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# Barrowmore Model Railway Journal



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Published on behalf of Barrowmore Model Railway Group by the Honorary Editor: David Goodwin, "Cromer", Church Road, Saughall, Chester CH1 6EN; tel. 01244 880018. E-mail: [david@goodwinrail.co.uk](mailto:david@goodwinrail.co.uk)

Contributions are welcome:

- (a) as e-mails or e-mail attachments;
- (b) as a 3.5in floppy disk, formatted in any way (as long as you tell me if it's unusual!); disks can be provided on request;
- (c) a typed manuscript;
- (d) a hand-written manuscript, preferably with a contact telephone number so that any queries can be sorted out;
- (e) a CD/DVD;
- (f) a USB storage flash drive.

Any queries to the Editor, please.

The NEXT ISSUE will be dated March 2009, and contributions should get to the Editor as soon as possible, but at least before 1 February 2009.

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Copies of this magazine are also available to non-members: a cheque for £6 (payable to 'Barrowmore Model Railway Group') will provide the next four issues, posted direct to your home. Send your details and cheque to the Editor at the above address.

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**The cover illustration** for this issue is of a 150 class DMU formed of vehicles 52262 and 57262, seen at Blaenau Ffestiniog on 15 August 2008, wearing the blue/white livery of Arriva Trains Wales. These 'Sprinters' were built at BREL York, with the first batch of 50 two-car 150/1s being constructed during 1985. These were followed by a batch of 85 two-car 150/2s, built in 1986/7, to a revised design with an inter-unit gangway on the cab ends. [*Caption by our resident DMU expert, Eddie Knorn; photo by the Editor*]  
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## **Forthcoming events**

**(2008)**

**13/14 Dec. 2008:** Wigan show ("Johnstown Road" is appearing).

**(2009)**

**10/11 Jan. 2009:** St Albans show ("Johnstown Road" is appearing).

**7/8 Feb. 2009:** Wigan show.

**4/5 Apr. 2009:** S4 North, Wakefield.

**27/28 June 2009:** Perth exhibition ("Mostyn" is appearing).

**12/13 Dec. 2009:** Wigan show ("Mostyn" is appearing).

*(The Editor welcomes details of other events of railway interest for this column)*

Our web-site address is: [www.barrowmoremrg.org.uk](http://www.barrowmoremrg.org.uk)

(Also of interest is: [www.mostynhistory.com](http://www.mostynhistory.com) )

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## Letters to the Editor

(E-mail from Philip Hindley of Old Colwyn):

David, Further to the item on MSC Brakevans in BMRJ No.15, the NCB in Lancashire also had two ex-LMS brakevans, which were used when NCB trains ran over BR lines. Brakevan B2 was photographed out of use at Golborne Colliery on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1975. It was painted black and



carried a plate – “Midland Railway No.1710 built Derby 1923”. This van was formerly used on NCB trains from Golborne Colliery to the coal processing plant at Haydock, which travelled along the former Great Central Lowton St.Marys to St.Helens line as far as Ashton Station where they rejoined the NCB track of the Haydock Railway System. These trains ceased about 1962 with the closure of the Haydock System. Rail traffic continued at Golborne until 1977, when the track was lifted and the van probably disposed of at about that time.

The second brakevan was photographed at Walkden Yard on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1970. It was originally used on NCB trains from Howe Bridge Colliery, Leigh, and Gibfield Colliery, Atherton, both connected to the ex-LNWR Kenyon Junction to Bolton line, to the coal washing plant at Chanters Colliery, Tyldesley, connected to the ex-LNWR Manchester to Wigan Line. It is not known exactly when these trains ceased to run but Howe Bridge Colliery closed in 1959 and Gibfield Colliery in 1963. This van carried no plates but had axleboxes lettered LMS. It had been provided with small windows high up on each side and was Numbered 22 with lettering “This vehicle will be allowed to work Gibfield-Howe Bridge Chanters Colliery”. By May 1964 it was noted at Walkden Yard with the end verandahs newly boarded in as shown in the photograph with two doors on one side only. It was subsequently painted dark blue and lettered as shown. Apparently it was intended for use when a locomotive needed attention away from the workshops, but whether it was actually used as such I cannot say as it was always noted parked alongside the loco shed at Walkden Yard.



Walkden also had a works train comprising a low roof ex-GWR van between two ex-LNWR brakevans with boarded-in verandahs.  
Regards, Philip

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*(When recently in Spooner's Bar at Porthmadog Harbour Station of the Ffestiniog Railway, I picked up a leaflet describing the progress on the project to link the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways at Porthmadog. The amended text of the leaflet is reproduced below with their permission ....)*

## RHEILFFORDD ERYRI WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY

### BRIDGING THE GAP RHYD DDU - PORTHMADOG

2009 sees the re-opening of the Welsh Highland Railway from Caernarfon to Porthmadog. Easter 2009 will see service as far as Beddgelert; Porthmadog should be reached by July 2009.

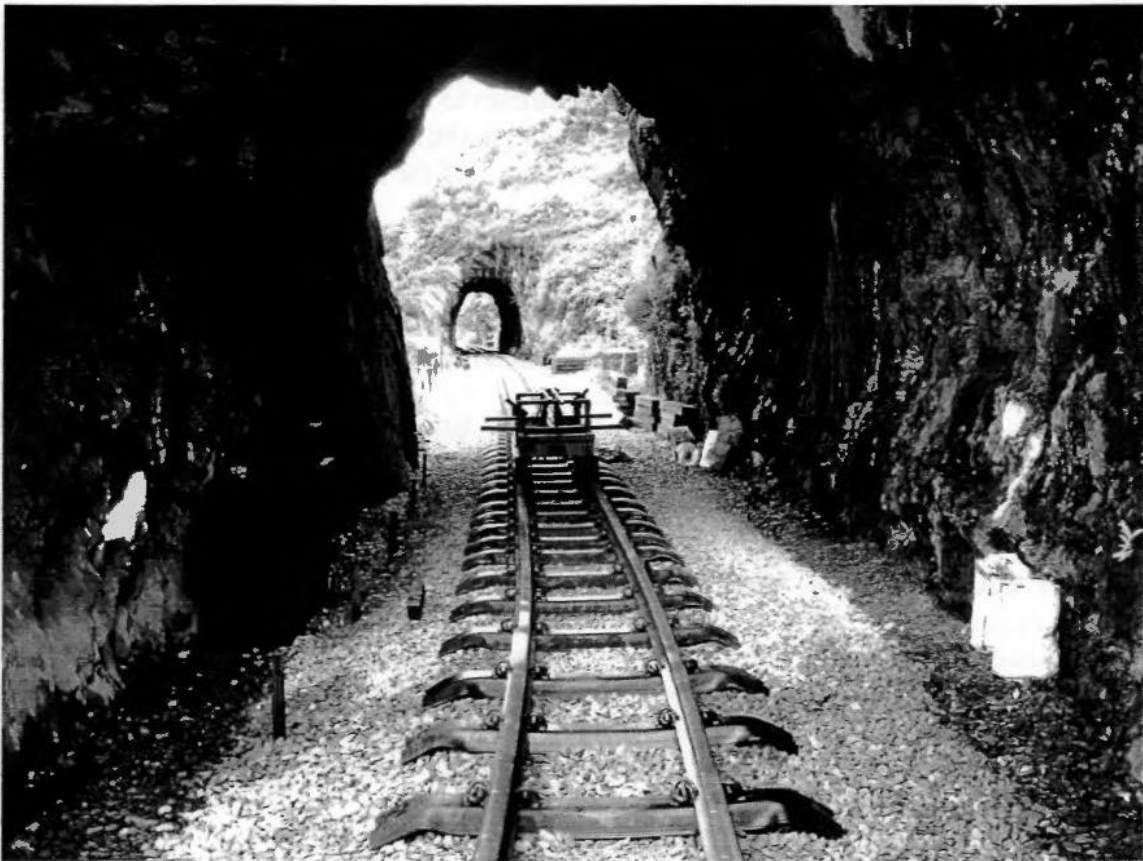
At the moment you can take a train between the historic World Heritage site of Caernarfon to the foot of Snowdon itself, at Rhyd Ddu. This section has now been open for a few years, but we're very excited about the next phase - re-building through Beddgelert and the Aberglaslyn Pass to join up with the Ffestiniog Railway at



Porthmadog. The WHR will take you through twenty five miles of glorious scenery - much of which is in the Snowdonia National Park.

### PROGRESS SO FAR

At the time of printing, June 2008, we have made very good progress. The track has been put in place all the way from Rhyd Ddu to Pont Croesor, near the RSPB's Osprey-watching site. There is a new station at Beddgelert and a halt at the forest campsite at Meillionen, just north of Beddgelert. New replacement bridges have been fabricated for us in Caernarfon by Brunswick Ironworks. The WHR uses these to cross the Afon Glaslyn at Bryn y Felin, and the Afon Dylif and Afon Nanmor. There is a new road bridge at Nantmor and Gwynedd County Council is re-building the road bridge just south of Beddgelert on the A496. A flat crossing has been constructed where the WHR Crosses the Cambrian Main Line railway just outside Porthmadog and a new tramway section built through the town itself.



*Work in progress near Beddgelert*

Much work has been done in collaboration with Forestry Commission Wales, the Snowdonia National Park Authority, the Countryside Council for Wales and other statutory bodies to ensure that the railway complements the local environment. Additional flood control methods on Traeth Mawr have been installed following discussions with the Environment Agency and Dŵr Cymru.

We have also ensured that local farmers and landowners have benefited from the re-invigoration of this important tourist conduit through the National Park. New roads and livestock access bridges have been built where, previously, the derelict railway trackbed had been used.

We have exciting plans for Beddgelert. This will be an important stop on the new railway and we expect many people to leave the train here to view this pretty village in the middle of the National Park. The village is centred on the confluence of two rivers and marks the site, as its name suggests, of Gelert's Grave. Gelert was a loyal dog who was mistakenly accused of murder, but you'll need to visit here to find out the whole story! We envisage that a regular shuttle train will operate between Porthmadog and Beddgelert as a great alternative to using your car. This will augment the two to four trains a day between Caernarfon and Porthmadog.

To ensure your comfort, we have built six new carriages to add to those already at Caernarfon. One of these is a service car equipped with a kitchen and other passenger amenities. Two more ex-South African Railways' Beyer-Garratt locomotives are also being re-built at our engineering workshops.

#### WHAT'S LEFT TO DO?

There is still much to do. As always with major reconstruction projects, once the substantial civil engineering obstacles have been overcome, there are many smaller tasks to complete.

The WHR is working with the Railway Inspectorate to ensure the safety of both the railway and its neighbours. This is particularly so in the design of level crossings. Much signage also needs to be erected, for safety notices and for the guidance of road users, cyclists and walkers.

The Halts at Meillionen Forest Camp Site and Pont Croesor need to be finished and the new station at Beddgelert also needs to be completed... And there is still track to be laid between Pont Croesor and Harbour Station in Porthmadog. The signalling systems to control the various crossings in Porthmadog need to be installed and tested, along with a revised footpath across Britannia Bridge.

There is much tidying up to do as well, to make the WHR one of the leading tourist attractions in Wales. You can help us too - below there are details of how to get in touch.

#### WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

*Have a look at our websites:-*

The official FR and WHR website is at [www.festrail.co.uk](http://www.festrail.co.uk), but you can also keep track of progress by visiting [whr.bangor.ac.uk](http://whr.bangor.ac.uk) or [www.isengard.co.uk](http://www.isengard.co.uk)

If you would like to help in the re-construction, or in keeping our trains running, why not join the Welsh Highland Railway Society (Cymdeithas Rheilffordd Eryri) - you can visit its website at <http://whr.bangor.ac.uk/whrsoc>

#### CAN I HELP?

If you want to make a donation to help finance this project, ask about our Phase 4 Appeal - or go to <http://whr.bangor.ac.uk/phase4/appeal.htm> and fill out the form now!

We are always glad of volunteer help. If you are interested in working on the trains and stations, or in the re-building work, please call us at:

Porthmadog: 01766 516000; Caernarfon: 01286 677018;

Volunteer Resources: 01766 516035.

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An LNER-designed six-wheel full brake built in 1950 by BR, E70676E was photographed in the 1970s. But where was it?? The DMU is either a Class 122 or a Class 116, which may give a clue. Richard (Oldfield) posted the picture on the internet, and it provoked one response from a reader of 'Tyseley'. This is currently the most likely suggestion to have surfaced.

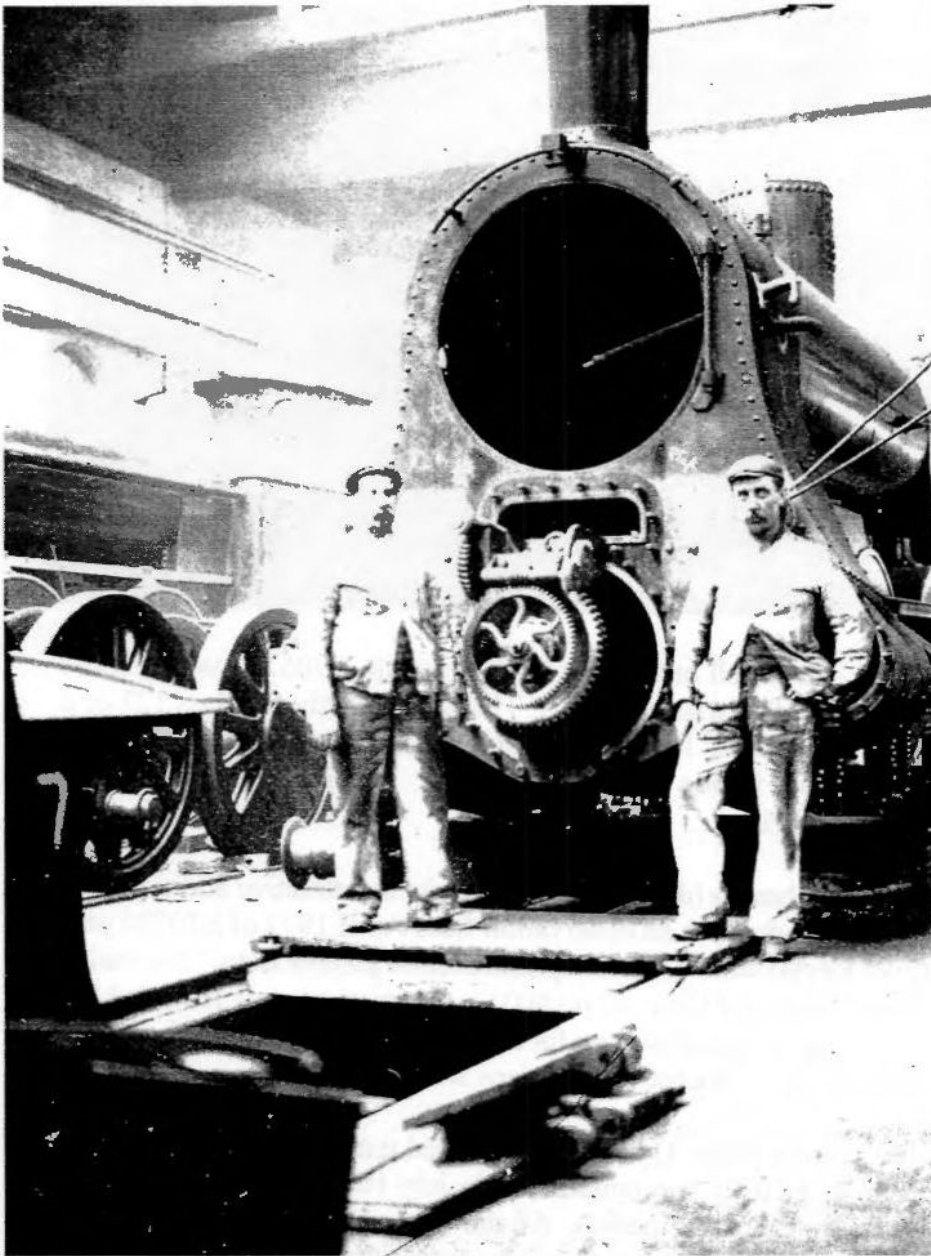
One of this diagram of full brakes (diag.358) would make an attractive addition to Mostyn's parcel stock! We do have an observation from April 1977 of E70720 passing through Shotton (Low Level) station in a Holyhead-Bolton parcels train. The make-up of this train of 21 vans, pulled by Class 40 no.40032, was meticulously recorded by Dave Rapson. We have to congratulate him for his foresight in this type of number recording – so interesting and valuable to historians and modellers.

