



NEWSLETTER 118 : Feb 2023

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Editorial

Andrew Chrysler

It seems that I may have spoken too soon. No sooner had I sent out last month's newsletter that the Hythe Ferry made the following announcement...

PRESS RELEASE.

GOOD NEWS.

Re The future of Hythe Ferry.

Thursday 29th December 2022.

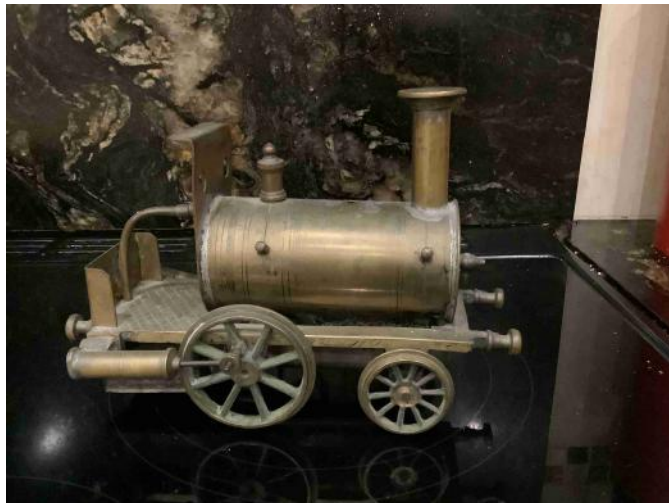
With the recent announcement of Hythe Ferry ceasing operation, there has been several parties interested in taking on or purchasing the business and continuing the Ferry Service.

At this moment in time, the ferry will continue to operate under Blue Funnel while discussions continue with a potential new owner/operator.

We strongly urge you to support the ferry during this period, and show your love of the vital link, while we hopefully complete the transition to a new operator. Confidential discussions mean no names will be released at this period in time.

We are booked to stay at a hotel in Hythe this summer, for the night before boarding a cruise ship in Southampton, and while the ferry is not crucial to our journey (It's for foot passengers only and we will be in a car) it would be a shame for this service - and the associated pier train - to end. No doubt it will be a topic of conversation at the hotel bar, so I may have more to report in a few months. In the meantime, Stuart Chapman has posted a 3 minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2ix2PiCUxU>

Also this summer, we will be making our regular visit to the Isle of Wight where a lot of work has been undertaken both at Ryde Esplanade station and on Ryde Pier. Last summer the work on the Esplanade was already underway, with temporary toilets replacing the demolished ones in Western Gardens. The station - almost 160 years old - is being given a major facelift with the addition of a cafe, new toilets and a cash machine (for those who still use cash!) Work on the pier is scheduled to be complete in Spring, but I wonder whether this deadline will be achieved - after the recent works for the rest of the railway over-ran dramatically.



Following on from last month's article on the history of railway modelling (which concludes with part 2 in this issue) Ian Shulver has contributed this photograph of his "Birmingham Dribbler" which he has been reluctant to put into steam due to the somewhat rudimentary safety valve.

Photo Credit - Ian Shulver

From 25th May, it will be possible to travel by train to Berlin in just 16 hours, with the Eurostar from St Pancras (15:04 departure) arriving at Brussels Midi at 18:04 with the European sleeper train departing at 19:22 (Mon, Wed and Fri) arriving in Berlin (Hauptbahnhof) at 06:48 the following morning. If the details in "Time Out" are correct, the prices seem extremely attractive.

https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/you-can-get-from-london-to-berlin-in-just-16-hours-thanks-to-a-new-sleeper-train-123022?fbclid=IwAR2fXnGP1bypS9KI0KYa6NcDnvWx_Yauu9s9f5G691wi88NEmdgtWZuK2t4

When I clicked onto the Time Out website, the banner advert was for Aer Lingus - which seemed slightly odd...

This New Year marks 100 years since the creation of the "Big Four" railway companies following the Railways Act 1921 which brought most UK railways under one of four "umbrellas" although a few joint lines were left outside the act - the Cheshire Lines Committee which was a joint LMS/LNER operation (and largest in terms of both passenger and freight traffic), the Midland and Great Northern, also a joint LMS/LNER operation (and largest in terms of route mileage) and the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway, a joint LMS/SR concern.

An article about the LNER can be found at:

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-11579787/The-Flying-Scotsman-hotel-J-K-Rowling-wrote-Harry-Potter-LNERs-history-turns-100.html



The Isle of Wight steam railway is putting on an exhibition to mark the anniversary. Their station building, together with a passing loop and island platform was built during the Southern Railways phase, replacing the far more simple structure of previous years.



