

Southport Model Railway Society April 2015 Newsletter

Chairman's notes

Spring is here at last and all that goes with it. The evenings are becoming lighter earlier, the weather is starting to improve and getting (a little) warmer in turn wakening the garden. Spring and April not only herald Easter and eggs but two major model railway events with, at Easter the York show then later the National Garden Railway show at Peterborough. In readiness for this I have recently been putting the finishing touches to a different form of 16mm motive power which I purchased in kit form at last years show. This is literally a 1 horse powered motorised merchandise wagon of the type used in Mid Wales quarries. It's debut run or trot will hopefully be made at the Peterborough show where Derek will be taking his Walmer Bridge layout (and us) for the layout's second appearance. The hope is that it will provide a novel and amusing means of distraction to entertain viewers while the other guys are preparing and steaming up their locos or giving light relief to their driving. I will let you know how I get on in the next months Newsletter.

Meanwhile have a good Easter, I hope you enjoy these and any other events rail related or otherwise and save a little chocolate for me.

Frank

Honorary Chairman

Secretary's Report

There is not a lot to report from the secretary's office this month, as so far we have not yet had a committee meeting although the minutes of the AGM

have been written up and submitted to the committee.

First of all, I would like to record a big thank you to the members of the society for me proposing a as secretary, an office which I have so far avoided undertaking despite my 40 years Association with the club during which I have however served as chairman and treasurer! Committee activity over the last 12 months appears to have been mostly of an ad hoc variety and the archive which I have received contains no minutes of any committee meetings..

Hence I have proposed to the rest of the committee that we meet regularly, if briefly, from 1900 to 2000 every first Tuesday in the lounge at the clubrooms. The idea is to meet frequently and regularly if briefly, to avoid the need for ad hoc or emergency meetings. This however also means that the lounge facility will not be available to other members until 2000 but that at that time, the seats should be nice and warm. If you do want to attend a club before 2000 on these first Tuesdays, please quietly make your way upstairs or into the garden and immerse yourself in activity. Normal service in the club Lounge will resume from 2000.

Jim Ford

Honorary Secretary

Building Report -57A Portland Street.

For those who have been to the Clubrooms in recent weeks, you will have noticed that the Portland Street railway room is now up and running. There is, of course, still some work to be to tidy things up (the floor needs cleaning thoroughly and some form of covering put down, and one of the wall requires papering and painting) but with a little will power and some help this can easily be resolved. The Talisker room is a little more 'problematical'. The accumulated 'rubbish' needs to be sorted and either stored safely or dumped before we can even assess the staes of the walls and how much remedial work is required on them. So we do need help with this, particularly from those members who interest is in getting this particular layout ready for exhibition etc.

The garden is sorely in need of some attention. However, until the committee have made a decision on what to do about the shed (which is very much on its last legs) it is not appropriate to carry out much in the way of major work. Of course general tidying can be carried out, wood can be cut up

ready for heating the building next winter, and also the main path relocated closer to the railway fence.

Ian Shulver

Exhibition Manager's Report

The major news is that our Exhibition Venue has changed. After seven successful years at Birkdale High School we are now at

Greenbank High School, Hastings Road, Southport PR8 2LT

Greenbank High School is 1 km nearer into Southport on A565 which is same road as previous venue and on the same side. A565 rises to cross railway, Hillside Station is on Bridge, within 50m take make first left turn into Hastings Road. There is a massive Billboard. Greenbank High School is adjacent to and on same side of A565 as Royal Birkdale Golf Club. www.greenbankhighschool.co.uk includes map showing details of access and area. Hastings Road is adjacent to Hillside Station on Merseyrail's Northern Line. Arriva bus route 47 stops at Hillside Station. Buses are every 20 minutes on Saturdays and every 30 minutes on Sundays. Route 47 runs from Southport (Crossens) to Liverpool 1 via Crosby and Bootle. There is free car parking with enormous capacity. This is used when Open Golf is in Southport and annually for Southport Flower Show Park & Ride. Admission prices have been held at 2014's levels. Our dates for 2015 are confirmed as 07th & 08th November. We have also advance booked Greenbank High School for 2016 when we are reverting to our established pattern of last full weekend in September which is 24th & 25th September.