We know from other sources [Note 1] that E70676 lasted until about August 1977, when it was condemned; E70720 was condemned in July 1977: both could feasibly have run on the line in our "Mostyn" period. All the vans of this diagram had been withdrawn by 1980. Comet Models used to make an etched brass body kit in 4mm scale, but Steve Banks (LNER coaching stock expert) tells me that there were significant problems with the kit; in any case, it is not currently available!

#### Notes

[1] *London & North Eastern Railway passenger train vehicles: a monograph on the details and history, from 1924 until 1979* by C.J.G. Bishop; vol.3: Corridor composites; non-passenger carrying vehicles ... Bishop, 2005.

## L.N.W.R. 3-cylinder compounds



Mr F.W. Webb designed six types of 3-cylinder locomotives. The most numerous class was the 8-coupled coal engine and 111 were built between 1893 and 1900. They were powerful and economical engines. They were very successful operationally but were unpopular with maintenance staff in sheds and in Crewe Works – staff disliked the complication of the third cylinder between the frames and at 30in diameter this must have been a heavy item to work with.

The front cover of the inside cylinder

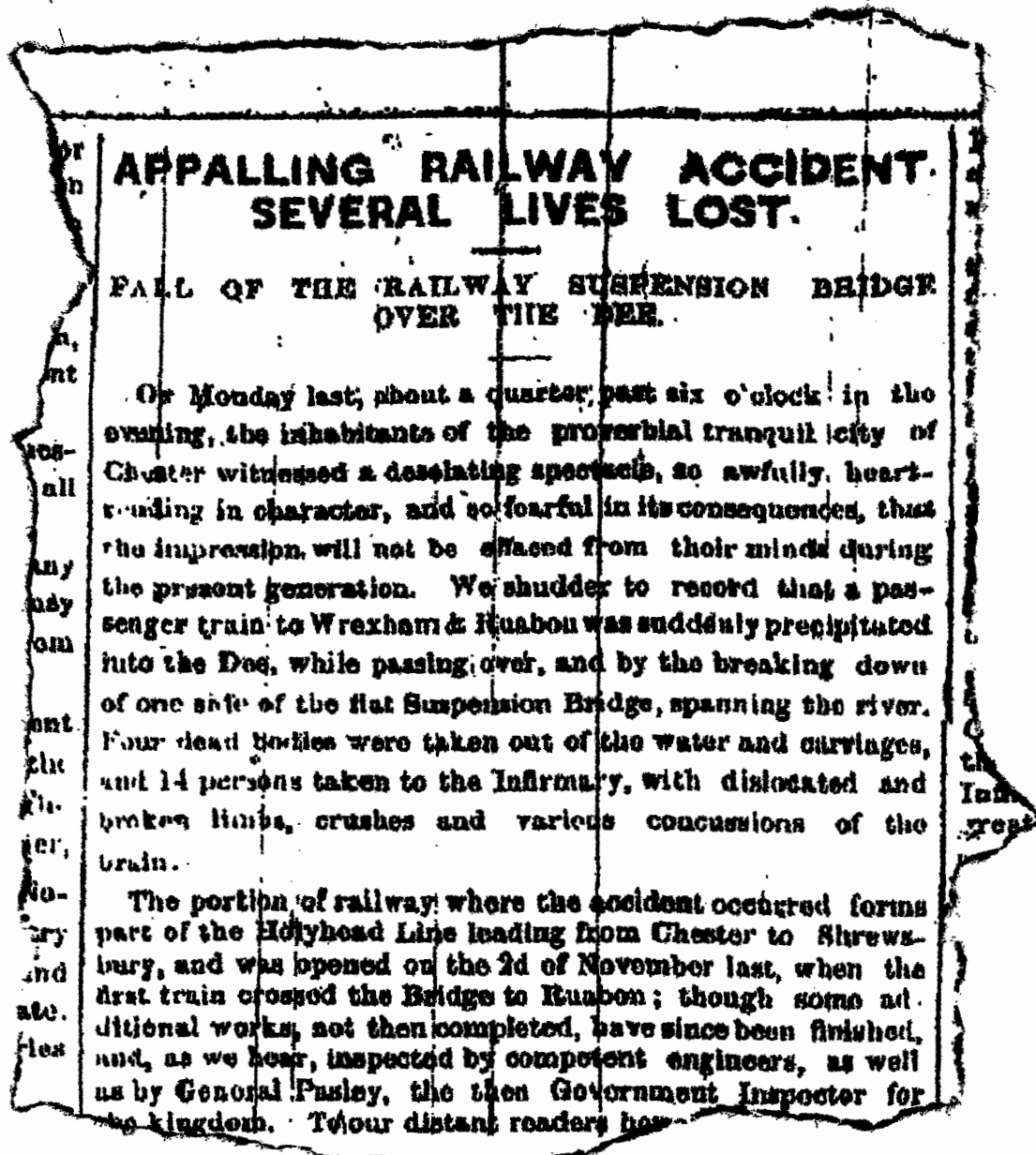
is prominent in many photographs but it is rare to see a picture with the cover removed. Crewe rarely discussed its secrets but the accompanying photograph shows how the inside cylinder really worked: most railway enthusiasts think that it was powered by the exhaust steam from the two high pressure cylinders – but it wasn't. It was really an enormous Portescap motor!

But seriously: L.N.W.R. Society photograph no. SOC606, taken in Crewe Works in about 1899, shows a cylinder boring machine in place within the inside cylinder of a Class 'A' compound 0-8-0.

*Photograph and caption supplied by Norman Lee.*

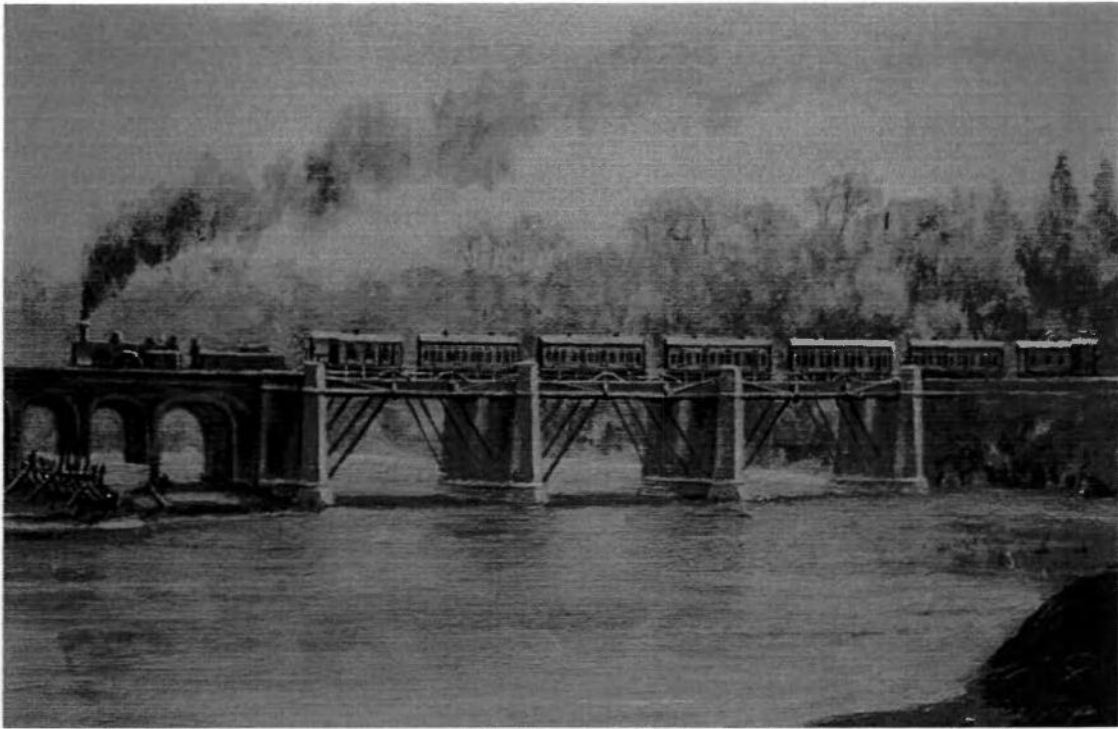
# The Dee Bridge accident, 1847

by David Goodwin



[The genesis of this article was a search for illustrations of the Dee railway bridge as it was in 1863. This search was itself generated by a request for help from the President of Merseyside Model Railway Society, George Winterburn, on behalf of his artist son-in-law Gordon Frickers, who was preparing to paint a landscape including the bridge.

My researches were relatively unproductive, for several reasons: firstly, I was looking for pictures made after 1847 (when the first bridge collapsed) and before 1870 when it was again re-built; secondly, there is no 'natural' viewing point for the bridge; and thirdly, the period of the bridge's existence in its 1863 state only just gets into the era of photography.



*Detail of a Great Western train crossing the bridge, from Gordon Frickers' painting; this shows the bridge after it was re-inforced following the accident.*

The first railway bridge over the River Dee at Chester was originally built in 1845/6 as part of the Chester-Holyhead Railway, to the designs of Robert Stephenson. It was inspected and passed for traffic by the Board of Trade on 20 October 1846. The bridge was used initially by the Chester-Shrewsbury Railway (later Great Western Railway) which had negotiated running powers over the two-mile Chester to Saltney Junction portion of the Holyhead line. Most of the Holyhead line itself was not opened until 1848.

On 24 May 1847, most of a Chester-Shrewsbury passenger train fell into the River Dee, killing five people and injuring 16 others. The enquiry, which ensued, was held by the Board of Trade's Commissioners of Railways. They produced a report in 1847 [note 1].

The reputed cause of the accident was that the locomotive tender derailed and hit the stonework of one of the bridge piers, causing the collapse of the bridge ironwork. The four coaches and the guard's van fell into the river, the derailed and uncoupled tender came to a halt on the remaining part of the span, while the engine alone was able to continue to Saltney Junction to give the alarm. The bridge was quickly re-built with temporary strengthening struts, utilising the existing stonework piers, and was in use for both the Shrewsbury and Holyhead routes until the London & North Western Railway re-built it 1870, and again in 1904 when the twin lines were quadrupled. The earlier part of the crossing has not been used by trains since the 1980s, but is still in place alongside the newer 1904 portion.

The report includes (like many later accident reports) much interesting material on the railway scene of the time: there are several diagrams of use to modellers - in particular, elevations of the original bridge itself. Another interesting snippet is a diagram showing the occupancy of the coaches and the respective injuries suffered!

Subsequent reporting of the inquiry inquest has revealed that Robert Stephenson would have liked to have acknowledged his design mistakes with regard to the iron girders, but was persuaded by the Chester & Holyhead company's solicitor to follow the official line which led to a verdict of 'accidental death' [2]. This 'whitewash' contrasts with the treatment and public criticism accorded to Sir James Bouch after the Tay Bridge fell down in 1879 with 75 fatalities.



It has to be said that a model of this first Dee bridge would be severely limited in operational interest, since its use lasted barely seven months!

But a by-product of my researches was quite a lot of information on the first bridge. It seemed a waste of time for it not to be used - hence the first article, which appeared in the *Merseyside Express* nearly ten years ago! Subsequently, after reading the slightly garbled account in the excerpt from an old history of Birkenhead (see page 23 of *BMRJ* no.14), and after looking at contemporary newspaper eyewitness reports, I decided to expand the first article - quoting verbatim some of the 1847 accounts. The first part of this now follows .... Note that additions/explanations are enclosed in square brackets and that Victorian spelling and grammar has been retained. We start with excerpts from the *Chester Chronicle* of 28 May 1847]

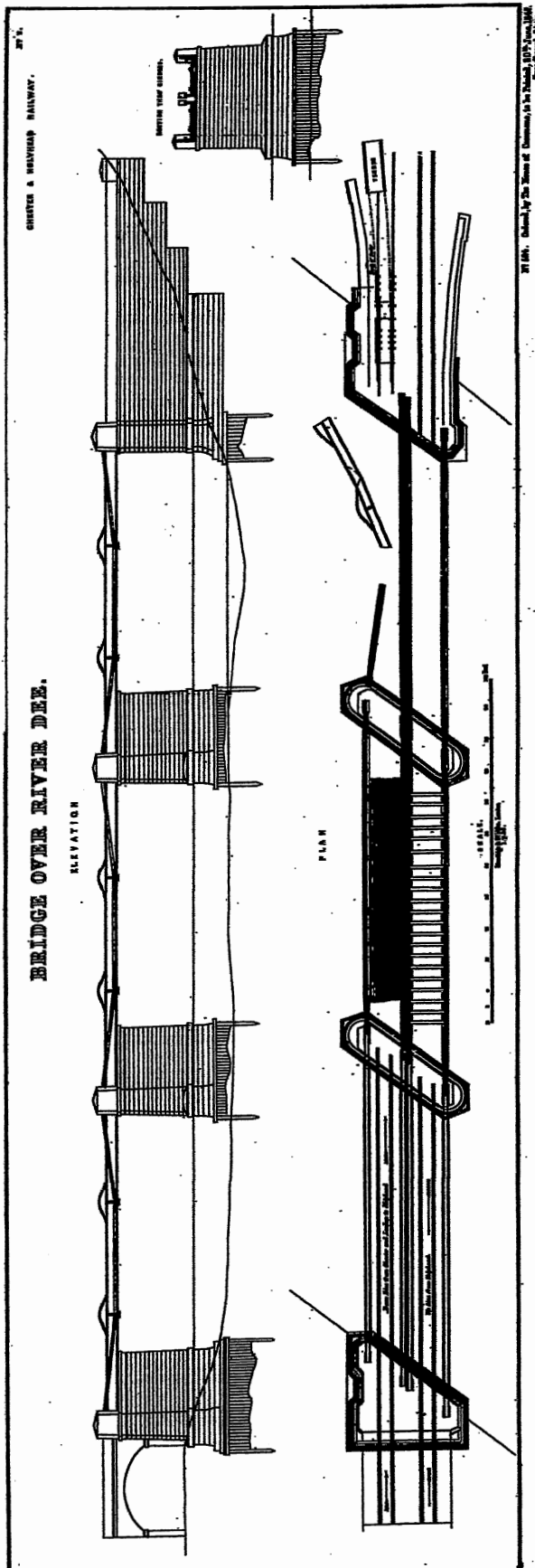
### **“APPALLING RAILWAY ACCIDENT SEVERAL LIVES LOST FALL OF THE RAILWAY SUSPENSION BRIDGE OVER THE DEE**

On Monday last [24 May 1847], about a quarter past six o'clock in the evening the inhabitants of the proverbial tranquil city of Chester witnessed a desolating spectacle, so awfully heart-rending in character, and so fearful in its consequences, that the impression will not be effaced from their minds during the present generation. We shudder to record that a passenger train to Wrexham & Ruabon was suddenly precipitated into the Dee, while passing over, and by the breaking down of one side of the flat Suspension Bridge, spanning the river. Four dead bodies were taken out of the water and carriages, and 14 persons taken to the Infirmary, with dislocated and broken limbs, crushes and various concussions of the brain.

