

FORWARD



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GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY SOCIETY

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Forward is the journal of the Great Central Railway Society and is published quarterly in March, June, September and December.

The Society, founded in 1974, is open to all who are interested in any aspect of the Great Central Railway, its predecessors, successors and joint lines. For membership details contact the Membership Secretary or visit the website.

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Any views or opinions expressed in *Forward* are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor or Committee Members of the Great Central Railway Society. Contributions for the September 2024 issue (no.221) must reach the Editor by 1st August 2024.

Front cover caption

GCR class 9K 4-4-2T no.1056 pauses at Meadow Hall and Wincobank station with a Sheffield Victoria to Barnsley Court House service. Known as the Blackburn Valley line, it was opened by the South Yorkshire Railway in 1854 to connect Aldam Jn on the SYR 'main line' with the Midland at Wincobank (the site of today's busy Meadowhall station) and extended to Woodburn Jn on the MS&L in 1861. The SYR became part of the MS&L in 1864. The station at Meadow Hall opened 1868 and closed in 1953.
photo: unknown / John Alsop collection



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No. 220 ~ June 2024

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The Editorial

At a well-attended AGM at Barnsley on 18th May we welcomed Daniel Needham as Northern Area Representative on the committee. After many years of faithful service, Ken Grainger has relinquished that post but will continue on the War Memorial committee and will arrange the Remembrance Event at Sheffield as long as he is able.

In the afternoon session we were treated to an excellent presentation by Steve Armitage who put together a show of GC related images from his collection. Many of us, including myself, have our own collection of photos which we have bought at railway events or on-line or inherited from others. These can be scanned as digital images and used in publications (such as *Forward*) or as part of a presentation. In contrast, Steve's collection is made up of original negatives not prints. These have been converted into digital images and with the help of image editing have been 'improved' to make images of exceptional quality. An example can be found on p.42. The original photographers would be amazed at the results.

The Reunification project to link the two heritage railways of the GCR continues to make progress (see p.40) as reported by Tom Ingall. Although the GCRS is an historical line society and not a preservation movement we should be supportive of all projects that see parts of the original GCR restored to use. The support is mutual as the GCR at Loughborough have welcomed the presence of our sales/publicity stand at their events.

Bob Gellatly

GCRS website

For the members-only content on the website the password from 1st July will be **Northwich**. If you have any problems with the password protected pages please contact the editor/webmaster.

NTH	-1949
13D	1949-50
9G	1950-58
8E	1958-68



Opening in 1869 on the CLC line between Altrincham and Chester, the shed lay alongside the station on the southeast side with access from the northeast. It was doubled in size in 1877 and rebuilt by BR in 1948 and closed in 1968. The building survived for many years but has now been demolished and replaced by housing.

Before nationalisation the allocation was mostly LNER types but even after becoming part of the London Midland Region of BR the allocation remained predominantly LNER until the mid-1950s when LMS types began to take over. The last LNER loco was J10 65169 which was withdrawn in Feb.1960.



*Northwich shed on 1 June 1952. On the left is class J10 no.65131. Facing the camera on the right is class D10 no.62651 'Purdon Viccars'.
photo: Lloyd Graham / John Alsop coll.*

Move to get a London service for Kiveton Park

In the editorial for the March issue of *Forward* I mentioned that Hull Trains are considering the introduction of a King's Cross-Sheffield service via Retford. They are to include Worksop and Woodhouse as stops on the Retford-Sheffield line. Vice president and former Northern Area Rep on the GCRS committee, Ken Grainger, would benefit, as Woodhouse is his local station, but what about Kiveton Park, the Editor's local station?

My MP, Alex Stafford*, has agreed that this is something that should be rectified and arranged to meet a representative of Hull Trains at Kiveton Park station to discuss the matter. In a statement from Downing Street, released on 1st April, Rishi Sunak said "I am pleased that this inequality is being addressed. We are the party that supports hard working editors."

* Until the next election!



Alex Stafford MP (left) meets with a representative from Hull Trains (right) at Kiveton Park station.

photo: Alex Stafford

Bob Gellatly

A new Facebook page

A new resource for GCRS members (and others) is a **Facebook page** for 'The Great Central Railway Society' which is administered by former committee member Brian Slater. It can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3521889804737730>.

This provides a forum for queries and comments on anything related to the Great Central Railway including modelling. Anyone can visit the page but to contribute to the discussion you have to register with Facebook first.

Below is a screenshot of the Facebook page header. Top marks if you know where the photo was taken.



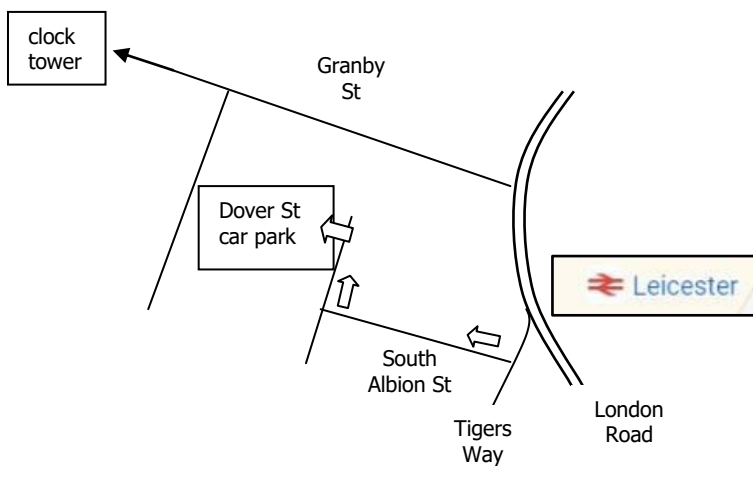
A walk around Leicester

I am leading a guided walk around Leicester on **Saturday 14th September** for the benefit of GCRS members. The tour will include the remains of the Leicester & Swannington Railway, the GCR and the Midland, but we will not be able to include the Great Northern. The walk starts at 11:30 at the Clock Tower on Gallowtree Gate. For those arriving by train, you can start your own tour of Leicester by walking along Granby Street and Gallowtree Gate (see map). For those arriving by car the Dover St car park is recommended (see arrows on map for access). A lunch break is included in the itinerary and we should finish by 15:00 at the railway station.



The Tourist Office describes Leicester as a "city full of surprises". I'm sure you will not be disappointed. Numbers are limited to 20 so please book your place by contacting me at kenwheatley@hotmail.com or 01162 392672.

Ken Wheatley, Midland Area Rep



Welcome to the following new members

N.G. Walker, Haddenham, Aylesbury
D. Scott, Blackthorn, Bicester
B.S. Ladkin, Ruddington, Nottingham
R. Cornell, Loughborough
M. Holland, Sibsey, Boston
M. Hammond, Redmill, Nottingham
K. & D. Gillott, Loughborough
N. Headley, Leicester
T. Hayton, Kingston on Soar, Nottingham
T. Birch, Scholes, Leeds
J. Skoyles, Kingswood, Hull
J. Horobin, Barrow upon Soar, Loughborough

P. Read, West Markham, Newark
D. Fielding, Slade Hooton, Sheffield
T. Peat, Pilsley, Chesterfield
S. Wakeland, Great Holm, Milton Keynes
M.A. Rees, Rugby
J. Clayton, Melton Mowbray
J. Hayes, Huncote, Leicester
A.S. Godber, Quorn, Leicestershire
R.J. Patching, Lichfield
J.F. Meakin, Colyford, Devon
C.D. Jackson, Huntingdon, York

Views of Leicester Central station facade then and now

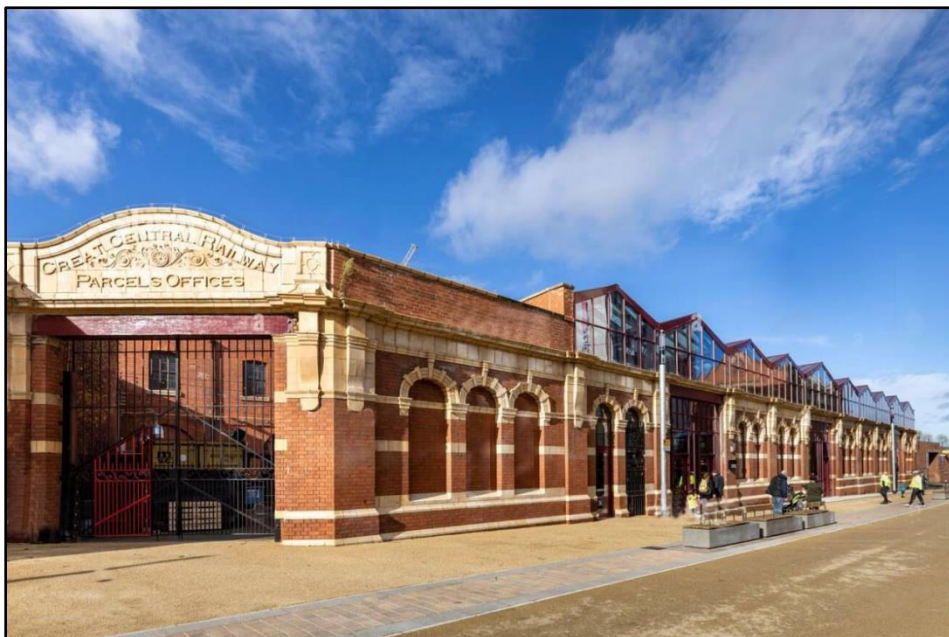


above: A postcard view from the Edwardian era.

photo: Aldwych Series postcard

below: The renovated station buildings in 2020.

photo: Jim Monk



Marylebone station 125th anniversary event

by Martin Walker

Representatives of the GCRS were invited by Chiltern Railways to attend an event on Friday 15th March to mark the 125th anniversary of the opening of Marylebone station. The station was the London terminus of the GCR and opened on 15th March 1899. It was designed by Henry William Braddock, a civil engineer working for the GCR, and has had a chequered existence since then. 2024 is also the 40th anniversary since closure notices appeared at the station in 1984. Thankfully that didn't happen and its future is looking secure, with the services provided by Chiltern Railways being well used.

On arrival at Marylebone, guests were directed to refreshments near the Harewood Avenue entrance, where displays had been set up showing the story of the station over time using archive material, pictures, maps and artwork. These displays had been arranged in collaboration with the Baker Street Quarter Partnership and the Chiltern Railways Community Investment Fund.

The station concourse had been set out to hold various events, and many Chiltern Railways staff were dressed in period costume. This bemused many passengers, and one lady was overheard saying to a friend, "They must be making a film, perhaps we'll see someone famous". Many special banners had been produced and a four tier anniversary cake had been made.

To coincide with the event a special charter train *The Master Cutler* from Sheffield ran into platform 2. This was organised jointly by Retro Railtours, Rail Adventure, The 125 Group, and Chiltern Railways. As the original route no longer exists it ran via Derby, Tyseley and Banbury to reach Marylebone. It was made up of a rake of ex East Midland Trains Mk 3 coaches and ex Grand Central buffered power cars 43480 and 43468. On arrival in London, passengers had the option of staying in the capital or taking a return trip to Banbury. It's a pity that it could not have been steam-hauled by *Green Arrow* or *Flying Scotsman* with an original headboard.

One of the highlights of the day was the naming of a Chiltern Railways class 168 unit with a commemorative name badge *Marylebone Station: 125 Years*. This took place on platform 1 and prior to the ceremony, by the Lord Mayor of Westminster Cllr Patricia McAllister and two local school children, there was a musical performance from St Edwards Primary School and various speeches from civic leaders, Chiltern Railway executives and other rail industry leaders. It was poignant that the events were overseen by the nearby statue of former Chiltern Railways Managing Director and past GCRS President, Adrian Shooter.

Following the train naming ceremony the celebrations concluded with a reception in the Drawing Room of the Landmark Hotel (formerly the Hotel Grand Central). The room, along with the rest of the hotel, has been beautifully and tastefully restored and provided an ideal setting for presentations from various industry speakers, commemorating the history of the route, and looking forward to the future of the station and the surrounding area. It was positive that Malcolm Holmes the General Manager of the GCR at Loughborough had been invited to give a presentation on the heritage GCR and its future development plans. The society stand and pop up banners were displayed in the Drawing Room and a selection of archive material and publications were available for guests to peruse.

