

**M. S. Cross describes
some pre-grouping
rail built
buffer stops**

FOR the want of a nail, so the story goes, the battle was lost. Much the same could be said of railway modelling, for without scale rail, not only is realistic track out of the question, but we have to do without many typical lineside features. Among the latter are railbuilt buffer stops.

Most of the pre-grouping companies seem to have developed their own designs for this equipment, with the result that each line, even today, has an unmistakable ancestry written in its lineside features. As railway modellers, it is in our interest to study these features and try to reproduce them on our layouts; the results cannot fail to add a certain air of authenticity to the models.

To show how the designs of buffer stops may vary, several typical examples chosen at random are depicted in the various diagrams and photographs. The notes refer only to the examples shown, as there are many small variations in design between structures erected by the same Railway Companies, quite apart from the main regional differences, as may be found from an examination of the photographs. Even the rails used vary in height between 4½ in and 5½ in.

As far as I can ascertain, railbuilt buffer stops were normally given a preservative coat of tar, although in post-war years this finish tended to be replaced by a coat of more familiar rust! It would be of value if further information on railbuilt buffer stops were to be forthcoming, especially with regard to the fitting of lamps.

1: Great Western

This neat, simple structure appears to be a standard type. The prototype was measured at Kidlington, but the photograph was taken at Fairford. Note the rounded beam in the latter and the fishplates where the tie rod enters the uprights. There is a central rail in the compression strut, which is bent to join the uprights at the top end. The uprights are joggled so as to rest flush with the outside faces of the running rails, to which they are bolted. The extension of the inner tension strut is joggled to provide a flangeway and special chairs are used to accommodate the groups of rails. At Fairford, ancient inside-keyed chairs have been utilised, a relic of the days when the entire line was so constructed.

2: Great Central

A very substantial structure. The three-rail beam is bolted through fishplates to a special chair, which is fitted to the leading upright rail. These chairs appear to be special rail-joint chairs left over from some experiments in this direction during the Victorian era. Other interesting features are the wrapped running rail ends, the use of extra tension struts and the long spacer in the flangeway. The photograph and measurements were taken from a prototype at Rugby Central.

3: South Eastern and Chatham

This company made considerable use of rail for its lineside equipment; even wayside stations boasted railbuilt cattle docks, fencing, loading gauges and, of course, versions of this attractive buffer stop. The wooden beam is backed by a triple rail and the unit is attached to the uprights by two angle castings and a metal strap. Uprights are joggled to fit inside the running rail. Extra blocks were sometimes fitted to the beam, which in some cases also carried a red lantern with white face ring. The photograph was taken at Reading.

4: London and South Western

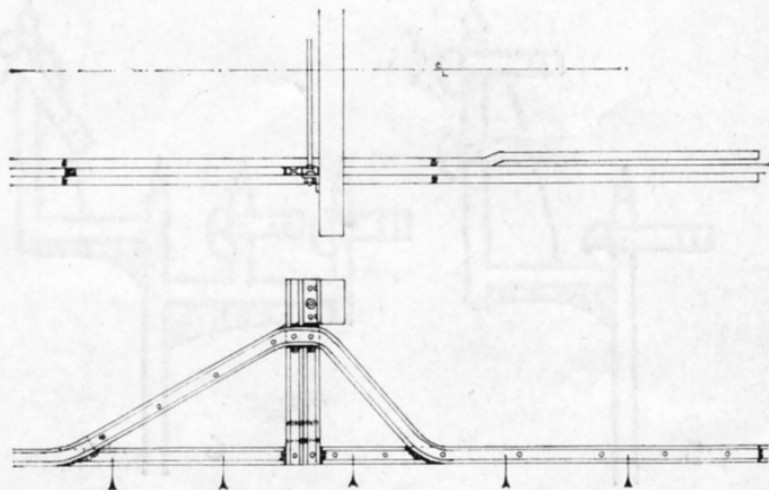
The wooden beam is attached to the uprights by special chairs and the uprights are joggled to lie flush with the outside edge of the running rails. The inner tension strut extensions are led below rail level. Beams are painted white with a red band across the blocks. The measurements were taken at Fleet, and the photograph at Southampton.