The proximate causation of our move was the loss of use of main Sports Hall at Birkdale. In August 2014 the floor suffered serious water damage. Had our Exhibition been organised for September rather than November there would have been no Exhibition. Temporary repairs enabled us to go ahead in November. We altered floors plan so large Layouts hid the damage from view and also removed likelihood of any incidents. Birkdale were very supportive throughout. Over Christmas the new floor went in. In late January it was discovered that the special sports surface would not take tables & chairs. This also effected Birkdale High School who used Hall for Assemblies and Examinations. So we lost the use of 700sqm out of our 1050sqm. There followed a series of meetings and offer of some alternative space which both left us 350sqm down and with a split location. The entire viability of our Exhibition would be fatally compromised. The decision to move away was taken with heavy heart in the

best interests of Southport Model Railway Society. At Greenbank we have 1050sqm based on a central core adjacent to main entrance. Refreshment area and use of kitchens are included. This is only the first phase of our new arrangements. Lunch facilities have to be revisited from scratch. Floor planning requires different philosophy given the different sized areas.

When I received the phone call at end of January I had just commenced the confirmations for 2015. These were put on hold until we had clear picture. Three weeks ago we formally made our decision. I have since visited Rainhill and Rochdale Exhibitions to brief those of our Traders and Exhibitors that I met. I also talked at some length to many fellow Exhibition Managers.

It is important to ensure that there are no misunderstandings. Our venue change is positive to protect and promote that which we currently have. At the same time we have the opportunity to completely refresh our Exhibition. Over weekend of 07th & 08th November we will be presenting 25 layouts. There is some churning of our Traders with welcome new additions. In our next Newsletters I will be setting out many of the details. There is a mountain of paperwork to be overcome in meantime

Tony Kuivala

Exhibition Manager 27th March 2015

Layout News

Monsal Dale: Progress with wiring up the points and the control switches is progressing slowly. However, the good news is that there has been some success - as we might say "all the points work but not necessarily in the right order". Luckily this can be corrected relatively simply by swapping wires on the affected points. More next month.

Ian Shulver

Monthly Talk

Regular readers will have noticed that Allan Trotter's name keeps cropping up on the reports of monthly talks, most recently with presentations on an American theme. Well, he was at it again last month, with another lecture in the series, this time entitled 'Amtrak – trains and travel'.

This was an extensive illustrated account of the US train operator's many and varied operations, both passenger and freight. The variety of cars used was immense, making full use of the available loading gauge to tailor the user experience to that required for comfortable, if not particularly fast, travel. The fact that the world capital of private enterprise deemed it necessary to have a nationalised rail network was not lost on the presenter, with appropriate reference made to the contrasting effect of multiple franchises in the UK model.

Like in the UK, modernisation meant a big cutback in route mileage, but at least Amtrak had the excuse of strong competition from the airlines on the long transcontinental routes. And a more relaxed view of engineering standards led to some unusual but effective technical solutions, such as attaching freight containers to the back of passenger trains using little more than a couple of bogie sets.

Of course SMRS is not backwards in innovation either, as the talk was advertised in the local press, attracting a number of non-members not only to attend the talk but also to join in the subsequent discussion. A promising blueprint for the future perhaps.

Rainhill Model Railway Exhibition

I have this year been invited to five shows with my different layouts. The first of those exhibitions was Rainhill. The show was held over the weekend of 7th-8th March. It was their sixteenth year at the Village Hall. The only problem for visitors seemed to be parking near to the Hall. Parking in front of the hall a time limit.

The show itself has a good friendly atmosphere and lots of willing helpers to get set up.

There was in total fifteen layout on view. I will talk about the layouts that are of exhibition standard. The rest to my mind where not!!