The day proved very successful and enjoyable and it was pleasing to see many other GCRS members attending, including society President John Quick, who had travelled on the charter service. Some members were identified on the concourse by proudly carrying their recently received 50th year anniversary society tote bag over their shoulder!

Many thanks to Geoff Burton and Richard Butler who assisted me on the society stand, and to Zach Bailey and other Chiltern Railways staff, the Landmark Hotel staff and all those who played a part in organising such a successful event.

Postscript

There is an extensive article on the history of the Hotel Grand Central by David Reidy in *Forward 207*. Videos of the charter train service, filmed at various locations on the route, can be found on YouTube.



43461 with 'The Master Cutler' in platform 2.



The naming ceremony in platform 1.



Speeches on the concourse.



Malcolm Holmes in the Landmark Hotel.



Geoff Burton with the GCRS display.



The celebration cake.

Photos of "The Master Cutler" on 15th March by Chris Behan

Friday 15th March was the 125th anniversary of the opening of London Marylebone station. As part of the celebration there was a re-run of the "Master Cutler" express train that originally ran along the Great Central route from Sheffield Victoria to London Marylebone. The special train consisted of ex-East Midland Railways Mk3 stock owned by the 125 Group and was powered by ex-Grand Central HST power cars 43468+43480, now operated by Railadventure.

The original London bound train went via Aylesbury and the return train went via High Wycombe as far as Ashendon Junction where it headed north to Grendon Underwood Jn to re-join the Great Central line to Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield.

Owing to the closure of most of the Great Central route, the special travelled down the Midland main line, calling at Chesterfield, Derby and Leicester, before heading west via Nuneaton, Coleshill Parkway and Tyseley to join the Chiltern mainline at Warwick, and then continuing to Marylebone, the final section from Ashendon Junction to Marylebone being the only part of the original route used by the special. The return journey took the same route back to Sheffield.

upper photo: The London bound "Master Cutler" is approaching Banbury having just passed the site of Banbury North Junction where the GCR Banbury Branch from Culworth Junction (south of Woodford Halse) came in from the right to join the GWR Paddington - Birmingham line. This branch was used by the extensive inter-regional services between the GC and the GWR.

lower photo: The returning "Master Cutler", travelling towards the left, has just past the site of Ashendon Jn where the Great Central and the GW went their separate ways at the end of the GW&GC Joint line. The GC line headed to Grendon Underwood Jn and the north. The alignment is still marked by the hedgerow curving away from the main line in the field above the train. The down "Master Cutler" would have taken this route.



Chiltern Railways employee, Rehana Khawaja, has changed her middle name by deed poll from Ismat to Marylebone, her favourite station. She said, "It's got a personal touch. It's warm and welcoming. Not every London station is like that." From "The i" newspaper 21 March 2024.



Some memories of a GC line signalman

by Brian Holyland

In the hope that readers may be interested in some of my sightings on ex GC lines, I submit these observations.

In the dying days of the LNER, on Sunday **28th December 1947**, I noted a 3.20pm Marylebone to Manchester London Road relief at Harrow-on-the-Hill station composed of ten coaches, all from pre-grouping companies, mostly ex Hull & Barnsley Railway.

In early BR days on Sunday **22nd October 1950** the 9.25am Half Day Excursion with Buffet Car from Marylebone to Sheffield, due at 2.20pm and calling at Rugby, Leicester and Nottingham, was noted composed of a six coach non-corridor suburban set.

On **13th November 1950** the 'Master Cutler' departed Marylebone at 7pm behind Thompson L1 no.67785, reputed to be Neasden's best L1, with a load of twelve coaches. The L1 lost 45 minutes before being replaced at Woodford Halse.

On Sunday **26th November 1950**, I was at King's Cross station to see the departure of the last GN Atlantic, class C1 no.62822 (formerly LNER no.3294), with a special train departing from platform 7 at 11am for Doncaster where it was due at 2.15pm. On arrival it was taken into the Works for scrapping and the return working was behind class A1 no.60123 *H.A.Ivatt*. No. 62822 was affectionately known as "the old lady" and was in immaculate condition in fully lined out black with coupling rods, buffers and whistle highly polished. On departure she sounded a long blast on her whistle and made a fine start, and so the era of the GN Atlantics had passed and became just a memory. I include the foregoing observation as Ivatt Atlantics often worked over the GC lines.



The 'Ivatt Atlantic Special' behind class C1 no.62822 speeds along the East Coast Main Line on its final journey from King's Cross to Doncaster on Sunday 26 January 1950.

photo: 'deva-bob' (flickr)

In **November 1953**, new carriage roof boards began to appear inscribed 'Marylebone-Sheffield-Manchester'. On **5th November**, the 7.02pm Marylebone to West Ruislip all stations was formed of two corridor coaches carrying such roofboards!

On **26th November 1953** class N2 no.69541 hauled the 7am Marylebone to High Wycombe service displaying a 'Hatfield' destination board. The return working, the 8.40am High Wycombe to Marylebone, carried a 'Kings Cross' destination board.

On Saturday **20th February 1954**, an excursion ran from Shirebrook North to Marylebone departing at 10:02am and due at Marylebone at 2.08pm. It was hauled by class V2 no.60831 and included a 12-wheeled restaurant car.

The six-block instruments at **Blind Lane** signal box (on the Neasden Jn -Northolt Jn line) were lettered 'GCR' but the letters 'MS&LR' could also be deciphered. The box is now at Rothley on the heritage GCR.

Now for two items at the extremity of GC territory, but never-the-less on GW&GC metals. The first involved two '**Princess Royal**' class locos transferred to Old Oak

Common for one week in February 1956 for coal trials. The locos were 46207 *Princess Arthur of Connaught* and 46210 *Lady Patricia*. They were put to work on expresses between Paddington and Birkenhead.



left: Blind Lane signal box in March 1971



right: The signal cabin at Rothley on the heritage GCR.

photo: GCRS collection
photo: Duncan Harris

The other item concerns the signal gantry which was located at **South Ruislip** and controlled from Northolt Jn West signal box. It now stands sentinel in the Great Hall at the National Railway Museum. During the very severe winter of 1962/3 I was working at this signal box and the outside temperature did not rise above freezing, day or night, for weeks on end. It was a one-turn box open for 8 hours from 4.30am to 12.30pm. It was opened in order to deal with the traffic to Express Dairy, Findus Frozen Foods and the domestic coal yard. This box controlled the stop signals on the gantry - the distant/directional signals were controlled by Northolt Jn East signal box, situated 704yards further east towards London.

Upon opening the box during the Big Freeze, the signals would be frozen in the off position, having been set by me at the end of the previous day's shift. The solution to this problem was to arrive about 45 minutes before my start time and heat a quantity of signal oil and walk through the frost encrusted snow to the gantry and with my free hand grip hold of the frost covered ladder and climb up to the gantry's deck. I could then climb each signal post in turn to administer the now rapidly cooling oil to the signals' bearings. Surprisingly this always worked, and now, thoroughly chilled, it was back to the signal box in the knowledge that I would have to do it all over again on the next day.

So whenever I visit the NRM, I always visit 'my gantry' - it's like greeting an old friend and kindles memories of my working life as a signaller many years ago.



left: The signal gantry at South Ruislip on the approach to Northolt Jn East.



photo: Brian Holyland
photo: NRM

A journey over Woodhead in 1980

by Paul White

I wrote this following article in 1980, following my one and only journey over Woodhead by train. Please remember that all the references relate to that date.

Having lived in Hadfield, terminus of the electric passenger train service from Manchester for the last six years, I can say I have had a close connection with the Woodhead line for that period. Indeed, it passes the end of Platt Street, Padfield, where I live, and at the bottom can be found the remains of a connection from Hadfield goods yard to Hadfield Mills across the road. I can stand in my garden, or on my front doorstep and watch the trains go by. Society members will no doubt be aware of the serious threat that exists to the existence of this route, and with this in mind I set off with my friend John Hallsworth on the morning of Sunday 13th April, 1980, to ride the Woodhead Route on one of the diverted Sunday trains that were unable to use the Hope Valley route due to the heavy engineering works that have taken place on that line for the past seven years, works mostly concentrated on the extremely wet Cowburn and Totley tunnels.

Our trip initially involved taking the bus into Manchester, taking well over an hour for the thirteen miles, as Sunday trains were withdrawn from the Hadfield route in 1966. On arrival at Manchester Piccadilly, we made our way over to platform 13 to pick up the 10.32 am to Sheffield. It arrived slightly late from its Oxford Road starting point and was made up of 2 DMU sets. Passengers for Sheffield were directed to the leading set and the rear set was then detached to go forward to New Mills. Our unit, a class 124 Trans Pennine set built at Swindon, then began to thread its way across the AC lines to Ardwick Junction, passing the low platforms of Ardwick Station, at which no Hadfield trains have stopped since electrification and maybe even before. On our left, we passed the once extensive Ardwick Sidings, which may again be electrified if Dewsnap closes, and on our right we passed Beatties Coal Depot. As our train gathered speed we ran through Ashbury's station, which took its name from a 19th century Carriage and Wagon Works – there is no "Ashburys" district in Manchester. The GC/Midland joint line now diverges to the right, the route our train would have normally taken, but we are set for Woodhead. In the widening gap between the two lines we can see the virtually complete remains of the former Midland loco shed.

Extensive but rusty sidings herald our approach to Gorton Works, but no trace now remains of the works or the recently demolished Priory Junction signal box, with the works site now being occupied by the new vegetable wholesale market and industrial units. At Gorton station the four running lines become two, the slow lines having been lifted in 1973. Little remains of Gorton station, demolished in the '60s and by all accounts a ramshackle affair consisting mainly of corrugated iron, now replaced by the inevitable bus shelter. On our right a sharply curved line leaves our own, destined to join the line from Fairfield at Hyde Road, forming the Manchester Central line or "Fallowfield Loop" which enjoys a busy trade in container trains to and from Trafford Park.

We are soon passing through Fairfield station, where the trackbed of the slow lines is now crossed by a footpath to reach the two remaining platforms, put in when the remaining station building, a booking hall built at overbridge level was demolished in 1978. The two remaining platforms are of an enormous length – originally the station had six platforms. Apparently, Fairfield was built to this scale to accommodate racecourse traffic to a course that was never built. The line diverging under the overbridge to our right was built to give access to Manchester Central Station, which closed in May 1969, while the little used suburban service from Fairfield to Central closed as long ago as 1958. The building of Reddish Depot on this line, used for servicing the electrics gave it a fresh importance.

Our train slows at the approach to Guide Bridge Station as the OA&GB lines merge

from the left and we are now restored to four tracks as we pass Stockport Jn (LNW) to our right. The wooden buildings on the centre platform were swept away in 1975 and the brickwork has been cleaned in common with all the other Manchester PTE stations, making Guide Bridge a clean and attractive station. As we pass through, we see on our left the Stalybridge branch, built as part of the original Sheffield and Manchester line in 1845 and the scene of a viaduct collapse with much loss of life in that year. The Stalybridge line passes through extensive sidings now occupied by tracklaying machines and the MSW electrification train, which consists of former LNER suburban coaches built at the nearby Dukinfield Carriage and Wagon Works.

We now cross the former LNW Hooley Hill line from Stalybridge to Stockport, lifted in 1972 and pass Guide Bridge East Jn and box, and then Manchester's only remaining marshalling yard, the threatened Dewsnap Sidings. On our right the former Dukinfield C&W Works are now in multiple occupation as a trading estate. Once again four tracks become two, with the former Adamson's Boiler Works on the left, which had its own standard gauge rail system, while the Midland/GC Joint line veers off to the right, past Hyde North station which does not serve the Woodhead line. The attractive stone station building was demolished recently and replaced by another bus shelter. By now we are travelling quite quickly, through the attractive stone-built Newton station built in 1882, and crossing the newly built M67 on a concrete overbridge. A quick glance down shows this £17.4M construction to be occupied by a mere three cars!

At Godley Jn the CLC line joins us on the right. Here, empty Fiddlers Ferry HAA wagons are dropped for collection by the class 76 electric locos. This line too will close if Woodhead is closed. The yard is occupied by three sets of wagons for the MGR trains. Less than half a mile further on we pass through Hattersley station, opened by Greater Manchester PTE in 1978 to serve the huge Hattersley estate, and built as an island platform – shades of the London Extension!

