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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 June 2011, and contributions should get to the Editor as soon as possible, but at least before 1 May 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 by the late Mike Morton Lloyd, of Barrow station. Mike's photos are held by the Welsh Railways Research Circle ([www.wrrc.org.uk](http://www.wrrc.org.uk)) – images, mainly from the 1950s and 1960s, many of them taken when Mike lived on the Wirral. At that time, when I believe he was a member of Merseyside Model Railway Society, his membership did not coincide with that of the Editor. He later worked for the Wye River Board and lived in Hereford. The W.R.R.C. holds over 5,000 of his negatives, and prints are marketed by them. He was also a skilled 7mm scale modeller – mainly of Cambrian Railways subjects – and is the author of *Private owners on the Cambrian*, published in 1998 by the W.R.R.C., and long out of print.

This view of **Barrow for Tarvin** station was taken in 1951 – just two years before closure – looking west from the road overbridge on the B5132 road.

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## **Forthcoming events**

### **(2011)**

**19 Mar. 2011:** 7mm running track (American), Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

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

**9/10 Apr. 2011:** S4 North, Wakefield.

**16 Apr. 2011:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

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

**30 Apr. 2011:** 7mm running track (American), Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**30 Apr./1 May 2011:** Liverpool show.

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

**21 May 2011:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

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

**18 Jun. 2011:** 7mm running track (American), Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**10 Jul. 2011:** Gresford 7mm Group show (see Editor for details).

**23 Jul. 2011:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**6 Aug. 2011:** 7mm running track (American), Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**20 Aug. 2011:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

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

## Chester Model Railway Club Clubrooms since 1951

by Robert Griffiths

Like a wandering band of minstrels looking for somewhere to play, for 42 years, the members of Chester Model Railway Club led a fairly nomadic existence, being forced to move from clubroom to clubroom at regular intervals. For many years there was little thought to owning somewhere and the club could only afford to rent premises that were in somewhat rundown condition and of little use to others. This obviously made them cheaper to rent. However, as the premises owners realised the value of their asset the club had to move out. What you are reading here is the tale of our club's travels and one of eventual triumph over adversity.

The Club was founded 60 years ago and its inaugural meeting was held on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 1951 at the City Arms Hotel (now called the Temple Bar) in Frodsham Street, Chester. At that meeting it was reported that the club had been offered the use of a large room (30ft x 12ft) above the shop of *Messrs H Baker Boot & Shoe Repairers* of Brooke Street Chester for a rental of 7/6d (37½p per week). It was agreed to book the room for a period of one month pending further enquiries. Club-night was Friday evening.

### *The Ermine Hotel*

The Brooke Street room was only a temporary base and at the committee meeting 16<sup>th</sup> March 1951 it was reported that negotiations with the Birkenhead Brewery Co for the hire of a large room in the Ermine Hotel (at the junction of Ermine Road and Hoole



*The Ermine Hotel - now the Flookersbrook pub)*

Road, just north of the railway station - now The Flookersbrook) at £36 pa. This was approved and the club set up its 4mm and 7mm layouts at the new premises. To defray the substantial cost of the new premises, new members were needed and to this end open nights over three days were organised at which over 150 people attended.

Following this a series of annual exhibitions were held at the Town Hall, the first of which took place over the Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 1952, admission 1/-adults & 6d children; the total attendance was 4146! It's interesting to note that during the show, the club had complaints of causing radio and TV interference and two members were detailed to fit suppressors to locos. At the 1954 AGM it was reported that The Ermine Hotel was scheduled for modernisation and members should look out for new premises.

### *The Northgate Station*

With the imminent rebuilding of the Ermine Hotel the committee met at Chester Northgate Station on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1955 and inspected the refreshment room and canteen in the main station building in Victoria Road (on the present site of the Northgate Arena) and it was agreed to rent the premises from British Railways.



Renovation work was to be carried out by contractors in such a way that the rooms could be returned to their original use. The rent was to be £40 p.a. No date can be found for the move to the Northgate Station Clubroom but it must have been soon after the June meeting. The clubrooms consisted of two rooms, one being 50ft x 20ft and the other 20ft x 30ft. So began a very stable period for the club, staying at the Northgate for over 13 years. In the early sixties, Town Hall exhibitions were abandoned in favour of a weekend and weeknight opening of the clubroom to the general public.

I joined the club in 1968 and by that time the main room at Northgate was filled with a magnificent OO layout 48ft x 6ft named Ash Road. As a junior member I was consigned to making the tea on a club night and washing up afterwards. Water had to be obtained from a tap in the gent's toilet. I remember security being a major issue and there were two or three key-holders, each with a different key, which meant they all had to turn up before we could get into the clubroom.

The railway line to Shotton closed to passengers on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1968 and Chester Northgate closed on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1969, after which the Manchester (via Northwich) trains were diverted, at Mickle Trafford, to Chester General Station. The club had been given notice to leave the Northgate but was beaten to it by scrap men or thieves who removed lead flashing from the roof causing a hasty evacuation on a very damp weekend in October 1969.

#### *The Dale Camp*

Initially, no proper accommodation could be found but through the auspices of the treasurer, John Raymond, winter storage and a meeting room were found at Chester Racecourse in the function rooms by the walls. The contacts of another member, Ron Rising, who worked for the army at Western Command, enabled the club to secure a hut at the Dale Camp in Upton off Liverpool Road. We moved into Hut No.130 in spring 1970. The hut had been used as a band room and was fitted with barred windows and 3-4KW fan heaters on the wall. However, drinking water and toilet facilities were located in the main building some 75yards away. The local hostelry was the Frog Hotel which became the regular venue after club-night as well as the venue for film shows. The room measured 70ft x 20ft so there was plenty of space for the OO, TT, N gauge and a new OO9 layout to be built.

During the following years annual exhibitions were revived at various locations including the Talbot ballroom Lower Bridge Street and Ellesmere Port Civic Hall. The lease for Dale Camp ended on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1978 due to modernisation of the camp by the army. As there were no immediate prospects of new premises, storage space was obtained on the camp. Laurence Wheeler hired the van for removal and Hut 130 was emptied by 12<sup>th</sup> May

#### *Lowes Removals*

Enquiries which included a farm building in Saughall, Saughton Camp and Chester Diesel Depot, were made about new premises during the summer of 1978, all of which came to nothing. Lowes Removals, of Tarvin Road, had heard of our plight through one of their employees and made contact with the club. The rent being asked for was £250 p.a., over six times what was being paid twenty years earlier, but following meetings on 16<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September the committee agreed to accept Lowes offer. A general meeting was arranged to inform members and seek volunteers to help with renovation. The accommodation consisted of one large room, approximately 40ft x 30ft, on the top floor of a store which was bounded by Tarvin Road, Filkin's Lane

and Boughton Hall Cricket Ground. To gain access, a new staircase was fitted with a landing at the top. The original building had had a lean-to extension built on to it with steel roof trusses attached to the wall. One of these trusses cleared our staircase by some 3ft making access to the clubroom with a bit of an assault course especially with a 6ft long baseboard! Members painted the walls and fitted new lighting and sockets. The room was heated using portable bottled gas stoves; the gas bottle weighed 17kg (just over 37lb) and had to be changed by the member with the shortest straw! This was quite a task, because access to the premises was via a small gate, down an alleyway from Filkin's Lane, and no cars were allowed into Lowes yard. Following renovation, the club moved in on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1978. At a subsequent EGM it was agreed to increase subscriptions to £12 to help subsidise the rent.

However, after less than six years, Lowes decided to relocate their business at the industrial estate in Sealand Road and sell their Tarvin Road premises and notice of termination of tenancy of Lowes Removals from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1984 was received. The premises have now been redeveloped into housing.

### *Chester Enterprise Centre*

Once again the club had to find a new home and all normal enquiries were fruitless. Fortunately, a visitor to the club reported that his father had worked for National Carriers at the old LNWR goods shed adjacent to Chester Station and that, although the ground floor was being converted for use by small starter businesses, the whole of the upper floor was empty. Following meetings between Laurence Wheeler, Stuart Dickinson and Chris Attril, manager of the Chester Enterprise Centre, it was agreed



*The eastern end of the former goods shed – the background of so many of the Editor's photographs of wagons at Chester station over several decades. The bogie bolster is DB040171, in departmental use on electrification duties.*

that the club would have an area of 50ft x 35ft at the end of the bay adjacent to Lightfoot Street, at the Hoole Road end of the building. Rent, inclusive of rates, was £400 p.a. The club built a wooden partition wall and installed lighting and sockets and there was a separate mains supply fitted. The total cost of works and materials was



approximately £1500. The official opening was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1984 at which a presentation was made to Stuart Dickinson, a long standing member, on the occasion of him leaving the area.

The whole top floor of this building was accessible from our room and many fittings, from its days as a goods warehouse, such as inclined desks and hoisting machinery, were still in position. The king post roof trusses with their 15inch x 9inch x 50ft long main beams were very impressive and the windows on the station side gave a great vantage point for watching visiting steam locomotives. Notice to leave the Chester Enterprise Centre was received in May 1987, after only two and half years residency and the club had to vacate the premises by the end of August 1987. Following a serious fire in 2010, the future of the building is I doubt, but we hope it will be rebuilt.

