

The Whistleblower

August 2011

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Please welcome Ron Burnham to the club who joined us end of July. Ron is interested in OO.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- The storage room is now cleared of private layouts and is much tidier. As the N & O gauge groups are planning new layouts all spare space is at a premium. We are planning to empty the cupboards in the clubroom of old magazines to make more storage space for non layout items. Please note that some new shelves have been added to the end cupboard and that the spray booth, airbrush and resistance soldering is now stored there.
- We have now started the process of improving the website. Dave Arkley has kindly volunteered to help us on this. To attract people to the website we are planning to add a "How to" section on various subjects - please help us (if you are asked) to compile sections.
- Please remember we need to appoint another Treasurer in December. If you are interested please let a committee member know.
- The club is now a member of the Chilton Model Railway Association (CMRA). This association consists of 133 clubs and societies across the UK. Membership allows us to advertise our layouts (both club and private), access to a discounted insurance scheme, modeling events and much more. If anyone is interested in knowing more, please contact the Chairman.
- The next committee meeting is on 14th September.

PROGRAMME FOR AUG - SEPT

As the remainder of the year from September is very busy, I have published the activity to ensure everyone is aware of what is planned.

Date	Group Rota	Event	Subject
August			
Wed 3	O	0 gauge running night	
Wed 10	N		
Wed 17	OO		
Wed 24	P4	00 gauge running night	
Wed 31	O		
September			
Wed 7	N	0 gauge running night	
Wed 14	OO	Presentation	Low melt, ordinary and resistance soldering – Robin Baker
Sat 10/Sun 11		Wellington Centre	Greenfields Sidings at shopping centre publicity event
Wed 21	P4	Modelling competition	Entry rules published on the notice board
Wed 28	O	00 gauge running night	
October			
Wed 5	N	Briefing for exhibition	Attendance of all members requested @ 8pm
Fri 7		Exhibition set up	Loading at starts @ 3.00pm. Hall available @ 5.00pm
Sat 8 / Sun 9		Club exhibition	Attendance of all members requested to help
Wed 12	OO	Presentation	Subject TBA
Wed 19	P4	00 gauge running night	
Wed 26	O		
Saturday 29		Open day set up	Starts @ 1.00pm
Sunday 30		Club open day	Members attendance from 8.00 – 17.00hrs
November 2011/12 subs due			
Wed 2	N	0 gauge running night	
Wed 9	OO	Competition	Photography competition with Astolat and Liphook MRCs
Wed 16	P4	Presentation	Chris Webster slide show
Wed 23	O	00 gauge running night	
Wed 30	N	0 gauge running night	
December			
Wed 7		Annual General Mtg	Attendance of all members requested to participate
Wed 14	OO	Presentation	
Wed 21	P4	Mince Pie night	Social evening before Christmas
Wed 28		Club closed	

EXHIBITION DIARY

8/9th October - Weydon Rd & Brixcombe at the Club exhibition

22/23rd October - Basingstoke at Taunton

30th October - Greenfield Sidings & Basingstoke at the Club Open Day

5/6th November - Greenfield Sidings at IOW

19/20th November - Weydon Rd at the NEC

ANNUAL EVENTS

- The annual modelling competition. This will take place on 21st Sept - the categories and rules are on the notice board. Don't forget the "Loan" class for you just to show off your pet projects.
- The Club Open Day. To be held on Sunday 30th October - the club layouts being erected will be Greenfield Sidings (OO) and Basingstoke (N). David Harrington is co-ordinating activities to ensure the day is a success. Please note: this year we will be charging £1 entrance fee to cover the hall hire cost.
- The photographic competition. Liphook MRCs are organising this in November. Information will be available closer to the event but keep snapping.
- The Club AGM. This will be held on Wednesday 7th December 2011

Please take and circulate the flyers for our exhibition to other exhibitions, shops, friends, work - in fact anywhere where you think they will attract people to the event.

LAYOUT AND CLUB ACTIVITY

N gauge group - No report

OO gauge group - First of all, welcome to another Ron to the OO group - an ex SR engine driver at Feltham. He admits he is a beginner but he is learning fast and is very good at holding things while they are being soldered.

The 3rd rail alterations are going well, there is only one board outstanding. The "George & Dragon" on board 6 appears to be open for wedding receptions thanks to Adrian's work last Wednesday. Also there has been another delivery of farm animals. Don't forget The Wellington Centre.

