



# NEWSLETTER

November 2025

## *Editorial*

In this issue of the newsletter we include reports on the FMES Rally at Rugby with reports on the winners of the AALS Trophy and the FMES Competition.

The FMES stand was present at the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition in October and at LowMex in November – reports are included.

There is a final reminder for submission of entries by young engineers for the Polly Model Engineering Prize. Time is now running short so please encourage anyone you know who is considering entering to do so as soon as possible. Full details are referenced in this newsletter.

The FMES Library continues to expand. We are always interested in seeing articles that can be added to the Library. We see some clubs' newsletters but will be pleased to see more from others.

Of particular importance, FMES have now published guidance for clubs on the matter of safeguarding. This is a large body of work prepared Dr Peter Kenington a member of the FMES management team, and has been checked by legal opinion. A page in this newsletter introduces the guidance written in four parts, gives details of how to access them and give any feedback or questions that may arise. The FMES Facebook private page is also available for comment/discussion – apply to join via the link on the main Facebook page.

Finally, although at the time of writing Christmas is still a few weeks off, as this is the last newsletter of 2025 I will take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

*Tony Lee*

## *Chairman's Chat*

It is now the time of year when many of us retire from outdoor activities to the possible warmth of our workshops to start on the next project or even to look once again at the part built item that has lain under the bench for the last few years. Can I suggest another use of our workshop time, namely designing and or building custom equipment items to help people with a disability achieve greater independence.

REMAP is a charity that provides solutions to everyday problems when there is nothing commercially available. They are looking to recruit new members, with the ideal candidates having practical metal or woodworking skills, knowledge of CAD and 3D printing, etc, in other words a model engineer (amongst others). So if you feel like giving something back to society why not have a look at their website and find out, much more than I can tell you, about how they are organised and how you might be able to help.

Each year the FMES holds a national rally and ideally these are held in a different part of the UK every year. If you feel that your "neck of the woods" deserves a visit and you could interest your club into hosting such an event in a future year why not get in touch and tell us. Also, with the demise of many of the larger national ME shows, the FMES is considering attending smaller events such as traction engine rallies, miniature railway shows, etc. What are your thoughts on this matter. As I'm sure you are aware the FMES now has a "private" Facebook page/account so why not post your thoughts and ideas on it so we can have a discussion on the rally and attendance at events.

Finally, it is approaching that time of the year when a figure in a white trimmed red outfit comes amongst us, so can I on behalf of the FMES wish you season's greetings and a happy new year.

*Bob Polley*

# Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about creating an environment in which both visitors and members can feel 'safe'; safe from abuse, comfortable in the club environment, a 'safe' space for everyone. If club members don't feel safe, they will leave, if visitors don't feel safe, then they won't come to our open days, with significant financial implications for clubs.

We need to provide a safe environment and, as a result of legislation, we need to be able to demonstrate that we are providing a safe environment. There are direct parallels with H&S in this regard – the provision of a safe railway, for example, involves good design and regular maintenance. It also involves the procedures and paperwork through which this good practice can be evidenced, should the need arise.

Our clubs are an attractive location for all types of people to enjoy Model Engineering, whether as members or visitors. Some of these people may count as 'vulnerable' in at least one of a number of ways. Club officers have an obligation to make sure that their club is a safe place for everyone.

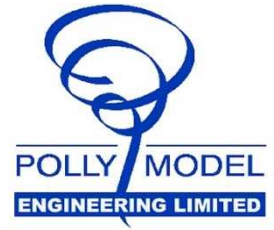
*FMES is developing support resources for clubs in relation to this topic, to introduce, explain and clarify how they might respond to the needs of this area in a way that instils confidence in their management of Safeguarding. This will allow clubs to continue to provide interesting activities for the enjoyment of members and visitors alike. The resources that we have developed can be found [www.fmes.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.fmes.org.uk/safeguarding), and we recommend that all engaged in club management take time to read this. Feedback and questions can be emailed to [safeguarding@fmes.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@fmes.org.uk)*



# YOUNG ENGINEERS

## POLLY MODEL ENGINEERING PRIZE

2025 competition



### Last notice!

We are a month away from the closing date for this years competition and the chance to win recognition, publicity AND prizes!

It is not too late to describe those projects, part projects, club support work and other engineering related development activities that young engineers have carried out this year – the application form is not hard to prepare so please consider entries whether you are a young engineer or a young engineer’s mentor in a club!

