

NOGGies, getting ready.for..

Greetings to one and all. I hope O gaugers everywhere enjoyed Guildex at Telford; I know we as a group did. Eight of us travelled there, with me heading south as everyone else headed north. The reason is I was returning from a lovely week-long holiday in Wales. At the time of writing this update (late September) we are just over a week away from what will probably be our final committee meeting before our biggest ever club exhibition and two months from the day itself. Several of us also have to try and find time to fit in holidays (but I'm sure we'll manage it somehow!) When I last wrote saying that we had transferred our exhibition to the much larger indoor school at the cricket club and asked for layout owners to come and display their pride and joy, we've had such a high success rate that we'll have 30 layouts, eight of which will be O gauge together with good trade and society support and cannot find room for anything else now. Treasurer Chris has worked wonders in drawing up and re-drawing the plan, but worryingly for a 'numbers man,' he's forgotten how many versions there has been. The important thing is that we have settled on the final version more than two months out and all feel very confident that we have an excellent balance to offer every potential visitor.

Another item of good news is that a discount is available on admission prices to the show. Anyone can benefit, you just need to visit our club website at www.ndmrc.org.uk. Once there, click on the link for the exhibition, enter your name and address and a voucher will be sent by return of post. We'd love to see as many of you as possible. This is a critical show to the wellbeing of our group. The Northampton club has a long and proud history, we're over 50 years old and we're investing a lot into the 2007 exhibition. The club has seen some dark days in the last decade, ranging from losing our permanent home because of the discovery of Radon gas (Northamptonshire is unfortunately, one of the worst affected areas in the country for this) to unexpected and sudden deaths in the ranks. There was quite a time when the viability of the club was in the balance. However over the last few years, we have fought back having found temporary premises (twice) and by sheer hard work and dedication have grown the membership, including an encouragingly active junior section which bodes well for the coming years. One junior club member is proud to be bringing his newly built layout to the exhibition; look out for Hamtune, which is the old Roman name for Northampton.

Having mentioned the club website earlier, it is also an opportune moment to thank Michael and his son who have done the brilliant design work. It so impressed a local model shop owner that he gives a 10% discount on items purchased there. The website has had a major overhaul recently, and there's still a little more to do. I hope by the time you read this that the 'NOGGies' section will be up and running. We should also have more photos of members with their favourite locos and items of stock. Next week we are restarting our 'master-classes' which through the series will cover nearly all aspects of the hobby. We also have a new club O layout to design and build. That starts when we get back to Kingsthorpe. I hope to be able to give you a further update on that next time. At the moment, sadly, no news, is no news. By the time you read this the club will have had a day out at Didcot and Pendon, so more on that next time. Photos of that could well feature in future, as I'm sure will piccies from the November exhibition. Then there is our annual Christmas dinner event to look forward to. This year we're indebted to Tony who has his daughter working at the place we've chosen and they've given us a great deal on the meal and drink prices.

Closing on a personal note again, I'm glad to report that nearly all of the outstanding electrical work on my garden railway has today been completed to allow trains to run. A quick running session this afternoon was cut short by rain. A 30+ year dream realised – wow! There will be some enhancements and upgrades to carry out and monitoring to do to ensure satisfactory running, but Les, Tony, Chris, David, Roger and others have given freely of their time and knowledge, so once again I would like to publicly thank all the club members who have contributed time and expertise to the project. I'm not sure whether there will be time (and weather) for a 'grand opening' before the end of the year, but it would be nice to think it could happen. If the chance presents itself I'll go for it. If not, I know that I'll have the whole of next spring and summer to look forward to outdoor running. Everybody who has helped in the project will be invited to the opening session and open to all who are interested after that.

STEPHEN LLOYD Secretary (20155)