



Newsletter

Issue 79: October 2019 Editor: Allan Trotter
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Editorial.

Car boot layouts.

What exactly is a car boot layout you may ask?

Over the past few years there seems to have been an increasing trend at model railway exhibitions for displays of minuscule diorama type 00, H0 or N scale layouts up to about two feet in size that can be transported fully assembled in the boot of a car, hence the designation. If the layout is meant to represent a North American scene, the description Car Trunk Railroad (certainly not Grand Trunk Railroad) may be a more accurate description.

Generally these layouts are of very high quality in scenic detail but with such limited space the scope for any interesting operation is somewhat of a challenge. Usually consisting of a very limited amount of track and possibly a couple of points at most, there is not really much that can be done to keep the layout owner operator entertained for any length of time. No doubt the paying public find it a similar situation and promptly move on. Just how the owner operator manages to retain any degree of sanity over a weekend at an exhibition presenting this type of exhibit defies all logic. No doubt the anticipation of some strong intoxicating refreshment at the end of the session is the much appreciated incentive.

Why are layouts of this type invited to be displayed at exhibitions anyway? Perhaps it is because they initially seem cheap as they only require one person but by the time accommodation and transportation are included then the at first seemingly cheap option may not be as cheap as was first assumed.

One layout observed at the York exhibition was only about 12 inches by 6 inches. Probably a more accurate description would have been a Glove Box layout rather than a Car Boot layout! The exhibit was fully staffed by one solitary person, not doing very much, who did not appear to be enjoying himself which really is what the hobby is supposed to be all about, is it not? It seemed to be a dreadful waste of a precious weekend.

Events Diary.

Sat 23rd Nov Southport MRS Model Railway Exhibition. All Saints Parish Hall, Park Road, Southport, PR9 9JB. 10:00-16:30.

Chairman's Report.

Autumn is now just around the corner with shorter days and longer nights. So with holidays behind us, it time to let the garden have its rest and to get down to some modelling. I have made a start in attempting to finish constructing a 3 car rake of Bulleid coaches. These are nickel silver kits with resin roofs but with a few bits missing (roof vents, buffers, seats and vacuum cylinders). The coaches are made up of four component parts (bogies, underframe coach shell and interior) to facilitate painting. I am now on the tricky part which is adding door handles and grab rails. As you might imagine in 2mm scale they are minute and a little taxing so this is taking some time. Once completed, the old fibre brush will come out to clean off any excess solder, before painting can commence. Note - must remember to get some appropriate paints. To complete I will need to decide on the couplings to be used - DG or Electra but definitely not the standard N gauge variety.

We have recently returned from a rail tour to Corsica - Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord, a hair-raising bus ride across Paris to Gare du Lyon (by way of Gare du L'Est) to catch the TGV to Nice. This was a duplex train and was pretty full. A little bit of excitement leaving Marseille when a passenger (drunk?) was caught smoking in the buffet car. Eventually we made a stop at Antibes where two burly gendarmes removed the guy from the train. After a night in Nice we caught the ferry to Bastia (a 6 hour rough crossing). Following a couple of nights doing the usual touristy things in Bastia we caught the local panoramic train to Calvi. The railways here are metre gauge to enable them to climb through the mountains and negotiate tight curves. The journey time was about 3 hours with numerous stops at request halts to pick up and let down the many hikers who use the line.

We then had another couple of relaxing days in the citadel town of Calvi, before retracing our way back to Ponte Di Lechia and changing trains for Corte and then the final leg to Ajaccio, traversing one of Gustav Eifels viaducts. The ferry from Ajaccio this time took us to Toulon with a bus ride to Marseille. A conventional TGV train took us to Lille and the Eurostar. It was a most interesting and enjoyable trip.

In terms of HS16.5 and HS32 there is good progress. HS32 just requires a short length of track to complete whilst wiring of HS16.5 is continuing apace. Hopefully by the time of the next newsletter we may be in a position to operate both. **Ian Shulver.**

Secretary's Report.

I am writing this after returning from a music cruise to the rivers of France. It



was a wonderful experience and I did not realise that the Seine was so beautiful and that you can sail up it in an ocean liner for half a day to Rouen. I didn't get to sample the single tramline in Rouen which seems to mostly have to make do with bendy-buses, but the tram system in Bordeaux was fantastic. There is a star

shaped system with three lines crossing the city and trams every 6 minutes. I was able to see many of the sights in a few hours by hopping off and catching the next one!

We continue to progress the race-track project but the 'top shelf' HS32 line awaits a final joining piece to be fitted. The next one down, the HS16.5 is still being finessed and needs the power supply sockets fitting enabling it to be used for DC, DCC or live steam.

My contribution has been limited not just by my recent holiday (with another to come shortly) but also because I am setting up a crowd funding page on our behalf. This is something for which hopefully we will get some support from Sefton, but in addition the fundraising process for our essential and urgent electrical upgrade work, will raise our profile in the Southport community and so our security.

I have also been engaged in planning for our November Show. Unfortunately one of the OO layouts which I had spoken to earlier is unable to attend. This was a shunting layout and if member knows of another OO layout please make me or Ian aware of it. Or if you are attending the upcoming Wigan or Warrington shows, then feel free to talk to exhibitors of small local OO layouts who might want to attend. The essential requirement being that they will fit in the owner's car and will be near enough to attend the show without the need for an overnight stay. We have plenty of N gauge and OO9 layouts already committed.

