

WELLS RAILWAY FRATERNITY

Newsletter No.192 - July 2018

<<< **50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR** >>>

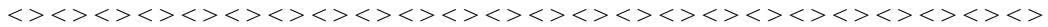
www.railwells.com

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



Visit to STEAM Museum at Swindon on 12 June. Photo by Andrew Tucker.

MODERNISATION TO PRIVATISATION, 1968 - 1997

by John Chalcraft – 8 May

On the 8th May we once more welcomed John Chalcraft as our speaker. John has for many years published railway photographs and is well known for his knowledge on topics relating to our hobby. He began by informing us that there were now some 26,000 photographs on his website! From these, he had compiled a presentation entitled 'From Modernisation to Privatisation', covering a 30-year period from 1968 (the year of the Fraternity's founding) until 1997. His talk was accompanied by a couple of hundred illustrations, all of very high quality, which formed a most comprehensive review of the railway scene during a period when the railways of this country were subjected to great changes.

We started with a few photos of the last steam locomotives at work on BR and then were treated to a review of the new motive power that appeared in the 20 years or so from the Modernisation Plan of 1955. John managed to illustrate nearly every class of diesel and electric locomotive that saw service in this period, from the diminutive '03' shunter up to the Class '56' 3,250 hp heavy freight locomotive - a total of over 50 types. The period also saw the beginning of the replacement of earlier diesel and electric multiple-unit stock, and the appearance, following the 'Blue Pullmans', of the highly successful High Speed Train design - which only now, after over 40 years, is beginning to be replaced. We were reminded that, like many steam classes, some of the new diesel locomotives were also destined to have short lives. The decision to abandon the Western Region's involvement with diesel-hydraulic technology led to the early withdrawal of the 'Warship', 'Western' and 'Hymek' classes but other diesel-electric classes, such as the 'Baby Deltic' and the Metrovick Co-Bo were to have very short operational lives. The nature of freight traffic was also changing rapidly and some classes, such as the Swindon '95XX' type were built only to find that there was very little work for them to do - although many examples found new careers in industry. With regard to liveries, the first two decades of the period under review saw virtually every locomotive in a standard blue livery and coaching stock in blue and grey. The scene was made a little more interesting to the loco enthusiast with the appearance of a few remarkable prototypes such as *Lion*, *Falcon* and *Kestrel*. The last-mentioned was a venture by Brush being a 4,000 hp diesel-electric which eventually was sold to the Russian railways.

The second half of the period was to see great changes in the railway scene with the advent of sectorisation from 1983. BR was split up into six main sectors of activity - InterCity, Railfreight, Provincial, Parcels, Network South East and Departmental - with some sectors being further sub-divided; Railfreight for instance had Construction, Coal, Distribution, Metals & Automotive, Petroleum and General sub-sectors. As a result a whole range of new liveries appeared with new logos and decals often replacing the BR double-arrow. The then new Class 58 freight locomotives appeared in a new Railfreight grey colour scheme and in 1985 new liveries for InterCity and Scotrail appeared. A taste of what was to come was the appearance of some new private undertakings, a move pioneered by Foster Yeoman who incredibly were able to introduce American-built diesel freight locomotives into Britain.

Sectorisation was seen as a preliminary to the eventual privatisation of railway operations and towards the end of the 30 years under review the this policy was pursued by the Government. At first all railway rolling stock, locomotives, coaching stock and freight vehicles were apportioned between three private leasing companies and it was something of a shock when one of the leasing companies, Porterbrook, repainted a couple of locomotives in a purple livery! It had been intended that the various Railfreight sub-sectors should be offered as three separate undertakings but in the event, nearly all these activities were swallowed up by an American company and the red livery of the new English, Welsh and Scottish Railway (EWS) soon became familiar and a large number of American-built locomotives, similar in appearance to the Foster Yeoman Class 59 were imported.

