

MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY



WINTER 1973

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1973

Sitting down before a blank sheet of paper with a report to write, my lack of command over the written word always fills me with a certain dismay; I even venture to say panic. The immediate problem confronting me is the presentation of a report which is both interesting and accurate.

This year however, my task is so much easier for we have had such a wonderful season. From Boxing Day 1972 until last Sunday 25th November we have successfully run Mote Park track with only three Sundays being rained off, even then engines were steamed and a few passengers carried.

The new Club House and store was duly opened by Mr. & Mrs. Wallis on the 8th July. The Society is indebted to our members who decorated, painted, fitted the electrics, cooker and refrigerator, sink unit and installed the necessary plumbing.

The Opening was made doubly pleasant by the static display of 37 locos, running '00' gauge models and stationary steam engines in steam supplied by a large boiler.

Progressing through the season a considerable amount of work went into making the track at Mote Park true to gauge.

We have now a greatly improved water supply (thanks to a GPO man on furlough) and a very good drain system (thanks to a certain Sheppey mole). Both of these will be a boon to engine drivers.

A most welcome gift, by one of our senior citizen members, of a wall plaque in the Society's colours sets off our club house.

Work is being carried out on a new signalling system which, when complete, will be an asset to the safety of our track.

Speaking of safety there is quite a lot of work to do in bringing our passenger cars up to the "safe" standard.

Thanks to the efforts of our Secretary we have enjoyed visits from and to other Societies, also some very interesting meetings held in our new premises.

Thanks go out to our tame press officer for all the Newsletters.

Lastly thanks to you all for making this season such a success.

As to the ladies of the Society - drivers, ticket takers, tea and coffee makers, eats providers - the list is endless, we all thank you for your most welcome help without which the Society would be the poorer.

In conclusion may I wish you all the very best and hope to see you at the Annual General Meeting which will be held in the new Club House, Mote Park on the 22nd February, 1974.

A.H.W.Payne, (Jack). 1st December, 1973.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

This Newsletter, skillfully timed to arrive with the Xmas cards is also designed to bring good cheer or despondency depending on its interpretation. Being the last of 1973 a resume of the year's events and projected fixtures would seem to be in order.

The winter sports of Mote Park last January saw many more competitors than previously, enjoying the exceptional weather and the opportunity of many bracing trips round the track.

During February and March the weather remained dry enabling even more members to indulge in a few last laps until the gathering dusk ended the entertainment. It is worthy of note also, that many hardy passengers were carried, handing over frozen pennies to Eskimo clad ladies then to accompany the train operators on the trip to the sunlit but frozen wastes of Mote Park. Many of us sitting in the club shed after a cold winter run contemplated the expected pleasure of this coming winter with the improved facilities which were still in the pipeline at the time.

The Committee of the Society and many members have worked very hard this year to bring to fruition as much of the pipeline schemes of last winter as time and finance would allow.

The moment the word finance enters the picture the host of critics accuse the Society of being principally interested in money and not in engineering. One of the doubtful advantages of being Secretary is that I am able to delve into the archives for information on how the Society has been run since nineteen dot.

From the inception of the Society in 1929 the club has run on two quite separate lines. Being primarily concerned with locomotive models the club in those early days obviously looked forward to the day when they could afford a permanent track on which to run their products.

Mr. Payne in his history of the Society articles has amply illustrated how members in those days ran a portable track for a penny a time towards the day when a permanent track could be financed. Even after the very considerable efforts of building the original track in the Park members used it to finance the present one. Quite over and above the enormous manpower efforts expended by members, a very considerable sum of money was required in the region of three times (allowing for relative values in 1963) what has been expended on the new premises just indulged in.

From the foregoing it would seem clear that the financial aspect has been with us for some thirty years. If that does not indicate the commercial side of the Society I don't know what does.

During these "commercial" enterprises the model engineering went on unaffected. In fact it seems probable that the model engineering continued with increased vigour in view of the improved facilities provided.

One may draw the obvious conclusion that without the fare paying passengers the track and the Society as we know it would cease to exist or more probably have expired twenty years ago. It would be more than naive to suppose that the members subscriptions of £60 per year could support a Society whose insurance liabilities, maintenance and fuel costs total £240 per annum. Many model engineering clubs operate on the "you gets what you pay for" basis and the money has to come from somewhere. Most active members of Maidstone Model Engineering Society appreciate this and it is significant that those who criticise the most make the least contribution.

Turning aside from the commercial to the engineering front, considerable activity has taken place in this direction too. Many members this year visited by kind invitation, the Southern Federation Rally at Romford to meet old friends and new, in glorious sunshine and enjoyed a run on their own heavyweights, and saw a 2½" gauge Garratt and two of L.B.S.C.'s originals in steam and running.

Chingford's Easter Rally on the following day as always provided a friendly and interesting excursion. The I.M.L.E.C. also at Chingford, a visit to Maldon and a drive of their excellent 7¼" ground level loco was also most interesting.

