FORWARD

Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 158 December 2008

Front cover caption

LNER class S1/3 0-8-4T no.2799 at Mexborough. This loco was one of two built by the LNER to the same design as the GCR class 8H (LNER class S1/1), the Wath "Daisies". They were built with rear bogie boosters, which can be seen under the bunker of 2799. *Photo© Photomatic*

The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 158 ~ December 2008

Contents

Editorial by Bob Gellatly

I am writing this editorial just after this year's Remembrance events have taken place. My impression is that as a nation we are taking more notice of the sacrifice made by the members of our armed forces. Remembering the effects of past wars should motivate present-day politicians to make more effort to resolve disagreements without resorting to armed conflict. However, learning from the past is not one of the human race's strong points.

The two Remembrance events organised by the GCRS this year were arranged after the previous issue of *Forward* had gone to press. The details were given on the website, an increasingly valuable means of communication in this electronic age. On Sunday 9 Nov. a small group gathered at the GC War Memorial at Sheffield followed by refreshments at the Royal Victoria Hotel. On Tuesday 11 Nov. GBRf class 66 locomotive 'Valour' was placed in the platform at Marylebone and a short Remembrance ceremony took place. In contrast to last year, the event attracted quite a sizeable crowd, consisting mostly of non-GCRS members. Refreshments, courtesy of Chiltern Railways, were provided at the Landmark Hotel afterwards (I don't think the two were linked!). Readers will be aware from the item included in the last issue that the proposed visit to WW1 cemeteries organised by Ken Grainger has generated sufficient interest to enable it to go ahead. Contact Ken (0114 254 0275) to book a place. The dates are 25-29 May.

To complement my editorial comments on the new Marylebone-Wrexham services in the last issue, I have received two further reviews from members. Both are included in this issue. Our new Model Steward, Tony West, makes a welcome first contribution in 'Modellers Corner'. Please keep your GCR modelling photos coming in.

The celebration of Edgar Fay's 100th birthday on 12 Oct. was a great occasion. Unfortunately I was unable to accept the invitation to attend as my wife and I were enjoying the fall colours in New England. Thanks go to our chairman, Mike Hartley, and the staff of the GCR at Loughborough for organising the event. This issue contains a report by David Bodicoat and centrefold photos by Paul Dalton.

After the week in New England, I was able to visit Roanoke in Virginia, as one of my other railway interests is the Norfolk & Western Railway. As well as visiting the Link Museum and the Virginia Transportation Museum I was able to visit the archive of the NWHS (Norfolk & Western Historical Society). This gave me an insight as to how historical line societies in the USA are coping with the problem of storing and disseminating historical material. The NWHS archive is kept in a former industrial unit in the outskirts of Roanoke. Three local volunteers are available to arrange access to visitors and to respond to requests for information and material. Four times a year on a Saturday they invite as many members as possible to visit for a 'working day'. Considerable progress has already been made with cataloguing, storing and digitisation. Clearly this facility is far beyond anything the GCRS could achieve at the moment. Our archive is temporarily stored at a location in Wickersley. Long term, the Society hopes that the archive can be transferred to Loughborough following the redevelopment of the former GC goods yard offices.

Those who attended the Society's Autumn Meeting at Aylesbury on 1 Nov. enjoyed two excellent talks from Clive Foxell and Richard Crane. It was a good turn-out of members despite the poor weather. Thanks go to Richard Butler for organising the event. Local member, John Reed, had self-published books on sale : 'Met & Great Central' and 'Railway Observations at Ayelsbury'. Members can contact John on 01296 613351 if they wish to purchase copies.

Last year I printed off several copies of the GCRS calendar to distribute to committee members and *Forward* contributors. This year I have put the calendar for 2009 on the website where anyone can download and print it. The season's greetings to all!

PS - Please note my new e-mail address.

Welcome to the following new members

Mr A.T.West, Mortimer, Berkshire
Mr S.G.Custance, Peterchurch, Hereford
Mr A.Higginson, Quorn, Leicestershire
Mr & Mrs R.A.Franklin, Newbury, Berkshire
Dr R.J.Paget, Harthill, Sheffield
Mr A.Mullett, Newport Pagnell, Bucks
Mr C.Killingbeck, Beaconsfield, Bucks
Mr D.Cousins, Swinton, Manchester
Mr A.J.Emsen, Westfield, Sheffield
Mr J.C.Wilson, Bainsville ON, Canada
Mr M.K.Wilkinson, Sudbury, Suffolk
Mr F.A.Siddaway, Sheffield
Mr M.N.Warr, New Milton, Hampshire
Mr J.Durnin, Dadby, Leicestershire
Mr F.R.Hillier, Sheffield
Mr J.T.Williamson, Silkstone Common, Barnsley

Annual General Meeting 2009

In accordance with Section 7(a) of the Society constitution, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday 9th May 2009 at the The St Peter's Centre, Church Side, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 1AP starting at 11.00am.

Under Section 9 of the constitution, proposals for changes to the constitution, properly signed by the proposer and seconder should be sent to the Secretary to reach him no later than 28th March 2009.

Under Section 5(c) nominations for the committee, signed by the proposer and seconder and made with the agreement of the nominee, should be sent to the Secretary to reach him no later than 18th April 2009.

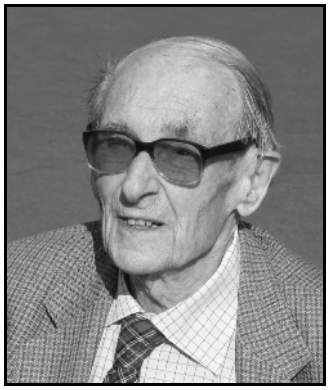
Proposers and seconders must be paid up members of the Society.

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

Brian Slater, Secretary

Ken Grainger lays a wreath from the GCRS at the Remembrance event at Marylebone on 11 Nov. *photo: June Grainger*

Edgar Fay's Centenary Special
by David Bodicoat



Edgar Fay on his 100th birthday. photo: Paul Dalton

Sunday, 12th October, 2008 was a special milestone in the history of the Great Central Railway Society and an even greater one for one of our Vice-Presidents, his Honour Edgar Fay QC. Earlier in the week he had celebrated his 100th birthday – what an achievement – and to mark the occasion the Society had chartered a coach on the Sunday dining train on the Great Central Railway. The train was scheduled to leave Loughborough at 13:15 but all those who had accepted the invitation to the event had been asked to arrive some time earlier so as to permit of photo opportunities and a general get-together on the platform. Not that any persuasion to get there earlier was needed; the date happily coincided with the GCR's gala weekend and a most attractive array of locomotives was working on the line – 60163 'Tornado', 850 'Lord Nelson', 70013 'Oliver Cromwell', 5690 'Leander', heading the list, with a substantial supporting cast. It had been agreed some months previously that our train would be headed by 63601, the resident 04, which would be an entirely appropriate selection with its GC ancestry (and which is, indeed, drawing close to its own centenary). Mike Hartley, though, had been informed by the GCR prior to the day that there had been a hitch in the arrangements and that a GW prairie tank would be used. This was something of a disappointment, but there was some consolation that the 04 would at least be working on that day.

However, following pressure by Mike and others, there had been a change of heart and when the stock was drawn into the platform, no. 63601 was seen to move alongside and eventually take its place at the head of the rake of coaches, proudly carrying a commemorative headboard stating that it was Edgar Fay's centenary special. Edgar Fay was photographed by the local press alongside the front of the locomotive, and I believe that TV cameras were also in evidence. The time soon came to board the train – platform occupation was at something of a premium due to the intensive train service in operation, and once everyone had been allocated their seats by Mike Hartley, we set off on what is a familiar journey to many of us to Leicester North, although it is not often that I permit myself the indulgence of dining on the train. There were several members of Edgar's family accompanying him on the special train, and these, plus the GCRS took up a whole coach, which was filled with a special ambience as it is not often that there is an opportunity to celebrate a centennial birthday.

After an excellent meal and a most pleasant journey, in the course of which Edgar was presented with a special birthday card from the GCRS depicting GCR no. 423 'Sir Sam Fay', a return was made to Loughborough, where more photographs of the group were taken on the platform, both with and without no. 63601 in the background. Many of the GCRS members then chose to visit the loco shed or to have another ride on the line. The weather was absolutely brilliant – warm sunshine all day, and this, plus the array of locomotives at the gala, had certainly brought out the crowds to the extent that as well as the more dedicated enthusiasts who regularly attend such events, many people were simply sitting by the lineside and even in the fields just to enjoy the spectacle of trains passing to and fro at regular intervals.

Subsequent to this, my thoughts have turned to what might be the next GC-related centenary to celebrate. Whatever it may be I am sure that it will be difficult to surpass the style in which we celebrated this one!

More photos of the event can be found on pages 24/25.

Edgar Fay arrives with his wife, Eugenie, and son, William. GCRS vice-presidents Paul Dalton and Mike Fish are in discussion behind them. *photo: Brian Slater*

Our president, Richard Hardy, is enjoying his visit to the footplate of 63601. *photo: Brian Slater*

The new service between Marylebone and Wrexham has generated two articles – both are produced below.

The new Wrexham - Marylebone direct service
by David Reidy

The Wrexham, Shropshire & Marylebone Railway Company (WSMR) started its full service of five trains a day in each direction from Wrexham General, through Shropshire and the Chilterns, to London Marylebone on Monday 28th April 2008. The Saturday service is four trains in each direction and on Sundays three trains run each way. Whilst the first day was slightly marred by technical hitches and late running of one set, the service was generally very well received by locals, politicians and the media alike. Wrexham lost its direct link to London in 1967.

The service provides direct London trains to Wrexham General, Ruabon, Chirk, Gobowen, Shrewsbury, Wellington, Telford Central and Cosford. Trains then stop to set down/pick up only at Wolverhampton before taking an interesting route through the West Midlands, calling at the park-and-ride station at Tame Bridge Parkway before running to Banbury (set down/pick up only) and thence to Marylebone via Princes Risborough. Some trains have pathing stops at Birmingham International, but the doors are not opened. A large market is anticipated from Telford, the largest town in Shropshire with a population of almost 140,000. The booked platform at Marylebone is no 4.

Connections are available at:

- Wrexham for stations to Shotton/Bidston;
- Ruabon for Llangollen (by bus);
- Gobowen for Oswestry (by bus);
- Shrewsbury for stations to Machynlleth, Aberystwyth and Pwhelli, and stations down the Marches line to Ludlow;
- Wolverhampton for Birmingham, the North-West and Scotland;
- Tame Bridge for Walsall and Cannock;
- Banbury for Oxford and Reading and intermediate stations to Marylebone.

Each service is hauled by a class 67 loco hired from EWS. Nos. 67012-015 are the dedicated locos for the service. The formation is two TSOs, seating 64 each, a buffet vehicle and a DVT with guard's and luggage/bicycle accommodation.

All southbound services are booked to run via Coventry with two northbound services to run via Dorridge and Birmingham New St. The standard route via Coventry is Leamington Spa- Coventry-Birmingham Int.- Stechford-Aston South Jn- Bescot Stadium-Darlaston Jn- Wolverhampton. The standard route via Dorridge is Leamington Spa-Dorridge- Bordesley Jn- St Andrews Jn- Proof House- Birmingham New St- Soho South East Jn- Bescot- Darlaston Jn- Wolverhampton.

WSMR is aware of the uncompetitive time taken by its services and is looking to speed up the trains from December- an overall journey time of 3h 50m is envisaged. On one shadow working, Shrewsbury to Marylebone, a journey time of 3h 01m was achieved. Loco-hauled trains are currently restricted to lower speeds between Princes Risborough and Aynho Jn.

Refreshments, including full meals for first class passengers, are available on every train seven days a week.

Work is ongoing to complete a new open-air operational and cleansing depot at Wrexham General on the site of the old south-facing bay platforms. This will provide overnight stabling accommodation, storage for on-board catering and office space. EWS is contracted to undertake maintenance of the locos and coaching stock at Crewe

Electric depot. Two rakes of stock stable overnight at Wrexham and one at Chiltern's Wembley depot. The operation of the service is managed by the Chilterns Railways Control Centre at Banbury.

WSMR is a member of ATOC and accepts the full range of inter-available tickets, including relevant seasons and rovers. The company has also launched its own range of tickets which have some attractive discounts. Advance purchase tickets start from as little as £24 single from Wrexham to London. First class fares start at £50 single. 2000 seats at these prices are available every week. WSMR has also introduced its own range of saver tickets.

WSMR has set a standard of 95% or more of all trains to arrive at destinations within ten minutes of booked time and that 99% or more of trains will run. Compensation is payable if passengers are delayed by 30 minutes or more.

WSMR employs just over 50 staff: 13 drivers, 13 train managers, 20 stewards and 10 management staff. WSMR uses some Chiltern Railways drivers south of Banbury.

With just 158 seats, including thirty first class, available on each train, which have four staff (driver, train manager and two stewards), WSMR is going to need to work hard to fill all services, whilst trying to suppress demand on busier services for parts of the journey- at least until further rolling stock is refurbished. Services can be lengthened to four coaches, but short platforms at Tame Bridge and Cosford preclude any longer trains at present.

Postscript:

It is reported that Chiltern Railways is proposing to run a new Oxford-Marylebone service via Bicester. Two trains an hour would run via Bicester Town and a new ¼ mile chord, thence by the existing Chiltern route via Princes Risborough. This would give Bicester four trains an hour to and from Marylebone- two from Bicester Town and two from Bicester North. The company also believes this scheme would strengthen the case for the proposed Oxford-Milton Keynes East-West Rail Link.

Bicester Town station, currently served by only six shuttle trains a day to and from Oxford, would be rebuilt and expanded to take longer trains. Services between Bicester and Oxford would be increased to up to 35 a day. A new station would be built at Water Eaton park and ride site near Kidlington, between Oxford and Islip.

All Oxford-Marylebone trains would call at Bicester Town and Water Eaton, with some also serving Islip and most calling at High Wycombe where there would be easy connections to and from Wembley Stadium.

The new service would provide High Wycombe with direct services to Oxford for the first time since 1964. It is intended to complement rather than compete with existing First Great Western services between Oxford and Paddington and would offer an alternative route to London while FGW's route is disrupted by the major works planned at Reading station and Crossrail-related construction work.

