

SOUTHERN FEDERATION NEWS



JUNE 2009



Under normal circumstances I would have expected to publish one or two of your photographs here.

Due to the changes in the editors seat I do not have any in stock, so.....if by any chance anyone would like to submit one or two for inclusion in 'my library' I would be most grateful.

The pictures should be submitted with a few details of when and where it/they were taken, and what the subject/s are please.

I have however taken the liberty of reproducing a picture of Number 136, a Rogers 4-4-0 built in 1883 in Paterson NJ. It is the locomotive that was operating on a preserved railway in Ontario. Canada. The line is situated to the North West of Toronto near the town of Tottenham, and is known as the South Simcoe Railway. Running through typical Southern Ontario countryside of rolling hills and tall trees, it gives a lot of pleasure to both passengers & crew.

Photo. Stan Bishop

Cover photograph is of a Class 56XX in 5" gauge.

This was taken in April this year at its inaugural run at the Staines Society track. It was a Bronze Medal winner at the Model Engineer Exhibition at Ascot racecourse last year (2008)

Photo: Jeremy Weston



Southern Federation News



June
2009

Editor
Stan Bishop

stanleybishop@tiscali.co.uk

Views and comments expressed in
this publication are not necessarily
those of the Southern Federation of
Model Engineering Societies

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the June 2009 edition of your newsletter. I am sure I am just as amazed, as some of you may be, that I am back in the hot seat once again, the decision on my part was not that easy.

After serving for some 16 years previously, I did wonder at times if I had taken the right course of action, time will tell I suppose.

This action, coupled to the success of both Norman Rogers and Mike Leahy, will offer challenges, but at least most of the ground work in the format has been completed, it just remains for everyone to contribute their exciting news.

The alternative may have been a simple black & white printed sheet, so let us all try to keep a similar format up and running.

I have suggested elsewhere in these pages, some of the different methods for submitting items that you may want considered for publication.

Thanks to everyone concerned for showing their confidence in allowing me this second chance.

Stan Bishop
June 2009.

Items for inclusion in the
September 2009
edition should be with the
Editor by
26th JULY 2009



From the Chairman

Brian Thompson

Welcome to another edition from the Chairman, I had hoped with a new editor that I might have been excused duties, but it is not to be. Welcome back Stan.

So what has been happening in recent weeks on the Federation front? The second Saturday in March witnessed another very successful Annual General Meeting, on this occasion in the excellent Clubhouse of the Woking Miniature Railway. On behalf of the Federation committee and the delegates present, may I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of Woking Miniature Railway for their organisation and friendly hospitality, the weather was kind to us as well. It gave us the opportunity to have our Annual Meeting not too far removed from the London area at an acceptable price, something we have been endeavouring to achieve for some time now. There were 76 delegates present representing some 56 Clubs/Societies with 20 apologies for absence, which is almost identical to last years attendance. Many thanks to everybody who attended, it makes all the effort and organisation that much more rewarding.

Another topic that has involved Federation officers with much burning of midnight oil is the recent problem of commercially manufactured boilers which are not CE marked compliant. Working alongside with other national organisations, insurance brokers and Royal and Sun Alliance hopefully we have been able to resolve the problem to everybody's satisfaction, with an information package circulated to all Clubs/Societies.

By the time read this edition of our Newsletter, another Harrogate exhibition will have come and gone, along with the Federations spring rally hosted by our friends from the Llanelli and District Model Engineering Society. As ever, it is always a pleasure to meet so many of our friends when we are out and about.

Well I think that is all for this time, just to remind you that the Federations "Road Show" will be supporting the following events before the next Newsletter, You are always welcome to pre-order any sales items for collection at these events.

June 27/28	MSRVS Traction Engine Rally
July 5/6	Bristol SMEE IMLEC
July 18/19	Guildford MES Rally and Exhibition
August 21/23	Bristol SMEE Exhibition

DIRECTORY SUPPLEMENT UPDATE – JUNE 2009**NEW CLUBS / SOCIETIES****POLLY OWNERS GROUP**

Sec: Mr N Mortimer. 108 Cophall Road West. Ickenham. Uxbridge.
Middx. UB10 8HT.
Tel: (01895) 635596. E:mail neilmortimer@aol.com

SOUTH DEVON MINIATURE RAILWAY SOCIETY

Sec: Mr D.W Greenop. 215 Moorfield Avenue. Denton.
Manchester.M34 7TS.
Tel: 07849444925 E:mail (not readable)

CHANGE OF SECRETARY**BRIGHTLINGSEA MODEL BOAT CLUB**

Sec: Mrs S Bowery. 50 Granville Way. Brightlingsea. Essex. CO7 0SY.
Tel: (01206) 304401 E:mail sandrabowery@supanet.com

COVENTRY MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Sec: Mr M Sweatman. 42 Elm Tree Avenue. Tile Hill. Coventry.
West Midlands. CV4 9ET.
Tel: (02476) 468566 E:mail mikesweatman1943@hotmail.com

PENTNEY PARK RAILWAY SOCIETY

Sec: Ms C Ward. 48b Mill Road. Magdalen. King's Lynn Norfolk. PE34 3BZ.
Tel: (non listed) E:mail holidays@pentney-park.co.uk

RED HALL LIVE STEAMERS

Sec: Mr D Davies. 19 Netherdale Court. Weatherby. Leeds. LS22 6EW.
Tel: (01837) 526316 E:mail (non listed)

RUSHDEN MINIATURE STEAM ENTHUSIASTS

Sec: Mr B Reeve. 58 The Hedges. Higham Ferrers. Rushden.
Northants. NN10 8AB.
Tel: (01933) 315550 E:mail (non listed)

WESTLAND & YEOVIL DISTRICT MES.

Sec: Mr P Puttock.
The Old Crown Inn. Leopen. South Petherton. Somerset. TA13 5JX.
Tel: (01460) 240717 E:mail (non listed)

FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

Sec; Correct telephone number should read (01252) 668893

FANCOTT MINIATURE RAILWAY SOCIETY

Sec; Mr C Taylor. 65 Grove Avenue. Harpenden. Herts. AL5 1EZ.

Tel: (non listed) E:mail (non listed)

50D ASSOCIATION

Sec; Mr P Lazenby. 3 Forestgate. Haxby. York. YO32 2WT.

Tel; (01904) 750007

WEB SITE / E:MAIL CHANGES

CHESHIRE LIVE STEAMERS website www.cheshirelivesteamers.org.uk

COVENTRY MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY website www.coventrymes.co.uk

SOCIETY OF MODEL & EXPERIMENTAL ENGINEERS

E:mail secretary@sm-ee.co.uk

DELETIONS**AVON VALE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY**

An apology to the
Nottingham Society of Model and Experimental Engineers
Ltd

Committee Meeting Minutes which appear in the Newsletter, whilst being substantially complete in the interests of transparency, are normally expurgated to remove sensitive information such as society names, finance etc. The full Minutes are clearly marked "Southern Federation Committee Use Only" at the top and bottom of each page.

Unfortunately, this sanitisation was incomplete in the March Newsletter, which was produced during the period in which we did not have a full time Editor. This situation is now remedied.

**The Federation unreservedly apologises to the Nottingham SMEE
for any embarrassment caused by this lapse.**

It should be noted that the discussions were concerned solely with Nottingham's use of non-standard boiler certification documents. At no time was it suggested that Nottingham's insurance and boiler testing arrangements were inadequate.