Privatisation was here to stay and, whatever one's views on it, there can be no doubt that the railway scene has become extremely colourful as a result. A vote of thanks was given by John Uncles who congratulated the speaker on giving us such a comprehensive and excellent summary of three decades of British railway history, the like of which had never been seen before. We left with our heads spinning!

VISIT TO “STEAM” MUSEUM, SWINDON - by Andrew Tucker – 12 June

As part of our 50th Anniversary Year we arranged for Canon Brian Arman to give the fourth and final part of his talk on Swindon Works in a surviving section of the former workshops at STEAM - the Museum of the Great Western Railway. A total of thirty six members and friends made their way to Swindon for this special occasion.

After coffee we went into the museum through the introductory displays and saw the re-creations of the works offices, foundry and the various workshops before reaching the main exhibits. Brian Arman and Mike Wyatt joined us at this point. They are both founder members of the Friends of Swindon Railway Museum and were able to give us some interesting additional information. After seeing the subsequent sections about building the GWR, operations, goods and passenger traffic, stations, etc., we all gathered around *Caerphilly Castle* for a group photo.

We then had a break for lunch before assembling in the Sir Daniel Gooch Theatre for Brian Arman’s talk (see report below by John Uncles). All those returning to Wells on the coach agreed that it had been an excellent day.

SWINDON WORKS, PART IV - by Brian Arman – 12 June

After lunch we all assembled in the Sir Daniel Gooch Lecture Theatre for the final episode by Brian Arman in his monumental series on the “History of Swindon Works”. Assisted once again by Mike Wyatt in charge of the projector, the period under review began in 1941 with the appointment of F.W. Hawksworth as Chief Mechanical Engineer in succession to Charles Collett.

“Fred” Hawksworth was born in 1884 and he began his long career with the Great Western Railway as an apprentice in 1898. In 1905 he was appointed to the Drawing Office and some 20 years later had risen to the post of Chief Draftsman, whilst during 1937/38 he was the Senior Assistant responsible for the modernisation of Swindon Works. He remained as CME through Nationalisation but retired in 1949 as the newly created British Railways was not at all to his liking. He was a shy, reserved man, strict but essentially kind-hearted. A bachelor for nearly all his life, he surprisingly married at the age of 88 and died four years later, in 1976.

As CME he was responsible for some 17,000 employees, a total that included those in the motive power department. At the time, Swindon was capable of building and repairing substantial numbers of locomotives, coaching stock and freight vehicles. The GWR, at the outbreak of the Second World War, had over 3,800 locomotives, 5,000 passenger vehicles and 16,000 goods wagons, whilst the total mileage run accounted for over 100 million miles per annum. The War saw much of Swindon Works' capacity given over to armaments work and an amazing variety of items were manufactured – tank tracks, cranes, landing craft and even miniature submarines. In addition many skilled toolmakers were transferred to other factories, particularly to Filton where Bristol Beaufighters were being built. Unlike Filton, Swindon escaped major bombing except for some damage to No.24 Carriage Works in 1942.

Hostilities severely restricted locomotive development work but Swindon was to build a batch of 80 LMS “8F” 2-8-0s and undertake repairs to US-built “S160” type 2-8-0s as part of the War effort. Nevertheless, the “Modified Hall” 4-6-0 appeared in 1944 and a completely new design, the “County” 4-6-0 a year later. Brian mentioned the unsubstantiated accounts that Hawksworth was contemplating designing a “Pacific” but his view was that, having regard to the severe gradients in the West of England, a 4-8-0 would have been more likely – even if the GWR had need of a more powerful express engine than the “Kings”.

SWINDON WORKS, PART IV - continued

In the immediate post-war years, three new designs of pannier tank appeared – the “16XX” Class for light shunting and branch line work, the “94XX” for heavy shunting and the “15XX”, again for heavy work. It was interesting to note that the prototype No.9400 incorporated an unused boiler built as long ago as 1924 for a projected 4-4-4T for the M&SWJR line, whilst two “1600s” were sent to the far North of Scotland to work on the Dornoch branch. The “1500” design was a complete departure from GWR tradition in having no running plate, and outside cylinders with exposed Walschaerts valve gear. Having regard to their high axle loads, it was debatable that there was enough work for the heavy panniers to do. Nevertheless 210 Class “94XX” were built and were consequently to have comparatively short working lives.

