



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 206

Spring 2022

CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

Since the last Newsletter, we have been able to hold a traditional AGM in the Clubroom again, at which James Woodley volunteered to become Club Secretary. With the exception of two members who had previously resigned, all other Committee members were re-elected. James is planning to make more use of social media to advertise club activities by setting up Facebook and Instagram accounts with possibly a revised You Tube channel.

With fewer members the monthly outgoings have been exceeding income by up to £300 a month so the Committee recommended an increase of £1/month in the subscription, but following discussion at the AGM it was unanimously agreed to raise by £2 to £13/month. The new bank account is finally live and members who may not have not already done so are asked to please amend their standing orders and monthly payments to the new account.

We have welcomed two more new members into the club, Richard Seward and Frank Pedro. Frank models in 00 and Richard has penned an article elsewhere in this issue about his model railway interests.

The items recently on sale in the clubroom have so far raised in excess of £1700 with a few locos and rolling stock still available. This is all profit for the club at no cost since everything had been kindly donated by a visitor to our last exhibition at Stantonbury.

An Open Day has been arranged for Saturday 2nd April from 10:00am until 3:00pm and adverts have been sent to the modelling magazines in the hope that we can attract some more new members. Also, thanks mainly to Russell, we have found a very nice new exhibition venue – The Ridgeway Centre at

Wolverton Mill. It is in a modern conference centre with plenty of parking space. There is a large roller shutter for easy Trader and layout access and everything is all on one level. Consequently, we are planning a one-day exhibition for Saturday 16th July using locally sourced layouts to avoid accommodation costs. The hall has been measured and is basically 92ft x 88ft so there should be sufficient space for both layouts and traders.

Whilst our bank balance is currently healthy it was not considered prudent to start any new layouts at this time, but to concentrate on completing and upgrading the ones we already have. To this end, Friday club nights have been designated 'track nights' and so far, this arrangement is working well with members getting involved in maintenance and construction rather than just running trains.

A successful weekend clean-up was held in the clubroom in January with much clutter removed. It would be helpful if the room could be kept reasonably tidy and tools put away after use. Particular attention needs to be paid to the waste bin which does need to be emptied from time to time and not just left to overflow. There is a supply of black sacks in the kitchen drawers and the full sacks can be dumped in the container in the car park. That about wraps it up for this edition, except to remind everyone to think about submitting an article or two to keep the Newsletter going.

Chris Hughes
Chairman

Meet Our New Member

Richard Seward



At the beginning of Covid my interest in model railways was rekindled with a random purchase of a Triang/Novo Big Big Train set at a local auction, which along with quite a lot of Lima O gauge has since snowballed to a level where my wife tells me I apparently have enough!



To break the covid monotony, for these last two years we have done a little train show on our driveway for the local kids that you can see on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4rNvwJ2KWtQoIh8xGDAZgg/playlists>

I've also now got a couple of more modern Heljan/Dapol loco's with plans to build a more permanent O gauge garden track to run these all on. For something to pull behind them I've had a go at converting a Triang Big Big coach in to something a little more realistic which to date has taken best part of a year, so my plan to build a rake of them may take a little time!

Railway Fun Quiz

By Claire Harris

No prizes but just fun to have a go.....

Questions:

- 1) The Red Arrow is a famous overnight sleeper train in which Country?
Which two cities does it connect?
- 2) Name the highest railway in the UK which opened in 2001?
- 3) Which UK railway station is the busiest outside of London?
- 4) The Night Riviera sleeper train, one of only two sleeper services in the UK, runs six nights a week between London and which town?
- 5) In which year was the bullet train introduced?
- 6) What is the colloquial name in the UK of a very early morning train?
- 7) Which country has the second largest electrified railway systems in the world?
- 8) What is the longest rail route in the world?
- 9) What is the name of the family in The Railway Children?
- 10) St Davids, St Thomas and St James Park are all railway stations in which British city?
- 11) The Hogwarts Express travels over the Glenfinnan Viaduct en-route to Hogwarts. What time does the train depart London Kings Cross?
- 12) Which cities did the original Orient Express run between?
- 13) True or False – Whilst on tour, Rod Stewart often books a second hotel room so he can set up his model railway?
- 14) At which London station did Sir Gilbert Scott built his Grand Midland Hotel?
- 15) “Sitting in a railway station with a ticket for my destination” is a line from which Simon and Garfunkel song?

