



MKMRS at the Crown 7 event on May 30 was recorded by our photographer. Front cover - Stan watches the shunting whilst Colin and David are at work. Top - A train arrives at Alverton. Bottom - Stan and Ken take a breather from selling magazines. We reduced our stocks by 180 at the event!

# MILTON KEYNES MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY NEWS

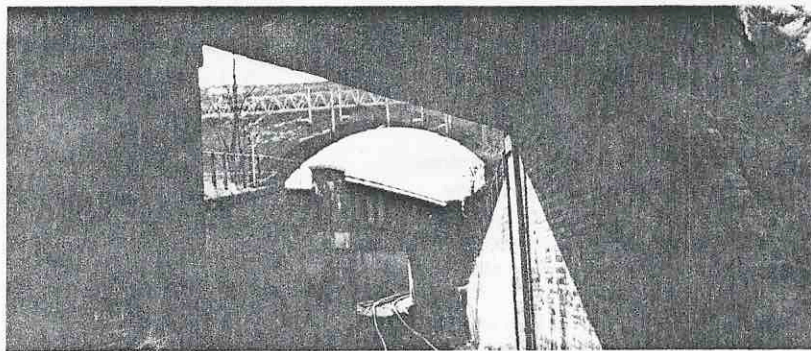
No. 4 July 1992



Published by Dennis Lovett, Chairman, Milton Keynes Model Railway Society  
c/o 4 Browning Crescent, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 5AU.  
Telephone: 0908 376750.

## Mystery Picture

This picture was taken at a Buckinghamshire Railway location. Can you identify it.  
Answer at bottom of page.



## GUILDEX '92

on: **SATURDAY 5th SEPTEMBER**  
10.00 am to 5.00 pm

**SUNDAY 6th SEPTEMBER**  
10.00 am to 5.00 pm

at: **TELFORD EXHIBITION CENTRE**  
TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE  
*(follow signs to Exhibition Centre)*

See: **AT LEAST 15 LAYOUTS**  
*including "Inkerman Street"  
and "Dewsbury"*

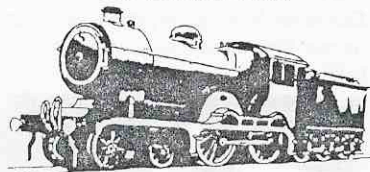
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£5.00, non GOG members and family  
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**More for the 7mm modeller!!**

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## CHELMSFORD MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION



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**SATURDAY 24th OCTOBER 1992**  
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- + REFRESHMENTS + RAFFLE +
- + TRADE & PRESERVATION STANDS +

Christopher Awdry  
*(writer of THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE)*

Adults £1.20 Children and S.C. 60p Family (2+2) £3.00

## MILTON KEYNES MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY

The club was formed in 1969 and is an Associate Member of The Model Railway Club and a Member of The Chiltern Model Railway Association.

<b>President:</b> Jim Wood	<b>Secretary:</b> Chris Hughes	<b>Committee:</b> Geoff Bell Fred Collins Phil Gilbert Colin Catley
<b>Vice President:</b> Les Wood	<b>Treasurer:</b> Gordon Etherington	
<b>Chairman:</b> Dennis Lovett	<b>CMRA Rep:</b> Eric Bowman	
<b>Vice Chairman:</b> John Symons	<b>Librarian:</b> Mark Wilson	

## Putting our house in order .....

Extensive work on our workshop/kitchen and library has now reached the point where we get around to thinking about the "official opening". This will enable our landlords to have a look at our workmanship and for us to relax after three years of pretty hectic activity.

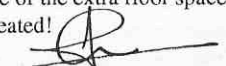
Before this can be achieved and our guests invited, we have to undertake a certain amount of clearing up. We have recently gained access to our Holne Chase premises. I should perhaps explain that we never ever lost access, but for a short period were frustrated by the fact that the door would not open thanks to an over enthusiastic painter who managed to stuff several coats of blue paint in every possible nook and cranny. He had obviously done so without bothering to arrange for someone to give him as key. The school caretaker was as bemused as the rest of us! Your Chairman, not well versed in criminal activities, spent over an hour with screwdriver, chisel and hammer endeavouring to persuade the door to open. Eventually he succeeded and because of the amount of noise he generated, alerted everybody in the world apart from the police!

