Brid Lines

Summer 2020 No 10

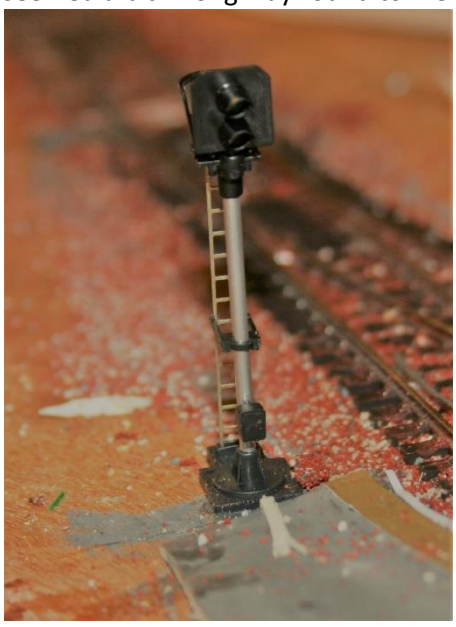
You heard it here first!

In issue number 3 of Brid Lines I warned you to expect a proliferation of layouts called Lock Down or variations such as Loch Down, I also included variations and plays on furlough. Well here it is October's Railway Modeller features Lockdown Junction on page 805. The layout also includes Fir Low Works and Fir Low End just for good measure. You were warned. Be prepared for more.

And a first for me!

I have never installed working signals on any of the layouts I have built. In fact, I have hardly ever bothered with signals at all. Selwicks Quay for all its size had one lone signal at the entrance to the yard. I have always found making signal kits too fiddley and ready-made looked bulky and out of scale, especially the Hornby ones. There were handmade dummy electric signals on Loch Oran. Invercalley and Annerley both have fixed signals from the PD Marsh range. So, while constructing my present layout I decided that I would try working signals. As the layout is modern image it would need colour light signals so I began an internet search of the prominent manufactures.

Train-Tech offered a range which looked very good. Even one that worked automatically via a sensor as the train approached. The sensor needs to be placed at the side of the track a little in front of the signal. The box containing the sensor seemed quite bulky compared to the rest of the structures and of course not prototypical. The signal was permanently green until the train approached then it turned to red and stayed at red until the train had passed. This seemed a bit wrong way round to me so I decided to give it a miss. Other signals in the range were set up for digital operation. I didn't really want that as it requires enough concentration to operate the trains digitally without having to remember codes for accessories as well. The simplest and most scale looking seemed to in the Berko range, I watched the You tube video on how to set them up and wire them to a switch. It seemed straightforward as long as you kept the soldering iron away from the signal itself. I wanted the signal to operate when the points changed. It would have been simple enough to install another switch, on the panel at the side of the switch that changes the points but I thought the whole operation could be made even simpler. In my box, (you know, the one, where you keep all the bits that you don't throw away because they might come in useful one day,) I had some Peco PL13 accessory switches that had been attached to Peco point motors on a previous

