

MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Summer Newsletter 2011



*A fine line up of
MMES Club
locos*



A fine line up of MMES club members at the Grangemoor dinner in February

Andrew's Spot (formerly Sue's spot)

Well finally (and about time I hear some of you mutter), here is my first newsletter as the club's new Press Officer. I have some big shoes to fill taking over this role from Sue, who has done a great job over the previous... too many years to mention, so hopefully I can do as good a job and keep you all entertained and informed for as long as I can.

Unfortunately Paul, further to your comments from the last newsletter, I haven't been able to persuade anyone to be the new MMES pin up – maybe next time ladies...? Instead, I have included a little recent picture of moi (ok, not that recent). This was taken from my very early days with the club.



For those of you who do not know me all that well, just a little about myself.

I have been with the club now for about 20 years, with a bit of a break in between. I was introduced to the club by Peter Kingsford who I used to go and watch of an evening working away in his garden shed on his latest loco – I think it was Jersey Lilly at the time. Seeing how this fine looking engine went together fascinated me, and it was from this that my real interest in railways really began. Back then, I enjoyed building plastic model kits and 00 gauge layouts, and was always bugging my dad to get his old Hornby Dublo 3 rail set out of the loft so that I could put it together on the landing and enjoy listening to the sound of the old metal coaches clickety clacking round the track. I still like to do that now and again, and have even added to my dad's collection with the help of good old Ebay.



From my first introduction to Mote Park, I went on to develop my interest a bit more by volunteering at the K&ESR in the loco department. This involved getting my hands (and my face) really dirty, cleaning the engines, then clearing out the ash pits and tidying the yard before being able to get to the glamorous bit and riding on the footplate. I even managed to have a go in the workshop making a new part for Charwelton, but that's about as far as my workshop experience went.

Unfortunately, due to growing up I suppose, leaving school and getting a job, I didn't pursue volunteering any further, deciding to devote my time to the MMES, so that I would at least have one day a weekend free for myself.

As most of you know, thanks to JB, I am now the proud owner of Lochwood, and thanks go to quite a few of you in the club for helping me to keep the old girl going, especially to Tom who did a great job on the repaint. I'm not that experienced when it comes to the workshop, but I am willing to learn, and knowing the upcoming work that Lochwood is going to need in the near future no doubt I will be calling on those with more experience for assistance. Who knows, maybe we can finally cure her of the clanks—although I think they might be missed, at least you can hear her coming.



Among my other interests, some of you may know that I have been working on a novel for a number of years, which maybe one day I might get round to finishing (it's about a third complete, but on about the 6th rewrite, so time to stop rewriting and get on and finish the thing!) – it does have some railway interest in it, as it is based on a young boy interested in railways. However, it is no children's story, as it involves some nasty dreams, and disasters – I like to think it has been influenced by one of my favourite writers Stephen King, so don't expect a nice story with a happy ending. If anyone is interested I might just ask for some proof reading and criticism in the future. Maybe I could submit a chapter in each newsletter...

I have also recently taken up riding lessons again after a break of about 8 years. Some of those lessons will be taking place on a Sunday morning, so if you see me walking around a bit oddly in the afternoons, you'll know why. After living around horses for most of my life where I had the opportunity of my dad teaching me to ride, I choose now to learn, never mind.

Somehow, a friend of mine has managed to twist my arm into learning ballroom, and I'm quite enjoying learning to Waltz, Quickstep and Cha Cha. Just don't expect to see me on Strictly anytime soon.

I am currently working for CCL Label (UK) Ltd, who produce pharmaceutical, agrochemical & promotional labelling solutions. I have been with the company for six and a half years now, in a customer and technical support role. I won't go into the ins and outs of my job as it will get quite boring – and I don't want to bore you all more than you are already.

Needless to say, that working for a printing company has enabled me to assist with the printing of the previous newsletters and now that Sue has handed the baton to me, I get more of an excuse to spend more time at work... (Thanks for that Sue x.) So amongst endless interruptions of "can you just check this job bag" "where's the drawing for this" "can you just check the tolerances on this artwork, we can't find the file" "can you just...", this newsletter is finally coming together. However, just when I'm ready to send this to print, the two main printers I can use have decided to break down on us, one giving a lovely tie-die effect, the other just giving nice streaky lines. Anyone know of a good printing firm?

Anyway, enough of me...

So far, it has been a very good start to the year for the club now that public running is underway again. Some great weather is certainly helping this. As always, there is the ever present need for more station staff—yes it's my turn to do the nagging in the newsletter—who without we would find it difficult to run. It would be nice to see some of the members who we don't get to see that often, come and lend a hand if you are able, there's usually plenty of tea and cakes on offer (so long as there's somebody with a free hand to make it). No doubt Jack Ruler will manage to track some of you down with his duty roster.