You will find the answers at the end of the Newsletter.

Converting a Triang Big Coach - Part I

By Richard Seward

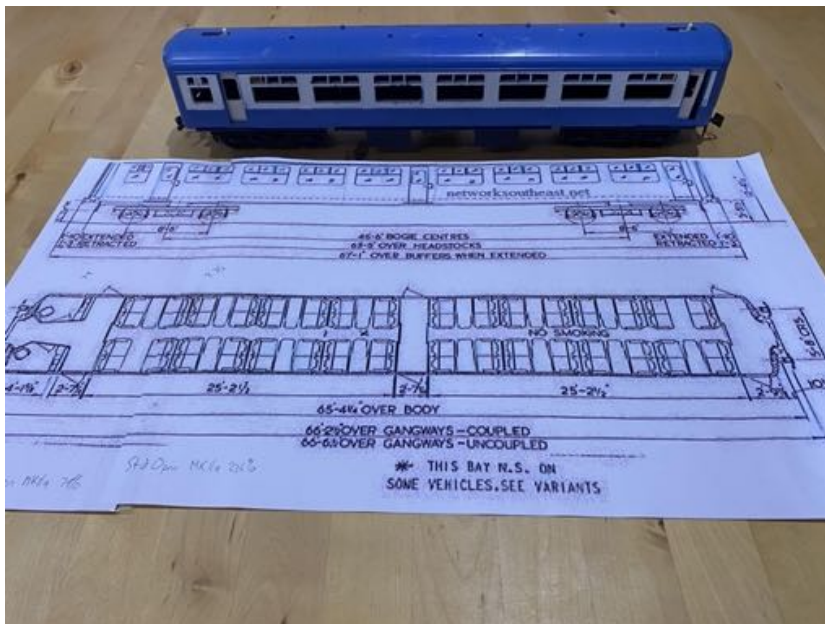
Having never done any modelling before I started, as you do by have a good Google around. I struggled however to find much more than the odd picture of progress and finished articles, but very little detail as to how to actually do it and source what was needed.

To that end I wrote the blog so it was out there for others to use, but also as a record for me for when I make the next one.

While the Triang Big Big MK2 coaches are reasonably accurate they are shorter than British Rail MK2 coaches should be. Also, more realistic ready to run O gauge coaches from the likes of Heljan are expensive starting at about £170 for a BR MK1 with the Mk2 coming in at over £230 when they are available!

My plan is to have a go at converting some Big Big coaches in to something more accurate.

I found some plans at <https://www.networksoutheast.net/coaching.html> .



Comparing to the Triang coaches you can see it's missing a door and window in length and the existing windows are also further apart than they should be.

There is also someone on eBay selling 3d printed upgrade items for Big Big coaches (and Hymeks - another story) which should come in very useful.

https://www.ebay.co.uk/usr/floyd_kraemer?_trksid=p2047675.l2559

There are 3 ways I've seen other people doing this.

1. Cut a coach in half and insert a section cut from another coach consisting of the missing door and window. Whilst the easiest this ends up with the coach being longer than the correct scale length.
2. Cut the train up into multiple sections with one window per section (adding the extra window and door) and re-glue it all back together to get the correct length filling all the gaps with filler. You then sand the whole coach down removing all the raised window surrounds which you then replace with acid etched metal ones. This looks better, but because the coach bodies are about 4mm thick the window surrounds come out at about 6 inches thick if it they were full size.
3. You've guessed it, the method I'm trying. Cut the train in half at the right point to add the extra window and door and make it the right scale length ignoring where any existing windows end up. Then cut out the complete white coloured window areas between the doors and replace with thinner plasticard with window holes cut in the correct places, fill, sand and attach the acid etched window frames.



