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Barrowmore Model Railway Journal

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(e) a CD/DVD;
(f) a USB storage flash drive.
Any queries to the Editor, please.

The **NEXT ISSUE** will be dated September 2012, and contributions should get to the Editor as soon as possible, but at least before 1 August 2012.

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Copies of this magazine are also available to non-members: a cheque for £9 (payable to 'Barrowmore Model Railway Group') will provide the next four issues, posted direct to your home. Send your details and cheque to the Editor at the above address.

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The cover illustration for this issue is a photograph of the later stages of track lifting, following the final closure of the Chester to Dee Marsh Junction branch. The photo is dated 7 June 1995, and was taken from the road overbridge just to the north-west of the site of closed Saughall station. The track bed eventually became a cycle-way and footpath – plans to turn it into a guided bus-way having been abandoned; my eldest daughter uses it regularly to walk to work on the Deeside Industrial Park. The railway was originally built for the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway Company (later to become the Great Central Railway, then the L.N.E.R., then B.R.) and opened in 1890. The railway's later years, as a freight-only line were complicated by closure/re-opening, the trackwork deteriorating all the time, until final last train (a light engine class 47) in 1992.
(*See* the article on pages 23/29)

Forthcoming events

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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The Editor has known John Crompton since we were both members of Merseyside Model Railway Society, several decades ago. When we happened to meet again at Scalefour North in 2011, we talked of his current modelling activities, and knowing of my ongoing interest in modelling Irish prototypes he promised to write something for BMRJ. To put John's layout plans into context for readers who know little .of Irish railway history: the Midland & Great Western Railway- was the third largest railway company in Ireland until the grouping in 1925/6, when it amalgamated with the Great Southern; it ran main lines from Dublin through the midlands to the west and north-west.

A scratch-builder's Irish Odyssey by John Crompton

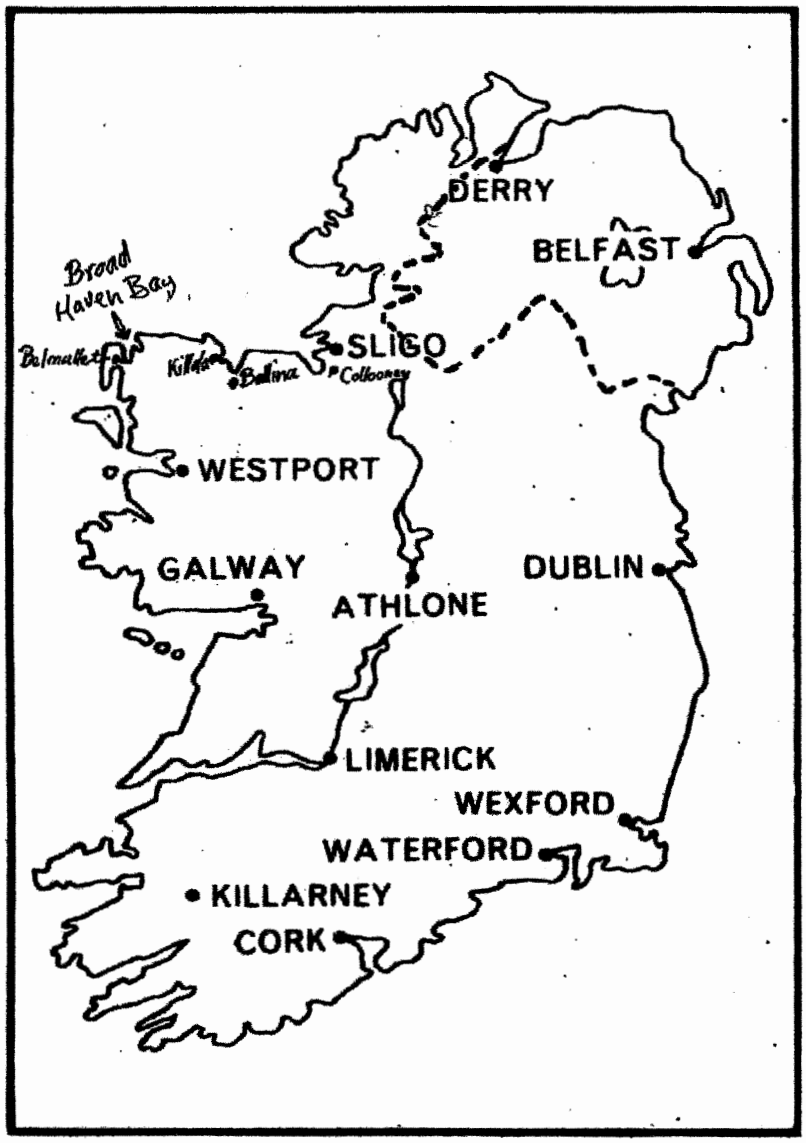
We're all allowed to dream from time to time, and many railway modellers do. In my time I've graduated from Hornby and Trix Twin, through 16.5 and 18.2mm Great Western, to a long period when work, voluntary activity and lack of space called a halt to anything more than dreams of the armchair kind. But when it's in the blood, modelling bites again, even after more than fifteen years. There'd been so many new developments over those years that it was almost like starting again, but some principles remained: a continuing move towards accuracy of scale and authenticity of setting and, most importantly, a desire to model prototypes which wouldn't be produced by the trade within three weeks of scratch-building them.

So how unusual can you get? Discounting things like monorails (why? - I've just come across Aveling-Barford's 1942 [later Road Machines Drayton Ltd] portable monorail concept for civil engineering projects, together with a chap who has collected a lot of track and had a steam loco built for it); or, one can move to an earlier time period as, for example, the East of Scotland Group have done with "Burntisland 1883". I've been much involved with that layout since its inception when I was living in those northern climes, to the great detriment of my own dreams. The alternative is to seek out some obscure and hitherto neglected part of the railway empire and trust that Messrs Bachmann and Hornby won't intrude - not that one would complain about intrusion from a Martin Finney or other such august person, perhaps.

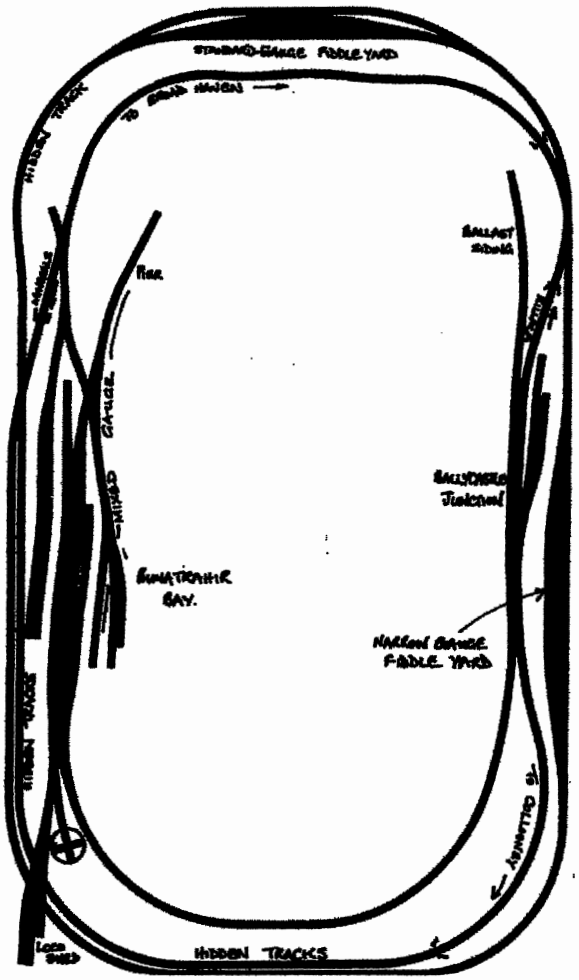
The west coasts of the British Isles have attracted railway builders (the full size version) from early days, with the lure of Irish Mail contracts and the promise of express trans-Atlantic traffic. In the 1970s the Merseyside MRS EM Group's "Downton Road" borrowed the theme for a failing incursion from the Shrewsbury-Hereford Joint line towards the Welsh border and Porth Dinllaen. Good ground for GW and LNW aficionados certainly, although not very original. But over in the Emerald Isle the same principles were at work, with bays from Donegal to Cork vying for the honour of taking passengers off the trans- Atlantic steamers and hurrying them to their destinations. Did anyone tell these passengers, I wonder, that there was another chunk of sea to be crossed before they would get to England? Broad Haven on the north-west coast of County Mayo was about the most remote of these bays, and probably the one which had least in the form of other potential traffic to recommend it, but that didn't prevent several alternative schemes being promoted after the passage of the Light Railways (Ireland) Act in 1889 and the Tramways Act of 1890. Had any of them succeeded in building a standard-gauge line it would have fallen, no doubt, into the doubtless reluctant hands of the Midland & Great Western Railway, that most idiosyncratic of Irish railway companies; had a line been built with due attention to economy it would no doubt have been built to the three-foot gauge, by an independent company which might have looked like any or none of the other Irish narrow-gauge lines.

In real life, alternative schemes proposed joining the MGWR's line to Achill or its Ballina and Killala line, and might have been of either gauge. Might it even have happened that the standard- gauge managed to get part-way before the need for economy forced a continuation on the narrow gauge?

So there's a dream worth pursuing. An extension of the M&GW Killala line, itself built under the Light Railways (Balfour) Act and opened in 1903, would cross an easy piece of country from an engineering point of view, but once beyond Ballycastle [this Ballycastle is in Co. Mayo – not to be confused with the larger town in Co. Antrim] and Bunatrahir Bay the northern slopes of Maumakeogh reach the coast in spectacular cliffs and are much more challenging. A narrow gauge line westwards from Bunatrahir would at least save money, as well as making it easier for the M&GW to refuse to work it, as they would have been required to do under the Tramways Act. Traffic over such a line to the new port at Broad Haven could be increased by the exploitation of mineral deposits on the eastern slopes of Maumakeogh, by building a branch up the valley of the Bellananaminnaun River; the pier on the west side of Bunatrahir Bay was only accessible for small fishing boats. If all these possible but imaginary lines failed to provide sufficient variety for "the dream", then one could imagine that the 1907 promotion of a Bill for the Colloney (sic), Ballina and Bulmullet Railways and Piers Act would have produced a straggling line from Collooney (where both the Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties and the Waterford, Limerick and Western joined the MGWR Sligo line) along the south shores of Donegal Bay to join the Killala–Bunatrahir extension. Surely the hard-pressed SLNC would have seized such an opportunity to extend its influence westwards - or would it?



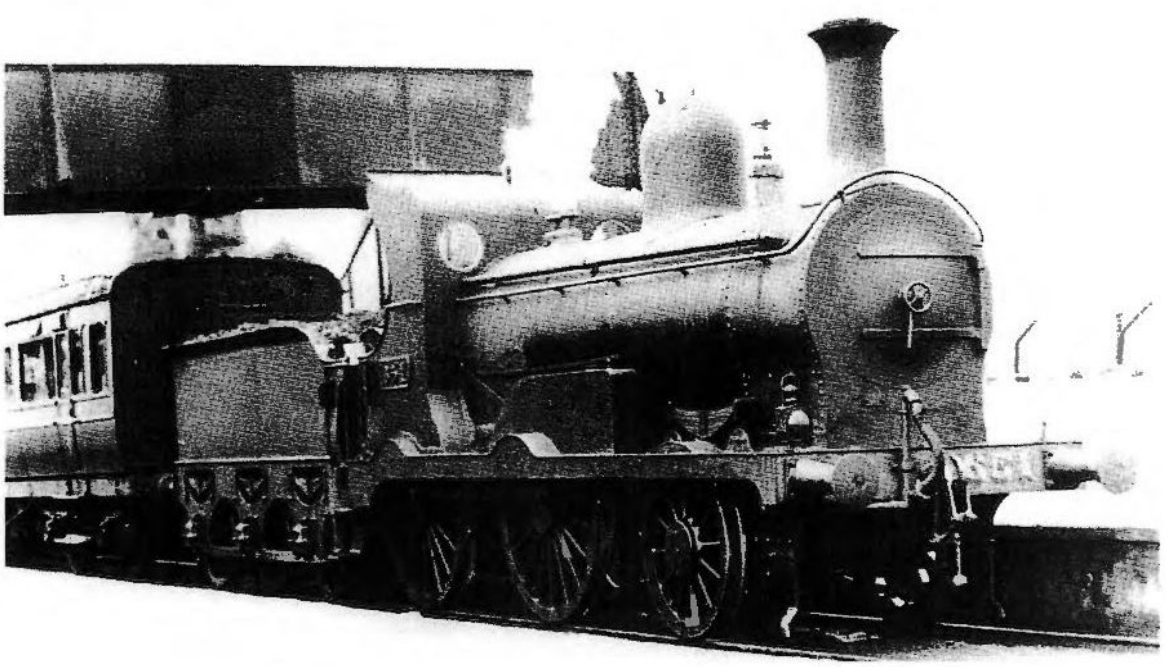
Enough dreaming! Suffice it to say that a move to west Wales brought with it an opportunity to design our own house, complete with a 20ft x 12ft railway room on the ground floor. The dream translates into continuous circuits of both 5ft 3in and 3ft gauge, not to be used officially for continuous running, but to provide access to common fiddle yards for each gauge; the standard gauge represents Killala at one end and Collooney at the other, whilst the narrow gauge represents the Belmullet line and the mineral branch. One side of the room accommodates the station at the break of gauge, Bunatrahir Bay, where those hundreds of passengers from the ocean liners will have to cross the platform to continue their journeys; other than the narrow gauge platform, loop and some mixed gauge track, the layout bears a distinct resemblance to that at Loughrea (Co. Galway). At the other side of the room is Ballycastle Junction, where trains heading for Collooney have to reverse; a single platform face, passing loop, two goods sidings and a ballast siding (cf Dunsandle on the Loughrea branch). 'Templot' has fitted it all into the available space, and a copy is attached.



