



NEWSLETTER 94 : Feb 2021

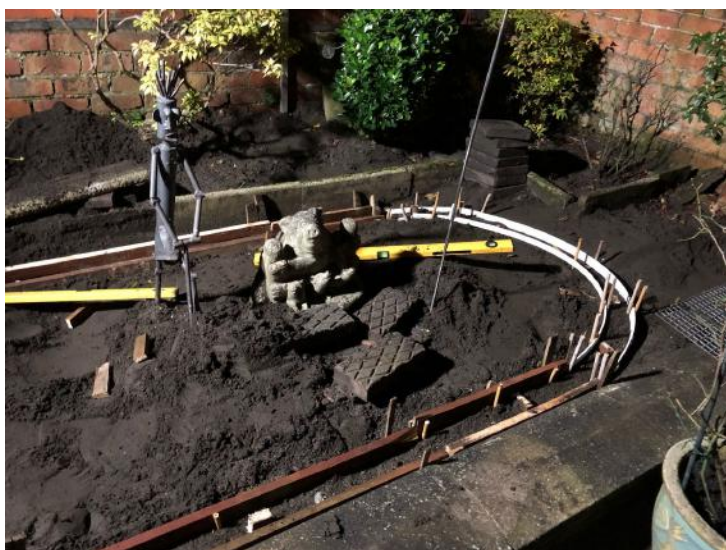
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Editorial

Finally, the railway construction works have commenced - I'm not talking about anything major like reinstating Burscough curves or extending the Northern Line to Skelmersdale, but I can report that work on the Lesley Road circular railway is now in progress. The shuttering was built several weeks ago as the photograph shows, and more recently cement has been poured to form a base, but as yet the tracks have not been laid.

We only have a small garden, so an extensive layout is not possible - in fact a simple oval is all. Still, my grandson, Alfie, will no doubt be entertained by the "choo choo" (which I was hoping would be his first word) and I am looking forward to making some buildings without the aid of reading glasses or even a magnifying lens.



Rather more extensive works have also commenced on the Isle of Wight, where services are suspended until 31 March so that the line can be prepared for the "new" Class 484 trains.

Updates on both projects - mine and theirs - will follow as progress occurs.

Forthcoming Events

A weekly meeting is held each Friday on the Zoom platform. All members are sent a link by Ian Shulver - please remember that the link changes for each meeting so please be certain to use the most recent one.

Chairman's Report

Well, what has been happening this month? I suppose with lockdown under way, not a lot. One of my daughters managed to come over for Christmas Day, but have not seen the other three, nor the grandchildren since last August - I do not class a zoom call as meeting them, but I suppose it is better than nothing. It's a little difficult to give hugs over the ether. Hopefully the lockdown and the vaccines will 'soon' allow some proper social contact.

Obviously the clubrooms have been shut for all of this month apart from brief visits by various people to check that all is in order - particular thanks to Tony for lighting fires to air the place and for organising restringing the tarpaulin on the shed (and those that helped him). It is a great shame that we cannot make use of our excellent facilities, particularly since we have had a few enquiries from prospective new members..

I am not certain how much modelling you have been doing at home so it would be nice if each of you could send a short article/note to the Editor (Andrew) showing what you have achieved. Just one or two paragraphs would be sufficient, and do not worry about the grammar/spelling because Andrew will sort that out. Your effort may well find its way onto the Club's video showcase. Talking of which, Barry has made a great start. Some of you saw a taster at one of our zoom meetings although I believe the quality was not great due to zoom bandwidth issues. I have to say that there are no problems with the original video. Videos or photos of your own layout or model will be appreciated by Barry (threechimneys10@outlook.com). My

contribution to this request is a short update on my new layout , Filleigh. Some months ago I posted an article in the newsletter detailing my ideas and how to achieve them. I have now built the baseboard and have started to build some of the buildings. The road bridge has been completed, as has the station building (all except the chimney pots which will go on when I can find some superglue. Both of these are scratchbuilt, but the signal box has also been made from a kit. At the moment none of these have been painted. I have managed to get a few points but will not start to fix these down until I get the rest of them from Hattons (whenever that might be). I am still experimenting with turnout operations so will not bore you with my trials and tribulations for the moment. However, all things taken into consideration, the project is progressing satisfactorily. I think I will close now, but just say look after yourselves and stay safe.

