

WHISTLEBLOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

February 2020 Edition

I would like to add my welcome to Jon as the new editor of Whistleblower and to also thank Julian for all his efforts while in the editor's chair.

Whistleblower is an excellent way to keep in touch with all members about what is going on in the Club. It also has first class articles of general railway interest, but it does need your input as well to keep that aspect alive. Jon needs both your ideas as well as articles and reminiscences of both our hobby and the full-size railway.

Do you have memories of your "Glorious Years"? Do you have photos of those times which could be included - both models and the full-size railway? Don't worry about the quality because not many of us were a Colin Garrett in those days. See what you can find from your archives and let Jon have them. We will look after them, I promise you.

Enjoy this edition

Richard Puddephatt

OO9 PLANS & PROGRESS – David Harrington

With the acquisition of the remaining board by Richard Puddephatt, the new(ish) group focusing on 4mm scenery with 4mm vehicles running on 2mm (N-Scale) track seems to have come of age. (For those who haven't yet discovered the delights of this narrow-gauge, light-railway adventure, it's called "OO9", for pretty obvious reasons).

The initial concept (drafted a short two years ago) was that each board and its associated rolling stock would be the property of individual members. This was a significant departure from normal club activities, but it does have the advantage that OO9 boards are stored at home, not in the crowded club basement. It also gives full rein to each board owner to design and build whatever he wants on his board, so long as his board can join with any other to create a through-running layout, and scenic breaks between boards are not jarringly intrusive. So far the concept is working well and group members seem to relish the artistic and inventive freedoms that it allows. For example, all our OO9-ers are also active in other groups – I, together with Mike Le Marie and Mike Frost are in N, Richard, John Yarham, John Chase and the Holts are OO, Julian leads the O Group while Pete Tigg seems to be everywhere.

Recently we were able to fill a last-minute gap in our annual show caused by withdrawal of a booked entry – we linked up 6 semi-completed boards in a linear fashion and ran trains back and forth for two days. We are now working with Guildford's Astolat Club in planning a one-day OO9 show in June 2021 – a challenge that's focusing minds as that distant date becomes less distant and the adrenaline starts to flow.

We're not yet at the stage where we can link up all 14 boards that are being worked on but that target is just about visible on the horizon. Given that each board measures approximately 4ft by 18 inches, a fully linked layout might look like 4 boards on two sides of a rectangle and 3 boards across the top and bottom, making the rectangle 18ft by 14ft (including the four corner pieces). We might just get it to fit in the Hall on a Wednesday! In fact, we had a partial trial run on 22 Jan at the P4/OO9 running night. We assembled 8 boards with 2 corner boards in a U-configuration for the first time. Richard Harris took some great pictures and we produced a write-up for the OO9 Society Journal. All good exposure for the Club!



Two years ago, when we began work on the concept, there wasn't much RTR stock on the market. But Peco has changed that dramatically, and the main suppliers now have a growing range of very attractive offerings: locos, wagons, coaches and scenic items. So, what's next? Our twin longer-term objectives are "completion" (whatever that means) of all 14 boards and managing the club's first-ever OO9 show in June 2021. Wish us luck!

Overheard at an Exhibition – Julian Evison

We recently took Haydon Square to the very enjoyable, and very busy, Southampton MRS show at Eastleigh. In the middle of the Saturday morning when things were at their most crowded two men spent very nearly 25 minutes in front of the layout discussing (loudly) their views on railways, modelling and, particularly control systems. One of them gave us the benefit of his views about the issues with using DCC. So far, so normal. However, amongst the more unusual alleged problems, stated with great certainty, were:

- the next generation of DCC chips will not allow locos to work on a layout without the points also being DCC worked
- in future DCC controllers will be unavailable and we will be forcibly replaced by tablet, laptop or phone control using Internet connectivity
- the UK government is going to nationalise the Internet and therefore will be able to take control of our model railways whenever they want

While this was, for us, a novel take on the sterile DCC vs DC debate, it was getting a little tedious. I asked them to move on as I 'needed' to get to the layout at precisely the place they were standing. Happily they complied, so peace and sanity were restored to our little corner of the exhibition.

LOOK AT THE LITTLE TRAINS! – David Harrington

Every show seems to have at least one. This one appeared at Stafford, sporting a floppy hat like a giant pancake and boasting co-respondent shoes. Leaning over Wickwar's barrier he informed us yet again that we had some lovely little trains. His companion, offering a ringleted Louis XV hair style, nodded solemn agreement.

Poor Mike had a rather more embarrassing encounter with a couple who, like 50% of visitors, wanted to know how the lorries and cars worked. In an attempt to save his vocal chords, he offered them our booklet on the subject, only to be informed by one of them that he was registered blind. Hastily apologising, Mike offered the book to his companion, only to be told that he was dyslexic and couldn't read. Happily, the booklet has pictures.

