

THE E.M. GAUGE SOCIETY PRESENTS ITS . . .

expoEM'99

PROGRAMME OF FINE SCALE RAILWAY
MODELLING IN 4MM SCALE

LAYOUTS - DEMONSTRATIONS - LECTURES - MANUFACTURERS' TRADE STANDS

SATURDAY 15th MAY 1999

10.30am to 6pm

SUNDAY 16th MAY 1999

10.30am to 5pm

THE LEISURE CENTRE
PRINCES WAY - BLETCHLEY - MILTON KEYNES

Who needs reminding that it is expoEM time again? Get these dates in your diary now. This two day event is one of three expoEM presentations by the Society in 1999. The next being:

expoEM North'99 - 18th and 19th September 1999
at The Colne Valley Leisure Centre,
Slaithwaite, (A62), near Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

This is expoEM - The show with a difference. The informal club atmosphere for all modellers irrespective of scale or gauge. Layouts, demonstrations and traders. No crush barriers. It is where you can talk to the specialist manufacturers and where you can discuss with the layout owners any facet of modelling you wish, and even have a go yourself.

If you would like a map giving directions to either of the expoEM events shown here, please send your request to Doug Fairhurst, 4 Meadway, Freetzywater, Enfield, Middlesex, EN3 6NU

ALL VISITORS WILL RECEIVE A PLAN OF THE HALL ON THE DAY

Further details of the Society:

Mike Unit (Membership Secretary) 200A Prospect Road, Woodard Green, Essex, IG3 7NG
Colin Wilson (Secretary) 45 Hillside Avenue, Chesham, Hertfordshire, EN8 8PH



By train:

The Centre is a short walk from BLETCHLEY (NOT Milton Keynes) station.

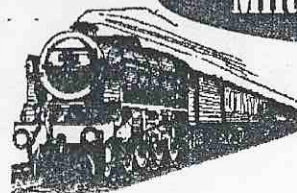
By car:

Use exit 14 of the M1 if travelling from the North
Use exit 13 of the M1 if travelling from the South
OR use the "Old A5" route which gives direct access to the town.

Admission £4
(2 day ticket *)
EMGS Members £3

(*) This is a single-price "Weekend" ticket and accompanied children are admitted free. However, as this is a specialist show we leave it to your discretion whether you bring very young children as this may spoil your appreciation of the models, demonstrations and lectures available throughout the weekend.

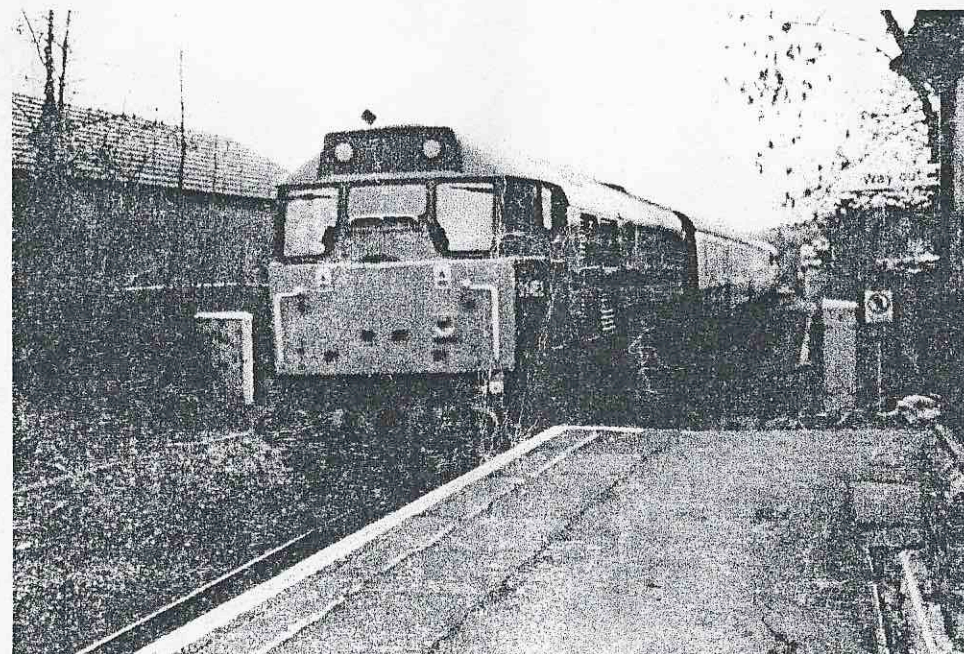
Milton Keynes Model Railway Society



Newsletter ...

