



Scenes from the club outing to the Mid-Hants



MILTON KEYNES  
MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY  
NEWS

No. 5 August 1992



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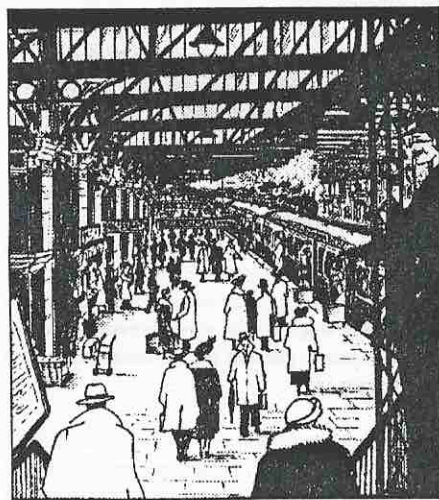


would say and he only resorted to the LMS when there was no alternative. This happened when he decided on a holiday at Bridgington and we were forced to travel from New Street. At first this other station seemed so vast because it could not all be taken in at a glance like Snow Hill. It was in fact two stations; the old London and North Western under one glass roof and the old Midland across a road under two. They continued to operate as two stations under LMS rule and had separate booking offices. At one time the Midland station called itself Station Street Station. A more ridiculous name would be difficult to concoct but it happened to lie alongside Station Street, so I suppose there was some justification for it! More than Snow Hill the air reeked with the smell of hot engine oil, clouds of smoke hung beneath a vast glass cavern and down below locomotives hissed and simmered. For me New Street never held the fascination that Snow Hill did. It was complex and complicated to use. It was dirty and not well-maintained and in stark contrast to the immaculate Snow Hill.

Now the great railway stations with their magnificent overall roofs and enamelled advertisements for 'Stephen's Ink', 'Virol' and 'Paletthorpe's Sausages' have gone. Snow Hill, where 'Kings' and 'Castles' roared in heading the cream of Great Western expresses, lay derelict for years, its buildings rotting away until, for safety reasons, the former hotel and booking hall were reduced to rubble, the tracks lifted and the road bed built up to platform height for use as a car park. Only the skeletal remains of the train shed survived to be used as a setting for television serials and a shelter for layabouts. In 1977 what remained was demolished. A landmark that had witnessed every human emotion and been a meeting place for more than a century had vanished. Snow Hill became but a name until, after discussion, deliberation and finally decision, a new station was built there to provide a commuter service. The station that was once the

pride of the Great Western Railway has been replaced by one reputed to be more in keeping with the needs of the times.

At New Street no stately 'Claughtons' puff their smoke through shafts of sunlight towards the vast glass roof that had had the widest span of any in the country nor any 'Compounds' clank connecting rods musically on the 'Midland Side'. Both stations have been superseded by a huge subterranean cavern, tiled and clinical, where no daylight ever penetrates and an eerie silence pervades, broken only by the whine of electric locomotives and announcements in stentorian tones that echo through the oppressive mausoleum. Now that Moor Street Station has been moved nothing remains of the exciting stations that enchanted in the 1920s and 30s, and children hustled from centrally-heated homes into heated cars miss out on expeditions that were full of excitement and anticipation of the unexpected.



From the bridge at Snow Hill



## 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	

### Attracting new members .....

Now that our major rebuilding programme is reaching its conclusion and our three new layouts are taking shape, we find ourselves for the first time in several years, with an opportunity to go out and attract fellow modellers into the club.

The new modelling season is fast approaching, although these days, the season like the football one, seems to go on all year round!

I have recently had produced a leaflet giving information and membership details, which I hope will find its way into local model shops for handing out to interested modellers. Copies will also be available in the club room.

It will hopefully produce a stream of potential members which I trust will be made welcome by us all. Don't leave it to the Secretary or Chairman to make the first move, although inevitably when a visitor walks through the door, it is usually one or other of us they seek. If a visitor shows an interest in what your doing, please take time to explain to them and make them feel welcome.

The challenge is not to get people through the door once but to get them to come back again week after week.

I hope our higher profile will also encourage some of our former members to come back into the fold. If they do, again welcome them back.

Whilst we can be proud of our history, we must work hard together to secure our future.

Dennis Lovett  
Chairman





## MKMRS NEWS

Thanks to all who have commented favourably on our newsletter. It would appear to be a success.

Thanks also to those who have contributed material. Like all publications we could do with more. All contributions are welcome. If you wish, we can revamp material from your rough notes or scribbles.

