

April 2013

Steaming Ahead



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Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society

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Directors

David Smith
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Events This Month

MONDAY	01-Apr	EASTER MONDAY	10am onwards
TUESDAY	02-Apr	BOARD MEETING	7.30pm
SATURDAY	13-Apr	STEAM-UP & WAKEFIELD SOCIETY	10am onwards
SUNDAY	21-Apr	BIRTHDAY PARTY (AVAILABLE)	2pm-4pm
FRIDAY	26-Apr	SET-UP SCRS EXHIBITION	5pm onwards
SATURDAY	27-Apr	SCRS EXHIBITION	9am - 5pm
SUNDAY	28-Apr	SCRS EXHIBITION	9am - 4pm

Events Next Month

SUNDAY	05-May	STEAM-UP & DRIVING EXPERIENCE	10am onwards
MONDAY	06-May	EARLY MAY BANK HOLIDAY	10am onwards
TUESDAY	07-May	BOARD MEETING	7.30pm
SUNDAY	12-May	STPRING STEAM EVENT	1.00am - 4.00pm
SUNDAY	19-May	BIRTHDAY PARTY AVAILABLE	2pm-4pm
TUESDAY	21-May	TRACTION ENGINE NIGHT	5pm onwards
MONDAY	27-May	SPRING BANK HOLIDAY	10am onwards

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Press Date is the first Tuesday of the month

Front Cover: Another completed club project—the new loco lifter awaiting final ‘tweaking’

Spring Steam event 12 May - please help if you can!

Chairman's Chunter

After the last board meeting I was given an edition of the forerunner of Steaming Ahead, the Balleny Blast, published spring 2004. On page three was an appeal for contributions to keep the publication going. During the meeting concerns were raised regarding the recent editions particularly the March one. It is obvious that our club mag. is not new to a struggle. Having said that I feel we should not simply accept the situation but could, with a collective desire, address the issue. The question is do we want the Steaming Ahead to survive? The Board believe strongly that it should. If your answer is yes then surely it needs to be worth reading. To get to the point we need much more input from across the membership . It's impossible to rely solely on board members to fill the pages month after month and do we need a blow by blow report on what's being done? I agree we should all be kept informed but to what extent?

The society is blessed with many experienced model engineers who over the years have produced some fine work, together with a fair amount of scrap. I appeal to these people to share with us some of their experiences and advice which many will appreciate. I am also sure there are stories from times past that would be of interest so why not put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and share them with the rest of us?

Last Saturday 13th april we entertained a group from Wakefield MES including Jacquie and Phil from Blackgates Engineering. The weather was fine until around 3.00 pm when it turned wet and cold. As a society we made a very good name for ourselves giving an especially warm welcome followed by a particularly good days running. All present enjoyed some very welcome food supplied by our volunteer kitchen staff who, once again excelled themselves proving how fortunate we are having their support. I have received a letter from Denis Halstead, secretary of Wakefield MES which reads as follows,

Dear Allan,

I write on behalf of our members who visited your track on Saturday last and would like to offer many thanks. We were made very welcome indeed and enjoyed driving and riding your wonderful track, being set in a lovely location and beautifully landscaped.

Spring Steam event 12 May - please help if you can!

On walking around the track being shown your signalling and points system it appeared quite daunting but we soon got into it and found it quite user friendly.

We must say a big thank you to Sharon and all the other ladies and the gent who prepared the pork, jacket potatoes, chicken curry and the sweets, it was all very nicely done and enjoyed by us all and I note by your members too.

To say our facilities are a bit poor is probably an understatement but we are in the middle of changing things having just ordered a new clubhouse. So I hope that in the near future we can invite you to our club and we can reciprocate the hospitality given to ourselves.

Once again many thanks to your members who welcomed us to your club and provided us with a very enjoyable day, just a pity about the weather

Denis Halstead

Allan Leary.

Pond Restoration /Waterfall Project – Progress Report.

Progress has been made on the Pond restoration project despite the weather, with the ground often either being frozen, covered in snow or just too wet to do a lot.

As mentioned in last month's edition, the mounds of soil from Mr Moles uninvited activities have been put to good use as top soil on the rockery, which has made it now ready for planting as soon as the weather improves.

