



**MAIDSTONE MODEL
ENGINEERING
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN & WINTER
EDITION 2006**



**M.M.E.S. COMPETITION ^
WINNING PHOTOGRAPH**

2006. Photograph taken by
Martin Parham at the New Valley
Railway.

*Competition Topic: Trains, Boats and
Planes—seems the main pictures won't*
2nd Place to a photograph taken
by Keith Spenceley at the Kent
and East Sussex Railway.

DIARY DATES 2006 - 2007

Sunday October 29: Last Public Running Day (British Summer Time Ends)

Friday November 3: Bits & Pieces and Crumpets

Friday December 1: Members Old Slides Show and Toasted Teacakes

Tuesday December 26: Boxing Day Run

2007:

Friday January 5: DVD & Video Night

Sunday January 14: Annual Sunday Lunch at the Grangemoor Hotel, Maidstone

Sunday January 21: POSSIBLE Coach Trip to the Ally Pally Exhibition with Tonbridge Club
(Have only just started discussions as to if this is on or not)

Friday February 2: The Great Wallis and Gromit Team Quiz Night (run by Mike & Roger)

Friday March 2: Annual General Meeting at Mote Park

Sunday March 25: Public Running Starts (with British Summer Time)

Friday April 6: (Good Friday) Bring & Buy Anything Night

All evening events start at @ 7-45pm.

It will be appreciated if everyone attending Club Nights will donate £1 each towards the cost of the refreshments provided/evening entertainment (all those who think this is disgusting may donate £2).

Although we finish public running at the end of October, we still meet up on Sundays, to do maintenance work, or to just chat over a cup of tea. The Old Geysers meet on Wednesdays likewise. Or you can even run a loco, if desired. Unless the weather is really inclement!

ANYTHING ANYWHERE ELSE KNOWN ABOUT SO FAR YOU MIGHT LIKE TO GO TO:

October 28: Night Run 6 -10pm at Northampton Society, visitors welcome.

December 29-31: The Model Engineer Exhibition at Olympia 2, London (new venue)

2007

January 19-21: The London Model Engineering Exhibition at the Alexandra Palace

February 16-18 Model World 07 at the Brighton Centre, Brighton

Please note that events/dates are likely be added before the next newsletter.

The copy of this Diary kept on the Club Noticeboard is kept as up to date as possible (as and when I remember or somebody nags me!).

Dates *may* change and it is possible that sometimes events get cancelled. Who knows in this day and age? If in doubt, please check with us. But we don't claim to know everything!

Please contact the Secretary for any details or information on MMES meetings.

The Club website is at www.maidstonemes.co.uk

NEVER FAR AWAY by Paul Rolleston

The time has come for me to write another article. The conditions are ideal, the planets are in alignment, I have a new computer with a 450 gigabyte hard disc and an 11 speaker surround sound system and therefore I have music, the ultimate music machine, let the walls tremble, I have a glass of whisky and also, a far greater motivation; a mental visualisation of the wistful 'I want an article' look on Sue's face and in my head the haunting sound of her soft voice gently nurturing all her contributors with encouraging threats like 'write me an article or die' (must suggest a proposal for the committee to approve; bottle of Scotch to all article writers, it helps to stimulate the mind and to create literary excellence).

For the most part the ongoing theme of 'Never Far Away' will predominate but a couple of diversions into the realms of humour and maybe, just maybe, the *supernatural*, will also feature.

The featured music for this edition is the Classic FM 'At The Movies' triple disc set. I do have a habit of conducting orchestral pieces (you've heard of Karaoke? well, I do Conductoroke) and this does tend to slow down the rate of typing hence this article is long overdue. Only one track that has any association with trains; The Harry Potter Theme – Hogwarts Express.

Let us return to where I left off, in an earlier edition so long ago, my early years. At the age of twelve I was bitten by the fishing bug, I had also been bitten by a nasty big dog but I didn't pursue that as a pastime. On a Saturday or Sunday a gang of us from my school would take the bus to Maidstone to fish the Medway. In due course we eventually discovered Mote Park with superb fishing in an idyllic setting but at 5 shillings a day it could only be an occasional treat and therefore in order to get full value for money we would strive to arrive at the park as early as possible and stay till late. This was in turn governed by the bus service from Twydall Green, where we all lived, to Maidstone. On a Saturday the bus left Twydall at 6am whereas on a Sunday the first bus was not until 8am, so in order to get our 5 bobs' worth Saturday was the chosen day for fishing.

Now, at the age of fourteen I had my first bike and with it so much freedom to explore so many places. I had also become fascinated by water wildlife and would cycle miles to find ponds, streams, quarries, reservoirs, in fact anywhere that had water. I still am an aqua naturalist (that's naturalist, not naturist). Bear with me, this is going somewhere in the direction of a railway.

One Sunday I cycled to Mote Park, but not to fish as it was the close season (mid March to mid June), and found that I was onto the discoveries of the year. It was so different to a Saturday. The first discovery was radio controlled model boats, only a couple, launches with diesel engines. I had not seen such things before and I spent a long time watching them. At some point when neither of these boats were actually running and it was quiet by the lake I could still hear the sound of a diesel engine running, well, not just running but screaming its (cylinder) head off. I left the side of the lake and headed in the direction of the sound of ten thousand cats with their tails caught in the door. What a racket, I homed in on a crowded circle of people gathered around something that I just couldn't see. Suddenly the noise stopped, there were mumblings from the crowd and some people moved away thus allowing me the chance to see what it was all about; tethered model cars belting around a circle of concrete inside a circle of mesh fencing. I had not seen or even heard of such things before. I stood and watched as the car that had just finished its run was disconnected from the tether and replaced by the next car. Then the entertainment started, trying to start it. I'm not sure if Glo-plug engines existed in those days (late fifties) because the effort that it took to get a car running was considerable. The procedure of a cleft stick on the back axle and large amounts of running like the clappers pushing the car with the cleft stick and still it wouldn't start. After much fiddling with the car and more pushing it eventually started. At first the car was slow and the engine seemed to be labouring but its speed increased with each lap until the car was only a blur and the engine sounded as though it was fit to explode. In due course it stopped, I presumed because all the fuel had been used.

I was totally absorbed by all the activities in and around the circuit and watched other cars run, but I was totally oblivious to what was happening only a few yards away. What a day, the ten mile cycle ride home was not something to look forward to, especially going up Boxley Hill, but seeing the model boats and cars made the day out a huge success. You can probably guess what's coming next. Correctamundo! At some point my attention wandered from the cars, and I smelled, saw or heard something else that stirred my curiosity and I found the MMES railway track. That was the icing on the cake. Something else I had never seen before, and how many times had I fished at Mote Park and not known of its existence. Once again a railway was Never Far Away. Small point; some years later, this year in fact, I was thumbing through some old M.E.s and found a mention of a tethered car speed record being achieved on that circuit and I believe that was 167 m.p.h.

Mote Park has always been a special place for me. The Medway towns where I lived for most of my younger years had its own attractions; the Darland banks, the Strand miniature railway, and other places of interest to a small boy, but Maidstone had so much in one Park. I'd made up my mind that Maidstone was the town that I just had to live in and 20+ years later I made it, but that's a story for a later episode. Humorous experiences in the park also contributed to my affection for 'The Mote' and I now have over half a lifetime's fond memories of personal events in Mote Park. Let me tell you of one now, and maybe another in a later newsletter.

In later years, possibly 1970, I persuaded a work colleague, Lloyd, to make the journey from his native Essex into Kent to sample the superb fishing in Mote Park. On the chosen date we met up very early one morning at Stone Street bus station, before the M&D had started for the day and I led the way in my Singer Vogue and Lloyd followed in his vintage Alvis soft top with wire wheels. We parked close to the small waterfall, dawn had only just broken and the air was cool and refreshing, the mist on the lake spilled out onto the banks, add to that, silence, and it created the ambience that makes all the effort to get to the water's edge early so worthwhile. We unloaded our cars and set about loading ourselves with all the tackle and equipment. It has always been the angler's prerogative to take more tackle than he needs and Lloyd was definitely of that ilk, and as Anglers trolleys didn't exist in those days everything had to be carried. The back is very useful for this purpose and with my help one very large haversack full of tackle and a slightly smaller one containing breakfast, lunch, snacks, flasks and bait, was hoisted onto Lloyd's back and made secure with a strap. In one hand he carried his rod holdall and in the other his chair and nets, he was the complete angler and Isaac Walton would have, at the very least, nodded his approval. I was less heavily burdened. Now, on account of his payload Lloyd had to lean forward, about 30 to 40 degrees, in order to not fall backwards under the weight of all that he had on his back. We set off towards what I thought was a promising spot and found ourselves walking into the deepening mist that lay on and around the lake.