[There is a good map of the various railways proposed for north Mayo on page 36 of *Rails to Achill* by Jonathan Beaumont; Oakwood Press, rev. ed., 2005; ISBN 0 85361 588 8].

The layout will be set in 1925, immediately after the grouping, to allow Aspinall and McDonnell locomotives from the Great Southern, to mix with the Atock designs of the MGW. Sounds good, to me at least, but how many years have I got? Most of the baseboards are in place, complicated by the need to maintain a passage through the room, so one board rotates whilst another will lift. Standard (5ft 3in) track extends about three-quarters round the room, quite a lot being hidden where

it dips under the exchange station on its way from the fiddle yard to Ballycastle Junction, so rails soldered to copper-clad. One "challenge" is that the MGWR never used bullhead rail and some of their ballast was pretty minimal; so track is being assembled with wooden sleepers cut from 3/32nd obeche, with anodised nickel-silver rail (Micro-Rail Codes 70 and 55, imported from the States) secured by wire staples to represent the dog spikes - a rather slow process. Points are, and signals will be, operated by servos - cheap, reliable and easily adjusted, so membership of MERG has been a new experience. My one working loco, still lacking some details and paint, has home-made all-metal wheels and a DCC chip from Loksound - sound being an added requirement, although the chips and loudspeakers are really going to have to get smaller if the projected loco stud is to be completed - especially the narrow-gauge ones.



One of the M.G.W.R.'s distinctive Atock designs: G.S.R. no.651 (built in 1894 as M.G.W. no.17) pictured in 1934. The 'flyaway' cab design gave little protection from the elements, and so was unpopular with crews. (Photograph by H.C.Casserley, courtesy of his son Richard Casserley).

As regards model rolling stock: kits - TMD (?) did an MGW 0-6-0T, and Richard Chown gave me one; it's a scale 9.5 inches too long, about 3 inches too narrow, and the frames are *&%*@x* - yes, really. It's now just a bit too short, but the correct width, and it has hand-made wheels rather than the W&H recommended - as yet running but unfinished. I believe he did an MGW white-metal van, examples of which Dennis Bates has assembled - again, far too wide. Scalefour's Jeremy has done an MGW open wagon, a good whitemetal casting although the MGW generally didn't go in for opens.

r.t.r - Murphy's Models ex-Bachmann - very good but modern image - however, if Murphy's were to commission a GSR 101/J15 0-6-0, the largest class of steam engines ever in Eire, I suspect one would be of interest, though I prefer the older version with the round-top firebox and sloping smokebox front.

The narrow gauge will have to run on borrowed locos - I'm currently working on the frames for the Ballymena & Larne's "Bruiser", the 2-6-0 Beyer Peacock saddle tank; info from photos and a copy of the works drawing from the Manchester Museum of Science & Industry archives. Not much room there between the frames.

This is an updated version of a piece by **Tony Miles** for the *Merseyside Express,* the magazine of the Merseyside Model Railway Society. Since it was first published in September 1976, it is now very much an 'historic document'. The first "Adavoyle" layout was successfully exhibited on several occasions, and when Tony retired and went to live in Shropshire, he took the layout with him - so making the M.M.R.S.'s room that housed it available for a new club P4 layout. With space to expand in its new Ludlow home, the layout expanded!! It was largely rebuilt, renamed "Adavoyle Junction", and in its new guise was shown widely, until Tony decided that with advancing years it would be sensible to find a 'good home' for it: it is now at home in the headquarters of the South Dublin model railway club, together with most of the rolling stock.

SPOTLIGHT ON P4

Originally the P4 group [of the Protofour Society - predecessor of the Scalefour Society] met monthly at the Chester home of one of its members, to discuss future layout plans (none of which achieved fruition) and to sup ale, but during this period the initial P4 layout (the terminus of the North Wales Holywell Town branch) was constructed and subsequently exhibited successfully on several occasions.

"Holywell Town", with its single coach branch train and its two tank engines, had limitations.

A view of the "Holywell Town" layout. The station platform was just beyond the right-hand overbridge arch, with the single track line down to Holywell Junction station and the Holyhead main line starting to drop down (average gradient 1 in 27) on the right. To the left is the goods yard. The wooden tower seen over the parapet of the bride (visible as a pale patch at the top of the photo) was a steam powered luggage/parcels lift to enable passengers to get their luggage more easily to road level – the whole station was in a deep cutting. At the time that this photograph was taken, we had yet to model the steam reservoir next to the base of the overbridge; it was refilled periodically by the locomotive.

Thought turned to something more ambitious. This, it was felt, should be a substantial continuous run, layout, able to cope with main line trains - if only to prove that P4 stock could operate successfully on such a basis (for at the time the few P4 layouts to be seen were invariably of the 'out-and-back', branch line terminal type. Holywell Town had been accommodated on small portable baseboards but the new layout would need a permanent home, and here the Merseyside Model Railway Society came to the rescue with the offer of a room. Accordingly, operations were transferred to Birkenhead and most of the group became paid-up members of the MMRS.

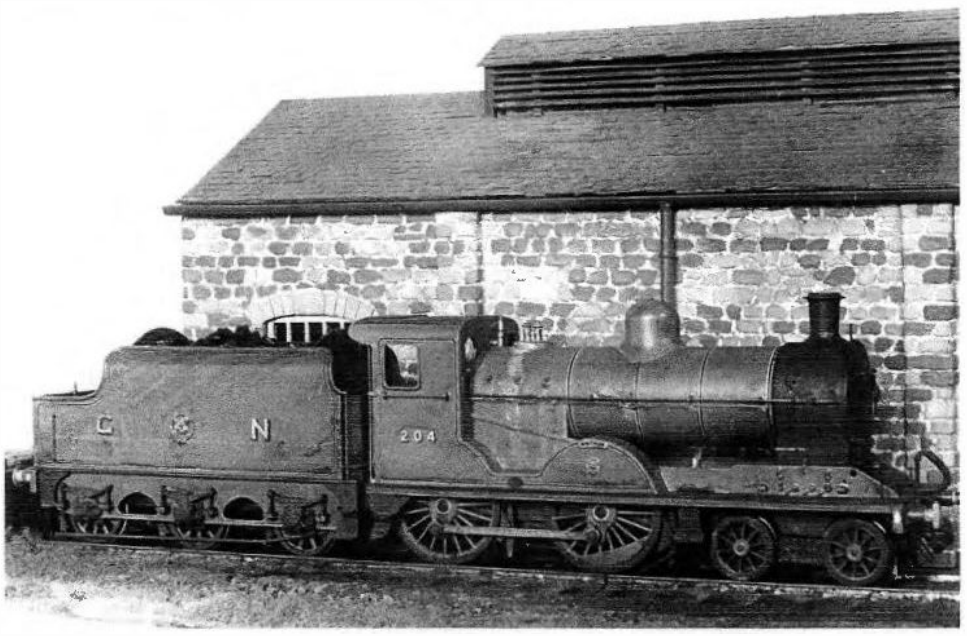
A home having been secured, the particular railway to be modelled had to be settled, and at once a problem arose - the group boasted one member loaded with locomotives and stock (but possessing two feet of track), while the rest had produced track and sundry items but were remarkably bereft of engines and carriages. So for so good, but unfortunately the aforementioned stock was all built to Irish standard and was designed, therefore for 5ft 3in (21mm) gauge - everything else was of course, what the group nowadays dismisses as 'narrow' gauge (4ft 8½in). On a momentous evening it was resolved to 'go Irish' and the MMRS, evincing a deal of faith, declared itself prepared to support this venture.

The decision to model on 21mm gauge was probably a wise one as it utilised an existing stock of locomotives and wagons though, on the debit side, the adoption of Irish standards may have deterred would-be recruits and there have been a few times when extra hands would have been invaluable. It has also entailed building virtually everything from scratch as not only was the gauge unusual in the model world, but there was the additional snag that very little kit help could be employed - for example G.N.R.(Ireland) coaches, without exception, were unlike any English prototype, were 9ft 6in wide and often ran on one of two patterns of 10ft wheelbase bogie. To deal with this it has been necessary to build each coach completely from scratch and to produce a mould for the most frequently met 10ft wheelbase bogie, while building the other 10ft type by hand. Similarly, Irish wagons resembled nothing to be found in England and even sported an antediluvian form of brake-gear for which no help could be garnered from the trade. P4 trackwork, even in 4ft 8½in is a labour of love with all points hand constructed. 5ft 3in gauge also entailed cutting each individual sleeper.

Curious faces appear from time to time at the door of the P4 room, but usually they review the prevailing mess, grimace and retreat thankfully to N gauge. However, when it is fully assembled the layout can be seen to consist of a double track on a plan which can only be described as egg shaped (there are no straight midsections, but provision has been made to incorporate an extra baseboard in each side (?) of the egg, if and when John Crompton and his crony can be persuaded to clear their EM kits from the attractive sized room adjoining. The public will view one half of the egg - the double mainline emerging from a tunnel, climbing over a stone viaduct to its summit before entering the station (foolishly sited on a falling gradient offering all the problems of run-away stock) and vanishing into a second tunnel. The station has a bay on the inside of the baseboard from whence a single line branch climbs steeply above the main line, traverses its own girder viaduct (beside the other) and is enveloped in another tunnel. The hidden side of the egg blossoms into main storage loops, a turntable and sidings at the end of the branch. Throughout the layout simple turnouts are the exception rather than the rule - complex point-work has perforce been used to compensate for the smallness of the room - and only an exhibition will reveal the efficacy of this arrangement.

This lack of space precluded representing an actual station prototype, so the model is imaginary, but all the structures are faithful replicas of buildings which did exist in various locations on the real G.N.R. The station building is that of Sion Mills on the now sadly defunct G.N.R. route to Londonderry, the goods shed is a shortened version of Lisburn's (near Belfast on the main line) and the signal box resurrects the unique specimen formerly at Portadown North which began life as a normal box but then had parts added in a haphazard fashion. Finally, there is the timbered Adelaide Halt building (the first stop out of Belfast) and, as no railway use can be found for it at the moment, it serves as a bus office

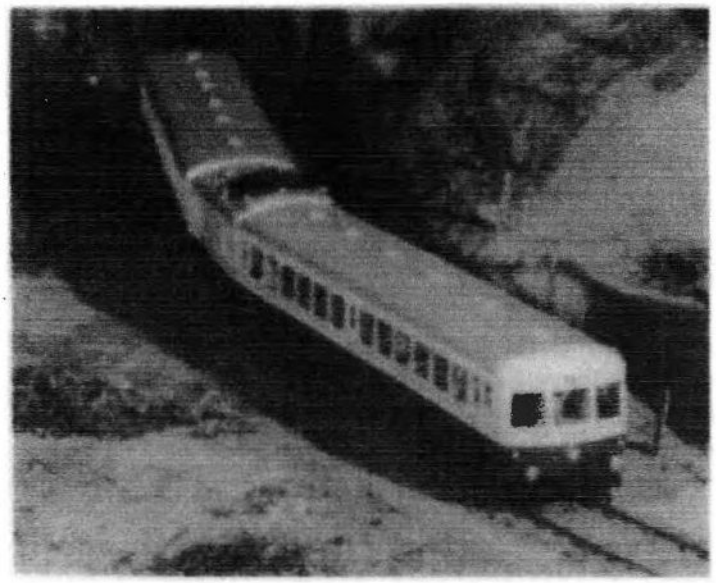
in the station yard. The platforms will be linked by a lattice footbridge at present under construction. The nearby stone viaduct is a much reduced version of the great Bessbrook structure on the mountain section of the Dublin-Belfast main line and the accompanying branch line girder bridge resembles the Moyle viaduct on the closed Londonderry line (it also brings even more closely to mind the bridge near Kirkcudbright on that now lifted branch!). Perceptive viewers will observe that the branch is laid with the light 30ft flat bottomed rail so often employed in Ireland. [This original Adavoyle layout was 18ft by 12ft – the maximum size allowed by the room]. The railway represents a small part of the cross border mountain section of the Dublin-Belfast line (a favourite haunt of bombers in the 1970s/1980s) and the imaginary junction station has been christened 'Adavoyle', the summit name in real life (a station of that name did, in fact, exist between 1892 and 1933). This section of the GNR is comparable with that over Shap, yet in the halcyon days of the accelerated schedules of 1932 the then new 4-4-0 compounds somehow managed to leave the Portadown stop, edge the mile thence to the three way junction beyond the station with its 15 m.p.h. restriction, run several miles over a level bog with two intervening speed restrictions of 50 and 30 m.p.h., face the 8½ mile climb to Adavoyle (much of it at 1 in 100 and very little at less than 150) and pelt down the 11 mile bank to the stop at Dundalk, all in a working timetable allowance of 36 minutes for 33.8 miles - it was an exhilarating experience which made the contemporary 'Merseyside Express' quite a tame affair. The same 4-4-0s were persuaded to lift 14 bogies over this bank in wartime days.



