Soberton Operating Notes

Introduction

Soberton being a Club layout, it is reasonable that everyone gets a chance to run their stock on it. However, when being exhibited this has to be tempered with the question “Is this correct, or even justifiable?” and “will the public accept what is being displayed?”

To explain, at odd times in the past we have allowed the layout to run “Modern Image” at our own shows and occasionally at other shows as well; the last time we did this at a Wickham Show I wound up fielding some fairly serious complaints about the travesty of having allowed it to happen from visitors who had travelled some distance to see it, only to find modern diesel and electric stock hurtling round rather than the BR(S) trains we normally show on it. Whilst everyone had a good time and was happy to have seen their stock out on the big layout it can not be denied that the exercise did not do any good for our credibility as a Club for serious modellers and accordingly these notes are offered in the hope that we can all learn from the experience and retain our street cred whilst still having fun.

The reason I am setting them down on paper now is that it’s probably a good idea that this information is in the public domain rather than just in my head. And the origin of this wisdom? Mainly reading magazine articles, web articles and talking to the people “who were there” over the last 20 years. I don’t claim that any of these notes should be treated as if they were Holy Writ, they are just a distillation of what I have learnt over the years into something that seems to work. There are always going to be exceptions to any rule and if someone comes up with one please let me know about it so that we can look at incorporating it into the way we run Soberton.

Finally, whilst mentioning Soberton by name, these notes apply equally to, Bramley Oak, Nictun Borrud or any other late-steam/early-diesel layout set in the BR(S) territory, or indeed anywhere else in the country - you just have to change the names and classes of the locos I will talk about.

Freight Stock and Trains

General Things to Understand First

Soberton is set in the BR(S) “Early” era - this corresponds to Bachmann Era 4. Therefore, stock that belongs to Era 3 (the so-called Grouping or Big Four era) is unlikely to have been seen on the railway at this time. During WW2 the Ministry of War Transport effectively took over all

private owner wagons and used them to the best advantage it could in the circumstances it was dealing with at the time. At the end of the war a lot of the remaining freight stock was so badly damaged or worn out that there was little point in trying to renovate it and so when Nationalisation happened an urgent task for the newly formed BRB was to create standardised designs and build replacement stock, replacing the existing stock as quickly as possible. As a result, this largely precludes Private Owner vans and open wagons from appearing on Soberton - but there are always going to be exceptions...

Liveries and Numbers

Freight wagons in the BR era typically come in two colours, bauxite (a sort of deep brownish colour) and grey. Officially there are two versions of each colour which represent the “early” and “late” periods corresponding to Bachmann eras 4 and 5; the reality is that there are lots of variation of shade in both colours, add to that colour fade and the actual colour of each wagon is going to be different - and all that before we start weathering...

Further, a wooden bodied van or open wagon is quite likely at some point to have had a plank or sheet of ply replaced as a result of either rot or damage, at which point the new section will have to be repainted. When a new wing on an accident damaged car is sprayed after fitting a good body shop will go to some lengths to tone the new paint down to match the existing faded colour of the car - after all they are being paid to do a proper job - but a railway works is unlikely to want to go to that length so it is entirely plausible to see a van on a layout with a totally different coloured plank or panel, indeed some of my kit built wagons have this feature.

With one exception, the colours of wagons in this period have a specific meaning: bauxite = “fitted”, grey = “unfitted”, the “fitting” referring to whether or not the wagon is fitted with a vacuum brake. The difference that this makes is that a fitted train can go much faster than an unfitted train as if the driver needs to stop suddenly a fitted train can come to a stand much more easily that an unfitted one because all the wheels on a fully fitted train will be contributing to the stopping force the driver is trying to apply. The exception to this colour rule involves unfitted mineral wagons used owned by the Ministry of Transport (MoT), these are exclusively to carry road stone - and they are all painted bauxite despite not being vacuum braked.

Any private owner wagons that did make it through the war in a serviceable state were repainted in an appropriate colour scheme - for the most part. Exceptions to this rule occurred where the wagon was inspected and it was deemed to have only a short life expectancy, when a black data panel was painted on it in the lower left hand corner of each side and its running number stenciled on. As late as the end of steam there were open wagons running in this state - very faded paint private owner livery and a big black data panel.

