

The Whistleblower

September 2012

IT'S ALL WHITE!

In August we redecorated the club room and improved the tea & coffee station - I think you will agree that it looks a lot better. A big thank you to all those members who helped with the decorating and finished it in record time. Also, thanks to Terry Hillyer for loaning us all the brushes, rollers and dust sheets. The Treasurer splashed out and bought a new coffee machine and containers for the tea & coffee. The majority of the cups and glasses have been moved to the hall kitchen with can be used by club members - a small number of cups are kept in bottom drawer of the clubroom cabinet for use during daytime. Please help to keep the clubroom clean and tidy - thanks.

PROGRAMME FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2012

Date		Event	Subject
September			
Wed 12	O	Running night	O gauge, OO gauge & N gauge running tracks
Wed 19	N	Modelling Competition	Details on notice board
Wed 26	P4	Running night	O gauge, OO gauge & N gauge running tracks
October			
Wed 3		0 gauge running night	
Wed 10		Briefing for exhibition	Attendance of all members requested @ 8pm
Friday 12		Exhibition set up	Loading @ 3.00pm. Hall available @ 5.00pm
Sat 13 / Sun 14		Club exhibition	Attendance of all members are required
Wed 17			
Wed 24		00 gauge running night	
November - 2011/12 subscriptions due			
Sunday 4		Club open day	Organised by Dave Harrington. Members 8.00 – 17.00hrs
Wed 7		0 gauge running night	
Tues 13		Competition	Photography competition at Astolat MRC, Guildford
Wed 14			
Wed 21		Presentation	
Wed 28		00 gauge running night	
December			
Wed 5		Annual General Meeting	Attendance of all members requested
Wed 12		Presentation	
Wed 19		Social event	Mince Pie night before Christmas
Wed 26		Club closed	

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- The committee meeting planned for 29th Aug has been postponed to Sept 26th.
- Please don't forget the Exhibition Jobs published in the last newsletter - volunteers are still needed to help. We rely on a successful exhibition to fund layout expenses.
- Greenfield Sidings is at the Wellington Centre this weekend. Richard Puddephatt has organised this (it was not easy) but we need ALL members to help out collecting donations for "Help the Heros". Just turn for to help.
- The joint twice monthly running night experiment has not been a success and seems to be too much. Therefore we will revert to the old system of individual running nights for the 4Q12. Please let me know if you have any further ideas on this.
- Mike Brown's list for catering at the exhibition has been in circulation and being completed by many members. However if you have not signed up, please do this asap - no name no exhibition lunch.

FAMILY FUN DAY IN AUGUST

You will all be interested to hear that Dave Bentley collected over £4000 for his event supporting Papworth Hospital charity. Well done Dave!

Farnham & District Model Railway Club

EXHIBITON DIARY

Club layouts

- 8/9th Sept - Greenfield Sidings, Wellington Centre, Aldershot
- 15/16th Sept - Greenfield Sidings & Weydon Road at REC, Woking
- 29/30th Sept - Brixcombe at Scaleforum
- 13/14h Oct - Basingstoke, Club exhibition
- 20th Oct - Weydon Rd at Beckenham

Exhibitions of interest

- 8/9th Sept - Guildex 2012, Telford
- 8/9th Sept - International N Gauge
- 15/16th Sept - REC, Woking
- 29th Sept - Loddon Vale MRC
- 29/30th Sept - Scaleforum
- 6/7th Oct - Manchester MRC
- 27/28 Oct - Railex, Taunton

ANNUAL EVENTS

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

- The Modelling Competition. To be held on the evening of Wednesday 19th Sept. Please get ready - the entry rules are published on the notice board. Don't like competitions? - then just bring a model along and enter the Loan class.
- The Club Exhibition. To be held on the weekend of 13th/14th October at The Connaught Centre, Aldershot. Please offer help on the many jobs need to be carried out.
- The Club Open Day. To be held on Sunday 4th November. The club layouts being erected will be Weydon Road (0), Brixcombe(P4) plus a small private N/OO layout.
- The Photographic Competition. This is being organised by Astolat MRC on Tuesday 13th November. Get your snaps ready and see below.
- The 2011/12 AGM. This will be held on Wednesday 5th Dec in the main hall at the clubroom. Any resolutions or points for discussion must be logged with the Secretary 28 days before the meeting.

