



Newsletter

Issue 55: October 2017 Editor: Allan Trotter
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Editorial.

The Ascent of Mediocrity.

In the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's the British Railways management seemed to be on a death wish and only wanted to provide second-rate services and not any higher quality, higher revenue generating services. This was illustrated for example by the demise of the Bournemouth Belle in 1967, the Midland and Western Blue Pullmans, the Golden Arrow and the Brighton Belle in 1972, the Night Ferry in 1980 and finally the Manchester and Liverpool Pullmans in the late 1980's epitomised this myopic attitude. In fact now only one solitary train operating company provides restaurant cars with Pullman standard silver service dining and that is GWR between London Paddington and South Wales and South West England. Whether this quality of service will survive after the replacement of the HST by the new electric and dual mode IEP trains is very doubtful as no proper kitchen facilities are incorporated within the new trains.

The extinction of prestige services seemed such an incompetent approach to revenue generation. Just observe the situation today. The many charter trains that are operating currently always sell out well in advance, especially in Pullman and Premier Dining class.

Even within the freight business, the closure of the only railway route across the Pennines that had a sufficient loading gauge to carry international containers and was also electrified succumbed to these inept business decisions. Perhaps the manager who made this particularly illogical decision went on for another career with Eddie Stobart.

This deteriorating of the quality of accommodation and the subsequent overcrowding of passengers is still continuing right up to the present day. Current Minister of Transport Grayling is proposing the reduction or even the total elimination of first class facilities from many trains, to be enforced through franchise contracts. Well seeing he has his own private limousine on call and does not have to travel by train. The obvious and simple solution is of course to provide more passenger carriages! After all, an eight car train does not require any more track paths than a two car one. This option is much less expensive and much quicker to implement than all this HS2 & HS3 nonsense.

This contempt of the customer is not just confined to trains though. To quote the head honcho of Ryanair, Michael O'Leary, he stated about his airline service that "It's only a f***** bus that flies". This really is an insult to the Stagecoach X2 bus service which has much superior seat spacing and passenger accommodation than any aeroplane.

Diary of forthcoming events.

30 th Sep-1 st Oct 2017	Binns exhibiting at the Wigan finescale exhibition
10 th Oct 2017	Committee meeting, open to all members
18 th Nov 2017	Family Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints Church Hall
23-24-25 th Feb 2018	Monsal Dale exhibiting at Modelrail Scotland, Glasgow
24 th Feb 2018	Canadian Pacific, Southport Lecture Society, Jim Ford
10 th Mar 2018	Night Ferry, Southport Lecture Society, Allan Trotter
28 th Apr 2018	Spring Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints Church Hall

Obituary – Derek Davies.

We first met Derek at our Exhibition at Birkdale High School in September 2009. Derek & Jenny had recently moved to Southport to be near to family. He had been unaware of our existence and joined immediately. They were living at Shaftesbury Avenue in Birkdale where Derek had built a small outdoor OO Garden Railway to supplement his rather larger West Country based OO in their garage. He loved all things Great Western and was a most positive gregarious enthusiast.

In 2013 Derek & Jenny decided to move to Australia to join family who had emigrated some little while before. We helped Derek pack up all this stock for shipment to other side of world and said fond farewells. Derek never forgot his links with us. Every year he was our most distant Member sending his Subscription without needing to be reminded. Derek passed away early on Friday morning the 18th of August. He was in hospital and very peaceful. We shall treasure his memory as a great modeller and a good friend.
Tony Kuivala.

Chairman's Report.

Not a huge amount to talk about this month. We had our monthly committee at the beginning of the month, the main topics of discussion being the progress with the building renovation and the forthcoming Model Railway Show.

With regards to the building work, not a great deal appears to have been done over the month of August but there was a brief burst of activity earlier this month when the scaffolding came down and new doors were fitted all round, with a double glazed window in the entrance vestibule. Unfortunately the old front and back doors were disposed of before we were able to reclaim the locks. Consequently your old keys will no longer work. I have new ones available (and can get more) but they will require a returnable deposit of £5 for one. There is still a surprising amount of work to be completed, painting the woodwork, finishing of the pointing, renewing the roof over the kitchen, re-wiring the panelling on the kitchen (trackside), re-establishing the outflow from the kitchen sink and not least putting back the downspouts on both the east and west elevation. This latter job is urgent since rain is washing over the newly pointed bricks and is coming through into rooms.

