

# WHISTLEBLOWER

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

September 2018 Edition

### EDITORIAL

September and October are busy periods at the Club. On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September we have the annual modelling competition – the rules are given below – the more entries, the better the evening, so please bring along items.

Also for your diary, we have the Club Exhibition on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October with set up on the Friday evening. There is also the important show briefing on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm at the Club Rooms. Please put these dates in your diary. We run one of the most successful shows in the country, but it takes a lot of effort to put it on – please be ready to do your bit as without you the magic doesn't happen!

**Julian Evison (Editor)**

### CLUB MODELLING COMPETITION

This is a reminder that this year's Club Modelling Competition takes place on **Wednesday September 19<sup>th</sup>** (i.e. one week later than initially advertised).

As Richard Harris said in May, please consider entering one or more of your treasured creations – the success of the event relies entirely on a copious and diverse set of entries – and who knows – it might be a winner!

The competition is intended to be a fun evening and an opportunity for all the Club's Members to take part and demonstrate their modelling skills at all levels.

**Categories** (open to scratch built, kit-built or modified proprietary models):

- **2mm** scale locos and rolling stock – N and 2mm finescale
- **4mm** scale locos and rolling stock – OO, EM, P4 finescale, OO9
- **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 less than 2 ft sq.

Entries in all the above Categories will also be judged for Best in Show and, where qualifying, the Younger Modeller award.

### Rules of entry

- All entries must be owned by Club Members and, if relevant, fit to operate.

- A completed entry form must accompany each item. Entries also qualifying for the Younger Modeller category (under 26 yrs) should indicate this on the form (available from the Club Room from a week before and on the night).
- The closing time for entries will be 7:30pm. Voting finishes at 8:00pm.
- All Members present may vote and are invited to vote for the entry they consider best in each category. They are also invited to vote for Best in Show and best Younger Modeller entry.
- The winner of each Category, Best in Show and Younger Modeller will be that with the most corresponding votes recorded on returned ballot forms.
- The adjudicators (on eligibility or other dispute) will be appointed before the event.

**Best in Show** – The recipient will receive the Club shield and a bottle of wine.

**Category winners** and **Younger Modeller** – will have custody of the appropriate trophy for the following 12 months.

**Loan Category** – To encourage Members who do not want to compete, there will be an additional non-judged category:-

**Any model, any scale, out of the box, completed or under construction. This is 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.**

## **A DAY ON THE LOOE BRANCH – Ian George**

On my latest trip to Cornwall I took the opportunity to re-visit the Looe branch; at 8 3/4 miles in length it is the shortest and possibly most attractive of the branches surviving in the West Country.

The railway had its origins in a canal built in the late 1820's to bring fertilizer from the Looe river estuary to the farming area inland. In the 1840's a single track mineral railway was built to carry granite blocks, copper ore, and later china clay from quarries on the edges of Bodmin moor down to the canal and hence on to the fishing port of Looe for onward shipment. With the canal unable to handle the booming volumes of traffic, the railway was extended down to Looe, following the route of, and eventually replacing the canal. By the 1860's the broad gauge Cornwall Railway main line had arrived at Liskeard, crossing high above the Looe river valley on the Moorswater viaduct, one of Brunel's distinctive wooden fan structures. It took until 1901 for a linking line to be built from the mainline at Liskeard running down steeply to make a junction with the original “quarries to Looe line” at Coombe Junction, the line becoming the Liskeard and Looe railway, which today forms the Looe branch.

The independent L and L Railway was absorbed by the GWR in 1923 who heavily promoted Looe as a holiday destination. This busy seasonal passenger business, along with the china clay plus traffic including fish from Looe, coal for the town gas works, and general merchandise kept the branch in existence through into the 1950's. The line narrowly escaped closure by BR in 1966 when only 2 weeks before the intended closure date the then Minister of Transport, Barbara Castle, refused to sign off BR's closure plan. Today freight traffic along the line has ended and the line survives as a popular tourist route with an hourly service, operated each day by a single DMU, either a 1 car class 153 or a 2 car class 150.



Geography dictated that the original link line from Coombe Junction not only climbed at a steep gradient from the valley floor up to reach the main line at Liskeard but it also joined the main line on a very sharp curve, the effects of which continue to this day. Loaded passenger coaches were not permitted around the final curve of the branch into Liskeard mainline station. This prevented any passenger through- working onto the branch, and also necessitated in the branch having its own separate platform at 90 degrees to the mainline platforms. The severe reverse curves along the branch also prevented the use of more modern passenger coaches with 9' bogies; in steam days the branch coaches remained the older types with 7' bogies and normally consisted of B sets plus various elderly types of strengthening coaches added as required.

