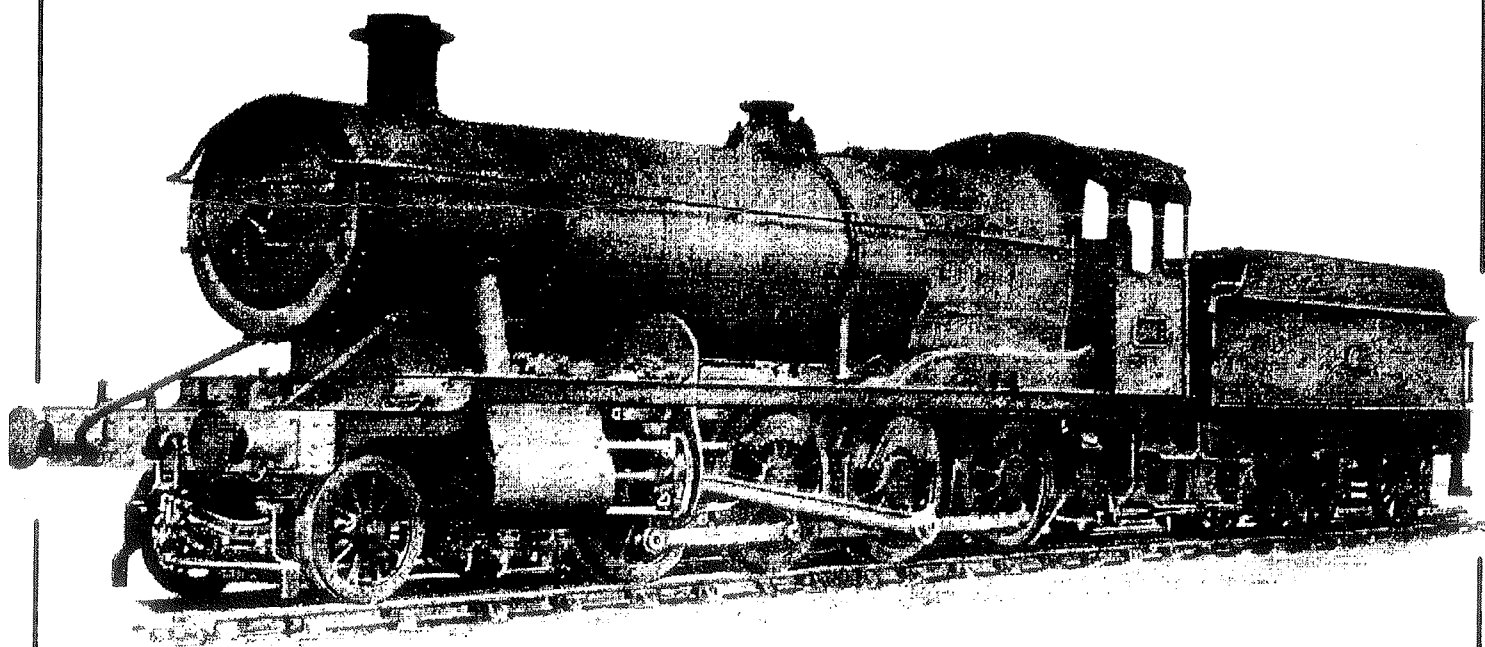


Maidstone Model Engineering Society.



Newsletter - Spring 1995

BOILER TESTING:

EXPIRED BOILER CERTIFICATES :