Chiltern Railways is prepared to meet the £200 million development costs. It is expected to prepare an application shortly under the Transport & Works Act, including a full consultation with all local stakeholders. The company hopes that the new service will start by 2013 at the latest, and may be introduced in time for the London 2012 Olympics.

Editor's note : There is also an item about the proposed Oxford service on p34.

Marylebone's 'other' TOC – Wrexham & Shropshire
by Mark Hambly

As reported in *Forward 156*, Wrexham & Shropshire, the trading title of the Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Company Ltd, began operations between Wrexham General and Marylebone on Monday 28th April. A total of 32 return services are operated each week – five each weekday, four on Saturdays and three on Sundays.

Comment was made in *Forward 157* regarding the variation in routes taken through the West Midlands between Leamington Spa and Tame Bridge Parkway. Two principal alternatives exist:

1. Via Coventry, Stechford Jn and Aston South Jn
2. Via Hatton, Bordesley Jn, St. Andrews Jn, Birmingham New Street, Soho South Jn and Perry Barr North Jn

Both of these are booked to be used each weekday, the former by the majority of services and the latter by the 10:17 and 16:10 departures from Marylebone. At weekends trains generally operate via the former Great Western route. Other route variations are physically possible and are on occasions necessary for operational reasons or due to weekend engineering works. For this reason the last departure from Marylebone on Saturdays does not call at Tame Bridge Parkway and instead runs via Sandwell & Dudley in order to maintain route knowledge of the alternative approach to Wolverhampton from the east.

On both of my trips northbound from the capital to Tame Bridge Parkway to date, the on-board service in First Class has been excellent. Following a welcoming hot or cold drink a cooked two course lunch or dinner was offered, either immediately or later in the journey, with the option of dessert at a modest extra charge. For the future W&S might like to consider giving customers greater flexibility by offering any combination of the two courses as part of the inclusive package with a supplement payable for the full three courses. The only let-down was the rolling stock, which is currently provided by Cargo-D based at Crewe. While both internally and externally the stock is clean and tidy, on one trip there was no lighting in the Buffet First vehicle and on the second, on one of the warmest days of this summer, the air conditioning was struggling to make any impression. However, in fairness to W&S, their own rolling stock is currently being comprehensively refurbished to a very high standard by Marcroft Engineering at Stoke-on-Trent and is due to enter service in the Autumn. At that point train formations will alter from 'top & tail' Class 67s to a single locomotive at the Wrexham end of the train and a Mk 3 Driving Van Trailer (DVT) at the Marylebone end.

Some interesting comparisons may be drawn with 20th century GWR and BR(WR) services from London to Shrewsbury and Wrexham via the GW&GC Joint line. Departing from Paddington, they joined the present-day W&S route at Northolt Junction. From Leamington Spa they then all climbed Hatton Bank and passed through the West Midlands via Birmingham Snow Hill and Wolverhampton Low Level to Oxley Junction, from where the remainder of their route was common with that of W&S services.

Although the principal rationale of W&S services is to connect Wrexham and Shropshire with London, the protection from competition provided to some other operators in their franchise agreements means that not all of the journey combinations the W&S service is physically capable of providing are actually permitted. Restrictions apply to the Banbury and Wolverhampton calls (set down only southbound, pick up only northbound) and the nationally important transport hubs of Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International are passed through non-stop, although on one of my trips we occupied a platform at New Street during the evening peak for almost ten minutes awaiting a path.

June to September 1959 Monday to Friday	(1)		(2)				(3)	
Paddington (d)	00:05	09:10	10:10	11:10	14:10	16:10	18:10	20:10
Banbury (d)	02:45	10:42	11:24	-:-	15:33	17:43	19:49	21:36
Wolverhampton LL (d)	04:30	12:14	12:43	13:40	17:06	19:18	21:25	23:10
Wellington (a)	05:00	12:40	-:-	14:06	17:31	19:42	21:49	23:39
Shrewsbury (a)	05:35	13:00	13:19	14:25	17:47	19:59	22:06	24:00
Gobowen (a)	06:08	13:30	-:-	14:53	18:16	20:28	22:40	-:-
Wrexham General (a)	06:40	13:58	-:-	15:18	18:45	20:54	23:05	-:-

(1) Ran via Didcot. Conveyed Sleeping Cars.
(2) Cambrian Coast Express.
(3) FX timings. FO departed 18:10 but ran between 4 and 7 minutes later intermediately.

April '66 to March 1967 Monday to Friday	(1)			(2)				(3)
Paddington (d)	00:15	08:20	09:10	11:10	12:10	14:10	16:10	18:10
Banbury (d)	02:45	09:37	10:24	12:21	-:-	-:-	17:34	19:27
Wolverhampton LL (d)	04:28	10:49	11:40	13:38	14:41	16:38	18:57	20:52
Wellington (a)	04:55	11:10	12:01	13:59	15:02	17:00	19:17	21:14
Shrewsbury (a)	05:16	11:24	12:15	14:13	15:18	17:14	19:31	21:29
Gobowen (a)	05:55	11:55	12:47	-:-	15:55	17:44	20:01	22:03
Wrexham General (a)	06:24	12:16	13:11	-:-	16:15	18:10	20:25	22:24

(1) Ran via Didcot. Conveyed Sleeping Cars.
(2) Cambrian Coast Express.
(3) FX timings. FO departed 18:10 but ran between 5 and 8 minutes later intermediately.

April to December 2008 Monday to Friday		(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)
Marylebone (d)		06:45	10:17	13:17	16:10	20:03
Banbury (d)	PU Only	08:00	11:29	14:30	17:31	21:14
Wolverhampton HL (d)	PU Only	09:25	12:55	15:55	18:55	22:36
Wellington (a)		-:-	13:21	16:21	19:21	-:-
Shrewsbury (a)		10:12	13:42	16:38	19:41	23:15
Gobowen (a)		-:-	14:07	17:04	20:07	23:36
Wrexham General (a)		10:44	14:28	17:25	20:28	23:57

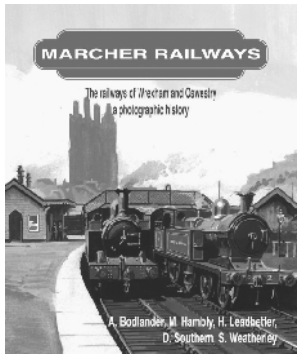
(1) Runs via Birmingham International and Aston.
(2) Runs via Hatton, Birmingham New Street, Soho and Perry Barr.

Comparison times from Paddington or Marylebone	1959 Best	1959 Average excluding Sleeper	1966/7 Best	1966/7 Average excluding Sleeper	2008 Best	2008 Average
Wellington	2:56	3:24	2:49	2:55	3:04	3:06
Shrewsbury	3:09	3:38	3:03	3:09	3:12	3:21
Gobowen	3:43	4:23	3:34	3:46	3:33	3:47
Wrexham General	4:08	4:38	3:56	4:05	3:54	4:06

EWS 67028 arrives at Wellington on the front of the the 13:21 service to Wrexham (ex-10:17 Marylebone) on 10 Oct 2008. *photo: Paul White*

Book Review

"Marcher Railways" by A. Bodlander, M. Hambly, H. Leadbetter, D. Southern and S. Weatherley.
Bridge Books, 61 Park Avenue,Wrexham LL12 7AW.
Price £19.99. 200pp hardback. ISBN 9781844940509**.**



"Marcher Railways" is a major new pictorial history of the railway networks which grew up around the border towns of Wrexham and Oswestry, from their beginnings in the mid 19th Century through to the present day. Richly illustrated with over 270 photographs, this 200 page hardback book sets each station, engine shed and industrial location featured in historical context and brings the story right up to date with coverage of 21st Century passenger, freight and heritage railway operations. The text and photographs are supplemented with several explanatory maps and plans while the cover features a specially commissioned painting of Wrexham Central in the Edwardian era by well-known railway artist Jonathan Clay. The Great Central's Wrexham, Mold & Connah's Quay section is featured, as is Wrexham & Shropshire's new service to London Marylebone.

The publisher, Bridge Books, is offering GCRS members the opportunity to purchase their own copy at the special price of £17.99 post free to UK addresses for orders placed by 31 January 2009. Please make cheques payable to Bridge Books (see address above) and remember to confirm that you are a GCRS member.

Mark Hambly

GCRS book sales

Some second-hand stock is now available for purchase from the GCRS web site. All proceeds are towards GCRS funds.

The Great Central Railway on the Internet

www.mountsorrelrailway.org.uk

As described by Dennis Wilcock on p11, this is a project by Railway Vehicle Preservations to reopen the Mountsorrel branch from Swithland on the preserved GCR. The website gives a brief review of the aspirations of the scheme and what has been achieved so far. It consists mainly of updates posted by George Oventon.

http://longgonesignalboxes.synthasite.com/home

Frank Spowart has contacted me regarding the use of signal box photos for his website. He is a Network Rail employee based at Retford. He is collecting signal box photos from around the area, which of course includes former GC lines.

www.therailwaychannel.com

I expect most of you are familiar with magazines on the internet but what about a video magazine on the internet? This is what The Railway Channel offers along with their inane young Australian hosts Jonathan and Hailee (not your usual train buffs!). Contributions of video clips are made from around the world. Each clip is quite short so no chance of boredom setting in. But then, one dose of Jonathan and Hailee might be too much!

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

Re-instatement of the Mountsorrel Branch
by Dennis Wilcock, Editor of Main Line

The Mountsorrel branch runs in an easterly direction from the north end of Swithland Sidings, just north of Rothley on the preserved Great Central Railway, and for just over 1½ miles to the unique red granite quarries at Mountsorrel, Leicestershire. It was built at the time of the building of the "London Extension" and, like the building of the GCR itself, its building was recorded by S W A Newton. It is thought that it opened in 1898 when the "London Extension" was opened for freight traffic. It continued in operation until the 1960s when the GCR route was closed. During that time millions of tons of granite travelled along the branch to the exchange sidings at Swithland and on to the GCR for onward delivery all over the country. The quarries are still open under the current ownership of Lafarge but the stone now goes further east, partially by conveyor, to the Midland Main Line at Barrow on Soar for delivery throughout the world.

In 2005, Railway Vehicle Preservations (RVP), which maintains and operates the Gresley and BR TPO sets and other historic carriages on the GCR, leased the first ½ mile of the branch from a point at the north end of Swithland Sidings to the boundary of the former Nunckley Hill quarry, formerly part of the Mountsorrel complex of quarries. The purpose was to build a carriage shed in the triangle of land between the branch and the current GCR. The shed would have housed the majority of RVP stock and would be developed into a restoration and maintenance base so relieving the hard pressed facilities at the GCR's Carriage and Wagon Works at Rothley. The remainder of the branch would be laid with track to serve as a head shunt for the shed.

Although the trackbed was still in situ it had become overgrown with trees and bushes after so many years of neglect. The newly formed project teams started the process of clearing the formation in 2005. As clearance progressed a long drawn out planning process finally resulted in the rejection of the application for the carriage shed in 2007. Undaunted, RVP and the clearance teams continued with their work and it remains RVP's intention that a carriage facility will be built.

As clearance reached the boundary at Nunckley Hill at the end of 2007 discussions with Lafarge resulted in them allowing, in June of this year, the remaining ½ mile of the branch to Bond Lane, at the boundary of their quarry, to be cleared. In addition Lafarge agreed to donate 1900 tons of ballast, enough to ballast the whole length of the line from Swithland Sidings. Once completed an industrial line of just over one mile will be restored.

With clearance progressing through 2008 and the agreement with Lafarge in place, interest in the project blossomed and horizons and dreams multiplied. Many local people and some from as far afield as Nottingham and Birmingham, not associated with the GCR or RVP, have become involved and even local schools are involved in clearance work. A greater range of interest has been encompassed with ecologists involved whose main interest has been to see how the opened tree canopy has encouraged more bird nesting with the woodpeckers returning after a thirty year absence. A great motivating factor has been the desire to restore a part of our industrial heritage and see a real industrial railway once more in operation. The project has now expanded into 'The

Mountsorrel Railway Project' with the aim of re-instating the whole one mile branch and has become a real community project. There are even dreams of building a halt at Bond Lane at the end of the branch and adjacent to the projected country park. Passengers could then embark on a branch line train and join the GCR main line for a run down to Rothley Station. But these are really dreams for the long term. A new website has been set up at www.mountsorrelrailway.org.uk with the latest information and progress updates.

As we approach the end of 2008 clearance is all but complete along the whole length of the available line with just a few large tree stumps to be removed. This will be done by the end of the year at which point the trackbed will be levelled and graded in preparation for the donated ballast to be delivered. As funds allow track laying will then commence.

