Aire Valley adventure 1.

Introduction to a valley

Derek Naylor describes the setting for his 00n 3. system

Photographs by Brian Monaghan

The Past Years

THE AIRE VALLEY first appeared in these pages in April 1961. Other articles followed showing various aspects of the line from scenic items to rolling stock. As a portable layout it was exhibited at several shows in the West Riding. The last public showing was in April 1965. The same year a permanent home was found for the line in the loft of my house. I had considered making use of the loft as a railway room for some months. It was only when Derek Shore started building his main line layout (Ardendale, Waterfoot and Crestron, Railway of the month, November 1970) in a loft a little smaller than mine that I got moving.

Of the portable layout, Nethertarn was sold. Saltaire and Moorhead were retained. The intermediate baseboards were scrapped after various scenic items were rescued. A new start was made. This new start, however, was disastrous and resulted in two years wasted modelling. In the first flush of enthusiasm a layout was designed with a view to getting the longest possible point-to-point run, plus a branch line. This involved the main line going twice round the room with the branch line fitted in between. At one point there were three levels. The lower main line over which the branch line crossed, this in turn being crossed by the upper main line. As the layout progressed my doubts about the layout design deepened until in one mad week the whole thing was ripped up.

The Present Layout

Before redesigning the layout some thought was given as to what would be desirable features. The valley must come first, this was to be the setting for the railway. Next the river, this must run the whole length of the valley. Obviously there must be some towns and villages for the railway to serve. As these would pre-date the railway some roads would also be needed. Some main basic traffic for the railway to transport was also a must. This is a mineral but more of that in the next article. Finally the line itself. There must not be a continuous run, no lines crossing over one another that are supposed to be miles apart. Lastly, if possible a branch line to add interest to the operating side.

The map of the valley and line will show how far I have been able to achieve the above aims. The least desirable feature in my own opinion is the section between Moorhead and Nethertarn. Here the railway hugs the riverside too much. This was a compromise that had to be made due to restriction in baseboard widths, etc.

The design of the layout has resulted in a relatively short run between stations. I have tried to overcome this to some extent with scenic breaks on the between station sections. Photographic number one shows the first of these, between Saltaire and Moorhead. This is the "Aire Gap". Here is a fold in the earth across the valley through which a glacier has forced its way. The road has had to climb over the lowest part of the fold. On the other side of the river the railway has had to tunnel under the fold. The timber tunnel mouths of the old line have been retained. The bare rock faces are made from stone beggared from the foreman of the demolition gang pulling down the real Saltaire station! And a queer look he gave me. I suppose he could have understood had I wanted a couple of barrow loads, but one stone!

The next scenic break between Moorhead and Nethertarn is shown in photograph number two. This is a combination of items. The Stonyridge road crosses the main line and river. Like the tunnel this bridge is an old gag. Also in the picture is one side of the valley. This is more or less in steps. On the plateau is Withering Heights Hall. (Yes Withering not Wuthering). This is made from plasticard with the stones cut individually. It is based on the first house in the deserted village of Wycoller between schools and Stonyridge.
TOP LEFT: Railcars 101 and 102 just entering; or are they just leaving Aire Gap tunnel. Road just visible on the right.

ABOVE: The tree, top left, shows the direction of the prevailing wind on Withering Heights! The river is just off scene, it runs through the arch, bottom right.

LEFT: Railcars 103 and 104 in the branch cutting. As in photograph No. 1 the water has come out very fair.

BELOW: The customs warehouse masks the harbour entrance.
Plan of the month
Looped eight
by C. J. Freezer

THIS month’s plan is deliberately designed to meet two needs, a compact scheme for a comparative beginner with a longish run, and a small layout ideal for exhibition use. It is, however, quite unsuitable for serious prototypical operation.

In any compact system, something has to go. In this case, it is reversible working. The line is designed for clockwise operation of up to three trains—one for each of the storage sidings. A large loco depot is provided, hopelessly out of proportion, but who cares? The gradients are arranged for clockwise operation, if you go widdershins you hit the sticky climbs, and the sidings face the wrong way. However, to vary the running, a short bay is provided for a local, either steam hauled or a 2-car DMU. The station is at mid level, equalizing the climb.

