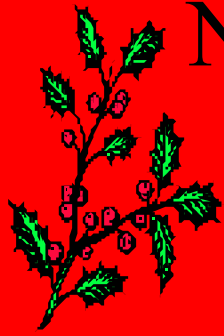


MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2009



M.M.E.S. MEMBERS & VISITING CLUBS
CELEBRATING 80 YEARS 1929-2009



MMES Sunday Lunch Menu

on Sunday 21st February 2010 at the Grangemoor Hotel, Maidstone, £18-50 pp.

Cream of Fresh Vegetable Soup

or

Prawn & Cucumber Salad in Marie Rose Sauce
served with Brown Bread & Butter

or

Fanned Honeydew Melon with Kiwi Fruit served
with Strawberry Coulis

or

Deep Fried Mushrooms
with Garlic Dip

Roast Sirloin of Beef with
Yorkshire Pudding

or

Roast Leg of Lamb in Red Wine & Mint Sauce

or

Roast Breast of Chicken with Sage & Onion Stuffing

**The above main courses are served with
Roast Potatoes & Vegetables**

or

Fried Fillet of Plaice Served with French
Fries & Salad Garnish

or

Mixed Vegetable, Herb & Mozzarella Lasagne
served with Salad

Home Made Apple & Cinnamon Pie with Cream

or

Woodland Fruits & Vanilla Ice Shortbread
Shortbread Base on a Peach Coulis, covered with Woodland
Fruits in a Blackcurrent Liqueur topped with Luxury Vanilla Pod
Ice Cream & Rolled Wafer

or

Drambuie & Chocolate Profiteroles
Choux Pastry Buns filled with Drambuie Cream & Coated with
Chocolate Sauce, with Whipped Cream

or

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee / Tea & Mints

***THIS IS YOUR COPY - PLEASE COMPLETE AND SEND THE LOOSE COPY WITH YOUR MONEY AND
MENU CHOICES AS DETAILED ON THAT SHEET.***

MERTWITT'S TWITTERINGS

Being in a club and discussing current problems is a good way of avoiding expensive or time wasting mistakes when making bits for our locos. This is more true now with the current price of materials. When you study the perfection of some exhibits at shows, what you don't see as all the effort and the scrappage that is created to achieve that perfection. Some while ago I read an article in the M.E. Written by a well known lady modeller who gave an insight into how drastic one must be with components that are not quite right and must be rejected.

We all have a certain level of work of which we are capable, and for me it is a hobby to be enjoyed, and if the end product is not quite perfect, does it *really* matter? Some years ago I was studying a beautifully finished model at an exhibition (as it happened, by the same lady modeller) when a steward noticed my interest.

“Nice model?” he remarked.

“Yes, very nice.”

“You see the lock on the toolbox? It works!”

End of conversation.

I would probably have been satisfied with the toolbox without the (expletive) padlock. Many years ago, a former late President, who was always ready to praise any effort, reckoned that if the member had made it themselves, then that was good enough.

Getting back to the problems I've had, this involves the suitability of the material for the bit you are making. For instance, what looks like brass may not be brass, and some bronze may not be suitable for silver-soldering. In an attempt to save a few quid, I made both of these mistakes recently. I spent the best part of a day fabricating an exhaust “Y” piece from solid brass, or so I thought, only to find that pipe stubs wouldn't silver-solder to the ends. I have a special vocabulary reserved for these situations, and it was promptly given an airing. So next time try a test silver-solder before an abortive days work.

Shortly after this experience I had a boiler bush to make for a dome about 2” diameter. A nice piece of bronze was at hand with a large hole already through the middle, but remembering the recent problems, a trial heat up seemed a good idea. On applying the torch, within a few seconds lead beads appeared on the test piece (xxxx). This material, I'm now thinking, could be bearing bronze, which my tables tell me has a lead component life of up to 10%, so unsuitable for boiler bushes. Another lump of bronze was selected but without a central hole running through. This was obviously cast material because of the fettling marks. After a few cuts, the sound of something lurking within the metal could be heard – donk donk donk. Oh (xxxx), never mind, turn it end for end and re-chuck. Donk donk donk, a (xxxx) flaw through the whole lump. Time to bite the bullet and ring our supplier in Warwickshire. The requested castings arrived with the next morning's post, after the frustration what a pleasure it was to machine some nice gunmetal.

What a wonderful instrument the human eye is.

I had made the chimney for my Wainwright “C” class, which is quite tall. The base had been fly-cut in the lathe and sat on the smokebox perfectly, but how to accurately position the hole for the liner? I clamped verticals up on each side of the chassis and checked that the smokebox was central. I then measured across the smokebox and marked the centre. Time to transfer the smokebox to the vertical mill and bore the hole. I had a length of stainless steel vacuum cleaner tube exactly 1½” dia. for the chimney liner and this was used as a gauge for boring the hole. I pushed on the chimney, which had already been bored to fit the liner. (Xxxx) hell, it's on the pist, how did that happen? It obviously wasn't vertical and looked a mile out.

I laid an accurate spirit level across the chassis and centralised the bubble, then on top of the chimney to determine the adjustment needed. Because a tall chimney accentuates any discrepancy, a small distance is magnified. The smallest enlargement of the hole in the smokebox was all that was required to make it look right, thanks to the human eye. To prevent the chimney moving to the pit position again, I glued it on with Alraldite and riveted it the following day.

