



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.
- ❖ The articles need to be sent in by email to 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.

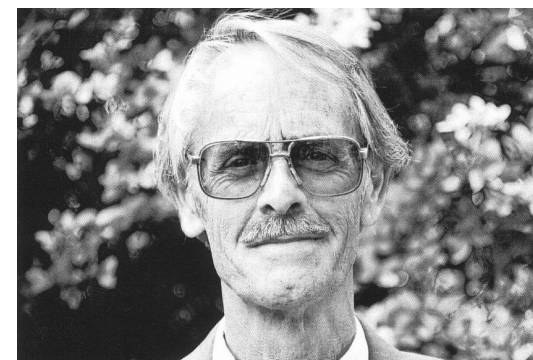
Deadline for articles for the Spring Edition is the 27th February 2025 with the Newsletter being published by the 1st March 2025.



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 216

Winter 2024



Geoff Bell
1950 – 2024

Although not a recent member, representatives of Milton Keynes Model Railway Society, the Gauge O Guild and the model railway trade attended the funeral of Geoff Bell who passed away on 12th August 2024.

Geoff was an outstanding railway modeller and built numerous O gauge items representing his beloved Great Western Railway. Geoff was active in MKMRS over many years and was a committee member. When we assisted with the Gauge O Guild annual Guildex exhibition which was held for a number of years in Bletchley Leisure Centre, Geoff and his wife, Chris, were part of the organising team made up of MKMRS members. Geoff and Chris went on to continue supporting the Gauge O Guild's annual event and were awarded the Gauge O Guild Order of Merit, which Chris accepted shortly

after Geoff's funeral. Colin and Margaret French were similarly honoured last year with the Guild's Order of Merit.

Geoff was a landscape gardener and joined the Milton Keynes Development Corporation in its infancy helping to plant many of the trees alongside the grid roads. He had been brought up in Enfield and attended Chase School where well-known railway author, modeller and Ffestiniog Railway supporter, Keith Catchpole, was a teacher. On one occasion our then O Gauge layout was invited to his old school, who organised an exhibition each year. Unfortunately, the trailer came to grief enroute and Geoff, ably assisted by Chris spent much of the day in his old school metalwork workshops repairing it. It was during his schooldays that Geoff joined the school trips to the Ffestiniog Railway joining the volunteer work parties restoring it.

Geoff's membership lapsed when he set up his own gardening company "Bluebell Landscapes" often undertaking work for club members. Although he has not been active since Bletchley Park days, he did visit us with Chris last year for one of our Open Days, showing interest in our new club O gauge layout. They also attended our exhibitions each year.

Geoff was diagnosed with cancer six weeks before his death and continued to work up until two weeks before. He hated letting his customers down. Our condolences have been passed to Chris and the family.

Dennis Lovett

Meet Our New Member

Member Updates

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



Carl White

Meet Our New Member

Carl White



Brinklow Access.

The club layout, Brinklow, has been returned to the club and was being readied for the next show at the N.E.C. as this was being written, so by the time you read this it will be back up and being used in the club room again. When the layout is put back you should see something different about it. It is about four inches/10 centimetres lower than before.

Why is that you ask? Well whilst at the show in Crewe the layout opposite Brinklow had more viewers than Brinklow because it was more viewable as it sat lower down, and it was easier for youngsters and those in wheelchairs to see it. As someone who must use a rollator because I am unable to stand for very long, it has become clear to me that some layouts are very difficult to see when seated.

Just think about this, you have spent a lot of time and effort making your layout and getting all the details looking just right, but because the layout is set so high up on its supports most of the details like the houses, cottages and trees as well as the trains are difficult to see! All your efforts are not being seen! I myself noted this with my layout at the club's exhibition in June and having noticed how difficult it was to see the viewing side from the rear as well. So, at the last open day my layout was stood on two tables, it was easier to operate, and younger viewers were able to see it easier without having to ask parents to lift them up to see the trains. Those parents also commented to me that it made a change not to have to lift up their children to see the trains.

So, access to see the trains and the layouts, especially the scenery is something we all need to think about, after all it is not just us disabled persons but more importantly our much younger people. After all, if we do not catch whilst they are young and interested, who will continue this great hobby of ours!

I'm 45 years old and have been into railways for as long as I can remember. This started with a steam ride on the Scarborough Spa express in the early eighties. This led into me being a trainspotter during my youth, travelling all over the country with my dad. I received my first model railway for Christmas 1987; a Hornby HST set.