THE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION - TUESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER

Astolat Model Railway Circle are running the competition this year at their club rooms in Guildford - it will be organised as follows:

- The evening is to be an Exhibition, rather than a Competition
- Chris Nevard, Photographer for Model Rail Magazine has kindly agreed to come and comment on the submitted photos. Having oeed, ummed and aarhed, he will then chose up to 5 to receive a certificate of merit and one to be classed as 'best-in-show'.
- The event is in the Astolat clubroom on the ground floor of the Guildford Methodist Church, Woodbridge Road, Guildford, GU1 4RG (next to the cricket ground). Please arrive from 7.30 for a start at 8pm. Light refreshments will be available during the evening.
- All entries are to be prints, either black & white or colour, of either 6" x 4" or 7" x 5" in size. This way film and digital users are on an equal footing and digital users are free to enhance their photos as they wish.
- Each person can submit up to 5 entries and they must put their name on the back of the photo. All photos will be displayed on a professionally made double-sided display board and will not be seen by Chris before the evening.
- Photos are to be of any UK railway related topic.
- Entries are only permitted from members of Liphook Modellers, Farnham and District MRC and Astolat MRC and that none of photos have been previously entered in any competition or exhibition.
- An entry form (attached) and your photographs and be submitted to Ron Patterson to arrive not later than Wednesday 25th October 2012.

CLUB OPEN DAY - 4TH NOVEMBER

Dave Harrington is agreed to organise this again this year. Dave will be producing a list of jobs to carry out and make this event successful -

EXHIBITON JOBS

Overall exhibition manager	- Noel Leaver
Layout invitation and management	- Noel Leaver
Trader co-ordination and management	- Mike Brown
Exhibition guide production and printing	- Richard Puddephatt
Publicity	- Noel Leaver
Accommodation co-ordination	- Richard Puddephatt
Webmaster	- Noel Leaver
Guide advertising	- Greg Coady
Leisure Centre Liaison	- Vacant
Hall Planning	- Paula Martin
Financial mgmt (I&E, Insurance, etc)	- Treasurer
Electrical supplies	- G Phillips & E Jackman
Food and Drink co-ordination	- Vacant

Stewarding co-ordination	- Vacant
Club corner organisation	- Ron Patterson
Booking of AA signage	- Vacant
Booking of St John's Ambulance	- Vacant
Booking of Hart Lions catering	- Ron Patterson
Booking of Van, select drivers	- Robin Baker
Co-ordinate "most appealing layout" election	- Vacant
Co-ordinate barriers erection/take down	- Vacant
Print outs for hall stewards	- Vacant
Co-ordinate arrival times of traders/exhibitors + car parking	- Dave Mulvey
Run exhibitors lounge	- Keith Wright
Flyer distribution to traders, shops, etc	- Vacant

EXHIBITION CLUB CORNER

Bring and Buy: This year the P4 group will be running a club second hand sales table at the exhibition. Members wishing to divest themselves of unused or unwanted railway items can do so for a 10% contribution to club funds from any sales made. Items must be clearly labelled and listed on a sales form, copies of which can be obtained from Greg Coady or David Taylor. It is not too early to be delving into the back of your cupboards and bringing out those models, kits, gizmos and add-ons which seemed like a good idea at the time but have never seen the light of day or are now outside your period of modelling interest. So get looking.

Club Display Stand: As explained in last months newsletter, the club now owns a display stand to be used to publicise the club. This will be erected in club corner and contain photographs, computer monitor, a small amount of text to show off the club activities. We will also have the small club hand outs and application forms for anybody who expresses interest in joining. We need members to man this stand for approximately 1 hour at a time - please be ready to do your stint.

DCC demonstration: Greg Philips will be explaining the mysteries of DCC again this year. Anybody who wants to assist, please see Greg.

