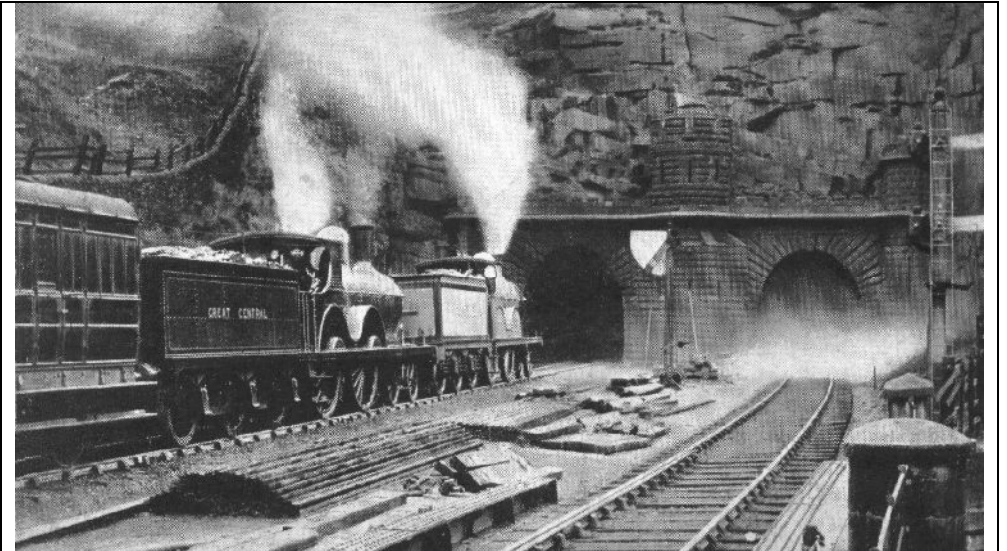


# FORWARD 169



## **Front cover caption**

Any self-respecting book, article or presentation about the Woodhead line should include this iconic image of the two single bore tunnels at Woodhead. It was originally published as a postcard by The Locomotive Publishing Co. in the early 1900s. The passenger express train is hauled by two 4-4-0 locomotives and is about to enter the Woodhead tunnel. The photographer is at the end of the down platform at Woodhead station at the point where the railway crosses the infant River Etherow. *Caption continued on page 2.*



# The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 169 ~ September 2011

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## Editorial by Bob Gellatly

It was agreed at the 2011 AGM to invite George Hinchliffe to be a vice-president of the Society. I'm pleased to report that George has accepted the invitation. His love of the GCR and its heritage is touched upon in the article he has written to be found on page 34. His modelling skills are well known with the construction of GCR locos and rolling stock in 7mm being his particular forte. A visit to the Gainsborough Model Railway will confirm the excellence of his work.

Throughout this year I have looked to include Woodhead related items in *Forward*. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of closure of the Woodhead line – the last through train ran on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1981 – is something well worth commemorating. Hopefully this will make some small contribution to "the cause", supported by many, to see the Woodhead line reopened. It would be nice to think that this will happen one day along with the construction of a class 2 by the GCR 567 Locomotive Project. It might then be possible to run a train hauled by a class 2 over Woodhead. (The fantasy overload alarm is ringing!)

Those members who were unable to join us on our vintage bus journey over Woodhead on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July missed a "grand day out". I hope you enjoy reading the two reports in this issue. Particular thanks go to Ken Grainger for organising it. With so much of the original trackbed and infrastructure still intact, the reopening of the line seems a lot less challenging than some of the other railway developments currently taking place.

J.G.Robinson, the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Great Central Railway from the resignation of Harry Pollitt in 1900 to the Grouping in 1923, is stilling awaiting the honour of having his name carried by a main line locomotive. The GBRf naming policy has always been somewhat haphazard but with *Sir Sam Fay*, *Valour*, *Metro-Land* and *Sir Edward Watkin* having made it onto their locomotives, there was not an unreasonable hope that *J.G.Robinson* would be in contention. This may not be for some time as according to *Railway Magazine* GBRf will now be naming their locomotives after their female employees and I suspect there are quite a few of them.

As my wife keeps reminding me, "if you can't say anything nice then don't say anything at all". Does this apply to book reviews? I think not, as the purpose of a review is to put forward an honest opinion, hopefully in an objective way. Richard Morton has submitted two book reviews and he assures me that these are the toned-down versions. As I see it, the cause of the problem lies with the publishers not the authors. Once a series is launched the publishers will commission authors to produce books on a fairly tight time schedule. It's all to do with putting books into the readers' hands and getting a quick return. If an author has the time and the resources to research and write a book before taking it to a publisher, the result can be much more satisfying both for the author and the reader.

Finally I hope to see as many of you as possible at our Autumn meeting at Penistone on Sat.22<sup>nd</sup> October. Details are on p48. The speakers are John Quick and Stephen Gay.

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*front cover caption continued...*

Unfortunately the numbers on the locomotives are not clear but Bill Taylor in *The Great Central Railway in old picture postcards* (Reflections of a Bygone Age, 2007) identifies the train engine as class 2 no.709 (built 1882). The pilot engine has the larger 4,000 gallon tender and lacks the splasher cut-outs. This would indicate a class 11 (built 1895 with 3,080 gallon tenders but replaced with 4,000 gallon tenders in 1897) or a class 11A (built 1897/8 with 4,000 gallon tenders). Both engines are in original condition with Pollitt chimney and short cab roof. The pilot engine is in a workshop grey livery.

Close inspection of the photo shows the emergency cord from the cab roof of the pilot engine extending across the tender to the train engine and then on to the first carriage. This clarity of detail makes me wonder whether the train was actually moving or if it was

posed for the photographer. The smoke on the other hand is quite indistinct as would be expected from a long exposure plate negative of the time.

The Locomotive Publishing Co. later published a colour art postcard (see p26) which was obviously inspired by the original photo but also shows an express train leaving the down bore behind Atlantic no.264. The pilot engine on the up express has the same dark green livery as the train engine and splasher cut-outs have been added. They both have extended cab roofs, Robinson chimneys and tender coal rails. In other words, the scene has been updated.

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## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011 at LMRCA Club, Rugby**

Present: 26 members.

The meeting was opened at 11.00am by the Chairman, Mike Hartley.

A minute's silence was observed for deceased members – John Pollard, Frank Stratford and David Brindley.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Brian Holyland, Richard Graham, John Quick, Peter Rousselange, Chris Gilligan, Brian Walker, Garth Smith, Deryck Watkinson, Dave Hanger, Len Bunning, Brian Wainwright, Derek Boothby, Bill Fay, Richard Tilden-Smith, Christopher Jackson, Jack Turner, Terry Silcock, Richard Hardy, Jason Marbeck, Peter Scott, Reg Instone, Paul Greenwood, John Williamson, John and Jenny Williamson, Robert Fielding, Bill Tooke, Robert Carroll, Jack Fisher and Andrew West (of Brisbane).

### **2. Minutes of the 2010 AGM**

The minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting, which had been published in *Forward 164* were accepted as an accurate record on a proposition by Paul White and seconded by Martin Walker. They were then signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Matters Arising**

Brian Slater advised that there were 9 kits being obtained from D&S Models and not 13 as shown.

### **4. Officer's Reports**

#### **Secretary's Report**

Brian Slater reported that there had been four committee meetings during the last year. We have almost finalised the transfer of D&S Models GC kits in 4mm, some artwork is being finished and then we will take control of the masters and start to produce some kits. He commented on non-committee activities undertaken during the year. He finished by thanking the NSMEE for making available a room at Ruddington for committee meetings.

#### **Treasurer's Report and Membership Secretary's Report**

Eric Latusek commenced his report with the membership, currently standing at 492, 8 more than last year. 94 members were still to renew compared with 71 last year. 55 members now pay by standing order.

Martin Gray ACMA has retired and these accounts are the last he audited. A new auditor has been found for next year, Richard Webster, thanks to Paul White. A small present of an engraved pocket watch is being given to Martin Gray in thanks for over 20 years services given to the Society.

Income has increased to £9,876.93 compared to £8,920.90 last year. He commented on the donation of £2,000 from the estate of the late Hon. Edgar Fay which has been ring-fenced towards a permanent home for the archives. Sales are slightly down, but still a good result. Expenses were £8,858.80 compared to £8,957.22 last year. The largest expense is the printing of *Forward*. Expenses increased mainly from the purchase of model railway kits for eventual sale to members. Other items of income and expenditure

were explained. The society currently has a balance of £9,382.79 compared to £7,734.88 last year after taking into account advance payment of subscriptions. The committee are not proposing any increase in subscriptions at the present time.

David Bodicoat expressed the view that the subscription income should cover the cost of producing and distributing *Forward* - the life blood of the Society. From the published accounts, this objective was being achieved with a margin to spare.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Dave Arnold, seconded by Colin Todd and agreed by all present.

### **Editor's Report**

Bob Gellatly said that there had been an interesting range of articles, letters, photographs and news received for publication in *Forward*. Each issue fills quickly and some submissions have to be carried over. As editor, he reserves the right to make amendments or omit parts of contributions and he hopes that contributors understand this. New sources of photographs are hard to come by and this year at least three new photographers have made their material available for publication. Ken Grainger continues to supply contributions on a regular basis and the late John Pollard has supplied the full manuscript for his railway history of the Pollard family and the series will be completed. No feedback has been received for the crossword and he will be interested to hear readers' comments. The high quality of *Forward* production has been maintained and he thanked Franco Grippo and the rest of the team at TSW Printers, as well as Eric Latusek, Mike Hartley and Colin Todd for distributing *Forward*.

Commenting on the web page, he said that it continues to provide details of events and information about the Society. There are 83 visits to the site each day (compared to 62 at this time last year) leading to new members and items for *Forward*. He finished by thanking Richard Butler for providing information to keep the site up-to-date.

Richard Butler congratulated Bob and queried if there is to be a 'Woodhead' edition of *Forward* to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of closure. Bob replied that there would not be a "special" edition but there would be more Woodhead related items included this year.

### **Midlands Area Rep's, Report**

David Bodicoat reported that the Society had obtained almost 100 glass plate negatives of Immingham Docks and its construction. He had taken them to the 'Magic Attic' at Swadlincote who had transferred them to 6"x4" photographic prints, which are now being circulated for identification. He had also investigated the digitisation of the *Great Central Railway Journals* from the Archives. Unless a generous benefactor comes forward, it will have to wait until funding can be found.

Mike Hartley commented on the use of the negatives.

### **Sales Officer's Report**

Dave Smith said that he had not much to report. Apart from selling donated books, he is trying to get some Christmas Cards produced and has ordered a new supply of mugs.

### **Model Steward's Report**

Tony West said that GC modelling was taking a turn for the better – Bachmann have produced the O4 and buildings based on Rothley, and Hornby have produced a GC Coke Wagon. He attends the Telford 0 Gauge Guild show – the busiest two days of the year – and modulates and receives queries via the GCRS Forum. He gets few queries by post.

### **Southern Area Rep's Report**

Richard Butler reported a good year for the London Group. He has attended shows with Andrew David, selling items to help with the costs of running the group's meetings which are at Euston with a variety of speakers - all welcome. Outings were to the Palace Gates GER branch, branch lines and a canal trip. Bus trips are not being arranged owing to the high costs of bus hire. He also referred to a rail trip to Calvert on 14<sup>th</sup> May. At last year's Remembrance Service at Marylebone some school children attended. He also referred to the HS2 project, which had been discussed at the last committee meeting. He thanked

Andrew David for organising stands at Princes Risborough and Alexandra Palace and Stoke Mandeville.

### **Archivist's Report**

Geoff Burton reported that there was still no progress in getting a permanent site for the Archives, this is being pursued. He thanked those who gave copies of items missing from the archives. It was suggested from the floor that extracts from the *GCR Journal* be published in *Forward*, which was further discussed, especially the type of articles in the journals.

### **Chairman's Report**

Mike Hartley said that he hoped for a site at Ruddington for the archives. He then commented that he was on a committee to arrange events at Immingham for next year's centenary and discussed the glass plate negatives referred to by David Bodicoat.

### **Northern Area Rep's Report -**

Ken Grainger said that he is really the committee odd job man. He had been involved in inviting members to leave items to the Society in their will. He is now organising a vintage bus trip over Woodhead for Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The bus is a 1954 Leyland PD2 Sheffield bus, limited to 50 passengers. There will be a lunch stop at Penistone and hopefully a train from Hadfield into Manchester and back. Ken is involved in the reformation of the Sheffield Branch meetings. He continues to write for both national and local magazines about the GC, and continues to research the names on the GCR War Memorial. He is preparing an article on the GC War Memorial at Mexborough and found that Lance Corporal Thomas Jackson VC had been omitted from the Sheffield Memorial. He is pursuing an idea to add his name, but the memorial is listed and this has added difficulties.

### **5 Election of Officers**

The following nominations had been received by the secretary for committee posts for the coming year:

Chairman - Mike Hartley  
Secretary - Brian Slater  
Treasurer/Membership Secretary - Eric Latusek  
Sales Officer - Dave Smith  
Northern Area Rep - Ken Grainger  
Midlands Area Rep - David Bodicoat  
Southern Area Rep - Richard Butler  
Editor - Bob Gellatly  
Model Steward - Tony West  
Archivist - Geoff Burton

In the absence of any other nominations, their appointment was proposed by David Grainger, seconded by Dave Arnold and agreed by all present.

### **6. Ratification of Vice-President**

George Hinchcliffe had been invited to be a vice-president. Mike commented on why he should be a vice-president. It was proposed by Mike Hartley, seconded by Geoff Burton and agreed by all present.

### **7. Any Other Business**

David Shaw told the members that a Rail Summit was to be held at Guide Bridge Theatre with Jim Bamford of Notts CC about reinstating rail services on abandoned lines. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July members of the Reopen Woodhead Group and the Don Valley Railway are hoping to lay wreathes in honour of the six men who died in building the new tunnel. Their names are not known and any information is requested.

Paul White said that the previous night's *One Show* had shown Marylebone and featured Rod Stewart who was a railway modeller.

David Grainger said that John Rissbrook is retiring as station supervisor at Marylebone and will the committee consider some sort of presentation for his past help?

Martin Walker asked if anyone had heard the rumour that the Parcels Office at Leicester is to be demolished?

Derrick Rhoads said that it was good to see so many interested in the GC and railways in general, but nothing makes it to the newspapers.

Ken Grainger mentioned his forthcoming article in *Railway Archive* on "J.G.Robinson and other Locomotive Artists".

Tony West said that the Rugby local authority had approached him for information to enable them to restore Hillmorton and other bridges on the Great Central Way footpath.

### **8. 2012 AGM**

Proposals for a venue for the next AGM included Immingham, Scunthorpe, Loughborough, Glossop, Woodhead, Gainsborough and Retford. The committee will discuss and arrange a suitable venue.

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 12.45pm

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### **Welcome to the following new members**

Mr A. Munday, Stalybridge

Mr M. T. Miles, Nuneaton

Mr P. J. Korrison, Burghill, Hereford

Mr S. R. Shaw, Sutton Coldfield

Mr D. J. McKenna, Beckenham

Mr A. Horrocks-Taylor, Nottingham



GCR 567 Loco Group



Newly built MS&L class 2 4-4-0 no.567 poses for its photograph – the earliest known photograph of a class 2 locomotive.

## **GCR 567 Locomotive Project** **by Andrew Horrocks-Taylor (Chairman)**

Kipling put it best in his 1903 poem *The Elephant's Child*, describing the way to plan a project.

