

MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Easter 2022

www.maidstonemes.co.uk

President - Martin Parham

Maidstone Model Engineering Society

Easter 2022 Newsletter

Luke's Spot.....	3
At the Park.....	4
Chairman's report	6
Norman Francis Clark.....	10
7 1/4"	16
Geoff Riddles.....	18
Calendar	On the back

Your Committee

The committee exists to serve the club, to look out for the clubs interests and to make decisions on behalf of the club and its members.

Each committee member has volunteered and been elected by the membership at the AGM.

We are your committee, if you would like a point raised, either write/email to Tom, or talk to one of us and we can raise an issue on your behalf.

Chairman - Chris Hawkins
Vice Chairman - Sue Parham
Secretary - Tom Parham
Treasurer - Edgar Playfoot
Press Officer - Luke Bridges
Pat Riddles
John Hawkins
Andrew Hulse
Chris Williams
Jack Ruler
Amy Bridges

Cover photo: A sign of things to come? by Sue Parham

Luke's Spot

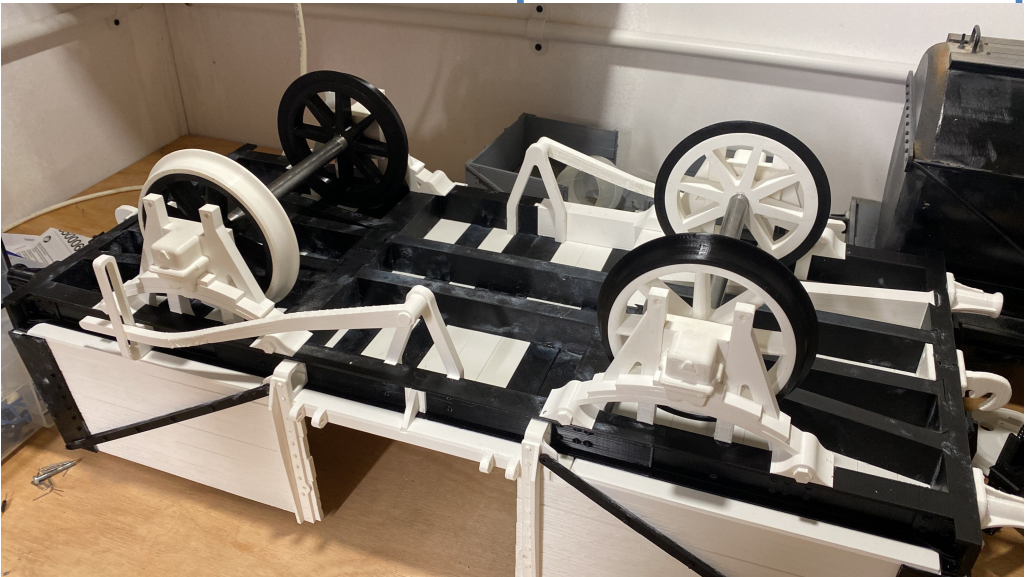
As we come out the other side of winter, into spring and a new running season I can't help but feel a sense of hope of a return to normality, with some exciting developments on the horizon.

The club hasn't been sleeping, and much work has been done over the winter as will be featured over the coming pages.

On a personal note, I now have a mostly usable workshop even if getting things in and out is difficult if it can't be carried due to having no garden path at the moment, just mud - but hey ho, progress is progress, we'll get there eventually. But at least it means projects can begin to move forward again.

As we move into the running season, I hope to see more of you all again, and hear of trips/projects/news that may be of interest to readers and members. Who knows what may turn up this year.

An experiment in scale and printing. Before you read the article later in this edition, what scale do you think it is?



Join our members page at facebook.com/groups/Maidstonemes
And like our public page at facebook.com/maidstonemes

At the park

General Works - Jack Ruler & Chris Williams

The carriage traverser has had its new decking fitted.

7 1/4" has been added to 2 of the steaming bays and traverser.