<u>NAME</u>	<u>MODEL</u>	<u>EXPIRED</u>
MR N.F.CLARK	5" GAUGE 0-4-0ST SWEET PEA	07/05/94
MR C.E.P.DARLEY	5" GAUGE 0-4-0T "BAUDOT"	09/11/93
MR F.DEEPROSE	5" GAUGE 0-4-0 "POLLY 2"	11/04/94
MR T.GREGSON	5" GAUGE 0-6-0T BUTCH	22/07/91
MR T.GREGSON	5" GAUGE GWR 2-6-2T	30/06/92
MR T.GREGSON	3" SCALE ATKINSON STEAM LORRY	30/06/92
MR A.E.GURR	3 1/2" GAUGE 0-6-0T ROB ROY "SIOUXSIE"	28/12/93
MR L.HULBERT	VERTICAL STATIONARY	15/09/92
MR F.LAROCHE	5" GAUGE 0-6-0 3F	12/09/94
MR A.D.LEWIS	5" GAUGE GWR 0-6-0 PANNIER TANK	20/03/95
MR R.J.LINKINS	5" GAUGE 2-6-0	07/07/92
MR P.MARTIN	5" GAUGE 0-6-0T SIMPLEX	03/08/93
MR P.MARTIN	3 1/2" GAUGE BLACK FIVE	05/10/93
MR A.H.W.PAYNE	3 1/2" GAUGE 0-6-0 FOWLER TANK	23/05/94
MR A.H.W.PAYNE	5" GAUGE LMS 4-6-0 RED FIVE	10/04/95
MR A.PROBYN	5" GAUGE 0-4-0 "DIXIE"	26/05/92
MR J.A.WINSER	5" GAUGE 0-6-0T "SIMPLEX"NO.5548	10/04/95
MR M.WREN	3 1/2" GAUGE 0-4-0 "TICH"	23/02/93

BOILER CERTIFICATES EXPIRING THIS SEASON :

<u>NAME</u>	<u>MODEL</u>	<u>EXPIRY</u>
MR N.F.CLARK	5" GAUGE 0-6-0 "BUTCH"	30/05/95
MR N.F.CLARK	4 1/2" SCALE BURRELL TRACTION ENGINE	23/04/95
MR D.DELLER	3 1/2"GAUGE 2-6-2 BANTAM COCK	17/07/95
MR T.FRISKEN	3" SCALE ATKINSON LORRY No.2	26/07/95
MR T.FRISKEN	3" SCALE ATKINSON LORRY No.1	26/06/95
MR T.GREGSON	3 1/2" GAUGE CONWAY 0-4-0	24/04/95
MR R.HILLS	5" GAUGE 0-4-0T NARROW GAUGE	19/06/95
MR G.KIMBER	5" GAUGE 0-4-0 "COFFEE POT"	02/10/95
MR J.LARKE	5" GAUGE 0-6-0 SPEEDY	02/05/95
MR F.A.LAROCHE	5" GAUGE 2-6-0 "GROOMBRIDGE"	04/09/95
MR K.P.LINKINS	5" GAUGE 4-6-0 CLASS 5	02/10/95
MR D.OSBALDSTONE	5" GAUGE GNR 2-8-0 "CONSOLIDATION"	05/06/95
MR M.N.PARHAM	5" GAUGE 4-2-2 STIRLING SINGLE	04/09/95
MR M.N.PARHAM	5" GAUGE "DUCHESS OF HAMILTON"	21/08/95
MR D.S.PATERSON	5" GAUGE 4-4-2T ADAMS TANK	07/08/95
MR R.R.STAGG	5" GAUGE MANOR NO.7830	17/04/95
MR J.WILLIAMS	5" GAUGE 0-4-0T "RUBY"	08/05/95
MR J.A.WINSER	5" GAUGE 2-6-0 "LOCKWOOD"	12/06/95

All boilers presented for test must have an **identity number** stamped into the boiler which is visible at the time of the test any boiler which has not had a certificate issued before must have its first hydraulic test off the frames and unlagged. Pressure gauges must be marked with a red line to indicate the working pressure. Boilers must have a suitable 1/4" x 40 male fitting to take the test pump union. A copy of the new test procedure is on the club notice board, if you have any queries, please contact the Secretary, Martin Parham.

Boiler tests must be carried out by **TWO** of the following boiler testers, so please check that they are available before turning up for a test.

Graham.Kimber.	4 The Stream, Ditton, Maidstone.	W.Malling 845931
Peter Kingsford.	16 Cherry Tree Road, Charing Heath.	Charing 712086
Martin Parham.	9 The Landway, Bearsted.	Maidstone 630298
Don Paterson.	1 Westlawn, Little Ivy Mill, Loose.	Maidstone 743081
Jack Payne.	38 Oxford Road, Maidstone.	Maidstone 757545

FAR EASTERN RAMBLINGS

Following a visit to Great Britain in 1870 the Sultan of Jahore, a province in the Malay Peninsula close to Singapore Island, became gripped by the railway fever that was still spreading throughout Great Britain. He returned to the Straits determined to build a railway within Jahore and consequently ordered the construction of a 20 mile line. The railway was constructed in standard gauge but using hardwood rails rather than steel. Little appears to be known of this first railway but it is recorded that the Governor of Singapore rode on it, behind a British built tank locomotive, soon after its opening in 1875. By 1877 the line ceased to exist as both rails and sleepers had been eaten by white ants.