We moved to Barrow in Furness in 1992. I found and joined the local Furness model railway club. Over a few years, I found myself gravitating to the N gauge group as they allowed me to become more involved in the modelling and cut my teeth learning various skills.

I moved to MK when I left school in 1995. I did come to a few club nights at Bletchley Park but must say I didn't feel very welcome as a younger person, so decided not to join at that time.

I have continued to model at home and have 2 layouts I can take to shows, 1 is a model of Bank on the Waterloo and City line, the other is a small engineers yards based on Hither Green. I am currently building a larger one that I will be able to take to shows.

One of my main skills I feel I can bring to the club is 3D design and printing. I am self-taught in CAD and during lock down I started a YouTube channel to teach others how to model in 3D. From this I have done Demos at several shows and this has gone down really well with visitors who don't realise how easy it is to learn.

Thoughts of a wondering photographer By Paul Egerton

On a holiday this September to the East Lothian area of Scotland, I thought that it might be worthwhile to drive a few miles and visit the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway, as it is a preservation venue that I have never been to before. Access is easily obtained, but the brown tourist signs that you normally look out for were lacking until I was approaching Bo'ness. But that said, you follow the signs and there is ample parking space within the station area.

For those of you who were not originally aware, the railway is operated by the Scottish Railway Preservation Society and the line has been developed since 1979 on a greenfield site with various historic buildings located at Bo'ness Station having been obtained from various locations and re-erected on site. The line was extended to Kinneil in 1987, and to Birkhill in 1989, where the fireclay mine was open to the public until 2010. Since 2010 the passenger service has continued to Manuel, where a station and run-round loop has been constructed. It is at Manuel that a mainline connection has been established with the Edinburgh to Glasgow main line and it is via this connection, that visiting locomotives have occasionally visited the line.

At Bo'ness itself, there is an excellent museum housing a number of rare artefacts under cover or out of ticket steam locomotives waiting their turn in the restoration queue. On my visit, I saw 65243 *Maude* displayed in the museum.



Unsurprisingly, my camera went into overdrive, and I took pictures of almost all the stock. What was surprising to find, was a LNER class 91 power car –

A progress report on “Tombridge Junction, change for St, Faiths”.

Also, the early HORNBY style OO gauge layout.

By Paul Sucksmith

When you have attended the club, you will have no doubt noticed that two layouts are having work done to them in the small room. One is an OO gauge layout belonging to Dennis Lovett. The other is the above-named N gauge layout. This layout is undergoing a major update of the tracks, fiddle yard and points including the point motors. It will then be rewired with two control boxes. One is for the Up Main Line and the Down Main line and the other for the branch line and goods yard.

It was decided to replace all the point motors as most were in poor condition. The fiddle yards have been stripped out, the track has been relayed. New additional point motors will be fitted in the fiddle yard. The trackwork was temporarily wired up to prove the new trackwork and to have another layout working for the last open day. I am pleased to say that the new trackwork works very well.

It is thanks to Mike Biss and Wayne Webb, with the work they are doing, in between displaying the clubs two large N gauge layouts, Brinklow and Dentdale that this work is being done, albeit slowly. You can only do so much on club nights!

The other layout is also a work in progress, with about forty percent of the point motors fitted to just one of the boards. This has proved challenging, as several of the cross bearers have had to be modified for the motors to fit to be able to operate the points. The same is also expected of the second base board. The layout then also has will be rewired.

Both layouts are long term works in progress, but they will be finished. (is a layout ever finished?)

The railway industry is coming together with heritage railways to prepare a range of events nationwide. The communities of Stockton, Darlington and Shildon are working on restoring various historic buildings and Shildon will be very much part of it. One company which occupies part of the old works is building the new G5 class tank locomotive whilst restoration work is carried out within the Locomotion complex.

The Shildon to Stockton Railway

You may be wondering why this railway was called the Stockton & Darlington Railway rather than the Shildon to Stockton Railway? The answer is simple, it was the businesses and communities of Stockton and Darlington that provided the money to build it – hence the name! Whilst the initial reasoning behind its construction was purely a local need, it created an international industry that is still building new lines today.

As for the engineering skills which once employed thousands in the railway works at Darlington and Shildon, they too have returned to nearby Newton Aycliffe, on the line a few miles east of Shildon when Hitachi opened its new train manufacturing plant in 2015. It ensured that the legacy of Pease, Stephenson, Hackworth and others continues to add to the rich story of its illustrious past two hundred years later! If you have never heard of Shildon – you will in 2025!