P4 gauge group: As a consequence of attending in the GWR Study Group's exhibition in June, it was discovered the quality of running on the layout was not satisfactory. The P4 Group have been investigating the problem areas and have reached some conclusions which centre on the point kits used. These are of high quality but we probably made some mistakes in their deployment. First, we may have chosen some points of too sharp an angle (B6 or less when we should have gone for B7 or more). Second, we constructed some points on the plans provided with the kits rather than following the Templot plan we had made. This does not seem to have mattered in the case of points on a straight road but does seem to have contributed to derailments on points located on slightly curved roads. Finally, when we came to lay the track we took great pains over the alignments to try to get nice flowing curves through formations with the result that we got slight, but significant dog legs in some points which resulted in misalignments appearing between the units of which these point kits are made up. In particular, the units comprising the blades and stock rails came out of alignment with the closure rails and crossing. These faults were almost impossible to detect with the eye but were enough to cause an unacceptable amount of derailments. We have now removed the goods yard points which were the most troublesome, made a new drawing of the whole formation and constructed it as one single unit in the now rather old hat method of ply sleepers and rail soldered to rivets. This has now been bench tested with encouraging results and after detailing it with cosmetic chairs and fishplates it will be laid and tested. Further work also needs to be done on the entry road which presently has a troublesome point which may need modification or even removal.

O gauge group: Several long standing jobs have been started. The fascia has now been cut down to lighten it in preparation for suspending it from the rear - Eddie has sourced some new lightweight fluorescent tubes. The curtains have been "fire proofed" for Warley (they insist upon it). Unfortunately we have not been able to weather the track as insufficient numbers and hall access has prevented this - this is planned for 7th Sept when the group will hire the hall for that day.

A draft proposal is in circulation within the group for the new layout. The plan is to present this to the committee on 14th Sept.

AND ANOTHER THING BY DAVID HARRINGTON

I bought a 9F in 2mm. It's a lovely-looking thing, bristling with handrails, doors, knobs and valve-gear to die for. It's fully weathered, has details too small for the naked eye and it comes in a very nice box, complete with a packet of even smaller things for you to lose in the carpet.

But it didn't run. It lifted a rearmost driver once per rotation, just like that fat lady who works down the chippy. So I sent it back to "the manufacturers" with a polite note asking if it could be repaired or replaced. It came back the next day, without even so much as a cover note or a short message inviting me to go away.

There followed some 8 hours of fettling by two of Club's expert 2mm fettlers. While I admire their skills and am grateful for the sheer determination expended on my behalf, the result of all that effort is that the loco no longer lifts its left buttock as it rounds a bend; it now lifts one of its pony wheels, leaves the track and lies on its side in the undergrowth. In that posture the tender becomes detached again. Depending on how it feels at the time, it might go through a point or it might not. And if it does go through in one direction it won't in the other.

I hate to admit it, but I also have a brand new B17, covered in finely-detailed accessories, that hurls itself off the rails as soon as it senses the gentlest of bends. In desperation I fitted a third-party bogie in the hope that said third party is better at making the loco go round corners than the folk who designed, built and (in theory) tested it. It worked. But I can now add a fiver to the thick end of a hundred quid that the loco cost in the first place. One of last month's mags casually reported - as though this is par for the course - that one of the 2 "review" models of the new Dapol Halls refused to go when it glimpsed the test track. I repeat - a review model!

I can't help marvelling that we, as modellers, passively put up with this outrageous situation. The editorial in the 4th edition of N'spirations magazine offers this thought: "Bearing in mind the packaging proclamation, it's probably time that the enthusiast's accuracy side was favoured and became the design priority...." With the greatest respect, Mr Editor, OH NO IT'S NOT!

Speaking as an "enthusiast", albeit an inexperienced one, the design priority should be that the model runs perfectly out of the box on trackwork that has been laid by the average modeller and that it needs no adjustments whatsoever to persuade it to do so. If that can be done while preserving accuracy, fine. If not, accuracy must suffer.

But, given that such basic reliability seems inversely proportional to the degree of fine detail on the model, isn't there a trading standards issue here? Shouldn't the adverts (and the reviews) be more honest about the more adventurous projects and say: "A beautifully detailed miniature of its Class. Not suitable for children or modellers wishing to operate a layout. For display purposes only." At least this would provide opportunity for the manufacturer to shed his ineffective quality control staff.

However, given that such a move is rather unlikely, this inexperienced modeller is resolved to return any model that is reluctant to run as it should, and to keep returning until such time as an acceptable sample is provided. Enough is enough!