Entry gained, we then discovered that the County Council had disconnected the electricity only a couple of weeks earlier and this had affected not only the lights but also the pumps

which keep back the floods from the doors. Fortunately someone had the foresight to build an 8" step to avoid the floodwater gaining access. This problem is now being resolved and once Holne Chase has been tidied out and tables etc. fitted, then we can bring it back into use as a large store room. Anything not in regular use at the present time can then be moved to the store and this includes surplus baseboards and the Verney Junction layout. These items can then be called back as and when needed. Once this has been achieved, then we can undertake a general tidy up, and with this in mind I have undertaken negotiations with a certain railway company, for more of their scrap metal cupboards.

Our club rooms are not only used by ourselves but by our guests (HMRS etc.) and it is essential we keep them looking reasonable. Whilst, I do not expect high levels of cleanliness, the occasional use of dustpan, brush and black sacks would not go amiss.

Once our house is in order, then we can start to look at attracting new members and making use of the extra floor space we will have created!

  
Dennis Lovett,  
Chairman.



### Club outing

The club outing will take place on 5 July to the Mid-Hants Railway. For details please see page 3.

### QGM

There will be a short QGM in the club room on Tuesday 28 July starting at 8pm.

### Crown 7 Thanks

Thanks to all who helped in any way with the Crown 7 even on 29/30 May. Special thanks to Joy Wood and Jenny Lovett who along with Fred Collins made sure that all were fed. This year the catering staff had to work in even more difficult circumstances than normal and their efforts were much appreciated by the organisers.

### Articles wanted

Articles or information for publication should be handed to the Chairman a.s.a.p. Please put pen to paper or be prepared to put up with his efforts indefinitely!

### Club Library

Work is still progressing on inserting vast numbers of magazines into our library.

We have also benefitted from donations of books and videos and these are now available.

Phil Gilbert has also given us temporary custody of his videos whilst he moves home. These are also available for loan.

Details from Mark Wilson in the library.

### CMRA Exhibition Diary

11 July - Kempston

### J.H.& E. Essen, Private owner wagon

Ken Breedon rang me to provide some interesting information on the private owner wagon we illustrated last month.

Ken's dad was a coal merchant for the Co-op at Bletchley. Next to their staithe in the goods yard were those of Essen. In 1949 Ken's dad had the chance to buy the company but declined and continued to work for the Co-op.

On the same site were the staithe of A. Sharpe of Bletchley. Neals produced a OO wagon some years back, which was made for them by Graham Farish.

Other local coal merchants, Bramley/Amphletts/Martells had their staithe at Fenny Stratford.

## N GAUGE PROJECT - MANDLEBURY

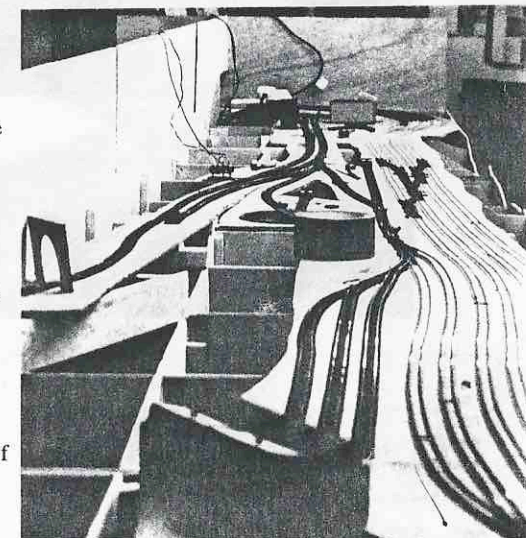
Since our first report in Issue 2 of MKMRS News, work has continued on the N gauge project.

The first trains ran many weeks ago and since then, work has continued on the permanent wiring. Work has now commenced on the scenery and the rugged Pennine landscape is now being formed from polystyrene blocks.

