

Leicester Rally, 24th July



1. The first picture captures the essence of the NAME Rally hosted by Leicester Society of Model and Experimental Engineers at their Abbey Park track on 24th July: **very wet!** Here we see Robbie Burns on the right with his Martin Evans 2-6-2 tank engine 'William' doubled up to 7½" gauge. It took Robbie 11 years to build the engine and he called it 'Buffalo Bill' in recognition of its roots, though much has been changed in the detail design. An excellent performer, Robbie reckons it will pull four of the club's passenger truck, not bad for a standard gauge prototype.



2. Next we see Dick Durrant with his Wren 'Jonathan' blowing down amid clouds of steam. Dick finished the engine last July after 15 years in the making. A very attractive model, beautifully finished, and a good runner. Designed by Ken Swan, the model is a very close copy of the Kerr Stuart contractors' locomotives of the same class name built in the twenties for duties which would be carried out today by dumper trucks and earth movers. They generally hauled rakes of jubilee tippers over pre-fabricated track sections on large construction contracts. There are thought to be three full size Wrens in preservation today, and a couple more, non-runners, in the Falklands



3. Finally, Graham Windram's Bagnall 'B A Riley' stands forlorn in the steaming bays in the rain. This engine was built by the late Ron Gilbert and first steamed in 1993. Why do Bagnalls always seem to have such big tanks?

These were all 7½" gauge engines. There were one or two brave souls going round the elevated track with smaller engines as well, but most of the visitors were in the clubhouse keeping out of the wet and tucking into the heaps of food laid on by the ladies. There were several trailers and quite a few cars no doubt carrying engines which would have emerged had the sun thought fit to show his face, but the drizzle of late morning developed into a steady downpour by mid-afternoon, and the visitors started drifting away, boots and trailers unopened. Full marks for effort, and many thanks to the club for their hospitality, but Leicester really do need to get a grip on the weather!