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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

- 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.

Any queries to the Editor, please.

The **NEXT ISSUE** will be dated September 2005, and contributions should get to the Editor as soon as possible, but at least before 1 August 2005.

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Copies of this magazine are also available to non-members: a cheque for £5 (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.

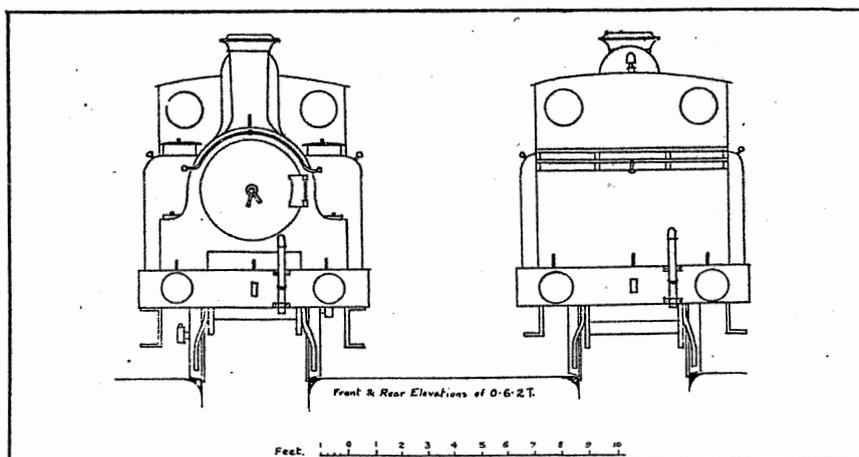
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Cover illustration of the **last issue** was based on a photograph taken in 1966, and NOT in 1961 as stated. Barrow station had therefore been closed for 13 years, rather than the eight quoted. This mistake was the Editor's, and was nothing to do with Eric Power. Apologies!

This issue's cover illustration features the Euston Arch, photographed in 1888 from the central block of the Euston Hotel and across Drummond Street. The road through the arch leads to the cab yard, with the booking office beyond. The Great Hall is beyond the left-most two columns of the arch. All the foreground area (Euston Place in L.N.W.R. days) is now part of the main hall of the modern station.

[Crewe Official Photograph A103; Norman Lee's article on the Arch starts on page 7 of this issue].

Front and rear elevations of Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway class 22 tank engines (0-6-2T) of 1881/2



Forthcoming events

(including confirmed appearances for B.M.R.G. layouts)

(2005)

- 4 Jun. 2005:** DEMU showcase, Burton-on-Trent.
- 9 Jun. 2005:** "City of Truro" trip – see page 25 of the last issue (No.2).
- 11 Jun. 2005:** **S4 Society a.g.m. at Barrowmore.**
- 11/12 Jun. 2005:** Chatham show.
- 9 Jul. 2005:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 6/7 Aug. 2005:** Porthmadog show ("**Johnstown Road**" is exhibiting).
- 20 Aug. 2005:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 24/25 Sept. 2005:** Halifax show ("**Johnstown Road**" is exhibiting).
- 30 Sep./1/2 Oct. 2005:** Manchester show
- 8 Oct. 2005:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 14/15/16 Oct. 2005:** Blackburn show.
- 12 Nov. 2005:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 12/13 Nov. 2005:** Newcastle show ("**Mostyn**" and "**Johnstown Road**" are appearing).
- 25/26/27 Nov. 2005:** Wakefield show.
- 3/4 Dec. 2005:** Warley show at NEC ("**Mostyn**" and "**Johnstown Road**" are appearing).

(2006)

- 14/15 Jan. 2006:** St.Albans show ("**Johnstown Road**" and "**Rockingham Pottery**" are appearing).
- 21 Jan. 2006:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 18/19 Feb. 2006:** Bolton show ("**Star City Yard**" is appearing).
- 24/26 Feb. 2006:** Glasgow show ("**Mostyn**" is appearing).
- 4 Mar. 2006:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 11/12 Mar. 2006:** Kidderminster show ("**Mostyn**" is appearing).
- 15 Apr. 2006:** Llanbedr 7mm running track. (See Editor for details).
- 27/28 May 2006:** Railex (Aylesbury) ("**Johnstown Road**" and "**Mostyn**" are appearing).

(2007)

- 27/28 Jan. 2007:** Normanton show ("**Mostyn**" is appearing).
- 17/18 Feb. 2007:** Bolton show (extended "**Johnstown Road**" is appearing).
- 19/21 Oct. 2007:** Blackburn show ("**Mostyn**" is appearing).

(2008)

- 12/13 Jan. 2008:** St.Albans show ("**Mostyn**" and "**Star City Yard**" are appearing).

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

Our web-site address is: www.barrowmoremrg.org.uk

Scalefour Society AGM – Saturday 11th June 2005 – 2.00pm

The Scalefour Society is an international group of modellers working to P4 standards (like “Mostyn” and “Rockingham Pottery”) committed to developing and sharing their skills and currently numbering about 1800 members. The Society looks to move the venue for its AGM around the UK in order to encourage members to attend who might ordinarily not make the journey if it was always in one location.

Barrowmore Model Railway Group will be hosting the Scalefour Society AGM on Saturday 11th June 2005 and we will be using this event to encourage people to visit our clubroom and the Barrowmore Estate. We expect to have three P4 layouts in operation plus a small number of trade stands including Henry Wilson Books who occupy the Unit next to us. Other businesses may also wish to open on the day and take advantage of the fact that there should be many visitors on site.

We have no idea how many visitors this event might attract – some AGMs have been barely quorate whereas others have seen 150 attendees during the day. The more we put into it the more we are likely to attract. The exact programme is still being put together at present and ideas/suggestions are very welcome providing they come quickly. It has already been suggested that we consider running a preserved bus service from Barrowmore to Chester Station and this may encourage the general public to take part in the day.

Cheers - Richard

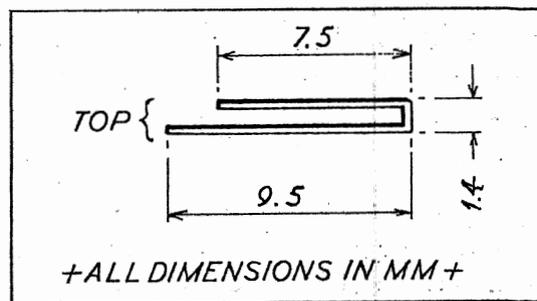
Workshop notes, no.3 (continued from issues nos.1 and 2)

These notes describe another jig that uses narrow metal strip: a tool for making brake safety loops for 4mm-scale wagons fitted with four-shoe brake gear. Clasp brakes (sometimes used on fitted wagons) use a different design of brake gear safety loop which is more easily modelled than the type described here.

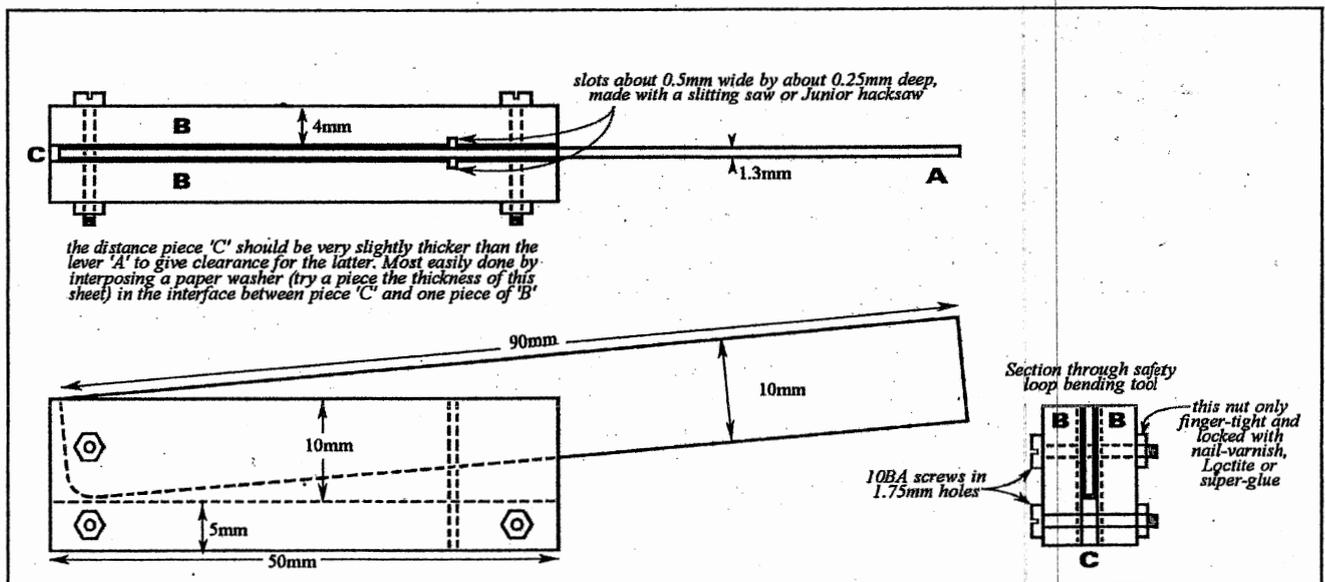
Most four-wheeled wagons built since the early days of the twentieth century and before the advent of disc brakes, will have had safety loops fitted as a means of avoiding derailling accidents as a result of parts of the brake gear coming loose. Of course, wagon kits have representations of these, moulded integrally with the push-rods: the problem is that they are grossly oversize – so that you lose the visual impression of ‘thin-ness’ of the components. So – cut off these monstrosities and replace them with the metal parts as described here. Allied to other improvements you can make to the kit brake-gear, this procedure vastly improves the appearance of model wagon under-frames.

The initial aim is bent-up metal strip shaped like this. The practical problem lies in making identical, close, bends at the bottoms of the loops. This is where this jig comes in very useful.

[The dimensions in the diagram are for a B.R. 16-ton mineral wagon]

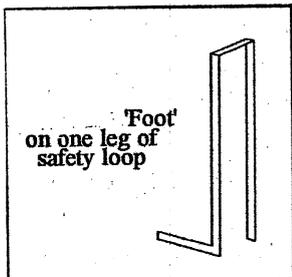
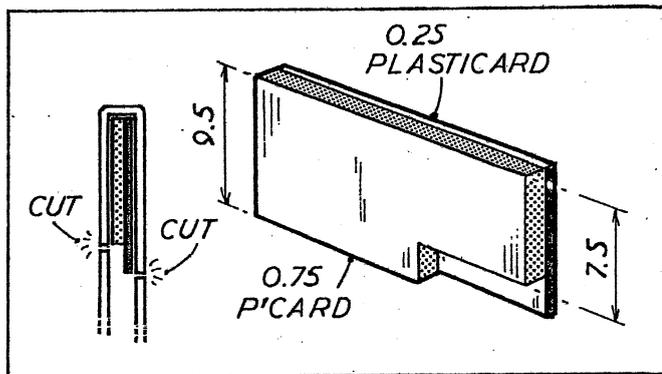


The construction of the jig should be clear from the diagram below. Mine was made from scrap steel, and the only critical dimensions are the thickness of the lever marked ‘A’ and the size of the slots in the side-pieces ‘B’. To operate: bend a length of your home-made strip (about 30mm or so long) in half and place it under the jig lever so that depressing the lever forces the strip down the grooves in parts ‘B’ and towards the bottom of the jig.



When you extract the loop from the jig, it will need the ‘legs’ cutting to length, and a ‘foot’ bending onto the foot of the longer leg, to help its gluing under the floor of the wagon. These operations are illustrated in the next sketch diagrams.

Use a jig to aid in cutting to size. The 'foot' is bent at right angles to the 'leg' in order to make secure attachment to the underside of the wagon floor. Sizes quoted in this diagram are for B.R.16T mineral wagons: measuring the plastic loops before discarding them may make different dimensions desirable.



The loops should be tried in position in a 'dry run' before actually applying glue. I put a blob of a slow-acting adhesive like wood-working PVA or 'No more nails' where the foot is going to go. Position the foot, and leave to dry. The slowness of the glue makes alteration of placement easy – and final tweaking is also easy, since the loop is made from copper strip and will bend. But if you want to work faster, something like Araldite Rapid or even cyano-acrylate could be used.

