

WHISTLEBLOWER

September 2015

The Newsletter of the Farnham & District Model Railway Club

Welcome to the September Edition of Whistleblower. There are a lot of Club Notices which you are asked to read carefully and take note.

Modelling Competition – 16th September 2015

The Annual Club Modelling Competition will be held on the 16th of September. There are categories to cover all the popular scales and include locomotives, rolling stock, buildings and other scenic items. Please do try and enter something so that our Judges are really made to work hard.

General Meeting – 30th September 2015

A General Meeting of the Club will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 30th September at 7pm. The formal notice was placed on the Club Noticeboard on Wednesday August 26th and a copy of the notice along with the accompanying notes are included with this Newsletter.

Presentation Evening – 30th September 2015

Following the General Meeting Ron Patterson will present a follow-up to his Air-Brushing presentation. A number of spray booths will be set up and members will all have an opportunity to use their **own** equipment (compressors, airbrushes, paint etc) to get practical experience under guidance. This is a chance to get started and test your own equipment. Please bring along some models to paint. Don't forget the notes that were sent out.

Annual Club Exhibition – Aldershot – 10th and 11th October 2015

This is the most important event of the year, as the Club's financial stability very much depends on our exhibition being successful. Running an exhibition successfully is dependent on having enough members present to undertake all the necessary jobs ie ticket desk, car parking, stewarding, manning Club Layouts and the Club Second Hand Stall.

If you are able to attend then please do so even if it is only for two or three hours. The Exhibition Manager, Noel Leaver, will be carrying out a full briefing and allocation of duties at our Club Meeting on Wednesday 7th October.

You are asked to note that major water main works are being undertaken in the area of Lower Farnham Road. At this time we do not know where they will be working and it is possible that it may be necessary to take a diversionary route to reach the Connaught Centre.

Members are also asked to, where possible, support the traders attending the exhibition by making purchases of those items you have been considering for a while!

Club Open Day – 22nd November 2015

The annual Club Open Day will be held on Sunday 22nd November. Layouts on display will be Weydon Road and Wickwar plus the OO Gauge test track. Private layouts by Wilf Pateman and John Yarhams OO Gauge shunting layout.

Setting up will be in the afternoon/evening of Saturday 21st November.

The object of the Open Day is to encourage/recruit new members, have an enjoyable day and hopefully make a little money. If you are available then please do come along.

Other Dates (Details to follow)

Wednesday 2nd December – Club Annual General Meeting.

Wednesday 16th December – Club Christmas Dinner.

Annual Photographic Competition

In past years we have held an Annual Photographic Competition in conjunction with the Astolat and Lodden Vale or Liphook Clubs. This year Astolat has said it is no longer interested and the others have not replied.

The Committee would like to hear members' opinions on whether we should hold our own competition and in particular is there anyone who would like to organise it?

Data Protection Act

In the last Whistleblower we asked all members to fill in and sign a Club Membership Form which included the statement on the Club's Data Protection Policy. Roughly half of the Full Members have done so. Those who have not are requested to do so as soon as possible. Forms are available in the Club Rooms. Once completed they should be handed to Mike Le Marie – the Club Secretary.

Club Diary

The Club Diary for the rest of 2015 is attached.

FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

NOTICE is hereby given that a General Meeting of the Farnham & District Model Railway Club will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 30th of September to consider the following motion:

That the motion passed at the 2014 Annual General Meeting held on the 3rd of December 2014 to increase the 2015/16 Annual Subscription Rate from £75 to £85 for Full Members be rescinded so that the Annual Subscription Rate remains at £75.

No other formal business will be transacted at the meeting.

Michael Le Marie
Secretary
Farnham & District Model Railway Club

Notes: A summary of the Club Finances is attached to this notice.

This General Meeting is necessary because the revised rates of subscription would have taken effect on the 1st November 2015 which is prior to the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

CLUB FINANCES (Summary)

What's the Club for? It's to share a hobby with friends

Background

1: A motion to raise subs from £75 to £85 in FY 2015-16 was put to the 2013-14 AGM, but the meeting was not provided with a detailed review of alternative options. Nevertheless members voted by show of hands in favour of the motion by 15 to 10. The vote was followed by intense discussion that gave rise to a further motion:

“Having due regard to the degree of dissent among the membership, and having due regard to the reported review by Farnham Town Council of the rental applicable to the Club’s use of the Community Centre, and having due regard to the motion approved by show of hands to increase membership subs from £75 to £85, it is proposed that the Committee be tasked to conduct a thorough review of the Club’s financial situation and available options and, if appropriate, to call an Extraordinary General Meeting to present such options to the membership and to recommend an optimum strategy for the short and longer terms.”

That second motion was approved by show of hands, 29 to 2.

2 Costs The Club is subject to two main costs. There is the unavoidable cost of running the Club, such as rental for premises and insurance – “running costs”. There is also the Club’s policy of paying for (and thus owning) its layouts.

