

BARROWMORE MODEL RAILWAY Journal

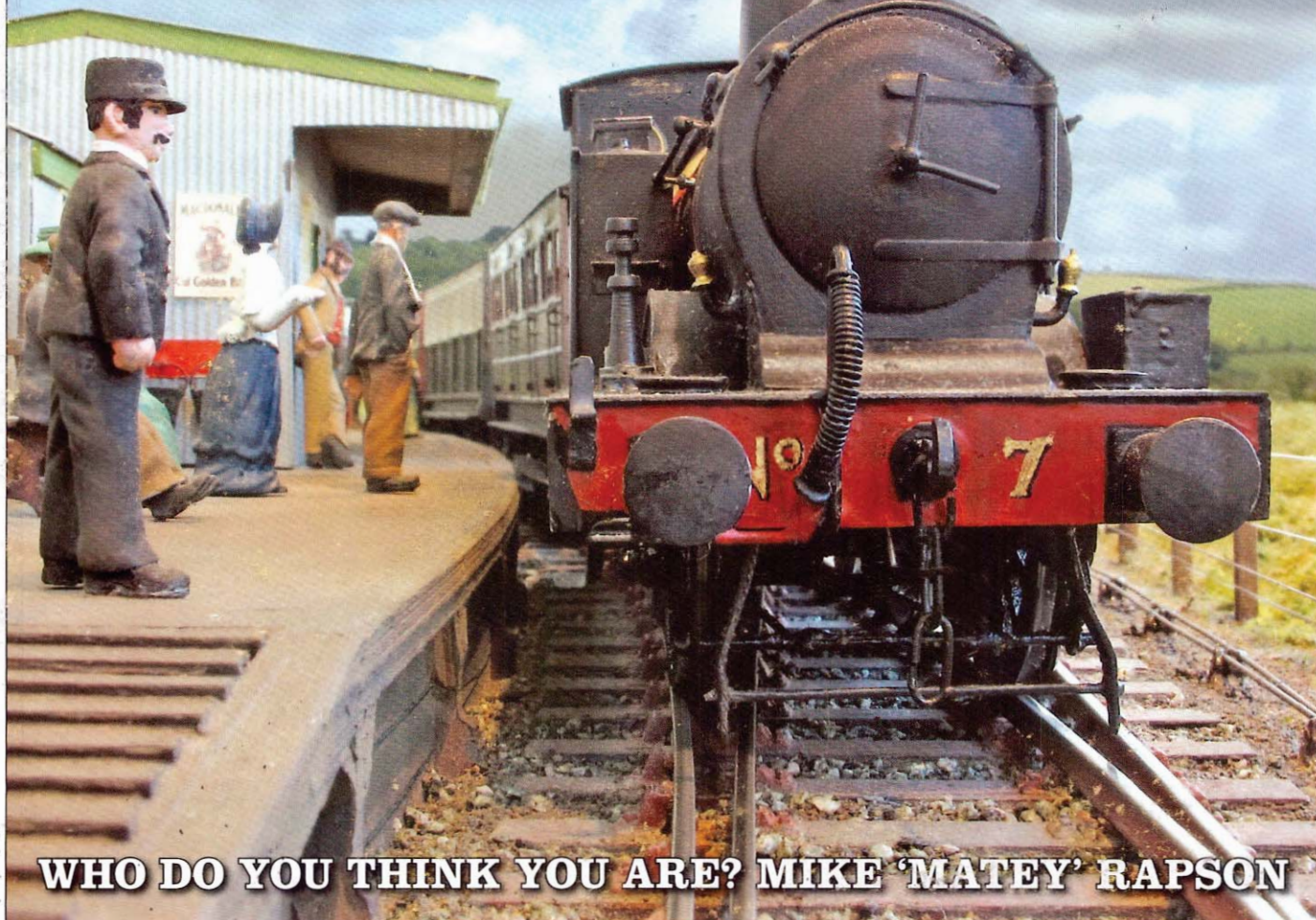
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE BARROWMORE MODEL RAILWAY GROUP ISSN 1745-9842 No. 42 Spring 2015

JOHNSTOWN ROAD WOWS THE CROWDS AT YORK

Our successful visit to the Easter show
Full report and pictures inside

WHITHORN BRANCH

An historical background



WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? MIKE 'MATEY' RAPSON

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Contributions are welcome :

- (a) as e-mails or email attachments;
- (b) a hard copy of a computer file;
- (c) a typed manuscript;
- (d) a handwritten 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.

Copies of this journal are also available to non-members. A cheque for £12.00 (*payable to the 'Barrowmore Model Railway Group'*) will provide the next four issues, delivered to your home. Send your details and cheque to the Editor at the address given above.

Front Cover

It must be market day at the port judging by the busy platform at Johnstown Road. Cambrian Railways 0-4-4T No.7 waits departure time with a passenger service to Port Nefyn, under the watchful eye of station staff. The layout made a visit to the York Model Railway Show over the long Easter weekend and was well received by the visiting public.

Back Cover

One of the significant Mostyn projects undertaken in recent years has been the building of a long rake of 21 and 24-ton minerals from Parkside-Dundas and Chivers Finelines kits. Richard Oldfield incorporated numerous brake, axlebox and buffer variations into the build, before Gavin Liddiard, Mike Rapson and Philip Sutton got involved with the final painting and weathering stage. Work-weary 24-tonner B282217N shows off its roller bearings and self-contained buffers. Fully sprung W-irons ensure they run as good as they look.

Who are we?

Barrowmore Model Railway Group is a friendly bunch of railway modellers with excellent club rooms set in the Cheshire countryside a few miles east of Chester.

We welcome new members to bring fresh ideas and skills. We are less worried about modelling capabilities and more interested in your ability to fit in with a happy cohesive group.

The Barrowmore Model Railway Journal is produced quarterly by the Group, and reflects our areas of interest.

Our website - www.barrowmoremrg.co.uk - is always worth a look, if nothing more than to view the comprehensive collection of BR Diagram Books which we have either borrowed or purchased and have uploaded for the benefit of modellers and historians alike.

The Group has three layouts

Johnstown Road (0 Gauge) portrays an imaginary branch line blending the style of the impecunious Tanat Valley Railway with a Cambrian Railways extension. It is an L-shaped layout, 48 feet long, and requires six operators. It is transported in a Luton-bodied Transit van or similar.

Mostyn ('P4' 18.83) is an accurate model of the closed North Wales coast main line station as it was in 1977, featuring full length trains and prototypical speeds. It is a continuous run layout, 24 feet x 30 feet, and requires 10 operators. It is transported in a 7-tonne lorry.

Whithorn (EM Gauge) is the recent addition to the Barrowmore Group. This end to end layout is based upon Whithorn Station in Galloway in South West Scotland. Although the line closed in 1964, modeller's licence assumes the line continued in use which allows branch line steam locomotives and green diesels to appear.

It is 18 feet long x 3 feet wide and can be transported in a Transit van.

BARROWMORE MODEL RAILWAY Journal



A NEW EDITOR

Having edited and produced the Barrowmore Model Railway Journal for the past ten years, David Goodwin has decided that the time has come to retire.

My interview with Dave to take on the editorship of this esteemed Journal was over a pint in a pub. The interview was along the lines that he felt the time had come for his retirement from the post, that the Journal would be in good hands with my leadership, and that I appeared to be good at spelling. Interview concluded. I bought the next round and was presented with the editorial files. The job was mine. I just hope I can meet Dave's exacting standards.