The Club's visit to Stoke Park, Guildford, followed by another trip to the traction engine rally, enabling us to slog around their track hauling some of their many visitors was equally entertaining.

Our visit to Beech Hurst in glorious weather with many engines included a tour round their extension and the hospitality of S.M.L.S. extended until 9 p.m. and provided M.M.E.S. with a most interesting day out. If they invite us next season we will be able to savour the experience of the Sussex underground movement.

Apart from our own exhibition in Mote Park we entertained many visitors from other Societies including Chingford, Maldon, Guildford, East Sussex, Eltham, Romney Marsh and Tonbridge. Two of these visits coincided with evening runs for our own members followed by hot meals for upwards of thirty members and guests. Midnight had passed before we made our way home on these two occasions. Judging from references made in their respective newsletters our guests had a entertaining and informative time as our own members.

This interchange of ideas on how other societies run their affairs and the chance to examine and drive many various models is a continuous inspiration to many members.

Now that Maidstone Model Engineering Society is approaching solvency once more having repaid £1,600 of the £2,000, plans are in hand for promoting model engineering pursuits for next year.

Following the excellent film show by Mr. Liddell in October and Mr. Ewins most informative and entertaining lecture in November - January will see an engineering competition of a similar type to the competition run by Guildford M.E.S. Bring along to Mote Park on January 26th any part completed model of almost anything for an interesting evening - and possibly a prize.

On May 18th the Southern Federation Spring Rally will be held at Maidstone exhibiting and running models from far and wide. July is the date for the second M.M.E.S. engineering exhibition in Mote Park.

Coupled with the usual interchange of club visits (probably about twelve spread over the season) to and from Maidstone 1974 should not be without interest from an engineering aspect. On Boxing Day this year the Society is having its third successive run and will probably see the first run of Mr. J. Carr's 5" gauge "Brittania" - an excellent model which was started on 1st November, 1972. Considering Jack spends almost every Sunday at Mote Park and has rebuilt several trollies in this period not a bad effort. Apart from Jack's Brittania we have a 5" Springbok, a 5" Boxhill, a 5" American, a 5" Royal Scot, 5" Lion, 5" Duchess, two 5" Ajax' concurrently being built by father and son and a 5" Mountain all making good progress, to name only those I readily call to mind.

Considering the 37 locos on show at our summer exhibition plus the many under construction it does seem to me to be justification for spending large sums of money providing a headquarters and adequate storage facilities at Mote Park.

With the new hooks devised by Mr. Hayward it would appear that we can store about 20 trollies in the new store leaving the engine shed completely free for the storage of models only.

Recently provided also are the new water cranes at the trackside and an elaborate drainage system built at almost nil cost by members. Water is also being installed in the steaming bay area and a hand basin is already fitted in the trolley store.

Many other facilities are in the pipeline, not forgetting the refrigerator already donated by Mr. Harris, the portable library unit built by Mr. Lawson and the signalling system underway, designed by Mr. Basedon.

Considering for a moment the question of trollies, the Committee have drawn up for discussion a list of recommendations for what is called "minimum standards for passenger hauling trollies" to be discussed at the A.G.M. These standards which at first appear formidable are not really as severe as at first supposed.

They are as follows -

1. Be of basically sound construction.
2. If over 30" wheelbase must have swivelling bogies and properly flanged wheels.
3. Have an efficient braking system.
4. Have rigidly fixed leg guards that when in use will make contact with the guard rail to prevent a capsize.
5. Have a handrail and buffer at the rear.
6. Be kept in a reasonable state of repair, free from projections liable to cause injury.
7. Multiple trolleys must have a rigid link and the gaps between protected.

In July last a toddler was injured on the Mote Park track. The injury sustained was caused by the child's foot slipping in the gap between the trolleys and catching on the guard rail support. How ironic that after spending £400 fitting the guard rail to prevent one type of accident the guard rail indirectly caused another type of injury. Fortunately the parents did not pursue the matter having been reimbursed for the clothing damaged.

Perhaps the Society should look at this accident as a salutary lesson in that parents of passengers, having given their children into our care for a ride, reasonably expect them to be returned suitably exhilarated and complete with fingers and toes.

I think it fairly evident from Arnold Throp's article in the Model Engineer, 16th November, 1973, that we too operate in Mote Park by grace and favour of the Local Authority and that one serious accident might see the suspension of the railway permanently and the efforts of members over thirty years would then have been in vain. After cheerfully paying £400 for a guard rail a few shillings spent on the trolleys to maintain a high safety standard is all that is necessary.

Turning to the forthcoming Annual General Meeting to be held on February 22nd at Mote Park (7-30p.m.) may I ask members to submit names of candidates to serve the Society in 1974. Candidates for the posts of President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Press Officer and six Committee members. Agreement to serve must be obtained before submitting the names to the Secretary - by January 31st please.

