

WHISTLEBLOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

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EDITORIAL – Jon Faulconer

Awakened this morning to find this cheery chap on the patio; he's keeping his social distancing and won't come inside, turns out he's 'armless really.

The lockdown continues and currently the talk is about vaccination. Important as they are, as are all the other measures that keep us safe, I trust you have avoided becoming stir crazy and are maintaining that healths sense of humour that keeps us sane. It doesn't take much to make me smile, I did laugh in Sainsbury's 2 days ago when their stay safe customer announcement concluded with a wish for a Happy Christmas.

How are your lockdown projects going? Ian George gives us an insight of his O Gauge BCK that has finally been completed after 14 years thanks to the lockdown. I am sure there are similar long forgotten project that have been pulled out from the "*I'll make that one day box*"; so let's hear about them, warts and all.

Next issue of Whistleblower is planned to be in 2 weeks' time on Valentine's Day, namely Sunday 14 February. As usual, articles, pictures, links, etc to me for Saturday 13 February.



009 VALE OF RHEIDOL BRAKE VAN – Alex Holt

Over the Christmas break, I've been working on a Dundas Models kit that I got for Christmas. The kit is based on some of the brake vans that ran on the Vale of Rheidol railway in the early 1900s, but also works quite well with the Dundas Glyn Valley Tramway Coaches which are the same size. It's a very simple kit with only a few parts to, so assembly didn't take too long. Couplings aren't included with the kit, but I've used Woodworm 2014 couplings on this brake van for better compatibility with the rest of the coaches that I've already built.



The construction of the kit didn't take long, because of how simple it is to construct. Most the time making this brake van has been spent on painting. The kit has been painted using Vallejo paints, Dark Sea Grey for the body sides, Gloss Black for the running boards and frame brackets, Burnt Sienna for the window frames, Rose Gold for the handles and White for the roof. I've gone for a Southern freight grey livery over anything prototypical as I felt it would look a bit more unique and interesting rather than just having it brown all over.



The transfers I've used are a set of Railtec SR Goods Wagon transfers, the 2 Tons transfer on the side was cut down from a 12 Ton transfer as even the smallest weight restriction of 8 Tons seemed like a bit too much for a van of this size. Although this pack of transfers didn't include any transfers for a Guards door, I've used some white Guards door transfers from a set of Modelmaster BR Blue transfers to correctly label this. The model has then been finished in a coat of Vallejo Matt Varnish to give it a uniform finish with the rest of the narrow gauge coaching stock. The final step of the build was to stick the roof on permanently.



The BCK (things don't always go to plan) – Ian George

The BCK, or Brake Composite Corridor to give its full title, was a useful coach for the railway companies (and modellers) in that it combined all the elements of a train within a single coach i.e. it accommodated both 1st and 2nd class passengers, a luggage compartment and provision for the guard. For this reason, they would often be used as “through coaches”, starting the journey as part of a train heading elsewhere, dropped off on-route, and then moved on to their destination either as a single coach on their own or attached to another train. The advantage to passengers was that they (and their often-substantial luggage) could stay put and didn't have the inconvenience of changing trains during their journey.

An extreme example of the use of BCK's for this purpose was the Atlantic Coast Express, the 11.00 am from Waterloo, whose consist during the winter 1954 timetable was as follows:

Coach No	Corridor Coach type	Destination
1	Brake composite	Ilfracombe
2	Brake composite	Torrington
3	Brake composite	Padstow
4	Brake composite	Bude
5	Brake composite	Plymouth
6	Brake second	Plymouth
7	Kitchen buffet	Exeter
8	Refreshment saloon	Exeter
9	Brake composite	Exmouth
10	Brake composite	Sidmouth
11	Brake composite	Seaton

During my days by the lineside of the West Coast Mainline in the 1960's, I remember seeing a WR BCK attached to the rear of certain Scottish expresses. For example, a WR BCK went north each day on the rear of the "Mid-day Scot" and one returned south attached to the "Birmingham Scot". These BCK's were distinctive because they were either ex-GWR designed examples or later they would be WR numbered BR Mk 1, sometimes in WR chocolate and cream livery. After some research, I discovered that these BCK's were a Plymouth-Glasgow through coach and had started their journey attached to a Plymouth-Bristol-Shrewsbury-Crewe-Liverpool / Manchester train. While the Liverpool and Manchester portions were being split at Crewe, the BCK had been detached and shunted into a bay platform where it waited for an hour or more. Just when the passengers felt they had been abandoned the BCK was collected out of the bay and attached to the Glasgow express. The overall journey time was over 20 hours!

