

# FORWARD



Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 155

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Front cover caption

LNER class A5 4-6-2T no.5129 near Little Missenden with a Marylebone-Aylesbury local. Date unknown.

Photo: GCRS Collection



# The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 155 ~ March 2008

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Please make a note in your diaries for the AGM at Northwich on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May. Information about getting to the venue is on the opposite page. Our AGMs are not dry boring affairs but provide an opportunity for members to meet each other, discuss the business of the GCRS and listen to an excellent speaker. We vary the location to enable some members to attend who might not be able to otherwise. It is also that time of year when our Treasurer/Membership Secretary would like to receive your annual subscription. These remain the same as last year - £12 for UK residents and £16 for those living abroad. Prompt payment does help the society's finances.

On the subject of the Study Centre/Archive, the lack of positive news does not mean that we have not been trying to address the problem. Proposals to locate the archive with the Sheffield Libraries have not proved acceptable. We are now awaiting developments at Loughborough where the Great Central Railway have plans to buy and restore the Goods Office adjacent to the station. This would be an ideal location.

Instead of the usual 'Members and their Models' feature (please keep them coming), this issue contains colour photos taken at Gainsborough Model Railway. This layout has been mentioned before in Forward and I make no apology for giving it another recommendation. You can find this year's Open Day dates on page 48.

I recently sampled a ride on Chiltern Railways from Marylebone to Aylesbury - out via Princes Risborough on a class 168 'Clubman' and back via Rickmansworth on a class 165. Did you know that you can travel from Marylebone to Birmingham for £6 if you download your ticket onto your mobile? Ideal for techno-wizard students but perhaps not so good for GCRS members! The MD of Chiltern Railways is Adrian Shooter. He has a fantastic garden railway on his estate in Oxfordshire. If you turn to page 9 you will find an invitation to visit this private railway on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May. It could be a busy weekend!

It is indicative of our times that the fact that Chiltern Railways is owned by Deutsche Bahn AG hardly raises an eyebrow. I wonder what those GCR war heroes described by Ken Grainger on page 16 would have thought about it?

Several members have contacted me recently about the proposals by National Grid to use the 'new' tunnel at Woodhead for cables. You can find information on this debate on page 36. If this happens it could well be the end of any future rail use for the Woodhead tunnel.



Chiltern Railways 'Clubman' set 168215 waits to leave Marylebone with the 15:20 service to Birmingham Snow Hill on 24 Jan. 2008. photo: Bob Gellatly

The response by readers to the inclusion of colour in the last issue of Forward has been extremely positive. Thanks must be extended to our printers for doing such an excellent job.

You may have noticed that the amount of material for 'Readers' forum' is now at a healthy level. This was my plea at the last AGM and I am grateful to those who have responded. This is your magazine and the more members who contribute, the better it will be.

Welcome to the following new members

Mr D. Fairest, Sheffield  
Mr R. Coulson, Market Rasen  
Mr J.B. Fisher, Stockport

Mr D.B. Witney, Polegate  
Mr J. Emmerson, Grimsby

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

In accordance with Section 7(a) of the Society constitution, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at The Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5RB starting at 11.00am.

Under Section 9 of the constitution proposals for changes to the constitution, properly signed by the proposer and seconder, should be sent to the Secretary to reach him no later than 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

Under Section 5(c) nominations for the committee, signed by the proposer and seconder and made with the agreement of the nominee, should be sent to the Secretary to reach him no later than 19<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

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

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

Brian Slater, Secretary

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## Further information for those attending the AGM

The Gladstone Club (Station Road CW9 5RB) is a short walk (300m) from Northwich Railway Station. Follow Station Road towards the town centre and you will see the Gladstone Club, set back from the road, immediately before reaching the Chester Way roundabout. Northwich Station is served by the hourly Manchester Piccadilly-Chester local service via Stockport and Altrincham. The 09:24 departure from Manchester arrives at Northwich at 10:16. The fare is £8.10 for a day return ticket.

If travelling by car from the south, exit the M6 at junction 18 and follow the A54/A530/B5082. As you pass Northwich Station, the B5082 becomes Station Road. Turn left into the Gladstone Club car park just before the Chester Way roundabout. Travellers from the north should exit the M6 at junction 19 and follow the A556/A559 to Northwich. Before reaching the town centre turn left onto Station Road (B5082) at the roundabout and immediately turn right into the Gladstone Club car park.

The doors will open at 10.30am for an 11am start. Food will be available at the venue at lunchtime or you may prefer to sample the local cuisine. The afternoon session will start at 2pm and will consist of a talk by Bill Chapman on 'Railways Around Nottingham in the 1960s'. We aim to finish the day at 4.15pm.

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If you intend using the train to travel to Northwich, you may be interested in purchasing the GMPTE Wayfarer. This is a scratchcard day ticket that allows unlimited travel by bus, tram and train in Manchester and surrounding areas, including Northwich. It can be purchased at railway booking offices and bus stations but not on the train. It can also be obtained by post from Wayfarer Ticket Sales, GMPTE, Wythenshawe Bus Station, Rowlandsway, Manchester M22 5RG. Cost of an adult ticket is £8.80 and a concession ticket (60+) is £4.40 (send photocopy of proof of age). Payment is by cheque made out to 'GMPTE'. There is no time restriction on Saturday travel.



## A Station Master's Memories of Finmere : Part 1

by Gerald Summerfield

As a schoolboy during the Second World War my family moved from the Midlands to Harrow due to my father having received promotion to Watford Junction as a Relief Station Master in 1942. My schooling continued at Harrow adjacent to the Met & GC line between Northwick Park and Harrow-on-the-Hill stations, where I was able to hear and occasionally see steam trains passing on the adjacent lines. As I was a keen engine number taker at this time it was not long before I started to find out more about the LNER trains that were passing so close to the school. I eventually found out that the trains in question were using the original GC main line from London Marylebone to Manchester. Marylebone was to figure in my later railway life, but that is another story. It was during this period that I came into contact with other pupils who were also keen number takers. In fact one is still a friend to this day.

In 1944 my education came to an end and I followed my father's footsteps onto the railway as a Junior Booking Clerk at Kenton on the Euston to Watford electrified line run by the LMS Railway. To cut a long story short, after working at most LMS stations between Euston and Tring, and South Acton to Hampstead Heath on Relief Clerk duties and taking my Block Signalling Rules and Regulation examinations, I started to put in for junior Station Master's positions anywhere on the London Midland Region, as by now Nationalisation had taken place and I was still a single man, albeit I was engaged to a pretty young lady. I was interviewed at Crewe, Derby, Leeds and London for various posts and eventually in 1952 I was told that I was to be appointed to the Station Master's position at Finmere on the ex-GC line. There was one snag however, the ex-GC line was working to the LNER Rules etc and Finmere was still under the DOS at Kings Cross (evacuated to Knebworth for the duration of the war and was still in existence in 1952) but I was only cleared for knowledge of the LMS Rules etc as the BR Rules had not at that time been agreed and issued. Therefore, before I could take up the job, I had to go to Kings Cross and be re-examined on the differences between the two sets of working. This filled me with some trepidation as my LMS rules interview had lasted some four hours! On this occasion I was asked whether I wanted the Signalling Regulations first, followed by the Rules and finishing up with the Appendix Instructions or some other order of my choice. They were the days!

As it turned out I passed all of these and in the early spring of 1952 I found myself on the platform at Harrow-on-the-Hill station waiting for the morning stopping train to Leicester to take me to Finmere, arriving there at 10.00am. I had attained at this time the ripe old age of 23yrs! On arrival I was met by the Relief Station Master and after he had shown me the emergency cross-over roads and introduced me to the Signalman and the Porter on duty, I found some lodgings up the road in the local Post Office in the village of Newton Purcell as Finmere village itself was about 1½ miles away towards Buckingham. He then told me he was leaving on the 1.10pm to go home and he wished me all the best. What he



Gerald with his dog 'Cymru in the garden at Finmere in 1953.

failed to say was that the Assistant DOS and his Staff Officer were coming by road that afternoon from Knebworth to look at the station for economies to be made in the staffing levels! Before their arrival I just had time to find out that I was the youngest member of staff and the others varied between late thirties and sixty four. The next youngest was the lady clerk and the oldest being one of the Signalmen. In answer to their questions I pointed out that I had only been there for three hours and I would look at their requests in due course. I also found out that the local Control Room was at High Wycombe (WR) and that the local Commercial Office was at Leicester (LM). A real cocktail of different regional practices.

My uniform was one of my father's, suitably altered at short notice by my mother who was a very good seamstress. My first impressions of the station and its workings were to the effect that in comparison with some of the other stations I had applied for and not been appointed to, Finmere was much busier than I had expected. The station was originally called 'Finmere for Buckingham', the latter town being just over 4 miles away. The station itself was in Oxfordshire and the stations to the north and south were in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire respectively. It was of the standard GC type layout - an island platform with one set of buildings to cater for both direction passengers. Access was from the the Buckingham to Bicester road which passed under the railway at the south end of the station.

Apart from the well known history of the slip coach being dealt with in the down direction, long since gone when I arrived, the only remaining relic from those days was a metal bracket suspended from the platform canopy to which a lamp used to be attached as an indication to the 'driver' of the slip coach that he should bring it to a stand as near to it as possible. The bracket was removed during my time there when the station was repainted in LMR colours in place of the former LNER style. The only other piece of history that remained to the day I left was the retention of a wooden building just south of the road underbridge which was in use as a store, but during the Second World War had been used and staffed by the army as an RTO (Railway Transport Office). The need for this was because Finmere was the nearest station to a fairly large army camp at Tingewick. This camp was still in use in 1952 and some members of the GCRS may even have been stationed there during the Z Reservist days right up to 1955. Reservists had to do training in the forces in the spring and summer, and during the change over of the soldiers, which took place every two weeks, the station dealt with over 300 soldiers on a Sunday. In addition, the regular soldiers kept the station busy at all times with their comings and goings on leave or on transfer.

On the freight side the station was used for the transfer of various army vehicles and equipment in addition to the, what was in those days, usual farm commodities and livestock, including the storage and eventual hiring out during the harvest period of several thousand grain sacks which involved quite a lot of clerical work tracing their whereabouts until they were handed back to the railways at some distant station. What can happen to a sack will be recounted in a later instalment!

The main passenger-rated parcels traffic was in the form of newspapers for Buckingham, for which reason the 03.20 Marylebone to Nottingham train stopped at 05.15, followed by hundreds of baskets of racing pigeons which were received and released every year. These mainly came from the North. On the forwarding side the main income in this category was the despatch daily, except Sundays, of dozens of tins of maggots to fishing clubs and shops throughout the UK. The so called 'Maggot Factory' was sited about two miles from the station. How these were produced is another story.

As the army pulled out of Tingewick Camp, so the USAF moved into the wartime aerodrome at Finmere. They used it for the storage of redundant bombs, prior to their despatch to the deep or to other ordnance depots. This involved the receipt of at least one or two bomb specials a week, complete with their armed escort in case anyone wanted to highjack the train! These trains came mainly from East Anglia as the Americans cleared their airfields used during the invasion of Europe. They were usually made up of about 30-35 wagons with two brake vans, one for the railway guard at the rear and the other next to the engine for the military guards. This caused problems when the trains were reversed at Calvert as the bomb specials had come from the Cambridge direction via Bedford and Bletchley. Later on when all the army and air force work had ended the freight side was kept busy by a local firm taking over 90% of the goods yard for dealing with scrap metal and surplus railway sleepers and rails which were received and despatched by rail.

The following account sets out some of the more unusual things that can and did go wrong with the everyday life of a country station and how the Station Master was expected to be capable of dealing with them all immediately. All these events did happen but they are not necessarily in strict date order. Besides the daily routine of balancing the cash and sending it away to be banked at Brackley, checking the freight side of the station and the daily visit to the signal box to see that all was well with the running of the trains, it was inevitable that from time to time things went wrong with the running of trains or the staff involved therewith.

On my arrival at Finmere the main freight flow was, as I have already said, of a military nature. Thus the goods yard was nearly always very busy and the scheduled two shunts a day were at times not sufficient to deal with the shunting required to enable the unloading of the wagons to proceed all day long without bringing the army or air force personnel to a stand. Special arrangements had then to be made with High Wycombe Control to get wagons repositioned. Whilst shunting was going on, the loading or unloading had to cease. One of the porters who had a wicked sense of humour did on one occasion, just prior to the movement of a string of wagons from which 200 pound bombs were being unloaded by American air force personnel, go along the line of wagons and place about twenty out-of-date detonators under the wheels so that as soon as they were moved a series of explosions went off. He had of course warned the train driver and guard and also the signalman but not me or the Americans! The result of these explosions was for the American airmen to abandon their usual relaxed way of unloading the wagons and make an undignified fast exit from the station yard. Within a few minutes a very irate American Officer came fuming into my office wanting to know if I would sack the person involved in such an incident on the spot and for an immediate apology from me for the goings on! Needless to say he got neither.

On another occasion I was almost marched from my office by an officer for refusing to evacuate the whole station when an incendiary bomb (a type that explodes on contact with the atmosphere without a detonator and blows burning phosphorus over a large area) was found to be leaking when the wagon in which it had arrived was opened up for transfer of the contents to a lorry. I said that if he was staying to supervise the moving of the bomb, so was I, to see that the railway was properly protected and trains stopped from passing through whilst his men did the necessary with the offending bomb. The bomb was sometime later transferred to a lorry and was escorted from the station to the aerodrome escorted by two or three fire tenders spraying the bomb all the time with foam.

On the passenger side of the station, the movement of troops into and out of the depot gave the station a welcome source of revenue from the men that were able to go home on a Friday afternoon and return late on a Sunday evening. The men were brought to the station by lorry and on one occasion a soldier was knocked down by a passing car at the entrance to the station and severely injured, thus bringing my wife's First Aid knowledge into action whilst I arranged for an ambulance to be called. He was so badly hurt that he was laid by the roadside in her arms for almost half an hour because we were so far from the nearest ambulance station. I learned later that he was invalided out of the army on medical grounds as he never fully recovered from his injuries.

In addition to the regular servicemen there was at that time a system of Reservists, known as the "Z" reserves, and these men had to undergo 14 days training a year and Tingewick Barracks was one of the camps they were sent to, which meant using Finmere Station. So from Easter through to September about 500 men would arrive on a Sunday from all parts of the country and return home again two weeks later. It was on one of these weekends that the Engineer had blocked the line for repairs and maintenance and passengers were being taken by bus from my station to the next one on the London side, Calvert, and as was normal practice on such occasions of closure, two double-decker buses had been laid on. The time of reporting to the camp by the reservists was 16.00 hours, which meant that all the men from the South would use the 11.20 from Marylebone, due at Finmere at 13.05, as the next train did not arrive until after 19.00. Despite advising the District Office of the intake of troops they did not strengthen the buses, so on the day, the Calvert Station Master was left with about 200 fully kitted-up soldiers trying get on two buses! His and my reports to the District Office on the Monday were not very complimentary. We eventually managed to move the troops, with the help of a local coach firm, after about 2½ hours delay.

