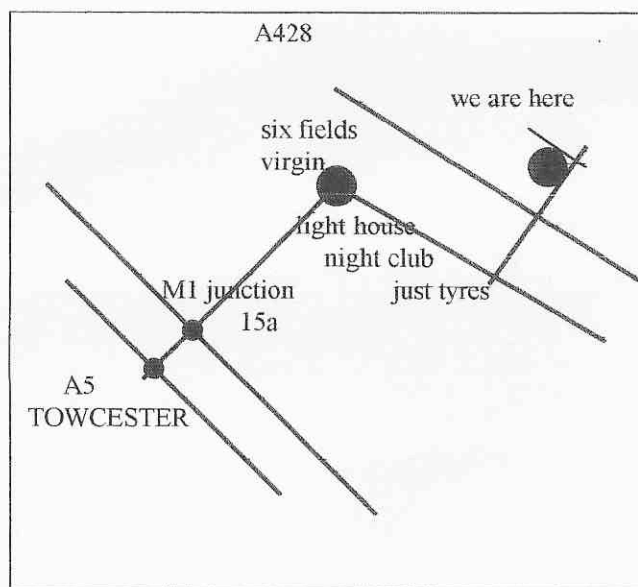


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# Milton Keynes Model Railway Society

## News ...

No.77 August 1998



The MKMRS is a member of The Chiltern Model Railway Association,  
The Model Railway Club and The World War II Railway Study Group.

Published by Dennis Lovett  
Chairman of The Milton Keynes Model Railway Society.



**Museum Duty Roster  
August - December 1998**

Weekend	Saturday	Sunday
August 8/9th	Ray/ Richard Cousins	Gordon Shrimpton, Chris/Nick Hughes
August 22nd/23rd	Geoff Bell, Colin Jamieson	Gordon Shrimpton, Dennis Lovett
September 5/6th	Tim Davey, Mark Wilson	Fred Collins, Phil Wood
September 19/20th	Chris Lester, Tony Winn	Brian Barnes, Stan Pennington, Mick Clements
October 3rd/4th	Eric Bowman, Eric Preston	Dennis Lovett, Les Wood
October 17/18th	Bernard Worden, Ernie Johnson	Gordon Shrimpton, Chris/Nick Hughes
October 31st/November 1st	Dennis Lovett, Ray/Richard Cousins	Bruce Garwood, Ken Wiggins
November 14/15th	Tim Davey, Geoff Bell, Colin Jamieson	Phil Gilbert, Chris Lester
November 28/29th	Dennis Lovett, Les Wood	Tony Winn, Eric Bowman
December 12/13th	Mark Wilson, Ken James	Gordon Shrimpton, Chris/Nick Hughes

**PLEASE ARRANGE SWAPS AMONGST YOURSELVES - EVERYONE IS WELCOME  
EVEN IF YOUR NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE ROSTER.**

**MILTON KEYNES MODEL RAILWAY SOCIETY - Founded 1969**

**President:**  
Jim Wood

**Vice President:**  
Les Wood

**Chairman:**  
Dennis Lovett

**Vice Chairman:**  
Fred Collins

**Secretary:**  
Chris Hughes

**Treasurer:**  
Eric Bowman

**Committee:**  
Geoff Bell  
Colin Jamieson  
Bruce Garwood  
Gordon Shrimpton

**CMRA Rep:**  
Chris Lester

**Museum Curator:**  
John Hatton

**Librarians:**  
Ray Cousins  
Richard Cousins

**Editor:**  
Dennis Lovett,  
☎ 01908 376750

**Frustration v Tolerance**

Over the past few weeks the normally harmonious club room has become less so. Part of this has been down to the frustration felt by some that the O gauge project has not been advancing as fast as they would like and that its position has been threatened by the developing test tracks.

I would like to put the record straight on both counts.