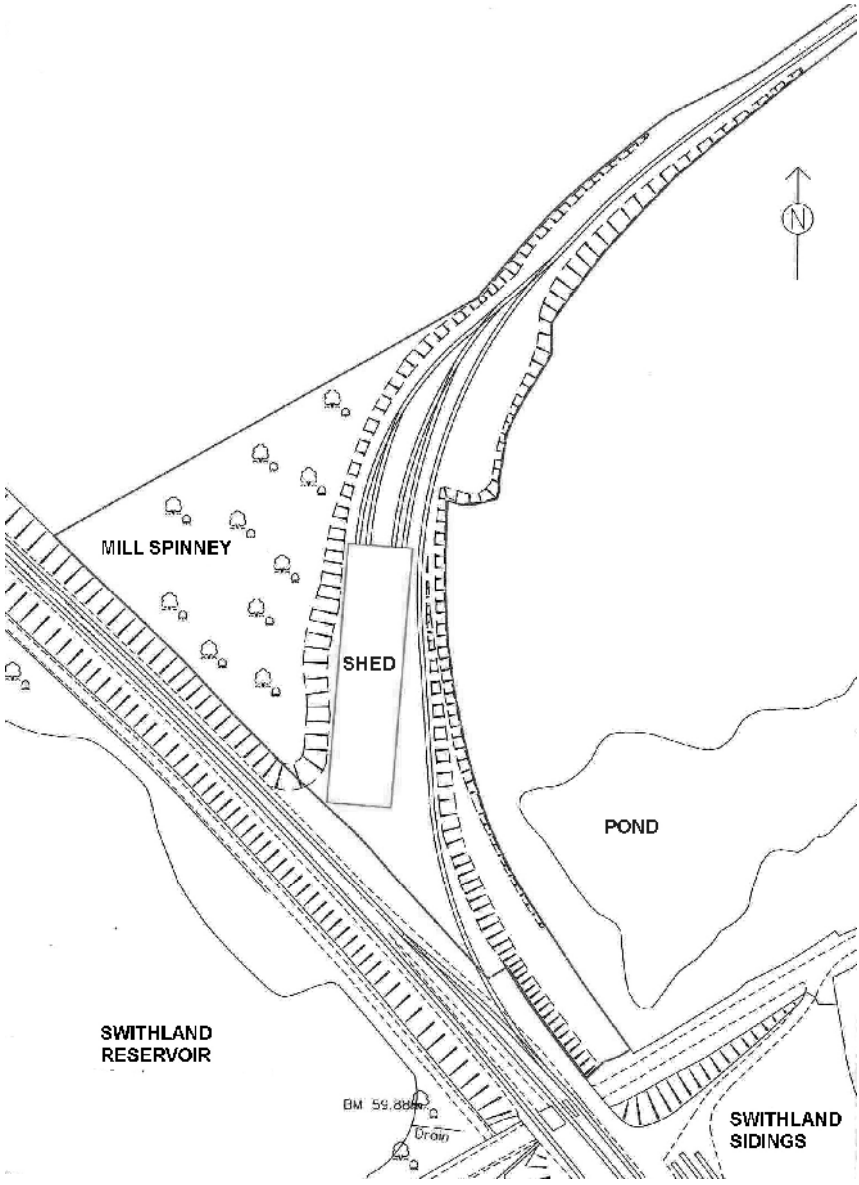
Control and operation of the line will be in the hands of the GCR. The signalling scheme for Swithland Sidings has always allowed for the re-instatement of the branch and the signal to be used as the exit signal for the branch has already been completed and is ready for installation. Plans are underway for the track layout that will allow the branch to connect to the existing Up Loop. The connection will use the bridge over The Ridings that was added to the original formation during the Second World War when considerable expansion of the GCR facilities at Quorn & Woodhouse and Swithland was undertaken for the war effort and particularly for the D-Day landings.

Once complete it is possible to envisage an express on the GCR main line sweeping through Swithland Sidings while a branch train runs off the Mountsorrel branch ready to run down to Rothley. It is certainly a scene that is well worth creating, but sight has not

The additional bridge at the north end of Swithland Sidings added during the 2nd World War. The entrance to the Mountsorrel branch is on the other side of the bridge. photo: Ian Allison

been lost of the main purpose of the project – to provide covered accommodation for the historic RVP carriages.

If you wish to support the project financially the appeal for funds remains open and donations should be sent, marked Nunckley Hill, to RVP Ltd., 26 Cliff Park Avenue, Wakefield WF1 2DW.



The original plan for the carriage shed on the Mountsorrel branch proposed by Railway Vehicle Preservations (RVP) in 2005.

The Pollard family railway history – Part 1
by John E. Pollard

The earliest member of our family that we know of with a railway history was my great grandfather who was described in the 1861 census as a railway worker. We do not know what he did on the railway or which company he worked for. The first one for whom we have a record was my grandfather. He was born at Barrowden, a small village in Rutland. He had three brothers who also worked as railwaymen. As there was no work in the village, grandfather moved to Nottingham where he got employment as a van boy working with a carter on the Midland Railway delivering parcels round Nottingham. Later he got promotion to a second guard (or travelling shunter) on the Nottingham to Lincoln pickup train. He once told us that if any station on the run did not have any traffic to pick up or set down and they ran through they lost three pence off their wages. It was during this period that he met my grandmother, who was working as a live-in domestic. She was born at a small village in Nottinghamshire near Newark called Collingham and like him had had to move to find work.

My father was born 27 May 1897 at Nottingham. In 1904 grandfather was offered promotion to first guard if he would move to East Kirkby where the Midland Railway had opened a new loco and marshalling yard. He took the job at Kirkby. He lived at 136 Lowmoor Road until about 1930, when they moved to 130 Lowmoor Road. I cannot remember the first house but I had a long association with the second.

At Kirkby they worked a lot of lodging turns to Wellingborough, Burton on Trent and Manchester. It was not unusual in those days for a train crew to leave home on a Monday and not get back home until the following weekend. The goods trains were slow moving and got shunted to make way for passenger trains and fast goods trains. It could take up to fourteen hours to get as far as Harringworth, where on one occasion grandfather's train was stopped. There was a Wellingborough crew waiting and they were relieved and told to go to a certain address in the village where a platelayer lived, whose wife took in lodgers for a bit of extra money. Grandfather's crew knocked on the door and the platelayer let them in. It was the middle of the night and the platelayer was in his night-shirt. When he had the lamp lit he said,"Right, you know where everything is, I'm going back to bed."

After overnight lodging they would report back to Harringworth signal box, where, if they were lucky, they might get a train north and home or they may get one to Wellingborough or even to Manchester. I have known my grandfather turn up at our house in Stockport. We were living at Stockport because my father was a guard at Manchester Deansgate at that time. My father used to say that the pay clerks at Kirkby would not pay the men until they had had a shave to make sure the men got the right wages. I was once told a story about my grandfather by an ex-Midland man, George Corbett, a Kirkby yard foreman who transferred to Annesley as a yard inspector. He said grandfather came on one day to work a Wellingborough train - these were normally coal trains as Kirkby was in the middle of a mining area. On this day grandfather had four wagons of cattle on the front. After putting his traps in the brake van, he walked round his train making sure all the cattle were standing - talking to the animals and calling them "my old chuckles". He did not notice one animal with its back end towards him was lifting its tail. He was looking through the bottom bars when the beast covered him in dung. "My old chuckles" immediately became "a dirty old cow" and the train was late away as grandfather had to go home and change his uniform.

It was round about this time we came to live at Kirkby, as my grandmother had slipped on the back door step and broke her leg. We had to come and live at Kirkby to help grandfather look after her. My father got a transfer to Annesley. When grandmother died we moved in with grandfather at 130 Lowmoor Road. It was right across the road from the Midland loco sheds. With my father also being a guard they both had the same type

of bag. Dad always put his bag down against the door from the kitchen to the living room. The bags were a large oval shape with two slots through the top that the handles came through, one on each side. They were made of highly polished leather. They carried the time tables, rule books, detonators and flags in these bags but most importantly they carried their food in these bags as well. Sometimes my dad brought us some food home in his bag, which was then shared between my eldest sister, my older brother and me. We had not got my youngest sister at that time. One day we came in, saw dad's bag by the kitchen door and thought, "Great, dad's home!" Irene lifted the lid and we had a real beano. Grandfather later picked up his bag and left for work. He was not a happy man when he went to get his food. We were in the doghouse alright. Dad got a metal plate fitted to his bag with his name on and it never happened again.

Grandfather had a friend at Kirkby, his second name was Tobin. My father, as a boy, used to do odd jobs for Tobin and one time he said, "I'm not going to pay you Jackie, I'm going to put the money on a double for you." I think it was the National and the Derby. Dad kept doing his jobs until eventually both races were run and both horses won! Dad duly set off for Tobin's home and grandmother went with him. Tobin had kept his word and everything Dad had earned had gone on the double. My dad had twenty three sovereigns to come but grandmother claimed the lot. Dad never got a penny and never worked under those conditions again.

Tobin, who was also a guard at Kirkby, was on a Wellingborough turn. When it was time for his return there was a big derailment north of Wellingborough so the powers that be sent him south instead on trains to, I believe, Brent and empties back to Wellingborough. When he was coming to the end of his second week on these trips someone at Wellingborough realised he was not a Wellingborough man and he was sent back home to Kirkby by passenger train.

The next railwayman in the family was my grandfather's brother John, who was a track worker. We always knew him as Skegby Jack because he lived at Skegby. When the Great Central drove the tunnel at Annesley to start the London Extension, the Great Northern, which had a branch line from Colwick up to Annesley Colliery (which was one of the oldest coal mines in Nottinghamshire), claimed running rights on the GC and at Kirkby South Junction cut a branch line through Kirkby by Summit Colliery to Sutton in Ashfield Town and Skegby, where there was a branch line up to Teversal and Silverhill Collieries. The line then carried on from Skegby to Pleasley where there was another colliery and on to Langwith Junction where it joined the LDEC line. Jack was working on the new line as a tracklayer. When the job was done Jack got a job as a platelayer and eventually became a lengthman. Jack told us of the problems they had with the Midland Railway who had a branch line from Sutton Junction up to Sutton Town station, where there was a large goods siding with a cattle dock. There were also stables for the horses which made deliveries around the area. The GN had to pass under the line but the Midland made it difficult so the GN had to take out the cutting either side of the Midland line. When the Midland closed on Saturday night until Monday morning the GN men moved in, took out the block, built the walls, moved the bridge in, and relaid the line ready for the first train. As I have already said, Jack got the job as lengthman. He had to walk from Skegby to Kirkby South Junction and back every day with a platelayer's hammer. One end of the head had a normal head like a seven pound hammer, the other end was longer and narrow for knocking keys into the chairs which held the rails. He also carried a long handled spanner for tightening the fishplate bolts. He looked for damaged rails, sleepers and chairs. These were reported to the ganger of the section where the damage occurred. Each section had a gang of about four men who carried out the maintenance on their section.

The next railwayman of the family was my grandfather's brother, Owen. He got a post at March on the GN and became a fireman. The work was hard. The shift times had come down from twelve hours to ten hours but the men were still expected to regularly work

up to eighteen hour shifts. Owen saw an advertisement appealing for staff on the Canadian Pacific Railway. He applied and was accepted. He emigrated to Canada where he got a job as fireman on the CPR. We were told by our grandfather that a lot of the engines were wood burners and the equipment on the engine included a double handed saw, an axe, and a rifle. The first two were for the loco men to use to replenish their tender. The rifle was handed to the guard, or as the Canadians called them, the conductor, to keep watch for Grizzly bears. Owen later moved down into the USA and was employed on the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. I don't remember ever being told what he did on this line. He did write to my father and in my old papers I have a letter from him to my father. Owen finally settled in Albeqeurque, New Mexico. l always remember his address as 1201 Virginia Boulevard. Somewhere I have a photo of him outside his barn. I also have an American newspaper cutting reporting his death stating "no known relatives". He died on 28 November 1956. Meanwhile, my grandfather died March 3 1947 and Skegby Jack died 12 February 1955. This information came from the family Bible.

The last one of this generation was my grandfather's brother Jim. I did not know a lot about him but I do have some documents which show he applied for a job on the Midland Railway, and got a post as sandman at Kentish Town and a year later as porter at Duddinghill station. I only ever met him once. I think it was just before the Second World War and the main thing I remember was that he gave me half a crown. That made feel rich!

The southern portal of the 1,000yd Annesley tunnel, which formed the southern end of the MS&L Derbyshire Lines. From here MS&L trains ran over the GN Leen Valley line (which reached Annesley Colliery) to Nottingham and Colwick. Just behind the photographer, the MS&L London Extension would eventually begin its journey south to London from Annesley North Jnct.

On Great Central lines today
by Kim Collinson

Possibly one of the most unusual workings this year took place on the 1st August when 31601/02 with an inspection saloon ran over the LDEC beyond Thoresby Colliery Junction to the overbridge over the ECML at Tuxford. This is the possibly the first working over this disused section of the LDEC since a railtour to High Marnham around 8 years ago!.

A railtour on the 2nd August originating from Doncaster and worked by 47245/47826 visited various GC routes including Stainforth, the SY Joint, and Beighton to Woodburn where it reversed and travelled over the Attercliffe branch and via Thrybergh. Friday 15th August saw class 37 locos 97301/03/04 work a 07:05 Derby to Derby test train via Woodburn.

Class 37 locos were also in action on the following day when 37059/37423 worked a railtour from Wolverhampton to Cleethorpes and return. A landmark GC building, the former steam loco depot at Immingham, has been demolished, however the coaling stage still stands which is one of only two left in the UK. The diesel depot is still used for storing condemned locos. On at least three occasions during August services via Penistone were severely disrupted due to signalling failures and cable theft, for example on the 14th there were no services beyond Penistone to Huddersfield for over 6 hours!

The multi million pound resignalling and track renewal scheme at Lincoln was completed on time on the 1st September, sweeping away all the traditional signalling in the Lincoln area. Also from the middle of September for three months another major engineering project took place at Bradway Tunnel resulting in all services between Sheffield and Chesterfield and return being diverted via Woodburn Jn and Beighton. This has brought the regular appearance of HST and Meridian sets to the route on the St Pancras-Sheffield services. Also because of the work at Bradway an HST is also booked through Barnsley at 0845 on weekdays on a Leeds-St Pancras working.

An unusual sight at Penistone on Sunday evening 14th September, working the 19:14 Huddersfield to Barnsley and 20:06 return service was unit 155346, the only type of Northern's DMU fleet not usually seen on the branch.

A new down platform and connecting footbridge has been built on the alignment of the former down fast line at Denham replacing the original platform which was subsiding down the embankment!

The WCML diversions over the GW&GC Joint line during the summer between London and Birmingham were formed of two Virgin Voyager sets. Heritage LUL trains over the Metropolitan line between Harrow-Amersham and Watford ran on the 14th September formed by the preserved 1938 set together with the 4 TC topped and tailed by no 12 'Sarah Siddons' and class 20 no. 20189.

The autumn sandite trains began operation during October with EWS providing five Class 60 locos to work services in the Manchester area including the Glossop and Rose Hill branches and over the Cheshire lines. In the Yorkshire and Humberside areas class 20 locos on hire from DRS were used, the first working over the Penistone branch and to Worksop was on the 20th when nos. 20301/04 worked the train through Silkstone at 05:00. On the same day 66171 worked a long CWR train heading towards Penistone passing Silkstone at 23:54.

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.

The MS&L Rly London Extension

Notes by Edward Dale, Logan & Hemingway contractors

The article is an unpublished manuscript in the Nottingham City Library Local Studies collection. Submitted by Brian Slater.