After Nationalisation, the Swindon Test Plant, under the direction of Sam Ell, was used to investigate a variety of locomotives ranging from an LMS 2-6-0 to a “Merchant Navy” 4-6-2 and the unique “8P” No.71000 *Duke of Gloucester*. The LMS 2-6-0 No.46413 was surprisingly found to have considerably inferior performance to the “Dean Goods” 0-6-0 No.2579, built half a century before, and the situation was rectified by redraughting the newer loco. An LNER “V2” 2-6-2 provided experience of a self-cleaning smokebox – soon to become standard – whilst, with concern mounting over the deterioration in the quality of steam coal available, work on a “King” led to the development of the 4-row superheater. Swindon Works was fully involved in the scheme to convert locomotives to oil-firing but this proved a short-lived project.

Hawksworth continued the work of his predecessor with regards to the development of diesel railcars and shunters but the GWR was to break completely new ground by ordering two gas-turbine locos for main line work. No.18000 was built in Switzerland, followed by No.18100 built by Metrovick. Both were moderately successful but No.18000 eventually went to Vienna for use as a test load loco; in recent years it did return to Britain for preservation. The British-built gas turbine was converted into a prototype a.c. Electric locomotive at the beginning of the 25kV electrification of the West Coast main line.

Steam locomotive construction continued at Swindon until 1960 and included the final ten “Manor” Class 4-6-0s, followed by batches of LMS design 2-6-0s and Standard 4-6-0, 2-6-2T and 2-10-0 types. In fact the last “9F” 2-10-0 No.92220 *Evening Star* was the final steam loco built for British Railways. By then, diesel locomotives were being built at Swindon; shunters and some “Warship” and “Western” diesel-hydraulics. The final locomotives built comprised a batch of 0-8-0s for Kenya Railways. Maintenance and repair work continued and the last steam locomotive to be overhauled was the by then privately-owned No.4079 *Pendennis Castle*. A strange job was heralded by the arrival at the Works of a number of LNER “V2s” for cutting up but with the tenders to be converted to snow ploughs.

Work also continued with diesel multiple unit and coaching stock but the Works were by now very much in decline. Nevertheless it still came as a shock when the complete closure was announced in 1985, the year of the “GWR150” anniversary, whereupon the workforce voted that there should be no anniversary celebrations in Swindon. The main closure came in June 1986 although a few of the workshops were retained for a little longer (e.g. for the production of springs and for private preservation work). Following closure part of the works were hosted to house “The National Railway Museum on Tour” exhibition, but the site of the once famous works was then sold after some 140 years, partly for a vast new IT-based complex, which did not happen, and nowadays, apart from the STEAM museum, most of the site is occupied by a large shopping complex. Brian concluded by reciting a short but appropriate poem.

Andrew Tucker proposed a vote of thanks to Brian for this last fascinating installment in his long-running series on the history of Swindon Works. He felt the venue had been a highly appropriate one, a sentiment echoed by the applause of a most appreciative audience.

RAILWELLS – ANNUAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 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 10.00 to 4.30 on Sunday.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Wells Railway Fraternity, making this the 3rd anniversary event in a row. (2016 was the 50th anniversary of the closure of the Somerset & Dorset Railway and 2017 the 40th Railwells). Including Scalefour Southwest and Special 2mm section.

Included in this year's exhibition is a 009 layout depicting a WW1 trench railway, by Callum Willcox, commemorating the battle of Amiens which began on the 8th August 1918. Tim Venton will be showing his P4 layout Clutton for the last time; the layout is set in 1952 on the Bristol & North Somerset Railway. Also attending, for probably it's only public show, is the Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway by John Greenwood; this 2mm system is in fact 7 layouts in one, making up the Southern Withered arm in North Cornwall. Roger Orpwood's tiny T Scale layout's locos are so small there is no room for motors inside them; the layout works with magic 'You'll like it, not a lot, but you'll like it'.

