

The Bedford to Bletchley  
Rail Users Association



Bring all the family to the

# Bow Brickhill RAIL DAY

- \* Working Model Railways
- \* Slide/Video showings
- \* Society/Trade Stands
- \* Refreshments

Free VINTAGE BUS  
from/to Bow Brickhill  
station

**ADMISSION**

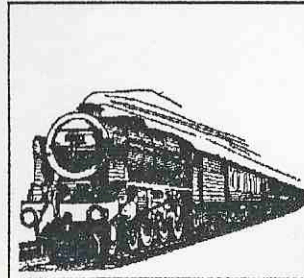
Adults £1.50  
Children (under 16)  
and Senior Citizens £1  
*[50p off if arriving by train]*

*Saturday*  
*16th October*

**Village Hall**  
**Rushmere Road**  
**off Station Road**

*10.30am - 4.30pm*

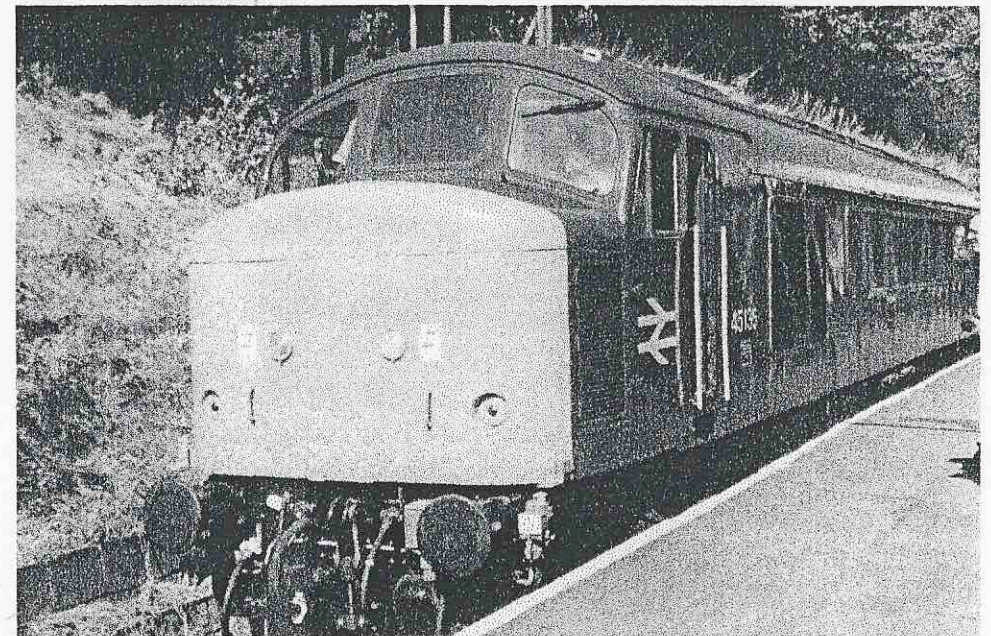
TRAVEL BY TRAIN  
TO RAIL DAY



# Milton Keynes Model Railway Society

**Newsletter**

**No. 91 October 1999**



The MKMRS is associated with:

- The Chiltern Model Railway Association
- The Model Railway Club
- The World War II Railway Study Group

Working within the Bletchley Park Museum

## 30th Anniversary Barbecue

On Saturday 18th September, the MKMRS held a barbecue to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the society and I am pleased to report that it was an unqualified success.

It was held alongside the outdoor layout and a procession of trains kept the guests entertained. The weather had taken a turn for the worse a week before hand and the forecast was far from promising. However, apart from a few drops of rain, the weather relented and allowed proceedings to go ahead as planned.

Three barbecues were in operation under a small marquee and thanks should go to Gordon 'Sausages' Shrimpton, Jeff 'The Incinerator' Mathie and Colin 'Onions' Jamieson for their hard work, keeping the rest of us fed. Tracey 'Service 'n' Smile' Broyd, shunted the constant flow of food into the buns and onto the queue of customers and Jenny Lovett was in charge of cakes and light refreshments in the clubroom.

