



# Maidstone Model Engineering Society

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## NEWSLETTER '77

SUMMER EDITION

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	2
SECRETARY'S NOTES	2
'TRIP' TO BLENHEIM	3
NOSTALGIA 1	4
THE LATE SID LONGLEY-	
"ALLROUNDER EXTRAORDINARY"	5
THE NEXT LOCOMOTIVE-	
..... SOME THOUGHTS IN ALL DIRECTIONS	7
STOP PRESS	8

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Our thanks to the many Societies from whom we have received newsletters. They are greatly appreciated.

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Copy for the Autumn edition must be in by :-

SEPTEMBER 4th. LATEST.

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EDITORIAL

As Richard is now deep into finishing projects and swotting for exams it has fallen upon me to write the Editorial. After hours of sitting with pen poised but nothing written Richard suggested to me that I should dig up a newsletter from three years ago, copy out the Editorial, because nobody would remember it, and be happy at that. I immediately discarded this idea, told him to get on with his work and got down to writing what you are about to read.

Firstly I must tell you that the proposed M.M.E.S. trip to Guildford on the 25th. June was postponed because it clashed with this years I.M.L.E.C. trials at Chingford. The Society is hoping to arrange a coach trip to Guildford later in the year. Details of this will be pinned up in the clubhouse, but I hope to have the new date for the trip before the newsletter is finished.

The first coach trip of the year, to the Southern Federation Rally at Blenheim Palace, was a great success and enjoyed by everybody. More of this later !!

The two runs for charity, one on May 15th. in aid of the Cheshire Homes, and the other on June 7th. were also a great success. The amounts to be donated to these two funds will be decided during the July committee meeting.

May I now take this opportunity on behalf of the Society to wish our Hon. Sec. Ray Milliken a safe journey to Japan and an enjoyable visit. We shall look forward with interest to reading of his experiences in the next newsletter.

Now a reminder !! An article for the next newsletter would be very much appreciated. The reserves are again very low (not one to be precise). Copies for the Autumn edition should be in by Sunday September 4th. at the latest please.

GRAHAM LINKINS.

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SECRETARY'S NOTES

Firstly may I thank via the medium of this journal all those who were kind enough to send messages of sympathy and offers of help during my recent illness. I am sure most people will be pleased to know that I am fully recovered with no permanent damage though a certain amount of 'wear and tear'. Doctors appear to take a poor view of patients who engineer in their spare time. My Doctor, after convincing him I was not a stevedore and did not go coal mining in my holidays could not understand the amount of wear and was looking strangely at my wife until she showed him the models. He then pronounced us all quite mad and apparently bent on self destruction either from injuries such as mine or instant bronchial problems from the inhalation of oil and smoke.

For the benefit of those wishing to take medical advice it is as follows: Sit by an open window (out of the draught) in a typist's swivel chair (without the typist) and carve models out of 'balsa' wood taking care to wear industrial gloves in case of a cut therefore incurring 'tetanus' or some similar nuisance to the National Health Service.

I was most grateful for the help in preparing my engines for shipment to Yokohama, without such help I should have had to cancel the whole venture.

Cont. Over

Having been removed from the Secretarial scene for some time and unable to attend events of late this coupled with the strange aura within the Society at present indicated my report would be better written after returning from Japan.

RAY MILLIKEN.

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#### TRIP TO BLenheim

On Saturday the 21st. May we hired a coach for a trip to the Southern Federation Rally, which this year was held at the Oxford and Witney S.M.E. track in the grounds of Blenheim Palace.

The coach was loaded up and ready to go at the appointed time of nine o'clock when the driver noticed that he had got a water leak in his engine. He quickly disappeared to a public phone box to get another which duly arrived very shortly afterwards. The coaches were then unloaded and loaded up again and we were once again ready to go. The party was not quite as big as had been expected because one member and his family decided to go by car and Ray Milliken's family could not go because Ray had a bad back injury. The coach then departed from Mr. Parham's Autoyacht Garage at 9.40 a.m. with 38 people and 7 engines on board.

The journey time to Blenheim, which for the uninitiated is about 5 miles North of Oxford, was three hours almost to the minute. When we first arrived there was some confusion about whether we would be able to run or not because the track was booked up until after six o'clock which was when our coach left for home, this was due to there being so many engines. So after one member saying "we might as well go home then", the host club requested for volunteers to change their running time to after six o'clock so that we could all get a run. Seven kind volunteers then came forward to change their running times and we all eventually had a run.

The length of running time was restricted to about half an hour, which, considering the amount of engines, was very reasonable indeed. Steaming arrangements went very well considering that the steaming bays were only designed to take a very few engines. This I am sure was due to the good organisation made by the host club.

