



**Welcome to the January Smokebox**

I hope you all had a very good Christmas and New Year, wishing you a happy and healthy New Year. The next couple of months are going to be a busy time for the Group. We are taking Ridgemont to the Model Engineering Exhibition at Ally Pally later this month. We have scheduled the Bedfordshire Area Groups Annual General Meeting for 12 noon on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February; details for both these events will be issued separately.

**Steam in Beds Report**

Firstly I should like to thank everyone for their help and support in making it our best show yet and once again the team in the kitchen did a sterling job keeping us and our visitors fed and watered. The visitor numbers show a healthy increase over the previous year ending up just short of 250. The general feedback from visitors was very good, I did however have an angry email from one visitor apparently he did not know that half of the show was in the church as he did not bother to look at the show guide until he got home. One of the problems with the success of the show is the car park gets overwhelmed, in spite of the best efforts of our members to keep the situation under control. I thought this year we could do with some outside help, I approached our local scout troop to see if they would be willing to help manage the parking. They jumped at the chance providing they could collect donations on the day with Brian Walton overseeing the scout team and judging by the feedback from visitors it was a great success. The scouts had a very successful day raising over £80 for their funds; they have already said they would like to come back next year. I will present a full report including a financial statement of Steam in Beds at the A.G.M. in February.

**Group Meeting Dates – 2018**

Following any feedback I had regarding dates and times of our meetings I can confirm the following dates have been booked for next year's meetings. Please note the change to our usual date for the July meeting. As I have not had any adverse comments regarding the timing of our meetings we will continue with current times of 10:30 am to 4:00 pm.

7 <sup>th</sup> January	4 <sup>th</sup> February	4 <sup>th</sup> March
1 <sup>st</sup> April	6 <sup>th</sup> May	3 <sup>rd</sup> June
15 <sup>th</sup> July*	No meeting in August	2 <sup>nd</sup> September
7 <sup>th</sup> October	4 <sup>th</sup> November	

Steam in Beds will be on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November

### **Ridgemont Repairs**

I mentioned that we will be taking Ridgmont to Ally Pally; members have identified a number of problems with the track and point. These we need to put right before we take it to Ally Pally which we plan to do during the January meeting. As it won't be possible to run on Ridgmont while this work is going on we will be using Eaton Downs for running during our January meeting.

### **Time Table for London Model Engineering Exhibition**

As I said earlier I will publish full details to those members who have offered help with Loading/Unloading and Running at the show but I have outlined below the time table for the show.

#### **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January**

Meet at Eaton Bray Hall to collect Ridgmont	1.00 pm
Unload and Build Ridgemont at Ally Pally	3.00 pm – High Viz Top must be Worn
Leave Ally Pally at the latest	6.00 pm

#### **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January**

Exhibitor's entry to show from	8.30 am
Show Opens	10.00 am
Show Closes	5.00 pm
Exhibitor's to leave Hall at latest	5.30 pm

#### **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January**

Exhibitor's entry to show from	9.00 am
Show Opens	10.00 am
Show Closes	5.00 pm
Exhibitor's to leave Hall at latest	5.30 pm

#### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

Exhibitor's entry to show from	9.00 am
Show Opens	10.00 am
Show Closes	4.30 pm
Exhibitor's clear Hall at latest	8.00 pm - High Viz Top must be Worn

#### **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January**

Return Eaton Bray and unload Ridgmont	9.00 am
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### **Wags Wharf at Pitstone Museum**

Apart from Wags Wharf, there are plenty of other exhibits of interest to see whether a railway enthusiast or not. There are many interesting items that show the developments that have changed how we do things around the Home, Farming, Technology and Engineering, things we take for granted today. Look at their web site at <http://www.pitstonemuseum.co.uk/>

The open days for 2018 are as follows:

Easter Monday	2 <sup>nd</sup> April	Early Spring Bank Holiday	7 <sup>th</sup> May
Late Spring Bank Holiday	28 <sup>th</sup> May	Sunday	10 <sup>th</sup> June
Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup> July	Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup> August
Bank Holiday Monday	27 <sup>th</sup> August	Sunday	9 <sup>th</sup> September
Sunday	14 <sup>th</sup> October		

Chris