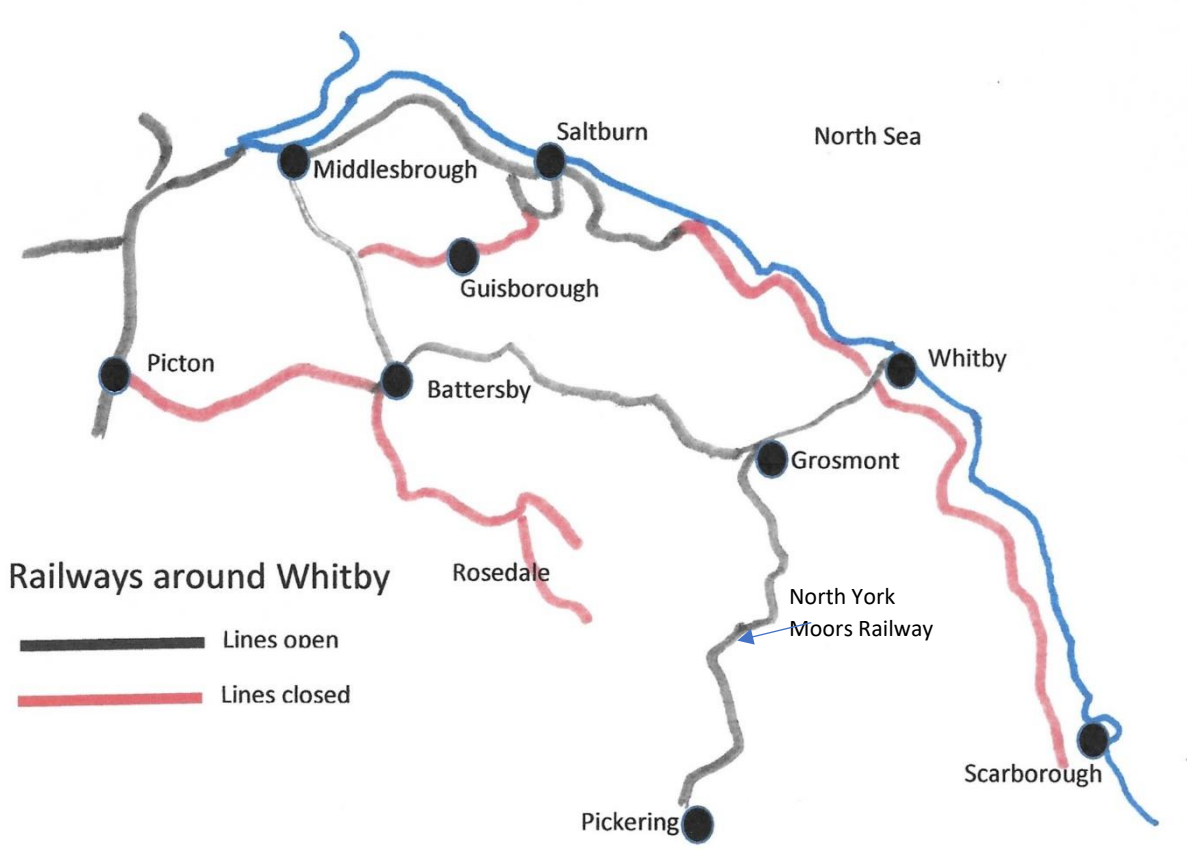


layout to change the polarity of the frog. (This was before I discovered Frog juicers). So, I thought I would try these in place of the normal switch, in the hope that when the point changed the signal would change. I managed to wire the signals to the 12v transformer and incorporate the switch and attach it to the point motor and guess what it worked. So now I have working colour light signals at the end of two of the three platforms.

Railways around Whitby

Steve Twigg's article in the previous edition of Brid Lines about his escapades in a tunnel somewhere past Saltburn reminded me of the research I did when building Selwicks Quay. The layout was based on the Yorkshire Coast especially that bit north of Whitby and around Sandsend in particular.

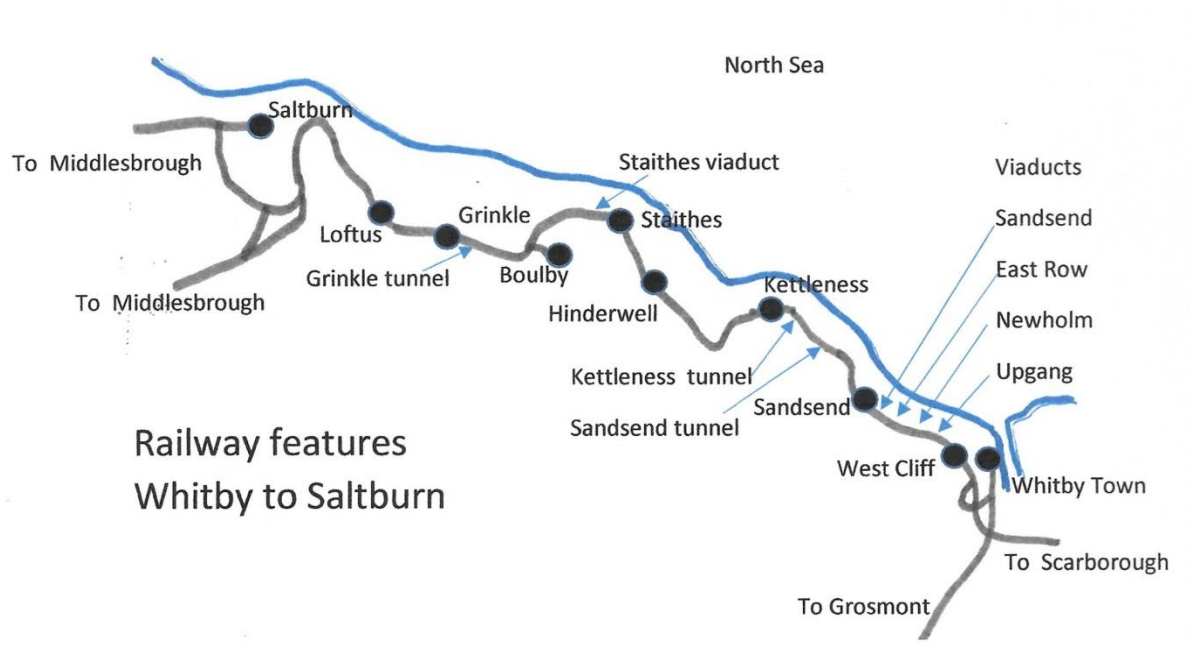
Looking at map of the railways that once served Whitby it can be seen that there were three lines that came directly in to Whitby. You could argue there were four if you included the route from Pickering which joined one of the routes from Middlesbrough.



