

MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring & Summer 2009

Smart Pete 1994



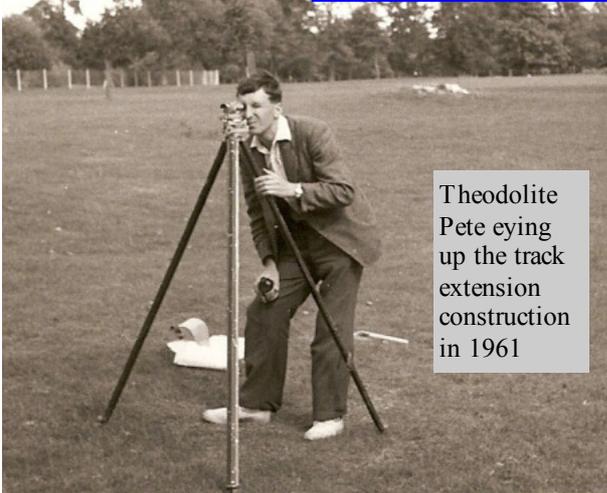
Driving Pete: JB's Lion in 2000



Loco Pete: Bernie's Britannia 2003

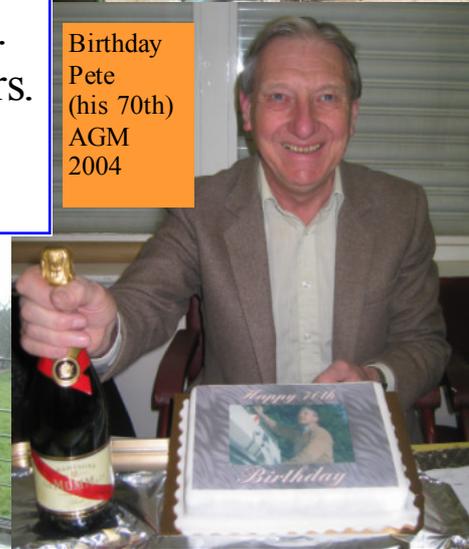


Theodolite Pete eying up the track extension construction in 1961



This issue is dedicated to Peter Roots 1934 — 2009.
Treasurer for the last 49 years.
M.M.E.S. member for 59 years.
The place won't be the same without you.

Birthday Pete (his 70th) AGM 2004



Steaming Pete: Martin's Stirling Single late 1970s



Treasurer Pete in the Clubhouse waiting for your sub 2002



Pensive Pete 1990s



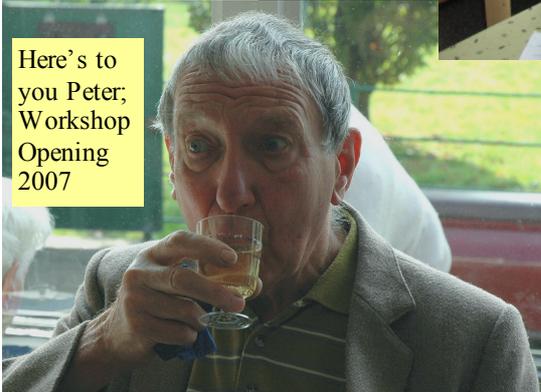
Painting Pete at the Clubhouse 2002



Sparkling Pete at the Club Firework Run 2004



Here's to you Peter; Workshop Opening 2007



THE TREASURER WHO WAS A TREASURE

Peter A. Roots was born on 4th March 1934, lived all his life, and died on 14th March 2009, at Mitchells Stores, the small hardware shop in the Tonbridge Road, Maidstone. He was 75 when he had a massive heart attack while asleep in bed and was found next morning by his family after a customer alerted them that the shop had not opened as usual. He had died peacefully in his sleep and wouldn't have known a thing (possibly the best way to go – if you have to!).

Peter's parents were already running the shop when he was born. When he was a child his dad took him to London mainline stations collecting steam train numbers. And so his life long passion was formed. When he was eleven he contacted Brights Disease which meant long spells in hospital. He missed a lot of schooling, nearly all of it between the ages of eleven and fifteen, but despite this he had a thirst for knowledge, particularly for learning all things practical and engineering. In his late teens he had fully recovered from his illness and started working locally in Maidstone. When his mother died he took over running the shop, which he did for the next forty-five years. Peter never married, he was just happy on his own. He would happily chat and give advice to anyone who asked. At the club some nicknamed him Arkwright, like the shopkeeper in the old TV sitcom *Open All Hours*. I expect many a time Pete was also asked for “fork handles” as in the *Two Ronnies* favourite sketch - which doubtless he stocked, as he did candles. And wicks for your Tilly Lamp! Martin can tell you the tale of how years ago we needed half a hinge at the Park, so Pete carefully cut one in two. Twenty years later, when this half a hinge broke, Pete was, at the time, able to produce instantly the other half of the hinge in replacement, he'd kept all that time.

His great passion, of course, was for trains and so he joined M.M.E.S. in 1950, a few months after his mate Bernie White. In due course it became a ritual for Peter, going to Sunday lunch with his sister Marion and husband, then heading up to Mote Park for the afternoon. From 1960 he took on the role of Treasurer for the Society, and happily remained in the role until he died. Several years ago he was awarded with Life membership for his unstinting commitment to the club.

When he drove his white van, it was a familiar sight coming up the road whenever and whatever time we were about to pour a cup of tea. He had an uncanny ability we marvelled at, a sixth sense of knowing exactly when the kettle was put on, as no matter what time we tried to catch him out, he'd always turn up at just the right moment for his cuppa. Or, more than likely, three. We never had to worry about what to do with any rubbish we had at the Club. Pete would either store it or make a bonfire with it.

In 2006 he had a stroke and a minor heart attack and although he recovered really well, he never completely regained the use of his left arm. After his stroke he was unable to drive, and true to form, he didn't want to put anybody out and he took a bit of persuading to let members take him to and from the Park in their cars. But he soon realised he would not get there otherwise, so it became a regular routine. This meant he was at the Club all day on a Sunday, and so I got into the routine of giving him lunch. Pete was never one to turn down food, and anything left over at the end of the day at the Park we always wrapped up for him to take home. Yet he never got fat.

While recuperating he and Marion would take advantage of their “Pensioner's Passport to Paradise” (as Graham Kimber calls it) - free bus travel, and they took several coach trips together, often down to Dover and back. He was always able to educate the bus drivers on points of interest on the trip. Whereas many would have decided to call it a day on running the shop, not Pete. “I wouldn't know what to do with myself”, he said, and carried on, as soon as he felt he had recovered enough to continue, despite being in his seventies, well past normal retirement age, and with limited use of his left arm.

Pete would never complain; “Who's going to listen?” he'd joke. In fact Pete always took everything in his stride, nothing ever seemed to upset him, he never lost his temper, he was always friendly and approachable and never rude to anyone. He was held in high esteem by those who knew him. We will miss him terribly at the Club, in so many ways. Farewell old friend. *Editor.*

Chairman's Report on 2008

Well, another year over, it's that time again to report on last year. The New Year started as we left the old year with the ongoing saga of the cesspit. Needless to say the rather large hole had now filled itself with water and needed to be continuously pumped out while the cesspit was put in place. We decided at that point we would leave the toilets until the end of the season before we started the main work of changing the old trolley store into our new super toilets and washing facilities.

The new season started at Easter with outstanding weather but from that point in time it all went down hill; cold and wet and always seemed to be on Sundays, so we spent an awful lot of time looking at ourselves in the clubhouse. This meant our takings were down, but as usual we came through smiling.

We did our normal visits to other societies through the summer starting with Romney, which was a pleasant Saturday with good weather. The day turned out to be more of a Gauge One day than 5" gauge, as the majority of our members brought their Gauge One locomotives to Romney's Garden Railway. We also made visits to Canvey, Beech Hurst, North London, Birmingham and Welling. It's very sad to hear that Welling will lose its track due to redevelopment at the Power Station and we can only hope that this will be resolved.

