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Disclosure of Member's Addresses

Members who attended the AGM at York were almost certainly confused by a discussion which evolved from the circumstances under which a special offer of a package holiday from the local office of Swissair in Manchester was made to members of the Society.

The disclosure of names and addresses of members to third parties has always presented risks to the managements of societies. It is widely accepted that names and addresses are provided by members for the purposes of communication between management and the member unless specific authority is given for disclosure to third parties or publication.

The Society's membership records are kept on computer and since the passing of the Data Protection Act 1984, application forms have asked whether the name and address may be published in the Society journal. It was my understanding (and that of the Chairman of another society for which this became an issue) that disclosure to a third party, or even publication without specific authority within the Society, could breach the provisions of the Act but, in any case, it was a breach of the privacy of the individual.

It was expected that the Swissair offer would be circulated to Manchester members by the Society branch but, for what seemed to be a good reason at the time, a set of labels for the members of the Branch was sent to Swissair with the instruction that they were not to be used for any other purpose. In committee, I expressed strongly the view that this should not have been done as it might expose the officer concerned and the management as a whole to an action if a member claimed to have suffered in any way.

There the matter might have ended because it became clear from enquires made of the membership, a majority was in favour of the publication of a list of member's names and addresses, within the Society, provided specific authority had been given in each case.

At the AGM, I undertook to provide a statement of the pros and cons concerning publication and to be reasonably assured of my ground, I sought legal opinion through the Swiss Express Vol.3/4 December 1991

good offices of our Vice-President.

The opinion was given by **Griffith Smith Conway**, Solicitors, of Brighton and reads:

We have investigated the matter fully and after carefully studying the Act we have come to the conclusion that there is no restriction on the Society giving out a list of names and addresses of Members to a third party.

However, we should say that there might be a problem if any Member suffered damage as a result of that and obviously if a Member expresses his view that he does not wish his name to be published then we strongly advise that that should not be done.

I was, therefore, wrong about my interpretation of the Act and apologize to anyone who may have been upset about my views.

Arguments against the circulation of the list should be fairly obvious, invasion of privacy being perhaps the least of the drawbacks; a flood of junk mail if the list escapes outside Society bounds being another; and, for members of the Security Services, a more serious threat is apparent.

But members do wish to communicate with other members of the same Society for a variety of reasons so, to enable members to debate and take a decision, a proposal will be put to the next AGM by the Committee.

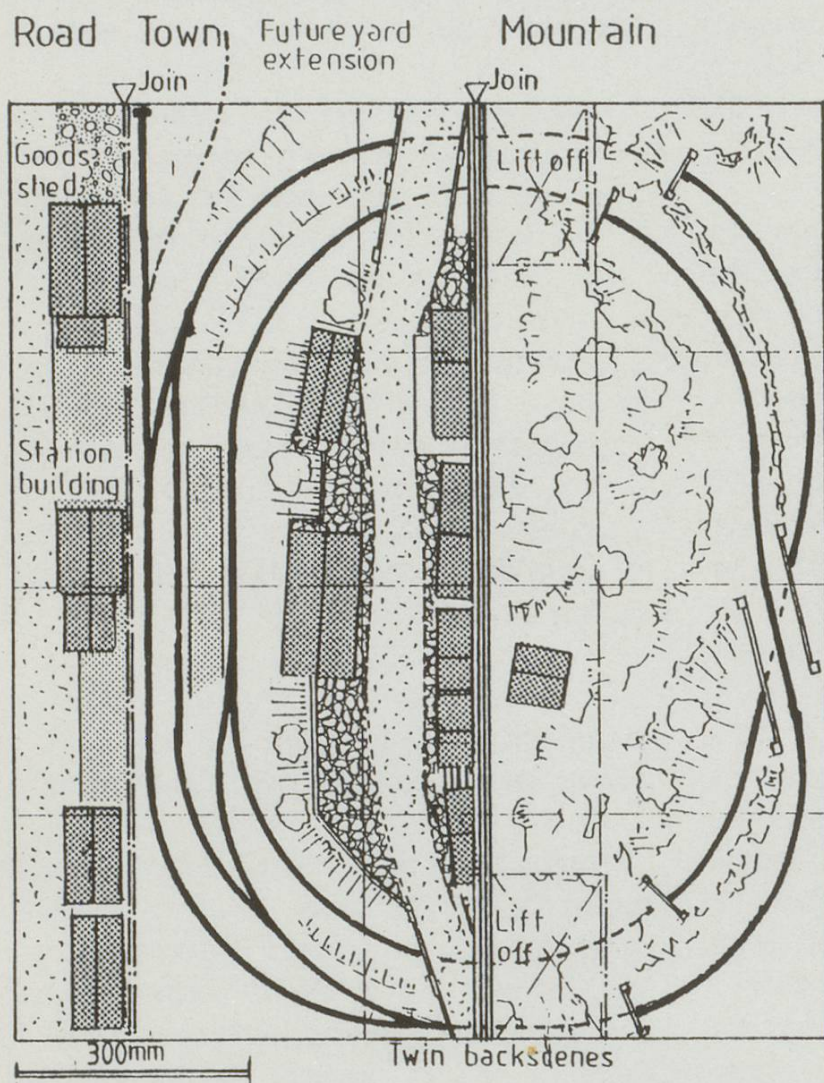
If the debate goes in favour of a list, the Committee has decided that, not only must the Constitution be changed to allow members to state their preferences, but also a positive declaration must be made each year for names to be published.

If the motion is passed, let me make it quite clear that if the renewal/application form is completed in such a way that it creates room for doubt, the name will not be included in the list (which will be issued annually, probably in the summer) even if authority has been given in the past.

The wording of the motion will be found on page 7. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that the Society will accept no responsibility for the consequences of any error in the compilation of the list.

A.J.Pike Chairman

Plan for Metre Gauge



backed by a pair of backscenes. This neatly divides the railway into "town" and "mountain" sections and so avoids many of the scenic difficulties that arise when one attempts to cram perhaps a hundred square kilometers of landscape onto something less than a hundred scale hectares of baseboard.

As, in the town section, the tracks are more or less on the same level, I have introduced a crossover to create the illusion that this is one unit. I have also shown a simple add-on town section in the form of a narrow sub-base carrying the buildings, which would be desirable at exhibitions but probably inconvenient in the home, where, in all probability, the more spectacular mountain scene would be against a wall.

I have also shown the provision of two lift-off sections above the

There is nothing, on the face of it, particularly novel about the plan above, a conventional looped eight scheme on a solid baseboard. However, two features are worthy of note.

First of all it is for HOm, where the relatively sharp curves - or do I mean corners - are of little consequence. Furthermore, if one follows, at some distance, RhB practice, mainly by the use of Berno stock, then the section where one track passes over the other is in keeping with the spirit of the line.

However, the main feature is the construction of the model, in two equal sized boards,

hidden track joints, these would allow access to this rather crucial part of the layout. Construction, I suggest, should follow modern ideas with ply framing and cross profiles, with the backscene integral with the frame. Provision for extension is shown, this I think would best be a small shunting/storage yard. Should any member be interested, will gladly provide further hints. It would make a good trial run for HOm and be of considerable value to the Society as a compact, reasonably easily transported layout to support a Society stand at smaller shows.