

# MID ESSEX RAILWAY GAZETTE

**Issue Number 62**

**Summer 2012**

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## Editorial

Welcome once again to the latest issue of the Mid Essex Railway Gazette, your club newsletter keeping you up to date with recent club events and news.

First of all, the club would like to warmly welcome a number of new members who have joined the club over recent months.

This month there are a couple of events worthy of special mention:- This week, on the evening of Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July, is the club's annual visit to Mangapps Farm Railway Museum in Burnham on Crouch. This is an event which has been ongoing for 20-odd years now and all members are welcome to come along and enjoy an evening's driving and photographing the trains which John Jolly will be running for our benefit. All members interested in coming along should contact Peter Burrell on 07712 102574 or at peter.burrell1@live.co.uk for details and costs, plus putting their names down for fish and chips if desired. The evening runs from 5pm 'til late!

Later on this month, on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July is the club's open day at the club house. Club layouts will be up and running and the doors open from 11am until 5pm for visitors, with club members arriving at 9am to set up. More details available from our secretary, David Zelly.

Further dates for your diary on page 7.

Robert (031)

## 2012 Exhibition

Yes it's nearly that time of year again – only a couple of months to go until our own exhibition in September. This year is our 35<sup>th</sup> exhibition and as always it is the most important date in the club's calendar. Pre-preparation is currently in full swing and one important priority to organise is the ROTA. Ken Wilkinson and Bill Taylor need to know who will be available on the day (Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September) in order to produce the rota – hopefully everyone should be available to help staff and run the exhibition on Friday night for setting up and in particular all day Saturday for the exhibition itself. Please get in touch with Ken or Bill to confirm.

Also needing clarification is whether or not there will be any buses for the station shuttle. Details are awaited for the exact contents of the GE 150 add-on and there have already been some alterations to the plans after a couple of layouts had to drop out.

The normal disclaimer applies – if you don't want to end up in the Car Park, a good Sterling (paper variety) donation to Bill and myself might help!

Ken (079)

**With this year’s exhibition nearly upon us, former club member Steven Duhig has sent this article about a Braintree MRC layout he was involved with and which appeared at our very first exhibition, 35 years ago.... (Part 1)**

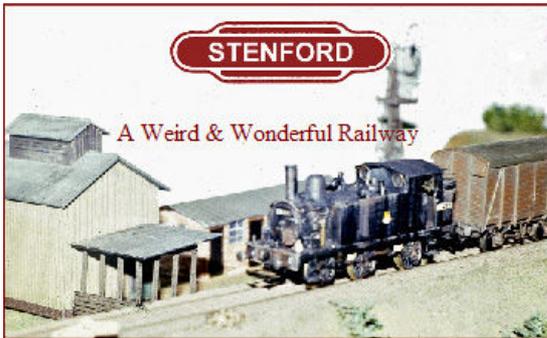


Figure 1: - A former G.E.R J69 Buck jumper approaches the station

**This article is about a small Braintree MRC layout that was privileged to attend the very first MEMRC Exhibition in Brentwood. Originally intended as the culmination of several articles written, for “Railway Modeller” and “Practical Model Railways” during the 1980’s. It was not submitted at the time as I did not type it up on my typewriter, and was less than satisfied with the photographs and drawings. Sadly even with the arrival of New Technology, they still leave a lot to be desired, but nevertheless please be patient! Perhaps even after resurrecting this article after some 27 years and updating some of its “ingredients” you might still find something of an inspiration here even today?**

**Introduction**

To start with the layout was known as Little Stanford but, as it grew larger and busier, we changed the name to Stenford. This coincided with a strategy of replacement of the early temporary card kit buildings with more substantial scratch-built embossed Plasticard types. These were not based on any particular prototypes. Stenford was constructed extremely economically using spare material discarded from another much more prestigious official (still surviving) Braintree and District Model Railway Club project. This layout was doubtless one of many projects, to be born over a few pints of beer after a club night, (in our case, Ridley’s Wood at the Boar’s Head pub’ in Braintree, Essex). The original “Famous Five” were; Bill, Brian, Mike, Barry and myself. Sadly time soon saw us all gradually, one by one, go our separate ways, all over the country, and in my particular case eventually across to the other side of the world.

**Concept & Design**

The basic ideas, behind what was originally called "Little Stanford", were simple and conventional:

- To retain OO gauge universal track standards to accommodate both our older and newer rolling stock.
- To provide a compact, easily transportable, layout for exhibitions, which fitted into the back of either of the two estate cars which were already available within the group.
- To incorporate a decent backdrop for my road our vehicle collection too. This layout design preceded today’s influx of superb 1/76 road vehicles by some years, but perhaps this is even more relevant today?
- To give an impression of distance with as much variety of scenery as possible along its entire length.