The largest permitted locos were small prairies of both the 45XX and 4575 classes which by the 1950's covered all the passenger and goods turns on the branch. The prairies were permitted to take a maximum of 9 loaded china clay wagons up the gradient to the mainline sidings at Liskeard. Here several branch trains would be joined together to await collection by one of St Blazey shed's 42xx class 2-8-0 tanks.

Today, setting off from Liskeard's platform 3 the Looe branch train descends steeply at 1 in 40 and completes almost a full circle before coming to a halt at Coombe Junction some

150 feet below, with the mainline passing overhead on a viaduct. Almost uniquely on Network Rail, at Coombe Junction the guard climbs down onto the track to work the ground frame for the train to reverse direction. To do this the driver walks through the train, clutching the train token and chatting to passengers, to take up his position in the cab at the other end of the train. The guard climbs back on board and the train re-starts its descent towards Looe.

In steam days the operation at Coombe Junction was an altogether more complex affair. Here the up and down passenger trains had to cross each other, reverse/ engine run around, and each had to call at the short single platform halt. Add in a branch goods or china clay train also wanting to pass through the junction and the signalman needed to be at the top of his game. The moves required were so complicated that a system of 11 different whistle codes were stipulated for each engine driver to advise the signal man which move he had completed and where he needed to go next. In steam days Coombe Junction would have been a fascinating place to watch trains.

More than that, with its simple track plan (a single-track junction plus a run round loop), minimal structures (a small single platform halt and a signal box), and masses of operating activity, it would make an excellent small layout. The branch was cleared for use by yellow weight category locos so the modeller could legitimately add pannier tanks to provide more variety. I was once sufficiently tempted that I bought a brass kit of the GWR style signal box and that still languishes in my cupboard. One day perhaps.

From Coombe Junction the line continues steeply down the wooded valley passing a number of attractive request-stop halts, including "St Keynes Wishing Well Halt" which cries out for further investigation. Eventually the line emerges onto a narrow causeway running alongside the wide tidal estuary of the Looe river. It then passes through one of the most scenically attractive railway locations in the UK, at "Terras Crossing" (take care how you pronounce that one). Observing the "Stop then Proceed" signs at the now un-gated crossing the train crawls through the scene which includes a level-crossing keeper's house, an ancient pack horse bridge over the river, and the remains of the sea lock for the original canal. Stunning.

Continuing along the narrow causeway, at low tide the train passes close by wading birds such as oystercatchers, herons and white egrets feeding on the mud flats. At high tide the water laps up either side of the causeway, the train appearing to be heading out to sea.



Round the final bend and the train reaches the minimalist, 2 coach length platform at Looe, located right on the water's edge. Five minutes for the driver and guard to change ends and we are off climbing back up the valley to Liskeard.



The Looe branch contains plenty of interest for the holiday traveller and the railway enthusiast and at £2.90 for a Senior Railcard Day Ranger ticket it's a steal.

Recommended.

## **A LIFETIME OF RAILWAYS (PART 1) – Mike Le Marie**

My earliest railway memory goes back to about 1953 when I was about 4 years old. At that time we lived in Emsworth on the South coast and my grandparents lived in Cheam. Visits to them were invariably by train and always involved a change at Barnham for a

London train via Horsham and Sutton. Whilst waiting for the London train an unrebuilt Bulleid pulled in on a Brighton train. I was stood there gazing at it when the safety valves lifted. I fled from the station platform and in later years my Mother told me I was nearly a quarter of a mile up the road when she finally caught me.

In 1954 my Father applied for and got a civil service transfer from Chichester to Spennymoor in Co Durham. We bought a house on the edge of Durham City with a distant view of the East Coast mainline. When we actually moved my Mother and I went by train and travelled from Kings Cross to Darlington on the Queen of Scots Pullman. What a pity I was too young to appreciate some of the now closed lines the train traversed in those days.

Not far from our house was Rely Mill Junction through which passed the East Coast mainline plus lines to Bishop Auckland, the Derwent Valley and Consett. If I had been good during the day my pre-bedtime treat was to be taken to Rely Mill to watch the Evening Talisman come through inevitably hauled by an A4. As I got older I spent many hours trainspotting at Rely Mill where in addition to the East Coast traffic there was a steady succession of coal and other freight trains on the other lines mainly hauled by Q6s and Q7s. I was a bit of an evil little so and so in those days and took great delight in standing on the bridge and attempting to drop a stone down the locomotive funnel!

