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# Barrowmore Model Railway Journal



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- (a) as e-mails or e-mail attachments;
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  - (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 2011, and contributions should get to the Editor as soon as possible, but at least before 1 February 2011.

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Copies of this magazine are also available to non-members: a cheque for £8 (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 a photograph taken in September 1994, in the yard at Ballina station in the north west of the Irish Republic. **Bell containers** were a common sight in Ireland at one time, and in 1977 when the container terminal was still in operation at Holyhead they would have been seen passing through Mostyn (as well as B&I and the more common Freightliner branded boxes). I still have (somewhere!) pots of the lilac and blue Precision model paints that were at one time marketed by Model Irish Railways; the 'lozenges' were black and white, and the lettering was white. Bell were certainly around in the mid-1970s – I photographed some in Dundalk loaded on container flats. Now that we have our new rakes of FFA/FGA wagons, the next thing is to make suitable loads for them!

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## **Forthcoming events**

**(2011)**

**27 Jan. 2011:** Railways around Saltney by Geoff Pickard. MRHG, United Reform Church Hall, Meols Drive, West Kirby: 7.45pm.

**19/20 Mar. 2011:** Nottingham show.

**23/24/25 Apr. 2011:** York show.

**14/15 May 2011:** ExpoEM, Bracknell ("Mostyn" is appearing).

**11/12 June 2011:** Chatham show ("Johnstown Road" is appearing).

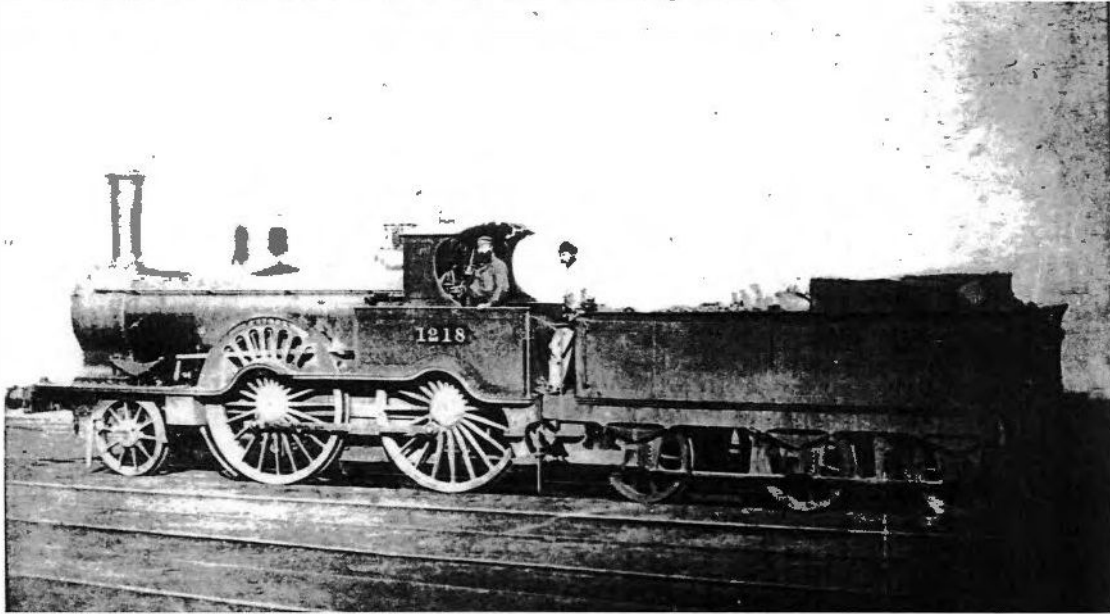
**26/27 Nov. 2011:** Warley show (NEC).

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

## The Last 'Newton'

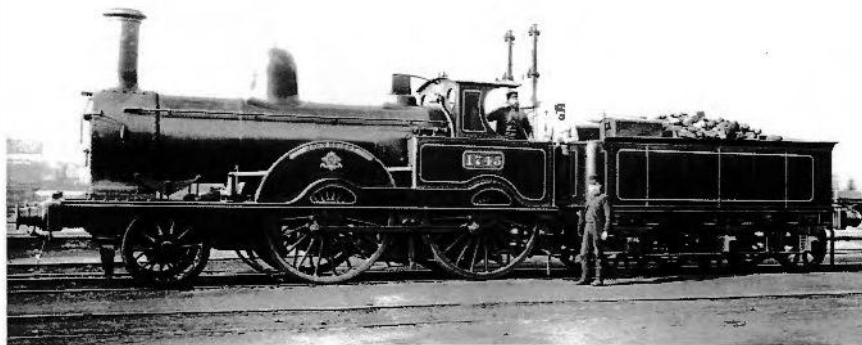
by Norman Lee

The 'Newton' class was Mr Ramsbottom's 2-4-0 design for L.N.W.R. passenger services. The first one appeared in April 1866 and 75 had been built up to 1871 when Ramsbottom left Crewe. Mr Webb succeeded him and built another 20 'Newtons' for the LNWR, with the last one entering service in August 1873.



(Photo ref DNR138: 'Newton' No. 1218 PHAETON. Built by Mr Webb in 1872, the year before the L&Y 'Newtons'. The engine is in its original condition, with slotted splashers and with Webb chimney and cab roof. The screw drive for the exposed Ramsbottom reverser is seen above the cab sidesheet in front of the spectacle plate. It is still in the LNWR's lined green livery so it would be fairly new – it would have been painted blackberry black on its next visit to Crewe Works. The L&Y engines would have looked very similar although they were probably painted in plain black when they left Crewe.)

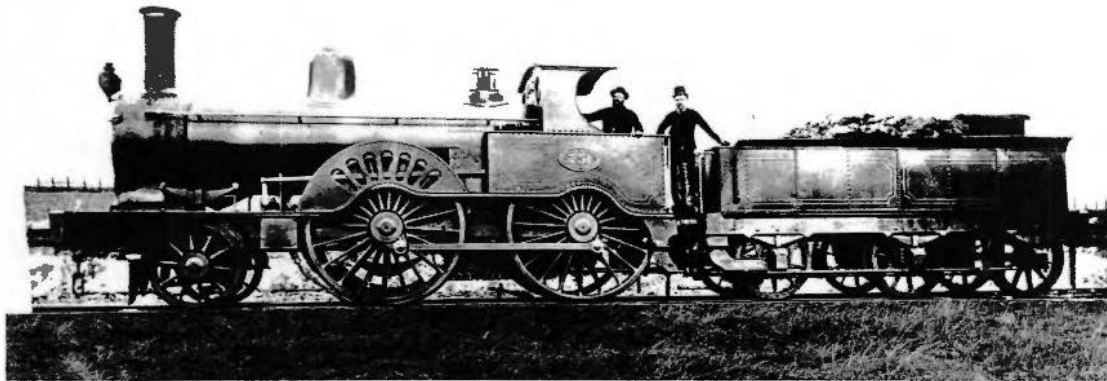
The engines received lots of detail alterations over the years but by the late 1880s they were wearing out. Beginning in 1888, all of them went through Crewe's 'renewal' process whereby they were replaced by new engines to Mr Webb's 'Improved Precedent' design of 1887. The original numbers and nameplates were kept but little else remained. The last of the LNWR's 'Newtons' was renewed in January 1894, after which the class was extinct on the LNWR.



(Photo ref NHL1187: 'Newton' No. 1745 JOHN BRIGHT. This was one of the late survivors on the LNWR, lasting until 1893, and is seen in its final condition, in the yard at Ordsall Lane steam shed in Salford in the early 1890s. By this stage it looked very much like a Webb 'Precedent' but

a careful glance will show that, unlike on the latter, the frames do not protrude above the running board between the back of the smokebox and the driving wheel splashers. The 'Precedents' were a more modern design and much better engines with stronger frames - moreover, the 'Precedents' had Mr Webb's V-shaped arrangement of valves between cylinders, which gave a more direct path for steam and contributed towards their greater power.)

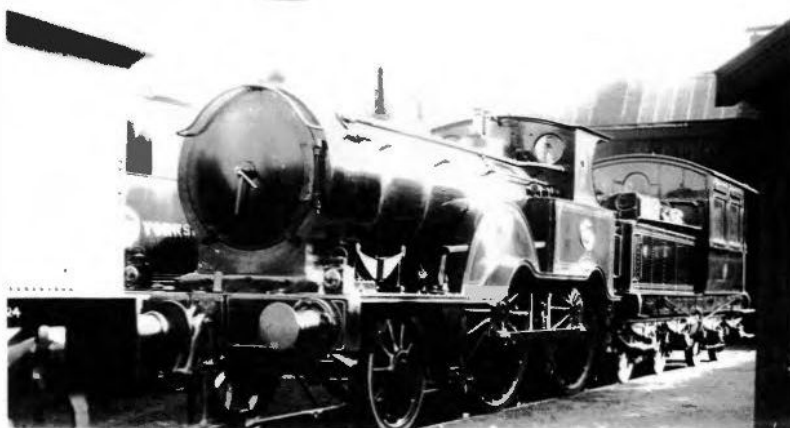
However, in the early 1870s the LNWR directors were working closely with the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway and a merger had been agreed by the two companies. Crewe supplied dozens of 'DX' 0-6-0 goods engines and five 0-4-0 saddle tanks to the L&Y. Then, in 1873, Mr Webb built a further ten 'Newtons' for the L&Y. As documented elsewhere, this collaboration annoyed many of the independent locomotive builders and they obtained an injunction which prevented railway companies building any more locomotives for each other. Moreover, Parliament objected strongly to the 'London, Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway', as the combined company would have been known, and refused to approve the merger - it was not to happen until 1922, just a year before the formation of the LMS.



(Photo ref NHL1437: The last 'Newton' - L&Y No. 731. The engine is in the L&Y's lined green livery but is otherwise much as it would have been when supplied by the LNWR in 1873. Unfortunately much of the background has been painted out on the negative - not very carefully in places - and the grass in the foreground does not look very convincing. Nevertheless, the engine itself is authentic.)

Nevertheless, the L&Y had ten 'Newtons'. They had a similar career to those on the LNWR, with reboiling and receiving various standard L&Y fittings. They remained in regular service a little longer than those on the LNWR but were withdrawn by the late 1890s.

Not all were cut up, however, and three of them (L&Y numbers 460, 461 and 731) were kept for departmental duties - much the same principle as ENGINEER engines on the LNWR. Nos. 460 and 461 went to Newton Heath and lasted until 1912 and 1904 respectively.



