

7¼ in. Gauge Society visit Malden

by Bob Jones

SUNDAY, 17 October, was the day that the M.& D.S.M.E were hosts to the 7¼ in. gauge Society. This has now become an annual event, and is always eagerly awaited by everyone. The Malden Society has one of the finest ground level 7¼ in. gauge tracks in the country. It is basically a large oval with a total track length of approximately ¾ mile.

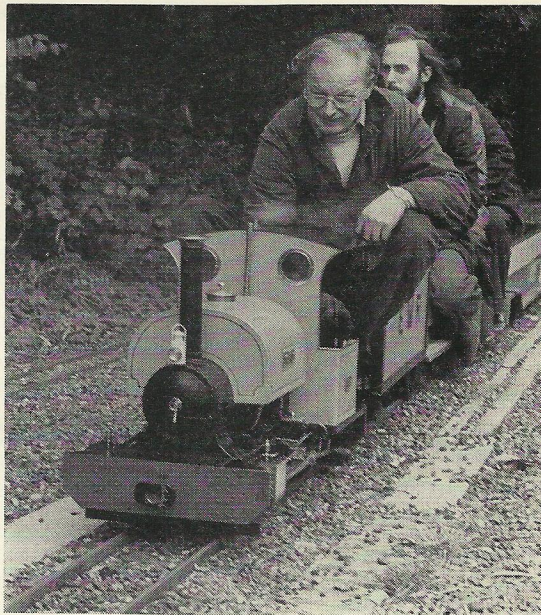
Several 7¼ in gauge Society members, coming from fairly far afield, began arriving on the Saturday afternoon. For most, by the time they had unloaded their locos and put them in the shed it was too late to think of steaming a loco. However, Jim Haylock from Caterham decided to run his narrow gauge type petrol loco *Triumph*. It is powered by a 50 cc. moped engine and the loco is quite unusual as one can sit inside with a roof over one's head. In the evening, after a very enjoyable meal of fish and chips, there was a film and slide show held in the clubhouse which lasted until the early hours.

Sunday turned out a nice bright day. Everyone was up early despite the previous late night (the extra hour gained by putting the clocks back came in most useful).

Geoff Oughton's *Romulus*, a 0-4-0 N.G. well-tank fitted with Hackworth valve gear, was the first loco to be steamed. *Romulus* is a very attractive freelance loco designed by Roger Marsh from Hinckley. Geoff has made a very neat job of *Romulus*, and it looks just right. An item of great interest is the steam-driven water pump which can be set to work as slow as a full-size pump.

Roger Marsh brought his Hayward type loco *Tinkerbelle*. This is always a great favourite wherever it appears, and it is fitted with Hayward valve gear and a marine-type boiler. Jim Haylock had brought his rake of recently completed N.G. coaches and these formed the train behind *Tinkerbelle*, a sight I am sure the late Sir Arthur Hayward would have loved to have seen.

Remus, the sister loco to *Romulus*, owned by Doug. Kempton and built jointly by R. Marsh and G. Oughton, arrived about 10 a.m. This was a pleasant surprise as we had heard on Saturday that it was doubtful if Doug. could come, but he was soon un-



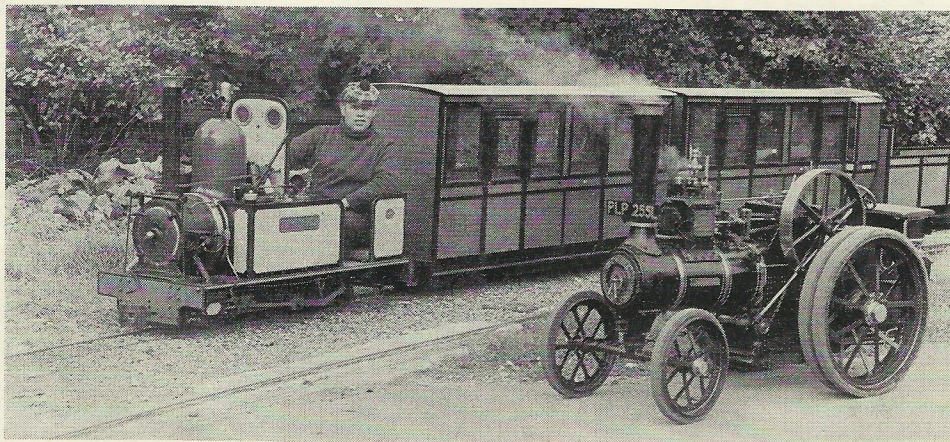
John Drury driving his saddle tank "Topsy".

loaded and in steam enjoying the lengthy run and a different track layout to that which he is used to.

