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THE FAIRGROUND **MERCURY**

The Journal of the Fairground Association Vol. 3 No. 2. Summer 1980



ARTS



Editorial

Judging by your comments the first issue of our re-titled, re-styled magazine has been a great success. We hope that you will find this edition up to the same standard, if not better. Production of the magazine is now in the hands of Graham Downie, our former editor, Michael Smith, now devoting his time to researching a comprehensive list of current rides (see page 3).

This issue contains articles by writers new to these pages but both well-known to all our members—Ron Taylor, whose historical surveys in the W.F. are always keenly read, and master decorator Fred Fowle who has swapped his brush for a pen to reminisce about a couple of his old pals. More choice items are already on the stocks for future issues but all contributions are greatly welcomed.

With the back-end run about to start we wish all our showman members and friends a prosperous conclusion to the season and look forward to renewing old acquaintances at all the usual gaffs. Incidentally, Ben Lovell is probably moving back into the London area in the autumn and hopes to arrange a social evening during the winter months.

For all those who sometimes wonder where to address their subscriptions/magazine contributions/orders we include a list of the appropriate officers on this page and where to contact them. Note well!

All items in this journal remain the copyright of the contributor and/or the F.A.G.B. All possible care has been to credit photographs correctly, but should errors have occurred please accept our apologies.

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Cover

Detail from a photograph by Richard Ward of the Ben-Hur front, owned by Pete Tei and regarded as the finest version of this theme painted by Edwin Hall. An article on Edwin Hall by his protégé Fred Fowle appears on page 8. The photograph is taken from the forthcoming book on fairground art by Richard Ward and Geoff Weedon. Details of the special offer to members concerning this book to be announced nearer to publication date.

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Machine changes

New Machines

<i>Machine</i>	<i>Manufacturer</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Date</i>
Easyrider	Maxwell	A. Danter	5/80
Easyrider	Huss	Greenstar, Blackpool P.B.	3/80
Flying Coaster	Pollard	J.H. Mellors	4/80
Ghost Train	PTA (rebuild)	W.H. Roberts	Winter 79-80
Ghost Train	T. Charles, Jnr.	T. Charles, Jnr.	Winter 79-80
Meteorite	S. Ward	J. Stevens	3/80
Meteorite	Cadoxton	W. Shufflebottom, Southsea	4/80
Meteorite (No. 2)	S. Thurston	S. Thurston	Winter 79-80
Meteorite	S. Ward	B. Coupland	4/80
Meteorite	imported USA	J. Wall	Winter 79-80

Abie Danter's Easy Rider Speedway, Cwmbran 21.6.80 (Terry Agland)



Rib Tickler	J. Martin	J. Martin	Winter 79-80
Rib Tickler	R. Bond	Gerald Jones	5/80
Skylab (Enterprise)	J. Bakker-Denies	J.A. Remblance	4/80
Space Walk (Jolly Tubes)	imported USA	H. Remblance	Winter 79-80
Swinging Gyms	S. Ward	P. Cook	3/80
Swinging Gyms	S. Ward	H. Remblance	Winter 79-80
Tidal Wave	Huss	Greenstar, Blackpool P.B.	3/80
Tipping Paratrooper	Maxwells	A. Harris	4/80
Twist	Bennett	D. Parnham	3/4/80

Changes of Ownership

<i>Machine</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Date</i>
Ark	Francis (N. Wales)	M. Boswell	Winter 79-80
Autodrome	M. Boswell	Francis	Winter 79-80
Big Wheel	B.E.Y., Aberavon	R. Henderson, Jnr.	Winter 79-80
Chairoplanes	M. Herbert	R. Foster	4/80
Dodgems	F.C. Dean	V. Gray	Winter 79-80
Enterprise	USA	Collins Bros., Barry	6/80
Gallopers	late J. Beach	R. Rawlins	4/80
Meteorite	J. Wall	Bobby Stevens	7/80
Octopus	J.A. Crow	K. Turner	4/80
Octopus	J.J. Evans	W. Spencer	Winter 79-80
Orbitor	E. Robinson, Rhyl	?	Winter 79-80
Paratrooper	Holland	W. Thurston	Winter 79-80
Paratrooper	USA	F. Rose, Jnr.	5/80
Satellite	USA	P. Booth, Porthcawl	Winter 79-80
Satellite	Grahams	Ireland	1979
Satellite	K. Emmett	J. Saunders	4/80
Slip (Lighthouse)	R. Mulhearn	B. Cubbins	5/80
Telecombat	J. Biddall	Down & French (Billing Aquadrome)	1/80
Tempest	USA	P. Day	3/80
Tipping Paratrooper	J.A. Remblance	D. Beach	3/80

Twist	D. Parnham	Adlams	3/80
Twist	? (Blackpool)	P. Booth, Porthcawl	Winter 79-80
Twist	J. Collins	H. Sharland	Winter 79-80
Twist	W.J. Studt	J. Hammond	Winter 79-80
Waltzer	D. Rowland	S. Edwards	Winter 79-80
Waltzer	A. Botton	Rotunda, Folkestone	Spring '80
Waltzer	Kursaal, Southend	F.C. Dean	Winter 79-80

Conversion

J. Smith, Jr.	Ark converted to Waltzer	Winter 79-80
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Delete

Orbitor	E. Robinson, Rhyl	K. Taylor
Flying Coaster	C. Codona	Irvin

MACHINE REGISTER

For some time it has been apparent that a complete register of all fairground rides in the U.K. (including rides travelling, stored, and on permanent sites) would be of great value. It is my intention to compile this over the next few months, and eventually publish a copy, which will be available to all members. To enable this to be done I have devised a simple sheet onto which any interested member can write details of any rides

with which they are familiar. Forms can be obtained on request from Michael A. Smith, 43 Gross Gates, Bellshill, Lanarkshire. (Phone: Bellshill 842540).

Don't forget—all help is needed—whether you can supply details of one machine or a hundred!

Michael A. Smith

SALES

Magazines

Back numbers of magazine currently available:

Volume 1 No. 1, 10p; No. 2, 25p;
No. 3, 30p.

Volume 2 No. 1, 30p; No. 2, 40p;
No. 3, 40p.

Volume 3 (Fairground Mercury)
No. 1, 50p.

plus 20p p&p per copy.

Badges

Gilt metal badge in the form of the Association's Mercury motif with fastening suitable for use as lapel badge or tie pin. Price £1.00 plus strong s.a.e.

Car Stickers

Plastic, size 6" x 4", printed in four colours. 20p each plus s.a.e.

All available from the Sales Officer,
Paul Angel, 10 Norton Avenue,
Hereford, HR2 6DN.

East Anglia's Pride

For as many years as one would like to remember showmen's wagons have rolled towards the cathedral city of Cambridge.

Sturbridge Common Fair less than two miles distance from the present site is believed to have existed even before the charter of 1211 granted by King John. It was mentioned in the writings of Daniel Defoe, and was possibly the inspiration for John Bunyans "Vanity Fair".

