



## Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 157

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### Front cover caption

BR class J11/3 0-6-0 no.64324 at Langwith Junction shed on 5 July 1959. Known as the 'Pom-Poms', the GCR class 9J was Robinson's development of earlier MS&L designs. Piston valves were fitted to some members of the class from 1942 onwards and became sub-class J11/3. No.64324 survived until Sept. 1962.

Photo: A. R. Goult



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One of the good things about the current railway scene is the greater value placed on heritage. Sensitive renovation is now the way to go when stations are due for redevelopment. My local station at Sheffield is a good example – I rate it as one of the best in the country and anyone arriving there cannot help but be impressed by the way the station acts as a fine gateway to the city.

Sheffield developers Ackroyd & Abbott have acquired the site of the Derbyshire Lines Killamarsh Central station. Rather than simply demolish it they have offered it to anyone who can take it away. Ken Grainger has been trying hard to generate interest among the heritage railways. The colour section of this issue focuses on Killamarsh.

My visit to Wrexham using the W&S service took place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July. The train was well-patronised, not only with 'real' passengers but with anoraks like myself. There was a very friendly atmosphere among the passengers and the train staff were very courteous and friendly. On the approach to Birmingham I excused myself from a discussion of the works of R.L. Stevenson with the lady sat opposite and took myself to the vestibule in order to stick my head out of the window. How many service trains offer that facility today? Being a weekend the route was via Birmingham New Street - weekdays it is via Birmingham International. At each junction during the wheel-flange squealing journey through Birmingham the train was held at signals until all other conflicting movements had been cleared. There was even a signal stop in Birmingham New Street itself where one enthusiastic passenger had to be refrained from boarding the train by station staff. Eventually the train arrived at Tameside Parkway ON TIME! When I questioned the train staff about this I was told "There is a lot of recovery time in the schedule".

So to Wrexham. The service terminated at Wrexham General, a GW station with the former GC Exchange platform accessed by a footbridge. The station is very attractive having been sensitively renovated. W&S have contributed to the ambience by placing colourful planters on the station forecourt. The staff in the booking office were very friendly when I enquired about my onward journey to Chester. I walked through the town in order to look at the new (1998) station at Wrexham Central. What a shock! It is the most ugly, inhospitable station imaginable. It is unstaffed with a draughty glass box as a station facade. Litter was strewn everywhere - perhaps being wet and a Saturday late afternoon didn't help. I wondered why the station had been built at all when the hourly service calls at Wrexham General anyway.



W&S livery class 67 no. 67015 'David J Lloyd' at the rear of the 12:17 service from Marylebone after arrival at Wrexham General on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2008.



The bleak Wrexham Central station.

For those who attempt the crosswords in Forward I have an apology! Some of the crossword clues in the last issue were missing. For those who would like to finish it, the missing clues can be found on p.31 of this issue.

The GCRS will be celebrating Edgar Fay's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 12<sup>th</sup> October. Please see p48 for details.

## GCRS Autumn Meeting 2008

This year's Autumn Meeting will take place at Aylesbury on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008. The venue is the Aylesbury Multicultural Centre, Friarscroft Way, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 2TE (5 mins walk from Aylesbury station).

There will be two presentations - at 11.00am and 2.30pm. Details to be finalised. Look at the website or contact a committee member nearer the date. Finish at 4.00pm.

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### Any more for the Somme?

I am delighted that the response to the Somme and Flanders tour proposal, announced in the last issue of Forward, has been sufficient for the tour to go ahead. It will constitute a four night stay and will take place next May – the actual date and itinerary is still to be determined, but intending participants are being consulted as to preferences.

The group already exceeds the minimum number required but if anyone else would like to join us, they will be more than welcome. The next target is a party large enough to have our own coach and simply go wherever we like.

Ken Grainger



A new life for the LD&ECR. A test train from Derby top-and-tailed by 31601/602 at Ollerton on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

See the article by Chris Booth on p34.

photo: Chris Booth

# S. W. A. Newton - Photographer of the London Extension

by David Reidy

Sydney Walter Alfred Newton was born in Argyll Street, Leicester, in 1875. His father, Alfred, started a small photographic business, the Belvoir Photographic Studio, at 19 Belvoir Street in 1882 and the family lived in rooms above the shop. A fire in an adjacent factory caused a wall to collapse on the Belvoir Street premises and the Newton family and business were forced to relocate to 17 King Street. To the late Victorians, photography was still thought of as novel and exclusive and it was not until George Eastman introduced the Kodak camera in 1888 that photography began to take its first steps towards a mass audience. This novelty meant that Alfred did a roaring trade as a portrait photographer. However, this was not the only line of business he concentrated on, and for many years Alfred Newton & Son were the official photographers to the Leicester Museums, helping to record and document many objects and artefacts.

Young Sydney joined the family firm in the early 1890s, shortly before work began on the construction of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway's London Extension. He was captivated by the sheer magnitude and variety of this new undertaking - a railway carving its way through the heart of England from Annesley to Marylebone down through Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire - and when work began in 1894, he took it upon himself, still in his teens and with no official funding, to record the work in progress. He was still taking photographs of the line until at least 1907. Judging from the number of photographs he took, his interest became almost obsessive. Contrary to popular belief, he was never the Railway's official photographer, but his own enthusiasm for this momentous engineering scheme led to the creation of a truly magnificent archive. He did, however, have official sanction and, at the completion of the line, he gave each contractor a photographic album in thanks for their cooperation.

By rail, bicycle and foot, with his heavy plate camera, Newton travelled the length of the London Extension as the construction progressed and photographed every aspect of its creation. He captured the giant steam excavators, the quaint contractors' locomotives, the hundreds of bridges, the cuttings and stations, and also the navvies themselves whose hard labour drove the line through the countryside. Indeed, the workmen often wanted photographs of themselves and he would help to offset the costs of his journeys by selling pictures to the navvies and engineers. Together, his photographs represent a compelling and unrivalled account of social and engineering history in late Victorian and Edwardian England. As if this were not enough, he subsequently also recorded the construction of the joint line from Northolt as far as Princes Risborough.

The end product of Newton's single-minded enthusiasm was some 6,500 glass plate negatives - the most comprehensive and evocative record we have of the art of railway construction at the end of the nineteenth century. Newton did for the Great Central what J. C. Bourne had done for Stephenson's London and Birmingham and Brunel's Great Western in the distant dawn of the railway age. It may seem invidious to bracket Newton's pictures with Bourne's incomparable lithographs, but whereas an artist's work is necessarily a highly personal interpretation of things seen, the cool, objective eye of the camera records an undistorted image of the past, a window of clear glass through which we are privileged to peer into the past.

Newton remained in photography for the rest of his life and the business remained in King Street until 1950. He married at 39 and at 45 became a father for the first and only time. For many years he lived in Victoria Park Road in Leicester in a house he named Finmere after one of the stations (the only one in Oxfordshire!) on the London Extension. After selling the King Street shop he moved to a smaller house at Branting Hill in Groby before moving in with his son, with whom he shared his name. He died in 1960 at Beverley, East Yorkshire, aged 85.

Throughout Newton's life the glass negatives from the construction of the London Extension were something of a Holy Grail amongst railway historians, and it was not until the late 1950's that their whereabouts were re-discovered. It was at that time that John Daniel, a member of Leicester Museums staff, had been invited to tea at Branting Hill by Newton, as Newton had something to show him that he might find of interest. After tea, Newton took John out to his rickety wooden

garden shed. Inside, stacked from floor to ceiling, were hundreds of carefully labelled cardboard boxes containing some 6,500 negatives. Newton said that if the Museum did not want them, then they would have to be destroyed as he was moving to Yorkshire. It did not take John Daniel more than a moment to realise what he was looking at and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Newton collection is one of the finest and most important collections of railway photographs anywhere in the world. It is a unique technical and social record of the building of the last English main line railway. It is divided into two sections. The images of the railway's construction, featuring the infrastructure, locomotives, machinery, navvies, bridges, tunnels and stations, are in the care of the 'Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland' at Wigston, whilst the social history plates that capture the timeless rural life of the villages along the line before the upheaval of the First World War are housed at English Heritage's 'National Monuments Record' in Swindon.

Newton seems to have developed an affection for the places and countryside he got to know and he returned to photograph some places on more than one occasion over a number of years. He also recorded memorials to those who died in the First World War.

Some of Newton's photographs have been reproduced in Leicester Museum publications, notably *The Last Main Line* in 1961, while others have been used as illustrations in such works as Dow's monumental trilogy *Great Central*, Terry Coleman's *Railway Navvies*, Rolt's *Making of a Railway* and very recently *Boyd-Hope and Sargent's Railways and Rural Life*. In the latter I particularly enjoyed the 1897 views of a bank-trimming gang at Helmdon (p 101), navvies posing beside a steam crane near Charwelton (p 77), the construction of Ashby Magna station (p 59), the locomotive and carriage works at Woodford in 1900 (p79), the construction of the Catesby Viaduct (p75), the group of curious children at Greatworth in October 1901 (p 119) and the September 1903 view of the derelict church of St Leonard, Aston Le Walls (p 108). But these represent only a minute fraction of the total collection.

17 King Street is now a hairdressing salon! O tempora, o mores.

Editor's note: See page 12 of this issue for information on where to find Newton's photos on the internet.

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## Brian William Leslie 1932-2008

An appreciation by Chris Killingbeck

Brian was born in Beaconsfield on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1932. He worked in photography for a while before moving to film projection. He was on the staff of the National Film & Television School at Beaconsfield for 20 years. Allied to his interest in photography he collected old cameras and film projectors. His particular railway interest was in the Great Western & Great Central Joint Railway. He joined the Great Central Railway Society in 1974, the year of its formation.

Brian had been ill for some time. He could not swallow food and had to be fed through a pipe. He had chemotherapy for a tumour in the gullet and was in and out of hospital several times. An operation to remove the tumour in January 2008 was postponed because of Brian's poor health, which continued to deteriorate until his death on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

He will be greatly missed by his family and friends. He leaves a wife, Pat, a son, David, and a daughter, Marie. We extend our condolences to them all.



Editor's note: It was Brian's wish that his collection of railway books, photos, timetables etc. should be left to the Great Central Railway Society. We are grateful to Brian's family for fulfilling this wish and to Len Bunning for organising the transfer.

## On Great Central lines in North Lincolnshire in the 1940s and 50s

by Bill Glasspoole

My first sightings of Great Central locomotives were in 1946. I had been invited to accompany a friend to stay with his aunt at Goole during the Easter holiday just a month before VE Day. We lived in Bridlington where the railway activity was fairly infrequent. Thus to us the traffic at Goole was a revelation, with a constant procession of heavy freight trains heading for Hull docks and thence to Europe, with empties returning. The flows were such that quite often the crossing gates on Boothferry Road, adjacent to the station, would close to road traffic for one train, remain closed after it had passed until one came in the opposite direction and then still remain closed for another train to follow the first one. Every available locomotive was pressed into service including, of course, a lot of O4s, which I had not seen previously, as well as Q6s, J39s, LMS "Austin 7"s and almost anything else that could turn a wheel.

The O4s were not the only GCR locomotives to be seen there because around 9.30 every morning a passenger train from Doncaster to Hull was headed by a D11 Director. In fact on 21<sup>st</sup> April, at the end of our holiday, we set off homeward behind no. 5508 Prince of Wales and I recall that we had also seen no. 5506 Butler-Henderson more than once. I believe a batch of these D11s was shedded at Sheffield Darnall and so it is likely that the train had worked through from Sheffield Victoria. In August we stayed at Goole again. Traffic to Hull was greatly reduced, with war materials now heading mainly southward for the fight against Japan. In fact victory over Japan was declared while we were at Goole and celebrated very noisily with all the ships in the docks blowing their hooters loud and long. Again we returned to Hull behind a Director, this time no. 5509 Prince Albert.

Now let's get to North Lincolnshire. My first visit to that area was from 20<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> August 1946, when my mother took me with her on a visit to friends at Louth. By then we were living at Driffield. As a fourteen year old train spotter I looked forward eagerly to the journey although I had little idea as to what I might "spot". In fact the visit turned out to be a great deal more interesting than I could possibly have anticipated. I trust I shall not be criticised for giving details of all the locomotives involved in our journeys to and from Louth, even though only the central sections were actually over GCR metals. I should remind readers that at that time the LNER 1946 renumbering was in full swing, so some of the engines had their old numbers and others their new ones.

We took a morning train from Driffield to Hull headed by C7 no. 2203 of Hull Dairycoates shed, crossed the Humber by ferry, then travelled from New Holland Pier to Grimsby Town behind J11 no. 4443 (ex no. 5330). C7s were then frequent performers around Hull on both passenger and goods trains but I cannot now recall whether I had previously seen a J11, possibly when visiting Doncaster while staying at Goole, though I certainly hadn't seen one at Driffield nor travelled behind one before. But there was no question that our next engine, from Grimsby to Louth was a real "cop", no less than no. 6165 Valour, immaculately turned out though still in wartime black, working the midday departure to King's Cross, which it would haul through Boston and Spalding as far as Peterborough. No. 6165 worked this turn every day during my week at Louth, despite this route not being Great Central territory - it was formerly Great Northern. Unfortunately I never noted the names of the Humber ferries on which I crossed the river, though I certainly used all three of them during the period covered by these notes. For the record, they were Lincoln Castle, Tattersall Castle and Wingfield Castle.

Valour was at that time allocated to Immingham shed along with no. 6169 Lord Faringdon, these being the only B2s never rebuilt. Valour was unusual in being the Great Central's war memorial engine, but there were two genuinely unique engines to be seen at Louth every day. No. 2808 (ex-3279) came along at about 11.00am on a King's Cross to Grimsby train and no. 9311 (ex-5771) shunted the yard. The former will be recognised by all GNR/LNER enthusiasts as the Ivatt Atlantic rebuilt by Gresley with K2 cylinders and Walschaerts valve gear. The latter locomotive, not as well known, was the N5 modified with rather ungainly extended tanks, shedded at Immingham but on loan to Louth while I was there. (Featured on the cover of Forward 149 - Ed.)

Apart from these three unusual locomotives there was little more to be seen at Louth. C12s and D2s went out and returned on the trains around the Mablethorpe loop and a J6 worked the occasional

goods train. I assume that there were fish trains from Grimsby to London but they must have run later in the evenings than when I was about. I decided to seek more productive grounds, Grimsby being the obvious destination.

Trains to Grimsby were very infrequent as well as being much more expensive than buses, so I travelled by bus. The outcome was possibly the most memorable day of spotting that I ever had. Highlights were two of the five B2s still in service, City of Manchester and City of Liverpool - I had not previously seen any of the class and indeed never saw one again - and all four of the GCR compound Atlantics. I have never retained my notes, other than brief details of journeys, but there were certainly one or two Directors. At the other end of the scale were two contrasting classes of 0-6-0ST. These were the little Pollitt dock engines of 1892, LNER Class J62, with outside cylinders and weighing only 30tons 17cwt, and the ex-WD locomotives, some virtually brand new, with inside cylinders and weighing 48tons 4cwt, bought by the LNER and classified J94, but still in WD khaki livery.

At Grimsby I witnessed my only SPAD, as they are now called. One of the B2s, running light, overshot by a couple of yards the starting signal between the end of the platform and the level crossing, the gates of which were already open to the railway but the signal was "on". There was some cursing from the signalman and the loco was duly reversed to allow the signal to be pulled off.

Returning to the GCR locomotives seen: at that time Immingham shed was very much a last repository for engines due for retirement, which is not to say that they were not expected to earn their keep. In 1945 all six B2s went to Immingham but by the time of my visit to Grimsby City of Chester had been withdrawn. The B3s have already been mentioned. All the C5s were also based at Immingham. Thus at that time Immingham was the exact counterpart of the ex-NER's Dairycoates on the other side of the river, which was home to all eleven surviving B15s and several Atlantics of classes C6 and C7.

Our return from Louth started behind no.2808 to Grimsby, followed by J6 no.4268 (ex-3629) to New Holland Pier. This was the only time I ever travelled behind a J6. From Hull to Driffield we had D20 no.2102 of Botanic Gardens shed. Overall, six trains hauled by locomotives of six classes, including representatives from three pre-grouping companies.