No. 85

April 1999



The MKMRS is a member of:

- The Chiltern Model Railway Association
- The Model Railway Club
- The World War II Railway Study Group

Philately will get you everywhere!

Bruce Garwood's layout will be appearing at 'Stamp '99', which this year includes Trains 1999 – a special exhibition to celebrate the wealth of trains in philately. It is a 4 day exhibition and therefore Bruce needs all the help he can get! Please contact him if you can help.

The exhibition is on the 15th to 18th April and open from 1100 – 1800 Thursday, 1000 – 1800 Friday and Saturday and 1000 – 1700 on Sunday. Full details can be found in the full-page advertisement in this month's 'Railway Modeller'.

Bruce's layout is appearing as part of the Bletchley Park Post Office display organised by John Chapman of the BPPO. Apart from Bruce other stars appearing are Norman Wisdom and 'The Railway Children's' Bernard Cribbins, Jenny Agutter and Sally Thomsett. *Woo Hoo!*

Museum Notes . . .

Easter Weekend was very busy with 1005 visitors through the clubroom doors on one day and all indications show that it will continue that way right throughout the summer. 9 coaches are booked for this Saturday, 17th April. The 'Park' will be open on at least two more Bank Holidays this year so any help will be greatly appreciated.

Museum Duty Roster April – June 1999

Weekend	Saturday	Sunday
April 17/18th	Eric Bowman, Eric Preston	Dennis Lovett, Les Wood
May 1st/2nd/3rd May Day Bank Holiday	Bernard Worden, Eric Bowman Monday	Gordon Shrimpton, Chris/Nick Hughes Dennis Lovett, Ray/Richard Cousins
May 15/16th		
May 29th/30th/31st Spring Bank Holiday	Tim Davey, Tony Winn Monday	
12/13th June	Chris Symonds	Gordon Shrimpton, Chris/Nick Hughes
19/20th June	Chris Lester, Tim Davey, Phil Gilbert	Dennis Lovett, Les Wood

Milton Keynes Model Railway Society – 1969

President:
Jim Wood

Vice President:
Les Wood

Chairman:
Dennis Lovett

Vice Chairman:
Fred Collins

Secretary:
Chris Hughes

Treasurer:
Eric Bowman

Committee:
Geoff Bell
Colin Jamieson
Bruce Garwood
Gordon Shrimpton

CMRA Rep:
Chris Lester

Museum Curator:
John Hatton

Librarians:
Ray Cousins
Richard Cousins

Newsletter:
John Dibben

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Chairman
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Cover Picture:

The 'Fragonset'
Class 31's at
Fenny Stratford.
Photo:
Jeff Mathie

March

The past month has seen plenty of activity but no events upon which profound thoughts are required on this page. Therefore I thought it would be a good opportunity to write about the club in general and the part the newsletter can play in portraying issues effectively.

I am not in favour of bland 'everything is wonderful' newsletters which neither convince or interest anyone. An example appears below.

'It seems like only yesterday that the finishing touches were being put to the last newsletter ... How time has flown! Has anyone heard the first lawnmower yet?' - 'West Bletchley Chronicle'.

I try to 'keep my ear to the ground' and obtain as much information as possible in order to reflect issues that are relevant to members, as far as possible, bearing in mind that it is principally to articulate the Chairman and committee's aims. In this respect it has the potential to inform one group about the activities of others. I believe this can reduce the inevitable tensions which occur when space and funds are limited. My 'inquisitive nature' often provokes bouts of paranoia but having no vested interest in one layout or outside group, guild or society means I can remain unbiased (in print anyway)!

