

Class	Make	Ref No.	Price	Notes
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Liliput - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Kader - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Woodland Scenics - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Scenecraft - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Aristocraft - Ltd Club Edition

## Member Updates

Please join us in welcoming the following new members to the club. If you see them in the clubroom, please introduce yourself.



John Gusterson   Tom Harris   Stephen Allen   Daniel Brown

The MKMRS Newsletter will only survive with your help, we need you to provide articles -

- ❖ These can be write-ups on exhibitions you have attended, modeling titbits, or anything that you think other members would find interesting.
- ❖ If you would like to be included in our "Meet the Members" articles in a future Newsletter, please send in your notes for inclusion.
- ❖ The articles need to be sent in by email to [MKMRSNewsletter@courtmk.co.uk](mailto:MKMRSNewsletter@courtmk.co.uk) they need to be the words that you want to appear, include any pictures that you want in the article. All can be sent to the above email address for inclusion.

**Deadline for articles for the Spring Edition is the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022 with the Newsletter being published by the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**



Issue 205

Winter 2021

## CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

It is good to see Members returning to the Clubroom again. We average over 20 on Tuesdays and about 15 on Friday nights. A group also meets on Monday mornings. Since the last Newsletter, we have been joined by four new members, Stephen Allen, Dan Brown, John Gusterson and Tom Harris but still need more to bring our numbers back up to break even on the rent. We plan to arrange an Open Day early in the New Year in an effort to attract more new members. There are still a couple of 2021 subscriptions outstanding and payment would be appreciated even though it is appreciated that Club activities had to be restricted for most of the year.

The site maintenance team have recently sprayed expanding foam into the ceiling joint between us and the next-door premises to prevent further ingress of the dreaded black powder which has been settling on everything in the Clubroom for months. The Milton Quays layout finally left the Clubroom on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November after a protracted period waiting for the new owner to collect it. With the layout out of the way a massive clean and tidy up session is required before any other changes or new projects are started. A clean-up will also determine whether the ceiling joint has been successfully sealed.

We intend to hold the traditional mince pie and sausage roll evening again on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December following which proceeds from the teas and coffees will be donated this year to the McMillan Cancer fund. Face coverings

may have been made mandatory by then but for the time being they remain discretionary.

I have been asked about getting more Club shirts but our supplier needs numbers in order to give prices. For the benefit of new Members, the garments come in burgundy (LMS maroon) colour with our MKMRS logo and the member's name embroidered on them. As a guide the 2019 prices were £23 for polo shirts and £25 for sweat shirts. I expect there will be some increase in price since the last order but if you wish to obtain one, please tell me or e-mail me at [chris.hughes13@btinternet.com](mailto:chris.hughes13@btinternet.com) if you are not coming to the Clubroom regularly so that a current price can be obtained and an order placed.

We plan to hold an AGM again next year, unless anything conspires nationally to prevent such a gathering. The meeting will be on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 commencing at 8pm.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find a list of stock we currently have for sale. If you are interested in purchasing anything on the list, contact me as usual when the item(s) will be held for one month, with payment due by the night of the AGM. Unfortunately, it has just become apparent that the locos listed as DCC are not working. It may be that a CV8 factory reset will sort them out but, in the meantime, please ignore the locos listed as DCC until they have been thoroughly tested. It may be necessary to convert them back to analogue condition, in which case the prices will be reduced accordingly.

In closing, may I make a plea for Newsletter articles as the well has now run dry and it would be a pity if the Newsletter dies a death after over 50 years of publication.

In the meantime, I wish you and your Families a Happy Christmas and hope Santa is kind to you all.

