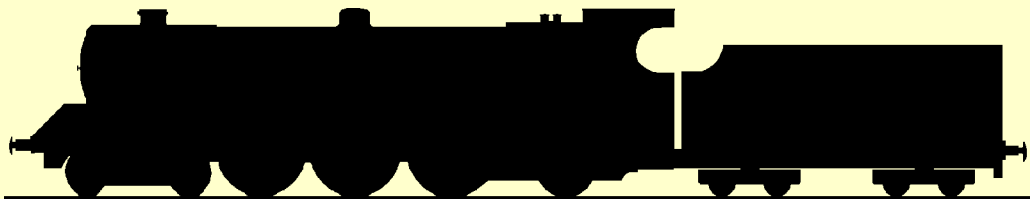


**A HISTORY OF THE
THAMES SIDE
PROMENADE
MINIATURE
RAILWAYS**

**The story of the miniature railways
run by Harold Judd on the
Thames Side Promenade in Reading,
including his other railway interests on
the south coast**



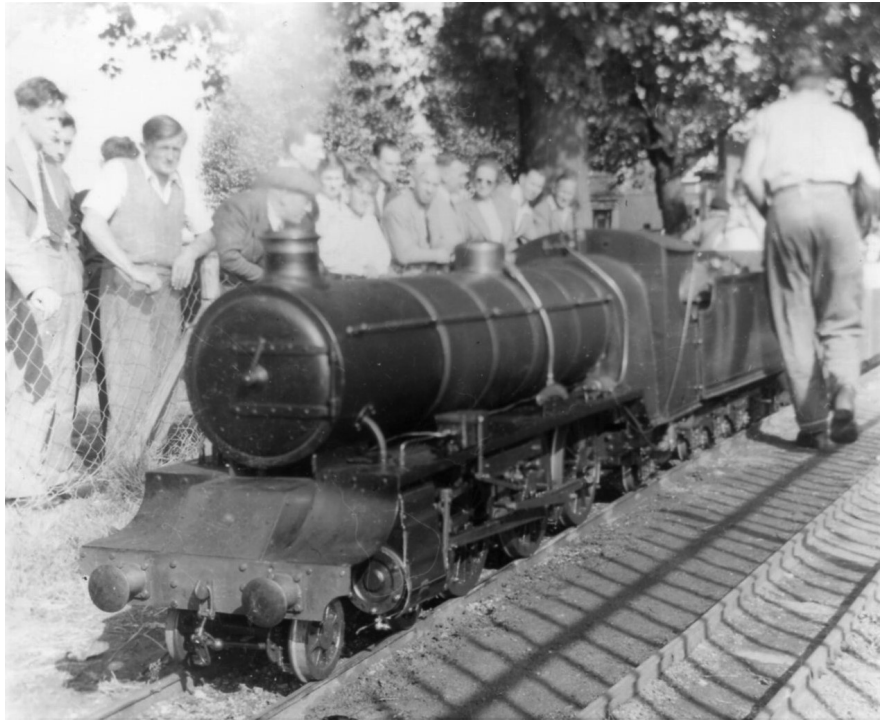
MINOR RAILWAY HISTORIES – No.4

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PETER SCOTT



A scene from Harold Judd's second railway in Reading. "Western Queen" waits in the station near to Caversham Bridge, while a good number of people look on. This 10¼" gauge 4-6-2 locomotive was built by John Thurston in 1946 for a customer in Cornwall.

(J H Meredith. 1/7/51)

Overleaf: The Mayor of Reading driving on Harold Judd's first railway in Reading. The occasion was a Sailors Flag Day being held in the town. Note the flags on the smokebox of the locomotive and the small boy apparently operating the signal.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection. 29/7/44)

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ISBN 1 902368 20 7

Published by **Peter Scott**

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INTRODUCTION

The fact that two 10¼" gauge steam operated miniature railways ran in Reading during the 1940s and 1950s, may come as a surprise - it certainly did to the author who knew little or nothing of them. They were owned and operated by local man Harold Judd. He was born in Buckinghamshire and moved to the Reading area in the early 1930s, setting up a successful haulage and timber business. The railways ran on, or near, the Thames Side Promenade - an open area of land on the south bank of the Thames, to the west of Caversham Bridge. The first railway operated during 1944 and 1945 in some fields behind the Promenade, while the second railway lasted from 1949 to 1954 - running along the Promenade. These were not Harold Judd's only miniature railways for, on the south coast, he operated the Southsea Miniature Railway between 1945 and 1951. Sadly, he suffered an early death at the age of only 52. Nevertheless, he had been able to take advantage of what was a boom time for miniature railways in the years immediately following the Second World War.

This book covers in detail for the first time, the history of the two railways in Reading as well as the story behind the man himself - Harold Judd. Also covered is the history of the Thames Side Promenade, which seems not to have appeared in print before. Away from Reading, Harold's railway interests on the south coast are detailed, along with a chapter summarising the various locomotives that he owned. A little known engineer from Farnborough - Travers John Thurston constructed the locomotives that ran on the railways in Reading and an appendix briefly describes his life and miniature railway work. A chapter on other miniature railways in Reading completes that aspect of the town's railway history.

Researching these two Thames Side Promenade railways and the other subjects detailed above, proved a fascinating and at times difficult task. As is usual for miniature railways, there were many twists and turns together with false leads and previous incorrectly recorded "facts". The story stretches far out from Reading: to Plymouth, Southsea, Hilsea, Hayling Island, East London and western Scotland. In carrying out the research I was assisted by many people. It was a great pleasure to travel down to Somerset on a number of occasions to meet Harold's son, William and record his memories of the old times of over fifty years ago. Simon Townsend freely gave invaluable help and access from his background research over the years, especially into Thurston and his locomotives. Keith Horn proved a goldmine of information on the Hilsea and Southsea Miniature Railways, as did Ted Martin on Thurston, his locomotives and the first railway in Reading. I am also grateful to Matthew Kerr for the use of photographs from his archive and for valuable guidance on the chapter dealing with Harold's first railway. In addition many others assisted, please read the acknowledgements section. All the memories of those involved were backed up, wherever possible, with reference to council records and minutes, Ordnance Survey maps, local papers and other primary sources.

I hope this book suitably records the history of these two miniature railways, which brought enjoyment to the many children and adults who rode on them over fifty years ago and also the enterprise of Harold Judd who made it all possible.

Peter Scott
Reading
November 2005

CHAPTER ONE

HAROLD JUDD

HAULIER & MINIATURE RAILWAY OPERATOR

Introduction

The central character in the story of the Thames Side Promenade Miniature Railways in Reading is Harold Judd. A contractor specialising in timber haulage, originally from Buckinghamshire, he was by the early 1930s operating from Spencers Wood to the south of Reading. Harold was what we would probably call today an entrepreneur, who came from humble beginnings. He later ran a number of businesses and acquired a fair amount of land and property. Sadly, he died at the early age of only 52, and it has been said that if he had lived only a few years longer, he would have been a very rich man. Miniature railways seem to have been a small sideline, probably brought about by his interest in steam and all things mechanical.

Background

Harold Judd was born on 19th September 1900 in the village of Chackmore in Buckinghamshire. This small village lies about 1¼ miles north of the town of Buckingham. Harold's parents were Noah Judd (1866-1941) and Lizzie Dawson (1864-1933) who had married on 22nd March 1884 in Sandford St Martin in Oxfordshire. Noah came from Brackley, Northamptonshire and was a labourer and later a haulage contractor operating a number of steam traction engines, while Lizzie was born in Wootton, Oxfordshire. Harold was the second youngest of eight children. He had three older sisters and three older brothers, sadly one of whom, Reginald was killed in 1916 at Berrow Green (about 6 miles west of Worcester) when he was crushed under an overturned steam traction engine. His younger brother, Ernest Isaac, we will meet later on as he got involved with Harold's miniature railway interests, after his death.

On 27th March 1922, Harold married Kate Elizabeth Bignell in Buckingham District Register Office. He stated his occupation then as Timber Haulier. Kate was born in Aldrington, Hove, Sussex on 1st November 1902. Her father, William Frederick Bignell, was a Brewers Labourer at that time and had been born in Paulerspury, Northamptonshire, so came from very much the same area as Harold's parents. Kate's mother - Kate Edith Swain came from Worthing, Sussex. With Kate, Harold had four children - Pamela (born in 1923), Dorothy (1926), Jean (1930) and William (1932). The majority of the Judd family became involved with the haulage business and by the mid 1930s they had moved to the Shinfield and Spencers Wood area, just south of Reading. At first Harold bought a former railway coach and converted it into living accommodation - this being located at Three Mile Cross by the main Basingstoke Road. He set up his own haulage company "H Judd & Son", whose main business seems to have been timber haulage. His yard was located at the far south end of Spencers Wood, on the west side of the Basingstoke Road and on the north side of the junction with Back Lane - at SU715657. Here he also had a sawmill for dealing with the timber.

Above all, Harold Judd was a practical man who could turn his hand to anything. He was a lover of steam, especially traction engines. At different times, between the 1930s and his death in 1952, he owned a good number of steam road engines - including such types as Burrell, Sentinel, Tasker and Foden. He also owned a number of internal combustion engine road vehicles. However, he had no business sense - leaving this side of things to his first wife, Kate. Harold was also a generous man and as will later be told, he aided charities at times. It is also said he was a hard taskmaster.

The Second World War and Miniature Railways

As we shall see it was during the Second World War that Harold first got involved with miniature railways - in Reading (near the Thames Side Promenade) and then later on the south coast of England. At the time of his death he was running another railway actually on the Promenade. Through his haulage business he had many contacts and his son, William, remembers they did not go short of anything during the war! Although, on 12th May 1944 he was fined £100 with £50 costs for "*building work at Saw Mills, Spencers Wood in contravention of the Defence Regulations*". Apparently, he had erected a large garage without permission!

In 1945 Harold Judd purchased part of the Stanbury estate near Spencers Wood for £9,100. From 1859 this had been owned by a Frederick Allfrey and he had built a fine mansion in the grounds. The estate was later sold to a developer and the house demolished in 1960. During the war, Stanbury had been used as a prisoner of war camp with Nissen huts lining the driveway. Harold bought up surplus army equipment, including Bren gun carriers, which he stored on the grounds he owned.

Separation & Second Marriage

Sometime around the summer of 1945 the Judd's marriage failed and Harold and Kate parted. Kate remained at Spencers Wood and took over the running of H Judd & Son Ltd and the sawmill. Meanwhile, Harold obtained Charlton House, a small estate in Charlton Lane, Swallowfield and went there to live with Phyllis Daisy Smith (née Barnes). From there he continued timber haulage, using the E Howe Ltd name. Phyllis already had four children (a son and three daughters) and with Harold she had another two children - Harold and Angela.

Kate Judd died on Wednesday 18th October 1950 at Spencers Wood. The *Reading Standard* of Friday 15th December 1950 reported she had left £37,113 1s 0d gross, £28,575 8s 0d net, with a duty paid of £5,049, in her Will. She also left £100 to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Harold then returned to run H Judd & Son Ltd and the sawmill. He married Phyllis on Saturday 16th December 1950 at Wokingham District Register Office, Berkshire. Sadly, this marriage only lasted the two years until Harold's untimely death.

An Early Death & Afterwards

The death of Harold Judd on Saturday 20th December 1952, at the age of only 52, dealt all his business interests a serious blow, and the miniature railways were no exception. He had suffered a stroke in his office at Spencers Wood a few days earlier. Harold's obituary

appeared in the *Berkshire Chronicle* of Friday 26th December 1952 "*The death occurred on Saturday of Mr Harold Judd, aged 52, of Charlton House, Swallowfield. Mr Judd, who came to Berkshire from Buckinghamshire, was managing director of H Judd and Son Ltd, timber merchants of Spencers Wood; Spencers Wood Tractor Repairs Ltd, Judd's Removals Ltd, of Reading; and E Howe Ltd timber merchants, Reading. He was also associated with Spencers Wood Saw Mill. He leaves a widow, two sons, four daughters and four step children*". In fact he actually controlled the sawmill company. The *Reading Standard* of Friday 10th April 1953 reported that in his Will he had left £55,915 7s 6d gross, £23,555 17s 6d net - with duty paid being £3,485.

Sometime after Harold's death his businesses encountered difficulties and various creditors took action. On Thursday 11th March 1954 a Sheriff's sale was held in the tractor shed at Spencers Wood, undertaken by Cooksey & Walker of 17 Market Place, Reading. Two further similar sales were held on Thursday 1st July 1954 and Wednesday 11th August 1954. These raised a modest amount of money. At the conclusion of the last of these sales, a Mr David Burrows visited the offices of Cooksey & Walker and made an offer for the site at Spencers Wood (excluding the sawmill). This offer was subsequently accepted and the influential Burrows family established a substantial business there, making compressed fibre moulded products. This company was initially known as Prestfibre Limited and later became British Moulded Fibre Limited. The company subsequently opened a large additional factory at Bitton near Bristol. Sir Robert Burrows KBE had been (the final) Chairman of LMSR from 1946 to 1947, and the family previously had substantial colliery interests.

Following the Sheriff's sale a creditor sought and obtained the appointment of a Judicial Trustee to administer Harold's estate. Oswald Francis, the senior partner in Ernest Francis & Son of 8 Forbury, Reading was appointed. In August 1954 John Tovey, a junior partner in the firm, was appointed liquidator of the main company H Judd & Son Ltd, which was undertaking timber haulage throughout the country. It is interesting to note that the creditors of this company were eventually paid in full. John Tovey was also appointed Receiver & Manager of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Ltd (which, as we shall see was the company Harold used for his miniature railway interests) and, with the able assistance of Frank Shelton, also ran Spencers Wood Sawmills Ltd successfully for some four years. The other companies, E Howe Ltd (actually another haulage firm) and Judds (Removals) Ltd were liquidated by another employee of Ernest Francis & Son.

An auction of the plant and equipment of the haulage companies was held in the tractor shed at Spencers Wood on Thursday 3rd February 1955 by Henry Butcher & Company of Holborn, London. The notice advising the auction described it as "Timber Transport Fleet, Stores and Equipment". The bulk of the heavy equipment was sold at Spencers Wood, but some additional plant located at Charlton House, Swallowfield was included. The auction was conducted by Mr Howard, the senior partner of Henry Butcher & Company. Some 200 people attended and the auction was highly successful.

The Charlton House Estate was auctioned by Martin & Pole, of 23 Market Place, Reading on Friday 10th June 1955 at the Great Western Hotel in Reading. The estate was formed of the main house with outbuildings and 2 acres, building site of $\frac{4}{5}$ acre, large implement shed and garage with 3 acres and a small cottage with 1 acre. The whole estate was sold for only £4,500.

This then was the rather unhappy end to Harold Judd's companies, equipment and property. He had, nevertheless, achieved a great deal from virtually nothing and, as we shall see, his miniature railways provided thousands of passengers with an enjoyable train ride. At present, in 2005, the site of Harold Judd's yard and sawmill at Spencers Wood has a set of offices built on it, with nothing to suggest its past use.



A smiling Harold Judd stands behind his wife, Kate (right) and his eldest daughter, Pam (left).

(Courtesy W Judd)



A delightful picture showing Harold with his son, William. This was taken at Spencers Wood during the early years of the Second World War.

(Courtesy W Judd)

H. JUDD & SON
TIMBER AND
GENERAL HAULERS

*TIMBER HAULAGE
UNDERTAKEN IN ANY
PART OF THE COUNTRY
BY EXPERIENCED MEN*

**Spencers Wood
READING**

*PERSONAL SUPERVISION
ON ALL WORK
Telephone:
SPENCERS WOOD 83241*

Letterhead (slightly reduced) from Harold Judd's main company.

(Courtesy D Judd)

CHAPTER TWO

THAMES SIDE PROMENADE

A POPULAR READING RETREAT

A Very Brief History of Reading

Reading lies in the Thames Valley, some forty miles from central London and was for many years the county town of Berkshire, now having an aspiration for city status. Today it is a thriving multi-cultural town and transport centre, within easy reach of London via two railway links and the M4 motorway. Present day workers are likely to be employed in computing or in call-centres, but past industries have included boat building & repair, biscuits (Reading was the home of the famous Huntley & Palmers brand), beer, seeds & bulbs (Suttons), railways and bricks.

A Saxon settlement, dating from about AD600, has been discovered near the confluence of the Kennet and Thames rivers and these people were known as the "Readingas", from which it is said the town takes its name. Alternatively, the name may be Celtic *Rhydd-Inge* or "Ford over the River" which neatly fits the town's location. The river would, of course, be the Kennet, not the Thames. Reading Abbey was founded by King Henry I in 1121 as a private mausoleum for his family and once ranked third in all England. It was built on the site of a Danish stronghold set up during the Viking Wars of King Alfred's reign and was dissolved by Henry VIII, who turned it into a palace. It was later destroyed during the English Civil War. The first town charter was that of Henry III (1253), confirmed and expanded by succeeding sovereigns. The government charter until 1835 was that of Charles I (1639), incorporating the town under the title of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses. The town suffered severely in the English Civil Wars of the mid-17th century - the Parliamentarians laying siege to the Royalist held town between the 14th and 27th April 1643. By that time the town's trade, notably in clothing, had begun to decline. In the 18th century the chief trade was malt. A university college was opened in 1892, affiliated to the University of Oxford; it became an independent university in 1926. Its researches into agriculture, horticulture, and dairying are of special importance.

Caversham Bridge and the River Thames

Although now very much a Thames town, ancient Reading was a Kennet side town and only gradually expanded to make contact with the Thames. The site of the present bridge over the Thames, known as Caversham Bridge, (ST71157460) has been a crossing point of the river since before 1231 when the first reference to a bridge is made. Before that time ferries plied the river and may have continued after the bridge was constructed as tolls collected on both sides made a crossing expensive. This first bridge was of wooden construction and had a chapel to St Anne on it. The Abbots of Reading and the Lords of Caversham Park kept the bridge in repair by joint effort. When the Abbey was dissolved, the upkeep of the Reading side of the bridge fell to the Crown and then to Reading Corporation. The Lords of Caversham Park and later Oxfordshire repaired the Caversham end. The bridge was to play a key role during the Civil War. In 1869 a new latticed iron bridge replaced what was by then a bridge made partly out of brick and in disrepair. However, when in 1911 Reading

Corporation expanded its boundaries and incorporated (among other places) the major portion of Caversham, the bridge become the responsibility of the newly expanded Borough and part of the agreement was the provision of a new bridge. Reading thus became a Thames town and in 1926 the bridge was replaced by an attractive two span structure in ferro-concrete. Construction of this started in 1924 when the old iron bridge was demolished. The new bridge was built by contractors L G Mouchel & Partners Limited and Holloway Brothers (London) Limited and was said to have cost £71,000. It was first used on Saturday 8th May 1926. The official opening by Edward, Prince of Wales was on Friday 25th June 1926 when a tablet was unveiled on the Reading side of the bridge during an "Industrial Visit to Reading". This states that the Prince of Wales "*who but for unforeseen circumstances would have opened the bridge for traffic*". The "unforeseen circumstances" were the General Strike of the 3rd to 12th May 1926.

The Thames itself rises in the Cotswolds of Gloucestershire and winds eastward through six of the country's southern counties, its estuary meeting the North Sea at The Nore (a sandbank). The river's total length is around 210 miles and is tidal between Teddington and The Nore, a distance of some 65 miles. The river became navigable by barges to Oxford and beyond by 1624, but with difficulty until locks were constructed above Staines in 1771. The London Corporation added locks between Staines and Teddington in 1810-15.

Thames Side Promenade

The Thames Side Promenade, the location of the two railways covered in this book, lies immediately to the west of Caversham Bridge, on the south bank of the river, extending about 1 mile up stream. Encompassing some 15 acres, it has been a popular riverside leisure retreat with the people of Reading for many years. The Reading Official Guide for 1947 noted "*The Promenade by Thames has been beautifully laid out as a public park and truly, the Thames has become one of the finest assets of the Town*".

A map of 1899 shows the area of the present Promenade to be just a towpath alongside the River Thames, with open marshy meadows beyond. The Finance & General Purposes Committee of Reading Borough Council resolved at their meeting on 25th October 1905, subsequently approved by the Council, to acquire the land needed for what was then called the "Thames Side Improvement Scheme". The land seems to have been at that time in the ownership of three people – Edward Francis Saunders (from Shinrone, Ireland), Ind Coope and Company Limited (owners of the Caversham Bridge Hotel) and Henry George Wilson of Wolverhampton. A conditional contract for purchasing the land was approved by the Council on 5th April 1906. On 30th May 1906, John Bowen the Borough Engineer and Surveyor presented his detailed plans for the scheme and reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee that his estimate of the cost would be £3,320, including planting trees and shrubs, laying out paths etc. To finance this the Council arranged a loan of £3,520; hearing on 29th November 1906 the Local Government Board had agreed this.

Things were now set in motion and tenders to erect an iron railing fence to enclose the land were opened. At their meeting on 28th June 1907 the Finance & General Purposes Committee were told the land had come into the ownership of the Council on 8th June 1907, and that the contract to erect the iron railing fence had been awarded to Hill & Smith from Brierley Hill, Staffordshire (for £986 8s 0d). The Borough Engineer was told to obtain the services of an arboriculturalist to advise on the planting of trees. This was William Goldring

(1854-1919) of 28 Kew Gardens Road, Kew, Surrey. Born in Sussex and trained at Kew, he had been the assistant editor of *The Garden* and editor of *Woods and Forests*. He set up as a landscape architect in 1887 and had hundreds of commissions, including private houses, asylums and public parks. William visited Reading on 11th October 1907 to view the ground involved and subsequently he provided a plan, report and a list of suitable trees (sadly, these documents have not survived). His fee was 4 guineas a day, plus travelling expenses.

