

HILLINGDON RAILWAY MODELLERS

Open
10 am.
to
5 pm.



Model Railway Exhibition

Saturday 4th March 1995

Yiewsley Baptist Church Hall

Colham Avenue, Yiewsley, West Drayton

Near West Drayton Station
Bus Routes 222, U3 and U5

Layouts, Trade Stands,
Bring & Buy Stall

Adults £1.50, Child/O.A.P. £1.00, Family £4.00

MILTON KEYNES
MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY

MKMRS NEWS

No. 36

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Hall Class No. 6990 at Loughborough, Great Central Railway Photo : D Lovett

Published by Dennis Lovett, Chairman, Milton Keynes Model Railway Society

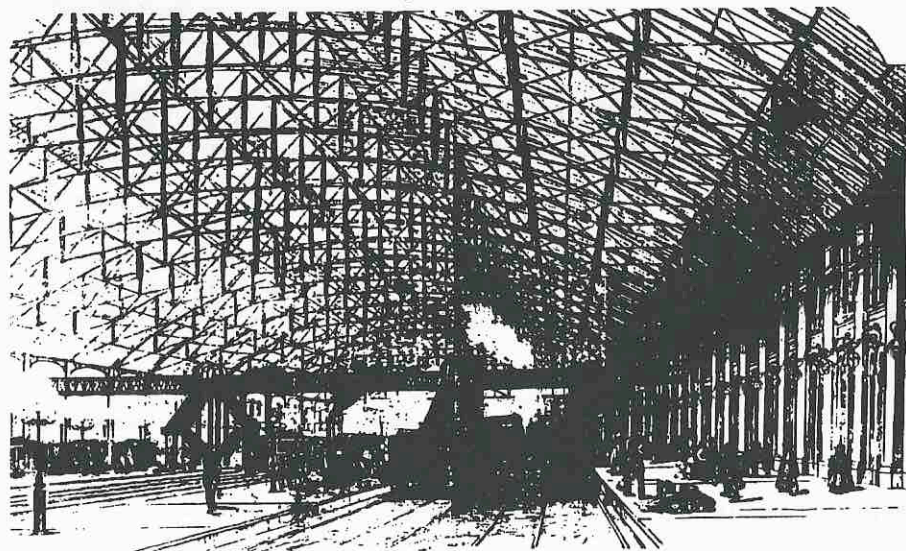
Telephone 0908 376750

The GWR arrived a few years later and built a station near the Bull Ring. For a railway so progressive and aggressive this did not satisfy for long and more tunneling began into a new station at Snow Hill. So expensive had been the tunnelling that, until the early 1900s, a wooden structure and two platforms was all the company could afford. It was later rebuilt with twelve platforms and was surely the most spacious, convenient and functional of all the stations in the city! BR policy to centralise all traffic on New Street has seen its almost complete demolition, except for two bay platforms at the north end for rush hour traffic. (The station was later completely closed, and the trackbeds abandoned north of Moor Street).

Most of the circular suburban lines have fallen into disuse and the stations closed. The duplication of circuitous and often tortuous routes to ill-sited stations in the suburbs was much to blame. There were four roundabout routes to Walsall, one via Sutton Coldfield! There were three to Dudley, one involving a change and no less than five to Wolverhampton.

Is it too late to resuscitate some of these lines?

The interior of New Street station, Birmingham circa 1854



Some think not and moves are afoot to rebuild some of them, to resite stations and join them to an entirely new underground railway. Let us hope that the newly formed West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority will act wisely.

And they did. 23 years after this article first appeared, Birmingham Snow Hill is today a modern rebuilt station, currently used by diesel services from the former GWR lines. The line north is being rebuilt and will again be used by passenger trains. Alongside will be a new tram system built on the old GWR trackbed to Wolverhampton. New stations have opened, services have been electrified and New Street is very much the hub of the former InterCity and local network.