We had a very good May Day weekend where £400 was raised for the Heart of Kent Hospice. Our very own Sue and Pat, and also Pat's sister Nina, were doing their bit by taking part in the Bluebell Walk in Harrietsham on the Sunday, so well done and congratulations ladies.

It was very nice to see many of our members together at the Grangemoor back in February. I know there were a few grumbles about the food and service this year, but Pat has been on the case, and the staff were very sorry to hear of our complaints and they have promised to try much harder next year.

It seems that we are slowly dragging the club into the 21st century. We now have a presence on Facebook. For those that do have access and can actually manage to make head or tail of the WonderWeb, if you go to www.facebook.co.uk, in their search engine you can enter Maidstone MES members. This is a group open to all MMES members—you will have to request to join the group, but here you can be kept up to date with all the latest news and events which will be happening. Also you will be able to post photographs/videos and any news that you may wish to share here.

There is also a page which is open to anybody—Maidstone Model Engineering Society—where again news and events, photos, videos and comments can be added for any member of the public to see. Once on the page, if you click on Like, then you will automatically be advised of any updates. We will be advertising this Facebook page on new signs informing members of the public of our running times and fare.

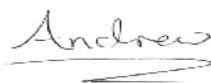
As you can see from the diary dates page, there's plenty of visits to other clubs on offer over the coming months, this includes a visit to Dummond Randall's Birchley railway on 6th August. Some members from the Great Cockrow Railway will be attending too, and they will be arriving in style in a vintage East Kent bus, so there will be something slightly different of interest.

Well that's just about it from me. Thanks to those who have contributed to this edition of my first newsletter. It doesn't quite come up to the standard of Sue's last bumper edition, maybe I'll need to do some more nagging and arm twisting.

Please feel free to send me articles (I'll beg if you want me to...), it can be about anything you wish to share with the club. It would be especially nice to hear more about some of your latest projects, and any troubles that you may have had and how these have been overcome, that may be of help to people in the future. Also any jokes, or funny experiences welcome. You can send these to my email—ahulse@cclind.com, where I can store them away for future use.

I will try and get newsletters out on a more regular basis, every quarter hopefully, and I may even try different formats over forthcoming issues—any feedback will be gratefully received.

For now, I wish you all a good running season, and a very pleasant summer—hopefully what we had over Easter isn't going to be the best of it, but then this is England so who knows?!



Just so you're all aware, it's getting towards that time of year when the park will be invaded by the runners for the Race for life. Cancer Research have been in touch with us with details of the races, and have advised that there are to be no vehicular movements within the park from 10am—1-30pm on those days. The dates are as follows:

CANCER RESEARCH RACE FOR LIFE AT MOTE PARK

Sun 10 July 2011 10:30 5k race

And just in case anyone feels like coming on a Saturday:

Sat 09 July 2011 10:30 5k & 10k race

Chairman's Spot

It may be late in the year to say it, but since this is the first newsletter of 2011, Happy New Year...

The year so far seems to be one for change on a personal note, and for areas of the club. We have a new newsletter editor for the first time in my lifetime, and the new appointment of myself as chairman.

The year seems to be going well so far, having had several weeks of public running that have gone fairly well, although it would relieve the load on some of our regular attendees if we had some more volunteers for station duties on the Sunday afternoons.

As a club we need to progress with the times, and as such we are currently experimenting with using a bio-degradable degreaser for cleaning our locos at the end of the day. This seems to be proving popular and successful for the job, either sprayed on or applied with a brush, subsequently washed off with the hosepipe. Not only does it appear to work, it also removes the release of paraffin into the environment.

Currently all of our club locos are available for use. Galloping Gertie has just finished being repainted, and having the gearbox looked at. As I sit here writing this I can see it being enjoyed, running around the track. John Wheeler continues to run well now, and I encourage all members to enjoy running her as required or purely for pleasure. Finally, the French loco is running well, although it has been known to overheat on prolonged runs on hot days at the club, although this is being looked into.

For now I will bid farewell, and I hope to see you all at the club from time to time, as well as at the various open days throughout the season at our local clubs.

Enjoy the coming season in whichever field of our wonderful hobby that you enjoy.

Tom



Gertie looking resplendent in her new red livery

Boiler Testing

All boilers used at the club must have current hydraulic and steam test certificates. When presenting a boiler for test at Mote Park, please observe the following conditions:

Any new boiler or a boiler that does not have a certificate must be off the frames and must be unlagged so that all seams and joints are visible. Boilers with an existing certificate can be tested in running order.