Sounds easy so here we go!

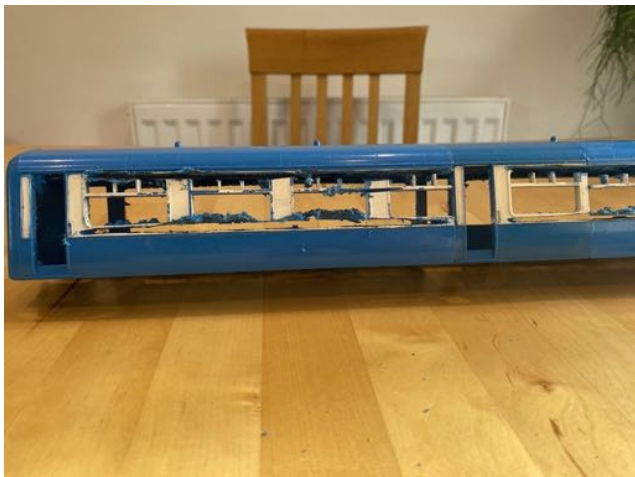


After a lot of adjusting the length and sanding to get it straight it came out like this. I checked it on a piece of glass to ensure it was flat with the edge against a spirit level to make sure it wasn't banana shaped.



Glued it together with Slaters MEK-PAK polystyrene cement which because it is a solvent melts the surfaces together and unlike superglue doesn't stick your fingers together. Apparently, you can also make a liquid filler out of it by dissolving offcuts of plastic in it. I was actually really impressed with how strong the guide joint has ended up

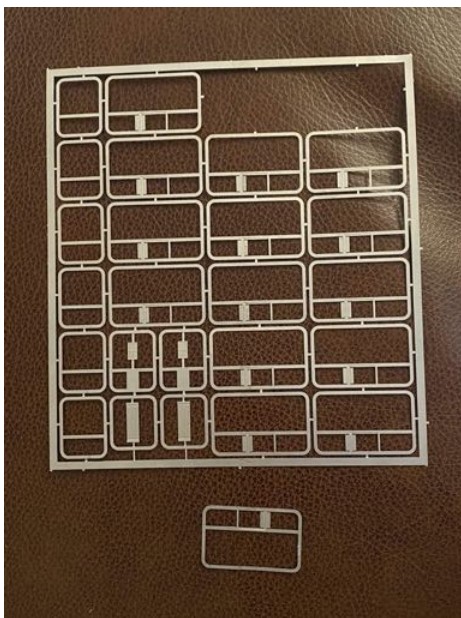
Then attacked it with a multitool using the borders of the white area as a guide.



