

Wirral Model Engineering Society - Memory Lane

As the Society heads towards the fifty year celebrations a look back provides a lot to be proud of and celebrate.

1965

Forty-five years ago the society had moved its meeting place from the Castle Hotel in Chester Street to the Royal Rock Hotel in Rock Ferry. Membership had reached 30.

A joining fee of 2 guineas was introduced. This could be waived if the person had just moved into the area, was from outside the area, a member of another society, or by committee. In June 1965 members paid six pence each for membership cards which were distributed in July.

1975

In January 1975 the founder and chairman, Harry Roberts, gave a talk on the breathalyser in full battle dress. (He was a member of the police force) The talk was well received and very sobering!

In April the secretary had 'flu, a cement mixer was offered to the society and two new brooms were purchased for the track.

In May a talk on LNWR locomotives was only half completed by 10.45 pm when members left for home. The society outing was to the Severn Valley Railway.

Due to the increase of members attending meetings the use of larger rooms was necessary at the Victory Hall.

Not to be outdone, the Chairman had chicken pox in November and the annual dinner cost £3.25. The top table centrepiece was made by Sylvia Johnson.

1985

Members visiting the 1985 ME Exhibition by rail had a long wait due to the main line wires being down.

Facilities at the track were a matter of concern to some members and the building of a club house was raised again. The anti-tip rail gang did their stuff but the shed lock was vandalised and had to be replaced.

Our open weekend enticed over sixty visitors to come and taste our tea and have a run on the track with their locomotives.

October saw a new broom purchased for the steaming bays. November saw the Annual Dinner at the Eagle and Crown, Upton, an enjoyable evening.

1995

9th January 1995 The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting with the news that Mr Ken Chynoweth had been awarded a Silver Medal at the Model Engineer Exhibition. Members were delighted for Ken and congratulated him on his success.

The January committee minutes record that concern was expressed about the Society Locomotive. It was being used and put away uncleaned. Various remedies were proposed. The storage shed required a new lock.

Sadly Mr Ken Senar had stood down as editor of the Society newsletter.

The Society would not be permitted to erect any form of building adjacent to the track. However, to bring the railway extension to the existing buildings would be an acceptable option.

Committee and members met with the Royden Park Rangers to discuss the possibility of an extension to the raised track. It would be necessary to have holes in the existing sandstone walls to accommodate the track route and an embankment on which the track would be located. Parking was mentioned as a possible problem. The station would be sited in the corner of the main field.

It was agreed that WMES would establish which trees would be affected by the planned extension, we would consider parking problems, we would provide drawings of the holes required in the walls and agreed that no work could commence until official approval had been obtained.

The society locomotive had been painted and the boiler tested. A loco log book was envisaged which would provide the society with a record of any work required and hopefully keep the locomotive in good condition.

By May new locks had been fitted but the membership had strongly objected to a refundable deposit system.

In June aspects of Limited Company status were debated by the members. A report on the proposed track extension was before the Council and we were awaiting the results.

In July a meeting was held with the Council representatives and the outcome was that the extension may be supported by the Council. There was no reason why the arrangement of a five year lease for the society should not continue.

By August the prospects of a site in Brimstage were being debated. Subsequently a document was put together as an outline proposal. It was hoped that some firm news would be received before the end of the year.

Some members had located a wooden building which was a cricket pavilion at a very reasonable cost. It was felt that prolonged storage of the building was necessary and the building may prove to be a liability. The project was abandoned.

In October it was agreed that we could not proceed with the Brimstage proposals due to the restrictions placed on traffic access by the Council. WMES were going to return to Gordale Garden Nurseries to see whether the original site proposals were acceptable. There was also the possibility of a track site at Hadlow Road. This was to be investigated.

Meeting venues were discussed and a visit to Irby Cricket Club was arranged. Following the visit the proposal was put to the members. 26 members voted for a move and 4 voted against the move. The Secretary was asked to make the necessary arrangements to move the society meetings in the New Year.

In December it was recorded that the proposals for a Company Limited by Guarantee would be put to the members at the 1996 AGM. Hillbark House had now been sold and this might affect the track. The Gordale site survey was still in progress.

2005

The Society was meeting at the WI, Thornton Hough. January minutes record that the President, Dr D Postlethwaite wished to stand down at the forthcoming AGM.

The raised track had been in use throughout the winter months. The Society had purchased a 5" Gauge battery locomotive 'Jenny'. The ground level track had suffered damage due to falling trees in the January gales. The damage had now been rectified.

A wagon project engaging our young members was ongoing as was the construction of the new steam locomotive for the ground level track.

The Society contributed towards the improvements taking place at the WI in line with the disability discrimination act. The society currently had 54 full members, 38 family and 9 others.

The Open Day had been successful and improvements to the GL turntable were approved as were proposals for signage on the raised track.

The membership fee was agreed at £20; a tree survey had been completed; the society participated in the MMRS Exhibition at Pacific Road. There was a 'tree down' on the raised track. The Santa Specials were held once again and were judged successful.

Tailpiece



Brownie Special Express Photo: Mo Stephen