Our section of the London Extension from Annesley to East Leake was started in September 1894. We took a house in Mansfield Road, Nottingham for our staff. The great difficulty at the start of the work was to get a connection with the section south of the River Trent, no railway running nearer than Loughborough, some 5 miles beyond the end of our section. Arrangements had to be made with the Clifton Colliery to get materials delivered there through their Midland Siding connection and then a temporary road was put in from the colliery through some allotment gardens and across Wilford Road and Queens walk to the Recreation Ground joining the centre line there, and a temporary bridge over the River Trent constructed to afford the necessary communication with the south side.

The drawing of this bridge was one of my first jobs. It was about 250ft long across the river and besides this there were long approaches on each side at a gradient of 1 in 20. The approaches were on trestles carried on sills and the main part of the bridge consisted of trestles of three piles driven 9ft on an average into the bed of the river at which level was touched. The spans were 20ft except one of 25ft near the towpath side and through this a staging had to be run out for the horses to avoid disconnecting the rope. To construct the bridge, a pile had to be run out on the overhanging baulks as the work proceeded and a fresh group of three piles driven, etc. The whole bridge took about three months to construct.

The line lay through a very rocky formation on the north side of Nottingham and at one bridge near Hucknall, the rock was so clean to the surface that it was found difficult to drive the pegs. On the whole, however, the excavation was good stuff to work, but blasting of the rock led to a few difficulties and claims for compensation. The earthwork was not nearly so heavy as on the Derbyshire Lines and we had to get rid of some of our steam navvies. The largest cutting was towards East Leake, about 333,000 cubic yards.

The bridges on this work were made (unlike those of the Derbyshire Lines) with counter forts and curved wings. Where practical, arches were used. The first large bridge was at Linby where the GNR was passed over in three spans at an angle of 40ft. The skew spans were 46'9", 77'9" and 26'6". There was ample headway and designs adopted for the four main girders, one under each rail. The main lattice girders of the middle weighed nearly 25 tons each and were brought ready built from Heenan's yard and lifted into position with a derrick.

The Bulwell Viaduct was a fine structure of 400 yards long with an average height of over 40ft to rail level. It consisted of 20 average arches of 34'3" span and five skew arches of 39'1" skew span with one girder span over Hucknall Road of 49'1" skew span. When making out our estimate, previously alluded to, we considered that the arches could not be used because of colliery settlement, but the Company purchased the way-leave underneath to avoid this danger. There was a fine bold parapet to this viaduct, but dangerous to build on account of it's great overhang. During it's erection, one man slipped on the scaffolding and put out his hand to steady himself, clutching at the string course. About 30ft of it immediately came down (the mortar not being dry) and crushed him. The whole viaduct is a monument to Mr E. Parry, the Engineer and to Mr Stafford's fine work in building it.

There were several large bridges north of Nottingham, where railways and public roads were crossed. One rather curious one may be noticed, taking the Day Brook footpath and the Day Brook itself. The embankment at this point was very high and the footpath taken in a long tunnel arch bridge 25ft span, while the Day Brook itself was carried by a

double culvert (2 culverts 10'6" wide and 6'4" high) twisted in under the bridge to form part of the same structure, the cost of which was about £6,500.

As the line reached Nottingham, the first tunnel (under Sherwood Rise) was reached. This was about 400 yards long and ran as far as Carrington Station, which was opened up with a cutting from 70 to 80 feet deep. Sherwood Rise Tunnel was straight with convenient points for shafts on top, but the Mansfield Road Tunnel, which started on the south side of Carrington Station had a reverse curve in the middle of it's length and required very careful setting out. With the exception of a few lengths, the rock through which it passed was hard and no side walls were required. This tunnel was more than 1000 yards long and opened out into the Nottingham Victoria Station.

Meanwhile, work had been proceeding rapidly on the south side and the job was still out, by the delay in getting possession of the site of the station, where some 7000 houses, mostly of the poorer classes, had to be cleared away. Many of them were of the obsolete back to back type and approached only by courts. But among them were some public buildings, such as St Stephen's Church and notably, the old Workhouse, a very large pile at the north end. The houses were sold by auction, the buyer to pull them down and cart away the materials. This part of the work made very slow progress and it was not until the Spring of 1897 that the site was cleared for us to start the excavation.

Steel girder bridge in Nottingham

The Company's Directors were then exceedingly anxious to make up for lost time and agreed to the Contractor's suggestion that the excavation should be carried away at both ends, in which case they undertook to complete it within 12 months and offered them a bonus for every month less than a year in which they got it finished. The estimated quantity of excavation was 530,000 cubic yards, but with a subsequent widening at the north west side, it proved to be about 580,000. This quantity was all intended to be tipped in the Nottingham Goods Yard at Queens Walk, but it was decided at once to run a heading through the station site from the south end of Mansfield Road Tunnel and carry the excavation away to a spoil tip at Bulwell. A heading was therefore driven for 170 yards and the large cutting was started in this way. As soon as the Midland Bridge was finished, the stuff was taken both north to Bulwell and south to the Goods Yard at Queens Walk. 650,000 cubic yards were required here and the deficiency had to be made up by excavation from a side cutting at Ruddington, where some land was purchased for that purpose. It will be seen that the Company were at a very large expense in order to get the all important Nottingham Station finished at an early date. Messrs Logan & Hemingway put up a special installation of the electric light so that the men could be kept working, night and day, and their efforts were rewarded by getting the excavation practically finished in 8 months from the start, thus earning four month's bonus.

Most of the material was a soft sandstone rock which could be taken out by steam navvies. At the north end, however, where the cutting was deepest, the rock was of a harder nature. Under Charlotte Street, it was found to be made ground where an old watercourse used to run. Some interesting discoveries were made in the course of the work. Near Parliament Street was found a portion of the old Town Wall, while on the west side, several skeletons and bones were unearthed, indicating that an ancient burying place had existed there.

It was necessary to accommodate the traffic which used to run along Charlotte Street and for this purpose a timber bridge 25ft wide and 250ft long had to be put up during the progress of the work. At Parliament Street, too, the traffic had to be kept going and

a new bridge which was 80ft span on the north side to 110ft on the south, had to be built half at a time. This bridge was built in one span, so as to give an uninterrupted view of the signalling from the station platforms which of course made the steelwork very heavy. It consisted of 8 plate girders with cross bracing and trough flooring between the plate parapets faced with blue brick and moulded ashlar. The total cost of the bridge exceeded £12,000. The other bridge, towards the north end, carrying York Street over the station was in 5 spans with a total length between abutments of about 280ft and in a width between parapets of 40ft. The 4 piers were on a platforms and consisted of groups of 5 steel stanchions. The total cost came to about £16,500. In addition to these bridges and the excavation, Logan & Hemingway's contract included the retaining wall, platform walls and the laying of the permanent way, but the contract for the station buildings was given to Messrs Henry Lovatt & Co of Wolverhampton.

For about 120 yards from the north end, the sides of the cutting were in hard rock and were neatly dressed off to a slope of ½ to 1, but beyond this, retaining walls became necessary, varying in section according to the work they had to do. The line then proceeded through covered ways at Weekday Cross and Thurland Street and a short length of tunnel under Victoria Street, where it opened out and about 60 yards of retaining walls led straight on to the Nottingham Viaduct. This viaduct is over 1,100 yards long, but not high and imposing looking like the Bulwell. It's average height is about 20ft to rail level and its general appearance is somewhat plain. Only small pieces of it can be seen at once owing to the surrounding buildings. It consists of 49 square arches, 4 skew arches and 12 steel work spans, besides the retaining walls at each end. The foundations were good throughout, consisting of firm gravel at a depth of 8 or 10 feet, the top of the rock averaging about 25ft from the surface for the southern half of the viaduct, but less than this for the northern half. For the heavy steel work span over the Midland, it was considered necessary to go down to rock with the foundations, the cast-iron cylinders carrying the piers sunk to a depth of about 38ft. In two cases piles were driven, but elsewhere, 4 or 5 feet of concrete was employed, while the retaining walls and first abutment at the north end were built direct on the sandstone.


Bridge at Wilford

The viaduct proper starts with the bridge over Garner's Hill, a narrow footway requiring only 10ft span but a width of 62ft in order to accommodate the junction with the viaduct leading to the High Level Station which was not on our contract. Narrow Marsh is then crossed and then Canal Street, a rather curious bridge with widely splayed abutments to admit off the junction with Sussex Street, on one side making the girders of very different lengths on the two sides. They are hog-backed lattice girders, the longer being one of 97ft and the shorter 60ft. Next comes the Nottingham Canal which is crossed by a fine skew arch of 54ft skew span. Five ordinary arches of 36ft span bring us to the bridge over Station Street, the Midland Station and the Midland Goods Yard, all adjoining. This important structure consisted of three spans on a skew of 77'5". The skew spans were 52ft over Station Street, 171ft over the passenger station and 104ft over the Goods Yard.

The foundations for the four steel piers carrying the bed plates for the ends of the 171ft span girders and the adjoining spans were carried down to the solid rock by means of cast iron cylinders 12ft diameter and 1.5" metal. Messrs Handyside & Co., our subcontractors for the steel work in this bridge started to sink the first cylinder on June 29th 1895, and finished the last on August 30th, the last one at the south east corner taking only 9 days. The top lengths were left about 1ft above the water level in the ground (about 9ft below the surface). The cylinders were then filled with concrete in the upper part of which the holding down bolts 17ft long and 2.25" diameter were built in.

About 5ft of blue brick was built on top of the concrete and on top of this, granite bed stones which received the steel base plates of the piers. The steel piers themselves were 4ft square outside, strengthened and braced inside, reducing the total stress on the metal to about 1.5 tons per sq in under it's maximum load. The superstructure was of two girders type with cross girders slung by four angle irons from diaphragms between the vertical plates of the bottom booms. Station Street had simple N-type lattice girders, but the others had a double system of triangulation in the bracings and a curved upper flange, known as the Linville Truss. They rested on roller bedplates with 6" steel rollers.


Bridge near Linby.

The viaduct proceeds with the arches and then crosses Queens Road where it changes from the straight to a 20 chain curve. It then crosses Crocus Street and Arkwright Street, on the south side of which there is a passenger station with platforms carried on steel staging and trough flooring. The platforms extend over Waterway Street and Conduit Street, the next two roads crossed. From Waterway Street, the viaduct is straight again and after several more arches crosses Kirkewhite Street, when 3 more arches bring us to the end abutment from which runs a retaining wall upwards of 4 chains long to keep up some houses, which runs along the side of the Recreation Ground, now turned into Nottingham Goods Yard.

Proceeding through the Nottingham Goods Yard, which was a bank of a moderate height, the line was carried in four lines of way with a fine viaduct across the Trent Boulevard (66ft span with plate girders) and the River Trent in three spans of 106ft, 112ft and 106ft by four rows of lattice girders of N type, carried on cylinders sunk into the river bed under compressed air. This part of the work and the steel work was carried out by Messrs Heenan and Frode, our steel work subcontractors.

The rest of the work from the Trent to East Leake calls for little comment, but there were three good sized public road bridges, one at Ruddington and two near East Leake, also the big cutting aforementioned. We purchased a piece of land near the Trent and sunk a gravel pit in it to obtain aggregate for the concrete, but we were prevented from reaping the full benefit from this as Mr Parry, the Engineer, considered the stones too round and smooth and insisted on an equal quantity of broken slag being mixed with it. It is strange how engineers differ - some will not have slag in concrete at any price.

We also carried out several branch railways, four of them near Bulwell which were not properly located when the contract was let and £2000 compensation was allowed us for the expense of moving the Yard which we had established there. There was a single branch line 2 miles long to the Gypsum pits at Gotham, but there was very little work on it.

Besides laying the sidings in the important Goods Yard at Nottingham, we put up several large buildings there, including an engine shed, goods shed, goods offices, carriage sheds and hydraulic power station. There was a large Yard at Annesley with an engine shed. The country station buildings were let to building contractors, but we were allowed a percentage of their cost for haulage of materials. These stations were at Hucknall, Bulwell, New Basford, Ruddington and East Leake.

As soon as the job was fairly started, we opened an office in London Road for our Chief Engineer, Mr Fenton and I was sent there to act as his assistant. My work consisted mainly in making any drawings that might be required, keeping the progress of the work, assisting in Certificate work and subcontractors' measurements, etc. It took about a year after the work was practically finished to get the quantities and final account agreed on. The final amount for this contract was over £1,100,000, nearly the same as for the Derbyshire Lines.

Gainsborough Model Railway
www.gainsmodelrailway.ik.com

In the centre of Gainsborough - Florence Terrace, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1BE

A reminder that the remaining Open Day dates for 2008 are

Sunday 7th December, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Sunday 28th December, 1.30pm to 6.00pm

Admission: Adults £3.00, Children £2.00, Seniors £2.00, Family(2+2) £ 8.00

Open Day dates for 2009 are

Saturday 11th April, 1:30pm to 6:00pm
Sunday 12th April, 1:30pm to 6:00pm
Monday 13th April, 10:30am to 6:00pm (Easter Bank Holiday)
Saturday 20th June, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Sunday 21st June, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Sunday 12th July, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Saturday 29th August, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Sunday 30th August, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Monday 31st August, 10.30am to 6.00pm (August Bank Holiday)
Sunday 11th October, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Sunday 6th December, 1.30pm to 6.00pm
Sunday 27th December, 1.30pm to 6.00pm

Admission: Adults £3.50, Children £2.50, Seniors £2.50, Family(2+2) £10.00

The North End Goods Yard on the Gainsborough Model Railway *photo: Paul Otter*

Auction items of GCR interest

	
Great Central Railway 8-page guide to the town of Stratford-on-Avon, advertising the new route between London (Marylebone) and the town. Auctioned on ebay in Oct. 2008. Sale price **£25**.	Vintage ticket pouch embossed with Dean & Dawson, a travel agent based in Blandford Square NW1. Dean & Dawson were official agents for the Great Central Railway. Red cardboard outside; envelope with green printing inside. Auctioned on ebay 15 Nov. 2008. No bids.

A line-up of 'Faringdons' at Westerley Victoria on George Hinchcliffe's 0 gauge loft layout. From left to right: GCR 1165 'Valour', LNER 6164 'Earl Beatty, GCR 1167 'Lloyd George and LNER 6168 'Lord Stuart of Wortley'. *photo: George Hinchcliffe*

George Hinchcliffe adds:It was reported that 1167 'Lloyd George' was used to haul a special train for the Conservative Party convention at Cleethorpes in July 1923. Fred Banbury's sister-in-law thought that the use of this engine was most insensitive. It is believed that because of this incident Fred Banbury decided that no engine on the LNER should carry the name of a prime minister and 1167 was denamed in Aug. 1923.