By coincidence, like David, some years ago I edited The Merseyside Express for the Merseyside Model Railway Society when a member of that society.

The opportunity must now be taken to thank David for all his efforts over the past ten years in the editorship and production of the Barrowmore Model Railway Journal, and in meeting all the publication deadlines each quarter. His retirement will allow him more time to carry out detailed research which we know he loves, and to perhaps produce even more articles for future editions of the Journal.

The BMRJ is a unique publication, inasmuch as it has a broad range of railway topics in its pages. These range from articles of model railway interest to historical research on the railways of Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales. The progress of the BMRG layouts of Mostyn, Johnstown Road, and more recently, Whithorn, have, and will be, regularly featured.

As the new editor it is my intention to continue these themes each quarter, and of course I will welcome any suitable articles and pictures for publication.

Alisdair M Macdonald

Journal No.42 Spring 2015

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

13th 14th June Chatham Show
Medway Park Leisure Centre : Mill Road : Gillingham : Kent

Club Layouts - Update

MOSTYN

Gavin L., Dave F., and Richard O. spent time recently at Mostyn station site to photograph in more detail the Mostyn Hotel and Mostyn signal box.

The signal box is scheduled for decommissioning and removal in the next couple of years, and the opportunity was taken, before it is too late, to record its condition in 2015 for posterity.

The Mostyn Hotel is one of the missing key buildings on the Mostyn layout and the site information obtained from the site survey will go some way to provide more detailed knowledge of the premises to progress the construction of the model of the hotel.

On the stock front Richard O. has restarted his project of kit building a rake of Freightliner wagons. The work on this project has given him a bout of repetitive strain injury. When the wagons go public his RSI health condition will be appreciated from the complexity and repetitive work of these kits.

Dave F. continues to progress his Mk2 coaching project.

While Gav L. has found a backlog of weathering projects, and has fired up the compressor for the first time this year.

JOHNSTOWN ROAD

Johnstown Road had a successful outing to York over the Easter. More details on the facing page.

WHITHORN

For those who do not know about Whithorn, it was originally built by Alisdair Macdonald, one of the members of the Barrowmore Model Railway Group.

It is a 4mm EM Gauge end to end layout with a twelve foot by three foot scenic section and fiddle yard, all based upon the existing railway station in Whithorn in Galloway, South West Scotland. The station, when open, was the most southerly railway station in Scotland. The line closed completely in October 1964.

After its one and only premier showing at the Merseyside Model Railway Society Annual Exhibition in October 2014 the layout was taken back to the Barrowmore clubrooms where the BMRG Team put forward various thoughts on its improvement.

So having been "deconstructed", it is now, phoenix-like, being reconstructed.

The track layout of the station and the station yard is the same as the earlier layout, but it has since been redesigned by Richard O. using his skills and knowledge of the mysteries of Templot.

The track has now been laid, and weathered, and the tedious chore of ballasting is underway. Only the railway bridge over the river, which is being worked on by Mike "Matey" Rapson, prevents the completion of the trackwork on the scenic section.

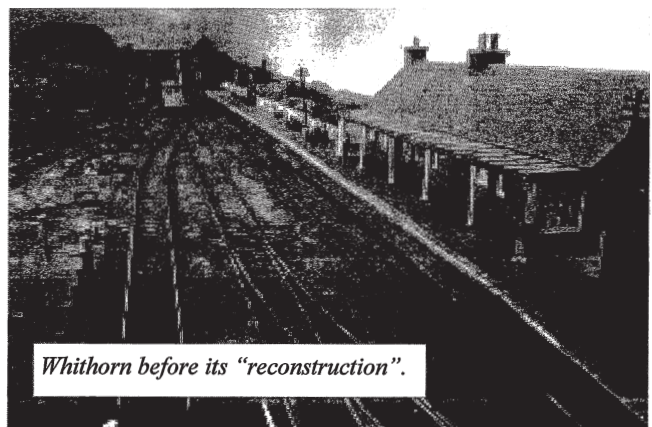
The new fiddle yard timberwork is complete, and the trackwork will be laid in due course after Richard O. completes his Templot magic.

Thanks must be given to Richard O. and Eddie K. for their efforts on trackwork, Dave F. for his trackwork and electrical expertise, and Gavin L. for his joinery skills with the upgrading the baseboards. And to Mikey Matey for work on the river bridge.

In due course Richard Stagg intends to construct a typical GSWR signal box when he has received the etched frets from Alisdair M, who is now progressing the scenics and buildings.

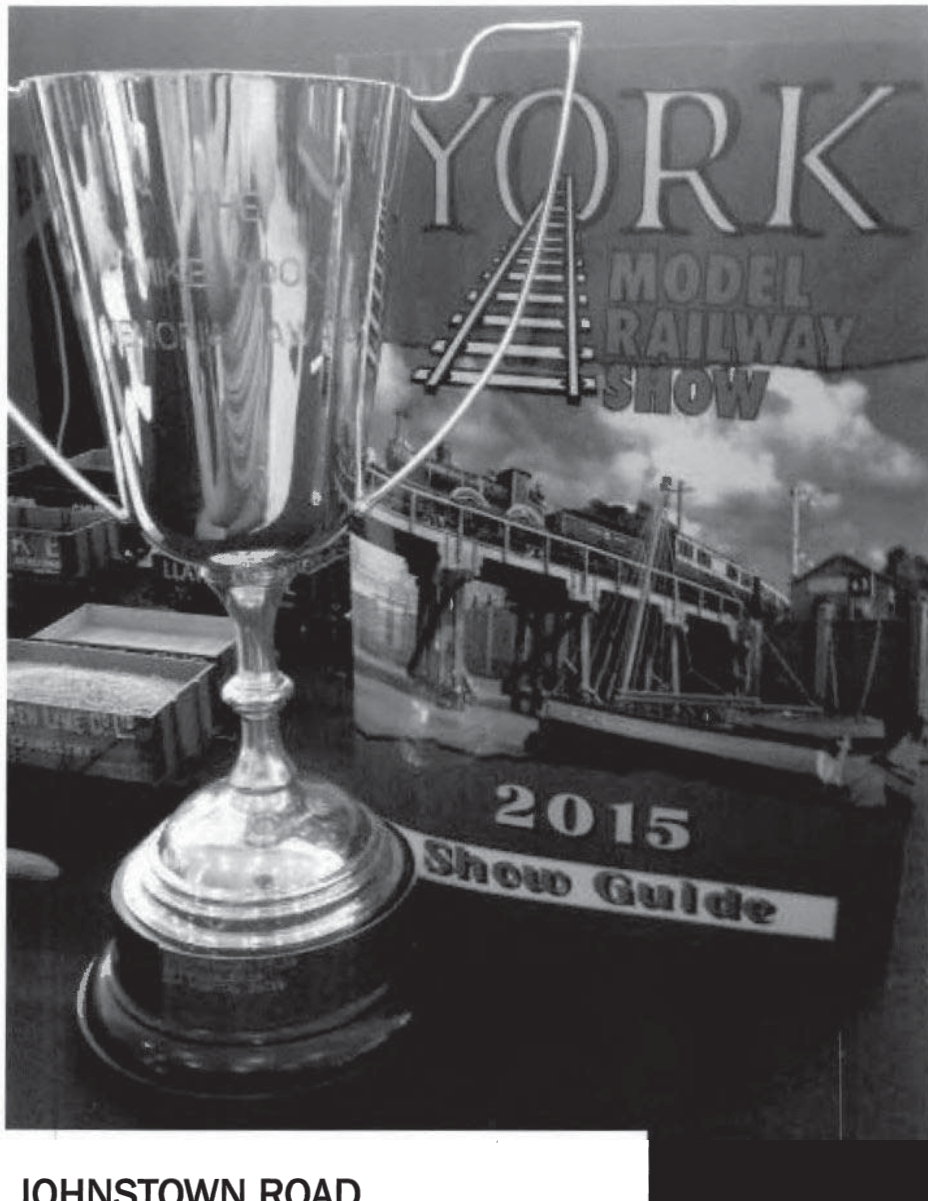
The next major package of works on the layout is the construction of the lighting rig and fascia and to make a start on the electrical control panel for DCC operation.

