



*This article is provided by FMES for your interest thanks to the kindness of the original publishers. FMES makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied about the completeness, accuracy or reliability with respect to this document and any sentiments expressed are not necessarily supported by FMES. Any reliance you place on this document is therefore strictly at your own risk*

## “FMES Autumn 2023 Rally”

This document was written by Paul Naylor and was originally published by the FMES in November 2023

The Autumn Rally this year was held at the Frimley and Ascot Locomotive Club's impressive track in Surrey where the club managed an excellent day for those who attended, with plenty of chance to run on the one kilometre long multi-gauge ground level track, or the somewhat shorter raised track...indeed, or on both! The weather was kind with a sunny balmy day, well worth the trip.



The event had been advertised in the model press, on the FMES website and in messages sent round to clubs, both electronically and in a letter.

Everyone who attended the event had a good time, with many congratulatory comments from visitors for the organisation by the host club including food, booking in, car parking and stewarding. The event also comprised two competitions this year: the regular Australian Association of Live Steamers (AALS) competition and an inaugural FMES competition set up to complement the AALS award but with broader eligibility criteria.



A difficult judging process was dutifully undertaken by panels of judges from FMES, the host club and previous winners, and they were very pleased to make their selections unanimously.

The AALS award went to Paul Norrington of the Romney Marsh Engineering Society with his stunning 5" gauge 4-4-0 'Schools' class 'Epsom'. This locomotive, built from works drawings, took Paul over 12 years to build and this level of

commitment showed in its appearance and performance. Paul received the AALS trophy, cash prize and a glass trophy to keep.



The inaugural FMES Autumn Rally competition award was also awarded to a locomotive: this prize includes any Model Engineering aspect that the host club represents, the host club in this case focussed on locomotives, and so the competition this year was for locomotive or other railway rolling stock. The winner was Martin Parham with his magnificent 5" gauge Gresley 2-8-2 P2 class 'Lord President'. Martin built this locomotive around 20 years ago and is built to a prototypical Michael Breeze design.

There were other locomotives of course and these ranged happily across the spectrum including steam, petrol and electric power, and with owners of all ages, as can be seen from the photos.



Photos – Phil Weaver

The reason for the enjoyment of those present was clear to see: the chance to drive on an impressive track, to show their models to others, to meet other model engineers and some old friends and 'chew the fat', as well as compete in two competitions. Our only disappointment was that there were not more members from FMES clubs present to enjoy the Rally. We are not alone in experiencing a reduction in numbers attending these sort of events no doubt impacted by the effects of Covid , rising costs, etc. but are those the only reasons? At risk of being repetitive, we believe that the Rally does provide a valuable opportunity for members of FMES clubs to meet, exchange views and just have a good day out. Yes, there is something of a focus on ride-on railways due to the competition for the AALS trophy, but that also comes with the opportunity to ride another club's track. However, the Rally only succeeds if it attracts attendees and consequently **we need your feedback** on what you as club or club member think of the Rally in its current form, what could be included that interests you or conversely, whether it is of no interest to

you anyway. If there is no feedback, I guess we will have to take the view that there is no interest. Please send your comments, encouraging or otherwise to [info@fmes.org.uk](mailto:info@fmes.org.uk) .