

# FORWARD



**The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society**

**No. 162   ~   December 2009**

**Front cover caption**

BR class A5/1 4-6-2T 69808 emerging from Mansfield Road tunnel at the north end of Nottingham Victoria with a local service, probably a Saturday working from Edwinstowe or Mansfield Central, in the late 1950s. No. 69808 was one of the last of the class to be withdrawn in Nov. 1960.

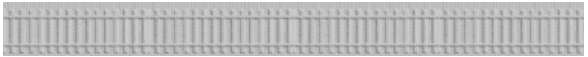


# The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 162 ~ December 2009

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The "Sheffield Special" event at the Royal Victoria Hotel on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September was a great success and brought much positive publicity for the GCRS. A report and photos of the event can be found on pages 26 & 27. The society's Autumn Meeting at Lutterworth on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November may have taken place by the time this issue hits your doormat. It was unfortunate that the details for this event had not been finalised in time to be included in the September issue. I hope that members were able to obtain details from the website or by contacting committee members. Richard Butler has worked hard to organise the event so I hope that everything went well. If you are reading this before the event please make an effort to attend if possible. Details opposite.

If you look at the 'Dates for your diary' section inside the back cover you will notice that the Grimsby & Cleethorpes Railway Group will no longer be functioning after the December meeting. Mike Hartley has organised this group for many years and he deserves our thanks for the commitment he has put in. The group has suffered from a dwindling attendance and Mike thought it time to bring it to a close.

Please can I make a plea to all our members? Try and attend a monthly railway society meeting in your locality. It doesn't really matter what banner the group meets under, visiting speakers and topics cover a broad spectrum of interests whatever group you attend. Also most groups that are part of a larger national organisation eg RCTS will promote membership but they will not insist on it. Can I also encourage those who attend meetings to thank the organiser and the speaker. It's amazing what a difference a few words of thanks can make.

The society now has a Sales Officer. Dave Smith has offered his services and he was co-opted at the committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. As the society's sales activities are quite diverse at the moment it would be good if anyone involved in selling items on behalf of the society contact Dave and let him know what they are doing. One particular member, Andrew David, has been busy co-ordinating the appearance of the GCRS stand at events in the south. You will find a short item about this on p40.

Until recently all copies of *Forward* produced under my editorship have been available for anyone to view or download from the society's website as pdf files. The committee have decided that this is not fair to our members who have paid their subscriptions, a large part of which pays for the production of *Forward*, and have suggested that access be restricted to members only. This has now been done. If you would like access to these files please contact me or any committee member for the log-in name and password (they are universal). Interestingly our membership secretary has received an application for membership from someone who used to download *Forward* but found they could no longer do so without joining the society!

Another aspect of the website that I would like to remind you of is the photo gallery. There are now 30 photos on display. I have had some feedback on caption information but more is welcome. Please have a look and see if you can help.

Please keep sending in your contributions to *Forward*. Articles and photos are welcome whether sent by e-mail or by snail mail. Also please do not hesitate to let me know what you like or don't like about *Forward*.

Finally, make a note your diary for the 2010 AGM. The venue this year is a little special - Marylebone station! Details opposite.

## The Autumn Meeting

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2009  
at the Lutterworth Club, Lower Leicester Road, Lutterworth LE17 4NF

11:15 - Doors open with tea/coffee available.  
11:45 - "The South Yorkshire Joint Railway" by Bob Gellatly  
13:15 - Lunch break  
14:45 - "Lost Railways of Leicestershire" by Geoffrey Kingscote  
16:15 - Meeting ends

A new design of GCR mugs will be available @ £2.99.

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### Welcome to the following new members

Mr M.G. Fisher, Ashted, Surrey  
Mr B.H. Verden, Nuneaton  
Mr S.F. Browne, St Neots, Cambridgeshire  
Mr D. Scargill, Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire  
Mr R.F. Hartley, Elston, Newark, Nottinghamshire

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### Annual General Meeting 2010

In accordance with Section 7(a) of the Society constitution, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010** at **Marylebone Station** starting at 11.00am.

