

WHISTLEBLOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FARNHAM & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

March 2018 Edition

EDITORIAL: TAKING PART

As well as building or maintaining layouts or just simply 'playing trains' there are many other things that the club offers, if you wish to take part. Here are just a few of them:

- volunteering to run a workshop to help other people learn new skills
- helping at club open days, such as those to be held on both the early and late May bank holiday Mondays
- being part of the teams which take layouts to exhibitions
- writing articles for Whistleblower

None of these things are gauge specific and help from across the whole club is needed from time-to-time. When you see an opportunity, please grab it with both hands. The more you do, the more fun it is!

Julian Evison (Editor)

MODEL RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

The series of model railway workshops continues most Wednesdays with good attendance and appreciative audiences. They are open to all members, but are aimed particularly at those who wish to develop their skills from beginner level. Please come along to as many as you like. The programme is included in the diary at the end of this Whistleblower. If you would like to run a workshop on a relevant subject please contact David Harrington.

HELPING WITH THE P4 LAYOUT AT EXHIBITIONS

The P4 group in the club may be small in number, but it has a very well-regarded layout (Brixcombe) which is probably the most prototypically accurate we have in terms of operating. There is a need for more operators for club days and exhibitions. If you would like to learn more and perhaps give it a go, please contact Richard Harris. You definitely do not have to be a P4 modeller to take part!

SIX GO TO BOURNEMOUTH – Julian Evison

It is often difficult to get a new layout on to the circuit. Once it is out there, then (hopefully) invitations result, but to start with it is a question of personal contacts or recommendations.

The invitation to take the 0 gauge group's new Haydon Square layout to Bournemouth resulted from Wickwar going to the show in 2017, so passing on details is always helpful.

Haydon Square fits in Jim Edwards' small van and two other vehicles, so we loaded up on Friday afternoon for an early start on Saturday morning to get to Bournemouth for 8am. All went well and everything was up and running well in time for opening. The Bournemouth Model Railway Exhibition is unusual in two ways. Firstly, it is not run by a model railway club, but by two gentlemen alone and, secondly, it is held in a sports and social club. From an exhibitor's point of view, all the important things were in place: easy access for unloading/loading, free tea and coffee and plenty of visitors. The layout performed well and many people commented on Ed Jackman's radio controlled shunting operation with some simply not believing it can be done on a DC layout.

A really nice aspect of exhibiting is the social part on a Saturday evening. The organisers had booked us in to a surprisingly nice hotel which had a pub less than 300 yards away to which we went for dinner. A good meal with good beer was had by all with the bonus the next morning of a decent cooked breakfast.

Sunday continued as before until it was time to pack up, drive back to the clubhouse and unload the layout. All-in-all a good weekend doing something enjoyable with a bunch of friends.

MORE RAILWAY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES – Noel Leaver

Following on from the piece in the last Whistleblower by Ian Welch on memories of railway in his childhood, Noel has given some of his:

Most of my memories are of my local station Rose Grove - an island platform with a short bay in each direction, 2 hump yards (both 16 roads), and a 4 road steam shed.

The most vivid one is of an 8F or WD starting a loaded coal train out of the hump yard, struggling for the first 200 yards which were up the bottom of the hump: lots of slipping and trying again, lots of clanking from the coupling rods.

An 08 pushing wagons over the hump and the shunters changing the points as they came down.

Excitement when a Jubilee or Patriot came through. The occasional B1.

The local train on the Padiham loop when it was still a tank loco and a couple of carriages - in fact I think the line was closed to passengers before a DMU was substituted.

The windows in the doors with the leather strap to hold them shut or part open.

At weekends I sometimes got further afield - usually Skipton with a lot of ER locos, or Preston on the WCML. On occasions I visited Barnoldswick, a single platform station, the only one on its branch, with one of the very old "Crossbar" signals - a red horizontal plank on top of a pole about 12 ft. high. It was rotated to be visible to the driver to mean stop, or end on to show clear. <http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/b/barnoldswick/index5.shtml>

Do you have childhood memories of railways you would like to share? If so, please get in contact with the editor.