Chris Hughes  
Chairman

Class	Make	Ref No.	Price	Notes
	Gaugemaster	GM194	£12.00	scenic starter pack - trees/scatter/glue
	Peco PS-37		£1.00	rock' face (tree bark)
30966	Bachmann		£10.00	50ft parcels van - LMS Maroon
5328	Bachmann		£10.00	57ft BTK - LMS Maroon
3605	Bachmann		£10.00	57ft C - LMS Maroon
3619	Bachmann		£10.00	57ft C - LMS Maroon
	Murphy Models		£15.00	(Irish Railways) Mk2A TSO
	Murphy Models		£15.00	(Irish Railways) Mk2A TSO
	Murphy Models		£15.00	(Irish Railways) Mk2A TSO
	Murphy Models		£15.00	(Irish Railways) Mk2A TSO
	Silver Fox		£30.00	IE Inter City (ex Mk1) generator van Ltd Edition
143	Murphy Models		£50.00	Class 141 black/orange - poor runner forwards
2260	Bachmann		£25.00	GWR Collett - BR Black
3650	Bachmann		£30.00	Stephenson Clarke - blue weathered- Ltd Club Edition
47279	Bachmann		£25.00	LMS 3F Jinty - BR Black
47445	Bachmann		£30.00	LMS 3F Jinty -Wm Pepper & Sons - Ltd Club edition
2691	Bachmann		£40.00	Fairburn Tank - LMS black
46441	Bachmann		£50.00	Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 - BR Maroon Ltd Club Edition
41241	Bachmann		£50.00	Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0T KWVR Maroon Ltd Club Edition
448	Bachmann		£30.00	LNER V1/3 2-6-2T LNER Black
67664	Bachmann		£10.00	LNER V1/3 2-6-2T BR Black for spares or repair
67673	Bachmann		£30.00	LNER V1/3 2-6-2T LNER Black - poor box
58	Bachmann		£30.00	Midland 4F SDJR Blue livery
689	Bachmann		£50.00	C Class 0-6-0 SECR Wartime Grey - Ltd Club Edition
32571	?		£20.00	LBSCR Class E5 tank - kit built
03179	Bachmann		£30.00	03 shunter - Wagn Railway -cab light. Ltd Club Edition
08484	Bachmann		£25.00	Class 08 shunter - Port of Felixtow
22	Lima		£25.00	GWR Railcar - choc/cream livery
44454	Airfix/GMR		£20.00	Fowler 4F0-6-0
52946	Bachmann		£5.00	12T vent van - LMS Grey
	Bachmann		£8.00	GWR Toad Brake Van. 15th Anniversary Ltd Edition
	Bachmann		£8.00	Vent Van - Graham Farish 1970-2010
	Bachmann		£10.00	7-plank wagon - Fish Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	7-plank Wagon - Paper Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	7-plank Wagon Leiw's Merthyr - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Graham Farish - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - GraFar - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Bachmann - Ltd Club Edition
	Bachmann		£10.00	Vent Van - Bachmann - Ltd Club Edition

Class	Make	Ref No.	Price	Notes
	Hornby	R6581	£8.00	4 plank open "Morecombe Electricity"
	Hornby	R6581	£8.00	4 plank open "Morecombe Electricity"
	Hornby		£8.00	brake van
	Hornby	R6646	£10.00	Frank Hornby anniversary wagon (ltd) 524/1000
	Hornby	R514	£0.50	4x platform canopies (50p each)
	Hornby		£1.00	bridge pier set
	Hornby		£0.50	7x platform sections with fencing attached (each)
	Hornby	R537	£0.50	lineside fencing
	Hornby		£1.00	5x signals (each)
	Hornby		£15.00	900 controller
	Hornby	R8213	£30.00	Select DCC controller boxed
	Hornby	R8575	£5.00	Skaledale war memorial
	Hornby	R8619	£12.00	Skaledale tuck shop
	Hornby	R8626	£15.00	Skaledale fire station
	Hornby	R8003	£12.00	Skaledale water tower
	Hornby	R8005	£12.00	Skaledale signal box
	Hornby	R460	£0.50	6x platform sections (each)
	Bachmann	37-275E	£40.00	4x tippler wagons - box still tissue wrapped
	Bachmann	37-275E	£40.00	4x tippler wagons - box still tissue wrapped
	Bachmann	37-275E	£40.00	4x tippler wagons - box still tissue wrapped
	Bachmann	37-275E	£40.00	4x tippler wagons - box still tissue wrapped
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	Bachmann	37-275E	£40.00	4x tippler wagons - box still tissue wrapped
	Bachmann	37-275E	£40.00	4x tippler wagons - box still tissue wrapped
	Bachmann	37-665	£30.00	triple tank wagon set
	Bachmann	37-665	£30.00	triple tank wagon set
	Bachmann	37-665	£30.00	triple tank wagon set
	Mainline	37-155	£8.00	WR brake van
	Mainline		£8.00	Macaw B wagon - unboxed
	Airfix/Dapol		£10.00	suburban coach
	Airfix/Dapol		£10.00	suburban coach
	Airfix/Dapol		£10.00	suburban coach
	misc		£10.00	4x BR livery Gresley coaches (each)
			£5.00	LMS mail coach
			£5.00	tank wagon
			£5.00	tank wagon
			£5.00	open wagon
			£5.00	open wagon
			£5.00	open wagon
				road vehicles
				assorted die cast vehicles
	Gaugemaster	GM194	£12.00	scenic starter pack - trees/scatter/glue

## Meet New Member Tom Harris



Hello everyone. My name is Tom Harris and I am 12 years of age. Thank you for accepting me in this club. I love coming to the club because everybody's so friendly and welcoming. I also love seeing all the trains on the massive board.

I have loved trains ever since I was a baby. My Grandad took me to my first model railway show when I was 6 months old and showed me my first steam train on holiday in Pickering, North Yorkshire when I was 9 months old. I used to sit and watch DVDs of old steam trains with him – my Grandma says I was the only one who would watch them with him.

I got my first OO gauge Hornby set at the age of 8 and my first model railway train was the Intercity Express. My collection has grown since then and my favourite model trains now are steam trains. My favourite steam train is the



Coronation Class, Duchess of Hamilton but I also love the Mallard and the Flying Scotsman. My model trains are DCC ready.