Richard O has potential dates in the club diary for its first outing, and a deadline of November 2015 has been set for completion and final testing.



Whithorn before its "reconstruction".

Johnstown Road at York Show 2015



JOHNSTOWN ROAD

Johnstown Road had a successful outing to York Model Railway Exhibition over the Easter Weekend 2015.

The layout was awarded the Mike Cook Memorial Award. It was chosen by a group of anonymous judges at the Show as the winner of this prestige award.

A further bonus was that the layout was featured on the cover of the 2015 York Show Programme. This same illustration was used previously on the back cover of our own BMRJ 40.

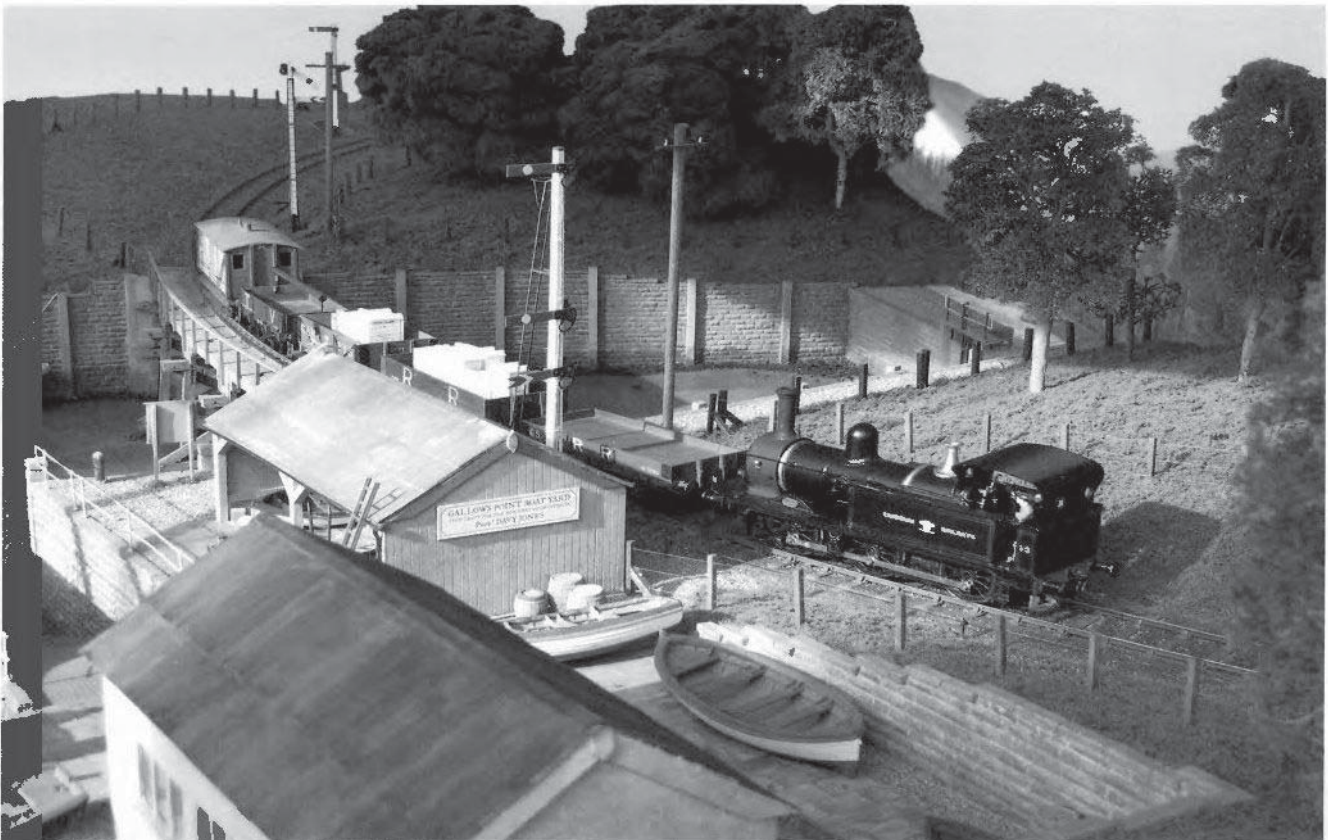
Congratulations must go to Richard Oldfield, Richard Stagg, Dave Faulkner, Emlyn Davies, Norman Lee, Gavin Liddiard, Mike Rapson and Phil Sutton for their efforts in making the layout such a success on its first visit over the Pennines.

One of the barometers of opinion and criticisms on model railway exhibitions is found on the enthusiast website RMWeb. Scrolling down the postings on the 2015 York Show, there is not one mention of Johnstown Road.

Could it be that the current breed of model railway enthusiasts are more interested in diesels and modern image models? Maybe they cannot relate to an Edwardian 0 Gauge cameo layout which ran faultlessly over the full weekend, and operated in accordance with the correct contemporary railway practice?

Or are the enthusiast spectators entranced with modern image diesel layouts which have the attraction of sound chips and flashing lights?

Johnstown Road



Thanks to Phil Sutton for these two pictures of Johnstown Road at York Exhibition at Easter 2015

The Whithorn Branch



Railway Executive Map extract dated February 1949

INTRODUCTION

With the arrival of the EM Gauge layout "Whithorn" into the Clubrooms, it seems only right that a bit of a background should be given on this geographic choice for this new arrival.

Alisdair M was looking to start a new EM 4mm layout, based upon an end to end design with fiddle yard he found inspiration for the new model in the publication "Light Railway Layout Designs" by Iain Rice. Alisdair was taken by the comments of Rice on the Wigtownshire Railway, particularly on the comment by Rice

"As an exercise in prototype modelling, you'd have a job to find a simpler subject than Whithorn – but it's far from being hackneyed in the manner of similar GW termini".

Further research found that the principal steam locomotive used on the branch was a Caledonian Railway Jumbo 0-6-0 tender locomotive complete with a stove pipe chimney. By chance Alisdair had an EM gauge stove pipe chimney CR Jumbo to hand from an earlier layout, and in 1962 had been on a steam special down the Whithorn branch. The choice of model which is based on Whithorn was decided.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Isle of Whithorn is a broad peninsula of land in Galloway in the South West corner of Scotland; a remote place, windswept, a more gentle and flatter landscape than the more rugged North West part of Scotland. It extends southwards into the Solway Firth and the northern part of the Irish Sea.

The principal employment of the area is much the same as it has been over many centuries; dairy farming, tourism, a bit of fishing, and not much else. And it has the most southerly distillery in Scotland at Bladnoch.