Under Section 9 of the constitution proposals for changes to the constitution, properly signed by the proposer and seconder, should be sent to the Secretary to reach him no later than 27th March 2008.

Under Section 5(c) nominations for the committee, signed by the proposer and seconder and made with the agreement of the nominee, should be sent to the Secretary to reach him no later than 17th April 2008.

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

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

*Brian Slater*



*An assembly of veterans (the GCRS committee?) in front of  
GCR class 8B 4-4-2 no.1084 at Marylebone in 1912.*

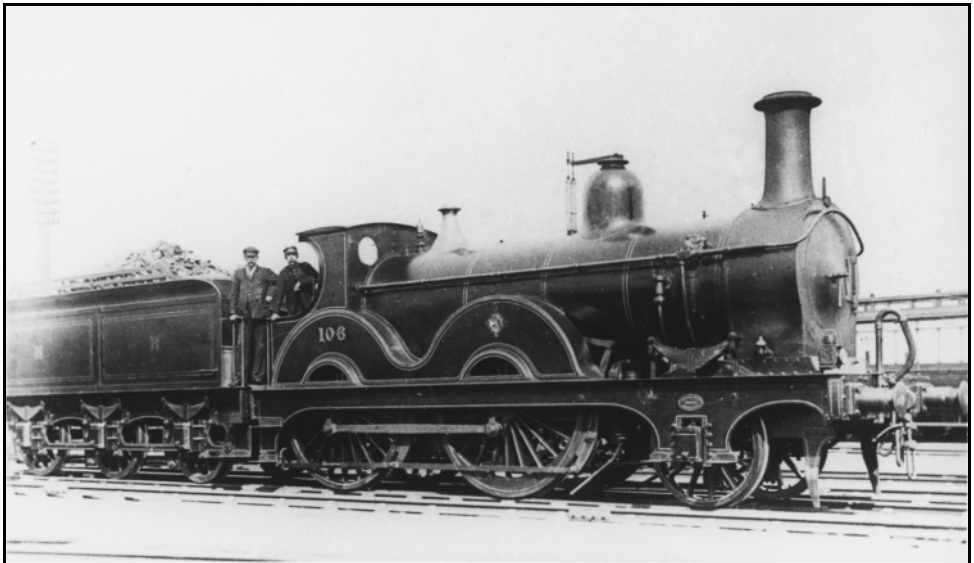


## John G. Robinson and Other Locomotive Artists: Part 1

by Ken Grainger

Funny, isn't it, how the odd chance remark can stick in your mind? One such for me was by our Chairman some years ago now, that there would be no GCRS were it not for the locomotives of John George Robinson. I was a bit taken aback at the time, but on consideration decided that he was right. The GCRS membership must encompass a whole range of interests, but surely there can only be very few, if any, who are not fascinated by the steam locomotive. And I am pretty certain that I will not be alone in paying far more attention to the locomotive's appearance than to "coal consumed per ton-mile" and suchlike: as far as I am concerned the rebuilding of the *Lord Faringdons* with Caprotti valve gear merely turned magnificent engines into ugly ones, and that's an end to it!

In former times, locomotive aesthetics was a keenly debated subject, partisan pundits each championing the distinctive look of "their" railway company's locomotives. That rarely happens nowadays, other than the occasional letter in the railway press proclaiming a Great Western 'Castle' or Gresley A4 to be "the most beautiful ever". Generally, one suspects, these are from people who aren't even aware of the locomotives of that late Victorian/Edwardian Golden Age, when our railways were at their zenith and, connoisseurs agree, locomotives were at their most beautiful. But if that is accepted, what was it that raised locomotive design in that era to such artistic heights?