The present fair held in mid-June overlapped the older fair by many years for the Mayor, Mrs. Keynes proclaimed that Sturbridge fair opened as recent as late August 1933 although its decline really began as early as the mid-1880s.

By the turn of the century the Mid-summer Fair on the Common of the same name had become firmly established and early photographs show the famous Bioscopes of the various members of the Thurston family together with that belonging to the well-known William Taylor, a showman of great renown.

William Taylor it will be remembered was the second travelling showman to exhibit living pictures on the fairground, second only to Randall Williams. Indeed the late G.W. Essex, M.B.E., M.I.E.E. in his book of the Taylor Bioscope wrote that he reached the zenith of his career when in 1907 he opened at Cambridge Midsummer Fair with his 1,000 plush seat Orton and Spooner built Cinema de-luxe, "The Premier Show of the Universe" complete with dummy Royal boxes and a magnificent 120 Key Merenghi organ which was the shows centre piece, a full 36 feet long, illuminated by some 4,000 electric lights, being the largest and most expensive ever built and when playing was equivalent to 150 musicians.

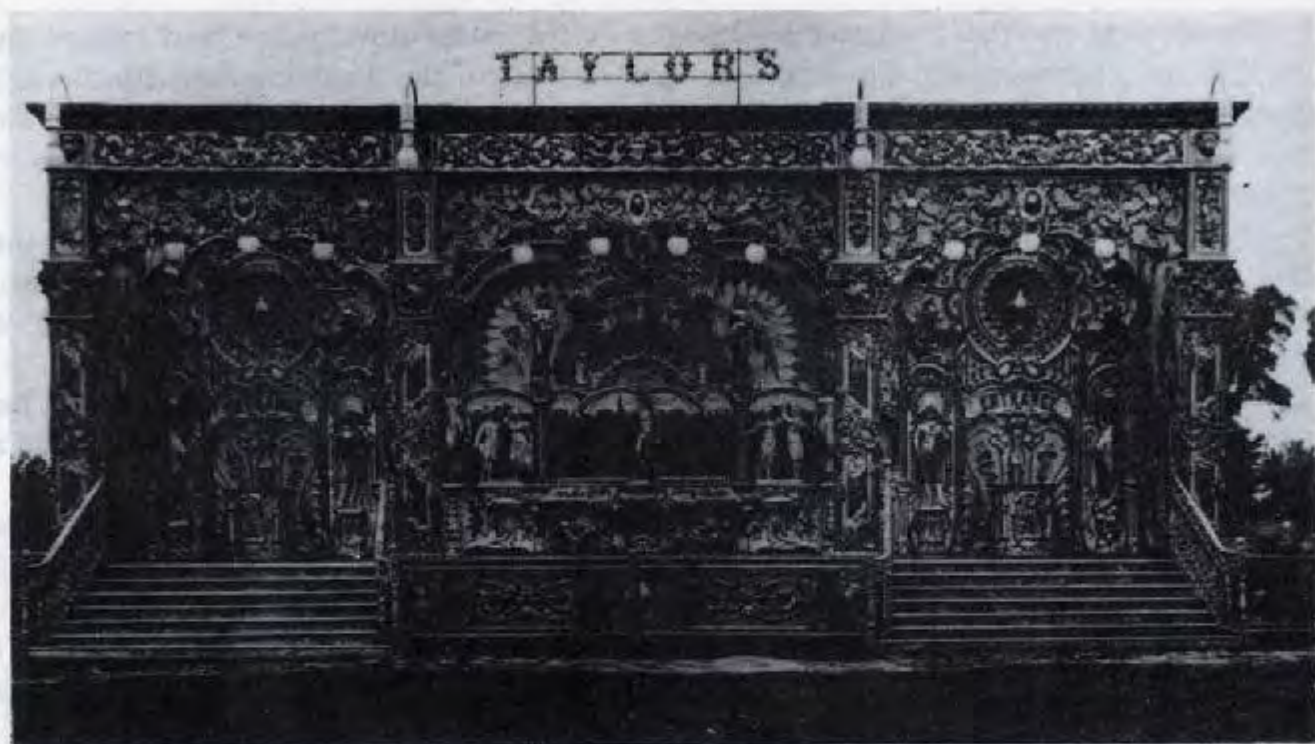
In the year 1920 Charles Thurston's superb Orton and Spooner built Dragon Scenic appeared for the first time at Cambridge, new at Kings Lynn that year. This fine ride was accompanied by that beautiful Burrell "Victory" also new in May of that year.

By that time (1920) Charles Thurston of Ketts Hill, Norwich, the eldest son of Henry Thurston the founder of the firm was one of our great showmen, also presented the Tidman-built Little Machine, the American Joy Wheel and Canadian Helter Skelter. William, brother of Charles opened with his ex-Pat. Collins Steam Gondolas and his three abreast Gallopers. Henry Thurston Jnr. presented the White City Motor Scenic formerly owned by his father.

Another famous showman of the day was Charles Abbott who was present with his famous and ornate Gondola Switchback which was converted to electric drive that year, together with his cake walk.

John Barkers Motors were also attending Cambridge at this period, originally a spinning top with traction centre drive. During 1920 this machine was also electrified and converted to standing top with ornate extension front.

Other rides there were Holland Bros. Golden Dragons, Harris's three abreast Gallopers, Harry Richards original Cake Walk, Jervis's Tunnel Railway and J.W. Waddington's Steam Yachts.



William Taylor's new Bioscope Show, Cambridge 1907 (Fairground Society)

Of course many engines would have been on the common a lot of which would have been lined up near the river for obvious reasons. Apart from the new Burrell "Victory" already mentioned, others of that make present were most certainly 3302 "John Bull", 2879 "Lord Nelson", 3285 "King George V", 2668 "Brittania", 3724 "Victory", 2780 "King Edward VII", 3118 "Dreadnought", 3200 "Unity", and 3603 "Unity Jnr." Fosters were to be seen in 1291 "Medina", 14153 "Admiral Beatty", 12415 "Dreadnought" and 14388 "Surprise". The McLaren of Waddington's would have been with the Yachts, and I wonder if the Fowler "Lord Kitchener" said to have been built up out of parts from four engines by the Harris family was there. Garrett tractors were very popular at Cambridge especially for the lighter jobs such as hauling living wagons and among those present we might have found "John Bull Jnr.", "Prince", "Princess Mary" and "Felix".

The following year four extra sets of Gallopers were on the Common, three sets by the Mannings family and the one owned by Bert Stocks, the Leiston, Suffolk showman.

At the 1922 event Chairplanes were open for the first time with Thurston, Abbott and Barkers having six sets between them and although their popularity remains to this day only one set, that belonging to Charles Abbott, appeared in 1923. Nevertheless, to make up for this Charles Holland presented his brand new three-abreast Golden Gallopers. The following year Sam Mannings acquired W.C. and S. Hancocks Three abreast from Cornwall and opened it at Cambridge. On leaving this fair Henry Thurston Jnr's Marengi was destroyed by fire and the following year he appeared with a large new Verbeeck organ.

By this time Charles Thurston's Dragons had been changed to Peacocks and his new machine this year was a set of three Jolly Tubes.

