



Protocab

OWNER'S CLUB

OWNERS'

UPDATE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF ACC+ESS LIMITED- MANUFACTURERS OF THE PROTOCAB WIRELESS MODEL RAILWAY CONTROL SYSTEM

Edited for you by Tony Hagon, Director, Acc+Ess Ltd

The Coronavirus Emergency - How it's affecting Acc+Ess

Up to the 23rd March, the effect of the Coronavirus on our activities had been less of a problem than other aspects of our business, which I will cover in this Update.

However, the UK government ordered a 'stay home' policy, effective from 26th March, which, although it has created an effect, is something with which we can have no possible objection, if we are all to help to stem the growth of this virus.

I have written to all Owners who pre-ordered the new products to let them know how the 'stay home' order is affecting the development of the new products.

Although we can get on with plenty of final developments at home, the development centre we were using in Cambridge has closed and the equipment they have, which is vital for our testing and development, is not accessible for the time being. It's no good even considering alternatives, because not only would this involve non-essential travel, but they would probably be closed too. We cannot predict, any more than the government can, when the restrictions will be lifted, so the new products are 'on ice' for the moment. Except for what we can still do at home, which would be undertaken anyway as part of the

development, so it's not all bad news.

Are we confident that we will be able to carry on in a reasonable timescale? Yes, very much so, and if you didn't pre-order in the timescale up to New Year's Eve, it's not too late. Please go to our website, protocab.com, where you can choose your options against a 10% deposit. Remember, we are still aiming for the 100% target which we didn't achieve at the end of last year. Hitting that target will enable us to bring the new products to you that much sooner -once we are over this present emergency. Stay safe and stay at home!

If the coronavirus hadn't taken hold...

Let's wind the clock back to before March, indeed, the beginning of the year, when the coronavirus may have appeared to be someone else's problem. In fact, let's go back to November of last year. Acc+Ess was in a dilemma.

We were in the middle of the pre-order programme and hoping that we could achieve the target that would enable us to order the level of product volumes that would let us offer the prices to you as advertised. It would also enable us effectively to replace the Pilot Series products with the greatly enhanced features of the new products. But you will recall from the frequent updates that we sent you, the number of pre-orders was considerably below the straight line of the target. This suggested that we couldn't go ahead with the new products and would continue with supplying the Pilot

Series products for the time being. Back in September, we exhausted stocks of key components for the 0201 Direct Controller, notably the membrane keypad. We attempted to secure new stocks, to discover that the supplier who had previously designed and supplied this vital item, was no longer trading. It would mean a substantial upfront cost for a different supplier to produce it, plus several months' delay. In January, we exhausted the last of the stock of 0502 Locomotive Control Units and a similar discussion was held internally about re-ordering these units, given the minimum volume we would have to order and the sales turnover of the 0502, and, importantly, the plan to replace the 0502 with the new 0505. Our inability to satisfy new Starter Set orders due to the non-availability of the 0201 Direct

Controller is one thing.

But not being able to satisfy existing Owners wanting to increase their Protocab-fitted fleet is very much a different matter.

We have plenty of batteries and the 9601 Plug Charging Unit, so having the 0502 LCU back in stock will enable us to fulfil the 0052 Locomotive Sets to enable you to grow your fleet. However, we need to know whether we can restock these items with a strong degree of confidence that you will want them in a reasonable timescale. To that end, we would like to place on order 25 0502 LCUs from our suppliers, but in order to confirm this would you please let me have your likely demand over the next few months. Once we reach that target of 25 we can reorder for a delivery in around six weeks.