*Many are of the opinion that S.W.Johnson locomotive beauty reached its peak with his 4-4-0s and 'Spinner' Bogie Singles but, for all their undoubted elegance, arguably his more compact 0-6-0s and 2-4-0s, such as 7ft '1347' class no.106, were even more beautiful. photo: R.K.Blencowe Collection*

One highly respected contributor to the historic railway press commented a while ago that locomotive beauty was merely a matter of "finish, plus a little adornment". With respect, that's a long way wide of the mark; just ask Cinderella and her ugly sisters! Certainly a fine finish, and in those days finishes tended to be very fine, enhanced a pleasing design, but could not of itself create beauty: no amount of burnished metal or Brunswick Green finery could disguise the inherent ugliness of Churchward's freakish experiments, and conversely, the beauty of latter day Golden Age survivors was still fully apparent despite their being all too often filthy and unkempt. As regards

adornment, arguably, unless one counts their (frequently elaborate) lining out, the finest of our locomotives had no extraneous adornment at all, other than their chimney caps and, perhaps, splashers beading or, on occasion, smokebox wing plates. A locomotive's looks stand or fall by its proportions, complemented by the harmonious detail design of its component parts.

In that Golden Age which, like so much else, came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of the Great War, locomotive design had reached a rich maturity. Etruscan steam domes and castellated chimney tops had been consigned to history, and such blind alleys as Crampton's adhesion-less stern wheeler or Stephenson's 'long boiler' had been left behind, but as yet considerations such as loading gauge limitations or the needs of economy were still to appear above the horizon. The size of locomotives of the day was such that the firegrate of a typical 4- or 6-coupled engine would slot neatly between the rear axles and, since its diameter would fit between the largest of driving wheels, the boiler could be pitched at a height which allowed the designer full expression in his boiler mountings, and at which the traditional buffer beam height running plate precisely defined the point of balance.

If one accepts this as a recipe for attractive locomotive design, does it then follow that the greatest artist-engineers is merely a matter of when they were in office? That certainly helped, but the conditions of the day only made locomotive beauty *possible*, still requiring the most exquisite attention to detail. In any case, within a few short years those 'ideal' conditions would no longer apply. To cope with rapidly increasing train loadings, the firegrates of ever-larger locomotives had to extend across and therefore above axle height. Regardless of that, boilers had to be higher pitched anyway, as less and less of their expanding girths could be accommodated between the wheels. The rules were completely rewritten as bigger, higher pitched boilers nudged the loading gauge and allowed progressively less room for boiler mountings: little wonder that the designers of some of our finest Golden Age locomotives were unable to adapt to the



*Johnson obviously considered his customary flowing curves and a Belpaire boiler to be mutually exclusive, nevertheless his class 3 'Belpaire' was a very handsome locomotive. Note the subtly raised running plate and matching tender.*  
photo: Photomatic

changing requirements. John G. Robinson was arguably unique in being in office and producing attractive locomotives in both the Victorian and 'modern' eras.

But that is getting ahead of our subject. The first priority of the locomotive engineer was to provide his employers with locomotives which could carry out the work required of them and as efficiently as possible. That much is obvious, but during that Golden Age there was (for many, at least) a secondary but still very important requirement: while going about their work those locomotives should *look* good. Patrick Stirling rejected out of hand a Joy valve gear proposal for his celebrated 8-foot single, because he "couldna spile ma grand engine wi' all that machinery outside o' her" and Samuel Waite Johnson would not countenance the Belpaire firebox until he designed a locomotive he thought big enough to take it.

In the final analysis though, aesthetics is a matter of opinion, and none of us can actually say what we will like or dislike: we each look upon an image and instantly register how pleasing (or otherwise) we find it. It is only afterwards that we can try to rationalise precisely *why*. On that basis everyone is entitled to his own view - even, I suppose, that clown who claimed that the GWR rebuilds of those unfortunate M&SW 4-4-Os were Britain's most beautiful!

Much more credibly, as long ago as September, 1996, Jack Braithwaite, former President of the Midland Railway Society and an avid student of locomotive aesthetics, wrote an article on the subject for *Forward* in which he strongly argued Samuel Waite Johnson's credentials as Britain's greatest artist-engineer - and unquestionably Johnson was responsible for some of the loveliest locomotives ever to grace our metals. Perfect proportions combined with exquisitely designed and harmoniously graduated detailing to give his 2-4-Os and 0-6-Os an unsurpassable beauty, and the elegance of his earlier 4-4-Os and 'Spinner' bogie-singles was supreme.

