

September 2016 Edition

ALL CHANGE

As you can see from the change in presentation format, The Whistleblower has had a change in editorship. Ron Patterson, ably assisted by Liam Rasbid, has taken over the reins from Mike LeMarie the previous editor. We thank Mike for doing a superb job over the last 2 years. The plan is to publish The Whistleblower every 6 to 8 weeks dependant on the need to keep all members informed of club activity. Remember The Whistleblower is there for all members to use as a communications vehicle so don't be shy in sending me your inputs on anything railway you want to share.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- A committee meeting was held on 7th Sept. All committee members attended.
- The Secretary is busy making arrangements for the AGM which will be held on the 7th Dec. The usual statutory notice and minutes of the previous AGM will be published on the club notice board 28 days before the meeting. Items for the agenda must be submitted in writing to the club secretary at least 14 days prior to the meeting.
- Attention all members. The 2006 club constitution has been rewritten and approved by the club committee. This will be a key item for approval at the AGM so we urge all members to read this when it is published 28 days prior to the AGM. If you can't wait then please go to the members' section of the club website to see a PDF version - the password is "Greenfields"
- Most members will be aware that Basingstoke N gauge layout has been sold to an exhibition in the Isle of Man. We sold this for £1000 which is a good price for a layout that is 20 years old.
- The club now has a publicity plan through which the committee actively pursues opportunities to promote the club both locally and nationally. If any members have any publicity ideas please contact any committee member.
- The club open day will be held on 20th Nov 2016. Andrew Wrobal is coordinating this and will be looking for members to take on a number of jobs to make this a success. Layouts on show are Bolden, Round the Bend, Greenfield Sidings, Wilf Pateman's OO layout & Box File Modular.

CLUB DIARY FOR 2016

2016	Running Night	Event	Notes
Wed 14th Sept	N Gauge		
Wed 21st Sept		Modelling Competition	
Wed 28th Sept	OO		
Wed 5th Oct	O Gauge	Exhibition briefing	
Fri 7th Oct Sat & Sun 8 & 9th Oct		Exhibition set up Exhibition @ Connaught centre	Annual Club Show
Wed 12th Oct	N Gauge		
Wed 19th Oct	OO/P4		
Sat 23rd Oct		Layout @ Liphook MRC	Haydon Square E1
Wed 26th Oct	OO	Committee meeting	
Tues 1st Nov		Start of club financial year	Subscriptions due
Wed 2nd Nov	O Gauge		
Sat 5th Nov		Layout @ High Wycombe MRC	Brixcombe
Wed 9th Nov	N Gauge		
Wed 16th Nov	OO/P4		
Sun 20th Nov		Annual Open Day	
Wed 23rd Nov	OO		
Wed 30th Nov		Presentation Evening	TBD
Wed 7th Dec	O Gauge	Annual General Meeting	
Wed 14th Dec	N Gauge	Annual Xmas Dinner	Bat & Ball pub
Wed 21st Dec	OO/P4		
Wed 28th Dec		Club closed	
2017			
Wed 4th Jan	O Gauge		1st club day in 2017

MODELLING COMPETITION - 21ST SEPT

This will be held in the main hall so no layout activity will be allowed on this night. The competition is intended to be a "fun evening" and an opportunity for all the club members to take part and demonstrate their modelling skills at all levels. Category trophies and Best in Show will be awarded.

Categories

(open to scratch built, kit built or modified proprietary models)

- 2mm scale locos and rolling stock - N and 2mm fine scale
- 4mm scale locos and rolling stock - OO, EM, P4 fine scale
- 7mm scale locos and rolling stock - standard & narrow gauge
- "Other" scale locos and rolling stock (From Z to Gauge 3)
- Trackside/Scenic features (Any scale) - a railway/scenic feature not exceeding 2ft square.

Please note all locos and rolling stock must be running models.

Rules of entry

- All entries must be owned by club members.
- The closing time for entries will be 8.00pm.
- A completed entry form must accompany each item (available on the night).
- Voting will be on a one vote for each category basis.
- The winner of each category will be that with the most votes.
- The Best in Show will be chosen from the category winners based upon the highest number of votes.
- The adjudicator's (to be appointed) decision will be final.