*I keep six honest serving-men  
(They taught me all I knew);  
Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who.*

"When", "How", "Where" and "Who" will follow in other articles, but firstly let us explore "What" and "Why".

**What** is a class 2 locomotive? It could certainly be described as the first "modern" passenger engine for the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (the forerunner to the Great Central Railway). This was because they had single frames and they laid down the basic design of passenger locomotive until J.G.Robinson's days at Gorton. In the 1880s, single frame machines used a relatively new material called steel and the class 2 design was one of the first to embrace it fully. As more followed they became a typical late Victorian engine design of the four-coupled type. Therefore, the class 2s stake a claim to represent the era well as many railways had very similar locomotives on their books.

The first example, no.561, was built by Kitson and Co. of Leeds. It represented both the MS&LR and Kitsons at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition of 1887. Thomas Parker, who was locomotive superintendent of the MS&LR, added to the class after the pioneer had been evaluated. A total of 24 were built by the MS&LR at Gorton and by Kitsons. Then later in 1894, six further, very similar engines of class 2A, completed the class. On the LNER they became the class D7.

From new the class 2 engines worked the MS&LR's best expresses. These were the celebrated Manchester to Kings Cross services, jointly operated with the GNR. The trains were never heavy, but the difficult road over Woodhead had to be negotiated. These trains ran punctually from their introduction. Indeed, so successful were they, that even over the longer and hillier railway, the travelling public preferred the service because punctuality was superior to that of the competitor's trains. Generally, the class 2s worked the up service as far as Grantham. After a change of engine, the locomotive waited to work the corresponding service in the down direction.

At this time Sir Edward Watkin was preparing the MS&LR. for its next step forward. This would be the Great Central Railway with its London Extension and its new formal crest was being submitted. So was the locomotive featured on the GCR crest a class 2? Well the crest locomotive certainly is a single framed 4-4-0 with no Belpaire firebox evident (which the later 11 and 11A classes carried), and the boiler is also lower pitched than these classes. The 567 group feels the class 2 is a contender for the GCR crest and would like to hear the views of GCRS members.

Express locomotives developed slowly during the 1890's at the MS&LR. The next generation of 4-4-0 locomotives, the Class 11 and 11A in the mid to late 1890s, were eventually built in sufficient numbers and the class 2 and 2A locomotives were displaced from the London expresses to work other services. Sheffield had some for working local trains. Later, they continued to work in South Yorkshire, but also in the North Lincolnshire district. It was from New Holland that the last two examples were removed from service. So ended the class 2 and 2A, by then of course reclassified by the LNER as D7. They had served three companies; the MS&LR; the GCR and the LNER for well over 40 years.

**What** is the GCR 567 Locomotive Project? Quite simply, to build a GCR class 2. The project looks for 567 supporters to donate £5.67 per month over an estimated 10 year timescale to generate the funds to build no.567. The group is run as a charity; donation



is via the GCR's main charitable organisation, the David Clarke Railway Trust, which retains the funds until required by the project. The locomotive will be based on the preserved Great Central Railways at Nottingham and Loughborough, but will be available for use on other preserved lines.

**Why** build a new class 2 locomotive? The answer is that there exists a possibility to recreate scenes from the time that the Great Central Railway came into being. We have the lines themselves at Loughborough and Ruddington, the only preserved main lines nationally and possible in the world. These should be connected within the next 10 years to allow a near 20 mile ride from Nottingham to Leicester with the wonderful Edwardian themed station already in place at Rothley. We have the prospect of a significant number of serviceable MS&LR/GCR carriages within the same timescale. The missing element is an early GCR passenger locomotive to complete the scene, to allow the general public once again to experience the sights, the sounds and smells of travel in the 1890s and the first years of the 21st century. For many they were the Golden Age of the Railways, when the world still looked towards Britain for its lead.

We have of course two surviving GCR locomotives. The 8K is a wonderful Robinson locomotive class and we are fortunate to have one in steam at Loughborough. One day it would be great to put into GCR livery. However, that would still be a freight locomotive livery representing the later GCR period from 1910. The 11F *Butler-Henderson* is still with us, but it is unclear whether the NRM will ever release her for overhaul as significant firebox repairs are required, the view being that the repairs would eliminate the historic record of Edwardian boiler making that she represents. Repairs to her large boiler using traditional methods would certainly be very expensive if allowed. She also represents the last GCR express type, the class being built from 1919.

This only leaves us with the option to build new if we wish to complete our unique early GCR vision. The class 2 has the claim of being the earliest express locomotive associated with the GCR. Other contenders for a GCR new build would be a Pom Pom (9J), a Pacific Tank (9N), or a Jersey Lilly (8B). These could be considered, but are either not passenger locomotives (9J) or represent a slightly later age (9N, 8B) and certainly as larger locomotives would cost significantly more.

The choice of no.567 to represent the class 2 is a little more arbitrary. There is no option of taking the next number in the class 2 sequence as this would be another MS&LR locomotive type. Therefore the group had to choose to recreate a specific class 2 locomotive. We wanted a Gorton built engine, so this eliminated class pioneer no.561 that was built by Kitson. No.567 happens to be the earliest image we have of a class 2, the photograph being taken in January 1891, one month after completion, the last of the first Gorton build batch (see p6). As the group needed a strong image to promote the project no.567 was chosen as the locomotive we intend to recreate. It also happens to be that 567 supporters donating £5.67 per month for 10 years gives us our budget of £430,000.

More articles to follow shall explain "When", "How", "Where" and "Who". However, for an earlier explanation of these project elements, as well as providing more information, we currently have the following events arranged:

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September:** Project Presentation to the GCR Society (Sheffield branch) at The Harlequin, Sheffield. 7.30pm.

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October:** Project Presentation to the FOGCML Northampton Area Group at Weston Favell Parish Hall in Northampton. 7.30pm.

**7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October:** GCR Autumn Steam Gala: The group will have a covered stand with displays in Quorn Yard and will be happy to discuss any aspect of the project. Further events will be arranged.

The group would also like to hear from anybody who is in possession of a GCR locomotive component that may be of use on 567 for installation or copy. Whilst it is early to be thinking about whistles and safety valves, to have a list of "who has what" would be extremely useful to the group as the project progresses. Please contact us via e-mail or the group's postal address below if you think you may have something of interest.

We hope you will join with us to recreate a classic early GCR express locomotive that aims to recreate the British Victorian / Edwardian mainline experience.

Supporter/donation forms are available to download at [www.gcr567loco.co.uk](http://www.gcr567loco.co.uk)  
General Enquiries can be made to [gcr567loco@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gcr567loco@yahoo.co.uk) or by writing to GCR 567 Locomotive Group, c/o Mrs Dawn Bullock, 19 Hartridge Walk, Allesley Park, Coventry CV5 9LF. Alternatively you can follow us via Facebook and Yahoo Groups (search for "GCR 567 Loco").

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## **Model railway exhibition diary**

*Some events that may interest our readers*

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Sept.: Northolt Model Railway Exhibition at Northolt Community Centre, Ealing Road, Northolt. [www.northolt-mrc.org.uk](http://www.northolt-mrc.org.uk)

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Sept: Romiley Methodist Railway Modellers at Romiley Methodist Church, Hill Street, Romiley, Stockport. <http://rmmr.urwick.co.uk/ourshow.shtml>

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> & Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Sept: Glossop & District MRC Exhibition at Bradbury Community House, Market Street, Glossop.

Sat 17<sup>th</sup> & Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Sept: "Model Rail Live" at Barrow Hill Roundhouse, Chesterfield. [www.modelraillive.co.uk](http://www.modelraillive.co.uk)

Sat 24<sup>th</sup> & Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Sept: Soar Valley MRC Exhibition at Garendon High School, Thorpe Hill, Loughborough. [www.svmrc.co.uk](http://www.svmrc.co.uk)

Sat 1<sup>st</sup> & Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct: Manchester MRS Exhibition at the Armitage Centre, Moseley Road, Manchester. [www.mmrs.co.uk](http://www.mmrs.co.uk)

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Oct: Sheffield MRS Exhibition at Davy United Social Club, Prince of Wales Road, Sheffield. [www.sheffield-mrs.com](http://www.sheffield-mrs.com)

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> & Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Oct: The Elizabethan Railway Society Model Railway Exhibition at The Summit Centre, Pavilion Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. [www.elizabethanrailwaysociety.co.uk](http://www.elizabethanrailwaysociety.co.uk)

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> & Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Oct: The National Festival of Railway Modelling at The East of England Showground, Peterborough. [www.model-railways-live.co.uk/Exhibitions](http://www.model-railways-live.co.uk/Exhibitions)

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> & Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Oct: Wirksworth Model Railway Exhibition at various venues in Wirksworth, Derbyshire.

Sat 29<sup>th</sup> Oct: Nottingham Woodthorpe Model Railway Show at the Sherwood Community Centre, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

Sat 29<sup>th</sup> & Sun 30<sup>th</sup> Oct: Hazel Grove MRS Exhibition at Hazel Grove Recreation Centre, Jacksons Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport. [www.hgdmsr.org.uk](http://www.hgdmsr.org.uk)

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> Nov: Braunstone Model Railway Show at St Peter's Church, Woodshawe Rise, Leicester.

Sat 19<sup>th</sup> & Sun 20<sup>th</sup> Nov: Warley National Model Railway Exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham. [www.thewarleyshow.co.uk](http://www.thewarleyshow.co.uk)

Sat 19<sup>th</sup> & Sun 20<sup>th</sup> Nov: Bassetlaw Railway Society Model Railway Exhibition at the Town Hall, Market Square, Retford. [www.bnnrs.net/show.html](http://www.bnnrs.net/show.html)

## **Signalmen's Confusion at Crowthorn Junction 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1906** **by Brian Wainwright**

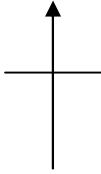
The Oldham, Ashton and Guide Bridge Junction Railway, jointly owned by the Great Central and the LNWR, was a busy piece of line in 1906. Though the westward curve to the L&Y at Ashton Moss and its associated exchange sidings were still a thing of the future (they opened in December 1911<sup>1</sup>) its southern end included a whole series of junctions, closely spaced together.

On leaving Ashton (Oldham Road) Station, the line joined the L&Y Stalybridge branch by a connection in the Manchester direction at OA&GB Junction signal box, but immediately turned off south by way of a second junction at the same box. Next along the line at this time was Boulton's Sidings box, formerly the location of the private sidings of Isaac Watt Boulton<sup>2</sup>, the famous locomotive hirer. The next signal box after Boulton's Sidings was Crowthorn Junction, a tall brick built structure that stood at the junction of the main OA&GB to Guide Bridge and the LNWR line to Ashton Moss Junction that curved off to the right. The OA&GB continued to Canal Junction box, where the east fork led to the GC at Stockport Junction west of Guide Bridge and the west fork to the GC at Audenshaw Junction.

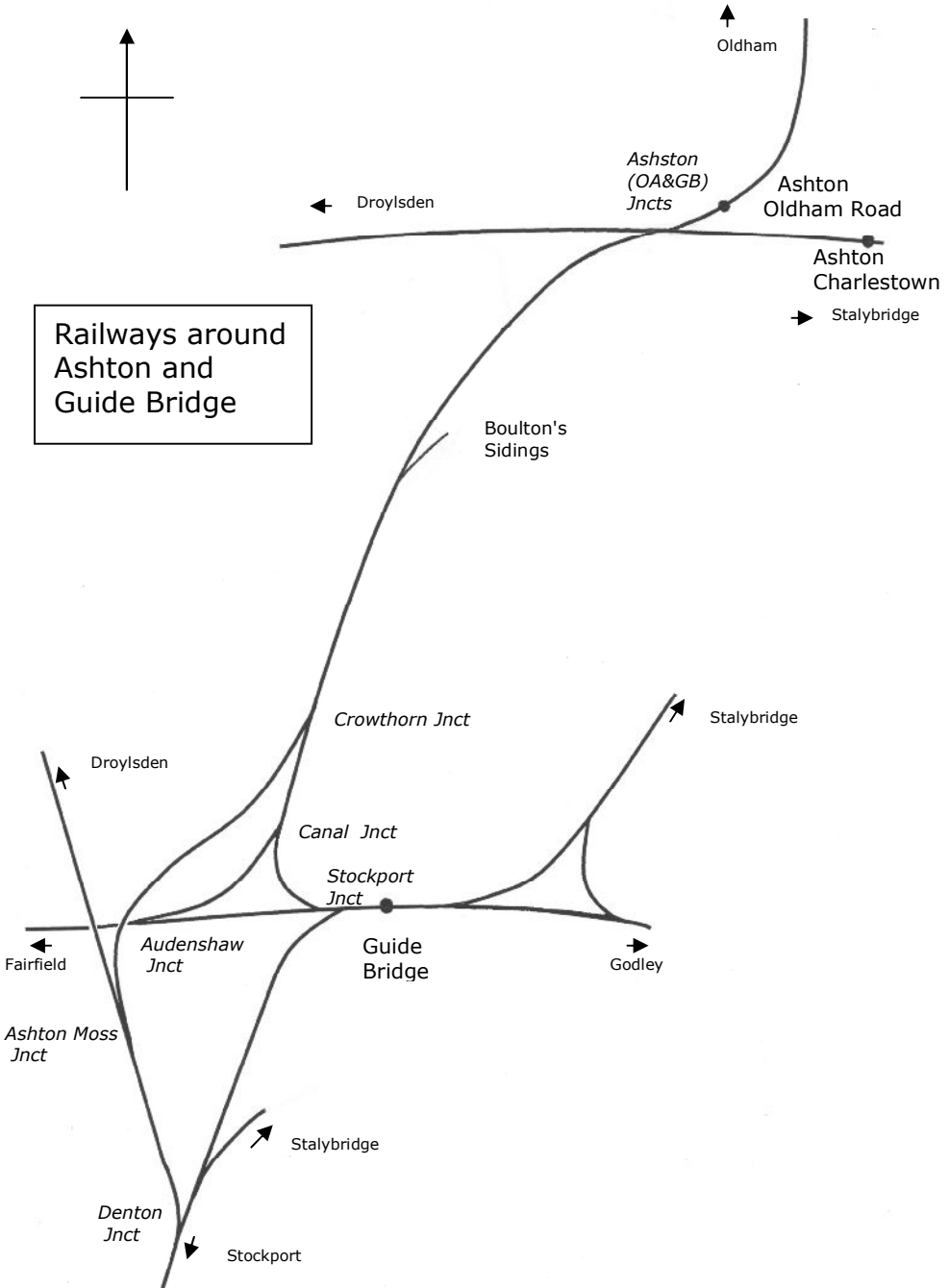
At about 12.40pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1906 a Great Central goods train had finished its shunting at Boulton's Sidings and was awaiting the road. The engine was a six-coupled side tank, probably a class 9C or 9F 0-6-2T (later to become LNER class N5). Unfortunately we do not have its number or even the name of the fireman, but the driver was Edmund Peacock. It headed a short train of coal empties and the details give us a rare glimpse of what such a train comprised. There were four wagons belonging to H. Johnson of Ashton (36, 37, 39 and 46); two of Houghton Main Colliery Company (332 and 442); Manvers Main (557); Hickleton Main (168); two belonging to Tom King of Ashton (2 and 8); W. Waddington of Ashton (3); J. Bainbridge of Ashton (1); a GCR coal wagon (17532) and a GC 4 wheel 15 ton brake (27764) in which Guard Arthur Walshaw Netherwood was riding.