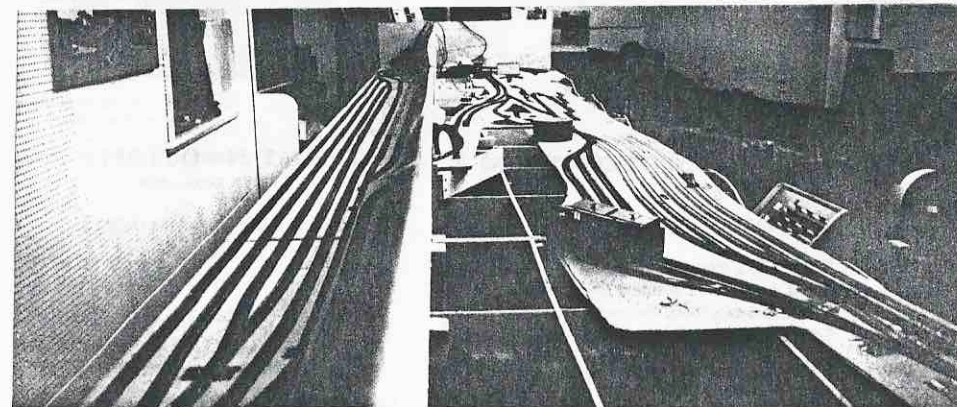
Don Pigott has 'volunteered' to look after the townscape development and some imposing Northern looking buildings are now being built.

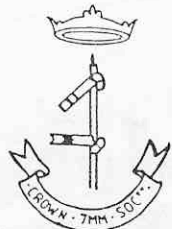
Chris Garner has devised a name for the project - MANDLEBURY. This is made up of MANchester, LEeds and BURY.

It is just six months since the project started and since then, a lot has been achieved. The Exhibition Manager is pencilling the layout in for our 1993 show - keep up the good work lads!



Above - The preserved railway appears from the tunnel left. Depot and yard in centre. Main lines on right.  
Below - Fiddle yard left, main lines to right.





## CROWN 7mm SOCIETY



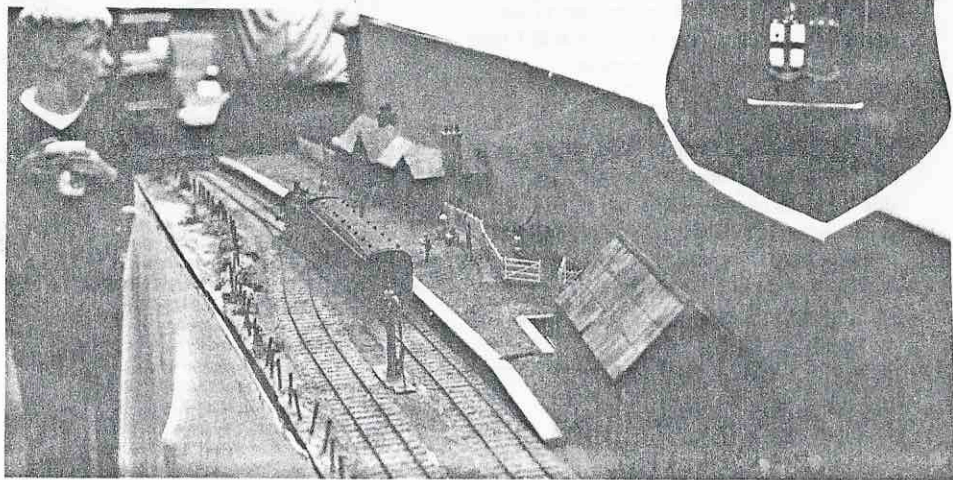
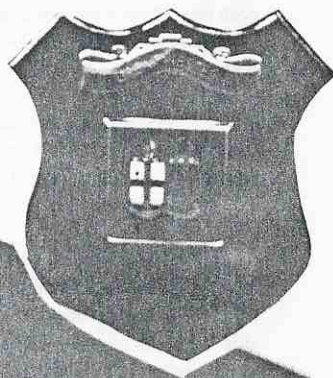
On Saturday 30 May, the club played a major part in the Annual Convention of the Crown 7mm Society and the AGM of The 7mm Narrow Gauge Association.