Now, did you know, and, not a lot of people know this, but in the very early hours of the morning ducks are more likely to be on the banks than in the water. We were walking through the mist which was getting deeper and thicker as we got nearer to the waters edge. When the mist was about waist high Lloyd unwittingly found a pair of ducks. To say he found them, no, he kicked them. The spectacle of a pair of Mallards doing a vertical take off is an inspiring sight to any naturalist. Up they rose in front of him quacking for all they were worth, he was stunned but not silent, he uttered a profane expression and stood bolt upright. A foolish thing to do, trying to defy laws of physics. He had shifted his centre of gravity, upset his equilibrium and with a futile attempt to stay upright by dropping what he had in his hands and waving his arms around in circles he ungracefully fell backwards and disappeared into the mist. I thought this was hilarious and laughed out loud. What with ducks quacking twenty to the dozen, a loud and unholy utterance and my laughter disrupting the hitherto peace and quiet of the entire park, it was quite natural for all other anglers around the lake to stand up to see what was going on, and they did. All around the lake there were heads and shoulders poking up above the mist looking for the cause of the commotion and with Lloyd lying on his back, out of sight in the mist, and by then laughing, I was the only person that they could see. Oh! Hell, move over Lloyd, I'm going to hide in the mist as well.

The time has come in these chronicles to make a move into the next significant stage of my life; leaving school and starting my 5 year apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner in Chatham Dockyard. I'd hated school and starting work gave me a feeling of liberation. I had previously visited the Dockyard on Navy Days. These were amazing events not to be missed by any small boy, but especially me. The modern Navy Days aren't a patch on what they were in Ye Olden Days. Despite the obvious existence of railway lines all over the place in the Dockyard I was totally preoccupied with submarines diving and leaving a hapless salt encrusted sea dog clinging to the periscope on the conning tower, torpedoes being launched, ladders to climb, mock attacks by everything in the fleet air arm and gunfire with red smoke and a battle with Pirates on a Chinese Junk. I have to admit that dockyard shunters and wagons did not stand a chance of getting my attention, I don't recall actually seeing any, but I'm sure they were Never Far Away.

I spent the first two years of my apprenticeship at the apprentice training school and in that time I saw only one ship, and very briefly at that. But no matter, on the top floor of the training school there was a model steam engine plant. This was an amazing model and I would love to know where it is now. I still went on my monthly hospital/train spotting trips and had the whole day off for it. I learned the hard way that it was not a good idea to admit to being a train spotter in Dockyard Apprentice circles, it was considered seriously un-cool, and I was thus labelled for all my time 'In the Yard'. On my first day at the School I was instantly smitten by Motorbike Fever. Prior to this I hadn't given these machines much more than a quick glance when seen on the streets, but at the training school there were hundreds of them and each one was the pride and joy of an apprentice. Eventually I had one myself, a 250cc Matchless that cost me £145 second hand from Waldrons of Brompton. Due to my growing slowly problems it was difficult to handle when at a standstill because I couldn't get both feet onto the ground at the same time, so I had to lean the bike one way, and then to get it going again was a bit of a performance but with some practice I got the hang of it. Now, with my own motorised transport (mum and dad didn't have a car) I could go fishing as early in the morning as I liked, which meant that Sunday fishing trips to Mote Park were far more frequent, with, of course, enjoyment of all the other attractions.

So, let's press onwards, backwards and onwards again. As one memory begets another I could go on and on, backwards and forwards for ever and a day, but I must get back to the subject matter 'Never Far Away'.

Uncle Tommy. Has the time has come to learn the truth, was there a corpse bricked up in the old fire place. Carrying on from where I last left off. I made a few exploratory nibbles with a chisel here and there at the plaster looking for any weak spot to get a good hole started, lost cause, there weren't any. After some significant amount of nibbling and gnawing and getting not too far I realised that the whole of the chimney breast had been covered with plasterboard, bonded directly onto the original plaster lath walls. Anyway, for what I thought was a good reason I took all the plaster board and plaster on lath off first so that I could find the mortar courses and then I finally got into it and the muck really started to fly. The radio was fighting a losing battle trying to make itself heard over the noise of a Hilti demolition breaker munching it's way through the masonry, and I thought at the time that it was just as well that Mrs Wilson next door was deaf.

The moment of truth was getting nearer and I do recall that feelings of trepidation had been replaced by excitement. Finally, I had a hole into the void that was the old fireplace. I opened it up to find ????

To be continued. What was that I hear you say, 'YOU B*S*A*D'?!

Oh! Alright, I'll finish it off. Not one but two skeletons, birds of course, but you probably guessed as much. So after all that, the origin of Uncle Tommy was still a mystery. As far as I know his activities ceased, but a little while later the family moved. Maybe Uncle Tommy had become more of a problem than they were willing to let on about. Perhaps, at some later date another builder will stir things up again by removing the other bricked up fireplace in the front bedroom. Who knows, perhaps a Ghost is Never Far Away.

NEW MEMBERS 2006

We welcome the following:

Richard Barker from Orpington, a geophysicist, who has acquired a 3½” Rob Roy and a 2-6-0 Mogul;

And

Sidney Gibbons, from Paddock Wood, retired, interested in Gauge One and 3 ½” locomotives;

And

David Mills from Greatstone, a factory operative, interested in small scale steam and diesel locomotives;

And

Clifford Carter from Maidstone, a postman driver, whose model making has included OO gauge;

And

Andy Mills from Ashford, a C.N.C. setter/programmer, who is building a 3” scale Savage little Samson Tractor;

And

John Porter from Lenham, a retired medical practitioner, principally interested in 4mm railway modelling

And

Chris Wheal from Grafty Green, a self-employed handyman, whose model making activities are G gauge garden railway and who has a 5” gauge electric shunter

And

Harry Godding (Junior Member) from Detling, a student, who has completed plastic model kits from very young and is getting his granddad’s Mamod engines running again

And

Richard Cook from Beckenham, a doctor, with a 5” gauge Speedy and a 3½” LWR Super D locomotives and 4mm standard and narrow gauge live steam

And a re-member

Charles Darley from Gillingham, a chartered surveyor, model making activities steam loco, hovercraft, generator set 12v, wood working and ceramics;

And

We have another 3 people joining, but as we haven’t yet had the next committee meeting as I write this, they’ll be in next issue!

ODDS and ENDS by E.W. Playfoot

Brighouse & Halifax Club



At IMLEC



While on a visit to Beech Hurst Club at Haywards Heath the other day, I was reminded by one of our members, of the article 'Holiday Breaks for the Discerning Model Engineer' written by Ed Nutter and published in our Club Newsletter several years ago. In the article Ed Nutter described a rack type of in house storage system for model locomotives. Beech Hurst Club are among several clubs that have now adopted storing club and owners models on their premises in this way. Brighouse and Halifax Model Engineers have also adopted this storage system with a very clever lifting traverser based on a forklift truck.

A couple of weekends ago was the Autumn Rally of the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies. As the then current holder of the Australian Association of Live Steamers Trophy I had the honour of assisting with the judging at this year's event. With your Chairman and our wives we travelled the considerable distance to Brighouse on the Friday before the event and put up in a travel lodge. I was very much looking forward to the event with the expectation of many fine models to see. Saturday morning was rather cloudy and dull which lasted all day. We soon found the track and there appeared to be a good attendance. The car park was nearly full, just enough room for us to park. Several engines were already on the steaming bays, some in steam. 'Got an engine mate?' I was asked. I replied 'No, but I have the trophy!'

There was a very nice A3 (5" g) completed from a kit. There was also a very nice and interesting Sentinel (7 1/4" g). There were several other models, which I looked forward to scrutinising. I was introduced to the other two judges and in discussion soon learned that the engines that had caught my eye were all Brighouse and Halifax club engines and were therefore not eligible for the award.

Brighouse and Halifax model engineers operate from their own site and have a small raised track of 3 1/2" and 5" and a larger ground level track of 7 1/4" including several sidings and a turntable. Adjacent to the turntable is a large ornate brick engine shed containing several large engines including an American type of 'Big Boy'.

The raised track had its own adjacent covered steaming bay along with engine and rolling stock storage. At the other side of the site is a very nice clubroom with integral kitchen where we were well looked after by the Ladies

of the club. To raise funds the club opens to the public at set times when they charge to enter the club site. Once in the site the public are free to have as many rides as they like.

I don't think there were more than six visitors to this club for the Autumn Rally. Brighthouse and Halifax Model Engineer members had made a great effort to entertain and feed all visitors and it was very disappointing to witness such a poor turnout. I did not take an engine as I thought I would be too busy judging, but with only two possible contenders I wish I had taken an engine to help pass the time.

One thing that did help pass the time was the trade stand of 'The Model Engineers Laser' who specialises in producing laser cut components for model engineers; he had many examples of the components he produces on display. He has had articles about his work published in *Engineering in Miniature* magazine recently. I was tempted by a gauge one flat pack of components for the Wainwright 'D' engine. As I have the engine in 5" gauge it will be rather nice to have a smaller version as well. I have acquired some very nice wheel castings from a Mark Wood, whose address can be obtained from the Links on the Gauge One web site at: www.gaugeone.org. Have a look at the videos on the Iden Coach House site on the Links page. The Sept 06 video in particular.

I mentioned Ed Nutter earlier and it so happened that we recently had a holiday in Canada and was able to briefly call in and see the old fool. He seems happy enough but now seldom has any spare time to write silly articles for us. We were able to spend an hour or two together and reminisce about times passed.