The O gauge layout is one which has the support of all the committee members. It has always been a long term project and Geoff and his team have spent a considerable time on building and fitting out control panels and working towards the loom installation which will make all the trains work. Whilst this work has been going on, the layout has been stored. It certainly has not been abandoned! If the trains are to run, then it is important that the wiring and control panels are properly constructed. I appreciate that the hidden bits of the layout, tend not to be appreciated by everyone and progress is more difficult to plot than say the laying of track or the construction of scenery. In the meantime, the space utilised by the O gauge has been used for building other layouts, notably the tinsplate layout for the last Gauge O Guild, the Trix layout for the Olney event and it will in turn be replaced by the baseboard building for the outdoor scheme and the refurbishment of the N gauge Fenny Stratford layout which is needed for a local exhibition date in October. Then we will be in a position to re-erect at least some of the boards in the remaining space for the winter.

Fred and John have, on behalf of the committee, made the necessary approaches for obtaining use of the adjacent building or at least part of it. This currently is in need of major work. The Trustees are aware of our need to provide suitable accommodation for what will undoubtedly be a star attraction and they are more than aware from the feedback received from visitors, of the popularity of our efforts. The problem is, the building next door is not in their hands. Our building is a former BT building, the one next door belongs to the Government's property agency.

**Cover picture:** In tribute to Gordon Ethrington, a picture of 6990 'Witherslack Hall', the GWR being his passion, it is pictured just leaving Quorn on The Great Central Railway. My thanks to Bob Perry for the use of the photo - John Dibben, News Producer.



Anyone who has had to deal with a Government department will be aware of the implications of this particular scenario. Despite the fact that there are plenty of disused buildings all over the park, if they are not BT owned, then no one has access.

Once we can progress the situation we will. No one will be happier to see the O gauge layout standing in its own accommodation, so that it can be finished and operated - than me. Please be patient as we negotiate our way through a minefield, but rest assured we are not sitting around doing nothing.

Now to the outdoor layout. At a recent QGM, I outlined that there were approximately 50 people in this area working in the larger scales - notably live steam SM32 / 16mm / G etc in this area. This information was passed to us by a neighbouring organisation who meet once a month in a village hall. This information was passed to us by a neighbouring organisation who meet once a month in a village hall. When use of the adjacent garden area was first outlined in a trust meeting, we were horrified to find that it was proposed to have a small animal zoo on this site. Fortunately this proposal fell through, allowing your committee to step in and propose using it for an outdoor layout which would make a useful extension of our activities. Now somewhere along the line, it has been misinterpreted that these 50 are going to march in, kick us off the tracks and take over. This is not so. I have already outlined why we moved in this particular direction and I am encouraged by the number of members who are buying or building rolling stock to run outside. Once the facility is opened and others see what is available, I suspect that we shall attract a few of that 50. If not, we would appear to have a number of members who will be able to make better use of the layout than we first thought. Anyone from another organisation will have to become members of this society in order to benefit from the facilities in the same way in the same way as the N, OO, EM or O gauge members do. Whatever happens, we will control the situation and I would like to reassure our members that there will not be a takeover or that we will favour any attracted by our outdoor layout. They will need to pay the same subs as you and I do and will be members of this club. This will be no different to the members who also have membership of various societies such as The N Gauge Society, The EM Gauge Society, The Gauge O Guild, The OO Association, The Train Collectors Society, Hornby Railway Collectors Society, Hornby Railway Collectors Association, Trix Twin Collectors Association etc. etc.

To put this in perspective, there are currently 71 members of the Gauge O Guild with MK post code addresses (which of course goes out to Bedford etc). By my calculations there are 8 members of the Guild.

I trust that the situation regarding both issues has now been clarified. We have a lot to do. We will only achieve it if we all pull in the same direction.

We are a democratic organisation. Members have not only an AGM and 3 x QGMs to raise issues, they have full access to all committee members to raise their concerns. The committee and club officers stand down at every AGM, not many clubs can claim that. I am in the club room at least twice a week and for at least part of most open weekends. My telephone number is well known (01908 376750) if you have concerns. Please do not bottle these up or allow them to be misunderstood by others. If you have a concern, let us know. We will do our best to explain what is going on and why.

