

The 20th Sacrewell Miniature Steam Rally 16 -17th July, by D A G Brown

Nearly fifty entries including 30 engines in steam took part in this year's Sacrewell miniature steam rally, a joint effort between **Sacrewell Farm Centre** and **Peterborough Society of Model Engineers Ltd.** The participants were free to run around the large field at any time and they took part in a 'Road Run' around the farm roads, a real test of endurance as well as driving skills as there are some interesting gradients and speed bumps to negotiate.

The general public, used to a family visit to the centre had the extra bonus of mingling with the engines, as well as a flying visit from a Spitfire.

A third of the models in steam were predominately 4 in. scale Foster traction engines, mostly simple single cylinder agricultural versions; these designs have been well publicised and are known to be fairly straightforward to build. A double crank compound to the Roy Mosley design was also present.

Burrell locomotives were also well represented, again exhibiting compound (both single and double crank versions) and simple single cylinder designs and they all performed well on the road run, which demanded good water management and the ability to last the pace on a fairly long steep gradient. The general public, visiting the farm park, mingled safely with the engines. The safe operation was managed by PSME whose administration skills were well used throughout the weekend. The road run was led and controlled in the busy public areas by a portly gentleman in period dress, complete with red flag.

Other prototypes of engines included Fowler, Savage and Garrett and steam lorries represented by the makers Foden and Atkinson.

In addition to the miniature steam exhibits, there was also a display of model engineering tooling by members of the Peterborough Society and a fine display of models boats presented by the Peterborough Area Model Boat Club.

The annual event was pioneered back in 1997 by a small group within the model engineering society, in particular Roy Mosley and Doug Crampton. Roy sadly died a few years ago, although not before he set up two annual awards for presentation at this rally. A ballot among those taking part determined that the Roy Mosley award for the Best Engine in Steam this year went to Chris Gunn for his 6 in. scale Garrett tractor, while that for the best stationary exhibit went to David Dean for his 5 in. gauge 'Speedy' railway locomotive. The awards were presented by Roy's son Chris.

The event is supported by engine owners, most of whom have built their own engines and came from as far afield as Middlesex and Derbyshire. Most of the visitors, however, were from Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. Discussions included the sourcing of coal and the consensus was that the current seam of Welsh Steam Coal from an open cast mine in the Welsh valleys does the job well.

The Saturday evening was rounded off with a BBQ and the obligatory raffle with an interesting range of prizes.