

September 2013

Steaming Ahead



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Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society

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Mike Bentley	Mark Dale
Peter Robinson	Chris Greene
Stuart Harrison	John Cope
Bill Colman	

Events This Month

SUNDAY	01-Sep	STEAM-UP & LOCO COMPETITION	10am
TUESDAY	03-Sep	BOARD MEETING	7.30pm
SUNDAY	08-Sep	BIRTHDAY PARTY BOOKED	2pm-4pm
SATURDAY	14-Sep	STEAM-UP	1pm
TUESDAY	24-Sep	EVENING STEAM UP	5pm

Events Next Month

TUESDAY	01-Oct	BOARD MEETING	7.30pm
SUNDAY	06-Oct	STEAM-UP	10am
SUNDAY	13-Oct	BIRTHDAY PARTY AVAILABLE	2pm-4pm
SATURDAY	19-Oct	STEAM-UP	1pm

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Press Date is the first Tuesday of the month

Front Cover: Mark Dale's 5" gauge 9F sits on the steaming bays following a successful boiler test.

Please try and help out at the Bonfire Party on 9 November!

Driving Competition

So September began with a fine sunny day; just what was needed for our inaugural driving competition.

Competitors were required to manage their engine and train safely over a long run involving 4 anticlockwise and one clockwise circuits. They also had to couple, shunt stock and turn, and carefully judge their speed over our 'temporary speed limit'. An extensive overall test that took each of them 35-50 minutes. We were pleasantly surprised at how successful they were at the speed limit test, all managing to regulate the train to within a +0mph/-1mph tolerance, and without any speedometer on the locos!

I think all competitors enjoyed the challenge, as did the rest of us as spectators, especially during the reverse running. I think this has inspired several members to look at improving our pointwork so that reverse circuits are easier to set up and give smoother running.

All in all it was great to just be playing trains instead of fundraising, or working hard on maintaining and developing our facilities.

And the winner was..... Mr John Copestick, with Allan Leary as runner up.

My special thanks to the three bold souls, Allan, Brian and John, who were prepared to put their driving skills to the test in front of an audience. Our thanks also go to all who helped make this successful, especially to Mark Dale and Neil, our competition judges, members who acted as track marshalls, Bill for his signal expertise and not least the ladies who kept us supplied with refreshments.

And next we have ... the Shunting Competition..... 6th October

John Cope

Stuxnet Virus

You may remember about two years ago it was alleged that an unknown computer virus had penetrated the Iranian Uranium refining plant and caused the centrifuges used to purify bomb grade Uranium to over speed and self destruct.

As time passed more information came to be known about the incident. The virus was called Stuxnet and was the first virus to be specifically designed to attack industrial control computers that are not based on complex operating systems like Windows.

You will be interested to know that the particular equipment used by the Iranians were Siemens PLCs being run on Step 7 and WinCC software. This is precisely the setup we have to run the signal system at Little Hay!!

Please try and help out at the Bonfire Party on 9 November!

Next time something goes wrong with our system please blame the Iranians for getting their own back.

Joking aside this class of virus poses a much greater threat to everyday life than any that we have experienced so far.

Bill Colman

Southern Fed Autumn Rally

The Northampton Society of Model Engineers (NSME) is pleased to host the Autumn Rally of the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Society's on Saturday 21st September. Our site will open to visitors from 2.00pm to 7.00pm on Friday 20th and the Rally itself, including the competition for the Australian Association of Live Steamers Trophy, will take place on Saturday 21st from 9.00am to 7.00pm. Sunday 22nd is a club running day, from 9.00am to 4.00pm, and rally attendees are very welcome to stay and enjoy an additional days running.

Our site is in a relaxed woodland setting, about a mile south of the centre of Northampton. Since arriving on the site in 1965 when it was a boggy overgrown wilderness, we now have a spacious club room, modern toilets (including those for the disabled), plus workshops and other buildings to complement the recently extended tracks. Track reconstructions and extensions were completed in 2011, and now provide a raised track of 535m (1755ft) of dual 5" and 3½" gauge, and a ground level railway with a steaming bay, terminus station and an out and back run of 925m (3034ft) of dual 7¼" and 5" gauge. Ruling gradients are 1 in 200 and 1 in 100 respectively. Also available are 32mm and 45mm gauge tracks for garden railway style locomotives and rolling stock. Unloading facilities for 3½" and 5" gauge locomotives from cars, vans and trailers are provided and a hydraulic lift is available for larger 5" and 7¼" locomotives.

