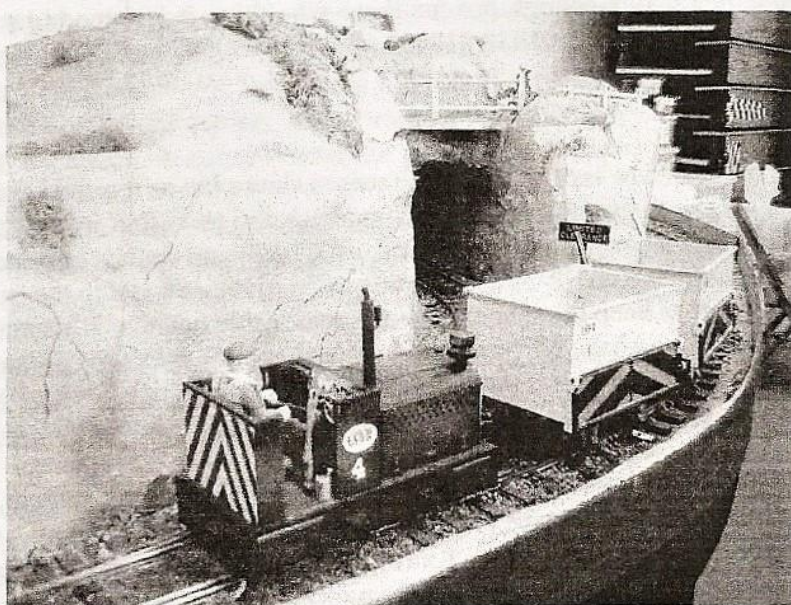


THE GRAIL

The Newsletter of the Mid Wales and
Marches Group of the
'G' Scale Society
June 2008



At work on the Lentil Soup Works Railway

Change of Group Leader

Towards the end of last year Alan Millichamp rang me and explained that he was considering stepping down from the post of Leader of the Mid Wales and Marches Group and he asked if I would be prepared to take on the job. I told him that whilst I was pleased that he considered me a suitable candidate I was not sure that I was the right person so he agreed to ask for volunteers in the December 2007 issue of 'The Grail'. Surprise surprise! – no one volunteered so despite my reservations I am now your esteemed Group Leader.

Alan is going to be a very hard act to follow but I will do my best and I am hoping that the members of the Mid Wales and Marches Group will keep me up to date with everything that is going on in our area of Garden Railways so that I have plenty to put in 'The Grail' each quarter. I welcome any articles, letters, items for sale and items wanted. I would particularly appreciate articles about your own garden railway and photos (digital or otherwise) with or without an article as long as you also provide a brief explanation of the photo. .My contact details are :-

IMPORTANT (Alan will not see this section in his newsletter)

In view of the work Alan has done for the Group and the Society over the years it would be nice to mark his retirement from the Group Leader's post in some way and as he will be hosting an open day on Sunday 29th June that would be an ideal occasion on which to make some sort of presentation. My initial thoughts were that we could each donate say £5 and that I could approach his wife Chris to find out what gift he would most appreciate. Obviously some of you may want to do your own thing and some of you may not know Alan well enough to want to get involved which is fair enough but for those who think it is a good idea could I ask you to give me a ring on

Around the shows

At Christmas I intended to visit all of the pre season shows but as it turned out I only managed to get along to the 16mm show at Stoneleigh and to G Rail in Nottingham. The 16mm show was a very popular show with all of the main dealers in evidence and it was only by leaving my credit cards at home and restricting myself to the cash I had taken that I was able to keep my spending within reasonable bounds. It's funny but even when you think you have all you need it only takes a show like the 16mm to make you realise that there are in fact loads more bits & bobs which you desperately need to make your railway more interesting and individual.

G Rail was a smaller but no less interesting show and I was easily able to curb my spending on that day as I had agreed to assist Mike Goodwin with the running of his portable layout 'The Lentil Soup Works Railway'. Both my son James and I spent the day as Mike's apprentices loading lentils at the mines and transporting them to the soup works. In the afternoon I took time out to attend the G Scale Society AGM which was held in an adjoining room and the business was dealt with swiftly. The current committee members were all voted back on unopposed and it was agreed that the G Scale society subscriptions would remain unchanged for another year.



