

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 March 2016 issue (no. 187) must reach the Editor by 1st February 2016.

Front cover caption

LNER class D11/1 4-4-0 no.5509 *Prince Albert* enters Leicester Central with an up passenger service on 29 June 1929. Leicester Passenger North signal box is on the left and the signalman has already returned the signal to the stop position. Built at Gorton 1919-22, the class 11F 'Improved Directors' were the last 4-4-0s built by the GCR. They proved to be worthy machines and lasted well into the BR era. *Prince Albert* was a resident of Staveley shed during its latter days and was withdrawn as 62663 in May 1960.

Photo: W.L.Good / Colin Walker collection



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Editorial

Coal traffic, the life blood of the former Great Central Railway, continues to decline on the present network. UK deep mining has virtually disappeared. A photo of the last train to carry coal from Thoresby Colliery in Nottinghamshire appears on page 12. The colliery branch was connected to the LD&ECR. Both Hatfield (also on a GC line) and Thoresby collieries ceased production in July of this year. That leaves Kellingley as the UK's only deep mine and its prospects are not good. The Government has backed away from a rescue package and the colliery is scheduled to close in December.

Since the miners' strike in 1984-5 there has been a rapid decline in the number of working collieries. Some would say the two are connected. As UK production has dropped, so imports have risen to meet the needs of our coal-fired power stations. This has meant a change in coal flows on the railways. Ironically, Immingham Dock, opened by the GCR in 1912 to export coal, has now become one of our main coal importing ports. The associated Humber International Terminal (HIT) has been built specifically to handle coal and other bulk commodities and is now also handling biomass. Coal-fired power stations at Cottam and West Burton are connected to GC lines.

To comply with EU directives, some of our coal-fired power stations have had to switch to biomass or close in order to reduce their carbon footprint. Renewable energies are unable to replace them despite forests of wind turbine and domestic solar panels. So welcome back nuclear power! We should never have let our expertise in this area lapse. That was due to successive governments adopting a non-nuclear energy policy in response to public fears after nuclear disasters such as Chernobyl in 1986. As a teacher at the time I confidently told my pupils, when studying energy resources, that eventually we would have to come back to nuclear power. The Government didn't listen to me and now we have to grovel to the Chinese to come and help us build nuclear power stations.

Opening of new lines or rebuilding lost lines makes good news. Chiltern Railways are to be congratulated on their new service to Oxford Parkway from Marylebone. This has involved construction of a new chord at Bicester from the former GWR line onto the L&NW's Oxford-Bletchley line. There still remains the last step into Oxford station itself which requires a new parallel line and platform facilities at Oxford. I have not yet travelled this new route but one line I have travelled on is the newly opened Borders Line from Edinburgh to Tweedbank. This, of course, is part of the North British Railway's Waverley Route from Carlisle. Plans are already in hand to extend but only as far as Hawick. From there to Carlisle is too sparsely populated to tempt even the most ardent pro-rail campaigner. It was great to see the new railway well used both by locals and tourists. ScotRail are a progressive rail service provider.

There are many other routes that could be reopened if there was sufficient funding and political commitment eg the Woodhead route, East Lincs line, Malton to Pickering etc. I'm sure you could think of many other examples in your neck of the woods. As a safeguard for future re-openings there should be greater planning controls to protect the right-of-way. And what about funding? The controversial scheme for a high speed link to Birmingham and the North will cost far more. Would you prefer to see local lines reopened to serve their communities or to arrive at Birmingham 20 minutes earlier from London after paying a higher fare for the privilege?

The two major cities of Manchester and Leeds are on opposite sides of the Pennines and also seem to be at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to local transport policy. The expansion of the Metrolink tram system in Manchester shows no sign of slowing down. (Appropriately the expansion is referred to as the 'Big Bang'.) The new airport connection has experienced exceptional volumes of traffic, the rebuilt Victoria station in the city centre is a marvel to behold and the Second City Crossing is making good progress. Move to Leeds and what do we find? Some talk of guided busways and even trolleybuses but nothing achieved. Local transport depends on buses and a few suburban stations served by trains out of Leeds station.

Annual General Meeting 2016

In accordance with Section 7(a) of the Society constitution, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on **Saturday 28th May 2016 at Keadby and Althorpe Working Mens Club, 112 Station Road, Keadby, Scunthorpe DN17 3BN** starting at 11.00 am.

Under Section 9 of the constitution proposals for changes to the constitution, properly signed by the proposer and seconder, should be sent to the secretary to reach him no later than Saturday 16th April 2016.

Under Section 5(c) nominations for the committee, signed by the proposer and seconder and made with the agreement of the nominee, should be sent to the secretary to reach him no later than Friday 6th May 2016.

Proposers and seconds must be paid up members of the Society.

Only proposals made in accordance with the constitution will be accepted for the Annual General Meeting.

Brian Slater, Secretary

AGM venue and programme

Althorpe station is situated at the west end of Keadby Bridge over the River Trent, also known as the King George V Bridge. This Scherzer Rolling Lift Bridge was built 1912-16 by the GCR to replace a swing bridge built by the South Yorkshire Railway in 1866. It carries the A18 road as well as the railway. It was last lifted in 1956 and the bascule has been fixed in position since 1960. The year 2016 will mark its centenary.

The Keadby and Althorpe WMC is a 600m walk from Althorpe station.

Programme

10:30 - Doors open with sales and displays.

11:00 - The AGM

12:30 - Break for lunch - bring your own or local fish-n-chips.

Participants have the opportunity to visit The Trolley Bus Museum at Sandtoft if they wish. Transport to and from the museum will be provided free of charge by the museum using a bus from their collection (but not a trolley bus!).

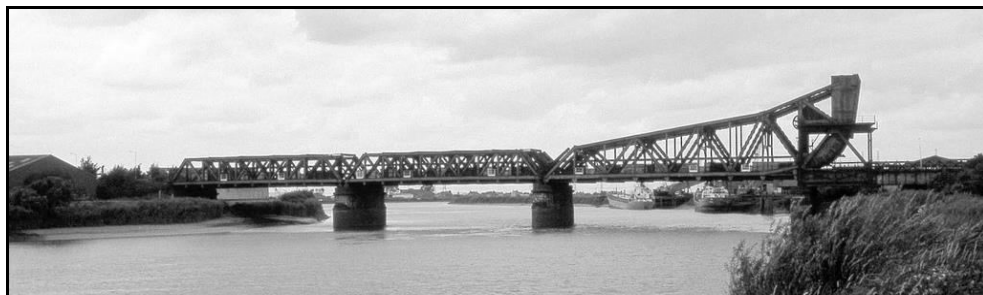
13:15 - Bus departs for Sandtoft. Admission £5.10 for seniors and £5.95 for adults.

16:30 - Bus departs from Sandtoft to return to Althorpe.



Keadby bridge viewed from Althorpe station.

photo: Bob Gellatly



Keadby bridge from the south. Althorpe station is on the left.

photo: John Law

Cross-Country by Great Central by David Anderson

In the summer of 1957 I was the proud possessor of passenger timetables for the North Eastern, the London Midland and the Western Regions. I regarded this as quite an achievement. Living in West Hartlepool, the North Eastern book could be purchased from the station, but anything else seemed unobtainable. In Middlesbrough though I found a bookstall that sold other Regions' timetables, so for the first time I was able to plan cross-country journeys. The most ambitious was for my history teacher who came from Builth Wells. He gave me the job of planning his journey home at the end of term. The trains and their connections took so long that within the day he was only able to get to Builth Road, not quite Builth Wells!

I was reminded of this when I came across *Internal Cross-Country Train Connections. IV.- Great Central Railway*, published in *The Railway Magazine* for March 1906. This was the fourth in a series of articles covering several of the old companies. The author, W.P. Martin, divided the GCR and its joint lines into five districts and then chose journeys to illustrate the connections between them. This present article compares Martin's findings with weekday services in 2015, using the timetable valid from May 17.

Martin chose "*suitable trains*" without defining this term. However, in his review of the LNWR connections, published in *The Railway Magazine* for January 1906, he makes it clear that in considering frequency of service he ignored stopping trains closely followed by expresses and also services that he regarded as "*valueless to through passengers*". For some journeys he limited his study to "*day trains*".

For the 2015 timings I have ignored the following:

- Connecting services if a change has to be made in less than the recommended minimum time for the station concerned.
- Services commencing between midnight and 05:00 hours.
- Services by connecting trains which arrive at journey's end 5 minutes or less before a through train.
- Services which are overtaken by faster trains.

Martin summarised most of his findings in tables. These included distance and overall speed but I have not quoted these. I believe the main interest in the comparison is in the frequency and duration of the journey. Each of his articles dealt with one company but he did occasionally compare the services with those of others, as mentioned below.

Sadly, with line closures, none of the journeys today makes full use of the routes available in 1905-06. For some journeys, little or no use is now made of the lines once provided by the GC. Unless otherwise noted, the present-day routes are those used by today's principal services.

Sheffield and Liverpool

Martin chose this as representing connection between the central district of the GC and the west, using the CLC as well as the GC proper. In GC days, there were two routes, via Manchester Central and via Stockport Tiviot Dale, Martin noting that the latter was taken by many of the quicker trains.

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Sheffield to Liverpool	13	5	1h 59m	3h 02m	2h 25m
Liverpool to Sheffield	9	8	1h 54m	2h 10m	2h 01m
<i>2015</i>					
Sheffield to Liverpool Lime St.	17	14	1h 51m	2h 30m	2h 00m
Liverpool Lime St. to Sheffield	29	14	1h 42m	1h 58m	1h 47m
Sheffield to Liverpool Cen. (LL)	16	0	1h 58m	2h 37m	2h 06m
Liverpool Cen. (LL) to Sheffield	28	0	2h 04m	2h 21m	2h 09m

Compared to the Midland, Martin noted that more through carriages were provided on the GCR; eastbound, the Midland provided only three, with two westbound. In 2015 through trains use the Hope Valley and terminate in Liverpool Lime St. and this routing has been used for comparison with 1905-06.

Surprisingly, the eastbound service now offers many more departures than westbound. This is because in this direction connection can be made at Manchester Piccadilly between trains from Liverpool to the North East and those from Manchester Airport to Sheffield. In the westbound direction the corresponding trains require a change at Piccadilly in less than the minimum recommended time of 10 minutes and are therefore ignored. This minimum time is particularly relevant for Sheffield–Liverpool journeys because the traveller needs to change from the terminal platforms at Piccadilly to the somewhat-distant island platforms 13 and 14.

Martin's services via the CLC used Central Station in Liverpool and one can still arrive at the Low Level station there. One needs to change at either Hunts Cross or Liverpool South Parkway.



GCR class 11B 4-4-0 no.1040 passes Hunt's Cross West Jn (the line to Southport Lord St branches off to the left) with a Cheshire Lines service to Liverpool Central. photo: unknown

Chester and Grimsby

Martin chose this as an example of connection between the western and eastern districts of the GC and its joint lines. He didn't tabulate the service but commented "*It is of a very poor character. The Great Central, in this case, does not seem to attempt to make a good connection.*" Eastbound, journeys were particularly affected by the time taken to Manchester and time spent there and in Sheffield making connections.

Little detail is given for the service from Grimsby but, to save time, transfer to the LNWR was suggested for travel beyond Manchester!

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Chester to Grimsby	3	0	5h 45m	7h 00m	6h 15m
<i>2015</i>					
Chester to Grimsby Town	15	0	3h 33m	4h 05m	3h 44m

In 2015, the service is dramatically better, with departures every hour from 06.02 until 20.04. As in the 1906 survey, travel from Chester is via the CLC route towards Manchester but trains are now routed from Altrincham via Stockport and this is the station at which to change. Except for two journeys, the traveller then has a through train to Grimsby.

Leicester and Warrington

This is given as an example of connection between the Leicester and Nottingham district and the west. Martin examined "*day trains*" and considered the service to be satisfactory. Connection times at Sheffield or Manchester were not unduly long. Like the service to Liverpool, some were via Manchester and others via Stockport Tiviot Dale.

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Leicester and Warrington	7	0	3h 12m	3h 54m	3h 27m
Warrington and Leicester	9	2	2h 49m	3h 55m	3h 22m
<i>2015</i>					
Leicester and Warrington	13	0	2h 45m	3h 20m	2h 58m
Warrington and Leicester	23	0	2h 33m	3h 37m	2h 40m

The comparable service in 2015 is at least hourly from after 07:00 until 19:00 or 20:00 in the evening. Towards Warrington, usually one change is to be made, at Chesterfield. Coming towards Leicester, the frequency is greater, for the same reason as for Liverpool-Sheffield. On some journeys, there is one change, at Sheffield. On others, change is necessary in Manchester as well. In three cases, one change only is needed, in Nottingham.

In 2015 there are also connecting services via Nuneaton, as there would have been in 1905-06, but such routings were outside the scope of Martin's study of GCR cross-country connections and have been ignored.