SOUTHERN FEDERATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS - MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING held on 27th January 2009 at the Model Railway Club, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA, commencing at 6-30 pm.

PRESENT Brian Thompson (Chairman), Maurice Bennett, Mike Chrisp, Clive Ellam, Ivan Hurst, David Mayall, John Norman, Wally Pearson, John Walker and Clive Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Norman Rogers.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate representation of the business carried out at the previous meeting. They are now on file.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence:- Correspondence had been received

- A request for information relating to SVGA. Supplied.
- A correspondent had sought details of local societies who might provide a portable track for an event.
- It is pleasing to report that the Welling Society have had a reprieve with regards to their site closure, and intended to run a full programme this year.

WEBSITE Traffic details as at 21st January 2009 follow. The figures for w/e 19th November 2008 are given in parentheses.

- Visits Cumulative Total..... 4,502 (4,089)
This Week.....73 (38)
- Page Views Cumulative Total..... 21,089 (19,120)
This Week332 (203)

Traffic has increased considerably, probably reflecting the imminent 2009 season. The Secretary felt that the mechanism for updating the Website, and its interface with the Newsletter, require to be rationalised; it would make sense for these activities to be co-ordinated.

TREASURERS REPORT The Treasurer had previously distributed details of the financial situation prior to the Meeting. It will be seen that we have a small surplus on the year to date. The Chairman stated that a new print run of Blue Cards would be required. There was no other discussion on financial matters.

INSURANCE REPORT The following has been taken from notes supplied by FJ (distributed to Committee). "Following our review meeting all issues raised have now been presented to yourselves and following your letter 11th December 2008 the revised update policy schedule and product summary was sent to you 23rd January 2009."

The subject of supervision of inexperienced drivers arose once more - in particular the interpretation of "able to intercede".

NEW APPLICATIONS To date, some 100+ renewals had been received, and no Society had yet declined. An application had been received from the newly formed South Essex Model Engineers Society. This was accepted and they were allocated #773. This brought the total number of affiliated societies to 257.

SAFETY REPORT Mr Pearson reported that he had found the focus group meeting "straw poll" dealing with Club approaches to Safety had been most useful, and considerably more encouraging than he had feared. The 16mm Society had also enquired if the Blue Book is obtainable as a pdf file, as they could potentially need 3,000 copies. There is currently no intention to put the Book on the Website. It was agreed that for such a large quantity we should offer a special print run at an attractive cost.

RALLIES & EXHIBITIONS The Chairman thanked those who had supported him at Alexandra Palace.

AOB The Chairman had received details of Boiler Test Code courses, organised by NAMES. We had been invited to attend one to be held at Northampton on 21st February. Finally, it was noted that this was to be Mr Ellam's last meeting. He was thanked for his work and wisdom in the past, and wished all good luck in the future.

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING held on 24th March 2009 at the Model Railway Club, 4 Calshot Street. London N1 9DA, commencing at 6-30 pm.

PRESENT Brian Thompson (Chairman), Maurice Bennett, Stan Bishop, Mike Chrisp, Roger Griffiths, Ivan Hurst, David Mayall, Wally Pearson, John Walker and Clive Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE John Norman, Norman Rogers.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN Mr Young having signified his willingness to stand as Vice-Chairman, was duly elected. In acceptance, he stated this would be the last year that he would be standing.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate representation of the business carried out at the two meetings and they are now on File.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence:- A number of items of correspondence had been received

- An enquiry was made from an individual who had not received recent

Newsletters. Three enquiries with relation to new Test Codes Documentation were also noted.

WEBSITE Traffic details as at 10th March 2009 follow. The figures for w/e 21st January 2009 are given in parentheses.

- Visits
 - Cumulative Total..... 4,905 (4,502)
 - This Week.....73 (73)
- Page Views
 - Cumulative Total..... 22,906 (21,089)
 - This Week378 (332)

The Secretary felt that the mechanism for updating the Website, and its interface with the Newsletter, require to be rationalised; it would make sense for these activities to be co-ordinated. The Editor undertook to do this. He said he had already looked at our Website, and expressed his concern, the Secretary expressed his gratitude

TREASURERS REPORT Committee expenses increased between 2006/7 & 2007/8. Probably much of that was transportation/fuel prices but one to watch. We've incurred additional expense on the newsletter for the past two editions. This occurred because it was prepared in a basic format and then was translated into a printable version by A N Other. These additional sums involved are unsustainable.

Although Woking had not requested any payment for the use of their facilities for the AGM, the Chairman suggested that a donation might be appropriate. There was no other discussion on financial matters.

INSURANCE REPORT As at 24th March, no report had been received from FJ. This has happened consecutively over the last three Committee Meetings. The Secretary had written to FJ on 1st February with collated comments which he had received from Committee Members on the new Policy and Product Summary Drafts. The publication of the new documents had prompted further comment.

NEW APPLICATIONS / RENEWALS

Of the 258 organisations, some 230 had renewed their affiliation.

An application for affiliation had been received from the Polly Owners' Group, and South Devon had re-applied. These requests were accepted and they were allocated Federation #774 and #775 respectively.

SAFETY REPORT Mr Pearson had recently attended a meeting of the Boiler Sub-group relating to the proposed Boiler Design Code, held in Manchester.

A major topic for discussion was the CE marking of commercial boilers manufactured since May 2002. RSA Insurance Engineering Services (via Walker Midgeley) had estimated that the cost of retrospective certification was likely to be of the order of £700. The need for a list of CE approved Boiler Builders was identified.

With regard to the Design Code, it is likely that stainless steel will still not be permitted for amateur construction. RSA would be producing a note on materials.

Codes for Copper and Steel will appear in the same document, as in the Test Codes, rather than separate.

EU Database/Boiler Numbering System. The Secretary had previously reported the NAME initiative with regards to liaison with their opposite numbers in Holland in exchanging Boiler Databases. The Committee agreed that we should also participate, and the Secretary was asked to follow this up.

NAME Boiler Testing Day. The Secretary reported on a NAME Boiler Test Seminar, hosted by the Northampton Society, which he and the Secretary had recently attended. This led on to a discussion of Federation Membership knowledge of Safety in general, starting with the Committee.

NEWSLETTER The Editor noted that his intention was to try and retain the existing format and quality of the Newsletter. He also assumed that, other than Minutes and formal announcements, he would have full editorial control. This was confirmed.

RALLIES & EXHIBITIONS The Chairman thanked those who had supported him at the AGM and Brighton Modelworld. Letters of thanks had been received from the organisers of Alexandra Palace and Brighton.

The arrangements for Harrogate, 8th - 10th May were discussed.

Future Events. Invitations had been received from:

- Vale of Aylesbury, 30th/31st May
- MSRVs, 27th/28th June
- Guildford, 18th/19th July
- The Midlands Show, 16th - 20th October

AOB

The Safety Officer sought the Committee's views on whether they would comment if they visited an event and saw potentially dangerous practices. It was agreed that this is potentially a tricky point - but what is clear is the law, which mandates that we all duty of care to other people.

**The Autumn Rally on Saturday 19th September
will be hosted by the
City of Oxford Society of Model Engineers.
The Australian Association of Live Steamers
Trophy Competition will take place during the
Rally.**

'GREAT GARRATT GATHERING'

August 2009 is the 100th anniversary of the production of Beyer Garratt locomotives in Manchester at the Beyer Peacock works in Gorton.