I was sorry to have let our club down with my attempt at the IMLEC held at Fareham Club this year (*you didn't let us down Edgar; it's just one of those things – Editor*). I had spent hours checking over my Royal Scot to try and make sure all was well. I did have a last minute problem with a kind of chalk blocking my injectors. This I discovered to be caused by a purpose made aluminium sump casting fitted to the tender. The tender is to Tony Alcock's drawings with the late Norman Spinks castings. This I replaced before the event, with a new sump, which I fabricated from brass, since this modification I have had no further trouble. What I failed to anticipate was trouble with the front bogie derailing, but then it had never ever once derailed before, and I had run it on several tracks.

It was a two-day event; my run was on the Sunday at 11.30. I attended the Saturday competition and watched all the other contenders to try and get as many tips as I could and also to get an idea of the passenger load to ask for.

I steamed up on charcoal only and changed to a thin layer of coal just before leaving the steaming bay. Once in the start position I built the fire up with coal ready for the off. There was just a short length of downhill track before entering the 1 in 70 uphill section to the tunnel. The train comprised a sandbag weighted driving trolley, the dynamometer car and three passenger cars. The observer sat behind the dynamometer car with six additional passengers. On opening the regulator the engine slipped which I quickly checked and was able to get away. The train did feel heavy and I was desperately trying to get speed up. Each time I squeezed the regulator open a bit more the wheels slipped. However I soon realised I was going to make it to the top of the hill so left the regulator alone.

Through the tunnel I was on a level or downhill section, but just before the viaduct bridge the bogie derailed. I quickly stopped and restored the bogie to the rails. Shortly after it derailed again. Several more times it derailed before completing the first lap. To get the engine to go around the boating lake bend I had to walk the engine pushing down on the front buffer beam. It was clear that I could not continue so had to retire. It was very disappointing, particularly as I felt I had caused a gap in the running programme and the entertainment that it gives. I think I learned a lot from this experience and hope to have another go.

As several of you know I have been wondering what engine to build next. I want to build the 5" gauge Asia by Les Saxby, for which I have the drawings.

But this is a small engine and only suitable as a 'play' engine not for serious body moving. However, before I build the Asia I thought I would like to build a big engine and I have decided on the Peppercorn A1 to Michael Breeze's drawings assuming that I am able to obtain the principle castings.

Over two months ago my wife bought the set of drawings for me as an anniversary present from the acting agent. One of the drawings was missing. 'To follow' was annotated to the invoice. I waited patiently for about a month and then phoned. "Sorry, we'll send it on to you" I was told. So I patiently waited over another month and phoned again. This time I was told that they had no record of any drawings being outstanding. This annoyed me and I made my feelings known. To which the response was that if I was going to act in this way they would rather not have my custom. Another example of how times have changed. No longer is the customer always right!

However I did eventually get the missing drawing and was able to complete a list of material and casting requirements. The drawings are very detailed but, I found, not particularly easy to read. There are many castings listed on the drawings I just hope that many are still available. I intend to take advantage of laser or water cutting on this engine. The Model Engineers Laser who I mentioned earlier, list the frames on his web site at <http://www.modelengineerslaser.co.uk/>

PHOTO COMPETITION GUIDELINES

The theme is "Maidstone Model Engineering Society" and you are looking for the best photograph in your opinion that illustrates M.M.E.S.

Pictures should be @ 4" x 6", or 5" x 7". Previous winners will not enter.

No captions, as these distract from the actual picture and all pictures should be judged equally.

Maximum 3 entries per person or per photographer (who must be a club member).

All entries should be checked in to the newsletter editor who will then arrange the display.

All photographs on show will not advertise who the photographer is.

All entries are to be received on 5th October 2007 and by 8pm for judging that evening.

All pictures submitted should reflect the topic and only the photographer is eligible for the prize, if the picture is submitted on behalf of another member of the club who can't make it.

Everyone who turns up on the evening is entitled to have a vote.

A picture taken by your best buddy, or with you in it, should not be the one to automatically get your vote! Be objective (not objectionable) and subjective (not subversive).

The number of voting rounds will depend entirely on the number of pictures submitted and how many votes are cast for each.

The newsletter editor is responsible for drawing up the guidelines, and may bring in further ones on the night if necessary, and has the right to discount any photographs if they are inappropriate.

Remember, you should be voting for the photograph that, in your opinion, best reflects the theme, be it a member or members, locomotives, scenery, or otherwise.

Should there be any arguments; the Chairman's decision is final.

An explanation of Engineering Terms for the Non-Engineer. (Or Plumb Loco)

For the benefit of our non-engineering readers here are some definitions of terms used by engineers, particularly Model Engineers, to help you to understand what it's all about.

BATTERY:	What you get from 'er indoors if you spend too much time in the workshop
BLOWER:	A lot further down than you can reach
BOLT:	To dash to the workshop at the earliest opportunity
CAD:	Someone who messes up your drawings
ELECTRIC:	A rude word not to be said within the hearing of a steam enthusiast
HACK SAW:	An injured newspaper reporter or a useful parting-off tool
HAMMER:	A person who's trying to convince you he knows what he's talking about or A very fast acting screwdriver
LATHE:	A strip of wood used to hold up plaster on a wall or ceiling
LOCO:	Someone who's mad keen on engines
MACHINE:	Something a Scotsman uses to make things (think about it)
MILLING MACHINE:	Something a milliner uses to make hats
NUT:	Someone who's mad keen on anything
PARTING TOOL:	The mother in law
PISTON:	What the cat did to my toolbox
RAIL:	To rant and rave when something is dropped on one's foot
RULER:	'Er indoors who must be obeyed
SAW:	What it feels like when you scrape your knuckles
SH*T:	An often used word when appreciating that a project has been ruined
SHAPER:	Someone on a diet
SLEEPER:	A model engineer who's been told to take his bed into the workshop
STEAM:	As opposed to the A Team
TIE:	Something to be removed at the earliest opportunity
TOOL-POST:	Implements by mail from Tracy Chronos
TRACKS:	Railways in the snow?
TWIST-DRILL:	A dance routine from the rock and roll era
WHEEL:	A Scotsman's last testimony
WORKSHOP:	Somewhere where you can purchase labour

I have no doubt that the list is inexhaustible and readers will be able to think of many more items much more amusing than those above. My particular favourite is PISTON.

Vic R.

I'll Show You Mine if You will Show Me Yours (Or A Comedy of Errors!)

It is a well known fact (who says it is?) that you can learn by your mistakes. I've made so many I must be a professor by now! I am a firm believer that the above is true, about learning by making mistakes I mean. I firmly believe that you can also learn by the mistakes of others, and it doesn't overfill the scrap bin either or cost a mint into the bargain. If our newsletter editor/programme organiser agrees, I am going to throw down a bit of a challenge.

And this is it - are you man (or woman) enough to actually show others the failures that have happened when you have been making something? It could be either that you have misread a drawing, used the wrong materials, or overcooked the handles when machining a component such that it is only fit for the scrap bin? My suggestion is that you bring along the **** thing to a Bits and Pieces Evening and explain, if you can, how the mistake happened and what you did to rectify it. Hence my use of the title above.

Vic R.

BOOK REVIEW

My book review this time is on a couple of books that are a little out of date but updated reprints are still available from Camden books. The other is a current version.

The first is: - The Stirling Engine Manual Volume Two by James G. Rizzo. Currently available in hardback @ £26.30 plus p & p. My edition is a 1999 version. I must first issue a *warning*. There are a number of dimensional errors in my version and I do not know if they have been corrected in any later editions. The moral is to check dimensions and then check again before cutting any metal. When I contacted Camden about one particular error I was brusquely told "oh well that was up to the writer to have checked". I can't say I was particularly impressed. However the book itself is quite fascinating. As the history of hot air engines was dealt with comprehensively in Volume 1, this volume gives details of a lot more engines to build, with detailed drawings, black and white and several coloured pictures. If you have seen Roy Darlington's advanced projects at M.E. exhibitions and you would like to know more, this book is a good introduction to the art. Because when driven by an external source the engine acts a refrigeration plant they are apparently used to provide super cooling in missiles, Roy was contacted by the CIA to see why he was so interested in classified machinery. I'm sure he provided a satisfactory answer! Incidentally he would make a good speaker for a club meeting. If anyone does try to build the Noddy engine I have a source of supply for the test tubes. The one enemy of these engines is friction so bear this in mind.

The next book is: – The Tesla Disc Turbine by W.M. Cairns, currently priced at £5.90 plus p & p. Some of you may have seen my copy when I brought it along to a club evening a while ago. This is a 34 page soft cover book in A4 format. Nikola Tesla was a Croatian born inventor who came up with many inventions before their time but is best remembered for his work on A.C. electricity. The Tesla turbine uses the fact that if a fluid passes through a pipe then the walls of the pipe are actually drawn along with the fluid. Obviously the movement is very small but is there nevertheless. If the pipe was not fixed it would surely advance with the flow. The author sets out the basic principles, goes on to describe practical applications, gives some technical data and then gives a set of drawings for producing a miniature version. It looks a bit complicated to me but the end result is pretty impressive, running at a shaft speed of 20,000 r.p.m and the prototype achieved something in the order of 50,000 r.p.m. Builders are advised to run their machine behind a suitable guard just in case the high stresses cause failure of the turbine blades. Some of the stress calculations give some pretty enormous bursting pressures. If present day materials had been available in Tesla's time we would no doubt be seeing many more examples of these engines in everyday use today. Who knows, with the ever present problems with pollution and fossil fuel shortage some further developments may be seen in the not too distant future. I do not remember seeing a description of a model based on this principle so if one of you feels like something different

The next book is: – The Model Injector by Ted Crawford from the Australian Model Engineer. This is a 62 page soft covered book at £6.25 plus the usual. The book is in two parts. Part one deals with the theory and design principles and unless you are very technically minded is quite heavy going. It does however give a lead as to why a particular injector doesn't work and how to correct operating problems. The second part is about actually making an injector. This really is a comprehensive treatise on the subject with excellent drawings and straightforward instructions. There is also a description for making the cone reamers from old hacksaw blades. This little book is certainly worth its weight in gold and takes all the mystery out of these little perishers. Strongly recommended for your bookshelf.

