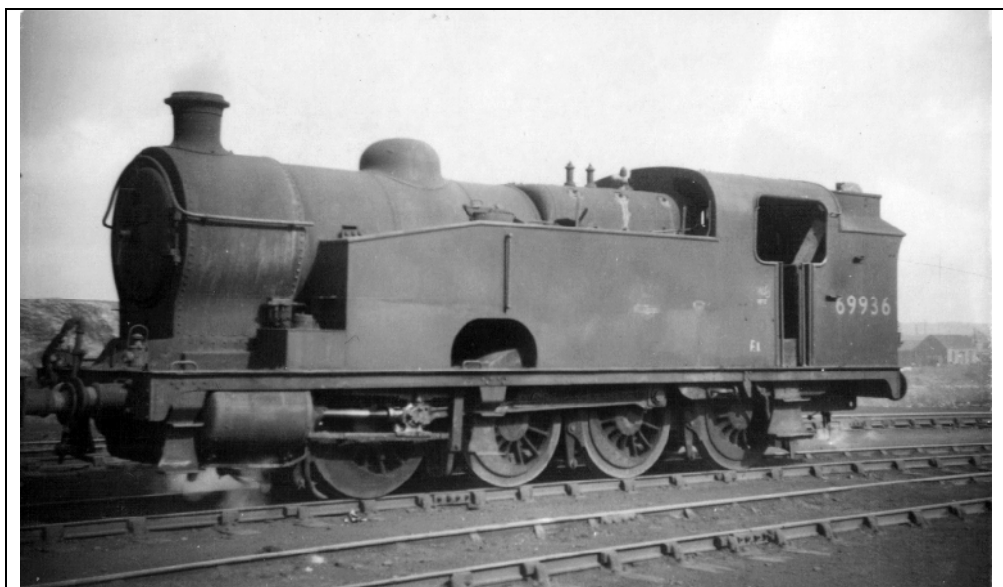


FORWARD



Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 159

March 2009

Front cover caption

BR class Q1/2 0-8-0T no.69936 at Frodingham on 20th Sept 1953.

Photo: Bill Gee

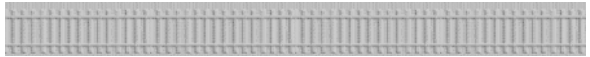


The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 159 ~ March 2009

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What does the future hold for railway societies such as ours? The editorial of the February edition of *Railway Magazine* posed the same question, prompted by the demise of The Railway Club, the oldest railway society in the world. The conclusion was that unless clubs and societies cooperate with each other and maybe amalgamate, they will inevitably suffer the same fate.

This is all to do with the demographics of membership. I was stood on Kinchley Lane bridge during the GCR's Winter Gala at the end of January and struck up a conversation with a fellow photographer. He was under 50, so I asked him how he became interested in railways. After an earlier interest in aircraft he had discovered the heritage railway movement. The sight and sound of a restored steam engine in action had appealed to him as a photographic subject. I am fairly confident that the attraction generated by heritage railways will secure future support from the public, whatever their age.

The situation faced by historical line societies is different. Even though most of their members may not have had first-hand experience of the railway company concerned, they will have been trainspotters from the age of steam. This has implanted in them a love of railways and the history behind them. Such people are the back-bone of our line societies, without whom they would fold. As these ageing trainspotters catch their last departures, membership will inevitably shrink.

In many areas the GCRS appears to be successful. Our membership is at a healthy level, our finances are in good shape and the committee members work well together. Our quarterly journal *Forward* is well supplied with contributions and is generally well received by the membership. There are four regional groups with programmes of activities. The AGM and the Autumn Meeting are aimed at all members. We are happy to work with the GCR at Loughborough and the GCR(N) at Ruddington on matters of mutual benefit. The relocation of the GCR war memorial and the setting up of a Roll of Honour at the Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield, have brought the GCRS much positive publicity. So are there areas where we are failing? Yes!

1) The state of our archive is the main cause for concern. It remains in storage and inaccessible to members. It is vital that we make progress this year. A new catalogue needs making of the contents and new storage boxes are essential for protection. Only when we have done that is it possible to consider moving the archive to a permanent home. As briefly mentioned in the last issue we are hopeful that this will be at Loughborough.

2) Another cause for concern is that we seem unable to recruit a new Sales Officer. It is now over two years since we first appealed to the membership in the Autumn 2006 edition of *Forward*. We continue to receive donations of books but selling them is left to the efforts of individual members.

I hope as many members as possible will be able to make it to Mansfield for the AGM on 9th May. Not only is it an opportunity for members to meet each other and support the committee in its work but our guest speaker, Bill Taylor, is not to be missed. To whet your appetite I have included some photos of the Mansfield Railway in this issue. See if you can spot them!

One of our members, Michael Brearley, has written a book about Mexborough Loco Depot. Please read the review on p20 and buy a copy. They will be on sale at the AGM if you can wait until then.

A good friend of the society, Brian Mummery, has received an honour. The details are on p39.

Welcome to the following new members

Mr M.Ferrelly, Asfordby, Leicestershire
Mr R.McLellan, Llanrhystyd, Ceredigion
Mr J.G.Hooker, Uckfield, East Sussex
Mr R.Crook, Sheffield

Mr D.N.Kitchiner, Salisbury, Wiltshire
Mr J.F.Gearing, Hillsborough, Northern
Ireland

Edgar Fay's 100th birthday celebration

On behalf of the Fay family I would like to thank the Society for arranging such a tremendous celebration of my father's 100th birthday and for allowing family members to be included. I know that Edgar felt honoured that this was laid on for him and he thoroughly enjoyed himself, particularly as he was able to meet so many of the friends he has made in the Society. He has always had a high regard and affection for railwaymen; perhaps partly due to his parentage but also through his professional acquaintance with many during his legal career and latterly through the GCRS.

Bill Fay

Annual Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 April (£12.00 for UK members; £16.00 for overseas members). Payment should be sent to Eric Latusek, cheques being made payable to 'The Great Central Railway Society'. Prompt payment helps to keep the Society's accounts in good health.

Eric Latusek, Treasurer

Sat 28th & Sun 29th March 2009

Sheffield Model Railway Enthusiasts Exhibition
Birkdale School, Oakholme Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S10 3DH

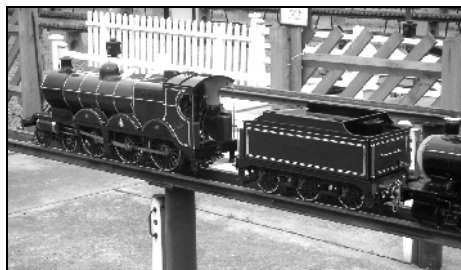
OPENING TIMES: Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm

ADMISSION: Adults £4.00 Concessions £2.80 Children £2.80 Family £10.00

16+ layouts, including "Tintagel", with the usual traders and societies.

GCR themed event at the Transport Heritage Centre, Ruddington, Notts

Nothing definite yet but please pencil in for 11 and 12 July 2009 to keep these dates free. Look for confirmation in the next issue or on the website.



Model of GCR class 8F 4-6-0 no.1097 "Immingham" at Ruddington

Charlie Peace : A Tale of Victorian Villainy

by Alan Rowles

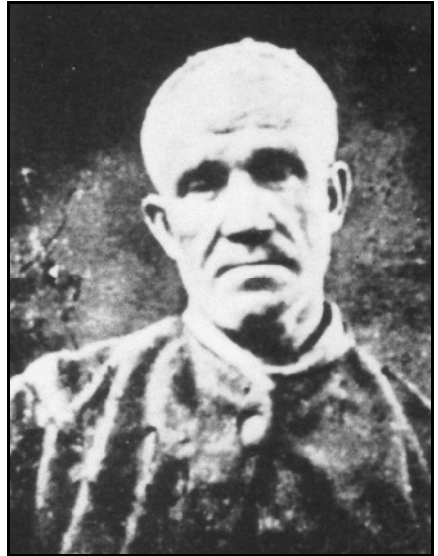
Many readers will have heard of the Victorian master criminal Charlie Peace, but few will know of his connection with the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway. But first, a brief résumé of the life of the man who many regard as the greatest criminal personality of the 19th century, a man who was as famous in his day as Claude Duval, Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard were two centuries earlier and who, like them, paid for his crimes on the scaffold.

Born in 1832 in a poverty-stricken area of Sheffield he was a skilled pickpocket by the age of 14 but it was his ability as a burglar that gained him wealth and fame. Despite several lengthy periods in prison, including 2 years at Her Majesty's pleasure in the convict settlement on Gibraltar, he went on to elevate housebreaking to a science. He was however a real Jekyll and Hyde character. On the one hand his police record stated 'intelligent, resourceful, always goes armed and is willing to shoot'. On the other he was an animal lover, a talented musician, a member of an amateur dramatic society and for while even a Sunday School teacher.

In 1854 Charlie married Hannah Ward. Ostensibly he worked as a joiner and picture frame maker, but in truth, he spent much of his time burgling houses the length and breadth of the north of England. In 1875 Charlie moved with his family to Darnall where he had a brief relationship with Catherine Dyson a married neighbour.

Though she was far from blameless, her husband Arthur issued a writ against Charlie, he in turn threatened to 'blow both their brains out' and, one step ahead of the police, Charlie fled to Hull. In his absence the Dysons moved across the city to Banner Cross but infatuation got the better of Charlie; he tracked them down and on a dark November night shot and killed Arthur. Charlie went on the run and was not heard of again for two years. A master of disguise who could transform his facial features in an instance, he had an innate ability to avoid the clutches of the law.

Teaming up with a woman called Susan Bailey they set themselves up in Peckham, London as Mr. & Mrs Thompson, a well to do couple. With a fine house and a carriage and pair, they were regarded as model citizens with Charlie even becoming a churchwarden. At night however Charlie's activities were less beneficial to the local community. Working up to five houses a night, nowhere in London or the south of England was safe from the most skilled burglar of his day. He even robbed Lord Shaftsbury's London residence twice in a matter of days. Yet even with such a 'workload' he found time to engage in other inventive and ingenious schemes. He designed a helmet that would enable firemen to enter a smoke filled room and, along with Henry Brion, came up with an invention for raising sunken ships. But Charlie's days of luxury were not to last long. In October 1878 two policemen cornered him as he burgled a house in St. John's Park and despite shooting one of them they bravely arrested him. Giving his name as John Ward (the police were unable to discover his true identity) he was tried at the Old Bailey and sentenced to penal servitude for life for the attempted murder of the policeman.



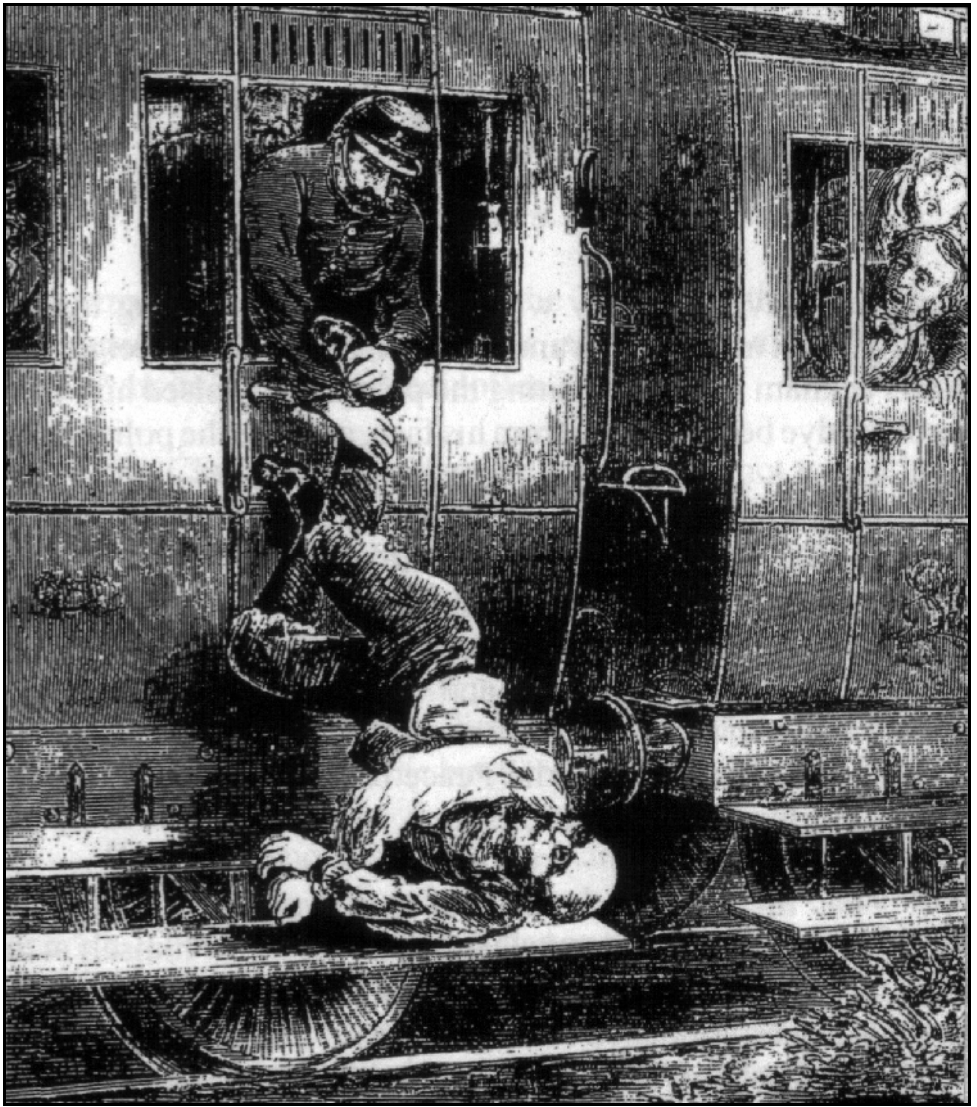
The last known photograph of Charlie Peace

However, in Pentonville Prison Charlie's true identity came to light and in the company of two warders he was taken to King's Cross station where the trio boarded the 5.15am GNR 'Newspaper' to Retford and thence on to Sheffield where he would be formally charged with the murder of Arthur Dyson. Their prisoner lived up to the warders' worst expectations. He had to be dragged along the platform to the reserved compartment and in an era before the advent of toilets and corridors in 3rd class coaching stock, he demanded to visit the gents at every stop. At Peterborough he created a scene and had to be forcibly returned to the train. The preliminary hearing took place at the Magistrates' Court in the Sheffield Town Hall on Castle Hill and at the end of the session Peace was remanded until the following Wednesday. So vast was the crowd outside that it was only with the greatest of difficulty that the wagon conveying the prisoner made its way back to Sheffield Victoria station. Here the police formed a human barrier but the many thousands who had gathered in the hope of catching a glimpse of the most famous criminal of his day swept this aside and flooded into the station. The 4.15pm train for London departed on time but only after Peace had been manhandled through the crowd by a combination of police and porters.

