

The Whistleblower

November 2013

IT'S TIME FOR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The new club financial year started on 1st November. Will all members please pay their Annual Subscription as soon as possible please. This helps the Treasurer and the committee keep control of the club finances and avoid chasing late payment. Thank you.

AGM CALLING NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the club will be held on Wednesday 11th December 2013 at the Wrecclesham Community Centre, Greenfield Road, Wrecclesham at 8.00 p.m. to transact the following business:

- Apologies for absence.
- Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
- Matters arising from the previous Annual General meeting.
- Chairman's report.
- Treasurer's report and accounts for the year to 31 October 2012.
- To set the annual subscription for the year 1 November 2013 to 31 October 2014.
- Exhibition Manager's report.
- Election of Officers and Layout Committee Representatives
- Election of Independent Reviewer of the accounts.
- A.O.B.
 - Annual club dinner

Motions from the membership for inclusion in the agenda must be received by the Secretary in writing at the latest 14 days before the AGM.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- The committee meeting scheduled for the 23rd Oct was postponed due to the Chairman's sickness and the Secretary being on holiday. This will be rescheduled.
- The Annual Exhibition took place on the weekend of 12/13th October. Attendance was better than last year - up by around 4%, profits from the event increased and many positive comments were received. This was a very successful show. Thank you to Noel Leaver and his team for organizing the show, David Taylor, out of sight keeping track of the finances and all the members who helped over the weekend.
- The accounts for 2012/3 are now being prepared and being sent for independent review. These will be presented to the membership at the AGM by the Treasurer.
- The club open day on Sunday 27th October went very well with over 60 visitors. We have a number of visitors who are interested in joining the club as a result. We also made £84 for club funds.
- The Christmas Dinner is being organized for the evening of 18th December at The Sandrock pub. Please see the separate email on this.

PROGRAMME FOR 2013

October			
Wed 2	N	0 gauge running night	
Wed 9	OO	Exhibition briefing	Members attendance @ 8pm
Friday 11	-	Exhibition set up	Loading 3.00pm. Hall 5.00pm
Sat 12 / Sun 13	-	Club exhibition	Attendance of all members req'd
Wed 16	P4	N gauge running night	
Wed 23	O		
Sun 27		Club open day	Organised by Dave Harrington.
Wed 30	N	00 gauge running night	
November - 2012/13 subscriptions due			
Wed 6	OO	0 gauge running night	
Wed 13	O	Competition	Photography comp @ F&DMRC
Wed 20	N	N gauge running night	
Wed 27	P4	00 gauge running night	
December			
Wed 4			
Wed 11	OO	Annual General Mtg	Members attendance @ 8pm
Wed 18	O	Social event	Christmas dinner
Wed 25	-	Club closed	

Christmas Dinner - 18th December

If you want to go contact the Chairman asap to book your place

EXHIBITION DIARY

Club layouts

- 9/10th Nov - Weydon Road @ Tolworth

Exhibitions of interest

- 9/10th Nov - Hampton Ct MRS, Tolworth
- 16/17th Nov - Solent MRG, Southampton
- 23/24 Nov - Warley MRC, NEC
- 24th Nov - Hurley O Gauge, Bourne End
- 30th Nov - South Hants MRC, Portsmouth
- 7th Dec - Guildford O gauge, Reading

ANNUAL EVENTS IN 2013

Diary dates for members, here are the club events to be held throughout the year.

- The photographic competition. This will be organised by F&DMRC and held in our club rooms on Wednesday 13th November. Entry instructions were published in the last newsletter and on the club notice board.
- Club AGM. This will be held on Wednesday 11th December in the club room - an agenda and calling notice is posted on the front page of this newsletter. All members are encouraged to attend and take part in this very important meeting.
- Christmas Dinner. This is being organised for 18th December at The Sandrock pub close to the club.

LAYOUT REPORTS

N gauge group: We were able to run trains at our exhibition including (to the surprise of most of us) large parts of the automated fiddle yard - thanks to a lot of work by Greg. We are now sorting out the layout supports, and fixing remaining wiring problems and some dodgy bits of track. Next is to mount the point motors for the fiddle yard and start on the scenery and more of the buildings. We are increasingly aware of having committed to take Wickwar to the exhibition in Yate on 1 Feb!

We also enjoyed having Basingstoke up and running at the Open Day.

OO gauge group: Well, we did it! The layout was finished in time for the exhibition, the fault with the points mentioned last month was found by Ian and Wilf. It was the new super upgraded CDU for the point motors, they had been upgraded so much that they blew half the diodes in the matrix. So I was told - it's all Greek to me.

Trains ran well on the extended sidings. In fact, there was a mini competition to see who could haul the longest train. The record appears to be 12 coaches for the passenger and 30 tanks for the freight. Comments from the public included "it's nice to see something running all the time (well most of the time) and "Daddy, why does that man keep touching the train" - I was shunting at the time.

