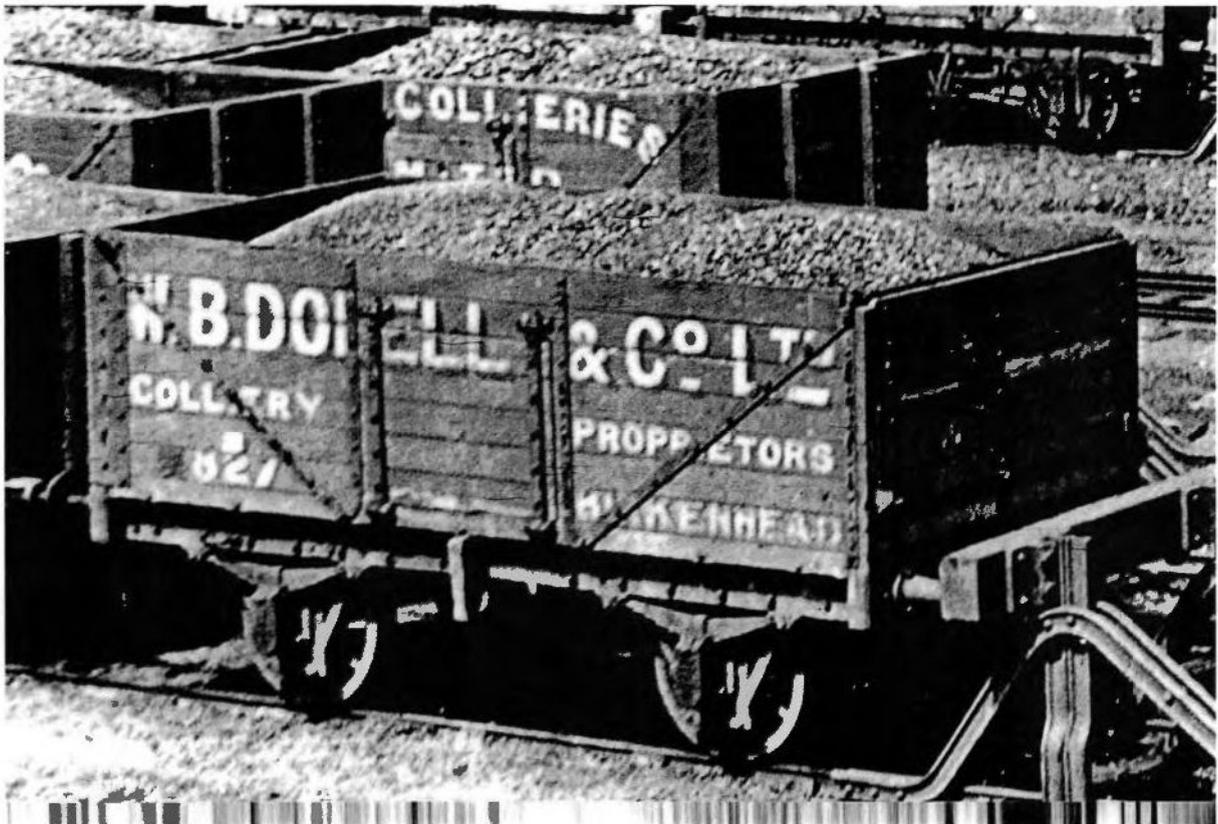


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# Barrowmore Model Railway Journal



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Contributions are welcome:

- (a) as e-mails or e-mail attachments;
- (b) a hard copy of a computer file;
- (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 2012, and contributions should get to the Editor as soon as possible, but at least before 1 May 2012.

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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 of a private owner coal wagon operated by the local firm of W.B.Dobell & Co.Ltd. This wagon is only one of several Dobell wagons which appear on the negative, taken on 3 August 1912, in a siding at Ellesmere Port docks. I know very little about this firm but an entry in *Gore's directory* for 1910 lists a number of local branches: "Dobell, W.B. & Co.Ltd. colliery proprietors, 61 Hamilton St. Birkenhead (TA 'Dobell, Birkenhead'; TN 17 Birkenhead), 11&13 Tunnel Road Edge Hill, E, Tunnel Road Birkenhead, Birkenhead Road Seacombe, Victoria Road Seacombe, 11 Liscard Village Liscard, Albert Road Hoylake, 5 Grange Road West Kirby and L.&N.W. Railway yard Spekeland Road Edge Hill, E and 16 Coal Exchange Chester". There is no mention in the 1934 edition of *Kelly's directory*, nor the 1935 *Telephone directory*, but I have not had to chance to look in other trade directories for the 1912 to 1934 period. Perhaps they fell foul of the depression of the 1930s and amalgamated with another firm, or were taken over??

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### **Forthcoming events**

**7/8/9 Apr. 2012:** York show.

**14 Apr. 2012:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**21/22 Apr. 2012:** Scalefour North, Wakefield.

**28/29 Apr. 2012:** Liverpool show (New venue: Old Christ Church, Waterloo Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L42 1RE)

**19 May 2012:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**19/20 May 2012:** ExpoEM, Bracknell.

**16/17 Jun. 2012:** Wigan show (changed dates)

**8 Jul. 2012:** 7mm group Gresford show.

**21 Jul. 2012:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**18 Aug. 2012:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**15/16 Sep. 2012:** Woking show (“**Johnstown Road**” is appearing).

**29 Sep. 2012:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**29/30 Sep. 2012:** Scaleforum, Leatherhead.

**6/7 Oct. 2012:** Manchester show.

**27/28 Oct. 2012:** Merseyside show (**New venue** Mosslands School, Wallasey; “**Mostyn**” is appearing).

**17 Nov. 2012:** 7mm running track, Llanbedr (see Editor for details).

**19/20 Nov. 2012:** Warley show.

*Notes of other railway-related events for this column are welcome*

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*While researching Minera Lime Works for a potential BMRJ article, the Editor came across this interesting piece on the Internet ...*

## **Henry Robertson and Palé Hall**



Palé Hall is a privately owned luxurious Victorian mansion set in acres of parkland. Both our staff and ourselves are enormously proud of our Country House and Restaurant and we so want to share them with you.

Lots of guests ask us about the history of the house and we thought a précis of its fascinating history and ownership might be of interest to you.

### **The Original Owner**

The Hall was built for a Scottish gentleman, Henry Robertson, who bought the house originally sited here in 1868 and tried to restore it, but eventually demolished it, and the building of Palé Hall as we know it today was completed by 1871 and remained his home

until his death in 1888. It was spaciouly built to accommodate his growing family and originally had 22 bedrooms, not including the staff quarters! The architect, Mr Samuel Pountney Smith of Shrewsbury, was given a 'carte blanche' and no expense was spared.

Through his profession as an engineer he first came to Wales in 1842 to survey mineral properties at Brymbo near Wrexham. So impressed were the financiers by his reports about the coal, limestone and iron resources of the area that they offered him the opportunity to revive the Brymbo Iron Works (last exploited with short-lived success by 'Iron Mad' John Wilkinson 50 years earlier). To improve haulage between the works and the quarries he promoted the laying of the North Wales Mineral Railway (later acquired by Great Western). In 1846 he married Elizabeth Dean, a London solicitor's daughter and had one son and three daughters.