A work-worn example of the last class of 4-4-0s built for the G.N.R. (I) by Beyer Peacock in 1948, modelled by the Editor.

Time - and space - have combined to preclude capturing much that was the spirit of the G.N.R. The layout has one of the blue compounds ('Peregrine') and No.44 an example of the much earlier PP class 4-4-0s, express engines of the 1890s which, like all G.N.R.(I) locos, showed marked similarity to their counterparts on the old English Great Northern (note the boiler fittings and cab particularly, and, indeed, the earlier G.N.R.(I) was also green, though there was no actual connection between the two railways. The layout also has examples of G.N.R. 4-4-2T, 2-4-2T and 0-6-0 tender locomotives together with a fair selection of coaching stock with the Doncastrian feature of square cornered windows and panelling (but finished in mahogany, not teak, and providing for three classes until as late as 1951). Again, the

layout is painstakingly correct in such matters as building colours, name-board styles, signalling and fencing. However, the G.N.R. was unique in operating not only steam trains, but



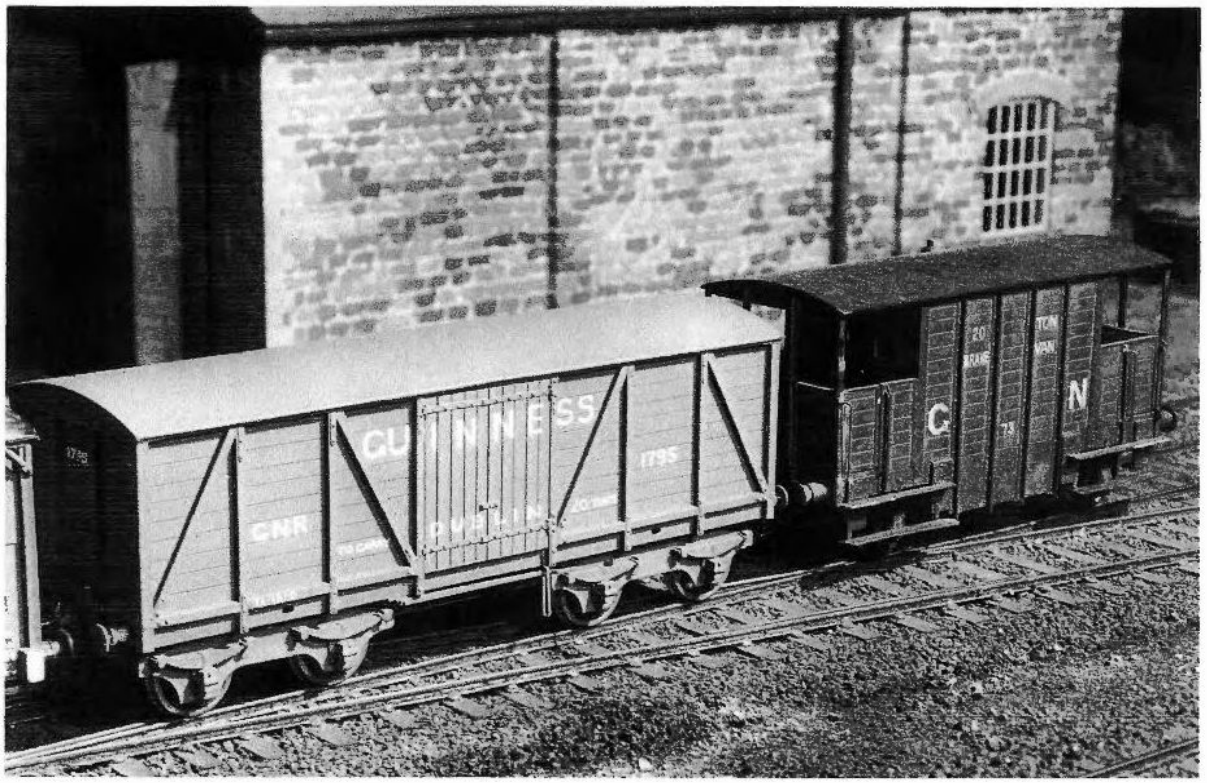
Railcar 'D' which was built in 1936

also some of the earliest diesel railcars in the British Isles [they were diesel mechanical, 6-coupled, with the diesel engine in the centre unit], rail buses, electric tramcars (on the Hill of

Railbus F3, built 1935. It had a patented wheel system, with flanged metal tyres outside normal pneumatic tyres.

Howth) and, of course, the renowned horse tram at Fintona, together with a sizeable fleet of buses and lorries. The railcars, trams and buses were finished in Oxford blue and cream and, with the exception of a bus, have failed so far to appear on the model. (One member did devote many misspent hours in an attempt to produce a working model of Dick, the propulsive power of the Fintona horse tram, and concocted an imaginative plan to galvanise the brute's

limbs from a motor in the tram, transmitting its power to cranks in the horse via a flexible shaft passing through you can imagine where - but all in vain). Nor has time or space been available to bring back to life the mixed gauges, 5ft 3in and 3ft, of such stations as Strabane, Tynan or Maguiresbridge.

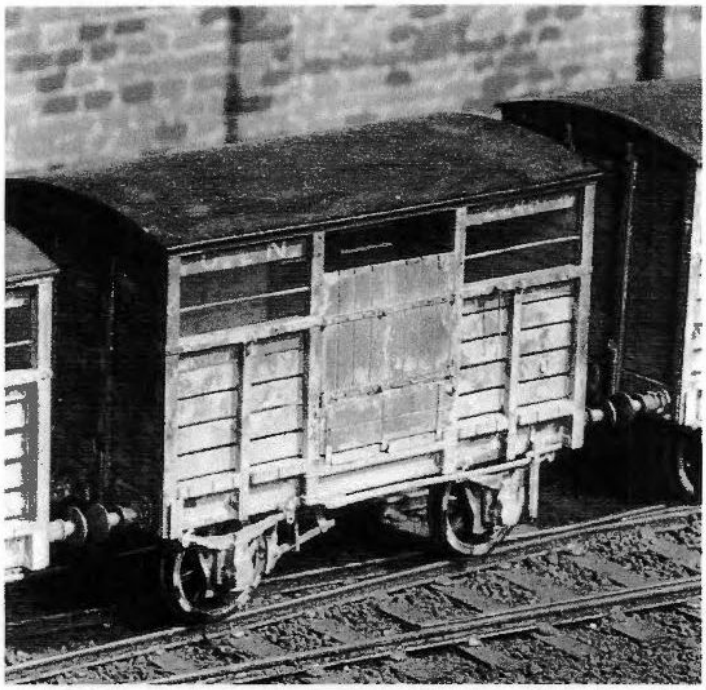


The G.N.R. had a number of bogie vans devoted to servicing the Guinness brewery in Dublin. The goods brake van is a standard G.N. design.

Since the model began, foreigners who never saw Adavoyle in real life have crept in - members of the group have tended to import English features, so the LMS NCC appears in the form of the Derby-built 2-6-0 'The Foyle', an engine which ran to Dublin in latter days but not in 1947/8 (the period being modelled); and also a jinty (two were imported and re-gauged during the war). A C.I.E. train, hauled by a Woolwich 2-6-0 (a SECR design re-gauged and put in service on the Midland Great Western) is another stranger - the coaching stock would have been seen on the GNR(I) by 1951, the C.I.E. engine never (the poor thing began as a Wills kit, but looked so sick that only the chimney and dome survived in the finished model). Then, inevitably, one member began work on a Dundalk, Newry & Greenore train - an LNWR engine with plum and spilt milk six wheelers bearing coats of arms depicting Britannia (LNWR) shaking hands with Erin - a livery retained till closure in 1951. There is, unfortunately, no representative of the Belfast & County Down Railway.

For the technically minded: tender locos have motors in the tenders mounted on lead which, in turn, is rubber insulated - all in a not altogether successful attempt to reduce the din set up by the notoriously noisy P4 track, glued down with stone ballast (the branch was experimentally laid on rubber carpet underlay for the same reason). Most locos have lead flywheels and power is transmitted to the driving wheels via a universal shaft. Some pick up through the tender wheels, others have insulated frames and split axles. Locos and tenders are sprung - for good rail holding and electrical pick-up. One 0-6-0 has full inside

Stephenson motion in steel. All the G.N.R. coaches and wagons are models of actual vehicles (the G.N.R. had a custom of building small numbers of a type for specific purposes). Compensation on the P4 rocking principle is used for most, though not all, wagons, but has not been found essential for bogie coaches. Most coaches are permanently coupled in sets with sprung buffers and all are fitted internally. A fine collection of profusely riveted



Livestock was once an important traffic for Irish railways, and there were many cattle wagons similar to this G.N. design in use in 1948. They exhibit an antique form of brake-gear, reminiscent of British practice of the 19th century. The sheep wagons were similar.

wagons has appeared and these use three link couplings; original company drawings have been used for most stock and the group has been fortunate in the amount of advice it has received from former officers of Irish railways as well as from a number of enthusiasts domiciled in Ireland.

The old Great Northern Railway of Ireland was never really an Irish railway at all - much of it had the essence of Doncaster and the blue compounds were in truth enlarged versions of the Midland type, pressed to 250 lbs and born, as were so many of their sisters.

A description of the original "Adavoyle" layout appeared in *Railway modeller*, vol.31, no.359, Special extra [May 1980], as 'Railway of the month'.

We have been given a collection of **British Railways internal circulars**, dating from about 1963 to the 1980s; most are of only limited interest (e.g. "British Railways Board promotion, transfer and redundancy arrangements for footplate staff ... 1981"), but a few are of more general interest, and one is reprinted on the next page: 'DMU idling fuel costs'. The annual cost of idling covers more than the actual fuel cost – for instance, the price of antifreeze is a significant saving, as is the cost of replacement batteries; no doubt Eddie Knorn will have input into any discussion! The Editor remembers staying in Dundalk, just across from the

station, and hearing the parked locomotives' engines running all night; it seems the local residents never noticed the noise!

In today's money the 1981 figure of £246,000 equates to a minimum of £790,000 or a maximum figure of over a million pounds.

BR.30069/2

LONDON MIDLAND REGION

TRACTION BULLETIN No.31. APRIL 1981

If, after reading this Bulletin, you feel you need help with any point, please tell your Supervisor who will arrange, as necessary, for this to be given.

DIESEL MULTIPLE UNIT ENGINE IDLING FUEL COSTS

1. **Fuel Cost per Engine per hour Idling**

Leyland & AEC 150hp	20p per hour
Leyland Albion 200hp	23p per hour
Rolls Royce 238hp	26.5p per hour

With the present complement of engines on the L.M Region the cost of fuel for all engines idling for one hour is as follows:—

150hp engines	1262 X 20p	= £252.40
200hp engines	174 X 23p	= £40.02
238hp engines	104 X 26.5p	= £27.56
		£319.98p

With an average availability figure of 77% the hourly fuel cost of all engines idling is £246.00p.

If 50% of the service stock idle for one hour the cost is £123.00p.

The same amount of stock idling 8 hours per day or night costs £984.00p.

For a period of 250 days/nights, i.e. 5 days/nights per week for 50 weeks, costs £246,000.00p, which is approx. £¼m. per year.

A tale of two exhibitions – where is the hobby headed?

Together with other members of BMRG I have recently attended two exhibitions as a visitor. Firstly, David Faulkner, David Goodwin, Philip Sutton and myself went to Scalefour North at Wakefield College, Thornes Park, Wakefield on Sunday 22nd April and then, a week later, Gavin Liddiard and myself made the short journey to Old Christ Church, Waterloo, Liverpool for the annual exhibition of Liverpool MRS in its new venue.

I came away from each exhibition with completely different opinions about the health and direction of the hobby and decided to share my thoughts with readers of our Journal.

Our visit to Scalefour North was on a dry bright day and we arrived at the venue in the early afternoon following our customary stop for a pint of Taylor's Landlord at The Redoubt pub not far from Thornes Park entrance. Admission was £6.00 for adults (although it is less for Scalefour Society members) and this felt a bit steep for a small exhibition but is nevertheless a trifling sum compared with the fuel cost of getting to Wakefield from the Wirral. There were only seven layouts at the exhibition but the venue is small and there are plenty of specialist traders – a decent attraction in its own right.

