

WHISTLEBLOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

21 February 2021 – Edition No 4/21

EDITORIAL – Jon Faulconer

The Prime Minister is due to announce his “road map” out of the current lockdown on Monday which may enable us to revert to some form of normality in time, although I don’t think we will see whatever we regard as normality for a long while yet. At some stage in this process, hopefully, we can come together within our various interest Groups, as happened last summer, and we can enjoy our hobby with friends. Ultimately, we should be looking forward to being able to use the Wrecclesham Community Centre and meeting up once more on a Wednesday as a Club.

A new service is available to Members with this Edition of Whistleblower, namely a Sales capability. The more senior members of the Club will know whether or not this really is new, or whether similar capabilities have been offered earlier in the Club’s existence. Nonetheless, we will run with this Sales Capability for a couple of months to see how it goes and confirm (or not) any interest amongst Members.

The next edition of Whistleblower will be Sunday 7 March. Please let me have your articles and pictures by Saturday 6 March.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A F&DMRC SALES CAPABILITY

There has been a suggestion for Whistleblower to provide the capability for Members to advertise their surplus model railway rolling stock, equipment, and other materiel to fellow Members.

The proposal is that the Seller will suggest a price for each Lot. Potential Buyer(s) will e-mail the Editor of their interest and after 5 days, the Editor will forward the names(s) to the Seller. At this point Whistleblower drops out of the process and the Seller communicates directly with the potential Buyer(s) to settle the transaction.

Once the transaction has been completed, the Seller will transfer 5% of the transaction to the Club Treasurer, which must be via electronic bank transfer.

Attached at the back of this edition of Whistleblower is the first batch of items being offered for sale.

OO9 MODULE BLACKMOOR L&B – Richard Puddephatt

This is my contribution to the 009 Group. It is a very loose representation of Blackmoor Station and its environs on the Lynton & Barnstaple line in the early 1930s, only two or three years prior to closure.

I am greatly indebted to both Mike Le Marie and Wilf Pateman who helped considerably in the tracklaying and to David Harrington and Julian Evison who listened most patiently to my pleas on the wiring and then provided the advice which made it so much easier.

This part of the board was completed prior to the lockdown but the scenery has been produced subsequently and is my own handiwork. The buildings are a mixture; the station is the Bachmann OO9 building, the cottages and coal office are Scalesscenes, the loco shed is scratch-built and the goods shed came from I know not where – it had been around in the cupboard for a long time.

There is just one section to finish which will include a small hill and its foliage. Then just the back scene to complete which will have to await the easing of the restrictions to allow a visit to B&Q.



EARLY MOTION PICTURE FOOTAGE – Noel Leaver

This is a compilation of some of the earliest moving pictures made in Europe. They are of amazingly quality as they were shot using 68 mm film.

<https://player.eyefilm.nl/nl/films/the-brilliant-biograph>

There are several featuring British railways, the best is the very first of the Irish Mail in 1898 at 1:30 in. Interesting pictures of track workers at Maidenhead at 32.20 and of the approach to Windsor at 40.15, as well as some narrow gauge quarry trucks moving under gravity in the background at 37.25.

DAPOL KITMASTER WAGONS

Recently I've been making a few kits from the Dapol Kitmaster range. Although introduced 60 years ago these kits still hold up surprisingly well in the modern day. Often when reading up about these kits online, you'll find a lot of people going on about how bad they are and that these are the worst kits ever. However, I've had very few issues with the ones I've made and can't see why they are so disliked. The kits offer a great value for money and are a great budget alternative for making certain wagons. Initially, I had only planned on making a rake of Presflo wagons, but I received a Lowmac and 16t Mineral Wagon kit as gifts for my birthday so have built those as well. Across the three types of wagon I've made, the quality of the kits are fairly consistent and although they have a bit of extra flash on the mouldings, once this is cleaned up, they build up in to some very nice models. Running qualities of the models are much the same as any other kit, although they do require a bit of weight to be added to get the best performance. The couplings are of the larger tension lock style but are perfectly adequate and usable with other stock.



Presflo

The first of the three wagon kits I've been building is a Presflo Cement Wagon. This kit does have quite a bit of flash on some of the parts but once cleaned up can make a very nice model. The buffer beams were slightly warped and needed to be submerged in warm water and reshaped ever so slightly, but other than that all the parts were fine. Of the three kits I've made the Presflo wagon is the most complex, having the largest number of parts and finer detail parts compared with the other wagons. I'm yet to paint this one or add the transfers so I can't comment on the quality of the



transfers for these particular wagons. The plan for these is to paint them in Blue Circle Cement Yellow. At only £6.60 these offer amazing value compared with the ready to run Bachmann models at £25 and offer more detail than the ready to run Dapol Presflo Wagons which cost £12.