The rules can be found on the website [Here](#) along with other information including frequently asked questions if you need guidance for this.

You should prepare your entry form for submission as a pdf and send it to [info@fmes.org.uk](mailto:info@fmes.org.uk) (making it clear it is a competition entry) by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

We will decide the winners in time to advise them and invite them to our next AGM that is expected to be on Saturday 14 March 2026 in the Midlands (we will advise the venue details later). Whilst we would love to see winners at this event, if you cannot make it, then your entry will still be considered of course!

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

We are very pleased to confirm our venue for the next AGM, which will be held on:

Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026

The venue will be at:

The Midlands Air Museum next to Coventry Airport.



## Midland Air Museum

Incorporating The Sir Frank Whittle Jet Heritage Centre

This is a small, volunteer run and interesting museum containing a number of jet era aircraft and stories, and it incorporates the Sir Frank Whittle Jet Heritage Centre. The displays focus on the high days of British jet aircraft development, essentially founded of course by Sir Frank. You can find out more on the museum website at <https://midlandairmuseum.uk/>.



We will be sending invitations, with more detail of the day's schedule (which will be similar to recent years) to all member clubs in the new year: please watch for these. Space will be limited so book early to come, represent your club, contribute to the discussions and meet ourselves and others.

# FMES Rally Rugby 2025

This year's FMES rally was generously hosted by Rugby MES at their Rainsbrook Valley site on Saturday, 6 September 2025. The event brought together colleagues affiliated with the Federation of Model Engineering Societies for a memorable and enjoyable gathering. Members arrived from as far afield as the Isle of Wight, Brighouse, Halifax and Merthyr Tydfil. A truly national event for the Rugby Society.

The weather conditions proved highly favourable, contributing to the smooth execution of all scheduled activities throughout the day. A total of 94 model engineers participated in the rally, presenting an impressive array of models. These included twenty-three 3 ½" and 5" raised track locomotives—both steam and diesel—as well as seven 7 ¼" locomotives operating at ground level. The strong attendance and diversity of entries ensured that the event was both well-supported and dynamic. In addition, a number of tabletop entries and engineering exhibits were on display, including Tony Lee's 3-inch Burrell Traction Engine, which made appearances throughout the extensive venue.



Ron Head, representing the City of Oxford club, presented his Adams 415 class Radial 4-4-2 locomotive in 5" gauge. The locomotive performed flawlessly and was subsequently recognised with the AALS award.

Of the three B1 steam locomotives running that day, ORXY is pictured being prepared by its owner, Stuart Ellis of Coventry.



The ground-level steaming bay was active with the preparation of 7 ¼" locomotives, characterized by distinctive sounds and aromas. A notable example, the Lynton and Barnstaple Baldwin model—ordinarily stationed at Cutteslow Park in Oxford—was presented at the rally by Simon Mulford, representing the City of Oxford Society.

Gordon Robertsy operated his 7 ¼" B type Darjeeling locomotive on the Rainsbrook Valley track, having travelled from Taunton to participate in the FMES rally. Attendees of the event had the opportunity to enjoy a ride behind this capable locomotive, as pictured here with Gordon at the controls.



The recipient of the FMES rally award was the meticulously crafted GWR Manor Class 7803 Barcote Manor, constructed by Roger James. The locomotive is pictured here being expertly operated by his grandson, Callum.

Locomotives were not limited to steam propulsion; Alan Stevens, a member of the Hayes and Harlington Club, operated his 5-inch gauge Class 55 Deltic locomotive, Alycidon, on the elevated track at Rainsbrook Valley.



The rally featured a well-prepared lunch organised by the ladies of the Rugby club, served in their newly completed clubhouse. The facility was specifically designed to support the club's activities during public running days. Lunch was enjoyed outdoors, while attendees observed an impressive array of locomotives operating on both the elevated and ground-level tracks.

Following lunch, numerous attendees participated in a tour of the mile-long ground track, which traverses the 7.5-acre site.

At the conclusion of the event, Bob Polley presented awards to the recipients from AALS and FMES. He also expressed his gratitude to Rugby MES for their hospitality and for ensuring all attendees felt welcome.



At the conclusion of the event, George Cannon, organiser of the Rugby MES event, formally expressed his gratitude to all rally participants for their attendance. He presented each attendee with a commemorative mug, marking the successful completion of another FMES rally.

