

2017 Narrow Gauge LEC - Oswestry & North Shropshire

This year NGLEC was held at our track on the 20th 21st May 2017 and as always was pleasing to see competitors from the local club taking part. The competition is regarded as a fun event where taking part is more important than winning. OK winning does give you some bragging rights, but who cares. Well done to all three members for taking part and depending where the event is held in 2018 you have the experience to do it again, no pressure.

A total of ten locomotives entered the competition this year, with four taking part on the Saturday and the remaining six on the Sunday. Due to the torrential rain on Saturday morning the first run was delayed until the afternoon.



Matthew Higgins and Fred Newall observer

Photo S Davies

The first locomotive on the track was from the home club with Matthew Higgins driving a newly completed Sweet Pea, Hero owned by Dave Dilnot. The run started well with a reasonable load of 9 slate wagons but soon developed problems getting water to the boiler and a number of slate wagons were removed.



Roger Pugh and Fred Newall observer

Photo S Davies

The next locomotive was again from the home club with Roger Pugh driving Oswald the work horse of the Oswestry & North Shropshire MES club. This was Roger's first attempt in the competition and started off well with a load of 6 slate wagons.



Steve Milns and Peter Greenhulgh observer

Photo S Davies

The third locomotive, again from the home club was driven by its owner Steve Milns and took off with a load of 22 slate wagons. Charles is a 5" gauge Hunslet and had a large appetite for the coal, but nevertheless completed the half hour run well and come in fourth overall in the competition.



Trefor Milns and Peter Greenhulgh observer

Photo S Davies

The last locomotive of the day was driven and owned by Trefor Milns from Derby SMEE and with brotherly love took his narrow gauge locomotive of the South African Railway to the top of the leader board on the Saturday. Lawley took off with a load of 13 slate waons and completed the task on about half the coal rate of the Hunslet. This locomotive being a past winner of the competition was entered in the category for past winners. With all locomotives for the Saturday roster finished some of the locomotives continued in steam into the evening while all members and friends sat down for a well-earned supper of fish and chips.

On Sunday with the cloud base now moved on, it was time for the last six to step up to the plate.



Mike Barnet and Fred Newall observer

Photo S Davies

The first locomotive on the Sunday was a 5" gauge K1 type Garrett owned and driven by Mike Barnet from the North Staff MES. Mike is not new to the competition having competed many times before and has won the NGLEC trophy with different locomotives in the past. This year with his K1, Mike started off with 12 slate wagons of his choice and finished second overall winning the Narrow Gauge Trophy.



Marcus Peel and Peter Greenhulgh observer

Photo S Davies

The second locomotive on the Sunday was the first of the 3½" gauge locomotives; Conway owned and driven by Marcus Peel from Southport MES. Marcus has a wealth of experience in this competition and has won the 3½" gauge trophy on more than one occasion. Marcus started with 8 slate wagons but had difficulty with slipping on the track and reduced his load. He came in eighth overall in the competition.



Alan Reid and Fred Newall observer

Photo S Davies

The third locomotive was again a regular competitor at the narrow gauge event. Alan Reid brought his Sweet Pea along from the Fylde SME and started with 15 slate wagons. On completing a steady run Alan came in sixth overall.



Tim Hines and Peter Greenhulgh observer

Photo S Davies

The fourth locomotive on the Sunday was a 3½" gauge Alco, Mountaineer owned by Norman Tuck of the Wrexham DMES, driven by Tim Hines. This was the first time for Tim to entered the Narrow Gauge LEC and opted to take 10 slate wagons, the locomotive ran very well with his chosen load and returned with a creditable result. Tim was awarded the best 3½" gauge trophy for his effort.



Nigel Thompson and Fred Newall observer

Photo S Davies

The fifth locomotive to run on Sunday was entered by Nigel Thompson; this was Conway, another 3½" gauge stalwart of the competition. Betty, driven by Nigel from the Erewash Valley MES took 2 slate wagons and completed the allocated task in 29 minutes, gaining second in his category.



Marcus Peel and Peter Greenhulgh observer

Photo S Davies

The sixth and last locomotive to run on the Sunday was a 5" gauge Polly and was driven by Marcus Peel of the Southport Model Engineering Society. On this occasion Marcus accepted the challenge and assembled a rake of 15 slate wagons. He completed his run in 27.5 minutes, resulting in fifth overall.

On the Sunday visiting members from other Societies came to the Show Ground including Frank Cooper the Chairman of the Northern Association of Model Engineers and Alan Budd the Secretary. John Arrowsmith a represented the Engineering in Miniature magazine published by Warner Publications who again this year supported the event with a subscription for the winner in each category.

Prior to handing out the prizes to the competitors the Chairman of Oswestry & North Shropshire MES, Fred Newall thanked all those who had entered the competition and given of their time over the two days of the event. He also thanked members of the 'Tuesday Gang' who had spent hours on improving the track and drinking tea and coffee!



Mike Barnett with the NGLLEC trophy

Photo S Davies

Frank Cooper Chairman of NAME presented the Narrow Gauge LEC trophy to Mike Barnett who drove a K1 Garrett: the Past Winners Trophy to Trefor Milns driving his SAR Lawley and the trophy for the best 3½" gauge locomotive to Norman Tuck. A presentation of cheques to the winners was also made by NAME and all competitors received a slate coaster as a memento of the event.