



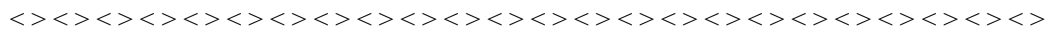
Established 1968

WELLS RAILWAY FRATERNITY

Newsletter No.189 - July 2017

www.railwells.com

Thank you to those who have contributed to this newsletter.
Your contributions for future editions are welcome;
please contact the editor, Steve Page
Tel: 01761 433418, or email page564@btinternet.com



34092 "City of Wells" at Horsted Keynes on the Bluebell Railway,
where the loco has been running recently.

Photo by Dr John Sagar, who gave us the talk about 34092 at our September meeting last year.

1960s BR STEAM CINE MISCELLANY

by **Michael Clemens**

11 April

This evening, the Fraternity welcomed Mike Clemens from Worcester who showed us three cine films, taken by his father, Jim, in the late 1950s and 1960s - the final years of steam on Britain's railways. At that time, amateur cinematography was an expensive hobby and Mike explained that his father acquired his first cine camera, not to record the railway scene but in connection with his association with his local football club! Over the years, however, Jim's railway films were to form an extensive and valuable record, and latterly Mike had been able to assist his father with this.

The three films from the collection that we were privileged to see featured different areas of the British Isles. The first covered lines in South and West Wales, showing many branch and secondary lines which have long since disappeared. The second film particularly enthralled us as it covered the South West of England and included coverage of the Cheddar Valley and East Somerset lines between Yatton and Witham, with shots in the Wells area bringing back memories to many older members. Other lines in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall were recorded, taking us back to the scene half a century ago. The final film took us northwards from Crewe and featured various lines in Southern Scotland. In all, the three films provided a wonderful reminder of the last decade or so when steam still held sway.

Mike gave an interesting and most informative commentary on each film and we were impressed by his recall of dates and other details, without the use of written notes. As film was expensive at the time, his father had had to be selective in what he recorded but, as a rule, always tried to include a shot of a station or signal box nameboard to help identify locations.

As time permitted, Mike treated us to a further short film, made in the USA in 1928 and entitled 'Iron Ore to Pig Iron'. This remarkable film started in the Mesabi Range opencast iron mines in Minnesota and followed the ore as it was taken by rail and then by water (across the Great Lakes) to Buffalo where it was smelted into pig iron. Although not specifically a railway film, being possibly rather more of interest to the industrial archaeologist, it did include several railway scenes, featuring typical American steam locomotives of the period. The film provided a fascinating insight into an industry at a time when there seemed to be scant attention paid to health and safety matters!

A vote of thanks to Mike for a splendid evening's entertainment was given by Ken Smith.

SWINDON WORKS – PART III

by **Brian Arman**

9 May

We were delighted to welcome Canon Brian Arman back for his annual visit on the 9th May, when he continued his 'History of Swindon Works', this third instalment covering the Collett era, from 1922 - 1941. Brian began by summarising the career of C.B.Collett who had been born in Worcestershire in 1870. After being educated at Merchant Taylors School and Imperial College, London, his first employment was with the marine engineers, Maudsley Field & Co. but in 1893 he entered the GWR Drawing Office at Swindon under William Dean. Over the years he rose to become Chief Draughtsman and then Assistant Works Manager. On the retirement of G.J. Churchward, he was appointed as Chief Mechanical Engineer in 1922. *Continued.....*

SWINDON WORKS – PART III - continued

Swindon Works at that time had some 16,500 employees but Collett's overall responsibility throughout the engineering and operational activities of the company amounted to some eight or nine times that number. His appointment was somewhat surprising as Collett was a very private individual, lacking the common touch. Unlike several other senior GWR officers, he never played any part in the public and civic life of Swindon. He did not marry, and, after his family had suffered a series of tragic events, he developed a deep interest in spiritualism. Professionally, he was not innovative like his contemporary, Nigel Gresley on the LNER but like his eminent predecessor, he was an excellent production engineer, content to continue the development on locomotive design on the GWR very much following the standardisation principles laid down by Churchward.