5: Midland

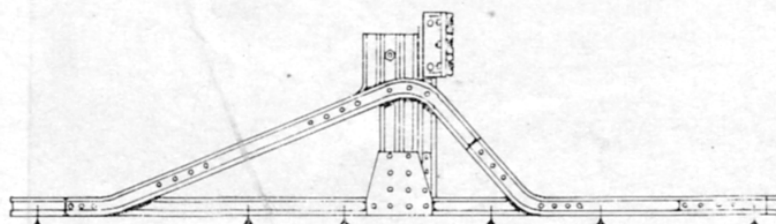
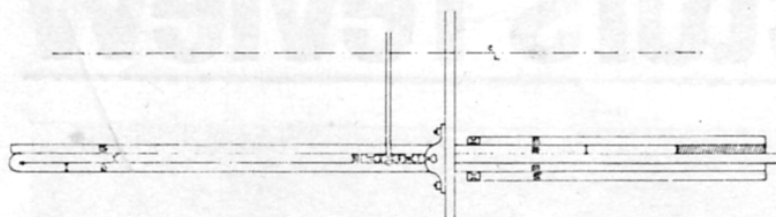
A very simple structure this; two or three buffer beam rails are bolted to the uprights by angle plates. The uprights are gently joggled to lie flush with the outside of the running rails. From observations at March, the Great Eastern appear to have used a very similar type of buffer stop, the difference being a metal collar round the top of the uprights. This is shown on the drawing. The photograph was taken at St. Albans Loco Depot; note the inside-keys of the chairs.

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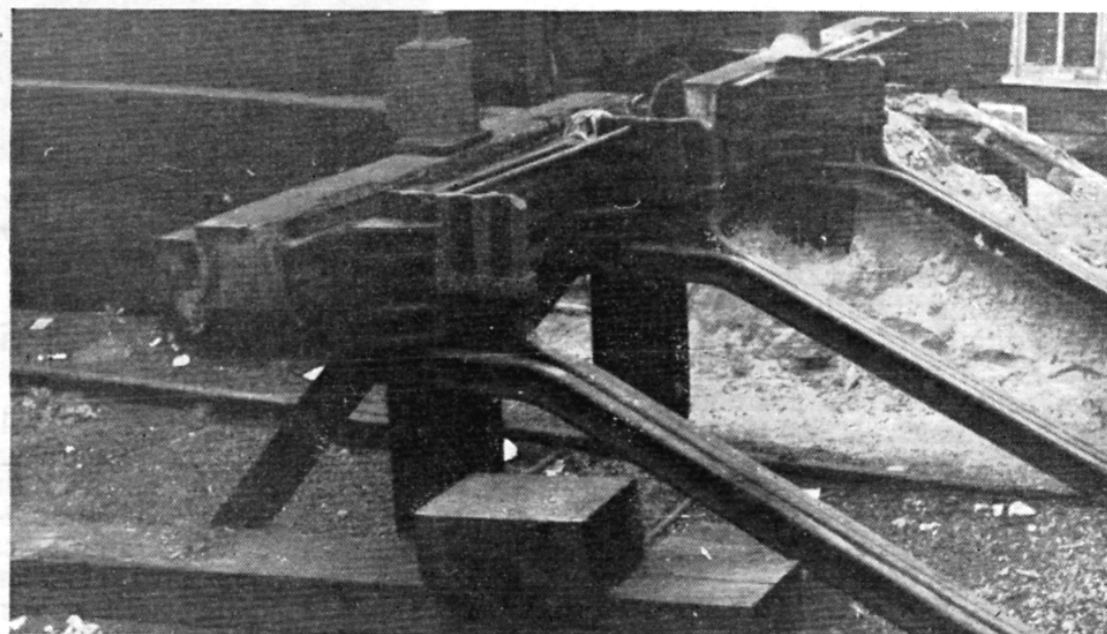
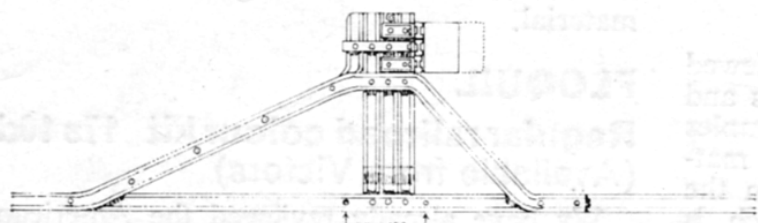
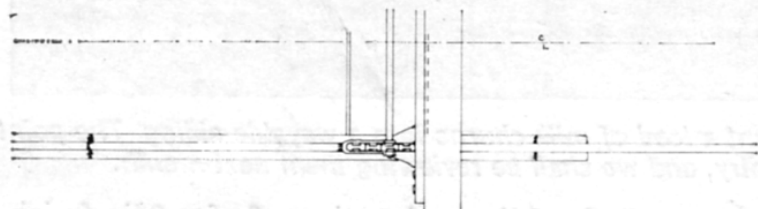
1: GWR



