



NEWSLETTER 91 : Nov 2020

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Editorial

While looking through previous issues of the Society's newsletter, my attention was taken by an article from November 2017, in which Ian Shulver shares a Daily Telegraph article on "the world's scariest but most beautiful train journeys" and I'm pleased to be able to say that I have travelled on two of these - while unarguably beautiful, they weren't particularly scary. No. 2, the White Pass and Yukon Route (or Wait Patiently and You'll Ride) was the most memorable, originally a route for pack horses created for the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897 opened in 1900 and - just like the railway in last month's "Where's Andrew" - is marketed as a tourist attraction to cruise ship passengers. We took the first 67 miles from Skagway to Carcross for a round trip, although the excursion is also available travelling the full 107 miles in one direction, returning by road (or vice-versa). Leaving the snow of Alaska and entering the almost spring-like surroundings of Carcross is an unexpected surprise. This railway does not connect with any other lines, but that's not exactly surprising for Alaska, where the State Capital, Juneau, has roads, but no road access.

No. 5, Norway's Flamsbana is used as a means of public transport - connecting at Myrdal on the railway from Oslo to Bergen - as well as a tourist attraction, but is no less spectacular for that. There was a photo stop for the waterfalls but we were back on the train within only a couple of minutes, helped by the rather cold wind. There is a museum (free to enter) alongside the station at Flaam and souvenirs are available from the shop - although a second mortgage is advisable, as it is for any shopping or eating out in Norway.

Events Diary.

There is a weekly "zoom" meeting. The link for this meeting is sent by email each week. Please be certain to use the current link, old ones will not work.

Chairman's Notes.

Well, another month has gone and it feels as though we are back to square one with regard to returning to normal life. The weather has not helped either with copious amounts of rain. Talking of which, it has obviously found some defective areas in the roof of the new shed. Fortunately water does not appear to be getting into the shed, but the wooden roof is very wet and soggy in place. A small group of us (the shed subcommittee) has been looking at various options. We have received a quote for reroofing but this was what one might call extortionate. A replacement shed (plastic or metal) was also rejected for the moment (available sizes not ideal), so as a temporary measure we will throw a tarpaulin over the roof and reassess thing in the spring when hopefully the weather is better. Tony, Frank and Jim have kindly offered to cover the roof with the tarpaulin and secure it.

On HS16.5, I have wired up the point motors on the inner track back to the control panel and these seem to be working satisfactorily now. The outer track ones are still to be completed but it is nearly there. One of these point motors is sticking so will either need adjusting or replacing. I am hoping to purchase some track for my own planned layout shortly and will at the same time add to the order a couple of boxes of 9mm flexitrack so that when Covid restrictions allow we can commence laying HS9.

As you will be aware, we unfortunately will not be having our autumn exhibition this year. However we do hope to have a virtual one ready in

time for Christmas. I understand that Barry is a whizz with "moviemaker" and has offered to put a series of videos of our layouts. We will therefore be looking for video clips of your own layout and/or modelling projects. But more details later. I think that is all for now, the managing director has indicated that since it is a beautiful sunny day we should go out for a walk on the sand dunes.

Ian Shulver

Secretary's Notes.

Well I for one am always relieved when Autumn stops pretending it is Summer and reminds us of the Winter to come; however this afternoon was quite pleasant, allowing us to sit sheltered from the wind in our summerhouse and read the Weekend Newspapers.

Having been quite snooty over the years about our hobby, Sunday's Observer carried an article (<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/oct/25/we-are-railing-britain-embraces-the-joys-of-the-humble-train-set>) revealing how much our hobby has expanded in recent months over the lockdown. According to Richard Davies, Managing Director of that well known den of iniquity, Hattons, sales are at least 50% up, and Peco have had to recruit more staff with Steve Haynes, their sales and export manager commenting that sales have been 'relentless'. It seems that since it has been revealed that our hobby has attracted celebrities like Rod Stewart and Jools Holland, we have suddenly become respectable if not quite mainstream. Maybe the TV programmes have helped. As a hobby it really isn't any more geeky than computer games.

This week I was on the receiving end of a blast from the past, as I was contacted by Nick Sandys who used to run Collectors Alley in Wesley Street, where he employed our late member, Keith Gregory. Nick reflected affectionately about Keith and I was able to tell him about how we carried out his last request just over two years ago by scattering his ashes in the Brynglas Memorial Garden on the Talylyn Railway where Keith had been a very early volunteer. Keith had (prior to his migration north) been a member of the Twickenham club and on one occasion, perhaps 25 years ago, he led us on an expedition to visit their exhibition. It always intrigues me as a

true-born "sandgrunder" 3 of whose 4 children have migrated away, just how many of our members come from "Daarn Saarth" and have migrated north for various reasons. Maybe it is something to do with the air - or the model railways!