Ian Shulver

Secretary's Report

Greetings, Comrades from the Hesketh Road Lockdown Bunker.

I haven't got much news for you other than to report that I am working on refreshing my big cellar layout based on the borders of Devon and Cornwall, which is called Downstaple Junction and which is now forty years old. Many of the locomotives are in need of care and attention and I have a winter small models workshop down there set aside for this. It is too cold and dark to work in the conservatory workshop on my large garden models.

I've received a request from Roy Corlett (roy.corlett@eclipse.co.uk; mobile 07831 666024) who is planning on returning to the hobby and is looking for



some help with servicing some of his locos that need some attention. There is a photo below of these which look to be a mix of Lima and Hornby. Roy is willing to meet any reasonable charge. Please approach Roy directly if you are able to help him out and let me know that you have done.

The recent article by Keith Hicks set me thinking about my experience of Churchtown and Hesketh Park Stations. We lived midway between Meols Cop and Hesketh Park stations and used the Preston line a good deal. It was especially handy to visit my aunt who lived in Mallee Avenue in Churchtown. She used the line to travel daily for business and with a change at St Lukes could be in Manchester within an hour or direct to Preston inside half an hour.

Hesketh Park Station had a path of red gravel from Roe Lane and you got an excellent view of the trains as you walked towards the station and the chance to crunch the gravel under your feet – very important when you are nine years old. Often we walked that way to Hesketh Park just for the view, but not for the smell as there was an overwhelming stink from a pig farm on the other side of the tracks backing onto the Rookery! The farmhouse still stands but is now indistinguishable from the similar modern bungalow next to it. This station was a very spacious affair with a rather grand ticket hall and a range of buildings and an extensive goods yard, with 'ginnels' or paths leading to the station from surrounding streets. The windows had a very distinctive yellow brick arch above each, an architectural feature which was echoed on all of the stations on the line. From Hesketh Park you had the choice of steam or electric trains to Churchtown.

Churchtown was a rather windswept station with timber platforms with little or no cover. All of the facilities were at street level and I recall that the Southport platform could be accessed directly from Cambridge Road or via an archway through the blue engineering brick bridge abutment. The ticket office had a central door with a window each side, each with the characteristic yellow brick arches above. And when you went through the door there was an old-fashioned weighing machine for parcels right in front of you. This must have been used for the shrimps that were exported from that station, presumably by passenger train as there were no goods facilities at Churchtown. Going to Southport from Churchtown by steam train was a disappointing experience as apart from discomfort from the horsehair seats in the non-corridor coaches there was no chuff to experience as it was all downhill.

My father had been a senior teacher at Churchtown School (and later at Stanley and the 'Tech'), so when the line closed, he took a last sentimental

look up on the platform and the railway staff were busy dismantling the fittings and signs which were all piled up. He was offered a bench for 15/= and a totem for 5/= . He took the latter as we only had a small car and no way of getting the bench back home, which he always regretted. The totem was fitted to our garden shed in Welbeck Terrace in Birkdale where it gradually deteriorated. My Dad's friend and colleague, Dick Howard, acquired a number of Hesketh Park totems which surrounded his cellar bar, the Cwm-y-Inn in Hawkshead Street. I often wonder if they are still there.

That was not the end of the story, however as from 1979 until 1991 I worked as a GP at Churchtown Health Centre, so the sign took up residence in my consulting room, for the Health Centre had been built by Southport Corporation on the station site after the bridge was demolished. That was where the totem sign got its new lease of life, for one of the patients (who in his day job was a transport bobby) offered to renovate it for me, as the long years in the Birkdale air had taken its toll. The worst effects of the rust were from the sign and the stove-enamelling was repaired.