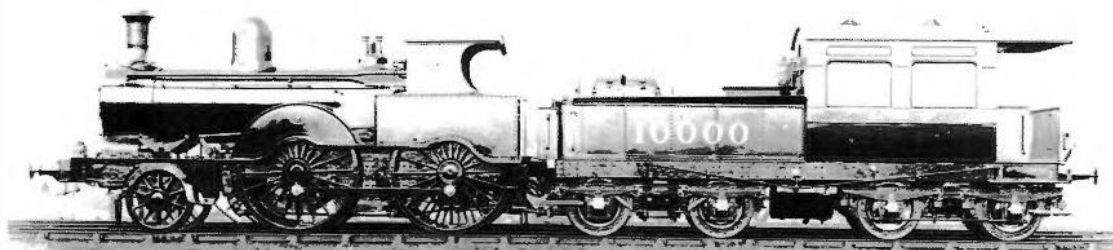
(Photo ref VF2: No. 731, the L&Y CME's engine and saloon, polished and beautifully lined out in the L&Y's black livery. The photograph was probably taken at Horwich, after the Great War. The engine has received several L&Y modifications, most noticeably a circular smokebox door, but it is still recognisable as a 'Newton'. The tender body, although mounted on a bogie frame, is the original LNWR one - when LNWR engineers

developed a similar arrangement of combined tender and saloon they build a special little tender for the job.)



No. 731 left normal service as early as 1886 and went to Horwich. A long wooden underframe was built and mounted on bogies. This was used to carry both the tender body from the 'Newton' and a small saloon for the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

George Hughes became CME in 1904 and seems to have regarded No. 731 as a pet engine, rather like Bowen Cooke and CORNWALL on the LNWR. No. 731 was reboilered again in 1914. Then in 1923, when Hughes became CME for the new LMS Railway, the whole assemblage was painted in the company's magnificent crimson



(Plate 38: The broadside view of No. 10000 is copied from a 12in x 15in glass plate presented to the Society by Mr Glyn Jones, along with other similar plates of Crewe locomotives.)

livery, fully lined and given the number 10000 to show its importance. The engine outlasted the LNWR's own 'Newtons' by thirty years. Unfortunately, Mr Hughes



(Photo VF1: No. 10000, the CME's engine and saloon, newly painted and lined in LMS crimson and photographed at Horwich in 1923. The old 'Newton' looks splendid - it seems dreadful that such an historic veteran was cut up just three years later.)

retired in 1925 and the next year the Locomotive Department headquarters was moved from Horwich to Derby. The new CME, Mr Fowler, and the powers-that-be at Derby were not very impressed by No. 10000 and the last of the 'Newtons' was cut up in July 1926 despite its historical significance.

(The author acknowledges the writings of the Baxters, and John Marshall for the chronology).

## Workshop notes, no.22: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU BREAK A HACKSAW BLADE

Hacksaw blades are quite expensive, so that when one breaks (as they tend to do, at the most inconvenient times!) there is an immediate reaction from most modellers. So, "what can I use the pieces for?" springs to the modeller's mind.

There are various handles available from tool-shops and DIY stores which will hold pieces of hacksaw blade to enable them to continue to be used in their sawing mode, but it has to be admitted that when separated from the hacksaw frame this sawing function is nowhere near as efficient.

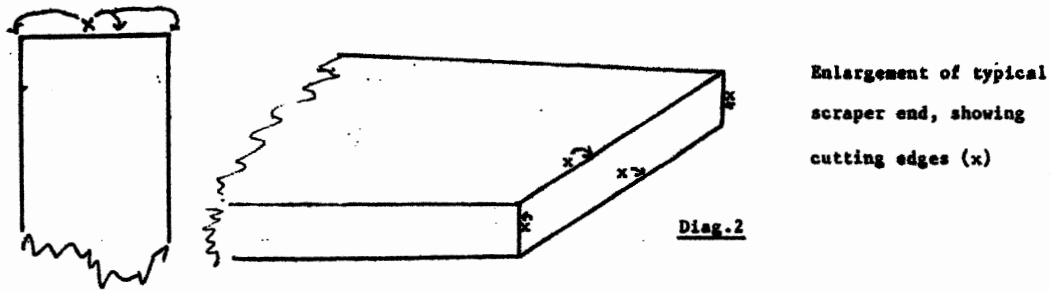
So, what else do can you do with the pieces? My solution is to make small **scrapers**, which can be used on things as diverse as cleaning excess solder from etched brass, cleaning up white metal, or removing 'flash' from plastic kits.



You do need access to a **bench grinder**; if you don't own one yourself (cheap ones cost in the region of £25 or so, and will also enable you to sharpen blunt drills, etc.) then you must prevail upon a colleague who has one, to let you use his machine. (Some clubs have communal grinders for use by members). **Safety first:** industrial accidents don't always happen to other people! - so wear some sort of eye protection when using a grinder.

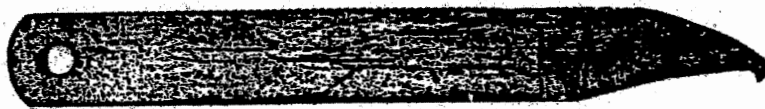
You first need a 3- to 5-inch piece from a normal half-inch-wide hacksaw blade, and this is when Murphy's Law comes into the act. You have already accidentally broken the blade once - and it was quite easy, wasn't it? - but when you want to snap a couple of inches off a too-long piece, it proves to be anything *but* easy! I find that a good method is to clamp the wanted piece of the blade in a bench vice, muffle the unwanted part in a rag (to avoid sharp bits of metal flying about), and hit it near to the vice jaws with a 2lb hammer. If it then snaps in roughly the right place, take the embryonic scraper out of the vice and grind most of the saw teeth away from the side - the aim is to remove proud areas of the 'set' and round-off any sharp bits. Also smooth off the handle (non-cutting) end. It is not too important to avoid 'burning' (and annealing) the metal at this stage.

Now decide what shape cutting end you want (*see* diag. 1), and slowly grind the end to this shape, avoiding overheating ('burning' - evidenced by discolouration) of the metal. The most useful end profile is shown in diag. 2, but there is no reason why you can't make chisel or knife shapes. It helps to cool down the metal and avoids blistered fingers if you dip the work-piece in a cup of cold water at frequent intervals.



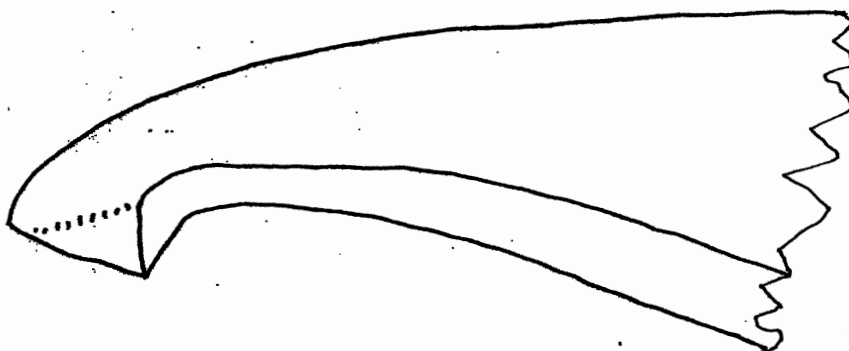
Finish the profiling of the scraper by stoning the cutting edges first on a fine Carborundum stone and then on a finer abrasive such as an Arkansas stone. Blunt scrapers can be re-sharpened in the same way. The last operation is to make the scraper easy to use, by covering the handle in something like a piece of tyre inner-tube held on with insulation tape.

One very useful tool which also can be made from a hacksaw blade is the 'scrawker' which cuts a 'V' shaped groove in metal or plastic sheet (diagrams 3 and 4). This is



Diag.3 The 'scrawker', full size (see also Diag.4 below)

described in an interesting article by Colin Binnie in the November 1971 issue of *Model Railways*; the cutting action depends on pulling the tool towards you, guided



Diag.4

Enlarged sketches of 'scrawker'  
cutting end and (left) cross-section

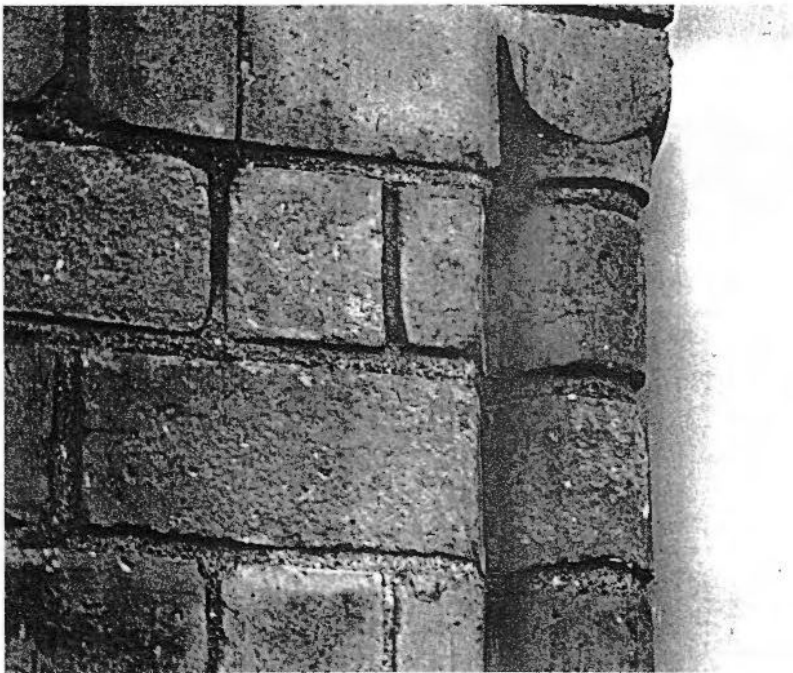
by a straight edge. But unless you need a particularly deep or shallow 'V', or a different shape groove, the easiest solution is to buy the excellent 'Olfa plastic cutter

P-450' (diag. 5) which is sold by Squires Model & Craft Tools and other arts and crafts shops, for £7; it includes spare blades.