Another recent problem was assembling a turret connection for the boiler with several branches. I've read that holding the branches in position with wire for the silver-soldering operations one method, well, it don't work for me as the bits move. Clamping in position doesn't work either because the metal can distort when very hot. Another way is to machine the branch with a stub on the end, but you can't do that if the branch is profiled to match the header. My solution is to hold the branches on with short lengths of thin wall brass tube, in my case 1/8" outside dia.. The header and branches are drilled for the internal tube to be a tight push fit, and after silver-soldering can be easily removed by drilling through. Using this method, multiple branches can be attached in one operation.

J.B.

NEW MEMBERS

Six New Members.

We welcome the following into the Society:

Andrew Bridges, from Snodland, a marine engineer, interested in model trains and model boats,
and his sons

Luke Bridges, also from Snodland, a student, interested in model trains, boats and toy steam engines,
and

Simon Bridges, also from Snodland, a student, interests include OO gauge railways.

Mrs Kirsten Cook, from Beckenham, in Finanace, Trading and HR, Mum to a toddler (and wife of member Richard Cook), interested in 5" gauge live steam and battery loco driving;

Richard Lemon, from Bearsted, a structural engineer, interested in restoration and use of veteran/vintage motorcycles and vintage car;

Brian Mortis-Bigg, from Maidstone, retired, learning to rebuild a 3½" Virginia and putting together a driving trolley.

We look forward to seeing you all.

TWO SIMPLE MISTAKES by Ron Attfield

Memory is a truly remarkable sense. Apart from the present our whole life is a memory and you can recall events of many years ago, particularly so if at that time serious material damage happened or could have occurred, and even more so if life had been endangered or lost.

This article recounts one such event, and it is as clear to me now as it was then.

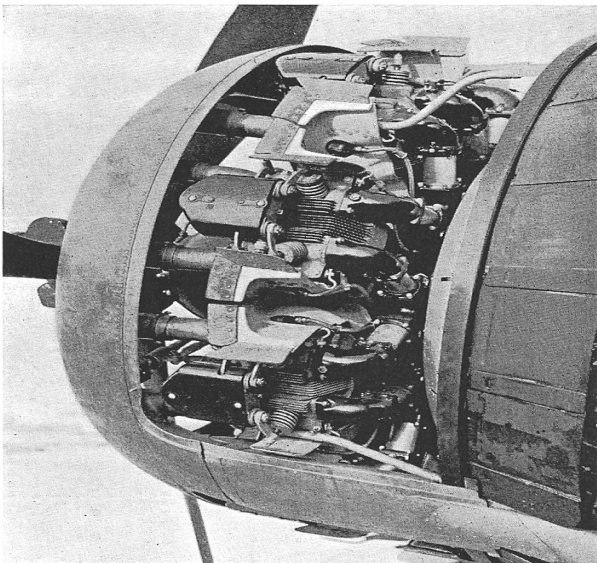
The year was 1944, I was 19 years of age. Although in the Navy I had been trained by the RAF to understand, service, and maintain British aircraft engines. During training, I had within a group of four dismantled 14 cylinder Bristol Hercules radial and 12 cylinder "V" in line Rolls Royce Merlin engines. It was a very concentrated and interesting course, at the end of which I was drafted to RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.

After a month or so I was sent to a satellite airfield at Charlton Hawthorne, where 20 or 30 well used Spitfire and Seafire aircraft were held as replacements for Yeovilton as aircraft were lost. On the far side of the airfield was a blister hangar containing an aircraft awaiting an engine change.

One morning I had to report to the Air Engineering Officer. He said: "Attfield, in the hangar is an aircraft requiring the new engine in the packing case in the rear of the hangar. You are in charge of the job and you may select an air mechanic to help you – report back to me when the aircraft is ready for flight test." I selected George Blake, an aircraft mechanic, as my assistant. George, a Welshman, was tall, strong, and had a lovely sense of humour. We walked to the hangar to survey the job.

The aircraft, a Miles Martinet, was a development of the Miles Master. The Master was powered by a 12 cylinder liquid cooled "V" in line supercharged Kestrel Engine. This was in effect a smaller version of the well known Merlin. The Martinet was powered by a radial engine. Both aircraft were in the main of wooden construction and had been designed as two seater high speed fighter trainers, although some were modified as target towing aircraft.

The engine was a Bristol Mercury 9 cylinder supercharged poppet valved radial engine developing about 900 horsepower. It weighed half a tonne and was 1.3 metres in diameter. The valve gear had a clever push rod assembly which compensated for variation of tappet clearance caused by expansion of the cylinders as temperatures increased. The carburettor was an updraught Claudel-Hobson unit. Usefully, the manufacturer had fitted a removable lifting eye on the top of the engine at the point of balance.



It soon became apparent we required installation information. All aircraft were covered by an Air Ministry publication which would have installation details. I requested a copy and one was sent over from Yeovilton. This I signed for, and having collected our tool kits we started work.

All controls and pipes were disconnected, we called up a crane for the removal of the propeller and having pulled out the bearer bolts the engine was removed and placed on a stand. All auxiliary units were transferred to the new engine and quite quickly the installation was completed. We doubled checked all tabs on the locking washers were bent up and split pins bent over. The aircraft was pushed out of the hangar, fuel tanks filled with 100 octane fuel and oil levels checked – I was happy with the installation.

