

WHISTLEBLOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

May 2019 Edition

EDITORIAL

After four weeks away, it was a pleasure to return to the Club and a noticeably tidier Clubroom. Whoever the heroes were who did the tidying, thank you. Now, let's keep it that way!

Julian Evison (Editor)

OPEN DAYS – Richard Puddephat

The season of Open days is upon us and the first is the OO gauge Group's day on MONDAY MAY 6TH 10.00 AM TO 4 PM. The second one will be the O Gauge Group's turn on MONDAY MAY 27TH 10.00 AM TO 4 PM. Please give both these days your support by attending for some of the time or offering to help during the day. These are important occasions, not just for the groups themselves but also for the whole Club as it offers an opportunity to showcase what we do to our local community. It gives us all an opportunity to see what the other groups are up to.

HEADLAMPS – Noel Leaver

I'm writing a booklet about head, tail, and side lamps for the 2mm Scale Association, and have been doing research into what codes were used when, much of it at the National Archives at Kew. (I'm now fairly familiar with the place, so if you have never been but want to do some research I can help you.) This extract is a general overview of the development of the use of head lamps to give information about the train.

Head lamps were used from very early days to warn of the approach of a train at night. After a little while companies realised that by using different positions or colours of lamp, or by using more than one lamp, they could help the signalman recognise what train was approaching, for example was it an express or a slow train. Initially this was just at night, but it started being used in daytime as well – though oddly most companies used a completely different set of head codes during the day. Each company invented its own codes – there was no commonality between companies, including how many lamp irons and where they were placed.

In 1902 a list of 9 headcodes, 1 to 9, was published via the RCH, describing different classes of train. They used the 4 lamp positions that became standard, and white lights only. Classes 1 and 2 were what in BR days were A (Express, a light either side of the buffer beam) and B (Ordinary passenger, one light on chimney). The others differed a bit

from later codes, and 4 of them used 3 lamps.

Most companies decided to adopt them, the few that already had these 4 lamp iron positions like the GER did so very quickly, others took a year or two to alter lamp irons. Companies were allowed to extend the codes with their own private codes and many did: the GWR added a tenth code which eventually became code H on BR, others added codes for special trains using green lights, or codes for particular routes. BTW, a “green” lamp in this context means one with a green light, the body would probably be the same colour as all the other lamps. In daylight when lamps were used to indicate routes discs were usually used instead, white, coloured, or sometimes a white disc with a black line or cross on it in place of a coloured lamp.

As is well known, the Southern companies never adopted headcodes showing the train class, but showed a route indication instead. What is less well appreciated is that there were many other places where route codes were used, often until the end of steam on BR. For example on many of the suburban trains into London such as those into Liverpool St, suburban trains in some other major cities, and cross-London freight trains. Plus some companies like the Caledonian and Taff Vale kept their own individual class head codes until grouping, and the S&D continued using its own 3 head codes until the end of steam. Possibly the GER had the largest number of different head codes, with in addition to the 9 standard ones 90 others including, for example, “Empty Coaching Stock travelling over local line for Liverpool Street platform 8”.

In 1918 the head codes were revised to change the codes with 3 lamps to only use 1 or 2 lamps. At the same time code 3 (C for the GWR and in BR terms) was given the same headcode as class 4 (D), though still recognised as separate classes and with different bell codes between signal boxes. Several other headcodes/classes included trains with different bell codes already. So from this point there were 8 standard codes, 9 on the GWR, that were more or less the same as the later BR ones.

After grouping most of the hold-outs within the GWR, LMS and LNER were made to adopt the standard codes except for suburban routes – though while the Caledonian officially dropped its use of a pair of route indicating semaphore arms, these continued to be used and there are pictures of a DMU around 1960 fitted with them! The use of coloured lamps, particularly green, was discouraged and codes that still used them – like the route codes on ex-GER lines – were changed to use just white and violet (violet was a blue filter which appeared violet in front of an oil lamp).