LAYOUT REPORTS

N gauge group: Work is progressing well on Wickwar. A slight hiccup arose when transferring "paper" track plans to reality which has meant that a short extension board is to be added to one end of the fiddle yard to maintain the appearance of the scenic section. (There is a traditional N gauge group precedent for this in that Basingstoke was 24ft long when we started but 28ft long by the time it was finished!). As well as finishing off the main boards and fitting the board to board connectors, work is also proceeding on the construction of the protective lids that will fit to the boards whilst in storage and transit.

Basingstoke is going to be erected over the weekend of 15/16th September to address a few known issues and test it out before our show. If anybody fancies coming along to help erect it and have a play, they will be more than welcome. Speak to Greg or David to check exactly what times they have in mind. We may well also be looking for assistance operating the layout at our show as well. Despite persistent rumours to the contrary, it's not as difficult to operate as it looks, and if necessary Noel can issue you with the latest issue of its user guide "Basingstoke for dummies!" So let us know if you are interested.

O gauge group: The activities as reported in the last Whistleblower have continued with work on Colin's Wharf and members own projects. The photo shoot on Greenfield was successfully carried out and Richard Harris has shown us the proofs. He has completed one photo to publishing standard and is now working on the remaining shots to get them ready for the web site etc. Richard Puddephatt has refurbished the trestles which were previously used on the original O Gauge running track. Some further work is necessary to the trestles after which we will be able to use them rather than the Hall's tables to support our running track. It is planned to build a trolley to transport and store the trestles.

Greenfield Sidings was set up on the 5th to check out the layout ready for the Wellington Centre and REC Woking. A minor wiring fault was found and repaired by Ian Gordon. Ian then went on to adjust the new un-couplers in the sidings. After repairs were complete members spent the afternoon and evening running trains. While this was going on David Taylor installed working coloured light signals for the crossover to the sidings

P4 gauge group: With the layout essentially complete, work on Brixcombe has been concentrated on tuning operating procedures and testing stock. It is a pleasure to report that all 7 signal arms now operate and drivers of locomotives can rely on them to signal the next movement. Scaleforum is only a few weeks away and we will try to fit in as many test running sessions as possible to learn the timetable and ensure familiarity for all members of the operating team with the controls on the layout. We have amended the operating timetable to introduce a station pilot and the option of adding or removing tail traffic from passenger trains to add interest. We will be trialling this concept over our week-end test session on 15th/16th September to see if we take it to Scaleforum. The layout gets very good coverage in the Scaleforum guide with two of Richard Harris's excellent photographs.

O gauge group: No report received.

GROW YOUR OWN GRASS

By John, John and Connor Yarham

Here are last month's events at the Yarham railway world. I made a new static grass applicator, as I broke the Mk I version, this one is Mk III it has a lid as according to Model Rail the one the thing that makes the Noch one stand out is the lid so I thought we'd better have a lid.. We got some 6mm long Static grass from Realistic Modelling Services (Hillside KJ0862) from the P4 show over at Bracknell and the boys wanted to try it out seemed like a good test for the Mk III we put a thick bead of PVA on a tin lid as recommended by model rail and a few passes with lid on and we had some nice tufts and then the boys decided they needed to be flowers so some coloured scatter later and we had some flowers.

INNOCENTS IN PASTYLAND – A GENTLEMEN’S DAY OUT

by Dave Harrington

Unwary folk who drink three pints of Somerset’s local brew find themselves in one of three camps – those who suddenly develop terminal eloquence, those who can no longer speak but exhibit a thousand-metre stare, and those who come out fighting. Greg is in the first category. I deduce I am in the second because (a) I couldn’t get a word in edgeways and (b) I don’t seem to have any bruises. But once more I get ahead of myself.

I didn’t want to go, you understand. But Greg can be very persuasive and he also needed to share the petrol money. So it was really an act of charity when I accepted his invitation to visit the West Somerset Railway and Steam Fayre (sic). Thus it was, with bacon butties akimbo, that we plunged into the Saturday dawn, aiming for somewhere called Bishops Lydeard. The downpour wasn’t too bad, although Greg did deliver a stern injunction to bring my wellies. As you do, I humoured him. It was a good call.