This was also the time that an interest in model railways awakened. There was a model railway shop in the City and I used to gaze at the many products from Binns Road i.e. Hornby Dublo 3 rail. Another shop sold the then very infant Triang products and the local Woolworths stocked Lone Star. My Father insisted that I had to be 10 before I could have a train set. He was probably thinking of the steady destruction of my clockwork set. The engines flew through the air rather well when you sent them up a ramp at full speed! By the time I was 10 Hornby Dublo had released their 2 rail system and I was promised one of the new train sets. All I had ever wanted was the A4 set so imagine my disappointment when I opened the parcel and there was a Castle class loco with 2 chocolate and cream coaches. My Dad liked the GWR and that choice just about put me off anything Western for life (not quite!). How could a young boy go to sleep listening to his train set going round and round in the next room because his Dad wanted to play with it.

I was also a rather prolific wanderer and at the age of 8 my Dad received reports that I had been sited on my roller skates some 5 miles from the house. This wandering got wider as I grew older and by the age of 11 I was taking myself off by train to Newcastle in order to see what I could 'cop' on Gateshead Bowes Bridge shed, all without my parents knowing where I was.

By then the railways were changing rapidly and Class 40s and DMUs were appearing. One day a gang of us had dug a pit beside the railway line and mounted a large pipe pointing skywards. This was meant to be an anti aircraft gun and we were ready to shoot down any German intruders. Anyway, we suddenly heard a sound in the cutting that to our ears was similar to a large bomber aircraft and this two tone green beast burst into sight. It was of course the first production Deltic which was to have such an influence on my railway interests in the years to come.

Every year the major event in Durham City was the Miners Gala. Thousands flocked to the City to take part in or watch the parade and listen to the political speeches. Many arrived by train and for that weekend many closed stations and mineral lines were re-opened for passenger use. The weekend was a train spotters delight with all sorts of unusual engines being turned out to haul the special services.

From the age of 11 I was allowed to travel between Durham and Kings Cross on my own. My Mother would put me on the train at Durham and my Grandad would meet me at Kings Cross. I was told to stay put but of course I would get out at York and Grantham to watch the locomotive changes but I always managed to get back on board in the nick of time. From that time I also remember those wonderful waxed cartons of ki-ora orange squash could you buy from the attendant who came along the train with a large wicker basket. On arrival at Kings Cross my Grandad would make me lead him to the ticket office, buy the correct tickets and find the correct route to Victoria (there was no Victoria line in those days) and then lead him to the correct platforms. At Victoria I had to read the departure board and find the correct train for Redhill. I have always been very grateful to my Grandad to teaching me travel independence at such an early age. Of course it only fuelled the 'wander bug' even more and I started exploring the lines radiating from Redhill. By 13 I was allowed to go down to Brighton on my own. I would save up my pocket money over the months so that I had enough money to buy train tickets. On one occasion my Grandad thought I was in Brighton for the day when in fact I was in Portsmouth contemplating whether I could cross to the Isle of Wight and cop the steam locos there. In the event it was a step too far even for me and it was another year before I crossed to the Isle of Wight.

**To be continued.**

## **CURIOUS NAMES – THE ANSWERS – Ian Welch**

In the last edition of Whistleblower, Ian posed a few quiz questions on the location of various places with curious names. To keep you on your toes the list included one GPO exchange and one electricity substation. Here are the answers:

- Dr Days - Bristol and named after Dr Willam Edward Day who lived in Barrow Road. The area was named after him when the bridge at Barrow Road needed to be cut for the railway to pass.
- Indian Queens – a village in Cornwall near St Columb and an electricity transmission substation
- Pyewipe – near Lincoln a local name for lapwing/peewit
- Vandyke - a telephone exchange in Wandsworth London dialling code 874 / 826
- Cogload - north of Taunton named after local farm
- Wooden Gate - south of Alnmouth
- Proof House – Birmingham – origins not known but presumably inebriating (*Ed: this might be to do with testing (proving) firearms*)

- Stoats Nest – Coulsdon – named after local area; origin not known
- Bopeep - close to St Leonards and derived from a local pub
- Parsley Hay – on the Whaley Bridge to Cromford railway a hamlet in the Peak District

How many of these junctions can one travel through on a single (timetabled) train? The answer is four: Cogload / Dr Days / Proof House / Wooden Gate Junctions on the 12:25hrs Plymouth to Edinburgh Cross Country Service – which goes via Wickwar!

## CLUB DIARY – Andrew Wrobel

Recent changes in **yellow**.