The Hitachi plant at Newton Aycliffe is connected to the Shildon & Stockton line.



91131 which has found a home after withdrawal and donation by the train leasing company. We often forget that what we regard as being modern railway rolling stock is now becoming life expired and therefore being withdrawn and replaced by more modern stock, so it is important that these artefacts get saved in their own right.

The museum even has one of the infamous Glasgow underground carriages which have been replaced in recent years. Also present within the museum were a number of pre-grouping wagons which only see the light of day on special occasions when a demonstration freight train is called for.

As to what can be view outside. The Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway is home to a good few diesel locomotives with the most recent addition being 37403 which bears



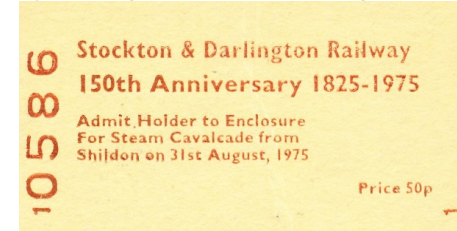
the Scottie Dog logo. Many were hidden from view under cover either being worked on or in storage within areas that were not accessible to the public. However, I did spot 26024 looking a bit weather worn, but obviously waiting its turn in the restoration queue. One unusual spot was the prototype hydrogen train project which was sat behind Bo'ness station.



Onto the ride offered by the railway. The train departs Bo'ness and crosses what was once railway sidings, timber yards and coal mines and progresses around the edge of the former port (the original Bo'ness station is now part of a remodelled roundabout). The line curves to cross an oil pipeline (Grangemouth refinery is not that far away) and then it starts a climb towards Kinnel station which was like Bo'ness, built from scratch. At this point, the line passes through woodland and arable farms with short views possible over the Forth. Half a mile further on, the line reaches Birkhill where the station building came from Monifieth which is near Dundee. The approach towards Manuel is through open country which is the end of the line and the point at which it is possible to see the engine running around its train. Manuel Station although has a physical connection to the Edinburgh Glasgow line, does not possess an actual interchange and it is not possible to connect to the mainline services.

powered by stationary engines and horses on the level before locomotives took over at Shildon. The works in Shildon later became the main wagon building works for its successors until British Rail Engineering closed it down in 1984 when it completed the last of 11,083 HAA coal wagons as used on merry-go-round trains. At the time of closure, it employed 2,600. A campaign to save it failed although most of the buildings were saved and turned into industrial units, the closure affected the whole area.

In 1975 the works had hosted the 150th Anniversary celebrations and was the starting point for the Calvacade. MKMRS organised an outing to it and for many of us it was the first we had heard of Shildon! It was a long way on the coach but was a great day out. I still have my ticket!



Rail 200



Major celebrations were held in 1875, 1925 and 1975, the event MKMRS attended was opposite the current Locomotion site.

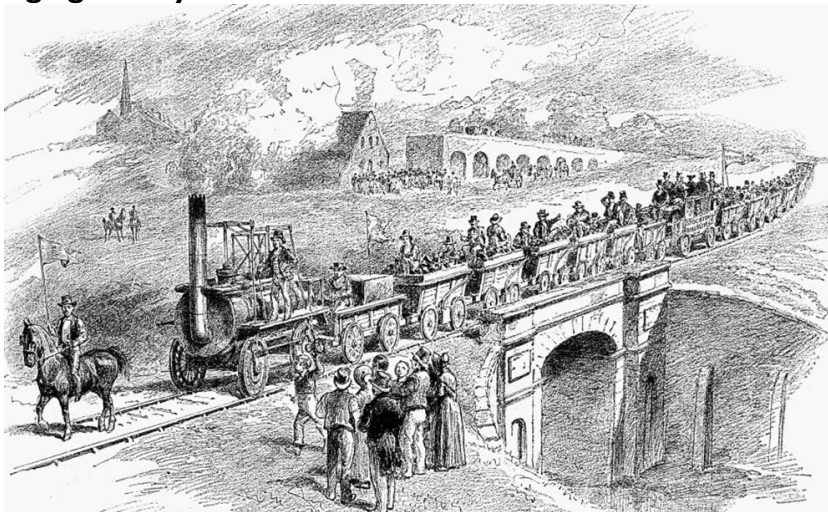
Such was the importance of Shildon to the railway story, that the National Railway Museum opened a storage facility in September 2004. Initially it was planned to open its doors on limited dates but 94,000 people visited it in the first six months and the site opened daily.