Photos taken on Edgar Fay's special day by Paul Dalton

His Honour Edgar Fay QC with Brian Axton, Station Master at Loughborough, and Bill Ford, President of the GCR. Stood on the front of 63601 are Bill Gwilt, Martin Stretton and Roger Howes.

Above : The ex-GCR Robinson designed class O4 2-8-0 no.63601 waits at Loughborough before departing with 'The Elizabethan' dining car train. On this occasion the special headboard takes pride of place – 'HON EDGAR FAY GCRS centenarian 1908-2008'.

Below : His Honour Edgar Fay QC in the dining car accompanied by his wife Eugenie.

Scratchbuilt wagons in 7mm scale by Tony West
An article describing the making of these models appeared in *Railway Modeller* in May 2007. Photos by Tony West.

Above - A Great Central 5-plank mineral wagon.

Below – A Cheshire Lines 5-plank wagon.

Modellers' Corner
by Tony West

Possibly the best news for GC modellers for some time is the promised arrival of coaching stock transfers from Dragon Models, hopefully before Christmas. I initially approached Chris Baston, the proprieter, with regard to him producing wagon lettering, tares and tonnages etc. Anyway, information on wagon and coach lettering was passed on and so the coaching stock transfers will be the first result. I have mentioned locomotive lettering, but due to the number and complexity of colours involved, this will be a long term project which will also be dependent on the sales of the coaching stock transfers. The Dragon Models catalogue normally caters for 2mm, 4mm and 7mm scales, so there should be no excuses now!

Whilst manning the GCRS stand at Telford in September, I obtained from Peter Dobson of Newbold Models a set of etches for the body (sides and ends only) of an MS&L 1870s tricompartment, one of which is on the K&WVR in all its restored glory. Peter has made a very nice job of this and if you are interested you may obtain a set for £30 plus P&P. He also has drawings for some 6-wheelers which he is planning to produce etches for bodies and underframes to order only. I will keep you posted on this one.

I recently spoke to Bill Bedford regarding some etches he has in his 4mm catalogue for a Sacre class 6c and tender. These are to be revamped as a 'complete' kit with a resin boiler/firebox. My enquiry was about the possibility of obtaining a set of etches in 7mm scale, which he says he can indeed do – a set has been ordered! If you are interested then bear in mind that in 7mm at least, castings will need to be sourced but as the 'kit' represents the Robinson rebuilt version, this should be fairly straightforward. I should also add that this is to order only and Bill is renowned for his flexible approach to time scales. He said mine should be ready for Christmas but couldn't say which one!

Ken de Groome offers a profile milling service and I approached him with the idea of producing a basic set of parts for a Sacre class 2 2-4-0T. Again castings would have to be sourced. Anyway, Ken has promised to look at this seriously as he is a Metropolitan devotee and is interested in a set of parts for himself.

Right then, last but not least, a couple of dodgy characters who can be found on the GCRS stand at Gauge O Guild shows peddling resin wagon bodies and who trade as 'S&T Wagon Works' are to produce a 3-plank open of the 16ft version. With the addition of leather axlebox aprons this can be finished as an Eng. Dept. ballast wagon (Diag.31). There are still a few D8s left (5 plank open) so hurry whilst we have them, they will not be repeated.

Contacts

Dragon Models
9 Kingsley Close
Sully
Penarth
CF64 5UW

Newbold Models
57 Desford Road
Newbold Verdon
Leicester
LE9 9LG
01455 823767

Bill Bedford
4 Belgrave Court
George Street
Pontnewynydd
Pontypool
NP4 8NP
01495 753931

Ken de Groome
The Bungalow
Fen Road
Newton
Wisbech
PE13 5HX
01945 870060

S&T Wagon Works
c/o S.Spare
82 Clifton Way
Hinkley
Leics
LE10 0UZ
01455 233372

Wath Yard and the "Daisies"

by Ron Fareham

Ron Fareham was the GCRS Chairman 1991-96 and a Vice-President from 1996 until his death in 2001. This is the first in a series of articles by Ron to be reproduced in Forward.

The twin centres of the South Yorkshire Coalfield, one of the richest in the country before the second world war, were the large towns of Barnsley and Doncaster. The portion of the coalfield around Barnsley was the older of the two, and by the time Wath Yard was opened in 1907, some of the smaller Barnsley area pits were reaching the end of their useful lives. Barnsley was for many years the centre of this coalfield and the Headquarters of the Yorkshire Mineworkers was established in the town - and is still there despite the centre of the coalfield moving across to Doncaster. Evidence of this, is the presence in Doncaster of the Yorkshire Headquarters of the National Coal Board, a more recent authority.

Wath Yard was placed midway between these two towns and to give some idea of the need in 1907 for such a large yard in such a place, it must be said that within a radius of ten miles of Wath, there were 46 collieries, and there were still 35 in 1940.

The yard was built on a piece of nearly level ground - there was a slight slope towards the east; the area was known locally as the 'Cunnigarth' and was very close to the Wath Main colliery. It was the brain-child of the Great Central General Manager, Sir Sam Fay, following a visit to the United States. Its purpose was to concentrate the marshalling of coal wagons from the pits to the various destinations instead of it being done on a piecemeal basis in some of the smaller yards - and in many cases, in the actual colliery yards. Logan and Hemingway, a firm much used by the MS&L. Rly. and the GCR, was the builder of the yard, for a sum of £60,879 and it was commissioned in August 1907.

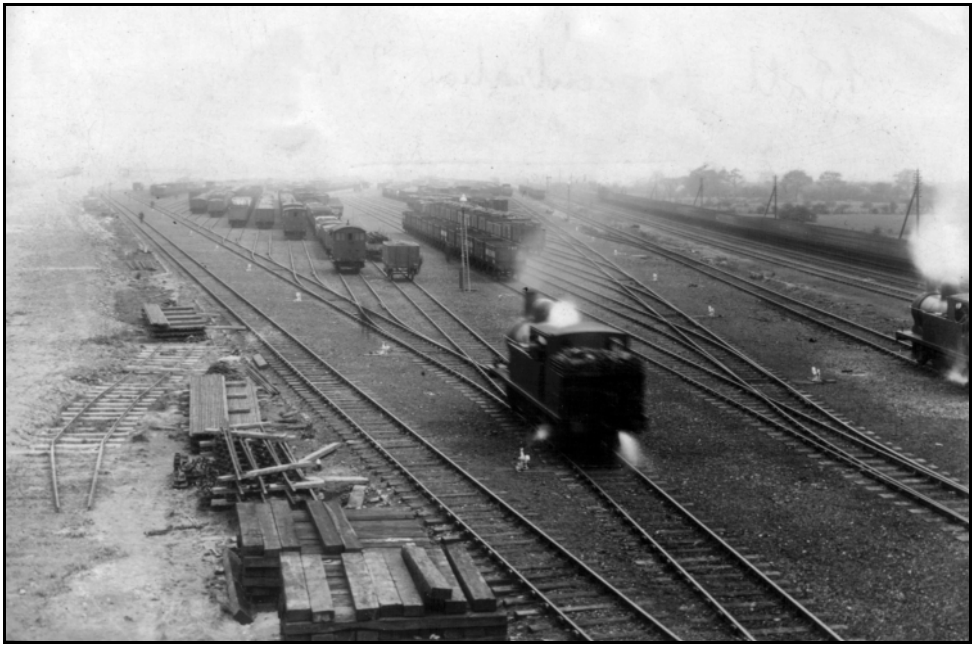
It was really two yards, one for each direction. The whole complex was 1¼ miles long and contained 36 miles of track. It was the most modern hump yard in the country, and the first to use pneumatic power for both points and signals. The yard points, operated by the two hump cabins "A" and "B", were controlled by electro-pneumatic power and this was later used to control the main line points and signals. The total cost, taking into account rails, signals, air equipment and buildings was close to £200,000, a very large sum for those days.

Westbound, there were 9 reception roads and 31 sorting sidings: eastbound, there were 8 and 31. In each group of reception sidings, one line was kept clear as an engine run round line. The total capacity of the yard was 5000 wagons a day. In the days before 1940, all empty coal wagons passed through the yard as each privately owned vehicle had to be sent empty to the proper owning colliery.

There were two locomotive ash pits in the centre of the yard, together with water columns and a "push round" turntable. In addition there were various loops, engine lines and wagon cripple sidings. There were two humps, "A" and "B". "A" hump sorted wagons for the west, "B" for the east. Trains arriving on the reception lines seldom contained wagons which were all for one direction and hence there was a considerable number of vehicles that were "transfers". An example of this would be, that a train from a colliery to the west of the yard normally went onto "B" hump; however, if the train contained wagons for the west then these had to go over "B" hump and into the transfer road. They would then be picked up by the "A" hump pilot and pushed over "A" hump into their correct road for a west departure. This was double humping - and there were many instances of it in a period of 24 hours.

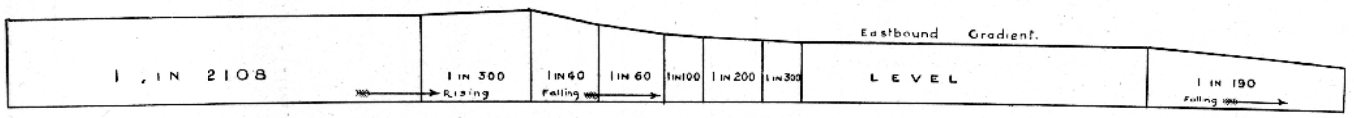
The layouts in each direction were very similar: the two groups of 31 sorting sidings were laid out in the "gridiron" pattern with two long "ladders" and roads running off. The advantage of this arrangement was that it allowed a straight, unobstructed run between

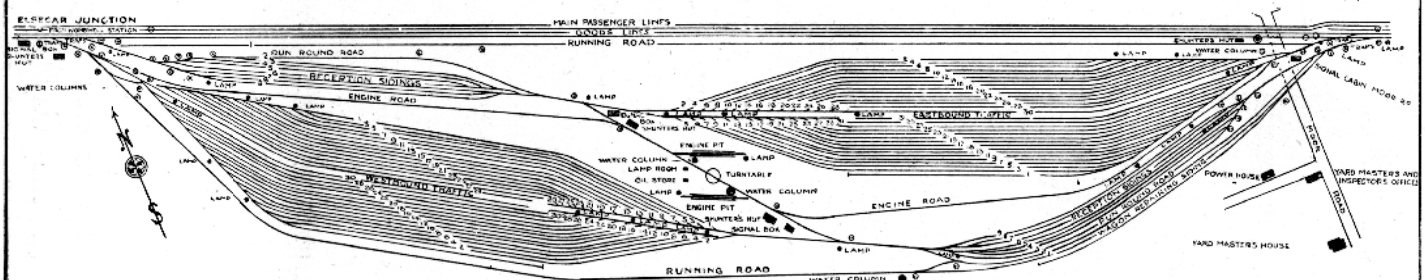
The Eastbound Yard viewed from the hump. Some kind of activity is taking place in the foreground that involves white strips on the ground and the carrying of white boxes! Any ideas?

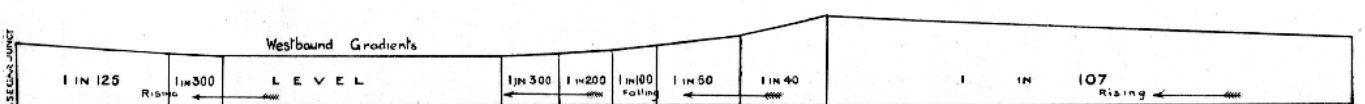


Two tank engines busy themselves in the Eastbound Yard in this view from Moor Road. The main lines are on the right of the picture.

G.C.R WATH. DIAGRAM OF CONCENTRATED SIDINGS







the ladders so that the wagon "chasers" could run at the wagon side and control the speed of the vehicle by applying the hand brake. A good deal of agility was required on this job and advertised vacancies were usually suffixed "Must be a good runner". The chasers were spaced out down each ladder and were equipped with short brake sticks: the top man dropped the wagon brake as the vehicle passed him at moderate speed; the second and successive chasers ran at the side of the wagon and put pressure on the wagon brake to control it into the individual road. This reduced the impact with the wagons already in the road and avoided damage.

The system of chasing worked very well in the early days of the yard when all the wagons had axle boxes lubricated by fat. However, when oil fed axle boxes became more general after the second world war, the wagons ran more freely. In this situation, if the top man missed the brake handle, the wagon would be running too fast for any subsequent chaser to get at it and the result was a very heavy impact with the stationary wagons already in the road. The sudden and violent stop sometimes derailed the vehicle, but the more usual result was that part of the load of coal was shot over the wagon end and onto the ground; occasionally the end door burst open, with the loss of a few tons of coal. At Wath, the amount of such spillage in the fifties and sixties was considerable and led to a close investigation. The railway had, of course, to compensate the consignee for any loss of weight stated on the wagon label, which was put on by the weighman at the colliery. This spilt coal had to be picked up and was used at Mexborough shed - and other places - to fire the stationary boilers. It was poor stuff as there was a heavy admixture of ballast therein. However, its use ensured that the spillage was not a complete loss: it was always known as "pick-up coal".

There were no separate departure groups of roads at Wath where prepared trains could be parked awaiting the train engine; these were only found at more modern yards such as Whitemoor. Each light engine arriving had to prepare its own train: this usually involved attaching wagons, drawing them down and backing up onto the brake van. Each guard was responsible for preparing his own train, assisted by the shunter, and knocking out any odd crippled wagon. This usually led to a late departure.

The modernisation of Wath Yard with retarding equipment was never possible because of the grid iron pattern of the roads resulting in very short space between the point blades on the "ladders" . There was nowhere to put a retarder in this design of sidings.

Each hump had two specially designed 0-8-4 tank locomotives, built by Beyer Peacock and Co. of Gorton in 1907. They were GCR nos.1170-1173. This liberal provision of power was allowed so that humping, which could be almost continuous throughout the 24 hours to cope with the planned throughput of 5,000 wagons a day, could be achieved. This figure applied to a mixture of both loaded and empty wagons, as privately owned empties had to go to the owning collieries in those days, and this applied right through to the beginning of the Second World War. A break of only a few minutes was planned between the humping of trains, just sufficient to allow the release of the humping engine after the last wagon had passed over the hump and before the next train moved up.

