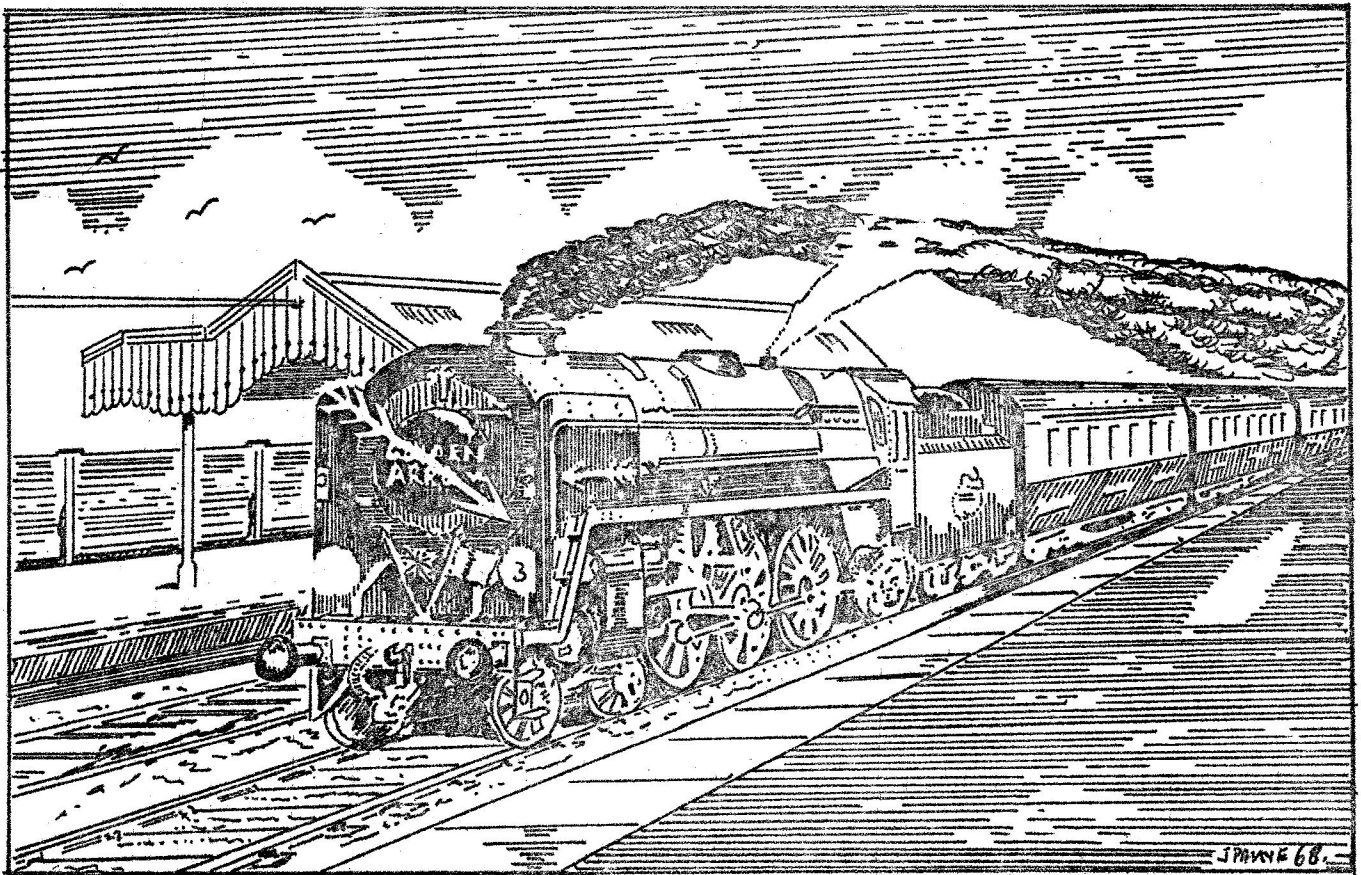


# Maidstone Model Engineering Society



SPRING 1968

## Secretary

Chairman.  
J. Payne.  
38, Oxford Rd,  
Maidstone,  
Kent.