The number of regular troops using the station when returning from leave on a Sunday night always exceeded the number that went out on a Friday evening and I put this down to the fact that there was not a suitably timed train to London on a Friday. Some soldiers managed to catch the 16.02, but the next one did not leave until 21.10. On making enquiries of the camp I found that the majority of the troops were not able to leave the camp until after 17.00. There was an up express due through at just after 18.00 and I made arrangements for this train to be stopped on a Friday to pick up passengers only, or so I thought! On the first day that the arrangement should have worked, and with a platform full of soldiers and some officers, the up express went through at its usual speed of about 60mph! Was my face red! Urgent calls to the Control Office at High Wycombe resulted in the Aylesbury - Calvert local train being extended to Finmere and the passengers changing at Aylesbury onto the Metropolitan Line service rather than wait at Finmere for another three hours. I am happy to say that on subsequent weeks the train did stop because, contrary to the rules, I told the signalman to keep the signals at danger just to make sure! The District Office was of course not told that part of the story.

Some of the work at the army camp was being done by 'Displaced Personnel'. They were men who had fled across Europe and eventually found their way to England but for one reason or another could not return to their own country, so they were housed in a camp near to the army base and were employed by the Government. They came from Poland, Hungary etc, and they used the station to go on visits to London and Aylesbury for recreational purposes. It was on the return of one of these men on the last train from Aylesbury on a Saturday night that he was knocked down by an up express at the north end of the station. In answer to my question of the porter who called me out from home as to whether the services of my wife's First Aid would be of any help, his reply was, "Only if she is any good at putting back a person's head on their shoulders if it could be found!" It was found on the locomotive buffer beam nearly two miles away at the point where the train had come to a stand. The subsequent coroner's court, which was held in the general waiting room of the station some weeks later, recorded a verdict of Accidental Death. The driver of the train came from Leicester Central depot and after having tea with us following the inquest, in which he was exonerated from all blame, he never passed through Finmere without giving us a wave and when on the down line and seeing us in the garden in the Spring or Summer would always hold up his tea mug! Such was the friendship I found among all the former Great Central line staff.



Finmere station photographed by S.W.A.Newton in June 1904. The station staff are posed on the down platform. © English Heritage

## Open Day at the Beeches Light Railway

An invitation is extended to GCRS members and their partners by Adrian Shooter to visit the Beeches Light Railway at his home in Oxfordshire on Sunday 11th May 2008. To accept this offer, members must send a cheque (made out to 'M.Hartley') for £25 per person to Mike Hartley, 7 Donnington Gardens, Scunthorpe DN16 7RJ. Lunch will be provided.

Despite its name, this 2ft gauge garden railway is modelled on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway of India, as can be seen from the photo below.



DHR no.19 at the Beeches Light Railway.

photo: Alex Morley

By coincidence David Charlesworth, the railway artist whose picture of Staveley was featured in the last issue of Forward, has contacted the editor to publicise the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society. David is the editor of their magazine The Darjeeling Mail. You can find out more by visiting their website at [www.dhrs.org](http://www.dhrs.org) or by contacting the membership secretary - Janine Bird, Bryn Rhyd, Betws Garmon, Caernarfon LL54 7YR (e-mail: [membership@dhrs.org](mailto:membership@dhrs.org)).

David has also provided further contact information for those wishing to purchase his artwork.

website: [www.davidcharlesworthart.com](http://www.davidcharlesworthart.com)

e-mail: [david@notions.co.uk](mailto:david@notions.co.uk)

tel.: 01246 237729

David Charlesworth's painting of a train on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.



## Update on Aylesbury Vale Parkway

from an article in the 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2007 edition of the Bucks Advertiser by Callam Jones submitted by Des Jenkins

### "Full Steam Ahead"

Work has officially started on building a new railway track that will run from Aylesbury town station to the new Aylesbury Vale Parkway train station. Last weekend, existing track was removed and work began on installing around one mile of new railway line which will be used by trains running to and from Aylesbury Vale Parkway. Despite poor weather, Bucks County Council said the work, carried out on the section of track between the A41 Fleet Marston bridge and Rabans Lane, went to schedule. The new station is currently scheduled to open in 2010 but is dependent on the construction of the Berryfields development, as the station only becomes viable once 40 per cent of the housing is occupied. However, the financing of the railway line improvement works is time constrained and the funding from central government must be spent by March 31, 2008. Recent work has seen a significant amount of track, ballast and other material delivered to site via rail which will now be utilised in the installation of the new track. Once the newly installed track is complete, a ballast cleaner will then clean the existing ballast, remove any poor quality ballast and recycle it back into the track bed. Work is being carried out at the weekend as this is the only time available to take possession of the track and enable the works to be undertaken safely.

The next two weekends will see more work being undertaken on installing new track between Rabans Lane and Griffin Lane. The works being undertaken over this weekend will not involve large machinery and will centre on tensioning the continuous welded rail and fine tuning the alignment of the track. Cabinet member for transportation, Valerie Letheren, said: "The project has progressed well to date and with the installation of the new track we will start to see this exciting project really begin to take shape. The necessary work will involve large machinery which will cause noise and we hope that residents can bear with us during these times."

Editor's note : It's amusing how newspaper editors try to come up with snappy headlines. In this case I wish it was true. A class A5 tank loco would do nicely!

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## Mid Cheshire Steam Rail Day - Sunday 4th May 2008

To celebrate 40 years since the last steam passenger train travelled the Middlewich Branch, the 2008 Mid Cheshire Steam Rail Day will include the journey between Crewe and Northwich via Sandbach and the Middlewich Branch. The train will be hauled by Stanier class 8F no. 48151, a regular visitor to Northwich and the Mid Cheshire Line in the 1960s. The itinerary will also include the usual two return journeys between Altrincham and the historic city of Chester via Delamere Forest.

Bookings can be made on-line at [www.railday.org.uk](http://www.railday.org.uk) or by phoning 07825 681583. A few tickets will be kept for sale on the day at Crewe, Chester and Nantwich.

P.S. Highly recommended by Ken Grainger!



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## The Great Central Railway on the Internet

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/david.enefer>

A collection of railway photos by David Enefer and others which includes 'A Lincolnshire Railways Gallery'. This is quite comprehensive, including all the former GC lines of north Lincolnshire. David Willerton has also contributed a few pictures showing freight in Grimsby. Well worth a browse.

[www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/stations](http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/stations)

Information on over 1,000 disused stations has been put together by Nick. Here you can find a short history, a map and a photo of each station. Includes many former GC stations.

# Watkin and the South Wales Dream

by Michael Minter Taylor

With the passing of the Welsh Railways Through Traffic Act in 1889, Sir Edward Watkin must have seen the riches of the South Wales coalfield as a goal to be achieved by his cross-Pennine railway, the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. There were obstacles in the way but he thought, no doubt, that by making allies of the smaller Welsh companies, he could create an alliance that would join his system right through to Swansea, at the same time restricting the advances of the GWR, LNWR, and the Midland, in Wales.

That same year Sir Edward became Chairman of the Neath and Brecon. Prior to his appointment the railway had been 'managed' by the Midland under an agreement dated 5th July 1877. This situation was due to end on 30th June 1889. Watkin, who had taken up office on 27th Feb. 1889, was unhappy with the way the Midland was 'milking' the N&B for its exclusive use of the 29 miles main line. Negotiations for the extension of the agreement beyond 30th June 1889 were suddenly broken off on 21st June; the Midland ceased to operate the railway on 1st July 1889 and within five days MS&L traffic was operating on the Neath and Brecon.

That year, 1889, also saw the passing of the Wirral Railway Act. Previously the Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay Railway had joined up with the Wirral to create a line between Hawarden Bridge and Bidston on Merseyside, but the two companies could not afford to take matters further. The Act was passed on 12th August 1889, whereby the Wirral's interest in the scheme was transferred to the MS&L. With this railway's support, the WM&CQ had secured links towards Birkenhead, Liverpool, Manchester and Chester. The Cheshire Lines Committee, with its links between Chester and the Welsh border, would also be able to assist in Watkin's battle to gain the South Wales coal traffic. It should be noted that William Pollitt, General Manager of the MS&L, was also Chairman of the WM&CQ, and his colleague James William Maclure was a director of both companies.

Now Maclure, a close friend of Sir Edward, had also secured a place on the Cambrian Railways board. How did this help Watkin's aspirations to reach South Wales? Let us review the situation; rails from the north could now access the WM&CQ, the Cambrian and its allies, and the N&B, to reach the south Wales coalfield. There was, however, a missing link; the non-existence of a railway from Wrexham to join up with the Cambrian system. All that was required was a 12 mile line to connect Wrexham with the latter's Whitchurch to Oswestry railway.

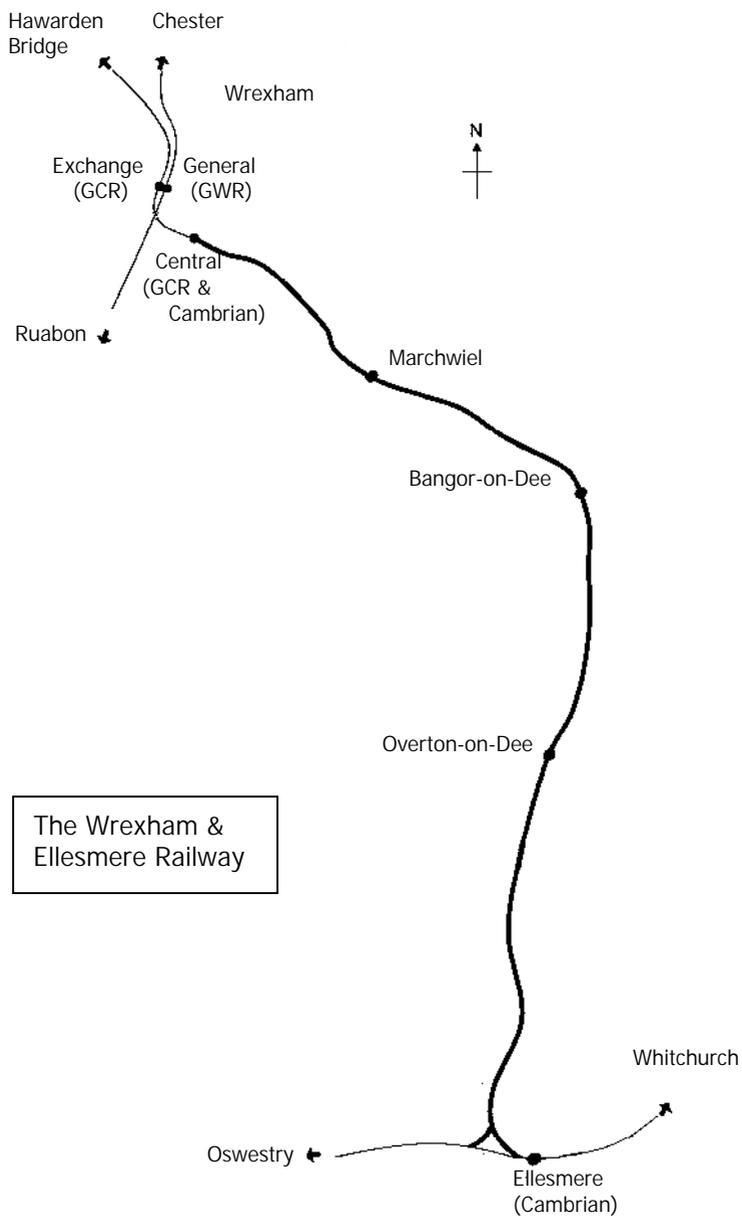
The required Wrexham and Ellesmere Railway had already obtained its Act way back on 31st July 1885, but the first sod was not cut until 1892. Naturally the MS&L became very interested and it is not surprising to see Pollitt, Maclure and a James F. Buckley, Chairman of the Cambrian, on the new railway's board. Nominally independent, the W&E opened on 2nd Nov. 1895 and was worked by the Cambrian.

Watkin had his through line to the South Wales coalfield and traffic should have flowed, but it did not materialise. Aspirations of the MS&L were now focused on reaching London, and two years later, on 1st Aug. 1897, the MS&L became the Great Central Railway. The South Wales dream nurtured by Sir Edward Watkin for a decade or so just died away.



The 1998 Wrexham Central station.

Editor's note : The Wrexham-Ellesmere line was a victim of the Beeching Cuts, closing on 8th Sept. 1962. Wrexham Central is now the terminus for the 'Borderlands Line' service from Bidston. The station was rebuilt in 1998 to the north of the original site which has been developed as a shopping centre. Passenger services at Ellesmere finished in Jan. 1965 and goods in March 1965. The Whitchurch-Oswestry line closed in 1966. A full map showing Watkin's ambitions in Wales can be found on page 224 of Great Central Volume Two by George Dow.



# Sheffield Victoria through the lens of 'loose grip 99'

Photos taken in September 1969



E26000 Tommy, the 1941-built EM1 electric loco built for the Great Central Manchester-Sheffield-Wath electrification that didn't open for business until 1954. The photographer is getting some attention from the driver and his second man as the loco stands at platform 5.



Peak diesel D92 waits with a Brush Type 4 in the centre road to take forward Manchester-St Pancras trains diverted over Woodhead and down the 'Old Road'. The view is looking east from platform 4.



Back to the days when Sheffield Victoria still had main line through trains. English Electric Type 3 diesel D6817 stands in platform 2 with the Harwich to Manchester boat train. The railings seen behind the loco are along the footpath to The Wicker steps. The Royal Victoria Hotel is in the left background.

## The Great Central war dead remembered



First GB Railfreight provided 66715 'Valour' for a short ceremony held by the GCRS at Marylebone on 11th Nov. The society's wreath was placed on the front of the loco by chairman Mike Hartley. Thanks go to Len Bunning for organising the event. The loco is based at Willesden hence the 1A shed plate. photo: Brian Holyland

## Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008 : "The Nene Valley Wanderer"

Proposed itinerary for the GCRS (London Group) trip to the Nene Valley area

Watford Junction station	Main start point / Pick up at 0900
Wellingborough London Road	Site visit
Wellingborough Midland Road	Pick up if required at 1015
Rushden old station	Site visit
Irthlingborough old station	Site visit
Thrapston Bridge Street old station	Site visit
Thrapston Midland Road old station	Site visit (including Nene Viaduct)
Raunds old station	Site visit depending on time available
Kimbolton old station	Site visit depending on time available

Wellingborough passengers may need to return by train from Bedford Midland. Please contact Richard Butler (01525 372487) to book a place on the coach.



# The LD&ECR Working Timetable for July 1906

by Bill Taylor

In line with all the major railway companies the LD&ECR published working timetables marked "private - for the use of the company's servants only". Unless someone responds to this article to say otherwise (in which case a copy would be much appreciated) the only one which appears to have survived is that relating to the period 2 July 1906 until further notice, which I venture to suggest would be the final one issued by the independent company as it is marked to supersede the issue of New Year's Day of the same year. It is a twenty page affair, stapled and printed by Wilfred Edmunds Ltd. of Chesterfield who also printed and published the Derbyshire Times newspaper, and it is one of the very few documents I have seen published by the Company which does not carry the usual reference to the line as "the Dukeries Route". Perhaps the reason lies in its being a private publication. Sent out under the authority of Harry Willmott, the General Manager, the first five pages carry detailed instructions regarding certain types of traffic, particularly tranship trucks to and from Attercliffe Goods station on the Sheffield District line, and reference to the working of Great Northern coal traffic and accidents to that company's trains whilst exercising their running powers. There is also a table indicating how the company dealt with mailbags including those to and from places remote from the line, namely Mansfield, Newark, Nottingham and Sheffield.