I have to mention Sue's outstanding run with Jack at Guildford's IMLEC for smaller locomotives. It was amazing to see the speed she managed to get out of Jack on the Guildford course, and the sight of Martin sitting behind Sue as the load for one of the runs with his hands around in front of Sue, trying to hook up the trolley, which became separated from the loco, well, that is what Martin said he was doing. From where I was standing I couldn't tell either way; there just seemed to be an awful lot of frantic movements around the rear of the loco, it certainly was an outstanding effort; well done Sue.

I would now like to mention a visit we had on one of our club nights from Noel Shelley who was guest speaker on sand castings. His talk was very interesting with demonstrations on how to make a mould up. This led us to invite him to follow up his talk with a demonstration of casting on another club night. This he did, it was an amazing evening which I think you will all agree. The furnace that was made out of an old spin dryer roared like a jet engine on reheat, I can only describe Noel's character as another Fred Dibnah. He made it a very enjoyable evening with most of the members staying longer than normal on a club night.

I have to thank our friends at Canvey who invited us to their track as they have done so many times before for a special meet, this is always a very pleasant day. They look after us so well with the important things of food and drink. We also as before held a Family and Friends Day. This went very well. I always find it a pleasure to see members of families and friends, who have never driven before having so much fun behind the loco. Perhaps we ought to expand it a bit and see whether road vehicle members can talk their families into trying to drive their vehicles, could be fun.

With the end of the season coming so quickly we then started our usual repairs and the building of the new toilets. I can now report at this meeting (the A.G.M.) that we have now got functional toilets, they may not be finished but our ladies no longer have to sit crossed legged because the public toilets are not open in the Park. We plan to formally open the loos on our first public running day on 29th March. I must mention the key manufacturing men for this project: Many thanks for your outstanding work to Edgar, our key builder; Martin, materials and planning; David, plumbing; Geoffrey, plumber's mate; Paul, sink plinth construction; Phil a friend of the club who volunteered to give up his time and do all the electrics; and a special thanks to everybody else who helped these guys to get the job done. The work itself is a credit to all. I also must thank again the track crew led by Peter for their outstanding work in keeping Maidstone's track as one of the best in the country; well done boys.

Now we come to the Boxing Day Run, which this year was so well attended by our members and the general public. The weather was good and everybody seemed to have a good time, the donations were good too. Annual dinner arranged by Pat was again a great success even though the weather was trying to upset us with all the white stuff coming down but the food was good and the company of our fellow members made it a very enjoyable meal. We intend to do the same again next year, for those who didn't attend I can highly recommend it. So, Pat have you booked yet? If not, why not.

Being that 2009 is a special year as we are celebrating the club's 80th Birthday, Sue is trying to arrange a dinner celebration on the Kent and East Sussex Railway at Tenterden on Saturday May 30th, Speak to Sue for details, it should be a great night. We also intend to hold an 80th anniversary special event inviting other clubs to an open day. As always, help on this day from our members is very welcome, please come along and make this a really successful day.

I would now like to thank our President Peter Chislett who has now decided due to ill health to step down from his current position. The committee feels that Peter should be recommended for Vice President, with your approval. I know Peter will be very happy to be elected Vice President.

And so, to end, I wish you all a Happy New Year and let's hope for better weather than we had last year, so we can all play without rain macs on.

As before, thank you all for reading my waffle.

Your Chairman
John Hawkins

DEAR OLD WOOLWORTH

We've most of us 'eard about t' Lion, and Albert, and 'is Mum and Dad,
And of Sam Small, and of 'is encounters, and all of the problems 'e 'ad.

But there's new things that are now occurring, that it looks like no-one can stop,
That's the demise of dear old Woolies, that's forever had a town centre spot.

In days gone by, dear old Woolies was a wonderful place to behold,
With all of it's sixpenny barg'ins, and also some threepenny I'm told.

It were like walking into t' cave of Aladdin, a real Treasure House, so they say,
There were toys and games and household stuff, and tea and cakes all day.

But as Woolworth tried to get posher, and sell stuff like other shops did,
They just lost their public connection, and so started downward to slip.

So now we have no more Woolies, where else can we go for a treat?
I know, let's go to t' Pound Shop, I'm sure there'll be one down your street.

So, will t' Pound Shop replace old Woolies? Cos we need a shop of that kind,
Where we can go and just wander, and see what bargains we can find.

I hope t' Pound Shop don't try to get posher, like dear old Woolies did,
Or else they'll probably slip down as well, just as t' other lot slid.

Laurie Nichols
December 2008.

HALF PRICE WORLD

It's a wonderful world that we're livin' in now,
With so much bein' given away,
And on t' tele that we've most of us got,
They're saying 'ow much we can save.

Everything seems to be half price today,
Not just a bit off, like before,
They say: "the more we spend, the more we save",
But I don't believe that no more.

Now these days, we're all short of money,
Especially the poor folk like me,
So, if I could save a bob or two now,
It would make me quite 'appy you see.

So, deciding to try to save money,
I went to the town centre shops,
With all my loose cash in my pocket,
And all my pound notes in my socks.

I looked round the shops for the bargains,
That they were all talking about,
But I swear, I couldn't find them,
No matter how much I looked out.

There were many that said Half Price Bargain,
But, they were same price as afore,
So it weren't Half Price of Half Price as expected,
But, full Half Price, as before.

There were some shops that were a bit different,
They said "Up to 50% Off",
So that could still be half price couldn't it?
And then of course it may not.

I 'ope you can understand what I'm saying,
About t' Half price bargains these days,
And if you can, please will you tell me,
'Cos I haven't a clue, as they say.

Laurie Nichols
January 2009

(Editor: Our own Poet Laurie-ate?!)

Mertwitt's Limericks

There was an old man from Hornbeam
Whose engine goes just like a dream
He's good at plumbing, and also running
Round the bend and spotlessly clean.

There was an old man from Wingrove
Stewed the Club's brew on a gas stove
The tea was so strong, but what is wrong
When the members faces turn mauve?

There was an old man from Ridgeway
Occasionally drives on a Sunday
“Gertie is fine, but rather mine
When it's a Family Fun Day”.

The old man from Headingley
Bought and sold toys carefully
“I don't like to mention, but that's my pension
So sod the crisis” said he.

There was an old man from Snodland
Who grew up in London's East End
“I don't give a toss”, he once told his boss
“So stuff the job and be damned”.

There was an old man from Beverley
Who built an engine so cleverly
The Duchess said “Hey I have to say
My cross stitch is just as heavenly”.

There was a man from Charing Heath
Whose engine was knocking underneath
We can't see what it could be
Perhaps his bypass needs relief.

There was a man from Tonbridge Road
Over the shop was his abode
Four candles and matches, nutty slack dispatches
Three bags full make a load.

There was a man from Argos Hill
Allowed his missus to use his drill
It's so whizzy, when making chilli
For the Members bellies to fill.

There was an old man from Ditton
Who by the steam bug was bitten
Prefers his models not tall or small
Just big enough to sit on.

IMLEC 2007 AT LLANELLI by Tom Parham

When reading through an issue of the model engineer some time ago, I read “This year IMLEC will be hosted by Llanelli & District Model Engineering Society.” Having been intending to enter for some years, with location and clashing events getting in the way, this year had to be considered. As I remembered, a group of us enjoyed a spectacular S.H.I.T. visit to Llanelli some years earlier, with the weather even being great for us (strange for south Wales). Memory recalled the people being among the friendliest that we have encountered on our travels, the club site being incredible and the track being of a top standard. I figured that it had to be worth a trip for the experience. I called the telephone number in the article, promptly receiving an entrance form through the post, which was filled in and returned the same day. As soon as my confirmation had come back to me it was time to start planning. A quick call confirmed my support crew of Andrew to join me for the weekend. I knew John Linkins was planning to enter his Dad's Class 2, so I called him to see if he had been accepted, however he had only managed to reach the subs bench, which did mean that he was still going. I promptly booked the B&B that day for the pair of us, so that we had company at the pub. With the event now planned, it was time to start checking that the loco was in prime form for the event.