Planning for the autumn show, Saturday 18th November, is progressing slowly but surely. Jim is organising the layouts, more details later, the room is booked, fliers have been printed and available in the Clubroom for you to pick up and distribute and we have a selection of donated model railway items to sell. We will be asking for help to put up posters outside schools (probably from 6th November), to put up road signs on the Thursday before the show, and help on the Friday night setting up. Of course it goes without saying that your presence on the day of the show will be much appreciated.

I think that is it for this month, apart from mentioning that Clairmont Old Quay is in the process of being rewired to improve operation and make fault finding easier. Fishy Tales track work is well on the way to being sorted out. Hopefully it may be possible to run something in the near future.

By the time you read this, Tony will have reached the age when one has to reapply to the DVLA for a driving license. Hopefully he does not have to do the same to all the various railway establishments, standard, narrow and garden that he is associated with. SMRS wishes him all the best on this particular milestone.



On a personal note, we have just returned from a trip to Sicily where there appears to be a reasonably extensive network of railway tracks. However, I did not see evidence of much traffic. There were a few wagons parked in some sidings near the central town of Enna and also close to Catania airport.



We did however pass by the very fine Giardini-Taormina railway station in the shadow of Mount Etna with its renowned mosaics. Although pointed out to us by our guide, we did not have opportunity to stop and inspect, perhaps another time. Apart from a single sighting of a 3-car unit on the line from Messina to Syracuse, the only other train seen was the ubiquitous one at the base station on Mount Etna. **Ian Shulver.**

Secretary's Report.

This month there is a picture illustrating the progress which is being made with track alignment on Fishy Tales. Network Rail's contractors are still working on the building and although the pointing and roofing work is largely complete, I had reason to contact them recently due to damp penetration of the walls below the gutters.



It seems that the downpipes have been left off and there has been unheralded precipitation this month. Our property contact has been asked to ensure that down pipes are put in place to prevent further damage to the plaster work. We are continuing to work on gathering an array of layouts for the forthcoming Family event, but are giving some thought to communications with our friends and fellow travellers who are not currently members and who therefore don't receive the newsletter. It has been suggested to the Committee that we issue an occasional e-mail to these "Friends of SMRC" to keep them informed as to our activities. If you can think of people to whom this might apply, then please let the secretary or another committee member know. I am off on another trip on the 14th October; therefore I won't be in a position to contribute to the November newsletter as we will not be home until 16th November. **Jim Ford.**

Treasurer's Report.

No report submitted.

Exhibition Coordinator's Report.

No report submitted.

Members' contributions.

Back to the Future - again.



I'm in London at the moment. Here is a photograph from yesterday, Sunday 10th September at London Euston. I thought I was seeing things.

Peter Mills.

ED. You certainly were not! This Class 86 locomotive, 86259 started out in life as E3137 in 1965-66 and was built by English Electric at the Vulcan Foundry, Newton-le-Willows. It is now indicated as being owned by the Peter

Pan Locomotive Company, Rail Operations Group Operational Locomotives and has been restored to an original British Rail colour scheme. It is named "Les Ross".

A Weegie & Scouse Goddess.



No, not some kind of dodgy vegetarian gourmet delicacy but actually a tram. Liverpool car 869, a "Streamliner" or better known as a "Green Goddess" is seen here in service at the Crich Tramway Museum in Derbyshire on the 16th September 2017. This car, along with 45 others had an extended life after they were retired from service in Liverpool in 1954. The canny Scots knew a good thing when they saw it and at a price of £500 each including delivery, the cars headed north for further service in Glasgow. Car 869 departed Liverpool in May 1954 and entered service in Glasgow in November 1955 as car 1055.

No doubt the extra work re-gauging the wheel sets contributed to the delay as Glasgow tramways were not standard gauge but some $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch narrower. The last Glasgow Green Goddess was retired in June 1960.

Only one Liverpool and Glasgow Green Goddess survives and that is car 869, saved by the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society and is currently in operation at the Crich Tramway Museum. **Allan Trotter.**

Dirty, oily and rusty – A first go at weathering.