Anyway, Nick has a request as he is looking for help checking a very large Model Railway collection which has come into his hands. He tells me that he will be happy to pay 'very well' for any members' time and would be happy for them to take the items away to assess- I suspect that Nick will be undertaking the valuation as he is a regular dealer, but if you are interested, please feel free to contact him on mintinboxuk@aol.com. The collection is from the estate of the late John Rimmer, whom most of you will be familiar with. John was also of course a member for a number of years, and for those who have many times heard his diatribes on the NRM, Flying Scumbag (as he called it) and Union of South Africa, it will be interesting to see if these two locos feature in his collection. Surprisingly I understand that John left his estate to the NRM, which is presumably how Nick came to acquire it.

I am still attending the club, mostly on my own to play trains on HS 16.5 on Tuesday late afternoon or evening. Last week, Colin joined me for part of the time and I reckon we should be safe if we wear masks and each keep to one room, and wash hands etc. Conforming to the lockdown rules is very important but too much isolation will send us insane! If you are going to the club, please indicate so by posting on our Whatsapp or text or call either myself or ian - this is also important for safety reasons if you are being there on your own.

Jim Ford

Where's Andrew?

Just one correct answer last month - Ian Shulver - who mentioned that the St Kitts Scenic Railway was the subject of an article in the May 2018 newsletter!

For this month, we are closer to home (as indeed we all are at present!). This photograph was taken on our visit last year, but we have visited this narrow gauge railway several times. It was originally laid around a holiday camp before relocating a couple of miles to its current coastal location.



Two bonus questions this month... what was the nickname of the branch line train that carried holidaymakers to this seaside location - and what was the name of the holiday camp where the line was originally established?

Any answers to:

apc253@gmail.com

Stairway to.....Canalside Halt?

Frank Parkinson



This is another project commissioned during lockdown and was already underway when Barry announced 'Today we have been mostly doing skirting boards', when Andrew our esteemed Editor announced 'Today I've been mostly been working with caravan hook-ups.....and repairing underground power cables', each with accompanying photos on the Whatsapp group and when I announced 'Today I've been mostly doing staircases' as shown in the first picture.

The individual steps were cut from a sheet of 12mm MDF, this represents a scale 9"

riser, each step being overlapped to the next, clamped and glued as the flight grew. The finished staircase in the second picture was then coated with sanding sealer, MDF being very paint absorbent, followed by a couple of coats of Halfords rattle can grey primer for a suitably greyish stone/concrete type finish. The panel fencing above the parapet walls are once again more coffee stirrers. Stepping back from the structure, the large blank wall was a blank canvas crying out for detail. Step up one Rob Guinness 16mm MAWLAG co-ordinator who remarked that it could house an under-stair storage area. Once again out came the coffee stirrers - job done. I also had a few enamel style posters obtained from some show or another and decided upon the Daddies one for that little extra detail.

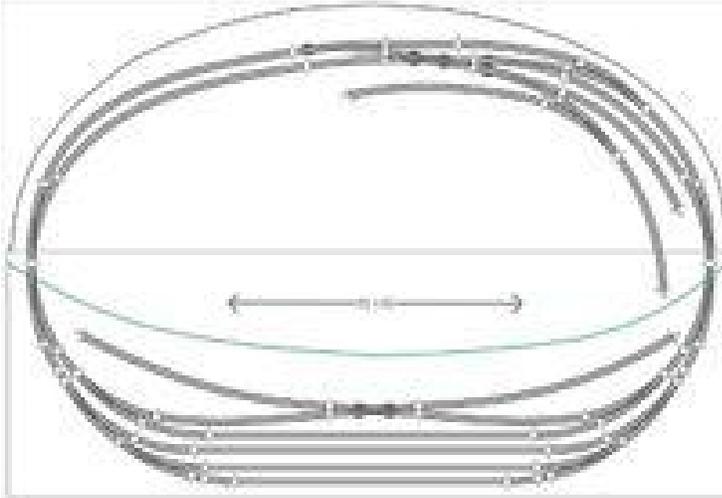


Finally, after waiting some four years since the halt was built, passengers alighting there no longer need to negotiate the rough terrain in order to reach street level. It seems the sleepy Moss Park Light Railway Co are awakening to their passenger's needs.

