

South Cheshire MES visits Rugeley Power Station Society of Model Engineers



(Above) Nigel Breeze with his Princess and Steve Brown with his Black 5 double head a 12 bogie train hauling 20 passengers.
(Below) Grenville Vale obviously enjoying the day.
(Below Left) Neil Talbot at speed with his 2-8-0.



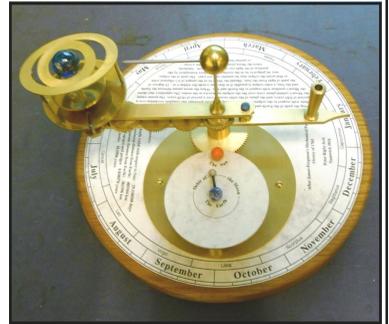
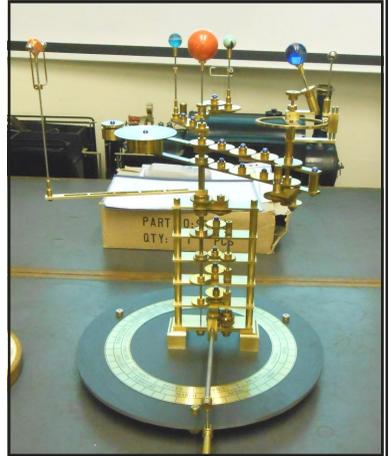
Apology

On the front page of the February edition of the Blower the model of the Sterling 60 engine should have been accredited to Mick Hancock (not Hanley). Sorry.



Meetings

February - Peter Rigby was our speaker for the February meeting and he gave a very interesting and fascinating talk on Orreries, their origin and history. Peter started by showing members pictures of his locomotive collection and explained how he wanted a change from locomotive building but in keeping with his interest in astronomy. He spoke about the Historical Perspective of Astronomy and showed pictures of early astronomical time pieces, especially the 1410 Prague Astronomical Clock. Continuing, Peter went on to explain about the construction of orreries, the gear ratio required and calculations to attain the ratios. Planetary orbits were discussed and difficulties in construction to obtain correct gearing for both planets and moons. Peter had brought along 3 types of Orreries he had built to show and also help explain how they work. He concluded with a picture of an orrery which was salvaged from a sunken roman ship dating back to 200 - 250BC! Probably the most fascinating, interesting and mind blowing talk that I have witnessed with many members totally enthralled into silence. A huge vote of thanks goes to Peter for his excellent talk.



March - 'Engineering of the Weaver Navigation' was the theme of our guest speaker Colin Edmondson this month. Colin is the Weaver Historian and Editor of the Weaver News, and is recognised as one of the leading experts on the Weaver. However, Colin started his talk by showing the audience his achievements in 7¼" gauge railway developments at the High Legh Railway near Knutsford in Cheshire. This included simple track assembly through to complicated point work and onto locomotive building, along with rolling stock and sheds, one of which (his micro shed) won shed of the year competition 2015. Colin then went on to his main subject the Weaver Navigation which, I have to say, was very thoroughly researched and presented. It covered historical workings of the Weaver from the mid 17th century through to recent events and showed how the river had been 'straightened' and made more efficient for transportation of minerals and goods from Winsford to Frodsham. Colin gave in-depth explanations of how the locks along the river were built and how they were operated together with the construction of the bridges and towpaths along the way. All the early work for the river was very labour intensive until the introduction of steam cranes which made lighter work of the tasks in hand. Colin's talk was elaborated by superb pictures and historical diagrams and made for an exceptionally interesting evening. Grateful thanks to Colin for what was a super talk enjoyed by all.

Rugeley Power Station S.M.E. Visit.

Photos - Bob Brown & Colin Mansell

On Sunday 26th February fourteen members of the South Cheshire MES visited the Rugeley Power Station Society of Model Engineers tracksite located within the grounds of the now closed power station. After being told that the society had to vacate the site on 31st March 2017 they kindly opened invitations to other society's to come and have a last run on their fantastic track. We were lucky to be able to get the penultimate date before the closing of the invites.

