

REDDITCH MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

The home of model railways in Redditch since 1967

Points of Interest

- New fiddle yard completed
- A new exhibition layout is started
- Planning continues for our 2021 model railway exhibition
- Our plans to keep our finances under control

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to this newsletter. The purpose is to provide Redditch Model Railway Club members with an update on club activities over the last year and set out our plans for the future. We look forward to a time when we can get back to normal Tuesday and Thursday evening meetings, hopefully sooner rather than latter.

Story of our new fiddle yard

Back in September 2019 after our own exhibition you may remember we decided that we would finally embark on the total rebuilding of the fiddle yard we use behind our Chilcompton, Dagnell End and Oakenshaw layouts. At the time we had an eight month window before the new fiddle yard would be

needed for an exhibition. By Christmas 2019 we had made the new baseboards and by March 2020 we had started to lay the track. Then lockdown one arrived and everything stopped. Over the next few months between lockdowns we managed to complete the fiddle yard. This included finishing the track laying,

wiring it up and making two new control panels. We have now successfully tested the fiddle yard behind our Chilcompton and Oakenshaw layouts with plans in the coming weeks to test it behind Dagnell End. The pictures below show progress.



The completed baseboards December 2019



Track laying started February 2020



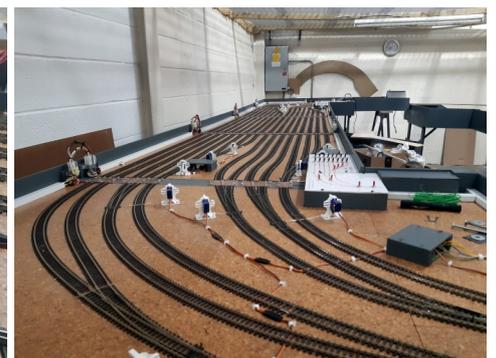
Lockdown one arrives in March 2020



Track laying completed summer 2020



The points are powered by servo motors



The completed fiddle yard

We have started our new Norgrove layout



The big event this year for the club, despite Covid, has been the start of construction of our new exhibition layout called Norgrove. This 4mm scale 1970s based layout has been in the planning for many years and is set in south Birmingham where the real station of Northfield is located. The layout will have many features from the real location that you would have found there in the mid-1970s. To increase operational interest we are adding a parcels depot and an oil terminal. Many of the buildings will be taken from

prototypes in the south Birmingham area mainly from the Northfield, Kings Norton and Cotteridge areas. Unusually, we started construction of the layout in June 2020 with a full sized mock up of the baseboards. This used otherwise scrap 12mm MDF and allowed us to evolve the design and proved the practicalities of using larger sized baseboards. What this has done is cut down the number of baseboard joints and hence track joints which should improve layout reliability. Norgrove

is made up of two 4ft square and two 5ft x 2ft 6in baseboards. By using larger boards this has also allowed us to fit self-contained legs to each board that fold up inside the baseboard frames for transportation. This follows the experience we have had with a similar arrangement for the new fiddle yard. The construction of the actual baseboards from plywood was made much easier because of the mock up which was used as templates.

Views of the full sized mock up boards made from MDF (all these boards have now been scraped)



Baseboard construction from plywood



Recent progress with Norgrove

Over the last few months we have started to amass the items we need to build the layout such as track and materials to assist with the scratch building of structures. On the baseboards we have now fixed basic topography and have made a start on some the key structures like the bridges, the tanks for the oil terminal and the carcass of a large factory building that will dominate the one end of the layout. Like many people we have struggled to source PECO track as they stopped production until fairly recently due to Covid. Production has now resumed and much of the track we need has now been acquired thanks to Derek at Footplate in Kidderminster. The plan for the layout is shown on the right and the pictures below show recent progress.