The test track was well used on the Open Day. Some junior visitors worked their way through several stock boxes and the record for an Inter-city 125 was about 200 mph but it stayed on the track so it can't be that bad. The P4 track is to be re-laid with the "proper" scale track by the P4 group so we shall have even more users.

P4 gauge group: The group have agreed that Brixcombe deserves some better facilities for operators and these include illuminated indicator panel(s) and end to end bell communication. We have embarked on this, and the move to common return wiring that it requires, with the objective of completing the work in good time for our Tonbridge appearance in February 2014.

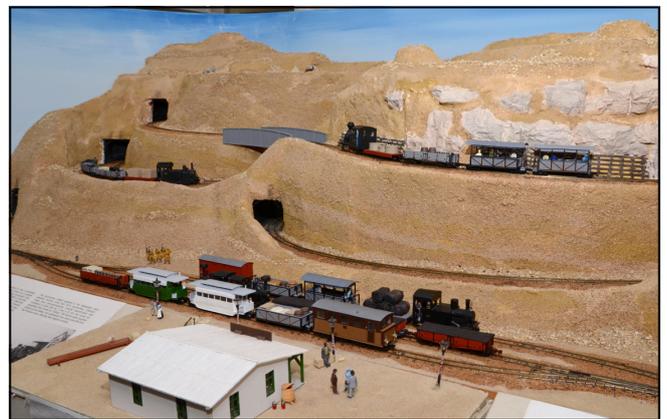
O gauge group: The new layout is going well, we are now gluing down cork. The next move is fitting the hinged fiddle yard bases and working out the best way to arrange the mounting of the moving sector plate. The group are planning to use cassettes to hold stock, there should be space on the fiddle yards for five and each being 48 inches long (loco and two coaches). Ron & Eddie are starting to think about the electrics and panel wiring, that should give us something to think about over the next few months??. Next outing is Tolworth on the 8/9/10th Nov..

OPEN DAY PICTURES

By Richard Harris



Simon Hucker's East End



Julian Evison's Khan

THE CONWY VALLEY LINE

By Ian George

The Conwy valley line is 30 miles long, running south from the North Wales coast mainline at Llandudno to the slate industry town of Blaenau Ffestiniog 800 feet above sea level. It was built by the LNWR in an attempt to seize a share of the lucrative slate traffic from the GWR and Ffestiniog Railway and bring it down to a purpose-built quay and sidings (now a marina and hotel complex) on the Conwy estuary at Deganwy. Because the mountainous terrain made the southern end of the line extremely difficult and expensive to build the LNWR began its construction as a narrow gauge line. Realising the transhipment costs that would occur when this narrow gauge line met the rest of its system it converted the construction to standard gauge. The final obstacle to be overcome was the tunnel under Moel Dyrnogydd which took 5 years to bore and at 2 miles 338 yards long is the longest single-bore tunnel in use on Network Rail. Because of conditions in the tunnel the line was one of the first passenger services to be converted to diesel multiple unit operation by BR in March 1956, however freight continued to be steam hauled until the end of steam in the mid 60's. Imagine the conditions for the crew on the footplate of a Black5 working hard on a heavy freight climbing the steep grade through that 2+miles long single bore tunnel!

The line would have been a prime candidate for closure by BR but for the fortunate fact that following the closure of the GWR line in 1961 the Conwy valley line remained the only acceptable route to transport nuclear flasks through the Snowdonia National Park to the nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd 7 miles south of Blaenau. The power station and its rail connection closed in 1998 but the nuclear business had enabled the line to survive into the era where it can continue as a community and tourist line, sharing a purpose-built terminus with the Ffestiniog railway which had successfully re-opened back to Blaenau from Porthmadog in 1982. In the holiday season Arriva Trains operates 6 return trips per day using class 150 2-car DMU's, timed to link with the Ffestiniog trains. The round trip takes about 3 hours, and at £8.10 return is a steal.

The line is scenically stunning, falling into 3 distinct landscapes. Leaving the coastal mainline with its LNWR signal boxes and semaphores the line runs on a low embankment at the edge of the wide Conwy estuary (views of herons, cormorants and various ducks, geese and waders) and then follows the twisting river up the valley as far as Betws-y-Coed. South of Betws-y-Coed the line becomes a spectacular mountain railway as it climbs at 1 in 47 into the upper Lledr river valley. Here the scenery and engineering wouldn't disgrace a Swiss railway, the sharp reverse curves running on ledges, through rocky cuttings and tunnels and across viaducts. The Snowdonia Park mountain range looms above. Finally the line plunges into the long tunnel which seems to go on forever before emerging into the distinctive Blaenau landscape of slate tips and industrial archaeology and into the interchange station with the Ffestiniog.