Signalman John Goddard in the Boulton's Sidings box held this train for the 12.30pm Great Central passenger train from Oldham to Guide Bridge to pass. Mr Goddard was a very experienced signalman, with twenty-five years service in the role, including over nineteen at this particular box. It seems reasonable to assume that he knew his job like the back of his hand. He offered the passenger train to Signalman Eli Bowden at Crowthorn Junction at 12.41pm and it was immediately accepted. It passed his box at 12.48pm and he received 'train out of section' at 12.50pm. The boxes were only 1393 yards apart. According to Signalman Goddard, he now offered the goods train and this too was immediately accepted by Crowthorn Junction. He then sent 'train entering section', set the road and pulled off his signals, and the empty coal wagons went on their way. At more or less the same time he was asked the road by OA&GB Junction for the 12.40pm LNWR passenger train from Oldham to Stockport, but he 'refused' it. That is, he did not respond to the bell code.

Driver Peacock, meanwhile, was working his GCR goods train towards Crowthorn Junction. He saw that the home signal was set at danger, so he blew the whistle and drew his engine to a halt. After about a minute the signal came off, but the arm that was lowered was for the LNWR line towards Ashton Moss Junction and Denton, which was not the line he wanted or expected. No doubt puzzled – I'm not even sure that the GC had running powers over this line – he whistled again. The signal went back to danger but the same board was lowered again, so he edged slowly forward with the idea of sending his fireman to the box to find out what on earth was going on. The fireman was just getting off the engine when he saw the LNWR passenger train bearing down on them. He shouted a warning to his mate, and Driver Peacock applied steam, but the passenger train crashed into the rear. Although the collision could not be avoided the slight



Railways around  
Ashton and  
Guide Bridge



movement of the GC train may have helped lessen it, as fortunately the speeds involved were relatively low.

The LNWR passenger train was headed by an 0-6-2 tank engine (probably a 'Coal Tank' or 'Watford Tank') working bunker first with Driver David Clarke at the regulator. He had been held at the Boulton's Sidings starter signal, and by his estimate was already a couple of minutes late. His train was further checked by the Crowthorn Junction distant, which was passed at caution but he then saw the tall home junction signal 'off' in the direction he required and assumed he had the road. It was only when he passed beneath a road bridge on the immediate approach to Crowthorn Junction that he saw the goods train standing in his way, and by that time it was too late, even though he immediately applied the brakes. He had already shut off steam to reduce speed for the junction. He hit the GC goods brake doing about 20 mph by his reckoning.

Fortunately the injuries that resulted were relatively minor. Guard Netherwood of the GC train was probably worst hurt. Despite being unable to inspect his train as a result of the collision, he only described himself as 'slightly injured' and was able to give evidence to the Enquiry. The LNWR driver and guard also reported slight injuries, as did three passengers. The GC engine was undamaged, but all but one of its wagons required repair as did the LNWR engine and all six of its coaches. The permanent way also needed some attention, no fewer than 92 chairs being broken. One would have expected the GC brake to have come off worst, even to be have been destroyed, but its damage was surprisingly light. One headstock, thirteen end boards, two end lights, two buffer castings, one buffer and one tail light required replacement.



*Crowthorn Junction signal box c1954 looking north. The Woodhead electrification included this section of the OA&GB as far as Ashton Moss South exchange sidings. The first bridge, Crowthorn Lane has been raised temporarily, while the second bridge, Ashton Old Road, has already been rebuilt. The bridges made the observation of trains approaching from the north difficult.*

*photo: J.W.F.Scrimgeour/Signalling Record Society*

What had gone wrong? According to Signaller Goddard of Boulton's Sidings, he had received 'train out of section' for the goods at 12.55pm. After the departure of the GC goods train he had accepted the LNWR train at 12.51pm and held it at his starter, also at 12.55pm. He phoned Crowthorn Junction to tell Signaller Bowden that the LNWR train

had arrived. Signalman Bowden said 'I forgot to clear for the goods.' Goddard then offered the passenger train and received immediate acceptance. He therefore pulled off his signals and let it proceed. A minute later Crowthorn Junction rang back to ask 'What's this that's coming?' When he replied 'It's the LNW train', Signalman Bowden was very upset, mentioned the goods and said there was going to be a collision.

Signalman Bowden at Crowthorn Junction was as experienced a signalman as Goddard, if not more so, with twenty-three years service at Crowthorn Junction alone. He had come on duty at 5.12am that morning to work until 3.00pm, a long shift in a busy signal box, but not out of line with usual practice in this era. He recalled dealing with the GC passenger train, but although he had recorded giving 'train out of section' in his train register, claimed that in fact he had never done so. By his version of events he was neither offered nor accepted the goods train and there were no entries for it in his train register.

At the crucial moment, Signalman Bowden had been given a telegraphic message to pass on to Ashton Moss Junction. The complexity of this procedure, using a very basic two position instrument, should not be underestimated. Some men developed extreme skills with the instrument, and could practically pass messages in their sleep. For others it remained a difficult task. In any event Signalman Bowden would have been distracted by the need to send this message and then by having to talk to Ashton Moss Junction on the telephone, perhaps to check that the message had been properly understood.

He was no sooner finished with Ashton Moss Junction when he received a phone call from Signalman Goddard at Boulton's Sidings. According to Bowden, Goddard asked 'Have you got without him?' meaning 'Is he gone away?' 'Haven't I cleared yet?' asked Bowden. 'No,' said Goddard, 'the passenger train is drawing up here.'

Signalman Bowden thought they were talking about the long-gone 12.30pm GC passenger train from Oldham not the goods train from Boulton's Sidings. So he restored his instrument to normal and accepted the LNW passenger, pulling off his signals for it. He then phoned Boulton's Sidings again, to ask whether the train had been halted. 'No, but he is drawing up to the starter,' was the reply. Bowden then turned to some other work – we are not told what exactly – but eventually became conscious of smoke from a locomotive standing at his home signal. His box was immediately adjacent to two road bridges and although he stood high above the track, his view of an engine or short train standing at the signal was severely restricted. His reaction was to phone Boulton's Sidings and ask 'What have you done?' On receiving the reply 'Nothing!' he realised something must be wrong, so reversed his signals which were off for the Ashton Moss line. He sent six bells to Canal Junction and Ashton Moss Junction, and then saw the smoke of the approaching LNW train followed by the noise of the collision.

Lt. Colonel von Donop, the Officer in charge of the Enquiry, concluded that the prime blame lay with one of the two signalmen, but he was unable to say which. Both had freely admitted to irregularities in their booking of trains and one of them was obviously not telling the whole truth, but there was insufficient evidence to be sure which of them it was.

There was one piece of evidence in favour of Signalman Goddard. A LNWR shunter at Boulton's Sidings, James Holt, claimed to have heard the bell codes given for the goods train. Lt. Colonel von Donop dismissed this on the grounds that he thought it 'strange' that a shunter should be familiar with the codes. (I have to say that I find this verdict odd, as to my mind there is nothing strange about an intelligent man working in the vicinity of a signal box picking up the meaning of bell codes. Shunters needed to be intelligent to do their job properly.)

The LNWR loco crew were also criticised for not keeping an adequate look-out, though it was admitted that the curves and gradients of the line reduced visibility.

There is some congruence between the accounts of the two signalmen, and it's not

surprising that the exact words used in telephone calls were not precisely recalled. Both were men of very considerable experience, not just in their job, but at their particular boxes. The chances are that one of them made a simple omission, unconsciously and without malice, under the pressure of their demanding work and long hours. The consequences could have been much more serious.

This article is based on an official report available online at <http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/docsummary.php?docID=2509>

The original report is Crown Copyright.

#### footnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Great Central Volume 3*, George Dow, page 214.

<sup>2</sup> This business closed in 1898. See *The Chronicles of Boulton's Sidings* by Alfred Rosling Bennett, first published by the Locomotive Publishing Company in 1927, new impression by David & Charles 1971, ISBN 0-7153-5318-7.

*Editor's note:* Although the line is still open for freight only as far as Ashton Moss North Jct. the area around Crowthorn Junction has been considerably changed as a result of the building of Manchester's orbital motorway, the M60, which runs immediately to the west of the OA&GB trackbed at this point. The road referred to as Crowthorn Lane in the photo caption is now Birch Street and stops short of the railway. The original Ashton Old Road has disappeared and is now replaced by Manchester Road and junction 23 of the M60. If the box was still standing it would be looking over the southbound slip road just before it reaches the main carriageway of the M60. Note on spellings: both 'Crowthorn' and 'Crowthorne' are used by various sources.



At 20:10 on the evening of 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011, no.66165 set off from Deepcar to return to Aldwarke with the 6J58 steel working. A small headboard (see inset), made by Andy Hurrell, was placed on the loco, with the driver's permission, to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of closure of the Woodhead line.

photo: Melvyn Kirkham

## **On Great Central lines today** **by Kim Collinson**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> May a Network Rail test train from York worked over the Deepcar branch with Class 37 no.37409 plus test vehicle *Caroline*, seen at Deepcar at 14:00. Class 60 locos continue to appear on the branch. The evening trip from Aldwarke was worked by 60071 on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

A visit to Shepcote Lane on the 14<sup>th</sup> June saw 66137 on the evening freight to Immingham at 19:49. The area is now totally covered in dense vegetation with the remains of the track on the former Sheffield District line to Brightside still intact as well as the disused southwest spur to Broughton Lane along with several signals still displaying red aspects although they have been out of use for many years now.

The Spring and early Summer have brought several interesting workings through Guide Bridge. Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May saw three. An early morning Leeds to Southend railtour worked by 31601/31190 with 67029 on the rear. This was followed by a "Northern Belle" excursion from Birmingham to Alnmouth worked by DRS 47790 and 47810. Next was a railtour from the Birmingham area to Newcastle, top and tailed by 37229 and 33207. Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June saw a boat train from Southampton to Edinburgh pass Guide Bridge at 16:02 hauled by DRS locos 47501 and 47810.

Heritage traction still works regularly on the Chiltern Rail routes and a refurbished single bubble car 55034 (TOPS 121034) has been restored to traffic painted in BR green (see *p78 of the August issue of Railway Magazine*) and will join sister unit 121020 on the Aylesbury to Princes Risborough shuttles. The movement of new underground stock for the Metropolitan line from Old Dalby to Neasden continues to be worked by Class 20 locos as on the 16<sup>th</sup> April when 20301/2/5 were used on one of the stock movements.

Since the beginning of the Summer timetable on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May there has been a notable increase in the use of Sprinter traction on Penistone line services with Class 158 units being seen almost daily. An unusual livery to be seen on the branch is carried by 153366 which has been transferred to Northern Rail but still retains its London Midland and City livery. On 17<sup>th</sup> May services through Penistone were badly disrupted due to vandalism in the area.

Coal movements are rarely seen these days in the Guide Bridge area, however on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 66620 passed through around 10:00 conveying 10 empty MGR coal hoppers from Stoke Gifford to Leeds Hunslet Sidings. Very little freight traffic now uses the GC route between Guide Bridge and Ashburys apart from aggregate traffic to and from the stone terminal at Ashburys and waste traffic from Bredbury. One of the few other workings is the movement of empty styrene tanks from Stalybridge to Immingham which was worked by 60040 on the 14<sup>th</sup> July.

It has been announced that Amey Rail has been awarded a contract which will involve the closure of Ashburys and Guide Bridge signal boxes and the area of signalling control transferred to the Stockport South Signalling Centre. When this work is completed and both signal boxes, which date from 1906, are closed this will leave just Dinting as the last traditional GC Signalbox in the Manchester area.

The Summer Fridays only steam specials from Crewe to Scarborough and return commenced on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and will run each Friday until the first week in September. The first train was worked by former SR Pacific 34067 *Tangmere* which passed through Guide Bridge just after 09:00.

*If you have any news of current activity on ex-GC lines please let me know -  
Kim Collinson, 18 Close Hill Lane, Newsome, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD4 6LE  
or by e-mail : kim.collinson@btinternet.com.*



## Arrivals on the bookshelf

### "South Yorkshire Railway Stations: Adwick-le-Street to Wortley" by Peter Tuffrey.

Published by Amberley Publishing, 2011.

Softcover 128 pages.

ISBN 9781445601229.

£18.99

"South Yorkshire Railway Stations" is by Peter Tuffrey, a well respected author with several very good titles under his belt, one of the most recent being "Voices from Doncaster Plant Works", a particularly valuable contribution to Doncaster's industrial and social history. Peter's work is mostly centred on his native Doncaster but on this occasion he has ventured into the wider realms of South Yorkshire. I fear that this is a venture too far.

In essence this is an alphabetical listing of South Yorkshire's stations, most being illustrated with supporting descriptive and historical outline. My heart sank when I read that the internet's Wikipedia is his one acknowledged reference source. Most university undergraduates begin their studies with an explicit warning that Wikipedia should never be considered or accepted as an authoritative source on anything. Its contents vary from the good to the downright inaccurate and that is very true for its pages on railway history. There are inherent dangers in using Wikipedia as an information source and, sadly, this book reflects all of them. Thus the inaccuracies of Wikipedia are faithfully transferred unquestioningly to the printed page with the result that "South Yorkshire Railway Stations" is riddled with mistakes, errors and misinformation.

One of the first pictures that I encountered when opening the book claimed to be Attercliffe (GC) but was, in fact, Attercliffe Road on the Midland, for so the station running-in board tells us. The mistakes are too numerous to list fully but a few corrections are offered below.

Sheffield Midland's overall roof never covered the current platforms 1 and 2, this was part of the newly extended station which had awnings right from the beginning.

Dodworth did not have a standard MS&LR double pavilion, indeed the photograph in the book on page 40 illustrates this, but had a 2 storey station master's house with a single storey range of offices and public rooms.

Rotherham Road's double pavilion station building was not on the Doncaster bound platform.

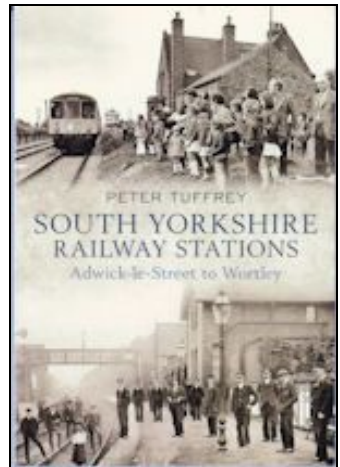
Hazlehead's main building was not on the Sheffield bound (up) platform.

Oughty Bridge was never part of the London Midland region, indeed there seems to be a general misunderstanding of BR's regional organisation.

Tinsley's station buildings are not extant. The ruins close to the site of the station are those of a pumping station associated with the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.

Neepsend's station buildings did not remain in situ into the 1970s. They had been removed by 1955 and probably much earlier when the MSW electrification masts were erected.

Stairfoot did not have an MS&LR double pavilion.



And finally, Francis Thompson's design at Rotherham Masborough had two platforms and was swept away when the Midland rebuilt the station in the early Edwardian period.

There are many, many more such inaccuracies and omissions.

The photographs are an interesting collection but the captions are mostly limited to simply the station name, so much is missed. The view of Swinton Town on page 105 is especially valuable as it shows the original North Midland station with its 1899 replacement appearing in the background. Sheffield Midland's original entrance is shown on page 91 - the buildings are now on the current platform 2. The building shown on page 72 and described as the Millhouses signal box, is the main station building with its booking office at street level on Archer Road.

