

Book Review Nr 2

I am pleased to report that last month's reviews tempted a member to borrow one of the reviewed books. Hopefully this month's reviews will bring a similar response. The subject matter of this month's books are locomotive and a traction engine related. Remember we would welcome members' views on any books they borrow.



The two books this month are "Scale Model Traction Engine Building" and "Model Locomotive Valve Gears".

Scale Model Traction Engine Building by L.C. Mason. Our copy is a 1975 edition published by Model & Allied Publications based, at that time, in Kings Langley. The title is a little misleading as whereas it does cover general matters, it is, in effect, a complete and comprehensive manual for the construction of a 1" scale freelance design traction engine. The contents page identifies ten chapters covering all components. The book is illustrated with 32 plates and many detailed fully dimensioned diagrams. The author has selected 1" scale for construction and transport practicalities. Larger scale models require larger tooling. Size of components to be turned are more manageable for a modeller's lathe and silver soldering is less challenging than larger boilers will demand. It is the author's intention to produce a design resulting in a reasonable looking engine; this has been undoubtedly achieved. Once built you end up with a model 18" long, 8"

wide and 12" high. The engine weighs in at 26lb (12kg) with a nine tube 2½" boiler producing a working pressure of 50lb/sq.in. Even if you step back from building one, after reading this book and studying the detail and illustrations dedicated to each component one would be conversant in the construction and working of the ultimate steam powered road vehicle.

Model Locomotive Valve Gears is by Martin Evans. This is the 1981 revised edition (first edition published 1962). As the title suggests this book is dedicated to valve gear and valve settings. The book is not specific to any particular scale and recommends dimensions for cylinders and ports for 1¼", 1¾", 2½" on up to 15" gauge locomotives. The book, therefore, does not concentrate on any particular gauge. Modellers determine the dimensional requirements from the various formulae and setting out details provided. There are various plates and diagrams showing the various components which make up the cylinders and valve gear; the bits which convert steam from the boiler to smooth and efficient locomotion. The book has chapters covering Stephenson, Gooch, Allen, Joy, Hackworth, Marshall, Walschaert, Beames, Caprotti, Baguley, Poppet and other valve gears. Other chapters cover Basic Proportions, Eccentric Gears and Cab Reversing Gear.

Similarly, this book provides a comprehensive understanding of the various types of the different forms of locomotion development throughout the age of steam locomotives. It would be interesting to know how many different types of valve gear society members locomotives are utilising. Something for another day. This book seems essential reading for those constructing and maintaining locomotives.

If you want to borrow either, or any book in the library, please contact me.

Reviewed by Clive Reynolds. March 2021