Household and Catering - Sue Parham & Pat Riddles

23 people attended the annual club lunch at the Grangemoor.

Public Running - Sue Parham & Chris Williams

A new rota has been started for running duties, please put names down, or speak to someone if you're unsure what a role entails.

Safety - John Hawkins

A new battery for the defib has been obtained.

Permanent Way - Chris Williams & Peter Kingsford

Repairs to beams carried out and still ongoing, survey on clubhouse wall.

Fuel & Club Locos - Chris Hawkins

Frenchie is still cutting out, and being investigated.

Rolling Stock - Amy & Luke Bridges

One set of trolleys is currently out of action needing new tyres.

Also trolley no 3 also needs its front wheels turning, the bogie is in the workshop to be worked on.



New deck fitted to traverser

Index of Articles

This has started to be compiled and will shortly be available online on the newsletters page of the website. www.maidstonemes.co.uk

Currently we are up to the end of the 1980's and adding more gradually.



Those who attended this years lunch. This year was a carvery which made a nice change and was well received, I would encourage all who can to try and attend the club meal, it's a friendly occasion, enjoyed by all in good company. With a bar....



Chairman's AGM Report of 2021

I always find that the hardest part of writing these reports is knowing how to start, but I guess that's out of the way now... so sat here with a large glass I'll get going, and hopefully it shouldn't be too long since we didn't really do as much as in previous years...

The year started in a strange way, much as the previous year had finished, in lockdown, which prevented any activities being carried out at the club beyond a few of our local members keeping an eye out and checking in on a regular basis.

We were able to continue with our monthly club nights by way of Zoom meetings, we even managed to find enough 'volunteers' to maintain two per month in order to break up the monotony of lockdown life. I must mention a massive thanks to Amy, Andy, Richard and Roger who were the mainstay of our evening hosts. I know a lot of effort goes into preparing these evenings and it is very much appreciated. Digressing a touch, we had a talk a few weeks ago by a chap from Sheffield about the construction of his 7 ¼ loco which was unexpectedly fascinating. He was very grateful for the kind reception that he received.

In the early part of the year we were able to sort out a contractor to replace the roof of the clubhouse for us which will hopefully give us many more years of use.

It wasn't long before restrictions were being lifted and we were able to meet at the club, and this progressed to being able to run, giving rides to the public, albeit with a few modifications to the queuing system and only using double trolleys with passengers on the rear trolley. Also, in order to prevent the spread of COVID, we were not taking fares, however a donations bucket was on hand. This proved to be a successful way of running the club for the time being, although I personally am looking forward to it being back to 'normal' next season, and being able to fully load double trolleys, and have smaller locos with a single trolley if necessary.

We were able to go 'on tour' this year, with a few of us visiting Oxford, North London, Brent House Railway, Gravesend and indeed the Federation Rally at Reading, where dad was awarded the Australian award for his

28XX.

I can't write this without mentioning the biggest event of ours for the year, IMLEC. A lot of planning went into this, with a lot of the organisation going ahead not knowing whether or not we would even be able to go ahead with the competition due to any restrictions that may be imposed, however it is easier to cancel an event than to organise one last minute... personally I felt that this went extremely well, especially considering that it was our first time hosting this event, and the restrictions that we still had to work around with COVID. There are things that could have been better (but when isn't there), I must thank all that were involved, it was such a good weekend, and one which I think the model engineering community were in need of at the time.

Fortunately, we were able to carry out our boxing day run this year, having had to take a break last year, and despite the atrocious weather at the start of the day, it did dry up enough for us to have a successful run, with (if I remember correctly) 5 locos in steam, including one visitor.

Despite these not happening during 2021, I cannot finish this report without mentioning the loss of two of our members, Geoff Riddles and Norman Clark. Both of these will be sorely missed around the club having been faces that have been seen at the club for many years, both having been at the club for all of my life...

That's enough from me, all that's left to say is to have a great 2022! I look forward to seeing you all at the club throughout the year.

Tom Parham

Tom working on the traverser, replacing the deck.