## OUTING SUCCESS

Thanks to all who made our outing to the Mid-Hants Railway a great success.

Special thanks to Gordon Eckersley for taking a busmans holiday to drive the bus for us. Thanks to Gordon recently being passed out on the big buses, we travelled not on our usual little bus but in a very large, European Tour coach!

A good day was had by all.

## BANRAIL 92

Our O Gauge layout Alverton has been invited to attend Banrail 92 on Sunday 15 November at Banbury.

John Symons will have further details nearer the time.

## CONGRATULATIONS

To Phil Gilbert who marries Jenny on 15 August.

Phil will be moving into neighbouring Hertfordshire, but as he will still be working in Milton Keynes, will remain a member of MKMRS.

Best wishes to Phil and Jenny from all at MKMRS.

## NEWPORT ARTS & CRAFTS

Thanks to Roger Blackburn and John Tennant for flying the MKMRS flag at the recent Newport Pagnell Arts & Crafts Festival.

## CLUB LIBRARY

Work is still progressing on sorting and filing large numbers of magazines. We are currently compiling a list of missing magazines which we will publish in due course.

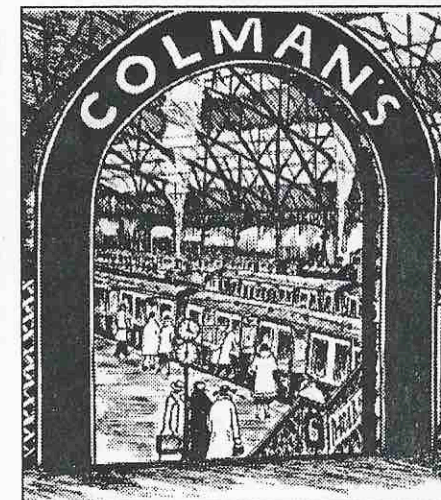
Books and videos are still wanted for the library and contributions will be gratefully received.

Further details from Mark Wilson.

to Birkenhead Express as far as Wolverhampton. It always departed from Platform 5 and, as always plenty of time was allowed, there was ample in which to examine the fascinating machines that stood along the platform. At one, a bar of chocolate could be dispensed for a penny (old of course), at another a card with your weight printed on it (in stones and pounds of course), but most intriguing of all was the one where you could spell out your name on a metal strip by moving a clock-like hand to successive letters and pulling a lever to emboss them. There were no disturbing loudspeaker announcements for train departures so we had to watch a porter at a wooden fingerpost who slotted into position on arms bearing the destinations of trains due to depart with a finger pointing to the appropriate platform. The arms not being used were stored in a box at the base of the fingerpost.

It was more usual to be dragged reluctantly away from these machines to the bay platform 3 where the local trains stood with engines hissing impatiently. These were usually drawn by Prairie or Pannier tank engines with a train of old compartment stock, lit by gas and with faded sepia photographs depicting resorts served by the railway displayed above the seats and beneath a netted luggage rack. Under the window hung a heavy leather strap that could be pulled to raise or lower the window. It was accepted that the passenger occupying the seat next to the window and facing the direction of travel had control of this. Consequently it was this seat we coveted so that we could operate the window whenever the engine driver's whistle warned of the approach to a tunnel when it was very necessary to close all windows to prevent the intrusion of smoke and smuts.

The actual journeys were far more exciting than the purpose of the visit where you were expected to be on best behaviour and not to speak unless spoken to. Any waiting time spent at junctions was spent watching the movements of signals,



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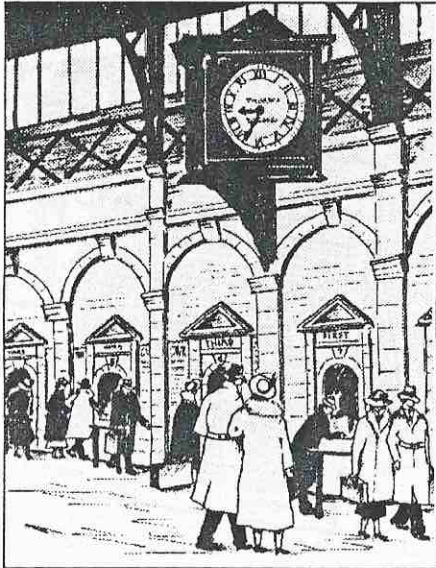
points and trucks being shunted. The station waiting rooms were lofty and depressing and only resorted to in bad weather. They were sparsely furnished with horsehair upholstered benches that prickled the backs of short-trousered legs. A solid, heavy and immovable table occupied the middle of the room. I never saw it used. It was situated at an inconvenient distance from both the benches arranged along the walls decorated with discoloured and peeling posters and from the fireplace. As a consequence passengers huddled standing round a bright fire replenished from time to time by a porter. It occurred to no-one to move the benches nearer the fire. I suppose people thought that any interference with company property would have been severely censured. At least that appeared to be the thinking of a generation brought up to respect authority and not to question.