Nottingham and Barnsley

This particular journey between the East Midlands and the central district was chosen because it linked the main line with a local stopping service to an important and sizeable town. Two routes were identified between Sheffield and Barnsley, via Ecclesfield and via Penistone and in Martin's article journey times for each route were given separately. He was critical of the lack of any fast trains between Barnsley and Sheffield and the absence of through carriages to London.

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Nottingham and Barnsley	10	0	1h 46m	Not given	2h 11m
Barnsley and Nottingham	10	0	1h 35m	Not given	1h 55m
<i>2015</i>					
Nottingham and Barnsley	33	14	1h 20m	2h 04m	1h 28m

In 2015 the service both ways is excellent. For most of the day there are two services per hour, taking less than an hour-and-a-half. Because of the similarity of these services in each direction, only that to Barnsley is tabulated. Each hour, one service is through and the other has a change in Sheffield. In both cases, trains run fast from Meadowhall to Barnsley. Trains use the direct former Midland route from Nottingham to Sheffield via Alfreton.

Coming south, there is an additional third service for most of the day, with changes at both Sheffield and East Midlands Parkway and taking longer than 90 minutes. For much of the day this arrives in Nottingham only five minutes before the hourly through train and these additional services have been ignored.

Wakefield and Banbury

Martin next turned to a much longer journey, 135 miles via Woodford and Hinton, summarising the service of day trains. *"Out of the eight trains tabulated...in three cases a change must be made there; the delay ...averages only 18 minutes"*. He chose this journey as illustrating *"a connection between two places of some importance, both of which are off the main line, and are at the northern and southern ends of the company's system"*. The last southbound service left Wakefield as early as 3pm, with the first arrival there not being until 2.29pm. *"With these exceptions, the service is a very satisfactory one"*, although Martin would have liked more through carriages.

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Wakefield and Banbury	4	1	3h 14m	5h 12m	3h 47m
Banbury and Wakefield	4	1	3h 38m	4h 46m	4h 00m
<i>2015</i>					
Wakefield and Banbury	15	2	2h 25m	4h 17m	2h 54m

In 2015 the service is frequent. Heading south, for most of the day a fast train from Wakefield Westgate to Doncaster connects into a train to Banbury via Birmingham New St. The distance is now 160 miles but journeys are substantially quicker than in 1905-06. The longest duration is a late evening journey, the traveller reaching Banbury by changing stations in Birmingham and using the last up service from Moor Street; this stops at all stations to Banbury except Small Heath.

The service in the reverse direction is broadly similar and so is not tabulated. With the usual hourly service the change is at Birmingham New St. and there is only one through train. A useful service additional to the hourly pattern is the 17.31 from Banbury to Sheffield; changing there, one arrives in Wakefield Kirkgate at 20.28, 19 minutes earlier than the following service from Banbury at 17.57.



GCR class 11B 4-4-0 pilots GWR 'Dean Single' 4-2-2 no.3073 'Princess Royal' on the 10.23am York-Bournemouth at Whetstone.
Photo: Ken Nunn Collection

Leicester and Grimsby

This journey provides an illustration of connection between two more of the districts into which Martin divided the GCR. His survey pre-dated the take-over of the LD&ECR and the building of the connections at Duckmanton, and the construction of the Mansfield Railway. The route was therefore either via Sheffield or the Waleswood curve. He notes that *"from the map the Great Northern Railway would appear to provide the most direct route...but..their service is much inferior to that of the Great Central"*. Presumably the GN route would have been from Leicester Belgrave Road using the GN&LNW Joint.

Martin stated that *"once a day in each direction a through train between Cleethorpes and London is available"*. Four other trains required a change only in Nottingham and connections were good. Otherwise, Martin expected that the traveller would change in Sheffield and was critical of delays incurred by this. He particularly mentioned the slow journey associated with the last train from Grimsby, which left as early as 4.30pm. East of Sheffield, the trains were routed via Retford and Grigg.

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Leicester and Grimsby	6	1	2h 53m	5h 10m	3h 54m
Grimsby and Leicester	6	1	2h 56m	5h 52m	3h 57m
<i>2015</i>					
Leicester and Grimsby	15	0	2h 27m	3h 07m	2h 44m

In 2015 the principal route from Leicester is via Derby, Sheffield and Doncaster, changing at Sheffield. There is an hourly service from 07:52 until 20:02. Between these, there is occasionally a useful service via Nottingham and Lincoln that arrives in Grimsby significantly before the following service via Sheffield. The service in the reverse direction is broadly similar and so is not tabulated. It is noticeable though that the first departure from Grimsby is not long after 05:00, much earlier than the first eastbound service. (*Ed. - This is for the benefit of early morning travellers to Manchester Airport.*) Services via Peterborough are not considered as the routing departs far from that of the GCR.

Southport and Doncaster

This journey was included because so far Martin had not given any information about the way the GC served these *"rather important towns"*. Alternative routes were available around the Manchester conurbation, via Manchester or through Stockport Tiviot Dale. Between Penistone and Doncaster, one could travel via Sheffield or via Barnsley. There was a considerable variation in journey time, depending on whether a Hull express was available or stopping trains with indifferent connections had to be used.

	<i>Trains</i>	<i>Through carriages</i>	<i>Shortest time</i>	<i>Longest time</i>	<i>Average time</i>
<i>1905-1906</i>					
Southport and Doncaster	7	0	3h 16m	5h 28m	4h 20m
Doncaster and Southport	6	0	4h 05m	5h 31m	4h 45m
<i>2015</i>					
Southport and Doncaster via Wigan Wallgate	15	0	2h 46m	3h 40m	2h 58m
Southport and Doncaster via Liverpool Central	26	0	3h 22m	3h 53m	3h 32m

In 2015, the principal eastbound route from Southport is via Wigan Wallgate towards Manchester, using the former L&Y. One curiosity is that the same hourly departure from Southport leads to two arrival times in Doncaster, depending on whether one changes twice, at Manchester Oxford Road and Sheffield (the faster option) or just once at Manchester Piccadilly. In the table, this has been counted as one service with the shorter time. The service in the reverse direction is broadly similar and so is not tabulated. The usual station for changing is Manchester Piccadilly.

As the trains Martin studied ran on the now long-closed CLC route from Southport Lord St, joining the line from Liverpool Central to Manchester at Halewood, the present-day service via Liverpool Central Low Level and the CLC through Halewood has also been looked at. The results are summarised in the table, with changes to be made at Liverpool South Parkway and usually either Manchester Piccadilly or Sheffield. The greater number of services compared to the route through Wigan reflects the greater frequency of trains between Southport and Liverpool, compared with Southport to Manchester via Wigan.

Travelling to Southport via Liverpool Central LL, there are fewer services, for the reason explained when presenting the present-day services for Sheffield to Liverpool. Services in this direction have not been tabulated. Additional services are available via Leeds but this route has been judged too remote from the Woodhead route used in Martin's study.

Conclusions

Despite the line closures of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, all the 1905-06 journeys can still be accomplished, usually by reasonably direct routes. The re-routing of trains from Chester to Manchester via Stockport has made Chester - Grimsby more direct than in earlier times. The reverse is true of Wakefield-Banbury; with closure of the GC, trains now travel many more miles via Birmingham.

In 2015, more services are available, on most routes many more, and journey times have been reduced, usually substantially. The least improvement is in the shortest time from Sheffield to Liverpool, reflecting the fast GCR through trains via Stockport and the present-day routing through Manchester with stops at more intermediate stations. On most other journeys, improvements are at least of the order of 30 minutes, in some case, eg Chester to Grimsby, much more.

The improvement in journey times is also particularly noticeable for Wakefield-Banbury, despite the detour via Birmingham. Overall, this may lead to the conclusion that Beeching, Barbara Castle and others were right in their closure policies, particularly those affecting the GC. But if Voyagers can bring Wakefield-Banbury down by around 50 minutes despite travelling 25 miles further, just think what could have been achieved with these units on a GC route upgraded for 125 mph! And with Super-Voyagers the tilting mechanism would have avoided straightening out all those curved island platforms on the London Extension!

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful for the access provided by the British Library to its collection of past issues of *The Railway Magazine* and for the help provided by the staff.



GCR class 2 4-4-0 no.687 at Macclesfield Central.

photo: unknown

Modellers' Corner

by Tony West

Following a recommendation, I've contacted a transfer manufacturer to price up some wagon transfers. These, I'm assured, should be straightforward. The initial requests are for MS&L wagons: D8 5plank, D6 3plank drop side, and D1/2 3plank fixed side. Also a separate sheet for basic GC opens - that is 1,2,3 and 5 plank general merchandise opens, vans and brake vans. If this proves a success then other sheets will follow for other goods stock and then into coaching stock. Should this come to fruition they will be in a rub down format. I would appreciate some feedback on whether MS&L transfers are on anyone's wish list and in what scale.

Just a reminder for all those who asked: etched plates for GC/CLC cattle wagons are now available from **Quinton Road Models** in 7mm scale...and possibly in 4mm if you ask nicely!

One project that I've been seriously considering is a couple of D54 refrigerator vans - not the more well known 1905 vans in their distinctive livery but the earlier 1902 built type that were based on the D12 body and frames. Indeed this looks to be a very doable venture using the **JLTRT** resin bodies. However there is one problem - there appears to be no record of the livery of these vans, let alone any photos that I've seen so far. Logic says that they must have worn some form of livery confirming their usage if only in the same way that the insulated vans carried a white circle. Any information would be most gratefully received.

S&T Wagon Works still have some 0 gauge D1T5 OCT kits in stock. When these are sold they will not be repeated.

The Reading 0 Gauge trade show is on Dec 5th at the Riverside Leisure Centre and I will be there aiding and abetting David Howes with the Quinton Road Models stand and also flying the society flag, so come along and say 'hello' and check out the GC goodies on David's stand.

contact details

Quinton Road Models, David Howes, *Chyanbre*, Hill Park Road, Polyphant, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 7PT.

website: www.quinton-road-models.co.uk

tel: 01566 880157.

Just Like The Real Thing, 26 Whittle Place, Irvine, Ayrshire KA11 4HR.

website: www.justliketherealthing.co.uk

tel. 01294 222988

S&T Wagon Works. Simon Spare, 82 Clifton Way, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 0UZ.

Examples can be seen on the Quinton Road Models website.

tel: 01455 233372.



LNER class C13 4-4-2T. One of a range of RTR models from '00 Works'. All excellent value.



above: A fine display of GCR models on the society's stand at the Gauge O Guild exhibition at Telford in September.

below: A model of a GCR cattle wagon in O gauge by Tony West.

photos: Tony West





above: Freightliner 66617 backing the empty hoppers under the loader for the last train of coal out of Thoresby Colliery on 17th Sept. 2015. The destination was Cottam power station. photo: Tom Merrill
 below: Riviera Trains 47815 'Great Western', on hire to GBRf, with a single hopper wagon modified for biomass as the 13:30 WHDavis & Son, Shirebrook to Doncaster Down Decoy Yard. The train is approaching Dinnington Jn on the South Yorkshire Joint line on 29th Oct. 2015. photo: Bob Gellatly



On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

Now that the old Woodhead tunnels have now been sealed the former narrow gauge rolling stock used on the tunnel railway have been donated by the National Grid to the Moseley Railway Trust in Staffordshire. These include the last locomotive to operate in Woodhead Tunnel, AK 46, along with seven wagons and a man-riding vehicle. Altogether there are four tunnel locomotives at the Moseley Industrial Museum. It is good to know that a small piece of the Woodhead Tunnel operation has been preserved.

On Tuesday 17th September the ending of an important era in GC operations took place with the final working from Thoresby Colliery. Details are as follows; the 21 empty HHA mgr wagons which had been stabled overnight at Thoresby Colliery Junction from Cottam were hauled by 66617 at 13:51 arriving at the loading bunker at 14:00. The train then departed at 15:40 running as 6B36 to Cottam Power Station, leaving the former LD & EC route at Shirebrook at 17:27, the last coal train to use the LD & EC. Train 6B36 arrived at Cottam at 18:21 and after the wagons had been discharged the empties departed at 20:17 to York Yard South.

This of course was the final coal train to operate from a UK colliery that was connected to the GC and its branches. Apart from movements of opencast coal to the cement works at Hope and Pennyfford, and anthracite from South Wales to Immingham, the only other domestic UK coal movement over the GC is the working from the reclaimed colliery tips at Rossington to Cottam. Although loaded coal traffic along the LD&EC has now finished, on Monday and Tuesday 28/29th September, two empty trains of coal hoppers were worked from York for storage at Thoresby Colliery Sidings. 66506 worked the train on the Tuesday arriving at 11:28 and returning light loco at 11:40 to Leeds.

A further working to Thoresby Colliery Jn took place on the 7th October when a track machine from Doncaster arrived returning back at 12:33.