The site has since been extended to include several historical buildings at the far end of the site, including Hackworth's house and works, which have been restored ready for 2025. A second museum building opened on the site in 2024.



'Locomotion No. 1 on display at Darlington Bank Top station

Changing history



On the 25th September 1825 the first train hauled by 'Locomotion No.1' left Shildon for Stockton via Darlington.

The steam railway began in the then village of Shildon which had a population of 115 when our story began in 1821. Twenty years later it stood at 2,631 and continued to expand reaching over 7,000 in 1891. The Stockton & Darlington built its workshops, engine sheds and sidings here. Beyond Shildon the collieries were linked by conventional waggonways, using inclines



Steam services on the day of my visit was provided by an ex-industrial tank – Neilson Reid & Co number 5710 of 1902.

Seen here at Manuel prior to uncoupling and running around its train.

Would I visit again? Well, I have to say, it is not the most aesthetically pleasing of heritage railways, but what is offered is interesting both for the steam and diesel enthusiast. So yes, if in the area, I would go again. Like a lot of small heritage railways, it lives a hand-to-mouth existence and is dependent upon revenue derived from the public travelling on the steam trains and what is generated by means of the café, shop and donations. So, if you are in the area, do visit as I am sure you will find something of interest.

A Trip up to North Yorkshire

By Ian Egerton

With myself having quite an interest in steam and with the North Yorkshire Moors Railways been one of my favourites railways, and with their annual steam gala having eleven steam locomotives in steam over the course of the gala weekend (four days in length), so it is definitely worth the long journey! Luckily my dad (Paul Egerton) was keen to come too and did all the driving. We kindly invited Tim Byrne (club chairman) along with us as well due to have space in the cottage as we know he loves the railway too! We were very fortunate that the cottage was situated right by Grosmont station and out of the window we could see a rake of Pullman coaches sat in platform four at Grosmont station. Although sadly the cottage is up for sale, along with a guest house there too, so the chance of being able to stay there again is very slim.



We arrived a couple of days before the gala so we were able to see some shunting action and see the railway whilst been quite as believe me it was very busy over the gala with the platform often been filled up with people with their cameras at the ready and people taking a ride on the train.

Seen in the picture above is Black 5 No 5428 'Eric Tracey' sitting in Grosmont station facing Whitby, before it was reversed back down to Pickering where it was turned on the turntable to face Pickering direction which all locos were facing for the duration of the gala. Worth noting Hornby are due to produce a model of this particular loco, which I believe is a limited run with Locomotion Models and Rails of Sheffield. I'll certainly be looking to get my hands on one of those myself, let's hope they live up to the expectation as I heard many things about how poor the first run of the Hornby Black 5 was with numerous issues!

Darlington Railway from 1821 to its opening in 1825. He is often named as the 'Father of the Railways'. He died in Chesterfield in 1849 aged 67 years old.

Timothy Hackworth's name will always be associated with Shildon. Like Stephenson he was born in Wylam but five years later in 1786. Hackworth was a prominent methodist who became a foreman blacksmith at Wylam Colliery in 1810 before joining Warbottle Colliery in 1816. He worked alongside William Hedley on early colliery locomotives before joining Robert Stephenson & Co as relief manager in 1824. It was Hackworth who established Shildon as the engineering base for the Stockton & Darlington Railway after becoming Locomotive Superintendent in 1825. He later formed his own locomotive building company in 1833, run initially by his brother and left the Stockton & Darlington in 1840 to concentrate on his own company at Soho Works, Shildon. He died in Shildon in 1850 at the age of 63.

The other main player was not a person but a locomotive. Originally named 'Active' the first locomotive was built in 1825 by Robert Stephenson & Co. It is better known today as 'Locomotion No. 1'. It arrived just before the opening and was unloaded at Heighington. It exploded in 1828 when the driver tied down the safety valve! After being rebuilt it hauled the first train on the Middlesbrough & Redcar Railway in 1846 continuing in service until 1850. It spent a further seven years as a stationary colliery engine before being purchased for £50 when it was due to be scrapped and was displayed at Darlington Bank Top station from 1892 until 1975. A replica was built for the 1975 celebrations for the 150th anniversary. After display in the museum at Darlington North Road station it transferred to Locomotion, Shildon in 2023.