Collett took over at Swindon when, following the First World War, the backlog of locomotive repairs was so serious that it was to take some ten years before matters were rectified. Locomotives were spending very long periods out of traffic and there was consequently a shortage of serviceable motive power. The GWR therefore purchased 100 redundant 2-8-0s from the War Department and the best 50 of these 'ROD' engines, to a Great Central design, were retained and were to see many years of service on the GWR. The Grouping of the Big Four in 1923 had brought with it a very mixed collection of locomotives from the absorbed companies, the predominant type on the former Taff Vale and Rhymney Railways being of the 0-6-2T wheel arrangement. Many of these were to be rebuilt but so useful was this type that an early Collett design, the '56XX' Class, was a development with no fewer than 200 being built, some 50 by Armstrong Whitworth, as part of a Government employment initiative.

As previously mentioned, locomotive development at Swindon continued on the principles set down earlier and between 1924 and 1938 various 'families' appeared - the 4-cylinder 4-6-0s (*Castles* and *Kings*), 2-cyl 4-6-0s (*Halls*, *Granges* and *Manors*), 2-6-2Ts and 0-6-0PTs. Fleets of 2-6-0 and 0-6-0 tender engines and small 0-4-2Ts were also built to replace earlier classes, mainly dating from late Victorian days. One most unusual design appeared in 1936 with the 'Dukedog' 4-4-0s, a novel and cheap solution to the need for motive power over lightly-laid lines. Only a few experiments were undertaken - including the fitting of Caprotti valve gear to a '*Saint*' 4-6-0 and the partial streamlining applied to a '*King*' and a '*Castle*'. The GWR did, however, pioneer the use of diesel railcars and built up a small fleet of such vehicles.

Under Collett's management, Swindon Works saw many improvements, including the extension of 'B' Shop and the modernisation of the Test Plant (which had been built in 1902). Of particular note, was the introduction of state-of-the-art Zeiss optical alignment equipment used in the setting up of locomotive frames. Workshop practices were continuously reviewed and a significant reduction in the period for locomotive overhauls was achieved.

Despite the Depression and the outbreak of the Second World War, Swindon maintained very high standards and established a world-wide reputation for excellence. Brian concluded by commenting that, despite the War, the GWR's costs were the lowest of the Big Four and that the company would have almost certainly survived, had nationalisation not taken place.

A vote of thanks was given by Chris Challis and we look forward to the next instalment of this fascinating history, which we hope will be given within the confines of the 'Steam' museum at Swindon.

TWO - DAY TRIP TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Report by Andrew Tucker

Our small group (just seven members and one guest) travelled to Ryde by train and ferry on Saturday 8 July. Leaving our bags at the Hotel we continued by Island Line to Smallbrook Junction to board the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's 13.21 service to Havenstreet. The locomotive on our train was the Ivatt 2-6-2T no.41298. Interestingly this steam loco was built in 1951 whereas the Island Line's electric multiple unit is former London Underground 1938 stock!

At Havenstreet we were met by John Faulkner, who is the IoWSR's official photographer. John gave us a conducted tour of the loco workshops which are not normally open to the public. Austerity 0-6-0T no.WD 192 *Waggoner* was under repair with its boiler out of the frames. This was the engine that hauled our train when we visited in 2007. John also conducted us around the Train Story Discovery Centre which has been built since our previous visit. This is an excellent facility to display the lines historic rolling stock and provide under-cover storage. After a late lunch, and a visit to the small artefacts museum and gift shop, we continued our journey to Wootton. This terminus is in a delightful rural setting at the west end of the line. Catching a Southern Vectis bus we were back at the Hotel in time to freshen up before going out on our evening mini-tour.

