



THE CENTURION SMOKEBOX

"Providing smoking news and steaming interests to members and friends"

Centurion Society of Model Engineers

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 **Centurion Society of Model Engineers**
& Centurion Society of Model Engineers' Supporters Group

CSME NEWSLETTER APRIL 2024

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2024 SUBS: R500 FOR ORDINARY MEMBERS R250 FOR SENIOR MEMBERS AND STUDENTS

Official Correspondence & Newsletter

If you read this and are not receiving mail from the CSME you should contact the secretary or editor to update your details. Please ensure we are notified of any change of email address and cell phone number. Those members without email can collect a copy of the newsletter on request from the clubhouse on track day. The news letters are also distributed via the official CSME Whatsapp group.

Next Club Meetings

The Committee Meeting is on Saturday, 20 April 2024, and club track day on Sunday, 21 April 2024.

Members are welcome any other time by arrangement with Swannie 064 520 8572. The gates are operational by cell phone for members. Members, please contact Norman Reyneke to be added to the gate motor list.

Chairman's Chatter

Another busy month, with all the extra public holiday running well supported by the public. Again thanks for a concerted effort by our regular drivers to make things happen. We had one slow rainy day in the month.

The rains resulted in flooding again, but only water through the inner track tunnel pushing into the steaming bay, with our new bridge taking care of the drainage.

We started with the raised track sleepers, and plan again to work on it Saturday before club day. We also did the building work for a tunnel.

Please come and help, extra hands make the job easy. We want to start with a track session this Saturday.

Leon

Secretary's Bit

Some members Subs for 2024 remain unpaid: Full members (Employed) R500.00, Retired and Junior Members: R250.00.

All Drivers must keep a correct following distance on the Horseshoe loop and be on constant guard for stopped trains around the corner, before the new bridge, as well as the last corner before the long back straight as there are blind spots now created due to the new direction of travel. Speeds need to be reduced around the entire loop as well as down the back straight.

Our April birthdays: Paul Burnett and Francois Hanekom. We wish them all the best.

From the Editor

Thank you very much for all the contributions for this edition of **THE CENTURION SMOKEBOX**.

We have another **REPORT BACK FROM TRAVELLING MEMBERS** with two members visiting the **WINELANDS LIGHT RAILWAY**.

We also have a excellent in-depth report from Heinrich Lategan of the Bloemfontein Society of Model Engineers.

If you have any material, tools, parts or projects for sale, please share and we will do our best to get parts used and projects revived or locos running again.

Contributions to the **SELL / SWOP / WANTED** is what assist to keep the hobby alive, and might just convince a potential new model engineer to get going!

Report Back from Travelling Members

On his recent Easter trip to the Western Cape, Johnny Sharpe treated the Cape by hauling passengers with LADY SHAY at the Winelands Light Railway near Stellenbosch. Joined by Francois Hannekom, we are proud by the men representing the CSME dressed in blue! (the rest dressed in black, are legends in their own right ;-)

Great photograph guys!



And in some other news, another first by ESTEEMED INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING, a live broadcast showcasing Johnny Sharpe's (dressed in blue) current 19D project in 7 1/4 inch: (stunning guys!)



Bloemfontein Society of Model Engineers

Preserving Tradition - Building Community

Founded in 1957 by Harold Marshall Smith and a dedicated group of model engineering enthusiasts, the Bloemfontein Society of Model Engineers (BSME) has a storied, 67-year history rooted in a passion for craftsmanship and community. Here follows a brief history of the early days of the society and some recent developments.



D. R. McFarlane, Vice Chairman of B.M.E.S. working on his milling machine.

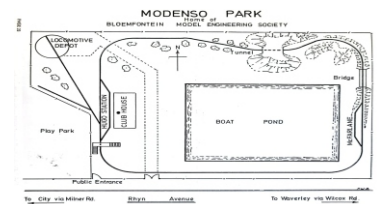
A Legacy of Determination

The BSME's story began with Harold Marshall Smith, a founding member of the Rand Society of Model Engineers. Smith was one of the founding members of the RSME (Rand Society of Model Engineers). He was transferred to Bloemfontein in 1956 as Branch Manager of Schindler Lifts and was disappointed that there were no organizations like the RSME in Bloemfontein. Together with George Rhodes-Harrison, he arranged a meeting for those interested in model making. The meeting took place at the Cecil Hotel, Bloemfontein on 13 July 1957. This was the inaugural meeting and led to the BSME being officially formed.

In the beginning, there were not many models available, but with an organized society, development was rapid, and it was not long before there was a live steam section and a marine section. They used the pond at the National Zoo in Bloemfontein for the Marine Section. For many years, the only steam loco was that of Harold Marshall Smith, which was run on a private piece of track that he owned. In 1965, Jan Hugo's donation of a partially completed locomotive led to collaborative efforts among members, resulting in the completion of the club's iconic "Springbok" locomotive, now retired and housed in the BSME museum after traveling around 8000 km with the club. Forty-five meters of portable track was built in 1966.

Securing a Home and Expanding Horizons

The society was very anxious to have their own ground where they could lay down permanent railway track and build a clubhouse. After several years of negotiation with the City Council, a piece of land at 6 Rhyn Street, Bayswater, was obtained in April 1969. Members were quick to take advantage of this, and within six months, model trains were running over a triple-gauge track nearly 400 meters long. An early success of the club during this time was its hosting of the South African Model Railway and Engineering Exhibition in the Bloemfontein City Hall in 1970.



