



## NEWSLETTER 100 : Aug 2021

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### **Editorial**

There is a saying about "The best laid plans of Mice and Men" and I can certainly understand where the writer was coming from. We left home on Thursday afternoon, to stay at the White Hart Inn at Alfreton, but on the Thursday morning we received an email to tell us that their boiler had broken, there was no hot water in the place, and they had booked us into the Horse and Jockey a mile or so away. The rooms were nice, the food (and beer) was enjoyable and after breakfast I checked Facebook to see what trams were running at Crich Tramway Village. It was then, and only then, that I discovered that Crich is closed on Fridays.



We discovered that we were close to "The Great British Car Journey" and rescued the day with a few hours spent in the company of Mini Metros, Ford Fiestas and even a Morris Ital.

Travelling with satellite navigation can be something of a surprise... while you know where you are going, and invariably arrive there, the exact route taken can be rather unexpected. Our journey from Southport to Alfreton took us via the M56 and off at the Manchester Airport turning - talk about rubbing it in, we would normally have been heading to the airport in preparation for flying somewhere warm, but this time we had packed coats instead of shorts and sandals. We were routed along a new by-pass to the A6, which cut out quite a lot of congestion, through the Peak District and through Bakewell. While I have not yet seen the club's layout of Monsal Dale, so cannot compare it with Headstone Viaduct (which I could not see from the car in any case) I feel that for the sake of total realism the model should feature a tractor, trailer and a traffic jam of around two dozen cars *INCLUDING MINE!*

Onwards to Dudley, where we had obtained tickets (using Tesco "Clubcard" points) for the Black Country Living Museum which was open, although the tram and trolleybus were not operating. At least - as can be seen from the photo - we were third time lucky when we reached Seaton ten days later...

Just before Seaton, we spent a couple of days in Barnstaple, and visited "The Big Sheep", which is a popular attraction, based around a farm and themed (not unsurprisingly) around sheep. We had to pre-book, due to Covid, and we had to present our ticket (complete with Baa-code) to gain admission. Entertainment consisted of a sheep show, duck herding and the grand finale was their version of horse racing - a Sheepchase over a few (low) jumps carrying knitted jockeys. Sandgrounders may like to know that sheep No 1, Red Ram, came second, just behind No 6, Woolly Jumper, which won the race and was first to the feed trough. The railway connection was provided by a children's scenic ride from the appropriately named Ewe-ston station.

## **Chairman's Notes**

**Ian Shulver**

Well, finally we can all meet at the clubroom without any restrictions. I say that with reservations since we are still in a not ideal position with regards to Covid, and you should therefore bear that in mind when visiting the club. I suspect that most of us, if not all, are double jabbed, but that does not mean that we should let our guard down. So, please wash hands when entering the building, practice social distancing, and ventilate the building. Whilst masks are not mandatory, you may be more comfortable wearing one. On that basis I do hope to meet many of you on our normal meeting times (Tuesday evenings 7.30 – 10.00, and Thursday mornings 10.00 – 12.30).

You will see from Jim's notes, that we hope to have our delayed AGM in the near future (Secretary – please note that a date needs to be set and documents available) and that he has made a request for people to put their names forward for election one or other of the various offices (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer in particular whose current incumbents feel like a respite from high office).

I would imagine that this is really the season for our garden railway brethren – making use of the great outdoors even though no actual modelling may be done. This is in stark contrast to us miniature modellers, where trying to work indoors to exacting standards in extreme heat without sweat making scalpels slippery and soldering irons short out. As for me, I have not even looked at my layout this month, but no doubt most of you will have persevered with the heat and been super productive. I wonder if the good weather has lessened the demand on the likes of PECO, so that they may be able to catch up on orders and I will soon get my pair of double slips I ordered some eight months ago.

And as I said earlier, I look forward to seeing you all at the clubrooms, but can only reiterate the final paragraph in Jim's notes.

## **Secretary's Notes**

**Jim Ford**

Greetings Comrades. Well it is as hot as Hades as I write this month's report but I guess that the weather will break before you read my missive. It has been quite busy here on the P&L with many non-garden railway members attending to join in the revelry on Tuesdays. Some of us also made it to the SMEC small gauges event last Saturday.