Some good news to report on coal movements is the commencement of a new flow from Immingham to Fiddlers Ferry Power Station which began on the 6th October. The daily train uses the CLC route via Northwich bringing a welcome return of coal traffic to this route. This is the first trans Pennine coal flow apart from occasional short term specials and diversions for almost 30 years! The first train which left Immingham at 05:43 was hauled by 66617, ironically the same loco which worked the final train from Thoresby Colliery.

Sunday 27th Sept. saw a day excursion run from Barnsley to Blackpool and return via Penistone formed by dmu 155342. Sunday 25th Oct. saw the introduction of the new Chiltern Lines service between Oxford Parkway and Marylebone with the first train departing at 07:49. This new service runs via the new chord at Bicester then onto the GW route south to Ashendon Junction then over the GC/GW Joint to Marylebone. The full service began on Monday 26th October and there were some delays during the day due to leaf fall problems.

On Sunday 1st Nov. a steam hauled railtour starting and finishing at Preston was worked by 'Black Fives' 44871 and 45407. It traversed sections of the GC running via Ashburys, Romiley, Barnsley and over the Penistone branch, the second steam hauled working over the branch this year.

Although the decline in coal and steel traffic has had an adverse effect on freight movements over GC lines, the CLC route via Northwich has actually seen an increase in freight traffic this year with waste trains from the Manchester terminals to Runcorn, new biomass traffic from Liverpool to Drax and a new coal flow from Immingham to Fiddlers Ferry. This in addition to the aggregate traffic from the Peak District quarries to various terminals in the North West.

*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*

Exploring the London Extension

by Robert Barker

For some years now, the London Branch has organised a Summer outing to view the remains of the London Extension as far North as Nottingham, and some of the other "lost" lines which once crossed it. Most of the more obvious sites have now been visited, and the 2015 trip was very much devoted to filling the gaps left by previous expeditions. We met our minibus at Bletchley station on July 25th and drove straight down the A5, through Stony Stratford, where just possibly a nonagenarian might keep narrow gauge steam trams within living memory, to Towcester. Here the site of the Stratford upon Avon & Midland Junction Railway station is clearly identifiable - as a branch of Tesco.

We crossed the West Coast Main Line at Weedon, a village dominated since 1802 by the former Royal Ordnance Depot, situated on the Grand Junction Canal so munitions could be moved in large quantities in the event of an invasion. When the London & Birmingham Railway was projected, it was routed through Weedon for the same reason. British Railways closed the passenger station in 1958, about the time the War Department removed the two Ruston & Hornsby diesel shunters from its internal rail system. The Depot has been "sold off" and the buildings survive as a series of workshops and warehouses.

Our next point of interest was Flecknoe station on the LN&WR branch from Weedon to Leamington Spa. The trackbed and railway cottages survive, but there was little else to see, not even a village. Closure came as early as 1952. At last we met the Great Central at the remote hamlet of Wolfhampcote, where it crossed over the Weedon-Leamington Spa line and the Oxford Canal in quick succession. On the abutment of the demolished canal underbridge was the faded graffiti "Pink Floyd". Wolfhampcote church was closed and redundant, and we didn't meet a soul, though some pigs in a pen seemed glad of our company. As the minibus left Wolfhampcote, we saw across a field, a typical GCR engineering brick bridge of three arches.

Nobody opted for pork at our lunch venue, the Saracen's Head at Daventry, built in the 18th/19th century as an assembly room, and now a Wetherspoon pub. There was plenty of time for conversation, some about the GC, some not, and some about our unavoidably absent friend Richard Graham. Lunch over, we headed for our main objective for the afternoon, the north portal of Catesby Tunnel. This involved walking along a footpath through the beautifully landscaped, and very private grounds of Catesby House, infamous for the part it played in the Gunpowder Plot of November 5th 1605. Catesby tunnel had a reputation for being "wet", and one or two of us brought our wellies, though thanks to a spell of dry weather they were not needed.

The portal brickwork looked in good condition, though in need of repointing, and a huge stone slab over the arch bore the date 1897. It would see trains for just 68 years, and 49 more have passed since the last one ran. The tunnel was barred and gated, but it was possible to see a pinpoint of light at the south end. I am still unsure how this is possible. Published gradient profiles show the line falling southwards at 1 in 176, or 30 feet in a mile, so according to my back of an envelope calculations it should fall over 50 feet in the 2,997 yard tunnel, surely greater than its height. A couple of lumps of coal found by the tunnel mouth led to a learned discussion as to whether they had fallen from the tender of a V2 on the "Master Cutler" or a 9F on a "Runner". The Forensics Dept. were undecided.

As the minibus left Catesby on the road to Helmdon, we passed close to one of the tunnel airshafts. Nothing is left at Charwelton but the alignment of the trackbed in the landscape, and so we came to Woodford Halse. This was the venue for our 2014 trip, but we managed to find something new to see from the road which runs over both the CG and S&MJ routes south of the station. A shepherd holding a crook led his flock along the GC trackbed as his forebears might have done before the railway was built, while in the S&MJ cutting was the unlikely vision of a mule.

We had a glimpse of the nine arch Helmdon viaduct which carried the GC over the S&MJ route, and what was once Helmdon for Sulgrave station, where the goods shed is now the depot for Jeff's Coaches. In Brackley we resisted the temptation to linger at Brackley Central station, now also devoted to things which run on rubber wheels, and a beer festival in full swing in Brackley Park, then crossed the GC for the last time north of Finmere, just yards away from the proposed route of HS2.

Our final stops were on the meandering LN&WR branch from Verney Junction to Banbury. It was hard to imagine the station and level crossing at Fulwell & Westbury, and even harder to visualise the Derby lightweight single units used in a brave but futile attempt to make the line pay. The trackbed was firmly marked "Private Land". At Buckingham, the largest intermediate station, the railway buildings have vanished and Nature is reclaiming the platform edges, while the goods yard has become a car park.

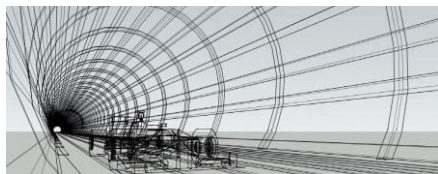
Our thanks are due to Richard Butler for organising the day, to Bedford YMCA for providing their minibus along with Joe the friendly volunteer driver, and the Good Lord Above for a beautiful July day between two very wet ones.



The north portal of Catesby Tunnel.

photo: Robert Barker

A future for Catesby tunnel?



The motorsport press has announced that Aero Research Partners have acquired the lease of the 2,740m Catesby tunnel and the approaches and station yard at the southern end. They plan to turn the tunnel into a test facility for aerodynamic design for the motor industry. There will be automated turntables

at each end for quick turnaround and return testing. The only other similar facility in the world is at Laurel Hill tunnel in Pennsylvania USA, which is a disused turnpike tunnel.

Margaret Sanders (nee Wild) remembers

by Paul White

I recently had the pleasure of visiting a very interesting lady - 77 year old Margaret Sanders, the daughter of Mr Frank Wild who was station master at Dunford Bridge when the new Woodhead Tunnel opened on 3rd June 1954. He had been station master there since August 1951 but moved on shortly after the new tunnel opened to Timperley. His subsequent career took him to such varied locations as Hindlow, Millers Dale, Peak Forest, and on that station's closure to Buxton where he retired as Deputy Station Master.

Mrs Sanders told me that the tunnel opening caused great excitement locally, and she was deputed to ask Mr Bowman, the headteacher of Penistone Grammar School to give the local children the day off so that they could attend the opening ceremonies - and he agreed!

Mrs Sanders told me that Dunford people, including the tunnel workers would visit Manchester for a night out. Passengers for Dunford were directed to take the seats in the front of the train due to the shortness of the original station's platforms, with that part of the train being isolated from the rest by means of a locked corridor door. This arrangement worked well until one night, returning from Manchester with her father, the train pulled up in the wrong position, and then pulled away with the Dunford contingent still aboard. Mr Wild took it upon himself to pull the communication cord, and the train was brought to a halt at Dunford East. He then had the job of shepherding the passengers back along the line to Dunford Station in the dark, something that would be severely frowned upon in our more safety-conscious days.

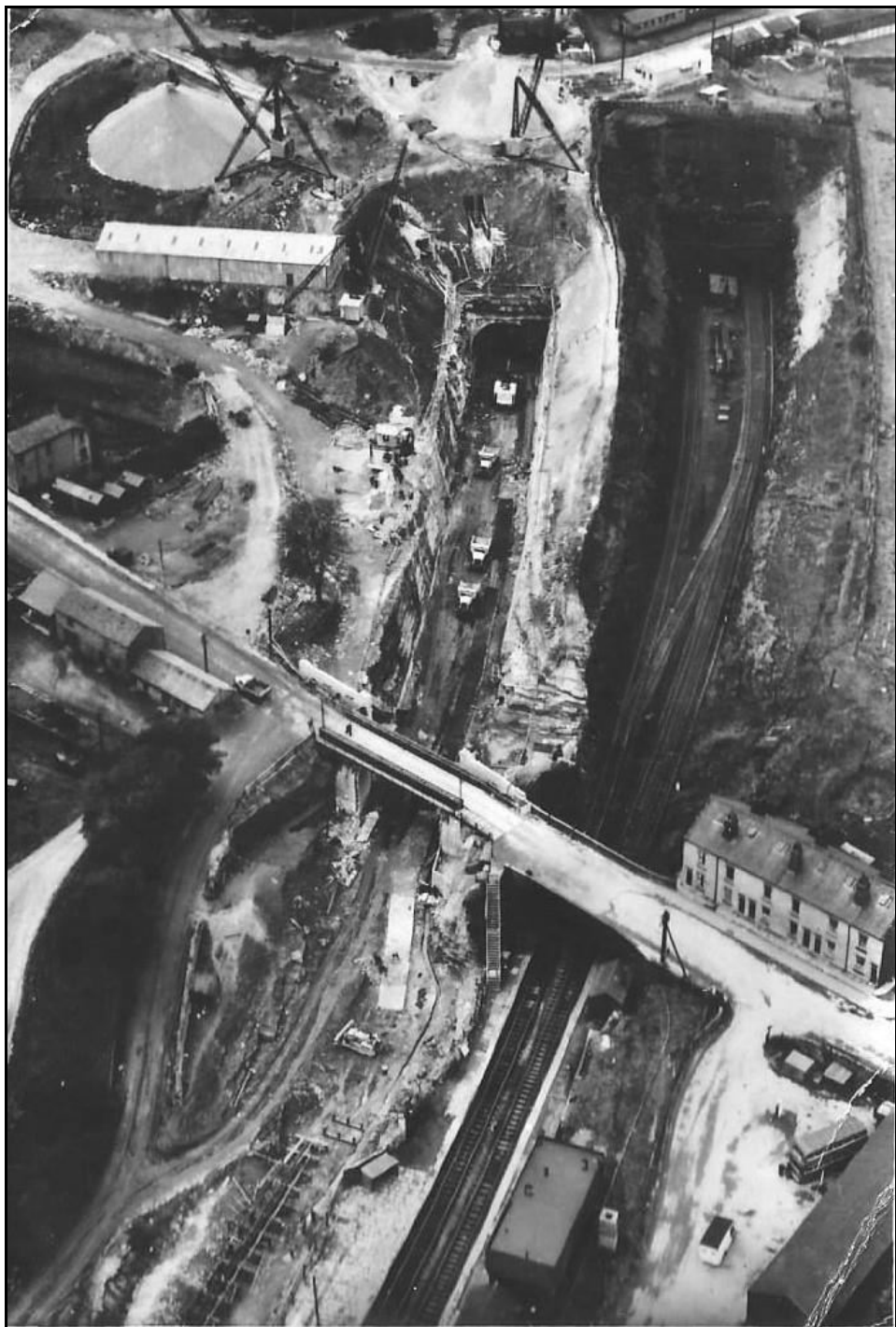
There was considerable excitement on the day of the formal opening, with the presence of many important figures and none more important than the Right Honourable Mr Alan Lennox Boyd, the then Minister of Transport, who famously said in his speech: "This is an event of immense significance in the history of Britain's railways...". I wonder what he would make of the present scene?

After the opening ceremony at Woodhead, the official party was taken on the train through the tunnel. The train made several more "shuttle" journeys through the tunnel from Dunford to Woodhead and back carrying members of the public, and Mrs Sanders was on the first train. The opening marked a "first" in Mrs Sanders' life - her first drink in a pub, the long-closed Stanhope Arms, which as you may imagine was very busy on the opening day.

When the family moved away to Altrincham in 1954, Margaret continued her studies at Penistone Grammar School rather than change schools at a crucial time. This involved a very early start and a train to Oxford Road, on to Piccadilly and on again to Penistone via Woodhead. In 1955 Margaret won a place at Oxford University to take a degree in Geography.