The portion of railway where the accident occurred forms part of the Holyhead Line leading from Chester to Shrewsbury, and was opened on the 2d of November last, when the first train crossed the bridge to Ruabon; though some additional works, not then completed, have since been finished, and, as we hear, inspected by competent engineers, as well as by General Pasley, the then government Inspector for the kingdom. To our distant readers however, who may not be acquainted with the locality, we may observe, that what is termed the London and Holyhead, branching from the Chester and Birkenhead Line, is now in course of construction; but that this portion of it is carried across the north end of the Roodee, on an extensive viaduct, consisting of a great number of arches. The Roodee is another name for our race-course, which is bounded on the east by the ancient City Walls, on the west by the River Dee and within three minutes walk of Chester Cross; presenting a splendid natural amphitheatre, unequalled in England in approach and beauty, especially at this season of the year, being clothed with nature's richest verdure of green and gold; presenting a most contradictory contrast with the *debris* of human life and works of art so recently strewn in its immediate vicinity. The extreme west end of the viaduct joins the Bridge which crosses the Dee; the railway then continues westward for about a mile to a place called Saltney. At this point, the line proceeds in a north-west direction, skirting the banks of the river and sea shore through Flint, Abergele, Conway, Bangor, to Holyhead. At Saltney before-mentioned, another line stretches to the southward, leading to Wrexham, Ruabon, and (when finished), ultimately to Shrewsbury. With this explanation of the local bearing of the spot, where the accident took place, our narration will be better understood.

The communication by rail between the Chester and Saltney stations is for the present abandoned; but omnibuses convey passengers there (free of cost) whence trains





*Elevation (looking upstream – City centre to the left) and plan of the Dee bridge, from the Report [note 1].*

*This is a reduced size photocopy (the original is a folded sheet in the report, measuring about 33in by 12in).*

will be regularly despatched so long as the bridge over the Dee is impassable. The entire length of the bridge is 300 feet; the length of the fallen compartment is 100 feet, its rail width 10 feet; and the height of the rails above the river at high water on Tuesday night, about nine o'clock, there being a neap tide, we measured so be 31 feet. Now when the accident took place, it was just about flood, during a strong gale, and the river at the bridge would be, at the lowest computation, three feet lower than at high water; consequently the fall of the carriages, in perpendicular height, must have been about 34 feet.

It appears that the train in question was despatched to Ruabon from the Chester Station at a quarter past six o'clock, taking on passengers from Birkenhead and the North Western line; and consisted on Monday evening of the engine and tender, a first-class carriage, three second-class carriages, and the van, in which were two persons, besides the guard. It is rather difficult to ascertain the number of passengers, as, in addition to those who paid at the booking offices there were several with return and contract tickets, who would not appear in the way-bill. We understand there had been taken in Chester only four or five tickets, and six or seven at Birkenhead; but there were no doubt upwards of 30 passengers in all. The train started at the usual time, and proceeded safely through the Northgate-street tunnel, and across the Roodee viaduct. The bridge, as our readers are aware, is constructed by the bolting together of iron girders, which are supported by four stone piers, dividing the river into three arches - there being three united girders extending over the stream for each line of rails, and three between each pier.

When having passed over the western division of the bridge off the Saltney side of the river, the engineer, whose name is James Clayton, heard an extraordinarily-peculiar loud crash. At that very moment, fearing some dire evil, he put on all the steam power that could possibly be commanded. The engine as quick as electricity, obeyed the impulse, and, like the high-bred blood horse at the winning post, leapt and bounded in advance with the velocity of lightning. To this impetus may be ascribed the safety of Clayton, and most probably the lives of those who have providentially escaped for had the massive weight of the engine and tender been dragged down upon the falling carriages, accompanied with severe scalding by the bursting of the boiler, perhaps not a single human being would have survived the lamentable catastrophe.

The tender, containing the stoker, was attached to the engine by what is technically called an iron "screw-jack," chains, &c. The jack, which we measured to be one inch and five-eighths in diameter, was snapped asunder, as though it had been cut with a knife; as well as the one connecting the tender with the carriages. The vibrating shock, or rather violent chuck that Clayton felt, would have hurled him off, but for his firm hold of the engine, which his feelings instinctively influenced him to take. After the crash, the chuck, and the bound, the engineer looked behind, and beheld the bridge broken, the carriages and passengers in the river and the tender standing detached from the engine and carriages. He immediately proceeded onward to the Saltney Station to give warning for the next train which was shortly expected, and hastening those persons on the line whom he passed to go and give their assistance. Reaching the Saltney points, Clayton reversed his engine, and steamed back again up the other line. Arriving at the bridge, he stopped for a moment to reconnoitre, then proceeded slowly over the other uninjured side, and quickly reached the Chester Station. After giving information, an engine, carriages and all hands that could be obtained, were instantly dispatched to aid in the great calamity. This act of the driver, in recrossing the fatal spot has by some

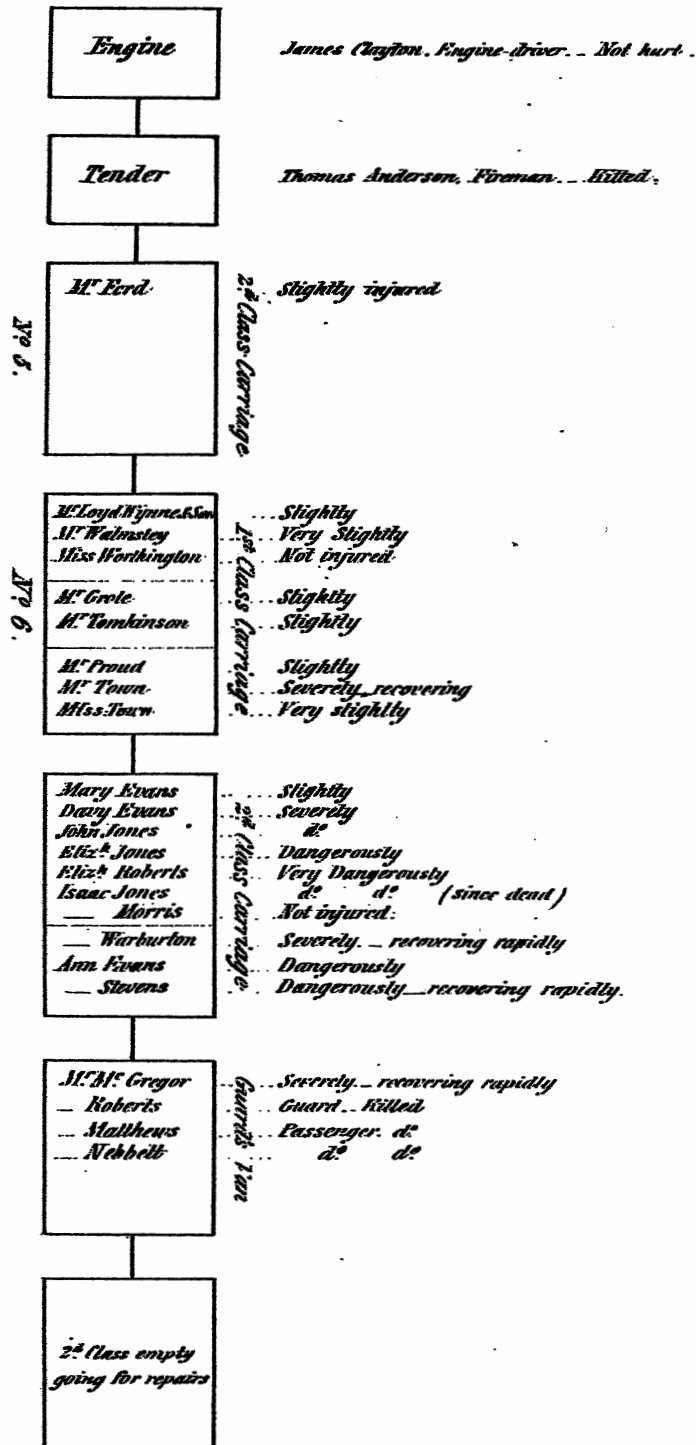
persons been applauded as highly courageous; by others as reckless and imprudent. Obtaining this relation from the lips of Clayton, we put to him this question:- "Was you collected and sensible when you recrossed the bridge?" He replied, "Perfectly so; my object was to prevent further danger, and procure assistance." The powerful jerks of the engine, and the descent into the river of the four carriages and van, must have been exerted upon the tender simultaneously; for it was thrown a little to one side, off the rails and left standing upright within about twenty yards of the abyss. Close to, and with his feet nearly touching the wheels of the tender was the lifeless body of Anderson, the stoker, his head, with blood streaming from behind, was laying upon the rails and upon his chest a heavy screw, weighing about 50lbs, which is supposed to have struck him a violent blow, and instantly caused his death.

The first indication the citizens had of the disaster, resembled the discharge of a piece of ordnance, succeeded by a rumbling noise like distant thunder, and finally the death shrieks of the unfortunate sufferers. On our way to the Roodee, we met an omnibus on its way to the Infirmary, containing a number of the maimed, attended by Mr. Jones, House Surgeon of the Infirmary; who, with his usual kindness and vigilance in cases of accident, had promptly rendered his assistance upon the first intelligence of the casualty reaching him. Also other conveyances, with mutilated objects, being on their way to the Infirmary; which, fortunately for the occasion, is within two minutes' walk of the bridge. Poor creatures dead were likewise being conveyed on boards to the Workhouse, which is close to the river, for the purposes of the inquest. Several thousand individuals soon assembled on the Dee banks adjoining the railway; the city itself presented the appearance of a deserted town; and the horror so strongly depicted in the countenances, and the mournful exclamations indulged in by the congregated multitude, may be better imagined than described.

We have before stated that all the passenger carriages, with the luggage van, were hurled off the bridge. The first-class carriage, one second-class carriage, and luggage van, fell close to the Saltney side pier; resting partly in the water, and partly on the shore. These were mostly on their sides, and dreadfully shattered by their fall upon rubble stones, and by the falling of coping and other huge stones, thrown down by the wrenching out of its bed in the masonry of one end of the united girder that had fallen, and caused the melancholy scene we are relating. Another second class carriage was shivered to atoms; and one remained sunk below the surface of the water. Some of the passengers, unhurt, beyond mere bruising, were able to release themselves, and walked home, or proceeded forward on their journey. Others were embedded in their positions by large stones, and pieces of timber. Several females were in most perilous situations, unable to stand or walk, being severely injured in the region of the pelvis. One poor fellow, taken out dead, had his head jammed under a wheel, and most of his brains in his hat. A young woman had all her apparel, except her under garment, torn completely off by the concussion. One was rolled up in a lump resembling a ball. A gentleman, supposed to have his arm broken, set off immediately to his friends in the neighbourhood. Another had his arm broken in two places, his shoulder twisted out of the socket, and his brains severely mangled. One, besides injuries to his head and face, had one leg broken in two places. Another with the scalp nearly torn off the skull. It is indeed singular that any one could escape death when the spot was inspected, for there were left remaining in the river, under the bridge where the carriages fell, several upright beams, which had been used as supporters for the scaffolding in constructing that division of the bridge. It is, however, very remarkable, that, nearly all the men

REPORT — CHESTER AND HOLYHEAD RAILWAY.

APPENDIX — SHEWING THE ORDER OF THE TRAIN AND  
POSITION OF THE PASSENGERS IN THE TRAIN.



By E. S. Smith, Esq., M.P.

No 584.

Ordered by The House of Commons to be Printed 30<sup>th</sup> June 1847

Henry Bousfield, Printer.