There was at least 50 people present with members and their partners children and friends and invited guests. All ages were represented, the youngest being 16 weeks old and she expressed satisfaction with the evening during an in-depth interview.

Guests were invited to bring their own drinks and did so. The beer, lager and wine flowed well into the evening.

It is very pleasing to report that the MKMRS is able to hold an event whereby members can get to know each other a little better and meet their partners in a relaxed and cordial setting. It also enabled partners to see what their 'other halves' get up to on a Tuesday evening and some appeared to be interested to the point of conversion, judging by the way they were leafing through the magazines at the door.

These are more informal times and the event reflected this. The fact that it was a wholly MKMRS success enables the club to give itself a truly justified 'pat on the back'.

So, its onwards towards the next 30 years and hopefully, more similar events.

John Dibben  
Editor

## Milton Keynes Model Railway Society- 1969

**President:**  
Jim Wood

**Vice President:**  
Les Wood

**Chairman:**  
Dennis Lovett

**Vice Chairman:**  
Fred Collins

**Secretary:**  
Chris Hughes

**Treasurer:**  
Eric Bowman

**CMRA Rep:**  
Chris Lester

**Museum Curator:**  
John Hatton

**Editor:**  
John Dibben

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

**Librarians:**  
Ray Cousins  
Richard Cousins

**Published by/  
Contact Point:**  
Dennis Lovett  
Chairman

### Cover Picture:

'Peak', 45105 at the  
East Lanes Railway  
Diesel Gala earlier  
this year. Photo:  
Jeff Mathie.

## Guild Events for 1999 / 2000

### Saturday 27th November 1999 Winter Trade Show

Bletchley Leisure Centre  
Admission free to Guild members

### Saturday 12th February 2000 Guild Auction

Bletchley Park  
Guild members only

### Saturday 18th March 2000 Spring Convention

Rivermead Leisure Centre, Reading  
Guild members £3.00, non-members £5.00

All tickets are family tickets

Saturday 3rd June 2000

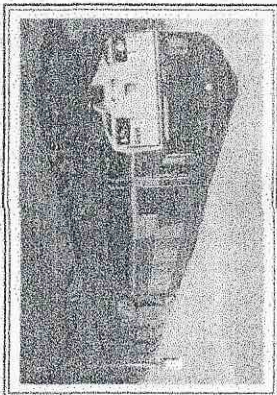
### Northern Summer Convention

Northbridge Leisure Centre, Halifax  
Guild members £1.00, non-members £3.00

All tickets are family tickets



## INTERESTED IN RAILWAYS? RCTS



One of the foremost railway societies in the country has come to Milton Keynes.

The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society now meets regularly at the C.I.U. Workingmens Club, London Road, Stony Stratford at 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of every month.

On the 7th, October Phil Marsh will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Thameslink 2000'.

Do join us if you can. You will be very welcome.

## Notices

### QGM

The next QGM will be held on Tuesday 26th October, in the club room. *Starts at eight' - don't be late!*

A committee meeting will be held on the previous Wednesday, the 20th October.

### Christmas Social Evening

Yes, its here again and this year a 'social evening' is planned for Tuesday, 21st December. Details will appear in due course.

### Bow Brickhill Rail Day

A reminder that Mandlebury Central will be exhibited for the last time at the Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association's Rail Day at Bow Brickhill on Saturday 16th October. Full details appear on the rear cover. Members are welcome to attend this annual event that the MKMRS has supported for some years.

### Historical Model Railway Society Meetings – 1999/2000

This month space allows the publishing of all the dates of HMRS meetings to be held at Bletchley and Bedford for the year 1999/2000 and they are listed below.