But north of the Isle of Whithorn peninsula, running east to west, is the main arterial route to the shortest sea crossing from mainland Britain to Ireland. This east-west route is now only for road vehicles, the "Port Road" railway line from Dumfries to Stranraer closed on 14 June 1965.

There is evidence of a settlement at Whithorn away back in the 5th Century when St. Ninian landed here from Ireland to spread the Gospel. It might even be considered that Whithorn was the first Christian community in Scotland.

In the 12th century a priory was built in Whithorn, but little of it survives today. The importance of this Christian site continued for many centuries, being a primary shrine for pilgrims in the Middle Ages where even King James IV of Scotland made frequent pilgrimages right up to the Battle of Flodden in 1513.

After the Reformation Whithorn declined as a religious centre.

Although it predates the other early Christian site in Scotland at Iona, Iona has retained its spiritual atmosphere and remains an enduring symbol of worship, while Whithorn has slipped into obscurity.

THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

Galloway has never been a part of Scotland which would ever attract any major railway development. Even today it has a sparse and scattered population with little industry, its only benefit being the close geographic link across the North Channel to Northern Ireland from Portpatrick in Scotland to Donaghadee in County Down, a distance of 21 miles.

The village of Portpatrick was originally the principal crossing point to Ireland from Scotland. Legend has it that it was here that St. Patrick first stepped on Scottish soil.

There was a regular Royal Mail vessel sailing to Donaghadee from Portpatrick from around 1642, Portpatrick village being a post office packet station. Portpatrick harbour was the faster and shorter crossing for passengers to Ireland, while Stranraer, in its more sheltered location on Loch Ryan, was used for cattle and goods, a longer and more leisurely route across the North Channel.

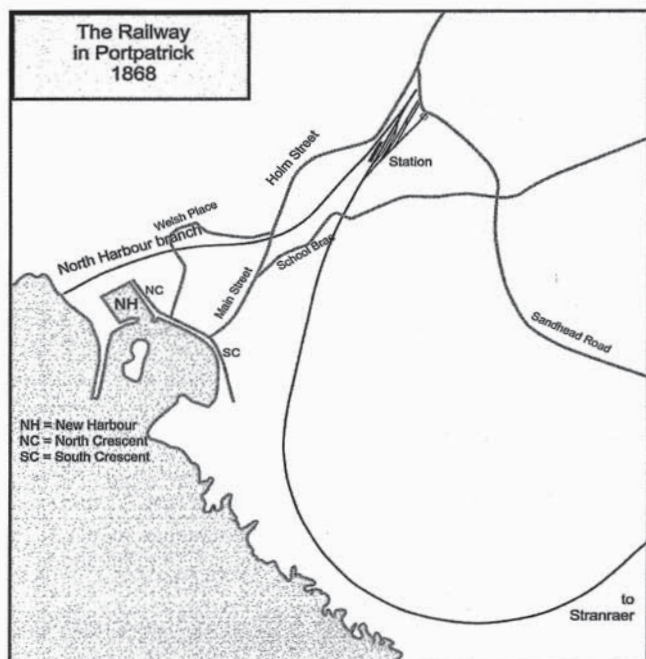
The trunk route between the two countries was appreciated as a possible money maker for early railway promoters. There was some grand thinking from those promoters in the Railway Mania of the 1840s – The Glasgow and Belfast Union Railway; The British and Irish Grand Junction Railway; and The Girvan, Stranraer and North of Ireland Junction Railway – to name but three. They all suggest that there was revenue to be had from a trunk route over the bare moorland and the miles of empty coastline of South Ayrshire and Galloway. Many were simply dreams of the railway speculators.

By 1859 the 19¾ mile long railway route of the Castle Douglas and Dumfries Railway had opened. The trunk route to Ireland was underway.

And during the construction of the Castle Douglas and Dumfries Railway another new railway was promoted and authorised westwards through Galloway to Stranraer and Portpatrick with branches to the harbours at these two port locations. This second line, 60¾ miles long, from Castle Douglas to Stranraer reached the latter town in 1861 with the extension down to Portpatrick ready a year later in 1862.

There was now a direct rail link between Portpatrick and London. The line was known as the Portpatrick Railway.

While Portpatrick might have been the closest point between Scotland and Ireland, the harbour at Portpatrick was a difficult place to access for both ships and railway traffic. The harbour was triangular in shape with the sea forming the base of the triangle, and it was open to the prevailing south west winds and rolling swell of the sea. The railway approach was over the natural ridge at Colfin, was down a falling gradient of 1 in 57 to swing around above the village to the harbour below. The harbour railway branch was then reached by a further down gradient of 1 in 35, which had to be negotiated by a back shunt. So not really the best track layout for regular railway operations on what was a main trunk route.



Portpatrick railway route to the harbour
Licensed under Wikimedia Commons

A new steamboat service between Portpatrick and Donaghadee now improved the link between the two countries. The LNWR saw the potential of another link to Ireland, not being content with their route along the North Wales Coast to Holyhead. They poured £500,000 into upgrading the Portpatrick harbour facilities.

Acknowledging the problems of working the Portpatrick Branch, David L Smith, the foremost G&SWR railway historian, is quoted in one of his books

Portpatrick was a brute of a place to get out of, a great grinding curve, and an up-grade of 1 in 57, the whole in the full track of the westerly gales, even in the rock cutting where the blowhole up at the Tailor's Peak let the salt spray in to coat the rails. The old single [probably 2-2-2 no. 7] was coming up, and, not unusually, got stuck. "Get back an' half yer train" instructed the driver. "H'ye a saw?" inquired the fireman. Truly a saw would have been necessary, for they had only one coach on!"

But even this financial expenditure did nothing to improve the difficult rail and maritime operating conditions of this ferry station. The Portpatrick Railway was under capitalised, having expended its capital in the construction of the line, and the boom in traffic the company had expected never really came about.

In 1874 the ferry facilities were transferred to a new enlarged packet station at Stranraer. Instead of Donaghadee, the link was now made with the town of Larne in Northern Ireland. Portpatrick fell into decline. Stranraer became the established ferry link across the North Channel.

As has been seen the route of the line from Dumfries to Stranraer was through long tracts of wild moorland country devoid of population; and where the railway might have benefited from local passengers and goods. Stations were far from the townships and villages and the local bus operators and carters were the beneficiaries.

The Portpatrick Railway (PPR) sought financial assistance in the sum of £40,000 for the running of their line from the Glasgow and South Western Railway, but the G&SWR turned them down. A few years later when the Caledonian Railway (CR) began working the newly opened Dumfries Lockerbie and Lochmaben Railway giving access to Dumfries, the G&SWR had a change of heart; more particularly as the PPR now sought running powers over the Castle Douglas and Dumfries Railway (CDDR) to link up with the Caledonian at Dumfries.

The G&SWR hoped they might now acquire the PPR to fend off their CR rival. The PPR directors had long memories of their earlier refusal of financial assistance, and they opted instead to negotiate with the CR.

The CR offered them generous terms which included matching the earlier £40,000 request made to the G&SWR. The working agreement with the CR was progressed, and in due time the CR was given running powers over the full length of the line from Dumfries to Stranraer. This now gave the route direct connections to the industrial central Scotland, and to Carlisle and the south by way of the LNWR.