Photographs four, five and six show some views of Saltaire. The customs warehouse at the end of the harbour is a kind of scenic break itself. It helps to hide the supposed harbour entrance, so difficult to represent on a flat backdrop. This warehouse is about the only new feature at Saltaire. The captions will explain the other two photographs.
Aire Valley Adventure—2
C-Oil on the Aire Valley
Derek Naylor reveals the raison d'être of the line—a new and unique mineral
Photographs by Brian Monaghan

MANY prototype narrow gauge lines were constructed mainly with a view for easy transport of some mineral from a mine or quarry to a port or standard gauge line. In considering the fictitious history of the Aire Valley the mineral came later. The first section of line only ran between Saltaire and Moorhead. This was built to tap the agricultural resources at Moorhead. Some years later a mineral was discovered at the head of the Aire at Nethertarn and the line was extended. Reverting to fact again. Throughout the life of the line as a portable layout the mineral remained unnamed. It was transported to Saltaire where it was dumped in coastal steamers and shipped to unknown ports.

Before fully planning the permanent line I just had to find some mineral—something original yet reasonably feasible. Slate and granite were out, not original. Black pudding and treacle mines were also out, just a bit too silly. Though I think

1. The C-OIL works. The place could do with a lot more "mucking up.
2. The Quarry.
3. Loco number 2 Anne shunts a couple of hoppers under the mine level.
4. The C-OIL company's private coach.

Railway Modeller
we should take time off now and again to smile at ourselves. Suddenly the whole thing clicked, and up came C-OIL. What is C-OIL? It is a high oil content coal. The name C-OIL is pronounced as in coil of rope. There is a double meaning to the name. The associations of coal and oil will be fairly obvious. Also in broad Yorkshire coal is pronounced coil.

The mineral was discovered by a young American mining engineer called Colorado. It is understood his forefathers were Indian chiefs! Backed by a British financier called Carson, Colorado proved the mineral could be mined and processed economically. In the amended history of the line it was extended to Nethertarn and a branch line built to Stonyridge. It may be seen by readers, if we did not mine C-OIL at two separate places the whole theory of transporting it to Saltaire to be processed would fall through. It would be cheaper to process on the site and transport the oil.

As well as making the railway more interesting to operate the mineral provided three nice scenic items. Photograph number one shows the processing plant at Saltaire. The Playcraft hopper loading installation provides the centre piece. This is now the only commercially produced building on the layout. The condensing apparatus on the right is made from cigar tubes and wire. The oil storage tanks are the top half of some washing-up liquid containers. The oil is piped to coastal tankers in the harbour. The residue clinker is not wasted but taken farther up the line to the clinker block plant. The locomotive shunting in the works is the new number six diesel. It is a model of the Clogher Valley Walker diesel number two. The old diesel is now working in Australia!

At Nethertarn the C-OIL is quarried. Photograph number two shows the quarrying in operation. The quarry is several pieces of coal embedded in the “earth”. Piles of broken coal are ready for loading. The steam navvy is scratch built. In the foreground are the blacksmiths shop and the stable for the shunting horses. The mine at Stonyridge is shown in photograph number three.

Before closing this article on C-OIL I must explain how the company got its name. A pen friend in America—Martin Fauel—sent me a beautiful model he made of a Carson and Colorado combine. I was at a loss how to put this to use on the Aire Valley without repainting it. Of course! Name the mining company Carson and Colorado and make the combine its private coach. Photograph number four shows the combine.
Aire Valley Adventure—3
Scenes on the River Aire
Derek Naylor describes the riparian delights of his narrow gauge scenic system
Photographs by Brian Monaghan

Railcars 101 and 102 in Green Cove halt. The halt is well equipped, it has a seat as well as a nameboard! As mentioned in the text, the clinker block works really fits in.
IN the first article it was mentioned how the river had to be an integral part of the layout. I think one pitfall to avoid on this type of layout is that of filling all the available space with something. Naturally there must be the countryside, river, road and railway but to me some of this must be left free of houses, works etc. I'm not sure whether I've altogether succeeded in this, though a couple of attempts have been made. The section between the Clinker block works and Moorhead has been left absolutely clear. There are no houses, road vehicles or people and other animal life has been confined to a couple of water hens. Visitors never notice or at least never comment on this lack of life. So perhaps it works without it being obvious as when written down. The whole of the branch line is also free. This countered to some extent though by the fact the main line runs along the other side of the river and has several scenic features.

