

Northern Association of Model Engineers

News Bulletin for club notice boards Spring 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.

AGM and Delegates Meetings 10th April 2010

These were held once again at Ockbrook near Derby after a light buffet lunch, some delegates having travelled considerable distances to attend. Minutes of the meetings are sent to your club secretaries and delegates but for reasons of confidentiality we do not publish them here or on the website, just the heavily edited summary below.

The AGM started with the usual formalities followed by the officers' reports of the year just gone. Highlights from these included **chairman Frank Cooper's review**, noting the continuing rise in membership and increasing representation at exhibitions, lack of awareness of club members of the Northern Association's role, indeed very existence (not a new problem, Ed), and difficulties in responding appropriately to the ever changing legislation on the protection of vulnerable persons. **Hon Sec Alan Budd** then filled in some of the detail in his own take of the year. **Treasurer Maureen Stephen** circulated the accounts for the year, duly audited and invited questions of which there were few; one delegate enquired about the repayment of loans, and the accounts were duly voted through. Boiler **registrar Alan Reid** reported figures for boilers in service (1701) and on the register (6519) and asked that any commercially made traction engine boiler ONLY should **not** now be renumbered in accordance with the standard NAME format but should retain its makers identifier.

The AGM is the time for the appointment of officers and most of the officers continue in office but Maureen wished to stand down as treasurer after serving in several capacities for a good number of years. No replacement was forthcoming and it was agreed that the chairman and secretary would take on this work on a temporary basis. The positions of insurance broker, internal and external auditors will continue unchanged. A vote of thanks to Maureen for her services over the years was proposed and carried.

The **Delegates' Meeting** followed immediately after the AGM and again we report just on issues relevant to the

membership at large.

It seems that our **loan facility** has been a victim of its own success following efforts to promote it and a change in the procedure for authorising loans, and is now oversubscribed. Three current applicants for loans (Cardiff, Northampton and Evergreens) were invited to give a short presentation on their respective projects and a debate then ensued as to how the available funds should be distributed. That settled, amicably, your editor reminded delegates of the Heritage Lottery Awards for All scheme as a useful source of funds, but it seemed that some who had looked at this had had some difficulty ticking the boxes required by the adjudicators. A great shame, since like the Northern until recently, the money is there burning holes in their pockets! Delegates were reminded that loan repayments as well as subscriptions should be paid on time, some are now 12 months overdue and this is not acceptable. Subs to be paid by the AGM.

Our **insurance broker Tony Wood** reported on the insurance situation, which is generally satisfactory, but asked that in the unfortunate event of an incident witness statements should be taken immediately to give our insurers the best chance in handling any claim that might arise. In answer to questions from the floor he confirmed that the insurance policy did not exclude cover for drivers with medical disabilities and that the common sense approach should be used regarding **driver capability**; it is not the case that people barred from driving a car on medical grounds should automatically be barred from driving a model locomotive. He confirmed that there had been no insurance claims arising from medical incapacity to drive. (No doubt the disability rights movement would have something to say on this these days! Ed)

Brian Potts of Sheffield reported on experiments conducted on **skid brakes**, which in common with **transmission brakes** are frowned upon under HSG216 (para 214), and a lively discussion followed, including the observation that HSG 216 was advisory, not mandatory, so if a proper risk assessment has been carried out there should be no problem. (Skid brakes, though banned on full size railways, were found in the experiments to be significantly more effective than wheel brakes, but did have a tendency to derail the vehicle; clearly a question of getting the design right)

Moving to legislation, Alan Budd, reviewed changes in the law on the

Protection of Vulnerable Groups. The legislation is mainly concerned with those in a caring or educational role, but it is highly complex and its effect on our activities depends heavily on the circumstances of each club, and clubs must therefore make their own judgement as to how it affects them. There is now an **Independent Safeguarding Authority** (presumably to take the workload off the police) to do the checks, which may be free for volunteers. The annual **Risk Assessment** should include any operational issues arising during the year, such as driver capability and changed practices.

Offers to host the **Narrow Gauge Efficiency competition** and the **Annual Rally** were not forthcoming, therefore these events will not be held this year, sadly.

The chairman announced the winner of the **Young Model Engineer of the Year** award and runner up, their names to be published later. The awards will take place once more at the National Railway Museum. Bradford delegate Jim Jennings noted that the bar on friends attending the presentation was a source of some disappointment for award recipients and asked if this could be relaxed. The chairman explained that this constraint came from the NRM who find it difficult to supervise more than a small number of people in the 'behind the scenes' tour included in the award ceremony. A proposal to move the award ceremony to one of the exhibitions for example will be looked at. (Interesting to note that the NRM joined the Northern Association a few years ago having seen our website!)

The Association will be represented as ever at the **major exhibitions** this year, including Harrogate, Leamington Spa, Alexandra Palace, and Shepton Mallet.

On **boiler matters**, Nigel Thompson of the NAME boiler committee reported on **the national boiler seminar** to be held at Leamington Spa hosted by Tee Publishing. The Southern Federation and its clubs will participate in this as well as the Northern, and 205 delegates have been registered so far including 46 from the Southern Fed. Minutes of a recent BMELG boiler committee meeting will be put on the website. There is no further progress regarding a design code for boilers, but the Urmston delegate drew attention to colleague Neil Counsell's set of sample calculations for two types of boiler which it was felt might serve as a model.

The meeting closed about 5.30pm.