Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 153 September 2007

Front cover caption

LNER class J10 0-6-0 no. 5194 (1946 numbering) with a Warrington goods at Skelton Junction. This particular loco was part of a batch of 40 locos built to the existing Parker/Pollitt class 9H design in 1901-02 but with detail changes made by Robinson who had become Locomotive Superintendent in 1900. Meanwhile, Robinson's own class 9J 0-6-0 (LNER class J11) had already started to appear in 1901.

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Contents

Editorial by Bob Gellatly

The age profile of the membership of most railway societies will show that the majority are in retirement. This is particularly true of those societies whose main interest is a pre-grouping railway or one of the Big Four. Heritage lines, with their emphasis on getting out there and doing something practical are able to attract a younger membership.

Those in retirement today have never had it so good in terms of pensions, standard of living and health care. With people living longer this level of provision cannot last and the retirement prospects for those now starting employment will not be as good. With the present affluence of many retired people, those with an interest in railways are spending a lot of money on buying books, models and railwayana. The amount of choice we now have is staggering – a look at the adverts by booksellers and auction houses in the railway press demonstrates that.

Our homes are at bursting point when it comes to finding a home for all our railwayana. Personally, I have boxes of books and magazines stored in the garage because there is no room left in the 'study'. As we get older there needs to come a point when we start to get rid rather than carry on collecting. It is, however, difficult to accept our mortality unless we get a warning shot across the bows in the form of a heart attack or other life-threatening health problem. As a precaution it is a good idea to discuss with our family what we want to happen to our railwayana collections. Remember that our precious possessions can very quickly become someone else's junk when we are gone. Those who have had to deal with parents' estates will understand this.

If we have no immediate family or we are doubtful about our wishes being fulfilled, we should add a codicil to our will specifying the disposal of particular items. I recently heard of a member of a model railway society who promised that he would leave his quite valuable collection of models to the society but died without leaving any written instruction. If we do make such an arrangement it is important that we also let the beneficiary know as well in case there is any dispute with the executor.

The Great Central Railway Society is fortunate in having a membership that that is very generous when it comes to donating articles of GC interest to the Society. A recent example is the commemorative medallion struck for the opening of Nottingham Victoria station on her Majesty's birthday, 24th May 1900. I was surprised to see that the inscription was for Central rather than Victoria Station. However, as explained on page 16 of George Dow's 'Great Central vol.3', this was the original name of the station.

Medallion struck for the opening of Nottingham Central Station in 1900.

As outlined in earlier issues, the Great Central Railway Society is working towards the formation of a Study Centre where all the material and artefacts owned by the Society can be kept secure and available to the public. Members of other societies who have tackled the same problem have generously offered advice from their own experiences. A working party has been set up to consider all the options and make recommendations. This comprises Mark Hambly (see Forward 152 p.36), David Bodicoat (Midlands Area Rep. on the committee) and myself.

If you receive this issue in time, please make an effort to attend the gala at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre at Ruddington that is taking place on Sunday 26th and Monday 27th August. (Please note that Saturday is not an operating day). There will be lots going on. Sunday will see the opening of the 'Country Park Branch' on the miniature railway, a book launch by Dave Allen and the unveiling of a plaque in the signalbox to commerate the donation of signalling equipment by Martin Walker from his father's estate. Monday will see the naming of a locomotive 'John G Robinson CME' – the recipient has yet to be confirmed! On both days there will be two photographic displays (by the GCRS and the NSMEE), model railway displays (possibly John Quick's layout), GC rolling stock display, operation of GC models on the miniature railway and full scale trains to Rushcliffe Halt (diesel and possibly steam). The GCRS will have a publicity stand so please come along and introduce yourself. Finally, I am sure I speak for all GCRS members in offering our condolences to our President, Richard Hardy, on the sad loss of his wife, Gwenda, in July.

Welcome to the following new members

Mr A. Stennett, Woodhall Spa
Mr C.G. Ashworth, Hadfield
Mr A. Hudson, Melton Mowbray
Mr P. Chapman, Grimsby
Mr G.K. Summerfield, Saltdean
Mr T.P. Shaw, Woodhouse, Sheffield
Mr C. Roberts, Joondalup, Western Australia

The Great Central Railway on the Internet

www.gcrsociety.co.uk
This is now the Society's official website. Please note that the URL given in the last issue of Forward, www.gcrs.org.uk, has not been used. If you are a 'surfer' please help to update links in other railway-related web sites by notifying the webmasters of our new URL.

www.bridgingthegap.org.uk
This is the web site of Great Central Railway (Link) Ltd which has been formed to investigate the feasibility of linking the Great Central at Loughborough with Great Central (Nottingham). This will necessitate the reinstatement of bridges over the Grand Union Canal and the Midland main line at Loughborough. The plan includes the construction of a new loco works at Loughborough connected to the link.

http://orion.math.iastate.edu/jdhsmith/term/slindex.htm
Sometimes you come across a web site that makes you wonder if the compiler has a life! J.D.H.Smith of the Dept. of Mathematics at Iowa State University has attempted to list the specifications of all the worlds 'standard' locomotives (ie not including one-offs). You can use the index page to find lists of all GCR loco types and LD&ECR loco types.

www.railwayherald.co.uk
I include this site for those who take an interest in the currect railway scene. You can subscribe to receive a weekly download of 'Railway Herald'. It is full of high quality images and informative copy. There is no cost to the subscriber so how does it generate income? And it comes from Scunthorpe!

Reader's request

from Bill Gee : 'Tandridge', 17 Lawn Way, Felixstowe IP11 7TG

Can any reader supply me with information about the class J11 and class Q4 locomotives which were used in France during World War 1 by the Railway Operating Department of the Royal Engineers?

Can any reader supply me with the dates of opening and closing of the following facilities?
1. Checkerhouse station and W.D. siding.
2. Morton Brickworks Siding (east of Checkerhouse).
3. Rushey Siding.
4. Clarborough Siding.

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from the editorial of the ***Great Eastern Journal***

"As a line Society we have the highest membership and our *Journal* is generally acknowledged to be the best of its kind. We have some able competition out there, so please do your bit to ensure that our *Journal* remains head and shoulders above the rest."

Editor's note : Let us show that 'the able competition' is also up there with the best!

My cousin Arthur

by Edgar Fay

Arthur Frank Bound died on the 5th October 1957, and now, half a century later it may be a fitting time for those who remember him to record their memories of this substantial contributor to the reputation of the Great Central Railway.

His connection with the GCR took its origin in a visit of inspection made in 1899 by my father, Sam Fay, then Superintendent of the Line on the London & South Western Railway, to the United States. He returned impressed by what he had seen, and in particular by the new system of power-assisted signalling which had just been installed at Grand Central Station in New York. He accordingly proposed to install experimental stretches of the new system on parts of the main line from Waterloo to Salisbury. His directors approved, and he looked for a contractor able to do the work. This he found in the shape of a newly formed company named the British Pneumatic Railway Signal Co.. They placed their "outdoor assistant", Arthur Bound, then aged 22, in charge of the work. By the time it was completed my father had moved on to the Great Central, but he had not forgotten the young "outdoor assistant" and when in 1903 it was decided to adopt pneumatic signalling with the widening between Ardwick and Hyde Junction, he recruited him to be the railway's Assistant Signal Superintendent. Three years later the incumbent Signal Superintendent of the GCR, Thomas Wharmby, retired and at the age of 28, Arthur Bound succeeded to that major post, which he retained up to the end of the GCR in 1922.

I had known Arthur since my childhood. He was my first cousin once removed and when, on the not infrequent occasions, I would be sent as a child to visit my grandmother in her retirement cottage in a Hampshire village near Fordingbridge, I would often find Arthur there too as another visitor, for my grandmother was also his aunt. In those days he would take me for walks in that lovely countryside and instruct me in the names of the birds and the wild flowers that we encountered. I remained in touch with him for the rest of his life.

Arthur Frank Bound, age 28, on his appointment to the GCR in 1906.

He had begun that life on 23rd August 1878, the son of a bank manager in Tunbridge Wells. Determined on an engineering career, he went as an apprentice to the London Brighton & South Coast Railway's works at Brighton under R.J.Billinton. After an interval with Vickers, he went to the Pneumatic Signalling Company in 1903, moving to the GCR in the same year. In the GCR he found his niche and his subsequent career saw him mounting steadily in his profession. Upon the amalgamations of January 1923 he went to the newly formed LNER, with the designation of Signal Engineer (Southern Area). In 1925 he became President of the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, a body which he had had a hand in setting up in 1912. In 1929 he was head-hunted by Lord Stamp of the LMS who offered him the post of Chief Signal and Telegraph Engineer to the whole of that line - an offer which he could hardly refuse. He was now unquestionably at the top of his profession, and there he remained until 1944 when he retired.

Down the years I was in intermittent contact with Arthur. I retain scattered memories, such as that of meeting him at Waterloo to go together to my grandmother's funeral, he dressed in tail coat and top hat. Or being taken by him with others to see the musical "No, No, Nanette" just before the war. I think it must have been about 1929 when he moved house from the Manchester area to London, buying a house in the newly developed suburb of Wembley Park. He must have become familiar with the Wembley area a few years earlier when, first

with the GCR and then with the LNER, he would have been involved in the building of a new line and station serving the British Empire Exhibition, being in charge of signalling in that area. His new home was in Wembley Park Drive, close to Wembley Park Station, and there he and his wife lived for the rest of his working life.

In 1931 I also married and set up home. On Arthur's advice I took a flat in a new block opposite the Exhibition Grounds at Wembley. Arthur's house was just round the corner, and he took me under his wing with much needed advice on being a householder. I also recall frequent jaunts at this time around the lanes of Hertfordshire in his car, an Alvis two-seater with an ample "dicky seat" for a young passenger. This car was his pride and joy, but he always licensed it for the summer months only. In the winter he would take down the engine and transmission, give everything a thorough engineer's overhaul and put it together again, all this in his garage, now fitted up as a complete workshop. His wife Edith used to say that he enjoyed his car more in winter than in summer!

Then came the war and with it the bombing of London. By now I was living further along the line near Chorleywood and when the terrors and disturbed nights of the Blitz proved too much for Edith's nerves, I was happy to offer them a refuge at my house. They lived with us for a month or two until the Blitz died down and Hitler turned his attentions to the Russian front. For much of that time Arthur spent his nights on a camp bed in his office at Euston. I remember that on one of his rare nights at Chorleywood the phone rang in the small hours. On the line was an LMS controller with the news that the locomotive hauling the Royal Scot express had fallen into a bomb crater near Berkhamsted. "What can I do about it?" said Arthur and went back to bed.

Arthur's 2nd marriage to Florence took place at Bognor in the early 1950s.

He retired in 1944. At about the same time his wife Edith, who had never completely recovered from her wartime experiences, passed away. Arthur himself was in poor health but after an interval he married again to an acquaintance of long standing. I have a number of mementoes of his wedding but unfortunately no note of the date - the late 40s/early 50s I think.

Arthur and his new wife went to live in Bognor Regis where I used to visit them, comfortably ensconced in their contented retirement, but sadly that was not to last. Arthur had a stroke and although he made a good recovery with devoted care from his new wife, Florence, his health declined and he died in 1957. A great many ex-railwaymen gathered at Bognor for his funeral. He was a kind, helpful, and rather self-effacing man. I owe a good deal to him personally. No doubt there are others still alive who also have memories of him. Let's hear from them.

Editor's note : There have been two recent articles by L.G.Warburton in the 'LMS Journal' (published by Wild Swan) that shed further light on the work of Arthur Bound while employed with the LMS : 'Automatic Train Control on the LMS' in vol.10 (2005) and 'The Organisation of the Signal and Telegraph Departments on the LMS' in vol.15 (2006).

Liverpool memories

by Peter Lang

My story began in July 1957 when I started work as an engine cleaner at Edge Hill. At that time I didn't know much about the Great Central Railway or the Cheshire Lines Committee. As I found out later, at working level, the railways even then were run and referred to by their original company's names, so whilst working from Edge Hill everything was LNW. Once passed out for firing duties, my little world began to expand and I discovered other lines such as the CLC, the Midland, the L&Y, and a line called the Great Central. I couldn't understand why the GC was a part of the LNER and was operating even in North Wales!

I began to take an interest in the vacancy lists which were put up every month advertising positions for footplate staff. Eventually in early 1961 a vacancy was advertised for a Fireman at Speke Junction, which was only about 8 miles from home, so I duly applied and was successful. So I was then declared to be a fully qualified and regular Fireman. Unbeknown to me at that time there was a plan to close a locomotive depot, which although in Liverpool, I had never heard of - that depot was Brunswick. It was then that I became aware of this other railway which ran from Liverpool Central to Manchester Central and Stockport and points east over the Pennines.

Speke Junction and all the surrounding sidings including Garston were there to service the vast amount of coal, amongst other things, which came and went through Garston Docks. There were a considerable number of 350 hp diesel shunting locomotives shedded there and the Dam Bridge Shunting Link comprised 50 drivers who were mainly ex-main line men who for various reasons had come off the main line links. It was one of the first sheds to have diesel shunters before the war and one of the sayings was that there were more miles of track at Speke and Garston than there were at Crewe. The E - section sidings alone had 50 roads which were used to store timber which came off the ships at the three docks. Coal however was the mainstay traffic. This went to Ireland and the Isle of Man. Between 11 pm at night and 7 am in the morning, on the hour every night from Monday to Friday, there was a train of approx. 50 empty coal wagons that left Speke for various destinations across the Pennines to such as Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. Most of these went via Godley Junction or Gowholes and were worked mainly by enginemen from Speke. This then was my introduction to Speke.