New Chairman

Hi there just to let you know I am the new Chairman.

Please make sure you put your name down for Public running duties, and looking forward to seeing you all at the club. Nothing more to report.

Thanks, Chris



Chris running his Netta, which always performs well and goes as good as she looks. Not that you can tell by his expression!

Other changes

You may notice a few returning faces on the committee this year, we welcome back Pat Riddles and Andrew Hulse - both have served on the committee before and volunteered to serve again. Thanks both for standing!

But those are the only change on the committee, as well as Chris, we have Sue Parham as Vice Chairman and as you'll see opposite a new President.

Martin Parham

Following on from Martin's decision to stand down as Hon. Secretary after 46 years, Pat Riddles nominated Martin to take over the reigns of club President from Geoff.

I'm sure you'll all agree that 46 years is a true commitment and an increasingly rare thing nowadays, not just in the club and hobby, but anywhere.

In what can be a pretty thankless task at times Martin has served as Secretary on behalf of the club and provided a wealth of knowledge and way of doing things.

In continuing to have a role as President, Martin has passed the workload of Secretary on, which Tom Parham has accepted and all has been voted



on and accepted by the membership at the AGM. Martin, as President will still attend committee meetings and not shy away from offering his wealth of experience and knowledge gained in the 46 years, which can not be underestimated.

As a club we thank you, Martin, for your 46 years of a job well done, and look forward to having you around for many more yet.

Thankyou Martin, from the whole club.

Martin with his Duchess on a visit to Canvey club



Norman Francis Clark

7th October 1937 – 17th January 2022

Memories of Dad by Paul Clark



Paul's picture of his Dad driving the 8F Paul built

Dad was born in Edmonton, Middlesex, in 1937 to Florence and Francis Clark. His Dad was a lorry driver, whilst his Mum worked as a cleaner at the Bank of England. The family lived in Bow in the East End and Dad was associated with the area throughout his early years, these being disrupted by the outbreak of war.

He was not evacuated from London and went to the local Devon's Road Primary School. Dad spent so much time away from home exploring the East End on his home-made scooter, fashioned from two planks and a couple of ball races, that his Mum doubted his father would recognise him.

Bomb sites became his playground, and his intended junior school was destroyed by a doodlebug just two days before he was due to start there, so he transferred to Knapp Road Boys School instead.

The Headmaster, Mr. Goodall, advised him to go on to further education, and so Dad went to Poplar Technical College. Here he achieved a City and Guilds qualification in Machine Shop Engineering and became a Fitter. Dad always maintained he was an observant street raker at heart and thus street wise. This and his sense of humour became apparent in one of his early factory jobs.

The works overlooked a bomb site. Each morning the council road sweeper would push his barrow into the site, put in a shovel of dust, then close the hoardings again to go off and do a second job, collecting the barrow at the end of the day. But on the Friday afternoon he found his barrow immovable. Opening the twin lids revealed two tons of bomb site rubble inside, which could only be removed one brick at a time. We know who put them there. The road sweeper was never seen again.

Eventually through his Uncle Harry's recommendation Dad started an apprenticeship at the well-respected firm of WH De Writter in Three Colt Street, Limehouse. Dad loved it and often recalled his time there with affection. One day he'd work out on a lock gate, the next machining in the works; every day was different. He enjoyed learning engineering at this small firm although it was antiquated and had just one electric hand drill. He worked on varied machinery; the newest a Whitworth lathe from the First World War, the oldest dating back to the mid-1800s.

If a deep hole had to be bored out, a candle was placed on the end of the bar as they had no electric light for the job. They possessed no welding equipment and some of the machines had no dials, but work to tight tolerances was still expected. Anyone who could pass through an apprenticeship here would have developed craft skills of a high order and this laid the foundation for Dad's working life.

The manager throughout Dad's time there was Mr Todd Slaughter who accepted every job, so there was always plenty of work.

