

The Whistleblower

December 2012

THE NEW CLUB YEAR

You may aware that the club financial year closed on 31st October and the new club year started on 1st November. The significance of this is three-fold:

- The 2010/11 club accounts closed at midnight on 31st October and are prepared for presentation at the AGM.
- The annual subscriptions for 2012/13 are now due and should be paid directly to the Treasurer as soon as possible.
As a reminder: - Full Membership is £75
- Associate Membership is £20
- Junior (incl students) Membership is £20
- The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Wednesday 5th December starting at 8.00pm at the clubrooms. The formal calling notice and agenda has been issued in the last newsletter and is published again below. Richard Puddephatt has also sent out a copy of the agenda and previous minutes for your information and use.

We urge everyone to come along to the AGM to ensure you are engaged in the management of the club and have your say. Normally the AGM takes approximately 1 hour.

REMAING PROGRAMME FOR 2012

Date	Event	Subject
December		
Wed 5	Annual General Meeting	Attendance of all members requested
Wed 12	Presentation	Howard Watkins of MERG
Wed 19	Social event	Christmas dinner at The Sandrock
Wed 26	Club closed	

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- A committee meeting was held on 14th November - Chris Webster and Richard Puddephatt were not present.
- The layout groups presented their 2012/13 expenditure budgets - these have been approved. Please see your group leader for details.
- The draft 2011/12 accounts were approved subject to the Independent Reviewers approval.
- A review of the 2012 exhibition was carried out looking at what was successful and needs improvement. Noel Leaver needs help to organize and manage the future exhibitions - he is looking for 2/3 people to carry out specified jobs. This will be raised and hopefully resolved at the AGM.
- All current group leaders were asked to ensure that a candidate for election at the AGM was identified.

NOTICE OF AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the club will be held on Wednesday 5th December 2012 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.

HOWARD WATKINS PRESENTATION - 12TH DECEMBER

We have Howard Watkins of MERG (Model Electronics Railway Group) coming to give us a presentation. He is going to cover 3 subjects:

- the pros and cons of different DCC systems
- Understanding C-Bus and it's application
- MERG products to help the modeller

This is going to be very interesting so please come prepared with your questions.

PROGRAMME FOR 1ST QTR 2013

Date	Duty Grp	Event	Subject
January			
Wed 2	N	0 gauge running night	O gauge running track
Wed 9	OO	N gauge running night	
Wed 16	P4		Committee meeting @ 8.00pm
Wed 23	O	00 gauge running night	
Wed 30	N		
February			
Wed 6	OO	0 gauge running night	Weydon Road??
Wed 13	P4	Social evening	Pancake night lead by Robin Baker
Wed 20	O	N gauge running night	
Wed 27	N	00 gauge running night	
March			
Wed 6	OO	0 gauge running night	O gauge running track
Wed 13	P4	N gauge running night	
Wed 20	O	Presentation	TBA
Wed 27	N	00 gauge running night	
Friday 29		Club Annual Dinner	Venue to be advised

EXHIBITON DIARY

Club layouts

- 26/27th Jan - Round the Bend @ Erith
- 2/3rd Feb - Greenfield Sidings @ Alton
- 16/17th Feb - Brixcombe @ Bourne-mouth
- 27/28th Apr - Brixcombe @ Epsom & Ewell
- 11th May - Brixcombe @ Watford

Exhibitions of interest

- 12/13th Jan - Orpington MRC
- 18-20th Jan - London Model Eng
- 19th Jan - Astolat MRC
- 19/20th Jan - Bentley MRG, Calne
- 19/20th Jan - Leamington Spa MRS
- 20th Jan - Bristol O Gauge
- 26/27th Jan - Southampton MRC

ANNUAL EVENTS IN 2013

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

- The club Annual Dinner. Planned for the evening of Friday 29th March. Would the club members give the Chairman their inputs on preferred venues.
- The O Gauge open day. To be held on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May.
- Summer club outing?? This year we may want to visit York in June to see Dominion of Canada and Dwight D Eisenhower - let me know on this. Also we may want to hold a 2nd outing to McAlpines or Pendon museum - again, let me or the Secretary know if you are interested.
- American Night. Following the success last year we will hold this again on Wednesday 3rd July. We will invite other local clubs to this.
- Wellington Centre publicity. We may not want to do this as there is little value to the club exhibition. Inputs please.
- The modelling competition. Planned for the evening of Wednesday 18th Sept.
- The Club Exhibition. To be held on the weekend of 12th/13th October at The Connaught Centre, Aldershot
- The club Open Day. To be held on Sunday 27th October. The club layouts being erected are still to be determined - please let me have your inputs now!
- The photographic competition. This will be organised by F&DMRC and held in our club rooms on Wednesday 13th November.

LAYOUT REPORTS

N gauge group: Basingstoke saw an outing to our show in October and although we did experience a few electrical issues which had escaped our attention during the run up to the show, it still acquitted itself pretty well and we had a lot of complimentary comments from the public. We "broke in" a few new operators who all seemed to rise to the challenge and enjoy themselves. Thanks are also due to members of the club outside the N gauge group who assisted with dismantling and packing up the layout at the end of the show, it makes a big difference. The intention now is that Basingstoke will go into semi-retirement for a while whilst we concentrate our efforts on Wickwar. We are however still hoping to seek out an invite or two for 2013/14 and will probably take the opportunity to have a weekend running session at some point.