As Ian will tell you, we have also re-commenced regular meetings in the clubroom on Tuesday evening and Thursday mornings. We also hope to be able to welcome new or returning members at these times. We are also going to arrange a face to face AGM in the next few weeks and we invite those who haven't been members of the Committee or Officers to consider putting yourselves forward. I have been secretary through the tenure of three different chairmen and David has been Treasurer for even longer. These are not jobs for life although it can seem so! Both Ian and myself have significant events coming up which will increase our absence from the club and reduce our availability in the next couple of years. So this is your chance to step forward!

It was nice earlier in the month to meet up with a former Secretary and Chairman of our club, Nick Wood, who lives in a very bucolic setting near Wadebridge. We had a chance to operate his fantastic Bodmin and Wadebridge Division of British Railways Southern Region and a most enjoyable time was had by all, not least our ladies. Grace made us a fine Cornish tea such that we were hard put to manage more than a token dinner in the pub where we were staying! A fuller report will follow from Tony Kuivala, assisted by Frank Parkinson.

And finally, just a reminder that if you are visiting the club, please remember to wash your hands and to observe social distancing. Masks reduce transmission of this terrible virus which is not yet fully vanquished by 50%, so please consider wearing one especially inside. It is your choice and your health!

## Where's Andrew?



No answers for last month's photograph. I was at Milestones museum at Basingstoke. A convenient place to break a journey to the south coast, there is a Premier Inn beside the museum. The new exhibit, a seaside pier, had not opened at the time of our visit, but the remainder of the museum was interesting, with several street scenes, period shops and factory workshops, and (important for the British summer) it is all under cover.

In keeping with the tram theme of this month's editorial, (and continued in an article by Mike Sharples) the challenge is to answer

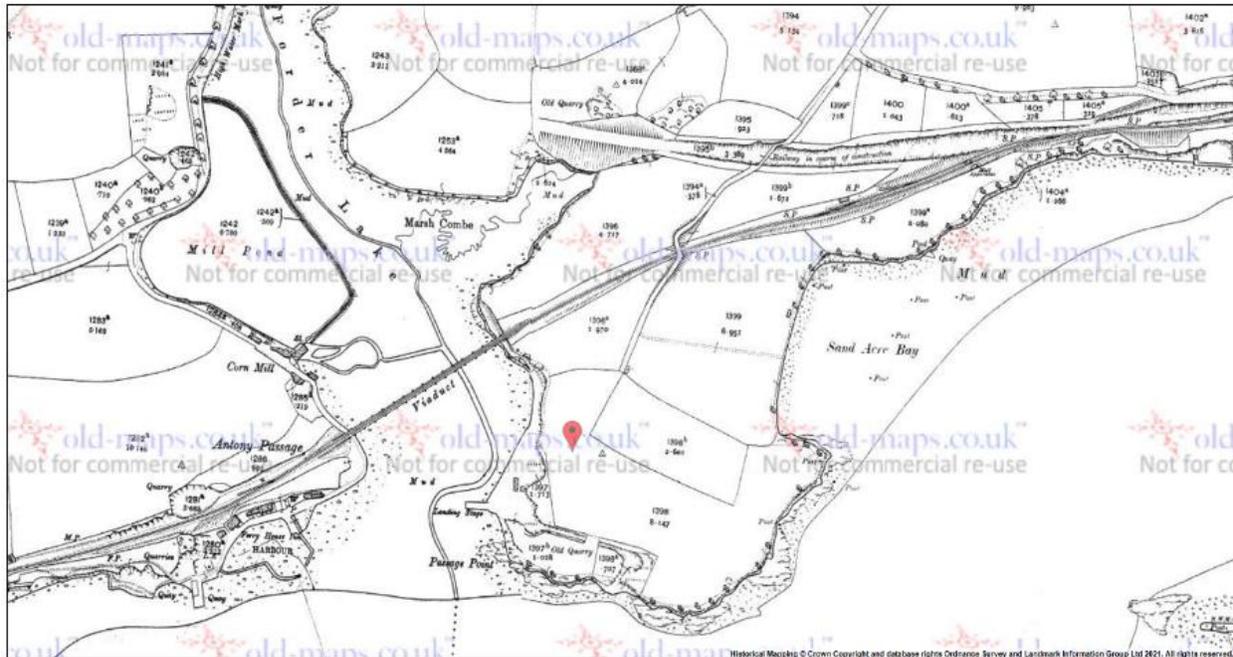
with the location of this tram line. Please note that there is no overhead electric power (or am I just trying to fool you with "Photoshop"?)