Videos of the unloading facilities are available in the "One Stop Shop" on our website www.nsme.co.uk along with information on local accommodation, a map of the site and a trip around each of the railways. Road vehicles are catered for with a steaming up facilities near the clubhouse. You may like to drive your engine within the site or across the park and about half-a-mile along the road to the historic Delapre Abbey.

The Northampton Society of Model Engineers is located in Lower Delapre Park, Far Cotton, Northampton. The postcode for your SatNav is NN4 8AJ.

Visitor's cars must be parked on the grass to the right of the roadway and must not be taken into the site, except when directed by the Track Marshal, for unloading and loading locomotives. A buffet lunch will be provided on the Saturday, with a barbeque in the evening. Drinks and confectionery will be available to purchase from the clubhouse throughout each day and a light lunch will be available for you to purchase on the Sunday.

Please try and help out at the Bonfire Party on 9 November!

A limited number of camping, camper van and caravan places are available from 2.00 pm on Friday 20th until 5.00 pm on Sunday 22nd in the adjacent paddock, however we must know beforehand if you wish to make use of this facility. Please contact chairman@nsme.co.uk to reserve your place.

Finally a reminder to anyone bringing a steam powered model to operate, please do not forget your up to date certificates. We will accept BTC 2008 or 2012 style certificates as appropriate. We all look forward to welcoming you to our site and the rally.

For further information or to learn more about local accommodation, please visit the “*One Stop Shop*” on our website www.nsme.co.uk or telephone 07907 051388 (if no answer, or return call, please send a text), or e-mail chairman@nsme.co.uk

Birthday Party Thanks

Just a quick note from me to thank you and pass on the thanks from Clare Spencer, her son Edward, who's birthday is actually tomorrow, the family and rest of the guests.

It was another very good day helped by the weather and the work you all put in to make another successful party. It earns the society two hundred and sixty very valuable pounds and with £30 in the donation churn made the total £290.

Eric Davies

Another Competition!

How are your train management skills?

We plan to hold a Shunting Competition on Sunday 6th October at Balleny Green. It will be a test of skill, not speed, so any 5" or 7 1/4" loco can enter. You will need to be able to shunt/haul 6 wagons + brake van. Both 5" and 7 1/4 wagons have been organised.

Judgement will be based on minimising moves to sort train, care in manoeuvring/coupling etc, controlling your train professionally and safely, etc. Bonus points can be added/deducted for accurate fly shunting if you think you can. It will also include driving circuits in both clockwise and anti-clockwise direction.

If you are interested in entering/taking part, please contact John Cope. This can either be done by adding your name to the notice in the clubhouse, dropping me a line at the clubs address or by emailing me on Copesc@lineone.net.

John Cope

Last month in Pictures ...



Our President leading by example!



Time for a cuppa as we entertained Sutton Coldfield Autistic Group

Last month in Pictures ...



David Smiths 'Stafford' being unloaded



A lazy Tuesday afternoon at Pool Junction!

Please try and help out at the Bonfire Party on 9 November!

Grounds maintenance diary and Misc. Notes

TUESDAY 6TH

Ron was waiting for me to unlock and we were followed in by Grenville. After a short chat about the work we opened up the maintenance store and got the mowers fuelled and ready to go.

The other Tuesday members arrived gradually but with the holiday season well under way there were less than usual sitting down / having a break around 10.30am. Good progress had been made by the time we stopped even though there were only three of us today. We finished and put the mowers away around 12.30pm and, having got drinks, sat down for lunch. The team work well and hopefully we will have Steve with us next week and be able to make a start cutting back the 'goat hedge'.

As we were having lunch Allan Duckworth called me to see an urgent problem. He'd spotted two wasp nests which needed to be dealt with before the next birthday party and children on site. One in a rabbit burrow and the other in a small hole, also in the ground. I quickly dealt with them, a pint of petrol poured into each, quickly blocked up with chunks of turf and left for the fumes to do their work. Find out Sunday if it was successful.

TUESDAY 13TH

I checked the wasp nests on Sunday; there were one or two wasps around but the treatment had done the trick.