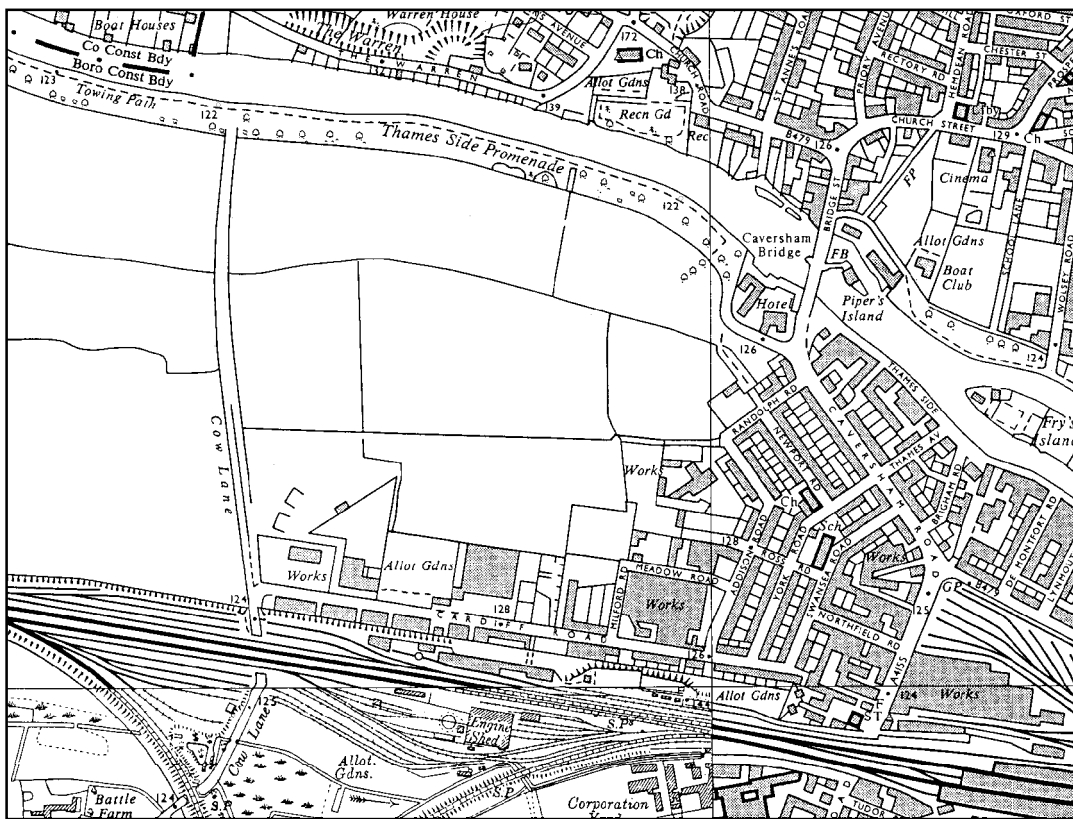
On 15th November 1907 a Sub-committee was formed "*for the purposes of giving directions for the laying out of the Thames Side Pleasure Ground*". It was also decided to upgrade and widen the towpath alongside the River Thames, this work being undertaken by unemployed workmen, with their wages being paid by the Distress Committee. Work on setting out the grounds now continued and at their meeting on 27th March 1908 the Finance & General Purposes Committee heard that the gravel path alongside the river was well over half complete and the planting of trees and shrubs would be completed "*in a few days*". A suggestion to name the approach road "Coombe Bank Road" was not accepted. However, at their 1st May 1908 meeting the Committee resolved that "*the Thames Side Pleasure Ground and the road affording access to it from Caversham Road be named 'The Thames Side Promenade'*".

So now the new open space had a proper name and the first band concert held there seems to have been on the evening of Saturday 30th May 1908 by the Reading Temperance Prize Band. The riverside gravel path was completed by 19th June and at their meeting of 26th June 1908, the Committee agreed that a portable bandstand be obtained, and the purchase of 100 chairs was agreed. Thus, it would appear by July 1908 virtually everything had been completed and the citizens of Reading now had a new public open space to enjoy. The management of the Thames Side Promenade passed from the Finance & General Purposes Committee to the Parks and Pleasure Grounds Committee in November 1908. After that, judging by the minutes of the Parks Committee meetings, the Thames Side Promenade settled down to a fairly quiet life. Regular band concerts took place and the annual Regatta was held on River Thames by the Promenade. The Regatta had been held there, going back to at least 1907.

A children's paddling pool was provided about 250 yards along the Promenade from Caversham Bridge. There is no specific mention in the various Council minutes about its construction, so it may well have been provided at the time the Promenade was originally set out in 1908, although whether it was a paddling pool then or an ornamental pond is not known. It was certainly in use as a paddling pool by April 1933 as it is mentioned in the minutes in a passing reference. Three public surface air raid shelters were built on the Promenade in 1941. Two were a short distance west of the paddling pool and the third just to the west of Cow Lane. The Parks Committee agreed to their construction, and also in most of Reading's parks and recreation grounds, at their meeting on 14th February 1941. In the summer of 1942 the Council looked to remove iron railings, where possible, from its parks for the war effort. The Promenade was spared and retained its characteristic iron railing fence along its boundary. Thames Side Promenade has been well served by public transport over the years. The Reading Tramways system extended as far as the southern approach to Caversham Bridge. When the bridge was rebuilt in 1926, the terminus was moved into the Promenade approach road. The 4ft gauge electric trams ran from Wednesday 22nd July 1903 until Wednesday 15th July 1936. Trolleybuses started running in place of the trams from Saturday 18th July 1936, with a terminus in the same location. These ran until Saturday 10th July 1965, when motor buses took over.

In recent years the land near the Thames Side Promenade has been used for the well-known Reading Festival. The National Jazz, Blues and Rock Festival, as it was then known, was first held in Reading in 1971 - moving from Plumpton in Sussex. It is estimated that the Festival now brings in more than £7 million to Reading each year, with some 80,000 visitors invading the town every August bank holiday. The Reading Festival is an international event with bands appearing from all over the world, making the town a globally recognised name on the music scene.

Before leaving the Thames Side Promenade it is worth recalling an amusing, but apocryphal, tale about its name, told to the author by his father. During the Second World War the destination names on the front of the trolleybuses were changed to avoid giving much away as to the actual locality to enemy troops, should an invasion occur. "Caversham" became "Promenade" and the pretence seems to have worked. A gentleman, standing in the town centre, was said to have asked where the sea was, after noting the "Promenade" destination on the front of a trolleybus!



An extract from an Ordnance Survey 6" map revised in 1956/1957 and reproduced here approximately full size. The Thames Side Promenade can be clearly seen towards the top centre with Caversham Bridge to the right. Cow Lane can be seen running from underneath the main London - Bristol railway line to the west end of the Promenade. Richfield Avenue has yet to be built (linking Cow Lane to Caversham Road) and open fields separate the Promenade from the buildings alongside Cardiff Road. Reading railway station is just visible in the bottom right hand corner. On the Promenade itself, the Paddling Pool is the oblong just to the right of the last "e" of "Promenade".

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CHAPTER THREE

FIRST RAILWAY 1944 - 1945

A WARTIME AMUSEMENT

Introduction

How and why Harold Judd first became interested in miniature railways is not known. He was, however, a great steam enthusiast - although with his business this would have been mainly road traction engines as opposed to railway locomotives. It is possible that his interest in railways and especially miniature railways came from his close friendship with Matthew Kerr, the owner and operator of the Kerr's Miniature Railway in Arbroath on the east coast of Scotland. This railway had opened as a 7¼" gauge line on 22nd June 1935 and was converted to 10¼" gauge in 1938. It still runs to this day, operated by Matthew's son. It is not certain how and when Matthew Kerr and Harold Judd first met, but Matthew or "Jock" as he was known to the Judd family, first started making regular visits to the Judd household at Spencers Wood in the early years of the Second World War. He helped out by doing some driving for the Harold's timber haulage business and sometimes stayed for long periods. This was of course in the off season when his miniature railway was not running! Together they visited two local miniature railways - Nigel Holder's 5" gauge Penwood Newtown Railway at Penwood Farm near Newbury and the 10¼" gauge railway at the Royal Anchor Hotel in Liphook, Hampshire owned by Charles Lane. Mr & Mrs Kerr were staying with the Judd family at the time of Harold's death in December 1952.

The other person Harold came into contact with, and who may have got him interested in miniature railways, was Travers John Thurston from Farnborough, Hampshire. More commonly known as John Thurston, he had previously done some work for the brilliant and well-known miniature railway locomotive builder Herbert Charles Stuart Bullock, also from Farnborough. A brief account of Thurston can be found in Appendix One. We do not know how Judd and Thurston got to know each other, but living comparatively close to each other and sharing engineering and steam interests, it is perhaps not unexpected. Additionally, it is fairly certain Thurston undertook various engineering jobs for Harold, including welding. We also know Matthew Kerr had dealings with Thurston before the war.

During the Second World War, to encourage people not to travel and seek amusement and recreation in their own towns, "Holidays at Home" events were promoted by the government and local authorities during the summer months. These commenced in the summer of 1942, when petrol rationing had become more severe, and Reading Borough Council tried to turn the Thames riverside into an alternative seaside to discourage people from travelling to the beaches. Chinese Dragon boats were provided as one added attraction. Although not apparently part of the official "Holidays at Home" programme, Harold Judd seems to have opened and operated his first miniature railway as part of this scheme, offering Reading people local entertainment, and by all accounts it was very popular. The site Harold selected was not on the Thames Side Promenade itself, but in the fields immediately adjacent, to the south and not far from Caversham Bridge.

Equipment Obtained

The locomotive and rolling stock Harold Judd obtained for his new railway have an interesting background. In his book "*H C S Bullock, His Life and Locomotives*", Kenneth Bullock tells us how in spring 1936 Alexander Kinloch had discussed with Herbert Bullock the building of a large 10¼" gauge LMSR 4-6-2 locomotive. This was to be used on the Foxhill Miniature Railway, which both Bullock and Kinloch were then about to open in Farnborough. No final decision had been made when Kinloch left for a holiday in Switzerland. However, after his departure Kinloch's close friend Doctor Bernard gave Bullock the go ahead for the new Pacific. Material and components for the locomotive were then ordered and steel for the frames cut. On Kinloch's return he immediately stopped the work, stating Doctor Bernard had no right to give the go ahead. The frames and what had been assembled of the chassis were then set aside in Bullock's workshop. There the part built locomotive remained until the death of H C S Bullock on 20th November 1937. Then, John Thurston removed the abortive 4-6-2, in return for engineering services rendered to Bullock. He then completed the engine as a 4-6-4 baltic tank locomotive in the summer of 1939. Writing to Matthew Kerr on 17th July 1939, Thurston said "*I have here a baltic tank engine just finished, being painted. Length of engine 10ft 6in a 4-6-4. 4in bore 5in stroke 12in drivers a very powerful engine*". In the same letter he also said "*I have had a gentleman here to see me with a view of buying an engine*" – who this was is not known, but it could have been a Mr H Cookson of Billingshurst. Ted Martin, who later worked for John Thurston, remembers not long before the war Cookson had ordered a locomotive, coaches and track for a complete railway - apparently a joint venture with John Thurston to be built at Peacehaven in Sussex. Mr Carter, a local carpenter, built the coaches. This equipment was never used, probably due to the war, and was all stored in Thurston's yard in Farnborough.

Mr H G Cookson had previously been a good customer of H C S Bullock, obtaining four of his locomotives at different times between 1933 and 1937. He operated public railways in Sussex at Bramber Castle and Shoreham-by-Sea, as well as a private railway. After the war he went on to operate railways in East Worthing (1947) and the present Littlehampton line (1948-1949).

We can only assume that Harold Judd came to know about this stored material and arranged to obtain the 4-6-4 locomotive, coaches and track. Whether he was looking for equipment for a railway with a site in mind, or the other way round - is open to conjecture! However, Harold wanted a tender locomotive so in early 1944, in a matter of weeks, John Thurston built a tender and took the trailing wheels out to make the 4-6-4 tank a 4-6-2 tender locomotive. The new tender was mounted on twin bogies. Harold told his son, William, that it was "his" locomotive. This was the only locomotive to work on the railway. Later, Harold Judd named the engine "Sir B Montgomery" and photographs show this was done sometime after August 1944. Apparently, the name was suggested to Harold by Alec Wickens, one of his haulage drivers and was presumably after Bernard Montgomery (1887-1976) the well-known Second World War commander.

Construction and Opening

The ground where the railway was to run was owned or leased by a local farmer and divided by small ditches or drains, and from the Thames Side Promenade itself by the long iron railing fence that had been erected when the Promenade was set out. Harold presumably rented the ground, or had some similar arrangement for its use. He put a large workforce (of

his own men) on building the line, which was supervised by John Thurston. Amazingly, it is said everything was completed in one week or so, although the earthworks were minimal. The new railway was 10¼" gauge and formed a simple circuit (a sort of elongated oval) of some 750 yards in length, extending approximately from SU70947460 to SU70647466. See map on page 20. There were no points, station platform or buildings. There were, however, two bridges over a ditch along, which ran a fence that seemed to divide two fields. The "station" appears to have been at about SU70907465 and was merely a spot where the train halted. From here the line ran parallel to the Promenade fence and over the ditch by means of a bridge, before curving around, turning back on itself and crossing the ditch by another bridge, and then returning to the station. A photograph of one of the bridges shows it to be a simple small structure under the track with no railings or other fittings.

It is not known when the new railway actually opened to the public - the local press seems to have ignored the event. However, it appears to have been open by Friday 9th June 1944, as an advert appeared in the *Reading Standard* of that date. The wording of the advert suggests the railway was open before the 9th June, saying that it had "*Already proved to be an immense success*". Whit Monday was 29th May, but there was nothing about the railway in the previous edition of the paper on Friday 2nd June 1944. Here, reporting about the Whitsun holiday, the paper noted the river was busy, but made no mention of the railway.

<p>HOLIDAYS AT HOME</p> <p>Come and see Reading's Newest Attraction.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>MINIATURE RAILWAY</p> <p>installed in the meadows adjoining the THAMES SIDE PROMENADE. The track covers a circuit of half a mile. Already proved to be an immense success with the "grown-ups" as well as the kiddies.</p> <p>Entrance: First turning on right in Randolph Road (by Trolley Bus Terminus at Promenade).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FARES</p> <p>Children under 14 3d. Children over 14 and adults ... 6d.</p>
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The advert from the *Reading Standard* of Friday 9th June 1944, announcing that the new railway was open. Presumably, Harold would have preferred visitors to ride as well as to "Come and see"!

Operation

As already stated, the fields where the railway ran were divided from the Thames Side Promenade by an iron railing fence and Harold Judd had requested Reading Borough Council that entrances be provided, so that the many people who visited the Promenade could also gain access to his railway. The Parks Committee considered this at their meeting on 9th June 1944. They resolved "*That H Judd & Son Limited of Spencers Wood, be informed that this committee are not prepared to agree to the provision of entrances in the fence on the southern boundary of the Thames Side Promenade to enable access to be obtained from the Promenade to the adjoining land*". Note that Harold was using his main company name for this correspondence and the railway was not actually mentioned. The matter was raised again at the next Parks Committee meeting on 14th July, where it was decided "*That the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Town Clerk and the Borough Surveyor be empowered to deal as they may deem to be proper.....any further questions which may arise in relation to the committee's decision at their last meeting not to agree to the provision of entrances in the fence separating the Thames Side Promenade from the land on which the railway is now operated*".

It is thought the entrances were probably later provided; but either way the new railway was an immediate and overwhelming success, proving very popular with the people of war time Reading. Fares were 3d (children) and 6d (adults). The railway's popularity is confirmed by an advert in the *Reading Standard* of Friday 16th June 1944, only a week after the first advert. Here it states "*Owing to its great appeal to all ages it has been decided to double the length of the ride*". This meant going around the track twice - and doubling the fares! The fares now became 6d (children) and 1/- (adults). One has to wonder why if the railway was very busy the ride became two circuits; this would have surely increased the length of any queue somewhat! Apparently, American servicemen were frequent passengers and very much enjoyed the ride. There was no ticket office and Mrs Judd sat in their car and the money collected was put in her lap! No tickets were used or issued. Trains ran anticlockwise around the circuit and were formed of up to five coaches - this being the maximum number seen in photographs. At other times, if fewer coaches were required, they were merely lifted off the track and left alongside. William Judd, Harold's son, recalls that on one occasion a train had 109 passengers, which must have been a tight squeeze for the passengers.

The only feature on the railway appears to have been a lower quadrant signal located at the boarding/alighting point. Two Great Western Railway permanent way staff looked after the track for Harold. Ted Martin came from Farnborough on the train and walked down to the railway - he got "steam up" in the locomotive, ready for when the Judd's arrived and the train starting operating. At the end of the day's running Ted was given a lift home in the Judds' car. He also drove on the railway and among the others who took turns on the regulator were: Harold Judd, William Judd, Matthew Kerr and John Pegler. The latter was a driver on the mainline railway. At night, or when the railway was not running, the locomotive and one of the coaches were chained to the track.

Direct access to the railway had to be gained via a small track. This was a right turn off Randolph Road and led down over a ditch into the field where the railway ran. Randolph Road left Caversham Road very close to the trolleybus terminus, so getting to the railway was comparatively easy.

Charity Days

One of the very few photographs of the railway shows the Mayor of Reading driving a train in his regalia. This was taken on Saturday 29th July 1944 on the occasion of a Sailors Flag Day being held in the town. The *Reading Standard* of Friday 28th July 1944 reported "*Tomorrow (Saturday) Mr Judd, owner of the miniature railway at Caversham, will give his profits of the day towards the Sailors fund*". The Mayor, Alderman Alfred Lovell, probably enjoyed his driving turn on the railway. He had been elected Mayor on Tuesday 9th November 1943 and was a former Great Western Railway locomotive driver and had always wanted to be so since he was a small boy. An Alderman since 1937, he had represented the Battle Ward from 1924. A picture of him seated on "Sir B Montgomery" (adorned with flags for the occasion, but still un-named) at the head of a well loaded train appeared in the *Reading Standard* of Friday 4th August 1944, titled "*Mayor Drives Miniature Train*". A similar photograph appears on page one of this book. Saturday 26th August 1944 saw Harold donating his takings for the day to the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

As this advert from the Friday 18th August 1944 edition of the *Reading Standard* shows, Harold Judd again donated his takings to charity, this time to the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. The advert also appeared in the Friday 25th August edition.

Thameside Promenade
MODEL
RAILWAY

THE entire takings of
this model railway, on
Saturday, 26th August,
(first trip 12 noon) will
be handed over to the
Royal Berkshire Hospital,
through the kindness of
Mr. Judd.

Children 6d. Adults 1/-

Make this a Bumper Day
for Our Hospital !

Onwards to 1945 and Closure

Presumably, the railway ran on to the end of its first season in the autumn of 1944. The official end of the 1944 "Holidays at Home" programme seems to have been Sunday 24th September 1944. Anyway, the locomotive and coaches were returned to the yard at Spencers Wood for safe storage during the winter. The track remained in position.

From an advert in the *Reading Standard* of Thursday 29th March 1945, it seems the railway reopened at Easter. The advert stated the railway would be running on Easter Monday, 2nd April 1945. This was the last time the railway was advertised in the local newspapers.

THAMES SIDE PROMENADE
EASTER MONDAY
MINIATURE RAILWAY
Will be running
Fares : Children 6d. : Adults 1/-

Advert from the Thursday 29th March 1945 edition of the *Reading Standard*. Note the fares were unchanged from the previous season.

Keith Wilson (of miniature locomotive construction fame) remembers visiting the railway, probably at Whitsun 1945. He recalls the track as a "long oval", running anticlockwise. The locomotive had a pull-out regulator and the coaches, he recalls, had sit-in seats and were in longish trucks. Relations of his lived in the Market Place in Reading in a house with a large number of staircases (at least six including a spiral!) and he spent a couple of weeks there around 1945. They walked to Caversham Bridge once, a long way for the young Keith aged 12, but they visited Harold Judd's railway.

At the Reading Borough Council Parks Committee meeting of 9th March 1945, the Chairman reported he had interviewed Harold Judd regarding an application he had made for permission to use Hill's Meadow (an area of open ground on the north bank of Thames to the east of Reading Bridge) for "*fair entertainments*". However, it had been decided that permission would not be granted. It is not known exactly what fair equipment Harold Judd had, but he does not seem to have applied to the Council again for permission to use Hill's Meadow or elsewhere.

Sadly, sometime around the summer of 1945, the Judds' marriage failed and Harold and Kate parted. Kate Judd took over ownership of the whole railway (including "Sir B Montgomery", coaches and track) and continued operating it. It is not certain why or exactly when the railway closed. However, it is believed to have run on until the end of the 1945 season, around September. The most likely explanation for its closure, after all it had been very popular, was the failure of the Judds' marriage. Also, with the end of the war in May 1945, part of the reason for the railway's existence had gone. All the track, locomotive and coaches were returned to the yard at Spencers Wood (now under Kate's control) for storage and to await further use.

However, during its short life the railway must have provided a happy diversion for hundreds of Reading's residents from the war. It was to be another four years before Harold Judd ran another miniature railway in Reading, but as we shall see, there were other Judd railways and railway interests in that time. Despite all the development in the area around the Thames Side Promenade the railway, as it was in 1944, could be relaid today - there no obstructions along the line of its track.



A photograph thought to have been taken when the railway equipment was first delivered to site of the railway in May 1944. Left to right: the farmer who owned or leased the land, Ernie May ("Dosher") and George Gould. Ernie and George were both employees of Harold and are enjoying some liquid refreshment. Ernie was a great steam enthusiast.

(Courtesy W Judd. 5/44)



A train stood in the "station" alongside the iron railing fence, which separated the fields where the railway ran from the Thames Side Promenade itself. Left to right we have John Thurston, William Judd, Kate Judd and in the driver's seat, Harold Judd.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection. August 1944)



"Sir B Montgomery" rounds the curve at the western end of the railway with a very lightly loaded train of what appears to be five coaches.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection)



The Mayor of Reading, Alfred Lovell, is sat in the driver's seat in this view taken on the occasion of a Sailors Flag Day held in the town. The two gentlemen stood either side of the locomotive are unknown, but are thought to have been connected with an insurance company. Harold Judd is stood immediately behind the Mayor's left shoulder.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection. 29/7/44)



The Mayor driving a well-loaded train leaving the "station" and approaching the first of the two bridges over the drain or ditch, its position marked by the two trees.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection. 29/7/44)

CHAPTER FOUR

HAROLD JUDD'S OTHER RAILWAYS

HILSEA, SOUTHSEA & HAYLING ISLAND

Introduction

Despite the chapter subtitle, of the three places mentioned, Harold Judd himself only operated the railway at Southsea - although he did have connections with the other locations. 1945 seems to have been a very busy year for Harold as far as miniature railways were concerned. Around this time he appears to have joined up with Louis Hathaway who also came from Reading and in the summer of 1944 Harold Judd was attempting to set up a company for his miniature railway interests. This was Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited, which in the end was not formed until November 1945. By this time Judd and Hathaway had become involved with 10¼" gauge railways on the south coast at Hilsea and Southsea. The exact business relationship between Harold and Louis is not certain, although the equipment (locomotives, rolling stock and track) were Harold's, it seems Louis was the one who approached the relevant authorities seeking permission to operate the railways. The situation is not helped by the fact that Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited never sent any detailed accounts to Companies House. Given the way the two gentlemen involved operated, this is hardly surprising. Keeping proper business accounts would have been low down on their list of priorities. The few years immediately following the Second World War were a boom time for miniature railways - after all the restrictions and tribulations of the war, people could finally travel to the seaside and other locations to enjoy the attractions and amusements there. Harold Judd and Louis Hathaway, it seems, were ready and able to capitalise on this trade.