Bletchley meetings are held in our clubrooms unless stated and those at Bedford are held at the Addison Centre, Kempston.

- October 27th, 1999 – Bedford:** 'Steam Railways of South America' - Alan Burgess.  
**November 24th, 1999 – Bletchley:** 'Centenary Lecture': 'The West Coast Main Line 100 years ago' - Peter Davis. *(To be held in the mansion at Bletchley Park, all ticket, free of charge– see Eric).*  
**January 26th, 2000 – Bedford:** 'Manual Signalling'  
**February 23rd, 2000 – Bletchley:** 'The Railways during World War 2'.  
**March 29th, 2000 – Bedford:** 'Film Show'  
**April 26th, 2000 – Bletchley:** 'Modelling the London & Birmingham Railway' - Ian Forsyth.  
**May 31st, 2000 – Bedford:** 'Modelling Clinic'

Meetings commence at 1930, are free of charge and MKMRS members are welcome to those held at Bletchley. Eric who will no doubt point anyone interested in the meetings held at Bedford in the right direction.

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**MKMRS Sweatshirts and Polo-shirts** are still available. Sweatshirts £14.50 and Polo- shirts £12.50. 'Personalised' shirts with name embroidered £3.00 extra. Orders to Gordon Shrimpton.

## Museum News

### Bletchley Park Roster – October to December 1999

Saturday	9 October	Mick Clements	Stan Pennington	Brian Barnes	2nd Craft
Sunday	10 October	Ray Cousins	Richard Cousins	Steve Ellingham	Fair
Saturday	16 October	Eric Preston	Tim Davey	John Dibben	
Sunday	17 October	Gordon Shrimpton	Chris Hughes	Nick Hughes	
Saturday	30 October	C. Symonds	Ray Cousins	Richard C.	Halloween &
Sunday	31 October	Bruce Garwood	Ken Wiggins	Paul Wakely	Fireworks
Saturday	13 November	Colin Jamieson	Geoff Bell	Martin Shenton	
Sunday	14 November	Phil Gilbert	Chris Lester	Steve Ellingham	
Saturday	27 November	Eric Bowman	Tony Winn	Mark Wilson	Christmas
Sunday	28 November	Dennis Lovett	Les Wood		Fair
Saturday	11 December	Bernard Worden	Ken James	John Dibben	Christmas
Sunday	12 December	Gordon Shrimpton	Chris Hughes	Nick Hughes	Carols

### Postscript

As this article was being written, yet another disaster took place on the 'privatised' mainland railways at Southall. Whether 'privatisation' was a factor in this and recent tragedies is not a matter for debate in a club newsletter. It is, however, ironic that Northern Ireland's 'troubled' past led to its continued public ownership. This and the 'Peace Dividend', has led to its modernisation without the 'unseemly squabbling' between the many private organisations involved and the Government that precedes almost any attempt to upgrade any aspect of the former 'British Railways', not least in the area of safety.

The NIR is run by the Northern Ireland Transport Holdings Company which also runs Ulsterbus and Citybus. They are combined under one management but trade under separate names. Some people believe this integration, with public accountability and access to other government departments, works to the public's favour. The passenger operation might become the subject of a franchise and Eire's IE would be a preferred candidate but it would be open to anyone and Stagecoach would be a likely bidder.

Whilst it is easy to criticise the purchasers of the nations railway assets, how many of us would refuse the offer of something at a fraction of its value. In fact many people 'cashed in' on the great 'sell-off's' of the 80's and 90's. For something to be bought it has to be sold. The public gave its consent to railway 'privatisation' in 1992. It is being suggested that now the public is now realising the 'real' price.

York Road station was demolished but a new Yorkgate station was opened nearby. Passengers from Larne can now travel across the river giving better access to the city and obtain direct connections to destinations in the east of the province and the Dublin main line. The line is mainly single track but combined with a centralised signalling centre at Belfast Central has been of particular benefit to commuters.