Having secured the running powers the CR went on to operate the line from December 1864. Through traffic was worked by the CR from Glasgow and Edinburgh via Lockerbie. The PPR might have thought that their financial problems were now over with the involvement of the CR. But the CR drove a hard bargain and requested the PPR construct new stations along the line, including one at Dunragit, all at a cost to the PPR. This put further pressure on the limited finances of the PPR.

The agreement with the Caledonian Railway operating the Port Road expired in 1885, and being principally a trunk route to Ireland with little local traffic the Portpatrick and Wigtonshire Joint Railway (PP&WR) was formed to run the line. The railway had representatives from the Caley, (CR) the Sou' West, (G&SWR) as well as from the Midland Railway and the London North Western Railway. With this joint venture between the four major railway company players there was, perhaps, no real need from any of them to spend their capital on a rural backwater in Galloway with little prospect of a reasonable return on expenditure.

The four railway companies now had a toe-hold in the cross channel traffic to Ireland. From the joint venture it was agreed that the two Scottish companies should work the line alternatively; two years by one, and then for three years by the other. It is recalled that the Caley worked closely with the LNWR on the West Coast main line, and the Sou' West with the Midland over the Settle and Carlisle line.

The Portpatrick and Wigtonshire Railway continued to be operated in this joint manner until the Grouping of the separate railway companies in 1923. After the Grouping the responsibility to operate the line fell to the LMS, and subsequently by British Railways after Nationalisation in the 1947 Transport Act. The line from Dumfries to Stranraer closed under the Beeching Plan on 14 June 1965.



Stove pipe chimney Caledonian Railway Jumbo 57375 at Dunragit between Newton Stewart and Stranraer on the Stephenson Locomotive Society Wigtonshire Railtour" on 2 September 1961. – Author collection

THE WHITHORN BRANCH

So how did the Whithorn Branch fit into this piece of Galloway railway history?

Before the railway arrived the principal means of accessing the Isle of Whithorn was by a rough track northwards to Newton Stewart, or by the coastal shipping trade by sailing out of Garliestown. While life has changed little over the years in this part of Scotland, the coming of the railway brought benefits for all in the local community. The rural communities of the area are much as they always have been; a dairy industry and a distillery at Bladnoch – Scotland's most southerly. But not really much more. Although the railway has gone, the road links have improved, but much is the same as it has always been.

Thomas Bouch, later Sir Thomas Bouch, of the first Tay Bridge fame, in the course of his professional wanderings, was called in 1863 to survey the potential of providing a twenty mile route to Whithorn. The scheme came to nought. Eight years later in 1871, the scheme was revived under the name of the Machars Railway, which later became known as the Wigtownshire Railway. Perhaps the draft scheme by Bouch was used in this railway scheme?

According to the Scottish railway historian John Thomas in his book "Forgotten Railways – Scotland" the Wigtownshire Railway was a gentlemanly affair. The Earls of Stair and Galloway, and the Lord Garlies and Borthwick were among its directors. Letters to the board were addressed "My Lords and Gentlemen".

It would be fair to say that none of the directors knew much about the construction and operation of railways. They relied very much on the abilities of McClure, the Company Secretary, for such matters.

The Bill for the construction of the line went through both Houses of Parliament unopposed on 18 July 1872. The first part of the line went south to the county town of Wigtown from the junction at Newton Stewart on the Dumfries to Stranraer "Port Road" main line. Work began on the earthworks in mid-summer 1873. And by 1 March 1875 the first locomotive for the line had arrived at Newton Stewart. The line was now completed on the seven miles as far as Wigtown.

With the shortage of capital the rails for the line were lifted and reused from the Portpatrick harbour branch. The platform edging slabs came from the same source for the extended Newton Stewart station. For their efforts in these transport costs the CR charged their share of costs to the PPR and WR the princely sum of £14.10.6d.



Davie Smith notes in his book "The Little Railways of South-West Scotland" that the CR requested additional sidings and a longer loop headshunt at Newton Stewart and they were told that as they had not contributed to the works, they were entitled to nothing. Even the request for a clock and, in mid-winter, a stove for the signal cabin, the CR was further refused.

Given its rural nature, the line was built to light railway standards. Maybe the earlier survey information was to hand from the visit to the area by Thomas Bouch. His survey documentation might well have been used as the scheme engineering design.

But history has shown that the designs, specifications, and construction methods used by Bouch were, more often or not, cut down to a minimum standard.



Whithorn Station circa 1884

Bouch's engineering solutions were to construct railway routes as frugally as possible at a capital cost which might allow the railway to pay their way without incurring great initial debts. Bouch's obituary noted his "pattern for cheap construction", the best example perhaps being the poor quality of materials and poor workmanship used on his ill-fated first Tay Railway Bridge.

So maybe the Whithorn branch was built down to Bouch's specification, who knows? Then again, had the directors not taken the decision to build their light railway at a lower specification with the associated lower construction cost then the railway might never have been built.

The light railway standard of the construction of the line perhaps haunted the line right up to its closure in the 1960's. In 1962 Caley Single No.123 and GNSR 4-4-0 No.49 double headed an enthusiast special down the branch with five BR Mark 1 coaches including a miniature buffet. It would seem that HR No.103, the Jones Goods, was originally diagrammed to work the branch.

But 103 had had mechanical problems the previous day, having run hot, and a local decision was taken to send 123 and 49 double headed to Whithorn. It was only on their safe arrival back at Newton Stewart was it realised that 123 was grossly over the permitted axle load for the branch, particularly on the bridge over the River Bladnoch.

The Whithorn Branch might well have been remembered for all the wrong reasons had there been a mishap that day!

The route onward from Wigtown ran inland away from the coast as the 9th Earl of Galloway, who owned extensive lands in the area, was hostile to the railway crossing his land. The line to Whithorn, with the most southerly railway station in Scotland, was ready for traffic on 7 July 1877, two years after the completion of the line to Wigtown. But the story is getting ahead of itself.

In 1875 the Wigtownshire Railway directors started to look at the operating of the line and the associated working arrangements. With the CR operating the Dumfries to Stranraer line and the Wigtownshire Railway making a direct connection at Newton Stewart, it was the obvious choice that the CR might operate the line. But the CR was losing money on the main line and declined the offer.

The terms offered by the Caledonian to the Wigtownshire board were quite punitive. Possibly the Caley saw little financial benefit in providing stock and staff for such a remote line with little return. The only business coming from the Whithorn Branch was local agriculture traffic, a small distillery, and a harbour at Garliestown which had very limited operations because of local tidal conditions.

The terms offered by the Caley were to receive 80% of the gross revenue if the weekly revenue per mile was £5, dropping to 50% of the gross if the revenue attained a plainly impossible £50 per mile. The Caledonian Railway spokesman is quoted as saying to the Wigtownshire Railway directors "My directors do not feel justified in offering more favourable terms; they doubt if the percentages proposed would yield sufficient to cover the cost of working and maintaining the railway".

These quoted terms to operate the branch were quite unacceptable to the Whithorn directors, and to say that the Wigtownshire directors were disappointed with this response is probably an understatement.

To progress matters from this point back refusal, and to find a way forward the Whithorn board wrote letters to various railway managers seeking their advice and assistance. Advertisements were placed in the lay and technical press for locomotives and rolling stock as the company did not even have the necessary stock to run any goods or passenger services on the line.

Nothing was forthcoming, but help arrived fortuitously from an unusual source as will be told in Part Two of the Whithorn Story.

Part 2 of "The Whithorn Story" will appear in BMRJ 43.

