

WHISTLEBLOWER

The Newsletter of the Farnham & District Model Railway Club

Easter 2015 Edition

Welcome to the Easter edition of Whistleblower. The Club continues to be a hive of activity and your Committee is busy making plans for the future. Details of some of these are set out below.

Club Night Activities 2015

Your committee is intending to revive the idea of holding occasional presentation/ demonstration nights.

The first of these is being planned for Weds 29th April, and will consist of a number of mini-presentations/demonstrations, hopefully on a variety of subjects.

If any member would like to give a 15 minute talk or demonstration on a railway / modelling related subject, please make contact asap with Ian George on club nights or via email to ian.george@keme.co.uk.

Please don't be shy in coming forward ; the more offers we receive the more chance we have of putting on a varied and interesting programme for the evening.

The second evening is being planned provisionally for Weds 29th July in the form of a demonstration/ hands on evening on the subject of weathering techniques, airbrush, powders etc . More details to follow.

Editor's Note: Future events will be planned to coincide with those months where we have a 5th Wednesday in the month.

Wrecclesham Community Centre Representative

Ian Gordon has had to stand down as our representative on the Community Centre management Committee. David Taylor has agreed to take his place. We all thank Ian for all his work in representing us.

Club Insurance

The Club insurance has been renewed for another year. A copy of our Public Liability Insurance Certificate will be displayed on the Club Notice Board. If any member requires a personal copy then they should speak to Ron Patterson (Treasurer) or Mike Le Marie (Secretary).

Club Open Day

The 2015 Club Open Day will be held on Sunday 22nd of November. Please put this date in your diaries.

News from Abroad

Our long time member, Jim Wheaton, has arrived in California, his new home, and has even found time to contact us. In response to our request for a report on how he's

blending in with the local modeling community, he says -I haven't had much time for modeling, but things are beginning to settle down now, so I will see what I can do. So watch this space for an inside track into the trials and tribulations of an expat Brit in the Bay Area Model Railroad scene.

Data Protection

Your Committee has been examining the Club's responsibilities under the Data Protection Act. The personal details provided on the Membership Application Form are stored electronically, but access is severely restricted and never passed to a third party. We are required to obtain positive assent from every member that they agree to their details being stored in this way. The membership Application Form has been updated and we will shortly be sending a form to all members to obtain their consent.

Sleeping Car Services on BR

At the Reading 0 gauge show last December I was admiring a model of an ex LMS 12 wheeled sleeping car, beautifully built and painted in BR maroon. Note these were always referred to as 'cars' rather than 'coaches'. It started me thinking how sleeping cars seem to be overlooked by modellers, and why this should be so?

Most of us who were watching trains in the 1950s and 60s when sleeper services were in their heyday rarely saw them as by their very nature they were night-birds, and few of us probably realised just how many sleeping cars, and how many regular nightly sleeper services there were at that time. Since then the combined effects of faster journey times, universal car ownership, growth of domestic air travel, and changed methods of doing business have reduced the number of scheduled sleeping car services in the UK to just 3 round trips per night linking London to Penzance and Scotland, and the sleeping car fleet reduced to less than 90 cars. And so for the modeller, sleeper trains and their sleeping cars tend to be forgotten and rarely seen on model railways. This is a pity as they would add interest and variety.

In the 1950s and 60s each of the regions of British Rail ran overnight sleeper trains covering a wide range of destinations. The Western region ran nightly sleeper services between Paddington and the West Country and West Wales. The Eastern region ran services between Kings Cross and Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland. The Scottish region ran services to and from Glasgow/ Edinburgh and Aberdeen/Inverness. There were also several 'inter-regional' 'cross country' sleeper services connecting the South West to Lancashire, the North East and Scotland. The Southern had its specialist Night Ferry services.

However, the largest user of sleeper services was the London Midland region which ran an incredible 14 up and 14 down services per night. Of these 7 ran each way between Euston and Scotland (including to Glasgow, Perth, Inverness, Stranraer and others), plus services each way between Euston and Liverpool, Manchester, Holyhead, and Cumbria.

The LM region sleeper trains weren't just confined to serving London. In addition to the London trains there were sleeper services from Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester to and from Glasgow and Edinburgh. Nor were the services confined to linking the major cities. Effort was made to include destinations which we would find surprising. For example one of the Euston -Glasgow sleeper trains was run via the former GSWR route to give access to towns such as Dumfries and Kilmarnock. Another Euston to Glasgow

sleeper stopped northbound to pick up sleeper passengers at Rugby, Nuneaton, Tamworth and Stafford. A sleeping car was detached at Preston. Perhaps the strangest for us is the Euston to Windermere sleeper service, a section of which ran around the Cumbrian coast serving Barrow, Workington and Whitehaven.

Another indication of the scale of the nightly operation is that on nationalisation in 1948 the LMS alone passed on to the new British Railways over 250 sleeping cars, most of which ran until the mid 1960s and some into the mid 70s before being replaced by BR Mark 1 sleepers of which BR built 380 cars. And what magnificent vehicles these ex LMS sleeping cars were; the all-firsts and composites being 69 feet in length, as heavy as 47 tons and running on 12 wheeled bogies.