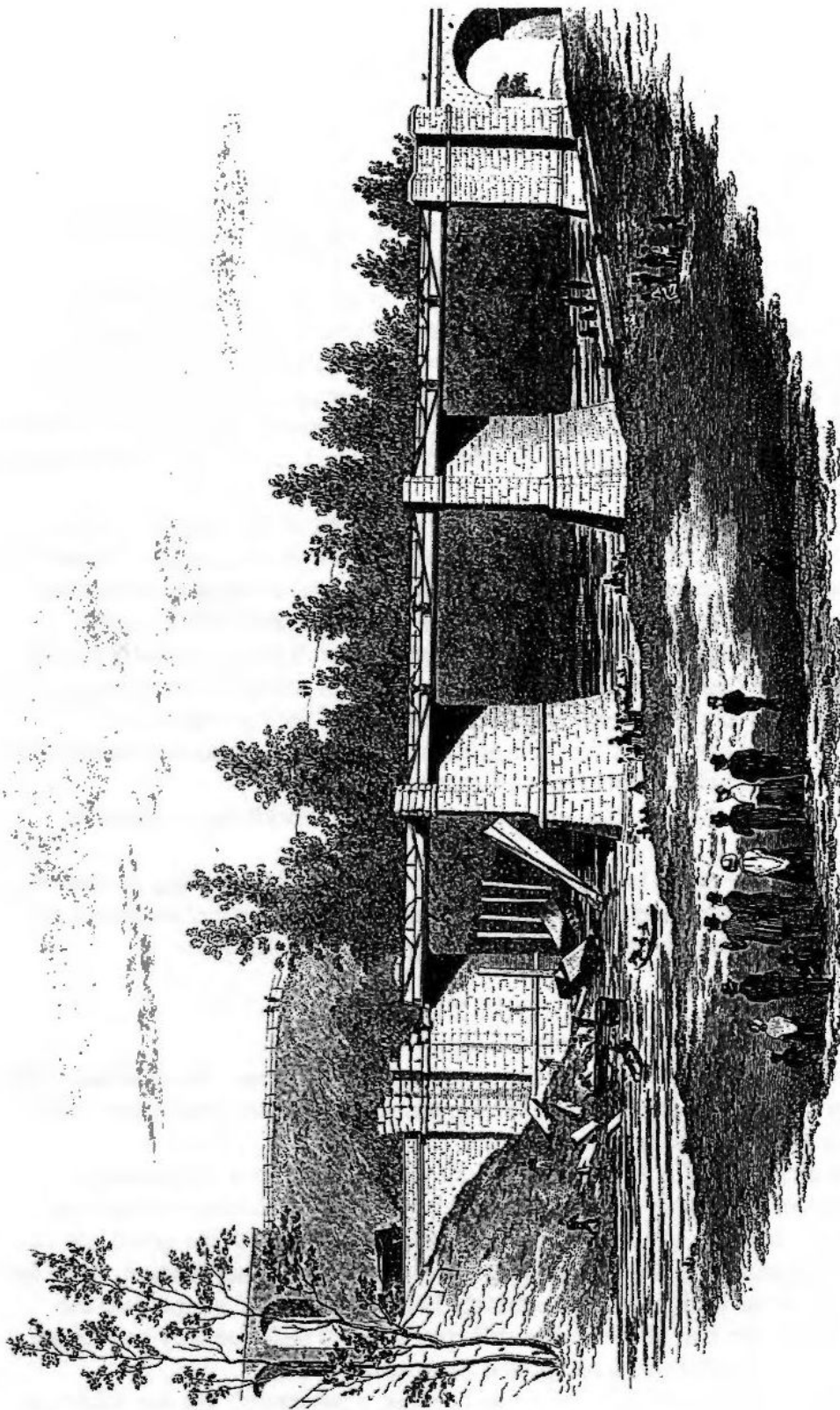
Extract from the official report, showing the occupancy of the vehicles [note 1].

have received their injuries in the head, while nearly all the females have been injured in the body and limbs.

When the accident happened, Mr Grote and Mr Tomkinson were in the front compartment of the first-class carriage, which happened to be next to the engine. This carriage was very nearly over the bridge; it did not fall into the river, but upon the bank. Dreadful as was the crash with which the carriage struck, both Mr Grote and Mr Tomkinson felt that they had received no serious injury. A young lady, Miss Maria Worthington, who was riding in the next compartment, also escaped without any injury, except a slight abrasion on one finger. Mr Proud, a traffic clerk of the London and North Western Railway, recovered himself almost immediately; he found himself on the bank, and did not know how he had been extricated from the smashed carriage. He escaped with a number of slight bruises, and a deep cut on the forehead.

We sought and obtained from an eye witness the following particulars, relating to the actual fall. He stated that he was standing on the plantation shore a little to the south of the bridge. He had been observing the train before it reached the river. The engine and carriages had just cleared the last river pier, when the middle of the train gave way, and those carriages forming the centre of the train descended first, with a tremendous crash, attended with such sounds as he could not describe. That only a quarter of an hour previous to the fall, there had been standing partly on, and drawn over that portion of the bridge broken, no less than twelve waggons of shingle stone, each waggon and its load weighing three tons; the engine and tender 18 tons; together with fifteen labourers spreading the said stone upon the wooden planks between the rails. This is corroborated by several witnesses; and is a singular fact that so many times a heavier weight actually stopping on the part broken, did not then break it down. We trust the inquiry into the cause by more than one scientific man will throw some light upon this subject, as bridges on the same principle now exist on various railways - one, we believe, the first of the kind, on the Newcastle and Darlington Line, one of the oldest in the kingdom - and we know that they are intended to be extensively used on other lines now in progress of construction. On the South Junction and Altrincham Railway, for instance, several of these bridges are about to be erected: one over London road, another over Knott Mill, and a third, which is partly laid over the Bridgewater Viaduct, at Knott Mill. So important it is deemed to ascertain the cause of the accident at Chester, that several gentlemen connected with the South Junction and Altrincham and other railways, proceeded to the spot to examine the bridge, the beam, &c. Amongst others, we may name Mr Henry Hen[.....*illegible*], resident engineer of the South Junction Railway (Mr Baker being the engineer in chief), Mr Patrick, agent of Mr D.Bellhouse, contractor for the works on that line, and Mr Ellis, the resident engineer of the branch from the Manchester and Birmingham line at Stockport to Ashton, and also for the Macclesfield tunnel on the Macclesfield branch.

In examining the broken girder, we found that it was the one abutting upon the river pier, broken in a solid part of the metal, and not in the joint. We found that the bearing of this long united girder of three pieces, spanning, we believe 100 feet, had upon the land pier only between six and seven feet; and that out of this length the coping stones projected over about one foot eight inches. We observed that the stone work on the top of the land pier exhibited unequivocal signs how violent had been the wrench; for huge stones were displaced for nearly 21 feet in length in the masonry. We do not ourselves give an opinion, but common mechanics assert that the want of more



# THE CHESTER & HOLYHEAD RAILWAY BRIDGE ACCIDENT,

CHESTER MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> 1847.

*Four persons killed; and unknown injured.*

*(1) A field road viaduct crossing the Railway on the Saliney side. — (2) The Tender where left. — (3) The broken sill of the Bridge. — (4) The end of the tender resting against the pier. — (5) The viaduct stretching across the River.*

Printed by J. B. G. at the Chester Press, Chester.

*A contemporary engraving of the accident scene — the fifth death had not yet occurred in the Infirmary*



ample bearing as a counterpoise to the vibratory motion (as seen in the Menai suspension) is the cause of the accident.

We cannot omit recording the activity and useful services rendered by the military, under the command of Major Eyles, Major Robe, and Brigade-major Gordon; Mr. Hill and the police under his direction; and many of our most respectable class of citizens.

Dr. Phillips Jones, the mayor of Chester, was not only on the spot, giving directions with reference to the removal of the sufferers, but he subsequently repaired to the Infirmary and remained almost the whole of the night with the patients, giving his valuable aid as a medical man, wherever he could be most useful. Indeed the zeal, attention, and assiduity manifested by all the first medical men in the city, was the subject of grateful comment throughout the city on Tuesday. The principal officers of the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company were on the spot very shortly after the accident; Mr. Robert Roy, the Secretary; Mr. Robertson, resident engineer, and others. The resident engineer of the Chester and Holyhead line, Mr. Lee, was also upon the spot shortly after the accident.

The following resolution was passed:- "At a meeting of the Directors of the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company, held at the Offices, on Tuesday - Resolved, that the Secretary be requested to write to the Governors of the Infirmary, expressing the thanks of this Board, for the very great attention paid to the sufferers from the unfortunate accident of last night; and assuring them that the Board will gladly pay all expences incurred and that may be considered necessary, for affording every comfort to the patients. That they also beg to express the deep sense of their gratitude to the Medical Officers of the institution, for their prompt and effectual assistance rendered by them on this painful occasion.- Robert Roy, Secretary."

Before 8 o'clock three bodies were deposited in the Workhouse to await the Coroner's inquest.

At the same hour at the Infirmary, the following persons (excepting as otherwise stated), were comfortably placed in bed, receiving all the care and attention which the whole medical skill of Chester and sympathy could possibly administer:-

#### SEVERELY INJURED

Mrs. Aveson, near Wrexham, internal injury.

Mr. Towne, of Wrexham, who was a passenger to that place. He was conveyed to the Infirmary in a state of insensibility, having sustained a severe concussion of the brain, and being also very much bruised.

Mr. Macgregor, of Chester, aged about 20 years. This young gentleman is a pupil in the office of Mr. Henry Robertson, resident engineer of the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway Company. At the time of the accident, he was with the guard and two others upon the luggage van. He was looking out towards the Saltney Station, when he saw the declining of the bridge, and immediately he sprang out, and alighted on the other line of rails, on the half of the bridge still standing, but unfortunately he pitched upon his head, and the result was a compound fracture of the skull.

Mr. Isaac Jones, of Wrexham, tailor and draper, a passenger. He was taken up very much injured, having sustained a severe contusion about the head.

John Jones, fractured leg, and contusions of head and face.

Elizabeth Jones, his wife, dislocation of the hip, fractured thigh and otherwise bruised.



Ann Evans, servant in family of Capt. Hopkins, who resides near Llangollen. She was severely injured by the fall of a stone upon her. Her thigh is fractured, the collar bone is also said to be fractured, and she has likewise suffered many internal injuries. Her master being in Chester, paid great attention to her case.

Elizabeth Roberts, a married woman, from Wales, apparently a person in humble circumstances. When taken up she was severely bruised, but had also sustained a severe concussion of the brain, and continues in a state of insensibility, not having yet spoken.

The whole of these patients, as well as others less severely injured, passed an exceedingly favourable night, much more so than even the surgeon himself could have anticipated.

#### SLIGHTLY INJURED

Mr. John Bruce Ford, of Manchester. He was much shaken, and otherwise hurt, having received a cut on the head and other slight injuries; but he was so far recovered on Monday night, as to be able to sit up in bed and dictate a letter to some of his family or friends in Manchester. He is doing well.

Mr. David Evans, of Llangollen, a passenger, face cut and thigh fractured.

Mrs. Evans, his wife, received a number of bruises, but none of them of a serious character. They were returning home via Wrexham.

John Stevens, a boy, son of one of the station keepers on the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, and himself employed on the line. He was returning home. He was only slightly contused, though at first concussion of the brain was apprehended.

Miss Towne, of Wrexham, shaken, but very slightly hurt. She remains with her brother, who is still very ill.

Miss Maria Worthington, a passenger in the centre compartment of the first-class carriage, suffered only very slightly, chiefly from the shock occasioned by the fall, and she was able, shortly afterwards, to walk to her friends in Chester.

Amongst others named as escaping with little or no injury was Mr. Grote, of Liverpool, who was in the first compartment of the first-class carriage, with Mr. Tomkinson, at the time of the accident; and though the crash and shock of the fall for a time shook these gentlemen considerably, Mr. Grote received no injury, and was able to return to Liverpool.

Mr. Proud, a traffic-clerk, in the employ of the North Western Railway Company, at present residing in Chester, was slightly wounded.

---Walmsley, Esq. of Gardden Lodge, Ruabon, a passenger, was slightly wounded.

Mr. Tomkinson, merchant, of Liverpool, a passenger, slightly hurt. After having his injuries looked to, and his arm placed in a sling, he took tea in Chester, and proceeded to Liverpool the same evening.

Mr. Warburton, tailor, of Chester, a passenger, was bruised, but not seriously, and after having his hurts looked to at the Infirmary, he went home, and is convalescing.

Mr. Wm. E.W. Wynne, Esq. of Peniarth, Merionethshire, a passenger, slightly hurt. He proceeded to Oswestry, in a post-chaise, the same night.

#### KILLED

GEORGE ROBERTS, a fine handsome man, about 30 years of age, the guard of the train. He was precipitated from his place on the roof of the carriage to the bank of the

river, amidst the falling ruins, being very much crushed. He died on his way to the Infirmary. He left a widow and a family of children.

THOMAS ANDERSON, also about 30 years of age, the stoker. He was not married. He was thrown off the tender upon the other rails, and killed by the screw-jack falling upon him.

Mr. JOHN MATTHEWS, of Llangollen, a passenger to Wrexham or Ruabon, in the second-class carriage. He was formerly driver of a mail coach on the Bala road; and lately in business as a coach proprietor. He has left a widow and eight children. The unfortunate man had £30 in his pocket; & a gold watch. This amount was taken charge of by Mr. Hill, superintendent of the police. [Some journals have erroneously stated the sum was £150.] - To the disgrace of our species be it recorded that, some unknown miscreant, under such trying circumstances, actually snatched at Mr. Matthew's gold watch; but he was observed and prevented by Richard Bellis, a horse tender in Mr. Bett's employ, who was supporting and bearing the body up the bank at the time. The fellow immediately made off.

CHARLES NEVITT, of Chester, the driver of a coach or omnibus, and a passenger by the train to Wrexham. He was about fifty years of age, and has left a widow and several children. [His name is given as 'Nebbett' in the diagram from the Report, reproduced on page 15].

#### TUESDAY [25 May 1847]

Great efforts up to the evening of this day had been made to raise the sunken carriage, but without avail. This was very important, because there existed some reasonable fear that more bodies might be found therein; but no other corpse was found during the day, nor in any part of the river. The company's men were a long time employed in collecting together and removing the bodies of carriages and other obstructive materials from the line and the river.

Mr. Hill, with several assistants, were for a considerable time employed in dragging the river; as it was supposed other individuals might have been thrown out of the carriages into the stream. However no bodies were brought up.

#### THE INQUEST

Immediately after half-past one o'clock in the afternoon, the inquest on the bodies of John Matthews, Charles Nevitt, and Thomas Anderson, commenced at the Workhouse, where the bodies were lying, before John Hostage, Esq. Coroner. The following gentlemen were sworn on the jury:-

Sir E.S. Walker, Knt. foreman; Mr. John Smith, draper; Mr. A. M'Leilan, mercer; Mr. George M'Leilan, mercer; Mr. Edward Boden, chemist; Mr Samuel Gardner, upholsterer; Mr. John Grindley, druggist; Mr. John Dutton, wine-merchant; Mr. Robert Jones, tobacconist; Mr. Booth, tanner; Mr. W. Seller, brewer; Mr. Samuel Davies, chemist; Mr. William Edwards, baker. There were also present, the Mayor, (Dr. P. Jones), Mr. W.H. Brown, Mr. Geo. Folliott, Mr. Geo. Harrison, Mr. H. Kelsall, Mr. Roy, Mr. Munt, Mr. Lea, &c. &c.

The CORONER, after swearing the jury, intimated that in consequence of several parties, whose evidence upon this enquiry was of the highest importance, residing at a distance, he did not intend examining any witnesses that day. He proposed that the jury should view the three bodies then and there lying dead, after which they should proceed to the Infirmary, where another body lay which they should also warrant for their interment. He then proposed to adjourn the inquest to any other day which

would suit their convenience, providing it did not cause any unnecessary delay. If the jury acquiesced in this arrangement, they would fix the day for proceeding with the enquiry, and he would issue summonses accordingly.