Working up river from Saltaire photograph number one shows the boating lake at Green Cove. This scene was not originally planned. It was only after being given the bathing figures and I was thinking of a way to use them, that the idea occurred. While not in the least like the real pleasure ground known as Shipley Glen, it was the glen that helped to inspire this model scene. Although it was a not too warm November day, the Editor of the RAILWAY MODELLER sampled one of the pleasures, I should say treasures of Shipley Glen, namely a ride on the tramway. The rowing boats and punts are fabricated from card. The row boats could do with replacing with better ones.

Swinging the camera to the right we came up with photograph number two. Here we have the halt which serves Green Cove and the Clinker block works behind. The latter was fully described in the April 1968 RAILWAY MODELLER. The photograph in that article showed the works situated on the aborted layout. Strangely enough, the various parts of the works were sited to fit the old layout yet they seem to blend in better on this one. A private siding serves the works. The points are electrically worked so the operators at either Saltaire or Moorhead can work them without leaving his panel. The old pack horse bridge is shown in photograph number three. This is only used as a footbridge now, vehicular traffic using a newer bridge. To some extent the pack horse bridge is shown out of context. It is part of a little scenic set, each giving reason to the other. This will come to light in the next article.

Having stated in the first article the river must be seen to flow the whole length of the valley, we now find this principle broken—but legitimately. Referring to the map of the valley it will be seen the river runs along the front of Moorhead and then disappears. It doesn't actually go off scene but goes underground. It would be more correct to say it rises here. It disappears as shown in photograph number four. Unfortunately the Moorhead controls are in the way of the river and this seemed as good a way "round" them as any.

Moving along beyond Moorhead for photograph five, up pop two more oldies. The watermill and sawmill. Both were described along with the ferris wheel and roundabout in the December 1961 RAILWAY MODELLER. I think they have both fitted in better on this layout than the old portable one. The watermill, between rail and river has been fitted with a weir, mill race and sluice gate. It does not have a private siding but goods can be loaded or unloaded on to a platform direct from the main line. The sawmill is in the inevitable corner position. This is tempered a little by having the road between the railway and the mill. The private siding serving the mill crosses this road. Once again the points are power worked.

The last photograph number six shows the adjacent rail and road bridges near Nethertarn. Once again the old idea of making the river appear from off scene under the bridges has been used. In the distance is the lower Tarn from which Nethertarn takes its name. There is supposed to be another Tarn up in the hills.

Loco number 5 "Aire" shunts a wagon of logs into the sawmill siding. The watermill's freight platform is adjacent to the first coach. In the foreground is the branch line.

Loco number 4 "Arthur" leaves Nethertarn. The PECO backdrop lake scene has blended in very well.
Aire Valley adventure 4
Moorhead village

Derek Naylor describes the principal metropolis of the valley
photographs by Brian Monaghan

DURING its life as part of the portable layout, Moorhead village was represented simply by the Bilteezi village square backdrop. On the present layout chance has been taken to expand part of the village in three dimensions. All these new buildings are to the left of the station. A couple of them are in front of the railway but most of them behind the line. It makes things look a bit more interesting with the line threading its way between buildings. It was the Editor who suggested I might like to try modelling some buildings in Plastikard stone and brick. Having had a go with this material on several of the buildings at Moorhead I must say I'm very pleased with the result. As many modellers will know it's easy stuff to cut and cement. Details like window frames are so easy to make up. Like most plastics and plastic kits though it's the painting finish that counts. The three plastistone buildings at Moorhead have been painted N.A.T.O. extra dark grey. It's more of a brown to me but it gives the effect I wanted. The painting was done in the usual manner and the whole of the stone work painted normally. By the time the last side of the building was painted the first side was tacky dry. The walls were then gone over again with a brush dipped in turps to kill the all over depth of paint. This is easy to do once you have got the knack.

In the case of brick buildings I just gave them a thin wash of black paint to weather them.

Photograph number one shows the first of the stone buildings, Moorhead parish church. This is modelled on Kirkdale church near Hemsley, Yorkshire. The church was illustrated in a drawing in the "Dalesman". It's a very useful publication for simple sketches of buildings and some of the cover paintings by IONICUS can be very inspiring to the modeller.

