

## The Kentside Branch - a layout of a lifetime project by Karl Crowther

Kentside MK1 was retired in 2008 having made 34 show appearances. Not bad for a first completed EM layout. Buildings and the like were removed for future use and the baseboards with track etc. were sold on to another EMGS member. The plan was then to build an enlarged version of the same theme. The general scenario was (and still is) a fictional station situated in the same location as Sandside on the former Furness Railway Arnside - Hincaster branch and situated beside the Kent Estuary - hence the name. It was used primarily for coke trains between the Durham coalfields and the blast furnaces of Barrow-in-Furness and west Cumberland. There was a passenger service between Grange-over-Sands, Oxenholme and Kendal (the Kendal Tommy), but that ceased in 1942. The line north of Sandside was closed in 1963 when the coke trains stopped running via that route, with just the section from Arnside providing access to the limestone quarry at Sandside, this finally closing in 1971.

I chose the fictional option to suit the limited space available - Sandside was quite a sprawling station and in any case I really liked the architectural style of the Lakeside Branch structures and so decided to adopt Greenodd in terms of buildings. In addition I wanted to model the mid-1960s, a time when trains through Sandside would have been very limited, with no passenger at all. Kentside MK1 also assumed the presence of a limestone quarry (as at Sandside), but this was off stage with quarry traffic merely doing a run-round manoeuvre at the station. The resulting model was in effect an amalgamation of both the Lakeside and Arnside - Hincaster Branch features.

Anyway, that was the original layout. After quite an amount of planning I'd come up with a MK2 design that still fitted the footprint of the original layout, with the inclusion of some quarry sidings on a 'kick-back' at one end in front of a fiddle yard. Being about to embark on construction, I was then seduced by the need to build something with blue diesels and in my native West Yorkshire area. Hebble Vale was the result and what was intended to be a quickie project, spanned 10 years!

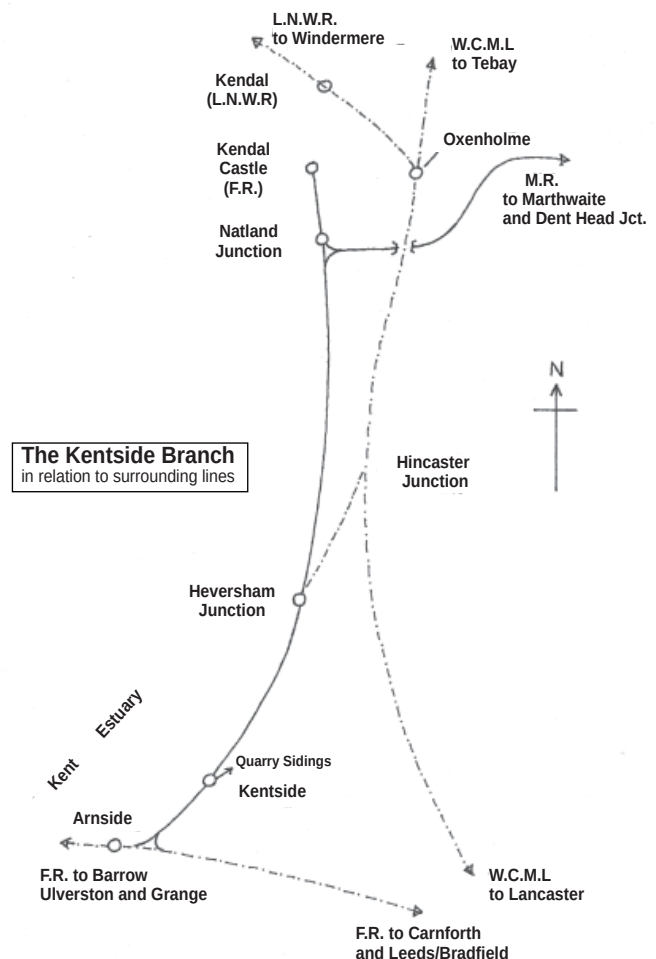
We then moved to our present house and MK2 Kentside was again on the cards. Having generally more room to play with, the planned new exhibition layout though grander than Kentside MK1 was still a very compact affair, so the plan was further enlarged to give something more like what I wanted. At this point, several factors came into play that were to initiate a further change of direction. Firstly, more than 10 years had elapsed since last showing Kentside MK1 and I was beginning to find attending shows with Hebble Vale quite demanding and stressful. It became clear that Kentside MK2 would most likely be a 10-year construction project and by that time I'd probably be too old to hire the van needed to take it to shows - not that I had much enthusiasm for using such transport in any case, all adding to the stress factor. Consequent with our house move had been a relocation back 'oop north' and an introduction to our local EMGS Area Group, as well as being closer to some other long-time friends and quite a few new ones too. Several members of this new social circle had permanent layouts at home that were operated as a group, something I'd not experienced before. Don't get me wrong, I do enjoy exhibiting in public and realize it's a vitally important part of the hobby, but as I said already I find it quite an effort these days and was really enjoying operating layouts without the demands of public showing.

