



# Newsletter

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## Editorial.

### Looking ahead with 2020 vision.

The year of 2020 holds some significant events in the model railway calendar. Firstly, a century ago, Frank Hornby (Liverpool) introduced a range of 0 scale tin plate train sets and accessories. As there was still considerable resentment to the main manufacturers of model railways at that time, Germany, a quality and less expensive British made product was eagerly appreciated. Using the somewhat jingoistic slogan "British Toys for British Boys", the range was heavily promoted along these lines.



Some thirty years later a small company called Rovex Plastics started making train sets for Marks & Spencer. Such was their success, Rovex Plastics was soon assimilated by Lines Brothers, the largest toy maker in the world at that time and subsequently they became Tri-ang Railways. Their heritage can be directly followed through to the present day Hornby (Margate) company. That is why present day Hornby 00 scale items still carry the R prefix on all their products, in deference to their Rovex Plastics heritage. It will be interesting to see if Hornby (Margate) acknowledge their true heritage of their 00 range in 2020 and whether there will be factual recognition of both Hornby (Liverpool) and Hornby (Margate) and how both have contributed to the hobby. If you find all this commercial history a bit convoluted, well it is! That though is the nature of all big businesses.

On a more topical note, Christmas will soon be upon us and it will be time to open your surprise presents and play with your latest acquisitions, hopefully around the Christmas tree. Allow me to wish you all the compliments of the season and a happy new year when it comes around. **Allan Trotter.**

## **Events Diary.**

Tue 17th Dec      SMRS Christmas social event, 19:00 Clubroom.  
Thu 19<sup>th</sup> Dec      SMRS Committee Meeting, 10:30, Clubroom.

## **Chairman's Report.**

No report submitted.

## **Secretary's Report.**

Well it has been quite an eventful month! I returned from our rather lengthy African Odyssey including surviving flying into and out of Addis Ababa by Ethiopian Airways and a flight on a four seat Cessna the length of Malawi, which like our big Volvo didn't like to start when hot and was immediately thrown into the hurly burly of organising the remaining details of the exhibition and implementing the advertising programme as well as keeping the Spacehive programme rolling on.

Fortunately, it all worked out well, and the exhibition was judged an all-round success with good attendance, happy exhibitors and positive remarks from our visitors. I am sure that our Chairman will be thanking everybody for their hard work, and especially for our "newer" members who worked like Trojans and made life easier for everybody. Also a special welcome to all the new members who have joined us in the last few weeks.

Spacehive contributions continue to climb and the Committee are now very confident that our total will be reached in time and that Sefton Council will be giving us a substantial contribution, but don't let that prevent your friends from joining in, the more the merrier. In the New Year we will be moving into the next phase of fundraising via a National Heritage Lottery Fund bid to pay for our storyboards. As Secretary, I am especially grateful to John Howard for kindly offering to take minutes of our Committee Meetings and to circulate these same. I am sure that you will agree that these have been written in a very professional style and put my efforts to shame. I appreciate John's willingness to take this on, especially whilst I have been very busy with the exhibition and the Spacehive Project.

We have also acquired a Facilities Manager, following the kind offer from Colin Hardwick, who is going to help us to keep the clubroom in order. I am sure that Colin will remind you that your Mum and Dad do not look after the clubroom and especially the kitchen and you need to TIDY YOUR ROOMS and CLEAN YOUR CUPS!

As Christmas gets closer, there is a date for your diary. Previously we have had a party at the clubroom on the last Friday evening before Christmas but as we now no longer meet on Friday evenings, the Committee has decided to hold this event on Tuesday 17th December from 19:30. You are welcome to bring your other halves and a festive evening in our cosy Victorian Parlour will follow

with a nice open fire. Some eats and drinks and a programme which is yet to be finalised and which may include a ghost story, a slide show from members and possibly a quiz and other entertainments.

Hence please could you respond to the Secretary at [drjimford@btinternet.com](mailto:drjimford@btinternet.com) by sending me your choice of slides taken during this year of SMRC events or your railway visits or anything else which you might wish to share. Around 12 slides from each contributor would be ideal but if you have more than this, please feel free to send them. Please send them by Saturday 7th December if at all possible so that your Secretary can fit them into a PowerPoint Presentation.

I would also be grateful for offers from members to bring some items of food and drink on the night. We all enjoy mince pies, but we can only eat so many do need some alternatives and the Mr Kipling Bakewell Tarts seem a popular choice as do chocolate biscuits and chocolates. Savouries too are needed and if anybody is willing to produce some sandwiches they would go down well, as would some large bags of crisps and tortillas.

On the drinks front it is a good idea to bring what you like to drink. Anyway, please send offers of catering contributions to myself at the above e-address so that I can co-ordinate and make sure that we have a reasonable spread. And let me be the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I hope that your Elves pay a visit to the Traders at Manchester Exhibition! **Jim Ford.**

## **Where's Allan?**

As usual, Tony Kuivala was the first and only person to respond. Tony stated:

*"My first guess would have been Southport in North Carolina but the clues suggests otherwise so I'll hazard guess as Southport in New York State, on coast North East of New York. When we went to Yankee Stadium in 2016 from Grand Central Terminal, Peter Mills mentioned that there was a commuter line out North East to New Haven".*

Close but no cigar. You have the general location right and you followed the clues well but unfortunately you are on the wrong side of the state line between New York State and Connecticut. This Southport which is on the Grand Central Terminal to New Haven line is actually in Connecticut.