The pump, together with its strainer bucket was removed from the pond, all cleaned out, a new delivery pipe fitted and the pump on its own temporary re installed. When tested, water flowed down the stream, over the waterfall and back into the pond, much to the delight of the fish!

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Work has started on the permanent installation of the pump/pumping system, but the waterfall will not be in operation until the stream and waterfall concrete has all been sealed. This job unfortunately requires a period of dry warm weather.

Roger Addenbrooke

Grounds Maintenance Diary

The first Tuesday started very well with a lovely warm sunny day and the team did very well. We were able to burn all the rubbish on the bonfire, complete the cutting back of the last laurels and carry out the first mowing. Mr Mole has been very active but our mole catcher has done a very good job again.

After the good start to the month the weather turned very cold and there was little that the grounds team could do because of the frosts and rain. However, two members working on the pool were able to do a small amount of work on the pump and supply pipes to the waterfall. There were few signs of the 200 crocuses we planted a couple of years ago – but the daffodils are looking good.

We've been able to complete the mowing and clear the bonfire residue but little else. The team thought they had lost a valuable member who resigned but after phone calls from Allan L and Garry T he has resumed his membership but is not able to attend Little Hay as frequently as he would wish because of other commitments.

Having a coffee and sitting talking about work one thing lead to another. It was mentioned by the team that there had been a number of references to the grounds work carried out by the hort team. Members had commented or have previously said:-

- 1 The grass didn't want mowing,
- 2 Have you seen what they have done to the laurels,
- 3 The grass should be left to grow – up to two feet,
- 4 They have cut down more trees,

Last month in Pictures ...



The new control panel on "Great Northern"



"Leo" undertaking a successful steam test

Last month in Pictures ...



Foundations for the new carriage shed are progressing



The waterfall almost completed

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5 People can see right through the hedges,
6 It's too much like a park,
7 It's a waste of petrol mowing often,
8 Those branches didn't require cutting,
9 The hedge should be left to grow,
10 We had a nice stream and didn't need a big waterfall,
etc., etc., etc.

There are very good reasons why the team work as they do; here are just a few of them:-

1The grass needs cutting regularly to ensure the cuttings mulch down, the remaining leaves are chopped up and also mulch down along with the small twigs from the silver beech trees. Equally, if allowed to grow long the grass holds the wet and encourages moss. There are large affected areas following the very wet weather last year.

2Cutting back had been delayed to some laurel bushes, by the tunnels and front gate, because of the poor weather; around 18 months growth removed.

3If we let the grass grow (up to two feet) then it becomes a fire risk but more to the point it requires a lot more effort to strim, rake up the cuttings and dump in the lower copse than mowing. Mowing; not only does it look much tidier but doesn't rob the area of the mulched cuttings.

4Yes we do remove trees which are diseased, damaged, dangerous and poor specimens affected by others keeping the light out. By my count we have removed 29 trees over the eleven years but have planted in excess of 200 in the form of saplings and young bushes, e.g. holly, hawthorn, oak, horse chestnut. A few of the most obvious are the horse chestnut and conifers down the 'goat hedge'.

5Yes you can see through most hedges at this time of the year. Have a look as you drive by but remember those bordering farmers fields have only open fields behind – nothing to see; except cows, sheep, horses and tractors which you see in the same way as you see our track, colour

Spring Steam event 12 May - please help if you can!

light signals, members cars, buildings etc. These are all visible unless you have a solid conifer hedge like those at the crossing gate.

6Yes, the site is kept tidy and looking good because, whilst it still requires a lot of effort, it's infinitely easier that way. Also, because of HSE we have to be able to look after hedges etc., within reach whilst standing on the ground.

7What can I say; we don't mow any more than necessary.

8 It has to be born in mind that branches grow and have to be cut back if they are or going to be a potential risk to anyone. When in full leaf and additionally when wet they hang significantly lower.

9Hedges. From a practical and safety point of view these have to be no more than six feet and not least for HSE reasons need to be maintained at accessible heights.

10The waterfall. Back to being like a park? This is a great feature and acts as a good visual counter balance to the SM32 track.

