

Northampton O Gauge Group (Noggies)

Greetings to one and all; at the time of composition it is 30th December, I'm therefore thinking 'Happy New Year', but by the time you read this it is likely to be around 1st February, so we'll be a long way past that. I was going to start with news of our exhibition, but yesterday most of the committee met at the front of an empty former estate supermarket on the eastern side of town hoping we were about to find a new permanent home for the club. The owner duly met us at 11:00 and let us in to inspect, measure and photograph. However, it soon became apparent that the building wasn't as large as we'd hoped and I don't think will be suitable to move into. We have a committee meeting on Thursday 3rd January to make a formal decision, but I'll stick my neck out now and guess it'll be rejected.

That'd be a shame because we were told about this by Chairman Ralph on the last club night of the year and so we were all keen to see the place. Whilst there we learned that it'd been a butcher's shop before conversion to a small supermarket and that it had been empty for nine years, so we were confident of a good deal on the rent.

So assuming that we won't be pursuing the old shop, we'll have to get in touch with the borough council to see when the Kingsthorpe Community Centre will be ready for re-opening. As you may know we had one meeting there the first week in January 2007 only to be told a few days later that it wasn't fit for purpose, and that we and all the other users had to vacate until further notice. So one year on we've got our fingers crossed for a better result.

Now to the topic which dominated most of our time and the content of these updates - our 2007 Exhibition. As a club the committee and members were all busy right up to the day of the show. The day was cold but dry thank goodness; there's nothing worse for exhibitors and traders than unloading in the wet, so we felt we were off to a good start. Everything went smoothly in the hours before opening and then we experienced a good and steady flow of visitors through the door. Lunch and tea coffee was provided for the exhibitors which included the Radway layout by Brian Stayt from the Sheffield O Gauge Group. We thank him and Bob his helper of the day for travelling south down the M1. Also we'd like to thank Chris Thorn our area Guild representative who journeyed in the other direction to be with us and brought the Guild stand and a splendid model of a class 76 1,500v dc Manchester-Sheffield-Wath loco with him. Another first for us was a 'just completed' model of a class 37 diesel loco on the Skytrex stand. This had been only a figment of the owner's imagination ten weeks beforehand and looked good and more importantly ran well. I was told they are doing both split and centre headcode versions (unlike Heljan) and will also offer an un-powered version to allow the cost-effective running of pairs on the head of coal trains. Because the Skytrex versions don't have working lights and roof-fans they are going to be cheaper than the Heljan versions when they appear.

There was 'good footfall' through the venue doors all day and the Tombola proved popular as did the ride-on 5" scale ride. We carried out exit polls amongst the public and traders/exhibitors and found that everyone loved the venue and the overall ambiance of the exhibition - a definite plus as we'll be back there at the end of November again. We also managed to pull in several new members from those visiting and lots of people brought their own stock to run on the Test Track; quite a few of these were making their very first outing. When the money coming in had been counted and set against outgoings, it was found that we'd fallen short by about £85. This was a slight disappointment, but set against Treasurer Chris's three-year plan that was to lose no more than a £1,000 in the first year, break even in the second and make a grand in the third, we think we're off to a blinding start.

Our Christmas dinner took place on Tuesday 11th December when 19 of us including the WAGs went to a country pub on the Rugby Road and had a lovely meal. There were some grumbles about the service, but overall everything went well and we had a good time.

The weekend after our show six of us Noggies went along to the Reading Trade Show, where most of us bought something and the club sold a couple of items in the Bring and Buy.

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