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David L Smith 7153 4652 0

David and Charles 1969

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Mr. Wheatley's Railway - A.J. Mullay

British Railways – Past and present

South West Scotland

Keith Sanders and Douglas Hodgins

ISBN 1 85895 074 0

Trains Illustrated Annual 1960

•The Port Road •Dumfries-Stranraer

George H. Robin.



BR Standard 78016 sits with the thrice weekly goods train at Wigtown Station in July 1964 two months before the branch closed.

Picture by Derek Cross in "Steam in Scotland Volume 1"

The Reading Room

Book review Richard Stagg

The Bryngwyn Branch
by
Dave Southern & John Keylock.

Welsh Highland Railway Heritage Group, 2014.

£15.

ISBN 978-0-9930821-0-8.

Let's face it. Lt Col H.H. Stevens collected a wacky selection of obscure railways just after the First World War; and some of them sprouted branches. One would have thought that the definitive accounts of these lines would have covered their branches in enough detail. But no, so I have in my collection an account of the Shropshire & Montgomery's Criggion branch.

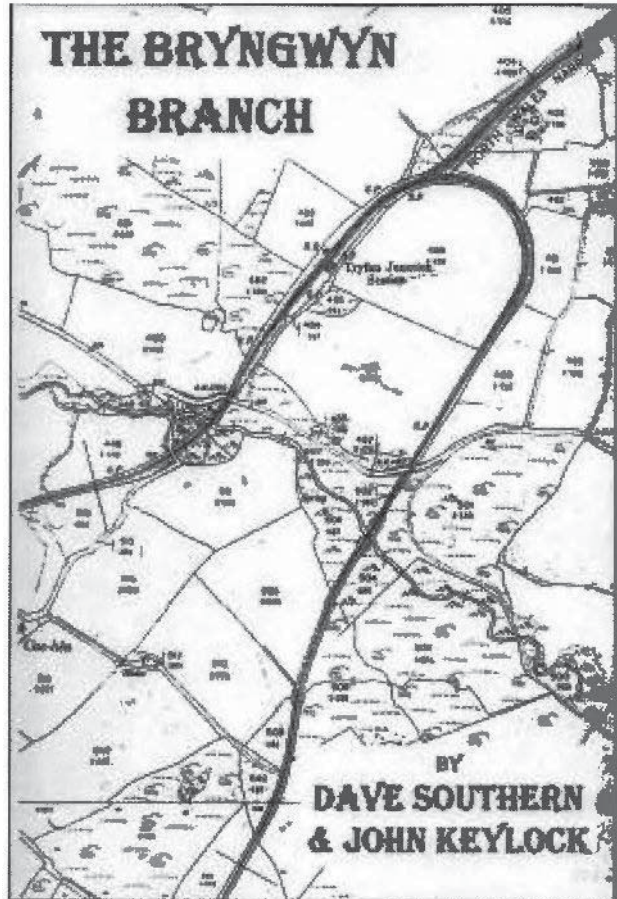
Now to add to it comes *The Bryngwyn Branch* which is an account of an even more obscure branch of what was, in any case, a remote byway.

This book is a profusely illustrated account of what started off life not as a branch line but as the main line of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways (Moel Tryfan undertaking). Originally the line to South Snowdon (Rhyd Ddu) was regarded as the branch – after all there was far more slate coming down from Bryngwyn than from the Gwyfrai valley.

The trials and tribulations of the line and its operational problems are well covered, and its revival under Col. Stevens as part of the Welsh Highland Railway in the 1920s, though as explained in the book, never regained its passenger service.

Finally the present state of the line – as a footpath - is well covered, starting from what must surely be regarded as John Keylock's memorial – the superbly restored station building at Tryfan Junction. This walk along the full length of the old line up to the top of the incline and then on over to the Nantlle Valley is one I am looking forward to doing as soon as I can.

It is, I aver, the true test of a railway scholar to have in one's collection the definitive work on such a branch. (RS)



Who do you think you are?

MIKE RAPSON



His first railway day out. Mike "Matey" Rapson at York Railway Station with Nodding Donkeys 55518 and 55538 on 19 September 1985. (Photo David Rapson)

Mike "Matey" Rapson arrived in the world three years after the 1977 "base date" in which Mostyn is set. Even the BR Blue period was in decline by the time Mike became aware of railways. However with his father's great love of all things railway it is not surprising that Mike was influenced by him, and has inherited that love from from an early age.

Mike was born on 5th April 1980 at the Countess of Chester Hospital in Chester to David and Norma Rapson. He spent his early years with his parents over the border in Connah's Quay in North Wales where he now continues to live in this part of North Wales, with Karen and their three daughters.

On leaving school Mike spent two years studying at Deeside College learning skills in joinery. He went on to work for some years on various construction sites in North Wales, being involved principally in domestic refurbishments.

It was while he was working on a three storey Grade II Listed Building in Holywell Town Centre that Mike found some home comforts in the local Sayers the Baker's shop across the road from the site. It was here that he met Karen, who was working there at the time. It is recorded that she made his toast every morning when he visited the shop. It is not recorded who makes the morning toast in the Rapson household today.

Mike now works as a Technical Sales Consultant for a hazardous waste and component cleaning company in North Wales.

Outside his railway interests, and apart from his family, the other main hobby for Mike is cricket. He plays regularly for Hawarden Park in the North Wales Premier Division. So there are no rules of players being born in England playing for a Welsh cricket club?

His other sporting interest is golf, and he has been seen putting and chipping his way around North and South Carolina, Austria, Switzerland, and Portugal.

As noted Mike's interest in railways began at an early age when he accompanied his father on railway photographic excursions to many parts of the UK.

Mike recalls his first proper railway day out was to York railway station and the Railway Museum with his father. The accompanying picture shows the young Rapson complete with his Thomas the Tank Engine lunch bag at York Station.



On 1st September 1987 Mikey Matey takes the driving seat of electric locomotive 86103. (David Rapson)

We are told that Mike's first train set was a Hornby 08 mixed freight trainset complete with siding and a level crossing. He played with this train set for hours on the dining room table. BMRG members are reminded that Mike has spent many more happy hours on the Mostyn layout playing with his BR blue 08 on the dock siding and weathering the road level crossing. *Plus ça change!*

But Mike reckons he lost interest in his dining table train set when he ignored his mother's request when asked to clear his train set off the dining table to allow her to set the table for tea. In exasperation at him ignoring her, she swept the whole lot into a crumpled heap on the floor. He said he lost interest in the train set from that time onwards.

It can be seen that from an early age Mike Matey has a strong willed mind of his own!

His father continued Mike's education in railways, by presenting him with a copy of Ian Allen's Motive Power Combined Volume, in which he had underlined all the locomotives Mike had seen since January 1985 .

When he reached the age of twelve the family considered Mike was old enough to go on railway adventures on his own. The trips included regular days out to Manchester, south to London, and even up to Motherwell in Scotland chasing those elusive "last cops" to complete his classes of diesel locomotives.

One of his last cops was Class 87 87032 "Kenilworth" which he was finally able to underline in his Combined Volume at Stockport on 16 April 1992.

Travelling further afield to Chesterfield Station on 24 August 1992 at the age of twelve, Mike can recall becoming engaged in conversation with a very well spoken woman who told him about her dogs and she invited him to her home. When he returned back home to North Wales he told his parents about this encounter. The consequence of the tale was a visit by the British Transport Police next day who came to interview him about his Chesterfield meeting. He never told us if he ever saw the dogs.