For hydraulic tests the safety valves should be removed and the bushes plugged. The pressure gauge should also be removed and its fitting plugged off. Somewhere on the boiler there must be a 1/4" x 40 male adaptor to take the union from the test pump. The pressure gauge, which must have a red line at the working pressure, should also have an adaptor to fit the pump union so that it can be tested against the master gauge.

The boiler must have an Identification number stamped into it in such a position that it can be seen clearly at each boiler test.

When a boiler is presented for a steam test, the pressure gauge must again be removed and be provided with an adaptor to fit the test pump. The boiler should be cleaned as much as possible with the smokebox cleared of ash and the grate and ashpan removed for inspection of the firebox and the I.D. clearly visible. Before bringing it for test the owner should make sure that at least two means of water feed to the boiler are working satisfactorily and the water gauge, blowdown valve and the whistle operate.

If you need more information about the testing procedure, please ask one of the boiler testers.

All boiler tests must be arranged with two of the following testers:

Dave Deller	01732 841194
Graham Kimber	01732 845931
Peter Kingsford	01233 712086
Martin Parham	01622 630298
Edgar Playfoot	01892 722019
Bernard White	01634 841899

Anyone up for a caption competition...?

Tom and the Bridges boys working hard on Galloping Gertie's makeover.



MACHINING CYLINDER CASTINGS FOR G1 4-4-2T TILBURY TANK

by Ron Attfield.

Having completed the Johnson Belpaire – What to do next? Three of the four gauge 1 locos built used single cylinders. The fourth, a “Dee” had twin inside motions. I wanted to make another twin.

In the Gauge 1 Association newsletter dated April 1966, JVR wrote an article on the “Tilbury Tank” also mentioning Paul Forsyth had produced plans of a Midland Class 79, also known as a Tilbury Tank. Even though I am not keen on Paul’s plans, I purchased the cylinder castings and a set of drawings.

It was clear most of the parts were as expected – however the cylinders were not. This short article describes my machining methods. Obviously other methods could be used. Nevertheless my techniques produced a satisfactory end product.

A single casting comprised both cylinders joined by a central web just over 3/8” thick. It was greatly oversized on all other dimensions. In its finished state it is cut into two pieces down the centre of the web and bolted together using 5BA bolts.

Using the vertical mill with the casting held in the machine vice the underside of the web was cleaned up using an end mill. Turning the casting over, the top face and the inside of the side flanges were finished.

The end faces of the cylinders were cleaned up using an end mill and coated with marking blue. The position of the cylinder bores were marked out and centre punched. 9/16” and 7/8” circles were inscribed on all four ends and centre drilled (No.2 drill).

To machine the 9/16” diameter cylinder bore a fixture was required. A Myford faceplate was used as a base with angles and jacking points fixed to its face. Each piece was bolted and dowelled in position. With the casting clamped to the fixture and screwed onto the lathe mandrel it was easy to see if the centre ran truly. All was OK.

The bores were re-centred with a larger centre drill, drilled 1/4” diameter and finally 1/2” diameter so leaving 1/16” for the boring tool. I had made two plug gauges at .552” and .562” diameters. Using the smaller helps you establish the final cut. Only .010” cuts were applied to ensure easy swarf clearance as the bore is 1-1/8” long.

At this stage I cut the casting into two pieces using a hacksaw. The sawn edges would be machined later. The half castings were held on a 9/16” diameter arbour and the opposite end of the cylinder skimmed to ensure squareness and final size.

Finishing the outside of the cylinders to 7/8” diameter x 1-1/8” long posed a problem. My mill is a Dore-Westbury vertical machine. I had to use a long series end mill and in my opinion using a rotary table would be somewhat dangerous on such a small machine.

I decided a safe way was to mount the casting on a spigot set on the lathe centre line attached to an angle plate bolted to the cross slide. With the 5/16” diameter end mill in the chuck a lengthwise cut could be taken – the casting rotated a few degrees and the operation repeated until finished. The final depth of cut was only .005” leaving shallow scallops – these were blended to give a final

finish by hand filing.

To machine the sawn edges square and to size was simple. Held in the machine vice the half casting was set level on two axis using a spirit level. When finished to size the two half castings are bolted together with the inside of the flange fitting over the loco frames. I made allowance for the frame thickness of .058" as against the drawing size of .062".

