



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 215

Autumn 2024

CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

Hello all, and welcome to our Autumn 2024 Newsletter.

It's been another busy few months at the club with the highlight being our booking of our exhibition venue for 2025 and 2026 at the Ridgeway Centre. Our 2025 show will be on Saturday 7th June, 2025 (with setup the evening beforehand) and in 2026 the date will be Saturday 6th June, 2026. Unfortunately, the price of the venue has risen approximately 33% from our show this year, so we will have to raise ticket prices to account for that. We did look around to see if there were any other more suitable venues but unfortunately, we found none.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Chris is standing down as treasurer and once again we thank him greatly for helping keep the club stable after the sudden passing of Bob last year. We can announce that Paul Egerton will be taking over from Chris as treasurer in due course and Ashley Goodall will be stepping up as vice treasurer. This was voted on at a quarterly general meeting which occurred on 13th August. The addition of a vice treasurer role was deemed important to help with the stability of the club, to ease pressure on the main treasurer and to add security should something sudden happen. Regarding layouts, there has been much going on. Frimingham visited the Northampton Exhibition at Roade in July and Dentdale visited Silver Fox exhibition recently in Milton Keynes. Both were very well received, with Dentdale having now appeared at 66 shows! Over the next few months there are several outings for the N Gauge planned with trips to Wing, The International N Gauge Show and the new November exhibition at the NEC.

Dyffryn Y Rhaeadr is also visiting the exhibition at Wing on Saturday 7th September. Work has been continuing on Barton Crossing with the upper layout now fully switched over to the Z21 DCC System. Huge thanks go to Gerhard and John Gusterson for sorting this out, and so far it seems to be a great improvement, especially on the points front. Trains can be run on any tablet or smartphone that is able to download the Z21 however, if you prefer a physical controller there is still that option with both a Lenz and Z21 controller setup at the club. There is also a master tablet that anyone is welcome to use at the club if you do not have your own. A full set of instructions is on the table inside the layout courtesy of Gerhard and should anyone have any problems, do ask Gerhard, John, or myself for assistance.

Over the past few months, we have seen several new faces at the club as well as a few who have departed the club. If at any point anyone has something they wish to discuss about the club, myself or other members of the committee will always be willing to listen and help best we can. I hope to see most of you at the club in due course.

Tim Byrne
Chairman

Meet Our New Member

Ged Hallam



My name is Ged Hallam, I am 66 years young! I was born in Edwalton in Nottingham near the Edwalton Station where the testing was done for the first high speed train. I now live in Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire.

I was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease 5 years ago but I do not let this stop me doing all the things I want to do. I have an allotment that keeps fit and healthy.

I moved to Marston Moretaine 23 years ago to live with my partner, Carol, and her tortoise. We have 5 children between us and 11 grand-children, number 12 is due very soon.

I have always had an interest in steam and model railways and now I have retired would like to build my own layout featuring where I used to live and where I live now.

Thank you for letting me join your club, I look forward to meeting you all and getting lots of hints and tips.

Meet Our New Member

Martin McDermott



Born into a "railway family" - father and maternal Grand-Father were drivers at Kings Cross - I have always been a railway enthusiast.

As a boy I had a bit of OO but never really did much modelling - just trains running round tracks on a sheet of chipboard. This was all forgotten at about 14 years old when exams loomed and then I became a full time "student", and that gave way to working for a living. Then came a wife and family - does it sound familiar?

I retired almost 10 years ago and have spent my time volunteering in multiple capacities in County Golf. I am currently Secretary of England Golf's South East Region, organising inter-county tournaments in the region.

Last winter my wife reminded me that we have a room that isn't used and is a good size for a model railway. She started what I am sure will be an epic adventure. I haven't a clue where this will end up but I'm pretty sure that there will be lots of issues that some of you will help guide me through.

Thanks for the welcome that I have already received.

Photography on Railways

By Paul Egerton

Quite often, when visiting a preserved railway, scant attention is given to the rolling stock that is often present in favour of the “must have” picture of the steam locomotive of choice at the head of the consist. Occasionally, during a gala, if you are lucky, a consist of goods wagons is prepared for a demonstration run up and down the line, but these occasions are rare in themselves so are worthy of being photographed.