Many years later, Margaret was to travel to Sheffield again as part of a course in planning; she worked for Tameside and High Peak Planning departments. The journey took place in winter via the Hope Valley line for by this time Woodhead had lost its passenger service. After a day of snow, the Hope Valley line was blocked, so the Manchester service was re-routed via Woodhead. Mrs Sanders approached the guard and asked him if it would be possible to stop the train at Dinting for Glossop. The guard replied that the train would proceed straight to Piccadilly.

Undaunted, she replied, "I know the train has to slow right down as it approaches Dinting Viaduct. I shall position myself at the door, and I am sure you will do the right thing". And he did, and the Glossop contingent were able to make their short way home through the winter weather.



An aerial view of the new tunnel construction at Dunford Bridge. photo: Margaret Sanders collection

"Disgraceful Conduct"

A report from The Crowle Advertiser - Saturday August 8th 1891.

Submitted by Bryan Longbone

What follows is a copied out account (with some words inserted where bits were missing due to torn corners etc) of a newspaper report of an incident of exposure on an MS&L train in 1891.

Joseph Fawcett, brewer's traveller of Retford, was charged with committing a breach of railway bye-laws at Stainforth and further with behaving indecently on the 1st ult. Mr Harper, solicitor to the M.S.&L.Railway Company, prosecuted, and Mr Hall defended. The case excited a considerable amount of interest.

The young lady who laid the charge against the defendant is Miss Isabel Jobson, daughter of a tradesman in a very good position in Gateshead. She was dressed in black, and though apparently in delicate health, gave her evidence clearly and consistently. Once during the examination she nearly fainted and had to be supplied with a glass of water. The defendant, who occupied a seat behind Mr Hall, is a most respectable looking man, and is in a good position, being related by marriage to Mr J. H. Hewitt, brewer, Retford, and manager for the firm.

Miss Isabel Jobson (single), aged 22, who lives at 19 Kingsbro' Terrace, High Street, Gateshead, said on July 1st she was returning from Grimsby, and left at 3.30pm. A lady travelled with her as far as Brocklesby, and then she travelled alone as far as Gunness when two girls and a boy got into the compartment, followed by the defendant. She was sitting against the door, facing forward and had a basket of flowers on the seat opposite. The defendant sat next to the flowers. He asked if she had been to some flower show and she answered "No". She said "Do you think they look pretty?" and he answered "Yes". He began to fidget about his overcoat, and then produced a newspaper. He got nearer to the flowers and as she was afraid he would damage them, she removed them to the seat next to her. The defendant then got into the space opposite her where the flowers had been.

She noticed that he was very uneasy and fidgeted a good deal. He then put the newspaper in front of him. His right hand was under the newspaper, and he was doing something. Thinking he had forgotten to adjust his clothes, she turned her head away. She did not look at him for a long time after that, but before getting to Stainforth she noticed that he was looking intently at her and she saw then that his person was exposed. She looked round for the cord to communicate with the guard but found that the train was stopping anyway. She called for the porter at the station (Stainforth) and drew his attention to the defendant, and said she wished to have him removed which he was. She did not remember that the defendant said anything. His dress seemed all right when he got into the carriage. When the train arrived at Doncaster they all went into the station master's office, and she stated her charge against the defendant. The station master said "was she not aware of the nature of the case?- It was a serious charge, and wherever they threw dirt it would stick."

When cross-examined by Mr Hall, Miss Jobson said "My health was not very good, and I had been visiting some friends. The children were seated at the other end of the compartment. When charged, the defendant did not say that the accusation was false or protested his innocence. He did not say that unknowingly his buttons were undone. I did not notice that he had a large quantity of money in his pockets when I noticed the impropriety. The defendant still sat with his person exposed until the train pulled up and I shouted for the porter."

Charles Needham, porter, Stainforth, said "On July 1st, the train from Grimsby arrived at 5.10pm, when a lady put her head out of the window and shouted "Porter!". He went and found a man with his person exposed. He opened the door

and the defendant was seated opposite the lady. She said "He was a disgrace," and asked the witness to remove him. As the witness removed him to another carriage he buttoned his trousers up. The defendant did not say anything. I gave this account to the station master on the 2nd of July.

Several other witnesses pro and con gave evidence. The chairman said with respect to the charge of exposing the person, the Bench had come to the conclusion that the offence was committed, and it was a decidedly bad and disgusting offence, but taking into consideration the witnesses to the defendant's character and that he had hitherto borne a respectable character, and that he was a married man, they did not intend to send him to prison, but they would put on a fine which they thought, for a person in his position, was not too heavy. He would be fined £10 and costs for the first offence, and for breach of the Company's bye-laws he would be fined £2 and costs."

£10 for 1891, using www.measuringworth.com website, gives for income about £4,000 and for prices about £900. As I have said before, over a long period of time, the prices of goods have got cheaper as incomes have increased. So the equivalent of a few thousand pounds to this man was not a small sum to pay for such a public urge.

Consulting the nearest WTT I have to this report (July 1899) the above-noted passenger train ran from Cleethorpes, dep. 3.00pm and arrived Penistone 6.54pm. It was nearly all-stops through North Lincolnshire to Penistone, for connections to Manchester. It appears to make a mighty long time to get there, but all station stops as said, but in addition a speed limit of 25 mph from Thorne Jct. through to Wrawby Jct was in force at or

soon after this time. The Guinness & Burringham station stop was at 4.36pm and that for Stainforth & Hatfield at 5.05pm. This service from Cleethorpes to Penistone lasted into early BR days, leaving from varying points, New Holland, Cleethorpes and latterly Barnetby.

When I first saw this account in *The Crowle Advertiser*, the local Axholme newspaper (when I was tutoring my Social History class for the WEA at Crowle) I was surprised how modern it appeared. The account of the misdeed would not be out of place in a current tabloid or similar and it also shows that human nature has not changed, today more brazen maybe.

A more general point is that railway incidents of whatever hue were continually written up in any local press, very much so in north. Lincolnshire. Obviously the MSLR was much more of an influence in any community than any railway company of today, with a great deal still to be said of such a period.



Before the quadrupling of tracks associated with the opening of Immingham Dock, Stainforth & Hatfield had two staggered platforms with a level crossing at the west end of the station. This view looking west shows the platform (occupied by the pick-up goods) at which Miss Jobson's train would have stopped.
photo: unknown

Model railway exhibition diary

Some events that may interest our readers

Sat 5th & Sun 6th Dec: Manchester MRC at The Barnes Wallis Building, Altrincham Street, Manchester M1 7JR. www.mmrs.co.uk. (*Features Roy Cropper's 'Woodhead' from Coronation Street!*)

Fri 15th - Sun 17th Jan: London Model Engineering Exhibition at Alexandra Palace, London N22 7AY. www.londonmodelengineering.co.uk

Sat 16th & Sun 17th Jan: Chiltern MRA at The Alban Arena, Civic Centre, St Albans AL1 3AD. www.cmra.org.uk

Sat 30th & Sun 31st Jan: Normanton & Pontefract RMS at New College, Park Lane, Pontefract WF8 4QR. www.nprms.org

Sat 13th Feb: Milton Keynes MRS at Stantonbury Leisure Centre, Milton Keynes MK14 6BN. www.mkmrs.org.uk

Sat 20th Feb: Risborough & District MRC at the Community Centre, Stratton Road, Princes Risborough HP27 9AX. www.rdmrc.org.uk

Sat 20th & Sun 21st Feb: Syston MRS at Sileby Community Centre, High Street, Sileby LE12 7RX. www.freewebs.com/systonmrs

Sat 27th & Sun 28th Feb: New Mills & District RM at Chapel-en-le-Frith High School, Long Lane, Chapel-en-le-Frith SK23 0TQ. www.nmdrm.co.uk

Sat 27th & Sun 28th Feb: Lincoln and District MRC at the Lincoln Showground, Lincoln LN2 2NA. www.ladmrc.co.uk

Sun 28th Feb: Ilkeston (Woodside) MRC at Trowell Parish Hall, Stapleford Road, Trowell NG9 3QA. www.ilkestonwoodsidemrc.com

Sat 5th & Sun 6th March: Mansfield St Peter's MRG at St Peter's Church Centre, Mansfield NG18 1AP. www.mansfieldmodelrailway.co.uk

Sat 12th & Sun 13th March: Macclesfield MRG at Tytherington School, Manchester Road, Macclesfield SK10 2EE. <https://sites.google.com/site/macclesfieldmodelrailwaygroup>

The Gainsborough Model Railway, at Florence Terrace, Gainsborough DN21 1BE, is open to the public (1.30pm-6.00pm) on Sun 6th Nov. and Sun 27th & Mon 28th Dec. www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk

The "Dawn Rose"

by Richard Allsopp

The Chesterfield Canal Trust's sailing narrow boat *Dawn Rose* was recently launched at Shireoaks Marina and had its maiden voyage on 25th May, but towed by another boat not a horse! The naming ceremony took place at Shireoaks on 6th June. The boat is new but is built to the same style and dimensions of the many vessels built at Tomlinsons boat yard at West Stockwith on the Trent. No working boats survive on the Chesterfield Canal, the last one being broken up in 1976, but not before a detailed survey was carried out and drawings produced. Recently, after much planning, the drawings again saw the light of day and the timber (oak and larch from Brocklesby Park) was acquired to season. All the boats were of wooden construction and horse drawn. Construction started in 2011 and has taken 4½ years. Tomlinsons original tools were used to build the boat - no power tools were used at any time.

The completed boat is thought to be the only full length, sailing, horse drawn narrow boat in the world, ensuring that the traditions of the canal, once owned by the MS&LR from 1846 and then the GCR, continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

For further information on the project or to become a 'Friend of Dawn Rose' visit www.chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk.



'Leicester South' is a 00 gauge layout belonging to the Shipley Model Railway Society. This scene shows the goods warehouse. The layout is scheduled to appear at Epsom & Ewell on 23rd/24th April and at Tyneside on 12th/13th Nov. 2016.

photo: Derek Shore



The 'Dawn Rose' on the Chesterfield Canal near Shireoaks.

photo: Chesterfield Canal Trust



"A V2 in the Snow" An unidentified BR class V2 2-6-2 is passing Wilford Brick Siding with an up fitted freight in January 1963, probably from York (Dringhouses). It is mid-morning and there has been a light covering of snow. The train has crossed the Trent and is on the gentle climb up to Ruddington. The fireman has just put a shovel on and the engine is going well. The photographer is stood on the opposite side of the tracks to the Wilford Brick Siding signal box. The brick works itself is immediately to the right with the south facing connection to the siding, already out of use, behind the photographer. The NET trams on the newly opened extension to Clifton now use the same alignment as the GC line but at this point the tram tracks steepen to climb up to the level of the former Ruddington Lane overbridge and Ruddington Lane tram stop. (See the photo on page 19 of *Forward 185*.) The site of the brick works is now a trading estate. Only the houses on Brierfield Avenue have survived to the present day.

photo: David Ford

Some recent items from Great Central Railwayana Auctions

The next auctions will take place at Stoneleigh Park on 5th Dec. 2015 and 5th March 2016. See www.gcrauctions.com for further details.



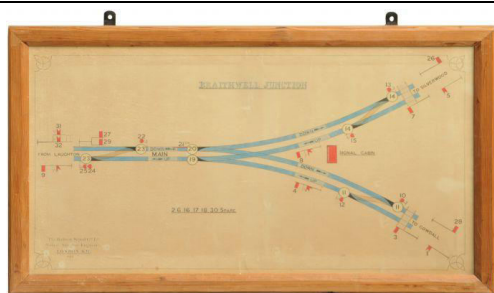
A BR totem from Navigation Road on the ex-MSJ&A line. It is now also a tram stop for Manchester Metrolink. **Sold for £680.**



A BR totem from Appleby on the ex-GCR Scunthorpe-Barnetby line. The station closed in 1967. **Sold for £300.**



A signal box nameboard from Great Missenden on the Met & GC Joint line. **Sold for £820.**



A framed signal box diagram from Braithwell Junction on the Thrybergh-Dinnington line. It was here that the Mid & GC Joint joined the H&B & GC Jnt. Dated 1915 (when opened). **Sold for £580.**



A blue BR enamel direction sign from Gainsborough Central. The former GCR station remains open for a Saturday service only. **Sold for £540.**



A worksplate from Beyer Peacock & Co. at Gorton dated 1907. Carried by GCR class 9L 4-4-2T no.1130 (LNER C14 6130 and BR 67450). **Sold for £740.**



A worksplate from the NBL Co. Queen's Park Works, Glasgow. Works no.22199 dated 1919. Carried by 2-8-0 ROD no.2109 (GWR 3041). **Sold for £400.**



A worksplate from the Neilson Reid & Co. Hyde Park Works, Glasgow. Works no.6233 and dated 1902. Carried by GCR class 9J 0-6-0 no.1050 (LNER J11 6050 and BR 64327). **Sold for £390.**

Great Central Great War Heroes Part 11A: Liverpool, Stockport, Wigan and St Helen's by Ken Grainger

Parts 9 and 10 of 'GC Great War Heroes' honoured the fallen of the joint lines, the Cheshire Lines Committee, the Metropolitan & GC Joint and the Great Western & GC Joint, but they are not exhaustive: the Great Central was also a partner in other joint lines, either directly connected or reached via the CLC, which also gave the Great Central access to outposts which weren't otherwise connected to the main system.