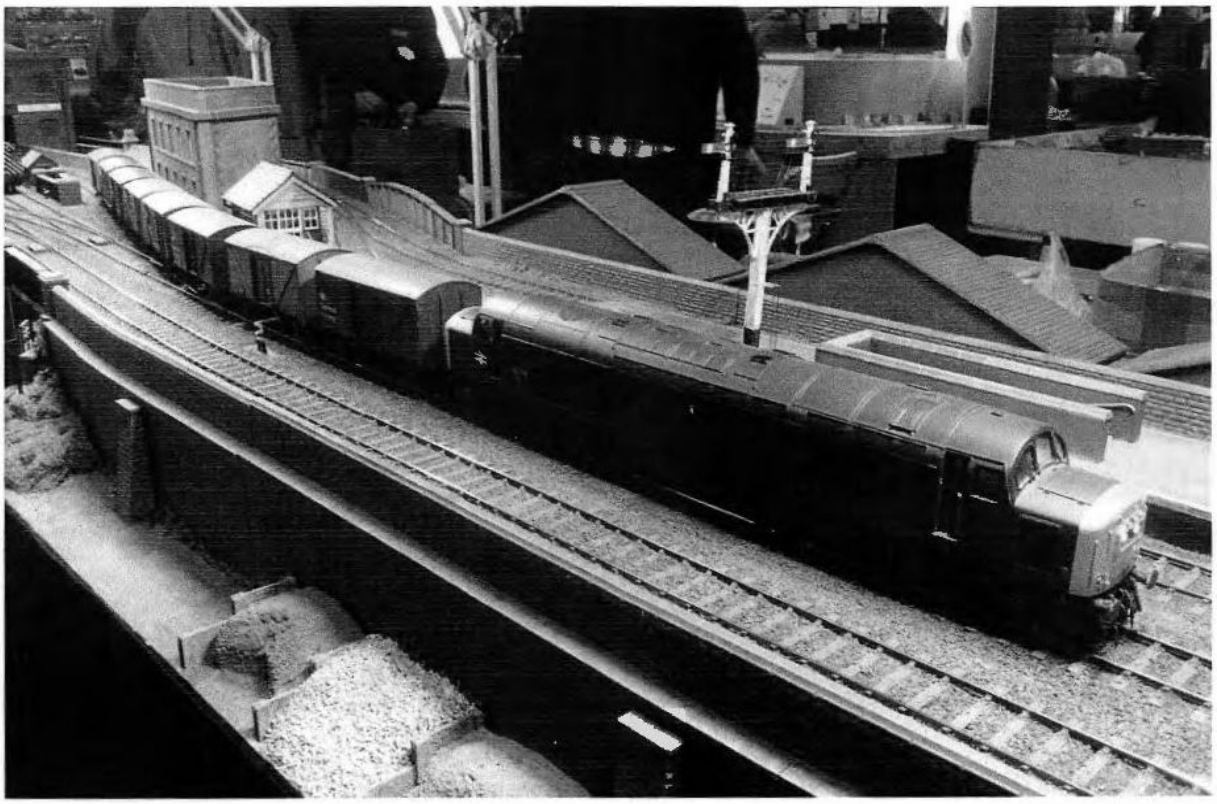
As you might expect from P4 modellers, the Scalefour North layout and stock detail was generally of a high standard and there seemed to be a quiet contemplative atmosphere in the main hall – perhaps brought about by the apparent scarcity of visitors on a Sunday afternoon. I was struck by the relative lack of movement on the layouts whilst I was watching them, lost interest and soon turned my attention to the traders. This was much better – helpful advice from David Geen and Comet, chats with Alan Gibson and Bill Bedford plus the usual banter with the Shawplan gang. I came away armed with a few bits and pieces for future "Mostyn" projects and it was also good to touch base with other modellers we know from various internet forums but seldom see in person.

The contrast in weather could not have been greater when Gavin and I ventured across the Mersey to Liverpool. It was cold and raining heavily but, fortified by a full English breakfast, we made our way to the decommissioned church venue. Parking was either on-road or on the grass surrounding the church building – quite a contrast to the off-road tarmac car park at Scalefour North. Admission was £4 per adult and this seemed good value for an exhibition with 14 layouts attending. The layouts were a right mixture with everything from N to O gauges and modelling standards varying from accomplished to beginner.

The Liverpool traders were mostly of the 'box-shifter' category and, whilst there was the odd specialist stand, nothing tempted me to make a purchase. I chatted briefly to one of the demonstrators before focussing on the layouts. A quick scout round saw us settle for a while on Franklin, an ON2 American DCC shunting layout which sufficiently grabbed Gavin's attention such that he soon found himself drafted in as an operator for an hour or so. I am particularly attracted to layouts whose operators seem to be enjoying themselves (and interacting with the public) so paid plenty of attention to small layouts like "Enstone Road"

An American ON2 shunting puzzle layout called " Franklin" provided Gavin with an hour's operating practice.

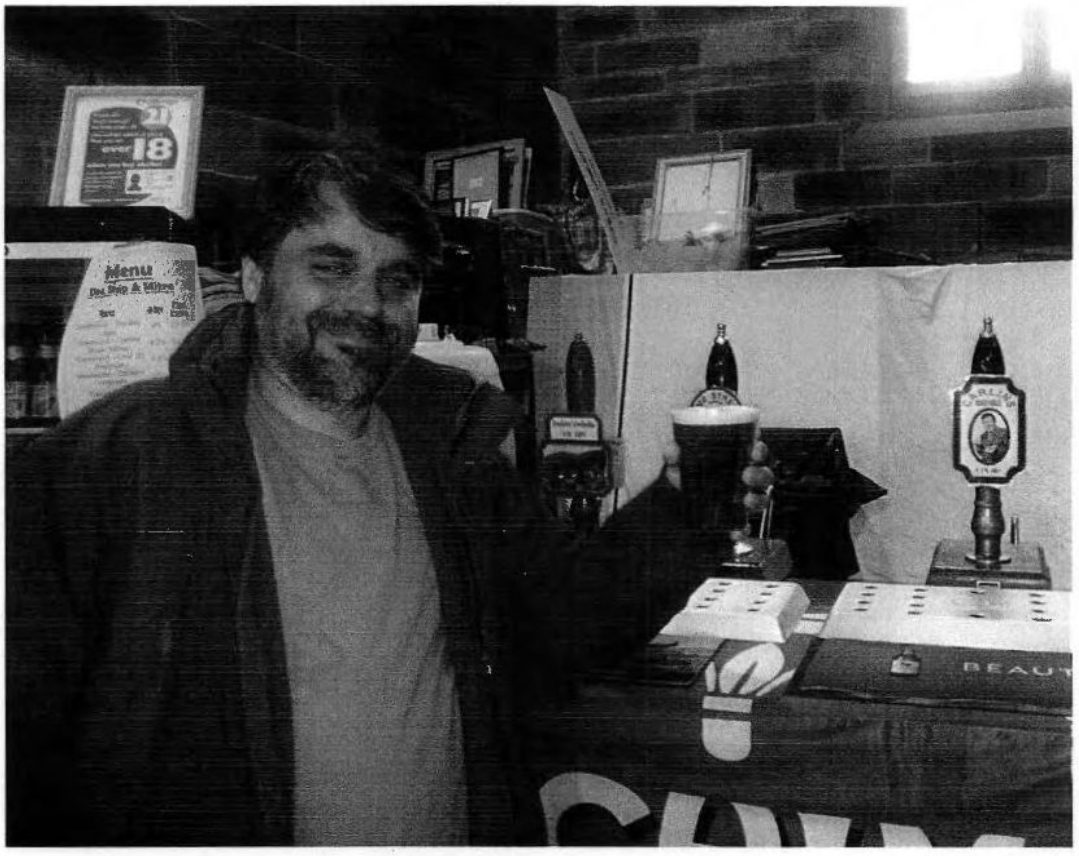
and "Black Rock Buffalo" whilst other less pro-active layouts failed to grab my attention. After a customary stop to admire the full-length trains on "Coppel"l we headed to the highlight (for us) of the show – we love our diesels and when it's 7mm and "Oldham King Street" you are in for a treat.



English Electric type 4 locomotive 40,178 eases a van train away from "Oldham King Street". The three SPV ex-fish vans immediately behind the locomotive are a vehicle type we still need to complete for "Mostyn".

A slight air of rebellion hung about the venue with the odd mutterings about coldness and difficulties with the toilet arrangements but this was countered by the organisers' decision to have an outside bar from Liverpool's famous Ship & Mitre real ale pub. There was a good mixed crowd which helped create a pleasant fun atmosphere – somewhat of a contrast to the often muted exhibition Sunday afternoons. The whole event was a big improvement on Liverpool MRS's recent efforts at Archbishop Blanch School and we can only hope that they achieved a good result for their work.

And so, there you have it, two quite different exhibitions both representing the model railway hobby. Given my P4 modelling focus, Scalefour North ought to have been the highlight – it's a smarter venue with better facilities, the average layout quality was better and the traders/demonstrators were of more relevance to me. However, after only a couple of hours in the exhibition, I had had my fill and left feeling somewhat uninspired and unenthused. It was just too serious and lacking in atmosphere. Where was the fun? By contrast the Liverpool show was inferior by many measures of objective quality but exuded friendliness, enthusiasm and perhaps a touch of anarchy. And you know what? It held our attention and kept us entertained for over four hours – that's excellent value at less than £1 per hour. I particularly liked the personal touches such as the thoughtful re-badging of the Weetwood real ales and the cheerful catering ladies and, at the end of the day, what can compete with the challenge of getting your car out of a flooded grass car park?



The outside bar from the Ship & Mitre was certainly an unusual (and irresistible) attraction: Gavin has given way to temptation!

There might be a message here about the formulaic standardised approach of many current exhibitions. I think you know what I mean – leisure centre sports hall, traders round the outside, layouts on the inside, smattering of demonstrators, industrial catering etc., etc. How can you make these events more distinctive (from one another) and memorable? There is, of course, an imperative to make money which drives most exhibitions, and this seems to be

producing a uniformity of approach. During the last fourteen years since my return to the hobby there has been a surge in the number of exhibitions but less of a need to actually visit them. Traders who once attended occasional shows now appear to be manning their stands on a weekly basis whilst the growth of internet sales further reduces the attraction of catching a trader at a show. Perhaps I'm a bit jaded, having attended scores if not hundreds of exhibitions but I'm starting to value more the unexpected, quirky and above all interactive experiences. There will have to be more at shows than passive consumption (you gawk at a layout until you've had enough and then move on) otherwise the economic downturn will start to take its toll on attendances.

This begs the question as to how BMRG, with its two large exhibition layouts, can play a role in increasing exhibition visitor participation. "Mostyn" operators and visitors to ExpoEM 2011 will have seen the excellent Mostyn brochure produced by Philip Sutton which we gave out to stimulate interest in the layout and its 1977 time period. Perhaps we should also be expanding our guest operator idea such that a greater number of exhibition visitors might have the opportunity to drive a train on the North Wales coast main line? And lest we forget, there is the added challenge of encouraging younger people to take up the hobby.

Hopefully this article can spur some dialogue within the readership of BMRJ.

Richard Oldfield

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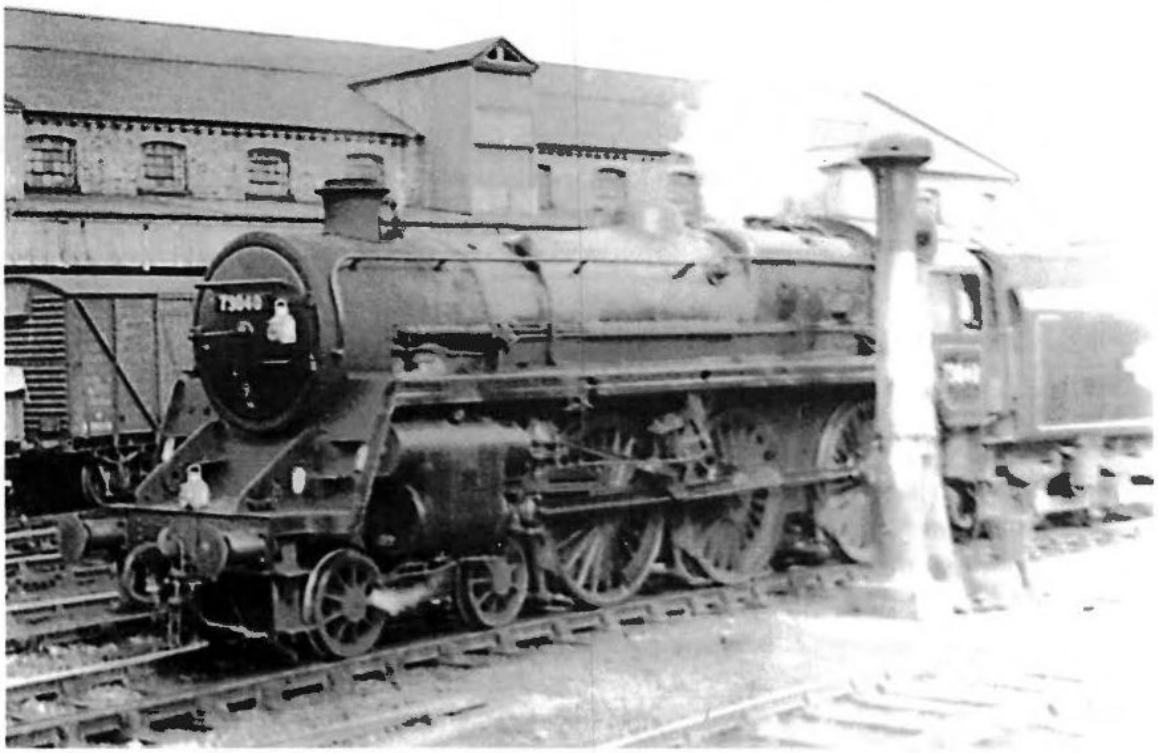
Eric Gent, Librarian of the Historical Model Railway Society, was born and brought up in Blacon and his sister still lives there. He regularly visits her, occasionally acting also as a 'courier service' between the H.M.R.S. at Butterley, and the Mostyn Group.