So keep me informed and I will keep the rest of the membership informed. However, if you have a problem, there is a list of 'the great and the good' in the column on the left, in which to confide, particularly the 'third one down', although I am sure he wants to know the good news as well, working for 'Silver Link'.

It is also noticeable that new or new-ish, young or youngish members are displaying a great amount of enthusiasm and willingness to learn new skills to increase their enjoyment of the hobby. Anyone with time to spare could do a lot worse than encourage this energy.

It is surprising how similar views come from unconnected sources. One common concern is that of being given a task only to find funds, space or 'politics' becoming an issue. That is why the better informed we are of one another's situation the more members' can take this into account in their words and actions.

Finally, if anyone has any ideas for inclusion in the newsletter, for example private sales or requests for information and is prepared to 'start the ball rolling', please, let me know.

John Dibben



Diary



APRIL

17/18	Bletchley Park Open Weekend
27	QGM
28	HMRS Meeting – The Raetian Railway in Switzerland

MAY

1/2/3	Bletchley Park Open Weekend (May Day Bank Holiday)
15/16	Bletchley Park Open Weekend
29/30/31	Bletchley Park Open Weekend (Spring Bank Holiday)

Notice Board

M&GN 40th Anniversary North. Norfolk Railway.

Our honorary member for Norfolk, Gordon Eckersley, has invited MKMRS to take part in the model railway exhibition being held on various parts of the North Norfolk Railway on the first weekend of June 1999.

Accommodation will be provided by the NNR and all layouts transported in a large vehicle by Gordon Shrimpton.

SWAPMEET DATES Woughton Campus

The next Woughton swapmeet will be held on June 13th.

Doors are open from 1100 – 1500.

The admission is 80p Adult, 40p children/Senior Citizens and £1.60 Family (2 adults and children).

The dates for the rest of the year are as follows:

September 26th
November 14th.

HMRS Meeting

The last 1998/9 season HMRS meeting at our clubrooms will be held on April 28th and is on the subject of The Raetian Railway in Switzerland and the talk is by E.C. Vaughan.

Meetings commence at 1930 prompt. MKMRS members are invited to attend all HMRS meetings held at Bletchley Park.

The Move

After a few years it became obvious that it was not doing the layout any good being continually dismantled and re-erected on a weekly basis. About this time the MKMRS had moved from the basement at Holne Chase School and into Victoria Road. Holne Chase was offered to us by the MKMRS and we accepted.

We moved lock, stock and barrel into Holne Chase and re-erected the layout on a permanent basis. The first time we had heavy rain, we were aghast to find the floor two inches deep with water, more akin to a boat club than a model railway club.

Unfortunately, due to a job change and other reasons, I was forced to cut my commitment to the club shortly after the transfer. I cannot tell you too much of what happened at Holne Chase and by the time I was able to get involved again, the West Bletchley Model Railway Club had ceased to exist.

I joined the MKMRS where Peter Jarvis and John Tennant were already members. Ian Rixon is now quite heavily involved with the Ffestiniog Railway, some of you may have seen him on their stand at exhibitions.

I believe Bert gave up his interest in model railway clubs. Arthur died whilst we were at the Community Centre. I still have some of his Hornby-Dublo which I bought from his widow Margaret when we sold his models for her.

John Hatton, who had been a later member of the WBMRC, joined the MKMRS after me.

This has been a 'potted history' of the WBMRC with some serious and I hope some amusing anecdotes. If any of the other ex-members can remember any more, I will jot them down and maybe get John D. to publish them.

Pleased to do just that Fred! - John D.

MKMRS Sweat-shirts

Further to the notice about our sweat-shirts, the manufacturers have requested a photograph of us in our outfits for publicity purposes. They have even offered the services of a professional photographer. Dennis also would like a photograph for our 30th Anniversary.

So as many members as possible may be asked to 'pose' outside when the lighter nights permit.

The 'Master Plan'

A 'master plan' showing the possible future development of the Bletchley Park Museum site, is on public display just inside the 'Mansion'. It shows the possible allocation of buildings and developments which are being considered at present.