Mr. KELSALL here rose and informed the Coroner, that he was instructed, on behalf of the Chester and Shrewsbury Railway Company, to state that they ready to afford every facility within their power, through the medium of their officers, to the object of the enquiry.

Mr. MUNT, on behalf of the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company, made an offer to the same effect.

The CORONER said that there were several officers whose attendance he should require, and perhaps Mr. Munt would say whether it would be necessary to summon them.

Mr. MUNT – I presume you will take the usual course. But whom will you require?

The CORONER said he should require Mr. Stephenson, engineer, Mr. Betts, the contractor, and Mr. Lee, the resident engineer.

Mr. MUNT had no doubt all those gentlemen would attend voluntarily. Mr. Stephenson had gone into Wales, and he expected him to return on Thursday.

The CORONER said he might also ask the Jury whether or not they thought it would be necessary to have a civil engineer to survey the bridge. For his own part he should strongly advise that course; and that he should be an impartial man, entirely unconnected with any railway. Neither did he think that they ought to trust to a Government survey, especially as the bridge had been passed by General Pasley.

Sir EDWARD WALKER said they ought to have a surveyor by all means; and the Jury generally expressed themselves of the same opinion.

Mr MUNT intimated that general Pasley, who reported on the bridge, had resigned; and that if a Government Surveyor came down, it would most likely be Captain Cuddington.

The CORONER suggested that Mr. Yarrow, who was an able engineer, and totally unconnected with any of the Railway Companies, should be appointed to survey the bridge.

The Jury accordingly appointed Mr. Yarrow (who was present) to make a survey, with a view of ascertaining the cause of the accident. It was arranged that the inquiry should commence on Friday morning next at the Exchange. The Jury then proceeded to the Infirmary to view the body of the guard, George Roberts, having previously visited the place where the accident occurred, and made their own observations thereon.

Coffins were taken to the Workhouse, by the respective friends of the deceased, and the bodies borne away.

We understand that the Holyhead Company's authorised agents offered to inter the dead in a respectable manner, or to allow £10 for each funeral to each deceased's relatives.

#### WEDNESDAY [26 May 1847]

At twelve o'clock today, the body of the submerged carriage, was recovered from the water, and we are glad to report that no person was found therein.

Mr. Isaac Jones, of Wrexham, died in the Infirmary this day, at two o'clock in the afternoon. He has left a widow and four small children to deplore their loss.

Mr. Jones, the House Surgeon, reported that all the other cases, excepting one, were doing much better than the most sanguine could have anticipated.

Between seven and nine o'clock this evening, two several trains, one consisting of twenty-four, and the other of sixteen waggons, loaded with stone, iron, and merchandise, were passed over the remaining up-line of rails on the bridge. This was done in order to test the certainty, whether or not that portion had been weakened, or sustained any injury by the late accident. These loads however cleared the bridge, without the least appearance of failure. Two engines were employed for the purpose; one on the Saltney side, the other on the Chester side: so that no loss of human life was hazarded. Each engine advanced its load to the bridge approach; the engine power was then suspended and the acquired velocity of the waggons was more than sufficient for the urging them over the bridge.

#### THURSDAY [27 May 1847] FUNERALS OF THE KILLED

On Thursday the remains of Roberts the guard, and Anderson the stoker were interred in St. Werburgh's burial ground. The funerals were attended by the Directors of the Chester and Shrewsbury Company; by H. Kelsall, Esq., solicitor; Mr. Roy, secretary; and Mr. Truss, manager of the coach department. Mr. Nevitt, the coach and omnibus driver, was interred in the afternoon. A large concourse of spectators assembled to witness the obsequies. A great number joined in the processions. The corpse of Mr. Matthews was, this morning, conveyed in a hearse for interment at Llangollen.

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The above are the whole of the facts we could gather up to the time of our going to press. The inquest, which will be held this day, in the Exchange, will no doubt be conducted with that impartiality and rigid scrutiny which the case so imperatively demands. We perceive that scientific men will be examined, as well as the responsible authorities connected with the construction of the railway bridge. We have therefore no doubt that ample justice will be done to the public; especially so, seeing a jury composed of gentlemen whose high standing in society is a certain guarantee for the most honest and upright inquiry.

Respecting the above occurrence the most exaggerated reports gained credence, even among the citizens, so contiguous to the scene originating their fabrication. For instance, it was circulated that a baby was taken out of one of the carriages, and that it had been landed in a boat, and taken home; that the sunken carriage had been got up on Tuesday forenoon, having five corpses, which had been conveyed to the Workhouse, previous to interment. These and many other stories which we could enumerate proved false; which reminds us how cautious people should be in circulating such; particularly when they might disturb the peace of numerous families.

We perceive that the 'Manchester Guardian' estimates the loss to the companies at £4,000; supposing that, or more, to be required for the restoration of the present structure. But will the constituted authorities be satisfied with that? Is there not some latent cause in the principle of the erection, that will operate against its adoption? Circumstances point to this conclusion. We know that all the girders at the bridge have been amply tested. What reliance can then be placed upon the work ever so well proved before its destined use? Otherwise how happens it, that one of the bridge girders, a

short time ago, after being so tested, had to be replaced, in consequence of symptoms of defect being manifested. And the present broken one, has it not been so tried; and what was the result? We leave to more competent authorities to say, whether electricity, or expansion and contraction of the mixed metals, has exerted an unascertained power over structures of such magnitude as the one under review?

Apprehensions are seriously entertained that other persons are lost; for at the Infirmary applications for the following missing persons have been made by their friends from different parts, respectively named:- Foden, Salary, Greenwood, Truss, Hammel, Thomas Williams, and John Williams.

[*"Chester Chronicle"*, Friday 28 May 1847]

*To be continued with reports from the newspaper dated 4 June 1847 ....*

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## Editor's page

I have just come across an obituary for well-known trader Norman Wisenden of Greenfield near Saddleworth. He died on 10 November 2007, and many modellers in the North West will remember him as a regular exhibition stand holder, before he retired a few years back. He was 69 years old.

Another recent death: Keith Hatton, of the Liverpool firm of that name, is also reported to have died.

### Recent books:

*British carriage & wagon builders & repairers, 1830-2006*, by Chris Sambrook. Lightmoor Press, 2007. ISBN 1 89988927 3. £24.99.

*Ness Colliery*, by Anthony Annakin-Smith, part 3. *In Wirral Champion Journal*, vol.14 no.2 (Summer 2008); *and* part 4, *in* vol.14 no.3 (Autumn 2008). Wirral Champion Journal, South Hill Grove, Oxtun CH43 5SH. £2.50 each.

*Gas by rail, part 1: Early chlorine tanks*, by Peter Fidczuk. *In Railway archive*, no.9, March 2005. Lightmoor Press, 2005.

*Gas by rail, part 2: Imperial Chemical Industries*, by Peter Fidczuk. *In Railway archive*, no.11, 2005. Lightmoor Press, 2005.

*Gas by rail, part 3: Murgatroyd's*, by Peter Fidczuk. *In Railway archive*, no.15, March 2007. Lightmoor Press, 2007.

*Gas by rail, part 4: Associated Octel and Tank Rentals*, by Peter Fidczuk. *In Railway archive*, no.16, July 2007. Lightmoor Press, 2007. [Back numbers of this excellent series are currently still available from the Lightmoor Press at £7.50 each].

*The reconstruction of Euston Station*, by Peter J.Wilde. H.M.R.S., 2008. ISBN 978 0 902385 26 9. £7.99.

*Anglesey railways*, by Geraint I.L.Jones. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch (Llanrwst), 2005. ISBN 1 84527 006 1. £6.50.

*Disaster on the Dee: Robert Stephenson's nemesis of 1847*, by Peter R.Lewis. Tempus, 2007. ISBN 0 7524 4266 x. £17.99.

*Modern locomotives illustrated, no.173: the Class 59s.* M.L.I. (Ian Allan), 2008. £3.95.

As an addendum to Peter Lawson's and Phil Hindley's communications ("BMRJ" nos. 15, and 17 – this issue), I remembered that I had a photograph of another **Private Owner brake van** somewhere in my collection of P.O. wagons. Further investigation



revealed four contact print photographs (three of them printed here) taken on 10 April 1961, at Bromborough Dock on Lever Brothers Port Sunlight Railway, by an unknown photographer. The subject is no.1310, an ex-Midland Railway six-wheel brake van, built at Derby in 1904 as their no.1060. It was bought from the L.M.S. in the late 1940s and sold (probably for scrap) in 1967.

Other photographs from the late Jim Peden's collection show it in use in the later 1960s as a mess van, with elongated stove chimney.

*The railways of Port Sunlight and Bromborough Port*, by M.D.Lister, Oakwood Press, 1980, is the main reference source.





Most of us spend some of our pennies on modelling-related items, and many of these purchases are of potential interest to other Group members – even if only to say “don’t touch this with a barge-pole!” So, a **plea for contributions** (as brief as you like) on the subjects of new models, kits, tools, techniques, methods, books or whatever. All contributions gratefully received (see note on page 2).

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### Letters to the Editor (continued from page 4)

(E-mail from **Brian Baker** of Poynton ...) “... Thank you for giving our modest little DVD effort [on the *West Cork railways* (“BMRJ No.16”)] such excellent coverage. You have set a record, in that you are the first publication to review the DVD!! (For the sake of the Railway Children charity I do hope not the last). Sales are going along quite nicely but mostly by word of mouth. Thank you again, it has given me a great boost to see an independent appraisal. Every good wish, Brian Baker.”

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(E-mail from **Don Rowland** of Whitchurch ...) “Many thanks for sending the copy of the Journal. I think you should know though that the writer of the caption at the head of page 25 has fallen into a trap the LMS laid especially for enthusiasts. (I know of at least one retired station master who was caught as well). The General Appendix, p44, states:- ‘Shunting engines working exclusively in station yards and sidings, Must, while in those sidings, carry one red head light and one red tail light’. This was in addition to normal (white) lights front and rear. It was principally so that in the hours of darkness shunters would know the engine was likely to move in either direction. In the daylight it was assumed there was little chance of mistaking 47680 as an express engine. Don.”



*[Editor's note: by coincidence, an article entitled "Pilot duties" by Steve Banks (an old acquaintance and expert on coaching stock), appeared in the October 2008 issue of 'Model Rail'; a brief excerpt from the article is given below:*

"Identification: The lamp code is key here and before Nationalisation the rules (based on RCH) were ambiguous by only referring to a red light fore and aft, which is believed to have meant that one of the lights at each end had to be red, the number of lights and their position being left open to interpretation. The BR Rule Book was more explicit and embodied the most widespread practice; it is worth quoting in full (Rule 123):

**Rules 123-12**

**123. Engines employed exclusively in shunting** <sup>Shunting engines.</sup>  
**at stations and yards must, after sunset or during fog or falling snow, carry one red and one white light, both at the front and rear, one over each buffer.**

During daylight, the appearance was the same as the Express Passenger code which has led to some wonderful photographic mis-captions over the years ...."

By the early 1970s, the wording was still similar:

**12.2 Lights on shunting locomotives**

**Locomotives employed exclusively for shunting at stations or yards will, by day and night, exhibit one red light and one white light at both ends of the locomotive, one over each buffer.**

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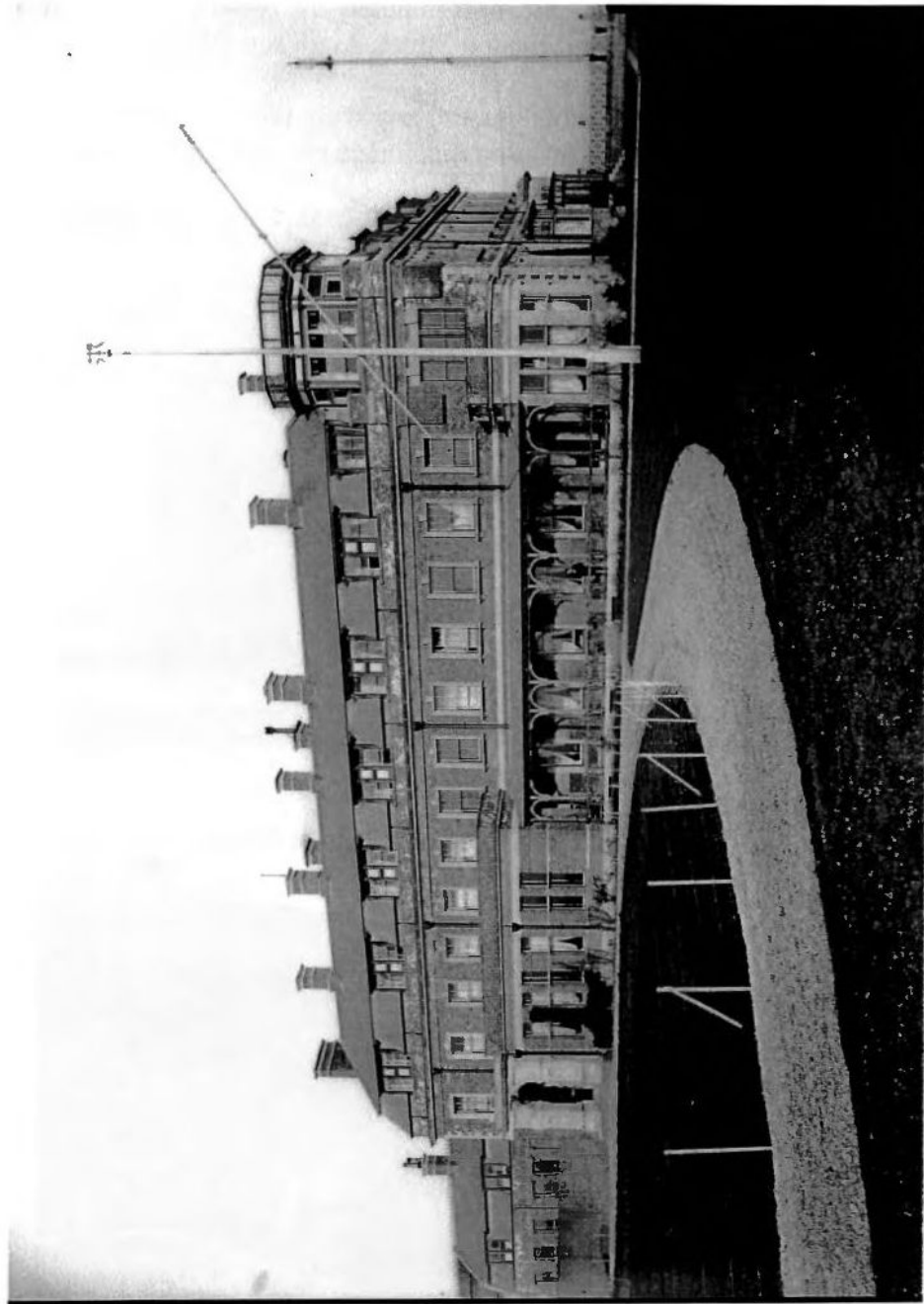
(E-mail from **Philip Hindley** of Old Colwyn ...) "David, I was interested to see the photo of locomotives in Crewe Works paint shop yard on page 27 of BMRJ No.16, particularly with regard to the third locomotive, identified only as "etc", at the rear of the ex LNWR saddle tank and coal tank. I think this would be the ex Ince Forge works shunter, a former tram engine built by Beyer Peacock in 1886, which was stored at Crewe Works from 1954 until the late 1960s.