Even rarer, are the wagons that sometimes sit seemingly unloved or awaiting their turn in the preservation queue often away from public view as those charged with their restoration are often small in number and cash strapped so are needing to raise significant sums to enable a restoration project to go ahead.

Like most, I am guilty of pointing the lens at the steam locomotive at the head of a rake of coaches, but just occasionally, I venture to record the less well-known wagons and coaches as this can often be achieved between passing trains or, when the line is normally closed for passenger working. Closed seasons can be a productive time to take such pictures especially of a dry and sunny day in the winter months when hordes of people are not about and in the way of your subject.

Over the years, I have now amassed quite a collection of photographs of many subjects on the railway from freight to the humble milepost marker. We attempt to model these things in miniature, but have we really got the setting right? Only photography can provide that answer. Here are some examples that I have captured in recent years.



A BR 20 tonne Shark brake van pictured stabled in the loop at Levisham on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

An Esso Petrol tanker wagon stabled in the long siding at Minehead, West Somerset Railway.



An improvised gunpowder wagon forming part of the demonstration freight train whilst awaiting the road at Hampton Loade, Severn Valley Railway.

So, you see, it just requires a bit of imagination and yes, often luck to be in the right place at the right time, but we no longer regularly see these vehicles on our railways, which were once a common sight that nobody gave a second glance towards.

Be thankful that there are preservationists who had the foresight to purchase these vehicles when so many were going straight to scrap yards to face the cutters torch. Many of those pioneers have regretfully, passed onto the great railway in the sky, but our preserved railways today would be the poorer without their efforts.

The charge towards DCC sound

By Paul Egerton

Although it may yet be a way off, the major manufacturers of models appear to be moving inextricably towards the day when traditional analogue (DC) models become a thing of the past. But is this a good thing?

Whilst undoubtedly, sounds by means of a chip and speaker located within the body of a model has come on in leaps and bounds over recent years, does this really sound just like the real thing? I would argue that whilst in the Clubroom or on your layout at home it does, within the hustle and bustle of an exhibition where there is the inevitable background of noise from spectators talking and competing noises coming from adjacent stands, it does not.

There are it seems, competing sound systems with volume levels that vary according to how the model has been programmed. What might be acceptable on the big railway, is certainly not within the Clubroom and if we are honest, there have been times when such sound might be regarded as being intrusive. But, at exhibitions, sometimes a louder sound needs to become a requirement just to make the public hear what is being transmitted.

Model Railway enthusiasts of all gauges appear to be prepared to pay the inflated prices that a sound fitted locomotive attracts, but I wonder if such an approach is pricing some out of the hobby. Where I might buy a brand-new locomotive say once a year, I now think twice about whether I can afford to do so and instead opt for a more conservative once every two years, or possibly have recourse to the second-hand market.

So, is there a future for the modeler who either is content to operate a model without sound or, is unprepared to pay the sort of money for a sound fitted, all whistle and bells locomotive? I pose the question but cannot say that I have the answer. What do other Club members think or am I just a lone voice and need to move towards the darker side and the world of sound?

Making Tracks to Woburn Sands



A week after our exhibition, Tim Byrne, James Woodley and Dennis Lovett set off for Woburn Sands to take part in a local history “rail” day. Held in the methodist church in Woburn Sands High Street, the event included a large number of photographs and memorabilia relating to Woburn Sands station and other local railway interests provided by well-known Woburn Sands historian Paul Cox. His son, who works at Wolverton Works had a large collection of Wolverton related material including wagon and coach builder’s plates.

MKMRS were contacted some months ago to see if we could provide a couple of operating layouts to keep the younger (and not so young) visitors amused. We took our junior layout and our recently completed OO9 narrow gauge layout. There was a great deal of interest during the day and at one point Paul was engaged in conversation with a visitor who turned out to be the son of one of the former porters at Woburn Sands, Stan Cox (no relation to Paul). Paul was being asked if he had any photographs of the station staff that included Stan. On over hearing the conversation, Dennis was able to tell them that he had pictures, as his late father-in-law, Richard

Prue, was the very last Woburn Sands Station Master, who moved on promotion to the new Area Manager organisation at Hemel Hempstead. On returning home, Dennis made sure that both, had the images in their in-box.



In this picture Stan Cox is in the centre with the W of Woburn above his head. Station Master Richard Prue is on the left.