In the late 1840's he left Brymbo Iron Works under management to concentrate on further railway building. He was the engineer of the Shrewsbury to Chester line (1848) which involved building viaducts over the Dee and the Ceiriog rivers; the Shrewsbury to Birmingham line (1850); the Shrewsbury to Hereford line (1853); the Central Wales Railway and the Ruabon to Dolgellau line. Some lines were so fraught with opposition from land owners he frequently surveyed the proposed routes at night to avoid being hindered by his opponent's gangs.

In addition to his primary enterprises, Robertson had other commercial interests: as a founder partner of Beyer, Peacock & Company, the Manchester locomotive builders; Chairman of the Vale of Llangollen, Corwen, Bala and Wirral railway companies, and finally, Chairman of Minera Lime Works near Wrexham and Ruabon Coal and Coke Company.

He went a step further in 1884 when after the Bessemer revolutionised steel production, he founded Brymbo Steel Works, which until recently were still in production.

It was the frequent visits along the Dee Valley which led Henry Robertson to find a house in the area. He originally lived in Crogen Manor, two miles from Palé Hall (which the family still own). He loved shooting and fishing, sports for which Palé Hall was a suitable venue.

Robertson was Liberal MP for Shrewsbury between 1860-65 and 1874-75. Apart from the railway connections, his other notable contribution to that town was his building of the iron Kingsland toll bridge (1879). After making his home at Palé Hall he became High Sheriff of Merioneth in 1869 and MP for the county in 1885. However, he resigned the following year because of his opposition to Gladstone's controversial Irish Home Rule proposals, which caused him to leave the Liberal Party. Throughout his parliamentary career he was a valued spokesman for the Welsh railway interests.

He died, after becoming paralysed, at the Palé Hall on 22nd March 1888 at the age of 72 and was buried in Llandderfel. Some of his papers (which include railway and engineering plans) are displayed at the National Museum of Wales in Aberystwyth. He left Palé Hall to his only son Henry, who was knighted two years later by Queen Victoria.

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# **Another piece in the Mostyn 1977 Diesel Multiple Unit jigsaw falls into place**

**by Eddie Knorn and Richard Oldfield**

When you have spent considerably over ten years researching the railway traffic for a given time period at a specific location the initial burst of discoveries and surprises soon gives way to a comfortable predictability. You feel that you have put the time in, basically learned what there is to learn and that new discoveries will be rare. Well, it pays to keep your eyes open and, despite having viewed hundreds if not thousands of images over the years, a newly-spotted photograph has altered our view of the Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) variety that worked on the North Wales coast main line in 1977.

First of all, for those BMRJ readers who find the topic of Diesel Multiple Units confusing, we are summarising our understanding of the 1977 position as it relates to passenger services running past Mostyn prior to the discovery of this new image.

The sheds which provided DMU formations for regularly timetabled North Wales services in 1977 were the local London Midland Region facilities at Allerton (AN), Buxton (BX), Chester (CH), Longsight (LO) and Newton Heath (NH) and, by studying the RCTS coaching stock publications, it is possible to establish the running numbers and Classes of all DMU vehicles allocated to these sheds. You still need to keep an eye on the possibility of excursion traffic bringing DMUs from more distant sheds – as an example Tyseley (TS) allocated vehicles became relatively common just a few years after our time period – but passengers ‘enjoying’ a DMU trip to the coast in 1977 would almost certainly have been travelling in vehicles serviced by the five locations above.

We can therefore eliminate from consideration all DMU Classes which did not have examples allocated to AN/BX/CH/LO/NH in 1977. This simplifies the task at a stroke. Of the 32 first generation DMU Classes (numbers 100 to 131 inclusive) allocated under BR’s Total Operations Processing System (TOPS) we can ignore 22 Classes for the following reasons:-

- 102 – re-classified as Class 101
- 106 – re-classified as Class 105
- 107 – in Scotland
- 109 – withdrawn
- 110 – allocated east of the Pennines
- 111 – either east of the Pennines or in Scotland
- 112 – withdrawn
- 113 – withdrawn
- 114 – allocated east of the Pennines
- 116 – allocated to Birmingham and points south or in Scotland
- 117 – allocated to the Western Region apart from a couple of trailer vehicles
- 118 – allocated to the Western Region
- 121 – allocated to the Western Region
- 122 – allocated to Birmingham and points south or in Scotland
- 123 – either stored or on Trans-Pennine services
- 124 – on Trans-Pennine services
- 125 – withdrawn

- 126 – in Scotland
- 127 – allocated to Cricklewood for Bedford-St.Pancras workings
- 129 – withdrawn
- 130 – re-converted to Class 116 by end 1977
- 131 – in Scotland

The remaining candidates can best be considered according to their intended use, underframe length, seating pattern and manufacturer:-

1. Local/suburban, short underframe and low density seating

- 100 – Gloucester RCW
- 101 – Metro-Cammell
- 103 – Park Royal
- 104 – Birmingham RCW
- 105 – Cravens
- 108 – BR Derby

2. Local/suburban, long underframe and high density seating

- 115 – BR Derby

3. Cross-Country, long underframe and low density seating

- 119 – Gloucester RCW
- 120 – BR Swindon

4. Parcels, long underframe and no seating

- 128 – Gloucester RCW

All these vehicles were ‘blue square’ classified for multiple working and could, therefore, be coupled together to form longer sets up to a maximum of 12 vehicles (or, more accurately, up to a maximum of 6 motor vehicles) in any formation. In practice most vehicles ran in 1, 2, 3 or 4-car defined sets as originally delivered when new but Chester shed in particular seemed to operate an emergency ‘mix and match’ policy which could produce quite exotic formations, presumably resulting from the pressure of maintaining services during peak periods.

The great majority of services on the North Wales coast main line were formed of sets from Classes 101,103, 104 and 108 with Classes 100 and 105 putting in occasional appearances. Allerton-based Class 115s normally stuck to their ex-CLC Liverpool-Manchester route but could work services such as the Saturdays only 2D83 08.25 Lime Street-Bangor. Class 119 Cross-country DMUs were allocated to Chester until October 1977 when they were transferred away and Class 120s were transferred in. Luckily we have a record of a Class 120 charter working down the coast in Summer 1977 so we can justify examples of both Classes on Mostyn but they were much rarer than their shorter brethren. The distinctive Class 128 operated on its own, perhaps with tail parcels traffic, or commonly as the head or tail of a longer formation of other DMU Classes. The livery was generally standard BR blue for local/suburban DMUs although the white-blue refurbished livery could be seen on a growing number of Class 101 and 108 vehicles. The cross-country units were blue-grey and the parcels units were BR blue.

So, hopefully the reader now has a basic grasp of the DMU variety working past Mostyn in Summer 1977 – a preponderance of short underframe, low density, blue or white-blue 2 and 3 car sets, either working singly or in multiple, was supplemented on occasion by long

underframe, low density, blue-grey 3-car cross-country units or even the rarer long underframe, high density, blue 4-car Class 115s. The Class 128 parcels units add to the variety.