A city which was rebuilt around the car quickly learned that it had to seek alternatives and it did. The work outlined above is just the start. Good Public Transport, carefully planned, coordinated with other modes and operated is vital to any city. The residents of Newcastle, Manchester and Sheffield have proved it. Milton Keynes take note! - Editor

MILTON KEYNES MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY Founded 1969

President	Jim Wood	Committee	Geoff Bell
Vice Presidents	Les Wood Gordon Etherington		Chris Garner Chris Lester Colin Jamieson Mark Wilson
Chairman	Dennis Lovett	Librarian	Mark Wilson
Vice Chairman	Fred Collins		
Secretary	Chris Hughes	CMRA Rep.	Chris Lester
Treasurer	Eric Bowman		

Model Shops are a must

During a recent family visit to Northampton, I had the opportunity to reflect on the disappearing model and toy shops.

Not far from the town centre was a large toy warehouse, "Toys R Us". Whilst the family inspected computer game boxes, yours truly set off for the avenue marked "Model Trains". I was somewhat amazed at the state of the stock. Boxes open, items thrown about and even the train sets in their selophane wrappers looked as if they had been run over by the company's fork lift in the loading bay! This was not likely to create a good impression to any potential purchaser

Beatties next - so many of their shops now have model railway sections which hardly warrant the effort. Bearing in mind they started as model railway shops in the days of the Colonel, they appear to concentrate these days on anything but.

Even Watts, the traditional town centre toy shop in the basement of the furnishing business, had reduced most of its stock to next to nothing, and moved into part of the shop which offered about 50% space than available previously. A book shop having been established where they previously operated from - no doubt the sub-letting

helping to pay the way!

Gone are the days of Bassett-Lowke in Kingswell Street and the large displays of model railway items in all the other shops.

I know Northampton has its own model shop up the Wellingborough Road, but this is hardly within the town centre, and certainly a good route march away, thus preventing the abandoning of the family whilst "I pop in here for a couple of minutes".

The story in Northampton can be mirrored elsewhere. Central London once boasted a whole array of model shops, today those left are hardly worth visiting.

It would seem that the model railway business will have to rely on fewer specialist shops in future - the big toy shops no longer see model railways as something worth tying up their capital in.

Its a good job we have a specialist model railway shop in the town, otherwise life could be much more difficult!!


Dennis Lovett
Chairman

Club Notices

Swapmeet dates

A swapmeet will take place at Woughton Campus on the following dates during 1995;

February 12th
May 21st
September 10th
December 17th

Opening times are 1100 - 1500. Admission is 60p, child/senior citizens 30p.

Relics join layout in TV stardom bid!

Details of our N gauge layout Mandlebury's forthcoming TV appearance were given last month. From receiving the telephone call to erecting the layout in Slough, it was all done within 36 hours, such is the pace of TV work!

We did forget, however, to acknowledge the contribution provided by Gordon Eckersley at Bletchley Railwayana. The TV production company asked us to provide at the last minute, some authentic railway relics to provide "atmosphere". If we could "borrow" some then the club would be well rewarded.

Gordon, was able to supply on loan some items which were gratefully received by the producers, although the insurance value left them a little staggered! Thanks Gordon and apologies for not mentioning it last time!!

The funding from this exercise is already assisting in another club project. TV work is financially rewarding and the production company promised to use us again in the future!

A new N gauge project.

The committee has recently approved the building of a new N gauge layout. This will be a steam period layout and will be a model of Fenny Stratford between (1948-1965).

The decisions behind the layout are:

- 1 It is a local prototype which will be of interest to visitors to Bletchley Park.
- 2 It will play a major role in the Bletchley - Bedford 150 celebrations now being organised. Further details later.

Chris Garner will act as Project Manager and we look forward to receiving his reports for future issues of the magazine.