Mr Charles Thurston died in February 1928 but his rides came to Midsummer fair as usual under the control of Mrs Charles and her two sons, John and Charles William Ramsey. William Wilson of Peckham Rye was the first showman to bring along a dodgem track and Fred Thompson had a Jack and Jill Glide.

Brand new on the Common in 1929, was the latest novelty, a Swirl owned by Mr Charles Thurston, and the next year saw the last of the Thurston Switchbacks and Scenics attending and the first time in 30 years the grand old lady, the Little Machine did not attend, indeed several generations had grown up with her. Nonetheless she was to make a come back as we will see later.

By 1932 Noahs Arks, Dodgems and Swirls were used by all the big showmen of the day with William Thurston's and Harris's being the only Gallopers, the link with the past, but the next year William Wilson bought along for the only time his very well known Rodeo Switchback. New at this fair was E.C. Farrar's Mont Blanc.

C.W.R. Thurston presented his Waltzer for the first time in 1934 together with his other novelty, the Monkey Speedway, a ride in which monkeys raced each other round a track in toy motors electrically driven. A Wall of Death was also present.

The line-up of rides for 1939, the last fair before the war, was William Thurston Ark, Dodgem and Monte Carlo Rally, Charles Thurston & Sons' Waltzer, Rolladrome and Monte Carlo, John Gale's Ark, Casi Manning's Ark, Fred Thompson's Ark and Dodgem, John Barker's Dodgem, Herbert S. Gray's Dodgem, Harris Bros.' Dodgem, Holland's Moonrocket and Green's Caterpillar, plus a brand new Lang Wheel Autodrome by John Thurston, minus scenery.

Small fairs were held during 1943 and 1944, but by 1945 the fair was almost back to its pre-war days, however it will be noticed that a number of older showmen were missing the ride line up, was as follows: John Thurston's Ark, Autodrome and Dodgems, Henry Thurston's Autodrome, Stanley Thurston & Sons' Ark, Dodgem and Monte Carlo Rally, Harris Bros.' Dodgem, H.S. Gray's Dodgem, Bert Stock's Ark and Dodgem, Holland's Moonrocket, Bert Wooding's Cake-Walk, C. Manning's Gallopers, W. Barker's Diving Dolphin Scenic and Razzle Dazzle plus Joe Manning's Swan and Dragon Scenic which was our old friend the ex-Thurstons Little Machine which later that year I myself had the pleasure of riding on while at Chelmsford.

Newcomers the next year were Johnson Bros.' Big Wheel, Mrs Parkin's Monte Carlo Rally and Chairplanes and Elias Harris's Wall of Death.

The very last Showmans Engine to enter the Common in working guise was Harris Bros. Foster "Surprise" the year 1947, and in 1948 both John and cousin Stanley Thurston opened with new Swirls, both superb examples of this popular ride by R.J. Lakin of Besley Street, Streatham—the "Swirl Kings". John Thurston was now using a fleet of four huge Diamond T tractors.

By the year of 1954 the line-up of rides had begun to take the shape that we know today and was as follows: Stanley Thurston and Sons' Ben-Hur Speedway Ark, Englands greatest Dodgem, Atomic Thriller Swirl and Muffin Juvenile, all Lakin built machines, Charles Thurston's Swirl and Rotor, Bert Stocks' (of Leiston) Lang Wheel three-Hill Ark, Dodgem and ex William Thurston Swirl, Holland's Moonrocket, Sid Stocks' Octopus, Down's Gallopers, Bert Wooding's Cake Walk, S.T. Manning's, ex Thurston Monte Carlo Rally, Butlin's Slip, Sedgwick and Thurston's Ark and Dodgems, Elias Harris's Octopus, Pettigrove's Gallopers, Nichols' Ghost Train, Shaw's Ark and Chairs and J.T. Whyatt's Autodrome.

Nearly twenty years on, the year 1971 we find that the Stanley Thurston Swirl had been sold and in its place there was a set of Lang Wheel Jets, to supplement the Ark and dodgems and Thurston Bros. had acquired a Bennett Cyclone Twist. Charles Thurston had also acquired a similar set of Jets to go with his Swirl. Swales Bolesworth had acquired the Manning Monte Carlo. The Sedgwick and Thurston partnership had ended and their dodgems were present under the control of Mrs Laura Thurston. Other rides were



Bert Stocks' Coronation Speedway in its original decor, Cambridge 1949 (Fairground Society)

J. Crole's Octopus, Nobby Print's Paratrooper, Bert Stocks', his Ark being sold, was present with Dodgem and Swirl, B. Day's Octopus, Downs' Gallopers, C. Farrells' Wheel, B. Woodings' Cake Walk, Raymond Armstrong's Waltzer, R. Fowkes' Twist, Albert Manning's Autodrome and Paratrooper, Pettigrove's Gallopers, Harry Parrish's Hayes built Swirl, C. Wynns Rotor, William Thurston's Waltzer, Charles Phillip's Wheel and Doug Drake's Ghost Train. Sam Manning's Chairs were built up but due to a death in the family were not open.

Other rides to appear in recent years are the Satellite, Swinging Gyms, Sky Skimmer, Hustler, Time Machine, Jolly Tubes, Hustler, Round-Ups and a number of others.

Often it is said that Cambridge Midsummer Fair lacks the atmosphere of those like Hull and Nottingham. Admittedly it's not so big, just a mere 30 to 35 rides, but then biggest is certainly not always best, and with its triangular layout, avenues of market traders, its pleasant site by a lovely river bank, the tremendous following of caravan dwellers, high competitive spirit of the showmen both decorative and customer-wise the event is one that wouldn't be missed by countless thousands.

Also it's been said that the showman is often guilty of obtaining a position and keeping it unaltered, thus lessening a fair's variety, but as we have seen that there is plenty of variety at this fair, both in showmen's names and rides. So if you've never paid a visit why not go along and see what's new next year, I can assure you, elements permitting you'll have a great day.

R.A. Taylor

Lakin Days

When I first went to work for Lakin's in the early 1930s Eddie's brother, Bill, was working there, under George Hancock who was the foreman at that time. When George left Billy took his job, thus starting an influx of Halls. First came Eddie, then 18 years old, followed by 'Pop' Hall. Old Mr Hall, a staunchly religious man, had set up a business at Beddington with two of his sons but the business fell down so he came to Lakin's.

Before that he had been the foreman painter at Orton & Spooner. He was a specialist in painting living wagons—Baileys sold one not so long ago painted by him with angels and cherubs on the ceiling. He would shut himself in a wagon for a month when decorating it! Of course there had been something of an exodus of people from Orton & Spooner, including Lakin himself and Philip Tew who was the brains behind the construction of the machines.

Eddie emerged as the brains of the family and with his flair for design soon became chief designer at Lakin's. It was just after the 'animal period' of Arks that Eddie introduced the Ben-Hur theme. Eddie was a great cinema fan—a lot of his ideas came from films—and it was the then popular picture 'Ben-Hur' which inspired the theme which he made very much his own.