To celebrate this they are trying to amass 100 examples of this type of locomotive for the festival.

The star of the show will be the K1, kindly loaned by the Welsh Highland railway, indeed the K1 was the first Garratt ever built.

Several other larger locomotives will be exhibited along with other Beyer Garratt memorabilia.

If any of our members have models of these types of locomotives, and would like to take part in this exhibition at the museum will they please contact Chris Barnett on 0161 6060214 or 07734971388.

The exhibition will take place at the
Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester.
This is a free event and all are welcome to attend.

An Apology.

In the March 2009 issue of this Federation news an article appeared concerning the registration of a traction engine for road use. The credit for this article was given to the TYNESIDE SOCIETY, when in fact it should have been given to the SAFFRON WALDEN & DISTRICT SOCIETY of MODEL ENGINEERS and its Author Ian Couchman.

On behalf of the Federation can I make a full apology for this error.

Model Engineering Supplies

(Romford)

have ceased trading, so the advertisement
has been removed from this copy.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

The event this year was hosted by the Woking Miniature Railway at their grand site in Woking just to the west of London. What was once their site at 'Mizens Farm'. to the other side of town, is now the home of the McClaren Race Car Company.

Delegates were given the chance to wander freely around the site taking in as much detail as they wanted, train rides were also provided for those interested in seeing what was 'around the corner'.

56 Affiliated Societies/Clubs were represented at this years meeting, something like an average figure these days. The room allocated for this meeting was comfortably full, although the urgent need for more air was quickly made known and windows and doors opened.

From the reports made it would appear the overall position of the Federation remains on a positive footing, a few clubs/societies have failed to renew for various reasons, but inevitably there have been new groups joining, so the numbers remain status-quo you could say.

During his Chairman's report, in which he welcomed the representatives from Footman James, Kevin Askell and Angela Orford, Brian Thompson went on to say that there was some concern that no new blood had come forward to offer their services to the Federation. Age is a non-stop process and many of the exisiting Committee were likely not to be available within the next few years. The fact that the Federation 'represents' some 12,000 members it is not very encouraging when we struggle to find twelve to serve on the Committee.

A report from the Treasurer was not all doom, finances remain fairly stable, although increased Committee expenses during the past twelve months did cause a warning to be issued. Many of these increased costs were due to rising fuel and other travel costs. The Treasurer also stated that due to the Affiliation fee not being increased over the last seven or so years it does seem likely it may have to rise by small annual increments to keep pace. Good news was that the Auditors were pleased to announce that the accounts were in order and that they were in a position to offer their services next year.

The representatives from Footman James submitted and read their report, this showed a good level of understanding of the business at hand.

A proposed rate of increase from RSA had been postponed for this year, any new business however is likely to have an increase of 5% added to the premiums. Club liability has been amended and now gives cover for 12 public events as opposed to 6 previously, the premium for £3 million cover for more than twelve events has been reduced in cost. The delegates to this A.G.M. were reminded that any queries on insurance matters must be directed to Footman James at all times.

Kevin Askill closed his report by adding he felt that Footman James had shown their commitment and excellent relationship to the Southern Federation and hoped this would continue.

The Safety Officer followed with his report, which gave importance to the need for

everybody to be aware of what was required of them with regards safety at our premises. He made the comment that it is an unfortunate fact that within our groups personnel leave, retire, or resign, taking with them much information which is then lost. He then ran through a lengthy list of what was basically important for us all. He did however begin by stating that the Southern Federation does not produce any rules or regulations that can be applicable to any Club or Society. There are however a substantial number of regulations in the form of Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments that are applicable, the Federation makes every effort to ensure you are aware of these.

The election of the Committee members took place without too much arm twisting, all of the previous committee were reelected as a group, with the addition of Stan Bishop (Staines Society) being elected back into the seat of Editor. Mr Roger Griffiths from the Woking Miniature Railway was elected to fill the one vacancy still remaining. Several events were due to be visited by the 'Federation Road Show' during the year, these included both Federation Rallies, the Harrogate Exhibition, Vale of Aylesbury TE Rally, the MSRVS Rally at Tewkesbury, the Guildford TE Rally, Birmingham Locomotive Rally and the Midlands Exhibition. While the Federation expect to be at the IMLEC event and the Bristol Exhibition at the Thornbury Leisure Centre they had not received any invite. (At the time of the meeting)

One of the more pleasant aspects to this particular Annual General Meeting was the declaration of the winner of both the Southern Federation Trophy and the Polly Model Engineering Prize.

Clive Young introduced this part of the proceedings by stating that the Federation Committee had unanimously agreed it would be unfair to have an outright winner, and that for 2009 the awards would be made to both recipients as winners of both the awards. Bruce Davy, representing Polly Engineering, then presented the prizes and trophies to Alex Webb (Reading Society) and Tom Fuller (Bedford Society) both very worthy winners. (Pictures follow later)

Several items were discussed during AOB, all of which were successfully dealt with. Questions involving Safety or Boiler Issues should be formally addressed to the Federation's Safety Officer Mr Wally Pearson who would do his best to provide an answer. If needed this could involve the committee that produced the Test Codes and if after that it was thought fit, an Amendment could be issued to the 'Blue Book' as was done previously.

There is a report and pictures of the
Southern Federation Awards for 2008/9
on pages 16 and 17.

THE HUMBLE CORDLESS DRILL

The cordless drill must be one of the most useful tools we use. Drilling and screw driving are the most common function (especially for arthritic hands) but I have also found them very useful for tapping with small taps.

Some time ago I needed to tap 50 holes with a 6 BA thread. I'm not the most adept with a tap wrench and tend to apply too much hand power and thus break the tap. Using the cordless drill with its adjustable clutch and speed control enabled me to keep the tap straighter and the clutch would operate before the tap became immovably jammed and broke. Then a little reverse and continue forward until the hole was fully threaded. Since then I've used the drill for all small tapping jobs without any breakages.

However that's not the point of this note.

Talking to other users it is apparent that I am not alone in mistreating the battery. I tend to leave the drill in its partly discharged state and then just before using give it a "top-up" charge with its associated charger.

Because of the "memory" or "lazy battery" effect this causes the battery to lose capacity and also this maltreatment encourages the growth of dendrites which can short circuit a cell. It gets to a stage when the battery will not recover even if subjected to a series of deep discharges and recharges.

When it gets to this stage we are left with a functional drill and a dead battery and, since one part is useless without the other, there are three options:-

- 1) Buy a new battery. In most cases it's not possible to do this but in cases where it is, the cost of a new battery is often greater than the original cost of the whole drill unit. For example, I was quoted £60 for a replacement battery for a drill which originally cost £45.
- 2) Dispense with the battery and connect the drill to a DC power supply unit. However this loses the important cordless attribute.
- 3) Scrap the whole lot and buy a new cordless drill. Since we are urged to practice conservation, this is undesirable, so I have added a fourth option.
- 4) Build a new battery.

I had two drills and battery boxes to work on, one which gave up the ghost about 3 years ago, which I hadn't the heart to throw away, and its replacement, now defunct. The battery boxes were similar in style except that in one case the two halves were held together by 4 screws and in the other the two halves had been glued together.