It is now time to have a look at the newly-discovered image and see how this changes our understanding:-



The original photograph (© Robert Carroll - reproduced above, with his permission) is from

the collection of Barrie Watkins/R.W.Carroll, and the original caption stated that this was a Class 116 DMU working the 16.34 Manchester Victoria to Bangor service, at Winwick Junction on 7/9/1977. Now, the captioning of any DMU image is normally treated with suspicion by us as errors in books and magazines (with some notable exceptions) are really so numerous that they betray a lack of interest or research or both. A quick look at the Summer timetable for 1977 yields the information that there was a Saturdays excepted 2D99 16.34 Manchester Victoria – Bangor DMU service that would have passed Mostyn at about 6pm – so far so good. Ignoring the given DMU Class at this stage (working on the assumption that it must be wrong as Class 116s were unknown on North Wales services at this time), what does the picture show us? First of all, it is a high density seating and therefore long underframe DMU. This is most easily shown by looking at the number of passenger access doors to the saloons – low density units only have 2 or 3 passenger doors whereas these vehicles have many more. Looking at the list above it can be seen that the only candidate in our region is the Allerton Class 115 fleet, perhaps it is a Class 115 4-car set with one of the trailer cars taken out for maintenance?

This possibility soon falls apart. The lead vehicle, a driving motor brake second (DMBS), lacks the characteristic Class 115 headcode box above the cab and handrails by the cab front windows. You cannot see the cab of the rear vehicle but you can see that it does not have a brake compartment. Since all Class 115 driving ends are DMBS i.e. they have a brake compartment, it follows that the rear vehicle is not Class 115 either.

My next step was to assume the original caption was correct. Certainly both the driving ends are consistent with Class 116 but what about the trailer (centre) coach? One of the delights of first generation high density DMU travel was the absence of toilets in certain formations of which the Class 116 3-car set is an example. The trailer coach in our picture has a toilet section in the centre of the vehicle and therefore cannot be a Class 116 trailer composite (TC) or trailer second (TS). What could it be?

It seemed a bit selfish not to share this interesting puzzle with BMRG's other DMU enthusiasts and I now pass the pencil over to **Eddie Knorn** to continue the story.....

As soon as I saw the picture, I recognised the power cars on this unit as Class 116, so certainly the caption was correct in that respect, but, as Richard says, the centre trailer car had a toilet and close examination of the picture also showed that the nearest end had a partition between the second and third doors. This partition ruled out this vehicle as being a stray Class 127 trailer, but what was it? The cab front of the nearest vehicle has a patch of yellow paint beneath the driver's windscreen, which immediately suggested "ex Western Region".

To give a bit of background, the Western Region followed a policy of ordering DMUs broadly summarised as: -

Three car "high density" units for "local" services - classes 116, 117 and 118.

Single car "high density" units with matching driving trailers for "local" services with lower loadings - classes 121 and 122

Three car "cross country" units - classes 119 and 120.

In addition, for "Inter City" type services they had some suitable, more luxurious units more akin to Mark 1 stock, classes 126 and later the 123s.

A quirk of the WR ordering policy was that there were imbalances in quantities of centre trailers in the three car "high density" and "cross country" units; for example, the BRCW-

built class 118 fleet had 15 pairs of power cars and 15 trailers, while the Pressed Steel built class 117s had 42 pairs of power cars but only 39 trailers. Thus from the outset, "mix and match" was always part of the plan!

The WR, in spite of an element of mixing vehicles, maintained the three car high density and cross country sets in almost permanent fixed formations, with a set number painted on the end beneath the driver's windscreen. (For example, "L400" was a class 117 three car set based in the London area). As was the case elsewhere, line closures and changes to service patterns saw DMU sets become surplus, which explains class 116 and 122 vehicles allocated to Scottish depots as per Richard's list above, but where did the unit in the above picture come from?

In my library, I have a copy of the RCTS "Coaching Stock of British Railways 1976" reference book. This describes the state of play as at the end of 1975. The 1976 edition was the first to publish the WR set formation, but in the written introduction it mentions that during 1976 these formations underwent a general renumbering, with some units reformed and some vehicles transferred to other regions. Elsewhere in the book, it lists vehicle reallocations, and in amongst the list the following "high density" vehicles were transferred from the WR to Newton Heath depot: -

50081, 50123, 50866, 50919, 59374, (class 116) and 59486 (class 117).

Having established this, the identity of the vehicles in the picture fell onto place; the leading vehicle (with brake compartment) could not be 50081 as that had the "4-lamp" cab front design, so it had to be 50866, which corresponds with the 2-digit headcode design. The middle car has a toilet section, so it could only be 59486, and this corresponds with the presence of the partition mentioned above. The rear vehicle is likely to be 50919 as that was paired with 50866 at build and was still paired a few years later.

This information leads to possibilities of a further DMU model for Mostyn, and a suitable starting point in 4mm scale could be the former Lima class 117 model, but this first appeared 30 years ago and would take a lot of effort to bring to the required standard.

Newton Heath did not keep hold of these two sets for long after the photo was taken, as the 1978 RCTS book, (correct to the end of 1977), shows 50081, 50123 and 59486 as having moved to Cricklewood while 50866, 50919 and 59374 had moved to Tyseley. The transfer to Tyseley is notable as at the same time as the six vehicles went to Newton Heath as described above, others went straight there from the WR. Tyseley had been a recipient of brand new 116s as it was at that time a Western Region depot providing stock for services into Snow Hill. The reason for building up a fleet of further 116s arose from the 1970s innovation of linking the Birmingham New Street to Longbridge/Redditch line and the line to Four Oaks/Lichfield to become the new "Cross City Line" with a high frequency through service. Indeed 50081 and 50123 moved there in the end.

#### **Postscript by Eddie Knorn**

Further to the picture of DMU vehicle 50866 at Winwick Junction in September 1977, I remembered taking this photograph of the same vehicle a few years later!



On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August 1980, I was nearing the end of that year's family holiday camped at the far end of Barmouth promenade. I had taken a few photos during that holiday but had a few spaces left before the film had been used-up. It seemed a good idea to walk to Barmouth Station and photograph a few late afternoon DMU services.

This train arrived on a service from Pwllheli to the West Midlands conurbation, so I took the opportunity of a photograph and making a few notes.

Nearest the camera is gang-wayed Class 116 set "TYS548" of Tyseley depot, Birmingham. This comprised power cars 50866 (nearest camera) and 50919 with centre trailer car 59352. The two power cars were photographed in 1977 when allocated to Newton Heath, and since that time they moved to the West Midlands, gained a different centre trailer and underwent "refurbishment". The BR DMU refurbishment scheme was intended to freshen-up selected vehicles for a further ten years' service while the options for fleet replacement were considered. The original intention was that refurbished units would be distinguished by a new livery of all over off white with a 12" blue band below the body side windows. By the time TYS548 was refurbished in 1979, such units were instead painted Blue/Grey in a similar scheme to that used on Inter-City trains. In the fullness of time, even unrefurbished vehicles of certain classes gained this livery.

On Summer Saturdays at this time, the Cambrian Coast line saw a number of through workings from the West Midlands to Pwllheli. The train pictured comprises TYS548 as described, a further three car set in the TYS400 series and a Chester allocated Class 101 2-car set at the rear. The TYS400 sets were mostly formed of Class 101 vehicles of a "low density" seating layout and with toilets, but the set pictured comprised a Class 101 trailer car sandwiched by a pair of Class 100 (Gloucester RC&W) Motor Brake Second vehicles.

