

# Hazel Grove and District Model Railway Society - A History

## *Celebrating 50 Years 1966 - 2016*

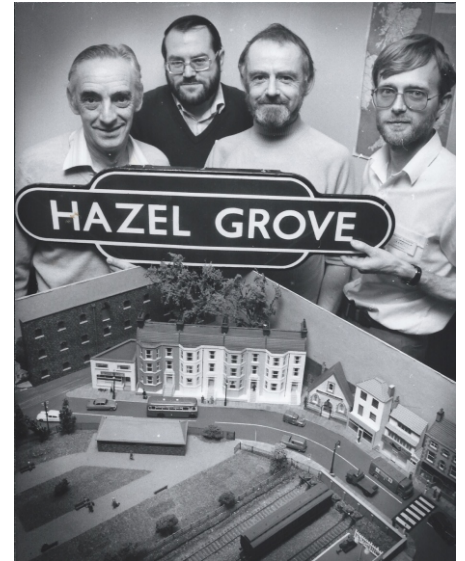
Mention 1966 to the majority of people, and they'll think of the famous World Cup victory by the England football team. But 1966 was also a momentous year for the Hazel Grove and District Model Railway Society – it was the birth of the club!

Trevor Moseley, the Clubs Honorary President, and Graham Neve, sadly no longer with us, had been at school together and shared a love of all things railway. By 1966 both of them were employed by British Railways. Trevor in the telecommunications department and Graham was signaller at Hazel Grove station box. Many an evening was spent in the signal box discussing all things railway, and they both agreed that there was a gap between the established model railway clubs in Manchester and Macclesfield.



Hazel Grove signal box where it all began

Not knowing whether or not there would be any interest in such a club, they placed an advert in the magazine 'Railway Modeller' inviting anyone interested to come along to the Civic Hall in Hazel Grove. They waited with bated breath to see if anyone would turn up! To their surprise (and relief) nine people turned up and in November of 1966 the society was born!



Founders of The Society (lft to rt)  
Ron Furness; Graham Neve (dec)  
Trevor Moseley & Mel Roberts

The first Committee consisted of Trevor Moseley as Chairman; Graham Neve as Secretary and Mel Roberts as Treasurer, and I think it says a lot about the society that both Trevor and Mel continue to be active members 50 years later. The regular weekly meetings soon settled down into enthusiastic discussions about the models that members had brought along with them and what the club members would do if / when a clubroom for the society could be found. The membership fee at the time was 5 shillings a year ( 25p ).



Inaugural meeting of the society at Wesley Street.

The first three years saw the Society based in the Civic Hall, making the best of limited facilities available, and in 1968 the decision was taken to build the first club layout '**Poseidon**' based on a small HO9 plan from the Railway Modeller. This gave the society its first 'claim to fame' when an article featuring the layout was published in the magazine 'Model Railway Constructor'. And it earned the society the huge sum of £9!

The search for a permanent club house continued, and in 1970 the Society heard that a slot car club was renting a room above the Red Lion Hotel (now demolished) in Hazel Grove. But on enquiry it was found that the slot car club had disappeared and two rooms was there for the taking. And taken they were!

The members of the Society happily settled into the new rooms and began a refurbishment project of both the rooms and the **Poseidon** layout. The layout had to be refurbished as it was discovered that the layout was 13' 3" and the biggest room was only 13' long! A second OO gauge club layout was soon planned and work started, but the project never became more than a large test track on bare boards.



Graham Neve on post at Hazel Grove Station signal box

In 1971, the first Annual Dinner was held, but a more dramatic event was the death of the landlord of the Red Lion. For a few painful weeks the fate of the club hung in the balance, but when the new landlord was installed he turned out to be very kind to the club. He allowed the weekly meetings to continue and allowed the use of a third room for social events in return for the room being redecorated. In 1973, following the first HGDMRS attendance at the Cheadle Hulme Exhibition, the members decided to organise the first Society exhibition. The date was set for 29th September and the venue was to be the large hall inside the Civic Hall.



Members of the society at Hazel Grove Show. Circa 1967/68.

Six exhibiting layouts and two trade stands were gathered for this and the event. It was a huge success with over 1100 people attending. But there was a big cloud on the horizon – the brewery evicted the club from the

Red Lion, the site was going to be redeveloped. Everything was dismantled and put away, but the club did not fade away. The original club layout 'Poseidon' was sold, and parts of the OO gauge layout were



1992

Members of the society - Geoff Bennett; Chris Pearson; Ron Furness and Trevor Moseley presenting The British Transport Police with their layout 'Sunhill'

By 1975 the development of the Red Lion had fallen through and the club returned to the old rooms, to find that they were much as they had left them. The new club layout, Norbury, was quickly put up in the larger room. And a new development was the construction of an N Gauge layout by the late John Pearson and his son Chris, who is still a member today. But in 1976, the developers came back again, and the Society was told that it had to leave the Red Lion early in 1977.

