Minutes of the Inaugural General Meeting
held on Saturday 14th March 2015

Venue
The venue for the Meeting was The Bursledon Brickworks Museum, Swanwick near Southampton.

Secretary's Note:
These Minutes summarise the proceedings of the meeting and reproduce individual Officer's reports verbatim as Annexes. To assist reading ‘on-screen’ hyperlinks to the Annexes and back to the main section of the minutes are provided.

Attendance
Southern Federation Officers
Brent Hudson (Chairman), Ivan Hurst (Vice-Chairman), Norman Rogers (Treasurer), Peter Squire (Secretary) Martin Baker (Membership and IT Manager), Mike Chisp (Awards), David Mayall (Boiler Registrar), Bob Walker (Safety), Bob Polley (Projects) and David Goyder (Newsletter Editor).

Delegates
The following 27 Societies were represented:

In total, 46 delegates (including the Officers) attended.

Guests
There were 5 guests among the assembled company, for the award of the Junior Trophy.
Tony Wood from Walker Midgley Insurance was also present at the invitation of the Officers.

Note on Attendance Data: - The information was taken from the Signing-in Book: it is not possible to guarantee that every delegate who attended had signed in.

The Officers are most grateful for the assistance provided by Mrs. Frances Mayall, Mrs. Jennie Goyder and Mrs. Simone Squire with the registration of the delegates and administration of the lunch arrangements.

The meeting started at 3.30pm.
Introductory Remarks
The Secretary, Peter Squire opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates. He reminded the delegates that this would be the Inaugural General Meeting for the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies, incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2014.

He also reminded delegates that the Articles of the Southern Federation (Incorporated 2014) required that no business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present and that a quorum is ten members present in person or by proxy and entitled to vote upon the business to be conducted at the meeting, or one quarter of the total number of Affiliated Organisations at the time, whichever is the smaller. The authorised representative of a member organisation shall be counted in the quorum.

He confirmed that a quorum was present and as the Articles require that General meetings shall be chaired by the person who has been appointed to chair meetings of the Officers, Brent Hudson would be Chairman for the proceedings.

In introducing the agenda, he reminded delegates that as this was an inaugural meeting, there would be no finance report and that the omission of Any Other Business (AOB) from the agenda was deliberate. The reason for this, which had been questioned by a few members, was because only the business declared on an agenda can be discussed at a General Meeting. AOB items by their nature cannot be advised to all members in advance of the meeting. A written question had been received from a member and this would be responded to in item 6.

Voting for this meeting would be by raising the GREEN card issued at registration.

Receive and record apologies for absence
The Secretary, Peter Squire confirmed that apologies had been received from the following Societies:
Bournemouth and District SME, Burnley & Pendle Miniature Railway Society, Chilterns Clock Club, City of Oxford SME, Docklands and East London MES, Echills Wood Railway, Eskvalley MES, Hilton Light Railway, Keighley & District MES, Peterborough SME, Pimlico Light Railway, Polly Owners Group, Romford MEC, Swansea SME

Personal apologies for absence had also been received from Andy Clarke (Polly Engineering), and Roger Griffiths, (Director – Vulnerable Groups).

No additional apologies for absence were given on behalf of other clubs/societies or individuals by the delegates.

Chairman’s report
The Chairman presented his report which is recorded in full in Annex A

There were no immediate questions arising from his report.

Appointment of Officers
The Chairman, in reading out the nominations for Officers of the Federation for 2015, reminded delegates that there was a need for further committee members and in particular for someone to look at the issues of Safeguarding of vulnerable people in the hobby.