The physical characteristics of the two Wath humps were radically different. As there was a slight slope downhill towards the east, this determined that "A" hump (westbound) was steep (1 in 107) but "B" hump (eastbound) was nearly level (1 in 2108). Therefore, starting a 65 wagon train on "A" hump and slowly pushing it forward, the slower the better, was a stiff proposition; so much so that, in Winter time, an additional engine was provided on "A" hump to assist the ''Daisy". This addition made it three engines at the east end of the yard. The extra engine was always called the "push up" pilot to distinguish it from the other four. The unfortunate feature for the "push up" crew was that they assisted every train whereas the "Daisies" pushed every other in turn.

In an attempt to obviate the use of the "push up'' pilot, Gresley fitted up 6171 with an American booster engine on the trailing bogie. This was a small, two-cylinder machine fitted inside the bogie frames with the bogie wheels coupled by means of side rods. The bogie wheel dimensions were so designed that the four exhaust beats per revolution occurred at exactly the same time intervals as the three main cylinders, which gave six beats per turn of the driving wheels.

In 1932, nos.6172 and 6173 were transferred to March depot to work on the new hump yard at Whitemoor. However, Gresley built two new S1s, complete with boosters, as replacements. Their numbers were 2798 and 2799. These had side window cabs and cut down front corners to the side tanks so as to improve the lookout when going up behind a train. This, together with 6171, gave a total of three booster-fitted "Daisies", so as to ensure that there would always be two booster-fitted ones available for the steeper "A" hump.

The "Daisies" always worked with chimney leading towards the west thus giving added protection to the firebox crownplate when working on "A" hump. It also ensured that the engine would be going forward on the stiffest task - again ''A" hump. This, of course, meant that the engines always worked bunker first on "B" hump, which was, as stated, nearly level, so the positioning of the engine didn't matter.

The boosters were reversible but in practice as the "Daisies" were chimney first on "A" hump, the back gear was never used. The fore gear booster was in use on "A" hump, and even this, with a tractive effort of 46,896 lbs., was insufficient to start a heavy train during frosty weather. However, on "B" hump only a fraction of the power of the three cylinders was ever used to push a train on the nearly level hump, let alone needing a booster. The latter therefore was never used because it was never needed. Why Gresley ordered reversible boosters for the Wath engines will now never be known. The nature of the traction problems had obviously not been properly taken into account before the decision was made to fit them. The booster on 6171 was altered within a few weeks so that back gear could not be engaged; the two new S1s had a similar amendment made. Volume 9B of the RCTS "Locomotives of the L.N.E.R." poses the question as to why the back gear operation of the boosters was blanked off so soon after building. The reason was that it was not needed and this was no doubt very quickly discovered - and at some expense.

The "Daisies" had very long frames and consequently were barred from using the very acute curve between Mexborough No.1 and No.5 signal boxes when going to shed; instead they had to use the other two sides of the Mexborough triangle in each direction. The cabs were roomy, but, because of the high floor, a tall man had to be careful to avoid hitting his head on the cab roof. The regulator was a long version of the normal Robinson design with the addition of a "foot" at the bottom end. This, together with the additional length, made for very sensitive handling as the load gradually reduced as the hump top approached. An unfortunate occurrence with this regulator took place when a fireman once stood on the ''foot" to close the roof ventilator. He slipped and injured himself in the process. Following his claim for compensation, all the regulator "feet" were removed.

Steam reverse was fitted, but not to help the driver with constant reversal; the "Daisies" did not reverse as often as a normal shunting engine did, they merely went behind trains already placed on the reception lines and pushed. It was always considered that the steam reverse was fitted so as to save space between the wide water tanks and the boiler.

All the "Daisies" were transferred away in 1953 when the standard 350hp diesel shunters arrived. Most of them went to Frodingham.

LNER class S1/1 0-8-4T no.6173 at March shed. Built by Beyer Peacock & Co. for the GCR in 1908.
photo © Railway Photographs

BR class S1/3 0-8-4T no.69904 at Doncaster shed. Built by the LNER with cab windows, cut-away side tank and fitted with bogie booster from new. *photo: David Jackson*

Chiltern rail upgrade to link Oxford and High Wycombe
From the 'Transport Briefing' website, submitted by Richard Butler

Train operator Chiltern Railways is finalising plans to submit an application under the Transport and Works Act to allow the construction of rail infrastructure to support a London Marylebone to Oxford service. The direct train link would be made possible by constructing a new chord at Bicester and dualling the existing line between Bicester Town and Oxford stations. A new parkway station would be constructed at Water Eaton on the outskirts of the city and Bicester Town completely rebuilt.

Altogether the infrastructure package is expected to cost approximately £200m and would offer a 66 minute journey time between Oxford and Marylebone. It would put Chiltern in competition with First Great Western, providing passengers with an alternative to the existing Oxford to Paddington route, which is already congested and will face further constraints during the Reading station upgrade and Crossrail projects.

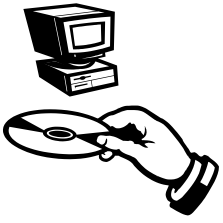
A spokesman for Chiltern said that with trains stopping at High Wycombe the new route would also restore a direct rail link between Oxford and Buckinghamshire that was axed 40 years ago. The train operator is currently working towards a 2013 opening date and intends to submit the Transport and Works Act application to the Department for Transport "sooner rather than later". Chiltern's Oxford route plan will form part of the Evergreen III project, an enhancement package which must be implemented if the train operator's franchise is to run for the full 20-year term, which began in 2002.

A further infrastructure upgrade will be included in Evergreen III and is expected to be revealed within the next few months. Chiltern has the flexibility to choose from a number of candidate schemes including support for the East West Rail Link project, which would bring mothballed lines between Bicester and Aylesbury to Milton Keynes back into passenger service. By agreeing to fund rail line improvements between Bicester and Oxford and with the imminent opening of Aylesbury Vale station the company is already upgrading parts of the route.

The long term of Chiltern's franchise agreement has allowed it to progress a series of infrastructure schemes - unusual for a train operating company in Britain. The Evergreen I and II projects included redoubling a single line section of track between Bicester and Banbury in Buckinghamshire and building two new platforms at Marylebone station.

Oxford skyline

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)*.

The Plight of the Railways

by George Huxley of the The Great Central Railway Association

This is the text of a pamphlet produced in October 1966

To those of us who believe that our economic difficulties in Britain are in no small measure due to the excessive growth of road transport and to the neglect or enforced decline of the railways the recently published White Paper on Transport Policy (Cmnd. 3057) is a somewhat heartening document. At last, it appears, the Ministry of Transport and even the Treasury have become aware that the railways' social and economic worth is not to be measured in terms of selectively rigorous accountancy; that many traffics at present on the roads are better suited to conveyance by rail; and that the railways can do much to lessen the congestion and slaughter on our roads which so disfigure our national life and cost us so dear, perhaps £250 m. last year from accidents and as much as £1,000 m. in blockages in cities and ports, beside which sums the £135 m. book loss by British Railways last year does not seem unduly serious.

Before I discuss some of the proposals in the White Paper, I must recall a few facts of recent transport history. At the end of the war the four main railway companies were busy but run down, and badly needed capital for re-equipment. They had also been paid by the State considerably less than the total value of the services rendered by them during the war. In spite of this the Treasury gave the railways low priority, and while our European competitors were re-equipping their railway systems and, notably in France, electrifying their trunk main lines, railways in Britain were required to operate with technically outmoded equipment and at the same time to show a profit; this, almost heroically, the railwaymen and management, whose devoted services we as a nation have always been too ready to take for granted, succeeded in doing until 1953. The hastily implemented and imperfectly thought out modernisation plan, with its excessive concentration of expenditure on the electrification from Euston to Liverpool and Manchester, premature scrapping of post-war steam locomotives, failure to grapple with the problem of loose-coupled wagons, and inflated hopes for diesel traction, did not halt the economic collapse of the railways from 1953 onwards in a period of increasing road competition. Parliament, the Ministry of Transport and the Treasury still imposed unrealistic demands for profitability upon the railways even when little attempt was made to work out the social and economic cost to the nation of the toll-less road programme, with its increasing road accidents and heavy demands upon the time of the police and hospitals; nor was any attempt made to find out whether trunk road hauliers were paying their true track costs as the railways have until now been required to do.

To the fanfare of publicity trumpets Dr.(as he was then) Beeching was ushered by Mr. Marples into 222 Marylebone Road and the Railways Board, prompted by the 1962 Transport Act, set off once more hot foot in pursuit of the mirage of commercial profitability in conditions of imperfect competition. I cannot here criticise in detail the actions of Lord Beeching who, after all, was only carrying out the brief given to him by a political party which insists upon regarding British Railways as a nationalised anomaly rather than a national asset - Conservatives are, it is true, entitled to assert that the railways should not have been nationalised; but where, in 1966, do we go from there? How fortunate are the French to have removed their railways almost entirely from the political arena; they are justly proud of their SNCF, heavy losses and all! But I have to say something about the grave and lasting consequences of the erroneous Beeching philosophy, the Old Testament of *The Reshaping of British Railways* and the New, published only last year, *The Development of the Major Trunk Routes.* Psychologically, it was a great error to emphasise the surgery first and the growth later. Much of the chopping was, in any case, premature or needless, and whole tracts of the country, especially outside the over-privileged south-east, were wantonly deprived of their railways and given inadequate substitute omnibus services, because branch lines were costed as they were being operated and not as they ought to have been operated. The

will was lacking to keep them open, and hundreds of miles of track were torn up before any attempt was made to persuade the Ministry of Transport to ease the regulations requiring expensive, ponderous and superfluous Victorian signalling hardware to be maintained on secondary lines. This, at a time when the same Ministry was applying less than rigorous standards of safety and costing in new road operations.

The manner in which enquiries were conducted before closures were announced has left a residue of bitterness in many parts of Britain which will not be easily eradicated. The public could not be reasonably expected to have confidence in closure enquiries in which detailed financial and technical factors were excluded from debate, and in which the true cost of the substitute road services was never explained, because it was not known. Branch closures did not permanently reduce the deficit, but they did reduce main line revenues. Why, then, are they still being made? And why does Mrs. Castle still talk of "pruning" when closures are now striking at the trunk?

The Beeching policy of closing so-called duplicating trunk routes, which appears to be treated as gospel still by the Railways Board, was not proposed as "a prelude to precipitate action on a broad front" to quote the trunk-line survey. It was propounded so that the selection of routes could be subjected to constructive criticism. Unfortunately, in, the past twenty months since the New Testament appeared there has been much precipitate action and, such is the lack of interest of the public and even of the Ministry in technical railway matters, very little informed criticism of the Board's actions.

In the Beeching New Testament there are fundamental defects. The capacity of the selected lines, even if they were all equipped, which many of them are not, with expensive new signalling, is grotesquely exaggerated. If, re-equipped, they were to carry the traffic sent over them, the fastest trains so routed would have to travel at unacceptably low average speeds - not more than 65 mph or so. There is plenty of evidence that circuitous diversion of traffic to selected routes has resulted in heavy delays and increased losses by the Board. In the West Midlands the congestion is especially serious; it is doubtful indeed whether the selected main line between Birmingham and Gloucester can function properly any more unless some traffic is transferred from it back to routes at present proposed for closure, and already closed, such as the Great Central.

Far too little attention was given in the New Testament to the traffic potential of intermediate cities on the so-called duplicating routes. By running down or closing alternative routes, what is now known in the jargon as giving them "the kiss of death", the Board is condemning itself to the loss of much intermediate haul traffic - a loss which more than offsets any savings that may be effected by the closure of secondary lines. Again, the widespread practice of converting double track to single is generally a false economy. Not only is the capacity of lines thereby reduced; but also signalling and single line block working become more complicated, timetabling becomes more difficult, delays to traffic have more lasting effects, the life of the track, carrying twice the load, becomes shorter, and services cannot be maintained during track re-laying. Route mileage is quite as important in costing secondary lines as track mileage, since the care of fences, embankments and cuttings is a prime factor in maintenance charges. These unpalatable facts are ignored in the trunk-line survey.

The Board's obsession with block trains, highly successful as many of these services are, has forced much small consignment and sundries traffic, at great social cost and loss of amenity, on to the roads, and freight concentration schemes have had a similar effect. Consignments which would have to be taken many miles by road to the nearest railhead tend to be sent the entire journey by road, even in today's congested conditions. The Board is now faced by the need to recapture small consignment traffic or must expect an ever-continuing decline in revenues; for much of the traffic available for rail transits, from private sidings for example, cannot be hauled in block loads, and the Beeching

dogma that "the unit of movement is the train", while ideal in theory, does not suit the untidy diversity of traffic on offer, much of it unavailable for liner or block trains or for containers. At present the flexibility characteristic of well organised rail transport is being thrown away deliberately. Consequently, freight revenues are falling in contrast to the spectacular increase in rail goods traffic in Europe and North America.

There is no doubt that the Liner Trains have an enormous potential, even if the terminals are served only by publicly-owned vehicles. The reluctance of the NUR to admit private hauliers to the terminals has been deplored as Luddite obscurantism, but the railwaymen have a case, even if they have not been articulate in presenting it. Why should private hauliers be permitted to cream off the best of the railway business at the Liner train terminals if they are not going to pay their fair share of trunk road costs? The White Paper of 1966 promises an examination of track costs of trunk road hauliers, but the evidence has already been found; it is well known that long-distance lorries pay about one-third of their true road costs in taxes. The proportion was established by a comparative study carried out by Dr. Beeching and the Railways Board. The study was given little publicity at the time, but the facts are known, and sooner rather than later, freeze or no freeze, the Minister of Transport will have to exercise the political courage necessary to make the road haulage lobby pay its true dues. The examination of relative costs promised in the White Paper is an attempt to stall on this important issue, which has been obscured by hauliers' complaints about the cost of fuel - the fuel tax is irrelevant to the relative cost of road and rail movements and, in any case, British Railways pay the fuel tax too for their road vehicles.