From this biography we can see Mike's attention to detail when events are recorded to the day. Most of us have problems in even remembering the year!

His further escapades continued when he accompanied railway enthusiasts Bob Casselden, John Feild and Mike's father to Rotherham in South Yorkshire where he was sent under the wire of the boundary fence of the yard of the locomotive dismantlers, Booth Roe, to identify the numbers on the diesel locomotives lying in the yard ready to be broken up. Looking back at the event Mike reflects that no one in the group bothered to check if there were any guard dogs on the site.

Like many other railway enthusiasts trainspotting and number-taking were replaced in due course by night clubbing and girls. But Mike returned to modelling in his early twenties, beginning with Games Workshop figures, although he never played war games he enjoyed the modelling the dioramas.

(continued)



87032 Kenilworth at Stockport on 10 May 1992 a month after Mike's final cop.
Photo courtesy Flickr

LNWR Photographs

MIKE RAPSON (continued)

As Mike says in his notes, his youngest daughter, Niamh, was now old enough to feed herself (more toast?) and he found more time to think again about his own love of modelling - not war game dioramas, but this time the world of railway modelling.

Living in North Wales he decided the layout should be based upon a 4mm model Holywell Junction set in the period of the mid Nineties. Researching the stock and locomotives for the this period on the North Wales Coast Line he has found there was a great variety of liveries from this Regional Railways period of railway history, with so many different classes of locomotive running on the Coast line after the BR Blue period which gives him plenty of scope for variety.

Mike began purchasing locomotives on Ebay, and to extend his modelling skills he resprayed and detailed his purchases. His first effort was to work on two DRS liveried Class 20's - 20301 and 20302 - which were followed by Bachmann Class 37's and a Hornby Class 31.

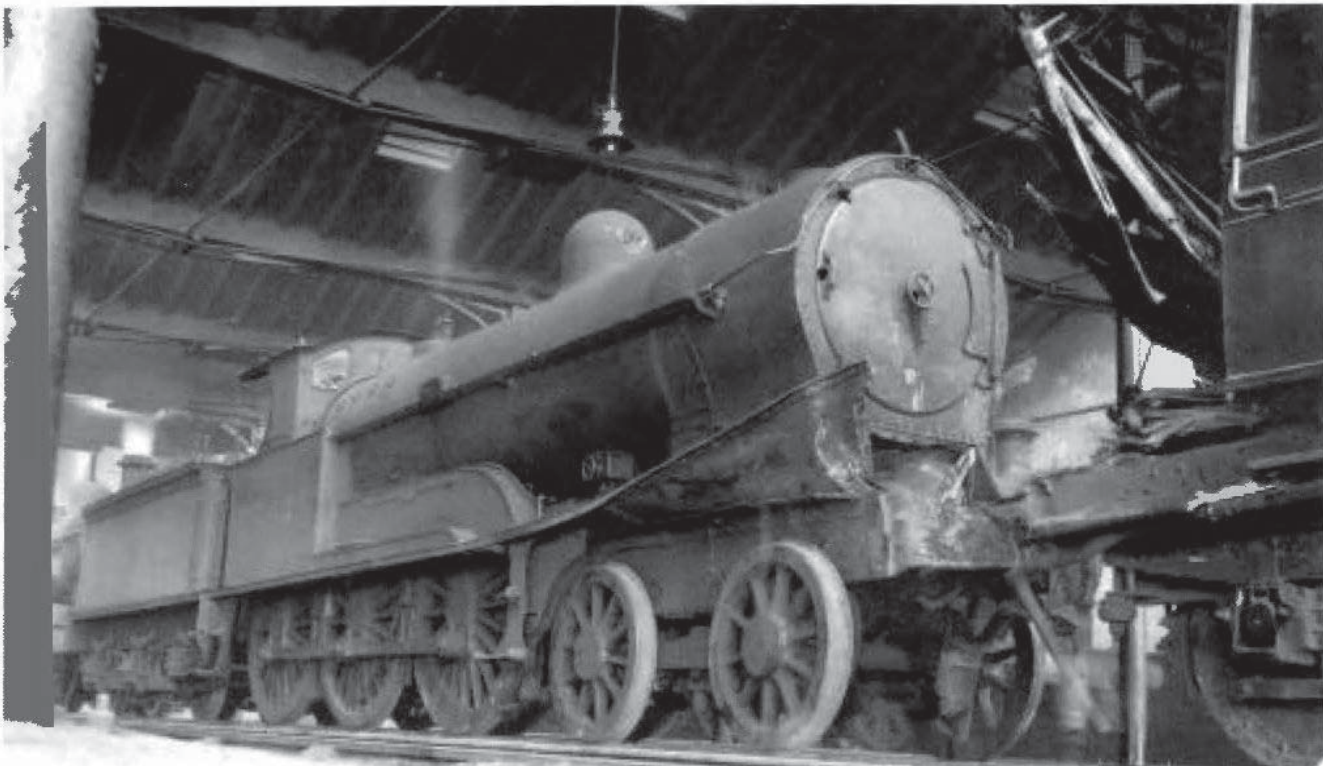
His modelling skills have benefited the BMRG where he has assisted in the construction of further stock for Mostyn, and is working with Richard O in weathering stock and assisting with the ironstone hoppers

With his move into from 00 to P4 his DRS Class 20 20301 has been fitted with Ultracscale P4 wheelsets. This locomotive can be seen occasionally on the exchange sidings of Mostyn, although it is out of the Mostyn time frame.

Mike says that he is proud of the fact that he has been able to input his modelling talents into the Mostyn layout and proud that he has worked on the level crossing, as well as the LNWR cottages allotment gardens.

Mikey Matey is currently working on the railway bridge over the river for the Whithorn layout.

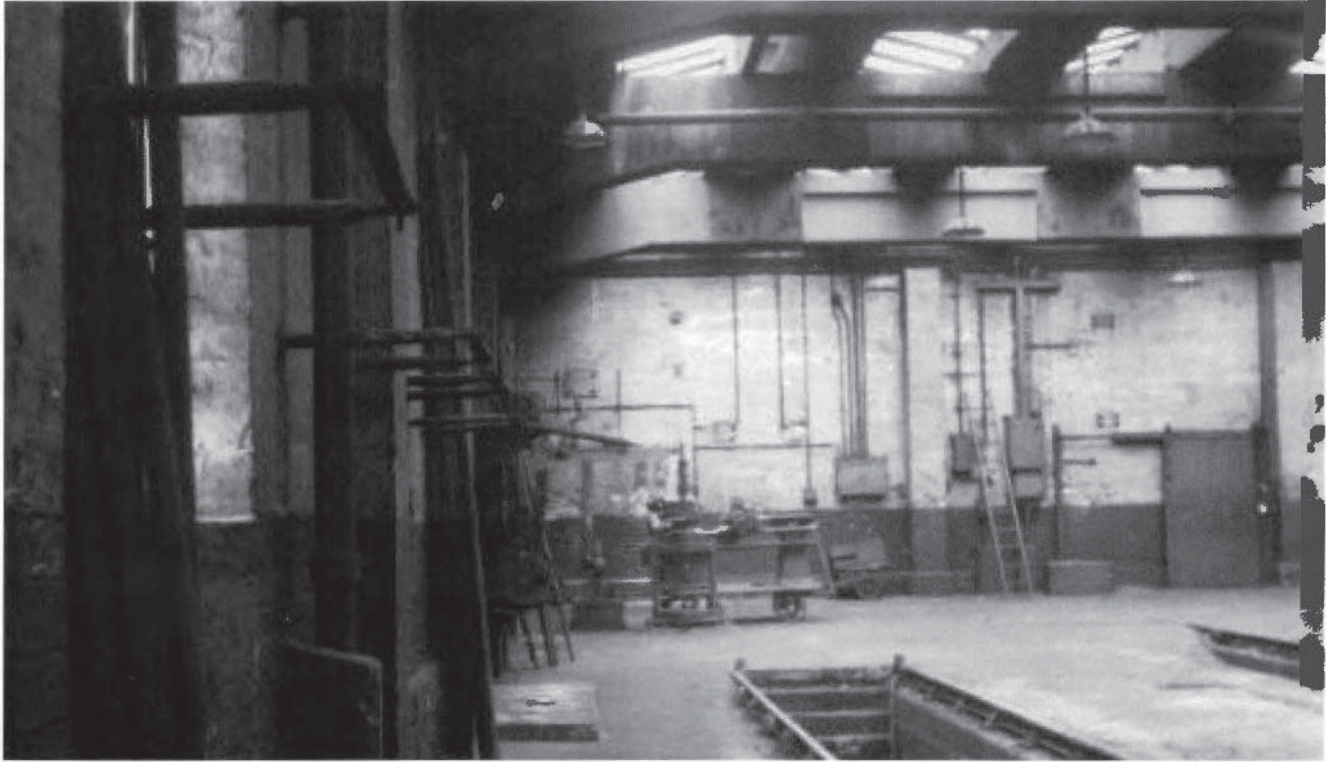
The Group have even got used to Mike's own individual sense of humour!!