I recently bought some N gauge track, an engine and two carriages from the Great Electric Train Show but my favourite is the OO gauge. I put the N gauge track in the middle of my OO gauge layout.

I have a track in my bedroom and some pictures are below.



## Club Stock for sale

Following the 2020 Exhibition, the Club was donated a large amount of OO stock from one of the visitors to the Show. It has all been catalogued and can now be offered for sale to Members on a first come first served basis. The Bond Estate Toy Shop will open for business on Club Nights as usual and Members may reserve items by email to [chris.hughes13@btinternet.com](mailto:chris.hughes13@btinternet.com) if they do not come to the Clubroom regularly. If people wish to pay by instalment, the final payment will be due on AGM night, 25<sup>th</sup> January and it is hoped that this sale will go some way to compensate for not having an exhibition in 2022.

Class	Make	Ref No.	Price	Notes
BR 9F	Hornby	R864	£40.00	DCC address 3 - needs attention
BR 8F	Hornby	R2394	£50.00	DCC address 4
BR 5MT	Hornby	R2355	£50.00	DCC address 6
Duchess	Hornby	R2205	£55.00	DCC address 1
BR 4F	Hornby	R2396	£45.00	DCC address 5
BR 9F	Hornby	R2785	£25.00	Evening Star - Railroad range
BR 4P Tank	Hornby	R 2223	£25.00	
-	Hornby	R2665	£10.00	0-4-0T open cab
-	Hornby	R2439	£10.00	0-4-0T Southern Green livery
-	Hornby	R2597	£10.00	0-4-0T Queen Elizabeth
06	Hornby	R2783	£10.00	diesel shunter
Beyer Garratt	Heljan	266201	tba	
	Hornby	R6369	£15.00	breakdown crane set - Railroad range
	Hornby	R6226	£15.00	3 wagon freight set
	Hornby	R422	£10.00	composite coach
Princess	Hornby	R1057	£50.00	Royal Train set complete
	Hornby	R1037	£20.00	GWR mixed traffic set - 2 coaches missing
LNER A3	Hornby	R1039	£45.00	Flying Scotsman + 3 coaches +track
	Hornby	R070	£15.00	turntable
	Hornby	R603	£20.00	2 packs track - 27 lengths total
	Hornby		£8.00	departmental brake van
	Hornby	R6360	£8.00	WD 20 ton tank wagon
	Hornby	R296	£8.00	track cleaning car
	Hornby	R6240	£10.00	Lowmac wagon
	Hornby	R6240	£10.00	Lowmac wagon
	Hornby	R6240	£10.00	Lowmac wagon
	Hornby	R6240a	£10.00	Lowmac wagon
	Hornby	R6240a	£10.00	Lowmac wagon
	Hornby	R6124E	£10.00	BR 20Ton hopper wagon
	Hornby	R6124E	£10.00	BR 20Ton hopper wagon
	Hornby	R6124E	£10.00	BR 20Ton hopper wagon



proposal to build a layout to run digital models, after much deliberation by the Club's Committee the proposal was accepted.

Building was started in earnest in one of the rooms at Bletchley Park using redundant 18mm thick plywood provide by another club member, re-usable standard code 100 track was used and club members had to provide their own digital equipment to operate the layout. By the time of the basic layout construction was completed a number of club members had converted to DCC and gradually other people joined the club in order to run their models. Eventually, a second layout was built because the initial one was now of insufficient capacity to accommodate the number of members now running digital models.

This second layout was more accommodating and it was installed in another room adjacent to the initial layout which had been cannibalised for as many parts to reduce costs.

Again, space was a factor in the second room, there not being enough for more than three members at any one time.

A request to move out of this second location into one of the larger rooms at Bletchley Park, with ample space was granted and a twelve-foot extension was made for the layout when it went out on the Exhibition circuit.

The layout moved with the club to Barton Road and performed reasonably well in the climatic condition of the premises for the three-year tenancy, eventually being purchased by a club member.

From being introduced in 2003/4 the acceptance and use of digital control in the club has outstripped all conception that it was a passing fancy and would not last. So much for history.



## Meet New Member

### John Gusterson



Hi my name is John Gusterson.

I have worked in manufacturing of electronic devices for well over 18 years and was then made redundant. I now work for a small company, which supplies payment systems and computer equipment to the hospitality sector. Been there just over 7 years now.

I have been interested in model railways, from the age of 7.

I am in to electronics. Have designed several circuit boards for my railway, which includes coach lighting board.

I most like creating scenery of layout, which brings the whole aspect of the layout together.

## The Advent of Digital Railways in the MKMRS.

**By Bernard Worden**

It all started in mid 2003, I was dabbling in “0” gauge at that time having built a couple of Clan locomotives from kits, when I came across an advert for an American 4-6-0 loco with DCC and sound at a very competitive price.