Looks better after a bit of filling and sanding

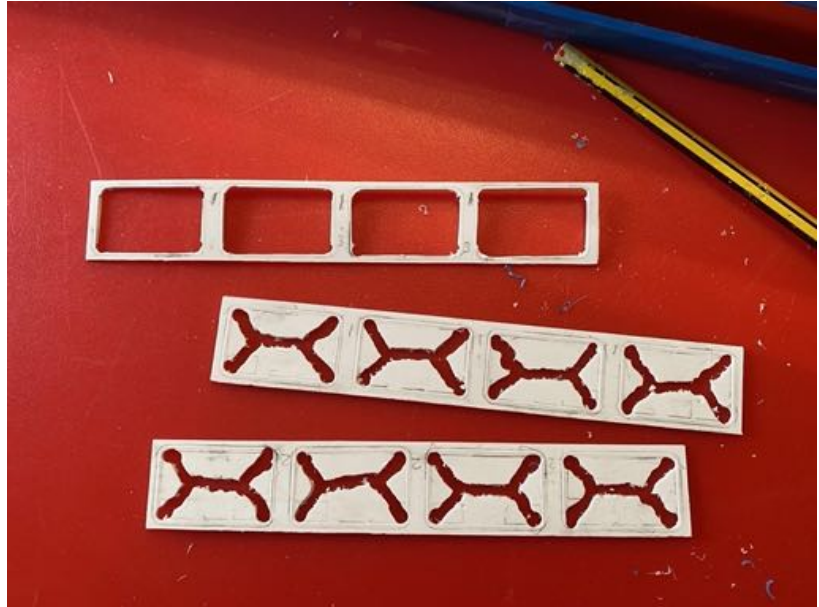


I cut some 1mm thick plasticard panels to fit the gaps and then marked out the window holes by drawing around the window frames that I got from <https://www.jandmhughesogauge.com>



...before scoring around the outside of the windows between the lines the hole so that the frame will overlap both the window hole and the glazing.

Then cut an X using a Dremel so the remaining plastic could be snapped off.



After some more filing glued in permanently using the polystyrene cement leaving slightly proud along the bottom edge due to a slight wasting of the body below the windows. Filler will hopefully then fill the gap to give a smooth line up the side of the body.



Apply some filler

<https://deluxematerials.co.uk/products/perfect-plastic-putty>



This is after about 4 cycles of sanding and filling.



You may have noticed I've also filled the holes in the roof with plasticard, squared off the tops of the end doors and opened up the small windows. It doesn't matter that this window is still in the original thick body as it is the toilet and will be opaque white so you won't see that thickness.



Forgot to take a picture, but put a coat of grey on and it really showed up the imperfections, but did remember to take a picture part way through several cycles of filler primer and sanding.



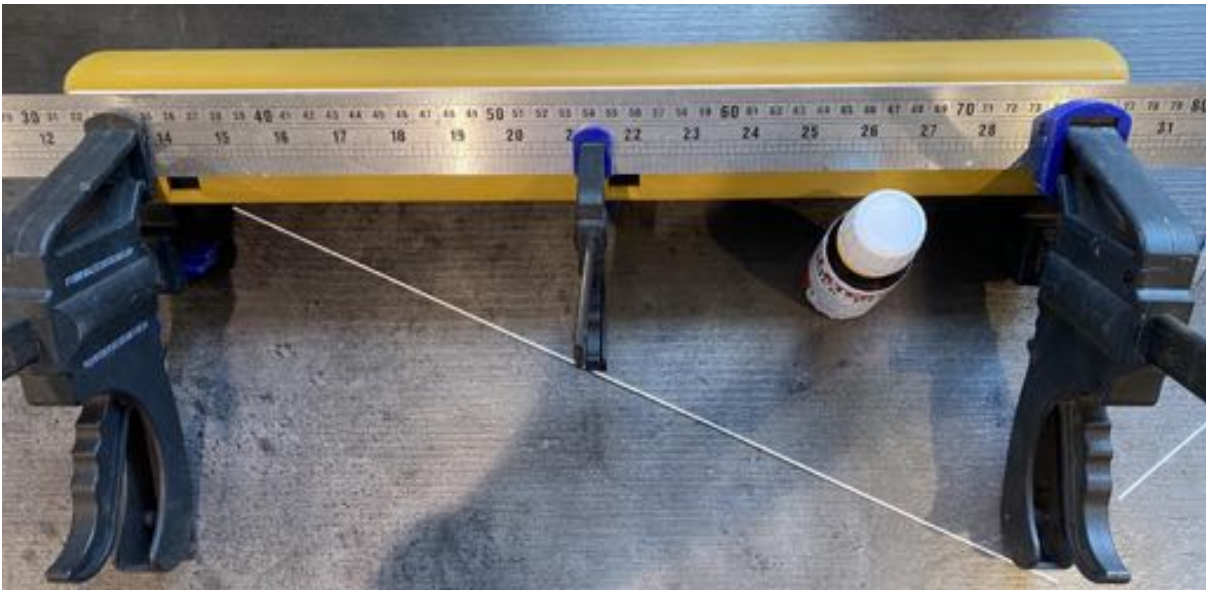
...and this is what it looks like once it's finally smooth with 2mm acetate sheet cut to fit all the windows and temporarily wedged in the gaps. They will be permanently fixed from the inside behind the frames once all the painting is completed



The inside looks like this



Glued on some rain gutters made from square section plasticard by using a steel rule as a guide to get it on straight



After the rain gutters were fitted and after checking some fuzzy pictures on the Internet and of some 00 gauge models marked out where the roof panel weld joins should be. They seem to have been at each window pillar and then half way along each window. This was made from the smallest section plasticard strip I could find.