Opening up the screwed one I found it contained 10 C size Ni-Cad cells (both batteries were 12 volts) connected in series by short strips of metal spot welded to the terminals, and insulated from each other by strips of thin card. Two of the cells were short circuit. The cells were typically 1000 mAh capacity so if I could replace them with 1800 mAh AA size Ni-MH cells I would have a higher capacity battery with no annoying “memory” effect and more tolerance to charging abuse. But connecting them together is a problem.

I don't know what metal is used to plate the cells, Cadmium or Nickel perhaps? But it doesn't take solder with resin flux easily. “Killed spirit” (AKA Baker's soldering fluid) flux works OK but the residual flux causes corrosion and deterioration of the positive end insulator. I have ruined cells in the past because of this and, probably, the overheating occurring whilst soldering.

While wandering around Maplin's shop I found plastic AA size battery holders which held 1,2,3,4,6,8 or 10 AA size batteries, each with a press stud connector at the end the largest costing less than a pound and also press stud connectors with leads costing a few pence. The 10 holder was ideal and it fitted inside the battery box with room to spare, in fact I had to pack bits of plastic foam around it to stop it moving about. After that it was just a matter of soldering the press-stud leads to the battery box terminals (remembering to get the polarity right otherwise the drill electronics would get a, perhaps fatal reverse voltage) and rejoining the two halves of the box. So the drill was in working order again.

The other one was hardly more difficult. It was easy to separate the two halves by cutting through the joint with a Stanley knife and after fitting the cells, rejoining the two halves by melting the plastic at the joint with a soldering iron. The joint was hidden by application of a strip of sticky plastic tape.

How much did it cost? Each battery holder with press-stud lead cost about £1.40. The AA NiMH cells I bought as a special offer at £10 for 12 cells when we used them for our digital cameras. Since we've updated and now use Li Ion batteries they were surplus to requirements. Maplins may still have this offer in their catalogue and the ALDI supermarket has them for sale at £2.99 for a pack of 4.

So for less than £10 you can have a restored cordless drill. But don't throw the old Ni-cads into the bin; I think it may be illegal anyway take them to an appropriate disposal centre.

We acknowledge the source of this article as being the Leeds Society Newsletter 'Leedsline' and the writer Mr Glynn Huges. Many thanks to all concerned for allowing it to be reprinted here.



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MASTERCARD

RYEDALE SOCIETY of MODEL ENGINEERS

Just a brief look at how other groups manage to achieve their aim.

These two pictures show a bunch of hard working members laying the base for a new building at their track site. Some days before, there had been activity laying barrier sheets and preparing the site ready for delivery of the concrete. Two very useful machines were also used, a powered float and a powered polisher.

The concrete was delivered early'ish in the morning and the gang quickly set to spreading it out and levelling.

A large crowd quickly saw that the concrete was off the truck and levelled using the powered float by mid-day. (With it seems just about a bucketful left over!)

After a suitable wait they then used the polisher to give the final levelling and finish, job completed at about 6 pm. A vote of thanks was given to everybody that put some effort into this project.



Some later news suggested that the blockwork had begun to appear and the building was growing before their very eyes. I expect we shall hear more on this as time progresses.

Annual Awards 2009

It was very encouraging to receive two nominations for the Awards this year, once again being awarded to Club/Society members who are both under the age of 24. In no particular order, the first nomination was for Alex Webb, not quite 12 years old at the time. Alex is from the Reading Society and has shown a keen interest in 'all things steam' as a result of many visits to the track in Prospect Park. First introduced to the hobby by Les Dawson (President of the Reading Society) when he was approximately 8 years old, Alex has made great progress with the building of a small steam plant, based on a design known as 'Bowman' and described in the Model Engineer. He entered this model in the 2007 Model Engineer Exhibition and was awarded a very worthy 'Very Highly Commended Certificate'. Following on from this he has built a 'real' coal fired boiler. All of which will stand him in good stead for his next project, a 3½ gauge 'Tich' with slip eccentric valve gear. Shown below on the left is Alex with Bruce Davy presenting him with the award, and on the right with his friend and mentor Les Dawson, well done Alex, (and Les of course)



Alongside Alex was the other nominee Tom Fuller. He is just 16 years old and a member of the Bedford Model Engineering Society. Tom has been a member of this Society for several years, found to be hardworking and trustworthy, oh and always willing whatever the situation. It was said that this just shows that there are still good youngsters even though that is not how they are always portrayed in the media.

Tom does not come from an engineering family, but takes a keen interest in all aspects of the Clubs activities. Under the supervision, and the facilities of much respected fellow club member Frank Hills, Tom was able to design and build a freelance five plank wagon during his school holidays.

This included much burning of midnight oil to get it completed in time for their club's 60th anniversary exhibition during 2008.

Tom is also the latest member to be 'passed out' as a full driver on both steam and diesel, a very competent young man and a credit to his club.

Tom is pictured below receiving his award from Bruce Davy.



Since the Federation Trophy is now 25 years old, the committee felt it would be appropriate to do something different, so commencing this year, both nominees would receive a suitable Trophy to keep. This would mean there would be no winners or losers, in fact they would both be winners

The situation will be kept under review.

We thank Mike Chrisp for allowing us the use of these three photographs.



This is a shot taken by Mike Crisp at the start of proceedings at the Woking Miniature Railway and the Annual General Meeting of the Southern Federation.

The speaker here is Mike Smith, Chairman of the host Society, he was welcoming all present, doing a bit of free advertising for his group with handout calendars.

All in all a good afternoon amongst many friends and fellow enthusiasts.

AROUND THE CLUBS

Since my departure from this office there have been some significant changes to the way this newsletter is put together and printed. One factor that keeps a check on the amount of pages is the postal system and costs. If for any reason your own piece of news is not shown please do not feel offended, please do not feel your news is not wanted, it is.

Many thanks. Stan. (Ed)

NATIONAL CLUBS



From **SMEE** comes a recent newsletter that has an almost identical comment to my own earlier. Mike Chrisp, of some fame, remarks that he is being allowed a second attempt as a stand-in, temporary Editor of their Journal. Also, as in my own case, he says he hopes to have his next issue out in time for the deadline, more or less; the difference between the two of us is that once he has achieved this he will be handing over his 'borrowed' blue pencil! Another 'milestone' within this Society is the celebration of 25 years in the hot seat, by their Treasurer David Taylor. He was shown in a photograph being presented with a nicely engraved glass (sorry) crystal tankard by Mike Chrisp.

The countrywide group known lovingly as the **MSRVS** do I suppose have several advantages over those that are dealing with just a small area. One of these may be the availability of several 'boiler testers' willing to travel to one location to perform their own art form. One such occasion was held recently when

some 15 or so engines were presented for a boiler test. Luckily there were 5 boiler testers to hand who all joined in the process. I suppose you could have almost created a conveyor belt type system to deal with those numbers, however the day went smoothly with no mention of any failures. A feature being considered in this group is the setting up of a Drawing; Pattern & Parts register (DPP). Members would add to this register a list of parts they may have available for loan or sale, along with drawings etc, sounds good to me. With a system that works it will be a bonus and save some financial outlay over time. Returning to the past there is mention of the cost of a Myford model M lathe, back around 1948. Listed at a grand figure of £73/8/- plus carriage it would represent a price today of around £1975. Really no comparison with today's machines and prices, but then 'that's progress' so it is said.