De Writters sent Dad to a sawmill near Cheshunt, and he fixed the band-saw wheels to their shafts successfully, when all previous attempts had

failed. He used nothing more than hammer, chisel and file, there being no workshop facilities available there. A tapered key was made from an eight-inch nail to fix one-wheel, vindicating Mr Slaughter's faith in his apprentice.

By now Dad had a car, the only one in his street. His parents met another couple at a holiday camp and on finding they lived two miles apart in London, his parents were invited to tea. When Dad went to collect them, he met their daughter Iris. He took her out and always turned right out of Campbell Road, away from London towards Epping Forest. He courted Iris for 18 months and they married in 1960 in the church in Platform Street, Bow.

After De Writters, Dad spent his National Service in the REME regiment of the army, two years at Bude camp, Cornwall where he was an artillery gun fitter. He did not care too much for the army as it took him away from our Mum. One night the sergeant called a fire drill in the midst of a howling Atlantic gale with rain driving horizontally over the cliff tops. Dad and the others were told "that tree is a blazing inferno - put it out." So, they hosed down the tree in torrential rain until one bright spark asked, "Is it out yet sarge?" No wonder he was keen to leave National Service but there was one silver lining to his time there.

Dad had 25 jobs in his life but was never dismissed from any of them. If they didn't treat him fairly, fulfil their promises, or simply if he wasn't happy there, then he left. He always picked up another job quickly.

He applied for a vacancy at Mann and Crossman brewery, Whitechapel. When initially rejected, the manager Mr Gibson happened to pass as Dad was leaving and asked where he had served his time. On finding it was De Writters he was taken on immediately, such was the reputation granted to anyone who had learned their trade there.

Dad realised that the East End of London was in decline and would not be a good place for his young family to live. One of his Bude camp National Service colleagues came from Kent and had kept in touch. He suggested a better life could be had there and told Dad the house two doors along from him was for sale. So, Dad persuaded Mum to move to the country - and in Orchard Way, Snodland they both stayed all their lives. Dad had made the streetwise choice.

Moving to Kent in 1967, Dad worked at paper mills and brewery depots before retiring from what he thought his best job ever, at East Malling Research Station. The variety at De Writters had come full circle as Dad



Norman driving Iris, the freelance loco he built and named after his wife

worked on intricate experiments for the scientists, maintenance of the huge green houses and everything in between.

Dad's practical creativity led to him joining Maidstone Model Engineering Society in 1979 and this hobby became central to his life and that of my Mum and myself. The first loco he constructed was a 0-6-0T Butch and many other successful engines followed, as well as a traction engine and a steam car named "Florence" after his Mum.

When my Mum's health deteriorated, she was cared for devotedly by Dad, and her doctor told me it was his care, as much as anything they had done, that extended Mums life. Dad's hobby helped him get him through when we lost Mum, but he

missed her deeply. Sadly, seven years on Dad's physical health also began to fail, compounded by the terrible scourge of Alzheimer's, but Dad carried on without complaint to the end.

Our Dad has always been there for us. When we needed practical help or guidance, we knew there was someone we could turn to and trust. We knew we were loved and that our dad was proud of us. His decision to come to Kent and all that followed from it gave us the opportunity of a better life. We will miss that guiding, loving hand more than we can say. It has been painful to witness his decline in recent years, but he can suffer no more now.

Isaac Newton wrote "If I have seen further, it is because I have been standing the shoulders of giants." My brother and I feel that if we have had a better life, a good education and achieved more it is because we have been standing on the shoulders of our giant.