Where Wikipedia has very short entries for the relevant stations, the book mirrors that. Summer Lane and Wombwell West get very cursory shrift whereas much more could have been said. One has to seriously question an author who does not appear capable of going beyond fairly superficial electronic sources. "South Yorkshire Railway Stations" could and should have been so much better.

*Richard Morton*

**"Steam around Sheffield"** by Mike Hitches.

Published by Amberley Publishing, 2011.

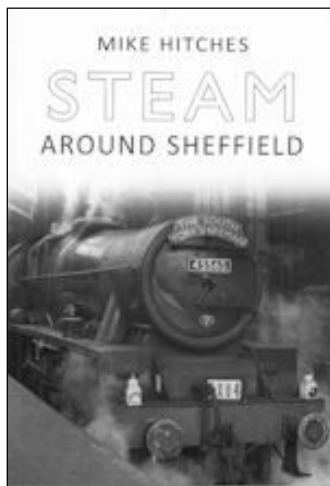
Softcover 176 pages 271 b/w illustrations.

ISBN 9781848684454. £16.99

Mike Hitches, the author of "Steam around Sheffield", makes a very liberal interpretation of Sheffield and its district to include Hull, Doncaster, Manningham and even Rugby. It really is very difficult to find anything good or positive to say about "Steam around Sheffield" which comes from the author who famously and amusingly gave us "platelayers" (sic) in his previous work "Steam Around Leeds". Admittedly this was a typographical error but it is symptomatic of the minimal attention to detail with which this series is apparently blessed. The errors are manifold and legion.

The introduction cheerfully tells us "the last of the big companies to arrive in Sheffield was the Midland Railway, gaining access to the town via a 3½-mile branch from the Derby-Leeds main line between Treeton and Brightside on the Sheffield and Rotherham Railway." This is hopelessly inept and inaccurate and a total misinterpretation of railway chronology and topography in the Sheffield area. Sadly there are many similar errors, the most spectacular beneath a postcard picture of Elsecar (MR) which appears in the MSL section: "This view of Elsecar station is seen at the end of the nineteenth century, possibly serving the nearby colliery." This is an unforgivable schoolboy error: 'Elsecar & Hoyland' is a wayside village station on the Midland's Sheffield - Barnsley line and has been since July 1897.

Nostell is claimed to be on the Barnsley Coal Railway but is on the West Riding and Grimsby - the whole supporting caption outlining the history of the BCR is therefore rendered irrelevant! Incidentally the WR&G did not reach Leeds as suggested. There follows "Hare Park with a GC local train" whereas the locomotive is obviously from the Great Northern. Hitches is well out of his depth with the WR&G as Hemsworth is pronounced to be a GC station! Arksey is said to be on the GN/NE joint line but the line was in pure GN ownership. Carelessly a picture of Dovecliffe, from earlier in the book, is described as being "a Jinty at Stourton", and Kilnhurst is "on the route to Barnsley" - the caption to the picture says that the GC was on an embankment to the left of the



view but it was actually below on the right! An "O3" at Sheffield Victoria is a J39, hardly any difference at all! And so it stumbles on and on.

As a last example of ineptitude we have two views of the "South Yorkshireman", claiming that these show the late lamented service from Bradford Exchange to Marylebone. What we are looking at are Jubilees working on "South Yorkshireman" rail tours from Bradford to Glasgow (September 1966) and Carlisle (October 1967). Inexcusable! The sketch maps take us into high farce territory. On page 72 we have "Ecklington Grenshaw" (Eckington and Renishaw), "Parkgate Drawmarsh" (Parkgate and Rawmarsh), "Chestfield" (Chesterfield) and finally "Hes" which beats me completely (any suggestions?).

The photographs are an eclectic selection with some interesting views from some very good cameramen such as H.C. Casserley and Ken Boulter (referred to as "H. Boulter" in the book) but their work deserves to appear in something better than this. Incidentally Henry Priestley has many pictures in the book but he always chose to be designated as H.B. Priestley and several of his views are wrongly attributed to other people. He was a great stickler for historical accuracy so this work would not please him. It certainly doesn't please me.

It gives this reviewer no pleasure in assigning to "Steam around Sheffield" the most damning and astringent review that he has ever written in covering some forty years of railway literature. David Joy took well over ten years to write his monumentally reliable regional history "South and West Yorkshire" for David and Charles, but one cannot help wondering how long it took to produce this flawed and ill conceived title. The publisher tells us that Mike Hitches is an acknowledged expert and a writer of authoritative captions - "Steam around Sheffield" belies both claims.

*Richard Morton*

**'Little Peter's Railway' series** by Christopher Vine.

Published by Christopher Vine, 2011.

Softback with 32 pages.

'Christmas Steam' ISBN: 9780955335952

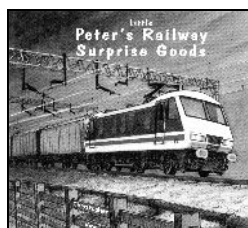
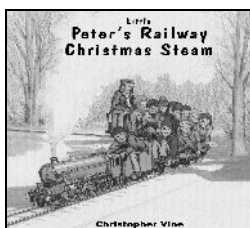
'Surprise Goods' ISBN: 9780955335969

£2.99

[www.petersrailway.com](http://www.petersrailway.com)

The 'Peter's Railway' hardback books (of which there are now four) have featured in previous reviews and been heartily recommended. Now the author Christopher Vine has launched a new series called 'Little Peter's Railway'. These are aimed at a younger reader/listener age of 3-6 years. The format is small softback, similar to many other books to be found on the bookcases of 3-6 year olds. The first two titles are 'Christmas Steam' and 'Surprise Goods'. I have read 'Surprise Goods' to my 4 year old grandson and his attention was held throughout the story. Although we are in the realm of fiction there is not the credibility chasm found with 'Thomas the Tank' stories. The trains don't talk to each other and there is a touch of realism about the trains and their operation. Although it tends to be boys that are fascinated by trains, these stories will appeal to girls as well.

*Bob Gellatly*



## **A Woodhead interlude**

**by Bill Turner**

The sun invariably shines on Great Central Railway Society events and Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July proved no exception. On that day GCRS members and friends convened at the classic Sheffield Victoria Holiday Inn, a splendid survivor of the railway age, to join what proved to be a sun-filled excursion along the Woodhead route by vintage bus. Fifty of us boarded the 40 year old double decker and set off.

First stop was at Oughtibridge to admire a small station building now turned (surprise, surprise) into somebody's well kept home with the single goods line to Stocksbridge immediately beyond. Thence to Deepcar which, for some reason, was a much larger building but once again now a much loved home and guarded by two Alsatians, rightly suspicious of an influx of strangers.

A circuitous route to avoid low bridges brought us to a lunchtime stop at Penistone Station (built 1874) where the GC platforms peeped from the undergrowth. Those with packed lunches were able to sit on the L&Y platform and admire the intricate cast iron work while others set off to the cafes and chip shops of the town centre. The parish church of St John the Baptist had provided a good vantage point as an old postcard showing the station and viaduct (clearly taken from the church tower) was passed round to admiring comments.

Suitably replenished, we travelled to Dunford Bridge to gaze on the old and new east portals of Woodhead Tunnel. Meanwhile, our bus was much admired by staff from the cable laying site, besides cyclists enjoying a high part of the Trans-Pennine Trail which ultimately links Southport and Hornsea.

After passing two tunnel ventilation shafts and a procession of parched reservoirs, with the GCR track bed often clearly visible on the other side, we arrived at Hadfield, now the easterly terminus of frequent suburban services from Manchester Piccadilly. Here the station building still boasts a small ticket office but the rest is a wine bar offering the opportunity for a swift "half."

A very comfortable and popular electric train took us smoothly over Dinting Viaduct into Manchester, although we had to make do with Platform 2 at "London Road" from where the train soon began to take us back to Hadfield. Unused widths of overhead gantries showed how many running lines there used to be and the Gorton area, in particular, with modern buildings alongside a double track but with one wing of the Beyer Peacock works still surviving, to remind us of the many thousands who had once worked either side of the former GCR main line and the traditions and skills they represented.

Then back to the remarkably comfortable bus and a sunny return journey to "Sheffield Victoria." The Pennines were still at their best and views from the top deck for over 40 miles to be enjoyed, although stationary wind turbines showed the limits of new technology even high on the "backbone of England." Thanks to Ken Grainger for organising the trip, to the bus crew for a smooth ride and to Hermann Beck of the Holiday Inn for providing a delightful rendezvous.



*The first ventilation shaft from the Dunford Bridge end of the Woodhead Tunnel has been decorated with this painting of a class 76. It is visible from the road between Dunford Bridge and the A628.*

*photo: Flickr/"Flusky"*

## **The Woodhead Wanderer**

**by Ken Grainger**

Many of us will shudder at memories of Woodhead, of blasts of wind seemingly coming straight from Siberia, and horizontal, stinging rain. But then there are other days, when the sun shines from a clear blue sky and all is well with the world. Happily, Saturday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, when we commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the 1981 closure of Woodhead, was one of these.

Thanks once again to the generosity of our good friend and Society Vice-President Hermann Beck, we were able to commence our "bus substitution" journey over Woodhead from Sheffield Victoria railway station - the forecourt of Hermann's Royal Victoria Holiday Inn. Our conveyance was Aldwarke Museum's Sheffield City Transport No. 1156, a 1958-vintage Roe bodied Leyland PD2, expertly driven (as ever) by Brian Hutchinson with Stewart Cooke as conductor. Actually No. 1156 was a very appropriate choice. She had begun her career in Sheffield's 'C' fleet, which operated on behalf of British Railways to more distant destinations, as distinct from the within-the-city 'A' fleet routes, or the 'B' fleet services to the outer suburbs. No. 1156 had actually plied the Leeds and Bradford routes, which perhaps went some way to explaining the comparative comfort of her seating - ruefully compared by some to the provision of the present-day buses.

After leaving Sheffield she had found further employment with Yorkshire Woollen District, around Dewsbury, then with Don's of Dunmow in deepest Essex, before finally coming back home, being restored and, ultimately, donated to the bus museum.

The much-loved old livery of cream and blue never fails to turn heads, and so it was as we headed for our first stop at the former Oughtibridge Station, now tastefully converted to a private residence. Everyone was most impressed, apart from the lady from along the road who came hurrying out in her dressing gown (I don't know what she had been doing) to berate us for intrusion of privacy on her road. Refusing to be placated, she stridently announced she "was going to report us", though for what, and to whom, was not made clear.

A vintage Huddersfield Corporation double-decker was waiting to greet us at the Station Road turn-off to our second stop, Deepcar Station. Later investigation established her to be a 1966 Daimler, Huddersfield's very last front-engined bus and purchased as a trolleybus replacement! Normally resident at the Dewsbury Bus Museum, she had been brought out by her owner, Colin Sidaway, for a jaunt to the Worth Valley Railway.

Deepcar Station is also now a private residence but, with all due respect, with its multi-gabled frontage an altogether grander edifice than at Oughtibridge. Happily the enthusiastic welcome from those two quite beautiful Alsations proved to be nothing more than that. They wanted nothing more than a tickle behind the ears. That proposed turning point by the station proved to be inadequate, but Brian had no qualms about reversing right back down Station Road - though perhaps it was just as well that that beer delivery lorry which we had inched past outside the Lowood Club on our way up, had now gone.

Now it was full steam ahead for Penistone, with the passing scenery very beautiful on this gloriously sunny day. The projected halt by Oxspring viaduct couldn't be made - I'd missed that there is a 13'3" headroom bridge along that road! However, our alternative route was rewarded by the sight of a Pacer crossing Penistone viaduct with a Huddersfield - Sheffield service, and it did avoid what would have been a tortuous turn to get into the Penistone station approach.

Penistone station building looked as smart as ever, hiding the wilderness of the former main line platforms beyond. Some of our complement went to admire the still-in-use Huddersfield line platforms and the "MSLR" cast canopy spandrels, while others meandered up Church Hill in search of sustenance - or the toilets!



Above: The station house at Oughtibridge. Note the extension on the left which blends in well with the original structure. The single line to the steel works at Stocksbridge is immediately behind the fence.  
Below: The station building at Deepcar. Restoration has been comprehensive with no expense spared.  
photos: Bob Gellatly



Variouly refreshed and relieved, and now with a full complement, having been caught up by the stray without whom we had left Sheffield but who had given chase by train, we were on our way again, past Penistone Goods and the impressive remains of the coal drops.

Now came a real trial for Brian and No.1156 - not that they had been having it easy thus far. Eschewing the cut-back from the A628 Manchester Road to reach Dunford Bridge, Brian opted for the Carlecotes lanes, with grindingly steep climbs alternating with brake-screeching descents. Overlooking the eastern portals of the Woodhead tunnels, at the original single-bores masked by a shanty town of Portacabins and presumably the 'new' twin-bore soon to follow suit as it too is used for National Grid power cables, we mused on the politicians' sop that the tunnel *could* be returned to its proper use, if it was ever decided to reopen the Woodhead Route. There must be a greater hope of the adjacent Stanhope Arms reopening, but I'm not holding my breath for that either.

Along to the main road, by the tunnel's ventilation shafts and passing high above the western tunnel portals, then paralleling what is now the "Longdendale Trail" on the other side of Woodhead, Torside and Valehouse reservoirs, we headed for the railhead at Hadfield. We were there in ample time for the 15.01 into Manchester Piccadilly, even allowing for a "quick one" in the Edward's Wine Bar extension to the station building. The Hadfield Booking Clerk seemed pleased to see us, if a little bemused, as we formed an orderly queue for our tickets, but it was gratifying to see there were plenty of other customers as well.

Those 323 electric units are an impressive swan-song for their Hunslet builders, smooth, quiet and, even with 3+2 seating, spaciouly comfortable, and glory be - you can even see out of the windows! In and out of Glossop we went, via two legs of the Dinting triangle, admiring Dinting's apparently well-preserved MS&L-style station buildings then looking down from the lofty Dinting viaduct, but was that really Mottram Yard? More choice architecture was in evidence at Broadbottom and at Newton for Hyde, but you could weep for Guide Bridge. Beyond Broadbottom we noted where the one-time Hattersley tunnels had been opened out in the '20s, then the derelict platforms of Godley Junction and the empty trackbed angling away towards Woodley, Stockport Tiviot Dale and the Cheshire Lines. It was fascinating to see the LNER catenaries, still serving their original purpose but now for 25kv AC (a conversion, it will be recalled, which was "not possible" for Woodhead), their spans widening to take in long-lost junctions, such as to Fallowfield and the criminally wastefully discarded Reddish depot. And Gorton is now only the name of just another intermediate station along the way.

And so we came to London Road: the frontage and concourse might be Piccadilly, but the platforms - and our timetable didn't even allow for stepping off the train - with their variegated brick sidewalls and ornately cast roof columns, are indisputably London Road.

Somehow return journeys always seem so much quicker: when we pulled back into Hadfield, Brian was all ready to get under way. One last count to make sure we hadn't lost anyone and we were off. This time it was main road all the way, but what a tail we gathered as No.1156 toiled up to the top of the moors. Brian pulled in at the first opportunity, to let the convoy go by, but that wasn't enough to satisfy one or two drivers keen to prove once again how stupidly arrogant some of the seemingly most reasonable people can become when behind a steering wheel.

Over the top, with stupendous views as far as sun-bathed Drax power station on the distant horizon, and now it was downhill all the way, arriving back at the Royal Victoria by six o'clock. With the possible exception of 'Outraged of Oughtibridge', everyone agreed it had been a wonderful day. The glorious weather had of course been a major factor, but we mustn't forget Brian and the PD2 No.1156. Perhaps the real star of the show was the Woodhead line itself. Shall we ever see its return?