The Scenery

We had arrived at the stage when the layout was ready to be landscaped. One of our members stepped in to volunteer for this task. The supports were fitted and the 'chicken wire' stretched across, carefully laid and tacked to the profile required. The aforementioned member turned up on a Sunday morning armed with a bucket of medical plaster and a spatula. Dressed in full surgical overalls including rubber boots and elbow length gloves, he proceeded to plaster the layout plus the floor, walls and doors of the Community Centre and it would not surprise me if half of West Bletchley also received a sample.

I think this member worked on the basis that 'if a job is worth doing it is worth doing well'. (I leave you to guess the identity of the person involved.)

The Finger

Again on a Sunday morning, we were all working hard preparing the layout for exhibition. For some reason I had to cut some card into strips with a 'Stanley' knife. Due to all the activity around me, I must have lost concentration for a moment and ran the 'Stanley' knife along the card and across my finger, disconnecting half an inch of finger from the rest.

With the injury wrapped in a towel, I was rushed to Dr. Peter Jarvis who was at home. He arranged the finger into the correct order and bound it tightly with a dressing and told me to report to the surgery the next day. The finger has since healed with no loss of feeling. (Who says doctors cannot do 'First Aid'.)

I am glad it was only my finger that had the problem. I had no wish to pioneer the 'Bobbit' operation.

The Exhibition

We had worked hard on the layout, were satisfied that it did not look too bad and ran quite well. We received an invitation from the MKMRS to bring it along to the 'Wilton Hall' show. I am glad to say that it ran perfectly during the whole show, being operated by the older children. The same could not be said of the MKMRS layout that seemed to have someone permanently underneath it, trying to find out why it was not working. (Embarrassing but true). It was during the show that the phrase, 'We have continuity here, here but not there!', was coined.

The Turntable Saga

After the show, we decided to give construction work a rest and just enjoy playing trains for a time. This was not enough for one of our members who began campaigning to have a turntable fitted alongside the shed. We resisted the pressure as long as we could then eventually gave in and reluctantly agreed to it. The turntable was duly installed which was not easy as the layout had never been designed with a turntable in mind.

The member who had caused all the fuss then stated that it had spoilt the layout and he had never wanted one in the first place anyway. We were 'dumbstruck' and there was even talk of a 'lynching party'. I will not name the person involved but he has been known to swear occasionally with a Scottish accent.

Club Notices . . .

Outside Layout

Only three boards which have to be 'custom built' remain to be made to complete the 'figure of eight' layout. Most of the credit must go to Ian Harrison and Martin Shenton who have put in hours of work to achieve the rapid progress that is evident to anyone who ventures 'round the back' for a look.

MKMRS Sweat-shirts

Gordon Shrimpton reports more orders for our 'very own' sweat-shirts which are available from him. Resplendent in 'burgundy' with MKMRS motif ('Top feed'), it is a snip at £14.50. Available in all sizes. Gordon has also informed me of the 'possibility' of 'Polo-shirts', similarly adorned for our 'summer collection'. These would probably cost slightly less than the sweat-shirts. This is only a proposal at the moment but he will no doubt keep us informed.

Northampton Swapmeets

The next one is Sunday May 23rd and is held at The Moat House Hotel, Silver Street, (off Horsemarket). It is open from 1100 - 1530.

The dates for the rest of the year are September 5th and December 19th.

QGM

Please note that the next QGM will be held on the 27th April, 1999. The meeting will be held in the clubrooms at 2000.

The Return of Ern'

I am sure many others apart from myself were delighted to see that ever popular character Ernie Johnson in the clubroom a few weeks ago. Ernie has been unable to visit the club for quite some time due to illness and subsequent operation. Always cheerful and normally in the club room up to four times a week, he has been missed and although we were kept informed of his progress it was nice to see him again with his sense of humour still present.

I am sure we all wish him a full recovery whilst obeying 'doctors' orders' during his convalescence and a return to as near his 'old self' as is possible.

The West Bletchley Model Railway Club

By Fred Collins

On the Tuesday before Christmas, John Dibben, Dennis and myself, were in the club room chatting while we were eating our mince pies and admiring the Christmas display. In fact, idling the time away, when the subject arose of the good old days when Bletchley had three model railway clubs. This surprised me as I was only aware of two of them. The MKMRS and the West Bletchley Model Railway Club. The third one was the Bletchley model Railway Club which apparently ceased to operate shortly after the MKMRS was formed (or maybe before).