Enterprise had been in fine form the previous season, so I could not foresee any major problems, only the regular problems that crop up. A boiler de-scaling would not be a bad idea, and injector reliability could be improved, not to mention me getting more used to driving her under the different conditions. First things first. New injectors were ordered from Reeves, which turned up promptly and were fitted. These worked well, so long as good water flow could be achieved before the steam was turned on. Deciding that it would be a good idea to see the sort of loads she could cope with, I started passenger hauling one Sunday with an extra double trolley in tow, until Dad was in steam to take the rear pair. I couldn't have been happier; four trolleys worth of passengers, totalling 16 people were pulled around our track with power to spare, although the traction could not have coped with much more.

The loco was run as often as possible for familiarisation, and experimentation with firing methods. This included numerous visits to other clubs' open days whenever possible. As I kept thinking about de-scaling the boiler things kept cropping up meaning that I didn't have a spare Saturday to be able to do it. During a visit to one London club I encountered a setback. The unloading facilities were poor, in fact more like non-existent. Engines needed to be hand lifted from the car to the steaming bays about 20 feet away. ‘Fortunately’ a helping hand was offered, and I was asked what was best to lift the loco by? “Under the buffer beam is best” was my response. Naturally the assisting gentleman lifted under ten running boards just in front of the buffer beam. This being underneath the bunker tank that meant that the weight of the loco was being supported by the two bolts holding the tank to the frames in the centre of the tank base. The resulting stresses caused the rear seam of the tank to split.

Under normal circumstances this sort of damage would be fixed by re-soldering the joint, causing the paint to need stripping or blistering, leading to a re-paint. However, this occurred only a couple of weeks before the competition; therefore a bodge plan had to be formulated. The easiest method I could think of involved taking the tank to work. Not having any real access to the inside of the tank, it was not possible to mechanically clean the insides, therefore acid was poured in to clean the joint, followed by water to wash it out, then rinsed with acetone to dry it out. Next, some epoxy resin was mixed with catalyst and poured in through the filler cap. The tank was sat on wedges to keep it at the correct angle, for the resin to form a fillet around the offending seam, until the resin had fully cured by next tea break. At this stage it was possible to test the tank over the sink to check that this had worked, leaving me with a leak-free tank without the need of a paint repair. Without a tank on the rear section of frames, I noticed that there could be room for improvement to the traction since there was a gaping hole between the frames rear of the boiler as far back as the buffer beam. This void was filled with lead in order to weigh down the back end, increasing the traction. Having added this, I decided to have a rough effort at balancing the springs, until the axle loadings felt roughly equal when prised up with a screwdriver. This meant that Enterprise was out of action for a couple of weeks, meaning that it was too close to the event to want to attempt a de-scale, without the risk of causing problems.

At this point I was feeling confident that I could not do any more before the trip, I was ready to go, and couldn't wait. With three other fellow Maidstone members taking part I was anticipating a fun weekend with plenty of healthy banter and friendly competition between friends.

So, to the event we went. The 300-mile drive was made considerably easier and more enjoyable by having Andrew's company, especially since he took a stint behind the wheel. We left Maidstone late morning intending to reach the B&B in plenty of time to check in. Arriving in Wales in the early afternoon on a beautiful day, we decided to take a minor detour to the village of Mumbles, which is the home to a renowned ice-cream shop, which had been recommended by Cerys (then a new girlfriend who originally came from that area). Joe's ice cream is indeed fantastic, and well worth visiting if in the region. Continuing on the journey, we were soon arriving at the pub which was to be base for the following two nights, where John and Richard could already be found propping up the bar. The evening saw dinner eaten by the four of us, with plenty of talk about who was entering, with which locos, and who would be likely contenders for the title, not to mention a few drinks before turning in. Dad also popped in for a drink with us, having decided to stay at a hotel nearby.

Saturday morning brought the same great weather as Friday, with unspoiled blue skies, perfect weather to sit back and enjoy proceedings. By the time we reached the site a couple of runs had already taken place... the competition was under way. It was surprisingly interesting to sit back and watch the proceedings unravel, watching the different locos running past with varying loads, seeing how each engine coped with the tricky bank, and being surprised by several locos that struggled. There was a tense wait after each run for the result to be brought out to be added to the leader board, and to see how far up the board each one could climb. Especially interesting was when anybody that we knew was running. It was suggested to me that I might like to unload Enterprise from the car, so that it could be prepared, and have the official checks and measurements made. This idea appealed to me since then the engine would be locked safely inside their shed overnight instead of being on view in the back of my car outside the pub, also this would give me a more relaxed Sunday since the engine would be ready to go. So this was what I chose to do. I fetched the car, unloaded the engine where it waited on the unloading bay for the current run to finish before being transferred across the running line to the steaming bays. I was chatting with people about the history of Enterprise, and generally enjoying the atmosphere in the steaming bays, which was different to that of the spectators outside the track. One of the officials came over to me to ask if I was ready to weigh the loco, which I did, moving to the steaming bay at the far end, where the scales were mounted below the track on an inch of rail so that each axle could be individually weighed. I was happy with the result of this, since I had only guessed at the spring settings and ended up with the axle loadings all reasonably close to each other, while the leading pony truck carried next to no weight at all at merely 4lbs, and the trailing truck didn't even twitch the needle on the scales, to which the official said "we'd better put it down as 2lbs since it must have a weight." I was happy and content in the thought that everything was set ready for the next day, which put me in a good, relaxed mood for the rest of the day.

Sunday morning arrived, bringing with it bright sunshine. I went downstairs to enjoy a fried breakfast with Andrew, John and Richard, discussing the events of the day before, and those to come that day. I have discovered that Wales is notoriously bad for phone signal in that area, with the windowsill in my bedroom being the only place I could get any within the B&B, therefore my mobile phone stayed in the room over breakfast. Once the meal was finished, we decided to pack up and head to the track in order to enjoy the morning before I had to get ready for my run. When I reached the room, I had a missed call on my phone from a number I didn't recognise, so I called it back. Bernie White answered and said he had called because there had been an accident with Enterprise. "We're not sure how bad the damage is at the moment, your dad's just checking it out at the moment." Suddenly packing and getting to the site all happened at warp speed.

The car was hastily abandoned in the car park, and I was heading straight for the steaming bays when Sue met me at the gate, looked me in the eyes and told me "It's f**ked." (*Editor: Oh dear, did I really say that? I do apologise, it was just a quick way of summing up the situation in a way he'd instantly understand.*) I couldn't believe it, how could something have happened that would do that much



Enterprise as found on Sunday morning

damage? The loco had rolled out of the storage shed while backs were turned, by the time it had been spotted it was too late, it headed off the end of a bay, three feet in the air, and hit the ground bunker first before rolling onto its back. I didn't know what to do. Under visual checks, mechanically, she was unharmed as far as we could see, since it still rolled freely. However, the soleplate had been ripped out of the bunker, with the recently fixed joint having been completely ripped open. A good thing that I hadn't spent the time required to fix the tank properly before. I couldn't believe how upset I was; all I wanted at that moment was to be alone, so I just turned around and walked away without saying anything. I found a field to sit in the middle of to compose my thoughts. A couple of people

came over to check how I was feeling and offer sympathy and eventually I made a decision... I hadn't travelled a 600 mile round trip to not run, mechanically there was no reason why I couldn't have a go, so why not, all I needed was to make the tank hold water. What would Adrian have done? That was an easy answer, find a 'temporary' bodge, and put it right at a later date (probably in about 10 years).