The Cheshire Lines gave the Great Central access to Liverpool and its enormous goods traffic, cartage of which was handled by Thompson, McKay & Co. (TMC), which continued to operate under its own name despite having been wholly owned by the MS&L/Great Central since the 1880s.

Formerly a Clerk with TMC in Liverpool, Private Charles Joseph Duffy was the 41 year old son of Michael and Ann Duffy of Liverpool and husband of Catherine Duffy of 120, Abingdon Road, Walton, Liverpool. He served in the 3rd Battalion, The Kings (Liverpool) Regiment, a training battalion composed of recalled reservists, which never saw active service. The battalion moved to Pembroke Dock in July, 1915 where, in unascertained circumstances, Charles Duffy died on October 5th, 1915. He lies in Pembroke Dock Military Cemetery, Grave C.15. TMC's first Liverpool battle casualty was former Clerk, Rifleman George Munro Comrie, the 28 year old son of James and the late Margaret Comrie, of 20, Gwendoline Street, Liverpool. Serving with the 5th Kings (Liverpool), 6th Brigade, 2nd Division, he was killed in the aftermath of the Battle of Loos, on October 21st, 1915, in the bitter and ultimately fruitless assaults on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and lies in Grave I.G.28 of the Woburn Abbey Cemetery (between Bethune and La Bassee).

Another TMC Liverpool Clerk who also served in the 5th Kings (Liverpool) – by then part of 165th Brigade, 55th (West Lancashire) Division – was Rifleman Ernest Bicknell, the 26 year old son of Charles and Elizabeth Bicknell of Everton and husband of Mary Ellen Bicknell of 9, Buckland Street, St. Michaels, Liverpool. He was killed on July 31st, 1917, the first day of Third Ypres and the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, as 55th Division advanced up the slope of the Frezenberg Ridge and across the valley of the Steenbeek. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Menin Gate Memorial Panel 4 and 6.



Stockport was also served by the CLC, and former TMC Stockport Carter Private John William Hodgkinson of the 10th Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (64th Brigade, 21st Division) died on the fateful first day of the Somme, July 1st, 1916. In the last 5 minutes of the artillery bombardment, 9th and 10th KOYLI crawled out into no-man's land to spearhead 64th Brigade's attack south of La Boisselle. Enfiladed and in the face of heavy fire from Fricourt, they nevertheless pressed on and, joined by 15th Durham Light Infantry and 1st East Yorks., completed the capture of Crucifix trench, Lozenge Wood and Round Wood, then were thrown back in a counter-attack. John Hodgkinson was among the many who did not answer the post-action roll call. Along with so many others, he has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 11C and 12A.

Another formerly with TMC at Stockport was 44 year old Private T. Lawley of the Royal Scots 1st Garrison Battalion, who survived the war only to die on June 1st, 1919, and be laid to rest in Grave 19 of the Famagusta Military Cemetery, Cyprus.

Liverpool though, suffered most of the TMC losses, including 19 year old former Dock Porter Private Thomas Tallon. The son of William and Emily Tallon of 4, Plan Street, Brunswick Road, Liverpool, he was serving with the 2/7th Battalion, Kings (Liverpool)

Regiment, 171st Brigade, 57th (2nd West Lancs.) Division, which didn't arrive in France until February, 1917. He was killed on July 27th, 1917 and lies in the Estaires Communal Cemetery Extension (west of Armentieres), Grave IV.H.2.

Gunner Thomas Frederick Waddington, a former clerk with TMC at Liverpool, was the 20 year old youngest son of Elizabeth and the late Thomas Waddington of 113, Blythswood Street, Liverpool. He died of wounds on August 2nd, 1917, serving with 276th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, part of the 55th (West Lancashire) Divisional artillery at the outset of Third Ypres, in the Battle of Pickem Ridge. He is buried in Mendinghem Military Cemetery, near Poperinghe, Grave III.B.9.

Private Joseph Demellweek, formerly a Carter with TMC in Liverpool, served with the 11th (Lonsdale) Battalion, the Border Regiment. 11th Border was part of 97th Brigade, 32nd Division which had the misfortune to be selected for a night attack at Passchendaele on December 2nd, 1917, some weeks after the Third Ypres offensive had been closed down. With brilliant moonlight negating the coyness of night, the attack was a complete failure and Joseph Demellweek was among the heavy casualties. Having no known grave he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial Panels 85-86.

Sergeant William George Byfield of the 21st Co., Machine Gun Corps (30th Division), formerly with the Goods Dept. in Liverpool, was one of the many who fell to the German *kaisherschlacht* Spring 1918 offensive. He was killed as the British 5th Army was driven back over the Somme Crossings on March 24th, 1918 and is one of over 14,000 with no known graves who are commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, Panels 90-93.

Just what were the circumstances of the death of Bombardier Joseph Henshaw of the 73rd Company, Royal Garrison Artillery is not known. Another formerly with TMC in Liverpool, he died far from home on October 30th, 1918 and lies in the Ahmednagar Government Cemetery in India, Plot DD, Grave 44.

The last TMC Liverpool loss didn't succumb until 8 months after hostilities ceased. Whether by accident or illness, Sapper Edward Hart, the 29 year old son of John and Abbie Hart of 26, Naseby Street, Walton, Liverpool, serving with the Royal Engineers Road Construction Troops (attached to R.T.O. Traffic, No. 1 Area), died on July 18th, 1919. Possibly a victim of the Spanish 'flu epidemic, he lies in the Terlincthun British Cemetery, near Boulogne, Grave XIV.B.16.

Despite being reached via the CLC at Glazebrook, the branches to Wigan Central and St. Helens Central were exclusively Great Central. The first GC casualty from its Lancashire outpost was Private Leonard Dennerley, formerly a Locomotive, Carriage and Wagon Dept. Cleaner at Wigan. He was serving with the 1/5th Manchesters, part of 127th Brigade, 42nd (East Lancashire) Division which landed on Gallipoli from Egypt on 6th May, 1915. He was killed on August 7th, 1915 in the Battle of Krithia Vineyard, an attempt to divert Turkish attentions away from the Suvla Bay landings. Like so very many who died at Gallipoli he has no known grave and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Panels 158-170. Another Gallipoli casualty was Private A. Ackers, formerly a Signaller at Bickershaw and Abram on the Wigan line, serving with the 6th Battalion, Border Regiment. 6th Border was part of 33rd Brigade, 11th (Northern) Division, which sailed for the Dardanelles on July 1st, 1915 then from August 6th was at Suvla Bay. Private Ackers died on November 6th, 1915 but he too has no known grave and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Panel 119-125 or 222-223.



The Helles memorial at Gallipoli.

Private Ackers died on November 6th, 1915 but he too has no known grave and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Panel 119-125 or 222-223.

On the Western front, Rifleman William Burrows, formerly a Locomotive, Carriage and Wagon Dept. Coalman at St. Helens was serving with the 1/5th South Lancs., part of 166th Brigade, 55th (West Lancs.) Division. He was killed on the Somme, in the September 9th, 1916 Battle of Ginchy but has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and face 7A and 7B.

Private John Thomas Slattery of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 12th Brigade, 4th Division, had formerly been a Goods Porter at West Leigh and Bedford, on the Wigan line. He died on October 23rd, 1916 as, in the most desperate conditions, the division attempted to struggle forward through knee-deep mud towards the Le Transloy ridges before Lesbœufs. Along with so many lost on the Somme with no known grave he too is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 3C and 3D.

Another West Leigh and Bedford Goods Porter, Private Frederick Robert Allen, the 20 year old son of Frederick Richard Allen of Birkenhead, served with the 10th Loyal North Lancs. As part of 112th Brigade, 37th Division, 10th Loyal North Lancs. were heavily involved in the Battle of the Ancre, the final large scale British attack of the Somme campaign, in which Frederick Allen was killed on November 15th, 1916. He lies in Grave C.11 of the Frankfurt Trench British Cemetery, Beaumont Hamel.



Frankfurt Trench Cemetery, France.

How 20 year old former Wigan Porter Private Harold Baxendale, the son of James and Emma Baxendale of 98, Clayton Street, Wigan, met his end is not known, it may or may not have been the result of his serving with the 2nd Grenadier Guards who were heavily involved in the Third Ypres offensive. However his death came about, he came home to die on October 20th, 1917 and is buried in Wigan Cemetery where his Memorial, M.C.E.36, is inscribed "Buried near this Spot".



Harold Baxendale's headstone in Wigan Cemetery.

Private Lancelot Bishop of the 2/7th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 182nd Brigade, 61st (2nd South Midland) Division had been a Goods Porter at Ashton-in-Makerfield on the St. Helens line. 61st Division had been in reserve for the November, 1917 Cambrai attack, but Lancelot Bishop was killed on December 5th, 1917 as the division fought to repel German counter attacks around La Vacquerie. Yet another with no known grave he is commemorated on Panel 3 of the Cambrai Memorial.

Whether from illness or injury, Gunner F. Forster of the 379th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery and formerly with the GC's Engineering Dept. at St. Helens, died after the signing of the Armistice, on November 23rd, 1918. He lies in Grave S.II.MM.16 of the St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen. Still later was Sapper William Godfrey Skelton of the Royal Engineers' Railway Operating Division, formerly with the Traffic Department at Golborne, on the St. Helens line. The 27 year old

Wicklow born son of William and Catherine Skelton of 8, Church Terrace, Bray, he died on March 3rd, 1919. He lies in the now derelict Old Connaught Burial Ground, Dublin, at the nearest corner of the church ruin.

A Central Station for Sheffield and the City and Suburban Railway **by Chris Booth**

With the present day lobbying by Sheffield City Council to get the proposed location of the HS2 station moved from Meadowhall into the centre of Sheffield, it is interesting to look back at an earlier scheme to get the railways to provide a city centre station.

Back in the late 1880s there were calls in the Sheffield newspapers for a Central Station to be erected to serve all the railways coming into the city and, prior to receiving a photocopy of a newspaper from the period, I personally had no knowledge of this fact. I have done some research and gleaned the following from newspaper reports of the time.

A Central Station

In February 1889 there was a letter in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* complaining about how the two existing railway stations in Sheffield were a long way from the present businesses, and in the case of the MS&LR's Victoria Station, were at least a cab ride away. The writer went on to explain how he had travelled widely and seen other cities with their stations in convenient areas, such as that in Birmingham, which had involved major engineering works to get it there. (I suspect this was today's New Street Station.)

He went on to suggest that although this was not at present practicable as all the land in the central parts was built over, there were however still several good sites that could be used, such as the bottom of West Street opposite Firth College, or Leopold Street to Holly Street setback to accommodate bus and taxi cab traffic. To access the station if built, the Midland Railway would come underground from Heeley, such as the L&NWR does to access its station in Birmingham, and the MS&LR would come overground via a bridge across the Don valley.

On 10th August 1889 there was a short paragraph in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* stating that a "Mr Joseph Bright proposed to move a resolution at the next Council meeting, that on the consideration of any proposed extension of the present railway accommodation for Sheffield, endeavours should be made to secure a central railway station for all the lines running into the city."

The next mention I find is in the *Evening Telegraph and Star* for 15th August 1890, where there is a sketch map of the proposed Central Station, "prepared at the insistence of Mr Frederick Ward", showing how the Central Station might be placed in the heart of the town to accommodate the MS&LR, the GNR, the LN&WR and the MR. The approach from the MR would have been from the then present Pond Street Goods Yard (roughly where Sheffield Power Signal Box is today), passing beneath Pond Street near to Howard Street, and through a tunnel beneath Rawson's Brewery, then on a viaduct to meet the MS&LR Goods Yard near Nursery Street.

The station would have been close to Snig Hill and elevated on arches similar to Manchester's London Road station. The fault of this would have been that trains from the north along the MR route, would not have been able to access the station without reversal at the MR station, and any trains from Manchester along the MS&LR would have also suffered reversals to carry on towards Darnall, so although the report stated that the proposal had been put to the railway companies, it is doubtful they would have accepted it in this form.

The 18th November 1893 edition of the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* newspaper presented its readers with full particulars of the proposed Central Station. The article explained that there had been growing feeling that Sheffield was a long way behind the times in the matter of railway accommodation, and that even though the town had grown, there had been no increase in railway facilities for almost 25 years. With the council's decision to clear insanitary property between Trippet Lane and Broad Lane, this provided the ideal opportunity to use the area for the new station. It was therefore proposed to erect a station along the same model as that at Birmingham New Street.