Sue says: "I got together with Paul just before Norman's funeral, as I had penned an obituary to Norman who I had known in M.M.E.S for forty years. As Norman's health declined, I had visited him in hospital in Maid-

stone Hospital and at Canterbury Hospital, and chatted to him about his life, also chatted at the Park of course. Those who took the time to talk to him know that he was a true Cockney who despite illness, still had amazing memories of his life and work. He did not tolerate fools easily - and wasn't political correct! He was known to shake his head and say "Modern World! I just don't like it." He adored being at the club and looked forward to being at the Park more and more as life became harder for him. When Norman felt up to it Paul, who he relied on completely, would bring him to the Park. I feel sure you will agree that Paul's tribute to his father (and Paul's brother Ian would have contributed too) is well worth reading. Here are just a few more pictures:



Norman at the back, with wife Iris and Paul driving Dholpur

Norman on his 80th Birthday at the Park, flanked by sons Ian and Paul



Florence, named after his mum, the steam car Norman built, with Paul in the driving seat



Norman with the traction engine he built at the Heritage Transport Rally at Detling



7 1/4"



Okay, so shortest article title yet, but bear with me.

Over the winter it was decided that, due to the increasing number of members with 7 1/4" models, that we should provide the facility to steam test them at the club.

Therefore, as seen above, the unloading bay and lifting table, traverser, and long bay adjacent have all had a 7 1/4" rail added in the 3 1/2" gap. Now this does mean that those two bays cannot be used to drop a 3 1/2" fire, but we have enough other bays this should not be a problem. The 7 1/4" shares a common rail with the 5" and so sits pretty evenly on the supports.

As can be seen by the cover photo, this has already been put to use by Martin for his Stirling Single.

Coincidentally, on the same Sunday, I took my 3d printed 7 1/4" wagon down - as shown upside down on page 3



Having just had a first coat of paint, the wagon on my bench



And now on the unloading bay, accompanied by other scales of printed stock

The 7 1/4" at the park now totals a mind blowing 30ft

On a personal note, I would enjoy seeing other locos and stock turn up on this gauge, even if it is just to take a single turn of the wheels.

The arrangements are the same as we're used to for everything else on the bays, its just a bit bigger, and heavier.

Anyone planning to bring anything large down is advised to be careful with the length of the lifting table due to its length and the potential of 7 1/4" models to be a bit longer....

Who knows where this toe dip into 7 1/4" will take us.

I certainly wont stop at a single wagon, but maybe not printed planks next time.....

For those with 7 1/4" models, please make use of it, its there to be used, and will always generate conversation. We're here to encourage all forms of model engineering, not just 5" and 3 1/2".

For those interested in 7 1/4", a good place to start is the 7 1/4 Inch Gauge Society, who maintain track and wheel standards -

<https://www.sevenandaquarter.org>

Geoff Riddles

26th JULY 1937 - 11TH DECEMBER 2021



President Geoff at the Club's 85th Anniversary in 2014

Geoff joined Maidstone Model Engineering Society in 1959. From that day, he attended the club at Mote Park in Maidstone regularly.

When love blossomed, he married Pat in 1966, and they had three daughters in the next few years. He made the decision to devote all his time to his family while the girls were growing up. Once the girls became more independent, he, and then Pat as well, started to attend the club more often.

Geoff became a committee member in 1979. In 1992 they moved from Maidstone to Rotherfield and although this meant a journey of around twenty-six miles to Mote Park, nevertheless they both attended

meetings regularly, and Pat also joined the committee in 2002.

Geoff built two locomotives; a 3 ½" gauge Virginia and a 5" gauge freelance locomotive based loosely on the model Springbok, that he called Reuben Message after his father. This had taken him 25 years to construct.



Geoff at the Cobdown Show in 1960.



Geoff's first day running Reuben in 1999.

He first ran it at Mote Park in 1999.

It was a success. From then on, he ran the loco regularly, pulling passengers on Sunday afternoons, and he took it to other tracks all over the country where it always steamed well.

Geoff became the President of the Society in 2009, a post he held for the rest of his life, and he performed all the required duties competently in this capacity, as he did any task.

Geoff & Pat at North London Track in 2001





Geoff and Pat both threw themselves into Club activities whole-heartedly, and would join in everything when they could, be it work or social. They enjoyed coming on the club holidays. These started with the annual modellers get-together week held in mid-September at Brean Sands in Somerset, where model engineers from all over the country would meet and then run their locomotives at different tracks each day.