Our run now takes on a more rural character as we pass the remains of the two Hattersley tunnels, opened out in the 1930s. I was told they were built as "brick cylinders" to compensate for the unstable nature of the sandy ground. We have left the eastern suburbs of Manchester and are now approaching Broadbottom, once known as 'Broadbottom for Mottram', one of the few original stations on the line. Stone-built, recently cleaned, sporting fresh yellow and brown paintwork, and surrounded by trees, the effect is somewhat spoiled by the appearance of the mouldering, but original two storey goods shed. Tameside MBC want to convert it into a sports centre but to date a deal has not been agreed. So, we press on, past the site of Mottram No 1 box, painted and demolished in the space of three months in 1978, and the great waste space that was the lower half of Mottram Yard, lifted in 1972.

All that now remains is the eastern end of the yard, occupied by loaded MGR sets waiting to be taken on by diesel power to Fiddlers Ferry power station near Warrington. The planned withdrawal of these trains will see the end of the yard as well as the Woodhead Route. The central control tower was demolished in 1976, and its lights and loudspeakers are a thing of the past. On our left is Dinting goods yard, closed in 1967, and the beginning of the Waterside branch, closed in 1964, can also be seen trailing away on the left. This was also the site of the original Glossop station, which operated before the viaduct was constructed, and we see the main A57 to Glossop and Sheffield far below us as we cross the viaduct. This was extensively repaired during 1978-9. Dinting station appears next, with attractive pink brickwork since cleaning during the past year. Access to the Glossop branch is by means of junctions to the west and east of the station. There was once a Dinting West box situated between the main line and the West junction, but this is long gone and the present box is situated on the main down platform, as is Gorton box down the line. Dinting Railway Centre occupies what was the goods yard accessed from the Glossop Branch, complete with single-road loco shed built in MS&L days.

An up loop diverges just to the east of the road overbridge, used to hold freight trains to allow passenger traffic to pass. This loop accompanies us under bridge no.57, reputedly the first railway bridge in Britain to use pre-stressed concrete, and rejoins the main line at bridge no.58, where we pass the single platform of Hadfield station, terminus of the EMU service from Manchester. The station is a stone-built single-storey building with a high-pitched slate roof and Tudor-style chimneys, original and barely altered since it was built in 1845 at a cost of £450. The coal-drops and extensive goods yard to the east were closed in 1963 and largely demolished, but much of the former infrastructure remains: a handsome GCR-built station master's house, the large single-storey goods shed now occupied by a firm of steel stockholders, and the weighbridge-office which has been restored and put to other uses. In 1963 the box on the up platform known as Hadfield West was replaced with a BR standard pattern box to the east of the station, which also replaced Hadfield East, the foundations of which can just be seen as we pass under Padfield Main Road bridge No.60 and into a short but deep cutting.

To the right we can see the down loop for waiting freight trains, now rarely used and gauntleted with a sand drag for any runaways. We have been climbing steadily at 1 in 100 and 1 in 117, and the strain is beginning to tell on the DMU. What a contrast to the smooth pulling of the 76 electric locos, which do not always seem to respect the 40mph speed limit for goods trains. The view up the valley in the sunshine is breathtaking, as the light glints off the reservoirs which line the Longdendale Valley, while the fresh green of the willows and birches contrasts with the brown and purple of the surrounding hills. We pass the small and isolated Valehouse box with its famous tea-stain on a sharp right-hand bend in a short cutting, and our train makes its way around Devil's Elbow. There was a third up track until the end of the passenger service, beginning at Valehouse. The line clings to the side of the hills, with the reservoirs close by us on the left, reminders of another possible threat to Woodhead – the CEGB's proposed pumped storage scheme which will raise the water level by 100 feet.

Our train is now approaching Torside, and is brought to a stand at the level crossing. The signalman at this remote outpost leans out with a green flag and instructs the driver to approach the next signal at danger, so we proceed. The crossing gates were replaced with lifting barriers as recently as 1976. Our next point of interest is the site of Crowden station, which closed in 1957. Hardly anyone lives at Crowden; there is a Youth Hostel and of the four railway cottages standing high above the railway line on the right, only one is occupied by Mr John Davies, a retired railwayman who had worked over much of the GC system. However, it was not always so. There was a large bleaching works and a thriving community at Crowden until the valley was flooded in the 1870s. Despite the steep decline in population, the station was largely rebuilt in the 1900s with an island platform, and the lines still diverge round the station site.

From Torside through Crowden to Woodhead was a four-track section in more busy times, but the extra tracks were more like long loops for slow-moving freight traffic. The generous width would no doubt be attractive to road-builders should closure occur. The 132,000V cables, which have been our constant companions, have now moved closer to us, until we find one straddling the former Woodhead sidings. Here, I am informed, the heaviest trains were sometimes split before they entered the old tunnels.

The short platforms of Woodhead station now appear, built new with the tunnel and closed in 1963. Pictures of the old station show a grandiose castellated affair, and the story of Woodhead bears some similarity to that of Crowden, because pre-reservoirs there was a thriving community here too. I have been told that the area was famous for its plums and there was an annual "Plum Wakes" when this produce was sold, to which the MS&LR ran excursions. Nonetheless, the original station had a refreshment room – goodness knows who the clientele were.

The new station buildings are intact and are used by the P.W. Dept for storage, while the signal box controls the lighting in the tunnel. On our left the 132,000V cable is carried through the 1845 tunnel and is serviced by a 2-foot gauge railway running alongside. A 2ft deep covering of hardened soot had to be removed from the roof and sides when the cable was installed. The castellations and gargoyles over the tunnel entrances have been removed to who knows where. The commemorative plaque to the new tunnel has been removed and it is now displayed high on the wall inside Piccadilly Station, appropriately enough next to platform 1.

We accelerate as we enter the tunnel, a masterpiece of modern railway engineering. On the down side electric lights shine at 132ft intervals. These lights are on continuously. There are similar lights on the up side which are only lit when work is taking place inside the tunnel. They also give the traveller an opportunity to study the construction and condition of this marvellous tunnel, concrete-lined throughout and bone-dry, with none of the problems associated with the crumbling structures that abound on other Trans-Pennine routes. Further "light" was shed on the subject when we were brought to a stand just inside the eastern end of the tunnel by work on the track. To close such a tunnel would be a gross insult to both the engineers who designed it and the men who constructed this, the most modern rail tunnel in Britain. At the Dunford end a sign marks the LMR/ER boundary, possibly another factor in the decline of Woodhead. Our train now gradually picks up speed through the short approach cutting blasted through stone, and we come upon Dunford Bridge station, closed in January 1970 when the passenger service was withdrawn. The old route rejoins us on our left. Rusting loops abound, telling their own tale of declining traffic. Dunford station, newly built with the tunnel, has a continental air about it.

The tall, flat-roofed Dunford box is situated on the down platform. A long loop accompanies us to the left to Dunford East box. A huge, cleared site denotes the location of Dunford East Sidings, where in pre-nationalisation days private-owner coal wagons were sorted for return to their respective collieries. Now nothing remains but a pair of signals at the eastern end, with no lines to control. Just before we reach Hazlehead station (closed 1955) the branch to the Hepworth Pipe Works curves sharply away to the left. The huge pipes produced there are now transported by road. In the yard stands the body of an outside framed van. The platforms have long since been demolished and the black-painted station building presents a somewhat sinister appearance.

Our steady acceleration is marred by a severe speed check and then we are away again, heading for Penistone. At Penistone Goods Yard box we reduce speed and approach Talbot Road, site of the original Penistone Station. This is the scene of a bid by the Hallamshire Railway Society to set up a depot from where they could run steam trains over a section of a closed Woodhead line.

At Penistone station itself we can see where the Manchester platform buildings were demolished some years ago, and those on the up side are now decrepit and neglected. The former L&Y Huddersfield line, itself threatened, curves in from the left on its tall viaduct, and we are back on an active passenger line once more. South Yorkshire County Council's decision not to support the Penistone-Sheffield services means that this once important main-line junction, a town of over 7,000 inhabitants and an industrial growth-point may soon be devoid of all rail connection, a sad commentary on our times. A vast cleared site on our left marks the site of Cammell Laird's works as we head towards Barnsley Junction.

The line to Barnsley lost its passenger service in 1959. Recent plans for its revival, canvassed by South Yorkshire PTE, which would have replaced the present direct service, have come to nothing and would anyway have meant an unacceptable rise in journey time to 45 minutes from Sheffield to Penistone. The freight-only line to Barnsley is also threatened with closure as the traffic in trans-Pennine rail traffic

declines. At the Barnsley Jn stand several HAA MGR wagons.

We leave behind us the extensive sidings of Penistone and its tall Barnsley Jn signal box for more open country, passing the tiny MS&L box at Blackmoor Crossing. Here on our left, we find a large underground oil storage depot, and as is so often the case it is no longer rail connected. Shortly afterwards we enter the short twin-bore Thurgoland tunnel, the down bore of which was constructed at the same time as the Woodhead line with the up bore being added later. The site of the branch to Thurgoland, which very briefly possessed a station, is barely discernible. The branch itself closed well over 100 years ago.

Rounding a curve, we come to Wortley, where this station with its aristocratic connections, once in ruins, is being attractively restored by its current owner. Passenger services ceased calling in 1957. A little over a mile further on we enter Deepcar station, closed in 1959 and still bearing blue LNER notice boards. This attractive stone building is now in a sad state of disrepair, and from its similarity to the Hadfield station building I would judge it to be original. This is the junction for the BSC Stocksbridge branch, which disappears into the trees on the right. If the BR closure plan is pursued, all that will remain of the eastern section of the Woodhead line will be a single line from Sheffield to Stocksbridge steel works, and the line over which we have travelled will be no more than a memory.

We are now travelling through Wharnccliffe Woods, a beautiful early spring sight as the new leaves unfold. As we approach Oughtybridge we notice that the up line is out of use due to an unfortunate accident in February which had distorted the continuous welded rail. Although this was newly laid, BR had planned to lift this section and run it as a single line, but wiser counsels have prevailed and the line is now being restored to double track. Oughtybridge (closed 1959) is passed, and we rush on through Beeley Woods until we find ourselves on the northern fringes of Sheffield itself. An increasing industrial scene begins to unfold and just before Wadsley Bridge station we see on our left a rusty diesel shunter sitting on rusty rails at the Batchelors factory – another firm which has switched to road transport. Wadsley Bridge station itself next comes into view, which only yesterday (Saturday), was a scene of great activity as it dealt with a number of football specials for the Liverpool–Arsenal Cup semi-final played at Hillsborough Stadium which finished in a goalless draw. Since the closure of the station to regular passenger services in 1959, Wadsley Bridge had seen excursion traffic until 31st October 1965, and was even briefly reopened to Huddersfield–Sheffield passenger services between 15th and 19th February 1979 due to the disruption of road traffic in Sheffield caused by heavy snowfall. Perhaps with the promotion of Sheffield Wednesday to the Second Division, the station might be restored to its former importance. It is a pleasant red-brick structure, reminiscent of London Extension stations, but I am told it is badly affected by dry rot at street level.

We are now among some of the signs of Britain's industrial decline – closed factories, cleared sites, the flotsam of dereliction so common in northern industrial towns and cities. The depressing approach to Sheffield Victoria station is made even more poignant by the empty shell of the station itself, with services to all points of the compass all long since gone. Half-hearted "contemporary" additions to the structure from the '50s make an odd contrast as they decay amongst the original dark Victorian stonework. Slowly, we thread our way through the remains until we pass the end of the Nunnery Curve, constructed in 1965 to divert services from the east into the Midland station. Down this we must reverse to gain our destination, Sheffield Midland station, and the driver walks though the train to the opposite end for this short section. Within a mere three minutes our DMU is on its way again, past the derelict MS&L Nunnery box, under the smoke-blackened arches and into Midland station to make an "on time" arrival.