THE NEXT TRAIN TO LONDON – Ian George

How many stations can you think of from which it was possible to have a choice of trains to London departing from opposite ends of the station? These situations were the result of fierce competition between the early railway companies, the building of many duplicated routes and the use of “joint” i.e. shared stations. Until recently I was aware of three such stations, however while walking with my dog on the edge of Dartmoor last summer I unexpectedly came across the remains of a fourth candidate; more of which later.

The “opposite ends departures for London” station with which I was most familiar was Chester General, which was a joint station shared by the Western and London Midland. The eastern end of the platforms saw arrivals and departures to and from London Euston via Crewe. These trains connected London to the North Wales coastal holiday resorts, and the busy Irish Sea ferry port at Holyhead. The opposite, western end of the platforms saw arrivals and departures to and from London Paddington via Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. By the BR period most Western expresses reversed at Chester before heading on to Birkenhead which gave the Western valuable access to the Mersey and Liverpool, however prior to nationalisation the Great Western ran services on through Chester via Warrington to reach Manchester Exchange station.

Chester was the nearest place that Lancashire based enthusiasts such as myself could see Western engines which in BR days were detached from the London arrivals at Chester along with the dining car sets (Birkenhead Woodside station being limited to 6 coaches), the final leg of the journey to Birkenhead being by London Midland 2-6-4 tanks running non-stop under express passenger headlamps. At Chester General the most anticipated Western trains weren't in fact the London expresses, but the daily up and down Birkenhead to Bournemouth and to Margate trains, each of which had western engines but with full rakes of Southern green coaches; a rare sight in the north of England.

Standing on the end of the platforms at Chester eagerly awaiting the arrival of the next express, we enthusiasts had an early warning system to predict the type of engine. Awaiting an arrival at the Western end of the platforms, if we could see the engine in the distance before we could hear it, the engine would be a Castle; if we could hear it before we could see it, it would be a County. Waiting an arrival at the London Midland end of the platforms the early warning system was more cynical: if the train was on time it would be a Scot; if it was running late it would be a Britannia.

So Chester General was my first station where it was possible to see two trains departing in opposite directions both heading for London. It is still possible to travel to London from the much-reduced Chester General station with frequent services to and from Holyhead and North Wales using the former London Midland route via Crewe. Sadly, through running to London has ceased on the former Western route from Chester via Shrewsbury, which although still open, much has been singled and reduced to the role of a local railway.

Possibly the most well know “opposite ends for London” station is Exeter St. Davids. Western trains from Plymouth and the far West take the coastal route around Dartmoor to arrive in Exeter from the south westerly direction, departing for London from the north-eastern end of the station. Southern trains from the West took the inland circular route

around Dartmoor, arriving into Exeter from the north east along tracks shared with Western but running in the opposite direction. Having passed westwards through St Davids the Southern climbed the steep hill up to their own Central station before heading off to London via Honiton and Salisbury. Fortunately despite the Southern route from Exeter being down-graded and much of it singled, it is still possible to travel from Exeter to London by both of these routes.

The third well-known “opposite ends for London” station is Plymouth North Road which was another joint station, predominantly used by the Western but with the Southern having access through it to reach their own terminus, Plymouth Friary. As at Exeter, the different choice of route taken by the two railway companies to get around the obstacle of Dartmoor led to their London bound trains departing Plymouth heading in different directions. Western trains for London departed from the eastern end of Plymouth North Road heading round the coastal route to Exeter and beyond. Southern trains left Plymouth Friary and headed west through Plymouth North Road, then headed north up the Tamar valley, through Tavistock then circling around the northern edge of Dartmoor, through Okehampton and on to Exeter.

Following heavy bomb damage during WW2 Plymouth Friary station was closed in 1958 and today the formerly named Plymouth North Road station, now just titled Plymouth remains as the city’s main-line station. The Western route through Cornwall to London is the only one remaining open. The former Southern route now extends westwards from Exeter as a freight-only route for the rail-borne stone traffic from Meldon quarry, just west of Okehampton. However, pressure continues for a re-instatement of the remainder of the inland former Southern route to Plymouth due to the on-going vulnerability of the coastal route to weather disruption.