Thanks to all who took part. In addition to stewarding and catering, the club staffed a stall selling surplus magazines at 10p a copy and this went down well with the assembled visitors. We sold some 180 and some visitors to the stand kept muttering about how cheap they were! Your Chairman keen to reduce the stocks offered discounts to those who bought lots! Little did they know that back in the club room we would be replenishing supplies on a weekly basis!

The club O Gauge layout Alverton was exhibited. Much hard work had gone into it and once Roger had fitted the buildings, the scene was transformed. The Crown 7mm Society awarded us the Great Western trophy (see picture) for our efforts. Well done the Alverton team.

Our Hon. Member Doug Moorcroft asked me to pass on his own thanks for the work you put in. The organisers were well pleased with our efforts and are even talking about a return next year!

Watch this space!



## Club Outing - Mid - Hants Railway 5 July 1992

The club outing to the Mid-Hants Railway takes place on Sunday 5 July. The bus driver, Gordon Eckersley points out an error in the previous issue of MKMRS News. He told us that our journey estimate of 2 hours was a little optimistic and as he was driving a Citybus and not a Formula One car, he estimates 2.5 hours as more likely!

Departure times are as follows;  
Club room (car parking) - 0915  
Mercury/Tel.Rentals - 0920  
Whaddon Way (Murco) - 0925  
Shenley Road (Sh.Hotel)- 0930

Balances on fares should be paid to Gordon Etherington before the day. Costs are;  
Adult - £10.50  
Senior Citizen - £9  
Child - £8

Train service is as follows;

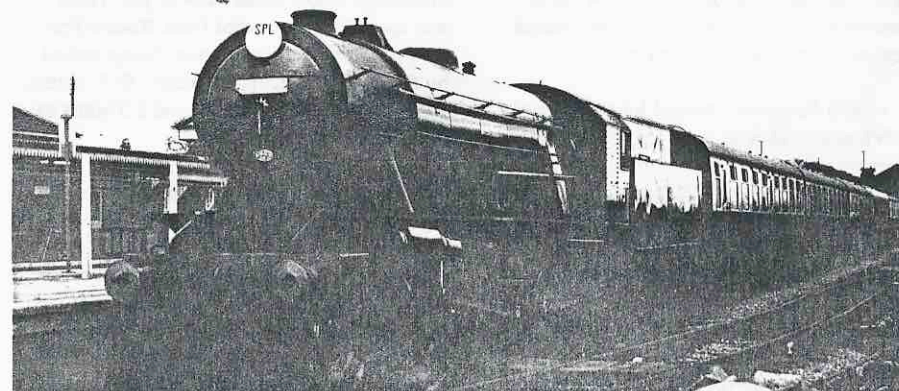
Arlesford	1225	1305	1415	1505
Ropley	1240	1320	1440	1520
Medstead	1251	1342	1451	1542
Alton	1303	1354	1503	1554

Alton	1320	1410	1520	1610
Medstead	1335	1430	1535	1625
Ropley	1352	1442	1552	1638
Arlesford	1400	1450	1600	1646

To view the locomotive depot - alight at Ropley.

Individual tickets will be issued. Travel on trains as you wish.

Return bus times to be advised.



Above - One locomotive we won't see on the Mid-Hants is this WD 2-10-0 which has been sold to the North York Moors Railway.

# Profile

## John Symons (Vice Chairman, MKMRS)

John Symons was born in Penzance, Cornwall, where his father and grandfather were family doctors. John soon discovered Hornby O Gauge and built up layouts on the floor. Soon a layout was built in the family home in Morrab Road (well known to several MKMRS members who stayed there during early trips to exhibitions in Cornwall). The layout was built from sawn timber planks, supported on trestles constructed from roofing laths obtained from a local builders merchants. By the mid - 1930's he had some twenty 20v Hornby locos available for traffic, the pride of the stud then being the 'County of Bedford'.

The next layout was a joint affair with a friend and was built in the old coach house in the yard of his grandfathers house, opposite Penzance Town Hall. The old coach house was by then being used as a garage and the loft above it was no longer used. After clearing it out they laid an electricity supply themselves and in the room measuring 25' x 14', built baseboards from tongue and groove boards rescued from a derelict cottage.