Ron, Grenville and I discussed what was required and agreed that with two events at the weekend, SCRS Saturday and Clare Spencer's birthday party on Sunday, we needed to mow. Steve arrived and told me he would get the strimmer and deal with the mounds by the level crossing. We stopped as usual at 10.30 and I joined them after discussing events with Allan. We recommenced mowing while Rod returned to working on the waterfall rockery, the shrubbery behind it, and then weeded and trimmed back the grass around it. At least for the time being it needs attention every week. We all finished around 12.30 for lunch and agreed that we would try to get the 'goat hedge' cut back next week!!

For those who have forgotten or are new members the 'goat hedge' as it is referred to is, as you may have deduced, because the field had goats in for years and it was always interesting doing the hedge trimming down that side. Any suggestions for a better alternative?

TUESDAY 20TH

The weather has been good to us, a nice sunny warm birthday party that went very well and it continues this week. Grenville, Ron, Steve and new member Rodney together with myself worked cutting the 'goat hedge'.

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It took all morning to cut it back from the maintenance store to 50yards down the inside of the road hedge and we now have a large pile of cuttings to burn. Bill brought his long handled hedge cutter without which we would not have to reach over the top.

We welcome Rodney to the team and assure him that there is no shortage of work – in that respect and after this morning he has said he would sort out the fire bins and buckets as a priority and essential task.

Hopefully the weather forecast will be right with a fine sunny week promised; the cuttings should dry out and be ready to burn next week!!! As we had to leave mowing to do the hedges this week we will definitely need to mow next week. This week David M has done a good job of mowing the grass within the SM32 track, with his own hover mower,

TUESDAY 27TH

No surprise that mowing was a priority today keeping Ron, Grenville and myself busy until lunch time. Rodney, with help from his grandson, made a start installing some of the new fire water bins and buckets. The rest will be cleaned and stencilled (with **FIRE**) progressively.

Finally, we all stopped a little earlier for lunch as Allan and I had arranged for the Sutton Coldfield Autistic Group to visit between 1.00 – 3.00pm. We have two members I know who have links to the group and tell me just what it means to their families and others having the opportunity to visit Little Hay.

The group started arriving just after 1.30pm and we had Steve and Graham driving their locos and Allan driving Jubilee. They all had a very good time; Vickie Roche the organiser asked that their sincere thanks and appreciation was passed to all and handed £133.00 to me as a collected donation from the families. This was very generous as there were only 17 children and their parents.

So, passed on from me, **thank you** for helping make their day.

Eric Davies

'Steaming Ahead' articles

As you might be aware, we sometimes struggle to get enough material for 'Steaming Ahead', resulting in a delay in delivery to your good selves.

A couple of ideas have been suggested to increase the contribution I receive - please consider them and see if you are able to contribute anything!

Firstly, do you have a garden railway at home? If you do, why not do a short write-up on your line for the benefit of fellow members.

Please try and help out at the Bonfire Party on 9 November!

I will start the ball rolling on this one with an article on our 'Tat Bank Railway' in a future edition, but I know there are others in our Society with garden railways too!

Secondly, how about telling us a bit more about yourself, how you got into model engineering and your career. I know there are lots of members able to tell some fascinating tales which I am sure would be well received by the wider membership.

I look forward to receiving your contributions in due course!

Steve Kesterton

SCRS visit to Balleny Green 17th August 2013

So much for meteorologists who forecast unfavourable weather for the day, which undoubtedly affected attendance early on. However after the sun came out at around 1.00pm members and their families turned up in increasing numbers to enjoy the hospitality provided by you and your colleagues. We are very grateful to you and the members at Balleny Green for making 4 locomotives available for the enjoyment of our members and their families, not forgetting of course Cath who so generously served hot drinks, crisps and confectionary to us all.

It was nice to be at the inaugural run of your new locomotive and for members to drive, under instruction, the motive power on duty during the day.

Please extend our gratitude to all at Balleny Green and we enclose a cheque for £50 as a contribution to the event and a token of our appreciation.

Your sincerely,

Malcolm Gibbins

Driving Competition Report

On Sunday 1st September we held our driving competition. I was asked along with Neal to be a judge, a couple of weeks before the two of us along with John Cope who coordinated the event sat down for a chat to work out the tasks which our competitors would be required to do. A final draft to test their skills of engineman ship consisted of :- being ready to depart on time off the shed, shunting onto stock, running four non - stop laps, observing signals, slowing for a speed restriction of 4 mph and returning to the station with the loco in good order of steam and water. After turning the loco a reverse circuit was completed before reversing the coaches back into the siding and returning to the shed.