This jig does make the replication of brake safety loops much easier

BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION
BRITISH RAILWAYS
From GARSTON DOCKS
Tikhoretsk B/L

USE BLOCK LETTERS
BR 21203/2169
19

TO Mickle Trafford East

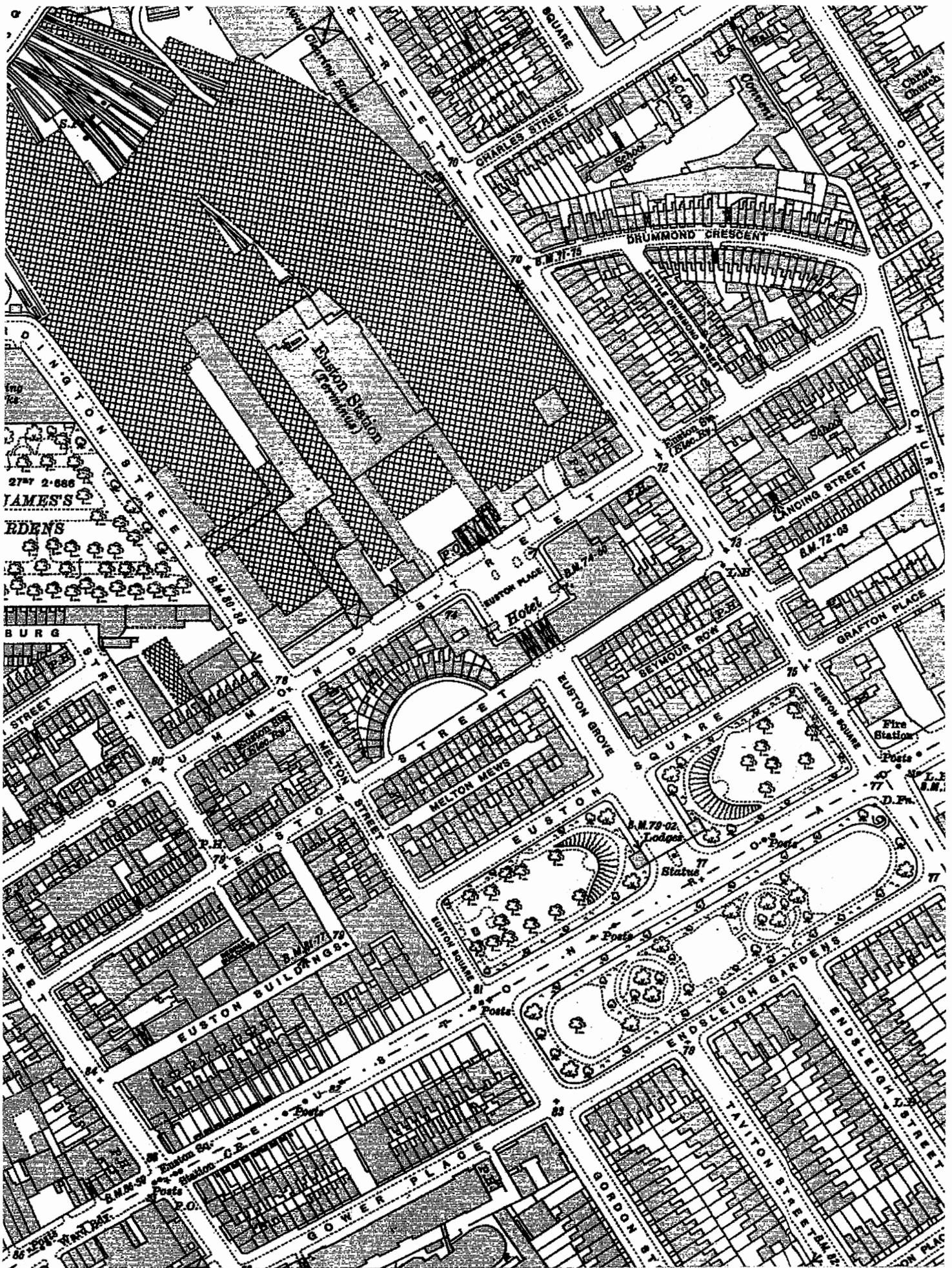
Via *Cressington Halewood Northwich*

Wagon	Number	3	*Cross Traffic	
Container			T.	C.
			Gross Weight	
			Heaviest Lift	

* If no work is necessary strike out this panel.

Contents _____
Consignee **W G John**
Deeside Sawmills

Wagon label from the last truck to use the C.L.C. yard at Mickle Trafford. Dated 13 Oct. 1959, it came from Garston Docks, via Cressington, Halewood and Northwich, with a load of timber. (thanks to Arthur Willis of Mickle Trafford and John Dixon of Saltney).



Euston Station about 1913. The Doric Arch fronts onto Drummond Street, opposite Euston Place

The Euston Arch - Where Was It?

by Norman Lee

The present Euston Station is so different from the old station, demolished in the early 1960s, that it is difficult to imagine where the major features of the LNWR station used to be. In particular what was the location of the Euston, or Doric, Arch - the best known edifice of the old railway?

Euston station was opened by the London & Birmingham Railway in 1837 and was the world's first trunk line terminus. Philip Hardwick designed the buildings and the Doric Arch, which formed a magnificent entrance to the station. Flanking the arch were four gate houses and some fine iron gates. In architectural terms, the 'arch' isn't an arch - it ought really to be called the Euston 'Propylaeum' [a gateway of architectural importance...].

The L&B's original scheme was for the Great Western Railway to share the site and use the western side for its trains whilst the L&B would keep to the east. The companies soon fell out, leaving the L&B with its platforms to the right of the arch. The master plan had foundered at the start and as Euston developed over the next century the site remained lop-sided and the arch was never in the centre of the frontage.

The L&B and its successor, the LNWR, owned the land between the station and Euston Road. Drummond Street was built east to west across the front of the station, with the arch and gatehouses next to the new road. Euston Grove ran at right angles from Euston Square up to the arch - at that date there was no direct path from Euston Road to Euston Grove because of the garden in the middle of the Square. From before the station opened, the L&B intended to have an hotel for Euston and in late 1839 the Euston Hotel, again designed by Philip Hardwick, was opened and the building let to an hotel syndicate. The hotel straddled Euston Grove, with the bedrooms - the 'dormitories' - to the west and the rest of the facilities in a separate building to the east.

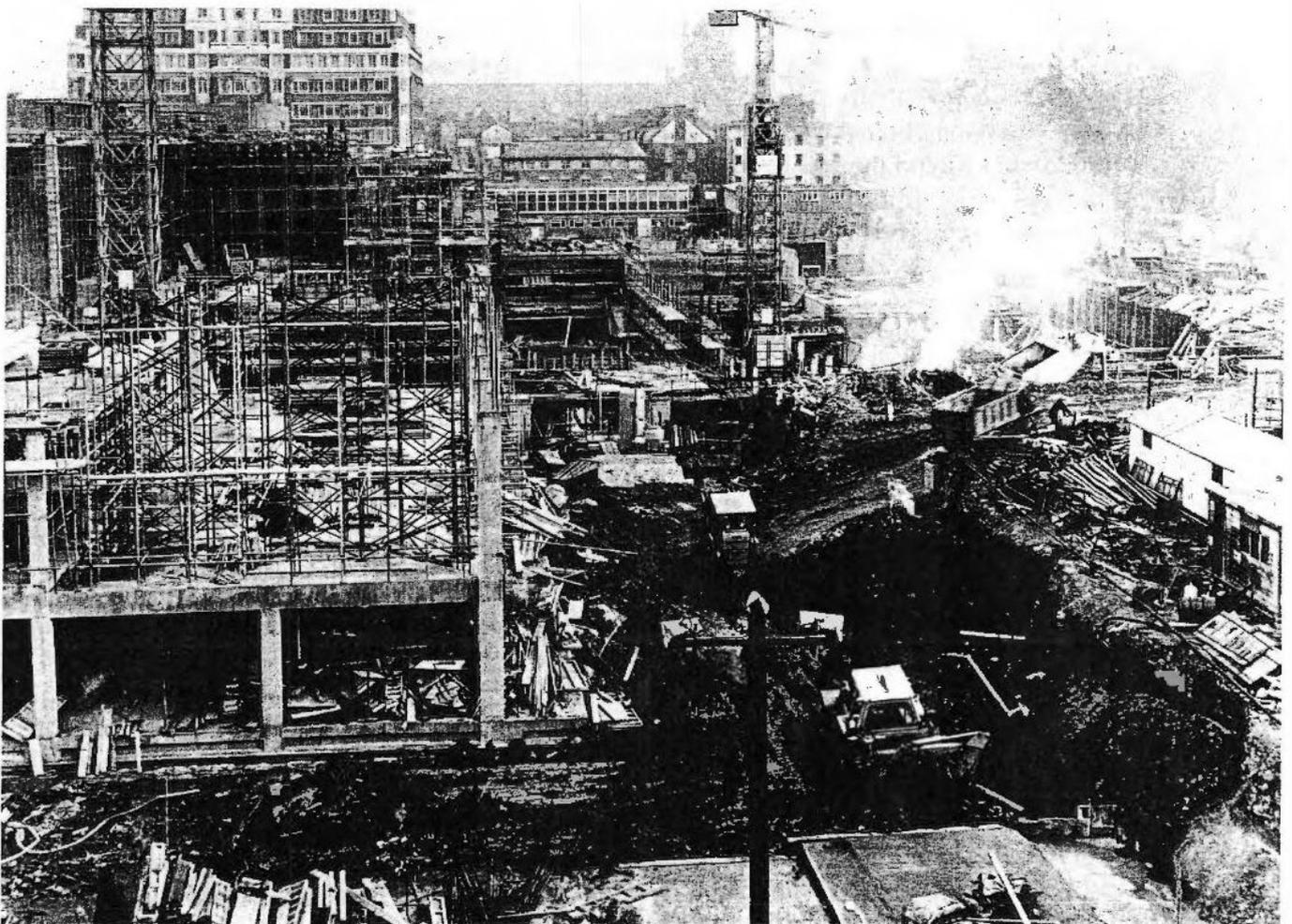
The L&B was extremely successful and Euston grew quickly. In 1846, the L&B amalgamated with the Grand Junction and the Manchester & Birmingham to form the LNWR. Soon afterwards, Philip Hardwick jnr was commissioned to design the Great Hall and this became the centre of the station and of the LNWR itself since it housed the boardroom. Various station offices were built against Drummond Street (one of the gatehouses had to be removed) and the area through the arch became a circulation space for vehicles and passengers. Over the years, platforms were extended and extra ones built.

Outside the station area, in 1869 a road was built across Euston Square gardens to give a direct access to the station from Euston Road. Lodges flanked the new road and gates stretched between them - these lodges are the ones still in place nowadays.

In the late 1870s, the whole station underwent major surgery when the roof was lifted up, section by section, to give better ventilation and more space for the larger engines and carriages of the time.

In 1881 the Euston Hotel was given a central block which joined its two halves - road traffic passed through archways beneath it, with carriageways marked 'In' and 'Out'. The changes presumably improved the hotel but they spoiled the view of the arch from Euston Road.

By the end of the century, 'Old Euston' had achieved the shape familiar to anyone who can remember the station before main line electrification. It had grown in many stages without any overall plan and was quite difficult to operate. The LNWR and then the LMS drafted plans for rebuilding but nothing much happened until the massive demolition and renewal in the 1960s by BR.



The rebuilding of Euston went on for a long time. This photograph is dated 4 Jan 1968 and looks across the new frontage from Melton Street. Euston Square is on the right and St. Pancras is in the distance at the top centre. Clearly, nothing remains of the Euston Hotel nor of anything else in front of the old station!