This locomotive was built with three others in 1886, numbered 83-86, for the Manchester, Bury, Rochdale and Oldham Steam Tramways Co., which became the Bury, Rochdale & Oldham Tramways Co. in 1888. This company operated some 30 miles of steam tramway, of which 9½ miles were of standard gauge and the remainder 3'-6" gauge. The locomotives ran on the Oldham Borough lines until they were electrified in 1904. In 1905 three of the four locomotives were sold to the Ince Forge Co. of Wigan where they were named ANT, BEE and BUG, but by the 1930s only one remained, used as the works shunter. Alterations carried out to the locomotive since its former tramway days included removal of the rooftop condenser and the skirt enclosing the wheels, and the provision of an additional upper frame to take the thrust of the buffers. It was replaced by a secondhand diesel locomotive acquired in 1953, and last worked in February 1954. After withdrawal it was presented to the British Transport Commission and left Ince Forge on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1954 for storage at Crewe Works. About 1967 it was loaned to the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, and subsequently displayed at the Dinting Railway Centre. After the closure of Dinting it was stored in Sheffield for a number of years but is currently reported to be at the Crich Tramway Museum in a dismantled condition. Regards, Philip."

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## **Greenore Hotel update no.3**

**by David Goodwin**



In a previous “Greenore update” (“BMRJ” no.14, March 2008) I mentioned that I planned to visit the National Photographic Archive – part of the National Library of Ireland – on my next visit to Dublin, to look at whatever other photographs of Greenore that were in their collections. There turned out to be a number that I had not previously seen, and five of them seemed of interest, and enlargements were ordered. The image

above was one. It shows the Hotel after enlargement, probably soon after 1900, and is another item from the Lawrence Collection (IMP4231).

On the same visit to Dublin, I managed to visit The Porter House to sample their Wrasslers Stout: it is still very nice! And on my last full day in the Republic, I actually managed a visit to Greenore, for a tour of the village, guided by the local expert on the Dundalk Newry & Greenore Railway, John Martin. A very interesting day, and a lot of film was used on railway related remains; unfortunately the Hotel itself was demolished a couple of years back, but Euston Street, Anglesey Terrace, the Co-op etc. are still visible.

Displayed on the wall of the Dock is this plaque, originally unveiled in 1873 by the Lord Lieutenant. It was only when I inserted this image into the text of this file, that



I noticed the peculiar spelling!

The influence of the L.N.W.R. is obvious even in the street names – and the main street



(Euston Street) is still quite recognisable from Victorian photographs.

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## **Beckenham Exhibition – the end of the first chapter in Mostyn’s story?**

**by Richard Oldfield**

In its current form “Mostyn” first hit the exhibition circuit at Macclesfield in April 2002 and, whilst the scenery, trackwork and stock have continued developing ever since, the overall shape of the layout has remained the same. The Beckenham exhibition (25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> October 2008) represented the last time (probably!!) that “Mostyn” will go out in her current shape as we hope that the first stage of the extension will be complete in time for our long journey north to Perth in June 2009. So how did we get on as the team headed ‘dahm sarf’ to close this part of the “Mostyn” story?

At the time of accepting the Beckenham invitation we understood that it was not half term at the school venue and that our set-up time would be massively curtailed to about five hours compared with the six-to-seven hours required normally. This gave us a massive incentive to prepare everything possible in advance so, instead of the customary last minute ‘headless chickens’ approach to packing the baseboards, stock boxes and tuff-crates, we opted for a more disciplined approach. At the same time we also implemented the decision to move from our traditional freight rakes to formations which more accurately reflected our current understanding of the North Wales Coast Trip workings. This meant a significant amount of re-boxing of stock and a decision to worry less about completely filling stock boxes and to focus more on keeping stock together in the order in which it now runs on the layout. An added complication was the 20 new items of stock which were making their debuts at Beckenham – 2 ex-LNER 4-wheel CCTs, 10 ex-iron-ore tipplers, 7 ex-LNER and BR-built 13T steel opens and, last but not least, the first new item of stock from the bench of Dave Millward – a BR diagram 1/271 grain hopper.

Everything went smoothly on the journey down to south-east London and we arrived at the venue to see a vast army of schoolchildren swarm out and around the van on their way home. School venues are not so common now, as leisure centres have become more popular with exhibition organisers but luckily we were situated handily for unloading (right by the grand piano in the corner of the assembly hall!) and the organisers ensured we could start setting-up before the hall had been properly cleared and marked out. I’m not quite sure what happened next but, all of a sudden, four and a half hours had elapsed, it was 8.30pm and “Mostyn” was fully erected, the stock was running reliably in its formations and the job was done. This is easily our best ever performance at any show. Good luck continued with the news that our hotel was only a couple of minutes walk from the venue, the rooms were comfortable, good food was on offer and Young’s Bitter was on tap in the bar.

Saturday started off with a continental breakfast at the hotel followed by rapid cleaning of the trackwork and then the public were upon us. Beckenham is what I would call a traditional show containing a right mixture of layouts from beginner to advanced, strung out along a maze of corridors and classrooms with the traders interspersed wherever they would fit. We thought the show had opened quietly but I think it was just the time it took for the early visitors to find our hall! All the new stock settled in nicely though a few long-time inhabitants of the rakes (a couple of Mark 1s and the Freightliners)

decided to play up but happily the problematic compensation units/wheelsets were rapidly rectified. With over 360 items of stock on parade now we have to anticipate some issues with stock that has given long faithful service but could really do with a trip to the maintenance shops.

It came as quite a shock to many of the team but 'last orders' means last orders in Beckenham so we were relatively rested and sober on Sunday morning and the whole team were at the venue on time. This is a refreshing change from normal practice – I anticipate casualties from the Saturday evening session and we have been known to start the Sunday morning schedule with at best a skeleton crew and some who, whilst present in body, do not appear to have re-connected brain and body from the previous night's festivities.

It was a pleasure to meet the author and wagon historian, David Larkin, at the Show. He seemed genuinely 'chuffed' to see so many of his photographs re-created in model form – I haven't counted exactly but I suspect that his wanderings around the BR network in the late 1970s have inspired at least 100 examples in our wagon fleet. He passed on more images at the show to keep us going.

The layout generally ran to a high standard – a good measure of this is our willingness to invite members of the public to see the operating area and fiddle yards. When things are not tip-top we tend to batten down the hatches and concentrate on the job in hand, and conversely, when we're 'in the groove' it's quite common to see three, four or five guests at the rear of the layout. We issued plenty of back-stage passes to visitors at Beckenham, including a Swedish tourist and his son, so you can tell that everything was in order.

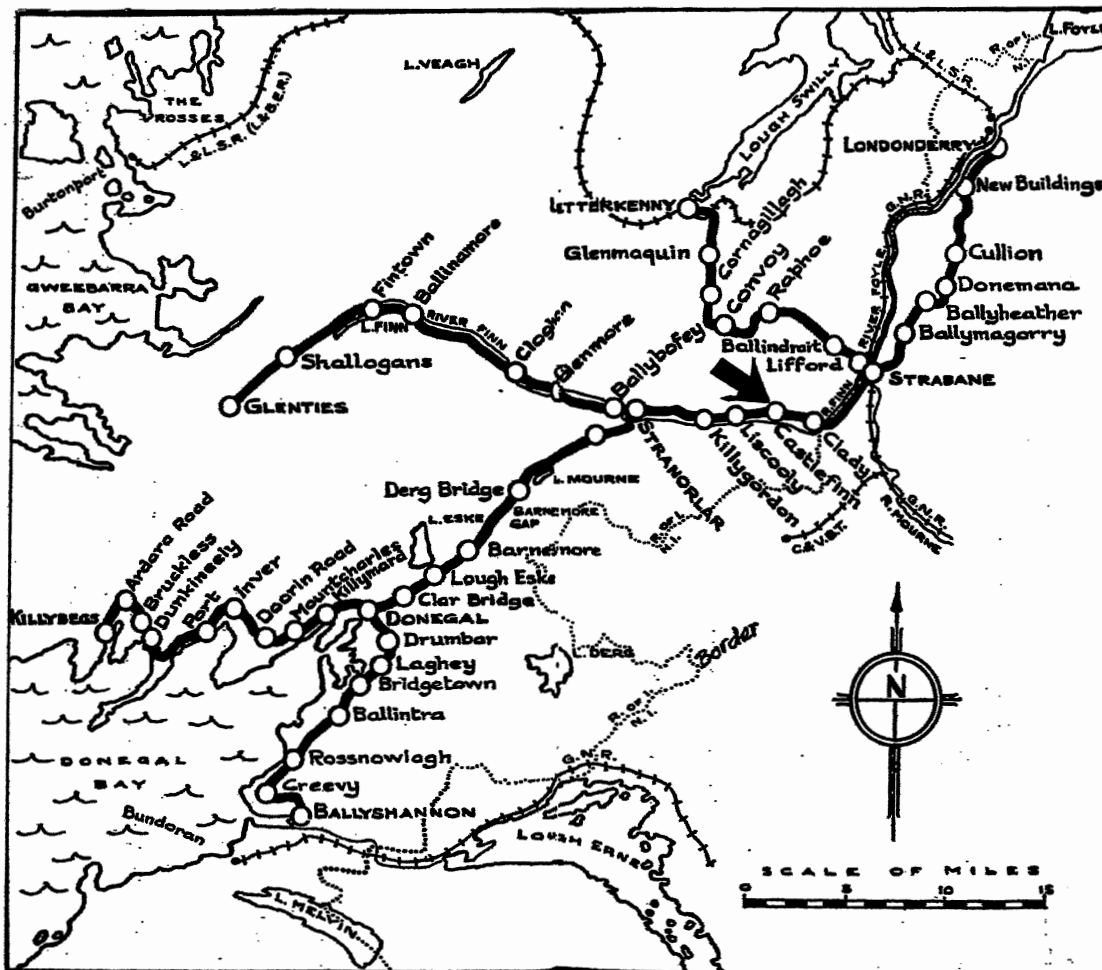
At the end of the exhibition we dismantled the layout quickly and were on our way northwards only 105 minutes after the doors closed. Traffic was calm and "Mostyn" was back in the clubrooms at a sensible time. All in all I would have to say that this was one of the most relaxing and stress-free exhibition weekends I have ever known – a fitting curtain call for the layout in this form.

Mostyn has never let us down so far so let's hope we can keep this up as we embark on the second chapter of the story .....

+++++

[Letters: here are a couple of e-mails that we received after the Beckenham exhibition ...] Hi to you all, Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed seeing "Mostyn" at the Beckenham show last weekend, it always inspires me every time I see it. It was also enjoyable to be able to get up close without the usual 3 deep crowd round it, maybe not so good for the host club though. Keep up the great work. Best wishes, Mark Burgess.

I have seen and heard "Mostyn" several times and have long been an admirer of the correct pace and SOUNDS!! I noticed that you use an MP3 player and speakers...something I fear that the sound decoders cannot emulate is the throaty bass roar of a diesel engine!! Is it a secret but are these files downloadable?? and the size of speakers ...is absolutely correct. I wish to do the same on my home layout...! Here's hoping... Philip Gardner



## Castlefin – Chester MRC

described by Simon Starr

County Donegal is a wild and beautiful county in the northwest of the Irish Republic, ironically further north than Northern Ireland. It has an area of 1865 square miles, just over twice that of Cheshire (population of Cheshire in 2001, 674,000), however only about 1/3 of the county is suitable for agriculture, the rest consisting of upland bogs, mountains and lakes. It is certainly not a land suited for mass population yet the county's population was, at its highest in 1841, 296,000. However the potato famine and mal-treatment from English landlords led to death and emigration over the years and even now the population is only about 140,000 and this is after recent rises, in particular of 33% in the period 1971 to 1981. Even today there are few towns with over 1000 people, most people living in small villages in the middle of nowhere! (some

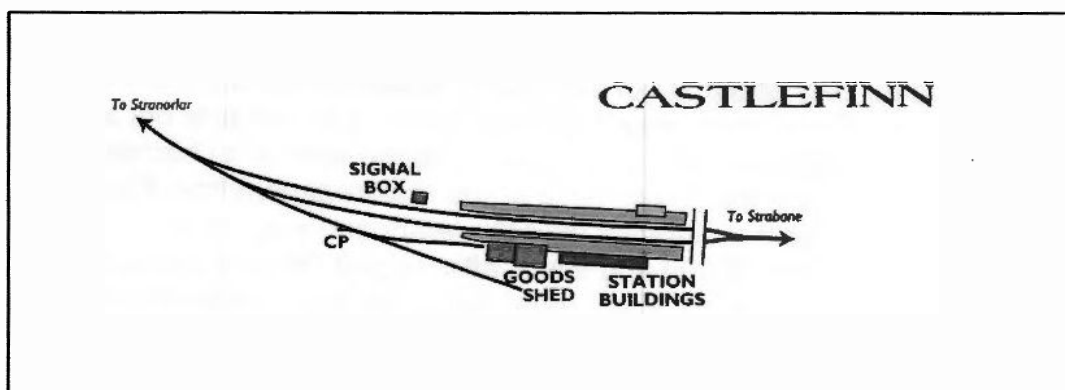


pictures of old Donegal can be seen at  
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal/oldphotos.htm> )



Castlefin (sometimes spelled 'Castlefinn') is a small market town in the comparatively lush Finn valley, just over the border into the Irish Republic. In 2006 it had a population of a mere 806!

It seems surprising then that with a declining population and few centres of any note that a railway was considered at all. In fact politics played a key role in developing them in such remote areas of Ireland. The railway history of the county dates back to a survey being done by enthusiastic local landowners in 1859 leading to the Finn Valley Railway Company being formed. The first sod was cut on September 9th 1861, near Strabane and despite a few 'snags' the railway opened on September 7th, 1863 to the Irish standard gauge (broad gauge) of 5ft 3in. The line ran from Strabane to Stranorlar, through the intermediate stations of Clady, Castlefin and Killygordon.





