

THE MAFVA NATIONALS 2016

After many, many years of holding the annual get together of the Miniature AFV Association at Duxford, financial concerns forced us to re-locate to a new location. Not only the finances, but the cancellation of the Military Vehicle Show and the book fair, plus the sheer level of effort required to set up the one day show made us re-consider what we wanted from the event. We found the Burgess Hall in St Ives, only a few miles further North, already in use by our friends at the Brampton Show, which ticked all the boxes.

The weekend started off with putting out the 'Tac' signs to guide visitors in from the A14. Not everyone has the electronic gadgetry, and some systems do let the user down!

On the Saturday evening some 30 members and friends from around the UK gathered at a restaurant in St Ives for a Curry Night which was deemed a great curtain-raiser for our Nationals. I got down to the Burgess Hall at 07.00hrs next morning to find our friendly 'Front-of House' man Paul was already opening up. He was not due on duty till 08.00hrs! An excellent start. Luckily the weather was dry so with traffic control in place, the set up went relatively smoothly. Cambridge and other members were on hand to help traders and exhibitors unload, and by 10.00hrs, when the public came in, we had ourselves a show!

Traders were mostly grouped in the main hall, with the Bring & Buy on the stage, and MAFVA branches filling in the gaps. We had a good selection of regulars from home and abroad, plus some new names offering a variety of kits, books and paraphernalia, so your money did not remain in your wallet for long. Also in the hall was the bar which was selling bacon butties from 09.00hrs, plus other snacks and drinks later on. In the Drama Centre we had set up the competitions with the organisation under the control of Bob Lockie safe in his bunker. Cambridge Branch and two IPMS SIGs were also there with Early War Miniatures. A novelty for the competition was the ability to close off the tables for judging, a real challenge whilst we were in the marquee at Duxford.

At the front of the building in the Foyer we had the Membership desk where Neil Wharton could handle enquiries, welcome new members and sell back issues of our house magazine Tankette. The Nottingham crew of Ali, Rita, Graham, Steve and Malcolm looked after the popular Tombola alongside their branch display, and also, for the first time, a model display by our friends from the Duxford Aviation Society M.T. section. Outside Paul Lambert had kindly brought along his Green Goddess, so we at least had one full-size M.V. with us. Upstairs we had numerous IPMS branches and independent clubs, all exhibiting marvellous models from all genres.

As always, the day went very quickly, although I was very pleased to welcome Heather Williams, former MAFVA treasurer and widow of 'El Presidente' Gary and spent some time showing her round the show so she could meet old friends.

Suddenly it was 16.00hrs and time to present the prizes. One or two 'challenges' to address, but as I read out the names of the winners, an excellent set of photos organised by Simon Ward and John Paulding illustrated the winning models on the screen behind.

The best of Show was a scratchbuilt 1/35th scale model of a T-27 by Yuri Gavrilov which follows the old school idea of producing a model not available from any kit manufacturer, one of the reasons MAFVA evolved over 50 years ago.

Feedback indicates that everyone enjoyed themselves, although a few improvements can be made. Must have been good, traders and clubs are already booking up for the MAFVA Nationals 2017, which will be on Fathers' Day again, Sunday June 18th, again at The Burgess Hall. Watch www.mafva.net/nationals for more information.

Paul Middleton - President, MAFVA.