The **National 2½" Gauge Association**, another group that has the coverage of

the entire country under its wing, enjoy the benefits of having several 'area' groups to look after things locally. A piece of good news recently published in their own journal known as the 'Coupling Rod' concerns a supplier of wheel castings and patterns for the same. The proprietor of the business 'Turn of the Century Models' was in negotiations with the Association, regarding them being able to purchase his entire stock and the casting side of the business that deals with wheels. A description of the events that took place at the Chesterfield track and a rally make for some spine chilling reading. Gradients that are steep on the up side and death defying when going down. Some even were both

steep up and on a tight curve just as the tunnel was exited. Anyone not convinced just what a smaller locomotive was able to achieve should pay a visit there someday and see for themselves. A good sign that this section of our hobby is still well supported is shown by their fixture list for this summer, many weekends are shown as having an event taking place, including their National Rally at Rugby (June 14th) and later on at Stafford there is the 'Curly Bowl' (September 5th & 6th).

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND



In a recent edition of the newsletter from the **Pickering Society** dealt with a visit one member made to a French guy known as Pierre Scerri. Apparently known as one of the world's top model engineers he specializes in model cars. With a workshop that would be the envy of many small businesses, equipped with good machinery and above all else clean, tidy and well decorated. His pride and joy at the time is a one third scale 312 Ferrari that had just been returned from Chicago, North America. The model is famous and has been described many times, mainly because everything works on it as with the full size version.

Many years ago I reported on the support needed for the (then)

developing **Stockholes Farm Miniature Railway**, it seems that development is still the by word here. The main thrust for the members for 2009 will be the third circuit, but some delays with a set of handrails along 'Lupin Alley' is stopping further progress at this time. As a consequence it has been decided to concentrate their efforts on extending the third circuit from 'Millstone Colliery' sidings down to 'Sully Steps'. (Don't these names conjure up some imaginative thoughts?) Reading through a latest copy of their newsletter I see activity was rife around 1999 and even further back to beyond 1988, with mention of a 'first steam up' during Boxing Day 1988. Time stands still for no man, so they say, I think it positively races away sometimes.

Upholding a tradition held for many years the **City of Sunderland Society MES** held a New Years Day run, with locomotives performing well and giving interesting onlookers something to smile at. Just three locomotives took part, unfortunately an electric locomotive had to retire when the metal bodywork caused a short circuit that led to control box problems. With temperatures hovering around the zero mark everyone that took part were pleased to have been able to complete another tradition. During another steam up in January a member took along his re-built 5" gauge Royal Scot named 'Royal Air Force'. This had been derailed and suffered some damage on another occasion. Following the clubs own guidelines the driver took care when driving it around the track, and only when it had been successfully tested were the public allowed to ride behind it. This drew comments from many of the onlookers, many saying how they admired the care and attention taken by the members. From one of their own it was said, 'you never know who is watching or how they interpret the actions taken when talking with others'.

Along at the **York City & District Model Engineers** they are counting the cost of the 'credit crunch'; suggested figures show a loss of an equivalent amount to ten subscriptions over the year. They do at least show a healthy number of members, compared with a lot of other clubs. Even so at the time their own report was filed they only had approximately half of the renewals in. A proposed storage arrangement using a container, for their passenger carriages, is being re-thought. Probable rejection of planning permission means that the members are now being asked for alternative ideas on what the needs and requirements are for this

project. As an added interest they have been offered and accepted an invitation to host the 2009 'Lionsmeet' event. An event similar to IMLEC but much less formal and for models of the 'Lion' locomotive, the event is shown as being booked for August 1st.

I see that the lads from 'Up North' are a hardy lot, members of the **Kirklees Model Boat Club** spent a good time one Sunday morning breaking up the ice on their water so that they could sail their boats. I must admit if that had been some members from my own club 'Down South' they would have probably stayed in the warm. Unfortunately their newsletter I have contains much about their AGM and the various issues they were dealing with, not a lot of which would be of interest to outsiders, so with that in mind we will move on.

Members of the **Tyneside Society** have been very busy laying lengths of ground level track since mid January. Message was that everyone has been doing well but that they were sure more help would be appreciated, some it is said may even enjoy it! Back breaking work involving laying concrete, digging and eventually laying pre-fabricated lengths of track does not seem to make them an less cheerful, judging by the photograph on the front of their latest news. A plea for more scrap copper and brass for their funds was made, all for the track fund it would appear. (Pity the prices have dropped recently ed) Anyone wanting to go along and give the new work the once over should aim for the weekend of September 5th/6th when they will be holding their late Summer Rally.

Recently, at my own club, we have been working away from any 'mains

electricity, using one of two battery drills. After this exercise one member suggested our batteries were at the end of their life, and that he had found a way to overcome the problem and save money at the same time. Lo and behold when reading through the news from the **Leeds Society** I came across an article describing the same process. If I can I will seek permission to re-publish this as it is interesting, also with replacement batteries being almost as costly as a new machine it may be worth considering. Portable track events are prominent with this group, all of which

need members to offer and give support. This year they were asked to take their track along to the NRM and operate it inside, along with an exhibition of some of their work. This was at an event known as 'Cab It' taking place during March. Unfortunately the event clashed with their running day, but they decided to carry on with both, hopefully all went well.

THE MIDLANDS & EASTERN COUNTIES



Puff & Stuff' a particularly apt title for a club newsletter, this is used by the **Kings Lynn & District Society** and is of course shown on the front of their latest newsletter. The issue I have shows they are determined not to let a drop of rain stop them enjoying their track. One picture shows a member driving an electric locomotive around under an umbrella. Their own comments were that they hoped the locomotive did not start to 'Ruston' maybe they missed the fact that the drivers name was Poppins, I leave the connective 'pun' for you to work out. The charity nominated for this year is the East Anglian Air Ambulance, a worthy cause indeed. Following the find of several steel framed, fold up tables, the word 'recycle' have taken on a new meaning here. These old table frames have been transformed into several new passenger car frames. The plywood tops have also

been used to make all of the panels for these new cars. Good work.

The newsletter from the **Norwich & District Society** shows a very interested couple of youngsters admiring the workings of a steam locomotive. Comments inside were that judging by the numbers of youngsters that approach them at events would indicate there is still a lot of interest in steam and the hobby. The writer goes on to say, 'unfortunately, Health & Safety laws often restrict us from extending this enthusiasm'. An invitation made to this writer some years previous, to drive a locomotive, was the thing that stirred his enthusiasm that has not diminished to this day. This enthusiasm has also encouraged other members at this society to complete a works programme over the last winter.

Like several groups around the country the **Colchester Society** are not alone in realizing they are gradually spending more money than they are collecting in. This fact has prompted them to think about running several passenger afternoons during the warmer months of the year. A question was raised so that the members could deliberate on, (a) whether they could draw enough members together to cover the various jobs that would be needed to do if this and (b) could they get enough motive power organised.

One point that is obvious from the newsletter of the **Birmingham Society** is that they are not short of photographic records. Several pages of their latest newsletter are filled with pictures from several events. One even shows a member working in freezing conditions making good a defect on a turntable. As most other groups take advantage of the 'off season' so the members here have been busy making good and improving their own facilities. Maybe they benefit from having a change of committee on a fairly regular basis, I know it does make sense to do this, but only if there are enough willing members to take on some of the positions available. Membership here (at the time of their writing) stood at 133, so you could expect a good response to alternative committee members now and again I suppose.