The weld lined for the roof panels on these coaches were quite variable as to how prominent they were. I assume they got better at welding them over time and on later coaches they seem much less prominent. because of this and how thick even the smallest plasticard is several other modellers doing this haven't put the weld lines on. As I'm doing an earlier MK2a coach they would have been more prominent so I've put them on anyway, but then sanded the plasticard strips back to almost nothing to reduce their prominence.

Next came the windows and the steel rule came in handy again for getting them straight.

Stuck them on with superglue which with so little overlap on the edges was a bit of a nightmare with them repeatedly falling off, which eventually improved after a few layers of top coat paint to help hold them on. Hopefully they should stay attached even better once the glazing is glued in as well.



Having looked at some more images it looks like the ends of the roof are moulded fibreglass or similar. You'd be surprised how few pictures there are of roofs of coaches, although this site was a good source.

<https://paulbartlett.zenfolio.com/mark2coach>"

More filler was used to create the raised roof ends which were then sanded back, which seemed to take forever.

I also glued in the doors, roof vents and buffer beams that came from Floyd Kraemer on eBay. The roof vents were fitted by first marking out using a combination of the original layout on the Big Big Train coaches and images of ready to run 00 gauge coaches.

Some plasticard steps below the doors were also glued on.



This is after final sanding and priming.

Next time: Chassis, paint, decals, windows and end doors.

Decorating My Office

By Stephen Allen

Last year I decorated my office at home and hung several railway related items on the wall, some of which I had been my father's.



I have a Metropolitan Railway print (above) from Quainton, my grandfather worked at Stoke Mandeville on the Met, and also a stool which came from the station. He cut the legs down so my gran could use to reach the kitchen cupboards. You can just see MR on the leg.



I have also attached a photo of him



Another print of The GWR loco was given to a friend of mine by the artist.





I have been using the IKEA Ivar shelving system, cutting the uprights to the requires height and building supports for my model railway. I have old kitchen shelving units which I am then going to use for baseboards



By adding the shelves underneath and cross struts underneath the baseboard the structure is quite strong. I have got this on 3 sides of the office now. I just need to make a 'bridge' across the doorway.

My plan for this year is to get trains running, then I can call it a railway room !!

Warley Model Railway Club Open Day

By James Woodley

On Sunday 20th February Tim Byrne and I went to Warley Model Railway Club's open day in Oldbury near Birmingham. It was a fantastic day and great opportunity to see what the club's premises are like. There were layouts in all the major gauges, about 15 - 20 layouts in total, all of which were in operation, so there was plenty to see and take in. We also bumped into two other members of MKMRS who had made the trip up for the open day.

The scale of the building was very impressive, with a packed main club room, two mezzanine floors, a junior room, separate meeting room, two library rooms, as well as a small garden to the rear of the building which backed onto the canal. The garden appeared to act as a memorial garden for past members which was genuinely moving to see.



There was also a well-stocked member's sale table which provided an opportunity for bargain hunting. There was also a small stall selling club wagons, some of which may have been too hard to resist so look out for them running around Barton Crossing soon!



There was also tea and cake available to keep everyone well fuelled for the visit.

