



Part of the attractive 300 ft SM32 layout.

Federation of Model Engineering Societies Rally

Mike Chrisp reports from Sutton Coldfield on this year's Federation rally.



Hosted by members of Sutton Coldfield MES Ltd on their attractive Balleney Green site at Little Hay, Saturday's records of this year's FMES Autumn Rally, held 3rd - 4th September reveal a total of 23 visitors and 13 locomotives. More would have been welcome but those of us there enjoyed an excellent day and felt sorry for absentees. We are very grateful for the efforts of SCMES members and friends who worked hard beforehand to ensure everything was ready and spent time during the event looking after their visitors.

The Little Hay site boasts a ground level track approximately ½ mile long for 7¼ and 5 inch gauge locomotives and rolling stock, a 480 ft 5, 3½ and 2½ inch gauge raised track and a very attractively landscaped 300 ft SM32 layout.

Saturday's proceedings included the annual competition for the Australian Association of Live Steamers Trophy awarded to the best working steam locomotive at the event modelled on a Commonwealth prototype in any gauge from 2½ - 7¼ inches inclusive. The winner is chosen by a team of three judges

consisting of last year's winner and representatives of the host society and the Federation. This year's judges were Martin Parham, Phil Davies and Ivan Hurst respectively.

A similar annual competition for the Federation of Model Engineering Societies Trophy is held in Australia at the AALS Easter Convention. These trophies commemorate the affiliation of the two organisations and were first contested in 1966.

This year's AALS Trophy winner was David Mayall with his five-inch gauge BR Standard Class 2 locomotive. Very finely detailed and

extremely well finished, it ran sweetly and attracted many admiring comments. Mike Crisp, an FMES vice president, awarded David with the AALS Trophy during the presentation which was introduced by Bob Polley, the FMES chairman. He asked Paul Naylor, FMES vice chairman, to say a few words about a matter that affects us all. Paul made a brief appeal to all present, and to all reading the rally reports, concerning the need for active and enthusiastic volunteers to support the representative organisations including, of course, FMES.

There are some fairly obvious co-ordinated activities that are essential for the existence of much of the hobby (such as boiler testing) let alone other support that is or could be provided to enhance the hobby's prospects for growth and modern relevance. Without new volunteers (in whatever capacity, as board members or to manage an activity) with energy and ability to sustain and enable these, the representative organisations



Busy steaming bays for the 480 ft raised track.

will cease to be. Paul ended this sombre comment with an appeal to all to consider volunteering to support and enhance their hobby.

Martyn Cozens - SCMES secretary and Ivan Hurst - the

other FMES vice president then brought formalities to a close. Martin Parham received the SCMES award for having travelled the furthest to attend the event.

The day concluded with a barbecue, much enjoyed by all present, accompanied by a choice of hot and cold drinks which had also been available throughout the day. Bacon baps were served first thing and hot samosas and a selection of cakes at

lunchtime. Thanks are due to Ray and Anna Gilbert for all their work with the catering.

FMES is pleased to announce that next year's rally and competition will be held at Frimley and Ascot Locomotive Club's extensive mixed gauge ground level and raised track in Surrey on the weekend of 16-17 September 2023. Please see www.fmes.org.uk for more details as they are published, as well as other news and events.

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David Mayall enjoys a run with his fine five-inch gauge BR Class 2 locomotive.



Mike Crisp presents David Mayall with the Australian Association of Live Steamers Trophy. (Photo by Bob Whitaker.)