Harry, the Health Centre caretaker used to say (when he wasn't entertaining the receptionists by doing impersonations of the doctors) that a ghost train passed through the health centre after it had closed to the public. I often dream about the Preston line, imagining a bit of it still lurks in a forgotten part of the Botanic Gardens as far as Banks but the only trains that now disturb the peace of the totem in its permanent resting place in our dining hall. with all the other artefacts kept from our life and travels are the ones in my cellar and garden!

Jim Ford

Where's Andrew?



Last month I was at Didcot Railway Centre, which was open (with precautions) in October 2020 when we visited, and took a ride on this steam railmotor. To be totally accurate, for social distancing reasons, it was coupled to a compartment

coach in which we travelled.

This month I am a little closer to home, with a photograph taken one weekend last March, not long before the world changed.



Just off the picture (to the left) is a footbridge that crosses three gauges of track - in the foreground is a miniature railway on 7¼ inch track, behind this is a 15 inch line before the standard gauge line.

Some Freelance Large Scale Thoughts **Pratt**

Derek

I read with interest Barry's comment on 16mm modelling in last month's newsletter (to be precise I read all of the newsletter with interest, and am learning a lot about the Isle of Wight). It's true that us garden railway types do like a social meeting - playing trains on a warm summer's afternoon in someone else's garden, with tea and home-made buns in the offing, is a joyful experience. Such events were much missed in 2020, so Jim's mini-meeting on the Winter Solstice was even more enjoyable due to its rarity.

I would however point out one factor which differentiates us from 'normal' modellers, in that we have the opportunity to run real, live-steam locomotives that live and breathe just like their full-size counterparts. This is not to belittle Hornby's foray into 00-scale live steam, nor to ignore the fact that many people like to run battery-electric, track-powered or even clockwork trains in the garden. For me there is no pleasure like getting a blast of hot steam up the nose from a safety valve just waiting for you to come close enough, sprinting after a Mamod that has only two speeds, zero and much too fast, or watching a derailed wagon slowly and unstoppably

pulling a complete train off a viaduct and down into some well-thorned rose bushes. Truth be told, radio control technology is becoming ever more reliable, miniaturised and economical, so there's little excuse for unruly behaviour. And when everything does behave itself, the sight of your loco of



choice pulling a large rake of coaches or wagons around a scenic garden with prototypical steam clouds, smells and sounds, is the only way to go. You are allowed to disagree.

Barry mentioned freelance running as a characteristic of 16mm modelling, and I for one am happy to

accumulate a somewhat random collection of stock, some representing particular lines but most not. To some extent this reflects narrow-gauge practice - money is always tight so they acquire what's available and affordable to create a consistent job rather than to look pretty. However there are increasing amounts of prototypical locos and rolling stock on the market which model particular companies, with those from North Wales being particularly well represented. And having just acquired a loco of a type which ran in Southern Africa, I have in front me as I write a just-about-finished model of an SAR brake van, and it looks very smart too. Some matching bogie wagons are on order, so a complete train will eventually appear.

This brings me to another benefit of 16mm and similar scales, that you can have up to five notional thumbs per hand and still build your own stock to a satisfactory standard. I never really got on with 4mm or even 7mm kits, it was all very fiddly and required just a little too much skill for me to be happy with the result. However in 16mm it's a lot easier, and with laser-cut woodwork everything fits together well. It's therefore possible to build complex structures with much panelling and detailing without having to be very good at it. The aforesaid brake van has over 250 components, but was both easy and quick to build, aided by a mere 45 pages of instructions!