I've worked on various projects since I joined in July 2000 but primarily the grounds for which I have assumed responsibility over the last 11 years or so. The team have worked and continue putting a lot of effort into maintaining and improving the site to the standard you see now. The team has changed over the years but the core members, a bit older, are still making a very good contribution to the society's image. They are encouraged by and appreciate the very many compliments made by members and visitors to Balleny Green but not snipping from those who don't know any better.

Ground maintenance is an easy target and over the years there have been various comments, both helpful and unhelpful, about the work and the way in which it's been carried out. The second sentence in the previous paragraph again gave me cause to think about giving up responsibility for grounds maintenance, particularly the way we lost a valuable member of the team.

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Like a number of other Tuesday stalwarts the big 80 is getting close and as I said to another of the team; "Perhaps the thing that concerns me most is letting down the team. Also in a way I feel I'd be letting down the society and the standards we've all spent the last 10-11 years establishing. I'm not ashamed to say I love doing what we do; working with a great team, the satisfaction we get from how good Balleny Green looks and working with the other members on Tuesdays and Sundays".

The team are always ready to listen to any suggestions and endeavour to ensure that all the work we do is safe and takes into account the abilities of the team members. But like any other work, or projects, it is the wishes of the majority that must be considered and taken account of.

So, what's the bottom line? Simple --- if you are unhappy with anything, wish to see a change, feel you could do it better, would like to help in any way or take over then I and all of the team would be very happy to hand you the keys to the lawn tractor and all the other equipment together with responsibility for the grounds maintenance.

I'm sure that also goes for other project leaders giving up their time and working their butts off for the benefit of the society. The AGM's coming up soon, so now's the time to volunteer, take on a project, become a director and or do something constructive.

Eric Davies

Updated boiler testing procedure

Just a brief note to inform everyone that revised arrangements for the testing of miniature steam boilers have now been adopted by this Society.

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These updated procedures (known as “The Green Book”) are now common across all model engineering societies having been drafted and agreed by the Model Engineering Liaison Group (MELG) in discussion with the HSE, our insurers and the commercial model-engineering boiler makers.

A briefing article outlining the changes has been prepared for the benefit of our members, but rather than fill the pages of this Steaming Ahead, your Board has decided that all members likely to operate or require a test for a model boiler should request a copy of the document from one of the Boiler Inspectors named below or any Board member.

These arrangements cover all boilers from the very smallest to the largest we are likely to encounter.

Peter McMillan
Neal Harrison
David Smith
Colin Davis

Peter McMillan

Steaming Ahead Contributions

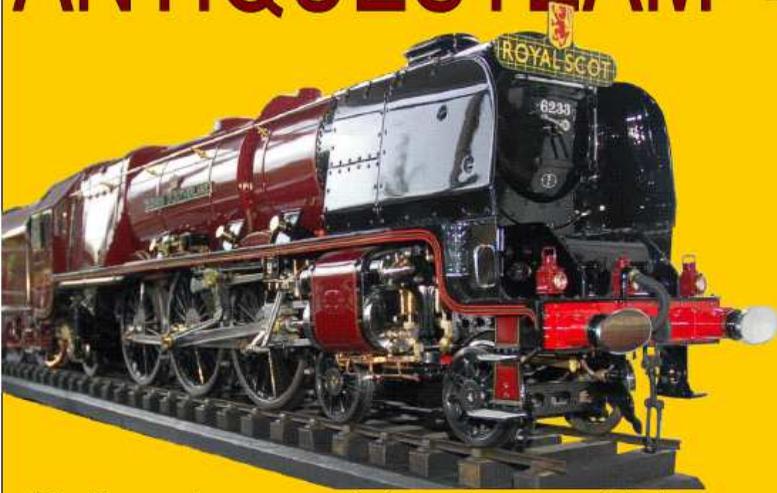
It has come to light that there is an issue with the redirection of emails from steamingahead@scmes.co.uk to my personal account. This has resulted in several of your contributions to SA not actually reaching me - I have not been ignoring you!

If you have recently sent me an item via the steamingahead@scmes.co.uk email account and it has not appeared in these pages, can you please resend it to my personal email address - stevekesterton@hotmail.co.uk. Can you please also use my personal email address until advised further to ensure that I get your valued contributions!

Steve Kesterton.

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