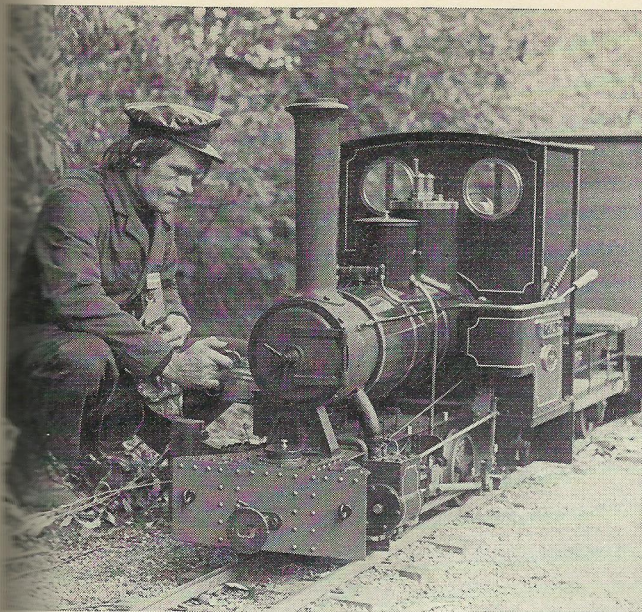
John Drury from Coventry brought his delightful 0-4-0 saddle tank *Topsy*; this is painted in a very attractive yellow. *Topsy* has Hayward valve gear and a marine type boiler. John is well-known in the Midlands for the number of excellent models he has built in the past, one of which is a fine 3 in. scale Burrell traction engine.

One of the smallest locos on the ground level track was *Rosabell*, built by David Walters from Kenilworth. *Rosabell* is a 0-4-0 saddle tank with inside valve gear. She is David's first attempt at loco building and a real credit to him. I have often seen *Rosabell* in action and shall never cease to be amazed at the loads she can handle. David left her in the very capable hands of Ken Blackham for most of the day while he watched from the line side for a change.

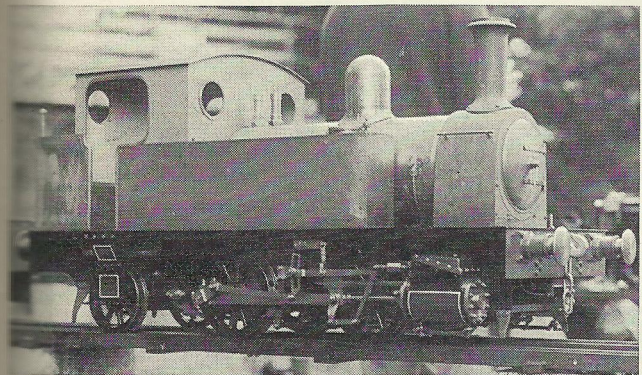
No 7¼ in. gauge meeting these days would be complete without one of Ken Swan's "Bridgets". George



