

The Eureka Times

17th Edition

19 January, 2009

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of The Eureka Times.

Another visit to the factory has come and gone. Although this visit was a short one (up Sunday, back Wednesday) it was a particularly good one. Some new projects started, some existing projects progressed and a little bit of socializing indulged in all made for a very pleasant and productive visit. Plenty to report so as usual, let's get on with it.



CPH/CTH leaving Breeza .

Photo:

Ray Pilgrim

The Third Wave:

Whilst thinking about the Eureka experience so far it occurred to your writer that the activities of Eureka since the Company started operations in late 2003 could be considered in waves. The first wave consisted of the 620/720 2 car diesel set and the AD60 class garratt. The second wave which is still in progress consists of the LCH/CCH four wheelers and CHG van, the CPH/CTH rail motor set, the C38 class steam locomotive, the 40 class diesel electric and the R class steam locomotive. This wave should be complete by the end of 2009. The third wave is just getting under way and includes the 59 class locomotive, the

HUB car set, the DEB sets, the K class, the oil tank cars, the RSH and the BCW/BSV stock cars. The third wave should be delivered in 2010/2011.

Second Wave Update:

The CPH/CTH.

Assembly of the CPH/CTH will be completed in February after the factory returns from the Chinese New Year break. The non-sound version will be produced first and then the sound equipped version. Delivery is anticipated in mid to late February. To take advantage of pre-order prices balances on orders should be paid for by 15 February.

The C38 Class.

Paint samples have been received and are being checked. Approval should be at the factory ready for when production resumes after Chinese New Year. This suggests a March/April delivery date. Photographs of the painted bodies will be available on the web-site shortly.

The 40 Class

Paint samples are being prepared. Production will be completed after the 38 class is delivered.

The R Class

Minor items are being clarified as part of the normal process and test shots are expected mid-year.

To demonstrate the intense, non-stop pressure that a visit to the factory involves the accompanying photo is reproduced. It shows Eureka and factory staff hard at work dealing with issues arising from the Eureka production program. On the left is Mr. Ting, the factory manager, Ms Lee, the deputy factory manager and on the right Mr. Kenneth Chung, customer liaison engineer.

As the entire Moulding Department was present (about 40 people) the opportunity was taken to hold the annual drinking championship of the Department. This involved downing either full glasses of the local beer or a shot glass of rice wine which is a traditional Chinese drink (something akin to fire water) which weighs in at 50% alcohol content.

Work, Work and More Work



Unfortunately, your Eureka representative dropped out about half way through the contest but Eureka was well represented at the end when Kenneth Chung, our liaison engineer defeated last year's winner to take out the championship. Well done Kenneth.

The Third Wave:

The NSWGR HUB Car Set:



Approval for the HUB car set project to proceed has been given and drawings are being prepared. Six separate cars are being produced which will allow five and seven set combinations on such name trains as the Central West Express, South Coast Daylight Express and of course, The Newcastle Flyer. Sets are expected to be available in four main paint schemes and will have interior lighting and detail including passengers.

An order form is included with this edition. More details on the prototype will be available in future editions. Delivery is expected in the second half of 2010.

The RSH 4 Wheel Hopper:



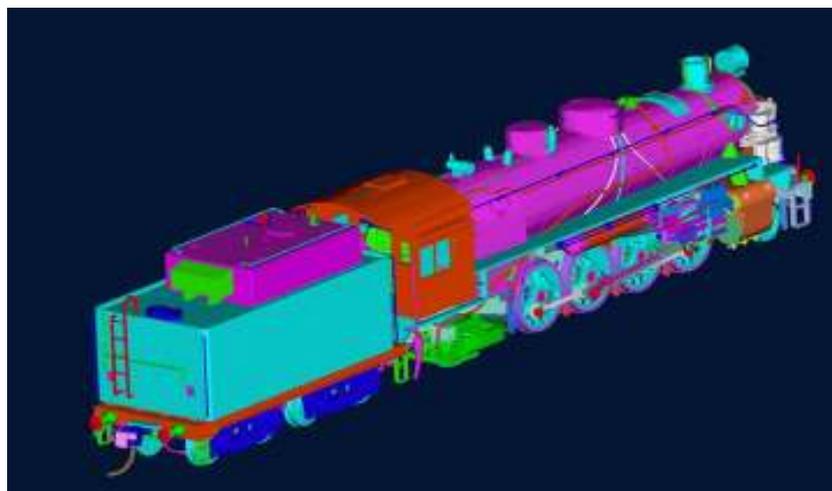
A data package for additions to the LCH to produce the RSH version had been delivered to the factory previously and this visit provided an opportunity to clarify minor points to allow the preparation of a quotation. This is not expected to take long and subject to a satisfactory quotation the extra tooling required can then proceed. Delivery has been tentatively scheduled for late 2009. Full details including prototype information will be in the next edition.

The NSWGR 30 Class Tank Engine:

The 30 class tank engine project has started. At this stage the project consists mainly of dealing with engineering issues. These mainly relate to matters associated with operation on sharp curves and placement of sound board and speakers for sound. It is anticipated that the engineering will be resolved this year and for drawings and tooling to be carried out in 2010 for a 2011 delivery.

The 59 Class locomotive:

Drawings for the 59 class in both coal and oil burning versions have been signed off and approval for tooling to commence has been given. Order forms will be available with the next edition. Test shots should be available in the second half of this year which would suggest a delivery in mid to late 2010.