C. Edwards.  
13, Church Rd,  
Tovil, Nr Maidstone,  
Kent.

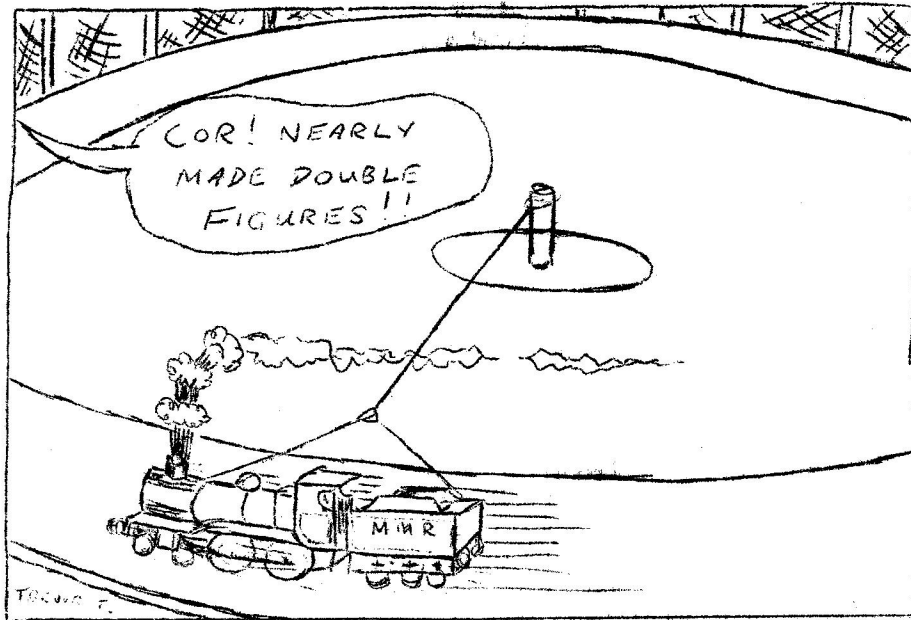
Treasurer.  
P. Roots.  
97, Tonbridge Rd,  
Maidstone,  
Kent.

## Club Notice Board

CLUB SOCIAL EVENING. In response to requests at the A.G.M., a Club social evening is to be arranged. This will be held on the 29th March at 7. 30 pm, in the usual room at the Fountain Inn. Due to the cost of hiring the room and the fact that "eats" are being provided, there will be a charge of 2/6d per person. A programme is being arranged for this meeting, so please support us in this new venture. See you at the above place at the above time on the above date!

PARK ACTIVITIES. Tracklaying is now underway on the repaired sections up the Park. The new beams have been levelled, and some club members will very soon be suffering a recurrence of "Screwdriver Twitch", a disease first noted in our Public Relations Officer, while the new extension was being laid. Please help to keep his twitches to a minimum. Every Sunday morning finds a few of us somewhere around the track or the compound.

CLUB RUNNING DATES. While on the subject of the park, would members please note the running dates for this season. If the above activities are brought to a successful conclusion, the track will open for Public running on Sunday 15th April, and continue on the 1st & 3rd Sundays in each month, until 20th October. On Bank Holiday weekends, the public running day will be the Monday and not the preceding Sunday. There will be an additional public running session on the evening of the Town Carnival. The public will be carried up until 7.30pm, after which there will be a "Sovalcue" for members and friends.



Club Notice Board, (continued).

NEW MEMBER. We welcome a new member to our midst, Mr. Brian Harris. Brian is reputed to be building (dare we say it?) - a diesel. It should be very useful.

PARK ENTRANCE FEES. Maidstone Borough Council are again imposing a 1/- per car entrance fee to Mote Park at Bank Holidays and weekends this year, but have agreed to a payment of £6 being made to the Club. This is to cover the fees paid by members when operating the track on Sunday afternoons.

HARLINGTON RALLY. Club members have been invited to attend the 1968 "Harlington Rally", organised by the Harlington Locomotive Society, Middlesbrough. This will be held on the 24th and 25th August. It sounds a very interesting "do". There is a railway track for  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " & 5" gauges, 1140ft long, and there is to be an exhibition of models, and refreshments will be available. Further details will be posted on the notice board in the hut. Would anyone intending to attend please let me know as soon as possible, as I have to contact the Harlington Club regarding numbers.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. Last, but most certainly not least, will members please note that subscriptions are now due, and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer as soon as possible.