The next couple of hours are spent on a brief survey of some of Sheffield's pubs,

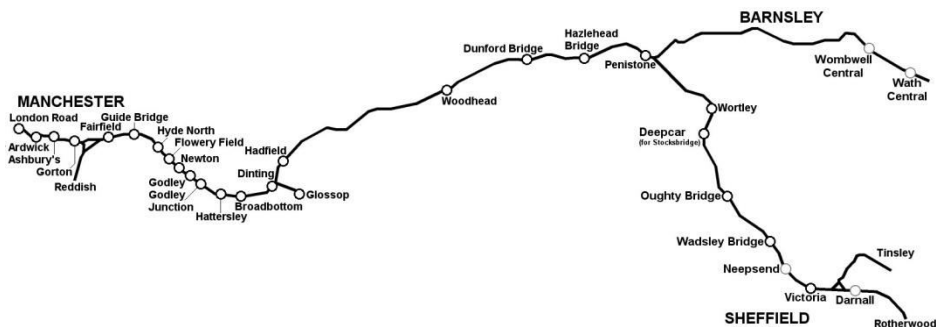
and by 3.15pm we are leaving Midland station for the journey back. Again, reversal at Nunnery takes a mere three minutes. At the time, BR were insisting that this reversal would be a "major problem", militating against any further use of the Woodhead Line for passenger services. Three minutes with a DMU a "major problem"?

At Oughtibridge we are brought to a stand and we reverse onto the down track to bypass the distorted up line. A smashed coal wagon being cut up on site evidenced the previous accident. Another halt at Oughtibridge box and we regain the right line. Without further incident our DMU climbs steadily to Dunford Bridge and into Woodhead Tunnel. Steadily accelerating we burst into the sunshine at Woodhead for a clear run to Manchester Piccadilly, with the 40 mph speed limit appearing to be treated in a cavalier fashion. It was an odd sensation to be travelling at speed over a freight-only line which I had spent the previous six years photographing from as many locations as possible.

As we travel over the smooth continuous welded rail with which most of the line has been relaid over the past five years, I wonder how many of my fellow passengers are aware of the imminent threat to the line's existence. If Woodhead goes, will Sheffield-bound passengers be consigned to buses when the Hope Valley line is closed during the winter? Will Sheffield eventually lose all rail connection with Manchester if present policies are continued?

This is not the time or the place to describe the continuing fight for the retention of the Woodhead Line, which has continued now for over two years, although it must be written some day. One hopeful sign is that the Manchester-Sheffield diversions once again appear in the Autumn 1980 working timetable. I would urge all members to take advantage of these diversions while they are happening – it may be your last chance to have, as I did, an unforgettable day out over the Woodhead route.

Author's note (written in 2024): I submitted this piece for possible publication in *Forward* back in 1980 – 40 years ago! Having recently been out of commission recovering from an operation, I used the time to sift through my collection of *Forwards* (right from No.1 to date) to check which of my submissions had made it into print and discovered that this article had not. Because of when it was written I could not tell the full story of what occurred on that, my only journey over Woodhead. While sitting on the platform at Sheffield Midland waiting for the return train, the driver, who knew us from our activities in the campaign to stop the closure of the line, came over to speak to us. He told us to get into the rear carriage of the DMU, and on reversing at Nunnery he would come through the train and let us into the cab with him. We did so and I was able to take photos from the cab on the way back. Unfortunately, this was into the sun, and being in the days before digital, there was no opportunity to 'photoshop' them until now. I shall always treasure them as mementoes of a truly remarkable day.



Map of the Manchester-Sheffield-Wath electrified lines.



Approaching Sheffield Victoria after the reversal at Nunnery Curve.



Looking back after passing through Sheffield Victoria.



A view of the up line on approaching Thurgoland Tunnel.



MGR wagons in the yard at Barnsley Jn, Penistone.



Approaching Penistone with Barnsley Jn box on the left and the electrification maintenance train on the right.



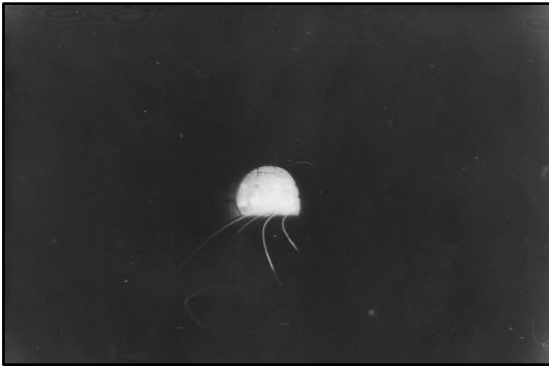
Dunford East box and site of sorting sidings on the right.



Approaching Dunford Bridge station.



Approaching Woodhead tunnel.



Approaching the Woodhead end of the tunnel.



Approaching Torside Crossing.



Approaching Valehouse box.



Approaching Hadfield on newly laid track.



Running through Dinting Station.



Approaching Mottram No 2 box.

*Two class 124 'Trans Pennine' units pass through Ardwick on their way to Manchester Piccadilly on Sat.13 Sept 1980.
photo: Chris Davis*



Sulgrave embankment: A Victorian High Speed train route by Chris Behan



It's 2.03 pm on a beautiful, sunny, late summer day, the 25th of August 1952, and an express train races across Sulgrave embankment. The photographer, standing at the end of Little Street, peers through the viewfinder and presses the button on his camera. Click, the above photograph is taken.

Once upon a time, this would have been the limit of our knowledge about the subject, but the age of information technology has changed all that. The 1952 timetable shows that the train was "The South Yorkshireman" which had left Bradford, hardly in South Yorkshire, at 10 am bound for London Marylebone via Huddersfield, Sheffield, Nottingham, Loughborough, Leicester, Rugby, and Aylesbury. Travelling at 75mph, the maximum speed along Sulgrave embankment, the train was on time and London Marylebone would have been reached at 3.29 pm, its advertised arrival time but 5 hours and 29 minutes from Bradford to London is hardly express speed.

The equivalent Great Central train in 1903 left Bradford at 10.07 am. It travelled over the same route as the 1952 service but with additional stops at Halifax, Woodford and Hinton (renamed Woodford Halse in 1948), and Brackley, arriving in London at 3.05 pm, 31 minutes faster than in 1952. Today, a Grand Central (no, not a spelling mistake) train leaves Bradford for London King's Cross via Doncaster at 10.23 am and arrives at 1.44 pm, a journey time of 3 hours and 22 minutes. Now that is an express train!

The 1952 train left Bradford with nine coaches, painted in the "blood and custard" livery first introduced in 1949. It was hauled by an ex-LMS 'Black 5' 4-6-0 locomotive. On arrival at Sheffield Victoria the crew and the locomotive were changed, an ex-LNER class A3 Pacific replaced the 'Black 5', and two restaurant coaches, also in "blood and custard" livery, were added to the train. The new crew and locomotive took the train to Leicester where further changes were made. Another crew and another A3 took the train on its final section of the journey to London Marylebone.

Unfortunately, the identity of the A3 in the photograph may never be known, but we have two clues. Thirteen A3s were based either at Leicester (38C) or Neasden (34E) on that day, one of which was 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. There is photographic evidence that *Flying Scotsman* was rostered to haul "The South Yorkshireman" from Leicester to London Marylebone in July 1952. Did this roster apply throughout August? Could the locomotive in the picture be *Flying Scotsman*? We can but dream.

At the time of the photograph, six long distance express trains ran daily each way to and from London Marylebone along Sulgrave embankment. A morning service, a

lunchtime service, and an evening service to and from Manchester London Road, plus "The Master Cutler" to and from Sheffield Victoria and "The South Yorkshireman" to and from Bradford Exchange. There was also a night service to and from Liverpool Central via Manchester and Sheffield. This service was a mail and newspaper train introduced by the Great Central Railway when it won a lucrative contract from the *Daily Mail* to carry their newspaper to the Midlands. "The Newspaper", as it was known, became and remained for many decades the fastest express between London and Nottingham. Because of its success, all the major newspapers were soon using it to carry their papers to the East Midlands. The train became something of a legend and continued to run until the line closed as a through route to in 1966.

The line through Sulgrave, opened in 1899, was part of the London Extension of the Great Central Railway, which ran from the most southerly point of the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (MS&LR) at Annesley, north of Nottingham, to connect with the Metropolitan Railway at Quainton Road. In 1896, during the construction of the extension, the MS&LR was, more appropriately, renamed the Great Central Railway (GCR). Known as the "The Last Main Line", it was the brainchild of Sir Edward Watkin, Chairman of the MS&LR, who had ambitions in the late 19th century of building a high-speed railway line from Manchester and Sheffield to Paris via London and a Channel tunnel. A Victorian HS1, 2 and 3 all rolled into one. Sadly his dream only reached London.

Nothing ever changes. The proposed line met with many objections, but unlike today, few came from the general public but more from the landowners and other railway companies. Unexpected however, was the vociferous opposition of the artistic residents of St John's Wood and the Marylebone Cricket Club. The GCR tried to buy the Lord's Cricket Ground for its railway line into Marylebone. After a huge rumpus, an agreement was reached whereby a cut and cover tunnel was built to carry the line under an adjacent nursery. The construction of the tunnel was not too dissimilar to the proposed HS2 tunnel bypassing Greatworth, near Sulgrave. The only significant difference being that the Victorians used engineering bricks to line the tunnel, whilst HS2 is using precast concrete sections.

The nursery, a real fruit and vegetable nursery, eventually became MCC's practice ground. Since then, it has been immortalised by lovers of cricket, being known as the Nursery End of Lord's Cricket Ground. However, little would placate the residents of St John's Wood who foresaw "a line for the conveyance not only of passengers, but of coal, manure, fish and other abominations."

At Brackley, the GCR planned to build a locomotive shed and workshops. The opposition to this was considerable and was led by the Squire of Turweston, John Locke Stratton, a major landowner and Mayor of Brackley. The GCR decided not to fight the opposition and, instead, constructed their engine depot at Woodford Halse. When the line opened in 1899, the headquarters of the GCR were moved from Manchester to London Marylebone.

The London Extension was engineered to an extremely high standard and to a more generous loading gauge than that of the former MS&L lines. In retrospect, the line was years before its time, for instance there were no level crossings on the line. However, the line was never a success, due to the sparsely populated countryside it travelled through south of Leicester which generating little traffic and the intense competition from other railway companies. Passengers travelling from Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham and Leicester to London had a choice of railway companies to use.

The dream of Sir Edward Watkin in business terms is questionable, and it could be argued that the London Extension should never have been built, but strangely there is now a view that it should never have been closed. The Great Central Railway's motto was "Forward". Sadly, it did not turn out that way.



Local at Loughborough. BR class 5MT 4-6-0 no.44825 arriving at Loughborough with the 18:15 Nottingham Victoria-Rugby Central stopper in the summer of 1966. This service ran twice a day each way but after closure as a through route on 3 Sept. 1966 it continued as a dmu service with six trains each way. Viewed from the Empress Road bridge, which today overlooks the engine shed on the heritage GCR. Just beyond the signal gantry is the bridge over the canal which marks the present limit of the shed area. No.44825 was specially cleaned at Colwick to work the 17:15 Nottingham Victoria to Marylebone on the 'last day', but was replaced by 44984 because of injector problems. *photo: unknown*

Staff files on recycled paperwork!

by Bryan Longbone

As stated in previous articles I have been able to access some railwaymen's staff files of the LNER period and later. What became a frequent occurrence was the use, during the period of WW2 and after, of utilising the reverse side of previous years' paperwork. For example, after the war some staff file entries were usually written on the back of torn-to-size notes of the 1930s. Or, in modern parlance, recycling or salvaging former notes for further utility, thus saving paper and money.

One file that did stand out was that of **John William Brigham**, a footplate grade man at Immingham loco shed. He was born 31st July 1906 and entered the service of the GCR as "Boots" on 3rd December 1922 at the Yarborough Hotel. He lived with his family in New Holland. His seniority date was 1st September 1927 when he became an engine cleaner at New Holland shed. He transferred to Immingham shed on 20th March 1939. I will not go into any further personal details noted within the file, only bringing to light such incidents pertaining to identifiable locomotives worked, plus what was on the reverse side of the paper or papers used on these occasions. The earlier notes will be labelled "Back". The "Back" being the original of that date. The gist will be soon appreciated. As an aside, more "Back" entries applied to other LNER Southern Area locations.

"Front" notes

15th September 1940

Brigham, as a passed cleaner, was preparing C4 no.5267 in Immingham Running Shed on No.5 Road and received a finger wound. He was accompanied by Driver J.C. Fenwick to work the 7.10am Cleethorpes to Sheffield passenger train. This was their 6th turn of duty. The reporting and enquiring into recorded accidents on the railway could generate a great deal of paperwork, depending on the severity. The above is a quite simple variant.