Inside travel cost 1½d per mile and by travelling outside 1d per mile. This arrangement ceased in 1833 when services were taken in house by the Stockton & Darlington and locomotive haulage took over.

The main players

Proposal to provide a rail-based option was led by Edward Pease of Darlington. He was born in Darlington in 1767 and joined the family woollen business at 15. He was a prominent Quaker, and promoted the need for improved transport in the Darlington area. He became chief promoter of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. He later became a Director of Robert Stephenson & Co, the locomotive building company formed by George Stephenson and his son, Robert, in Newcastle. He died in Darlington in 1858. The religious Quaker movement has long been associated with Darlington, the football team which plays in National League North are nicknamed “the Quakers”.

The first survey for the projected railway was carried out by George Overton in 1818 but it was George Stephenson who carried out a second survey in 1821. This led to Stephenson's plans being adopted and passed by Parliament following the publication of The Stockton & Darlington Railway Act 1821. Stephenson also persuaded Pease and his backers to adopt steam traction over horsepower. Born in Wylam in 1781, George worked in Killingworth Colliery from 1801 initially as a stoker on stationary steam engines where he gained knowledge of the workings of steam traction. He built his first colliery locomotive in 1814 and was the lead engineer for the building of the Hetton Railway from 1820. He was co-founder of Robert Stephenson & Co alongside his son and became engineer of the Stockton &



With Thursday being the first day of the gala and the weather been typically British with it raining awfully all day, so staying out of that mostly meant a trip on the train was perfect. Been pulled by the magnificent Pitchford Hall (on hire for the gala from the Epping and Ongar Railway) from Grosmont to Pickering, as can be seen in the picture above it is ready to depart Grosmont. After spending a few hours at Pickering where there was a small model railways display of a number of layouts and there were stands about on Pickering station which was selling model trains, so of course I had to buy something, so I purchased two Bachmann MKI maroon coaches as well as purchasing an Accurascale wagon which I found in the shed shop at Grosmont, which I feel was a great find given it's one of their exclusive one too!

On the return back to Grosmont we happened to have Pitchford Hall again!



With riding the train on the Thursday there was the opportunity to take the train up Whitby and this was the Diesel locomotive class 25 'Sybil' doing the run to Whitby and back to Grosmont, so even though it did come out of the 'steam' it was still enjoyable and worth doing to get the best value out of the ticket which was a whopping £49.50 per day for a person!! As can be seen in the picture is the class 25 ready to take the train to Whitby from Grosmont.

For the rest of the time, I was spending at the railway I was around Grosmont station or surrounding area taking pictures of the locomotives running throughout the gala weekend. Below are a couple of my personal favourite pictures with one being visiting engine Rebuilt battle of Britain class 34028



'Eddystone' passing Grosmont MPD and Black 5 class 44806 departing Grosmont station.

So, a fantastic trip which was full of action over the weekend with lots of trains, and model railway stands and even a steam crane demonstration and much more!! Hope to return once again next year so if any other members of the club would be interested, I'd highly recommend!

Stephenson had seen the potential for a transport system that would change the world.

It was not the first line to carry passengers, the horse drawn trams on the Swansea & Mumbles system which opened in 1807 had that honour.

It was also not the first line to be designed for steam locomotive haulage that distinction falling to the Hetton Railway at Houghton-le-Spring in 1822, the engineer of which was a certain George Stephenson

So why are we celebrating?

Having failed to tick all the "first" boxes so far, you may be wondering why the Stockton & Darlington is so important to railway historians?

Most of the previous lines had been privately owned and were designed to carry out a basic function such as carrying coal from colliery to the nearest river, canal or seaport.

Where the Stockton & Darlington was different was it became the first railway to carry both goods and passengers becoming the world's first public railway. For a fixed fee between any two points on the line, goods or passengers could be transported, thus setting the standard for all railway lines that followed across the world.

It issued passenger tickets and used public houses as booking offices initially but there were no platforms. The passenger operation used stagecoach type vehicles and were operated by a form of franchise system, proving that our current franchised system is nothing new! These private operators used horses to pull the vehicles along the rails.



Shildon, County Durham – where it all began

Dennis Lovett explains why

2025 will see the roll out of events across the nation to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Our school history books had us believe that the railway ran between those two places, but this was not the case.