The modern station extends much nearer to Euston Road than did the old. The walkway across the heads of the modern platforms follows the line of Drummond Street, more or less, and gives a through path from one side of the station to the other. All the property between Drummond Street and Euston Square was demolished,

including the hotel - much of the present circulation area is where the hotel once stood. Looking from the modern hall, the Euston Arch itself stood to the right side of the present arrival and destination board, where the ramps descend to the platforms. The Great Hall was well down amongst the modern platforms, somewhere where the Watford electrics run.

To build anything like the modern station, it is easy to see why the arch had to go. However, the arch was the entrance to the first main line terminus in London and in the world - it was dismantled carefully with the intention of re-erecting it but the blocks were soon taken away, muddled and then sold. Parts ended up as reinforcements for a river bank and others were used as hardcore. Surprisingly, one tiny fragment is held in the archive of the LNWR Society. The destruction of the arch was rated as being the biggest act of corporate vandalism of all time (since Henry VIII's days, at least).

One of the strangest stories of the demise of the old Euston concerns some of the iron gates under the arch and beside the gatehouses in Drummond Street. The gates were preserved and eventually passed into the custody of the National Railway Museum at York. When the outpost of the NRM was built in Shildon, County Durham, the gates were given away to the local council and installed at the entrance to a housing estate. What a pity that, if the NRM no longer wanted them, they could not have been loaned to a town with LNWR or L&B connections - Wolverton for example, which was the world's first railway town, where the L&B built its workshops and where the local council is keen to show its railway heritage.

Epsom & Ewell Show report: 19th –20th March 2005

Epsom & Ewell was the first Exhibition that both “Mostyn” and “Johnstown Road” have attended together as Barrowmore Model Railway Group layouts and it is great to report that it was also one of the most successful and enjoyable weekends that I have enjoyed since “Mostyn” was first completed in early 2002.

We did, for once, manage to do some pre-exhibition preparation and, thanks to Dave Millward, the “Mostyn” locomotive fleet was cleaned and checked before arrival and Gavin/myself completed the upgrading of “Johnstown Road’s” fascias. Journeys in ‘the van that time forgot’ are always entertaining but, thankfully, the Scotch Egg eating contest can now be consigned to the dustbin of history and we arrived at Epsom some 6 hours after departure from Barrowmore to be shortly followed afterwards by the rest of the team in Richard Stagg’s Volvo which had left Chester some two and a half hours later than the van.

We started erecting the layouts at 4pm and by 9.30pm both were fully operational. This is certainly the quickest we have erected “Mostyn” for a long time and this is despite having also to cover “Johnstown Road” and work with a smaller team – my congratulations go out to everyone for making this possible. Our bed-&-breakfast accommodation was fine and we finished Friday night with a few beers at a local pub where Young’s real ales were on tap.

The Saturday of the show passed in a blur of operating, talking trains and demonstrating. We did not really have enough operators to man the exchange sidings on "Mostyn" but this was lucky given the high numbers of spectators that often surrounded the layout. Emlyn and Richard Stagg manfully operated "Johnstown Road" for the entire day, occasionally relieved by Ian when not in demand at the demonstration stand which itself proved very popular under the control of Dave Goodwin. We were helped by various guest operators during the show and this included none other than the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Brian Angus, who taught us all a bit about high speed running on the layout during a half hour session that was not for the faint-hearted!

There were a lot of favourable comments about the quality, presentation and running of "Mostyn" and "Johnstown Road" and this can be judged from the fact that we received no fewer than eight new invitations to exhibit combinations of our layouts in the South East in the future. "Johnstown Road" was especially coveted and Emlyn received three enquiries as to whether it was 'For Sale'.

Sunday was another busy day at the exhibition and we were very relieved when Eddie Knorn arrived to ensure that our Diesel Multiple Unit fleet was not being under-used and proceeded to operate "Mostyn" for a good session. We also managed to give Paul Moore (Scalefour Society), Chris Ibbotson (DEMU) and Tim Easter (DEMU) their first ever operating sessions on "Mostyn". Tim stayed behind after the exhibition to help us dismantle and load our layouts and has expressed an interest in joining BMRG despite living in Harpenden.

The van finally arrived back at Barrowmore at 1.30am on Monday morning after a compulsory 'Kebab and Chips' pit-stop but it was not until 2.50am that I finally arrived home after Gavin, Dave F. and myself had unloaded the van in a zombie-like state. Was it all worth it? Too right it was. It was an excellent weekend and I would just like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone who made it possible.

Cheers - Richard

[Editor's note: of the two 'potted autobiographies' in this issue, Ian is the one who lives relatively locally to Barrowmore – his home is in Bebington, and he has just retired early from his work as an analytical chemist for Unilever Research]

"Who are you? (Ian Clark)"

**"LIFE'S NOT ALL BEER AND SKITTLES LAD!"
JOSEPH EDWARD CLARK (Ian's father - Summer 1961)**

I came into this life in a great hurry, thirty three weeks after conception. Added to this my mother had an A-Rhesus negative blood group: I am one of the few people in this country who can truly claim to have been born with blue blood in my veins. As one member of the medical profession told me last year "...in 1950! You were lucky to survive!"

My luck continued some eighteen months later when I was again taken seriously ill. The nascent NHS had yet significantly to reduce infant mortality rates and (not for the last time) the medical world gave up on me. Had I been a Catholic no doubt the

priest would have been called to administer the last rites! I survived but carry the scars from this incident to this day, with seriously defective sight in my right eye. People give me a half-completed model and say "What does this look like to you?", and I think: "Well, it depends which eye I look through!"

At the tender age of ten years and ten months I entered Wath-upon-Dearne Grammar School in Yorkshire (and before anyone tries to blackmail me – yes, it is the same one as attended by William Hague – I never knew him but think he was in the first year when I was in the upper-sixth).

My chemistry teacher told me that I was stupid and useless (the school was not heavily committed to child-centred education). I recalled this statement at least twice in later years; once when I received my first in chemistry and again when I received my PhD in applied physics. 'Boot' Hill (as this teacher was nick-named by the pupils) had been a laboratory technician at Manvers Main colliery and knew a thing or two; sadly few of them were about chemistry. At Wath 'decent chaps' studied Latin and Greek, the headmaster openly referred to the science block as 'The Wilderness' – and we wonder why Britain is going down the drain!

My father was a very religious man, though we worshipped in neither church nor chapel, but, regular pilgrimages were made to Headingley (cricket) and Bramhall Lane (soccer). I never went to sleep with tales of 'Winnie-the-Pooh' echoing in my brain, but was enthralled by the exploits of cricketers Herbert Sutcliffe, Percy Holmes, Wilfrid Rhodes, Sir Len Hutton and Frederick Swards Trueman – but my father did have to admit "This lad Boycott looks promising"!!! In case anyone thinks that ours was a xenophobic household may I say that Brian Statham was held in high regard and an Australian (of all people), Sir Donald Bradman ('the Don'), held an almost god-like position. My father had seen him play at Bramhall Lane and he had been instantly elevated to the position of 'honorary Yorkshireman'.

At school each April the talk was of who would finish second in the County Championship. Then one year the unthinkable happened as Hampshire sneaked past us on the rails and became County Champions for the first time in their history. "Where is Hampshire anyway?" we all asked. "It's where 'urricanes 'ardly hever 'appen" quoth a musically gifted member of our group – he went on to become a concert pianist.

It is the dream of every Yorkshireman that his son wins a 'White Rose cap'. As my father put it "Any bugger can play for England, but only a Yorkshireman can play for Yorkshire!" In this respect I was a great disappointment to him; one evening in July 1966 (soon after England had won the World Cup) a ball reared-up off a good length and almost decapitated me. It was time to look for a new hobby.

I had been an avid train-spotter since the age of ten, but the customary half-term trip to Crewe had yielded but one Stanier pacific, "City of Carlisle" (and some moron had painted a yellow stripe down her cabsides!) and railway modelling seemed to offer an answer. I was already a keen follower of the works of Denny and Jenkinson in "Railway Modeller" and decided to make a few kits and try scatch-building. My first efforts weren't too bad (in fact I've recently seen worse made by adults) and I decided to persevere. Things were interrupted by marriage and education.

In the autumn of 1976 I was called to my professor's office to receive some bad news. My post-doctoral research money was coming to an end in December and the university could not afford to fund me after that date. PANIC!! I would have to look for another source of income. I quickly applied for three jobs and duly attended for interview. One morning the postman delivered two envelopes, one offering me a research fellowship at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the other offering a job with Unilever Research. Martin Poliakoff (the brother of the playwright) rang me up to ask me to go to Newcastle, but I was a married man and decided it was time to find a 'proper job'. I left academic life on 23rd December and travelled south, it was a grey day which had turned to snow by the time I reached Barnsley bus station.

On the morning of 4th January 1977 I walked along the cobbled streets, turned into the factory's West Gate, passed the Pear's soap plant and ascended the steps to the door of Unilever Research Port Sunlight Laboratory (URPSL, as I would come to know it). It was my first day as a company servant.

On 29th April 2005 I passed through the hallowed portal for the final time as a company servant, paused to gaze at the ivory towers and dreaming spires, shrugged my shoulders and turned to walk home. Ah well, least said soonest mended. I was about to start a new life!

The intervening years were not all bad. In May 1980 I ascended the stairs of the Merseyside Model Railway Society's clubrooms and met a dark-haired man wearing 'John Lennon' spectacles, holding a cigarette. A scholar and a gentleman if ever I have seen one thought I – and have never trusted first impressions since! 'I think it's time to go to the pub.' quoth he 'Are you coming?'

It turned out that he was a librarian. "If you are serious about railway modelling" he said "give up OO and change to P4, in the end you will waste a lot less time and money". It was the start of a friendship which has lasted 25 years to date – and never a crossed word!

In this period I have been involved with a number of P4 layouts: "Adavoyle" (Irish 5ft3in gauge in 1948), "Plemsworth" (Cheshire Lines in 1929), "Rockingham Pottery" (L.N.E.R. in 1929), "Birkenhead Woodside" (L.M.S. & G.W.R. in 1934) and "Mostyn" (B.R. in 1977). My most recent essay is a diorama of Rotherham Road, the first station out of Rotherham Central towards Doncaster. It is set in September 1929 – the day Trigo won the St Leger. I cannot recall the station being open (it closed in 1953) but passed by many times. The backscene contains a representation of St Mary's church, Rawmarsh, where I was christened and married.

People ask me what I shall do in retirement. I suppose eventually I shall be drawn back to Yorkshire; it's OK, I guess, for a soldier to die in a foreign field, but I am now too old to be called upon to serve Queen and Country. In the meantime I am heavily committed to Barrowmore MRG and its objectives.