The train pictured was detained at Barmouth for some time as it was booked to cross a Pwllheli-bound service that was delayed. Late running was a feature of the Cambrian Coast line in those days.

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## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

E-mail from Robert Drysdale who wrote the article on Irish bulk cement wagons, which was printed in the last issue: "... Thank you very much for the unexpected copy of your magazine! It was very interesting to read and certainly is of a professional quality. Your comments and additional photographs certainly help the article on cement wagons. I hope it is of interest to your regular readers.

I managed to find a source of 28mm [for 4mm scale Irish standard gauge wagons] pin-point axles, in New Zealand! <http://northyard.co.nz/> . Globalisation, eh? They are made from brass instead of steel, so I have ordered some to see how they are.

Progress on the spoil wagon drawing has been slow over Christmas due to my wife's love of dinner parties. I spent a week (very part-time) sorting out a hinge!!! More learning about the difficulties of drawing from photographs.

I also got a 3D version of my drawing package as a Xmas present, so sometime in the future I would like to draw the cement tank in 3D as a test piece for 3D printing as an alternative to a batch run of castings. Lots of ideas, but little time!

Regards ...."

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E-mail from **Tony Robinson** in response to my query regarding the date of the roof of the engine shed at **Mold Junction**: "... According to Essery's "LMS ENGINE SHEDS"... the shed was cut back and the roof was rebuilt just prior to WW 2 in 1938 along with the coaling plant and new 60ft turntable. I believe the track layout was changed to include the scissors crossover and RSF's office at around the same time. ... By the way I found Jim Lowes tale of the kids counting the kick starts on the old motorbike most amusing! ..."

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Press release regarding **Squires**:

"**Oliver Lewis** is delighted to announce; that he is to ensure the continued supply of **Squires'** famous ranges of Modelling Tools, Materials and Electronic Components by Mail Order and from the well know **Squires Trade Stand**, at many Model Shows and Exhibitions throughout the UK.

**Squires Tools Shop** is closing in **Bognor Regis**. **Oliver** is pleased to have secured new business premises where he will operate the Mail Order and Exhibition Teams.

**Oliver** is also very pleased to announce that he is launching a new online store, ( [www.squirestools.com](http://www.squirestools.com) ) which he hopes will be ready to go live on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012.

**Squires Tools** will have new telephone and fax numbers, which we will advise as soon as numbers are confirmed.

Web address ( [www.squirestools.com](http://www.squirestools.com) ) and email

( [sales@squirestools.com](mailto:sales@squirestools.com) ) will remain the same.

Please keep checking this page for more information. I look forward to being of service to you in the future..."

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More letters on page 17 ....

**"THE GOLDEN SANDS EXPRESS"**

Here's something "local" that I found whilst looking for something else in my copy of the "LMS 150" book by Patrick Whitehouse & David St. John Thomas.

The "Golden Sands Express" was a named train that ran in the summer of 1931 between Rhyl and Llandudno and its name appeared in the public timetables for that year only! It was one of the first trains to carry an express name-board, this was a "large square" device mounted on the loco's smokebox and the train was clearly a precursor for the post war BR inspired Ivatt tank powered push-pull "Welsh Dragon" service! Small name-boards of distinctive shape were fitted on the roofs of the carriages. All lettering was golden yellow and the train made three journeys in each direction from Mondays to Fridays. 30 minutes was allowed for the trip and motive power was usually a George V or Precursor 4-4-0 class.

This was probably the shortest distance (17½ miles) if not the shortest life in the history of named trains in the country! (AJR. Feb 2012)

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Book review .....

**BASHERS, GADGETS and MOURNERS.**  
**The life and times of the LNWR Coal Tanks.**  
**By Peter W. Skellon.**

ISBN: 978-0-9569292-0-4.....Price £19 + p & p. Published by The Bahamas Locomotive Society at 22 Windsor St., Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 5JR.

A Brief Review by Tony Robinson.

I don't honestly think any locomotive class has ever had such a detailed and definitive history as this published before and it's doubtful we shall ever be fortunate enough to see the like of it again in our lifetimes.

The book is hardback to A4 format with 256 pages not including the covers which have detailed engineering drawings on their inside faces. There is also, attached to the inside of the front cover, an audio CD of interviews with various people who worked with the engines in service and were subsequently involved in 1054's restorations. I emphasise the plural as this locomotive has had not only the original cosmetic restoration as instigated by its venerable saviour Max Dunn, of whom I was able to provide a few personal recollections for the author, it has had at least two major overhauls since it was first put on display by its National Trust owners in Penrhyn Castle way back in 1964. The book title gives the

locomotive class three rather un-complimentary "nick names", but to my father and his cohorts they were always known as "Gadgets". The locomotive suffered many faults of which poor brakes were just one, originally there was not even a powered brake and stopping was effected by applying the hand brake in combination with the reverser! But their "fitness for purpose" was never in dispute by enginemen and fitters alike. Not one to waste money on un-necessary fittings, their designer Mr Webb utilised their boiler handrails for operating the sanding gear on one side and the blower on the other. Wooden brake blocks would frequently catch fire if overworked down a bank where not enough "pinning down" of wagon brakes had been indulged in. Their cabs were never known for roominess and many faults were corrected in LMS days. The discrepancies of Gadget's are ably covered in the book which examines the class history in a warts and all way.



**1054 at Keighley on the "Launch Day" February 8<sup>th</sup> 2012. (photo AJR)**

The author has done a fantastic job as not only the technical aspects of the class of 300, all Crewe built between 1881 and 1897, but he has covered the human aspect of the people involved in their upkeep and operation in the latter years of their service, 1054 the last operational member of the class, being retired from Abergavenny shed in 1958 as B.R. 58926 following seventy years of service all over the former LNWR system. Without exaggeration you could just about build yourself a Coal Tank, 12" to the foot or otherwise, from the information in this book such are the quality of the detail drawings and supplementary information. There isn't a page that is not enhanced by a photograph (all of good quality) or drawing. Why, there is even an owner's workshop manual (Haynes style) near the back of this thoroughly outstanding book.

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Book review ....

### ***The Allocation History of BR Diesel Multiple Units Part 1***

Compiled and Published by Roger Harris, 63 Carol Avenue, Cherry Orchard, BROMSGROVE, Worcs. B61 8RW, 2011; £21.50.

Reviewed by Eddie Knorn

Some years ago, I recall the appearance of the first Roger Harris locomotive allocation history books, which gave a comprehensive allocation history of each loco, along with "new" date and withdrawal information. At the time I concluded that something similar for DMU vehicles would be useful (speaking as a DMU enthusiast.....), and once a number of volumes of the loco histories had been published the first official mention of a DMU book became public. Finally, in mid- 2011, "Part 1" of the DMU books appeared.