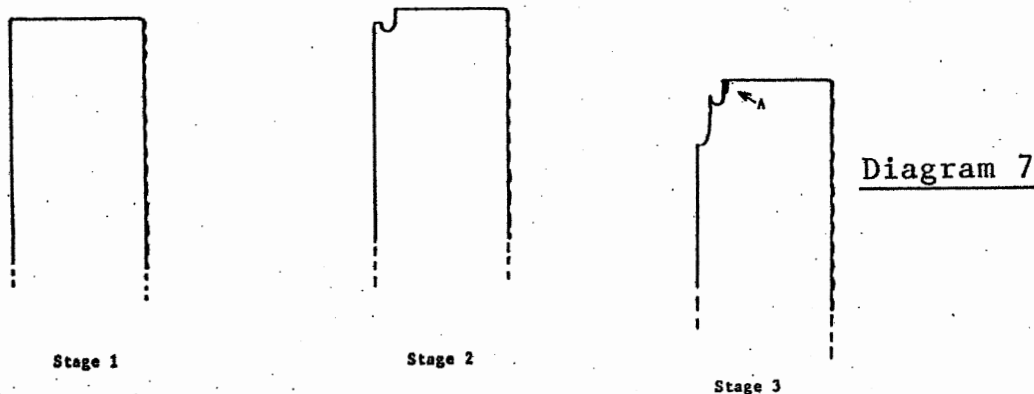
Diagr. 5

This also suggests that you can make scrapers with other profiles – the obvious limiting factor is your ability to grind the required end profile. An example of using a scraper to solve a modelling problem may suggest possibilities: the task was to model the decorative brickwork at the sides of doorways and window apertures on a building dating from L.N.W.R. times, thus –



Diagr. 6

The scraper end was shaped (diag. 7) using a combination of a normal size bench grinder wheel, and a thin 19mm diameter Carborundum slitting disc, such as is sold for use with 12V mini-drills. The sequence of operations was as follows: stage 1 – the broken end of the broken blade is cleaned up on the bench grinder; stage 2 – the blade is held in the vice and a Carborundum disc used to create the shape shown; stage 3 – the side of the top of the blade is reduced on the bench grinder to shape the groove-cutting part to a point. Then the edges of the blade marked 'A' are slightly rounded with wet-or-dry paper so that the tool does not cut here – this part of the blade acts only as a guide for the cutting section.



So next time you are about to put a broken blade in the bin - think again!

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## DAD HAD AN ENGINE SHED

*Some childhood railway reminiscences  
of a North Wales shedmaster's son*

*by Anthony J. Robinson*

Railways were very much 'in the blood' John Eric Robinson (dad) was born in Crewe in 1902, the second child and the eldest son of John Robinson, assistant chief electrical engineer to the London & North Western Railway. John Robinson was in turn the eldest son of the redoubtable (and famous) Ben Robinson who had enjoyed the distinction of having driven the Royal train more frequently than any other man of his era and he was at the controls of 'No. 790 *Hardwicke* on its record-breaking run during the 'Race to the North' in 1895.

Around about 1910 John Robinson moved the family to Wembley following a promotion to the head office at Euston. On leaving school in 1919 J.E. Robinson gained a position in the LNWR workshops which were part of Willesden sheds. It was the start of a career on the railway that was to span more than 45 years. Most of those years were spent in North Wales on sheds associated with the Chester & Holyhead Railway. He moved to Llandudno Junction in 1925 as a fitter and remained there for 20 years. In 1945 he was promoted to leading fitter at Rhyl and another promotion, in 1948, saw him achieve the position of shedmaster at Sowerby Bridge in Yorkshire.

Keen to get back to North Wales, early in 1952 he applied for the shedmaster's job at Mold Junction. The importance of Mold Junction shed was essentially in its freight engine stud and what was for the area one of the finest locomotive handling facilities available.

Who today could image someone in charge of over 200 men and 60-odd locomotives living in a council house and going to work on a bicycle! Working five full days a week plus Saturday and Sunday mornings and having to be on permanent standby day and night for breakdowns and, yes, for no extra pay at that! It has been written elsewhere that a typical shedmaster had to have the powers of judgement of Solomon, the ingenuity of Trevithick, the stubbornness of Stephenson, the leadership skills of Patton, the negotiating powers of Kissinger and the memories of several elephants! Well, J.E. Robinson would probably would have failed on the last one, so to counteract this he meticulously kept a diary of all his work activities from 1922 right through to 1965. His selfless devotion to duty was not unusual to men of his ilk, a job well done usually the only reward. This leadership by example imbibed similar qualities in others responsible for the smooth running of the various departments within an engine shed. To say that he was a hard working man would be an understatement in the extreme!

A5 format, 184 pages with 138 illustrations. The book has a laminated card cover with a square-backed spine.

RS21

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\*\*\*\*\* (Tony Robinson's book is now available – see review on next page .....)

**Book review by Norman Lee**

***Dad had an Engine Shed* by Anthony J Robinson. Oakwood Press, 2010**

184pp Card back 150mm x 210mm. £12.95

Tony Robinson comes from a long line of railwaymen and has been a member of the LNWR Society for many years. His father, Mr J E Robinson, joined the LNWR in 1919 and was an apprentice in the workshops at Willesden. The book is about the life and career of John Robinson - Dad - from North London to North Wales where he eventually took charge of Mold Junction shed. To the LNWR this was shed No. 37 but it had become 6B under British Railways when Mr Robinson took charge in 1952. The story inevitably covers the LMS and BR eras more than the LNWR period but life at a steam shed hadn't changed a lot by the time the shed closed in 1966 even if the LNWR's engines had gone by then - in fact, in one of the later chapters Tony confesses that a few Great Western engines came to 'The Junction' in its final years.

The history is well written and is built from a series of anecdotes about Mr Robinson, his friends, his acquaintances and even one or two of his enemies. Max Dunn, another North Wales shedmaster and a great family friend, features frequently. The book isn't all about the railway and covers the way that society changed (or sometimes didn't) for the Robinson family through the grim days of the 1930s and the war until life began to improve by the 1960s. Sadly, the promise of affluence was too late for John Robinson and as steam declined so did he and his end came very tragically as the shed closed.

The chapters give a good balance between social and technical aspects of the railway. Similarly, the book balances humour and the more serious parts of a railway engineer's career. An early section discusses John Robinson's draughtsmanship and there are several drawings of subjects such as Joy valve gear and Troffinof (sic) piston valves - however, your reviewer confesses that he still cannot understand the workings of the valve gear in a Midland Compound.

There are well over 100 photographs in the book - all interesting and only a few have been published before. Some have turned out better than others but the book is the story of Tony's father and is not intended to be a picture album. Oakwood and Tony have done a good job and there are few errors - I only spotted two and both are about poor old CORNWALL. On page 3 it gets called LADY OF THE LAKE and later on its design is attributed to Ramsbottom whereas it dates back to Trevithick's era - Webb, working under Ramsbottom, seems to have developed the engine in its present form.

I have known Tony for a long time but I never met his father - after reading this book I wish I had.

I can recommend the book to anyone interested in railways and railwaymen.

Norman Lee (November 2010)



**Book review by John Dixon**

***Shrewsbury to Chester* by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith. Middleton Press, 2010.**

This is a hardback book, one of about 300 by this West Sussex publisher whose aim is to create a railway encyclopaedia with a wide geographic range that stretches to the continent. As a new addition to the well established format the book measures 9¼" by 6¾" and contains 120 B&W numbered photographs, interspersed with copies of old O.S maps of the immediate area which have been clearly reproduced and add extra interest. Not so clear are the smaller scale maps covering a larger area and in which the railway lines merge in with the roads. Another interesting regular feature is the inclusion of tables of station data for different years showing such as passenger tickets issued and various goods handled.

Starting from Shrewsbury and travelling north the photographs concentrate on the stations along the route, 21 being depicted, either with trains in view or none at all, and cover a wide date range but, as expected, are chiefly of the post WW2 era with both steam and diesel shots and a few very recent views. These, reproduced quite well in the main, are from a variety of photographers, one of the authors himself having travelled the line to include his own work such as the Wrexham to Marylebone modern day service.

Captions are fairly informative with a minimum of slip-ups noticed; that for photo 20, for instance, seems to have been intended for Leaton rather than Baschurch while the statement that Rossett station opened later than its neighbours in 1866 is refuted by the timetable of 1850 presented in the first few pages.

This reviewer was particularly pleased to see the photo of Gresford signalbox as the structure was camera-shy in its lifetime. Much of the signalling data seems to have been taken from the Signalling Record Society's Signal Box Register, probably through the late Larry Crosier (acknowledged) who was a former W.R. signalman and SRS member. There's a rather surprising choice of picture for the front cover, showing two former LMS engines at Salop; OK, the LMS had its own line from Crewe to Salop but the book is about a line predominately pure GWR for 100 years! Also surprising was no mention of the Wheatsheaf Branch, opened just after the main line and the reason for building the latter, to carry the coal, iron and limestone products away from the Brymbo and Minera areas to the towns and cities elsewhere. The book does pack much of interest in its pages besides the photos and, I believe, represents good value in an easy to handle size and is priced at £15.95. Website is [www.middletonpress.co.uk](http://www.middletonpress.co.uk). Tel: 01730 813169

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## Bangor layout

Richard Oldfield writes, in an e-mail to Group members:

"A short while ago I was contacted (via our website) by the nephew of a long-time P4 modeller called Arthur Mould who passed away about two years ago. His modelling credentials stretch back to a layout called Pendlebury but when that layout finished he embarked on his own project which was to create a model of Bangor as it was in the 1930s. There is about 20 years of work in the layout which is in his loft, measures 20ft x 10ft (the scenic section is 18ft x 4ft) and is fully-signalled. Apparently it represents most of the layout of Bangor between the tunnels with the exception of the two through roads. I have also been told that it splits into sections that can be removed through the loft access.

Arthur Mould's nephew has tried to find a new home for the layout (via the Scalefour Society website) but the offer he received fell through. He contacted us to see whether we would be interested. I sent a reply saying that we had enough work with our own projects but would hate to see Bangor dismantled and would be willing to store it until such a time as either we or someone else could use it.

My initial thoughts are that we could use it as a photographic diorama and perhaps change the layout so it suited our 1977 Mostyn stock but, in discussions at the club, there is a clear interest in using it in its 1930s/1940s condition. There is an intriguing possibility that we may be able to borrow or acquire some of the stock that was built for this layout.

I have no idea what the modelling standards are or the state of the woodwork and running quality.

Perhaps if we had a steam-era layout it would help to attract other members?

The next step will be on 2nd October when it is arranged for us to see and start the process of removing the layout.

Questions/comments anyone?"

