

# RIDING RAILWAYS NEWSLETTER



**Grand Scales**  
Quarterly

JULY 2007

Welcome to the July issue of the *Riding Railways Newsletter*. I know I am cutting it very close since this is the last day of July! But here it is and I hope you enjoy it.

The convention in Missouri will be here before we know it. Mr. Woods has put a great deal of effort into this event and we are grateful to him. I am sure that all who attend will have a wonderful time. Greg will be there (in his usual conductor's uniform) but sadly, as much as I want to be there, my boys and I won't be able to make it. We will miss seeing you all.

In this issue we have a brief article with photos on building bridges in 1.5" gauge and also information on the railroad at the Humboldt State Historic Park in Eureka. Hope you enjoy it all. See you next month!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Susan'.



## The Bobbsey Twins' Own Little Railroad



I have always loved to read. While growing up I read every book in the Bobbsey Twins series that I could get my hands on. A couple of years ago I purchased some of these books on eBay to share with my children. One of the books I found was the Bobbsey Twins' Own Little Railroad. Who knew o' so many years ago that this book would have even more meaning for me!

In the story young Freddie is upset because his toy train is broken. One day his dad comes and tells him that his neighbor has sold their property and moved into an apartment in town. Since their children are now grown, they have decided to give their grand scale railroad to the Bobbsey family. The book doesn't tell us the gauge or size but from the photo at left it looks like the drawing was based on a Cagney design or something similar. The family were given an engine, a tender, a passenger car and track. Before long the family has the train set up in their yard and all sorts of fun things happen.

This particular edition was published in 1951 by Grosset & Dunlap, Inc. I am curious if any of our readers remember this story or know what engine the artist used as a model for the illustration. If nothing else, it's a fun story to share with whatever children are near you. . . or just to reread for yourself.



Visit [http://www.arborwayrailroad.com/2007\\_convention.html](http://www.arborwayrailroad.com/2007_convention.html) for more info on the convention.

# FORT HUMBOLDT STATE HISTORIC PARK Prototype Gypsies



The Fort Humboldt State Historic Park sits on a bluff above Eureka, California on the far northern coast. It was established as a military post in 1853 to assist settlers and gold miners in their conflicts with the Native Americans. For a six months period in its early years the Fort saw a commander who would eventually become very famous: Ulysses S. Grant. Reportedly Grant didn't enjoy being in what was then an extremely isolated post.

The one original building on the site is the military hospital. What will interest our readers far more, however, are the logging interpretive displays which include Bear Harbor No.1 and the famous Elk River engine, *Falk*. These engines are standard gauge 0-4-0Ts built by Marshutz &



Cantrell in 1892 and 1884 respectively. They both have distinctive bull gear winches mounted in front of their boilers.

The Bear Harbor engine has two cylinders mounted "backwards", turning a drive shaft in front of the smokebox. The drivers are powered by a gear on the front axle and can be disengaged. A separate mechanism

can engage the bull gear. The *Falk* is a normal "rod" engine with two cylinders powering the drivers. A third cylinder located in the fireman's side of the cab powers a flywheel, which is geared to the bull gear on the spool shaft. The Bear Harbor No. 1 weighs in at 12 tons. The *Falk* is a lightweight at 9 tons . . . but cute as a bug's ear. Many readers will recognize it from the series of articles that appeared in *Live Steam*



magazine a number of years ago.

There is also an excellent collection of steam donkeys that had been used in the once prosperous logging industry on the coast. A close-up look at these fabulous machines will delight anyone who has a Rube





Goldberg sense of wonder about mechanics. There are more levers and gears and shafts than you can shake a stick at.

During the summer, one day each month is set aside to give train rides behind one of the engines. The track is short, but could certainly be considered “rare mileage”! A number of the donkey engines are steamed up on a weekend in April for “Donkey Days”.