The first book is part of what promises to be a wide ranging series of books. Vehicles to be covered are everything from GW railcars to the current "Class 22x" Voyagers and the like, including every generation of BR DMU, rail-buses, Blue Pullmans, Southern Region Diesel Electric units and HST trailer cars on the way. Part 1 of the series, the subject of this review covers "First Generation" DMU vehicles in the number range 50000 to 51828 - but does it? In 1983, all surviving DMU vehicles in the number range 50001 - 50987 were renumbered 53001 - 53987 and a feature of this book is that all vehicles within this number range only contain the history up to the point at which they were renumbered. At first sight, 51828 also seems an odd place to stop, as this vehicle was the last of a batch of Driving Motor Brake Composite vehicles of the first batch of "Calder Valley" (Class 110) units, but the Driving Motor Composite vehicles of the same trains (51829 - 51848) will not be covered until the next installment.... I presume this is a result of printing and binding constraints?

The book itself follows the format established by the locomotive allocation histories, being approximately "A4" sized in portrait format, with card covers. The only illustrations are the colour picture on the cover and two colour pictures on the rear, but this is not intended to be a book of pictures. A significant part of this volume is taken up with 'scene-setting' stuff, such as shed allocation codes, lot numbers, vehicle type codes, and a list of all "First Generation" unit formations as-built. Then it gets into the detail of each vehicle in the number range listed above. Within the introduction section, the author makes mention of the difficulty of establishing information from the early days of BR DMUs, noting that in the 1950s and 60s, reports of incidents such as collisions would mention the date and location of the incident, the class and number of the steam locomotive involved and a "throwaway" remark that it collided with "one of the new Diesel Multiple Units". This was, of course, a consequence of the railway enthusiast community at that time taking a dislike to these new-fangled DMUs!

After the introductory pages, the book gets into the detail of individual vehicle histories. Unlike some books that give a series of "snapshots" of vehicle allocations at various stages in their lives, this aims to give a continuous "story" for each vehicle. Unfortunately, the book tries to go beyond the depot allocation histories, with other snippets of information such as periods out of traffic following accident damage, date refurbished and liveries carried. In some cases this succeeds but elsewhere it fails. For instance, Class 116 vehicle 50866 that spent a while at Newton Heath depot and was caught on camera on a Manchester-Bangor working (illustrated in this journal) is listed as carrying only green and Blue/Grey liveries, when it was pictured in September 1977 in plain blue. A number of vehicles are recorded as having been refurbished when they never were. A random dip into the book has also found some Cravens Class 105 vehicles (with AEC engines) that are implied as having been Class 106 (Leyland-engined variant of the 105) which was not the case.

One aspect of "user-unfriendliness" is the way in which the depot allocation codes are listed

in the introduction as depot name followed by the various steam era codes and subsequent TOPS codes that applied to that location, with the dates when the various codes changed. Taking a random vehicle: 50857 was allocated to '86A' in October 1964, but to establish that this was Cardiff Canton takes a bit of searching, not aided by the fact that Canton 86C (1950-Jan.1961), then 88A (Jan.1961-Sept.1963) before becoming 86A in Sept.1963. What would be better is a list in depot code order.

All in all, Roger Harris has taken on a brave assignment and he is to be commended for his efforts, however the book tries to go too far and does not always succeed. In spite of these reservations, I am still eager to get hold of future editions.

.....

**THE FRANCIS THOMPSON BUILDINGS IN NORTH WALES TODAY.  
A Post Script on MOSTYN - By Tony Robinson.**

Following the appearance of the above article in the December 2011 edition of the LNWR Society Journal, I received a call from member Len Arnold of Maghull, Liverpool. Apparently his wife's sister lives close to Mostyn Station House and had alerted the owner of the house to the content of the article that concerned his abode! The owner, Mr C. P. Hughes subsequently requested that he would be delighted to receive a copy of that issue of the Journal. This being done I telephoned him and our discussion revealed that he had bought the house in a totally dilapidated condition back in 1991 and had then set about restoring it to a habitable dwelling which, being a builder, he was well qualified to do. The project nevertheless took some fifteen years of his spare time to complete amid several "skirmishes" with the planning authorities who it seems were prepared to see it fall into dust rather than have the building changed in any way! A compromise was reached whereby Mr Hughes was allowed to convert what was left of the interior into a modern well equipped home on the strict understanding that the exterior should retain its historic appearance. He was amenable to a visit so myself accompanied by Norman Lee and David Goodwin made the trip on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February.

Below are some pictures of the previously unseen lineside part of the building and I'm delighted to report that Mr Hughes has carefully restored the old Chester & Holyhead Railway plaques that sit on the wall either side of the doorway onto what was once the platform. On the left of the door is a "Table of Tolls" and on the right are stated the "Bye-Laws". The top-light over the door has a nicely leaded glass pane depicting "1848-2004", the latter being the year of completion of the renovation.



The slate plaques or tablets are affixed to the wall and the lettering has been carefully cleaned of years of algae and dirt to reveal most if not all of the wording. Within the building there are no original remnants but the door trims etc. have been nicely re-made in timber with corridor archways etc. retained as near to original as thought possible, bearing in mind there was nothing left to copy at the outset of the restoration.



All in all, a very commendable external restoration indeed and a credit to the owner, Cyril Hughes (seen on the left) with Norman Lee (centre), and David Goodwin (right).

\*\*\*\*\*

**Letters ... continued from page 10:**

The Editor wrote to **Liverpool Model Railway Society's** secretary, **Richard Thwaite** (a retired dairyman who has lived in Liverpool for 78 years), about 'Moor Street Incline' (September issue, page 27; December issue, pages 25/26) and his replies contained the following pieces of information:

"... only suggestion I can come up with is perhaps the following. As you leave the platforms at the James Street station arriving at the lifts that will take you up to the street level, in the right corner there is the entrance to a long tunnel. This tunnel is quite a fair incline for passengers to walk through and eventually comes out in Water Street. This in actual fact passes I believe under Moor Street, which is behind the station and runs parallel to James Street. An aside regarding this tunnel was that during the Blitz for a while it was the only way in and out of the station due to enemy action rendering the lifts out of order ... Sorry I have not been able to glean any more information, if I do in the future I will contact you." And shortly afterwards he added: "... the train was, as stated, a Hunts Cross bound train leaving the embankment which was once the entrance to Exchange station, dropping down to go underground to pass under the City centre via Moorfields and Central stations, and then regain the open air half way to Brunswick station." And, as an appendix: "At the last minute before posting this I found the slope was called **Leeds Street Bank**".