Richard, John and I work on water pipes

One of the host members, Rob Rayner, was a magnificent help to me. He had already dashed home to fetch a tank that had not yet been finished, but was watertight, in the hope that it might be of help. By the time Rob returned to the site, between us we had an idea as to being able to use the tank for the run. We figured that if we could hold the tank together and add some sealant then it might just be okay. Once again Rob came to the rescue; he went home to get some 6BA screws, matching drill/tap and some pond sealant. I couldn't face the work required, so Dad offered to take it off my hands for me, along with Bernie to help him, since they had clear heads. In the meantime I set about a

backup plan. Richard offered me the use of the tender off of his class 2; however I didn't think that was too practical due to the stretch required to reach the controls with a tender and bunker to reach over, not to mention the problems of being able to couple together. Having collected his tank we decided to



Dad, Bernie and Rob working on the bunker

see if Rob's tank could be the backup. Between Richard, John and I we managed to split the feed from the tank to either feed 1 or 2 injectors, just in case the tank didn't seal. The sealant seemed to go hard just in time for my run, with my run having been moved to the last position of the day to give me more time. This was my only chance for a successful attempt. The tank seemed to be holding water so I prepared for a fire, also leaving the extra tank rigged up for the left hand injector, just in case. I lit the first piece of charcoal, and proceeded to build a new fire of soaked charcoal, as soon as I had done this, the heavens opened. I went from wearing shorts with my shirt off, to wearing full

waterproofs, once they had been fetched for me. Until they arrived I was standing in the rain to tend to the loco. I was getting the feeling that this wasn't my day and I shouldn't have got out of bed. Just my luck for the weekend, perfect weather all weekend, until my steaming session.



With the fire lit, the heavens opened

Pressure started to build up, with no leaks issuing, I was happy that the boiler had not sustained any damage. Mechanical blower removed and onto the loco blower, so far so good. Both injectors were working at low pressure from respective tanks. Injectors continued working at higher pressures too; I was starting to feel happier. The final test being if it would run okay. Draincocks opened, regulator cracked, water and steam hisses from the cylinders as they warm up, and the loco starts to creep forward. Now I was confident that nothing serious was broken, and was ready for the run. Enterprise was moved to the track under its own steam to aid the warming process, where the four trolleys and twelve passengers were waiting for me. I wanted to leave with my head held high and wanted to show what this engine was capable of, only one person had attempted a higher load over the course of the weekend. Off I set with the rain still coming down hard, however easing, trying to gain as much speed on this slippery track before hitting the hill. At this stage I was already regretting the large load. She was barking hard with every stroke of the pistons, while I was fighting to prevent the wheels breaking away into a spin. With the first climb completed, the rest of the track was easy in comparison, and with the momentum already

present heading into the second lap, the climb was not quite as difficult.

As the laps proceeded, pressure was steadily dropping; the climb was taking its toll a bit too much. Eventually, with every hill climb looking more and more suspect, I stopped half way up the bank. While I recovered pressure, the train was backed to the bottom of the hill, and the last trolley taken off of the back of the train. This made the run much easier, being able to sustain pressure from one lap to the next. By the time my run finished, the sun was shining with not a cloud in the sky, I had a huge smile on my face, and I was exhausted. It was such a good feeling to have been able to come back from the tragedy of the morning, and yet still be able to complete my time on the track. Once the unused coal was returned, it was time to get cleaned up. This was the time when most people would be tensely looking at the scoreboard to see where they had placed, but for me, that didn't matter. I had beaten all the odds as soon as I started. I knew that it wouldn't be a great score. All that remained was to get home. Andrew offered to drive, since I was so exhausted, and in no mood for it, which gave me the chance to enjoy the scenery.



After a successful run, enjoying the returned sun with a smile.

I will be entering again, and I will have different tactics to improve my efficiency, but they will be discussed when I next write, after the coming competition. All that remains is for me to thank all those who travelled with me in support, it was not exactly down the road, also to the Llanelli members for their hospitality and friendliness; in particular Rob Rayner who did so much for me to help me reach the track, Dad, Bernie, Richard and John for their assistance, and to Andrew who was there with me all the way. Mostly I would like to thank Adrian who is no longer with us, but whose memory will live on within this incredible machine. The repair job did not return the loco to the original looks, in my opinion it now looks better, the coal rail bunker has been replaced with a hopper type bunker, and the cab roof has been extended back to the bunker. It seemed a shame to do all the repairs and end up with it looking the same as when I started. By the way, I finished 18th out of 31, with a thermal efficiency of 0.735%.

Station Staff

It is the start of the new season for giving train rides at Mote Park. We are very fortunate to have dedicated members who maintain the facilities and drive the engines, but there are also those who, in addition to everything else they do, help us out as Station Staff.

I would like to record my thanks for last year's help from:

Alex Linkins, Ann Playfoot, Bernard White, Charles Darley, Chris Phillips, Dave Deller, Gemma Hawkins, Geoff Riddles, Gerald Spenceley, Graham Kimber, Harry Godding, Jack Ruler, Jeanne Starnes, Jim Puttifer, John Hawkins, John Hutt, Mick Lister, Mick Starnes, Mike Cranfield, Mike Prescott, Mike Wallace, Paul Clark, Paul Rolleston, Paul Stephens, Peter Evans, Peter Kingsford, Peter Roots, Robert Barton, Roger Vane, Steve Hall, Tony Jones and Vic Reynolds.

(Apologies to any missed out who helped, but didn't put their name on the Duty List and a big thank you to Ann, Pat, Sue and others who provide regular tea etc. to keep the drivers happy!)

As the committee member responsible for Public Running, may I ask for help again? Before we can run the track for the kids (and earn some cash too) we need a Traffic Controller (not necessarily Fat!), a Fare Collector and a Passenger Loader. These are all easy duties within anyone's capabilities and help and advice is readily available for 'newbies' (we even manage to get a lot of fun out of it).

If you helped last year, I hope you can do it again this season; if you didn't, especially if you don't do anything else to help with the club, please volunteer for at least one session. We run from about 2:30 to 5:00 on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays and I am sure you could spare one afternoon a year to share the load with us (even half a session would be useful!).

One last plea, please put your name down early for your duty; it is nerve racking not to have any names down for the next Sunday and we worry if we will be able to actually run that day!

Contact: jack.ruler@blueyonder.co.uk 01634 327186 or 07791 986058.

NEW MEMBERS 2009

We welcome the following:

David Arnold, of East Peckham, a retired electrician, no model making activities at the moment but he is hoping to build a traction engine;

and

Brian Gibbons, of Sheerness, a retired maintenance engineer, who is engaged in loco restoration.

BOILER TESTS

You are respectfully reminded that YOU must make an appointment IN ADVANCE, I repeat IN ADVANCE and with TWO Boiler Testers, whatever day you want a test. Do not expect to turn up and have a boiler test done because you feel like it. The members of the Society who are boiler testers do have other things to do and have the right to refuse if it is inconvenient for them so you MUST book first. Our Boiler Testers are: Graham Kimber 01732 845931, Peter Kingsford 01233 712086, Martin Parham 01622 630298, Edgar Playfoot 01892 722019, Bernard White 01634 841899 (prefers Wednesdays), John Barrow 01634 863915 (needs transport), Dave Deller 01732 841194 (unable to book much this year).

NEVER FAR AWAY

The last newsletter contained many Merry Christmases and Happy New Years. I had intended to add mine as well, but as so frequently happens, time was in short supply and it seemed that something else that must be done first was Never Far Away, and so my article wasn't finished in time. I had also intended to wish to all of you who make New Year resolutions that you manage to keep them better than I ever can. If I didn't have a problem with keeping such promises to myself my Speedy would be finished by now, and the next project would be well under way. I would particularly like to make an unusual timepiece, but it's an irritating irony that I can't find the time to make a clock. I will try harder this year to be a bit more selfish with my time; otherwise Speedy is more likely to become fossilised rather than finished.

So! The usual, and presumably acceptable, format follows, starting with something to drink so as to oil the wheels as it were and then moving into music, progressing into historical (is that a contradiction?) matters and also, of course, not forgetting the all important humour. I must also squeeze in something about trains/locos etc.

Right! Let's get straight into the drinking bit shall we, and just to let you know in case you are wondering, yes, I have decided to revert to drinking whiskey whilst writing for no other reason than that there are no instructions on the bottle and I can therefore follow my instincts rather than feel confused and intimidated by what the rest of the world thinks. On this occasion a Patron has kindly provided the lubricant; - a'bunadh from the Aberlour distillery, highly recommended, treat yourselves.

Tea still does and always will have a place in my life and from my memories there are some more humorous tales to tell following on from my last contribution. As there has been some time since the last 'Never Far Away', it may be a good idea to reread the previous episode so as to set the scene.