Louis Hathaway

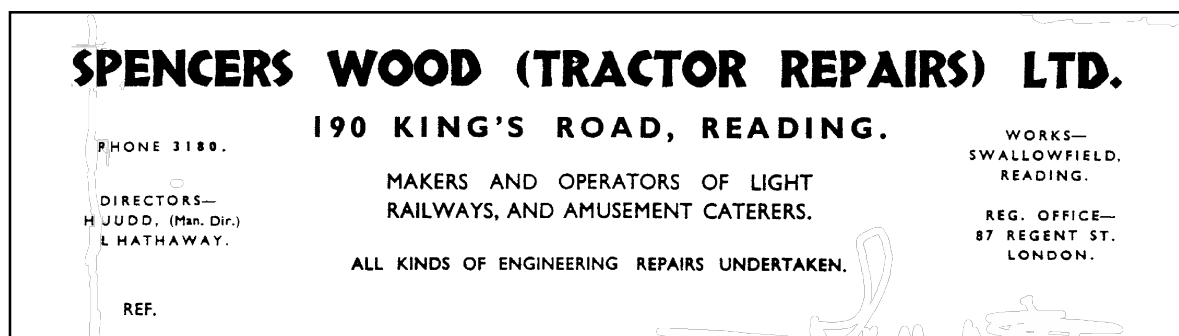
Louis Hathaway was born at 12 North Street, Caversham, Reading on 9th December 1900; only a short distance from Caversham Bridge. His father, John Hathaway, was a labourer in a "biscuit factory". Louis had five brothers and one sister. As far as is known, he had no formal training for an occupation, but over the years worked in a wide variety of jobs. In 1927 his occupation was given as "stoker at biscuit factory". At one time he also worked in the butchery and fishmongery trades. In 1943, with his first wife, he was running a café in Southampton Street, Reading. The *Kelly's* directory for 1939 shows us that Louis had a shop or office at 190 Kings Road, Reading and was listed as a furniture dealer. He seems to have taken over this business from a Mr Evans who is listed there in the 1938 edition. Louis Hathaway undertook furniture removals, house clearance work and during the war did evacuation removals. In this line of work, he apparently dealt with antiques and did business with Arthur Negus (1903-1985), the expert of the television shows *Going for a Song* and *The Antiques Roadshow*. It was possibly through the removals business, he met or had contact with Harold Judd. The premises at 190 Kings Road passed to Harold Judd when Louis left Reading in 1945. Harold used the address for two of his companies - E Howe Limited and Judd's (Removals) Limited, both of which he set up around that time.

Sometime between May and November 1945, Louis moved to Portsmouth where Pat, his second wife's family came from. He spent many years at Portsmouth, closely involved with the miniature railway at Southsea, but was also connected with other lines at Gosport and Hilsea. During his time at Portsmouth he worked in the Royal Naval Dockyard for a while. Many years later he returned to his native Reading and died there on 25th February 1983.

Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited

With the success of his first railway, Harold Judd seems to have decided to set up a company up for his miniature railway interests. So, with the help of Louis Hathaway, Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited was formed; which despite its name seems to have been used by Harold solely for his miniature railway interests. The rather limited records of this concern survive in the Companies House archive in Cardiff.

Harold appears to have attempted to set up the company in the summer of 1944; the relevant document being originally dated 24th July 1944, just a short time after his first railway opened. For whatever reason, this did not happen and the company was not formed until 1945, being Incorporated (under the Companies Act 1929) on 19th November 1945. The Solicitor engaged in the formation of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited was John Henry Pickard of Pickard & Company, Kent House, 87 Regent Street, Westminster, London W1 and this was also the Registered Office of the Company. Nominal capital was £5,000 divided into 5,000 ordinary shares of £1 each. A Mr M K Chaplin was Secretary with one ordinary share and Mr J Guest, Clerk, also with one ordinary share. The address of both gentlemen was given as the Registered Office. The original (1944), names for Secretary and Clerk were different. Under "*Particulars of Directors or Managers*", two names were listed: Harold Judd, Haulage Contractor, Charlton House, Swallowfield, Berkshire and Louis Hathaway, Manager, 418 Commercial Road, Portsmouth. Judd was allotted 2000 ordinary shares and Hathaway 1000. The main objects "*for which the Company is established*" were "*To carry on business as carriers, haulage contractors, railway, shipping and transport agents, manufacturers of, dealers in, hirers, repairers and warehousemen of tractors, carriages, wagons, trucks, automobiles, aeroplanes...*". The list continued, but one wonders how many aeroplanes the Company dealt with! Miniature railways were not even mentioned.



Letterhead (slightly reduced) taken from a letter sent by Harold Judd to Matthew Kerr of the Kerr's Miniature Railway, dated 7th April 1949.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection)

On 5th April 1946 Harold Judd mortgaged the Company - the amount secured being £2,000 against *"All the Company's undertaking and all its property and assets both present and future including its uncalled capital for time being"*. Under *"Changes to Directors/Secretaries"*, Harold become Director and Secretary, the alteration being signed by Harold on 14th October 1948. Louis Hathaway seems to have left the Company sometime around 1950. He was presumably still involved in early 1949, as it was he who approached Reading Borough Council for a site for Harold's second railway in the town. However, the annual return to Companies House made up to 31st December 1950 makes no mention of Louis Hathaway and by then Harold's brother Ernest had become a Director. At that time Harold had 2,900 shares and Ernest 100. There are no annual returns prior to 1950. The subsequent history of the Company is covered in Chapter Five.

Dudley Zoo Locomotives

Surprisingly perhaps, our story moves to Dudley Zoo in Worcestershire - for it was from here that Harold purchased two locomotives. On 11th September 1937 a 10¼" gauge railway opened in the grounds of the Crown Hotel at Wychbold near Droitwich, Worcestershire. Motive power was one of a pair of 4-4-2 freelance locomotives designed by J N Maskelyne and built by G & S Light Engineering Company Limited, a partnership of Trevor Guest and Raymond Saunders. Following an approach from Dudley Zoo the railway was moved there, opening on 14th July 1938. Additionally, the second 4-4-2 locomotive was completed by G & S Light Engineering and put into service - this was 1002, the original locomotive being 1001. Following the 1944 season, due to the railway's popularity, it was decided to change from 10¼" to 15" gauge. This was undertaken over the winter of 1946/1947 and the railway reopened on the larger gauge at Whitsun 1947. After 1941, steam power had only been used at holiday times, so in 1945 with the regauging in mind, the two 4-4-2 locomotives were sold to Harold Judd. 1001 was dismantled at the time. It is not thought Harold obtained any of the coaches from Dudley Zoo, and these appear to have gone elsewhere after the railway was regauged.

Hilsea Miniature Railway

Background

Hilsea lies at the northern end of an area called Portsea Island and today is effectively part of Portsmouth, but was once a small village. Hilsea Lido was opened on 24th July 1935 by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth. It is situated at SU651045 in the far north west of Portsea Island, on the northern side of the moat at Hilsea Lines; a series of 18th-19th century fortifications built to protect the north of Portsmouth and now a scheduled ancient monument and nature reserve. Here ran a little known 10¼" gauge miniature railway from 1946 until 1949. Hathaway and Judd's connection with this line proved to be short lived, but as little of this railway's history has appeared in print, it is worth recording here.

Planning

The suggestion of having a miniature railway at Hilsea Lido came from Louis Hathaway - one presumes working with, or for, Harold Judd. The Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee of Portsmouth City Council, at their meeting on 25th May 1945, heard of *"an offer received from Mr L Hathaway, 190 Kings Road, Reading to operate a miniature railway at Hilsea Lido, adjoining the Children's Paddling Pool, and offering to pay to the corporation 30% of*

all receipts". Apparently, Louis had all the rolling stock and track available and if agreement was given the railway "*could be operated within a fortnight*". The Committee resolved that the idea be proceeded with. The Chairman of the Committee then visited the Lido along with Louis Hathaway and agreed that a suitable site would be the Promenade running alongside the creek - this being the creek that separated Portsea Island from the mainland. Apparently, the Promenade was still closed and protected with barbed wire, following the war. Louis agreed to clear these obstructions and lay the necessary track for the railway.

However, when all this was discussed on 1st June 1945 at the meeting of the Piers, Beach & Publicity (Trading) Sub-Committee, the City Engineer pointed out that the Promenade was a public highway and no railway could be operated on it without a provisional order from the Ministry of War Transport! In any event, he stated, the Promenade was under the control of the Roads, Works & Drainage Committee. After discussion, the meeting agreed that an alternative site at the Lido should be sought.

Track Laid

Things presumably then moved forward satisfactorily as at their meeting on 22nd June 1945 the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee heard that "*arrangements had been made for Mr L Hathaway, to operate a miniature railway at Hilsea Lido for the remainder of the season. The laying of the track was in progress, and it was hoped that the railway would be operating on Saturday next. The track would be contiguous to the footpath alongside the moat and the corporation would receive 30% of the receipts from passengers using the railway*". The track laid was 10¼" gauge and probably a simple end to end layout.

Despite this report to the Committee, it is thought that the railway never in fact ran in 1945 - there is certainly no evidence that it did. As we shall see, by this time Harold and Louis had agreed with the Council to reactivate the Southsea Miniature Railway and, as the Swimming Pool was still under requisition by the Admiralty (it was hoped that it would be given back towards the end of 1945), they probably thought that Southsea had better prospects. A report in the *Portsmouth Evening News* of Saturday 14th July 1945, mainly about Louis Hathaway operating the Southsea Miniature Railway, also stated "*On similar conditions, he is to operate a miniature railway along the side of the moat at Hilsea Lido*". Note the tense, suggesting the line had not operated at that time. It was noted in the 18th July 1945 edition that the Promenade was still blocked with "*barbed wire and other obstacles*".

All this seems to be backed up by an entry in the minutes of the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee meeting of 28th September 1945 "*The City Engineer had been suggesting that there was an excellent opportunity for installing a Miniature Railway near to the moat at Hilsea Lido, and giving an exceptionally long run*". He pointed out that it would be a "*money-spinner*", especially when the pool was open again. Although the Council had an agreement with Louis to operate a railway, there was no mention made of it. In fact at the next meeting, on the 26th October, the City Engineer outlined his proposal for a line running "*from the Swimming Pool buildings round to the Promenade, distance of approximately half-a-mile each way*". He went on to note that some seats would need moving. The meeting resolved that "*the principal of operating the Miniature Railway at Hilsea Lido be agreed to; that the operator be required to supply and lay his own track; that the period [of operation] be for 3 years*". Members of the Committee would also view the site suggested. It seems odd that no reference was made to the agreement with Louis Hathaway, whether or not the railway had operated that summer.

1946 - New Operators Take Over

Louis Hathaway's involvement with the Hilsea Miniature Railway was to be short lived. He probably found the Southsea Miniature Railway, which he was now running, a much more viable proposition. The 28th June 1946 meeting of the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee heard that "*Mr Hathaway, to whom the council had granted permission to operate a Miniature Railway at Hilsea Lido, had now found it impossible for him to operate, and he had agreed subject to the confirmation of the Committee to transfer his right in the matter to Messrs L G Baker and R L Bryden who had the necessary locomotives and rolling stock. The City Engineer informed the Committee that the length of track was not so long as at first anticipated, but he had inspected the track, and in his opinion it was suitable for use*". (This was track laid by Baker and Bryden, because Louis had lifted his track for reuse at Southsea). The Committee agreed to this and to Baker and Bryden operating the railway with the Corporation getting 30% of the receipts and the operators also having the right to run the railway for the 1947 season. It was also noted that the pool would be de-requisitioned from 1st July 1946, but it would not be possible to have it open during the 1946 season. This presumably restricted potential passengers on the railway. Leonard Baker, the more active of the two partners, lived in Reading and appears to have known both Harold Judd and Louis Hathaway. This was probably because one of his brothers ran a removal firm in Reading called Bakers, based at 105 Oxford Road. Leonard worked for this company for many years.

The railway was apparently open by at least early August - an advert appeared in the Wednesday 7th August 1946 edition of the *Portsmouth Evening News* titled Hilsea Miniature Railway "*Spending your holidays at home? Then visit the Lido and give the Kiddies a thrill on the Miniature Railway. Running Daily*". The *Hampshire Telegraph* of Friday 9th August 1946, reporting on the August Bank Holiday, stated "*Three thousand children "booked" on the miniature railway*". It is not certain what locomotive Baker and Bryden used for the 1946 season, but it was hired. The coaches were constructed by Leonard Baker in Reading. In the winter of 1946/1947 they asked David Curwen to build a new locomotive for the railway. Curwen inspected the locomotive then in use and described it as a "Bullock". (The authors of the book "*The Surrey Border and Camberley Railway*" think that this locomotive was 1003 "Western Queen" built by Bullock in 1934). At that time David Curwen had his engineering works in Gore Lane, Baydon, near Marlborough in Wiltshire. The new engine turned out to a handsome 4-6-2, Numbered 1547, with "HMR" on the tender. Pictures of the locomotive appeared in *Model Engineer* for 5th June 1947 and 12th August 1948. It was later named "Robin Hood".

1947 - 1949 Seasons

Baker and Bryden then operated the railway until October 1949, extending the track for (or during) the 1947 season. The pool finally reopened to the public on Wednesday 4th June 1947 and presumably brought welcome extra custom to the railway. Robert Bryden left the partnership in sometime around late 1947 or early 1948. In September 1949 Baker wrote to the Council applying to run the railway on through October (the agreement was due to expire on 30th September 1949). The Council agreed to this and also invited tenders for a period of three years from 1st January 1950 on a fixed rental basis. In the end it seems the last trains ran on the Hilsea Miniature Railway during October 1949. Leonard Baker then sold the whole railway - locomotive, six coaches and the track, to Bell & Smith Limited of Carr Mill, St Helens, Lancashire.

After 1950

There was only one tender received for the 1950-1952 seasons and this was from a Mr W Botterill of Nassington, Peterborough for £150. The Piers, Beach & Publicity (Trading) Sub-Committee resolved to accept this bid on 18th November 1949. However, Botterill seems to have had some difficulty in obtaining a (diesel) locomotive and the railway never ran under his ownership, although he did lay the track. The Council had to take County Court action against him in November 1950 to obtain, at least some, of the £150 - he was told to pay £5 per month! Botterill was informed, if the Council could find another operator they would purchase the track from him, if not, he was to remove it by 31st December 1950. In December 1950, the City Engineer reported he had valued the track laid and found it to be 10¼" gauge, 1,950ft in length, with a value of £350. The Council then attempted to get another operator, but by the end of March 1951 no tenders had been received and Mr Botterill was asked to remove his track and commence the outstanding payments. Botterill finally removed his track on 15th May 1951. Even then the Council had not given up. At the 5th December 1951 meeting of the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee, they agreed to invite tenders for the 1952 season. It was reported at the meeting on 25th January 1952 that none had been received. This then marked the end of the Hilsea Miniature Railway. In March 2005, the only trace of the railway was the concrete station platform in the undergrowth between the moat and the Lido building.

William Botterill

Mr W Botterill was a showman and a dealer. He operated or had interests in a number of railways in the period following the war – Cleethorpes and Billing near Northampton being examples. He formed a company called "Botterill's Miniature Railways Limited". At different times he seems to have operated from addresses in London, Peterborough and Tunbridge Wells.

Southsea Miniature Railway

Background

Somewhat overshadowed by Portsmouth, Southsea lies on the southern tip of Portsea Island, where, for many years a miniature railway ran adjacent to an area known as Children's Corner on the seaward side of Clarence Esplanade at SZ640983. The Southsea Miniature Railway has a long history running from 1932 to 1989 and it is not intended to relate a detailed account here, but merely cover the period of Judd's and Hathaway's control in some detail. The original line opened in 1932, was of 9½" gauge, and employed a Bassett-Lowke 4-4-2 locomotive named "Sir Edward Nicholl". This and a second similar locomotive kept the line going up to the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939. It was Harold Judd and Louis Hathaway who rescued the railway following the war. However, they were not the first people Portsmouth City Council looked to for reactivating the railway. It was probably because of Louis Hathaway's contact with the Council over the proposed railway at Hilsea Lido he came to the Council's notice in regards to the railway at Southsea.

Finding an Operator

The Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee of Portsmouth City Council heard at their meeting on 23rd March 1945 that the railway was let prior to the war on a 60-40 basis and the owner of the boats on Canoe Lake (about 1 mile further east) had been interviewed. He would probably purchase "*the whole of the equipment of the miniature railway*" and also be prepared to run it. At the same meeting the City Engineer reported he was taking the necessary action to have the track thoroughly inspected and put into order as far as possible. At their meeting on 4th April 1945, the Piers, Beach & Publicity (Trading) Sub-Committee

heard that correspondence had been made with Mr Hockey, the former lessee of the railway and also with Mr A Butcher who was negotiating for the railway. However, it was reported to the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee at its meeting on 27th April 1945, that the previous owner (presumably Mr Hockey) had sold the rolling stock to Botterills (who we have already met in conjunction with railway at Hilsea Lido). Mr Botterill had been interviewed and had offered to run the railway on a 75-25 basis. It was resolved to recommend that this offer be accepted, for the period Whitsun to October 1945. So it seemed all was set for the railway to be once again carrying passengers. However, the City Engineer informed the Committee at its meeting on 25th May 1945, that the track had been inspected and was "*found to be useless*". He went on to say he had been in contact with Mr Botterill and had made enquiries about the supply of new track, which was likely to cost £400.

At the meeting on 1st June 1945 of the Piers, Beach & Publicity (Trading) Sub-Committee, Louis Hathaway's name is first mentioned in connection with the Southsea Miniature Railway - it was stated "*if the arrangements with Mr Botterill could not be proceeded with, Mr Hathaway would be prepared to lay the track and operate the miniature railway on the same percentage basis as that offered for Hilsea Lido*". As with Hilsea, it is fairly certain Louis was working with, or for, Harold Judd. The City Engineer reported that he had someone (a Mr Liversage of Stockport) who was able to supply the track. On 22nd June 1945, the Committee heard that the Town Clerk had written to Mr Botterill informing him that the arrangements with him had been cancelled, due to the delay in obtaining the track. Given the problems the Council later had with Mr Botterill at Hilsea, perhaps this was no bad thing! It was also reported "*Arrangements had been agreed with Mr Hathaway to operate the railway; he to provide and lay the necessary track and to pay the Corporation 30% of all receipts from passengers using the railway*". A report in the *Portsmouth Evening News* of Saturday 14th July 1945 merely repeated these arrangements.

Re-opening

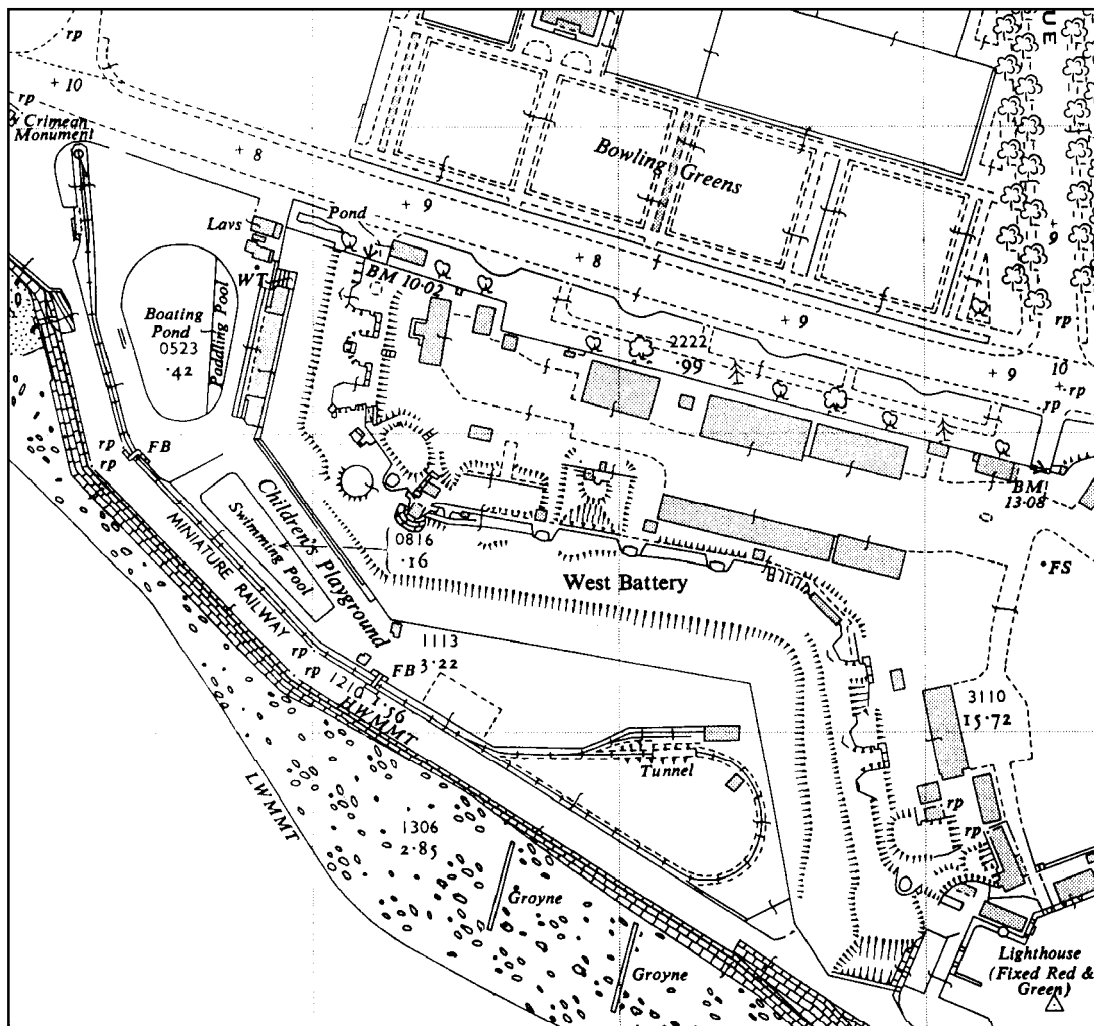
It seems no time was lost in getting things ready. The track was laid in six weeks and at their meeting on 27th July 1945 the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee heard "*that the miniature railway at the Children's Corner, commenced working on Saturday, the 21st July, but had since broken down*". The City Engineer informed the Committee he had "*inspected the track as laid by the Proprietors of the Railway, but had found this to be unfit, and he had instructed the Licensee not to operate the railway until the track had been put into proper serviceable condition*". This was presumably prior to the 21st July opening. The *Portsmouth Evening News* of Saturday 21st July 1945 carried a picture of a locomotive and the track being prepared for use, but did not report the actual opening. The reactivated railway was 10¼" gauge, as opposed to the pre-war 9½" gauge. The route, however, was the same - a terminal station at SZ64029829 with a single line running behind the sea wall, past the boating and swimming pools before reaching a return loop. This gave a run of around 800 yards (a route length of 530 yards).

At first, the locomotive employed was 1002, one of the two 4-4-2s Harold had acquired from Dudley Zoo. Photographs at Southsea show this locomotive lettered "JMR" on tender; presumably Judd's Miniature Railway (or a leftover from Dudley Zoo). A petrol locomotive, built by John Thurston, was also obtained as standby but apparently was not a great success and was never used. The *Portsmouth Evening News* of Monday 6th August 1945, carried a picture captioned "*Southsea Miniature Railway is in running order again. Full steam ahead with a crowd of young holiday makers*". The railway must have been a success, as the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee were informed on 28th September 1945 that "*£800 had been*

received from the Miniature Railway since it operated in July". At the same meeting it was resolved to issue tenders for Children's Corner, as one unit or three separate units for a period of three years (1946-1948) - the other units being the Boating & Swimming Pool and the Amusement site.