It just so happened that my daughter and her husband were visiting his uncle in California for a holiday and I asked her to see if she could purchase this loco for me knowing nothing about Digital Control.

Armed with the cut-out leaflet of the loco my daughter went to The Original Whistle Stop Inc. shop in Pasadena, California. This store is reputed to be the oldest model railway shop in America.

Presenting the leaflet to the shop assistant my daughter was informed that the loco was not available for another 3/4 months and had to be pre ordered. However, after some questioning by the assistant it was established that I was running mainly “00” (HO) gauge models at home. The assistant said he could convert a 4-6-0 HO loco of the same model to DCC with sound and could my daughter call back in 8/10 days’ time to collect the model.

Returning to the shop my daughter was shown the converted model but the assistant was reluctant to sell it as he did not like the performance and said your father would probably not like it and it would be too much to return it if anything went wrong.

He did however offer my daughter another loco at a reduced cost which after a number of texts I accepted.

The loco offered had been voted the best overall model in America for 2003/4 being a 4-6-4 JIE Hudson by Broadway Industries Limited complete with sound and DCC capable of operating in analogue or digital.

This technology was completely alien to me but with the help of Gareth Homersley, who knew a little more about DCC we set about compiling a

saved many thousands of pounds in tax. One of my last assignments on British Rail was to produce a catalogue of all the vehicles in service so that the departments could order the type and quantities they required to fulfil their duties.

After a long and happy career working on and for the Railways, I was made redundant yet again in October 1994.

### **GTRM.**

After kicking my heels for twelve months I decided to have a day out in Birmingham and travelled with an old Road Motor colleague who asked me if I would be interested in producing specifications for this new company. The remit was to write 10 specifications in 8 weeks. I agreed the terms and became a temporary consultant working from a typing pool!!!

The privatised GTRM employment was very enjoyable as the new transport manager after my probation period expired gave me free rein to carry out my enhanced duties and not to report back every five minutes.

The GTRM fleet of new vehicles had a maximum GVW of 3.5 tons so there were no restrictions on driver's hours. Any inherited vehicle from B.R. over the 3.5 t was gradually phased out. Vehicles need over the 3.5t limit were hired in on a daily basis, sometimes, with driver accompaniment.

After five and a half years I was made redundant from what started as a few weeks' employment.

And so, after some 44 years in Road Transport at the age of 61 I called it a day having met many fine engineers in the industry, was privileged to see secret developments of materials and designs, i.e. the gluing of panels in lieu of rivets, testing of fibre glass panels for dry freight vehicles, mobile production lines for the construction of dry freight vans and a trip to visit a plywood factory in Finland.

I hope you enjoyed my experiences which in reality you have only been given a brief resume, it was on one of my trips by rail that I was accompanied by Les Wood our past chairman who convinced me that I should join the MKMRS which I did in October 1989.

The rest as they say is history.

## **Meet New Member Stephen Allen**



I have always been interested in trains. My wife once worked for Silverlink and she saw class 37s working through Bletchley in the night on DRS trains. This led to me asking her to marry me in the cab of a class 37. We were then given a Bachmann model of this loco. Since moving house and having a bit more room I have been buying other locos, wagons and coaches, along with retrieving my childhood Hornby layout from my parents' loft.

I live near Leighton Buzzard and I am originally from Aylesbury. Both my grandfathers worked on The Metropolitan.

Given all of this I am planning to build some sort of locally based layout set around 20 years ago with a preserved London Transport Metropolitan branch line. Hopefully with a Leighton Buzzard narrow gauge section as well. But it's early days. We will see what happens!



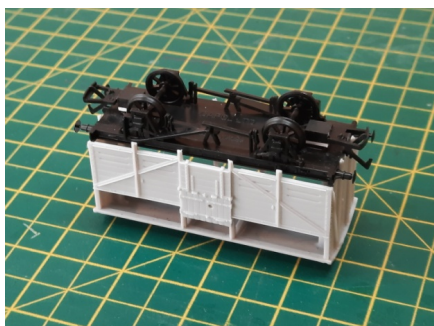
# A RAKE OF CATTLE WAGONS

By Peter Ellis

I wanted to purchase some cattle wagons to add to the two I had to form a market day cattle train on my layout. Alas at that time we were all in the middle of lockdown and there were no cattle wagons to be had from any of the retailers. Thankfully I remembered that Dapol produce a range of products that are unpainted and without transfers and one retailer had three in stock.



As you can see from the above left image the model is rather basic and needs some work. The above right image (GWR Diagram W12 cattle wagon) was the closest match to the model and I used the image as a guide to decide what improvements to make.



The first task was to replace the coarse wheel sets with Alan Gibson wheels and also remove the long tension lock couplings with the short version. Here the couplings were fitted to the under body with plastikard packing until the height matched that of the standard coupling on the test track. The NEM socket was fitted with a plastikard wedge to hold the coupling firm and stop

My initial project was to design the 7.5T GVW personnel carriers that formed the backbone of the Railway's fleet.