From the modeller's point of view it's informative to look at the formations of these sleeper services. Of the 28 nightly trains run by the London Midland region only 2 comprised entirely of sleeper accommodation, this being the 21.10 Euston to Glasgow and its corresponding up service. This comprised of 11 sleeping cars plus 3 full brakes. Note that sleeper trains would usually include at least one full brake which was used to carry bedding and other supplies for the sleeping cars. This particular train, always 8P Duchess hauled, was the heaviest scheduled passenger train on the LM region, weighing 564 tons which was just 6 tons inside the load limit for an 8P class loco over the northern fells, and was second only to the West Coast Postal train in terms of priority. The remainder of the sleeper trains, although departing with between 11 and 16 coaches, contained typically 3 or 4 sleeping cars, the rest of the train being ordinary coaches for seated passengers, plus at least 2 or 3 full brakes. Some but not all included some form of dining car(s), and some included Post Office sorting vans, which would also make unusual subjects for the modeller.

Attractive as these lengthy train formations are there is also a more practical option for the space-starved modeller. At various points along the route some of these lengthy trains were split to serve different destinations resulting in a far more manageable train for the modeller. This could be a train consisting of a couple of sleeping cars with their accompanying full brake, plus a few coaches for seated passengers headed by a modest class 5 loco. Very tempting.

Finally let us indulge in some pure nostalgia. It's just after midnight in the early 1960s and we are standing at the end of the departure platforms at Euston. During the evening so far we have already watched 8 sleeper trains leave, and the last 3 are about to make a spectacular departure.

First away from platform 13, is the 00.10hrs Glasgow sleeper; 15 coaches including 5 sleeping cars and a 2 car dining set. This train was usually allocated to one of the best pair of the 8P Duchess pacifics, the post-war built roller-bearing fitted examples, which will take the train as far as Carlisle. Next away from platform 12 is the 00.30hrs Liverpool sleeper with 11 coaches. Having seen one of the newest ex-LMS pacifics on the Glasgow we now see one of the oldest, an Edge Hill shedded 8P Princess pacific working back home. Ten minutes later from platform 14 we see the departure of the last of the trio, the 00.40hrs Manchester sleeper. Although loaded to 30 tons heavier than the preceding Liverpool train, this train clearly illustrates the LM region's chronic shortage of 8P engines. With Manchester never having an allocation of 8P pacifics the Longsight shed crew will have to make the best of their 5P Jubilee, both engine and fireman having to work to their maximum to keep time.

Across the 11 sleeper departures we will have seen 4 'Duchesses', 1 'Princess', 4 'Scots', a 'Britannia' which will have its work cut out on the 16 coach Holyhead sleeper, and the 'Jubilee'. Not a bad night's entertainment for the price of a platform ticket.

Happy days!
Ian George

Who remembers Wink Martindale

During the 1960s a controversial record 'Deck of Cards' told the story of a soldier placed on a charge for opening a deck of playing cards during a church service. His defence was that to him the deck of cards was a source of knowledge on a range of subjects. The record was banned by the BBC thus ensuring greater success for its performer, Wink Martindale.

Like thousands of other 'Spotters' spending hours sitting by the lineside during the endless summers of youth, while waiting for the passing of the next train I would browse my precious Ian Allan 'British Railways Locomotives, combined edition'. To us Spotters this was far more than a collection of engine numbers; like the 'Deck of Cards' it was a tardis of information on a huge range of topics.

For example in maths it provided an introduction to the concept of zero as a number, thereby demonstrating how the GWR could have 30 'King' class loco's the last of which was numbered 29. Similarly with 30 'Counties' and 30 'Manors', the last of each of these classes being numbered 1029 and 7829.

The 'Kings' provided a valuable history lesson, being a list of English kings in correct chronological order working backwards to 6029 King Stephen. I always thought it a pity that the GWR didn't build 3 more as this would have taken us back to William the Conqueror, 1066 and all that.

The list of kings also covers the Abdication crisis of 1936 which must have annoyed the GWR no end. The class started at 6000 with the then King, George V, who then most inconveniently died and was replaced by Edward VIII. No sooner had the GWR solved that problem by renaming 6029 as Edward but that ungrateful monarch resigned, causing the GWR to have to rename 6028 after his successor George VI. Fortunately for the number series the next monarch was a Queen!

The GWR wasn't alone as a source of knowledge about royalty. More fascinating information came from the LMS 'Princess' class of 12 loco's, the last one this time actually being numbered 12 as there was no longer a number 2. This had been the ill-fated 'Princess Anne', formerly the Turbomotive, subsequently destroyed in the 1952 Harrow rail crash. The 'Princess' class included a number of mysterious Royals, not least of which was the intriguingly named 'Princess Arthur'. That name certainly provided food for thought for young Spotters!