“Knutsford East Junction”

by Don Rowland and Dick Petter

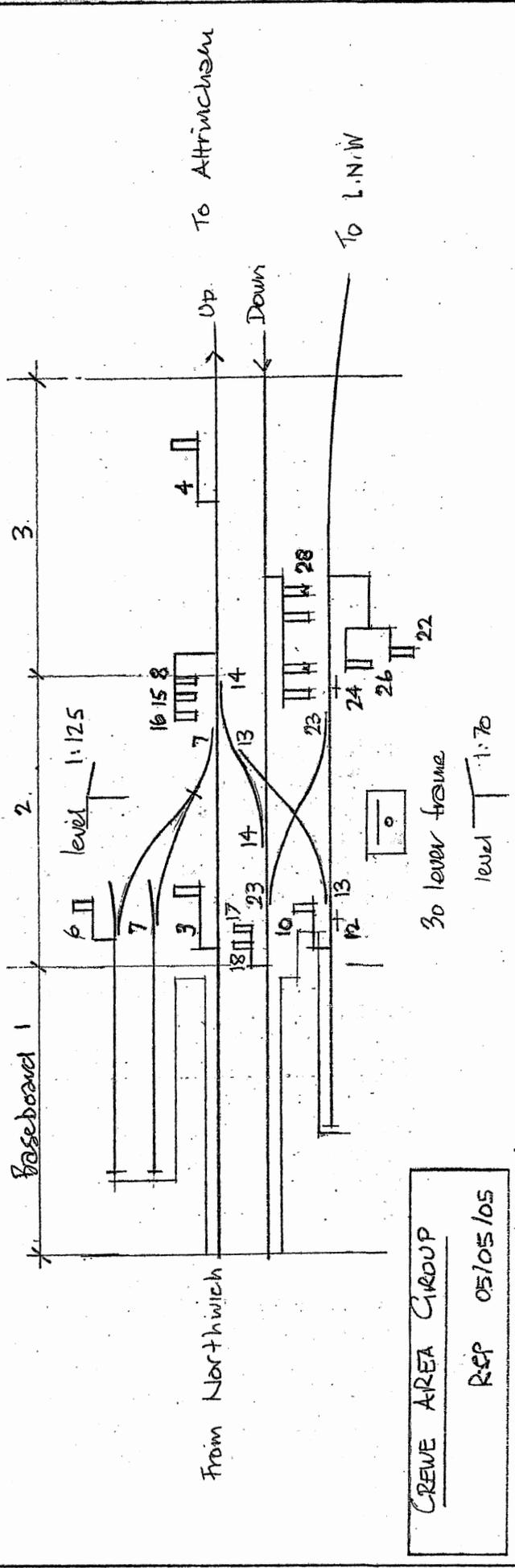
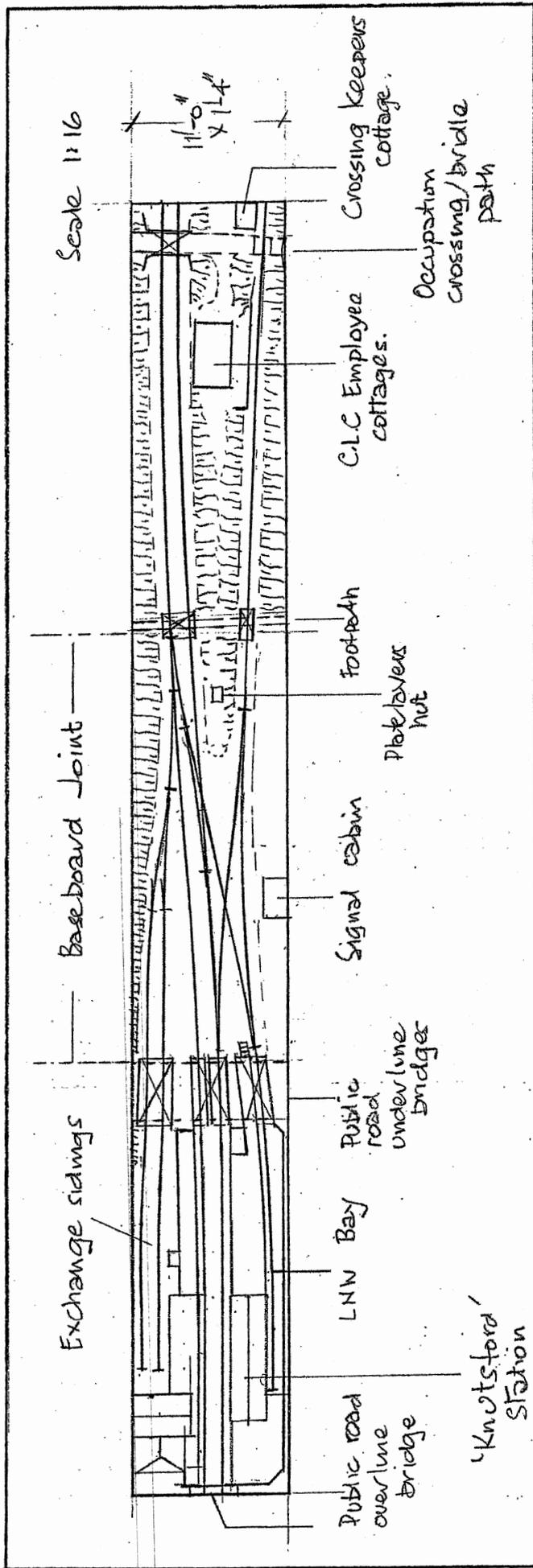
The Crewe Group of the Scalefour Society is one of the newest area groups, having been formed something under three years ago as a gathering of P4 modellers meeting once a month in each others' houses for a chat. To be honest, some of them with a long experience of exhibitions were, to put it at its mildest, not terribly keen on seeing more from the inside and were quite content to keep it that way.

It was on to this idyllic scene that some chap called Challis burst with his crazy notion of a challenge competition for the best layout no larger than 18.83 square feet in total, in P4 of course. After a decent interval of time it became obvious that the man was indeed serious and would not go away and odd members - yes, we do have some - began to wonder if we should perhaps get involved. In the end it was Dick Petter who came along and helped us make the decision. He had planned on having a branch line on his layout and in fact had the junction already built. His suggestion was that the group would build part of the far end of his branch to be incorporated, after the Challenge, into his layout.

Basically it is a 'might have been' branch. In 1867 the LNWR obtained an Act to build two branches off the Crewe to Manchester line. One, Sandbach to Northwich, was built but the other, Chelford to Knutsford, lapsed when the Cheshire Midland granted running powers to the LNW. Dick has assumed it was actually built. He already has a model of Chelford station with a branch striking off in a south-westerly direction from the Down side of the station. It trails in at east end of the present Knutsford (CLC) station and this is the new portion which forms the group entry for the Challenge.

As the plan shows, the part of Knutsford station actually modelled is that bit to the east of the Toft Road over-bridge. As the CLC had it this consisted of Up and Down platforms with a single coal siding behind the Manchester platform. The LNW branch terminates in a short bay platform behind the other (i.e., Chester) platform and there is a trailing connection to the main line. In theory this gives the opportunity of through running to Chester but in fact its principal use is for freight workings transferring wagons between the branch and the Exchange sidings. For this traffic the coal siding has been doubled to give more exalted status and additional pointwork has been installed.

The layout attempts to portray the CLC as it was in the late 1940s/early 50s. The infrastructure is still purely Cheshire Lines. As yet there are no upper quadrant signals on tubular posts but LMR influence is beginning to be seen in the shape of some motive power and coaching stock running alongside CLC carriages and LNER engines. A CLC goods brake sometimes appears at the tail end of freight trains. This is the layout which will be exhibited for the Challenge, along with removable cassettes at each end to hold trains. After the Challenge we believe Dick plans to make Knutsford a full length through-station once more but that is another story.



KNUTSFORD EAST JUNCTION

Star City Yard - part 2

By Gareth Bayer

THE FIRST PART of this series on the Barrowmore Model Railway Group's new US 'HO' scale layout was well received. However, while the initial plan - as laid out - did garner some positive comments, when it came to producing the final version which would be used to produce the baseboard design, a number of problems emerged. These could be summed up in three main areas. Firstly, the original layout, (formerly Philip's British 'OO' Star Lane project) was seen, in the end, as being too difficult to adapt. Secondly, it became increasingly apparent that the 'second' railroad would create more problems than could easily be solved. Finally, the issue of handling of stock was brought up. Whilst US 'HO' stock is rugged and we had already planned on having a 'maximum' standard of detailing, in the end it was decided that a more 'handling-friendly' traverser design (i.e. more length given over to the hidden sidings) would need to be built in to the plan.

By not re-using Star Lane we have been able to design a plan that more fully replicates US practice, although it would be nice to have longer yard leads at the right hand end of the layout! The layout will still feature the Purina feed mill as its centrepiece and the new design enables more room for these structures allowing the industry to 'breathe'. The replacement of the second railroad with a Rock Island operated industrial track ups the switching fun to be had from the layout. One interesting by-product of the design is that viewers will not be able to see the whole of the trains entering or leaving the yard, enabling us to use longer lash-ups of locomotives at the front without them looking incongruous. Any more than two locomotives on a seven-foot train, as envisaged on the initial plan, was always going to look silly, but now, and even with maximum trains lengths being around five foot six inches this is no longer a problem.

The plan is reproduced in its entirety below. The intention is to build the layout in two distinct 'phases'. With the first exhibition appearance for the layout being at Scalerail, Bolton, early in 2006, this is seen to be prudent. Phase I consists of the left-hand twelve foot of the layout,

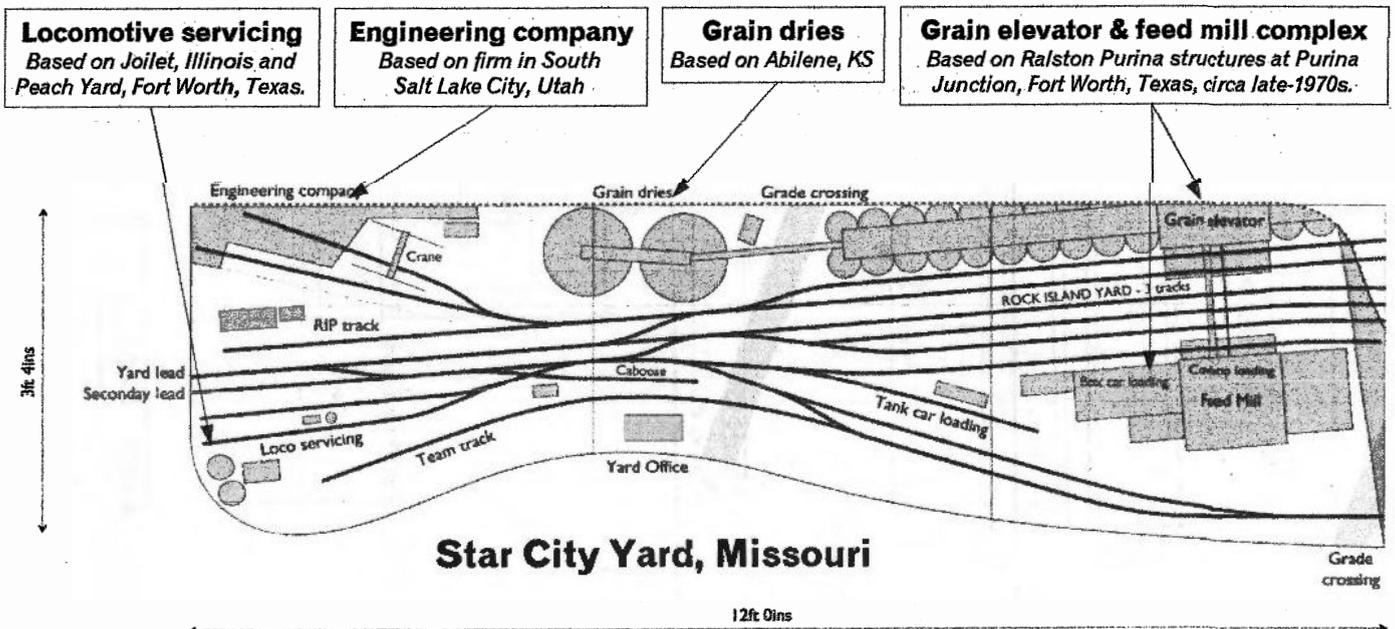
whilst Phase II features the scenic section of the industrial track. One final point, with the dropping of the other railroads, we have shifted the layout several hundred miles south into Missouri, for no particular reason other than it places us near Kansas City, a major US railroading hub, giving us an excuse for visiting locomotives and more trains!

Gentleman, start your wallets!

If you read the first part of this feature in the BMRG Journal No. 2 then you will be 'up to speed' on what the Rock Island was, where it operated and the details of its somewhat chequered history. However, as the previous article was merely an overview to give Barrowmore MRG members a taste of what the vision of their latest layout acquisition was, it necessitated skipping over certain subjects that deserved more space. BMRG members are an eager bunch and the sound of wallets bursting to spend money on US 'HO' gauge models was becoming deafening! With this in mind, we present the rest of this article which will look at the potential minefield that is purchasing locomotives and rolling stock that are required to operate Star City Yard as effectively and prototypically as possible.

Casting your mind back to the 1979 Rock Island railroad locomotive roster that appeared in BMRJ No. 2, the fleet can be split into three different groups, as follows, with the builders in brackets: Switchers (EMD/Alco), four-axle road units (EMD/GE) and six-axle road units (EMD/GE). For our purposes, only the first two groups are appropriate as the six-axle machines tended to be used mainly on the long 'unit' grain and coal trains that travelled from the mid-west to the Gulf coast. Their extra length will also look odd on Star City Yard, despite its 23ft length!

