

Newsletter

May 2015

Editorial



Since our Exhibition in November, we have all had a chance to get a visit to an exhibition under our belts. This is an excellent opportunity to chat to fellow modellers, get inspiration from what they're doing. I always enjoy chatting with my fellow modellers at exhibitions, I find it really useful. For example, getting a play with a particular DCC system to see what it feels like in your hand. Asking questions about the pro's and con's of it with someone with first hand experience of the system. Sharing, learning and just having a go is what our hobby should be about. Using your iPhone, iPad etc can come into their own helping you

effortlessly and instantly capture a scene. Gone are the days where you had to take a picture and wait for the film to be developed. Now you have an instant resource at you finger tips to help you in your project.

Whilst at the recent Liverpool MRS exhibition, I saw this. It is good to see some modellers still have a sense of humour and are not obsessed with the amount of rivets on a wagon or scratching their heads because the laptop has stopped the trains moving.

Remember, it's your Club newsletter, so keep sending articles in from your modelling adventures and get out of that armchair! **Peter Mills.**

Chairman's notes

It's looking like another busy month ahead. I am preparing these notes from our conservatory on a bright sunny morning and all seems at peace with the world as I sit in the warmth of the sunshine pondering the future development of the garden and it's associated railway. Idyllic. I come back to earth with a bump as I look around and see a number of unfinished modelling projects looking back at me all demanding to be completed. I'm conscious of the target dates and deadlines I've set for myself including these notes. (Note to self. Must learn to do one job at a time rather than juggle six different balls at once ! Trouble is - am I listening ?)

Then there is the realisation that there are a number of people and things too see and places to be all making demands on ones time, things like the Royal Blue Quarryman bus tour of north/mid Wales railways, the WLLR Teddy Bears day at Hesketh Bank and the SMEC 16mm open day at Victoria Park to name but three. As a necessary evil of course I also have to squeeze in a few days work in order to finance all of the above, still on the bright side proper retirement is only a few months away and although not to wish life away it's like that old adage about work and time. You see it's all about time, I'll sign off before getting too philosophical but to paraphrase that Sandy Denny folk song - Where does all the time go? Answers on a post card.

I hope you have the time to visit some of the some of the events above and to do all the things you

promised yourself. **Frank Parkinson.**

Southport Modellers go Large



Size is not important, as we all know, but sometimes one just has to go for the max. And so it was recently that your intrepid reporter and an almost-as-intrepid-and-definitely-more-sensible chairman volunteered their services as trainee drivers of a Quite Big Engine at Southport Model Engineering Club.

On the occasion was one of their periodic familiarisation evenings, designed to help novices get acquainted with the fine art of coal firing a 5" gauge steam locomotive. A small select group gathered in the early evening as two locos were rolled up to the steaming bay ready for us to

experiment with. Under the expert guidance of Ben and John we learned how to apply water, coal and oil to their correct orifices, and when all was ready, to light the blue touch paper to set it all in motion. In reality, with a powerful fan applying suction to the open end of the chimney, and the firebox filled with paraffin-soaked charcoal, a burning coal applied several inches away from the open door was sufficient to ignite the mixture.



In a remarkably short time a warm glow from the rear of each locomotive indicated that combustion was well under way, despite the dampening effect of a passing shower. Unfortunately at that point a faulty clack valve on Southport rendered the loco incurably short of water, despite vigorous operation of the hand pump. Apparently the effect of steam on brass is to remove zinc from the alloy, to the point of mechanical failure. One solution, also apparently, is to make small fittings from phosphor bronze. Another new thing learned.

So we persevered with the John P Tavener, and soon sufficient steam was raised for Ben to try a test run. And then it was our turn. One by one we

were sat in the driver's seat, given a miniature shovel to apply coal to the left, right and centre of the firebox, and instructed in just how far to open the regulator for smooth running. And where to set the reverser for optimum cut-off and the axle pump bypass for adequate replenishment of the boiler water. Once all was committed to memory, or so we hoped, we were released into the wide open spaces of Victoria Park, with only a few curious caravaners and a patrolling cat to watch our hesitant progress.