Although in construction the main line is that between Chesterfield and Lincoln with the branch running towards Sheffield from Langwith Junction, nevertheless in the timetable the main line is shown to be that between Sheffield Midland Passenger Station and Lincoln, with the Chesterfield line being relegated to the status of a branch. In all cases, eastbound trains are regarded as being on the up line.

Three of the pre-grouping companies exercised running powers over certain portions of the Dukeries Route. The Midland, limited to the operation of a passenger service between Mansfield and Edwinstowe as well as the Mansfield Town to Sheffield Midland trains, used their own engines and footplate crew but LD&ECR coaches. The Great Eastern, of course, saw in the line the opportunity to gain access to the collieries and ran its own trains as far west as Markham Colliery as well as along the Sheffield line at least as far as Clowne. Finally the Great Northern collected coal trains from Markham Junction west of Bolsover and took most of them to Tuxford North via the connecting west to north curve there, but also took a few directly to its own yard in Lincoln. It also went along the Sheffield line to Creswell Colliery, but strangely the timetable is silent as to Great Northern workings from Creswell Colliery to Colwick via Langwith Junction and the Leen Valley lines. Both Great Northern and Great Eastern dealt with their own empty wagon trains along the line.

The last three pages are taken up with routes in respect of which the LD&ECR itself exercised running powers over the lines of other concerns. The Warsop Curve was used along with running powers over the Midland line to operate two trains daily into and from Shirebrook Colliery and three each way to tap Sherwood Colliery at Mansfield Woodhouse. The Sheffield District Railway was also incorporated into the timetable as was the Leen Valley Extension line of the Great Northern to deal with colliery traffic from all those served by that company including those along the Teversal branch. The longest runs using LD&ECR locomotives are to be found in the special Grimsby coal trains.

To give some idea of the nature and frequency of trains, Edwinstowe has been taken as a suitable location and an attempt has been made to list, to the nearest five minutes, the times of trains which would be seen in a period of twenty four hours passing through or calling. Care must be taken to treat the times of goods trains as approximate noting also that, although the list does not show it, some trains ran only on certain days of the week. With this warning it is hoped that the list might be of some interest to anyone modellers of the Dukeries Route.

Approximate times passing Edwinstowe in July 1906

Time	From	To	Type	Co.
00.15	Langwith Jct	Lincoln	G	LD
00.35	Langwith Jct	Whitemoor	C	GE
00.45	Lincoln	Warsop Jct	E	GN
01.00	Markham Jct	Tuxford N	C	GN
02.20	Warsop Jct	Lincoln	C	GN
03.00	Langwith Jct	Grimsby	C	LD
03.30	Grimsby	Langwith Jct	E	LD
03.50	Tuxford W.	Attercliffe	G	LD
04.10	Tuxford N.	Langwith Jct	E	GN
05.10	Grimsby	Langwith Jct	E	LD
05.25	Lincoln	Langwith Jct	G	LD
05.25	Langwith Jct	Tuxford N.	EBV	GN
05.55	Lincoln Holmes	Chesterfield	G	LD
06.00	Tuxford W.	Chesterfield	E	LD
06.20	Grimsby	Langwith Jct	E	LD
07.15	Tuxford N.	Markham Jct	E	GN
07.39	Mansfield	Ollerton	P	MR
07.58	Ollerton	Mansfield	P	MR
08.13	Tuxford	Chesterfield	P	LD
08.35	Tuxford W	Sherwood Coll	E	LD
09.54	Mansfield	Ollerton	P	MR
09.55	Tuxford W	Creswell	E	LD
10.15	Langwith Jct	Tuxford	G	LD
10.18	Ollerton	Mansfield	P	MR
10.55	Whitemoor	Clowne	E	GE
10.58	Chesterfield	Lincoln	P	LD
11.45	Grimsby	Langwith Jct	E	LD
11.50	Tuxford N	Markham Jct	E	GN
12.35	Markham Jct	Tuxford N	C	GN
13.00	Langwith Jct	Grimsby	C	LD
13.10	Creswell Coll	Grimsby	C	LD
13.10	Whitemoor	Markham Jct	E	GE
13.30	Clowne	Whitemoor	C	GE
13.42	Lincoln	Chesterfield	P	LD
14.30	Chesterfield	Ollerton	P	LD

Time	From	To	Type	Co.
15.00	Markham Jct	Tuxford N	C	GN
15.05	Tuxford W	Warsop Jct	E	LD
15.10	Markham Jct	Whitemoor	C	GE
16.12	Tuxford	Chesterfield	Mixed	LD
16.15	Warsop Jct	Tuxford	C	LD
16.45	Tuxford W	Warsop Jct	G	LD
16.50	Chesterfield	Lincoln	P	LD
17.03	Lincoln	Chesterfield	P	LD
17.25	Tux.N.	Langwith Jct	E	GN
17.35	Markham Jct	Whitemoor	C	GE
17.50	Sherwood Coll	Tuxford N.	C	LD
17.55	Whitemoor	Clowne	E	GE
18.25	Pyewipe	Langwith Jct	G	LD
18.50	Langwith Jct	Grimsby	C	LD
18.54	Mansfield	Ollerton	P	MR
19.01	Lincoln	Chesterfield	P	LD
19.10	Warsop Jct	Tuxford N	C	GN
19.25	Whitemoor	Markham Jct	E	GE
19.33	Chesterfield	Lincoln	P	LD
19.34	Sheffield	Mansfield (rev)	P	MR
19.35	Ollerton	Mansfield	P	MR
19.45	Edwinstowe	Langwith Jct	ECS	LD
20.15	Markham Jct	Tuxford N	C	GN
20.20	Langwith Jct	Grimsby	C	LD
20.25	Clowne	Whitemoor	C	GE
20.35	Warsop Jct	Tuxford N	C	LD
21.05	Sheffield	Mansfield (rev)	P	MR
21.12	Edwinstowe	Sheffield	P	MR
21.25	Tuxford N	Markham Jct	E	GN
21.45	Langwith Jct	Grimsby	C	LD
21.55	Markham Jct	Whitemoor	C	GE
22.35	Whitemoor	Langwith Jct	E	GE
22.54	Mansfield	Ollerton	P	MR
23.09	Ollerton	Mansfield	P	MR
23.40	Langwith Jct	Tuxford	G	LD

key  
 G = Goods C = Coal E = Empties P = Passenger ECS = Empty Coaches EBV = Engine & Brake  
 LD = LD&ECR GN = Great Northern GE = Great Eastern MR = Midland

# Great Central Railway Great War Heroes

## Part 2 : Pilgrimage - November 2007

by Ken Grainger



Many thanks to those members who responded either in writing or verbally to my question 'Is the fate of the Great Central Railwaymen who fell in the Great War of interest to GCRS members?'. Knowing the disparate range of interests of members, I was genuinely unsure what the answer would be, and so was delighted that every single person who responded was in favour.

By all accounts both the Armistice Day commemorations at Sheffield, before the GC War Memorial, and at Marylebone where GB Railfreight's Valour was visiting, were tremendously successful. I personally wasn't at either, though I can have no regrets as Carol and I, along with my brother and sister-in-law, were instead at that time visiting some of the Great War battlefields, cemeteries and memorials in Picardy and Flanders. I had originally envisaged that this second salute to the Great Central's Great War dead would continue the saga of the Somme, but that will wait. Instead, let me try to relate something of the emotion still invoked by a visit to the battlefields, even 90 years on.

As you are conveyed in your coach across Picardy, the Somme region, the landscapes are really quite unremarkable, bland even. Nearly a century after its return to agriculture, the countryside betrays few signs of the carnage which was inflicted in these fields in the summer and autumn of 1916. Or so it would were it not for the frequent British war cemeteries: there, just by the roadside; or over there, in the corner of that field; or did you see that circular one, where the gravestones face each other from around what was obviously once a shell crater? Each of the cemeteries follows a pattern, with the uniform arc-topped Portland stone Commonwealth War Graves Commission gravestones having as their focal point Sir Reginald Blomfield's tall white 'Cross of Sacrifice', on the face of which is superimposed a bronze sword. Only the larger cemeteries feature Sir Edwin Lutyens' 'Stone of

Remembrance', a large white sarcophagus-like block bearing the inscription "THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE" but, given the numbers of the fallen, the British Somme cemeteries are numerous rather than individually large. All have tremendous dignity and are very, very beautiful.

We were travelling from Péronne, where we had visited l'Historial de la Grande Guerre, a superb museum built within the ramparts of the medieval castle, to Albert. During the 1916 Somme offensive, Péronne had been to the German soldiers their "R&R" equivalent of the Tommies' Albert. Indeed, Péronne, or what was left of it, wasn't liberated until the Germans withdrew to their Siegfriedstellung (the Hindenburg line) in the spring of 1917, laying waste to all that they left behind them. Amongst the exhibits in l'Historial is the large notice left by its despoilers amongst Péronne's ruins 'Nicht argern, Nur wundern' (Don't be angry, just wonder).

It was a sobering thought, on arrival in Albert, that our short journey had more than covered the distance advanced by the British and Commonwealth troops in 1916 at such fearful cost. Albert is famous for the Golden Madonna atop its Basilica. From early 1915 the original Golden Madonna was left teetering at a perilous



Albert and the striking gable-end mural featuring two Tommies and a Highlander against a background of the famous 'Leaning Madonna'.

angle by German shellfire, giving rise to the Tommies' fable that the war would end when the Madonna eventually toppled. The German squaddies' version added that whoever was responsible for the Madonna's finally falling would lose the war. Neither proved to be true - the Madonna was finally felled by British artillery fire after Albert was occupied during the German 1918 spring offensive which so nearly won them the war. I wonder how many German soldiers looked knowingly at each other when the statue did come crashing down? Now a new Golden Madonna holds aloft her infant Jesus above a Basilica rebuilt to the original design, but I have to acknowledge it was my brother, heading down a side street to the bank of the Ancre in order to get a better camera angle, who found the wonderful complete gable end mural of two Tommies and a Jock (perhaps he was the inspiration for 'The Highlander' bar just up the street?) against the 1916 backdrop of the leaning Madonna. Apparently Albert also has a fine museum, in the tunnels and subterranean galleries beneath the Basilica, the Musée des Abris, but it was closed for lunch!

We headed back north-east to the 1916 front line. Our first stop was at the Lochnagar Crater where, at 7.28am on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1916, an enormous mine was detonated under the German lines. This was but one of the huge mines exploded that morning about La Boisselle, but its enormous crater is the only one not since filled in. The intervening years have done little to soften its awesome effect. Looking upon its 300ft diameter and 70ft depth, one can only imagine the ear-splitting roar when it blew, or the column of debris which was reportedly flung nearly 4,000ft into the air. It took with it goodness knows how many German soldiers, but their comrades took a terrible revenge on the evenly-spaced lines of Tommies now unhurriedly walking towards them. In the forefront of 34<sup>th</sup> Division's advance were the 'Grimsby Chums' (10<sup>th</sup> Lincolns), including a strong Great Central complement. As related in GC Heroes Part 1, within ten minutes they had suffered 80% casualties before the few who managed to cross no man's land could take refuge in the still reeking mine crater. Only one of the ex-Great Central 'Chums' who died that day, former Grimsby Docks clerk Percy Walker, has a known grave, in Owillers Military Cemetery. Of the rest, some will lie beneath a headstone engraved "Known Unto God" but it is almost inevitable that others will still be here. A simple cross stands on the rim of the crater where so many died that day, both British and German: it is very appropriate that a service of remembrance is held here at 7.30 am - zero hour - each July 1<sup>st</sup> for all those who died on the Somme, on either side.

We next visited the Thiepval memorial which entailed more-or-less following the German front line. Both going and returning our journey took us straight past the entrance to Pozieres Cemetery and Memorial, which I would dearly have liked to visit, but our itinerary had obviously been determined by the events of that cataclysmic July 1<sup>st</sup> and this cemetery wasn't begun until after Pozieres fell to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian and 48<sup>th</sup> (South Midlands) Divisions on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Just two Great Central Railwaymen lie amongst the half that are identified of the 2,760 British and Commonwealth graves, but no less than seventeen are on the memorial wall listing over 14½ thousand who were killed in Germany's 'last-throw-of-the-dice' spring 1918 offensive, who have no known grave. Nine of them died on 21<sup>st</sup> March, the day that Ludendorff's Storm Troopers emerged from the fog to remind the Allied High Command of the value of surprise: we knew they were coming, but neither where nor when. The remainder fell during the next month-or-so, before the storm blew itself out. It had been a close-run thing as the British line bowed and bent, but it had not broken.

The Thiepval monument is an awesome object (see p38 in Foward 153 - editor). Huge and unlovely, it squats on top of the ridge the capture of which cost so many lives. In recent times the original rustic brick facing prescribed by Lutyens has had to be replaced by harder wearing Manchester stock red brick which, remembering the achievements of the 'Manchester Pals', seems rather appropriate. The largest British war memorial in the world, its sixteen piers are bewilderingly inscribed with the names of over 73,000 British and South African soldiers who died on the Somme but have no known grave - the Canadians, Australians, Indians and New Zealanders each have their own memorials elsewhere. What is truly awesome is that only half of the missing can be accounted for by unidentified graves, those of soldiers "Known unto God". The other half still lay where they fell, each in his own "corner of a foreign field". The missing of the Somme are listed per regiment: I made a point of finding Sergeant Cyril Flower, one-time Sheffield (Neepsend) fireman and one of about 150 Great Central Railwaymen listed on the memorial (41 from July 1<sup>st</sup> alone). A very brave man, Cyril Flower was awarded his DCM for gallantry at one of the BEF's less well remembered battles, Loos, in

September, 1915, but met his end on Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1916, trying to find a way forward against heavy machine gun fire north of Delville Wood. What is rather surprising is that, Yorkshire born and bred (his brother was a regular in the Green Howards) Cyril joined the Highland Light Infantry: I bet he didn't half get his leg pulled when he came home on leave wearing his uniform kilt!

Symbolically, the cemetery behind the Thiepval memorial contains French and British dead, 300 of each. I have to admit I didn't examine the French crosses but the British gravestones seemed to be mainly "Known unto God" and thus, fittingly, of men listed on the memorial. My sister-in-law set about finding a York and Lancaster grave, with its tiger and rose badge (the 'Cat and Cabbage' in the vernacular) on which to place her poppy cross. The York and Lancaster traditionally recruited from South Yorkshire but, having the usual smattering of Irishmen, was irreverently known as the 'Cork and Doncaster'!



Former Sheffield (Neepsend) fireman Sergeant Cyril Flower. Pictured here as a Corporal when awarded the DCM for gallantry at Loos.

Not much further on, in fact still within sight of the Thiepval Memorial, we arrived at the Ulster Tower, erected in honour of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division's irresistible July 1<sup>st</sup> assault on the Schwaben Redoubt. With tremendous élan and buoyed up by it being the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, the Ulstermen ignored the Fourth Army Directive to advance at a steady walk, and charged into the Redoubt before the defenders knew what was happening, to secure the greatest advance on that day of anyone north of the Albert-Bapaume Road. Sadly their bravery was to no avail. With those on either side of them being repulsed, and the opportunity they had made possible to attack the formidable Thiepval position 'through the back door' not realised until it was too late, the Ulstermen came under intense fire from three sides and eventually had to give up the hard-won ground.

