

## The Staines Model Railway Society

Our local club was formed at an inaugural meeting held in Staines (old) Town Hall on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1965. The initial committee comprised Terry Wheelwright (secretary), John Adams (treasurer) and Tony Dyer (chairman), with Chris Leigh as Exhibition Manager and Andrew Waller leading a junior group (under 18's). Meetings were held on Tuesday evenings in a side room of the main Town Hall building off Clarence Street in Staines, then later at a modern scout hut in Laleham.

The first item constructed was a portable test track 12ft x 8ft upon which members could run models they had built at home. The first running session was held on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1965, barely three months after start-up.....



In the left hand picture Tony is at left, with Paul Chamberlain in the bright white shirt and tie. 6<sup>th</sup> from left with ciggie in mouth is Mike Beard, with large hammer poised over my newly-converted GWR carriages, showing where his loyalties did (not) lie. Terry is next, then Paul Bartlett with Chris Leigh on the end. The right hand view has Paul C. then Mike, Chris attempting to hide behind a magazine, Paul B and (unknown). Having served its purpose, this test track was converted to a full layout, "Wallerford" by the junior group members.

The first major layout project undertaken was a scale representation of the GWR terminus station at Staines West, which had just then closed down. This was some 27ft long and constructed over a period of 10 months from January 1966. It was ready in time to form the centrepiece of the club's first exhibition, held in Staines Town Hall on 19-20 November 1966. These pictures are quite poor due to difficult lighting and the crowds, but give an impression of the scale of the Staines West model.....



The exhibition was a great success; here are two local newspaper cuttings reporting the following week.....

It became an annual event; on 4-5 November 1967 Staines West was shown again together with 9 other layouts, static exhibits and a few trade stands, a commendable effort for a fairly new and small group.

The next major change was the search for permanent clubhouse premises. After some time, a patch of unused ground adjacent to the Hummer Road car park was rented from Egham Urban District Council, a former industrial storage shed was obtained by two members, dismantled and re-erected on this site by volunteer working parties. The pictures below show the early stages, on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1969, with Chris and his fiancée Diane looking on.....



### Railway show attracts 1,600

"It was a marvellous show," agreed enthusiasts young and old, arms full of books and souvenirs, leaving the Model Railway Show held at Staines Town Hall on Saturday. The show attracted 1,600 visitors during the day.

The Staines Model Railway Society—formed about a year ago to promote the interests of railway modelling in the area—and clubs from Hampton Court and Northolt took part in the exhibition.

There were working models of goods trains and passenger trains whirling around yards and yards of track, and sprawling layouts of stations and shunting yards.

There were stalls with colourful books, leaflets, photographs and models for train-lovers to buy.

#### Main attraction

The main attraction in the Staines Society section, and the

centrepiece of the exhibition, was a 20 ft. long model replica of Staines West Station, which was closed down in 1965.

The exhibition was the first in the history of the Staines Society, and it is hoped to have another show next year, making it an annual event.

Railway preservation groups were represented at the show by the Talyn (Wales), the Great Western, and the Rother Valley societies.

The Staines Society had a model of the Staines West railway station among their working exhibits.

M.C. photo: 6104

### Model trains chug round Town Hall

FORMED just over a year ago, the Staines Model Railway Society held their first annual show at the Town Hall on Saturday, when 1,600 people attended.

The show was a schoolboy's dream with model trains of all shapes and sizes buzzing round complicated track layouts, while their proud owners shunted them up sidings, in and out of tunnels and up and down the main lines.

A point of interest for local people was the 20-ft. long scaled layout of Staines West Station—and very realistic it was.

Staines Society were joined for the occasion by the Hampton Court and the Northolt societies, each bringing along their own tracks and models and operating them with boyish enthusiasm.

So successful was this first show, that the members are thinking of making it an annual event.

The society meets at the Town Hall on Tuesday nights when they run trains, hear talks on railways generally, and all in all have an interesting and instructive time. New members would be welcomed.



Of interest to local visitors was this 20 ft. long model of Staines West station—which came under the Beeching axe.



..... and here nearing completion on 27<sup>th</sup> December that year.....



**Added March 2012:-** *I was delighted to receive an additional set of 9 slides depicting the various construction stages of the clubroom from John Senior, reproduced at the end of this article with his permission – recognise anyone?*

By July 1971 the clubroom was filled with layouts and other artefacts, sufficiently well established for a public open-day to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of that month. These pictures show the view greeting visitors at the main doorway, and Chris operating his splendid “OO” gauge model of the GWR branch terminus station at St Ives, Cornwall.....



The name was changed to the Egham & Staines Model Railway Society to reflect the change of venue, and as such it continues to flourish, in the same building on the same site, to this day. Here is a link to their website:

<http://www.egham-staines-mrs.co.uk/>

Additional slides taken by John Senior on several dates during late 1969 showing stages in the construction of the new Egham clubroom.....