In the event it all went smoothly, with no kangaroo starts or wheelies to prompt ribald comments, and no embarrassing incidents involving lack of steam, water or fire. After a supervised circuit we were allowed to go solo, with two revolutions of the track in quick succession, complete with on-the-fly firing to show we could multi-task with the best of them. Fish and chips, followed by tea and cakes, kept the energy levels up during an enjoyable and worthwhile evening. **Derek Pratt.**

Secretary's Report

A report on the next committee meeting will be in the June issue.

Exhibition Manager's Report, May 2015



I was at Liverpool Exhibition at Old Christ Church in Waterloo over weekend. It struck me that two interesting features are emerging. The first is the ambience of the buildings we use. Some five or so years ago there were some Hornby Exhibitions in Lady Chapel of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral. Frank Hornby had been a Cathedral Sideman and there are family connections with the stained glass windows in Lady Chapel. The sandstone walls, lofty vaulted ceilings and sweeping arches were overwhelming. But within the Lady Chapel the floor layout was impressive between the columns.

The light shone in through the high windows. Natural warmth radiated downwards. The unusual nature of location created an atmosphere that was so very conducive to a good Exhibition. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. To me some Layouts seemed so very at home, in particular the Hornby Tinplate and Third Rail ones. Maybe it was the historic features that were swaying me. Be that as it may the overall experience was excellent but not one that could repeated annually. But this is not so. Liverpool have been at Old Christ Church for some years now. The Church is no longer in use as place of worship. The lofty sandstone structure has been retained in original condition. Very similar to Liverpool Cathedral but much smaller all be it larger than the Lady Chapel. Internally much superior in circulation and usability of spaces. The floor plan seems to improve each year. So does the ambience. Traders and Exhibitors like the location (Waterloo) and interior facilities. The latter are a mix of history, architecture and the modern - wall mounted heaters etc. The former includes ready availability of car parking, access via public transport and being in a quiet residential area. The light streamed in during the day, there was warmth in the sun - unlike when outside and exposed to a chill breeze! Yes, ambience of the buildings we use is important. Our customers must recognise it but do we? I have a vested interest to admit to. Having changed Southport's venue to Greenbank High School I was struck by how refreshed their facilities are. And how impressive Birkdale High School's Sports Hall is now that it was been refloored and redecorated even though we cannot use it.

The second returns straight to Hornby at Liverpool Cathedral. There were no Traders. Event was put on by Liverpool Museums who apparently never thought of income generation. I am unsure that Cathedral Authorities would have permitted Trade anyway. More space was available for Layouts. There is a case for having minimal or no Trade - Rails at Burscough was viable based on door admissions on account of good costing from Landlords and being a small venue filled with moving trains. We are larger, we need Traders . Public have expectations. Many have shopping lists. Why I am thinking of Traders at this time? For health reasons Southport are losing - temporarily I hope - Vintage Prints and Trackside Signs. At weekend I had long chats with Edwin and Mike respectively and offered them our best wishes in their troubled times. We shall miss them. Fortunately recruitment of new Trade Support is successfully in hand. One is locally based railway Bookseller, the others are from outside the area. More variety means a better overall presentation.

I think I've written enough so apart from the "normal" additional features generated by a change of venue and general paperwork I'll conclude with thought that everything for November 2015 is going forward well. **Tony Kuivala.**

Building Report

Nothing to report .

Layout Report Portland Street.

The long anticipated revamp commences next week. To avoid congestion on Club Nights we will be working day time during week. One of privileges of retirement is that one day is much like another. And refreshment breaks are regular. Now that layout is centered in room the creation of space against far wall has reduced circulation space along window side which in turn impacts on where we site the Control. The emerging solution is that control point will not be fixed location as hitherto.