Martin Bairstow's books Railways Around Whitby Volumes One and Two give an admirable account of the history and the construction of the lines in the area so there is not much point me recounting all that here. It is interesting to note, however, that that the first line from Whitby journeyed south towards Pickering and was horse drawn. It opened in 1836 and this route was chosen in preference to one travelling west to join the Stockton and Darlington Railway in the hope it would eventually lead to connections with industrial Yorkshire. This line is now the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Whitby did gain a connection to the North east when the line to Picton was opened in 1865. The Battersby to Middlesbrough line was first opened in 1864 but it didn't carry passengers until 1868. The railways serving Whitby were completed when the through line from Scarborough made a connection with the line from Saltburn at Loftus.

This was the line I was most interested in whilst constructing Selwicks Quay. The landscape and the viaducts were based on this line. The line itself was difficult to build. One constructor had gone into liquidation whilst in the process of constructing the line and when another constructor took over, they found much of the work unsatisfactory. Some of the cliff edge route north of Sandsend was abandoned because it had collapsed in to the sea. The line was re - routed through tunnels at Sandsend and Kettleness. The line wasn't opened until 1883.



I based Selwicks Quay's viaducts on those close to Sandsend. Altogether there were five steel tubular viaducts on this stretch of line. From south to north they were

Upgang - 330 feet in length and 70 feet high with six spans,

Newholm Bank - 330 feet long and 50 feet high with 11 spans,

East Row – 528 feet in length and 30 feet high with 8 spans,

Sandsend - 268 feet long 63 feet high with 8 spans,

Staithes – 790 feet long 152 feet high with 17 spans.

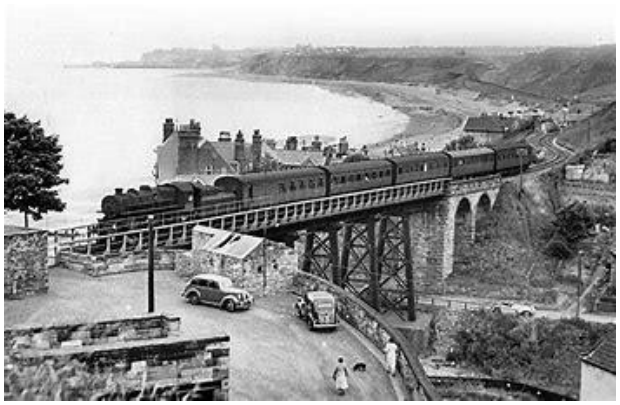
Left - East Row viaduct

The first four viaducts were all situated just south - east of Sandsend within a distance of one and a half miles. Staithes was the most exposed. According to Martin Bairstow's book traffic over it was protected by a wind gauge which rang a bell in Staithes signal box when the wind pressure reached 28 lbs per square foot. Traffic would be suspended when this happened. Trains approaching from Grinkle were propelled back to Grinkle. The book doesn't mention what happened to trains travelling in the opposite direction.