Our story starts in the then village of Shildon in Country Durham. Like numerous places in the north-east of England, Shildon had coal. The problem was that nestling on the edge of the Pennines it was some miles from both its domestic customers in Darlington and the River Tees at Stockton. Clearly something had to be done and whilst a canal was first mooted, it was George Stephenson who persuaded others that a railway was the best way of achieving both objectives.

Not the first

It was not the first wagonway or railway to be proposed, the first was in Prescott, Liverpool around 1594. Certainly, by the opening of the Stockton & Darlington there were several such horse drawn waggonways in use around the north east, including Killingworth Colliery where a young George

Why do I do these things?

Paul Egerton

Well, it seemed like a promising idea at the time, so after hearing about Elgin Model Railway Club's Modelfair 2024 Exhibition, I had to see for myself, as it was promoted as being the Premier event in the North of Scotland. So, I built myself a programme of events around a five-day trip staying within the town of Elgin that not only covered attendance at the exhibition, but also, enabling me to undertake my other passion that of Men's Sheds and pay a visit to the Forres and Nairn Sheds. I therefore booked myself on a cheap flight with EasyJet up to Inverness and travelled around whilst gallivanting by using a hired car.

But returning to the subject, it is good to see what is happening at the other end of the country, as it gives one inspiration and ideas of what might look good at one of our own Club exhibitions and I was not to be disappointed. I saw an N gauge layout in DCC displayed atop an ironing board, got talking to the 009 Society Scotland Area Group, an interestingly fictional 0 gauge layout called Castle Morris which is a country terminus set in the North West Midlands where the GWR and LNER meet and featured a working signalled level crossing. But one aspect of modelling which I cannot say that I have seen done before, is that of locomotive transportation so I just had to take some of the Hogwarts Castle and support coach diorama being shifted by none other than Alleys.





Would I come again? Most certainly if I were to be in the area, but of course, you must have a reason to be in that part of the world in the first place, and I can always be inventive when I make up my mind to do something. Plus of course, I found a couple of models that have now been added to my stock so that was a bonus as well.



They quickly made their way to Machu Picchu. As they cornered the final bend the horror of the slide of a mountain came into view. Where there should have been a rain forest was a mountain of rubble. The train had been derailed and was on its side with people everywhere, shouting and screaming. It was horrifying.

Dixie came to a quick halt where the track ended. Very quickly the emergency services disembarked and ran towards the incident. It looked like some ants were crawling all over someone's dropped sandwich.

The paramedics and fire fighters worked really hard to rescue the injured and trapped. The tourists that could walk were getting on the carriages slowly as each car was rescued. Others were carried into makeshift beds made up in the first carriage. It seemed like hours before everyone had been rescued.

Finally, Dixie started to reverse and get to the front of the carriages. When they got into the station there was a sea of paramedics waiting for them. They tended to the victims, and everyone was okay and alive. Dixie finally got to her shed, it had not been the day she had expected, but she felt very proud that she could help so many people.

Finally, the tourists returned and Dixie started the second half of the leg towards Machu Picchu. The only way to access this ancient city was by train, even the buses that took the tourists to the complex came in by train, Dixie felt very important. They hadn't even gone for 30 minutes when an emergency message was received that there had been a landslide outside Machu Picchu and a train had been derailed. What started out to be a fun holiday trip was now going to be a rescue mission.



Dixie was pulled into a siding and decoupled from the carriages. She was then taken to the back of the train and rejoined and rushed back to Ollantaytanbo. The tourists were disembarked and emergency staff and their equipment were hastily loaded. Dixie was feeling very anxious, she had not trained for this.

Brinklows Updates – Part 4

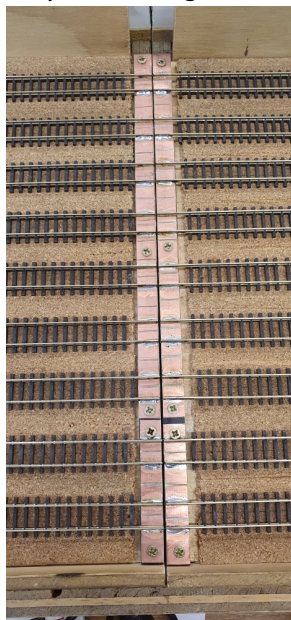
By Mike Biss

The next instalment of upgrades has started and the first one was to replace the dowels on the ends of the boards, as the original, cheap ones, didn't actually, do the job they are there for, as they keep pushing out when placed together. They have all been replaced by pattern makers dowels.