Monthly Talk

Our April talk, attended by fifteen members and friends, was held at Jim's followed by a meal courtesy of Fiona (many thanks for this). This talk was entitled "Geoffrey Jones - a life in 85 minutes". Geoffrey Jones, who died in 2005, was a producer of short films of which he made less than a dozen with a total running length of just 85 minutes. In his working life he produced three short railway for British Transport Films under the direction of Edgar Anstey, a couple of films for Shell, an unusual "travelogue" on Trinidad and Tobago for BP and one or two other. His films were unusual in that there was no voiceover just background music, often electronic and mixed by Daphne Oram who helped set up the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. All the films were a mixture of still shots and moving images, often in quick succession, which, to me, gave them a rather frenetic feel and was not at all a relaxing viewing experience.

The three railway films (*Snow* -1963, *Rail* - 1967 and *Locomotion* - 1975) were all most unusual with *Locomotion* being a history of railway, comprising of over 400 archive shots of artwork, films and objects being set to music. The earlier two, *Snow* - a celebration of how the railways coped with the winter of 1963, and *Rail* - contrasting steam and the emergence of diesel and electric traction, both won a string of plaudits and awards. Snow, which was nominated for an Oscar, can be viewed on-line at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl4pJwcE7II>.

Next Monthly Talk

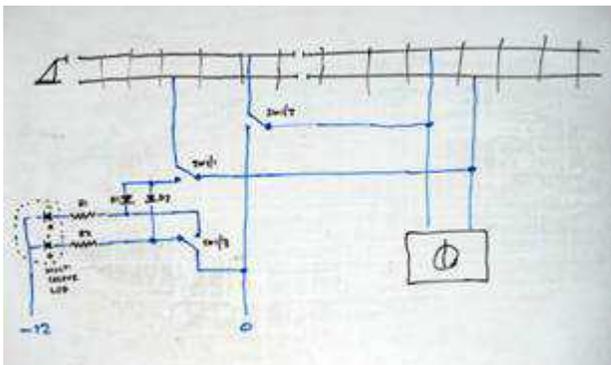


Our next talk will be on 12th May and will be held at the Southport Football Club. It will be an illustrated presentation with 35mm slides to be given by Allan Trotter and entitled:

“The Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad”.

Ian Shulver.

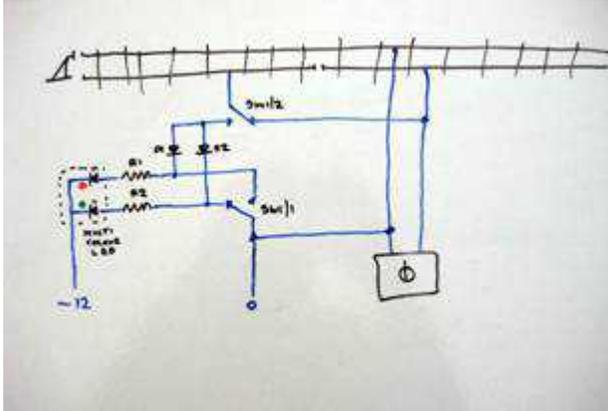
Short Circuits No. 20. A Better Dead End Job.



In the terminus station it may be convenient to be able to see if the platform line is clear, if it is isolated at the end or if it is isolated at the end with a locomotive located there. This may be done by adding to the circuitry shown in the previous article.

If common return is not being employed then an extra pole on the switch is required, necessitating the use of a triple pole changeover switch. However, with

the common return version, then only a double pole changeover switch, two LED's and a bit of extra wiring is required. We can now get an indication of the three possible states of the end of line section, namely clear and live, clear and isolated or occupied and isolated. A red and a yellow LED would indicate this perfectly. This though is a bit clumsy.



It would really be ideal to provide only a single multi colour LED showing either a green, a yellow or a red depending on the situation at the time. This time a three leg LED is required. One positive leg is connected to the red, another to the green and the centre one is common to the other negative side of both. The useful bit here is that if the red and green are energised simultaneously the LED glows yellow. Two series resistors are used to maintain the luminosity of the LED in all operating colours.

Three ordinary diodes are also required to separate the red and green circuits. This time a three pole

changeover switch is required if no common return is available but if we do revert to our old friend common return then only a two pole changeover switch is required. Now you have full indication of the state of the isolating section at the end of the siding. Green is clear and live, red is clear and isolated and yellow is occupied and isolated.