This was a nice local community event that enabled us to get some publicity for the club but it also enabled us to contribute some local history that those taking part did not have copies of. They have now!

Brinklow Updates – Part 3

By Mike Biss

The control panel and signals are now completed, with all the LEDs and labels fitted. It was mostly ready for the Club open day, but a slight issue with the signal operation was found. With the servo travel being so small to move the signal arm the correct distance (about 1mm), that it was causing the servo controller to not recognise the two stop points. The easiest way to correct this was to remove one gear in the existing servo, so the motor was disconnected from the arm, which then became a pivot point instead. A second servo was mounted alongside with a long arm fitted, with a connector between the two servo arms, so that a large movement of this servo now gives the correct movement on the pivot one. The joys of working in 2mm scale!



One of the things we have been doing recently is sorting out where the canals and roads meet the backscene. Previously, they had just stopped and a field appeared, which is not very realistic. So, one of the roads and the canal tributary have been hidden behind overhanging trees, and the station bridge road has been curved downwards at the back, to give an impression of disappearing over a brow, including a lorry coming up the hill (inset).



The canal lock required a bit more thought though, as only half of the actual lock is on the scenic area, so having an impression of the other lock gate and the canal disappearing into the distance on the backscene would be very difficult to do, so it looked right.



So, what I did was take a picture of a canal bridge and then a picture of a lock gate (correct end). You can't find a bridge and lock gate on the canal network the way needed, as the bridges are always crossing at the lower end of the canal lock.



The picture was then modified to just having the gates and the lock edges. The area inside the railings was also removed, so that when this was placed over the bridge scene, this would show through the gaps.



The two pictures are now overlapped.



A copy was taken from a picture of the side of the canal lock on the layout; to get the brickwork pattern and this was pasted into the picture, replacing the existing lock sides.



A bit of extension to the bridge brickwork was required and some bushes added to hide what would be behind.



After a trial fit, it would look better with the left hand lock gate arm shortened and more scenery needed on the left hand side, to go behind the existing layout hedges.



After fixing the picture to the backscene, a new tree was added to the layout on the left, just to hide where the edge of the canal may have been in the background. In addition, the height of the water in the lock on the layout was also raised, to match that of the level in the picture.



The next additions will be some trees for the field where the cattle are, as it was pointed out by a visitor that there are usually trees in the vicinity of cattle, to give them some shade when required.



FRIMINGHAM

by Paul Egerton

As club members will know, the 0-gauge layout, Frimingham, went out to



our Club's own exhibition. What many may not know, is that it also went out recently to represent the Club at the Northampton and District Model Railway Exhibition that was held at Roade Village Hall on Saturday 20th July.

The Club was led by Gerhard and the team included Tim, Dennis, Stephen, Ashley, Frank and me, and we were kept busy operating both fiddle yards as well as sending trains up and down. This was a great lesson in learning the challenges of operating DCC and keeping up a constant ever-changing number of trains moving from end-to-end. We learnt a lot, and doubtless will be ever more proficient next time we get invited out.

A few operating issues were discovered, but this will be fettled in the coming weeks at the Clubroom where the layout has now been re-erected.

Here is another picture that I took on the day.



Tea – Trains & Prosecco By Richard Seward

Tea - Trains

&

Prosecco

Come and see the trains

**Saturday the 13th of July
11am - 5pm**



I would like to say thank you to everyone who came to our 'Tea Trains & Prosecco' day we had on the 13th of July held on our driveway.

A special thank you goes to James as guest exhibitor with his Thomas & Friends G scale trains, along with Tim as his willing assistant.

We had a collection for Willen Hospice and with everyone's kind donations collected £213.09.

It was great to see so many of you and hope to do it again next year.

Here's a link to it on YouTube: https://youtu.be/UJX86w_l8cM

From the Archives – Our first club project Dennis Lovett explains the story behind our first ever club project



Alongside the model produced as an instructional aid for Thames Valley Police are: unknown, Colin Stacey, unknown, Jim Wood (Chairman), Brian Golding (Vice Chairman), Jem Wood (Jm's son), John Symons (Secretary) and Alex Revett.