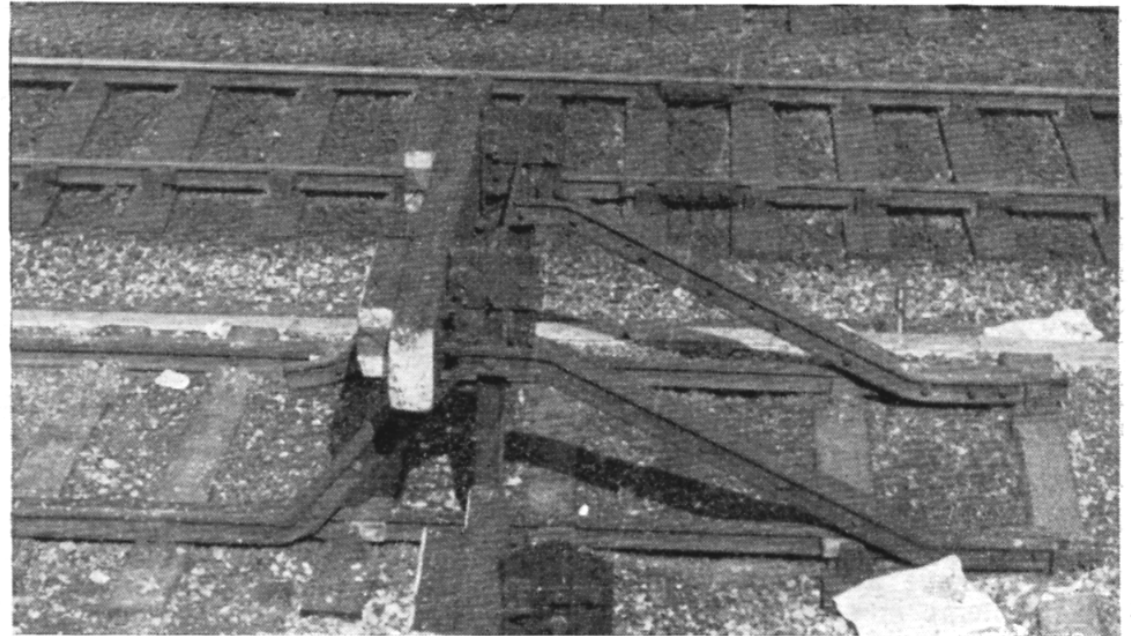
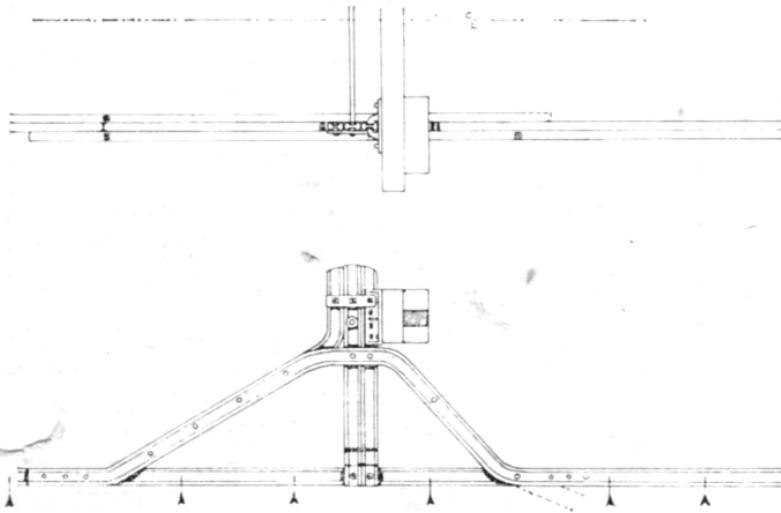
2: GCR



3: SECR



4: LSWR



5: MR