Just as a reminder, as with all common return configurations, the line controller and the indicator -12 volt supply must be derived from totally independent sources. For more on this see: www.eastbank.org.uk/circuits.htm **Allan Trotter.**

The Night Ferry

The final years of Britain's first international passenger train.

The Night Ferry commenced service on the evening of the 14th of October 1936 and offered overnight sleeping car service between London and Paris and eventually from 1956, to Brussels. The service was of course suspended during the period of hostilities. The Night Ferry ceased operation on the 31st of October 1980.

It would then be some fourteen years later before it would become possible to travel between Britain and Continental Europe by through train and then no overnight sleeping car service would be offered. Is this progress?

So how did this fascination with the Night Ferry first come about?

Interest came about purely by chance. Being in Glasgow Central station to make a booking on the Glasgow to Bristol overnight train, a schematic map was noted depicting all sleeping car services in Great Britain. One service noted was from London to Dover but as the distance is around seventy seven miles, why was a sleeper service required? On asking the ticket agent about this service he stated he did not even know of its existence.

Curiosity was now aroused. This unusual service required further investigation. Back in the 1970's there was no such thing as the internet so this resulted in any research having to be done by use of books and any published advertising material. Once information was collated, an overnight sleeper trip to London was arranged with specific plans made to visit Victoria Station late at night to attempt to see the elusive Night Ferry train.



Photography of the train was another hurdle to overcome. As can be deduced by the title of the train, operation took part during the night. This is not conducive to photography as this was well before the era of digital cameras and we were using Kodachrome 64asa colour slide film. Time exposure and a tripod were essential. Also, as I resided in Glasgow at this time, regular visits to the area were restricted by employment commitments and financial considerations. Despite all this a number of visits to London and Dover were made to capture the images. There was absolutely no restriction in setting up a tripod and camera and close up photography of this international train at both London Victoria and Dover Marine. Try to imagine this scenario today; the force would immediately be upon you.

Operation of the train in the UK was quite convoluted. The following description is based on first hand observation only. During the day the train consist was usually stabled in Road 1 in Victoria Grosvenor Road Carriage Shed. At the appropriate time the consist was brought into Platform 2 of London Victoria Station by either a Class 33 or 73 locomotive. Another Class 33 or 73 would attach to the outward end ready to take the train to Dover. The first vehicle in the train behind the loco was an adapted Mk.1 Brake Corridor Composite (BCK), either S21270 or S21273. This vehicle was only for use by the guard, no passengers were carried. The next vehicles in the train were the CIWL Type F sleeping cars. The number of cars varied depending on demand. Six sleeping cars seemed a common consist. Bringing up the rear there were either one or two SNCF four wheel Fourgon vans.

The train was generally routed via Folkestone but deviations could happen. After exiting Shakespeare Cliff Tunnel the train took the right hand line at Archcliffe Junction and proceeded into Platform 4 at Dover Marine Station. There are four platforms here, No. 3 to 6. Platforms 1 and 2 are not passenger platforms but are two lines set into the quay side.

On arrival the locomotive is detached and a Class 09 diesel shunter attaches to the rear of the train. This locomotive then hauls the consist towards Hawkesbury Street junction and towards Dover Priory station. Once the consist has cleared the junction, it is propelled towards the train ferry dock. The Mk.1 BCK is detached and left in a siding adjacent to the link span whilst the sleeping cars and the vans are distributed in a balanced position on the train ferry where they are secured by chains thus preventing movement due to inclement weather. This is the English Channel remember. The Class 09 then retired.

The following morning the ferry returned with the other Night Ferry consist from Paris and Brussels. The Fourgons and sleeping cars were removed from the ship by a Class 73 locomotive and a stop is made to collect the Mk.1 BCK left on the previous evening. The train then proceeded towards Hawkesbury Street Junction and Dover Priory. Once the junction is cleared the train is propelled into Platform 6 at Dover Marine. After some time the Night Ferry departed for London via Folkestone.

Models of the Night Ferry.