Overall, it was a fantastic day and well worth the visit, with there being a welcoming atmosphere and buzz to the club premises, it also gave a chance to

compare MKMRS facilities and see what can be achieved with economies of scale, being located in a large city and running the nation's premier model railway exhibition. There were a few things we could replicate during our

own open days in Milton Keynes, such as handing out a blurb welcoming you to the club on entry and providing flyers for the exhibition. They were also recording the postcodes of people attending, to gain an idea of how far people travelled for the



event. When we gave our postcodes, the person behind the desk asked "MK, where's that?" when we informed them, we were from Milton Keynes they replied with "well I hope you think it's worth it." I can confirm it certainly was.

Preserving the past

Dennis Lovett looks at the importance of preserving old models for future generations to enjoy.



Roger White keeps an eye on his Hornby Dublo post war three rail Sir Nigel Gresley pulling five Gresley coaches on the test tracks in the club room.

I have always had an interest in the history of model railways and penned several histories for the now defunct *Railway Magazine Modeller* under another name. Such history provides the background as to why we model OO and the rest of the World uses HO, whilst we also differ in N and O scales from everyone else. Model Railway history is littered with many strange decisions alongside a whole graveyard of defunct brands, some of which died in their infancy. Understanding something of “why we are where we are” enables us to appreciate just how good the current range of models from different manufacturers are, although reading some criticism on forums you would think otherwise!

Within MKMRS we have a wide range of interests ranging from run the very old to the latest innovations. It was only when we moved from Victoria Road

to Bletchley Park in 1995, that we were able to provide room for the first time for two of our longest serving members Brian Barnes and Stan Pennington to be able to run their vintage O gauge trains in what subsequently became known as the tinsplate room. Such was its success that it soon attracted others such as David Ramsey, John Forman, Mick Clements, Roger White, Roger Mills and others to join them in what became a very popular attraction in our facilities there. It was, therefore, important that after we had to move out of Bletchley Park, we were able to retain such a facility at Barton Road and for the past few years at Bond Avenue.

We were one of the first clubs to include what we now term “vintage trains” at our exhibitions in the old Bletchley Leisure Centre back in the early 1980s when Brian and Stan provided the first of several O gauge Hornby layouts to be followed in subsequent years by John Hatton’s Trix Twin and visiting layouts covering Hornby Dublo, Tri-ang Railways and others. Today, many exhibitions now include at least one layout covering such products and we have continued that tradition to this day.

Several MKMRS members attend the bi-monthly Bedford Vintage Train Group at Houghton Conquest near Bedford. The evening meeting hosted by our own Roger White and Roger Mills, provides facilities to operate vintage trains powered by steam, clockwork and electric.

With all the major model railway manufacturers now pushing the boundaries to enable our models to include smoke effects, lighting options, operating fans, opening doors and highly sophisticated electronics why do people even bother with this old stuff?

For some of us it is familiar territory, we started with them and as we have grown in the hobby, it is a journey of nostalgia. Whilst modern trains have all the sophistication, the old ones were simpler and much easier to keep going. There is also a whole raft of small companies supplying replacement parts when originals get broken or wear out. One wonders if such attention will be paid to the products currently available perhaps when the manufacturers themselves have been confined to the pages of model railway history books.

Such has been the renaissance of tinsplate O gauge in the last 20 years that new companies have evolved to provide modern equivalents that can be mixed with vintage ones, often at less cost than a poor example of an original.



A pair of recent Bassett-Lowke O gauge tinplate wagons produced when Corgi in Leicester owned the company. They were replicas of originals produced when the company operated out of Northampton.



Two original Bassett-Lowke GWR vehicles bought many years ago and built in Northampton by subsidiary company Winteringham.

Whilst original locomotives can cost several hundred or even thousands of pounds, the new generation ones from Ace, Darstead, ETS and others are more affordable. Modern track to the old standards is also available such as that available on our test tracks.

Such locomotives often required a little imagination as they were clearly toys. I am sure the Advertising Standards Authority today would have views on a locomotive purporting to be 'Flying Scotsman' running as a 4-4-2! It was not until the 1930s that proper scale models emerged from Bassett-Lowke and Hornby, the pinnacle being reached with their release of a near scale 'Princess Elizabeth' a couple of years before World War Two. It remains a very sought-after Hornby locomotive today.