One aspect of this particular aircraft was it had no fuel gravity feed. The tanks were in the wings. To prime the system a hand operated “wobble pump” was situated in the cockpit. When operated this fed fuel through filters to the carburettor. It was important that pressure was not to exceed 2½lbs per square inch. We were to find out the consequences of excess pumping.

I climbed up on the wing and into the cockpit. Fuel cocks on – pump up to 2½lbs – propeller in fine pitch – mixture lever in rich – both magneto switches on. I pressed the starter button. The engine turned, fired and then back fired. I tried again with the same result. I turned the magnetos to off and jumped down out of the cockpit. George talked over the likely cause of the problem and asked if he could have a try in the cockpit. He settled into the seat and turned on the switches – pushed the starter button and was working the wobble pump. As before, the propeller turned, the engine gave a massive back fire and burst into flame. George was still pumping and with his head down in the cockpit did not see the flames. I yelled out to him to get out. He didn't hear me. When he did look up his face was full of fear. I called “jump you silly sod!” - he did through the flames. His only injury was singed hair. His over use of the wobble pump had blown the fuel filter seals and petrol was cascading down.

I looked for a fire extinguisher – there wasn't one. We were in real trouble. Luck was with us as the fire tender at Flying Control had seen the flames and black smoke. They quickly arrived and covered the aircraft in foam. The Air Engineering Officer arrived and threatened me with every charge he could think of and told me to clean the aircraft down and inspect the damage. We were surprised to find very little – mainly scorched paintwork. We were both worried; but also sorry for ourselves. We spent the evening drowning our sorrows in Scrumpy cider.

Next day we read through the manual. There was no mechanical fault and more than enough fuel. It had to be the ignition system. Apart from two main magnetos, a chain driven starter magneto fed sparks to one of the main distributors. When the engine started this automatically cut out. In the feed cable was a small unit called a “spark gap”. This was simply an insulated body with a screw at either end separated by a gap of about 3/8”. When we looked at it we found it was full of dirt and corroded. It was cleaned and reassembled.

We found a fire extinguisher and I sat in the cockpit going through the starting procedure. This time all was well and the smoke caused by the inhibitor oil being burnt off was no cause for alarm. Along came the Air Engineering Officer saying he himself wanted to run the engine up. When he was satisfied he pulled the slow running cut out to stop the engine – the cable came away in his hand – we had forgotten to connect it. He jumped down from the cockpit, called me a “Bloody Idiot!” and walked away. We connected the cable and rechecked everything we could think of – we were now completely happy with the installation.

A day or so later a test pilot from Yeovilton came over and asked if I was the person in charge. My answer was yes, to which he answered, “well, if I'm going to risk my life flying this machine, you can also.” He rigged me out with a parachute and after my signing the Form 700 we spent twenty or thirty minutes flying around Somerset. All was well.

In those days inexperience was no excuse for mistakes; and if you were in charge of a job you were indeed responsible. My first mistake was not having a fire extinguisher on site. The second was not having impressed on George not to exceed the pressure using the wobble pump. It is often said that you learn from your mistakes. I think this is true, but if luck isn't with you, the learning may be very costly.

I was lucky: the fire tender crew were wide awake and came to our rescue.



Roger Vane sent me this article to share with you from the magazine Steam Railway:

Merthyr madness: Welsh line forced to use Siberian coal

A South Wales steam locomotive is burning coal shipped 3,000 miles from Siberia rather than from its local mine just three miles away, because of red tape over how it can be transported.

The Brecon Mountain Railway says it would prefer to use dry steam coal extracted from the Ffos-y-Fran opencast mine in Merthyr Tydfil, but planning rules dictate that it must be sent by rail (a little difficult

as the line was closed in 1962).

Jayne Hills of the BMR is astounded that she has to import 'black stuff' in container ships across the North Sea to Hull, then by road to Merthyr.

"It seems ludicrous when we could get good coal on our doorstep," she said. "I dread to think what the carbon footprint must be like of moving that coal but we have no choice."

FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT

Those e-mail "Funnies". This one is thanks to Norman King.

THE FLYING SCOTSMAN

At last Gordon Brown decided to throw the towel in and go.

His cabinet colleagues decided it would be a worthy gesture to name a railway locomotive after him.

So a senior 'Sir Humphrey' went from Whitehall to the National Railway Museum at York, to investigate the possibilities.

"We have a number of locomotives at the NRM without names," a specially-sought NRM consultant told the top civil servant. "Mostly freight locomotives though."

"Oh dear, that's not very fitting for a prime minister," said Sir Humphrey. He stood and surveyed all the locomotives around him. "How about that big green one, over there?" he said, pointing to number 4472.

"That's already got a name" said the consultant. "It's called 'Flying Scotsman'."

"Oh. Couldn't it be renamed?" asked Sir Humphrey. "This is a national museum after all, funded by the taxpayer."

"I suppose it might be considered," said the NRM consultant. "After all the LNER renamed a number of their locomotives after directors of the company, and even renamed one of them Dwight D Eisenhower."

"That's excellent", said Sir Humphrey, "So that's settled then let's look at renaming 4472. But how much will it cost? We can't spend too much, given the expenses scandal!"

"Well," said the consultant, "We could always just paint out the 'F.'"

TOOLS ONE HAS LEARNED TO USE

(Thanks to Mike Wallace for sending on this go-round to me)

DRILL PRESS:

A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.