Lowmac

The second wagon I've made is a Lowmac Wagon. This is the easiest to make kit out of the three wagon types I've been building. However, I would say this one is probably best suited as a static wagon in a siding. This is because this kit isn't as good as the others, using plastic wheels instead of metal and there being no tension lock couplings included with the kit. The transfers on this kit are however better than



the ones for the 16t Mineral Wagon, as these ones didn't flake apart when being applied. I've painted this one in Vallejo Black and used Teak Top Coat for the planked bed of the wagon. On the top of it a cast resin boiler has been added as a load. The intention with this wagon is to have it in a siding in my engine sheds as a boiler that is being restored.

16t Mineral Wagon.

The third and final wagon kit I've been making from the Dapol Kitmaster range is the 16t Mineral Wagon. This wagon has the best mouldings out of the 3 types of wagon as it's got much less flash on it than the Presflo and Lowmac kits. It's fairly simple to construct but does require a bit more skill to build than the Lowmac Wagon. An interesting feature of this particular kit is that you can build it with the wagon doors open if you want to. This might be useful for those looking to have a wagon unloading coal in a siding. I've painted this one using Vallejo Dark Sea Grey for the body and Vallejo Black for the frames. The Transfers included with this kit aren't the best, the ones I had flaked apart when being submerged in water. Despite this I was able to reconstruct them when back on the model and it's not too noticeable.



ADVICE ON DECALS – Noel Leaver

As a result of Alex's experiences with decals mentioned above, Noel has penned some tips that may be of interest to the Membership.

I remember building the Presflo and mineral wagon kits - it must have been about 60 years ago! They were very good quality kits, I built some of the loco kits as well (non-working). I think by the time I was 15 I had built just about every kit in the range, I sort of managed to motorise the railbus.

As to the decals, it is easy to buy alternative decals, for example among others:

<https://www.railtec-models.com/showitem.php?id=1135>

Regarding the decals splitting when you used them, I've been looking into this for some N Gauge Society decals that were splitting.

The main reason for them splitting is simply that they are old, and the plastic film has lost some of its elasticity and cracks rather than stretches when stressed. When you soak the decals the backing paper expands by about 4%. This causes some or all of these to happen:

- * the decal curls up
- * the decal stretches
- * the decal cracks

New decals can easily stretch the full 4%, which may not sound much but if it were the length of a bogie wagon then in OO that could be as much as a 1cm.

If you encourage the decal to go flat rather than leave it curled up while soaking, this will definitely stretch (or crack) it.

You should never leave decals in water, just dunk them in and put them on a plastic lid for a minute while they soak (but maybe you did this). If you leave them in the water the glue can wash off.

If you have decals that are splitting, there are some things you can do:

- * Handle them carefully, don't bend the paper as that will stress the decals and may crack them.
- * Leave longer than usual to soak, and leave curled up so by the time you flatten them the decal is loose on the backing paper and can slide rather than stretch.
- * before use (before even cutting them out for preference) spray the sheet with a couple of coats of varnish to hold them together. It does not always work, but it definitely helps. In fact there is a special varnish you can buy just for this, Microscale liquid decal film:

<https://www.emodels.co.uk/microscale-micro-liquid-decal-film-msfilm.html>

SERVO MOTORS – Noel Leaver

Points without Electronics:

I discovered recently that a number of people use servo motors for operating points without using electronics - something I did not realise was practical.

You open up the servo mechanism, pull out and unsolder the circuit board, and solder a pair of wires directly to the motor (taking care the gears stay in place - they can easily fall out and are tricky to get back).

To operate it you use a 2-pole 2-way biased centre off switch - one that has the lever vertical, it can be pushed to either side but springs back. It is wired like a reversing switch in a controller, with power going in and the output connected to the servo motor, so one way supplies the power one way round and the other reversed. You push the switch over briefly to operate the point, a mechanical stop in the servo limits how far the motor can move. No issues of interference from motors or drifting over time! It needs at most 5V DC, probably less for slower operation.

BTW, if you remove the mechanical stops you can convert it to a continuously running motor with built in gears. Probably better done with a metal geared one as the plastic gears are only good for 100 hours of operation.