He asked for a proposer and seconder for the resolution;

“That the individuals whose names are given in sections 4 and 5 of the Report of Officers be appointed as a Director of the Company from this date until the next Annual General Meeting unless previously disqualified or removed from office under Article 38”
Vote on resolution on audit proposed by the Officers

The Treasurer, Norman Roberts provided background to the reasoning behind the resolution. As a Company Limited by Guarantee, the accounts can only be audited by someone who is formally authorised to do so, and therefore it would not be possible for the present auditors of the 1970 established Federation, Maurice Sparks and Diane Leahy. to continue that work for the Federation. Formally authorised auditors would result in considerable expenditure on the company’s balance sheet, hence the proposal that the company uses an exemption to the requirements for audit, which is available to small companies. He continued that as the Federation intended to remain transparent to the members with its financial matters, he was also proposing to the delegates that Maurice Sparks and Diane Leahy would be independent examiners of the annual accounts. They had both agreed to this and to produce a report to the members for future Annual General Meetings.

He asked for a proposer and seconder for the resolution;

“That the company will use its exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 unless any member of the company deposits a notice pursuant to section 476 of the Companies Act 2006, requiring an audit of these accounts under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. Any such notice must be supported by at least 10% of the member clubs and societies.”

Proposed by – Alan Regan, Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers.
Seconded by – Andrew Clayton, Guildford Model Engineering Society Ltd.
Result of vote – Resolution endorsed by delegates present

Replies to questions received from Members

Mr. Jeff Dickinson of Royston and District Model Engineering Society had used the opportunity contained in the Calling Notice to register a question with the Secretary. The question;

“Can you please make the web site more user friendly and inform users of simple ways to overcome what seems to be a basic deficiency”

was responded to by the Southern Federation’s IT Manager, Martin Baker. His response is recorded in full in Annex B

On conclusion of the response there was a suggestion from Adrian Parker that a warning message shows when someone is using Internet Explorer to visit the website. Martin Baker confirmed that this was already in operation.

There were no further immediate questions arising from this report.

2015 Rallies, Exhibitions & Events

The Events Officer, Ivan Hurst presented his report which is recorded in full in Annex C

There were no immediate questions arising from his report.

Southern Federation Trophy & Polly Model Engineering Prize

The Awards Officer, Mike Chrisp gave a brief background to the award and the winners which are recorded in Annex D

The Chairman made the presentation of the awards.
Chairman’s closing remarks

Following the presentation of the awards, the Chairman offered his thoughts that the Southern Federation should give consideration in the next year to an award to the person who does not have engineering skills but someone who should be rewarded for their diligence and help in the day to day running of a model engineering club, someone who does not have lathe, may not have the skills or the money to have a workshop, but when the club is under pressure, steps up to the mark and does their best.

He then thanked the delegates, clubs and society’s for their support in attending then closed the meeting at 4.15pm.
Annex A: Chairman’s report

“Welcome to the Inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies

As I mentioned in my opening report earlier this afternoon, part of the modernising of the Federation has been to update the Federation to Incorporated status. This was set in motion following the 2013 AGM at Bedford when the delegates agreed to the proposal to change the status of the organisation. Since April last year the Federation has operated as two organisations, the old un-incorporated body and the new organisation which is now a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Earlier this afternoon we said good bye to the old Federation which has served the hobby well for almost 53 years, a Federation that is very much the foundation of the new Company.

The change to Incorporated status means that all the Committee members are much more relaxed now as our homes are not on the line and this has only been possible with the support of the clubs and societies who have underwritten the guarantee, a guarantee so small that it would never be called in, as it would cost more to administer than would be collected.

I have gathered together a first Class competent group of people to run the Southern Federation for the benefit of the members. Some things do not change though and they are still overloaded with work!

We urgently need at least one more committee member to help the young people side of things move forward.

This will be my last year as Chairman as failing health is becoming a problem so you will need to look for a new Chairman in 2016.

The agenda for this meeting is

➢ For the appointment of individuals to serve as Officers of the Southern Federation for the next year to be confirmed,
➢ to vote on a proposal for exemption from the need to have the accounts audited,
➢ to respond to written questions that have been received,
➢ update you all on the rallies and exhibitions that the Federation will support in the coming year
➢ and then to formally acknowledge the excellent contributions made to the hobby by two of our young members with the award of the Southern Federation Trophy and Polly Model Engineering Prize”

Annex B: Response to registered question

“It is always desirable to consider ways of making websites more user friendly. However making things more user friendly for some makes them slow and laborious or otherwise disliked for others. People with dislikes make complaints, whereas being OK leads to silence. It is clear that large numbers of people are able to perform tasks without any need for assistance on this and several other websites using the same user interface.