A Word of Caution

Take a tip from me:- When electric arc welding make sure you are at least 6 feet away from any glass. Those seemingly innocuous sparks from the material are almost drawn magnetically to any nearby glass (or plastic) and make a very good job of etching into the surface and are not removable which I learnt to my cost – literally!

Y IZZITT

Why is it that I get done those tasks that I didn't intend to do and don't get done those things that I did intend to do?
VJR

The Perils of Political Correctness - A Modern Fable.

REST OF THE WORLD VERSION:

The squirrel works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building and improving his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool, and laughs and dances and plays the summer away. Come winter, the squirrel is warm and well fed.

The shivering grasshopper has no food or shelter, so he dies out in the cold.

THE END.

THE BRITISH VERSION:

The squirrel works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool, and laughs and dances and plays the summer away. Come winter, the squirrel is warm and well fed.

A social worker finds the shivering grasshopper, calls a press conference and demands to know why the squirrel should be allowed to be warm and well fed while others less fortunate, like the grasshopper, are cold and starving. The BBC shows up to provide live coverage of the shivering grasshopper; with cuts to a video of the squirrel in his comfortable warm home with a table laden with food.

The British press inform people that they should be ashamed that in a country of such wealth, this poor grasshopper is allowed to suffer so while others have plenty. The Labour Party, Greenpeace, Animal Rights and The Grasshopper Council of GB demonstrate in front of the squirrel's house. The BBC, interrupting a cultural festival special from Notting Hill with breaking news, broadcasts a multi cultural choir singing "We Shall Overcome". Ken Livingstone rants in an interview with Trevor McDonald that the squirrel has got rich off the backs of grasshoppers, and calls for an immediate tax hike on the squirrel to make him pay his "fair share" and increases the charge for squirrels to enter inner London.

In response to pressure from the media, the Government drafts the Economic Equity and Grasshopper Anti Discrimination Act, retroactive to the beginning of the summer. The squirrel's taxes are reassessed. He is taken to court and fined for failing to hire grasshoppers as builders for the work he was doing on his home and an additional fine for contempt when he told the court the grasshopper did not want to work.

The grasshopper is provided with a council house, financial aid to furnish it and an account with a local taxi firm to ensure he can be socially mobile. The squirrel's food is seized and re distributed to the more needy members of society, in this case the grasshopper.

Without enough money to buy more food, to pay the fine and his newly imposed retroactive taxes, the squirrel has to downsize and start building a new home. The local authority takes over his old home and utilises it as a temporary home for asylum seeking cats who had hijacked a plane to get to Britain as they had to share their country of origin with mice. On arrival they have tried to blow up the airport because of Britain's apparent love of dogs.

The cats had been arrested for the international offence of hijacking and attempt bombing but were immediately released because the police fed them pilchards instead of salmon whilst in custody. Initial moves to then return them to their own country were abandoned because it was feared they would face death by the mice. The cats devise and start a scam to obtain money from peoples credit cards.

A Panorama special shows the grasshopper finishing up the last of the squirrel's food, though spring is still months away, while the council house he is in, crumbles around him because he hasn't bothered to maintain the house. He is shown to be taking drugs. Inadequate government funding is blamed for the grasshopper's drug 'illness'.

The cats seek recompense in the British courts for their treatment since arrival in UK.

The grasshopper gets arrested for stabbing an old dog during a burglary to get money for his drugs habit. He is imprisoned but released immediately because he has been in custody for a few weeks. He is placed in the care of the probation service to monitor and supervise him. Within a few weeks he has killed a guinea pig in a botched robbery.

A commission of enquiry, that will eventually cost £10,000,000 and state the obvious, is set up.

Additional money is put into funding a drug rehabilitation scheme for grasshoppers and legal aid for lawyers representing asylum seekers is increased. The asylum seeking cats are praised by the government for enriching Britain's multicultural diversity and dogs are criticised by the government for failing to befriend the cats.

The grasshopper dies of a drug overdose. The usual sections of the press blame it on the obvious failure of government to address the root causes of despair arising from social inequity and his traumatic experience of prison. They call for the resignation of a minister.

The cats are paid a million pounds each because their rights were infringed when the government failed to inform them there were mice in the United Kingdom.

The squirrel, the dogs and the victims of the hijacking, the bombing, the burglaries and robberies have to pay an additional percentage on their credit cards to cover losses, their taxes are increased to pay for law and order and they are told that they will have to work beyond 65 because of a shortfall in government funds.

THE END.

(Article of unknown origin received over the Internet)



THE IMPORTANCE OF BOILER TESTING!

Picture from Peter Martin.
Taken at Beamish in 1989.

M.M.E.S. 5th Annual Sunday Lunch at the Grangemoor Hotel, Maidstone,
on 14th January 2007 - £16 per person

Fresh Home Made Soup of the Day
or
Prawn & Pineapple Salad in Marie Rose Sauce
Served with Brown Bread & Butter
or
Chilled Honeydew Melon Boat
or
Deep Fried Breaded Mushrooms
Served with a garlic mayonnaise

NAME:
MENU CHOICES:

NAME:
MENU CHOICES:

Any Special Requirements:

Cash or cheque
(payable to M.M.E.S.)
and Menu Choices to
Pat Riddles (or Sue if
Pat isn't around) by
December Club Night
Friday December 1st
please.

Remember you can
bring a guest if you
wish.

Roast Sirloin of Beef with Yorkshire Pudding
or
Roast Leg of Lamb with Mint Sauce
or
Roast Breast of Chicken
Sage & Onion Stuffing

The above main courses are served with
Roast Potatoes & Vegetables
or
Deep Fried Fillet of Sole
Served with French Fries & Salad Garnish
or
Stir Fried Vegetables & Tagliatelle
With a Sweet Chilli Sauce
or
Cold Ham with Mixed Salad

Home Made Apple & Apricot Pie with Cream
or
Strawberry Meringue
Meringue nest filled with luxury strawberry ice cream, coated with strawberry puree
& topped with whipped cream
or
Selection of Ice Cream, Vanilla, Strawberry, Chocolate
or
Warm Chocolate Fudge Cake served with Whipped Cream & Vanilla Ice Cream
or
Apricot & Chocolate Cup
Chocolate cup filled with vanilla ice cream, topped with apricots, coated in apricot coulis,
finished with whipped cream

or
Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee or Tea

A FEW MORE FUNNIES *received by the Editor*

*ACTUAL RADIO CONVERSATION RELEASED BY THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS,
OCTOBER 10, 1995:*

(Voice 1): Please divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision.

(Voice 2): Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to south to avoid a collision.

(Voice 1): This is the Captain of a U S Navy ship; I say again, divert YOUR course.

(Voice 2): No. I say again divert YOUR course.

(Voice 1): THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER ENTERPRISE, WE ARE A LARGE WARSHIP
OF THE U S NAVY, DIVERT YOUR COURSE NOW!

(Voice 2): This is a lighthouse. Your call.

PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE WORDING AND SPELLING. IF YOU KNOW THE BIBLE EVEN A LITTLE, YOU'LL FIND THIS HILARIOUS! IT COMES FROM A CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEST. KIDS WERE ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE BIBLE WERE WRITTEN BY CHILDREN. THEY HAVE NEITHER BEEN RETOUCHEDED NOR CORRECTED. INCORRECT SPELLING HAS BEEN LEFT IN.

1. IN THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE, GUINNESSIS. GOD GOT TIRED OF CREATING THE WORLD SO HE TOOK THE SABBATH OFF.
2. ADAM AND EVE WERE CREATED FROM AN APPLE TREE. NOAH'S WIFE WAS JOAN OF ARK. NOAH BUILT AND ARK AND THE ANIMALS CAME ON IN PEARS.
3. LOTS WIFE WAS A PILLAR OF SALT DURING THE DAY, BUT A BALL OF FIRE DURING THE NIGHT.
4. THE JEWS WERE A PROUD PEOPLE AND THROUGHOUT HISTORY THEY HAD TROUBLE WITH UNSYMPATHETIC GENITALS.
5. SAMPSON WAS A STRONGMAN WHO LET HIMSELF BE LED ASTRAY BY A JEZEBEL LIKE DELILAH.
6. SAMSON SLAYED THE PHILISTINES WITH THE AXE OF THE APOSTLES.
7. MOSES LED THE JEWS TO THE RED SEA WHERE THEY MADE UNLEAVENED BREAD WHICH IS BREAD WITHOUT ANY INGREDIENTS.
8. THE EGYPTIANS WERE ALL DROWNED IN THE DESSERT. AFTERWARDS, MOSES WENT UP TO MOUNT CYANIDE TO GET THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.
9. THE FIRST COMMANDMENTS WAS WHEN EVE TOLD ADAM TO EAT THE APPLE.
10. THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT IS THOU SHALT NOT ADMIT ADULTERY.
11. MOSES DIED BEFORE HE EVER REACHED CANADA. THEN JOSHUA LED THE HEBREWS IN THE BATTLE OF GERITOL.
12. THE GREATEST MIRACLE IN THE BIBLE IS WHEN JOSHUA TOLD HIS SON TO STAND STILL AND HE OBEYED HIM.

