

# The Corkscrew



Newsletter of the

**Wimborne Railway Society**

**Issue 127**

**February 2022**



**No 2 on an afternoon service to Palma arrives at Bunola**



**North of Bunola looking north towards Soller.  
See article "Rails from Soller" from page 4.**

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## Editorial

Even the best of technology can let you down!. When the laptop and projector refused to communicate for Bob Steedman's presentation on Swiss tourist railways desperate measures ensued. As Bob had prepared his presentation on a DVD, the trusty DVD player and wide screen TV last used for the 2018 Christmas open day were hastily connected up and somewhat later than planned the evening got under way. Bob's filming and knowledge of his subject delivered without a script proved most enjoyable. Our new season is now under way and we look forward to many more presentations over the coming year.



In this issue Paul Carpenter presents part one of RAILS from SOLLER an account of a visit to Mallorca. We continue the Alan Ashberry series courtesy of David Coasby cover a quick visit to London and further updates on the Hudswell Clarke shunters and the rebuilding of Poole Park railway.

Sit back and enjoy Corkscrew 127. Closing date for 128 is 10 March 2022.

Cover Picture :-Ledbury Station with West Midlands Trains class 172 unit 172333 operating 1M63 the 11.39 Hereford - Birmingham New Street on 10 July 2021.  
Paul Carpenter

# Rails out of Soller

by Paul Carpenter

## Part 1 'Ferrocarril de Soller'

Note – All photos taken March 2015. This date also applies to my observations.

The 27km long three foot gauge railway from Palma to Soller and the tramway beyond to Puerto de Soller on the island of Mallorca (Majorca) are perhaps remarkable survivors of a previous age. Whilst it is understandable that today as mainly tourist carriers they are retained and treasured as living history, what is fortunate is that tourism started to take off post war and so passenger numbers were healthily maintained.

It should be stated that there is, and even more so was, a much more extensive network of lines in Mallorca. Lines radiated out of Palma to Manacor and on to Arta with a branch from Inca to La Puebla. Other much longer branches served Santany and Felanitx. This system also of 3' gauge almost faded away completely by the 1980s. However the line to Manacor and La Puebla was completely rebuilt as a metre gauge line and completely new Metro lines have also been built. This work generally took place between 2005 and 2018. However these lines are not covered in this article.

Proposals had been made before the end of the Nineteenth Century for a railway to connect Palma and Soller, the terrain though is not easy at the northern end. Soller is surrounded by the highest peaks on Mallorca, the Sierra de Alfabiya range. Although early plans had envisaged going around the mountains the final route was more direct and involved much tunnelling. Work commenced in 1907 and the line opened for passengers in April 1912 having been built to a gauge of 3 foot. Initially the line was steam worked by four 2-6-0T from the builder La Maquinista Terrestre y Maritima of Barcelona. The tramway extension opened the next year worked by electricity from the start – we'll look at that line in part 2.

However the line from Palma to Soller wasn't turned over to electric traction until later. The traffic generated by the line had exceeded early expectations and with the steam locomotives struggling to cope and accordingly being worked hard, and with associated higher maintenance, the costs of working the line were quite high. Experts in Germany had been consulted in 1926 and they suggested electrification at 1200V DC. Four bogie electric motor coaches were supplied by Carde y Escoriaza in 1929 with two Siemens motors and running on Brill bogies. These motor coaches hauled (and still do) the existing coaches which seem to number around fifteen.

The motor coaches numbered 1 - 4 present a fine sight with varnished teak bodies which was possibly the 'livery' from new? From available photographs it's certainly been the case for a very long time.

The hauled carriages, with reversible bus style seats, are similarly finished. The motor coaches in addition are painted light blue for the roofs as is the extended down 'buffer' beam', a substantial apron necessary for the possible rock falls on the mountain section of the line and to act as a snowplough for minor falls I would imagine.



***Motor Coach No 1 waits to take out the first train of the day from Soller***



***Coach No 5 seen at Soller station***

My feeling is that if the line had been electrified from the start in 1912 (as many in say France were) it might not have survived. Quite probably the equipment of that period could have been worn out by the 1930s. During those difficult years in and around World War II and through the 1950s, any renewal needed might have not been considered economic. I think it's quite fortunate that at that time the rolling stock and equipment was still relatively new.