A lovely day out at Pat and Ivan Byng's garden railway last year

Mike Goodwin

The LSWR at G-rail 2008

A short account of the layouts visit to G-rail 2008

It started when I noticed a request by Martin Putman in the G scale society's 2007 autumn journal. He wanted portable G scale Layouts for the 2008 G-rail.

After some careful deliberation and the obligatory consultation with the significant other half. An E-mail was sent to Martin which offered the Lentil Soup Works Railway (LSWR) as a possible exhibit and gave brief details.

In December I had an E-mail thanking me for the offer and to say the LSWR would at this stage be included in the G-rail exhibits. Confirmation and other details would be sent in the new year. The confirmation E-mail came halfway through March and a further E-mail containing full details and passes etc arrived on the 22 April.

We usually use our camper van to transport the LSWR to an exhibition and G-rail would be no exception. A camp site within easy reach of Harvey Hadden sports centre was found and booked.

During the weeks immediately prior to G-rail the LSWR's scenery, stock and electrics were checked out and any problems rectified. A spare box was made up 'just in case' and I also recruited David and James Dowling to come and assist me in operating the LSWR.

After lunch on Friday (25 April) we set off and reached the sports centre just after four to find it a hive of activity as around 75% of G-rails Traders, Layouts and others were all trying to ferry equipment stores in to the hall build their stands, obtain power etc.

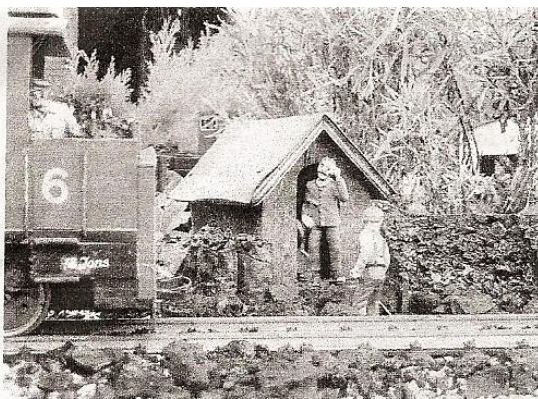
It took about an hour to set the LSWR up and have the trains, the lentil loading chute, discharge bay and the sector plate all working. It was then on to the camp site was reached around seven that evening.

At nine thirty on the 26th we returned to the sports centre which once again was very chaotic every one putting the finishing touches to their stands etc. At ten David and James arrived and familiarised themselves with the operations of LSWR. In what seemed no time at all we were surrounded by members who seemed to have a never ending list of questions. Lunch time seemed to fly by David and James went to the AGM whilst I continued to operate the LSWR.

At around four we started to pack up by five we had loaded the van and were on our way home.

It was a good show from the LSWR point of view no breakdowns or problems to speak off, both David and James operated wonderfully all day and managed to answer most of the questions asked !





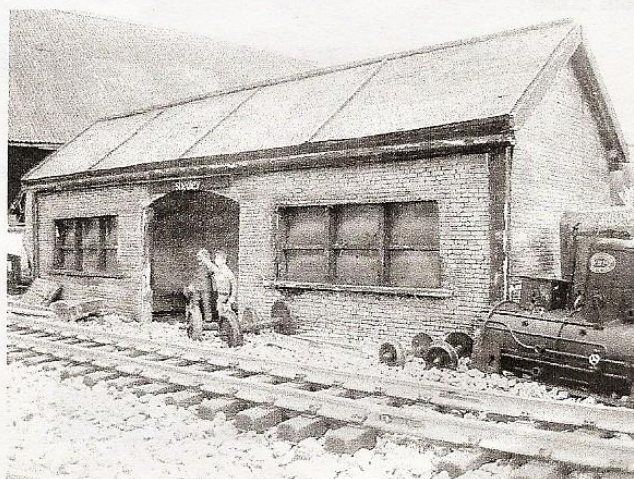
A hot day on the Dow Valley Light Railway