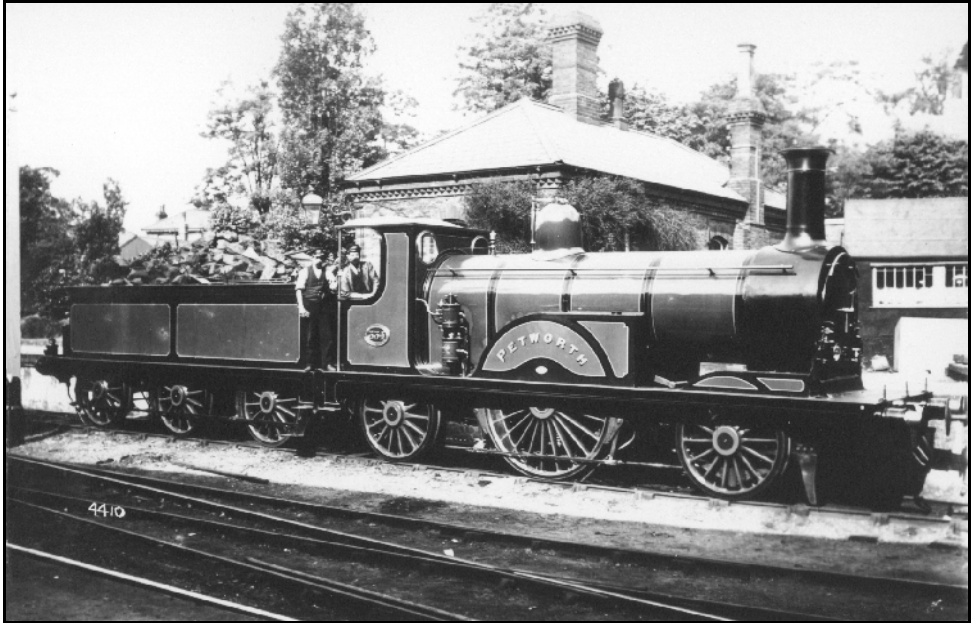
But perhaps for his artistic reputation Johnson stayed in office just a little too long. To accommodate piston valves beneath the smokeboxes of his later 4-4-Os and singles, their boilers had to be higher pitched. Their proportions and elegance were preserved by



John G. Robinson had no such hang-ups with Belpaire boilers and his class 11B 4-4-0, such as no.1040 seen here, was a very beautiful engine. photo: Author's Collection

a subtle raising of the running plate via a gentle curve behind the buffer beam, but perhaps they hadn't quite the flawless beauty of their forebears.