Dennis Lovett  
Chairman

## Gordon Etherington

It is with regret that we announce the death of Gordon Etherington, Vice President of Milton Keynes Model Railway Society.

Gordon served on steering committee when MKMRS was being set up in 1969 and as he worked for Barclays Bank, was elected the first Treasurer, a position he held for 25 years, before becoming Vice President.

Born in Clapham, South London, the Etherington family home backed on to the former SER tracks from Victoria. Gordon's mother hailed from Newton Abbot and he was christened there at the age of 6 weeks. Visits to his grandparents involved lengthy train

journeys and whilst in the town he spent many hours watching the trains in Newton Abbot station. It was not surprising that the GWR was his main interest and his knowledge of all things connected with the Devon town's railways was exceptional. Gordon moved with his parents to Wolverton in 1936 and his association with what is now the Milton Keynes area began.

Gordon received his first O gauge trains in 1927 and they continued to do good service until 1950 when they were packed away. Pride of the line was a Bassett-Lowke Duke of York 4-4-0 which carried the number 1927, the year of its purchase. It was not until 1968, when on a visit to Newton Abbot, that a cousin announced he was into railway modelling. A large OO layout was built which had at its peak over 100 locomotives operating, many of which Gordon built from kits.

Encouraged by others in MKMRS, Gordon disposed of his OO models, moving into O gauge. He built a large loft layout based on the Devon area, with the appropriate locomotives represented by examples allocated to Newton Abbot. This layout was largely complete at the time of his death, with some 30 locomotives being available for service.

At one of the Gauge O Guild's first Conventions at Bletchley Leisure Centre, Gordon was asked to assist in the Treasurers office. It was a role he continued to undertake, eventually joining the Events Committee as its Treasurer. Despite his long term illness he did so at the Spring Convention, again on home soil, just a few months ago.

Gordon will be sadly missed by all those who knew him. He was an excellent worker for both club and guild. In addition he was an active church member and also served in a number of capacities over the years, including a lengthy spell as Church Treasurer.

Our sympathy has been extended to wife Helen and daughter Jane. We shall miss the guidance and skills that Gordon offered over very many years.

Dennis Lovett



The Ministry of Defence set about rebuilding the standard-gauge line, from the breakwater to Mannez Quarry, with the help of a steam railmounted crane rebuilt from two which had seen service in Aden in 1943/1944. They arrived with a 1929 Sentinel vertical-boilered steam shunter which was named 'Molly' and 24 side tipping wagons (pictured on previous page). By 1949 they were carrying stone in trains of eight wagons, three or four times a day, each weekday, to repair the breakwater. 'Molly' had one unusual feature, *she wore a life-belt!* (Modellers of the unusual please note!) The breakwater being a hazardous place in bad weather.

In 1958 'Molly 2' arrived, a brand new Ruston-Hornsby diesel shunter. Wearing her life-belt she worked the line supplying stone to maintain the breakwater for over a quarter of a century.

In 1978 the line was purchased by a group of preservationists. That is an interesting and lengthy story in itself.

Today, 'Molly 2' and a variety of other locomotives, Wickham rail-car trains and two pre-war ex-London Transport underground carriages (pictured below) convey tourists on an unrivalled two mile scenic ride.

*My thanks to Gordon Shrimpton for the information to write this article. This 'little line' is obviously well worth a visit.*



The two ex-London Transport underground carriages on the Alderney Railway. Are they planning an extension?

## Notices

### Gordon Etherington

It is with regret that we announce the death of our Vice President Gordon Etherington. Gordon was a founder member and served as Treasurer from our formation in 1969 until handing over to Eric in January 1995. Gordon's 25 years as Treasurer was an outstanding feat. Please see the article elsewhere in this issue. 15 members (+ Chris Bell, Joy Wood and Jenny Lovett) attended the funeral on 17th July at Freeman Memorial Methodist Church. Colin French made the journey from Suffolk, whilst 5 officials of the Gauge O Guild were present.

### Swapmeet Dates

The Woughton Swap meets will take place on Sunday 20th September and on Sunday 22nd November at Woughton Campus. They are open from 1100 until 1500. Admission is 70p Adult and 30p Children/senior Citizens.