On his latest visit, he brought two prints that he had come across, showing B.R.-built 4-6-0 no.73040 leaving Chester General with a freight train bound for Mold Junction. Eric's photographs date from about 1953/4, when the engine was allocated to 6A Chester shed, and they were primarily used on Llandudno to Manchester passenger services. 73040 entered traffic in October 1953, and was withdrawn in May 1968; it was one of the 5MT class which were direct successors to Stanier's 'Black 5's.

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*Another piece contributed by **Eric Gent**: ....*

WAGON REPAIR DEPOT LABELS

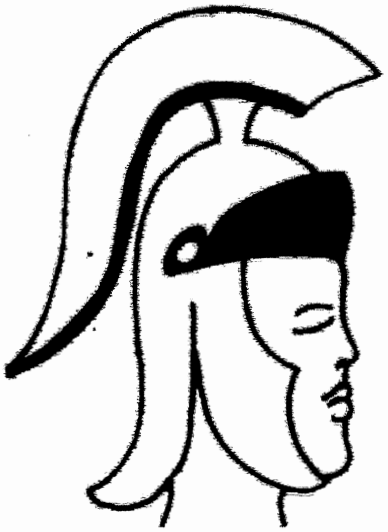
Looking through one of my files recently I came across the enclosed two labels. They date back to the 1980s. Apparently all the then existing wagon works were given/selected their own emblem.

The Chester Wagon Works - the new modern one on the site of the previous coal merchants sidings off Black Diamond Street - chose a Roman legionary - reflecting the city's early history. The label firstly reveals that Chester Wagon Repair Depot was contracted to maintain a certain number of wagons. If they needed repairs the depot should be contacted either by the TOPS CODE 40301 (code for Chester WRD) or by given phone number. Depending on the nature of the repair required the Depot Manager would have to decide if the wagon was close enough to be moved to Chester as a crippled wagon, or to arrange repairs at the nearest depot and probably then costed to 40301. The Label was attached to the solebar alongside the stencilled repair information.

As the older vacuum braked vehicles were being phased out quite quickly at this time, leaving the modern air braked, roller bearing axled wagons which were also allowed longer periods between maintenance, quite a few Wagon Repair Depots became surplus to requirements and were closed down. This applied to the Chester WRD which closed in the early Nineties. This was hastened by the almost total loss of freight in the Chester, Saltney, Mold Junction and North Wales yards by this time. On closure any wagon repairs in the Chester & North Wales areas were consigned to the WRD in Warrington goods yard/loco

MAINTAINED UNDER CONTRACT BY

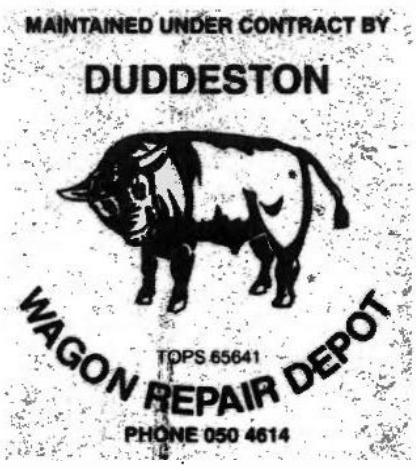
CHESTER



TOPS 40301

WAGON REPAIR DEPOT

PHONE 053 6245



depot. This is still the situation today. Mobile teams are often sent out to locations where a wagon needs repair (Track access charges come into play here!).
The only other I acquired was one for the Duddeston WRD in Birmingham.
Can anyone recall any such labels, e.g. for Toton, Peterborough, Carlisle, or York. I believe the MGR depots at Burton, Worksop, Knottingley and Barry did not receive such labels.
(The Chester symbol is blue, and the Duddeston one is red).

CLC SIX WHEEL GOODS BRAKES by Bob Miller

At the end of 1929 the Cheshire Lines owned and operated 90 goods brake vans of which 66 were of the Parker MS&L four wheel design with a single vestibule at one end. There were also five brakes of GNR type but with a verandah only at one end, and nine modern vehicles of standard LNER design. The remaining ten brake vans, the subject of this article, were Robinson GCR six wheelers with a vestibule at each end.

All ten were built in 1915 by the GCR at Dukinfield, for which the CLC had to pay £218 each, and they were given the numbers 2163 to 2172 and placed on wagon diagram 59. Unlike the other goods wagons, which were sold off to the LMS and LNER in 1930, the CLC kept their goods brake vans until the nationalisation of railways in 1948. With only a few types after 1930 it was decided to renumber the diagrams, so old 59 became new diagram 6. As the vehicles were now repaired by the LNER the diagrams were, from 1938, given LNER four digit codes in the 59XX series so that 6 was altered to 5906.

The drawing shows these brakes as built, and is a modification of one by Nick Campling originally showing an ex-GCR van in LNER livery. The CLC vans were all unfitted with three link couplings and screw handbrakes. They also had steel solebars and headstocks, short-rib buffers and retained their sanding gear (which was on one side only) to the end unlike the LNER, which soon ripped out the sand gear of all their pre-grouping stock.

Bearing springs consisted of six leaves each 4in wide by ½in thick with oil axleboxes of the '84B' pattern. Continuous draw-gear was fitted with an intermediate cradle containing Spencer's concentric india-rubber springs, and the same springs were used in cradles behind the headstocks for the buffers. Building was to Gorton general arrangement drawing No. 2617 which, by its number, dates the design from circa 1905.

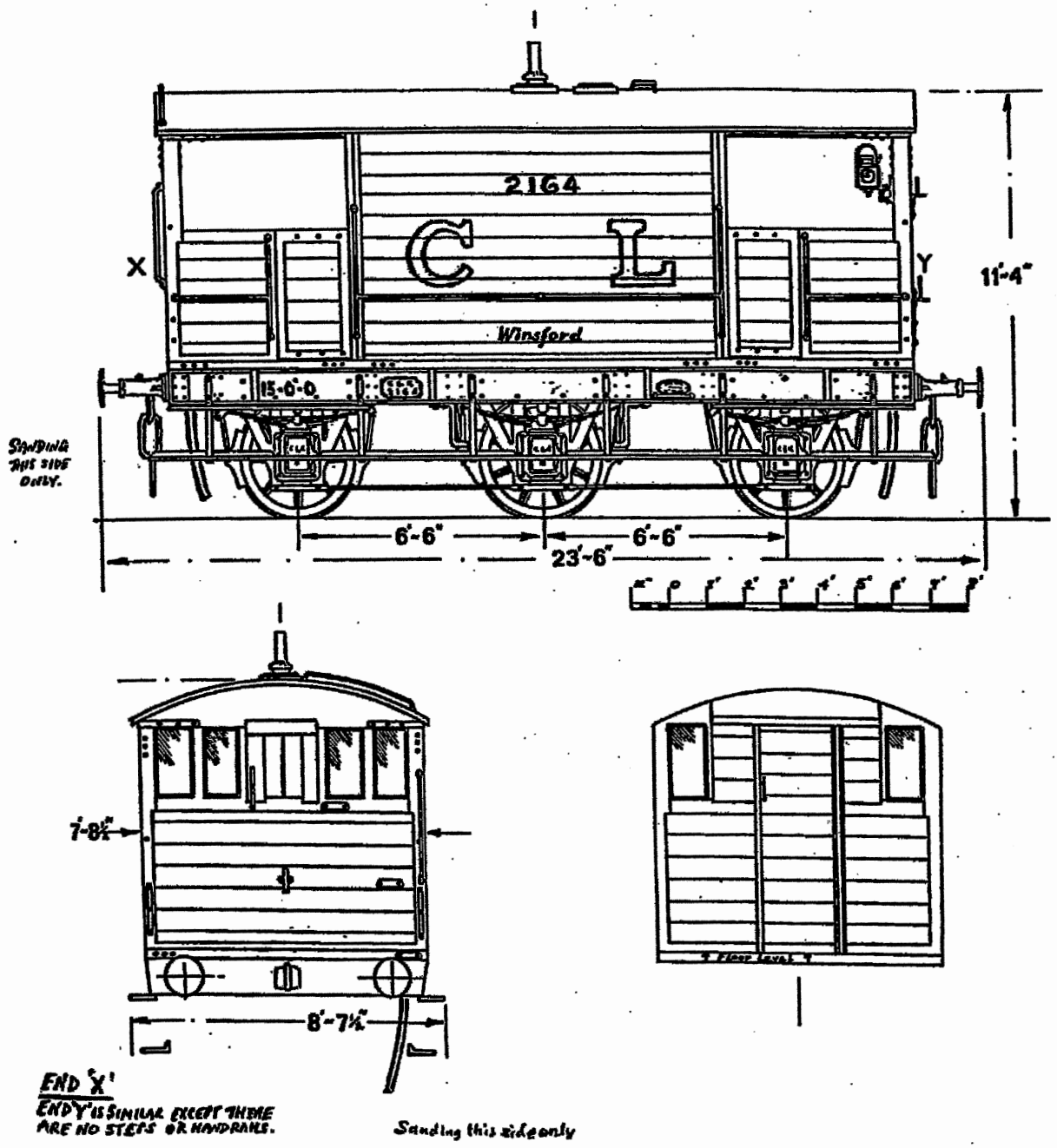
It was the practice of the CLC to brand their brake vans with the name of their home depot in italic script on the bottom plank mid-way along each side. Known examples for these six wheelers are 2163 Hartford; 2164 Winsford; 2166 Glazebrook and 2167 Helsby. Other names taken from other classes of brake van include Brunswick, Godley, Halewood, Heaton Mersey, Huskisson, Manchester Central, Northwich and Stockport; no doubt there were more.

In January 1939 the CLC purchased seven second-hand unfitted brake vans from the LNER, becoming Nos. 4476 to 4482, followed by a further eleven in late 1939 and/or early 1940, Nos. 4483 to 4493. Of these No. 4479 was withdrawn in 1946. I have no further details except that Nos. 4477, 4480 and 4481 were former GCR six wheelers like 2163 to 2172 but without sanding gear. It is possible they were all of this type but I just do not know.

It was not until 1950 that British Railways got around to allocating new numbers in the former LMS series to the 44 or so ex-CLC goods brakes still remaining. A suitable block of vacant numbers from M360372 upwards seems to have been used. Does anyone have any details? One of these six- wheeled vans became M360395 but I don't know which one, unfortunately.

With regard to liveries, CLC goods stock (including the brake vans) was painted a light lead-grey, about as light as the Midland grey but without the blue cast in the colour used by the latter railway. This grey was applied to the body, solebars, headstocks and buffers, and also to the wheel tyres of new and generally repaired wagons to show that they needed to be run-in; this was only until the light grey tyres were no longer discernible (after three or four

days). Everything else under the solebars plus the couplings was black, and the roof, chimney). Everything else under the solebars plus the couplings was black, and the roof, chimney and all writing were in white. White handrails go back to at least 1923 but whether or not they were so treated previously is not known. The vans purchased in 1939-40 were probably painted in LNER grey, which was darker than CLC grey, with black solebars, headstocks and buffers.



The insides, at least in post-grouping years, were painted grey up to waist level and drab (which I presume is a creamy brown or deep stone sort of colour) above, with the ceiling in white. I would take the waist level as being in line with the top of the half-height doors and this two-tone livery as applying to the inside of the van portion only and not to the verandah ends. I don't know if the floors were painted; on my own model I have coloured them a dirty grey-brown.

The large 21in initials of the 1915 stock were mostly retained until 1950 although No. 2166 was unusual in later getting LNER 18in sans- serif letters with the serifs added on, giving a most curious aspect! The 1939-40 additions all had the standard LNER style 18in initials as per plate 337 in Peter Tatlow's book *LNER Wagons*. Some time after 1923 the number was moved to just under the "L", in slightly smaller 5in figures. After 1936 a few vehicles (including 2166) had the number in 4in figures low down on the left with "15T" above, as did all the later additions, otherwise they had "15 TONS" in 4in characters at the bottom left. One final point, the 1939-40 purchases had standard LNER half-round shape number plates (lettered CLC) on the solebars instead of the CLC rectangular type. These number plates had black backgrounds.

How long did they last? One copy of the diagram is endorsed "NO VEH 15/6/63" but my guess is that they had all gone well before this date, probably by the late 1950s.