The engines from our club which went by coach were :-

Reg Holdstock's	- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	gauge	4-8-2	"Cock of the South".
Steve Woods	- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	"	"	"Black Five".
Peter Chislett's	- 5"	"	0-6-0	Terrier "Rolvenden".
Fred LaRoche's	- 5"	"	"U" Class	"Groombridge".
Ken Linkins	- 5"	"	0-4-0	"Joan".
Graham Paviours	- 5"	"	"	Sentinel
Ray Wilkinson's	- 5"	"	4-6-0	"Torquay Manor".

Another Maidstone engine was also present, this being Barry Lawson's 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge freelance pacific "Wayfarer". Barry had none of the troubles we encountered with getting a run, because, travelling by car he was able to run after we left at six o'clock.

While we were playing trains our lady members went round the palace and gardens and from what I heard they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Cont. Over.

Many interesting engines were there apart from ours... Quite a few of these models had been based on prototypes from the last century which included a model of the 2-2-2 "Aerolite" and the 2-4-0 "J.W.Baker". Two very popular models at the rally were "Rob Roys" and Speed's, there being 3 or 4 examples of each. Laurie Joyce's I.M.L.E.C. winning "King" was also present. An engine which I had not seen before was a 5" gauge 4-4-2 No. 182, "Lalla-Rookh". There were also two 5" gauge narrow gauge engines present, the first was a straight copy of one of the Llanberis Lake Railway engines and the other was not quite so conventional as it was a blue 0-4-2 saddle tank with a spark arresting chimney, but the strange thing about it was that it had oscillating cylinders a la Mammot. Surprisingly these cylinders did not leak as much as was expected by the spectators. One model which would have been especially interesting to Ray was a 4" scale Burrell double crank traction engine. This chuffed along all day pulling a truck load of people.

The coach left Blenheim at six o'clock and arrived back at the Autoyacht Garage at nine o'clock where it was agreed that a good day had been had by all. A special mention must go to Mr. L.F.Parham for the use of his yard and Martin Parham for arranging the coach.

TIM GREGSON.

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NOSTALGIA 1

As a life-long railway enthusiast I suppose it is only natural that as the railways decline and near their end, my interest in their history and diminishing existence must increase; I need only think of events happening almost on my own doorstep to realise that I, and thousands of my age group have lost an environment and way of life endeared to us by the railways, which can never be regained.

It has been said that nostalgia is a distorted view of the past, this may be partly true, but I find it's participation is a pleasant and soothing departure from the glamourised presentation of violence, sex and pop, so be-loved by to-day's press and television.

Many will recall Tovil station, which in it's pre motor age was a busy little station catering for commuters of the Tovil industries and provided transport otherwise unavailable to the surrounding community. Remembered too, will be the little steam coach unit that served this line in off-peak periods, with it's peculiar array of rods between coaches and engine, necessary for "push and pull" operation. The station and it's signal box were closed on March 15th. 1943, four years after electrification. A similar coach unit is still in operation on the Buckfastleigh - Totness line, but of Great Western origin.

Close by to this site a spur of single track from Maidstone West still exists, trailing across the Medway to serve the once flourishing marshalling and goods depot for the Tovil industries. The construction of this spur involved the provision of a steel bridge over the Medway and two steel bridges over roads, in addition a considerable amount of earth works were employed to not only satisfy these levels, but to provide a reasonable level plateau for four sidings, two of which terminate with covered bays.

The bridges spanning the roads bear the date 1887 and give the name of the manufacturer as Westwood and Co. Ltd. When I saw the complex during last summer, it presented a most depressing sight, road transport had robbed it of all the hustle and bustle that once predominated and had only left a remnant as epitaph.

Cont.Over

A rake of seven steel vans stood in one of the bays, the wheel treads of only two showed signs of recent movement, and the track they occupied appeared seldom used. The other three tracks could now and again be traced amid the overgrowth.

The Tovil main road entrance to the complex still has the unmistakable S.E.&C.R. timber constructed administration office guarding the property, it's green and cream paint-work now shedding it's last flakes.

Facing the road and fixed to this building are two placard boards, which in days gone by, must have proudly presented posters of golden sands and blue seas bathed in sunshine, to which paradise the railway could speed you. Now forlorn and covered in creepers, the only vestige of paint left on the boards is readable as " British Railways ". A pedestrian side entrance to the property is protected by a broken, cast iron, notice board on which the Southern Railway warns you not to trespass on the Company's property.

Legend has it that this single line spur was originally intended to meander it's way to Headcorn, but I have found no authentic record to support this intention. May-be the cost of the initial project was sufficient to fire the imagination with greater things to come ???