The first successful railway in the Malay Peninsula did not open until 1885 a line of only 8 miles from the mines at Tai Ping to Port Weld, now known as Port Swettenham, on the Indian Ocean coast. Meanwhile, over one thousand miles north, in Thailand (Siam), railway construction was under consideration from Bangkok, east towards the Cambodian border and in the far north from Phitsanulok towards Chaing Mai. It is said that Queen Victoria presented a model train set to King Mongkut Rama IV in 1855 as a gift to celebrate the signing of the Anglo Siamese Treaty and that this was played with by Prince Chulalongkorn who succeeded to the throne as Rama V. He then proceeded to instigate railway construction. The King consulted British engineers and schemes were proposed of three different gauges but Krupp of Germany convinced the Siam Government that they could build the line more cheaply than the British. Construction of the first section of 16 miles was commenced in 1891 between Bangkok and Paknam and is said to have been a great success. Although built by a Belgian/Danish company, Britain supplied the rolling stock.

Railway construction continued in unconnected sections but by 1900 four lines were open and working in Thailand with many more sections under construction, whilst in Malaysia the line from Butterworth south through Kuala Lumpur to Tai Ping, was in operation.

By the turn of the Century construction work on the main line from Bangkok south towards Malaysia was well under way and unlike the lines already constructed heading to the north and east which were in standard gauge, the 1 metre gauge was adopted for the new line. By 1907 Hua Hin the summer residence of the Siamese King on the South China Sea had been reached and by 1910 the line was open to the Malay/Siam border at Padang Besar. The line was linked to Butterworth in 1914, at the same time as the line from Tai Ping was completed through to the coast off Singapore and although a line was also constructed from the docks in Singapore, they were not linked across the causeway until 1923. Lines in Thailand spreading north to Chiang Mai, east to Cambodia and Vietnam and north east to Laos were gradually extended, the destinations eventually being reached between 1924 and 1950.

The lack of the strategic value of these routes however was to mean that the track work became the source for the Japanese of rails and sleepers for the construction of the Death Railway, from its junction with the Southern Line 25 miles to the west of Bangkok to Burma.

Although that railway was not actually completed until 1950 ironically the break up of the colonial empires and the deteriorating political situation between Thailand and its Burmese neighbour, meant that the line was little if ever used beyond the border. The River Kwai (pronounced Kwar) runs some 85 miles to the west of Bangkok. Although it is now easily accessible by road or train from Bangkok, at the time of the Second World War it was effectively as accessible for the mass movement of goods or persons as John 'O Groats is from Land's End on a bicycle for us. The Japanese push to move their forces across Thailand and into Burma to secure the Indian Ocean ports was hampered by the lack of communicable channels and hence their reason for extending the existing railway, which at that time stretched only 73 miles, to Ratchaburi before turning south, through to north western Thailand and across the River Kwai into Burma.

In realism, the River Kwai formed but a small obstacle in the full picture of the construction and it is doubtful whether it would have had little or any significance had it not formed the basis of the book and film "Bridge Over the River Kwai" of which the majority is glorification and in some parts, fiction. There is no fiction however regarding the existence of the so called "death railway" and the number of Allied troops, Thai and Burmese citizens, who died in its construction.

The rail route leading to the River Kwai presents no major or elaborate engineering feat, it is basically flat and relatively straight; much of the land of which it crosses being below natural water level, necessitating the permanent way to be raised up on a small embankment. At the time of its construction, the area was mainly swamps and loose jungle and the works consisted mainly of raising the earth to create the embankments after cutting down the foliage. The River Kwai was the first obstacle encountered and it was an obstacle only in so far as it being wide, around 300m with the ground on either side elevated around 15m above water level. There were many more difficult obstacles even before the Burmese border at Nam Tok, 132 miles from Bangkok, was reached.