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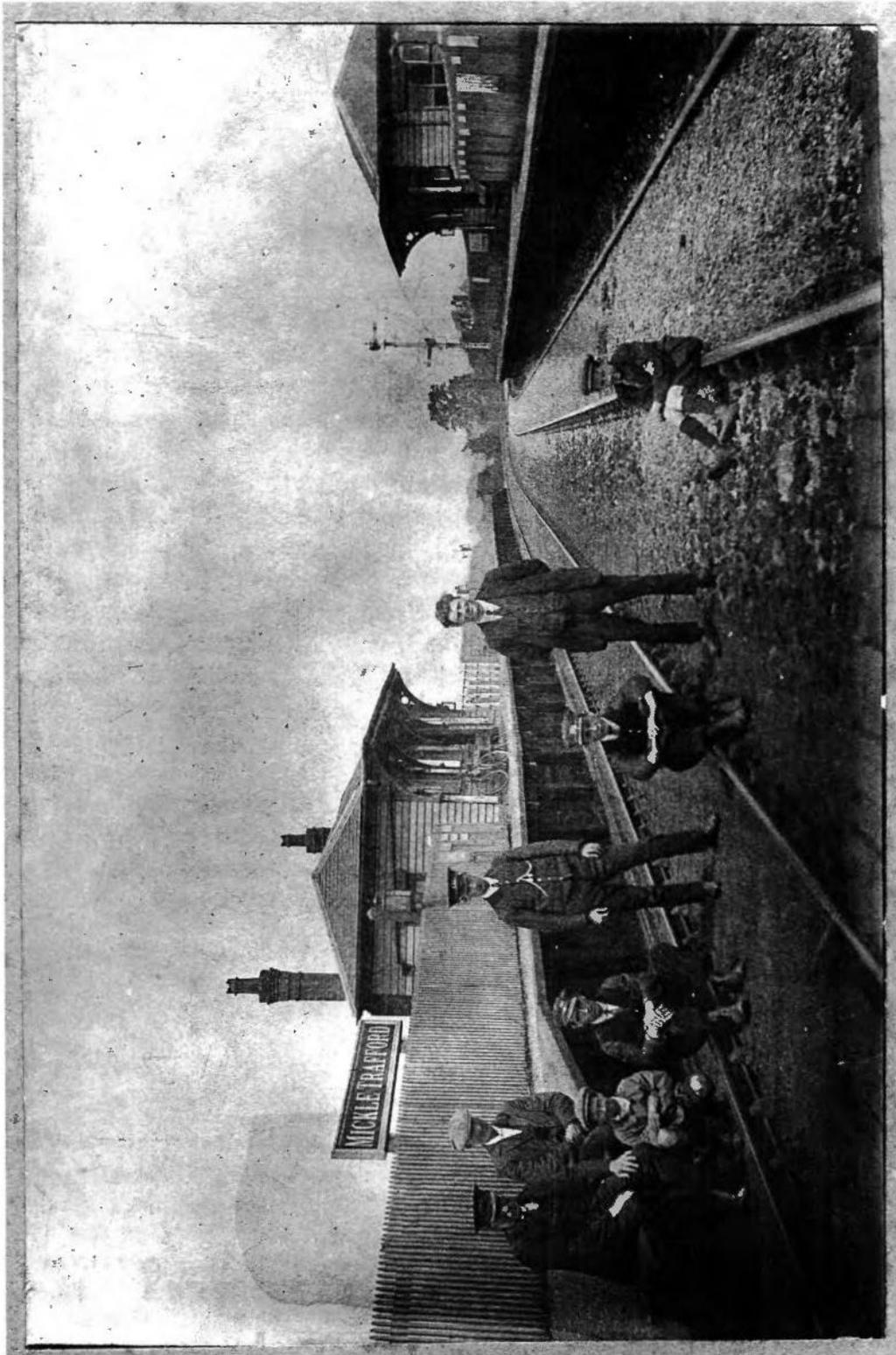
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Richard also notified us of new dates and a new venue for their exhibition. Parking should be less stressful, and there are some reasonable hostelryes not too far away! We hope that all goes well.

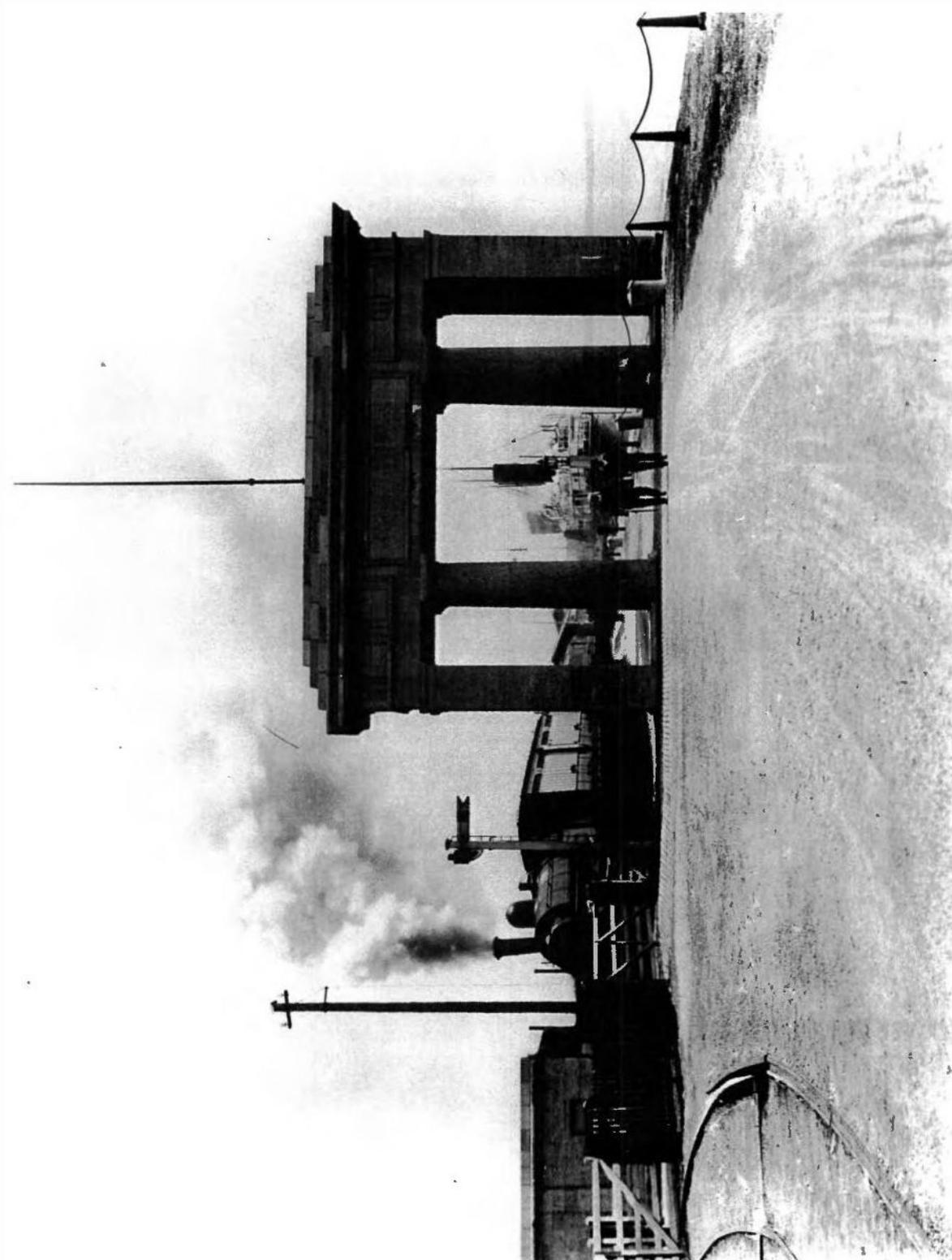
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The **photographs** reproduced on the next few pages were given to us by **Graham Jones**, a retired British Railways signalling manager who we see quite frequently on our way home from our clubrooms; a few of us call in at the Stamford Bridge hotel on a Wednesday evening, for a quick pint and a chat. Mr Jones and his wife are usually in there, and we are accustomed to asking his opinion on the guest ales which are available. So he has become aware of our interests, and likewise we can pick his brains on real-life signalling problems that can arise in our modelling. The caption has been provided by our group's 'consultant' on C.L.C. matters, **Bob Miller.....**