*The Enterprise Centre after the fire last year*



#### *42 City Road Chester*

Once again personal contacts provided the club with new premises, this time located above the Home Aids home appliances showroom (now an up-market furniture showroom) in City Road, Chester. The space was in 4 rooms of various sizes with a total area of 1500sq ft. Again the club did the refurbishment before moving in. Rent and other running costs were now in excess of £1200 p.a. and it was decided that the club could no longer finance the construction of layouts. The club took up occupancy on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1987.

Access to the clubroom was by a door on City Road and members parked on the road, one member collecting a parking fine for parking too long during the daytime. Notice to vacate the clubroom by the end of June 1990 was put to an emergency meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1990.

In 1988 the Dee & Mersey Group of the Ffestiniog Railway Society invited the club to become a partner in the organisation and operation of a rail-tour to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway and, as several members had feet in both camps, this was agreed. 'The Bronte Flyer' ran on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1989 and made £166 for the club. The foundation had been set for a very successful partnership which has run more than 35 trips and is still going strong. Exhibitions continued at 18 month intervals although with a reducing attendance. The combination of these enterprises brought about a significant improvement to club funds, especially after the repeated expenditure on renovations to a potential clubroom, only to be kicked out shortly afterwards.

#### *Blacon High School*

On the clubroom front, exhaustive enquiries were made through all the usual channels to find new premises. Enquiries were also made for the use of empty school rooms at Queens Park and Blacon High Schools. After all other leads dried up, the room at Blacon was taken up. The move from City Road to Blacon was set for the 1<sup>st</sup> June

1990. The new premises were far from ideal. The OO layout had to be shortened to fit, and there were serious restrictions on access. The 009 layout, Upton Dale, was a regular on the exhibition circuit at the time and, a 'donation' was required to get the caretaker out to open up the school, just so that we could put the layout back on a Sunday night. Extra storage at the Manor Hospital, Little Sutton, was used to ease the pressure on space and refurbish the old OO9 layout ready for exhibition. The Manor Hospital storage space was vacated in 1991 and replaced by storage at N H Garden's farm in Rossett.

At this time it was decided that the club should endeavour to find and purchase premises to end the constant disruption of finding rented accommodation. Premises at Sandycroft, Gowy Mill, Guilden Sutton and Great Sutton were all investigated. An offer of £8,100 was made for a school kitchen which was unsuccessful. It was eventually sold for £40,000!

#### *Welsh Presbyterian Chapel, Flint Road, Saltney Ferry*

At a special committee meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1992, Laurence Wheeler and Robert Griffiths presented details relating to the Welsh Presbyterian Chapel, Flint Road, Saltney Ferry. The Chapel had several restrictive covenants on it which made the guide price of £40,000 unrealistic and the club was advised that an offer of £25,000 would be nearer the mark. The building was in reasonable condition except for the wooden floors, which were rotten. The club's funds stood at a healthy £13,500 but further finance would still be required. It was agreed to hold a general meeting of members on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November. At this meeting it was agreed by the membership to make an offer for the premises, although not all members were in agreement and there was much discussion on how the extra finance could be arranged. In January 1993 our offer of £18,500 subject to survey was accepted. The survey was very promising and, to further the purchase, a solicitor was engaged. He recommended that the club should reform its own rules and form a Trust to give it legal status. He suggested that loans to the club by members were dangerous and suggested we approach the bank for a loan to cover the shortfall for purchase and renovation.

At an EGM held on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1993, it was formally agreed to buy the present clubroom, appoint four Trustees and approach the Yorkshire Bank for a loan of £10,000. The purchase of the Chapel was completed on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1993.

The original building consisted of three rooms and a hall. Planning permission was applied for and granted, for change of use of the building. Contractors were employed to fit new concrete floors, re-plaster the interior walls, lay a concrete pathway, fit a gate and treat the remaining timber. The President of the club, Ted Young, was keen to see more space in the building and to this end, donated £1,000 towards building a mezzanine floor in the main room. The contractor fitted padstones in the walls and steel beams were installed by members on Saturday morning 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Members then built the floor and staircase. Other work including wiring, repair to the main door, decoration and ground clearance was carried during many weekends over the following months. The move from Blacon was made on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 1993, the new clubroom being formally opened on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July 1994 by the President of the club Ted Young.

To date, the club has spent in the region of £40,000 on major improvements, as funds have allowed, but, with the Chapel, we have been investing in our own long term future rather than someone else's. Some key developments have been:

1999 Concrete driveway

2001 Concrete parking space



2003 New perimeter fence  
2004 Water supply and sewerage connection  
2005 New toilet and kitchen extension  
2007 Re-slating of main roof  
2008 New hardwood front doors  
2009 Windows tastefully bricked up.

Our biggest set back was the break-in and theft of models and tools on or around the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2006, which meant that funds had to be diverted into the improved security measures you see today.

It can be seen that the club has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1951 and it is really important to acknowledge the efforts of the many members of the club, old and new, in keeping the club alive through the years. Their ongoing commitment is witnessed in the current buildings and many other model railway clubs are envious of our position.

In compiling this article I have relied extensively on the carefully archived minutes of club committee and other meetings. I would also like to thank Jim Parrish and Laurence Wheeler for their contributions.

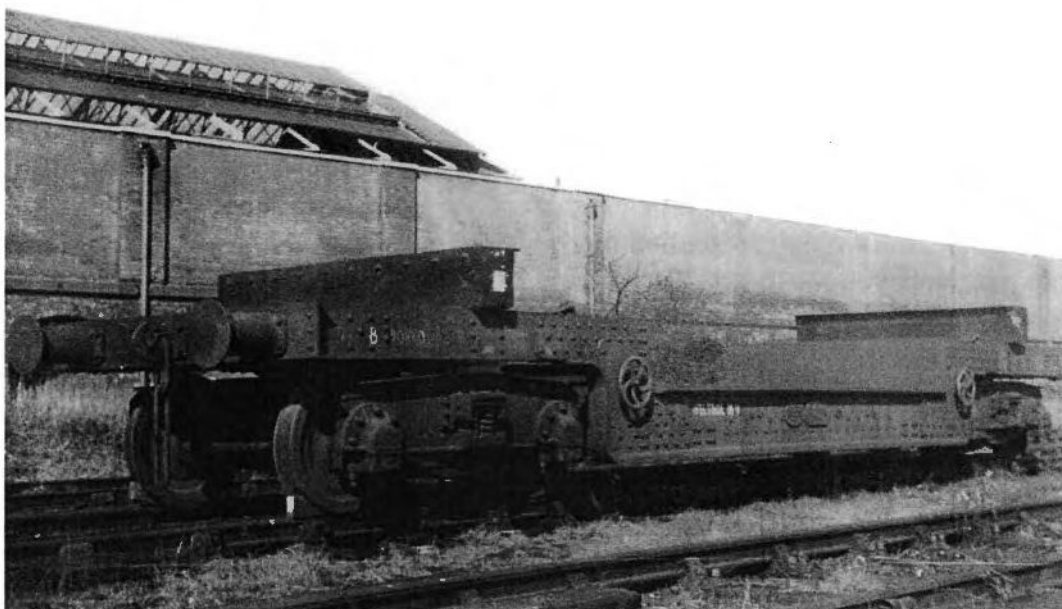
(This is an edited reprint of an article that appeared on the C.M.R.C. website and in their Newsletter: [www.chestermodelrailwayclub.com](http://www.chestermodelrailwayclub.com) )

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## **Northgate reflections no.5: by Eric Gent**