It was some time before we discovered New Street Station. My Father was a firm adherent of the Great Western. "It's the safest railway", he

## SNOW HILL REMEMBERED

Railways have been in the blood since the earliest recollections. As a child family ancestry imposed obligations for ritual visits from our home in Birmingham to relatives in the Black Country, and the visits were always by train. Buses in the 1920s were unreliable and frequently broke down and the trams took so long. A journey from the suburbs of Birmingham to Dudley, now taking but a few minutes by motorway could take a couple of hours and be complicated by several changes and long waits at junctions.

Whichever route was chosen, and there were long discussions over the route and speculation over the best to gain maximum advantages of time and money, my brother and I usually found



Like a row of sentry boxes, all with a tiny opening through which a ticket clerk peeped

ourselves deposited under the magnificent glass canopy of Birmingham's Snow Hill Station while tickets were being purchased at one of the little windows, some marked 'First' and some 'Third, each surmounted by a pointed architrave, that stood along a marble-faced wall like a row of sentry boxes, and each with a tiny opening through which a ticket clerk peeped. A wooden barrier, polished over the years by thousands of waiting elbows, prevented more than one person at a time approaching him. During the waiting time our attention was diverted watching others operating a tall red platform ticket machine. It had a narrow glass panel in its front through which we could see a stack of cardboard tickets. An inserted penny clattered through a labyrinth and dropped into a metal drawer. The purchaser pulled a shiny brass handle and a ticket was delivered.

The tickets obtained we ran ahead to the concourse where a man stood at a sliding gate ready to punch the tickets before letting pass. The whole splendour of the station lay below and could be taken in at a glance as we descended the wide staircase. It was ecstasy to take in the panorama displayed in the bustle, colour, and the noise and smell of the trains; steam escaping from engine cylinders, smoke being puffed towards the glass roof, whistles shrieking impatiently and goods trains trundling slowly through on the platform-avoiding lines. Snow Hill was rarely quiet and, because its platforms were so long trains did not slide gently into the main line platforms, they burst theatrically out of the tunnel with dramatic splendour, a full head of steam and with 1,200 feet of platform ahead.

The biggest thrill was to travel on the Paddington

by  
DON  
PIGOTT

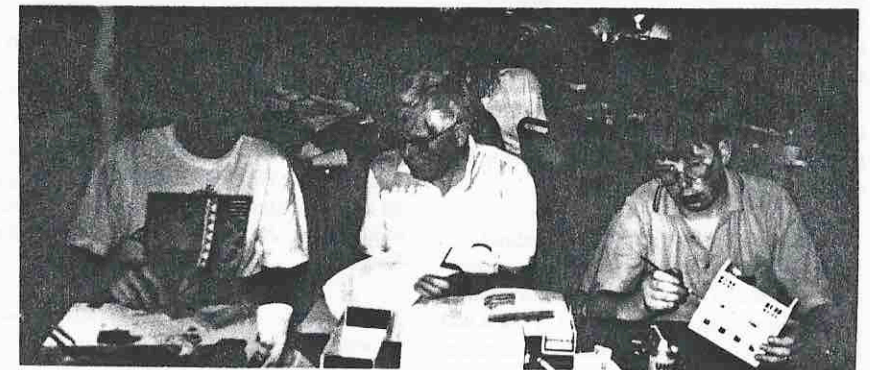
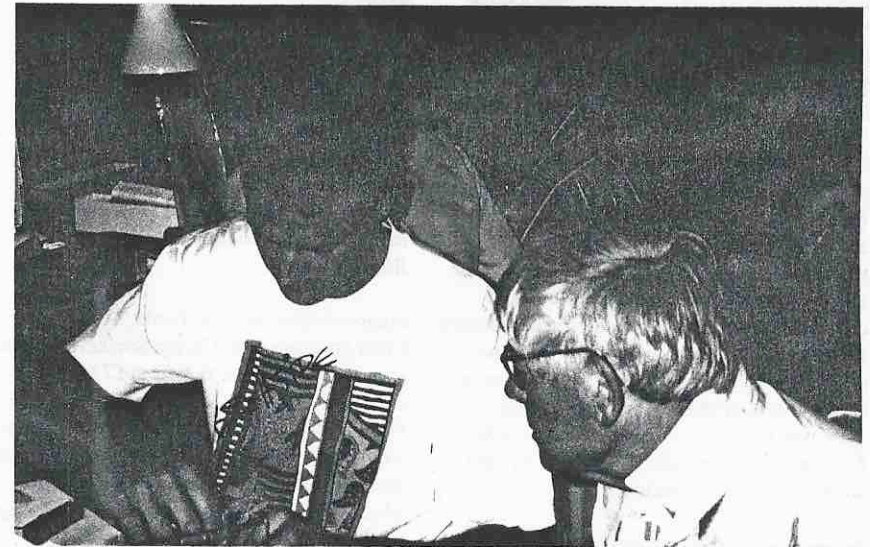
## CMRA CONVENTION