To encourage members who do not want to compete, there will be an additional non-judged category:-

Loan Category - Any model, any scale, out of the box, completed or under construction. Your chance to either show off "work in progress", seek advice/encouragement in completing a model, show off an uncommon proprietary item or just bring along your latest acquisition.

EXHIBITION COUNTDOWN - URGENT!

The club's annual exhibition will be held on 8/9th October at The Connaught Leisure Centre, Aldershot. Public opening hours are 10.00 -5.00 on Saturday (doors open at 9.30 to restaurant goers) and 10.00 - 4.30 on Sunday. This year we have 20 layouts and 31 traders attending.

Briefing: There will be a briefing in the clubrooms on Wednesday 5th Oct at 8.00pm - we would like all club members to attend this. There will be a list of jobs available for people to do - we particularly need hall stewards, front desk manning, etc. So please put yourself down for a job. If you can't get to the Wednesday meeting but are able to help let the Exhibition Manager know.

Helping out: All members are requested to help on Friday 7th Oct afternoon/evening to mark out the halls and get layouts/equipment ferried from the clubrooms. Loading of the van at the clubroom will start at 15.00. Access to the Leisure centre for marking out starts at 16.00. Also, help after the exhibition closes on Sunday getting everyone and everything out is essential. Some of the layouts/traders may be short-handed and appreciate occasional relief (hall steward responsibility) - if someone is struggling please help.

Club Corner: We are looking for members to man the club display stand talking to the visitors about the club, it's activities, etc. whilst thrusting an open day leaflet into their hand. You don't need to be an "expert" (knowing the difference between N and O gauge is sufficient). If you are interested please let him know at the briefing.

Sales Stand: The stand will be run by Dave Bentley and John Yarham. If you have any items you want to sell (for a commission) please bring them into the club before the briefing session and John Yarham will look through them and mark them up accordingly.

Parking at The Connaught Centre: The parking section immediately to the left of the entrance can be used by club members only. If you intend to park at the centre please park in this section nose to tail. If you want to get out before the end of the day, please park at Aldershot Lido and walk to the centre. All main car parks are allocated to the paying public.

Saturday Night: There will be a short party starting at 5.30 pm in the exhibitor's mess room when the "Most Appealing Layout" award will be presented after the show closes. Drinks are on the house.

Lunch: Don't forget, if you want lunch over the exhibition weekend please let Mike Brown's know - please don't leave it to the last minute. This measure is to reduce overspending on unused food and hence save the club money.

Traders: If there are things you are thinking of purchasing that are likely to be on sale from a trader at our exhibition, could you try to buy them at the exhibition please? It increases the trader's turnover and the likelihood of them wanting to come back next year. If you are wearing a club shirt many will give you a discount.

Please remember that the annual exhibition funds the club layouts so will all members please contribute to making this a success - Thank you.

LAYOUT REPORTS

N gauge group: We have 6 definite invites and 2 probable's for Wickwar (in addition to our exhibition), and one for Bolden. Work has mainly been on Wickwar - reprinting the backscene, getting the goods yard and signals working and making proper boxes for the power supplies. I sent an offer of various articles on Wickwar to Hornby Magazine, but have had no response after 8 weeks.

OO gauge group: No report

P4 gauge group: Our next public engagement is the Club Exhibition - the group has been working on improvements to stock, the layout, operation and reliability for this show. We have focussed on the quality and appearance of the track in the platform road. We plan a couple of testing days (half day hall hire) 9th and 23rd September. We have been asked to make the layout available for photography in anticipation of a feature in Model Rail and are finalising a suitable Wednesday date in the autumn for this.

O gauge group: Our small but happy band of builders are pressing on with Haydon Square E1 to get it into a presentable condition for our club exhibition this October. Although it will be clearly be a long way from finished and some key items of stock have yet to materialise, viewers will hopefully be able to see progress and to visualise what the finished layout will look like.