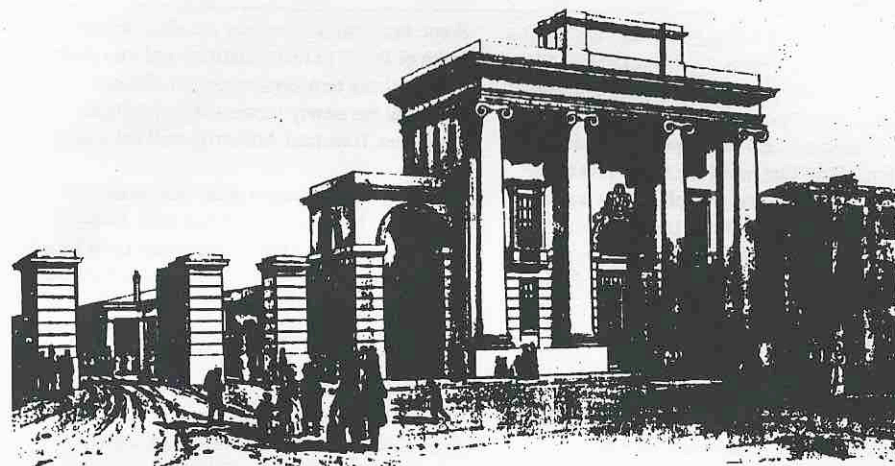
EXHIBITION DIARY

February 1995

- 11 Northampton, Moulton**
18 East Beds MRC, Biggleswade
18 Risborough, P. Risborough
25/6 Twickenham MRC, Richmond

Please see model press for details

RAIL
Modern Image Exhibition
APRIL 1/ 2
Bletchley Leisure Centre
Stewards needed by CMRA.
Volunteers please see Chris Lester



Curson Street station entrance

seven hills to provide a direct and fast line across the city from Tyseley to Handsworth, with some magnificent engineering. Now, by some strange quirks of fate, and BR policy, this once prosperous artery lies derelict and almost abandoned.

This sad state of affairs resulted partly from rivalries between competitive lines and pointless duplication, but mainly from the obstacles presented in early days by the seven hills.

The only flat approach is from the east, from whence entered the first line, the London & Birmingham; pushing forward from Bletchley in the 1830s, it built a magnificent terminus (dominated by a replica of the Doric arch at Euston) at Curson Street, unfortunately located 1.5 miles from the city centre. It remains today, a reminder of past glories; what must be the most grandiose goods station entrance in the land.

Next to arrive was the Grand Junction from Liverpool. This approached from the north-west but, to avoid the hills, swept through an arc of 180 degrees to the north of the city to approach from the east and join the London & Birmingham at Grand Junction.

The Birmingham & Derby (later Midland) line

could gain no access from the east and for many years had to be content with a single platform nine miles outside the city at Hampton-in-Arden, alongside the London & Birmingham, where passengers were transferred.

The Stour (pronounced Stower) Valley Line was opened in direct competition with the Grand Junction, and it was when these two, together with the London & Birmingham, amalgamated to become the London & North Western Railway, that the honeycombing under the city began. Curson Street was inadequate and inconveniently sited so New Street was built. It had both terminal and through platforms and the largest single-span overall roof in the country. Permission was granted to the Midland to run over the new lines but not to use the station, a Gilbertian situation which caused the Midland to build its own station alongside the L & NWR one! Both stations had the same name but were completely independent, each having its own booking office and refreshment rooms. This uneconomic and archaic system was perpetuated even into LMS and BR days!

By 1870 the heart of the city was so riddled by tunnels that trains could leave for Liverpool or Bristol (which are respectively north and south) by going east or west in both cases!