Fireman Peter Lang in the cab of an unidentified Caprotti Black Five at Halewood Sidings. *photo : Fred Downey*

Meanwhile on the other, to me still mysterious, railway called the CLC, pretty much similar operations were going on. Brunswick Yard was situated in a very cramped area next to the South Liverpool Docks approximately 2-3 miles north of Garston. As space was very short, the yard could not accommodate many wagons, so the CLC used Halewood Sidings, about 8 miles out from Brunswick, to hold the large number of coal wagons needed to load the ships which used to come into Herculaneum Dock. The trains were moved from Halewood to Brunswick by what were called trip engines which

returned to Halewood with the empty wagons. The actual loading of the ships in the dock was not as quick as at Garston due to the lack of space and was done by a crane which lifted the wagons, swung them around and tipped their contents into the ship's hold. This was quite a laborious process. Originally the CLC intended to build their own docks at Otterspool and actually bought the land but alas, it did not do so, and the only physical result to be seen are the two loops which were put in at Otterspool, which had a lovely signal gantry. One Monday morning, when I was on a coal train which was signalled into the loop, we couldn't see the outlet signal gantry. Instead there were just two new BR type ground dollies and on the ground was the lovely gantry lying there where the chainsaw had done its work. However one of the finials was complete and not too damaged with CLC still plainly visible. As I type these words it is peeping out of my cupboard at me - a little piece of the Cheshire Lines which has survived.

Back to my story - I cannot remember the exact date when Brunswick Shed closed but one thing I do remember is the first Monday when I was rostered with a Brunswick driver on the very first train of the day due out of Liverpool Central at 5.05 am with an LMS class 4 Baltic Tank. For this duty we booked on at the grand time of 3.00 am to prepare the engine and travel down to Central Station. Now this for me was an experience as I had not long been at Speke and did not know anything about the CLC. Anyway my driver was in a similar predicament in reverse. He did not know the route from Speke to Central station, so I guided him from the shed to the CLC at Garston. That morning was quite dark and I remember it did not get light until about 7.30 am and we were all stations to Stockport Tiviot Dale via Glazebrook and Cheadle. Well, I was on a train on a completely strange railway going as I thought quite fast in the dark, when all of a sudden my driver put all the brakes on. I looked out ahead and saw we were just about to pass a red signal. When we stopped, he jumped down and proceeded to the signalbox, where he obviously sorted out the problem with the 'bobby' for when he came back we resumed our journey. What a start to a new era.

When the Brunswick men came to Speke they lost quite a lot of the passenger work, which mostly went to Trafford Park and that was a continual bone of contention right up to and after the closure of Speke Jct. However one job which they brought with them was a real 'hurry up' one and it caused quite a stir amongst the firemen. Some enjoyed it and others were not so keen. It was the 4.52 pm from Liverpool Central which, if I remember rightly, went through to either Hull or Harwich. From Liverpool Central to Manchester Central it was about 37 miles and it was routed over what was known as 'the straight line' because it by-passed Warrington Central and was non-stop all the way, due in Manchester at 5.32 pm! That meant 40 minutes to cover 37miles. The load was 9 coaches, including a dining car, with a Black Five.

Now the CLC main line was built for speed. Although only 37 miles long it had to be fast to survive and as we foreigners soon found out they did not hang about. When you looked ahead from the engine it was virtually dead straight with only a few gentle curves. It wasn't long before someone christened it 'The Racetrack' because Speke men thought the CLC drivers were mad. From Speke Shed you could look across towards Allerton Depot and the CLC ran from left to right in a shallow cutting and whenever the 4.52 pm or the other fast job, the 9.30 am to Hull, was due, all you could see was the continuous exhaust from the engine going at a terrific pace with the sound to match. What a sight it must have been to see it hurtling down from Farnworth towards Sankey. However when you were on the engine it was a sensation that I will never forget. To be on a machine that must have been doing about 80 mph and with some drivers keeping steam on while hurtling downhill towards what looked like a dead end, which in fact was Sankey Station where the track was banked into a gentle right hand bend, could well be a bit disconcerting. Sat on the fireman's seat on the footplate of a Black Five hanging on to the side of the cab was something to remember. When you looked at the top of the boiler, the cab was moving one way and the boiler the other way, and I used to think 'What is keeping this on the rails?' Then I would realise it must be safe because we do this every day. A Black Five with outside cylinders did a lot of oscillating and banging about under those conditions. One driver (I won't mention his name) used to open the regulator wide and take out of his pocket a small piece of wood and jam it in between the regulator and the stop, then he would drive on the reversing screw. A bit nerve-racking if you were not used to it. As we invariably had a clear road all the way, we would soon be slowing down past Trafford Park on the approach to what was called the Bird Cage running up to Manchester Central, and for us journey's end. Another engine

would hook on the other end to take it on up to Guide Bridge where an electric loco would couple on to go on to Sheffield. We used to have what we all thought was the best Black Five ever - it would steam on fresh air and no matter how little fire was in the box, the steam gauge would stay glued on the red mark all day long. That engine was number 5386 (we never used the BR prefix 4.) and it was kept exclusively for the 4.52 pm.

Black Five no.45441 from Speke Jct. passing Halewood Sidings with the 9.30am Liverpool Central – Harwich at 60mph and still gathering speed on the CLC main line. Note the original CLC signal on the right. Can anyone identify the structure to the left of the signal? photo : Peter Lang

On the goods side we used to go from Halewood and sometimes Brunswick to either Guide Bridge or Dewsnap and sometimes to Godley Jct.. One job which we all liked was to book on at 6.00 pm, travel to Halewood and relieve a set of men on the fish empties going back to Grimsby. We would start off with about 6 vans on and pick up some more at Warrington Central then carry on to Trafford Park and go right at Throstle's Nest Jct. travelling via Chorlton Jct., Fallowfield, Hyde Road and then join the GC main line at Fairfield Jct. and up to Dewsnap Sidings. There we would hook off and run around the junction towards Stalybridge, fill the tank and wait in the sidings for the fish train to appear from Sheffield with it's electric loco. I think we were due away about 1.00 am and with about 12 to 20 fish vans it wasn't a bad job. First stop was Warrington Central where we put about 6 or so vans into the goods loop and then it was right away to Liverpool Central. Yes, we used to take the fish vans into the passenger station. After that it was light engine to Speke Jct. and home.

I remember a driver who told me that in the old days, when they were coming back through the tunnels and bridges on the approach to Liverpool Central, they would always give a good few blasts on the whistle to wake up the horse drivers who lived just above the track where the Company's Horse Stables were. Which reminds me of another tale. The approach to Liverpool Central, when you were about a mile or less away from the stop block, went over the LNW line to Wapping and as you were in a tunnel it was tricky to know when to shut off steam. Well, if you can imagine going over a hump back bridge doing about 45 mph, that was the cue for the driver to shut off steam and put the brake nearly full on and we would squeal around the curves and points and come to nice stop just in front of the stop block. That was known as a GN stop. I never did find out why it was so called. There was an old driver whom I remember shouting, whenever we arrived at Halewood Sidings, 'Any for Kings Cross or Somers Town?'. There were quite a few interesting old boys around in those days.

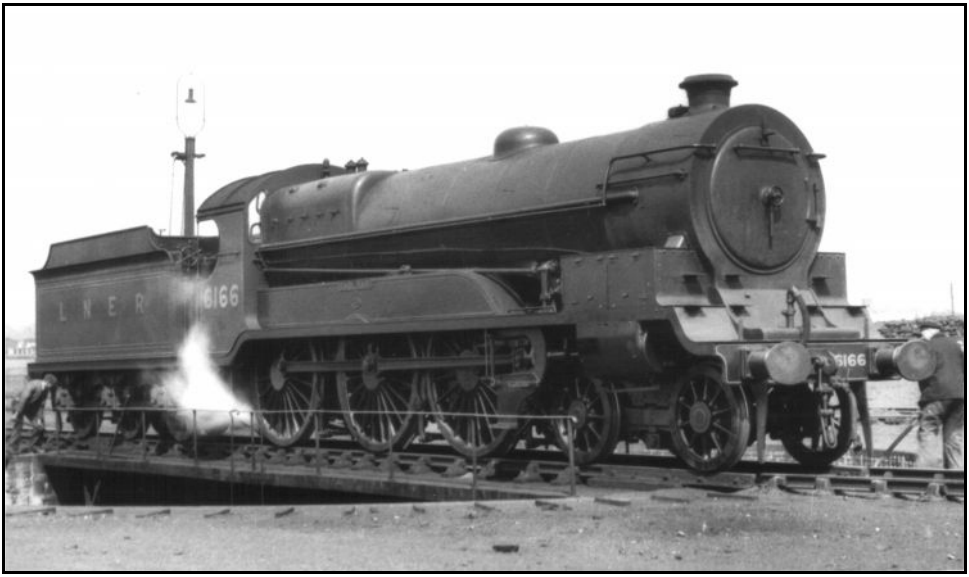
Reading the series of articles 'Along Cheshire Lines' by Ken Grainger in recent issues of *Forward* has brought back a few more memories. As I have mentioned, we had a lot of work to Guide Bridge and sometimes we would take a train of empty oil tanks back to Stanlow via Skelton Jct. and Northwich travelling as far as Mouldsworth where we would turn off to the right and go down the single line to Helsby West Cheshire Jct. thence back into the Shell Complex at Stanlow. This train usually left Guide Bridge between 1 am and 2 am and in the summer time we would be passing through Delamere Forest a couple of hours later. I can still remember the smell of the trees even now. It was really lovely and with just the sound of the engine it was as if we were the only people around, which we were at that time of day. Also on this job we used to back the tanks into the loading terminal and I used to wonder how we could stand in such an area where petrol was being loaded with a 9F steam locomotive. They were happy days. How could I know that years later I would be in the same area loading a Shell Company road tanker!

Recent auction items of GC interest

	China teacup from Nottingham Victoria refreshment rooms.
	GC engineman's cap badge.
	GC & NS Joint ticket from High Lane.

A tale of two 'Faringdons' (LNER class B3)

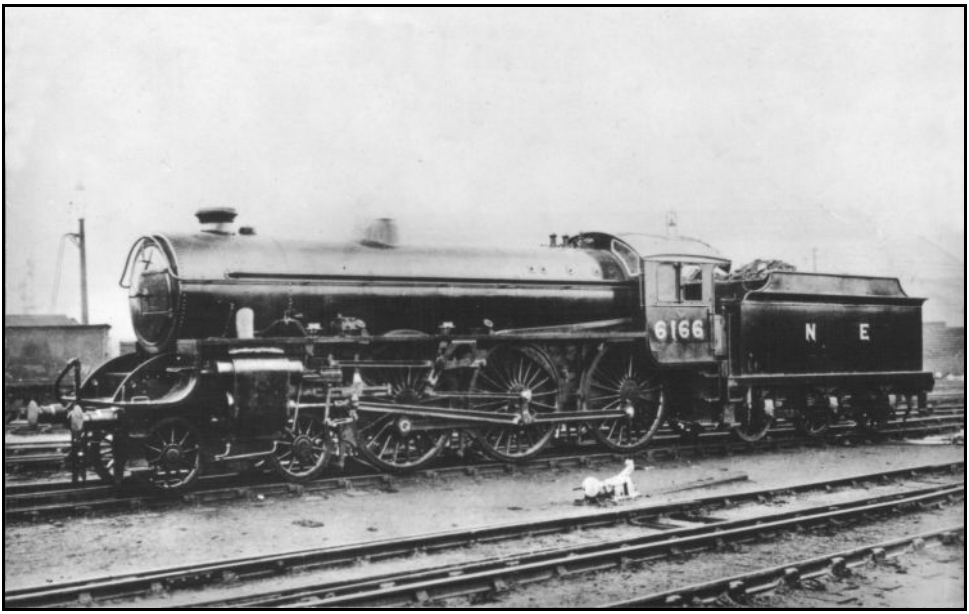
One eagle-eyed reader has spotted that the loco featured on the cover of *Forward* 152 is no.6166 not 6168. Here are photos of 6166 and 6168, both rebuilt with Caprotti valve gear, but 6168 has a side-window cab. In later years the casing over the Caprotti valve gear was removed as in the photo featured on the cover of *Forward* 152. 6166 was the only member of the class to be B1-ised in 1943.



LNER class B3/2 4-6-0 no.6166 *Earl Haig* with cut-away cab. *photo : GCRS Collection*

LNER class B3/2 4-6-0 no.6168 *Lord Stuart of Wortley* with side-window cab. *photo : M.D.England*

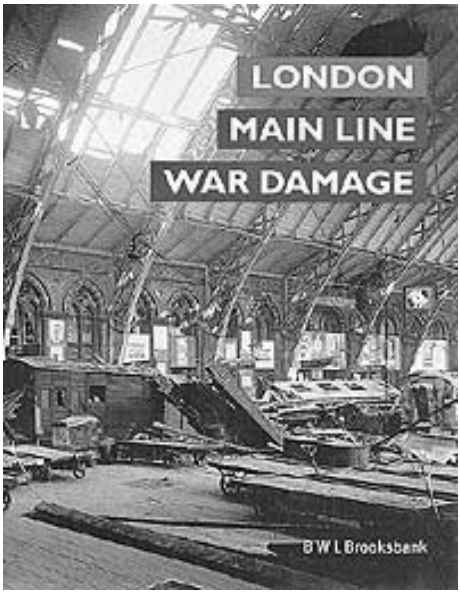
LNER class B3/2 4-6-0 no.6168 *Lord Stuart of Wortley* passing Harrow in 1938 with casing over Caprotti valve gear removed. *photo : C.R.L.Coles*



LNER class B3/3 4-6-0 no.6166 after rebuilding by Thompson in 1943. *photo : GCRS Collection*

Book Reviews

"London Main Line War Damage" by B.W.L.Brooksbank
Published by Capital Transport Publishing, 2007. ISBN 978 1 85414 309 9.
Hard covers, 144 pp A4, 80 photographs, bibliography and index. £19.95.



Ben Brooksbank's earlier books on the East Coast Main Line will be well known to readers, and his latest work continues in the same informative style. Although numerous books have been published on the general subject of the blitz on London, here we have a thorough chronicling of the damage suffered by railways (and railwaymen and passengers) during those dangerous years. The effects of the bombing on the population were severe, nearly 30,000 people being killed in the Greater London Region alone, including many railwaymen in the course of their duties. Often, the nightly toll would be 200 or more.

The author's introduction summarises the steps taken at official level to prepare for enemy action and to combat the tactics employed by the Luftwaffe, as well as how Londoners coped with the inevitable disruption to everyday life, and the steps taken to repair the damage caused by the bombing. But the greater part of the book is taken up by a graphic account of the air raids, first by conventional bombing aircraft from August 1940 to May 1941 (as well as the 'little blitz' in early 1944), and later by unmanned 'flying bombs' and rockets from June 1944 to March 1945.

