

A CONVOCATION OF CONWAYS

Jim Matthews

from Erewash Valley MES recounts how from small beginnings larger events were generated. The annual Conway rally is nowadays an integral part of the rally calendar and is a good excuse to visit a lovely track in an excellent location.

I don't know if there is a collective noun for locomotives, but in the case of Martin Evans' 3 1/2in. gauge Conway design, the same one as that for the skylark seems appropriate!

During 1994 we were concerned at Erewash Valley MES that our new raised track was not being used as much as it could be. Among our 70 or so members from the Nottingham and Derby areas there were no less than four examples of Martin Evans' Conway design, with another in progress. We decided to hold a Conway rally, on the principle that if no-one else turned up, at least we could have a reasonable day's steaming. The 1995 May Day Bank Holiday Monday was chosen and publicity was sent out before we realised that it conflicted with the national VE Day celebrations!. Nevertheless, the event went ahead with the programme rearranged to accommodate a two minute silence in which to remember the fallen, and was a great success despite miserable weather and only one visitor faking up our invitation.

Following everyone's enjoyment of that day, we immediately decided to hold the event again in 1996, and managed to attract visitors from Chesterfield and Ibstock, and Pete Maybury brought his very fine Conway from Bromsgrove. This rally was an even greater success as it was a beautifully fine day which brought six



Nigel Thompson buzzes briskly along the straight behind Betty, his version of this popular design.



David Mayall built it for his wife Frances who is seen here enjoying a run behind her locomotive which boasts a tender as an extra.

Conways onto the track at various times, and at least two individuals decided to make a start on building a Conway!

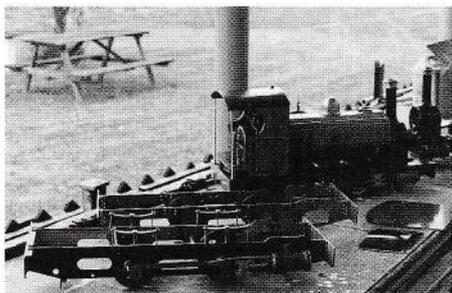
The event for 1997 was again arranged for May Day Bank Holiday Monday and once more was dogged by poor weather but we were delighted to welcome, amongst others, Dave and Frances Mayall who had brought their Conway all the way from Hampshire. For the first time in the club's history we were able to say "Ladies first" to those wishing to steam, and Frances Mayall and her Conway were romping around the track by 10.30am. Ron Haynes and Nigel Thompson were both circulating behind their Conways shortly afterwards, and by the afternoon five Conways were on the track or in the steaming bays and four more were on display in various stages of construction.

For anyone looking for a first project, or for a simple, practical and surprisingly powerful locomotive, a Conway takes a lot of beating. If you have a Conway, if your Conway is under construction, or if you are simply curious about Martin Evans' Conway design, we have every intention of holding our Conway rally each May Day Bank Holiday. Anyone requiring further information should contact me on 01332-705259.

Finally, I should like to thank our ladies for their contribution to the success of these events. The 'crack' while sheltering from the rain under a steaming bay roof, with mugs of tea and sandwiches is a very important part of the social side of life of the model engineering movement!

Suppliers

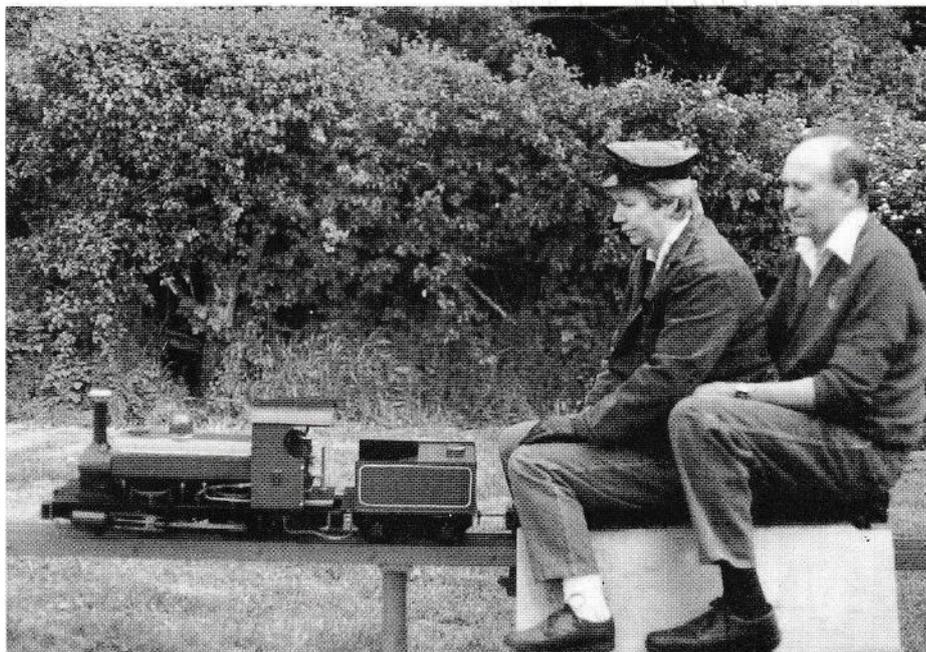
The design for Conway was published in *M.E.* Vol. 146 (1981) starting on page 480, and carrying on into Vol. 147. Plans are available from Nexus Plans Service, code LO957. Castings (code 5/078) are available from A.J. Reeves & Co. (Birmingham) Ltd, tel. 0121-779-6831. 



Work in progress bench.



A convocation of Conways under the station canopy, the damp air providing some lovely scenic effects.



Frances and David prove that Conway is an easy master of a load of two adults.