Hopes for integrated public transport are expressed in the White Paper, but past experience suggests that they are unlikely to be realised unless the Ministry of Transport takes direct operational responsibility for all passenger and freight movements in the public sector. This daunting task no Minister is likely to contemplate with enthusiasm, not least because of the lack of experienced railwaymen in the Ministry. Some progress can, however, be made. British Railways road fleet ideally should be combined with British Road Services. The railways already co-operate with BRS informally and, so far as possible, the Road Services trunk road freight should be transferred to rail. If this is done, then the need for a National Freight Authority, such as is proposed in the White Paper, becomes less obvious. The interests of such an Authority would almost certainly intersect with those of the Railways Board in a most inefficient manner.

Really successful integration of inland passenger transport presupposes uniformity of ownership: I think, therefore, that as a start all omnibus services intended to connect with passenger trains should be owned and operated by the Railways Board and carry railway insignia, at least outside the great groupings of cities. So long as the proposed Regional Transport Authorities confine themselves strictly to local traffic there need be no administrative clash between them and the Railways Board, but devolution has its dangers. It would, for example, be intolerable if a regional authority were to have power to order the Railways to stop main line trains at certain points rather than at others. Similarly, if the National Freight Authority were able to command freight to be routed to certain railheads rather than to others, regardless of the railways' operating convenience, severe administrative friction would result. The concept of the Freight Authority does, I believe, require much closer examination before it is accepted.

Electrified trunk railways carry larger loads more quickly, more cleanly and, with far greater safety than motorways, and in all weathers. New motorways take up valuable land, whereas our trunk railway network is already in existence and at small cost can be adapted to the conveyance of motor vehicles in frequent, high-speed, roll-on-roll-off trains of flat wagons, such as are to be used in the Channel Tunnel. I am convinced that for many years we have assigned too large a share of our national resources to roads and to aeronautical follies, but not enough to the electrification and development of our railways. In particular, we have been short-sightedly indulgent to the private motorist.

In the present economic climate we can scarcely expect to emulate the Japanese in building a Tokaido line, but at the very least we must start work at once in erecting catenary from King's Cross to Newcastle, from Leeds to Birmingham, from Lancashire to Glasgow and Edinburgh, and to the Southern Region via Banbury or Northolt from Leicester Central and Sheffield along the valuable but moribund Great Central line as an extension of the Woodhead electrification and. as a feeder to the Channel Tunnel - not that a Tokaido-type line would be an extravagance: its cost per mile to build and operate would be less than any conceivable motorway of equal length and traffic capacity.

Electricity for railways is, for the most part, generated from indigenous or nuclear fuel, and every conversion from internal combustion to electricity is a benefit to our balance of payments. Continuing electrification will help our engineering industry and strengthen our bids for export markets. We must not, therefore, allow the present railway electrification teams to break up. Electrification will also help to attract traffic from the roads and thus lessen the need to overrun our dwindling countryside and burgeoning towns with concrete deserts and race-tracks which fill with automobiles as soon as they are made. Motorways, we have to remember, are but a costly palliative; already the end of free flow on the M1 is in sight. Moreover, England, apart from Scotland and Wales, is one of the most densely populated countries in the developed world territories. Her surviving railway network is suited to this density, but a road system sufficient to cope can never be realised.

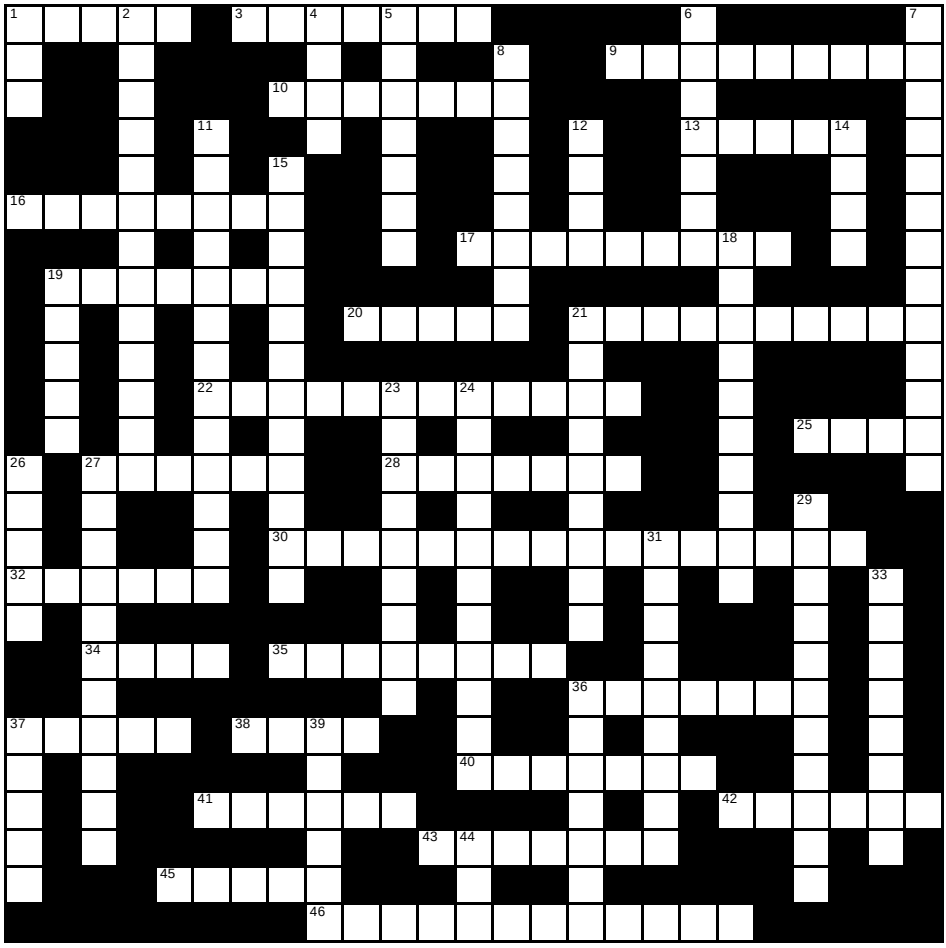
Our country rose to industrial greatness with the growth of our railways. In our age of decline we have neglected them. Unless we give them pride of place in our inland transport system our economy will continue to weaken and the distinctive feature of British civilisation will be the traffic jam. Of all branches of public transport, railway operations have to be the most disciplined; they are in consequence the most vulnerable by the blunders of politicians and well meaning theorists. Having made so may errors in railway policy since the war, we cannot as a nation, for our economic health and well-being, afford to make any more. The past decade has been a peculiarly frustrating one to railwaymen of all grades. If persons of ability and enterprise are to be retained in, and attracted into, the railway industry, we have to be able to assure them now of an unmuddled future, of their just share of our limited resources and of a respected place in our country's industrial structure.

Dr Beeching with that Report.

Electric class EM1 26028 with a westbound coal train passing Penistone on 21 Feb. 1968.
photo: 'Barking Bill'

Electric class EM1 26040 with eastbound empties passing Penistone on 21 Feb. 1968.
photo: 'Barking Bill'

Crossword (*Forward 158*) : Answers in the back of this issue.



Across

1 Pulling the cord sets this off. (5)
3 Longest tunnel on the London Extension. (7)
9 An example of a tubular bridge. (9)
10 Distance travelled by a loco. (7)
13 Resulting from a wheel skid. (5)
16 A siding used to link an industrial network with the main line. (8)
17 A junction between the GC and GN north of Nottingham. (9)
19 Shape of the wheel tyre. (7)
20 Engineer for the SA&M. (5)
21 List of locos assigned to a particular shed. (10)
22 Junction between the GC and GN in the centre of Nottingham. (7,5)
25 Means 'marshy ground' and used in signal box names east of Doncaster. (4)
27 Modern system of measurement. (6)
28 Records of a meeting. (7)

30 Deviation from the GC main line between Staveley and Heath. (12,4)
32 An extension to a building. (6)
34 At an angle, such as made by a bridge. (4)
35 The Doctor whose report led to the closure of many railway lines. (8)
36 Beam running down the side of a railway-vehicle chassis. (7)
37 Two "Daisies" were transferred from Wath to this shed. (5)
38 The highest point in a gravity operated marshalling yard. (4)
40 His locos operated on the London Extension in its final years. (7)
41 Part of the wheel that keeps it on the track. (6)
42 Background colour on a nameplate or other cast iron sign. (6)
43 Workers who built the railways. (7)
45 Often found visiting heritage railways in December. (5)
46 A valuable source of funding for railway heritage projects. (7,5)

Down

1 Removed from the firebox during disposal at the shed. (3)
2 Mansfield's modern-day railway. (5,4,4)
4 A working that collects/drops off wagons, usually over a short distance. (4)
5 A working that is not in the timetable. (7)
6 The result of the Grouping in 1923. (3,4)
7 A train that stops at all stations on a line in order to fulfil legal requirements. (13)
8 Our legacy from the past. (8)
11 Manufacturer of small locos, mainly industrial, based in Leeds. (7,6)
12 Comes before 'found'. (4)
14 A legacy of steam days found in tunnels and on overbridges. (4)
15 Locomotive manufacturer based at Gorton. (5,7)
18 Modern name for London Road station in Manchester. (10)
19 An essential part of any railway archive collection. (5)
21 Name given to locos built to war-time restrictions. (9)
23 Celebrated on 11 November. (9)
24 They need to be made when a journey involves more than one train. (11)
26 American modellers' term for a transfer, now used extensively in the UK. (5)
27 Quarry once served by a short branch from the GC at Swithland. (11)
29 Viewpoint for Marylebone station. (7,4)
31 The junction that connects the up Decoy Yard at Doncaster with the SYJnt. (3,6)
33 Part of a circle's area traced out by its radius, and used to describe a signal. (8)
36 Essential for good adhesion on greasy rails. (7)
37 The 2-6-0 wheel arrangement. (5)
39 A signal box operated by levers. (6)
44 Atlantic Coast Express. (3)

Readers' forum

from Reg Instone, Shirley, Solihull

Re. *Forward 155* p34: Editor's note.

I feel I must respond to the Editor's note at the foot of page 34 of *Forward 155*, the one that says, "…the slightest incident closes down the railway for hours with no regard to the travelling public…". This does a great disservice to the dozens, if not hundreds, of Network Rail staff who regularly do all they can to respond to incidents and get the railway running again.

There are a number of factors which make responding to incidents much more difficult nowadays than it used to be:

1. Thanks to Dr. Beeching and his successors, long stretches of main line now have no staffed stations or yards, and thus no staff permanently employed along that stretch of line.

2. Even where stations are staffed, there is usually only one person on each shift who is just a glorified ticket salesperson. They are employed by the TOCs, have little or no knowledge of railway operations, are not passed out in Rules and Regs and do not have PTS. Therefore they cannot go on the track and would not know what to do if they did.

3. Maintenance is by mobile gangs who cover huge areas from a van.

4. 50 years of resignalling schemes means that most points and signals are remote from the person operating them, by up to 50 miles in some cases.

5. As a result of all the above, broken rails, track circuit failures, points failures, OLE problems and power failures (these are the most common causes of delay) are attended by someone driving out to the site. This could be a PW Fast Response Manager, an S&T fault team or a Mobile Operations Manager. Each of these is trained and kitted out to deal with every likely problem, and most of the unlikely ones, in accordance with the Rule Book, but they are stationed at key points on the network and may have to come from 20-30 miles away.

6. Fatalities are largely outside the railway's control. Once the police declare a crime scene, the railway is effectively blocked until they declare it clear. This never used to happen.

Now for a few observations on modern trains:

7. Modern trains are very reliable. The failure rate, measured in number of hours per casualty, is undoubtedly better now than it has been for many years. Some fleets are more reliable than others of course.

8. Modern trains are packed with electronics, running all sorts of things from engine management, intelligent braking, wheelslip protection, tilt supervision (on Pendolinos and Voyagers) and power doors to air-con and PA. If a fault does develop, it is likely to be beyond the capabilities of the train crew to put it right, although, rest assured, they will try everything they know. (As an aside, I once owned a Renault 4. You looked under the bonnet and could see all the bits and whether they were doing what they were supposed to. Everything could be lashed up to keep the car running. Compare that with a modern car engine with electronic ignition and engine management systems.)

9. Whereas in the past, almost any train could be coupled up to any other, that is no longer the case. An assisting train or locomotive has to be the right type, with the right coupling and control systems. Ergo, the only one available may be many miles away. And what happens when the failed train has three or four other trains standing behind it, each of incompatible types? How do you get the assisting train to the failed one, especially if it is on a long stretch of line with no points?

10. In order to save money in the BR period, most little-used sidings, goods lines and loops were removed. As a result, there are very few places left where you can put a failed train to allow following traffic to go past. Ditto diversionary routes.

I could say a lot more, but I thought I would restrict myself to these ten points. Most of it comes back to money and the fact that the railways lost huge amounts of money for decades, resulting in cost-cutting on a huge scale. Consequently the railway of today is very different, physically and financially, to that of 50 years ago. The staff, though, or at least most of us here in the West Midlands and other areas that I visit, are just as dedicated and enthusiastic as they ever were.

Finally, don't believe everything (or anything?) you read in the "gutter press". They are highly selective in what they print, to pander to and reinforce pre-conceived ideas and stereotypes. One bad story about the railways will have banner headlines, whereas 200 good stories will be ignored completely. And with a free press there is very little that can be done to make them do otherwise. I refuse to give them my custom: I wish the rest of the British population would do likewise.

Re. *Forward 157* p12: review of the a2a website.

In your description of the a2a website, you say that "it enables you to search all archives in the UK". This might be slightly misleading. It may be worth pointing out that while most, if not all, of the major archives in the UK have contributed to a2a, I don't think any have placed their entire catalogue on it. In most cases, selected collections only have been uploaded and some other collections have been included as a collection title only. The task of converting catalogues from typed paper to electronic ("digitisation"), checking and uploading them will take quite a few years yet before everything is included. In other words, (a) if you can't find something on a2a it does not necessarily mean that it doesn't exist and (b) it is worth repeating a search at periodic intervals to see whether new catalogues have been uploaded.