The Layouts – Ludlow ‘N’ gauge. Glen Bogle ‘O’ gauge, Royston St. Davids 016.5 gauge. Place de la Victorie 1/35 scale, Rothampton 009 gauge, Cleverley Wood ‘OO’ gauge (trams)

Dufton Road ‘OO’ gauge, Dawn Patrol 009 gauge. Spires Road ‘OO’ gauge,

Trix Twin Railway ‘OO’ gauge, Mitre Bridge depot ‘OO’ gauge, St Etienne-en-Caux 009 gauge, Un-named layout from Rainhill MRC, ‘Festive Lane’ and My own ‘The Circle Line’ ‘N’ gauge.

‘Ludlow’ built by Ian Coules. Ludlow was one of those layouts you just had to keep going back too. The modelling was of a high standard there was continual running of locos and I look forward to seeing it at our show this year.

‘Rothampton’ is a fictional place somewhere in the North of England at the head of a valley. The scenic details capture this very well. With plenty to look at this layout worked and looked good. Well done to this 009 group.

Un-named as yet and not quite finished was the Rainhill MRC layout and well worth a mention. The engine shed and yard was interesting and well modelled. Long rakes of trains on the move running at scale speeds. They did on the day have some little niggles working it however, this will be a layout to look out for in the future.

‘Festive Lane’ By Andy Shaw. This little end to end layout took my fancy as this could be placed on a window ledge. I am sure one lady told her husband ‘you can have one that size’ Well modelled and with what looked like a running time table had members of the public in front of it all the time.

Dufton Road. In the programme it states that ‘ ‘ The old goods yard at Dufton Road was Converted into a diesel depot stabling point in the late 1960’s At the time depicted it is mainly used by Diesels for re-fuelling and placing parcel vans in various sidings’ What it did not say was any young child wishing to have a go placing vans, Diesel in those sidings receives a ‘Drivers Certificate’ with their name on it. What a good idea! Simple things like that can make it a good show for the public.

St. Etienne-en-Caux.. This French depicted model was one of those models that I could not make my mind up about at first. However the more I looked at it I could see the story behind it. The busy shops the avenue of trees, typical French town.. On the layout there was a mixture of French, Belgian machines as was the trend in the 1950. This was a well thought out model and was rewarded with the Best in Show layout.

Glen Bogle This ‘O’ gauge layout was excellently modelled. It ran so smooth and effortless it was a joy to watch. When modelling in such a large scale your eye for details is paramount. This layouts detailing was second to none. It was modelled by the Bradford MRC I will look for this one again.

My own layout **‘The Circle Line’** you have all seen it before so modesty stops me from going any further.

Royston St.Davids is worth a mention. It had on the layout some very fine modelling standards of scratch built buildings using foam board. I'm sure this layout will be seen on the circuit again.

The other layouts I have not mentioned well!!!!!!.

There was the usual mix of traders at the show nothing unusual apart from Simon Howard, who gave demonstrations on art of fitting DCC decoders, both normal and sound versions. He would also, for a reasonable price fit them while you're at the show.. I had four locos converted while I was there.

The catering was of an excellent standard both for public and exhibitors.

The exhibitors had waiter service!! Are you listening David???

This was a well presented and run show with a few Layouts belonging to Rainhill Members

Well worth a visit next year. If only to pinch sweets from the 502 group!!!

Congratulations to Rainhill MRC.

Terry Tasker

Doncaster Exhibition (February)

It seems to be a very busy time for model railway shows at the moment. I chose to go to "The Festival of British Railway Modelling" at Doncaster on the 7th February. The journey was good starting from Lime St. on to Doncaster via Manchester Piccadilly, the bus station adjoins the railway station at Doncaster and a courtesy bus was waiting to take us conveniently into the car park at the racecourse entrance. The entrance cost £9 and the guide £1. First impression was plenty to see about 30 layouts and 80 exhibitors/sales stands, those figures are from the catalogue. The first layout that caught my eye was 009 "The Clydach Railway" 25' x 10' based on mid and north Wales, I thought the scenery and sea shore were terrific, even though I could only see it over peoples shoulders as it was very popular.