*Peter Harrison*

# AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF LIVE STEAMERS TROPHY 2025

The annual AALS trophy was held at the Rally as is usual, and there was an excellent array of locomotives to choose from, to give the judges a difficult decision, also as usual. The AALS competition has slightly restrictive rules that is mirrored in the sister competition run by the Australian Association of Live Steamers 'down under': it is for steam locomotives that are working models of prototypes that ran in the Commonwealth. If you own an engine that meets this condition, even if you are not the builder, then please consider coming to the rally and entering it, the rules and frequently asked questions can be found on the website (<https://fmes.org.uk/project/australian-association-of-live-steamers-trophy/>).

This year, the rally was held at the extensive raised and ground level tracks at Rugby SME and this gave all engines a chance to stretch their legs and show off their abilities.

It is not necessary to enter the competition as the judges will tour the locomotives and all will be considered for the competition if eligible. On this occasion, the decision came late as the eventual



winner steamed up quite late in the day and seeing an engine perform is an essential part of the competition! The judges (there is a triumvirate: a representative from FMES, one from the host club and the previous year's winner) had their usual difficult time and after discussion came to a unanimous decision.

The winner was Ron Head of the City of Oxford SME with his very nice 'Adams Radial Tank' in 5" gauge. Ron was very quick to point out that he was not the builder, however was persuaded to allow his loco to stand since firstly it is the loco that is judged, and secondly, the loco was very substantially rebuilt as Ron describes below.



“My 5” gauge model represents a 415 class engine as originally built, being basically to the design by Kelvin Moonie, and carries the Adams pea green livery with stovepipe chimney. It was acquired by me in 2017, basically in running order but in much need of attention. Over a period of two years, it was dismantled and re-built from the frames upwards, with re-painting as required. Many mechanical parts and fittings, and much pipework were replaced. One driving axle was found to be cracked longitudinally, and this had caused excessive wear to an axlebox, probably due to the crack acting as an oil scraper. All four driving axleboxes were bored out to a larger diameter, which necessitated new axles. All wheels were re-profiled and the driving wheels were keyed onto the new axles, while the incorrect balance weights were replaced by new ones. Much of the motion, including piston and valve rods, slide bars, eccentrics, crankpins, weighshaft and lifting links were re-made, and the rods were re-bushed.

Modifications were made to the regulator, axle pump, clacks and blowdown valve to improve their operation, and a new no. 4 injector was fitted. The water gauge bottom nut had an upward sleeve added to mask the lower end of the glass, due to the boiler bush being too low to ensure water coverage over the firebox crown. The lubricator was redesigned and re-built with a ratchet replacing the roller clutch, which had worn the drive shaft to the point where it no longer gripped. A problem with steam blowing back into the lubricator tank was cured by fitting check valves of an improved design. New soft-pop safety valves, spark arrestor, water valve, bypass valve, water strainers, stainless steel grate and ashpan, all to my own design were fitted. The springing was adjusted to place most of the weight on the driving wheels for adhesion, whilst keeping just enough weight on the bogie and trailing truck to prevent derailment. The smokebox door was re-profiled to the correct Adams profile and made an airtight fit.”

Ron also remodelled the valve gear using CAD with significant improvements to the running. Ron has volunteered to write this up as an article for publication, which we will be very pleased to make available in due course.

There is a fuller write up of the locomotive and Ron’s work in the AALS winners report, along with the same for previous winners, available on the website via the above link.



# The 2025 FMES Autumn Rally Competition

This year, the rally was hosted by Rugby MES on the 6<sup>th</sup> September at their spacious facility near Rugby. It was held alongside the AALS competition, although this competition has less restrictive rules in that any 'type' of model engineering can enter as long as the hosts have the facilities to show the exhibits. In this case, whilst there was plenty of space, the majority of the models attending the rally were locomotives running on the extensive 7.25" gauge ground level track and the almost as long raised track for smaller gauges. Tony Lee, an FMES colleague and our newsletter editor brought his traction engine that was running almost all day around the grounds and very nice it is too, but, since Tony was a judge, he was not really in the running! Similarly, our Chairman Bob Polley brought his farm machinery models and these provided some diverse interest.

On this occasion though the judges decided that the prize should go to an excellent 5" gauge GWR



'Manor' class locomotive – 7803 'Barcote Manor' - built by Roger James, and driven by his son Alan and grandson Callum (photo right). Roger has not painted this locomotive for reasons he explains below. This is a shame in some respects as it is not 'prototypical', however it also shows off the minute detail and construction methods used and is a great demonstration of the skills of a highly proficient model engineer.