Photos Credit - Isle of Wight steam railway / Facebook

A short article celebrating 100 years of the Southern Railway, written by a modeller (Graham Muspratt), can be read at:

<https://southern-railway.com/2023/01/01/marking-100-years-since-the-formation-of-the-southern-railway-a-potted-history/>

This is written after January has concluded as we held a very important Committee Meeting on the evening of the 31st. I have to confess that as a month of the calendar, January does nothing for me. This is not a new reflection. I have shared this "nothingness" with colleagues and friends over 40 plus years. Christmas and New Year have come and gone. There is no longer the magic in the air and Carols being played in the shops. The reality of life resumes. Bills drop through my letter and email boxes. This year, and in common with some ex-colleagues, we detect that January has flown by rather than its usual dragging on and on. The nights are lighter. Winter weather has been an improvement on what was expected. Our Tuesday night attendances remain at high levels. We are receiving enquiries about Membership.

Dare we move from hope (which I mentioned last month) into positive progress? I think the answer is YES. Thursday mornings are set to become more active as days get warmer and Colin as Facilities Manager seeks you out with his lists of improvements. Just before Christmas Barry and Rowan deep cleaned the kitchen – great effort, thank you. We have to keep this high level at that level. Thanks to Ian S's efforts our Electricity Account with Scottish Power has returned to a sound footing. The arrears (which were false accounting if truth be known) are gone and we are well in credit. Since our new Smart Meter was installed on 30th September our consumption as at 31st January is 108 units, in real money £100 including standing charges and VAT. We are warm on Tuesday nights and Thursday mornings.

Out of nowhere I was contacted and passed on all the publicity about Skills Week run by World of Railways, part of Warners Group Publications. Did anyone participate? The content looked impressive - well balanced and entirely relevant. We will be commencing our own classes in the short term now that Colin is fit and active again.

Five or six of us ventured out on a Thursday afternoon to Hesketh Bank for West Lancs Classic Trains second event. Speaking personally this was one of my January highlights. The weather was reasonable, bright and dry. The venue was spot on. We needed not to have wondered about a brew as admission included one plus biscuits. Good Catering equals happy punters. Hornby TinPlate in more than one form, Three Rail in 00 and O plus more all largely from the pre 1970 era. It is not just what we saw but who we met –

it might sound a bit childish but nothing happens except through people. Those we met wanted to share their passions with others. We are a broad church of scales, periods, preferred locations, Great Britain or otherwise. It is the people that bind us together.

My finale to January was a large box delivered by UPS. Our 50th Anniversary garments have arrived. These will be available for collection from next Tuesday night. Each lucky recipient will receive an invoice from me. SMRS will pay Balmoral the week after next, you will pay SMRS by the end of February please. There were no charges levied for embroidery or delivery so items are at the prices you saw last autumn.

Timothy has written words about the results of the Committee Meeting. My thoughts are around background issues. Please put these dates in your diary. We have picked the 20th May date for the Anniversary to use a blank weekend between the multiple Bank Holidays. By kind invitation of Fiona Ford we are using her gardens. Later on we have a BBQ in our gardens at Portland Street. There will be an evening special dinner at an outside establishment. More details will follow. Pre Covid we would have held our Annual General Meeting at a user friendly external location. This will resume in 2023. The date will be Tuesday 18th April. This is a month earlier than usual to avoid too much happening in too short a time scale. Formal notices will be distributed in due time.

An important part of the Annual General Meeting will be to adopt a revised and updated Version 8 of the Constitution. Things have moved on significantly over the last ten years. A review was undertaken four years ago. The results were in draft form and being updated for 2023. Now that Covid is behind us, now we are stable, viable and moving forward, this is the time to deal with such an important matter.

Details of 2023 Sleeper Trip options were circulated last month. Response was disappointing. I will be recirculating next week. Deadline is now absolute as bookings have to be made immediately after a decision is made. The more people who travel the harder it is to find suitable accommodation. Broad brush all inclusive cost including your meals is range circa £600 to £1000 per person as there are numerous options.

An article in this month's railway modeller detailing a couple helping sell hand made models on behalf of those who had died got me thinking. There is only one inevitability and that is death. Clearing a deceased person's belongings is stressful particularly when a skip or the tip is the destination. I wonder how many of us when building layouts factor in the layouts being disposed of in due course. Whilst rolling stock can usually be sold or given away, what about the rest of the layout? Can the buildings be recovered without causing damage to them? What about the boards themselves?

It may be that your layout is already a 'permanent fixture' but have you discussed with those who will be sorting the estate what they should do with your prized possession? I was part of a discussion of what to do with a large layout that was in a custom made room. The layout has stood unused for some time after the bereavement. The family did not know where to start with disposal of the layout.

Might I suggest that you give thought to this situation? It might be a folder with useful information about the layout, for example a wiring diagram, if any rolling stock has high/special value and how to dispose of it would assist those left behind, potentially reducing their burden.