The Birmingham Roundabouts

by Don Pigott

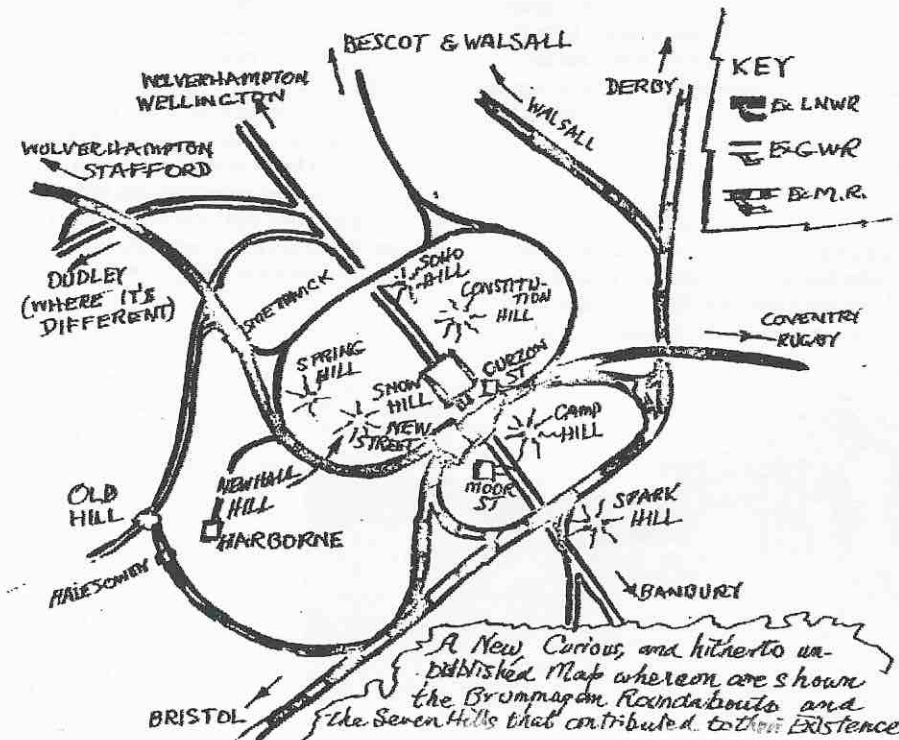
Reprinted from Newsletter No.7, February 1972

Birmingham, like Rome, is built upon seven hills, and there the similarity ends, except to say that the topography of the city had a great influence on the railway development there in the 19th century and on railway stagnation in the 20th. The result is that, today, it is the only city of comparable size whose citizens are confined, almost exclusively, to travel within the road confines of their city.

Because the city came first, the railways, when they began to arrive, had, perforce, to terminate on the outskirts, to plunge into vast caverns, or fling themselves up onto huge viaducts. Or else they took long circuitous routes to avoid tunneling or annoying the gentry.

By 1900, the railway map looked reminiscent of an optical illusion of concentric circles and tangents, which offered several alternative ways of reaching the suburbs; none was direct and most were inconvenient. The railways like the music went "round and around". Vast populations were without any direct line to the city centre, and it is hardly surprising that, once competition arrived in the form of tramways, the local railways fell swiftly into disuse. Only the most enthusiastic and adventurous preferred a seven-mile tour to a three-mile tram ride.

The Great Western alone, aggressive and thrusting, was courageous to attack five of the



QUIZ CORNER from SAGITTARIUS

HORSES FOR COURSES

Ever since the beginnings of railways operators have faced the problem of identifying their locomotives. Should it be by number, name or both. Railway companies have done all three. If company policy was (is) to go for names, the problem then becomes one of supply (are there enough suitable names?); witness the GWR "Saint" and "Star" classes which soon ran out of saints and stars, let alone some of the names currently in use! The LNER was faced with many problems in the 1920s. The particular one which concerns us was the naming policy to be adopted in relation to their new Pacific locomotives. Their solution was to look for thoroughbred winners (which, of course, is what these new engines became) in other fields. So they went to the yearbooks of the classic races and took racehorse names for their engines. There are 30 names from the LNER class A3 for you to find in this wordsquare.

N O I R E P Y H Q K A C I R E M A Y G T M N R S J E B
 K N E C R D E O P I C U B E L A D E C N I M A I K R L
 M E L T O N I R E T J C M T V L I U Q N A R T B Y M I
 K S M I M W S N S A N S O V I N O K F I W Z S N O L N
 B F W V E J Q U I I C L X D A D H A V L U G N A I F K
 S T E R E C A R F T M R E J R P V D B B Y M U V M A B
 L U A Z T G F W N M P M R I B A Y A R D O I S R I I O
 S A D A L U L R M R W E O P W I N K L A E W N E T I A N
 A H R B A I L N E A H T N N O L A T C L E D K G Z A N
 G O T O G T S T O L S N P L A C T I T R P L Q E F T Y
 G U M D S A T K C I F O X T A G O T A O H A C V W O S
 T U C T G Y H S V S F B Q L C T U R A S A D E L L G X
 C M A T P R Q R H C A N O R O C Z S C D N D I T N N R
 I N L O L V I T K Y E A F L N T O P S N C E Q R F A M
 A I L I G S S Y Z T L K N I W T S V R I S R T A L T M
 S L B I Z I G Z D X D B A Q R R B R O W N J A C K Y S
 Y D O C R R B E O Q W T Z D F D N B R O K B E A E M
 C L Y O N E D A R A P D N A R G A S D A O F K R V Q U
 K P M C W N X J T A I U Q S A R F U F T L O F Y G E A
 R U E P O T U R C I S E M L J K N E S R C H K X I U N
 H P S M R J R I B R T P O L H A R V E S T E R L M I P
 E I R N R T O A L O C P E W Y A T S O S I H O R A J I
 W O O L W I N D E R I U O H N E E R L G L H K A S W O
 P T S K U O I S S N C S X I O C E I L A G A T E U O M
 T I O Y L N M R P I C E N T E N A R Y R W I G U I E R