Kinver & West Midlands Society members were reminded that the club newsletter remains a very important 'Link' with members from all sides. So much so the Editor had an inkling he would be asked to provide more issues during the

year. The problem with that idea is the extra time needed to complete these extra issues, so based on the belief it can be done a 'slim line' version is possible, with added frequency. Had to smile (well a little grin) when I read the Treasurer is standing down after a busy term of office. The need for a replacement was publicised along with the 'carrot' of a new BMW and a starting salary of £35-000 per annum. I looked for a date on this publication but could not see April 1st; bet it was not far away though!

Sadly the reporter from the 'Stephenson Link' the newsletter from the **Chesterfield & District Society** had the task of reporting not one but three deaths of members in a recent issue. On the opposite side of the coin there is a fine picture of a young lad driving granddads 5" gauge Simplex. The story of this locomotive is typical of many, begun many years ago it ended up in a cupboard 'under the stairs' unfinished, until one day the owner met up with an old mate once again. This old friend was one of the three deceased members and it was with encouragement the locomotive was finished and now runs regularly at the club tracks. A cheap replacement for those lost 'balls' on the ends of machine handles is reportedly to be second-hand (or new) golf balls. They (the newer variety at least) drill easy and will take a coarse thread or can be glued on using a well know two part adhesive. The aerodynamic dimples also feel good to the hands when gripping said ball. Oh, the writer also says they are a lot cheaper when found alongside golf club pathways, where the player has not hit them very straight!

LONDON & SOUTH EAST



Members of the **Pinewood Society** have been reminded of the life and achievements of Dick Woodruff, a past Chairman who they lost due to a heart attack recently. Much of their latest newsletter is devoted to his life story, with other club news being held over until the next issue. Dick was well known around the area, we did meet on several occasions, always good and polite exchanges. One point noted was that there had not been any reports of any safety incidents at their track during 2008 and the hope was that 2009 would see the same result.

One of the many 'new faces' I have come across at my return is the **Canterbury & District Society**. A very peaceful picture taken at the Swanage railway graces the front of their newsletter, with a different view of life on the tracks during their own New Year Day run, with a hard working 'Pansy' doing the business, just inside. Several good pictures accompany the story of an abandoned 'Hielan Lassie' and its eventual rebirth. This locomotive was started back in 1947 and stored when the builder became too ill to continue. During 2005/6 it was offered to somebody keen enough to finish it and was taken on by a member from this group. Latest picture show it resplendent in new livery and in steam. All that is needed now is the tender, while this is being worked on a Derby 4F tender is being used instead.

Isn't it good to hear of members of the public showing their generosity towards our fellow clubs?

The Prospectus, which arises from the **Reading Society**, has a simple story about a tea urn. It seems a family group regularly visited the track in Prospect Park and always enjoyed a ride behind several locomotives. When one of the children died suddenly the mother decided to donate a new tea urn and several insulated mugs so that 'outdoor' staff at the track could enjoy a warming drink, a very nice gesture indeed. Despite the cold weather at the start of this year the members have continued with the work to be done. New raised track components included 300 ties and 1500 sleepers, all being produced by members, some on a Wednesday team programme. During 2010 this Society will be celebrating their 100th birthday, what an achievement! Plans are being drawn up to mark the occasion.

The **High Wycombe ME Club** reported a possible problem for them when running their passenger days in the future. It is suggested they may have to obtain planning permission for their four days of running, for an annual charge. Seems a clause in their original planning permission prohibited members of the general public from using the railway. Checks are being made to ascertain the situation fully. Sub headlines in their latest issue read 'Bomb Disposal', which grab

the eyes quickly. No nothing seriously wrong at the track, it was referring to a talk to be given on the subject. Unfortunately the speaker was to have been available during last December, he had however been detained for a few weeks on 'bomb disposal' activities in Afghanistan, so will not have been available until April. Must say that would have been a 'different' evening, wonder if he took any samples along!

The bad weather we all experienced early on this year has been replaced by some better and warmer days now. The Editor of the newsletter from the **St Albans Society** makes mention of the walk he made around their site at the 'Puffing Field' in early February. He says he can't recall when he last saw the site so wet and waterlogged. Still that would not have deterred any from their boating section who of course thrive on water. Then again he talks about ice, so I suppose they do have their own problems. A recent talk was given on the subject of restoring a Spitfire, a topic that has been on television recently although not the same aircraft it seems. The aircraft that was centre to their talk lay in a field for some 40 years in Australia, before being brought back to the UK and Wales. WD 40 has been the subject of a couple of newsletters, dealing with the various uses it can be applied to. I did read somewhere that WD 40 was also good for anyone with arthritis, an application of the oil, rubbed in thoroughly, apparently gave some relief. Not sure I would want to try it on myself though! (That little reference should carry the warning 'don't try this at home, maybe)

Good to see that some exhibitions organised by clubs are a success. The exhibition run by the **Northolt Model Railway Club** last September saw a

healthy allocation to their balance sheets. Increased 'gate money', better takings at the canteen and the fares raised on the live steam rides all came together to produce the final gain. At least their new Treasurer should have been happy with all of that! This club have decided to make both their Model Making Competition and Photographic Competition Annual events, this I would imagine be due to the success of recent events of a similar nature.

Possibly disturbing news from the **Frimley & Ascot Locomotive Club** comes in the way of a warning to their members. The major item for 'food for thought' is that their current lease expires in around two years time, discussions with the Council have already started but must be pursued in earnest before time runs out. Another worry (it affects a lot of clubs as well) is the slow but steady decline of membership and the non-emergence of new and younger people. Along with the thoughts about the membership the writer gives the impression that, again as with a lot of other clubs, there is perhaps a certain lack of enthusiasm amongst the members. Many make or give suggestions and, an idea of what they would like to see take place, but that is as far as it goes. The writer says anyone can organise anything (with maybe approval in certain cases) and that it would perhaps widen the broader picture and make club life more enjoyable for more members. Despite this picture of uncertainty there has been a lot of engineering work taking place, both with the track and some of their buildings. Some fairly complicated views of new trackwork are shown in a couple of smaller photographs, great work anyway.

In the 'Newslink', a newsletter from the **Sutton Model Engineering Club** there

appears a warning that is perhaps good for us all. Power cuts can happen almost anywhere these days, although they are fairly uncommon. A recent cut to the supply at the home of 'Dusty' Miller caused all of his appliances to go off, including his Myford. On this machine he was taking a cut using the auto-feed, which was nearing the end of the cut. Luckily for him and his machine he was still there when the machine started up again when power was restored. He says this particular machine did not have a no-volt release device fitted, so was therefore easily able to start again once the power was back. He has now bought one such device and has fitted it so the problems should not occur again. (Food for thought, have you checked your machines for this) Here's another thought provoking fact. Back in the 1500's most people were married in June, the reason was thought to be because they took their 'yearly' bath during May and still smelt pretty good come June. However because some did begin to smell a bit by then the Bride carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odours. This is given as the reason why brides still carry a bouquet to this day, not because of the odour but because of tradition! (This from a collection published in the Newslink.)

A copy of the Journal from the **East Surrey 16mm Group** portrayed a day out visiting the Bluebell railway, this gave the writer some food for thought. Walking along the proposed extension he saw and walked over the viaduct and along towards the Northern end of the proposed route. The height of the viaduct walls created some discussion, feelings were that not very much of the locomotives and trains would be visible from down below nor the scenery from the train. These feelings were quickly tempered when they

saw the recently uncovered bridge across the infamous cutting. This cutting was filled with domestic rubbish some years ago and is probably the final obstacle before they can get to their destination. He went on to apologise for digressing into standard gauge talk rather than 16mm gauge matters, he will try to do better next time.