It was thus with no disrespect to the Ulstermen that instead of visiting the Ulster Tower, I headed back the couple of hundred yards to the Connaught Cemetery where so many of them lie. This and its neighbouring Mill Road Cemetery are sad places, even if beautiful. Connaught Cemetery was not begun until after the fall of Thiepval on September 26<sup>th</sup>, when the remains of men who had been dead for nearly three months could finally be gathered. The cemetery was further enlarged after the Armistice by bodies brought in from the surrounding battlefields. Little wonder that so many of the 1,268 burials are unidentified. For a third of them not even their unit could be established. Even so, one sees poppies and crosses placed before the anonymous gravestones, perhaps by mourners thinking maybe, just maybe. Are there Great Central Railwaymen here? Who knows; but there are at least a couple just along the footpath in the Mill Road Cemetery, which is virtually on the site of the Schwaben Redoubt: former Nottingham Victoria porter Private Lambley of the 16<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters, and Stockport fireman Private Shelton of the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Cheshire, both of whom fell as the Redoubt was finally secured in October, 1916.

Our final visit on the Somme battlefields was the Newfoundland Memorial Park, just south of Beaumont Hamel. Here the original trench lines are still evident, even if softened by the passage of time. At the entrance to the park is the memorial to the dead of the 'Red Triangle' 29<sup>th</sup> Division, which included Great Central Railwaymen along with the Newfoundlanders and so many others. The Newfoundland Regiment's memorial is a stone cairn, topped by the statue of a caribou (the

regiment's emblem) bellowing its defiance across the valley where so many died. A noble animal it is too, most certainly not of genus Prancer-et-Dancer.

We made our way down the shell-cratered slope, passing the now bleached and twisted skeleton of the "Danger Tree" which marks the point at which the attackers were met by the full fury of the German machine gun fire and where so many died, to reach the Y Ravine Cemetery. The cemetery had been created after the German withdrawal in the Spring of 1917 by 51<sup>st</sup> (Highland) Division, which had finally overrun the ravine on November 13<sup>th</sup>, and at last the bodies could be collected, or what putrefaction and the disgustingly well-fed rats which swarmed over the battlefield had left of them. The cemetery's initial impression of orderliness is belied by a third of its 400-plus graves being unidentified, with sometimes two, sometimes three gravestones crowded side-by-side indicating they stand above a communal grave, and other single gravestones naming (or being unable to name) more than one occupant. Perhaps there are ex-Great Central Railwaymen here, who knows? Maybe former Gorton Works crane driver Joe Butler, or ex-Gorton shunter Sam Slack, both of whom died in the 29<sup>th</sup> Division July 1<sup>st</sup> attack near here and are listed on the Thiepval Memorial. On the other hand perhaps they were laid to rest in the one-time Y Ravine Cemetery No. 2, which was one of the battlefield cemeteries removed to the Ancre British Cemetery after the Armistice, or, looking back up that shell-hole pitted slope, untouched over the intervening decades other than by a covering of green, perhaps they are among so very many who are still there. If that is the case, so be it. No ground could be more consecrated than this.

On Armistice Day, an early start saw us heading north into Belgium and Ypres, which we approached via Hellfire Corner and the Menin Road. Just about unpronounceable to we Anglos (try "Eep-hra" in which the "r" doesn't quite reach the front of the mouth) Tommy got around the problem by rechristening it "Wipers". Peaceful enough now, ninety years ago Hellfire Corner was a Dante-esque scene of death and devastation, overlooked by the Germans who would greet any attempt at movement by day with a salvo of shellfire.

M. M. M.	ECCLESTON T.	INMAN A.
W.	EDGE J. A.	IRVINE D.
W. S.	EDWARDS H.	JACKSON
E.	ELLIOTT E.	JACKSON
R.	ELLIS E.	JACKSON
J.	ELLWOOD C. H.	JACKSON
D.	ELLWOOD E.	JACKSON
J.	EMERY T.	JARDINE
D. S. W.	ESCOLME H.	JENNING
M.	EVANS E.	JENNING
	EVANS J.	JOHNS
	EVANS J. C.	JOHNST
	EVANS O.	JOHNS
	EVANS W. D.	JOHNS
	FAIRBAIRN A. W.	JOICEY
	FAIRBAIRN W. R.	JONES
	FARMER J. M.	JONE
	FARRELL J.	JONE
	FELL F.	JONE
	FELTON H.	JON
	FENELON M.	JON
	FIELDING J.	JON
	FINCH J.	JON
	FISHER R. H.	JON
	FITT H. F.	JON
	FLETCHER G. A.	JOY
	FLOYD E.	JOY
S.	FODDY C. J.	JOY
	FORRESTER T.	JU
	FOSBROOK F.	K
	FOTHERGILL J. L.	K
E. P.	FOWLER A.	K
G.	FOX G. H.	K
	FOX T.	
	FOXLEY R. T.	
	FOY J.	

The name of Fred Fell on the Menin Gate, Ypres.

The Menin Gate was already closed to traffic for the Poppy Parade, but we were able to wander through, and read some of the nearly 55,000 names of British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in and around the Ypres Salient who have no known grave. As at Thiepval, they are arranged by regiment and so, from the many Great Central Railwaymen here, we had little difficulty picking out the Kings Liverpool Regiment's Fred Fell, formerly of the Chief Accountants Dept. at Dukinfield, who was killed at Zonnebeke on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1917 but whose grave was subsequently lost. His daughter, Kathleen, had been in Sheffield for the unveiling of the GC War Memorial in 1922, and in her ninetieth year was there again for its rededication in 2003.

Looking around Ypres' 'Medieval' streets and squares, it is incredible to think that all of the buildings are post-1918. Pre-1918 Ypres had been comprehensively reduced to rubble, to the extent that it is said two men on horseback could see each other from opposite sides of the town. Winston Churchill wanted Britain to purchase the ruins of Ypres and keep them as they were, but perhaps the dutiful reconstruction is a greater memorial. The 'Medieval' Cloth Hall is magnificent.

The Poppy Parade arrived at the Menin Gate in time for the 11 o'clock service of remembrance, for which the congregation was overwhelmingly British. The Belgian Master of Ceremonies movingly spoke of his nation's continuing gratitude to Britain and her Commonwealth for their sacrifice and, in

a touching finale, the Belgian fife and drum band bringing up the rear of the parade marched off playing "The British Grenadier". I doubt there were many dry eyes.

We would be back at the Menin Gate for the Last Post Ceremony at 8 pm, but in the meantime went to pay our respects at the Essex Farm Cemetery, just north of Ypres. This originated as the burial ground for the dressing station which operated here from April 1915 until August 1917, and it was here that, after the committal of his friend, Alexis Helmer, Canadian Medical Officer John McRae was moved to write his immortal poem 'In Flanders Fields'. To the rear of the cemetery, behind the Stone of Remembrance, stands the memorial to the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Division, which buried its dead of 1915 here. Many Great Central Railwaymen from South Yorkshire served and died in the 49<sup>th</sup> Division's York and Lancaster, KOYLI and Duke of Wellington's battalions but none are buried here. There are though the 20<sup>th</sup> (Light) Division's former Staveley fireman Rifleman Whetton of the 10<sup>th</sup> KRRC and ex-Gorton Works helper Rifleman Dearnley of the 10<sup>th</sup> Bn., Rifle Brigade who died in March and April of 1916, plus Dukinfield's Private Hilton of the 13<sup>th</sup> Royal Welsh Fusiliers - a battalion of the 38<sup>th</sup> (Welsh) Division which added Plot III to the cemetery in the Autumn of 1916.



A view across the 'apse' at Tyne Cot Cemetery with the Stone of Remembrance on the left and the northern end of the arc wall on the right, on which are engraved the names of the missing.

The ultimate destination for British pilgrims in Flanders is the cemetery and memorial at Tyne Cot. Deliberately or otherwise, the layout of Tyne Cot Cemetery is like that of a cathedral. You enter the 'nave' and proceed along the 'aisle', with the congregation in rows on either side, towards the Cross of Sacrifice, with 'transepts' left and right. Beyond is the 'chancel' leading to the Stone of Remembrance 'High Altar' and then, right at the end, the great arc of the 'apse'. That curved wall (with, continuing the allegory, a pair of circular 'chapels' leading off) is the Tyne Cot Memorial. The names of nearly 35,000 British soldiers who died in the Ypres Salient and have no known grave are recorded here, all of whom died after August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1917. This is the overflow after the Menin Gate Memorial's panels had been filled with names, and with but one exception (a Newfoundlander) is exclusively British, for the Kiwis have their own annexe and space had been found on the Menin Gate for the Canuks, Aussies, etc. No less than 65 Great Central Railwaymen are listed on their respective regimental panels of the memorial. We sought out some from our locality: Frank Ash, Sam



Jack Millns

Beevors, Bob Crick and Albert Keller from Staveley; George Oakes, Edward Brammall, Charles Erratt and Vincent Wade from Sheffield. Jack Millns (originally from Doncaster) completed a tragic pairing: he and his pal George Vickers, both from Chesterfield (Market Place) Station, had joined up together on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1914 - Jack is listed on the Tyne Cot Memorial, George at Thiepval.

Unlike the memorial, Tyne Cot Cemetery is not exclusive, with Australian Sunburst and Canadian Maple Leaf gravestones intermingled with the British Regimental badges. It was originally begun as the burial ground for a dressing station which operated from October 1917 until the end of March, 1918, in a captured



George Vickers

concrete bunker. The Cross of Sacrifice now stands on that bunker, with those first battlefield graves the slightly less tidy group to its right. Amongst them are the graves of former Upton platelayer Private Williams of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and Manchester's Henry Byrom of the 4<sup>th</sup> Bn., Kings Liverpool Regiment. The bunker, now hidden beneath the Cross of Sacrifice, is one of no less than five within the cemetery. The domed pavilions at the ends of the memorial wall each stand on a bunker, and there is one left completely untouched on each side of the 'nave'. The present day tranquillity of the cemetery is put into perspective by the consideration that two Victoria Crosses were won in 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division's capture of that on the right. The very name 'Tyne Cot' is said to be derived from these bunkers, of necessity built above ground because of Flanders' notoriously high water table and reportedly thought by Tommies of the Northumberland Fusiliers to resemble, in silhouette, Tyneside cottages. On the other hand, another version is that the original 'Tyne cottage' was what the Geordies called the barn which once stood hereabouts: you pays your money and takes your choice.

The cemetery was enormously enlarged after the Armistice when burials were brought in from surrounding battlefield cemeteries, bringing the total number of burials to nearly 12,000. A dreadful legacy of the conditions in which the men fought and died is that only about 3½ thousand of the burials are identified. They include former Dukinfield wagon painter Vincent Hurley of the 2/9<sup>th</sup> Manchester, and New Holland crane cleaner Albert Tupling of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Manchester (the 7<sup>th</sup> Manchester Pals) both of whom were reburied here in 1920. We placed a poppy cross at each of their gravestones, and at the Special Memorial to former Woodhouse signal lighter, Private Walker of the 1/5<sup>th</sup> York and Lancaster, one of those "Known or Believed" to be amongst the unidentified burials.

Tyne Cot is the largest British cemetery in the world, but its 11,954 burials hardly compare with the more than 44,000 in the only German cemetery in the Salient, at Langemarck. Langemarck is not a place of beauty. From the moment you enter through an unlit passage, the atmosphere is dark and forbidding. Immediately on entry, you face a stark square which, incredibly, is the mass grave of 25,000 men. Beyond and stretching away on either side are the individual graves, but they turn out to be anything but individual. The occasional trios of squat, rough-hewn crosses are not grave markers: the actual graves are each capped by a slab, likewise of dark grey stone, naming - one line for each - the occupants' name, rank (Musketier, Gefreiter, or whatever) and date of death. Each grave appeared to have at least half-a-dozen occupants and one we looked at named five soldiers, plus eight "Unbekannten Deutscher Soldaten" - unknown German soldiers - which seems so final, dismissive even, compared with Rudyard Kipling's inspired "Known unto God" for the unidentified British burials, even if in the final analysis it amounts to the same thing. And there are a great many "Unbekannten Deutscher Soldaten" in Langemarck. One can understand that, with scars still painfully

livid, post-WWI Belgium would have been less inclined to be generous with land for burial of their erstwhile invaders than for their allies, but Langemarck smacks more of land-fill than reverential interment.

We were happy to move on to Sanctuary Wood, where there is a magnificent bar-cum-museum, absolutely crammed with Great War memorabilia, of which my favourite was the row of pickelhaube helmets (Tommy's most prized mementos) above the bar. All the exhibits were hidden away during the WWII occupation and, when the Germans came looking, they were told that les Anglais had nicked them all. We get blamed for everything! There are also particularly well preserved trenches by the museum, but we chose instead to visit the Sanctuary Wood Cemetery. This was originally one of two cemeteries in the wood, with a third just to the east, all dating from May-August 1915. All three were more-or-less obliterated in the Battle of Mount Sorrel, in June 1916 (when, no doubt, Tommy would have had some pithy observations to make about the 'Sanctuary') but traces of one remained, around which the present cemetery was created.



Gravestone of Fred Randall at Sanctuary Wood Cemetery.

At the Armistice there were just 137 graves, but between 1927 and 1932 Plots II - V were added with graves from the surrounding area, mainly from the 1914/15 Battles of Ypres and the 1917 Passchendaele offensive, bringing the number of burials up to nearly 2,000 but with only 646 identified. We placed poppy crosses before the gravestones of 1/5<sup>th</sup> Leicesters' former Thompson McKay Carter, Fred Randall and 8<sup>th</sup> Bn., Rifle Brigade's ex-Gorton plate moulder, George Wilson, both killed in action in July 1915, plus former Nottingham parcels clerk, Private Clark of the 1/7<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters, killed in the beating off of a Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915 dawn attack on the British trenches. Not for the first time we wondered how faithfully the orderly gravestones reflect the actual burials, with gravestones headed "Buried Near This Spot".

Our final call before leaving the battlefields was at Vimy Ridge, for the Canadian National Memorial. After soggy Flanders, where the slightest undulation can be dignified as a "ridge", Vimy is the real thing, steep sided and commanding expansive views across the Douai plain. Fighting for the first time as a unified Army Corps, the Canadians swept the Germans off the ridge on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1917 in a tremendous

feat of arms. There could be no more fitting place to commemorate Canada's 60,000 Great War dead, nor a finer memorial. Photographs cannot do justice to the soaring majesty of this monument, before which stands an exquisitely carved female figure, her eyes downcast: Mother Canada grieving for her lost sons. From January, 1918, they included John McRae whom we met at Essex Farm. It is entirely appropriate for him to have the last word:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky,  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

Amen.



David Grainger placing a poppy cross on the grave of former Nottingham parcels clerk C.J.Clark at Sanctuary Wood cemetery.



Ken Grainger placing a poppy cross on the grave of former Dukinfield wagon painter Vincent Hurley at Tyne Cot cemetery.

## Some GCR locos on the Gainsborough Model Railway layout

This O gauge layout is based on the King's Cross - Leeds Central route. The models used are from the pre-grouping era (GNR and GCR), the LNER, and BR up to the steam/diesel transition period of the 1960s. The line is divided into ten sections, each of which has a control desk. On Open Days the



GCR class 11F 4-4-0 no.506 Butler-Henderson alongside the York Road platform.



