



# OFFCUTS



Newsletter of the Bromsgrove Society  
of Model Engineers

Edition 64

September 2010

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## Home and Away

Our members have been making the most of the summer weather here at the Club and around the country. A good time was had by all. See inside for photos. Also inside, Steve Benbow's final part of "THE WORKS"

### Committee Matters

#### Annual General Meeting

**The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting** will be held on Wed. 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010, starting at 7.30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Active Learning Centre, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove. As usual, please park in the museum car park on that evening.

All committee posts fall vacant at the 2010 A.G.M. so why not consider joining the committee and giving your ideas and input to the way your club is run. All committee nominations or proposals for discussion at the meeting should reach the secretary by 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Nomination forms are on the notice board in the clubhouse.

At the 2010 A.G.M. the committee will propose two alterations to the BSME Rules of Membership. The proposals should be read with reference to the October 2008 edition of the rules.

### Alteration 1.

To include an ordinary member's grandchildren within the category of Associate Member, thus allowing them to take part in our activities at the track site without the need to be signed in as a visitor. It is proposed to alter rule 2.2. as below.

#### 2.2. Associate Member

An ordinary member's partner and/or children and/or grandchildren, shall be entitled to the facilities of membership, notwithstanding any exceptions made in the Rules of Membership and Bye-laws. Associate membership shall be automatic and not be liable to any joining fee or annual subscription.

### Alteration 2

Rule 5.4. says that the accounts of the Society shall be audited by an independent auditor approved by the General Committee. Historically we have been fortunate to find a suitable person from outside the society to carry out this task free of charge. Unfortunately our present auditor is no longer able to look at our accounts and we have been unable to find anyone else outside the society to do it free of charge. However, we do have experienced people within the society whom the committee would like to approve to audit the accounts.

It is proposed to alter rule 5.4. as below to make clear that it is acceptable for a member of the society to act as auditor.

5.4. The accounts of the Society shall be audited by a person/persons independent of the Treasurer and approved by the General Committee and a certificate of audit shall be produced when the Balance Sheet is presented at the Annual General Meeting. The General Committee may approve an auditor/auditors from outside or within the Society.

### **Subscriptions.**

**In view of the steadily increasing cost** of items such as insurance, petrol, electricity etc., the committee has decided that for 2010/11 an increase of £2 to £44 per year would be prudent.

John Spooner  
Secretary

**Earlier in the year** the committee decided that a good tidy up of our site was required and work on this has been proceeding. The rubbish behind the clubhouse has been cleared, the tool shed has been sorted through and much junk disposed of and currently the bonfire/rubbish heap by the water wheel is being tackled.

In future will all members please co-operate in keeping the site tidy by removing any building waste, timber, plastic bags or broken items etc.

Please do not bring unwanted items from home before asking a committee member if they are actually useful to the Club.

All grass cuttings, plant material and tree prunings should be deposited in the new area that has been established between the hedge and the farmer's field in the corner beyond signal 5.

## Club nights

**The August club night**, with invited guests the Kidderminster Choir, was a very damp affair with only two visitors turning up which was very understandable given the appalling weather. John Pagett bravely ran his loco and Jim tried out his Gauge 1 diesel which looked fine with bright headlights cutting through the rain.

## August GTG.



Here is John Hurdley with his loco EUROPA at speed during the August GTG.

photo Brian Mould

**From now on all club nights** will be held in the club house on the last Wednesday of the month. There is no meeting in December and the AGM is in the ALC as mentioned above.



photo Geoff Leigh

Brian, Jim and Alan admiring visiting loco 'Chevallier' at Llanfair Cereinion on Saturday, 4th September. Don W, Mike, Keith, Graham C, Steve and Geoff were also there.

## Noticeboard

**Please welcome** new member Terry Groutage. (He's tall)

**We welcome Club** members' visitors to our site. However, the member inviting guests must be available to welcome them, enter the names in the visitor book and issue visitor badges. The member must explain the hazards on the site and emphasize that they are not allowed access to the museum by the connecting gate. The member must look after his visitors while they are on site.