## A Cornish Viaduct

**Ian Shulver**

Some time ago I gave a talk entitled "Timber viaducts of the West Country", more specifically those built by Brunel to the west of Plymouth. Sadly, none of these elegant structures are with us today. However, I recently had an opportunity to stay in the area that once boasted of six of these - the area in question being Saltash. Some of you will remember the N gauge layout we built of Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge over twenty years ago - unfortunately no wooden trestles on this layout other than layout supports. The viaducts near Saltash were Coombe, Forder, Wivelscombe, Grove, Nottar and St Germans. Only Coombe and St Germans were on, or close to, the existing

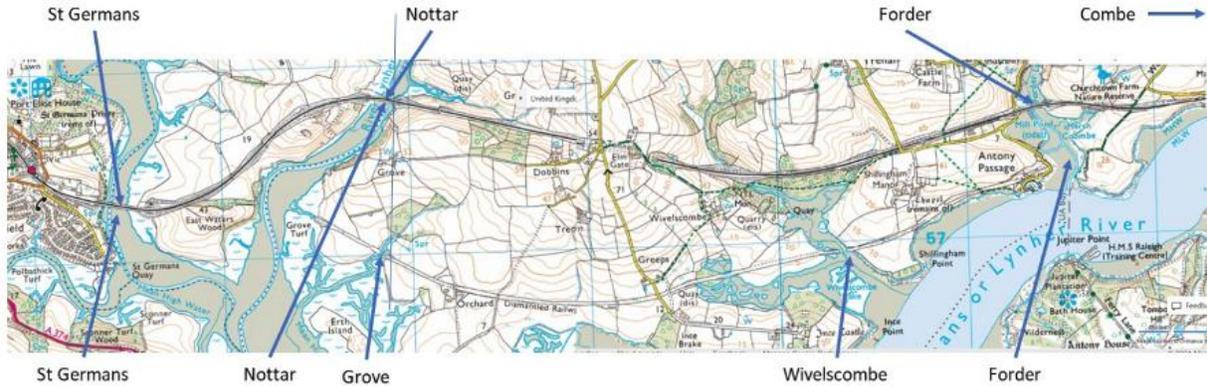
railway line to Penzance. The other four were dismantled in 1908 when a diversionary route (I believe known as the Wearde Deviation) was constructed from just east of Forder to just west of Nottar. The deep valleys that those bridges spanned are still there of course and are now crossed by masonry viaducts with Forder, and Nottar being substantial structures.



The one viaduct that I would like to focus on is Forder, and closest to where I was staying. This crossed a branch of the St Germans or Lyner River at Anthony Passage where parts of the earthworks and bridge portal can still be seen, but almost impossible to photograph. A couple of hundred yards to the north of the old viaduct is the new Forder viaduct. The 1906 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map below shows the old railway line and the construction works for the deviation.

The line of the old railway can clearly be seen on current OS maps (1:25000 and 1:5000) and also on the ground (see satellite image) between Anthony Passage and St Germans. However, there seems to be no evidence towards the east of the viaduct even though there was a siding (Churchtown siding) there until the 1960's which was used to store carriages. More details, and some interesting photographs, can be found at [www.cornwallrailwaysociety.org.uk/wearde-deviation.html](http://www.cornwallrailwaysociety.org.uk/wearde-deviation.html)