Designs had already been suggested to replace the original integral bodies after a fatality occurred due to one of the large rear doors being ripped off by a passing high-speed train killing a track man.

The new designed for the body was to ensure a 1:2 ratio with the chassis. However, due to the extremely low mileage of the vehicles no bodies were transferred to a second chassis, therefore making it a 1:1 ratio for body and chassis. The all-aluminium box body now incorporated a roller shutter in lieu of smaller sized doors at the rear, later a 10 cwt tail lift was fitted to comply with Health and Safety lifting requirements. These bodies provided washing and messing facilities, tool and machine stowage and diesel fired heaters for the personnel. The bodies were constructed by numerous contractors between Andover and Glasgow/Linlithgow.

I also designed a vehicle for the Over Head line Maintenance gangs that had a flat roof to carry the long wooden ladders used on the overhead maintenance of the catenaries. A further one-off design was for the Bridge maintenance gang in East London who looked after some 3000 arches. This vehicle had a large electric welding generator and an air compressor; the vehicle came with a work platform above the cab to facilitate safe working practices.

This vehicle was modelled by Oxford Die cast; no, I did not get any royalties. Other designs included caravans for asbestos workers that complied with current legislation, messing caravan were long track possession occurred and motorised caravans.

The brief for these motorised caravan vehicles was to carry up to six personnel with messing, washing and heating facilities, a limit load capacity for hand tools and a portable generator. Windows were included in the personnel compartment.

In view of this conversion, we submitted the vehicle to the Customs and Excise to determine how much car tax we would be liable for. The Customs representative examined the vehicle and declared we had apparently fulfilled all the requirements for a motorised caravan so no car tax was due which

an overzealous PC, who said the wooden DB Container on the trailer was not secure.

I was charged with determining what effect the load restraints had on preventing the container from moving in the event of emergency braking. Once again, I relied on my various sections of my degree to determine the breaking point of the ropes in an emergency brake application. For some reason I retained the calculations as a reminder of what I was capable of. Would not have a clue now!!!

The magistrate asked a number of pertinent questions in relation to the security of the load to which the PC answered no to each question, the case was dismissed.

National Carriers was taken over by the National Freight Corporation which meant yet again I was redundant, a position was found for me at Battersea Road Motor dept. whilst the company decided what to do with a surplus of engineers. Again, I was fortunate when within a week a position became available at the British Railway Board HQ at Marylebone which I attained in October 1974.

### **British Railway Board Marylebone**

So, I went full circle, my position was to design, specify, recommend purchases, and ensure quality control in the construction of the various builds and conversions.

In my early days at Marylebone a lot of work was carried out in conjunction with the Department of Transport regarding Tachographs and driver's hour legislation.

Having assisted the D of T with the forth coming change in the law I was presented along with my colleagues with the Certificate of Professional Competence for both domestic and international categories, which gave me the option of being a Transport Manager in charge of a fleet of vehicles.

At the B.R.B. there was an assortment of road vehicles, ranging from 10 cwt. Car derived vans to 20/30-ton trucks

it drooping. The second image shows the nickel silver wire added to the openings and a representation of the internal divider screen supports made out of plastikard. White metal vacuum pipes were then fitted to the ends and the frame work was masked off ready for spraying with primer from a can before spraying with GWR colours with the airbrush.



The above two pictures shows a wagon painted in Railmatch GWR Freight Grey and Roof White. The second picture shows the wagon vacuum pipes painted black and transfers (Modelmasters) applied. Finally the wagon was lightly weathered with Life Colour Frame Dirt and Roof Dirt.



The Wednesday Only cattle Train arrives empty to be loaded for a trip back to Hereford.

## **175 Not out**

### **By Dennis Lovett**

I was present for the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Bedford to Bletchley line

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November 1846, the first train headed out of Bedford station bound for Bletchley. Aboard the special train were Directors, investors and guests that included the Duchess of Bedford, who had officiated at the cutting of the first sod for the new railway in December 1845. As the first line to serve Bedford, it greatly reduced the journey time between the county town and London. The Duke of Bedford was an enthusiastic supporter of the railway through Bedfordshire, which included parts of his estate.

Proposals to link Bedford with the London & Birmingham Railway near the village of Bletchley were first mooted in 1844, although there was a considerable support for an alternative canal to join the network at Newport Pagnell, although the canal to the town was subsequently converted into the branch line from Wolverton beyond Linford. The 16 ½ mile line from Bedford to Bletchley was surveyed by George and Robert Stephenson.