WIRE WHEEL:

Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned callouses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, "Oh, #@!*!"

SKILL SAW:

A portable cutting tool used to make studs too short.

PLIERS:

Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

BELT SANDER:

An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.

HACKSAW:

One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

VICE-GRIPS:

Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH:

Used almost entirely for lighting various flammable objects on fire in your workshop. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race

TABLE SAW:

A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:

Used for lowering a car to the ground after you have installed your new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

BANDSAW:

A large stationary power saw primarily used by most shops to cut good aluminium sheet into smaller pieces that more easily fit into the trash can after you cut on the inside of the line instead of the outside edge.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST:

A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER:

Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids or for opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; but can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads.

STRAIGHT SCREWDRIVER:

A tool for opening paint cans. Sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws and butchering your palms.

CROWBAR:

A tool used to crumple the metal surrounding that clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 20p part.

HOSE CUTTER:

A tool used to make hoses too short.

HAMMER:

Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent the object we are trying to hit.

UTILITY KNIFE:

Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on contents such as seats, vinyl records, liquids in plastic bottles, collector magazines, refund checks, and rubber or plastic parts. Especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use.

SON OF A B*@!H TOOL:

Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling "Son of a b---h" at the top of your lungs just as the neighbour's son walks up to sell you some Boy Scout popcorn.

It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need.

And Now For Something Completely Different by Paul Rolleston

Different that is, to the usual Never Far Away format in that there are none of the usual elements such as music, drink, humour, long ago and almost forgotten personal memories, or even the profundity of emotion. So what does that leave? Good question. A History lesson? This is probably the best way to categorise an account of a recent interesting and informative experience and how it gave me some insight into the life and times of a respected Engineer; Thomas Russell Crampton.

I am well known in my family for my fondness of trips to the seaside and especially for having a fish and chip lunch whilst there. As half term was upon us (my wife Pat, works in a school) we decided to have a seaside day trip. We tend to look for somewhere where there is an additional attraction other than the sea; Dymchurch has the RHDR, Dungeness a Lighthouse, Hastings the Sealife centre, Dover a Castle, you get the picture? So quite naturally when Pat suggested Broadstairs I had to ask what's there? Well, apparently Charles Dickens lived there in Bleak House, but better still there is a museum, I find them irresistible. 'It's called the Crampton Tower Museum' she said. Hmmm! Increased interest 'train of thought' thinking that this may relate to Thomas Crampton who is very well known for his locomotives designs, but perhaps not so well known for his other engineering achievements, well, anyway, I didn't know, but in due course I was to be educated in this matter. It seems that he was another of the same ilk as Isambard Kingdom Brunel and had capabilities that covered a broad range of engineering disciplines.

Anyway, in the Grand Scheme of things I aspire to build other locos when Speedy is finished and amongst the short listed candidates is a Crampton, so that clinched it for me and we set off for Broadstairs.

We arrived mid morning and as is our usual practice, owing to our deep rooted sense of frugality, not to be interpreted as 'tight as a ducks chuff' had our morning coffee from a flask with a home-made sticky bun picnic style in the car park (no problem finding parking in October) and then we went exploring. We didn't come across anything to write home about but it was a pleasant walk along the seafront in the sunshine and gentle sea breeze, and back again to the harbour arm Café for a lunch that sadly fell a long way short of my Great Expectations. Whilst washing this gastronomic disaster down with tea that had a distinctly fishy taste we perused a town guide looking for the museum. It wasn't shown. Never mind, we asked someone and got directions; 'top of the high street opposite the train station' (how appropriate). It was a long uphill walk but with a couple of interesting shop windows to look into on the way. I reckon it was a fifteen minute walk upwards and onwards, upwards and onwards, and at my age, and when we got there it was bloody shut. Bother! Despite what I said at the beginning here is a variation on the theme of emotion; frustration bordering on anger. Lunch was grim and the main attraction was closed. So, how cheesed off was Paul? Very.

At this juncture I was thinking of two things at the same time, yes I was a man doing what women say men can't do:- Multitasking. Firstly, I was thinking if something is going to go wrong Crap Magnet Rolleston will be the hapless victim, it is a way of life whether or not I'm in a pessimistic mood and secondly, I was quietly contemplating taking it all out on the neighbours cat when I got home, it's always doing things in amongst my Peonies so it deserves a good kicking.

I snapped out of it as a door opened and the talking head that popped out said 'we are closed but will be open at 2 o'clock.' Charlie the cat had a lucky escape. Having noticed that the museum had its' own car park we decided that whilst waiting for 2 o'clock we would stroll back to the car, have a cup of tea and drive back to the museum. Nice little bit of time management, and I was feeling a little more at peace with the world.

At the ticket office we were offered the services of a guide, which we accepted (there was no extra charge so something for nothing is not to be sneezed at, is it).

The museum consists of four buildings and the guided tour started in a giant igloo shaped building. Here we were given a condensed résumé of Crampton's impressive achievements which included the locomotives, Broadstairs waterworks, a telegraph cable under the English channel, a Gas works, an iron bridge and more. I don't think it would be possible in a newsletter format to do justice to all of his achievements. Such things are most likely better documented elsewhere (books). So, back to the museum.

