

S&DJR 4-4-0 No. 78 in blue livery with 'The Pines Express'.

'Otterley St Mary'

Celebrating 125 years of the S&DR

by M. J. Clements

Photographs by D. Maries

THE layout portrays an imaginary section of the old Somerset and Dorset Railway as it was. Depending on the stock being used it can be "run" from its pre-grouping days until British Railways closed the line in 1966.

The station is not modelled on any particular prototype on the S&D, and makes no pretence to be historically accurate. As I possess most of the publications available on the railway, I have been able to glean many facts, figures and ideas from these publications to portray part of the railway as I imagine it would have been, especially in the pre-grouping era, which is the subject of this particular article.

Fortunately I have sufficient rolling stock from my permanent layout to operate this one when at exhibitions, as detailed below.

1920-1927

Stock. Painted in Midland S&D LMS and Southern liveries. Many items have been scratchbuilt or modified from various commercial products.

1928-1947

LMS/Southern liveried stock. Details as above.

1948-1966

LMS BR liveries. Modified ready-to-run items are used.

The layout — a brief history

The original layout measured 12'x2' and was constructed on three baseboards (see Fig. 1). The scenery ended in a tunnel mouth on board B. Originally a GWR layout, with GW buildings and fittings, the model was shown locally in this form.

In 1980 the layout was running in its extended form (see Fig. 2) as an LNER (my son's stock) LMS/BR layout. It appeared in this guise for the Redditch Club's show in 1981. Since then the layout has been extended with a 9' long storage yard section beyond the station. It now operates as a S&D/LMS

layout, either as a through station or branch terminus depending on the room available at exhibitions.

Construction

This is conventional, timber framed, screwed and glued, with built-in legs or trestles to support it. 2" x 1" timber is used. Chipboard and plywood have been employed on the station and storage yard sections, and open-top construction, using timber/plywood/expanded polystyrene, on the scenic sections. Split hinges/bolts secure joints and legs. Backscenes are painted hardboard. All the 'normal' scenic preparations are used for construction and finishing. 'Lift off' scenic sections are placed at the ends of the station, forming a small diorama on their own.

Track

PECO track and points are used on the layout. The station layout was laid by Steve Higgitt, a fellow club member, and the remainder by myself. Points are all manually operated, although provision has been made for either wire in the tube or electrical point operation.

Electrical

Control is by an H and M Duette, wired for cab control so that two operators can use two locos at all times during exhibitions. All switches are centre-off three-way switches on dual sections and on/off for sidings etc. Electrical connections from the control board to layout and the layout connections themselves are ex-aircraft and audio multi-plugs.

Accessories

Signals are Hornby, and tough enough to stand knocking about. Road vehicles include metal kits by Malvern Models and Midget Models.

Others are various plastic kits (by Hales, Slaters, Airfix etc), some modified. As the layout was originally refurbished for the Club's 1981 Show, all of the buildings with the exception of the signal box, have been constructed from kits (i.e. Builder Plus, Wills Coopercraft etc.). Additional lineside features are by all main manufacturers and "little people" are by John Piper, Merit, Airfix and Slaters.

The S&DR — some prototype notes

The Somerset and Dorset Railway was formed in 1862 by an amalgamation of the Somerset Central, and Dorset Central railways. This formed a through route linking the Bristol and English Channels, via Burnham-on-Sea and Wimborne.

In 1869 the Midland Railway opened its terminus at Bath, Green Park station (S&D head offices were here) at the northern end of the line. By 1874 the Bath-Evercreech junction section was opened. Thus the Midland and London and South Western Railways had a standard gauge line passing across the GWR broad gauge territory.

In 1875 the line was leased jointly by the above two companies as the "Bath Extension" (Bath-Evercreech) had drained the S&D's finances to the extent that it was unable to cope with increased traffic, especially as Bournemouth was becoming a holiday town, and the line was becoming a main line from the North to the South coast.

Passenger traffic was seasonal, very busy on summer Saturdays with much double heading on the heavy trains from Bath to Evercreech because of the very hilly nature of the line in its northern sections.

The "Pines Express" was the line's major through train, running daily from both directions, unlike the 'summer only' specials.