At last night's committee meeting (31st January 2023) it was confirmed that Colin Hardwick (Honorary Facilities Manager) is authorised to progress minor repairs and improvements to the club house. He has a list of 'things to do' from fixing handrails to painting. May I invite you to speak to him to arrange to undertake these?

I have previously written that this is the members club and the members need to be involved in the practical side of running it. We are introducing a kitchen and toilet rota. We do not want the good work of Barry and Rowan, who cleaned the kitchen at Christmas to be undone.

Please note that the club **does not** have a fairy who hoovers or a fairy who empties the bins. Again please 'muck in'. I am adding 'housekeeping' to the next committee meeting agenda when we will review progress.

50th Anniversary Exhibition Layout

To celebrate 50 years of our club the committee announced a competition to design an exhibition layout. We are looking for the 'vision' of the layout so a note or bullet points are acceptable. The criteria is that it can be transported in a car. Can be carried by no more than two.

The scale, theme, location of the layout is yours. Costs will be defrayed by the club. The most important factor is that of the WOW factor. We want this to be a statement layout reflecting how our club will be moving forward. Something we can be proud of.

The winner will be announced at the AGM, so the closing date for entries is 4 April.

Dates for your diary

27th February 2023 Colin Hardwick will be demonstrating CPR and other first aid techniques. Please contact him directly to book a place limited to six participants. I think this is incredibly important. We know that the NHS is under pressure. Being able to do first aid provides assistance to those needing treatment and can literally mean the difference between life and death. I undertook a three day course with St John's last year for this very reason.

14 or 21 March (TBC) - committee meeting

18 April - AGM - location to be confirmed

20 May - Anniversary event (further details to follow)

Where's Andrew?

Last month, I was in Darlington, at the Brick Train - a sculpture created in 1997 by artist David Mach from 185,000 Accrington bricks. This has resulted in the largest number of correct answers in the (admittedly short) history of "Where's Andrew?" with correct answers coming from Tony Kuivala, Derek Pratt and Ian Shulver. Perhaps I can understand the level of response because it has been pointed out to me that this location was visited on the 2018 sleeper trip...

This month I am at a building through which a train passes. But where am I?



Photo Credit - Wikimedia

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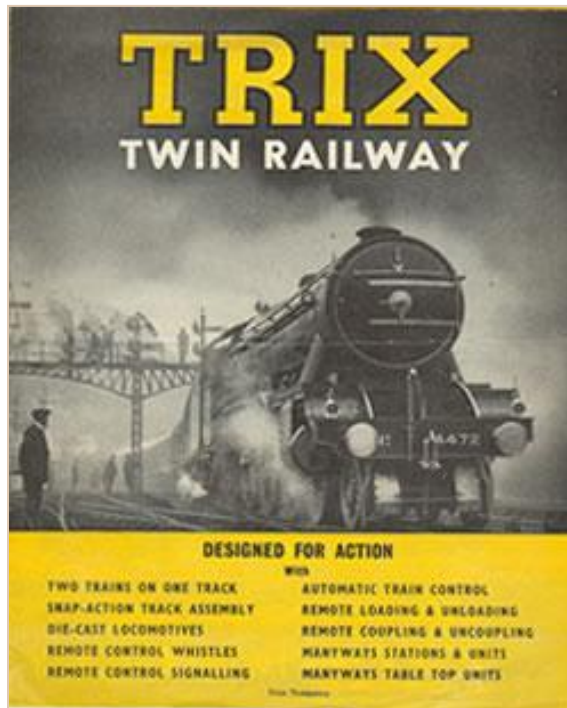
At the same time as Marklin was introducing the toy train to Europe America was experimenting with electrical novelties. One result was that several ranges of electric toy trains were available from the later 1890s which in their size and use of home-assembled two rail tracks rather resembled the pre-Marklin type of train. But they had a following, despite plenty of German imports. Also from 1900, Ives, an established US toy maker decided to compete with the likes of Bing with clockwork tinplate trains in gauges O and 1. As will happen, fusion occurred, in that Lionel, one of the 'novelty' makers, adopted European style tinplate tracks and some constructional approaches, but only offered electric trains. All of which kept the Germans innovative.

All of this meant that during the Edwardian period and up to 1914 the toy train matured. Marklin and Bing still largely set the agenda, but they had to take some note as to what the English gentlemen and their US rivals were doing. The result was some beautiful toys, larger, more realistic and yet still quite toy-like. Model Pacifics appeared, rather than improbable express 0-4-0s (though the latter dominated the cheaper sets). Live steam was available if required and electricity was becoming a more common form of propulsion, though in Europe clockwork was probably still No 1 even for top of the range items.