Parliamentary powers were applied for on behalf of the scheme to erect a Central Station in Sheffield, due it was said to "the Midland and MS&LR stations being situated at an inconvenient distance from the centre of the population and business." The idea for the station being to unite all the railway companies having running powers for passenger traffic into the City, into one Central Station.

It was proposed that the station would connect with the LD&ECR, the MR and the MS&LR by a branch line to Eckington and then offer the use of the station to those companies. It was said that the scheme would also provide facilities for giving the L&NWR and L&YR connections with Sheffield. The proposals outlined in the 27th November 1893 *Sheffield Independent* newspaper, showed that the station would have been in an area roughly bounded by Trippet Lane, Pinfold Street, Campo Lane, Silver Street, Scotland Street, Hollis Croft, Garden Street, Broad Lane and Bailey Lane. Passenger access would have been from an inclined roadway from Townhead Street, past the entrance to St. James Church and the end of Campo Lane, down to the station frontage. From the booking office there was to be a wide bridge crossing the four sets of tracks, with flights of stairs leading to the outer platforms and to the central island platform. Another booking office was to be at the other end of the bridge between Garden Street and Hollis Croft and there were other proposals for access from off Trippet Lane.

The plans for rail access to the new station now showed that it would be by a connection from the Midland at Havelock Bridge in Heeley, then passing through Bramall Lane where there was to be a station. Trains would then have passed beneath Machon Bank and across Ecclesall Road on a viaduct before diving into a tunnel beneath Division Street, West Street and Trippet Lane, emerging at Bailey Street into the station just beyond. The area today is occupied by Hawley Street and the Pennine Centre. Continuing on from the station, the route would have swung slightly eastwards to connect back to the Midland after which a triangular junction would connect to the MS&LR giving access to Victoria Station and towards Darnall.

There would have been a further triangular junction between Heeley and the Central Station, this heading northwards to a proposed Central Goods Station, to be built just to the north of the Town Hall. This may have been a good idea as it could have dispensed with the multitude of smaller goods depots spread throughout Sheffield. By 1899 the proposals for the Central Station had changed again. *The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* newspaper for Saturday June 3rd ran a full page story about the proposed City and Suburban Railway along with a drawing which inferred that the station frontage would have been situated on Fitzalan Square.



INTERIOR OF PROPOSED
CENTRAL STATION

LADON & PLACE
ENG

The City and Suburban Railway

Proposed by Mr William John Lindley, Civil Engineer, the idea of the City & Suburban Railway was that it would open up areas to the southwest, west and northwest of Sheffield for residential use, that were currently without public transport. It would also allow residents of the City to escape the smoky atmosphere and take in the clean air and extensive scenery of these districts. Mr Lindley went into great detail about how escaping the "dense and smoke laden atmosphere of the commercial portions of Sheffield" would be beneficial to the health of the residents, and if my memories of Sheffield in the 1960s are anything to go by, I can agree with him!

The proposed Suburban Railway would have run from a connection with the proposed line to the Central Station near the Bramall Lane station and would have been on a viaduct through the town until Ecclesall Road was crossed. It would then have run on a "serpentine route of twenty to sixty chain curves" along the valley of the Porter Brook to a station at Endcliffe. Skirting Endcliffe Woods through a tunnel it would pass Nether Green to another station at Fulwood. After this it would run in a north-westerly direction along another valley until it came to a 1 mile long straight tunnel under Brown Hills, Lodge Moor and Fox Hagg. Exiting the tunnel the line would then have crossed the main Sheffield to Manchester road, (today's A57) then skirt along the hillside at Rivelin Rocks with a station at Stannington. Then following the Rivelin Valley almost along the route of today's Rivelin Valley Road, it would next have a station named Malin Bridge and Walkley. A sixty chain curve would then take it towards Langsett Road to the south of Hillsborough Barracks, where it would again enter a tunnel beneath the road. Exiting it would sweep around a curve and cross Penistone Road and the River Don, to gain a triangular connection with the MS&LR just to the north of Neepsend station. Continuing along MS&LR tracks it would then connect again with the proposed line into the Central Station. The total length of the City & Suburban line would have been 10¾ miles.

Although at the time the Council had planned housing estates for the Porter and Rivelin Valleys and this line would have served both, on Monday 10th July 1899, it was reported that the Improvements Committee considered the scheme but did not recommend the council took any action on the matter. On 12th July 1899 the City Council: described Mr. Lindley 's suburban railway project as a "wild cat scheme". In a letter in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* on 29th September 1899 the scheme was described as a "white elephant", also stating that the "cost per mile would be not less than £50,000 at the lowest estimate, but with the addition of land, equipment etc, the end figure would be closer to £1m. To pay 2½% on £1m would require net revenue of £25,000 pa. The cost of working a short length of railway which could only receive revenue from passenger traffic would be high, and the letter asked "taking the working expenses at 60% of gross receipts, what amount would be required to be earned per mile to have net revenue of £25,000 on a capital of £1m?" It went on to state that "Sir Ernest Paget, chairman of the Midland Railway, had said that they would be better off without suburban traffic on their railway in London, the meaning being that it did not pay." The letter went on to say "If it does not pay in London with its millions of population, what of Sheffield with its thousands?"

What Mr Lindley planned to do about the existing MR and MS&LR stations is open to conjecture. The MR station could easily have been closed as the Central Station connected to the MR routes at both ends; however the MS&LR's Victoria station was a different proposition. Closing that would have entailed reversals for all trains between Manchester and London, with the subsequent increase in journey times. The scheme was again put to the General Managers of the MS&LR and Midland Railways, but they refused to have anything to do with it, undoubtedly in the MS&LR's case due to the difficulty in working it, and possibly the costs involved. In the event, although discussions rumbled on in the newspapers, nothing was to come of this grand scheme and with the death of Mr Lindley on 15th December 1907, aged 64 years, the schemes also died.



above: The terminus of the LD&ECR was at Chesterfield (Market Place was added to the name in 1907). The line opened between Chesterfield and Lincoln in 1897 and despite its name it never expanded any further other than the branch to Beighton from Langwith Jn. This view of the frontage on West Bars c.1905 is the subject of a Nadin Series postcard. photo: John Alsop collection

below: A spotless LD&ECR class A 0-6-2T no.26 stands at the head of a train at Chesterfield Market Place in Sept. 1906. It has been bulled up for Royal Train duty. The railway management on the platform are posed for a photograph along with the footplate crew. The driver with his oiling can takes pride of place. photo: John Alsop collection





Chesterfield Market Place closed on 3rd Dec. 1951. Shortly afterwards the premises were taken over by a paint and wallpaper firm as in this painting by the artist David Charlesworth. Demolition came in the late 1960s. (Does anyone know the exact date?) Both pubs survive today - the 'Sun Inn' on the left and the 'Portland Arms' beyond the station, so named in honour of the Duke of Portland when the station opened. The Google street view below was taken in June 2015. The 'Duke of Portland' is now a Wetherspoon pub and the name has been changed to the 'Portland Hotel'. There is still a row of cars parked in the station forecourt!





above: MS&L coach no.946 had not been moved out of the workshop following restoration at GCR(N) at Ruddington, however this close-up view clearly shows the museum standard quality of the paint-work and lining-out applied in October 2015.
photo: GCR Rolling Stock Trust

below: MS&L coach no.1076 at Quainton Road, resplendent in French grey and brown GCR London Extension livery, in September 2015 after restoration by Quainton Railway Society volunteers.
photo: Chris Andrew



GCR rolling stock and the Quintinshill disaster of 1915

by Andrew David

Launch a thousand rifles to face the Ottoman gun! they said.

Bull-head rail 'gainst Mansell wheel disturbs their sleep;

Darkness beckons: what will the dawn bring....

A fit! ... a coupling rends asunder moquette from wood!

Gas!...no respecter of class - or age:

horribil-e visu!

Shadows cross the land.....

Can you hear the echoes..... one hundred years down the line?

Saturday 22nd May 1915 witnessed the UK's worst rail disaster at Quintinshill in Scotland. The crash involved five trains and is believed to have claimed a total of 227 lives – a terrible fire engulfed the wreckage after the collision due to the combination of gas lighting and the wooden construction of the coaches. A troop train carrying soldiers from the Royal Scots Regiment bound for Gallipoli was destroyed in the crash. A swift official enquiry concluded that the cause of the accident was 'human error', and two signalmen were charged with culpable homicide and imprisoned - but later released early following trade union intervention. Collusion between the Caledonian Railway Company, the Judiciary, and the Government showed little accountability for public safety, although the constraints of war time and the consequent need to keep up morale were no doubt contributory factors in the matter.

How, you may be thinking, was a rail crash in Scotland connected with the Great Central Railway? The connection is simple: nine of the six-wheeled coaches in the troop train at Quintinshill were of Great Central (ex-MS&L and ex-LD&EC) stock - the oldest vehicle lost in the accident being a Composite coach no.203A built at Gorton in 1878. These nine vehicles are believed to have been part of a Government requisitioned fleet which was being pressed into service due to war-time rolling-stock shortages, and although all new GCR coaching stock was electrically lit from 1903, this stock was still fitted with gas lighting of either the Pintsch system or Popes Patent Lighting. Gas stored in cylinders under the coaches was ignited on the impact of the collision by hot ash and coal being spewed out from the locomotives, causing an unimaginable explosion and a raging fire, fuelled by the wooden coach bodies.

Six-wheeled carriages evolved from earlier four-wheeled carriages and a fine example of a GCR four-wheeled carriage, GCR no.476, has been restored by the Vintage Carriages Trust, and may be viewed at the Museum of Rail Travel at Ingrow near Keighley.

Non-bogie ex-MS&LR stock continued in use into the Grouping era, and some survived through to Nationalisation - with several examples still in existence to-day. A Third Class five-compartment vehicle (GCR no.373) built at Gorton in 1889 is one of the GCR Rolling Stock Trust vehicles currently in store at Ruddington, with the superstructure flat-packed awaiting restoration by the Trust. Another ex-MS&L coach, no.946, has been restored by the Trust. This coach dates from 1888 and after use as a boiler tubing store and then a game bird 'shooting lodge', was donated by the late Bob Drage and Tony Keeble to the Trust and moved to Ruddington in 2000. Pat Sumner and his team commenced restoration work fourteen years ago and no.946 is now resplendent in 1900 GCR French grey and brown livery, being finished to 'museum standard' since it is intended that it will eventually be placed in the planned 'Main Line' National Railway Museum complex at Leicester North. At the time of writing the coach is due to appear at an Armistice Day Commemorative event at Ruddington on November 11th, when she will be dedicated to the Royal Scots Regiment.

The restoration of coach 946 has come about at the same time as Third Class ex-MS&L 'sister' coach no.1076 which has been restored at Quainton Road in Buckinghamshire by the Quainton Railway Society. Both coaches have also, serendipitously, been restored to life, so to speak, within the year of the Quintinshill anniversary.

Web links

Vintage Carriages Trust at www.vintagecarriagestrust.org/MS&L.htm

GCR Rolling Stock Trust at www.gcr-rollingstocktrust.co.uk/stock.asp

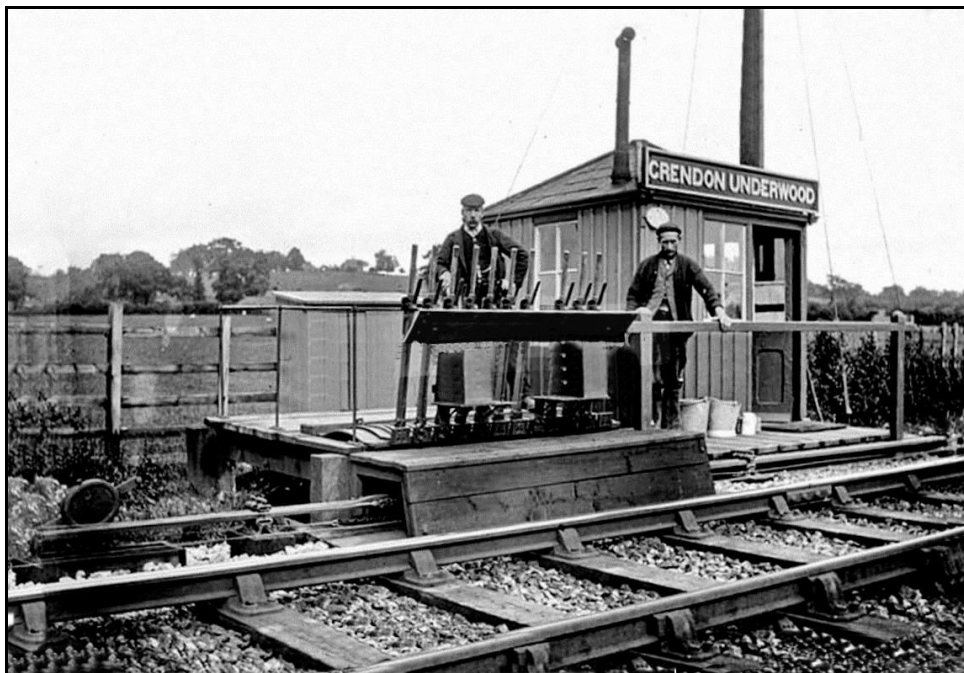
Quainton Railway Society at www.brc-stockbook.co.uk/MSLR_No1076.htm

A more extensive version of this article appeared in Issue 208 (October 2015) of *Heritage Railway* magazine.