Two views of our vintage transport – Sheffield Corporation No.1156.

*Above:* Outside the Royal Victoria Holiday Inn at Sheffield waiting for the 10am departure.

*Below:* After the lunch break at Penistone. The station buildings on the right are now in private commercial use. Next stop Dunford Bridge. *photos:Bob Gellatly*





## Woodhead Electrics - photos by Bill Wright

Kodachrome II transparencies taken with a Voightlander camera



Above: EM1 Bo+Bo no.26012 waits to depart from platform 1 at Manchester Piccadilly with the 16:10 passenger service to Sheffield Victoria on 22 June 1966. Below: EM1 Bo+Bo no.26028 passes through Penistone with a west bound train of coal on 21 Feb.1968. Penistone West signal box can be seen on the left. The building on the right is the Penistone Electric Control Centre.





Above: EM1 Bo+Bo no.26039 stands light engine at the end of platform 3 at the west end of Sheffield Victoria on 23 July 1965. The signal box seen on the right is Sheffield Victoria No.4. It is the box that appears in photos taken of the Wicker Arch from the street below. Below: EM2 Co-Co no.27005 *Minerva* stands at the east end of platform 4 after arriving at Sheffield Victoria from Manchester Piccadilly with a passenger service on 23 July 1965. The loco looks well in its BR green livery with waistband lining out.





An EM1 Bo+Bo features on this Salmon Series postcard. The train of rather unusual stock stretches into the distance. Why is only one pantograph being used? Nice educational touch with the trackside items explained. Was this a confectionary card?



This colour postcard of GCR expresses passing at Woodhead was published by the Locomotive Publishing Company. The artist, F. Moore, has based his picture on the photograph featured on the front cover of this issue. Is it a painting or has the original photo been coloured with oils? According to the NMSI website, the name F. Moore is a pseudonym for Thomas Rudd.

**Sheffield Victoria in 1984**  
photos by Melvyn Kirkham



*Above: The middle road has gone. The platform canopies have been dismantled. The platform edging stones have been lifted. The footbridge has lost its envelope of corrugated sheeting. The catenary supports are now wireless. This is the sad sight looking west from platform 3.*

*Below: The subway connecting the platforms.*



## Woodhead after closure – part 11 : 2008

by Paul White

The Woodhead Tunnel demonstration of January 12<sup>th</sup> 2008 gained considerable local press coverage and led to the formation of the "Save the Woodhead Tunnel" group, which was to co-ordinate the campaign to return the tunnel to rail use. Strong backing came from the Northern Way, a group of three Northern Development Agencies. Their chairman, Neville Chamberlain, had written to the then Labour Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly giving the opinion that if the Woodhead Tunnel was not reserved for rail use there would be no possibility of a new, higher-speed Trans-Pennine line ever happening. Additional, faster capacity across the Pennines would be critical to the economic future of the North – a view echoed by Northern Way Transport Director John Jarvis.

"Save the Woodhead Tunnel" were in touch with Ruth Kelly during January 2008, and getting very mixed messages: with rail freight predicted to increase by 25% over the next 10 years, the group were demanding the suspension of the National Grid's cabling work while the situation was reviewed. Ruth Kelly's replies to questions in the House of Commons were very unhelpful: "National Grid owns the tunnel and can insist on its own cabling in the tunnel....it has assured us that even if it did that it would not preclude opening the line for freight traffic were the growth of freight traffic to warrant it". Following this "mixed" message, Kelly's department was forced to issue a clarification, explaining that the project would indeed prevent the 1954 tunnel from being used for rail, but that the adjacent bores would be available as the National Grid was moving its existing cables out of these. The implausibility of this was obvious; quite apart from the fact that it was the condition of the twin tunnels which led to the decision to build the new tunnel, even if in perfect condition they would be unsuitable for modern freight traffic or high speed passenger trains. National Grid had given a figure of £156m for refurbishing the old tunnels, but what that would involve and how the figure was arrived at was not made clear. Not surprisingly, the conclusion reached by the "Save the Woodhead Tunnel" group was that the Labour Government and Ruth Kelly in particular were showing "acute short-sightedness".

At the end of February 2008 Ruth Kelly invited the "Save the Woodhead Tunnel" group to contribute to consultations on a government White Paper following a meeting at the Salford Station re-opening where members of the group mounted a well-reported protest. Formal consultation on the White Paper was to take place between May and July before the publication of the final "Transport Challenges" document in January 2009. Ruth Kelly herself was gone within weeks, and by March 20<sup>th</sup> a victory of sorts was being claimed in the local press; "Tunnel Vision Reaps Rewards: Woodhead to be kept for Rail" was the big front-page headline on the *Glossop Advertiser*, announcing confidently in the first paragraph "Campaigners are celebrating after the Woodhead Tunnel was saved for future rail use". This was based on new Transport Minister Rosie Winterton's statement in a parliamentary debate that "National Grid's plans will not jeopardise the possibility that the Woodhead Tunnel will re-open to rail traffic at some future date". This was described by the then High Peak Labour MP Tom Levitt as "a victory for common sense and forward thinking.....our task now is to demonstrate to Network Rail that Woodhead is not only a possible option but the best option for improving Trans-Pennine freight movement". National Grid asserted that "the older tunnels will no longer have a use but will continue to be inspected and maintained. This will ensure that if and when the 1953 (sic) tunnel is required for the installation of rail track, the HV cables can be transferred back into the old tunnels in a cost-effective way". However, the *Manchester Evening News* of March 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 was less optimistic, stating that the government had "only deferred a decision on reviving the Woodhead Tunnel as a rail route...saying it has not seen a need to reopen the tunnel to trains so far". Any decision would be made in three years time. Reopening the route had been strongly backed by Sheffield Hillsborough MP Angela Smith, who cited the rapid growth of rail passenger numbers in the North and an increasing demand for rail freight. The *Manchester Evening News* also quoted Transport

Minister Rosie Winterton as stating that "a final decision would be made in 2011...if the government decides that there may be a future need for a rail link, the National Grid would be required to carry on maintaining the abandoned tunnels and stop them deteriorating", adding ominously that "no government or rail industry strategy or planning document has identified a need for additional rail capacity across the Pennines that would require the re-opening of the Woodhead Route". These statements make the near euphoria expressed by the local MP Tom Levitt and our local newspaper the *Glossop Chronicle* seem particularly ill-judged. An "early day" motion calling on the government to intervene "to prevent this strategic rail route being lost forever" was signed by more than 70 MPs of all parties.



*Demonstration by the "Save the Woodhead Tunnel" group on 2 Aug.2008.*

people attended the demonstration. The campaign group followed up this activity by announcing a competition to "find the best solution to re-opening the Woodhead Tunnel" – one question being should it become a high-speed line or one with a local stopping service. I do not recall any publicity being given to the outcome.

No doubt stimulated by the high profile of the tunnel in the news at the time, the *Glossop Chronicle* decided to contribute some "background" in the shape of a photograph of Woodhead Station "probably taken 60 or so years ago" despite the station notice board clearly bearing the legend "Great Central Railway", continuing with the remarkable statements that the station "was *probably* built around 100 years ago by the Great Central Railway, a company well-known for its castellated stations," further stating "the station was *probably* knocked down in the sixties". A newspaper report could hardly have been more inaccurate and vague at the same time, and the *Chronicle* was good enough to publish my own potted version of the facts the following week! They also published a photograph of a 1920s open tourer crossing the line at Torside captioned as Crowden. The rash of GC-linked photo-features continued - during March the *Glossop Advertiser's* "Bygone Memories" feature carried a picture of the NW turret base of the Roman Fort of Melandra, with in the background a clear shot of the viaduct carrying the Waterside Branch over Glossop Brook at Brookfield.

The *Glossop Chronicle* carried a short article on the Waterside Branch, together with a photograph of the last train, a brake van special organised by the NW Branch of the LCGB. Much of the line east of Woolley Bridge level crossing has now been buried under a warehousing complex, but at the Gamesley end it is still easy to trace, with one of the level crossing gates currently being refurbished as a feature. The following week the *Glossop Chronicle* carried an excellent photo of the "Melandra Rail Bridge" over the A57 at Brookfield being demolished in 1966. To accommodate double-decker buses, the road under the bridge had been lowered, with the result that in heavy rain the road below the bridge became flooded. Both parapets of the bridge were demolished about ten years ago in connection with improvements to the coast-to-coast walking route, and there is now a light-controlled crossing of the busy main road on the exact site of the bridge. The Waterside Branch made its final appearance of 2008 in the *Glossop Chronicle* of 9<sup>th</sup>

"Save the Woodhead Tunnel" held a further demonstration at the tunnel mouth on August 2<sup>nd</sup> to coincide with the "Camp for Climate Action" at Kingsnorth Power Station. The campaigners were emphasising that a re-opened Woodhead railway line would help to reduce transport contributions to greenhouse gases while at the same time providing an alternative to the proposed Mottram-Tintwistle by-pass, boosting the local economy and opening up the area to tourism. Local press reports suggest that over 50

October 2008, with the viaduct at Gamesley featured in the "Melandra Fort" photograph in the process of being cut up, an excellent photograph showing the simple method of its all-metal construction.

Once again, the old chestnut of Gamesley Station hit the headlines: in August 2008 the *Tameside/Glossop Advertiser* newspapers announced "New Village Train Station on Horizon". What was new was not the station itself (estimated cost £2m, well up on 2002's £400,000), but a study to see if it would be viable (cost of study £50,000), to update information "last surveyed almost 10 years ago". The then Labour MP for the High Peak, Tom Levitt said "Gamesley Halt is an idea whose time has come". The *Glossop Courier* also carried the story, as did the *Glossop Chronicle* of 7<sup>th</sup> August, which noted that Gamesley had been waiting for a station for "exactly 40 years". The report carried the usual pictures of smiling councillors, but once again, no more was heard of the plan. It is interesting to note that in 1939, having been given the land by a firm of developers who built the Penda's Way housing estate outside Leeds, the LNER approved the project to build a station to serve the estate in March, and the station was complete and open for business on the 5<sup>th</sup> June of that year, having cost £2,111, which even allowing for inflation does not come to anything like £2m, and the project was not preceded by costly and unnecessary "studies" – they just got on with it! (see *Backtrack* January 2009). Since 1981 the phantom Gamesley Station has been "proposed" at least eight times, with no result!

There were much more positive developments concerning Stalybridge Station, the eighth busiest in the Greater Manchester area, with 700,000 journeys to and from Stalybridge per annum. A £475,000 project was to provide step-free access to all areas, improved lighting, hearing induction loops and passenger information screens as well as a new ticket office and waiting area. The ornate entrance with tower provided by the MS&L in the 1880s had been replaced by a much simpler structure in the 1960s, but some of the stone springers which supported the old canopy can still be seen high up in the retaining wall. The refurbishment was completed and the official opening took place on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2008. By now the cost had risen to £675,000, part of an ongoing overhaul of the station which included raising the platforms, improved customer services and shelters on the westbound platform. The report in the *Tameside Reporter* stated that the station is used by 13,500 passengers per week and is one of 30 stations managed by First Trans-Pennine Express who were engaged in a £12m programme of station improvements. Additionally, the famous Stalybridge Station Buffet bar completed a £50,000 revamp in February 2008, with a new conservatory replacing the original 123 year old structure. The grand re-opening was conducted by former Stalybridge Labour MP Lord Pendry. The bar is a top attraction for "real ale" fans, with 20 entries in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. The bar hit the headlines in the 1980s when the then landlady Dot Redfern banned striking ASLEF members. Lord Pendry was instrumental in saving the bar in 1994 when it seemed destined to be closed and demolished. The Buffet Bar was featured in "Oz and James' Big Beer Adventure" on BBC2 in October 2008, Oz and James of course being Oz Clark and James May.

At the recently rebuilt Guide Bridge Station a row broke out over a £3 per day parking charge being introduced, to the dismay of the users and Denton and Reddish MP Andrew Gwynne. Network Rail defended their move which would cost regular commuters an extra £15 a week by stating that regular commuters would get a discount if they bought a season ticket. However, commuters voted with their feet by parking in nearby side streets, much to the distress of local residents, leaving the brand-new car-park virtually deserted. Furious letters to the press criticised what they called a "raid" on commuters' pockets, lack of foresight and even the non-existent Gamesley station was brought into the argument, a correspondent asking "shouldn't Gamesley Station and a Park and Ride have been built on that waste eight acres down the line sometime in the last 45 years after Manchester residents were moved out?" Why not indeed!

The possibility of a new station to serve Dukinfield was raised in the *Tameside*

*Advertiser*, with Dukinfield councillors having identified a preferred location which coincidentally would be on the site of the SA&M's Dog Lane station, which was open from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1846 to 1<sup>st</sup> November 1847. Currently Dukinfield has no station, having previously had two, Dukinfield and Ashton (LNW) at Cooper St (closed 1950) and Dukinfield Central (MSL/GC) on Station Street, closed 1959.

Longdendale gardeners and DIY enthusiasts received a boost from the "Active Longdendale " campaign which had secured the use of two of the approach arches to Broadbottom Viaduct as power tool and gardening tool banks. At the unoccupied Broadbottom Station itself, the "Friends" organised a "Fun-Day" featuring art and musical events, while local artists Chris Connell and Patrick Joyce painted the protective boarding over the windows of the empty building.

At Dinting Station the possibility of longer trains being run on the Glossop line raised a problem in terms of the platforms being too short. While Simon Warburton, transport authority policy manager said that longer platforms were a definite option, Derbyshire Councillor Dave Wilcox favoured trains of the current length but running more frequently! At the same time, the former Dinting Loco/Dinting Railway Centre site was in the news as it was being used unofficially as an off-road course for "mini" motorbikes. Part of the local paper's report consisted of a brief history of the site and, remarkably in view of later events the statement that the police "were trying to discover who owned the land, which has had failed planning applications for homes to be built on it".

Meanwhile the "Friends of Glossop Station" were engaged in the taking down and auctioning of the GM/BR Glossop sign over the entrance of the station, which was being replaced. They were also looking for sponsors to give "Howard the Lion" (Lord Howard's emblem) a makeover, as he was becoming "shabby". According to the group the lion once had a gold band around his neck and a gold tip to his tail. However, according to local historian Derek Slack, until the mid-1950s the stone lion was covered in gold leaf all over, until on the eve of the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race the lion was painted dark blue – and the lion was never the same after the paint was scraped off.

Meanwhile, the stalled Longdendale by-pass continued to take up acres of newsprint while making no progress, while £13.7m of taxpayers' money had already been spent on preparation for the scheme. By January 2008 the estimated cost of the road had ballooned to £183m while the public enquiry continued to be adjourned indefinitely. By-pass supporters and "Save the Woodhead Tunnel" groups clashed in the press in January, with the Longdendale chairman (pro-by-pass) expressing his support for the National Grid plan to move the cables into the new tunnel, ridiculing the tunnel supporters, asserting that there was no support in statements of interest for the next thirty years from the Government or Network Rail for re-opening the tunnel, dismissing the "piggyback" freight idea, and citing the "destruction" of the Longdendale Trail as a counterbalance to the anti-by-pass campaigners' claims that the new road would destroy the landscape.