So looking at the switcher fleet first, there are six major classes operated in our era, from which we would initially be looking at acquiring three for the layout. In all but one case the switcher models that are available are excellent models that mainly need only pilot detailing (air pipes/couplings/multiple working jumpers) to complete. The six types are:



EMD NW2 1000hp Nos. CRI&P 765-774/795-797/4900-4909
 Produced by Kato in the early 1990s this model still stands up well today and will require only minimal detail work. Two different types were produced, known as Phase I and Phase II and while numerous paint schemes featured, Rock Island was not one of them. This firm pioneered the limited edition production runs that we know and hate nowadays and the last issue of this model was in 1998 so it is difficult to get hold of the NW2 new, however they are common on eBay and secondhand.

EMD SW1 600hp Nos. CRI&P 529-546/4800-4804
 Walthers has not got a great reputation for producing stunning models, mainly preferring to target the 'trainset' and passenger/freight car modeller, but the SW1 was an excellent model for its time and will detail into a fine model. Production of the switcher finished some time ago, so again, checking out eBay and secondhand listings is the only way that this model can be sourced. It is not clear whether Rock Island was amongst the schemes that were produced, but the RI colours are simple to apply so purchasing a unit in another livery should not be considered a problem.

EMD SW8 800hp Nos. CRI&P 811-840
EMD SW900 900hp Nos. CRI&P 900-915
 Life-Like Proto2000 has recently produced an excellent model for these switchers which are externally almost identical. This is possibly the best switcher model currently available. Rock Island was amongst the liveries produced but sadly this was the 'as delivered' scheme which was obsolete by our 1979 period. One of these units - which can still be bought new - should certainly be considered a high priority for Star City.

EMD SW9 1200hp Nos. CRI&P 775-780
EMD SW1200 1200hp Nos. CRI&P 920-936
 Again, Life-Like Proto2000 has come to the rescue with a model of this useful machine. These units are very similar to the earlier SW8/900, although in P2K's case, the SW9/1200 model came first, way back in 1995. Again, Rock Island was one of the liveries produced, but again (!) the delivery

scheme of black with safety stripes was the only one produced that was gone by the 1970s. The SW9/1200 model is a little rougher around the edges than the SW8/900 but it can still be purchased at many places for half the price of the later model.

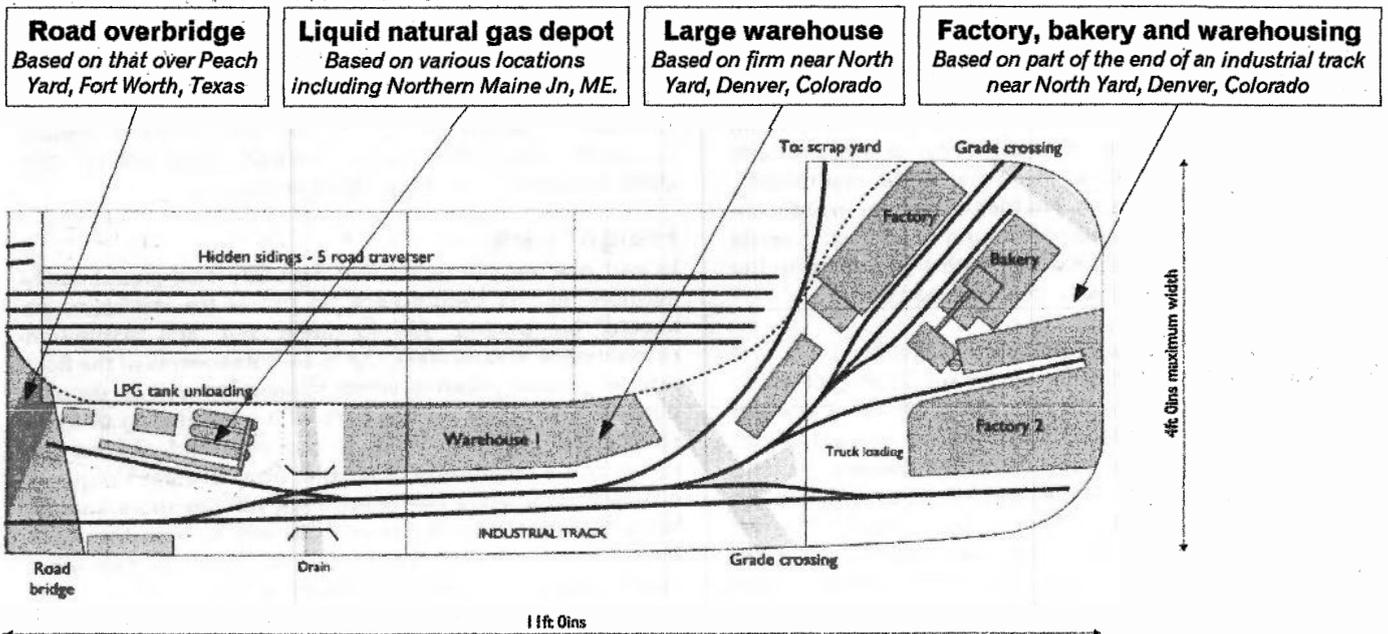
EMD SW900M 600hp Nos. CRI&P 550-563
 No model is currently produced for this particular class, which were rebuilds based upon the first SW switchers produced by EMD. They have an obvious similarity to the later SW600-1200 types and it may be possible to detail up a Proto2000 model to represent one of these switchers.

EMD SW1500 1500hp Nos. CRI&P 940-949
 The final switchers purchased by the Rock Island were ten SW1500s acquired in 1966. They received 'The Rock' blue early on and a just such a model is produced by Athearn. The loco is perhaps not to the same standard as the Proto-2000 releases but it has an excellent bodyshell with fine detail and excellent truck sideframes and underframe detail. One of these is a must for Star City Yard.

Alco C415 1500hp Nos. CRI&P 415-424
 The solitary non-EMD switcher on the Rock Island roster in 1979 was the Alco centre-cab C415. There are two sources for this model, AHM which produces a plastic model of questionable quality, and various ready-to-run 'brass' manufacturers, principally Overland. The latter models are generally excellent and can be ran straight out of the box with almost no work, but as these are hand-made brass kits you must be prepared to pay for them, often around £400! The C415 is pretty much an oddball loco which is not of high priority for Star City Yard.

With the above in mind, it may be best for BMRG to concentrate on the following three models to start off with: a Walthers SW1 in maroon livery, a Proto2000 SW900 in red livery and an Athearn SW1500 in blue livery.

So having got the switcher fleet out of the way, it is now time to take a look at the Rock Island's four-axle road fleet. EMD



Star City Yard continued...

general-purpose units predominate, with competitor General Electric and its 'universal' or 'U-boat' series supplying three classes. Happily, good models of most of the following types are available, or are promised for delivery in 2005, so it should be quick and easy for BMRG to speedily build up a quality fleet to run our Rock Island trains.

EMD GP7 1500hp

Nos. CRI&P 435/7/8/9/40/1201/26/52/67/75/1301

EMD GP7 1500hp (Capital Rebuild Programme)

Nos. CRI&P 4425-78/4500-55

Produced by both Atlas in its 'Classic' range and Life-Like in its Proto2000 series, the GP7 is a signature locomotive of the Rock Island railroad and Star City Yard will require between three and five units. Both the Atlas and P2K models are good, although the latter is a more recent release and thus features slightly better detail. The Atlas, however, is available in 'The Rock' blue, whereas the P2K is only available in two early schemes that are not applicable to our era. Three Atlas models have already been acquired for the layout. The Rock Island's units were not fitted with dynamic brakes, which means that the distinctive blister on the long hood is not present on these machines.

EMD GP9 1750hp Nos. CRI&P 1321/25-7/31/2

EMD GP9 1750hp (Capital Rebuild Programme)

Nos. CRI&P 4421-3/80-93

Again, both Atlas and Proto2000 have produced the GP9 and pretty much the same information as given for the GP7 applies here. The GP9s were less common on the Rock Island, but we should be considering at least one unit to be run interchangeably with the GP7 fleet.

EMD GP18 1800hp Nos. CRI&P 1333-1353

The GP18 was a further development of the GP7/9 unit and is produced by Proto2000 and in a livery suitable to the late-1970s. The model is very good and comes fitted with a DCC socket, wire grabs throughout and excellent flush glazing. One of these units would be a quick and easy addition to the Star City Yard roster.

EMD GP35 2500hp Nos. CRI&P 300-333

Both Kato and Athearn produce GP35 models, but they are of an earlier 'phase' to the Rock Island units and would require a certain amount of modification to suit the later Phase II design. The Kato is the better of the two models, but is much more expensive. Neither of the two models are up to the current best standards but are good basic models that would repay careful detailing. With thirty units on the roster, one of these would be a desirable addition.

EMD GP38-2 2000hp Nos. CRI&P 4300-55/68-79

The other signature Rock Island unit is the GP38-2, of which the railroad rostered 68 by the late 1970s. All were delivered in the 'bankrupt blue' scheme and matched sets of three or four were common in the early days after delivery. Models are produced by Athearn and Proto2000, three of the latter having been acquired for the layout already. Again, this is a case of you pay your money and take your choice. The Athearn model can be purchased for a third of the price of P2K or less, but will require significant work to bring up to the same standard. That is not to say that every aspect of the

P2K is perfect, the Athearn truck sideframes, for example, are far better than those on the P2K release. Three distinct configurations of GP38-2 existed in the Rock Island, so it is important to be careful if planning on renumbering any of the P2K releases. Star City requires four GP38-2s initially.

EMD GP40 3000hp Nos. CRI&P 340-396/4700-4719

EMD GP40-2R 3000hp (Capital Rebuild Programme)

Nos. CRI&P 3000-3004

There is only one choice for the GP40 and that is produced by Atlas in its Master series and comes already supplied with a DCC-decoder already fitted. Atlas even produced the maroon 'speed-lettering' scheme in an early run that can be purchased secondhand or on eBay. One of these units is a must for the layout.

GE U25B 2500hp Nos. CRI&P 200-238

Stewart Hobbies produces the U25B and while it is a good basic model, it will require a certain amount of work to bring it up to the standard of the latest releases from Atlas and P2K. However, with nearly forty units on the roster, and the wacky weathered state that many of these units were in by the late-1970s means that BMRG should certainly consider producing one of these locomotives.

GE U28B 2800hp Nos. CRI&P 240-281

Currently no model is available for this development of the U25B, but one is promised for an autumn 2005 delivery by Proto2000 and in a suitable Rock Island livery. This should be a quick and simple route to a high quality U28B.

GE U33B 3300hp Nos. CRI&P 190-199/285-299

The most attractive of the General Electric units on the Rock Island roster are the U33Bs, which is ironic as no model exists, however, it is a simple kit-bash using an Atlas U23B and an Atlas U33C bodyshell. The conversion entails swapping the radiator section of the U23B for that on the U33C. One of these units, in Rock Island red with 'speed lettering' would be an excellent addition to the layout.

In part one of this feature we surmised that Star City Yard would initially require around 12-15 locomotives for its exhibition commitments. Based on the information given above would roughly break down into the following fleet requirements: Atlas/P2K GP7 blue x3 (three already acquired), red x1, Atlas/P2K GP9 blue x1, P2K GP18 red x1, Kato GP35 maroon x1, P2K GP38-2 blue x4 (three already acquired), Atlas GP40 red x1, Stewart U25B red x1, P2K U28B maroon x1, and Atlas U33B red x1.

Freight cars

In part one we estimated that Star City Yard would easily swallow up fifty freight cars, so this is the minimum we should be aiming for to meet our first exhibition commitment in early 2006. The main components of the fleet will be grain/soybean covered hoppers as well as general purpose and insulated box cars with a smattering of more specialised vehicles. There is one main industry on the layout and a smattering of smaller firms and each requires different cars, while the team track will see more variety. While the vast majority of vehicles will be from the Rock Island, there will also be a small number cars from other local railroads, as well as freight stock from the larger companies and private owner cars. This is where things start to get really complicated!

