

NORTHERN ASSOCIATION RALLY
Saturday 9th July 2011, WIRRAL SME

There was no Annual Rally last year but this year's rally made up for it with a very memorable gathering at the magnificent tracksite of the Wirral Model Engineering Society at the tip of the Wirral peninsula.

Situated in mixed woodland in Royden Park the facilities include a partly dual gauge ground level track, extended a few years ago into and twice around a rather attractive flower meadow to give a run of around a kilometre from the three platform station and turntable at the other end of a few hundred metres of twin track though shaded woodland.

The elevated dual gauge track runs entirely in dense woodland a most of it is well out of sight of the well equipped steaming bays.



Adrian Hinchcliffe prepares his ageing but immaculate Maisie which won him the trophy for best 3½" gauge engine.



Mike Barnett drives his NER T2 to secure the trophy for best 5" gauge engine. You may recognise it as LBSC's 'Netta', but Mike's model is built to the prototype. T3 was the three cylinder version.



The cab interior of Mike Barnett's T2 shows off his workmanship nicely.



NAME boiler registrar Alan Reid's much admired Peveril of the Isle of Man Railway missed getting best 5" gauge engine by the narrowest of margins.



Peter Squire drives the host club's Tinkerbelle 'Peter George' round the flower meadow under the watchful eye of club official John Meadows. The Tinkerbelle variant is one of a batch of three built recently by former NAME Treasurer Frank Stephen of the host club.



Russell gets to drive the host club's Roanoke diesel hydraulic, aptly named Royden after the public park the club operates in. I nearly said 'imaginatively named' but that would be unkind because the club were very generous in offering guest drivers the use of their club fleet.



Les gathers the evidence from his rocket propelled chair as John eases Royden off the turntable. The Leyland mob were much in evidence this weekend and were made very welcome, as were all the visitors.



Les Buckley keeps an eye on the magnificent Britannia 'Black Prince', which won builder Tony Bickerstaff the trophy for best 7¼" gauge engine. This engine gets around a bit and will be familiar to many on the 7¼" gauge circuits.



Bob Leigh prepares to leave platform one with this rather nice 7¼" gauge GWR Dart, built by Peter Corley.



Club loco 'Peter George' waits in platform three with Peter Squire at the helm. The club loco is named after a former member who was very much involved in the construction of the original ground level track here.



Club chairman Alan Banks gives Adrian a few friendly words of advice.



Northern Association chairman Frank Cooper got to cut the cake ready for the club's 50th Anniversary celebrations the following day. Sadly the gannets got to work immediately and we understand that none of the cake survived overnight to see the club's birthday.