13. DAVID WAS A HEBREW KING WHO WAS SKILLED AT PLAYING THE LIAR. HE FOUGHT THE FINKELSTEINS, A RACE OF PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN BIBLICAL TIMES.
14. SOLOMON, ONE OF DAVID'S SONS, HAD 300 WIVES AND 700 PORCUPINES.
15. WHEN MARY HEARD SHE WAS THE MOTHER OF JESUS, SHE SANG THE MAGNA CARTA.
16. WHEN THE THREE WISE GUYS FROM THE EAST SIDE ARRIVED THEY FOUND JESUS IN THE MANAGER.
17. JESUS WAS BORN BECAUSE MARY HAD AN IMMACULATE CONTRAPTION.
18. ST. JOHN THE BLACKSMITH DUMPED WATER ON HIS HEAD.
19. JESUS ENUNCIATED THE GOLDEN RULE, WHICH SAYS TO DO UNTO OTHERS BEFORE THEY DO ONE TO YOU. HE ALSO EXPLAINED A MAN DOETH NOT LIVE BY SWEAT ALONE.
20. IT WAS A MIRACLE WHEN JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND MANAGED TO GET THE TOMBSTONE OFF THE ENTRANCE.
21. THE PEOPLE WHO FOLLOWED THE LORD WERE CALLED THE 12 DECIBELS.
22. THE EPISTELS WERE THE WIVES OF THE APOSTLES.
23. ONE OF THE OPPOSSUMS WAS ST. MATTHEW WHO WAS ALSO A TAXIMAN.
24. ST. PAUL CAVORTED TO CHRISTIANITY, HE PREACHED HOLY ACRIMONY WHICH IS ANOTHER NAME FOR MARRAIGE.
25. CHRISTIANS HAVE ONLY ONE SPOUSE. THIS IS CALLED MONOTONY.

This one is from Roger: **SURGEONS**

Four eminent surgeons met at a conference, and were discussing their patients and the ease of operating on them. They all firmly believed that the patient's occupation had an influence on the ease of surgery.

The discussion went something like this

First surgeon: "Accountants are the easiest to work on, as everything inside is neatly organised and labelled".

Second surgeon: "I can't really agree with that, as I find that electricians are the easiest - everything is colour coded".

Third surgeon: "I'm afraid that you're both wrong. In my experience, I have found that librarians are the easiest as everything is catalogued and laid out in order"

Fourth surgeon: "No. I totally disagree – you're all wrong. Of all the occupations that I've operated on, politicians are the easiest – there's nothing to them. There are no guts, no spine, no heart and the head and backside are totally interchangeable. Easy!"

What do you think?

RV

PASSENGER CARRYING CARS

by George Playford

Having just completed and brought into use my own double passenger car (trolley), I thought it might help and be of interest to others if I recorded to paper my experiences in this respect.

On our track at Maidstone most of our engines can comfortably manage a fully loaded double car on the long climb up to the toilet end of the track when the track is not too greasy.

For many years I passenger hauled with my tank engines using single club trolleys doubting whether these engines would be capable of pulling a double. Then one passenger-hauling day I decided to try pulling a double with my 0-6-0 freelance tank engine. To my surprise the engine coped easily with the added load, the exhaust beat sounded much better because it was now doing some real work. When you think about it a small tank engine such as a Simplex is better placed from the power angle than a scale express tender engine because the Simplex with its small driving wheels is much lower geared than the larger wheeled express.

I feel happier hauling the double passenger car because I think it is more stable, particularly the articulated type. There being less risk of being tipped off by leaning passengers. Despite the three large notices in the station asking passengers to sit upright, we all know and have experienced when they have leaned! It is difficult to make our narrow gauge passenger cars resistant to tipping, hence the anti-tip rail. However, although the anti-tip rail prevents the passenger car from leaving the track, it seems the human or passenger response to a small unexpected tip is to jettison themselves from the car and onto the ground. I have now experienced this three times.

The first time this happened to me was when I was pulling a single club car with my tank engine. We were travelling uphill where the two tracks run parallel. I had three or four teenage girls and they all decided to lean over the same way either to grab grass from the trackside or to touch the passengers on trains on the return track. All the passengers ended up on the ground. Fortunately my engine stayed on the track.

This happened to me again with teenagers on a single club car, this time on the return parallel track. This time my engine derailed and hung over the side of the track suspended by its attachment to the car. I am quite sure that the derailed passenger car remained on the track and I think the reason the engine came off was because of my inadvertently weighing down on it in order to save myself. It is because of this that I prefer to avoid where possible any contact with my engine or tender. I always try to hold onto the bar at the front of the passenger car when provided. This is a contentious point as some drivers do not like bars at the front of the cars and the bars to the club trolleys have now been removed!

I am now always very nervous when hauling teenagers. It seems they just have to show-off all the time, particularly if they are in a large group. I am sure I was not like that when I was a teenager!

The articulated double cars are far more stable than the singles. The weight of a fully loaded rear car helps to stabilise the front car. The only problem I have had with the double articulated cars is that occasionally the rearmost bogie will derail when the rear car has only one or two passengers sitting at the front of the rear car. This I think is caused by the stiffness of the cars frame not being able to cope with the camber change where the track changes from a right hand bend to a left hand bend.

I tried several changes to one particular member's articulate double car, which used to derail, but with little success. I came to the conclusion that the car frame should be flexible so as to accommodate the track camber change. More on this later.

All the club cars have sledge type brakes. Also the member's cars all have sledge type brakes with the exception of one. The sledge brakes are very effective but are inclined to snatch.

The better double passenger cars are often in high demand, particularly if the owners are present. For some time I have desired my own and with the help of another member last year commenced building my own passenger cars. I hoped to incorporate all the best points of the club and members passenger cars of which I had become acquainted. In terms of size and driver comfort I considered the four club cars to be ideal and in size and many other respects I based my own on these. I considered larger wheels to be smoother and freer running, as the club cars. I decided to build two single cars rather than an articulated double, first because I thought it easier and second because often the high loading of the articulated bogie is voiced as a reason for the hammering of the track joints.

I was given a great deal of help with the design of the bogies and was also given much of the material needed for them for which I am very grateful. The design I was given included loco type brakes which I applied to both the leading car bogies. I found a specialist supplier for the brakes shoes, which are impregnated, plastic. The brakes on both bogies are operated from a single lever using an equalising mechanism, which I copied from another club.

Generally none of the club cars or members cars have springing so I did not consider this as an option. The bogie pivot most used is a plain UPVC sliding block. Some member's bogies have rollers, which I adopted for my own as I felt they would offer less resistance to the bogie turning. I designed and built the car frames to be flexible to accommodate camber twist in the track.

My experience in using my own passenger cars has been very disappointing. They are very free running, comfortable and the brakes much better than I expected, but they are more sensitive to passenger leaning. The rear car has now derailed four times over approximately 100 passenger-carrying circuits.

I have tried several minor modifications to try and improve this but without effect. I am now convinced that the problem is in the flexible frame. I have inspected all the club and members cars and find that none allow any significant twist in the frame. In some cases the frame is flexible but is stiffened by the seat.

I opted for a flexible frame to overcome the derailment potential where the track changes camber in the right to left bend. For a long time I considered that a flexible frame would cure this which I am sure it did, but I now realise that a flexible frame is sensitive to just one passenger leaning. A stiff frame will tolerate at least one passenger leaning heavily, the weight of the other passengers keeping the cars upright and on track.

The bogies on my cars are the all-floating type and are similar to commercially available bogies, which I had considered before making my own. I wonder if these are more sensitive to derailling. There is no resistance to the lifting of the leading wheel other than the weight bearing down on it. I think also the roller type of bogie pivot is not helping because as the bogie turns on a bend the weight bearing down on the bogie is transferred very slightly to the trailing bogie wheel. I see that the Reeves passenger car bogies show a double roller! I have however found one rear bogie on a double car I have used many times which is similar to the above and has never derailed during my use.

Springing has been suggested to me. For many years Reeves have supplied a bogie drawing and kit, which included springing. The passenger cars at Tonbridge MES have bogies with springing which may be the Reeves type. They create a bit of a floaty ride, which I am not too keen on, but maybe the floatiness encourages the passenger to sit upright!

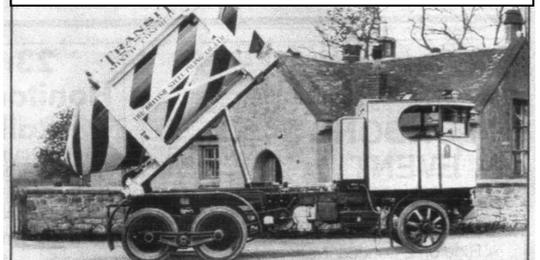
I have now taken my new cars out of use pending modifications, which I think will certainly involve making a rigid frame and maybe modifying the bogies. However this will now have to wait awhile as it is now the gardening time of year. (*Editor: Well, it was when he wrote this!*)

DRIVING ON SLICK'S DG6 SENTINEL by Norman King.