We had 5 locomotives from SCMES running, Nigel Breeze with his Princess Class, Grenville Vale brought his Simplex, Paul Vidler his Tram loco, Neil Talbot his LNER 2-8-0 and myself with my Black 5.



Paul was soon up and running with his 5" Gauge Tram and made full use of their wonderful track before the steam loco's were ready. One of the junior members of the Rugeley club, namely Alfie (who informed me he was 9 and a bit - the bit being very important at that age!!) made himself very helpful throughout the day with truck organisation and assisting drivers with coal, water, oil and locomotive movements. Don't know what we would have done without him!

Apparently, Alfie is a regular driver at their track so Paul let him have a go with his Tram loco (see picture).

Grenville was next on with his much admired 'Simplex' with its purpose built drivers truck. Grenville had a faultless run and enjoyed the experience of the Rugeley track.



Nigel Breeze, Neil Talbot and myself soon followed, all enjoying a good run around their well appointed track. A little later on, Brian from the Rugeley society suggested that Nigel's 'Princess' and my Black 5 should each have a go at pulling all their 12 trucks around as well as filling them with 21 passengers and try double heading. A really fun day was had by all and we must thank Rugeley for their invite and support on the day. A very friendly bunch of lads and we wish them all the best for the future.



Above - Neil Talbot at speed with his 2-8-0.

Right - Steve Brown with his Black 5 pilots Nigel Breeze with his 'Princess Marie Louise' with a full load!



Below Left - Grenville Vale prepares his Simplex.

Below Right - Getting to grips with 21 onboard!



New Class 67 for Club Duties



Following an assessment of the two club diesel locomotives at the end of the running season last year, it was found that one of them ('Herbert Elnor') was in quite a decayed state and not really safe to continue for another season. Therefore, the committee decided that due to the revenue these locos earn for the society year after year and the heavy use they get from birthday parties, public running and driver training, it was essential that 'Herbert Elnor' be replaced with a new locomotive. On behalf of the society Neil Talbot contacted Abbots Model Engineering in Telford and negotiated the purchase of a new Class 67 kit which was due to be ready early February 2017. Well, late February and Neil and Colin Perkins travelled down to pick up the kit and found Abbots had half built the locomotive which was a bonus for us as there was no extra cost involved. However, quite an amount of work still required for the locomotive to be up and running and thanks to Neil he has taken up the challenge to complete the task and by the time you read this it should be on the track and ready for the new season.



Fixing the work of Gremlins!

Stewart Hart concludes his experiences re-working a 5" gauge 'Simplex.

(Continued from February 2017 Blower)



Running Boards

For these I deviated from the Martin Evans one piece design. The main drawback of his design is that you have to remove the side tanks before you remove the running board in order to get to the slide valve to carry out any maintenance or adjustments. So, I made a two part running board screwed to an angled bracket bolted to the main frame with the same bolts that hold the motion plate, this allows the front of the running board to be removed for access to the slide valves. DSC 02126



I carried out one further addition to the basic design of the loco again at the suggestion of a club member, as drawn the bunker water tank has no convenient way of draining the water out of it, this can only be done by uncoupling the pipe work, so I added 5/16" x 32 ME bush into the base of the tank to take a drain plug.

For my own satisfaction I carried out a fair bit of tidying up work on the side tanks and also made a new spectacle plate and roof. With that work completed all that was required was the pipe work and fittings that I bought from one of our suppliers and to give it a paint job to the best of my abilities. Now, when it comes to paint I'm not very competent which I think it's due to lack of patience. However, it doesn't look too bad in the dark and covered with authentic running grime. As a finishing touch I gave her a name that I thought fitting "GREMLIN".