Wagon numbering is relatively simple in era 4, they all have a letter followed by a six digit number. The letter indicates the origin of the wagon and the number its serial number in the capital stock. The letters can be read as follows:

Initial Letter	Meaning
B	Built by British Railways Board
S	Inherited from Southern Railway
W	Inherited from Great Western Railway
E	Inherited from the London & North Eastern Railway
M	Inherited from the London, Midland and Scottish Railway
MoT	Owned by the Ministry of Transport
P	Formerly a Private Owner Wagon

Finally in this section, the transition between eras 4 and 5 was marked by the introduction of TOPS codes and other enhancements to the data panels.

Operations

Take a moment to think about any logistics operation, something is produced, it is parcelled up and either taken to or collected by the courier; the courier then moves it from its local offices to its distribution hub where it is forwarded as quickly as possible to the distribution hub nearest its destination, and then to the local office from where it is either collected or delivered to its final destination.

The vast majority of railway freight is no different in this era, goods - either individually or by the wagon load - were taken to the local railway station where they were to be loaded, they were then moved to the nearest main marshalling yard to be put into trains to go to another main yard by the quickest possible route, and then back onto a local train for delivery to the station where they were to be unloaded.

The train that collects or delivers one or more wagons from the station is usually referred to as a pick-up goods train. The trains that run from main yard to main yard have a variety of names, Trip Freight being the chiefly used term. Additionally Soberton actually uses a third type of freight train, referred to as a block freight. This is a train made up entirely of one type of wagon, in our case mineral wagons, that form the two long coal trains.

Parcels traffic is very similar to freight traffic but on a smaller scale, in the era in question a parcel would be delivered to the local station - but the booking office as opposed to the goods office. Certain passenger trains would be designated to collect and deliver parcels and the station staff would always be on hand to touch base with the guard to exchange packages. On arrival at a major station (in our case most probably Portsmouth and Southsea) the parcels would be collected by the station staff and taken to the Parcels Office for sorting. Anything that could be delivered by a regular service leaving from that station would be sent straight out,

parcels for further afield would be transported to a distant hub station on a parcels train - which were made up of parcels vans and usually ran to passenger train rules, but overnight.

Marshalling Freight Trains

The distinction between fitted and unfitted wagons rears its head again here, a fitted train is able to travel much faster than an unfitted one because it can brake much more easily and it is beholden on the person assembling a train to do the best he can with the stock that has to move to allow it to run at the fastest permissible speed.

In the case of the pick-up goods train this can be difficult, the yardmaster at the yard where the train is prepared will do the best he can to arrange the wagons in some sort of order that will allow the driver to proceed at the maximum permissible speed, but his overriding concern will actually be to make sure the train can be divided and shunted en-route with the minimum of fuss and as a result the pick up goods could be a right mixture of fitted and unfitted wagons in virtually any order; this concern may also limit the length of a particular freight train to being really quite short.

The block freights and the trip freights will, however, be assembled to a different priority - maximising the speed of travel. To do this the train may be given a fitted head and tail; to explain: in a train made up of 25 mineral wagons the locomotive and the first five wagons will be fitted with braking and the last five and the guards van will also be fitted. This means that when the driver applies the brakes braking effort is supplied by the locomotive and the first 20% of the train - a much better bet than the locomotive trying to hold back its train alone and if the rest of the train is through-piped then the rear-most 20% of the train can also contribute to the braking effort.

The only other “rule” - if you can call it that - that has an impact here concerns cattle wagons. It is said that if a train is transporting livestock then the cattle wagons should be marshalled at the front of the train to remind the driver that he is carrying livestock. It is also said to be a general direction that cattle wagons containing livestock should be subjected to the bare minimum of shunting in order not to distress the animals. These rules have to be caveated that I have read about them from various internet sources, I have never actually seen them in print in what I would consider to be an authoritative source...

And Freight Train Locomotives

Firstly here, a word about power classifications and other ways of identifying locomotives.

An M7 has a power classification of 2P - meaning it is a Class 2 locomotive designed to run passenger trains. A T9 is 3P (Hornby), a Black Motor (700 class) is 3F (Hornby), a Schools is 5P (Hornby), a Bulleid Light Pacific is a either 6MT (mixed traffic) or 7P 5F (freight) (Hornby), a Merchant Navy is 8P (Hornby), a Terrier is 0P Hornby), an N Class is 4P/5F (Bachmann) and a Q1 is 5F (Hornby). What do these different distinctions really mean, and what difference does it

make to a locomotive? Well, a locomotive for passenger use needs to be able to accelerate relatively quickly to be able to get away from a station in a sprightly manner whereas a freight locomotive may need to grind a heavy train away relatively slowly; as a result passenger locomotives tend to have bigger wheels, a trailing pony truck (bogie) and a cylinder arrangement to suit the sprint start, mixed traffic locos have slightly smaller drivers and a freight locomotive the smallest of all. Oh, and with smaller wheels the top speed of a freight loco will be lower than a large wheeled passenger loco.