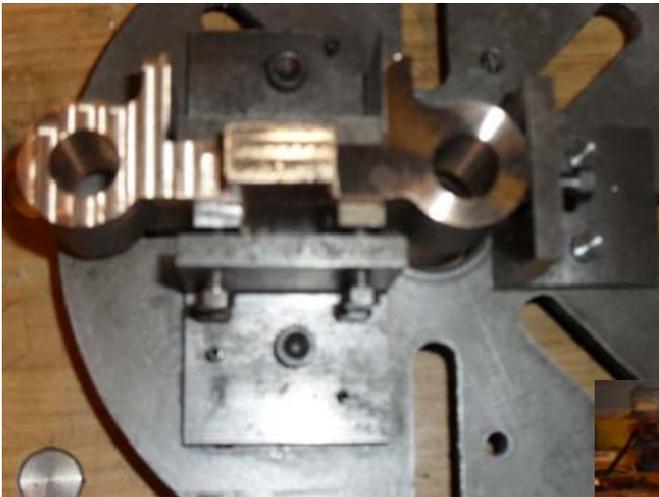
Machining the steam ports was straightforward. However the drawing specified 1/4" depth. A depth of about .200" is the maximum using a standard 1/16" slotting cutter. I simply moved the drilled passageways up .050".

Looking at the drawing the drilled passageways were very close to the 8BA holes for holding the steamchest. A mistake here would be a disaster. A drawing 3 x full size showed there was no room for even the slightest error.

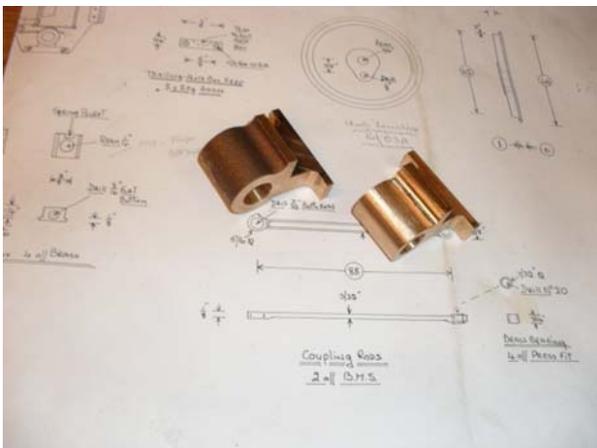
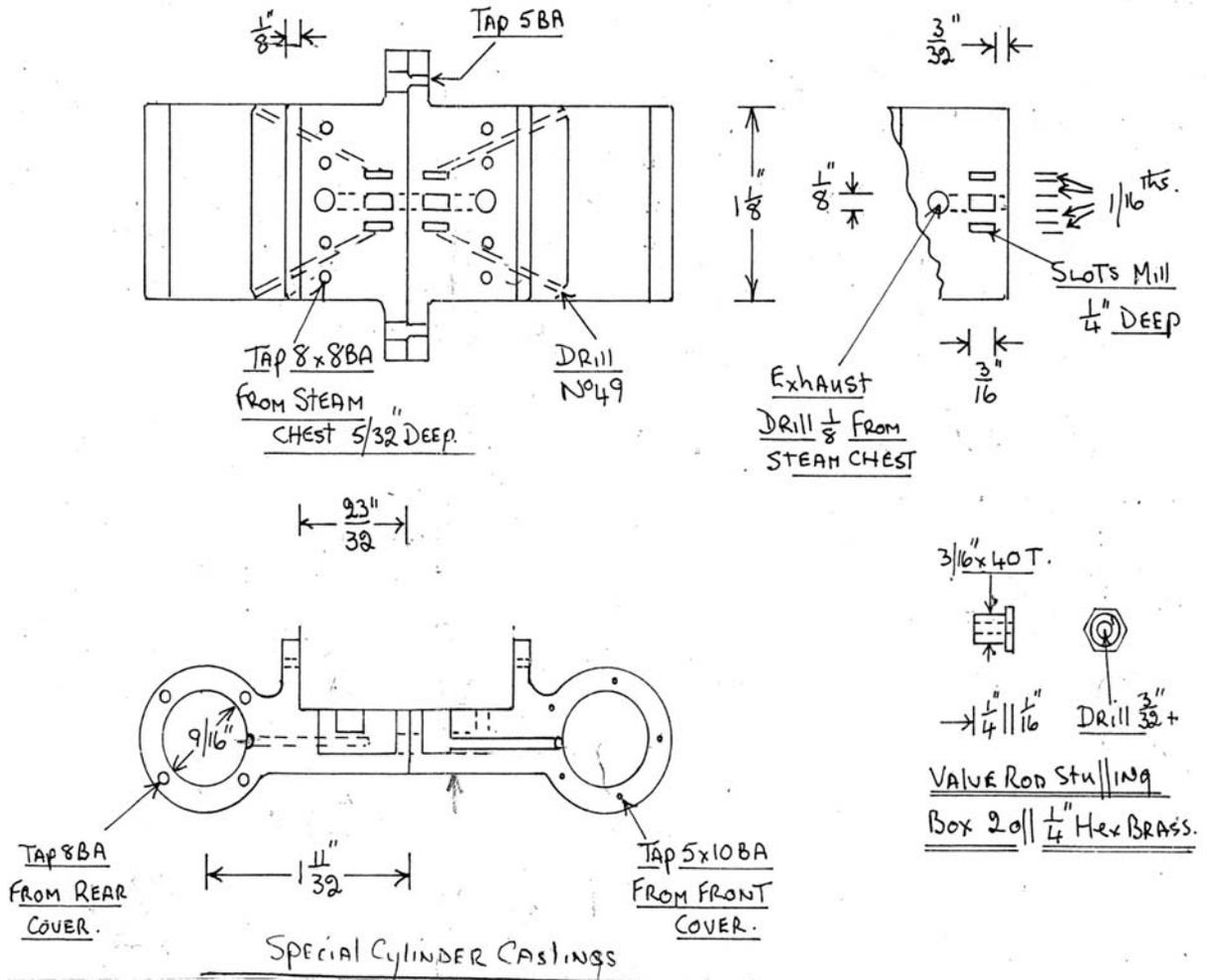
Talking to Dave Deller he mentioned on one job he drilled two intersecting holes in positions to clear other holes – a good idea. This I did with complete success.