Andrew David works as a volunteer for both the GCR Rolling Stock Trust and the Quainton Railway Society. His job has been to restore the undercarriage iron-work and the Mansell wheel centres of the two ex-MS&L coaches.

Caption competition

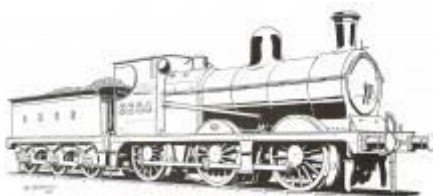
Please send your suggestions to the Editor. No prizes, but the best suggestions will be published in the next issue of *Forward*.



Welcome to the following new members

Mr T. Elson, Langen, Germany.

Mr B. Fletcher, Heysham, Lancs.



Arrivals on the bookshelf

"Newark to Doncaster, featuring Retford" by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith

Published by Middleton Press (www.middletonpress.co.uk), 2015 at £18.95.

ISBN 978 1 908174 78 9. Hardback. 96 pages with 120 b&w photos.

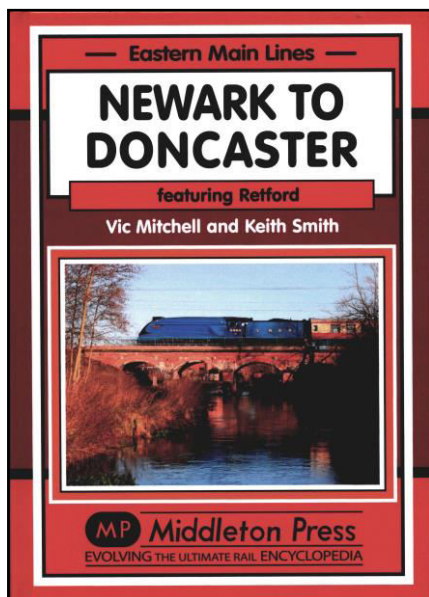
Middleton Press are well known for their prolific output of railway titles, each covering a small section of the national network. The aim, as stated on the front cover, is 'Evolving the Ultimate Rail Encyclopedia'. A worthy if probably unachievable goal. This volume covers the Great Northern main line between Newark and Doncaster and has interest to Great Central aficionados since that system interacted with the GCR at several places along the route. The book is in effect a pictorial record of the line compiled from old postcards together with photographs, mostly in the British Railways era, but with a fair selection from the 1930s. Up-to-date views of the main stations are also included.

The book concentrates mainly on the infrastructure and the pictures of trains and rolling stock are incidental to this. The format is that each station is covered pictorially, south to north, supplemented by large scale OS maps of the area. Two Railway Clearing House maps provide the geographical setting for the area. The history of the line is briefly covered in a half page and the book also contains facsimile timetables from various years.

In all, the book contains 120 photographs, all the stations are covered, the larger ones, Newark, Retford and Doncaster quite comprehensively. Of particular GC interest are Dukeries Junction, Retford and Doncaster. Dukeries Junction is one of those peculiarities of the railway system - an interchange station with no road access, existing solely for the purpose of interchange between two lines, in this case the GN and LD&EC. It is difficult to envisage that the quite substantial station ever generated enough revenue to justify its existence with only one or two trains per day. Retford, on the other hand, saw a lot of GC traffic, its three platforms handling both the ECML traffic and the Sheffield to Lincoln traffic. The flat crossing to the south of the station saw heavy freight traffic and historically the GC traffic had priority due to it being first on the scene. The photograph of this crossing would have you believe that the GC trains had to bump over the unbroken main lines of the GN! The photograph of platform 1 showing the trainspotters sitting on the wall evokes happy memories of that time when you could stand on your bike crossbar and bunk over the wall, saving the cost of a platform ticket. The ladder of the starter signal provided easy access down the other side.

Doncaster is comprehensively covered in photographs from 1904 to 2011 and features sections on 'The Plant', the goods yards and the loco shed. A tantalising reference to the wartime Royal Ordnance Factory at Ranskill offers a sketch map of the rail system but no photographic evidence, for obvious reasons. The factory does not appear on the OS maps of the period for the same reasons.

The photographic reproduction is variable but probably represents the quality of the original material. The captions are brief but usually sufficient to explain the context of the subject although many of the photographs are undated. The maps are useful in helping to understand the layout. There are however several glaring errors in the text.



The caption to the cover photograph would have you believe that streamlined Pacifics were running on the line in the 1920s. One of the photographs of Retford is captioned as the north end of the down platform when it is obviously the south end of the up platform. This makes you wonder what other errors lurk which you haven't spotted.

On the whole, the book achieves what it sets out to do, record pictorially in some detail the fairly short section of the GN route which it covers. The cover price seems a little steep for such a modest volume but it is a hardback. You would need very deep pockets to complete the whole encyclopaedia, there being well over 300 titles in the series listed at the back of the book!

Dave Bell

"Yorkshire Joint Omnibus Committees" by Geoff Kerr

Published by Venture Publications (www.mdsbooks.co.uk), 2014 at £18.
ISBN 978 1 905304 65 3. Softback. 112 pages with 157 photos.

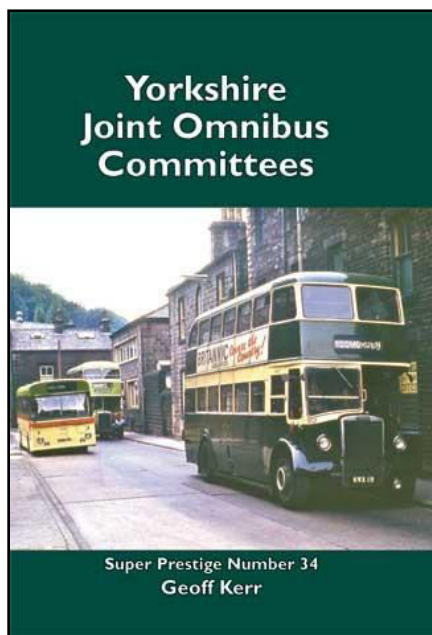
The preserved Roe bodied Leyland PD2 double decker 1156 (3156 WE), formerly operated by the Sheffield Joint Omnibus Committee, featured in *Forward* 169 and 173. As was noted in *Forward* 169, this bus was built in 1958 and formed part of the Sheffield "C" fleet operated on behalf of British Railways before it was transferred into the "B" fleet. This book explains what all of that means as it recounts the history of the joint omnibus operations of the LMS and LNER and of the Sheffield, Halifax, Huddersfield and Todmorden Corporations.

The attraction of this book for the Great Central reader is the fact that the Sheffield "C" services extended to Retford, Gainsborough, Manchester, Doncaster, Huddersfield and Glossop while a "B" service went to Chesterfield. The book explains that the "C" services were railway owned with revenue divided as to 60% to the LMS and 40% to the LNER. These were services beyond 12 miles from the Sheffield city centre. The "B" services operated between 4 and 12 miles from the city centre and the revenue was split as to 50% to the Corporation and 50% to the LMS and LNER. "A" services operated within 4 miles of the city centre and 100% of the revenue went to the Corporation. Bus cover was provided by "A", "B" and "C" fleets on a similar ownership basis. The original LNER buses carried a green and cream livery, but latterly all vehicles carried Sheffield's smart blue and cream. The Sheffield Joint Omnibus Committee effectively lasted from 1929 to 1974.

Venture's books are uniformly excellent with quality text and images and a high level production values. If there is one criticism of this book it is that, unlike most of its companions, it does not contain full fleet lists. The reader can, however, glean that 1156 had at least two sisters, 1160 and 1162 built in 1958 and 1960 respectively, and an ECW bodied half-sister 1152 built in 1957. There is also a delightfully captioned image of Leyland Leopard 3081C on service 48 to Manchester via Woodhead in the late 60s. It is pausing for a refreshment stop at the Dog & Partridge Inn near Flouch. How much more civilised things seem to have been before the advent of motorway services!

This is a highly recommended book.

Andrew West



The Calow and Bond's Main Joint Railway – a follow up

J. Richard Morton

The original article on the line appeared in Forward 184 p4.

One of the many reasons for writing any sort of history is the hope that publication will produce clarification, correction or more information and it gives me immense pleasure to be able to share the two accompanying sketches with GCRS members. They come from John Bennett who found the original Board of Trade signalling diagrams in a box at the National Archives in Kew (Ref MT6/1040/4). At the time, John tells me, he was looking at documents concerning the complex area around Grassmoor colliery but, happily, took the time to sketch the diagrams. He was quite surprised to find them; so was I as there is no indication in the Kew catalogue that any such items are in the collection.

The Calow Colliery diagram shows us that the signal box had nineteen levers (16 working) and controlled a layout of looped screen sidings with separate empty and loaded wagon sidings. What I find most interesting is that there is no indication of trap points – considering that the site is at the top of a steep incline in both directions I fully expected them to be shown. The down outer starter signal is on a post shared with Calow Junction's distant. The inspection report is dated 25th January 1901 although the branch from the junction began operating in November 1899.

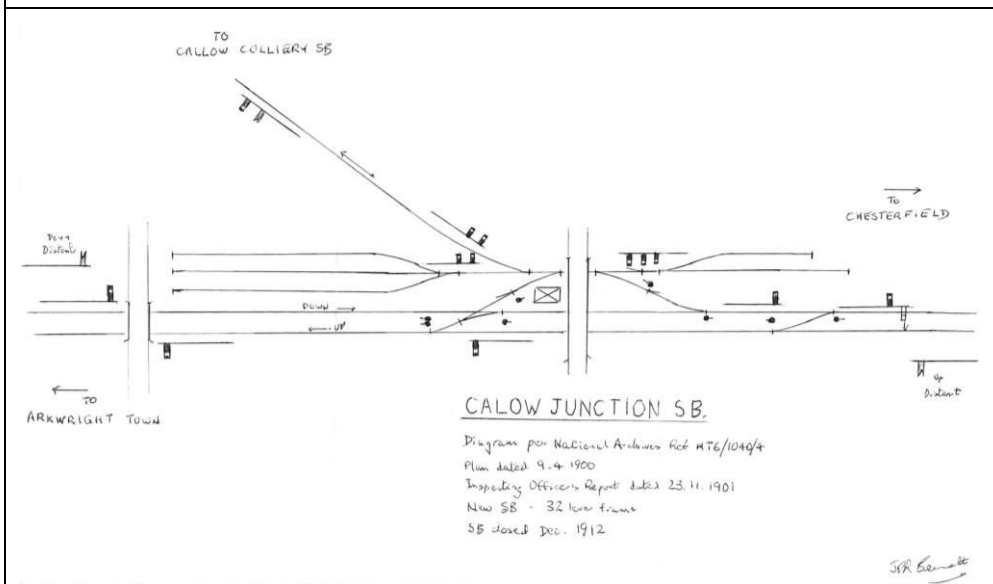
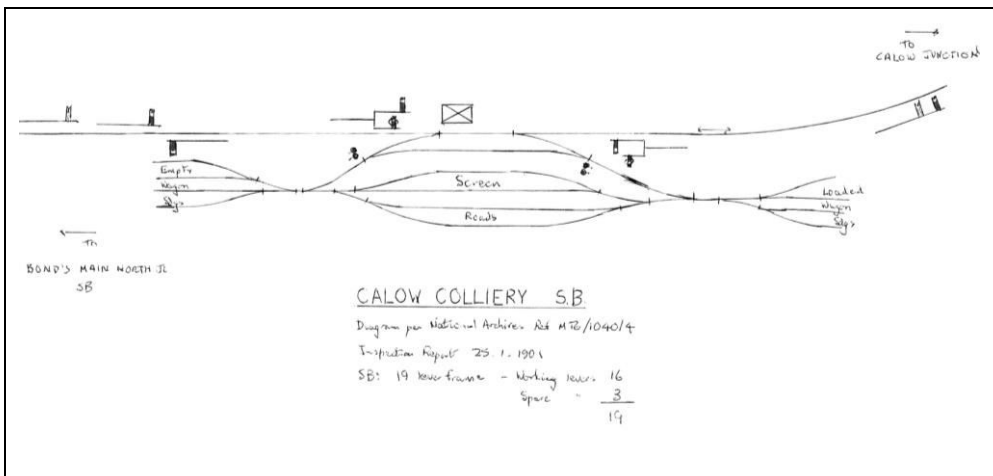
Calow Junction was clearly much more complex than I had ventured to suggest from the evidence on the ground, with sidings off a loop at both the up and down ends of the layout and also two trailing crossovers. There were 32 levers and no record of any of them being spare at the time of the BoT inspector's report (23rd November 1901); the plan dates from 9th April 1900. The joint line down the hill from Calow colliery opened on 6th May 1901. The siting of the signal box hard against Dark Lane bridge might be considered surprising as a constraint on the signalman's vision but the span of the bridge was wide enough to allow the new layout without additional supports or abutments. Bill Taylor has observed that the layout clearly indicates an expectation of much more traffic than was ever realised from the branch.