But they have now shown up another problem, in that the end faces of the boards are no longer flat. It seems the faces of the boards have had the baseboard tops and scenery encroach over the ends in places, and what with the dowel movement, the bolts holding the boards together had been tightened so that the boards didn't move at shows. As the two faces weren't actually touching, over time the end faces have bowed out and we can't get a flush fit. All the overhangs have now been removed and they are all flush with the end faces, but we still have to sand the ends down to get a nice close fit on all the joins. This will have to wait for the winter break.

With the dowels done, work now commenced on replacing all the tracks joins in the fiddle yard, as they were all over the place and had deteriorated over the years, meaning you couldn't run a train at speed through the fiddle

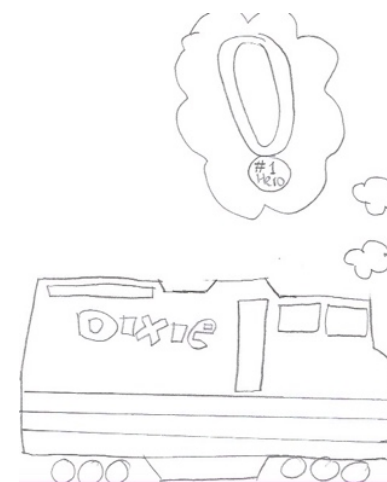


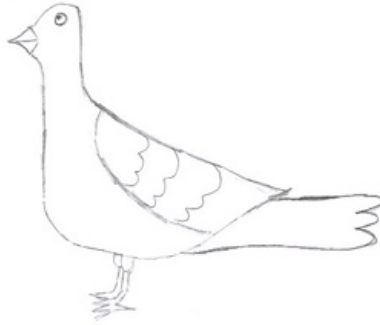
yard without derailing! The original ones were fixed over the cork and had individual bits of PCB for each track. For the new ones, the cork was removed from the edge of the board and we could have a solid base, using a strip of plastic under the PCB, so that it could be screwed into the top. However, removing the cork showed up another problem from the original build (yet another of those that only appear over time), in that allowing for the PCB to be screwed into the edge of the top board, there were no fixing screws holding the top board to the frame. In some places this had lifted and there was movement in the ends of the top boards elsewhere. A slight change of plan meant we could actually screw the PCB/plastic down with longer screws, so that they went through the top board and anchored into the frame below, so making sure everything was now flat. With all the joins done, we can now runs trains at full speed through the fiddle yard without problems. The replacing of the track joins in the scenic section is another job for the winter break and that will hopefully remove the humps of ballast currently there hiding the fixing screws, and will also allow us to get a better alignment of the track.

Ollantaytambo is a village in the sacred valley of South Peru, set on the Urubamba river, amid snow-capped mountains. It's massive Inca fortress with large stone terraces on a hillside. With the complex there is the Princess Baths Fountain. The village's old town is an Inca-era grid of cobblestoned streets and buildings. Dixie had never imagined anything like it.

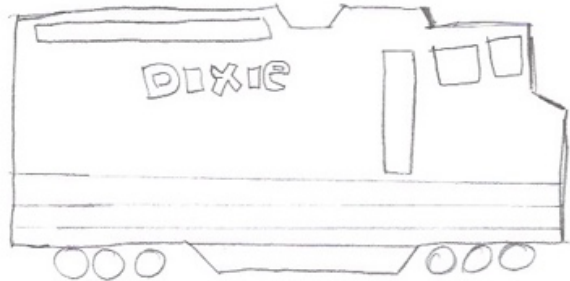


She was so exhausted from the days adventure so far. She started dozing off as she waited for the tourists to explore the complex. She had overheard a mother telling her son about Wiracocha, a scar on the mountainside that looked like a face. She started dreaming that the face came alive and told her that she was doing an amazing job and that Dixie will become a hero.

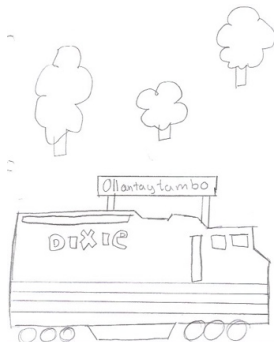




Finally, it came, the day that she would start working. She was to be a tourist train between Cusco and Machu Picchu. She was very excited.



She made her way from the train shed and chugged her way into the station. It was noisy and busy, filled with tourists and screaming children. Dixie was clapped into the station. This made her feel special and excited for the day ahead.



