

Northern Association of Model Engineers

News Bulletin for club notice boards Autumn 2010

News on the web

Members will remember that we discontinued our twice-yearly newsletter a few years ago in favour of the internet, which is available to anyone with access to a public library or an internet connection. The site is still at www.normodeng.org.uk and this bulletin is posted there as well as on your clubhouse notice board.

Delegates Meeting 30th October 2010

This was held once again at Ockbrook near Derby after a light buffet lunch, some delegates having traveled considerable distances to attend. Minutes of the meeting are sent to your club secretaries and delegates but for reasons of confidentiality we do not publish them here or on the website, just your editor's notes below.

After the opening formalities chairman Frank Cooper reported on applications for membership of the Association, of which there were three, from Huddersfield SMEE, Wakefield SME, and the Model Railway Society, which operates ½ mile of 10¼" gauge track.

Maureen Stephen, seemingly unable to escape from her former role as treasurer, reported that the Association's finances were now looking much healthier, thanks to the prompt repayment of items due. Applications for new loans were received from Scottish Model Engineering Trust to extend their track, and from North Wales MES towards the cost of removal of facilities from their old site to a new green field site in Llandudno. In response to a question from the floor regarding new members applying for loans before the ink was dry on their application, it was agreed that, in deciding loans, delegates would be told how long the applicant had been a member. It was not considered desirable, as someone suggested, to require that new members should establish a track record before accessing the loan facility, however it was re-affirmed that it would be the prerogative of the delegates' meeting, not the officers, to decide on the matter of loans, and that officers should only approve loans in cases of dire emergency. Richrd Guthrie of Rochdale was sworn in as the new treasurer

Insurance broker Tony Wood gave his report on the insurance situation, but at Tony's request we do not report this in the

bulletin. However he reminded delegates that in the event of an accident a written report including witness statements should be made at the time to assist in the processing of any claim which may arise.

On legislative issues, it seems that we can now take a more relaxed approach to RIDDOR, the authorities having been made aware of the rather large volume of paperwork they would have to contend with if every incident were reported, as previously advised. The new HSE advice is to make a RIDDOR return only if someone is hospitalized as a result of an incident. Likewise on the protection of children and vulnerable persons; it seems that the new government has put the recently formed quango the Independent Safeguarding Authority firmly on the back burner. We should continue to behave responsibly of course, but with less of the looming imperatives to worry about.

The chairman mentioned that he is on the circulation for railway accident reports and felt that these would make instructive reading for club members; they may be seen at www.raib.gov.uk.

The Model Engineer of the Year award was made at two locations this year, the first being at the NRM as usual, and the second at the recipient's local club at Avondale. The NRM have 350 yards of 7¼" gauge track on their site and are keen to have it used more than it is. They will offer our members a number of dates during 2011 when members will be able to run by arrangement; those interested should approach our chairman Frank Cooper in the first instance. The first such occasion will be the last weekend in February.

The lack of both the Narrow Gauge Efficiency Competition and a Rally this year seems to have pricked a few consciences and we now have offers for both events for the next three years! In 2011 the Narrow gauge event will be held at North Staffordshire, also celebrating its 75th anniversary, date to be announced, and the Rally at the Wirral, who also celebrate their Golden Jubilee, on 19th July. Congratulations to both clubs!

The chairman reported on the exhibitions supported in 2010: Harrogate, manned by Frank and Mo, Leamington by chairman and hon sec, and confirmed that we would be at Alexandra Palace in February, with

Nigel and Betty in attendance.

On boiler issues, registrar Alan Reid repeated his oft-rehearsed plea that paperwork should be completed legibly, and in a timely manner. Nigel reported on the boiler test seminar at the Fosse attended by 177 boiler inspectors including many from the Southern Federation. It was considered a resounding success, and will be repeated in future years, but with attendance limited to 40 or 50 on any one occasion so as to make the demonstrations more accessible to attendees.

Frank Stephen tabled a paper regarding the Boiler Test Group of the old British Model Engineering Liaison Group, now defunct, and suggested that the scope of the Boiler Test Group be expanded to cover the whole range of issues relating to the hobby, as previously covered by the BMELG. Your editor suggested reincarnating the BMELG, but it was felt that this had become rather bloated and that the much smaller boiler group would be more effective if it could avoid the same fate. Despite the short notice, Frank's proposal was adopted, and the groups next task will be to make the paperwork more fully compliant with the various statutory regulations.

Several people have suggested that it would be useful to have more reference sources on our website, including HSG216, the HSE guidance on the operation of miniature railways. Your editor asked if we could obtain a permission under the copyright on HSG216 to do this, but the chairman stated that the authorities had previously refused to give this, saying responsibility had passed from the HSE to the Office of the Rail Regulator and that neither had any intention of revisiting HSG216 in the foreseeable future.

The AGM and next delegates' meeting will be held on 9th April 2011, and the autumn delegates' meeting on 22nd October 2011. (My, we are getting organized!) On a request from the floor, future meetings will start at 1.30 following a light buffet lunch at 12.45.

The meeting closed at 5.30