My next visit to North Lincolnshire was not until Whit Monday, 14 May 1951. The Doncaster Student Apprentices Society had arranged a visit to Appleby Frodingham's rolling mill at Scunthorpe. In the morning I went from Driffield to Hull, then crossed to New Holland Pier, whence I continued to Grimsby Town to meet a couple of my Sheffield friends. We then travelled from Grimsby (Corporation Bridge) to Immingham Town and back on the Grimsby & Immingham Tramway, in both directions in ex-GCR car no.13. This was a long, single-deck, bogie car, with First and Second class open saloons divided by a partition with frosted glass panels in the upper parts. One of these carried a beautiful representation of the Great Central's coat of arms. The track was in a very poor state and it was interesting to observe the extent to which the car body could twist as the front and back ends rolled in opposite directions. We then returned to Doncaster, had some lunch, met up with the rest of the party and went to Scunthorpe. After the visit we all returned to Doncaster (or Sheffield) ready for work the following day. In contrast to my earlier visit to the area, on this day the locomotives which I travelled behind were all B1s, successively (from New Holland): nos.61328, 61365, 61328 again and finally 61193. In fact this was very much a precursor of things to come, with no fewer than 22 B1s allocated to Immingham shed and 20 to Doncaster. Moreover, B1s also became dominant between Grimsby and New Holland, though that line did produce some variety on future travels.

For the June Plant Holiday Week in 1951 I bought a Runabout Ticket, still labelled London & North Eastern Railway. For the princely sum of ten shillings (50p) at privilege rate (£1 full fare) I could travel as much as I liked for seven days in an area bounded by Cleethorpes, Doncaster, Hull via Goole and Bridlington. This included the East Riding branches to Hornsea and Withernsea, the Humber crossing and both lines from New Holland. On the Saturday, 23 June, I stayed within East Yorkshire but on the Sunday I went to Hull, intending to cross the Humber and go to Cleethorpes. The first problem arose when I arrived at Corporation Pier to find that the ferry was delayed by a very low spring tide, with no clear forecast of when it might appear. Along with six or eight other

people I waited in the pier station shelter in pouring rain until the boat eventually turned up, over 1½ hours late. I should have cut my losses and returned home straight away, but carried on to New Holland and thence to Cleethorpes behind J11 no.64284. The rain was still pouring down and so at last I decided it was time to go home. At the ticket barrier for the train back to New Holland it was the same inspector who had checked my ticket on arrival only about ten minutes before. He recognised me and thoroughly summed up the situation with the few words, "I don't blame you." The engine back to New Holland was K2 no.61736. On arriving there I found that the ferries were so out of schedule that the one I had expected to catch had been cancelled, leaving me with no alternative but to return to Grimsby, behind B1 no.61079, and then head for Doncaster behind K3 no.61806. This was an Immingham engine, no doubt standing in for a B1. At Doncaster it was too late to return home to Driffield and so I had to spend the night at my digs. As for the K3, I would have been very surprised if that class never stood in for B1s on that line. In fact Doncaster shed often used them on other turns on which I travelled, though not as frequently as Hull Dairycoates turned them out, to stand in both for its own B1s as well as those belonging to Botanic Gardens. Furthermore, Doncaster also surprisingly often supplied remarkably run down V2s on 6-coach all-stations trains.

During two separate periods I travelled almost weekly on one such, early evening train to York, usually headed by a V2 but sometimes by a K3. Similarly I once travelled from Doncaster to March on the 6.35am "Parliamentary", six compartment coaches behind a Doncaster V2 that had been out all night, and sounded distinctly "off the boil" as it departed from Lincoln. It had to stop at Spalding North Junction for the fireman to clear the grate. So I would not have been surprised to find a V2 working between Doncaster and Cleethorpes, though I never did.

Three days after the previous unfortunate trip to Cleethorpes I ventured to New Holland again, specifically to travel on the 3½ mile branch to Barton-on-Humber. This was being worked on that day by N5 no.69322. On return to New Holland I travelled to Grimsby, then to Scunthorpe and back to Grimsby and New Holland, with all trains again powered by B1s.



BR class B1 4-6-0 no.61196 passes Great Coates with an excursion train for Cleethorpes on 23 August 1959.

photo: John Willerton

My next two journeys along those lines were on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1952 and 21<sup>st</sup> September 1953, both occasions when I had merely chosen to travel that way when going home from Doncaster to Driffild. The former run was slightly the more interesting. On the way to Grimsby I stopped off at Scunthorpe, travelling behind B1s on both stages, but to New Holland K2 no. 61727 made a pleasant change. On the second journey I went straight through to Grimsby and then to New Holland, with B1s on both sections. That was the last time that I used the Humber ferries.

Summing up, my very first double journey into Lincolnshire was by far the most interesting. B1s did appear to be excessively large engines to work the line from New Holland to Grimsby and Cleethorpes to the extent that they did. But the most surprising aspect of the line between New Holland and Grimsby was the greater use of ex-Great Northern locomotives rather than ex-Great Central ones. In fact I travelled behind J11s only twice, compared with one J6 and two K2s. I cannot find any reference to an ex-Great Northern shed at Grimsby, although one might expect that there would have been one at the end of the very long branch line from Peterborough. Ex-GNR engines would certainly be seen in Grimsby every day in the 1950s, with no fewer than eight K2s allocated to Immingham shed in 1947 and seven in 1954. The single J6 observed on the New Holland line would be accounted for by Immingham shed using it simply because it was available, though the nearest sheds to which they were allocated were Doncaster with 20 and Retford with two. New England had no fewer than 29 in 1947 and these were probably the ones I saw working through Louth. Lincoln also had seven in 1947, though Doncaster didn't have any. The only specific record I can find for no. 4268 was that it was allocated to Ardsley in 1957.

Returning to GCR engines, class J11s were widely scattered around the whole area although the only figures I can quote for their allocations were at the close of 1947: Immingham 12, Frodingham 7, Lincoln 9, Louth 2 and Retford with no fewer than 23. Thus one might have expected to see rather more of them working to New Holland.

Overall, these records cannot be more than an example of the way in which variety decreased during the period considered. Today a brighter note is that freight activity from Immingham Dock seems to be ever increasing.

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## Demolition of Immingham steam shed

reproduced with permission from the Sept. 2008 issue of 'The Railway Magazine'

Another major link with the steam era has disappeared with the demolition of Immingham steam shed. Coded 40B during the British Railways era, Immingham was at one time one of the largest depots in the country and continued to be so well into the diesel era, by which time a large diesel traction maintenance depot had been added to the site.

Right up until last year, the ex-Great Central Railway steam shed and its adjacent fitting shop were still being used for occasional wagon and loco repairs, but EWS's increasing centralisation of traction maintenance on its Toton depot has resulted in a winding-down of operations. Even the large diesel depot building at Immingham is now used only for the storage of withdrawn Class 56s and other redundant locos and there are fears locally that it too could be knocked down to make way for an expansion of the nearby docks car park.

Immingham steam shed was opened in May 1912 and at its peak contained 12 roads with an allocation of more than 120 engines. In the late 1950s, a large part of it was removed to make way for the diesel depot but the bulk of the shed, along with the two-road workshop, remained, not closing to steam until February 1966. Although primarily a freight engine depot, it was for a while home to a fleet of 'Britannia' Pacifics.

Today, rail freight traffic in the North Lincolnshire area remains vibrant and EWS is to retain a signing-on point cum open-air loco stabling point in the town, either at the docks or at Immingham reception sidings. The concrete coaling tower, now one of only two left in the country (the other being at Carnforth), is believed to be safe from demolition for the moment.

## Great Central suburban-City services

by David Bodicoat

The above title appeared at the head of one of the paragraphs in the 'Pertinent Paragraphs' section of the February 1908 Railway Magazine. Intrigued by what it might reveal, I read the paragraph at length. Closer study revealed that it did not refer to the Great Central's existing services, but rather to those which could possibly come about if the working union of the Great Central and Great Northern Railways, which had been first mooted in 1907 following a meeting between the General Managers of the respective companies and described in Dow's Great Central Volume 3 p116-121, were to receive approval. The likelihood of creating the working union was very much to the fore at that time - the same issue of Railway Magazine set out in full the Heads of Agreement and informed the reader that the General Manager of the combined concern would be Sam Fay, and the Chairman Oliver Bury, with Sir Alexander Henderson taking the post of Deputy Chairman.

The history of the proposed union of the railways, as far as it had been agreed at the date, should be briefly recapitulated. In essence, the General Managers, Sam Fay (GCR) and Oliver Bury (GNR) had put to their Boards the advantages which could be gained through a form of working union, similar to that achieved by the London, Chatham & Dover and South Eastern Railways in 1899. The time was opportune, as the time limit of 50 years which was applied to the GN/MS&L Traffic Arrangements Act of 1858 was about to expire and in any event some form of continuation agreement would have been desirable. Even though the spirit of the Act had been damaged some years earlier by the MS&L's London extension, with the introduction of through trains from Manchester to Marylebone, time had been something of a healer as there were many other aspects of inter-working between the two railways apart from London-Manchester express trains.

Towards the end of 2007, Heads of Agreement for the proposals had been drawn up, and they were approved by the shareholders of both companies at separate meetings on December 20<sup>th</sup>. However, as far as that part of the story goes, the companies were not masters of their own destiny, as the Railway and Canal Commissioners, undoubtedly influenced by the Board of Trade, would find the proposals ultra vires on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1908, a verdict endorsed by the Court of Appeal only eight days later. This meant that a Parliamentary Act would be required to sanction the proposals, and despite the addition of the Great Eastern Railway to the proposed merger arrangements under the Bill which was promoted in the following year, the hostility which was evoked was such that the Bill was withdrawn by the three companies and it was left to the 1921 Railways Act to bring about a compulsory merger of the three railways with others to form the London & North Eastern Railway.

To go back to the 'Pertinent Paragraph' item, the statement regarding the running of GC services into the City was attributed to Lord Allerton, Chairman of the Great Northern Railway, and it seems likely that it was included in his speech to the GN shareholders at their meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Whilst his counterpart, Sir Alexander Henderson was, according to Dow, at pains to emphasise the closely interwoven nature of the two railway systems and to some extent the probable financial outcome of the proposals at the corresponding meeting of GC shareholders, Lord Allerton seems to have caught the imagination of The Railway Magazine's editor by his vision of the extension of the GC suburban services in the London area.

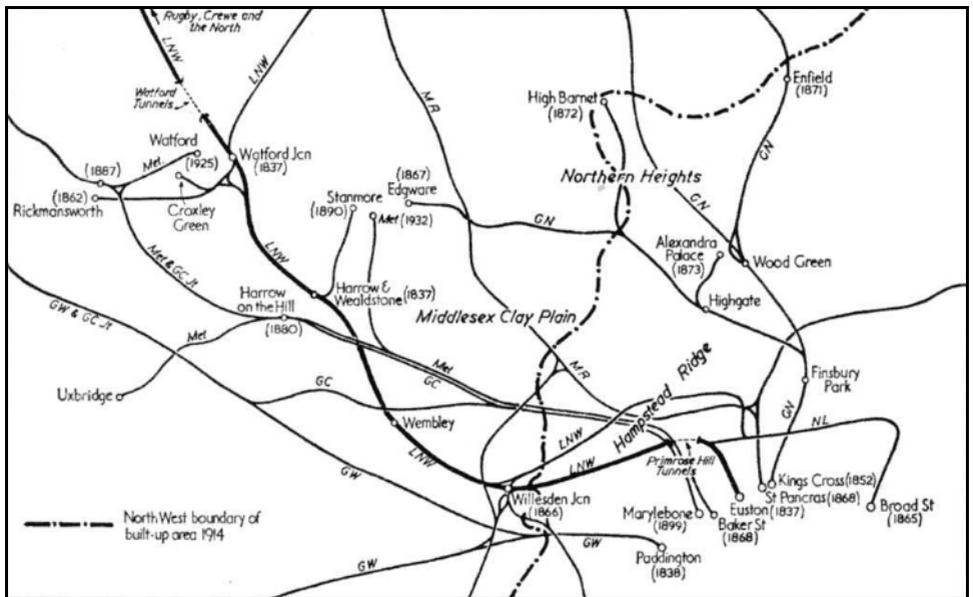
The Railway Magazine states: 'The one point on which a definite pronouncement has been made is that regarding the building up of a service between the City and the suburban districts served by the Great Central Railway. Lord Allerton intimated that, by a connection between the two systems, such a service could be worked into the City over the Great Northern Railway's existing lines.'

It then went on to comment on Lord Allerton's statement, and beyond it, as follows:-

'A glance at the map of the north-west suburbs of London shows that the most obvious connection would be by means of a line from the Great Central Railway in the neighbourhood of Pinner (with possibly a line from near Ruislip to provide a connection from the Gerrard's Cross district) to the Great Northern Railway at Edgware. Such a connection would only be about 4½ miles in length, and would enable trains to be run from and to King's Cross and Broad Street, and the Great Central Railway's suburban district; in fact, it would only mean the extension of trains to and from the Great Central Railway, and, therefore, would not necessitate many additional trains over the Great Northern

Railway; indeed, by reverting to the original through train service to Edgware in use prior to the extension of the GN from Finchley to High Barnet, no new mileage over the Great Northern Railway between Finchley and Moorgate Street and Broad Street would be necessary. The services could be rearranged, some trains still running through to High Barnet, and the others to the Great Central Railway via Edgware and the suggested connecting line, the High Barnet or Great Central line passengers changing into a connecting branch train at Finchley, as might be necessary. The line from Finchley to Edgware is a single line at present, but since as many as 25 trains each way daily already pass over it, this number alone would give quite a respectable City service to and from the Great Central Railway's suburban district'.

'A short spur line, connecting the Great Central Railway with the Hampstead extension line of the London & North Western Railway near West Hampstead, would enable the Great Central Railway to run trains to and from Broad Street, as the London & North Western Railway does at present. It would be necessary to get the sanction of the London & North Western Railway to such a project, but that need not be difficult; whilst the North London railway (if the London & North Western Railway did not object) would be only too pleased to accommodate such additional traffic, now that the electric tram competition has so much reduced the traffic previously carried by the North London Railway.'



Despite the observations made by The Railway Magazine, all that Lord Allerton seemed to be suggesting was that a connection from the Great Central Railway to the Great Northern in the north London area would permit GC suburban services to run into the City. The report of the Great Northern Chairman's suggestion does not even make it clear where the link should be, although the options would be fairly limited and it is probable that Pinner-Edgware would have been the most likely option, by virtue of land availability and the physical nature of the terrain. The Great Northern line from Finchley to Edgware had been constructed as a single track although it was built to generous dimensions - when the section as far as Mill Hill East, now in the ownership of London Transport, was doubled and electrified as part of the 1935 New Works Programme, there were no difficulties. In fact, the whole Finchley to Edgware section was scheduled for doubling and electrification; due to the outbreak of war, only the section from Finchley to Mill Hill East was so treated and the remainder of the works, although partly finished, were abandoned after the Second World War. If the Pinner-Edgware link had been constructed, there is a very good chance that this

section would have been doubled and remained in the ownership of the LNER, and later by British Railways.

The Pinner-Edgware link, with its objective of enabling the Great Central to obtain access to the City, is a straightforward enough proposal. However, a westwards extension to the area of Gerrard's Cross, as suggested by The Railway Magazine, might well have attracted hostility from the Great Western, as the GC&GW Joint line had only been opened as recently as 1906 and outer suburban traffic was still building up. Any possibility of diverting a proportion of this new traffic from the Joint line on to a line to Pinner, Edgware and the City would have been frowned on by the Great Western as a breach of the contractual agreement under which the GW&GC Joint line had been constructed and financed in partnership with the Great Central. The practicality of running trains from the Great Central via Edgware and Finchley into Broad Street, should this have been envisaged, need not have required the construction of a link with the London & North Western Railway near West Hampstead as suggested by the The Railway Magazine. This objective could have been achieved by continuing from Finchley to Finsbury Park, whence they could use the Canonbury curve to the North London Railway and the west side of the Dalston triangle to obtain access to Broad Street. Whilst it is unlikely that the motive power to be employed by the Great Central would have been a matter in which Lord Allerton would be interested, it is worth at least giving some thought to this. The 4-6-2 tanks had yet to appear on the scene and the Marylebone suburban services, such as they were, were worked by the 4-4-2 tanks. The GC was not over-endowed with tank locomotives suitable for this type of traffic and it seems likely that the 4-4-2 tanks would have been employed on the prospective City services, subject to loading gauge and weight considerations over the Great Northern tracks. All these proposals were, sadly, to become the victim of Parliamentary whim and the intriguing thought of GC locomotives working into the heart of the City was destined to become part of the byways of railway history.