Anyway, the drink at the moment is whiskey, the effects of which, on the quality of the writings, I like to think of as beneficial. If I may suggest: that as this article was written whilst under the influence of a good drink, it should also be read in the same manner. Cheers!

OK, the next thing is music: It seems to be taking me an increasing number of sessions on the word processor to create an article to a standard that our esteemed editor considers fit for inclusion in our prestigious publication, and as I prefer to do such work with background music, it logically follows that more musical recordings will be listened to. I have been methodically working my way through my dear old departed Dad's record (disc) collection of mainly classical music, and in doing so found not only many gems that I will play again, but also quite a few that simply do not flick my switch (article writer and music critic at the same time, who said men can't multi-task). So this edition may well have, to those of you with a deep sense of Literary and Musical Appreciation, an essence of Tchaikovsky, Respighi, Mozart and Bud Flanagan. Those of you who don't have LAMA will unfortunately miss the subtle associations and also the profound artistic implications. Are you following my meanings? Gooood!

Drink whiskey, right back to music.

Music has always been very important to me. It either creates or reflects my moods and can most certainly evoke memories, which are the most important resource for my articles. In this edition I also want to include a new element to my articles that is 'Never Far Away' and that's - emotion.

During one particular article writing session I found myself singing along with old soldiers songs by Bud Flanagan;- It's A Long Way To Tipperary, Hang Out The Washing, Goodbye Dolly etc., and then suddenly, and perhaps not unexpectedly, there was a song that brought back a fond memory and the stirring, even deeply moving, emotion that went with it. I will tell you about it. It is a long story, so have another drink.

In my earlier pre-marital years when apart from everything else I used to do there was, most importantly and above everything else, the natural manly pursuit of ~~Crumpet~~ young ladies. I was far more sociable then than I am now and could frequently be found tripping the light fantastic around a ballroom floor on a Friday or Saturday evening. I would seek out Dinner Dance Events where I could demonstrate my remarkable stiff legs and three left feet techniques. For some reason that I can no longer remember other than possibly dancing, I got myself involved with the Rotary Club, whose Balls were absolutely magnificent (stop it), and I ended up on a blind date with the Lady President of a Rotaract group at Riverhead. She was a charming girl and certainly met with my family's approval. She was also a Minister's daughter that worked in a bank (another one of my interests was money - that's a pun). Now, I am well aware of the popular stereotypical image of a Ministers, Vicars, Bishops etc. daughter and I know just what you lot are thinking, so yes she may well have had cast iron drawers and magnetic buttocks to hold them up but I will play the part of a gentleman rather than a Cad and say no more, so there. Anyway, to me this was definitely a step in the right direction as I always aspired to move in respectable circles and this was a golden opportunity.

And it came to pass that the Rotary Club held a dinner dance for Rotaract members and I went as the Presidents Escort and was seated at the top table. This was a very grand bash, I even bought a new dinner suit, frilly shirt and a proper velvet bow tie (and what a sod it was to tie; that little episode is a story in itself).

Although I can't recall exactly what I ate that night, it must have been good. I am certain of this as I've always had a tendency to remember if things are not up to scratch, but on that night the whole function was flawless. There was good conversation and laughter which could have made the small Palm Court Orchestra feel ignored but they were there playing in the background. The meal finished with Brandy, Port and Cigars, Cigarettes for the Ladies, and then the 'Pièce de Résistance'; entertainment by a Chelsea Pensioner. Yes; a Chelsea Pensioner.

How does a Chelsea Pensioner entertain? Well, I'll tell you. The band stopped playing as he hobbled onto the stage with a crutch wedged under one armpit and a banjo slung over the other shoulder, wearing the respected scarlet coat and three cornered hat. I don't recall any introduction, but it was a long time ago. He gestured to the band as he positioned his banjo for playing, the music started and he sang. He performed so many songs associated with times of war, and in between each song he cracked jokes. Everybody was so very much into the spirit of the performance; in fact 'enthralled' would be an appropriate word. Then there came the Finale. He thanked the audience and the band and then asked us to stand and for the band to let the audience sing unaccompanied;- We'll Keep The Home Fires Burning. By the time we were half way through this song, the 'choir' had achieved a profound tone and fervour that cannot be described in words, other than to say that it was one of the most moving experiences that I'd ever had. He conducted the last few lines and when it finished there was not a sound to be heard, if someone had dropped a pin, I'd have heard it. He turned to leave the stage and when he was halfway to the wings the applause erupted.

On that night Emotion certainly wasn't far away, the hall was full of it.

So! What has Emotion got to do with our activities in the realms of precision miniature engineering? Read on. But before I get to that I think it's time to lighten up a bit. Let's have some humour.

Perhaps I should have included in the last edition this tea-tale that has been told many times to family and friends. No matter, it is included now herein.

Back in the mid 1940's when Mum and Dad were newly weds, Mum moved from her home town of Portsmouth, where she upset a long standing family tradition by not joining the Navy (see footnote) but joined the Army instead where she met Dad, to live in the Rolleston ancestral seat of Leicester City. Mum had to endure a somewhat protracted period of adjustment to the ways of Dad's family and friends.

By all accounts it was an uphill struggle for Mum to cope with the accent and the quirky etymological aspects of Leicester language;- aye, intit, buus, cuup, mardy, safto, a bread roll was a cob, Cobblers (Shoe Technicians) were called Snobs, and when a cup of tea was made it was usual to 'wash the pot' after pouring the tea. This was not the literal interpretation of the Leicester dialect known as Chisit, as spoken by Chisits, but a referral to the practice of pouring more hot water onto the leaves to make a second brew. So, you can guess what happened when Mum made the tea one Sunday afternoon at a family gathering and was asked if she had washed the pot. Yup! You got it; she washed the pot and left it upside down on the draining board. So, no second brew, which was not good when in those days tea was a rationed commodity.

Do you want to know what a Chisit is? I'll explain. Leicesterfarrians would go to Skegness for their holiday or maybe on a Beano as provided by their employers where their thrifty attitude earned them the nickname of Chisit or Chisits in the plural, because when considering buying something they would always ask "how mooCH IS IT?" And their accent accentuated the chisit bit. Do you believe that? The authenticity of the story carries as much credibility as you want to give it.

A Sinister Footnote. The family's Naval background has a skeleton in the cupboard. My great-great-granddad was a real salty seadog – a smuggler who got hung for murdering a customs and excise officer. **Villain, Martyr or Hero?**

Now then, what's next? Ah! Yes, in recounting my career 'track', I had got as far as Ford Motor Company's tool room at the Dagenham River Plant, and having by now calmed down after previously recounting the Trade Unions corrupt practices, I am ready to try and go forward objectively and without emotion.

The scene is a 3000 acre site sandwiched between the A13 and the river Thames Wharf where there were jetties for offloading coal and bulk raw materials. The site had it's own power station, gas works, coking ovens, blast furnaces and a huge network of railway track and sidings. I'll go right back to the beginning, in fact to my first day at FOMOCO.

In those days there were no induction courses or "come and meet the team and bond with them". Oh! No. First thing was to prove to the Shop (bar)steward that I was a fully paid up member of a Union and that my other credentials qualified me to do the job. The Foreman and the Plant Manager could only look on whilst this vetting took place, it seemed that they had very little authority on the shop floor. Having satisfied the bumptious little ~~bugger~~, ooops, sorry that's not very polite is it, little ~~sed~~, doh! - moron with a negative I.Q. that I was Kosher, he nodded his arrogant approval and slid away to his hole in the Inspection Room. Steady now Rolleston, it's in the past, calm down and move on. Having got that out of the way, more trauma followed.

As an apprentice at Chatham Dockyard I had learned that ships were built and measured in yards, feet, inches and fractions thereof. Consequently, my grasp of Metrology was established on these criteria. You need to know this in order to appreciate the blinding technical bombshell that was waiting for me.