Thanks to Norman Lee for this undated picture inside Dallam / Warrington Shed with ex LNWR 4-6-0 renumbered LMS 25648 having had a front end shunt. No.25648 was originally LNWR 2596 4-6-0 "Queen of the Belgians" built at Crewe and withdrawn in October 1948. Could this damage be the reason for its withdrawal? Note the safety valves still blowing off suggesting that the locomotive is still in steam Also was the damaged LMS coach to the right of the picture part of the same incident?

Perhaps DG or Norman L can provide more details.

LNWR Photographs



With thanks to Dave Goodwin for this photograph taken circa 1969 of the interior of the LNWR Shed at Chester just before its closure.



Undated photograph of the gleaming white interior of Crewe South Shed newly completed and ready to receive all those lined out blackberry black locomotives

Odds and Sods 1

A Salop Tragedy Postscript

In BMRJ 41 – December 2014 Tony Robinson wrote about “A Salop Tragedy” and the railway accident at Coton Hill. Eddie Knorn now gives us a bit more information on the locomotive involved in this incident.

A minor correction is needed to Tony Robinson's source of information in relation to the runaway freight train at Coton Hill in Shrewsbury which was featured in BMRJ Issue No.41.

D1111 entered traffic from Crewe Works in February 1967, and was allocated to York (50A) and remained allocated in Yorkshire, or later Newcastle, until its transfer to Bristol in November 1987.

D1111 was indeed the last Brush Type 4 (later Class 47) to be built at Crewe, and it is (sort-of) the highest numbered of these locomotives. The first such locomotive was numbered D1500 and when 500 numbers had been allocated these went up to D1999. Unfortunately there were 512 locomotives on order, so the vacant part of the number series was claimed. D1100-D1111.

The very last Brush Type 4 to enter traffic was in fact D1961, This locomotive left Brush Falcon Works in Loughborough in May 1968, around 15 months after its sister left Crewe Works

D1961 was allocated to the London Midland Region until October 1982. During the time period of Mostyn it was based at Crewe Diesel Depot, no doubt appearing on the North Wales Coast, but by that time it carried the number 47515.

Eddie Knorn

Eddie Knorn For the weekend of 21st and 22nd March Eddie Knorn extended an invitation to the members of the Barrowmore Group to join him, and his other friends, to celebrate his 50th birthday. He took over a room at his local public house, the Bridge Inn in Ruabon Wrexham, to mark the occasion.

We wish Eddie well on achieving his half century!

Richard Oldfield And back on 10 January Richard Oldfield celebrated his 56th Birthday. Yes, another year older, so what's the special significance? Only that that other railway modeller and rock star - Rod Stewart - shares the same birthday. But Rod was born some twelve years earlier than Richard on 10 January 1945.

In an article in the Saturday Times supplement on Rod, it went on to say “These days, Rod takes his pleasure from his 90 minute workout in the morning (gym and running), his family and his trains. “I’m working on a bridge at the moment, very complicated, painting it, weathering it. It’s not rock’n’roll, but I don’t care. I’d be up there eight hours at a stretch, but Penny won’t allow that”

Richard O takes Dylan and Bob (the dogs) on long walks. That's not rock and roll either!

David Goodwin has recently been in the Countess of Chester Hospital with a suspected heart attack. After some detailed tests he was discharged and is now back home. The suspected heart attack turned out - in Dave's words - “to be nothing more than a serious build up of fluid in my lungs”. This did cause him a severe shortage of breath.

Back home he is now again regularly walking Sid the Dog, and building up his strength again (Dave's not Sid's) after all those days of lying in a hospital bed. He reckons that his health problem has now been sorted out, and he is now attending the hospital Out Patients for anaemia problems.

It must be reported that Norman L attempted to smuggle into the hospital ward some bottles of beer for Dave, but the clink of the glass bottles in the carrier bag gave the game away.

We wish Dave well on his journey back to full health.

Odds and Sods 2



The photograph has been received by your Editor from Dave Goodwin with the attached information.

Dave Goodwin writes ...The photograph shows (foreground) my mother Lucretia May Goodwin, born Tibbott in 1902, holding my younger sister Sylvia Goodwin.

I am the small boy, Herbert David Goodwin, born 1933, holding the hand of my aunt, Maud Tibbott, on the second row.

Behind us is my maternal grandmother, Martha Ann Tibbott, born 1874. Her husband William Tibbott (1868-1935) is recorded in the 1911 census as living at 28 Victoria Street, Merthyr Tydfil, his occupation then being given as a colliery platelayer. What colliery was it likely to have been?.

The picture was allegedly taken outside Llandrindod Wells Railway Station on 28 May 1939. My family then lived in Birkenhead. We often visited my grandmother at her home in Llandrindod Wells – travelling by train of course.

The question which has arrived from David with the accompanying photograph is

“Who was holding the camera as my father would have been at work?”

Any queries – just email Dave...

(david@goodwinrail.co.uk)

Your Editor suggests the picture is either an early picture from the archives of the Welsh “Hello Magazine” - “Helo Cylchgrawn”, or a young Goodwin being escorted by the family off Llandrindod Wells Railway Station platform, under duress, after a day's trainspotting.

And the last word on Johnstown Road – for now!

Richard Stagg writes to say that he his current modelling centres around slate slab traffic for JR both on standard gauge and narrow gauge. There were some quite wacky waggons in use on the narrow gauge – and they needed the use of a waggon turntable to enable unloading!

So far all that has been achieved is one Cambrian two plank waggon and half a load of slabs. I am hoping to find some kits at York that may be suitable for butchery for the slab NG waggons. I've also done a Cambrian brake van – different from any of Emlyns, though that still lacks its final lettering.



GOAL 24
BY FARE 10.00
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DO NOT SMILE