

Left Hand Running

The July 2006 Newsletter of The British Train Society
Chicago

A View From The Footplate

The Independence Day celebrations and other summer activities do not stimulate our thoughts towards trains, modeling and other fun stuff. However, fall will be here before we know it and it is not too early to think about future plans. Our annual picnic makes a nice break in our ongoing activity and provides a break in the action so to speak. The picnic itself was a very nice affair, well attended with a convivial atmosphere prevailing and an opportunity to see some familiar faces again and also make new acquaintances. Again I would like to extend our thanks to Ralph and Kathy for the use of their place for the event - it is such an ideal location, and for all the work that goes along with it and also to Harry and Beth for their contributions to a very successful day. As always while the participants enjoy the event I am sure many of us take for granted the work and preparation that goes into it and in behalf of all our members I extend to them a sincere vote of thanks.

There are a couple of issues now that we need to address at our next meeting. One is the funding for our picnic that over the past two years has made a considerable dent in our finances - more on that at the meeting. Secondly I would like to discuss with you an idea I have to permit participation in two major shows in the area with a view to creating more publicity and stimulating membership. I have discussed these ideas informally with some of you and I think it is fair to say that the response has been uniformly receptive. I will try to flesh out my ideas before we meet and get as much background info as possible so we can have a good discussion. So I look forward to seeing many of you then. In the meantime
Happy Modelling
Don Buchanan

Calendar of Coming Events

- July 15th, 1:30 pm
BTS Regular Meeting
Clarendon Hills (Don Buchanan,)
- August 13th, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm
Great Midwest Train Show
Wheaton (DuPage County Fairgrounds)
- August 19th, 1:30 pm
BTS Regular Meeting
Chicago (John Derler)
- August 27th, 2:00 pm
European Train Enthusiasts
LaGrange Park (Public Library)
- September 10th, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm
Great Midwest Train Show
Wheaton (DuPage County Fairgrounds)
- September 16th, 1:30 pm
BTS Regular Meeting
[location & host to be determined]
- September 30th - October 1st, 10:00 am
Southland Railroad Show
Oak Lawn (Richards HS, 10601 S. Central)
- November 11th – 12th
Trainfest
Milwaukee (State Fair Park, West Allis)

The Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the British Train Society will be on Saturday July 15th. This meeting will be hosted by Don Buchanan at his home in Clarendon Hills. For the special program John D. will present a “how-to” clinic on building road vehicles from kits. Don't be late!

Classic Railway Models

The *Duchess of Dublo*



In the late 1940s and early 1950s the British model railway hobby was beginning to recover after the trauma of war. In 1938 Meccano Ltd. of Liverpool had introduced their new Hornby-Dublo brand of 00 scale model railways on 3-rail track. To pull the 00 scale express trains, Hornby-Dublo chose to model the most powerful express locomotive of the time, the London Midland & Scottish Railway's brand-new, Duchess class 4-6-2. Unfortunately, the outbreak of war put a stop to the luxury of model trains and the Duchess project remained on hold for the duration.

The Duchess finally appeared in 1948 as *Duchess of Atholl* in boxed sets with two LMS coaches. The Hornby-Dublo model was very close to scale and compared favorably with the prototype. The model matched the non-streamlined locomotives as they appeared with double blast pipe and smoke deflectors. Full outside valve gear was present as was a semi-working representation of a screw coupling on the engine buffer beam. As was common at the time, the model was of all-metal construction: both the chassis and the body were die-cast of a zinc-magnesium alloy while the tender body was of stamped, lithographed sheet steel. Plastic was used only for the molded coal load in the tender. A 12v DC motor was mounted vertically in the firebox area with drive to the third coupled axle. A third-rail pickup shoe was mounted under the locomotive between the drivers. All wheels, including those of the tender, were also die-cast metal. In 1950 the model was improved with a new, heavier chassis and a better motor. The Duchess was

initially produced as *Duchess of Atholl* in LMS livery and by 1953 it also appeared in the BR green as *Duchess of Montrose*. In 1959, to counter market pressure, the Duchess became available as a two-rail model in BR maroon as *City of London*.

However, the Duchess was not without competition. In 1950 those upstarts, Tri-ang Railways, brought out their own ex-LMS express locomotive, the *Princess Elizabeth*. While the Tri-ang loco was compromised in scale and not as detailed as the Hornby-Dublo model, it would run on standard 00 track and it was cheaper. Hornby-Dublo's 3-rail system hampered sales and the new 2-rail products came too late to halt the decline. In 1965 the new owners, Lines Brothers Group, appended the Hornby name onto that of another of their train products brands, Tri-ang. Hornby-Dublo products, meanwhile, were shunted into Lines Brothers' other model train company, G. & R. Wrenn Ltd.

As for the "*Duchess of Dublo*"? It continued under the Wrenn label in various LMS and BR liveries in very small production runs until about 1990. Wrenn was sold and although some former Hornby-Dublo wagon models were still available, the engines were not. Good locomotive models, however, never die and a new Duchess emerged from Margate in 1977 as a totally redesigned, state-of-the-art model under the new Hornby label. It has since been updated and improved and is still available – now better than ever!



Photo: Hornby Railways