The igloo was in fact an above ground reservoir of about 80,000 gallons capacity for the local water company. The history of water in Broadstairs is a subject in itself that I won't go into in any great detail, perhaps suffice to say that in several respects it was inadequate and Crampton set about improving matters for the benefit of consumers and probably also as a lucrative business venture. It became obvious why this, at that time facility, now tourist attraction, is on the top of a hill; pump the water up and let gravity distribute it back down again. In more recent years the long time redundant reservoir was put to good use by the local Scouts and Guides as an H.Q. and hall for their indoor activities. The acoustics' inside the building would most certainly have produced a deafening racket during Scouts and Guides meetings which from my own experiences are never ever quiet, it is impossible to subdue youthful exuberance which is all too frequently expressed through loud voices. Ah! Love the little Angels.

Next stop was the tower. Here again our guide provided a lot of information. He was good, he listened as well as he spoke. I explained my interest in model steam locos and at the same time seized the opportunity to offer an open invitation to museum staff to visit our club. I feel a little embarrassed to admit that I can't remember his name. Having done his bit he left us to tour the tower at our leisure. Once again it was onwards and upwards, with many interesting exhibits that were very well displayed in galleries on each floor, including a sectioned 5" gauge copper loco boiler.

Right, done that, back down the stairs across the yard and into the model railway exhibition. This Barn was crammed full with so much that it is impossible to fully describe. There was a good sized OO gauge layout and a combination layout of Hornby-Dublo three rail, O gauge clockwork and early O gauge electric trains. Also on display was an overhead layout and many tin-plate toys, some Meccano and Dinky toys.

Hey! guess what else they've got, yup, a gift shop. But they are sensible gifts that you would buy for yourself like models, dinky toys, OO gauge rolling stock and things of that ilk.

Finally, the last building was an information gallery featuring photographs and descriptions of local points of interest and historic events.

If you are in Broadstairs it is well worth a visit, and if you are not impressed I'll give you your money back.

So, there you are. Has anybody else had a similar newsletter worthy museum experience? Write an article, I'll look forward to reading it.

I'll give in to temptation and close with 'A Museum is Never Far Away' - they just need seeking out.

CLUB NEWS

MAIDSTONE'S HAPPY YEAR

THE year just ended included what must have been the most consistently fine summer season since the locomotive and race car tracks in Mote Park were built by Maidstone MES. This resulted not only in enhanced pleasure to members but an improved financial position as well.

No heavy expenditure was incurred on the maintenance of either track, though an improvement in the amenities has been effected by extending the concrete base near the steaming bay of the railway track. Tracks have been in regular use at alternate week-ends from April to October inclusive.

More visitors were welcomed from other clubs than in any previous year. The society itself has visited the Torry Hill Railway, by the kind invitation of our vice-president, Mr D. Leigh Pemberton, and the Beech Hurst track at Haywards Heath, as guests of the Sussex Miniature Locomotive Society.

Acting secretary: P. G. Wallis, 34 Spot Lane, Bearsted, near Maidstone.

MODEL ENGINEER 14 JANUARY 1960

50 years on

Given time (a hundred years should do it...!) I would like to write a more complete history of the club from the records we do have.

If anyone has anything from the good old days, I would be grateful to borrow it to copy for the official club records. Or has anyone any memories to put on paper for us?

I have repeated in this newsletter the article that our dear old president, Jack Payne (who died in 1997) typed for us for the newsletter printed winter 1984.

You'll just have to remind me from time to time – if you're interested in knowing the Club History - to have a go at the last 25 years at least, and to find out more details of the last 60 years!

THE "PETER ROOTS" AWARD?

It has been suggested that perhaps we should have a more lasting memorial to our late Hon. Treasurer, in the form of a cup or a trophy in his name. This could be awarded annually, perhaps to the member who it was felt, had deserved recognition for something done that year in the name of society. This could be anything as simple as just regularly being station staff to having completed a really nice model of a locomotive. The committee could make the final judgement from suggestions/nominations put forward along with the usual nominations submitted by the end of January with the cup/trophy to be presented each AGM. None of the committee would be eligible as they would be making the decision at the last committee meeting before the AGM.

Or something like that? What do you think? Please let the committee know.

THE HISTORY OF MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

The Society all started about 1929. Two schoolboys were interested in the old 'tin plate' railways and the building of models using 'Meccano' sets. One of the boys asked his father if they could belong to the 'Hornby Railway', so the first step was taken and the Maidstone Branch of the Hornby Railway Company was formed.

In 1930 this boy's father was persuaded to become the chairman of this branch, which in those days was called The Model Railway & Meccano Club.

By 1935 the club was reported in the Model Engineer as having a portable track, run under the heading of Maidstone Model Railway and Engineer Club.

As the years passed, more people joined and larger engines were built. We had a 2½" & 3½" gauge portable track, some gauge one engines and also a 00-gauge layout. This was until 1939-1945, the Second World War. In 1945-1946 we started once again, about six older members were left to reform the club. We renamed the club Maidstone Model Engineering Society, by which name we have today.

From 1946-1947 we ran a new portable 3½" & 5" track, mainly with one 3½" engine, at many fetes and fairs travelling around until we had a little money by us. We also ran an exhibition at the Old Technical Institute using the 00-gauge layout for the last time (as interest in this track had waned).

1947 was the year that we had the notion to build a track in Mote Park. Two of our members came to our help and made themselves guarantors to the bank. This enabled us to start the Mote Park track. Obtaining permission from the Maidstone Council, towards the end of '47 we started building the track, comprising of 2½", 3½" & 5" gauges, 220 yards long with a turntable to a steaming bay and a 7' deep by 7' wide rainwater well.