Around 1928 class 3 was given a separate headcode of lamps right and centre of the buffer beam (left and right when describing lamps are always from the engine driver’s viewpoint.) The GWR had been using this for class H, so that changed to lamps centre and left on the buffer beam. At this point the codes on the GWR were essentially those by BR in the 50s and 60s, though still without class H on the LMS and LNER (who still numbered the classes 1 to 9).

In 1950 a standard set of 10 codes – the same as the GWR ones – was adopted by the

BR(M) and BR(E), as was the GWR practice of putting the train class in the heading of the working timetable rather than just a description like "Express Goods".

There were detailed changes in the meanings of the codes over the years, mainly to reflect the increased availability of fitted goods stock, so for example class 3 (C) originally did not include fully fitted goods trains.

Another interesting feature of head lamps was the design of lamp which varied by company, and the colours they were painted. White headlamps are familiar from the 60s, but head lamps were not always white. The LMS and most of its predecessors painted them black, and almost all BR(M) trains in the 50s have black head lamps. The GWR, LNER, and GWR painted head lamps red until 1936 when they were changed to white (the GWR had used black until 1915). However, head lamps seem to have been rarely repainted, so red lamps could still be seen on some GWR trains in the 50s and occasionally into the 60s, and many BR(M) lamps were still black. Similarly lamps of non-standard design from pre-group companies could occasionally be seen.

A QUICK QUIZ – Ian George

At which station would you find these signs?





Answer in next month's Whistleblower

CLUB DIARY – Andrew Wrobel

Recent changes in **yellow**. Running starts at **14:00** in the Hall.

'Run'g pm' = Priority for use of Hall, AND tidy/vacuum Club Room + Lock-up

DIARY 2019		
Date	Run'g pm	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Wed 01 May	0	
Fri 03 open 1pm, Sat 04 & Sun 05 May	--	Haydon Sq. E.1(0): Bristol Model Railway Exhibition, Thornbury Leisure Centre nr. Bristol, BS35 3JB
Mon 06 May (Bank Holiday)		00 Gauge Open Day, Hall & Club rooms
Wed 08 May	N	Most likely date for 'N' Group meeting re. future layout
Sat 11 May	--	Kinlochlaggen (N) [Mike Le Marie's layout]: Loddon Vale MRC, Swallowfield
Wed 15 May	P4/009	
Wed 22 May	00	
Sat-25 & Sun-26 May	--	Wickwar (N): Railex, Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Aylesbury, HP21 9PP [Transport available from Farnham, but for the whole day; contact Andrew W. (Secretary)]
Mon 27 May (Bank Holiday)		0 Gauge Open Day, Hall & Club rooms
Wed 29 May	Any	7pm Presentation - the Faller Road System (a trial-run prior to same for Chiltern Model Railway Asso'n) Noel Leaver
Wed 05 Jun	0	
Sat 08 Jun	--	St.Mary's [J.Evison's layout]: 7mm NGA 40th Anniv'y Exhib'n, Town Hall, Burton on Trent, DE14 2EB
Wed 12 Jun	N	
Fri 14 to Sun 16 Jun	--	Wickwar (N): GCR (Great Central Railway), Quorn Station, LE12 8AG
Wed 19 Jun	P4/009	
Wed 26 Jun	00	
Wed 03 Jul	0	
Sat 06 & Sun 07 Jul	--	Aldermouth (0) [J.Edwards's layout]: Basildon MRC, [40th Exhib'n], James Hornsby School, Basildon, SS15 5NX
Wed 10 Jul	N	
Wed 17 Jul	P4/009	
Wed 24 Jul	00	
Wed 31 Jul	Any	
Wed 07 Aug	0	
Sat 10 Aug	--	Haydon Sq. E.1(0): Bexhill MRC, Bexhill [Unconfirmed]
Wed 14 Aug	N	
Wed 21 Aug	P4/009	
Wed 28 Aug	00	