1946 - 1948 Seasons

At their meeting on 12th November 1945 the Committee considered the bids. Louis Hathaway bid £1,500 or 30% of the receipts for the whole site, and 30% of the receipts for just the railway. There were nine other bidders - three for the entire site. There was only one other bidder for just the railway. Interestingly, an H N Barlow bid £500 for the whole site except the railway. One assumes this was the Barlow of the Lakeside Miniature Railway at Southport. Louis Hathaway's bid of 30% of the receipts for the entire site was accepted and we know by this time he had moved to Portsmouth, as a week later Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited was formed and Louis gave a Portsmouth address on the relevant paperwork.



An extract from an Ordnance Survey 25" Map revised in October 1947, published in 1952 and reproduced here approximately full size. The station is top left, alongside Clarence Esplanade. Note the tunnel and shed on the north side of the return loop.

(Reproduced from 1952 Ordnance Survey map with the kind permission of the Ordnance Survey.)

With the future operation secured for the years 1946-1948, Louis Hathaway presumably got down to improving the railway and arranging things on a more permanent basis. As we have seen he gave up his rights at Hilsea Lido. Up to now, all the dealings with the Council had been recorded in the minutes as being with Louis. Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited had been incorporated on 19th November 1945, and thereafter this name was used instead - the first occasion being on 25th October 1946, when they were applying to open Children's Corner in the winter. There is little doubt though, that Louis continued to be "in charge" on site. 1001 was partially rebuilt and overhauled by John Thurston. It arrived at Southsea by late May 1946 on a trailer towed behind a car driven by Harold himself. 1001 was later (by January 1951) named "Sir A Montgomery" - quite why Harold Judd chose that name is not known, although he had already named a locomotive "Sir B Montgomery" which operated on his first line at Reading. If Harold kept to the same theme (British Field Marshals), "Sir A Montgomery" could have been named after Sir Archibald Armar Montgomery-Massingberd (1871-1947) - but this is only conjecture by the author. The railway certainly proved popular, the *Hampshire Telegraph* of Friday 9th August 1946, reporting on the August Bank Holiday, stated "*Over 7,000 passengers rode on the Southsea Miniature Railway*".

1949-1951 Seasons

By September 1948 the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee started to consider tenders for the next three years operation of Children's Corner. They decided at their meeting on 24th September 1948 that separate tenders be invited for the three sections (Boating & Paddling Pool, Miniature Railway and Children's Swimming Pool & Playground) for three years from 1st January 1949. On 26th November 1948 the Committee considered the bids. Those for the railway were: A F Butcher £1,600; Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited £1,650; R Smart £1,600; Southern Miniature Railways Limited £1,525; T J Thurston £1,000 and D N & E Haywood £200. Unsurprisingly, the Committee accepted the highest bid - that of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited. T J Thurston, of course, we have already met, as it was he who rebuilt the locomotive and helped lay the track for Harold Judd's first railway in Reading. See Appendix One for more details of Travers John Thurston.

Southern Miniature Railways Limited had been incorporated on 17th June 1948 with a registered office in Hereford Road, Southsea. The Directors at the time of formation were: Frederick Albert Tubbs, George Renham Vimpany, William Ernest Simmonds and the ubiquitous Louis Hathaway. At this time Louis was obviously still working for Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited and Harold Judd as he gave his address as "The Hut", Children's Corner, Southsea. However, he had ceased to be a Director or Secretary by 14th October 1948. Perhaps he was merely trying to get a foot in both camps! As for Southern Miniature Railways Limited, one of the "*objects for which the Company is established*" was to "*acquire and carry on in particular the business of Miniature Railway owners and operators heretofore carried on by [the Directors listed above] at Gosport, Hants*". This was a 10¼" gauge line at Stokes Bay. The Company went on to run other 10¼" gauge lines at Bognor Regis (on a site later used by Billy Butlin for his holiday camp) and Poole Park. By 1948, two 4-4-2 locomotives similar to 1001 & 1002 had been built by Southern Miniature Railways Limited. These were "Vanguard" and "Valiant" - built partly in the shed on the Southsea Miniature Railway and at a workshop in Boulton Road, Southsea. They were not direct copies of 1001 & 1002, but when one of them was stripped down for overhaul in the winter (at J W Tout Limited of Portsmouth), measurements were taken and patterns made for the cylinders, motion work and bearings. Confusingly, the new locomotives were also numbered 1001 & 1002!

After 1951

On 23rd November 1951 the Piers, Beach & Publicity Committee considered the tenders for the next three years operation of the miniature railway (1952-1954). This time only two people entered bids. Southern Miniature Railways Limited bid £1,000 per annum and Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited £825 per annum or 30% of the net takings. On this occasion, having bid the higher figure, Southern Miniature Railways Limited won. Harold sold them the track and turntable, but removed his locomotives and rolling stock. For Harold Judd this was the end of his miniature railway interests on the south coast although, as we shall find in the next chapter, he was already operating a second railway in Reading.

Southern Miniature Railways Limited went on to run the railway successfully for many years along with the railway in Poole Park. The Southsea Miniature Railway underwent a number of changes in later years and the last passenger train finally ran on Sunday 1st October 1989. A visit to the site in February 2005 found no trace of the railway, although the station site and route of the line have not been blocked. Part of the route has been incorporated into a garden for the Blue Reef Café, which marks the railway's former location on the seafront.

Hayling Island

Hayling Island lies just off the south coast and in the south east corner of Hampshire. It became popular with the residents of Reading as a day trip or holiday destination, being one of their closest seaside resorts. For just one season in 1946, Kate Judd ran a railway on Hayling Island. As would be expected of such a short-lived railway, there is no documentary evidence of its existence. It would appear to have been laid on private (ie non-council owned) ground as there is no mention of it in the minutes of Havant & Waterloo Urban District Council.

The railway was 10¼" gauge and comprised a simple straight end to end run of around 200 yards, with no turntables. It was located at the western end of Hayling Island, close to Sinah Common near a lake and just off (to the south of) Ferry Road at approximately SZ697995. John Thurston operated some motor boats on this lake. The track was from Harold Judd's first railway in Reading, as were the coaches. This equipment and the locomotive used, "Sir B Montgomery", were now owned by Kate and came from being stored at Spencers Wood during the winter of 1945/1946, following the closure of the railway in Reading.

The railway was run by Kate and William, Harold's son. It only ran at weekends, William and another employee going down to Hayling Island to operate it. There was no engine shed and when not in use "Sir B Montgomery" was merely sheeted over. The fare was probably 1/-. However, the line was badly located and did little business, so at the end of the 1946 season it was lifted and everything returned to be stored again in the yard at Spencers Wood. So in 1946 there were two Judd railways operating on the south coast, no more than 4 miles apart! Harold at Southsea and Kate on Hayling Island. John Thurston ran a railway towards the eastern end of Hayling Island between 1948 and 1953 and this is covered in Appendix One.

Kerr's Miniature Railway

One final item from the period up to 1949 concerns the 10¼" gauge Kerr's Miniature Railway in Arbroath, Scotland. As related in Chapter Three, this was run by Harold Judd's friend Matthew Kerr. The railway was closed during the Second World War, but reopened for the 1946 season. By then Matthew Kerr had purchased two coaches from Harold to supplement his rolling stock at Arbroath. One presumes these were either spare coaches from those Harold obtained from John Thurston for his first railway in Reading or they may have been sold by Kate after the closure of the railway at the end of the 1945 season. However, the coaches remained in use on the Kerr's Miniature Railway, until being scrapped in 1960.

JUDD'S (REMOVALS)

Directors :
H. JUDD, P. JUDD

LIMITED



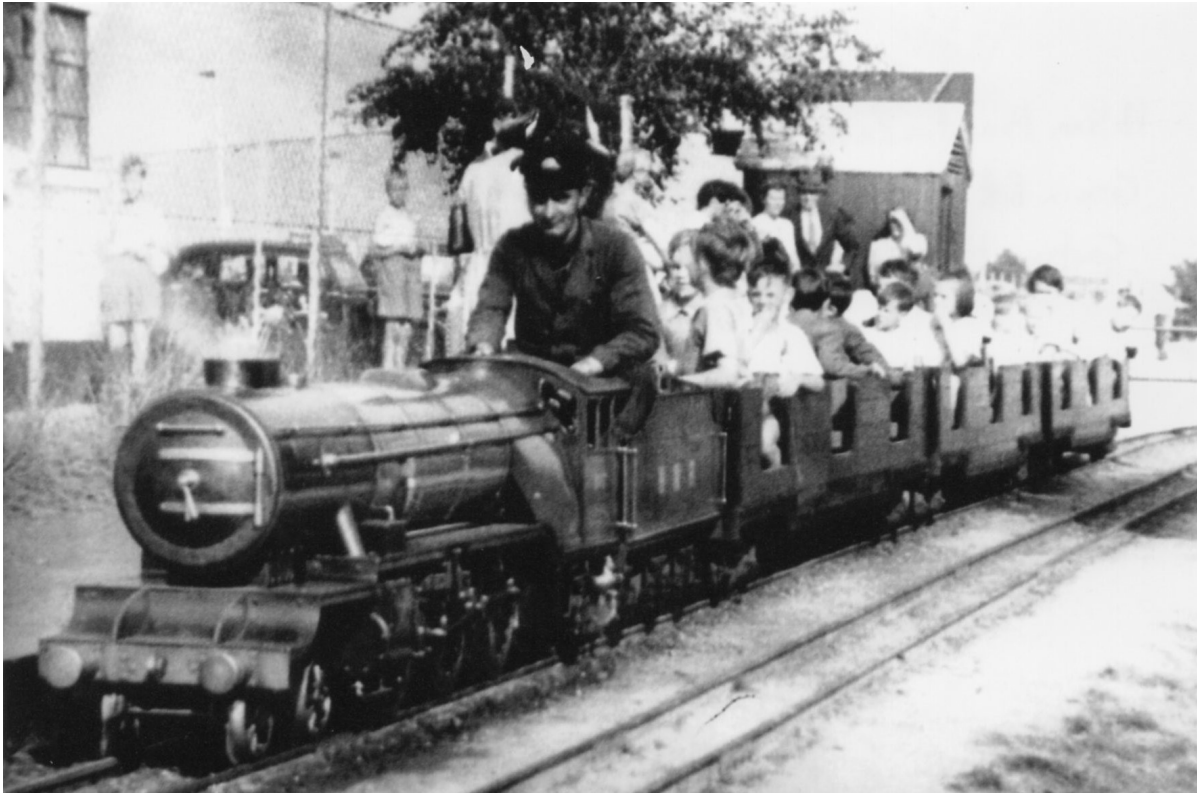
Phone : Reading 3180
JUDD'S (REMOVALS) LTD.

*Removals, Storage and
Haulage Contractors*

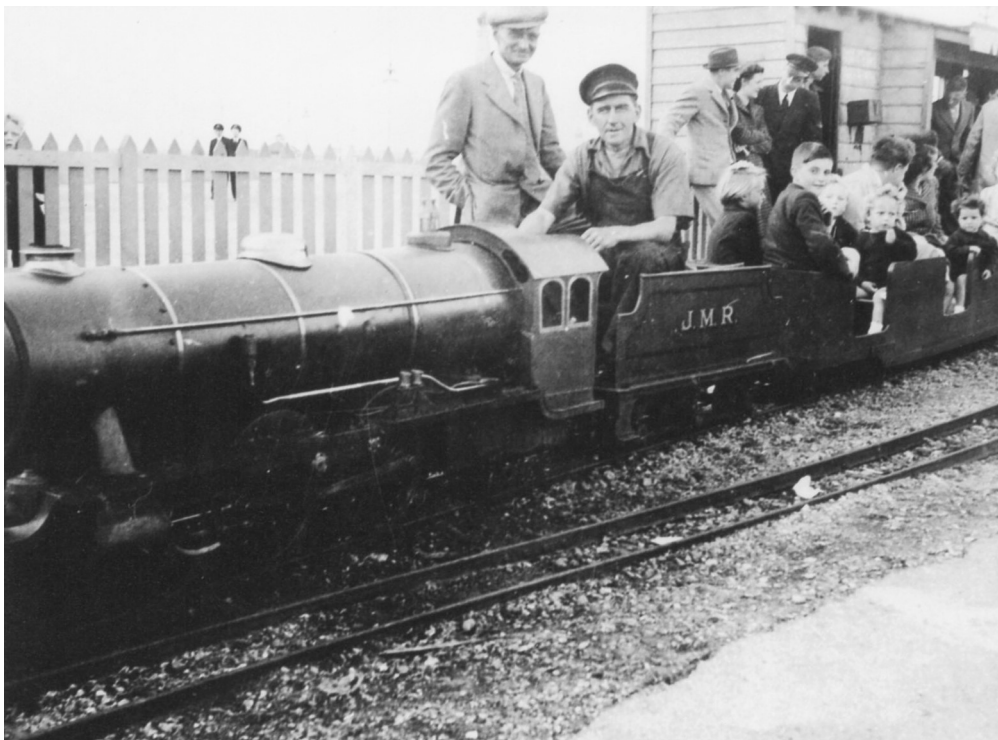
ALL KINDS OF HAULAGE
UNDERTAKEN
DISTANCE NO OBJECT

190 King's Rd., Reading
Telephone 3180 **Berks**

An advert taken from the 1952 edition of *Kelly's* directory of Reading, for Harold Judd's removal firm. The company used the same address in the King's Road as for Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited – this had been previously used by Louis Hathaway! The other Director, P Judd, was Harold's second wife, Phyllis.



Hilsea Miniature Railway Not really a Harold Judd railway, but the original idea of a railway here was his and Louis Hathaway's. We see the 1947 David Curwen built 4-6-2 ready to depart from the station alongside the Lido buildings. The driver is Leonard Baker.
(*Courtesy R Baker. 1947*)



Southsea Miniature Railway A train waiting to depart from the station alongside Clarence Esplanade. The locomotive is 1002, one of the ex-Dudley Zoo 4-4-2s in original condition. Note the lettering "JMR" on the tender.
(*Courtesy P Alexander. c late 1940s*)



Southsea Miniature Railway A line up alongside 1002. Left to right we have Louis Hathaway, "Pop" Leworthy, Joanna Brown, Joyce Hathaway, Grace Bryden and on the locomotive, Pat Hathaway, Louis second wife. John Leworthy is at the rear. Joanna was Pat's sister and Grace, Pat's mother. Note the covered coach.

(R Alexander. Courtesy P Alexander)



Southsea Miniature Railway Here we see 1002 outside the shed. The driver is Reg Alexander, Louis Hathaway's son in law. The mound on the right is in fact a tunnel on the running line. The coach is on an adjacent siding. Note the lighthouse in the background.

(Courtesy P Alexander. c late 1940s)

CHAPTER FIVE

SECOND RAILWAY 1949 - 1954

ALONG THE PROMENADE

Introduction

We have seen from the last chapter that Harold Judd and his partner Louis Hathaway reactivated the railway at Southsea in the summer of 1945. In May of that year they also gained approval to operate a railway at Hilsea Lido, which they transferred to others in 1946. However, towards the end of 1948 the pair turned their attention back to Reading. Harold, of course, would have been familiar with the Thames Side Promenade from his earlier war time railway and this second 10¼" gauge railway was to run along the Promenade between 1949 and 1954. There is no doubt it would have lasted longer, not for the sad death of Harold in December 1952. Thankfully, the railway ran on council owned ground, so there is a reasonable amount of written material relating to its existence. However, as the Promenade was not a holiday location, more a destination for day trips out, photographs are more elusive.

Planning

The initial idea about having another miniature railway in Reading seems to have come from the Reading Borough Council Surveyor following a letter, dated 17th December 1948, he had received on the subject from the "*Managing Director, Southsea Children's Corner, Clarence Esplanade, Southsea*". This gentleman was of course Louis Hathaway, Harold Judd's partner. In the letter it seems that Louis representing Harold's company, Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited, was asking for a site in Reading to run a miniature railway.

The Borough Surveyor wrote to the Reading Borough Council Parks Committee on 7th January 1949 "*It has occurred to me that the committee might wish to consider the provision of a passenger carrying miniature railway in 1949-50, in a suitable position in one of the committee's parks or open spaces. Such a railway of 9½" or 10¼" gauge could be installed in collaboration with one of the several firms who are interested in these projects, and if a profit sharing scheme could be negotiated, so that a proportion of the income is received by the Council, the scheme would probably be self-supporting and it would prove to be a very popular additional amenity for the children of the Borough. A miniature railway on these lines has been operated for some years by the Local Authorities at Barking, East Ham and Hornchurch, and, on a different basis, at Bexleyheath, Southsea, Scarborough, Blackpool etc, but the railways at the last two places are of a larger gauge*". The Surveyor seems to have been well acquainted with a number of lines, especially those in East London. He went on to say if the committee agreed in principle to the provision of a miniature railway, he would recommend the Thames Side Promenade or Hill's Meadow (an area of open ground on the north bank of Thames to

Railways listed by the Surveyor

The lines at Barking (in Barking Park), East Ham (Central Park), Hornchurch (Harrow Lodge Park) and Bexleyheath (Danson Park) were all 9½" gauge. Judd & Hathaway's line in Southsea was 10¼" gauge. The line at Scarborough (North Bay, 20" gauge) was owned and operated by the local council, while Blackpool (Pleasure Beach, 21" gauge) was a wholly private concern. Only the last two lines are still in operation.

the east of Reading Bridge) as potential sites and that Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited and others should be asked to bid to operate the railway.

The Parks Committee considered the Surveyor's report at their meeting on 7th January 1949 and decided "*That approval be given in principal to the proposal to provide a miniature railway on land under the control of the committee, and that the Borough Surveyor be instructed to submit detailed proposals there on to the next ordinary meeting of the committee*". The Surveyor now seems to have asked two firms to submit offers for the two sites - namely Thames Side Promenade and Hill's Meadow. The two firms were Harold Judd's Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited and Miniature Railways (Bexley) Limited. The latter company was based at 38 Danson Road, Bexleyheath and was run by Ronald Cyril Hammett. This company's involvement might explain the Surveyor's knowledge of the 9½" gauge lines in East London as Hammett had connections with all of them!

The Borough Surveyor conveyed the results in his report to the Parks Committee of 4th February 1949. For the Thames Side Promenade site, Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited offered to pay the Council an annual rental of £200 for "*a site extending from the car park near Caversham Bridge Hotel to the northern end of Cow Lane (about 760 linear yards) on which the Company would provide and operate a 10¼" gauge miniature railway, supply and fix a suitable fence to enclose the track and provide and erect two stations*". The Company also offered to pay the Council 30% of the gross receipts from the railway, with the Council supplying and erecting the fencing. Miniature Railways (Bexley) Limited also offered to pay the Council an annual rental of £200, but for a shorter railway, namely "*a site extending from the car park near Caversham Bridge Hotel to the children's paddling pool (length about 230 linear yards) on which the Company would provide and operate a 9½" gauge miniature railway*". The Company made no mention about the fencing and the Surveyor assumed the Council would have to supply and erect it. The Company also requested the Council to provide a shed of Anderson shelter parts for the rolling stock. Neither company made an offer for a site in Hill's Meadow, presumably both considered that the Thames Side Promenade offered a more lucrative location. The Surveyor went on to describe the route of the proposed railways "*The proposed miniature railway at the Thames Side Promenade could extend from the car park site to a point near the children's paddling pool, or it could cross the paddling pool by means of a light bridge and terminate near Cow Lane. It would be necessary in either case to amend the shape of the existing flower beds near to the existing wrought-iron railings and this could be carried out by the Parks staff as routine work*". Fares were agreed by both companies to be 6d per person return and 3d per person single. The Surveyor concluded that the offer from Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited had the following points in its favour: "*a) The gauge is larger and the rolling stock heavier and therefore more commodious, b) The Company offer to fence the track and to provide the platforms etc, c) No costs would fall on the Council apart from the small initial cost of altering the existing flower beds*". He went on to say that the company had "*operated the Southsea Miniature Railway satisfactorily for a number of years in collaboration with the Portsmouth Council*" (actually four seasons by then, 1945-1948). He then recommended the offer from Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited should be accepted.

At their meeting on 4th February 1949 the Parks Committee considered the Borough Surveyor's report and recommendation. They resolved "*That the offer of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited, of 87 Regent Street, London, W1, to pay to the corporation a rental at the rate of £200 per annum for a site on Thames Side Promenade on which to*

operate a miniature railway be accepted". They went on to lay down the following terms and conditions:

"(i) *The Company*

(a) *to provide suitable fencing to the proposed railway track throughout its length to the satisfaction of the Borough Surveyor.*

(b) *to erect and maintain all stations, rolling stock, sheds, pay office, and other buildings to the satisfaction of the Borough Surveyor.*

(c) *to supply all drivers, attendants, fuel and water.*

(d) *to indemnify the Corporation against all claims for damage to persons or property by reason of the operation of the proposed railway.*

(ii) *The charges proposed to be made for fares, and the times of operation, to be approved by the Corporation.*

(iii) *The proposed railway to be operated on Sundays from 2pm only.*

(iv) *The operating season to be from 1st April to the 30th September, or other dates to be agreed by the Committee"*.

The Committee finished by stating that the agreement was to be for only one year in the first instance and the Mayor and Town Clerk were empowered to fix the Common Seal to all necessary documents. Subsequently, the *Reading Standard* of 4th March 1949 reported "*Permission has been granted to a London firm to operate a miniature railway on Thames Side Promenade on Sundays from April 1 to September 30, after 2pm"*.

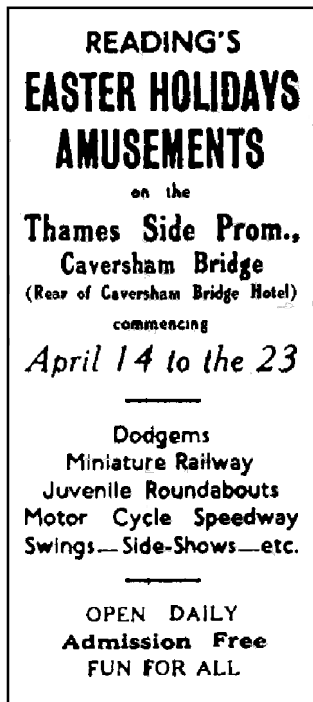
Construction

One assumes that with the necessary agreement with the Council, Harold Judd could commence work on building the railway. The actual sealed agreement documents have not survived, but later the Parks Committee minutes refer to an "*agreement dated 10th June 1949*". Presumably, this was the final agreement, as work must have started long before then, as the first trains seem to have run in April 1949.

Nothing is known about the actual construction of the new railway, but as the first trains ran at Easter 1949, work must have proceeded at a good rate. It is likely staff from the haulage business were again used to help build the line, but by this time numbers would have more limited as control of the main firm, H Judd & Son, rested with Harold's estranged wife, Kate. However, little earthworks were required, the only structure on the railway being the small bridge over the paddling pool. The other major task would have been the fencing along the river (north) side of the line. The other side used the existing Promenade iron railing fence as a barrier.

Opening

The opening of the railway seems to have completely been ignored by the local press, not even a passing reference being made to it. However, it appears to have opened on (or by) Maundy Thursday, 14th April 1949 according to an advert in the *Reading Standard* of Thursday 14th April 1949. It is listed along with other amusements being provided for the Easter Holiday.



An advert from the Thursday 14th April 1949 edition of the *Reading Standard* advertising the amusements provided on the Thames Side Promenade for the 1949 Easter holidays. Harold Judd's new railway is listed along with the other attractions.