Eric Bowman, Colin Catley, John Symons, Chris Lester, Phil Gilbert and Dennis Lovett, attended this years CMRA Convention held on 6 June at Hatfield.

The convention allowed many clubs to show their activities and the day included various

demonstrations and illustrated talks.

The MKMRS members got on with several modelling projects as out photographs show. The convention allowed us to meet and talk to other modellers in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.



# Profile

## Chris Hughes, (Secretary, MKMRS)

Chris Hughes was born in nearby Steeple Claydon. His father Albert, is a keen Great Central modeller and travelled on the GC line from the age of 8. He has built many models mainly from card, the first of which was built during the war using little more than a razor blade and glue. Albert's models are well known locally and they were exhibited at our last exhibition and also at the last CMRA exhibition at St. Albans.

Chris having been brought up in a railway modelling environment could not fail to become interested. In the 1950's he acquired a selection of Hornby O Gauge clockwork trains, which he still owns. These, along with all his Dinky Toys, are in mint and boxed condition, Chris always being careful to return them to their correct boxes after use. Chris recalls building layouts all over the house on the floor and by the time he had set them up there was little time left to run the trains before bedtime, which probably explains why they are in such good condition!

Around 1957, Chris acquired a Triang Railways Princess Royal set, which was eventually built into a permanent 6' x 4' layout by his father. They used Wrenn fibre based flexible track and Chris recalls the great effort he put into saving up 32/6d to by a Triang Jinty (today's price £1. 63p - not allowing for inflation!).

Trainspotting became a favourite pastime. After tea it was off on the pushbike to nearby Calvert to watch the 1839 x Aylesbury and the 1850 up semi-fast to Marylebone. Then it was back on the bike to Double Bridge, where the

Great Central crossed the Oxford - Bletchley line, to watch a couple of parcels trains pass on their way to Bletchley or Oxford and the 1920 down semi-fast proceed towards Woodford Halse and Nottingham. Then it was back on the bike to do the homework.

His crowning glory as a trainspotter was the 1964 cup final which saw second division Preston North End travel to Wembley to play West Ham. All specials from Preston to Wembley were routed via Bletchley and Calvert, and Claydon station on the Oxford line saw a procession of prestigious locomotives including Duchesses, Britannia No. 70000 and the Blue Pullman.

Summers were spent in Poole, Dorset and Chris grew interested in the Southern Region as a result. Railover tickets at £7 (£3.10/-child) gave a weeks unlimited travel between Poole and Winchester and included the original LSWR route via Ringwood. He also managed a trip on the Somerset & Dorset line when the family car broke down at Stalbridge. Stalled at Stalbridge you could say!

Trainspotting and modelling fell by the wayside whilst Chris attended college in London and gained a degree in Civil Engineering. He works for Bucks County Council as a civil engineer and his activities with bridges continue to bring him into contact with railways on a regular basis - mainly when a large locomotive has to be moved in or out of Quainton Road!

Around 1976, Chris's interest in railways was reawakened when he saw a Ratio Johnson 2-4-0 locomotive kit in Taylor &

Newsletter No 8 is unfortunately missing at present (does someone have one I can borrow for copying?) but issue No 9 (October 1972) contains an article on preparations for the new modelling season.