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## The Great Central Railway on the Internet

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a)

The 'a2a' (Access to Archives) section of the National Archives web site is essential for anyone involved in research in preparation for a book or article. It enables you to search all archives in the UK. For example if we enter 'Great Central Railway' into the search we get 126 returns. This large number is made manageable by the number of 'hits' given for each archive. Top of the list is North East Lincolnshire Archives with 62 hits. If you then click on this archive you get a comprehensive list of what these 62 items are about. By clicking on the links to the holders of the archive you get information on opening times and contact information. You still have to visit the archive but you can make sure your journey is worthwhile before you set out.

[http://prints.leics.gov.uk/pics\\_7469/The-Last-Main-Line.html](http://prints.leics.gov.uk/pics_7469/The-Last-Main-Line.html)

The photos of S.W.A. Newton are in the possession of Leicestershire County Council. They can be found on this page of the Leicestershire County Council print archive. I'm not sure how a picture of a class B1 got included! One drawback is that there is no search engine to help you find a particular photo – you just have to explore.

<http://fotopic.net>

There are several photo-hosting sites on the Internet. This one seems to be well patronised by railway photographers. Contributors can put together their own galleries for others to view. This is a useful site if you want to search for photos of a particular locomotive or railway location. For example, searching for preserved class O4 '63601' produced 626 photos! Each photo is linked to the gallery of the photographer who took the picture, so you can explore their other photos as well if you wish.

Rare photo of Marylebone under construction?

The request for more information about this photo in the last issue of Forward (page 14) resulted in the following response.

from J.E.Pollard, Sutton-in-Ashfield

I remember seeing this picture many years ago. I looked in my books and found it in Dow's Great Central Vol.2 on page 326. The caption given is "Tunnelling work in progress at Lords in December 1896". Although a large number of photographs at this time were taken by S.W.A. Newton, this one does not have a photographer's name attached to it.



from John Quick, Sheffield

This photo shows the construction of the three tunnels underneath Lords cricket ground. It can be found on page 326 of Dow's Great Central Vol.2. Similar views can be seen on page 75 of Rolt's The Making of a Railway and in Feilden's Magazine.

Editor's note : As I possess both books mentioned I should have been able to do my own research! It was a coincidence that the news item on the redevelopment at Lords on page 43 included a photo taken inside one of the tunnels.

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A mystery photo submitted by Brian Slater



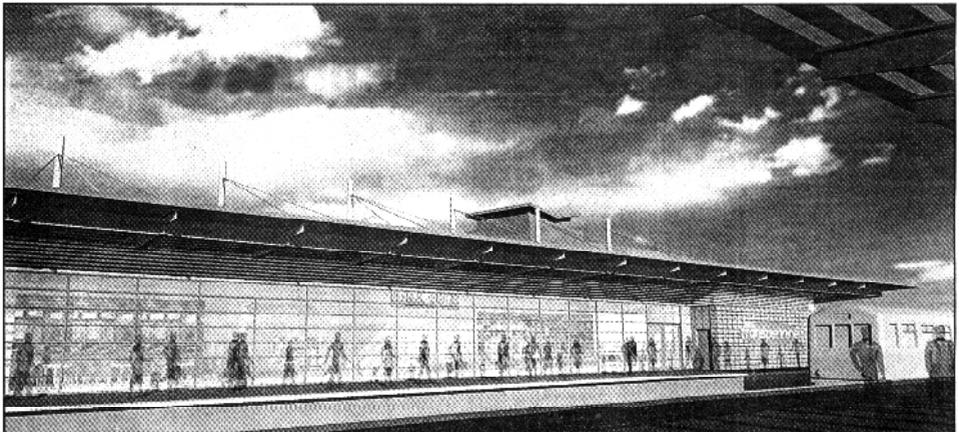
The only information given on the back of the photo is 'Mexboro 1920'. Can any reader supply more details?

## Woodhead after Closure - Part 6 : 2000-2004

by Paul White

The 21<sup>st</sup> century began quietly in terms of Woodhead – my records show only oblique references in 2000 in the context of the proposed by-pass of Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle, an issue which even at the time of writing (Aug 2008) is not resolved. The Tameside Advertiser's wildlife correspondent, former Water Authority worker Sean Wood who lives in the valley at Bleak House questioned in an article in July 2000 why the A628 could not be "de-trunked" and lorries redirected to the M1 and M62. To date, despite this question having been posed numerous times, the answer is always that this "is not an option", with no convincing reason given. Mr Wood asserted that the opening of the Stocksbridge by-pass in 1988 had quadrupled lorry traffic and noted with approval that the Council for the Preservation of Rural England were backing the re-opening of the Woodhead Railway Line. Meanwhile, the correspondence columns of our two local newspapers appeared to show that the bypass supporters would not have it all their own way, with the formation of a group calling itself APT (Alternative Proposals for Transport, but with an unfortunate echo of the abortive Advanced Passenger Train project), pointing out that the bypass would result in ".....a much bigger road above the village carrying an extra 19,000 vehicles". The group also called for the re-opening of the Woodhead Line.

At the beginning of 2001 local papers carried news of proposals for a new Guide Bridge Station, together with a highly modernistic artist's impression. The station would be turned into "...a vital link in Greater Manchester's Transport network". Arriva Northern Spirit's plans would involve building six new platforms to take services from Leeds and Sheffield, plus the provision of shops, a café and a 900-space multi-storey car park with bus interchange and taxi ranks. The £10m scheme would "link with Northern Spirit's £200m plan to reopen the famous Woodhead Tunnel and run fast trains between Manchester and Sheffield in just 35 minutes". Even if the tunnel was not reopened, Northern Spirit's Managing director Nigel Patterson said the station would be re-developed, providing park-and-ride facilities close to the newly-opened M60. Mr Patterson also reassured readers that the proposals would not have a negative effect on Stalybridge Station.



An artist's impression of the 2001 proposed redevelopment of Guide Bridge

The proposals were welcomed by Tameside and High Peak Borough Councils and fears about the future of the Trans-Pennine Trail were allayed by the assertion that a new trail could easily be established next to the railway. Further details were carried by the Holme Valley Express of 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 2001 which announced that Arriva would be introducing "a fleet of 26 new high speed trains capable of reaching 125mph and costing around £100m by 2007". The re-opened route would benefit Penistone and "...position Sheffield and Manchester more firmly into the wider network, providing better links to Humberside, North Lincs, East Anglia and the East Midlands". New park-and-ride stations "...could be created to serve local communities.....there would also be potential for rail freight

services which could reduce numbers of HGVs thundering over Pennine roads". The report linked Arriva's proposals, which were in fact part of a bid to secure a new franchise with Central Railway's plan to re-open Woodhead as part of "...a £5.5bn 'lorries on trains' cross-channel freight link". Director of Central Railways Robert Rafferty hoped that they would be able to work with Arriva, while Chairman Andrew Gritten reaffirmed that the plan, backed by private business, would have "no cost to the taxpayer". By May 2001, the Manchester Evening News was reporting that the Central Railways scheme could be approved "by next month", bringing "jobs and redevelopment" to areas along the line. At the same time, the Country Landowners Association were calling for a major assessment of its impact on the environment.

Also in April there were fresh calls for the provision of a station at Gamesley, this time prompted by proposals for new housing in the area. Once again to this date no station has been provided. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the closure of the Woodhead Line was commemorated jointly by the GCRS and Glossop-based Peak Film Society with a film show at the Partington Theatre in Glossop on June 9<sup>th</sup> and at the Paramount cinema in Penistone. By October, Arriva's plans for a re-opened Woodhead Line and high-tech Guide Bridge Station were in ruins – first the company was fined £2m for cancelling too many trains and then they lost the franchise.

In April 2002 the Guardian was reporting the endorsement by the SRA of the idea of building a rail link between London and Scotland, with trains modelled on France's TGV Network, travelling at up to 200mph. Chairman of the SRA Richard Baker said that it should be built by 2015, and saw it as "the best way to avert the prospect of a motorway system that's in complete gridlock". Noting that passenger traffic was set to grow by half in the next 10 years the report went on to note the two lines that could form the basis for the new line: London St Pancras to Yorkshire and the East Midlands, and from London Marylebone through the Chilterns to Birmingham. Costs were put at over £6bn. Central Railways proposals, though still on the table were not mentioned in the report. A map in Rail News of May 2002 showing the proposals, has a link from Marylebone apparently passing to the west of Rugby and joining the WCML south of Nuneaton. The £6bn cost needs to be placed in context; at the same time Lord Birt was proposing a £750bn upgrade to our motorways, principally the M6.

Plans for the proposed Gamesley Station seemed well on the way to fruition with High Peak councillors voting £400,000 funds for the station building following a deal with a company which was to build 200 new houses in the area. At the same time, Railtrack announced plans for a major refurbishment of Glossop Station. In order to ease pressure on the WCML during its upgrading, some Manchester to London services were re-routed via Sheffield for the first time since the 1980s, although they did not stop at Sheffield and of course did not use the Woodhead Line!

In November 2002 it was announced that a feasibility study was to be undertaken into re-opening another Trans-Pennine route: the former Midland main line from Matlock to Buxton. Prime movers were the Peak Railway Society, backed by Derbyshire County Council. Once again, the main idea behind the scheme was principally to take freight traffic, mainly limestone off the roads, but the "park and ride" angle had importance also in this picturesque area. The report was commissioned from Scott Wilson Railways at a cost of £800,000. This led to renewed optimism among those campaigning for a Woodhead re-opening, appearing to signify a more positive attitude towards rail in general. However, this optimism was somewhat tempered at the beginning of 2003 by a statement from Tameside's Euro MP Chris Davies, citing a "massive increase in the cost of work to the rail network since privatisation" leading to no money for major improvements, including plans to re-open Woodhead. At the same time he confirmed his backing for the Woodhead reopening in the Manchester Evening News of January 6<sup>th</sup> 2003, loosely linking it to Central Rail's plan, the report being accompanied by an extraordinary map including the GC London Extension and highlighting the towns of Loughborough, Leicester, Rugby, Brackley and Beaconsfield!

Before leaving 2002 entirely, mention must be made of a sad event which took place that year, namely the death of Eddie Wright at the age of 80 on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Eddie was secretary of the NUR Glossop Branch during the 1970s and 80s and also Secretary of Glossop and Hadfield Trades Council. He was the prime mover of the massive protest against the closure of the Woodhead line throughout a seven year period, and I was very privileged to work with him as TC research assistant for the

duration of the campaign which brought together many rail and other trades unionists, politicians of all parties, conservation and environmental groups and ordinary people from all walks of life in a common cause which is still very much a live issue today.

The Central Railways plan received a further airing in January 2003, with a disappointment for Tameside Council, which still harboured hopes of a major freight depot at Guide Bridge as part of the scheme, a proposal first mooted in the 1980s. The depot would now be built near the M6 in Warrington at the site of the former Parkside Colliery. However, a report in the Tameside Reporter of January 9<sup>th</sup> quoted a Central Railways spokesman as saying "...we are looking at the possibility of a terminal to the east, near Hadfield". On March 13<sup>th</sup> the Manchester Evening News repeated its story of January 6<sup>th</sup> together with the map and a panoramic view of the Woodhead Tunnel with an electric train passing through. The occasion for this report was two-fold: an imminent government decision on the Central Railways bid, and the final bids from two short-listed companies on running Trans-Pennine services - First Group and Connex - Arriva's bid having already been rejected.

Once again, the Central Railways plan was rejected, although this rejection received no local publicity. Indeed, a dribble of articles continued on the "re-open Woodhead" theme, including a report from the Countryside Agency authored by Paul Salveson, also chairman of the Penistone Line Partnership, reported in the Holmfirth Express and Chronicle of April 25<sup>th</sup>. Central Railways Chairman Andrew Gritten died on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2004 aged 51 and the company seemed to die with him. The Company revived briefly with a new website, but this does not seem to have been updated since 2006!

By March 2003 the SRA was complaining that a £1.5bn "funding gap" could lead to general cutbacks rather than development. In terms of road funding this is a drop in the bucket, but the comparison is rarely publicised. At the same time, plans for the long-awaited Mottram bypass were published, the "Brown" route to the north of the A628 and cutting through local beauty spot Swallows Wood being chosen, with an estimated cost of £90m. Almost immediately, battle lines were drawn between supporters of the scheme (Longdendale Siege Committee) and their opponents, and once again the Woodhead rail route was to feature in the ensuing war of words which continues to this day, chiefly between the Siege Committee and APT. Supported by the affected local authorities and local MPs, the scheme drew immediate criticism from the Council for National Parks, concerned about increased noise and pollution, while the Council for the Protection of Rural England called the plans "a motorway by stealth". A date for the public enquiry was eagerly awaited by all parties. However, nothing further was heard of the project until July 2004 when the Tameside Advertiser reported that work on the bypass was expected to begin "one year earlier than expected - in 2006". In the intervening period, a mysterious company calling itself "Translink" had put forward a plan to use the Woodhead Line as an alternative to the bypass, providing a "roll-on, roll-off" rail shuttle from a depot at Deepcar to a depot at Hattersley. My own enquiries reveal the company to be a one-man band, but they have a website which is well worth a visit, linked to Hupak which runs these kinds of services in Italy and Switzerland.

Other news relating to GC related lines in the 2003-4 period include complaints about the state of the trackbed of the former OA & GB Junction line in Ashton-under-Lyne, where illegal dumping of rubble had blocked some of the road overbridges. It transpired that the material had in fact been dumped by Network Rail in the mistaken belief that they still owned the line! The rubble was cleared and the line has since been developed as a walking and cycling route. First Group, which had taken over from Arriva on the Liverpool-Stalybridge-Huddersfield Trans-Pennine route announced plans in May 2004 for 51 new trains to be built by Siemens with a maximum speed of 100mph. These are now running and are serviced at a purpose built depot built on the site of Ardwick Sidings. In the event, the franchise was expanded and a new operator, Serco, in association with Dutch company NedRailways, was chosen to run it.

Prospects for a Woodhead re-opening receded further with the news, reported in the Oldham Chronicle, that EWS was seeking to have the old single-bore tunnels at Diggle on the LNW trans-Pennine route re-opened so that the later double-track tunnel could be converted to a single track, straight down the middle so that the largest containers could be carried. To date (2008) this work has not been carried out. A further plan to build 70 homes on the site of the former Dinting Railway

Centre was rejected by High Peak Borough Council in November 2003 on the grounds that further housing development was not needed in Glossopdale. Also rejected were plans to remove the many thousands of tons of ash from Gorton Loco that had been dumped there over a 120 year period. This ash is what has buried the masonry arches on the approaches to the main spans, so clearly visible in early views.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the new Woodhead Tunnel. The only commemoration the event received was a letter from myself to the Manchester Evening News – which won me a very nice pen for "Letter of the Week" !



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## On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

The inaugural working by Wrexham and Shropshire Railways to Marylebone was on the 14th April worked by 67013/015. Timetabled services began a fortnight later on the 28th April, the first service being the 05:42 from Wrexham which was worked by 67025/026 but due to brake problems at Wellington it arrived in London 40 minutes late.

Since the first working into Marylebone by Wrexham and Shropshire Railways on the 28th April, the following class 67 locos have all been noted on the services; 67001 / 012 / 013 / 014 / 015 / 023 / 025 / 026 / 028 and 029.

From the beginning of the Summer Timetable on the 18th May the Penistone line has seen two additional return services introduced over the route to cater for increased passenger usage.