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#### CURIOSITY CORNER.

In 1912 the Russian Government Railways provided a fully equipped laundry car on their trains carrying the Imperial Troops. The coach was completely fitted out, even to ironing boards and a disinfectant! The report concludes by saying that the coach was introduced to improve sanitary conditions in the Russian Army.

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#### FOR SALE.

3", Woden Metalwork Vice, £ . Please apply to Hon Secretary.

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CHAIRMAN'S MATTER SPOT.

On July 5th, 1967, a letter was written to our then Secretary, Jack Revell, who passed it to me and I duly replied to it on 28th August last.

If by now you are wondering what the old fool is on about (meaning me, of course!) I will explain that the letter was from a Mr. P. J. D. Davis, the President of The Maidstone Model Engineering Society, of NEW ZEALAND. Hence the postal delay involved

In his letter Mr. Davis gave the following information:-

"I am the President of a Society recently formed, having the same name as yours. It was not until I was reading some back numbers of MODEL ENGINEER that I learned that there is, in fact, another Society with the same name. As our Society was formed in February, 1967, would you mind if we use the name? When I suggested the name MAIDSTONE we were unaware that we might infringe the copyright laws!

Our Society has leased one and a half acres in Maidstone Park here for a multi-gauge railway and perhaps in the future a boating pond. The track has been surveyed and engineering drawings are ready. The length of the track is in excess of 1,200 feet and the local Lions Club is actually laying it. They have been very active in raising the necessary funds. We will erect, from revenue, the station buildings and club rooms. Our membership is about forty and we endeavour to cater for all aspects of model engineering. My own interest is in miniature locomotives. I have two; one is a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge G. N. R. "County", now about twelve years old, and I have just about completed a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge 'K' Class N. Z. R. locomotive. After a 4-6-0 the 4-8-4 seems to be rather a monster, which I suppose it is, for  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge, being six feet long,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and  $11\frac{1}{2}$ " high, with a grate area of over 47 sq.ins. The weight, with fuel and water aboard, is about two hundred-weights.

When we commence running next summer (1968) I think we shall have a useful group of passenger haulers. As a Club project we are building a petrol-electric locomotive in 5" gauge. We are fortunate in having a beautiful site for our future track; as a "backdrop" we have some beautiful natural bush and in front are cricket pitches. The Superintendent of Parks is a personal friend of mine and he will have the entire site looking really unique when he has finished his planning.

We have quite a fair number of Engineering Societies in this country. As a matter of fact I am a Founder Member of the Hutt Valley Model Engineering Society; their track is about ten miles from here but the site leaves much to be desired as it is adjacent to the sea and is very exposed to every wind that blows.

I would be very interested to hear from you any details of your Society and its activities."

I replied to this letter, on behalf of our Society, giving him full information about our activities and adding that we would be pleased to hear from him again. On 23rd September, 1967, he wrote this further letter:-

"Our New Zealand track is about the same shape as yours - turn your track round and it IS the same!

Copies of your letter were circulated at our last meeting and members were extremely interested. A motion was passed expressing the hope that our two Societies could become closely affiliated though, being as yet a young organisation, we would have little to offer you immediately.

We hope to start work on our track site soon. To date the land has been waterlogged, following ten inches of rain last month - double the average - but with hot sun and warm, drying winds the area is drying out nicely.

The radius of curves will be forty feet and on the south side of the track there will be a background of bush and pines, with cricket pitches on the north side. In the same (northerly) direction and within a few hundred yards there is the main railway line between Wellington and Gisbourne. The particular area is the valley of the Hutt River, one end of which is Wellington Harbour. At the eastern end are the Tarauia mountains, rising to over five thousand feet and snow-covered during the winter months of June to August. Not far away is a railway tunnel five and a half miles long.

To-day we had our portable track in use at a college gala held not very far from here. My engine was in steam for about six hours and ran very well. We shifted about three hundred children, which we considered was not a bad effort.