*(The above e-mail went to all Group members prior to the mentioned visit on 2 October. The following note about Arthur Mould and the layout was later provided by Arthur's nephew):*

### **Arthur Mould 1924 – 2008.**

Arthur's involvement in model railways restarted in 1968 when he assembled a Wills Finecast kit for his nephew; I still have it. This led to visiting Bearwood Models in Smethwick and returning home with enough material to scratch-build an LMS Compound, which was completed in 1969. Like many modellers of the 1960s Arthur disliked the toy-like end result of many hours of work which resulted in him joining the Protofour Society and the conversion of the Compound to P4 standards. Several locos followed the Compound including a 4F with working inside valve gear.

In 1975 Arthur joined the Pendlebury group of the P4 society, which despite a north Manchester name was actually based in Solihull. The group's chairman Bert Topping had started an OO layout which he had called Pendlebury after his birthplace and the group took it over and rebuilt it to P4 standards. The track work of the new

Pendlebury was built using the then latest Brook-Smith techniques using plated steel rivets in wooden sleepers soldered to nickel silver rails. What no one foresaw was that the soldering flux would eventually remove the plating from the rivets and thus limit the life of the layout to about 10 years. Pendlebury was voted layout of the year by *Railway Modeller* readers in 1979 and from that year to 1985 was exhibited at shows throughout the Midlands. The plated rivet issue took the layout off the exhibition circuit and the will power to produce a new layout was lacking causing the group to fold.

In 1986 Arthur and myself started to research the possibility of modelling Bangor station in its rebuilt LMS form set in the 1930's. Bangor was chosen because the scale length of the site is about 20 feet and Arthur could get it in his loft without compressing the length unduly. Bangor is a very wide station but in its modelled form is still reasonably proportioned. Numerous visits were made to the station both by Arthur and me to produce a set of pictures and plans of buildings to enable working drawings to be made and work to start.

The layout was designed as a folded figure 8 with fiddle yards under the layout and a long mainline run from station to fiddleyard and back to the station. Station buildings, loco and goods sheds, signal boxes, turntables complete the station and a representation of the terraces overlooking the station were made. Scenery was not one of Arthur's strong-points! *(But seems fine to the Editor's eye!)*

Signalling was something that he enjoyed and Bangor is fully signalled using memory wire operating units. Control of the layout was by conventional DC but Arthur had been in the process of converting to DCC when he was taken ill. Some interlocking of track and signals had been completed.

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## **A new home for "Bangor"**

**Elsewhere in this issue of BMRJ you will learn some basic details about the latest arrival at our clubroom. To add some flesh to the bare bones here is how it has come about.**

At the end of August we were contacted via our website by the nephew of Arthur Mould who had died some two years previously and whose major modelling project lasting 20 years had been to construct a P4 DC-controlled layout based on Bangor in the 1930s. Attempts to find a new home for "Bangor" via the Scalefour Society had failed – an option to relocate the layout to Crewe fell through when the prospective new owner's personal circumstances changed. The suggestion in the first e-mail was that, with our North Wales railway interests, would we not consider giving a new home to "Bangor"?

My initial reaction was neutral due to the great list of outstanding work to do on both "Mostyn" and "Johnstown Road". However, as the possibility of obtaining "Bangor" was discussed within BMRG, it became clear that there is considerable interest in this time period and the opportunity to do some steam era modelling should not be passed up. It was eventually agreed that we would go to Arthur Mould's home at Sedgley (near Dudley) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October to dismantle and recover the layout.

Your BMRG team for the day was David Faulkner, Eddie Knorn, Gavin Liddiard and myself and we arranged to meet at the Midway Truckstop Transport Café at Prees Heath (south of Whitchurch) at 9.30am for a hearty English breakfast before proceeding south on the A41. We arrived in Sedgley just after 11.00 am and soon had the opportunity to make our first impressions about the layout which was built very snugly into an attic space.

Bangor's physical format was 'figure of eight' with the scenic section (between the two tunnels at Bangor) on one level then curving round into fiddle yard access roads dropping down in height around the back of the workbench to gain access to the fiddle yard itself which was under the scenic boards. The attic space itself looked very much undisturbed with all the modelling paraphernalia, books and other materials looking as if their owner could return and resume his work at any time. We were very favourably impressed by the quality of the modelling skills on display though dust and the ravages of time had obviously played a role.

The scenic part of the layout had been designed to come apart into various irregular shapes that would fit through the loft access hatch provided key structures had first been removed. Our first job, therefore, was to remove and safely pack all loose scenic detail such as the second floor of the platform building, the footbridge, signal boxes etc etc. One of the glories of "Bangor", the extensive signalling installation, had been cleverly modelled such that the signals themselves could be disconnected from their actuation (memory wire) and removed from the layout boards – this saved us a huge worry during transportation.

We soon discovered that, whilst the scenic boards were separable, quite a lot of the control electrics had been wired across them and these had to be cut. The control panels were then removed from the attic. The first scenic board was then disconnected (the usual bolts plus alignment dowels) and carefully eased through the loft access hatch. This process continued until all scenic boards were downstairs and much of the house was strewn with other parts of "Bangor" – we did not want to start to load the cars until we could work out how to most safely pack everything.

That left the now revealed fiddle yard and access roads in the loft. It was obvious that the fiddle yard and access roads had been built firmly in situ and we could not see how to dismantle them and recover them for our future use. We left them in case they could be re-used. The rest of the fiddle yard was effectively demolished and dumped in a skip (with the agreement of the workmen who were refurbishing the adjoining property).

Having brought along with us various tuff-crates, rolls of bubble wrap and plywood off-cuts, we were able to make the packing and return to Barrowmore as safe as possible. Apart from congestion through Wolverhampton, the return journey went smoothly and "Bangor" was introduced to our clubroom by 6.30pm.

### **What do we now have with Bangor?**

Well, we have a set of scenic boards which, when assembled, are a model of Bangor in the mid-1930s. We have the control panels. "Bangor" is now owned by BMRG and we are free to develop it as we choose.

The layout will require cleaning, refurbishment and some upgrading. It will require a new fiddle yard or possibly adapting to use "Mostyn"'s fiddle yards. It will require stock (although there is a possibility that we may be able to borrow some of the stock that was built for "Bangor").

Above all we have an opportunity to expand our modelling interests and to use "Bangor" to attract potential new members.

The first actions required will be to make end protectors for the layout so that it can be stored and worked on safely.

On behalf of BMRG I would like to thank Arthur Mould's wife and his nephew, Malcolm, for their kindness during our visit to Sedgley and for giving us the opportunity to adopt "Bangor".

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Subsequent e-mail to Malcolm:

From: Richard Oldfield [mailto:richardoldfield@btinternet.com]

Sent: 18 October 2010 16:03

To: megandmal@tiscali.co.uk

Subject: RE: Bangor

Hi Malcolm, Thought I would give you a little update.

We have started some work to clean the scenic boards (make-up brush, dilute IPA plus soft tissue and a gentle vacuuming) and I have enclosed three images of the work my eldest daughter, Georgina, has done.

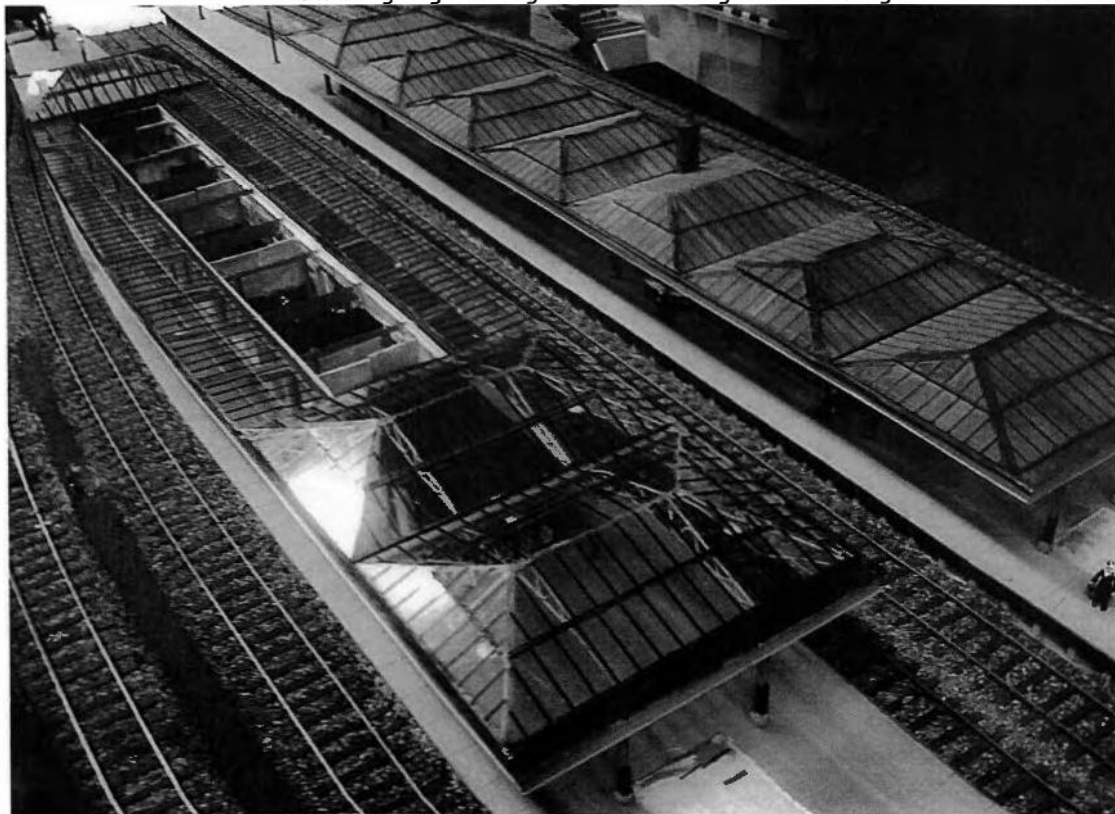
- close-up as the platform board arrived here



- full shot of the un-cleaned platform board



- full shot with the board half-cleaned. The difference in the awning glazing is striking!      Regards - Richard





## *The Chain Bridge at Berwyn*

Bob Miller



Most members will be familiar with the suspension footbridge over the River Dee that links the Chainbridge Hotel with Berwyn station on the Llangollen Railway. Unfortunately it has been closed to the public for about twenty-six years now as repairs were required and the local and County Councils had refused to contribute to the cost. The owner of the bridge, which is the Chainbridge Hotel, felt it was unfair to totally fund the repairs as it could (and was) used by people who did not frequent the hotel in any way and it actually formed part of the route of a public footpath.