The castings were very oversize but the material was clean, no blow holes and it machined beautifully.

A long winded job but giving real satisfaction when finished. Making the fixture was time consuming, well rewarded when fitting the casting to the assembled loco frames, everything lined up.



BOLT & SOFT SOLDER
CYLINDER BLOCKS TOGETHER
THEN TAKE FINE FINAL CUT
ACROSS TOP FACE.



MERTWITT'S MIDDLE EAST EXPERIENCE

From time to time, something triggers ones memory of events distant past, thus it was after reading Paul's account of the launching of the submarine HNS Ojibwa. I too witnessed the launching of a submarine at Chatham Dockyard on 5th May 1962. That was HMS Ocelot, and was the 54th submarine to be built at Chatham since 1908, and the 3rd of the 'O' Class. Over 450 vessels were constructed at Chatham since 1585, the most famous HMS Victory, built in 1765 and now preserved at Portsmouth Dockyard.

As an apprentice I was involved in a very minor way in completion of the vessel, and that entitled me and a guest to witness the event. This has nothing to do with the Middle East, but perhaps indicates that some of the grey cells function when stimulated, if maybe not firing on all cylinders. (But did they ever?).

The recent events in Libya reminded me of an assignment to that country in 1982. The Ethylene plant with which I was involved was sited at Ras Lanuf, an area being constantly in turmoil at the moment. This has little to do with the Middle East either as it is North Africa, but both regions are occupied by Arabs together with many other nationals including Brits. So one thought leads to another, as two years previously I was working in Abu Dhabi on the Arabian Gulf which IS classed as Middle East. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) consists of seven emirates of which Abu Dhabi is the capital and Dubai the next most important.

Well that's got the geographical bit out of the way, now to the experience. One big benefit of going abroad for the Company, is that they pay all the bills, including Passport renewals and all necessary vaccinations. Before working abroad, the Company insists that you visit their Physician, to get checked over and who will administer the appropriate jabs.

"Your blood pressures up a bit??"

"Having a medical is not exactly calming, anyway I've just come from the Underground and then climbed umpteen stairs to reach your surgery".

"OK, pop into the examination room, get stripped off and I will be with you shortly to check that there's nothing protruding that shouldn't be".

"That's interesting, you're all lopsided, in fact one nipple is higher than the other. Cross over to the consulting room, there's a full length mirror".

This entailed crossing the field of view of his secretary who was in a side room, banging away on her Remington.

"Don't mind Miss Jones, she's seen it all before".

Well she hasn't seen me before, and anyway, although Paginini has been dead for 140 years, musicians still get excited over his variations. Getting dressed back in the examination room meant crossing the firing zone again with the chance of a 'double take' . During scrutiny the Physician failed to discover a latent mental condition which affects my current ramblings, a similarity to micturition, that is once the flow starts, it's difficult to stop.

Nothing quite prepares you for stepping off the plane in Middle East temperatures with 100% humidity. Maybe today there are mobile corridors which couple up to the aeroplane's doors, but in 1980 no such luxury existed in Abu Dhabi. If you can imagine walking into a greenhouse in the height of Summer when all the plants have just been watered, then that gives some idea of what 100% humidity is like, together with intense heat from the sun. That immediately resulted in your body becoming completely covered in sweat (or perspiration if you are a lady), and a total energy exhaustion. It takes several days to build up some stamina in these conditions, it's not a holiday, you're there to work.