By 1949 the track was complete.

We ran a few engines in those days, two 2½", two 3½" & one 5". The few passengers we did carry travelled FREE, amid old army huts and weeds, the latter were about one foot high. We also had to keep a sharp lookout for four legged things that roamed all over the park at that time.

April 1950 the mayor opened the track at that time, Alderman Sir Garrard Tyrwitt-Drake.

In the 50's we ran the portable track, usually on a Saturday; Friday evening find a flat piece of ground at the event to erect the track. Make sure a water supply is at hand for the loco, and, if possible, rope off each side of the track. Saturday get steam up (by hand pump) and start carrying passengers by 2 p.m. Run until late evening, blow down the loco, pack it away in its box, and dismantle the track. Put the whole bag of tricks onto a very small trailer behind an even smaller car to disappear into the night, a few shillings towards paying off our Mote Park track debts. We were also collecting a little money from our track at the park. This was at the rate of one old penny for three laps round the track.

1954. 150 yards of the track were ripped up and stolen.

Easter 1955 we were back to running trains once more.

September 6th 1955: We opened the car track.

1961 We put up the earthworks to form the embankment on the lake side of the track.

1962 We completed the first bridge, called the 'Sidney Wright Memorial Bridge'. The mayor, Councillor W.B. Hawkins, opened it and his passenger was Mrs S. Wright who was one of the Society's vice-presidents.

By now we had 'upped' the fare to sixpence, so we were starting to get together a little money in the kitty.

In 1962, July 29th to be exact, we started to build another 'bit' to the track, in other words an extension. Once again our good members acted as guarantors to the bank.

Also at this time the Park had become well kept, as most of it remains today.

So through the winter of 62-63 some building went on. To give you an idea is the following information:

November 1962

4th: Beams cast - 3

11th: Beams cast - 5

18th: Beams cast - 7. 27 more needed.

December 1962

2nd: Beams cast - 5.

9th: Beams cast – 4. Removed top curve of old railway track.

16th: Beams cast - 2. 15 more needed.

24th: Very Cold.

25th: Cold.

26th: Snow late afternoon.

27th: Snow 10-12" deep, stopped at 4-20pm.

30th: Snow - 3" fell.

1963

A hard winter. January to March saw lots of snow.

March 3rd: Walked across the ice on Mote Park Lake

April 7th: Last bends made and 120 feet of single rail laid.

May 12th: First run on the completed new track

June 2nd 1963 Officially opening of the new track. The mayor, Councillor John Evans, opened the extension.

We soon found that the track was too much for 2½" engines, and so we re-laid the track in 3½" and 5" only.

1965

May 15th: One of the many societies to visit was Chingford M.M.E.S.

Towards the end of the year we had managed to pay off the cost of the extension and were all set to railway running at its best.

1966

November: The speed of 152 m.p.h was recorded at Mote Park Car Racing Track. This was reported in the Kent Messenger on the 2nd December 1966.

1967.

An 80 m.p.h. gale dropped an elm tree across the railway track at Mote Park. Damage - 30 feet of double track, thus cutting short our 1967 running season.

1968

Easter: Found us once again in running order, thanks to the efforts of our members.

November 18th: We applied for planning permission for a new loco shed.

1969

We completed this loco shed (which is now our track workshop).

At this time we had also our first clubhouse which was donated by one of our life members and his wife who was one of the Society's vice-presidents.

We have a very strong link with New Zealand for they have a society that is running a track in Maidstone Park, New Zealand. Hence their society is named the Maidstone Model Engineering Society. Our two societies have been affiliated for some few years now and we exchange newsletters.

1970

Boxing Day: Found us running at the park through 6" of snow.

1971

April 12th: Easter Monday. We ran our 21st year at the Mote Park track, complete with a cake, made by our first lady member of the society.

Winter: we started to build a guardrail round the track. (1½ tonne of 1 ¼ x 1" mild steel flat, three quarters of a mile, ¾" pipe, 2½ tonne, all welded in place and painted)

1972

March: Completed guardrail.

November 8th: We applied for planning permission to erect a store and shelter on our site at Mote Park.

1973

July 8th: Designed by one of our members, this building was opened by Mr and Mrs Wallis.

1974

August 1st: Midnight. Skylarking youths drove a car into the track. Beams were dislodged, seatings damaged, the guardrail bent on both sides and the running rails severely twisted.

September 8th: Thanks to our members this was put to rights and we were running again on this Sunday. We had by this time rebuilt the steaming bays as they are today.

1975

We held our Silver Jubilee at the track in Mote Park; we were very lucky to have most of our older members attending.

1976

We re-laid the whole track using the new type chairs come sleepers.

1978

One of our members built our very fine station buildings; also he had previously built our coal store.

1979

To celebrate our 50th year a rail trip and dinner taken aboard the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

1980.

February 23rd: Saturday. We took part in the BBC programme ' Swap Shop '.

1981.

More track damage when a boy took his father's car over the top of our track.

1984

We have built wings to the bridge, and grassed over parts of our site. Also built a hard standing for our road engines and we have now completed the club workshop. As most of you know, we were able to celebrate the golden wedding of Mr and Mrs Wallis. One of my highlights of 1984 was to steam over the Mote Park Lake.