Coming to the end of year 2 of our 3 year construction plan we are almost where we planned to be; the only significant omission being the design and building of the lighting gantry for which we have run out of both time and money in this financial year. That will now be carried over into next year along with the scenic development of the "bottom deck".

We've been invited to take HSE1 to the Liphook club Open Day this October to demonstrate what can be achieved in O gauge by a small team of builders in limited space. For us it gives us another learning opportunity with HSE1 in a low pressure environment.

We have received our first "away" exhibition invitation for HSE1, which is for the Beckenham exhibition in October 2017. We have promised to have it finished by then so we now have a deadline to work towards.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

A friend of mine quit his job as a reporter and left town by railway. It was an ex-press train.

DO WE HAVE A SUCCESSFUL CLUB?

by David Harrington

"Yes" some might say, while others take the opposite view. But how to measure "success"? I take this comment from the October issue of the Modeller (p903) where a member of the Swansea Club – www.srmg.org.uk - boasts about how effective his finance and management structure is. His summary says:

1. Keep an eye on finances and don't expect the annual show to fill the coffers;
2. Find ways to work and share resources with other local community and business organisations;
3. Let all members share tasks and responsibilities;
4. Be democratic and avoid dictatorial attitudes;
5. Have lots of activities on the go simultaneously;
6. Keep your website modern and up to date.

It's worth reading the whole piece – for example, 3,000 visitors to their show, which is entry free. A soft-start membership fee for new members. Sharing their (permanent) premises with their landlord, a charity, thus avoiding rates.

So how are we doing in F&DMRC? Well, in my humble opinion we are:

- More than OK for items 1 and 6 (Liam is working on interfacing our website with social media).

- "Could do better" for items 3, 4 and

- "much better" for item 5.

- Poor for item 2.

But what do you think? Let me know by phone or email or even by podgy-fingering over coffee in the clubroom. Can we do better? If so – how? Especially in establishing links with local businesses and communities.

EMAIL SPOOFING

by David Harrington

Do you sometimes receive emails that seem to come from someone you know? But obviously aren't. Conversely, do your friends sometimes complain that you've sent them an email with nonsense text or that contained a virus?

Here's why it happens – it's called "Email spoofing" and is defined as the creation of email messages with a forged sender address. Because the email system doesn't have any mechanism for authentication, it is common for spam and phishing emails to use such spoofing to mislead the recipient about the origin of the message. In other words, somebody has recorded your email address (simple to do – addresses can be picked up from the open internet, a website, or stolen from a company you've traded with). That somebody is now using your address to send spam or malware.

Should you be worried? In a word, no. Should you be careful? Yes you should. If you have any doubt whatsoever that a received mail is not from somebody it purports to be, don't open it, just delete it permanently. And never, ever, click on a link in a dodgy email. That is certain to land you in a whole heap of trouble!

I'VE STARTED SO I'LL FINISH

by Ian George

A couple of follow ups to previous articles.

Jubilee names. Some time ago I wrote an article in the Whistle-Blower about loco names, and in particular the wide variety of subjects covered by the names given to the LMS Jubilee class. These included a batch of famous Royal Navy warships. The thing that didn't occur to me when I wrote the article but has since given me food for thought is that this batch of engines was built and named in the second half of 1936. This meant that within only 3 or 4 years of these engines being named many of these great warships had been lost in action along with the majority of their crews. Ships such as Barham, Glorious, Courageous, Repulse and of course Hood had all gone. To us now these are just names from history but to the public then and even more so to the engine crews, seeing and working on the loco's carrying these names must have been a dreadful reminder of the price they were all paying at that time. A sobering thought.

"Coal Staithe". In the last Whistle-Blower I wrote about whether these were the modelling equivalent of the urban myth. This prompted a response from Noel Leaver who said that he had written an article for an N gauge publication about the working of local coal merchants in railway goods yards. Noel has placed a copy of the article on our club website. It's a good read and I recommend members to look it up. In fact, there is now a good collection of interesting and informative articles on the club web site so do take a look.