After only two hours we rolled into a patch of sodden mud-and-cinders where the toilet was locked. So too was the station buffet, though a tray of sausage rolls left outside gave a hint that this situation might change fairly soon (the buffet, that is). But although we were an hour early for the first train of the day there was much to do! We looked through the railings at some coaches and where a diesel could be heard in the distance. We crossed the line by a notice that said we must cross by the bridge. We listened to a man-with-a-stick being read to by another man in a peaked hat, holding a timetable. We read all the notices on the waiting room wall and visited the museum to look at the wheelbarrows and brown pictures. Upstairs there was another man gloomily taking stuff out of Hornby boxes and putting them on a track. He said that he had to do it all in reverse that evening and if he didn’t it would get nicked. Greg sympathised and gave him a full briefing on Basingstoke, after which it was time to buy tickets for our train, involving running back across the line, past the buffet which had handily opened 2 mins before the train was due to leave, back to the mud-and-cinders to collect wallet and wellies, back to queue for tickets and then running up the platform to find a seat in a green DMU-thingy, next to the man-with-a-stick, who had sensibly tottered along while we were sprinting about. The rain wasn’t too bad.

5 or 10 minutes later the DMU-thingy dropped us off at a water-logged field with some tents and tractors. A man-with-a-mic was already warming up with stentorian bellows that rattled tiles and alarmed rooks. I bought a programme that neither of us looked at, but our wellies now came into play and we strode heedlessly through the small rivers and marshes on which the Fayre was being held. Oh what fun we had! We saw steam engines, very old tractors, very old cars (the sort that Robin shows you pictures of unless you see him coming first), some old fire engines, some jeeps and small tanks with old people with long hair dressed up as soldiers. For some reason there was a full-size model of a Spitfire and one of a Hurricane but without wings. There were tents selling clothes pegs and knitted things and pictures and large boots. There was a blacksmith doing blacksmith stuff and a circus ring with pattering motorbikes going round and round while the man-with-a-mic shouted out their names and insulted them.

I do recall buying a huge bun full of pork and stuffing and onions and apple sauce and crackling. I also recall Greg telling me we ought not to sit in the rain but should go in the beer tent where they sold that Somerset brew I mentioned earlier. But it got a bit hazy after that (although there was a minor skirmish involving some men trying to avoid the river that was flowing over people’s ankles in the tent and Greg’s rucksack got wet). I think we rode back in the green DMU thingy to Bishops Lydeard and I suspect we transferred there onto a proper train, pulled by a Manor – or maybe it was a Hall. But I do know it was green and it was a steamer, because Greg was in full flow and insisted on having the window open so we could hear something called “the beat”. Anyway, I now know (or ought to know, assuming I can remember any of it) the full history of the line, including what crops were grown in which field in 1992, which householders come out to wave at the train, how dangerous it is at some hillside place called Stogumber should you tumble off the platform and descend to the rooftops far below, and what are the long-term plans for “doubling up”. Happily, by the time we reached Minehead, Greg’s eloquence had dried up and my Basilisk stare had probably given way to a more normal expression of polite interest. Somewhere between leaving the swamp and arriving at Minehead we had changed out of our wellies, although Greg was clearly uneasy about what he’d done with his rucksack. We also seemed to find time to visit the Taunton Group’s Bath Green Park layout where Greg gave another detailed briefing on Basingstoke to a man with an alarmed expression who hastily gave Greg his name and address – or maybe it was any old name and address..

We were probably in full control, though, as we marched up Minehead High Street to the Methy Hall where there was a model railway show and where we spent several contented minutes before marching back to the station for fish and chips. Greg wanted to walk along the coast to show me Cornwall, but, sensibly, I declined. We rode back to Bishops Lydeard behind a smelly blue diesel thingy – a 47 or maybe a 57 - and ate our chips on the way.

It was just dusk as we rolled, complete with Greg’s rucksack, into my driveway, tired but happy at yet another partially memorable but wildly successful Gentlemen’s Day Out. By the following day the headache had almost disappeared – a very welcome bonus.

UNDERSTANDING GOODS TRAINS - PART 1

By Clive Jackson

The following aims to give the reader a basic understanding of traditional short wheel base goods wagons and how they were made up into trains and worked. I will primarily concentrate on the BR steam era, partly because this is where my main interest lies, but principally because it is the practices of this era of which I have knowledge through my work on heritage railways. However, much of what is written will be applicable to the “big four” era, and references will also be made to modern freight working.