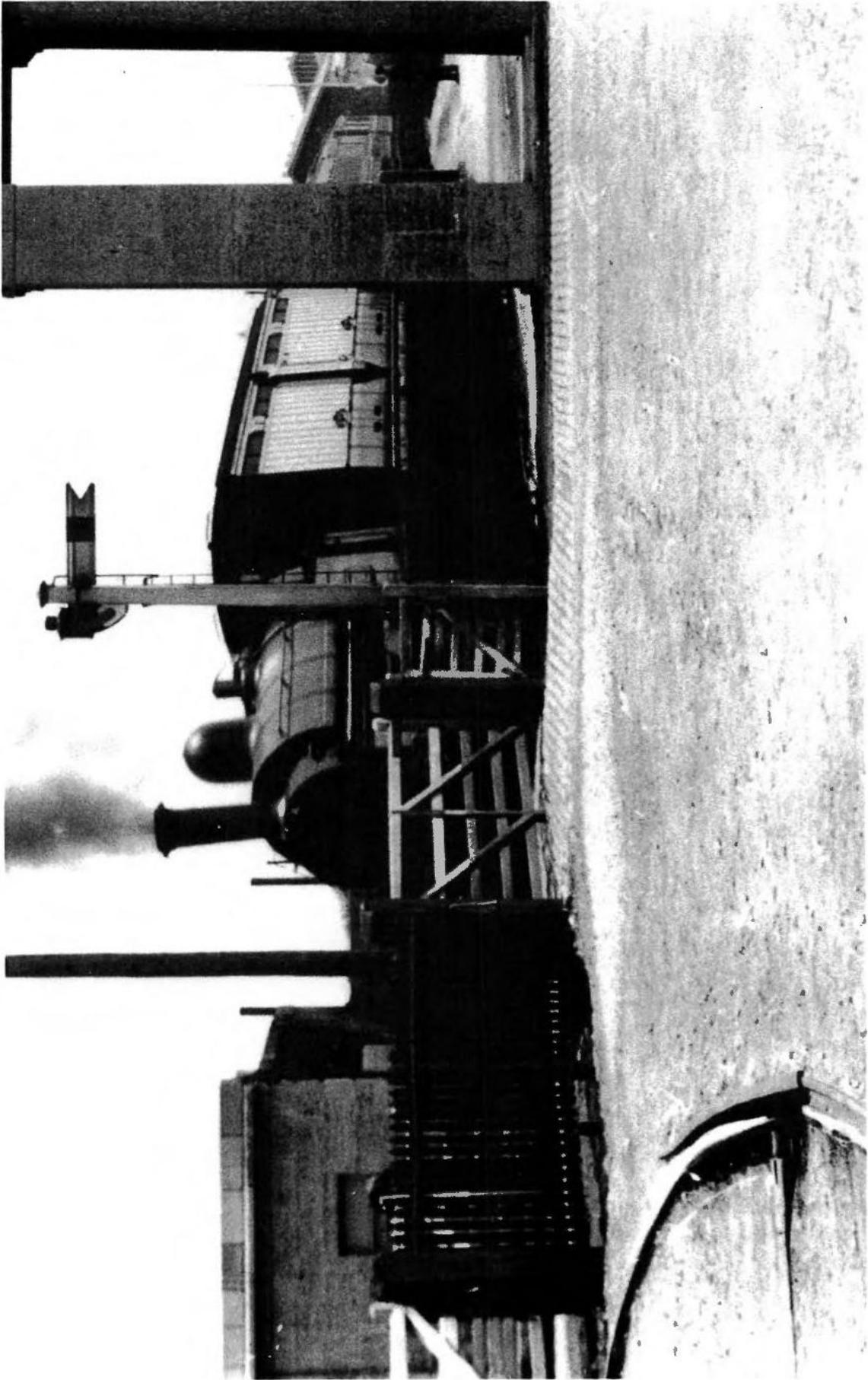


The Cheshire Lines station at Mickle Trafford looking towards Northwich and Manchester. There are not many clues as to the date - probably the best that can be said is around 1910. Note the depth of the ballast covering all the sleepers. The platform buildings are of timber and of lighter weight than brick would have been; this was normal for station buildings on an embankment as here. A slightly larger building is provided on the Manchester bound platform than that for Chester; there was also a booking and other offices at street level

whilst the station master's house was across the road and was still standing the last time I was in Mickle Trafford. The Birkenhead Joint line (LMS and GWR) station was over to the left but not visible in the picture. Looking at the station staff, the two boys who are both in short trousers look about fourteen and have probably only recently left school. They will have found their first job hard enough, fortunately the station master (on the extreme left) looks a kindly soul. I would imagine the gentleman without a hat is the signalman; his box was on the down (towards Chester) side just beyond the end of the platform behind the photographer. Note the economical use of mounting the up starting signal on the same post as the down home. Regret I can give no details as to the make of the bicycle on the Up platform. (Bob Miller). (See also the article about Mickle Trafford in *BMRJ* no.6, March 2006).



**Admiralty pier, Holyhead, with Dublin Steam Packet Company ferries tied up and a Euston boar train being pulled the short distance to the station's main platform. Date unknown.  
*Below* is the portion of the photograph which features the train.**





An 'Irish Mail' train leaving the Conway tubular bridge for Llandudno Junction, thought to be some time in the 1920s.

## **November Monthly Meeting: reported by Ralph Robertson**

### **Friday 11th November 2011, Mostyn by the Barrowmore Group**

The Barrowmore Group turned up at Dean Hall to give us a brilliant presentation on Mostyn, the well-known 4mm P4 layout. When I say the group turned up I mean 6 of them and over the evening all of them gave us a share of their knowledge of Mostyn.

The layout actually started in 1991 and it is based on the North Wales coast line at Mostyn. The period chosen was June 1977 when steam had finished and blue diesels and dmus were the mainstay of the line. The line was quadrupled in 1902 and was reverted to 2 track in the 1960s. The station was closed in 1966 but the goods shed and station building were listed buildings so they could not be demolished.

The current model version of Mostyn is a far cry from the original layout which was conceived in 1991. The layout was built from 1991 to 2000 and it was exhibited at Scalefour North in 2000. Having investigated the problems that arose at that show the group decided to totally rebuild Mostyn and the only things that now remain of the original layout are some of the buildings.

The layout size started at 6.6m x 4.2m (24x14) and it has been expanded over the years to add additional fiddle yard roads which makes the current layout size 9m x 7.2m (30x24). This huge fiddle yard makes for lots of stock and over the years the group have built a huge number of trains to be accommodated in the sidings.

The original layout used Pentrollers and DC as the control method but the rebuilt layout uses DCC based on the Lenz Z100 command station and LH100 controllers. The number of power districts has risen from 4 in 2003 to 9 currently in order to enable trains to continue running in the event of a short on one section of the layout. The handsets plug into a bus system which runs right round the layout. Turnouts are operated by Tortoise point motors.