E.G.Rix.

To Be Continued.

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#### THE LATE SID LONGLEY "ALLROUNDER EXTRAORDINARY"

I am sure it is with great regret particularly amongst the older members of the Society that we have lost the previous Vice Chairman in the person of Sid Longley. It has been my privilege to have known him perhaps rather more than 25 years and from my very first few meetings I began to realise the all round ability that this man possessed.

It was during the laying of the first track in Mote Park that I made his acquaintance and naturally our common interest drew us together somewhat. After the completion of my first loco and a few trials on up and down tracks Sids aid was sought for a run at Mote Park. The appointed evening duly arrived and a borrowed car saw my wife and engine on site at the arranged time. Steam was up in record time with the aid of a foot pump, a truck was provided and away we went in very enjoyable style, but only until a steam joint to one cylinder blew. Of course this was a disappointment, but the true generosity of my host then revealed itself. Realising that the car was only for a one night stand he kindly offered to take the engine to his Workshop where I was to meet him the next Sunday morning. Now Sid lived at Barming, I was at the Willesborough end of Ashford, and the distance between us had to be made by foot, bus and train. On arrival the repairs were put in hand with suitable guidance from my host that "if we wanted to run this afternoon perhaps we had better do it this way". repairs completed, the goods were delivered to the Park per Morris Series 'E' HKN 700 about as fast as the motor would travel. A fine afternoons running was the result.

As a somewhat rough hewn amatuer to a new game one could not help but be very interested in Sid's 1st. floor workshop. My eyes alighted on an unusual angled bend in Ogee guttering. On engineering what this was for I was shown the position where it was to be fitted and the existing leaking lead item. As I remember the new unit was a welded structure suitably shaped in both profile and angle to suit the unusual shape of the building.

Cont. Over.

I seem to remember my feeling that if this was the sort of standard that one had to attain for sound model engineering then perhaps I had some considerable way to go.

Sending and receiving Morse Code at a fast speed was another ability that Sid possessed. A morse key and sounder was rigged in his Workshop. Being in communications for a living I was expected to understand the messages he sent and I didn't. His signalling had been learnt during the First World War where I believe he had been involved in the Gallipoli campaign and had subsequently arrived in some country on the Eastern side of Germany with a view to a thrust from this quarter into the enemies territory. The privations that this corp endured for so long had really to be heard from one who was there to be believed. Sid always went to the reunion of his army group each year until 50 years elapsed after which there were not enough men left to warrant the function.

Map reading was another of his interests and it was an education to sit with him ( when he did sit ) and listen to his knowledge Geography. A goodly number of us remember the  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge Pacific which was subsequently to be seen on the Tonbridge track regularly. This was an E.W. Twining, design, a writer who used to contribute regularly to the M.E. in bygone years.

During its life it certainly had at least two boilers, the second being generally of the 'Heilan Lassie' design. It was for many years running with unpainted stainless steel platework and cleading with the war time utility motif on the tender sides. I always understood this steel was the remainder of a job that a contractor carried out on some part of Sids Fish and Chip shop. It may well have been a utility engine but a first class performer if ever there was. It had run almost all its working life to make funds for the M.M.E.S. In fact the flanges on some of the driving wheels were like knife edges where they had persistently ground against the curved rail. He also had a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge Pacific of much the same design. This had a widening rim attached to some of the driving wheels by countersunk screws in order to prevent the wheels dropping between the rails on curves. Needless to say these rims were only attached to those wheels which needed the treatment and consequently all were not alike. His final loco, a B.R. 2-10-0 in  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " gauge was constructed with considerable vigour but was sold unfinished to Mr. Skues who finished it to a standard which would have pleased the original owner. Parts of the chassis were constructed and given by some members of the Society as a token of their thanks, particularly for his major part to the 1962/3 track extension, and no doubt to spur its recipient to further efforts. Sid who could be very forthright about most things was very touched by this kind gift.

Mentioning the 1962/3 track extension cannot be allowed to pass without a few words regarding our friends efforts towards this venture, at a time when his age must have been closer to 70 than he would let us know. His Morris 'E' and trailer were really the tractor and trailer that performed for a great deal of that very bad winter doing miscellaneous transport duties including earth moving. Sid would drive the car would perpetually slipping and sending earth clods high into the air and over anybody who happened to be around. When returning his broad grin would indicate satisfaction at this performance. But much as the membership tried to keep Sid to the driving, an idle shovel or tool was more than he could tolerate.

The production of small metal parts was undertaken at Barming on various tools produced by Mr. Rix. Many members occupied the workshop for long sessions and often in quite large numbers at any one time.