This Hornby electric locomotive was released as a 6-volt model between 1930 and 1936. It was given to me about 30 years ago and was in poor condition. It has recently been professionally restored and now operates on the same voltage as other O gauge tinplate trains. It can now haul a long train of original and modern tinplate wagons or coaches. It makes for a noisy addition to club room running.

Early OO trains were made of tinplate and cast metal from the mid-1930s. Trix were the first to enter the British market with the range of Trix Twin table top railways produced for Bassett-Lowke and like the early O gauge models, were far removed from being a model of any known prototype. It was the emergence of the Hornby Dublo range in 1938 that gave us the first scale looking OO models when the A4 and N2 locomotives released caused a sensation by resembling the prototype! Many are still running today, testimony of the engineering skill of the Meccano team at Binns Road. Apart from remagnetising every few years and the occasional armature rewind provided by members of the Hornby Railway Collectors Association, any replacement parts can easily be sourced.

Even the name Hornby Dublo has emerged again, initially as part of Hornby's 100th Anniversary celebrations in 2020 when a die-cast bodied 'Duchess of Atholl' with a modern Hornby chassis underneath it emerged to replicate the part played in the company's overall history. The first Hornby O gauge trains had gone on sale in 1920 to capitalise on the switch to domestic production following World War I. Prior to this all trains had been imported and were expensive. Frank Hornby realised that model trains could be manufactured more cheaply and thus attract new customers. During my school days everyone had a train of one sort or another although they were often incompatible and brand loyalty grew up around what the local shops stocked. Bletchley was prominently a Tri-ang town!



A pair of Hornby Dublo Gresley articulated coaches recently acquired and converted to run on two rail track. Produced pre-war, they were reintroduced after the war with the new PECO coupling until the printed tinplate sheets were exhausted.

Such trains may not be everyone's cup of tea, but they certainly draw crowds whenever they appear at exhibitions. They may be crude by modern standards, but they do not need decoders to create a noise.

As someone once told me in my railway days "before you can establish where you are going it is necessary to know where you have come from." These old, often battered and sometimes less realistic elements of the model railway industry are worthy of inclusion in exhibitions or in our club room if only to show us just how far the hobby has come during the last fifty years.



*This 1960s Hornby Dublo Class 55 Deltic will be a million miles away from the forthcoming model being released soon by Accurascale. Only the paintwork is not original. It was without doubt the most appalling model every to carry the Hornby Dublo name being dimensionally challenged in about every department! When someone visited the Bachmann stand at a Glasgow Exhibition to moan about the 'cr*p' model produced by the company, I told him I had an interesting Deltic to show him (having bought it in the hall before opening). He left speechless!*

The running of vintage trains is something which I hope will part of our club activities for many years to come. If you would like details of the Bedford Vintage Train Group bi-monthly meetings please see Tim Byrne, James Woodley or myself.

The HMRS Bletchley Area Group meetings for 2022

Most HMRS Bletchley area group meetings will be held at (exceptions noted as * below):

Whaddon Way Church Centre Beaverbrook Court West Bletchley
Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
MK3 7JS

All visitors are Welcome

The Whaddon Way Church building is the new(ish) building on the corner of Whaddon Way and Beaverbrook Court. There is limited car-parking in Beaverbrook Court.

All Wednesday meetings commence at 19:30, except the May evening out which will commence at 19:00.

Meetings:

Wednesday **26th January 2022** – ‘3 blind mice!’ - Three short talks from our local Bletchley AG talent – ‘DMUs’ (Chris Foren), ‘North to South on the East to West’ (Tony Lines), ‘Views around Shrewsbury’ (Alan Rhodes).

Wednesday **23rd February 2022** – ‘The Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway’ (Terry Bendall).

Wednesday **30th March 2022** – ‘The North Staffs Railway - part 1’ (Brian Sullivan).