### **The freight scene**

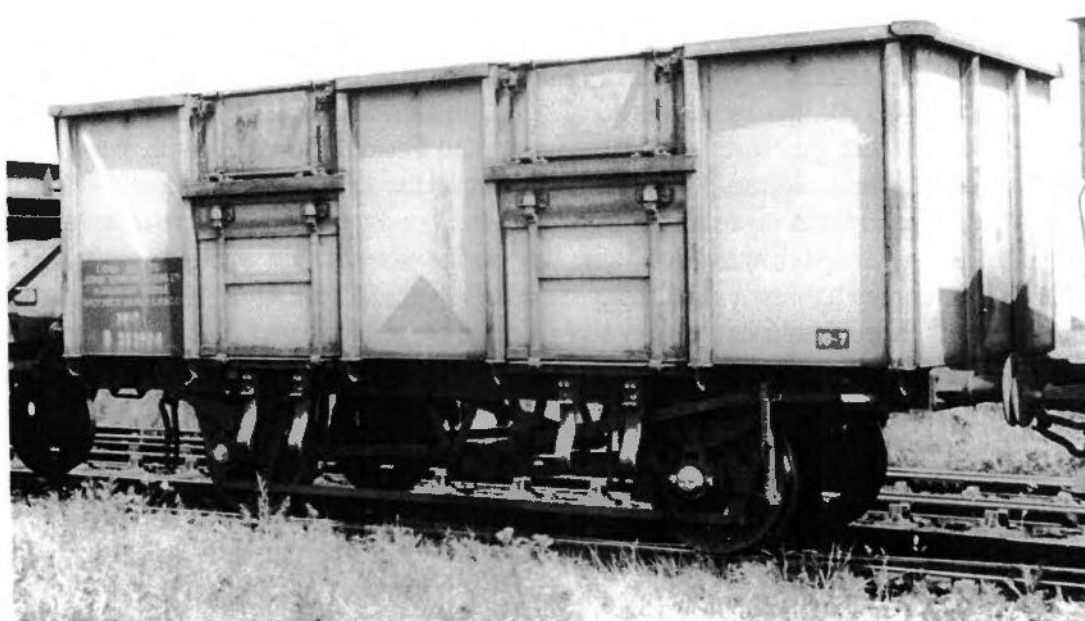
The goods yard at Northgate was normally a sleepy inactive area with one shunting session a day. Occasionally a pick up freight would arrive from Northwich headed by one of their 0-6-0 J10s, though ex MR 43538 (a Johnson Midland 3F) appeared on 30/6/54. Each evening a Northgate J10 struggled up through Saughall with some stock from Dee Marsh sidings and left the wagons in the yard; the BR class 78000s eventually replaced them on these turns. Within the goods yard there were a few designated areas for specific traffics. One line on the eastern side was for coal traffic with coal merchants having a stock/bagging area adjacent to the track, though there were often not more than half a dozen 16T mineral wagons present. When empty some of these wagons were moved to the scrap merchant. Within the yard Fyffes had constructed a cold storage depot. The banana wagons arrived from Garston Docks in Liverpool. I saw them once being detached from the head of a coal train, so presumably they went via Northwich to reach Chester. Two or three vans arrived in a delivery, mostly once a week, though sometimes twice. Normally they were BR standard banana wagons of diag. 1/240 etc. (880000-882637) with a few pre-nationalised vans. The only other regular traffic was scrap iron/steel. This was loaded in a scrap merchant's yard in the station area into 16T mineral wagons and removed when full to the goods yard for onward despatch. One wagon spent much of its life parked in the goods yard immediately below the station. This was a special vehicle, Weltrol MV 901010. As to why it resided at Northgate there was no real answer. It



*Eric Gent's photograph of 40Ton bogie well trolley no.901010 lettered Weltr MV, in the goods yard at Northgate station. This was built to diag. 2/731.*

was most likely to be required at Dee Marsh for heavy steel products leaving the steelworks. However, wagons were known to become lost and hence spend a long time "whereabouts unknown" in pre-TOPS days (and to a lesser extent in TOPS days). I cannot recall any other regular traffic in the yard. Shunting was normally done by an N5 0-6-2T or an 0-6-0 J10 locomotive.

The Manchester to Dee Marsh avoiding line produced a steady stream of heavy coal trains working from South Yorkshire collieries to John Summers steelworks at



*24½ ton mineral wagon no. B282904, built to diag. 1/118*

Hawarden Bridge/Dee Marsh. I have fleeting memories of ex GCR 4-6-0 B7s (and maybe an older Q4 0-8-0) working through Blacon at the end of the 1940s, and quite a vivid recollection of new K1 62016 which a stock allocation list shows as being initially allocated to Gorton depot. All the coal trains were hauled by Gorton depot locomotives from Manchester, the vast majority being variants of Robinson's O4 2-8-0s. Other locomotives did appear; in order of frequency they were Gresley 0-6-0 J39s, GCR J11 0-6-0 Pom poms, and 2-6-0 K3s.

Though I cannot recall it, quite a number of these coal trains received J10 banking assistance from Mickle Trafford to Chester. On reaching Dee Marsh sidings some locomotives proceeded to Bidston depot in Birkenhead for servicing, or were turned on the triangle and returned to Northgate depot, especially at weekends, as no such facilities existed at Dee Marsh. For this coal traffic 24½T unfitted mineral wagons were steadily provided from about 1951. Many such wagons (e.g. 281141-182, 282773-929 and 283304-347) were branded to be returned loaded to J Summers at Hawarden Bridge. The biggest surprise on these coal turns was the appearance of an ex works looking ex GNR 02 2-8-0 63946 on 14th June 1954 - another rare appearance. A mad cycle dash to Liverpool Road station gave us a close up view of the rarity. Once the Manchester - Sheffield Woodhead route had been electrified, it became more common for some of these trains to be hauled by LMSR locomotives especially Stanier 2-8-0s and WD 2-8-0s.



*Enlargement of the branding on Eric's photo of B282904*

When steel production stopped at Dee Marsh, they concentrated on applying various coatings to steel coils. These steel coils were brought in from near Motherwell in Lanarkshire. Though the West Coast mainline had been electrified, the Railfreight Steel sector preferred to use pairs of class 37 diesels throughout on these steel trains, to avoid a loco change of a diesel for an electric locomotive at Warrington. From Warrington they took the LMSR route to Chester changing over to the CLC line at Mickle Trafford to reach Dee Marsh. The coal traffic had by this time ceased.

Eventually the CLC route was closed and the steel trains had to take the more circuitous route through Chester General station and on to Wrexham with a loco run round before descending down via Shotton to Dee Marsh. When Motherwell closed too, the steel coil was brought from Port Talbot and Llanwern in South Wales. The wagons used for this traffic were modern air-braked bogie vehicles, BAAs (900000-305) and longer wheelbased BBA (91000-591 and their variants). Shunting at Dee Marsh by this time was with diesel 08 shunters which were maintained there and so stayed there for considerable periods of time.

One final comment. Blaen goods yard was virtually never used and the signal box was locked up for very long periods. Occasionally a few PW wagons would be parked there. At one stage when John Summers works were about to use new shock absorbing wagons for transporting finished steel products the yard was filled up with



*B724168, branded 'Empty to Hawarden Bridge/LMR (GC)'.*

them for many weeks in 1955. Eventually at least 724179-233, 725163-196/257-334 and 726050-099 (diag. 1/052) were all branded for use from Dee Marsh.

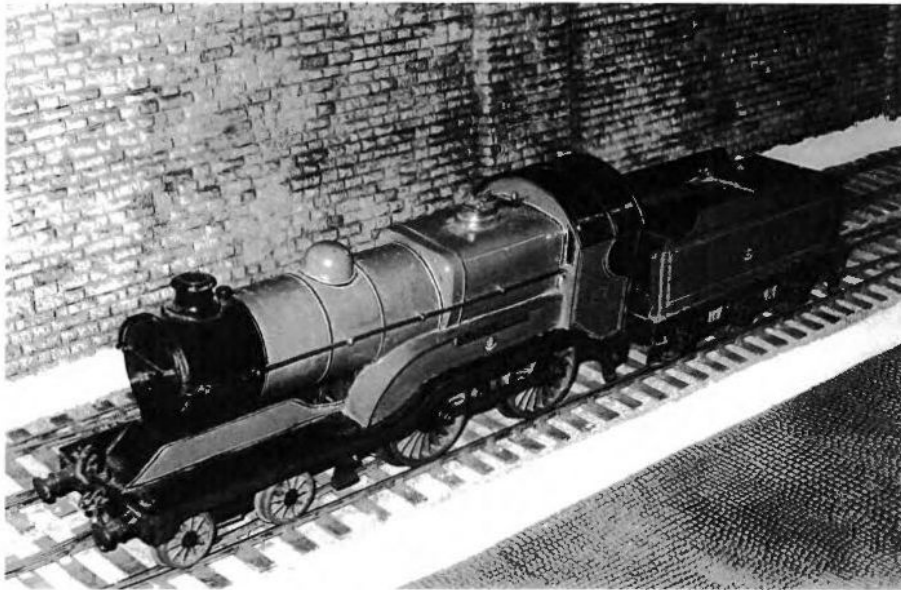
The final trains along the Dee Marsh, Blaen, Chester, Mickle Trafford line were worked by Class 31 diesels on track lifting duties.

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As a summary of locomotive types seen in Northgate Depot/Station shows, over a ten-year period, for an end of line secondary route, there was considerable variety:-

**GWR** 0-6-0PT; **LMSR** Fowler/Staniel 3MT 2-6-2Ts, **MR/LMS** 2P 4-4-0s, Compound 4-4-0s, Ivatt 2-6-2Ts, Fowler, Staniel, and Fairburn 2-6-4Ts, **MR** 3F 0-6-0s, **MR/LMS** 4F 0-6-0s, Black Fives, a Patriot, Jubilees, **LNWR** 2-4-2T, 0-6-0T Jinty, Staniel 2-8-0s and **LNWR** 0-8-0s. **LNER** 4-6-0 B1 & B17, 2-6-0 K1 & K3, 4-4-0 D9, 10, 11, 16, 2-8-0 O2 and O4, 4-4-2T C13 and C14, 0-6-0T J67, 0-6-2T N5; **WD** 2-8-0 and finally **BR** 73000, 76000, 78000, 82000 and 84000 classes.

As a final comment I must add that the depot staff were always very obliging. Up to four of us spent many hours on the goods yard side of the cutting opposite the depot between 1953 and 1959. They never came across to complain or move us on - I know our behaviour was not always perfect, but they were always fine towards us.