Roger describes his locomotive and the project to build it as follows:

"The model, one of a pair, was started approximately 40 years ago and is now nearly finished. It was decided not to paint it as it allowed me to add more detail as I went along. Now the task of stripping ready for and actually painting it is just too daunting for me!





The loco frames were cut to Martin Evans design and later, where possible, works drawings provided the detail along with hundreds of photos of the prototype. Cookham Manor at Didcot provided the most authentic detail as it is still in the condition last used on British Railways.

The boiler was made with reference to Alec Farmers book, utilising a lap strip type joint on the taper barrel. A tapered fire box has also been made.

The tender is made to works drawings outline and incorporates a well tank, a twin cylinder hand pump is fitted that is equivalent to a single three-quarter inch diameter ram. For convenience it has been made modular and is easily removable.

Two scale injectors are fitted based on those provided years ago by the late Gordon Chiverton and have proved to be excellent in service. Displacement lubrication is used, via twin sight feeds, feeding through hollow stays in the boiler incorporating small chokes fitted into the superheater tubes in the smokebox.

I no longer drive any of my engines leaving this normally to my son Alan or my grandson Callum Rastall, he providing our family with a fifth generation of steam engineers.

The sister engine to 7803 is now being finished in the capable hands of Mr. Glyn Winsall whose father, Fred, gave me the inspiration to make a GWR Manor, after seeing his Hook Norton Manor so many years ago."

Roger was awarded the FMES Autumn Rally Competition Trophy and prize money by Bob Polley at the rally (with his son Alan, photo right).

We look forward to seeing more models of *any type* at future rallies to demonstrate that model engineering is a broad-based hobby, and to give these steam loco 'boys' a run for their money!



## ***MMEE25 – a brief tour***

Currently, the only show exclusively for model engineers on the calendar is (thankfully) arranged by Meridienne and held annually at the Warwick Exhibition Centre. This year the show followed usual lines with a mixture of club exhibits, trade stands and organisations supporting the hobby. Visitors included experienced and new model engineers, parents and young people interested in the hobby and setting out on this fascinating lifetime pastime, and some organisation representatives endeavouring to understand the hobby with a view to adding their support, products and services. Also as usual, the organisers struck a good balance of stands and catering to look after their patrons. The hobby was well represented across most model engineering disciplines including rail, road, stationary engines, marine, young engineers and some unusual displays including robot devices, evidenced by the club and trade stands. For those interested in statistics, there were 34 club stands and 39 suppliers.



There was also a competition and display of the entrants' exhibits, as well as some talks in the conference room. Harlington Locomotive Society won the club stand competition (see photo, right) with their impressive loco shed and locos, followed by Coventry MES second and Northampton SME third: well done to these for their excellent presentations. FMES had a stand that was a place to come and chat, find out about the hobby and pick up brochures and other information covering boiler testing, health and safety, young engineers. We were joined in our representation of the hobby by other such organisations including NAME, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " Society, The Model Steam Road Vehicle Society and some others. Walker Midgley (shortly to be known as 'Everywhen'), the insurers of our hobby activities were also present to answer questions and present their



services. The standard of exhibits was high and varied, and the trade provided many tools, materials, components, designs, kits and other necessary items that proved popular with the visitors.

Following our usual practice now of providing a place to 'meet and greet', we had our usual modest stand with brochures to take away, the opportunity to discuss matters with our volunteers, give us feedback, be introduced to our website and enjoy a chocolate from our exhibition staple provisions. We also promoted our library via take away 'business cards' with a QR code as well as our growing Facebook activity as mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter.

We need to sustain this type of exhibition for the longer-term strength of the hobby and your patronage is essential to justify such organisers and the providers of all types of exhibits taking the time and building their support, so do try to come in the future!

As we go to press, we are pleased to note that Meridienne have announced the dates for next year's event: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026 to Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> October: let's reinforce our support for the organisers and the trade by meeting up next year too!

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## Lowmex

### *(Lowestoft Model Engineering and Model Making Exhibition)*

Lowmex is a show very well organized by Halesworth & District MES with a main aim of raising funds for a local disabled child. It is very much a club show with probably around 70 (I lost count) clubs and individuals displaying a wide range of models and modelling. There was the standard model engineering fare of locomotives, traction engines etc. all of a very high standard displayed by Halesworth and other local clubs, but also many other aspects of model making such as scale model dioramas, boats, Meccano, 3D printing and radio control trucks, tanks and Sci-Fi characters. It was good to see many working models, some using compressed air but quite a lot of live steam in evidence as well.