We got around to talking about the origins of the West Bletchley club which I mentioned I knew something about and could tell a few stories about it.

John Dibben suggested that if I put pen to paper he would publish it in the magazine. I will try to present the story as best as my memory will allow, so here goes!

The Formation

In the middle-sixties the occupants of West Bletchley had, for some time, been pressing the local council to provide premises for a Community Centre. At this time, prior to Milton Keynes Development Corporation days, this type of much needed premises was more difficult to come by and the local council (The Bletchley Urban District Council) were reluctant to sanction the expenditure for a new structure.

The local authority fought a long-winded rearguard action for some years. Eventually the council gave in slightly and stated that if a responsible committee could be formed, they might consider providing a building.

A committee had already been formed under the chairmanship of the Rev. Leslie Jell, a Baptist minister from Whaddon Way. I cannot remember all the names on that first committee but I know it included Dr. Peter Jarvis and myself amongst other voluntary leaders in the area.

Peter was already gaining the reputation as someone who could 'bang the drum' quite loudly (figuratively speaking). I suppose I was proposed as I was an active member of one of the political parties in the area.

The council must have been impressed by the mixture of firebrands and do-gooders that made up that first committee, as it was not long before a Terrapin building had been erected behind the Whaddon Way Shops. A position now occupied by the Milton Keynes Council's Housing Officer.

A Community Association was formed and the building was put into more or less immediate use. The usual communal activities were started, such as an Infants Play Group, Keep-Fit classes and mothers' meetings. A Chess club and 'Lonely Hearts Club' also used the centre for their activities.

It was known that I was interested in model railways and I was persuaded to start a group for 10-year olds and upwards with a view to occupying them with a small layout. I foolishly agreed to the proposal, enrolled John Tennant (my next door neighbour at the time) and away we went.

We built a small baseboard, laid some track and started the kids off modelling. I still have nightmares at the thought of the chances we took early on. It did not take us long to realise that 10-year olds with glue, solvent and modelling knives was not an ideal combination. We were lucky they did not end up killing themselves or each other.

However, we got away with it, thank goodness, without serious accident or incident.

After things settled down, we had quite enjoyable weekly sessions which the children appreciated and we enjoyed but John and I began to think of a bigger and more elaborate layout.

The locomotives and stock were provided by John and myself plus anyone that cared to donate. During this time we were well supported by Peter Jarvis.

An interesting incident took place one night after I had left the centre. I put my car away in the garage in the garage block and forgot that I had put the box containing all the stock outside the garage door. By the time I went back the next morning, the box and its contents had disappeared. I had to accept that it had gone missing for ever. I contacted the 'Bletchley Gazette' who were quite interested and published a report on it.

The day after publication, the box was returned to me, with the contents intact, by a fellow tenant of the garages, who when he found out what it was used for, gave us a small donation to 'keep up the good work'.

The layout

By the time we started planning for a bigger layout, we had been joined by Bert Bowers and Arthur. Unfortunately I cannot remember Arthur's second name but I would consider the four of us to be the originators of The West Bletchley Model railway Club.

Between us we came up with a design for a 20ft x 8ft oval with 2 track main line and 2 track branch giving 4 tracks with independent operation. There was a through station with goods, cattle and coal facilities (not original but effective).

Construction began in earnest. We had the usual problems that all clubs experience. Once the track is laid, people play trains and tend to neglect the rest of the work. However, we showed great willpower and carried on at a reasonable pace.

Ian Rixon and John Thomas joined our happy band after a while and made some wonderful buildings between them, particularly Ian who made us a signal box that stood between the tracks on stilts and overhung the tracks on either side, with trains running under the box. I believe it to be a copy of one in Glasgow.

Tony Smith, John Hatton's next door neighbour came along and did the wiring for the layout. We never experienced any electrical troubles which stood us in good stead for exhibition purposes (see later paragraph). Tony was an engineer with B.T.