At the other end of the scale, I find I can scratch-build with little more than basic carpentry skills. Axles, wheels and, if you want to be posh, brass bearings, are all you really need to buy to make a flat wagon, a basic goods van or a rake of slate wagons from a few lengths of stripwood. And with a



3D printer lurking in the shed, it's now only axles. It's also possible to indulge in creating the ultimate prototype, what in the US are known as 'critters', small one-off internal combustion locos and railcars. These were usually built in a back corner of the engine shed, often by the local blacksmith using whatever materials

that came to hand, not excluding his mum's old washing machine. Building these in 16mm is a niche market, but highly enjoyable for those with the penchant to do so. And of course there's the recent Christmas present, a Marks and Spencer steam engine fudge tin, just waiting to be emptied of its contents and fitted with a power bogie...

Each to their own of course, but when whatever passes for normality in your household eventually resurfaces, us of the outdoor persuasion would be happy to demonstrate why it is, if not the only way to go, then a most realistic and satisfying way to do model railways. One of the many benefits of the local 16mm group is that you don't need to belong to anything or even to own any suitable stock, just come and join in. What are you waiting for? (apart from a vaccine jab of course).

The Midland (and Western) Blue Pullmans

Ian Shulver

Some of you may recall that when we started to build Monsal Dale in N gauge, there were two things that we really had to feature. Firstly, the

Midland Main Line was home to many long coal trains hauled by both 2-8-0s and 4Fs and secondly the iconic Midland Blue Pullman which was a regular in the early 60s. Both of these were a must.



The New **MIDLAND PULLMAN**

First Class de luxe travel — Supplementary fares

8.50 am	Manchester Central	↑	9.21 pm	Mondays to Fridays from 4th July	12.45 pm	St. Pancras	↑	4.00 pm
9.04 am	Cheadle Heath		9.07 pm		2.10 pm	Leicester		
12.03 pm	St. Pancras	↓	6.10 pm			London Road	↓	2.33 pm

The last word in rail comfort. Limited accommodation, book in advance

The first requirement was relatively easy to satisfy (although mostly limited to 25 or so wagons rather than the more usual 40). The second feature was a little more difficult – there were no ready to run N gauge models available. But what about the second requirement. Undaunted, by the lack of a ready to run model, I resolved to have a go at producing a Blue Pullman set. Fortunately Allan Trotter had a set of drawings (Skinley?) from the time when he “bashed” some Triang coaches to form a 00 set. I used these drawings (suitably scaled) to construct a card and acetate set of coaches using Farish bogies. However, I came unstuck with the two motor cars – how could I form the complex shape of the cab? At the same time that I was attempting this card model, I recalled seeing a Blue Pullman on the

famed 2mm scale layout "Chee Tor". The Blue Pullman on this layout was made from a Worsley Works (scratch aid) kit, and was probably commissioned by Manchester Model Railway Society. So, I bought one and duly soldered up the various bits – I have to say not without some difficulty since soldering is not one of my fortes. As I found with the scratch built card model, the cab end of the motor cars was very tricky to get right. However all was completed, suitably painted in Nanking blue and with Fox Models transfers. The bogies under the coaches utilised Minitrix coach bogies which seemed closer to the originals than the Farish ones. For the motive power I used a Kato chassis slightly modified to fit, but only one rather than the two on the actual set.. I have to say that it was reasonably successful and attracted considerable attention on its first outing and even its second outing. However, by the time we were next due to exhibit Monsal Dale, Farish had brought out their superb model so my kit/scratch built one was retired. Although reasonably authentic, it did not pass muster against the Farish one. How often has someone built a model not supported as either ready to run or as a kit, only for a manufacturer to produce one a few months later.