There is also a report on an illustrated talk given by Jim Buck on Narrow Gauge Railways. So successful was the evening that the Editor reports "it was with some reluctance that we had their room lights switched on at the end".

Les Wood produced an article on Quainton Road in BR days (another one worth reprinting), whilst another appeared on making boilers from polystyrene.

A QGM with slide show was scheduled for 31 October, whilst on 28 November, Bill Ibbot was set to return to talk about the Hitchin Branch of the Midland Railway.

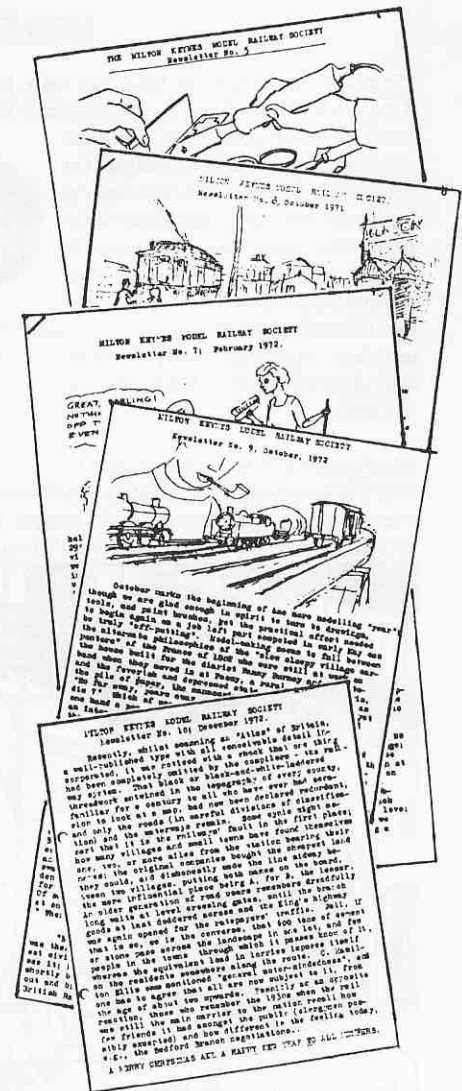
The Editor appealed for articles and thanked member Frank Godfrey for printing the newsletters free of charge!

Issue No 10 (December 1972) contained an article on Birmingham Trams from Don Pigott, a Christmas story, an article on kit building by Ivor Oldham and one by Barry Chapman on the 50th Anniversary of the Grouping of Britain's railways in 1923.

The plans for the first O Gauge (Ayot St. Lawrence) were outlined and a report on Bill Ibbot's Hitchin talk was given.

Although issue No 11 is also missing it no doubt dealt with the first MKMRS Exhibition in great detail. The story behind the first MKMRS Exhibition will sadly have to wait until next time.

To be continued.....



# 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 Three) by RODNEY WEAVER

McCconnell's next attempt to design the perfect locomotive was the 7'6" 'Patent' of 1854, which like the Mangle was an expensive mistake. This time the Board found it had bought twelve useless engines instead of one! Six years later he managed to convince the Board it needed five slightly heavier Bloomers, with the results already recorded. That McCconnell survived so long, was probably due to his friends in high places, but 1861 saw Richard Moon appointed Chairman. Moon was extremely well-informed and quickly realised that McCconnell exercised little or no budgetary control over his department. The show-down wasn't long in coming; McCconnell saw the writing on the wall and resigned. The red Southern Division livery of popular legend was a belated attempt at cost-effectiveness and fewer than 100 locomotives may ever have been so painted, but we know what they looked like because Small Bloomer No.2 was

among them...

If McCconnell was not quite what earlier writers would have us believe, he was no fool and some of his work displayed considerable ingenuity. Recognising the excellence of the Bury cylinder design, he adopted its principle features in the 'Patents'. Besides the LNWR 'Patents' he ordered a smaller version on his own account to demonstrate the principle to other potential customers. It ended up on the Chemin de Fur du Nord, who were not very impressed with the patented features, but they liked the cylinder layout and the excellent proportions of the steam circuit, which found their way into subsequent Nord designs including the de Glehn compounds.