The *Reading Standard* of Friday 22nd April 1949, reporting on the Easter holiday period, noted that it had been the hottest Easter for 50 years, with temperatures reaching 80 degrees on the Saturday. It said the riverside was very popular, but made no specific mention of the railway.

Description of the Route

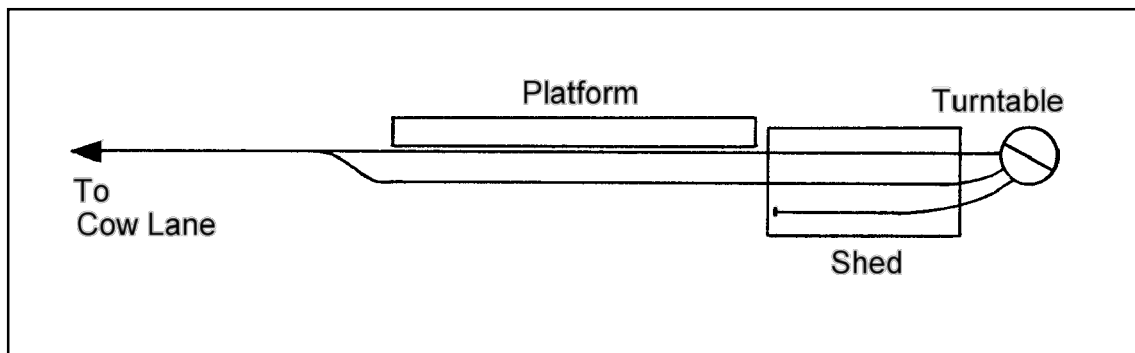
Photographs of the railway are few, and it never appeared on a large scale Ordnance Survey map, being closed a couple of years too early. An aerial photograph taken in June 1954 covers the western end of the railway and clearly shows the extent of the track in that direction. Assuming it was built at its fullest extent at opening, the new 10¼" gauge railway was 660 yards in length in an "end-to-end" layout.

The main station and shed were located at SU70997462, adjacent to the car park for the Promenade and not far from the Caversham Bridge Hotel. Here there was a three road brick shed. Whether this was built for the opening is not known. Probably not as Harold would have wanted to see how successful the railway was and if he got permission for another year from the Council, before providing such permanent facilities. A turntable was located at the very end of the line - this served three roads, which ran into the shed. Two of these emerged to form a single platform line and a run-round loop. The exact layout is not known. The line then ran out along the Thames Side Promenade keeping close to the iron railing fence which, as mentioned in Chapter Three, separated the fields where Harold's first railway ran from the Promenade.

Running parallel to the war time line, but on the other side of the fence, after some 220 yards the railway crossed the paddling pool on a bridge (SU70807471). The only known photograph of this bridge shows it to be a low, simple, single span, structure with twin metal girders supported on stone or brick abutments. The railway crossed over the far end of the pool, away from the river, leaving virtually the whole pool available for the paddlers.

However, for a small child in the pool, a train crossing the bridge hauled by a steam locomotive must have been an impressive sight. One man remembers, as a small child, running along and keeping up with the locomotive and while looking at it, ran headlong into the paddling pool - fully dressed. Another recalls the train made a very different noise as it rumbled across this bridge.

About 100 yards further on the line passed close to two surface air raid shelters built during the Second World War. The line continued, following closely the iron railing fence and running through the trees that bordered the Promenade. The railway simply ended after 660 yards, with a turntable and run-round loop. The end of Cow Lane was another 90 yards or so further on. In the original plan for the railway, a station was intended here, with both single and return fares being mentioned. No photograph has been traced of this end of the line, but the aerial photograph referred to earlier shows no structure or platforms were provided. Although, only one adult and one child fare were ever quoted, passengers were able to leave (and presumably join) the train here.



A track plan of the Caversham Bridge end of the railway, showing the single platform, turntable and three road shed. This is a "best guess" from what photographs are available and passenger's memories. The iron railing fence ran immediately along the lower (south western) side of the shed and parallel with the railway all the way to the Cow Lane terminus.

Locomotive and Rolling Stock

To operate the railway Harold acquired another locomotive built by John Thurston. This was a 4-6-2 tender engine that had been constructed in spring 1946 for a Mr Dingle from Cornwall. "Sir B Montgomery" was of course now owned by Kate Judd and would have not been available to Harold. George Archibald Dingle (1895-1976), generally known as Archie, came from Kelly Bray near Callington in Cornwall. In the early years of the Second World War he had ordered a 7¼" gauge locomotive from Thurston, but on a visit to see progress, spotted a 10¼" gauge 4-6-2 under construction and immediately ordered a similar engine. Thurston must have worked fast on this locomotive, as apparently it was not started by January 1946, but was complete by the beginning of that August.

Dingle put the new locomotive to work on a temporary 10¼" gauge line in Plymouth's Central Park. This railway opened on Monday 5th August 1946 and ran for the summer season, the track and all stock then being removed back to Kelly Bray. The railway, with the Thurston built 4-6-2, then returned to Central Park for the summer seasons of 1947 and 1948. Dingle also acquired Bullock's 4-6-2 No.1003 "Western Queen" - this was believed to have

run at Hilsea in 1946 (see Chapter Four). However, Dingle put it to work on a new railway in Paignton Zoo, which opened in May 1947. Archie Dingle seems to have named the Thurston locomotive "Tamar Queen" and then exchanged the names between his two locomotives. Hence the Thurston locomotive became "Western Queen". Both locomotives had "PMR" on their tenders - perhaps indicating Plymouth Miniature Railway for the Thurston and Paignton Miniature Railway for the Bullock. After three seasons running on the temporary railway in Central Park the Thurston 4-6-2, now named "Western Queen", was sold to Harold Judd sometime over the winter of 1948/1949. Basil Judd and James Judd (two of Ernest Judd's sons) went down to Cornwall to pick up the engine for Harold. This locomotive then worked on the new railway along the Promenade and, as far as is known, was the only locomotive ever to work on the line. Although, a supplement to the Birmingham Locomotive Club's "*Light & Miniature Railway Locomotives*" refers to a petrol engine 4-6-0 on a "Caversham Miniature Railway". Whether this was Harold's line is not known, but all photographs of his railway show only "Western Queen" at work.

Archie Dingle owned a sawmill at Kelly Bray and built models. Also as a miniature railway operator he shared a number of interests with Harold and this is probably how the two came to know each other - apparently they were close friends. Archie Dingle was no relation to the Dingle family of R Dingle & Sons, a supplier of steam and later modern road making equipment and who now operate Dingles Steam Village near Launceston.

It is uncertain whether Harold reused coaches from his earlier railway, or obtained some from elsewhere. Probably the latter, as the coaches from the first railway were then in Kate's ownership. He did not acquire any of the coaches from Dingle, as these were of a different design and possibly ex Surrey Border & Camberley Railway stock.

Operating the Railway

At their meeting on 22nd April 1949 the Parks Committee approved the proposals of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited "(a) to make a charge of 6d for children and 1s 0d for adults in respect of the return fare on the miniature railway operated by them on Thames Side Promenade, and (b) to operate such railway on weekdays, except Mondays, from 12 noon". Note the use of the past tense in (a) confirming the railway had already opened. Adverts in the *Reading Standard* in July 1949 confirm these fares. The fares mentioned when the Company first bid to run the railway were "6d per person return and 3d per person single". The fact that single fares were not quoted would support that fact that a station was not built at the Cow Lane end of the railway as was originally intended, although passengers could leave trains there if they wished. The times of operation were expanded somewhat as well from the original "*Sundays from 2pm only*".

An advert from the Friday 8th July 1949 edition of the *Reading Standard*. Note only one (return) fare, adult or child, is mentioned.



In the *Reading Standard* of Friday 29th July 1949, "Townsmen" aired his thoughts and views on the Promenade and the new railway "*Reading's Thames Side Promenade I have found also a cool and gracious retreat. In these hot days it is, of course, popular, but never crowded. Folk down there are never noisy. There is something in the quiet green beauty of the place, in the silence of the broad flowing river, that hushes the voice to a murmur. A deck chair in the shade, a book and a cup of tea is a recipe for a happy afternoon on the Promenade. In the evening many motorists drive down there and eat a picnic supper on the grass. And what about the miniature railway? I was prepared to write "Ichabod" over the Promenade entrance when I read of the railway's arrival. But the railway, happily, fits unobtrusively into the scene. I fell head over heels in love with the railway's miniature engine. This is none of your imitation steam engines with a diesel motor, or steam powered, but oil fired, as so many of the miniatures are. This is a perfect model of a steam railway engine with coal in its tender, and a glowing fire in its firebox. The steam gauge registered just 110lbs when I looked at it. The funnel gives the most delightful little puffs a child ever heard. The driver fondles his engine like a baby as it goes puffing away with its freight of tiny people behind it, all like a whimsical dream from toyland*". Well at least one resident seemed pleased with the new railway. The biblical reference to "Ichabod" means "without glory" or "where is the glory". The comment about non-steam worked miniature railways is interesting – one wonders which ones he was thinking of?

The few photographs that exist show trains were formed of four or five coaches – the number used presumably being tailored to meet likely demand. Trains were worked with "Western Queen" hauling in each direction, the locomotive being turned on the turntable at each end of the line. It is not known whether tickets were issued - probably not during the years Harold was alive, but at least during the last months of operation in 1954, a bus conductor's type machine was used.

The railway was staffed by family members and friends. Louis Hathaway's son in law Reg Alexander and Ernest Judd's son, Allan Judd, are known to have driven "Western Queen". Ernest Judd's daughters Mavis, Joyce and Olive assisted with fare collection. A wooden hut near the shed was used for issuing tickets. Apparently, this survived after the railway closed, as a ticket office for the Promenade car park.

Ongoing Operation (1950 - 1952)

Following its first successful season, Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited asked the Council for permission to operate the railway for the 1950 season on the same terms. The Borough Surveyor reported the request to the Parks Committee at their meeting on 17th March 1950, adding "*The railway was operated satisfactorily in every way during 1949 and I, therefore, recommend that the contract be renewed for the 1950 season on the same terms as hitherto*". The Committee agreed.

The annual return to Companies House made up to 31st December 1950, shows that the Directors were now H Judd with 2,900 shares and E Judd with 100 shares. Their occupations are shown as Haulage Contractors - Harold was also Secretary. E Judd was Harold's younger brother Ernest. The registered office was still at Kent House, 87 Regent Street, London. "Amount of Indebtedness" was given as £1248-0-0. This was the first annual return in the records, there being none for period 1945 - 1949.

The railway now seems to have gone quietly about its business of carrying children of all ages along the Promenade. According to the *Reading Standard* of Friday 18th May 1951, Whit Monday (14th May) was the coldest since 1916 - but this seems not to have deterred people from using the railway. In his "Talk of the Town" column, "Townsmen" reported "*Even the Thames Side Promenade had no lack of patrons. The miniature railway was carrying crowds of happy children to Nowhere and back*". The Parks Committee gave permission for the continued operation of the railway, for a year at a time, at their meetings on 16th February 1951 and 21st March 1952. This was at the same terms as originally agreed in 1949. One assumes that the railway was reasonably profitable and the £200 that Harold had agreed to pay the Council each year had been a good estimate of likely business.

East Ham

In early 1950, Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited negotiated with East Ham Borough Council with a view to operating a miniature railway in Central Park, East Ham in the east of London. A miniature railway there originally opened on Saturday 6th April 1946. This was a 9½" gauge line operated by M E Locomotives Limited of Upminster. This company sold out to Ronald Cyril Hammett of Bexleyheath around March 1948 - the sale including both the track and rolling stock. This was the same gentleman, we have already met, who also bid for the site on the Thames Side Promenade in early 1949. However, East Ham Borough Council now hired the railway (track and rolling stock) from Hammett and employed four drivers to operate it. The railway then ran for the 1948 summer season under this arrangement and the agreement was renewed for the 1949 season, although the Council had made a loss of £79 0s 9d on its operation during the 1948 season. The Council's Parks Committee heard at their meeting on 5th September 1949 "*That arising out of certain defects in the locomotive in use at Central Park, and following a request to replace the locomotive, M E Locomotives Ltd [sic] had terminated their contract with the council giving a month's notice to expire on the 22nd August 1949*". The railway closed at this time and presumably Mr Hammett removed his rolling stock and track.

In October 1949, the Council Borough Engineer was directed to invite tenders for the operation of a miniature railway in Central Park for the 1950 season. Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited must have responded, because at their meeting on 2nd January 1950 the Parks Committee asked the Borough Engineer to negotiate with the Company on the three alternative proposals they had put to the Council. Things must have proceeded satisfactorily as the Borough Engineer was able to report to the Parks Committee at their meeting on 30th January 1950 that agreement had been reached with Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited. But at the 27th March 1950 meeting the Parks Committee heard "*That Messrs Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited, had now intimated that the miniature railway which was previously for operation in Central Park had now been let to another Corporation and they were therefore, not prepared to enter into a contract with the council*". As the contract at Southsea had been already renewed in 1949 for the period until 1951, Harold Judd must have been hedging his bets in case Reading Borough Council had decided against renewing his agreement for the 1950 season on 17th March 1950. Anyway, the railway in Central Park did not reopen – the Council deciding to take no further action in letting another contract. Reading's gain was East Ham's loss!

Troubled Times (1952 - 1954)

The death of Harold Judd on 20th December 1952 dealt the railway a grievous blow. It seems that Harold's brother Ernest took over operation of the railway, with the help of Harold's second wife. The annual return of the Company, made up to 31st December 1952, shows that (as usual) no AGM had been held and that Mrs Laurie Utley of 31 St Johns Road, Reading was appointed Company Secretary on 27th August 1953, replacing Harold in that role.

The Borough Surveyor noted in his report of 20th March 1953, that he had received an application from Children's Amusements of St Albans for permission to operate amusements on the Promenade during August 1953. The amusements were to occupy a site 200ft by 100ft and they would "*include a miniature steam railway*". The Surveyor noted that recent policy had been not to allow similar amusements at the Promenade (in this case the railway) and he recommended that Hill's Meadow should be offered instead. It would have been interesting to know what sort of railway this would have been, in such a small space. However, the railway was saved from losing passengers to it, which as we will see was a good thing.

The usual application was made to run the railway during 1953, on the same terms as before. The Parks Committee agreed to this request at their meeting on 20th March 1953. However, it seems Ernest Judd may have had some problems in getting things running for the new season. At the meeting of the Parks Committee on 16th October 1953, the Town Clerk reported "*that in May last the members appointed to deal with matters of urgency had agreed to a request from Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited, that, in view of difficulties then being experienced by the Company, they should be permitted to operate such railway from month to month at a fee of £33 6s 8d per month, and that as a result the sum of £133 6s 8d had been received by the corporation for the season now ended*". It would certainly seem from this Harold's death had caused problems and the £133 6s 8d received by the Council indicates that the railway had only ran for 4 months during the 1953 season.

However, despite the difficulties Ernest Judd appears to have decided to carry on, although paying less to Council. In a letter to the Borough Surveyor of 23rd October 1953, Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited offered to pay the Council £50 per year for the right to continue to operate the railway. The Borough Surveyor in reporting the details to the Parks Committee on 20th November 1953 noted that "*it is understood that the public are not supporting the Railway as much as in former years. It is, however, an amenity for children, particularly during the school holidays*". Presumably, bearing this last comment in mind, the Parks Committee resolved to accept an offer from Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited to pay £50 for operation of the railway for a further year from 1st April 1954. The Registered Office of the Company was changed to 190 Kings Road, Reading on 5th May 1954.

BBC television cameras visited the Thames Side Promenade on Saturday 31st July 1954 (the August Bank Holiday weekend) as the final part of a five day schedule of broadcasts from Reading. The cameras were there during the afternoon, for what the *Reading Standard* called "*a spontaneous hour's viewing*". The railway was not mentioned in the paper's report of the event, but may well have featured in the program itself.

The various problems with Harold's business interests have been detailed in Chapter One. These did not impact upon the railway until the summer of 1954, but the first of the Sheriff's sales on Thursday 11th March 1954, held in the tractor shed at Spencers Wood, did include some track. How much and who obtained it, is not known.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 1954.
 LAMBS LANE, SPENCERS WOOD
 NEAR READING.
 Situate on the Reading-Basingstoke
 Road.
 Thames Valley and Aldershot Traction
 Company's buses pass.
 Messrs.
COOKSEY & WALKER (C. W. N.
 Sharp, F.A.I.) have received in-
 structions to sell by Public Auction
 upon the Premises, as above, on THURSDAY,
 MARCH 11, at 1 o'clock sharp,
 the
**SURPLUS PLANT AND MACHINERY
 OF A HAULAGE CONTRACTOR.**
 Comprising:-
 Davey Air Compressor, Foden Steam
 Winch, Stuart and Brett Concrete
 Mixer, Karrer Lorry with Tipper,
 Austin Truck A.70, 1951, Stationary
 International Diesel Engine T.D.6,
 Bedford Tipper, 1937, Single-Cylinder
 Gardner Engine, Hydra Crane Hoist,
 Rubber-tyred Fork Waggon, Heavy
 duty Rubber Tyres and Tubes, Electric
 Flood Lighting Equipment, Morticing
 Machine, Band Saw, Wire Hawsers, Log-
 ging Winches, quantity Light Railway
 Track and other Useful Effects.
 On view: Day previous (Wednesday,
 March 10, 1954), from 10 a.m. to 4
 p.m., and on morning of sale.
 Usual Conditions of Sale, all lots to
 be paid for immediately after the sale
 and cleared by mid-day on Saturday,
 March 13, 1954.
 Catalogues Price 3d., may be obtain-
 ed at the place of sale and of the
 Auctioneers, 17, Market Place, Reading.
 Telephone 60887.

The notice from the *Reading Standard* of Friday 5th March 1954 advising of the auction on Thursday 11th March. Note at the end of the list of items is "*quantity Light Railway Track*".

Ernest Judd put Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited into Receivership on 10th August 1954. John Roger Tovey of Ernest Francis and Son, 8 Forbury, Reading was appointed Receiver and Manager. At that time he was a junior partner in the Company. Then, gross liabilities were £4744 1s 6d and gross assets were £1339 13s 4d. Shares called up were £3000. Mrs Laurie Utley was still Secretary. John Tovey now took over the running of the railway and for the first time detailed accounts were sent to Companies House! These make interesting reading, especially the daily income from fares. They can be found in Appendix Four.

Closure

From the record of receipts (see Appendix Four) we can see the last day the railway ran was Sunday 19th September 1954, when £7 8s 0d was taken in fares and £2 1s 4d was expended in wages and expenses. Despite the term "wages" the Company did not employ anyone officially.

In September 1954 the Company asked the Council if they were interested in buying the railway. At their 17th September 1954 meeting, the Parks Committee resolved "*that no offer be made to purchase the miniature railway on Thames Side Promenade*". Despite this rebuff, it seems the intention was to carry on running the railway. At the 18th February 1955 meeting the Parks Committee resolved "*that the Receiver and Manager for Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited be informed that the Committee are prepared to permit in principle the continued operation of a miniature railway at Thames Side Promenade for a further year from 1st April 1955, subject to (i) the operator being satisfactory to the corporation, (ii) the payment to the corporation of a rent of £50, together with all rates and other outgoings, and (iii) his entering into an agreement to be prepared and signed by the Town Clerk*". The Receiver and Manager was of course John Tovey and when the author spoke with him during the research for this book, he recalled the Council had declined to renew the agreement, saying they wanted the land for redevelopment. In fact on 19th November 1954, the Parks

Committee at their meeting resolved to proceed with negotiations to acquire "*land at the rear of the Thames Side Promenade*". The land may have been purchased, but no redevelopment work ever took place that would have affected the route of the railway.

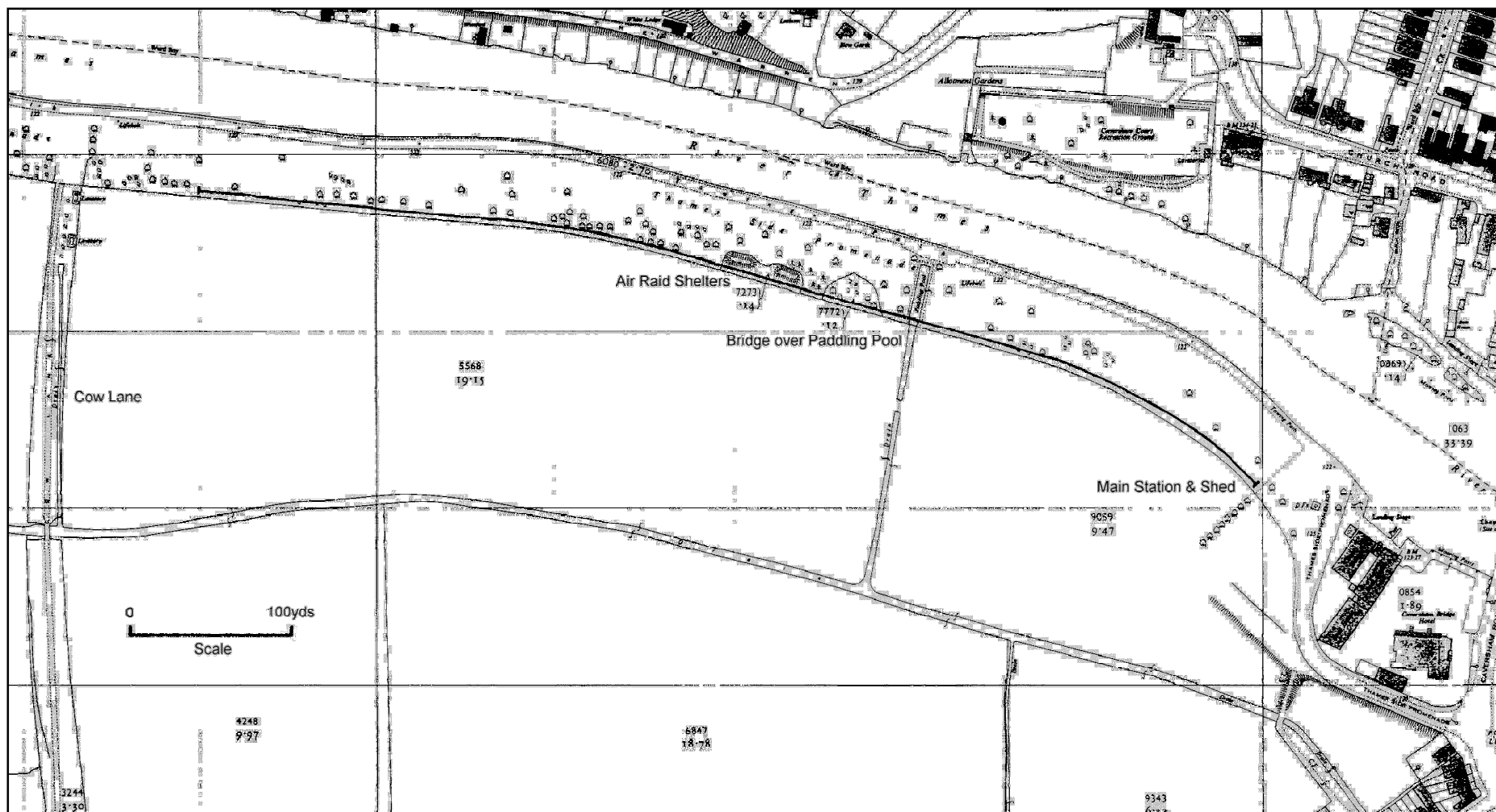
So in the end the railway did not reopen and the track was lifted. The accounts show us that it was as early as 24th February 1955 (a mere five days after the Parks Committee meeting noted above) that the first of the railway was sold - £4 5s 6d being made from "Sale of Equipment". The actual railway was sold on 14th April 1955 for £375 and it is believed this was for the track, 4-6-2 locomotive "Western Queen" and the rolling stock. The buyer was John Cuthill Sword from Ayr in the south west of Scotland. Appendix Two details the interesting background to this gentleman. Apparently, one of Sword's sons had come to inspect the railway beforehand. The Parks Committee at their meeting on 6th May 1955 resolved that they were prepared to accept the sum of £50 in full settlement of the cost of reinstatement of the site of the railway - the accounts show the Council was paid their £50 on 12th May 1955. The Company engaged local firm E Hadley, paying them £20 for "*clearing the site on termination of tenancy*". Sadly, the railway was then no more.