During May class 47 no.47812, painted in two tone green and still carrying its original number D1916, ran from Derby to Deepcar and return on Monday to Wednesday 19th to 21st May arriving around 11:00hrs, the purpose of the visits unknown. Also on Thursday 22nd May 66173 worked a rare morning freight service from Aldwarke arriving at Deepcar at 10:28 and returning at 11:12 hrs.

On three occasions at least during June, class 37 locos made a return to their old area around Sheffield using the GC route between Beighton and Nunnery on test trains to and from Derby on trials of new in cab signalling equipment which is going to be used on the Cambrian Lines in Mid Wales. The locos involved were 97301/303 now painted in a yellow livery. They were observed on these workings on the 4th, 25th and 26th June. Sunday 29th June saw the first steam locomotive to work through Barnsley for almost 20 years when 'Black Five' 45407 worked a return excursion from Stockport to Keighley on the outward journey passing through Barnsley Station at 10:54 hrs.

The remains of the sidings at Guide Bridge, Brookside and Avenue are still in use, the former are largely used by track and tamping machines where a small maintenance depot is located, while Avenue sidings are used for stabling of freight wagons. Often over weekends, sets of GMC waste container wagons and stone hoppers are stabled as there are no other sidings in the Manchester area for stabling purposes these days. The single line connection from Guide Bridge North to East Junction is still occasionally used by Track Machines or Light Engine movements.

The Chiltern Lines single bubble car 977873, usually used as a Sandite vehicle, has been used as a route learning unit and is now lettered both 'Chiltern Railways' and 'Wrexham and Shropshire training the team'!

Week commencing 7th July saw an increase in traffic to Stocksbridge steelworks with two return services running on two days, and on the 9th and 10th class 31 no.31233 in yellow livery worked to and from Deepcar on a test trip which originated at Derby. On Sunday 13th July the evening freight from Aldwarke arrived at Deepcar at 19:49 worked by 60043 instead of the usual class 66.

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.

## Along Cheshire Lines - Part 4: Manchester to Warrington

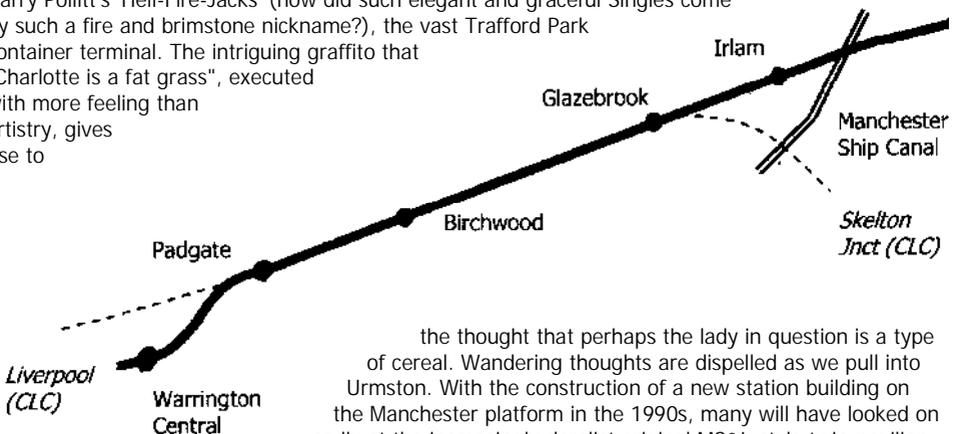
by Ken Grainger

In Forward issues 150-152, 'Along Cheshire Lines' parts 1-3 leisurely surveyed the CLC's secondary route from Manchester to Chester. May I now invite you to join me for a look at the CLC's Manchester to Liverpool 'main line' - today a main line still, worked in the traditional manner with 'stoppers' interspersed between limited stop 'expresses'.

Of course, with Manchester Central no more, our journey must commence at Manchester Piccadilly, this time from the through platforms of the former MSJ&A station, though if there is anything left of the MSJ&A's London Road of 1849 I'm not aware of it. The layout has been completely transposed with the tracks now occupying the site of the former side platforms, passing either side of the island which comprises Piccadilly's present-day platforms 13 and 14. We mustn't make ourselves too comfortable though. Such is the pressure on Piccadilly's platforms (we really could do with Manchester Central back) that the Liverpool line 'stoppers' terminate in a bay platform at the west end of Manchester Oxford Road, so it is there that after only a very few minutes we must change. I don't remember the original Oxford Road station. From photographs it looks to have been a dark and gloomy place, no great loss when it was replaced by the present station in the 'Sixties. It has to be admitted the 'new' Oxford Road is looking rather tired now and could do with sprucing up, but the station was fortunate enough to be rebuilt before the minimalist movement really got hold, and reflects the not displeasing impossible-to-describe form made world famous by the Sydney Opera House - which it actually predated in construction, if not in concept.

After the false start, the first stop on our journey proper is at the elevated Deansgate, itself considerably rebuilt such that the canopies above its nondescript platforms (at least it still has platform canopies) are now supported on what look for all the world like the salvaged ribs of blown-inside-out umbrellas. No matter, it's well worth getting out here for a look around. There is a walkway directly across to the Metrolink's Manchester Central stop, but there are rewards for those who resist the temptation and instead take the glazed terracotta tiled stairway down to road level. Historical Castlefields is a fascinating area, not least for the transport enthusiast with an array of railway lines criss-crossing the Rochdale and Bridgewater canals at various heights and angles, their cast iron bridges highlighted by tasteful paintwork. And look back at Deansgate station's frontage - taking full advantage of its height and road junction location to announce its presence with a boldness that defies the station's 1971 renaming from "Knott Mill and Deansgate".

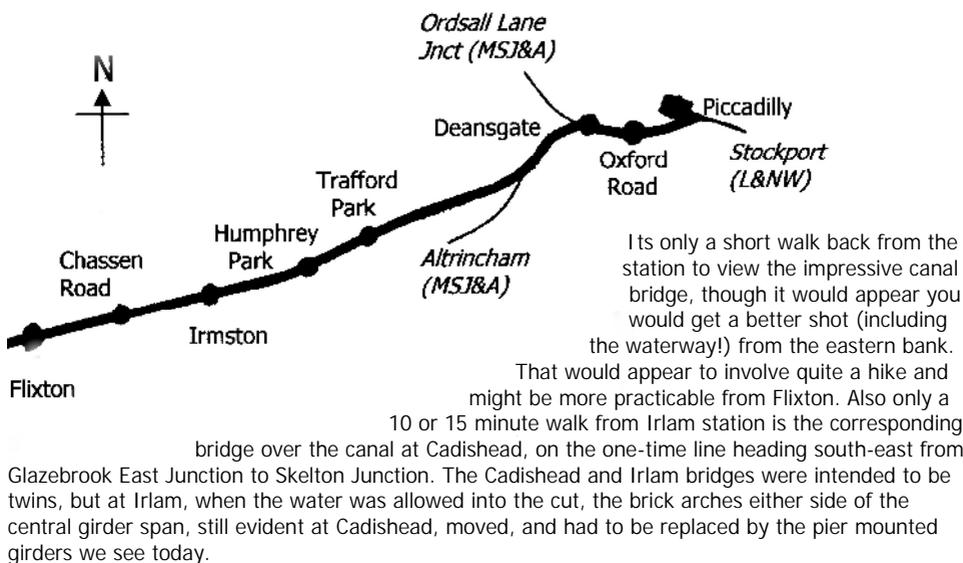
Beyond Throstle Nest East Junction and a swapover with Metrolink to regain genuine CLC tracks, there follow Trafford Park and Humphrey Park, halts of little interest and less merit, as we pass Manchester United's theatre of dreams and, where once reposed superannuated GCR 4-4-0s and Harry Pollitt's 'Hell-Fire-Jacks' (how did such elegant and graceful Singles come by such a fire and brimstone nickname?), the vast Trafford Park container terminal. The intriguing graffiti that "Charlotte is a fat grass", executed with more feeling than artistry, gives rise to



the thought that perhaps the lady in question is a type of cereal. Wandering thoughts are dispelled as we pull into Urmston. With the construction of a new station building on the Manchester platform in the 1990s, many will have looked on sadly at the increasingly derelict original MS&L-style twin-pavilion

building on the Liverpool platform. Happily the seemingly inevitable has been avoided and today the 1873 building is shrouded in scaffolding as, with the aid of a grant from the Railway Heritage Trust (who were so very supportive of our War Memorial project), it is being restored as a pub/restaurant. Much has been achieved already, including restoration of the CLC-trademark 1872 drinking fountain, but Railway Heritage Trust involvement is a guarantee of quality – they will accept nothing less. It promises to be another good spot for lunch, in the not too distant future. The more recent addition at Chassen Road (September 1934) need not concern us, nor, unfortunately Flixton, which once had a building similar to Urmston's but which was burned down some years ago. Only the fine cast iron footbridge remains as a reminder of what was once here.

I had to check up when I got home that the gradient up to the Irlam bridge, to achieve the required 75ft clearance over the Manchester Ship Canal, was indeed only 1-135, as our labouring 150 unit seemed to make very heavy weather of it, and wasn't able to pick up much speed once over the bridge before stopping at Irlam station on the descent. There have been many candidates for Britain's coldest station, but with a stiff westerly blowing Irlam's claims shouldn't be dismissed too lightly. Nevertheless its worth breaking your journey here. The original Irlam station (1873) had a 'standard' MS&L style building, like Urmston, but when the line was slewed to align with the climb up to bridge the new ship canal, that building was replaced in 1893 by the current one, a little to the north, rather larger and plainer but of a not dissimilar style. Perversely the track alignment through the station has reverted to the original (apparently to take advantage of a road bridge at the east end of the platforms, which presumably proved to be more durable than its supposed successor) before negotiating a pronounced 'kink' to line up with the canal bridge. As a result the station building, now disused and boarded up, but seemingly in fair condition, is stranded some yards back from the platform.



Noticeably Cadishead is very much an industrial area and one cannot but think that if the railway could be reopened it would be a boon. The embankment south of the bridge has been swept away but still remains on the north (Glazebrook East Junction) side, intriguingly including a bridge to accommodate the new 'Cadishead Way' stretch of the A57 which only opened in 2005. Could this indicate hope that the line might be reinstated, I wonder, or is it just that bureaucratic right hands are ignorant of what their left hands are doing? I have to admit to having been slightly surprised to find that Glazebrook East Junction is separated from Glazebrook station by the 'Glaze Brook', a small but not insignificant tributary of the Mersey. Despite Mother Nature's best efforts, Glazebrook East Junction is still well defined, and clearly visible from the road bridge which also provides cross-

platform access at the eastern end of Glazebrook station – though the intervening Brook probably makes the Junction more accessible on foot from Irlam. If you visit the line but only have time to stop off at one intermediate station, make it Glazebrook. The original station buildings of 1873 still stand, in excellent condition. There is the standard brick-built shelter on the up (Manchester) platform, with the main building on the down platform displaying the adopted MS&L style at its finest, its booking-hall linked pavilions, one single-storeyed and the other the two-storey station house, lancet windowed and with the inevitable stone drinking fountain. The booking hall's projecting roof-cum-platform canopy is supported on cast iron spandrels and the steep gables are decorated with a riot of elaborately and delightfully varied fretted barge boards. A row of picturesquely dormered cottages, once a familiar feature at CLC stations, abuts the station building and, even if most trains pass through without stopping, Glazebrook is a lovely place to watch the trains pass by.

Just to the west of the station Glazebrook West Junction is also clearly visible, where the Wigan and St. Helens lines (purely Great Central, be it noted, not CLC) once turned away northwards, completing a triangle with the west-to-north curve from Dam Lane Junction at Glazebrook Moss. Had Sir Edward Watkin had his way, Glazebrook West would also have become the junction for the GC's route to Blackpool, but that proved to be an ambition too far. I haven't established what further traces of the branches might remain beyond the road bridges which cross the diverging lines in quick succession. Certainly Wigan Central's once grandiose terminus was near-derelict even before the line finally gave up the ghost. I'm not aware either of any remains of the war-time station built to serve an ordnance factory at Risley, but from photographs it looks unlikely that it would have taken long for the 1940-utility structure to disappear after its 1960 closure. It can't have been too far though from the station opened in 1981 to serve the new shopping centre at Birchwood. Even most of the expresses stop here, where the modern amenities leave nothing to be desired, unless that is one needs to cross the line and cannot use the footbridge stairway for reasons of disability, in which case (unless things have changed in the meantime) the unfortunate must travel in the wrong direction to a more traditional station where such sophisticated facilities are available.



The CLC trademark drinking fountain at Urmston.  
photo: Ken Grainger

If you've only time to call at one intermediate station and you visited Glazebrook last time, Padgate is well-worthy of consideration. Much like Glazebrook, albeit with the main building on the up (Manchester) platform and without the adjacent cottages, even shorn of some of its bargeboards and drinking fountain, Padgate is another exceedingly pretty station. If you're sitting on the right hand side of the train, as it veers left on the last lap into Warrington Central, you will have no difficulty picking out the site of Padgate Junction and the trackbed of the Warrington avoiding line (closed 1968) continuing over a rusting girder bridge, before disappearing into a bus garage. This had been the originally projected route, it being intended Warrington would be served by a station on the northern outskirts of the town, before the proprietors were prevailed upon to build the loop and a town-centre station. Rooftop height Warrington Central is a fine station, infinitely better than what WCML passengers are palmed off with at neighbouring Bank Quay. However the new booking hall provided at ground level only serves to further hide the imposing original range of buildings – no longer in railway usage – compounding their mystifyingly having been built on the Manchester platform, facing away



A Manchester-Liverpool 'express' consisting of a 158 unit races through Glazebrook. The restored drinking fountain can be seen on the right. photo: Ken Grainger



The restored Warrington goods warehouse as seen from a passing train. photo: Ken Grainger

from the adjacent town centre. The buildings are of yellow brick and in an attractive rusticated mix of Classical and Italianate styling, with a balustraded roofline and central pediment above round-headed windows. The style is repeated on the platform side, uniquely including an arc-topped drinking fountain, contrasting with the Gothic stone version noted elsewhere. The original ridge-and-furrow platform canopies have been replaced by near-flat glazed awnings (actually an extremely shallow "vee") but happily on the original columns and spandrels.

But the jewel in the crown is undoubtedly Warrington's magnificent Grade II listed goods warehouse, now sympathetically converted to apartments. A well proportioned red brick building, what sets it apart is the splendidly cast "CHESHIRE LINES" lettering extending across each end of the building and, along its railway-facing side, the names of the CLC's owning companies. Unfortunately, an adjacent apartment building now masks the goods warehouse from the station platforms. An extension of the Liverpool platform's eastern end, in front of the signal box but prohibited to the public, looks as though it might provide a photographic vantage point, but the bulging-eyed outrage of the jobsworth in the booking office, when asked for permission to enter this forbidden area, made his blustering refusal (with threats of dire consequences) hardly necessary. The warehouse is therefore best (if fleetingly) seen in its entirety from a Liverpool-bound train as you pull into the station or, this being the western limit of the Manchester 'Wayfarer' ticket, as you set out back home. The continuation to Liverpool must await another day.

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## Killamarsh Central buildings under threat

by Ken Grainger

Killamarsh Central, as featured in Albert Emsen's delightful painting of Flying Scotsman hurrying through with an up express (see centrefold), is, or at least was at the time of writing, the last MS&L Derbyshire Lines station surviving and in near-original condition. Killamarsh Central opened with the Beighton to Staveley line on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1892, just three days before the continuation of the line to Chesterfield.

Along with all the other Derbyshire Lines stations which lasted that long, Killamarsh Central closed on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1963, but its main (up platform) station building survived until recent times as Havenplan Ltd's Emporium, thanks to which the building is substantially intact, including many of the estate agents' beloved "original features" (e.g. the ticket office window, but unfortunately none of the fireplaces). The platform canopy is also intact on its elaborate cast iron columns, though as at Chesterfield Central and other Derbyshire Lines stations, in the 1930s the originally gabled outer end of the canopy was bevelled to the hipped profile seen in Albert's painting.

But now the station is under imminent threat. The station site has been acquired for housing by Sheffield developers Ackroyd and Abbott who need to clear the site and, as a matter of urgency, want someone to purchase the building for £1 and to remove it for re-erection elsewhere, "where it will be appreciated".