Brief Historical Background

The greater bulk of goods vehicles on the railway were open wagons. The Southern Railway, having less trade in coal and minerals than the other companies had a higher proportion of vans, but open wagons still made up the greater part of its workings. The open wagons were primarily used for coal and minerals, but were also used for other loads, being sheeted over with a tarpaulin if the load needed to be protected from the weather. Loads requiring greater protection than sheeting offered were usually carried in vans or special purpose wagons.

Although the pre-war railways owned a proportion of the wagons, the majority were “private owner” wagons owned by companies, mines etc specifically for the transport of their goods. These were painted in the varied and sometimes colourful liveries which the R-T-R manufactures clearly regard as a good selling point, even if, at the time they are offering very few engines in appropriate liveries to work with the wagons. A disadvantage of the private owner system is that the wagons would often be worked back empty on their return trip as they were dedicated to carrying loads for their owner.

Coal was an important source of revenue for the railways, as well as being required for their own use. Wagons used for coal traffic were normally dedicated to the transport of coal and coal products, simply because coal is such a dirty material that it would contaminate other loads put in the wagon.

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Of course in addition to open wagons and vans, there were a variety of special purpose wagons such as cattle trucks, milk tankers, oil tankers etc. With exceptions such as cattle trucks, most of these would have been privately owned. During this period, and broadly to the end of steam, the railways had "common carrier" status which meant that they were obliged to carry anything from a single parcel through a wagon load to a train load – known as a block train. The modern railway, having to compete with road haulage, no longer has "common carrier" status, and tends to focus almost exclusively on the freight it can handle most efficiently – regular block train workings. Most other non-passenger workings on the modern railway are non-revenue earning workings for the engineering departments.

During the Second World War, the bulk of private owner open wagons were commandeered for pool use as common user wagons, thereby overcoming the operational deficiency of the private owner system as highlighted above. By the end of the war most of these were in poor condition, typically being worked hard while receiving only essential maintenance. As the Mid-Hants wagon group has demonstrated, a wooden sided wagon left exposed to the elements for a few years rapidly deteriorates from ex-works condition – even without the rigours of heavy use. Thus by the end of the war, any wagons still in private owner livery would be badly weathered, which is ideally how a modeller should depict them if modelling the BR period. In most cases the wagons were in such poor condition that the original owners usually preferred to use railway owned wagons for their loads rather than take on the heavy maintenance costs associated with their own fleet. Wagons that weren't scrapped were renovated and given a coat of grey paint and a new number starting with the letter P to indicate they were ex-private owner.

Wagon and Train Classification

Different loads clearly have different requirements for the manner in which they are transported. Fruit and similar perishables need to reach their destination quickly so as to be in good condition when sold to the customer. Livestock won't appreciate being hump shunted or left in a goods yard for three days for a connecting train. On the other hand, coal and stone won't come to any harm at all if their journey is rather slow, and sometimes the average speeds for such loads were little faster than the canals, although with many hundreds of tons being worked in one train, transport costs could not be matched by the inland waterways.

Goods trains could run at different speeds, for the reasons given below, and were accordingly given different priorities, so that a mineral train, as well as travelling at a maximum speed of 25 mph, might frequently be shunted into goods loops or lie by sidings to await the passage of higher priority trains, both passenger and goods.

Brakes and Couplings

Because goods wagons were required to be detached from a train and left in a siding, all goods wagons were equipped with a hand brake, usually in the form of a long lever which was "pinned down" to apply the brake. Some larger or more modern vehicles had a hand wheel, normally painted white, to apply the brakes. For the majority of pre-war vehicles that was all the braking they had, which meant that the brakes could not be applied when the train was in motion. Such vehicles are known as "unfitted" and in the BR era were normally painted grey.

On some vehicles, particularly in later years, the brakes could also be applied by the driver (or guard) by means of the automatic vacuum brake, a vacuum cylinder usually being mounted underneath the chassis, and vacuum pipes being provided to connect to adjacent vehicles. Not only did this supply additional stopping power for the train, but the vacuum brake system is fail safe, so that if a coupling parted company, the vacuum would be destroyed, applying the brakes on all connected vacuum fitted vehicles.