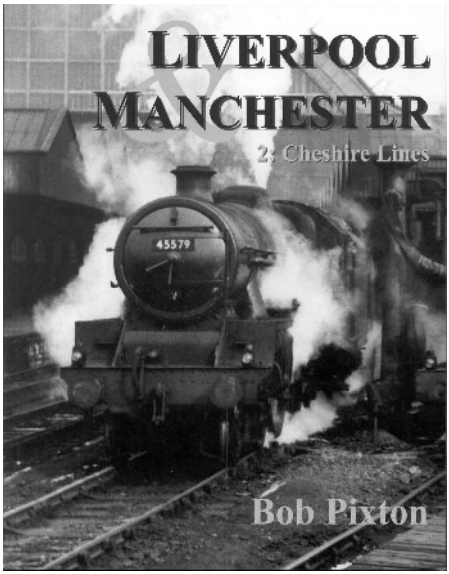
The first occasion on which the LNER suffered damage was on Sunday, 25 August 1940, bombs falling near the lines at Seven Sisters and Cambridge Heath, with the onslaught finally ending when V2 rockets fell near Picketts Lock and Spitalfields on 27 March 1945. One of the most serious incidents occurred at King's Cross on 11 May 1941, when a bomb exploded in the main booking hall, whilst residential Palmers Green suffered a direct hit by a V2 during the evening rush hour on 26 October 1944. With the aircraft generally approaching from the East, it is understandable that the majority of damage to the LNER system was to the Great Eastern network, Stratford and Temple Mills often being the target, but practically every station from King's Cross to Hadley Wood had its share. Marylebone was also out of action for periods in the 1940s, due to tunnel blockages, and Neasden was also damaged on several occasions. One of the worst V2 incidents occurred when a rocket fell directly on to Smithfield market, causing considerable damage to Faringdon Goods depot, and killing 110 people.

The author's research is reflected in the amount of detailed information, each day's activity (and suffering) being recorded - not statistically, but in a very readable fashion. The text is supplemented by a collection of photographs, mostly taken very soon after the action. One can pick out for particular mention those of Bow Junction, with the firemen playing their hoses on the remains of Evershed's Paper Works; what is left of Bush Hill Park station, with two women wondering what to do; panoramic views of Neasden, Finsbury Park and Homsey; and three studies of King's Cross, where the effects of the bomb damage can still be seen today.

The book's coverage, as its title conveys, is not just the LNER but all the railway groups. It will be of interest not only to the serious historian, but to everyone wishing to extend their knowledge of the harrowing events of the period.

Geoffrey Hughes

"Liverpool and Manchester 2 : Cheshire Lines" by Bob Pixton
Published by Kestrel Railway Books, 2007. ISBN 978 1 905505 03 6.
Soft laminated covers, 128 pages 10¾in x 8½in, 230 photographs. £14.95.



This book is part two of a trilogy in which Bob Pixton looks at the railways between Liverpool and Manchester, parts one and three covering the L&NW and L&Y routes respectively. With black-and-white photographs throughout, the book is printed on art paper by Amadeus Press, which is in itself a guarantee of good photographic reproduction. The photographs are virtually all from the steam era, ranging from Pollitt Singles and 4-4-0s to the ubiquitous Black 5, but the pair of Metro-Vick Co-Bos which throbbed at Manchester Central have receded almost as much into history.

We of a Great Central leaning always tend to regard the Cheshire Lines with rather more than just the one third share interest which is strictly speaking all that we are due. This is not least because of the MS&L/GC provision of the CLC's domestic locomotive power and the distinctive MS&L look of the wayside stations along the Liverpool line – hardly surprising since it was Sir Edward Watkin's MS&L which obtained Parliamentary powers for the line to be built.

Bob comments quite rightly that this line is somewhat anomalous in continuing to thrive despite the loss of both its termini, at Liverpool Central and Manchester Central, taking his readers around both stations at either end of a west-to-east survey. At the Liverpool end, good use is made of the late Jim Peden's collection of photographs but, progressing towards Manchester, it has to be said coverage can sometimes become a bit patchy. For example, Bob tells us about the imposing station buildings which still remain at Warrington, the most important intermediate station on the line, but shows us nothing of them, or of the direct line which formerly avoided Warrington, though the omission of the new station of 1981 at Birchwood is no great loss. Of the line's major engineering feature, the bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal at Irlam, there is just one rather distant (but magnificent) view which predates replacement of the original masonry arch approach spans by piers and girders, made necessary by ground settlement. On the other hand, industry along the line is much better covered than is often the case in line surveys and details such as the CLC's distinctive signals are not forgotten.

At £14.95 this book is not expensive and can be recommended as a good introduction to a line deserving of more attention than it generally gets.

Ken Grainger

A one day symposium

'The LNER in Retrospect : A Celebration of the LNER's Achievements through 25 Difficult Years'.

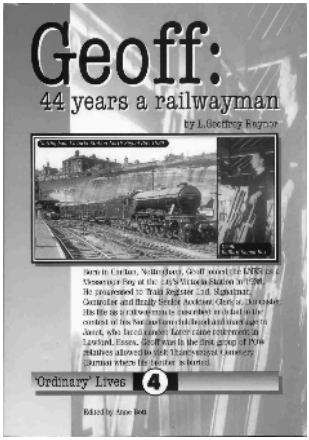
The LNER Study Group will be holding a one day symposium to mark the 60th anniversary of the demise of the LNER. The date will be Saturday 26th April 2008. The venue will be York. More details will be provided in the next issue of Forward.

The railwayman's autobiography

reviews by Bob Gellatly

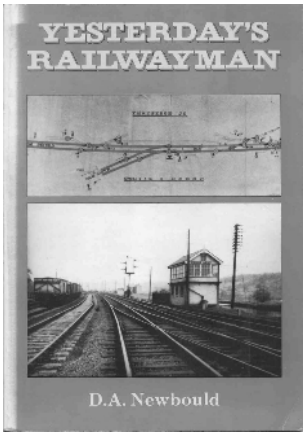
I have recently been lent a copy of the book *Geoff: 44 years a railwayman* by a friend of the author with the suggestion that I might do a review for *Forward*. To make the exercise a little more interesting I have looked through my bookshelf to find other books of the same genre, autobiographies by ex-railwaymen, and have included them in my review. I must admit that this type of book does not rank particularly highly in my estimation. There is no doubt that the writers' experiences are of interest to the railway reader but the inadequacies of literary style can force the reader into a 'I've started so I'll finish' mentality. The mix of railway reminiscence and personal biography can irritate both the railway reader, who is not really interested in where the author and his wife went to on their holidays in 1958, and the general reader, who is mystified by the railway terminology.

"Geoff: 44 Years a Railwayman" by L.Geoffrey Raynor. Published by Plowright Press, 2000, ISBN 0 951960 6 8. Softback 199 pages.



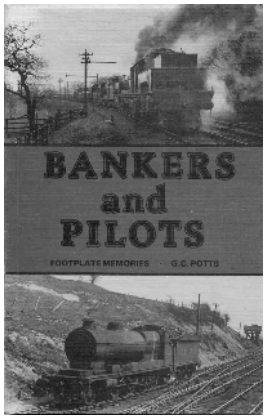
This is part of the 'Ordinary Lives' series edited by Anne Bott. It is aimed at the general reader but there is plenty to interest the railway reader as Geoff recounts his career on the railway. It started as a messenger boy at Nottingham Victoria in 1939. He then progressed through the grades as a signalman before moving to control, finally working as an inquiry clerk before retiring in 1983. The areas in which he worked were Nottingham, Mansfield, Rotherham and Doncaster, all areas with a rich GCR heritage. All this is interwoven with personal history – we learn about his family, his wife's struggle with cancer and his religious experience. Geoff does try to help the general reader by explaining railway terminology but this is difficult to do without it being condescending for the general reader and trivial for the railway reader. In my opinion this book is aimed at too broad a readership. I also dislike the style of layout with its small paragraphs and large spaces between them. A more compact style could halve the number of pages.

"Yesterday's Railwayman" by D.A.Newbould. Published by Oxford Publishing Company, 1985, ISBN 0 86093 331 8. Softback 95 pages.



Mr D.A.Newbould keeps his first name a secret – the nearest we get is when he is introduced as 'Young Newbould' to the signalmen in Mexboro' No.3 box on his first day at work at a register lad. His career is not unlike that of Geoff Raynor's with progression through the signalling ranks, then to control, finishing as a list clerk. He also worked in 'GC areas' – Mexborough, Sheffield, Doncaster and Retford. The period of railway employment was only 14 years, 1956-1970. This book is written for the railway reader and gives a fascinating insight into the complexities of running a railway. It is accompanied by a good selection of photos on glossy paper. The cover features Thrybergh Junction signal box, where the GC&Mid Joint line branched off up to Silverwood Colliery and connected with the SYJnt at Laughton Jnct. The editor has allowed a few typos to creep in, eg when describing the necessity of route knowledge through 'a maize of lines'. Although a slim volume, Mr D.A.Newbould has managed to squeeze a lot in.

"Bankers and Pilots" by G.C.Potts. Published by Bradford Barton, no date, ISBN 0 85153 449 X. Softback 136 pages.



This publisher has an extensive list of titles in a series written by railwaymen. This time we have a footplateman, George Potts, relating his experiences on the railway. He started in 1922 as an engine cleaner at Mexboro' shed, and progressed through the grades to become a driver. For anyone with an interest in the GC this is a gold mine of memories. We travel with him on various kinds of trains around the GC system, but mostly in South Yorkshire, and often with ex-GC locos. Each type of loco has its own character and idiosyncracies which George is able to describe in an entertaining way. George has a flowing style of writing and his book is a pleasure to read. This narrative finishes in 1951 when he leaves steam to train on the new Woodhead electrics. It is accompanied by some great photos, but unfortunately not on glossy paper. I wonder if his initials 'G.C.' were deliberately chosen by his father who was a GC signalman!

On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

Since May there have been 9 engineering trains from Doncaster operating through Penistone, conveying materials for track renewal. These workings have all been operated by class 66 locos usually top and tailed.The work should commence in July.

The preserved GC Line at Loughborough is currently engaged in meetings with local schools into the possibility of running a school train service along the route. (see p23)

The major event in June was the widespread flooding in South Yorkshire and Humberside as a result of torrential rain.The effects are briefly described below as follows. Friday 15th to Monday 18th all routes affected with no trains running on the routes between Sheffield to Doncaster, Lincoln, Barnsley, Penistone for all or part of this period. Then even worse was to occur on Monday 25th when all GC services out of Sheffield were suspended as well as most from Doncaster. Even by the end of June only a limited shuttle service was operating between Huddersfield-Penistone and Barnsley with Rotherham Central and the route to Lincoln expected to remain closed for several more weeks.

Freight traffic has been almost totally suspended with widespread damage to signalling equipment and track damage affecting all traffic flows throughout the area, for example on the Deepcar branch traffic will not resume for a couple of months due to extensive damage to the Stocksbridge railway and the works with wagons derailed and retaining walls having collasped. On the 25th the road under the Wicker arches at Sheffield was turned into a raging river claiming the life of an elderly resident.

The routes from Doncaster returned to normal operation by Wednesday 4th July, but the situation on GC lines in the Sheffield and Rotherham area has remained critical ever since. Sheffield to Lincoln passenger services will not restart until possibly September due to the collapse of the embankment and wash out of the track at Waleswood.

Routes via Rotherham Central were suspended until at least the beginning of August due to major damage to signalling equipment. This has resulted in all passenger services being either cancelled or diverted via Masborough and no freight services can use the routes to Tinsley, Deepcar or over the Attercliffe branch.

The only GC line still open in the area is the section between Nunnery and Beighton which, with no passenger services at present, is only seeing occasional use, as for example over the weekend of the 14th and 15th July when the Barrow Hill specials used the route between Barrow Hill and Earles Sidings at Hope which were operated by four class 20 locos in top and tail formation these being 20311/15/20901/05.

The Penistone route reopened on the 27th June with a reduced shuttle service operating between Huddersfield and Barnsley only.This carried on until the Monday when services were once again able to operate through to Sheffield.

On Friday 20th July the colliery rapid loading bunker line at the reopening Hatfield Main colliery was being tested prior to being brought back into use for the movement of coal to Drax PS. Unusually the locomotive involved in the tests was Jarvis Fastline locomotive 56302.

Over half of Britain's remaining deep coal mines are now connected to the GC or its subsidiary routes – Maltby, Hatfield, Thoresby and Welbeck. Harworth and Rossington are still rail connected but the mines are at preent mothballed.

A well known railway landmark on the CLC route through Warrington Central is the former goods warehouse which has been disused for many years and has now been saved from demolition and is being converted into flats.

The line through Rotherham Central reopened for passenger traffic from Monday 23rd July.

During each Sunday in July all services from Sheffield to Huddersfield terminated and started from Penistone due to track renewal at Honley. This brought the sight of engineering trains returning to Doncaster being observed at Penistone during daylight hours, for example on the 15th, when 66108 and 66034 passed through at 1100 and 1930hrs respectively. Also on this date dmu 158787 was in use on the Sheffield-Penistone shuttle service.

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

Waleswood on the Sheffield-Worksop line on 30 July 2007. Flood damage closed the line on 25 June and work is being carried out to reconstruct the embankment using aggregate instead of spoil. An aerial view, taken by Chris Booth, of the damage caused can be found on p77 of the September issue of The Railway Magazine.

photo : Bob Gellatly

The LD&ECR engine shed at Chesterfield

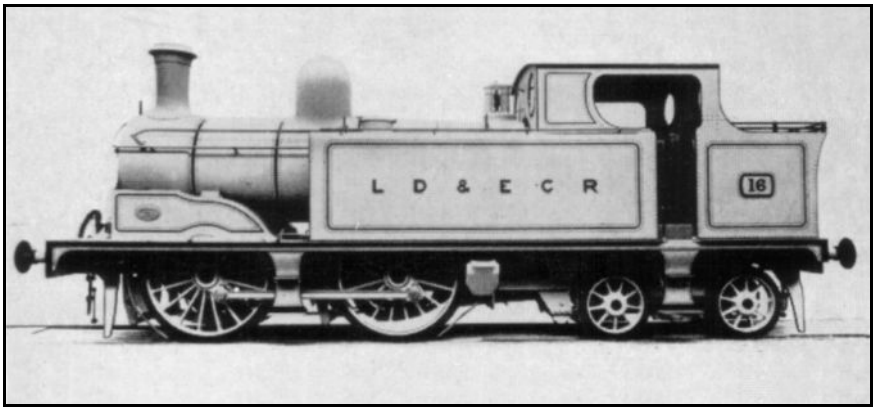
by Bill Taylor

When considering engine sheds on the LD&ECR those at Langwith Junction and Tuxford spring immediately to mind but the little company constructed more than these two. One such establishment was to be found at Chesterfield where the administrative headquarters were located and was squeezed onto a small piece of land between its owner's main line and the Brampton Branch of the Midland Railway on an embankment to the east of Park Road. The site was obviously cramped with no opportunity for expansion.