Needless to say, the members went into overdrive to find a new home for the club, and we were fortunate to secure the use of rooms in the Methodist Church Hall, Wesley Street, Hazel Grove where the Society is still in residence.

The only difference was that we had to share the rooms with other clubs and societies. This meant that all of the layouts had to be made so that they could be taken down and stored at the end of each session.

HAZEL GROVE & DISTRICT  
Model Railway Society  
**Exhibition**  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
20th and 21st October 1978  
WESLEY STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL HAZEL GROVE



The Society has been involved in many projects and layouts over its history. But we have two projects that have brought us much publicity, praise and credit over the years. In 1992, the Society worked with the British Transport Police to construct a layout, called Sun Hill, specially designed to be taken to schools to show the dangers of trespassing on the railways. It highlighted the risks associated with overhead cables and other areas.

This was a success and when the responsibility for visiting schools to highlight the dangers of trespass on the railway was handed over to the Train Operating Companies, we worked with Northern Rail to build a newer version, called Northern Vale. Again, this layout has been a great success and has been to many schools in the Northern Rail area. It is thought that the original, Sun Hill, layout is still in existence and we hope that one day it will come to light so that we can refurbish it for further use. The annual exhibition, has been a firm favourite with railway modellers and the general public alike on the exhibition circuit, with the exception of 1975 when a shortage of layouts resulted in no exhibition.



Members of the society enjoying a regular day trip gathering information to inspire their modelling.

Exhibition Guide for  
1978



The date is always the last weekend in October. For the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition, we used Stockport Town Hall to celebrate the event. In 1999, we moved to the current location of Hazel Grove High School on Jacksons Lane. Several classroom and the main hall were used, but this was not ideal as we had to clear the classrooms before we could use them. Fate intervened in 2002 when there was a fire at the school, causing quite a lot of damage, making those classrooms unusable. We had started to look for another venue, but the adjacent leisure centre stepped in to offer the Society the use of their sports hall. So successful was this that we have used the Leisure Centre ever since.

Hazel Grove and District  
Model Railway Society  
PRESENT AN EXHIBITION OF  
**MODEL  
RAILWAYS**



TO MARK  
THE SOCIETY'S SILVER JUBILEE  
**1991**

**STOCKPORT TOWN HALL**  
EXHIBITION GUIDE 50p

MEMBER OF THE NORTH WEST ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILWAY CLUBS

Silver Jubilee  
Exhibition programme  
cover



Left; Members celebrating the societies 40th Anniversary in 2006 with a combined evening meal and journey on the East Lancashire Railway.  
Right; Our new home at Hazel Grove Leisure Centre.



The Society also has an annual open day at the club house in Wesley Street every year. We try to hold this event every year in June. This differs from the Exhibition in that we only show our Club layouts – warts and all. At the Open Day you get the chance to see those layouts that are being built and chat to the members who are working on them. We also have members working on other aspects of the hobby, building kits, repairing locos etc. So if you ever have any modelling question, this is the place to come.

**Hazel Grove & District  
Model Railway Society  
50th Anniversary Year**

**Open Day**

**Saturday 18th June 2016  
10am to 4pm**

**Hazel Grove Methodist Church Hall  
10am to 4pm**

- Hazel Grove Methodist Church Hall, Wesley Street, Hazel Grove, SK7 4JQ
- Layouts : Demonstrations : Work in Progress
- Help & advice on all aspects of the Hobby
- Ask those questions you always wanted to, and SMTF (Your local model shop)
- Free Entry - Refreshments - Parking

More details at - [www.hgdmrs.org.uk](http://www.hgdmrs.org.uk)  
or phone 0161 477 5565 - Find us on facebook

 ACCESS & PARKING




Open Day poster 2016.