In the early days of MKMRS we were approached by Thames Valley Police to produce a training aid to show an electrified section of the West Coast Main Line which had been completed only a few years before. MKMRS was formed in the Autumn of 1969 and Thames Valley Police just the year before. Before that Bletchley (and what is now the rest of Milton Keynes) was policed by Buckinghamshire Constabulary. The new Thames Valley force

included Oxford City, Oxfordshire County, Berkshire, Reading as well as Buckinghamshire with its new Headquarters established in Kidlington.

Viewers of the TV series 'Endeavour' will no doubt recognise the transition the police underwent at that time as they joined forces and the amalgamation of Oxford City and County forces into the new structure.

The only piece of overhead electrified railway in the area at that time was the West Coast Main Line. The police used many visual aids in their training programme and an approach was made to Chairman, Jim Wood, to see if the club could produce such an item. Jim's son Jem was a police cadet and went on to have a long-distinguished career with Thames Valley in Berkshire. In effect, apart from the test tracks installed in the then club room underneath Holne Chase School on Buckingham Road, this was the first scenic project the club produced.

With money being very tight in those days an appeal was put out to members to see what they had that could be used to provide the train crash diorama. Someone produced the body shell of a Hornby Dublo Class 81 (that will bring tears to the eyes of Hornby Dublo collectors) to which a non-powered chassis was duly added. Coaches were repainted into the corporate blue and grey livery by David Barrow and then distressed in several different ways to resemble a crash. I contributed a couple of badly constructed Kitmaster Mark I coaches, my excuse being that I was only 15 then! The donated track was laid on an embankment made of chicken wire and paper mache in those days. The bridge utilised Merco brick paper and Tri-ang overhead catenary was fitted.

The model was handed over to Thames Valley Police and a photographer captured the scene in our club room prior to delivery. Note the formal club attire which members wore back then, no maroon polo shirts in sight!

The emergency services carry out numerous table top responses as well as mock exercises. One the author was involved in was held in Bletchley sidings where a wagon carrying a hazardous load had become derailed. Such exercises are necessary and allow rapid response to any incidents such as those experienced in major accidents.



One of the coaches was fire damaged by use of a cigarette!



The bridge was provided to show access for emergency vehicles such as ambulances



Goes to Church in Biggleswade

Trains at Trinity is a bi-annual exhibition put on by Trinity Church, Biggleswade. Normally Roger White and Don Hall have attended with their well-known Hornby Dublo 3 rail layout Whitehall, but with Don out of action following an operation, Roger passed the baton for 2024 to Bowler's Croft, which had recently attended our own exhibition.

Held on 29th June, John Gusterton was able to assist with transport and setting up on Friday evening, but was working on the Saturday. A team consisting of Tim Byrne, Roger White, Peter Hoare and Dennis Lovett, ensured that there was plenty of movement on the layout during the day.

With the centre sidings and point work still requiring completion, work on this has now started. The layout was built to display models produced by Hornby Dublo and its successor G & R Wrenn from the 2-rail period, with all tracks being PECO Streamline.



Silverfox DCC Railway Club Exhibition at Oaklands school MK. By Paul Sucksmith

The Dentdale Layout was at this show, and after being in the storage container for some time, worked extremely well with only one point failing towards the end of the day. However the team got round it, so the public were not really aware of it.

Viewing the layout, members of the public were impressed with the length of the trains and the number of different trains being run. It is good to see this impressive layout still being shown off by the club as it does show what can be done with N gauge scale and if you have a large space what you could model.

Newsletter Questionnaire By Dave Court

I am trying to establish where we go with the Newsletter in the future and I would appreciate your help. The questions I am looking to answer are –

1. Do you like reading the Newsletters?
2. Do you find the Newsletter informative?
3. Is a quarterly release cycle to frequent?
4. Do you ever look at the Newsletter archive on our website?
5. Are there other items that you would like to see in the Newsletter?

Please email your answers to MKMRSNewsletter@courtmk.co.uk giving the question number and your answer. All of the questions other than number 5 are Yes or No answers.

Many thanks for your help with this

Member Updates

Please join us in welcoming the following new member to the club. If you see him in the clubroom, please introduce yourself.



Ged Hallam



Martin McDermott



Damien Quarney

Returning Members



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.
- ❖ 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.

Deadline for articles for the Winter Edition is the 28th November 2024 with the Newsletter being published by the 1st December 2024.