At 18.00 Derek Gawn of Mendip Mule Motorbus picked us up in his 1971 Bristol RELL single decker. This vehicle was new to Southern Vectis in 1971 and converted by them to an open-topper in 1986. There were a good number of passengers already on board including required bus crew and enthusiasts. Driving up on to the East Downs we had superb views across the island and out to sea. Descending to Brading we arrived at the station on the Island Line where the former station buildings are now a Heritage Centre run by volunteers. This was specially opened for our bus party and we were able to view the small museum and visit the preserved signalbox before having a cuppa in the tea room. The signalbox is interesting as it still has the lever frame dating from the days when the station was the junction for the Bembridge branch. Block instruments and token machines are also present so that our guide was able to simulate the procedure for a train arriving at the station (with each of us having a go at ringing the block bells and pulling the levers).

Having enjoyed a fine summer's day on Saturday we were pleased to find that Sunday was also sunny and warm (in fact it became quite hot). We boarded the open top single decker at 09.00 for the start of the full day tour of the closed railways of the island. At its peak the system totalled 55 miles and we visited most of the former stations with Derek Gawn providing a detailed running commentary. Heading west from Ryde to Wootton we followed the route of the railway as closely as possible to Newport and then turned north to Cowes including a visit to Medina wharf. This was the rail served port where most of the freight to and from the island was handled including rolling stock transfers.

Retracing our steps to Newport we continued west to the vicinity of the former Ningwood station where Derek had a surprise for us. One of his many friends in the area has a 1931 REO charabanc and we were able to travel a short distance in this fascinating historic vehicle. Approaching Yarmouth those that wished then had the opportunity to walk the path along the former railway trackbed to Freshwater – about 2¼ miles. Initially walking alongside fields and wetland we quickly came to Yarmouth station which now includes the Off the Rails Café with many original railway features retained or recreated. Passing by this oasis we continued the walk with superb views over the river Yar to our lunch stop at the End of the Line Café at Freshwater. Sadly nothing remains of the station here but the lunch was good. *Continued.....*

ISLE OF WIGHT TRIP - continued

The island's railway system never reached the south west coast but we enjoyed the very scenic ride along the clifftops to reach St Lawrence and Ventnor. After visiting both of the former station sites in Ventnor, we headed back inland to pick up the route of the Merstone to Sandown line. At Horringford Derek had arranged with the owner of the former station for us to call in and view the building and platform from what is now the garden of his home. The final part of this very comprehensive tour took us down the branch from Brading to Bembridge before we returned to Ryde Esplanade for the journey home. We all expressed grateful thanks to Derek Gawn for his excellent tour of the former railways of the Isle of Wight.

RAILWELLS

Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 August

Railwells, our annual model railway exhibition, will once again be held in Wells Town Hall, from 10.30 to 5.30 on Saturday, and 10.30 to 5.00 on Sunday. This year we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Railwells Exhibition itself!

Members are reminded that they can come in **FREE** on production of their membership card. Better still, why not offer your assistance as a steward, or in some other capacity. As well as during the show, help is also required on the Friday afternoon and evening, to assist with unloading vehicles and carrying exhibits into the hall.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact the organiser, Chris Challis, on 01749 938362, or email cgchallis@yahoo.co.uk

This Years Railwells Exhibits (some still to be confirmed)

LAYOUTS:

P4 - **Sidmouth** - Richard Harper. BR Southern Region prototype set in the summer of 1959/60.

P4 - **Seaton** - Simon Harris. The original station before it was extended for holiday makers.

P4 - **Trerice** - Iain Rice. Depicts Cornish china clay pan dries c1960.

P4 - **Longcarse West** - Simon Bendall. Sidings set at Alloa central Scotland in 1983.

P4 - **Waterloo St** - James Dickie. Inspired by the Waterloo goods branch in Aberdeen.

Gauge1 - **St Petroc** - John Green & Tony Massey. Compact terminus set in Cornwall in the 1940's.

Gn15 - **Scratchy Bottom Halt** - Mike Walshaw. Rowland Emmett inspired layout.

Og - **Happisburgh Goods** - The Model Railway Club. BR ex-Great Eastern goods in 1950's/60's.

EM - **Hebble Vale** - Karl Crowther. A cameo set in Halifax, mills, coal drops and a goods shed.

Ng - **Mill Lane TMD** - Phil Smith. Another new micro layout from Phil, a 1980's diesel depot.

