

# LITTLETON PARKWAY

BY  
STAFFORD RAILWAY CIRCLE



Photo session by Steve Flint for Railway Moddler



Photographs by SRC members

# LITTLETON PARKWAY

## Some time in the very recent past

SCRs' flagship and Prize Winning layout originally known "Littleton Junction" has moved forward in time to become "Littleton Parkway".

### *THE SIGN OF THE TIMES*

The economic crisis of 1982 and 1993 left the route between Stafford South signal box and Wednesfield as well as the Lichfield Branch un-electrified. Successive governments have promised to remedy this, but at the last minute cost increases have always stopped the work. The line is used as a freight route with Bulk Minerals including intermodal, coal and limestone/granite. The level of passenger traffic has increased since "Privatisation" with the local midland area and central England TOCS represented. In addition both London and South of England long distance passenger trains operate several times a day. It is also often used as a diversion from the Birmingham & Wolverhampton area electrified routes.

It is a very busy route with trains passing the Parkway Station every few minutes with quite regular cross track movements from the Branch and the interchange yard

### *THE ROUTE*

The route runs north out of the station tunnel into the Parkway. This is a three platform station, two used by the mainline and a single one for the branch. Many long distance and local trains use this as an interchange point. On leaving the station a small industrial oil depot is on the left and a group of engineers sidings are on both sides of the line.

Going north the line runs under the A 3595 motorway link trunk road; past the old level crossing and over the derelict canal. On the left is one of the new industrial areas with the quarry interchange sidings. These are the old Littleton Colliery sidings which gradually changed usage after the pit closed. A lot of traffic is generated here for both industrial and transport use. These sidings are also used as a parking area for the local heavy freight locomotives.

A small complex of lines turns off here towards the quarry and various open cast coal mining still carried out in the area. The main line disappears under the disused Lichfield to Newport single track and on into Baswich 1059 yds tunnel.

The branch line has become steadily busier over the last twenty years with the building of Admaston N<sup>o</sup> 2 coal fired power station. This is one of the Upper Trent Group stations and generates some 900 mW of power. This demands a steady stream of 1500/2000-tonne trains moving up the recently re-laid track, fighting for paths with the quite intense Stafford to Derby and Lichfield locals. In addition several daily trains of railway ballast moves to the Lichfield virtual quarry as well as the Burton Road Coating Plant; with all the returning empties causing extra congestion.

### *OPERATION*

It is controlled by manually operated three aspect colour light signals, with a repeater signal on the Parkway platform. The flow of trains is governed by their position on the fiddle yard; which holds around 50 trains of various lengths and configurations. One complete run through of all the trains takes approximately an hour. They are run at a scale speed with the maxim of keeping something on the go at all times, as we are entertaining the public who want to see movement.

### *STOCK*

**FREIGHT** – All the major freight operators use the line with locomotives ranging from Class 20; 37, 56, 58 and 60 to the latest 66/67 pull all classes of train. They are owned by the various freight operating companies. The main line traffic is heavily Inter model configurations with international containers, motor vehicles and long wheel base vans. The branch is 70% bogie bulk coal wagons and some shorter wheel based wagons for moving granite to the virtual quarry

### **PASSENGER Local**

Regional Railways class 37 locomotive hauled services to Holyhead via Crewe and Chester; Central trains with 153 single car unit for the branch to Lichfield; 158; 170s running to Liverpool; Birmingham; Manchester; Stoke and Crewe. North Western 158s also appear as well as Chiltern 168 Clubman in a startling white livery running from London Marylebone to Crewe a couple of times a day. A very “Nodding Donkey” (142) that nobody seems to want to own plods up and down the branch.

### **PASSENGER Long Distance**

Cross Country Virgin Voyager Class 220 & 221 on both London, Manchester and Glasgow services as well as to the South Coast stop at Littleton a few times a day. Class 47 hauled Mk3 Coaches on a Coventry to Preston with a HST on Bournemouth to Manchester services. A highlight of the passenger working is a diverted Pendolino's pulled by Class 57 Thunderbird locomotives.

### **THE LAYOUT**

See the attached sketch which will detail the floor footprint; electrical requirements operator numbers and transport needs.

Contact can be made directly via the webmaster on the Stafford Railway Circle web site on [enquiries@staffordrailwaycircle.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@staffordrailwaycircle.org.uk).. Just give details of your exhibition and dates and one of the “A” team will contact you directly

More pictures are available on the SR website; [www.staffordrailwaycircle.org.uk](http://www.staffordrailwaycircle.org.uk)