It has to be admitted, much of the building's planking is 'shot' and would need to be replaced – unsurprising given its Victorian heritage - but hopefully the heavy timber window and door housings which give the building its distinctive character are salvageable. And that ornamental canopy ironwork really mustn't be lost. Undoubtedly anyone who takes the station on is going to have to spend a considerable sum of money before it can be recommissioned but surely grants would be available to save an authentic MS&L/Great Central station, and by comparison with the astronomical

costs incurred by some heritage railways for new-build stations, it could be a real bargain.

It will be nothing short of a tragedy if Killamarsh Central is lost.



Preserved 'Flying Scotsman' passing Killamarsh Central. photo: H.V.Green

## Views of Killamarsh station

Photos by Bob Gellatly

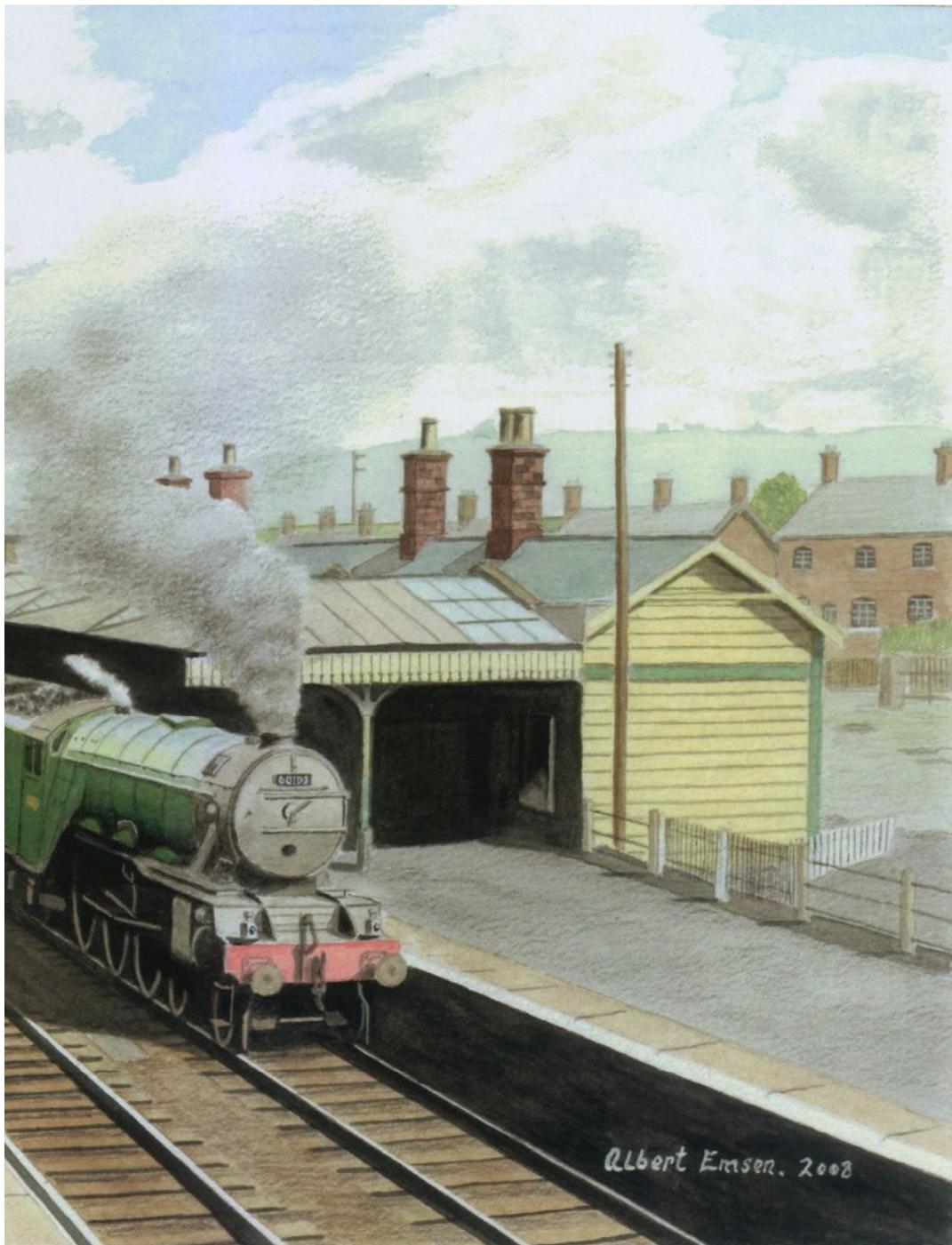


Above - Killamarsh station from the station footbridge (part of a public footpath) looking north on 13 Feb. 2006. The up platform has been taken over by the extensions to the station building. The cycleway from Beighton to Staveley occupies the trackbed. Below – The station facade on 28 May 2001 when the premises were occupied by Havenplan Ltd. whose business was to provide props used in TV and film production.





'Flying Scotsman' at Killamarsh by Albert Emsen  
BR class A3 4-6-2 no.60103 Flying Scotsman races through Killamarsh with a Manchester-Marylebone



express in the late 1950s.

Reproduced by kind permission of Albert Emsen



The only information given on this colour postcard from Valentine's "Artotype" series is 'Great Central Express'. The stock is carrying the cream-and-brown of the GC but the locomotive is Great Western and looks like a 'Saint'. Could this working be the "Ports to Ports" express described by Michael Minter Taylor in his article opposite? Compare this working with that on the back cover.

### Auction items of GCR interest



1G shedplate – allocated to Woodford Halse from Sept. 1963 to June 1965. Auctioned by Sheffield Railwayana Auctions on 14 June 2008. Sale price £100.



Goxhill-Immingham West Jct. single line key token no.12. Auctioned by Sheffield Railwayana Auctions on 14 June 2008. Sale price £100.

# The Barry Hauls "The Ports"

by Michael Minter Taylor

In 1905 discussions were held between the Great Central Railway, North Eastern Railway, Barry Railway and the Great Western Railway to ascertain whether it was feasible to run a passenger service between Newcastle and Barry in South Wales. No doubt Sir Sam Fay, the General Manager of the GCR at the time, was behind the scheme as he was keen to promote the GCR's cross-country services, but why Barry? Perhaps he saw revenue accruing from the use of the service by ships' engineers between Newcastle to the large coal-exporting port of Barry. Steam engineering was very much a north eastern enterprise and wouldn't it be logical to suppose that engineers from that region would be employed on the ships sailing from Barry? Anyway, the service was inaugurated on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1906, and was known as the "Ports to Ports Express" or "The Ports" for short. At the start of the service Cardiff was the southern end of the route, for only after three months of operation was the service extended to Barry, when a Barry Railway engine had the honour of hauling the express between Cardiff and its final destination.

The reader may well consider that having an 0-6-2 tank engine, normally used for coal trains, would be a bit of a come down for such a prestigious express. Nothing could be further from the truth. Between 1913 and 1920, the Barry Railway's dividends never fell below 9.5%. Originating as the Barry Dock and Railway Company, the Barry Railway was incorporated on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1891. It was therefore the last major railway to penetrate the South Wales coalfield. Its growth was phenomenal, tapping the coal trade of every port from Newport to Swansea. In 1913 the Barry shipped about one third (11.37 million tons) of the coal exported from South Wales. By 1922 the route mileage had grown to 68 miles. Apart from the valley lines and that between Cardiff and Barry, the railway also controlled the Vale of Glamorgan line to Bridgend. The Barry was much more than just a coal carrier as it also had substantial passenger services.

When the through service started, the GCR carriages were in their brown and French grey livery - the teak finished stock did not appear until 1909. Passengers were said to prefer the GCR carriages, for even the third class accommodation was better than the GWR first! Operating practice was that sets of GWR and GCR carriages would run alternate days.

Travelling from the north, the GW system was accessed at Banbury. Continuing south the route left the GW main line at King's Sutton to run over what used to be the Banbury & Cheltenham Railway. Railway journalists of the time referred to this line as the 'longest branch line in England' because of its lack of any significant towns on its route. After a rustic tour through the Cotswolds, the route was joined by the northern end of the Midland & South Western Junction Railway at Andoversford, before continuing to the triangular junction just south of Cheltenham where the Gloucester direction was taken. From hereon it was a relatively straightforward route via Newport and Cardiff to Barry.

Following on from the inaugural run on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1906, "The Ports" continued its daily service until 1<sup>st</sup> January 1917 when the effect of shortages of crew and stock due to the demands of the war effort, meant that the service was suspended. However, it was reintroduced on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1920 with an extension of the service from Barry to Swansea using the Barry's Vale of Glamorgan line with GWR crews and Barry pilotmen.

Many changes were made to the service in the following years. The service was occasionally cut back to Barry and sometimes diverted to call at Penarth on the Taff Vale Railway. From 8<sup>th</sup> July 1935 the up train was diverted from Cardiff to Swansea over the GW main line via Llantrisant with the down train continuing to use the Vale of Glamorgan line via Barry. The coming of WW2 saw the introduction of the emergency timetables on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1939. Post war reinstatement took place in October 1946 as an un-named express and with a longer route, by 16 miles, via Oxford, Didcot and the Severn Tunnel. Services in both directions used the GW main line between Cardiff and Swansea via Bridgend. Such is progress and with it the disappearance of the "The Ports" to Barry.

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## The changing scene at Weekday Cross

by Richard Butler

The once busy location of Weekday Cross Junction in Nottingham was where the ex-GN line from Grantham joined the ex-GC main line from Marylebone, just before reaching Nottingham's Victoria station. Both lines closed to passengers at this point in 1967, although a spartan DMU service ran from Arkwright Street station (south of the city centre) to Rugby until May 1969. After that only a limited freight service operated, reversing at Weekday Cross en route to the Ruddington ordinance depot and East Leake gypsum factory prior to the new Loughborough curve opening circa 1973.

The site is now being redeveloped and the view of the tunnel mouth likely to be soon hidden behind the new buildings. Views taken recently from the adjacent roadway, show (top left) the new tramway viaduct looking south, partly on the old GC alignment, (top right) the view towards the tunnel and Nottingham Victoria, (bottom left) the view towards the Grantham line viaduct and (bottom right) Nottingham Victoria station site (east side).

Original plans for the Nottingham tram system (opened in 2004) envisaged use of the tunnel to reach the Victoria Shopping Centre, but was later modified to give full street running instead via Parliament Square. Further plans now exist for a new southward extension to the suburbs of Clifton and Beeston, involving a new tram-only bridge across Nottingham Midland station, the original GCR bridge having been demolished some years ago. Watch this space .....



## How did the Great Central cope before Wath?

by Reg Instone

The centre of the GCR's operations was the coalfield of South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire. The company provided the outlet for dozens of collieries, many as the only connection, but some in competition with the MR or H&B. How the company organised its handling of this huge traffic prior to 1906 is intriguing.

For any reader who has never contemplated the handling of coal traffic, let me explain the problem this way. Colliery A fills 30 wagons of coal – of several different types and grades - sold to buyers across Yorkshire, Lancashire and the rest of the UK. Each wagon is labelled with its destination. Some of it may be for coal merchants, some for mills and factories, some for gas works and some for coaling the Grimsby trawlers. Some may be for export and possibly even some for locomotive purposes. Colliery B fills 25 wagons with a similar range of types and destinations, possibly some actually the same, but a lot of them different. Colliery C fills another 30 wagons, Colliery D another 20 and so on. So what is the most efficient way of getting each wagon to its correct destination? The "logical" answer is to take all the wagons to some central point, where they can be shunted into trains according to route. As a simple example, all the wagons for destinations west of Penistone and Dunford would be put into one siding to be taken away as a train via that route. Another siding would be used to amass all the wagons that had to go south via Woodhouse and Beighton, a third for East Anglia via Lincoln, another for those to go east via Retford or Doncaster (including Grimsby and Hull). It is then quite simple to send an engine to take all the wagons from one siding to their destination, or at least to another marshalling yard close to destination. Of course, in reality it is rather more complicated than that, because the number of wagons and the number of destinations are each considerably larger; however, the same basic principles apply. In addition, it may be necessary to get the wagons in the right order within the train, so that it can be split en route. And that is how Wath worked, and latterly Mottram.

Of course, construction of a large central yard like Wath was a huge capital project, costing nearly £191,000. The power to acquire the site was granted by the GCR Acts 1903 and 1904 (section 28 of each) but the expenditure was not authorised by the Board until April 1905 (Dow vol.3 p95). No doubt the GC management only approved such expenditure after carefully considering the locations of existing yards, and whether any of them could be enlarged. It has to be assumed that the prevailing view was that none of the yards was in a suitably central location, and that the lie of the ground and/or surrounding buildings made expansion impractical or uneconomic. I imagine that the directors would also have to be persuaded that an equivalent amount of money would be saved in reduced labour costs, and perhaps because fewer locomotives would be required than if the existing practices were allowed to continue. I have no reference to any mention in the GC Traffic Committee minutes, other than awarding contracts, so the location and design of the yard may have been discussed only at Board level.

It is important to understand the difference between a goods yard and a marshalling yard. A goods yard normally has public access; it is where wagons are placed in position for loading or unloading, and has sheds, cranes, cartways, possibly cattle docks and other access to enable this to be done. A marshalling yard has none of these, for its only function is to form wagons into trainloads according to destination. There needs to be space between each siding only for the shunters and/or number takers to move up and down to couple or uncouple the wagons and read the labels. Relatively few coal wagons were owned by the railway companies. Most were owned either by the colliery companies, who naturally wanted them sent back to the right colliery when empty, or by merchants who would send them back to a particular colliery to be reloaded with further purchases of coal. So the whole process had to be repeated in reverse to marshal the empty wagons. This is largely why Dunford yard was constructed in the late 1890s.

To return to the original question - how was this achieved before Wath? Looking at maps and track layouts, there were very few places that had any significant siding capacity, beyond what was needed for receiving wagons consigned to them. There was certainly no single central yard. In the coalfield area, there was a small yard at Pindar Oaks (east of Barnsley), another between Old Oaks Junction

and Stairfoot (down side) and quite a few sidings at Mexborough, plus several more at Rotherham Road. Penistone had a fairly extensive yard from quite early on, I think, as did Worksop. Woodhouse had another significant yard, at least by the 1890s; this may have only been constructed after the opening of the Derbyshire Extension in 1893, and the start of through traffic from the GNR and L&NWR. Staveley was certainly constructed at that time. To some extent each of these would have been used for exchanging wagons with the MR, L&Y or H&B. The Hexthorpe/Cherry Tree/Balby complex at Doncaster was extensive and well-established, going back to MS&L days. The coal sidings seem to have been laid out for down traffic and may have been used for sorting return empties from Grimsby and Hull. Places like Sheffield Bernard Road and between Tinsley and Rotherham had extensive sidings, but I assume these were provided mainly for the steel traffic.



GCR publicity shot of the eastern approach to Wath yard.

to the west, another those for places in the south, and so on. In other words, the marshalling would be done at the pit itself. However, this would be a most time-consuming and inefficient way of working, and I should emphasise that I have absolutely no evidence whatever that it was ever used. On the other hand, John Bennett cites the example of Dodworth, where the colliery sidings fanned out immediately beyond the connection with the GC running lines. "A private siding agreement I looked at at Kew provided that the colliery company's engines would take loaded wagons out of the colliery yard and shunt them back (over the level crossing each time) into one siding parallel with the GC for westbound traffic and one for eastbound destinations. The wagons would then need a further sorting out in the relatively limited yards at Penistone or Pindar Oaks/Stairfoot respectively."