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bayardo | Galopin | Persimmon |
| Blink Bonny | Galtee More | Pretty Polly |
| Book Law | Grand Parade | Sansovino |
| Brown Jack | Harvester | Sir Visto |
| Call Boy | Humorist | Sunstar |
| Captain Cuttle | Hyperion | Tagalie |
| Centenary | Ladas | Tracery |
| Coronach | Melton | Tranquil |
| Firdaussi | Minoru | Windsor Lad |
| Flying Fox | Ormonde | Woolwinder |

Answers from last month

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Belgian National Railways | 8. Swedish State Railways |
| 2. Royal Bavarian State Railway | 9. Dutch Railways |
| 3. Greek State Railway | 10. Soviet Railways |
| 4. Danish State Railways | 11. Swiss Federal Railways |
| 5. Croatian State Railway | 12. German Federal Railway |
| 6. Finnish State Railway | 13. Austrian Federal Railways |
| 7. National Railways of Luxembourg | 14. Polish State Railway |
| | 15. Royal Prussian Railway Company |

The Beckton Branch

by Dennis Lovett

In 1870, The Gas, Light & Coke Company opened a large gas works at a place now known as Beckton, on the marshes north of Gallions Reach. Work had commenced on its construction on 29th November 1868. To house the workers a small town grew up around the works and took its name from the Governor of the Company, Simon Adams Beck and adding town to his surname.

The gas works had its own docks facilities for the unloading of coal from the ships which had brought it from the Northumberland & Durham Coal field. In 1871, the company built its own railway branch from Beckton to Custom House, 1 mile 60 chains in length. Most of the incoming coal was unloaded at two piers which jutted out into the river, where on Pier No. 1, 14 x 30cwt cranes were available to unload the colliers (coal carrying vessels) and on No.2, 12 x 50 cwt cranes were provided for this purpose. Once the wagons were loaded,

they proceeded on high level tracks to be the weigh bridges, before proceeding to the unloading point, where they were discharged through the wagon floor. The branch gained little benefit from this traffic but it did, however, deal exclusively with the output from the works waste material namely coke, tar and spent lime, which were transported by rail for further use elsewhere, although some coke also left the site by barge. Coke is itself a fuel and tar was a useful product for building roads etc.

The 269 acre site had its own adjacent chemical works which dealt with the tar and other waste materials, which were transported to it by the internal railway system. The main site included 14 retort houses which were used for baking the coal in clay lined chambers, the coal gas then being drawn off for storage in one of the 9 gas holders. These had a capacity of 19m cubic feet which was constantly being

drawn on by both industrial and domestic users.

A small station was built at Beckton to cater mainly for the work force with passenger services running to coincide with shift changeovers. No railway staff were provided at Beckton, the platform there being just sufficient to accommodate the short 4 wheel coaches and little more than an internal works halt. Because of the lack of proper station facilities at Beckton, in later days under Great Eastern operation, trains began at Stratford Low Level and ticket checking took place at the Custom House stop.

The internal railway system at Beckton was to comprise some 41 miles of track, 9 of which were built on elevated sections on steel viaducts. 31 locomotives were at work on the system and over 1300 wagons, of which only 140 were 10T open wagons for use outside the internal system for conveying coke via the Great Eastern Railway. Some of the locomotives were built to a restricted loading gauge, with low boilers and cabs, to allow them to work into the retort houses. It was not unknown for 20+ trains to be in traffic at any one time on the system. The Great Eastern Railway took over operations on the Beckton line in 1874.