The foreman led me to a lathe, on the bed of which there rested a large piece of steel and a blueprint (drawing) for a quality control jig. 'Have a go at that,' he said, and left me to it. Hmm! I thought as I pondered the specification which showed an outside diameter of 400. Four hundred what? Yards or feet were definitely not in the running and even inches would work out at 11 yards 0 feet and 4 inches. The material wasn't big enough for that, and neither was the lathe. The title on the drawing was wheel centre pressing jig. That would be a very big wheel. All the other dimensions shown were equally baffling. The Foreman was obviously keeping an eye on me and it didn't take him long to work out that I was having a little bit of a problem and he wandered over to see what it was. I said that I didn't think that the piece of steel was big enough. Oh! "Let's have a look then," he said, casting an eye over the drawing and then he laid a two foot rule across the work piece. "That'll be alright, you'll easy get 400 mil out of that".

400 Mil?

“Yeah, 400 millimetres, you know, those little metric things”. As I didn’t say anything I can only assume that I must have had a bewildered look on my face that gave me away. “Surely you’ve worked in metric before, haven’t you?” Nope! “Surely you didn’t think it was inches did you?” Before I could say “of course not, and stop calling me Shirley”, he was telling the whole tool room that the new boy thought it was all in inches and by the end of the day the most quoted, even most over used, phrase was ‘Rollestons’ the name, cock-ups the game. Well, actually they used a different word instead of cock beginning with an eff and ending with a kay but being, as I am, aware of the sensitive and puritanical disposition of the bulk of our readership (obviously there are some exceptions) I decided that I should tone it down a little bit and substitute the original word for something less offensive even if it does water down the sentiment.

Anyway, from that point in time I wasn’t allowed to forget it, EVER. In fact my reputation preceded me wherever I went at Fords and for me the controversial issue of metrication had a unique implication. And just to rub salt into the wound all the machine tools, every single one, had imperial micrometer dials, even the two large Société Genevoise jig borers, the ultimate tool room machines, had imperial scales (but their motorised drawbars, would you believe, were quite a novelty).

So there you are, for me it was and still is, a way of life; a cock up is Never Far Away.

On the metrication issue it is interesting to note that; at FOMOCO, obviously American owned, all plants, including Ford of Britain who were, and as far as I know, still are, working to metric specifications. But in the bigger picture there seems to be a reluctance to adopt the metric system in American engineering. Even today when I buy tools of American origin - i.e. I recently purchased a Kreg Pocket Hole Jig and, as an example, it is most noticeable that they still prefer to work in inches. Personally, I find it useful to use both systems.

Anyway, back to my career at Fords. Another new experience for me was night shifts.

Fords gave me a fortnight on day shifts to get settled in and then I had to get into the routine of alternate day/night shifts on a week about basis. The big attraction was a 33% premium in the pay packet for the night shift (standard rate during the day). The downside was trying to sleep during the day which was sometimes a problem, but I got used to it eventually. I also was allowed day release on Mondays in order to finish my Engineering course at Medway Tech College so that was a bonus. I found it quite easy to slot into the night shift regime where amongst the ranks of those working on ‘permanent nights’ there were many live wires who were ready and waiting to welcome ‘Rollestons the name, cock ups the game’ with much banter and many practical jokes. In due course they were to find out that I could give as good or bad, even better or worse, than I got. There are tales to tell.

Now, the night shift had a totally different culture to the day shift, which did sometimes leave me wondering where I stood with career aspirations on one hand, and a willingness to be one of the lads on the other. A sense of balance was the way to go, and if I do say so myself, I managed to live a working life that suited both aspects quite successfully. I also experienced a different perspective of the railway system within the Ford plant, as well as the Tilbury to London line that passed straight through it. At night time there were floodlights all over the site, and to watch trains of wagons being shunted at night time was a fascination. Nothing was ever idle, big business does not stand still (unless there’s a strike). Through the inevitable, and always present, copious clouds of steam and smoke that wafted over the plant from the many forms of material processing operations, it was eerie to see the halo effect around the floodlights, and also to see shunters and wagons drifting in and out of sight like apparitions. A particularly absorbing feature was the loading of cars off of the production line and onto double-decker bogie well wagons.

At night time with their headlights on this was quite mesmerising, as the cars were driven up an access ramp and then through the full length of all the coupled wagons of the train, up and down as they passed up over the bogies and then down into the well, a bit like a gentle fairground ride. With a mug of tea in my hand, watching this was a favourite night-shift respite. On the night shift it was easy to take time out to make these observations. It was also easy to find time to work on 'Homers' (see my article on Furriners) but I'll leave that till next time.

So, what's all that emotion stuff got to do with our activities at the club? Well, I'll tell you. This is not a long story so you won't need a drink. Oh! Go on then, I'll have one as well, make it a big one.

Although I haven't actually finished my 'Speedy', I have gone through many of the major stages and in doing so had countless fracas' with unyielding and obstinate pieces of metal, so I think I can relate to what other club members must have felt at many stages in building a locomotive. After years of effort working on inanimate lumps of metal, which have been turned, milled, filed, ground, heated, beaten, sworn at, chucked across the garden or at the neighbours cat, there is finally something, a Beast or a Beauty, tugging and straining at the coupling, proving that metal, effort and a determined bloody minded attitude can get it all together into a life-form that eats coal, drinks water and oil, breathes and spits fire, and then lifts the safety valve. Does that make the builder feel emotional? You tell me. I can only wait until my Speedy is finished, but I would be very surprised to learn that it doesn't and that at that point in time:- **Emotion is Never Far Away.**

Paul.

P.S. I think I've got it right this time



RADIO CONTROLLED MODEL HELICOPTERS



When I was young I was mad about model planes. Not the 'Airfix' type. I don't think these were available then, models built of balsa wood and covered with tissue paper. How I loved the smell of balsa cement and dope. Fortunately my mother allowed me to build model aircraft in my bedroom. I can remember many times being up to my ankles in balsa wood shavings.

I think I must have started building free flight aircraft at about age 10 and continued until I was 16, when a motorbike took over my interest. Many, many KeilKraft semi scale kits I built and flew in the field behind my parent's house. Some had Jetex engines, these acquired the propulsion from burning a solid fuel pellet. Others were just gliders and some had rubber bands powering the propeller.

At about age 13 I built a scale Catalina with twin engines for control line. It had a five foot wing span and was powered by two ED Racers. I flew it once in my school playground. There is no doubt that my schooling suffered due to my fanatics for modelling.

After the Motorbike and girls period of my teens I got married and settled down. It was at this time that I became bored and needed something to do in my spare time. I became close friends with an electrician who was into radio control model aircraft, which included building his own radio gear. With his help I built my own radio control transmitter and receiver together with a suitable model.

The early radio control equipment consisted of a relay in the model, which released a rubber-powered escapement causing the rudder to turn. A press and hold on the transmitter control button would release the escapement and the rudder would turn. Release the button and the rudder would centralise. The next press and the rudder would go in the opposite direction. So you had to try and remember which direction the last press caused and if you wanted the same direction again you had to give two presses in quick succession.

Multichannel radio systems were coming available but were generally too expensive for me to acquire. However a few years later I did acquire one of the first proportional radio control sets for about £200 which was a lot of money all those years ago.

I eventually gave up aero modelling to go sailing which you may have already read about.

Recently, for a few years now I have fancied a go at radio controlled helicopters. This I have mentioned to my dear wife Ann on a number of occasions and lo and behold she bought me a model helicopter kit complete with radio control equipment for my last birthday.

She also gave me model flying simulation software enabling me to fly both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft on my computer using the actual transmitter controller. Have a look at the demo at www.phoenix-sim.com I think it's great.

My model helicopter has a rotor span of about 2' 2" and is powered by Li-po battery giving it a flight time of about six minutes (two circuits of our Maidstone track). Electric flight in models has come on in leaps and bounds avoiding the noise and mess created by IC engines.

Model fixed wing aircraft are fairly difficult to fly because of the orientation factor. For example when the model is flying toward you the controls are reversed and one has to try and imagine sitting in the cockpit. Fortunately I have not lost this ability, I suppose it is a bit like riding a bike. Once learnt, never forgotten.