A 7mm model of G.C.R.-built class D10 4-4-0 'The Earl of Kerry', made by Eric's father, Cyril Gent

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## **Finescale Railway Modellers' Workshop** **by Richard Oldfield**

I have lost a lot of modelling time in the last few months due to various ailments and have been looking for another outlet for my energies. One of the areas in which I have invested time in the past is railway/model railway internet forums. The experience has been very mixed – the internet can act as an attractive stage for the socially inadequate, immature and axe-grinding nuisances who are much easier to avoid in real life. On the other hand a well-run forum is a nice place to be and a lot of useful information can be shared.

The Finescale Railway Modellers' Workshop has been running for a couple of years but was slowly decaying due to a lack of active posters plus some reliability issues with the forum itself. At the start of December 2010 I decided to become actively involved in re-energising this forum which can be found at <http://scalerail.phpbbhosts.co.uk/index.php>. The previous owners of the forum have now passed this responsibility on to me and I'm hoping to make it a vibrant place for active modellers to visit and contribute

to. In other words I now have an opportunity to 'put my money where my mouth is'.

A lot of BMRG members are already contributing to FRMW (or 'Fred' as it is affectionately known) but more will always be welcome.

Richard

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Book review by David Faulkner

***Merseyside Electrics***, by Jonathan Cadwallader and Martin Jenkins. Ian Allan, 2010. ISBN 978 0 7110 3417 4. £14.99.

Earlier this year I acquired 'Merseyside Electrics', the cover of which shows the station I start my working day at, Birkenhead North. A hardback tome of 80 pages, after a brief introduction describing the various constituent parts of Merseyside's electrified railways past and present, there follows a series of full colour pictures ordered in sequence as the reader is guided round the railway system.

Although limited by the need to use colour photographs (all taken between the 1950s and 1990s), the authors have ensured that sufficient variety has been provided and it appears that all electric train types used are represented whether they be Liverpool Overhead Railway (some rare shots of the American-style EMUs originally used on various parts of the system), or the BR-built units now used on the 'Merseyrail' system; more recent traction such as Class 90 and Pendolino are not included. Each picture is accompanied by text describing location, traction and any relevant history; were necessary for the younger reader (!) comment is also made about what now occupies the depicted scene.

I can't think of what is missing from this book other than more pages and consider that the book is for anyone interested in the railways of Merseyside whether for provoking memories or in my case for showing what is no longer existent. From my point of view there are photographs in this book that caused me to look twice as the current scene is almost unrecognisable today; examples are the photograph of Seacombe Junction (p63), Edge Hill (p53) and a busy picture of what now only contains the lines from Moorfields low level to the surface (p16).

Recommended.

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# THE ENGLISH RIVIERA EXPRESS

SATURDAY 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2011

## A SPECIAL EXCURSION TRAIN TO EXETER, TORBAY and DARTMOUTH via THE MARCHES LINE & THE BEAUTIFUL DEVON COAST

Join us on our special class 67 diesel-locomotive hauled tour with Riviera Trains carriages. We will start from HOOTON (large car park/M53) at around 6.45am and pick up at BACHE, WREXHAM, GOBOWEN, and SHREWSBURY. The train then proceeds south down the Marches Line, passing through Hereford, then skirts Newport and through the Severn Tunnel. We pass through Bristol and part of Somerset, entering Devon and dropping off at EXETER ST DAVID'S. A spectacular run along the sea wall at Dawlish follows, before we head for Torbay and call at TORQUAY and PAIGNTON for passengers who wish to leave the train to visit these popular resorts. We then continue to our final stop at KINGSWEAR. The return will be the reverse of our outward route.

From Paignton to Kingswear our train (still behind our diesel) runs for 6½ miles on the tracks of the heritage Paignton & Dartmouth Steam Railway, climbing above the beaches of Torbay and then descending along the banks of the River Dart. At Kingswear you can take the short ferry crossing to the maritime town of Dartmouth for a relaxing visit or you may wish to travel on one of the steam trains. Reduced rates will be available for the ferry and steam trains.

**Fares:** First: Adults £89, Children (5-17) £58, Children under 5 sharing a seat, free.  
Standard: Adults £59, Children (5-17) £38, Children under 5 sharing a seat, free.

Each passenger will have a reserved seat, a route description and local information. The train has a buffet car and trolley service providing light refreshments. Seating in First Class is in open carriages around tables for four and for two (first come, first served). Most Standard Class seats are at tables for four.

Tickets, seat reservations and timings will be sent a few days before the train runs.

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## Book Review by Richard Oldfield

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

We are very keen on Diesel Multiple Units within Barrowmore Model Railway Group and therefore eagerly await any new publication on the topic. This new book arrived just before Christmas and is a softback volume of 96 full-colour pages. It consists of a very brief introduction to the topic, summary listing of all DMUs built since Nationalisation and a main section showing captioned images of DMUs sorted by the date the photograph was taken.

Readers wishing to locate images of particular Classes of DMU will find a table at the back of the book very helpful and there is also a bibliography in the Introduction which is OK but restricted to Ian Allan titles (a better listing exists at <http://www.railcar.co.uk/books/books.htm>).

The trouble with the subject of DMUs is that it is very complex and could not be covered adequately in a volume of this size. The author has therefore had to 'cut corners' and focus on specific areas. Despite purporting to cover the period 1954 to the present day, half the book contains images taken in the last 10 years. Pre-Modernisation Plan DMUs are poorly represented and, if like us, your main interest is in First Generation DMUs, then you may feel disappointed. Fans of Second and Third Generation DMUs will be happier.

The book is very formulaic in terms of layout and amount of captioning per picture – you feel that some images could have been sacrificed in favour of bigger images of rarer subjects and more detailed information. It is not clear why the author would want to include no fewer than 21 images of Class 158s but only 5 images of Class 108s and no image of Class 125.

We have not had time to comprehensively review the accuracy of the captioning but note the normal confusion between Classes 108 and 114 has been perpetuated on page 20 and the Metro-Cammell construction of Class 101 vehicles was not 461 as claimed in the Introduction.

Overall we are disappointed by this book and this stems from comparison with the excellent Stuart Mackay volume on First Generation DMUs in the same 'For the Modeller and Historian' series. Having said this, it will be welcomed by enthusiasts of more recent times and we're happy to have it on the bookshelf.

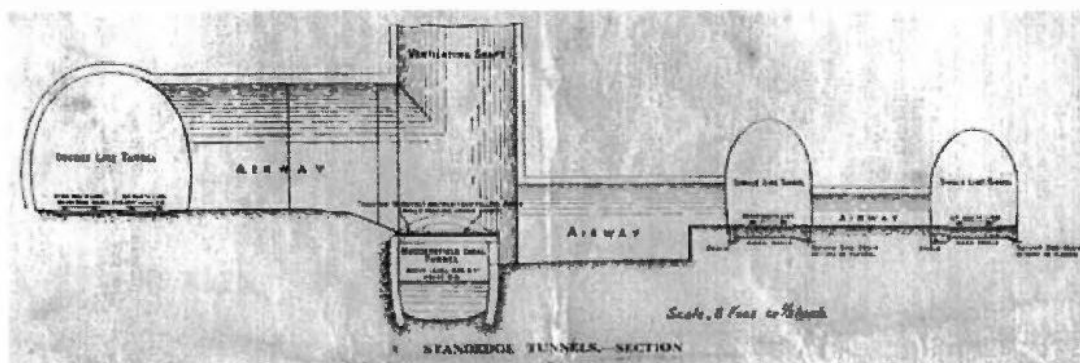
[The Standedge Tunnel between Manchester and Leeds/Huddersfield, built by the L.N.W.R., is the third longest railway tunnel in the U.K.: only the Severn Tunnel and the Totley Tunnel are longer. The Down South single line bore was the first to be completed in 1848; the Up South single line bore was finished in 1870; and the Double Line bore which is in current use dates from 1894. The Huddersfield Narrow Canal tunnel predates the railway tunnels, and was completed in 1811 .....]

## Trans-Pennine, But Not As You Might Expect...

### Eddie Knorn

A few years ago, my railway career led me to the Engineering team of First TransPennine Express (FTPE), the operator of the longer distance, limited stop passenger services across the great cultural divide also known as the Pennines. The busiest section of line for FTPE services is the Manchester - Leeds route via Diggle, typically with four trains per hour in each direction with the actual crossing of the Pennines undertaken via the 3 miles and 66 yards of Standedge Tunnel, between Diggle signal box and Marsden Station. When I used to commute from Cheshire to York, I passed through Standedge Tunnel twice every day and since I moved jobs to FTPE I have had some trips through the tunnel in train cabs, but in mid June, myself and some FTPE colleagues were offered the chance of seeing the tunnel from a whole new perspective... (I refrain from using the phrase "in a new light" for obvious reasons!!): we were able to *walk* the entire length.