On the two occasions in 2001 and 2015 when Heather and I have travelled on the line we started our journey at Soller rather than Palma, quite a wise move as it turned out. Catching the first train of the morning from Soller we almost had the train to ourselves, riding in the last coach we could alternate between the balcony end, great for views, and the comfort of the coach interior. On arrival at Palma hordes of people especially German tourists waited. A seat on the return journey was out of the question, but waiting until almost departure time secured us a place on the end balcony. Beware early and late in the year this can be a distinctly cool place to be when you reach the tunnels!



***The Palma station of the Ferrocarril de Soller.***

Anyway for the purposes of this article perhaps we should I guess describe a journey starting at Palma. The Ferrocarril de Soller station is just across the way from the now underground Placa de Espanya station of the Metro and highly modernised now metre gauge line to Manacor. I think the Soller line station is largely as built, with a single platform and two loops which enable running round. Also behind the platform there's two covered sidings leading through into an original carriage shed.

Immediately on leaving the station the line passes through a gate and into the city streets running along central reservations with numerous crossings for both road traffic and pedestrians, something seen as a much greater hazard than would have once been considered. This section can be considered 'interesting' but not beautiful! Emerging from the feeling of being hemmed in by the apartment blocks and roads the line runs into a more open environment though still (and increasingly) developed and one could say lacking even the interest of the initial kilometre or so. The topography is very flat hereabouts and will continue thus for a considerable distance. The station at Son Sardina is reached after 5km. Here we can note a double track line coming in on our right (east side).



***Alongside the Palma Metro just north of Son Sardina stations.***

This is the modern Palma de Mallorca Metro constructed between 2005 and 2007. There is a modern station (estacio) on this line, very functional and rather overshadowing the pleasant modest Soller line station buildings adjacent. The Metro will shortly pass over us on a substantial flyover. Pictures of the not so distant past show the older station surrounded by trees which look like palms, google street view in 2019 showed a solitary lonely example by the widened improved road. Books written at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century describe Son Sardina as a small hamlet – that's changed a bit since!

A little further north, maybe a kilometre or so we come to a long platform at Son Reus with an associated large parking area. There is a passing loop here, but only the 'main line' is served by the platform.

On our journey south we passed another train here not shown in the timetable which was loading with passengers having arrived in several tourist buses. Without any information to hand I can imagine tour operators find it easier to unload passengers here for a train ride through the mountains to Soller picking them up at the other end? Onward we gradually get away from the more dense development crossing quite a few level crossings, some equipped with barriers, others are open crossings depending on importance of road. The line is heading in an almost straight line along here and now olive and orange groves are more of a feature of the countryside.

Another couple of kilometres bring us to Santa Maria, a small station with a passing loop and the benefit of a shelter on the platform. Also here in a fenced compound are sidings in use for permanent way materials. A wagon turntable was noted here. A number of low drop sided wagons were present probably having origins in former goods rolling stock (freight services were finally withdrawn in 1972). Also noted was a converted to rail small pick-up lorry.

A few hundred metres on the halt at Caubet is passed usually without stopping and we are now entering a very different terrain. The mountain range whilst not exactly comparing with the Alps is now a very visible barrier ahead. The scenery is now much more pleasant with the olive groves. Mediterranean Pine trees also now flank the line and before long we arrive at the main intermediate station at Bunola (recent spelling is Bunyola). We have only climbed around 50m in the first 14km, though that will rapidly change in the following 13km!



***Bunola station looking south to Palma***



Bunola has a fine station building which today at least incorporates a café. On the platform side of the building the clock is quite ornate resembling a giant pocket watch. There is a passing loop and a siding serving the former goods shed at one end complete with a wagon turntable. The other end of the siding is used by the permanent way department. When visited in 2015 a covered part of the sidings housed a Unilok 'E55 Tractonic' road-rail vehicle complete with crane. A further machine, not seen quite so well was a Plasser 'Unimar 3'. This purely rail vehicle is possibly used as a tamping machine and had also a hydraulic arm, maybe used as a grab, or vegetation cutting etc, but this is speculation on my part.

Curving out of the station over the level crossing we start climbing on a ruling gradient of 1:45, with initially open views across the olive trees but increasingly feeling hemmed in by the rock cutting sides and then plunging into the first tunnel. The first two are short around 60m, but then it's into the 2,900m called the 'Tunel Mayor'. It took 3 years to excavate and it seems to take an age to travel through especially stood on the balcony getting colder and colder. The lines summit is in the tunnel at just under 240m. A bit further on there's a stop made (at least by trains carrying a lot of tourists – normally northbound) at a loop and platform called Mirador del Pujol d'en Banyà.