Don't forget to bring your engine on Boxing Day.

Ray Milliken, Hon. Secretary.

On the evening of Saturday, 22nd December a Social Evening has been arranged by a group of the members to be held in the Club house.

WANTED - by enthusiast with limited workshop facilities, a finished or almost finished $3\frac{1}{2}$ " or 5" gauge steam locomotive. Anything considered.
Tel. Sevenoaks 56502 (evenings).

The Hon. Treasurer reports that the membership list as published in the last issue of the Newsletter contains names of people who are not paid up members of the Society. In order to put the record straight a new system of payment is being introduced this year. You will find with this Newsletter a pre-addressed envelope and also a printed slip for you to complete and return. Even if you hand your subscription to the Hon. Treasurer it must be accompanied by the completed slip of paper.

Honorary members of course must disregard this scheme.

A new list of membership will be created in April and will be printed in the Newsletter.

A small document has been proposed to be made available to members who run locos on the track and also to give to visitors and no doubt this will be under discussion at the Annual General Meeting. Its text is as follows -

Mote Park Railway Track - Rules and Recommendations

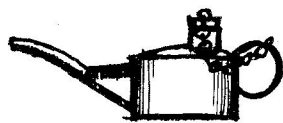
The following list is for the guidance of Society members and also visitors using the track and other facilities. There are two sections comprising running rules and recommendations and the minimum specifications for public passenger carrying trucks.

1. The Track Superintendent shall be a Committee Member appointed on the day in agreement with the other members of the Committee present. He is responsible to the Committee for implementing the following rules and recommendations on the day in question. Any apparent digression will be reported to him and must be dealt with by him.
2. All engines must possess a current boiler certificate. Permission to raise steam may be refused if the certificate cannot be shown at the request of the Track Superintendent.
3. Any truck used for carrying the public must comply with the minimum specifications for public passenger carrying trucks.
4. Only qualified Society members are allowed to drive trains carrying members of the public unless express permission is obtained in person from the Track Superintendent.
5. Every effort must be made by drivers to avoid obstructing the traffic or fouling the running lines with oil or water.
6. Engines must be driven at all times with due regard to the safety of passengers, members of the public, other trains and possible obstructions on the track. Especial care must be taken when approaching the station area.
7. Signals must be obeyed.
8. Members and visitors are expected to treat all equipment with respect, return it to its proper place after use and help keep the area tidy.

Anyone not currently engaged on new construction or major repairs and maintenance jobs may like to add a few little accessories to their locomotives.

To that end, the sketches of the few bits and pieces are given to a scale of $1\frac{1}{16}$ " to the foot. The straight sided coned top to the oil container may be rather a blighter to make and might be easier to carve to shape. The loco stoking shovels with the clasped crutch handles came in two sizes with the pans 9" x 16" or 7" x 14" (as shown). In 1953 these were available at 216/- or 212/9 per dozen - 1939 "strong loco shovels" 9" x 18" and 10" x 20" were 84/- and 90/- per dozen.

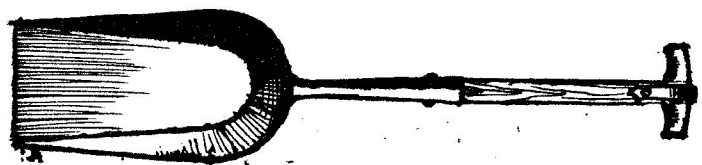
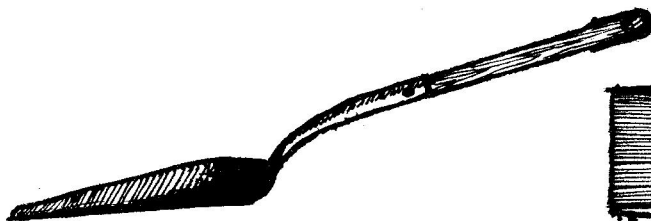
The ash shovels vary in size, but one of these and a pricker of about the same length would be in evidence on the top of the tank or tender.



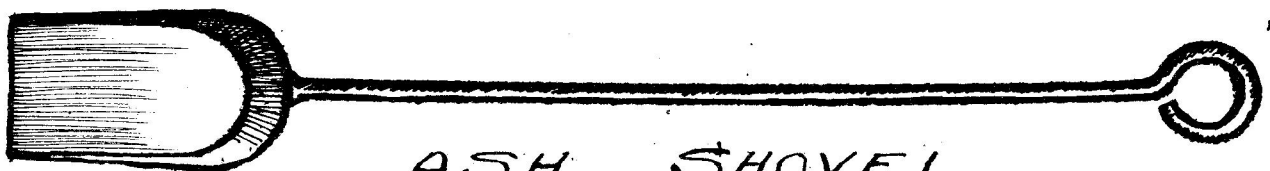
OIL FILLER



OIL CONTAINER



FIRING SHOVEL



ASH SHOVEL