On Shed

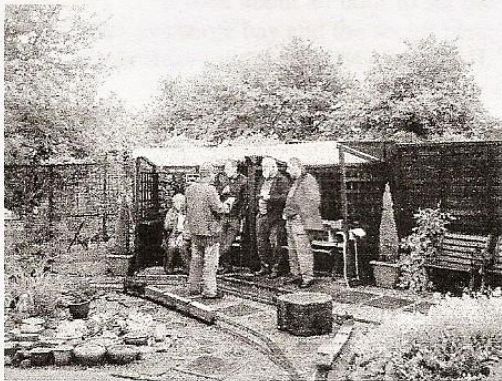
Open Days

The first open day of the year was held at my railway the 'Dow Valley Light Railway' and whilst the weather around the country, particularly up north, was pretty rough we were lucky in Welshpool with no rain until about 5pm by which time almost everyone had set off for home. We had the usual mix of Electric, Battery a Steam operation and the day did not pass without it's problems particularly when Steve Thornhill's steam Pearce 'Countess' kept derailing at the same place. Closer investigation revealed a kink in the track caused by an episode of tree lopping over the winter. Luckily I had some spare track and we managed to lift the damaged section and replace it with new track and that solved that problem. We had a more difficult and ultimately insurmountable problem when Ian Sharples found that his LGB Mallet would not fit through the Tuxcraft concrete tunnel mouths. I think that a session with the angle grinder is going to be needed. I thought that my loading gauge catered for all size of locos and stock (apart from those large hoppers which Martin took along to Ivan & Pat Byng's last year) but obviously I was wrong. Doug Garner from Skelmersdale was 80 on Sunday 4th May and when he turned up for the open day we all took the opportunity to sing 'Happy Birthday' and my wife Cynthia very thoughtfully presented him with a cake and a candle to blow out.