The next photograph, number two, is a view of the buildings in Church Lane. From left to right are the Vicarage, this is balsa wood and stone paper. A pair of houses in plasticbrick. The third block houses the general store, a hardware shop and a bank. The names over the shops are cut from billheads begged from the owners of a couple of local shops!

For photograph number three we move over the other side of the railway. The left hand building is a freestanding public house the Pack Horse Inn. The other building is the local garage. The prototype lies on the Patley Bridge-Grassington road. It had taken my eye several times so one day I stopped to sketch it. You might think there's not much to it but it has character, more so if you could see the prototype.

It was mentioned in the last article the pack horse bridge was tied up with several other scenic items. One of these is of course the Pack Horse Inn adjacent to the bridge. Then there is the garage. This has good reason for being positioned where it is. It stands almost on the site of the old stables which were once part of the inn's outbuildings. It will be seen that Church Lane is a cul-de-sac. Now, while local history is a bit thin I would imagine the old pack horse road continued behind the inn and joined Church Lane at the church gates. I suspect until the arrival of the railway this old road existed as a footpath. No doubt the railway company "forgot" to erect a stile at either side of the line!

From being a simple passing station on the portable layout the station now has the status of being a junction. This has been achieved with very little addition to the track layout. The shunting neck on the old layout which also served as a siding for the
A Harbous Bullnose Morris pulls in for some petrol while a mechanic sorts out the tiller steering on an old banger. The Pack Horse Inn is doing a brisk trade. Note the end wall where the stables used to be.

The sawmill has become the start of the branch line. The siding serving the goods yard is still in the same position. The additional track mentioned is a short bay platform for the branch train. The platform is very unprepossessing being of simple timber construction with an old coach serving as a waiting room. Ultra simple as it is, it works quite well if one of the railcars are serving the branch. With a separate locomotive and stock in use the staff have the additional chore of running round the train. Photograph number four shows the branch platform.

The last photograph, number five, is a view of the main platforms and the village square. The market and little fair are still with us—though theoretically only on Tuesdays! Older readers will see little has changed here. A little more dust has accumulated. Some different trains are on show however in an attempt to show the line is not stagnant.

The steam railcar rests in the branch platform at Moorhead. Perhaps “crude” is the word for the platform. In the right foreground is the waiting shelter, an old coach.

Tuesday in Moorhead. The market is busy. Up and down trains pause in the platforms.
Aire Valley adventure—5

On the Stonyridge branch
by Derek Naylor

photographs by Brian Monaghan

Loco number 5 “Audrey” with branch coach on timber trestle bridge. Stonyridge arrival signal by rear of coach is slotted in the post.
In a diesel railcar article (RAILWAY MODELLER March 1966) and the steam railcar article (RAILWAY MODELLER February 1970) I kept harping on these units would be ideal for branch line working. So here we have the stamping ground of these units.

In the earlier article in this series on C-OIL it was mentioned the mineral had to be mined in more than one place to give reason for transporting it to the processing plant. This did not mean there had to be a branch line. A couple of mines or quarries at different places on the main line would have served equally well. However a branch line does offer extra operating interest. In the last article a photograph featured the branch platform at Moorhead and a photograph in the first article illustrated the cutting beyond midway point on the branch.

The first photograph therefore brings us relatively near to Stonyridge itself. This is a timber trestle bridge carrying the line over the river Stony. To be honest I don’t think the width of the crossing really warrants a trestle bridge. They are nice to look at though and interesting to construct. The line is on a curve over the bridge. The track was laid first and several of the clips or staples holding the rails and sleepers together were soldered to the rails on each side of the bridge site. The sleepers on the bridge portion of the track were then removed without the track gauge springing. The bridge was then built under the rails!

Moving up river or stream, for truthfully the Stony river is not much more than a stream, a small but only tributary to my river Aire we come to photograph number two. Before continuing I wonder if the Editor will permit a small observation on rivers and tributaries. There must be many modellers and prototype enthusiasts who have never heard of the real river Aire. It nurses the Midland main line from Leeds to Skipton on its way to that more famous location, the long drag. Yet all must have heard of the river Worth which is no more than a glorified stream emptying into the river Aire. The Worth valley is of course famous for the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway and the legend of the Brontës. Truly a case of the tail wagging the dog! The Aire has one famous landmark though, the real Saltaire...
village. Built 120 years ago by Sir Titus Salt, it was a marvel in its time and today the main buildings and almshouses are protected under the ancient monuments, act. For those who may be interested, Sir Titus Salt's biography published in 1876 has just been reprinted by the Benton Publishing Company of Settle. But all this has strayed from photograph number two. This is a near view of the property backing on to the river. Access to the back door being via a timber stage.