The railway had reached the Bletchley area in 1838 with the building of the London & Birmingham Railway. For a few months, the bridge over the Watling Street at Denbigh Hall became a temporary terminus. A plaque on the bridge tells the story to this day (the Bridge is the one which is south of Standing Way heading towards ASDA). However, Fenny Stratford which was the town in those days with all the amenities, had evolved from a coaching town on the Watling Street and Bletchley itself consisted of a few houses close to St. Mary's Church around Church Green Road (today shown as Old Bletchley on road signs). The railway considered Bletchley to be too insignificant to warrant a station although the building of the Bedford railway required one to be built, along with sidings and an engine shed.

The London & Birmingham ceased to exist on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1846 when it amalgamated with the Grand Junction Railway to form the London & North Western Railway. When the Bedford line opened on the 17<sup>th</sup> November it was operated by the new company from the outset.

I was also charged with modifying 30-0ft four in line trailers that carried 16-0 ft steel billets.

Four in line refers to the wheel arrangement at the very rear of the trailer, the wheels being arranged in two pairs of two wheels all in the same plane. It was noticed that due to the long distance between the trailer's king pin and rear wheels, coupled with the relative short billets the chassis were sagging.

The modification consisted of an increase in the chassis depth made up of an open frame and welded to the bottom of the original chassis. Having calculated the loads involved the frame was designed with a generous factor of safety incorporated to prevent any further sagging. My Theory of Structures degree came into play and the modification was successful in preventing further damage to the trailers.

During my time at N.C.L. I was involved in the advent of containerisation and was directed to attend the arrival of the first ISO container to cross the Atlantic at Canada Dock, Liverpool.

This proved to be a catalogue of misfortunes. When the 20-0 ft "container" was lifted, it was found to have a king pin at the front and heavy perforated angles at the opposite end of the box body. Secondly, when the "container" was transferred to a low loader rail vehicle it was found to be "out of gauge" with railway conditions. It would not pass through the small tunnel from the dock onto the main Railway network.

The third problem the now confirmed "flexi-van" was loaded onto a road trailer for its overnight journey to the inland Custom Depot at Birmingham, Lawley Street. The vehicle broke down on its journey, a replacement was found and the "flexi van" duly arrived at Lawley Street the following morning. When reversing to the loading dock the driver managed to smash the overhanging veranda of the Custom's shed.

The correct container arrived at Liverpool some days later.

During my tenure at NCL I was designated to represent the company in a high-profile case on a charge of carrying an insecure load brought about by



Guilds at 19 and was now on a course for a degree in Mechanical Engineering, which I achieved some years later.

The head of this panel was my future boss at B.R. I was asked to meet him at a one-to-one meeting when he informed me of a managerial post that would be coming available in a few weeks' time and would I be interested in the position.

After attending an interview, I was fortunate to be appointed to the position. This involved liaison with the parcels and cartage division, road vehicle depots that maintained the fleet of vehicles, and Railway workshops i.e., Horwich and Wolverton, and private contractors. One of the most unusual contracts that I was involved in was to modify trailers with special equipment to convey washing powder to the docks at Whitehaven.

My area covered a large part of the LMR, From Carlisle to Leicester then across to Aberystwyth in mid Wales, visiting all the depots in cities and towns.

This position lasted between 3-4 years, when due to the government's introduction to a change in the Railways freight operations I was transferred to the B.R. Sundries Division which entailed a move to Bletchley. Eventually, the Sundries Division became National Carriers Ltd, and the Railway service and maintenance vehicles moved back to B.R. at Marylebone.

#### **National Carriers Ltd.**

My new job included the design, specification of new vehicles and trailers, recommending the placement of orders of 4-5-million-pound contracts with numerous companies as far apart as Lancing West Sussex and Wishaw in Scotland.

All the bodies were of aluminium construction employing special sections for the trailers that introduced a three-inch narrowing at can't rail level to reduce the damage in that area caused by the bodies hitting rail vans due to the uneven camber in the goods yard.

One of my designs was a three in one trailer 30-0 ft long platform, this trailer had a well-positioned in the centre between the chassis members to carry 5-ton steel coils and ISO twist locks for 20-0 ft and 30 ft containers

Although not the most direct route between Bedford and London, the journey time was only half of that of the stagecoaches. The 'Bedford Times' ceased to operate from the opening day of the railway. Journey times between Bedford and London would be further reduced by the opening of the Midland Railway's line from Bedford to Hitchin in 1857, where services joined the Great Northern to Kings Cross although Midland Railway services were heavily delayed as the GNR gave priority to its own trains. The result was the Midland Railway extension from Bedford Midland to St. Pancras which opened in 1868.

#### **A Cross Country Route**

The Bedford line changed from being a main line to London into an important cross-country route which would eventually link the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge. The line from Bletchley to Oxford opened in 1851 whilst the line from Bedford to Cambridge opened in 1862.