Representing the Night Ferry in model form presented a bit of a challenge. When our 00 scale layout "Seabourne Marine" was being exhibited during 1985-87 the only correct models available were the Lima Classes 33 and 73 locomotives. Night Ferry Type F sleeping cars were made by Playcraft Jouef but of course they were to H0 scale and did not readily blend in with the locos. To create a more acceptable illusion the sleeping cars were raised by the placing of a washer between the bogies and the car body. Jouef also made Fourgons but not the correct ones for the Night Ferry.

Once again compromises were made and two Fourgons were repainted green for the train. The Mk.1 BCK model was made by Trix Liliput but to a scale between 00 and H0. This vehicle was again raised by use of thin washers between the bogies and car body. If it all seemed a bit crude, well yes it was.

However it was the only way the represent the Night Ferry on the layout. The alternative was to do without.

Today in 00 scale there is another alternative. Metal kits are available of both the sleeping cars and Fourgons but these are somewhat pricey. They are also available ready to run but at a considerable price premium especially if you require six sleeping cars.

An alternative is to go to H0 scale. The Class 33 is available on the used models market from Lima. Sleeping cars are now made by LS Models in a number of configurations depending on the era represented. The Fourgons, made by MMM-RG are also available in various versions on the used models market. The Mk.1 BCK is probable the most awkward to correctly represent in H0 scale but my solution was to fit smaller diameter wheels to the Trix Liliput model to lower the vehicle. Once again, a crude solution but it works, well sort of. For more images of the real train and the models see: <http://www.eastbank.org.uk/ferry.htm>

Allan Trotter

Liverpool Exhibition

Your intrepid editor was on hand as a mercenary or hired help for Mr Tasker on Jacksonville Yard at the Liverpool MRS's annual Exhibition. Tony has mentioned the venue in his report, so I won't go into detail apart from that the setting is beautiful, it has great atmosphere and most importantly, had a real ale stand. So I would advise using public transport if you want to enjoy this unique part of the exhibition.

Our day started nice and early with a cooked breakfast, then full of sustenance, we headed to the exhibition. Terry had quite rightly took the layout the night before and ensured that everything worked etc. So I didn't have to soil my hands undertaking menial

task, it's always good to leave that sort of thing to ones staff! No seriously everything was set up and ready to go, the only difference this time since I last operated it, was that Terry had converted the layout to DCC and had picked the NCE system that I am going to buy for my project at home.

So it was the perfect opportunity for me to have a full day playing with the system, learn the pro's & con's etc and get use to how to use it. At the end of the day, I'm going to spend nearly £400 on my system and I need to know that I am picking the right one.

There is limited off street parking in the grounds of the church and I wasn't sure how much is left for general use once the exhibitors are in. But this is a minor point and does not distract from the quality of the exhibition. Of which, has increased greatly over recent years with excellent layouts and trade support and is a credit to those involved in the organisation of it.

Being lucky to be an exhibitor, I had a chance to have a quick look around to see what was there and bag any 'Tartan Arrow' wagons before the doors opened. There wasn't and I'll have to make do with the 30 odd that I have already! The trade were good and there



was somewhere to buy glue, plastic card. There was somewhere to buy tools, somewhere to buy scenic materials. In fact, you could buy most things there for your railway, something that is not always the case where some exhibitions are predominately



traders selling 'ready to run' stuff out of boxes. It made for a refreshing change.

I was struck by the balance of the layouts and the varied topics models. From French narrow gauge to American, from N gauge to scale four and EM gauge, from large layouts to small, there really was a good choice of things to see. Even the finer gauges seemed to have movement, this is not always the case, everything worked. There was only one layout that I didn't like.

Being a local exhibition, it gives you a chance to meet old friends and catch up. You end up spending a lot of the time talking, but that's all part our hobby. As I said in the editorial, I ended up with visual ideas for my project at home taken from inspiration from what I had seen during my day in Waterloo. It has the added bonus of being within practical use of public transport which can useful as parking is limited in this inner city environment. All in all, it was probably one of the best local exhibitions that I have visited recently. **Peter Mills.**

END