On the front page of the public area of the website is a link to a page offering help – it is hardly ever used

On the main page when you enter the members area, there is a link to a page outlining what you can do and how you can do it. A large number of questions raised are clearly from people who have not taken the recommendations on board
Those who perceive a need for improvement need to outline what those improvements might be. For example, an improvement that has been requested and will be implemented is to revise the account set up and log on process – clear and precise.

Specific and well-articulated suggestions are needed. Good suggestions will be implemented.

From Sep 2014, all new account set ups have been advised, in their account set up email, regarding problems with Internet Explorer.

Since January this year, as a result on continued user problems with newer versions of Internet Explorer and people ignoring the recommendations not to use it, a notice has been presented to users of all recognised Internet Explorer versions, advising that that product was not suitable for use on the website.

Unlike other browsers, which are generally kept up to date and comply with International Standards, Microsoft Explorer presents versions in use of 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Each has different operational characteristics – all of which contain major variations to the International Standard.

In addition to the obvious version differences, Microsoft also offer compatibility mode on each version which, despite its name, does NOT give a 100% equivalence to another version, but generates further variants. If the compatibility mode worked as Microsoft claimed it did, people would have been able to have used it.

There are also tablet and mobile variants with further differences and there are also detectable differences according to the version of operating system on which it is running.

Substantially more effort is needed to support Internet Explorer than for all the other browsers in the world combined. It is a stable as quicksand and as consistent as a politician. On large websites with large teams of developers, substantial full time resources are dedicated to keep up with the changes from Microsoft. We have neither the money nor the resources.

Until we have a volunteer to specialise in dealing with Microsoft issues, to unravel the vagaries of this product, we have to adopt the policy that if it cannot be trusted to work reliably it is best not to use it.

It is a matter of regret that Internet Explorer is not currently supported but this will remain until either there is a volunteer to resolve the issues or Microsoft eventually complies with International Standards. It will most likely eventually evolve sufficiently to line up with standards and become supported again sometime in the future.

These problems are created by Microsoft and in the absence of volunteers we don’t have the resource to work around the new shortcoming that keep appearing as a result of perpetual product changes. In 2002, W3C Schools reported IE usage represented 86% of the marketplace. With the continuing problems with dependability and security, it is no surprise its popularity has plummeted. The major use now is by those who have not updated old systems and those who simply use new PCs straight out the box with the preloaded browser.”

Annex C; 2015 Rallies, Exhibitions & Events

“Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this inaugural meeting of the new Southern Federation. I would like to take a few minutes to update you on the forthcoming Rallies and Events at which we will be present.

To take the Rallies first, the Federation intend to maintain its long tradition of holding two a year, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn. These events are nominally one day events, on the Saturday, but the host club frequently makes the Sunday a public running day, and visitors may be invited to drive. Some visitors make a weekend of it, arriving on the Friday afternoon.
This year the Hereford Society have kindly offered to host the Spring Rally. Details have already appeared in the Newsletter and on the Website, and the Rally takes place on the 23rd May. As a consequence, on the two following public running days they will only have space for a small number of caravans. It will not be possible to move caravans onto or off the site between 11am and 5pm on those days. There are of course some very good caravan sites within easy reach of Hereford for anybody they cannot accommodate. Can caravanner’s please contact them as soon as possible to book a spot?

In the Autumn, we have not yet had a confirmation from a society who had expressed an interest in hosting us. This is doubly disappointing, in that the Autumn Rally is the event at which the Australian Association of Live Steamers cup is awarded to the model locomotive run at the Rally that most closely captures the spirit of a Commonwealth prototype. The Rally is scheduled for 19th September, and I can only ask you to keep an eye on the Newsletter for further information.

We are always looking for societies willing to host future Rallies. If you are interested (and that includes for Autumn this year) you may find Information Sheet #13 (on the website) useful as background material. They are great fun, and if you would like to discuss the matter further (in confidence) do not hesitate to contact me.