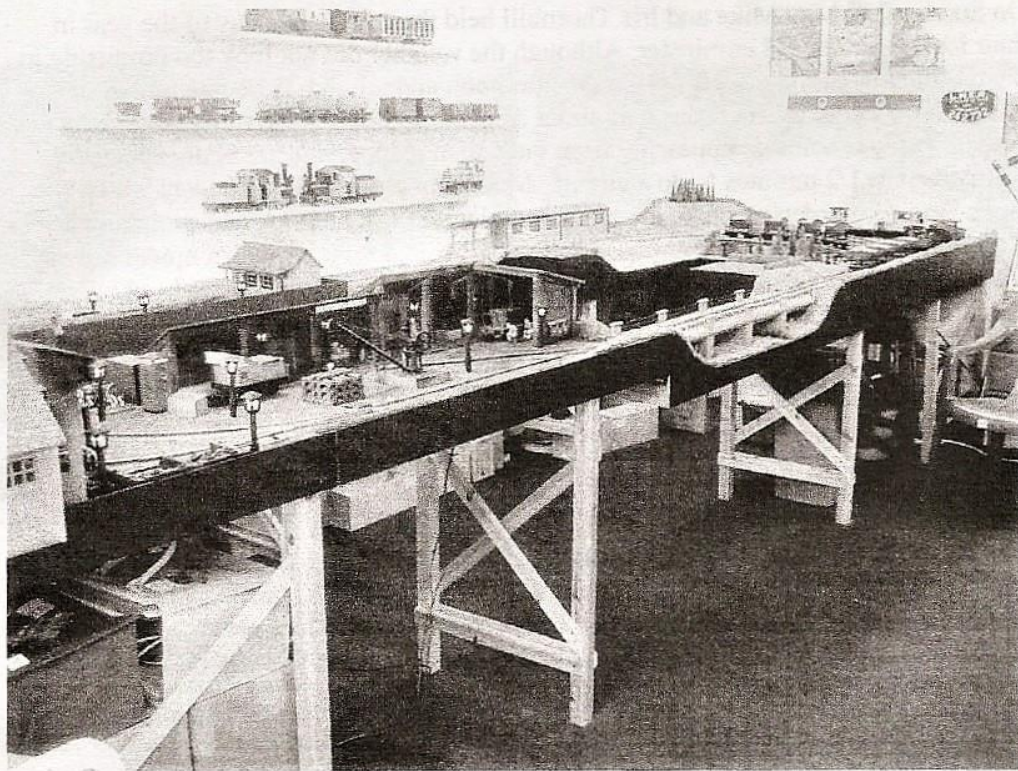


On Sunday 25th May Mike and Iris Thornhill held their first open day of the year in their lovely garden in Leominster. Although the weather did not look too promising in the morning the rain held off during the afternoon and around 25 people turned up. The railway has a continuous run of about 330 feet and twists and turns around the garden with the trains disappearing from view then reappearing again unexpectedly taking over 2 1/2 minutes to do a circuit. Mike is in charge of the railway whilst Iris looks after the garden and they certainly complement one another. Mike explained that they have aimed to have a garden with a railway in it rather than a model railway in the garden and they have succeeded admirably. The track is electrified and operates via a Massoth digital control. However there is plenty of scope for battery operation and live steam and on the day all three types of control were in operation. In addition to the extensive railway in the garden Mike has built a layout in his workshop. This is also in G Scale and is known as 'The Kenwater Chicken Grit Company' and it covers an area 17' x 6'. The layout has been built in sections and Mike intends to take it to the shows. The first public show at which the layout will be exhibited will be the Stafford show on 3rd & 4th February next year. As Mike & Iris live on the border between the Mid Wales and Marches Group and the West Midlands Group they hold open days for both groups and the 25th May date was for the Mid Wales and Marches Group. On 8th June they will be opening their garden for the West Midlands group and if you would like to visit on that day please give them a ring on them a ring.

Mike & Iris Thornhill's Open Day



The Kenwater Chicken Grit Company



Diary of Events

OPEN DAY MARTIN HOWARD KINGTON 7th JUNE - CANCELLED

Martin Howard (Martins Models Kington) was due to host an open day on 7th June but when I saw him at G Rail he explained that he has had a number of problems over the winter. Firstly the wind and rain has caused a lot of damage to his buildings but more seriously a deer managed to get into his garden by walking along the stream which runs at the bottom of his garden and it created havoc on his railway. Martin is now faced with a lot of repair work before his railway is up & running and he does not anticipate being sorted by 7th June so reluctantly he has asked me to let everyone know that he will have to cancel that date. When he has the railway back to how he wants it he will arrange another date for an open day. In the meantime his shop is open as usual.

Sunday 8th June 2pm onwards Garden Railway Open Day
Mike and Iris Thornhill

Sunday 15th June Father's Day Steam up at Maws Craft Centre
Ironbridge

Sunday June 29th 11am onwards Garden Railway Open Day
Alan and Chris Millichamp

Sunday July 6 th	11am onwards	Garden Railway Open Day Ivan and Pat Byng
Sunday July 20 th	10.30 – 16.00	Narrow Gauge Show Telford Park Inn
Sunday August 10 th		Aberaeron Railway Show
Sunday 17 th Aug	11am onwards	Garden Railway Open Day Dave & Cynthia Dowling
Sat & Sun 30-31 Aug	10-17.00	Llanfair Garden Railway Gala
Sunday 7 th Sept	11am onwards	Garden Railway Open Day Tony & Pauline Hayward
Easter to End September		Garden Railway Open in aid of Charity Alf Bacon

James Dowling has been very busy over the winter and early spring building a railway in his garden at Cnwch Coch near Aberystwyth and when Dennis Chandler sadly announced that he was taking up the railway in his garden in Llanfyllin James bought the posts and raised sections of trackbed from him to use in his sloping garden and they are now part of the Cnwch Coch Mineral Tramway. The railway is still in it's early stages and is being built for battery and steam operation only and although there is still a lot to be done James would welcome visitors provided that you give him a ring beforehand on [redacted] He lives in a single track road with no parking so a formal open day would be a bit of a problem.

I have sent this issue out to everyone by post but if you have internet access and would prefer to receive future copies by e-mail will you please let me know your e-mail address so that I can arrange for that to be done.

Dave Dowling