*The lion above Glossop station entrance.*

*photo: Richard Ducker*



Early in the year the A57 Snake Pass to Sheffield was closed again for three weeks due to a landslide, leading to fears that it could go the same way as the A625 through Castleton to Sheffield, closed permanently in 1979 due to the same cause. This would leave only one trunk route to Sheffield – the A628 Woodhead Pass. By March the Highways Agency were announcing that their updated traffic figures would not be ready until May and the public enquiry would not resume until October. The Government's view, reported in April, was still that the by-pass remained the optimum solution, but adding ominously that "alternatives to the by-pass should be fully explored by the Highways Agency". By May the £13m preparatory costs had risen to £15m. A further blow came with the Highways Agency admitting that the whole scheme's cost, estimated at £90m in 2002, and currently £184m could rise to £315m! The rise was described as "very worrying" in what could be described as an understatement by Simon Cronin of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

In August the date for the public enquiry was put back yet again, to May 2009. With this admission came a further one, that the Highways Agency had miscalculated vital traffic figures in the Environmental Statement. The enquiry, which had begun in June 2007, had now become the longest ever enquiry in terms of time – but had only sat for 15 days in that 14 months. Tintwistle councillors were now calling for an interim lorry ban until the by-pass was approved, a "solution" they had consistently dismissed. At the same time it was revealed that the preparatory costs had risen by a further million to £16m. Yet another delegation of local MPs and councillors went to press Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon on the by-pass delays and in the words of the then Labour MP for Stalybridge and Hyde "left the meeting far happier than when we went in". But there was no new commitment. While the Woodhead Tunnel was being ruined for future rail use, the by-pass scheme had reached a kind of costly limbo.

To put the Woodhead events into a national context, rail electrification had a high profile in the national press: on June 14<sup>th</sup> Ian Jack wrote a piece in the *Guardian* entitled "When it comes to Railways the Government is on the wrong track". The article reiterated Labour's promises when in opposition in the 1990s, that it would "dismantle" privatisation and restore a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway, with Tony Blair calling the privatisation "absurd". The article went on to accuse the government of being "timid" on electrification, with Britain lying between Macedonia and the Czech Republic in terms of the proportion of electrified route miles, while politicians, in particular the lacklustre Ruth Kelly, were blinded to the extra efficiency and smaller carbon footprint of electric traction by the high set-up costs and thus continued down the dead-end of diesel traction.

However, by June 2008 Network Rail was announcing a study of high-speed rail travel in terms of high-speed lines being built alongside existing lines, with a brand-new link between London and Glasgow costing at between £11bn and £29bn. A new group, "Greengauge 21", pinpointed London to Birmingham as the destinations of a new high-speed line while pro-rail campaigners highlighted the absurdity of internal flights. The route received a full page of publicity in the *Guardian* of 27<sup>th</sup> August, which stated that "most of the Birmingham line could be built alongside the M40 and parts of the Chilterns Railway line and could also run along disused trackbed on the former GC railway line which opened in 1899". At the same time, reports in the *Daily Telegraph* outlined plans by the "2M Group" to build a high-speed rail route running alongside the M1 allowing passengers to get from Sheffield to Paris in 3 hours. The "2M Group" consists of 24 local authorities unhappy about plans for the development of Heathrow.

While there may be much to debate regarding the future of railways at least there is a positive feel to most modern developments in the field, despite the stubborn refusal to consider Woodhead as worthy of redevelopment. The death of Sir David Serpell at the age of 93 in July 2008 was a reminder that twenty-five years earlier, in 1983, he had presented a controversial report on the state of the railways which had proposed the closure of most of the network.

## Modellers' Corner

by Tony West

Most like-minded modellers will have already seen issue 207 of *Model Railway Journal* which included several articles of GCR related interest. One of these was the background to the construction of *Whitchurch Road*. This is in 7mm scale (O gauge) and is a beautifully observed piece of modelling. Although set in a fictitious location somewhere near Quainton Road, structures and features from real locations have been brought together in a most convincing way. The period modelled is the 1920s.

The creator of this undertaking is a most modest person, Paul Bambrick. Watch out for this layout - the sight of GCR and Met trains passing through a slice of rural Bucks should be well worth waiting for no matter what scale you model.

The exhibition season is nearly upon us and 'we' will be at the O Gauge Show at Telford and will be reporting back on any GC related new products. Later in the autumn, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Nov., the GCRS will be in attendance at the huge NEC show, so if you are making a visit, please stop by and say hello.

As many will be aware Bachmann have released a range of 4mm scale buildings based upon GCR London Extension architecture and very nice they look too. These are applicable to the line north of Rugby as the buildings at Rugby and points south had small but definite differences. They are certainly not cheap but then quality seldom is! This may, we hope, provoke a greater awareness of the GC and encourage more GC related items to be produced. The one omission so far is a signal cabin ....but who knows?...or maybe this is the time to lobby Bachmann for a "Director"! Now that would be a sight for sore eyes.



A GCR class 12AT 2-4-0 (could be no.23 or 24) stands at Paul Bambrick's 'Whitchurch Road' with what looks like a motor train to/from Aylesbury.  
photo: *Model Railway Journal*

**The Gainsborough Model Railway** (at Florence Terrace, Gainsborough) is open to the public (1.30pm-6.00pm) on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, Sun 11<sup>th</sup> December and Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December. More information at [www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk](http://www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk).

## Memories of some GMRS railtours by George Hinchcliffe

Claire Golder's day to remember in June's *Forward* brought back many memories. I was secretary of Gainsborough Model Railway Society in the 1950s and 60s. The society provided a model railway to display at exhibitions, initiated by our president, Alan Pegler, to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries on the East Coast main line. Alan was well known for organising railtours so it was not surprising that GMRS should launch out on its own with Alan Pegler's guidance and assistance.

Memory of events 50 years ago have faded but with help from members and various books I can recall some of the special trains in which I was involved. Very soon after Alan purchased *Flying Scotsman* we organised a special train to Southampton using 4472 and it seemed only natural to use the passenger list from that trip to organise more trips. With Alan's help we ran this iconic locomotive to destinations and over routes where no A3 had ever been before.

In addition we also ran smaller railtours using Great Central locomotives. By the early 1960s almost all the GC passenger locomotives had disappeared. However I was deputy head at Sturton by Stow Secondary School and with over four hundred pupils it was not too difficult to obtain enough passengers to fill a 5 coach train. Through Alan's contacts on BR we approached passenger marketing officers in Doncaster (Stan Hales) and Lincoln (John Sullivan). The first tour I recall was from Lincoln to the Ffestiniog Railway. We had whatever locomotives BR could provide on the outward and the return journey as far as Sheffield where the electric locomotive was replaced by 62668 *Jutland*. The train was late but *Jutland* managed to gain 7 minutes to Lincoln with a very spirited run.

I regret that I cannot find the date that the branch line from Retford to Lincoln via Torksey was closed (3<sup>rd</sup> Nov.1959 – Ed.) but I made approaches to BR at Lincoln suggesting that the last train over the branch should be worked by a steam locomotive. The suggestion was agreed. By this time I do not think any GC passenger locomotives were left so the honour went to a "Pom-Pom" (class J11). I seem to think the driver's name was Hutchinson but I am open to correction if any reader can find out. The train was full and the J11 kept the diesel units schedule. Crowds turned out to watch. A very spirited run from Saxilby to Lincoln, with whistle blowing, brought the train into Lincoln two minutes early. I regret I do not recall the loco's number.

Two special trains using the same "Director" *Zeebrugge* were run by Sturton School for parents and pupils, first to the Lake District and then to Whitby. The one to Windermere Lakeside got off to a bad start. Stow Park station had been relieved from closure and allowed to be used for special trains. All the passengers assembled and as a freight train went through on the opposite line there was a whistling from one of the wagons - a hot box. *Zeebrugge* was held at Saxilby while the freight was examined, leaving us with a 20 minutes late departure. Nevertheless the Lincoln crew, which worked through to Ulverston via the Calder Valley regained some of the lost time only to discover a hot box on the locomotive. We returned behind an LMS "Horwich Crab". I experienced an interesting sequel to this trip. Many years later, when I had left teaching and was in charge of Steamtown Railway Museum at Carnforth, I met Ken Cottam who had been the shed fitter that had remetalled the hot box bearing on *Zeebrugge* after that trip.

The Lake District trip was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1954 but a year earlier the same engine had worked a special, again from Stow Park to Whitby. The route was through Retford, Doncaster, York and Pickering. The engine worked very well with the Lincoln crew working all the way with pilotmen where necessary. The top speed between York and Doncaster was 75mph. We were back at Stow Park on time.

The special train described by Claire (*Forward 168*) was from Lincoln to Northampton. Passengers were picked up at Stow Park, Gainsborough, Retford and Worksop. The train took the route to Nottingham using the Waleswood-Beighton curve and then on the



BR class O4 2-8-0 no.63585 takes a water stop at Maltby with the GMRS 'South Yorkshire' railtour on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct.1963. Note the Gresley teak coach in the cattle dock. photo: John Law

Grantham line to Saxondale Junction and Northampton. The return journey was via Peterborough, Grantham, Lincoln and Gainsborough Lea Road, finishing at Retford. Passengers for Worksop were taken on by coach. When we read of railtours today getting delayed and running sometimes hours late, I recall that timekeeping on this tour was never more than 4 minutes out. 64354 ran very well with speeds just under 50mph over Stoke summit on the fast line and 64mph on the last downhill sprint into Retford. I remember Claire going onto the footplate at Retford and how delighted she was. Bert Dixon was the chief loco inspector for the Easter Region and he accompanied us throughout the journey. I remember his comment when I asked him how the engine was behaving. He replied to the effect he would be happy to put it on the "Flying Scotsman". It was a super engine. There are several LMS 4Fs preserved - what a pity a "Pom-Pom" isn't.

Everyone has a favourite locomotive and I'm sure that being associated with *Flying Scotsman*, most people would assume that it was my favourite. It formed a big part of my life. I talked to it and it usually answered and gave me its best. However, I was born and raised in Gainsborough with the Great Central line from Manchester to Cleethorpes at the end of our road. When I was about four years old I was allowed to go to the embankment and watch trains go by. At 2 o'clock *Earl Beatty* would go by on its way to Nottingham with three coaches and up to twenty fish vans. My first lessons in counting and telling the time. Throughout the day there would be a procession of coal trains on their way to Grimsby and Immingham with the empties coming back. All these were hauled by 2-8-0 engines which I eventually knew to be O4s or "Tinies". I could hear them pounding their way up the incline from Humblecarr Lane to Gainsborough Central Station. I can still hear the music.

I later joined the Royal Navy and once I had settled my fight with Hitler I sailed with *HMS Tyrian* and headed East to settle the Japanese, but the Japs surrendered before I could get there. On the way out I saw an O4 pulling a train alongside the Suez Canal. In Australia, at John Browns colliery near Newcastle, I saw several O4s shunting coal trucks. In China I saw two O4s, both in steam, at Nanking on the Shanghai to Nanking Railway. I had no idea that these engines could be found on four continents! So the O4 must go down as my favourite locomotive.

I recall someone in the GMRS telling me that the last GC passenger locomotive had long since gone and the only GC engines left that could haul a passenger train were the 04s. At the time I was not sure if any GC tank engines remained. I approached Stan Hales at Doncaster and asked if a suitable route could be found for a trip with an 04 from Lincoln calling at Gainsborough and Retford. He came up with just that, with the destination of Thorne and the route over the South Yorkshire Joint Line. This would involve chimney first running to Thorne over the SYJnt, then tender first to Doncaster, where it would be turned before heading to Retford on the main line. The load would be 6 coaches and the price £200.

We agreed to do it. On the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1963, no.63585 took GMRS passengers over the agreed route. The schedule involved a maximum permitted speed of 30mph. It was amazing timekeeping. At no timing point were we more than one minute out of schedule and the section from Doncaster to Retford on the main line "officially" took exactly 36 minutes for the 18 miles with no one "officially" timing the speed at more than 32mph. In fact the train had not even cleared the platform at Doncaster before speed had reached 30mph. I must confess to having had a word with the crew, telling them the engine was going for scrap on the Monday so it might as well go out with a flourish. (*It was not officially withdrawn until two months later! – Ed.*) An actual maximum speed of 52mph was recorded by several timekeepers on the train. The crew reckoned it would have done more but the coal was invading the cab floor, making moving around very difficult.

Was this really the last passenger train to be hauled by a GC engine in BR days?

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*"The Woodhead Wanderer" at Oughtibridge on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011. The station building is to the right of the photographer. The new development behind the bus is on the site of the station yard.*

*photo: Ken Grainger*

## The Pollard family railway history – part 12

by John E. Pollard

*John continues his story working as a guard at Annesley*

Just a few tales about some Annesley guards. I first met Bob Bunny when I was a lamp lad and I always classed him as a gentleman. He usually gave me sixpence when I cleaned his brake van as I normally made a good job of it and always made sure he had a good stock of coal. I also had him as a guard when I was a fireman on some jobs. He always called me John - to most other men I was "young Jack" as my father was "old Jack". When I became a guard, Bob was very supportive towards me as some of the other old hands treated new recruits with contempt. One day, when I was on the yard pilot job, I was in the guards' room listening to a discussion as to why a train from Colwick to Annesley North box was allowed more wagons up the GN line than up the GC line as the GN was steeper than the GC. As I remember, the four guards in discussion were Bob Bunny, Tommy Cave, George Paige and another guard I didn't know. They did not seem to be able to come to a conclusion so I butted in and said, "I know why." I got a really nasty reply from George Paige, who was a rather sarcastic man, but Bob Bunny said, "Let the young man have his say, we may learn something. Come on John. tell us why." I told them that if you back in to Annesley yard off the GN the crossover onto the up line is right outside North signal box but if you back in off the GC you have to go past Annesley North Jct before reversing onto the GN line and then over the crossover into Annesley yard. It was this greater distance involved in the reversal that restricted the length of the train permitted. I saw Bob the next day and he told me I was right as he had looked at the layout as his train left the yard the previous day. Then he turned to George Paige and said, "You owe John an apology." I did not get one. George was not the sort to apologise to anyone.



*The butterfly hand lamp issued to Bob Bunny. photo: John Pollard*

Bob was one of only two guards at Annesley who had an Appleton patent hand lamp - most people called them butterfly lamps - the other was Tommy Lee. About four hundred of these lamps had been made and given out to traffic staff on test. There was a three legged brass swivel on top of the lamp which could be flicked round by one finger to change the colour to red or green from white. There were three springs in the top of the lamp but the heat from the burner took the tension out of the springs so they started to fail and the lamps were withdrawn. A few men held onto theirs. I only ever saw four of them. Beside the two at Annesley, a Mexborough guard had one and an inspector at Ickles had one. When Bob retired he gave me his lamp and I still have it. There is only one spring left in it but it still works. Tommy Lee gave his to George Howes. George was calling a train back at Swithland one night to cross over from the down road to the up side. He was stood on the viaduct over the reservoir when the bottom of the lamp flew off into the water - he chucked the rest of the lamp in after it!

Tommy Lee was on a Leicester turn one day. It was before the Woodford runners started. It was very foggy. Tommy got relieved at Leicester Passenger and had to walk down to the Goods for his back working. As he was walking down the platform he was stopped by a man with a camera who asked if he could take a picture. Tommy asked why and was told it was for the *Leicester Mercury*, the local paper, and it would appear the next day. So Tommy stood there with his bag over one shoulder and his lamp in the other hand while two pictures were taken. When Tommy got to the Goods he asked the shunters to get him a couple of papers the next day and paid for them. The next day

was fine and sunny and Tommy's train went straight down to Leicester Goods. As the Woodford guard climbed in the van he just said to Tommy, "Did you find it?" Tommy was puzzled. Each person he passed asked him the same question. He reached the shunters' cabin and found out why. The picture was in the *Mercury* with the caption - "Guard loses train in fog". It took him a long time to live that one down and nobody at Leicester would pose for a newspaper picture again.