LNER class O4/3 2-8-0 no.6320 on the turntable at King's Cross.

trains are run to a timetable with proper signal box bell codes being used to pass trains between operators. The whole layout is equipped with working signals. The dates of forthcoming Open Days can be found on page 48. photos by Bob Gellatly



LNER class D9 4-4-0 no.5106 between Hatfield and Hitchin.



BR class J11 0-6-0 no.64354 by the signal box at Werrington Junction.

Recent auction items of GCR interest



Badge for Great Central Railway Temperance Union.



Pay check no. 458 from the MS&L Loco Dept. Grimsby. 'IM' = Immingham?



Set of Great Central Railway newspaper parcel stamps.



Great Central Railway Corridor Car Express postcard. Posted 1903 at Nottingham.

## On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

After the summer engineering work on the Penistone line, engineering trains continued to be seen during removing scrap materials, for example on the 9th October when 66140/66086 passed Silkstone at 04:54 en route to Doncaster, this being followed on the 13th by 66017/66127 at 04:37.

The first daytime working over the Deepcar branch since the spring occurred on the 23rd October when 66197 conveyed seven wagons to Aldwarke passing through Beeley Woods at 11:40.

After the fire at Guide Bridge, which destroyed the booking hall and entrance area of the station, a new and improved modern facility has been opened at a cost of £150,000.

The 1884 MS&L signalbox at Stallingborough was closed in October as part of the upgrading of signalling in the Grimsby area.

During the autumn a couple of steam railtours operated over sections of the GC as follows. On Saturday 10th November, a railtour from Buxton to Derby passed through Guide Bridge in the early evening worked by 'Black Five' no. 45407 and Standard Class 4 2-6-0 no. 76079. This was followed on the 17th by Class A4 no. 60009 working an excursion from Cleethorpes to Chester.

Slipping on leaves has not been such a problem this year as in previous years, however, on Sunday 18th November 66204, working the evening trip from Aldwarke to Deepcar, became stuck at Beeley Woods at 19:45 and had to be assisted in the rear by 60026. The train did not reach its destination until 22:43.

A rare visitor to the Deepcar branch on the 6th December was 37038 on a route learning trip from and to Derby.

The Sandite season finished on the 7th December and the final working over the Penistone line was worked by 20301/20005.

Despite Northern Rail obtaining several cascaded 158 Sprinter units to ease overcrowding and improve punctuality, there have still been numerous complaints over the continued use of Pacer units, especially on services in South Yorkshire.

Week commencing the 21st January 2008 again saw services disrupted due to flooding, this time the worst affected area was West Yorkshire, however on this date the routes via Penistone, Barnsley and the Lincoln route beyond Worksop were also seriously disrupted with services suspended for part of the day.

An unusual working over the Penistone line on the following day the 22nd was an ECS working from Huddersfield consisting of two 3-car 144 units with a single-car 153 set in the middle being returned to Leeds, as this was the only route open beyond Huddersfield as all the others were still shut.

Two of the GCR's most notable locations are under threat. Closure of Immingham Loco Depot is a possibility. If this happens what will be the future of the coaling tower, one of only two still remaining in the UK? The other is Woodhead Tunnel where the National Grid want to run underground cables through the new tunnel thus precluding it ever being reopened for rail traffic. Huge opposition to this proposal has been voiced, despite the Government being in favour, let's hope the rail lobby can win the argument this time. (See item on p36)

On Friday 25th January one wagon in a coal train became derailed around 11:00 at Barnetby Top causing extensive track damage. This resulted in the route beyond Scunthorpe being shut for at least 10 days while repairs were carried out. Several freight services were diverted over the Brigg line and through Lincoln as a result, with a replacement bus service running between Scunthorpe and Cleethorpes.

In the London area the Metropolitan Railway Electric Loco no. 12 'Sarah Siddons', 20227 and the Met 4 TC set made 2 runs from Harrow to Amersham and return for equipment testing on the 5th and 7th of December. This was followed on the weekend of the 8/9th when all services north of Harrow were suspended for engineering work, which saw five class 66 locos 66709/711/714/725/726 in use between Harrow and Neasden before reversal to West Ruislip.

Not only has EWS been bought by the German Rail Company, DB, they have also taken over Chiltern Railways the operator of all services from Marylebone.

In the spring a new passenger operator 'Wrexham and Shropshire' hopes to begin running services between Marylebone and Wrexham using refurbished mark 3 coaches top and tailed by class 67 locos. If this happens it will bring back regular loco hauled services to Marylebone after an absence of over 40 years!

The arguments over the future use of Woodhead Tunnel and the reopening of the GC route continue to make headlines and recently around 60 MPs signed a motion for the tunnel to be retained for railway use and not to be used by the National Grid for its power cables.

During the early hours of Sunday 3rd February an engineering train was unusually top and tailed by 60062/063 through Penistone, these locos being very rare visitors to this line.

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.

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## Ruth Kelly 'open-minded' about reopening the Great Central main line Parliamentary report of proceedings for 8 January forwarded by Richard Butler

Secretary of State for Transport Ruth Kelly has said in Parliament that she is open-minded to the possibility of reopening the Great Central Main Line to provide a new inter-city link to Birmingham.

Reopening the line, which until the 1960s provided a route for trains from London Marylebone to Manchester, via Rugby in Warwickshire, is one option being examined following warnings that the West Coast Main Line could run out of capacity as soon as 2015, despite an £8.6bn upgrade scheduled for completion by the end of 2008 (Transport Briefing 15/06/07).

Speaking in the Commons on Wednesday (8 January), Ruth Kelly said: "I retain an open mind whether or not we need, for example, to re-open a disused rail line between London and Birmingham, whether we should have a high speed rail link which links London to Birmingham, or even beyond to Manchester or so forth, or indeed whether other modes of transport should be encouraged such as roads." The former Grand Central Main Line is the only disused rail alignment that could be reopened as part of a new London-Birmingham rail link.

The minister's comment was made in response to a question from Liberal Democrat MP Norman Baker who asked the Secretary of State whether she agreed with the Delivering a Sustainable Railway White Paper published last year (Transport Briefing 24/07/07) where it says the government "does not identify a need to re-open lines to deliver additional capacity" in the rail control period running from 2009-2014.

Ruth Kelly replied: "We have said that there will be no line closures and that we will monitor the growth in passenger numbers over that period [2009-2014]; if passenger numbers grow faster than expected, we will, in the following period, think about whether additional railway capacity is needed, including whether to open new lines." She added: "It is right that we take a fundamental look at these issues in the light of what is happening with the growth in passenger numbers and of a proper diagnosis of the problems. We are going through that process at the moment to prepare ourselves early for decisions that will be taken in several years' time."

The Great Central Main Line, also known as the London Extension of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, opened in 1899 as the brainchild of entrepreneur Sir Edward Watkin, who hoped it would one day be linked to a Channel Tunnel. However, most of the line was closed in 1966 as part of the cuts to the rail network recommended by Dr Richard Beeching. A skeleton service between Rugby and Nottingham survived until 1969.

Train operator Chiltern Railways launched its own, unsuccessful proposals to get the line re-opened in 2000. Another firm, Central Railway, drew up plans to use the line for freight transport, extending it to Liverpool and linking it directly with France via the Channel Tunnel, but these failed to win government backing.

## The 2,000<sup>th</sup> Mystery

by Allan Sibley, using information supplied by Brian Deer

This article was originally published in Great Northern News No.109 and is submitted by Allan Sibley as a clarification of his assertion made in Forward 154 p45.

LNER class A2 no. 500 Edward Thompson carried works plates showing it to have been the 2,000<sup>th</sup> locomotive constructed at Doncaster works. However, I have discovered a slight discrepancy regarding this engine. The RCTS Locomotives of the LNER vol. 2A relates that there was some "creative re-allocation" involving a batch of 8F 2-8-0s to ensure that no. 500 bore those plates and a significant milestone in Doncaster's history was not consigned to an LMS engine.



LNER class A2 no. 500 'Edward Thompson' at Doncaster.

photo : T.G.Hepburn

Thus, in all innocence, I consulted Brian Deer to try to establish the true identity of the 2,000<sup>th</sup> locomotive. Oh, were it so simple! The following 'spanners in the works' make accurate identification virtually impossible.

1. Four of the earliest GNR engines of the 'Sharp' class, nos. 10, 20, 42 and 43, were given Doncaster works numbers when rebuilt (103, 139, 142 and 101 respectively), whereas other rebuilds of the same class were not.
2. At the grouping ten works numbers, 1554-1563, were not used.
3. Gresley 2-8-0s nos. 477 to 486 were erected by the North British Locomotive Company in Glasgow and received NBL works numbers, but the materials were manufactured and supplied by the GNR from Doncaster.
4. In April 1938 no. 2744 Grand Parade was damaged beyond repair in the Castlecary accident. The LNER erected a brand new replacement engine and transferred the works and name plates to it. This was done for book-keeping purposes, i.e. charged as a repair to revenue account rather than a new build to capital account, but the post-1938 no. 2744 was definitely an additional product of Doncaster.
5. In 1944 four diesel-electric shunters were built at Doncaster, with power units supplied by English Electric, and given running numbers 8000 to 8003 (later BR 15000-15003). They were given Doncaster works numbers 1960/63/73/78. Frames for a fifth engine were laid down, but the finished product, no. 15004, emerged from Doncaster in May 1947 with the power unit supplied by Brush. This engine did not receive a Doncaster works number.
6. In 1945/6 ten class O6 (LMS 8F) 2-8-0s were built at Doncaster and received LNER running numbers 3148-57 but were not given Doncaster works numbers.

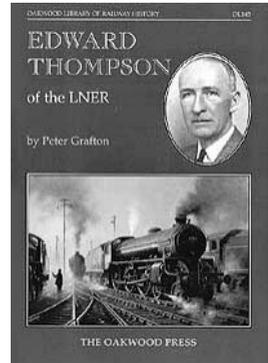
Taking all the plusses and minuses into account and assuming the O6 engines were built in the order of their running numbers, I reckon that the true 2,000<sup>th</sup> locomotive product of Doncaster works was in fact 8F no. 3159. This became no. 3559 in February 1947, went to the LMS as no. 8764 in September 1947, and was withdrawn as BR no. 48764 in December 1967.

PS - Lest anyone should be tempted to throw the GNR's 'American' moguls into the fray, may I just remind you that they were given appropriate Baldwin works numbers, being assembled in the UK from what were in effect kits of parts. Also, of course, they were dealt with at Ardsley, not Doncaster.

## Book reviews

"Edward Thompson of the LNER" by Peter Grafton  
Published by The Oakwood Press, 2007. ISBN 978 0 85361 672 6.  
Soft laminated covers, 152pp, 101 photos, A5 size. £12.95.  
(This is a revised version of that published by Kestrel Books in 1971)

Edward Thompson was one of the most controversial engineers in railway history. He has been portrayed as a self-opinionated disciplinarian, abrupt with his staff, who rode rough shod over practices introduced by his predecessor, Sir Nigel Gresley, and who made mistakes which, with more forethought, could have been avoided. Much of this is true but the drawbacks in his character and the defects in certain of his design features have been exaggerated by some commentators. In this biography Peter Grafton does justice to Thompson, presenting a balanced view of the man and his achievements, whilst not hesitating to underline his failures.



The author begins with a look at Thompson's immediate ancestors, none of whom seem to have been concerned with engineering, indeed academic and commercial activities predominate with more than a little interest in the sea. But the young Edward, educated at Marlborough, soon indicated that his future would be in engineering, although strangely he did not do too well scholastically but was very interested in sport. Indeed, he played for his school at cricket and rugby, activities which continued into later life. After joining the North Eastern Railway he attracted the notice of Vincent Raven, an association which developed into a close friendship with his son Norman and in 1913, marriage to his daughter Guendolen, one of whose bridesmaids being Violet Gresley. Thompson was then working for Gresley as Carriage & Wagon Superintendent at Doncaster, an appointment he held, except for a period in Government service during the Great War, until he returned to the North Eastern in 1920. At grouping he became C&W Superintendent of the North Eastern Area of the LNER, this being followed by regular promotions until in 1938 he was appointed Mechanical Engineer, Doncaster, the most senior position on Gresley's staff, Oliver Bulleid having left in 1937 to join the Southern Railway.

Sir Nigel Gresley's death at the age of 64 appears to have taken the LNER Board unawares. In the ordinary way, he would have retired at 65, but it was wartime and he had indicated that he would be prepared to carry on until he was 70. However, he had not been in good health, and it is perhaps surprising that Sir Ronald Matthews, the Chairman, did not have had a possible successor in mind. But this was not the case, and Gresley's death left a vacancy which needed filling without delay. One would think that Thompson would not have progressed as far as he had done if he had not been capable of taking the top job, but reliable sources indicate that this was not the immediate view of the Board, and efforts were made to entice Oliver Bulleid back from the Southern Railway, and Roland Bond from the LMS. Both of these approaches were unsuccessful, so that it seems that with some reluctance, three weeks after Gresley's death, the choice fell on Thompson.

The controversy now begins and the author takes the reader through a fascinating assessment of Thompson's character and ambitions, commencing with a straightforward discussion with the Chairman, in which, to Matthews' evident astonishment, Thompson pointed out what appeared to him as a number of drawbacks in Gresley's designs and offered to resign if his views were not accepted! Anyway, he got his way, his first decisions being to move the CME's office to Doncaster, and to reorganise his departmental staff. Unfortunately his brusque manner (with his male staff - the ladies seemed to take to him more) tended to give offence, although no doubt unintentionally. In wartime conditions matters took time to evolve, but he launched into a programme of work which entailed rebuilding selected locomotive classes and introducing a number of ideas of his own. He disagreed with Gresley's insistence on three-cylinder drive with conjugated valve motion, preferring a straightforward three-cylinder arrangement for the largest engines, and two-cylinders for less powerful ones, and he rebuilt a small number of locomotives accordingly, with mixed results. His most important (and controversial) action was to produce new versions of Pacific locomotive design,

in which he rebuilt Gresley's P2 class 2-8-2s into 4-6-2s, and the pioneer Great Northern into an almost unrecognisable version of the original. He saw the need for a medium powered mixed traffic 4-6-0, and his B1 class, introduced in 1942, was a successful conventional design, in sharp contrast with his larger locomotives. He also produced standardisation plans, under which 166 LNER classes would be reduced to 19.

Edward Thompson retired in 1946 after five years in office, the only period in his career when his professional activities were the subject of adverse comment. In this biography Peter Grafton surveys in detail, with useful appendices and an index, the life of this controversial engineer, quoting where appropriate from railway staff who knew him, notably Richard Hardy, who remembers him as a man of dignity, charm and kindness. Reading this book will bring out Thompson's better features and balance much of the critical assessment one reads elsewhere.

Geoffrey Hughes

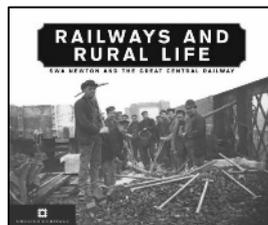
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"Railways and Rural Life - SWA Newton and the Great Central Railway"

by Gary Boyde-Hope & Andrew Sargent

Published by English Heritage and Leicestershire County Council.

ISBN 978 185074 959 2. 215pp. Landscape format. £17.99.