This has got to be one of the very best rail trips in the UK and is a must for everyone's bucket list. Highly recommended.



1879 built Merddin Emrys at Blaenau



Arriva class 150 at Blaenau interchange station



Deganwy LNWR Box



Llandudno Box and gantry

TAIL LAMPS AND SIDE LAMPS

By Noel Leaver

All trains ought to have tail lights, but often models do not - a pity as it is not difficult to add them. The basic rules were agreed through the Railway Clearing House in 1867 and (with modifications) are still used today; many companies had similar rules before this. Before 1950 each company had its own rule book based on the standard RCH rules but with slight variations. The following contains what I have been able to determine about the grouping companies rules (not complete). I have not covered special cases such as lamps on slip coaches on the IoW.

The lamps had to be fitted at all times when running (and removed promptly when not required) but only needed to be lit at night, poor visibility, or other special circumstances. As late as the early 60s a separate lamp had to be used on even DMUs and EMUs fitted with built in lights, and some carried lamps even in the late 70s. The Blue Pullman had lamp brackets but the rules were changed shortly after it came into use in 1960. Flashing electric lamps replaced oil lamps in the late 70s. There are several styles of lamp that differ in the shape of handle. A curved handle across the sides was used by SR and GWR, BR used a similar V shaped handle. The LMS used a curved handle front to back though often the other styles as well. LNER lamps seem not to have had handles. The cases of BR tail lamps were white; some grouping companies used different colours: LMS black or aluminium; LNER red for passenger trains and white for goods; GWR and SR red until about 1935 then white.



Springside make lamps for N, OO, and O, in many different styles and colours (Gaugemaster among others stock them). The carrying handles need painting black, or replacing with blackened wire as even in O they are over-scale, in fact in N they arguably look better cut off (as in the photo above). A block of white plastic strip with a red dot painted on looks almost as good in N.

In BR days passenger trains and fully fitted freight trains only required one red tail light, usually central or offset towards the left side (the SR required it to be on the left). The exact position depends on where the lamp bracket was. The photo on the right is a Farish MK1 coach fitted with an etched rubbing plate from TPM (which includes a lamp bracket each side), and a cover over the corridor connector that passenger trains often had over the front and rear corridor connectors to help keep the weather and sparks out (the TPM etch includes one of these), and a Springside tail lamp (supplied unpainted with no jewel) with the handle painted black.



While the last vehicle in the train was usually a brake, it did not have to be for a fully fitted train. However the tail lamp still had to be on the end of the train so some fitted vans had lamp brackets for this reason, and I think all passenger rated stock did. From September 1969 brake vans were no longer required on fitted freight trains unless they were carrying dangerous loads, though the tail lamp was still needed. Pre-grouping all trains required side lamps as well, companies dropped this requirement at different times. On passenger trains they were not required after about 1924 except the GWR required them until 1934. The LNER dropped the need for side lights on fully fitted freights in 1934 and BR adopted this rule, but they were always needed on unfitted or partially fitted trains. The rules about side lamps were complex. Two lamps high up shone a white light forwards as well as showing a light to the rear, so the loco crew could check the brake van was still attached to the train! Thus these lights have to be mounted so they are sticking out a little beyond the van side. The position of the brackets varies on different designs of brake van; on the LNER they were on the cab sides. It is best to check a photograph if you can. These lamps had 2 lenses and the body was usually painted black in BR days, though some seem to have been white. The SR was an exception as they considered the two side lamps sufficient on their own and did not require a tail lamp on a freight train, though SR brake vans would show one when running on other companies' lines.

The colours to be shown to the rear depended on the track the train was on (quite a challenge to change these when your train crosses between tracks!). Usually both would show red to the rear. However, if running on the slow line (of a 4 track line) or on a relief line or goods loop next to the mainline, the light on the side nearest the main line had to be white (if the colour shown could not be changed, the lamp had to be removed). A train on a relief line next to a slow line (i.e. the third parallel line running in the same direction) would show two red lights. The photo on the left shows a BR period unfitted brake with lights appropriate for running on the slow line next to the fast line. One light has been changed from white to red by painting it with Artists vermilion oil paint: this is translucent so looks better than ordinary enamel as the jewel still reflects light.

The above were the standard rules, and applied in BR days. However, most group companies had slightly different rules about side lights. The LMS omitted the side lamps if on the third parallel line. The GWR rather than having a light showing white backwards omitted it, and on the third parallel line had no side lights. The SR rule book says "special regulations will be issued" but I don't know what they were.

Finally, in OO or N if you never intend to couple anything to the rear of the brake van, why not remove the ugly automatic coupling? If you want, add a dummy 3-link coupling such as the ones produced by Scalelink as shown.

ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

2 railway articles this month - please keep them coming. . Why not write something for the newsletter - It can be about anything around railways and if you have pictures as well then that's fantastic. Any electronic delivery method is acceptable.