In addition to the faster services between Oxford and Cambridge, all stations to Bedford service continued. A railmotor was introduced on to the line in December 1905 and halts opened at ground or rail level at Bow Brickhill, Aspley Guise, Husborne Crawley, Wootton Pillinge (renamed Stewartby in 1935), Wootton Broadmead, Kempston Hardwick and Kempston & Elstow. Access to the steam railmotor was gained by folding steps. Of these, only three Bow Brickhill, Aspley Guise, Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick survived to celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the others closing in 1941 during World War 2. They had also been closed temporarily, like so many other small stations, during World War 1 in 1917 and reopened again in 1919. By 1926, the trains were no longer operated by railmotors but reverted to push/pull operation with a steam locomotive at one end. Proper platforms were added to the surviving stations in 1959 when diesel multiple unit working commenced with the introduction of the Derby Lightweight units. Pre-war the line was used for trials of an experimental three car streamlined railcar No. 80000 but the outbreak of war in 1939 brought these trials to a premature end.

It was during World War 2 that the line really came to prominence. Supplying airfields in East Anglia and elsewhere with ammunition and fuel was an additional requirement, as well as other military establishments. With extensive bombing occurring in London on a nightly basis, the Oxford – Cambridge line provided a rural alternative avoiding the capital and kept the

nation supplied with food and raw materials. The build-up to the D-Day invasion also the carrying of weapons and troops.

Wartime operations had resulted in British Railways undertaking a massive post-war modernisation plan. The Oxford to Cambridge line was earmarked as a strategic freight route. Plans were put in place to rebuild the hastily constructed wartime sidings at Swanbourne into one of the new mechanised marshalling yards then being built across the nation and to avoid all the conflicting movements across the West Coast Main Line, a £1.5m flyover would be constructed. Work began on the flyover in September 1956 and was completed in January 1962. The plans for the new Swanbourne yard were never activated.

### **Under Threat**

By 1959 plans were being drawn up to remove the passenger services between Oxford and Cambridge which capitulated local government into opposing closure. Instead, the line saw the introduction of multiple units (Derby Lightweight units) that year.

Closure was authorised in 1965 subjected to alternative bus services being provided. It took until 31st December 1967 to put those in place but the route between Bletchley and Bedford proved unworkable and the result was a basic pay train railway with stations becoming unstaffed. However, closure was never far away and further threats in 1971 and 1974 were somehow avoided. It was during 1980 that the Railway Development Society called a public meeting in Bedford to ensure that any further closure attempts would fail by breathing new life into a rundown and under threat railway. The result was the formation of the Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association, an organisation that still fights its corner for the line today alongside the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership and the rail operator.

With no viable alternative for bus services somehow the line continued. Multiple units reaching the bottom of the cascade were sent to the line, where the staff at Bletchley Depot managed to perform almost daily miracles to ensure the trains kept running – in what would have passed muster for a heritage line.

During my days working for North London Railways the predecessors of Silverlink, London Midland and London North Western, the line celebrated

## **British Railways Road Vehicles 1956-2001**

### **By B. Worden**

#### **B.R Apprentice.**

I started my career in road transport in April 1956, aged 15, as an apprentice bodybuilder and repairer.

The majority of bodies on the Railways at this period were predominately of timber construction, the exception being the three wheeled Scammel Scarab units.

Within a very short time the new vehicles that replaced an aging fleet were of all metal construction. This change opened a new avenue from working in timber and I had to master the art of oxy/act. Welding of steel and aluminium, plus a degree of panel beating.

There was also an element of fibre glass repairs thrown in for good measure, mainly on damaged roof panels and body dents, plus the front domes of the ubiquitous Scarabs that I am sure some drivers used them as bumper cars. As my apprenticeship progressed, I had to attend a 5-year City and Guilds course at night school and was fortunate enough to pass the final exam in May 1960 when I was 19. The last exam was on cup final day when Blackburn Rovers played in the Wembley final.

In the September of 1960 I was approached by the local Technical College with a view to teach the course I had just completed. This I agreed to and so started a career in teaching. I was faced with 16/17 – 19-year-old apprentices, who on a Friday night could not wait until 9 o'clock when they hit the town. My teaching career lasted 7 years when I had to give it up due to moving to Bletchley.

On the Railways apprentices were always well looked after, which, in my case and many of my colleagues' regular meetings were held with senior Managers to determine potential manager sources.

At these meeting a panel of 4/5 professional engineers asked questions about your career and technical education. I responded that I achieved my City and



### **Ready for the visitors – trains return to Stony Stratford**

In all, fourteen trains were moving at any one time although several sets of batteries required replacement during the day. The local pound shop doing a steady trade in batteries during the preceding week.

The faces of countless youngsters and many other visitors some of whom made several visits during the day, seemed to confirm that our fears were unfounded. The church provided us with two donation buckets for church funds and we were surprised and delighted to hand over to them just over £100 so it would seem our efforts were really appreciated by visitors. Hopefully our former Tinsplate Team members, Brian, Stan and John were looking down on us and would have approved of how we interpreted the continuation of their work. We have even been invited back for 2022.