Geoff on a Steam Dreams Trip to Winchester, 2014

From 1999 to 2005 Maidstone club decided to “go it alone” for 7 years, with their own holidays in June to various parts of the country, known as Sue’s Holidays Including Trains, abbreviated to the initials of these four words for the one-week holidays. Geoff and Pat came to every single one – Worcestershire, Yorkshire, Somerset, Derbyshire, South Wales, Lancashire, and Hampshire.

They often attended and supported the society’s trips to exhibitions, other

clubs, and other events, especially the club's annual Sunday Lunch.

Geoff was well liked, respected and all he did for the club was appreciated.

It's been hard trying to find any stories to relate about Geoff, even asking club members who knew him well and over many years. Everyone just remembers him as a thoroughly nice guy, quiet, hardworking, who would join in and get on with anything needed without any fuss. He always did what was required, and competently at that.

In looking through hundreds of pictures, I noticed that Geoff wasn't one who was never backwards in coming forward; but quite the reverse – he would always be the one standing at the back, or on the side of things, not wanting to be in anyone's way, and mindful that others would want to see what was going on or be seen.

From a personal point of view, I will always remember, when my first marriage broke up in the early nineties. Geoff made a particular point of coming over to see me when I was at the club, to ask how I was and would chat with me for some time. That again shows how kind and thoughtful he was.

We have lost someone who made an understated and important contribution to the society and its success over the 62 years he was a member.

Now he has left us to join other departed members, family, and friends, where we can no longer see them. But Geoff is one of those people that any person who knew him will always remember fondly and continue to talk about from time to time - in a good way!

There are those that never completely leave us, they live on in our memories and hearts. Geoff was, and is, one of those few members of Maidstone Model Engineering Society who will do so.

Cheers Geoff. Here's to you.

Sue Parham's Eulogy to Geoff as a member of M.M.E.S. Spoken at his funeral earlier this year.

MY WORKING DAYS WITH HORNBY HOBBIES DURING THE LATE 1970s

By David Chalk

I joined a team of four in which we had to produce a 3 1/2" gauge steam powered toy, the Rocket. Built to a cost limit, the toy had to comply with all the toy regulations, maximum working pressure of 20lb p.s.i. and no corners on any part under a .020" radius. It had to be fired by butane and run for approximately 8 to 10 minutes on one filling, pull one coach, and made and running within 3 months. The company treated this work as top secret.

So Off We Go.

There was a visit to the Science Museum for drawings etc. The first model, Mark 1, was running within 2 months. Remember that maximum pressure is only 20 p.s.i. so that it had to run or move at 15 p.s.i. and so we could not use any "O" rings on pistons due to the amount of friction.

Then 6 prototypes were built, experimental boilers with cross water tubes within the main flue tube were made, but we had to stop due to cost and production problems. All tooling was made for assembly, and production die casting tooling, for boiler ends, wheels, frame name plates, slide bars, chimney base, tender wheels axle boxes, firebox, gas supply fittings etc.

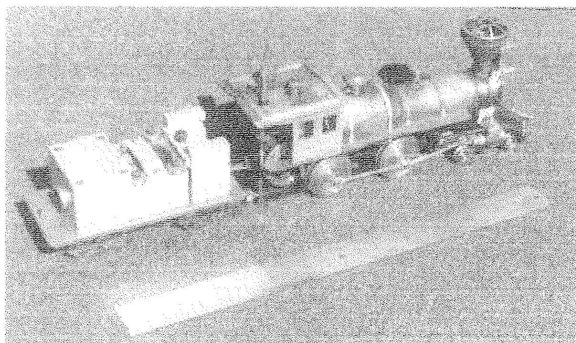


At Mote Park - Dave is the one on the left

We took three straight off the production line and ran them at Mote Park on a Monday morning. We decided that we would have to do away with the boiler insulation, as people would soak the insulation when filling. We then asked the director if his loft was insulated at home, because we had 3000 pieces of insulation in the warehouse going spare.