Covered hoppers

Perhaps the largest number of vehicles will be covered hoppers, mainly for carrying grain and soybean. There are numerous models available in 'HO' scale but only a few meet the very latest standards. The good news is that extra details like etched walkways, grabs and air pipes etc., are all available from the trade enabling all vehicles to be brought up to a high standard. The main customer for the covered hoppers will be the Ralston Purina feed mill, served by the Rock Island. With this in mind, we should be considering the following vehicles:

Accurail

50ft ACF 4600cf 'Centerflow' 3-bay hopper - RI

Athearn R-T-R

50ft FMC 4700cf 3-bay hopper - ATSF

54ft Pullman Standard 4740cf 16-rib 3-bay hopper - RI

Atlas

50ft ACF 4650cf 'Centerflow' 3-bay hopper (pre-1971) - NYC/RI

50ft ACF 4650cf 'Centerflow' 3-bay hopper (post-1971) - RI

Intermountain

50ft ACF 4650cf 'Centerflow' 3-bay hopper (pre-1971) - RI

50ft ACF 4650cf 'Centerflow' 3-bay hopper (post-1971) - RI

54ft Pullman Standard 4750cf 18-rib 3-bay hopper - BN/RI

Life-Like Proto2000

50ft PS2-CD 4427cf 3-bay hopper (high-sided) - ATSF/BN/RI

Walthers

50ft GATX 4180cf 'Airslide' 2-bay hopper - BN/RI

50ft PS2-CD 4427cf 3-bay hopper (low-sided) - RI

Box cars

There will be two types of box cars on the layout, those that served the feed mill and then those general purpose cars for loading/unloading on the team track, or that serve the engineering firm or the spurs on the industrial track. Purina had its own fleet of box cars, which were supplemented by similar cars worked in a pool system from other railroads. We are fortunate in that Atlas produces this car in HO scale. The mid-1970s saw the creation of the Railbox fleet of common user box cars which were common by 1979. A cursory glance at what is available suggests the following would be a good place to start:

Athearn R-T-R

50ft FMC 5347cf box car - general purpose - RBOX/RI

50ft Pullman Standard 5344cf box car - general purpose - RI

Athearn Genesis

50ft Evans box car (modified Sieco) - general purpose - RI

Atlas

50ft Evans double-plug door box car - feed - BN/RPCX

50ft Precision Design 'ribside' box car - general purpose - RI/SOU

50ft Precision Design box car - general purpose - ICG

Branchline

50ft AAR single door welded box car - general purpose - RI

Intermountain

50ft Pullman Standard 5277cf box car - general purpose - RBOX

Cabooses

Just to be awkward, the Rock Island had a strange selection of cabooses that mean that they are not generally available R-T-R in plastic. However, by the late-1970s the use of cabooses was starting to become less and less so we will not be required to feature one of these on every train saving considerable hard work. One Overland brass caboose has already been acquired.

Athearn

Extended vision caboose (requires modification) - RI

Walthers

Bay window caboose (requires modification) - RI

Life-Like Proto2000

Steel centre cupola caboose - RI

Other freight cars

While covered hoppers in the main will dominate the layout, we will also require gondolas, flat cars and tank cars. A quick list of potential vehicles is outlined below. Again, this is not exhaustive.

Atlas

ACF 23,500gal tank car - petroleum - ACFX

ACF 33,000gal tank car - liquid petroleum gas - ACFX

Intermountain

60ft wood deck flat car - general purpose - OTTX

Life-Like Proto2000

52ft 6ins drop-end mill gondola - general purpose - RI/SLSF

53ft 6ins AAR flat car - general purpose - IT/RI

Walthers

Union Tank Car 16,000gal tank car - chemicals - UTLX

Union Tank Car 23,500gal tank car - petroleum - UTLX

Union Tank Car 33,000gal tank car - LPG/anhydrous am. - UTLX

Key: ACFX – ACF Industries, ATSF – Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, BN – Burlington Northern, ICG – Illinois Central Gulf, IT – Illinois Terminal, OTTX – Trailer Train Corp., NYC – New York Central, RBOX – Railbox, RPCX – Ralston Purina, SLSF – St Louis & San Francisco, SOU – Southern, and UTLX – Union Tank Car.

Other railroads

The above list of locos and freight cars is not exhaustive, but it does provide a good starting point. Earlier I mentioned 'visiting locos' and the layouts new Missouri location provides ample excuse to run locos on transfer runs from the ATSF, BN, Kansas City Southern, Kansas City Terminal, Missouri-Kansas-Texas, Norfolk & Western, and the mighty Union Pacific railroad.

References

Modellers of post-1960s American railroads do not have the luxury of vast numbers of books dedicated to niche subjects like British-outline modellers, even for railroads as popular as the Rock Island. The country is too large and there were hundreds of separate lines that are all demanding attention. Sadly, most books also focus on the 'good ol' days' of steam and the famous passenger trains that crossed the continent to the detriment of our 1970's era. However, there are a number of books that are available and these are listed below. They will only give a flavour of what is required for the layout though.

HILE, S., Hickcox, D.H. & MILLER, T. (1995) *Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment*, Morning Sun Books, Inc.

MARRE, Louis A. (2001) *Rock Island Color Pictorial – Volume 3*, Four Ways West Publications

MARVEL, Bill (1995) *Rock Island in Color - Volume II: 1965-1980*, Morning Sun Books, Inc.

The Internet is a useful place to find information on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad but it is maybe not as good as might have been expected. Still, the following websites all contain useful information and images.

Fallen Flag and other railroad photos gelwood.railfan.net/
Rock Island Technical Society www.simpson.edu/~RITS

Part 3 will look at online industries and will hopefully also provide the first pictures of the layout under construction...

[Our second 'Who are you' in this issue lives quite a bit further away from Barrowmore than Bebington – he comes all the way from Deganwy (near Conway in North Wales) - not far from the Chester & Holyhead-built Llandudno Junction to Llandudno branch. He is also recently retired – this time from dentistry ...]

“Who are you? (Richard Stagg)”

I came to Barrowmore from Merseyside Model Railway Society via Wirral Fine Scale for one real reason only, my wife grows orchids. Her hobby means we come to Chester on the last Friday of the month. I like her orchids but there is a limit to marital devotion, so I cast around for something to go to that was more to my interests. I found that MMRS met on Fridays, so that is how you got me.

That's not the whole story though, as my railway and modelling interests go way, way back.

I was a child of the war years, (the 1939-45 one, nothing more recent sad to say!), and was born in the West Midlands. My earliest memories are of being taken in my pram by a convalescing Granddad to watch the GWR trains on the North Warwicks line just to the west of Tyseley. That early imprint of Brunswick green, and chocolate and cream was there for life. Besides which, there was no contest in the drama of train action between grimy bombed-out New St. and the panache of presentation to be seen at Snow Hill.

At that time I had a wooden model train, - engine, tender, wagon and guard's van, that was pushed around the floor. It was just not right, and I kept pestering for "trains on lines".

This was, I now know, a major problem. At that time, towards the end of the war, there just were no such toys (models) to be had. My father, who had been wounded in action, was sharing this problem one day in his hospital ward with another wounded colleague who said that he thought he could help. It seems that this chap and his brother had quite a lot of 'O' gauge tinsplate models from their childhood, and he thought that they could now dispose of them. Well, obviously father was delighted with this idea. There was though one problem. Obviously, the brother had to be consulted. A letter would have to be written. At that time the brother was a guest of a certain A.Hitler; and the postal services between the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, and whatever Stalag the brother was in were slow and erratic to say the least. Well, some months later a favourable reply was received and the models changed hands.

I was delighted with my Christmas present - trains on lines at last. There was a mixture of pre-World War I Bing and 1920s-30s Hornby models, all clockwork. One of the gems was a LNER Silver Jubilee set, and quite a lot of the goods wagons were in pre-grouping liveries. There were evidently a fair number of models bought, as further tranches came my way for birthdays and Christmases for a year or two, and I know that other examples were sold (at a premium I believe) which helped fund the whole endeavour.

These kept me enthralled for years. I was able to constantly change the configuration of the layout, indoors in the winter and out in the garden in the summer. There were no electrics to complicate my designs, which naturally got more prototypical as I grew older.

Eventually I fulfilled my mother's prophecy - "I'll know when you've got a girlfriend 'cos you'll start washing your neck and cleaning your teeth". How percipient she was. So in due course neck washing etc. commenced and the trains were put aside.

I was never an anorak. Having been sent to prep-school in Aberdeenshire, I got the 'real' railway travel bug from the various different routes worked out by mother and school to get me from Brum to Aberdeenshire. As was normal for those days, from about the age of 9, I could, (under the benevolent eyes of guards and sleeping car attendants), get myself from Birmingham to Aberdeen with changes at Crewe - into a sleeper, then at Perth - sometimes a very very cold early morning wait for the Glasgow - Aberdeen mail train, which needless to say, was due to arrive at Aberdeen on the ex-LMS line from the south 5 minutes after the ex-LNER connection left for Huntly which was the school's station.

However all was not lost, a full Scottish station breakfast with ALL the trimmings was a gourmet experience that alas now is almost beyond belief.

Coming home was easier, just one change in Glasgow - but that involved a change of station. Still a taxi ride across Glasgow from Buchanan St. to Central at about 10.30 at night was quite manageable once we had had a rehearsal with mother showing me what to do. Then onto the Glasgow-Birmingham sleeper followed by the last four miles home on the bus from New St.

My journeys though, were relatively short compared with some of the other boys whose parents were scattered round the Empire and who could only go home for the long summer holidays.

A seminal book purchase in the late 1950s was the acquisition of a copy of Edward Beal's "Modelling the old-time railways", with its dust jacket showing one of the early versions of Peter Denny's "Buckingham". The dreams that this book inspired were all that I had until I had finished with university and could actually earn some money.

Serious modelling commenced in the late 60s in 'OO' gauge, but as I was in the army and constantly moving around, construction was really restricted to rolling stock, including scratch built coal wagons and kit butchery.

Leaving the army and putting down some roots led to the first attempt at a layout, - based vaguely on Welshpool in the 1920s but without the W & Ll. It was called "Pwllsais" which translates as "English pool". This had some nice scratch built buildings including good copies of the signal workshops and signal box at Welshpool, and the goods shed from Llanfyllin.

Moving house in 1979 saw the move to S4, (definitely not P4, - then much too "commercial!"), and a more focussed attempt to model the inland section of the ex-

Cambrian main line though at an imaginary location called Garthmyl. The hamlet of Garthmyl exists. It was the first terminal of the Montgomeryshire Canal; and had not the formidable Mrs. Ann Owen of Glansevern forced the Oswestry & Newtown Railway to go down the east side of the Severn to avoid her acres on the west, Garthmyl could well not only have had a railway, but even have been the junction site for the Bishop's Castle line! That at any rate was my reasoning.

Regretfully, pressure of work and the demands on my time of all my activities with NHS committees, Health Authorities, and being a member of my professional association's governing body led firstly to the demise of that layout, and then to my realization that the standards that I wanted in my models were often much higher than my abilities, except perhaps for buildings. Recently "Johnstown Road" has gathered things together for me with its combination of the short trains enthused about by Edward Beal and a Cambrian setting; and a renewed realisation of what 'O' gauge has to offer.

I also have an interest in narrow gauge lines, probably stemming from the 3ft 6in gauge of the Birmingham trams. In the 60s I was a volunteer on the Welshpool & Llanfair, but in that pre-glove age foot-plate work and dentistry did not mix, so I switched to track work and manning the Llanfair Caereinion level crossing. Since retirement I have returned to active volunteering with the Welsh Highland, first on the construction side. Building points from a set of parts in 12in to the foot is quite a different kettle of fish from 4mm! Currently I am enjoying life on the foot plate learning to boil water.

"Thurstaston": a personal journey, by Bryan Johnson

It was late 1994 when I resolved to make a P4 exhibition model of Thurstaston station on the Hooton to West Kirby branch. This article describes the steps I've taken so far in pursuit of this, and my plans for the remainder.