3 Revenues We have two main sources of income: members’ subs and profit from our annual exhibition.

4 Club Policy Traditionally we have sought to maintain, each year, an excess of subs over running costs. In parallel with this we have attempted, with considerable success, to build up our reserves. The view of the Committee, as endorsed at last year’s AGM, is that we need significant reserves to protect against two possibilities – a notice to quit our Club premises (necessitating a short-term but nevertheless expensive need to store our layouts while searching for new premises) and a possible collapse of exhibition profitability.

5 The current challenge Over the last decade membership subs have risen more or less in line with running costs, but these exceeded subs in the FY ending 31 October (£4026 costs, £3838 income from subs). While this reduction is approximately the equivalent of “only” 2 full memberships, the trend must be carefully monitored. More importantly, however, we are advised that Farnham Town Council intends to review the “economic rent” for the Community Centre as a whole. There is no announced timescale for this but we are aware that the Club’s rent to the Centre has not risen for two years. We might therefore expect a significant increase in the foreseeable future.

7 Options Your committee has considered the financial options open to the Club:

A Do nothing – keep status quo. This is the position we are trying to avoid. Unless we take action to improve our finances we could be forced to dip in to our reserves or divert money from our layouts.

B Seek new premises. The need to seek new premises would arise only if any increase in rental could not be met by the Club. A previous Committee investigated the possibility of finding new premises, but was unable to find any that matched the Club's needs and were affordable.

C Use our reserves to plug the gap between membership subs and running costs. This is effectively the same option as A above. It would not be prudent to adopt a policy of running down our reserves. Your committee has already decided to adopt a long-term policy of increasing reserves by a small amount year-by-year as a hedge against inflation or disaster.

D Raise subscriptions by the amount required to avoid negative impact on reserves. This is not universally popular and could result in a loss of existing members and increased difficulty in recruiting new ones.

E Seek commercial sponsorship. Seeking out and negotiating sponsorship agreements is not likely to be popular with Group leaders or other members. One comment received was along the lines: "I joined the Club for personal enjoyment. I would not enjoy having to seek contributions from sources that might have little in common with us."

F Improve the profitability of our Exhibition (and Open Days). Our exhibition organisers have already decided to remove the "senior" concession and estimate this will add £500 to our profits in 2015 – the equivalent of 6-7 new full Club memberships. If the trend continues we might also consider a modest increase in our standard entry price from £5 to, say, £6 in 2016 and beyond, thereby adding up to a further £1000 - 1500 to net profit with little risk of significant damage to attendance figures or traders. The scope for reducing costs and/or increasing the Open Day entrance fee is limited, but refreshment prices could better reflect the customers' willingness to pay.

G Increase membership. If we were able to attract 4 new members each year that would help to balance natural wastage.

The committee, having assessed in detail the club's current financial position and the opportunities and challenges facing the club, have concluded that the membership fee should remain at £75 pa for the financial year commencing 1 November 2015, but should be reviewed at annual intervals thereafter.

Club Diary 2015

Date	Running Night	Event	Exhibition	Notes
2015				
2nd Sep	O Gauge			Committee Meeting 7pm
9th Sep	N Gauge			
12th/13th Sep			Woking	Brixcombe
16th Sep	P4	Modelling Competition		
23rd Sep	OO			
30th Sep		Presentation Evening		General Meeting 7pm
7th Oct	O Gauge			Briefing for Exhibition
10th/11th Oct		Club Exhibition	Aldershot	Greenfields, Bolden
14th Oct	N Gauge			
17th/18th Oct			Christchurch	Weydon Road
21st Oct	P4			
24th Oct			Beckenham	Brixcombe
28th Oct	OO			Committee Meeting
31st Oct/1st Nov			Wimbledon	Greenfields
4th Nov	O gauge			
7th Nov			IOW	Weydon Road
11th Nov	N gauge			
14th Nov			Tolworth	Brixcombe
18th Nov	P4			
22nd Nov		Club Open Day		Wickwar, Weydon Road
25th Nov	OO			
2nd Dec	O Gauge	Club AGM		
9th Dec	N Gauge			
16th Dec	P4	Christmas Dinner		
23rd Dec	OO			
30th Dec		TBC		

Long live Copy Pit by Ian George

In recent years the news has been full of the billions of pounds being spent on improvements to the rail system in the south of England including Cross-rail, Thameslink, the rebuilding of Reading and London Bridge stations, the electrification of the former Great Western mainline and so on. In amongst all these £ billions the announcement that this May has seen the completion of a project costing a mere £9 million to re-instate 350 yards of track in the northwest of England has probably gone un-noticed to most people. However, to 1960's steam enthusiasts, news of the re-instatement of the "Todmorden curve" will have brought memories flooding back.

Todmorden is on the Calder valley line, which is the earliest and northernmost of the 3 main rail routes that cross the Pennines between the industrial centres of Lancashire and Yorkshire. When opened in 1841 by the Manchester and Leeds Railway the main tunnel under the Pennines, Summit Tunnel, was the longest rail tunnel in the world at 2638 metres. At Todmorden, on the western side of Summit Tunnel, there was a triangular junction and what is now called the Todmorden curve formed one side of that triangle. Here the line forks, one set of tracks heading southwest and mainly downhill towards Manchester. The other set of tracks, known as the Copy Pit line, heads northwest and climbs at 1 in 65 up the steep and scenic Cliviger gorge to Copy Pit summit. From there the line descends steeply to Burnley then on via Blackburn to connect with the west coast main line at Preston.