There were three trains each way per day, which in later years rose to five. However, things were far from healthy for the company which had to borrow stock to run the line and pay rent to the Irish North Western Railway. By 1872 the railway decided to purchase its own stock. Interest was also being expressed in an extension to Donegal town. This manifested itself in the West Donegal Railway Company which partially opened in 1882, though it was another seven years before the money was found to reach Donegal itself. Strangely the line was built to 3ft gauge from the outset. By 1892 branches ran off to Glenties and Killybegs (the largest fishing port on the west coast of Ireland – Dingle is second!) and agreement had been reached to amalgamate all lines into the Donegal Railway Company. The change of gauge was now considered a handicap and the Finn Valley section of the Donegal Railway was converted to narrow-gauge and opened to the public on Monday 16th July, 1894. To save money this was done by moving the rail farthest from the platform and re-spiking to the existing sleepers over a weekend! A new narrow gauge station was built at Strabane (which saved rental payments) and in 1900 the line was extended east to Londonderry and in 1905 south from Donegal Town to Ballyshannon. The line, although somewhat short of cash, despite much of the line being funded by grants, was now 124½ miles long.

The County Donegal Railway Joint Committee came about in 1906 as the railway became jointly owned by the Midland Railway Northern Counties Committee and the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) who were upset by the thought of the Midland having sole ownership. The 'committee' was made up of three representatives of each company. This wasn't the whole story as the line from Strabane to Derry still remained in sole ownership of the Midland Company! In case I haven't lost you yet, the CDRJC was not the only narrow gauge railway in Donegal. The Londonderry & Lough Swilly was the other 3ft gauge line. This would be fair enough until I add that that line was extended over to the fishing port of Burtonport on the West Coast by a line carrying the name the Letterkenny and Burtonport Extension railway, which was a separate company, the politics of which I won't go into. Out of all this emerged the largest passenger carrying narrow gauge system in the British Isles and arguably one of the finest. Note that throughout, there never was a 'County Donegal Railway' despite CDR or DR appearing in white on many wagon sides! This was more a shortened title to describe the lines together.

Although the politics of running the line are fascinating, as are the tales surrounding it, to keep matters short, the line was run on a shoestring throughout and is best described by the motto of manager Henry Forbes 'make do and mend'. However, one point that is important to emphasise was the line's reliance on the railcar from an early time. Forbes inherited a small six-seater railcar for use with the mails (during a coal strike it carried 'many more') and line inspection, which ran, at best, inconsistently. In 1926 he picked up two of the Derwent Valley railcars fairly cheaply (though he had to fight off Colonel Stephens for them) and within two years, six railcars were in operation. All these were petrol driven and it was not until 1931 that the first diesel engined ones arrived (7 & 8). The last railcars, 19 and 20, are 'preserved' in the Isle of Man.

*C.D.R. railcars no.18, and no.12, pictured on the Foyle Valley Railway in 1997 – typical of the type of articulated railcars used on the system.*



So why did we choose Castlefin to model? I think ours will be the third model of the station in relatively recent times. In terms of layout it is nothing special – a passing loop with two sidings – the whole being on a slight curve. Even the



architecture was pretty average. However, to coin a TV program it's about 'Location, Location, Location'! Being just over the border, Castlefin became a customs point, with a bonded warehouse. Photographs of the station show trains running either side of the loop, with wagons either side of locos, shunting going on and a plethora of strange train formations - it is this which attracts. Passenger trains entering the station from Strabane would stop at the near end of the platform, its clientele having to remove their cases and themselves to be searched for 'contraband' before re-boarding their train at the other end of the platform for onward travel. Smuggling was rife as selected items were cheaper on one side of the border compared to the other, let alone the more serious aspects of gun running. The temptation and challenge of illicitly transferring goods, especially during the second world war, was a bit too great to ignore! Even today, when holidaying in Ireland it is a good idea to take your own breakfast cereals with you when you go, but fill up the car with petrol before you come back! During railway days, the Strabane to Derry line was often run using steam engines (as opposed to railcars) as coal was that much cheaper in Derry (UK) – locos going there 'empty' and coming back overloaded!

Once the location for our next project was arrived at we had to decide how we were going to do it. Two 4½ ft boards would take the station and scenery, though we felt that we should incorporate a continuous run – something missing from "Dingle", though we always had ambitions there! We would need fiddle yard boards with the same length as the front, with circular joining boards. At present the scenic boards have been built but little track laid; the fiddle yard boards and track have been largely done and are in the process of being wired up. The

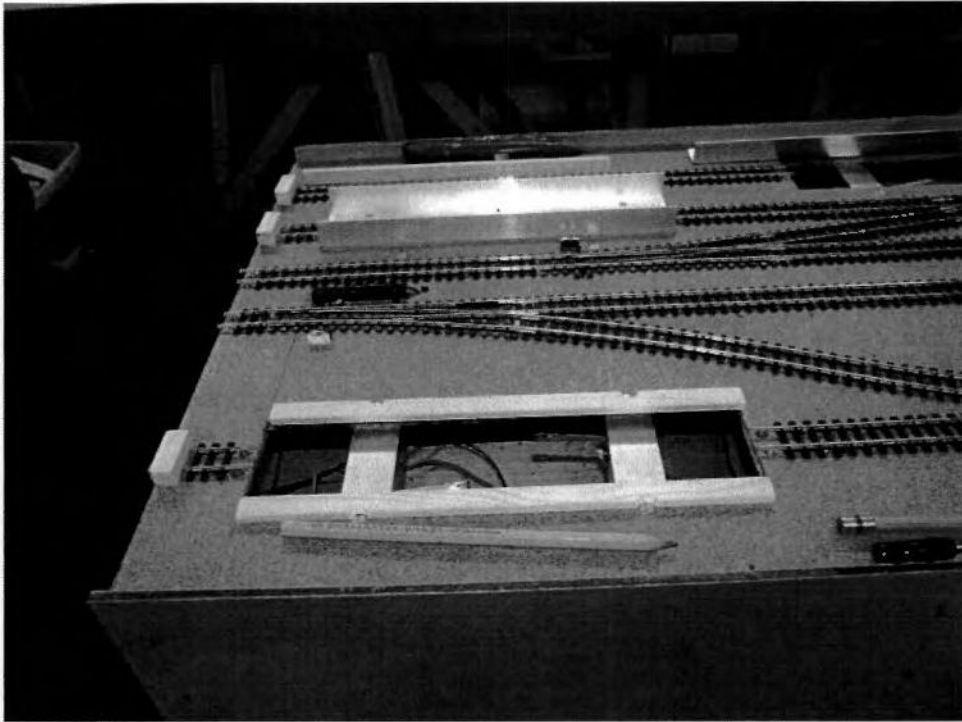
semicircular connecting pieces are still in the design stage. The joy of this system is that the two scenic boards can be changed and new ones built – a new layout – well yes, but only a small section would actually have to be built anew. Given our time



commitments – it has taken 5 years to get to this stage (!) we needed a way to speed up the process. The boards are constructed from ply in box sections – this has proved to be a lightweight but strong, reliable technique – used on

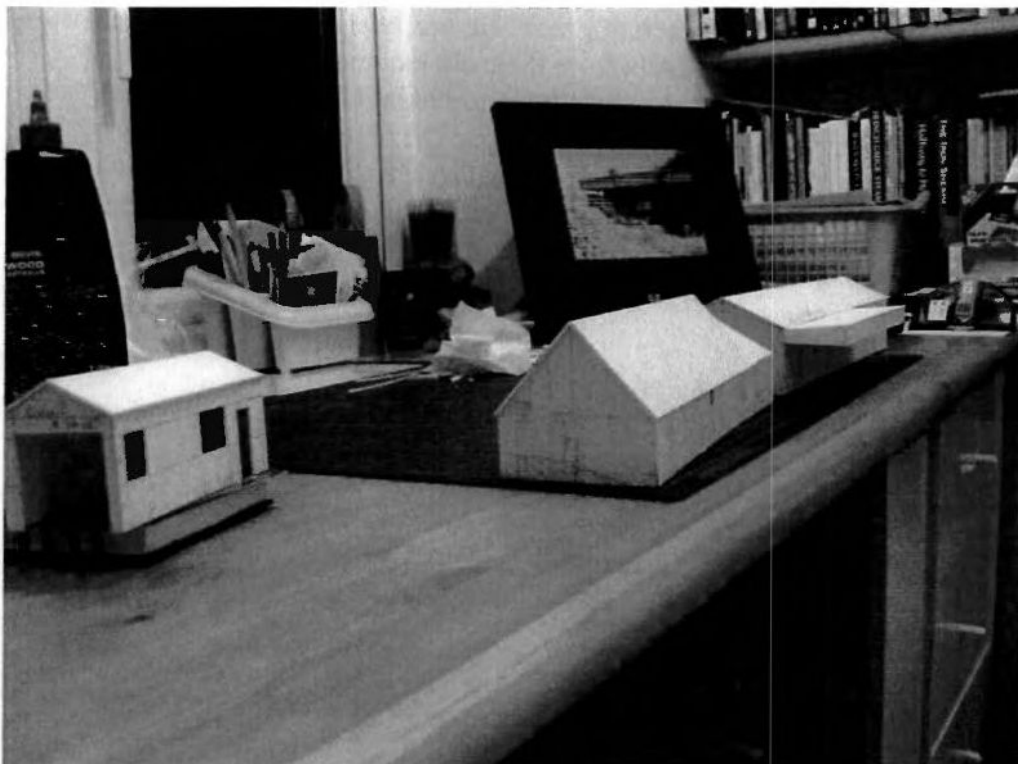
**"Dingle".** Legs are as usual integral to the boards. MDF or strictly speaking HDF has been used for the end pieces where patternmaker's dowels are used for locating the corresponding boards.

It was decided early on that we would use Peco code 75 track in the fiddle yard



and approach sections. Small cassettes with aluminium L strip will be being used to help turn locos – rather like those on "Dingle" – but the carriage and wagon stock shouldn't

need turning. On the scenic boards we will use Peco code 60 flat bottomed steel rail on plywood sleepers – some of the points have already been built – we only need four (rather than the seven for "Dingle"). Tortoise point motors will be used for the front boards, though standard Peco ones are being wired in to the fiddle yard. Our Tortoise motors on "Dingle" have stood the test of time and intensive use at exhibitions so we are quite happy with those, however ..... The big change for us is that we intend to go DCC. Hopefully the Tortoises will last, though some converters are apparently required for DCC use. DCC and kit built brass locomotives with live chassis will be an interesting adventure and I await the potential fireworks with some trepidation – and that amongst the operators! The other potential problem may well be the fitting of the decoders – there isn't a lot of room for manoeuvre under many of the loco bodies. If it works, the likely improvements to operating will be huge and the increased versatility a boon to running realistically. If all goes well we may look at "Dingle" and retrospectively change that as well. "Dingle" could really do with DCC and the improved operation could lift it from a good layout to a brilliant one! Time will truly tell.



The main structures for the station have been sized and mock ups built. Three members of the group extended their tour of

Ireland in 2005 (when we took "Dingle" over to Dingle) and visited Dromod (Cavan & Leitrim), Donegal Town and Castlefin - the latter to measure up for the model with this in mind. Although there were a few measurements missing, the critical ones were taken and we have what we believe to be reasonably accurate buildings – amazingly they fit without going over a baseboard join! The stock will be taken from what we have at the moment and (apart from the CDR stuff) will be rotated on a day to day basis – Saturday's running would be different to Sunday's. The fiddle yard is relatively small so this will be essential. For updates on what we are doing and for more information about Castlefin Station, the following websites may be of interest;  
<http://www.chestermodelrailwayclub.com/castlefinn.htm>  
<http://www.finnvalley.ie/people/maryagneselliott/railway.html> Ms Elliott's father was a station master at the station and she currently owns the station building  
<http://www.cdrri.com/CDRRLHome.htm> the Donegal Town visitors centre.

## **EATON CHURCH BELL - Tony Robinson.**

If perchance you should find yourself passing through the delightfully picturesque village of Eaton, situated outside the much larger and well known metropolis of Tarporley in deepest Cheshire then spare time for a glance up at the bell in the diminutive tower atop of the small church there.

It was acquired and placed there by one of the many clergymen interested in railways, the one-time Curate of St Thomas's Church at Eaton. He had heard that the Canadian Pacific Railway had given a number of bells from their old locomotives to various churches in Canada and thinking he would like a locomotive bell for St. Thomas's he wrote to the C.P.R. in 1956 asking for one. In due course the bell arrived but some of the parishioners objected to its use in a place of worship on the grounds that it had had a period of secular service but the Chester Consistory Court granted permission for its installation.

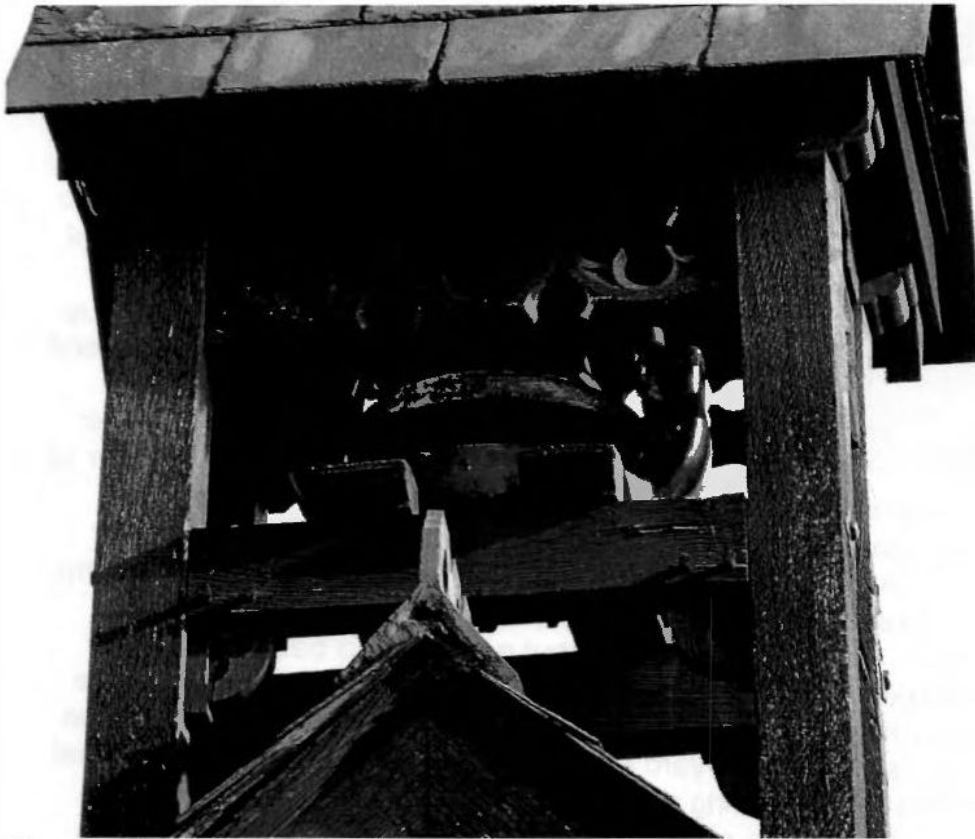


Photo:- AJR 2007.