Metamorphosis is not a word often used; however the Chairman from the **Bedford Model Engineering Society** did, and it made me think. But, it did not mean what I had thought initially, what a great thing education would have been! Various cost saving ideas mean the members are leaving the Barn at Summerfields, which has been their home since they arrived, they are now moving into a 'container workshop'. Along with this move there is a new bridge being completed at one of the stations. This bridge will span three ground level tracks and one raised. A grant of money is enabling these members to complete both projects at a reasonable price. First thoughts were they had not suffered any serious damage following the nasty winter weather, however the ingress of water into the floor space of their buffet, caused by some longer lasting issues, did require some urgent work but all is now well.

News from the **Welling & District Model Engineering Club** was probably greeted with some small amount of applause. The news was they have been granted a stay of execution from having to move off of their Falconwood Site. Members are reminded that they will not be idle in their search for a suitable alternative site, several of which are being actively investigated. Some steps have been taken already to make the dismantling a little bit easier when time

comes to make it happen. Following the announcement they were to have left the site they held a 'Farewell to Falconwood Boxing Day Steam-up', premature it may have been, but also a great success, with sixty five bodies and seven locomotives running. A few 'clips' taken from a published book about 'Disorder in American Courts' caught my eye, with one in particular. It read. Attorney 9. Do you recall the time you examined the body? Witness 9. The autopsy started at around 8-30 pm. Attorney 9. And was John Doe dead at the time. Witness 9. If not, he was by the time I finished! Typifies some views of American behaviour I suppose.

Saffron Walden & District Society members are eagerly awaiting their new clubhouse it seems. Some changes to the original design had been returned to the suppliers and a step towards planning application was due. A final result from the planners is or was still waited for. This is another group that has a Wednesday Gang, doing much of the work maybe. A section of track was being re-laid and some new points fabricated and installed. Their signal box was the scene of a final fit recently as well, the power points have been re-wired and a new worktop installed, with all of these improvements there were mutterings about having a vacuum cleaner to keep the carpet tiles clean, the Treasurer was said to have suddenly gone deaf at those sounds.

If you are at a loose end and anywhere near the East End of London pop along to Belhus Wood Country Park in Aveley, Essex. You may find some members of the **Docklands & East London Society** out there enjoying the hobby. With working parties on Thursdays, regular meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and weekend running on the first weekend of

each month from April until October. Their permanent track is currently being extended, this work taking place during the Thursday working party times. I am sure they would welcome some new faces to chat to.

A lot of the comments from the **Crawley Model Engineers** were centred on the cold weather earlier. On several occasions running was curtailed because it was so cold. Members did turn up but the attraction quickly turned to getting home and into the warm. On the topic of warmth, a Fish & Chip supper was held to which 21 members took part. The cod & chips followed by mince pies and custard with coffee and mints to finish was a good event. (Hope nobody fell ill after that mixture)

Several members of the **Staines Society** have been busying themselves replacing their original steaming bays and turntable this spring. The original concrete support posts were starting to break up due to corrosion of the reinforcing rods. These have been replaced with rolled hollow section (square tube) sunk into the ground with adjustable height top rail sections. A new turntable has also been constructed, this time doing away with outrigger wheel's, the down thrust from either end of the top section, is taken by diagonal bars connected to the base of the rotating centre spindle. This all seems to work okay at the present. Some vandalism did occur during the rebuild, but a heavy police operation locally against drug related crime seems to have forced the perpetrators to stay away from the open spaces such as the parks. The members here are looking forward to the reinstatement of an Invitation day to other clubs, due to be held on the 8th August

this year. Membership seems to have lost out recently to the ever present losses caused by members passing on from this world, new and younger members will soon see a 'press gang' rounding them up from the High Street.

Good to read that we still have 'Sue's Spot' in the newsletter from the **Maidstone Society**. I read with interest that Sue took part in Littlelec at Guildford last season, reading between the lines it was enough to make your hair stand on end (if you have any!). The second run she made with her recently refurbished 'Juliet'; hauling a borrowed driving car

(two seater) nearly came a cropper. The improvised connection between locomotive and driving car came adrift, luckily Sue had her hand where it was most wanted, on the locomotive. Her second run was however fast, and fairly uneventful after that, she was awarded eighth place overall at the end of the event, there were 24 competitors in total. Sadly at their own track in Mote Park they suffer the ever present problems such as track damage, graffiti, broken lights, smashed fences and broken glass bottles that have to be swept up every time they meet there, but...they keep smiling and enjoying their own

WALES & THE SOUTH WEST



Starting this section with the **City of Oxford Society** I read that a recent plea for financial assistance with the cost of the proposed clubhouse rebuild was reflected in some mixed returns. 70 letters were sent out with a return of 35, however the final result has given enough support for the project once planning permission is granted. Some comments were made regarding the new issue 'Blue Book', and how it may or may not affect some members. One last note was that despite lobbying from some quarters the test code still excludes stainless steel boilers. An idea to building a 16mm narrow gauge railway on site has been suggested it seems. The advantages included in the discussion were the ability of members to become interested in something smaller than normal, encourage younger people to go along and join, and of course be an attraction for people to look at. Early days in the discussion, as the new clubhouse

will take preference at the outset.

The Chairman of the **East Somerset Society** always felt that wintertime was a quiet time, but at their track they just seem to get busier each year. New trackwork, including a turntable and steaming bays have been built, signalling is being installed and other features will soon see a fine railway. This track is situated on the Bath & West Showground at Shepton Mallet so will be in full view whenever there is an event on. One visit planned for this year is a trip up to the Great Cockrow Railway, near Chertsey in Surrey. This is probably a trip to gain ideas as they have been promised a tour of all that is there.

Another 'Oily Rag' drops onto the doormat on occasions, this time from the **Taunton Model Engineers**. Quickly spotted was the report that this 'Oily Rag' had been entered in the EIM Competition

for the best 'club' magazine last year. Their entry came second with a monetary prize that was quickly taken into care by the Treasurer. I see they are another bunch that have been extremely busy with new trackwork and building projects. Land drains at the 'Creech' site became a priority last year when flood water washed a load of ballast away down a hill, causing work to slow appreciably, now some of these drains are in place the problems seem to be diminishing. Back at Vivary Park an extension is making fast progress, with some members producing large amounts of 'stuff' off site. An extremely helpful local authority made life easier for them by lending a backhoe excavator equipped with a post-hole borer, this made sinking the holes almost effortless for the work force.

Those members of the **Plymouth Miniature Steam** group that take part in the 'workshop training' sessions on Tuesday evenings have had to change venue. It seems they faced the prospect of having their entry fees doubled, luckily they have found a 'new' workshop to attend. Membership numbers still hover around the 100 mark, while active members really only account for 25/30% of these, nothing unusual here I suppose. After a long period of low track maintenance the members were told 'the holiday is over', serious track levelling and straightening will have to become a priority shortly, along with some other major work on their clubhouse. Finance for this is available with the Treasurer giving a thumb's up.

I seem maybe to have missed something recently, reading through the pages of the Journal from the **Newton Abbot & District Society** I see they are holding a track opening ceremony over the weekend of June 20/21st this year. So

presumably this is a new track for them, they are also holding, for their members, a session dealing with 'new track running rules', so I guess my assumptions are correct. A 'Boxing Day' steam up proved very successful with some twenty members turning out on a crisp morning. Several locomotives were steamed during the morning, with only the cold causing a halt to the event around lunchtime. Some comments on the smooth ride around their track were made with approval given overall.