All that was to change after 1914. Germany was largely unable to export to its main markets and so local toy train industries began to spring up or expand. In Europe this generally happened after the war, with, for example, the development of Hornby Trains by Frank Hornby of Meccano fame in Britain and JEP in France. Local production also got underway in Switzerland.

In the US the curtailment of German - made toys allowed the existing local makers to dominate the domestic market, so Lionel, Ives and American Flyer could battle for the hearts and minds of American boyhood, and a little later Marx (Louis not Karl) provided toy trains for the proletariat. While the German makers did try to win back their old markets, anti-German feeling

and the advent of protectionism meant that they never really threatened the domestic producers in Britain, France or the US. However, the rest of Europe and the domestic market was open to them.



In terms of product there were a number of trends. One was the advent of still smaller scales. OO and HO gauge grew from a collaboration between Bing and Bassett-Lowke, designed by Henry Greenly, for a table top toy. These first models were really just toys and since the same tooling was used for UK, US and German outline trains the scale was a bit debatable. In fact as a toy the Bing TableTop system was not a runaway success, but what it triggered was a great deal of interest by adult modellers in this size of train. As a result two new scales emerged (HO 1/87 scale) and (OO 1/76) both in Britain using the same track gauge, although ultimately OO gauge became the premier scale.

During the 1930s, O Gauge that had been the leading scale, gradually lost ground to the smaller scales and in 1938, Hornby (owned by Meccano) launched Hornby Dublo ,a much more realistic set of electric (12 volt DC) and clockwork model trains than Trix Twin (14 volts AC), that had been launched into the British market by Bassett Lowke as the TableTop railway and with the ability to run two trains on one track. Hornby's own O gauge models had gradually become more sophisticated but never really matched the quality of Bassett Lowke's models. However even the cheaper Bassett Lowke models were generally too expensive for most people and Hornby catered for this market.

During the 1920s and 1930s, model railways became a hobby and not just for the rich enthusiast. Magazines such as the Model Railway News and Model Railway Constructor placed an emphasis on home construction and better standards. There was also the growth of smaller manufacturers aimed

squarely at this adult enthusiast rather than toy market. In the US in particular this led to the early adoption of standards suitable for modelling (the NMRA was founded in 1934).

The toy makers took notice of these developments. While most toy trains were sold for children, they were sold to parents. And if Dad could be enticed to be a more active player, then perhaps more would be bought! Whatever the influence as the 30s went by, the better toy trains became much more realistic, adopting shapes, colours and markings much more like the real thing. By 1938 in the US, Germany and Britain there were second generation OO or HO scale systems from major toy makers that set new standards in realism.

The advent of WW2 saw the model railway makers switching to war related production. Of the leading toy train players only the US avoided major physical damage during the war and its economy was in good shape too, so it not surprisingly got going with both toy and model train production much sooner than Europe. Perhaps as a reaction to war the US toy trains in some ways became more toy-like, with emphasis on extra features such as smoke or action cars. But at the same time model railroading blossomed, with the emphasis on HO scale trains which gradually took their place in the toy market as well.

In Europe it took longer for the manufacturers to restart production, and when they did the emphasis was on the OO in Britain and HO in the rest of Europe. Although Hornby continued with its toy-like O gauge trains, its major emphasis was on the Hornby Dublo range. Probably until the late 1950s Hornby Dublo was the leading and most realistic range of mass produced model trains in the UK. But Hornby made a fatal technical and marketing mistake by sticking with 3 rail tracks i.e. a middle rail for the electrical pickup.

New players came into the market, with more realistic two rail tracks such as Fleischmann in Germany, Rivarossi in Italy and Rovex-Triang in Britain. These new ranges adopted 12v DC two-rail standards from the start. Hornby Dublo only introduced 2 rails at the end of the 1950s which was too late to compete effectively.



Toy and model trains were a major market during the Fifties. They were produced in their thousands and tens of thousands. But throughout the world real railways were losing their pivotal role in transport to the car and plane, and so was the toy train in the imagination and desires of children. What is more, the great post war 'boom' or 'bulge' of children were growing up, and the total market for toys was

shrinking. So it was that the toy train market declined, some long established brands disappeared and others consolidated to survive. Sadly, the Sixties did not swing a lot for the toy train.

Today the model railway is still very much with us and in a wider range than ever before. Apart from various scales and gauges, we have items clearly made for the adult enthusiast modeller, others for the collector, others thankfully still for children. Ironically the market has come full circle as Hornby has launched its "live steam" 00 gauge models of the Gresley A4 and Flying Scotsman, worthy successors to the Birmingham Dribbler!

Photos credit - Nick Booker collection.

And Finally...



John Martin



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India was the first country to sell fruit and veg online!



Photo Credit - John Martin / Facebook