On the Tuesday evening in question, colleagues from Engineering and Operations Standards functions within FTPE and I converged on Marsden Station. Although the FTPE services pass through here, those of us arriving by train had to use the Northern Rail stopping service that runs between Manchester Victoria and Huddersfield. The main purpose of the evening was to provide training for emergency service personnel who might be called to undertake rescue work in the event of an incident within the tunnel. Although footplate staff are trained in the proverb of "when in doubt, get the train out", there may come a time when a busy passenger train becomes stranded in there for one of a number of reasons, and the emergency services need to be ready. I suspect that for myself and my FTPE colleagues, there was a certain amount of "jolly boys outing" being undertaken...



In the event of a major tunnel emergency, the local Fire Brigade would play an important role, and in recognition of this, Network Rail had invited the firemen of Marsden to participate. It seems that word had spread within the West Yorkshire Fire Service, and although he didn't say it, I suspect that the

Network Rail man in charge must have thought "Where did all of those Firemen appear from..?" In the end, there were three fire engines *and* two Fire Service red vans huddled in the vicinity of Marsden railway station. Further key participants in any emergency within Standedge Tunnel would be the locally based Holme Valley Mountain Rescue Team, and they fielded a number of their members for the evening, along with a well equipped Land Rover Station Wagon.

Access from Marsden railway station to the eastern portal of the tunnel is by means of a lineside access road around three quarters of a mile in length that runs immediately next to the westbound loop off the main line. The only safe way for vehicles to use this road is for the loop to be blocked to train movements, and for the evening a Network Rail movements manager was on hand to arrange this. When it was safe to go, a convoy of assorted Fire Service, Mountain Rescue and Network Rail vehicles set off towards the tunnel mouth along with two cars containing the FTPE contingent. Just outside the eastern end of the tunnel is an area of trackbed of sufficient size for everyone to park their vehicles and gather prior to starting the walk, that is far enough away from any moving trains.

The tunnel comprises three rail bores, known as north, centre and south. The north bore is double tracked and remains in use, while the other two were each single track but now with track lifted. The two 'disused' bores play a key role for access to the north bore for routine maintenance and for emergency service use. Both are secured from unauthorised access by substantial metal



*Diggle end portals of centre and southern bores. (Steve Jackson photo).*

gates and there is even signage to control the flow of road traffic; westbound in the south bore and eastbound in the centre. In addition to the rail bores, the canal bore is located between the central and the north rail tunnels. The canal was there first and its presence was a useful aid during tunnel construction. Whatever the weather, the tunnel interior maintains a constant 15 degrees Celsius, and those of us walking the tunnel came prepared with warm jackets. Apparently, during certain weather conditions on Saddleworth Moor above the tunnel, the clouds of condensation escaping from the tunnel ventilators can lead to occasional false alarm reports of tunnel fires!

When the time came to start our journey, the West Yorkshire Fire Service vehicle convoy (all three fire engines and the two little red vans) set off through the south bore, while my FTPE colleagues and I joined the main party walking through the centre bore. Not having a torch myself, I made sure I stayed close to those who had. The change from warm summer day to tunnel standard temperature became apparent as soon as we entered. Our host from Network Rail had warned us of the syndrome where people became panicked by being in a railway tunnel and at a point a few hundred yards in, they would turn round and run out screaming. Fortunately there were no such incidents on our visit. Walking conditions were not too bad, as would be expected on a former railway track bed that had been converted for occasional use by road vehicles, though we had been warned about not stepping into puddles in case they were thigh deep pot-holes. Part of the objective for the exercise had been for the Fire Service and the Mountain Rescue teams to become familiar with the geography within the tunnel. Team members were observed shining torches at various features and scribbling detailed notes. In the event of a tunnel emergency involving a passenger train, key priorities are communication with the signaller and getting people away from the rail tunnel, then out into the open. We noted the provision of telephone communication points at a few locations along the centre bore, and also inspected a number of 'adits'; these are cross-passages between the tunnel bores and between the north and centre bores there are thirteen of



*View into an adit between centre and north bores. (Steve Jackson photo).*

them, all different in layout! They have a combination of level walkway (not all with good headroom) and steps, up and down. An added complication is that many also give access to the canal, so a wrong turn in the dark could lead to an early bath!

At present, it is possible to enjoy sightseeing tours of the canal tunnel where participants ride in glass-sided and glass-roofed boats; these are either short trips into the tunnel, lasting half-an-hour or so, or long ones going right through. In addition to the thirteen adits primarily to connect the north bore with the centre bore, the Waterways Board also have four 'super-adits' to



*The entrance to the canal tunnel from the Marsden side, with a tourist boat (similar to the one in the foreground), just exiting the tunnel on 28 August 2003.*

connect the canal to the centre bore. These are equipped with sensor-controlled electric lighting, good quality floor and steps and are provided as a means of escape should anyone suffer a medical drama part way through their canal tour. Canal tours can be shadowed by a road vehicle in the centre bore, equipped to evacuate anyone suffering such problems.

The southern and centre bores were the original railway tunnel, and their mid-points are marked by the presence of 'The Cathedral', a relatively spacious cavern linking them, complete with elaborate vaulted roof. Further west, we found the small bothy built into the wall of the centre bore, complete with brick 'stove' whose chimney vented into the tunnel bore itself.

Our walking tour took us all the way to the western portal and we emerged back into daylight. We were able to have a closer look at the redundant water tower building for the former water troughs [see the photograph on the cover of *BMRJ* no. 16 of September 2008, and Norman Lee's letter on page 30 of the same issue] located here. The only minor problem for those of us in the FTPE party was that the cars were parked over three miles away, at the far end of the tunnel! 'Rescue' came in the form of the Holme Valley Mountain Rescue Team; their Land Rover Station Wagon is equipped with all manner of emergency equipment (including a one-wheeled stretcher), 'Ambulance' markings, associated





*Eddie Knorn at the Diggle end. (Steve Jackson photo).*

flashing lights and sirens, and space for ten passengers! This provided a welcome ride back via the Centre Bore and when we returned to where the cars were parked it was starting to get dark. All that remained was for myself and some FTPE colleagues to venture to Huddersfield for a most enjoyable curry then a late night train back to Manchester.

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### **Workshop notes, no.23:**

*(Ultrasonic baths are perhaps best known to most people for their use in cleaning jewellery ... but they can be very useful to modellers .....)*

### **Science working for the modeller...**

by Iain Kirk

So you have just done some work on that nice etched brass kit you treated yourself to and now comes the bit you hate - cleaning off all that used flux and other gunk. It's messy and irritating and yet also maybe not quite as thoroughly clean as you'd like maybe? This is when the world of science can help in the form of ultrasound; specifically, an ultrasonic cleaning bath. Essentially, an ultrasonic cleaning bath is a cleaning device that uses ultrasound (usually from 20-400 KHz.) and an appropriate

cleaning solution to clean delicate items. The ultrasound can be used with only water but a form of solvent or cleaning solution is advised for the best results - it enhances the effect of the ultrasound on the item to be cleaned. Ultrasonic cleaning works by using high frequency sound waves to agitate in an aqueous or organic compound. Cavitation bubbles induced by the agitation, act on any contaminants adhering to the brass or any other substance. This action also penetrates blind holes, cracks, and recesses. The intention is to thoroughly remove all traces of contamination tightly adhering or embedded onto the surface of what is being cleaned.

Now when it comes to cleaning solutions, the best to use I find through my professional background, is Neutracon. A specialised surface active cleaning agent/decontaminant, it is supplied as a liquid concentrate, for dilution with water. Neutracon is biodegradable, phosphate-free, non-toxic, non-flammable and non-corrosive and totally rinses away. It leaves no residues on your work in other words. It is also most effective when used in an ultrasonic bath. It is worth noting that one should be very careful about what one uses as your cleaning solution as well. It is best to avoid flammable solvents as they are not worth the risks involved.

Ultrasonic baths come in all shapes and sizes; the cheapest option available for the modeller probably comes from the Aldi supermarket chain, when available. Failing that check out some of the modellers' tool shops, such as Eileen's Emporium.

Neutracon is available from scientific suppliers. However, one wonders if it is the sort of thing that could be sold by the modellers' tool shops? I feel maybe some enquiries may be in order.

#### References

Aldi - [www.aldi.co.uk/](http://www.aldi.co.uk/)

Eileen's Emporium - [www.eileensemposium.com](http://www.eileensemposium.com)

Decon [Makers of Neutracon] - [www.decon.co.uk](http://www.decon.co.uk)

Of relevance to our series of articles on the **Dee Bridge accident** of 1847, is this description of a later accident ...

## The Wootton Bridge Collapse of 1861

by **Norman Lee**

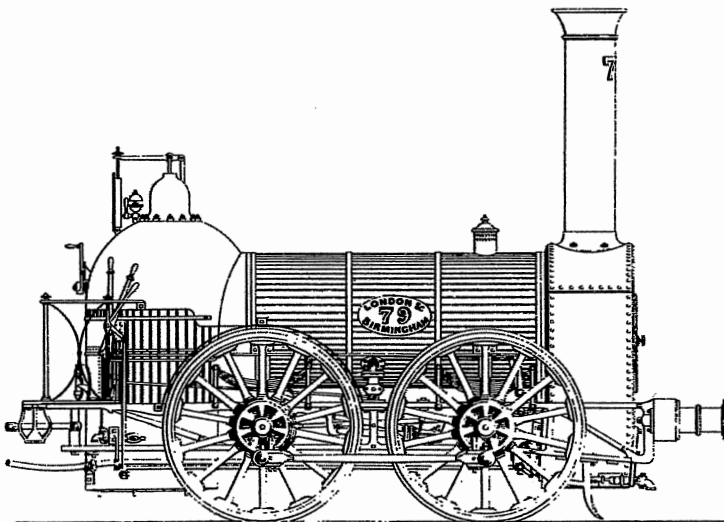
The Dee Bridge was not the only one of Robert Stephenson's structures to collapse. He died in 1859, aged 55, but two years later another of his bridges, also on the LNWR, failed with fatal consequences.

