



# NATIONAL TRACTION ENGINE TRUST

Preserving our heritage with steam on the road

## Outline of Voluntary Driver Competency Scheme

If you are a traction engine driver ask yourself these 10 simple questions:

- Do you want to help ensure the continued and safe use of traction engines for future generations?
- Can you demonstrate safe methods of raising steam and controlling combustion under widely varying conditions?
- Can you describe the function of every component on your traction engine?
- Can you confidently negotiate tight gateways or chicanes when moving backward or forward?
- Can you drive confidently in the close proximity of spectators at a rally?
- On the road, do you concentrate properly and avoid distractions?
- In an emergency on the road could you stop quickly and sympathetically?
- Are you confident that you could identify and cope with most everyday problems on your engine?
- Do you know the safe way to negotiate steep or slippery inclines?
- Are you knowledgeable about the working of the ancillary equipment you use?

If, as an owner or driver of a traction engine you care enough about your engine management skills to have asked yourself the above questions; welcome to the National Traction Engine Trust's Voluntary Traction Engine Driver Competency Scheme

### **Background to the introduction of the scheme**

The National Traction Engine Trust (NTET) is a registered charity whose primary objective is the '*Preservation of our Heritage with Steam on the Road*'. In support of this slogan owner or driver training and the prevention of accidents within the steaming fraternity has always been a major activity of the NTET.

Today, in the early part of the twenty first century, the steam propelled vehicles upon which we hobbyists lavish care and affection could easily become an anachronism to the modern society. Despite their attractive appearance traction engines are mainly slow movers, emit smoke and steam and do not have the sophisticated controls of a modern vehicle. Moreover they consist of a vessel charged with steam pressure the operation and control of which is not to be found in a glossy 'user manual'.

Historically the modern day owner/user gains knowledge by 'working' with experienced others or in some rare cases simply 'goes-it-alone', there being no current legislation requiring specialist skills in the management of these devices on the road or in a public place. However, Government regulation affects almost every aspect of our lives today and our hobby is now beginning to attract the attention of the regulators. Local Authorities

already have the responsibility for 'policing' rallies and similar events and the Health and Safety Executive is keen to ensure that those who operate 'specialist equipment' are competent to do so.

The NTET is keen to demonstrate its ability to self-regulate and the voluntary, logbook based, Driver Competency Scheme provides practical training and experience in the design, operation, maintenance and repair of steam powered traction engines, thus promoting safe operation in a public place.

The 'Log book' provides a permanent record of the named participant's progress through the NTET's Driver Competency Scheme. In essence it describes the tasks in which the participant must be fully acquainted and prescribes the number of occasions each task must be performed before the competency examination should be attempted.

The NTET recognises that the starting point of experience for each individual will vary from person to person and have therefore designed the scheme to cater for the rank novice or any combination of practice right up to someone with a lifetime of experience.

However, the newcomer must seek the assistance of a 'mentor'; someone who is knowledgeable about the operation of the scheme, is preferably assessed as competent, but essentially has the ability and time to devote to the pupil's needs.

The more experienced participant is also encouraged to acquire a suitably experienced mentor or sponsor who will give candid advice prior to the 'student' entering the assessment phase. With the mentor's approval the participant may request a practical examination.

Additional modules that will extend the scope of the competency scheme are being considered. These will possibly include a 'Theory Certificate' and an 'Engines at Work' examination.

Quite separately the NTET organises an annual 'Steaming Experience Weekend' which allows folk from all walks of life to become acquainted with the rudiments of steam powered traction engines. It is highly recommended that the newcomer attend one of these events, which are held at different locations each year. The logbook issued to 'Students' attending this annual event forms a good foundation for the 'Driver Competency Scheme'.

Other organisations, charitable or 'for profit', offer similar events. However, attaining competency in the safe operation of steam traction engines requires practical skill, understanding of things mechanical, patience, determination and humour. These can't all be achieved in a single weekend.

### **How do I get more information?**

The Scheme is currently administered by John Durling on behalf of the Technical Support Unit.

Additional information including an outline syllabus may be obtained from John Durling, NTET Competency Scheme Administrator c/o 19 Mill Lane, Barton-Under-Needwood, Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE13 8HE or by emailing [competency@ntet.co.uk](mailto:competency@ntet.co.uk)