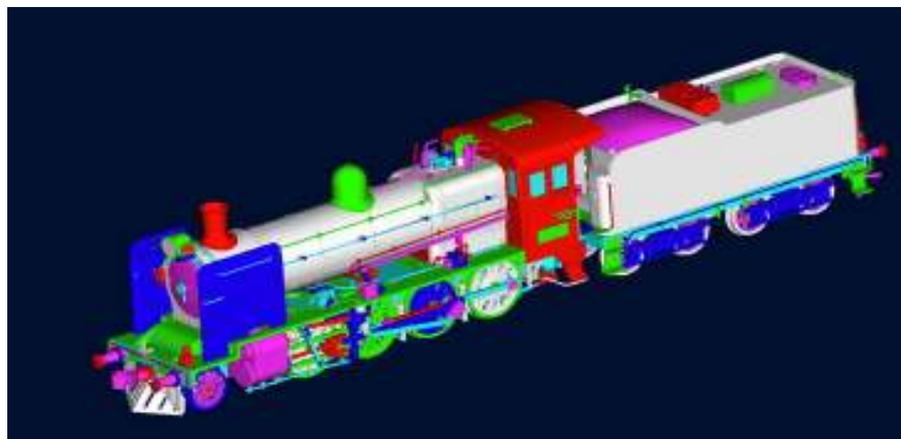
3D image of the oil burning version

The DEB 900 Class Diesel Rail Car sets:

This visit saw the resolution of the final production issues on the DEB set project. To achieve the smooth sides which were a feature of the prototype due to the flushness of the windows, a production technique which is different to that used on the 620/720s will be used. The bodies of the model will be injected in clear plastic and the detail on the sides simulated by paintwork. Examples of other car sets produced using this method were inspected and the result is quite startling and more than acceptable.

Decision on these matters will allow the finalization of quotations for the project and subject to these being acceptable advancement to the drawing stage. At this stage a late 2010 delivery date is indicated.

The K Class locomotive:



K class – Double windows with boxpok wheels.

The K class drawings are almost complete but as previously advised we will not be starting this project until we have received test shots for the R class. This would suggest a start to tooling later this year for a late 2010 delivery date

Oil Tankers, BSV/BCW and 43 Class Diesel

Minor matters were also discussed on the above projects which are at various stages of development.

Re-Runs:

The AD60:

All required tooling changes are complete and painted samples have been supplied. The next stage will involve us receiving painted factory samples for checking and then production can proceed. We are planning for a delivery sometime in the 2nd quarter of this year.

We are still accepting orders for 6020 in centenary colours but will close off orders for 6020 when we have to supply final numbers to the factory which we expect will be in early February.

The 620/720:

Work on the re-run of the 620/720 2 car diesel has commenced. The re-run will involve making changes to the existing tooling so as to incorporate the minor changes made to the prototype in the latter stages of their life. These changes involve mainly the addition of reinforced glass on the driver's windows (the bug eyes) and ditch lights.

The modernized version will be available in Candy, the intermediate scheme and City Rail grey liveries. Before making the changes we are planning to squirt a small number of 620/720 bodies so that we can make available a limited number of original sets in the early Tuscan red livery. A late 2009 delivery is being worked towards.

In Stock:

LCH/CCH and CHG vans:

We have limited numbers of LCH/CCH Trainpaks in stock. At the current rate of sales we would expect these to last about six months. Price is \$350 including a CHG van or \$300 without. CHG vans are also available separately at \$50 each.



The AD60:

We have a small number of units from the first run with sound left (but no weathered units with sound) and both plain and weathered units without sound.

Economic Report:

We here at Eureka are very mindful of the impact that the world financial meltdown might have on the model railway market in 2009 so we asked our staff economist, John Kaynard Meynes to prepare a forecast of market conditions for the coming 12 months. Remembering that that other noted economist J K Galbraith said that economic forecasting was invented to make astrology look good, our economist's forecast for 2009 should prove interesting reading and whilst he has started work on the forecast he is unable to forecast just when the forecast will be available.

However, there were some opportunities at the factory to discuss the outlook for 2009 both with factory staff and one very interesting customer from the US.

The factory is very positive in outlook. The toy manufacturing industry in Southern China is by all accounts in desperate straits with thousands of factories reported as closed. Our manufacturer however is reporting a full order book and expects to be hiring more staff after the factory resumes production after Chinese New Year.

On the other side of the fence a chance meeting with the Development Manager of a long established US model firm provided not only interesting insights into the hobby in the US but also an opinion based on 30 years in the business during which the firm survived at least three major recessions during which business never faltered. In this businessman's opinion the model railway industry is largely immune from recessions. (He didn't say anything about depressions though)

What does it all mean for the future of the hobby here in Aus then? Well, with all this doom and gloom about, the temptation is to put future projects on hold until economic conditions become a little clearer. The amount of money that is committed to a steam engine project for example is considerable and one likes to think that demand for the end product will be there. Even if it is, interim support from one's bankers is still necessary and problems in the financial markets just introduce even more uncertainty.

Well, that's enough of the negatives. We here at Eureka have decided to adopt a positive attitude and although we will continue to watch economic developments closely we will be pushing ahead with all projects on our list and will maintain our objective of providing high quality models of Australian prototype.

Just in case though, we have decided to put together a billion dollar rescue package for the model railway industry which we will be submitting to the Government should it be necessary. We might as well reserve a place in the line now behind the financial sector and the car industry.

The Eureka Blog:

We now have a blog up and running at eurekamodels.blogspot.com

We are using the blog to provide more regular information on goings-on at Eureka. Posting to a blog is a lot easier than making changes to a web-site and updates to the blog are already happening on a more frequent basis. Postings are intended to be informal and newsy. The blog is not designed to replace the Eureka web-site but rather to complement it. Comments are welcome although those posting comments will need to identify themselves. Anonymous postings will be deleted.

The blog will have the latest information available on a project so there should be no need for anyone with access to the blog to ask "what is the latest on such and such a project?" Whatever is on the blog will be the latest.

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