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## **Who am I? Simon Curness**

I was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1966 at Lynden Grange maternity ward within a stone's throw of Crewe station. My father was a railwayman: in the early part of his career based at both Nine Elms and Stewarts Lane before moving to North London to work at Willesden as a fireman. The family moved to Crewe in the early 1960s and my father left the railways to work for Rolls-Royce Motors cleaning the vanes on aero-engines for their Aircraft Division.



My interest in railways was spurred by my father's large Hornby Dublo 2-rail layout in the loft and the fact that our house overlooked Basford Hall Yard. As a youngster and then a teenager I used to go to Basford bridge and Casey Lane bridge and spend hours watching trains. At this time my favourites were the double-headed Class 25s on the Cricklewood-Garston 'brickliner' and I must have seen plenty of workings that would have passed Mostyn in our layout's 1977 time period. However, being a lad and not having a camera, there is nothing on film – sorry mates!!

After a wide variety of jobs including car cleaning, poultry processing and storesman, I've now had a sort of railway-connected job for the last five years. If you go by train now and see stacks of pressed metal sleepers at the lineside then there is every chance that the company I work for, GMT, made them at their factory by Birkenhead Docks. I frequently make components for the lineside cabinets and REBs (relocatable equipment buildings) that are essential on the modern railway.

My railway modelling interests include an extensive N gauge British outline layout that is gradually taking shape in my flat in Oxton, Birkenhead. The layout is very loosely based on Warrington Bank Quay station and the period covered is everything from Corporate blue to the present day. There is a slight connection with a previous incarnation of "Mostyn" in that some of the timber was reclaimed for my N gauge layout when the old boards were ditched. Together with Ian Corcoran and Richard Oldfield, I spent several months building the new (current) boards for Mostyn in 2000-1 – anyone who thinks the forthcoming extension will be a 'quickie' needs to think again, this is a very big job if we are going to maintain the standards of workmanship.

Within the club my main interest is "Mostyn" though I intend to spend plenty of time helping to develop "Johnstown Road" as well. At the present time I'm part way through a build of 17 fitted ex-iron tipplers that are intended to become part of a lengthy stone train on a Penmaenmawr-Hope Street working. These will be my first wagons for the "Mostyn" fleet and should be followed by many more.

I'm renowned for my eagle eyesight and no journey for me is complete without noting the numbers/names of buses, coaches, aircraft, ships, locomotives and rolling stock – if it moves, I'm interested in it.

Having lost my mother at an early age and recently having lost my father as well, I'm very conscious of the march of time and like to keep myself as

busy as possible with my interests. Quite often you can catch me wandering around Merseyside (and beyond) photographing anything transport-related and this includes the recent visits to Liverpool by “QE2” and the Royal Navy carriers HMS “Ark Royal” and HMS “Illustrious”.

I enjoy taking our layouts to exhibitions, meeting the public and chatting to other enthusiasts so you can count me in for any opportunity to take “Mostyn” and “Johnstown Road” on the exhibition circuit

Eat, drink and be merry!!

Simon



### **“Spooner’s Boat”**

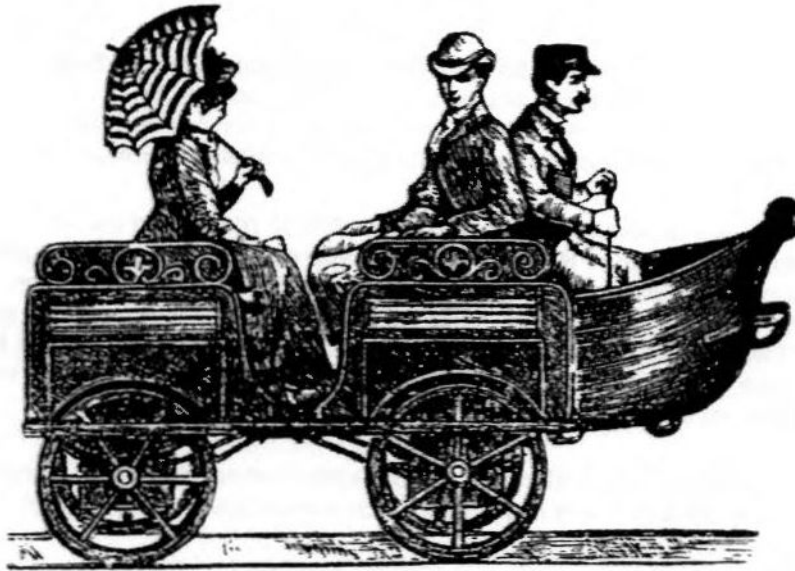
**a compendium based on an  
idea from Richard Stagg**

Charles Easton Spooner (1818-1889; pictured left), and his father James Spooner (1789-1856), were both closely associated with the management and engineering of the Festiniog Railway for many years. Charles was responsible for the building and operation of the ‘boat’. This was originally designed in the 1860s as a wind powered passenger carrying vehicle for the use of the Spooner family, which could be towed uphill from Porthmadog to

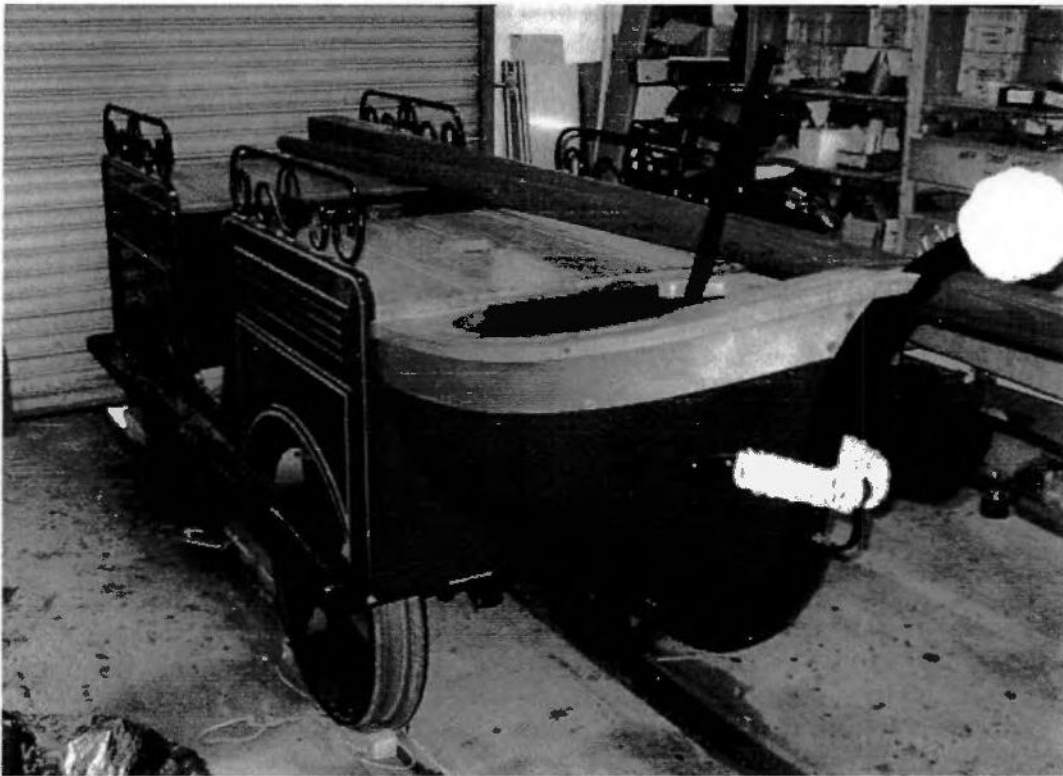
Blaenau Ffestiniog by the ordinary service train consisting mostly of slate empties. On the return trip, it would run down to Boston Lodge/Porthmadog by gravity: the sail could power it over the Cob.

On 12 February 1886 it met a steam locomotive while coming down the line without possession of the necessary single line staff: while there was only ever going to be one winner, at least no-one was killed!

*A contemporary engraving of an artist's impression of the original 'boat'*



A generous bequest from Michael Seymour, a former officer of the Company funded the construction of a replica, completed in 2005. The sail proved to be too small however, and a new larger sail was commissioned, funded by donations, fitted and



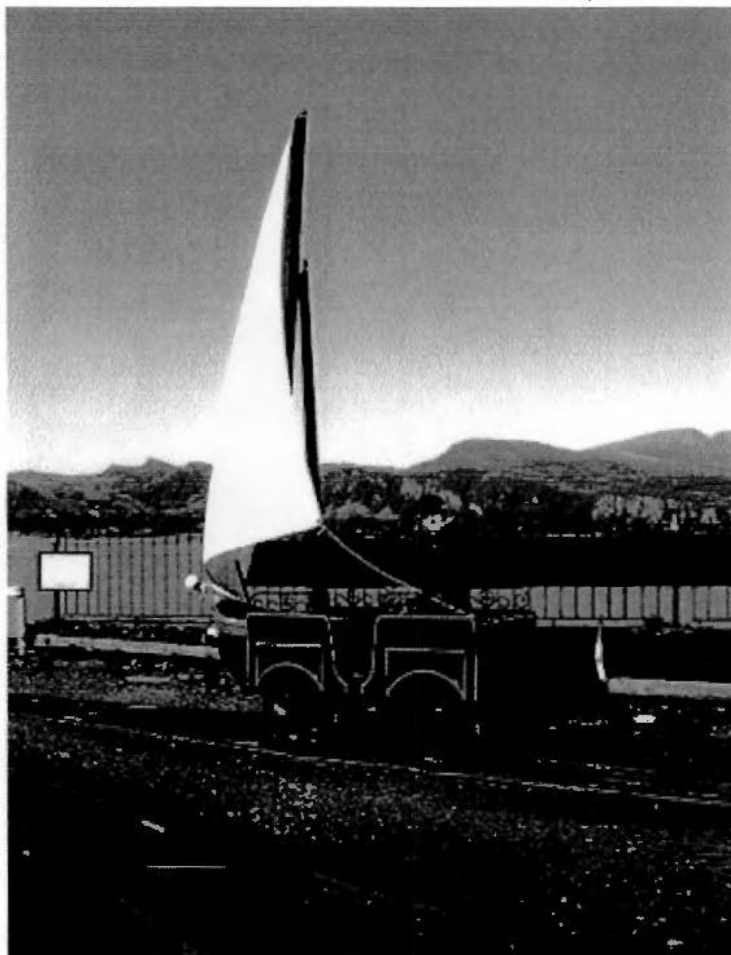
*The replica of "Spooner's Boat", photographed at Boston Lodge by Rudi Winter on 15 August 2008. The mast/rigging has to be taken down to allow the vehicle to pass through the door of its shed.*

tested in October of this year: it prompted this e-mail from Richard Stagg – one of our Group and also a keen sailor and an enthusiastic volunteer on the Welsh Highland Railway:

"I know that Emlyn has not got e-mail access so I wondered if you can show him these pics of my latest foray into 12" to the foot railwaying. Maybe a model of "Spooner's Boat" could go onto a corner of Porth Nefyn's dockside! A challenge for him perhaps. [Emlyn is both another member of our Group, and an enthusiastic sailor and small boat modeller! - Editor].

As you can see this vehicle is sail powered and was designed to so run across the cob at Porthmadog having been run down the FR by gravity. What you see is a replica constructed a couple of years or so ago. I got involved when a second larger sail was needed. You can squash 5 people onto it. A registered driver sits in the front controlling the brake, a horn and in possession of a GPS . Two passengers can sit behind him facing backwards and one or two sail trimmers sit at the back managing the motive power; and, yes, we have to carry the token and watch the signals. It is not too difficult to exceed the line speed if the wind is right.

The reactions of people waiting on the platform in Harbour station when we bowled along the platform road was a sight to behold. I have never seen such jaw dropping. Truly surreal. "



*One of Richard Stagg's photographs taken when the new sail was being tried out.*

*The replica when first completed, photographed by Martin Cowgill at Porthmadog in October 2005.*



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**“Saturday night out: report of the brakevan trip from Hooton to  
Whitchurch – 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1963”  
by Neville Knight**

The afternoon was rather cold and there was a covering of frozen snow over the Cheshire countryside. Arrangements had been made for our party to travel on the 3.50p.m. Stanlow-Rowley Regis oil train from Hooton to Whitchurch via Chester and Malpas.

The train engine was a class 8F 2-8-0 48165 of Buxton shed, the same locomotive that had taken us from Stockport to Buxton via Shallcross in February 1961 and still running with the small tender. The load was 23 tank wagons of heavy oil. An ex-G.W.R. brakevan was provided for our use, complete with a

warm fire, the latter being much appreciated by all. The train was timed to leave Hooton at 4.9p.m. but it left about 15 minutes late and the light was beginning to fail as we left the station. Very soon we were travelling at a brisk pace towards Chester, on the outskirts of which it was possible to see groups of people sitting around cosy firesides, some watching television.

There was a lengthy wait at Chester while the engine crew were changed over and other sundry jobs attended to. Eventually we had the road and again the train was moving away towards Waverton, the glow from the firebox reflected back along the train.

After passing through Christleton Tunnel the pace eased somewhat. The train was held for a few minutes at Tattenhall Junction whilst a diesel m.u. passed in the opposite direction. A class '5' was noted with a train of empty tank wagons in a siding adjoining the branch, having been shunted for the diesel set.

The train crew had told us that this train was the last through train to the branch, after Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, all the oil trains were to be re-routed via Ruabon. The line was in use earlier in the day for passenger traffic owing to a derailment at Beeston Castle, motor buses were conveying passengers between there and Crewe.

Despite the moonless night, it was possible to see quite a lot of the Cheshire plains as snow covered the ground to a depth of several inches. The frost was severe and the Shropshire Union Canal was frozen over. The frozen snow on the roof of the brakevan gradually melted with the heat from the stove.

The run to Whitchurch was uneventful and all the stations seemed more or less intact. The halt at Grindley Brook had lost the centre of its name-board.

The only signal check was at the home signal just before reaching Whitchurch. Soon the junction was cleared and the train drew into the platform on the main line where a special stop was requested.

The oil lamps in the van were extinguished and we had a moment to bid the engine men "Good Night", for very shortly the 2-8-0 was heard steaming on into the night, next stop Shrewsbury.

The Society wishes to thank the officials of the L.M.R., Liverpool for arranging the trip at such short notice. (N.R.Knight)

*[This report by Neville Knight for the Branch Line Society was on a special trip in a brake van attached to the last oil train to traverse the Whitchurch branch in normal service. Found by Tony Robinson].*

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