At the Normandy club open day in 2006, I saw a Bachmann 0-gauge BR Mk 1 BCK on the bring-and-buy stall for a very reasonable price. For the un-initiated, before exiting 0-gauge altogether Bachmann produced a range of brass models, including ex-GWR and BR designed coaches. The BR Mk 1's were sold in brass finish leaving the purchaser to paint, decal and glaze, plus scratch-build and fit the interiors. I had a rush of blood and bought the BCK, intending to finish it in the BR WR chocolate and cream that I'd remembered seeing.

It all started well. I'd painted brass coaches and plenty of coaches in two-tone livery before so that didn't worry me. The coach was cleaned and de-greased, then sprayed all over with etched primer, the roof sprayed with Railmatch "GWR freight grey" and the sides with "BR cream", all from "rattle-cans". A week or so later the cream was masked off and the "BR chocolate" sprayed on. When the masking tape was removed disaster had struck; the "chocolate" had not adhered properly and came away in sheets. This had never happened before. The paint job was ruined and the coach would need stripping and re-painting from scratch. Not wanting to face up to this I put the coach back in its box and into my stash cupboard where it sat unloved until March 2020 when, searching through my stash for a suitable lock-down project, I found the BCK. I decided it was time to sort it out. By now I had lost interest in the idea of chocolate and cream and decided simple BR maroon would suffice.

The process of stripping was messy but surprisingly straight-forward using De-Luxe Models "Magic Strip" and the coach was soon back ready for painting to begin. I started with a coat of rattle-can red oxide primer over all the body. I also sprayed a coat of black primer on the

chassis. These went on well but from then on things went downhill rapidly, not helped by shops being closed for lock-down making purchase of supplies problematical. The situation was also made worse by various bouts of muppetry on my part.

Again, I used Railmatch GWR freight grey for my roof colour, but my last rattle can ran empty leaving part of the roof still showing red oxide primer. Attempts to use the last dregs of freight grey from an old tin through my airbrush resulted in the predicted clogging of the air-brush (golden rule: never try to use old paint through your air-brush). After hours of unclogging and cleaning, the airbrush I eventually managed to spray the remainder of the roof. Then whilst cleaning the airbrush, I succeeded in splattering air-brush cleaning solvent over the newly painted coach roof. Back to square one. After hours of rescue, I finally managed to finish air-brushing the roof, then knocked my compressor off the bench onto the concrete floor. That was the end of air-brushing until I could purchase spare parts for the repair job.

Next job was the coach sides. My paint of choice to represent faded BR maroon is Halford's rattle can "Rover Damask Red" and having successfully sprayed one side of the coach the spray can ran empty. I contacted Halfords to order a replacement can and was told that the colour had been de-listed. I was facing the unwelcomed prospect of a coach with a different shade of maroon on each side. Fortunately, Julian came to the rescue by letting me use a can of Halford's Damask Red from his stash which allowed me to finish the sides. After applying the decals, a coat of "Dullcote" to seal the decals and tone everything down, then finally fixing the glazing into position, the exterior was finished.

The final job was to scratch-build the interior, i.e., corridor and compartment partitions, seats and whatever interior detail you wish to add. The method is that the interior needs to be built and painted as a complete unit then manoeuvred into position in the coach through a gap in the floor that runs the length of the coach. The width of the gap provided by Bachmann for you to do this is 40mm. which is not very helpful because the scale width of your painstakingly built-up compartments unit is 45mm. Much frustration and head-scratching before a solution was found.

I know I'm a slow modeller, progress often being made at a glacial rate, but 14 years from start to finish for a coach is a record even for me. Was it all worth it? Well yes. These 0-gauge brass coaches have a very pleasing "presence". After subtle weathering by dry-brushing and use of powders I'm pleased with the final result.



PRODUCT REVIEW: Hunt Elite Magnetic Couplings – Mike Le Marie

I recently saw an advertisement in the model railway press for a new range of magnetic couplings for OO and N gauge. My personal interest was in the N gauge ones so I bought a trial pack of 15 pairs for £16.95. The trial pack offered 5 pairs each of the short, intermediate and standard versions. The lengths of the couplings as measured from the back of the NEM pocket are given as Close 7.95mm, Intermediate 9.1mm and Standard 10.2mm.