For the second hearing on January 22nd, 1879, the trio again travelled north on the 5.15am train from King's Cross due in Sheffield Victoria at 8.58am. On reaching Retford the carriages bound for Sheffield and Manchester were detached from GNR train and shunted on to the rear of an MS&L train waiting in the station. Peace remained in a 3rd class compartment of a composite carriage situated next to the guard's van. This time to negate Peace's demands to visit a toilet at each station he was provided with small bags into which he could pass water and then dispose of through the carriage window. His wrists were handcuffed together and one bracelet of a second pair was fastened to the links of the first and it's other half held by Warder Robertson.

The journey north was uneventful until the train neared Shireoaks when the window was dropped to dispose of one of the bags. Despite the fact that the train was travelling at 50mph Charlie seized the moment and with lightning speed hurled himself through the open window tearing the handcuff from Robertson's grasp. Incredibly the warder was just quick enough to grab the left ankle of the rapidly disappearing prisoner and despite being viciously kicked by Peace's free foot, clung on as the snow-covered landscape whizzed by. The train ran on for two miles with the other warder, unable to get to the window to assist his colleague, making vain efforts to stop the train, but in the freezing conditions the communication cord, which in those days ran along the top of the outside of the coach, refused to budge. As the train passed Branccliffe Junction signal box he waved frantically to the signalman who, being unable to see the commotion on the other side of the carriage, simply waved back. Peace, who by now was fully outside the carriage grabbed hold of the footboard and pulled downwards, his left shoe came off, the game Robertson at last lost his grip and his prisoner crashed headfirst down into the six foot between the tracks.

Hereabouts and with the assistance of a passenger in the next compartment the communication cord at last began to work, the brakes went on and the train came to a standstill half a mile further on near to the malt kilns just east of Kiveton Park station. Immediately the train had stopped the two warders leapt down and set off running as fast as they could back down the line. As at other points along the train's route a large group of people had gathered at the station in the hope of catching a glimpse of the infamous Charlie Peace as he passed through and when the guard shouted that the prisoner had escaped by jumping through the carriage window some of these onlookers, along with a few passengers, set out in a mad rush after the warders. Mr Thompson, the station master at Kiveton Park, telegraphed Shireoaks stating that Peace might be lying badly hurt on the rails and everyone available there set out along the line. Unfortunately from Charlie's perspective escape was to elude him. In falling, his head had first struck the footboard and then the ballast causing a severe head wound and he was found semi-conscious having apparently crawled about 12 yards from where he fell.



An artist's impression of Charlie Peace escaping from the train between Shireoaks and Kiveton Park.

First on the scene was a pilot engine driver closely followed by the two warders and they found their quarry 'huddled up between the running lines'. The first local man to arrive was William Stephenson, a blacksmith from Kiveton Park, and he remembered Peace lying semi-conscious in a growing patch of crimson snow. Charlie had fallen from the train at a spot known locally as Harrycroft near Branccliffe East Junction and it was here that a slow train bound for Sheffield was stopped and the injured man lifted into the guard's van. Charlie later claimed that his leap from the train was a suicide bid and a note found in his pocket bore this out. It read "Bury me at Darnall. Goodbye and God bless you all", but it is also a fair bet that he thought he had a sporting chance of escape. Whatever the case, Charlie Peace was now more famous than ever.

When the train arrived at Sheffield huge crowds once again swamped Victoria station, despite a huge police presence, and even greater numbers surrounded the court house and the adjoining police station. It was only with great difficulty that the mounted police cleared a path for the police van to reach Water Lane Police Station. After two days in the cells a doctor deemed a still far from well Peace fit enough for the hearing to continue, albeit it in a cold, candle lit subterranean corridor far from the public's gaze. This clandestine hearing did not reflect well on the authorities, nor did the rapidity with which a still far from well Charles Peace was committed to stand trial for the murder of Arthur Dyson eleven days later at Leeds Assizes.

Half carried, half dragged into the dock, the trial lasted all of one day as Peace was hurried to his doom. His solicitor was William (later Sir William) Clegg and his defence counsel consisted of Frank (later Sir Frank) Lockwood and Charles Beilby Stuart-Wortley. The latter had become a barrister three years earlier and would go on to serve as a QC, an MP, and for seven years Under Secretary of State, before becoming 1st Baron Stuart of Wortley in 1916. In 1893 he even found time to be seconded onto the Board of the MS&L Railway, the selfsame railway on which fourteen years earlier his client had his audacious escape attempt. Charlie's only line of defence was that he shot Arthur Dyson accidentally during a struggle and despite a valiant effort by his counsel, in particular the eloquent Lockwood, the jury did not believe this and after deliberating for a mere twelve minutes found him guilty.

And so it was at Armley Prison on the morning of February 25th, 1879, the bolt was drawn and Charles Peace, the most notorious criminal of the 19th century died without a struggle.



BR class O4/8 2-8-0 no.63703 at Forest Town, Mansfield, with empty coal wagons on 4 Jan 1961.

photo: Bob Gellatly

"Forward" : The Ten Years History of the GCR

by W. L. Steel

This article appeared in the August 1909 issue of the Railway Magazine and was submitted for publication in Forward by David Bodicoat. Some editing has been made to improve readability.

Upon the opening of the London extension of the GCR, in an interview with the late Mr (afterwards Sir) William Pollitt, we recorded the salient points in the history of that railway up to that event. It is now our purpose to show how the line has progressed during the past ten years, for more than seven of which Mr. Sam Fay has been General Manager.

Great things were expected from the new line and it was confidently thought that the London extension was to prove the salvation of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, but up till the present the shareholders have reaped no material benefit, though the GCR possesses a most valuable property, and when united to the Great Northern and Great Eastern Railways, the Great Central "ordinary" may yet reach a premium.

Not content with the huge populations on its old system, the GCR planned the London extension to tap as many important towns as possible, and to a certain extent it sacrificed directness, for the new line was designed not only for the Yorkshire and Lancashire traffic, but also as a rival route to Rugby, Leicester, Loughborough and Nottingham, and the distances to these towns were more favourable for competitive purposes than those to the more northern centres. The London extension was constructed in the most approved manner, and it may justly be said to be down-to-date in every respect. The permanent way and plant are excellent, and the whole line is designed to handle the maximum of traffic with the minimum of expense and labour. The stations are all well-built buildings, constructed on the island principle, and those at Marylebone, Leicester, and Nottingham (joint with the GNR) are fine examples of station architecture, the latter being one of the best stations in the country.

The contracts for the new line were let in 1894, and the line was completed and opened for traffic in 1899, taking five years for its completion. During those five years great strides were made by the late MS&LR, its whole house being put in order, preparatory to its embarking on its career as a London Carrier; new locomotives and new rolling stock were ordered, its old rolling stock re-painted, and its stations altered, and in some cases re-modelled. Complete dining and corridor trains, then new to this country, were provided, and nothing was left undone that would in any way help to influence traffic over the new line.

While the engineers and contractors were busy laying the extension line through the Midland Counties and burrowing under St. John's Wood and Lord's Cricket Ground, the Board of the GCR was equally busy preparing for the opening and looking for fresh streams of untapped traffic. Near Woodford the lines of the GCR and GWR are not very many miles apart, so in 1897 powers were obtained to connect the GCR at Woodford with the GWR at Banbury by means of a branch 8 miles in length. The importance of the Banbury branch cannot be overestimated, for it provides a second channel for traffic almost equally as important as the Woodford-Marylebone line, and it promises to develop into one of the busiest cross-country lines in England, rivalling the Derby-Bristol line of the Midland Railway. By means of the Banbury branch, Oxford is brought into close contact with the whole GCR system of the Midlands, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the North, while Oxford means access, not only to the population of the university town, but the whole of the GWR system, and the South Coast from Dover to Penzance. The value of the Banbury branch will be more fully realised if the GCR is able to carry out the proposed fusion with the Great Northern and Great Eastern Railways.



Culworth Junction looking south from the signal box. The line to Banbury goes off to the right and allows GC traffic to access the south and west via Oxford on the GWR. photo: S.W.A.Newton

The making of the Banbury branch greatly strengthened the relations between the GCR and the GWR, and to still further cement the cordial feeling between the two railways, the GCR secured powers in 1898 for a line of some 6 miles from Neasden to Northolt, where it joined an authorised line of the GWR from Acton to Wycombe. The reason for this line is not very far to seek, for the GCR intended to use it as an alternative route to the North instead of the line of the Metropolitan Railway. The northern extension of the Metropolitan Railway, although it was made in order to form a route to the North, is badly graded. North of Harrow the line is very crowded, as the local traffic of such places as Aylesbury, Rickmansworth, and Chesham is not inconsiderable, therefore it is not to be wondered at that the GCR was trying to secure at least an alternative route.

But a much more ambitious project was on the *tapis*, for so intimate were the GCR and the GWR, that in 1899 they jointly secured powers to construct a new trunk line from London running north-west from Northolt (to which place the GCR was already authorised to construct the branch from Neasden) to Grendon Underwood. Part of this line was already authorised as a purely Great Western line (from Princes Risborough to Wycombe) and part was already in existence belonging to the same company. The Bill provided for these lines to be vested in a joint committee of the GCR and the GWR. This was distinctly to the advantage of the GCR to secure such excellent access to the Metropolis, but it nevertheless inflicted a hardship on the Metropolitan Railway which had constructed its northern extension almost entirely for GCR traffic, and now found itself in the unenviable position of having this "white elephant" left on its hands, as the extension ran through an almost entirely rural neighbourhood. This was the beginning of friction and litigation between the GCR and the Metropolitan Railway.

On March 15th, 1899, the London extension was opened for public traffic, previous to which it had been formally opened by Lord Ritchie, President of the Board of Trade. By

the opening of the London extension in 1899 the GCR took its place amongst the leading trunk lines of the country. Today its services and corridor rolling stock are second to none, and everyone has nothing but praise for the "rapid travel in luxury" along the new route. On the other hand, it must be admitted the financial aspect is far from glowing, but as yet it is perhaps too early to judge of the success of the London line. Millions have been expended on establishing the MS&LR in London, and the new-comer has had to fight for its traffic against the other great trunk lines of the country, so there is little wonder that a dividend has not yet been reached. With the completion of the London line, the original scheme of the MS&LR may be said to have come to an end, but with a vigorous policy the new GCR began to develop in all directions.

On the opening of the line for passenger traffic the service was, to say the least, rather disappointing, the time being occupied on the journey between Manchester and Marylebone being 5 hours. Soon afterwards the time was reduced to 4 hours 45 min., but even this did not compete very seriously with the Midland and London and North Western Railways. To Sheffield, Nottingham and Leicester the GCR was able to compete on more favourable terms, the GCR's route to Nottingham being only 3 miles longer than the Midland Railway. But if the new line was to be made to pay, fresh sources of traffic must be tapped, and accordingly, in 1900, in pursuance of this policy, the GCR, in conjunction with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, inaugurated a service of trains between Marylebone and Bradford, serving Huddersfield and several important towns in the West Riding.

At the end of 1901 Sir William Pollitt, who had been knighted soon after the opening of London, resigned his position as General Manager and was elected to a seat on the Board. The Board thereupon looked around for a successor and in March, 1902, they made the happy choice of Mr. Sam Fay, Superintendent of the Line of the London and South-Western Railway. He had previously been General Manager of the Midland and South-Western Junction Railway, which concern he had brought from a state of bankruptcy to a comparatively prosperous position. Sir Alexander Henderson, who had succeeded the late Lord Wharnccliffe as chairman, and Mr. Sam Fay, the new General Manager, immediately set about securing for the GCR a larger share of traffic and by means of opening up new routes and by granting fresh facilities, an increased volume of traffic soon began to flow over the new line.

The GCR justly claims that "cross-country expresses" and through arrangements with other railways are a feature of its services, and in this respect the GCR is *facile princeps*, for most of the great provincial towns and health resorts are linked by the luxurious corridor expresses of the GCR. In 1902 a restaurant car train was inaugurated between Newcastle and Sunderland and Southampton and Bournemouth via the Banbury branch, serving such important places as York, Nottingham, Leicester, Oxford, etc., and opening up an entirely new route between the North-East and the South Coast.

In the same year a new route was opened up between London and Stratford-on-Avon. At Woodford the East and West Junction Railway (now the Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway) crosses the main line of the GCR, and by means of a connecting line there thus existed a good competitive route to Stratford. The GCR, seeing this, made arrangements with the East and West Junction Railway for a service of trains, with the result that it is now London's most popular route for Stratford-on-Avon.