We were accommodated in the Abu Dhabi Sheraton Hotel right by and overlooking the Arabian Gulf. My status didn't command a room with a sea view, but the other side facing the city and a restricted vista of the Corniche Road (promenade). Even so, the room was spacious enough with mini—bar, tea and coffee making facilities and TV.

Most of the programmes were in Arabic and an amusing sports event was the camel racing. Have you ever seen a camel race? Well they don't actually gallop, more a fast trot. Between TV programmes, the empty slot was filled by a few minutes camel racing, only marginally more stimulating than the BBC aquarium scenes transmitted all those years ago while breakdowns were being fixed. The hotel food was first class, and if the Company is footing the bill, one can be adventurous and sample dishes that you might hesitate trying at home. Early substantial breakfast was ample to keep you going all day in such climate until the evening meal. Fresh fruit was available on site at midday together with endless supplies of bottled water and salt tablets. The hotel had a small adjoining private beach, also an open-air swimming pool, the water therein being chilled below ambient temperature the sea naturally felt much warmer.

The warm sea appeared to promote the fish population, and this was most evident when at the construction site where the wooden quayside allowed observation through clear water. Any slight movement while watching caused a shoal of small fish to leap out and splash in again as one. The sound of all that was just like a large bucket of gravel being thrown into the sea. Sadiyat Island where the platform was being constructed entailed a fifteen minute boat journey, either by traditional wooden dhow, diesel powered, or small steel ferries. The ferries were financed by the Client, or if either of these were not running, or we were late, the third option was sea taxis (speed boats) which each carried about four passengers. Dhows are not very smooth and tend to pitch especially if another was passing nearby in the opposite direction. Traditional dhows were still constructed in the open-air boat yard, and as Friday was a religious day, it was a good time to visit as nothing much happened, security being non-existent. The Arabian Gulf is quite shallow (about 40ft) where the platform was to be installed at a location about 50 miles out from Abu Dhabi. After years of burning off destabilising gases from rigs, it was thought economic to gather some and after processing and compression, put to a variety of uses.



In the boat building yard, customers inspecting a model of their dhow.



In the boat building yard, business end of a dhow with workmen's laundry.

For fear of boring the overalls off any readers of these ramblings, I will not dwell on the technicalities of gas gathering, but describe some of the unusual scene which were common place in and around Abu Dhabi. Sixty years ago, I understand Abu Dhabi was not much more than a collection of block buildings in the desert. Although vegetation appears to be lush around the city, this is because constant irrigation is needed to sustain plant life. Water was pumped from wells (there's no rivers) and throughout daylight hours workmen were seen busy with hosepipes. There's no indigenous soil, just sand, and on remarking about that I was informed that soil for plants was shipped in from Iran. I never asked from where the plants and trees originated. Apart from the sport of camel racing, an event which attracted a lot of local interest was the boat race. Not at all like our university Boat Race, but more like competing men-of-war with about fifty rowers in each boat. Preparations seemed to take several days on the water's edge with oil or something rubbed into the surface of the wooden hulls. Following European practice, each worker had about ten observers.



Preparing for the boat race.

Away from the city in the vast desert, the very dry sand was constantly on the move. Even with the absence of any detectable wind, the grains of moving sand obliterated any footprints. It was not wise therefore to cross the dunes and lose sight of the road, as there were no guiding landmarks. A strange phenomenon of which you become aware after a while, is the cleansing effect of sand. Hands and nails don't get dirty as in the UK, and cars get dusty rather than grimy. Most of the side roads were not metalled and required careful negotiation in the dark without street lamps. Away from the main roads, the dwelling houses were crude block built with the mandatory air conditioning unit precariously attached to an outside wall and continuously dripping condensate.

Shopping was another unique experience. European style shopping malls existed, to get a true flavour of local life, the Souk, or traditional market had to be place to go. Most people visited the Souk in the evening when the temperature moderated. Bargaining soon became second nature and was carried out with good humour. If you enquired about the price of something that you didn't really want, then bargaining became a source of entertainment, and got you into a frame of mind when a serious purchase occurred. Gold was one item where there was very little room for negotiation, as it was sold by weight. The way that jewellery was displayed was most casual, with very little security. It was noted that older Asian men were attracted to gold bangles for their wives who accompanied them. I observed one such wife who had on each arm from wrist to elbow, an ostentatious display still squeezed on more. This was definitely a case of 'if you've got it, flaunt

it'. The gold was of high purity, but not hallmarked.