It is fairly common knowledge now that the elaborate, timber constructed miniature Fourth Rail Bridge was cinema artistic licence. The bridge erected was a simple steel truss bridge on masonry piers, designed and fabricated by the Japanese and transported to site down the railway. It is probable that the bridge was even erected by Japanese engineers, the Japanese armed forces had a large contingent of specialised bridge designers and erecters and it is unlikely that they would have laid themselves open to such obvious opportunities for sabotage. British forces were utilised for crude labour and their part in the bridge building exercise was very much limited to labouring for the Japanese specialists.

There is still a bridge across the River Kwai, it is around 150m downstream from that built during the conflict. The only signs of the original bridge are the remnants of the masonry piers now virtually swallowed back to the undergrowth. The present bridge is a simple multi-span steel trussed bridge, on a number of masonry piers in the river and decking consisting only on the sleepers with a single board around 250mm wide running along the centre. Track is laid in 1m, 4ft and standard gauge but only 1m gauge continues beyond the bridge at each end.

The bridge is used by the railway and a number of trains pass in each direction each day. Pedestrians also use the bridge, either striding from sleeper to sleeper or walking on the centre board. At each pier there is a small reservation for pedestrians to squeeze into if a train should cross whilst they are part way. Motor cycles and mopeds rush across the bridge on the centre board, unperturbed at the consequences of a slight mistake and scattering pedestrians onto the sleepers either side. Four wheel drive vehicles straddle the track and bounce over the sleepers until they reach the security of the other side. Fortunately the vehicular traffic is only spasmodic but there are always a large number of pedestrians on the bridge, tourists and locals alike. Whilst this all may sound very hazardous, in comparison with the dangers of being on Thailand's roads it is probably one of the safer places to be.

The eastern side of the bridge is a tourist attraction, with restaurants (Thai style) and relics and museums related to the construction of the railway and the British troops who built it, along with the military cemeteries for those who paid with their lives, which feature at intervals all the way along the track. The River, as most rivers in this part of the World, is wide, fast flowing and only the typical Thai long tailed boats offer an alternative crossing to the bridge.

We crossed the bridge, peered down at the olive green waters and avoided the motor cycles until we eventually reached the totally featureless silt embankment on the far side, whereupon we turned round and walked back again. We felt that it was imperative to see a train cross the bridge after coming so far and thus we walked around and pondered upon the three rotted relics that formed part of the tourist area for the east bank. These consisted of the remains of a British built 4-6-0 tender loco, a similar Japanese built 4-6-0 and a Japanese lorry with trailer converted to run on flanged wheels.

The whistle of the oncoming train could be heard for at least 30 minutes before it finally appeared in the distance, travelling at the standard speed of local Thai railways of about 5 mph. A large diesel local pulled half a dozen coaches of Thai stock, all looking grossly over sized with their full size bodies on narrow gauge running gear. I felt that a good photograph would be achieved if taken from one of the reservations on the bridge and so I proceeded across the first two spans and crouched down in a small reservation on the down stream side of the bridge, as the proper reservation on the upstream side was filled with waiting locals waiting to cross. Slowly the train approached and it became quite obvious that I would have to remain down on my haunches, as the carriages would overlap my standing position. It rolled precariously over and stopped, it was then that I glanced up to discover that I was looking straight into a 4" diameter pipe, the outlet from yes, you know what! There was absolutely nowhere to go and the two or three minutes that the train waited there seemed more like two or three hours. Be warned therefore if you do ever go, to stand in a reservation on the upstream side!

Although the railway exists right through to Burma, trains do still not run through. Political relationships between Burma and Thailand are far from harmonious and Thai trains stop short of the border at Nam Tok. I have no idea where, if at all, trains re-start on the Burmese side.

Thailand had two main railway stations on either side of the Chao Prya River but these are now directly interlinked to Bangkok station, which provides services to the Burmese border via the River Kwai and branching from this is the main line that runs south, the whole way through Thailand, to Butterworth through Malaysia and then into Singapore. As well as suburban trains which are relatively frequent, covering the outer parts of Bangkok itself, there are express trains at intervals of three to four hours, running right through to Butterworth where a change of trains carries on ultimately to Singapore. The trains are long, consisting of up to 20 Bogie coaches, with sometimes three or even four diesel haulage units.

