

Calder Northern's Themed Meet (Western Roads) at Crewe

Terry Wynne

After all the worries when arranging a Themed Meet are behind you in the planning, the major concern emerges, 'what if the weather is awful over the weekend?! Well Mother Nature certainly looked down on us kindly on both Friday and Saturday. She obviously thought we had our share on those two days, as Sunday was much cooler but without the rain most of the areas around us experienced.

I am extremely pleased to say that our "Western Roads" themed meet was a resounding success. All those volunteering to assist in the many stewarding roles can give themselves a hefty pat on the back. Everyone was so helpful and as a result the event passed off very smoothly. Thank you to those who came along to sweep, vacuum and mop floors on Friday prior to assisting layout operators and traders to unload, then on Saturday on car parking duties and dealing with the pay desk. Sunday was covered in a similar way, with different members undertaking these duties plus assistance given to those packing their stands away before leaving the site at the end of the show. A big thank you to you all.

The whole show and the now expected evening meal on Saturday at our special themed meets have drawn only positive comments from the many members attending. It is amazing that 30 rooms were booked in hotels around Crewe and that 50 people sat down to dinner on Saturday evening.

Our guests from abroad, Tom Griffiths from New Jersey, USA and Patrick Bopp and friends from Luxembourg, were made most welcome and they all seemed to enjoy their stay with us.

Special thanks must go to Tom for his help throughout the weekend. We have photos of his heroic efforts with broom and mop on Friday; pictures have been sent back to his family, bringing forth many comments which he will have to deal with on his return. During the visits to the event by first the Mayor of Crewe and then by Edward Timpson MP (Member for Crewe & Nantwich) we were able to ask Edward to present Tom with a certificate and Calder Northern Division baseball cap granting him honorary membership of our group.

It was good to see so many NMRA members attending, over 100 during the weekend! Hopefully you all found what you needed from the traders, the layouts were of interest, and you could enjoy the relaxed atmosphere that prevailed all weekend. The Black Diamonds/Snake Bend layout proved a big interest to our non-member visitors with 200 ft of running, as well John Latham's O scale Lionel layout with its Hogwarts Express train for the younger ones. The South Shore Group had visitors non-plussed whilst searching for the elusive 'rattlesnake' on their 'Needles Sub' California N scale layout, amongst its real sand from the area.

We were pleased to see Roger Nicholls's new switching layout 'Iota Kansas' complete with DCC and sound, a new venture for Roger. 'Lytton' BC was displayed by Alastair Knox, showing the Fraser Valley and the many varieties of CN and CP trains over the route; plus my own favourite the Rocky Mountaineer train. Richard New also showed his 'Harrington' layout and Roy Harris his HO layout built in two weeks, hence the name 'Tweekson'! The two layouts brought by Patrick Bopp and friends from Luxembourg were of the highest order, and many people praised the modelling qualities and effects.

Calder Northern Division displayed their 'Devil's Creek' with its wonderful scenic cameos and 'North Western Mills', which drew some attention from those interested in operations, as we hope that once more of the ballast and scenery is completed we can perhaps suggest an 'operations weekend' when we can use the layout for a full running session using switch lists.

Mike Lenz's locomotive facilities found favour with those who have large diesel collections and are looking for ideal ways to display them.

Penguin and Geoff Poulter (Contikits) displayed their products for all to see, and along with Harry Madden (books), Richard Maxwell (brass models) and the Bring and Buy tables inside the APT, all were vying for the cash in everyone's pockets.

The disposal of the late Bill Burke collection displayed inside the APT was very successful thanks to Les Herriot and Ray Elwin, who managed to sell all the items, raising £1100 to send to Bill's widow.

The two sessions by Chris Leigh (ModelRail magazine) drew visitors to the Signal Box to watch PowerPoint presentations on the White Pass & Yukon Railroad and the Kinsol Trestle on Vancouver Island. I only wish I could have seen them myself.

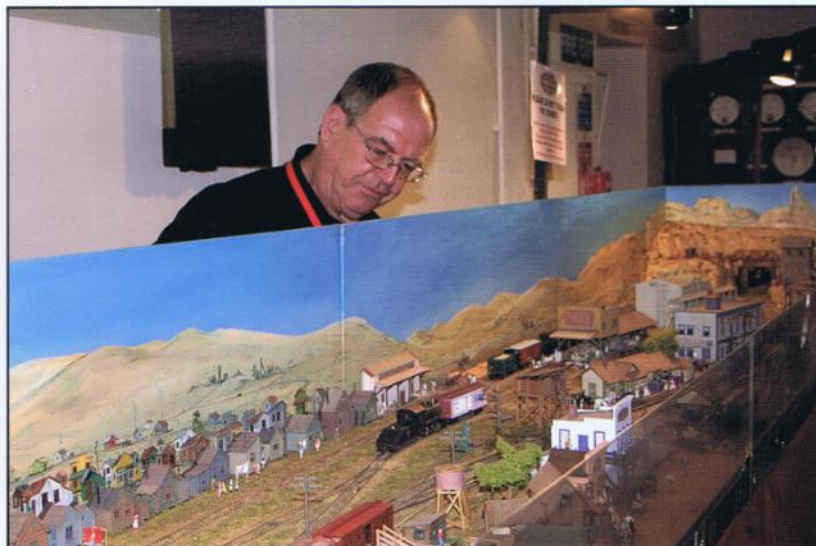
Thanks go to Mike Lenz for all the background work he undertook with the Crewe Heritage Centre Trust and liaison with the Friends of the Heritage Centre in organising the extra activities available for our visitors to enjoy. Secondly, grateful thanks to all of the volunteers who manned the miniature railway, the refreshment counter, the bookshop in the Signal Box and the Class 03 loco giving rides - 35 people taking driving lessons! It is these attractions being available that helps to make our events such a success.