TRAIN FACTS

by Liam Rasbid

- There is an abandoned subway station under City Hall in New York that no train stops at but you can see it in passing if you take the number 6 train.
- If someone commits suicide in Japan by jumping onto an oncoming train, the train company can/will sue his/her family for the clean up fees, loss of income and negative publicity brought on by the suicide.
- Ore trains in Sweden traveling down to the coast generate five times the amount of electricity they use, powering nearby towns and the return trip for other trains.
- In 1963, four Princeton students forced a local train to stop by parking a car on the tracks. With a gun loaded with blanks, they got on the train, picked four girls as their dates, and rode away with them on horseback.
- The fight scene on top of the train in Skyfall was actually filmed on top of a real moving train, and Daniel Craig did not use a stunt double.

HOW ABOUT AN EXCURSION TRAIN

by Ian George

The great attraction of our hobby is that it includes such a wide range of activities and interests, be it in constructing rolling stock, or collecting and displaying them, making buildings, creating scenery, designing and installing electrics, compiling operating schedules, researching projects, or just enjoying watching the trains roll by. There really is something for everybody.

One of my particular interests as part of our hobby is researching different train formations that can be modelled so as to be able to add a bit of variety to our running sessions. A recent example for me has been researching then building a train containing examples of 4 different types of coiled steel wagons to represent one of the many trainloads of coiled steel that ran between south Wales, Deeside and Lanarkshire in the late steam/early diesel era.

Some time ago I was watching a DVD of 1960's steam trains and by chance many of the trains featured were said to be "excursion" trains. That got me thinking about whether there were any characteristic features of excursion trains that made them sufficiently different from ordinary passenger trains. Could a train be modelled that was recognisably "an excursion"?

The BR steam era of the 1950's and 60's pre-dated widespread car ownership, a modern road system and cheap foreign travel so for most people holidays took the form of train trips to the seaside. Contemporary photographs taken on summer Saturdays and Bank Holidays show station platforms packed with holiday-makers like the London tube in the rush hour. Every possible available engine and carriage had to be pressed into use to cope with the demand. Engines that would otherwise have gone for scrap on the basis of age or condition were retained for another summer to do their bit. Elderly coaches that had been parked up for much of the year would be brought back into use just for the summer months. The whole system was run at maximum capacity and beyond.

At this point it's useful to clarify the difference between two types of extra trains run during these peaks, i.e. "relief" trains and "excursion" trains. The former would be run to duplicate an existing scheduled service where it was anticipated that the service train would be overloaded with passengers. The "relief" train or in some cases trains, would run a few minutes before or after the scheduled train. The key difference from an "excursion" is that the relief train would be of similar make-up to the original i.e. it would have similar category of loco and a similar mix of first and second class carriages, dining set etc, albeit possibly of more elderly and less well presented stock.

To the casual observer the rakes of carriages forming excursion trains appear little different from normal, scheduled passenger trains, but closer study reveals significant differences. Although back in the days of steam there were examples of excursion trains for the "well-off" consisting of first class coaches with full dining services (e.g. race meeting "members' specials") in the main the most obvious different feature was that it was unusual for excursion trains to contain first class accommodation; passengers who could afford first class fares would prefer to travel on scheduled services.

Another excursion characteristic was the on board catering arrangements. In general, there were 2 different forms of excursion train. Some were organised and advertised by BR itself; others were booked as private parties. My BR 1960 timetable states that BR had an "Excursion Dept." whose role was to take booking from party organisers. It states that "special reduced fares (second class only) are available subject to a guaranteed minimum of 300 adult fares for a full day excursion or 400 adult fares for a half day or evening excursion". BR could organise refreshments, "the minimum service for parties is tea and biscuits a 9d. per head. Alternatively, tea in Thermal Urns can be supplied to organised parties at 10s. 0d. per gallon". The organisers often did their own catering arrangements. In both cases the "Catering" usually consisted of a Full Brake coach located in the centre of the train in which the tea urns or crates of beer would be stored and served to the passengers who would often be seated in open saloon coaches, TSO's, rather than corridor compartment coaches, TSO's having a higher seating capacity and being easier for accessing refreshments.