Having been raised overlooking the signal box at Bebington on the Birkenhead to Chester line, my main area of interest has always been the joint lines on the Wirral. I have only a few memories of seeing steam in action, but I suspect that the trains I saw when I was growing up gave me my interest in things GWR, LMS and BR. I'd been building models since my schooldays, but without any specific plans. I had ideas of a model based on the approaches to Birkenhead Woodside in the loft, but this was really a schoolboy fantasy. Through friends, I'd moved from OO to P4 in the early 1980s but still bought and built without any real direction.

Apart from 9Fs, which I'd been taken to see working the Summers ore trains at Storeton, my steam prototype preference is for small to medium sized engines. My modelling preferences have always been rolling stock construction, covering locos, coaches and wagons in equal measure.

I don't know what process resulted in the decision to model Thurstaston, but the more I thought about it, the more I realised that it closely matched all my areas of interest:

- GWR and LMS operation, with the bonus of mixtures within the one train;
- Regular passenger and freight traffic passing through, operated by small to medium sized engines;
- All trains required to slow or stop to exchange the single line tokens with the signalman;
- Goods yard used for significant unloading operations, giving a prototype for stopping goods traffic;
- Based on the Wirral;
- Only a few buildings needing to be built, simple scenery, with a bridge at each end to give natural scenic breaks;
- The prototype could be shortened to fit, but still retain the scale width and appearance.

For those not familiar with the line, it was opened from Hooton as far as Parkgate on 01/10/1866, with the junction at Hooton facing Birkenhead as it was intended as a commuter route to Birkenhead and Liverpool. On 19/04/1886 the extension to West Kirby through Thurstaston was opened, with a connection onto the Wirral Railway at West Kirby. This provided an alternative freight route to the western end of Birkenhead Docks. A passing loop and additional platform was opened at Thurstaston around 1897. Thurstaston and other lesser-used stations were closed on 01/02/1954, with the passenger service finishing on 17/09/1956 and the line was closed to all traffic on 07/05/1962.

Having decided on the prototype, the next step was detailed research. This was helped by the line having been converted into a linear park ('Wirral Country Park') after closure. The primary visitors' centre for the park is located at Thurstaston and displays some information on the history. Some of the structures such as the platforms, end loading bay and over-bridges are extant, so can be measured and photographed. A meeting with the Park Ranger provided a copy of the plans from when the extension was originally opened.

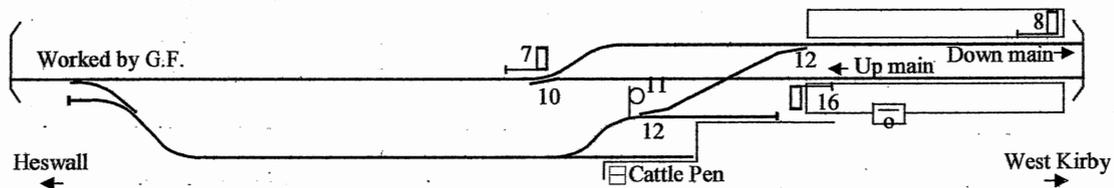
Literature and photograph searches were a bit more difficult. The Wirral seems to have been largely ignored by photographers and authors, so there is comparatively little material. The best sources found are some magazine articles by Rex Christiansen, the "British Railways past and present: Cheshire and North Wales" by Paul Shannon and John Hillmer (1988), "Merseyside and district railway stations" by Paul Bolger (1994) and "Railways stations of Wirral" by the Merseyside Railway History Group (1993). The Online Video "Steam on the Wirral" has a useful sequence showing a passing train, views of the goods yard and the unloading operation.

Through letters to the Wirral Railway Circle, and speaking to David Goodwin on the HMRS stand, I have been put in contact with a number of people with additional information on the line, some of it first hand.

From the plans provided by the Park Ranger, the distance between the over-bridges was worked out as well over ¼ mile, and would need 33 feet in 4mm scale. I calculated that I could reasonably compress the length into a 16 foot scenic section by cutting sections

out of the loop and the approach from the Heswall end without seriously compromising the platform length or overall appearance. By having reasonably wide baseboards, the prototype width could be maintained. For simplicity, I have decided on having cassette fiddle yards at each end. Building it as a continuous circuit would be easier to operate, but more complex to build and store, and would even further limit the opportunities to set it up and run. Also, all my stock would then have to successfully negotiate curves!

Thurstaston Signalling Diagram (Simplified)



By WWII, the siding coming off point 12 was lifted, leaving the point as just a catch point protecting the main line.

Trains on the layout will be a mixture of passenger, through freights and stopping freight. In my chosen period, there was unlikely to be any significant local freight traffic such as would have been dealt with by a daily pick-up goods train. However, the goods yard was regularly used for transshipment of material from rail to road. This included stone, iron pyrites and uranium ore, the latter destined for processing at Capenhurst. Mineral wagons were placed in the loop and the cattle pen area for unloading by a caterpillar-tracked grab crane. This transferred the material into short wheelbase tipper lorries which dumped the material on the top of a large pile at the Heswall end of the goods yard. Subsequently, this would be removed by road.

Due to my main modelling interests, the layout will mainly be a method of displaying rolling stock. Whilst most of this is authentic to the line and period, I still want to run some stock that might have been seen on the line, so I intend to cycle through a mixture of sequences on the layout. These are:

No.	Period	Description
1	1951 - 1956	<p>This forms the majority of the display sequence. Trains will be as accurate a representation of trains that ran on the branch as possible, including correct loco and coach numbers where possible.</p> <p>This will require a minimum of six steam locos, three rakes of coaches and numerous goods wagons for through and stopping freight. At least two further rakes of coaches have been identified for the future.</p> <p>I will eventually build an LMS push-pull set with BR Standard 2 84003, as these ran in the last few weeks of passenger service in 1956.</p>

No.	Period	Description
2	1956 – 1962	There will be a Class 24 diesel with an empty van train for the Cadbury's factory heading towards West Kirby. The remainder forms the 'might-have-been' part, and uses modeller's licence to extend the passenger service from 1956 until 1962. Stock for this will be the last to be built, and will include a GWR railcar, and a Park Royal railbus. Other possibilities include a single car.
3	07/05/1962	The final freight trains on the branch crossed at Thurstaston, and this will be recreated. This will require two locos plus wagons.
4	Post-closure	After closure, the track was lifted starting from the West Kirby end. I may build a representation of the demolition. I may also replace the 8F actually used on this with a Hudswell diesel shunter I've already built, as an excuse to use it.

Kits for all bar two of the required locos have been purchased, and half have already been built. Kits for four rakes of coaches have also been purchased, with two rakes constructed. Batch building of open mineral wagons for the stopping freight trains is the current project.

An outline track plan has been prepared, which fits the scenic section neatly onto six boards, each 2'8" wide by 2'6" deep. However, this has baseboard joints going through the middle of much of the point-work, so there may be some revisions. The plan includes a hidden track at the back to allow transfers between the fiddle yards. This seems safer than carrying the cassettes for the through freight trains (which only travel one way in the sequence) through mid-air around the back of the layout. I intend to get the baseboards professionally built, as I will only have one chance to get them right, and I don't trust my woodworking abilities enough.

By omitting the station master's house and station cottages, I can get away with just four buildings: main station building, down platform waiting shelter, signal box and café. The signal box is complete, and the waiting shelter will be modelled on the prototype still existing at Hadlow Road station. I am a bit daunted by the main station building; a ballpark estimate from one of the professional builders was for 3 weeks work.

One of the major advantages of taking so long to build the layout is that there is a continual stream of new innovations and products coming along that you can take advantage of. I'm very likely to use the recently introduced New Track for all the trackwork, they should have all the components I need by the time I get round to needing them. Other than in point-work, there are only two curves on the whole layout, so having a product that assists in laying straight, plain track will be essential.

My rolling stock construction techniques have developed over time. The first locos I built used compensation, wire pick-ups and were driven by Portescaps. The current ones have progressed to being all sprung, split axle collection and driven by Mashimas with High Level Gearboxes and flywheels. I fell out with Portescaps as I was nearly always putting an MJT conversion on, and I couldn't believe that the same gear ratio was correct for both a steam loco with 5'9" drivers and the Hudswell diesel shunter with

3'6" drivers and a 14mph speed limit. That was also before their quality dropped and they went noisy. My first chassis with split axle and springing is just about complete, and I think is a great improvement over the earlier versions. Life, however, is not long enough to re-visit those earlier ones that are already complete and working.

For coaches, I seem to have started with the old wooden bodied prototypes first. These have been the GWR A26 auto-coach from Blacksmith and LNWR D146 tri-composite from Chowbent (now Wizard 51L). The other ones built, and all those waiting to be, are from Comet. The major differences have arisen in the suspension systems. The auto-coach uses the Blacksmith compensation; the D146 uses Pendleton sprung bogies, and the other two MJT torsion units. I don't get on with the Pendleton bogie, and the MJT makes it difficult to fit brake-gear. The future plan is to use Bill Bedford sprung bogies as a standard.

I plan to cheat with the four-coach rake of GWR coaches to gain an extra rake of coaches. I have a photograph showing one of the coaches at West Kirby in a single colour livery with the number at the bottom left-hand corner. This shows that it is in the first British Railways crimson livery, so one side will be painted in this livery. I also have a photo of a similar coach at Port Sunlight in 1952, still in GWR livery, so the other side will be in weathered chocolate and cream.

I have built a variety of wagons over the years, all of which can be used on the layout. I will need a large number of open mineral wagons, both for the set trains, general through freights and the stopping freight. A number of these are being built as a batch. Most of the wagons have compensation, a few have Exactoscale springing; current and future builds will have Bill Bedford springs.

One of the more taxing aspects has been what couplings to use. For appearance, I don't think 3-link or screw can be beaten, but some form of automatic coupling/uncoupling is better for the viewing public. I plan to have a compromise where all passenger and through freight stock will have 3-link or screw couplings as these will only be worked on within the fiddle yards. Rakes of coaches will have fixed couplings between the coaches incorporating vacuum pipes. The stock used for the stopping freight, and the two locos used for these freights, will have automatic couplers. I intend to try the 4mm Dingham couplers, as I think these may be easier for a small amount of stock, and would retain compatibility with the 3-link or screw-fitted vehicles. If I can't get satisfactory results in some testing, I'll probably go for Alex Jacksons instead.

I decided a year or so ago to use DCC for the control mechanism. I am at the situation where the only controller I have is an ancient H&M Duette, so I don't have any existing investment in conventional DC controllers. (I use batteries for test running Portescap fitted locos, but will use the Duette with Mashimas.) Having decided to go the DCC route, I joined MERG to gain more information on this area, and gain access to their kits. I still intend to wait for as long as possible until buying the components I need. I hope that this will enable me to gain full advantage of the increases in performance and functionality and reductions in physical size and cost that is a feature of the current DCC market. The most important aspects will be the size of the loco decoders, as with a number of relatively small locos already filled with weight, there is not much room left for easily fitting decoders.

I have set up a web site showing plans and progress in detail, this can be accessed at http://www.thurstaston.fsworld.co.uk/layout_head.htm.

As you can see, I've done a lot of the preparatory work, now all I've got to do is build it. As this is a fairly ambitious project for a one-man band, it is still a number of years off completion. I hope the wait will be worth it.

I'd be happy to hear any comments resulting from this article, there's an email link in the web site. I'm also interested in any knowledge or photographs of the line.

Henry Wilson Books

Established in 1983 and now based in new stockrooms at Barrowmore, next door to "Mostyn", Harry Wilson carries a large stock of current and out-of-print titles on transport and industrial history. Railway books and magazines held cover all aspects (including modelling) of steam, diesel and electric haulage on standard, narrow and broad gauge tracks in UK and overseas.

Write, phone, e-mail or call (but please ring first for an appointment) for advice and purchases (we also need to buy similar material as single copies or complete libraries). In addition to our stock at Barrowmore, we also have railway books on sale in the new Dales and Lakes Book Centre (open daily in the Tourist Information Centre at Sedbergh, a few miles from the Settle and Carlisle Railway stations at Dent and Garsdale)

VISA, Mastercard, Delta and Maestro cards are welcome as are cheques drawn on UK banks.