Another chap was bursting to tell us that after our last show he went home "to consult his records" and could now confirm that Great Western steam actually did run on our line. We thanked him gravely for this priceless news.

It was an eventful weekend, starting with a TomTom that insisted on us leaving the motorway and taking an attractive route through council estates. But we got to the showground without much incident, as did the van. Jon was much taken by the pretty sheep in one of the show rings, but decorum was maintained and we had Wickwar up and running inside a couple of hours. That night we benefitted from some learned discussions in the bar, where we met Greg's brother (again). Happily, Greg's brother isn't at all like Greg – his beard is black, he doesn't conduct a virtual Halle Orchestra after a few pints and he doesn't wear a cap at all times. Also, he converses at an acceptable decibel level.



Alex turned up again on the Saturday. Alex lives in London, is 8 years old and his dad takes him to over 40 model shows each year. Alex resumed his place at one of the controllers and instructed the rest of us on how best to get the layout to perform to optimum standards. He calls us all by our first names and seems convinced that Greg's natural home is under the layout and only comes out at night. Paula, who has a safeguarding certificate, looked after him while his rather hassled dad went to get a cuppa. We like Alex. He's now an Informal Honorary Member of our club and you can see him here giving Greg instructions on how the fiddle yard should be organised

One of the organisers fell in love with the PA system (shades of Vicar of Dibley and the village fete – “no no no no, there’s parking on the field”). So at frequent intervals we were deafened by: “Attention, would the splurge grumble graunch blurb hiss bumble kindly remove it”. Or: “anyone staying at the hotel belch blob furtle bluuga grich before 6pm”.

We made a list of all the things that aren’t right on Wickwar, including a pre-recorded whistle that sounds more like a lightship in distress than a steam loco, and, partly to pacify a chap who was prepared to argue the toss for 15 minutes, noted that the light in the signal box is too bright. Another punter asked how we coupled our coaches so closely. He was told that they were made by Noel Leaver, at which news he fell to his knees and begged forgiveness. But we restored his self-confidence by telling him that at this show Noel’s coaches had won the “Best De-coupling-in-the-Tunnel” award.

Owing no doubt to some maladministration on the part of the host club, there was no “best in show” award. But we know we would have won it anyway, so a moral victory to us. As the man in the cumulo-nimbus hat and the black and white shoes departed we couldn’t help but reflect that it really had been a memorable trip. “Look at the little trains” just about sums it all up.

SHUNTING TRACTOR – Noel Leaver

This link shows an amazing implementation of a working shunting tractor in 2mm scale. He started it in 2001! It does have a link with the club because Paul Martin gave him a lot of help with the electronics when he was starting.

<http://www.2mm.org.uk/articles/shuntingTractor/index.html>

AND PHINALLY

Do we have a Phantom Philter Philcher?

A few weeks ago, the metal filter cone from our coffee pot disappeared – presumed thrown away by a novice coffeepot cleaner. A new filter cone was purchased from China and all was well, until.....

The cloth filter cone from our hand-held vacuum cleaner also went missing, resulting in the cleaner being innocently used until debris clogged up the motor vents. Our ever-diligent Secretary has now bought and installed a new filter.

So – Mr Phantom Philter Philcher - you know who you are! Please treat the non-disposable filters in our clubroom equipment with the reverence they deserve.

CLUB DIARY – Andrew Wrobel

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

Heading 'Run'g' = Priority use of Hall from 2pm; ALSO tidy/vacuum Club Room & Lock-Up

DIARY 2020

Date	Run'g	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Wed 05 Feb	O	
Wed 12 Feb	N	
Sat 15 Feb	--	St.Mary's (7mm NG) [J.Evison's layout]: Tonbridge MRC at The Angel Centre, Tonbridge
Wed 19 Feb	P4/009	
Wed 26 Feb	OO	
Wed 04 Mar	O	
Wed 11 Mar	N	
Sat 14 & Sun 15 Mar	--	Kinlochlagen (N) [Mike Le Marie's layout]: Basingstoke & North Hants MRS, Aldworth School, Western Way
Wed 18 Mar	P4/009	
Sat 21 & Sun 22 Mar	--	For info'n: The London Festival of Railway Modelling , Alexandra Palace, London
Wed 25 Mar	OO	
Wed 01 Apr	O	
Wed 08 Apr	N	
Sat 11, Sun 12 & Mon 13 Apr [Easter]	--	Wickwar (N): York Model Railway Show , York Race Course, Tadcaster Road, YO23 1EX
Wed 15 Apr	P4/009	
Wed 22 Apr	OO	
Wed 29 Apr	Any	