

C'est en 2008 qu'à l'autre bout du tunnel les anglo-saxons nous ont découverts



Leur journal, lu dans le monde entier, nous a consacré deux pleines pages

AN INTRODUCTION TO 'VAPEUR 45' IN FRANCE
by Chris Ludlow

'Vapeur 45' is a small association in the north of France. They base their activities on 45mm gauge track and, although much of their work has been in narrow-gauge scales, they are now well into the team-based construction of a series of 11 1/32nd 2-4-0 tank engines, of a well-known French type called 'Bicyclette' because of its large driving wheels. The following excerpts are translated and edited from their own words, originally written to explain themselves to a non-technical audience. Hopefully, this gives the flavour of something G1 outside the scope of GIMRA, although near by.

**DES GENS QUI JOUENT AU TRAIN
(PEOPLE WHO PLAY AT TRAINS)**
by Vapeur 45

The Vapeur 45 Group

The generations working together at Expométrique, Valbonne, November 2004

Our Background and Activities - 'Vapeur 45' was founded in 2002 by an experienced group of modellers. Established in Villeneuve d'Ascq, near to a museum of modern art, an asylum, a science park and some other workshops, we are not that well known in the neighbourhood! But we think we practice a form of culture: technical culture! How can we communicate what we are? We are not just modellers, nor designers, nor do we explore parallel universes. For most, we are simply 'people who play at trains'.

The 10 Sarthe train engines constructed by the members of Vapeur 45 at Expométrique the same year.

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But we try to do this intelligently through our stated aim of preserving our railway heritage through the medium of modelling, studying history, transmitting knowledge and encouraging teamwork and therefore social skills, particularly among young people.

To demonstrate this, we have already built a series of ten Sarthe' tram-locomotives. These are cousins of those that pulled trams between Lille and Roubaix via Elers Bourg and le Breucq at the end of the nineteenth century. This project involved about 850 hours of work over two years, to produce 1,750 parts.

Our President, Robert Rochart, created the plans and procedures that allowed us to bring this project to fruition. Almost all of our members participated. We shared the purchase of basic materials that each member, according to his abilities, made into parts for all of the ten machines. And everyone can lay claim to one locomotive, but with ownership drawn by lottery.

We also actively involve young people, seeking ways to encourage basic skills and teamwork. The first young person joined us at age 15, and now actively participates in our administration. Others followed, and each is building a simple locomotive. Costs are low, with all parts turned or milled. A more experienced person supervises them, and in this way links the generations.

We have three portable layouts to demonstrate locos and rolling stock, in schools as well as in front of the modelling fraternity and general public. We organize training sessions in live steam techniques describing the making of locomotives of 1/32nd and 1/22.5 scales.

After completing the Sarthe locomotives in October 2004, we turned our attention to a project to build ten of the famous 'Bicyclette' locomotives of the Nord and Ouest railways, so called because of their large 1.66 metre driving wheels.

The 'Bicyclette' project

Les Locomotives (C° du Nord)
Machine tramway dite "type Nord", N° 2.942, Serie de 2921 à 2950

The prototype for the 11 'Bicyclettes' - a real French character!

1. Boiler
2. Casting and machining of wheels.
3. Cylinder and valve gear
4. Meths burner.
5. Frames.
6. Trials.
7. Assembly.
8. Display - for this, you must see the website!
9. Display - for this, you must see the website!

Eventually, there will be a book of instructions for you to build your own 'Bicyclette', just as there is for the Sarthe locomotives and others.

Vapeur 45
155 allée de la Chaîne
59650 Villeneuve d'Ascq

Et en 2009 que va-t-il se passer ?

Une expo à st Nicolas près d'Arras en janvier, les 25 et 26 avril à Sainghin en Weppes nous serons au rassemblement des tracteurs. Le 31 mai nous irons probablement en visiteurs au festival de Froissy Dampierre dans la Somme et nous devrions être présents pour le centenaire du Grand Boulevard de Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing. Bien entendu la construction de la bicyclette se poursuit Et pour sacrifier à la tradition nous terminerons par

LE MOT DU PRESIDENT

Comme il n'aime pas faire de discours il se contentera de rappeler à tous que la cotisation de 55 € doit être payée pour le 31 janvier 2009