It is fairly obvious that a Working Timetable from the period would resolve a lot of the uncertainty. Unfortunately, the only surviving MS&L or GC one before 1907, to my knowledge, is the October 1905 issue in the Railway Club collection at North Woolwich. This is open to Railway Club members only. The earliest other known to me is the 1908 one in the possession of Martin Waters. There are certainly none in the National Archives, and although I have been unable to ascertain what is in the GCRS Archive, I don't believe there to be any issue that early. If I get an opportunity to analyse a

Some other places may have had extensive track layouts, but these were colliery yards, owned by the colliery company and used for storing wagons, as well as receiving empty wagons and accumulating loaded ones. As a general rule, the colliery company would not have taken too kindly to having its yard used to marshal someone else's wagons, even if there was sufficient space available – unless they were paid for the privilege, of course! So, I would suggest that the answer is that each of the yards mentioned above served as a marshalling point for operations in its surrounding area. That is to say, colliery operations in the Barnsley area were centred on Pindar Oaks and Stairfoot, with trips to and from all the local pits, including the Blackburn Valley and Worsboro' branches, while Mexborough might have distributed wagons from and to pits between, say, Corton Wood, Wath, Denaby, Cadeby and Aldwarke. This would have required inter-yard workings to get all Woodhead-bound wagons (say) into one place. Alternatively, perhaps trains from Mexborough to Godley or Guide Bridge called at Stairfoot and Penistone collecting wagons from each place.

I note that Dow says "a concentration yard designed to eliminate the sorting of the wagons at the pits" (vol.3 p95 again). I don't know whether this statement was derived from the minutes or was merely speculation. One possibility, which I mention from a theoretical point of view, is that each pit would be visited by several trips daily. One would shunt out only wagons for destinations

pre-1907 WTT then a follow-up article will be required! The only definite information I have is from the L&Y WTT for July 1898. This shows GC coal trains to and from collieries connected with the L&Y in the area of North Gawber and Darton, to which they had access under running powers. These ran from and to Pindar Oaks sidings. There is also a GC coal train from Mexborough, Manvers Main, Wombwell and Pindar Oaks via Barnsley and Horbury to Greetland L&Y, with return to Mexborough. (Incidentally, the L&Y ran their own trains to Manvers Main and Kilnhurst for loco coal).

Incidentally, it should be pointed out that, according to Dow (vol.3 p307), Wath was not the company's first centralised gravitation yard. That was at Annesley, brought into service in 1897/98 with the London Extension. Dow says it was a gravitation yard but John Bennett points out that there is no evidence of a hump on the O.S. map, nor can he remember seeing anything like that, and suggests that it was actually a flat yard! On the other hand, the way the up and down yards were laid out, with the reception sidings at the north end in each case, suggests to me that gravitation was used. Perhaps the whole site, main lines and yards included, was on such a gradient that no separate "hump" was needed. Can any reader confirm this, or provide a gradient chart for this section of line? In his account of the London Extension (vol.2 p311) Dow refers only to it as "exchange sidings for coal traffic". I suspect it performed a twofold function, not only acting as a centre for the distribution of wagons from and to the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire pits, but also as a staging yard for remarshalling trains between Yorkshire and the North on one hand, and Woodford and Neasden (for London and southern England) on the other.

Contemporary with Wath was the gravitation yard at Worksop, which performed a similar function in a different area. This was really at the eastern extremity of the workable coalfield, at least until after 1900 when it became possible to work the seams at the greater depth at which they are found to the east. Unlike Wath, Worksop yard was not assisted by power operation. The eastbound (empties) yard at Dunford dated from 1900/02 and that at Warsop was inherited from the LD&ECR.

I have some extracts from GC Traffic Committee minutes (courtesy of Paul Armstrong) but I have yet to look at MS&L minutes. There may be some relevant information in these, but I am not very hopeful.

Thanks are due to John Bennett for various suggestions. If any reader can comment on anything written above, or indeed point out any sources that I might have overlooked, I would be delighted to hear from them. I should like to look at the history of each of these yards in further articles, but there is a lot of research to be done first, so please don't expect to see them soon!

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## Missing crossword clues from Forward 156

### Down

- 27 Goes with 'push'. (4)
- 28 Sir Berkeley -----, promoter of the NLLR. (9)
- 30 Junction for Banbury. (8)
- 31 '----- Specials' ran overnight from Marylebone to Scotland in the 1960s. (9)
- 35 Unwelcome guest on the footplate! (9)
- 36 Colliery branch on the SYJnt visited by G. Freeman Allen. (8)
- 38 Formation needed when track is below ground level. (7)
- 40 Each shed had one. (4)
- 41 Manchester terminus used by the CLC and now an exhibition centre. (7)
- 43 They keep going up! (5)

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 1955: The last day of the Lincoln-Shirebrook passenger service - Table 67  
 Timings and observations made by Philip Robinson and submitted by John Hitchens

UP JOURNEY

Engine : 69828 Train stock : E5804E E5322E E82855 E80372 [Boston No.5 Set]

Miles		Booked	Actual	Remarks
-	Shirebrook North	4.20	4.21	Dep. platform 2. 90162 passed on down freight.
2½	Warsop	4.25	4.26	
	Clipstone West Junc.		4.33	
7	Edwinstowe	4.35	4.35	61975 standing on Nottingham train.
8½	Ollerton	4.39	4.40	63691 on down freight.
11	Boughton	4.44	4.46	
14¼	Tuxford Central	4.50	4.52	
	Dukeries Junc.		4.56	Stop for engine-men only.
18½	Fledborough	4.59	5.01	O4 on down freight.
20¼	Clifton-on-Trent	5.04	5.05½	
23½	Doddington & H	5.10	5.12	Joined here by party from Harby County High School.
26½	Skellingthorpe	5.16	5.18	
	Pyewipe Junc.		5.23	1 min. check to allow 61749 to pass with E.P to Sheff.
29¾	Lincoln Central	5.25	5.29	Passed through station and into No. 1 platform.

DOWN JOURNEY

Engine : 69828 Train stock : E80377 E80109 E80108 E5322E E5804E [Boston No.2 Set]

Miles		Booked	Actual	Remarks
-	Lincoln Central	6.25	6.26	Dep. platform 8.
	Pyewipe Junc.		6.31	
3¼	Skellingthorpe	6.33	6.34	
6¼	Doddington & H	6.39	6.41	Carriage lights switched on. 2 minutes wait.
9½	Clifton-on-Trent	6.45	6.48	
11¼	Fledborough	6.50	6.54	63915 on up freight.
	Dukeries Junc.		7.01	60053 passed on up main line express.
15½	Tuxford Central	7.01	7.04	
18¾	Boughton	7.07	7.11	Station clock stopped.
21¼	Ollerton	7.13	7.16	WD on up freight
22¾	Edwinstowe	7.18	7.20	O4 on up freight.
	Clipstone West Junc		7.26	
27¼	Warsop	7.26	7.31	WD on up freight.
29¾	Shirebrook North	7.32	7.35	Into platform 1.

Weather dry but overcast. Excellent sunset observed at Dukeries Junction on down trip. Wreath of poppies on front of engine and placard "THE LAST ROUND-UP".

Observed on shed at Langwith (40E)

class K1	63861	class N5	90150
62033	63870	69284	90259
class O4	63915	class A5	90275
63632	class J11	69804	90302
63636	64297	69828	90411
63664	64299		90431
63703	64337	class Q1	90508
63765	64359	69928	90545
63776	64414	class WD	90554
63833	64424	90055	90594
63837		90087	90732

Observed on shed at Lincoln (40A)

class V2	61889	class J6	64804
60858	61907	64214	64881
60948	61919	class J11	64960
class B1	61944	64315	64984
61281	61948	64328	class J69
61405	class D11	64365	68528
class K2	62660	64381	68553
61746	62663	64430	68557
class K3	class O4	class J39	68603
61828	63759	64712	class N5
61829		64728	69275
		64795	



BR class A5 4-6-2T no. 69815 waits at Arkwright Town with a Lincoln- Chesterfield Market Place service. This section of the LD&ECR between Langwith Jct and Chesterfield closed in 1951.

### Back numbers of Forward on CD

Eric Latusek has offered to provide back numbers 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).



## LD&EC line resurrection

by Chris Booth

Since High Marnham power station closed at the end of March 2003, the line from Thoresby Colliery to the end of the track on the approach to the now mostly demolished power station, has been derelict. The final train of coal for discharge at the power station arrived at High Marnham at 11:43 on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2003, being hauled by 66096 as 7J22 the 09:00 from Oxcroft Disposal Point. Once discharged the train departed as 6W22 13:11 to Worksop. After closure of the power station the remaining stockpiles of coal were to be removed by rail. What should have been the final train of coal departing the power station should have been on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003, as 7Z88 10:15 to Ratcliffe. Specially hauled by Load Haul livery 56090, the train stopped at several places along the branch, to allow photographs to be taken, it then ran only as far as Toton. However, there was to be one more train! This ran the following Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2003, hauled by an anonymous looking 66086. There was no fanfare as 66086 moved the final train away from the power station as 7Z88 11:18 to Ratcliffe, handing the train staff over for the final time, to signaller Clive Goodwin at Ollerton Colliery Box. Shortly after this train all remaining track on the power station land was removed, the branch thus ending at a pair of buffer stops close to the demolished remains of the former High Marnham signal box. After that the weeds grew and the thieves and vandals moved in.

Fast forward to 2008 and the news that Network Rail have announced exciting plans to reopen the section of line between Thoresby Colliery Junction and the site of Tuxford Central Station as a flagship project that will see the re-introduction of trains, on-track machines and other various engineering plant, running on much of the disused line. Network Rail will use the line for all future testing of on-track machines and engineering trains prior to being brought into operational use on the main line. The project will be known as The High Marnham Rail Vehicle Commissioning Centre (RVCC).

A whole new method of working the section of line has had to be devised, due to the large amount of theft and vandalism sustained along the line since closure. The signal box at Ollerton was burnt down by vandals in April 2006 and as such, all remaining signalling in the Ollerton and Boughton Junction areas will be removed.

It is planned for the line to operate under a special 'One Train Working' method controlled by Thoresby Signal Box and be operational on weekdays only. Trains arriving for the line will stop at Thoresby Colliery box, where the Person in Charge of Movements will collect an Annett's key from the signaller. The removal of this Annett's key will enable the signaller to clear No.4 signal (the former section signal to Ollerton Colliery box) once only. The signal will then be locked again preventing another pull until the Annett's Key is replaced and removed again.

Once the signal is cleared the train or machine can then proceed on to the 'One Train Working' section on the up line. The movement will then proceed to Boughton Junction. This is where the disused line from Bevercotes Colliery comes in from the left and where there were run round sidings, it is also the end of the double track section of line being single from this point to High Marnham. Here the Person in Charge of Movements will use the Annett's key to release and operate a ground frame. After the movement has entered the single line the ground frame will be normalised thus preventing any other movements entering the single line. Work will then commence to commission the trains or machines. During this commissioning work, movements will be authorised to proceed in either direction to and from a new stop board located at Tuxford and, a new reflectorised distant board located on the Down line at Thoresby. This new board will replace Thoresby's down semaphore distant signal No.30. At the end of each working day all the machines, wagons etc will return to Thoresby and the Person in Charge of Movements will return the Annett's key to Thoresby Signal Box. Depending on train lengths, the trains or on-track machines will be stabled at Thoresby for the night, returning to their bases at the weekend.

The installation of operational equipment is now finalized with a view to commencing commissioning in the Autumn of 2008. The first train to use the line since October 2003, was on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, this being a test train from Derby Research. 1Q11 left Derby at 09:12 with 31601/602 in charge to run to Thoresby for testing of the track geometry. A second movement on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August saw

the Network Rail MPV weed killing train visit the branch. All is set now for commencement of use. This should see the threat of closure of another section of the former LD&ECR removed for the foreseeable future



EWS class 66 no.66086 with 7Z88, the last train to leave the High Marnham site on 28 Oct 2003.



Signalman Clive Goodwin at Ollerton Colliery signal box collects the token from the last train.

## The Penistone Railway Accident

taken from The Engineer of 5<sup>th</sup> April 1889 and submitted by Brian Slater

Penistone maintains its evil reputation in the railway world. The accident which befell the Liverpool to London excursion train last Saturday morning was more remarkable for what was avoided than for what happened. The latter, of course, was grave enough in its results - one passenger killed and many injured, with serious destruction of rolling stock. But what would it have been had the Night Mail from London dashed into the wreck?

The driver of the Night Mail stated that on approaching Penistone, both signals were off; he was then running at 35 miles an hour. Just as he got under the distant signal it was thrown up. For the moment, he could not tell whether it was thrown up in the usual way of working or to stop him; but looking at the home signal, he saw that thrown up, and at once applied the brake, reducing the speed to about five miles an hour, at which rate he struck the tender of the excursion engine "a gentle tap". (Presumably derailed and fouling the down line? - Ed.)

The signalman was equally alert and cool. At 3.13 he received a signal from Barnsley Junction "be ready" for the Mail, and "on time" came at 3.17. A noise drew him to the cabin window. At that moment, though he had not taken the mail "on line", his signals were off for it. He immediately threw up both signals, and almost as he did it, got "train on line" from Barnsley Junction.

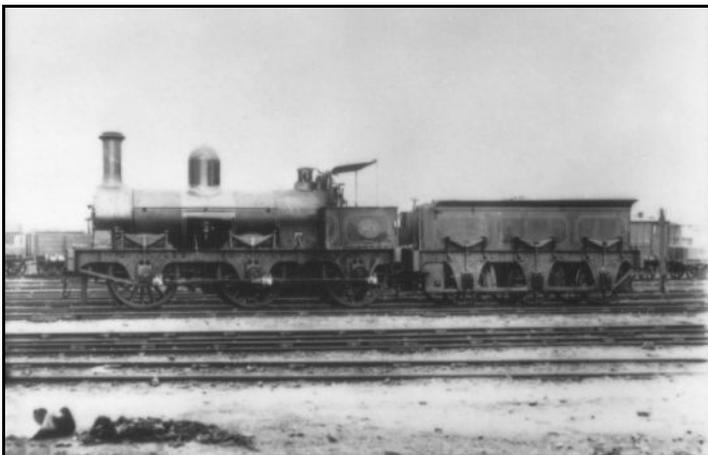
The driver, foreman, and guard of the excursion train behaved equally well. Indeed, the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Company has cause to congratulate itself on the intelligent and deliberate carrying out of instructions by its officers. There was no stupidity or flurry, and the Mail came within touch of destruction without any further result than "a gentle tap" - distinct enough, however, to batter the plates of the tender.

At the inquest on Tuesday the query was suggested: "What is the life of an engine?". That which drew the excursion train was a six-wheeled coupled engine made by Nielson and Co of Glasgow and had run no less than 1,619,414 miles. It was thoroughly overhauled in December 1888, when it was fitted with a new steel driving axle. There were three axles on the engine, and it was believed that the leading axle - which broke - had been in ever since the engine was built.

The jury found that the breaking of the leading axle of the engine was a pure accident, for which no one was to blame. Major-General Hutchinson is holding the Board of Trade inquiry, which is still proceeding.

Note: The engine, class 23 no.188, was built in 1865 and scrapped in 1902.

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MS&L 0-6-0 no.171 (formerly SYR no.20). Built by the South Yorkshire Railway at Mexborough in 1861 and scrapped in 1893. (corrected caption) photo: GCRS Collection

## A Station Master's memories of Finmere - Part 3

by Gerald Summerfield

The honesty of some of the station staff was tested occasionally. The way this was done was for a policewoman in plain clothes to join a train at Aylesbury and on alighting at Finmere to hand in a ladies handbag as lost property in which, besides the usual ladies cosmetics etc, there was to be a purse with a small sum of money in it. This was duly done and when I took duty the next morning I was to see if the full contents had been declared. If not, a similar test was repeated. Any evidence of embezzlement was used by the Railway Police to charge the suspect. If found guilty they were of course sacked.

Completely out of the blue one morning I was confronted by the civil police from Bicester and asked if I had in my employ a certain person working for me as a signalman to which I replied in the affirmative. They then said that he was in custody and would not be working his shift that night. It transpired that he was using his position as a signalman to give him a perfect alibi whilst he was out on the town doing the odd burglary! The system went like this - between the hours of 00.30 and 03.00 there were no scheduled trains to pass through Finmere so it transpired that after the last train had passed the station he would casually ask if there were to be any special trains about before the scheduled next train, which was the London to Nottingham newspaper, due past at 03.40. If there were no extras he would get into his car, proceed to Bicester which was just over seven miles away, choose a suitable place to burgle and then return to the signal box as if nothing had happened and that he had been there all the time!