The Wells Railway Fraternity stand and displays will have items depicting the last 50 years of meetings, outings and visits.

When the Fraternity first set up Railwells it was advertised as a Model & Railway Exhibition. For a number of years now the show has not included a Railwayana display. This year Malcolm Barton has stepped forward to put one on. This is in the room on the right of the foyer as you enter the Town Hall. In this room also is a display of live steam locos by the 82D Model Engineers Club.

If you follow the stand numbers round the show you will not miss any of this year's special delights. There are 16 layouts, 20 traders plus demos and displays.

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)

Demonstrations

Modelling in EM	-	-	-	Andrew Ulliyott
How to solder	-	-	-	Roger Sawyer
Track construction & working in S7	-	-	-	The Scale 7 group
Modelling the Broad Gauge	-	-	-	Paul Townsend
2mm Association Roadshow	-	-	-	Paula Martin
Kit and scratch built wagons & Modelling in Scalefour	-	-	-	John Chambers
Wagon Building	-	-	-	Gavin Clarke
Modelling the Missenden Abbey way	-	-	-	David Brandreth

Layouts

- P4 **Clutton** Tim Venton
BR WR North Somerset Railway station, Tim's last exhibition with Clutton
- P4 **Pwllheli** Jonathon Buckie
Northern terminus of the Cambrian coast railway 2000-2012
- P4 **Lower Rose Goods** Steve Howe
Inter war GWR Cornish goods depot
- P4 **Mount Woodville Works** Rob Milliken
Set in the mid 1960's a salt glazed works making mainly drainage pipes
- 2mm **Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway** John Greenwood
A rare chance to see 7 layouts in one, a true railway system
- 2mm **Bordesley North** Jim Alwood
Minimum space layout with high level station and lower level cement terminal
- 2mm **Callaton** Mick Simpson
Situated north of Newcastle in the 1970's
- 2mm **Mini-MSW (The Woodhead Line)** Alan Whitehouse
The first showing of Alan's revamped Woodhead inspired layout
- EM **Navigation Road** Clive Hunt
North East London 1970's
- 00 **Worlds End** Peter Goss
North Yorkshire 2005-20015
- 3mm **Ballyconnel Road** 3mm Irish Group
Great Northern Railway Ireland 1955
- 009 **WW1 Trench Railway** Callum Willcox
The Battle of Amiens 1918, a poignant reminder of 100 years ago
- 009 **Wantage Narrow Gauge Tramway** Richard Holder
An interpretation of what the Upper Yard, Mill Street might have looked like at 2'3" Gauge
- 0g **Paxtol Road** Tim Tincknell
Col Stephens inspired light railway in the 1930's
- Ng **Ashburton** John Birkett-Smith
This delightful scene is set in the 1930's
- T scale **Bridge Siding** $\frac{3}{4}$ mm to the foot Roger Orpwood
A demonstration, magic micro scene, of this very small scale

Displays etc.

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

Scalefour membership and promotion - Steve Carter
Brownsmyths, Main Street, Beckley, Rye, E Sussex, TN31 6RG. Pn 01797 260192

Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust; info at www.sdrt.co.uk

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: 50 years of the Fraternity

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

82D Model Engineers, from Warminster
Display of 5'' gauge live steam locos

Simon Bowditch, Member of the Guild of Railway Artists
Display of fine line and wash railway pictures

Railwayana Display by Malcolm Barton

Traders

Lynton & Barnstable Railway Sales

Rail-books

C&L Finescale, Carrs, Exactoscale

Scalefour Society Stores

Dragon Models

Minerva Model Railways

Eileens Emporium

Roxey Mouldings

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

Mousa Models by Bill Bedford

Dart Castings with Monty's figures and MJT

Newsletter No.192
2018

~~~~~ 7 ~~~~~

July