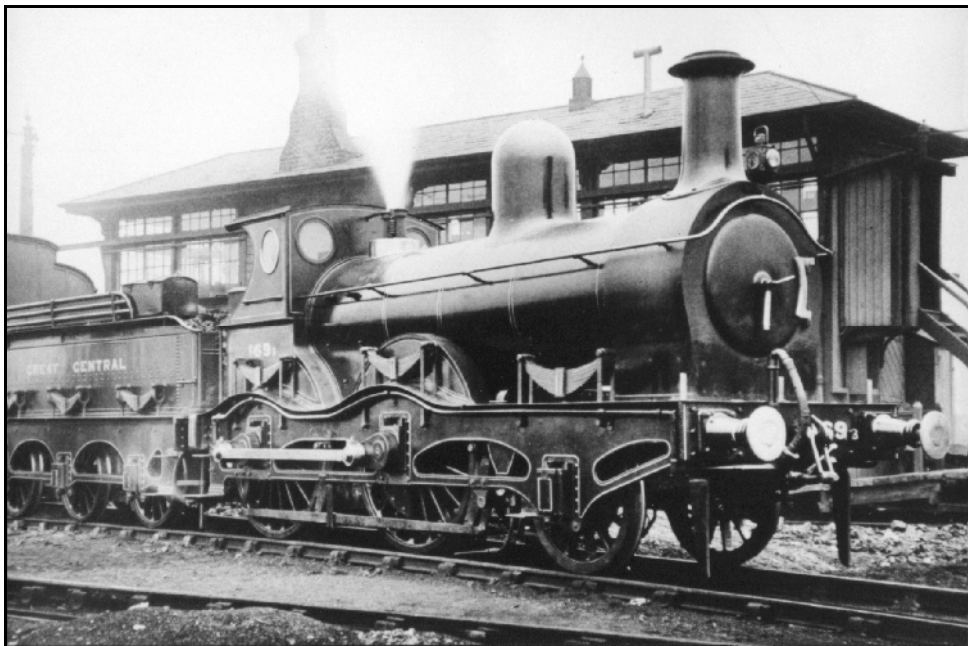
We have already noted Johnson's reluctance to adopt the Belpaire firebox, and when he finally did, the resulting class 3 4-4-0 forfeited what had become his customary flowing curves: like his later 3-cylinder compound it was by no means displeasing, but at risk of "damning with faint praise", it was smartly handsome rather than beautiful. Johnson's final goods 0-6-0 contrived to be neither, so much so, its ungainly appearance was actually improved by Deeley, rebuilding by whom was to visually ruin so many formerly beautiful Johnson designs. Meanwhile, with his class 11B (LNER D9) 4-4-0 and class 9J (LNER J11) 'Pom-Pom' 0-6-0, Robinson demonstrated just how lovely a modern, powerful Belpaire locomotive could be.



*Could there ever have been a prettier engine than this? William Stroudley's delightful LB&SCR 'G' class 2-2-2 no.334 'Petworth'*  
photo: Real Photographs

The usage of particular words evolves with the passing decades. In Victorian times Johnson's engines, and for that matter attractive ladies, were frequently described as "handsome" - in present day usage this is an essentially masculine term, more appropriate to the sturdier, more robust looking engines with which the modern era succeeded the Golden Age. The locomotives of that Golden Age are more appropriately considered in feminine terms. "Prettiness" suits diminutive locomotives which perhaps have an air of daintiness about them - the L&NW's Ramsbottom / Webb 'Lady of the Lake' 2-2-2s immediately come to mind - but the master of prettiness has to be William Stroudley. Stroudley has to be included in anyone's first rank of artist engineers, his claims epitomised by his delectable class A1 'Terriers'. In later years, other engineers would ostensibly fail to realise the aesthetic need to raise the running plates to "balance" their ever larger locomotives: Stroudley demonstrated the importance of running plate height by actually having that of his tiny tank engines below normal buffer beam height, their buffer stocks protruding above the buffer beam. Moreover, he scaled down the Terrier's cab size to maintain the engine's perfect proportions and in so doing created an absolute gem. Was the 'Terrier' his masterpiece? Some might say so, but consider also his exquisite 'G' class 2-2-2s - sheer perfection.

"Prettiness" and "charm" usually go hand in hand, indeed it would be hard to imagine prettiness without charm, but perhaps there can be charm without prettiness. The Metropolitan 4-4-0 tanks, with their cylinders seemingly hanging either side of the smokebox and their funny, bunched up bogies, were hardly pretty, but they had oodles of charm. They got everywhere: the Midland had them and gave them Johnson's elegant chimney and cab; the Cambrian even gave them tenders, but both retained the locomotive's character. As well as a cab and a further axle under an extended bunker to make it a 4-4-2, the L&NW gave theirs a smokebox sweeping out to encompass the cylinders - one of the features which made the "Lady of the Lake" so attractive - but oddly with less happy results. That short bogie now looked ridiculous and somehow the engine had lost its original character.