Down at the **Bournemouth & District Society** a lot of work has taken place since I last sat here at the Editors desk. What with all of the uncertainty in the past, then the upheaval when they had to move track, they now seem to be 'back on track' at their new home at Littledown. Some super ground works have just been accomplished, with the driveway being levelled and presumably given a hard surface, pictures show a piece of machinery in action while doing this work. New carriage sheds were on the agenda when their February and March newsletters were published.

News came that the **Andover & District Society** are well placed on a four-acre site nearby to the Wherwell Forest. The members here are busy building a new ground level and raised level track. No other news at the present time.

Apart from the business of hosting the **AIMLEC** event this year, the members of the **Bristol Society** will be celebrating their Centenary. This will be over the weekend of June 6th/7th with each member being able to take part in many activities on or around the railway. There are also strong hopes that a traction engine presence will be arranged.

Members able to help on this were advised that as it is an outside event they might want to organise various means of cover in case the weather changes for the worse. Heavy engineering work was being carried out at the track to create a tunnel. Huge digging and preparation took place before Christmas, with more heavy deliveries taking place after. At the time of their writing a lot of the building work has been completed and they were expecting the roof beams to be delivered, this will, when completed, make for some interesting running.

Searching through the Cardiff Messenger, the newsletter from the **Cardiff M.E Society**, I did spot the report from the Chairman, in which he speaks of 2008, and the frustrating year it was. Visitor numbers were good to excellent, their 'Welsh Rally' was a success and membership remains buoyant, along with good financial reserves. One 'fly in the ointment' seems to be the delay in getting 'Landlords Consent' to the improvements they have planned for their grounds. Planning permission was granted eighteen months ago for the clubhouse rebuild and the track extension but work may not be started until they had the other consent. It is/was hoped this would be

resolved during March this year, so maybe we shall hear more on this next time around.

A member from the **Mold M.E Society** writes of the dangers of handling hot boilers when pickling them. Thinking the boiler had reduced enough in temperature, following a tea break; he proceeded to pick it up by the smokebox end with a pair of 'molegrips'. Gradually lowering said boiler into the solution it gave off a nice gently sizzle, until, the acid met the still very hot tubes inside the boiler, boiling it up and out of the ends of the tubes! Not wanting to burn his arm any further he lowered it faster into the solution to get it away and safely on the bottom, this resulted in a further squirting of acid over his forearm once again. Once the boiler was at rest he quickly departed to the kitchen sink and ran plenty of cold water over this burns. To add insult to injury a couple of days later, despite all of his care not to damage the boiler it rolled off his workbench. He concludes by stating 'when handling H₂SO₄ whether hot or cold set the equipment out with plenty of space, wear gauntlets and eye protection and do not rush'.

EVENTS DIARY 2009

JUNE

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 6/7 | Sweet Pea Rally - (Sheffield S.M.E.E)
Welsh Locomotive Rally - (Cardiff M.E.S.) |
| 13/14 | Harrow and Wembley S.M.E. – Open Weekend
North Wiltshire M.E.S. – Rally Weekend |
| 20 | Chelmsford S.M.E. – Club/Society Invitation Day |
| 20 | Harlington Locomotive Society – Visiting Clubs Day |

20/21	Cambridge M.E.S - 50th Anniversary Rally
20/21	Worthing and Dist. S.M.E. – LittleLEC Efficiency Comp
21	Southampton S.M.E. – Electric Open Day
*27/28	M.S.R.V.S. - Traction Engine Rally (Tewkesbury)
JULY	
*4/5	I.M.L.E.C. - (Bristol S.M.E.E.)
11/12	North Wiltshire M.E.S. – Charity Weekend
*18/19	Guildford M.E.S Traction Engine Rally and Exhibition
	Sacrewell Traction Engine Rally and Gathering
25/26	City of Oxford S.M.E. - Dreaming Spires Rally
AUGUST	
8	Staines Society Open/Invitation Day
16	Bolebrooke Castle and Lakes Railway – Ffestiniog Day
*21/23	MODEL ENGINEERING EXHIBITION – Bristol S.M.E.E. (Thornbury Leisure Centre)
29/31	Harrow and Wembley S.M.E. – Open Weekend
31	Bolebrooke Castle & Lakes Railway – Steam/Electric/Diesel Day
SEPTEMBER	
6	Wortley Top Forge ME. Annual Open Day.
12	Peterborough S.M.E. – Polly Loco Owners Rally
*12/13	National Locomotive Rally (Birmingham S.M.E.)
12/13	Bolebrooke Castle and Lakes Railway – American Locomotives
13	Harlington Locomotive Society – Exhibition Day
*19	FEDERATION AUTUMN RALLY (City of Oxford Society of Model Engineers)
*20	Host Society Open Day
OCTOBER	
3	Welling and Dist. M.E.S. – Autumn Open Day
*16/20	MIDLANDS MODEL ENGINEERING EXHIBITION. (Warwickshire Exhibition Centre)
DECEMBER	
13	Harlington Locomotive Society – Mince Pie Run
13	Wortley Top Forge ME. Christmas Gala Run.

Note!! Subject to receiving an invitation, dates and events marked thus * the Federation “Road Show” would hope to be in attendance.

Apologies are also extended to the Bristol S.M.E.E. for showing the incorrect dates, in the March issue of this newsletter, for their Exhibition at the Thornbury Leisure Centre. The corrects dates are above.

SOUTHERN FEDERATION COMMITTEE

**If there is any need to contact any of the relevant
committee members, contact
boxes are to be
found on the web site pages.**

**FEDERATION WEB SITE
www.southernfed.co.uk**

YOUR OWN INPUT TO THESE PAGES.

The question of time is always at the forefront when you get to a certain age, is there time, what's the time, there comes a time!

So with those thoughts in mind, a selection of ideas regarding the input and output in these pages. Obviously, in an ideal world, each club that sends material in, would create an article, already complete as a word document and/or E:mail.

Obviously I do understand that not everybody has the facilities to do this, so perhaps if there is anything particular you would like printed within these pages, then you may feel like getting a highlighter pen and circling the words you would like used from your own newsletter.

Any articles you may feel are of interest to other model engineers can be sent in, once again finished articles are worth their weight in black ink.

Photographs are also a good way of filling up some of these blank spaces that seem to occur from time to time. A 'stock' of these would be handy and would almost certainly be used over a period of time.

So give some thought to these notes and see if you can help us to help you.

My contact details are at the back, and also on the website. Having mentioned the web site, I would also add that it has fallen on my lap to look after that as well. Any comments regarding it should be sent to me direct. If I can help I will.

Best regards Stan Bishop.

Many thanks for all the support. If your item of news has not appeared then please accept our apologies and tell us.

**Please note that you can also subscribe to this newsletter and have your own copy delivered to your door. Just contact :
Mr John Walker. 23 Redwing Close. Stratford upon Avon. Warks. CV37
9EX.**

**You should enclose a cheque for £7-50 if you reside within the UK
or a cheque for £11-50 (Sterling) if you live overseas.**

These prices include postage & packing.

Cheques should be made payable to SOUTHERN FEDERATION OF MES.

(Prices were correct at time of going to press)

