



Newsletter

Issue 60: March 2018 Editor: Allan Trotter
Email: eastbankmrc@btinternet.com

Editorial.

Making an exhibition of ourselves.



Well, it's all over now! After three days of hectic but enjoyable exhibiting with Monsal Dale at Modelrail Scotland, it was most rewarding to return to the hotel one last time for a well earned rest and a small libation or two.

At the exhibition and when time was available, it was most interesting to wander around the exhibition and view the other layouts on show. What has become obvious is that the standard of

layout scenery has progressed far from what it was just a few years ago. With general observation and with a skilled bit of photography and computer photo manipulation, the distinction between reality and model is becoming closer.

If there is one thing that lets down many of the layouts it is the attitude of the layout providers in presenting their efforts in a fully functioning manner. There were groups of operators, or in reality, non operators, standing about behind their layouts in a modellers' mutual admiration society complimenting each other on the fine efforts in miniature whilst completely ignoring the paying audience observing from the barrier line. Even worse are the perplexed looking chaps frantically tapping away at a DCC keyboard with one hand whilst holding and scrutinising the instruction manual in the other. Another layout incorporated enough computing power to mine bit coins whilst the non operator in charge glazed inanely at a laptop screen. No trains were seen in operation. You all know who the usual suspects are but they will not be named here in the interests of protecting the guilty offenders.

Layouts really need to be staffed by enthusiastic operators and not self appointed so called prominent modellers. This observation does not only apply to Modelrail Scotland but seems to be the common situation at all model railway exhibitions, big or small. After all you do not go to the theatre just to admire the on stage scenery, you go to see a worthy presentation by the on stage thespians.

After all, presentation is everything. We all participate in model railway exhibitions to make an exhibition of ourselves.

Monsal Dale invoked some comments, generally good, from the public and to quote a couple of these, "Highlight of the show so far, a shame it's out at this dark corner. Trains are running through the landscape, not on it, bang on. I like the curving sweep of the lines." Another stated "I do like the cutting approaching Cressbrook Tunnel; it embodies the location perfectly particularly with all the sheep following each other through the gate in the field above." Fair comments indeed.

Diary of forthcoming events.

10th Mar 2018

Night Ferry, Southport Lecture Society, Allan Trotter

28th Apr 2018

Spring Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints Church Hall

Chairman's report.

I am not feeling on top form as I write these notes having just arrived back home following our weekend in Glasgow exhibiting Monsal Dale. I am not certain whether it is the cumulative effects of three days standing on concrete, the conviviality of evenings in Wetherspoons or whether I have caught some bug. I now wish I had put pen to paper last week rather than hoping for further inspiration to appear over the weekend.



Since I have only been back for just over two weeks from our winter sojourn, I am still trying to catch up on what has been happening (or not happening) with Club affairs. For those who have visited the clubrooms recently, you will have noticed that the kitchen and vestibule have been repainted; there is a considerable amount of ironwork (downspouts etc) sitting around in various rooms and most of the external scaffolding removed. I hope that your Secretary may expand on this in his report. There does seem to be some light visible at the end of the tunnel and hopefully we will soon be able to get back to operate as a model railway society. Likewise, I hope that he will summarise our

recent committee meeting. Photo by John Howard.

Before I finish, I must thank Tony, Frank, Malcolm and Allan for all their help in transporting, setting up and operating Monsal Dale at Modelrail Scotland. In general the layout behaved itself, although there were a few operator hiccups (we soon learnt by our mistakes) and on each of the three days we always seemed to have had an appreciative audience in front of the layout and received many favourable comments during this time. **Ian Shulver.**

Secretary's report.

No report received.

Treasurer's report.

No report received.

Exhibition coordinator's report.

No report received.

Members' contributions.



Model Rail Scotland 2018.

This is not so much a show review more like the occasional ramblings of a wandering visitor/assistant exhibitor.

To reach the SECC from our Jury's Hotel in Jamaica Street we were provided with a courtesy vintage Glasgow Corporation bus resplendent in its original livery.

Aldbourn.

This is included for no other reason than I'm a not so secret 009 fan; the layout depicts an English narrow gauge railway in the early years of the twentieth century. The layout was featured in the April 2011 Railway Modeller.



Wickham Bishops.

This prototypical layout is taken from the Essex County Railways, it features a wooden viaduct spanning the River Blackwater on the Witham to Maldon line and the viaduct is of national importance as it is the last surviving example of this type of structure within England. It is included here as

the area is much visited by me and the better half.



Toby the Tram.

On a less serious note (sorry) I was attracted to this G scale layout only because I am at present scratch building a 16 mm Tram loco (honest) and Toby caught my eye. The Fat Controller gave children and bigger kids much entertainment. Hopefully the project will appear in a later Newsletter with the Editor's permission. **Frank Parkinson.**

My Modelrail Scotland 2018

Modelrail Scotland has been a firm fixture in our club calendar for many years with club members exhibiting many times. This year we seen our club layout Monsal Dale exhibited alongside Terry's layout Dunnlakin.

Will all big exhibitions, there are lots to see, in fact too much for a single day. So being lucky enough to exhibit, gave me the chance to take my time and pick up the things that I needed and one or two things that I'd like.

Before the Exhibition opened on the Friday, I had a walk around to see what new things were being released. Rails of Sheffield had posted on social media that they had a big announcement to make and it was going to be good to see what that would be?