His version of the famous chariot race scene was based on a reproduction of a painting in a book which he modified and elaborated to suit his purpose. The later speedway theme evolved from his treatment of Bensons' Ark, which had the Ben-Hur scene at the centre with bikes either side.

Eddie's skills resulted in him doing all the pictorial work and jungle scenes. The work load became too much for him so he devised a simple system using art deco patterns which could be applied by other painters on the staff in a 'paint by numbers' fashion. At its height Lakin's staff included 20 painters. I've known Eddie have no fewer than six painters working on animals. He could also call on outside painters to supplement the regulars when they were really busy. In those days they were paid the princely sum of 1/- an hour!

Between 1939-45 Eddie worked on war work at Lakin's. The firm remained in business after the war with Philip Tew in charge of construction and Edwin Hall in charge of painting. Lakin handed over the running of the business to them, though this did not prove very successful. Eddie took over the factory eventually in the mid '50s to make coin-operated kiddies rides with Lakin still keeping a finger in the business.

Billy Hall was in business with his father-in-law when he persuaded me to join him in 1948 to do fairground decoration. Edwin got us our first job, painting Botton's Gallopers, and also helped out with designs during the early days.

No one can convince me that Eddie was not the greatest—no one could touch him. His work was beautiful, nobody could do a front like him. His standards were impeccable, everything he touched was good—both pictorial and decorative work.

It grieved me in his later days when, as a highly sensitive man, who had always suffered from a nervous disorder, he developed a drink problem and forgot our earlier times together.



The late Len Huckle—master of the lining brush—at work (Graham Downie)

It seems that I am now the only survivor of those Lakin days in the role of F.G. Fowle Ltd. There were two of us until recently—the other being Len Huckle who worked for me for ten years until his sad passing at the end of May. It was a great shock, as he was never absent from illness. Len had all the “ingredients” of the Lakin’s days—hard work, intensive fairground painting and long hours but a happy atmosphere among us all.

I shall miss him, but intend to carry Lakin’s banner as long as I can. I have always said that Lakin’s was an institution, not a factory.

Fred Fowle

The Model Tober

Part 5. Materials

As there is virtually nothing in the way of materials being marketed specifically for the Fairground Modelmaker, my advice would always be to use basic raw materials which compare as closely as possible to that used on the actual machine upon which the model is to be based. There are of course exceptions and in some cases the materials should be varied to suit the application—e.g. the use of aluminium sheet instead of wood for many platform applications.

Let us just run through the most common materials available and list some of the applications:

WOOD

A very useful material to use is "ramin hardwood". If this material is cut straight initially it will not usually warp with time, neither will it split if it is worked with care. You must on no account, however, hammer pins or nails into it. It is available from most hardware or "Do it Yourself" centres—usually ready cut into sections or mouldings. The most useful sections are the square ones which start at $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " (or 6mm x 6mm) and are ideal for "posts" etc. Another useful section is called "Hockey Stick" and is a flat strip of approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ " in width with a slightly wider round "nose". The $\frac{1}{8}$ " portion may be cut into strips of $\frac{1}{4}$ " to make ideal "Rafters"—"Strut" etc. for models up to 1/16th scale.

When buying pre-cut sections, always run your eye along the length to make sure that they have been cut true and square.

PLYWOODS

The plywood now offered by most timber merchants is pretty awful stuff and only really suitable for the backs of wardrobes. To get the better quality "Birch Plywood" you will usually have to look elsewhere. Many model shops carry small sheets of thin birch plywood, sometimes down to $\frac{1}{64}$ " thick. Usual sizes, however, are $\frac{1}{32}$ "— $\frac{1}{16}$ " & $\frac{1}{8}$ " or .8mm—1.5mm & 4mm metric sizes. If $\frac{1}{8}$ " is not readily available you can glue two $\frac{1}{16}$ " sheets together which is an ideal way of making side panels or shutters as a panel laminated in this manner will usually resist any tendency to warp. If you have any difficulty in obtaining thin plywood locally it can be obtained by mail order from Messrs W. Hobby of Knights Hill Square, London SE27 0HH. Their 1980 catalogue costs 45p and is full of useful items, many of which have direct applications for the fairground modelmaker.

SOFTWOODS

Softwoods are normally only necessary for carved work and the favourites are Columbian Pine or Lime wood which have very little noticeable grain.

ALUMINIUM

This material, in my opinion, is one of the most useful for the building of fairground models. Its main virtues are that it is very light and strong, can be cut easily, and is ideal for substituting for wooden panels which must, on no account, warp. It is available as sheet or in extruded sections and sections available include Square, Flat, Angle, Channel and Tube. You cannot solder it but it is easily glued to wooden frames or members—the following are just a few examples of how it may be used. As “Ground Sleepers”— $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{8}$ " for models up to 1/16th scale and $\frac{3}{16}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " for 1/8th scale. As “Walk Platforms” for Arks, Waltzers, Mont Blancs etc. Platform panels cut from 20 swg aluminium sheet can be “scored” with a tile cutter to represent boarding, and the panels can be set with a slight twist so that they lie geometrically level from gate to gate. As “Trams” for similar rides— $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{8}$ " strip bent round and formed or cut from 10 swg or 12 swg sheet material. As fixed and swivel “Castor Brackets” made from aluminium channel section $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $\frac{1}{16}$ " for use with Skid or Waltzer Cars up to 1/16th scale. The wheels from brass curtain runners will conveniently fit these brackets. Other uses include Platform Facings for Gallopers—Roof Panels for modern flat topped machines and also Lighting Battens but I will deal with these when we come to discuss Model Lighting later in the series.

SHEET STEEL & BRASS

Either material may be used for the many types of brackets and special fixings required for demountable models. 20 swg or 22 swg sheet is usually satisfactory for brackets on 1/24th and 1/16th scale, and 16 swg or 18 swg for 1/12th scale. Avoid the use of extruded brass strip for brackets as it will usually break upon bending.

BRASS SECTIONS

These are available in the following sections: Square, Rectangular, Angle, Round Tube, Square Tube, Flats & Half Rounds, and of course, Round Rod & Wire. Channel sections are not normally to be found in brass however. Brass sections have many uses from Twisted Rods for Gallopers to Bearing Blocks. If unobtainable locally it is available by mail order from Messrs Kennion Bros. (Hertford) Ltd., 2 Railway Place, Hertford, Herts. SG13 7BT. Their materials catalogue currently costs 50p.

BRIGHT MILD STEEL ROD

Round B.M.S. is readily available from $\frac{1}{16}$ " dia. upwards and is recommended for Galloper cranks on 1/12th and 1/16th scale models.