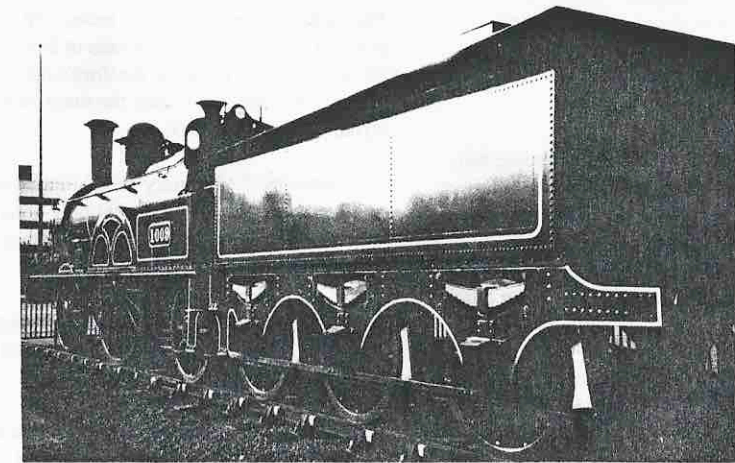
The names we should remember as the creators of the Bloomer are Edward Bury, James Kennedy and Charles Beyer. The modern

steam locomotive owes far more to Bury and Kennedy than to the Stephenson's; the reasons they have never received their due credit are too complex to discuss here.

Milton Keynes, however, has a particular reason to remember Edward Bury: he devised Wolverton, and Wolverton was the first railway town.

This concludes the story of the Bloomers and our thanks to the Milton Keynes Group of the Festiniog Railway for allowing us to reproduce the article from their September 1991 newsletter.

This active local group meets once a month on a Wednesday evening. Peter Jarvis will be delighted to tell you more.



## In the beginning (Part 3)

Issue 5 of our newsletter (March 1971) reported on the AGM where the following were appointed;

Chairman - Jim Wood  
 Vice Chairman - Les Wood  
 Secretary - John Symons  
 Treasurer - Gordon Etherington  
 Committee - Don Pigott

Eric Preston  
 Alec Revitt  
 Colin Stacey

Editor - John Mann

The test track is reported as now being fully operational and baseboards for the 00 layout were taking longer than expected!

Alec Revitt produced an article on Great Western Signalling and Les Wood an article on Oxford.

20 April was advised as a bring & buy sale following the QGM. Suggestions for club outings were requested and the committee invited designs for a club badge.

In issue 6 (October 1971), Editor John Mann reflected on the success of the club and its future aspirations. Don Pigott produced an article on club types and asked are you a mogul or a condensing pannier.

Other articles appeared on tools worth buying and one on brake gear. Les Wood concluded his Oxford story.

Future events included a talk on the SMJ Railway by Bill Ibbott, a club dinner on 4 December and the club competition on 14 December.

The Editor also reported on a recent trip to Bedford MRC by three members of MKMRS. They were given a tour of Bedford's recently opened premises and shown the three club layouts (2x00 and 1xN).

Newsletter No 7 (February 1972) reports on the club dinner which had eventually been held on 29 January at the Cock Inn, Stony Stratford.

Don Pigott produced an article on Birmingham Railway Development, which is worthy of reprinting (and updating) sometime.

The Chairman's wife Joy Wood writes to the Editor on behalf of all the Tuesday night railway widows, thanking him for producing the newsletter and enabling them to find out what the men were up to!

McKenna at Bletchley. These were plastic kits and came complete with chassis and motor including plated plastic driving wheels! Through this episode, he got to know Roger Webster at Ratio, mainly due to the fact that Chris was about the only modeller in the country who managed to get one to work! Mind you, he has subsequently confessed to having thrown away most of the chassis bits that were supplied in the kit!

Chris attended an HMRS in our club rooms one night back in 1981 and by this time, was interested in modelling the LMS (ex LNWR) and was delighted to find a local club with a prototype (Verney Junction) on which he could run his stock and joined MKMRS in the Autumn of 1981.

Chris soon found himself on the committee as CMRA rep and later as Secretary, a task he has gladly undertaken since. He has combined this with the role of Exhibition Manager for our last two shows.

His last major modelling project was to construct the A5 bridge for a certain Fenny Stratford layout. His skills as a civil engineer were put to the test and a superb model resulted.

Chris is currently engaged in looking after the Black Horse Bridge on the former Wolverton - Newport Pagnell branch line. This is now a redway route and is owned by Buckinghamshire County Council. Chris has the task of measuring the bridge and making drawings of it so it can be repainted. With all this information, your intrepid reporter enquired as to the possibilities of a model being made. He was given a very definite NO!

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*Another victim next month*  
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**Below; The Bridge that Chris built for the Fenny Stratford layout.**