We also addressed a slight tight spot in the track alignment on one of the return end boards and during replacing the track, we found several other sections of rail had broken free from the sleepers and further investigation showed that the chairs had become brittle and had broken off the sleepers. The rail was only held 'in gauge' due to the set track curve of the rail itself! This has now all been replaced. We think that this board was one that was left in a car for several days in the past and the sun's UV had done the damage. Definitely a case of keeping a close eye on your layout, if it gets direct sunlight for long periods, for damage or discolouration. A cover is always a good idea to help in this situation.

Another problem addressed has been the occasional non firing of point motors. The separate 24v AC supply has now been extended to the other two circuits, Red and Green, but although one worked OK with the original CDU unit, the other wouldn't, even with them doubled up. Suspecting there may be a slight tightness on a couple of points, some newer type CDU units have been fitted, and they now work quicker and so far, seem to switch all the points every time. We'll find out how well they work at the next two shows, at Crewe and the NEC.

Still plenty of things to keep us busy for the future, which keeps things interesting.

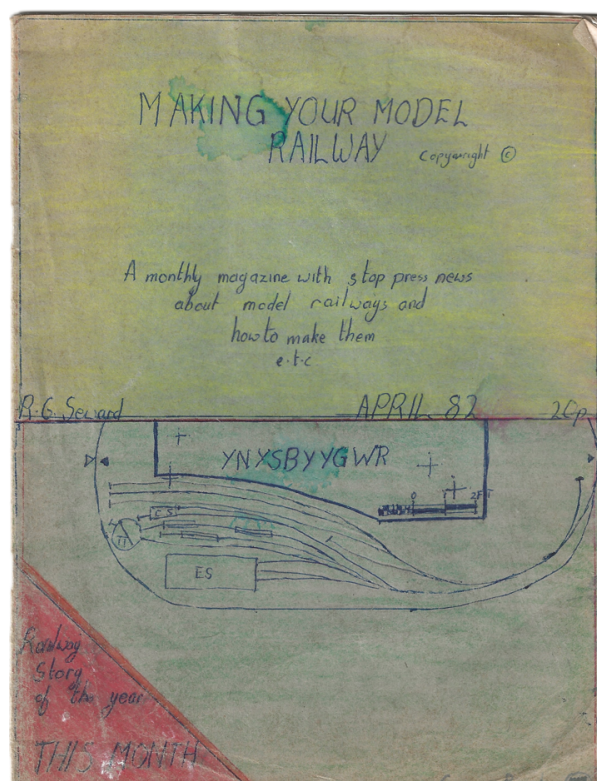
A Christmas Train Story

By Richard & Hannah Seward

A couple of years ago when she was 12 our daughter Hannah wrote a train story for me as a Christmas present which I had meant to type up back then.

Recently my Mum unearthed a model railway magazine I had written as part of school in 1982 when I was also 12, which as part of it had the 'Railway Story of the year', so I thought it only right to submit them both so you can appreciate how much better Hannah's is to mine.

My story:



1999

It was late afternoon and Charlie and George were going round their friend's house collecting their friends together for the weekly running of their railway in George's Garden shed.

When everyone was in the shed, they started to get the railway ready for work. Charlie looked at the locomotive shed and saw the old Hornby locomotive which did not work, which was just there to make up the numbers. It was a S.R. Battle of Britain, Spitfire number 21C166. This was the first locomotive that they had ever had and was beginning to gather dust. It could be repaired, but the parts were so hard to get and even if they did it would probably make a louder noise than the modern-day engines which were maybe making the same amount of noise, but the noise was that of a real steam engine. Also, motors were now so small they were quite easily lost.

One of his friends came up to him and said, "Come on Charlie you are in charge of the goods yard this week and there's a Black Five milk train out in a minute!"

Charlie went to the fiddle yard controls and starts to get the trains together. He was still dreaming and thought he would write a story about a model railway where the operators could shrink down to model size train size and drive the train. Maybe he would enter it for the railway story of the year competition run by 'Making Your Model Railway. Maybe it would win!

Hannah's story:

Dixie the Diesel

Dixie the Diesel engine was very excited. She had been in the train shed for two years whilst she and her carriages were being built. All she had seen were the roofs, walls and the occasional pigeon, who spent its next few hours being chased by the engineers. They didn't seem to be too keen on the pigeons, because the pooped everywhere. Dixie found the whole thing quite funny.