COPPER COATED IRON ROD

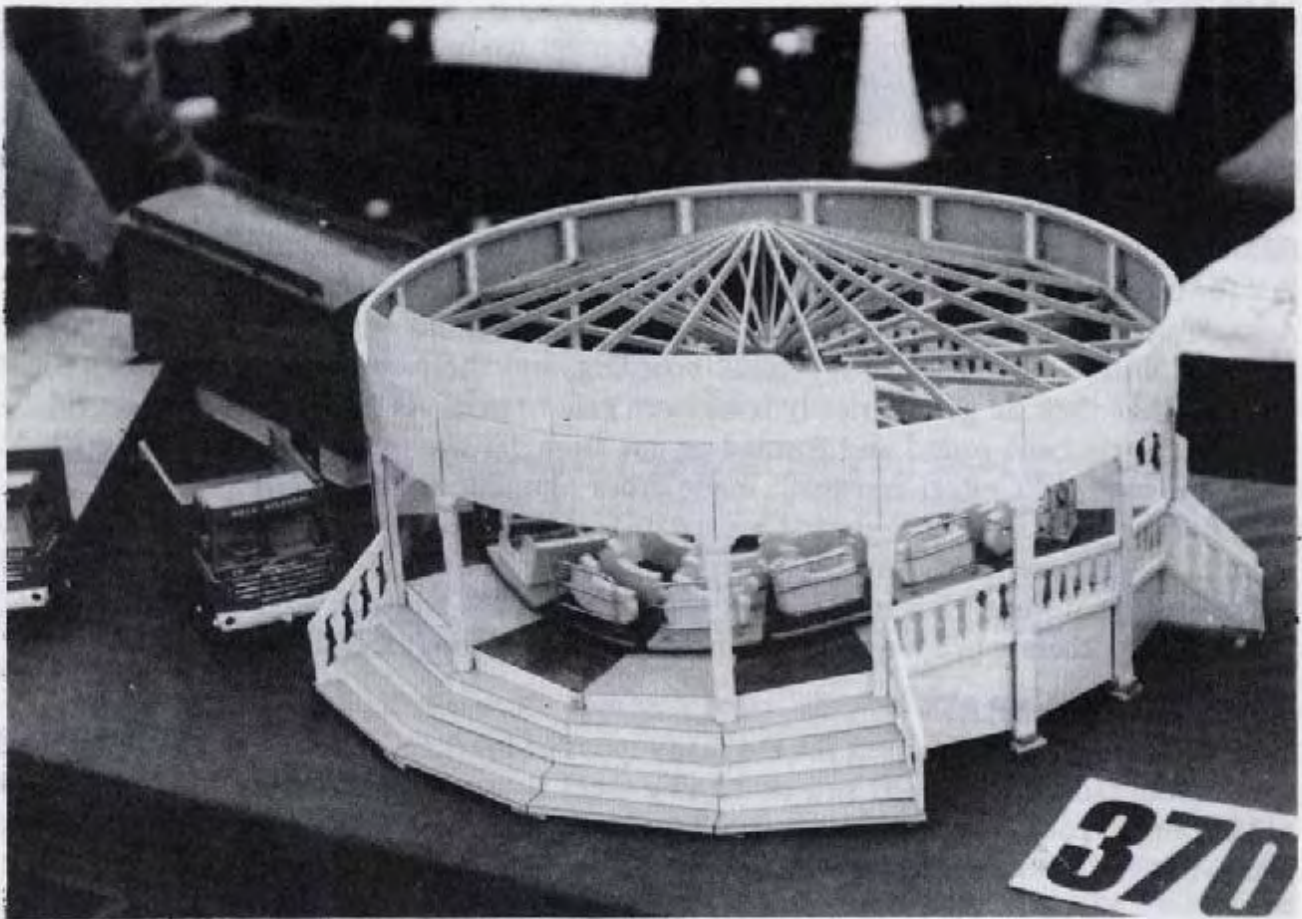
Round copper coated rod (Welding Rod) of $\frac{3}{32}$ " and $\frac{1}{8}$ " dia. is also ideal for Galloper cranks (1/16th and 1/12th scale) as it is easily bent cold.

SILVER STEEL ROD

Round silver steel is usually sold in 13" lengths and should always be used for spindles and driving shafts etc. It is slightly harder than mild steel and is ground straight to very accurate limits.

PIANO WIRE

Piano wire rods may usually be obtained from your local model shop. This material is extremely hard and has great tensile strength and is sold in gauge sizes from 20 swg to 8 swg. The thinner wires are ideal for Galloper Tilt Rods. Piano Wire is also useful because it can be used in conjunction with the thin wall brass tubing with gauge size bores (also from model shops)—the wires fit exactly into the tubes.



Association member Richard Whatmore's 1/24th scale M.F.D. Noah's Ark Speedway prior to decoration—showing thin plywood facings to roundings and steps—Ramin rafters and aluminium walkways.

SMALL BRASS HINGES

These can be obtained from ironmongers in sizes from $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " upwards. They may be used conventionally for doors or flaps and also for fitting Shutter and Crown Panels together by removing the hinge pin and reconnecting with a removable pin with a cranked end.

SPLIT PINS

These make ideal hinges for demountable Ark and Waltzer platforms. Use $\frac{1}{16}$ " dia. for 1/24th and 1/16th scales and $\frac{3}{32}$ " dia. for 1/12th scale. Connect together with Piano Wire rods of slightly smaller diameter.

NUTS & BOLTS

It is as well to standardise on one particular thread form and the British Association (B.A. Sizes) are ideal for fairground models. B.A. Bolts & Nuts are available from 12 B.A. upwards and the sizes you will generally require for 1/24th and 1/16th scale models will be 10, 8 and 6, and for 1/12th scale 6, 4 and 2. All are available with Countersunk, Round, Cheese and Hexagon type heads.

TAPES

There are a number of very useful self adhesive tapes on the market that have

modelling applications. These are generally to be found in Hardware Stores or branches of Halfords. Many have bright chrome or gold metallic finishes, some with embossed patterns. They are ideal for edgings on moving platforms and on Waltzer and Skid Cars also for step nosings or treads.

PLASTICS

Available in sheet or card and a number of extruded sections, plastics is a material favoured by some modelmakers but it is not without its problems with regard to demountable fairground models. Because of its lack of porosity it is not really suitable for glueing to other materials and for the same reason it is not as suitable as wood for decoration. It also has a high expansion and contraction factor which can cause problems in getting paint to adhere permanently. Where plastic is more useful is in the field of cold casting. Used in conjunction with special moulding rubber it is fairly simple to cast such items as Horses for Gallopers and even Crown Panels, Roundings and Pillars but you have to first carve your own pattern. The specialists in this particular field of casting are Alec Tiranti Ltd., 70 High Street, Theale, Reading, Berts. and they publish a number of very informative booklets on this subject.

In the next issue—Part 6—Building The Model.

Vic King

DON'T FORGET!

The Fairground Association's

MODEL FAIR SPECTACULAR

Saturday 15 November

Loughborough Town Hall

1030 - 1730 hrs

All enquiries to

Jim Lawson telephone 0533 609804

Notes

Truckin' on

My first major outing of the 1980 season was to Grantham, on the way I called in at the cattle market at Leicester, a new E.R.F. tractor was in evidence with Billy Bates' twist (Reg. XEG 806 J), this has replaced an A.E.C. tractor (Reg. KKK 901 G). Tucked away behind living vans I could see the eight-wheeler E.R.F. that is being used by Gary Gray with the art he purchased from A. Danter.