Several people said the white HK15178 servos (available from lots of places, though the one below seems particularly cheap) are much better quality and longer lasting than the commoner Tower Pro servos:

https://hobbyking.com/en_us/hobbykingtm-hk15178-analog-servo-1-4kg-0-09sec-10g.html?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=google_gb_shopping&countrycode=GB&gclid=Cj0KCQiA1KiBBhCcARIsAPWqoSo6TSA4BizJCgDv4IdcmH3bE0klzQzpr4Tw-tvcx38aSbcgyrMEkkQaAoiKEALw_wcB&gclidsrc=aw.ds&store=en_us

Servo Motor Different Qualities:

Another variation is whether the servo control is analogue or digital. It appears MG90S comes in both varieties, not all adverts say which, and the ones that say digital seem a little more expensive. The digital ones are apparently much less susceptible to interference and 'drifting' than the older analogue ones.

I'm copying some interesting comments on different qualities of servo motor that Ken Howard posted on an N Gauge email group. It sounds like it is worth paying a bit more for the metal geared servos. They seem to cost about £2.50, rather than £2 in bulk, and have code MG90S.

I've been flying RC planes for the best part of 40 years and I spent a lifetime in the electronics industry. I've got a few views of my own on servos in general.

A good servo costs money. For a start the internal potentiometers in the quality ones are made by depositing the carbon track onto a ceramic disc. It's known that the internal potentiometer in at least some cheap servos use a cardboard disc and they develop a bad case of the shakes after a while. I've got a box full of them.

I suspect that a lot of modellers who have used these will be tearing their hair out in a few years' time when they start to chatter especially if they are in hard to get at positions under the layout.

The 9 gram servo has become the standard for railway modellers. The cheap \$2 ones have very fine nylon gears as well as cheap potentiometers. They are not designed to have any substantial load and certainly not designed to carry a continuous load. The load in a model aircraft is actually very small. Just a few grams to move a control surface and no load at all when the model is not being flown.

As a point controller the gears will be always under some load even when the layout is not being used and nylon like any plastic will eventually distort when under continuous load causing a gear box failure. You can get metal geared 9 gram servos but at a price. I have had expensive servos working for years. I did buy a box of \$2 specials from China a couple of years ago and all of them have the shakes now. Maybe I just got a dud lot but I don't think so!

Another potential problem I've found is although all 9 gram servos will mount in the same cut-out, the distance between the mounting lugs and the servo arm can vary quite a bit depending on the manufacturer. Which means that if a servo is replaced with a different brand, the arm may no longer line up with the hole in the baseboard. Worse, if the arm is also being used to operate microswitches they may not line up either. So, a simple replacement may not be so easy.

They are cheap and they will work but correct setup is very important or they won't last very long. And the really cheap servos are likely to be a real headache sooner rather than later.

Ken Howard

Editor's Note: *It would be interesting to hear the views of other Members on their experiences of using servos.*

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

Due to Gov't Lockdown, the Club's Programme is currently SUSPENDED

DIARY 2021 – ALL are subject to change / cancellation		
Date	Run'g	Event / Layout at Exhibition/Show
Wednesdays: Clubroom available from ~09:00 [use rear entrance]; Hall from 14:00.		
Wed 03 Mar	O	Probably too soon after Tier-4 vaccinations + 3-weeks after Dose-2
Wed 10 Mar	N	Probably too soon after Tier-4 vaccinations + 3-weeks after Dose-2
Wed 17 Mar	OO	Probably too soon after Tier-4 vaccinations + 3-weeks after Dose-2 Club Zoom at 15:00
Wed 24 Mar	009	POSSIBLY 1 st Club Day of 2021
Wed 31 Mar	O	POSSIBLY 1 st Club Day of 2021
Sun 04 Apr	--	Easter Sunday – Go/No-Go decision on OO9 Show
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
Jun		Model Railway Show: Burton
Sat 12 Jun	--	Evening preparation for OO9 Show
Sun 13 Jun	--	Farnham OO9 Show (other Clubs invited): WCC Hall
Sat 26 & Sun 27 Jun	--	Wickwar (N): Perth Show CANCELLED
Jul		Model Railway Show: Beaconsfield
Sat 11 & Sun 12 Sep	--	REC (Railway Enthusiasts Club), Woking CANCELLED
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.]
Nov		Model Railway Show: Warley
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
Sat 25 & Sun 26 Jun	--	Wickwar (N): Perth Show
Sat 10 & Sun 11 Sep	--	REC (Railway Enthusiasts Club), Woking Leisure Centre