

DJModels Ltd End of Year thoughts 2018

Hello, and happy New Year to you all.

I hope you all had a great Christmas and didn't get too merry last night.

I'm typing this from the cold light of day after too much imbibing last night, so please bear with me if this becomes a ramble. I'll try to be pithy and to the point but I may wander and beg your forgiveness.

Personal

So, 2018? What a year for DJM and myself personally. The death of my father, who was a very good modeller himself in late February knocked me for 6 for a while, as these things are want to do. He was the inspiration to get me into model railways at a very young age, and nurtured me along as the years went by, being very supportive of show visits, railway visits and my efforts as a junior modeller. Sitting by his bedside on a week long vigil he passed while I was holding his hand. How I wish he would have passed by the side of the East Coast Main Line hearing and seeing the trains he so loved rather than the cold clinical hospital room, but he wasn't alone and that's the biggest comfort to me in his going. He is greatly missed.

Speaking of mortality for a moment, with these ongoing years passing more quickly than ever, you do feel it more, when seemingly friends and family start passing away more regularly, when you have your minds eye set on them still being as they were 30 years or so ago. And as such I was saddened to hear of more modelling friends who passed this year, and more so at Warley where it was a seemingly endless procession of friends letting me know of other friends with whom I had lost touch with, passing.

DJM's 2018

Well, not sure what to add to this that you probably don't already know.

The N gauge class 17 got put on the back burner due to a fall out with the factory, that also holds the J94 and class 71 tools. I subsequently found 3 alternate factories that are as good as, if not better than this one, and as such it was out of necessity and certainly with a heavy heart, that I transferred all ongoing work to 2 of these new factories. This has yet to manifest itself in new models, but with the N gauge King, OO gauge APT, N and OO gauge class 92's in various stages of design and development things are starting to get back to where they should have been 12 months ago.

The 'break up' has been expensive, and not without, seemingly, a great deal of animosity. I wont be adding more to this saga until my memoirs come out. Lol

Add to this my web site problems that, due to wanting an upgrade I appointed a designer to produce a new one which was to be more useful for my needs over the coming years. Alas my desire floundered within 4 days of going live as it was too 'buggy' had code that was

written where it shouldn't be, and had an interaction with Lloyds 'click safe' card net system that flagged both with my new designer (more of him in a minute), and Lloyds, to such an extent that it has taken me a long time to get Lloyds to start re-checking my new site for integration so that I can add their system to customers payment options.

Hopefully, later this week, or into next I may have an update on that which I will put on the web site.

Talking of which, most if not all of you will have seen my new website, and I hope you think it is an improvement on the original one, which had seen its day, and needed updating. So, the new website came and went (got pulled, actually), very quickly to be followed on by the MK3 website, which settled down and did as it was told, very quickly. Thanks be to my new web designer who knows systems, and my needs, and he models N gauge American too. (thanks mate)

Then we had not only a 'take the eye off the ball' moment, but a true 'WTF' moment for everyone, and that was my being threatened with a company 'strike off' by HMRC. This is all public knowledge and came out in forums and came as a salient warning to myself, which was duly corrected, with much embarrassment my end.

Forums and Social Media

The eagle eyed amongst you will have noticed that I no longer post on forums and in fact since I made that decision have only posted twice I believe.

I had always said that my previous employer had made a mistake coming off the forums to do things 'in house', but after this last year I see that as a very clever and understandable decision. Strange I should think that after actually winning an award for my participation in previous years, but I now do.

Forums were taking up a lot of my time, and to be honest, they were becoming extremely toxic, and not a nice place to visit. Trolls and people with an axe to grind (even if they never purchased a DJM product) were simply bringing the whole 'good vibe' of the forums down and ruining it for others. I now find forums to be still full of great people, but being spoilt by the negativity, and actually see a day when forums, due to the negativity, could end up a 'busted flush' and too much hassle to police correctly to remain on the right side of the legal bods. After all, it only takes 1 troll to post something to bad that it pushes the legal boundary, and then what? Someone is responsible. The troll? Sure, but try catching him. The web site? Well more than likely, as offering a free service doesn't absolve you from responsibility in publishing untruths, or malicious/spiteful comments.