Students of the Great Central Railway have been quite well served over the years with various books covering pretty well the whole of the one-time GC system. Some of these were "also rans", while others, such as the Dow trilogy, have stood the test of time. However, with this volume, recently published in a joint exercise, we have something of a masterpiece. Uniquely perhaps, Sydney (SWA) Newton photographed assiduously the construction of almost the whole of the London Extension, south from Annesley through to Marylebone. Not only did he capture the navvies, their equipment and the contractors' locomotives, he also photographed the communities through which the new railway ran, their simple rural Victorian lifestyle and the surrounding landscapes – many of which were changed irrevocably by the coming of the London Extension.

All this has now been brought together in a new volume. Beautifully produced, Newton's photographs are set one per page at a generous size and are accompanied by good and informative captions.

Here is the London Extension in the making, with the men, machines, bridges, track, tunnels and the social environment staring at the reader as if they had been photographed only yesterday.

The authors and publishers are to be congratulated on this major contribution to GCR history.

Though some of Newton's pictures have been published before, this effort surpasses them all.

Recommended unreservedly and a "must have" for any GCR enthusiast's library.

Eddie Johnson

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DVD review

"Woodhead Railway : Sheffield Victoria to Stocksbridge Steel Works"

by Melvin Kirkham and Brian Wilson. Self produced. Running time 72 minutes.

This recently produced film by two GC enthusiasts is an excellent documentary concentrating on one of the remaining sections of the Woodhead route still open. It mostly shows operations over the 8 mile route from Sheffield during the last 10 years and includes film of the daily steel train, special workings and railtours. Some archive photographs are also included. As many of the workings normally occur during the hours of darkness and much of the lineside access is fenced off and overgrown, it has certainly been a labour of love to capture the line's operations. There is also an excellent commentary on the industry and sidings connected to the route as well as information and film on the wagons and types of steel products conveyed, which at present is the sole reason for the line's existence. I can certainly recommend it as it is a superb record of part of the GC rarely visited and filmed these days. Price is £11 which includes p&p. Please send cheque payable to 'Melvin Kirkham' to 28 Fairbank Road, Sheffield S5 7DB.

Kim Collinson



From 'Main Line', the magazine of the Great Central Railway

## The GCR Class 2 Project

Mike Fairburn describes the start to an exciting project to build a Great Central Railway steam locomotive at Ruddington

The MSLR/GCR Class 2 (later LNER/BR Class D7) was an archetypal Victorian 4-4-0 express passenger locomotive. This project plans to recreate a long extinct class of engine, once the pride of the MSLR/GCR. The last 10 years has seen the establishment and, in some cases, completion of a number of "New Build" projects. The most prominent and technically complex of these, the construction of a new Peppercorn Pacific no. 60163 Tornado is within sight of its first moves in steam, and other projects have already demonstrated the viability of the construction of replicas. The broad gauge Iron Duke and Firefly, narrow gauge Taliesin and David Lloyd George are completed projects, and current projects in progress include the Great Western Society 'Saint', 'County' and steam rail motor projects as well as the Llangollen Railway based 'Grange' project.

Locomotives in operation in preservation include only one 4-4-0 of the period 1890 to 1910, the famous City of Truro. This project will create a new locomotive, externally indistinguishable from the Class 2s built between 1890 and 1895 by Kitsons of Leeds and the Gorton works of the MSLR. Whilst the loco will include parts of historic interest, it will be a modern construction, not subject to some of the constraints associated with the conservation of historic locomotives built over 100 years ago. The Class 2 is not a technically complex locomotive type. The heart of the locomotive, a pair of 18 inch bore by 26 inch stroke inside cylinders, fed by flat face slide valves, drive four 6ft 9in diameter wheels. A non-superheated boiler provides steam. The fundamentals of the design have much in common with latter day large industrial locomotives, but the classic 4-4-0 wheel arrangement and large driving wheels distinguish the late 20<sup>th</sup> century work horse from the front line express locomotive of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the same roots as the Brighton 'Atlantic' project, building a replica of Beachy Head, the Class 2 project has been germinating among interested individuals, to the point where the project has now been launched. The viability of the project is enhanced by the availability of key components. These components will enable a kick-start to the project with immediate availability of substantial parts of the locomotive.

### Boiler

The boiler comes from the same source as the boiler that will be part of the Brighton 'Atlantic'. It is of Midland Railway origin, and of dimensions that vary by less than one inch in any important dimension from the original. The boiler survived for many years after the end of its first railway career as a stationary boiler in a timber yard in Maldon, Essex, until rescued for preservation some 20 years ago. It has been a static exhibit at the Mangapps Farm Railway Museum at Burnham-on-Crouch, since it was rescued.

### Cylinder Block

A suitable 18 inch bore by 26 inch stroke cylinder block has been obtained. This block is a new unused item manufactured as a major spare part for an industrial locomotive, but never fitted. The cylinder block is now in store at Ruddington awaiting the development of the project to the point when it will be built into the locomotive frames.

### Tender Chassis

The chassis of a Great Central 4,000 Gallon tender has been offered to the project. This chassis survived as part of a snow plough and can be converted back to the correct specification for a locomotive tender.

The construction of a new Class 2 is an exciting and ultimately very rewarding project. The opportunity to display the construction work in progress and provide interpretation of the construction will enable a story to be told to visitors about how a locomotive is constructed, and what the inner workings of the locomotive consist of. Unlike almost all other current projects, the Class 2 is an admirably suitable example around which to tell this story. It is mechanically simple, containing the same elements as Stephenson's Rocket but in its final form before the introduction of piston valves and superheating, which took development forward from the basic elements of what history records as the first embodiment of the successful steam locomotive. When complete the locomotive will be available to operate on Heritage Railways and when accompanied by authentic period rolling stock will portray an era in rail transport now long gone. It is not planned to seek operation of the locomotive on Network Rail, though the locomotive will be constructed in accordance with appropriate national standards and accepted steam locomotive engineering practice.

As part of a living exhibition telling the story of locomotive construction, it is expected that the project will take in the order of 10 years to complete. It is intended that a display, including key parts of the locomotive, will be updated in approximately 10 stages, each showing important elements of the construction process. Poster board displays, video and other audio-visual media recording the process of construction will provide interpretation. Funding for the project will be sought from a number of sources; covenanted subscriptions, grants and donations, to fund an estimated project budget of £450,000.

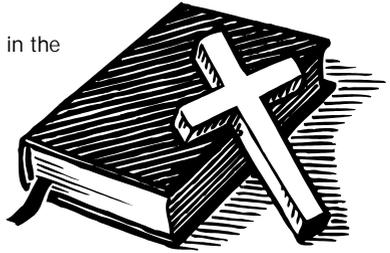
If you are interested in becoming part of the team to manage and deliver the construction of the locomotive, please contact Mike Fairburn through the GCR(N) at Ruddington in the first instance.



LNER Class D7 no. 5687, built in 1892 and rebuilt with a Belpaire boiler in 1909, passing Littlefield Lane Crossing as it leaves Grimsby with a train for New Holland c1929/30. The locomotive is in LNER black livery but with numerals on the tender.  
photo: F.R. Hebron / Rail Archive Stephenson

## Psalm XIII in lieu of a ticket from Sheffield

A newspaper report dating from 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1899 and reprinted in the "Guardian" of 15 Nov. 2007 and submitted by Paul White.



A respectable-looking man named Samuel Hawley Redfern, aged 41, who gave an address at Chesterfield, was charged yesterday before Mr Plowden at Marylebone Police Court, London, with travelling on the Great Central Railway with intent to cheat and defraud the company. The evidence was that the prisoner arrived by train at Marylebone on Sunday, and walked towards the ticket collector with his hat in his hand. When asked for his ticket he pulled a Bible out of his pocket and commenced reading Psalm XIII aloud. He was again asked for his ticket, and admitted that he had ridden from Sheffield and that he had no ticket nor any money to pay the fare. He added that God would see him right, and that He had sent him to Chancery Lane to get a certificate. The prisoner drank something from a medicine bottle, and having made two other statements as to why he had come to London he concluded by expressing his willingness to work there for a few days and so liquidate the amount of the fare. The prisoner was then taken to the office of Mr Oven and when the latter asked him his name Redfern commenced reading Psalm XXIV and parenthetically remarked, "Don't worry me." Thinking the man deranged he sent for the police. Redfern was quite sober at the time. The prisoner said he had fits of this kind occasionally, but was perfectly sane now. Mr Plowden remanded him with a view to his being medically examined.

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## Letter to the Great Central Railway Journal of August 1910

"Sir Edward Watkin Meritorious Fund"

There are probably many cases of promptitude which, through diffidence, or other reasons are not brought to notice, some of which have happened in my own experience.

Once, the signals were off for an up express passenger, when a platelayer, looking up the line, noticed and drew my attention to a number of young horses coming down the line, some one having left the field gate unfastened at a level crossing. I said, "Hurry off and send them back!" and called to the signalman, urging him to reverse his signals. The platelayer ran the distance of half a mile, and the train was delayed very little.

More recently, in 1909, a temporary porter, who was fetching the signal lamps in, was knocked down by a goods train. The train was stopped, and the driver and myself ran to the injured youth, followed by a platelayer. We found him unconscious and one arm nearly severed, and thought the best course would be to take him direct to the hospital. While the train was being detached and other arrangements made, we laid him on an improvised stretcher made of sack and two shunting sticks, and as soon as the brake was ready, lifted him in. Not being able to close the door, we covered him with a sack and overcoat. The stationmaster sent, requesting me to go with him. Having to be in a crouching position to steady him against the oscillation and hold him when he struggled during momentary partial consciousness, and with the oscillation of the brake and a cold wind blowing in at the door, it was a somewhat painful journey.

More recently, two platelayers noticed a train divided. They promptly endeavoured to attract the attention of driver and guard, and were successful. Being on the level, the parts were slowed up, coupled up, and then the train proceeded on its way without further delay.

No doubt by reason of not being brought to notice prevents some not receiving the honour of merit.

Name of writer not given

Editor's note : Those were the days when in the event of a mishap on the railway, those on the ground took every step to get the trains running again. Compare that to today's railway when the slightest incident closes the line down for hours with no regard to the travelling public or other users of the railway.

## Lineside with V.R.Webster

Mike Kinder has donated a selection of photo prints to the GCRS archive from the V.R.Webster Collection, owned by the Kidderminster Railway Museum, along with copyright permission for their use in Forward. These two photos were taken from the same spot north of Rothley on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1943 in the mid-afternoon. It looks as if the fence is being used to provide support for the photographer!



LNER class B6 4-6-0 no. 5052 with an up mixed goods.



LNER class B7 4-6-0 no. 5477 with a down mixed goods. The silhouette of Rothley station building can be seen on the bridge in the background.

## The Woodhead Tunnel debate

As most readers will no doubt be aware, there is a proposal by the National Grid to route electricity cables through the 'new' Woodhead tunnel (cables presently pass through the original single-bore tunnels). If this is carried out it could well be the last nail in the coffin for a proposed re-opening of the Woodhead line.

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To set the scene here is an article by Alan Salter from the Manchester Evening News from 27<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2007

### "Campaign for tunnel vision"

A campaign has been launched to try to save one of the nation's most famous railway tunnels. The future of the Woodhead Tunnel, which runs underneath the Peak District National Park, is under threat as owners National Grid want to lay new electricity cables through it. Campaigners fear new power lines could mean that the tunnel will never be part of the rail network again. Cables carrying power to Manchester from Sheffield already run through the old tunnel - laid there to stop pylons spoiling the view - but they are at the end of their life. The old tunnel, built in 1846, is in poor condition and was replaced by British Rail in 1951, but the route was closed down 30 years later. Now an alliance of politicians led by Blackley MP Graham Stringer, green campaigners and rail enthusiasts are involved in a race against time to try to preserve it for future rail use. The campaign will culminate in a demonstration at the mouth of the tunnel on January 12.

Mr Stringer has called on the government to intervene to prevent the rail route being lost forever. It has been signed by 28 Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat MPs. Mr Stringer said: "It would be very difficult to get the tunnel open to rail again once the cables have gone in." Politicians on both sides of the Pennines are backing the fight. Transport overlord GMPTA wants more railway capacity and chairman Coun. Roger Jones said: "I support waiting until a full feasibility study can be done." Lib Dem leader Coun Richard Knowles said: "It would make an awful lot of sense to keep the option of reopening it." Local protesters have formed an action group and are organising a petition. Co-ordinator Jonathan Atkinson, from Glossop, said: "It is a very winnable campaign. We just want the work delayed until a feasibility study can be done."

A National Grid spokeswoman said work will start in January and take until 2011 to finish. She said the company did not need planning permission but has consulted with all interested parties. She said trains could not run alongside the 400kV cables, but these could be removed if the tunnel was to reopen. The Department for Transport and Network Rail have said there were no plans to reopen the line.

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After the demonstration at the tunnel mouth, the following article by Tom Rowley appeared in The Glossop Times on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2008.

### "Tunnel demo 'victory' "

Protestors seeking to save one of the country's most famous railway tunnels hailed the big turnout at a demonstration at the weekend. National Grid wants to lay electricity cables through the Woodhead Tunnel – last used by trains 27 years ago – but campaigners fear that will prevent it ever again being part of the railway network. Environmental campaigners see a re-opened tunnel as an alternative to the Mottram-Tintwistle bypass. National Grid currently uses one of two Victorian tunnels to house 440 kV electricity transmission cables. A third tunnel built in 1953 was bought by the grid and is the subject of the current controversy.

Jonathan Atkinson, co-ordinator of the Save Woodhead Tunnel campaign, said: "We had about 100 people turn up at the tunnel on Saturday, with quite a few from Glossop and Hadfield, but also from Oxford, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bolton and all over." He added that the speakers showed the breadth of support for the campaign. These included local MEP Chris Davies, a local councillor from Yorkshire, a Green Party speaker from Liverpool and a speaker from the Friends of the Peak Park. Jonathan, of Victoria Street, Glossop added: "We have a lot of support from councillors, MPs, MEPs and the railway lobby, but we need to keep the pressure on transport secretary Ruth Kelly until she makes a

decision about the tunnel. "There may well be a similar event at the same place in the next couple of months but there's nothing definite yet."

The campaign received powerful support from the Northern Way group of three regional development agencies. Chairman Neville Chamberlain has written to Mrs Kelly. "Ultimately, if the future use of the Woodhead Tunnels for rail is not assured the need to construct a major new tunnel across the Pennines could thwart the ambition of a new higher speed line ever happening. Additional, faster capacity across the Pennines will be critical to the economic future of the North," he said.

Northern Way transport director John Jarvis added: "It is likely that a new higher speed rail route across the Pennines will need to be built in the next 15-30 years. Without the availability of the Woodhead Tunnels this would involve large-scale, expensive tunnelling and dramatically increase the costs to build any new rail line across the Pennines."

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On 30th January, Secretary of State for Transport Ruth Kelly appeared before the House of Commons Transport Committee and answered questions on the National Grid's (NG) intention to install power cables through the newest of Woodhead's three disused railway tunnels, opened in 1954. She gave the impression that the government was not interested in the debate and no steps would be taken to delay the proceedings.

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You can find out the latest news regarding this debate at  
[www.savethewoodheadtunnel.blogspot.com](http://www.savethewoodheadtunnel.blogspot.com)



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## GCR kits from D&S Models

The Society has commissioned some 4mm kits from D&S Models, which should be available by the time you receive this Forward. They are:

DS 64 – GCR 10 ton fish van £10.50

DS 60 – GCR 10 ton long open wagon £9.00

The above prices do not include postage.