It is called flaming June, in reality the weather was overcast, misty and damp. I would call it grotty, mind you it was 7 o'clock in the morning when I left home, travelling to near Haywards Heath and the barn where my friend Jim Hatfield keeps his Sentinel Waggon, a DG6. Well, on arrival, the first thing is turn the water on and make a mug of tea, and then fill up the 200 gallon water tank at the back of the waggon. Check the water level in the boiler, lay a fire on the grate of the boiler, using plenty of wood, some paraffin and about half hundred weight of soft coal. Next, open the chimney damper and the ash pan, which is under the front of the waggon, apply fire, half close the ash pan, replace fire hole lid, then enjoy a mug of tea. It takes about an hour to get 275 lbs of steam and pull out onto the road, also getting everything else sorted out. Half done by the fireman and half by the driver. I check the engine side of things as I was going to be the driver; crank case oil, steam lubricator tank, purging any water from pipes to regulator so steam oil is coming out. Clear any water from the engine cylinders, open the drains and warm the engine up. This is done with the engine in neutral, and the regulator just cracked open, with about 100 lbs on the gauge, this also helps draw the fire because of exhaust drawn up the chimney. Water passes through the water preheater (this warms the water from the mechanical water pump) before it goes into the boiler. Pressure builds very quickly, and as it passes 150 lbs, the control valve is opened for ancillary items, like blower, brakes, injector, water lifter, and whistle, all these pipes need purging of water. They also need testing before we get onto the road, and also the electric lights, and horn button on the front edge of the drivers seat, which is best done when it causes your mate to jump and bang his head. The waggon has a 12 volt electric system powered by a generator mounted on the left hand side of the chassis near the engine gearbox and driven by a pulley; the battery is under the driver's seat. The control box and switches are on the driver's cab side, having been added later to the waggon in the late 1930's. Without us forgetting our junk (personal effects), food and makings, and mobile phone because you never quite know what will happen, with a vehicle of this age, like breaking down. (No AA recovery, just friends with the right gear, a heavy recovery vehicle, if you can not fix it).

Particulars of this SENTINEL DG6, serial number 8213, registered 1930? Well, it means a steam powered waggon with vertical boiler producing 275 pounds per square inch of super heated steam. DG indicates doubled geared, a very low one up to 6 miles per hour, and a higher one over 12 miles per hour, and also a reverse. The engine: a pair of double acting cylinders, two connecting rods driving the crankshaft, which in turn drives a chain wheel at each end, each connected to the front pair of the rear road wheels. The front pair of rear wheels are connected to the rear pair of wheels by two single driving chains on each side. On modern roads these are not used, as it causes excessive scuffing and uneven tyre wear. However, 4 driving wheels are ideal for fields, or rough ground. The (6) is for six wheels, singles on the front, and twin double pairs on the rear, all fitted with solid rubber tyres, never being converted to pneumatics, because of this Waggons use. Solid tyres have a tendency to get warm when running on modern tarmac road surfaces, and they are getting old. So need watching very carefully in case they get too hot, which can cause a blister to form, and if they explode it sounds like a shotgun. Therefore great care must be taken, as no provision is made for a spare being carried. The cooling lubricant agent is water (so when you see a man facing the waggon, very close to the wheel you know what is going on). When empty the DG6 weighs 9.6 tons, when you add coal and water, (have to carry extra of both), spares tools and us, the total weight is 12 tons, in the days of working a total weight was about 16 tons.

Sentinel No.8213 as new April 1930



Sentinel No. 8213 no longer wanted

This DG6 was the first mobile tipping concrete mixer in Great Britain; it had a long working life mixing concrete, driven by the boiler, which is 3 inches larger in diameter than standard in order to drive the mixer mechanism.

We normally manage to get onto the road, with the boiler blowing off, in an hour, and as that's about to happen it is driven out of the barn. We check the steam, and that the handbrake works, ensure the injector picks up and will put water into boiler (to take the pressure off the boiler), which in turn should stop the safety valve blowing. A quick (toot) small blast on the steam whistle, this sounds like a LMS type, only done at reasonable times. A steam engine should sound its whistle before moving. Mind you, it sounds fantastic when going under bridges, when it is always getting tested; just making sure it works of course. It is very useful in making other drivers pay attention. The driver's seat is wooden, and the lid to the battery box, for comfort a cushion is fitted, but there is no seat adjustment. The controls: steering wheel is about 20 inches diameter, and angled away and up slightly, at an ideal angle for driving. On your right side below at your extended arm is the water tap and injector valve. Also on the right is a quadrant, on the outside is the handbrake lever, on the inside is the gear selector, to front (floor) 1st back, back, 2nd half way is neutral, right back reverse. Between the quadrant front and the steering column is the foot steam brake pedal. One's left foot does very little, except to get hot from being next to the boiler. The regulator steam chest is on the side of boiler, the throttle regulating lever projecting from the top, very close to the driver's left hand (this lever is on a square drive, and can be removed), with a foot release valve on the floor, close to the seat, which is operated with the left foot in emergency or manoeuvring. On the left side of the driver's seat in front of the coalbunker is the control lever for the mechanical water pump. The bunker extends to the fireman's seat on the right hand side, and in a mirror position to pump is the draincock operating lever, both in reach of either the driver or fireman. Between the driver and fireman is the chain that operates the steam whistle.

When the barn is secured, we are off down the track to the road junction. It's only safe to turn right because of a bend on the main road. This, however, does the Waggon, fireman, and driver a favour, as it's up a slight hill, which brings the fire up to a bright incandescent glow, (white hot), and the superheater starts working efficiently after about ¼ mile, the fire temperature about 800 degrees F. As soon as the speed picks up the gear selector is pulled back to second, and the cylinder draincocks are closed. The fireman checks the fire, adjusts the ash pan which can be raised or lowered, controlling the flow of air to the fire grate, and the rate of the fire burning. Water is pumped into the boiler by a mechanical pump, which is turned on when going down hill or on the flat, with the aim and intention to keep the water at a level between ½ and ¾ in the gauge glass. Being turned off when going up hill, the injector is generally used when stationary or the water level gets low for various reasons, quite often when either the driver or fireman are having a bad day. Driving on the road in 1st gear is used to start the waggon moving, then the gear is changed to 2nd. If you come to a stop then 1st is selected with your right foot pushing the selector down to the bottom, then moving, then selected back again by hand. Also low gear is used for climbing hills and when moving across rough ground.

We turned around at the Y junction at the top of the hill, as we were going to Parham near Storrington. The weather was still grotty, with heavy wet patches on the road surface. This requires the safety and stopping distance to be doubled. When braking on solid tyres they don't grip on the road surface but tend to skate on the top of the water that builds up in front of the tyre. Just like the Formula One racing cars, which are changed to wet tyres, we can't do this, so it makes life interesting, particularly when other drivers expect that you can stop as quickly as they can, so most get a blast on the whistle as we get close to them. Very occasionally their consideration is repaid with a bit of slack (coal dust) on the fire plus a bit of blower, causing it to be exhausted up the chimney, depositing ash over everything close by. The waggon generally moves at a steady 20 – 25 miles per hour, no speedometer fitted, just driver's judgement, or a bit of calculation (the fireman with his watch, distance over time should give speed), which confirms the driver's judgement. At 9 o'clock in the morning traffic is still light, our route is west on the A272.

So we crossed the A281 at Cowfold with the waggon under close regulator control, which uses the engine's power fully, no freewheeling, or harsh braking, or rapid acceleration, keeping it all nice and gentle in towns and built up areas, so you don't scare the horses (causing them to bolt) or frighten pedestrians. The A272 negotiates two tight roundabouts and the main shopping area, the road surface is wet and very well worn. The second roundabout is on the edge of town and the road surface is also tracked in the direction of the A272 traffic. As we exited, and I opened the regulator, the rear wheels started to slide outwards (to the right, "offside"), the waggon's back end only moved out a couple of feet before being corrected by the regulator (closing, then opening again slowly). A car driver, who was stationary, waiting at the roundabout, just sat unable to do anything except watch us coming in his direction. The waggon then corrected, and moved in the required directional line of the A272 again. My poor old fireman, Jim, due to the left turn was checking the close left hand side, this is due the waggon's length, you have to turn wide as the rear (backside) cuts across the corners. Push bikes, small cars, or motor cycles try overtaking on the nearside, while we are going round corners. (These are out of the view of the driver, so the fireman has to watch out for these. The fireman takes the necessary action, or gives an appropriate signal, or even a blast of the whistle, which sorts them out). Well, the waggon's sudden movement was enough to throw him off balance, causing him to bang his head on the cab side, to steady himself he then places his bare right hand on the boiler casing, which is extremely hot. What he then said is not repeatable or printable; I considered it very amusing, having been in the exact same position myself when he's been driving.