What can I use a spare sheet of plywood for? - Filleigh – part 1

Ian Shulver

During the summer months I had decided to make a start in clearing out my garage. As is usual, garages seem to accumulate a vast array of items which at the time was considered to be of potential use one day in the future. One, or rather two, of the items unearthed were sheets of plywood, each about 48" x 32" in old money, and wondered whether they might be suitable for turning into a railway baseboard. I do have a couple of small layouts at home, Watlington in N gauge and Aston Rowant in 2mm finescale (but as yet unfinished). However, both these layouts are effectively shunting layouts and with the current state of my eyes not ideal. But what could I build?



Although I much prefer building a layout based on a real location, with the size of the plywood to hand, some significant compromises would be required. Many years ago, I was heavily involved in constructing an N gauge layout based on Dulverton on the Somerset & Devon Railway midway between Taunton and Barnstaple. I

really thought I would like to revisit this station since it seemed to be ideal for what I wanted - a variety of through traffic (GW, LMS and Southern) as well as a modest goods yard, to operate when I hope my eyesight has improved, and also a branch line terminus. I also had a vast amount of information about the station, and the line in general. However, looking at the track plans, it appeared that realistically the layout would need to be at least 10ft in length to do it justice. Whilst not entirely rejecting the idea it was back to the drawing board and looking at other stations along the line, particularly if it was possible to accommodate one on a single 4ft board.



I was happy to make some compromise, for instance in the platform length, length and number of sidings (the bonus being a cost saving in the

amount of rolling stock needed), and curvatures of the line. However, the basic layout of the station, passing loops and goods facility had to be retained. In effect, to fit things onto the plywood sheet I had available meant that the station would need to be on a curve with the station building

and goods yard on the inside of that curve. The first station that seemed to fit my requirements was East Anstey, apart from the station being on the outside of the curve. Moving along the line I came to Filleigh. This seemed to have everything going for it including a road bridge at the eastern end which could act as a scenic break. It looked as though I could accommodate a four-coach train plus a mogul engine, but I did need to investigate whether it was viable with track and points that were available.

It was only recently that I became aware (September Modeller) that PECO made curved points, set-track, with an outside radius of 1ft, which made squeezing in an acceptable fiddle-yard and goods yard more feasible. To check that I could achieve what I wanted could be done, I used AnyRail to draw out the track plan. Luckily, there had been a recent update to the programme that included the set-track curved points. After some tweaking to get smooth curves and maximise the length of the passing loops, I arrived at a plan which looked doable. My next task was printing the plan out at full size and offering it up to the plywood sheets for a basic check on clearance etc. Locos, coaches, and wagons were placed on this for a check on the visual effect. The final pre planning task was to make a small visualisation model of the model (at a scale of 1:5) to see how buildings and scenery might fit together with the railway.



I have to say that I was pleased with the overall plan, although the station and goods yard looked a little cramped. Before doing any serious joinery, I will mull over whether it would be better to increase the overall length of the layout by about 300mm to address this issue. However that would involve the purchase of another couple of sheets of plywood. The fiddle yard was acceptable - effectively two roads each for the up and down trains, and two for short trains that could go in either direction (for a DMU, Bubblecar or Autotrain).

Next will be the preparation of the baseboard for accepting the track and then ordering the track. Once the track is in place it will be time for part 2, but that might, as the saying goes, be "some time" since the track seems to be in short supply at the moment. But in the meantime, a start might be made on constructing the station, goods shed, signal box etc.

10 years on – All My Yesterdays in October 2010 **Tony Kuivala**

October set off with a running start on the first day as I drove over to Great Central Railway at Loughborough. Duke of Gloucester had concluded summer holidays in the West Country by double heading with 6024 King Edward 1 to Plymouth and return to Bristol. I had missed this event as it coincided with SMRS's 37th Annual Model Railway Exhibition using for the third year Birkdale High School. This meant I missed a pleasant trip to Plymouth and the somewhat harder tasks of preparing 71000 for it's road trip to Loughborough and then unloading and Gauge Testing trials.



The Plan was that Duke would be available for Great Central's use throughout October. Their "Cromwell Pullman" Dining train was making its debut in revenue service. It is worth mentioning that Cromwell are the Engineering Company based in Leicester not

The Lord Protector of England. It was also their 40th Anniversary. As part of the celebrations they sponsored the full five carriage Pullman Dining rake and paid for Duke of Gloucester's road trip to Loughborough for hauling the Diners which ran three times each week for the month of October.