HOe - **Maraizellerbahn** - Pat Challis. Built 38 years ago by husband Chris and 2 friends, as Pat liked the HOe small and quaint locos and stock.

3mm - **Mendip** - Doug Richards. Doug has exhibited a number of layouts in past years at Railwells, this is his latest.

3mm - **50 x 50 Shades of Grey** - Nick Salsman. 50cm x 50cm scene in atmospheric shades of grey.

2mm - **St Ruth** - Midlands Group, 2mm Scale Association. Based on Penzance Cornwall, running the September 1965 timetable.

Ng - **Vale of Oxbury** - Carl Woodward. A busy Western Region junction set in the 1960's.

Demonstrators

Track construction & working in S7 - The Scale 7 group

Modelling in EM - Andrew Ullyott

How to solder - Roger Sawyer

Modelling in Scalefour - Mike Ainsworth

Modelling in Plastikard - Geoff Kent

Modelling in 3mm - Andrew Shillito

Modelling the Broad Gauge - Ashley Phillips

2mm Association Roadshow - Paula Martin

Kit and scratch built wagons - John Chambers

Modelling Gauge1 - Simon Castens

Etch loco construction - Chris Bastin

Displays

Lynton & Barnstable Rly - info at www.lynton-rail.co.uk

Scalefour membership and promotion - Steve Carter

Brownsmiths, Main Street, Beckley, Rye, E Sussex, TN31 6RG. Tel: 01797 620192

Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust - info at www.sdrt.org

Touring exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of closure of the S&D

Scalefour Society; info at www.scalefour.org

Scale 7 Group Membership Sec. Ron Pitts, 30, Wroxall Road, Solihull, W. Mids., B91 1DS.

Phone 0121 705 4138. Scale7 South West Coordinator John Day

Wells Railway Fraternity; info at www.railwells.com

Display 40 years of Railwells

EM Gauge Society - info at www.emgs.org

EM Gauge Society Membership - Iain Hunter

Pendon Museum - www.pendonmuseum.com

Missenden Abbey's Railway Modellers' Weekends - 3 "learn how to" weekends a year -

www.missendenrailwaymodellers.org.uk

Railway Children Charity - www.railwaychildren.org.uk

South Western Circle - www.lswr.org

3mm Society - www.3mmsociety.org

The Great Western Society - www.didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk

Traders

L&B Sales

Scalefour Society Stores

Minerva Model Railways

Roxey Mouldings

Wild Swan Publications - What's New

East Somerset Models

Cooper Craft

Pat Banks refreshments

Modelu - scanner will be in operation

Branchlines

Wells Railway Fraternity Book Sales, in aid of The Railway Children Charity

C&L Finescale, Carrs, Exactoscale

Dragon Models

Eileens Emporium

Wizard Models (inc MSE, 51L & Comet Models)

Mousa Models by Bill Bedford

Dart Castings with Monty's figures and MJT

Aspire Gifts & Models

David Geen and Malcolm Mitchell 4mm loco kits

Attwood Aggregates

RETURN TO SANDFORD & BANWELL

By Roy Kethro

Earlier this year I bumped into an old colleague of mine who is a retired High Speed Train driver. Peter is a Dutchman by birth but ended up in this country as a railwayman on the Southern Region before moving to the Western. Over the years his research and experience has resulted in an encyclopaedic knowledge of railway operations both nationally and internationally.

Living at Winscombe on the Strawberry Line these days, he mentioned that he runs a small walking club for gentlemen of a certain age group under the auspices of U3A (The University of the Third Age). He invited me to come along, so on a fine Thursday morning in March we met up at a small coffee shop a stone's throw from Winscombe station. Only three of us turned up that morning and as the fields and country lanes were still a bit on the muddy side Peter suggested we keep to the Strawberry Line foot and cycle path initially.

As we set off I couldn't help thinking that it was like a scene from 'Last of the Summer Wine' with three itinerant pensioners wandering off to get up to no good. After a mile or two we reached the restored Sandford and Banwell station which nestles in the Sandford Station Retirement Village. Those of you who came along will recall that it was our first port of call on the Fraternity's Strawberry line coach tour a few seasons ago. Since then, a cosmetically restored Sentinel loco of the type once used by Sandford Quarry has been installed on the short length of track alongside the platform to complement the two open wagons and exhibition coach.