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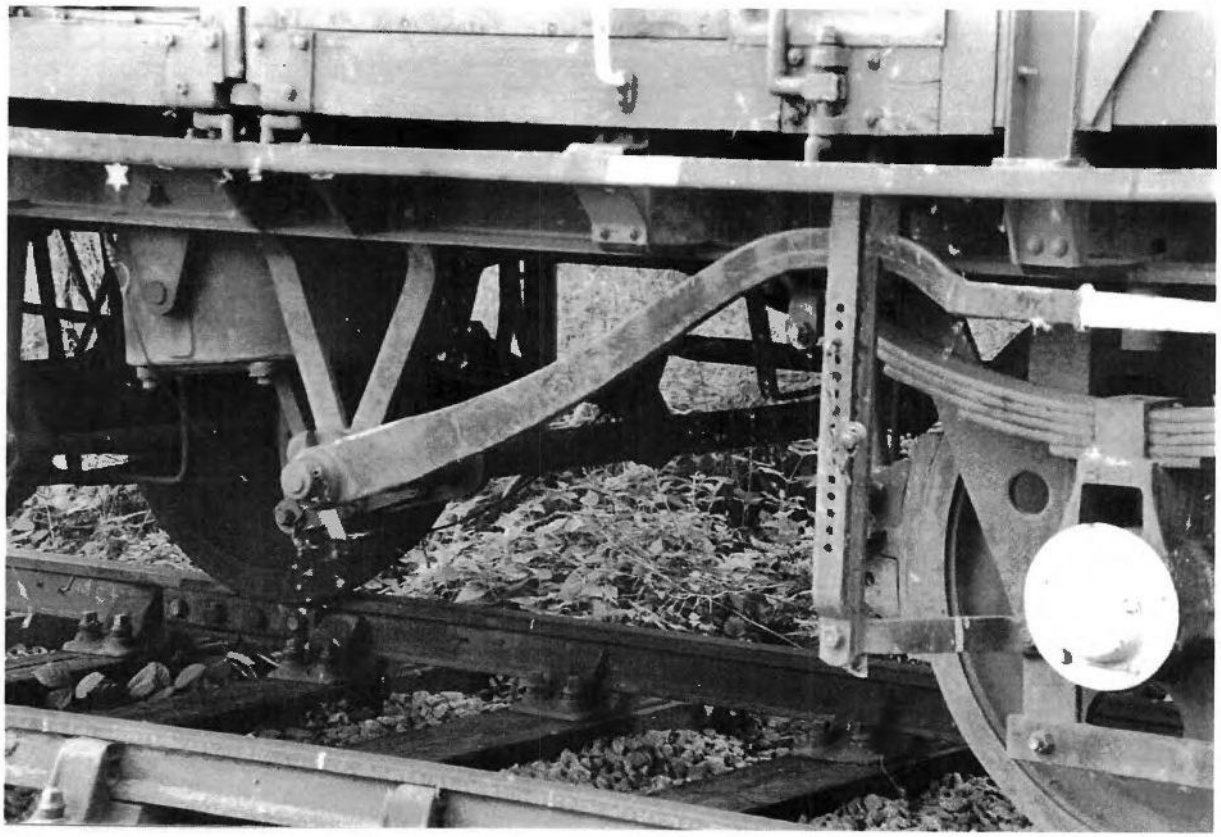
Vanwide, diag. 1/217, no. B783898. Built 1962. In preservation at Llynclys, 3 September 2005.

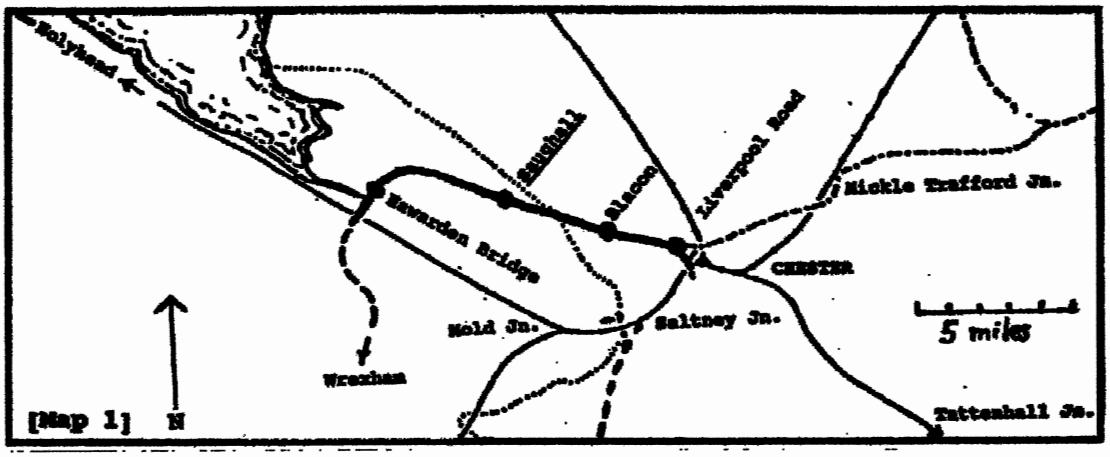


Iain Kirk has made some of these vans for "Mostyn".

The first Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway station in Wales

by David Goodwin

Saughall is a small village near Chester, and is a bit of a curiosity, since although the village is in Cheshire, the station was in Wales - what was Flintshire (or Clwyd after 1974, and now Flintshire again). **Map 1** shows the railways of the area as they were in 1890:



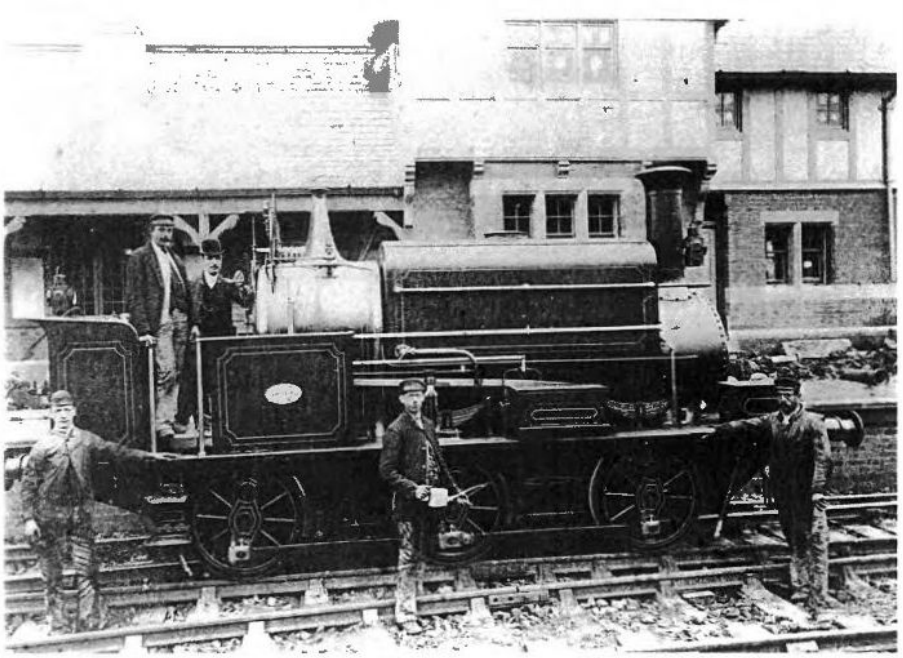
So this station can be thought of as the first M.S.&L.R. station in Wales!

The line of the Chester & Connah's Quay Railway appears not to have been aimed at serving the sparse populations along the way, but to allow the M.S.&L. to join the Wrexham Mold & Connah's Quay Railway line and so tap the potential of coal traffic between North Wales and the salt-works of mid-Cheshire: the stations along the way were only 'accidental' and never justified by possible traffic generation [1]. As an example, when the line opened in 1890, the population of Saughall parish was only some 800 souls - there were even fewer in the part of Flintshire that lay in the station's catchment area. By the time the station was closed in 1954 the population had doubled [3]; a bigger expansion took place

SAUGHALL RAILWAY STATION, BUILT ON RECLAIMED LAND.

This is the only picture I have of an M.S.L&R. train at Saughall: scanned from a poor photocopy of an article in the *Illustrated London News* of 24 July 1897. (It was in 1897 that the railway changed its name to the Great Central Railway).

over the ensuing years, and now (2001 figures) there are over 3584 people in the parish. There has not been any comparable increase on the Welsh side of the border, however.



Manning Wardle Class L 0-6-0ST, works no.1078, built 1888. Numbered 7 in the Logan & Hemingway fleet, at work on the Chester & Connahs Quay Railway contract; pictured here outside the almost-finished Blacon station about 1889 (the contract was dated May 1889, and the line was opened in March 1990). Photograph courtesy of Chris Dawson.

History: the Chester & Connah's Quay Railway was built between 1888 and 1890, the main contractor being the firm of Logan & Hemingway. The line was opened on 31 March 1890. contract for station buildings at Saughall and Blacon, railway houses etc., was awarded to T.&W.Meadows of Stockport: [1],[2].

Saughall station in Great Central days (between 1897 and 1922).

Passenger traffic was never great, and was mostly generated (post-WWl) by workers at John Summers Hawarden Bridge steelworks who lived near the line; in 1890 when the line opened, there were six passenger trains each way on weekdays, but by 1910 it had risen to 17 trains each way - to some extent the extra traffic was generated by the opening in 1896 of the Great Central line down the Wirral from Bidston to Dee Marsh Junction (near Hawarden Bridge). In 1949 the number of passenger trains was still 16 [4],[9].

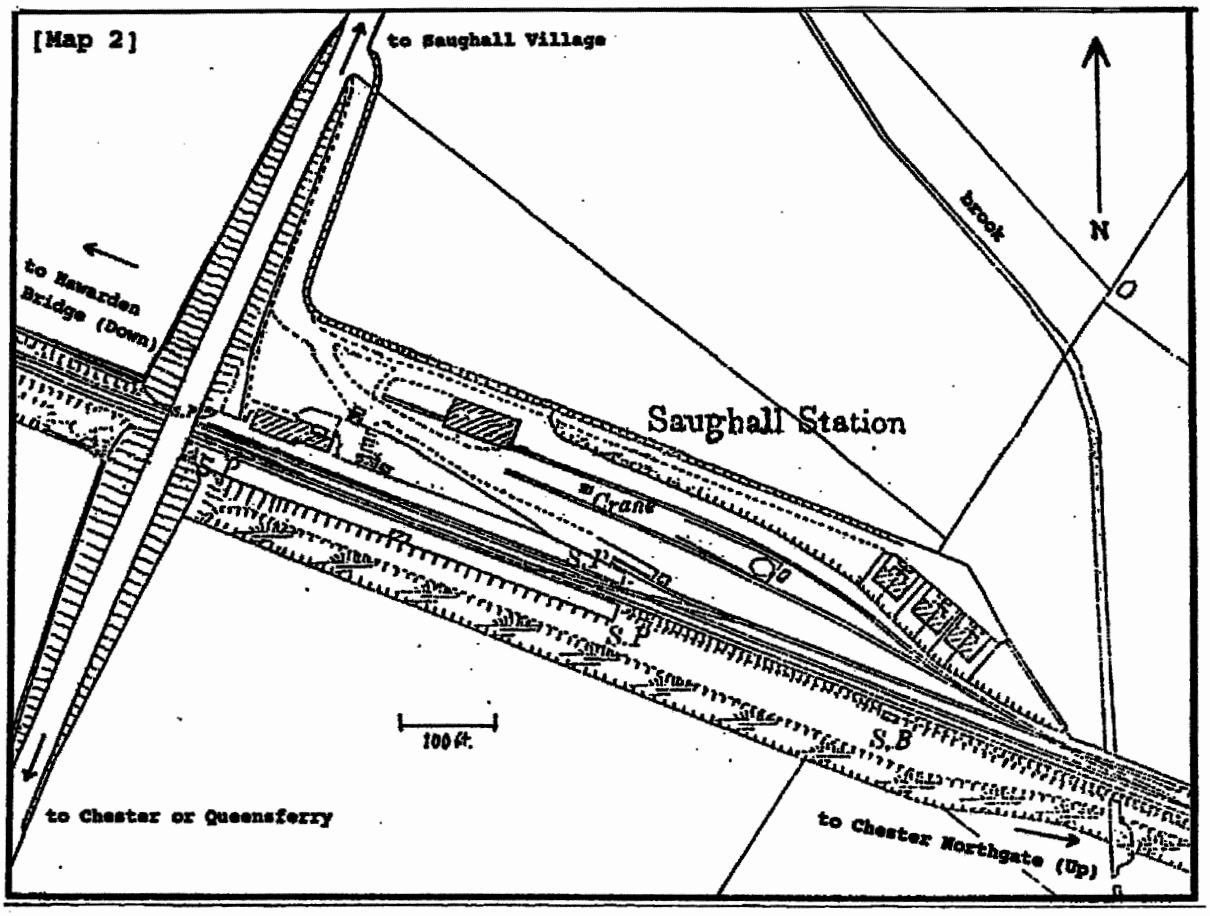
Saughall station in 1951: still much the same! (Photo: Bolger collection).

But, inevitably, passengers got fewer in number, and when the Railway Executive in 1953 proposed the closure of the station, it was reluctantly accepted; the official closure of Saughall station came about on 1 February 1954 - some fourteen years before the total withdrawal of passenger facilities between Chester and Hawarden Bridge [5],[6],[10] – and two years before the author moved to the village.