I arrived in good time on Friday 01st to establish a claim to a trip. Somewhat to my embarrassment I was politely instructed that I was to be part of the official on board guest group in the absence of two of our hierarchy and had been nominated by my Support Crew colleagues. The evening flew by. Company was excellent, the food was superb, the wine flowed freely, I was not paying and our Support Coach accommodation was 100m from where

we stabled the locomotive. Fortunately our diagram for Saturday was one



return trip for afternoon teas so not an early start. I did the decent thing and let my colleagues be guests on the train. On our return Hierarchy had arrived. We nodded knowingly when they wanted to take the Sunday Lunch train. As soon as that returned they disappeared off. We ran during the day on Wednesday, then evening dinner and the same again on Friday. The timings were quite neat for returning to Shed to take water in late afternoon as I was able to hop off footplate as I passed where my car was parked to drive back to Southport. Peter Mills' 40th was the following day at Scarisbrick Bowling Club. I dare not miss that.

The call of the wild rails was irresistible as I returned to Loughborough on the Monday for another interesting week. Wednesday was a repeat of the previous one. Thursday was a professionally organised Photo Shoot day based around North Eastern Railway J72 69023 which has just re-entered service after 10yearly overhaul and Gresley's K4 61994 "The Great Marquess". As Duke was not in steam (something to do with the £950 per day steaming fee) we played our part in stationary posture as head of London bound express in BR days on the main Up platform. This allowed me



to take images during the morning as 69023 and 61994 moved around. The afternoon session involved freight workings with 61994 about two miles outside station limits. There are no images as I was invited onto footplate to help relieve the



boredom and monotony (not my words.....) during stop start make smoke reverse stop start make steam, do it again as sun clouded across, repeat as we are changing our positions etc all to please the paying photographers. If I recall correctly the upwards of 30 paid £75 each including a sandwich lunch. I do not like firing

North Eastern locos as the "letter box" firing hole is quite awkward. On a photoshoot it is much simpler as you make up fire before moving off.

Duke ran in service on Friday, on Saturday and Sunday it was part Driver Experiences as well as Cromwell Pullmans. I took a day off on the Sunday. It was a glorious day. Then I committed a grievous sin. Duke was the only loco in steam. I accepted an invitation for a diesel ride. May I offer contrition and seek humble forgiveness please? There were two available. Brush Type 2 -



5830 - in strange brown livery. English Electric Type 1 - 8098 - was in green livery and with part yellow nose. I chose the latter as it was built at Vulcan Foundry in Newton le Willows. The ride was superb. I was even allowed to drive (under supervision). There are two seats in the cab. Each swivels through 180 degrees. In each position there is a full dashboard in front of you. I was

impressed with the interior design. Rest of it is pretty good too.

I had learned at East Lancs that it is Custom and Practice on Diners to feed the locomotive crew mid way through evening. Maybe not the full three courses but certainly the main course would be delivered to everyone on footplate. When my Duke colleagues learned this there was no shortage of willing crew for what would be quite a late night turn. Alcohol is not permitted around locomotives. Usually after we completed stabling the stock our Guard would reach into his bag and hand us two bottles of wine with compliments of the Catering Manager.



I returned home later in the week for the East Lancashire Railway Gala on 23rd and 24th. The star attraction was Tornado supported by a Caprotti fitted BR Standard Class 5 number 73129 which was shedded at Patricroft on the west side of Manchester from 1958 to withdrawal in November 1967. I opted to act as Shed Foreman on both days rather than take a footplate turn. Not only were they easier days but both Support Crews offered me rides which freed up roster spots for colleagues who would not otherwise not have had the opportunity.

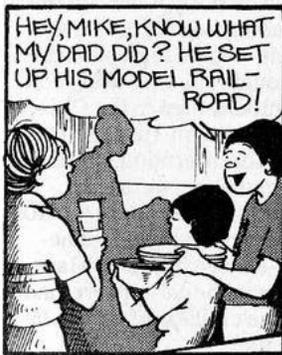


The month was rounded off with a trip on Welsh Highland Railway's Lydd Special on 31st October. This was 1315 off Porthmadog up to Ryth Ddu and return. Lydd was supported by Taliesin. My thanks go out to Jim and Fiona for their hospitality.

Has anyone spotted my deliberate mistake? I realise that you all twigged straight away so no prizes just the satisfaction of pointing out my 2010 error. 8098 was built by Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns of Newcastle in 1961 who were later merged into English Electric to avoid local liquidation as the building of steam engines was by then virtually non-existent.

And Finally...

For Better or for Worse By Lynn Johnston



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