In 1980 pirate cassette tape recordings of popular artists were readily available for 50p each. Included in the cover sleeve, also copied, was a distinctive symbol which identified it as a copy. The illegal recording business has now moved on to DVDs. In Kuala Lumpur where there is now a hive of activity, sniffer dogs specially trained to detect the plastics used in the manufacture of DVDs have been very effective in finding the secret pirate stashes. Within the Souk there was what seemed to be the equivalent of the FO Box, only it wasn't a box but a wooden post about 5" square positioned in a public area. On the post were nailed numerous items of correspondence, some sealed and others open, free for all to peruse, assuming of course the reader could understand the various languages.

Some years later, while scratching around a flea market in Rochester, I spotted a pile of typical pirate cassette tapes incorporating the distinctive symbol in the artwork. I selected a tape and asked the vendor if he had worked in the Middle East recently. He was a bit startled, but before getting an uncontrolled delivery in the nether region, I assured him that I was not a Customs Official and in fact had a collection of similar tapes myself. In an instant I was transported back to my days in Abu Dhabi, all that was missing was the aroma of exotic spices so typical of that part of the world.

J.B.



Edge of the desert between Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

New Members

Ben McDonald—Mechanical Engineer from Bangor. Model making activities 3 1/2" and 7 1/4" locomotives.

Albert (Bert) Samson—Retired, from Ashford. Model making activities Traction Engines and Petrol Engines.

And his son; David Samson—a Toolmaker from Ashford

A big welcome to our new members, we look forward to seeing you throughout the summer at upcoming club running days and events.

The funny bits..

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, the British Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would become known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, "s" will replace the soft "c". Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of "k". This should klear up confusion, and keyboards can have one less letter.

There will be growing public enthusiasm in the second year when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with "f". This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, public akseptanse of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible.

Governments will encourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate spelling.

Also, al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent "e" in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th yer people wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v".

During ze fifz yer, ze unesesary "o" can be dropd from vords containing "ou" and after ziz fifz yer, ve vil hav a reil sensibl riten styl.

Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech oza. Ze drem of a united urop vil finali kum tru.

Und efter ze fifz yer, ve vil al be speking German like zey vunted in ze forst plas.

Sometimes our cute companions in life can have bad days too....



A WEEK AT THE GYM - ONE MAN'S STORY

Dear Diary

For my sixty fifth birthday this year, my wife (the dear) purchased a week of personal training at the local health club for me. Although I am still in great shape since playing on my college football team 45 years ago, I decided it would be a good idea to go ahead and give it a try.

I called the club and made my reservations with a personal trainer named Belinda, who identified herself as a 26-year-old aerobics instructor and model for athletic clothing and swim wear. My wife seemed pleased with my enthusiasm to get started! The club encouraged me to keep a diary to chart my progress . . .

MONDAY

Started my day at 6-00 a.m.

Tough to get out of bed, but found it was well worth it when I arrived at the health club to find Belinda waiting for me. She is something of a Greek goddess - with blond hair, dancing eyes and a dazzling white smile. Woo Hoo!! Belinda gave me a tour and showed me the machines. She took my pulse after five minutes on the treadmill. She was alarmed that my pulse was so fast, but I attribute it to standing next to her in her Lycra aerobic outfit. I enjoyed watching the skillful way in which she conducted her aerobics class after my workout today. Very inspiring. Belinda was encouraging as I did my sit-ups, all though my gut was already aching from holding it in the whole time she was around. This is going to be a FANTASTIC week!!

TUESDAY

I drank a whole pot of coffee, but I finally made it out the door. Belinda made me lie on my back and push a heavy iron bar into the air then she put weights on it! My legs were a little wobbly on the treadmill, but I made the full mile. Belinda's rewarding smile made it all worthwhile. I feel GREAT!! It's a whole new life for me.

WEDNESDAY

The only way I can brush my teeth is by laying on the toothbrush on the counter and moving my mouth back and forth over it. I believe I have a hernia in both pectorals. Driving was OK as long as I didn't try to steer or stop. I parked on top of a GEO in the club parking lot. Belinda was impatient with me, insisting that my screams bothered other club members. Her voice is a little too perky for early in the morning and when she scolds, She gets this nasally whine that is VERY annoying. My chest hurt when I got on the treadmill, so Belinda put me on the stair monster. Why the hell would anyone invent a machine to simulate an activity rendered obsolete by elevators? Belinda told me it would help me get in shape and enjoy life. She said some other sh*t too.

THURSDAY

Belinda was waiting for me with her vampire-like teeth exposed as her thin, cruel lips were pulled back in a full snarl. I couldn't help being a half an hour late, it took me that long to tie my shoes. Belinda took me to work out with dumbbells. When she was not looking, I ran and hid in the men's room. She sent Lars to find me. Then, as punishment, she put me on the rowing machine -- which I sank.