This is my 16mm scale Darjeeling Class B, a few years old now and starting to look it. So, I thought, perhaps a candidate for a new experience for me, namely weathering. Until now I have resisted the temptation, without trying too hard, as although I can admire a well-weathered model as well as the next rivet-counter, I have never felt the need to try it out for myself. One reason possibly is that regular use of rolling stock in the external domestic

environment can, in time, do the job on its own, without any human intervention.



However, one Spring evening, after a short but pleasurable session running trains in the garden, I was flicking through some of my railway photos when I came upon some taken in 2004, on a trip to India and Nepal with Dr Ford and a dozen or so others. Tipong coal mine is in eastern Assam, not far from the border with Burma (hence the armed guards that accompanied us). It uses Class Bs to shunt the coal wagons,

and the locos are more weathered by the service than even the most ardent fan of the technique could wish for. So I had my subject, I just needed to find out how to do it.

One of the modelling magazines (I forget which) had an article on the subject, so for once I read almost all the words from beginning to end, without speed-reading over the longer ones. For materials, I realised I needed one of nearly everything, so eBay supplied me with a Revell Weathering Set, supplemented by a 'Tamiya Weatherine Master' (I think it reads better in the original Japanese). The former contained a foam-tipped brush and several small pots of paint powder, and the latter a smaller brush and a palette of three oil-based colours, burnt blue, burnt red and oil stain (a sort of burnt grey).

To complete the outfit I acquired a Windsor & Newton water colour marker, probably not intended for weathering use but I was intrigued by the description of the colour shade in three languages: lamp black, noir de fume and negro de humo. No Japanese, unfortunately. And a steam loco would have plenty of coal dust liberally scattered over it, so some small pieces of coal liberated from the

West Lancashire Light Railway's waste pile were ground up, or rather down, to a not too over scale size.

The basic method seemed simple enough, just dip the brush into the container of choice and dab whatever comes out onto the area of loco selected. The clever part apparently is to know what to dab where, for example using burnt red to represent rust streaks on the roof or corroded bolts on the body panels. Trial and error was the order of the day, as it was quite easy to remove any misapplied material with a damp cloth and try again. The Revell instructions advised the purchaser in four languages to observe the prototype, and try to emulate what you saw. Apparently there were no limits to my creativity, in English, French, German or Spanish. So it was back to the photos.

It took quite a time, as once you start the whole loco needs to be done (unless you pretend some new panels have been added) and there is a surprisingly large number of square inches of metalwork on a Class B at 1:19 scale. Not to mention the edges, bends, creases and joints, all of which could be expected to accumulate dirt. A tricky area was the motion, which required to be weathered on all surfaces apart from where moving parts slid or rotated. Another aspect requiring care was merging one area into the next, to avoid sudden changes of colour. At least the larger size of the loco meant the weathering substances were relatively easy to apply. Doing it in OO would require not only smaller tools but also a steadier eye and preferably some artificial magnification.

Once I had reached my preferred level of scruffiness I discovered one disadvantage of weathering – the loco is very dirty to handle! A quick squirt of extra-hold hairspray alleviated this, but I still use string loops to lift the loco in and out of its cradle. It has nowhere near the level of grime exhibited on the Tipong originals, and I was not inclined to add any of the myriad bumps, dents, scrapes and holes that they possessed. But the loco looks realistic enough from the standard 6ft viewing distance, so overall I am fairly satisfied with my first attempt.

With a Summerlands chuffer in the chimney and a Slomo flywheel between the frames, it not only looks the part but can both chuff and crawl in a prototypical manner. So now I have more than just photographic reminders of past holidays. All that remains is to decide when we are going back. **Derek Pratt.**

Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway.

Twice a year, Myself and my brother Frank go to Lords to watch England play, we normally travel down on a Friday, watch the test match on the Saturday, we then have a railway day on the Sunday before returning home on the Monday. On our recent visit, there seemed to be more than the usual amount of track work being carried out, which meant that there were lots of rail replacement bus services running. Basically, it turns a day out into a pain in the backside.

Then, quite by chance, I became involved with a HRA event being planned for next year and the LBNGR came up. That got me thinking, I could visit the people who I needed to meet and visit a new railway for the first time. And to be honest, I've been put off going because when I've spoken to people over the years, some say it is good and some say that it's ok and some people said don't bother, they built lots of houses and you can't see anything! Not really knowing anything about the railway or the area, I looked at their website to find out a little bit more. I regularly look at other railway websites with my job and it is always interesting to see how different they are and how each railway presents itself. Well the History of this line seemed quite interesting and when I looked, there was a First World War themed event on with extra things to see. It meant an intensive service and extra things to see and do. So decision made, we were off to Leighton Buzzard.