The London & Birmingham Railway opened its branch from Coventry to Leamington in December 1844 and Robert Stephenson was the principal engineer, as he was for most L&B lines.

There was nothing spectacular about the line but south of Kenilworth there was a bridge over a crossroads - it spanned both the present B4115 (between Coventry and Leamington) and the minor road between Leek Wootton and Hill Wootton. The line had to cross both roads and presumably a single bridge at the crossing was thought cheaper than separate bridges over each road, although at 50ft the span was greater than for a bridge over an individual road. To give adequate clearance for road traffic, a masonry arch would have been quite high and higher embankments would have been required either side - hence a girder bridge was preferred.

The bridge had conventional stone abutments. The span itself was, essentially, a wooden girder bridge - each side of the bridge was a truss girder made of wooden timbers arranged as a triangle with a beam along the bottom and two more beams

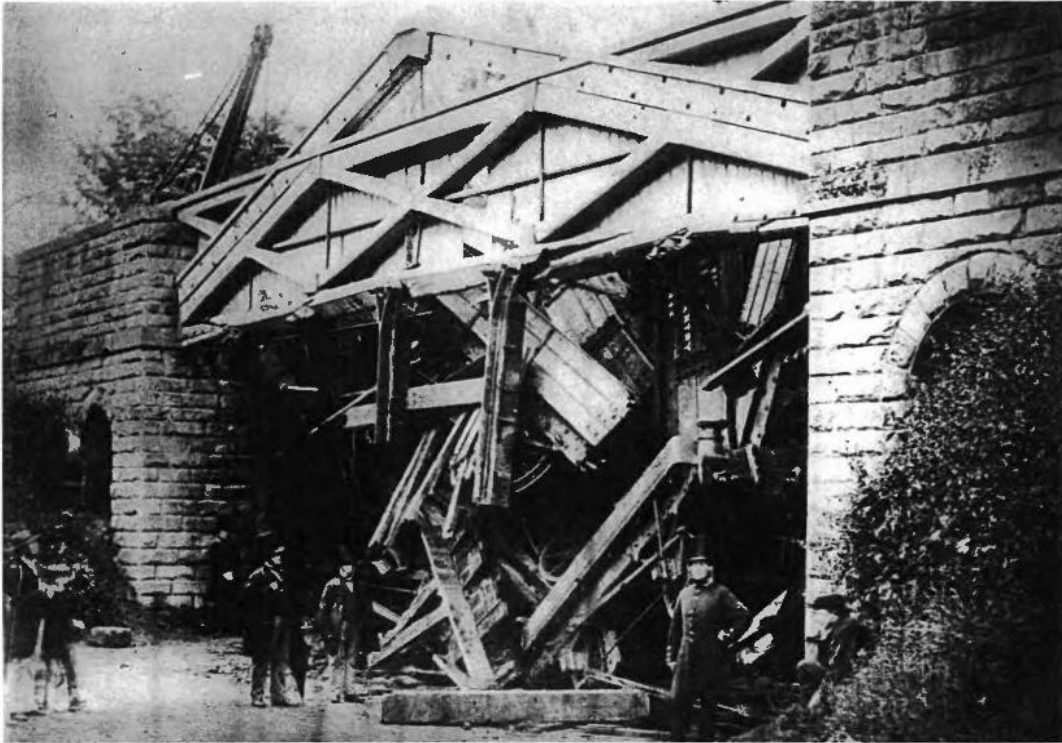
reaching up to an apex. These side girders seem quite massive. However, to support the bridge deck, five hefty cross beams were bolted to the bottoms of the side girders - these cross beams were of cast iron which was not prone to rotting in the way that wooden beams would have been when buried beneath the track. Stephenson made his calculations and the bridge was more than



strong enough for the little Bury 4-wheeled engines (with a maximum axle-load of less than 8 tons) which the L&B used.

On the 11th of June 1861, long after the L&B had become a part of the LNWR, a Fairbairn 'Long Boiler' 0-6-0 of the LNWR's Southern Division was rumbling tender-

first northwards to Victoria Colliery (near Longford on the line from Coventry to Nuneaton) with a train of empty coal wagons. When the train reached the Wootton bridge the cross girders snapped, dropping the engine straight down to land on its wheels on the road below. The engine dragged its tender end-on on top of it, after which several wagons carried on into the gap to form a compacted mass between the stone abutments. Driver George Rowley from Preston and fireman John Wade from Weedon were crushed to death immediately and it took several hours to remove their bodies.



*The engine, No. 282, is on its wheels on the highway at the bottom of the wreckage - the rectangular cab side sheet is near the far abutment (the Coventry end of the bridge). The defective cross-beam is the second from the left, the long one hanging down at an angle. Some of the debris would have been removed by this stage, to extract the crew. The picture is taken from a magic lantern slide. (LNWR Society ref LS 238).*

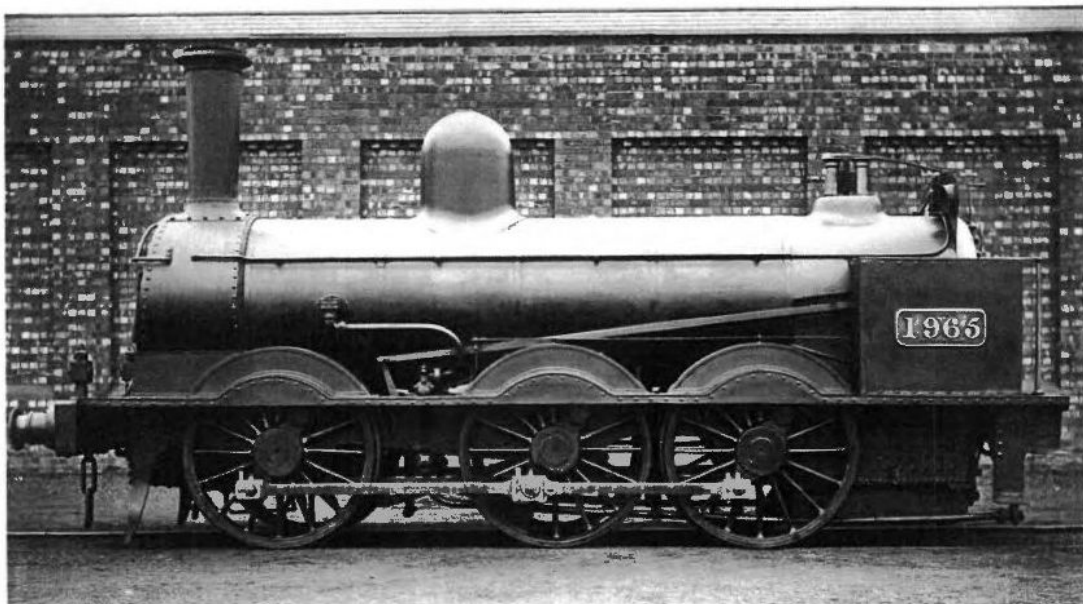
The LNWR was well managed - Mark Huish, the General Manager in the early years of the Company, was a pioneer in the compilation of railway statistics and management information - and it looked after its tracks well. Its senior engineers received monthly reports on all its bridges. However, there were lots of cast iron beams in use throughout the country and the material was not regarded with as much suspicion as it might in later years.

As early as 1853, less than ten years after the line was opened, a regular inspection noted an unexpectedly large vertical deflection when a train passed across the bridge. Work was commissioned to strengthen it and the ordinary track was replaced by bridge rail bolted to longitudinal timber baulks - rather like the GWR broad gauge but a common enough way of carrying track on a bridge. During the track alterations it was noticed that one of the cross beams was defective - part of the casting was honeycombed. The local engineer bolted angle-iron flitch plates to either side of the defect to strengthen the beam and this, plus the other work, seems to have cured the problems at the time.

Four years later, in late 1857, the bridge had become rickety. The wooden trusses at the sides of the bridge were reported to shake when a train crossed and the bolts and screws holding the bridge rails kept coming loose - the bridge rattled. Action was taken early in the next year. The side trusses were strengthened by extra timberwork and the bridge rails were replaced by conventional rails joined by fishplates - the bridge rails had been butt-ended together with only the bolts holding them to the longitudinal baulks to keep them in line (although with a 50ft span there would not have been more than a couple of joints in each rail). The remedial work seemed to have tightened-up the structure and the problems were again cured for the time being.