Not only that but I felt that comments there were getting 'injurious to DJModels' and could be very close to the edge legally. And so, even though I know you have to take the rough with the smooth, and I have a thick skin, but even so the best course of action was to leave.

Life is just too short to keep checking and answering mails and having to put up with negative comments which in my view came close to or passed by any measure of common decency.

Since leaving forums, I have found life a lot less stressful and 'busy' in that area, and please don't forget if you do have a question to ask, please write to me info@djmodels.co.uk

As a slight aside, I remember waking up at 4am once on the day of a show (might have been the excitement) and checked my mails and posted on a forum the answer to a question

And I'll try and answer quickly if I am able.

So what has leaving achieved? Well, like my previous employer I now do things 'in house', which means any news / press releases get posted on the DJM web site. However, anyone that has ordered or 'expressed an interest' in an announced model will get a newsletter updating them specifically on the project they are involved / interested in. This means that they don't have to read it on the web site, they will, if all is well in internet land, get their newsletter 1-2 weeks in advance of it becoming a public knowledge item with the posting on my web site.

This not only 'plays fair' with my customers, which is very important, but also means that news only comes when I have news to share.

For instance I have just sent out the N&OO Class 92 newsletter (it was a small update) to all my customers for those 2 gauges of class 92.

They know that I won't be sending out newsletters that say nothing new, as there is no point.

However, even in this day and age of modern communications e-mails don't get where they are going and some customers are having problems getting my newsletters.

Can I ask those that haven't had any for the King, APT and 92's to contact me please, so that I can check their e-mail address with the one registered on my database.

Surprisingly, I have had bouncing e-mails back from servers saying anything from 'this e-mail is not accepted' to 'this e-mail was refused by the server', and even a couple of e-mails that bounced because I copied and pasted an e-mail address that proved to be miss-spelt, and so bounced because of it.

Technology huh?

Product updates

As mentioned above, some products where customers have signed up for or paid their crowdfunded model deposit will get newsletter.

It is only fair to update the status of the models that were announced previously that had had work start on them.

Factory No.1 was paid for the cad/cam development for the OO gauge class 74, the N gauge King, the N and OO gauge class 92, and for the tooling for the N gauge class 17, of which I received a working 1st EP sample and had written agreement to complete the model on supply of the 2nd EP payment which was duly done.

However only the 92's were done, but not completed, and were In fact error prone in certain areas. Since allocating these 2 models to the new factory they are being worked on at this time in a far more expedient manner, along side the APT's. None of the other paid for cad/cam work was done.

The future

Well, as you can no doubt imagine 2018 is a 'annus horribilis' for DJM and one I'd like to forget. I truly cannot see the bulging market place for new models being sustainable, and the 2 major players are already rumbling about models being produced that are in their range, and their T&C's etc. That will prove interesting.

Where will it all end? I think one thing for certain..... it will end! There's only so much money out there, there are only so many new models that you can get a return on, and I think the market place will shrink rather than expand as model prices and the cost of living gets higher, and wages don't follow suit.

For DJM, 2019 will see some much promised releases, crowdfunded models come to fruition, and a 'getting over' of the last years 'hump' to a smoother, flatter road to travel.

I am currently working on 3 projects for clients, which at present are design only, but will be nice if they come to market, and I will always look at new business. It's also nice to see some retired designers back working in the marketplace, along with new ones.

As an aside, it was sad to see Dennis Lovett retire, as he was a fantastic ambassador for Bachmann, but great to see both him and Graham Hubbard at Warley 2018.

I'll be doing 1 or 2 new shows this year with variations on the main stand, which continues to get improved and updated, so look out for the web site where I will soon list the shows attending, and also post closer to each shows date as a reminder should anyone want to come along for a chat.

First show is Stafford in a few weeks, and I'm hoping to have 1 or 2 things on the stand for anyone that is interested.

I hope you all have a healthy and happy 2019, and if you see me at a show or measuring up a loco somewhere, come and say hello and have a chat.

All the very best

Dave

DJModels Ltd

1st January 2019