FRIDAY

I hate that bitch Belinda more than any human being has ever hated any other human being in the history of the world. Stupid, skinny, anaemic little cheerleader. If there was a part of my body I could move without unbearable pain, I would beat her with it. Belinda wanted me to work on my triceps. I don't have any triceps! And if you don't want dents in the floor, don't hand me the M----- f----- barbells or anything that weighs more than a sandwich. The treadmill flung me off and I landed on a health and nutrition teacher. Why couldn't it have been someone softer, like the drama coach or the choir director?

SATURDAY

Belinda left a message on my answering machine in her grating, shrilly voice wondering why I did not show up today. Just hearing her made me want to smash the machine with my planner. However, I lacked the strength to even use the TV remote and ended up catching eleven straight hours of the Weather Channel.

SUNDAY

I'm having the Church van pick me up for services today so I can go and thank GOD that this week is over. I will also pray that next year my wife will choose a gift for me that is fun -- like a root canal or a vasectomy.

Barrack Obama is visiting an Edinburgh hospital. He enters a ward full of patients with no obvious sign of injury or illness. He greets one.

The patient replies:

Fair fa your honest sonsie face,
Great chieftain O the puddin race,
Aboon them a ye take yer place,
Painch, tripe or thairm,
As lang's my airm.

Obama is confused, so he just grins and moves on to the next patient.

The next patient responds:

Some hae meat an canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it,
But we hae meat an we can eat,
So let the Lord be thankit.

The President is even more confused, and his grin now rictus-like, the President moves on to the next patient,

Who immediately begins to chant:

Wee sleekit, cowerin, timorous beasty,
O the panic in thy breasty,
Thou needna start awasae hastie,
Wi bickering brattle

Now seriously troubled, Obama turns to the accompanying doctor and Asks, 'Is this a psychiatric ward?'

'No,' replies the doctor, 'this is the serious Burns unit.'



Dave trying out the new cleaning method of watering the engines: “This new stuff’s great! I could have sworn this was 3 1/2” gauge when I started, maybe I can get it to grow to 7 1/4” by next week.”



It almost feels like summer!!



DIARY DATES 2011

Friday 3 June:	Evening Run & Fish & Chips & Cheesecake (£6pp)
Wednesday 15 June:	Members Playtime Run
Friday 1 July:	Evening Run with Pizza & Salad (£3pp)
Wednesday 20 July:	Members Playtime Run
Friday 5 August:	Evening Run & BBQ (bring your own food & BBQ)
Saturday 6 August:	Visit to Birchley, Biddenden (Drummond Randall) 2pm
Saturday 13 August:	Visit to North London Club
Wednesday 17 August:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday 20 August:	The Peter Roots Family & Friends Day
Saturday 27 August:	Visit to Canvey club
Friday 2 September:	Evening Run & Fish & Chips & Cheesecake (£6pp)
Wednesday 21 September:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday 1 October:	Visit to Beech Hurst Club
Friday 7 October:	Guest speaker – To be arranged
Wednesday 19 October:	Last Members Playtime Run
Sunday 30 October:	Last Public Running Day

Friday Nights start around 7-30 at the Clubhouse, evening runs a bit earlier.

Donation minimum £1 per person for Friday evening meetings, feel free to be more generous. Friday evening meetings are for members and associate members (their families), occasionally for members friends, and for those who intend to join the society.

The AGM is for members only.

Wednesday Playtime Runs now start around 10-30am and generally finish early afternoons.

Events will only alter if an unforeseen situation means change is essential.

The Club's website is at www.maidstonemes.co.uk

Other Events known about so far (not a lot) you may like to attend in 2011:

21-22 May: Southern Fed. Spring Rally then Open Day, Harrow & Wembley SME

4-5 June: Vale of Aylesbury Miniature Railway & Traction Engine Gala

11-12 June: Littlelec at North London Society (Change of dates and venue from last newsletter)

11-12 June: North Wilts Society Annual Rally

11-12 June: Welsh Loco Rally at Cardiff

25th June: Gravesend Open Day

9-10 July: Guildford Rally

23-24 July: Oxford Dreaming Spires Rally

19-21 August: Bristol M.E. Exhibition

2-4 September: Bedford Invitation Rally

10-11 September: Birmingham 2 Day Rally

17-18 September: Southern Fed. Autumn Rally then Open Day, Nottingham SMEE

24-25 September: Llanelli Autumn Rally

8 October: Welling Open Day

14-18 October: Midlands ME Exhibition

9-11 December: ME Exhibition at Sandown

20-22 January 2012: London ME Exhibition, Alexandra Palace, London