On arriving at Grantham the first change of transport there was the recent acquisition of Farrells' being an Atkinson four wheel tractor (Reg. PER 888 J). Further down the road stood Perry Days' imported Tempest ride, an articulated load, which is transported by a blue E.R.F. tractor unit (Reg. VBD 590 H).

The other Tempest in this country is owned by Richard Mulhearn, this one being on a drawbar trailer and is towed by a Foden tractor.

Another newcomer at Grantham was the Orbiter. Now owned by Charles Thurston, a specially constructed articulated load which is pulled by a Foden tractor (Reg. ALP 257 H) which its previous owner, H. Smith used for its occasional trips out of Dreamland, Margate. It has been resprayed metallic blue.

Farrars' last Leyland octopus in use with their waltzer has been retired (Reg. 3406 U), an ex-Hovis eight-wheel Foden has replaced it.

A visit to Whitchurch in Shropshire showed that a complete transformation has taken place with the transport with Graham Stokes' Dodgem. The Atkinson frame lorry (Reg. 8978 E) has been replaced by a mickey-mouse Foden (Reg. CRF 926 E) and the tractor previously used, a Foden (Reg. BNH 782 C) has its work done by the E.R.F. six-wheel tractor that was used as the unit with M. Payne's Tornado ride (Reg. BRR 590 C). A very smart purpose-built Foden tractor (Reg. NBM 804 H) now does that job.

A visit to Joe Stevens' grounds usually provides a few changes, and I certainly found some at Rugby. Joe Bugg has now replaced the

A.E.C. which carried his Ark, with a new-styled cabbled A.E.C. (Reg. GLC 30 J).

P. Stevens living trailer is now towed by the six-wheel A.E.C. which carried the twist, the ride that went to W.J. Studt. Avery Smart E.R.F. artic tractor has been commissioned by Studts for it (Reg. UMA 502 J) in red and navy blue livery.

I was able to see the Foden C40 that Danter's are using with their twist ride when I called in at Gloucester Park, their venue for Spring Bank Holiday (Reg. JNK 665 L). Quite a number of the modern style Foden cabs have appeared on the grounds over the past year. Other C40 cabs I have seen are: Roses, who have been using two articulated units since early last year, and a Lancashire traveller using an four-wheel rigid which I photographed at Wythenshawe Park (Reg. PTD 308 G).

The other modern cabs are the C80/83, the first of which I saw at Cambridge Midsummer Fair last year with the coaster of Donald Print (Reg. NEB 427 M). The next to be acquired was the six-wheel tractor of James Mellor, for use with the Coaster, which was hidden among the lorries at Nottingham Goose, last October (Reg. WXJ 373 L). Wales saw the latest C80, that being the tractor with John Studts' Waltzer (Ref. TGC 724 M).

The tractor of James Mellors was one of many newly acquired vehicles at Coventry Pot Fair. Standing alongside was the new Foden tractor with F. Cox's arcade (Reg. FNN 312 J), it seems like the Scammell Routeman (Reg. ANN 481 H) that was used, before it is another to bite the dust. Barry Stokes A.E.C. six-wheeler (Reg. YFD 146 H) has now being painted maroon, this replaced the Albion (Reg. 676 ECJ).

Another nicely painted, (with custom-style decoration) tractor is the Leyland with Holland's panams, a very impressive load when seen on the rod pulling two long living trailers, behind it.

A. Barker has now an Atkinson lorry (Reg. GWT 343 J) to transport his side stalls. His E.R.F. (Reg. SWR 668) having been scrapped last winter.

Rod Jesson

Northern

Once again for a new season the Crow family of Northallerton have introduced two 'new' vehicles into their fleet. To transport the Twist an ex-Tilcon E.R.F. six-wheeler (Reg. FWY 226 J), has been converted into an artic unit and fitted with a generating set enclosed in an aluminium body. The tractor has been painted in Crows usual colours and certainly looks impressive with its Twist load. The second 'new' vehicle is an Guy Big J4T tractor, (Reg. YBY 724 K), which is used with Alan Crows new Pilot articulated living trailer. This whole outfit is smartly painted in cream and orange. Withdrawn from the fleet are E.R.F. tractor, (Reg. EBY 98 C), Seddon tractor (Reg. NHN 847 E), which has been dismantled in Crows yard and lastly the Ford Kip Truck.

As usual Crows rides came out for the new season looking very smart. Billy Crow Jnr. has made an superb addition to the lighting effects on his Razzle Dazzle in the shape of an illuminated sign mounted atop the rides paybox. To be fully appreciated the new sign must be seen at night. Whilst attending the Northallerton May Fair Crows took delivery of a brand new fleet of Raverchon Dodgem cars. The cars had their baptism at the fair and seemed to be performing well. Crows are travelling a machine short this season as the lifting Paratrooper is now owned by James Crow and is in use at Whitley Bay Spanish City Park.

South Shields showman John Murphy certainly surprised a few enthusiasts when he started the season with his Waltzer freshly decorated. The rounding boards and shutters have been decorated by local showman Thomas Leng who has done a fine job on them. The Waltzer is an Lakin "Odeon" type and until its recent redecoration still had the original "Odeon" paintwork, the passing of which will be mourned by many enthusiasts. Towards the end of last season the ride had new platforms and rings fitted and by the time these notes appear in print a new set of Maxwell cars will have been fitted. These I understand are to be decorated to match the Maxwell pay box the ride received a few seasons ago. The Murphy family are also travelling a machine short this season as their Meteorite ride has been sold overseas, the smart Foden tractor used is at present in store at South Shields.

Another North-East showman to have invested in a new fleet of Reverchon Dodgem cars is Luke Jobson. Luke's Dodgem Track has also been redecorated and looks very smart and last season also received a modern paybox. A "new" ride travelling this area is the very smart Octopus owned by Alan Turner. The ride is of Lusse

manufacture and was previously owned by James Crow who operated it at the Spanish City Park. At present the Octopus packs in an E.R.F. eight-wheeler.

Turning to local Amusement Parks, on a recent visit to Whitley Bay's Spanish City I noted one or two changes. The Crow family dominate the park with their excellently turned out rides and this year have replaced their Hurricane Jets with their Vampire Jets, the Hurricane's being packed away. The ex-Crows of Northallerton Paratrooper has now got some very smartly lettered cars but otherwise unchanged. A mention must be given to James Crow's Hayes Fabrication Skid. Since acquiring the ride last year a lot of work has been put into the machine by John Crow who now has it running very smooth and fast. It certainly appears to be a very popular ride with park goers. Michael Houghton who operates a Lang Wheels Coaster at the park has been busy smartening up his ride. I noticed plenty of new lights and paintwork. The machine is trailer mounted with the modern type paybox mounted on the swan neck. When the ride is on the road its towed by a smart E.R.F. tractor.

Barry Brown

Lancs & Ches.

Changes over the past months have been many and varied, so I will work through in roughly alphabetical order.

