

## **Smokebox – January 2009**

### ***Steam in Beds - 2008***

Many thanks to everyone for helping to make this year's show a big success, attendance was well up on last year. Thanks should go to those who helped set up the Hall on the Saturday and all those involved in the Catering. Thanks also to those members who did such a sterling job selling raffle tickets; we had a record number of Prizes due in part to those members who donated some of the prizes. My final thanks to those members who stayed behind to help clear-up at the end of the day.

### ***Looking Forward – 2009***

#### **Exhibitions - 2009**

As you will remember from a previous Smokebox we have been asked by the 16mm Association to take Ridgmont to the G-Scale AGM on the 25 April 2009. We have received a good response from the BAGs membership so we have taken up the invitation. Further details will be available shortly.

We have also been invited to the Large Scale Exhibition at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre again this year; it's planned for the 18 & 19 April 2009. Yes that's right the previous weekend to the G-Scale AGM!! Please let me know A.S.A.P. if you would be interested in helping out with the layout and of course running trains. To do both shows so close together may be too much to ask of our membership. As we have been asked back for a second year it would be good if we could put a team together to support what turned out to be a very popular show in 2008.

#### **Dates for your Diary**

Club Meetings at Leighton Buzzard:

4 January  
1 February  
1 March  
5 April  
3 May  
7 June

Other notable dates:

17 January Brambledon Model Railway Club, Harpenden, St Genny's attending  
21 February Princes Risborough Railway Exhibition, St Genny's attending  
4 April 16mm AGM, St Genny's attending

Unfortunately due to an ongoing viral infection I'm afraid I won't be able to come to the club on Sunday.

Wishing you all the very best for the New Year.

Chris Pretty

## **The Chairman's annual waffle**

Sorry guys – for a change I haven't been blackmailed into writing this piece, so its more of a pre-emptive strike on my part. However, since it is now half way between Christmas and New Year and no requests have been forthcoming from our illustrious editor, maybe there is the merest hint that I should stop this right here. But.....

### **SIB08**

Starting at the end as it were, we seem to have done it again! I think SIB08 can be chalked up as another success. The new format of having a members running event thrown open to the public seems to have worked quite well. Numbers were well up on last year, partly due to Joe Public and his mates but also I think because we had a good few 16mm personalities show up from far and wide – including a group headed by the erstwhile Tony Sant. It would appear that our little event is becoming a bit of a feature in the 16mm calendar, which can't be bad.

A slight change from last year was the decision to provide a higher level of catering, the "attack" being spearheaded by Margaret & Maggie with the assistance of some of our other ladies. Although we had some un-sold comestibles at the end (at least until Mandy toured the building persuading the remaining bodies to part with some cash!), the catering still showed a profit and I know that copious notes have been taken for future events as to what did, and did not, go down well. So, before I waffle on, I must extend many grateful thanks to all the ladies of the catering department for their superb efforts.

Whilst on the subject, a huge "Thank You" to all involved, but particularly to our erstwhile secretary Chris who, yet again, took on the bulk of the organising and made sure of the event's success – thank you Chris, without you SIB08 would not have happened. Last but by no means least; my thanks go to Graham & Carol and Andrew & Joy for again making their respective layouts available for the event.

### **OTHER STUFF**

Returning to the rest of the year we had the usual monthly meetings, interspersed with the odd exhibition. Attendances have been consistently reasonable but not perhaps as high as they have been in the past and I think membership has fallen slightly - this is a little worrying for two reasons.

Firstly, of course, the membership is the "raison d'être" and life-blood of the club, without sufficient active members it would be difficult to continue. And naturally we could always do with some more input into the running of things.

Secondly, we have been hit with an increase in the hall rental for 2009 of about 10%. This is partly off-set by the increase in subscription for this year and we have some cash and the profits from SIB08 to fall back on, but the fact is that subs alone no longer cover our meeting costs.

So all-in-all we could really do with a few new members.

There were a number of garden meets which took place during the summer months and these were generally well attended. Even I managed to find the time to pop in to Roy Sterry's and John Kinross's this year, but unfortunately I have still not made it to one of Nick or Alan's events – sorry guys.

As always, thanks to all event organisers and those who opened their gardens to other members.

Those of you who have managed to overcome the dreaded "technophobia" (i.e. can use the internet without endangering your health) will have noticed that our web-site has undergone a significant transformation in the last year. Not only have we invested a small amount to transfer to a new host which provides a much improved service but the entire site has been re-designed and re-built by our new webmaster. Perhaps I am not the right person to comment on this as the aforementioned new Webmaster happens to be my son Michael, however I hope that you will agree that he has done a fine job and the site is one of which our group can be truly proud. Thanks for this must in part go to the taxpayers amongst us (despite the ever growing university fees I think the tax payers still contribute!) but on behalf of the club and despite my vested interest – thank you Michael, and the same must also go to our retiring webmaster Pete for his efforts in this role previously.

OK – well, I think I've bored you all enough and I think I have thanked everyone I needed to (but just in case – THANK YOU to anyone I have missed).

So, it just remains for me to wish you all a happy new year and express the hope that we can look forward to a year full of good steaming opportunities.

Brian Walton  
Chairman