However model **helicopters** are incredibly difficult to fly. They are notoriously unstable. They have to be controlled all the time. I think it is quite a challenge particularly when in later life ones eyesight, and reaction time, is not so good!

It didn't take me long to assemble my helicopter kit, after all I am a model engineer, but the electronics are a completely different story. The transmitter or controller is a microcomputer with a host of different settings and adjustments. The instructions were not too clear and even after four months or so I am still learning. Much of the information I am getting from the Internet particularly videos on You tube.

I have now spent many hours on the simulator and can fly the pixels on my computer quite well. After all if I crash and the model breaks to many pieces, just a few moments later it reassembles itself – marvellous. In reality it doesn't do this as I first found out on New Years Day.

It was a short while after receiving my model helicopter that I found out my nephew flew an IC model helicopter. He invited me to go flying with him to his uncle's flying field on new years day. I went with him confident that I would be able to fly my helicopter, but guess what, I promptly crashed it and took it home in bits.

On checking it out I found that there was not as much damage as I had at first thought. The main shaft was bent and the shaft retaining the rotor blades was sheared. A few other bits and pieces needed replacement but the rotor blades were OK. The replacement parts were readily available and not very expensive. It took me about a morning to rebuild and set up the helicopter.

Three more times I tried to fly it crashing each time. But I am now pleased to say that I have now flown it several times without crashing. But all I have been doing is just hovering close to the ground. There is still so very much more to learn.

Edgar Playfoot
March 2009.

“FUNNIES” SECTION

The following was found posted very low on a refrigerator door.

Dear Dogs and Cats:

The dishes with the paw prints are yours and contain your food. The other dishes are mine and contain my food. Placing a paw print in the middle of my plate and food does not stake a claim for it becoming your food and dish, nor do I find that aesthetically pleasing in the slightest.

The stairway was not designed by NASCAR and is not a racetrack. Racing me to the bottom is not the object. Tripping me doesn't help because I fall faster than you can run.

I cannot buy anything bigger than a king sized bed. I am very sorry about this. Do not think I will continue sleeping on the couch to ensure your comfort, however. Dogs and cats can actually curl up in a ball when they sleep. It is not necessary to sleep perpendicular to each other, stretched out to the fullest extent possible. I also know that sticking tails straight out and having tongues hanging out on the other end to maximize space is nothing but sarcasm.

For the last time, there is no secret exit from the bathroom! If, by some miracle, I beat you there and manage to get the door shut, it is not necessary to claw, whine, meow, try to turn the knob or get your paw under the edge in an attempt to open the door. I must exit through the same door I entered. Also, I have been using the bathroom for years - canine/feline attendance is not required.

The proper order for kissing is:

Kiss me first, then go smell the other dog or cat's butt. I cannot stress this enough.

Finally, in fairness, dear pets, I have posted the following message on the front door:

TO ALL NON - PET OWNERS WHO VISIT AND LIKE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR PETS:

- (1) They live here. You don't.
- (2) If you don't want their hair on your clothes, stay off the furniture. That's why they call it 'fur'- niture.
- (3) I like my pets a lot better than I like most people.
- (4) To you, they are animals. To me, they are adopted sons/daughters who are short, hairy, walk on all fours and don't speak clearly.

Remember, dogs and cats are better than kids because they

- (1) eat less,
- (2) don't ask for money all the time,
- (3) are easier to train,
- (4) normally come when called,
- (5) expect to drive your car,
- (6) don't smoke or drink alcohol,
- (7) are far cleaner and tidier,
- (8) don't have to buy the latest fashions, gadgets, etc.
- (9) don't need a gazillion quid for college and
- (10) if they get pregnant, you can sell their children

THE RULES FROM THE MALE SIDE

Female members (with a sense of humour and a pinch of salt may also read), and in respect of the fellas, then your wife/girlfriend/daughter can read it. Or maybe not?!

1. Men are NOT mind readers.
2. Learn how to work the toilet seat. You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down. We need it up, you need it down. You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down.
3. Sports, hobbies – it's like the full moon, or the changing of the tides. Let it be.
4. Crying is Blackmail.
5. Ask for what you want. Let us be clear on this one. Subtle hints do not work! Strong hints do not work! Obvious hints do not work! Just say it!
6. Yes or no are perfectly acceptable answers to almost every question.
7. Come to us with a problem ONLY if you want help solving it. That's what we do. Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for.
8. Anything we said six months ago is inadmissible in an argument. In fact, all comments become null and void after one day.
9. If you think you're fat, you probably are. Don't ask us.
10. If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of the ways makes you angry, we meant it the other way.
11. You can either ask us to do something or tell us how you want it done. Not both. And if you already know how best to do it, just do it yourself.
12. Whenever possible, please say whatever you have to say AFTER the game...
13. Christopher Columbus did not need your directions and neither do we.
14. All men see in only sixteen colours, like Windows default settings. Peach, for example, is a fruit not a colour. Plum is also a fruit. We have no idea what mauve is.
15. If it itches, it will be scratched.
16. If we ask what is wrong and you say “Nothing”, we will act like nothing is wrong. We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.
17. If you ask a question that you don't want an answer to, expect an answer you don't want to hear.
18. When we have to go somewhere together, absolutely anything you wear is fine...REALLY.
19. Don't ask us what we are thinking about unless you are ready to discuss such topics as locomotive design, construction problems etc.
20. You have enough clothes.
21. You have too many shoes.
22. I am in shape.
23. Thank you for reading this.
24. Yes, I know, I have to sleep on the settee tonight now you have read this; I don't mind that. It's like camping.

After an exhaustive review of the research literature, here's the final word on nutrition and health:

1. Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
2. Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
3. Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
4. Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
5. Germans drink beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
6. The French eat foie-gras, full fat cheese and drink red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.

CONCLUSION:

Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

SUE'S SPOT

Hello folks

Well, a sad start to the season with the loss of our long standing and much loved Treasurer. My tribute to Peter (on the back of the front cover) consists of information gleaned from his service and Graham's speech, as well as my own memories. The number of years he dedicated to the Society on such a regular basis is why he deserves this newsletter dedicated to him, and why at least half of our membership was present to pay their respects at his service. In due course we will put a plaque on a bench dedicated to him at the club, as suggested by his sister Marion. Pete will be much missed, not just as the Club Treasurer but as a friend to us all. Our thanks to Edgar Playfoot for taking the post on, especially at such short notice. Also to Andrew Hulse who has stepped onto the committee now that Edgar has become our new Club Treasurer.



Edgar



Andrew

So, now onto other matters, life goes on, as it must. At last we have our own toilets, thanks to the hard work and dedication of a few of the members, and the financial generosity of many more. A lot of you were kind enough to include a donation to the cause when paying your subscription this year. **Thank you** all very much. Joy Payne, the widow of former Club President (Amos) Jack, came to our "First Flush" celebration held on the day we started public running this year, Sunday 29th March, with daughter Julia and her husband Alan (who came from North Wales for the occasion).



You can't go in there Joy, it's the Gents! Loo Cake Joy cuts the cake Julia, her mum Joy and Alan

Joy did the honours, by cutting the ribbon to open the conveniences to the members (who had their legs crossed up until then). Why, we even had a cake to celebrate the occasion! We were joined by members of Romney Club and also Peter's family. The toilets are fab; I would just take this opportunity to remind you that **THEY ARE FOR MEMBERS ONLY** (and their guests) **NOT** the general public in ANY circumstances. Plus, do remember that if you use it, you clean it, too! So please leave the place nice and pristine after you have used it. As it's Earth Day as I write this, just a reminder to you not to waste water at the premises also. It all goes into a big tank we have to pay to have emptied now, too. Oh dear, perhaps I better stop nagging before you stop reading.

Backtracking, in February we enjoyed the annual Sunday Lunch at the Grangemoor.