### Mandlebury at the National Exhibition Centre

Our N gauge modern image layout Mandlebury will be appearing at the Warley MRC Exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre during the weekend of 8/9 November. Further details from Bruce Garwood.

### Fenny Stratford to appear in Fenny Stratford

Our other N gauge layout will be coming out soon, so that it can be made ready for the Open Day being organised by The Bedford Bletchley Rail Users Association on 17th October. This layout is still in need of considerable scenic work and work will be undertaken during September and October to ensure that it has not suffered too much damage during its storage in the big store room. See Bruce Garwood or Ken Wiggins if you wish to assist. The Open Day will be held at St. Martins Hall, which is at the Fenny end of Queensway.

### HMRS Meeting

The next HMRS Meeting to be held in our club rooms will be on 30th September at 7.30. The speaker will be A. H. Gould who is President of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society. The talk will be on the work of this well known organisation. Further details from Eric Bowman.

### October QGM

The next QGM will be held on Tuesday October 27th at 8pm in the club room. The committee meeting will be held the previous Wednesday (21st October) in the club room at 7.45.



# The Alderney Railway

by John Dibben

*Members will be aware of my interest in the unusual or 'quirky' railways by now, so it will come as no surprise that when Gordon Shrimpton offered some literature on the Alderney Railway, I welcomed the opportunity to write about this little known railway.*

Alderney is the northernmost of the Channel Islands. The island is only 3 miles long by a mile wide so it is obvious that we are not talking Inter-city here! However this railway, just 2 miles long is more interesting than might at first be imagined. It is over 150 years old, can be divided into five epochs, has changed gauge twice and is still a thriving concern today!

The Alderney Railway was built to standard gauge and opened on 14th July 1847. This makes it one of the earliest railways, only one year younger than the London North Western Railway and it has operated almost continually since that date. It was built to convey quartzite from Mannez Quarry and other quarries to the harbour in order for the construction of perhaps the longest breakwater in the world at over half a mile long and fourteen feet wide. Horses and men provided much of the labour but two locomotives were present when the railway commenced its operations with an unknown number of 4-wheel stone carrying trucks.

On 8th August 1854, the railway carried its only passengers until opening as a preserved railway on the 8th March 1980. Her Majesty Queen Victoria and Prince Albert arrived by sea aboard the Royal Steam Yacht 'Britannia' and made their journey on one of the steam locomotive tenders, laid out with red carpets and two dining-room chairs fastened to the floor and drawn by a horse.

The Alderney Railway was built and operated by the Admiralty of the British Government. After completion of the breakwater, it was used to covey crushed stone for export and for use on the breakwater. The two locomotives built for the opening of the opening of the line were named 'Veteran' and 'Fairfield'. Another outside cylindered 0-4-0 'Waverney' lasted until 1889. A pair of 0-6-0's 'Bee' and 'Spider' were also used on the line. In 1880 a Hunslet 0-6-0ST No.1 arrived and was used until 1923. This was joined by an outside-cylindered Peckett 0-4-0ST, No.2 delivered to Hill & Co, contractors at Portland, Dorset, later used by the Royal Naval Dockyard at Portland which was shipped to Alderney in 1904.