It was a two road affair able to provide cover for two of the company's tank locomotives, one to shunt the goods yard and the other to work the first morning passenger train out of Market Place Station. No photograph has come to light of the building itself although an old postcard showing part of the Queen's Park cricket ground and the Pond Houses, taken from the high ground to the south, exists and gives a distant view of the engine shed. Regrettably it had a rather short life, its existence being curtailed by a fire discovered at five o'clock in the morning of Sunday the 19th April 1903 by a watchman called Kilby. He alerted the Borough Fire Brigade who tried in vain for about four hours to save the building. The task was made more difficult because the railway company's water hydrant was located in the middle of the blazing shed, so it was necessary to bring water the short distance from Park Road.

Inside the shed a truck laden with coal was completely consumed whilst a visiting contractor's engine belonging to Messrs. Brown & Howie, along with LD&ECR tank locomotive no. 16 of Class C, sustained considerable damage. Fortunately the General Manager had insured the building with the Royal Insurance Company under Poiicy Number 7481741 and had paid the current annual premium of seventeen shillings and sixpence which enabled a claim for £500 to be submitted. In fact the LD&ECR received a payment of only £350 relating to the damaged caused to its own locomotive and building. By reference to the policy some idea of the construction of the shed building can be obtained, although the original plan attached to it has not survived.

The main building is described as a locomotive shed having steel domes or sheet iron smoke troughs and chimneys in the roof and furnished with two fitters benches. The second room is described as a mens mess room containing a close fire cooking stove in the centre standing on legs six inches high in a thick cast iron pan resting on a wooden floor. The exhaust piping is fitted with a vertical sheet iron flue through the roof, passing through an outer iron pipe with air space between, and the floor around the stove being covered with lead. The remaining two rooms are described simply as an office and conveniences. The entirety was single storey timber built with a felt roof which according to the local newspaper report had recently been tarred. Lighting for the whole building was by gas. Engine no. 16 survived its ordeal and was soon returned to service.



LD&ECR class C 0-4-4T no. 16, built 1898 by Kitson. *photo : author's collection*

The 2.32am newspaper

by "5267"

This article was originally published in the 'SLS Journal', December, 1959, and submitted by Mike Kinder for inclusion in 'Forward'. Reprinted by kind permission of the Stephenson Locomotive Society.

When it all began I don't even know - it was some time in the early 1900s but it escaped all notice, so only a search through a pile of Bradshaws would reveal the date. It was in the days when 60mph bookings were very rare. The Caledonian had slowed their Perth and Forfar runs, but the North Eastern, with a nice downhill road, did Darlington to York at 61.5mph, well publicised as "The fastest train in the British Empire" (for the Americans had something faster between Camden and Atlantic City). About this time, the combination of a level road with the use of a slip carriage got the GWR a little over 60mph between Paddington and Bath, and that was all. No other railway could produce as much as 58 mph average, unless in France the Nord may have had one or two runs at about 60mph.

And here the Great Central, without anyone even noticing the fact, accelerated their newspaper train to cover 66.4 miles in 66min running time including TWO intermediate stops! After running the 59.4 miles from Marylebone to Brackley (which then included a severe slack at Aylesbury) in 64min (55.6mph) only 24min were allowed for the 23.95 miles from Rugby to Brackley (59.9mph), 20min for 19.85 miles thence to Leicester (59.6mph) and finally 22min for 22.55 miles from Leicester to Arkwright Street (61.5mph). Non-stop from Brackley to Arkwright Street would have been equivalent to about 65mph and no nice flat road like the NER or GWR; though the general tendency is slightly downhill, the 66½ miles include 23½ miles uphill, of which 18½ are at 1 in 176. All three starts were awkward - two of them facing banks straight away, and only a little over a mile of a dip leaving Rugby to gain speed for the climb to Lutterworth. From Leicester to Arkwright Street the GCR train was 0.04mph slower than the famous NER one, over a far harder road, and only half the distance to recover the time spent in starting and stopping.

Unfortunately few recorders were prepared to forgo a night's sleep to be at Marylebone at 2.40am, so I know of only one record of pre-1914 performance. Mr Cecil J. Allen, in the *Railway Magazine* of June 1912, gave a run with Atlantic 363 and a load of 140 tons to Brackley (130 tons forward). Times were 62min 49sec to Brackley, 23min 10sec to Rugby, 19min 58sec to Leicester (including about a minute lost by a pw slack) and 21min 22sec to Arkwright Street. In those days the Neasden engine worked as far as Nottingham.

After a short period of deceleration during the 1914 war, the train was restored to its old timing, except that 3min extra were allowed from Marylebone to Brackley, and it started at 2.32am. In his *Railways of Great Britain* (1926) Lord Monkswell described a run with a Director and a train of 170 tons. To Brackley the time was 65min 37sec, to Rugby 24min 1sec and to Leicester 19min 11 sec. Thence a compound Atlantic took 22min 11sec to Arkwright Street with the load reduced to 150 tons.

When I got to know the train so well a few years later (about 1930) it had become a very different proposition, for the normal load out of Marylebone was a composite (in which I was usually the only passenger) and 8 vans of newspapers. The latter varied in type and few had any weight shown, but the tare weight may have been about 255 tons and probably, allowing for the weight of papers, not less than 300 tons gross. The regular engines were the 4-cylinder 4-6-0s 6167 and 6169 (ex-GCR Valour Class, LNER B3) and the job was shared by three drivers, J. Johnson, H. Caine and H. Threadgold, who made a link that got nothing but continuous night work. I am sorry that I have not got the firemen's names, for they were the men who really counted on this job. The engines were showing up to 80lb coal per mile on the Neasden sheet, and this being by far their hardest job, they were probably burning a good deal more than that on it. And while pounds per mile are a quite satisfactory figure for a statistician, they do not mean a lot to a fireman, whose interest is in a figure that is never seen - pounds *per minute*. I would ask anyone who has ever handled a shovel to estimate the Newspaper figure for themselves - it wouldn't mean much to anyone else.

It is no disparagement to either men or engines to admit at once that strict timekeeping was just out of reach with these loads: occasionally there was no loco-loss but even that was rare, and there was nothing in hand for the engineering slacks that were frequent on the Metropolitan line. Even from the carriage it was clear that steam was the trouble; any time a section was run rather harder than

usual, it would be followed by an easing obviously necessary to restore pressure or water level. When 6166 and 6168 were rebuilt with Caprotti valves they were sent to Neasden but, to me at any rate, they were a disappointment. I had hoped for a big improvement; improvement there was, but it was only very slight. I should add, however, that I never travelled on either of them, nor saw their coal figures which, I believe, were lower than those of the other engines.

To Brackley, time could just be kept with nothing to spare for delays and more often a little was dropped. My best times were 66¾ min with piston valves (twice, Wardle with 6164 and another run to be described later) and 65½min with Caprotti (Caine with 6166); the averages of all runs with 9-coach trains were 68½ and 67¼min respectively. The small difference between average and best times shows how consistently the engines were worked up to the maximum of their continuous capacity; on the other hand, a summary of the best point-to-point times adds up to only 62¾min, illustrating how an extra effort at any point reacted later on so that the overall time was not much improved thereby. If things were going well, or if speed had reached 80-85mph coming down from Wendover, a reduction to about 60mph might be made through Aylesbury (Caine was always careful there). Sometimes, however, no reduction at all was made and I have survived passing through it at 78mph, though it is not an experience I would be anxious to repeat.

LNER class B3/1 4-6-0 no.6164 Earl Beatty going well on the GC main line north of Belgrave & Birstall with a down express. *photo : GCRS Collection*

Brackley to Rugby just couldn't be done in the time allowed, which was not surprising, considering the start is 2½ miles up at 1 in 176 straight away. If this was taken really hard (Threadgold, the hardest starter, once topped it at 58mph with 6167) it always required easier running to recover over the following 9 slightly rising miles to Charwelton, so, though the summary of point-to-point times adds up to only 23¼min for the section, it was never done under 24min 20sec (Wardle with 6164) and the average (omitting one run to be mentioned later) was 25¼min with piston valves and, in this case 5sec more with the Caprotti engines. On Monday mornings this section had a further snag in that Woodford Central cabin was switched out, so that it was necessary to slow there in case of being blocked at No 3.

Rugby to Leicester offered no great difficulty and the times were more consistent than anywhere else, my best being 19min 40sec with Cane and 6167, the averages being 20min 20sec for the piston valve engines and just 2min less for the Caprottis, and the summary of point-to-point times 19min.

Maximum speeds at Braunston and Ashby might be about 75-78mph on one run in three, and 80-85mph for the remainder, though 85mph was quite common at both places and not rare down to Aylesbury, I never recorded more and thought it was the most the engines could do. I was very surprised, many years later, to enjoy a sustained 88mph past Whetstone with 6168.

One morning I failed to see the engine before leaving Marylebone. The running to Brackley was the best I had yet had – 66¼min net - and as it was the time the Caprottis were expected at Neasden, I was sure we must have one of them. I was amazed, on looking out at Brackley, to find that Johnson had a Director - and one of the old outside-admission ones at that, 5436. Directors were used occasionally when a big engine was not available and out of six runs I had with them, this and two with 5505 were fully equal to the 4-cylinder standard, but two were rather poor, which made their average times for the three sections 69½min, 25min 51 sec and 20min 52sec. Johnson's 24min 25sec from Brackley to Rugby, due to exceptionally fast work from Helmdon to Charwelton, was outstanding, but for some reason all the Directors were disappointing from Rugby to Leicester.

LNER class D10 4-4-0 no.5436 Sir Berkeley Sheffield and crew take a rest at Marylebone. *photo : Photomatic*

Before leaving this end of the road, I must describe one of my last trips on the 2.32. By then, Caine and Threadgold had retired and Johnson had changed link, after years of night work, to enjoy daylight again. The new link was G. Wardle, T. Summerland and J. Stephens. On this occasion I was with Summerland and Fireman Bailey on 6164, not long out of shops and my favourite of the piston valve engines (I never knew 6165 at all) so it looked as though we might have as handy a trip as was possible with this train. At the start 6164 was blowing off nicely and no one was worried by a slight fall in pressure going up to Brondesbury, but when she had only 165 lb past Neasden Jct and showed no sign of coming round, Summerland just gave her a bit more of the lever to make up for the loss of pressure. Bailey was throwing coal into her just as fast as he was able and she was burning every bit she got - a lot of it going straight up the chimney and over the surroundings. Fortunately all you had to do with these engines was to drop most of the coal just under the door, but it was heavy work, for all Robinson's otherwise very comfortable engines had the fault that the firedoor was higher than the shovelling plate. I think it was around Northwood that Bailey first passed the shovel to me while he got his breath. Passing Rickmansworth (on time) with 160 lb, she required still more of the lever up the bank and I am still wondering how the lineside woodland survived without catching fire, but our average of 36½mph up to Amersham was better than usual with this load. Down to Aylesbury then

at what must have been fully 85mph (but there was no time for taking speeds) and only the barest slack through it. Though I think she went back once to 140 lb, the combined efforts of Bailey and myself in turn kept her mostly round 155-160 lb, but not one pound above the 160 mark would she go. But Summerland kept her at it, up hill and down - never before or since have I seen coal disappear at such a rate - and we stopped triumphantly in Brackley just before time in 66¾min.

Our triumph was short-lived. We took only the usual 6min up to Helmdon, but at the top she was back to 110 lb. Luckily she held the brake off all right and we got her round enough to cover the next 9 miles to Charwelton in 9min but going over the hump there the water was out of sight, and there was nothing for it but a long shut-off down the bank, so we lost 4¾min in that section. Then, with the water level restored and pressure not going below 150 lb we lost only ¾min from Rugby to Leicester, where examination confirmed our provisional diagnosis of the trouble - a main steampipe joint gone. This, though we lost 5min, I regard as the best of all my many runs on the 2.32; but for one unaided fireman it would have been almost impossible to stick the pace.

The Neasden engine came off at Leicester to return home peacefully on the 6.10am (all stations to Great Missenden) and was replaced by a Leicester Atlantic which worked to Sheffield and returned with the 7.30am express. With the load reduced to 6 or sometimes 5 bogies, there was no real difficulty in keeping time to Arkwright Street. It was rare not to pass Loughborough under 11½min, which was adequate for timekeeping, but down from Belgrave not much steam had been needed to attain 80mph and over at Loughborough so it was natural that many drivers, with 7min standing time allowed at Arkwright Street, just left the regulator as it was over Barnston summit and so over a minute might be lost even with another 80 at Ruddington. But if the engine was opened up for Barnston, time would be comfortably kept. My best run was with Newall on 5363 in 21½min with two maxima of 85 and 69mph over Barnston, but this was with 5 bogies only. With 6, my best was 21¾min with 5260 and speeds of 80, 68 and 83mph. With a compound Atlantic my best run took 22½min overall, due to an exceptionally slow start, taking 45sec longer than 5260 to Belgrave, but exactly the same time thence to Arkwright Street in spite of passing Belgrave 9mph slower. The speeds were 83, 67 and 85mph. A. Bennett generally had this engine and, except for the poor start, it was very like his style.

Addition of point-to-point times from Leicester to Arkwright Street gives 21min 5sec and this, I am sure, any Atlantic in good condition could have done, unlike the summary times south of Leicester which would have been beyond the steaming capacity of the engines - or perhaps it was the shovelling capacity of the firemen who, after all, were only men, not automatic stokers. The average of all Atlantic runs works out at 22min 34sec, just 60mph. From Leicester to Sheffield, the load being reduced to 2 or 3 bogies, provided the opportunity of recovering some lost time.