However, my adventures weren't over and neither was the mischief, I still had to get her in steam. Now, when it comes to steaming a loco I'm a complete novice, even though I'd watched the process many times I'd never done it for myself. The boiler passed the hydraulic 1 ½ times working pressure test with no problem, but the steam test was a different kettle of fish. I must have made every mistake in the book, thankfully I was well supervised so no harm was done, but it wasn't until the fourth attempt did it easily pass and I was able to nervously take it onto the track. The first run I managed four laps before a pin fell out of the linkage. Second time onto the track I managed ½ a lap, this time I was convinced there was no water getting to the boiler so panicked and dropped the fire. The third attempt was similarly abandoned. For the fourth attempt I decided that most of the problems were due to my nerves

and ignorance so once she was in steam I handed her over to one of the clubs more experienced driver, who took her for a spin round the track. After about 4 laps he handed her over to me and gave me a bit of schooling and encouragement (Thanks John) and this time I managed 6 laps before, sadly, the same pin fell out again: those Gremlins were having fun! However, I had finally broken the Gremlins' spell, and slowly and surely I gained confidence. In fact, too much confidence, I got my licence endorsed by the club chairman for speeding, but I eventually passed out as a driver so that I can now give rides to the public.

Conclusion

As a way of quickly getting onto the track, buying this loco was a complete failure. It took me the best part of three years to finally get on the track, however, I did build a few stationary engines during that time as well. It did cost me a fair bit of time and cash that I wasn't really planning on spending and I suppose I could have cut my losses and moved it on, but that's not my way. I was unlucky and careless to have bought an example that was deficient in so many ways, my wife summing it up nicely when she said "you bought a good boiler with a load of defective parts". Getting her sorted (the engine - not the wife!) has been very frustrating at times and finding out what the problems were wasn't all that easy. For instance, finding the error with the crank pin pitch took me about two months, I just didn't think that anyone could get something so fundamentally wrong. I ended up chasing my own tail and it wasn't until I went right back to check the basics that I found the fault.

Now that it's all sorted I have the satisfaction of knowing that I've rescued a basket case from the scrap heap, and defeated the Gremlins!!!



Editor - This has been a thoroughly interesting series of articles and has obviously taken much time to compile. I would like to thank Stewart very much for his superb contribution to the Blower and , as I can see from my 'inbox', there is more to come! Again, Thank you.

Police Visit



On Saturday 11th March, because the weather forecast was dry and relatively warm for a change, a number of steam locomotive drivers got together to give their engines a first run of the year in preparation for the coming running season.

Stewart Hart, Tony Malpas, Neil Talbot and myself all brought their engines down and had an excellent run.

However, during our time at the track we were visited by PC Matt Stonier along with PCSO Sarah, the Bunbury and district Police Support Officer.

You may remember that PC Matt Stonier was responsible last year for arranging the visit of the Model Railway Club from Brine Leas School and also our visit to the school later in the year. Both officers were keen that we kept our connections with the school Model Railway Club and are hoping another visit from the school can be organised in the not so distant future.



Footnote:- Just to remind members that as part of our efforts to help the school we did issue some 'Free Ride' tickets for teachers to use as an incentive to good behaviour and outstanding work & effort. (Also, the officer did not drive the locomotive!)

SCMES Annual Dinner

The Society held its annual dinner on Tuesday 14th March at the Hunters Lodge Hotel, Sydney, Crewe. 30 guests attended and enjoyed a delightful evening with an excellent meal and much conversation.

With next years celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the South Cheshire Model Engineering Society it is hoped that more members can be tempted into coming along and enjoying the good company and food.



Join in this Running Season

From April to October, we are in what we generally regard as the Running Season for our track.

At the time of writing we have 13 **birthday parties** booked on **Saturdays** with, I expect, more to come. There is core number of members who enjoy helping to run these events but it is by no means a closed group. We would be delighted to welcome more members to help run the trains at the parties and you will find that they are very sociable occasions. The main requirements are the ability to exchange banter and to drink tea! "On-the-job training in these aspects will be available..."

On the noticeboard you will see the dates of parties that have already been booked and you can add your name to any of them. Otherwise just turn up between 11.00am and 2.30pm on the day and find out what is involved.

If you would like to drive, either steam or battery powered locos, you will of course need to be qualified to do so. Speak to one of our Traction Inspectors, whose names appear on your membership card to arrange training, if necessary. Remember, we have club locomotives available, so you don't have to have your own loco, before joining in.

