

Northampton O Gauge Group (NOGGies)

Hello again from me, plus the usual greetings from the NOGGies to all GOGGers. Let me start with a bit of good news. In the last article, I mentioned the rip-off catering bill we'd received half-way through our exhibition last year. As a result of lodging a formal complaint, we did receive some money off the bill after our chairman Ralph visited the catering company's HQ on our behalf. We thank him for that intervention and apologise for the difficulties he experienced in the weeks after the show in November.

With the exhibition in late July this year, and publishing deadlines as they are, (around 1st July for the August Guild News), this will be the last update I have chance to write and you'll see before the show happens, but as a club in general and a committee in particular, we are busy planning for the event. Those same deadlines mean that it'll be the November issue of Guild News before you see a report of how the show went. We are hoping that the weather will be very kind and we can put on a barbecue as part of the catering on the day. Indeed only this week I've heard a long-range forecast from Positive Weather Solutions that from mid-June until the end of August, we are meant to be having a very hot summer, so fingers crossed that they've accurately forecast that; we're certainly due a decent summer and that it happens in those weeks. Our exhibition date of 24th July sits right in the middle.

Because of exhibition date change, we have four months less than usual to make all the arrangements. With this time constraint in mind, we called an Extraordinary General Meeting for 10th February which was very well attended. On the day of the exhibition, the club members help out excellently; some undertaking several roles. But we wanted them to help undertake some of the tasks that need doing beforehand. During that meeting we asked the club membership to help with the advertising and various other tasks including keeping an eye out for layouts that may feature at the show. We created a new committee post to oversee the publicity we need to get better at. We have the next committee meeting on 12th April.

Whilst on an exhibition theme, I'll mention the GOG Spring show. The 6th March was keenly anticipated by the NOGGies as it is our scale/gauge interest and it's on our doorstep at the leisure village in Kettering.

The day may have been quite grey and cloudy, but it was dry and we were all grateful for that. For what is little more than a trade show, it's always struck me as being on the expensive to gain admission, though Guild members pay £5 rather than £7 for non-members and that also includes partner too.

Although we'd come from several directions, there were about a dozen current or past NOGGies in attendance. Amongst the names you might know are: Chris, Les, Ralph, Len, Roger, Michael T and Stephen along with several former club members. Most of us were spending money on kits or articles. The amounts ranged from just a few pounds for second-hand wagons (well spotted by Chris) that Adam will modify to match the others and they'll become part of the Windcutter train for the test track and garden railways to several hundred for locomotives or loco kits. Ralph was smitten with an Invertrains station kit and Les was 'chuffed' to be able to collect a kit for a Crosti-boilered 9F. This was the culmination of a very long-held ambition to build this very different version of the popular design of what would be the last British Railways steam loco. He has already made a start on the kit and we look forward to seeing the completed locomotive later this year.

I had hoped to collect a Heljan BR class 20 loco that was ordered at the end of 2009 from Tower Models before the VAT rise. I had asked for it to be weathered and brought to Kettering. Alas, I found that it had not been completed in their paint shop, so it wasn't with them. I've since received it and look forward to running it in on the next test track operational night.

Also, some specialist track in the form of a scissors crossover for the BR part of the layout was ordered for Kings Thorpe from Marcway in Sheffield and this too has since arrived. It looks very impressive and will probably be one of the first bits items positioned when we start track laying. It will save a lot of space over two conventional crossovers and it will be a talking point to the viewer at future shows.

As well as expenditure amongst the NOGGies, we also through Chris and Les's efforts managed to sell some of Neil's old collection and afterwards banked £100 for club funds. That was pure profit after purchasing the wagons and paying for the items onto the Bring and Buy stand.

There was also the other Northampton club show held in March, and although I didn't go, several NOGGies did, and we had a club stand to sell some excess items. Upcoming treats for us to look forward to include the resumption of running sessions of the O gauge railway at the Lavendon Garden Railway, www.webhost.350.com/LNGR.htm (though at the time of writing, the 2010 dates aren't yet shown) our own garden railways and the ALSRM show at Reading in May.

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