Almost every alteration in the time tables of the GCR chronicles extensions of the cross-country services initiated by Mr. Fay. Last month saw the previous high-water mark surpassed by the running of through services between Hull and Barry, and between Yorkshire towns and Ilfracombe.

The cross-country services provided by the GCR at the present time are as follows :-
Halifax, etc. (L&YR) to Ilfracombe (GWR).
York (NER) to Bournemouth (L&SWR).
Newcastle (NER) to Cardiff (GWR) and Barry (Barry Railway).

Hull (NER) to Barry (Barry Railway).
Scarborough (NER) to Southampton (L&SWR).
Sheffield (GCR) to Swansea (GWR).
Leicester (GCR) to Blackpool (L&YR).
Marylebone (GCR) to Stratford-on-Avon (Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway).

Thus by 1904 the GCR had established itself as one of the leading English lines, and the new route to Marylebone was already a popular one. To Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield, and Manchester its services were excellent, but in the case of Manchester the GCR was greatly handicapped by distance, and in the case of Liverpool and Warrington, this became further emphasised. But the cross-country services of the GCR immediately leapt into public favour, and they have since been largely increased, until it is now hard to say which are the more important, the London or the cross-country trains.

Of all the great railways the Great Central is perhaps the relatively most important in proportion to its mileage, which is accounted by the numerous large towns which it is able to cram into its system, and between most of these large provincial towns the GCR is able to give as good or better services than its competitors. No line has, perhaps, ever developed at such a phenomenal rate as the GCR. In 1894, as the MS&LR, it was of secondary importance; by 1904, as the GCR, it was a strong force in the railway world.

The opening of the London extension in 1899 increased the traffic of the whole system to such an extent that it soon became apparent that although the huge docks at Grimsby had been ample for the needs of the MS&LR, they were becoming too small for the traffic of the GCR. Steps were taken to increase the accommodation, with the result that, in 1903, a subsidiary undertaking, under the name of the "Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Company" was promoted and sanctioned by Parliament, though only to be withdrawn on account of certain obnoxious clauses. But the necessity of the new dock was so apparent that the "Humber Commercial Dock" was revived next session with the strong support of the GCR, and this time it was passed free from the previous conditions.

In 1905 the GCR took over the properties of two small lines - the Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay, and the North Wales and Liverpool Railways. The latter line was a joint affair of the GCR and the WM&CQ, and by this purchase the GCR brought its lines into Wales and direct communication with the Wrexham coalfields and the important system of the Cambrian Railways, thus opening a new route between Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the North, and Cardigan Bay and South Wales. By means of these two lines, and with the help of the Wirral and Mersey Railways, the GCR was enabled to make an energetic bid for the valuable stream of traffic that flows between Liverpool and Chester and Wales.

In the next year, 1906, the GCR further consolidated its property by transferring to itself two other small lines, the working of which it already had in hand. One was the Wigan Junction extending from Glazebrook on the Cheshire lines to Wigan, while the other was called the "Liverpool, St. Helens and South Lancashire" stretching from a junction with the Wigan line to the town of St. Helens. Both these lines were transferred to the GCR on January 1st.

By this time the joint Great Western and Great Central line was well under construction, and litigation was proceeding between the Great Central and the Metropolitan Railways, for the latter had very little use for its northern extension if the GCR's traffic was withdrawn. At last, however, an amicable settlement was arranged and embodied in a Bill. The settlement was a most excellent one for both parties, for by it the GCR leased for 999 years the line from Harrow to Canfield Place, which the Metropolitan Railway had constructed for its sole use, while the line north of Harrow, including the Chesham, Brill and Verney sections, was leased to a joint committee of the Great Central and Metropolitan Railways at a yearly rental for 999 years. By this means the GCR secured

two routes into London, with a prospect of a good local and suburban traffic, which would in all probability grow to large proportions. Since Mr. Sam Fay has been General Manager of the GCR, improvements in the service, improved methods of working, and closer relations with other railways have, thanks to his skill, been apparent in all directions.

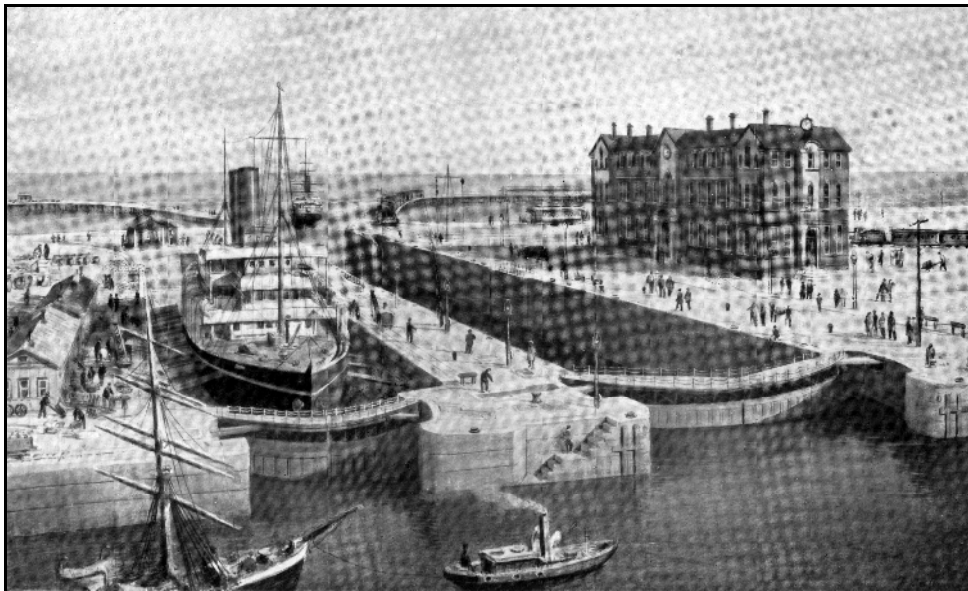
At the end of 1905 most important negotiations were concluded whereby the GCR provisionally agreed to purchase the undertaking of the Lancashire, Derbyshire, and East Coast Railway. The negotiations were concluded only just in time, since the Great Northern Railway was also attracted by the same bait, and were, in fact, negotiating themselves with a view to its purchase. This deal is, perhaps, the most important of all the GCR's purchases, for the LD&ECR was an undertaking of some 55 miles, embracing Lincoln, Sheffield and Chesterfield. As its name implies, it was only a fragment of a much more ambitious project, being originally intended to connect Warrington with the Lincoln Coast, but when the central section was completed the remaining portions were for various reasons abandoned. Needless to say, the LD&ECR was not a financial success, and for some years previous it had been pretty certain that either the Great Eastern, Great Northern, Midland, or GCR would purchase it. The GNR and GER were, perhaps, the most likely, the latter holding a large number of shares in the "Derbyshire", and also in its off-shoot, the Sheffield District, by right of which holding it was represented on the Board.

But, although the GCR had provisionally agreed to purchase the Derbyshire line, Parliamentary powers had yet to be obtained, and this threatened to evoke a big fight with other companies. Here history repeated itself, for the GCR wisely bought off the GNR's opposition before proceedings commenced and arrangements were also come to with the GER. But, nevertheless, the L&NWR, Midland, and NER strongly opposed the Bill, and the opposition of the latter nearly proved fatal, for the NER, in order to safeguard itself, submitted a protective clause, which ran as follows: "Rates for the conveyance of traffic between Hull and the collieries served by the railway of the LD&EC company, or to which that company has access, shall from time to time be agreed between the company and the NER, or in the case of difference shall be fixed by arbitrators, who shall be appointed by the Board of Trade, and in any such arbitration, the arbitrators shall have regard to the rates for the time being charged between Grimsby and the same collieries." But since the GCR was buying the Derbyshire line in order to protect the coal traffic of its docks at Grimsby, it could not afford to be hampered by the NER's clause, which was trying to take away from Grimsby its geographical advantage in the interests of the rival port of Hull. Accordingly, when the clause was accepted by the Parliamentary committee, the GCR withdrew the Bill. But, fortunately, the Bill was able to be re-introduced, and this time it was passed without the NER's clause. The Derbyshire purchase was a most important addition to the GCR, and will undoubtedly prove in the future to be a most valuable acquisition to the system.

Another Bill came before Parliament this session which might have had an important bearing on the future of the GCR, if it had not been withdrawn. This Bill, under the title of the "Wigan and Heysham Railway", proposed to make a railway from the Wigan branch of the GCR to join the Midland at Heysham, tapping Preston *en route*, and with a branch into the Fylde district communicating with Blackpool, the paradise of Lancashire trippers. Unfortunately, the Bill could not get the support it anticipated, and was, therefore, withdrawn. But the last has not been heard of it, and perhaps when next time it appears it will be directly promoted by one or two of the "Great" railways.

On April 2nd, 1906, the new GC&GW joint line was opened for traffic. The Grendon Underwood section was transferred from the joint committee to the GCR only, in view of the GWR's "Aynho" line, while the GWR's Princes Risborough and Aylesbury branch was vested in the joint committee. On the same date the GCR entered into joint possession of the northern extension of the Metropolitan Railway, and a suburban service was inaugurated from Marylebone on both the Aylesbury and Wycombe lines. On the opening

of the GW&GC joint line, the directors and officials of the two companies were entertained by a most enthusiastic gathering at High Wycombe. In the Course of his speech, Sir Alexander Henderson stated that the new line had cost fully £40,000 a mile. That the GCR was optimistic about the new line may be judged from it's chairman's speech: "I can say for the Great Central Company that we anticipate from this line very great things. We shall be bitterly disappointed if it does not do much for us, bring us a large amount of traffic, give us an excellent road, and provide us with all those modern conveniences which are absolutely essential to the good working of a railway today."



*Immingham Dock entrance showing the Graving Dock on the left and the General Offices on the right.
photo: Per Rail*

On Thursday, July 12th, 1906, the first sod of the new Immingham (Humber Commercial) Dock was cut by Lady Henderson. The Immingham Dock, when completed, will be the most down-to-date in the world. Its area will be 38½ acres, minimum depth 32 ft. and quay space of 6,760 ft.; 3,500,000 cubic yards of material will have to be excavated before the work is finished. The Grimsby Docks already form a most important part of the GCR's system, and when the further extensions are opened at Immingham, it will be the best and most convenient port on the East Coast, rejoicing in a naturally advantageous position for Continental traffic. From Grimsby to the Continent the GCR works three lines of steamers, a daily service to Hamburg and three boats weekly to Antwerp and Rotterdam. In view of the increase of trade, two new turbine steamers, the *Immingham* and the *Marylebone*, have recently been placed on the service, which will do much to popularise the Grimsby route.

All over the GCR's system improvements have been carried out during the last few years, too numerous to mention individually, but prominent among which are the concentration yards at Wath, Dunford, Worksop and Warsop, each constructed on the gravity principle, and the quadrupling of lines around Manchester, Hyde, and Sheffield.

In 1907 the GCR and the GNR entered into an agreement for the fusion of the two systems based on the now famous "Fifty Year Agreement", but this met with vigorous opposition from most of the other great companies, and when the case came before the Railway Commissioners the "unholy alliance" under a musty agreement 50 years old (according to the Midland Railway's chairman) was disallowed on a legal point. Before

going forward with the scheme, arrangements were made to include the GER in the union, and accordingly a Bill was deposited for the union of the three lines.

That Parliament refused to consider the scheme unless the three railways made concessions, which the directors of the three railways, and the General Managers concerned, considered to be outside reasonable demands, is fresh in the minds of readers of the *Railway Magazine*. As our readers know, the GCR/GNR/GER Railways Bill was withdrawn, and a Committee appointed by the Government is now considering the wider subject of railway combinations. Upon the report of this Committee will depend the course of action that will be pursued by the three railways, but our readers may be certain that, as pertinacity is the ordinary railway man's temperament, that a method satisfactory to the public, to traders, and to shareholders in the GC, GN and GE Railways will be sooner or later be arrived at.

One peculiarity of the GCR is the very large proportion that its jointly owned lines bears to those lines solely owned by it, the GCR being a partner in more Joint Committees than any other railway company in England. In ten years the mileage of the GCR has increased from 572 to 928, including lines jointly owned. The gross receipts have gone up from £3,285,653 to £5,128,546, the rolling stock from 775 locomotives to 1242, and the carriages and wagons from 24,218 to 40,360. All evidences of the living-up-to the motto of the GCR, which we have chosen as the title for this article.



Steam navy at work near Wembley Hill on the GC's Neasden-Northolt link to the GW&GC Joint. "Watkin's Folly" can be seen in the background. This section was completed in 1904.

The Pollard family railway history – Part 2

by John E. Pollard

My father, John Revill Pollard, was born 27th May, 1897, at Buxton Terrace, Nottingham. He had a brother, George Ernest Pollard, born 12th May, 1899. George never worked on the railway and died in France on 7th August, 1916, during the First World War.

I have a paper giving my father permission to leave school aged thirteen. He worked for a company in Mansfield for a year. When he was fourteen he started on the railway as a boy porter at Skegby on the Great Northern Railway. Dad's job was to meet passenger trains and to collect the tickets. Also he had to deliver parcels to local people and shops. One of his deliveries was to a Lady Dodsley who lived at Skegby Manor House, just across from the station. Lady Dodsley used to catch a train to Nottingham to visit Griffin and Spalding's store to order her supplies, then return to Skegby while her goods were crated and sent to Skegby on a later train. Dad then got his barrow out, loaded up and delivered them to the Manor House. Sometimes it took two trips and he used to get a good tip each time he went to the Manor. Another good run for him was the local Vicarage where his palm was greased again. With the tips he made he was fairly rich for the time and he told us that on occasions the Station Master would borrow half a sovereign until pay day, which he always paid back.