Henry Wilson Books

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[and for some background....]

“The Bookseller’s tale” (..... with apologies to Chaucer)

Many, many years ago a young railway enthusiast was given his first real railway book, a shiny new copy of “Locomotives of the LNER” by OS Nock, and published as an official guide to what was to be the final programme of LNER locomotive development before Nationalisation. From this acorn grew Harry Wilson’s love of railway literature and his collection of railway books and journals, obtained from many sources including bookshops all over the world.

Some years later, when his friend and fellow HMRS member Geoff Platt had died, Harry was offered the chance to buy some of the latter’s books before they were to be sold to the trade. Having selected a few titles and offered a suitable cheque to the widow, Harry was shocked to learn that she had been offered very little more by a well-known dealer for the entire collection.

The outcome was the formation of Henry Wilson Books, initially to buy and sell-on Geoff Platt’s library but very quickly leading to an ongoing business based on mail order selling from detailed catalogues.

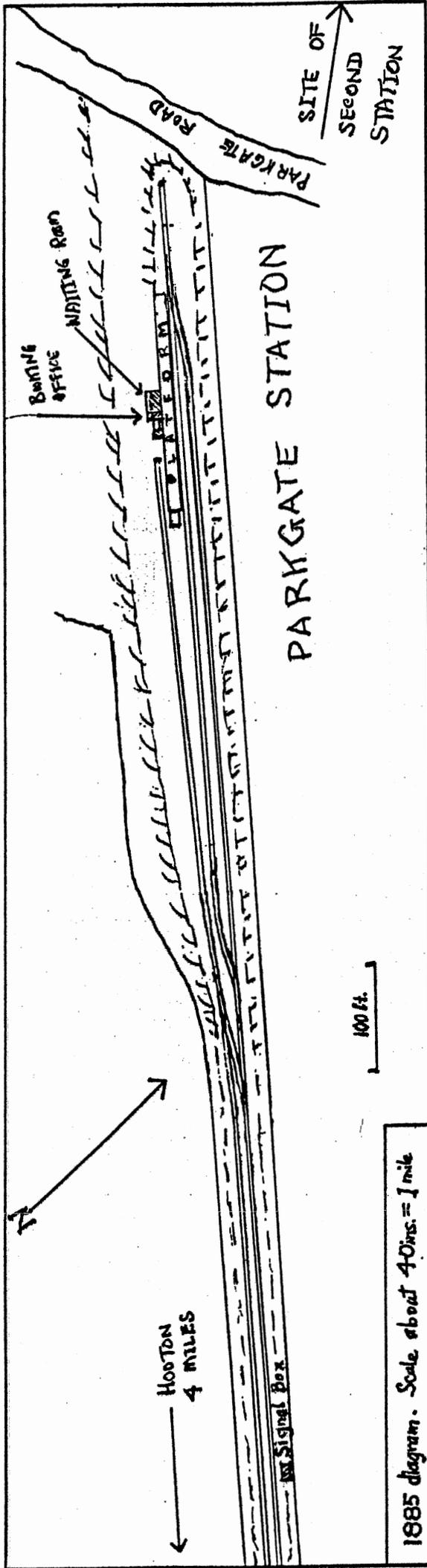
Catalogues were sent out every few months and each one created domestic mayhem with telephones ringing almost constantly for several days. A work pattern was quickly established with Harry’s wife Janet taking orders and preparing invoices with Harry packing parcels and carting mailbags to the Post Office. It became essential to smooth-out demand, and troughs between catalogues were soon filled with business generated by customers seeking to get copies of ‘sold’ titles for themselves.

Telephone orders were made difficult by local accents (the Irish priest whose book was sent to “Directory” – instead of “The Rectory” of course) and customers who wanted books for which they knew neither title nor author but had a vague idea about content, size and colour of dust-wrapper (such as the one who eventually got his copy of “2750, the story of a locomotive” on the basis of “it’s a small book with a multicoloured wrapper and it’s about an LNER Pacific”).

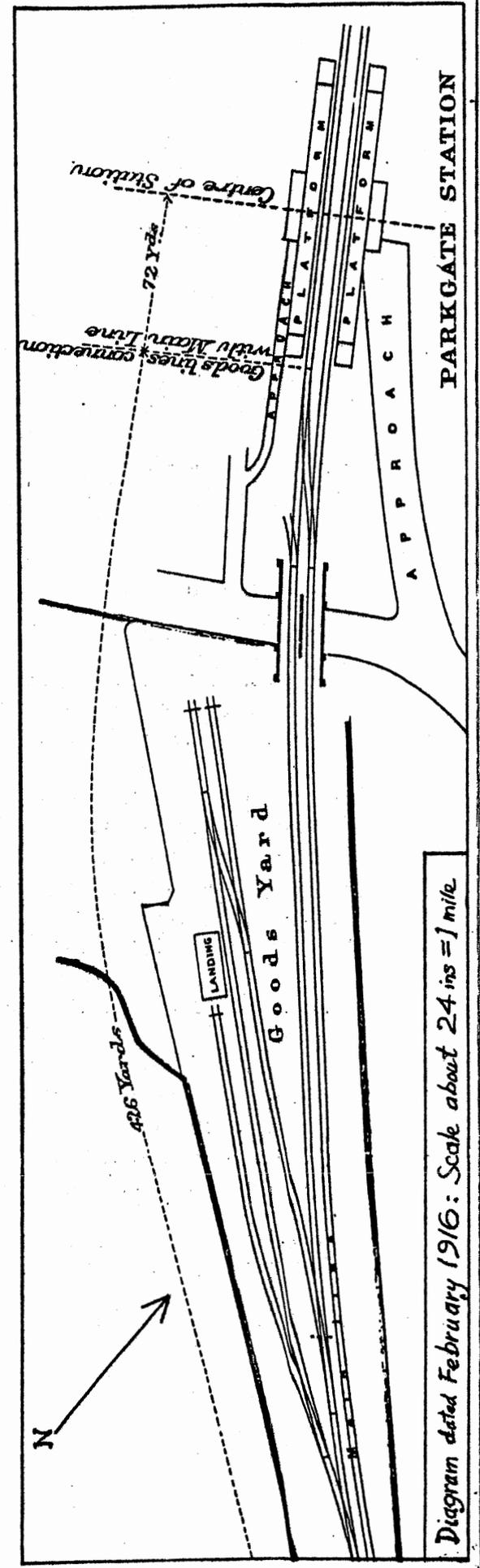
Despite the best endeavours of some customers, the Royal Mail and Chancellors (who keep raising the spectre of VAT on book sales), Henry Wilson Books has continued to grow over the years and now has customers all over the world. They would have celebrated their 21st anniversary in 2004 but for the illness and untimely death of Janet which created an un-fillable gap in the team. However, like the phoenix, a new Henry Wilson Books has re-established itself as a sole trader, and is now based at Barrowmore and a new shared retail outlet at the Dales and Lakes Book Centre in Sedbergh.

[The editor has used Harry’s services for many years, as have both Merseyside Model Railway Society and, more recently, the Barrowmore Model Railway Group]

The first Parkgate Station, 1866-1886



The second Parkgate Station, 1886-1956



(diagrams on previous page)

The Parkgate stations

by David Goodwin

These track plans of Parkgate station on the previous page were printed in the "Merseyside Express" of June 1990. The first station was opened in 1866 as the terminus of the L.N.W.R./G.W.R. branch from Hooton. I came across plans of the line in the (then) British Railways Property Board offices in Manchester, while investigating the industrial line which ran from near Parkgate to the Neston (later 'Wirral') Colliery.

In 1886, the line was extended to West Kirby, and a new station constructed on the new alignment; the old station site was converted to a goods yard. Parkgate station was closed to passenger traffic on 15 September 1956. Closure to freight came in May 1962, and now the track-bed of the Hooton-West Kirby branch largely forms the 'Wirral Way' country park, with a visitor centre at the site of Thurstaston station.

Notes

The Merseyside Railway History Group was responsible for two publications of interest:

"The Hooton to West Kirby branch line and the Wirral Way" published in 1982 by Wirral Borough Council (ISBN 0 904582 04 3); and:

"Railway stations of Wirral" published in 1993 by Boumphrey (ISBN 1 899241 02 7).

Workshop notes, no.4: Spackle

Over past years I have been in the habit of using 'Fine surface Polyfilla' as a gap filler on models. But when I finished the packet several years ago, I went to my favourite tool shop to buy another pack. This was the branch of T.E.Hughes & Son Ltd., at 33 Old Chester Road, Great Sutton, Wirral CH66 3NZ (tel.: 0151 339 5171), and they didn't have any for sale: I'm not even sure whether or not it is still made. Incidentally, this is very much an old-style ironmongers – they will sell you three 1" no.8 woodscrews from bulk! They are also happy to order items that they do not have in stock.

Anyway, they offered me something called 'Ready patch lite spackling & patching compound'. This is made by a U.S. firm called Zinsser, and it is just like a ready-mixed super-fine grade of Polyfilla, and it is usable for similar jobs. The word 'spackle' is apparently from the German (= fill or smooth) via immigrants to the U.S.A. Talking to fellow modellers at Barrowmore recently, it became obvious that this product was new to them: so - this short article by way of explanation!

Its natural colour is white, but I overcome this by mixing-in acrylic paint – usually dark grey of rust colour, but there are no restrictions! – in a 35mm film canister. The reason for colouring the mixture is that if any damage is accidentally done to the filler, then a revealed non-white colour is so much less of an eye-sore! My impression is that the

addition of paint to the mix, slows drying time very slightly. You could also add other things like white wood-working glue (to add some flexibility) or some granular substance (to add some texture), but I haven't tried either of these.

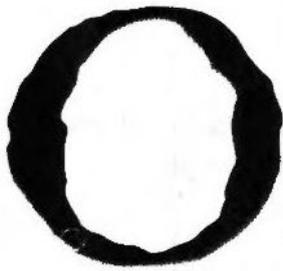
I can't remember what the cost was – but it has proved to be a very successful 'buy', and if you don't let it dry out (by occasionally adding a spot of water), will last a long time.

Editors page

With one of my other 'hats' on – that of Area Organiser for the Historical Model Railway Society in the North West: I recently suggested that perhaps we should adopt the practice of many voluntary societies, and have a 'summer break' each year. This would mean that there would be no meetings over the May-August months. This is a time of year when illustrating any talk with visual aids is made difficult by natural light in the evenings. Of course it is also a time of year when many people tend to go away on annual holidays. Until now, I had thought that the continuity of a regular day each month ("it's the second Tuesday so it must be an H.M.R.S. meeting at 'The Stork'" – sort of thing!) was a good memory aid. But people still forgot. So let us try this 'summer break' idea, and see how it goes.

On this same H.M.R.S. theme, I can report that Ian Clark, Merseyside M.R.S. member Paul Rees and the Editor recently spent several days at the newly-built Historical Model Railway Society's Museum & Study Centre, at Butterley in Derbyshire. We had offered our services to help re-erect and refurbish the Scalefour layout "Plemsworth C.L.C." which had been sold by Merseyside M.R.S. when we had decided that it was time to concentrate our efforts on the first version of "Mostyn". This was back in 1995, and for various reasons the H.M.R.S. permanent headquarters building, started several years later, was not finished until this year. So the past ten years have been spent in storage, with the natural consequent deterioration. We did our best, and eye-witness reports of the official opening of the building on 19 March 2005 were favourable. We were unable to take part in the opening since we were at Epsom show on that weekend (see pages 10 and 11 of this issue).

WANTED Two willing volunteers (always better than pressed men!) to contribute potted autobiographies in our "Who are you?" series. Other contributions to "BMRJ" are also solicited (preferred formats are listed on page 2). Have you recently bought a book which you think deserves wider sale? Or even one which was a waste of money?! Or an item of rolling stock? Or a kit? Let other members know about the good and the bad and the ugly! "BMRJ" is your magazine, and to some extent the good name of Barrowmore Model Railway Group is reflected in it.



n closer inspection it appeared the bloke at the car boot sale had lied to Dad about it having a Pentium Processor.



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