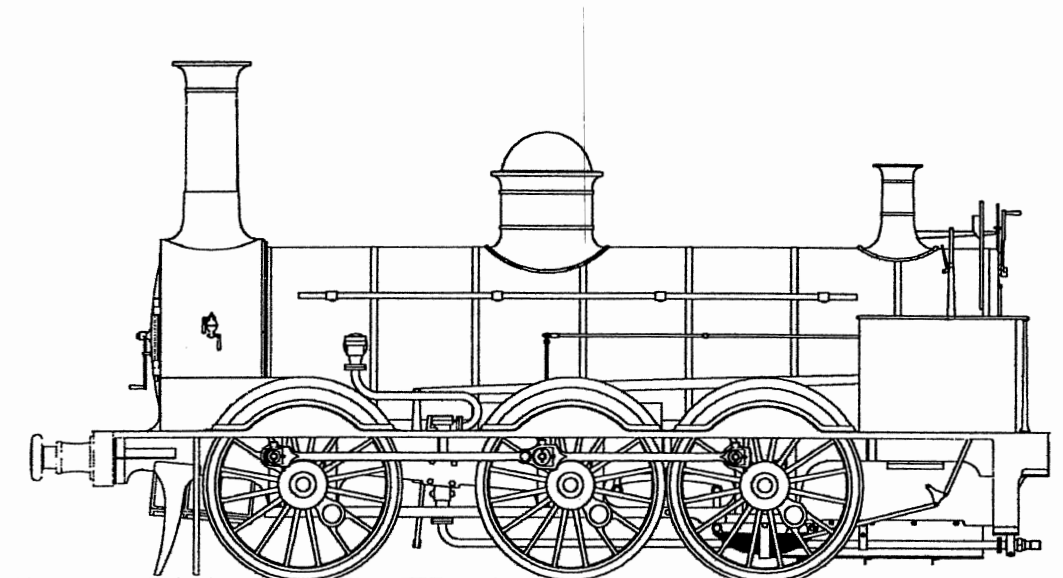
When the bridge collapsed in 1861 it was immediately seen that the girder repaired in 1853 had fractured at one of the holes drilled for the bolts used to hold the angle-iron strengtheners. Moreover, part of the surface of the fracture looked old and the girder had clearly begun to develop a crack some time before the eventual total failure. Presumably the crack was not evident during the 1858 repairs and subsequently the girder would have been out of sight, making any defect difficult to spot during normal track inspections.

The immediate cause of the collapse was the failure of the defective cast iron cross-beam. Once it failed, the other beams snapped successively under the extra load and the bottom fell out of the bridge. Whether the design was at fault isn't clear. Cast iron tends to crack in tension but is not totally without strength - presumably Stephenson had made adequate calculations. Wootton bridge was probably more than adequate for



*Ex-Southern Division Fairbairn 0-6-0 'Long Boiler' No. 1965 built in 1853 and seen at Crewe in 1881 shortly before scrapping. This engine was similar to the one involved in the bridge collapse but by this date it had been fitted with a Crewe number plate, Crewe boiler, Ramsbottom's safety valves and Webb chimney and dome. LNWR Official Photograph OS65 (LNWR Society ref CRPRT OS65).*

Bury 2-2-0 and 0-4-0 locomotives, had one of the girders not been flawed from the start, but the Southern Division 0-6-0 of 1861 was much heavier. With hindsight, the



*A drawing of an LNWR Southern Division Fairbairn 0-6-0 'Long Boiler' similar to No. 282, the accident victim. The total weight was 29tons 17.3cwt with the maximum axle load 12tons 11cwt. No. 282 was built in 1854. See 'Locomotives of the LNWR Southern Division' p 177 H Jack.*

faulty girder (if not noticed and rejected during construction) ought to have been replaced during the 1853 repairs and certainly should have been inspected closely in subsequent years.

Perhaps the main lesson drawn from Wootton and other bridges is that cast iron, if used in tension, has to be treated much more carefully than the more resilient steel or wrought iron. Unfortunately (and sometimes disastrously) the necessary diligence is not always attainable in practice either in construction or maintenance. In 1844, cast iron was a cheap alternative to wood or masonry for bridges and its partial success soon led to the discovery of more practical and cheaper ways of making steel - by 1861 the LNWR was experimenting with steel at its works at Crewe and by 1864 Crewe was producing its own steel.



*The Wootton bridge on 29 January 2011. Kenilworth and Coventry are to the left, as in the photograph of the accident. The original stone abutments are still there although the arches have been filled-in. There is nothing*



strange about the modern side girders although the siting over the crossroads is still unusual. Judging by the scrapes along the abutments, several road vehicles have hit the stonework - hence the erection of the draughtboard patterns. Stephenson's single bridge at the crossroads certainly saved money but even today it might have been safer to have taken a different alignment and built two separate, smaller, bridges. (LNWR Society ref SOCRR 233)

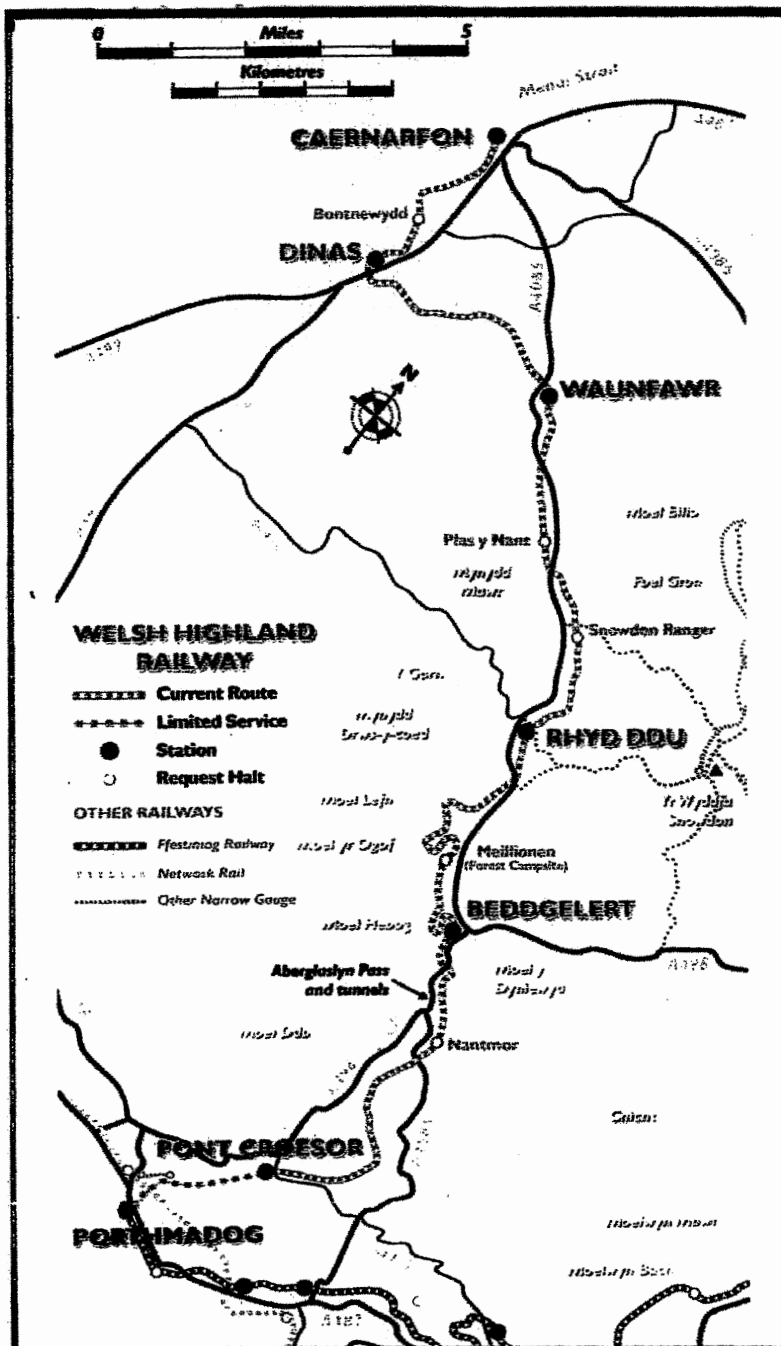
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Thanks are due to the following publications:

*Kenilworth's railway age*, by R D Leach. Odibourne Press, 1985.

*Locomotives of the LNWR Southern Division*, by H Jack. RCTS, 2001.

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## THE WELSH HIGHLAND IN 2011

A report from  
*Richard Stagg*

2010 was a momentous year for the WHR - seeing the completion of the basic railway from Caernarfon to Porthmadog and its inspection and approval for passenger use by H.M. Railway Inspectorate. This has been celebrated by through trains for the Supporters and a special for the track layers and contractors.

2011 will see the official opening of the line - on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. No details of this event have been released yet, though the first through trains for fare-

paying passengers will start during the February half term - on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>,

when simultaneous premium rated services are due to depart from both ends. Normal fares will be charged for the rest of the half term period. Full details of these services are shown on the winter time table. The summer time table is also now available (see the link below). I am firing from Caernarfon on 24 February, firing *Lyd* which will be double heading with *K1*.