Pat's famous Chilli went down a storm at the chilly February club night. The Wallace and Gromit (Mike and Roger – thanks chaps for all your hard work) Quiz Night in April was won by..... Yes, Paul Clark's team! No surprises there then! As soon as British Summertime started so did we, public running, which is a big relief to our bank account as we have been pretty skint. Not that we'll suddenly be “flush” in a hurry after “loo”sing most of our funds and “paying a penny” and more towards our “convenience”. Think I've crammed enough puns into that sentence, don't you?

Now while I remember; a word on the clubhouse library of books, magazines, videos. If you borrow something then please leave a note of your name and the date borrowed in the new book started for this purpose, to save someone an unnecessary search. Likewise please remember to return any borrowed items to the clubhouse within a couple of weeks. The club's copy of the Reeves catalogue seems to have “walked” - so if anyone out there has it, then please can you return it as soon as possible.

There is now a mobile phone at the clubhouse. It is pay-as-you-go and is for “only when really necessary” use, such as if a member of your family needs to get hold of you in a hurry, or if you can't make it to do your stint of station duty (HINT HINT *please* do a stint of station duty) due to some unexpected crisis. In other words, it is really for incoming calls of a priority nature only, or outgoing calls for emergency services. The number is 07763 812437.

The Race for Life this year is being held in Mote Park on Sunday May 17th and June 7th. I mention this as if you wish to get to the track by vehicle on those days, don't try it between the times of 10-45am and 12-00 noon as you will be swamped by an avalanche of runners and won't make it. Don't even try! Either side of those times should be fine.

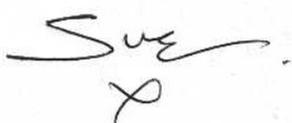
As usual, the vandals are causing us regular work at the club premises, so far this year the biggest problem has been in the graffiti department. We did leave the “I LOVE ME” on the ticket office window shutter for quite a while as we thought a shortened form of “I LOVE MODEL ENGINEERS” was acceptable..... otherwise it is just so disheartening seeing everywhere daubed with paint including the concrete step into the Clubhouse which told people to “go away” but less politely..... If anyone has any good ideas how to easily clean or better still discourage graffiti then do let a committee member know. Getting rid of it is not an easy task or one to get enthusiastic about when you can return a few days later and exactly the same has happened again. Our window shutters now need a good renovation job.

I think the diary is self explanatory but any questions just give us a shout. I don't want to keep repeating myself repeating myself. The Big Event up and coming is the Club's 80th Anniversary being celebrated by specially inviting just a few clubs for a run on Saturday 8th August. So the club night the evening before will be the preparation for this, so just for once don't turn up for a chat, turn up to help!

As you know I will accept articles for the newsletter (next edition October-ish) at any time. Many thanks to our contributors this issue. I would love it to be more colourful, but a colour page costs ten times as much as a black and white one. Sponsors? I don't mind including one holiday report each issue, if you think members will find it interesting. With this year celebrating the anniversary of Charles Darwin and his Theory of Evolution I'd happily include our trip to the Galapagos Islands, or even the journey to Machu Picchu on the Orient Express, but you hear enough from me already. Still, you can always ask.....

The 2009 summer season is now underway, so join in and enjoy. Finally, consider doing a Bucket List if you haven't already got one, a Bucket List being from the film of the same name, a list of things you'd like to do before you kick the bucket. The best advice is Do It Now or as soon as you can. So better get on with that loco!

Happy steaming, keep well, take care, and see you soon,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue", with a small flourish underneath.

ARCHIVES

Just a reminder that if anyone has any old black and white pictures or articles about the club, or has kept newsletters from before 1991, the Editor would appreciate taking copies for the Club Archives.

Thank you.

.....

GETTING SHIRTY

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

.....

SOME EVENTS KNOWN ABOUT ELSEWHERE YOU MIGHT LIKE TO ATTEND

May 2: Welling & D.M.E.S. Open Day,
May 3-4: Vale of Aylesbury Miniature Railway Gala,
May 8-10: Harrogate Model Engineering Exhibition at the Harrogate Showground,
May 9-10: Romney Open Days,
May 9-10: Southampton S.M.E. Open Weekend,
May 16-17: Southern Federation Spring Rally at Llanelli & D.M.E.S., then Open Day on 17th,
May 30-31: Vale of Aylesbury Traction Engine Rally, Peterborough Miniature Locomotive Rally,
June 6-7: Sweet Pea Rally at Sheffield S.M.E.E.,
June 6-7: Welsh Locomotive Rally at Cardiff M.E.S.
June 13-14: Harrow & Wembley M.E. Open Weekend,
June 13-14: North Wilts M.E.S. Rally Weekend
June 20: Chelmsford S.M.E. Club Invitation Day,
June 20: Sutton Electric Open Day,
June 20-21: Cambridge M.E.S. 50th Anniversary Rally,
June 20-21: Worthing & District S.M.E. Littlelec Efficiency Competition,
June 21: Southampton S.M.E. Electric Day,
June 27: Gravesend M.M.& E.S. Invitation Day (it's okay; we've been invited),
June 27-28: M.S.R.V.S. Traction Engine Rally Tewkesbury,
July 4: Chingford Open Day, July 4-5: IMLEC at Bristol S.M.E.E.,
July 18-19: Guildford M.E.S. Model Steam Rally & Exhibition,
July 25-26: City of Oxford S.M.E. Dreaming Spires Rally,
August 14-16: Bristol S.M.E.E. Model Engineering Exhibition,
August 21-23: Bristol Model Engineering Exhibition at Thornbury Leisure Centre,
August 29-31: Harrow & Wembley M.E. Open Weekend,
September 6: Fareham Diesel Electric Day,
September 12-13: Birmingham National Locomotive Rally (their 20th?),
September 19-20: Southern Federation Autumn Rally at City of Oxford S.M.E. then Open Day on 20th,
October 3: Welling & D.M.E.S. Open Day - Please check first in case they have had to leave their site,
October 16-20: Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition at Warwickshire Exhibition Centre.

The small print: Please note that events/dates are likely be added before the next newsletter. Be aware that dates may change and sometimes events get cancelled and we may not know. A copy of the diary dates is kept on the clubhouse notice board and updated from time to time. If in doubt, please check. But we don't claim to know everything! Feel free to contact the Secretary for any details or information on MMES meetings. The Club website is at www.maidstonemes.co.uk

M.M.E.S. DIARY DATES 2009

(updated 25/4/09)

Friday May 1:	Aster Hobbies G1 Model Display & Guest Speaker – Andrew Pullen
Wednesday May 20:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday May 30:	Decadal Dinner & 80 th Celebration on the K&ESR Tenterden
Friday June 5:	Evening Run and Fish 'n' Chips 'n' Cheesecake £6pp
Saturday June 6:	Maidstone Visit to Canvey Club
Wednesday June 17:	Members Playtime Run
Friday July 3:	Evening Run and BYOB (Bring Your Own Barbecue and food)
Saturday July 11:	Family & Friends Day
Saturday July 18:	Maidstone Visit to Beech Hurst
Wednesday July 15:	Members Playtime Run
Friday August 7:	Preparation evening for:
Saturday August 8:	MMES 80 th Anniversary and Specially Invited Clubs Open Day
Wednesday August 19:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday August 22:	Visit to Maidstone by Colchester S.M.& E.E.
Friday September 4:	Evening Run and Pizza & Salad £2pp
Wednesday September 16:	Members Playtime Run
Friday October 2:	Guest Speaker
Wednesday October 21:	Last Members Playtime Run of the year
Sunday October 25:	Last Public Run (British Summertime ends)
Friday November 6:	Bits 'n' Pieces 'n' Crumpets Night
Friday December 4:	Bring & Buy & Fish & Chips & Cheesecake £6pp
Saturday December 26:	Boxing Day Run

Most Friday evening events start at @ 7-30pm; evening runs can be a bit earlier.

Donation of a minimum £1 per person (if no sum is stated) for Friday evening meetings where no sum is stated, please, it goes towards club costs, and should you feel generous more is always welcome at anytime.

Please note that Friday evening meetings are for members and associate members (their families), occasionally members' friends, and people who intend to join the society only.

Wednesday Playtime Runs start about 10-30am, generally finishing early afternoon.

Meetings may change if necessity demands it.