We have had many good club nights and the Society is going from strength to strength - mainly due to *you*, the membership. I hope I have not missed anyone out of these notes, if I have, you can always give me a kick at the park.

A.H.W. Payne (Jack) 12.11.84

ARCHIVES/NEWSLETTERS

Just a reminder that if anyone has any old black and white pictures or articles about the club, or has kept newsletters from my first news sheet in 1981 up until 1984, the Editor would appreciate taking copies for the Club Archives. Thank you. Many, many thanks to Paul Clark who enabled us to upload newsletter from 1984 so these are now on the website and up to date. All you computer users out there should know there are some pretty good articles that have been written over the years just waiting to be read, so log in to our website when you have time at www.maidstonemes.co.uk

While on the subject of newsletters:

Those of you who can tell a PC from an I-pod have asked why I don't just e-mail their newsletter to them and save postage. Well, if you want to read it online then it's always on the club website www.maidstonemes.co.uk I just like everyone to have a written copy because that way I can imagine better that you actually read it.....

GETTING SHIRTY

The official club shirts are produced for us by Albie Fox, website albiefox.net, e-mail albie@albiefox.net, telephone 01743 873123, they have our logo on file. There are not enough requests these days for me to do a bulk order, so please order as and when you want something. Or as an alternative, Marie Hawkins or Ann Playfoot will embroider the club logo on whatever item of clothing you give them, they just ask a fiver to cover their cotton and time for doing so.

SUBSCRIPTIONS *please read!*

SUBSCRIPTIONS are due on 1st January each year. A fair number of you pay at the A.G.M. This is the LATEST date you should pay by, and is definitely the LAST possible date you can pay for personal insurance so please be aware of this. No ifs and buts, the same rule for everyone. If you do not wish to renew your membership to our wonderful club that is well worth it (and some clubs charge their members a lot more for less facilities), then please be kind enough to let the Treasurer know. We hate having to chase people for their subscriptions or not being told if they wish to cease membership.

COMMITTED?

Okay, who said some of us should be....to a mental institution??!!!

For the A.G.M. in March, volunteers for posts on the committee need to be nominated by the end of January (also president, vice presidents, life and associate members. Ask the secretary if you would like to know about these). For example, as you all must be fed up with the Hon. Press Officer and would like someone else to do the newsletter, maybe YOU. You must be nominated by another member for the position, and seconded, by the 31st January. New blood on the committee is always welcome (and rarely spilt!!!). After all, we just sit around on a Sunday morning and drink tea....or is that just me....??!!! Seriously, please feel free to chat to any officer or committee member if you want more information about what is involved.

Your present committee: Officers: Chairman Graham Kimber, Vice Chairman John Hawkins, Treasurer Edgar Playfoot, Secretary Martin Parham, Hon Press Officer Me (Mrs. Sue Parham). Committee Members: Ron Attfield, Andrew Hulse, Tom Parham, Mrs. Pat Riddles, Paul Rolleston, Jack Ruler.

SUE'S SPOT



Greetings All,

Christmas seems to be rushing towards us like an express train trying for the world speed record and as usual I am losing a fighting battle to get this newsletter to you at least a month before, so that you have time to read it before the annual deluge of Christmas cards – post permitting.

Hopefully, you will all have had a good year, or at least survived the year and the recession. The Club is doing okay, alive and steaming 80 years since its first inception. May we all be as fit and steam for 80 years at least!

Life's a Beach

Firstly, I need to thank committee member Andrew Hulse for the printing of this issue of the newsletter, many thanks Andrew, much appreciated by the Club. And to thank our contributors, some voluntary, some Bullied, I mean, bullied (couldn't resist a steam loco pun, sorry) into writing an article for us.

It's been six months or so since my last missive so I'll catch you up on what's been happening and hope I don't miss anything.

Well, as usual the club premises have suffered intermittent vandalism through the year. In May the wooden station fence was destroyed and a bonfire made from it, empty and smashed alcohol bottles were littered around (that last bit happens on a regular basis). So, we had a couple of representatives from the council visit in July so we could ask them if they can help deal with the problem. Of course there isn't much you can do unless you can catch miscreants in the act (and even then what deterrent is there these days? Someone write me an article "The decline of civilisation, common sense, law and order at the beginning of the 21st Century"!). They are aware of the problem, and not just because of the regular attempted break-ins to the nearby icecream kiosk, and vandalism to the public toilets. So in due course – but don't hold your breath – there may be CCTV set up in our area. In the meantime, we have recently applied anti-vandal paint to the buildings to stop trespassers causing damage to the clubhouse roof. Legislation insists we erect warning signs by it so the little dears don't touch it. I have to say that our premises look as if nobody cares to keep them looking nice – but of course we do – it's just anything we do will be destroyed/defaced so no point in wasting the club's money. I feel, sometimes, as I stand outside the clubhouse area and cast a critical eye in the immediate vicinity – that we must live in a poor inner city slum (that still not being an excuse), not a glorious park that deserves to be enjoyed and respected by all and has a lottery grant waiting to be spent on it..... okay I'll shut up on that for now.