Living in Penzance enabled John to view the GWR activities with great interest. He became friendly with the signalman in Long Rock box, which controlled the MPD area and was soon signalling trains in and out of the terminus. His interest in signalling stems from this period. John went to prep. school in Okehampton which introduced him to the SR and partly explains why he owns a West Country and Bullied coaches! He later went to Blundells, Tiverton where a bike ride to Tiverton Junction was part of the curriculum, train spotting being a regular pastime.

The railway by now owned a Hornby 'Princess Elizabeth' but with coaches costing 7/6d (37.5p) each, he built his own (some 24 of them), from mahogany, fitted Meccano bogies and used garden wire to make the couplings. The Hornby track was soon replaced by Bassett - Lowke component built track and included double junctions.

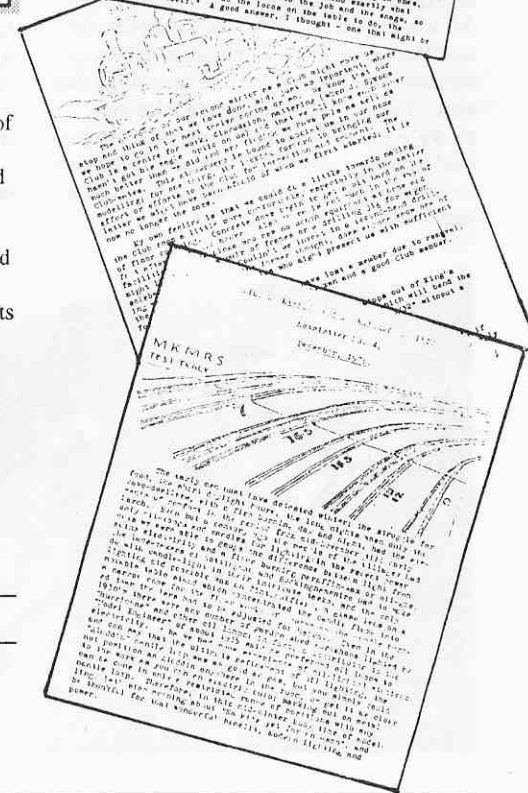
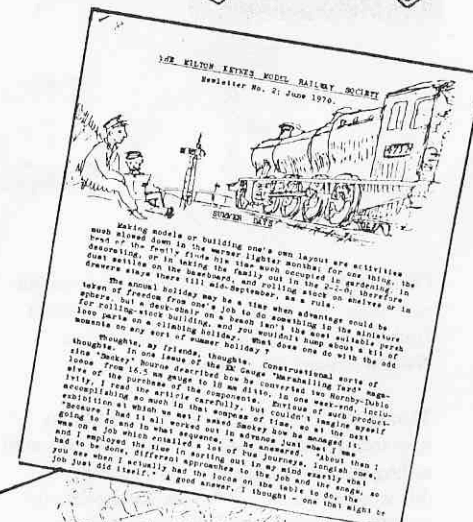
At the beginning of the war the layout was dismantled and moved back to two rooms in the top floor of Morrab Road. A new layout was constructed, complete with four platform station, twelve coach trains and some 800ft of track.

The next logical stage was to move towards scale accuracy and around 1943, John began experimenting with a 2 rail motor bogie (x Leeds or Bassett - Lowke) and fine scale track. All the Hornby locos were disposed of and replaced by an Exley pannier tank, acclaimed in those days as a Rolls - Royce job. Track was carefully constructed from Rocket Precision components, the company being owned by the famous O gauge modeller, W.S. Norris. John recalled that it took around 2.5 hours to build a yard of track!

The next few years saw little progress on the layout. After 5 years in the Army, John moved to Cheshire to join Associated Ocel in 1951. During his time in Cheshire, he met Barbara whom he married shortly after moving to the company's Bletchley operation in 1954. Sailing took over from model railways and the Penzance layout was eventually dismantled and moved to Bletchley for storage.