**You may have noticed** that the museum has altered its car park entrance. Because of this members are advised to exit the site via the museum car park during museum opening hours.

**If you have an accident**, however small, it is worth recording it in the Accident Book for your own protection. Small injuries can sometimes have more serious consequences. Avoncroft have a first-aider who we can call on when needed.

**Dave Grainger tells me** he has some steam oil for sale at half the shop price for £4.50/litre. It's grade 460C and you can contact him on 07767 644646.

## Gentle Reminders

**Smoking Members** are reminded that smoking is forbidden in public areas and on the train when the public are present on our track. It's not on in front of children.

**Steam Engine Driving** Members are reminded to use their spark arresters when using club carriages. The plastic seats are being ruined by lots of burn holes.



Plenty going on on the Garden Railway at the September G-T-G.

Graham and Geoff running their 'Projects' at the North London club on Wednesday, 7th July. Also there were Keith, Brian M and Martin. The barbecue there is always good and plentiful.



**The raised track sleepers** have now all been treated with a horrible mixture of oily substances - a long, tedious job. Our thanks to Jim, Laurie, Reg and others.

**The oil on the track problem** appears to have gone away following the chairman's threat of excommunication of the culprit. However, please continue to be vigilant.

## "The Works" Reminiscences from Longbridge by Steve Benbow

### Chapter 3 "Going for Bust"

The late 60's and 70's

**By the end of the sixties** and the start of the seventies, an ambitious programme of clever but frequently flawed new models had brought the mighty company to its knees. Against this background, I took my first job in the Quality Engineering Centre. A small band of engineers and technicians set out to try and ameliorate at least some of the problems.

It was a “David and Goliath” situation! Production treated us as a joke and Inspection with outright hostility. These two sides fought one another constantly and in retrospect it was like putting a third boxer into the ring. I remember sample inspections. From a vast bin of thousands of components, you checked a small number, wrote a report and sent it off into the vast bowels of the organisation. It was incredibly difficult to change anything. Rather like a government trying to change the Civil Service! With huge production volumes (nearly a million vehicles a year at one point) the cutting of costs was a priority. Visits to suppliers in rusty factories in canal side Smethwick, churning out some vital little component would often reveal a woeful lack of quality but many of these little firms generated minor miracles within very tight costings. It was all a complex balancing act, with quality frequently compromised.

I recall having days without any work, sitting reading to pass the time but still on full salary, of course. This went on throughout the factory. Every service was on site at the time and if there was nothing to be done, you passed the time as best you could while your pay continued to go in.

My second posting was in the Engine Development department in Lickey Road. Lots of fun with A, E (the Maxi engine) and O series engines. Some dabbling with rotary engines as well. The venerable A series was little trouble and had a production run of over 40 years in the end. If the E series had been around just a little bit longer it would have been a good all rounder, simple, lively and reliable. Issigonis wanted it short enough for the radiator to go on the end of the six cylinder version, in the 2200 but in the end it couldn't be done. The radiator ended up at the front and the “six”, in particular, ended up with constant reliability problems. The O series turned out quite well in the end.



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I recall the impact of demarcation in that department. Anything remotely electrical had to be done by an electrician, plumbing by a pipe fitter etc. Sometimes you waited days for them to arrive. It secured jobs but was

ultimately inefficient and costly. This happened everywhere and was one of the many things that contributed to large, organisation wide, losses.

Finally, I ended up as a finishing line production foreman in Car Assembly Building 1. Operating under great pressure, you endeavored to cope with all the faults and problems generated throughout the complex process of the cars' production. I recall the missing wheel trims on one side of the Minis. The man responsible had tended to cut his finger on the trims and refused to fit them so the finishing foreman had to do the job. Senior management were often notable by their absence. They “Fiddled while Rome Burned”. (Quite literally on occasions!). You never know, if that man had done his job - the firm might still be there. After all, survival is all about horse shoe nails and winning battles isn't it?

**The old shed** has finally had the chop! - literally. See the photos in the clubhouse. Here is the smart new shed that replaces it. Our thanks to everyone who helped in any way.



photo Geoff Leigh

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