Recent Times

Accounts continued to be sent to Companies House each year by John Tovey acting as Receiver right up to the year ending 9th August 1962 and then for the period from 10th August 1962 to 1st June 1965 – although no business was being done by Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited. On 1st June 1965, John Tovey ceased to act as Receiver and Manager. The Company was struck off the Register on 22nd August 1983 and dissolved on 1st September 1983.

Today, over half a century later in 2005, nothing remains of either railway. The Thames Side Promenade has not changed much itself, but the surrounding area has seen many changes especially the building of Richfield Avenue, the industrial estate on its south side and the Rivermead Leisure Centre on the north side. The site of the first railway is now an open grass area, no longer fenced off from the Promenade. The drains or ditches crossed by railway have been filled in, but all the ground on which the railway ran is still there. Fairs are sometimes held on this land, which now lies behind the Rivermead Leisure Centre, its car park and a Holiday Inn Express hotel.

The site of the second railway, is again, all there albeit somewhat landscaped. The iron railing fence has gone – although a small section remains at the end of Cow Lane and from there westwards to the end of the Promenade. The paddling pool has been filled in and grassed over. A boathouse has been built close to where the station and shed were located and behind this is a small café, whose outside tables are virtually on the site of the station. In August 2004, it was pleasant to sit in the sun at one of these tables enjoying a cup of tea and trying to imagine the steam hauled miniature railway trains of Harold Judd which gave hundreds of passengers an enjoyable ride along the Promenade between 1949 and 1954.



A reduced extract from an Ordnance Survey 25" Map revised in December 1958 and published in 1961. By this time the second railway had been closed and lifted, so the route of the line has been added. The railway ran west from the main station and shed, closely following the iron railing fence that bordered the length of the Promenade, over the paddling pool on a bridge, to a terminus near Cow Lane.

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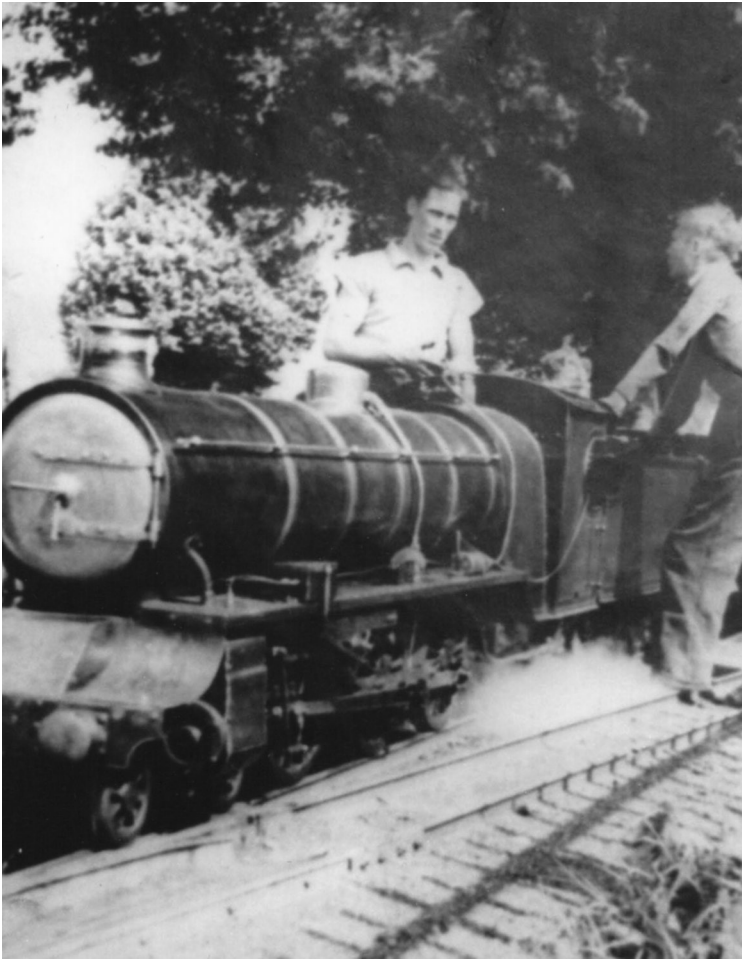
Thurston built "Western Queen" hauls a train along the rather overgrown track. The distinctive iron railing fence is clearly visible, separating the Promenade from the adjacent fields. One of the surface air raid shelters is just discernible above the train.

(Courtesy Reading Central Library. 7/52)



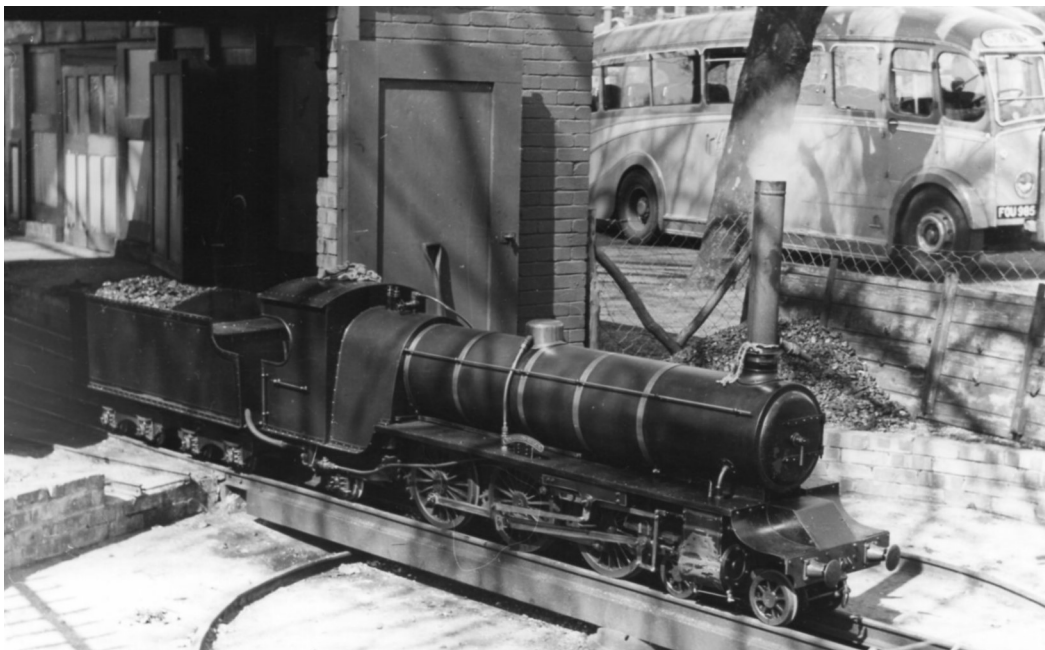
A view of the paddling pool, with the bridge carrying the railway over it, visible on the right. The bridge was at the end of the pool away from the river, which is behind the photographer.

(Author's Collection)



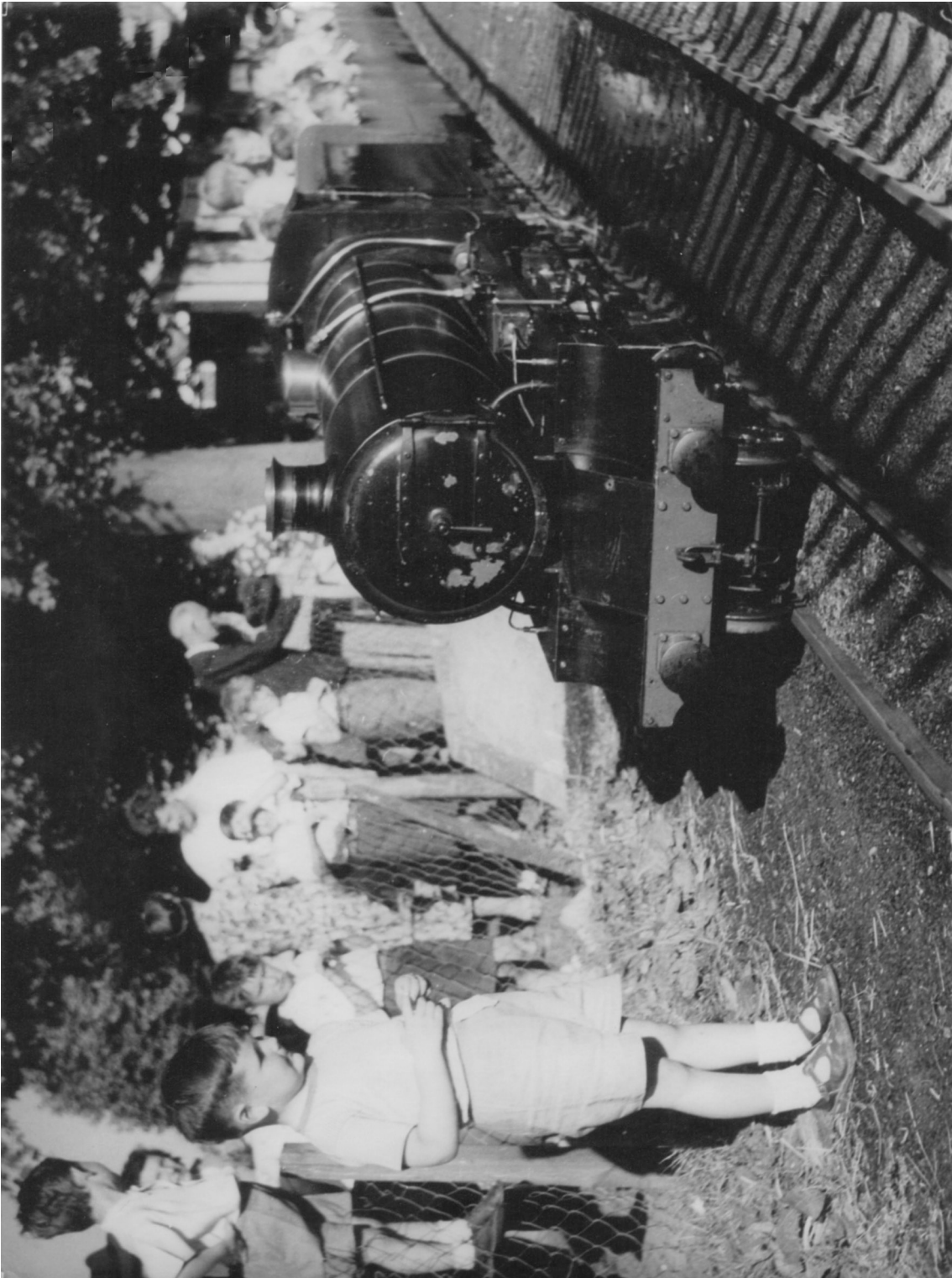
"Western Queen" being prepared for its journey along the Thames Side Promenade. The location is the station at the Caversham Bridge end of the railway. The run round loop, right, can be seen joining the running line. The driver, on the left, is Reg Alexander, son in law of Louis Hathaway.

(Courtesy K. Horn)



A fine view of 4-6-2 "Western Queen" being prepared for a day's work outside the shed, alongside the car park at the Caversham Bridge end of railway. Note the three road brick shed and turntable. The station platform laid away to the left, beyond the shed.

(J Meredith. 13/4/52)



An absolutely delightful picture of the photographer's young son admiring "Western Queen". The well loaded train is ready to depart from the main station - the shed is just out of view behind the train. The paint work on the smoke box door looks a little worse for wear.

(H Hands. Early 1950s)



A well loaded train arrives back at the main station near to Caversham Bridge. Motive power is the 1946 Thurston built 4-6-2 "Western Queen". The iron railing fence throws its shadow across the train. Harold's first railway ran along close to the other side of this fence. During its time at Reading, "Western Queen" seems to have been in a maroon livery.

(Courtesy E Martin)

CHAPTER SIX

THE LOCOMOTIVES

A SUMMARY OF LOCOMOTIVES OWNED BY HAROLD JUDD

Introduction

In this Chapter, there is a summary and subsequent history of the various locomotives owned by Harold Judd. Thankfully, the situation with the locomotives used on Harold Judd's two railways in Reading is simple - each railway employed only one locomotive. As far as is known Harold owned four operational 10¼" gauge steam locomotives at various times. Added to these, were a small 10¼" gauge petrol locomotive and parts of a 15" gauge steam locomotive. Sadly, all except one of 10¼" gauge locomotives are in private ownership and not available for public viewing.

4-6-2 "Sir B Montgomery" **(10¼" Gauge)**

This was the first miniature railway locomotive obtained by Harold Judd. As described in Chapter Three, it was completed by John Thurston as a 4-6-4 tank engine by the summer of 1939, with a boiler made by Goodhand of Gillingham. It subsequently spent the early war years stored in Thurston's workshop. Early in 1944, John Thurston re-built it as a 4-6-2 tender locomotive for Harold Judd. It then arrived in Reading in time for the opening of Harold's first railway, in a field behind the Thames Side Promenade, around late May or early June 1944.

The locomotive then ran on this railway for the 1944 and 1945 seasons, returning to store at Spencers Wood in the winter. It was still un-named in August 1944, but later Harold Judd named the engine "Sir B Montgomery". Ownership passed to Kate Judd around the summer of 1945 and on the closure of the railway in Reading, "Sir B Montgomery" was stored in the yard at Spencers Wood. For the 1946 season it ran on a short line at the western end of Hayling Island, before again returning to store at Spencers Wood. This was to prove its last operation on a public railway. The locomotive remained in store at Spencers Wood and ownership effectively passed to William Judd on the death of Kate Judd in October 1950.

In 1953 William sold the engine to John Cuthill Sword from Ayr in the south west of Scotland, along with three coaches, for £1,000. (Appendix Two details the interesting life and work of John Sword). He added the locomotive to his private collection on his farm at East Balgray near Irvine. Here, still named "Sir B Montgomery", it became BLR No.250 and was painted in a red livery. Following John Sword's death in March 1960, an auction was held on Friday 7th September 1962 of part of his vast transport collection. Sir Andrew Douglas Bruce (who became the 11th Earl of Elgin & 15th Earl of Kincardine in 1968) successfully bid £1,100 for "Sir B Montgomery", with three coaches and rail. He took the equipment to his estate at Broomhall, near Charlestown, Dunfermline and laid a line there - the engine being renamed "Lord Bruce". The locomotive is still there, although it has not been steamed for many years.

4-6-2 "Western Queen" **(10¼" Gauge)**

This locomotive ran on Harold's second railway in Reading along the Thames Side Promenade from April 1949 until the line closed in September 1954. As detailed in Chapter Five, it was built by John Thurston in the spring of 1946 for Mr George Archibald Dingle from Kelly Bray near Callington in Cornwall. The engine had a Goodhand boiler, 14" driving wheels and a tender mounted on twin bogies. Dingle ran the locomotive on a temporary railway in Central Park, Plymouth during the summer seasons of 1946, 1947 and 1948. By 1947 he had named the engine "Tamar Queen". Dingle also owned Bullock's 4-6-2 No.1003 "Western Queen" and he swapped the names between the two locomotives - hence the Thurston locomotive became "Western Queen".

Harold Judd obtained the locomotive sometime over the winter of 1948/1949 and put it to work on his new railway along the Promenade. Here it worked each season until September 1954. In April 1955 it was purchased by John Cuthill Sword, who had previously obtained "Sir B Montgomery" in 1953. As with that locomotive, "Western Queen" went to John Sword's farm at East Balgray. Here it was numbered BLR No.256 and finished in a red livery. At some stage, after April 1961, it was sold - this was not at the first sale of the Sword collection in September 1962 when "Sir B Montgomery" was auctioned. It may have been sold at the second and final auction in March 1965 - although this is not certain as the "Model Locomotive" lots did not have detailed descriptions. "Western Queen" is now believed to be in France, along with three or four coaches. Here it resides still in its BLR livery.

4-4-2 No.1001 "Sir A Montgomery" & 4-4-2 No.1002 **(10¼" Gauge)**

As described in Chapter Four, these were a pair of locomotives built by G & S Light Engineering Company Limited of Wollaston, Stourbridge in 1937/1938. In 1937, 1001 ran at the Crown Hotel, Wychbold, Worcestershire before moving to Dudley Zoo in 1938 and being joined by the newly completed 1002. They had 15" diameter driving wheels, 3½" x 5" cylinders, Goodhand boilers and six-wheeled tenders.

Harold Judd bought both locomotives in 1945 - No.1001 being dismantled at the time. 1002 went to work on the Southsea Miniature Railway where Judd and Hathaway reactivated the railway in July 1945. It was joined in 1946 by 1001, after an overhaul and partial rebuild by John Thurston. At some stage Harold named 1001 "Sir A Montgomery". The two locomotives then remained in use at Southsea throughout the time of Harold Judd's ownership, until the end of the 1951 season.

Presumably, they then returned to Reading and probably to Charlton House, Swallowfield for storage. It seems that Ernest Judd sold them after his Harold's death in December 1952, as in 1954 both 1001 and 1002 were purchased for £400 (the pair) by Maurice Densham, who owned the private North Tawton Miniature Railway at North Tawton, near Okehampton in Devon. Neither locomotive stayed long there - 1001 had left by 1956 and ran on a number of railways and currently is at the Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway in Hampshire. 1002 left North Tawton around 1956/1957 and later ran at Carlyon Bay near St Austell in Cornwall. By 1995 it had been sold and is now privately owned - although still in Cornwall.

0-4-0 Petrol Locomotive **(10¼" Gauge)**

This was constructed by John Thurston (probably in spring 1945) for Harold Judd and was intended for standby use at Southsea. It was a 0-4-0 with an Austin Seven engine. It was not a success and was not used at Southsea. Following the arrival of 1001 at Southsea in 1946, it was stored by the locomotive shed and then subsequently dismantled. The only known picture of the locomotive seems to be in the background of a postcard view of 1002 in the station at Southsea - probably dating from 1946. What seems to be the petrol locomotive is just visible, sitting on the turntable. The picture has not been reproduced in this book.

Part Built 4-4-0 **(15" Gauge)**

Sometime around early 1945, Harold acquired a part constructed 15" gauge 4-4-0 steam locomotive, with outside cylinders. This comprised a rolling chassis with a boiler. It is not known from where or whom he got it from, but at least some of the parts were taken to John Thurston for attention. Apparently, the part built locomotive was well made, but poorly designed with undersized cylinders. The chassis and boiler passed into Kate Judd's ownership later in 1945 and were sold by Ernest Judd after Harold's death. The cylinders and some other components were with John Thurston for many years until being sold and rejoining the chassis and boiler with their new owner near Maidenhead in Berkshire. Here the locomotive remains in a dissembled state.

5" Gauge Locomotive

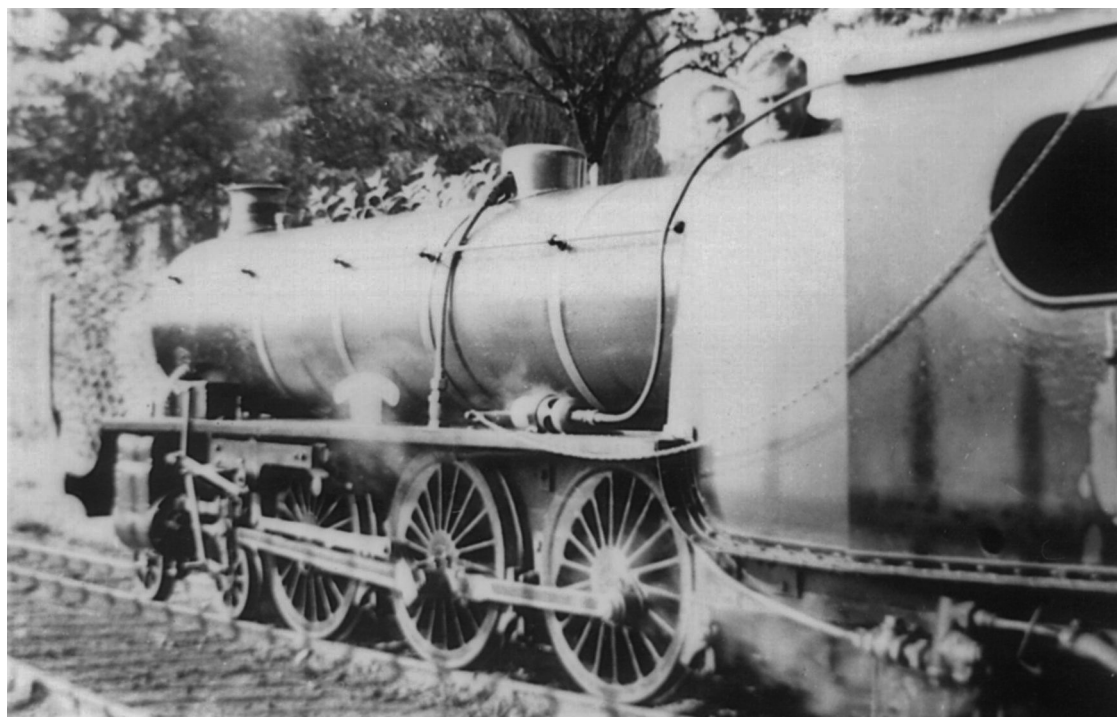
Harold Judd also obtained a 5" gauge steam locomotive for his son, William. This was a poor runner and Harold asked John Thurston to have a look at it for him. Harold made some track for the locomotive, with angle iron for rails, and short line was laid in the yard at Spencers Wood for William to drive the engine up and down.

SPENCERS WOOD (TRACTOR REPAIRS) LTD.
190 KING'S ROAD, READING.



"Sir B Montgomery" Here we see the locomotive on Harold Judd's first railway in Reading. This is a variation on the view at the top of page 21. Left to right we have John Thurston, Harold Judd, Kate Judd and Harold's son, William, in the driver's seat.

