

Bedford Model Engineering Society Steam Event 2011

Reporter: Jack May for Bottom Gear

On Sunday 26th June 2011 at Summerfield railway the annual miniature steam event was held. On this very hot summers day I got the chance to drive my Ford G.P.A., the MB43 and the Tractor DBR, I mainly drove my Ford G.P.A. and my sister Ellie mainly drove the tractor DBR. There were various different things to do at this great event such as having a ride on the miniature trains, have a look at all the miniature steam traction engines, locomotives, watch the arena events or just have a bite to eat and a drink in the Station buffet café plus lots of other fun things to do.

What is Bedford model engineering society you may ask? Well it is a club for all people interested in model engineering; many members own a ride on locomotive which they run on the club miniature railway line, passing through Haynes End, Badgers Holt and Hammer Hill stations. Some members have miniature traction engines, others own and build electric powered ride on vehicles including Richard Shepherd of Real Life Toys in Biggleswade.

Richard, a member, brought along his red tractor DBR and his MB43 (the Willys Jeep) also I took my Ford G.P.A. Throughout the day I got the chance to drive all three around the show. I drove my Ford G.P.A around the arena and through the slalom course; we drove all of the Toylanders in the main parade around the arena. All of the exhibitors at the show got given a blue rosette. After the main parade we took all of the Toylanders up to the end of the train line for a photo shoot. This went well because we got some good shots of the Toylanders with the great background of the hills looking over Bedford. Being able to drive all three Toylanders I got to compare them, there is a big difference between the 25 year old running gear on my Ford G.P.A and the newer models. On my Ford G.P.A there is a single wheel drive car starter motor, a big and bulky car 12 volt battery and a steel chassis whereas on the new more modern model vehicles they have two compact and powerful single wheel drive motors, no chassis and a compact battery. Also I found that the new Toylanders are a lot faster compared to my Ford G.P.A, my Ford G.P.A only goes about 5mph at the maximum when the battery is full but the new motors help to keep the speed up longer and you don't need to worry about stopping because Richard has sorted that with his advanced braking system, you can stop in seconds with these brakes because they are made with tough rubber material that presses on to the inside of the rear wheel for reliable, strong brakes. Also the newer motors are really just great, compact and powerful compared to the older generation of big and slow motors. (I feel an upgrade for the GPA may be needed!). Last but no means least the tractor DBR and the MB43 (Willys Jeep) are great fun to drive and very well designed

So altogether the Bedford Model Engineering Society annual miniature steam event was a great summer day out with lots to do and I hope to have just as much fun next year at this event, as I did this year.

Jack May