"Back" notes

No location and no date (but I would very much imagine local and looking at the listed engines possibly Immingham loco. shed.)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Engine number/class</i>	<i>Time on arrival</i>
August 28 th	3535 / J6	8.15pm
August 28 th	5243 / J11	9.15pm
August 29 th	5252 / J11	10.5pm
August 29 th	5874 / D6	10.5pm
August 29 th	6044 / D9	12.1am
August 29 th	5704 / D7	12.30am
August 29 th	5423 / B2	12.40am
August 29 th	5316 / J11	1.0am

"Front" notes

July 8th 1944

"Fireman J. W. Brigham, Immingham, injured July 5th 1944 when engine D3 no.4349 collided with petrol lorry at New Immingham Crossing, Barton & Immingham Light Railway, Killingholme, July 5th 1944."



LNER class D3 4-4-0 no.4349.

photo: C.F.Verrall coll.

"Back" notes

January 30th 1936

LNER Locomotive Running Department, Frodingham Depot.

No. 124 Name: C. Jackson Grade: Caller-Up.

<i>Work performed</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
Bringing sponge cloths from station and cleaning out mess rooms.	2pm	3pm
Advising.	3pm	5pm
Meal.	5pm	5.30pm
Messages to station.	5.30pm	6.30pm
Tranship shed.	6.30pm	9pm

I am assuming this is an afternoon shift.

"Front" notes - no date but see July 8th notes above.

"Driver Lambert and Fireman J. Brigham were occupied working engine D3 no.4349 from Immingham Locomotive Shed to New Holland for the 8.17pm New Holland – Retford train when a collision occurred at Clough Lane Level Crossing, Killingholme, with a petrol lorry with 2,000 gallons of petrol belonging to the Petroleum Board. The lorry was being driven by a man from Glasgow. The lorry was pushed approximately 35 yards along the line and then the articulated tank broke away from the tractor. The tank which contained high grade aviation spirit then burst and caught fire. The engine and tender and the permanent way were splashed with the petrol with the result that the whole area was a mass of flames. In addition the engine and tender were derailed all wheels. J. Brigham suffered severe burns on ears, face, neck, hands and suspected fracture of left forearm."

It was later noted it was New Immingham Level Crossing, not Clough Lane. A severe incident here, which required much follow-through paperwork on the LNER's patch but not reported on here. One presumes the aviation spirit was required at the wartime RAF base at Killingholme. Brigham spent some time in Grimsby Hospital.

"Back" notes

December 15th 1938.

No location but almost certainly Immingham Depot.

Driver & Firemen's Rosta

duty	name	time	engine
Pilot	Vessey	2.05am	530X
Pilot	Partridge	3.30am	53XX
Banbury	Taplin	3.50am	63XX
Pilot	Speed	5.55am	59XX
Retford	Overton	8.00am	6054 / Q4
Hull Goods	Girdham		58XX
Marshgate		9.15am	5252 / J11
Passenger	Pretty		58XX
Retford	Smith	9.45am	5197 / J11 & 5978 / J11
Pilot	Hudson	9.45am	6048 / J11
Pilot	Passmoor	11.00am	59XX
Passenger	Hirst	12.45pm	J11
Pilot	Scott	1.52pm	5197 / J11 & 6051 / J11 & 5858 / D6
Pilot	Maw	5.20pm	60XX
Woodford	Dale	6.10pm	62XX
Pilot	Plaskett	6.35pm	52XX
Hull Goods	Girdham	8.35pm	60XX
Pilot	Neave	9.55pm	52XX

Apologies for the number of Xs given in the above table but the pencil script was unreadable but given a modicum of knowledge of former GC locomotives one can readily pick out the loco types. Several names here noted are former New Holland loco shed footplate grades, latterly working out of Immingham when New Holland shed "officially" ceased operating – but not so in fact.

Locomotive Running Department

Daily Work Sheet for shed staff at Immingham Depot on **22nd December 1933.**

No. 155 G. H. Turner: Goods Labourer

Night Attendant Dormitories 8pm – 6am

and for Grimsby Depot on **22nd December 1933**

R Dansk: Shed Sweeper

Coaling Engines Cleveland Bridge (Grimsby) 8.45am – 5.45pm.

With these two entries above, along with others not listed here, the arena for a Labourer's duties on the railway and docks were flexible and "when needed and where" within the complex.

The "Front" notes paralleling these entries were much concerned with compensation with regard to Brigham's injuries resulting from the incident in July 1944 – not noted herein.

Continuing with the "Back" notes

Locomotive Running Department

Engine number 5259 / C5 Working pressure:

180 psi Shed: Immingham

Boiler number 38/3314 Examination by

District Examiner on **14th May 1944.**

Signed: J. H. Wick, Examiner.

A nice record here of an examination of a compound Atlantic's boiler, which appears to be "Good" on all fronts, though how old the boiler was I'm not sure.

Item	Condition
Tubes	Good
Tube plates	Good
Firebox plates	Good
Firebox side stays	Good
Firebox roof stays	Good
Firehole	Good
Foundation ring	Good
Ashpan damper & firebars	Good
Brick arch	Good
Lead plugs	Good



LNER class C5 4-4-2 no.5259 'King Edward VII' at Immingham. photo: Owen Russell coll.

Continuing on the "Back" notes

Daily Record of Work Performed by Cleaners and Passed Cleaners
Immingham Depot **10th July 1937**

<i>Check no. & name</i>	<i>on/off duty</i>	<i>parts cleaned</i>	<i>time taken</i>
528 J. Blyth	6.30 to 12.00	6169 / B3 tender & footplate 6029 / D9 motion	4 hr30min
520 J. Croft	6.30 to 12.00	6169 motion 6029 motion	4hr 30 min 1 hr
522 T. Boyle	6.30 to 12.00	6164 / B3 top and sides 5976 / J11 motion	4hr 30 min 1 hr
532 H. Bennet	6.30 to 12.00	6164 wheels 5976 motion	4 hr 30 min 1 hr
527 F. Lowe	6.30 to 12.00	6164 tender & footplate 5976 wheels	4hr 30 min 1 hr
534 J. Nicholson	6.30 to 12.00	6164 motion 5976 wheels	4 hr 30 min 1 hr
535 A. Prior	6.30 to 12.00	Cooling Sentinel 5976 top sides & tender	30 min 5 hrs
536 A. Trask	6.30 to 12.00	5467 / B7 top sides and tank & footplate	5 hr 30 min
537 V. Crowden	6.30 to 12.00	5467 wheels & tank & part footplate	5 hr 30 min
525 T. Herring	6.30 to 12.00	5467 motion & part frame	5 hr 30 min

The above is the nitty-gritty of routine work for those at the bottom of the footplate grade. But by cleaning and so on, the various parts of the locomotives became familiar. In addition, it seems that the cleaning of locomotives was a protracted job for the cleaning gangs. This is just one example of work performed so the following shifts would carry on the process. Just what was the wage bill for cleaning? During and post WW2 this aspect would be sidelined of course with manpower requirements elsewhere having priority leaving no staff to do such jobs.

More from the "Back" notes

Daily Work Slip for Frodingham Depot

July 6th 1935

No. 446 T. Browne Passed cleaner Coaling engines 1.45pm – 9.45pm

A single instance quoted here, but Brigham's file was full of small red slips showing daily work records. This feature of railway/shed work was unknown to me until looking through this file. It has been said that "the railway ran on paperwork" and continuously and increasingly more so I have been finding out. This, to me at least, is a far more complete and complex a picture of railway work and operation.

To return to the "Front" material

27th December 1945

Engine no. 3180 / D4, Immingham pilot, slipped from left hand motion step, grazing right leg.

Again, a reported injury of minor note, possibly not to Brigham though.

"Back" notes

LNER Daily Work Slip

Immingham Depot **September 12th 1938** No. 189 J. Atkin

Water pump & ? etc. & Water softener	10.00 - 11.00
Coaling plant & putting coal in hopper.	11.00 - 12.00
Glands 2792/J50 & 6281/O4	12.00 - 1.30
Water softener	1.30 - 2.00
Meal	2.00 - 2.30
Water softener	2.30 - 4.00
Glands Y3	4.00 - 6.00
Water softener	6.00 - 6.30.

Now whether this is day or night shift is not known. The Y3 Sentinels did not have much of a reputation around North Lincolnshire at least. This is based on informal interviews with former railwaymen who had first hand experience of them but from the LNER's point of view, the advantage was that the fireman was dispensed with.

Water softening was practised across North Lincolnshire and into South Yorkshire. The water supply was of poor quality for 20th century loco practice and contained much temporary hardness. Here at Frodingham a Jim Allison had this plant latterly full time to look after.

"Front" notes

24th March 1947

9.35am Fireman J. Brigham knocked down by engine, Boston 24th March 1947.

Driver N. Harrison and Fireman J. Brigham (Immingham), engine no.3054/D1. Working the 11.20am Colwick to Immingham train 24th March 1947, took water at Boston West Street Down Main column and while this was being done Fireman Brigham walked round the engine and was knocked down by Boston Pilot engine no.7387/J69 which was in the charge of Boston Passed Fireman E. Pearson. Brigham taken to hospital with shock, ruptured kidney, badly bruised bowels, critical condition, one kidney removed.

A very severe incident here. Brigham did recover, slowly and after some considerable time, his wife being constantly informed of his condition whilst in Boston Hospital, and the railway paying her fares to visit him.

The quantity of the paperwork involved in this accident was consequently large, even including insurance, workers compensation and other factors with evidence taken from the various railwaymen locally in Boston. None will be elaborated on further though.

Concurrent with the above process further Frodingham items crop up on the *"Back"*. No attached title, Frodingham depot with no date but seems to be a Drivers' list.

Engine	Duty	Name	Time	
5275 / L1	Frod. No.1	S. Marriss	2.00 pm – 10.40pm	
5307 / J11	Frod. No.2	J. Eyre	2.00 pm – 10.55pm	
1063 / J50	Frod. No. 4	S. Vause	2.00 pm – 10.45 pm	
6265 / O4	Staveley	A. Roberts	2.15 pm – 10.55 pm	Lodge Sheffield
5012 / O4	Relief	C. James	3.00 pm – 12.10 am	
6243 / O4 & 5151 / Q4	Rotherham Road	H. Roberts	3.40 pm – 11.40 pm	
6557 / O4	Burton	Starr	- 4.40 pm	Lodge Sheffield
6597 / O4	Woodford	C. Hudson	5.00 pm – 4.50 am	Lodge Sheffield
6236 / O4	Staveley	T. Allen	6.5 pm – 2.05 am	Lodge Sheffield

Three outward from Frodingham steel trains here as well as three local pilots.

And continuing, again with no date.

Trips	P. Bradley
Frod. No 3	A. Felton
Relief	F. Clark
Banker	C. Morley

The Gunhouse Banking Pilot could be from a medley of loco types - J11, O4 and Q1 were noted but others may have been used.

Light Rly No.1	L Amery	6223
----------------	---------	------

Les Amery was a lovely bloke who ended up as a shed foreman. Originated from Keadby Shed and with strong family ties in Axholme. The O4 was the travelling pilot on the North Lindsey Light Railway.

Frod. No.1	G Drury
Frod. No.2	F Hall
Frod. No.4	G Phillipson

The Phillipson family were all railway people and also out of Keadby Shed.

Relief	H Jacques
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All Pilots numbered above worked the various sidings/works entrances along with the Station and Goods Yard with a Travelling Pilot also.

The following item, of Frodingham engine shed, was the back/rear of a copied letter to "The Workmens Compensation Office, Cambridge, dated 23rd October 1947" relating to Brigham's accident.

Tuesday 5th November 1937.