There was, of course, no 2.32am on Sunday mornings, but for the Sunday newspapers there was a train at 11.00pm on Saturday nights, stopping at Aylesbury and booked thence to Leicester in 65min for the 65.1 miles. This train loaded to 10 bogies, about 280 tons tare and, being mostly newspaper vans, was heavily loaded, perhaps 325 tons gross, but the fast booking gave no difficulty. It was worked by the Neasden 4-cylinder Valours and the same link as worked the 2.32, the return from Leicester being made with the 10.30am from Manchester. The 47min allowance to Aylesbury was hard, and my best of 6 runs was 47¼min net with Caine on 6166, but my worst was only a minute longer. The same engine and driver gave me my best run from Aylesbury to Leicester, 61min net, the average of the six being 64min.

Only once I had a Director on this job, 5432 with Johnson, but the load that night was only 8 bogies so we had no difficulty, though the engine was in poor condition, taking 47¾min to Aylesbury and 63½min net to Leicester. This train brought the full load right through to Sheffield, worked by Sheffield or Gorton engines, maybe a GN Atlantic, a Black Pig or a Sir Sam Fay. One of the latter, 5426, achieved the fine feat of passing Arkwright Street 22.6 miles in 22½min having done 85mph at Loughborough and 69mph over Barnston, but only 76mph thereafter, whilst a Black Pig, 5463, though poor in starting and slow on Barnston bank, distinguished itself by working its 5ft 7in wheels up to 77mph at Ruddington. Later, all these jobs were taken over by Sandringhams. Though no larger than the GC 4-cylinders, they could keep time on the Newspaper without difficulty, as can be

seen from the *Railway Magazine* of April, 1937. The difference was partly due, no doubt, to their larger grate area, but it was also a measure of 12 years progress in front end design.

Such was the 2.32 as I knew it. Some may call this a chronicle of lost time. That may be, but it is a chronicle of engines being worked to the very limit of their abilities, night in and night out, and of the lost time being kept down to the least possible, for the Great Central tradition was always one of time keeping. In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to Messrs Webster and Harvey, enjoyment of whose articles has encouraged me to fill what was very naturally, a gap in theirs, for no doubt they were enjoying their sleep while I was collecting the material now offered.

Postscript

In subsequent correspondance following the publication of this article, Mr P. H. V. Banyard, an SLS member who was retired from railway service after a lifetime on the GC as fireman, driver and loco inspector, gave brief details of what may well have been the fastest run ever made by the 2.32. The train engine was B17 No. 2816 in charge of the late T. Buckle of Neasden and a Leicester C4 No. 5262, which had worked up on a special and was attached in the usual GC manner as "inside engine". Driver Banyard warned his fireman that Driver Buckle and 2816 in front would give them a rough ride and this promise was fulfilled. Brackley was reached in approx. 64min. From Brackley the normally impossible 24min to Rugby was cut by 2min and the final run to Leicester took 18min. The footplate of 5262 was deep in coal up to the level of the driver's footstool. It is a matter for regret that "5267" had not chosen this night for one of his trips.

LNER class C4 4-4-2 no.5262 with a down express at Rugby. *photo : W.L.Good*

GCR and Grammar School meet to discuss future full time service plans

story from www.goleicestershire.com on the trials run on Wed. 4th and Fri. 6th July

A success which captured the imagination of the country! The two trial school train services operated by the Great Central Railway for the Loughborough Grammar School, High School and Fairfield preparatory school went so smoothly, detailed talks are underway to run the train every term time day.

Around seventy children were carried on the first day, and the total rose to more than one hundred for the second trial. The event was covered in the national press and media gaining good publicity for the school, the railway and Loughborough.

"We're very pleased by how smoothly the operation went," said General Manager Robert Crew. "Many of the children were overheard saying how nice it was to travel by train rather than get stuck in a traffic jam. We can't be certain how many cars were kept off the road but we were encouraged by seeing the passenger numbers grow from the first day to the second."

The railway will now meet with the three schools involved to see if the idea can be adopted on a full time basis. A mixture of steam and diesel locomotives are envisaged to handle the early morning and mid afternoon timetable.

"If the idea goes ahead – and we are very excited about it – we may even dedicate a set of carriages exclusively to the job," continued Robert. "It has to work operationally and financially for both the schools and the railway. Ongoing discussions are taking place before we commit, but remain hopeful we will be one of the very few heritage railways in the country to develop a genuine public transport service. It's important we play our part in the community and if we can help bust traffic jams the old fashioned way that would be brilliant."

Editor's note : This story generated the headline 'Kids are chuffed' in the The Sun newspaper!

The Central Railway saga – echoes of Watkin

by David Reidy

Central Railway is a Franco-British project that will extend the benefits of the Channel Tunnel beyond the south east to the rest of Britain. It will reduce the cost to industry of transporting goods to and from European markets and directly create employment. Crucially, it will help UK regions compete for inward investment.

The project entails the modernisation and operation of approximately 430 miles (700 km) of railway between Liverpool and northern France via the Channel Tunnel, with terminals at strategic locations. The proposed terminals will be located mainly on brownfield sites close to key motorway junctions to avoid generating traffic on local roads. All but 40 miles of the proposed route will follow underused or disused railways and even where a new line is proposed, as around the west of London, it will primarily follow existing transport corridors. Central Railway will be the only major railway in Britain (with the exception of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link/TGV link between St Pancras and the Channel Tunnel) able to handle continental trains. It will be accessible to any European train from the vast continental network - finally laying the foundations for fully integrating the UK and mainland European railway systems.

Building and operating the service could create approximately 13,000 jobs. Some 5,000 construction jobs alone would be generated over the five years of building and another 2,000 permanent new jobs generated. A further 6,000 jobs would be created as a result of the improved links the railway would provide.

The railway's core business will be a high volume, low cost shuttle operation carrying unaccompanied lorry trailers. This will effectively convert millions of lorry trunk journeys into five trains an hour in each direction. The scheme will take some 10,000 HGVs per day off key motorways, including the M25, M20, M1, M40 and M6. The Company expects to co-operate with Network Rail, EWS, Freightliner and the involved transport operating companies to facilitate smooth connections between

the project and selected locations along the route in the UK where Central Railway intersects with other rail lines.

The overall construction cost is estimated to be of the order of £4 billion. However, with rolling stock, land and property protection costs, and inflation and interest charges during construction, the total financing requirement could be approximately £8.5 billion. The project has been developed to be capable of being financed entirely in the private sector. The Channel Tunnel Initiative Group, representing the interests of the principal local authority associations in England, Scotland and Wales, has signalled its support, as have other bodies including the Road Haulage Association, the North West Regional Assembly and the TUC. The French Government is also supportive.

The line will run from Liverpool via Manchester, Sheffield, the Midlands and London through the Channel Tunnel to Lille in northern France. The railway's construction should not involve major disruption of the Railtrack network as the result of the tunnel construction under the North Downs, restoration of the dismantled Great Central Railway, and new route works alongside the M25. Expansion of existing railway formations in Kent, along the relevant part of the Chiltern Line, the Midland lines between Leicester and Sheffield and between Hadfield and the Mersey Docks will involve some inevitable disruption during construction, but only a limited part of the lines are heavily used. Portions of the track between Gerrards Cross and High Wycombe may be four-tracked to permit higher speed trains to bypass slower stopping trains. There are capacity problems at Leicester - this is well known and is a good example of a location where the Company's investment will relieve an existing problem and create significant new capacity. A flying junction is planned at Wigston Junction to permit Nuneaton-Leicester movements in both directions. The original four tracks will be restored between Leicester and Loughborough. With the exception of the portion of line between Leicester and Loughborough, existing passenger train frequencies are below three an hour. None of the remaining track segments between Leicester and Sheffield are used to capacity.

Central Railway proposes to raise bridges to gain the correct clearance and restore the railway to its former four track configuration as far north as the freight line to Tinsley. The former two track railway will be restored from Sheffield north to Deepcar together with the former Great Central route across the Pennines. Engineering studies confirm that the main Woodhead tunnel can be deepened to handle Central Railway trains. The smaller tunnels house the high voltage cables and would not be disturbed. The selected route through Manchester is via Guidebridge, Ashburys and the Stalybridge link to Manchester Victoria and Salford Central. Taking the route through Manchester Victoria and Salford Central to Ordsall Junction will require changes, probably a flying junction, but ample space is available to realign and restore tracks so that freight and passenger train services can be accommodated. There appears to be no need for four tracks between Salford and Parkside.

The Company's engineers envisage that the track bed of the Catesby tunnel will be lowered, so there will be no opening up or single track operation. In relation to Rugby, three routes are being appraised. Central Railway's original plan was to reopen the largely uninterrupted former Great Central alignment and establish a new passenger station at Rugby. However, following concerns expressed about this proposal, the Company has sought to find an alternative and is currently considering bypassing the town to the east and running as far as possible alongside the M1.

The route would be as follows:

Section A: French terminal(s) and connecting lines to Eurotunnel/Eurotunnel to North Downs Tunnel/ M25 alignment Leatherhead to Gerrards Cross and west London terminal/Gerrards Cross to Ashendon Junction (near Thame)/Ashendon Junction to Lutterworth (M1/M6 terminal near Rugby).

Section B: Lutterworth to Wigston (south Leicester)/Wigston to Syston (transit through Leicester)/ Syston to a Sheffield Terminal.

Section C: Sheffield to Penistone/Penistone to Hadfield/Hadfield to Miles Platting (east Manchester)/Miles Platting to Parkside Terminal (Newton-le Willows).

section D: Parkside Terminal to Seaforth (Liverpool Docks).

From Manchester to Sheffield and on to Leicester and from Leicester to the Channel Tunnel the services will be operating on new, dedicated tracks. On some of the more lightly used sections of the

line from Leicester to Liverpool, Central Railway will share existing tracks with limited passenger and other rail operations. Route capacity will be tailored to traffic demand on each section. Central Railway's services will operate as direct point-to point shuttles with no stops at intermediate terminals. Average speeds are expected to be approximately 100 kph but speeds of up to 130 kph will be achievable in places.

Central Railway believes that expenditure on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) could be reduced by not having to accommodate all of the existing and planned EWS or Freightliner freight operations on what is essentially planned to be a high speed rail passenger line. Although freight trains only account for approximately forty paths per day on the WCML, the much slower speeds of those trains uses a disproportionate share of WCML's overall capacity. If these stakeholders are interested in pursuing a co-operative arrangement with Central Railway, the company believes that it should be possible to transfer a significant portion of that freight traffic to Central Railway, where it could be handled more efficiently and economically. For example, Freightliner container traffic could join Central Railway in Leicestershire rather than proceed to the WCML at Nuneaton. Container traffic from Southampton could access Central Railway near Heathrow, and EWS European traffic from most Midlands and northern depots could access Central Railway using new or existing junctions. Any required investment in connecting lines would be offset many times over by savings and service improvements on the WCML, including enhanced commuter services on the slow tracks.

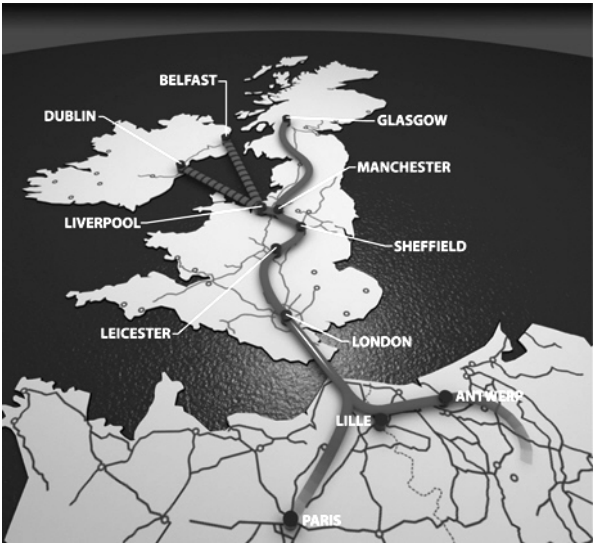
Specific stated Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) policy aspirations that Central Railway could contribute towards include:

- debottlenecking Leicester station with the linkage of the Syston and Wigston junctions
- upgrading the Trans-Pennine route including reopening the Woodhead Tunnel
- developing freight diversionary routes around central Manchester
- freight enhancements on the Trans-Pennine route to provide better links between Liverpool and the Humber ports
- a direct link from the WCML and other routes to Heathrow airport
- airtrack rail link between Heathrow and Staines
- improved access for freight from Liverpool to the WCML and other routes including gauge enhancement

The Central Railway proposals were first put forward by the late Andrew Gritten in 1989 and the Central Railway Group Ltd was formed two years later. The scheme was supported by Eurotunnel and welcomed by businessmen who feared that the Channel Tunnel would otherwise exacerbate the north-south divide in Britain. Gritten, insisting that the link would not require the injection of public money, set about raising funds from private investors, including engineering consultants, construction firms and investment banks. In 1992-93 Mott MacDonald developed Central Railway's first proposal for an electrified lorries-on-trains railway from Lille to Leicester via south London. In 1993 Central Railway secured the agreement of the UK Government that its project would not be put out to tender or made into a concession provided it did not seek public funds. Two years later the UK Government invited Central Railway to submit a Transport and Works Application (TWA) for the UK section of the scheme between the Channel Tunnel and Leicester. However, in 1996 the Conservative Government withdrew its early support for the TWA application which was defeated in the House of Commons. Four years later in 2000 the company asked for a hybrid Bill to approve the UK section of the railway. The SRA review found that the project had potential transport benefits and in 2003 the Department for Transport did not uphold the SRA complaints about Central Railway's impacts on the existing railway system and the Company secured submissions from banks etc, confirming the feasibility of the project. Gritten and Central Railway continued their campaign under Labour, and appeared to have strong backing from government ministers, Labour MPs and trade unionists. France, keen to develop a dedicated freight railway across the European Union, scrutinised the plan and gave its blessing, as a result of which Central Railway secured a development agreement with SNCF. France, worried that the British government would prevaricate, as it had done over the Channel Tunnel rail link, urged John Speller, the Transport Minister, to support the Central Railway scheme.