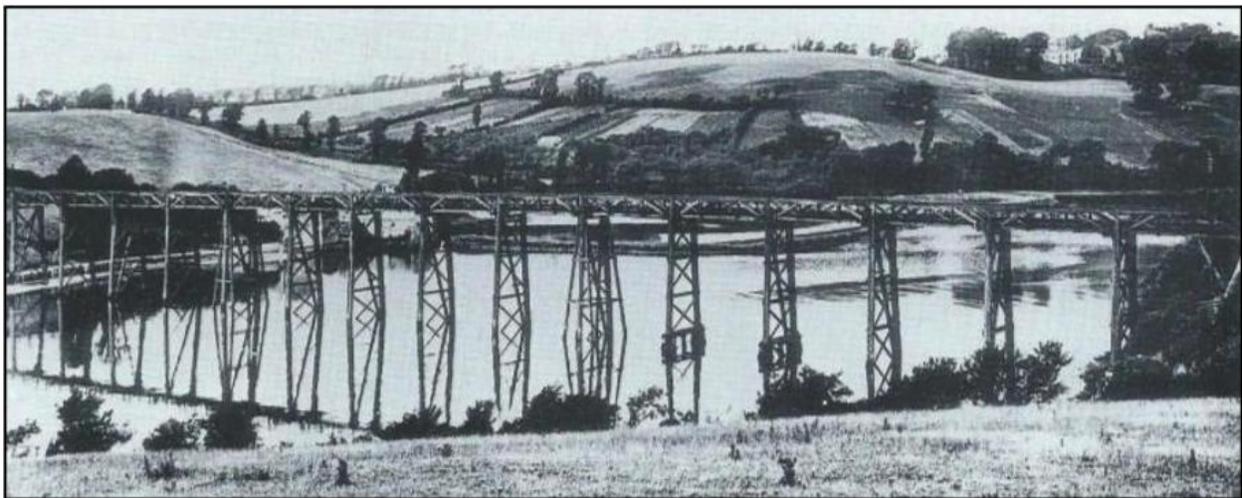
*Present day masonry viaducts*

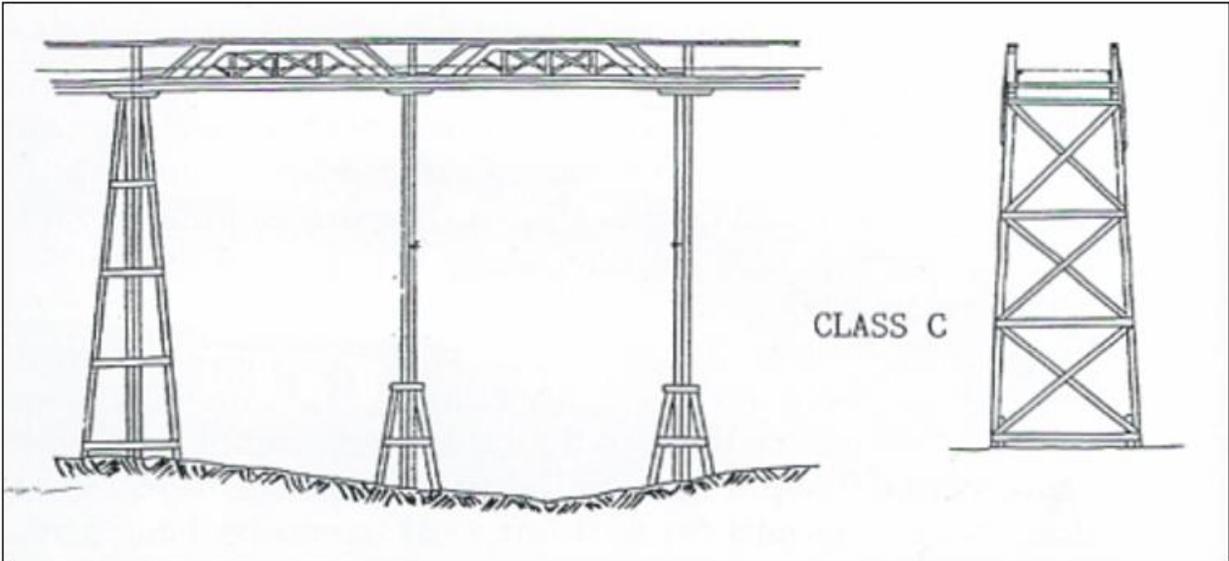


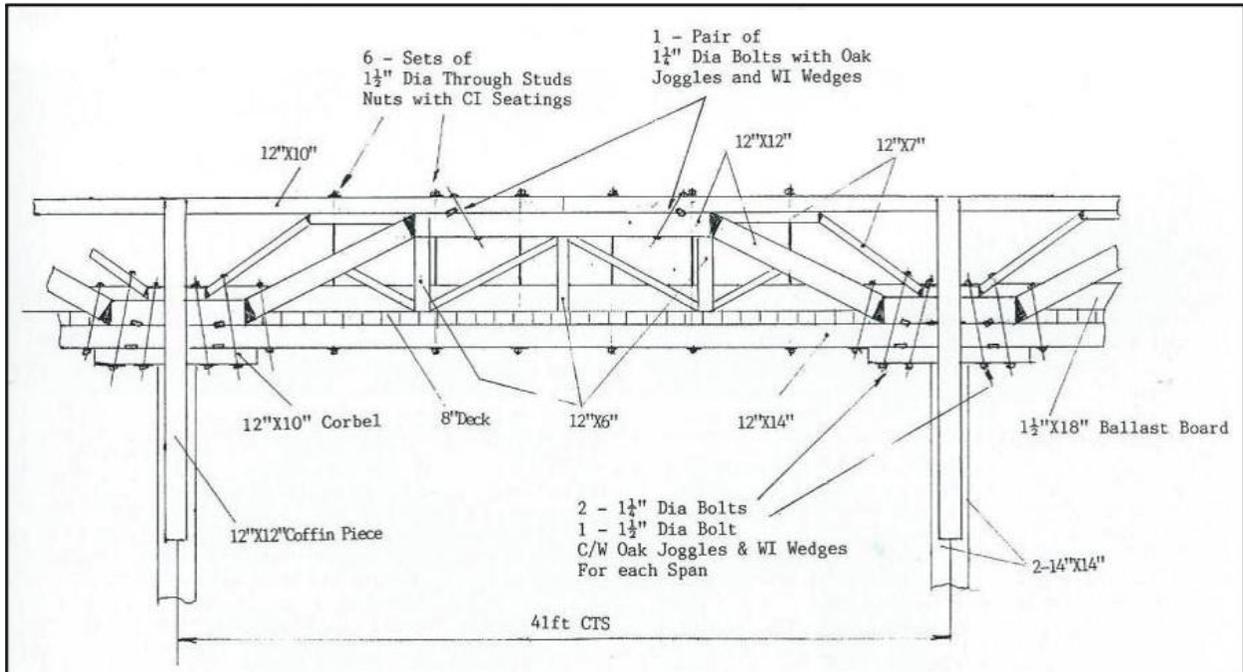
*Position of Brunel's timber viaducts*



The wooden Forder viaduct was built in 1859 and was 606ft in length, being 67ft above water level and supported on 16 piers. It was known as a class C viaduct because the soft nature of the ground required a much lighter structure. The diagrams show the general nature of the construction as well as a more detailed view demonstrating the clever arrangement of the strutting to distribute loadings on the spans to the vertical trestles.







## 009 Trams

**Mike Sharples**

Well it seemed a good idea to build a 009 tram layout but what I didn't know was how rare 009 trams are, so I started a programme of building my own stock for the layout from plastic tram kits I bought off ebay. Here are some trams I have built over the last few years

Picture 1 Pride of Llanroc is two keil kraft west ham four wheeled joined together to make up a bogied double decker with seating on the top deck from a blackpool boat tram on a Kato 11-105 chassis and painted in Ford Olympic Blue with cream stripe.

Picture 2 Isambard Kingdom Brunel was one of the first trams i built about four years ago, it's a Hadfield Blackpool balloon tram kit cut down to 009 size and converted to a single decker and mounted on a Bachmann gp40 n gauge chassis it is the works car for the line painted in Kawasaki Firecracker Red

Picture 3 Ramses is a top deck of a London Transport E1 class I bought off Jim and converted into a single decker mounted on a Kato 11-103 chassis from a scrapped 009 rail bus Painted In Northern Ireland railway maroon and cream.