6554/O4 & 5331/O4	Whitemoor
6575/O4 & 6518/O4	Guide Bridge
5140/Q4	No. 10 Pilot
172/Y3	No. 3 Pilot 5.10pm at Keadby
6237/O4	? - but a lodge job.
6002/J11	Whitton
6366/O4 & 6243/O4	Whitemoor
5164/Q4	Relief

A snapshot here of former GC loco types working Frodingham's traffic. The allocations of the O4s listed I have not sourced, being long distance change over or lodge outgoing and incoming locos may have been noted here. The

potentially heavy pilot work appears to be handled by the Q4s. A "Pom-Pom" is working the "Whitton Goods", named only but the pick-up along the North Lindsey Light Railway with general and agricultural traffics plus coal for the communities up to the Whitton terminus, and return. But the heavy stuff would be Normanby Park Sidings and into Scunthorpe along the busy southern portion of this "light " railway. The Keadby "Coffee Pot" and that is being polite, aka the Y3 Sentinel no.172, is doing a turn at Keadby. Quite possibly working three loaded coal wagons at a time, no more could be shifted according to Bill Leeman, formerly of Keadby loco shed.



LNER Y3 no.172 lives on as Dapol model of BR Y3 no. 68184.
photo: Hattons

A brief note rendering the listing of locos, men and work in these "Back" notes. I am justifying these inclusions given the scarcity of general all-grades work on the LNER in this area. These instances noted above and elsewhere are first hand direct sources with a more complete and complex picture emerging.

"Back" notes

Immingham Locomotive Shed **18th June 1935**

6285/O4	284 (?) Doncaster	R. Rhodes
5211/J11	Relief	F. Moody
7163/J67	N.P.	R. Hulton
5994/J11	Relief Whitemoor	J. Kempan
2270/Q6 & 5220/J11	Doncaster	P. Rolfe
7396/J67	N.P.	J. Hanson
7192/J67	C.P.	T. or J. Botham.
7052/J69	E.P.	L. Steels
5301/J11	Sheffield	C. Raynes
7182/F4 & 7163/J67	Relief	W. Larder
2980/J39	Dewsnap	H. Harrison
2967/J39	Ardwick	J. Whelpton
2967/J39	L Manchester	J. Lupton
5977/J11	Relief	H. Boucher
5181/B5	Doncaster	A. Hutchinson
4377/D2	Mail	W. Stow
5977/J11	C.P.	H. Boucher
6247/O4	Spl. Barnetby	T. Temple
2962/J39	Manchester lodge	Bowers
6036/D9	Grantham ?	T. Pickering
5187/B5	Relief	G. Stratton
6018/D9	Sheffield	C. Blow
49/Y3	Market Rasen	J. Hansard
5250/J11	Shireoaks	W. Jarvis.

Firstly, what "C.P." "N.P." and "E.P." refer to I'm unsure, possibly a Pilot job. This list was a poorly written job, so some blanks or errors may have cropped up. But what does stand out is the lack of 4-6-0 work. Two B5s are noted, one possibly on a Doncaster passenger, though they did work Lincoln passengers also. J39s worked the premium Lancashire-bound goods, being a newer class. D9s worked the local passengers and our sweet little Y3 appears to be having a trip to Market Rasen, with what and why? Former non-GC loco types are doing Dock work and locals within Lincolnshire. All low-level, low-key below the East Coast Main Line and other Main Lines' radar, but functioning and doing their jobs.

The final "Front" notes,

18th September 1951.

Accident to driver, and here is Brigham's statement concerning this:

"Whilst preparing engine 61318 at 9am September 15th on 9 Road East End of Shed I slipped on some oil covered by water, strained groin and left leg".

Brigham retired July 1971. This story does not quite end here as an undated and incomplete drivers' list at Frodingham depot is given in final *"Back" notes*.

5307/J11	C Pilot	Froulstone
5315/J11	Appleby	G. Pettitt
5353/O4	Sharlston	Woollin
6556/O4	Staveley	Cornish
6568/O4	Ardsley	E. Vause
6562/O4	Annesley	F. Dunderdale.

The writer's maternal grandad, George Pettitt, is noted on an Appleby turn, possibly a local trip to or from Appleby Iron Co. or Appleby Steel Works or thereabouts. Here were a mix of sidings and works entrances that may have warranted a

separate trip. As stated on other occasions George was an 8 hour entrant on to the GCR in 1919 commencing at New Holland shed, being born nearby at Thornton Curtis. He transferred to Keadby loco in 1921 for more work and turns, moving up to Frodingham shed in 1932 and retiring about the same time as J. W. Brigham.

Some photos by Mike Eggenton



above: Cheshire Lines warehouse at Woodside, Birkenhead, in 2024. Located in the heart of the once extensive dock area it was known as Shore Road Goods and was accessed via lines of the Birkenhead Joint (L&NWR and GWR). Opened in 1871 and closed in 1961. Note the company names displayed on the building.

right: The facade of Gainsborough Central station in 1964. Described as 'a substantial stone portico with full-height portico with four attached Roman Ionic columns and triple arcade with moulded round arches'.

When the line to the goods shed was laid in front of the entrance, a subway was built (visible to the left of the portico) to allow passengers access to the station.



left: D5561 (31143) with RCTS 'The South Yorkshireman No.5' railtour from Leeds to Leeds passing through Dinnington & Laughton station on the South Yorkshire Int line on 23 Oct 1965.

Arrival on the bookshelf

"The L&NER Delivers the Goods, Volume 2: Scottish and North Eastern Areas" by Peter Tatlow

Lightmoor Press 2024, £30.

ISBN: 978 1915069337. Hardback, 184 pages.

The second volume of Peter Tatlow's series on the LNER's goods operations has arrived and it has been well worth the wait. This covers Scottish and North Eastern Areas and you could not find two more like 'chalk and cheese'. In Scotland the LNER quickly found that a shortage of heavy goods locos was a major problem. The impecunious Great North of Scotland Rly used nothing but mixed traffic 4-4-0s for all its trains and the North British had nothing but 0-6-0s for its freight, so this section of the volume ought to have been sub-titled 'Gorton to the Rescue'.

The LNER needed to draft in a fleet of 2-8-0s and larger 0-6-0s to handle the freight traffic and Robinson's class O4s and a batch of J9s were chosen. However, the civil engineering department had to put severe restrictions on their route availability as many of the Scottish lines weren't strong enough to take these heavier locomotives. The author has included a number of previously unpublished shots of GC engines north of the border. These include O4/2s nos.6352, 6372 and 6544 and J9 no.5663. Other imported foreigners were some B12s from the GER and such was the shortage of more powerful passenger locos that Gresley had a batch of 'Improved Directors' (D11/2) built especially for these lines - the "Scottish Directors".

There is little doubt that the transfer of GC designs north helped make freight operations more efficient and therefore more profitable. I remember discussing this with our late vice-president Dick Hardy at one of his many lectures that I attended and he confirmed the positive effect this had on Scottish freight operations.

The North Eastern Railway, unlike its Scottish counterparts, possessed some of the most powerful express, mixed traffic and heavy freight locos in the country. Whisper it quietly near Swindon, but Sir Vincent Raven's class Q7 three-cylinder 0-8-0s were more powerful than the Great Western's 28XX class.

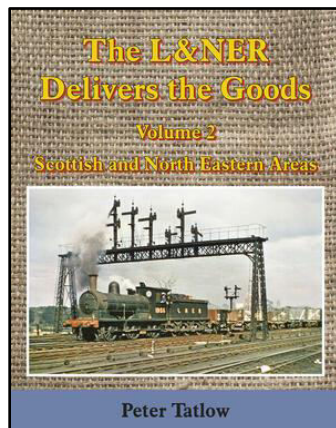
The LNER initially over-relied on the revenues Darlington was generating but its wealth was based on traditional heavy industries like mining, steel production and ship building which were in decline, not picking up until WWII.

The NER had taken over the Hull & Barnsley Railway prior to Grouping. The "Hopelessly Bankrupt" as the wags nick-named it, was best known for its large goods wagons proclaiming its Continental services. However, its lines were very useful for keeping slow-moving freight off main lines. Following the GCR's example at Immingham, the LNER embarked on a policy of upgrading the ports of the other pre-Grouping companies such as Hull. Come WWII and this policy was shown to have been instrumental in enabling the East Coast ports to handle large amounts of traffic.

The author also looks at how freight operations were managed. This unsung part of railway life is more important than most people realise. In the days when railways were all common carriers, being able to find paths for extra trains was important in order to minimise disruptions to other services and for the efficient use of locos and wagons.

I found this book to be fascinating and an excellent read. Anyone who is interested in the LNER's freight operations won't be disappointed. I look forward to Volume 3.

Chris Youett



A Retro Review

"Station Master's Reflections - images of railway life, 1954-64" by David Holmes

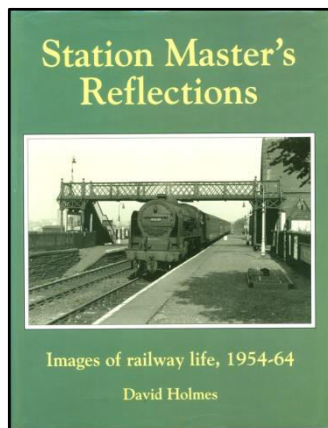
Silver Link Publishing 1992 / Book Club Associates 1993
ISBN: 978 0947971861. Hardback, 176 pages

As railway autobiographies go, I think this is one of the best. Unlike most, the author was not a footplateman and the period covered, from 1954 to 1964, saw him progress from Junior Clerk to a Relief Station Master. Frequent moves seemed to be part of the job if you wanted to progress through the ranks. He describes what work was required in each job - and lots of paperwork was involved!

The photos, taken by David Holmes himself, are of excellent quality and cover places and trains not often seen in other collections. He travelled extensively on his days off which enabled him to capture such a variety of photographic material. At first the sepia toning of the photos seems out of place as this is usually associated with vintage photos but it does create an artistic effect that is not displeasing when you get used to it. The captions are very informative and they make up a large portion of the book.

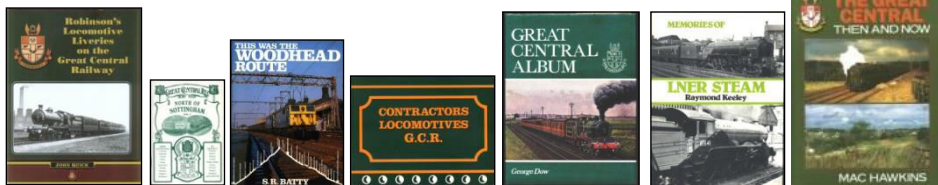
Most of the locations at which he was employed were in the Leeds area - Rothwell, Marsh Lane, Hunslet East, Bramley and Elland but he considers the brief appointment as Station Master at East Leake from January 1962 to March 1963 to be the most interesting job of his railway career. Many of the trains passing through the station were photographed.

Finding second-hand copies of the book is not difficult as reprints by BCA had a large print run and I prefer the BCA cover anyway (as illustrated above). Try www.abebooks.co.uk



Bob Gellatly

Visit the GCRS Sales page on our website at www.gcrsociety.co.uk/sales.html for our published items and second hand books. You will find our prices very competitive compared to retail outlets. Postage is at cost.



Apologies from the Editor for the following errors in *Forward 219*

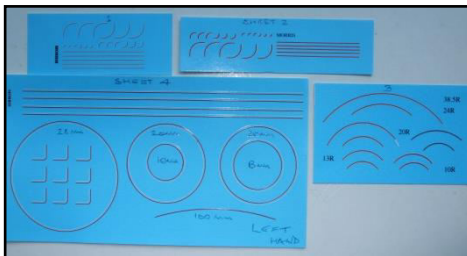
p35 line 32: for '2017' read '2022'.

p44 rear cover photo caption: for 'the end for Robinson's 2-8-0 locomotives' read 'the end for Robinson's 2-8-0 locomotives in the UK'.

Modellers' corner

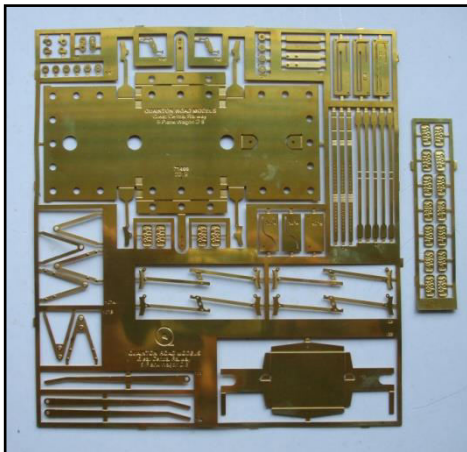
by Tony West

Firstly I would like to thank fellow society member **Richard Morris** for contacting me regarding details of some transfers he has recently commissioned. These are for the red and white lining on black liveried locos. Anyone interested please contact me and I will email you photos of the sample sheets and the accompanying notes, together with contact details for Richard. It is envisaged that these would be available in 4mm and 7mm scales.