There was a period when the staff were put on short time. The Station Master told them that they would have to go on three days a week. My Dad was always an astute man and after some thought put an idea to his work mates. They said it wouldn't work but were prepared to give it a try, so Dad went to see the Station Master. He was called into the office and the Station Master said, "Right, Jack, what do you want?" Dad said, "What about us working a week on and a week off turn and turn about?" The Station Master weighed it up, realised it would not cost the company any more than working three on and three off, and agreed. Dad went back to his mates and said, "It's on." They all laughed, for having a full week off they qualified for dole money. If they had worked three days a week they did not, so they now got some money on their week off.

About this time my Father joined the Territorials and when the First World War broke out they were up at Scarborough on three weeks camp. They had only done one week when they were called on parade and told what had happened. They were given their three week's pay and told to go back home and wait for call-up. Dad went back to work for a week before he was ordered to report to the Sherwood Foresters barracks at Derby. When he and his mate got there they were fully kitted up and given rail passes to go to a training camp near Sunderland. They were wearing their overcoats and they had a lot of kit, including rifles. As they were going to the station, Dad realised they had some time to spare so he asked his mate if he fancied a pint of beer. The man said, "Yes, but I haven't got any spare cash." Dad put his hand in his pocket, had a look at what he had and said, "I only have enough for two pints. When we get inside keep your mouth shut and let me do the talking." When they were inside they put their kit down, leaned their rifles against the bar, and Dad ordered two pints. He then wrapped his arms around himself and said in a loud voice, "By gosh, I'd forgotten how cold it was in this country." As they were both wearing overcoats it looked odd. A man jumped up and called to the landlord, "I'll pay for them." The other men in the pub also bought them a few more before they had to leave to catch their train north.

Once Dad came home on leave from France. As he got to the back door the doctor was just coming out. "What's going on?" he said. "Your Mother has had Spanish flu," replied the Doctor, "If you can get to *The Bird In Hand* pub at Blidworth, they have some cask whisky - it will do your Mother more good than my medicine." Dad put his kit down and set off walking to Blidworth. It was about five miles away; it was also snowing and cold. When he got to the pub he told the landlady what he had come for and why and that he had just got back from France. He had a pint while she filled him two bottles of whisky and then, before he set off back to Kirkby, she said, "Hang on a while, there's a man in

the village who works at Summit pit. He goes with a pony and trap and he'll be in for a drink shortly - he can give you a ride." So Dad had another pint. The man came in for his drink and the landlady said, "This young soldier would like a lift to Kirkby." So Dad got his ride back. This was in the winter of 1917.

In June, 1999, I had to take my brother, Lesley, to hospital. He was not up to the mark and was admitted. In the next bed was a man of 79 who lived at Blidworth. He and Les got on together and like my brother and I, he liked a smoke. He could not walk very well and asked if I would get a wheelchair and take him to the smoke room. I took him down and while we were talking I told him the tale of my Dad and the whisky. He looked up at me and said, "My father worked at Summit and travelled from Blidworth in a pony and trap." Amazingly our fathers could well have shared that journey together. I was glad to be able to repay the favour, if only in a small way, eighty two years later.

After the war my Father was a shunter at Colwick and had to cycle there from Kirkby, about thirteen miles each way. One morning he found a body at the side of the road. He knew where the local police sergeant lived so he knocked him up and took him to where the body lay. He asked the sergeant for a note as he did not want to be short in his pay. The sergeant said, "You will have to attend the inquest." The following week the local police delivered a message with the time and place of the inquest - it was at the Hut Hotel, not far from where the body was found and the time was just right for Dad to get his shift in and attend. When he arrived the sergeant met him and said, "The're not ready for you yet, come in here and get something to eat and drink." The table was laid with plenty of food and the beer was free. The sergeant said, "What have you got for the big race?" Dad said, "Grand Parade. Its a local horse and we have been putting money on it for weeks." It was named after the Grand Parade that was put on by all the armed forces after the war. They were called into the inquest. It was assumed that as the only vehicle travelling that road at night was the mail van between Mansfield and Nottingham it had hit the man who was a vagrant. A verdict of accidental death was recorded and Dad claimed his expenses, a day's wage. Grand Parade won the Derby so he was in

pocket all round. Gresley named one of his Pacifics *Grand Parade*.

Dad served as a signal man in Summit Colliery box for a time, then he moved to Bradford, also as a signalman. Then he got a job as a guard at Manchester Deansgate. It was at this time he met my Mother and they were married in March, 1924. Dad used to work all over the country from Deansgate which was a Great Northern depot. He went over the Cheshire Lines to Liverpool, over the GC line to Retford and then down the GN to London or sometimes via Nottingham (Weekday Cross) to Grantham and then to London. He had a vast route knowledge.

I think this is the time to list the duties of a guard. First the kit which he carried: freight and passenger timetables for all routes that he was signed on, his route knowledge sheets, loading books for all classes of engines on all routes, appendices which gave information on all stations and sidings, permanent way books (noting permanent way workings, speed restrictions and signalling alterations), the



John Revill Pollard in pensive mood.

Rule Book (which would have wrong line order forms in it) and the Train Recording Book. In this book he would write down everything - the driver's name, engine number, types of wagons on the train, out of gauge loads, number of carriages if passenger stock, weight of coaches (this was on a plate at the end of each coach), times of departure and arrival, booked passing times, wagons put off or picked up, and the weather. He also carried twelve detonators, one red flag, one green flag, a whistle, a watch, a hand lamp and a small bottle of lamp oil. This was essential as he never knew if he was going to get caught out in a tunnel or if he would go on overtime into the hours of darkness. Finally, his bag would contain tea, sugar, milk and his food.

The whistle was used for instructing the driver on train movements in fog or if they were out of sight of each other. The code was one blast for go ahead, that is away from the guard, two blasts for come back towards the guard, three blasts for stop, four blasts for ease couplings, and rapid continuous blasts for emergency stop. The other items he used were a tail lamp, usually on the brake van, or if starting from a marshalling yard the guard would pick up a fresh one from the lamp cabin making sure the lamp had been cleaned, trimmed, and filled. On the brake van were two side lights which had a red shade to show a red light to the rear and a white light forward. On loose coupled or semi-fitted trains three red lights were on the back. If a train ran into a loop line or a goods line or was backed into a shunt alongside the main line, the red shade near to the main line was removed showing a white light to the rear as this could be mistaken for a red signal light by the driver of any passing train. Other pieces of equipment required included a shunting pole, a brake slick, two sprags, and at one time, a tow rope. The guard had to ensure this equipment was all there. Sometimes the shunting pole or brake slick got broken and the guard leaving the van would not bother replacing them. The sprags may have been used to secure a wagon in a siding if the brake was not secure.

When a guard learnt a road from his home depot he had to memorise all signal boxes and all the signals for the up and down roads, also all ground signals applicable to the working of the yard he was in, all the points which were worked by the signal man and the hand points or spring points, which had to be held over while the engine or wagons were passing over them. He also had to know the goods lines, loop lines, and shunt roads, and also how many wagons the roads held. He also had to know the gradients he was working over and where any trap points were.

The normal signals operated by a box were: a distant - this showed either yellow or green, a home board - this was either red or green, a starter - with the same lights as the home signal. If the distant showed green then you were clear through the section but you had to keep a good look out if the distant was yellow for you had to be prepared to stop at the home board. Usually there were three boards but some had four, some five, and one I knew had six. The signals for three were distant, home and starter. For four it was distant, home, starter and advanced starter, or distant, outer home, inner home, and starter. For five it was distant, outer home, home, starter and advanced starter. The only one I knew with six was Mansfield Station which had distant, outer home, inner home, home, starter and advanced starter.

The guard also had to know the loads for different classes of engine over the different routes he signed. When preparing a train the guard usually had a pad of empty wagon labels which he used to write his calculations on the back. The standard wagon was a 12 tonner. To work a coal train out it had to be classed as so many 12 ton wagons but we also had 16, 21 and 25 ton wagons. Three 16 tonners equalled four wagons, three 21 tonners equalled five wagons and two 25-tonners four wagons. This was all right if it was all coal or steel but when you started to get other goods, oil tanks and timber, you had a totally different system to work on calculating the train weight. With coaching stock, as I have already said, there was a plate on the end of the coach. You wrote down the weight, counted the number of vehicles, then told the driver something like "ten on equal to 360 tons".

If a guard was working a pick-up train, for example from Annesley to Rothley, which was one of my routes, he would check his train for the setting down of each wagon to make sure they were all in order of each station or siding on his route. As we had local pick-up jobs to Basford, Nottingham Goods and Ruddington, the first drop was normally East Leake. We passed through Loughborough as we called there on our way back so the next stop was at Quorn and Woodhouse, then Swithland and finally Rothley. You put off and picked up at Rothley, reversed the train to get the brake on the back, had your food, then set off back to Loughborough where you got relieved by a crew who had travelled out and you travelled home by passenger. On this turn it was almost always a GC Atlantic engine.

My Father told us of a few of his experiences as a guard. On one occasion he was working an Immingham train to Annesley before the Second World War. He had a very old GC six wheel brake van, a right old rattle trap. They were running through a severe storm between Barnetby and Lincoln when the wind took the roof off his van - one moment it was there, the next it was in a field alongside the line. He had to ride without a roof to Lincoln before he could get a change of van.

Loughborough up side was a back-in shunt, it was not made a run-in loop line until the war. Dad was on a lodging trip to Woodford and they were backing in to Loughborough when the signalman took a chance and cleared for the "Fish". Dad's train had only just cleared the main line when the fish came through. However, she had a van off the road and it ripped the points out and some of the road Dad's train was in. They were there quite a long time while the permanent way gang got the track back in. His crew had quite a session in the Great Central pub which was close to the station.

During the war if Dad was away from home more than twelve hours, Mum would go to the phone box and ring Annesley to ask where he was. I was with her once when the answer was, "Somewhere between Manchester and Annesley." One night Dad's train was coming through Sheffield when there was a bombing raid on. Passing Darnall he had just made his fire up and about a foot of flame was coming out of the van chimney. People were shouting, "Put that fire out!", but there was nothing he could do. His driver opened up the "Tiny" and went as fast as he could to get away from Sheffield.

At the time of Dunkirk Dad would leave home and we would not see him again for about eighteen hours. He would get some sleep in and then be off again for another long shift working troop trains from Nottingham Vic north. They never knew where they were going, they just followed the signals until they were relieved. About 1943 he failed his eye sight test and came out of the brake. He was transferred to the wagon shops where he worked until his retirement. I still have his gold watch that he got for 45 years service. On his retirement, aged 65, he had completed 51 years service in total. He died just after his 79th birthday on the 6th June 1979.



Hornby 20 ton brake van in LNER livery.

The Nene Valley Explorer

by Richard Butler

A report of the London Group's minibus trip on Saturday 19th July.

Our summer minibus tour this year was to the Nene Valley area, principally between Wellingborough and Thrapston. The group had previously covered the GC London extension from Amersham to Annesley over the years, plus the SMJR in more recent times, so a fresh area was chosen for 2008.

The regular minibus company supplied the usual bus and we were off to our first calling point of Wellingborough. Although no trace can be found of the LNWR station and level crossing, the information sheets provided to participants showed a public house, which could be seen today. Only just though, as the pub was in the process of demolition! After picking up our friends from the North at Wellingborough's remaining station at Midland Road, we ventured off to Rushden. Here the local transport society has wonderfully restored the town's station building and adjacent platform. The building contains a small bar and separate museum of signs and other memorabilia. A number of carriages are stored in the platform and some locos on the adjacent tracks. Hopes are still high of an eventual passenger service towards Higham Ferrers. Opening times are very limited, so do check before making a visit.

After enjoying coffee with some of the society members, we left for a short ride to Irthlingborough. Here the station site is easily identifiable, although again no actual buildings survive. Much of Nene Valley line is now a cycleway and footpath and the narrow road which once passed over the level crossing, although still available to road traffic, is now mainly superseded by a 1930s concrete viaduct carrying today's A6 trunk road.

After our lunch stop at nearby Great Addington, we paused at the site of Ringstead and Addington station (annual usage probably in single figures given the distance from both villages) to then arrive at Thrapston's Midland Road station. Here the approach road led up to a moderately sized stone-built station building, which at a quick glance looked completely intact. Unfortunately, passing round to the platform side revealed a scene of complete dereliction. The platform had a wooden building extension which had been thoroughly vandalised, and the goods shed had been subject to considerable fire damage. Although very depressing, imagining a passenger train bound for Huntingdon or Kettering was not impossible to believe.

Retracing our steps down to the road and scrambling up the other side of the now missing rail bridge took us on to the single line formation blue brick viaduct that remarkably still spans the River Nene and adjacent meadow lands. All was not quiet though, as just yards away the A14 crosses the same area with a modern road viaduct. Back on the coach we looked at the site of Thrapston's other station, Bridge Street, now built over by office show rooms and a sawmill.

We now left the Nene Valley for a look at two of the Midland stations on the former Kettering to Huntingdon line. That at Raunds has been well restored by a local car dealer, while at nearby Kimbolton a private owner has completed a lovely restoration. This latter owner was only too pleased to show us onto one of the two platforms and talk to us about the station's history. Both these locations have not seen passenger trains since 1958 and no wonder, considering the distance from the villages they attempted to serve.

Time pressing, we followed more country roads through an area that never had railways to Bedford, where we set down, and then on via quaint Kempston Hardwick (on the still open Bedford-Bletchley line) to Toddington M1 services and finally back to Watford Junction.

Book Reviews

"Mexborough: A Railway Junction to Anywhere and its Steam Locomotive Depot" by Michael Brearley

Michael Brearley, Flat 2, Swinton Hall, Fitzwilliam Street, Swinton, Mexborough, South Yorkshire S64 8RE, tel. 01709 58694, e-mail: mick.brearley@virgin.net
ISBN 9781 904706 25 0. Soft covers, 257pp, 104 photos. £14.99.