Templot has been used on the layout to design all the fiddle yard turnouts and long sweeping curves in and out of the fiddle yard are apparent. Stock cleaning is one of the things that Barrowmore do at an exhibition and all the locos and dmus are cleaned each day and ACT6006 Track and Rail Cleaner is applied. Apparently a couple of drops are applied to a rail and this is then transmitted to the rest of the layout by passing trains which keeps the layout as clean as possible at exhibitions.

The baseboards are all made from 9mm birch ply and it is supported on 62 legs. All in all this is a large layout and it is operated by 5 operators [at a time] who run it for 1 hour at the most. All through the presentation Barrowmore put forward their view that the layout was there to entertain the public and it was essential for something to be running at all times. Given that a train can take up to 2 minutes to travel from the fiddle yard and back again this requires a lot of train movements to keep the layout fully operational

Throughout the presentation we were shown photos of both the prototype and the model and the standard of modelling was clearly superb. Towards the end of the evening a couple

of video shots were shown including one of a train of 5 Class 25 diesels hauling a 150 wagon train, quite a spectacle!

Time ran out and just after 10.30 we had to call it a day. There was a lot more for us to see but what we had already seen illustrated just how professional this group are and how much effort they have put into making Mostyn one of the best layouts currently on the exhibition circuit.

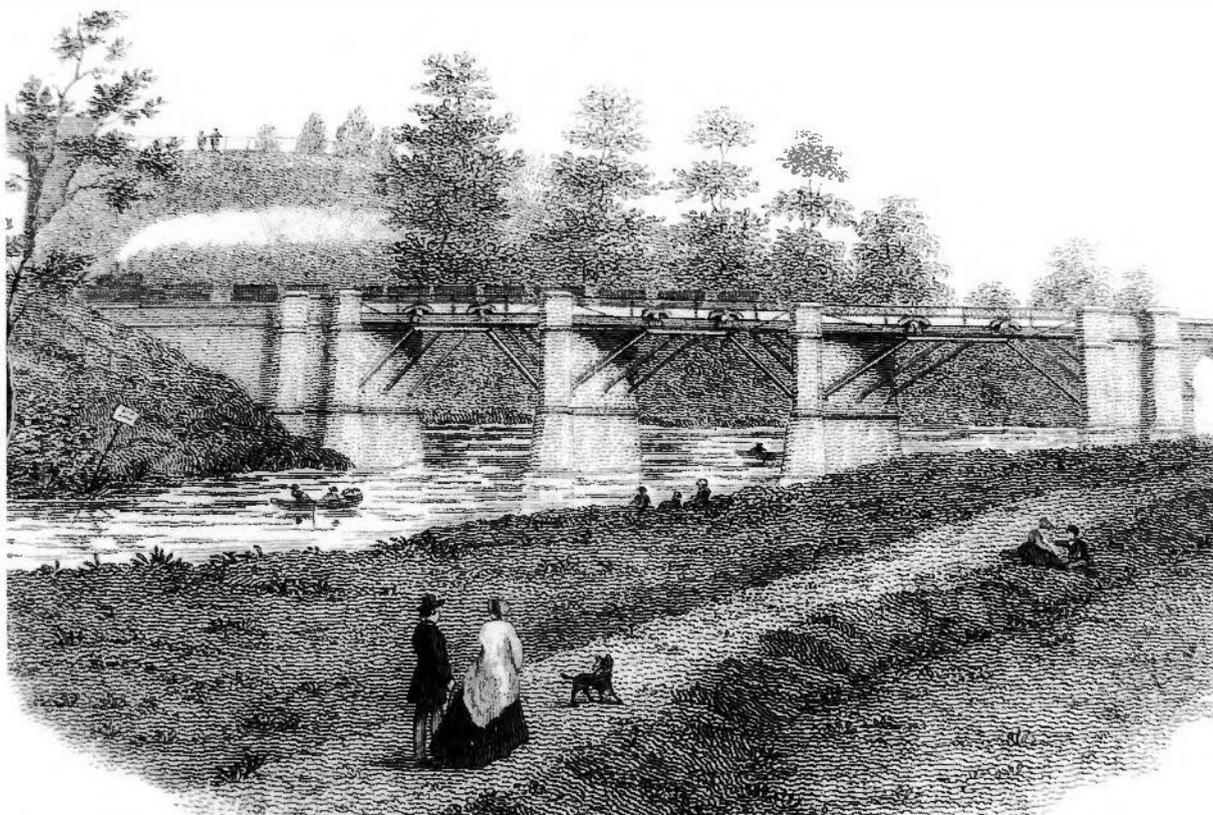
Our thanks go to the Barrowmore Group for taking the time to visit us and talk to us about their fantastic layout and also to Robert Fysh for organising such a great evening. We look forward to hearing more about Mostyn again before too long. Thanks guys, much appreciated.

*(Postscript: We have been asked to return to Dean Hall to give a further presentation to the Manchester M.R.S., on Friday evening 9 November 2012; this time, the emphasis is likely to be on rolling stock).*

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## Editor's page

First, in response to the many requests for more about L.N.W.R. bridge disasters, we are delighted to show another contemporary engraving!



*This is a copy of an engraving by John Romney (1785-1863), an artist who lived and worked in Chester and is best known for his picture of the original 1847 accident (reproduced on page 17 of BMRJ no.17, December 2008). This copy of the depiction of the repaired bridge, as it was in 1853, was provided some time ago by reader Paul Blurton of Crewe and has languished in my files until a suitable size space occurred!*

Recent books:

*Civil engineers wagons, vol.1: British Railways 1948-1967* by David Larkin. Kestrel, 2011. ISBN 978 1 905505 23 4. £14.

We have recently spoken with one-time local (he lived in Tarvin) transport bookseller Harry Wilson, who traded as Henry Wilson Books with a bookshop in Sedbergh – he is about to retire, which should give him more time to devote to modelling the North Eastern Railway in 7mm scale!

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*E-mail to Oakwood Press, forwarded to Tony Robinson ...*

**From:** Andrew Mellor

**To:** sales@oakwoodpress.co.uk

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 07, 2012 8:28 PM

**Subject:** Anthony J Robinson's book "Dad Had An Engine Shed".

"Although I am still enjoying reading Anthony J Robinson's book "Dad Had An Engine Shed", I have scanned most of the captions relating to the photographs. It was quite a surprise to read the caption relating to the top photo reproduced on page 144, depicting an LMS Compound locomotive hauling a 10-coach train passing Helsby. I was travelling on that train, returning from holiday in Llandudno to Liverpool (not Manchester as the author thought). The train was indeed 10 coaches long, and I can add that the engine number was 41111. I recall our driver had great difficulty in restarting the train at Halton Junction, where the line from Chester joins the Crewe line. After several attempts of setting back, our Compound made it! Walking past the engine on arrival at Liverpool's Lime St station, I was shocked to discover that no. 41111 was almost completely red with rust. It may have been in store at Llandudno Junction shed, being pressed into service as a last resort.

Thank you for another enjoyable read. I would be grateful if you could please pass my comments on to author Anthony J Robinson.

It may interest him to know that this event (and many more) is related in my book "Cheese Butties and the 12.39 to Wigan" (Silver Link). Best regards, Andrew Mellor"

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