About four years ago the ownership of the hotel (which is believed to date from 1888) changed, being acquired by the Llangollen Hotels Co Ltd, and managing director Stephanie Booth has agreed to donate the bridge to the town of Llangollen, paving the way for its possible restoration. Mrs Booth, Llangollen Town Council and Llantysilio Community Council agreed jointly to finance an engineering report on the structure and this revealed that much of the bridge will need to be dismantled to show the full extent of the corrosion that has occurred. The cost of restoration was estimated to be in excess of £120,000 and more probably in the region of £140,000. If the funding is raised, the restoration work would take at least four months to complete.

The first bridge on the site was built in 1817 by Exuperius Pickering (1760-1838) and his son of the same name (1785-1835), the Ruabon ironmasters, slate quarry and colliery owners, to take slate and coal over the Dee to Telford's new road (the present A5) and avoid the tolls then charged for using the Llangollen town bridge. It was replaced by a new chain bridge designed and built by Henry Robertson in 1870. Robertson, who was born in Banff in 1816 and died at his residence Pale, Llandderfel in 1888, is probably best known to



*(Photographed in July 2000 by David Stowell)*

us as one of the original partners in Beyer, Peacock & Co and the Brymbo Ironworks, but he was also the engineer (and later Chairman) of the Llangollen & Corwen Railway, opened in 1865. It was not a suspension bridge, but had the supporting chains underslung and resting on two intermediate piers.

Heavy flooding of the River Dee at 6.20pm on 16 February 1928 caused the second bridge to collapse and the structure was swept downstream, some parts reaching as far as Chester! The third and present bridge was built in the Summer of 1929 by Sir Henry Beyer Robertson (1862-1948), son of Henry, a director of Beyer, Peacock & Co, the Brymbo Steel Co, the Broughton & Plas Power Coal Co, the Minera Lime Co and also the GWR. There are no intermediate piers and the suspension chains supplied by the Brymbo Steelworks are new but two of the original chains were re-used underneath the decking and it is believed that it was the deterioration of these that caused the bridge to be declared unsafe. Indeed, it has been suggested that these two chains date from the building of the first bridge in 1817, in which case they will be the oldest such bridge chains in the world.

It is hoped that the finance can be raised to repair the bridge but, considering the present financial climate, it could well be some time before this is effected.

*(This piece was written by Bob for the Manchester Locomotive Society's magazine, and is reprinted here as it seemed to the Editor as of potential interest to our readers – after all, we are closer to Llangollen than are Mancunians!)*

## Book Review by Iain Kirk

*Essential model railroad scenery techniques*, by Pelle K. Søbørg.  
Kalmbach Publishing ISBN: 978-0-89024-736-5

This is the second book I have reviewed by Pelle Søbørg [1], a Danish gentleman who models American outline practice to a very high standard. A regular contributor to the American modelling magazine *Model railroader*, his articles and books have a distinctive feel to them and this book is no exception.

The book is, again, very well presented and is in full colour. Written in a very clear and concise manner, it takes specific US outline scenic settings and guides the modeller through them. The aim being to create a plausible and real looking scene in which one's railway fits in correctly.

Four sections deal with the Midwest, Rockies, Desert and Suburbs. Some interesting views and techniques are used and explained in a way which shows the advantages of working in the particular technique.

I was rather bemused by the concept of 'wet water' - which once understood makes a lot of sense. One area which is very well covered is the use of the static grass technique - if you cannot grasp it after reading this then I'd be very surprised.

Another strength of this book is that at the end of each section, a page lists all the products used and the manufacturers - details of which are listed at the back of the book under resources.

This book is worth a look at if you are a scenic modeller wanting a different slant however, I would not call it an essential purchase.

Ref:

1: Pelle Søbørgs website - <http://www.soeborg.dk/myhobby.html>

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### **'A late night reveller remembers ...'**

A man is stopped by the police at midnight and asked where he's going.

"I'm on the way to listen to a lecture about the effects of alcohol and smoking on the human body."

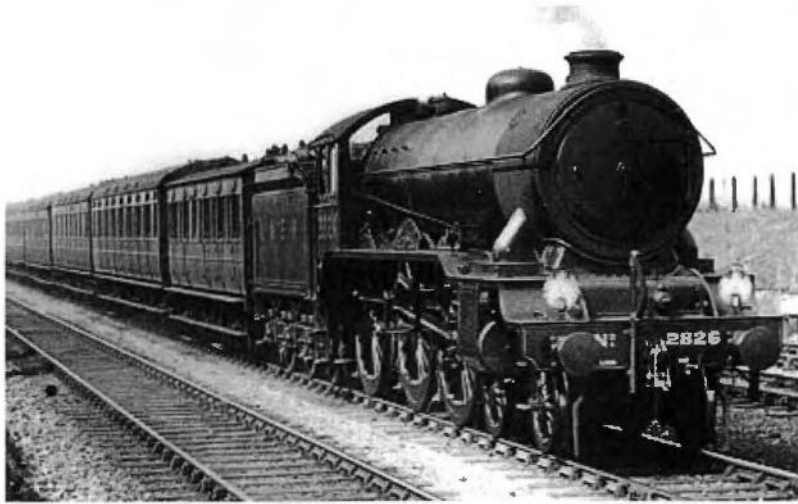
The policeman asks, "Really? And who's going to give a lecture at this time of night?"

"My wife", he replied.

#####

## Northgate reflections no.4: The MPD by Eric Gent

The depot was constructed in 1874/75 by the Cheshire Lines Committee and operated as a sub depot of Northwich at first. I made my first visit to it in May 1953 to see the visiting 'Sandringham' locomotives at close quarters. Access was through the Goods



*LNER 2826 (later 61626)  
"Brancepath Castle" of the  
Sandringham class (B17),  
built 1931.*

Yard gate and to the right past the coal merchants area to the twin track bridge over the deep cutting for the Shrewsbury (GWR) and North Wales (LMSR) lines. The bridge had a narrow walk way access to the depot. No drivers had cars in those days, arriving on bike or on foot. The building was a flat-roofed two road dead end depot



*The MPD photographed from the station platform on 29 June 1968 – only a year before eventual closure in October 1969*

with eight roof vents per track. Recently I found a photograph on page 35 of Shannon & Hillmer's *Past and Present No.40: Cheshire* which shows the depot with a high apex roof and five tall chimneys for each of the two tracks inside. It is dated 24 April 1947. Another photograph in 1950 shows the depot re-roofed in the form I always knew it.

Rail access to the depot was from just after the bridge over the Birkenhead Joint line with a track veering to the left into the goods yard /depot areas. The depot line

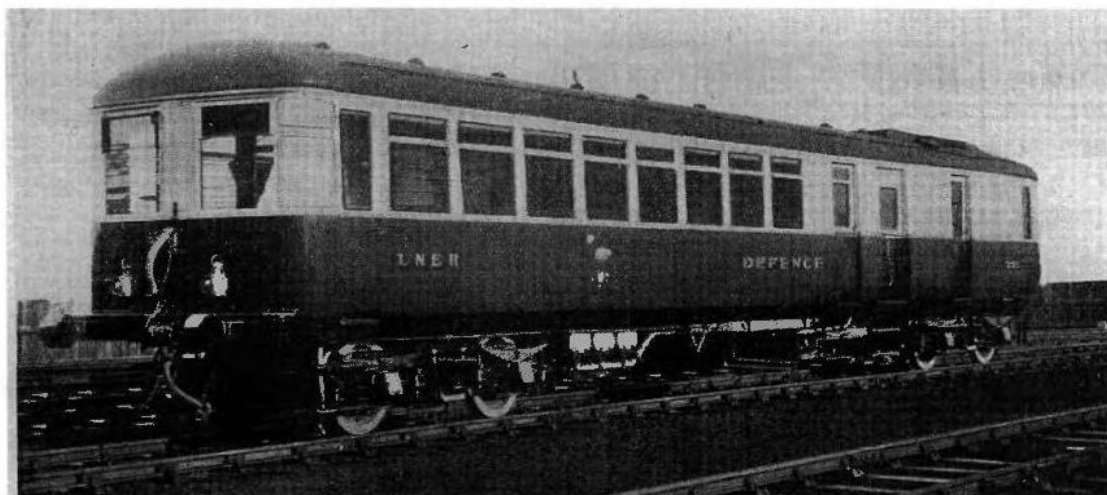


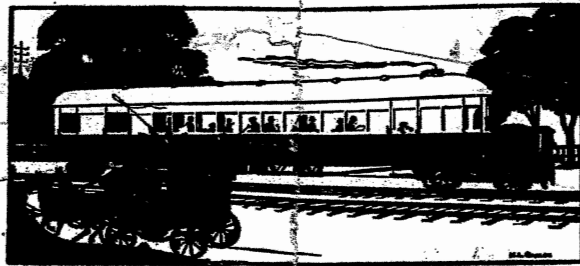
*An unusual visitor to Northgate shed, photographed on 26 May 1953 by Tony Webster: a B1 4-6-0 from Darlington shed.*

quickly forked left and split into two tracks. Of these, the line straight ahead passed the small coaling tower and then the water tower, proceeding to the two road depot. At the depot entrance to the left was a small building where the loco sand was kept. The depot could house 3 tank locomotives on each road. The tender locomotives were usually stabled outside. Before the approach to the depot another track diverged right to the turntable. From this there were three other lines. Straight across was enough track length to stable one tank locomotive.

Between this short track and the depot was a track as long as the depot. Between this track and the depot building was an old grounded carriage body. The remaining track led back to the depot entrance running the goods yard side of the coaling and water towers. This was where the larger visiting freight locomotives were stabled especially at weekends. The depot offices were at the dead end of the building overlooking the cutting.

In 1950 the depot had an allocation of two J10 0-6-0s, five C13 4-4-2Ts and two N5 0-6-2Ts - a strong ex GCR allocation, though a few years earlier it had been home to a GNR C12 4-4-2T, and before that my father talked about LNER steam railcars.





## ADDITIONAL STEAM RAIL CARS

(One class only)

## CHESTER and CONNAH'S QUAY and SHOTTON

Chester (Northgate ...	...	...	...	dep.	p.m. 6 35
Liverpool Road ...	...	...	...	"	6 38
Blacon ...	...	...	...	"	6 42
Saughall ...	...	...	...	"	6 47
Welsh Road Halt ...	...	...	...	"	6 51
Connah's Quay and Shotton ...	...	...	...	arr.	6 56
Connah's Quay and Shotton ...	...	...	...	dep.	p.m. 7 8
Welsh Road Halt ...	...	...	...	"	7 14
Saughall ...	...	...	...	"	7 17
Blacon ...	...	...	...	"	7 22
Chester (Liverpool Road ...	...	...	...	"	7 27
Northgate ...	...	...	...	arr.	7 30

MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS INCLUSIVE  
Commencing 1st JANUARY, 1930.