The couplings are designed as a replacement for the NEM style Arnold couplings. Fitting is simple in that you simply unclip the Arnold coupling and clip a magnetic coupling in their place. The only important thing to watch is that you insert them the right way up. The upper side is indicated by a small pip on the shaft and the fact that the magnet is brighter on its upper surface. The magnetic technology is very clever in that as long as you fit all the magnetic couplings correctly then the couplings

‘attract’ each other regardless of which way round you put the vehicle on the track. Get one wrong and it will ‘repel’!

I had a particularly troublesome set of coaches which continually uncoupled, so I converted the whole rake. Since then I have not suffered a single coupling failure. Coupling up is very simple – place one vehicle on the track, place another one on and push together.

Visually, they have little impact and look a bit like a simplified buck eye coupling.

I was concerned that the magnets I had placed in the track for use with magnetic uncouplers might react with the coupling magnets but in the event the couplings pass over the magnets without any reaction.



The main limitation is that these couplings are only suitable for permanently coupled rakes as there is no means of uncoupling other by use of the Mk1 human hand.

The couplings have also proved very effective with my 009 Peco L&B bogie coaches which had a habit of uncoupling on some of the module joints. A quick modification and the problem was no more.



Recently, a new pack was introduced which claimed to be a replacement coupling for the Elsie coupling, as used by Peco. In fact these are a replacement for the early Graham Farish coupling which were held in their housing by a small spring. I have yet to try and fit one to a Peco wagon as it would appear that the 'T' end of the coupling will have to be reduced in width.

The Hunt Elite magnetic coupling are retailed by Westhill Wagon Works. Their website is at westhillwagonworks.co.uk and as previously stated they also have various packs for OO gauge and they plan to introduce an O version soon.



To finish I can confirm that I have no ties with the company, just a satisfied customer.

F&DMRC DIARY

Recent changes in **yellow**. Running starts at **14:00** in WCC (Wrecclesham Community Centre) Hall.

Heading 'Run'g' = Priority use of Hall from 2pm; ALSO Tidy/vacuum Club Room AND Lock up

DIARY 2021 – ALL will change once vaccine rolls-out past Tier-4		
Date	Run'g	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Wednesdays: Clubroom available from ~09:00 [use rear entrance]; Hall from 14:00.		
NOTE: Due to Gov't Lockdown, the Club's Programme is again SUSPENDED		

DIARY 2021 – ALL are subject to change / cancellation		
Date	Run'g	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Jan	--	SUSPENDED except for Zoom chat – 17 Jan at 3 pm
Feb	--	SUSPENDED except for Zoom chat - TBA
Wed 03 Mar	O	Probably too soon after 1st Tier-4 vaccination and still LOCKDOWN
Wed 10 Mar	N	POSSIBLY 1 st Club Day of the New Year
Wed 17 Mar	OO	
Wed 24 Mar	009	
Wed 31 Mar	O	
Sun 04 Apr	--	Easter Sunday
More to add	--	<i>The following are known about events / Shows – all subject to change</i>
Mon 03 May	--	Early May Bank Holiday – usually a Group Open Day - TBA
Mon 31 May	--	Spring Bank Holiday – usually a Group Open Day - TBA
Sat 12 OR Sun 13 Jun	--	Farnham 009 Show (other Clubs invited): WCC – Situation not yet clear
Sat 26 & Sun 27 Jun	--	Wickwar (N): Perth Show
Wed 06 Oct	??	Briefing for Show 18:30 in Clubroom/Hall
Fri 08 Oct	ALL	Set-up Show – from late afternoon
Sat 09 & Sun 10 Oct	ALL	F&DMRC Annual Club Show , Aldershot [Most of the layouts that were invited for 2020 will be attending.]
Wed 08 Dec		19:15 for 19:30 start - AGM (details to follow) [within 2 months of Club's year-end; voting only for paid-up 'Full' members].
Wed 15 Dec		Dinner (optional) 18:30 for 19:00 @ The Mill House, Odiham
Wed 22 Dec		Last Club Day of the year

DIARY 2022 – ALL are subject to change / cancellation		
Date	Run'g	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Sat 05 & Sun 06 Feb	--	Wickwar (N): Alton
??		Brixcombe at a Show