It had now started to drizzle, weather which really makes for an enjoyable weekend on any rally field. Coming onto the A24 roundabout, a blast on the whistle, turning left south without stopping, onto the dual carriageway. Now some fast steaming, only if the cars don't get in the way, 6 miles of good steaming, by agreement between fireman and driver, our speed was about 40 miles per hour, which is pretty good for the waggon. I managed to get into the outside lane on the approach to the roundabout, turning right, going west on the A283, Storrington, a blast of the whistle to warn other drivers that a steam vehicle was about. In the village we filled up with water from a hydrant, before going into the grounds of Parham Park. Water is always a problem on the first day of any rally, as the low loaded Traction/Roller crowd are all filling up with water, in order to get steaming. Our arrival and greeting were not good, because of the light rain the surface of the rally field had become slippery so our waggon had to be towed to our position. This caused some delay before our DG6 waggon could be closed down, boiler filled up with water, rear wheels choked (a double one sloped at both ends placed between the two rear wheels), the fire was given couple of shovels of coal dust so it just simmers. Well, then lunch was taken, at 11am, after which the drizzle stopped, and the sun came out and everyone smiled, making life wonderful again. It is no fun living rough when it is muddy and wet, everything needs drying, and the mud gets everywhere. Steam Rallies are all much the same, our DG6 Sentinel needs to be in steam each day, even with the fire simmering you can smell the burning coal, so is acceptable, thus saving coal. The waggon is driven round the display ring a couple of times each day. Jim's main interests are appearance, the cost of running the waggon, and getting good quality coal. Most rallies issue coal, normally 10 - 12 bags, each 50 kilos, road driven steam vehicles normally get more. Without a steam waggon I very seldom attend rallies, I like the effort of running a steam vehicle, and doing all the maintenance work to keep it going. Mind you, the evening entertainment is generally good, and you are always meeting old friends and other steam minded people.

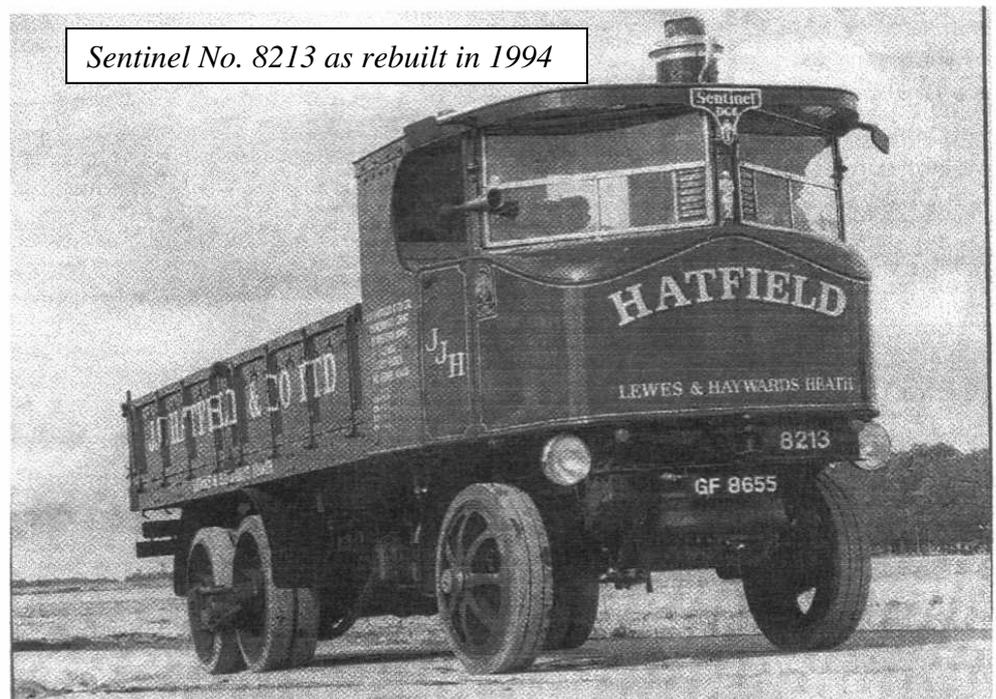
Sunday's homeward journey I was firing, so sorting out the coal, water, and fire. The coal bunker holds ½ ton situated in the cab between the driver/fireman, the waggon burns about 1 cwt. (50.9 kilos) every 15 miles. An extra ton of good steam coal is carried on the back, also a spare 150 gallon water tank. The main water tank is between the chassis and behind the rear wheels, holding 200 gallons it requires filling every 25 miles (range 35 - 40 miles); this can be a real problem. There are no coal yards or watering points left, any stream or river access points have been blocked off, or the road surfaces have been levelled to avoid any undulations at bridges, all in the name of transport progress. Due to the DG6's age it sometimes needs tender loving care while on the road, it being quicker to fix it there, because the AA don't do large recoveries. Also it costs money and it still needs fixing when you get home if you can't do it on the spot.

The fire is controlled by the ash pan that is underneath the boiler, being raised or lowered by a link connected by a lever on a quadrant in the left cab side of the boiler, and operated by the fireman. The ash pan can be unhooked, giving access to the bottom of the grate, allowing the fireman to rake the fire. Also the grate is hinged in the centre, the front part can be unlatched, for removal of half the fire, and for getting clinker out, (sometimes at the side of the road) and while disposing of the fire. Great care is required as it is very hot, clinker holds the heat for a long time, and needs to be disposed of carefully. Most steam waggons carry a bucket of cold water on the driver's side just behind the cab. The reasons: used to cool the injector on very hot days if it will not pick up, put out fires (or the fireman if he catches light), cooling down the clinker, and keeping milk or cans of drink cool.

The traffic was heavy from the rally, crawling through Storrington onto the A22; I had a good fire, and water level, with 270 on the clock (just below the red line) ready to steam. Only to find us confronted by two solid lines of traffic, all heading north, just what we wanted, crawling until the roundabout at the A272. Well, even after closing the ash pan the safety valve kept blowing intermittently for 6 miles, my driver then managed to force his way into the outside lane, giving a whistle blast, so we could go right at the roundabout, heading east on the A272. Only to have a car trying to pass us on the inside, even with my hand signal, either the whistle blast or the closeness of the back wheels did the trick. For some unknown reason, on clearing the roundabout the car was up the outside, eventually overtaking us in the most dangerous place possible. We soon accelerated up to about 20 miles per hour, and took water on the east side of Cowfold, from a hydrant standpipe and hose. As the fireman you do the watering, with the standpipe in, turn the water on gently until it comes out clean, turn off. Connect a piece of old fire hose, placing the open end into the filling pipe, in the top left side of the water tank, gently turn the stop cock on, normally takes 10 minutes. Also fitted as standard is a water lifter, on the left side of tank, strapped to the side is a length of coiled pipe with strainer on the end, which you place in the clean water. On the left side of the boiler is the steam valve, turn this on to suck water up and into the tank, which also takes about 10 minutes. The journey home was good steaming, like the whole weekend, no mechanical troubles. Arriving back at the barn, and putting the waggon away, first make tea, while the boiler is filled and blown down. I open the ash pan, and give the fire a good rake from underneath, if my firing has been well judged very little should be left on the grate. Tea is drunk while the fire dies and the grate cools enough so the front half of the grate can be opened. The remains of the fire, ash and clinker can be raked out into the ash pan, and the hot residue extinguished with water, then being disposed of safely. Ash pan then fully closed, and the chimney damper closed, the waggon is now reversed into the barn, the chock placed between the rear wheels. Steam pressure check; if everything has gone to plan it should be less than 100 lbs and falling; now we can go home and have our dinner.

The weekend's total steaming was over 60 miles, trouble free, and enjoyable. Now all that's needed is a bath, a good night's sleep in my bed, and to wake up as fresh as a daisy on Monday morning.

Bye for now,
Norm.



SUE'S SPOT

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the newsletter, this has turned into the Autumn/Winter edition, coming out around Halloween time. The delay is because by May I'd only got two articles, so I had a hissy fit and stamped my foot (it's a bit sore now) until receiving sufficient for a decent sized missive for you. Hope you enjoy it all, and many thanks to our contributors, as without them, you'd still be waiting.

So having done odd notes during the year, my own self-imposed deadline has, as usual, started pushing due to the unforeseen events in life interrupting the best laid plans of mice, men and newsletter editors. So I'm doing most of this bit on his laptop, in the car, as we head for the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition at Leamington Spa. Every so often I have to look up so I can offer such usual wifely advice, e.g. "Slow down!" and "Didn't you see that was going to happen?" (Obviously not). I always say I'd rather have a row and stay alive than keep quiet and be dead in a mangled heap of metal. It's not Himself that drives badly; it's just every other ***** on the road that can be the problem.

So time to shut up and get on with it.

Firstly to my last newsletter (Christmas!!! Can you remember it?); Roger's diagram did not all come out due to the colour scheme, so a revised copy of this was put on the Club noticeboard and I'm sure he'll reproduce it for anyone who would like it. But nobody wanted to enter the caption competition in the newsletter; apathy rules, okay. Won't do that one again and the response certainly didn't inspire me to rush the next newsletter. So I had a sulk, and then drunk the bottle of wine which was meant to be the prize, and felt a whole lot better. We had a successful run last Christmas on Boxing Day, and the same is scheduled for this year.