LNER

London, December, 1929.

*A 1929 LNER leaflet advertising their 1930 steam railcar service. The service between Northgate and Saughall took 12 minutes, whereas the present day bus service takes over twice as long!*

The J10s were for shunting the goods yard, local pickup freights and banking coal trains from Mickle Trafford to Chester. The C13s worked the push/pull trains to Shotton and the Manchester service, whilst the N5s worked some services to Wrexham and local freight. Gradually the GCR locomotives were replaced by ex LMSR locomotives after the depot became an LMR depot in 1948. First the trial of an LNWR 2-4-2T followed more successfully by Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2Ts and their BR successors, then came 3MT and 4MT Fowler 2-6-2Ts and 2-6-4Ts. Finally a batch of five new BR 2-6-0s 78055-59 (plus two earlier ones also drafted in). So just before the closure of the depot to steam on 4 January 1960, the allocation in 1959 was two Ivatt/BR 2-6-2Ts, five BR 2-6-0s and four Fowler 2-6-4Ts. After it ceased operation as a steam depot it was still used to stable the new dmus, with one 2-car set per track. Maintenance of the locomotives was carried out in the depot, though by the mid 1950s 67413/33 & 69274 were all under repair in the LMS 6A depot.

At weekends the depot stabled up to five freight locomotives that had arrived at Dee Marsh Sidings - always Gorton 39A locomotives - a few also went to Bidston 6F depot. All these were predominantly the various sub classes of Robinson 2-8-0s. The next most numerous were the Gresley 0-6-0 J39 class and some smaller J11 'Pom-pom' 0-6-0s, and a few K3 2-6-0s. After the electrification of the Woodhead (Sheffield - Manchester) route there was a gradual increase in ex LMSR locomotives



taking over the Yorkshire coal trains in the Heaton Mersey area, though not always allocated there eg LNWR 49405 (5/2/55), 49134 (1/12/56); 48432 (23/1/55), WDs 90321 (31/1/55), 90113 (15/12/56). By 1960 the freight trains were being worked by diesel locomotives (class 37s and class 40s) which did not need to visit the depot. From time to time the depot hosted Wrexham 6E and Bidston 6F locomotives on their way for works overhaul eg 47672 on 8/6/54, 68065 on 6/5/56 possibly to Darlington, and an unrecorded date for 68583 a J67 probably on a long journey from Wrexham to Stratford!



No. 82037 leaving Blaenau with a Chester Northgate to Wrexham Central train on 24 May 1959, (Syd Wainwright photo).

## **CHESTER MODEL RAILWAY CLUB NORTHGATE STATION CLUBROOMS**

**by Laurence Wheeler**

The Chester Model Railway Club was formed in 1951, making it in the top five oldest of such organisations in the country. In the early 1960s the committee arranged to rent the former refreshment rooms in the main buildings of the Northgate station. The accommodation consisted of the third class refreshment room some 50'x30', and the first class refreshment room about 30'x30'. The class distinctions were etched into the window glass, presumably there was a shared counter separating the rooms, but all trace of that had gone. Heating was by way of an open fire sometimes lit in the winter. The main room contained the enclosure for the platform clock, but the faces and mechanism were also long gone. I don't know when the refreshment room closed, no doubt a reader will let us know. The main access was via double doors on to the station approach road (approximately the present course of Victoria road in front of the Northgate Leisure Centre. This was used by Crosville as an overspill bus parking area, and some interesting specimens appeared, to the delight of those in the Club interested in such things. There was also a door on to the platform, and the deal

included use of the station toilets and a key to the train crew room for access to water etc.

Exhibitions were dead simple, sweep the floor, do some advertising and charge people to come in. The club had several exhibitions in just such a manner, presumably without the knowledge of the landlord, and I do wonder if we even had third party insurance for such events. Marathons they were, seven days every day from one Saturday to the next, except Sundays. Trade support was provided by 'Blackburn's' who at that time had a very small shop in White Friars in Chester. Live steam in the shape of an elevated 3½/5 inch track gave rides behind the operators of the 00 gauge layout.

The writer lied about his age to join the Club (not quite as brave as those who did similar in 1914) so could be found hanging about on Friday club nights from early evening. I remember the loco hauled service featured in Syd Wainwright's photo in a previous edition, which I was told was loco hauled on a Friday only. The loco was usually a standard 5, often a Caprotti version if I recall, and pushed the train round the triangle and disappeared back empty stock as soon as possible. One of the signalmen, one Bob Beale, was a member of the Club, and on afternoon shifts spent much time in the clubroom. After cessation of the Wrexham services there was plenty of time between trains, the hourly service of today being well in to the future. Young Club members, including the writer, were invited to 'help' with signalling the trains. I suspect this was where the coal for the fire came from as well.

The station closed in October 1969, but the club's tenancy continued as before. However a disused station attracts the wrong sort, and by the next spring the lead had been stripped off the roof by thieves disguised as 'contractors'. This prompted an emergency evacuation, with rain pouring in through the roof, to temporary premises at the racecourse. The Club then had a peripatetic existence around rented premises, until, using proceeds from the railtours, we were able to purchase our own property in the railway village of Saltney Ferry. But that, as they say, is another story.



*A class 108 dmu is parked between the platforms while another is just entering the station, on 29 June 1968.*

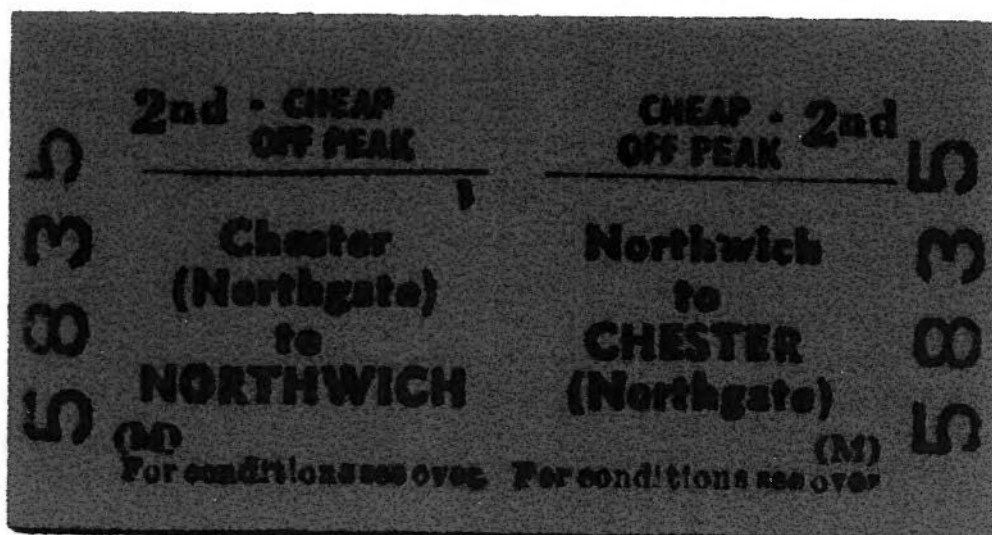
The main photo (below) is obviously a press photo, but I can't remember the occasion; it may have been in connection with an exhibition. The presence of a DMU to Wrexham dates it before September 1968, although looking at myself probably only just before that date. The individuals are (left to right) Ted Riches, Laurence Wheeler, Ken Wood, Ted Young, Barrie Peel, Bill Iles, Richard Raymond and Gordon Grey. All bar the second, third and fifth, all now deceased.

The station closed after departure of the 22.00 hrs to Manchester Central, and the arrival at 23.15 hrs of the 22.00 hrs from Manchester. Official sources give the closure date as 6th October 1969, (which my computer tells me is a Monday), but the last trains ran the previous Saturday. Presumably the Sunday trains were 'bustituted' perhaps in connection with engineering works at Mickle Trafford to divert the service to Chester General. All in all, one of the more sensible closures/diversions of the 1960s.



*(Left to right: Ted Riches, Laurence Wheeler, Ken Wood, Ted Young, Barrie Peel, Bill Iles, Richard Raymond, Gordon Grey – all but the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> are now deceased)*

The tickets show the return to Northwich and a platform ticket issued on that fateful night. The last departure and last arrival were greeted by a fanfare of detonators, courtesy of Signaller Beale, and we arrived back in the cab along with about twenty other people!



Enlargement of the train ticket mentioned above; dated on the reverse "04OCT69", the original was printed on a dark red card, and so does not copy well.



The platform ticket (remember them??), also dated on the back.

### Keeping the Railway Running

Whilst researching BR documents held at our clubroom, I came across the following in Part 1 Section 6 – ‘Accidents, Fire and Bad Weather’ of the British Railways *General Appendix to Working Timetables and books of Rules and Regulations* (page 6.3 of BR Document 29944).

Entitled ‘Fatalities to Persons on Running lines’ the brief paragraph is unambiguous:-

**"Where a fatality has occurred on a running line, the body should be moved clear of the rails immediately in order to prevent delay to trains. The position in which the body was found must always be carefully noted and suitably marked out. The Police must then be informed as quickly as possible."**

In today’s ‘Health & Safety’-obsessed society the priorities shown seem prehistoric in nature.

Oh, by the way, the date of the document? 6<sup>th</sup> June 1981 – not that long ago at all.

(Richard Oldfield).

## **Lanarkshire Models & Supplies buffers**

Every so often, new products appear which "raise the bar" in terms of quality and value for money. The new range of wagon and carriage buffers from Lanarkshire Models & Supplies certainly come into this category. To be blunt, they are superb both in accuracy and fidelity. David Franks, who runs Lanarkshire Models & Supplies, is not compromising with this range, which is great news for the serious maker of rolling stock.