Unfortunately for him, his car was seen in Bicester in the early hours of a particular morning by a night-duty policeman on patrol and his suspicions were raised as to why anyone should be in that area at that particular time just cruising around, so a note of his registration number was taken. When later that same morning burglaries were reported in that area from more than one property he became the prime suspect and a subsequent raid on his home found a lot of the stolen property. He was duly charged and sent to prison for three months and his railway career coming to an end at the same time.

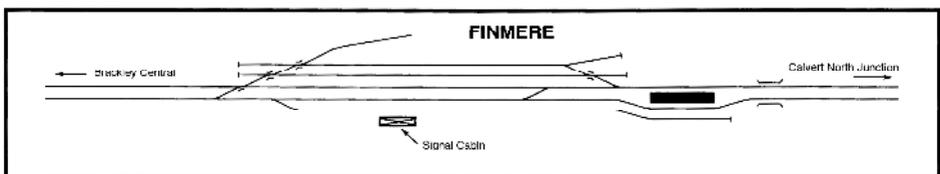


The view from Finmere station house bedroom window. The signal box can be seen in the distance. The vans are being stored in the down siding. photo: Gerald Summerfield

Before the above incident took place, this same person came under my suspicions for having an unauthorised person in the signal box from time to time. On one fine summer evening I was returning to the house after taking our dog for a walk over the fields, which ran behind the signal box, when I saw a bicycle standing by the signal box which I knew was not his as he always came by car. I took the dog home and then made my way back to the signal box, by which time whoever it was had seen me coming and had made a get-a-way over the fields but had left the bicycle behind. On asking the signalman if the cycle was his or if he knew to whom it belonged, I received a negative reply I promptly took the cycle back to the station and locked it up as "lost property", leaving a note for the porters not to release the cycle without finding out the name and address of the owner and what it was doing outside the signal box at that time of the evening. The next day the signalman came and asked if he could have his friend's cycle back, to which I agreed on payment of the appropriate lost property fee. I did not see the cycle or the person again.

On another occasion, during shunting operations in the goods yard and in particular whilst shunting the cattle dock siding, one wheel of the engine became de-railed for no apparent reason. The loco concerned was an 0-6-0 tender type, and this class of engine had been in and out of that siding many hundreds of times before without incident. Fortunately it happened at lunch time and the local p.w. gang were on hand having their sandwiches. Without too much trouble we soon had the offending wheel back on the line with the help of the metal ramp from under the signal box and plenty of wooden packing. Nothing was reported to the Control Office about the derailment, as everyone agreed that it was such a small incident that it did not warrant reporting. When I asked over the telephone for Woodford Halse Motive Power Depot to gauge the wheels of the engine on arrival back at the depot, imagine my chagrin when the person on the other end of the telephone said for all to hear, "I suppose you have been off the road with this engine". The telephones in those days on the railway were of the open circuit type which meant that anyone could listen in to a conversation anywhere between the limits of the circuit. The circuits in the country usually went along a stretch of line about twenty miles long or more and took in all the signal boxes and stations en-route. The delay to the train was put down to additional shunting!

I considered myself lucky to still be around in one piece. Firstly, when the windows of a bus I was travelling in during the war were blown in during a Doodle Bug raid and secondly, when I was involved in the train crash at Ecclefechan. Now came my third close shave. The station at Finmere was of the GC island platform type with the trains passing down each side. This meant that at a short distance either side of the station the tracks would split apart from each other thus leaving room for the platform to be placed between them. As has already been mentioned in part 2, in the morning there was a down train due to stop at Finmere at 09.57 and then the up "Master Cutler" was due to pass at about 10.12. It was one of my fairly regular habits to make my first visit of the day to the signal box after the departure of the 09.57. Before that time I would be busy balancing the books and getting the cash ready to bank as this had to be sent by sealed bag to Brackley on that train as I had no bank anywhere near me to make the necessary deposit. I would supervise the despatching of the 09.57 and then walk to the end of the platform as the train departed, cross over the down line and proceed to the signal box in safety knowing that there would not be another down train for several minutes. That was alright on clear days but things can and do work out slightly different when it is very foggy. It came to pass on one very foggy morning that the 09.57 was running ten or eleven minutes late and in addition the driver could not see the guard's "right away" signal, so I went forward to tell the driver to proceed after I had seen the green flag waved. This left me at the front of the train, instead of the rear, and without thinking I started walking off the platform with the stopping train still going past me. Unable to cross the down line I continued walking forward between



the up and down lines. I suddenly heard the engine on the up "Master Cutler" whistling for the Aylesbury route as it passed the signal box which is what the driver was supposed to do, and approaching me at something in excess of 60mph. I could not go left because the down train was still passing me and the lines were already too close together to provide any refuge between them. I decided not to risk trying to cross the up track as that was straight into the path of the express so I took the only alternative and that was to lay down in the gap between the two lines as it instructed one to do in the Rule Book if caught in such a situation. The tail end of the down train had just passed me as the engine of the up express roared by only inches away as I lay on the ballast! None of the station staff or the signalman had seen what had happened as I got up somewhat shaken but a lot wiser after the event. It was something I never did again!

Whilst on the subject of fog, my next memory is one of being called out by the signalman to go to Calvert as the signalman there had heard, but he had not seen, a lot of cows going past his box in the direction of Aylesbury, and he wanted some one to go and round up the animals. This was in the winter and in addition to the fog it was extremely frosty too. I arrived on the footplate of an up freight train about 03.00, by which time all was quiet at the signal box but in the distance you could hear the cows mooing, so off I set to try and find the beasts. It was a very black, foggy and frosty night, and I didn't know how many cows I was looking for or what kind. Eventually I found the first ones peacefully grazing the embankment and then I had the problem of getting in front of them all to enable me to drive them back to the station. The cattle were black and white Friesians, not the easiest to spot in the foggy conditions. I found in all about twenty of them and it took me nearly three hours to round them all up and to get them back to the station and into the cattle pens. So ended another night's work!

The army depots in the area were closed down after I had been at Finmere for about three years and they were closely followed by the RAF at Finmere aerodrome, thus leaving the station with very little in the way of freight traffic for a short time. The large open storage area of the goods yard was quite soon taken over by a firm dealing in second hand railway sleepers and rails etc., most of which came in and out by train. They employed around six to eight men in the yard and used welding and cutting equipment as necessary to make up rail lengths or to get them down to size for road haulage. They supplied equipment to many firms who had private sidings such as the National Coal Board and power stations. Their work meant that bottles of oxygen and acetylene were kept on site and these, along with the huge piles of wooden sleepers, were a recipe for disaster when one considers that passing trains were hauled by steam locomotives which, in the down direction were steaming hard to get to the summit which was about a mile further on from the station. So the inevitable occurred. One evening I was called out as smoke billowed across my garden to be told that at least one pile of sleepers was alight. By the time the local volunteer firemen from Buckingham, five miles away, had arrived the fire was going well. On arrival the first thing the officer-in-charge did was to call for assistance from Bicester, which was seven miles in the other direction. Not long after both the fire engines had arrived and were busily playing water on the flaming piles of sleepers there was a terrific bang and a gas bottle took off and flew across the railway and landed in the field opposite. This was the signal for not only me to tell the signalman to stop all passing trains but also for the firemen to beat a hasty retreat until a representative from the firm arrived to tell them how many more gas bottles there were on the site and where they were stored in relation to the seat of the fire. Whilst this was going on all traffic on the main road past the station was also stopped as by this time the local police had put in an appearance, and seeing the danger of airborne gas bottles, they were not keen on the possibility of having a road accident on their hands as well. After a good many hours work the firemen got the blaze under control and we finished up with about a dozen firemen in the kitchen having a cup of tea. I think it was the largest fire the locals had had for many a long year. It was certainly the largest that I had ever been involved with myself.

One of the winters during our stay at Finmere was particularly severe and included quite a substantial fall of snow. The extent of the blizzard was such that the weight of snow brought down many lengths of the overhead telephone wires between Finmere and Calvert which in turn meant that the signalmen lost all communication with each other both by telephone and by bell signals. This necessitated the introduction of the "Time Interval" system of signalling which in broad terms meant that trains were allowed to follow each other after the normal running time for the class of train had

elapsed plus an allowance for starting and stopping. The drivers and guards of each train being told of the circumstances before being allowed to proceed with caution. This method of working continued for almost three days before all the telephone wires were reinstated. After normal working had been resumed I carried out a check of the signal box train registers for my box at Finmere and the neighbouring box at Calvert to see if during the period of "Time Interval" running there had at any time been a situation of more than one train being in the section at the same time, that being a very serious offence and of course it could have led to a collision. My checking found out that on only one occasion were two trains in the same section at the same time and then by only a minute. That could be explained by the differences in the clocks in the two signal boxes as the signalmen did not book to half minutes anyway. All in all quite a satisfactory ending to a very interesting experience.

With the aforementioned types of incidents and the regular pattern of a country station through the various seasons of sugar beet loading, sack hiring and returning, and the occasional odd wagon load of sheep, life progressed at a steady rate. The odd wagon load of sheep sometimes caused problems when unloading them in as much that they had been cooped up for some time and as soon as the doors were opened they were out like a shot. Also if two farmers had purchased the sheep but had agreed to share the transport costs it was a question of counting out the individual farmer's sheep and that was not always easy.

As a result of a death in the family I was able to acquire a 1939 Hillman Minx which had been laid up throughout the war and was still in a very good condition. I started evening driving lessons in the autumn and took them right through the winter of 1957/58. As a result of this, when I eventually I took my test in the spring, I had to have half a day off work as my test was 10.00 in the morning. On reporting to the driving school the instructor said he would give me half an hour's run round the town before the actual test to get me in the mood. I said it would be a jolly good idea as I had never driven a car in daylight before!

During my stay at Finmere the number of people using the trains was diminishing as the car became more than just a status symbol and more of a means of getting about in the rural areas without the need to think about bus or train times. It was therefore only a matter of time before someone would begin an investigation into the need for some of the services that the railway provided. On this basis I could see that there would not be any long term future for many of the smaller stations and in particular the need for having a station master at every station. The writing was already on the wall with the centralisation of some of the accounts and the zonal collection and delivery of small goods and parcels. The latter in itself meant that a lot of the smaller stations no longer needed clerical staff in the form that they were at that time.

With all this in mind I started to look for pastures new in the recently set up District Operating Offices of the London Midland Region. I was surprised to find that after only making two applications for positions I was given the job as Accident Clerk in the District Operating Managers Office at Rugby (Midland). This was followed by positions at Leicester District and Divisional Offices, where I saw the demise of the former GC line, and at East Croyden, Waterloo and finally at the British Railways Board Office. I now live in retirement at Saltdean on the Sussex coast. I hope that you have found my memories of being station master at Finmere of interest.



Gerald in retirement.

## New station could be four years early

As reported in the Bucks Herald of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and submitted by Des Jenkins

We are pleased to announce that the next train to leave platform one for Aylesbury will be four years early. That will be the message read out to commuters on December 14 after it was revealed the Aylesbury Vale Parkway will open much earlier than originally planned. The opening of the train and bus services means that residents will be able to take advantage of the new train station before the homes are built at Berryfields. a move that Bucks County Council hope will get people into the habit of using the train sooner.

Val Letheren, BCC cabinet member for transportation, said: "This is fantastic news for the people of Aylesbury Vale. To have a fully operational public transport interchange by the end of the year is a great result for all concerned. Existing residents of villages to the north west of Aylesbury will benefit from this facility in December and having this station in place prior to any residents moving into Berryfields will provide travel choice to all of the new residents from day one."

Initially there will be two trains every hour at peak times and one an hour off peak or at weekends, but there will also be buses connecting villages. The route 16 bus, which serves Waddesdon and Quainton, will be diverted to include the station forecourt and when the development expands this will become a dedicated park and ride service every ten minutes, free to use for drivers parking at Parkway.

This first phase of the project cost just over £8 million, money that has come from the Department for Transport's Community Infrastructure Fund, John Laing plc and Bucks County Council. Adrian Shooter, spokesman for Chiltern Railways, said, "We are delighted to see that Aylesbury Vale Parkway will come on stream as soon as December 2008. Chiltern Railways are wholly committed to this project and have invested significant time and effort, as has our delivery partner John Laing plc, in achieving the earliest possible opening date."

A timetable for trains and buses will be put on the internet 12 weeks and published four weeks before the launch of the service. Next on the development agenda to the north of the town will be £10 million road works on the A41 starting in July that will allow major improvements for work to start of the Berryfields estate.

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Publication of Network Rail's plans to increase capacity on the nation's rail network brought this response in the Letters Column of The Daily Telegraph  
Submitted by Harry Smithson

23 June 2008

SIR - More than 100 years ago. Sir Edward Watkin, chairman of what was to be the Great Central Railway, had a vision of connecting the industrial North to the Continent via a Channel tunnel. A line was built, the London Extension, featuring a generous continental loading gauge and large-radius curves to facilitate maximum speed operation. The line was taken into London & North Eastern Railway ownership in 1923 and used predominantly as a freight route. It was closed in the 1960s and much of the land was sold off, including freight yards.

The latest proposals seem to be no more than what Sir Edward Watkin foresaw in 1896: railways are better than roads for freight.

P.M. Greenwood, Oldham, Lancashire

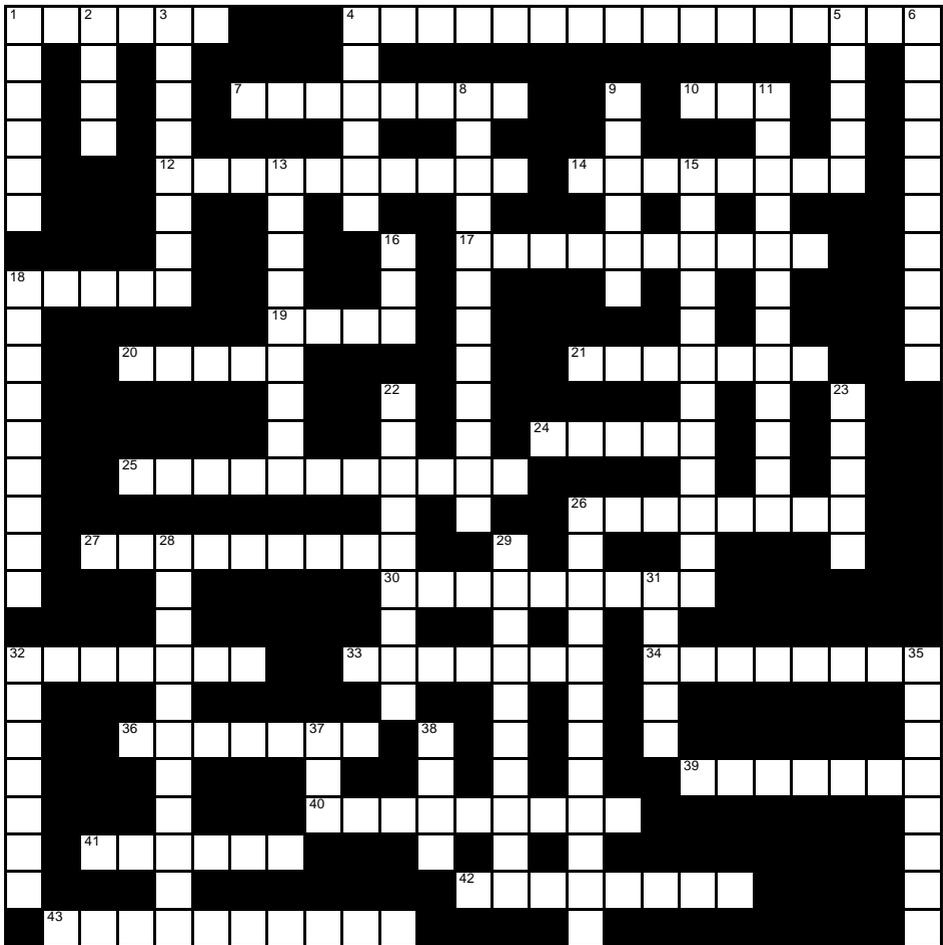
24 June 2008

Sir – The old Great Central Railway (Letters, June 23) was a fine, high-speed route. The old trackbed is virtually intact from London to the edge of Leicester and could be restored cheaply and quickly. It could be connected to the West Coast Main Line between Willesden Junction and Acton and get on to the Chiltern Line, which uses part of the original route, and parts of that could be widened.