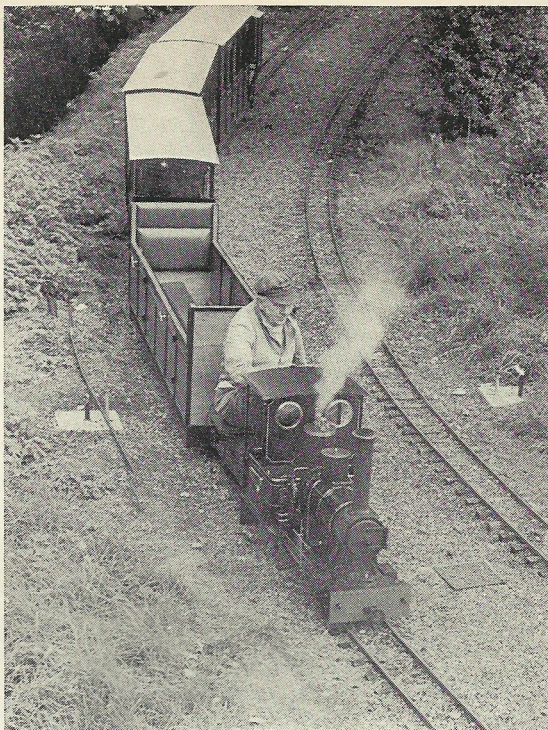
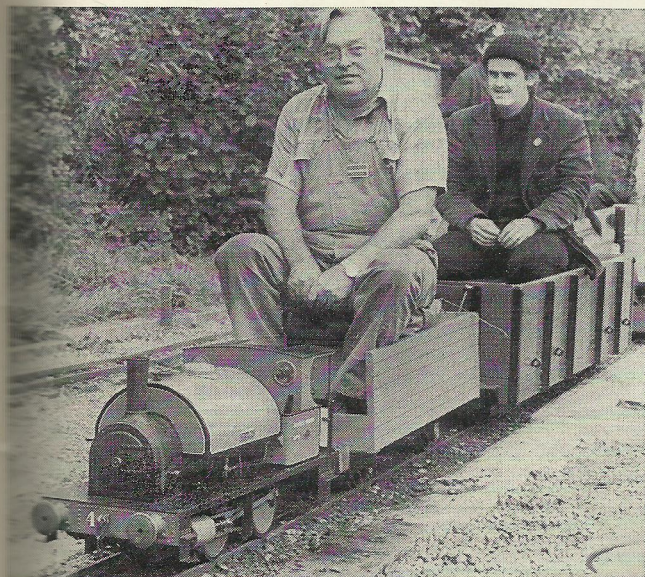
"Tinkerbelle" by Roger Marsh with train of coaches by Jim Haylock. In foreground is the 4½ in. scale Burrell by J. G. Clarke.



Geoff. Oughton with his "Romulus".



George Smith's delightful "Brigette".
Below: Ken Blackham driving David Walter's saddle tank "Rosabell".



George Barlow driving "Romulus" built by Geoff. Oughton.

Smith from Leatherhead has recently finished a fine example of one of these locos and it runs as well as it looks. George ran on the raised $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. track that forms part of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. and 5 in. gauge track. George is an old hand at $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. loco building; he has built in the past an N class S.R. "Mogul" and a S.R. "Schools" class.

We were very pleased to welcome several well-known visitors to the track in the course of the day, including Dr. Brian Rogers, Founder Chairman of the $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. gauge Society, George Barlow and Tony Crowhurst from the R.H. & D.R., and many others who have a great interest in small railways.

John Limming ran his large and very powerful petrol-electric locomotive which is based on a Santa Fe type diesel. Last year John replaced the original engine with a Fiat 850 cc. engine, and now the loco can pull almost anything one can put behind it. This is very useful on Malden's busy track days held on the first Sunday of every month from Easter till October.

A very fine "Royal Scot" No. 6155 *The Lancer* and owned by Bill Brown joined the many locos already running. *The Lancer* is one of Malden's regular locos and is in use every track day. Bill tells me he estimates that his loco travels approximately 450 miles a year. I think it is a great credit to him and his helpers that *The Lancer* runs and looks better than ever.

In the siding next to the station an American N.Y.C. & H.R.R.R. 4-4-0 was on display although not in steam, together with a chassis for a petrol loco in the course of construction. Last but not least, a $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. scale "Burrell" traction engine was in steam. A few visitors tried their hand at driving it up and down the club driveway. The engine was built by J. G. S. Clarke from Denbigh and is owned by Bob Jones.

A most enjoyable day was had by all. The $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. gauge Society wish to thank the members of Malden & D.S.M.E. for making such a day possible, also many thanks to the canteen ladies for providing the endless cups of tea.

Anyone wishing to join the $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. gauge Society should contact the Secretary, David Walters, 16 Station Road, Kenilworth, Warwicks. CV8 1JJ.