### Great Victoria Street Station

Despite part of the site being acquired by retail premises the former Great Northern terminus at Great Victoria Street has been reopened. It stands back from the main line and is reached by a triangular junction. Four platforms have been provided capable of taking six-coach trains. This gives passengers access to the centre of the city. Most trains now terminate at this station but the cross-border expresses continue to use the better facilities at Belfast Central.

One benefit NIR has over its mainland counterparts is its powers to purchase land for such schemes.

### Cross-border 'Enterprise'

A large amount of investment has been put into raising the line speed for the 113 miles from Belfast to Dublin to 90 mph. The distance is roughly the same as London to Birmingham but trains take over two hours. Considerable progress has been made both sides of the border but it will be some time before the target of 95 minutes can be reached.

Meanwhile, the line has received a boost in the form of the 'new' 'Enterprise' stock. 4 7-car sets built by De Dietrich, Reichshoffen, France, have been purchased, costs split equally between IE and NIR. They are similar in appearance to 'Eurostar' coaches and are complete with a driving van trailer and operate in push-pull mode with 4 dedicated '201's'. They have a bottle green and grey livery with crimson embellishments. Completing two return trips each day, they are not over-taxed but the benefits of extra 'layover' time must enable a good service for passengers.

The 201's, 2 IE and 2 NIR are part of the fleet of 34 General Motors machines delivered in 1994/95 which are externally similar to mainland Class 59's but are built with a top speed of 100 mph. Iarnrod Eireann, established in 1987 from the CIE, have used the extra power of the '201's' to allow more recovery time and increase train punctuality which is seen as more important than decreasing journey times. With a typical Irish sense of history the dedicated locomotives bear the same numbers as the last GNR steam locomotives built for the original 'Enterprise' in 1947.

### Belfast to Londonderry

In 1998, approval was given to reopen the Bleach Green Junction to Antrim line closed to passengers in 1978, restoring the direct route to Londonderry. This includes the splendid Ferro-concrete viaducts and junctions at Greenisland built by the LMS for the NCC in 1934. At that time they were the largest such structures in the British Isles.

### Freight

Freight traffic almost petered out in the 70's and today is limited to the cross-border line with a 'liner' train each day to Belfast Adelaide freight depot. Guinness also supplies a daily train to Belfast from its terminal in Dublin. These services are worked by IE.

## Events

**Saturday/Sunday 9th/10th October, 1999 – Bletchley Park Museum 2nd Craft Fair.**

**Saturday/Sunday 9th/10th October, 1999 – Warley Model Railway Exhibition, Birmingham NEC.**

**Saturday 23rd October, 1999 – 'Railex '99' Civic Centre, Market Square, Aylesbury. 1000 – 1700, Adults £2.75, Senior Citizens and Children £1.60, family (2+2) £7.00.**

