

TOWARD the end of a summer's afternoon in 1955, I came upon Lambourn quite by chance, while touring in the district. The simple, and yet typical nature of this ex-G.W.R. branch-line terminus, which had undoubtedly had a better outlook some years before, immediately impressed me: consequently a few snapshots and hasty sketches accompanied me back to London that day. Some months later, I saw the possibilities of making this the subject of my first attempt at modelling a prototype station, and I determined to begin construction. The accompanying photographs show the result of nearly 18 months' work, carried out in my spare time from preparation for G.C.E. exams and sixth-form studies.

Lambourn station is at the northern end of a 12 1/2 mile single line, branching from Newbury about 1/2 mile westward out of bay-platform 3, on the Berkshire-Hampshire section of the old Great Western Railway. Nine stations are served, in an area famous for horse breeding and training, and 11 passenger trains per day run over gradients not exceeding 1:60 – which occurs twice – with a timetable starting and finishing at Lambourn.

From my research into the line's history, which took me as far as the Houses of Parliament. I ascertained that schemes for a line started in 1873 and that eventually Act 176, authorising the construction of the Lambourn Valley Railway, was passed on August 2nd, 1883. Financial difficulties forced the abandonment of the unfinished works until the scheme was revised with the passing of the Light Railways Act in 1896, and an all out effort was made by the new contractors S. Pearson and Son of Westminster. As a result the line opened for public traffic on April 4th, 1898. The track was originally of flat-bottom rail, spiked to roughly hewn sleepers, and was operated on the train staff system, without signals or telegraph.

The first locomotive to operate the line was a Sharp Stewart, 4 ft 6 in. dia. four-coupled, side tank, G.W.R. 1384, but in 1899 two Chapman and Furneaux 0-6-0 sidetanks, *Eahlswith* and *Aelfred* took over the task. These were supplemented by a Hunslet 0-6-0T named *Eadweade* in 1903, but all three were withdrawn in May 1904. The original coaches were four Brown Marshall's, 26 1/2 ft, four-wheel cars of the end-platform type and were finished in varnished wood.

Six ex-G.E.R. wagons and 12 others comprised the goods stock, although none was actually the property of the company.

In later years of course, G.W.R. stock was used in great variety, and included a Dean 0-6-0, M. & S.W.J.R. 2-4-0s, 0-6-0 saddle tanks (often stored overnight in Lambourn's own shed up to 1925-30) and 57XX class pannier tanks (without cab back plates) hauling the classical auto-car trailers. Collett 0-6-0s have also been noted, and just prior to the last war, during G.W.R. experiments, A.L.C. railcars began frequenting the route. Other passenger stock has included a 46 1/2 ft suburban brake-third and a two-coach "B" set. Horse-boxes and coal wagons are abundant in and around Lambourn, two of the former being allocated to the line, marked "Return to Lambourn," and a G.W.R. gas-wagon lettered "No 7" is resident on the station sidings.

The rolling stock shown in the photographs of the model may, or may not, conform with actual practice, but it is my intention to utilise this on my next and more permanent layout. As can be seen, it consists of a two-coach set, including a clerestory 1st/3rd, which is hauled temporarily by a Collett 0-4-2T. No 1447, being one of K's with certain modifications such as a top-feed housing and hand-rails, etc. An ex-Taff Vale 0-6-2T, awaiting number plates 366, is in charge of goods traffic and is actually an H.D. body with a rebuilt outer firebox, and more typical G.W.R. fittings. For cartage there is a large variety of vans, coal and mineral wagons, horse-boxes, among other G.W.R. miscellany. Most of these have been built by hand or from kits, to increasing degrees of accuracy, proportional to my modelling experience. Choice of freight vehicles, at least, is

restricted by the local requirements, conveyance of horses and coal supply, etc., and, therefore, only occasionally are special duty vehicles to be seen on Lambourn metals.

The reception of these vehicles is taken on four tracks. One, the main line, is for passenger working, and adjoins a run-round; there used to be a spur behind the 15 lever, ground level signalbox. The second track is for the storage of vans, horse-boxes, and sometimes coaches: up to the early 'thirties the loco/carriage shed was located at the north end. The third road is possibly the busiest, bearing a wooden goods building for transferring light articles to road vehicles, a line of coal-staithes and an "L. J. Bodman, West of England Sack Contractors" red corrugated iron, coal office. Also on this track are a light crane and a rail-built loading gauge. The fourth siding runs into a goods platform and cattle dock, where livestock may be loaded.

My first problem of modelling was a common one, that of insufficient space, for I live in a small London flat, and consequently I was compelled to reduce lengths to a minimum. Finally I built a baseboard 6 ft x 2 ft out of hardboard and 1 in. hard wood battens, and the unit was made portable. A greater length would certainly have done the model more justice, but nevertheless I feel that the results are satisfactory.

The trackwork was laid with a proprietary flexible track, for I was not then in a position to re-equip myself with a more super-scale design. The system is wired for two rail running, and has a 12 volt d.c. supply.

All the superstructure was prepared from rough sketches with the aid of one or two photographs, but a further brief visit to Lambourn, en route from North Devon to London, served to refresh my memory and to make a few more notes. I found varied success in cardboard exteriors to buildings and huts, all of which have wooden frames, and I prepared the immediate surrounding earthworks by moulding in plaster, on a coke base to reduce weight. The ground surface was roughened with the usual sand and sawdust, was primed with matt enamels, and was finished in water colours.

In completing this replica of Lambourn I feel that I have achieved some small success in my first attempt; I do know that I have gained a tremendous amount of experience and railway knowledge.

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