Once in production it was handed over to P.I.D. - Product Improvement Division. They made some improvements to the burner, but that's about all. Of course, we did make some cross tube boilers which then carried more water, also double butane containers in the tender which gave 15 minutes running time, and a better performance.

I was then working on my own as my mates had to work on scalextric and the "00" gauge railways. It was a time when Zero 1-control systems for the railways were being introduced. I was asked to build an "O" gauge steamer. It had to be a 4-4-0 American tender loco, Virginia type, butane fired. Because of the small outside cylinders I decided to make a single cylinder oscillator in the cab with flywheel. Reverse was by gears.



The butane gas supply was at low pressure as I made a regulator within the tender so that it supplied a low-pressure flame via a tube with slots in it along the full length of the boiler. Running on our test track it could pull thirty-two "0" gauge trucks, because that's all we had. To see it running was very satisfying.

The next job was to build an "00" gauge steamer, butane fired. The "00" gauge had a simple oscillating engine hidden under the smoke box, 1/4" bore cylinder, driving the front set of driving wheels, via gears, all hidden under the casing of a L.M.S. Pacific Coronation Scot. The burner was fitted in the tender, firing direct into a tube within the boiler.

Can you imagine when the loco got underway and came to the first bend at a fair speed; a possibility that it might turn over and with the burner still giving a fair flame, it could soon catch a carpet alight. Not really suitable for a Christmas morning toy!

The Next Job

I was asked by the director to build a model steam powered Traction Engine. So I asked, to what scale? He just said "make it cuddly!" so we agreed on 3/4" to the foot, so that it would be in keeping with The Rocket.

Of course, it had to be a showmans engine. So off I go, thinking of Burrell. I had a friend who had some works drawings. I started to think that this must be easy to construct but look right. I decided to go for a soft flame, as in the '0'-gauge loco with a regulator within the tender to control the butane gas supply. Of course it must have twin cylinders and the beauty of this traction engine is that the cylinders are as hot as the boiler.

I decided to make the connecting rods straight on to the pistons, like a car engine, but single acting. It overcame the problem of having the friction of an end cover, plus seal, plus cross head, slide bars etc. Having a hefty flywheel with the cranks set at 180 degrees all was well.

The steam was regulated to the cylinders by a rotating hollow valve on top of the cylinder block, which in turn was driven from a crankshaft eccentric. Reverse was done with gearing. It had plenty of power to run a dynamo on the front for several bulbs along the roof.

I remember the first test run was in the snow. I set the front wheels on a radius and round and round she went. Directly the Sales and Director heard it was running they had a meeting about it. They estimated the cost of production against the possible number they would sell. They did not like the cost of producing the wheels with all those crossed spokes, which were right, my hollow valve on top of the cylinders, or the manufacture of the crankshaft (no CNC machines in those days).

I then worked on new products such as electronic cars and spacecraft, and scalextric cars.

MMES DIARY DATES 2022

Club Night - Bit and Bobs

1st April

Club Night

6th May

Romney MES Open Day

7th May

Club Night

3rd June

Polly Owners Group Rally at Sheppey

11th June

Friends and Family Day

25th June

Club Night

1st July

Guildford MES Open Weekend

2nd-3rd July

Sheppey Club Open Day

16th July

IMLEC at Guildford MES

22nd-24th July

Club Night

5th August

Club Night

2nd September

Club Night

7th October

Last run of the Season (Clocks go back)

30th October

Don't forget there is almost always someone at the club on Wednesday's and Sunday's even out of the running season, testing, having a play or doing maintenance work around the track and club site - or even just there for a cup of tea and a chat!

COVID-19

The sign-in sheet has now been removed and is no longer needed. The normal pre-covid queuing arrangements will be returning for public running. If, as a driver, you would like to only load the second trolley as we have done recently, please let the loader/fare taker know. Otherwise normal full trains and single trollies will now also resume for this years public running.

Stay safe.