Merry Christmas Everyone (by the way we have not yet found a train that plays that one yet!).

its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. On the actual anniversary day, Class 117 No. 117700 worked a special train conveying guests including the Mayor of Milton Keynes to Bedford. The crew wore Victorian costumes and on arrival at Bedford Midland the unit was named 'Marston Vale' by the Marchioness of Tavistock (later the Duchess of Bedford). A couple of weeks later the years celebrations concluded with the operation of steam hauled trains between Bletchley and Bedford with BR Standard Class 2-6-4T No. 80079 from the Severn Valley Railway heading the shuttles.



**No. 80079 gets ready to depart from Bletchley in December 1996**

Twenty-five years later, the celebrations were more muted. The line had not enjoyed the best service during Covid restrictions and many of the current stations face possible closure with five new stations proposed on different sites under plans now being consulted by East-West Rail.

A plaque was unveiled by former Network SouthEast Managing Director, Chris Green. He also officiated at a similar event at Ridgmont station, where guests attended the heritage centre and enjoyed lunch. Local community station groups were present including the Friends of Bletchley Station.





**Class 230 No. 230004 worked the train to Ridgmont via Bedford Midland on 17<sup>th</sup> November**



**The ceremony at Ridgmont. The station now houses the line's Heritage Centre**

### **The Future**

The line was received new signalling and stations were tidied up. The arrival of Class 150 units to replace the old first-generation units was welcomed by many. These have now been replaced by the VivaRail Class 230 units.

From its low point, the survival of the original section between Bedford and Bletchley now faces a new future (and no doubt challenges) with the opening of East – West Rail with the aim of once more linking Oxford and Cambridge although the later stage has yet to go through the various stages needed to



***Tim and James make some final adjustments whilst Chris looks on***

Having viewed and measured the available space some weeks before, not everything we had could be accommodated. Most was constructed in three hours on Friday afternoon with the rest following on the day of the event itself. With two large circuits of Lionel G scale operating the Santa Express and Disney Christmas sets, its remote-controlled handsets enabled young visitors (and some not so young!) to operate them, often resulting a donation in the bucket. Tim's O gauge train with moving reindeer and elves on the pump truck provided Christmas tunes. Two hurriedly built tunnel mouths allowed trains to run underneath the white cloths that draped down from the tables above which contain four circuits of Hornby track on which various Hornby themed trains ran including the Coca-Cola train set and various incarnations of the Santa Express ran fault free for seven hours hauling truckloads of presents.

The running of trains for the switching on of the Christmas Lights at Stony Stratford, was something started by our late member Brian Barnes. Brian was 'Mr Stony Stratford' to many having served as a JP on the Stony Stratford bench, Chairman of the Ansell Trust Charity and as owner of a well-known restaurant - a respected businessman who was a member of MKMRS for many years. Ably assisted over the years by Stan Pennington, John Forman, Mick Clements and others, our former 'tinplate team' ensured that the parish church of St. Mary & St. Giles resounded to the sound of Hornby O Gauge and the like every festive period.

Brian's admission to hospital from a fall just a few days before the traditional event in 2015 came as a shock from which sadly Brian never recovered, his funeral taking place on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 with many MKMRS members in attendance. Bill and Shirley Marston, neighbours and well-known Lionel collectors, ensured that the show went on that year and every year until Bill's own passing in 2018.

In 2020, the organisers approached our Chairman, Chris Hughes, to see if we could bring the trains back to Stony. With Covid-19 taking hold, those plans were put on hold for a year but 2021 saw the trains return. This was no ordinary model railway remit, for over the years some of us have started gathering all those different Christmas trains that appear in garden centres, hardware, discount and toy shops in the run up to the festivities. Someone dubbed them 'tacky trains' and certainly many of them are of dubious parentage and scale.

Having warned the organisers of what to expect from us (see club Facebook page for video of our display) it was with some fear and trepidation that the team of Tim Byrne, Chris Billingham, James Woodley and Dennis Lovett gathered material together and embark on setting up the operating display.

build a line from Bedford to Cambridge, albeit on a different alignment to that used in 1862.

### 175th Anniversary Event and Fun Day – 20th November



**Fenny Stratford in OO scale by Dave Court and Peter Ellis**

The club was represented three days later at the event held at the Masonic Hall, next to our former club rooms in Victoria Road station. Dave Court and Peter Ellis took their Fenny Stratford layout to be the star exhibit ably assisted by Wayne Webb, Tim Byrne, Jarred Webb, Chris Read, Tom Harris, Lee Brown and James Woodley.

Other exhibits included displays by local history groups who had interesting displays of old photographs of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership, British Transport Police and the Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association.



**Rowland Brothers timber yard, Simpson Road level crossing and signal box**





**Catch the Christmas Trains at  
St Mary & St Giles Church Parish Hall  
Stony Stratford**  
**On**  
**Saturday 27th November 2021**  
**From 1000 until 1700**



Poster publicising the event produced by Dennis for the organisers