To rail enthusiasts the Copy Pit line was almost as popular as its more famous northern neighbour, the Settle and Carlisle line with whom it shared many similarities, both running through spectacular scenery on a series of magnificent viaducts. Both were threatened with closure by BR, having been designated as a "duplicated route". As such both saw withdrawal of their local passenger services and the diversion away of their through passenger and freight services. Stations were closed, sidings and passing loops removed as part of a concerted run down towards the intended closure. As part of this run-down the third side of the triangular junction at Todmorden was lifted by BR in 1972.

Thankfully both routes were saved, partly by strong local opposition to closure. In the case of the Copy Pit line the re-instatement of the local passenger service came about in a curious way. In 1982 the Burnley and the Provincial building societies merged with the new joint headquarters being in Bradford. To avoid potential high redundancy costs the building societies persuaded BR to run one morning and one evening service along the Copy Pit line to enable Burnley based staff to be re-deployed to Bradford. Strong support for the service by the general public resulted in the eventual re-instatement of a full daily passenger timetable.

As rail traffic volumes began to grow again nationally the "favoured" routes became increasingly congested, forcing BR reluctantly to divert traffic back onto the "duplicated routes". The Copy Pit line and the S and C were both back in business. Firstly, through freight services began to re-appear, followed by the re-instatement of through passenger services. For the Copy Pit line the re-installation of the "Todmorden curve" will allow a further significant increase in passenger services and as such is another major step in assuring the long term prosperity of the line.

However, back to the nostalgia. In the mid 1960's the Copy Pit line had become a mecca for steam enthusiasts. By then steam had been largely eliminated from most of the BR network but in that

corner of northwest England mainline steam lived on. There were several reasons for the magnetic attraction of the Copy Pit line in particular. Vast quantities of coal were still being moved from the Yorkshire coalfield to the industrial towns of Lancashire, and also to Fleetwood Wyre Dock for shipping to Ireland, many of these coal trains being routed over the Copy Pit line. There was a seemingly endless procession of loaded west bound coal trains and east bound returning empty wagons, most hauled by 2-8-0's, either WD or Stanier 8F's. Surprisingly, very few BR 9F's were seen over Copy Pit.

Every loaded westbound coal train required banking from the Todmorden triangular junction up to Copy Pit summit, the usual banking engines being Crab 2-6-0's then later Stanier 8F's, all based at the most inappropriately named "Rose Grove" shed at Burnley. The sight and sound of train engine and banker slogging up through the Cliviger gorge was quite memorable. On reaching the summit the train would be put into a loop where the engine crew could take a brief rest while guard would walk the length of the train pinning down the handbrakes on the unfitted 16 ton mineral wagons to help hold back the weight of the train on its steep descent into Burnley. Engines on east bound trains of returning empty wagons were also worked to the maximum as they were expected to tackle the climb from Burnley to Copy Pit summit without a banker, often being reduced to walking pace as they reached the top of the climb.

In addition to the spectacle of the coal trains and their bankers there was a second major attraction to steam enthusiasts, namely the last opportunity to see ex LMS 3 cylinder engines in full cry. By the mid 1960's almost all the Patriots and Scots, along with most of the Jubilees had gone for scrap. However, a few dozen of the best Jubilees had been spared and had been shedded in west Yorkshire. Stored out of use during winter months they were returned to traffic each summer, well cleaned and polished, ready to handle the numerous heavy holiday excursion trains, many of which ran to Blackpool and were routed over the Copy Pit line. The distinctive sound of a Jubilee's 3 cylinder beat working hard to the summit was unforgettable.

Although these excursion trains were heaven for the enthusiasts they were anything but that for the railway control staff and signalmen who had to find paths for all these fast passenger trains amongst the constant flow of crawling coal trains. There was additional work also for the bankers as these heavy passenger trains also needed banking up to Copy Pit summit.

All good things come to an end, and steam over the Copy Pit line came to an end on the final day of normal steam working on BR on Saturday 3rd August 1968. Hundreds of enthusiasts including yours truly waited in the shed yard at Rose Grove as the last 8F's clanked slowly in and dropped their fires for the very last time. History was made when Stanier 8F 48278 came in having completed its last shift as the Copy Pit banker. It was the last ever steam banking duty on BR. My 0 gauge 8F is 48278 in memory of that achievement.

A local BBC television news-crew had been sent to Rose Grove to record the final events. As a driver climbed down from the cab of his 8F for the last time the eager reporter put her microphone in front of him and asked for his thoughts. Turning to look at his engine and wiping his hands on his oily rag he replied with feeling: "Well that's the last of them cast iron b*****ds!" Not quite the eulogy the BBC wanted, but it did seem rather apt. I wonder what choice language he and his mates

would have used if they had been told that in the future it would take BR's successor 3 years and cost £9 million to re-instate a mere 350 yards of track!