Transfers for red and white lining on black liveried locos.

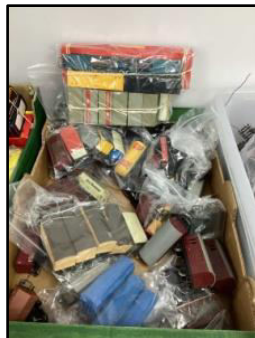
Some weeks ago I visited **Ken de Groome**, to whom I owe a huge thank you for saving the last stock of the former QRM range of GC kits in 7mm scale and allowing me to acquire it. Firstly I should say that there are no complete kits but there are certainly some useful items. I am still working my way through them and compiling a list of what will be made available. These I would like to offer firstly to society members, for a modest fee, the proceeds to be donated to a cancer charity. Some of the most significant items are a number of etch tools, which were quite literary rescued from a dustbin. These cover some of the six wheel stock and plates for the S&T cattle wagon as well as compensated underframes for S&T resin wagon bodies. So should some brave soul care to consider reviving part of the range in some form it's not a mission impossible situation.



QRM etches for the S&T D8 wagon in 7mm.



Following the takeover of **Hattons by Rails of Sheffield**, the excess second-hand stock has been put on sale via auction, the first of which was held by [The Sheffield Auction Gallery](#) on 14th May. Most lots consisted of boxes full of 'stuff'. Surprisingly the hammer prices were well above the estimates. The second sale is scheduled for 11th July.



Model railway exhibition diary

Some events that may interest our readers

Sat 8th & Sun 9th June: Peak MRE at Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell DE45 1AH. [website](#)

Sat 15th & Sun 16th June: Middleton Railway Trust at Middleton Railway, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ. [website](#)

Sat 22nd & Sun 23rd June: Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre MRE at Mere Way, Ruddington NG11 6JS. [website](#)

Sat 17th & Sun 18th Aug: Soar Valley MRC at Loughborough Grammar School, Leicester Road, Loughborough LE11 2DU. [website](#)

Sat 7th Sept: Worksof Model Transport Exhibition at The Crossing, Newcastle Street, Worksof S80 2AT.

Sat 28th Sept: Risborough & District MRC at Haddenham Village Hall, Banks Road, Haddenham HP17 8EE. [website](#)

Sat 28th Sept: Sheffield MRS at Grenoside Community Centre, Main Street, Grenoside S35 8PR. [website](#)

The Gainsborough Model Railway, at Florence Terrace, Gainsborough DN21 1BE, is open to the public on Sat 15th June, Sun 21st July, Sat 24th & Sun 25th August. For more information visit www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk



The GCRS sales and publicity stand at the Mansfield St Peter's model railway show on 2nd March. It was the first outing for our new tablecloth which looks very smart and hides the boxes under the table (well, almost).

photo: Brian Slater

Some recent items from Great Central Railwayana Auctions

Visit www.gcrauctions.com for details of future auctions.



A North British Loco. Co. (Hyde Park) worksplate dated 1918 from ROD no.1875, a Robinson 2-8-0. Later LNER O4/3 no.6588 and BR no.63779. Withdrawn from Retford in April 1962. Sold for **£220**.



A North British Loco. Co. (Hyde Park) worksplate dated 1918 from ROD no.1886, a Robinson 2-8-0. Later LNER O4/3 no.6592. Rebuilt as O4/5 in Sept.1939. Became BR no.63788 and rebuilt as O4/8 in March 1957. Withdrawn from Doncaster in January 1966. Sold for **£230**.



A restored platform lamp from Cefn-y-Bedd on the GCR Bidston-Wrexham Central line. The station is still open today on the 'Borderlands Line'. Sold for **£440**



A GCR pegging block instrument with brass plate QUORN. Would have come from either Loughborough or Rothley signal box. Sold for **£300**.



A single line token for the Harwoth Jn -
Firbeck Colliery section of the SYJnt.
Sold for **£90**.



A single line token for the Kirk Sandall - Markham Sidings section of the SYJnt. Sold for **£180**.



Smokebox numberplate from BR O4/3
no.63656. Sold for **£240**.



A signal box nameboard from Hawarden Station. Cast letters on wood. Location as for Cefn-y-Bedd. Sold for **£160**.



GCR circular brass paperweight stamped "MOTIVE POWER SUPERINTENDENT GORTON". 3" diameter. Sold for **£190**.



CLC 3 aspect small sliding knob handlamp with bull's eye lens. Brass plate "CHESHIRE LINES 34 MANCHESTER CENTRAL". Poor condition. Sold for **£580**.



Signal box diagram "KIRKBY SOUTH JCN" dated 1960. Sold for **£240**.

On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

February saw two workings along the Deepcar branch, the first was on Thursday **1st February** when single car unit 153385, converted into a video test unit, passed through Wharncliffe Woods at 16:36 on a working from and to Derby, the first time a Class 153 unit has been seen on the branch. Then during the early hours of the **10th February** Colas HST test units 43257/43272 worked over the branch between 00:30 and 01:30 from Doncaster, and returning to Immingham. Although no steel traffic has run since November 2022 the branch has seen quite a few test train workings since, it is amazing that the line is still sees this occasional use.

Monday **5th February** saw what could possibly be the final UK coal train to a power station, when 66799 departed Doncaster at 09:38 for Ratcliffe. Once emptied, the wagons were left at the power station and the loco returned light to Doncaster.

For the second time this year a landslip has caused major disruption to Chiltern Rail services, this time the location was at Stoke Mandeville, with the route completely closed from the **1st March** to the **4th March**, resulting in no services between Aylesbury and Marylebone via Amersham.

From **17th to 26th February** the route between Scunthorpe and Doncaster was shut for engineering work on the UK's only sliding canal bridge at Keadby. Frequent disruption due to malfunctioning of the bridge should now be a thing of the past. This resulted in all freight traffic being diverted via Kirton Lindsey making this normally quiet route very busy. On the **19th February** there were no less than 27 diverted freight services, which even included a rare coal working, this being the Humber International Terminal to Hope Cement Works which passed Northorpe at 08:22 worked by 66107.

Coal traffic from Immingham to Scunthorpe BSC (Coal Handling Plant) started again from the **12th February** after traffic had temporarily ceased in December. 66158 working the first train of 2024 which arrived at 12:13. By week commencing **26th February** there were 10 trains from Immingham.

Although the Penistone line is now operated mainly by Class 150 three-car sets, on Sunday **3rd March** 195008 worked the 13:14 from Lincoln and 16:19 return service.

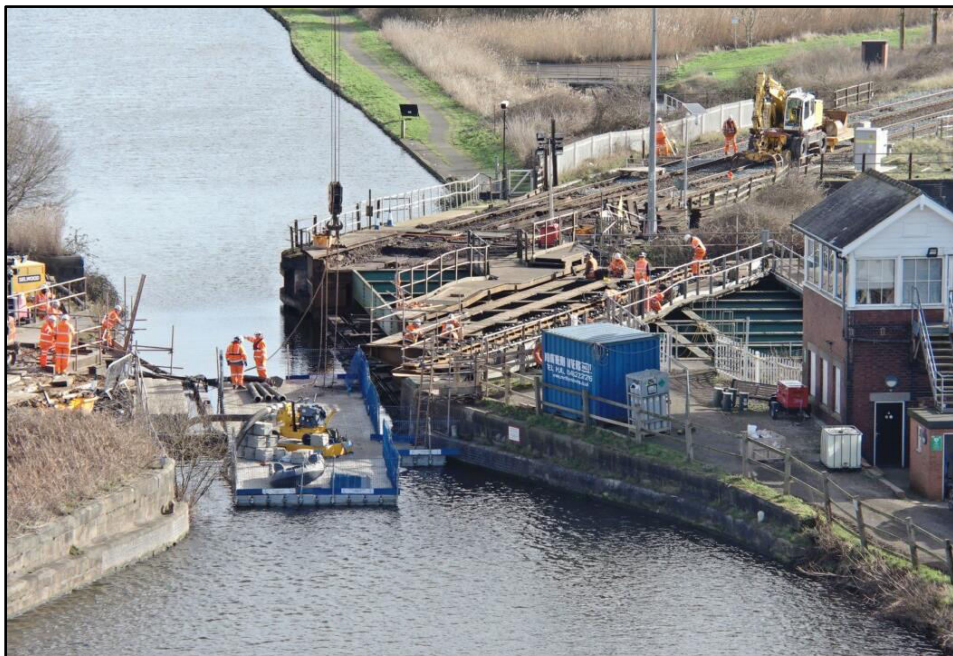
Wednesday **17th April** saw a railtour from Hereford to York steam hauled by 34046 *Braunton* with 47828 on the rear. It passed through Guide Bridge at 11:19.

Although it was thought the coal traffic to Ratcliffe PS had ceased, traffic recommenced from the **29th April** with one train running 3 days a week, altogether 30 services are to run these will no doubt be the final coal trains as the Ratcliffe is gradually being run down until its expected closure in the Autumn. On **3rd May** 66787 worked the 09:26 from Immingham which was routed through Brigg passing at 10:11.

The undoubted highlight of the month (if not the year!) was the use of HST power cars 43468 + 43480 on a wagon move from WH Davis on **30th April**. Running light from Kings Norton, they took 24 GBRf biomass wagons (ex-coal hoppers with lids) as 6Z44 11:20 Shirebrook Davis & Son to Gascoigne Wood Sidings. Running late they passed Dinnington on the SYJnt at 15:09.

On Wednesday **1st May** the Peak Forest to Stourton (Leeds) train passed Guide Bridge at 21:46 hauled by 66707, complete with the name *Sir Sam Fay the Great Central Railway*.

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: kimcollinson1949@gmail.com.



above: Repairs being made to the Keady canal sliding bridge.

photo: HBPW

below: Railadventure HST power cars 43468+43480 at Dinnington Jn on the SYJnt with converted coal hoppers for use with biomass working as 6Z44 WHDavis Shirebrook to Gascoigne Wood. HST power cars used on test trains are common but hauling wagons is rare.

photo: Chris Booth



Great Central Railway reunification update by Tom Ingall

The Shed

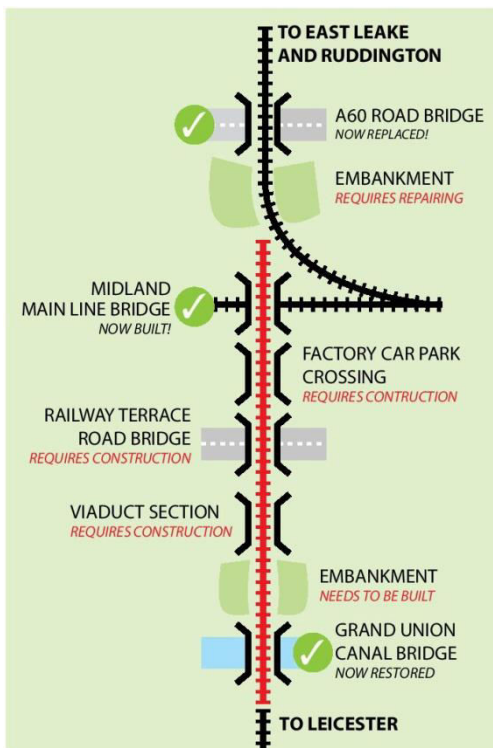
On 24th March this year it was announced by the railway that the locomotive shed at Loughborough, for so long the engineering heart of the railway, will close and move to a new location as part of the reunification project. The tracks will be put back on their original alignment through the site. This will allow a double track layout north of Loughborough station - it had been originally proposed that a single track could by-pass the shed but that would have caused operating problems and would not be historically authentic, which is what we are about. It also throws up a huge number of questions, so a working group are now looking at future engineering provision for locos, carriages and wagons for the whole eighteen mile railway. The results of their deliberations will include the locations of new facilities and a plan for how we transition to the new arrangements.

There is however some immediate positive news on the shed. Public money from Loughborough's Town Deal Fund, pledged to upgrade the current building can still be used to improve facilities for engineering teams, footplate crew and visitors in the short term. Meanwhile the money the David Clarke Railway Trust have recently made available will take the shed (a former Second World War hanger) to the end of its life which is expected to be around five years from now.