The trains feature three classes of travel, first, second and third. First class provides upholstered seats that convert into couchettes and air conditioning. Each carriage features its own kitchen and all meals, Thai style are provided. Second class is somewhat more basic, wooden slatted seats, no air conditioning but reasonable room. Third class is comparable with the photographs depicting the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. The journey takes 1½ days and tickets must be booked up to 3 hours in advance, no "turn up and go".

Railway travel is cheap, the journey to Singapore of 1,295 miles could be undertaken for £40 first class and £15 second class. However this was five years ago and costs have undoubtedly risen since then.

On the journey down towards Butterworth the train passes through a Hua Hin, the summer residence of the King of Thailand and where his private waiting room is a tourist attraction. Here on the opposite side of the tracks is a well maintained and painted Japanese manufactured 4-6-2 tender loco.

Services to the north of Thailand to Chaing Mai and to the east, to the Vietnamese border, are taken from Bangkok via Don Muang. The stock is modern and wholly featureless although it offers a fast and efficient passenger service. In so far as I could ascertain, there are no remaining steam locomotives in Thailand other than the static exhibits, which include a small tank loco outside the main station. Thailand's railways are primarily passenger; the occasional goods truck can be seen tacked on the rear of a passenger train as goods, which consist mainly of vegetables, travel by road. The drivers of the road freight sometimes go for 24 hours without a break and some of the head-on collisions, the results of which remain laying by the side of the road, are quite horrific.

1993 saw the introduction, two years later than planned, of the Eastern and Oriental Express, sister train to the British Continental Orient Express. This is formed of a rake of re-furbished aluminium bodied New Zealand railway coaches and runs once a week in each direction, between Singapore and Bangkok. There are currently side trips from Bangkok to Chaing Mai, and next year the train is likely to move even further afield, its limit probably being the incompatibility of the Thai narrow gauge with the standard gauge of surrounding countries.

ROGER STAGG

STOP PRESS : CHARITY RUN ON BEHALF OF IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH ON SUNDAY APRIL 23RD FROM 10 AM UNTIL 5 - 00PM.

This is to coincide with a walk being held near the track for the same cause. Please come and assist if you can during the day, the more locomotives the better to share the load.

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IN MEMORIAL

WE ARE SORRY TO REPORT THAT AT THE END OF NOVEMBER, MR RAYNOR - SHARP, ONE OF OUR VICE-PRESIDENTS, DIED OF A HEART ATTACK IN SOUTH AFRICA. ALSO WE LOST ANOTHER LONG-STANDING MEMBER, NICK NICHOLLS, IN JANUARY THIS YEAR, WHO DIED FROM CANCER.

OUR CONDOLENCES GO TO THEIR FAMILIES.

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DIARY DATES

Sunday April 23rd : All Day Charity Run

Friday May 5th : Bits & Pieces & Crumpet Evening

Friday June 2nd : Evening Run & Fish & Chips

Friday July 7th : Tidy Up Evening (Not Natter Night - that's later in the year!)

Saturday July 8th : Local Club Visit to Mote Park

Friday August 4th : Evening Run & Barbecue

Saturday August 26th : Visit to Sutton Club (yes, via the pub but optional!)

Friday September 1st : Evening Run & Jacket Potato

Friday October 6th : Natter Night

Sunday October 15th : Last official public running day

Sunday October 22nd : Club Coach Trip to the Midlands Exhibition - book now!

Friday November 3rd : Video Night (may possibly change to Bluebell Railway Talk)

Friday December 1st : Bits & Chips & Fish & Pieces Evening (you know what I mean)

Tuesday December 26th : Boxing Day Run.....doesn't the year go fast!

SUE'S SPOT

Just a few words from me to say how disappointed I am not to have received any articles this quarter. Luckily I remembered Roger sent me two at Christmas, hence I had one article to put in this issue. I may not bother with an autumn newsletter as you already have the rundown of events for the rest of the year and up to date information can always be gained by a trip to the club or a phone call. It's up to you!

Thanks to Martin for compiling the item on boiler testing-please read this carefully. Safety remains our highest priority and rules must be respected.

Those who have been toiling tirelessly throughout the winter for the Club are worthy of all our thanks. The cutting has been dug out, all the beam supports we had decided to do have been finished. We have cast a couple of larger beams as a standby and will do a couple of smaller ones to have by us. There is even a small but merry band of volunteers brandishing green paintbrushes and having a go at that never-ending job, painting the guard rail. Well done chaps, keep up the good work. There is always something one can help with at the Club, even if it's just putting equipment and trolleys out - and just as important, putting it all away! So please lend a hand!