The oil terminal tanks starts to take shape



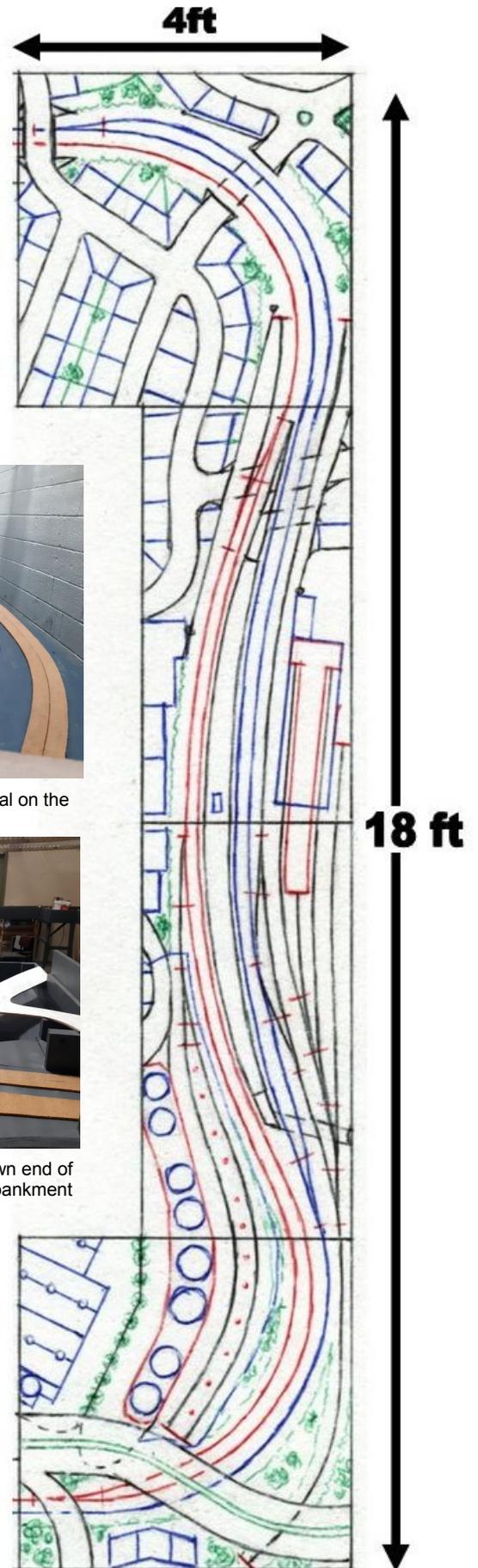
View down the layout with the oil terminal on the left



View down the layout from the other end where the town will be located



View shows the roads in white for the town end of the layout. The railway will be on an embankment



The great news is that over the next few years there will be plenty for club members to get involved in with the construction of this new layout. We also know a number of club members specifically want to learn new skills and this project should give them the opportunities they are looking for.

Other layout progress

Over the last year we have mothballed our Dagnell End, Oakenshaw, Smallwood, Chilcompton and Barrie Island layouts and they are all safely stored in the club room. One layout we have done some work on is Arrowmouth where we have made further scenery improvements including experimenting with static grass. As well as our club layouts both Buck and John Tisi have made lots of progress this year on their new exhibition layouts Auch Ae and Temple Bridge.

The show must go on



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e-mail at :

enquiry@redditch-mrc.com

or visit us on facebook

2020 was the first time since 1991 that we had not staged at least one model railway exhibition. As a club we have been staging shows since December 1967 and in 2020 it was not without trying that we were not able to stage our event. Planning for model railway exhibitions never stops and we have been able to roll over the layouts booked for the 2020 to either the 2021 or 2022 event. Currently we plan to stage the 2021 event over the weekend of the 18th and 19th September at the usual venue of the Trinity High School. As things stand it will not be legal to stage model railway exhibition until at least 21st June at the earliest and so there are no guarantees the September event can take place. A firm decision, like last year, will have to be taken in late June. There are many factors to take into account; whether the venue will be available; if exhibitors and traders still want to attend; if hotel accommodation is available for some of our exhibitors; can refreshments be provided; have

we got enough club members willing to man the show and most importantly do we think we will get an adequate attendance to make the event viable.

Highlights of the visiting layouts planned for September will be

Broadwater Junction - 2mm scale railway from Warley Club

Brynllwyd - 7mm scale Welsh narrow gauge railway

Bear Creek Junction - 3.5mm scale American logging layout

Bewdley - 4mm scale layout based on the prototype station

Harlyn Pier - 7mm scale layout based on a Cornish LSWR coastal station

Motley Sub Shed - 7mm scale locomotive shed

Rowington for Shrewley - 4mm GWR layout set in Warwickshire

Weaver Hill - 4mm main line modern image layout

The financial bit

MEMBERSHIP RATES FOR 2021

April 2021 - £50

May 2021 - £45

June 2021 - £40

July 2021 - £35

August 2021 - £30

These prices are payable at the first club meeting a member attends

The weekly £2 charge is unchanged

Now for the boring but very important bit - our finances. Without staging our normal annual model railway exhibition or getting membership income we have existed this year on the grant we were fortunate to get from Government in April 2020. This has covered our basic costs of club room rent, insurance and electricity. To give us the space to start our Norgrove layout and complete the new fiddle yard we have in recent

months taken on Unit 6 that Mick Clements had been using. The costs of keeping this unit on anything other than a very short term basis are untenable so from April 2021 we will go back to occupying a single unit at the Enterprise Centre. It is important that from April 2021 that we are able to continue to keep the club on a firm financial footing as none of us know what the future will bring. To help with this process the Club Directors have decided to

simplify the membership rates for 2021. This is to reflect the likelihood some members will feel uncomfortable to start attending meetings from April 2021 when the subscriptions are due. We are therefore introducing a sliding scale of membership rates for existing members. These are set out in the table to the left and show the amount payable for the year based on the month the member first restarts attending club meetings.