Freight was always important on the S&D with both through trains and local coal and stone traffic from the Mendips. A special 2-8-0 goods loco was designed for the line, the first one built in 1914 and later locos in 1925.

In the 1960's the railway was transferred from the Midland/Southern regions of BR to Western Region. This started the "death knell" of the railway with its steep gradients, tight curves and sections of single track, plus the need to double head trains making the line uneconomic to operate.

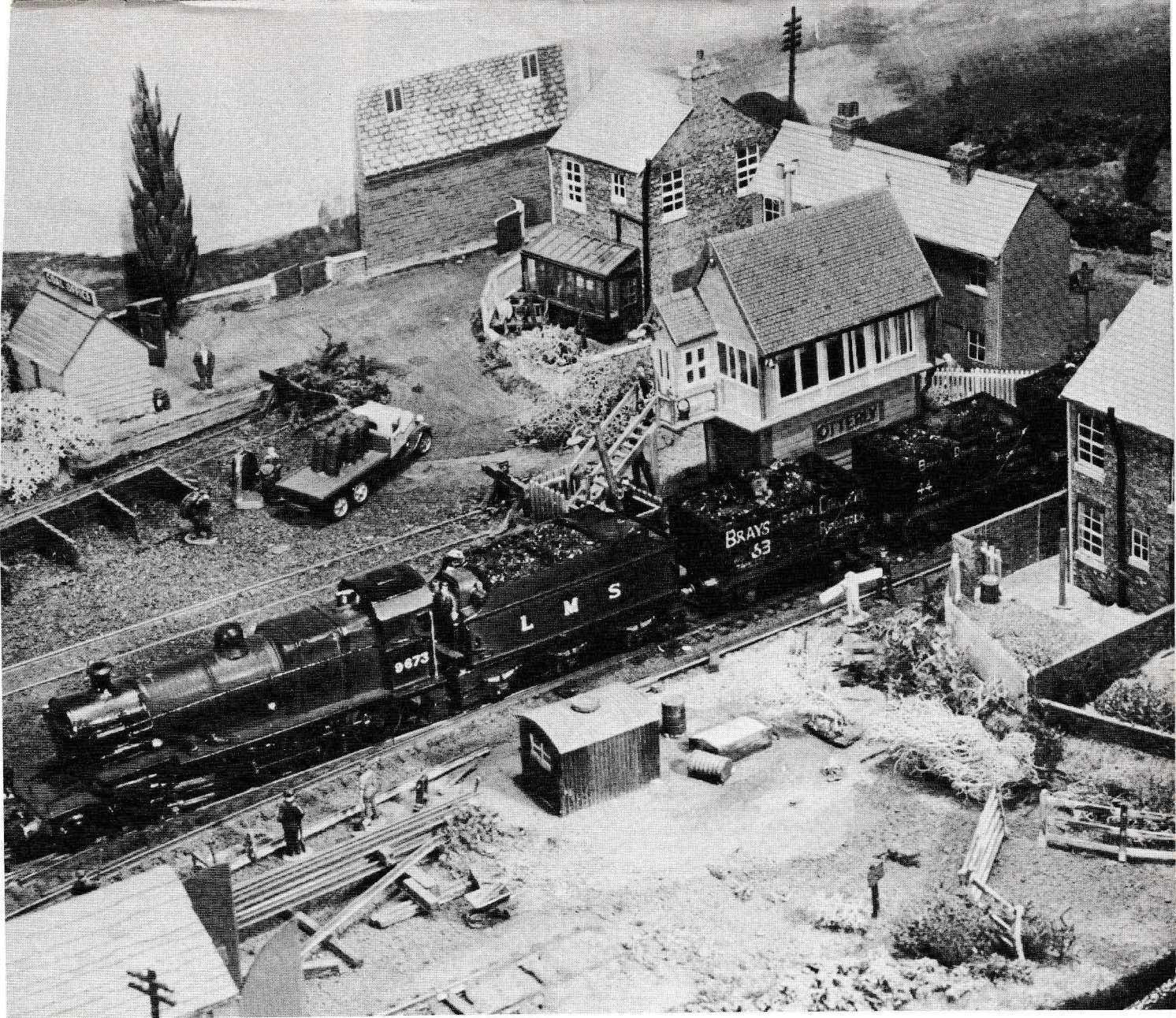
The rundown began with the Wimborne, Wells, Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea branches being closed. Through traffic was diverted in 1962 and the S and D closed completely on 5 March 1966.