"Northwick" an imaginary town near Weston-Super-Mare is an oo gauge layout of the 1957-62 period. I thought they had captured the period well with plenty to look at on this layout, such as workmen busy with repairs to the rails, some cattle waiting to be transported, coal being shifted and a terminus at one end with a high street scene behind it, complete with buildings and traffic. There were a great deal more exceedingly good layouts to see but I had not made notes. Upstairs in the theatre area there were seminars on subjects to do with the hobby, a little way from that was the eating area with a reasonable array of dishes on offer, plus beverages. Downstairs again wandering around the sales stands I bought a couple of sound modules from Digitrains and some fibre optic cable plus bits from other stands. I find I

spend a lot of time looking at things on sales stands, there is always so much on offer. Time soon runs out, it's 4pm and on to the courtesy bus for a fairly uneventful journey home, I enjoyed my day.

John Bunn.

Railway Rhythm

Whilst Tri-ang Railways were well known for producing a vast range of model railway items, they also issued some interesting and obscure items to complement their main range.

One of the more unusual items offered gave Tri-ang Railways the opportunity to enter into the high profile business of the record industry. The item number was RT395.

The release of their first single "Railway Rhythm" in 1964 was in reality never going to sell in such numbers as to enter the hit parade (1960's terminology) as it was not of musical content. What it did contain was authentic railway sound recordings, presumably to be played as you operated your model railway or in reality, played with your train set.

The record cover was illustrated in the 1964 Tri-ang Railways catalogue on page 27 and was priced at 5/- (25 pence in metric type money). The record was a normal 7 inch single and of course played at the industry standard of 45 rpm (revolutions per minute). Side 1 contained two tracks, "Steam Engine Shunting" and "Steam Journey". Side 2 had one track "Diesel Journey". A vivid description of the sounds to be heard on each track was itemised.

To quote the sleeve notes, "Now you can add a thrilling new dimension of realism to the operation of your Tri-ang Railways. These on-the-spot recording, specially produced to accompany your own Tri-ang model railway, bring you all the colour and atmosphere of the real thing". Now there is something not many top twenty hits could claim! The recordings were supplied by Great Features Ltd.

Whether many people rushed out to buy this latest release is not really apparent as it was only illustrated for one year in the 1964 catalogue on page 27. It was listed but not illustrated in the 1965 catalogue on page 19, still at the same price of 5/-. The following year however it was absent from the 1966 Tri-ang Hornby catalogue.

This was not the only record issued from Margate though. In the 1980's Hornby issued a flexible disk (original analogue floppy disk?) titled "A personal message to you about your

new Hornby train set from Bernard Cribbins" with the instruction "Please play this record before playing with your new train set". Unlike the previous standard single, this 7 inch floppy record played at 33 rpm.

Once again those clever people at Margate produced yet another innovative product.



Friends of the 502 Group

West Lancashire Railway – The lettuce line – Wednesday 29th April

Following on from the success of last September's 50th anniversary of closure tour of Southport to Preston railway route, Keith Hick will be presenting an illustrated talk with his unique personal images and knowledge at Southport Football Club's grandstand bar, commencing at 7:30pm. Keith Hick is a well known local historian and railway enthusiast.

The evening is for the benefit of the Friends of 502 group www.class502.org who are restoring the sole surviving 502 unit in Burscough. These electric multiple units were built in Derby in the late 1930's for Liverpool – Southport – Crossens and Liverpool – Ormskirk services. They were superseded by present day 507 and 508 units in the late 1970's/early 1980's. This unit ran on the Southport – Crossens service on the final day of electric services, Saturday 6th September 1964. Upon withdrawal from service in 1982, the unit became part of the National Collection in ownership of the National Railway Museum who donated it to the 502 group for restoration in 2011. In March 2012, the unit moved into the Merseyside Transport Trust's large undercover facility in Osprey Place on Burscough Industrial Estate.

There is no charge for admittance but there will be opportunity for donations to the 502 Group's Steel Appeal. They are about to order the new steel floor for the trailer coach. The first new sections should be in place for the Open day on 12th July.