What prompted this short article was two short films I came across showing the Blue Pullmans in action, as well as giving some of the more intimate details of them. This can be found on the following web links:

[The Tale of the Blue Pullman - YouTube](#)

[Blue Pullman - YouTube](#)

My TTR story - or how Trix Twin helped shape my life Keith Hick

I suppose I'm little different to the legion of TTR followers in being introduced to the magic of model railways by my parents, either as a birthday or Christmas present. My introduction was a little different; whilst my first model railway set was a present, the set up on the dining room carpet greeted me upon my return from an eye operation at Liverpool's Alder Hey hospital in the early 1950s. Born with a 'lazy' eyelid, two operations cured the problem. Fortunately, my eyesight wasn't affected and I pursued a career in Architecture and Civil Engineering, being elected as one of the UK's top 100 Architectural Illustrators, becoming a 3 handicap golfer and, and an Artist. The worldwide sale of prints from my series of six oils on canvas paintings of the *Bluebird* boat and car have raised some £10K

plus for the rebuild of Donald Campbell's K7 jet powered hydroplane, *Bluebird*.

Vicky Slowe, Curator of Coniston's Ruskin Museum, receives the first of a series of six paintings for an exhibition season from Keith, depicting Donald Campbell's K7 Bluebird (Below)



It didn't take long for the magic of TTR to unfold as I realised the, for then, amazing difference of TTR when compared to Hornby Dublo, Graham Farish etc. Yes, Hornby and Farish were more accurate representations of the 'big railway' locomotives, but the excitement of two 0-4-0 tender or tank locos on one track, coaches with interior lighting, electric points,

illuminated signals etc proved irresistible to show my pals how much more operational fun could be had with TTR. And at night, in my bedroom, where my model railway board was laid out, wow! – to see trains running when the lights were turned off made for an indelible memory.



The now preserved Stephenson link valve gear Black 5 44767, of 8M Southport shed, with the 1.50pm Southport-Preston seen passing our rear garden in Southport, during the early Spring of 1964. Photograph: Keith Hick

So, this was my introduction to the world of model railways and, as the hobby grew, so did my interest in railways in general, helped, in no small measure, by a house move in the mid 1950s which brought the Southport-Preston line into daily focus running past the end of my family home garden. By hopping over the garden fence, I could indulge my other hobby of photography, capturing the seemingly never ending array of steam trains upon what we believed was permanent way. Sadly, that was to change in 1964 with the Beeching cuts, but that's another story. Now I had the best of both worlds, model trains and the 'real thing'.



Preserved Midland Compound 1000 awaits release onto the main line from Derby Works' Paint Shop: 1959. Photo: Keith Hick

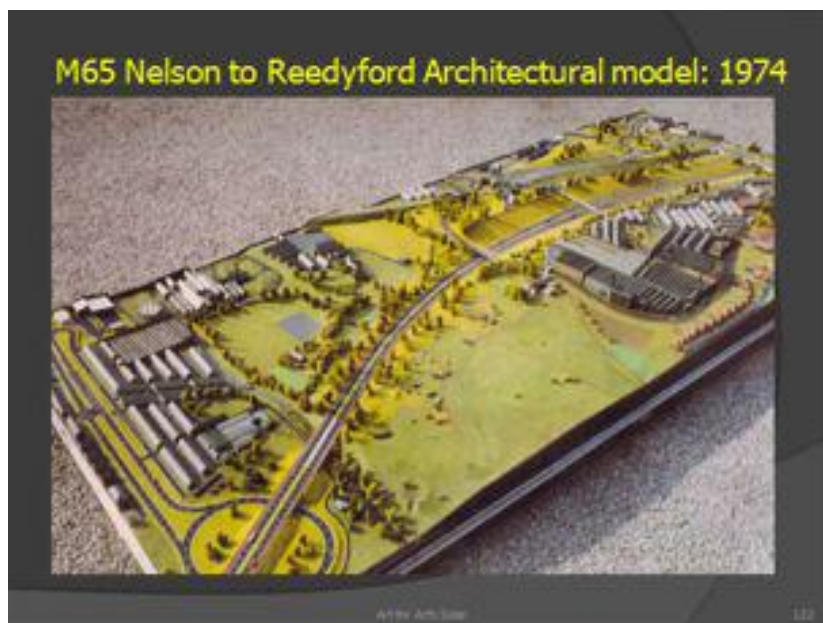
A school visit to Derby Works in the late 50s, seeing the preserved Midland Compound 1000 in the Paint Shop just before release for main line running, a brand new