Following on from the theme in November, another slightly different "Where's Allan" for you. Again the location is obvious, just look at the Station name but this is not the Glasgow Strathclyde that most of you are familiar with but elsewhere, a very long way away. There are some similarities between the two Glasgow's. Immediately on alighting from the train, the gallant traveller is presented with a surfeit of saloon bars, diners and watering holes. Oh, and of course it's damp and raining. You may find it of assistance locating this Glasgow if you consult an Amtrak schedule for the Chicago to Seattle Empire Builder. "Where am I?"



## Members Miscellanea.

### Rolling Stock Box.



Like all of us over the years I've collected large amount of model railway rolling stock and over recent years, I have made efforts to reduce in size of my collection and concentrate on the areas that I want to model and get rid of the stuff I have bought that doesn't fit in. I'm pleased to say that I have been successful in reducing my collection and this is funded a steady conversion to DCC as each sound card and chip is over £100. However I have always hated the fact that I had to keep all my running stock in its respective boxes which take up an enormous amount of room and took an age to get out play with and then put back, every time, slightly increasing damage to the cardboard boxes. Now that I have Loch Syd on the Exhibition circuit, I wanted something that

I could keep my stock in neatly stored. Get rid of all the boxes cluttering up my modelling room and make setting up and swapping stock on my layout at Exhibitions much easier.





I was visiting a friend's house in Linlithgow with Chris some months ago when a copy of the railway modeller was passed over. My friend passed it to me to read because there were two articles on Scottish layouts in it. After I had read through the magazine I always have a look at the adverts to see what I can be tempted with etc. At the back there is a glossy advert advertising stock box/cabinet made from laser cut plywood. I must admit, it looks good it was made up of five drawers that could take inserts to put your stock in. Like a lot of these things, it's expensive for what it is, but on the flip side, it's probably better than I could produce myself. So when I returned home, I found the website and looked at the various options, one of which was five drawers at a cost of just over £120. As I say it does sound

expensive but I was still reasonably. Keen to purchase one, as I previously said, it's far better than anything that I could realistically produce. I looked at the website and it also gave an additional postage and packing of £35. This I cannot believe and I was to be honest quite astounded that you are charging almost a third extra just to post the product to me. I emailed the manufacturer to query this to make sure I got it was correct and to find out if there is a much less expensive and realistic way to send the product to me.



Much to my surprise the response was this is the price that we are getting from our couriers. I even asked about Royal mail but they only use carriers like TNT. I phone Tim back to confirm this information and I told him I would not be purchasing their product at this outrageous price of £35 for postage and packing. I considered this to be daylight robbery. At least Dick Turpin had the decency to wear a mask.

The following week I was down at my local model railway club in Barrow and I just happened to mention my experiences to a fellow member and how disappointed I was about the whole episode. I was pointing the direction of one of the other members there. I explained what had happened and what I wanted. He gave

me an email address and he suggested I email the company stating my

requirements and they said they will get back to me. The following day someone from the company did ring me up and I explained what I wanted and we went through sizes, shapes and I told them that I would pop in when I next passed industrial estate where this company was based on the outskirts of Barrow. I did the following week and I took a long one of my pre-bought foam inserts to show what I wanted and to use as a guide for measuring purposes. This importantly meant that the cabinet was made to measure the size of the inserts and no compromise was needed for the maximum amount of locomotives in each draw. Measurements were taken and I was asked how many drawers I wanted and they would get to work on it and get back to me.

After about six weeks I received an email with photographs of the proposed stock box and asking whether I wanted to glue it together or if I was happy for them to do it. I replied that I was happy for them to glue it together and thank them for all their hard work in producing the drawer unit. I collected the completed stock box unit the following week and also purchased a tin of Varnish and it received three coats of varnish and fitted the foam inverts.

I can say that I am extremely happy with what I have got and the price I got it for. The fact that I worked with a local firm to give me exactly the product I wanted for was satisfying. Apart from my locomotive boxes, I've got rid of 95% of everything else, my modelling room is neat and tidy and I have a nice smart stock box with all my locomotives and rolling stock under the layout.

**Peter Mills.**

### **Interurban Railways.**



The connotation Interurban Railway may be a term not familiar to some but to explain, an Interurban Railway could best be described as a fusion between a street tramway and a full sized railway. The generally larger Interurban cars would share street tracks with the streetcars (or trams) and on reaching city limits entered their own trackage where greater speeds could then be achieved on their own private right of way.

Interurban railways were not common in the UK. Their greatest success was in the USA, especially in the Mid Western states. Canada (where they are known as Radial Railways), and Mexico and Cuba were also some countries that had some extensive networks as well. Unfortunately Interurban Railways are now almost extinct due to the inevitable onslaught of the personal automobile.

It's not all bad news though. Some Interurban systems still exist nearby, most notably the Manx Electric Railway in the Isle of Man. However the MER never quite reached its ultimate aspiration of extending to Douglas Ferry Terminal by

sharing street trackage with the horse trams from Derby Castle, well not yet anyway.

Another Interurban system no doubt less familiar to us British lies just across the English Channel and runs the full length of the Belgian coast between the French border at De Panne in the west, via Oostende and Blankenberg to Knokke and at one time to Le Zoute on the border with the Netherlands in the east.



In Belgium just as elsewhere the system employed high powered passenger motor coaches of various types hauling a number of trailer passenger cars as traffic required. Locomotives were also used for the heavier consists and even for a limited amount of freight ad mail traffic.



Alas, it is sad to report that these traditional Interurban vehicles have all disappeared from regular service in Belgium and have been replaced with the now almost universal multi segment articulated tram type vehicle which of course by their utilitarian design have less seated passenger capacity, low quality seating and inferior flexibility in operation. The images show how much superior things were back in the 1950's and 1960's.

Nostalgia is as good as it used to be, even if the passenger vehicles most certainly are not. **Allan Trotter**.