Somerset and Dorset Trust

The Trust was formed in 1966, starting as the S&D Railway Circle. Its aim is to collate and circulate information on the railway. Station stewards can supply information on the line's stations, and much information is available to Trust members. At Washford station, on the West Somerset Railway, is a museum displaying many S&D relics. A working reconstruction of Midford signal box has been mounted in Washford signal cabin.

The pride of the Trust's collection of rolling stock is 53808 (S&DJR No. 88) built 1925 by R. Stephenson and Co: one of the famous 2-8-0 locos. It was withdrawn from service in 1964, purchased from Woodhams by the Trust in 1970, and will steam again this April.

Trust members receive the bi-monthly magazine "Bulletin" which contains articles on the S&D, and many booklets have also been produced filled with information on the railway.



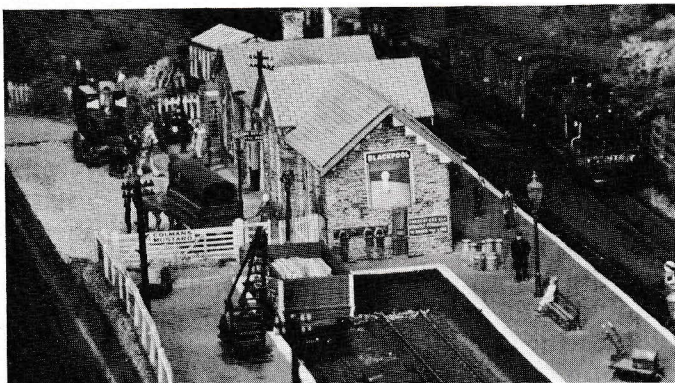
2-8-0 No. 9673 arrives from Brays Down Colliery. The token has just been given up to the signalman.

There is an annual model railway exhibition. Local groups run activities in many parts of the country. The Trust is an associate member of the A.R.P.S., a registered

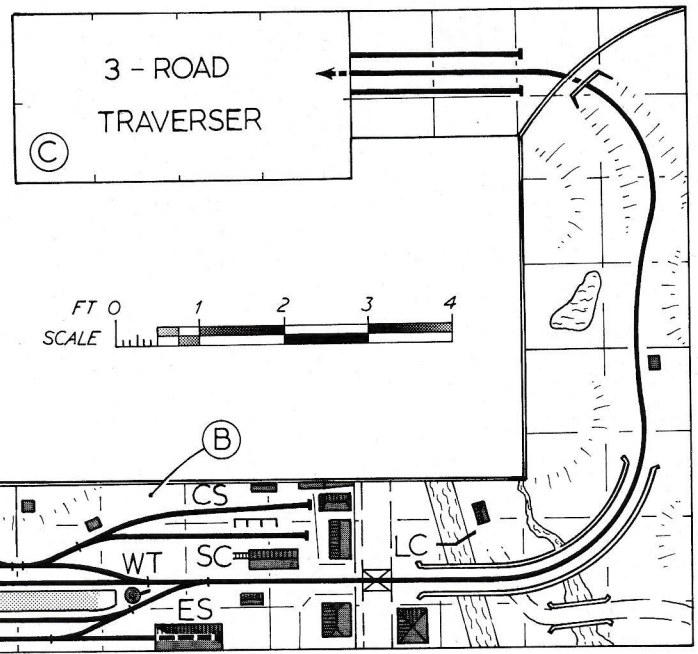
charity, managed by an annually elected committee.

Information for this brief account has been supplied to me by fellow members of the S&D

Trust and I must thank Mike West personally for his assistance in preparing this article.



Otterley station building and road vehicles.



Somerset & Dorset 125

The latest layout of M. J. Clements, whose article 'Otterley St Mary' appears in this issue, is another Somerset & Dorset-based model in 4mm scale, entitled 'Bath City Road'. Here, Armstrong 0-6-0 No. 60 is seen at Wrington station.