The show is held in East Coast College which provides visitors with the opportunity of "driving" their start of the art boat bridge simulator. It is very realistic and while watching the action it doesn't take long before you "feel" the rolling and pitching of the virtual boat. The show is held over two days and was well attended. We were pleased to have the opportunity to speak to visitors, particularly families, who whilst not active in model engineering societies, have a passing interest.

The following page shows photos of small selection from the range of exhibits.



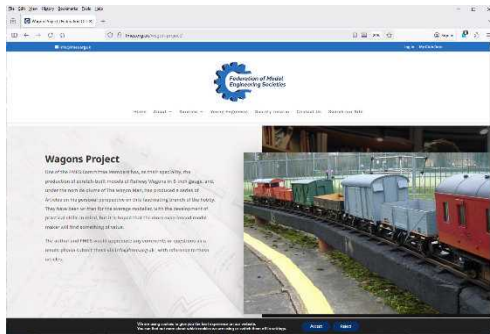
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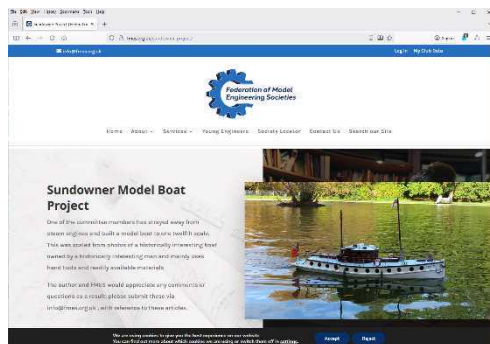
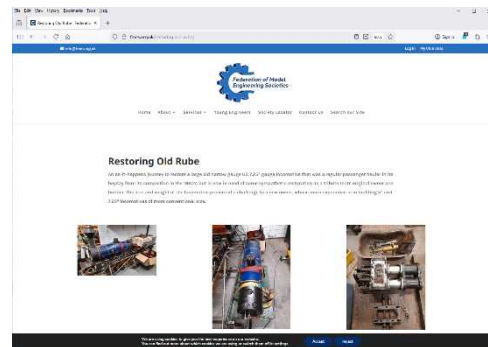
# Web Page News

Since the last newsletter we have continued to expand the content of the library.



There are now 12 excellent detailed scratch-built wagons in the wagon project plus 3 supplementary supporti ng articles. We expect the final 5 articles in the near future.

The Old Rube restoration project continues with part 6, dismantling the chassis components.



An impressive model boat project has been recently added, this shows the detailed construction of 'Sundowner' . This was scaled from photos of a historically interesting boat owned by a historically interesting man and mainly uses hand tools and readily available materials.

Finally, to highlight recent new entries we have added a new link page 'Recent new entries' to the main library page.

We are keen to continue to expand the library so if you have articles or projects that we can add then please contact us.

**Jim Hollom**



Part of the  Group of companies

We would like to inform you of a change of name/rebranding of **Walker Midgley** (WM), the insurers for many of our clubs (and ourselves). The new name will be '**Everywhen**' and this is now active, although some details (eg email addresses etc) may be updated in due course. It is very important to note that WM have the following explanation and confirmation: *The rebranding is a replacement of the WM name and logo with Everywhen and the relevant logo. All the people in the office, contact phone numbers, address etc remains exactly as they are now. The tone of the rebrand is that it is very much business as usual, with the same people they have always dealt with, doing the same type of business with the same high level of service that they have always had.* The web address, [www.walkermidgley.co.uk](http://www.walkermidgley.co.uk) will still work for a while with a divert to a new URL which is currently <https://www.towergateinsurance.co.uk/walker-midgley> .

Updates to insurance policies and other paperwork will follow in due course, but existing policies under the WM name will be otherwise unchanged.

If you have any questions for the insurers, please use the contact links above.

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## FMES 'Treasurer' and accounts

As we have announced through most of 2025, we need a volunteer to take on the management and formal submission of our accounts. Since no one has stepped forwards from member clubs for this activity, one of our management team - your editor Tony Lee – has volunteered to manage the internal day to day financial needs of FMES from 2026. We will complement Tony's kind offer with the hire of professional accountants to manage the formal submission of year end accounts to HMRC and Companies House. This will be clearly at a cost to FMES.