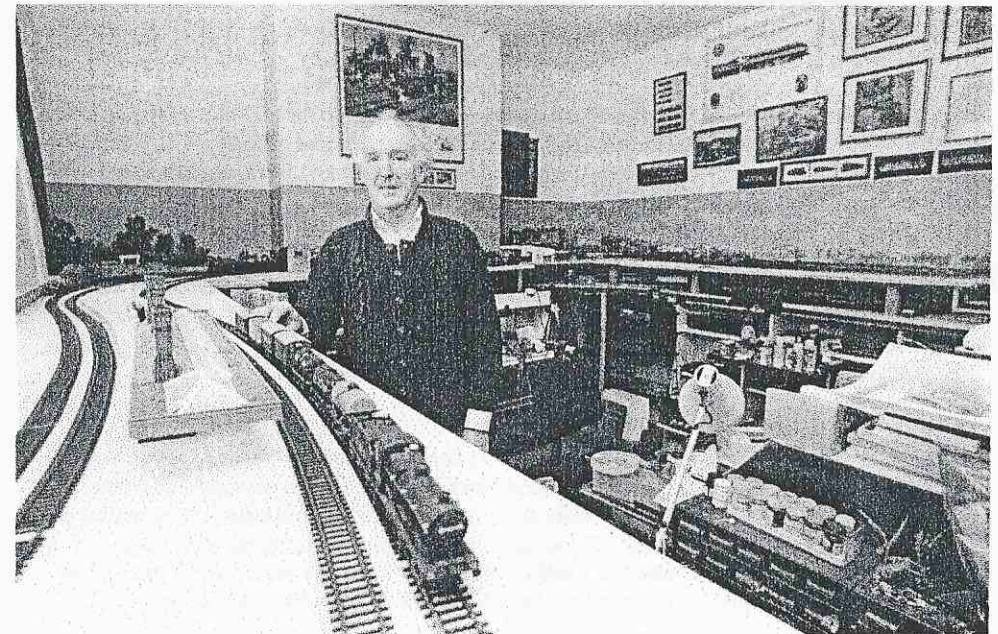
**Sunday 14th November, 1999 – Woughton Swapmeet – Woughton Campus. 1100-1500. Admission 80p Adults, 40p Children/Senior Citizens and £1.60 Family (2 adults and children).**

## RCTS in Milton Keynes

Bob Ballard, who some will know has informed Dennis of the formation of a branch of the RCTS in Milton Keynes. An advert appears elsewhere in the newsletter giving more details. He added that anyone from the MKMRS would be very welcome.

## Ernie Johnson

Ernie has received a couple of visitors of late and a photograph of him with his model of Wolverton station has been received and appears below.



# The NIR, Britain's 'Forgotten Railway'

By John Dibben

Northern Ireland Railways has never held the interest of the railway enthusiast due to its activities being overshadowed by 'events' which portray that part of the world in a 'negative' fashion. However, a study of this unique railway shows that far from being a neglected backwater, although small, is thriving.

## Brief History

Northern Ireland Railways was formed by the UTA, Ulster Transport Authority, which was set up in 1948 and like BR had the task of transforming a railway in poor condition after WWII. It was formed from three companies. The Great Northern Railway operated from Belfast Great Victoria Street to Dublin and the North and West. The Northern Counties operated from Belfast York Road to Larne and Londonderry and was formerly owned by the Midland, later LMS Railways in England. The third was the Belfast and County Down Railway operating from Belfast Queen's, Quay to Bangor.

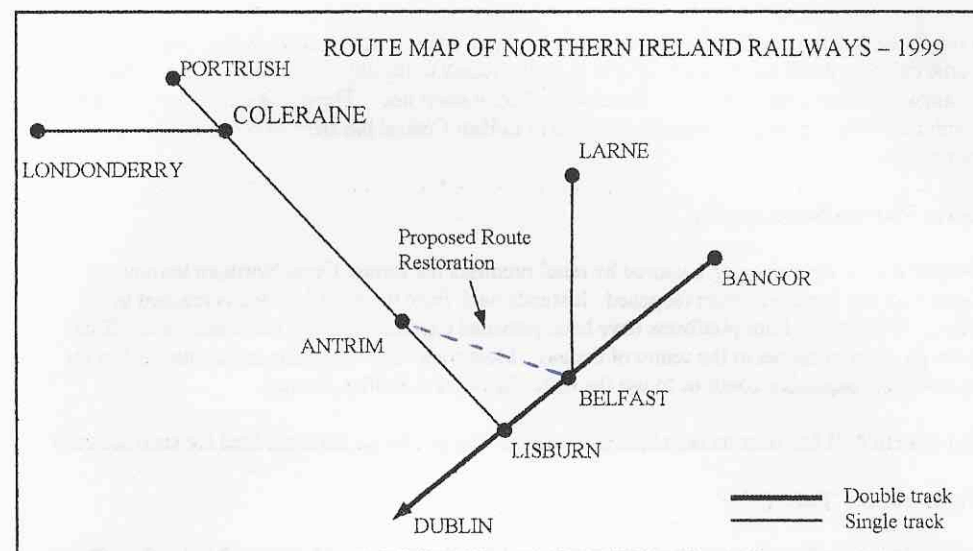
Through the 50's and 60's the pattern of wholesale closures mirrored that of those on the mainland until today's route map was all that remained. The B & CD had become completely isolated from the rest of the system when the dockside tramway link was closed. By the mid-60's the railway had reached its nadir, the line to Londonderry only surviving due to the government not wanting the city to appear isolated.