For the modeller therefore, one characteristic type of excursion train would be a rake of second open saloon carriages with a full brake situated in the middle, plus some form of brake coach at the rear. For the space-starved modeller a five coach set of this style would not be out of place.

The other characteristic and perhaps surprising choice of coaches for many of the excursion trains, even ones travelling quite long distances, was the use of suburban non-corridor coaches. There were 3 reasons for this. Firstly, these coaches would be parked up spare from their normal Monday to Friday commuter usage and therefore a readily available source of valuable extra coaches for the weekend excursions. Secondly a non-corridor suburban coach could seat almost twice the number of passengers as a corridor coach; very useful when every train was packed full. Thirdly the greater number of doors meant they could be loaded and emptied far more quickly; extremely useful for reducing platform occupancy time when the system was running at full capacity. It was not unusual therefore for an excursion train to have an express passenger engine at the head of a rake of suburban non-corridor coaches. Again, this is something different but authentic for the modeller to copy.

This brings us nicely to the other characteristic of excursion trains, which was the choice of motive power. Firstly all the spare express passenger engines would be used giving the local spotters the opportunity to see loco's whose normal routes were well out of reach. In my patch of the north-west this meant rare Scottish region Jubilees or Clans heading down into Blackpool during "Scotch fortnight", or rare Yorkshire Scots and Jubilees heading for the north Wales coast. Every available "mixed traffic" category 4-6-0 and mogul engine would be brought into use and these types covered the bulk of the excursion workings. However, such was the demand for loco's that almost any type could turn up at the head of an excursion train. In my area of the northwest this meant ancient 0-6-0 4F's, or ex Midland 4-4-0's from the midlands, with 8F's and the superb 9F's storming across the Pennines from the Yorkshire and Nottingham coalfield areas. Plus there was always the chance of something really special: my best spot being an ex Crosti 9F on a Blackpool excursion. In fact the only steam types that seem not to have been used were ex WD 2-8-0's.

Even better from the modellers' viewpoint is the opportunity to run something really different. Today we are used to seeing preserved steam engines heading excursions well off their traditional areas of operation. Less well known is the fact that this did happen in the 1960's steam era. In the north-west this meant strange looking engines with numbers beginning with "6" coming over the Pennines with excursions to the coast; usually B1's or various types of mogul. However, these incursions weren't just confined to mixed traffic class engines. There was also a sprinkling of celebrity, with excursion trains bringing e.g. an A4 to Exeter, a Castle into Preston and a West Country into Manchester. So if you really do want to run your favourite engine without feeling guilty put it at the head of an excursion train. You can't go far wrong. Unless it's a "dub-dee".

FAREWELL TO BASINGSTOKE

by Noel Leaver

Tuesday 28th June 10am, Andrew Wrobel and Greg set off with 'Basingstoke', crammed on Monday into a smaller van than we had ever previously used in order to fit the ferry, to deliver it to a new permanent model railway exhibition in Douglas, IOM (Isle of Man). Approaching Liverpool they were several hours early for the ferry, so diverted to find Hatton's new shop. Apparently it was not worth it – a large warehouse but a very small shop. However, Greg was very concerned with Andrew's purchase of a Hornby 'OO' set – did it mean he was going over to the dark-side? No, it was for his grand-son, just turned one.

Chris Webster and Noel travelled there by air. Chris formed the advance party by flying out on the evening of Mon-27th – as a past visitor he warned not to expect Easyjet to be on-time and booked a hotel next to the IOM airport in case the inward flight was late, (plus one at Gatwick on the way back). Chris was justified – both his flights were nearly 2 hours late. My outward flight (Tue-28th) was affected by the French air traffic controllers' strike, and EasyJet warned it was likely to be 6 hours late, in fact it was 5 minutes early! Chris had hired a car and having spent a day re-acquainting himself with the island, only just got back to the airport in time to provide a taxi service to the hotel. After a good sea crossing, on a massive catamaran @ 35knots, the van team arrived in Douglas later that evening.