Numbers are limited and will be restricted to members only, maximum 2 of each per member. It is a condition of sale that they are for members own use and not for third parties or resale.

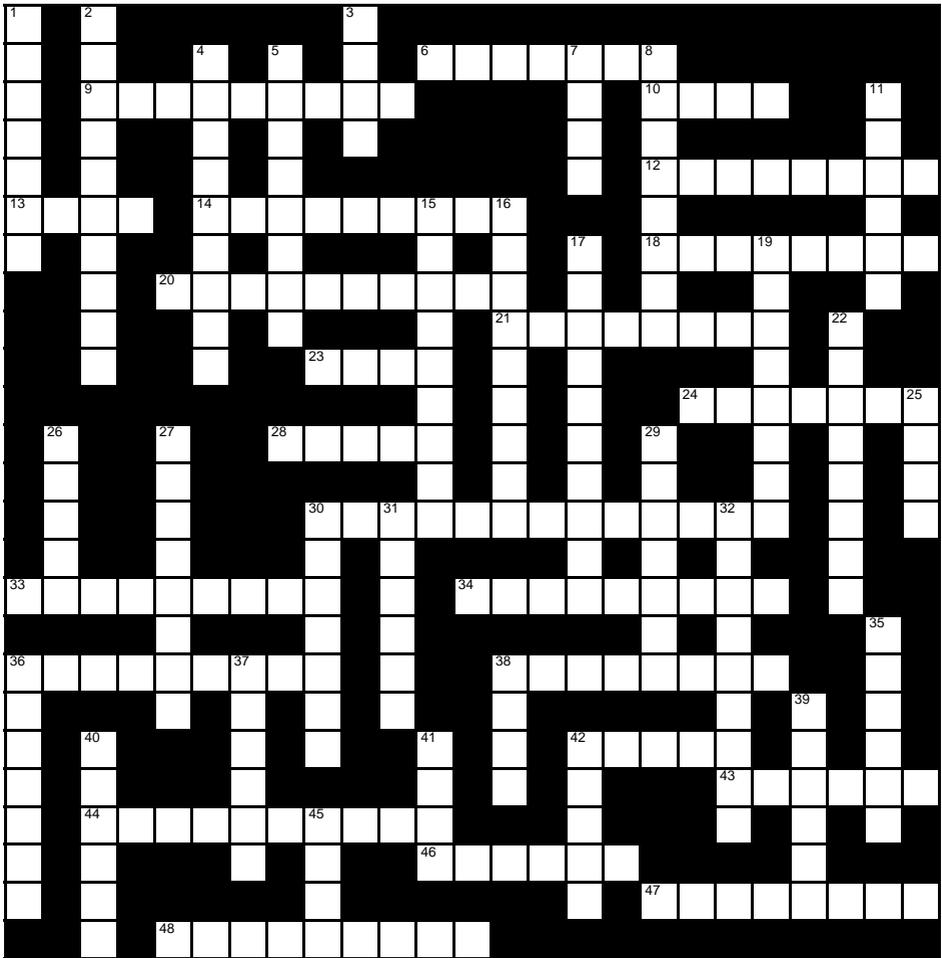
Please contact me by e-mail or by post for postage costs and availability before sending payment.

If using e-mail, put GCRS in the title otherwise your e-mail might be spammed!

If this venture is successful, we may commission further kits. Please let me know your suggestions for consideration.

Brian Slater (see inside front cover for contact information)

Crossword (Forward 155) : Answers in the back of this issue



Across clues

- 6 Junction of the LD&ECR with the GN&GE Joint near Lincoln. (7)
- 9 Device that creates a loud bang when struck. (9)
- 10 A line that eventually returns to the original route. (4)
- 12 Loco using steam at high and low pressures. (8)
- 13 "The ---- ". nickname for Gorton Works. (4)
- 14 Platform that moves stock from one road to another. (9)
- 18 A signal that mimics the aspect of a later unsighted signal. (8)
- 20 Earthworks to carry a railway. (10)
- 21 Arrangement of lamps or discs on the front of a train. (8)
- 23 River crossed by the GC in Leicestershire. (4)
- 24 Great WW1 sea battle. (7)
- 28 Simple valve type. (5)
- 30 Nickname for the GC Atlantics. (6, 7)

- 33 Venue for the GCRS AGM in 2008. (9)
- 34 Needed to avoid tender-first working. (9)
- 36 Links between stock in a train. (9)
- 38 Name applied to the LNER-built 'Directors'. (8)
- 42 Product of the combustion of coal. (5)
- 43 A stand-in for the regular employee. (6)
- 44 Name carried by a GC signal box and now a shopping centre in Sheffield. (6, 4)
- 46 Signal boxes had lots of these. (6)
- 47 Name applied to the LD&ECR route. (8)
- 48 A machine used to transmit messages using electrical impulses. (9)

Down clues

- 1 Material laid on track to counter effect of leaf mulch in autumn. (7)
- 2 Home of GCR(N). (10)
- 3 An imperial measurement. (4)
- 4 A man who changes the points. (9)
- 5 Earl Roberts of ----- . (8)
- 7 Twelve of these make 3 Down. (4)
- 8 Type of locos operating over Woodhead 1954-81. (8)
- 11 Carries coal and water. (6)
- 15 Supports used for lifting locos in a shed yard. (9)
- 16 Present Secretary of State for Transport. (4, 5)
- 17 The canal crossed more than once by the GC London Extension. (5, 5)
- 19 They use steam to create the brake vacuum on a locomotive. (8)
- 22 Shed with code 38D in the early 1950s. (8)
- 25 Used to show setting of a ground signal. (4)
- 26 MS&L class 7 0-6-0T known as '----- Tanks'. (5)
- 27 Birmingham station used by Chiltern Railways. (4, 4)
- 29 Loose stone used to hold railway track steady. (7)
- 30 Eddie ----- from Manchester, a railway author. (7)
- 31 ----- Sidings, a signal box between Brocklesby and Grimsby. (6)
- 32 Junction for Wrexham on the Cambrian. (9)
- 35 The S in SWA Newton. (6)
- 36 Name given to Chiltern Railways' class 168 Turbo units. (7)
- 37 Alight here for Hyde. (6)
- 38 Three of the class B3 4-6-0s had ---- window cabs. (4)
- 39 Colin ----- , photographer who recorded the last days of steam on the GC. (6)
- 40 River on which Immingham docks are situated. (6)
- 41 John ---- , General Manager of the Metropolitan Railway. (4)
- 42 Brothers who built locos for the predecessors of the MS&L. (5)
- 45 Earl ---- , who attended the opening of the GC War Memorial at Sheffield Victoria. (4)

## Nick Tozer

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## Photos from a railway family

Mr John Pollard of Sutton-in-Ashfield has donated some family photos to the GCRS archive. His father was a Guard who started on the GNR and finished his career at Annesley. His brother Les worked at Annesley as a fireman and a driver on steam and diesel traction. On closure he was transferred to Derby and then to Toton. John himself also worked at Annesley as a fireman and as a guard. The two photos below feature his brother, Les Pollard, who died on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 2007. Les was a member of the GCRS.



Driver A.Dakin and fireman Les Pollard lean out of the cab window of BR class V2 2-6-2 no.60815 as it stands over the ash pits at Annesley.



Driver Les Pollard in the cab of BR class 9F 2-10-0 no.92075 waiting to leave Newstead Sidings on 12 June 1964.

## Readers' forum

from Reg Instone, Shirley, Solihull

Re. Forward 153 p4: article 'My cousin Arthur' by Edgar Fay.

I read Edgar's piece on A.F. Bound in Forward 153 with great interest, since LMS signalling, as well as GCR signalling, is one of my special interests. Indeed, I helped Graham Warburton with his articles for the LMS Journal.

I was particularly intrigued by Edgar's statement that "my grandmother was also his (Arthur's) aunt" since I was unaware of any relationship between the two men. I have investigated this a little, using the usual internet sites for genealogical research. It is well known that Sam Fay's wife was Frances Ann Farbrother, who was born in Kingston in 1857 or 1858. His parents were Joshua Fay and Ann Philpott, born in 1824 in Awbridge and 1820 in Eling respectively, hers were Charles Hill Farbrother and Mary Ann (or Amelia) Goodall, both born in 1823. Since Bound's mother's maiden name was Jane Minter Grant, then any aunt of his would either have to have been born, or married, a Bound or a Grant. Clearly this does not work.

Then I remembered that in his interview in Forward 115, Edgar made no secret of the fact that he was illegitimate, and his name at birth was not Fay. So I assume that the grandmother in question was his mother's mother, whose name I do not know and cannot easily find out. Maybe she was either born, or married, a Bound or a Grant. I think only Edgar can tell us the solution to this puzzle. Naturally, I don't want to cause any embarrassment, but as Edgar has been quite open about his illegitimacy, perhaps he may be willing to tell us some more.

In view of Bound's subsequent interest in signal aspects and multiple-aspect signalling on the LMS, it is interesting to compare his work on the GC. He did introduce the first three-aspect signalling in the UK in 1922, the first daylight colour-lights in fact, between Marylebone Goods and Neasden South, but there was little scope for work of this type before the Great War. His imaginative thinking can be seen, though, in work such as the intermediate semi-auto signals at Hucknall and Whetstone, further power signalling at Wath and at Immingham in 1911, the three-position semaphores at Keadby in 1916, the "Reliostop" system of ATC, and the unique signalling for the Wembley Exhibition loop line of 1925. He also made extensive use of track circuiting to control signalling at numerous other places, being one of the pioneers in using this technology which was only widely used on other railways after the Hawes Junction and Pontypridd accidents of 1913.

A more detailed examination of his achievements will have to wait until another occasion, but let it be said that in the early twentieth century the GCR had some of the most innovative signalling in the UK, thanks to Arthur Frank Bound.

Editor's note: The letter from Reg Instone was sent to Edgar Fay before publication with the following response.

from Edgar Fay, London N6

Reg Instone is quite right in his assumption. The connection with the Bounds is through my mother. My grandmother was born Mary Chubb Bound. She married one Charles Scammell. They had a number of children, among them my mother, Beatrice Scammell.

from John Bennett, Brentwood

Re. Forward 154 p40: letter from Reg Instone on 'Leicester Central platform signal box'.

In his interesting letter in Forward 154 Reg Instone dealt at some length with the mysteries of the history of this short lived signal box. It may therefore be appropriate at this stage for the writer to add information, from a variety of sources, on a somewhat enigmatic Great Central signal box.

There was the obligatory Board of Trade inspection as a new installation. No individual report has been traced in the MT6 series of inspection reports in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew but there is a report dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 1899 in the annual bound volumes of these reports (TNA Ref.MT29/61), unfortunately without a plan. This Report was a few months after the opening of the London Extension to passenger traffic and the Inspecting Officer noted that there were two frames of 30 levers each, the West frame (on the Down side) having 18 working and 12 spare levers whilst the East frame (on the Up side) had 24 working and 6 spare levers.

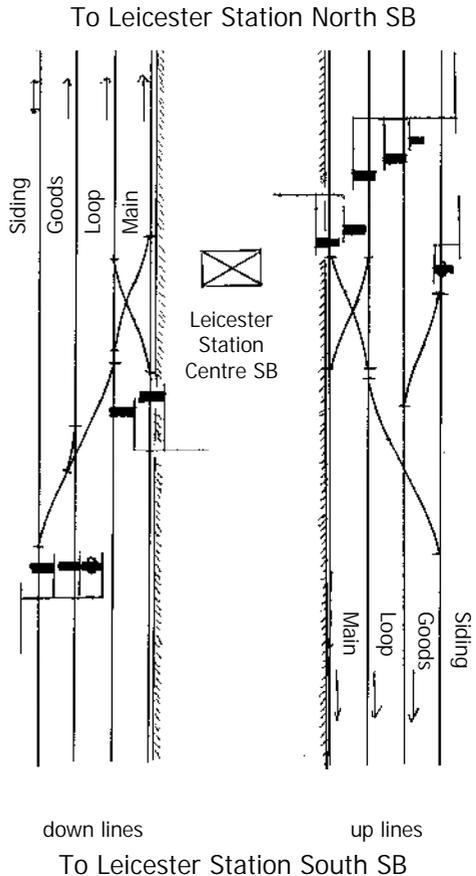
The next source of information to be mentioned is in TNA Ref. RAIL 226/325, being the detailed accounts from The Railway Signal Co for the signalling equipment they supplied for the London Extension. The items for this signal box (plus the two 30 lever frames) were described as:

- Two special 3-arm brackets
- Two special 2-arm brackets fixed to the station roof
- One 1-arm bracket
- Five ground discs (a sixth for the East frame was added later)
- Three rings for arms
- Seven facing point locks.

I will comment further on the actual installation of these items later.

The Great Central, like the MS&LR before them, produced comprehensive surveys of the various sections of the line, in part to show land ownership but also including detailed plans of stations and running lines. The volume covering the Extension from Annesley to Rugby has TNA reference RAIL 226/56 and is dated 1901. Unfortunately, as with the large scale OS maps, some detail such as slip points are not clearly shown and in places the depiction of individual signals is unclear - also frequently ground discs are omitted.

With this letter is a transcription of the area on this survey plan adjacent to the platform signal box with the signals as shown thereon, which did not indicate the ground discs. On the Down side the ring on the signal on the right hand side of the 3-arm bracket is clearly misplaced and should be on the left hand arm; prior to 1914 the GC used ringed arms for Goods lines and this arm would have applied to the Down Goods line through the station. As mentioned earlier, the arrangement of slip points on the GC plans is not clear, but it would seem likely from details to be given later that there was only a single slip trailing into the Down Goods line from the Down Siding, as a connection from the Down Goods into the Down Loop would have required additional signalling. On the Up side there is a wider view of the Newton photograph of GCR class 11B no. 104 in Manchester to Marylebone - a short history of the Great Central Railway by Robert F. Hartley on page 52. From a detailed study of the trackwork it would appear that the facing connection in the Up Loop led across the Up Goods line without any connection therewith to the Up Siding. This photograph also shows the trailing end of the crossover from the Up Siding to the Up Goods. There is also a photograph in the GCRS collection of class 18 0-6-OST no. 42 (converted from an 0-6-0 tender engine in 1903) on the Up Siding with the single bracket signal for the Up Goods line prominent.



Going back to the detail in the RSC Accounts this analysis still leaves unresolved questions. Seven facing point locks were supplied but there is an obvious need for only five of them; at the facing ends of the scissors crossings and the facing connection from the Up Loop to the siding. The discs are not shown, but presumably one applied to each of the points leading out of the Up/Down sidings. The RSC Accounts dealt with the equipment at the individual location only. If the home signal at one box had the distant signal for the next box on the same post then this would count as two signals for the former. This is relevant here as the gantries at the Passenger South and Passenger North signal boxes had distant arms for the Down and Up lines respectively and would have been included in the returns for those boxes. We can only surmise that there was some slotting arrangement which would bring the platform box into the operation of these distants.

Finally, the William Bradshaw book of Leicester photographs lists whistle signals to be given at the Station Centre signal box - the list is undated but may well have come from the 1905 Appendix which he mentions earlier in the book. This shows the following moves:

Platform Box East Side -	Up Main to Loop
	Up Loop to Main
	Up Siding to Goods
Platform Box West Side -	Down Main to Loop
	Down Loop to Main
	Down Siding to Goods, to Loop, to Main

It will be seen from this list that there is no mention of movements from the Up Loop to the Up Siding. Clearly there is an error in the 1902 OS map in not including the scissors crossings on each side.