### Competition Results were:

- Best entry - **Les Wood** (NBR Goods Shed)
- Scratch loco - **Les Wood** (4mm GC C1 13)
- 2nd - **Brian Golding** (3mm AL1 electric)
- Kit loco - **Ron Barnard** (7mm Compound)
- 2nd - **Colin Stacey** (4mm Castle)
- 3rd - **Alec Revitt** (4mm 45xx)
- Kit roll/stk - **Gordon Etherington** (4mm Auto coach, GWR)
- Kit lineside - **Chris Mann** (7mm GNR signalbox)



The Chairman reflected on the first full year of club life. Membership had increased to 39. Attendances for October/November averaged between 17 and 18.

Colin Stacey was the subject of the profile and gave further information on how part of his layout had been used at the 1969 Arts & Crafts and assisted in the clubs formation.

MKMRS could look back on its first 18 months with some satisfaction. Although we have only slightly improved on the membership numbers over the years, our weekly attendance numbers would appear to find us in a much healthier position!

To be continued.....

## In the begining (part 2) . . . . .

In the second issue of our newsletter dated June 1970, Treasurer Gordon Etherington, reported that 26 members had paid their subscriptions. Membership costs in those days were £2 and Associates 16/-. Tea could be purchased for 6d a cup.

A club outing to the Festiniog was planned for 4 July, leaving at 0600 and returning at 2400. We were all a lot younger then!

On 7 May, the club room suffered severe flooding following a thunderstorm and cloudburst. The basement at Holne Chase quickly filled to a depth of 3 inches and following emergency action, a dam was built the following evening. It is still giving good service, which following recent thunderstorms, is just as well!

On 27 May, there was a club visit to Barnet MRC and plans were being made for exhibiting Buckingham Gate at the Annual Arts & Crafts Exhibition and at the Olney Flower Festival.

The financial report made interesting reading and showed receipts of £87 3s 1d and expenditure of £33. The bank balance was reported as being in a healthy state!

Vice - Chairman Brian Golding outlined proposals for the club competition and these were adopted and still remain in force today.

The Secretary outlined a planned visit to Pendon Museum and a visit to Bletchley Power Signal Box and the Diesel Electric Depot.

Newsletter No.3 (October 1970) recorded a membership of 35 and weekly attendance averaging between 15 and 19 for the July - September period.

MKMRS is recorded as having joined the Chiltern Model Railway Association, an organisation which was formed in 1966.

The outing to the Festiniog had been attended by 47 people and member Peter Jarvis conducted the party on a tour of Boston Lodge Works. It is recorded as a long day with plenty of rain.

The Olney Floral Festival was attended on 9 July, Buckingham Gate being exhibited and the test tracks were virtually complete.

The future programme lists an evening of scratchbuilding with "Chairman Wood" and "Constructor Wood" taking the lead. A visit to Pendon was announced for 20 October and Competition Night as the last Tuesday in November.

Jim Wood had written the story behind the building of his King Class locomotive and Treasurer, Gordon Etherington was the subject of Editor, John Mann's interview.

In 1966, John began constructing a Hornby - Dublo 3 rail layout for son Johnathon. He came into contact from time to time with local modellers, including those from the former Bletchley Model Railway Club, which in the 1960's had a large OO layout in a loft in Victoria Road (not far from where we are now).

John joined the O Gauge Guild in 1968 and began to work in O gauge again. John played a leading role in the formation of our club in 1969 (by then the Bletchley club had long since closed) and the background to this was outlined in the last issue. John served on the steering committee and was appointed Secretary at the first AGM. He continued in that role until 1980 when he became Vice - Chairman following Colin French's move to Suffolk.

John knew of the existence of our Holne Chase premises through his Civil Defence connections and as Barbara was a Bletchley Head Mistress, knew how to obtain permission from the Bucks Education Department.

John still has Cornish connections and for several years stored our first O gauge layout, Ayot St. Lawrence in the basement of the family house in Penzance. Eventually this layout was donated to our Cornish friends and is now located in a road called Alverton, which is the name of our current O gauge exhibition layout, the name having been suggested by Roger Blackburn during a MKMRS outing to Penzance.

Through John and his Cornish connections, many of us in MKMRS have got to know modellers in that part of the world and have widened our modelling knowledge as a result.