The picture as far as freight traffic is concerned was not quite as bad. Retired railwayman Herbert Clayton [7], who worked at the station from the mid-1940s, remembers passing traffic (including coal) connected with the Shotton steelworks; and locally generated traffic of anthracite to fuel the local Bee's nursery glasshouses, and outgoing rail transport of plants/seeds. Also, with an interest in the local household coal trade was the Saughall Whaley family. Of course there were always items connected with the agricultural industry, including a regular cattle train which ran on Tuesdays.

The line between Mickle Trafford Junction and Dee Marsh Junction ceased being used for revenue-earning traffic on 14 May 1984, but use re-started on 1 September 1986 when six wagons loaded with hot-rolled steel coil en route from Ravenscraig to Shotton traversed the line hauled by two class 20 diesels [12]. The line was now treated as 'single track' although both tracks were still in place for much of the route: the 'up' or 'down' side was used for running according to whichever was in better condition. But the closure of the Ravenscraig steel plant made the line redundant yet again, and B.R. announced (June 1992) that closure was scheduled for 6 July 1992, and the track lifting (as you can see from the photograph on the cover of this issue) was almost finished in 1995 [11],[13].

The station itself is shown on **Map 2:**



which is based on the 1899 ordnance Survey 25" map - and the station hardly changed over the years before it closed when nearing its 64th birthday. One of the main reasons for its eventual decline was that in the relatively short (horizontal) distance - about half-a-mile - from the central crossroads in the village, is a quite severe hill. The railway ran at a very low altitude here, mainly on land reclaimed from the Dee estuary, whereas the village has a relative height of some 50ft above this. Not a lot perhaps, but imagine someone getting off the train at Saughall and then perhaps having to carry a young child and shopping bags up the hill to home. The train journey time from Chester was timetabled at between 8 and 11 minutes and the competing bus service takes between 20 and 30 minutes - but so much easier! - and overall, taking much the same time.

The facilities at the station (see the map) included a 5-ton crane, goods shed, cattle dock, coal dumps, loading for horseboxes etc. and end-loading for carriages and machinery. As well as the station building - occupied in part by the station master - six houses were built for railwaymen (in the 1930s they were allocated to a driver, three platelayers, a porter/signalman and a wagon examiner [7]). The houses (still standing) are very similar to the ones erected by the same builder, near Blacon station.

They appear dissimilar because the Saughall houses are approached from their backs, while the Blacon ones are front-on to the road.

The photographs reproduced on the next page show both styles: first, Station Cottages nos.2 and 1 at Saughall, in January 1992. This shows the back of the pair – they face the railway line (behind them) and so look different from the similar houses in Blacon.

The backs of the Saughall Railway Cottages

The railway houses at Blacon: these (two of six again) are nos.100 and 98 on Saughall Road, Blacon, in January 1992.

Following closure of the station in 1954, the site was used commercially by such firms as BICC, then a heavy plant hire depot, and later as a works for the industrial plant and pipework firm of Caxios; they had the station house demolished in the late 1970s, to be replaced by new offices. The site was eventually sold to developers who ignored the risk of rising sea levels and built a housing estate on the land, completely oblivious to the fact that winter rain and high tides mean flooding of nearby fields.

All that remains today are the platforms.

Saughall station building in use as offices for the Caxios firm, photographed on the early morning (nothing in the car park!) of 8 June 1979, by John Dixon.

COMMERCIAL GUIDE AND GAZETTEER. 337

SAUGHALL (Flint).

On the branch line between Chester and Connah's Quay. There is a goods and passenger station, and accommodation for loading and unloading furniture vans, carriages, portable engines, machines on wheels, live stock, horse boxes and prize cattle vans, also carriages by passenger train. Crane 5 tons. For information as to transit, &c., apply to Traffic Manager (Western Lines), 43, Castle St., Liverpool.

Above is an excerpt from the G.C.R.'s 1907 *Commercial guide and gazetteer.*

Signalling for the whole line was originally by McKenzie & Holland, and the signal-box provided was manned only 'as required for traffic purposes' in L.N.E.R. and B.R. days: the signalman at Liverpool Road (Chester) would ring Saughall station when he had traffic, and the porter/signalman would open the box (*see* Reference [14] below). The signalbox officially closed in 1957 and subsequently was demolished [11]. More recently (after 1986) the nine miles between Mickle Trafford Junction and Dee Marsh Junction were worked in accordance with the 'One Train Working Regulations', and subject to a 20mph speed limit; when not in use, the 'staff' was retained in a Tyers Key Token instrument at Mickle Trafford [12]. Later still (January 1991), the electric key token system changed to 'Train staff and Ticket' but with pilotman accompanying in 'down' direction.

References

[1] G.Dow *Great Central, vol.2* . Ian Allan, 1962.

[2] L.Popplewell *A gazetteer of the railway contractors and engineers of Wales and the borders1830-1914.* Melledgen Press, 1984. isbn 0 906637 06 6.

[3] *Victoria County History of the county of Chester, vol.2.* OUP, 1979. isbn 0 19 722749 X.

[4] *The Chester Chronicle* issue of 5 April 1890.

[5] *The Chester Chronicle* issue of 31 January 1953.

[6] *The Cheshire Observer* issue of 28 February 1953.

[7] Personal communication from Herbert Clayton of Saughall.
[8] M.D.Greville *Chronological list of the railways of Cheshire* ... RCHS, 1955.
[9] Various public and working timetables of the M.S.L.&R., G.C.R., L.N.E.R., and B.R.
[10] C.R.Clinker *Clinker's register of closed passenger stations and goods depots*.... New ed., Avon Anglia, 1978. isbn 0 905466 19 5.
[11] Personal communication from John Dixon (Signalling Record Society).
[12] *Rail Enthusiast* September 1986.
[13] *The Chester Chronicle* issue of 15 May 1992.
[14] British Pathe News: www.britishpathe.com/video ... Nearly 1½ minutes of cine film showing the two signal women working Saughall signal cabin in 1943.

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The opening of the Chester & Connahs Quay Railway

This line was built between 1888 and 1890 for the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, with the aim of joining the Wrexham coal producers to the salt proprietors of mid-Cheshire. To the south-west, the Wrexham Mold & Connahs Quay Railway was utilised, while at the English end was the Cheshire Lines Committee Railway.
I came across the following newspaper report while doing some research on Saughall station; it is a typical piece of Victorian journalistic prose - an attractive 'period piece' [Editor]

THE FIRST THROUGH TRAIN FROM CHESTER TO BUCKLEY
[BY OUR OWN REPORTER]

It is no easy task to describe the sensations which filled us as on Monday morning [31 March 1890, when the line opened] we sped along in the first ordinary passenger train which has ever picked a traveller up at Chester and deposited him in the vicinity of Buckley without the inconvenience of a change or a tedious wait. It seemed but yesterday when a project for bridging the Dee began to take definite shape, and as a matter of fact it was but yesterday that any Cestrian whose calling or political devotion took him to Hawarden was obliged to trudge up hill over two or three miles of road, after travelling some distance by train [on the Chester-Holyhead line], if he did not adopt the only alternative of paying half a guinea for a cab. To-day not only is the Dee bridged, but any Cestrian who has a wish to visit the famed Flintshire village has but to go to the Liverpool Road station, pay 8½d for a ticket [less than 4p in today's currency], jump into the Wrexham train, and he finds himself in Hawarden station in 23 minutes. No one can tell how far-reaching in its consequences will be this apparently small change, which in truth means a revolution. Saughall and Blacon will be more than ever the rendezvous of sweethearts, the ride into a hitherto unexplored country being so short and cheap, and the walk back so pleasant and long. The black-faced urchins of Saltney who spend more time in calling upon visitors to Hawarden to "chuck a penny out" than they do in school, will find their occupation gone; for the large brakes [horse-drawn wagons] which in summer have been wont to envelope the Chester and Hawarden roads in clouds of dust will in future be few and far between, while Hawarden itself will be more crowded than ever, particularly on Sunday, when the train will take travellers to the village in time for morning service and bring them back to Chester by two o'clock. Far more important is the better facility which the new line opens out to farmers for taking their produce to market, and for attending the leading markets themselves. Above all, who can foresee the possibilities of the development of the mining industries of Wales which the construction of a line connecting the great centres of Lancashire and the Midlands with the extensive coalfield of North Wales and the great industrial centres of the southern portion of the Principality, opens out? But as our duty is rather to chronicle an interesting event than to write an essay on railway enterprise and its

results, we will leave our readers to indulge in their own reflections as to the future. The station to which Cestrians will naturally go if they wish to undertake a journey to Blacon, Saughall, Hawarden, Buckley, Caergwrle, or any of the other points on the railway, will be the Liverpool-road station. This will eventually be the only station for passengers, no doubt, [but Chester Northgate remained more important as a passenger station, being nearer the city centre] and it is constructed with a view to a considerable amount of traffic. Durability combined with elegance seems to have been the motto of the contractor throughout the works, and one apprehension which had long troubled residents in Liverpool-road has been effectually set at rest, for the bridge over the railway has been so well made that the inhabitants will be able to enjoy the boon of a station so close at hand, without the drawback of an ugly or dangerous approach by road from the city. The station, however, from which we started with

Liverpool Road station in L.N.E.R. days.

started with the first passenger train on Monday was the Northgate Station. Here a small gathering of citizens was present to witness the departure. The train - which, by the way, had brought to the Northgate Station about 80 passengers, and to Liverpool-road between 40 and 60, from Wrexham and the intermediate stations - was made up of span [neat] new Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire carriages. Speaking more particularly of the third-class carriages, we should say that the compartments are no lighter or brighter, or cosier on any line in the district, only 16 passengers booked from Northgate station, but there were a number of Wrexham people with return tickets in the train, as well as the following officials:- Mr.Haig Brown, superintendent of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway; Mr.T.Cartwright, manager of the Wrexham, Mold, and Connah's Quay Railway; and Mr.S.B.Cottrell, the resident engineer at Chester of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway. Starting at four minutes beyond the appointed time, 9.20, we very soon made a halt at the Liverpool-road Station, where the assemblage of interested onlookers on the platforms, on the roadside, and on the bridge above was considerable. The stop was brief, and having picked up about forty passengers we resumed our journey, amid the salutation of many of the inhabitants of Parkgate-road and the vicinity, who had turned out to "have a look at the first train on the new line". In the midst of our reflections upon the great

Blacon, photographed on 6 June 1959, by Richard Casserley, from the road overbridge.

boon which the line must prove to the citizens in this part of Chester we stop again, for the first outward station has been reached. This is Blacon, and a pretty little station it is, the station house being of red brick with gables of the old Cheshire timbered style.

Saughall station

There was not a solitary booking here, and only one passenger, Mr.C.P.Douglas, who had travelled far enough to be able to say that he had had a ride in the first train on the new railway, and was apparently satisfied. Having passed under the first bridge beyond Blacon, there is a perceptible increase of speed, for we are now running down the somewhat steep cutting into Sealand, passing the Chester Rifles' shooting ground on the left. At Saughall station - the buildings here are much the same as at Blacon - a knot of the villagers, or should we say townsfolk, of Saughall, greet us, and a few passengers alight. Passing out of the station we skirt Mr.McDougall's farm - where we see the tenant in a position which he has never occupied in politics, to wit, "sitting on a fence" - and having left behind Mr.John Howard's Marsh Farm (where, it is said, a siding is to be constructed shortly), we are now fairly on the wild marsh. The fog prevents us from discerning the Hawarden Bridge over the Dee until we are fairly on the structure. We have no time to admire the bridge, which, as

most of our readers know, is as elegant in appearance as it is substantial in construction, nor to take much notice of the cheers and salutations of the inhabitants and workpeople who from cottage, field, and roadside are waving hats and handkerchiefs; for our engine is now tackling the formidable hill at the top of which is the village which the G.O.M. ['Grand Old Man', viz. William Ewart Gladstone] has made so famous. The engine is evidently a powerful one, for we seem to climb well, though towards the summit one is reminded of the journey up Kinnerton Bank [a steep part of the L.N.W.R.'s Chester to Mold line] so far as speed is concerned. The fog is lifting a bit, and the view from a point just above Aston, with the Dee and Hawarden Bridge beneath us and Chester in the distance, is an interesting one. We now enter Hawarden Station, where a number of people, including a sprinkling of "the oldest

Hawarden station looking to Buckley and Wrexham, from the road overbridge, on 22 April 1977 (RCTS photo).

inhabitants", had come to see the first regular train to Hawarden Station. The station house is of different construction to those on the other side of the river. It is a substantial and pretty building of light buff brick, relieved at corners with red brick. There are some good waiting rooms and a commodious warehouse, which the nature of the district makes necessary. Passing Hawarden House, Mr.W.H.Gladstone's residence [William Henry Gladstone (1840-1891) was the eldest son of William Ewart Gladstone; Hawarden House was nearly a mile nearer the railway than the residence of the famous father], all the inmates of which seem to be at the doors or at the windows, we are soon among the tall chimneys, the collieries, and the brick-works of the Buckley district. All the inhabitants seem to be out-of-doors watching the train. We reach Buckley Junction at ten minutes to ten o'clock, and as the line now merges into the Wrexham, Mold, and Connah's Quay Railway to Wrexham, we alight, having attained our ambition by travelling in the first ordinary train over the whole of the new section. We have already said that the carriages are comfortable; it has only to be added that the train ran so smoothly that there was almost total absence of oscillation, even shorthand writing while the train was at full speed being anything but a difficult exercise. To our taste,

the new line is by far the best to Hawarden, Buckley, and Caergwrle, and a capital service of trains has been arranged, on weekdays there are six trains each way between Chester and Buckley, stopping at all intermediate stations and the Sunday service is a particularly convenient one. One train leaves Chester at 10-10, reaching Hawarden at 10-36; another leaves Hawarden at 1-36 and gets back to Chester at 2-1. There are three trains both ways on Sundays. We can very confidently predict that during the coming summer few local lines will be more extensively patronised by pleasure seekers than this new Chester and Buckley section.