In his letter Reg refers to the fact that the writer had given the date of closure of the box as 1908 - this appears in a long standing note in my files but unfortunately the source was not recorded. Any further information on this signal box will be welcome.

from Ken Grainger, Sheffield

Re. Forward 154 p40: letter from Reg Instone on 'Leicester Central platform signal box'.

I'm afraid I can't help Reg much as regards the date of Leicester Central's mid-platform signal box closure, though I strongly suspect that the October 1900 closure "until further notice" was never rescinded. It would certainly have been closed long before the redundant platform road crossings were finally removed, which would have waited until the renewal of the through rails. I don't know when this might have been but the suggestion made by Reg of c1908-10 seems not unreasonable.

from Alan Turner, Market Rasen

Re. Forward 146 p42: photo of Wrawby Junction signal box and Forward 154 p42: letter from Reg Instone.

It was a pity that the information on the back of the postcard of Wrawby Junction signal box was not printed in full. This is what it says:

To : Pte Harry Partridge, D Company  
7th Lincs Regiment, Flower Down Camp  
Winchester, Hants

From : Barnetby, Lincs, Thursday July 8/15.

"Dear Harry, I thought you would perhaps be interested in this card so I have sent it. Hope you get back alright (sic). Regards Will Midgley (not clear)"

Postmark is 'Grimsby xxxxxxxxxxxxxx' (not clear - Cleethorpes?) dated '11 July 15'

½d stamp is affixed

At the bottom of the card on the front is printed "1071 Wrawby Junction Box, Barnetby".

from Frank Stratford, Huncote, Leics.

Re. Forward 154 p27: article "Locomotive performance in the declining days of the GCR route" by John Clay.

I really enjoyed reading the article by John Clay on locomotive performance on the GC route. It brought back happy memories of my time firing in the Number Two Link at Leicester GC. I would like to add a few observations of my own.

The "almost impossible" 11 minutes Loughborough-Leicester timing was a challenge to my driver at that time - "Radar" Ron Smith. If the fireman was prepared for it and the engine was in the right condition, it could be, and was done on many occasions by Ron and myself. The technique was to have a box full of white hot fire and a full boiler on departure. Ron would immediately go straight on to full regulator on my shout of "right away" and would only pull the cut off very slowly up. The sound and fury was something I will never forget.

The bit about the late braking was indeed true, and I never went with any other driver who left the braking quite as late as Ron. He would shut off steam at Abbey Lane signal box and the braking would virtually be a 'one application' job.

As already stated, we achieved the 11 minutes timing on numerous occasions - sometimes closer to 10 minutes! The types of engine were many and varied, including B1, V2, K3, and 'Black 5', but the



BR Standard Class 5 4-6-0 no.73066 at Nottingham Victoria with a Marylebone service on 2 Feb. 1963.  
photo: Colin Gifford

favourite of Ron and myself was the 'Standard 5'. In September 1959, Leicester shed received five of these from Holbeck, all in good nick. They were 73010, 73045, 73053, 73066 and 73069. The best was 73066 which was capable of timing any train on the GC at that time. I vividly remember one night with this engine when working the Swindon-Sheffield back from Banbury. We were late away from Banbury and as was our norm, we would be trying our best to pick up some of the lost time. On leaving Rugby we stormed away in our usual style and the engine really flew. The speedometer was nudging 90 at Whetstone and on arrival at Leicester an enthusiast, who had been timing us, told us we had done the 20 miles in 17½ minutes! What memories, alas never to be experienced again.

from Clive Foxell, Chesham

Re. Forward 154 p43: letter from Reg Instone re. the Joint Companies.

The background to the Joint Companies of the London Division with the Metropolitan Railway and the Great Western Railway was rather more complex than is suggested. I have researched this subject for my recent books about the Met and GCR Joint Committee Line. Briefly, with the decline of Watkin's health during the late 1890s, his subordinates managing the Met and MS&LR became increasingly at loggerheads over the linking of their lines to fulfil his ambition to create a railway from Manchester to London – and beyond! The mutual antipathy of John Bell (Met) and William Pollitt (MS&LR), which began with their rivalry as junior clerks at the MS&LR, grew as they were promoted by Watkin and came to an outright confrontation when Watkin unilaterally imposed on both men a sharing arrangement for the London Extension. The realisation that only one of them could now become the Manager of a merged railway brought relations to a new low culminating in litigation and physical interference.

With Watkin's death and the opening of the GCR, Bell and Pollitt encouraged an atmosphere of non-cooperation over the shared operation of the line from Quainton Road to Canfield Place. It was only the retirement of the two protagonists followed by the disastrous rail crash at Aylesbury in 1904 that

brought their successors to realise that they had to work together, and so the Met & GC Joint Committee came into operation in 1906. However, although they 'buried the hatchet – they marked the spot', both insisting on a rigid interpretation of a 50/50 share of traffic, costs, profits and support activities. Not trusting each other, this was enshrined in a side statement which closely specified the operation of the Agreement eg alternating every 4/5 years the responsibilities for management, purchasing, shunting engines etc. Other activities were equally divided on an ad hoc basis ie parcels were sent to London on alternate days via the Met and then the GCR! Maintenance of the track was divided at mile post 281/2 near Great Missenden, where the GCR became responsible to Quainton Road.

The Met & GC Joint Committee filed conventional financial accounts and statistics and did not employ "very few staff " as they were responsible for most of the operations of the line. Initially, equal numbers were transferred from the 'partners' and subsequently vacancies were filled in the same manner. They had 'Joint' uniforms, badges and conditions but in practice, some staff still felt old allegiances and this could show in making decisions - particularly signalling - which would favour their original company. Unfortunately, the two companies had different objectives and, with arguments over even the need for one fence post, it is not surprising that the GCR/LNER were reluctant in sharing the cost of the Met's capital investment plans for enhancing their suburban services.

In complete contrast, the GW & GC Joint was willingly formed in 1906 by the two companies, united in the common purpose of the need for a new line that would give them mutual benefit. For the GWR it would provide a shorter, faster route to Birmingham and the GCR needed to reduce its dependency on using the Met to get to Marylebone. Apart from the Met's failure to co-operate, their route was difficult and also involved interlacing fast expresses with slower goods trains and Met commuter traffic over just two tracks. Indeed, the GW & GCR Joint line was built with gentler gradients and curves plus adequate passing loops.

The opening of these negotiations between the GWR and GCR in 1898, which implied that the GCR could avoid using the Met line, was a key factor in forcing the Met to sign its own Agreement with the GCR. So the GCR ended up with two routes into Marylebone, using the Met line for about of its passenger traffic which included many excursion and other specials.

Against this background, the relationship between the GWR and the GCR was far more harmonious, without the continual quibbling between the Met and GCR that continued through the LT and LNER era until that 'Joint' was wound-up in 1948 by nationalisation. Indeed, some aspects of that original agreement are needed today by LT/Metronet and Chiltern Railways in sharing the line from Harrow to Aylesbury.

Incidentally, the relevant papers are kept at the London Metropolitan Archive under Accession No. 1297.

from Ruth Johns, Plowright Press

Re. Forward 153 p14: review of "Geoff: 44 Years a Railwayman".

I was interested in your review of Geoff Raynor's book. In fact, the title has a very interested and still growing readership. I can appreciate that your magazine is a specialist one and may take a different view to many 'general' readers who also love the railway content because often they themselves have worked on the railways.

Professionally, I am interested in presenting people's lives as a whole and therefore work is part of the whole. Whilst I come from a railway (GWR) saturated family, including writers and publishers, there is room for a more general approach. I developed this approach partly after growing up in a family where visitors to see my father's model railway would often be oblivious to anything else!



from Bill Gee, Felixstowe

Information requested re. loco coaling plant

I enclose a photocopy of an advertisement for loco coaling plant built by W.J.Jenkins & Co. Ltd. of Retford, Notts. It shows an LNER class Q4 0-8-0 stood next to a coaling stage. Can any reader identify the location of this photo? The firm that built it used to be adjacent to the GC loco depot at Thrumpton Lane, Retford. They had a private siding which was shunted by the Retford Low Yard/Thrumpton pilot, either a J3 or a J5. The area is now occupied by housing.

from Brian Wainwright, Bury

Re. Forward 154 p41: letter from Reg Instone re. use of the telegraph.

Further to Reg Instone's notes on this matter in Forward 154 I can add some information based on the Appendix to the Working Timetable for October 1914.

First, it is clear that the telephone was the main method used for train regulation. Apart from general instructions on this point, many individual boxes had specific directions to pass on train information by means of the telephone. For example, Godley Junction was required to pass on to Hyde Junction the times of all passing goods and coal trains. However, in the instructions for the use of the telegraph, there is a hierarchy given for the precedence of messages, with danger messages at the top. One of them is 'train message' which refers to "the running of specials, ordinary trains out of course, tail-boards, trainmen's relief messages and other important matters strictly relating to trains in motion." Another, higher, category is 'train advice' which is not otherwise defined.

Hidden among the instructions for regulation by telephone is the following: "Special attention must be given by the signalman to the working of through ballast trains so as to avoid delay, and with this object the guard in charge of such a train must in all cases advise the signalman as to the next point at which the ballast train has to stop, and the signalman on duty must transmit this information forward by means of the telephone or the single needle speaking instrument so that a clear road can be kept for the train as far as practicable." In this case at least the use of the telegraph for regulation was envisaged, and it seems likely, even though it is not spelled out, that there was broader use than this case alone.

The location of telegraph stations varies; most seem to be in the stations, but quite a few are specifically said to be in boxes. In addition, when the Nottingham Victoria office was closed, there is an instruction that important messages should be sent to the East Box, which is not listed separately. This implies that other boxes may also have been equipped, but not listed as transmission stations. Instructions make it clear that public messages may be conveyed "on behalf of the Postmaster General" from certain stations. There are also specific instructions for police messages to be sent from signal boxes where necessary – and charged for.



from Paul White, Staleybridge

Information supplied re. 'The Pointsman' public house.



Pub sign at the 'Pointsman Inn'.  
photo: Paul White

There is a pub in Staleybridge on the crossroads of Bayley Street/Whitelands Road and Clarence Street called 'The Pointsman'. It has been closed for some time now and has been on fire, so its days are numbered. The name is interesting, because Bayley Street was crossed on the level by a line leading into the Globe Iron Works, and one of the stanchions of the level crossing still remains. There was quite a complex of lines in the Iron Works so no doubt there were a good many pointsmen with a thirst to be satisfied! The sign is interesting, in that there has been an attempt at accuracy, but I think the chap depicted is actually a ganger or lengthsmen rather than a pointsman. The pub itself is built right up against three parallel lines: L&Y to Ashton and Manchester Victoria, MS&L to Guide Bridge and London Road, and LNWR to Stockport.

Editor's note : See the photo feature by Roy Harrison in Forward 149 pp35/36.

from Bill Tooke, Plymouth

Re. Forward 154 p21: Geoff Burton's Robinson 0-8-4T

In response to the item and queries concerning the 7mm scale model of the 0-8-4T 'Wath Banker' by Geoff Burton, my limited response may be of help.

Having made enquiries amongst the modelling fraternity within the Gauge 'O' Guild, there is no one I contacted who had come across a whitmetal bodied kit of this loco. However at one time, Walsall Model Industries used to fabricate whitmetal parts for certain locos - whitmetal fireboxes for GC engines was one example I understand. Indeed they still market a whitmetal former for GC engines to connect a brass boiler to a brass firebox, it merely forms the front curve of the firebox. At one time CCW Models did produce locos with whitmetal bodies but never produced a GC example. CCW are now JPL models of Manchester and produce various whitmetal fittings.

I get the distinct feeling that this loco is a scratchbuilt example using various whitmetal parts with a brass chassis, the chassis of which could be hand produced or obtained from Premier Components of Leeds.

For the motor with letters JH on, this is most probably a 'Jack Hart' motor named after its instigator and is now produced by MSC Models of Long Ditton Surrey. They produce a 5 pole JH motor/gearbox with flywheel as well as other motors. Interestingly, they still produce a brass kit for the GC/LNER A5 4-6-2T requiring wheels and motor. I built one of these back in 1993 with an MSC Crailcrest motor and it is a most powerful and smooth runner even today.

The way the wheels are made, I feel that these came from Walsall Model Industries, being cast iron castings turned on a lathe, then each spoke is cut through and rejoined with Araldite or the like to insulate each spoke and in turn the wheel. I have used these wheels on a Leinster tinplate 'Immingham' I built in 1981, a sod to build but what an introduction to 7mm modelling.

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## Backnumbers of Forward on CD

Eric Latusek has offered to provide backnumbers of Forward on CD to GCRS members. Initially this will consist of issues 1 to 63. The cost will be £20. If interested please contact Eric (see front cover for contact details).



## Publicity & Sales

The following appeal appeared in Forward 149

"The Society raises funds by selling books, photos and other railway memorabilia donated to us for that purpose. These have been sold, not only at GCRS meetings, but also at other events eg at model railway exhibitions.

Our current Sales Officer, John White, is looking for someone to take over this role. The person required needs to have plenty of energy and ideas. They need space for storing stock securely and have their own transport. They must be willing to travel to venues or arrange for someone else to cover for them. If you see yourself as that person or would like to know more, please contact John White (see contact details inside front cover)."



We are now 18 months down the line and we still do not have a new Sales Officer. The committee is concerned, not so much that we are not generating an income from sales, but that we are missing out on opportunities to publicise the society at events. The committee has agreed that money needs to be spent on a new GCRS publicity stand - one that is easily portable and makes a good impact. Please contact John White or any other committee member if you wish to be considered for this role or let us know of anyone you think should be approached. It would be great if we could put somebody forward at the AGM.

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## Open Days at Gainsborough Model Railway

Sat 22 March	Sun 23 March	Mon 24 March
Sat 14 June	Sun 15 June	
	Sun 13 July	
Sat 23 Aug	Sun 24 Aug	Mon 25 Aug
	Sun 12 Oct	
	Sun 7 Dec	
	Sun 28 Dec	

Opening times : Sat & Sun 1.30pm - 6.00pm, Mon 10.30am - 6.00pm

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## Crossword Solution (Forward 155)

### Across

6. Pyewipe 9. Detonator 10. Loop 12. Compound 13. Tank 14. Traverser 18. Repeater  
20. Embankment 21. Headcode 23. Soar 24. Jutland 28. Slide 30. Jersey Lillies 33. Northwich  
34. Turntable 36. Couplings 38. Scottish 42. Smoke 43. Relief 44. Meadow Hall 46. Levers  
47. Dukeries 48. Telegraph.

### Down

1. Sandite 2. Ruddington 3. Foot 4. Pointsman 5. Kandahar 7. Inch 8. Electric 11. Tender  
15. Shearlegs 16. Ruth Kelly 17. Grand Union 19. Ejectors 22. Staveley 25. Disc 26. Piano  
27. Snow Hill 29. Ballast 30. Johnson 31. Roxton 32. Ellesmere 35. Sydney 36. Clubman  
37. Newton 38. Side 39. Walker 40. Humber 41. Bell 42. Sharp 45. Haig.

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## Rear cover caption

USA class S160 2-8-0 no.1846 catches the evening sun with an up mixed goods south of Quorn on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1943.

photo: V.R.Webster / Kidderminster Railway Museum