The 'Counties' provided a lesson in the English language. Contrary to most Spotters' belief, the GWR's use of the abbreviated form of eg 'County of Hants' was not done so that the name would fit on the standard size nameplate. The words 'county' and 'shire' are synonymous so their use together, eg 'County of Hampshire' would be tautological.

Not words in common use amongst Spotters! Sadly this lesson still has to be learned by the presenters of BBC's "Countryfile".

As a geography lesson the "Counties" still provide suitably obscure answers for Quiz shows eg who has heard of the counties of Brecknock, or Radnor?

As the GWR continued to build ever more "Castles, Halls, Manors and Granges" the Swindon naming department became ever more desperate in the search of suitable country piles to provide names resulting in at least 1 "Manor" carrying the name of a non-existent place. Fortunately the GWR found 14 places that had 2 buildings worthy of a name. The team member who discovered the village of Broughton would have earned his bonus as that place was found to have a Hall which became 4907, and a Castle (5033), and also a Grange(6805)

However, for me the locomotive class that provided the most fascinating collection of knowledge was the LMS class of 190 "Jubilees". After the class leader, "Silver Jubilee" we begin with a comprehensive tour of the British Empire at its peak, starting with provinces of Canada ("Manitoba", "Saskatchewan" etc) and the states of Australia ("Victoria", "Tasmania" etc). We then cover India, ("Kashmir", "Punjab", "Kolkata" etc), head through Africa ("Nyasaland", "Bechuanaland", "Basutoland", "Tanganyika" etc) before sweeping through the Caribbean ("Bahamas" and "Leeward Islands" etc), through the Persian Gulf states, and finally heading through the Far East with eg "Straits Settlements", "Sarawak" and "North Borneo". The list ends in the Pacific with "Gilbert and Ellice Islands" and "New Hebrides", now firm favourites of BBC "Pointless" contestants as the modern day countries of "Kiribati", "Tuvalu" and "Vanuatu".

Having exhausted the Empire we have a list of several dozen famous Admirals, from "Raleigh" and "Frobisher" through to "Jellicoe" and "Fisher". Following them are famous naval battles against the Dutch, French, Spanish and Germans from the "Armada" through "Trafalgar" to "Jutland". Continuing the naval theme we have dozens of famous Royal Navy warships from "Victory", through "Dreadnought" to "Repulse" and "Amethyst".

Incidentally, and information not in my ABC, the frigate HMS Amethyst, shelled by the Chinese on the Yangtse river in 1949, was home to Simon the cat who held the rank of Able Seacat and is the only cat to be awarded the Dicken Medal for outstanding acts of animal bravery in wartime.

Bizarrely we then have the locomotives from the Rainhill Trials of 1825, "Perseverance", "Novelty" and "Sanspareil", and we finish with the provinces of Ireland, "Ulster", "Munster" etc. Plenty there to fire the imagination a young Spotter until the next "cop" came steaming along.

To paraphrase the end of the song: "I know; I was that Spotter."

Happy Days

Ian George

O Gauge brass wagons - mass production!

In the summer of 2014 several of the club's O gauge group had their flabbers gasted at the prices O gauge brass wagons were making on Ebay. After the usual one foot in the grave imitation of "I don't believe it" the challenge was taken on.

Ian George pointed out that one of the traders was offering a special deal to Gauge O Guild members on a new kit he was introducing. A BR 13T 5 planked Fitted Open of which 650 were built in 1949/50 based upon a GWR design at Ashford - strange! The kit was being offered for £20 each with a very special offer of £55 if you buy 3 kits. Well, I couldn't resist, so I asked what the deal was for 10 kits - £17 each. Excellent value. A deal on wheels was negotiated at the Telford show so the total cost of parts was £24 - cheaper than a plastic kit.

Delivery was made at the end of October and mass production started. Many of you may have seen me over the last 2 months, head down, not talking (unusual) and hot iron in hand building these kits. The body is brass and comes as part of a single etch bent up (carefully) to form the wagon box to which you add riveted corner plates to stabilise everything. The underframe consists of etched parts bent into a girder shapes to form the solebars, frame and buffer beams and then soldered together - it sounds difficult but it is quite easy once you get the hang of it. The underframe is then soldered onto the wagon body which means the basic parts are finished. All detailing, buffers and W irons are white metal so its then a case of taking things slowly to add these with low melt solder to the body - it's time consuming doing this and cleaning up excess solder but the results are excellent.

So far I have built 3 wagons and started a 4th. The plan is to build 5 and then paint, transfer and weather these in the spring. Then the big decision comes - do I put them on Ebay and see if I can get the stupid prices of last summer or make up another train for running on Weydon Road. Another 5 to build after that.

The point of all this is you don't have to pay silly prices for O gauge if you are prepared to have a crack at building. If you haven't built a brass kit before then practice makes perfect. If you need instruction then advice is available at the club. Give it a crack - it's good fun.

Written by Ron Patterson