Figure 2: The earliest Little Stanford station and goods shed behind. The Goods Shed doubled in size later on.



Figure 3: Original Superquick Little Stanford station building and Cotswold Leyland Windover Coach.

The layout was built on five irregularly sized baseboards, giving a total length of 24 feet. The longest board was the fiddle yard at 6 foot 6 inches long. The width of the layout varied from as little as 18 inches in the middle to over 2 feet at either end. As already mentioned it had been decided at the planning stage that there should be scenic affect along the entire length of the layout. To allow for this an industrial siding was constructed along the front, giving a full 24 foot viewing area, including in front of the fiddle yard. Some of the length of the sidings and any ideas of using a sector plate or traverser, were sacrificed for this feature. These days we might have used a three-way point for the fiddle yard throat, which would have allowed a for more efficient storage, but we certainly weren't going to hand build such a critical component, (which is of course now available from PECO).

The completed project portrayed a fictitious, unreasonably busy, major former LMSR single line rural terminus, with various GWR, SR and LNER visitors. The single line approached from under a bridge across an embankment, through a level crossing, and ended in the terminus. I hope you could see from the plan that a conscious effort was made to space out areas of scenic interest at regular intervals along the layouts entire length and to bring out the contrast between the rural and the industrial settings. The layout was simple, un-prototypical and yet very versatile to operate, keeping up to four operators fully occupied and interested all day.

#### Baseboard Construction



Figure 4: Later development as Stenford with scratchbuilt Plasticard station building.

The two middle embankment baseboards were constructed from off-cuts of a sheets of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick chipboard with, what seemed to me at the time, a somewhat crude 2" x 2" spine down the middle to form the track bed for the embankment. Some 2" x 1" was also fixed on the top of both ends to strengthened the edges and complete the "H" shape on the top of the baseboards. Interestingly even without reinforcement down the sides, these "edgeless" boards never warped in their lifetime! These middle boards were fixed together using the hinge and pin method underneath.

They were then "dressed" to form an embankment aligned with both the track bed and the higher scenic levels of the adjoining baseboards at either end. Wire mesh was tacked down to the track bed and to plywood formers across each baseboard end. The mesh was then shaped as necessary before being nailed down. A covering of "Modroc" plaster of Paris bandage material was applied and, once dry, covered by a coat of base brown colour latex emulsion paint. Again, once dry, lichen for bushes was applied in position using undiluted PVA white glue. The rest of the scenery area was then smeared with diluted PVA white glue and covered with the finer "N Gauge" coloured flock powders; Meadow green, Dark green, and Brown. More dilute PVA, with a tiny drop of detergent to break up surface tension, was then finely misted over the top to seal the coatings thoroughly and make the scenery more durable during transportation. The road surface was made of plywood and ran adjacent to the track bed until rising to cross the track through a level crossing. The road surface was covered with a "Tetrion" (an especially strong sculptable, exterior all purpose white exterior filler). The level crossing gates eventually had some pieces of fine white net curtain added diagonally for realism.

### Scenic Details

The entire layout length had detachable back scenes added, (the industrial siding always did have a backscene, to hide the fiddle yard). The industrial siding feature, and arrangement of the buildings, could be varied, incorporating a warehouse, an occupation crossing (cut down Airfix/Dapol, but the Ratio variant would be our choice today), and various other buildings intended to convey the impression of an industrial mill warehousing environment, complete with Bill's own new engineering toolmakers works.

Nearly all the above ground detail, including the level crossing gates, fencing, telegraph poles and line side buildings were removable for transport. Most items had metal pins in the bottom. The level crossing posts and gates and corresponding seats made of brass tubes permanently fixed, through the Airfix/Dapol crossing base, into the baseboard, so that these items could be safely re-fixed in precisely the same position time and time again. Other items using holes in the baseboard had a minute amount of "Plasticine" modelling clay placed in their fixing holes to guarantee a secure fixing every time. The removable telegraph poles were well worth spending time on, even though we did not get around to stretching wires between them. They really helped to give an impression of scale, distance, depth and perspective looking along the length of the layout, which also happened to be particularly narrow at this point.

As you can probably imagine, it required quite some thought to transport a layout in excess of twenty four feet in a single estate car. It certainly did help to keep the permanent scenic detail to a minimum. The buildings were stored in photocopy paper boxes which were numbered.