If you are visiting shows or heritage railways don't forget to take some of our A5 handbills with you. Next month I will be asking for your help in distributing these locally to friendly takeaways and community supermarkets. **Jim Ford.**

Where's Allan.

Once again our location expert came up with the correct answer to the September "where's Allan" conundrum. It was Tony Kuivala who stated "*It is Dunford Bridge at the eastern end of the Woodhead Tunnel*". Well done Tony.



For the October issue I am still in the Pennines but this time on a very much active main route. There was once a four platform station here but as you can see from the sparse habitation, this station was soon closed. Here we see a Class 124 Swindon Trans Pennine unit about to enter the west portal of Standedge Tunnel heading for Marsden in Yorkshire. Where am I?

Members Miscellanea.

Visit to the Isle of Wight.

Every year, my brother Frank and I travel down to the big smoke to watch England men's cricket team play at Lord's. As you may be aware this can be both entertaining and a nightmare as an England cricket fan. This year's cricket fixtures obviously involved the cricket World Cup and two test matches, one against Ireland on the second test match against our adversaries Australia. This meant that we could not travel on a normal day as in the past but travel mid week until Saturday morning.

Our normal routine (cricket fixtures permitting) is that we travel down on the Friday morning and come back on the Monday morning. We use our two together railcard to buy two 1st class returns from Oxenholme. When bought well in advance, these tickets do not cost much more than standard returns if anything more. The main bonus is of course decent seat by a window along with food and drink to get me through the nightmare that is the privatised railways on the west coast of the UK.

This year we decided to try to new railway venues that we have not been to before. The first one we chose was the Isle of Wight Railway. The second being the mail rail system in London which was run by the post office until 2003, but I will tell you about that in the later issue. As a rule, we generally stay in Premier Inn hotels as the standard is all the same and a good price. This year we were chose Wimbledon which meant with the right side of London for travelling down towards Portsmouth on the coast and a short journey into the capital and our onward tube ride to St John's Wood tube station for the test match.

With much excitement we set off from Wimbledon towards Portsmouth harbour station, the journey time is about one hour 45 minutes if you get a semi fast train. During our stay in London we experienced nice and warm temperatures of 37 to 38° C. You will be unsurprised to hear that this affected the track and our journey time arriving at hospital the station about 15 minutes late. Then it was a last-minute dash to the ferry terminal next to the railway station to buy tickets and board the next fast Seacat service to the island. Having seen lots of old TV footage of the Royal Navy freeze setting sail out of Portsmouth towards the Falklands in 1982, we passed the Royal Navy's latest flag ship HMS Queen Elizabeth at the harbour side on our way out towards the island.

The boat crossing lasts about 15 or so and you soon arrive at a pretty windswept and slightly bedraggled ride pier. One of the attractions on the islands apart from the steam Railway is the island line tube which uses 1930s London underground stock as this motive power. The transport system on the island from what I was told by the islanders is pretty good and all joined up as they say. It seems that life on the island is quite laid-back and there was plenty of turnaround time for the driver to walk the short distance of the two coaches to the other end to drive back towards Shanklin.



I heard many things about the tube stock on the Isle of Wight and by tradition, it is generally hand-me-downs from the general London underground network and as I said the current generation is from 1938. My first impressions of the train was full of character does it look like it was last painted in 1938 with the roof being in a pretty dire state of repair. That's the appropriate time we set off towards rise its self across the very derelict and wind swept pier. I really was quite taken aback by the general dilapidated state of not only the pier and the rolling stock but the holes that you can see through

the track and the supporting decking into the sea.

We soon came to Smallbrook Junction which originally was only a junction and it is now the site of the station which connects the island line to the steam railway. The station itself is quite new and has only built to accommodate Passengers for the steam Railway. To be fair the journey from London to Smallbrook junction on the Isle of Wight steam Railway was seamless and the total journey time was just over two hours and 30 minutes from leaving the

hotel. Our guide for the day met us at the station and we first travelled to Haven Street station which is the centre of the line and the home to the Exhibition Centre and main workshops.

We enjoyed a personal guided tour of both before a pleasant lunch in the



excellent cafe. There was even time to enjoy some retail therapy in the excellent book and model shop on the railway. The line itself is just over 5 miles long and is the last of the once 55 miles of track that once crisscrossed the island. The atmosphere on the railway is fantastic and the rolling stock superbly presented and restored by the volunteers and staff. Unlike most preserved railways which seem to have an abundance of Pacific locomotives running on small lines the biggest locomotive on the Isle of Wight steam Railway is an Ivatt

class 3. There seemed to be a myriad of different types of tank engines including the famous small terrier tanks to slightly larger tank engines, all are accurate to the line and spent their working lives on the island.

All in all, we enjoyed a very pleasant day riding up and down taking in the unique island atmosphere. After we bid farewell to our guide we still had plenty of time to ride the full length of island line on the tube stock to Shanklin before returning back to ride pier and our ferry to the mainland.

A useful railway related day out to add to our cricket adventures. **Peter Mills.**

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