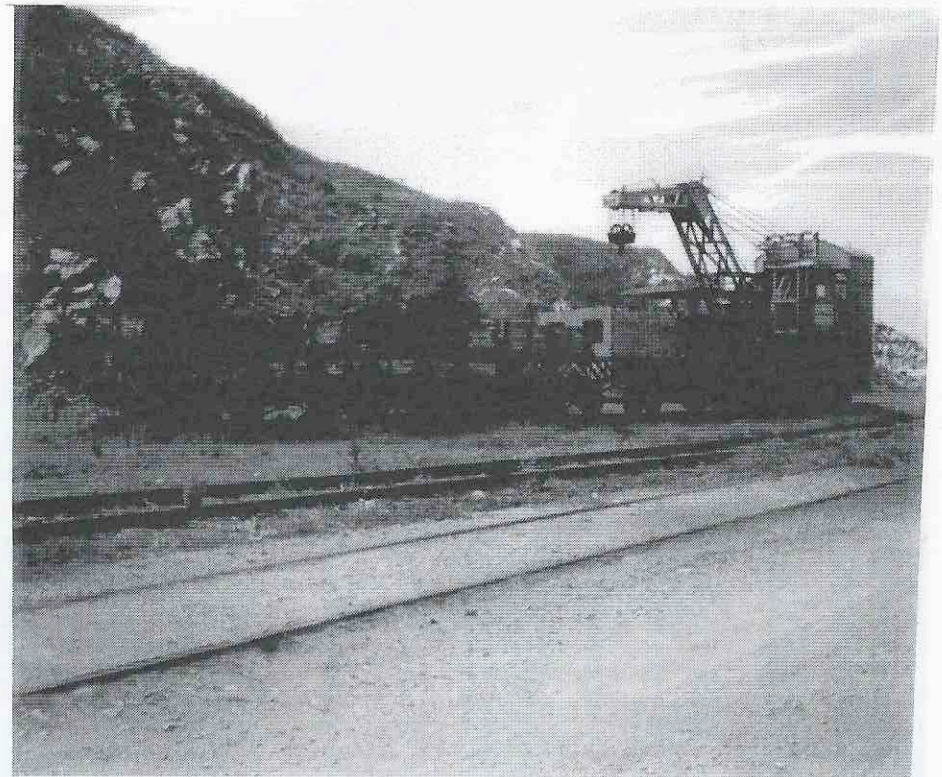
No.2 achieved fame in the winter of 1911/1912, when a combination of circumstances, sea water and sea-weed on the rails on the breakwater caused the driver to lose control. The Peckett and its wagons went over the end of the breakwater, plunging into the stormy sea. The driver and fireman jumped clear at the last minute and lived to tell the tale. No.2 was salvaged several weeks later. The chimney, dome and cab were lost and the smoke-box damaged, but was soon back on the lines for many years more service.

In 1921 Brookes Ltd. who owned the 'Channel Islands Granite Co. Ltd. took over the line and concentrated their activities on Alderney to produce roadstones for the then new tar-macadam process. A large stone crushing plant was built behind the original engine sheds and workshops near the harbour. The Hunslet No.1 was replaced by a standard 'L class' Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST 'Nitro'. One engine would be 'in steam' for a week, alternating with the other engine, allowing a week in the sheds for maintenance and repairs, steam engines being so labour intensive.

Brookes Ltd. was by far the largest employer on Alderney but the outbreak of war in 1939 meant the island's population was evacuated, being shipped to Weymouth. Shortly afterwards, the Germans' occupied the island. This period from 1940 to 1945 marked the third epoch in the lines history. The Germans' did not use the railway. The breakwater was allowed to decay and some trackwork was taken up in order to lay down their own military or 'feldbahn' metre gauge tracks and some 60cm tracks.

One line was laid around Crabby Bay and towards Platte-Saline, to a sand and gravel works there. Another line went from the harbour to the newly excavated tunnels across the island. A third line was laid on the original track bed to Battery Quarry. Alderney had become a prison labour camp. Two small 'Feldbahn' narrow-gauge 4-wheeled cableless diesel locomotives were used, one surviving until after the liberation of the island. The Germans' main purpose for the railway was to facilitate the transport of mixed concrete for the building of defence posts, observation stations and artillery bases, for at this time Hitler held thoughts that he would win the war from the Channel Islands.

By 1944, the two steam engines, Peckett No.2 and 'Nitro', had been shipped to Cherbourg, where they were cut up. When the island was liberated the railway was found to be in a state of disrepair and of different gauges, buildings and housing in a desperate state and all official records lost, such was the scene to which the islanders returned. Brookes Ltd. did not return as no compensation was forthcoming.



The steam-powered crane (inoperable), shell of 'Molly 1' and three of the post war wagons at Mannez.