Having a large garden, thoughts naturally turned to identifying potential sites to house a layout shed and spend my inheritance! An area that would take a 29' x 11' structure was duly identified and a suitable supplier located - thus Kentside MK2 was to be a permanent layout housed in its own purpose built structure. A further re-design of the layout now took place, with Kentside station logically along one side and the quarry sidings extending into one corner. A set of storage sidings would be needed along the other side of the room, but with the space available, even more railway could be accommodated! Thoughts turned to the

work of David Jenkinson whose writings had always greatly inspired me. Initially this was through his 1970s 'Little Long Drag' layout in EM which included a supposed Dent Head - Kendal link forming a Junction with an Arnside - Kendal Branch (Garsdale Road was before my time). This was followed by the 7mm Kendal Branch set in the LMS period. In a sort of 'light bulb' moment it was realized that I could adopt David's scenario and include the Kendal Castle terminus of the line - advanced in time for my purposes to the 1960s.

Realistically the only location for the terminus would be diagonally across one end of the room, which would mean running through the storage area to reach it, but I felt that would be a compromise worth making. As turned out, the general shape of the site closely mirrored that of Lakeside and here another thing fell into place. DJ assumed Kendal Castle station had been built by the Midland Railway with running rights for the Furness. I'd always really liked the Furness buildings at Lakeside and have thus decided to adopt this station as the blueprint for my own version of Kendal Castle. In other words to assume the branch had been built by the Furness rather than the Midland. The track plan will be very close to that of Lakeside, as indeed will the buildings (without the refreshment pavilion overlooking the lake of course!). Although the Lakeside Branch was single track (DJ's was double and so will mine), there was at Lakeside a long carriage siding that in effect gave it the appearance of being double track - quite fortuitous for my needs. What would the great man have thought of all this? I like to think he'd have been flattered his endeavours have had such a major influence on my own humble efforts, though we will of course never know.

This brings us to the name for the project. Initially I was minded (logically) to adopt the title of 'The Kendal Branch' as used by DJ, but thought this a little unoriginal and plagiaristic, so in the end have settled on 'The Kentside Branch', which seems equally fitting and appropriate. So with that I was able to finalise the scheme and make a start on construction, which will be covered in the second part.....





A reminder of Kentside Mk1 with a scratchbuilt Metro-Vick Co-Bo diesel at Kentside station building. Both will be redeployed on the new layout.



A final view of Kentside Mk1. The new layout will enable a more ambitious portrayal of the Kent Estuary/Morecambe Bay environment, only really hinted at on the original version



Article and pictures supplied by Karl Crowther.

### A sneak preview of Kentside Mk2.

This should hopefully give a general idea of how the baseboards have been laid out for Kentside. In the far right can be seen Kentside station running along one side of the shed. The quarry sidings lead off into the corner at the far end, while in the foreground is a lifting section providing access to the central operating area (for when we get too ancient to crawl under!). In the far distance you should just about be able to make out the location of the viaduct - this has temporary track at present pending later construction of the actual structure. Immediately in front of the camera, diagonally across the room are the boards that will house the Kendal Castle station scene, while running to the left is the curve that links Kentside to the storage area.

There are monthly updates on the layout's progress, and lots of other great EM modelling projects can be found on Kier Hardy's excellent website- [www.emgauge70s.co.uk](http://www.emgauge70s.co.uk)

The second instalment is due to appear in a later Newsletter

## A quick and simple tip



The photograph on the left shows the fencing that is on the Kitedale layout. As you can see there is recent damage to the fencing, actually caused by me leaning over to work on the track. This problem occurs time after time.



So I thought how can I stop this? The answer is quite simple. Nothing more than a takeaway food box with a cutout in it to go over the fence. Job done!!

**Ray Hodson**

## Fireless loco



Imperial Paper Mills Gravesend was opened in 1911 and initially had two German built Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0 fireless locomotives. Further fireless locomotives were required, but because of the First World War these were obtained from Andrew Barclay. These were supplied in 1916, 1917 and 1956. The photo shows the last one - build number 2373 and known as 'Imperial No. 1'. It was preserved for the National Collection and is currently at Shildon

Site was finally closed in 1979 having never been dieselised.

Scanned from a slide taken mid 1970's by Steve Young