Martin Baker demonstrating and exhibiting at an open day

Together with 'Poseiden' the society has been proud to have produced a number of acclaimed layouts. Amongst these are:-

**Holkham** started life as a short out and back 00 gauge branch line layout in 1978, but never really developed until an imaginary branch line on the North Norfolk coast was planned as an exhibition layout. The original branch line boards were incorporated into a layout that featured two branch lines running into a small seaside town terminus. The time was set in the late 1950's early 60's and the layout featured some innovating ideas including having the control panel and operator located at the front of the layout for the public to see. The panel itself resembled a signal lever frame and was fully interlocked with the signalling and the signals built from scratch using brass tube and operated by relays. The scenic side of the layout was some 20 feet long with a fiddle yard at the end capable of holding a maximum length train of 6 coaches, 2 fish vans and up to a Pacific sized steam locomotive or Class 20 diesel. The approach to the terminal station was over a tidal estuary bridge and featured a working windmill. The scenery and buildings all had an East Anglian influence as did the rolling stock and motive power. The layout attended many local shows including the annual Manchester Model Railway Society Christmas show in 1987 and it was featured in the Railway Modeller of that year. Since then the club has continued its policy of constructing exhibition layouts.

**High Peak Tramway** a 009 narrow gauge layout was a popular feature at many exhibitions across the whole country in the 1990's and 2000's. The layout was based on a tramway system starting at Whalley Bridge with the canal basin and ending in Bugsworth where limestone is quarried. Featured were cameo's from different parts of the tramway on its travels across the foothills of the Peak District. The layout

appeared in The Railway Modeller of March 1990. As 009 is not a popular gauge to model, the layout was renowned for its super detail to buildings, scenery and rolling stock for which most had to be built from scratch.

Most railway Societies have a layout that is their pride and joy, their 'flagship' layout, the one with the 'Wow' factor. We are no exception to this and our flagship layout is 'Hazel Valley', the 'wow' coming from it's size – 27' long by 12' wide. You'll find this layout in the Exhibition, and a description of how its running this weekend elsewhere in this programme. The **Hazel Valley** project started in 1991 as one of four possible projects put forward by the membership. Looking back, it seems that progress was slow. It wasn't until 1993 that the boards were made and track laying started, and its first appearance to the public was made in 1994 after the track laying and electrics were completed.

The layout is loosely based around the railway practice and operation around the Hope Valley line between New Mills South Junction and Sheffield. This was chosen as it is relatively local to the Society and our members were more than familiar with the topography and operational aspects of the area.

Since the mid 90's when the layout was first exhibited, it hasn't remained a static exhibit, it has improved, evolved and grown in many ways, not all perhaps visible to the casual observer. Although a stream was added across the middle board and many scenic details have been

added or improved, many behind the scenes changes have also happened. The original operating panel has been replaced; the layout has had operating signals added and the boards were rewired to improve operating stability and simplify fault finding. Typically, the layout is operated either as a steam era layout, or the diesel era of the 1970's - blue diesels to the fore!

Since 1997 it has appeared at 21 shows including 10 of our own and has won many awards. More information about Hazel Valley can be found on the Society web site, or just ask any of the members operating the layout over the weekend.



Trevor Moseley (founder and president front and centre) with today's membership

And so to the future, what does it look like for Hazel Grove and District Model Railway Society? Well we think it looks very rosy, but we would say that wouldn't we? But let's look at what the Society has at the moment. We have almost 60 members, most regularly attending the Society meetings. We have seven club layouts, plus our Northern Rail layout that tours the local schools doing very important Rail Safety demonstrations. The layouts are mostly HO/OO, but we do have an established O Gauge layout and an embryonic N Gauge layout, so we have all the popular gauges covered. We have an established series of monthly demonstrations on all the different aspects of the hobby. For example, DCC; scenery construction; track layout and ballasting and so on. The idea behind this is to share the knowledge that specialists in the Society possess amongst everyone else. We can't all be experts, but we can help each other on various aspects of the hobby.

So why not come along on a Monday or Friday night to see the Society in action, and maybe even take the plunge and join us? Speak to any of the Society stewards at the Exhibition, or make an enquiry at the Society Information stand. We look forward to meeting you and seeing you one evening in the future.

Recently we have adopted Social Media by creating a web site [www.hgdmrs.org.uk](http://www.hgdmrs.org.uk) and a Facebook page 'Hazel Grove Railway Modellers'. Please take some time out to look at these, and 'Like' our Facebook page! There we are, a potted history of the first 50 years of our club. Membership had its ups and downs over the years. Within a year of the Society foundation, 28 members had been recruited despite a high turnover rate. And, although this dropped back to 15 at one point, we have recovered to a membership of just under 60 today. And we're very proud to say that many original members from the early years are still with us. Please ask any of the stewards or society members about any details of the club you would like to know more about. You will always be made welcome at the club house, we're there Mondays and Fridays from 7.00pm to 10.00pm, please come and join us and help us go forward into the next 50 years of Hazel Grove and District Model Railway Society!