Each one had a "packing map" on the inside of the lid to help safe fast storage and transport. Some buildings were sited on sunken foundations carefully prepared on the baseboard surfaces.



Figure 5: Latest station building made of embossed Plasticard.

The field fencing strips were carefully fitted with metal pegs in the posts too. These fencing parts were also, for the most part, interchangeable. The PECO flexible fencing came into it's element on Stenford too. The remainder of the items such as station seats, people, platform details and road vehicles were kept loose but safe in small slide/transparency boxes with some paper tissue to minimize damage through vibration. Among the details I am particularly pleased to have are some tiny, exceptionally detailed, G.E.R monogrammed platform seats made from 5 part Kemilway brass kits.



Figure 6: 20 thou Plasticard edged with Microstrip with raised Slater's letters mounted on Plastruct rails.

Platform station name boards were made out of pieces of Plasticard, edged with Microstrip, with raised Slater's lettering, mounted on Plastruct rail shaped legs. Most of these were also removable. The Airfix/Dapol and Roger Saunders figures all had their bases removed and replaced with a pin in one foot to correspond with barely visible 0.5mm holes in specific locations in the roads and platforms on the baseboards. (PECO track pins are ideal but be careful of your eyes snipping the ends off, and do not let children stab themselves with them!). One advantage of this method is it allows you to move them around to different locations from time to time.



Figure 7 (above): Pin-mounted Roger Saunders figures.



Figure 8 (right): G.E.R. brass seat kit.

Miniature gas lamps from the old "Merit" range should also have had their bases removed and pins fitted too, but I still have not got around to that yet. After all these years, once carefully painted, I feel it is still hard to match these as platform lamps for their scale and atmosphere. "Bottle-brush" trees were also located on lugs in much the same way. Each box of materials was numbered to try to avoid items being left behind.

### Get organised !

Better organisation was a lesson hard learned on our own first exhibition outing (which happened to be for the Mid Essex Model Railway Club's first ever exhibition in Junction Road, Brentwood, in 1978 by the way). Having left the building boxes behind in Braintree by accident, I had to operate the layout alone for 30 minutes "in the nude" so to speak, (well almost as embarrassing if you know what I mean?), while waiting for Bill to return with all our buildings! Interestingly, even though there seems so much to do the whole thing only took about an hour to set up in working order on arrival, providing that is of course that we actually remembered to bring everything in the car!

### Electrical Operation

Electrical connections between boards was completed using recycled multi-pin plugs where possible. The layout was wired for three controllers; two controlled the station (the goods yard and station areas which could be worked independently), while the third (a hand held remote Gaugemaster) controller could be switched in to take control of the fiddle yard / level crossing approach, industrial siding and of course the fiddle yard itself. Indicator lights and switches were installed at both ends of the layout to enable the fiddle yard operator to switch block control of the middle approach section through to the level crossing.



Figure 9: Airfix / Dapol level crossing later had white netting fitted behind which was worth the improvement.

As we wanted to ensure we could operate limited service with a single operator. This facility could also be handy as a "panic switch" should an operator overrun into the fiddle yard, or just to kill all power at that end of the layout. An indicator light also showed at the station end when the third controller was in use. Buzzers were installed to allow further communication and to try to avoid having to "heckle" one another across 24 feet of layout in public. A very primitive, non-prototypical, bell/buzz code system covered our main needs:

1. for calling attention,
2. for calling for a Light Engine,
3. to go back to the previous move on the sequence,
4. to skip a move and miss an operation out, and
5. of course for a PANIC Conference required!

At the Station end there was the traditional analogue style diagram panel with track isolating and section dual pole dual throw centre off switches installed on the actual track diagram where appropriate.

Steven Duhig is a former member of Romford MRS, Braintree MRC, Mid Essex MRC and Southend MRC and is now living in Maryland, U.S.

He has kindly made this article available for publication in the MERG, given it's historical connection with our own exhibition; part 2 will appear in the next issue of the MERG.

All photos © Steven Duhig.

Steven (035)

### Great Eastern Memories

This is a new section I have started and hope will continue in future issues of the MERG. The idea is to dig out some older photos of the Great Eastern from the past; BR days, pre-BR days, pre-LNER days... one photo per MERG for the sake of nostalgia and memories! Hopefully some of the photos might also be of use for modelling ideas/projects. If you wish to submit anything for this feature please send me photos by email including copyright/accreditation info, date, location etc.