From the information about the book on the back cover we are told that the book is "a collation of facts, opinions and information about Mexborough Loco Shed." Potential buyers should not expect a detailed historical thesis in the style of an Oakwood Press publication. Instead the author has put together material, some previously published, that has been written about Mexborough and its locomotives. The principal contributor is the late Ron Fareham who worked for many years on the footplate out of Mexborough shed. Other contributors are Joseph Raybould and Bryan Longbone. The author himself has contributed an historical overview in the opening chapters.

The absence of a publisher shows in the poor standard of proof reading and the lack of a consistent presentational style. Having said that, there are many published books that deserve the same criticisms. The cover design, however, is excellent. There is a good number and variety of photos but the quality of reproduction is limited by the paper used. Some are also too dark to reveal sufficient detail.

The author, who is a member of the GCRS, is to be congratulated for undertaking such an ambitious project which includes providing the financial outlay required. Sales of the book through a local shop in Mexborough have already been encouraging. To buy a copy please contact the author in the first instance to confirm availability and postage costs.

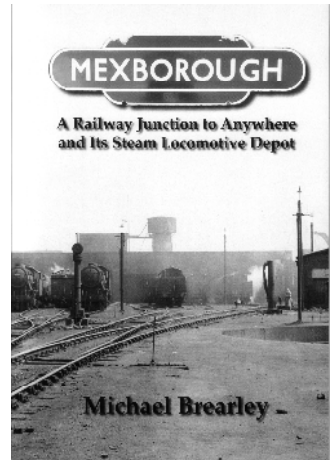
Bob Gellatly

"Colour-Rail Catalogue (18th edn.)" by Ron White.

Colour-Rail, 5 Treacher's Close, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 2HD
Price £10.00

Ron White, who has been developing his colour slide business, Colour-Rail, for many years now, has recently published the eighteenth edition of his catalogue (known as "Old Ron's Almanac"). This is available at £10, including a sample slide (steam/diesel/electric to your choice). Slides cost £1.50 each for up to 20, with a reduction for larger orders, plus postage. Those who have acquired a collection of Colour-Rail slides, or have been at one of Ron's presentations, will be aware of the quality and variety of the contents of his catalogue. In this new edition, there is one special GCR location well worth acquiring; apple green B1 no.1111, taken on the Birdcage north of Rugby in 1946. In addition, there are a large number of new slides, many of Eastern and Scottish Region subjects taken in the 1950s, including, with GCR system interest, B1s *A. Harold Bibby* (with red-backed nameplate) on Immingham shed, *Impala* at Blackpool LMR shed, no. 61078 passing Rickmansworth goods yard and A5/1 no.69828 near Bollington with a Macclesfield local. Ron has given notice that he is now not as young as he used to be and has sought, and found, a successor to take over Colour-Rail later in 2009. It is expected that business will continue exactly as at present. Whoever the new owner may be, they may be assured of the good will of all railway enthusiasts.

Geoffrey Hughes



On a personal note, Geoffrey adds:

This will probably be my last venture into print, as with 92 not far away, and the Care Home beckoning, I guess I will be reading more than I will be writing! Anyway, it has been a privilege to have been a member of the GCRS for many years now and, all being well, I will continue to be a subscriber. Unfortunately, lack of mobility prevents me getting very far from Milford, and it has been some years since I have been able to attend a meeting.

GCRS book sales

Some second-hand stock is available for purchase from the GCRS web site, www.gcrsociety.co.uk/sales. All proceeds are towards GCRS funds.



Mansfield Central in 1955. Looking north east from the down platform.



Kirkby in Ashfield Central looking north from the up platform.

Modellers' Corner

by Tony West

First off, those of you modelling in 7mm will be aware of the 'updated' GC loco kits being marketed by David Andrews. These were originally designed by him when he marketed the Gladiator range and it seems he kept the copyrights and has now decided to upgrade these early kits and market them under his own banner.

I purchased an 11D kit and I have to say it is a noticeable improvement on the original, not that there was much wrong with that! The cab sides now have a thin overlay in brass with the beading or just use the 'basic' sides if modelling a later debeaded version. The original kit had nickel silver cab sides which meant that the beading was most unprototypical. If polished, brass paint just does not cut it in 7mm scale! There are also more lost wax brass castings and very nice they are too, including a very nice 'ship's wheel' for the tender water pickup gear.

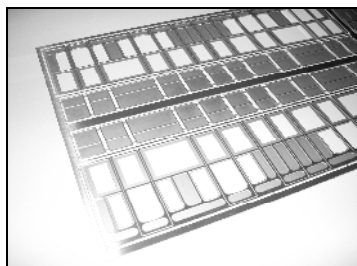
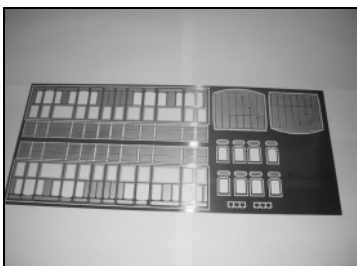
The bogie has been made a little more controllable and there is a set of dummy inside motion to add between the frames. So, all in all, well worth a look. It augers well for the other GCR subjects in the pipeline.

GCR loco green! Now there's a contentious issue. I am talking about the later Robinson green which varies greatly according to some of the leading model painting and lining specialists. So it was with some interest that I was loaned a copy of a book, published in 1952, by local member Bill Fay. The book is *Britain's Railway Liveries* by Ernest F. Carter. Anyway, the best thing about this book is the inclusion of pages of colour chips in the end leaves. These are actual paint samples, not just printed versions! I feel I should add that the rest of the book is also a must for the railway historian/modeller and is surprisingly well researched. Well worth an enquiry with a second hand railway book specialist.

Coming back to GCR loco green, the accepted source for most modellers, Precision Paints, looks to be a very close match but my tin is over 25 years old!. Anyway, I decided to try to obtain an alternative source from local autopaint factors and, would you believe it, I found a match used on Polish-built Fiats - FSO L50 zielony! So if you prefer cellulose or acrylic paint then just quote the code at your local auto paint supplier.

I also have to report that the latest arrival from S&T Wagon Works, the 16ft 3plk open in 7mm, is well on the way. The master has been made and hopefully a few test castings will be available in time for the GOG show at Kettering in March. Talking of which, in order to maintain a presence at these shows we really need the help of the membership. It always proves to be a very enjoyable day out and admission is free to helpers, so please do get in touch. The big O gauge show at Telford is in September and I really do need some help with this one as it is over two days, even if you could only manage half a day

Editor's note: 'zielony' is Polish for 'green' and FSO L50 will probably be an in-house code used by the autopaint supplier. Other suppliers may use different codes.



Newbold Models etch for the 1870s tri compo mentioned in Forward 158.

Recent auction items sold at Great Central Railwayana Auctions

(see p35 for auction house details)



A GCR silver plated sugar basin, decorated with coat of arms and "GREAT CENTRAL RY, DINING CAR". Sold for **£100**.



A selection of Great Central Railway cutlery. Sold for **£110**.



A locomotive worksplate "GREAT CENTRAL RLY BUILDERS 1911, GORTON WORKS" from GCR class 9N no.170 (LNER/BR class A5 no.69805). Cast brass oval, the paint removed but not restored or polished. Sold for **£840**.



A locomotive worksplate "GREAT CENTRAL RY BUILDERS, GORTON WORKS, MANCHESTER 1920". Cast brass oval, cleaned and the face repainted. Sold for **£1,100**.



A viaduct numberplate, "GCR, 374(76)", which was used on the viaduct over the River Soar just north of Leicester Central station. The plate has been repainted and its original location noted on the back. Sold for **£160**.



A 34E shedplate: Neasden (1949-1958) then New England (until 1968). The front is repainted with silver grey characters, the back in original condition. Sold for **£230**.



'Great Central Railway War Memorial : class 9P 4-6-0 no.1165 Valour '

by Graham Lee

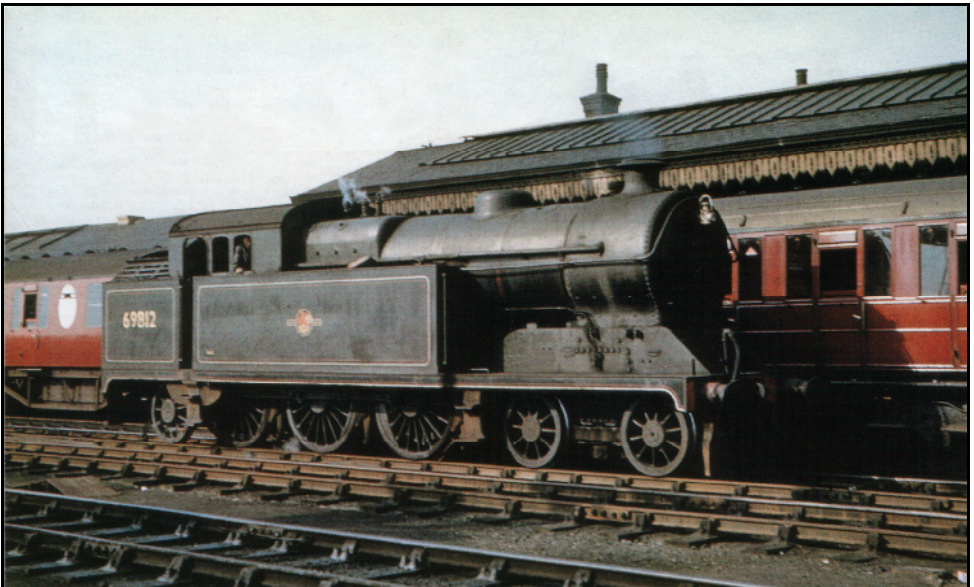
Reproduced by kind permission of John Lee





Above – BR class A5/1 4-6-2T no. 69821 at Derby in May 1959. Built by the LNER at Gorton in 1923, from a GCR order, as no. 5006. photo: J.B. McCann

Below – BR class A5/1 4-6-2T no. 69812 at Grantham in July 1958. Built by the GCR at Gorton in 1912 as no. 452. Became LNER no. 5452. photo: C.J.B. Sanderson



The class Q4 0-8-0 and class Q1 0-8-0T

by Ron Fareham

This locomotive was Robinson's first essay in an eight-wheeled coupled design and was first built in 1902. The boiler and firebox were slightly smaller than in the O4 and the firebox was not so high. All the boilers were saturated when built, but a plan to fit them all with superheaters was started in 1914 but for some reason it was never finished; nine engines remained saturated to the end. The last Q4 was withdrawn in 1951. There were slide valve and piston valve versions, mostly the former. The slide valves were of the balanced type and so no difficulty was experienced when notching up steam. The balance of cylinders, heating surface and grate area was well matched and the steaming qualities were excellent.

There were 41 of these engines at Mexborough in 1923 out of a total of 89, so that Mexborough, as the main "coal shed" had the lion's share. They were called "Old Tinies" to distinguish them from the O4s which were also called "Tinies". There were only 8 left in 1940 and they were used turn and turn about with the O4s, as the difference in loading was only 5 or 6 wagons. The Q4 was a class 6 for loading. The one exception to this arrangement was the Elsecar branch which served both Cortonwood (famous for its part in the '84 pit strike) and Elsecar collieries. On this branch, the O4 was barred because of weight restriction. The limiting feature was an old lifting bridge across the old Dearne and Dove Canal which was raised by a windlass and chains whenever a barge was to pass. The cast iron beams across the top of the winding gantry had the words "SOUTH YORKSHIRE" cast into them. This was the only surviving artefact I knew of with this inscription and it denoted the original South Yorkshire Railway company that operated the branch. It was worthy of preservation, but it never survived. The canal was disused in my time and I never saw the lifting bridge in operation. The canal was filled in after the Second World War, the lifting bridge dismantled, and the larger O4s worked the branch thereafter.

The Q4 class had all the reliable Robinson features of the O4 class; free-steaming boiler, good dry sanding gear, good injectors, surefooted, and the same semi-circular fire door "trap". The one thing to be watched with the saturated engines, especially with Mexborough water, was priming. The water level had to be kept low, particularly when the engine was nearing a boiler washout.

There was a development with this class in the early 1940s when 13 of them were converted to tank engines. Their boilers were shortened and the superheaters removed. This was done in order, so it was said, to (a) create a new class of heavy shunting engine and (b) to release a number of tenders (steel was in short supply at this time) for use on some new class O3 2-8-0s then being built. Such was the statement released to the railway press. None of this batch of O3s actually appeared with a GC tender, as the brake systems were incompatible (GN vacuum and GC steam). I understand that an O3 and a GC tender were placed together in Doncaster Works for photographic purposes but not coupled together! However, soon afterwards the GC tenders did start to appear, painted green behind one or two 'Hunt' class D49s, working from Botanic Gardens shed in Hull. In the latter days of steam traction the authorities would never have got away with such a cosmetic statement about the disposition of locomotive tenders, as the lynx-eyed spotters would have rumbled them.

The rebuilds from Q4 tender engines to Q1 tanks could never be regarded as a success by any stretch of the imagination and Edward Thompson lost quite a few Brownie points with Mexborough men over this scheme. Eight Q1s were sent to Mexborough in 1944 and were put on the Wath-Annesley coal trains. They only worked as far as Rotherwood Up Yard, a distance of 16 miles, from which point the trains were worked forward by Darnall men with a fresh engine. The Q1s then worked back to Wath from the Rotherwood Down Yard. They came to Mexborough at a time when Hitler's V1 flying bombs were landing on London and the men promptly labelled them "Doodlebugs", the

Cockney name for the flying bombs. This name stuck for their entire life, at least at Mexborough.