One major "problem" concerned with what locomotive to use for a particular train is that people often make misguided choices because they "like the look" of a particular engine. For example, a local pick up goods train really doesn't need a massively powerful locomotive, a locomotive rated 3F or 3MT would be more than adequate. Next, consider a class 4 locomotive; a 4MT is probably quite able to pull 40 or 50 loaded freight wagons, the choice of using a tank or tender engine for a particular turn being governed by the question "Does this loco have enough fuel and water capacity for the trip?". A 4MT tender loco would be able to manage most turns, a tank locomotive would be more than capable of managing Portsmouth to Eastleigh but Portsmouth to London might be stretching things a tad too far.

And the block trains? Where possible we try to use Q1s which at 5F are more than capable of hauling 25 loaded mineral wagons and a Queen Mary brake van, but just remember that it could just as easily be a 4MT (tender) loco.

Finally in freight there is a get out of jail free card that we can play, Soberton is geographically close to the works at Eastleigh. If Eastleigh had a locomotive that had been for a heavy overhaul - and they wanted to give it a shake-down to assess if further work was needed - they were not beyond putting some really quite bizarre locos on the most innocent of trains. A Merchant Navy on a local freight? If the works had one that needed testing and the route was up to the axle load of a Merch, then yes - highly possible...

A word about Brake (Guard's) Vans

The prime purpose of this vehicle is to provide a means of braking the train from the rear if necessary, to do this it has to be "manned" by the Guard. The correct term is a Brake Van but the term Guard's Van has slipped into common usage. Brake vans follow the same basic livery rules as other freight wagons - grey = unfitted, bauxite = fitted. Sensibly, someone assembling a freight train will try to choose an appropriate brake van for the train - unfitted ones should be the first choice for a pickup goods which is likely to be speed restricted thus leaving the fitted ones for the longer trip and block workings.

The Southern had some fairly distinctive brake vans, the Pill Box (both 15T & 25T), the Dance Hall (both originating on the SE&CR), and the Queen Mary (bogie brake van). Soberton uses QMs on the two block mineral trains and whatever comes to hand on the other trains. Other distinctive brake vans are the ex-GWR Toad. For the most part there were branded "NOT COMMON USER" in the time frame we are looking at and so rarely strayed off the Western

Region - but there will of course be exceptions.

An aside for Nictun Borrud: NB has a Military siding and has an MoD train in its timetable. The MoD had a number of SR style 25T Pill Box Brake Vans, if assembling an MoD train think about including a Pill Box rather than the BR Standard 20T Brake.

A word about lighting on brake vans: a properly organised brake van on a train with any unfitted wagons in it has 3, yes three, rearwards facing lamps on it, one in the centre of the rearwards facing veranda and one on each side outboard of the body side. The two outside lamps show red to the rear and white to the front. The reason for this is that a driver needs to be able to look back along his train and make sure the whole train is still following him - if he can see at least one of the forward facing white lamps he knows he still has a complete train. This is important because it is not unknown for 3-link couplings to break…

Finally here, I am indebted to Geoff E who pointed out that in some circumstances a guard's van can have 2 rearwards facing red lights plus an orange one. Why? In a "slow loop" with a passenger train hammering down behind, the driver seeing three red lights in front of him won't necessarily know if the freight train is in the loop or on the fast line and so would have to slow until he was sure he wasn't about to run into it. If however, the guard has pulled the red filter out of the lamp closest to the fast line and replaced it with an orange one as the train entered the loop then the driver of the approaching passenger train can immediately see which side it is safe to pass the slower moving train on.

Parcels (and Newspaper) Trains

Parcels trains fall into two main categories, trains composed of goods vans and trains of non-passenger coaching stock (NPCS).

The Southern had a range of NPCS Utility Vans which are available RTR or from Parkside kits. These are split to bogie and 4-wheeled varieties - but the 4 wheelers were somewhat larger than an ordinary freight van. Add to this the fact that British Railways produced a variety of vehicles of their own (and made some upgraded versions of ex-SR vans), and then add the fact that it would be very common for through parcels vans to run in from other regions then we have a strong case for really interesting trains.