Wickwar, despite being at "boards under construction stage" also picked up its first exhibition invite at our show, to the Sodbury Vale show at Yate in Jan/Feb 2014. So that gives us a bit of a deadline to aim for. Works currently are concentrating on finishing off the layout transport/protection covers and testing out of some of our proposed electrical wizardry for the fiddle yards on the test track, before we commence track laying. Noel has been undertaking a crash course in photoshop, experimenting with combining photos to form the backscene with some very encouraging initial results. We've also been swotting up on potential train formations etc so individuals know what to be asking Santa for this Xmas, and we can start assembling some suitable rakes of stock between us.

OO gauge group: Scenic work is still being carried out by David putting up and painting new fences and mending trees. The pub at the front is being fitted out with some seats outside for customers.

On the overall scene, it has been decided to widen the layout by 2 feet from front to back. New bridging boards (2 foot wider) will be used to make the operating area more comfortable. Also, the fiddle yard sidings will be extended and the 3 way points replaced by curved turnouts and moved further out onto the corner boards. Richard has constructed a full set of trestles that fit under the test track boards. These fold flat and mean that we will not have to struggle with heavy tables when setting up. To transport the trestles we are making a small trolley to the same design as the one that is used for the test track boards.

P4 gauge group: Brixcombe made its final exhibition appearance of the year at Lancing on 3rd November. Despite being somewhat cramped for space it was an enjoyable show and both stock and operators performed to expectation. The following day we were performing again in the more relaxed setting of the club open day and the opportunity was taken to indulge ourselves with some extended shunting rather than run our normal, fairly hectic timetable.

The P4 group is now reduced to 4 with the decision of Vic Beyer to not renew his club membership. Since Vic provided the majority of the stock for our 1930s period we are now heavily reliant on Jim Wheaton who provides 95% of the stock for the 1906 running. As some of you will already know, Jim will, at some time in the next year, be moving to the USA. Jim has very generously offered to leave his stock with us for a period of time until we can build sufficient to replace it. Work has already started on a replacement programme, initially involving the conversion of proprietary models to P4, which will also extend the range of operating periods from the Edwardian to BR.

This still leaves us short of operators for the layout. Ideally we need 4 at any one time but can run with 3 if necessary. We are fortunate to have been able to call on the services of Pete Smith at times to assist us and ideally we would like to increase the pool of operators familiar with Brixcombe to 7 or 8 to provide cover for holidays etc. If anyone within the club would like to help us at exhibitions we are happy to provide familiarisation sessions on Wednesdays when there is enough space to erect the layout. If interested, see anyone from the P4 group.

O gauge group: We had a successful weekend in Southend with only a few minor problems (which have now been fixed). Apart from mods to fiddle yard 1 to allow better running, we are also going to improve the layout with a few additions:- (i) add a auto pick/drop wagon on shuttle yard by the pub, and (ii) more grass and scrub bushes on trackside etc.

Hornby magazine came to the club to photograph Weydon Rd with BR stock on 21st November. The article is expected to be published next March.



January will see the group start work on the new layout, purchase of baseboard materials and if possible an amount of track making material? this just depends on how we get on with the first baseboard.

THE FAIRBOURNE RAILWAY

by Ian George

The Fairbourne Railway in Gwynedd has been carrying tourists from the centre of the village on a 1.5 mile journey along the coast for over a century. The terminus at Penrhyn Point connects with a foot passenger ferry across the river to Barmouth, and offers superb views of the Mawddach estuary and the surrounding mountains. It also offers excellent views of the spectacular Barmouth railway bridge.

The railway originated in the 1890's as a horse drawn 2 foot gauge tramway built by local property developer Mr McDougall (of self-raising flour fame). Over the years it has seen many changes of gauge and ownership. Since 1986 it has run as 12.25" gauge using a fleet of replica steam engines based on railways as far apart as the Lynton and Barnstaple and the Darjeeling and Himalayan railways.

Following the 1986 re-build the new owners decided to change the track layout at Penrhyn Point replacing the engine run-round at the terminus with a new loop line that circled around the headland before returning to Fairbourne. The new track was laid ready for the next summer season.

Only then did they realise the basic flaw in this new arrangement. All the coaches on the railway have doors only on one side. Running trains round the new loop meant that on return to Fairbourne all the carriage doors now faced away from the platform. Exit through the doors was blocked by the wall of the adjacent carriage shed. Whoops! The engine run-around method was hastily re-instated. The loop line track remains in place, gradually being reclaimed by the sand dunes.

It is possible to do a round trip from Fairbourne travelling on the miniature railway to Penrhyn Point, take the ferry across the estuary to Barmouth, then returning to Fairbourne on the "big railway" crossing the Barmouth bridge. Recommended for a visit.

Picture captions:

- Darjeeling Railway "Sherpa" heads towards Penrhyn Point and the ferry.
- Arriva Trains "Sprinter" crosses the Barmouth bridge, viewed from Penrhyn Point terminus.
- A rare visitor. A class 37 slowly crosses Barmouth bridge on a gauging test run prior to hauling a Cambrian railtour.
- The ill-fated loop line being reclaimed by the sand dunes.