Class 44 'Peak' and rows of locos awaiting entry to the repair shops, or scrap line, further cemented the interest. Membership of the Northern Railfans Club proved incredibly liberating with visits to, amongst others, Crewe and Swindon Works, seeing at first-hand steam and diesel locos under repair or construction. The innermost workings, sheer size and beauty of the steam locomotive, particularly those masterpieces of Messrs Churchward, Collett and Stanier, with their gleaming paintwork, polished brass and copper, captured my own 'golden era'.

Henry Greenly's TTR Permanent Way Manual was an indispensable bible, explaining how everything worked, both for newcomers to WJ Bassett-Lowke's pioneering table railway of 1935, plus how British Railways ran parts of the UK railway network. The photographs within Greenly's book are still imprinted within my memory, nearly seventy years later and

provided inspiration to create something similar in my own modest way in those pre and early teenage years.

Model Railway News, often with cover paintings by George Heiron, were devoured, but nothing could dissuade me from TTR and by adding a Britannia, Class V, Warship and GWR Collett 0-6-2 tank, my collection grew. Then life took over with school, exams, college, professional life, marriage, family etc, yet interest in railways remained undiminished. Having been invited in the early 1970s to leave the motorway bridges design office to form a pioneering section supporting Motorway Public Enquiries, my model railway expertise came to the fore. This included producing scale models of motorways some three to four metres in length, rendering artists impressions in Designer's Gouache for the Royal Fine Arts Commission and managing public exhibitions. All the while my TTR collection remained safe as layouts in 00 and N gauge were built in the family home loft, including the Southport Lord Street to Aintree Central Cheshire Lines route and Stainmore Summit/Appleby East in N gauge.



A chance evening dinner conversation with a design office colleague during a working stint in our Home Counties office, revealed he had several boxes of TTR stored in his loft and, with a house move planned in a few weeks time, he quickly said, "You can have the lot with my compliments."

The following day he was as good as his word and I returned home with a treasure trove of locos, rolling stock, track, signals and controllers as part of my unexpected acquisition. One of the boxes contained a boxed and complete early post war Diesel Flier, which looked rather the worse for wear. However, other locos were relatively easily returned to running order and the Diesel Flier was

placed alongside a pre-war Flying Scotsman I had acquired back in the 1970s, as a 'project impossible', lacking valve gear to one side and the other side seized. I had a vague hope that one day, they could be restored, but at the time didn't hold out too much hope.

Following retirement, I was able to devote time to the serious restoration projects. As an artist, I had happily re-liveried locos as required, so that aspect presented no problems. Even relatively minor repairs, or the easing of locomotives which hadn't run for decades as the collection grew, were a joy to work upon as motors were teased back into life. It never ceases to amaze how robust these early TTR and Triang motors are. I heard relatively recently the Triang X04 motors were a product of WWII, used in aircraft production, so well proven for more genteel peacetime use. Annual visits to our daughter and family between Houston and Galveston in Texas, USA, has seen running repairs completed for a Canadian friend to his vintage Marklin (Trix express clones) three rail locos. Even two and three truck H0 Shays were successfully brought back to life for an American friend, having suffered in the floods aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, which struck Texas in 2017. All these complemented a continuous stream of running repairs and restorations over recent years to TTR locos and stock regularly added to my collection.



Part of one of the large collections acquired which were a joy to return to working order, thanks to a combination of input from TTRCA stalwarts and home grown skills

Out of the blue I was offered a large collection from a widow whose late husband's collection hadn't seen daylight for decades and whose storage had been less than ideal. This has been repeated several times, as can be expected at 'our' time of life and this is where I will be eternally

grateful to the late Keith Hayman who, together with Duncan and John Hopkinson, have breathed new life into locos seemingly beyond redemption. Each have wielded their own special blend of magic and I count myself very fortunate to have benefitted from their respective skills set.