Also on the plan is the closure date of the signal box, December 1912, and there is nothing to suggest that the layout was ever altered before closure. Thus the GC/Midland closure agreement document of 1914 which detailed a single trailing connection into the down line plus a trap point controlled by a "stage" is unlikely to be accurate with the box lasting right to the end of the colliery branch's life. One is left to wonder precisely what its opening hours were at this point with much reduced traffic to deal with. Of course, by the time the closure document was published the line had already been lifted and, for most purposes, largely forgotten.

The original article also prompted Ron Gee to pose the question (*Forward 185 p37*) as to how Great Central and Midland wagons were dealt with at the collieries. I cannot fully answer his query but I hope that the following extract from the *LNER Appendix to the Rules and Regulations and Working Time Tables* (4th May 1942) goes some way towards an answer:

"Bond's Main Colliery. Books are provided at the Signal Box for the purpose of taking particulars of wagons handed to the Colliery Company and Guards must enter in the books their names, engine numbers, time, train, and particulars of all wagons attached and detached at Bond's Main in accordance with the instructions in this Appendix headed "Number-Taking." One label to be detached from all loaded wagons and handed to the Signalman with the number books."

The *LNER Appendix* was based entirely on the working arrangements that had come down to the company from its pre-Grouping constituents so the above is almost certainly a direct quote from GCR documentation.



From the evidence of working at other Derbyshire collieries (eg Ireland and Hardwick), yards had sidings designated for a particular company's traffic, both loaded and empty. Colliery company staff controlled these yards although railway company number-takers were usually found at large and busy collieries. As an aside the large Grassmoor colliery and associated coking ovens had dealings with the traffic of four companies before 1923 - GC (two branches from north and south), Midland, Great Northern and London & North Western - and five before 1907 when the LD&EC disappeared as an independent company. To some extent this explains the seemingly generous provision of siding accommodation at Grassmoor.

The GCR WTT from 1st July 1907 (no.302) has a note that the inspector at Grassmoor had to wire the inspector at Annesley each working day after 5.20pm (the time at which a GN coal train for Colwick left Grassmoor) with details of wagons present.

It goes without saying, but I will say it anyway, that I am immensely grateful to John for providing us with these diagrams and giving the GCRS permission to publish them here.

The Readers' forum

from Andrew David, Great Missenden, Bucks

Forward 185 p2: Society stands at exhibitions.

I welcome the comments concerning the GCRS presence at exhibitions in the last edition of *Forward*. Such events are a wonderful opportunity to present the Society to a fertile audience. My experience is that one can expect to recruit a new member or two (or three) at a week-end of sitting behind our frontage on the world. Besides that, it is a richly enjoyable experience to spend a day talking 'matters GC' with like-minded folk, or to awaken a passion in others for our wonderful former Railway Company. I have certainly enjoyed very much being involved in presenting our stall at shows in the Buckinghamshire area (*RAILEX* in May and at *RISEX* in February) as well as at the *London Festival of Railway Modelling* at Alexandra Palace, and I am happy to continue keeping up our presence at these shows.

Many (although not all of course) of our members are also modellers and members of model railway clubs or societies and I am sure GCRS members will know which shows they could take the stall to, so why not Just Do It!

There are at present two stalls available (one is housed by myself between exhibitions and is used in the South, and there is another for use in the Midlands and the North). But why not let's have a stand for the South West, one for the North East, one for Wales...? If this needs a 'co-ordinator' to make it happen, then let's recruit one, and I am happy to work with whoever this may be, in promoting our society to a wider public.

One exhibition at which we did not have a presence was at Quorn on the Great Central Railway, which had its first model railway show earlier this year. I am happy to volunteer my services for 2016 – assuming that the organisers would be willing to host us. Helpers for this event would be most welcome. Indeed, both Tony West and I would welcome offers of assistance to help with personing the stall at any of the shows which we currently go to. Please contact myself or Tony or the Editor of *Forward* if you would like to be involved.

Projecting a more professional image for the society by way of our stall has also been raised by members as an issue, and one suggestion for improving our presentation is to invest in fabric pop-up 'boards' such as the GCR Rolling Stock Trust uses, with explanation and visual images of who we are and what we do. The committee will be discussing this and other ways to develop this important work for the Society at the next committee meeting on December 5th, so if any members would like to become involved please contact Brian Slater or any member of the committee with your comments, suggestions and ideas, and particularly offers of help with acting on such comments, suggestions and ideas, prior to December 5th.

It's our Society so let's all be involved in promoting it to a sympathetic public where and when we can best do this!

Query: Plans to redevelop Leicester Central station buildings.

On a recent visit to Leicester I was able to have a good look around the old Central Station, many of the buildings from which are still *in situ* albeit in a gradually worsening state of repair. Talking to people at the site I ascertained that there appears to be a move to redevelop the site. Should the society be involved in advising, cajoling or encouraging the Powers that Be to conserve this fascinating architectural survival of our lost line? If any members have more up-to-date information about these plans, please contact me via the Editor of *Forward*.

Editor's note: For photos of the present day Leicester Central station site, visit Nigel Tout's excellent website at www.gcrleicester.info.

from Fred Hartley, Newark, Notts

Forward 185 p10: Restoration of the GCR 6-wheel carriage no.946.

I was particularly interested to see the update on restoration of the GCR 6-wheel carriage at Ruddington. Since the team must have acquired a close knowledge of Gorton carriage building practices I wonder whether any of them has had a look at the MSJ&A carriage stored in a field near Havenstreet by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. It might be possible to confirm whether it was built at Crewe or at Gorton.



The MSJ&A carriage body at Havenstreet.

photo: Fred Hartley

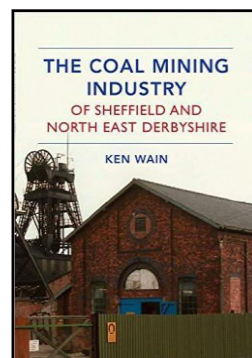
from David Wrottesley, Sheffield

Query: Working of the Birley East colliery branch.

It will be recalled that a few years ago, a series of expensive Sheffield railway picture books was printed by Amberley Publishing of Stroud in Gloucestershire. (*See Forward 169 for reviews - Ed.*) Sadly these books were full of photo caption errors. I am concerned that these problems are still with us, following a recent book I purchased.

The Coal Mining Industry of Sheffield and North East Derbyshire by Ken Wain was published by Amberley Publishing in 2014. I had a brief look inside before I paid £17.99. I was looking forward to any railway-related items. I am afraid that despite Ken Wain's efforts, I was disappointed. I have always been particularly interested in the subject of mining and railways.

The chapter about Birley East Colliery starts "In 1887 the Sheffield Coal Company moved into an area of Woodhouse known as 'Sally Clarks' and sunk a shaft into the Silkstone seam. It was completed by 1888". Dow in *Great Central Vol.1* on p.164 says that the MSL opened the 2¾ mile branch to Birley Colliery in June 1855.



On page 46 of Wain, there is a picture of "Birley" private owner wagons loaded with coal. A considerable number are observed in some five sidings. A main line railway, with four tracks is seen beyond. The caption is "Coal Wagons at Birley East junction awaiting dispatch c.1940 (Alan Rowles)".

The picture is, I am sure, of "Birley" private owner wagons in the exchange sidings, adjacent to the ex-GCR main line at Woodhouse Jn, later known as Woodhouse East Jn. I think we can assume that when the Birley Colliery branch was first built by the MSL, a simple connection was provided by them to make a junction with the main line. This may be described locally as "Birley East Jn". I do not think there was ever a signal box at this location with this name. This was before the operation of the junction points was included in a new signal box called "Woodhouse East Jn". This was possibly when the extensive exchange sidings were built, developing the connection between main line and branch line. The word "East" is crucial and I think it is associated both with the description of the colliery and the fact it was on the east side of Woodhouse station.

The real point of interest is: When did the MSL/GCR/LNER stop moving loaded coal and empties with their train crews and locomotives over this branch to and from the exchange sidings? Was this when ownership of the branch was transferred to the colliery? The haulage of wagons on the branch was being worked by NCB locos when the branch closed in 1950.

I first became aware of these sidings and their connection at Woodhouse, when working in BR(ER) Sheffield Division 1966-1983. They were known as the "Birley Ole".

from Michael J. Reade, Pinner, Middlesex

Forward 185 p21: Zeebrugge nameplate sold at auction.

I paid £2 5s.0d. for a Zeebrugge nameplate back in 1961 and sold it in the late 1960s for £100, which I thought was a substantial profit. Mine did not have a small section of the brass beading at each end of the plate unlike the one illustrated in *Forward*.

Editor's note: Using an historic inflation calculator on the web, £2 5s 0d in 1961 would be worth £46.33 today. Selling at £9,000 would therefore give a profit of about 20,000% or 370% per annum. Quite an investment for 'scrap'!

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	SCHED. No. 11/276 ITEM									
	Loco Nameplate "Zeebrugge" from Engine 62666					1	for	2	5	0
								PAID.		
Doncaster.		On 4.3.61.				To Above.				
Contract No.	3161	Dept.	20	Dist.	2/029	Firm	9999	Description		
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from Keith Parkin, Sheffield

Query: Working of WR coaching stock in Sheffield.

A note in the *Great Northern Railway Society News 204* has led me to a few minutes surprising research. It is suggested that in the early 1950s the 16:55 all stations train from Doncaster to Sheffield was formed of Western Region coaching stock. As I model Conisbrough and thought the only excuse I had for 'foreign' stock was the evening York-Swindon train I was surprised and had to investigate.

It seems that this is indeed correct. Each Sunday there was a rather slow daytime service between Sheffield Victoria and Swansea using alternately one ER and one WR set of four coaches. During the interim week the coaches were employed locally. Sheffield used them on a daily circular diagram to Cleethorpes - out via Retford and return via Doncaster.

I have no carriage working diagrams for the WR at that time so would be very interested to find out how the ER stock was used at Swansea.

Thus alternate weeks a set of WR coaches operated between Sheffield and Cleethorpes. I have never come across any other reference to this and certainly never seen any photographs. Does anyone have or know of any?

I attach the carriage working circuit information for the deployment of the stock from Sheffield.

*BR Carriage Working [Eastern Operating Area (western)] 5th June - 24th Sept 1950.
SET 214*

ER stock BTK(4), TK(8), CK(3½-4), BTK(4) 4vehs (21F, 160T) 132 tons.

Works alternate weeks with WR stock.

WR stock BTKBS(4), TKBS(8), CKBS(3-4), BTKBS(4) 4vehs (18F, 160T) 132 tons

Works daily [except Sunday].

2T (SX) and TK added at Sheffield.

07:30 Sheffield Vic to Cleethorpes arr 10:16 2T (SX) detached at Retford [08:22-08:28].

12:38 Cleethorpes to Doncaster arr 14:52.

16:55 Doncaster to Sheffield Vic arr 17:49. TK detached.

Works as SET 446 on Sunday.

09:20 Sheffield Vic to Swansea arr 17:15.

Works as SET 480 the following Sunday.

10:35 Swansea to Sheffield Vic arr 20:43. BG (WR) added at Swansea, detached Sheffield

The BS suffix on the WR stock codes indicates that they are fitted with 'British Standard' suspended gangways and screw couplings. The ER stock would have 'Pullman' gangways and 'Buckeye' couplings. The two systems could be joined with special adaptors to hold the gangway faceplates together and this would presumably have to be done with the added TK on alternate weeks (though not specified in the book) and possibly with the BG on the return Sunday. The two non-gangwayed thirds added between Sheffield and Retford would be screw coupled to either set.

Rear cover caption

LNER class B3/2 4-6-0 no.6168 *Lord Stuart of Wortley* at Leicester Central in one of the up loops on the east side of the station. It was on this side of the station that the turntable was located and was accessed from the south end of the station via the up loops. No.6168 was built at Gorton to a Robinson design by the GCR in 1920 as the last of the six members of class 9P which was also known as the 'Faringdons', the first of the class being named *Lord Faringdon*. The B3/2 classification was assigned to the four members of the class rebuilt by the LNER with Caprotti valve gear, 6168 being rebuilt in 1929 and withdrawn in 1946.

photo: Colin Walker collection