I am sorry to say that in the North Island steam locomotives have almost disappeared, but in the South Island they are still very much to the fore. A month or so ago I had the thrill of riding on the second locomotive of a double-headed "Special" bound for Arthur's Pass in the Southern Alps. The way these two 4-8-4 locos tackled the 1 in 50 grades with a heavy train was something I'll never forget! With booster, tractive effort is something over 30,000 lbs. If you so desire I could forward you at some later date a recording we have made of these locomotives at work. They are extremely well recorded and the only thing lacking is the smell!"

I replied to this letter and on 13th December last had a further one from Mr. Davis:-

"On the 4th November, 1967, the Mayor of Upper Hutt turned the first sod for the track. The workers shifted so much spoil that we had two five-cubic-yard trucks fully occupied. Concrete piers are now being erected and within the next week or so rail-laying should begin, but 1,200 feet seems a long way to go, (Don't we know! Ed.) particularly when the piers are at five-foot intervals. For our concrete work we use 'ready-mixed', which arrives in batches of three to five cubic yards in a truck on which is mounted a HUGE mixer; when that vehicle turns up the scene is one of great activity.

In my last letter I mentioned that my Society would like some form of affiliation with yours; has that matter been considered yet? In back numbers of MODEL ENGINEER I have seen some very interesting references to your track. I suppose the winter has caused you to stop running. We should just about manage to function all the year round, with any luck. We sometimes have some very sunny days during the winter. Seasonal greetings to yourself and your Society."

On 22nd January this year I had another letter:-

"A Happy New Year to your Society. I was very pleased to receive your last letter just before Christmas. We have been taking advantage of the fine weather over the holidays to carry out some track laying. We now have about 340 feet in operation and commenced passenger hauling on January 6th. It has been so hot that one day the temperature in my workshop reached 92°F! This is one of the reasons why I haven't bothered to lag my boiler, apart from the extra work involved.

All the signals and relays have been purchased from the Railways Department and as they are of the searchlight type they should be very satisfactory, particularly at night. I hope to forward by surface mail some colour photos of our railway, locomotives and surroundings. You will note that the 'backdrop' of native trees really sets things off. Also, if possible, I will send a photograph of a locomotive that is being purchased for preservation and will be seen not far from here. The



"The Railways want £600 for it in full running order. You will be able to see for yourself that the 'K' Class were magnificent locomotives, particularly when you consider that they were built for 3ft. 6ins. gauge.

I have taken the precaution of fitting a fusible plug in the firebox crown of my boiler. With learner drivers in our Society, this is essential! Do you fit them in your locomotives? I have never read of 'L.B.S.C.' fitting them at all but I like to follow full scale practice as far as possible.

I was very sorry to hear of the damage that was done to your track by the falling elm. We run on either side of a huge poplar (it is a special type of poplar which sheds, in season, a cotton-like substance), so I hope we shall not be faced with the same problem.

We had a reporter from the Wellington 'Evening Post' to see us at the track last Sunday and I will forward you a copy of the article he produced, which was of great benefit to our Society. To-day is a Public Holiday, so I will load my loco into the car soon, and have a steam-up. I was up early this morning and got all my odd servicing jobs done. I ran for three to four hours yesterday, so there was a great deal of rubbish in the smokebox; it doesn't have to be cleaned very often, as it is about seven inches long, with an internal diameter of five inches."

That was the last letter to be received to date and I replied to it as follows:-

"On behalf of the Maidstone Model Engineering Society we would be pleased if the New Zealand Maidstone Model Engineering Society and ours were affiliated, the fee for such affiliation to be the continuing friendship of our two Societies."

This suggested affiliation was approved by our Council on 5th January, 1968.

I will keep you up to date with these "Natters" as and when the letters come in but, as you can appreciate, the time lag with correspondence, even by Air Mail, to and from New Zealand, is quite considerable. I have waited until I had a reasonably complete picture to put to you, in the hope that it will be of interest to all members. I did bring a shortened version of the letters to our Annual General Meeting on February 16th, intending to read them, but as things turned out I didn't think it would be fair on the few members present (29 out of a possible 68) to RAM DOWN THEIR THROATS ONE MORE RAILWAY TRACK.