Peter's focus seemed to be on the chocolate and cream coach and he made a comment about this being a Great Western Railway vehicle. Straight away I thought that he wouldn't make such a basic mistake as that as it is clearly an early BR mark 1 design. We spent some time discussing the B4 bogies analysing how the suspension worked with coil springs and friction dampers. I knew a bit about this as during my apprenticeship I spent a short time on the production line at York Carriage Works assembling these bogies to go under Southern Region electric multiple units. I rapidly came to the conclusion that Peter was testing my knowledge so I gently pointed out that this coach was not a Great Western example but built by British Railways in the 1950's. I also pointed out that the jumper receptacles above the buffer beams suggested that it was actually from a 4TC unit which was used on the Bournemouth to Weymouth push-pull services prior to the third rail electrification of that route.

Not to be beaten, he then tested me on the method of operation with these units which I had to admit I was not that familiar with. He explained how one or two unpowered 4TC units would be propelled from Waterloo to Bournemouth by a high powered 4REP unit. At Bournemouth a class 33 diesel electric loco converted for push-pull working would haul one or two 4TC units through to Weymouth then propel them back to Bournemouth to marry up with a 4REP unit for continuation on to Waterloo. I do recall seeing 4TC units in operation in their overall blue livery but it looked to me more like a cobalt blue rather than the brighter BR corporate shade.

Satisfied that he had exhausted my knowledge on that particular subject, Peter then took us on a stroll up around the top of Sandford Quarry before returning back to our start point. These walks have become a regular thing on Thursday mornings and regardless of the make-up of the group, whose members come from all sorts of backgrounds, the conversation usually gets around to railways in one shape or another. We are planning to go further afield and a stroll along the sea wall from Dawlish is definitely on the cards. I expect there will be lots of railway talk that day!

2017 - 2018 PROGRAMME

All meetings are on Tuesday evenings, commencing at 7.30, in Wells Town Hall.

2017

| | | |
|--------------|--|---------------|
| 12 September | Railwells – 40 Exhibitions <i>followed by</i> | Chris Challis |
| 10 October | Railway Modelling – 40 years of change | Steve Flint |
| 14 November | Restoring a Sentinel Steam Locomotive | Andy Chapman |
| 12 December | Hill Railways in Germany, Switzerland and India | Alex Green |
| | AGM <i>followed by</i> Quiz – set by last year's winner: | John Uncles |

2018

50th Anniversary Year

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 9 January | Members Films and Photos from the 1960s | Andrew Linham and John Reakes |
| 13 February | Moving London Forward - Crossrail | Patrick Griffin |
| 13 March | Anniversary Meeting – 50 years of WRF <i>followed by</i> | |
| | Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Extension Plans | David Edwards |
| 10 April | The Barry Scrapyard Story | Roger Hardingham |
| 8 May | Modernisation to Privatisation, 1968 - 1997 | John Chalcraft |
| 12 June | Swindon Works – Part IV at STEAM Swindon <i>A day at the former Works – Coach leaves Wells Bus Station 8.30am</i> | Brian Arman |

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Roy Kethro

The Fraternity membership year runs from the beginning of September to the end of August. Your Treasurer cum Membership Secretary will be delighted to relieve you of £18 at the September or October meetings. However, please be conscious that as a courtesy to the guest speaker we cannot delay the start of proceedings so your prompt arrival to hand over your cash or cheque would be appreciated. Remember that as well as the 8 talks and AGM plus quiz and raffle, your membership entitles you to free entry to our model railway show Railwells on the second weekend in August on production of your membership card. For anyone who wishes to pay their subscription early, this can be done at Railwells at the Fraternity stand.

AND FINALLY :

Did you know that Whitechapel station has the unusual situation whereby the District Line and Hammersmith & City Line *London Underground* platforms are **above** the East London Line *London Overground* platforms.