DIARY 2018			
Date	Run'g Night	Notes	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Wed 05 Sep	0		
Sat 8 & Sun 9 Sep	--		<b>Wickwar (N):</b> TINGS, Warwickshire Event Centre, nr. Leamington Spa; <b>Haydon Sq. E.1(0):</b> REC Show, Woking
Wed 12 Sep	N & P4/009		Charity layout on-display at 'Woodlarks' from 14:00
Wed 19 Sep	<b>ALL</b>	Apologies for 1 week delay	<b>Club Modelling Competition</b> [Leads: Richard Puddephatt and Richard Harris]
Wed 26 Sep	00 & P4		Hall booked from 12:00 to 15:00, then rest of day [exhib'n prep'n]
Sat 29 Sep	--		<b>Aldermouth (0)</b> [J.Edwards's layout]: <b>BANRAIL</b> , Banbury & District MR Show, St.Hugh's Church, Ruskin Rd, OX16 9HU
Wed 03 Oct	0		
Sat 6 Oct	--		<b>Greenfield Sidings (00)</b> Horsham MRC 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
Sat 6 & Sun 7 Oct	--		<b>Brixcombe (P4)</b> Fareham 'Railex'
<b>Wed 10 Oct 7pm</b>	N		Annual Show <b>BRIEFING</b> [Noel]
<b>Fri 12 Oct even'g</b>	<b>ALL</b>		<b>Prepare the Show</b>
<b>Sat 13 &amp; Sun 14 Oct</b>	<b>ALL</b>		<b>F&amp;DMRC Annual Show</b> , Aldershot; <b>Greenfield Sidings (00); Kinlochlagen (N)</b> [M.LeMarie's layout]:
Wed 17 Oct	P4/009		
Sun 20 Oct	--		<b>St.Mary's (7mm NG)</b> [J.Evison's layout]: Central Southern 0 Group, Wimborne
Wed 24 Oct	00		
Wed 31 Oct	Any		
Sat 03 Nov	--		<b>Newport Road (00)</b> [L.Rasbid's layout]: Wycrail, Cressex Comm'y Centre, High Wycombe
Wed 07 Nov	0		
Sat 10 & Sun 11 Nov	--		<b>St.Mary's (7mm NG)</b> [J.Evison's layout]: Hampton Court Club exhib'n, Tolworth

Wed 14 Nov	N		
Sat 17 2pm (set-up) & Sun 18 Nov	<b>ALL</b>		<b>Club Open Day</b> [Sun 10:00 to 16:00, then put away. Organiser: Mike LeMarie]
Wed 21 Nov	P4/009		
Sat 24 & Sun 25 Nov	--		<b>Wickwar (N) and Haydon Square E.1(0):</b> Warley, Birmingham
Wed 28 Nov	00		
<b>Wed 05 Dec 8pm</b>	<b>0 &amp; ALL</b>		<b>AGM</b>
Wed 12 Dec	N & P4/009		
Fri 14 Dec	Payees		<b>Club Christmas Dinner @</b> Bluebell, Dockenfield
Wed 19 Dec	00		
Wed 26 Dec	--		<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>DIARY 2019</b>			
Wed 02 Jan	0		<b>Possibly open</b>
Wed 09 Jan	N		
Wed 16 Jan	P4/009		
Wed 23 Jan	00		
<more Wednesdays to be added>			
Sat 09 & Sun 10 Feb			<b>St.Mary's</b> (7mm NG) [J.Evison's layout]: Bournemouth MR Exhib'n, Hamworthy
Sat 16 & ? Sun 17 Feb			<b>Wickwar (N):</b> Milton Keynes (MKMRS) 50 <sup>th</sup> (possible Sunday)
Sat 23 & Sun 24 Feb			<b>St.Mary's</b> (7mm NG) [J.Evison's layout]: Eurotrack, Southampton.
Sat 09 & Sun 10 Mar	--		<b>Haydon Sq. E.1(0):</b> Basingstoke Club Exhib'n, Basingstoke
Sat 23 & Sun 24 Mar	--		<b>Wickwar (N):</b> The London Festival of Railway Modelling, Alexandra Palace
Sat 13 & 14 Apr	--		<b>Aldermouth (0)</b> [J.Edwards's layout]: Crawley MRS, Tanbridge House School, Horsham
Fri 03 open 1pm, Sat 04 & Sun 05 <b>May</b>	--		<b>Haydon Sq. E.1(0):</b> Bristol Club Exhib'n, Thornbury. [Travel Fri early]
Mon 27 May (Bank Holiday)	--		0 Gauge Open Day, Club rooms
Sat 08 Jun	--		<b>St.Mary's</b> [J.Evison's layout]: 7mm NGA 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniv'y Exhib'n, Burton-on-Trent.
Sat 06 & Sun 07 Jul	--		<b>Aldermouth (0)</b> [J.Edwards's layout]: Basildon MRC, 40 <sup>th</sup> Exhib'n, Laindon
Sat 10 Aug	--	Unconfirmed	<b>Haydon Sq. E.1(0):</b> Bexhill MRC, Bexhill

Please let Andrew know of any updates.