Photograph number three is a front view of the same property. The pub is called "The Royal Butterfly". It's not well known that William IV was a keen butterfly collector. On one of his northern collecting expeditions he stayed at the local hostelry at Stonyridge. The landlord promptly altered the name from "The Weary Traveller" to "The Royal Butterfly". The sign is out of a box of Dutch cigars.

Moving back down the main street photograph number four shows a rarely modelled place of worship. A Salvation Army Citadel. A strong non-conformist area this, of the four churches on the layout only one is Church of England. The band are several of the Airfix guards band. The bearskin hats were quite easily cut down into peaked caps.

Assisting Brian Monaghan back up the street with his old plate camera, tripod and what have you we note the main street is several feet below the level of the railway. On the way we pass a row of miners cottages, the steps to the station and the Station Buildings. The building is on two levels. The station master's sitting room, dining room and kitchen are at road level. "Camera all set up Brian?" "Oh yes," Photograph number five shows the domestic side of this building. The upper rooms on the street side are bedrooms.

Photograph number six presents the business side of the building with all the usual offices. The awning in front of the building is corrugated iron. As we will see this material has been used a lot at Stonyridge.

The track layout is very simple, employing only five turnouts. The engine shed is sited on the extended dead end. It is corrugated iron on a brick base. To one side is a lean-to carriage shed. This normally houses the branch coach which is only needed if there is a locomotive working the branch. Locomotive facilities are completed with a simple coaling stage and a water tank on a timber base. On the freight side the C-OIL loading arrangements were shown in the C-OIL article. The goods yard has a small shed, corrugated iron on a brick base. There is also a small cattle dock. Also in the yard are the rear of the premises used by a Fellmonger! I ought to explain a Fellmonger does not sell fells. He receives the skins of slaughtered sheep and processes them to remove the wool. Having talked with someone who used to work for a Fellmonger he assured me it was a place of high temperature and high smell! Photograph number seven is a general view of the engine shed and yard.

Photograph number eight is a view of two cottages and the carriage shed. The cottage in the foreground is thatched with Polyfiller. This is plastered on and combed to give the thatched effect. The walls are "whitewashed" with matt white paint with sand mixed in it to give a rough finish. The cottage in front of the carriage shed has a balsa wood frame. The walls are of stones supposed gathered from the river bed. As near as I could get was to use fishpond pebbles.
Aire valley adventure 6
Nethertarn village
Derek Naylor concludes the tour of his narrow gauge system

Photographs by Brian Monaghan

ONE can only suppose Nethertarn was a nice little village until the start of C-OIL quarrying. Without the quarry though the railway would never have come to the village. No doubt the inhabitants consider the railway and the increased prosperity worth it as far as this bit of Yorkshire “muck” is concerned. Space limitations forced me to put the quarry much nearer the village than I would have liked. I suppose the quarry siding could have been made into a mineral branch and have disappeared into a simple fiddle yard. However, I did want all the line and its associated sidings in view so settled for the railway dividing the village and the quarry.

The quarry, the road and rail bridges on the approach to Nethertarn were featured in earlier articles. We take up the story after passing over the rail bridge the brick built engine shed comes into view. As at Stonyridge the coaling and water arrangements are very simple. Photograph number one shows the shed.

The next building, coming up on the left is the carriage shed. I think all layouts must be plagued to some extent with dust. I try to keep all the locomotives in sheds when not operating. The carriages can also be kept under cover at Nethertarn and Stonyridge. One of the next jobs is the construction of an all over roof at Saltaire to give the stock there some protection. Photograph number two shows the carriage shed, inspired by, though not a model of the old carriage shed at Towyn on the Talyllyn Railway.

Photograph number three shows the goods yard. A single siding serves the brick built shed and cattle dock. There is a lack of coalmens facilities both here and at Stonyridge. The villagers made do with C-OIL, gooey though it burns.