For more information contact Fort Humboldt State Historic Park, 3431 Fort Avenue, Eureka, CA 95503. Phone: 707-445-6567. Website: [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)



## NEW CHANCE FOR MEMPHIS ZOO

The Memphis Zoo, Memphis, Tenn., received a new C.P. Huntington locomotive this past June. This is number 350 for Chance Rides manufacturing who has been producing CPH trains for more than 45 years. The Memphis Zoo operates two trains daily from March through October. Cost to ride is \$1. Chance Morgan, Inc. is located in Wichita, Kansas. For more information about Chance Morgan products, visit [www.chancemorgan.com](http://www.chancemorgan.com).





# BACKYARD RAILROAD BRIDGES

by Greville Machell

Having completed the intended track plan for my 1400 foot, 1.5 inch scale backyard railroad, I wanted to add some features to the enhance the layout. My first choice were some small bridges, specifically an 8-foot long through plate girder and a 12-foot long pony truss. I particularly chose the latter to avoid the problem of “scale size” vs. “people size” inherent in models of truss bridges with overhead bracing. The requirement for at least 5 feet people clearance above the rail gives the rolling stock a “toy train” look. Pony, or half trusses, were generally built in prototype lengths of about 90 to 120 feet. Many are still in use on class 1 railroads.

Direct observation of prototype bridges, and perusal of photographs, helped me in developing designs but left a lot of unanswered questions. As a former HO-scale modeler I also have the National Model Railway Association’s Data Sheets, including “D6c” on steel bridges, which was useful. However, the best information was gathered with the help of the inter-library loan section of the local public library. They obtained for me the following out-of-print books:

- 1) *Steel Railway Bridges* by Edward C. Dilworth (D Van Norstrand, 1916)
- 2) *Manual for Railway Engineering* (American Railway Engineering Assoc., 1979)
- 3) *Railway Engineering & Maintenance Cyclopedia* (1926)
- 4) *Standard Handbook for Civil Engineers* by F.S. Merritt (3rd Ed., 1983)

I chose to build two of the designs from the Dilworth book, although I changed the through plate girder to a heavier-duty type with a 14-inch deep (actual size) web. Both bridges were constructed from aluminum sections to keep the weight down (I have physical handicaps).

To carry most of the wood, however, I used treated lumber for stringers instead of the usual girders: 2 pairs of 2”x6”x8-foot (nominal) for the plate girder and two sets of three (2”x8”x12-foot) for the pony truss. The latter bridge is just over two feet high overall or about 20” above rail level.

Most existing railroad bridges are assembled with rivets but I used button-head socket and Phillips



Above and below: The completed through plate girder bridge



bolts. There are about 1100 in the plate girder and close to 4000 in the pony truss. Prototype bridges have even more fasteners of course. The two bridges are supported on heavy timber trestle bents which are not unusual on prototype secondary lines.

The photos illustrate the two bridges installed and in use. Since they are close to prototype in construction, they look more convincing than the welded angle-iron or tubing bridges seen on many club layouts. For example, following Dilworth’s design, the





Photos this page: the pony truss bridge. All photos by Greville Machell.



pony truss top chord has a “box” section formed from two channels with a solid top plate and x-lacing on the underside. The bottom chord, verticals and diagonals are “H” sections assembled from strips and angles. In addition, the cross bar of the “H” section of the bottom chord is perforated. A tedious job but justified by the end result.

I hope this information will help other rail-roaders who are contemplating adding bridges to their railroads.



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**Robinson & Associates**  
 PO Box 8953  
 Red Bluff, CA 96080 USA  
 530-527-0141

**Fax: 530-527-0420**  
[www.grandscales.com](http://www.grandscales.com)  
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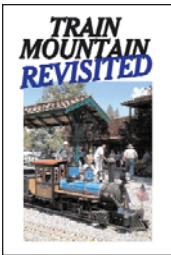


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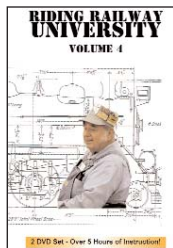
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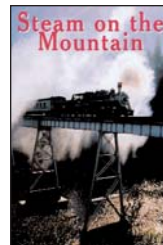


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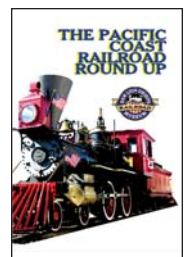
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