My evidence for this last statement? Well, the LNER had some interesting NPCS vehicles (BGs actually) that were converted for carrying and releasing racing pigeons - these turned up everywhere on parcels trains, were parked in a yard somewhere for the pigeons to be released and the van then returned empty to the north-east. Also, in the early 1980s I went to a Scout camp in Scotland with 3rd Portchester, we took 2 x 20' Home Counties Gigs with us. We towed one ourselves and delivered the other one to Portsmouth and Southsea station one afternoon, we heaved it off its trailer and loaded it into either a bogie luggage van or a PMV (I can't remember which but I do know it wasn't a CCT because we had to maneuver the boat in

through the side doors rather than using end doors), the second day of the camp we went to Inverness station with the trailer and collected the boat and the other equipment we had loaded into the wagon; two weeks later we went back to Inverness, loaded the boat back into the same van which BR(Sc) had been using locally for the duration of the camp (I remember the station team said it was better than the vans they usually had to work with) and then collected it a week or so later from Portsmouth & Southsea again.

Suitable vehicles for these sorts of trains: GUV, CCT, Van B, Van C, PMV et al.

Newspaper trains tend to follow similar rules but are block trains that run loaded in the early hours of the morning from the London Termini and return empty in the afternoons, arriving after the evening rush starts to calm down.

And the Milk...

Milk tanks are a special case of NPCS vehicle. They too get loaded at various locations in the wee small hours (but in the country) and are picked up by an early passenger train, taken to some central station where they can be marshalled into a special train and taken to a big processing plant somewhere, usually towards London. They get returned empty to the marshalling point and redistributed to the place where they are to re-filled by a pick-up goods train, and so the cycle continues.

We have tried to replicate this traffic on Soberton from time to time, we have brought a milk van into the bay attached to the rear of the pull-push from Southwick, and then shunted it into the goods yard; at the next convenient moment when a semi-fast passenger train going north (up) stops the milk wagon is shunted out of the yard and onto it - NB: it needs to be removed at the fiddle yard so that it doesn't come round again in the next cycle.

Now, it's no secret that I don't like keeping an engine in the yard at Soberton, a station of that size may well have had a dormitory shed to house the branch line loco - although that is also highly questionable - but the pick-up goods trains would almost certainly have been shunted by the road engine rather than a pilot kept there for that purpose. The milk tank is the one case where we can justify having a yard pilot to handle the movement of the milk tank.

Note: I have tried to build a corresponding milk tank movement into the timetable for Nictun Borrud but this is problematic because the platform length in the bay platform makes it difficult to accommodate a PP set, an M7 and a milk tank, but it will come one day.

Passenger Trains and stock

The Southern Railway was to a certain extent unique in that rather than deal in individual coaches and assembling trains as required it tried to keep its coaches together in pre-formed "sets" and assembled trains by coupling one or more sets to a locomotive, the other railways

(and later regions) tended to make up trains from available coaches they had to hand which sometimes led to not having consistent train formations. The SR also had a number of “loose” vehicles that could be used to augment a train if a heavier than normal traffic was expected, for example a spare composite would be tacked onto a 4-Set if it was known a school party was to be conveyed on a normally busy service.

The coaches we use

These can be divided as follows:

Breaking news mid-2014: Bachmann have announced SECR Birdcage stock. Originating on the South Eastern Section it is unlikely that these would appear on a South Western Section layout; however, they did stray this way sometimes on “specials” but bearing in mind that as “third” class stock they equated to cattle class and people would have been unlikely to be happy to travel any distance on them. That said, I will be using a rake of this stock on Gosport to represent an in-coming troop train from Chatham.

Breaking news June 2015: Hornby have just announced 4 coach models to SR Diagrams 98, 99, 418 and 31. These are ex-LSWR 48’ coaches that were life expired so in the mid 30s were butchered by Maunsell who placed them on 58’ chassis. They lasted well into the 50s and some were still around in the very early 60s. These would have run in both Crimson and Green liveries in the timeframe we are looking at here, they would have been used for the bottom link - in our case stopping or slow services from Gosport to Alton.

Generally speaking, the earliest coaches we would expect to find running in the era in which Soberton is set would be Maunsell coaches, these are produced by Hornby and for the most part are marshalled into fixed 3, 4 and more coach sets. For the purpose of this exercise we can assume that semi-fast (and some slow) trains would be made up of this Maunsell stock.