Just after New Labour came into power, a consortium applied for permission to rebuild it, but supposedly railway-friendly Labour MPs rejected it.

Andrew Rixon, Hertford

Crossword (Forward 157) : Answers in the back of this issue.



Across

- 1 Noon. (6)
- 4 A feature found at Glazebrook. (8,8)
- 7 Distance marker. (8)
- 10 Causes reduced visibility. (3)
- 12 Father of railways. (10)
- 14 A modern term for motive power. (8)
- 17 A Derbyshire Lines station. (10)
- 18 Name given to 26000. (5)
- 19 Can happen when rails are greasy. (4)
- 20 Term used to describe loco that shunts stock around a station. (5)
- 21 Junction north of Sheffield station that allows access between former MR and GC lines. (7)
- 24 Cricket ground under which three tunnels were built. (5)
- 25 First stop out of Manchester (London Road) for most GC expresses. (5,6)
- 26 Curved cover for driving wheel. (8)



## Readers' forum

from David Wrottesley, Sheffield

Re. more thoughts on Aylesbury

In Forward 151 p23, I said that in 1925 a new south end facing bay had been built at Aylesbury without an engine release road. The new platform was No.1, and the old up main platform No.1 had become No.2. This apparently required both ex GCR/LNER and Met Rly suburban trains from London, terminating at Aylesbury, to use only the down main platform now No.3, the island platform, now No.4, being only available to GWR trains. The use of the down main through platform by terminating trains, instead of the new bay, definitely created timing/pathing problems at Aylesbury for ex GCR/LNER medium distance services from Marylebone to Brackley etc and long distance trains to Nottingham/Sheffield etc. The majority of all starting services to London would now use the new bay after being shunted across the station from the down main No 3 platform.

I have now discovered that the platform bay was not built until 1927. In addition, the tracks included an engine release road. This would have possibly allowed the terminating trains mentioned above to use it. The enclosed diagram is from the 1947 "British Railways Illustrated Series 2: Rail and Platform plans of British stations Part 1" published by the Railway and Technical Press. The plan for Aylesbury is dated as being correct as at 28<sup>th</sup> June 1931.

There is unfortunately no indication of the length of each platform, but I think that the new bay would not have been able to platform all six "Dreadnought" vehicles of a standard Met Rly train or an LNER six carriage train from London, and still release the engine without a shunt. That is the reason down terminating trains rarely ran into it and went and blocked the down main. However I am of the opinion that it might have been possible to arrive with five vehicles in this new bay and release the engine.

I think that this run round road in the new bay soon became a "White Elephant" as presumably both the Met Rly and LNER required the majority of their loco hauled trains to be six vehicles and not five. GCR suburban/local services in the early days of Marylebone were composed of four long elegant carriages. This then increased to five as traffic developed. I enclose a picture of a Met Rly train in the Aylesbury bay No.1 platform with space to spare. In addition pictures of four, five and six carriages on GCR/LNER Aylesbury trains. (Ed – unfortunately these cannot be reproduced due to poor quality.)

Can anyone supply any more information about this most interesting Buckinghamshire station?

from Reg Instone, Shirley, Solihull

Re. Forward 155 p41: letter from John Bennett on 'Leicester Central Platform signal box'.

John Bennett has covered this excellently. The only thing I can add is a possible explanation of the two "missing" FPLs (out of seven). I suggest that the trailing points of the scissors in each of the Main Lines might also have been equipped with a FPL. This would have allowed loaded passenger trains to set back over the points when attaching or detaching, without the need for the points to be clipped.

As well as changing engines at Leicester, a number of trains either combined, divided, or attached or detached through coaches. In the October 1904 Bradshaw, for example, the 3.57pm from Bristol arrived at Leicester at 7.26, followed by the 5.25pm from Marylebone which departed at 7.45. Through coaches from these trains to Huddersfield, Halifax and Leeds were attached to the 6.20pm from Marylebone which arrived at 8.11.

In April 1910 the 3.56pm from Bristol combined with the 5.25 at Woodford, arrived at Leicester at 7.48 and still combined with the 6.20pm from Marylebone which arrived at 8.12. The 10.00am Bradford to Marylebone called from 12.44 to 12.49 and detached through carriages for Bournemouth, which were then attached to the 10.23am from York, calling from 12.53 to 1.01pm. In designing the layout of Leicester station, it may well have been envisaged that more such movements would take place.

Taking the down side, for example, a train from Marylebone could arrive at one end of the platform, and one from the GWR and Banbury at the other end. It would not matter which arrived first as they could "leapfrog" each other through the scissors crossings. The engine of the train at the south end

would be uncoupled and leave through the scissors onto the Down Loop. The train at the north end could then set back over the scissors and couple up. Alternatively it could have been a fresh engine and vehicles to be attached that were waiting at the north end; lots of other more complicated moves were also possible. By 1910, with the scissors crossovers out of use, locomotives and vehicles waiting to attach to the front of trains were instead held in the bay platforms.

The GCR had scissors crossovers only at Stalybridge, Leicester and Nottingham stations, but other companies made more extensive use of them. The LNWR made frequent use of such facilities at Rugby, Crewe, Preston, Carlisle, Chester and Huddersfield for exchanging portions between passenger trains, while the GWR had them at Exeter, Oxford, Snow Hill, Shrewsbury, Gloucester and Newport. The NER made much use of theirs at York and Darlington.

Re. Forward 155 p44: letter from Clive Foxell on 'the Joint Companies'

I totally agree with Clive Foxell that the background was much more complex than suggested. I had deliberately intended to restrict my piece to the essential facts to explain how Aylesbury came to be managed by a joint committee of two joint committees, although perhaps the finished article did not make this clear. I am grateful to him for the details of maintenance and staffing on the Met and GCR Joint after 1906.

Re. Forward 155 p46: letter from Brian Wainwright on 'use of the telegraph'.

Brian Wainwright's letter raises some interesting points. However, it is important to realise that the list of types and precedence of messages, in the 1914 Appendix, is not something that originated on the GCR. I have now been able to look at a copy of the 1914 GC Appendix, and the "Telegraph Department – General Instructions" on the whole of pages 215 to 219 and half of page 220 was taken from the instructions agreed for adoption by all the main line companies, although a good deal is omitted. The identical instructions appear, for example in the GWR Telegraph Appendix of 1909 and 1923 (which say as much in a notice on the front cover) and the LNWR booklet of 1916. So it should not be relied on too heavily as evidence of GCR practice.

The remainder on pages 219 to 223 is geographically specific to the GCR, and the arrangements with neighbouring companies. The final twelve pages of the Appendix, 224 to 235, are a list of telegraph stations on the GCR and their hours of attendance. It states that the instruments are at the stations, except where they are stated to be in the box. Clerks were employed at those places in italics. Those between Aylesbury and Annesley are:

<u>Station</u>	<u>Code Call</u>	<u>Transmitting Stations</u>
Calvert	CT	MB and OD
Finmere	FM	MB, OD
Brackley	B	OD and MB
Helmdon	HM	MB and OD
Culworth	CH	MB, OD
Woodford	OD	LC, MB, JO
Charwelton	CN	LC, OD
Braunston and W.	WL	LC, OD
Rugby	RY	JO, LC, MB, OD
Lutterworth	L	LC, OD
Ashby Magna	AM	LC, OD
Whetstone	WH	LC, OD
Leicester	LC	general
Belgrave and B.	BG	JO and LC
Rothley	RO	JO, LC
Quorn and W.	Q	JO, LC
Loughborough	LB	LC, JO
East Leake	EL	JO, LC
Ruddington	RG	JO, LC
Nottingham (Ark' St)	AK	JO, LC
Nottingham (Victoria)	JO	general

Carrington	CA	JO, FD
New Basford	BO	JO, FD
Bulwell Common	BC	JO, FD
Hucknall Town	HK	FD and JO
Annesley	AY	Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, London

(MB was Marylebone, FD was Sheffield Passenger Station)

From this, we can deduce several things:

1. No signal box on the line had telegraph instruments.
2. Every station office had telegraph facilities of some sort.
3. The only stations with general access to the whole network were Marylebone, Leicester, Nottingham (Vic.) and Sheffield Passenger Station. Each of these was a "hub" of the telegraph network, with a clerk employed solely for this purpose.
4. Most of the intermediate stations seem to have been on local circuits between these "hubs". The exception was Woodford, with the Marylebone to Woodford and Woodford to Leicester circuits.
5. Additionally, direct lines existed from Marylebone to Rugby and Annesley, and from Leicester to Woodford, Rugby and Annesley.

In addition, I think all major railway companies conveyed public messages from certain stations, this dating from the earliest days when the railways had more wires than anywhere else. However, this Post Office traffic was separate from the internal railway traffic and, I would suggest, of only marginal interest. Certain stations were designated as "handing-over" stations for it, and possibly for railway management wishing to communicate with private firms and other external bodies. The GC instructions were in clauses 22 to 24 on page 219 of the Appendix. Although in the twentieth century the telephone was usually the most convenient form of communication, there were places and occasions until quite recently when a telegram was the most appropriate message. The whole question of railway telegraph systems, especially the administrative and commercial ones, is one that has received only scant coverage in historical works, and it seems likely that very little research has been done on it.

The instruction for regulating the working of ballast trains (on p51 of the 1914 Appendix) does appear to be a "domestic" procedure, though. It is part of a section of the Appendix concerned with "Reporting of Trains by Telephone Between Signal Boxes". Although admittedly only speculation, I suggest that the telegraph would only be used where the two boxes were not in easy telephone communication with each other, perhaps because they were on separate 'bus circuits'. Although it is clear that a number of boxes on older parts of the network (not the London Extension) did have the telegraph, the jury is still out over the purposes and extent to which they were used. So although the above sheds some light on Peter Wortley's original question about the use of telegraph in the station offices at Rugby and Loughborough on the London Extension, it still doesn't really answer it!

from Penelope Gretton, e-mail

Information requested re. Henry Williams Braddock.

I have recently looked at the Great Central Railway Society website where I found your name as a contact. My interest is not in the railways, but in family history. My great grandfather was Henry Williams Braddock to whom Pevsner attributes the design of the buildings of Marylebone Station. I have inherited some information about H.W.Braddock's activities and work and wondered if your society's archives holds any information about his contribution to Marylebone Station and its design or his involvement with other parts of the railway, so we could make some sort of exchange.

If you would be kind enough to include my request in your journal 'Forward', I would be happy if you would like to publish the attached - a photograph of H.W.Braddock and his son Edward (my grandfather) in the offices of the Great Central's engineers, Sir Douglas Fox and Partners and a job application letter by H.W.Braddock. I am a retired architect and I would be interested in any design drawings or photographs which have any relation to the work of my great grandfather.

Editor's note: The archive, as far as I am aware, does not have any relevant information. Can readers help?

Extracts from a job application letter by H.W.Braddock dated 1900.

I have for a considerable number of years been engaged on both Architectural and Engineering works by Messrs Sir Douglas and Francis Fox. During the last five years I have had charge of the whole of the buildings on the Southern and Metropolitan Divisions of the Great Central Railway Extension to London now nearing completion. Goods offices and Warehouses, Dwellings, buildings for the Hydraulic Power, Electric Light and Gas Plant. Carriage and Locomotive Sheds and Workshops, including heating, ventilating, drainage and water supply to same and of a total value of upwards of £500,000.

I have had entire charge of the preparation of the plans and specification and the carrying out of the works, as stated in the description of this Railway published in "Engineering" of February 24<sup>th</sup> and in "The Contractors Chronicle" of February 27<sup>th</sup> 1899.

I have a thorough knowledge, both practical and theoretical, of all branches of both the Architectural and Engineering (Civil) professions, including surveying, levelling, constructional steel and ironwork, bridge building and sewerage.

In addition to the work I have carried out for Messrs Fox I have had a small private practice consisting, with the exception of a Primitive Methodist Chapel at Barnton in Cheshire at a cost of £1,300, chiefly of domestic work of a middle class character.

I have been a member of the "Architectural Association" since 1887.

1875 to 1882

Served Articles with and afterwards Assistant to Mr George Cunliffe of Bolton (previously of the firm of Messrs Cunliffe and Freeman) during the erection of several important buildings in that town including Dr Chadwick's Orphanage, Pikes Lane Board and other schools, the Central and Branch Co-operative Stores, various Residences, Cotton spinning and weaving Mills &c.

1882 to 1884

Engaged by Messrs Braddock and Mathews, Contractors to the West Lancashire Railway to superintend for the erection of Station and other Buildings at Southport and Preston forming part of their Contract. The stations were built from the designs of Chas H Driver Esq. FRIBA. Messrs Fox and Brumlees were the Engineers.

1884 to 1887

Draughtsman in the London office of Messrs Sir Charles Fox and Lens Civil Engineers during the construction of the Mersey Tunnel, the Gravesend Extension of the L. C. and D. Railway, the designing of the Dee Swing Bridge, the Scarborough and Whitby Railway, Warehouses, Offices and Sheds for the South Indian and Central Argentine Railways.

1887 to 1892

Engaged by Messrs Sir Douglas and Francis Fox as Architect to the following extensive Railway schemes then being carried out by them in Lancashire and Cheshire for the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Rly. Co.

Chester and Connah's Quay Railway – 3 passenger stations, dwellings etc.

Wigan Extension Railway – large station at Wigan.

Liverpool, St Helens and South Lancashire Railway – 3 stations, warehouses, dwellings and other buildings.

Manchester Central Station Railway – 4 important suburban passenger and goods stations, station master's houses &c.



Henry W. Braddock (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) and Edward Braddock (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) at the drawing office of Sir Douglas Fox and Partners in 1917.

from John Quick, Sheffield

Re. Forward 156 : caption to rear cover photo.

The photo of class 8F 4-6-0 no.1095 on the rear cover of Forward 156 dates from 19 April 1913, not 1923. The LGRP (Locomotive & General Railway Photographs) reference is 8045. I suspect that it was taken on the occasion of an SLS visit to Neasden shed as such visits were made regularly. An almost identical view exists with LCGB (Locomotive Club of Great Britain) reference H1159, the photographer probably being Harold Hopwood.

from Roger Morris, Melbourne, Australia

Have just found your bibliography on the GCR, a very helpful addition to My Favourites on my PC. I've only really just started on my GCR collection. I am looking to collect photos of Nottingham Victoria, maps, pay checks and books.

I lived in Nottingham in the 1960s and can recall trainspotting at Nottingham Victoria and near our home in Ruddington.

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### Crossword Solution (Forward 157)

Across

1. Midday, 4. Drinking fountain, 7. Milepost, 10. Fog, 12. Stephenson, 14. Traction, 17. Killamarsh, 18. Tommy, 19. Spad, 20. Pilot, 21. Nunnery, 24. Lords, 25. Guide Bridge, 26. Splasher, 27. Timetable, 30. Spectacle, 32. Bracket, 33. Revenue, 34. Corridor, 36. Harwich, 39. Valance, 40. Boat train, 41. Wrawby, 42. Beighton, 43. Signal lamp.

Down

1. Mersey, 2. Dock, 3. Annesley, 4. Diesel, 5. Allen, 6. New Holland, 8. Stocksbridge, 9. Wirral, 11. Gainsborough, 13. Penistone, 15. Coaling stage, 16. Sod, 18. Thrumpton, 22. Leicester, 23. Barry, 26. Staleybridge, 28. Markham Main, 29. Scunthorpe, 31. Local, 32. Buckley, 35. Rule book, 37. Cab, 38. Wath.

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### The Edgar Fay 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Special

To celebrate Edgar Fay's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday the GCRS has booked a coach on the Great Central Railway's Elizabethan Dining Car Train on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October. The train will leave Loughborough with Edgar Fay as the guest of honour. Participation is by invitation only but there may be a few spare places. If you would like to attend this event, please contact our Chairman, Mike Hartley (see front cover for contact details).



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### Rear cover caption

GCR class 8B 4-4-2 no.263 at Rothley with the Newcastle-Swansea train in 1922. This working is using GWR stock. (corrected caption)

photo © Locomotive and General



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