Gordon Baxter has had the Octopus acquired from Joe White last season redecorated. The work was carried out over the winter months by Yorkshire Showman/decorater Gary Leach, the base colour being black, and the ride now known as the "Monster". Tommy Bradley acquired the unusual Mojo ride from Roy Simons last August, and after attending a few back end fairs set to this winter overhauling the ride. It has now been mounted on an artic trailer, and completely repainted.

Michael Collins took delivery of a new Maxwell Waltzer last September. This passed during the winter months into the capable hands of nephew John Jnr. To make room for the Waltzer John Collins disposed of their Church-built Twist, which is now owned by Harry Sharland. Michael Collins' "retirement" was however short lived, and at Easter he was back, travelling the Orton Ark formerly W.A. Taylor's in partnership with manager John Sharland.

Another new ride in the section was the Ward-built Swinging Gyms, delivered in April to Eccles for Percy Cook.

The former Green family again had a busy winter. The Mont Blanc had a number of new steel trams fitted, while the Coaster arms are now

being gradually replaced by new pattern arms, designed by Woollards, the local test engineers. The Coaster is also sporting a new paybox.

Two Waltzers to be much altered over the winter months were Terence Hill's and Rodney Harrison's. The former has been completely re-decorated by Gary Leach, a big improvement on the previous rather shabby paintwork. The latter has had new platforms, cars, etc. as well as some new decor.

A new novelty going down extremely well not only in Lancashire; but also elsewhere judging from its recent visit to Newcastle, are the set of Diesel Yachts purchased in January by William Hill. After a long and varied history, they spent several years in the Clarence Pier Amusement Park at Southsea. Renovation is already well under way with much repainting being undertaken by William and his two sons, Billy and Robert. Transport acquired for the ride include a very smart eight-wheeler Scammell (Reg. RVY 884 G), and a four-wheel Commer, (Reg. LCW 662 G). Both are flats, a boat sitting neatly on the back of each. The rest of the ride packs onto these, and the four-wheel centre, which also carried the "power house", complete with a tidy little 4-cylinder Gardner engine.

One of several machines to receive the Fred Fowle treatment was Albert Hart Jnr's Big Wheel.

The shutters being done last year, this winter it was the turn of the flights. Brother Charlie acquired his second ride over the winter, an Eli Bridge Scrambler Twist, imported by Keith Emmett and Joe Manning. After opening at a few places early in the season the ride has been at Blackpool now for several months. New hand-rails were delivered recently by Pollards, with decor by "Tate". Charlie is also having a Big Wheel shortly (in keeping with family traditions)—the first fold up type to appear over here.

One showman to have a busy winter was Victor Manders. Having decided it was time to have a larger Ark he had a look around and eventually purchased a 20 platform Lakin machine from John Biddall. This ride has a rather vague history, Mr Biddall having acquired it from Butlins many years ago. Latterly, it spent several years in the Battersea Park Fun Fair, going into store in Essex after the park's closure. As a point of interest, this was the first complete ride to pass through the workshops of Hall & Fowle, having since had the treatment a second time, again by Fred Fowle. "Tate" has recently had the superb front boards in his workshop for altering the name, and a touch up and varnish.

The same owners' Waltzer also received attention this winter, with the fitting of a new set of Ibbetson cars, and the redecoration of the

William Hill's diesel yachts 'Shamrock' and 'Victory', ex-Clarence Pier A.P. (Michael Smith)



bottom shutters by Victor himself.

Local showman Dicky Mulhearn, previously famous for his appearance in the TV documentary last year, has now gone into the ride importing business. The first of these, a Tempest, he is currently travelling himself, and the Supercar Lighthouse Slip, with which he has been long associated has been sold to Benny Cubbins. More machines from America will follow shortly.

One of the most spectacular newcomers is the Ramba Zamba purchased new by John Walter Shaw. Built by J. Bakker-Denies of Appeldoorn, Holland, this is a most exciting ride. John Walter has also had a new Modern Products "Star Combat" ride, whilst the Easyrider centre had a trip up to Maxwells during the winter following fire damage at the Cross Lane, Salford, Christmas fair. Despite all these changes, it was good to see that the family's Moonrocket ride has not been forgotten, and was open at the recent Newcastle Town Moor fair.

Arthur Silcock last year acquired the former Mitchell Maxwell Speedway from Herbert Silcock (Silcock & Jeffries), and this winter the ride underwent such a transformation as to make it almost unrecognisable. A new paybox was built by a local joiner and fitted. New platforms have been fitted, and the ride now runs extremely well

following a full mechanical overhaul. Redecoration was in the capable hands of Carl Wallis. The other two rides belonging to Arthur were not forgotten; the Flying Coaster was rebuilt extensively by N.G. Wallis, while the No. 1 Maxwell Speedway received a set of Maxwell coachbuilt Waltzer cars towards the end of last season and now operates as a convertible.

Edward Silcock Jnr's Maxwell Waltzer is now in the hands of son John. A new front was fitted last back-end, decor by Fred Fowle. New roundings are now also made, but as yet undecorated. Perspex screens have been added, giving the ride a very warm appearance. A new acquisition in the transport for this ride is an eight-wheel E.R.F. (Reg. MCB 856 R).

Up in Cumbria (though often seen down in Lancashire) W.A. Taylor started the season with a Maxwell Speedway, acquired from Frank Hall of the Notts & Derby Section. This machine is now back in its original section having started life with S. & J. Cubbins. With the ride is a smart eight-wheel Foden (Reg. 456 EDA). Taylor's Waltzer had a new Pollard centre installed, and new girders and platforms fitted. It is now running very well... only anti-clockwise!

Moving onto the Wallis family, the sad news is the death of Harry Wallis, famous for his Maxwell

Victor Manders' superb Lakin 'Scramble' Speedway with some impressive decor by Fred Fowle (Michael Smith)



"Odeon Wonder Waltzer" which he had travelled for over 30 years, still using a 1942 Mack 6-wheel tractor. The machine this winter received a new steel track, fitted by N.G. Wallis, and complete redecoration by "Tate". Its fate is at present uncertain. David Wallis spent much of the winter overhauling his Hall Scrambler Twist. The metal parts were all sandblasted and painted. The surround was strikingly redecorated, and new diamond pattern Mainwend lights fitted to the trellises. Michael Wallis added another eight-wheel Foden to his smart fleet. The new lorry, (Reg.

GTU 907 G), joins an identical Foden (Reg. GTU 908 G) in transporting his immaculate Maxwell Speedway.

Having taken delivery of his new Ward Meteorite last season, Joe White returned the ride to the manufacturers for a number of improvements including the fitting of air operated doors. His stand-up Paratrooper also received a facelift, and now has a continental style paybox, built by Edmund Evans of Gloucester, and used formerly with father-in-law Billy Danter's Dodgems.

Michael A. Smith

Edward Silcock, Snr's, Scammell Explorer, 'Big Ted—I Did It My Way' (Michael Smith)



From abroad

One of our steadily growing ranks of foreign members, Mr Allan Price from Sweden writes of the amusement equipment in both permanent and travelling fairs in Denmark and Sweden.