Onto a different track..... our track continues to be well looked after, mostly I suspect due to the work of the Wednesday Gang, and our King of the track, rather Kingsford of the track, Peter that is, thank you Pete for keeping it in as good as running condition as possible. Of course, being aluminium rail, we get to a point in the summer where it becomes slippery, especially with a drop or two of rain just as we are public running. Yes, we do sand it but this is not always best for the locos (or tenders, Martin can tell you what happened to his P2 near the end of the season through sand). Cleaning the track doesn't work for long and is a mammoth task. So, all you brainboxes out there....any ideas on solving the problem? So far we've considered for the future instead of sand maybe using a fine powder like talc.....I quite like the smell of lily of the valley myself....!!!

May saw our dining trip on the Kent and East Sussex Railway, members celebrating the club's 80th anniversary, where strangely enough I ended up on the footplate as I had on the club dinner some twenty years ago. Some of us also visited our friends Romney on their Open Day as usual. This year was also an anniversary for Romney – in their case, 40 years – they're half our age!

They have the largest membership of all the clubs in the UK I believe – someone is bound to correct me if I'm wrong about that. We had our much enjoyed trip to Canvey club, and July we went to Beech Hurst track. August was our busiest month - we had our usual run for Mencap, then of course there was our 80th anniversary and visiting clubs day where we were overwhelmed by the number of visitors that turned up. Of course, the weather was good, which probably helped! Member Ron Heathcote joined us on the Sunday to celebrate his 90th Birthday – congratulations Ron – and our very best wishes for the next decade! The following weekend was our trip to Sutton Club – via our usual pub lunch – and the weekend after that Colchester and Romney clubs visited Mote Park. In September there was the Southern Federation Autumn Rally at Oxford, where Richard Linkins did us and Romney Club proud by winning the 2009 Australia Award (and also the trophy for the furthest travelled that day). His dad Ken and youngest son John were there as well. Richard was also the guest speaker for our October club night.

We did rather struggle in finding staff to run the station some Sundays in fact once or twice it came very close to us not being able to run at all. Please, for next year, ensure you come and help out at least once. It always seems to be the same few people who end up having to fill in – for all of us. With winter upon us, it's winter works time, tasks are on the flip chart in the clubhouse, so please feel free to add anything and also cross out what has been done. Thanks folks!

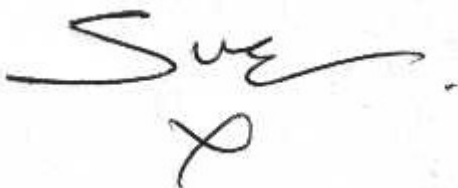
For the year coming up, 2010, well, it's 60 years since the track was completed in Mote Park and rides first given to the public. The mayor opened the track on the 15th April, so, we have arranged for the mayor (not the same one, the current one!) to come and cut a ribbon over the track on Sunday 18th April. We will have a buffet beforehand and this celebration is for Maidstone Club. We will try and spruce up everything before this, and hope it will last untouched as long as possible. In August we will have a visiting clubs day again so that they too can enjoy the track and our 60 years at Mote Park.

Before that (I don't feel like being too chronologically ordered today!) we have the annual and very enjoyable club Sunday lunch at the Grangemoor Hotel – our 8th annual lunch on Sunday 21st February. Members and their families/significant others, are welcome. And we have the AGM in March as usual on the first Friday.

The next newsletter is due April/May so start those articles for it as soon as you like!

Well, that's all folks! I'm now off to the Queen Vic (not the pub in Walford in TV's Eastenders but the cruise ship) - see you soon!

Stay safe,
Keep healthy,
Take care of yourself and your loved ones,
Happy Christmas
And
Best Wishes for 2010

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



M.M.E.S. OPEN DAY 8/8/09 & RON'S 90TH BIRTHDAY 9(10)/8/09



M.M.E.S. DIARY DATES 2009 - 2010

Friday December 4:	Bring & Buy & Fish & Chips & Cheesecake £6pp
Saturday December 26:	Boxing Day Run
2010	
Friday January 1:	The M.M.E.S. Movie – The Good Old Days – 1950s on
Friday February 5:	Members DVDs, Videos, Questions
Sunday February 21:	The Club 8 th Annual Sunday Lunch at the Grangemoor Hotel Maidstone
Friday March 5:	A.G.M
Sunday March 28:	Public Running Season commences
Friday April 2:	Team Quiz Night
SUNDAY APRIL 18:	60 YEARS OF PUBLIC RUNNING CELEBRATION WITH A RE-ENACTMENT OF THE OPENING OF THE TRACK BY THE MAYOR OF MAIDSTONE AT 2-15pm (BUFFET FROM 1pm)
Wednesday April 21:	Members Playtime Run
Friday May 7:	Guest Speaker
Wednesday May 20:	Members Playtime Run
Friday June 4:	Evening Run and Fish'n'chips'n'cheesecake £6pp (£1 if not eating)
Wednesday June 16:	Members Playtime Run
Friday July 2:	Evening Run and Barbecue (Bring your own food)
Wednesday July 21:	Members Playtime Run
Friday August 6:	Preparation Evening for:
Saturday August 7:	Visiting Clubs Day to celebrate 60 years of the track in Mote Park

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) for Friday evening meetings where no sum is stated, 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:

11-13 December: Model Engineer Exhibition at Sandown Park Racecourse
2010: January 20-22: Model Engineering Exhibition, Alexandra Palace, London
February 12-14: Modelworld at Brighton
March 13: Southern Federation A.G.M.
May 15: Southern Federation Spring Rally at Leeds
July 3-4: IMLEC at Bournemouth