

ORGANISERS of model engineering societies are often at their wits' end to find ways and means to enliven indoor meetings, or to stimulate flagging interest among members.

Even the most active societies experience slack periods; lecturers and demonstrators may be difficult to find, and funds may not be equal to the promotion of exhibitions or other schemes.

In a long experience of society activities I have found that few things stir up interest more than an informal exhibition of work in progress among

This is by no means a new idea, as many societies already organise their "bits and pieces" nights. In the case of one famous "gang," the one and only rule observed was that at every meeting, each "gangster" was required to produce some example of his handiwork, however small or simple.

It is worth while to remind societies who have not already instituted such a scheme, that it has many advantages, both to the club itself, and to its individual members. It enables them to follow, step by step, the progress of any individual member's model work, to discuss problems which may arise, and to offer helpful advice on any detail. Parts which might never be seen in the finished model may be examined, constructive criticism offered, and faults corrected at the

New members, or prospective members who visit club meetings, have an excellent opportunity to find out what is going on, and also to learn how this are done. Moreover, the comments and discussions which

Bits and pieces nights stimulate club activities

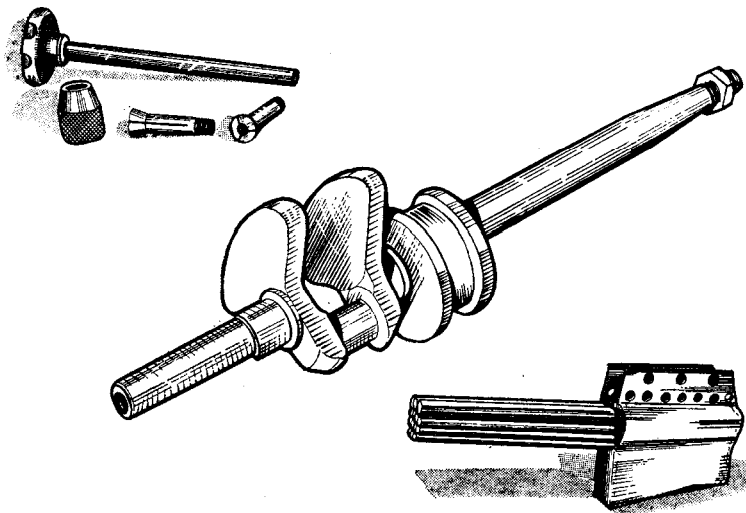
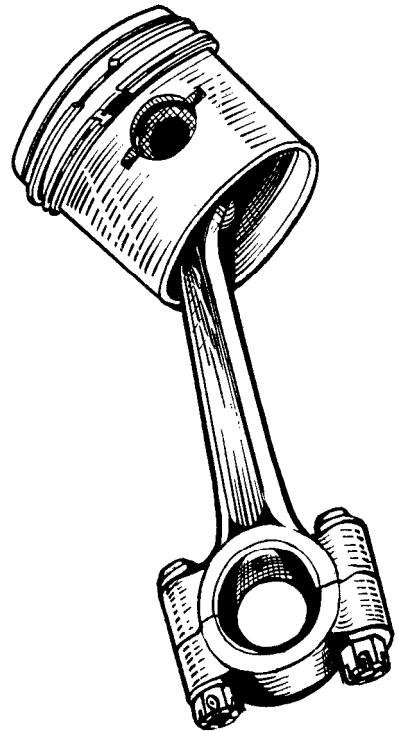
-says EDGAR T. WESTBURY

invariably take place are always informative and interesting.

One well-known club in the greater London area where "bits and pieces" meetings are held every month, usually produces a dozen or more exhibits, ranging from locomotive components, to tools, i.e. engines and ship models. At these meetings, the exhibits are eligible for competition, but there are no expert judges.

Each member present is invited to vote a certain number of points for each exhibit, representing his own personal opinion of its merit. At the end of the year these points are totalled up, and the member who has gained the greatest number of points is awarded a special prize.

In this particular case, evidence of the benefits obtained is shown in the way members look forward to "bits and pieces" nights, and also in the



progress which has been made by new or inexperienced members.

Another by-product of the scheme is that it is often the means of discovering new, or little known, methods.

In many cases, questions arise as to how a particular part was machined, or on some unusual process involved, and these may indicate the need for a lecture or practical demonstration.

The "bits and pieces" illustrated have no special significance, except that they indicate the sort of exhibit which often turns up at the meetings referred to. □