In Stockholm we have a permanent amusement park called "Grona Lund" which is by no means large, but caters for everyone with open air dance floors, Disco's and a large open air stage.

A run down on the main rides is as follows: The Enterprise built by Anton Schwarzkopf of Germany which was installed in 1975 and has proven very popular, then there is a Big Wheel

and Super 8 Roller Coaster both also Schwarzkopf-built, the latter being due for replacement by a Looping Coaster in 1983. The Viking giant swingboat was installed in 1979 and completing the line-up here is a Jackson Waltzer, Astroliner, Dodgems, Ghost Train, Fun House and a selection of juveniles and side stalls.

There are quite a few fairs that travel in Sweden, but due to the lack of an equivalent of the World's Fair it is often difficult to find them.

Two of these fairs were found at Hallunda on the outskirts of Stockholm, the first was called Rolles Tivoli, this consisted of an upright Paratrooper, Cyklon Twist, juvenile and side stalls. The Twist builds off its own trailer load. (Of the type Bottoms travelled as the Zig Zag.)

The other small fair consisted of an Octopus, Whirlwind, Juvenile Jets and side stalls. The Whirlwind is a Waltzer type of ride, also called the Tilt-a-Whirl and is of American manufacture.

One interesting point is that neither of these fairs used generating sets, all power required was mains electric which was specially installed for Fairs and Circuses.

Major rides at an Amusement Park in

Copenhagen, Denmark called "Dyre Havsbakken" include a Skylab (identical to the one being travelled by John Remblance), Racing Roller Coaster, Turbo Star (TRi Star), Hula Hoop (Tilting Calypso), Viking giant swingboat and Nasa 2000 built by J. Bakker Denies (identical to J.W. Shaws' Ramba Zamba).

Allan Price

One of our Continental members, Albert Lefebvre of Lille, France, sends us this charming picture of a French country fair taken, if the postmark is any guide, around 1908. Merci, Albert!



Short history

Continuing with my series of short histories of machines which despite their age, have been extensively modernised and are still capable of a good days work. I turn my attention to the Waltzer belonging to John Studt of the South Wales section.

This machine was built as a 15/30 section three hill autodrome by Lang Wheels, and first information currently available is that John Biddall of the London Section took the ride to H.P. Jackson and Sons of Congleton, for conversion to a Waltzer over the winter 1958/59.

This work involved the fitting of centre drive, girders, 18 platforms and 9 cars, but still retaining the original all metal bottom. The ride

left Jacksons works in March 1959 in the modified form.

Late in 1961 the ride passed to Joe Cogger (his son-in-law) to become the first of the three Waltzers he has owned. J. Cogger in turn sold it to Herberts (Dorchester) in 1965 in whose ownership it was repainted by F.G. Fowle. Eventually it was acquired by John Studt in October 1973.

An extensive programme of replacement and modernisation work was embarked upon. New Jackson cars were purchased in 1975 and in 1977 the top frame of the machine was seriously damaged in a gale, it was at this stage that the now characteristic low overhanging pitched roof was built (modelled on Danter's Waltzer). September 1978 saw the fitting of a new Thos. Tinsley glass-fibre paybox and the following winter the complete bottom of the machine was

rebuilt in wood by a Kington joiner. Glass-fibre face style handrails on tubular frames added in June 1979 completed the transformation.

At the time of writing this machine is up for sale with the good news that its owner has ordered a brand new machine to replace it.

Special thanks to Phillip Bradley, Arthur Jackson and John Studt for information supplied for this article. If anyone has any other information concerning its pre-conversion history, I would be interested to receive it.

Paul Angel

John Biddall's Waltzer, Tolworth, Surrey, 25.7.79 (Philip Bradley)



John Studt's Waltzer, Neath, 5.4.80 (Paul Angel)



Letters

Bill Lane, 7 Avebury Close, Tuffley, Gloucester, GO4 0TS, writes:

I have taken an interest in Gloucester Carnival Fair for many years now and I have seen many changes throughout the fairs gone by.

I wonder if any readers of the Fairground Mercury can supply any information whatsoever or photographs on Showman tenants who were once regulars at this fair. I have mentioned below some showmen who spring to mind.

Mr. and Mrs. John Bibb travelled an automatic jungle shooter. If my memory serves me right the shooter was built in a Mack box lorry. Mr. Billy Moore (Senior) shooter and roll downs, I can remember Billy attending the fair with a nicely turned out Bristol single deck bus with the living van in matching decor. The Loveridge family I can vaguely remember with Mrs. Loveridge sat at her cans stall.

Can anyone supply me with a photo of the adult set of boats (fully built up with name board) owned by the late Teddy Brewer, these boats were once on a regular pitch next to Stevens coconut sheet at the top of the park at Gloucester. I will of course gladly pay for any photos on this subject.

Bernard Fielding writes from 63 Forefield Lane, Crosby, Liverpool, L23 9TQ, to ask if any member can supply details of the rides at the two permanent amusement parks at Sunny Vale, near Halifax, and the Tower Gardens, New Brighton. He says:

I was taken as a small boy, in the late 1920's to Sunny Vale, but even then the place was semi-derelect. There were two lakes, one with rowing boats, but the second was silted up and out of use. Adjoining this lake was some sort of riding machine, lying derelict. I have often wondered what it was. The only other attractions in use happened to be a helter skelter, and a 15" gauge railway with a Bassett-Lowke 4-4-2 engine called "Baby Bunce" (I hear that this was rescued from a scrapyard in recent years).

As regards the New Brighton Tower Gradens, I believe this was a marvellous place in its heyday, but when I visited it in about 1959 it too was semi-derelect. I remember a drab looking set of dobbies (dark brown), which was billed as "the oldest surviving roundabout and 100 years old". When I revisited the site a few years later the whole place had closed down. I wonder what happened to this old ride.

If any of our readers have memories of either of these two parks we would be very pleased to hear from them.

Diary

Sunday, 24 August, 7.30 pm
London Area Social Evening,
The Tabard, Bath Road,
Chiswick, London W4.
Details from Chris Coutts
Tel: 01-995 3465

Saturday, 4 October
Goose Fair Get-together,
Hyson Green Community Centre
(Provisional booking—watch for details
in the W.F.)

Saturday, 15 November
Model Fair Spectacular,
Town Hall, Loughborough
Details from Jim Lawson
Tel: Leicester 609804

Small Ads

ENGINES, ORGANS, RIDES. Coloured photographs of showman's engines, steam wagons, fair organs, fairground rides (including over 50 different sets of gallopers), and showman's transport now available. Send 1st class stamp for extensive lists: T. Darby, 26 Old Kiln Road, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks.

WEST COUNTRY FAIRS. Many interesting colour photos available of transport, rides, shows, including buses and other transport no longer in service. SAE for lists, please, to N.P. Vanstone, 1 Valley Road, Bude, Cornwall.

FAIRGROUND PHOTOS. Superb colour prints of rides and transport in many different parts of the country. Please send large SAE for extensive lists. New 1979 list now available! P.A. Angel, 10 Norton Avenue, Putson, Hereford, HR2 6DN.



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