The range at the moment is listed below:

B001	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 4 rib 13" head, 2 with lugs
B002	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 4 rib 13" head
B003	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 4 rib 13" head (different from B002)
B004	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" 4 rib 13" head
B005	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" 4 rib 13" head - With welded collar
B006	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 2 rib 13" head
B007	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 4 rib 16" head
B008	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" 2 rib 13" head
B009	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 2 rib 13" head - Fabricated buffer
B010	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" 4 rib 16" head
B011	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 13" head -self contained
B012	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" 13" head - self contained
B013	Wagon Buffer 1'6"-1'8½"13" head - self contained
B014	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" 16" head - self contained
B015	Wagon Buffer 1'8½" oval head - self contained, with step
B016	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"2 rib 16" head - Buffer clipped top and bottom
B017	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"4 rib 16" head - Buffer clipped top and bottom
B018	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"13"head- self contained with step
B019	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"13"head- GWR 2 rib fitted buffer
B020	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 13"head- GWR 2 rib buffer
B021	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"13"head- early GWR, no ribs, base with rounded corners.
B022	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"13"head- GWR self contained, six ribs
B023	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"16"head- GWR self contained, six ribs
B024	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 4 rib 13" head- with step.
B025	Wagon Buffer 1'6" 4 rib 16" head- with step
B026	Wagon Buffer 1'8½"16"head- Southern Railway 4 wheel CCT, PMV, BY

Myself and Richard Oldfield have already ordered a large cross section of the range and each we have is excellent. The castings are sharp with virtually no flash to worry about. The white-metal castings are so defined that we are using the buffers without the need to replace the buffer-heads.

Future developments include sprung versions and some more modern type buffers as well as various coupling hooks and other goodies. I have already seen a test casting for Gresley style coach buffers and the results look very promising.

The highest compliment I can say is that this range will be used extensively on all future rolling stock projects which are for "Mostyn".

[Note: although manufactured by Lanarkshire Models & Supplies, the buffers are marketed through an associated company : Nairnshire Modelling Supplies, PO Box 6078, NAIRN IV12 5WU (tel. 01667 451130). Each packet of four buffers costs £1.95].

(Iain Kirk).

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#### **Mold Junction No.2 Signal Box – Information Request**

Can you help?

Well-known EM modeller, Tim Easter, is planning a future layout based on Mold Junction in the early 1960s.

He is looking for photographs/drawings of Mold Junction No.2 signal box – apparently one of the sides of this box was rarely photographed but I'm sure he would appreciate any photographs and/or help offered.

Please contact Tim via the Editor in the first instance.

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## **Stone train detective**

**by Dave Millward**

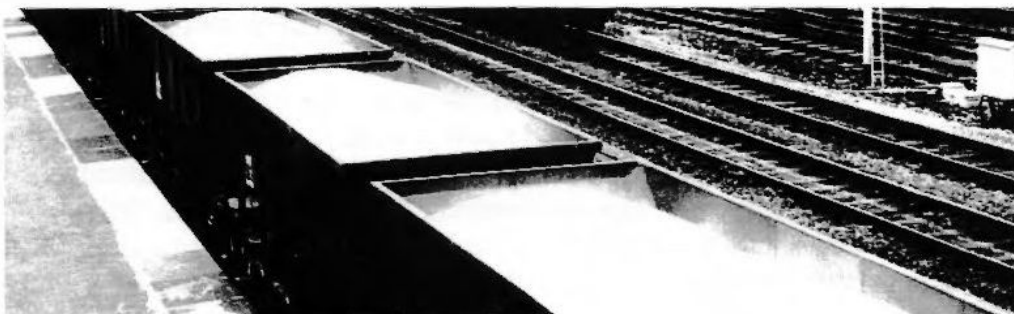
A significant part of our current stock building activity at Barrowmore MRG for “Mostyn” is a fleet of 69 ex-ironstone hoppers for the sulphur traffic between Mostyn dock and Amlwch (49 wagons) and the granite chippings flow between the Kingston Minerals quarry at Penmaenmawr and Hope Street, Salford, for road-stone use (20 wagons). Despite many hours of research little photographic evidence of the stone flow in the mid to late 70s has come to light. However, we have received assistance from the Railfreight Archive, in the form of first hand observations made during trips along the North Wales coast in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including details from old TOPS printouts. During several exchanges we have discovered that there were actually two customers for granite chippings at the Hope Street site in our period: Thrutchley & Co (Cawood) whose preference was for open ex-ironstone tippler wagons due to their lack of hopper discharge facilities and the adjacent Staveley lime products company who had recently installed these facilities and preferred their deliveries in the ex-ironstone hoppers, which are the subject of this article.





*Former ironstone tipplers (and Mermaids) at Penmaenmawr in 1976*

The Working Timetables (WTTs) for our period, also available on Dave Plimmer's excellent 2D53 website, have provided valuable information about the flow of granite chippings along the North Wales coast. In the summer of 1977 there was a 0757 Tuesdays and Thursdays conditional path from Penmaenmawr as 8F22 to Sandhills, Liverpool; this became 8J22 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the destination changed to Hope Street, Salford. Our source at the Railway Archive further explained that the Sandhills site had no hopper discharge facilities and that such trains were formed of open ex-ironstone tipplers. Thus, a 1977 observer of these trains passing Mostyn could expect to see regular tippler consists with occasional hopper workings interspersed on the Hope Street flow. They had no recollection of mixed open/hopper rakes.



WTTs also assisted with the likely make-up of the consists due to the need for both the Sandhills and Hope Street workings to reverse en-route. In the mid 70s there were substantial numbers of unfitted tipplers and ex-ironstone hoppers and it was rare to see a 'fully fitted' rake of them. The normal method of working on our trains was to run for the greater part of the journey with a 'fitted head' of braked wagons, this assisted the driver with the handling of the train and allowed higher speeds, whilst the 'unfitted' or un-braked portion was to the rear with a guards brakevan being the last

vehicle. This worked well until it was time to run-round or reverse en-route and suddenly the whole train became 'unfitted' with the brakevan at the wrong end, thus, a brakevan had to be provided at both ends of each train and the headcode changed at that point from class 8 'partially fitted' to class 9 'fully unfitted'. An extra point worthy of note being that Penmaenmawr didn't always supply the two destinations with their stone, there are several instances of years when limestone from Peak Forest was the preferred material and the conditional paths from Penmaenmawr vanished from the WTTs.

The returning empties departed Mold Junction for Penmaenmawr at 18.00 regardless of their starting point.

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### ***The other Dee Bridge ...***

Reader John Dixon of Saltney has discovered that members of Lancashire County Libraries enjoy free on-line access to a website containing files of many provincial English newspapers from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What you have to do is join Lancashire Libraries – and you don't have to live or work in the county - and [www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries) is the start of joining on-line, wherever you happen to live. This is obviously an excellent source of information on the re-buildings of the first (Chester) Dee bridge, and one I intend to follow up as time allows. In the meantime, I found this report of the building of the line which is now part of the Bidston-Wrexham route, copied from the *Liverpool Daily Post*, in the issue of the *Cheshire Observer* for 15 June 1895:

#### **“RAILWAY ENTERPRISE IN WIRRAL THE DEE BRIDGE RAILWAY. NEW ROUTE TO NORTH WALES.**

The peninsula of Wirral, although containing little of importance within itself, except from a residential point of view, occupies peculiar position in relation to larger and more important districts, which by it are linked together. A portion of the Lancashire manufacturing district and the North Wales mineral fields, for instance, are two great centres between which Wirral stands, to some extent at all events, as a dividing territory, and so long as it cannot be bridged, its circumvention necessitates a considerable detour. On the longer distances this does not amount to a large proportion of the whole journey, but on the briefer routes it is considerable. But, fortunately, these disadvantages, as we shall show presently, will cease to exist before the current year is out, and important territories will be placed in full communication with each other for the first time. The improvement in Wirral railway facilities has been made, as becomes a well-managed community, from inside. In the old days — indeed, within the memory of the grandchildren of the oldest inhabitants — one part of Wirral was absolutely without railways, and that part, too, nearest to the largest town in the Hundred. Not long before that, the outlying districts beyond Bidston, right through to Hoylake and West Kirby, and then onwards along the Sands of Dee, through Thurstaston and Heswall to Parkgate, were also innocent of the inroad of railways. Less than thirty years ago the only communication between Birkenhead and the townships named, together with the many intervening hamlets, was by 'bus and coach, running once a day from the larger villages, and more seldom from those

(continued on page 32 ...)



*A contemporary engraving of Hawarden Bridge (it was opened and formally so named by Mrs Gladstone in 1889 – although several miles from Hawarden village which was the Gladstone's home). The bridge predates John Summers' steelworks by several years.*

*The two fixed spans (each 120ft long) are on the south-west bank of the river, while the longer 285ft span is on the north-east side; this latter part was at first moveable (to allow the passage of larger vessels at high tide, and actuation was by machinery housed in the brick tower just visible to the right in the upper view). This swinging span cannot now be opened and the hydraulic tower and machinery were demolished in 1980. There is a public footpath/cycleway alongside the railway line.*

of less importance. But to-day there is hardly a village of size throughout the Hundred of Wirral which is not actually within reasonable distance of a railway station or shortly will be so.



The new line is in connection with the Dee Bridge from Burton to Connah's Quay, and taps the hitherto neglected centre of Wirral. This extension was authorised to the Wirral Company, but they have transferred it to the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Company, and by them it is being carried out. The old Hoylake line belonged

to the Seacombe, Hoylake, and Deeside Railway, but they have been absorbed by the Wirral, who are now the holders of all the lines from the Park Station to the termini at West Kirby, New Brighton, and Seacombe respectively, all being under the capable management of Mr. S. J. Carr. From Woodside Station, through Rock Ferry, Hooton, Neston, and Heswall, and on to West Kirby, the joint companies - London and North-Western and Great Western Railways are the owners; and from the junction with the Wirral at Bidston to the new Dee Bridge, the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire are the authorities in possession; the line joining on the Cheshire side with their old section from Connah's Quay to Chester, and on the Welsh side with the Wrexham, Mold, and Connah's Quay lines.