The railway is the far side of town about 2 miles from the mainline station. There were ample taxis and we soon arrived at the railway in plenty of time to enjoy a coffee in the cafe. I was met by the person who I needed to see and he generously offered to take us around the site at Pages Park which is one end of the line where the engine shed and carriages are stored. The other end of the line is Stonehenge, named after the old quarry there, not to be

confused with the one in Wiltshire. We were shown around the site. There were some interesting steam locomotives to see from a vertical boiler locomotive to one rescued from India. I was told that the railway also had 40 diesel/Petrol locomotives, many of which were Simplex machines. Some of these were in action as part of the themed weekend.

For anyone like myself who had no knowledge of the railway or area. The railway started life in 1919 as a result of the First World War and problems of sourcing the right type of sand meant that the sand from Leighton Buzzard was in great demand. In fact, in its heyday, there were about 100 Simplex type machines working within a 2 mile radius of Leighton Buzzard. The line survived still moving sand by rail until the 1970's with the last recorded train movement of sand from a quarry being made in the early 1980's. Strangely enough, sand is still exported to Saudi Arabia and other states in that region today from Leighton Buzzard!

Then at the start of 1967, enthusiasts were planning to build a railway in Watford and visited Leighton Buzzard with a view to buying some track. The track was not for sale, but an agreement was made to run passenger trains on the track at weekends and the use of a temporary workshop was also agreed. This began the passenger running years as up until now, it had been a freight

only line. Well at the end of the month, they will be celebrating 50 years of running passenger trains by volunteers and attract 16-17'000 visitors annually.

Well the time for departure arrived and we set off. Well yes, it did run past the backs of lots of houses for the first mile or so, there must have been a big increase in building in the local area from the 1980's onwards judging by the age and style of the buildings which has encroached onto the railway. It does slightly put you off as you don't see much. However there are gradients from 1:25 and 1:45 on the line and the small locomotives have to work very hard.



After a mile or so, there is a passing place and soon after that, you escape urbanisation and head out into the countryside for the remainder of the journey the other end of the line at Stonehenge. You had a choice upon arrival; you could go back on the service train or stay and enjoy a ride on a Simplex which was one of the themed activities on offer. The idea being that the station was a forward operating area behind the front lines on

the trenches and the simplex train was moving troops forward. We were offered a choice of standing or sitting on hey bails in the open wagons. I plumped for standing, not really believing that the railway could get away with it in this age of health and stupidity. Well the two Simplex machines set off with the seated passers whilst another passenger and I were left behind and after a short distance went through enormous cloud of smoke and disappeared. This was created by a smoke grenade and some of the re-enactors were on hand to explain what had happened and why. The train was simulating a Pals Battalion that arrived together and the train was split, men staying whilst their friends disappeared towards the front and were never seen again. It was a simple but effective way to highlight how your fate could be sealed by luck etc. A lot of thought and effort was it into this part of the event and it was carefully explained to my fellow visitors.



At the Stonehenge site, there were lots to see including various other Simplex machines, a fire train from an RAF site, an excavator used in the quarrying of the sand, a display of wagons that carried a wide variety of loads from shells for a rail mounted gun to special wagons that went straight into the kiln loaded with bricks. It is not a big site, but there are lots to see and later in the afternoon, we did a second round trip and there was plenty of time to have another look about at the bits that we missed the first time.

The Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway is an excellent railway to visit where the people are very friendly and welcoming. The railway has a pleasant relaxing, if slightly parochial feel where volunteers took time out to welcome all.

I recommend a visit if you are in the area, it's a grand day out. **Peter Mills.**

Epilogue.

If you are considering an excursion by aeroplane and with all the current disruption, it may be worth considering this amended children's' nursery rhyme.

***One, two, three O'Leary,
Customers betrayed severely,
Passengers, they're oh so weary,
Grounded planes, they'll cost you dearly,
The web's favourite airline, yea, oh really,
Who's a silly, greedy Mick then?***

Or you may want to check out this web site for more.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVASZ2ICY5Y>

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