But the progress to acceptance had already become bogged down in SRA reviews which, in an atmosphere in which priority had been given to the Channel Tunnel, rejected Central Railway's freight plan. When Gritten articulately countered the SRA objections, the Government allowed tripartite discussions between the SRA, civil servants and Central which appeared to resolve the SRA's operational concerns. But the SRA remained unconvinced that the scheme would not be a burden to the public purse, even though Gritten could point to the backing of such companies as SNCF and the giant American engineering group Parsons. The SRA's confidential advice to ministers remained that Central Railway's proposal was unlikely to be fundable from public resources, as a result of which the Department of Transport continued to refuse to proceed with a hybrid Bill. Alastair Darling, the Minister of Transport, eventually turned down Central Railway's request for a hybrid Bill in 2004.

Andrew Gritten died suddenly in November 2004. Central Railway is at present looking to restart the project on the basis of a new route in south east England running through the Thames Gateway, a more extensive system on the Continent and a co-operative relationship with the track authorities on both sides of the Channel, particularly Network Rail. As far as the former Great Central route is concerned, the company would continue to propose to reopen the former Great Central alignment from Ashendon Junction to a point near Cosby in Leicestershire – including however a diversion from the alignment to avoid, at least, the Brownsover area of Rugby. It is also proposed to reopen the former GC section from, probably, a point east of Clay Cross as far as the existing line running west of Hadfield (east Manchester).



Paul White reports-

On 13 July, the Peak Park Planning Committee published their report on the plans by the National Grid with regards to the Woodhead tunnels. The two older tunnels have been used for some time by the National Grid to carry electric cables, and they now plan to use the remaining larger 1953 tunnel to do the same. While this may not appear to be a major problem it would effectively prevent any future chance for the Woodhead line to reopen. The report concludes that the proposals should not be supported, and referred them to the relevant Government office where the proposals can be stopped or amended to prevent the loss of this potential future transport route.

Paul White's article 'Woodhead after Closure: part 5' will appear in the next issue of Forward.

Wicker Arches – one of England's Stately Wrecks?

a report from The Guardian of 25th July 2007

"Sixteen historic buildings in desperate need of public subsidy to secure their future were highlighted today by English Heritage. Between £1m and £25m is needed to restore or maintain each of the grade I and II listed structures which are among more than 1,235 entries on the organisation's Buildings At Risk Register 2007. "The total subsidy needed to bring all the buildings on the register into repair remains at around £400m, but £65m of that total relates to the entries we have highlighted today," the English Heritage chief executive, Simon Thurley, said. Last year, English Heritage offered £4.4m to buildings at risk, but this covered just 1.3% of the estimated total conservation deficit of all the buildings on the register."

The Wicker Arches, a grade II* listed structure, was included in the list.

photo : The Guardian

A dramatic view of the Wicker Arches during the current Inner Relief Road construction. The temporary traffic lights achieved fame on 25th June when footage of them sailing down the Wicker in a torrent of water was shown repeatedly on every newscast.

Could 'Save the Wicker Arches' be the next rallying call for the GCRS?

This well-known picture by Eric Bottomley –'The Wicker Arch, Sheffield' , is full of interest. The 1953 view shows class B17 4-6-0 no. 61626 ***Brancepeth Castle*** just to the north of Sheffield Victoria Station during the last year before the electrification of the Woodhead route. Sheffield Corporation tramcars nos.253 (left) and 189 (centre) stand at the tram stop in The Wicker.

Train watching at Guide Bridge with W.H.Whitworth

Down trains passed under a fine lattice public footbridge as they approached Guide Bridge from the east. This bridge features in all these photos taken from the same spot by Will Whitworth of Manchester. When he died in 1957, he left a collection of photos that form an invaluable record of railways around Manchester. Further caption information from readers will be welcome.

GCR class 1 4-6-0 no. 424 *City of Lincoln* with an express. *W1119 / Real Photographs*

An unidentified class 11E 'Director' 4-4-0 with an express. *W1154 / Real Photographs*

Another unidentified 'Director' with two 6-wheelers and clerestory stock. *W1155 / Real Photographs*

Another 'City' with a train of assorted stock plus van. *W1163 / Real Photographs*

These views show the extent of the facilities that once formed part of the railway scene at Guide Bridge. This is difficult to imagine if you survey the scene today.

Crossrail and Marylebone closure?

This letter was spotted by David Reidy in The Times newspaper on 14 May 2007.

Sir,

A more cost-effective way of linking the two sides of London would be to limit the construction of a new full-size tunnel to the Liverpool Street end and to construct a Tube-sized tunnel at the Paddington end under the existing northern portion of the Circle Line.

This would then free that portion of the Circle Line, which has a large enough tunnel, to take Crossrail. With a fairly cheap electrification of the line from Amersham to Aylesbury, the Metropolitan outer suburban services could be linked to Crossrail, replacing the Chiltern Line services. Remaining Chiltern Line trains could take up the spare capacity at Paddington thrown up by Crossrail, thus enabling the closure of Marylebone and allowing the valuable site to be sold.

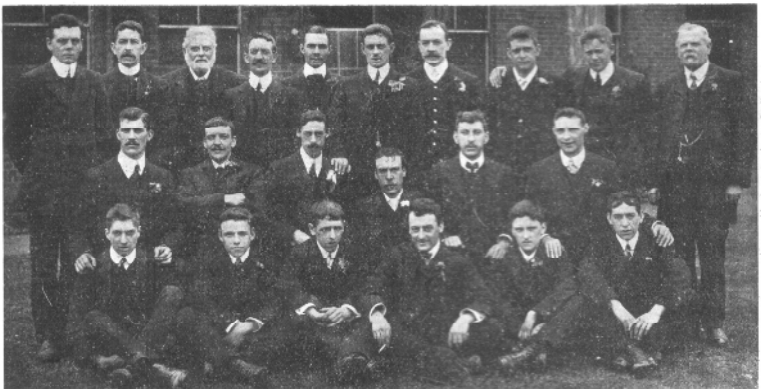
Apart from being a cheaper option this proposal would link Heathrow and Docklands to Baker Street, Euston, the Eurostar terminal at St Pancras, King's Cross and the City.

IAIN KING
Chester

From The *Great Central Railway Journal* Sept. 1909

Sheffield Loco Shopmen's Picnic

On 3rd July, about thirty employees headed by Mr. Fogerty, assistant superintendent, had a most enjoyable day's outing through the Dukeries. Lunch at the "Golden Ball" Worksop, which gave them an excellent start for the ride through a portion of England's most beautiful scenery— Clumber, Thoresby, Sherwood Forest, Edwinstowe, Welbeck, a tour of twenty-seven miles. Hot dinner, served at Worksop on return, and which finished up a most enjoyable day they ever had. Toasts were given for prosperity of the G.C.R. and all concerned, which was carried unanimously. The party was photographed at Edwinstowe.



Members and their models : "Dunnagin"

A 7mm scale layout based on a fictitious South Yorkshire location described by Les Warren

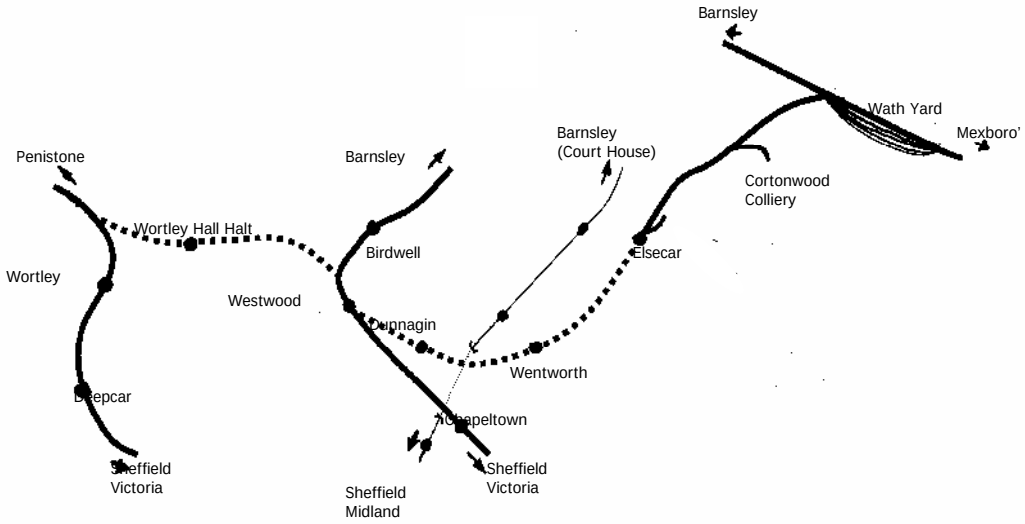
As the name suggests the location is totally fictitious. It is based in the 1950s-60s BR era on an ex-GC line in the heart of South Yorkshire. When the GC built Wath Yard and the branch from Elsecar Junction up to Corton Wood colliery and Elsecar station for Earl Fitzwilliam, it continued with a single track line through Wentworth and Dunnagin to join its line from Sheffield to Barnsley at Westwood Junction, the branch then continued on up to Thurgoland to join the Sheffield to Manchester line, this being electrified under the Woodhead scheme. On the map the fictitious line is dotted.

The layout is a representation of Dunnagin station on this line. The goods shed is based on the one that once served Ecclesfield on the GC Sheffield to Barnsley line. The station building is a compressed version of that at Mexborough. The signal box once stood on the station platform at Sprotborough. The permanent way hut was once at Wombwell (and is now a garden shed at a house that stood next to the station).

Well that's enough of the fiction, now for the facts, the layout measures 14ft by 18in. The baseboards are of the usual 2x1 softwood, topped with fibreboard, which makes a very light and sturdy base. This consists of three boards, two of which are the scenic section, and the third is the fiddle yard, the whole thing being free standing and portable.

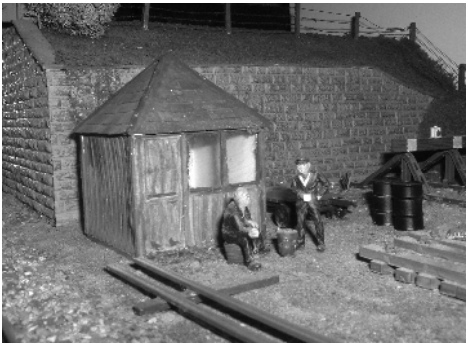
Track work is Peco Streamline 'code 124' and points are handmade to 4ft radius using plans from 'Marcways'. The layout consists of a single line through the platform with a passing loop. Coming off the loop are three sidings, one into the goods shed, one into a goods platform with yard crane, and the third along the front of the layout. Points are operated by Peco point motors via a capacitor discharge unit, as is the home signal. Control is the tried and trusted conventional method using a transformer and handheld controller.

The buildings are all scratch built using various methods and materials, from wood and plasticard to the humble greetings card. The tunnel mouth is Peco, and the road bridge is scratch built, as are the station and goods platforms. The yard crane is a white metal kit, and the signal is a Scale Signal Supply kit.



BR class C13 4-4-2T no.67434 takes water at the platform. A 1903 Robinson design for the GC.

BR class J94 0-6-0T no.68068 takes its turn on the 'local'. A WW2 austerity design by Riddles.




LES WARREN
MODEL RAILWAY ENGINEER
MEXBOROUGH
No6254

Great Central Railway Great War Heroes

Part 1 : The first day of the Somme

by Ken Grainger

It is hoped that the following will be the first of an occasional series introducing some of the men who are listed on the Roll of Honour, and how they died, but what do you think? Feedback, perhaps via a communication to the Editor, would be welcomed to gauge members' reaction. If further articles are considered relevant and of interest, all well and good, but if the consensus is that a railway society journal is not an appropriate medium for such articles, that will be respected.

As to the title, it is not intended to infer that those named were necessarily more heroic than the others. Neither is it claimed that those who died were necessarily more heroic than those who came through. As one GCRS member succinctly put it, "They were all heroes, just for being there". Amen to that.

Almost half way through the Great War, July 1st 1916, might seem an odd date to choose for the first part of a salute to the men of the Great Central who lost their lives in that dreadful conflict, but that date is seared into British folklore, being the first day of the Somme, the day on which more British soldiers (and more Great Central railwaymen) fell than on any other, ever, and perhaps the defining moment of the Great War. Until that day, the thinking was that, given a stiffening of regulars and sufficient artillery support, the infantry battalions of Kitchener's New Army could smash through the German lines, creating the gaps through which the waiting cavalry would surge to wreak havoc in the open country beyond the trenches.

An 18 mile stretch of the front astride the River Somme, at the junction of the British and French armies, was the chosen site for "the big push". For a full week, the ground had shaken and the very air had reverberated to the constant din of the British artillery: the boom of the guns, the screeching overhead of their shells and the thunderous roar of the explosions on and around the German lines, all merging into a mind-numbing cacophony which could be heard even in southern England. Despite some disquieting reports from returning raiding parties, of uncut wire and the spirited reception from an alert enemy, it was officially hoped, expected even, that the bombardment would tear apart the German barbed wire entanglements, pulverise their trenches, and leave the few surviving defenders too dazed and demoralized to resist the infantry assault. The truth was that all too often the barbed wire entanglements had merely been tossed about by the shellfire, coming to rest as impenetrably as before, and while the trenches had indeed been battered and, in places, all but obliterated, there were too few British guns of a calibre which could penetrate dugouts burrowed as deep as 40 feet into the Picardy chalk, where the German soldiers sat, playing Skat, and waiting.....

When the barrage finally lifted and the attack came, just as they had rehearsed, the German soldiers scrambled up from their dugouts dragging their machine guns with them. Their artillery, which had thus far kept silent so as not to betray their positions, opened up a barrage onto no man's land, creating a curtain of fire through which the ranks of British attackers could only pass at a fearful cost. Those who came through were then met by the persistent tack-tack-tack of the machine guns, the last sound many of them were to hear in this life. The bodies of most of those who got that far festooned the German wire, or piled three and four deep where they funnelled into the occasional gaps blasted in the wire. Very, very few even reached the German lines but, obeying the order to press on to their objectives regardless, little knots of men sold their lives dearly deep in the German lines. Many an act of gallantry and heroism will never be told, simply because no witnesses survived.

