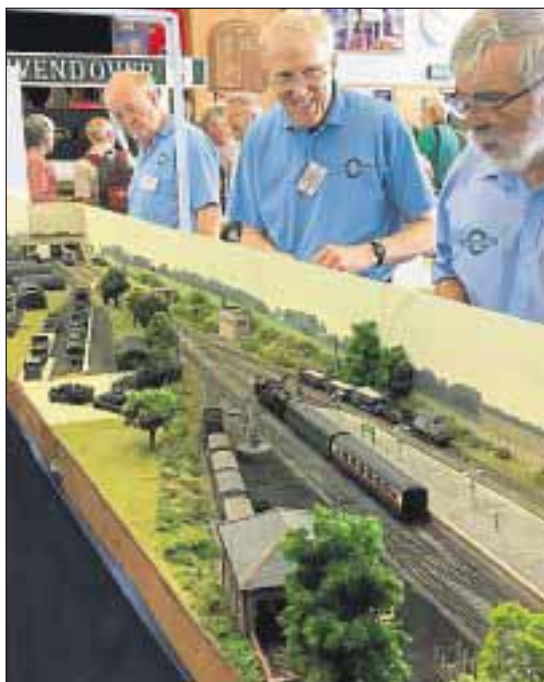


MEMORIES

Do you have any pictures you would like to share with readers? Email them to showcase@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Still chugging along after three decades



Andy Hopper, Richard West and Peter Chandler crewing the Bigbury layout at the Bexhill-on-Sea exhibition in 2017

Canterbury & District Model Railway Society (CDMRS) was formed in 1973 by Dennis Prior.

At that time Dennis was the County of the City of Canterbury Education Authority's youth manager, responsible for establishing The Longbridge Youth Centre.

The first public exhibition, to help pay the running costs of the society, was held at the Sidney Cooper Centre in November 1975.

The next exhibition was held in December 1976 at the Westgate Hall and which then became the annual exhibition's regular venue.

A catastrophic disaster occurred in 1984 when the roof of the society's clubroom at Canterbury West railway station fell in, leaving it homeless with nowhere to construct layouts or hold running sessions for members.

In 1988 the Society reformed and with a change of name to the City of Canterbury Model Railway Society. This reflected the loss of the county borough and the successor

With the annual exhibition returning this weekend, Richard West looks at the history of Canterbury's model railway society...



Jeremy Kennett and Mark Pledger crewing Wickhambreaux Road at the Chatham Show in 2004

district council then using the name Canterbury to include Herne Bay, Whitstable and the Bridge-Blean areas.

The first reformed CCMRS exhibition was held at the Westgate Hall in January 1990, where chairman Dennis Prior and his son Chris, together with webmaster Martin Allen, exhibited their layouts Inverglas and Hessem Rowe.

One of the layouts built and exhibited by CCMRS between 1994 and 2004 was Wickhambreaux Road, which was based on the idea of a successful Kent Coal Field, where the area was heavily industrialised with coal mining and iron and steel trades and the East Kent Light Railway having been expanded and successful.

The layout represented the



Exhibition poster from 1978

Picture: Richard West

junction of the Richborough to Chislehurst main line of the East Kent Light Railway and branch from the colliery at Wickhambreaux. There were sorting sidings where the trains were assembled before dispatching either to Richborough for export, or up country via Chislehurst.

Everything was built by members and it went to a number of shows in the area.

The January 1998 exhibition was the first held in the sports hall of the Kingsmead Leisure Centre, where there was more space and easier access to the exhibition hall. However,

'A catastrophic disaster occurred in 1984 when the roof of the society's clubroom fell in'

sports users did not like the hall being closed.

The January 2006 exhibition was held at St Anselm's School and which then continued to be the venue, including for the 2020 exhibition being held this Saturday and Sunday (see www.ccmrs.co.uk for details).

Members and society layouts have been invited to exhibit countrywide and have featured extensively in several railway modelling magazines.

Over the years, the exhibition has been managed by Paul Rowlinson, Martin Allen, Mark Pledger, and currently Jeremy Kennett.

The society held their 30th anniversary exhibition in January 2019, having invited back some previous exhibitors including the iconic Tonbridge West Yard by Paul Wade making its last public appearance.

When Dennis Prior became president, members elected Andy Hopper as chairman of the City of Canterbury Model Railway Society.

To read more articles from Richard's West's Chaucer Education Project, go online to chaucer.university.

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The Wickhambreaux Road layout and a typical Stour Valley water mill

Pictures: Andy Hopper