We are collecting materials and, I hope, volunteers to assist with completion of the Enterprise chassis - all donations of materials will be welcome, in particular for the boiler. With luck we can make a start before too long on this. Please let any committee member know if you would like to help. We hope to get as much work as possible done at the Park.

On the back page of the newsletter is details of the Club Trip to the Midlands, do let Sue have the necessary as soon as possible in order to reserve your seat.

Happy steaming and please start writing!
Have a good summer folks.



IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION FOR 1995 IT IS NOW OVERDUE.

PLEASE REMEDY THIS IMMEDIATELY OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL LAPSE AND YOU WILL RECEIVE NO FURTHER COMMUNICATION FROM THE SOCIETY.

THANK YOU.



OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President: A.H.W. Payne Esq. (Jack) Maidstone 757545.
38 Oxford Road, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 8DJ.

Chairman: A. Gurr Esq. (Adrian) TEMPORARY DETAILS: Maidstone 761336.
C/O 41 Surrey Road, Maidstone, Kent.

Vice Chairman: G. Kimber Esq. (Graham) West Malling 845931.
4 The Stream, Ditton, Maidstone, Kent. ME20 6AG.

Secretary: M.N. Parham Esq. (Martin) Maidstone 630298.
9 The Landway, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 4BD.

Treasurer: P.A. Roots Esq. (Peter) Maidstone 758599.
97 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent. ME16 8JN.

Press Officer: Mrs. S. Gurr. (Sue) Maidstone 630298.
9 The Landway, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 4BD.

Committee Members: Bob Hodgkins, Don Paterson, Geoff Riddles,
Mick Starnes, Chris Williams, John Winsor.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1994/5 (as handed out and read 3/3/95)

I am sorry that this report is short and written but I have now joined the ranks of the retired old fogies (well almost) and I don't have the eager "ha ha" young lady waiting to commit my every thought via the typewriter to paper.

This year has once again been a success as far as finances are concerned and we are spending some of this hard earned cash on improvements to our environment, the drainage around the steaming bays is being attended to and we are considering some new floor covering, which if you look at your feet, is becoming well overdue. Spare beams are being cast to replace some which are becoming a bit suspect.

One item which we will discuss after the official business of this evening is the finishing of a "very" well made "Enterprise" chassis which we have been bequeathed, this has been a very generous gift to the club and it is proposed to complete this engine as a "club loco". This is going to take quite a bit of effort by members and is not an undertaking to be entered into without some thoughts on the work and costs involved.

Best wishes for the coming season.

Graham Kimber

**COACH TRIP TO THE MIDLANDS MODEL
ENGINEERING EXHIBITION
SUNDAY OCTOBER 22ND 1995**

AS REQUESTED BY MANY MEMBERS WE HAVE AGAIN ARRANGED A COACH TRIP TO THE ABOVE. THE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MUCH THE SAME AS BEFORE, DEPARTURE WILL BE AT 8-00 A.M. PROMPT FROM DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE, ARRIVING BACK THERE AT APPROXIMATELY 8-00 P.M. THE JOURNEY WILL TAKE AROUND THREE AND A BIT HOURS AND WILL BE BY LUXURY COACH (DRINKS, LOO, VIDEO ETC.)

THE COST WILL BE £18 (£17 FOR O.A.P.S AND £16 FOR CHILDREN) PER PERSON. THE PRICE IS THE SAME AS 1993.

PLEASE PAY A DEPOSIT OF £5 PER PERSON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO SECURE YOUR PLACE.

THE BALANCE TO BE PAID BY SEPTEMBER 1ST PLEASE.

CASH, OR CHEQUES PAYABLE TO MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY PLEASE HAND TO SUE AT THE PARK OR POST TO 9 THE LANDWAY BEARSTED MAIDSTONE KENT ME14 4BD. YOUR PLACE WILL BE CONFIRMED TO YOU VERBALLY.

PLEASE NOTE FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

MIDLANDS EXHIBITION

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
NUMBER OF TICKETS AND TYPE REQUIRED.....
(ADULT, CHILD OR OAP)
SUM ENCLOSED.....