Cont. Over.

Most machine tools were pressed into service. The Drummond 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " lathe which was purchased direct from the manufacturer's at Guildford and transported away there and then. It was rigged with a foot operated clutch and lever operated collets. The production rate of parts was at a speed not usually undertaken by "Model Engineers". A small horizontal milling machine now in my possession was one speciality that was constructed with the aid of larger machine tools at the local Technical College. Boiler making and repairs were undertaken and the assistance that other members of the M.M.E.S. have received on this sort of work deserves special mention.

The "filling in" of initials engraved on silver cutlery was a skill undertaken. The stately home from whence the pieces were obtained was never indicated.

A phone call to Sid for info! was the shortest that could ever be. Certainly the telecommunications authority could not expect to make any undue profit as a result. The replies to the questions might be thus; "Yes-Yes- No Sunday, someone has just come into the shop" - finish. Sid had a very fine turn of hand at brush painting and lining, the ticket writing for his General Stores, Greengrocery and Fish and Chip business was something to uplift anybody and all done quickly with little fuss.

Finally the M.M.E.S. has been willed a bequest which the committee has been pleased to receive on behalf of the society. The provision of a seat with a suitable inscription is being examined currently. Thinking back to the years when I used to meet our friend more regularly one could scarcely associate him with ( of all things ) a seat. However I feel the plate in the clubhouse together with the seat will remind us of our former colleagues achievements.

KEN LINKINS.

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#### THE NEXT LOCOMOTIVE

#### ..... SOME THOUGHTS IN ALL DIRECTIONS

I often feel that an interesting aspect of our hobby is found in all the research and delving about into the background of some features of our next engine.

After completing my L.B.& S.C.R. "Terrier" I decided to have a shot at building one of those elegant and beautifully proportioned Adams 517 class 4-4-2 radial tanks of the L.S.W.R. They were obviously designed to take one's breath away!

The project seems to be progressing quite satisfactorily so far, but there may be some bugs lurking about that will show themselves before long. This is the price one has to pay when wildly carried away by the aesthetic appearance of the long and elegant front end with its outside cylinders and small bogie wheels that get nicely in the way of the cross-heads. Then of course - there is always the unknown quantity of the boiler. Don Young, who needs no introduction to anyone who builds small locomotives, says that the feature that makes his O2 boiler really steam, is the good firebox volume combined with the ratio of the clear area through the tubes to the grate area. He says that if this is around 15% then all will be well. Between this and 12% is satisfactory, but below the latter figure things get sticky and draught has to be forced a bit to get enough steam.

I am looking forward to coming up to the attractive Adams features of his stovepipe chimney and the double whistles. That stovepipe chimney somehow sets off all the proportions of the smokebox and front end to a nicety, and people never quite realised it until they were replaced later by the Cast Drummond variety.

The double whistles retained by Adams on the L.S.W.R. leads us directly back to the earlier days of railway operation. The two whistles were of a different size and tone, having a separate steam supply and independent valves for actuating them. The small whistle was for ordinary use, such as warning any person on the line of the approach of the train, or attracting the attention of the signalmen or any other person in hearing. The large whistle had a much deeper sound and was intended for use in foggy weather and for signalling to the guards in the train or to the drivers of assisting engines when it was required that the brakes should be applied.

The practise of using two whistles went out of vogue many years ago, probably falling into disuse following the "Regulation of Railways Act" of 1889, which made it compulsory for all passenger trains to be fitted with continuous automatic brakes and all traffic controlled under the absolute block system of signalling, by which no train was permitted to enter any section of line until it had been cleared by the previous train at the far end.

Tremendous strides had been made in the 1860's and 70's to improve the power and efficiency of locomotives, although nothing much had been done about stopping the trains.

Engineers of the day sreadfastly refused to fit any form of brakes to their locomotives as they feared that the application of retarding forces to the driving wheels would strain the machinery. All that was done was to fit a hand brake to the wheels of the tender only. On passenger trains there were just the two "brake vans" - one at the front of the train and one at the rear.

A recognised code of whistle was adopted whereby the driver whistled for the brakes to be applied by the guards in the two brake vans, who then applied their hand brakes.

Apart from this - an express passenger train of the day, often travelling at more than 60 m.p.h. was entirely devoid of brakes!

All this gives me a kind of apprehensive feeling that I must now immediately "break off" and go and check the hand operated sledge brake on my driving truck!

DON PATERSON

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STOP PRESS

Sat. 6th. August - Open day at Mote Park.

Sun. 28th. August - Exhibition at Mote Park.

N.B. There will be no August Committee Meeting. The next one will be on Sunday the 4th. of September.

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