Passing one of the traders, I saw something that caught my eye. Bachmann had done a set of coaches that ran on the Kyle line in the 80's/90's. I have read that there could be as many as eleven coaches or as little as three. They were all named after various clans with an adapted class 101 DMU as a n observation car named Hebridean. The set was made up of two coaches, one normal MK 2 and the second was the observation coach called Hebridean. The cost didn't warrant the purchase at the price of £138. Anyway, obviously others thought that too and I picked them up at £90. I admit that this was something that I always wanted.



Over the next three days, there was the shopping list to get on with, most of which were items that I needed for Loch Syd. Loch Syd made its debut at Workington Exhibition last November. After working just one exhibition manually I decided that I would like point motors to make operating easier at exhibitions. So I decided to go for the Tortoise point motors as they seem to have an excellent reputation. Ian gave me some useful tips on fitting them as they are used on Monsal Dale.

After I purchased them, I had chance to catch up with our electrics guru Allan. He went through the way to wire them up (simply), including LED's for route direction etc, all with only using two switches. Electrics are not my strong point so it's important to understand how the layout works electrically. I need to understand how it works for fault finding purposes. Also lots of layouts have a surfeit of extras switches, gongs and bells and in some cases laptops and head

scratching, why have all this if you don't need to! It's supposed to be fun! Thanks Allan, your help and advice to a fellow SMRS modeller is invaluable.

After the points, I picked up some LED's and some items for fine detailing Loch Syd from Ten Commandments.



All in all, a successful exhibition, some good layouts, learnt some new things about electrics and points and most importantly, inspired others to have a go including a small boy with his dad who ran the layout perfectly.

Finally, I found out what the exclusive announcement was from Rails of Sheffield, 812 Caledonian Railway 0-6-0, well it would be rude not to, I just have to wait until November 2019 to get my hands on it, in the meantime, I can look at the Caledonian 4-6-2 passing my signal box.

Peter Mills.

The site before the Scottish Events Campus (SEC) was built.



Youth Days.

A year or so ago, I was invited to speak at a Heritage Railway Association conference on volunteering at Crewe. There were speakers from other railways and outside bodies that deal with volunteering and its issues. I have to say, it was quite pleasant to go to a conference and speak about something that is interesting, not a boring tax conference. I only had to speak for half an hour, so it was straight forward. I got the graveyard slot, first on after lunch. I went through my background, why I was interested in trains, and what I did at the R&ER. I also went through the R&ER's 'Volunteer & Make a Difference' initiative and the processes we using to attract volunteers. Then I thought I'd wake them up with some 'home truths' as they say with one of the most serious issues facing heritage railways today. I told them that the people that remember steam in BR days would all be dead soon (relatively speaking) and unless they changed the way the attracted volunteers and to attract different

volunteers that weren't from a railway background or not even interested in railways. Then all they would be achieving is managing decline of their core business.

Well you can imagine how well that went down. The message was harsh but it's the elephant in the heritage railway room. In reality, it's not that far away. The railway preservation pioneers like our departed friend Keith led the way but that generation is coming to an end and we need to continue to keep their momentum alive. To sustain heritage railways in the long term then radical changes will be required to keep our heritage railways going. They must look to attract people like me and younger who don't remember steam and promote the benefits of volunteering in today's world. After all there is a lot of competition for our free time and there are many good causes out there that we can spend our free time on. People are working longer and now we are seeing the effect of less free time to give. We also need to be honest enough to say that it's a partnership and both the railway and the volunteer get something out of it.

Surprisingly the message got through and seemed to be reasonably received by the audience. Some months later, I was asked to speak to a HRA Committee on what we were doing at the R&ER to attract and keep our volunteers. One of the 'Ratty's' strengths is the wide range of ages of all who volunteer, the Ffestiniog is the same, they also enjoy a wide spread across the age demographics of volunteers. But essentially, you need a mix to attract all who are interested and this gives you the best chance to succeed. I was then asked to join the HRA in a more formal capacity and to plan and coordinate a national campaign to attract younger volunteers. So we wind on a few more months, planning is well under way now and I'm pleased to announce the following press release on one of their initiatives. The Heritage Railway Association is reaching out to the next generation of potential volunteers. It is a good way to sustain future volunteering in the long term in the heritage railway sector.

This year sees the landmark of 50 years since we stopped using steam in the UK. The railway preservation pioneers need to be followed up with new Young volunteers learning all the skills and enjoying all the benefits that volunteering brings to help continue the success of our heritage railway sector. We have found that volunteering can play an important part in today's society. Not only are skills being kept alive, but in today's cyber world, volunteering promotes social interaction and communication skills and it shows potential employers the life skills learnt that are needed for the workplace.

The HRA is creating a 'Youth Day' programme to promote volunteering and its many benefits to younger volunteers typically aged between 16 -25. The aim is to hold two 'Youth Days' per year (Spring & Autumn) in different part of the country, to include all gauges from standard to the many narrow gauges. Activities will vary depending on location but all are designed to show the many different aspects of volunteering on a heritage railway from steam and diesel driving experiences to permanent way, engineering and shunting

puzzles. The first event will be at the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway on Saturday. **Peter Mills.**

ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION



The final years of the Night Ferry.

Britain's first international passenger train.

Original images from 35mm colour slides.

Presented by Allan Trotter.

Saturday 10th March 2018

19:00

Southport Lecture Society,
Friends Meeting House,
Court Road,
Southport, PR9 9ER.