Meanwhile, while walking with my dog on the edge of Dartmoor along the Tavy valley just north of Tavistock I came across the remains of two sets of railway lines running parallel along the valley floor about 20 yards apart. After following their route into the small remote village of Brentor I was surprised to find a fully restored Southern Railway country station, now a very private residence. Further exploration and research led me to find an extreme example of the duplication of lines between early railway companies, plus a quirky country station perfect for modelling, and which also had “opposite ends for London departures”. The predecessors of the Southern and the Western both built railways that ran north from Plymouth, skirting the western edge of Dartmoor, the Western line originally being Broad Gauge. At Tavistock they each built a station, the Western station confusingly becoming “Tavistock South” and the nearby Southern station becoming “Tavistock North”. Heading on through the remote countryside north from Tavistock the confined nature of the Tavy river valley meant the 2 rival lines ran side by side only yards apart. At the first village, Mary Tavy, the Western built a station while the Southern, only yards away, ran straight through. At the next small village of Brentor the Southern built the splendid station that I had discovered, and here the Western line ran non-stop through the Southern station yard! The two railways continued side-by side along the valley to the next village, Lydford. Here some degree of sense prevailed in that the two companies eventually agreed to share a small joint station with 2 platforms for each company. Rivalry still was evident however as the signal box located on the central platform had 2 separate lever frames, mounted back-to-back, one for each company’s side of the station. This must have made the signalman’s job un-necessarily complicated! Also, the 2 rivals each operated “their” side of the station completely independently to the extent that there was no running line connection between the two sides of the small station; a connection was finally put in during 1943 when the needs of the war effort over-ruled local rivalry. With its compact,

small country station layout, quirky features and trains from both the Southern and Western including pacific-hauled expresses, Lydford would make an entertaining subject for a model.

Just north from Lydford the two railways' routes diverged, the Western line heading west towards Launceston and the Southern line heading east to Okehampton, Exeter and ultimately to London. So at Lydford station it would have been possible to travel to London on the Southern via Okehampton or on the Western via Plymouth, both departing from opposite ends of the platforms. Lydford station closed along with the rest of the Southern mainline in 1968.

I'm sure there must be more "opposite end departures to London" stations. If readers can think of any, the more obscure the better, please let me know. With the Editor's permission they could perhaps form a future article.

[Editor: Permission granted! In fact one came up at the quiz held during the Christmas dinner which has joined this select group of stations in 2017: Oxford.]

CLUB DIARY TO END MAY

Date	Run- ning Night	DIARY 19:00hrs Course	Layout at Exhibition/Show
2018			
Wed-07-Mar	O	Wiring the Layout (Mike)	
Sat-10/Sun-11-Mar			St. Mary's [Julian Evison's layout]: Basingstoke model railway exhibition.
Wed-14-Mar	N	Card Buildings 1 (Noel)	
Sat-17/Sun-18- Mar			Wickwar (N): Nottingham MRS Exhibition
Wed-21-Mar	P4/OO9	Card Buildings 2 (Noel)	
Wed-28-Mar	OO	Card Buildings 3 (Noel)	
Wed 4 Apr Sat-7 Apr	O	Scenery 1 (David H)	Kinlochlaggen [Mike Le Marie's layout]: Berkshire Area Gp, N-Gauge Soc, Sindlesham St. Mary's [Julian Evison's layout]: Narrow Gauge South, Eastleigh
Wed 11 Apr Sat-14 Apr	N	Scenery 2 (David H)	Aldermouth [Jim Edward's layout]: Fordingbridge Model Railway Exhibition, Fordingbridge
Wed 18 Apr	P4/009	Scenery 3 (David H)	

Sat-21 Apr			Aldermouth [Jim Edward's layout]: De Havilland MRS Exhibition, Welwyn Garden City
Wed 25 Apr Sat-28 Apr	OO	Trees 1 (DH + Terry)	Haydon Square E.1(0): Rotarail Exhibition, Fareham
Wed 2 May Mon 7 May	0	Trees 2 (DH + Terry)	0 Gauge Open Day at Club Rooms in Wrecclesham
Wed 9 May Wed 16 May Sun 20 May	N P4/009		St. Mary's [Julian Evison's layout] : Stow-on-the-Wold model railway exhibition.
Wed 23 May Mon 28 May	00		00 Gauge Open Day at Club Rooms in Wrecclesham
Wed 30 May			

Would club sections please keep me (Julian) informed of exhibition invitations. Likewise for club members who are attending exhibitions with their own layouts.