Wed-29th: Having met up with the van in foul weather on Douglas promenade, we set off in convoy for the exhibition building. This had been reconnoitred by Chris the day before and turned out to be a large former garage, near the Seaport terminal but **not** exactly in the most desirable/busy bit of town. Having arrived we were told there might be a change of plans: someone from the new Manx Motor Museum elsewhere on the island was interested in buying the layouts and would be getting back to him by 10am, if they wanted 'Basingstoke' we would install it there instead. We went with him for a coffee at another Museum, they phoned back apparently saying they were interested in 'Basingstoke' but not his other 12 or so layouts (poorer quality), he was not interested in selling just 'Basingstoke', so we went back to 'Plan A' and started unloading and setting it up.

A feature of the area where it was to go were 4 chalk circles marking damp patches on the floor beneath where the glass panelled roof was leaking. It was impossible to avoid 2 of the drips, though once the rain stopped it was (temporarily) dry. We set it all up (with ply sheets balanced on the lighting/fascia units protecting the areas with drips, went for lunch, then came back and started testing. There were numerous problems, mostly cables in the wrong sockets or not plugged in fully, or operators forgetting how it worked. A couple of wires had come loose in the ride over the high seas. By 7pm it was mainly working, we were getting tired so decided to come back in the morning.

As the weather had improved, the early evening was spent visiting the 2ft gauge **Groulle Glen Railway**, which by good fortune had its original surviving steam loco, Sea Lion, in-steam and hauling the carriages. We returned to Douglas and found an excellent pub in which to sample the local ales and 'Manx Queenies', (baby scallops to you and me), a very tasty local culinary speciality.

Next morning (Thu) the 2 outstanding layout problems (a switch set wrong and a rail joint that needed re-soldering) were quickly put right; a large bundle of £50 notes (English!) collected.

Noel quickly took custody of this, working on the theory that now that Andrew and Greg knew where Hatton's was and had an empty van they could fill, the cash was probably safer with him! [However, Hatton's was soon forgotten - during the return trip a slipping clutch on the van was more than enough to occupy their minds.]

Back on the island, acting tour guide Chris had developed 'a cunning plan' for the rest of Thursday. After bidding farewell to 'Basingstoke' with a group photo, confident in the knowledge that 4 trains were lapping the layout continuously in a trouble-free manner, the rest of the day was packed with real trains: **Isle of Man Steam Railway** to Port Erin (15.5 miles – with a hand-request stop for the airport); quick visit to the excellent Fish & Chip shop (where Andrew noticed a 'deal' for old-*arts); Steam Railway Museum; back to Douglas by train; Horse tram along the promenade (in the rain, including a change of 'engine' at the stables half way along); **Manx Electric Railway** tram to Laxey (saw the Snaefel tram depart but not enough time for a ride), back to Douglas and another horse tram. Highlights were having Fenella (the smallest Manx steam loco and the only one in service that Chris had not ridden behind prior to this trip); and travelling on electric **Tram #1** to Laxey – the oldest tram in the world (with beautifully varnished slatted seats, etc.) still at work on its original line, but normally only appearing on special occasions (how had they heard about us?).

The final somewhat damp journey on the horse tram saw us back in the Douglas harbour area. The flying party returned to the airport and the vagaries of Easyjet, whilst Greg and Andrew made a return visit for more Queenies at the pub (empty because of the pouring rain and cold wind); afterwards retrieving the van from outside the exhibition garage and returning to their B&B. With an early start, no hotel breakfast, Greg and Andrew drove to the packet ferry, this time a ship to the more northerly port at Heysham - luckily calm seas, latterly weaving through the profusion of off-shore wind-turbines.

We hope 'Basingstoke' will be happy in her new home with other 'N', 'OO' and narrow-gauge layouts; to-date Greg has only had one email about a problem. However, I would not be wanting to invest money in the model railway exhibition, only a (small) handful of visitors while we were there, not advertised much at present and on the wrong side of the inner-harbour.

You never know, should it need moving and recommissioning again, we might get a second trip out there on a consultancy basis!

As you can see, I have received lots of articles for this edition - keep them coming. Why not write something for the Newsletter yourself. It can be about anything around railways and if you have pictures as well then that's fantastic. Any electronic delivery method is acceptable.

Thanks - The Editor