Faced with high explosive, dense barbed wire and concentrated machine gun fire, bravery and determination simply hadn't been enough. In the aftermath, the British trenches were impassably choked by the wounded, so great had been the carnage. Over 57,000 British soldiers fell that day, 19,000 of them dead. In places, exultant German riflemen climbed onto their parapets to get clearer shots at any crumpled khaki form that still showed signs of life, but elsewhere along the front there were unofficial truces in which German stretcher-bearers joined their British counterparts, grimly collecting up the wounded and delivering them back to the British wire.

The New Army formations have been called "the flower of British manhood" and not without reason. They had been the first to answer their country's call to arms and foremost among them were the 'Pals' battalions, typically recruited from the terraced streets of the northern industrial towns and cities with the promise they would serve together. The 31st Division's Sheffield City Battalion, the 12th York and Lancaster, along with the "Accrington Pals", the 11th East Lancs., were on the left (northern) flank of the attack, facing the fortified rubble of Serre. Ten minutes before the 7.30am 'zero hour', they had crept through gaps in the British wire to lie down in no man's land and then, when the barrage lifted, they got to their feet and advanced. Before they had gone 100 yards they had been mown down by concentrated machine gun fire. Behind them the "Barnsley Pals", the 13th and 14th York and Lancaster, tried to get forward in support of the remnants, but met the same hail of fire and the attempt had to be abandoned.

The Somme battles would continue until halted by ever-more impossible ground conditions in November, but not an inch of ground would be gained at Serre. In that sector, few bodies were recovered until eight months later, when the Germans fell back to the even more strongly fortified positions of the Hindenburg Line in February 1917. 28 year-old Albert Webster from Railway Terrace, Penistone, an engineering dept. clerk from Guide Bridge, lies in Queens Cemetery, Puisieux but, as can be imagined, the remains of most of those that were eventually recovered lie beneath gravestones inscribed "Known unto God" and, along with those that never were recovered at all, are numbered among the more than 73,000 British soldiers listed on the Thiepval Memorial to those who died on the Somme but have no known grave. Of the Sheffield City Battalion, they include Edwin Stothard, formerly a clerk in the chief accountants dept.; 24 year-old John Burgon, from Endcliffe Vale Road, Sheffield but formerly a spare fireman at Mexborough; and Joe Bailey, a platelayer from Thurlestone. When the shocking news of the disaster was heard back home, the parents of another engineering dept. clerk, 22 year-old Archie Brammer from Carr Road, Walkley, desperately appealed for news of their missing son, but heard nothing until his body was eventually recovered and was one of the very few to be identified and laid to rest in the Railway Hollow Cemetery, Hebuterne. After the war Archie's friend and comrade, Lance Corporal Outram who survived the war as a PoW, described how he and Archie were amongst the last men standing when he glanced to his side and they exchanged waves. When he looked again, Archie had gone. Worsbrough platelayer John Hepplestone (14th York and Lancaster) was amongst the "Barnsley Pals" who died trying to support the attack, before the attempt was abandoned as hopeless. He too is listed on the Thiepval Memorial.

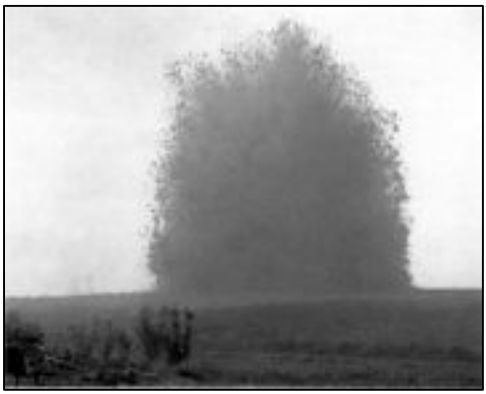
Only one battalion was honoured with the name of Sheffield, though there were men aplenty from Sheffield and South Yorkshire, including Great Central railwaymen, in other units. On 8th Division's front, to the south of Thiepval, 8th York and Lancaster and 8th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry's two leading waves had managed to cross the 400 yards of no man's land east from Authuille Wood at not too heavy a cost, pressing on to the second and, a few, even the third German line, before the defenders had time to reorganise themselves. But then the full fury of the German artillery and machine gun fire from Thiepval spur prevented all but a very few of the third and fourth waves, or of the 9th York and Lancaster and the 11th Sherwood Foresters, trying to move up in support, from even reaching the German front-line. From the 8th York and Lancaster, the dead included Private J. Harwood, formerly a goods guard at Wath who was laid to rest in Blighty Valley Cemetery, Authuille Wood. His comrades Harry Teat of Victoria Street, Doncaster, a 23 year-old checker from Conisbrough; Fred Depledge, a 25 year-old from Mexborough Loco. and Thomas Burgan of Lorna Road, Mexborough, also 25 years of age and from Mexborough Loco., have no known graves and are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

There was further grieving for Mexborough Loco. with the loss of former washer-outer William Brookes, along with 23 year-old Harry Hare of Netherfield Street, Sheffield, formerly with the engineering dept. Both were with the 9th York and Lancaster, both are listed on the Thiepval Memorial. The 11th Sherwood Foresters are represented by Walter Gibson, a 39 year-old sub-ganger from Arkwright Town who lived at the Gate House, The Green, Calow, Chesterfield – formerly the crossing keeper's cottage on the already closed ex-LD&ECR Calow Main colliery branch. Along with so many of his comrades he lies in Blighty Valley Cemetery, Authuille Wood.

The Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derbyshire Regiment) were severely tested to the north of the battlefield proper. With the aim of drawing German reserves away from the main battle front, there was no attempt at secrecy about a diversionary attack on the German-held salient at Gommecourt. In a two-pronged attack, along with 137 Brigade, 139 Brigade (comprising the 1/5th and 1/7th Sherwood Foresters with 1/6th in support) led 46th (North Midland) Division's attack on the northern face of the salient. The first three waves managed to enter the first German trench, with some even reaching the second line, but at a terrible cost. After the British barrage lifted the Germans emerged from their deep dugouts to ensure no reinforcement was possible, and in the evening the pitifully few survivors filtered back. They did not include 1/5th Battalion's Joe Bancroft, formerly a porter/goods guard at Nottingham or 1/7th Battalion's John Rhodes, formerly an Appleby slag heap labourer, both of whom are listed on the Thiepval Memorial. At least 1/6th Battalion's Lance Corporal Gibbons, once a stores deliverer from Chesterfield, does have a known grave, in the Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery.

It was a similar story on the south side of the salient where 56th (1/1st London) Division attacked. The first two German lines were taken without too heavy a loss, but then the attacking troops found themselves cut off from supply or reinforcement by an intense artillery barrage, and subject to furious counter attacks. The Germans had recovered their second line by 4pm, and at 9.30pm the surviving Londoners withdrew, suffering further heavy casualties as they again ran the gauntlet across no man's land. Former Marylebone goods clerk Albert Dawkes of 1/9th London (Queen Victoria Rifles) was amongst those who did not come back and, predictably, is another listed on the Thiepval Memorial. 21 year-old former Stockport Loco. cleaner John Kendall of the 5th Cheshire (56th Division's Pioneers) lies in Gommecourt British Cemetery No. 2.

Back on the main battle-front, opposite Beaumont Hamel, the barrage was ordered to be lifted and the Hawthorn Redoubt mine exploded a full ten minutes before 29th Division's attack at zero hour. The 1st Inniskilling Fusiliers attacked on the right, south of Y Ravine, but with the wire uncut they were mown down by machine gun fire, their heavy losses including former Gorton Works crane driver Joe Butler. The 1st Battalion, Border Regiment, joined in a second attempt at 8.05am, but met the same fate and 35 year-old Gorton shunter Sam Slack, from Bowness Street, Higher Openshaw, is also listed on the Thiepval Memorial. 1st Lancashire Fusiliers had no more success on 29th Division's left. Two companies attacked from a sunken lane in no man's land, the remainder from their front line. Absolutely none reached the German front line: Beaumont Hamel would not fall until November 13th in the final days of the offensive. The dead included James Turner, a 26 year-old Dukinfield helper, from Red Bank, Cheetham. He lies in Redan Ridge Cemetery No. 2, Beaumont Hamel.



The Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt mine was detonated 10 minutes before the infantry assault began.

A little further south, the "Grimsby Chums" (10th Lincolns), including a strong Great Central complement, were in the forefront of 34th Division's attack at zero hour, south of La Boisselle. They were met by heavy machine gun fire from their front, from La Boisselle on their left and from Sausage Valley (taking its name from the German observation balloon which floated above it) on their right, and within ten minutes had suffered 80% casualties. A party which tried to storm Sausage Redoubt was wiped out by flame-throwers and, apart from a toe-hold on the crater of the Lochnagar mine, exploded two minutes before zero hour, the 500 yards of no man's land could not be crossed. 33 year-old tug stoker William Kirk of David Street, 23 year-old goods porter George Ward of Harold Street, fish porter John Russell, and capstanman Christopher Marshall were amongst the dead, all listed on the Thiepval Memorial.

Likewise one-time marine dept. clerks 21 year old Maurice Pearson from Watkin Street, 18 year old Allan Grant of Kent Street, 19 year old Percy Oxley of Grafton Street, and 21 year old Jesse Hempstock of Rutland Street. Also 27 year old Henry Burrell of Humber Street, Cleethorpes, formerly a marine dept. clerk at Immingham, and William Coupland, an Ulceby timber loader, are listed on the Thiepval Memorial. 21 year old Percy Walker from The Fleece Hotel, Burgh (does it still exist?), formerly a clerk at Grimsby Docks, was one of the small minority to have a known grave. He lies in the Ovillers Military Cemetery.

To the "Grimsby Chums" right, during the last 5 minutes of the bombardment, 9th and 10th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry crawled out into no mans land to spear-head 64th Brigade's attack. They were met by heavy machine gun fire from Fricourt and enfiladed from south of La Boisselle, but pressed on and, joined by 15th Durham Light Infantry and 1st East Yorks., completed the capture of Crucifix trench, Lozenge Wood and Round Wood. No one knows at what point during the attack, or during the repelling of the inevitable counter-attack, that 9th KOYLI's Arthur Almond, a 24 year-old former Wombwell platelayer from Heelis Street, Barnsley, ex-Stockport carter John Hodgkinson and 30 year-old former Doncaster Marshgate shunter John Jeffrey, from St. John's Road, Balby, both of 10th KOYLI, died. They too are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

Only on the right flank of the attack, in the south, was there measurable success – possibly partly because of the support of the more potent French artillery. There, "Manchester Pals" Battalions were prominent in 30th Division's overrunning of Montauban and 7th Division's capture of Mametz. Before Montauban, the German wire had been well cut and, with many of the defenders still in their dugouts, 19th Manchester (4th Manchester Pals) of 21st Brigade suffered few fatalities occupying Alt Trench, though they included George Russell, a chief accountant's dept. clerk from Gorton. At 8.30am, 90th Brigade with 16th and 17th Manchester (1st and 2nd Manchester Pals), passed through 21st Brigade and advanced on Montauban, despite machine gun fire from Breslau Alley, which was eventually silenced by a 16th Manchester Lewis gunner. Under cover of a smokescreen, the Manchesters supported by 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers entered Montauban, then pressed on to their second objective in Montauban Alley. Finally, 16th Manchesters rushed the battery in Caterpillar Valley and captured the first three guns of the battle. Just when 16th Manchester's 19 year-old ex-Thompson McKay clerk Ernest Mainwaring and 22 year-old audit accounts dept. clerk Stanley Green fell is not known. Both are on the Thiepval Memorial.

7th Division's attack on Mametz was only slightly less successful. 22nd Manchester (7th Manchester Pals) and the 1st South Staffs. led 91 Brigade's attack across the 100-200 yards of no man's land and, despite machine gun fire from Mametz and Danzig Alley, advanced 700 yards until stopped by stiffening opposition. 2nd Queen's then joined the Manchesters to continue their advance while 21st Manchester (6th Manchester Pals) combined with the South Staffs to push forward into the centre of Mametz and complete the capture of Danzig Alley. 22nd Manchester's former Gorton labourer Private W. Redfern lies in the Danzig Alley British Cemetery, his comrades Edward Davies, a former Ashbury platelayer, 25 year-old Thompson McKay clerk George Heaps from Peru Street, Salford and 26 year-old William Nadin of Carlton Terrace, Gorton, formerly a shunter at Guide Bridge, have taken their places on the Thiepval Memorial, along with 21st Manchester's 20 year-old former chief accountants dept. clerk Harold Kemp from Sherborne Road, Cheadle Heath.

7th Division was only held up on its left, with the neighbouring 21st Division's attacking waves being virtually annihilated before Fricourt. 7th Division's leftmost battalion, the 20th Manchesters (the 5th Manchester Pals) suffered almost as badly and could only hang on where they stood. Their losses included former Guide Bridge wagon examiner Private W. Taylor and 28 year-old Allen Shaw, formerly a chief accountants dept. clerk from Muslin Street, Newton, Hyde. Both lie in the Danzig Alley British Cemetery. Just to their right, 2nd Border were able to wheel to their left, taking Hidden Lane to provide a defensive flank, their losses including former Widnes shunter Sergeant Henry Jeffery – another name on the Thiepval Memorial. The Borderers managed to stop the machine gun fire from Mametz Wood and Hidden Wood, but they could not prevent a murderous machine gun fire from Fricourt enfilading the 9th Devonshire, to their right. Despite their losses, the Devonshires stormed the German front line and even part of the support trench 250 yards beyond, together with the adjoining communication trench, before returning to create the long and narrow 'Devonshire

Cemetery', burying their 160 dead in their old front line trench, beside which a plaque poignantly reads "The Devonshires held this trench, the Devonshires hold it still." They include Willie Best from Ealing, a 22 year-old Marylebone goods clerk.

This list is not exhaustive. By the end of that dreadful July 1st, 1916, 56 Great Central railwaymen were dead, of whom just 15 have known graves. The remaining 41 either lie in graves "known unto God", or still lie where they fell, statistics suggest roughly half and half. This is hallowed ground indeed. The missing, as noted, are listed on the Thiepval Memorial, that awesome, unlovely monument to the futility and utter wastefulness of war which demands with an insistence that cannot be denied, that "WE WILL REMEMBER THEM".