***The five arch 'Cinq Ponts' viaduct some 50m high in the Sierra de Alfàbia range.***

This was not an original feature but was constructed in the 1980s as a viewpoint for a wonderful panorama. Soller is way down in the valley and around 10 minutes is allowed for the passengers to enjoy the spectacle. Now descending through a series of tunnels, over a curved five arch viaduct of 50m (164') height and through further tunnels and horseshoe curves.

The tenth out of thirteen tunnels and the second longest at 530m will have us turning 180 degrees. On emerging this naturally puts views of Soller on the other side of the train – somewhat disorientating! On the outskirts of Soller another halt is passed, though I've struggled to identify it in my photos especially looking at them nearly seven years on.

Now entering Soller gardens and houses accompany us before we squeeze between the railway and tramway workshop and depot buildings. On one side there is (looking from the station far end) a long workshop, in front of which is a turntable. Off the turntable is another fan of four roads that enter what could be described as a quarter roundhouse. The other side of the running line are the other depot buildings usually used in the main by tramway rolling stock with another four roads. These are joined to the tramway adjoining the main station. Usually hidden away in the sheds are a very early inspection vehicle based on a 1920s Renault car and a similar vintage engineers vehicle based on a lorry.



***No 2 arriving at Soller between workshop and depot buildings. Tramway rolling stock alongside.***

Soller railway station is a delight, the tracks being on a sweeping curve all shaded like the platform with maybe twenty mature Plane trees. The station building has its origins in a house already 300 years old when the railway was built.

The entrance is at street level and you ascend a flight of stairs within the building to the platform. There are several loops including a narrow walkway outside the platform line but I believe these are only for operational use and passengers only board and alight from the signed platform.

Below the retaining wall at the back of the platform is the loop at the boarding point for the tram on to Puerto de Soller but that can wait until part 2 of the article!



***Running through the streets of Palma - fortunately a rearwards view from the train!***

I must acknowledge two books that have helped fill in the many details needed to add to my limited knowledge. However any mistakes in above are mine!

First, and still the standard work on the subject:

The Railways and Tramways of Majorca by Giles Barnabe, Plateway Press 1993 – A much expanded updated edition is now available which unfortunately I haven't seen.

Also referred to was: The Iron Road to Soller, Peter Clayton, 1992

Doubtless the John Organ, Middleton Press book Majorca and Corsica Narrow Gauge would also be worth a look.

**Alan Ashberry** recalls some of the sights which regrettably are no longer commonplace on the British railway system.

## **Completely loco – Part 6**

from **David Coasby**

### **Gone, but not forgotten**

On a recent visit to one of the preserved railways, I could hardly help being very much impressed by the achievements of the dedicated teams of volunteers in keeping their railway running. Some time after this visit I began to think about the various trains, which the preserved railways cannot show the public today.

For example, wagons were once shunted in goods yards by being pushed, pulled and sorted onto different roads in the yard. There were other much larger yards too, in which trains of forty or more wagons were sorted by being pushed over the hump. The shunter had to chase after them with his brake stick to keep them under control.

Then there were the local freight trains which shunted small yards. Every station had one of these, some with just a single siding for the local coal merchant which was only used once each week. Others were used more often depending on their size. We no longer see the very long coal trains of sixty wagons plus brake van heading for London, or the return trains of empty wagon running in the opposite direction. The large numbers of fast vacuum fitted freight trains with their covered box vans which once rushed along day in, day out, hurrying to get to their destinations, are no more.

In the days before air-freighted fruit and vegetables they could still be bought, seemingly all the year round. Special trains were made up and despatched to the parts of the British Isles where home grown produce was available – but only in season. Once, too, there were milk trains with their lovely tank wagons proudly displaying the names of various dairies, mostly now long gone, on their way to the big cities. Fish trains from the fishing ports along with trains of vans bearing the famous names of beers, whiskies, sausages, and a wealth of other items required by shops and stores all around the kingdom. I recall and have worked cattle trains. These had to be shunted with great care and they had to be examined during the journey at regular intervals by the guard. If any attention was necessary, assistance had to be sought as soon as possible—Rule 171 (a), (b), (c) of the LMSR Rule Book 1933/1939.

While on the subject of cattle trains, a circus train used to arrive at Watford Junction each year. The caged animals were loaded onto flat lorries, but the elephants walked through the town from the goods yard to Cassiobury Park amid great excitement from the local children.