To turn to the Shows, the Federation will be supporting the following:

- **Harrogate**, 8th to 10th May.
- **Guildford**, 4th/5th July.
- **Bristol (Thornbury)**, 14th to 16th August.
- **Leamington (The Fosse)**, 15th to 18th October.

We have expressed an interest to the Organisers in supporting Sandown in December and Alexandra Palace in January 2016. We have also been invited to attend the Northern Manchester Exhibition on 27th/28th February 2016.

We will be using our “new look open plan” stand at these shows. This is a comparatively new venture which has proved to be very successful. To us, the most important people at any event are you, our members, and the stand is designed to enable easy discussions with the Committee Members. All Committee Members man these stands, although obviously not at the same time, and this makes for better specialised discussion. After all, it is only by such informal contact (which may develop into a more formal dialogue if the matter is substantive) can we establish your concerns and help solve them. Service to our membership is most important to us.

It is also worth pointing out that a stock of Boiler Documentation is normally on the stand for sale, but to prevent disappointment pre-ordering will ensure that it is available for collection at the specified event, thus saving postage.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to seeing you at forthcoming events.”

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**Annex D:**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, I’m Mike Chrisp.

I’d like to begin by saying how much we appreciate the continuing and generous support of this award by Andy & Jayne Clarke of Polly Model Engineering Limited and regret that a prior commitment prevents them from being with us now. In their absence our Chairman, Brent Hudson, will make the presentations.

So, it’s with the greatest pleasure that today I’m able to introduce two fine young men who’ve been commended for their participation in our wonderful world of model engineering.
Proposed by his Grandmother Ann Hatherill, Archivist for the Society of Model & Experimental Engineers and a model engineer in her own right, our winner of the 2014 Southern Federation Trophy & Polly Model Engineering Prize is fortunate in that he’s grown up with model engineering. As a young child he was always wanting to be making things. When a little older, he became Grandad’s Apprentice during school holidays, completed a stationary steam plant and started work on a steam crane. We’re told he helps at exhibits, participates in track events and attends Society meetings whenever he can.

Last June, at the age of just 15 years, he followed family tradition and joined the Society of Model & Experimental Engineers. His Mother Mary weaves intricate contemporary basketry, some in silver, and teaches her craft at West Dean College. His Father Trevor is a skilled toolmaker with a home workshop. His late Grandfather Gordon was a prolific and respected model engineer and his Great Grandfather Bill Carter was the winner of major awards for his fine locomotives.

The winner of the Southern Federation Trophy & Polly Model Engineering Ltd prize receives a £50 Polly Model Engineering voucher, a handsome engraved glass trophy and a £25 cash award. Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating Edward Crabb.

This year we’re also presenting a Special Award.

Proposed by his Mentor, the Rev’d John Roberts, Secretary of Pimlico Light Railway, I’d like to tell you about a young man who is a much valued member of the railway. His methodical approach, analysis and determination have resulted in the successful restoration of an elderly and ailing 5in. gauge Simplex locomotive to a condition that allowed him to use it to haul passengers during a recent public running day.

In order to improve the locomotive even further he’s a regular attendee at the Pimlico Light Railway evening engineering sessions. We’re told he can be relied upon to volunteer to help out at the railway whenever there’s a staffing shortage and his contributions include work on passenger cars, track alignment, maintenance of signaling equipment and clearance of rampant undergrowth.

He helps the more junior members of the club and has just bought a second hand Polly IV locomotive in need of finishing and painting. He’s also a valued member of the Northampton & Lamport Railway where he fires and helps to maintain the Peckett locomotive.

In view of his contribution to club activities, the committee of the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies is pleased to award a framed Certificate and a £25 cash prize. Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating Jack Colby.

We wish both Edward and Jack much pleasure and satisfaction in the pursuit of their hobbies and every success in their studies. We’re grateful to Ann Hatherill and John Roberts for bringing them to our attention.

Our thanks also to all of you here for joining with us to congratulate these two fine young men.

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