The system had three locomotive depots including a roundhouse with 10 roads. The system had its own workshops which employed some 600 men. They looked after the maintenance of railway locomotives and

rolling stock, stationary boilers and other specialist equipment.

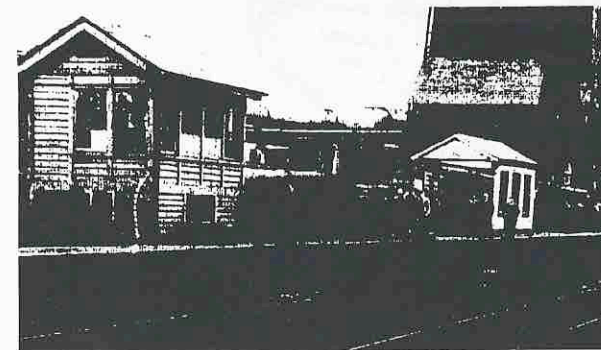
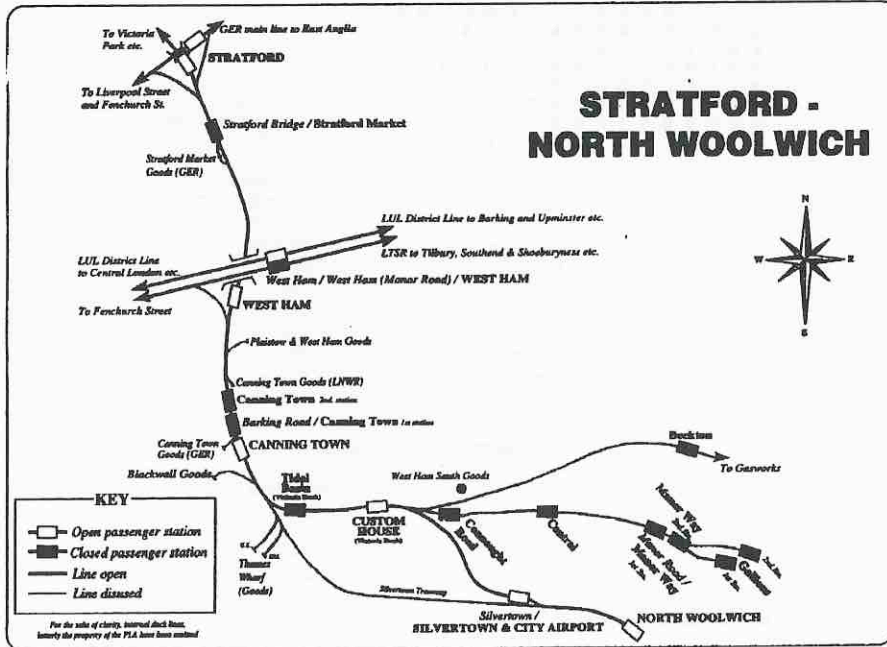
Beckton employed some 4,000 men at its peak and could produce 4m cubic feet of coal gas an hour.

Passenger operations were withdrawn in 1940.

After the war. Beckton was one of the areas developed with 'prefab' houses to rehouse those from the east end who had lost their homes during the war. Despite this influx of residents, the railway remained closed to all but freight traffic.

The last train ran to Beckton on 1st June, 1970, although the line did not officially close until February 1971. Beckton Gas Works itself finally closed in 1971, although the works had not taken coal deliveries since 1969, with gas production ceasing in favour of North Sea Natural Gas in the summer of that year.

The Parliamentary Bill for the extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Beckton was first lodged in 1986 with construction work commencing in June, 1989. This line is built almost on the former formation from Custom House to Gallions (as far as Cyprus), although by the time the line was built, the former trackbed and almost everything else had long since been removed and parts of the former Beckton Works internal system. The new Beckton line opened in March 1994.



The old Beckton station was part of the gas works complex. It boasted only minimal facilities.