The **First and Third Sundays** of the month will be **Public Running Days** and members will equally be welcome to join in on these days. The dates are shown on your membership card. Look at the noticeboard and add your name to take part on these days.

Finally, **Sunday May 7th** will also be the occasion of the visit of the 2½" Gauge Society and also on **Sunday 21st** we shall be raising funds on behalf of the Wilson House Scout Group who help us at our Open Day in September. *Paul Vidler.*

Paul Jeremy Thomas

Former member Philip Owston has advised of the death of Honorary member Paul Jeremy Thomas.

Known by his second name, Jeremy, he was a Solicitor, who through the offices of his friend Phil Owston, assisted the Society to become a Company Limited by Guarantee, by drawing up the necessary papers and by witnessing the final document in his capacity as a Solicitor.

Jeremy did this work free of charge and in recognition of this, the committee made him an Honorary member. He was very pleased to receive this honour. Whilst he was not a model engineer, he did have a lifelong interest in steam, both on the rails and on roads.

Our condolences go to his widow, Mrs Anne Thomas and the Committee have decided to make a donation of £25 to the charity Cancer Research, in his memory.

Society News

Site Lease Update - As you may know, the lease for the Peacock track site expires at the end of this year, and for almost 2 years the committee have been tirelessly contacting the brewery agents in an effort to obtain a renewal of contract - without success. However, recent communications have now been made and a meeting between Mary Evans (Brewery Agent) and the committee has been confirmed and will be held at the tracksite on Tuesday 4th April. It is hoped that this meeting will be productive and culminate with a successful outcome. The committee have insisted that the usual working party go ahead on the day but would ask members to respect the privacy of the meeting and refrain as much as possible from entering the clubhouse whilst negotiations are taking place. Lets hope we can get a favourable result from this meeting.

Risk Management - The Committee reviewed the Society risk assessment at the January meeting and a full copy of the revised assessment has been posted on the noticeboard. **Members are urged to read the full risk assessment and to highlight any issues that cause concern.**

However, particular attention is drawn to the use of the club electric locomotives. The change most likely to affect members frequently is the requirement to test the "deadman's" device fitted to the club battery locomotives. Whilst on the steaming bay roads, simply release the controls and check that the power is switched off. The controls are then returned to the OFF position before switching ON again and moving onto the track. If the power is not switched off during the test the locomotive is not to be used and a suitable report made – where appropriate to the Person in Charge, to a Committee member, or by making an entry in the Club diary.

Insurance - Members planning to visit other tracks and run their engine must have a current insurance certificate. These are now available from Neil Talbot Treasurer.

Working Party every Tuesday from 10.15am - The running season is upon us once again which means lots of tasks are now under way; Grass cutting, station canopy extension, general ground maintenance, etc.

Storm Doris - The February Committee meeting was a victim of Storm Doris with it being cancelled due to dangerous road and travel conditions. The committee decided against re-scheduling the meeting and will convene again in March.

SCMES 50th Anniversary 1968 - 2018 - An early reminder to all members that next year sees the 50th anniversary of the South Cheshire Model Engineering Society. It is hoped that we maybe able to stage a number of events throughout the year to help celebrate this special occasion and with this in mind I would like to hear if there is any of type of event members think may be appropriate or would like to see at the Peacock track.

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Meetings for 2017

- Apr 4th** - Members Work Night - Bring along your current project to show or chat about.
- May 2nd** - Building a WW1 Ambulance - Gerry Newbrook
- Jun 6th** - An 8F miscellany - Nigel Breeze
- Jul 4th** - 'Spud-u-Like' Social Evening (trackside meal)
- Aug 1st** - 'Potty Pot Pouri' - Stewart Hart

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 7th Sunday - 2½" Gauge Society Visit

**May 21st Sunday - Wilson House Scout
Fund Raising Day**

June 11th Visiting Clubs Day. TBA

September 9th Saturday - Society Public Open Day

December 27th Wednesday - Christmas Steam - up.