## Northern Ireland Transport Holdings

The NITH came into being on 1st April 1968 and took over from the UTA. Orders were placed for 3 English Electric, Vulcan Foundry 0-6-0 diesel shunters, 3 Hunslet Bo-Bo 1,750 hp diesel locomotives and a rake of 8 Mk 2B, push-pull fitted coaches from BREL Derby. This may not sound significant but was when the stock at that time consisted of about 30 Railcars and DMU's, 8 new DEMU's and a handful of very curious diesel shunters, dating back to the mid-thirties. Some of the railcars dated back to that period and the DMU's were often conversions of loco-hauled stock built as long ago as 1931. The three Hunslets were named *Eagle*, *Falcon* and *Merlin* and launched with much fanfare on the Belfast to Dublin 'Enterprise' service.

Events in the province took a turn for the worse and the next ten years saw little progress except for the arrival of 21 3-car DEMU's built by BREL at Derby, with 9 more in the mid-eighties. The 1970's batch are of early BR Mk 2 design. The later batch are similar to the Class 150 'sprinters'. An unusual acquisition was the experimental BREL Derby lightweight single car rail-bus based on Leyland National bus body. Built in 1981 it was sold to NIR in 1982, was numbered RB3 and was in service until 1992.

13 push-pull fitted Mk2B coaches, complete with two Driving Brakes were built by BREL with another 20 MK2 B/C/F's being purchased second-hand in the 1980's, conversions taking place at Wolverton Works. These included four brake firsts which were fitted with electric train heating generators, commonly used in by the CIE. These had to be conveyed by road as the Irish gauge is 5' 3". These included a Mk 2F TSO, rebuilt as a self service buffet (RSS) as a prototype for the APT in 1974 and renumbered 1800. It was purchased and converted into a grill/bar/dining car.



To replace the small Hunslets, 3 GM 2,475 hp Co-Co Class 111 (CIE 071) were purchased for cross-border expresses. 6 elderly Metro-vick locomotives (CIE 'C' Class) were also purchased in the late-eighties but with their 1,100 hp engines saw little use other than on excursions and P. Way trains. These locomotives were built with 550 hp engines and must surely be the least powerful main line diesel locomotives ever built.

In 1976 Belfast Central station was opened and the Bangor line was once again linked to the rest of the system. However, Queen's Quay to the north and Great Victoria Street which was the real 'central' station were closed. In 1978 Londonderry trains were diverted to Belfast Central on the east side of the river, from York Road on the west. This made it easier to make connections but added 20 minutes to the journey time. By 1987 the earliest stock in regular use was built in 1969, however, the infrastructure of the railway was way out of date. The maximum line speed in the province in was 70 mph.

One major problem that NIR had is that although a new central servicing depot had been built on the site of Queen's Quay station, the works at York Road could only be reached from Belfast Central by a 50 mile round trip via Lisburn and Antrim, 1.5 miles apart on the other side of the river!

## Time of Change

The nineties has seen a massive investment in Irish railways north and south of the border. Much needed investment has been provided by the European Regional Development Fund which has provided the majority of the money required for several projects which have begun to provide Northern Ireland with a modern railway system.

## Harbour Bridge

In 1994, in conjunction with a new road link, a 1.5 km, 45 span bridge was completed to provide a link across the river between York Road and Belfast Central.