

# NORTHERN ASSOCIATION RALLY 2012

Northampton 29<sup>th</sup> June - 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY

This year's rally was held at the Northampton Society of Model Engineers during a spell of the most unsettled weather ever experienced during an English summer. A few days previously giant hailstones were remodelling the roofs of cars in nearby Leicester and there was extensive flooding in many parts of the country, including Northampton's own tracksite not too long ago. The rally was scheduled to run over three days from Friday 29th June to Sunday 2nd July. Friday was fairly quiet but Saturday saw the best turnout we have seen at a Northern Rally in many years, and the weather, amazingly, was dry all day despite a rather indifferent forecast. Your editor attended on the Saturday.

The club track site is on a narrow strip of land along the northern edge of Delapre Park, a mile or so to the south of the city. It accommodates a sizeable loop of elevated track with a tunnel, and a good length of ground level track laid to 5" and 7¼" gauge and now configured as a folded 'out and return' with a turning loop near the station. In recent years both tracks have been extended to the full extent of the available space and an attractive woodland trail has been laid down the centre with low profile fencing so that the public can wander around the site in safety. The trail ends at a picnic area where families can eat their sandwiches as they watch the trains go by. The biggest improvement has been to the ground level track which now makes four passes down the full length of the site for each circuit, with a turning loop at the mid point near the station, and a turntable and passing loop at the 'loose ends'.

There were three trophies to be won, one for each gauge. For some perverse reason the biggest trophy was given for the best engine in the smallest gauge, 3½", and the smallest trophy for the best in 7¼" gauge! Two members of the host club were delegated to do the judging, not an easy task with so many excellent models there. First up was the fairly miniscule trophy for the best big engine, 7¼" gauge, and this went to the Highlander driven by young Charlie Waumsley, recently rebuilt by his granddad Michael Fox. Next was the reasonably sized (with a nod to Clarkson) 5" gauge trophy, awarded to Trefor Milns for his unusual and attractive South African Railways 4-4-0 'Joan'. The smart appearance of this engine belies it's antiquity being built in South Africa nearly forty years ago. Bernard Clark of the host club walked away with the rather large pot for best 3½" gauge engine, his beautifully detailed Ivatt Mogul. The Mogul was the only 3½" gauge entry and Bernard would have been happier with a bit of competition. He need not have worried; the Mogul would almost certainly have won anyway having earned Bernard many awards over the years. He started building it using outline drawings and photographs, and using castings intended for other models, long before the model was put on the market commercially by Blackgates. We understand that Bernard plans to grow cucumbers in the pot (sorry chairman, only joking!).

Next after the prize giving was the cutting of the cake, fast becoming a tradition of Northern Association Rallies. This magnificent creation of a local lady bore the logos of both the host club and the Northern Association, beautifully executed, with a lanyard trimming around the periphery and plenty of thick icing and marzipan. The somewhat less challenging task of cutting it was performed by NAME chairman Frank Cooper with the help of the club's ladies.

All in all an excellent event, greatly enjoyed by your editor, who drove 160 miles to be there, and we're sure by everyone else. The weather did us proud despite the forecaster's pessimistic forebodings, and the rain didn't start till we were well on our way home.



*Yardmaster Steve traverses Graham Gain's 4-4-2 Tilbury Tank into the steaming bays*



*The station approaches showing the up and down lines of the extended GL track*





*The club ladies did an excellent job stoking the inner man*



*Trefor Milne's very photogenic S.A.R 4-4-0 'Joan'*





*Steaming bays and MPD behind the station*



*Midland Spinner built by Cyril Ewing, now owned by son David*





*Mike Barnett prepares to take his N.E.R. T2, last year's winner, round the elevated track*



*Heading for the outback on the much extended lines*





*Nigel Thompson's LNWR Class 'D', currently being serialised by Nigel in EIM*



*Bernard Clark's nicely detailed Ivatt Mogul (see text)*





Charlie Waumsley and his rather nice Highlander



*The trophies and cake*