Timewise, next comes the Bulleid stock. OVS Bulleid was the CME of the Southern in the latter stages of the war and carried the SR into the Nationalisation era. He devised a programme of coach replacement that saw the demise of a lot of pre-Maunsell coaches. His coaches look like the later Mark 1 coaches but have very distinct rounded windows which are particularly noticeable in the windows above the drop-lights in the doors. Bulleid coaches are produced by Bachmann and are also available as kits from Southern Pride.

Finally, British Railways Mark 1 coaches produced in the nationalisation era and supposedly to a standardised design; if you’ll believe that you’ll believe anything... These coaches were also used as the basis of the slam door EMUs that we know and love. There are two distinct lengths of coach, 61’ and 57’, the shorter coaches being mainly high density seating suburban stock although note that the BGs were all built to the shorter length. The best Mk 1 coaches around today are Bachmann, with good kits from Southern Pride and Comet.

And finally in this section - an oddity. In the 60s when electrification of the Basingstoke to

Southampton and Bournemouth line was being planned - and more particularly the 4REP units that would be required to run the services were in build - BR(S) had to withdraw a number of their catering vehicles for conversion to multiple unit working which in turn left them short of vehicles for locomotive hauled trains. To redress this shortcoming they turned to the Eastern Region who were disposing of a number of Gresley designed teak catering vehicles which were simply bought south as ECS, renumbered and put into service in their existing maroon livery. Don't believe me? Look at http://www.semgonline.com/coach/gresbuf.html where the bastardised running number can be clearly seen. These vehicles went on to far outlive their cousins back home and I know of at least one picture of one at Portsmouth Harbour on a Cardiff train behind a Class 33 in very faded BR Corporate Blue/Grey livery.

Their liveries

Pre WW2 the Southern Railway's livery was green with light yellow lining. Wartime Austerity saw coaches that needed repainting being given "simple" liveries so all-over green became the order of the day.

Post-war, Nationalisation happened and the newly formed organisation that was the British Railways Board wanted a corporate identity that was clearly "different" to the big four companies that had gone before so the Carmine and Cream livery we refer to as "Blood and Custard" was born, Technically Blood and Custard was used on the main line stock and suburban and branchline stock was painted Carmine alone or Vermillion. Naturally this didn't go down too well in some quarters and most of the regions dragged their heels to a greater or lesser extent over the task of repainting their coaching stock. It's fair to say that by the mid 50s there were still a lot of ex-SR coaches still running round in their SR Colours.

Then the mid-50s came and it was decided that actually a bit of regional identity was possibly a good thing, and so the regional liveries were born. BR(S) heaved a sigh of relief and said we'll be green then, thus saving themselves the problem (and cost) of repainting a lot of their stock that was, by that time, long overdue for the paint shop.

It is worth recording what happened in the other regions when regionalisation was announced.

- Originally the Great Western had been chocolate and cream, they went carmine and cream on nationalisation and then went maroon on regionalisation, with the exception that for their top-link trains they reintroduced a chocolate and cream livery to hark back to their starting point. Unfortunately because they followed a loose-stock policy rather than fixed sets their regional liveried coaches quickly got spread around the region and never really appeared in the named trains for which they were intended.
- The Midland and Eastern Regions both went maroon with no exceptions.
- The Scottish Region which was born out of the LMS and LNER also went maroon.

Not every region fared well with this decision though, the Eastern Region (formerly the LNER) had inherited a lot of Gresley (and other) stock that was made from teak and was varnished

rather than painted. At Nationalisation they were more or less been forced to embark on a massive programme of painting their coaching stock so they couldn't really afford to change livery again so soon after the last change. The net result was that in the late 60s with the switch to the new corporate blue and blue/grey liveries there was a real rag bag of colour floating around the Eastern region.

When the "end of steam" took place and BR went over to the so-called Corporate Image livery of blue all this came to an end (supposedly). Coaches became blue and grey if on a top link service or plain blue if used on suburban services and everything became "common user" so the ideas of set numbers went around this time; also the regional identifier prefixes (and suffixes) of coach numbers were removed. As this progressed the remains of BR(S) got things slightly wrong, a number of their EMUs got painted in plain blue when they really ought to have been painted in blue/grey. Oh well.

And finally for liveries, I have seen a picture of a blue/grey brake coach at Eastleigh with a set number painted on the end behind a tender 4MT...