Opened on 31 July 1932 by the Prince of Wales, the Thiepval memorial was and remains the largest British war memorial in the world. The memorial contains the names of 73,357 British and South African men who have no known grave and who fell on the Somme between 1 July 1916 and 20 March 1918. 150ft high and dominating the surrounding area, the memorial was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. The building of the memorial created a degree of controversy at the time among former soldiers for its cost and scale, being commonly perceived as a waste of money better spent on the veterans themselves. The accompanying cemetery at the rear of the memorial unusually contains both British and French burials - 300 of each - to commemorate the joint Anglo-French Somme action, French burials on the left and British on the right.

photo : Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Editor's note : Recommended reading for anyong interesting in learning more about the events of 1st July 1916 is *'First Day on the Somme'* by Martin Middlebrook. This was reprinted in 2006 by Penguin.

An article by Ken Grainger on the GC war dead has been accepted for publication in a future issue of the railway historical magazine BackTrack.

Postcard showing the 'Great Central Ward' at the Railwaymens Convalescent Home at Herne Bay.
photo : Brian Slater Collection

From the *Great Central Railway Journal* Sept. 1912.

THE RAILWAYMEN'S

CONVALESCENT HOMES,

HERNE BAY, KENT.

AND

LEASOWE CASTLE, CHESHIRE.

Owned by the Railwaymen of the United Kingdom.
Managed by the Railwaymen of the United Kingdom.
For the Railwaymen of the United Kingdom.

The only Homes for Railwaymen in the Country which will give you a Fortnight's Rest and Change, when Convalescent.

Absolutely without Charge.

2,460 patients admitted during 1911. Ask any one of them what his opinion of "The Home" is

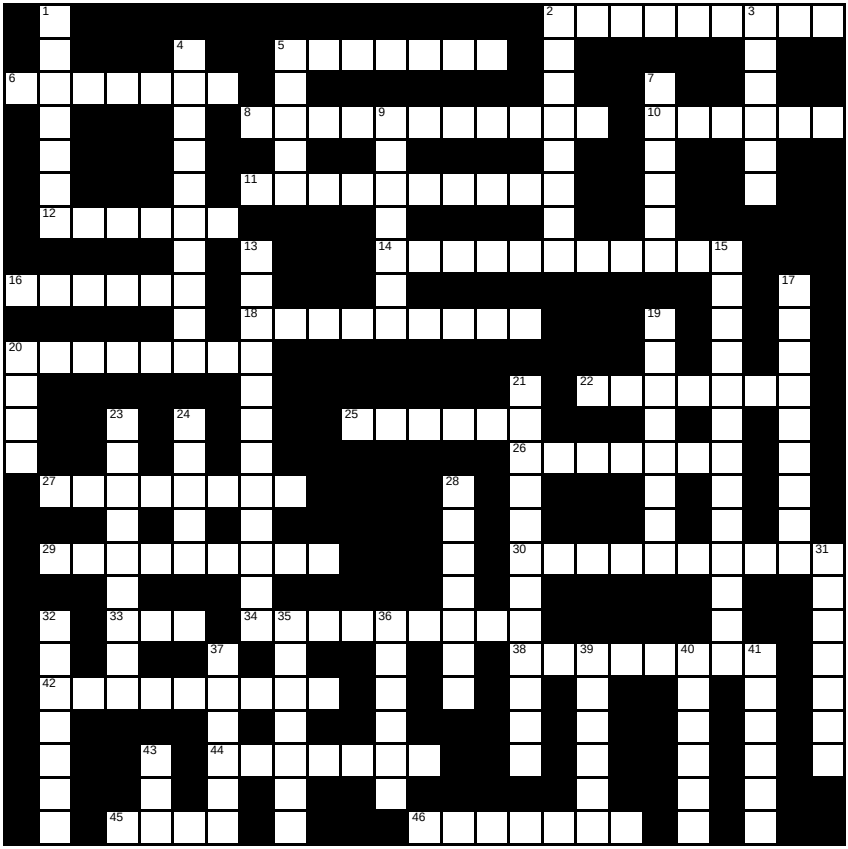
Trustee for G.C.R. Staff - Mr. JNO. CROSSLEY, Booking Office, Marylebone Station, N.W.

Sheffield Victoria station Spring 1969. EM1 E26049 1500v dc electric on a north bound freight.

Sheffield Victoria station September 1969. EM1 E26055, named *Prometheus*, stands in the centre road waiting to take over the Manchester train from Peak diesel D92 which is arriving from the south. Trains were diverted over the Woodhead route because of tunnel work on the Midland main line north of Chesterfield. The Class 47 in the distance waits to take the next southbound arrival from Manchester.

Sheffield Victoria station 5th June 1968. EM1 E26055, named *Mentor* and in green livery, prior to my departure for Manchester Picadilly and a visit to Patricroft shed. Thirteen EM1s, including the original LNER 26000, were fitted with boilers for heating passenger stock. The remaining non-boiler fitted EM1s were confined to freight workings.

Crossword (*Forward* 153) : Answers in the next issue



Across

2 Town station on the LD&ECR. (9)
5 Point of connection between the GC and GWR. (7)
6 Goods depot near Guide Bridge. (7)
8 GC company solicitor. (5,6)
10 Home of the editor. (6)
11 Scottish home of a GC director. (10)
12 The Place at the end of the LD&ECR. (6)
14 GC coach and wagon works. (11)
16 Robinson's oil burning system. (6)
18 Dock built by the GC. (9)
20 Longest tunnel on the GC. (8)
22 Once a flat crossing, now a dive-under. (7)
25 The G in J.G.Robinson. (6)
26 Had two stations - LD&ECR and GNR. (7)
27 LNER Class D10. (8)
29 Became Lord Faringdon. (9)
30 Crushed. (10)
33 Author of trilogy on GCR. (3)

34 On the Sheffield branch of LD&ECR and a GCRS meeting place. (9)
38 LNER Class D11 compared to D10. (8)
42 A railway that formed part of the Nottingham-Edwinstowe route. (9)
44 Once had three stations - Town, Docks and Pier. (7)
45 Alight at Newton for this place. (4)
46 GC motto. (7)

Down

1 Town served by GC, GWR and Cambrian. (7)
2 A flying junction. (8)
3 The 'Tank'. (6)
4 Thomas Monkton's station. (10)
5 A Met. & GC joint branch. (5)
7 Nickname for the only GC 2-6-0 class. (6)
9 GC's top shed? (7)
13 Original terminus in Sheffield for the SA&M. (12)
15 Station at east end of Woodhead tunnel. (7,6)
17 Point at which Sheffield-Marylebone trains left the original MS&L main line. (9)
19 Station adjacent to Keadby bridge. (8)
20 Home of the 'Daisies'. (4)
21 Their long-distance commuter services competed with the GCR out of Marylebone. (12)
23 Name by which LNER class B3 was known. (9)
24 Craig's successor on the MS&L. (5)
28 Junctions that form a triangle with Glossop Junction. (7)
31 Present limit of the GC line north of Sheffield Victoria. (7)
32 Stadium station once served by a loop line. (7)
35 His last design was a 'Single'. (7)
36 Location of a Scherzer bridge. (6)
37 Not double. (6)
39 Was promoted from Duckinfield to Gorton. (6)
40 Once the northern limit of Metropolitan services. (6)
41 Partner of Dean. (6)
43 Sir Sam. (3)

Cast iron corner

A Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway (MSJ&AR) bridgeplate. This line was a joint line of the GCR and LNWR. Black lettering on a white ground.

Readers forum

from Bill Gee : 'Tandridge', 17 Lawn Way, Felixstowe IP11 7TG

Re. *Forward 149* p6 – 'Private Sidings of the LD&ECR' by Lawson Little

During the early 1960s a Retford O2 or O4 was diagrammed for the BP oil train from Tuxford Central to Pumpherston, near Edinburgh, during the early evening. The loco worked to York but the crew only went as far as Doncaster. Several years later the oil terminal was moved to Bilsthorpe. The train then travelled via Mansfield en route to Scotland and class 4F no. 44154 was observed on this working. Local oil production ceased and the traffic was discontinued circa 1987/9.

from George Huxley, Church Enstone

Re. *Forward* 151 p41 line 36 : 'Footplate Memories at Aylesbury Town Loco – Part 2' by Jack Turner

I have found Jack Turner's two articles very informative and enjoyable. However there is one slight error. He describes 'coming off the joint line' at Neasden South Junction. This line, from Northolt Junction to Neasden, was owned solely by the GCR and later by the LNER. The signals between Northolt and Neasden were GC lower quadrant and later LNER upper quadrant until their replacement by colour lights. The GW&GC Joint had signals of a GW design.

Re. *Forward 152* p22 – 'The Great Central as I knew it' by Cecil J. Allen

Cecil J. Allen mentions that the Underground station at Marylebone was at first called 'Great Central'. It is still possible to see at Marylebone station on the Bakerloo Line evidence of the original name. At the Edgware Road end of the northbound platform, in glazed tiles, the name 'Great Central' is to be seen in brown letters against a cream background.

Allen's article is a poignant reminder of the loss of a fine main line, now urgently needed, and of the folly of those who closed it.

from Richard Graham, Wembley

Re. *Forward 151* p44 – The end of 'Crocker's Folly'

The statement that 'Crocker's Folly' (formerly 'The Crown'), Aberdeen Place, NW8, has been demolished is untrue. On 7th July the building was intact, although there was no longer an inn sign. I understand that it is a grade 2* listed building.

Years ago, I had thought that the tale of Mr Crocker's alleged suicide sounded rather fishy and had started my own research into the story. However, my researches were rendered redundant when Dr Geoff Brandwood of English Heritage published the true story in *Forward* 122 (page 17).

from Lawson Little, Newark

Re. *Forward 152* cover photo caption

It is most unlikely that the railwayman in the photo was a 'ganger'. My dad worked on the permanent way and often pointed out to me this common error in railway publications. The 'ganger' was the man in charge of a team of p.w. workers with a 'sub-ganger' as deputy. Members of the team were 'platelayers'. In addition there were also 'lengthmen' whose main task it was to walk a specified section of track, each day if possible, replacing keys on the bullhead track, oiling points and looking out for any irregularities in the track e.g. dips or cant anomalies. The railwayman in the photo is probably a lengthsman.

Editor's note – It seems incredible in this age of H&S that a solitary worker without any high visibility clothing was expected to walk the tracks, dodging out of the way of oncoming trains.

Re. *Forward* 152 p29 – 'The Bolsover Tragedy of Christmas Eve 1910' by Bill Taylor

The article by Bill Taylor on the Bolsover tragedy of 1910 was fascinating and entirely new to me. Although I travelled on the line daily from 1945 to 1951 I never heard reference to the incident, though doubtless it would have still have been remembered by older local residents.

One small point; the area on the south side of the line was Carr Vale, and that on the north was New Bolsover. The latter was an interesting early example of a "model village", being built around 1893 by an unusually enlightened Colliery Company and incorporating open outlooks over green fields or parkland for every one of the 194 houses, as well as schools, chapel, Post Office and Co-op store.

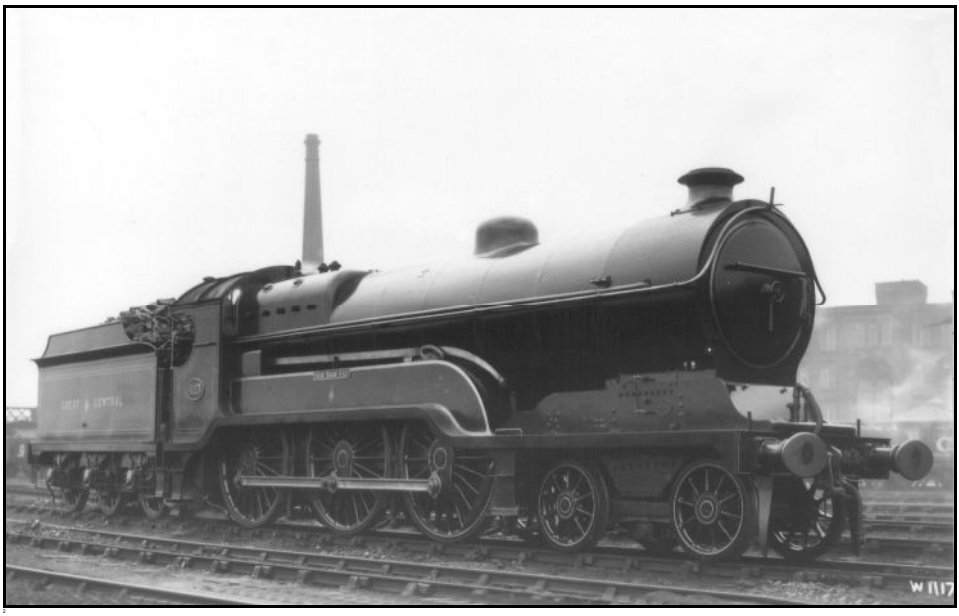
However its main interest for me was the provision of a narrow-gauge tramway from the colliery through the streets of New Bolsover. This horse-drawn line, of 2ft-gauge or thereabouts, was used to deliver the miners coal allowance (one ton per household per month) during the day, and the removal of 'night soil' during the hours of darkness. Whether the same wagons were used is not now known! The line fell into disuse when mains drainage was introduced, coal then being delivered by lorry, but the track was still intact in 1954 and may be there still, under the tarmac.

from B. J. Harding, Amersham

Re. *Forward 152* p2 – Editorial by Bob Gellatly

Edward Thompson was Gresley's successor in 1941 and the first A2 (later A2/3) no. 500 (later no. 60500) was named after him on his retirement at Marylebone Station on 31st May 1946. This was the 2000th locomotive built at Doncaster Works. Thompson's successor in 1946 was A. H. Peppercorn and his first A2 no. 525 (later no. 60525) was named after him at Marylebone station on 18th December 1947. His A1 Pacifics were built after nationalisation in 1948/9.

A case for digital editing? See the back cover photo for the result.



GCR class 1 4-6-0 no. 423 *Sir Sam Fay* with a Fred Dibnah safety valve.

Rear cover caption

The first of the GCR class 1 4-6-0s, no. 423, was named *Sir Sam Fay* after the Chairman of the company. Here no. 423, in immaculate condition, is captured by W.H. Whitworth at Guide Bridge.

photo : W.H. Whitworth (W1117) / Real Photographs