Dealing now with the Dee Bridge Railway, a junction is formed at the Old Bidston Cabin with the existing Wirral line from the Park to Hoylake, and it runs thence to the westward of Bidston village, close to which is the first station, not far from the third milestone from Woodside Ferry. Going south, the line crosses the Upton road near the Ford Bridge (Woodside Ferry  $3\frac{3}{4}$  miles), where the Upton Station will be. The rough course of the Fender Brook is followed in a long smooth curve to the Woodchurch road, which is crossed near the Prenton Bridge. Cyclists will remember the spot from the circumstance that it is in the valley at the foot of the long hill which runs down from the Half-way House on the Birkenhead side, and which mounts gradually up to Arrowe Hall gates on the other. But just before reaching here the line takes an inclination to the left, and at the bottom of Holme-lane the Woodchurch Station is planned for. For here the branch way runs nearly parallel with the Woodchurch road to the Half-way House and thence across the fields to the foot of Kingsland-road, where the Oxton Station is planned. Thence, keeping at first on the Oxton side of the Borough-road, and then cutting under the Tranmere hill, a junction is to be formed with the present Central Station, Borough-road. This section, which is not being proceeded with at present, would give direct communication with Liverpool from Woodchurch, Oxton, and the Devonshire Park district, as well as a shorter route from Upton than that which is now being completed. Doubtless it will be taken up in the not distant future. Returning to the main line from the bridge across the Woodchurch-road, midway between Little Storeton on the left hand, with Landican and Thingwall on the right, Prenton Station is reached. From here the line keeps straight on for Little Neston, running not through but between the village on the way. For instance, after leaving the Prenton station it runs between Barnston and Brimstage, then Thornton Hough and Gayton, rather nearer to the latter; then past Leighton and Neston, both being to the right, or Dee side of the lines. Next Ness is passed, and on beyond Denhall and Burton, across the marsh to the Dee Bridge, joining the Wrexham and Mold lines on the Welsh side. From here it is a



*Hawarden Bridge, 18 May 1982 (John Dixon). I have never seen an illustration of the first station here, opened in 1924 by the L.N.E.R., but I suspect it was also not overly extravagant!*

straight run to Wrexham, passing Hawarden, Hope Junction, and Hope, right into to the Brymbo and Wrexham colliery district. Loop lines at the Connah's Quay end give access to the Northop and Buckley district, as well as to the Flint Chemical Works, so that a most valuable connection will be made with the very heart of the North Wales mineral traffic. Indeed, from the Bidston junction the line to Wrexham, if not actually as the crow flies, is practically a straight run, and the distance from Birkenhead to Hawarden, for instance, is decreased by about ten miles, while Wrexham is probably seven miles nearer than by the old route. Not only so, but the line is likely to be far more serviceable even than the decreased distance might indicate, for there are a multitude of circumstance in the way of crossings, sidings, and junctions which do not appear on the new way, but are bound to occur at such a junction as Chester. The coal from North Wales, of which an enormous quantity comes to Birkenhead, at present has to go through Connah's Quay, Chester, and Hooton, and undergoes great delay in transit, but it is hoped that by the new line both delay and distance will be much decreased, as the route is almost a straight one from the collieries into the Birkenhead docks. It is also to be hoped for Birkenhead that an increment of trade to her neglected dock estate may ensue. Certainly with the facilities promised ships will be almost as accessible at Birkenhead as at Connah's Quay itself, and, of course, far larger vessels can be accommodated. For coaling the great ocean steamers, trucks will be run right from the collieries to the coal tips and discharged into the waiting flats before they could have reached the district under the old arrangement.

For passenger traffic in Wirral itself the advantages are very evident, for instead of going to North Wales *via* Chester either by the short route through Birkenhead or the interminable way by Runcorn, a much briefer one is supplied through the Tunnel to

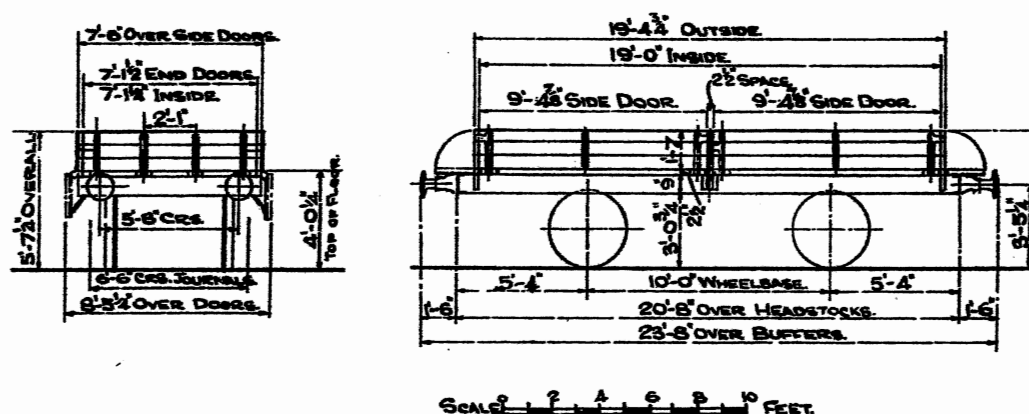
Park Station, and on through the Dee Lines. This communication through the Tunnel to Liverpool is not available for goods traffic, but if it were, the success of the companies concerned, hopeful enough now, would be an assured fact. As it is, however, the new line, which will be opened before the year is out, is bound to prove of great service to the whole of Wirral, to the Flintshire and other mineral fields, and to the coal dealers at Birkenhead docks. A beautiful district hitherto inaccessible will be opened up for residential purposes. Most of the permanent way is already laid. Passers through Wirral are half familiarised with the rushing of locomotives and the rattle of trucks, and in a few months more the peninsula of Wirral will have another, if not a final, addition to the network of railways which will make it one of the best-served districts of its size in the whole kingdom.

- *Liverpool Daily Post.* ”

## Editor's page

More on **Manulla Junction** (last issue, pages 34/36): I have discovered that this station was closed to passengers between 17 June 1963 and 7 November 1988; the only photograph from this period I have seen (1985, showing a goods train) depicts a scene of dereliction. The few passenger timetables from that period that I have access to, suggest that a change of trains was necessary at Claremorris (the adjacent station on the Dublin-Westport line) to get to or from Ballina. Further investigation is indicated!

More on **L.M.S. ballast wagons** - 'Sole' in B.R. parlance - (last issue, cover and page 2):



The LMS wagons were built to their diagrams D1954 (above) and the almost identical D2095; 3160 were constructed between 1936 and 1947, with running numbers between 740000 and 743159. The B.R.-built examples were to the very similar diagram 1/565, and production totalled just 350 before introduction of the B.R. Grampus design.

### Recent books (and CDs/DVDs):

*Private owner wagons: an eighth collection* by Keith Turton. Lightmoor, 2009. ISBN 978 1 899889 42 6. £19.95p. (Includes John Williams (Anglesey), Buckley Junction Metallic Brick, B.Q.C., Pwllheli Granite, Seddon's, plus 60 others).



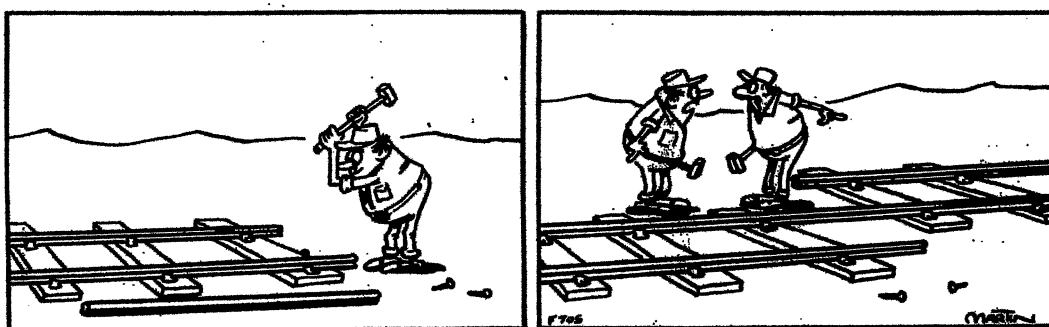
*Railway stations in County Mayo: Claremorris Railway Station, Manulla Junction, Foxford Railway Station, Ballyhaunis Railway Station, Ballina Railway Station, Castlebar Railway Station, Westport Railway Station.* Books LLC (Memphis, USA), 2010. ISBN 978 1 15738516 5. £9.93p. (A strange little book which indexes Wikipedia articles, etc., on these subjects).

*Shrewsbury to Chester* by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith. Middleton, 2010. (Western main lines series). ISBN 978 1 906008 70 3. £15.95p.

*Bangor* by Bill Rear. (Scenes from the past, no.14: railways of North Wales series). Foxline, 1992. ISBN 1 870119 18 5

*British railway DMUs in colour, for the modeller and historian* by Gavin Morrison. Ian Allan, 2010. ISBN 978 0 7110 3472 3. £16.99p.

## ***BUT is there a Prototype for THIS?***



Courtesy of 'Evening Post', Reading

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## **A blast from the past ....**

By the Editor

The photo (on the next page) was among some negatives loaned to me by John Dixon of Saltney, and shows the Liverpool Exchange station, in March 1977 – a month before it closed for passengers on 30 April 1977. This was the terminus for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway lines to the north and north-east of Liverpool, and was originally opened in May 1850.

In the 1950s, I was a frequent visitor to the College of Commerce which was also in Tithebarn Street; but in those days, I had no interest in railways – I was a ship modeller. Besides, I too suffered from 'it'll-always-be-there' syndrome, and I never went in. Luckily, John Dixon was apparently more prescient, when he took this photograph! My limited knowledge of Exchange comes from the 1980s when Merseyside M.R.C. was collaborating with the Liverpool club in organising model railway exhibitions in Liverpool: we looked at the former station site – by this time a shopping mall – as a potential venue, but the lack of car-parking plus the limited floor area ruled it out. I remember we used to meet in the pub visible on the left of the picture (the Red Lion?? – a Thwaites house??).



**Contents: December 2010 issue (no.25):**

Next issue; cover illustration; forthcoming events .....	2
"The last Newton" by Norman Lee .....	3/5
Workshop notes, no.22 (What to do when you break a hacksaw blade) .....	6/9
"Dad had an engine shed" (Tony Robinson) + book review by Norman Lee .....	9/10
"Shrewsbury to Chester" book review by John Dixon .....	11
The "Bangor" layout .....	12/16
"The chain bridge at Berwyn" by Bob Miller .....	17/18
"Essential model railroad scenery techniques" book review by Iain Kirk .....	19
'A late night reveller remembers' .....	19
"Northgate reflections, part 4: The MPD" by Eric Gent .....	20/23
"Chester Model Railway Club Northgate Station clubrooms" by Laurence Wheeler .....	23/26
'Keeping the railway running' .....	26
Lanarkshire Models & Supplies buffers – reviewed by Iain Kirk .....	27/28
Mold Junction No.2 signal box .....	28
"Stone train detective" by Dave Millward .....	28/30
"The other Dee bridge (Railway enterprise in Wirral)" .....	30/34
Editor's page .....	34/35
Liverpool Exchange station 1977 .....	35/36