I know a little about this because I was deeply involved with the TRAP-1 (Tracking Railway Archives Project) which obtained copies of railway-related catalogues from County Record Offices plus the NRM, and used HLF money to have them restructured to make them suitable for the database, digitised and uploaded to a2a. TRAP-1 was supported by 30-odd railway societies but I don't think the GCRS was one of them. This was successfully completed some years ago. It complemented a number of non-railway regional professional projects that contributed to a2a; we were the only user-based group involved in establishing the a2a database.

TRAP now functions as a special interest group of the R&CHS. TRAP-2 is seeking out railway archive material in public libraries, museums, private archives and other unlikely places, while TRAP-3 is seeking to compile "Authority Records" for every railway company, that is a record of the essential information about the company, that will be available in a single database and enable archivists to get their catalogues right!

If any reader is interested in helping with either TRAP-2 or TRAP-3 then I would be happy to put them in touch with the relevant people.

Re. *Forward 157* p37: 'A Station Master's memories of Finmere' by Gerald Summerfield.

I very much enjoyed Gerald Summerfield's recollections of Finmere! A propos recent correspondence, is it possible for Gerald to tell us if he recalls telegraph instruments in the station office at Finmere, and if so, what they were used for?

from John Quick, Oughtibridge, Sheffield

Re. *Forward 157* p13: mystery photo submitted by Brian Slater.

The photograph is interesting as I submitted an almost identical view, obviously taken on the same occasion, as a mystery photo in *Forward 132* p37. In my picture there are four additional members of staff. I remain convinced that they are CLC employees as the

vehicle is a 6-wheel first class CLC vehicle. I doubt if the photographs were taken at Mexborough. The suggested location was Winsford.

Re. *Forward 157* p26: colour postcard of 'Great Central Express'.

I like the coloured postcard reproduced on p26. Richard Morton believes the location is Swindon which makes it unlikely that the train is The Ports. The stock in this view is GW not GC. In any case there may not have been many French grey/brown GC carriages in the early Ports' trains as that livery was obsolete by 1902.

Re. *Forward 157* p29: 'How did the GC cope before Wath?' by Reg Instone.

In an attempt to help Reg Instone with his work on Wath yard, I quote from the GC board minutes of 7/4/1905 - Authorisation of construction of Wath Concentration Yard at estimated cost of £190,997, "This accommodation would enable traffic to be worked in the rough from 45 collieries, thus avoiding serious waste of power now taking place in sorting traffic at collieries and the consequent blocking of the main line. Only 25 engines would be required instead of 40 as at present and the colliery sidings would be kept clear."

Re. *Forward 157* p36: caption to photo.

There is an error on p36 regarding the caption to the photo of 0-6-0 no.171. This engine was originally a South Yorkshire Railway locomotive, that company's no.20. It was built by the SYR at Mexborough. The copy in my collection shows an MSL combined number/maker's plate. The GCRS Collection reference is D3.

Editor's note: Lacking any caption information for this photo I wrongly identified the locomotive as the MS&L class 23 0-6-0 which had been renumbered from no.15 to no. 171 in 1893 following the withdrawal of the previous carrier of that number shown in the photo.

Re. *Forward 157*: rear cover photo.

The 'Jersey Lily' on the rear cover is no.263 and not no.260. The LGRP reference is 16195. The train is actually an up express, Newcastle-Swansea, not as captioned. The photographer was Henry Salmon.

from Paul Davies, The Buckley Society

Information requested re. The Buckley Railway

I am the Honorary Secretary of the Buckley Society which is a local history society (see our web site at www.buckleysociety.org.uk). In 2008 we published *The Buckley Railway Album and Associated Industries* which contained some 207 photographs of the branch line which operated from 1862 for over a hundred years between Buckley Junction on the Wrexham Mold and Connahs Quay line down to Connahs Quay Docks on the River Dee in Flintshire.

The thousand copies we had printed were subsidised by a Lottery Grant. We were taken aback at the interest as they sold out within around fourteen weeks. Unfortunately the cost of producing a reprint would not be financially viable. We would however like to try and secure some cine footage of the line in operation with a view perhaps to producing a DVD containing the photographs used in the album supported by professional commentary and whatever brief cine footage we may be able to find. I know it's a long shot but nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Can I appeal to the GCRS membership for anyone with any old cine footage or knowledge of someone who has footage to contact us please? I can be contacted by phone at 01244 548387 or via the society's e-mail address which is bucksoc@uwclub.net.

Thank you for any assistance you may be able to offer.

from Andrew Comben, Slapton, Bedfordshire

Re. *Forward 157* p26: colour postcard of 'Great Central Express'.

I am sure this postcard is simply incorrectly captioned. There is nothing in the picture to suggest the Great Central at all. The coaches are in chocolate and cream but it is the chocolate and cream of the GWR. The coaches are all GWR: a Dean clerestory leads the rake and the others appear to be toplights, at least the second coach is a toplight. The engine is indeed a Saint and is one of the early ones with square drop ends. The train is passing a typical GWR lower quadrant semaphore signal.

Editor's note: Was this postcard ever produced with the correct caption?

Re. *Forward 157*: rear cover photo.

The photo shows the "Ports to Ports" on a day when GWR coaches were being used. All appear to be Dean clerestories in either brown or red livery. The GC Atlantic would hand over the train at Banbury (it is an 'up' service, not 'down' as captioned) to the GWR, probably at this time to a double-framed 4-4-0, most likely a Bulldog.

from John E. Pollard, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire

Re. *Forward 157*: rear cover photo.

The caption to this photo is incorrect. It is on the up line and is therefore the Newcastle-Swansea working. There are many published photos taken at this location which will support this. In my firing days I remember dropping a pin out of the union link at almost the same spot when we were on an up Annesley-Woodford runner with an O1.

from John Reed, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

The enclosed photo shows bubble car unit 121020 (coach 55020) which normally shuttles between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough on the ex-GW&GC line. On the two summer Monday Bank Holidays, it is elevated to named-train status as the "Quaintonian" and provides the Aylesbury to Quainton Road connection for the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. For a short time a few years back its destination on the Aylesbury departure screens was shown as "Quainton Road – Met & GC".

Bubble car unit 121020 at Aylesbury with the 'Quaintonian' service to Quainton Road on 25 August 2008. *photo: John Reed*

from M.Waters, Huntington, York

Re *Forward 157* p6: 'GC lines in North Lincolnshire' by Bill Glasspoole

The article on the GC in North Lincolnshire in the post-war era brought back some happy memories. In those days it was unusual to see former GNR locos running on GCR metals. However, the opposite was often the case. Some GNR men in the south of the county preferred 'Pom-Poms' to their own 0-6-0s and the GCR 0-6-2s were popular for branch line work.

As far as I know the GNR never had a shed at Grimsby. In pre-grouping days the small shed at Louth provided motive power for the East Lincs line. The shed housed 'Stirling Singles' at one time.

from Paul Armstrong, Southend, Essex

Re. *Forward 157* p29: 'How did the GC cope before Wath?' by Reg Instone

Since I let Reg have copies of my notes taken from the GC minute books I have come across file Rail 226/495 at the National Archives and this indicates that traffic from collieries was sorted at those collieries, as shown below:-

Extract from a board meeting held on 7 April 1905, min 3068.

> Wath Concentration Yard.
>
> This accommodation would enable traffic to be worked in the rough by pilot engine from 45 collieries, thus avoiding serious waste of power taking place in sorting traffic at collieries, and the consequent blocking of the main line. The traffic would be sorted by gravitation and then worked away by heavy engines in long trains. A great saving would be effected in the locomotive department as under the new scheme only 25 engines will be required to work the traffic to and from the pits in the district as against 40 per day as at present. The colliery sidings would be kept clear, the traffic worked more expeditiously, and the improved working would lead to a large development in competitive traffic.

Board Min 3213 of the meeting held on 6 October 1905 awards the contract to build the Concentration Yard at Wath to Messer's Logan and Hemmingway, with a tender of £60879.

This is the only discussion that I can find in the minutes of the directors or the traffic committee on this major scheme, although it was part of a larger scheme to ease the flow of traffic, and to increase the shareholders returns.

It is not clear from this document or the minutes the name of the person who put together the scheme, but it is likely that the General Manager put the scheme to the board, and that it was put together by the traffic department. It is possible that the idea for the scheme came from a visit to the USA, but I can't find any references to any visits to that country in the early years of the century in Dow. Unfortunately I can't at the moment lay my hands on any contemporary articles which may throw some further light on the subject.

The Traffic Committee minutes do not contain any useful information I'm afraid.

Reg postulates that the sidings at Pindar Oaks, Stairfoot were used for sorting coal traffic but from the documents that I have seen I suspect that they were either used for local traffic or to exchange traffic with the Lancashire & Yorkshire and Hull & Barnsley Railways respectively and not for sorting traffic by destination, as they were not really big enough for this given the vast quantities of coal being dispatched every day. I suspect that the siding capacity at Barnsley Main Colliery far exceeded the 7 sidings at Pindar Oaks for example.

The library of the National Railway Museum contains a small number of MS&L working timetables, although my list of them is not to hand I'm afraid. I have not looked at them to see when workings served each colliery but suspect that each colliery was sending out enough coal to need several trains to Lancashire each day.

from Richard Coe, e-mail: rwcoe@btopenworld.com

Information requested re. incident at Grimsby

My father was a fireman based at New England shed. When I was a boy, my father would relate his experiences on the footplate. He told me of the time when the train he was working was involved in a derailment and the locomotive ended up in a street. It was in the Grimsby area, and although I don't know the date, it must have occurred somewhere between the late 1940s to the early 1960s.

I wonder if anyone in the GCRS has any knowledge of this, or could point me in the right direction. As a boy, my visions of the tale conjured up a scene reminiscent of the 'Titfield Thunderbolt' where the locomotive ends up running freely down the road! Obviously the reality was probably far more prosaic than that, but nevertheless, it must have been a noteworthy incident, so I am hoping that someone will have some information on it.

from Geoff Franklin, e-mail: geoff@geoff-franklin.com

Information requested re. Grimsby Docks employee

I have been helping my father out with some family history. For an 85 year old he is quite agile on the internet, however, every time he gets stuck I get a call. My great great grandfather worked on the GCR as a superintendent at Grimsby Docks. My father stumbled upon a list with a few brief details but unfortunately he cannot find it again. It appears there was an accident in the docks in 1907 and this relative, a Robert Northcote, was either injured or killed. I had his death down from the BMD as 1907 so it's possible it was a fatality. Short of jumping in the car and driving up to Grimsby from the South Coast I thought I would try the internet but have not had too much luck. It's odd that it has never been mentioned in the family as they all worked on the GWR! Does anyone know of the best source of information where I could find out some more details concerning this relative, Robert Northcote?

from Garth Smith, Bideford, Devon

I recently discovered a personal connection with the GCR which may be of interest to *Forward* readers. I worked for Dean & Dawson in the 1950s at Doncaster. When we were taken over by Thos. Cook, we all received letters of thanks for our services from the General manager, Vincent Fay, who was the son of Sir Sam Fay. As readers may know, Dean & Dawson was once owned by the GCR and was an important part of that company's publicity and sales operations, something that Sir Sam Fay vigorously pursued. It is of interest to note that Thos. Cook was originally the equivalent operation for the Midland Railway, one of the GCR's main competitors.

from Mary Bell, e-mail: marybell@talktalk.net

Information requested re Tom Smith of Worksop

I have been doing a family history and have come across Mr Tom Smith who began with the railway as a grain porter in 1870 and retired as inspector-in-charge of the movement of Fairs and Animals based at Worksop. I have a number of photos of him, a retirement cartoon and newspaper article. He was born in 1848 and died in 1924. Does anyone know how I could find out more about him?

from Bill Gee, Felixstowe, Suffolk

Re. Forward 156 p15: article by Geoffrey Freeman Allen 'Day Trip on the SYJt'

The account of G. F. Allen's trip on the SYJnt line was very interesting. The Harworth pilot was a Retford (36E) diagram. The crew were relieved by the afternoon shift at Scrooby overbridge on the old A1 road south of the village.

On Saturday evenings, a train left Scrooby Sidings for Retford where it was remarshalled for onword working to various destinations in the London area. This train was composed of high-sided coal and

coke wagons with the letters 'BAWCO' (Barber Walker) on the sides. They were the original owners of Harworth Colliery.

With reference to signal box names in the area east of Doncaster, 'Carr' is an English translation of the Scandinavian word 'Kiarrs' which means 'marshy ground'. The land was drained by the Dutch engineer Cornelius Vermuyden. There is a signal box near Goole named 'Dutch River'.

from Chris Booth, Worksop, Notts

Re. Forward 156 p15: article by Geoffrey Freeman Allen 'Day Trip on the SYJt'

Thought you might be interested in the attached image for *Forward*. This shows a 1907 SYJR rail chair, still in situ at Maltby, albeit on a section of disused siding. Just think, 101 years old and still doing the job it was cast for!

How many other pieces of SYJR furniture are still in situ one asks?

Crossword Solution *(Forward 158)*

Across

1. Alarm, 3. Catesby, 9. Britannia, 10. Mileage, 13. Flats, 16. Exchange, 17. Bagthorpe, 19. Profile, 20. Locke, 21. Allocation, 22. Weekday Cross, 25. Carr, 27. Metric, 28. Minutes, 30. Chesterfield Loop, 32. Annexe, 34. Skew, 35. Beeching, 36. Solebar, 37. March, 38. Hump, 40. Stanier, 41. Flange, 42. Ground, 43. Navvies, 45. Santa, 46. Lottery Grant.

Down

1. Ash, 2. Robin Hood Line, 4. Trip, 5. Special, 6. Big Four, 7. Parliamentary, 8. Heritage, 11. Manning Wardle, 12. Lost, 14. Soot, 15. Beyer Peacock, 18. Piccadilly, 19. Plans, 21. Austerity, 23. Armistice, 24. Connections, 26. Decal, 27. Mountsorrel, 29. Rosmore Road, 31. Low Ellers, 33. Quadrant, 36. Sanding, 37. Mogul, 39. Manual, 44. Ace.

Rear cover caption

The preserved class O4 2-8-0 no.63601 at Loughborough with the special 'Edgar Fay' headboard on the occasion of his 100th birthday celebration on 12 Oct. 2008.

photo: Brian Slater

63601
HON EDGAR FAY
GCRScentenarian
1908 - 2008
D1705