Some trains passing through the various towns with race courses might also include horse boxes, the groom travelling in the box with his or her charges.



***A Stanier 8F pulling a lengthy coal train.***

***Photo: Peter Elmslie.***

Many trains were seasonal. School Specials were run when the public schools broke up for their holidays. We used to run one from Rugby to Euston, others would be going North. During the pigeon racing season, dozens of pigeon baskets lined station platforms waiting for the Pigeon Specials. Their owners helped to load them into the vans before the train departed. Trains of special vans for the banana traffic met the ships when they docked with their cargoes.

And parcel trains came in all sizes ranging from a single coach for local traffic to ten coaches or more for long distance routes. At Christmas time these would be increased to twelve or more coaches, making for very heavy trains. When the only means of moving households over long distances was by rail, flat wagons were available to carry the special furniture containers, each adorned with the logos of the carrier concerned.

The rules governing gunpowder vans and the carriage and handling of explosives were very strict indeed. Loaded vans had to be locked and no more than five vehicles containing explosives were permitted to be conveyed in any one train. Gunpowder vans had to be marshalled in the middle of the train and the guard was required to inform both driver and fireman that explosives were being carried.

How I miss the branch line push-pull trains with their engine and two coaches serving the rural areas of the country. On the other hand, who could resist the sight and sound of the express in full cry taking its fill of water from the troughs? I have had more than one soaking through not being able to wind the water scoop up before the tender tank overflowed!

The Down Postal from Euston made a fine sight too, with its row of lights gleaming in the darkness, low down on the coaches, and the nets which opened out to snatch the bags of mail hanging on the lineside posts. Nothing held up the Postal.

The District Engineer was a very important member of the railway staff, to the extent that he even had his very own saloon coach and locomotive. Maintained in spick and span condition, this was kept in steam ready to move at any time should he wish to inspect the track or any structure in his area. With just one coach to pull, this was regarded by the engine crew as a plum job.

Now and again stock could be seen going to the carriage works for scrapping or refurbishment and new or repaired stock might be observed leaving the works. One train in which the companies took great pride was the Royal Train. What a splendid sight it was, the entire train polished and the engine proudly displaying the special four headlamp code carried only by Royal Trains.

All locomotive depots en route were required to prepare and have an engine in steam, in the unlikely event that the Royal Train engine failed while passing through that area. These, then, were a few of the trains which are no longer to be seen on our railways today. I should perhaps add that each region also had its own special trains not seen in other areas. I must admit that I miss the hustle and bustle of the railway scene of the days now long past.



***Stanier Black Five, 45339 eases a southbound freight through Watford, not long before the overhead wires were installed. A sister loco to this is the basis of Alan Ashberry's article. Photo: Peter Elmslie.***



***Northern Rail class 195 unit 195131, a three car set, stands at New Pudsey on 29 December 2021 on a York to Blackpool service. KAveyard***

# The Hudswell Clarke/BR class D2/7 0-6-0DM.

## The story continues.

By Ken Aveyard

Back in Corkscrew 117 Steve Green wrote about a model of the Southern Railway designed 0-6-0 shunters 15201-3 he was making referring to the fact that 15202 had been seen at Cashmores in Newport sandwiched between two steam locos. This elicited a response from Howard Bolton, Treasurer of the Huddersfield Railway Circle, who supplied an image of Q1 33020 with 15202 behind which was published in Corkscrew 118. Howard also kindly sent some additional early shunter pictures which appeared in the same edition and included both the early and later Hudswell Clarks. In Corkscrew 123 Steve Green penned a follow up article on 15202 and mentioned that he had a body kit of the early Hudswell Clarke, as pictured on page 35 of Corkscrew 123 which would form the basis of a future article.

This later article appeared in Corkscrew 126, at the end of 2021 and prompted further responses from both Howard Bolton and Peter Watson on these distinctive shunters. Steve detailed their distinctive design with the final drive at the front of the locomotive in his article clearly visible in the picture below.



***D2500 and D2509 at Barrow shed on 26 November 1967. Howard Bolton.***

According to Howard's notes those present were D2511/05/02/04/08/00/09/03 and D2508 and D2504 were pictured in Corkscrew 118. This answered one of Steve's queries in that D2500 is still in plain black and had not received the yellow wasp stripes.



Peter Watson's contribution to the story is that he has a works plate from D2504 in his collection and this is shown below.



