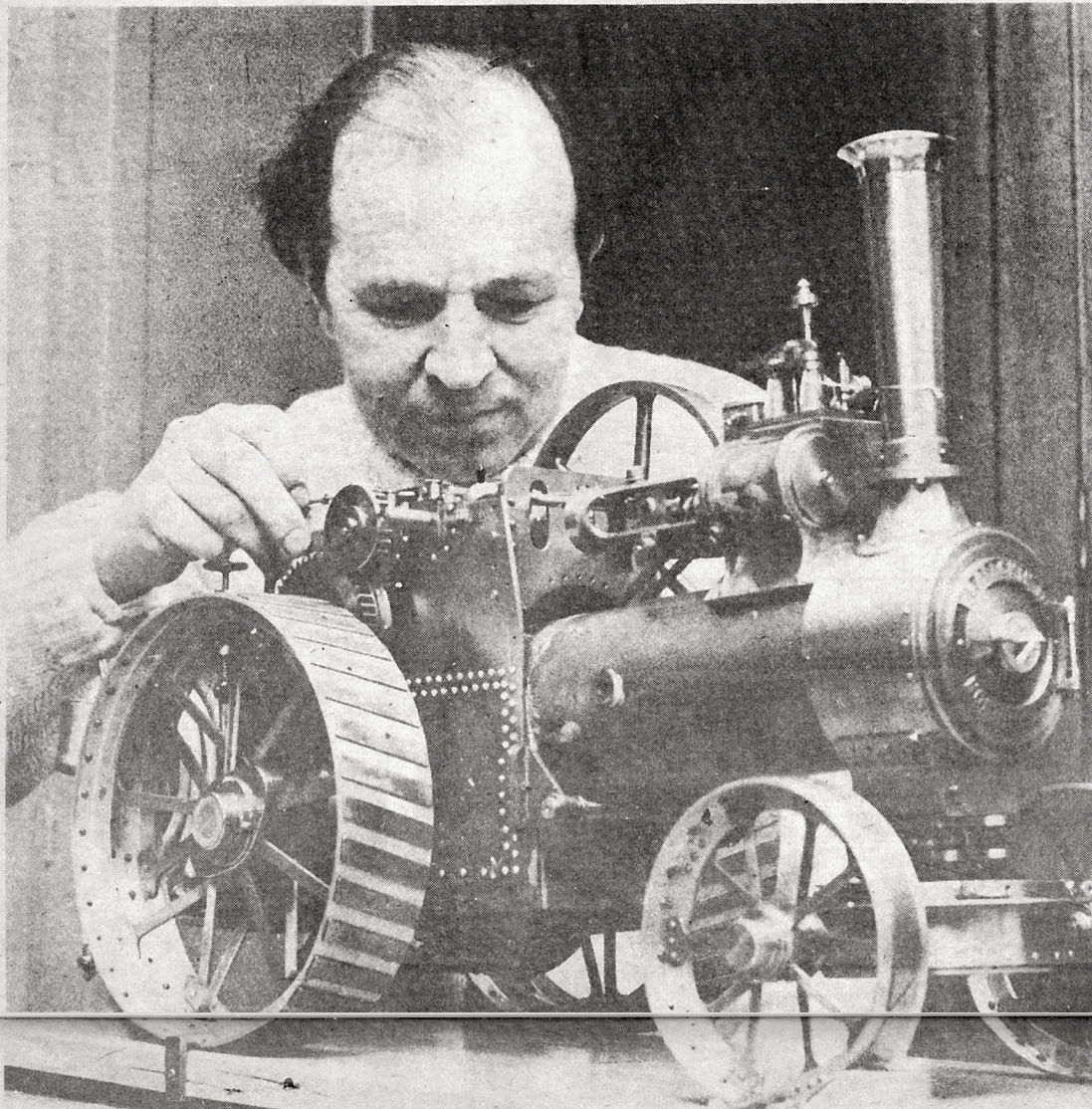


THE GOLDEN AGE OF STEAM

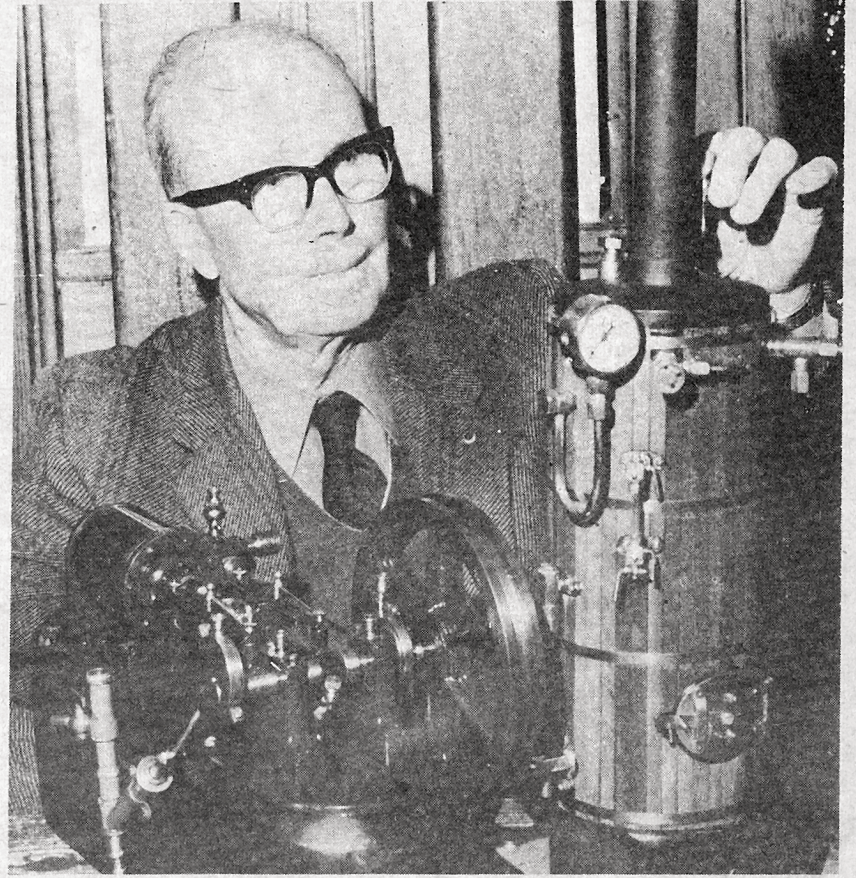


Mr Dennis Harris with his unfinished Auchin Traction engine which

has taken him five years to reach this stage and estimates another 18

months to completion. The total cost of materials, steel and

gunmetal, will be £200 and the finished model will be worth £1,600.



Bill Ballard has put much work into the restoration of the 100 year-old stationary steam plant which he inherited from his father.

Skilful enthusiasts

Although the North Wales Model Engineering Society hold monthly meetings attended by a number of enthusiasts little is known by the general public of this fascinating hobby.

Many have the impression that the society is merely an excuse for adults to play with toy trains, but as acting secretary Mr Harold Barton explained this could not be further from the truth.

"Many of our models are not of locomotive but of engines used in industry and have considerable interest to social history as they are precisely scaled down from prototypes of the golden age of steam in the industrial revolution."

Many members admit that there is a certain romance to the carefully detailed model locomotives and they have good reason to be proud of the precision with which they build their models. Although some of the models are bought, many of them are constructed with extreme patience and skill from complete basics by the enthusiasts themselves.

The Society began as a loose association of friends before the war until Brigadier Richards of Llanddulas, organised an official society.

After the Brigadier's death a five inch gauge 0-6-0 engine of his was donated to the society, becoming the first engine to be officially owned by them.

In 1972 the decision was made to build a track multi-gauge track at Ysgol Gogarth, a school for handicapped children and as this year is the International Year of Disabled People, the society intends to put on special events for the school later this year.

The Colwyn Bay branch of the society already has 40 members from many different walks of life and new comers are always welcome. The monthly meetings are held in the meeting rooms of The United Reformed Church, Rhos-on-Sea.

The next meeting to be held on February 2, promises to be particularly interesting as the guest speaker is Mr Alan Pratt of Conwy Valley Museum, who will bring 3 films to illustrate his talk.

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