The LNER 1944 Loading Book lists the Q1s as class 6 for loading, the same as the Q4 tender engines. Now, whoever was responsible for this Q1 loading classification could not have had much idea about unbraked train working, as they had obviously based the load on tractive effort only, which was the same as the tender engines.

The water capacity of the Q1s was only 1,500 gallons compared to the 3,250 gallons of the tender engines. All the superheaters were removed from the tank engines, which exacerbated the water problem still further. The position was that whatever their capacity as a heavy shunting loco, as a train engine they were a complete failure.

The route from Wath Yard to Rotherwood, although short at 16 miles, had many gradients. Also in the 1940s it was a very busy line, heavily occupied with coal and general freight traffic in addition to frequent passenger services running over the entire route. This meant that progress was slow and intermittent. The order of the day was to be diverted into every loop, backed up into block sidings, run onto branch ends etc. so as to give a clear path to more important trains. In practice it meant that a driver with 1,760 gallons of water less in the tank than an O4 and a saturated boiler was ultra-cautious about the water situation. The presence of lifting injectors made the situation even worse as they sometimes refused to work when the water level in the tanks became too low. The upshot of all this was that drivers felt unable to pass a water column without stopping. What this did for train regulation on a busy line can best be left to the imagination.

The most serious fault was braking, with nearly half the braking effort from the tender removed. On the return journey from Rotherwood the 1 in 72 gradient approaching Attercliffe Junction was the main trap which resulted in many run-bys with a full class 6 load.

This disastrous episode was finally brought to an end in 1946 when all eight locos were bundled off to Frodingham to do trip work between the various yards and where there was no shortage of water columns. By 1959 they had all been withdrawn.



LNER class Q4 0-8-0 no. 5137. Built by Kitson & Co. in 1904 as GCR class 8A. Superheated with 21in cylinders and piston valves in 1921. The original 3,250 gallon tender was replaced with the 4,000 gallon tender in 1924. Height reduced to LNER loading gauge in 1930 (as shown in photo). Shed allocation in 1948 was Barnsley. Withdrawn 1949 as no. 63214.



LNER class Q4 0-8-0 no. 5044 at Guide Bridge in 1924. Built by the GCR at Gorton in 1909 as class 8A with 4,000 gallon tender. Superheated 1924. No anti-vacuum valve. Low dome and short 1' 3" LNER chimney fitted (as shown in photo). Rebuilt as Q1/2 (longer bunker) in 1944. Withdrawn 1958 as 69931 at Selby shed. photo: Whitworth 4823



BR class Q1/2 0-8-0T no. 69935. Built by Kitson & Co. in 1904 as GC class 8A no.147. Became LNER class Q4 no.5147. Rebuilt as Q1/2 (longer bunker) in 1945. This was one of the Mexborough locos and one of the last to be withdrawn in 1959 from Frodingham shed. photo: E. Lowden Collection

On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

During the 40th anniversary year of the ending of BR steam in 1968, history was made over the preserved GC line from Loughborough to Quorn and return on the 21st September when the first newly constructed steam locomotive to be built in the UK for over 50 years, based on the LNER Peppercorn A1 Pacific and numbered 60163, *Tornado* made its first test runs over the route leaving Quorn at 10:15 with the first of five special trains that day. After more successful trials the loco was then moved to York for further tests over the main line network and on the 6th November worked a test train from York to Barrow Hill via Sheffield departing shortly after 22:00 and routed via Darnall. Then during the early hours of the 7th returned to York via Mexborough.

Also during September steam has been observed on several occasions at Guide Bridge as follows; on the 5th no.45231 passed through en route from Grosmont to Crewe. This was followed by LNER A4 Pacific no.60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* on an excursion from Scarborough to Crewe on the 8th, this being followed on Sunday 30th by no.45407 on a Buxton to Manchester Victoria excursion routed over the GC from Hyde Rd to Ashburys.

The autumn Sandite workings have brought some unusual loco combinations to the Sheffield area. Between the 5th and 7th November nos.37038/37607 were observed on the Penistone line and week commencing 10th saw no.37038 paired with no.20302. Adhesion has again been a serious problem on the Deepcar branch with trains being stuck between Neepsend and Oughtibridge on at least six occasions during the month, the worst incident was on the 13th November when no.66059 with 1,200 tons left Aldwarke at 18:45 but was continuously slipping beyond Neepsend and with no other locos available to assist the crew had to manually sand the track with the result that the train did not reach Deepcar until 03:00 on the Friday morning! As a result of the problems on the branch, Tuesday 25th saw an additional sanding trip from York to Deepcar arriving at 19:50 worked by nos.20301/02, the first class 20 locos to have worked over the branch since the early 1990s.

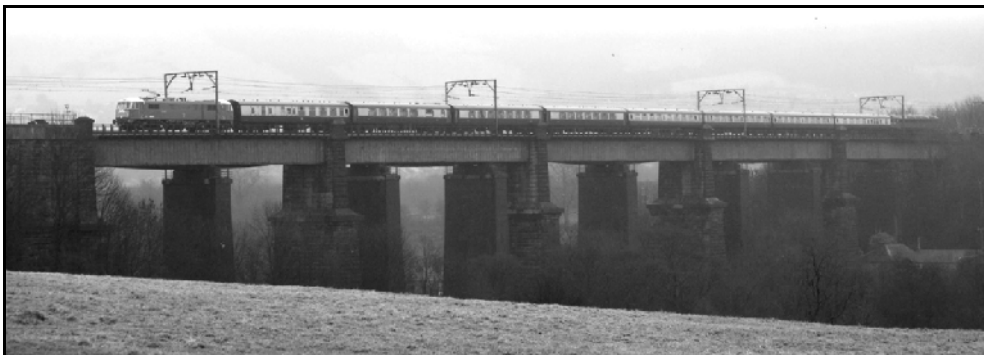
Despite the current recession, traffic to Stocksbridge Steelworks remains healthy and since November an additional working on Wednesday and Friday has run, leaving Aldwarke at 12:30.

One of the most interesting events over GC lines in recent years took place on Saturday 20th December when an excursion from Birmingham to Manchester made an additional run to Hadfield and return. The train was hauled by electric class 86 no.86259 and assisted in the rear to Hadfield by no.47773 in green livery with an 8 coach set which included several Pullman Coaches. The train passed Dinting at 12:39 and returned passing through Broadbottom just after 13:00 with the Class 47 leading. This is possibly the first time that a class 86 has worked over this route and possibly one of the very few occasions that electric locos have used this route since the Woodhead closure in 1981.

It is also reported that during November a Network Rail inspection train ran to Glossop and Hadfield around midnight and was worked by DRS class 37 locos nos.37069/37423.

From the new timetable in December a new hourly service is running between Leeds and Nottingham via Barnsley. As a result class 158 units are no longer employed on a regular basis on weekday services over the Penistone line, but are still seen at weekends on a variety of workings.

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.



*Class 86 no.86259 'Les Ross' crossing Dinting viaduct on 20th Dec. 2008 with a Vintage Trains special that ran from Birmingham to Manchester. This add-on excursion took the train to Hadfield and back.
photo: Jonathan Stevenson*



Before the Woodhead electrification: LNER electric EM1 no.6000 in Holland 1947. photo: Bill Gee

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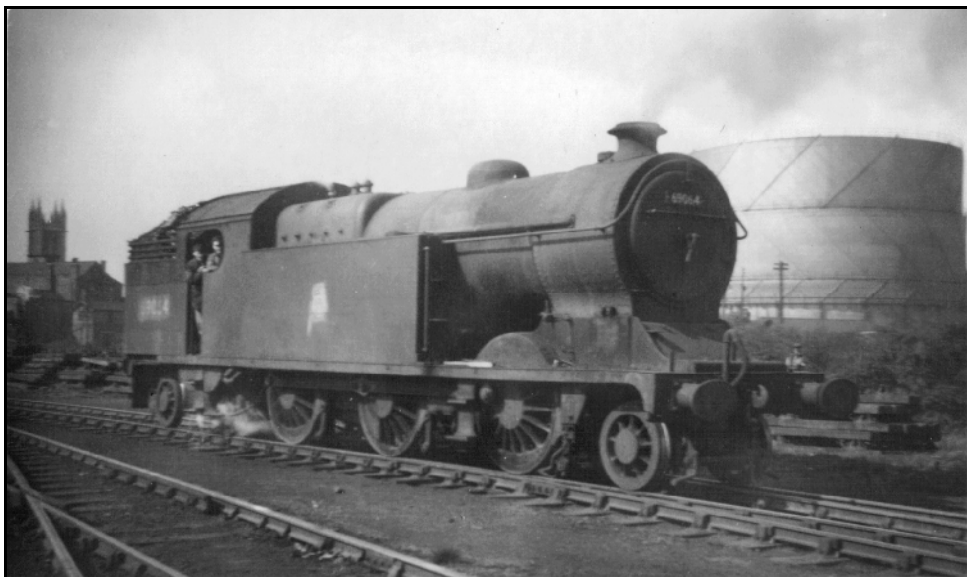
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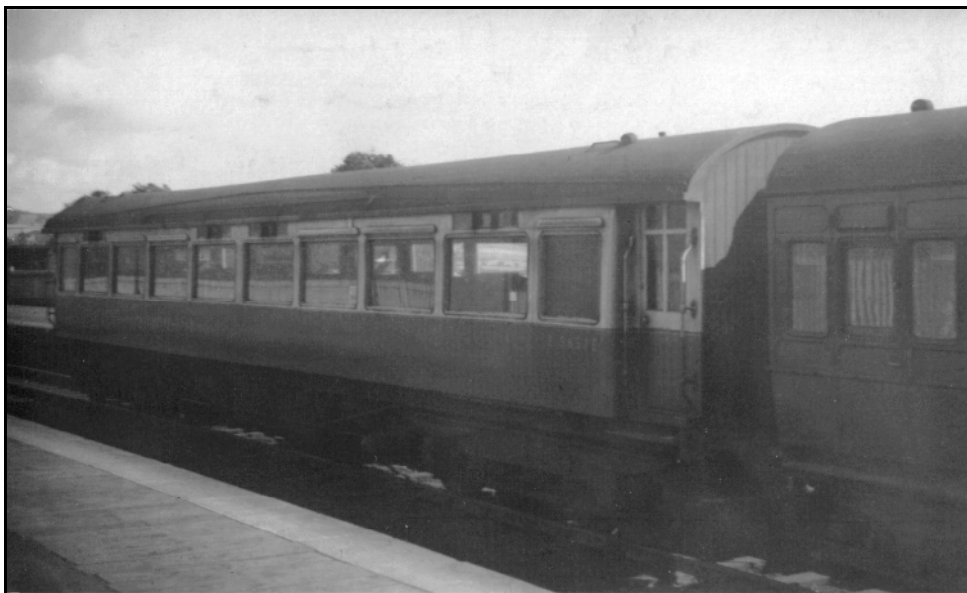
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A selection of photos submitted by Bill Gee



BR class L3 2-6-4T no. 69064 at Frodingham 20 Sept 1953.



Ex-GC 'Barnum' coach E5657E at Inverkeithing on an Edinburgh train 14 Aug 1953.



Dawes Lane signal box, Scunthorpe, taken from an RCTS Railtour on 20 June 1954.



Checker House crossing in 1960.

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High Marnham update by Chris Booth

The only recent activity on the LD&ECR past Thoresby has been an officers' inspection special traversing the line from Thoresby as far as Tuxford on 10th February. This was 2Z37 York to High Marnham formed of saloon 975025 *Caroline*, hauled by DRS no. 37423. The line is not yet in use for testing but will be known as the "High Marnham Rail Vehicle Development Centre" (RVDC) when it does reopen. All the semaphore and colour light signalling between Thoresby and the end of the line has now been removed and donated to the Great Central Railway. The end of February will see a weed killing and vegetation clearance train working up and down for a week.



37423 propelling 975025 past the site of Ollerton Colliery on 10 February 2009. photo: Chris Booth

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Improvements to Stalybridge

by Paul White

Our local paper the *Tameside Advertiser* reports that the final part of the improvements to Stalybridge Station have been completed. The report as in the *Tameside Advertiser* of 25.12.08 is as follows

"£1.5m Refit is on Track"

A striking new entrance has been unveiled at Stalybridge train station marking the completion of a £1.5m upgrade. Transport chiefs and rail bosses jointly funded the project to transform the station's entrance hall and ticket office. Passengers are now greeted by a new glass-fronted waiting area, with seating and departure information on hi-tech screens. Official marked parking bays have been introduced, along with a new taxi pick-up area.

Councillor Alan Whitehead, GMPTA spokesman said, "Stalybridge is already one of the most well-used stations in Greater Manchester. I hope that the new-look station will persuade even more people to consider giving their local train service a go. I'm delighted that these new facilities are now in place. It is great news for passengers and it is great news for Stalybridge, as it provides a wonderful first impression for visitors. We are committed to working with train operators to improve people's experiences of using train services. Thanks to this partnership Stalybridge now has a first-rate station to be proud of."

GMPTA and First TransPennine Express agreed to jointly fund the £675,000 scheme. The project is part of a wider £1.5m overhaul of the station which began last year when the platforms were raised and the toilets, information services and shelters on the westbound platform were improved. Station Manager Paul Jackson said, "It is fantastic to see the outcome of this investment for Stalybridge. Thank you to all passengers and staff for their patience during building work."

Of course I am pleased at the improvements carried out to what is still largely an MS&L pattern station. The new entrance replaces the rotting structure erected in the late 1960s.