January saw our joint coach trip with Tonbridge to the London Model Engineer Exhibition at the Ally Pally; hopefully we are doing the same again for 2007, but we're waiting to hear further from Tonbridge. Please register your interest with Martin (might be a list on the noticeboard soon to add your name to) if you'd like to come along so we can keep you posted. Three dozen of us enjoyed the annual M.M.E.S. Sunday Lunch at the Grangemoor Hotel at the end of January (are we too predictable doing the same again in 2007? Not if we enjoy ourselves!). Those that wish to partake for 2007, please complete your menu choices on the loose menu sheet enclosed with this newsletter and return it with the money to Pat Riddles (or me) by Friday Club Night December 1st please. You may bring a guest if you wish; this does not have to be a club member.

Quiz Night in February was ran by me in the absence of any other volunteers. It was won by Wallace and Gromit (Mike and Roger) and Tom (yes I know he's my step but he didn't see the quiz beforehand, honest) and his girlfriend. I believe it's the first year Paul Clark's team hasn't won, Paul's table usually wipes the floor with us all (bit of a strange analogy, that one). Still, there's always next year! Wallace and Gromit will be running the show this time, and I am assured they will make the questions easier than last time they did them. Do all come along, it's a team show so nobody gets put on the spot. What's more is that it's jolly good fun (and hard work for those setting the questions, not to mention time-consuming), there are prizes for the winners, and we all learn something new, so please come!

We had a work day (amongst many) on Saturday February 25th, because we needed to replace a beam, and replace guttering, for which Pat did one of her famous Chilli lunches. We really needed twelve people to lift the beam, instead there were only six and even Pat and I got involved. A very disappointing turnout for that one, but the work got done nevertheless. Almost forty people turned up for the AGM, we pleaded for more station volunteers. Next AGM, I may barricade the doors so nobody gets out before they've volunteered for one stint. It's not a lot to ask, being a club member is a bit like life, better for everyone if there is give as well as take (better shut up, getting too deep).

No people to do things = no club in the end. It's not that bad, we have lots of good people, but the more the merrier to do a bit makes it all so much easier and better.

We splashed out on a new cooker for the clubhouse; the last one had been in place six years and was second or even third-hand when we got it, and had really had its day. So bearing in mind you chaps all enjoy a bit of crumpet (the toasted kind I mean, but let's not go there as they say) a whizzy new cooker is now in place. Whilst on the domestics, we also had a professional clean of the carpet tiles in the Clubhouse, still looking good ten years after being legally lifted from NatWest, one of my old branches, being closed at the time and now a trendy wine bar (true!).

Our charity run this year was for the Heart of Kent Hospice – Pat Riddles and I (along with Adrian's sister) did the annual eight mile Bluebell Walk on 1st May (I'm still recovering) and we raised £300 from public running at the end of May for the cause.

We had great pleasure in entertaining our oldest member and wife at the end of May, Reg and Louie Holdstock, as you may recall from last newsletter, they had celebrated 70 years of marriage (71 now!). It was quiet a trek for them coming up from Hastings for the day, we laid on a Roast Beef lunch for them and Reg took a ride just like old times. It was lovely to see them and thanks to Geoff and Pat for the chauffeuring. Reg is one of our vice-presidents. We hope to see them again before too long.

Sadly we lost a vice-president this year, in June, George Barlow B.E.M, who was also president of Romney Marsh M.E.S. He was nothing less than an icon having spent a lifetime with steam, fantastic memory, great character, known by so many. He reached his 90th year, and proudly sent us last Christmas a photograph of a painting of himself that friends had commissioned for him. This was of him standing with the Green Goddess, the locomotive he drove for 31 years on the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. We also lost very suddenly and unexpectedly, another member, Jack Williams. Often at the Club to run for the public and quietly do his bit, Jack was recognisable by his trademark pipe which he enjoyed so much and was apparent in many pictures. The widow of Frank Deeprise also died earlier in the year, and although she was not a member, I mention this because the family have now sold Frank's SNCF locomotive to the society. This means the Club now has three locomotives to help with the public running. Condolences to the families of all those who have passed on this year.

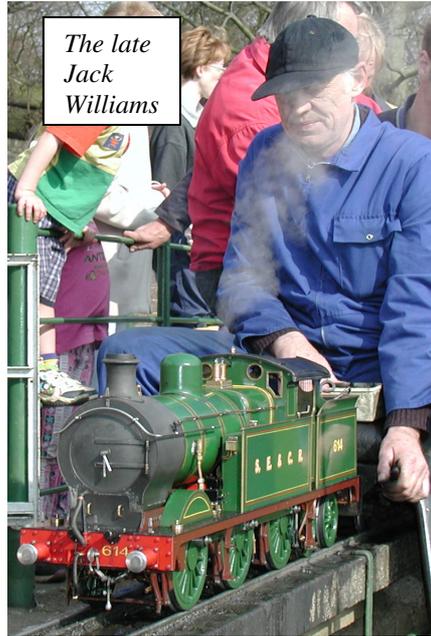
After much debating what to do with the donation from Adrian's family, it has been decided that the workshop at the park will be totally revamped and made more user-friendly, and be renamed "Adrian's Workshop". He'd like that.

We had another successful Family and Friends Day in July. Great visits to other clubs; Sutton in July, North London and Canvey clubs in August, and Beech Hurst in September. Thanks to all for their hospitality.

The Society is also proceeding with trying to obtain our own toilet for the Club premises. The Environment Agency has agreed so far, plans have been drawn up and planning permission is being sought. This will cost loads of money, which we don't have enough of, so all monetary donations will be gratefully received, we will not flush them away. At your convenience of course. So remember that when we're asking for a small donation towards club nights it's not greed, it's need - the need to go!

Back to June (who said everything had to be in chronological order?). Two dozen of us enjoyed the seventh Sue's Holidays Including Trains (called by most a S.H.I.T. week). Lovely weather, nice caravans to stay in, a good nearby inn, Yorkshire hospitality and a great week. In 2007 I'm taking a year off for good behaviour (oh alright, just taking a year off from all the organisation) but for all those who enjoy a week playing trains there is always the Brean Sands Week in Somerset in September, and we hope to join in there instead, having left them in peace for quite some years.

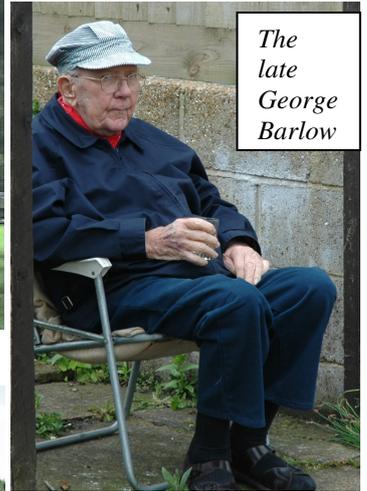
SUE'S SPOT - PICTURES



The late Jack Williams



Witch one am I ?!



The late George Barlow



Defenceless



Family and friends riding and driving on a glorious sunny day



Louie & Reg Holdstock



Santa Tom steams ahead!

Well, the photo competition was won this year by Himself, not nepotism, all entries anonymous, the topic and pictures were of Trains, Boats and Planes, obviously we're rather locomotive orientated as these pictures were the winners. A special mention for Harry, our latest junior member, whose entries were impressive, and made the final. Next year Martin and I won't enter at all, I'm feeling guilty, even though it's all as fair as it can be and I never voted for the winning picture!

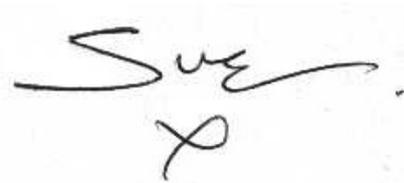
August and the school holidays saw some of the little dears with nothing better to do than kick the station fence in and damage the roof, smash the outside lights etc. All now repaired, more sterling work by the Wednesday Gang. They do a lot, our old codgers, but I don't get to hear about it all because they're all so modest. But – like a repeating record – I must say thanks, on behalf of everyone, to ALL who do their bit for the Society.

Winter works are coming up; the flipchart in the clubhouse will have the latest list of things to be done composed when the public running for the season has finished. Got to keep you boys out of mischief in the winter, can't have you roaming the streets with nothing to do now, can we? Although winter is a good time for you to knuckle down in the workshop and finish that loco at last. May the cold dark months fly past and a glorious summer beckon.

Well, nearly there now MIND THAT CAR!!!! Time for me to start wrapping up. Any news I've missed, well, just gossip amongst yourselves to pass it on. Next newsletter – articles depending, says she with a glare at you all, is scheduled for Spring 2007. You can start writing when? Let me see....NOW!

Sorry Martin and I will not be at the Park for November Club Night as we are off cruising the Med for a couple of weeks. We'll be sipping our G & T in sunny Malaga that evening, but we'll think of you all..... Just one thing; can you all look after my mother for me while we're away?

Have a great Christmas (don't forget my present), and see you at the Park soon. Look after yourselves. Wishing you good health and happiness always.



PS I just had to finish with this little ode (received via the internet of course) to show that the spelling checker with most computer software can be more of a nuisance than a help. It's also my way of apologising for anything wrong, as no matter how many times I try to edit this I'm always finding something to change, and still manage to miss something!

Eye halve a spelling checker
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marks four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
and weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My checker tolled me sew.