(Courtesy K Horn. August 1944)



"Western Queen" A track level view in the station at the Caversham Bridge end of Harold Judd's second railway in Reading. Note the whistle and operating chain.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection)



"Western Queen" Here we see 4-6-2s from Thurston (right, later "Western Queen") and Bullock (left, No.1003 originally "Western Queen") when both locomotives were owned by George Dingle. This view was probably taken at Kelly Bray, judging by the background.
(*Courtesy K Horn. c1947*)



"Western Queen" Another view of the two 4-6-2s, no doubt taken at the same time as the view above. Note the "P.M.R." lettering on the tender. Although the locomotives are similar, there are a number of significant differences - the cab and firebox being two.
(*Courtesy Matthew Kerr Collection. c1947*)



No.1001 Much changed from its days at the Crown Hotel and Dudley Zoo, here the locomotive rests on the turntable at its present home - the Eastleigh Lakeside Railway in Hampshire. Harold named the engine "Sir A Montgomery" and following overhaul at Eastleigh, it was numbered 1908 named "Ernest Henry Upton" in autumn 2005.

(P Scott. 26/8/00)



No.1002 This is the locomotive which reopened the Southsea Miniature Railway in July 1945. Thirty-four years later we see it on the white sands of Carlyon Bay in Cornwall, now numbered 289. Compare to the photographs on page 35.

(N Knight. 21/8/79)

CHAPTER SEVEN

OTHER MINIATURE RAILWAYS IN READING

PROSPECT PARK & TILEHURST

Introduction

The town of Reading is not a likely location for miniature railways, not being located on the coast or being a tourist destination. Apart from Harold Judd's two 10¼" gauge railways, there seem to have been three other smaller gauge railways in the Borough - considering its present boundaries. It is quite likely of course, that there may have been other, unknown, private railways. The definition of a miniature railway here is a line with a track gauge of between 7¼" and 15".

Prospect Park - 7¼" Gauge Railway

Prospect Park is Reading's largest open space and lies on the north side of the Bath Road (A4), around 2 miles west of the town centre. The estate of Prospect Hill had once been a farm belonging to the Kendrick family. A small house was built in the woods there in 1759 by Benjamin Child, widower of Frances Kendrick. After his death the house was occupied by his daughter and her husband, but around 1800 it was purchased by John Engelbert Liebenrood. He enlarged the house, and his colonnaded mansion is still the focal point of the park. Liebenrood also gave his name to the road running along the eastern edge of the park. Prospect Park was acquired by the Council as a public open space in 1901.

On 15th July 1952, the Borough Surveyor received a letter from a Mr Bertram Lewis of 35 Mansfield Road, Reading who was seeking permission to operate a 7¼" gauge railway in Prospect Park during August and September that year. Mr Lewis stated he had a steam locomotive and 150 yards of track available. The Borough Surveyor suggested a site "*on the grass near the drinking fountain in the approach road from Tilehurst Road*" (approx SU691729). Mr Lewis was prepared to pay the Council £10 for the right to operate the railway from 1st August to 30th September, and if successful, again from 1st May to 30th September 1953. At their meeting on 18th July 1952, the Parks Committee discussed the offer and resolved it be accepted, subject to Mr Lewis entering into a suitable agreement and the Borough Surveyor being satisfied about the siting of the railway.

It seems the railway started running on 23rd August 1952. In his report to the Parks Committee of 19th September 1952, the Borough Surveyor stated "*Mr Lewis, the promoter, was unable to commence operation of the railway until 23rd August and he has paid the sum of £5 in respect of the right to operate the railway for one month. If the weather is favourable, he desires to continue until the end of September and I recommend that the agreement be extended as required and the appropriate fee charged on a pro-rata basis*". At the Parks Committee meeting on 19th September 1952, consent was given to Mr Lewis to continue to operate the railway from 23rd to 30th September subject to the payment of £1 5s 0d, and during 1953 for the sum of £5 for each month the railway was to run. The opening of the railway was not covered in the local papers, although both the *Reading Standard* and the *Berkshire Chronicle* of Friday 5th September 1952, carried slightly different pictures of the

railway. The picture in the *Reading Standard* was captioned "*Model railways are always popular and Prospect Park falls into line with this latest attraction*". It showed a LSWR Urie H15 4-6-0 locomotive in Southern livery, hauling two small sit-in coaches, each seating four children. The track appears to be ballasted. The view in the *Berkshire Chronicle* shows a small wooden shed in the background, with a single track running out to what was presumably the "station" - although there is no platform visible.

The locomotive, numbered 486 on the tender, was built by Mr Ernest Cooper of Eastleigh in 1924. It was purchased from Mr Cooper by Mr J Lillington from Andover, just after the Second World War. He then ran it on a number of temporary lines at fetes and the like. One example being a garden fete held on Saturday 11th June 1949 at "Highlands", Spencers Wood by the Shinfield & Grazeley Conservative Association. A picture appeared in the *Reading Standard* of Friday 17th June 1949, showing the prospective Conservative candidate aboard the train. Another was during the Pangbourne Gala of August Bank Holiday 1950. There was around 250 feet of track and four coaches. No.486 and the equipment was then purchased by Mr Lewis, who in the early 1950s ran a gentlemen's outfitters shop (B Lewis & Sons) in Reading at 3 Duke Street, opposite the Ship Hotel.

It would appear the railway only ran between 23rd August and 30th September 1952. In his report to the Parks Committee of 20th February 1953, the Borough Surveyor stated he had received a letter from Mr Lewis dated 11th February. Mr Lewis had moved away from Reading and he was offering to sell the railway to the Council for £350. The Surveyor noted "*There are practical difficulties in operating the Miniature Railway by direct administration and I recommend that the offer be not accepted*". The Parks Committee agreed and turned down the offer at their meeting on 20th February 1953. After that nothing more appeared in the Council minutes about the railway - presumably Mr Lewis removed the track, stock and shed and this short lived railway was no more. Today the drinking fountain has also gone, its location being on the opposite (eastern side) of the path from the present children's playground.

Before Bertram Lewis got permission for his line in Prospect Park, he had applied to Havant & Waterloo Urban District Council for a site on Hayling Island. The General Purposes Committee heard at their meeting on 13th June 1952, that Mr Lewis had made enquiries about a site for a miniature railway on the Beachlands immediately east of the Butlin's Fun Fair. However, his offer was declined and he turned his attention to Reading instead.

Prospect Park - Reading Society of Model Engineers

The Reading Society of Model Engineers was formed just after the First World War, but was disbanded during the Second World War. The Society was reconstituted in 1947 - a notice in the *Model Engineer* of 17th July 1947 states that the society had been revived and meetings were being held monthly. An early achievement was the construction of an "OO" gauge model railway, measuring 36ft x 15ft. This was displayed as an attraction in the large McIlroy's department store in Reading for Christmas 1949 and was opened by the Earl of Northesk on Tuesday 8th November 1949. The Society acquired the use of a building in the grounds of a school at the corner of Crescent Road and Wokingham Road - in the east of Reading. Here a short ground level 3½"/5" dual-gauge track was laid.

During the 1950s a portable track was used at fetes, steam fairs and the like and this resulted in the funds being raised to obtain a new site, where a clubhouse and a passenger carrying track could be built. To this end the Society approached Reading Borough Council. At their meeting on 21st September 1966, the Public Entertainments & Parks Committee asked the Borough Surveyor to discuss with the Society suitable sites "*including Hill's Meadow, which could be used for a miniature railway and pool for model boats*". However, the site finally selected was part of the Council's Highways Depot in the south eastern corner of Prospect Park, just off the Bath Road (A4), at SU692724. The Highways & Drainage Committee gave approval at their meeting on 26th April 1968 for "*use as a site for a model railway track and premises*". This was for a period of, initially, five years with an annual rental £10. The agreement was subject to the approval of the Town Planning & Buildings Committee, who gave their permission on 24th May 1968 - the Public Entertainments & Parks Committee following likewise on 9th July 1968. So by the summer of 1968, the Society had a new permanent site to build a passenger carrying railway.

Work started in August 1968 - clearing and surveying the ground for a clubhouse and the railway. This was an elevated multi-gauge track and was opened for public running on Easter Sunday, 2nd April 1972. It was later extended and is now some 360 yards in length with gauges 2½"/3½"/5" available. More recently, a ground level dual 5"/7¼" gauge track has been constructed. This is formed of a circuit (outside the elevated track) of around 400 yards in length. It was opened to passengers on Sunday 6th February 2000, with an official opening on Saturday 30th June 2001. Both tracks run for the public on at least one Sunday afternoon a month all year round.

Park Farm Model Railway

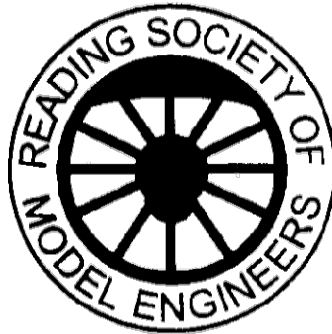
Laying just within Reading's present Borough boundary was a private 9½" gauge railway in Tilehurst, just to the west of Reading. This was laid down around 1936 by Arthur Edgar Newbery at Park Farm - his house at that time and, which despite its name, was not (by then) actually a farm. It was located to the east of Park Lane and north of Halls Road, at SU666732. The railway consisted of around 100 yards or so of track, probably laid in a "C" shape around the garden of the house. There were two locomotives, a 0-4-0 saddle tank with outside valve gear and a NER 4-4-0 tender locomotive. Rolling stock consisted of scale wagons, some of which could be used as passenger vehicles. There were also two coaches – a Pullman and a Southern Railway 3rd class brake. At a previous house (not far from Tilehurst railway station) Arthur Edgar had an elevated 2½" gauge line, on which ran a GWR "Saint" class 4-6-0 locomotive named "Robin Hood" that he had built.

Of the two locomotives: saddle tank 0-4-0 No.1 "Lady Veronica" was built by R H Morse from Brighton in 1935. It was first owned by Gerald Vere Burgoyne, who had 9½" gauge railways in Berkshire at Spring Lanes, Bracknell and subsequently Crowthorne Farm, Crowthorne. It then came into the ownership of Arthur Edgar Newbery, probably around 1936. No.2015 was a 2" scale model of a Wilson Worsdell designed NER R (LNER D20) class locomotive. It was built, as a 10¼" gauge engine, by H Awde around 1925 whilst he was serving with the Royal Engineers in Germany. Construction took place in the Gereon running shed in Cologne and took the builder two and half years of his spare time. It ran on a line in Cologne, but by September 1927 both the locomotive and its builder were at Maybank Road, South Woodford. It was advertised for sale in the *Model Engineer* for 29th September 1927 along three "trucks" and could be seen running by appointment. A similar advert

appeared in the 9th August 1928 edition. At some stage it was acquired by Vere Burgoyne and was regauged to 9½" by H C S Bullock in 1935. Arthur Edgar's son remembers visiting Vere Burgoyne and his railway a number of times.

It was Arthur Edgar's father, Arthur Newbery, which donated the land to Reading Borough Council in May 1932, to form the Arthur Newbery Park, off Armour Hill, in Tilehurst. Arthur Edgar Newbery moved from Park Farm in 1940 and his railway was lifted at that time. The family moved to Aldermaston, Berkshire and only a short length of 9½" gauge track was laid there. Arthur Edgar Newbery was later the Newbery of the partnership of Curwen & Newbery Limited of Northgate Street, Devizes, Wiltshire. Both Newbery and David Curwen had a common interest in Doble steam cars and in 1951 they took over a small engineering business in Devizes to form Curwen & Newbery Limited. This partnership lasted until Newbery's death in 1966. The company was formed to undertake agricultural, general and experimental engineering, machinery and tool making. However, it later constructed a number of miniature railway locomotives, mostly of 7¼" or 10¼" gauges.

Today, nothing remains of Park Farm. The house and the surrounding area being completely redeveloped by the early 1960s. Its location is marked by a small close called "Maiwand Gardens". No.1 "Lady Veronica" passed into the ownership of Captain Vivian Hewitt on Anglesey, but is now privately owned in West Berkshire. 2015 was obtained by Percy Harding-Kiff, a dealer in Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire. By 1940 it was privately owned in Oldbury in the West Midlands, where it still resides.



Present day (2005) logo of the Reading Society of Model Engineers, who have their clubhouse and operating model & miniature railways in Prospect Park. This is currently the only public miniature railway running within the Borough of Reading.



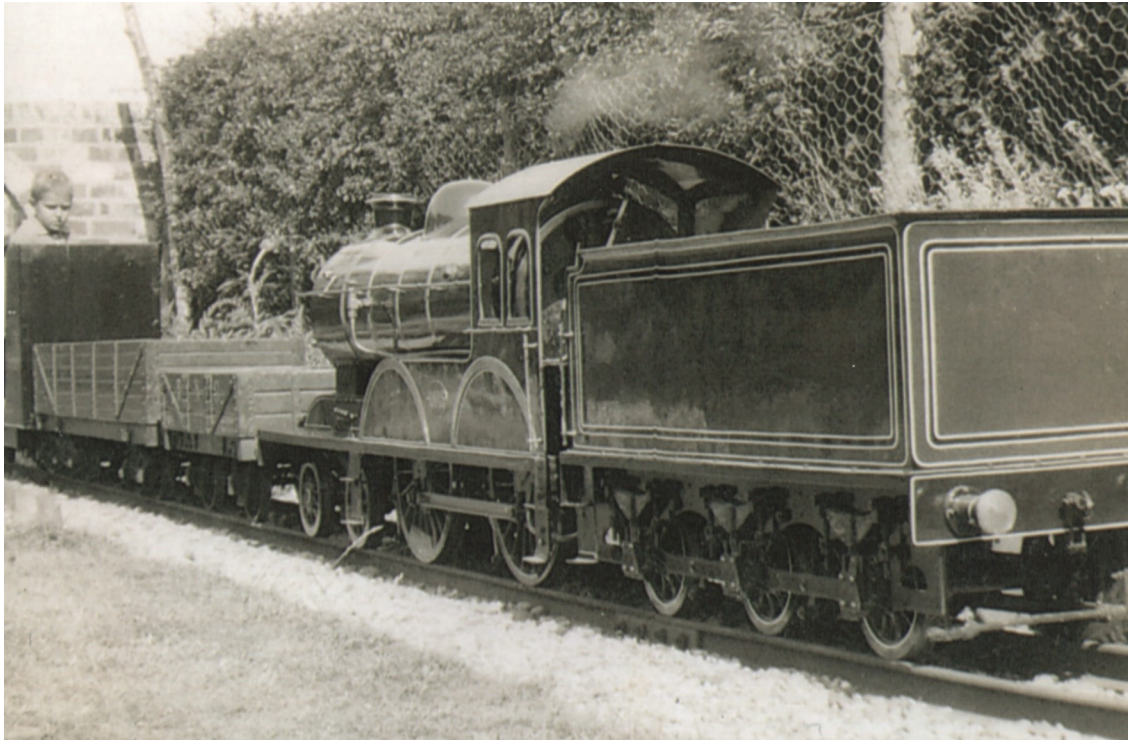
Prospect Park - 7¼" Gauge LSWR Urie H15 4-6-0 No.486 is ready to haul its two coach train of adults and children, while others pose for the camera. This was presumably the "station" area. Note the small shed and the ballasted track. This picture appeared in Friday 5th September 1952 edition of the *Berkshire Chronicle*.

(Courtesy Reading Chronicle)



Prospect Park - 7¼" Gauge A two coach train running under the trees in the park. This view appeared on the front cover of the 27th May 1954 edition of the *Model Engineer*.

(Courtesy Model Engineer)



Park Farm Model Railway A view of this private 9½" gauge line, with the NER 4-4-0 locomotive built by H Awde around 1925. The line was constructed by its owner, Arthur Edgar Newbery around 1936 in Tilehurst, to the west of Reading.

(Courtesy Robert Newbery)



Prospect Park - Reading Society of Model Engineers A train driven by the locomotive's owner, John Teirny, on the ground level 5⁷/₁₆" gauge line of the Society in Prospect Park.

(P Scott. 5/9/04)

Appendix One

Travers John Thurston (1897-1972)

Over the years Travers John Thurston has not been given the credit due to him as a miniature railway locomotive builder. Only in recent times has an attempt been made to correct this - in fact two of his locomotives most in the public eye over the years were once credited to another builder. Thurston built the two locomotives used by Harold Judd on his railways in Reading and it is therefore fitting that a brief description of his life and work be included in this book.

Travers John Thurston, better known as John Thurston, was born in the United States of America on 18th December 1897. His mother was Canadian and his father, American. John trained as a boilermaker and worked with his father in the USA, but by the mid 1920s he had moved to this country. On 24th September 1927 he married Edith Elizabeth West at the Register Office in Hartley Wintney, Hampshire. At that time he gave his profession as "General Engineer" and was living at Rummey's Farm, Minley Road, Hawley, Hampshire. His father, Edwin Thurston, was recorded as a "Builder".

With his brother Harold, he established a business called "Thurston Brothers". Their letterhead stated "*General Engineers, Acetylene & Electric Welding and General Machine Work*". In fact any sort of engineering work was tackled, with John Thurston being an excellent welder. In *Kelly's* directory for 1939 he is called a "*miniature locomotive maker*" and listed under Mechanical Engineers. He had no entry at all in the previous edition of 1935. The workshop and yard were behind Thurston's house at 24 Prospect Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire. Access to the workshop was from Holly Road, a turn off Prospect Road. No more than 1 mile away, at the "The Olives" in Prospect Avenue, was the home and workshop of the well-known miniature railway locomotive builder Herbert Charles Stuart Bullock (1889-1937). He had moved there from Fowler Road, Cove in 1932, and only some half mile from 24 Prospect Road. Apparently, at some stage John Thurston had undertaken work for Bullock. It may have been this connection that got John Thurston into miniature locomotives and railways - for he seems to have started building locomotives and doing railway work after Bullock's death in November 1937. Certainly, some of Bullock's miniature railway customers turned to Thurston after his death.

John Thurston ran a short lived miniature railway at Kingston upon Thames, using a 7¼" gauge 4-4-2 locomotive which he had obtained in April 1938 from the Matthew Kerr of the Kerr's Miniature Railway in Arbroath. Part of the deal, and going the other way to Arbroath, was a Bullock built 4-4-0, which was later named "Gladstone". This and the building of the 4-6-4 tank locomotive as described in Chapter Three, seem to have been Thurston's first miniature railway work. At the beginning of the Second World War he went to work for Vickers Armstrong at Weybridge for a short time and during this period his workshop was shut. Following this he did a fair amount of war work. Around 1945, Harold Thurston returned to the USA and John Thurston continued as before. The majority of Thurston's locomotives were built in the period during, and immediately following, the Second World War. The railway work would take place whenever there was a lull in other general engineering work. John Thurston's early locomotives generally used Goodhand (from Gillingham, Kent) boilers, but after Tom Goodhand retired in the late 1940s, Thurston acquired many of Goodhand's patterns and built boilers himself.

Below is a summary of the known locomotives he built - it is not meant as detailed history of each locomotive, more of an indication and recognition of Thurston's output. The actual order of building is not certain, but where known, completion dates are given.

10¼" Gauge 4-6-4 tank/4-6-2 "Sir B Montgomery"

As described in Chapter Three, this was complete by July 1939. Converted to a 4-6-2 tender locomotive for Harold Judd and later named "Sir B Montgomery", it ran on Harold's first railway in Reading. Subsequent history detailed in Chapter Six and Appendix Two.

9½" Gauge 4-6-2

Built for Gerald Vere Burgoyne from Crowthorne, Berkshire and was well under way in 1942, with chassis and a boiler. Burgoyne died on 4th July 1943, so either the locomotive never went to Crowthorne or was only with him for a very short time. It is not known what happened to the engine subsequently.

7¼" Gauge 4-6-2

This had been ordered by George Archibald Dingle from Kelly Bray in Cornwall. It was well under way in 1942 with a chassis and boiler. In the end, Dingle ordered a 10¼" 4-6-2 instead and the locomotive went to Charles Lane at Liphook in Hampshire. It later ran on a line at Goodrington in Devon and is now in Tasmania.

10¼" Gauge 4-6-2

Thurston built this locomotive as a present for his parents. Probably completed in 1944, it was shipped to Canada in 1945 after the end of the war. It then moved to the USA and ran on a number of different lines with various owners. It is still resident in the USA.

10¼" Gauge 4-6-2. "Western Queen"

Built for George Archibald Dingle of Kelly Bray in Cornwall, the locomotive was completed by August 1946 and ran on a temporary line in Central Park in Plymouth. It was later named "Western Queen" and acquired by Harold Judd around winter 1948/1949, then running on his second railway in Reading. See Chapter Five and subsequent history in Chapter Six and Appendix Two.

12¼" Gauge 4-6-4. No.2010 "Henry"

Built for H G Cookson of Billingshurst and ran on his line at East Worthing in summer 1947. In 1948, it transferred to his new railway at Littlehampton, where it ran for a good number of years. In the early 1970s it was named "Henry". Now privately owned in Lincolnshire.

12¼" Gauge 4-6-4. No.1005 "Gordon"

Built for H G Cookson for the Littlehampton Miniature Railway to work alongside 2010. Probably went into service in 1948 when the line opened. When 2010 was named, 1005 became "Gordon". Now privately owned in Lincolnshire.

12¼" Gauge 4-6-2 "Southern Queen"/"T J Thurston"

Built for Thurston's own line on Hayling Island, being complete by June 1948. Named "Southern Queen", it later donated cab, some fittings as well as its name to Thurston's 4-4-2. Passed into the ownership of Ted Martin, who constructed a new cab and tender. Then named "T J Thurston" by Mr Martin in recognition of its builder. The locomotive is now privately owned and is normally resident on the Fairbourne & Barmouth Steam Railway in North Wales.

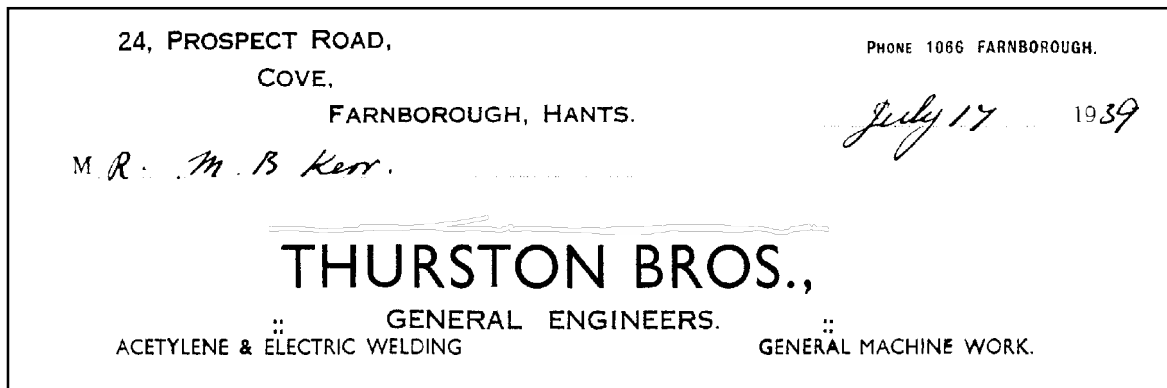
12¼" Gauge 4-4-2 "Southern Queen"

Thurston built this for use on his line at Hayling Island, being complete by 1953. Named "Southern Queen" it used cab and other fittings from the 12¼" 4-6-2 above. It is now privately owned in Hampshire in a dismantled state.