Bloemfontein Society of Model Engineers

A permanent clubhouse building and a steaming bay with space for 20 locos were constructed in the late '70s/early', and a longer inner track was also later added, which is now used as the mainline. Over the years, the society has been a home for many enthusiastic members to enjoy and share their love of model engineering with like-minded friends and the public. Modenso Park (from "Model Engineering Society") has played host to many National Steam Meets in the past, as well as always participating enthusiastically in those events of other clubs in the country.



Nurturing the Passion

Today, the BSME remains a home for model engineers. Under the inspiring leadership of our chairman, Christo Slabbert, young members enthusiastically develop their skills as budding model engineers, meticulously maintaining and operating engines. The society aims to preserve the craft of model engineering with a specific focus on model locomotives. Although the society is small at present, enthusiastic members are consistently working on their engines, which include a 3 1/2 gauge Ivy Hall (built by Malcolm Grant and now owned by his grandson Liam), another 3 1/2 gauge loco owned by chairman Christo Slabbert (previously owned by his father and built by Jimmy Scott), and a Simplex owned by Heinrich Lategan (built by Erns "Ertjies" van Rensburg). Mario Laubscher also regularly runs his two locomotives: a 16DA and Class 25, both built by his father Leon Laubscher. Current projects include a 16DA under construction by Liam (started by his grandfather) and a class 23 owned and being completed by Christo. The club operates a petrol locomotive named "Cookie" (built by Dave McFarlane) for its passenger hauling duties.

Renewal and Growth

In recent years, the BSME has embarked on a journey of revitalization. The society is very grateful to its older members for continuing to open and operate the club during a challenging period in the late 2010s. While the club's membership has become more modest, efforts to re-establish connections with former members and engage with the local community through social media and partnerships with local media outlets like My City Bloemfontein and Bloemnuus reflect the society's determination to build and grow. The BSME currently consists of about 14 members, but we are always happy to get reacquainted with previous members and re-establish positive relationships with old friends. We welcome all previous members to visit the club whenever they like.



Bloemfontein Society of Model Engineers

The society's commitment extends beyond its membership, regularly opening its doors to the public every Sunday afternoon. The club regularly hosts children's parties and welcomes visiting groups such as pre-primary schools, churches, and community organizations for private running days.

Recently, the club has also re-established a tradition of hosting a regular market day, which takes place once a month. The most recent of these, which took place on 17 March, welcomed over 1000 visitors with around 650 train tickets sold and featured two steam locomotives: Mario Laubscher's class 25 as well as Michael Eykelhof visiting with his class 15A. His grandfather Willem Nel also visited with a lovely Sweet Pea. Other activities included horse rides and a jumping castle. Cars in the Park also hosted an exhibition of beautiful old vehicles which drew great interest.



Despite ongoing challenges such as a shortage of passenger cars for large events, aging club infrastructure, and a shortage of steam locomotives for passenger duties, the BSME remains committed to preserving and promoting the craft of model engineering. The society invites enthusiasts of all ages to join its legacy, offering a welcoming environment to learn, share, and celebrate the art of model engineering.

We also specifically welcome contact with members from other clubs in South Africa.

For more information, please contact our chairman, Christo Slabbert, on 073 511 8670 or member Heinrich Lategan at heinrichlategan1993@gmail.com.

We would specifically welcome any stories and history of the club and its members, as we are currently working on a broader history of the BSME and would like to include more information on all the chapters of the story.

Our track is also always open for visitors to enjoy an afternoon of steam and a proper Free State braai!

CSME Raized Track



The curve builders! A well deserved rest after installing all the brackets on the curve in this picture, and beyond!



The RT tunnel under construction by the Centurion Society of Civil Engineers.

Below some/plenty of sleepers, and brackets being painted.



CSME Raized Track

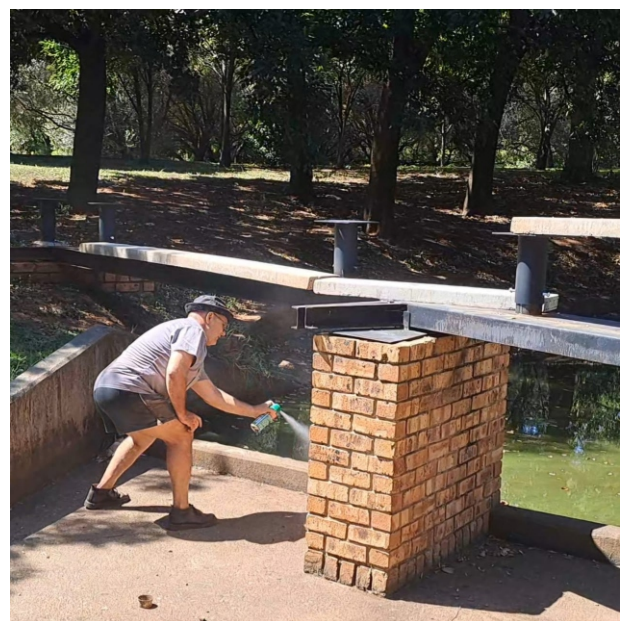


Construction work by the specialised team on the RT bridge went very well, until the most ferocious wasp nest was discovered.



Looking back for support, the member in imminent danger was ignored by his back-up team.

Only the bravest amongst them were then selected/delegated to neutralize the impending threat.



Who's doing what?



Carel Janse van Rensburg managed to get his mini CNC lathe going, just before losing his mind inside the maize of G CODES, X and Z touch-offs and offsets/tool tables/Linux/F360...

Cape Gauge 1, 1:24 scale SAR Goods profile wheel sets.



Seen around the club:



Kevin working the WREN on the inner track.

Neil contemplating why he didn't choose fishing a tranquil stream as his preferred extra mural activity on a Sunday morning.



But once that safeties pop, it's all action.

The main train shed got it's rightful name.