I loaned Bob Bunny's lamp to the Railway Museum at York. I made a few visits to the museum over the years but never saw it on display, so when I received a letter from the museum asking me if I would like to donate the lamp permanently, I said no. It was then returned to me and is now in a cupboard upstairs.



*John Pollard surveys the scene from his brake as his train arrives at Annesley Yard from Woodford. The train has just left the GC main line at Annesley South Junction and is travelling along the Goods Loop. BR class 2MT 2-6-0 no.78023, a Sheffield Millhouses engine, is on the up Goods Loop. The Up Yard can be seen on the right. The loco shed is to the left of the photographer. The spoil tips of Annesley Colliery on the left create an Alpine scene in the snow. No date given.*

*photo: John Pollard collection*

Things were getting desperate on our section in terms of traffic. We were going two light engines and brake to Woodford, then working two trains of coal empties or steel empties back home. Annesley yard seemed almost empty. I was working the afternoon Silverhill colliery turn one week. We sometimes picked a train up in the yard and often got one on the down goods road. This particular day we picked the train up on the down goods line. I put my gear in the van and had a walk up the train. I had sixty five coal empties. The engine came out - it was one of our converted Tinies (*class O1 - Ed.*). I tied the engine on, picked the brakes up, told the driver what we had on, then phoned the signalman at Annesley North to tell him we were ready to go. I set off back to the van. When we had cleared the yard I waved to the driver and got a whistle in return. I sat down and started filling my book and journal in. We passed Kirkby South Junction and headed for Summit Colliery box. Summit's distant was yellow. The engine stopped at the home board then drew slowly up and then stopped again. I heard the driver whistling so

screwed my brake on, picked the shunting pole up, got out the van and started to walk up the train. I was walking along the up line as the other side was tight against the cutting wall. Also the signal box was on the up side. When I got to the box the signalman came to the window and said, "You're leaving them here, guard." I asked him if there was any coal in the loaded sidings for us to pick up. He said, "No, you're just putting the empties off here, then engine and van to Silverhill." I told him, "No way. I'm taking these wagons to Silverhill." He went back in the box and then came to the window and said, "Control want a word with you." I went in the box and picked up the phone. The controller said, "We want these wagons for Summit, you'll put them off here." I told him that as the Midland had been taking the coal out of Summit for months now, the Midland can put the empties back in. I was not going to supply a pit with empties that didn't give us any loaded wagons back in return. He said, "If you don't put them in, the pit will be standing." So I replied, "Then send a train of empties up the Midland." I was not giving way so in the end he gave in and we left for Silverhill.

When we got there we found the empty sidings without any wagons in. If I had put ours off at Summit, Silverhill would have been without and would have been left standing waiting for wagons. After we had put them in the empty sidings we dropped down to the loaded sidings, got a train together and went down the branch to Skegby. When I had put the train away I went into the box and asked if I could talk to Control. The signalman pointed to the phone. I picked it up and when the controller answered I asked if he was the same man I had been talking to at Summit. The reply was yes so I said, "Well that dirty trick of yours didn't work this time. You know we move a lot of traffic from Silverhill and you were trying to drop us in the cart." I also said, "I know the Central line is a thorn in the Midland's side, but I didn't think an ordinary railwayman like you would deliberately try to shut us down." He said, "I don't know what you mean." I told him to pull the other one and put the phone down. If we hadn't taken that train to Silverhill, they would have been standing and we would have lost another train. One thing was sure, Control would never get me to put any empty wagons into Summit sidings until we started getting coal back out again.



*John Pollard's greenhouse with railway memorabilia including a name board from Summit Box.*

*photo:John Pollard*



I was on the Ardsley turn one week. This job was guaranteed twelve hours. We had made twelve all week up to Friday night on this job. I would leave my home at 7pm to walk the five miles to Annesley and usually had walked back to the house by 9am the next morning. On the Friday we left as usual and arrived at Mexborough where we had our food. While we were eating it the cabin door opened and my brother Les, his fireman and their guard walked in. We asked what they were doing on the Veg. Apparently there had been a derailment at Kirkby South and Les and his crew had relieved the other men and brought the train through. The timekeeper told me and my driver to leave the train at Mexborough and travel back home to Annesley. He gave us instructions to go up onto the Midland line and catch a freight train to Rotherham Masborough, then a passenger train to Sheffield, then another passenger to Derby, then another passenger to Nottingham. From there we could make our own way back to Annesley. Later on he told my brother Les and his crew to travel back to Annesley but did not give him them any instructions on how to get there.

So we set off for the Midland line and got on a freight as instructed. But it was on the slow road and the passenger we should have caught at Masborough passed us. We eventually got to Masborough and caught a train to Sheffield where we had another wait for a train to Derby. When one came in they took the steam engine off and put a diesel on. We were in the first coach and when he struck off we got a right bang and then stopped. Whoever had tied the engine on had forgotten to couple the brake pipes up and when the engine struck off he broke the coupling. We had a wait while they fitted a new one. We finally got to Derby where there was another wait for a train to Nottingham. We stopped at a station on the way and in the siding at the back of the platform was one of our K3 engines waiting to be cut up. She was the last K3 I ever saw. At Nottingham we walked up to Victoria and got a ride to Basford, then walked up to Bulwell where we caught the bus to Annesley. We walked up from the gates at Newstead, the driver went to the Loco and I walked up the yard. When I arrived at the telegraph office the clerk said, "Where have you been? We've been searching all over for you." I told him, "Ask Control. We've been following their orders." It was gone midday and as I could not sign on again before midnight I got a shift for nothing or as we said "one for nowt" - the only one I ever had. My brother had caught a passenger from Mexborough to Sheffield Vic and then a passenger to Annesley South, signing off before 10am. He was back at work again that Saturday night.

The time had come to move on as there was obviously no future at Annesley – rail traffic was declining and what remained was being diverted onto the Midland lines - and I was not going on the Midland! Annesley yard closed just after I left. That was the end of my contribution to the Pollard family railway history. However I have many more anecdotes I would like to tell about my brother Les who worked on the footplate at Annesley Loco.

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## Items for sale

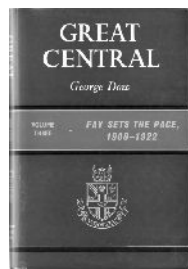
### •A full set of the *Great Central* trilogy by George Dow.

Vol. 1, 2 & 3. All 2nd edition and backed in self-adhesive plastic.

Any reasonable offer considered.

Contact Mick Savage.

email: micksavage@talktalk.net or telephone 0114 236 9002.



## Chorlton Metrolink line now open

The Metrolink South Manchester extension to Chorlton opened on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July. This new section of Manchester's light rail system runs from Trafford Bar to St Werburgh's Road with intermediate stops at Firwood and Chorlton (the only station that existed on the original line). The line follows the route of the CLC to Chorlton Junction (where the Midland and the GC's Fallowfield Line went their separate ways) which is now the site of St Werbergh's Road station. The Fallowfield Loop cycleway has had to be diverted and now runs

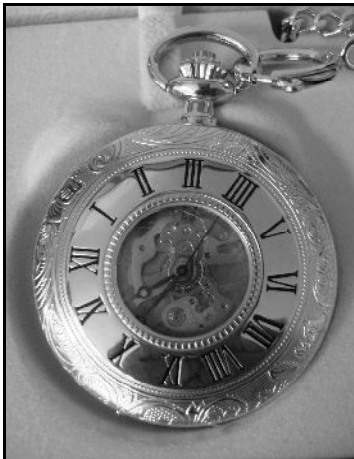


*Metrolink tram no.3012 arrives at St Werbergh's Road on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The diverted Fallowfield Loop cycleway is on the right.*

*photo: Michael Savage*

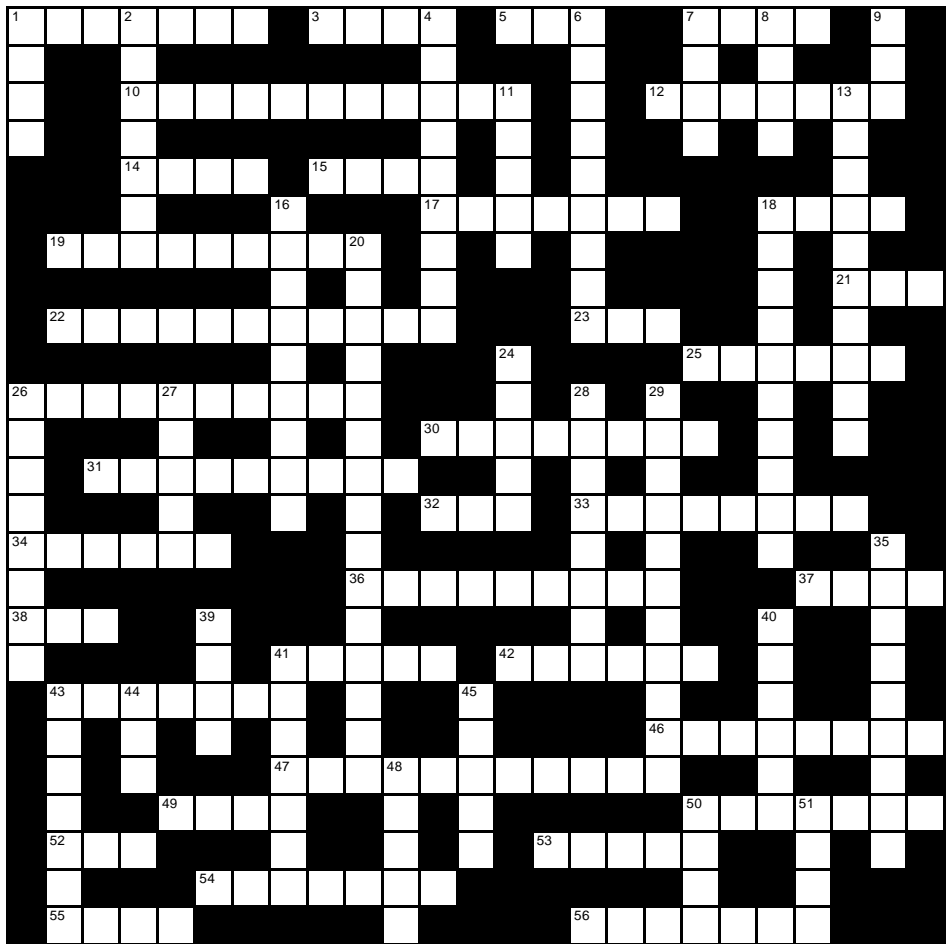
alongside the track. A further extension of the line along the Midland route to East Didsbury is scheduled for 2013. Looking further ahead a proposed Airport line will branch off at St. Werbergh's Road and head south, making it the site of a junction again, albeit along a new formation. The tram in the photo is one of the Flexity Swift M5000 type built by Bombardier in Germany. Nos. 3001-3015 have been delivered and are serviced at a new depot at Trafford Bar. A total of 62 have been ordered for delivery over the next few years to cater for the "Big Bang" expansion of the Metrolink network.

## Presentation to Martin Gray



In recognition of his services to the Society, our retiring honorary auditor, Martin Gray, was presented with a pocket watch by our treasurer, Eric Latusek, on 13<sup>th</sup> June. The inside of the lid was inscribed "Martin Gray GCRS Honorary Auditor 1989-2011".

**Crossword (*Forward 169*)** : Answers in the back of this issue.



**Across**

- 1** "Alan -----" : Publisher of old maps. (7)
- 3** The sound of escaping steam. (4)
- 5** And **7** down. Shed that provided motive power for the Bradford-Sheffield leg of The South Yorkshireman. (3, 4)
- 7** "----chrome" : Black and white. (4)
- 10** Lacking a depth of treatment. (11)
- 12** Favourite photographic location in Longdendale. (7)
- 14** and **52** across. Publisher of transport titles in Nottingham. (4, 3)
- 15** Connecting two points. (4)
- 17** "----- Press" : Publisher of line histories. (7)
- 18** see **41** across.
- 19** The start of the climb on Ashby bank. (9)
- 21** Partner with the GCR on the Macclesfield Committee. (3)
- 22** Nickname given to the 1936/37 batch of the B17 class. (11)
- 23** Centre. (3)

- 25** "----- Bridge" (railway spelling) : Visited by GCRS on 2 July. (6)
- 26** An original document, usually handwritten. (10)
- 30** see **43** down.
- 31** Method of signal operation introduced to the GCR by A.F.Bound. (9)
- 32** Unique to you. (3)
- 33** Needed to treat hard water. (8)
- 34** Used to hold steel plates together. (6)
- 36** Track layout that allows movement between up and down lines. (9)
- 37** see **44** down.
- 38** More satisfying when "real". (3)
- 41** and **18** across. A welcome sight for a thirsty engine. (5, 4)
- 42** Single line entry to a multi-track yard, station or shed. (6)
- 43** A killer of workers on the Woodhead line construction. (7)
- 46** see **50** down.
- 47** see **40** down.
- 49** 27004. (4)
- 50** Junction west of Baguley. (7)
- 52** see **14** across.
- 53** These Scots were shedded at Annesley in the 1960s. (5)
- 54** Large yard built by the LNER in 1935. (7)
- 55** "---- Park" : Between Lincoln and Gainsborough. (4)
- 56** Destination of proposed Metrolink line from St Werburgh's Road. (7)

#### Down

- 1** "National ----" : Occupiers of the Woodhead tunnel. (4)
- 2** Plug that prevents boiler explosions. (7)
- 4** GC station named after a three counties (Yorkshire, Debyshire and Notts) boundary feature. (9)
- 6** The incline from Wath up to Silkstone Junction. (9)
- 7** See **5** across.
- 8** "Throstle ---- Junction" on the CLC. (4)
- 9** Rail fastening (in UK) and a sleeper (in USA). (3)
- 11** Nickname for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway. (5)
- 13** Colliery and station on the SYJnt. (10)
- 16** Type of fuel used by Robinson as an experiment. (9)
- 18** Curved tunnel on the Trans Pennine Trail with interesting acoustics. (10)
- 20** Took place over Woodhead in 1954. (15)
- 24** "---- & Hemingway" : Railway contractors frequently used by the GCR. (5)
- 26** An aid to remembering what shouldn't be forgotten. (8)
- 27** It can be etched to provide parts for the modeller. (5)
- 28** Station on the LD&ECR. Its castle can be seen from the M1. (8)
- 29** Recorded by time keepers on a train. (11)
- 35** Alexander Henderson became first Baron. (9)
- 39** An experimental livery on the GC? (4)
- 40** and **47** across. Our latest vice-president (6, 11)
- 41** A regular procedure carried out on a locomotive boiler. (7)
- 43** and **30** across. Engineer who did the original survey for the Woodhead line. (7, 8)
- 44** and **37** across. Name used for the original route between Chesterfield and Rotherham. (3, 4)
- 45** "----- Street" : Restored MS&L warehouse north of Manchester Piccadilly. (5)
- 48** Junction south of Crowthorn Junction. (5)
- 50** and **46** across. The last vehicle on the 6.20pm from Marylebone to Sheffield. (4, 8)
- 51** Needed for disabled access to platforms. (4)

## Readers' forum

### from Gerald Summerfield, Saltdean, Sussex

*Forward 167* p18: "Notes on a 1966 pocket timetable" by George Huxley.