The Stalybridge Branch was built contiguously with the main "Woodhead" line between Manchester and Sheffield and I certainly consider them to be inseparable in historical terms - a view which I know is not shared by all. The original station was built at a cost of £2,079 in 1845, but was soon considered to be inadequate. In 1849 the MS&L and the L&YR were in agreement that a joint station, but with separate booking offices, should be built on the site of the MS&L station. The station was "enlarged and improved" jointly with the L&Y in 1858.

Within nine years of these "improvements" the inhabitants of Stalybridge, led by the Mayor were complaining of its shortcomings. The result was that the MS&L refused to spend any money on the station without contributions from the L&Y and the LNWR which made an end-on connection with the MS&L and L&Y at the east end of the station. The result was that the L&Y withdrew from the joint station and built its own station immediately north of the joint station, this taking place in 1869. The MS&L then spent £5,000 on "improvements", described by Dow as the building of a new footbridge and the closure of the refreshment rooms!

The station as we know it today is largely the result of agitation by Stalybridge Town Council in 1877, which threatened to send a deputation to the Board of Trade and the Home Secretary. As a result, the MS&L and the LNWR agreed to build a new "joint" station, and the L&Y relinquished any rights to it on payment of £6,250. The new station was part of a package of improvements including a new LNWR line from Denton to Stalybridge and a new joint goods depot. The station itself cost £23,156 and its architecture is pure MS&L.

While much of the infrastructure from those times has now disappeared or been put to other uses (the joint goods yard is now a "waste transfer station") the majority of the station survives with many original features, and of course is famous world-wide for its buffet!



The old (above) and the new (below) at Stalybridge.

photos: Paul White



The use of the Telegraph on the GCR

by Peter Wortley

This article first appeared in Forward 146.

Many railwaymen, signalmen and station staff know of the Telegraph, but it doesn't seem to be explained to those who are too young to remember. GCR men on the London Extension seem to have used it differently to other railways, and that is where the mists of time and the fact that it was so common is the problem.

Before the telephone became common, communication was by the Electric Telegraph. The GNR in 1852 installed the system in their signal boxes to indicate 'Passenger Train In', 'Passenger Train Out' etc by a needle pointing to the words. It was a forerunner of the Block Instrument with which most people are familiar. The LNWR also had a similar system in place.



*GNR telegraph instruments are quite common at auction. This one still has a card attached listing locations between Hatfield and Sandy.
photo: GC Railwayana Auctions*

In 1869 a Railway Telegraph Superintendent, C.E. Spagnoletti, invented a single needle instrument where the needle was directly activated by a movement of a handle. The needle strikes one of the two sounders which are a part of the instrument. Therefore it is similar in appearance to the Bright's bell instrument but without a bell or a double-tapper key. I think this is why there can be some confusion as the two instruments look similar except for a sloping table above the handle and two pins (sounders) sticking out either side of the upper part of the one needle. Plus of course the dial isn't quartered as with the Block Telegraph. The instrument was used to send messages in a Morse code along the line. The sounds made by the needle striking the sounders allowed the message to be read. Each sounder had a different tone and unlike a bell gave a 'tink' or 'tonk' sound which indicated a dot or a dash in the Morse code. The Morse was written down, transcribed into words and then by reference to a book of code words the original message could be understood and acted upon.

Even in 1958, British Railways issued a small grey book of 88 pages, "Standard Codes for Telegrams", with some 1,200 code words and explanations, arranged by subject. It also listed Abbreviated Railway Telegraphic Titles, and some Station Abbreviations. For a GNR signalman to pass out of signalling school he had to achieve a speed of at least 18 words per minute.

On most railways this device was installed in the signal box. The GNR used them extensively, and I know that the LNWR and LMS boxes also had them. It seems that station staff, both goods and passenger, would write out their message or query and the signalman would send it. Any reply or message received by the signalman would be written down and collected to be decoded.

On the London Extension at Rugby station, the Telegraph equipment was in the booking hall, not the signal box. Also, not every station had the instrument. Rugby and Loughborough did and I assume Woodford, Leicester and Nottingham would have it as they were control centres. Rugby and Loughborough were reporting stations and the signalmen using the omnibus telephone system would advise the other signalmen in their section of the traffic details as he received them. So far I have found out very little as to why Rugby had the instrument in the booking hall. It is obvious from the Code Book that most queries are to do with the working of the railway eg ordering wagons,

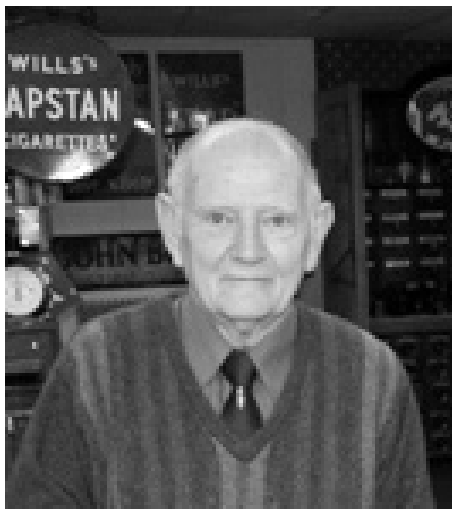
gaining information on the price of a ticket to an unusual destination, or asking for extra coaches to be attached to a specific train, and such like, not signalling. Messages could be up to 200 words long. Was it just the London Extension that used the equipment in this way, or did the whole of the GCR use the Telegraph from the booking hall? It seems odd that not every station had a Telegraph, even if it had a goods yard, so how were queries communicated and resolved?

Staff would have been supplied with operating instructions and a full list of abbreviations and station codes. It also seems that each area had its own list of codes pertinent to its requirements.

It seems that the heritage railway at Loughborough has two of these instruments and is wishing to set them up as a working pair. The Severn Valley has one on display but I am reliably informed that no explanation was forthcoming from them regarding its use. One of the staff was very impressed to see an ex-GNR signaller operating it. Wouldn't it be great if the GCR at Loughborough had such a display with the codes and a simple message to send and an answer to send back? Now that would be different!

Museum curator flabbergasted at MBE **As reported on www.grimsby.co.uk on 5th January 2009**

"I think the word is flabbergasted." That is how Immingham's Brian Mummery described his reaction to finding out that he had been awarded an MBE in the New Year's honours list. Mr Mummery, the honorary curator of Immingham Museum, has been honoured in recognition of his voluntary service to heritage in Lincolnshire. Mr Mummery (71), of Alderney Way, said, "I couldn't believe it. You think these things happen to other people. I feel privileged and humble. To be recognised for the work I've done is very nice. I have been curator at the museum for 28 years and I've always looked on it as a pleasure and a hobby." Mr Mummery, who took over as curator of the museum in 1980, said, "There's a lot of local history in Immingham, with the docks, the railway, and the Pilgrim Fathers. I enjoy researching and preparing the displays and I will carry on until I'm physically unable to do it." Now Mr Mummery is looking forward to his big day at Buckingham Palace. He said, "It will be a completely new experience and hopefully I will get to meet the Queen. I'm sure it will be a day to remember."



I'm sure all our members would like to congratulate Brian on his award. His commitment to the museum at Immingham is obvious to all those who have had the opportunity to visit Immingham and meet him. Let's hope Brian's health allows him to continue the work for a few years more.

Brian is co-author with Ian Butler of **Immingham and the Great Central Legacy**, a book that describes the important part played by the Great Central Railway in North East Lincolnshire. All those interested in the history of the GCR should have a copy on their shelves. The book is readily available from booksellers, eg on Amazon it is £6.59.

**Photos taken around Kirkby South Junction, Notts
by Frank Ashley and submitted by John E. Pollard**



BR class A5 4-6-2T no. 69809 crosses the Midland's Pye Bridge-Kirkby line on the approach to Kirkby South Jnct with a Mansfield Central-Nottingham Victoria local.



BR class A3 4-6-2 no. 60048 'Doncaster' with an up train passing under Lindley Lane bridge between Kirkby South Jnct and Annesley Tunnel in May 1952.

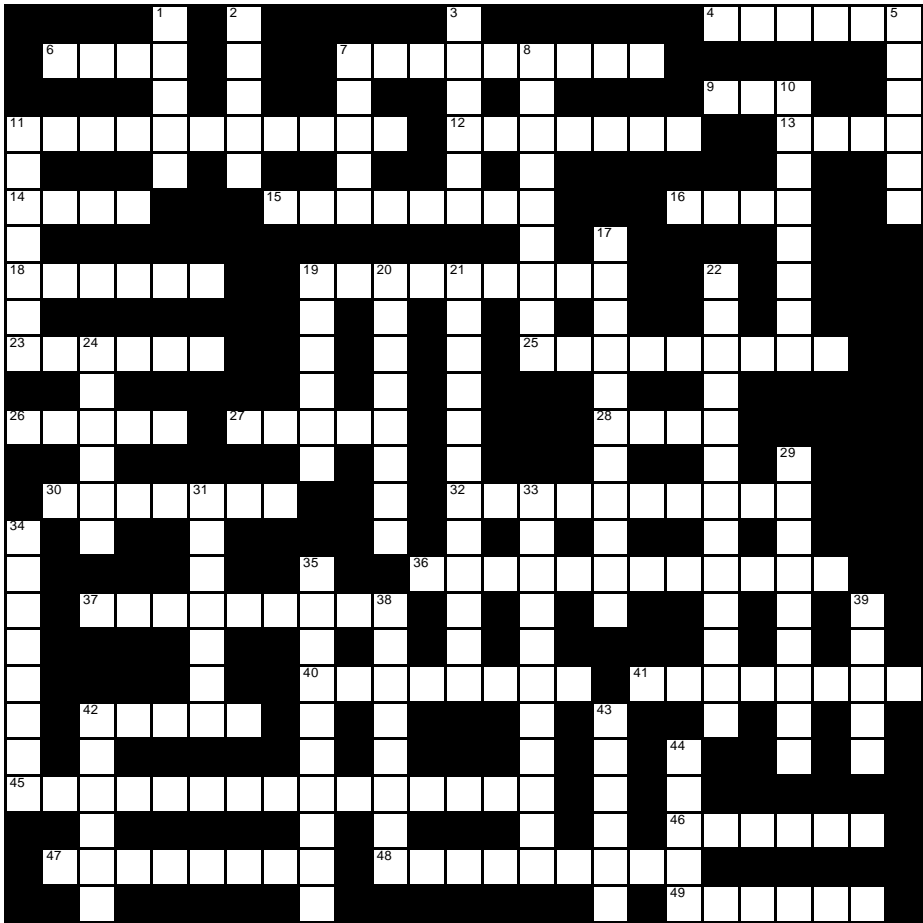


BR class N7/1 0-6-2T no. 69654 has just left Kirkby South Jct with a Nottingham Victoria-Mansfield Central local in July 1953. The GC main line is in the foreground.



BR class V2 2-6-2 no. 60890 with a Swansea-York working has just passed Kirkby South Jct. The Mansfield Railway is at a higher level on the left. The loco is carrying the 38E (Woodford Halse) shed plate.

Crossword (*Forward 159*) : Answers in the back of this issue.



Across

- 4 Alternative to a deep cutting. (6)
- 6 Shape of GC cabside numbers. (4)
- 7 System of automatic braking invented by Robinson. (9)
- 9 By way of. (3)
- 11 Fast coal trains between Annesley and Woodford. (11)
- 12 Nickname for S1 tanks. (7)
- 13 Boiler-top cover for regulator valve. (4)
- 14 Wrote "The Making of a Railway". (4)
- 15 Viaduct over the LNR line between Banbury and Towcester. (8)
- 16 A set of coaches. (4)
- 18 Platform type common on the London Extension. (6)
- 19 Length between outer wheels. (9)
- 23 Support for signals. (6)
- 25 Signal box in Scunthorpe. (5,4)
- 26 Wedge to stop wagons moving. (5)
- 27 GC station name on a D49. (5)

- 28 Inventor of pop safety valves. (4)
- 30 Long wheelbase mineral wagons. (7)
- 32 MSJ&A station in Manchester. (6,4)
- 36 The smaller companies that make up a larger undertaking. (12)
- 37 In original condition. (9)
- 40 "Watkin's Folly" was a white one. (8)
- 41 Letters in place of words. (8)
- 42 The only Earl's name on a GC 4-4-0. (5)
- 45 A reorganisation undertaken to improve economy. (15)
- 46 Required by railway companies to operate over other companies' lines. (6)
- 47 Site of an ordnance depot on the LD&ECR. (8)
- 48 Movements between sheds. (9)
- 49 Ticket valid for travel at any time during a fixed period. (6)

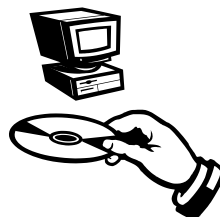
Down

- 1 Wartime livery. (5)
- 2 Could be number, builder's or shed. (5)
- 3 Bridge made out of steel. (6)
- 5 Style and colour of painting. (6)
- 7 Well away from towns. (5)
- 8 Station on the London Extension that was partly built but never opened. (9)
- 10 Grip on the rails. (8)
- 11 Term used to refer to any railway movement. (7)
- 17 Current body in charge of UK railway infrastructure. (7,4)
- 19 First station east of Shirebrook on the LD&ECR. (6)
- 20 Card ticket used for many years on Britain's railways. (8)
- 21 Present home of 63601. (12)
- 22 Pennine rock. (9,4)
- 24 Less than standard gauge. (6)
- 29 Written by the editor. (9)
- 31 Earl of Fitzwilliam's branch. (7)
- 33 Nickname for LNER class B5. (4,7)
- 34 First on the scene when a new railway is to be built. (8)
- 35 Height, width, length etc. (10)
- 38 Doncaster Works. (3,5)
- 39 Allows one-way movement only. (5)
- 42 Leeds based locomotive builders. (6)
- 43 First part of a locomotive to be built. (6)
- 44 GC number plates and nameplates were made of this metal. (5)

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*).