*Works plate for D2504 in Peter Watson's collection.*

*Peter Watson*

*Steve – your next challenge - Ed*



*D2956 (this is the second loco to carry the number D2956 as it was formerly Dept number 81 and was allocated at Cambridge Engineers Dept. It is NOT the original D2956 which is preserved at the East Lancs Railway) Doncaster shed 7 January 1968.*

*Howard Bolton*

# A short visit to London

by Ken Aveyard

On 6 November 2021 I found myself in London having travelled up with Robert to meet a friend of his, with the question “Could you go and trainspot and meet me back at Waterloo?” That seemed like a good deal so after meeting up in Oxford Street I left them to it and walked to Marble Arch photographing buses along the way. My intention was to ride an all electric Optare Metrodecker from Marble Arch to High Street Kensington, then drop down to Earl’s Court and remain there for as long as possible or until I spotted my final Underground unit, S7 21463/464. Yes that’s right I only need to see one Underground unit until they start building the new ones!

These days virtually all new buses delivered to London are hybrids based on various platforms and examples of these are illustrated below.



***Above left is a BYD with Alexander Dennis bodywork, BCE47002 of RATP Group’s London United operation advertising its green credentials whilst right is New Routemaster LT1111 of Metroline with the 2021 Poppy Appeal branding.***



***Above left is Metroline’s WHD2712 a Wright Hydrogen Streetdeck whilst right is Tower Transit’s OE34009 the Optare MetroDecker from which I had just alighted at High Street Kensington.***

So it was straight down the tube and the first District line service to Earls Court to begin the tube hunting.



***LU S8 unit 21424/423 arrives at Kensington High Street. Ken Aveyard***



***At Earl's Court 21369/370 departs on the Saturday only shuttle service to and from Kensington Olympia.***

One interesting thing I spotted was that all the station signage displayed the name Earl's Court with an apostrophe but the station frontage doesn't.



**Earls Court (without an apostrophe) station frontage. Ken Aveyard**



**Earl's Court still has these fine train describers over the platforms. KA**

Alas despite spending enough time at Earl's Court for the entire District Line timetable to repeat my final unit didn't show up so was probably on the Circle or Hammersmith and City that day.

A quick run to St Pancras found a Eurostar Cop amongst the three sets there but Kings Cross was all duds so it was back to Waterloo to meet Robert and be ready for the 1615 back to Bournemouth.

# Poole Park Railway Reconstruction

by Ken Aveyard

Finally after delays due to Covid 19 and a protracted tendering process, the Poole Park Railway is now being rebuilt. During November and December 2021 the old track was removed and by Christmas work was proceeding on a new realigned formation. Track Systems UK of Shropshire are the contractors, they specialise in narrow gauge railways for factories, mines and theme parks including rolling stock. The following pictures were taken on either the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 or the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 around the site.



***Looking from the station the new alignment stays inside the path instead of taking the wide sweep and crossing the path twice.***



***This tighter curve picks up the old alignment by the lake.***



***The original alignment is followed alongside the park drive until reaching the far end of the inner lake where it curves back round tighter than the old alignment which crossed the path behind the barrow.***



**Long range shots looking down the back as this is fenced off. The new alignment is to the left of the path but the path itself bends towards the lake so the new track will cross here and regain the old right side alignment. In the distance the shed has been demolished whereas it can still be seen in the bottom right picture on page 21.**



**You can't get any closer down the back of the loop as the work site is fenced off but the centre fence has been removed from the bridge. The previous track was set in concrete so it will be interesting to see how this area is reworked. The track will continue on its old line alongside the path as shown in this 2022 image of work which recommenced on 17 January. Above right and below left on 20 January from R Aveyard.**



**Finally the track will reach the station. On the right this 2011 picture of live steam loco George on the shed road harks back to better days and whilst the new railway will start with a steam shaped diesel loco who knows we may get a visiting steam loco in the future. More to follow.**

# Pictures from my archive

by Peter Watson



***West Yorkshire PTE liveried 308143 seen at Menston on an Ilkley to Leeds service in May 1995.***



***Network South East 31008 is seen on a Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness service at Barking in June 1995.***



**Regional Railways liveried class 142 Pacer unit 142027 is seen in the Chester bay at Crewe Station on 2 July 1988. WRS P1010\_5**



**Northern's Pacer replacements include the class 195 units built by CAF in Spain. This two car set 195001 is seen in Leeds Station on 29 December 2021 ready to operate the 1608 to Nottingham. Ken Aveyard**