Subsequent to the letter from Mike Kinder (*Forward 168* p45), regarding the 03:40 newspaper train from Marylebone to Woodford. This train was retimed to 03:45 sometime prior to 1952 and stopped at Finmere to unload about 20 packages of newspapers and magazines for W.H.Smith at Buckingham. They were collected from Finmere station by lorry.

This train was also used by soldiers returning from leave to the nearby barracks at Tingewick. The number varied from one to twenty according to the day of the week, the busiest being Monday morning.

This train kept to this timing until I finished as station master at Finmere in 1959.

### from Dave Cousins, Swinton, Manchester

*Forward 168* p47: letter re. Boiler plate from Ashford.

Regarding the questions from Carl Lardner about his brass boiler plate, I think I can answer them all except one – how it became detached from the firebox.

The number 3841 is purely a boiler number – it is not related to the O4 locomotive. It was never "one of ours" as he puts it, although in later years it was used on "one of theirs". Boiler numbering on the LNER was rather vague with each works doing its own thing. For example, Gorton Works 3841 was on an A5 and Stratford Works 3841 was on a B12. The boiler in this case was a Thompson 100A built in Feb.1948 and first used on B1 no.1056 in the same month. It moved to no.61232 in Aug.1949. In Nov.1951, by which time it had been renumbered by BR as 28570, it is recorded as being on no.61227. From Feb.1954 to May 1956 it was on no.61089. This fits in with the period described by Carl Lardner as it underwent repair at Ashford Works. It then appears on no.61645 *The Suffolk Regiment* at that engine's last overhaul at Doncaster Works in March 1957. It was removed for reuse when that engine returned to Doncaster Works for scrapping in Feb.1959. It's last use was with O2 no.63982 ("one of theirs") in Feb.1960 until it was withdrawn in Dec.1962. It went with that engine for scrap to F.C.Larkinson of Grantham. The boiler was always 225 lb pressure.

The plate would have been fitted to the firebox front, its scalloped shape dictated by the need to fit around the stays in this area which hold the inner and outer firebox shells apart. (I know about these things as I have recently achieved the status of honorary boiler-smith's apprentice at the age of 68!)

The plate that must have gone missing at Ashford Works would certainly have been replaced even though the boiler number and the engine number to which it was allocated would have been painted on the boiler shell.

*Forward 168* p6: "My Dad and the last Pom Pom" by Claire Golder.

Claire Golder's final comment that all the Pom Poms "have gone without a trace" is not completely true. Several smokebox number plates have appeared at auction, and indeed, the LNER cabside plate from 64354 itself (showing the number 5177), turned up at the Sheffield auction in 1997.

A number of worksplates survive – numerous examples from Gorton and Neilson Reid, with fewer examples from Beyer Peacock, Yorkshire Engine and Vulcan Foundry. A Vulcan Foundry plate from 1904 featured quite recently on the auction page of *Forward 166*. Vulcan Foundry plates of this age from any locomotive are rare, let alone from a J11. I went to the Great Central Railwayana auction anticipating quite a high price. When I succeeded in buying it for £190, the auctioneer, Mike Soden, was moved to comment that as there was no reserve put on it I had received a bargain! It was very untidy as the polished bits had been treated with varnish which had rotted. The varnish was easily removed leaving a nice polished plate which now has its place alongside my Neilson Reid plate from 64292.

**from Bill Taylor, Skegby, Notts**

Forward 168 p43: Reg Instone's letter re. Route of the LD&ECR.

I can confirm that the initial plans deposited in 1890 with the respective Clerks of the Peace for the counties through whose areas the proposed line would pass is effectively a copy of the ordnance map with the route of the lines marked on it. The promoters deposited a full plan "Warrington to Sutton on Sea" with every such Clerk, and the one in Lincolnshire can be inspected at the Lincolnshire Archives office by prior appointment. You will need to obtain a reader's ticket to view the item wherever you go, the Derbyshire one being at Matlock.

Forward 168 p44: Reg Instone's letter re. Edward Robert Charlesworth photos.

Reg Instone asks if there are any GCR staff records which may be consulted. I know of none at any local Record Office but RAIL 226 at the National Archives includes several records between RAIL226/192 and RAIL226/234 inclusive. Very brief details of what is included in each piece is included if you search the Catalogue on the website but to check on the names of staff you will need to visit Kew.

As an example RAIL226/202 gives details of staff joining the GCR from 1900-02 whilst the next number, 203, is an index to the names of those persons who appear in 202. That system of items in pairs goes through to the Grouping.

If you know when the person concerned joined the company it should be a simple task to locate them in the relevant index. If, however, you only know where the person worked then the index is of no use at all.

Should you find the person concerned in one of the records then a great deal of information is included, especially date of birth, useful for those researching family history. The date of joining is given as well as job title and location before other columns give details of pay, increases in pay, promotions, disciplinary matters, whether the person enlisted in WW1, and when they died, resigned, retired or were dismissed.

I attach a page from one of the staff records in order to show how the pages were set out. On the down side I could not find any records at all relating to footplate staff in the documents at Kew.

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY.									
NAME		DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF JOINING	LOCATION	CLASSIFICATION	DATE OF DEPARTURE	REASON FOR DEPARTURE	DATE OF DEATH	PLACE OF DEATH
Fred Bean		1871	1900	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Junior Clerk	1908	Resigned		
John Ernest Day		1890	1909	Rotherham	Assistant Clerk	1910	Resigned		
George Holland		1890	1909	Rotherham	Assistant Clerk	1910	Resigned		

A page from the GCR records available for inspection at the National Archive, Kew. This page shows details for Fred Bean (appt. July 27<sup>th</sup> 1908 as Junior Clerk at Newcastle-upon-Tyne), John Ernest Day (appt. June 14<sup>th</sup> 1909 as Assistant Clerk at Rotherham) and George Holland (appt. Feb.24<sup>th</sup> 1909 also as Assistant Clerk at Rotherham).

**from Carl Lardner, Herne Bay, Kent**

Forward 168 p24/25: photo of 27002 Aurora.

What a splendid photo of *Aurora*. The EM2s were such handsome engines. Such a contrast to the photo of NS 1506 at Tilburg that appeared in *Rail Enthusiast* (May 1985). It had long been planned to repatriate 1506 but it was not to be.

A photo of 27002 taken on 8th October 1965, while on NS trials, shows the single circular wiper still in place but another photo taken on the same day shows none. My records confirm that on that date *Aurora* was running with just the one circular wiper and three normal wipers. I believe that *Op De Rails* magazine had some articles at that

time about NS's new toys.

Quite apart from 27002 having been chosen for exhibition to the IRCA delegates at Willesden in 1954, and having been sent to the NS a week earlier than the rest, could I suggest that *Aurora* was the most photographed EM2?

I assume that there are two EM2s in preservation but are there any EM1s?

*Editor's note:* There are two photos of 27002 with two circular wipers at the same end in E.M.Johnson's book *Woodhead the Electric Railway* (Foxline 2001). On p81 at Crowden (18<sup>th</sup> April 1964) and on p135 at Sheffield Victoria (no date given). *Aurora* looks as if she is wearing a pair of 1960s style National Health spectacles.

### **from Alan Munday, Stalybridge**

*Forward 168* p40: crossword, clue 11 down.

Strictly speaking the name of the church is (St) BARNABAS which fits the spaces but obviously requires OPENSHAW, which is the geographical location of the church, to fit the answer to 11 across.

*Editor's note:* You are quite right but parish churches also took the name of their parish as well as their patron saint, so the church would be 'St Barnabas Openshaw'.

*Forward 168* p46: letter from E.M.Johnson on "The Fallowfield Loop".

The line from Chorlton Junction to Fairfield through Fallowfield has been variously described as the Fairfield/Fallowfield Line/Loop. I would accept any of these designations as alternatives to "The Manchester Central Station Railway".

In E.M.Johnson's book *Railways in and around the Manchester Suburbs* (Foxline 1989) the section heading (on same page as illustration 195) refers to "The Fairfield Loop" but in the caption (which is printed on the back cover) to the front cover picture of the Boat Train at Wilbraham Road it is called "The Fallowfield Line".

Wilbraham Road Station was the next station west of Fallowfield Station on this line. As a child, c1950, I often travelled on the line from Gorton & Openshaw (now Gorton), on Sunday excursion trains to Southport via the chord line from Gorton to the Fairfield/Fallowfield line to which it connected between Fairfield and Hyde Road at Hyde Road Junction. We then stopped at all the stations on the line, travelling via Chorlton, Throstle Nest South Jct and Trafford Park Jct to the Cheshire Lines route to Southport Lord Street. The stock I recall was Gresley teak and was kept all week near Ardwick on a siding below the station, which was next to the Manchester Corporation Hyde Road bus garage, near to the "skid pan" now used to store containers. The location is in the fork formed by the GCR & LNWR lines at Ardwick.

I have a photograph of me on the footplate of what could be a B1 at Lord Street station, with my uncle, the driver, Tom Greenwood, on the platform (obscuring the number) and his fireman looking out of the cab window next to me. My uncle started out on the Cheshire Lines, then was at Belle Vue Shed, moving to Gorton Shed and eventually driving electric locos and emus.

As a child I lived at 2, Sheffield Street (now demolished) off Railway Street, Gorton (although strictly just in Openshaw). Railway Street being alongside the GC line, I could see into the "Tank" (Gorton Railway Works, again in Openshaw) yard and see the J94 shunters at work. My uncle, Arthur Greenwood, was timekeeper in the lodge at the Lawton Street entrance of the works. I also had relations who worked at Beyer Peacocks at the end of Railway Street. The "bump" of the Naysmyth steam hammer was felt via my bed at night. I sat on the railway wall (still there!) for many hours as a child. I recall the Hayfield & Glossop "push & pulls". I can remember seeing the Bukton owned earth movers lowering the trackbed below Cornwall Street bridge for the electrification, while standing on the cobbled slope which had once served the original Gorton Station before its move to the present site.

Many hours were spent on the "Birdcage", looking off the GCR line footbridge into Peacock's yard with its tram engine. From the slope to Whitworth Street observing the

"scrap line" of the shed with 69999 and the "Directors" awaiting their turn. I recall they were next to a shed-like structure (was it a paint shop?). I recall seeing a photo, in a book, looking in the opposite direction at the slope of the "Birdcage"- does anyone know which book? The only photo I have is in *The GC line in LNER Days (Vol.1)* by Jackson & Russell (Ian Allan 1983) looking along the main line from near Priory Box with the "Birdcage" in the distance. I would love to have any copies of photos of the structure, if they exist.

Returning to Chorlton Jnct (*Forward 167* cover photo), I travelled on the other line during my student journeys from Manchester Central via Cheadle Heath to London St Pancras and back in the early 1960s while the Euston line was being electrified.

### **from Howard Turner, Sheffield**

*Forward 168* p28: photo of 61464 at Sheffield Victoria

The photo which appeared on page 28 of the June issue of *Forward* was taken by me on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1958. I was on a visit to Sheffield Victoria station enquiry office to deliver seat tickets from the Thomas Cook Fargate office where I was employed. The tickets, by the way, were mainly for weekend holiday trains to Scarborough, Cleethorpes, Great Yarmouth and other resorts. Thomas Cook handled a huge railway ticket business at this time. When visiting Victoria station, usually during my lunch hour, I always took the opportunity to have a meal in the railway employees canteen which was situated at the end of platform 1. Thomas Cook's staff were allowed to use the facility.

Just before lunch I noticed class B16/3 no.61464 from 50A York shed arriving with the Newcastle to Bournemouth express and a photograph was duly taken with my trusty Ensign Selfix camera which I nearly always carried in my briefcase. Sadly I did not observe the engine which took the train on to Nottingham, Leicester and beyond but, as Ken Grainger recounts in his article, it was most likely a Low Moor "Black 5".

A large framed copy of this photograph can be viewed in the Holiday Inn Royal Victoria Hotel. It is positioned on the wall near the entrance to the restaurant. This came about as a result of a request some years ago from the then General Manager of the hotel, Nigel Gray, and I was able to get my good friend Eddie Johnson to make an enlargement from my negative. The hotel provided the frame. The result speaks for itself.

### **from Maurice Barrick, Immingham**

*Request for information: Immingham loco shed*

Immingham Museum is planning to make a model of Immingham Loco shed. The work is being undertaken by John Trevit. John would welcome any details connected with Immingham loco shed, which was built while the dock was under construction

If any of your readers can help they should contact the museum's curator, Brian Mummery (tel. 01469 757577) or e-mail [info@immuseum.plus.com](mailto:info@immuseum.plus.com).

### **from Bill Gee, Felixstowe**

*Request for information: Grimsby wagons*

Does anyone remember the fires in Grimsby in the 1940s – at Consolidated and at Norstand? Both firms had their own wagons. Consolidated wagons had white lettering shaded in red. Norstand wagons were green with yellow lettering. Any information about these wagon fleets would be appreciated.

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**Building a Robinson 'Fish Engine' 4-6-0 in P4 – part 2** by John Bateson has been held over to the next issue of *Forward*.



## Crossword Solution (*Forward* 169)

**Across:** **1** Godfrey, **3** Hiss, **5** Low, **7** Mono, **10** Superficial, **12** Torside, **14** Book, **15** Line, **17** Oakwood, **18** Tank, **19** Whetstone, **21** NSR, **22** Footballers, **23** Hub, **25** Oughty, **26** Manuscript, **30** Vignoles, **31** Pneumatic, **32** PIN, **33** Softener, **34** Rivets, **36** Crossover, **37** Road, **38** Ale, **41** Water, **42** Throat, **43** Cholera, **46** Carriage, **47** Hinchcliffe, **49** Juno, **50** Skelton, **52** Law, **53** Royal, **54** Mottram, **55** Stow, **56** Airport.

**Down:** **1** Grid, **2** Fusible, **4** Shireoaks, **6** Wentworth, **7** Moor, **8** Nest, **9** Tie, **11** Lanky, **13** Dinnington, **16** Colloidal, **18** Thurgoland, **20** Electrification, **24** Logan, **26** Memorial, **27** Sheet, **28** Bolsover, **29** Performance, **35** Faringdon, **39** Grey, **40** George, **41** Washout, **43** Charles, **44** Old, **45** Ducie, **48** Canal, **50** Slip, **51** Lift.

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## Back numbers of *Forward* on CD

Eric Latusek can provide back numbers of *Forward* on a CD to GCRS members. If interested please contact Eric (*see front cover for contact details*).



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## Rear cover caption

GCR class 18A 0-6-0 goods engine no.43 is the centrepiece of this posed photograph taken at Broughton Lane goods depot, Sheffield. Built in April 1871 at Gorton by the MS&L, no.43 is one of only seven members of the class. They were similar to the earlier class 18 but with a larger double dome boiler and smaller driving wheels. They also had a proper cab rather than a bent weatherboard. At the time of the photo the original boiler had been replaced by a standard class 6A boiler. All the members of both class 18 and 18A were rebuilt as 0-6-0 saddle tanks but only a few survived into LNER stock (class J58). No.43 was rebuilt as a saddle tank in Feb.1904. This gives a date for the photo between the formation of the GCR in Aug.1897 and the rebuilding in Feb.1904. The duplicate number 43B was allocated in Sept.1920 and it was withdrawn in May 1922.

The photo was submitted by Rod Slatter and belongs to Bob Carnie whose great great grandfather, George Gineever, is the driver on the footplate. According to the 1901 Census he lived at 6, Railway Cottages, Attercliffe Cum Darnall, Sheffield. Any further information relating to the photo would be welcome.

*photo: unknown*

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