I entrusted John with the re-livery of the pre-war Scotsman into apple green LNER following repair by Keith, together with a similar treatment to a Hunt 4-4-0, plus a Southern 0-4-0T. I had decided to accelerate the return of these three instead of adding them to my queue of locos awaiting repaints. And this is where I must pay a personal tribute to Keith Hayman. Having spoken to Keith on the phone, he assured me he could repair 'anything electrical', even when I explained the Scotsman was devoid of valve gear to one side. "No problem", said Keith, "I can source replacement valve gear from a watchmaker friend". The additional icing on the cake was the complete repair by Keith of the post-war Diesel Flier, beautifully restored with replacement wheels, motor, running gear, shoes and re-sprayed roofs.



An eclectic array of TTR locos and rolling stock with motors repaired by Keith Hayman or Duncan Bell, and repainted by John Hopkinson or the author. The pre WWII Scotsman shown in the foreground, and the Diesel Flier were the two 'Project Impossible' finds, whilst the short and scale length LNER style coaches were rescued from oblivion with some dextrous paintwork

Spares from Martin have enabled pre and post war locos and rolling stock to be returned to running order and when a set of scale length internally lit blood & custard corridor coaches appeared rusted beyond hope, a dose of paint-stripper and Gresley teak style repaint, including fine panel lining by black permanent marker with off white roofs, looks the part. Far better than consigning them to the bin. Another set of pre-war LMS scale length lit coaches were suffering from rust bubbles along portions of their sides.

Careful spraying with WD40 has stabilised the rust and reduces any blemishes to an acceptable level – conservation, rather than restoration.



Inspiring the next generation; who needs an ipad or tablet when you can play with model trains?

Local model railway and community shows have been supported and, thanks to the excellent banners supplied by Steve White, together with membership leaflets, TTR has enjoyed a good shop window treatment pre pandemic.

Managing one of the UK's most comprehensive golf associations and a county Super Seniors' golf team, plus giving dozens of illustrated talks each year pre pandemic, has consumed much of my time during retirement, but not now.

Lockdown time has allowed concerted efforts to complete the definitive history of Southport's railways. I am leading an Authors' Panel to tell the story of how five railway companies homed in on Southport during the Victorian era as one of England's two prime sea bathing resorts, the other being Bournemouth. Amazingly, Southport had no less than 22 stations, although not all open at the same time, more than any other provincial town. Today, five remain.

Trix Twin was responsible for my lifelong passion with railways – many have attempted to define just what it is about TTR, but whatever it is, it works, as the worldwide following of Trix Twin and Trix Express happily testifies. *WJ et al*, we salute you!

And Finally

Stourbridge could be one of the most unlucky stations in the UK. The branch line from Stourbridge Junction is less than a mile in length, but has experienced three relatively recent accidents - all involving failing to stop - possibly in some extent attributable to the steep incline. Firstly, on 2 April 1977 – [BR Class 122](#) single-car diesel unit W55012 suffered a brake failure

while descending the branch from Stourbridge Junction and crashed through the [buffers](#) and the wall beyond, leaving the front part of the train overhanging the road below. This unit is preserved at the [Weardale Railway](#).

21 January 1989 – apparently caused by trespassers on the line distracting the driver, who consequently misjudged his braking, class 121 unit W55033 ran through the buffer stops at the end of the line and crashed through the wall beyond. The train was sent out of operation and required an overhaul. If the trespassers on the line were not the cause of the accident, the driver at least has to be commended for finding a plausible excuse at very short notice.

Just over 13 months later, 1 March 1990 – in a very similar incident to the 1977 crash, brake failure caused class 121 unit W55034 to crash through the rebuilt wall at the end of the line. The buffer stop destroyed in the 1989 crash had not been replaced.