Readers' forum

from Gerald Summerfield, Saltdean, Sussex

Re. *Forward 158* p43: letter from Reg Instone 'A station master's memories of Fimmere'

The telegraph instruments Reg Instone refers to had been removed by the time I arrived at Fimmere in 1952. However one of my staff, who was almost retiring age when I arrived, had been at the station for many years and did mention them to me but I cannot remember what year he said that they were removed. Apart from the usual GPO telephone in the booking office the only other phone in the room was the circuit phone which covered the area from Grendon Underwood Junction in the south and Woodford Halse in the north. Any call for Fimmere on this circuit was answered by the signalman and then if required put the caller through to the booking office. When the signal box was closed for a short period every Sunday the phone was switched through to the booking office thus enabling the station staff to enquire as to the running of trains etc.

from Peter Wortley, Beverley, East Yorkshire

Re. *Forward 158* p43: letter from Reg Instone 'A station master's memories of Fimmere'

The subject of the Telegraph keeps raising its head. Mr Instone seems to have missed some of the letters in *Forward* on this subject and unfortunately the subject wasn't well covered from my submissions. So here goes again, with some other information which is applicable.

The Telegraph was used for communication between principal stations as shown in bold type in the timetables, eg Nottingham, Loughborough, Leicester, Rugby, Woodford, etc. Therefore, the station master at Fimmere would not have had access to one, as the "position and parent station" was "Brackley and Aylesbury" according to the "Handbook of Stations". The station master at a principal station was responsible for the smaller stations either side of the station at which he was based. Therefore that is where the Telegraph was.

Likewise the signal box at these sites was a reporting box and the omnibus telephone system allowed communication, train updates, to and from the applicable control centre. Other signal boxes under the parent reporting box/station would use the telephone to update if needed, and the reporting box could pass the message on if needed and vice versa.

Editor's note: For clarification the short article by Peter Wortley on the Telegraph which appeared in *Forward 146* has been reprinted in this issue on p38.

Re. The GCR and the Channel Tunnel

I heard with interest a knowledgeable person on the radio holding forth on the GCR trackbed being built for Continental traffic and with links to a Channel Tunnel. When are these myths going to be dumped? The so called Berne Gauge didn't happen until a convention in 1914, and if anyone wants to check dimensions, the London Extension tunnels are tight for 1952 British Standards as are the bridge clearances. If in doubt check out the dimensions on the original survey drawings on the Leicestershire Railway Archive web site. Then consider that today it is the kinetic envelope which is bigger than the loading gauge, hence the yellow line on today's platforms.

The GCR did not get involved with the original Channel Tunnel. Watkin used another railway company and his position in Parliament to get the necessary authorisation and funding. Check out that lovely book "Sir Edward Watkin 1819-1901" by John Neville Greaves

from Reg Instone, Shirley, Solihull

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

Richard Morton and John Quick (*Forward 158* p44) are quite correct in that the location is Swindon; the station building and footbridge in the background are distinctive. The

track layout fits as well. However, this seems to me to raise some questions, which to some extent depend on whether the card is a painting or a coloured-in photograph. I think the latter were fairly common. The only regular "Great Central Express" to pass through Swindon in the down direction was the 10.57am Leicester to Bristol, introduced in July 1904, which was extended to Taunton in the summer period, from 1905. This arrived at Swindon at 1.18pm and apparently combined there with the 11.55 ex-Paddington, going forward at 1.28pm. So why does the postcard show the train running through on the down main line which had no platform?

From the start the train conveyed through carriages from Halifax and from Leeds to Weston-Super-Mare (Ilfracombe in the summer period). These were attached to a Manchester to Marylebone train and transferred at Leicester. It is possible that by 1906 the train ran combined to Woodford and divided there, at least in the winter. The GWR "Programme of Working of Coaches in Through Trains" for summer 1909 shows that the train was mostly GWR stock, only the Leeds to Ilfracombe through carriage being GC stock. It should have had only four carriages at Swindon, a van third and third from Leicester, the GC brake composite from Leeds and the GW brake composite from Halifax, with an extra GW van being added at that station. I cannot imagine that the loading was any greater in the winter or in earlier years, but it might have carried more vehicles by 1914. The postcard appears to show at least five vehicles, possibly more.

A list of photos by William Bradshaw includes one of this train at Abbey Lane on 26th March 1913 at 11.2am, with an 11B locomotive, four coaches and two vans - described as "Manchester to Bristol". The public timetables for October 1914 describe it as a through train from Halifax to Bristol, rather than through carriages as it was in October 1910, so one might assume that it had now acquired sufficient vehicles to justify this. It also arrived at Swindon and Bristol about ten minutes later than before. What the stock was at this time, I have not yet been able to ascertain. So I would suggest a date nearer 1914 than 1909, although 1905 to 1915 (roughly) was the heyday of the picture postcard.

If the locomotive is indeed a "Saint" (someone else had better confirm this as I am no expert), then any date after 1905 is possible. The GW engine probably came on the train at Oxford, although in some cases they did work through to Woodford or Leicester. Even when all the details of the workings are known, it still seems a little perverse to describe the train as "Great Central Express" when nothing owned by the GC company is visible!

There was also the 12.40am Leicester to Bristol, which ran from August 1900 until at least 1911 and arrived at Swindon at 3.45am. I think this can be discounted, though, as the subject of a picture!

from Bill Fay, Hook, Hampshire

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

Mr Armstrong (*Forward* 158 p46) postulates the possibility that the scheme to build a hump shunting yard at Wath originated from a visit to the USA. While still with the L&SWR Sam Fay visited the USA in 1899, following which pneumatic signalling was first installed on that line. It is possible that he had also seen hump shunting during the visit but I can find nothing to confirm this. His next visit to the USA was in 1906, too late to have an influence on Wath. Obviously it is equally possible that another GCR official had seen the potential. Speculation, I know, but given Sam Fay's character and track record it is highly likely that he would have backed such a scheme whole heartedly.

Editor's note: Bill Fay has submitted an article about Sam Fay's time on the L&SWR which will appear in a future issue.

from Bill Tooke, Plymouth, Devon

Re. GC coat of arms

I always notice the fine GC Coat of Arms on the cover of *Forward*. Is there any possibility that someone somewhere can make replicas in either metal or wood? I am

really looking at a finished article ready to mount on a wall. I recall seeing an example of what I am thinking of in the cafe on Loughborough station. It was still on display the last time I was there when *Tornado* was being trialed.

If there were to be enough interest shown by members then perhaps a firm would be prepared to produce these items for the society to sell.

Editor's note: This will be discussed at the next committee meeting on 21st March. Meanwhile, please let me know what you think.

Re. photos of the Mansfield Railway

Concerning the Mansfield Railway, I have been attempting for some time to obtain photographs of this line with little success. I wonder if any readers can help.

from Chris Booth, Worksop, Notts

Re. coach in garden at Kirton

I was recently invited by a friend to visit the home of an ex-signalman who lives in Kirton near Boughton, Notts. Now in his 80s, Eric once worked on the LD&EC line at Clifton, Skellingthorpe and Boughton.

In his back garden is a railway coach, shown in the accompanying photos. Eric says the coach was there when he bought the plot of land in the early 1950s. He even lived in it for a few years while he had a bungalow built. The coach looks like it was once on a 6-wheel chassis, but has has been on a Tilling bus chassis ever since Eric acquired it. The chassis still has rubber tyres! An inspection of the coach revealed the number 2157 painted on the inside of a door. Internally it is practically gutted and Eric uses it as a store.

As Eric lives about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the site of Boughton station, it can be surmised that this is where it was hauled from, or possibly Boughton Ordnance Depot. This could suggest an LD&EC or a GNR origin, who knows! If it is LD&EC, then I think there will be several people interested in saving it as there is only one in preservation. Can any reader shed light on the origins of this coach?



Coach in a garden at Kirton



photos: Chris Booth

from Stephen C. Corbett, Trowbridge, Wiltshire

Re. *Forward 157* p4: 'S.W.A.Newton – Photographer of the London Extension' by David Reidy.

Some time ago now I wrote to the Leicestershire & Rutland Record office to enquire when all S.W.Newton's GCR-related pictures would be available upon the 'Three Centuries of Transport' site and about progress in improving the sometimes sketchy captions of the images.

I suppose we would all agree the site is a wonderful resource and a huge improvement on the time when, if we wanted to study the Newton pictures, we would have to travel to Leicester to do so.

However, the site is beginning to look tired and the pictures require improved cross-classification. Some pictures cry-out for better explanations. A greater range of maps and plans, (for example inclusion of the relevant OS maps issued just after the line was built), would improve its quality and usefulness too.

I am providing the reply I received from the Chief Archivist for your interest. It is self-explanatory. I am sure members will be disappointed to hear that no further work is intended. There is an ominous air of finality in her tone too, but to her credit at least Dr Bonney has not minced her words.

This raises two important questions for all of us who have a passionate interest in the GCR: (a) is it possible for us to raise sufficient money to fund the development and completion of the site; and (b) if the answer to that is 'no', could GCR experts themselves contribute to improving the captioning of the pictures which are already available?

letter from the Chief Archivist

Dear Mr Corbett

I don't think your message from late July has received a reply from here, and I do apologise for this. I think it fell between the tracks when I went on leave in August, and I'm trying to pick up the pieces now.

The short answer to your question is that no content is being added to the Newton part of the website, because, like so many good things, there was an excellent project with funding which ran out a few years ago, staff departed with the end of the funding, and all we do is try to answer enquiries about the content of the site as best we can.

Inevitably the site begins to look jaded, and it is a disappointment for railway enthusiasts, but I'm afraid it's something we can't do anything about at this time.

You are right - there are other Newton railway images elsewhere in our collections which aren't loaded on to the site, and they're only available to people who visit our office to see them. It is frustrating, and I am in sympathy with you, but unable to revive the project.

Yours sincerely, Margaret Bonney (Dr)

Chief Archivist, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

from Irving Smith, Sheffield

Re. Success of Chiltern Railways

Well done to all those who, in *Forward 158*, contributed news about what is happening on the Great Central today and tomorrow. Congratulations to Chiltern Railways on their magnificent and symbolic achievement of conveying passengers north of Aylesbury. Whilst Aylesbury Vale might currently be described as an unstaffed halt, the prospect of a lively station with northbound trains departing for Milton Keynes and beyond is one to relish.

When Chiltern Railways have completed their upgrades to Oxford and High Wycombe, I hope they will turn their attention to Sheffield. After years of scratching around with the possibility of services along the upper Don Valley, we need Chiltern's can-do attitude.

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

Re. 63601 at Loughborough

The photos of 63601 at Loughborough in *Forward 158* reminded me of an occasion when my brother Les and I were watching a video of 63601 in action on the GCR at Loughborough. We were horrified to see the changes that had been made to the locomotive. The smoke box hopper had been removed. The GC regulator had been replaced by a LNW type. The driver had to stand to open it and then we saw the driver (he must have been ex-Midland) push the regulator right over. My brother and I worked on many of these 'Tinies' and none of the drivers stood to open the regulator, they just

stretched their left arm out whilst sat down and eased it open or shut. I never saw a regulator wide open. All Robinson engines could do their work on first regulator; the only time they were wide open was on express passenger work. Even on stopping passengers, unless heavily loaded, they could keep time easily in first regulator.

The Great Central Railway on the Internet

"Three Centuries of Transport" at www.transportarchive.org.uk

Some readers may be confused by the reference to the "Three Centuries of Transport" website in Stephen Corbett's letter on p46. It is also known as the "Transport Archive" and can be found at www.transportarchive.org.uk. The link to 'The Last Main Line' takes you to www.railwayarchive.org.uk which was featured in *Forward 151*. If you then click on the link to buy Newton's photos you are taken to <http://prints.leics.gov.uk>. If you then select 'The Last Main Line' again you finally arrive at http://prints.leics.gov.uk/pics_7469/the-last-main-line.html where you will find the gallery of Newton's photos.

"Railway Stations UK" at <http://railwaystations.fpic.co.uk>

"Rail Tickets Illustrated" at <http://therailticketgallery.fotopic.net>

These are two of the sites compiled by Roger Marks. The first provides a comprehensive alphabetical listing that makes it easy to find photos of a particular UK station. The second features a display of rail tickets that is mind-blowing. Each type has an informative description. Links are given to Roger Marks' other websites. All worth a visit.

"Railway Bridges, Viaducts and Tunnels" at www.leverton.org/tunnels

Another prolific contributor to the web is Nick Leverton. This collection of present-day infrastructure photos includes the tunnels at Woodhead and Nottingham.

Crossword Solution (*Forward 159*)

Across: 4 Tunnel, 6 Oval, 7 Reliostop, 9 Via, 11 Windcutters, 12 Daisies, 13 Dome, 14 Rolt, 15 Culworth, 16 Rake, 18 Island, 19 Wheelbase, 23 Gantry, 25 Dawes Lane, 26 Sprag, 27 Quorn, 28 Ross, 30 Hoppers, 32 Oxford Road, 36 Constituents, 37 Unrebuilt, 40 Elephant, 41 Initials, 42 Kerry, 45 Rationalisation, 46 Access, 47 Boughton, 48 Transfers, 49 Season.

Down: 1 Black, 2 Plate, 3 Girder, 5 Livery, 7 Rural, 8 Swithland, 10 Adhesion, 11 Working, 17 Network Rail, 19 Warsop, 20 Edmonson, 21 Loughborough, 22 Millstone grit, 24 Narrow, 29 Editorial, 31 Elsecar, 33 Fish Engines, 34 Surveyor, 35 Dimensions, 38 The Plant, 39 Valve, 42 Kitson, 43 Frames, 44 Brass.