And their running numbers

Under the Southern Railway coaches were just numbered. When British Railways took over the numbering system was changed so that it was possible to identify which region a coach belonged to and if it was one that was inherited from one of the Big Four companies which one it came from (presumably so that if one turned up a long way from home and in need of repair it was fairly simple to identify who to go to for spares and advice).

So, Southern Railway coach numbers all gained an S prefix, making Bulleid coach number 5768 become S5768 to identify it as belonging to the Southern Region and to identify it as ex-Southern Railway it was given an S suffix as well, making it S5768S.

For coaches in preformed sets the set numbers were painted on the outward facing ends of the coaches at the outer ends of each set in variously yellow and white.

And those Gresley catering vehicles? The LNER coach which had been 9121 in their ownership and E9121E in BR(E) ownership became S9121E in BR(S) ownership

And so to the trains:

The Boat Trains

A special train would be laid on to get passengers to and from a Transatlantic ship or a cruise liner. There are two distinct styles for this train.

1) To meet a Transatlantic ship a special train would be laid on by the shipping company from

Waterloo to Southampton Terminus (read as “Docks”) comprised of coaches and luggage vans. Where possible this would be made up of the “best” (or at least what was perceived to be the most comfortable) stock available and would have one or more SR luggage wagons usually marshalled at the “Up” end of the train.

2) Cruise Liner trains mostly followed the same pattern as for transatlantic ships but there is some evidence that if the operators knew they had a lot of people travelling from a certain area they would look at laying on a special train from that area. Logically extending this it is entirely possible that a 4 coach + luggage van train of Gresley stock in Blood and Custard might leave Newcastle upon Tyne (Eastern Region) and go to Birmingham where it was joined to a similar train from Glasgow made up of ex-LMS Maroon stock, thence to Reading where it was joined by a couple of Hawkesworth (ex-GWR) coaches in top-link chocolate and cream and a BG plus a couple of green ex-SR coaches from say Kent and London. The whole train then proceeded via Basingstoke to the docks at Southampton. Very colourful...

Geoff normally provides 2 x 14 coach + van(s) pulled by a Merchant Navy class loco for these trains.

The Fast Trains

These trains are top-link mainline trains, they stop at major centres of population and flash through wayside stations like Soberton. These trains would typically be of top-link stock and pulled by an express engine.

I generally provide a train of Southern Pride Bulleid coaches in blood and custard livery pulled by a Bulleid experimental diesel (10203).

Not sure what Geoff provides for the other fast train but it will be a Bullied pacific of some sort plus a handful of coaches.

The Semi-Fast Trains

These trains are one link down from Express Passenger and might make one or two stops between major centres of population. They would typically be hauled by a tender (but not express) engine and would composed of say 6 or 8 coaches. A T9 and 2 x Maunsell 3-sets would fit this bill well. These trains stop at Soberton on account of the need to collect milk tanks and because of the connecting services from the Southwick branch.

The Slow Trains

A stopping service. May be a Maunsel 3-set or 4-set, probably hauled by a tank engine. Stops at every station. Note: At Soberton needs to connect with the Branch service.

The Block Freights

We have chosen to use coal trains for Soberton's block trains although historically stone trains from the Mendips might be more accurate. These are marshalled as Q1 - fitted head (5 wagons) - unfitted body (15 wagons) - fitted tail (5 wagons) - Queen Mary Brake Van; we use 16T mineral wagons, the loaded ones travel down (south) towards Fareham (my Q1 and Graham Ive's wagons), the empties travel up (north) towards Alton (Geoff E).

The Trip Freights

Assorted wagons, vans, opens with loads, assorted special wagons from the era, say 20-ish in total. Topped with a Class 4 tender loco, tailed by a fitted BR standard brake van.

The Pickup Goods

Well, more or less anything goes here... Class 3 or class 4 tank loco, and a selection of wagons plus a (probably) unfitted brake van. I always try to have some sense of purpose in my shunting when I am on pick up goods duty, the idea is that we shouldn't just be pushing wagons mindlessly round the yard; my approach is that I will spot 3 wagons around the yard and then arrange to bring the train in, swap say two of the six wagons in it on a one-for-one basis and then put the train back to the fiddle yard again. There is a software package called Wagon Flow that will programme the flow of wagons on freight trains and I have sometimes wondered about buying a copy and using it to set up a programme of wagon movements for Soberton. Maybe on the next flagship Club layout.