In this issue we have a preserved theme, with 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' seen recalling the days when Britannias ruled, heading the return leg of 'The Norfolkman' descending the Stort Valley just north of Bishop's Stortford, on 2/July/2011.  
Photo: Phil (087)

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## Addresses

**Chairman**

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**Secretary and Membership**

David Zelly, 15 Edwards Close, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex. CM13 1BU  
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## MERG Copy Deadlines

Please consider submitting articles for inclusion in the MERG; anything relating to the club or model railways in general will be welcomed – exhibitions attended, your latest modelling project, a purpose built modelling room, developments at the club, developments on club layouts, all experiences, information and news which can be shared with all the members, especially those who are unable to attend the clubhouse very often. Please email submissions to [merg@midsexmrc.org](mailto:merg@midsexmrc.org) or if you cannot send by email, please hand your hard copy to the club secretary. If you have a short note to send you are welcome to send a text message (SMS) to 07768 310117.

The next issue will be published in September 2012, all copy to be received by 25 August 2012.

Please email text in Microsoft Word (.doc), Wordpad (.rtf), Notepad (.txt) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format; photos as .bmp or .jpg format. Please do not send photos by SMS!

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## Dates for your Diary

**2012****Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July****Mangapps Evening. Club visit to Mangapps Farm Railway Museum.**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July

C.M.R.A. Modelling day, Watford. Club with modelling demonstration stand.

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July****Club Open Day at Club House.**Sat/Sun 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> August

Southwold Exhibition. G.E.R.S. has stand and possible club visit.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August

Bexhill Exhibition – Bob Farrell attending

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September****OUR OWN EXHIBITION!!**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September

Scaleforum at Leatherhead. Possible club visit.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October

Folkestone Exhibition. Possible club visit.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> OctoberPossible Brentford Exhibition with **Lydgate**.Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October

Great Eastern Railway Society Half Yearly Meeting.

Sat/Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> November**B.B.C.** at the East London Finescale Exhibition.Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November**Zanesville** at the Romford Exhibition.Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November

National Exhibition at N.E.C. Possible club visit.

**2013**Sat/Sun 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> January**B.B.C.** at C.R.M.A. Exhibition, St. Albans.Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February**Lydgate** at Watford Finescale Exhibition.Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July**B.B.C.** or **Lydgate** at Northampton Exhibition.

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## Mid Essex MRC – Project Tey

### **Great Tey update June 2012**

We now have the front baseboards built and erected. With the emphasis now being on the production of cardboard structures to achieve a pleasing – if not completely accurate - right ‘look & feel’ within the constraints of a model whilst still seeking to capture elements of Marks Tey. Whilst it might appear that not much is happening, it is vital that we plan ahead before rushing headlong into further construction and then discover problems or ‘we wish we had done XYZ different – it would have been so much better’. Additionally we have to keep an eye on our forthcoming Exhibition, as there are items that need to be addressed now rather than go into panic mode closer to the day.

Following a further meeting (lively discussion) at the Clubroom it has been decided to go down the hand-built track route, and use a lever frame to control movements – Albert Woolford is progressing this, along with signalling. Train movements will be controlled by signal aspects, rather than as happens on many layouts just pay lip-service to this important safety element. The consensus was that as a Club we are looking to maintain a high standard and give something a little different to the Public, ourselves (and to encourage Exhibition Managers to book us). So we now need the support of a Member whom has Templot and knows how to drive the program so that we can design the trackwork without the constraints to RTR materials.

### **Hot off the press from Albert:**

The levers have landed! - at 5:30 this morning at Stansted Airport. Now let’s decide, where, by whom and how, the frame will be assembled. It maybe that I might have to do it here and keep it all together, kindest regards Albert.

I for one would like to see the materials and also ask if any other Members would like to assist Albert in the assembly. My thinking is that it would be advantageous to have that knowledge known by as many as feasible for any future maintenance/repair/upgrade.

Ken (079)

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## Epping - Ongar Railway news

Essex, and the UK, now has a new preserved railway. Running from Ongar to North Weald and thence to Coopersale. After many a false start and delay May 27th 2012 saw the line open with both steam and diesel traction (there had been a previous DMU shuttle operation).

The line has been totally revamped with the bed lowered through the stations to ensure that there is no longer a step-up into the coaching stock – LU had raised the levels when running tube stock. Ongar and North Weald stations have been subject to much work and now look more like they did before LU took over the service from Epping using tube stock. Whilst parking is a potential problem at both stations there is a frequent bus shuttle service between Epping and North Weald stations. Perhaps there could be an opportunity for a Club visit, as we do with Mangapps.

For more information visit: <http://eorailway.co.uk/news/>

Ken (079)

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