Wednesday **27th April 2022** – ‘Northamptonshire Railways – part 6 – The remaining odds and ends!’ (Robin Cullup). To be confirmed.

*Wednesday **25th May 2022** – An evening out – a trip to a member’s railway.

Details in due course.

*Wednesday **29th June 2022** – Zoom meeting – ‘Cross-London workings’.

***Summer 2022 (date TBC)** – the Summer Day Out to Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway – Workshop tools demonstration in the morning (10:30 start at Pages Park station with Terry Bendall) and trip to Stonehenge Works in the afternoon (14:30 train). Lunch – own arrangements – café or packed lunch. Confirmation & full details in due course.

***Wednesday 31st August 2022** – Zoom meeting – ‘Pre-Grouping Railways’.

Wednesday 28th September 2022 – ‘Brighton Line Signalling’ (Chris Durrant)
Author of a new book on Brighton line signalling: <https://lightmoor.co.uk/books/the-brighton-line-i-limited-editioni/L8962> See flyer on reverse side of this schedule.

Wednesday 26th October 2022 – Show and Tell’ - an evening of discussion and viewing members’ current modelling projects.

Wednesday 30th November 2022 – ‘Wolverton Works – the last 30 years – demolition and the rise of Tesco! Also an update on other significant Buckinghamshire railway works - HS2, East West Rail and Bletchley viaduct’ (Philip Marsh). To be confirmed.

***Wednesday 28th December 2022** – Zoom meeting – ‘Early electric trains’. Please put the dates in your diary now!

Obviously all of the above is subject to change if the COVID situation changes and further restrictions are put in place. Keep an eye on the HMRS website. If in doubt, please obtain confirmation of events from me needs (ag-bletchley@hmrs.org.uk or 07771 612321).

Members and visitors attending meetings at Whaddon Way do need to observe sensible COVID precautions. Hand sanitiser and masks will be available for people to use if they wish to. Seating will be placed to give individual space for those attending. Windows will be opened to allow ventilation. Anyone with any concerns, please feel free to contact me to discuss how/whether we can accommodate your needs (ag-bletchley@hmrs.org.uk or 07771 612321).



I look forward to seeing some of you during the forthcoming season of talks. All the best,

Tony Manktelow
Bletchley AG co-ordinator HMRS. ag-bletchley@hmrs.org.uk

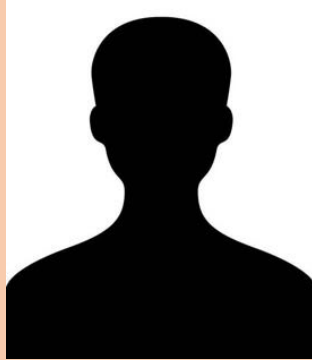
07771 612321

Member Updates

Please join us in welcoming the following new members to the club. If you see them in the clubroom please introduce yourself.



Richard Seward



Frank Pedro



The MKMRS Newsletter will only survive with your help, we need you to provide articles -

- ❖ These can be write-ups on exhibitions you have attended, modeling titbits, or anything that you think other members would find interesting.
- ❖ If you would like to be included in our “Meet the Members” articles in a future Newsletter, please send in your notes for inclusion.
- ❖ The articles need to be sent in by email to MKMRSNewsletter@courtmk.co.uk they need to be the words that you want to appear, include any pictures that you want in the article. All can be sent to the above email address for inclusion.
- ❖ Hoping for lots of copy for the newsletter.

Deadline for articles for the Summer Edition is the 22nd May 2022 with the Newsletter being published by the 1st June 2022.

Answers to the Railway Quiz:

- 1 Russia – Moscow and Saint Petersburg
- 2 The Cairngorm Mountain Railway
- 3 Birmingham New Street
- 4 Penzance
- 5 1964
- 6 The Milk Train
- 7 India
- 8 The Soviet Trans-Siberian line
- 9 Waterbury
- 10 Exeter
- 11 11 am
- 12 Paris and Istanbul
- 13 True!
- 14 St Pancras
- 15 Homeward bound