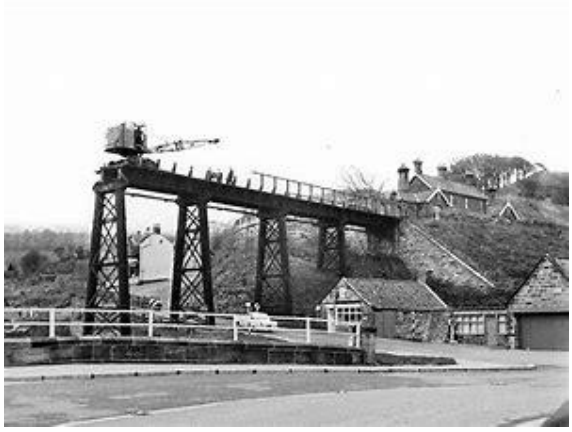
Is the wind blowing and ringing a bell something we might see on the Great Model Railway Challenge any time soon?

The coast line north of Whitby was closed sometime around 1958. The other lines falling victim to the “Beeching Axe” in the 1960’s with the exception of the line to Middlesbrough via Battersby Junction. There has been something of a renaissance now that the North Yorkshire Moors Railway has direct access to Whitby. Getting to Whitby by rail from a southerly direction still remains a problem for rail travellers who have to make their way to Darlington or Middlesbrough to make a connection.

Above -Newholme Beck viaduct



Sandsend viaduct



Demolition day at Sandsend

And That bridge!

Since the last edition of Brid Lines I have added the fencing to the bridge. I have also given it a coat of paint, I have tried to get the look it might possibly have had in current Scot Rail colours. I’m not sure it has worked really.

The photographs certainly show up all the flaws. I have decided I'm going to redo the platform surfaces. I have had to shave bits of here and there so that the trains would run with out scraping the side. The white line edge also looks too broad and too white! The track hasn't received its final weathering yet. Im' leaving that until all the terrain has been landscaped as I usually get blobs of plaster all over it.

No Shows

With the latest news announced this week it doesn't look like there is even the remotest possibility of a model railway show being staged until next Summer. I certainly haven't made any arrangements for our show next year. The shows I've been invited to with Annerley have been postponed until 2022. So, it seems pointless planning our show at the moment.

A.G.M.

It also seems likely that we will not be able to hold the Annual General Meeting this year. It but I am proposing that the current officers remain in place until such time we can hold a meeting and that we carry on as best as we can. Any seconders? Let me know how you feel. The accounts should be in order. Nothing has been collected or banked since the beginning of March. I'll try to get a balance sorted before the normal AGM date and pass it to Steve to verify. Hope that is OK with everyone.

The end of rail franchising

The government has announced the end of rail franchising, with Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps saying 'the model of privatisation adopted 25 years ago has seen significant rises in passenger numbers, but this pandemic has proven that it is no longer working'.

"Our new deal demands more for passengers. It will simplify people's journeys ending the uncertainty and confusion about whether you are using the right ticket or the right train company"

So, it has only taken them 25 years to work it out!

Will it mean the end of all those different liveries that Hornby, Bachmann etc reproduce so well?

It will leave and interesting legacy for period railway modellers. Will we now have the franchise era just Like we have the BR blue era and the sectorisation period.

Baseboard Design by George Bailey

I am embarking on a new layout and having done some research and a visit to the York Railway Museum I have decided on a single line branch based on the Somerset / Devon border in the 1930's.

I have kept the track design simple to help me produce a layout that is small enough to fit into the train room without being overly busy or compacted. I am anticipating the scenery to be the element that adds interest to the railway.

Now I am starting to make the baseboards. I am planning a modular layout with each section being a metre in length and around 600mm wide.

I used to be a member at Kingsway Model Railway in Wellingborough where Colin gave me some ideas on baseboard design. I understand that the modern way of doing it is to produce a lightweight construction by using plywood baseboard. Plywood is more resistant to warping and movement due to the ply having two different grain directions.

I have elected to use 6mm ply. I cut the top board and then reinforced the board with 15mm square section pine around the perimeter leaving enough recess for the side walls. The ends of the pine strips have been jointed with a tongue and grove to improve strength.

The pine is glued to the board and additional supporting screws fixed through the top of the board.

Side panels are added. These are 10cm wide. These are screwed and glued to the pine strips.




The corners are supported by a pine corner brace, again screwed and glued.

Another set of pine strips are fitted lower down tied into the bottom of the corner braces


This where I have got to so far. I have to fit cross braces to the bottom to attach the legs to and to design and fit the detachable legs.

I will report back when I make more progress.

The structure appears to be fairly rigid and light which is the main objective. I am yet to confirm whether the design will be durable on a long-term basis.