There were three competitors, Neal was in charge of judging the locos coming off the shed and at the station area and I was riding on the train to judge the running. John with his Hunslet was the first to go. He backed up onto the coaches nicely in the station, checked his brakes and we soon departed on the four laps,

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John drove nice and consistently but failed to sound the whistle at the whistle boards around the track. We returned to the station stopping at the marker in the platform. With the loco turned he made a bit of a rough shunt whilst backing up on the coaches for the reverse run, but he coupled up and made another steady run around returning to the station and completing his test by shunting the coaches into the siding and returning to the shed, after Neal had checked the loco was in good order.

Next to go was Allan with his 0-4-0 'Lord Jim'. A nice arrival and back up in the station and away we went. This time though we did not carry any passengers so as not to overload the little loco. Once again a nice run, but also a lack of whistling, on the first couple of laps anyway, then he remembered! Allan made a good job of controlling the steam pressure during the run and the stop at the red signal proved interesting! Returning to the station he stopped in the correct place and went off to the turntable to prepare for the reverse run. Allan made a nice shunt onto the coaches and a good run round the site. Neal checked all was well and Allan returned to the steaming bay.

Our final entry was Brian with his 5" prairie tank. He came off shed and made a nice shunt onto the coaches, connected the brakes and away we went. Brian's still learning how to drive so it was sporting of him to enter. All went well up the hill but unfortunately we had to stop by the club house for blow up to regain pressure, we set off again and made a good stop at the red signal. We had to have another blow up on the next lap and returned to the station completing the four laps, to his credit though he was the only one who set the route and ran into the station without stopping at the junction signal. Due to a problem with the 5" coupling on the coaches we made the reverse run with just the driving trolley which he drove well.

At the speed restriction amazingly all three drivers set the same speed of around 3.6 mph over the four laps. Very good considering no one had a Speedo.

So to the results after some deliberation we decided that John was the winner, followed by Allan then Brian. Overall it was an interesting afternoon. I had a go myself later in the day on the Prairie but this was cut short after the whistle valve stuck open and I made up for all the failed whistling!

Mark Dale

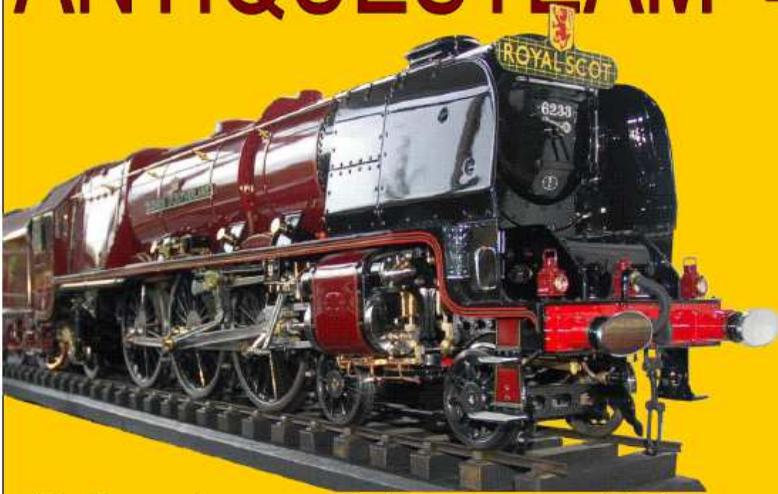
New Engine House

John and Stuart have been working on the power and lighting which is near completion. It has been fully lined and the floor painted thanks to recent work by John Cope, Peter Robinson and Tony Critchley. Brian Clarke is building a prototype trolley to store and transport an engine to the raised track. The Board are looking at possible increased security. Hopefully it will be in use soon and enable members to have easy access to our 5" locomotives.

Michael D Bentley

Please try and help out at the Bonfire Party on 9 November!

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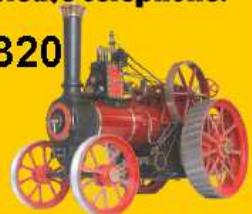
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