The aim of our event was to raise funds for our group and to use some of any surplus to finance the purchase of Perspex to provide cover over the Devil's Creek layout so that it can be permanently on display and for 'anti-little fingers' protection for the front of the North Western Mills layout.

Well I can happily announce we can achieve these planned tasks. Our committee members also agreed that we should make donations to the Crewe Heritage Centre and to the Friends of Crewe Heritage Centre for their assistance and kind efforts over the whole weekend. We see this cooperation as part of a partnership in maintaining good relations and common interest on the site and being able to work together toward improving the attractions for the public.

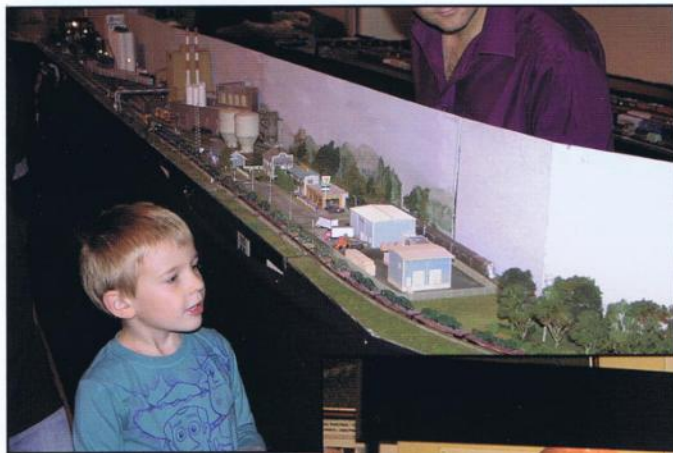
Finally, considering our event clashed with the Manchester Model Railway Club 75th Anniversary Train Show and Crewe Fire Station Open Day, we did well to have just over 100 NMRA members attending plus 300 paying members of the public (400 including the free entry for children).

A certain Mr. Steve Scott, Hon. Secretary of an obscure sect known as NMRA British Region, operates on "Devil's Creek" during the Crewe themed meet weekend



Calder Northern's Western Roads Themed Meet at Crewe Heritage Centre

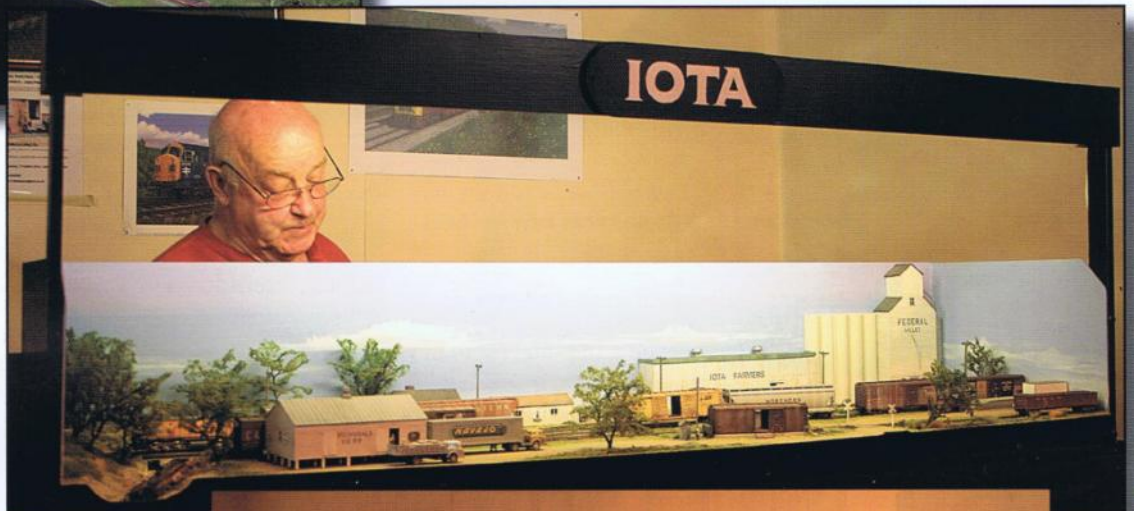
Right: The show area bustling with activity



A young lad enthralled by the combined modular N scale of Black Diamonds and Snake Bend. A future member?

Coincidentally, the need to attract young members was much discussed at the Region AGM in Bournemouth, a couple of weeks later

Iota, Kansas, is Roger Nicholls's latest HO project, his first with sound. Shown here at the Crewe Themed Meet



At Crewe, Patrick Bopp and friends combined two HO layouts. The night effects are amazing. All Crewe photos by John Baggeley