Latest Reunification Plans

In September last year a review of the entire reunification project took place. The good news was that everything done so far was right. Not so good news is that lots more work was required before we could submit a planning application for the new connection, so we have turned to our friends at Cass Hayward to help develop a plan.

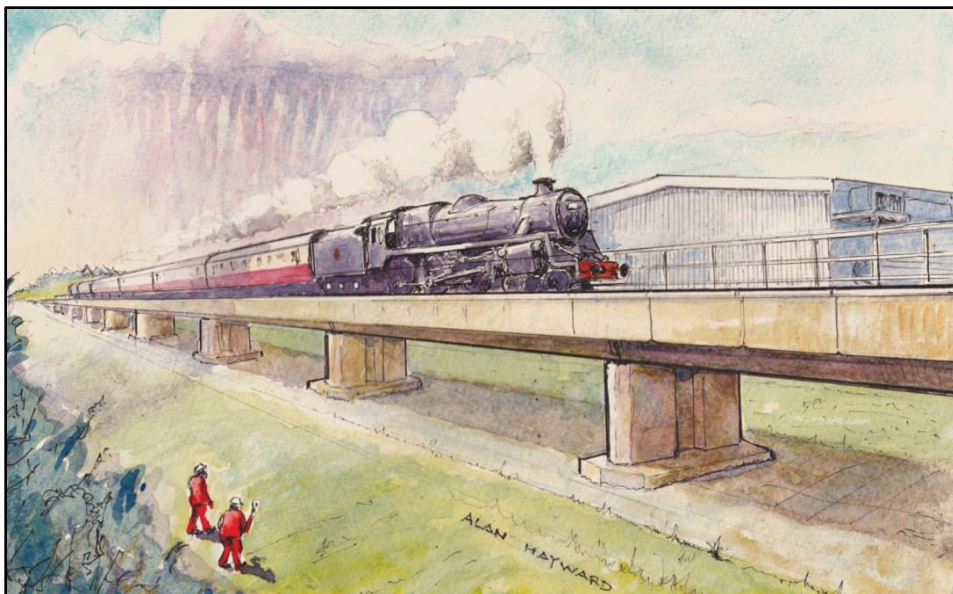
So working from south to north, this is how the reunification jigsaw now slots together. Double track will head from the station and pass over the canal bridge and onto a conventional embankment. The double track will become single where it needs to cross a culvert and sewer with a single metal span to allow access by Severn-Trent. After that there is a 200m concrete viaduct carried on pillars 20m apart (see the drawing by Alan Hayward). By the time the formation reaches the PreciSpark premises it will have moved 8m further away from its original alignment. With the use of



continuous welded rail the noise and vibration should be reduced to a minimum.

As we head north towards Railway Terrace, the track is climbing while the height of the local ground is falling. At the end the viaduct comes another single track span to cross Railway Terrace itself at a height of 5.3m, which is needed by lorries to access a Recycling & Household Waste site. Then the concrete viaduct takes over again to cross the PreciSpark car park and reach the Midland Main Line. This viaduct had previously been referred to as the Factory Flyover and is scheduled to be the first part of the new line to be built as part of the phased construction as funds become available.

The new bridge, now in place over the Midland Main Line, requires a higher track level than the original to allow for future electrification. The embankment to the north of the bridge must therefore be higher than the original. This new embankment will require reinforcing with 400 piles over its 300m length. Finally the railway crosses the A60 on the recently replaced bridge with the connection from the main line running alongside. The two halves of the Great Central will then become one.



*A Ruddington bound Greater Great Central service passes the PreciSpark premises on a concrete viaduct.
artwork by Alan Hayward*

The Reading Decks

The whole of the reunification project was kick started by acquiring two redundant bridge decks as Network Rail remodelled Reading station. At first they were intended for use to cross the Midland main line but when plans changed they were retained in case they had a future use. Unfortunately they don't fit in with the new proposals and they would need expensive alteration if used, to the point where it will be more prudent to purchase new spans. The decks will be disposed of, but for the record we wouldn't be where we are now if they hadn't been donated by Network Rail.

Planning Application

By the time you read this, the all important and expensive planning application will be on the cusp of being submitted. This is a major step forward. A planning consultant has led us through the process with many experts contributing reports. Stakeholders and neighbours have been approached. Part of the recent publicity campaign revealing

the new design was not just about raising money but waving the flag for the project, a reminder this is an exciting development with much to offer the region. We will need to wait some months for a decision.

The New Appeal

While we wait we won't be sitting on our hands. The business case is still be developed, essential to take to potential funders. Obtaining planning consent is not the only thing we need to be 'shovel ready'. Our design documents need to be turned into engineering blueprints which a contractor will require. This process will bring experts in orange jackets to site and it will cost, we estimate, just over half a million pounds.

Together, we have raised over two million pounds, with some of that being committed to the planning application. Every time we spend, it nibbles away at the main reunification fund which we want to protect for the actual building work. Our new appeal is to raise as much of the half a million pounds as we can to cover this planning stage. Donations can be made online or via text. The more we raise, the more the building fund is protected, which in turn means we can build further and sooner when the time comes. Needless to say, absolutely every pound makes a crucial difference and your generosity continues to make the impossible happen. It's humbling to see the generosity of our supporters.

The Way Ahead

The track has been relaid on the A60 bridge. In April a tamper came from Network Rail to fettle it. This was the first rail vehicle onto GCRN from the national network in four years.

The recent 125th anniversary gala proved two things - the potential of the Greater Great Central and the public appetite for it. The recent press coverage got the message out there once more. Reunification is moving ever closer. Thank you for your support with the appeal which we all hope will yield more progress soon. You can see more about the new design and an interview with the designers on the '[GCROfficial](https://www.gcraofficial.co.uk)' YouTube channel and donations can be made at <https://www.gcrailway.co.uk/unify>.

Aerial views taken in 1947



above: From Loughborough station to the canal bridge.

below: From the canal bridge to Railway Terrace.



Len Bunning - an appreciation

by Richard Butler and David Reidy

Leonard William Bunning (always known as 'Len') sadly died on 17th January 1924 aged 79. A wartime child, he was born in Manchester on 11th January 1945. He remembered being told by his mother that when she was expecting she was thrown across a room in their house as a result of the blast from a bomb. Fortunately neither he or his mother was injured. The family later moved south to London where he was educated at Rutlish School, Merton, at the same time as John Major.

Len spent most of his career as a telecommunications engineer, but latterly worked for a small advertising company in Covent Garden. He lived in the Wembley area for many years, and more recently moved to High Wycombe. He was a long time and extremely dedicated supporter of Brentford FC. He first went to a match with his father at the age of three.

He joined the Great Central Railway Society in 1989 and was an active member, attending most meetings of the London Area Group unless they clashed with Brentford FC matches! He became the Southern Area Representative on the committee in 1993 and served in that capacity until 2007. Len arranged and often subsidised the London meetings and the group's minibus trips. His memory was unrivalled- he was able to furnish the exact date an event that had occurred many years previously.

Len wrote two articles for *Forward*:

Len Bunning & David Bodicoat: Pullmans on the Met (Forward 135 p30)

Len Bunning: In appreciation of Richard Graham who died on 22 December 2014 (Forward 184 p14)

He never bore any malice and always had a good word for everyone. He will be sorely missed.

A fascinating photo submitted by Tom Robinson



LNER Shunting Tractor RD8306 with fish vans on Waveney Road, Lowestoft c1935. The first two are ex GCR. Note the bus driver on the right alongside his Eastern Counties bus. photo: Arthur Dudley

The readers' forum

from **Chris Youett, Coventry**

Adrian Shooter's plans for the GC's London Extension.

One of the best-kept secrets of the controversial HS2 development was that in 2008 our late President, Adrian Shooter, commissioned international transport surveyor Mike Byng to cost out how much money was needed to re-open the GC London Extension from Aylesbury to Lutterworth. The aim was to offer a Park 'n' Ride service to M1 users. Mike's calculations showed that this was possible with City money and would give a fair return on capital. If this proposal had come to fruition, extensions to Leicester, Lutterworth and even a new station at Nottingham South would have followed.

Regrettably the decision by the then controversial London Mayor and later Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to give the go-ahead to the HS2 vanity project killed this proposal and cleared the way for the "birdcage bridge" over the WCML at Rugby to be removed. This extension to Lutterworth could have been achieved for a fraction of the money already spent on HS2. We will all be the poorer for this ill thought out project and Boris Johnson didn't even agree a completion date with penalty clauses should there be a late delivery!

Editor's note: History is full of 'what ifs' and railway history has more than its fair share. This is one of the more intriguing. What would have happened to the heritage Great Central Railway if Adrian Shooter's line had reached Nottingham? Sadly, even if HS2 hadn't intervened to destroy the vision, MND did.

Steve Armitage gave a talk 'The Great Central in Yorkshire and Beyond' at the AGM at Barnsley on 18th May. In the 'beyond' category was the photo shown below. Steve's photos were of excellent quality and much appreciated by the audience.



LNER class B3 4-6-0 no.1165 'Valour' (still carrying its GCR number) passing the closed Stratford Brook signal box, south of Sandy, on the GNR main line with a down Pullman in early 1924. This is the only known photograph of this signal box.

photo: Steve Armitage collection

Dates for your diary

The Great Central Railway Society (Sheffield Branch)

The Farm Road Sports & Social Club, Farm Road, Sheffield S2 2TP at 7.30pm on the 1st Thursday of the month. Contact: Bob Gellatly 01909 565763. www.gcrsociety.co.uk

Thur 6 June 'The Making of a New Clan - 72010 Hengist' by Chris Jones.

Thur 4 July Meet at CTL Seal, Butterthwaite Lane, Ecclesfield S35 9WA, at 6.30pm for a short walk and at 7.30pm for a visit to CTL Seal. Donations to 72010 Hengist Fund welcome.

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

Thur 5 Sept 'Great Central Machines and Metals' by Steve Armitage.

The Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group

'The No.1', Station Approach, Cleethorpes DN35 8AX at 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Contact: Stuart Blackbourn on 01472 505853 or sc.blackbourn@ntlworld.com.

Wed 19 June 'East of Wakefield in Steam Days' by Roger Hepworth.

Weds 17 July and 21 Aug Film shows at Phil Sheard's (01472 697334).

Wed 18 Sept 'The Splendour of Swiss Railways' by Rob Morrey.

Lutterworth Railway Society

The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Coventry Road, Lutterworth LE17 4RB at 7.30pm on 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month. Contact: Alan Bilton on 01455 207996 or 0777 175 6013 or info@lutterworthrailwaysociety.co.uk. www.lutterworthrailwaysociety.co.uk.

Thur 6 June 'German Railways' by Alan Coltham.

The Leicester Railway Society

The Braunstone Civic Centre, 209 Kingsway, Leicester LE3 2PP. At 7.30pm on Tuesdays. Contact: Brian Holland - 0778 570 7573 or bryanholland60@aol.com. www.leicesterrailwaysociety.com.

Tue 18 June 'Loughborough to Coalville by L&NWR' by Andy Lowe.

NO MEETINGS IN JULY AND AUGUST

Tue 17 Sept 'Penistone to Sheffield' by Stephen Gay.

The 8E Railway Association (Northwich branch). The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich CW9 5RB. (*Only 5 min. from the station*). 2nd Tuesday of the month at 19:45. Contact : Paul Tench 0779 048 6735. www.8erailwayassociation.org.uk.

Tue 11 June Visit to Stalybridge station.

Tue 13 July A day out.

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

Tue 10 Sept 'Boat Trains and Channel Packets' by John Hooley.

Rear cover photo caption

This photo was taken at Northwich shed and shows a large gathering of shed staff posed in front of GCR class 3 2-4-2T no.583. The footplate crew are obviously very proud that their loco was chosen for this event. At the centre, the gentleman in the suit and tie must be the shed foreman.

No.583 was built to a Thomas Parker design at Gorton in January 1893. By the time of the photo its Parker stovepipe chimney had been replaced by a Robinson chimney and it had received a Belpaire boiler (March 1915). They were used on suburban traffic around Manchester. The LNER classified them as F1 and no.583 was withdrawn in August 1936 as LNER no.5583

photo: Reece Brook Studios, Northwich