### **Mobile Canteen**

**Ian Shulver**

If you saw this modelled on a layout, would you think that someone was taking the p...s. Apparently this modified container was one of a few converted in the late 1930's and lasted through the 40's.



It is believed the photo was taken sometime during the war as a morale booster. I am not certain how the water for tea was heated – no chimney visible, and would only really be viable where there was a platform or perhaps a mobile one. I suppose it might give Derek or Frank an idea for a quirky NG subject.

## **Trains, Trams and Holiday Camps                      Andrew Chrysler**

Recently I managed a visit to Seaton, a place that I had wanted to visit for several years, for three reasons. Firstly, the visit would be something of a pilgrimage to the site of the Warner's Holiday Camp, especially as this year is the 40th anniversary of starting to work at another of the Warner Holiday Camps, at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight (and the possible foundation of my interest in all things "Island"). While the camp has ceased to exist, a Premier Inn stands on the part of the site where the campers' dining hall originally stood, and it was indeed the hotel we stayed at for a couple of days. The remainder of the Warner's site is now occupied by housing; the site, formerly prone to flooding, was raised with around a million tons of sand brought in by sea.

Captain Harry Warner was no fool, he had built his holiday camp directly alongside the station making it easy for arriving and departing campers. A second holiday camp, named "Blue Waters" was later built alongside, and has now been replaced by a Tesco supermarket and more housing, bringing the housing stock to about 4,000, of which about a third are occupied by pensioners. The climate was pleasant at the time of our visit, but I did wonder how exposed the town is to winter weather, although it is shielded to some extent by Beer Point, the home of the second reason to visit, Beer Heights Light Railway, which is located at Pecorama. Although I had originally planned a visit to Seaton in 2020, Pecorama was closed to the public that year due to the pandemic, and I was happy to attempt to "kill three birds with the same stone" as my third reason for the visit was Seaton Tramway, which runs mostly along the original alignment of the Seaton branch line.

Modern Electric Tramways Ltd (founded by Claude Lane) had previously operated a 2 foot line since 1954 in Eastbourne, but problems with lease renewal led to the search for a new location that could be bought freehold, and the Beeching axe proved that - in Seaton's case at least - the cloud could be said to have a silver lining.

The line was built to 2ft 9inch gauge, being the largest size that the existing trams could be regauged to. It opened late August 1970, running initially without overhead electrics and was operated by car no 8, which towed a trailer of batteries. The line was at the time rather short, to "Bobsworth

Bridge” and back at a fare of - rather appropriately - 1 shilling. Claude Lane suffered a fatal heart attack in early 1971, just before the tramway reopened for the holiday season. The overhead electrics were completed in 1973, and the line extended to a terminus closer to the town centre with a deviation around the boundary of the two holiday camps, a deviation with several sharp bends that pose a challenge to the skill of the drivers as too slow a line speed risks the car juddering to a halt, while too high a speed brings other, easily imagined risks. The line was also extended to Colyton, which was not without problems as much of the track ballast for the section under construction was washed away by a flash flood in 1978.



The raising of the ground occupied originally by the holiday camps left Seaton terminus looking somewhat out of place, and in 2017 a new terminus was constructed with 450 tonnes of ballast, 300 sleepers and 190 piles allowing the new building to be raised two metres compared with its predecessor. The new terminus is completely enclosed, permitting boarding - and even queueing - under cover, which has aided in the popularity of their “Polar Express” Christmas service.

Colyton station, although slightly extended, appears entirely authentic to the period, except for the platform edge which - quite understandably - has been made safe with the installation of iron railings, which can be seen in the photograph accompanying this month’s editorial, which features tram no.10, which provided our first ride from Seaton to Colyton. The station building now houses a cafe, ticket office and gift shop.

Seaton Tramway operates with a weekend service from February to Easter, a daily service between Easter and September, with out of season birdwatching trips and the Polar Express in December, attracting upwards of 100.000 visitors each year. Both Seaton Tramway and The Big Sheep are finalists in the "muddy stiletto" awards for "Best Family Attraction in Devon" this year, I'm not sure which one I would be rooting for.

**And Finally...**

I leave you with these two photographs - one very local, the other in Wales, but somehow connected.