Such vehicles are termed "fitted" – i.e. fitted with the automatic brake, and in the BR era were normally painted in bauxite so as to readily identify them from unfitted vehicles. Short wheelbase fitted wagons could usually be operated at speeds up to 60 mph, although in some cases higher speeds could be used, particularly if the vehicle was rated for running in passenger trains. Not all fitted goods trains would run this fast, of course, since many goods engines had a maximum speed of 50 mph or less, being designed to work heavy loads rather than to run fast. Thus those running at 60 mph would often be comparatively short trains worked by a mixed traffic engine, or perhaps worked by a goods engine specifically designed for higher speed trains such as the Southern S15 class. The fastest XP class of wagons (often vans) were usually reserved for perishable loads and might be worked by the train load from docks to city, often at night, by an express passenger loco.

Almost all modern revenue earning freight vehicles are fitted with air brakes, air offering the advantage over vacuum that because a higher differential pressure can be used (limited to 1 atmosphere with vacuum brakes for obvious reasons) the brakes are more responsive to the driver's brake handle.

A third class of wagons was known as "piped". These vehicles had no automatic brakes themselves, but they did have a vacuum pipe with the hose connections for attaching to adjacent vehicles. Such vehicles could be placed in front of or between "fitted" wagons without disrupting the vacuum feed to wagons behind them. Clearly in the "unfitted" case, any fitted wagons to the rear of an unfitted one effectively ran as unfitted, as there was no way that the vacuum created by the engine could be connected to them. Piped wagons, were normally painted grey in the BR era.

Three types of couplings were used on traditional goods wagons in the UK – three link, instanter and screw coupling. The three link was effectively a short piece of chain, attached to a wagon's coupling hook which could be thrown over the coupling hook of the adjacent vehicle to couple them. Such couplings were standard on many unfitted wagons, and the lack of the automatic brake, together with these simple couplings meant that skilled shunters could couple and uncouple them on the move with the aid of a shunter's pole, greatly facilitating shunting operations in marshalling yards and goods yards. The down side of the three link coupling was that considerable slack was necessary in order to facilitate coupling and uncoupling operations. Trains working wagons entirely with three links were known as "loose coupled" because of the excessive slack between the wagons, and skill was required on the part of the driver to ensure that this slack was taken up gently when the train was started, otherwise the resulting snatch, which could place a temporary load on the coupling of several times the mass of the train, could result in a coupling breaking, and in the worst case, part of the train running away. The guard also had a part to play in controlling this, as he was required to apply his hand brake when slowing the train or running down hill, not only to assist the engine's brakes, but also to keep the couplings taut. With the only braking available to an unfitted goods train when on the move being that applied by the driver on the engine, and that applied by the guard on the brake van (a code of three short whistles, was used by the driver to indicate that he wished his guard to apply his brake) it was entirely possible that the available braking effort could be insufficient to hold a heavy unfitted goods when descending a steep bank. In the early days of railways, before the development of the automatic vacuum brake, long passenger trains would be provided with several brake vans, each with their own guard, so that sufficient braking was available. This solution was not normally used with goods trains, even if there was more than one brake van in the formation. As a result, such a train would stop at the top of the bank so that the guard could apply a suitable proportion of the intermediate trucks' hand brakes. The train would then have to stop at the bottom of the bank for these brakes to be released – not ideal in hilly areas where a long steep descent was followed by a long steep ascent! When making an ascent the main danger was the possibility of a coupling parting. In the worst case this could result in the wagons in the rear portion of the train overpowering the brake van, so that the whole rear section ran backwards down the hill. Double track lines were therefore fitted with spring or gravity operated "catch points" which lay normally open and thus would derail a train running in the wrong direction – this being the lesser of two evils compared with a head on collision with a following train. For obvious reasons, catch points could not be fitted on single line railways, but occasionally one might find them fitted at the exit of a passing loop. An example exists at Blue Anchor on the West Somerset Railway, where it does the job of protecting the level crossing from any runaway vehicles. Accidents with goods vehicles, particularly unfitted ones, were the most common source of collisions and derailments, and were the inspiration for the Rev Awdry's "troublesome trucks".