The above is an excerpt from the "Chester Chronicle" dated Saturday 5 April 1890.

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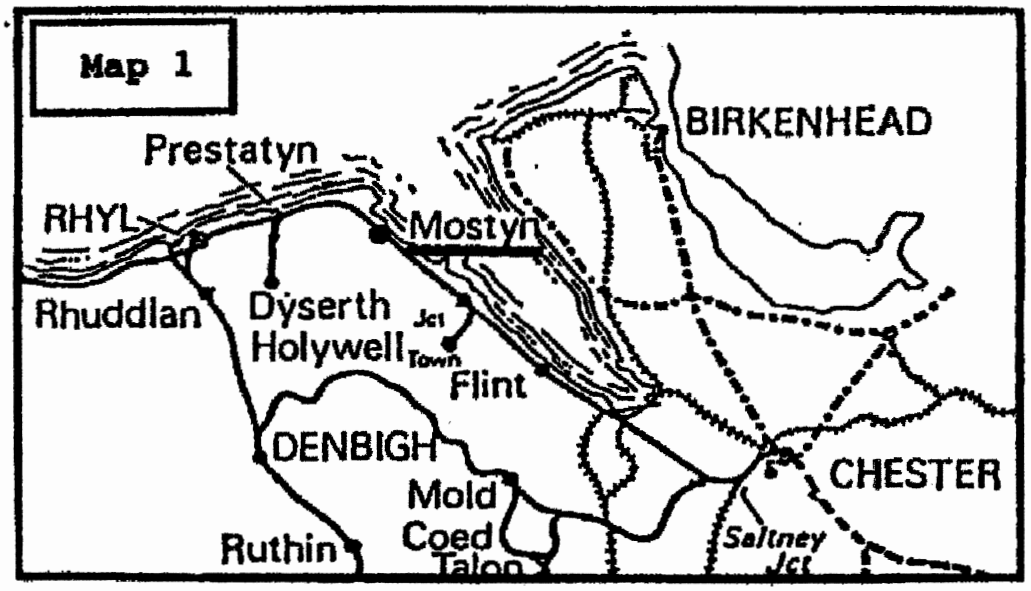
(First published in "Merseyside Express" in September 1992 – this article details the first version of "Mostyn"; a bit different now!)

"Halendy" by Chris Kay (S4D Group)

The Merseyside M.R.S. Scalefour Group diesel layout was started early in 1991. Several reasons prompted the decision to build a diesel-based layout. At a previous MMRS exhibition, the public were asked to fill in a questionnaire as to what they would like to see more of at future exhibitions - and many requested more modern image layouts, and particularly continuous run ones. Also, I wanted to be involved in the building of a layout where there would be no steam motive power. As Room no.31 at our clubrooms in Birkenhead was available for building a new layout, the diesel-minded (i.e. clever) enthusiasts among us got together with a view to submitting to the Committee, a suggested layout plan to fit in the 17ft by 14ft room. The Committee quite readily accepted our proposals and felt, as we did, that the room space would be wasted on an end-to-end layout.

We decided to set the date for the layout firmly in 1977 (mainly because Manchester United beat Liverpool in the Cup Final that year, and I am too big to argue with. Well, almost). Seriously, although technically still a piece of period modelling, we felt 1977 offered a good compromise for the Group whose original suggestions had varied from 1968 to 1985.



Mostyn station (on which "Halendy" is based) is situated on the North Wales coast line. This part of the Chester & Holyhead Railway, between Chester and Bangor was opened on 1 May

1848. The main contractor for the no.2 section (Shotton to Rhyl) was William Mackenzie, and the tender for Mostyn station (at £3,938) was won by Thomas Hughes; the architect was Francis Thompson who was also responsible for the designs (some broadly similar to Mostyn) for Flint, Holywell Junction, Prestatyn and others, and before these the stations on the North Midland Railway [1],[3].

The railway became part of the London & North Western Railway in 1858, having been operated by that company for the previous ten years. Mostyn itself was originally to have been called 'Mostyn Quay', and is some 20miles 8chains from Chester station and some 200 miles from Euston. The relative opulence of the station (the village is quite small) is perhaps explained by it being the 'local' station of Lord Mostyn, a prominent Welsh landowner [2][3].

The line was quadrupled in 1902, the necessary alterations including new footbridges and signal box. The station was closed by British Railways on 14 June 1966, and the main line mostly taken back to two tracks.

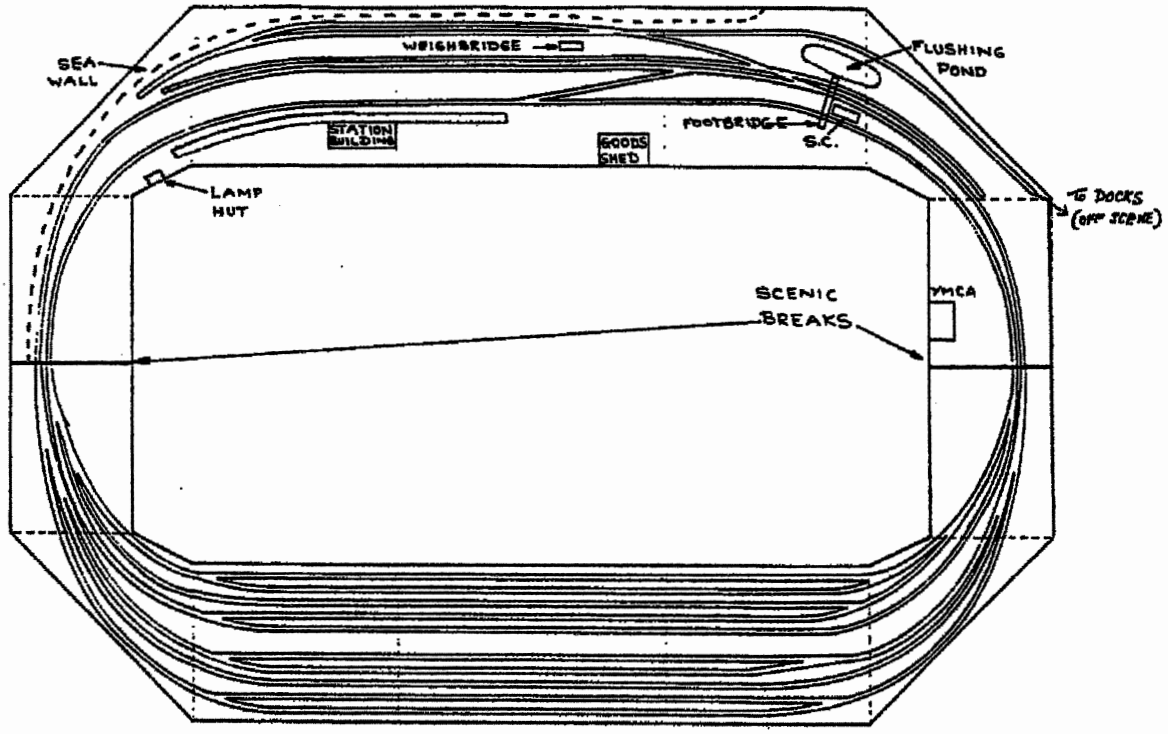
The main industrial employer in Mostyn - and the original reason for the station's relatively extensive sidings - was the Mostyn Coal & Iron Company, and then its successor the Darwen & Mostyn Iron Company, which closed down in 1965. The site of the ironworks is nowadays occupied by more diverse companies, but ones to whom rail access is not quite so important; although Warwick Chemicals are now (1992) taking delivery of such raw materials as acetic acid by rail tank wagons - up to a dozen or so wagons per week. There is still a little rail traffic generated by other works and by Mostyn Docks, which remain rail connected.

Mostyn was chosen as the location of our model for a number of significant reasons. Firstly, we wanted to model somewhere in the North West of Britain, preferably Midland Region orientated, which was near enough to enable us to make field trips when the need arose. Originally, Hebden Bridge had been suggested, but on draughting a couple of track plans, it was found that the scaled down version would not readily fit into the available room size. But Mostyn was found to be ideal for us as we could model the sections from the signal box at the docks to the old lamp hut in exact scale length. Unfortunately, due to lack of width of baseboards, we had to omit one of the sidings running along the sea wall. The ends of the layout have also had to be condensed somewhat, but we hope the location will still be recognisable in the final result. The fact that Mostyn is now a derelict station, was also instrumental in our decision: in 1977 the station buildings were still there but not in use, while the L.N.W.R. signal box was still in use (and still is today). We had not seen a derelict station modelled before - though no doubt someone has done it! - and felt that yet again it would be another challenge. For instance: we know what the lamp shed is like today, although it is impossible to get a decent photograph of it (even in winter) because of the surrounding undergrowth. We have photographic evidence of what it was like in the 1930s. But what we are not sure about is what it looked like in 1977 - eleven years after the closure of the station, but still some fourteen years ago. The moral of these observations is that modelling something 'as built' is in some ways easy; modelling something a little worn is a bit harder; representing something really derelict takes more imagination (and so is definitely not for steam enthusiasts!). In 1977 the semaphore signalling still existed, but the ironworks and Halendy village had long gone.

Why then do we call the layout "Halendy"? (This Welsh word means 'Salt house' and was the name for the dwellings built during the last century to house workers employed by the ironworks. It was also the name of the part of Mostyn nearest to the station site). In the

main two reasons dictated this decision: firstly, there is an existing 00 gauge layout owned by Chester M.R.C. with the all-too-similar name of "Mostyn Junction" (although not actually based on Mostyn); and secondly, although our model will be fairly closely based on Mostyn, we will be forced by the practical considerations previously mentioned, to use a little 'artistic licence' - and we wanted to avoid viewers saying "... there were four sidings at Mostyn ..." etc.

As well as the above mentioned buildings, other prominent features will include the sea wall, the flushing pond at the docks, the footbridges and a derelict corrugated iron structure used at various times by the YMCA and a bank. Motive power will be dominated by classes 40, 24, 25 and 47, although member Kevin Stanley has photographic proof of things like a class 50 working the route. Stuart Whittingham offered to build all 199 of the class 40, but has settled on three before moving up to class 47s. DMUs provide a fair chunk of the passenger workings, with 101, 104, 108 and 110 units in multiples of two, normally prevailing. Most of the loco-hauled stock is Mk.l, and parcels trains consist of BGs, GUVs and CCTs. Freightliners to Holyhead and back are very common - and provide a little variety of colour



to the rolling stock. Also present are coal wagons from Point of Ayr colliery. Sulphur wagons are required at Mostyn docks, and shunting is handled by two 0-4-0 industrial shunters, similar to B.R.'s class 02 and built by the Yorkshire Engine Company. Tank wagons are also common from the Octel works at Amlwch on the Isle of Anglesey, stone trains also appear from Penmaenmawr Quarry. The bulk of the stock will be built by the aforementioned people plus the writer, H.David Goodwin (who has already built the old lamp hut and weigh bridge hut, between drinking sessions), Dave Stapleton (a diesel modeller by default) and J.David Faulkner (a 4mm narrow gauge interloper).

At present, we are in the process of wiring up the layout to the control panel. Construction has progressed steadily (so far!); all baseboards have been built; track is laid

and checked; most of the scenic formers are in position, and that most Esteemed of Modellers, Dr Ian Clark, has begun work on the sea wall. We would hope to have the layout exhibitable (but probably not finished) by mid-1993 if present rate of progress continues, and are hoping for a possible invitation to Scalefour North.

We had hoped to attract new club members by constructing a modern layout, but so far this has not really happened. However, anyone wishing to join us in this venture would be most welcome, and further information can be obtained from the author Chris Kay (address in the S4 members list). Interested exhibition managers can also obtain a layout prospectus from the same source.

Thanks must go to Bill Rear of Wrexham, who furnished us with working timetables for 1977 as well as much other useful information; to Anthony Lewis-Jones of Mostyn, a local historian, without whose assistance and local knowledge we would not be at such an advanced stage; and many other enthusiasts who have provided photos, plans and information.

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[2] V.R.Anderson and G.K.Fox *An historical survey of the Chester to Holyhead Railway track layouts and illustrations.* Oxford Publ. Co.., 1984. ISBN 0 86093 216 8.
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Editor's page

Has to be postponed entirely this quarter: the Editor's wife has had to be admitted to hospital again (an extended period this time), so he has had to learn more about washing machines etc.!

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