*Preserved K1 (built over 100 years ago for a Tasmanian railway) approaches Rhyd Ddu on its first solo passenger run, 2006*

At the moment the Festiniog Railway is closed at Minffordd for the construction of the Porthmadog by-pass. The line has been lifted, the embankment removed and a girder bridge is being put in to carry the railway over the new road, but will re-open here for the summer season. The by-pass will also cross the Welsh Highland Railway and the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway near to the WHHR's terminus at Pen y Mount (the old preservation site adjacent to the mainline Porthmadog station) by an over bridge. This has given the WHR the opportunity to run the winter 'sherry and mince pie' trains out of Porthmadog along the latest bit of line as far as the loop at Hafod y Llyn. We are using FR stock and I have had some very pleasant days on these easy undemanding runs - absolutely flat all the way with excellent views of the mountains and, of course, a trip across the flat crossing of the Cambrian Coast line at Cae Pawb in Porthmadog. People who are only qualified for the FR itself are excluded from the rosters despite the trains using FR engines and stock. It will be interesting to see what happens next winter!

There are three 'jollies' arranged that I know of, as well as at least one more photo charter which is booked for the 28<sup>th</sup> Feb/1<sup>st</sup> March. The FR's London area group has a train - the *Eryri-Adventurer* - which has to be FR stock - running from Porthmadog to Blaenau, then Blaenau to Caernarfon, and then back to Porthmadog - 80 miles of

narrow gauge - running on the 25<sup>th</sup> March. Then on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April the Phase 5 Appeal (see below) is running the *Snowdonian*. Same route as the *Eryri Adventurer*, but a bit more up-market with breakfast and tea on the move and a buffet lunch in *The Goat Hotel* in Beddgelert. Again using FR stock and it will be double headed throughout by two double Fairlies. Tickets are said to be going well with the 22 first class seats being auctioned; all profits go to the Phase 5 appeal. The third 'jolly' is, I believe, a special, starting at Euston and presumably picking up from various places on the way north to Llandudno Junction or Bangor where, I understand, coaches have been arranged to take one group to Blaenau and the rest to Caernarfon to join trains to run the full 40 miles. They will then be coached back to join their standard gauge rake to take them home. Not sure of the date for this but it must be some time in April. As is commonly said all we have at the moment is a very basic railway. There are a number of things lacking. For a start Harbour Station in Porthmadog needs another platform. To get this it is necessary to widen the Cob and rearrange the tracks - no light undertaking. Indeed until this platform is provided most trains from Caernarfon will still be terminating at Pont Croesor. Some decent station buildings are required to provide excellent visitor facilities, catering, shops, information, etc, etc, particularly at Beddgelert and Caernarfon, though the latter is complicated by some uncertainty as to where exactly in the town the WHR terminus should be. The railway also needs more carriages - at least another rake which would be built to the latest FR dimensions, and perhaps a few more to WHR loading gauge (which is higher and wider) to strengthen the existing sets. More carriages and the increasing size of the loco fleet means further sheds are needed to store them in. An appeal (Phase 5) has been launched to raise the funds needed for these developments. Not all of these developments will occur on the WHR itself; some, such as extra carriage shedding and a Garratt-sized shed at Boston Lodge, though on historic FR land, are obviously a necessary part of the development of the WHR. Ditto the concentration of PW and other infra structure departments at Minffordd. The Phase 5 link gives all the gory details.

So, what have we got for 2011? The biggest change is that it is now a two ended railway with trains starting from both ends so operating turns can start from either end - indeed we already know that those of us who really only know the Dinas shed and its quirks have got to learn Boston Lodge as well. The train service is based on using two rakes. Most days will see one starting from each end at around 10 am. The Porthmadog set will run through to Caernarfon, return only as far as Pont Croesor (about 2½ miles short of Porthmadog), go back to Caernarfon and then ecs to Dinas and finish. Whilst the Caernarfon set will turn back from Pont Croesor on its first leg and will depart from Caernarfon a second time but then will run through to Porthmadog to terminate. In the high season there will be a third trip from each end so the sets will finish back where they started from. As mentioned above, until the second platform at Porthmadog is built, operating WHR trains out of Harbour Station is difficult, as trains have to be drawn out of the platform onto the Cob towards Blaenau with a pilot engine. Then, if necessary, attach the WHR train engine at the Caernarfon end (only if the train engines are FR ones can they already be attached as the Garratts are too big for the platform road), detach the pilot, initiate the crossing sequence for the tramway section across the Britannia bridge and set off. Regrettably at present there is the danger of people trying to join or leave the train at this point as it pauses in what will eventually be a bit of its platform. Trains arriving from Caernarfon have to go through a similar procedure but in reverse. So yes, you can do a return trip from Porthmadog and back the same day, though you will have time to

see all that Caernarfon has to offer as well but if you want to do a return starting from Caernarfon you will need to overnight in Porthmadog! Plenty of hotels and B&Bs to choose from!

Don't forget the beer festival on the 20-22 May: fifty-five beers to be sampled in the goods shed at Dinas. Follow the welsh highland link for the details.



*No.143 in its previous black livery, at Waun Fawr on 29 August 2006.*

There are some alterations on the loco front: no.143, the last Garratt built, returns after its 10 year refit - now in lined Brunswick Green and coal fired. *Lyd*, the oil fired Lynton & Barnstaple replica, which is currently running in early BR livery, will be based on the WHR, probably double heading with *K1*, which has had some extensive work done on its valves. No.87 will be the other mainstay once its winter refit is complete. No.138 being oil fired, and therefore very expensive to run, will probably



*No.138 'Mileniwm', also at Waun Fawr on the same August day in 2006.*

only be seen occasionally. There is a *Mallet* visiting from the Statfold Barn railway at Tamworth, so it will be interesting to see how that compares to the NG16s.

My personal commitment is to be firing most Thursdays during the season, but I shall not know till a week or so in advance which turn I shall be on nor where I shall be starting from. If you are planning to visit let me know as I may be able to show you some areas not normally viewable but I cannot promise anything.

Links: [www.welshhighlandrailway.net](http://www.welshhighlandrailway.net) for timetables, beer festival and general info  
[www.Phase5.org.uk](http://www.Phase5.org.uk) for future plans, the appeal for funds and the *Snowdonian*  
[www.isengard.co.uk](http://www.isengard.co.uk) gives a day by day account of activities

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Lastly for those keen students of DMUs, the 21<sup>st</sup> March sees the private unveiling of an example of the ancestors of modern?/current self propelled stock which will be emerging from its chrysalis in Pentrefelin workshops on the Llangollen Railway. It is to be trialled there prior to taking up residence at Dideot where it is scheduled for a public launch on the 28<sup>th</sup> May.

What is it? Well it's something I have been sponsoring ever since the start of the rebuild and I am looking forward to seeing it - and have been promised a footplate trip. It is, of course, the rebuild of *Great Western Steam Railmotor No. 93*. What you might call an SMU! Work is also progressing in Pentrefelin on its trailer, but I do not know the schedule for the completion of that.

As the number of sponsors who are coming for this event exceeds *No. 93's* seating capacity the *Wickham DMU* will also be out to convey the overflow. And at some stage it will be ALL CHANGE!



*A different sort of oil-fired locomotive – 'Castell Caernarfon' at the Caernarfon terminus on 13 September 2008. This is a 335h.p. diesel hydraulic locomotive, originally built for a South African diamond mine in 1967. Came to Dinas in 1997 and re-bodied for the W.H.R. loading gauge*



## Editor's page

### Recent books

*On the slow train: twelve great British railway journeys*, by Michael Williams.

Preface Publishing, 2010. ISBN 978 1 8480 9207 5. £14.99.

This book was a Christmas present from my eldest son, and it is ironic that one of the journeys featured – the Wrexham & Shropshire Railway service between Wrexham and Marylebone – was withdrawn on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011, with all 55 staff being made redundant. Decreasing passenger numbers because of the current recession was given as the cause. Acquaintances who have used the service have spoken highly of it.

*British Railways steam locomotives 1948 – 1968, every single one! ...*, by Jim

Grindlay. Modelmaster Publishing, 2007. ISBN 978 0 9544264 9 1. £14.95.

*The trains long departed: Ireland's lost railways*, by Tom Ferris. Gill & Macmillan (Dublin), 2010. ISBN 978 0 7171 4785 4. £15.39.

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### The Dee bridge accident, 1847: (lack of) progress report

I have been attempting to trace published information about the re-building of the bridge that took place in 1870/71. BUT: I have so far been able to find just one reference in the pages of the *Cheshire observer* newspaper from 1870-1872. It is certainly interesting from a social history point of view, but not particularly enlightening as far as railway history is concerned! The report, in the paper's issue dated 24 December 1870, reads (in a section of the paper listing magistrates' court proceedings) ...

"... Richard Goosey, a man belonging to Conway, and employed in the construction of the new railway bridge over the river, was charged with being drunk and incapable in Crane street, at ten o'clock on Saturday night. – Discharged."

But no reason given – most drunks were given either a fine of 5 shillings or three days imprisonment.

My next step is probably to try another local paper – the *Chester chronicle*. Progress (or lack of it!) will be reported.

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