Moving on towards the stopblocks brings us to the station. The station building lies in the lee of a retaining wall and is illustrated in photograph number four. It’s rather a dismal little building in engineers’ blue brick. In the centre background is the local Congregational church with the inevitable wedding scene. The model is based on a timber built church at Baildon in Yorkshire.

In stage coach days Nethertarn was a staging post. Surviving evidence of this is the “Coach and Horses” public house shown in photograph number five. The pub itself is on the left and a block of three shops on the right. Advantage was taken here of black and white styrene sheet. The main parts of the building are in white styrene sheet and the timber beams in black. There are odd bits of stone paper including the archway into the courtyard.

The last photograph, number six, illustrates several buildings at the low end of the village. The very thin low relief building on the left is from a Daleman cover painting of “Warrior” in the East Riding by IONICUS. The wedge shaped block houses the offices of the local newspaper, the Nethertarn Times and the police station.
Rolling Stock

Most of the locomotives and railcars have been described in detail at various times in the RAILWAY MODELLER. The old number six "ADA" a K's Southwold kit on a scratch built chassis has gone to new pastures. So has the old diesel which is a Kitmaster Drewery diesel on a Rokal chassis. As mentioned earlier it is now working in Australia. The new diesel, a model of the Clogher Valley Walker diesel number two is much more pleasing.

The existing motive power, six locomotives and three railcars are quite adequate for running the service. There is another locomotive on the drawing board. This is one of the Hunslet/Avonside geared locomotives. This will present some totally new problems in locomotive building. With the Editor's permission, more of this locomotive when complete.

Passenger and freight stock has not altered much. The branch coach is new, so is the Carson and Colorado combine. The bogie hoppers have been scrapped and replaced with some new four wheel hoppers. There are now twelve but these could do with increasing to sixteen.

Signalling

Very simple indeed. Moorhead, Nethertarn and Stonyridge just have home or arrival signals. Trains depart after receiving the staff or ticket and the okay from the station master. Saltaire also boasts a starting or departing signal. Where any of these signals have sneaked into a photograph it has had a mention in the caption.

Road vehicles

Considering the period of the railway (1929) and the area it serves there are quite a number of road vehicles in the layout. There are a few of the Lesney Yesteryear series. Two of these, the Osram lamps wagon and the Jacob biscuit van have been repainted. They are in use as the railway's railhead delivery service. I'm told some of these Yesteryear models in mint condition are worth pounds, it takes some believing. Horsedrawn Loco No. 4 has just arrived. The horse attached to the bridge conveyance is getting a bit impatient.

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5 vehicles are a mixture of German, Hong Kong and the Airfix wagon train kit. Good value the latter as there are also a good number of people in the kit. One of these Airfix wagons has been made into the Stonyridge railhead delivery wagon. Reverting back to horseless carriages. I got two sets of Harbut Replicas. One set are built as standard. Most of the other set have been converted into small commercial vehicles, vans, pickup and a hearse.

Some random thoughts
What inspires a modeller to build a certain type of layout? I'm sure space limitations don't bring about a branch or narrow gauge line so much as the builders desire for that type of line. Many good main line layouts have been built in a smaller area than that occupied by the A.V.R. (10ft x 10ft, plus a bit at Nethertarn). Perhaps that GW Branch line of some northern modeller was influenced by a holiday in Devon or Cornwall. For myself, I'm Yorkshire and my valley and railway are Yorkshire. Yes, parts of the county are grim but most of it is beautiful.

Why the Aire Valley Railway? Why not like the other precious dales? Wharfedale, Wensleydale etc? Well, at the time I started the layout in 1956 it seemed right the line should run up a valley. It will have to remain the A.V.R. for sometime yet. Relettering the stock will be a fair old task.

The least beautiful of the Yorkshire dales Airedale is prettiest in its first few miles and at its most spectacular at the source of its rivers. The Aire rises at the base of a massive 200ft. limestone cliff at Malham Cove. On my last visit the first three feet or so of water had no apparent movement, then it starts to bubble over the rocks.

Here then lies the inspiration of the Aire Valley Railway with no disrespect to the lesser counties of England.

May I acknowledge the patience of my wife who lives with a nut who thinks he has a valley in a windowless loft. The faith of the Editor that these articles would materialise. My daughter for typing the manuscript from my illegible best handwriting and Brian Monaghan for his superb photography.