Following the Second World War, John Thurston seems to have decided to get into operating miniature railways, possibly realising the success Harold Judd had in Reading and was having at Southsea. His first attempt at Southsea in November 1946 proved unsuccessful as the land for the railway suggested by the Council was still under the control of the War Department. He next approached Havant & Waterloo Urban District Council in late 1947 for a site on Hayling Island. Here, as was related in Chapter Four, Kate Judd ran a line during the 1946 season at the western end of the Island.

Following the Second World War, a site for a miniature railway was made available towards the eastern end of the Island at Eastoke. This was on ground between the seafront road and the sea, known as Beachlands and opposite the Lifeboat Inn (approx SZ729985). Here, a Mr J Lillington from Andover was granted permission to run a short 7¼" gauge miniature railway during the 1946 and 1947 seasons. We met Mr Lillington in Chapter Seven, as he was the previous owner of the LSWR H15 4-6-0 locomotive Mr Lewis used to operate his railway in Prospect Park. Lillington's railway on Hayling Island employed this same locomotive. John Thurston was successful in acquiring this site for his railway and it opened on Saturday 12th June 1948. The line was of 12¼" gauge and a circuit of some 400 yards. Running on this railway was a 4-6-2 locomotive and later a 4-4-2 - both built by Thurston. The railway ran until September 1953, when John Thurston was unable to agree terms with the Council for further operation. Despite the attempts of a Mr J H Woolley of Harrow and our old friend Mr W Botterill (who we met at both Hilsea and Southsea in Chapter Four and had now moved to Tunbridge Wells) no miniature railway was to run on this site again. The land is now occupied by "Eastoke Corner" station of the 2ft gauge East Hayling Light Railway, which opened on 5th July 2003. This runs for 1 mile eastwards from Eastoke to a station called "Beachlands".

Sadly, the operation of the railway at Eastoke on Hayling Island brought about the end of John Thurston's miniature locomotive and railway interests. For the Hayling Island railway, John Thurston had gone into a partnership in 1948 with a Harold Flint, an engineer from Aldermaston in Berkshire. Flint invested £800 in the venture and Thurston contributed the locomotive, rolling stock and track. The new railway must have been a success in its first season, as Flint and Thurston got over confident and decided to launch out on a bigger venture. It is not known what this was (most likely it was a railway at Hayling Lido where Thurston had been granted permission to operate a line for 5 years by March 1949), but Flint handed over another £800 to Thurston, followed by an additional £120. Towards the end of the 1949 season, Flint and Thurston had a trivial dispute and Flint walked out and took no further part in the business, but left his money with Thurston. Later, Flint tried to reclaim his money and the matter ended up in the High Court in February 1955. After the problems with his miniature railways business, much of his later work was in plastics. He retained his workshop right up to the time of his death in 1972.



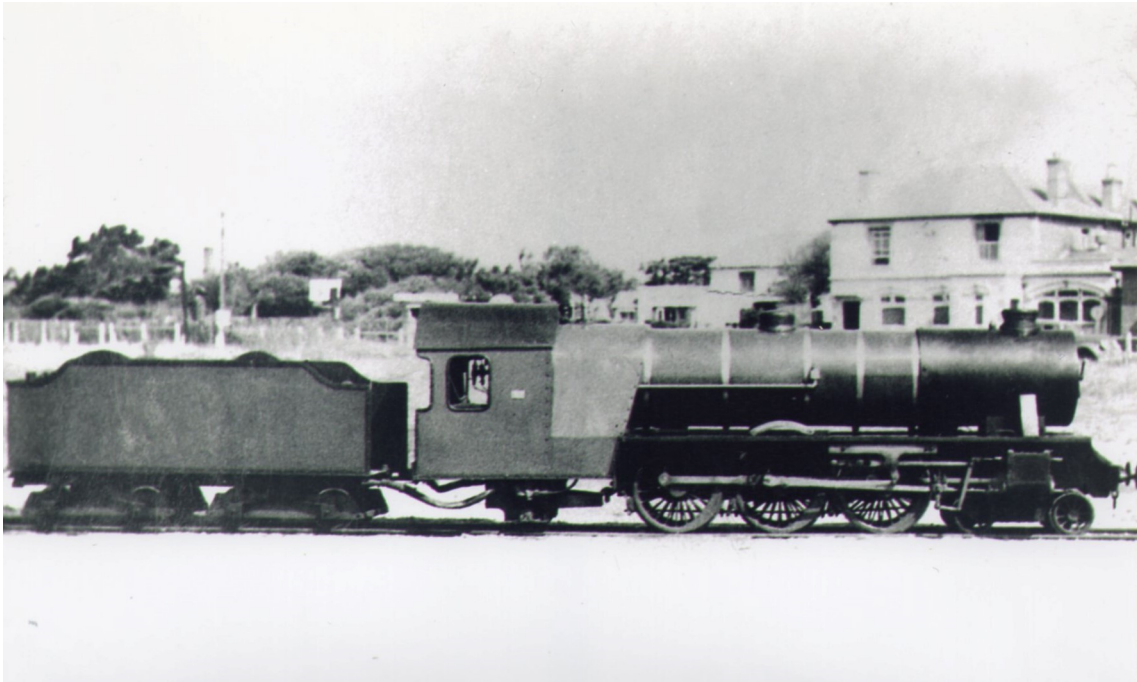
John Thurston's letterhead, slightly reduced, taken from a letter he sent to Matthew Kerr of Kerr's Miniature Railway in July 1939.

(Courtesy Matthew Kerr)



A view outside Thurston's workshop. Left to right we have Kenneth Bullock (H C S Bullock's son), Mr Carter (a local carpenter), John Thurston and Mr Martin (Ted Martin's father). As for the locomotives - left is the 7¼" gauge 4-4-2 from the Kerr's Miniature Railway and right, going the other way, the Bullock built 4-4-0 later named "Gladstone".

(Courtesy E Martin. Spring 1938)



A splendid view of the Thurston built 12¼" gauge 4-6-2 locomotive, "Southern Queen", on his railway at Eastoke on Hayling Island. The building in the background is the Lifeboat Inn. Note the bogie tender and characteristic, rather ugly, Thurston cab.

(Courtesy E Martin)



Thurston used some of parts from the above locomotive to build a 4-4-2 - also for his line on Hayling Island. The incomplete 4-6-2 passed into the ownership of Ted Martin, who as we see here, constructed a rather more attractive cab (as well as a new tender, the original one having been scrapped in the intervening years). The locomotive is on a trailer having returned from being displayed at the Knowl Hill Steam Rally.

(E Martin. 15/8/00)

Appendix Two

John Cuthill Sword (1892-1960)

Both the locomotives that ran on Harold Judd's railways in Reading ended up in the ownership of John Sword in south west Scotland. Here, if ever there was one, was a gentlemen with a fascinating life story, well-worth relating. John Sword was an industrialist, farmer, bus operator, airline pioneer and a large scale collector - mainly of cars, but many other things as well, including model and miniature steam locomotives. After the Second World War he set up a potato crisp factory near Reading and through this John Sword and Harold Judd became acquainted. No doubt shared interests in road vehicles and miniature railways helped!

John Cuthill Sword was born on Sunday 17th April 1892 in the Lanarkshire town of Airdrie, to the east of Glasgow. He was one of five children, with two brothers and two sisters. Both his father and mother were millers and bakers and, at the age of fourteen, he went to work in the family's bakery in Airdrie. Later he started delivering bread with a one-horse van. With the First World War, he joined the Royal Flying Corps and was engaged in motor transport maintenance. After the war, and a short time back in the bakery business, he formed "Midland Bus Services" to operate buses around the towns of North Lanarkshire. By the end of the 1920s the company had grown considerably and was eventually taken over by the Scottish Motor Transport Company Limited (SMT). John Sword then became the General Manager of Western SMT based in Kilmarnock, a post he held until 1950. With this job he moved from Airdrie to live in Ayr on the west coast.

By 1932 he had become very interested in aviation and set up a company called "Midland & Scottish Air Ferries Ltd" based at Renfrew Aerodrome near Glasgow. It was from here, on 18th April 1933, that John Sword operated the very first scheduled air service in Scotland - to Campbeltown. He notched up another first, when on 14th May 1933, his airline flew the first commercial air ambulance service in Scotland - from Renfrew to Islay and back. He went on to set up a network of scheduled flights to Campbeltown, Islay, Rothesay, Belfast and Liverpool - all from Renfrew; and the Isle of Man, Belfast, Dublin and Blackpool from Liverpool. He was a personal friend of the then Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and provided flights for him on many occasions. However, despite his pioneering air services, buses were his main business and when his SMT bosses, directed by railway company board members, forced him to choose airlines or the Western SMT bus company - he picked the latter and in autumn 1934 left the aviation world to others.

Aside from his road and air transport interests, John acquired seven farms in Ayrshire. On these he could indulge in his passion for horses. One of farms was East Balgray (NS360427) north east of Irvine, comprising some 900 acres. Here he could house his ever growing collection (mainly started after 1945) of motor cars, motor cycles and horse drawn carriages. The car collection numbered about 80 by 1949 and eventually reached around 180, with examples dating from 1895 to 1951. He also collected clocks, horse saddlery and paintings. Miniature and model steam locomotives were another interest, and these were said to number over 40. The whole effectively comprised a large private museum.

In 1932, he obtained a 15" gauge Cagney built 4-4-0 locomotive and equipment, apparently for his youngest son, and laid a line on his farm at East Balgray. In 1936 the locomotive

moved to a new railway, which opened on 1st June that year, at Ettrick Bay on the Island of Bute in the Firth of Clyde. This railway was a simple circle of track 109 yards in length and its inception was due to Western SMT and almost certainly John Sword. The location was close to the beach and adjacent to the Ettrick Bay terminus of the 3ft 6in gauge Rothesay Tramway. This ran from Rothesay Pier to Ettrick Bay and was operated by Rothesay Tramways Company Limited, closing on 30th September 1936. Control of the tramway company had passed to SMT in 1931 and then Western SMT in 1932 and hence presumably came under the control of John Sword in Kilmarnock, who also became a director of the tramway company. The Cagney locomotive, named "Samson" and carrying "Rothesay Tramways" on the cab side, had been overhauled in the workshops of Western SMT in Kilmarnock. The Ettrick Bay Railway was operated by Rothesay Tramways Company Limited and closed during the Second World War - around 1943. "Samson" then seems to have run at Millport on Great Cumbrae Island for two seasons around 1946, before returning to John Sword at East Balgray. The locomotive then ran on temporary railways at a number of special events in Central Scotland during the 1950s - Cathcart (1953), Castle Douglas (1958) and Kirkcudbright (1959) being examples.

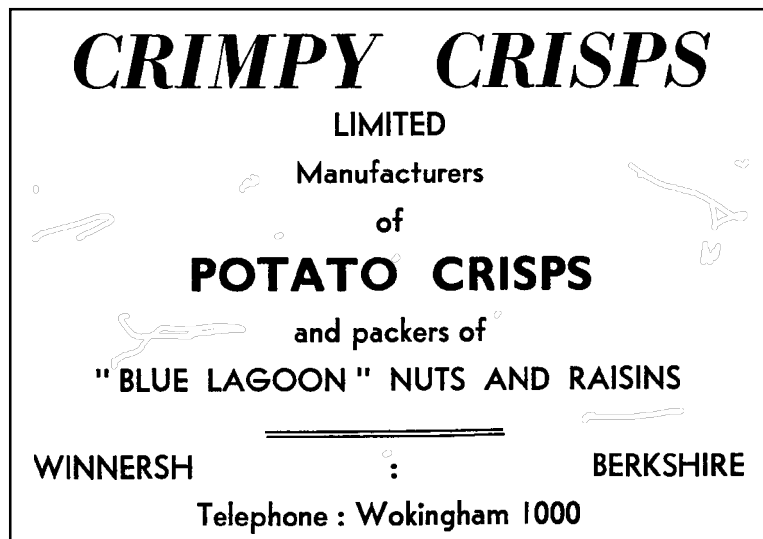
John Sword returned to his roots when he opened a potato crisp factory in Airdrie under the name of Crimpy Crisps. He expanded this business by opening another factory at Winnersh (SU781705) to the east of Reading and also one in Manchester. The Winnersh factory was run by David Sword and Manchester by Ian Sword - two of John's sons. Potato crisp manufacture began in the post war rationing period, when restrictions on the availability of meat and flour meant hard times for butchers and bakers. They began to cut up potatoes and sell them in fried slices to drum up trade. Crimpy Crisps at Winnersh opened around 1949, in premises previously used by a company called Minneapolis-Moline, who assembled American farm tractors. It was through Crimpy Crisps at Winnersh that John Sword and Harold Judd became acquainted. It is likely Harold undertook haulage work for crisp factory and with their shared interests, they became friends. Harold's son William remembers a number of trips to Crimpy Crisps with his father. The Crimpy Crisps factory at Winnersh closed around 1969 and the site was subsequently used by Bottle Closures (who made crimped bottle tops), then Hewlett Packcard - it is now a Sainsbury's superstore.

John Sword bought the entire railway stored at Spencers Wood, and last used at Hayling Island, from William Judd for £1,000 in 1953. This included the 4-6-2 locomotive "Sir B Montgomery", three coaches and track. John Sword built a 10¼" gauge miniature railway on his farm at East Balgray - presumably using the equipment he had obtained from William Judd. The layout or length of the railway is not known. However, a newspaper cutting from around November 1954, shows "Sir B Montgomery" with the 1950s singer Frankie Laine in the cab and what is probably John Sword looking on. The accompanying note states "*When he was on his last visit to Glasgow Frankie just had to visit the famous collection of models and vintage cars owned by Mr J C Sword, Balgray Farm, near Irvine, Ayrshire. He is seen here preparing for a spin on the model track*". The locomotive became BLR No.250 and was finished in a red livery. In April 1955 John Sword obtained Harold's other locomotive that had run at Reading, "Western Queen", for £375. This became BLR No.256 and was also turned out in a red livery. "BLR" presumably stood for Balgray Light Railway.

John Sword also went on to acquire a varied range of businesses including a cinema, a chewing gum factory, an ice cream manufacturer, an investment company and building and property concerns. On Thursday 29th November 1951 he was presented with the Freedom of the Burgh of Airdrie. He died on Sunday 27th March 1960 at his home at "Craigweil" in Ayr.

His large and varied private collection was then sold off in two auctions in 1962 and 1965 at East Balgray Farm. The first auction was held on Friday 7th September 1962, commencing at 11.00. The auctioneer was John Watson & Son of Glasgow. Included were 120 cars, 29 motor cycles and various other items. The whole realised around £50,000. Two of John Sword's miniature railway locomotives were sold here. Lot No.30 was described as "*Sir B Montgomery, Pacific model, 2 cyl. Steam Locomotive 4-6-2. 10" gauge [sic]. With rails and wooden coaches to carry 30 children*". Lot No.31 was "Samson" and was detailed as "*American type model steam Locomotive 4-4-0. 15" gauge. With rails and wooden coaches to carry 40 children*". "Sir B Montgomery", along with three coaches and rail, was sold for £1,100 to Sir Andrew Douglas Bruce (who became the 11th Earl of Elgin & 15th Earl of Kincardine in 1968). He took the equipment to his estate at Broomhall, near Charlestown, Dunfermline and laid a line there - the locomotive being renamed "Lord Bruce", presumably after his son. It is still at Broomhall in the ownership of the Earl, although it has not been steamed for a good many years. Lot No.31 "Samson", raised £500 and was also sold to the Sir Andrew Douglas Bruce. It was later auctioned at Christie's in October 1966 and is currently on display at the Strumpshaw Hall Steam Museum in Norfolk.

The remaining part of John Sword's collection, not sold at the September 1962 auction, was intended to form the nucleus of a Scottish motor museum. However, this was found not to be viable and another auction was held at East Balgray Farm on Friday 12th March 1965 starting at 11.30. As before the auctioneer was John Watson & Son. Included were 59 cars, 10 motor cycles, 3 pedal cycles, 14 horse vehicles, 27 model locomotives, 23 model engines and 3 model ships. Unfortunately, the gauge or scale of the model locomotives was not given in the catalogue. Whether "Western Queen" (BLR No.256) was sold at this time is not certain. None of brief descriptions of the "Model Locomotives" listed (Lot Nos.28-54) closely matches it. Anyway, at some stage it was sold and is now believed to be in France.



An advert from a directory of Wokingham for 1952/1953 for John Sword's potato crisp company. Note the phone number. The company was at the forefront of flavoured crisps, such as Beef and Cheese & Onion.

Appendix Three

Chronology of Important Dates

19th September 1900	Harold Judd born in Chackmore, Buckinghamshire
Spring 1908	Thames Side Promenade laid out and opened as a public open space
27th March 1922	Harold marries Kate Elizabeth Bignell
Early 1930s	Harold moves to Spencers Wood, south of Reading
June 1944	First Railway in Reading opens
Early 1945	Two locomotives (1001 & 1002) purchased from Dudley Zoo
25th May 1945	Portsmouth City Council approached about site for a railway at Hilsea Lido
1st June 1945	Offer to relay track and operate Southsea Miniature Railway
Summer 1945	Marriage fails, Harold & Kate part company
21st July 1945	Southsea Miniature Railway reopens
September 1945	First Railway in Reading closes
12th November 1945	Bid to operate Southsea Miniature Railway for 1946-1948 seasons accepted
19th November 1945	Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited incorporated
1946	Kate Judd operates railway on Hayling Island
28th June 1946	Right to operate railway at Hilsea Lido transferred
26th November 1948	Bid to operate Southsea Miniature Railway for 1949-1951 seasons accepted
17th December 1948	Letter to Reading Borough Council asking for site for a railway
4th February 1949	Bid for railway along Thames Side Promenade accepted
Easter 1949	Second Railway in Reading opens
30th January 1950	Bid to run railway in Central Park, East Ham accepted
18th October 1950	Kate Judd dies
16th December 1950	Harold marries second wife, Phyllis Daisy Smith (Barnes)
23rd November 1951	Out bid for operation of Southsea Miniature Railway for 1952-1954 seasons
20th December 1952	Harold Judd dies
1953	"Sir B Montgomery" and coaches sold to John Sword
1954	Locomotives from Southsea (1001 & 1002) sold to Maurice Densham
10th August 1954	Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Ltd put into receivership
17th September 1954	Reading Borough Council turns down offer to buy railway
19th September 1954	Second Railway in Reading closes
14th April 1955	"Western Queen" and coaches sold to John Sword
1st September 1983	Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Ltd dissolved

Appendix Four**Abstract of Accounts - 1954/1955**

Taken from the surviving records of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Limited.

1954	Receipts	£	s	d
Aug 14	Cash in Hand	15	3	4
Aug 14	Cash – Receipts from Miniature Railway	9	19	-
Aug 15	do.	16	4	-
Aug 21	do.	2	10	-
Aug 22	do.	10	9	6
Aug 28	do.	5	2	-
Aug 29	do.	11	13	6
Sept 4	do.	2	10	6
Sept 5	do.	13	11	-
Sept 9	Transfer of Bank Balance of Spencers Wood (Tractor Repairs) Ltd.	29	13	4
Sept 12	Cash – Receipts from Miniature Railway	2	18	6
Sept 19	do.	7	8	-
Oct 15	Law Union & Rock Insurance Co. Ltd. Settlement of Insurance Claim	590	-	-
1955				
Feb 24	Sale of Equipment	4	5	6
Apr 14	Sale of Miniature Railway	375	-	-
	Carried forward.....£	1096	8	2

1954	Payments	£	s	d
Aug 15	Wages & Expenses	4	4	-
Aug 22	do.	3	9	-
Aug 29	do.	3	8	4
Aug 31	C & G Ayres Ltd – Coal	1	19	2
Sept 5	Wages & Expenses	3	8	4
Sept 12	do.	2	-	-
Sept 19	do.	2	1	4
Sept 24	Vulcan Boiler Ins. Co. Ltd – Boiler Ins.		14	2
Dec 4	Road Transport & General Ins. Co. Ltd – Insurance of Miniature Railway	13	5	9
Dec 20	C & G Ayres Ltd – Coal	1	19	2
Dec 21	Corporation of Reading – Water Rate		19	3
1955				
May 12	Corporation of Reading – Reinstatement on termination of tenancy	50	-	-
June 8	E. Hadley – Clearing site on termination of tenancy	20	-	-
	Carried forward.....£	107	8	6

Signed: J Tovey. 12th September 1955.

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Harold Judd purchased this Sentinel steam tractor (No.8777) new in July 1933. Here we see it with a typical load of timber. Harold is leaning on the Sentinel, by the cab door.

(Courtesy D Judd. Late 1930s)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As always, with a work of this sort, it would be impossible to research it without the help of many others. However, any mistakes are mine. I would like to thank the following people for their help:

The staff at: Reading Central Library, Berkshire Record Office (Reading), Hampshire Record Office (Winchester), Portsmouth City Records Office, Portsmouth Central Library, Plymouth Record Office, Plymouth Central Library, British Newspaper Library at Colindale, Stratford Library (Newham Local Studies Library), Cornish Studies Library (Redruth), Carnegie Library (Ayr), Ayrshire Archives Centre, Railway Studies Collection in Newton Abbot Library, Glasgow Museum of Transport, Beaulieu Motoring Archive Research Service, Museum of English Rural Life (Reading), Companies House at Cardiff, Simmons Aerofilms, National Monuments Record Centre at Swindon. Without fail the staff at these locations were most helpful.

Paul Alexander, Roy Baker, Chris Baldwin, Michael Burrows, Robin Butterell, John Cadman, David Curwen, Richard Carvill, The Earl of Elgin, Brian Eighteen, John Hall-Craggs, Hubert Hands, Peter Hanford, Brian Hillsdon, Dave Holroyde, Keith Horn, Ian Hurst, Ken Hussey, Brian Joslyn, David Judd, Shirley Judd, William Judd, Deidre Keen, Matthew Kerr, Neville Knight, Frankie Laine, Charles Langham, Alan Lewendon, Henry Lewis, William Lillington, Ted Martin, Tony Maskell, John Meredith, Robert Newbery, Mike Palmer, Drummond Randall, Martin Rant, Alex Robertson, Richard Sandercock, John Sargeant, Derek Smith, John Snell, Steve Tiltman, John Tovey, Simon Townsend, Martin Ward, Bernard Webb, John Williams, Keith Wilson, Richard Wilson, Stella Young.

The Berkshire Local History Association and Winnersh & District Historical Society. The Ordnance Survey for permission to reproduce sections of their maps. The many people who kindly allowed their photographs to be reproduced.

Emma Deacon BA Ed for once again generously undertaking the onerous task of proof reading the finished book and correcting my English where necessary!



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**A MINIATURE
RAILWAY**
installed in the meadows adjoining
**THE THAMES SIDE
PROMENADE.**

The track covers a circuit of half a
mile.

Owing to its great appeal to all
ages, it has been decided to double
the length of the ride.

Entrance: First turning on right
in Randolph Road (by Promenade
Trolley-bus Terminus).

FARES:
Children under 14, 6d.
Children over 14 and Adults, 1/-.

An advert from an unknown publication, but dating from June 1944. This is very similar to that described on page 17. Also, compare to advert on page 16.

**A HISTORY OF THE THAMES SIDE PROMENADE
MINIATURE RAILWAYS**

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£5.00