

**Stephen Knight wrote on Facebook Train Collectors Society Any Make Any Age Any Gauge page on 2 August 2020**

It is with great sadness that I report the death last week of Dennis Franklin at the ripe old age of 90. Dennis was a lovely chap and we became friends whilst I was researching my first book, "Let's Stick Together" about the history of Rosebud Kitmaster models.

Dennis Franklin was Rosebud's Technical Manager from the mid-1950s to early 1960 and designed most of the first series of Kitmaster train models in consultation with renowned local modeller Frank Roche. They were both members of Northampton Society of Model Engineers. Dennis used a lot of the Roche drawings in his design work, which explains why Rosebud's "Duchess" pacific embodies all the faults of the Roche drawing, including the wrong tender type! Dennis was responsible for the full 1959 Kitmaster range which included The Rocket, 08 Shunter, Stirling Single, Schools Class Harrow and GWR Prairie tank. Some of his designs (L&Y Pug, Prairie and Schools) are still in production today, from his tools, at Dapol.

Dennis was eventually lured away for better pay at Mettoy in Northampton, where he went on to design the Playcraft Railways British outline models to a VERY tight budget and using a lot of available French Jouef components - the Class 29, North British shunter, BR Brake Van, 21 ton mineral wagon and their Mk1 coaches, including the working ore discharge wagon and TPO sets (which used a novel mechanism to avoid infringing Tri-ang and Dublo patents).

He was most proud of the Playcraft British semaphore signal set which he cleverly designed to allow two complete signals to be assembled, or by combining two kits, a complete gantry signal. This kit is now on display in the National Museum of Wales in their Mettoy section, as production was at Forest Fach near Swansea.

Whilst at Mettoy, he also designed the Corgi construction kits, such as the Bately Leofric garage and the AA/RAC Telephone box set and the full Silverstone Circuit buildings set. His later career in plastic injection moulding was in the Republic of Ireland, where he worked on purely industrial contracts. He retired back to his home town of Kettering and passed away there in a care home from natural causes. He is survived by his wife & two daughters.

Dennis Franklin - unsung legend of British model railway design.