One tale concerning a visit to the famous Buckingham branch is worthy of note. To avoid embarrassment I will not reveal all, but suggest those who wish to find out speak to Geoff Bell, a.s.a.p. about the run away train and a broom cupboard!

-----  
Another victim next month!  
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# Modelling in Twelve Inches to the Foot!

The building of the replica bloomer locomotive which now graces the front of Milton Keynes Central station has been well chronicled in both the local press and the railway magazines. The history of the locomotive is not so well known however. Our member Peter Jarvis in his role as Editor of the Festiniog Railway - Milton Keynes Group newsletter, has kindly allowed us to reproduce the article below.

## The Bloomers (part two) by RODNEY WEAVER

Between 1854 and 1859, there appeared twenty - six slightly smaller locomotives with 6' 6" wheels, having the same design features as the 7' class and known, not unnaturally, as Small Bloomers. Some of these Coleman's rubbers springs, fram plates, wheels and axles of the tender constructed for No.2 at Wolverton in 1859, have been used in the tender of the new locomotive now being built at Tyseley (the second 'replica'). They were followed in 1861, by three (of an order for five) 7' 6" "Extra Large Bloomers" with 18" x 24" cylinders, 1230 sq.ft. of heating surface, 26 sq. ft. of grate, a rigid wheelbase of 18' and weighing 34.5 tons. The lower heating surface was due to the use of a McConnell double firebox with combustion chamber (now burning coal), the tubes being relatively short. They were a disaster - fast, yes but too heavy and too rigid for the track. The Board soon ordered them to be removed from service and

cancelled the rest of the order!

More or less contemporary with these monsters, a further ten 7' locomotives were ordered - five from Sharp and five from Kitson - and a final batch of ten laid down at Wolverton, being amongst the last locomotives to be built there. These entered service in 1861/2. As built they worked at 150 lb/sq.in. but all had probably been reduced to 120 lb/sq.in. by the end of 1862. They had equalising levers between the leading and driving axles to maintain near - constant adhesive weight, similar levers having recently been fitted to the earlier locomotives. They also had plain fireboxes.

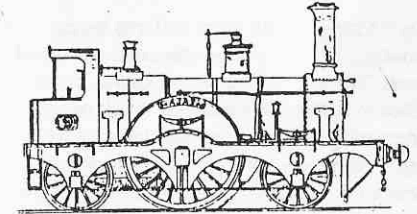
By mid - 1862, the LNWR had but one locomotive Superintendent - John Ramsbottom - and he was based at Crewe. Contrary to popular belief, he did not 'sabotage' the Southern Division fleet, although replacement DX

class boilers fitted in the normal course of overhauls, were slightly smaller than the originals: the Bloomers were more than master of contemporary express schedules. He rebuilt the three 7' 6" locomotives with smaller boilers and returned them to traffic somewhat lighter than they were originally. His successor, F.W. Webb, clearly appreciated the strong points of the Bloomer design and adopted the Bury cylinder block design in his own 2-4-0s. His standard boiler, fitted to about 2000 locomotives during his period of office, was virtually a flush - top copy of the Bloomer boiler, too. Nobody needs to be told how successful Webb's 2-4-0s were, nor indeed his 2-4-2Ts, which kept alive the Bloomer legacy until 1955.

Under Webb, all the Bloomers were named and some received cabs, but withdrawal commenced in 1876. The last one, withdrawn in November 1888, was also the last Southern Division locomotive to remain in service. Sufficient records survive to show that they were fully the equal of Webb's 2-4-0s as originally built, but they were handicapped by the use of Crewe rather than Wolverton proportions for the steam passages. This mistake was not made when the locomotives were renewed!

Observant readers will have noticed that James Edward McConnell, the Southern Division's Locomotive Superintendent from 1847 to 1862, does not feature much in the story of what has long been considered his most successful design. There is a good reason for this: he did not design them! Nor was he the champion of high centres of gravity and high boiler pressures applauded by later historians. When the LNWR passed over his ludicrous outside - framed, outside - cylindered, platform and track mangling prototype (also known as Mac's Mangle) in favour of a Bury 7' single, McConnell told them it was irresponsible to order so dangerously top - heavy a machine!

To be continued.



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