I say again that I hope these notes will be of interest to you all and for newer members especially I should like to mention that in the early days of our Society I have run Sid Longley's loco at all kinds of places, mainly entirely on my own until Sid could leave his business to help. I would put up the portable track on a Friday night, then run all day on the Saturday, take down the track at the end of the day and finally stow it in Sid's garage until the next engagement. I spent one of my annual holiday weeks running Sid's loco at our exhibition every day, the nett result being 15/6d. for the Society. Another time I spent a week of my annual holiday at one of our exhibitions, doing much the same thing, and netted precisely 5/6d. for the Society. To be fair, though, when we ran at some of the many outdoor fetes we did better. Most of the money for our first permanent track was earned in this way by Sid and his loco. Our Immediate Past Chairman's firm also helped in those early days, by giving extended and interest-free credit.

When the track was complete in Mote Park, Mr. Rix's "Liberty", Sid Longley's loco and, later, the "Green Arrow" together brought in enough money to clear the debt.

As I work six days a week (with all-night breakdowns as well, sometimes), I do not have much spare time.

We now have one of the best and probably the longest tracks in the South

of England and, if we wish, we have a ready-made Clubroom in Mote Park. We already have mains supplies of water and electricity there and as time goes by I hope we shall have a workshop, with power tools for making any type of model.

I am hoping soon to have the existing Loco Shed enlarged, so that we can move the passenger trucks and other impedimenta out of the Clubroom and have that building available for the activities I have mentioned.

We also have what is probably the finest miniature racing car track in the country.

We could have other interests but it's up to you all to see what can be done.

We must first be financially sound, as an insurance against the future.

At the moment, the only money coming in is from members' annual subscriptions (~~and~~ they're by no means all paid), from the "takings" at Mote Park track on Sundays, Bank Holidays ( and sometimes Saturdays), and from Vice-Presidents' donations.

Just one more thing before the old fool is finished:-

I have other interests as well as small locomotives, as a few of you know, such as oil painting, model ship building, 16 mm. cine projectors, and, lastly, producing posters for our Society's notices. I have been nattering on about the past ..... but I have not forgotten the present and the future. Thanks to the "Maids", to "Liberty" and to certain other five-inchers and three-and-half-inchers we are still able to keep together a Society of which I am proud to be Chairman.

Thanks for reading this. Think on.

A. H. W. (JACK) PAYNE.

#### PUBLICITY BLOKE'S BACKCHAT.

Members will have seen elsewhere in this issue that the "public" running days this season are to be the same as last year, namely, the first, third and, where applicable, fifth Sundays in each month, with Bank Holidays substituted for the immediately preceding Sunday when necessary. At the A. C. M. there were suggestions that it would be a good idea to have some days set aside for  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge locos only, so that when hauling passengers they don't have to tear themselves and their drivers to bits in trying not to hold up the five-inch jobs. The Council at its meeting in February thought this was a very good idea and suggested that perhaps the second and fourth Sundays in each month might be utilised for this purpose or, by prior arrangement, perhaps the drivers and owners of 5" gauge locos could take a day or two off and act as stewards, water-boys and what have you, instead. So if you're a three-and-a-half, get hold of your nearest Council member (or me) and give your views, before the season really gets cracking. Don't just sit and think - DO some'ut!

Another idea the Council is considering (and I hope I'm not freeing a feline from a felt-lined container) is the holding of an Annual Dinner in the early autumn of this year, probably in October. There might even be a dance as well if we've got enough twisters (of the foot-fiddling or terpsichorean variety, of course) to make it possible. Guests would be welcome (essential, in fact, if the thing is to pay its way) and the feminine variety would be highly desirable. What d'you think about THAT? Will you support it if it's arranged or shall we be faced with the spectacle of the Chairman dancing with the Honorary Treasurer?

And speaking of the Honorary Treasurer, have you paid your annual sub. yet? Don't forget, money is at least one of the Roots of all evil, but we must have it!

Philip G. Wallis.  
Hon. Publicity Officer.  
(If that's what I am!)