Our thanks to Tony, who will, for the time being, continue as your Newsletter Editor as well. We are still very keen to attract more volunteers however for our activities in order to maintain and improve the support and assistance that we can provide to our members and to the hobby.

### **2026 Annual subscriptions for Members:**

We are pleased to announce that, for 2026, our member club subscriptions will remain at £10.

Please help us by informing us of any changes to your primary contact details (that is name, club, email, telephone in the first instance) in advance. Check on the website using your login, or ask us if you need to confirm these details.

Contact us at [info@fmes.org.uk](mailto:info@fmes.org.uk) if you have any questions, need to pass on information or would like to volunteer to help with something.

**Paul Naylor**



# *The Federation Boiler Registrar*

## Copies of Written Scheme of Examination for the Boiler Registrar

I've had a few enquiries on the return of the pink slips for our records.

As most things are sent electronically these days, so I am happy to accept a copy of the Written Scheme of Examination by email or messenger. Please scan or take a picture of the **white** copy, as the pink slips are almost impossible to read from a picture

You can still send them by post if you prefer, I am happy with either method. However you send them to me, please make sure that the certificate is filled out correctly and all fields are populated.

Copies without Boiler Number, Owner, Model, Scale, Club Affiliation Number or Date cannot be registered and will be returned.

Thank you

*Colin Walton*

## Missing Certificate set

**We have a report from a member that a blank certificate set has gone missing from their pad.**

**Please watch out for certificate number C210459 as it might be used to support the sale of a model with an untested boiler.**

**Please be aware when purchasing a model or when a 'new' pressure vessel is introduced to your club.**

Supplies of certificate pads etc.can be ordered using the SHOP page on the website:

<https://fmes.org.uk/shop-2/>

and the order will go direct to Colin, or you can contact him by email using colin.walton@fmes.org.uk or by phone on 07745 687159

His address for sending WSE forms is:

12 Lytham Road  
Midandbury  
Southampton  
SO18 2BP

# FMES Committee

President	Brent Hudson
Vice President	Mike Chrisp
Vice President	Ivan Hurst
Chairman	Bob Polley
Secretary	Peter Squire
Treasurer	TBA
Vice Chairman	Paul Naylor
Safety Officer	Robert Walker

Management Team: Peter Harrison, Jim Hollom, Peter Kenington,  
Tony Lee, Melvyn O'Connell, Colin Walton

## INSURANCE CLAIMS AND INCIDENTS

All claims and reports of incidents should be notified in the first instance to Everwhen  
FEDERATION INSURANCE BUSINESS Managed by Everwhen (formerly Walker Midgley Insurance Ltd)

It will be useful if Clubs also advise FMES when an incident has been reported.  
(Information held in confidence – internal use only)

[info@fmes.org.uk](mailto:info@fmes.org.uk)

## *Publications Available from FMES*

The FMES publications listed below are available from our stand at rallies and exhibitions or by post.  
Please make contact first by email, initially to [info@fmes.org.uk](mailto:info@fmes.org.uk) or use the 'shop' option on the website.

The figures below are for single items and do not include postage.

We will minimise postage costs for multiple items.

Please make cheques payable to 'Federation MES' or use BACS to Sort Code 20-71-82 Acct 43755967.

Examination & Testing of Miniature Steam Boilers BTC 2018 - Orange Book Free

Vol 1: 3 bar litres to 1100 bar litres; Vol 2: under 3 bar litres; Vol 3: LPG tanks under 250 ml.

Boiler Test Certificates - Pad of 50 .....	FREE*
Written Scheme of Examination - Pad of 50 .....	FREE*
Small Boiler Test Certificate - Pad of 50 .....	FREE*
Boiler History Record Card - Pack of 10 .....	£3.50
Plastic wallets to hold certificates size A5 .....	£0.75
HS 2020 Passenger-carrying min railways 'Guidance' post included .....	£4.00

Colin Walton

Tel:+ 07745 687159

[Email: colin.walton@fmes.org.uk](mailto:colin.walton@fmes.org.uk)

\* These publications are issued free of charge to fully paid up member Clubs and Societies ONLY, and are NOT available for general sale. For delivery by mail, the cost of postage and packing is £5.00, and must be borne by the Club/Society placing the order.

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