*Arguably, none of Robinson's engines for the Great Central had the daintiness to be called "pretty", but such as his rebuild of Charles Sacré's 12A no.169B, seen here at Manchester Central, most certainly had.*  
*photo: P.F.Cooke*

"Beauty" and "loveliness" in locomotives imply prettiness but with refinement rather than daintiness. Beauty frequently equates with elegance - though some locomotives, it might be argued, could have elegance without being beautiful: Aspinall's 'Highflyer' Atlantics for the Lancashire & Yorkshire are a perfect example, tall and stately, with an air of haughtiness, but not beautiful. It is questionable if any of Robinson's designs for the Great Central could be described as "pretty", but his 2-4-0s for the Waterford, Limerick & Western most certainly were, and on the GC some of his rebuilds of Sacré locomotives, such as the delightful class 12A 2-4-0s, were exceedingly pretty. Poor Charles Sacré, who was broken by the Bullhouse smash despite being completely absolved of any blame for the failure of his class 6B 4-4-0's crank axle, is one of the anything-but exclusive club of locomotive designers who don't get the credit that is their due. Sacré's fine locomotives were no less so after updating by Robinson, which suited all his predecessors' locomotives, though perhaps the reboilered 'Bulldog' and 'Basher' 0-6-0s didn't fare quite so well, their new 20<sup>th</sup> century cabs and Belpaire boilers sitting uncomfortably above distinctly 19<sup>th</sup> century double-framed chassis. Sacré's class 12AT 2-4-0 tanks, both before and after Robinson's attentions, were an absolute delight.

"Prettiness" describes perfectly Johnson's rebuilds of some of Matthew Kirtley's engines - though such as Kirtley's '800' class 2-4-0s and outside framed 0-6-0s, in which Johnson added finesse to Kirtley's good proportions but somewhat crude detailing, were transformed into true beauties. Johnson's rebuilds of Kirtley's 2-2-2s were supremely pretty, but the only Johnson 4-4-0s that could possibly be described as "pretty" were those little blue gems for the Somerset & Dorset. The less said about their later rebuilding the better.



*Not pretty, certainly not beautiful, but the Metropolitan 4-4-0 tanks had possibly an even greater attraction - their inestimable charm. No.23 basks in the ramshackle environs of Brill, about as remote from the bustle of the Inner-Circle as one could possibly get.*

*photo: R.G.Jarvis collection, by courtesy of the Midland Railway Trust*

## **Model Railway Exhibition Diary**

*Some events that may interest our readers*

Sun.6<sup>th</sup> Dec. and Sun.27<sup>th</sup> Dec. : Gainsborough Model Railway Open Days (1.30pm-6.00pm).

Fri.22<sup>nd</sup> - Sun.24<sup>th</sup> Jan. : The London Model Engineering Exhibition at the Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London.

Sat.13<sup>th</sup> & Sun.14<sup>th</sup> Feb. : The Festival of British Railway Modelling (Warners Exhibitions) at Doncaster Exhibition Centre, Leger Way, Doncaster.

Sat.20<sup>th</sup> Feb. : Risex 2010 at the Community Centre, Stratton Road, Princes Risborough.

Sat.20<sup>th</sup> Feb. : Milton Keynes MRS at Courtside Sports Hall, Milton Keynes College, Sherwood Drive, Bletchley.

Sat.20<sup>th</sup> & Sun.21<sup>st</sup> Feb. : Watford & District MRC at Parmiter's School, High Elms Lane, Garston, Watford.

Sat.20<sup>th</sup> & Sun.21<sup>st</sup> Feb. : Syston MRS at the Sileby Community Centre, High Street, Sileby.

Sun.28<sup>th</sup> Feb. : Ilkeston MRS at Trowell Parish Hall, Stapleford Road, Trowell.

## **New running in boards at Thornton Abbey station**

**by Chris Booth**

Thornton Abbey station on the Barton Line between Cleethorpes and Barton on Humber, was opened in 1848 and once boasted substantial buildings, a goods siding, crossover and two signal boxes, Thornton Abbey East and Thornton Abbey West. The platforms were built much longer than those of the other stations along the line, which may be due to the many thousands of people who came from all over the north of England to great Temperance rallies at Thornton Abbey in the 1850s. During WW2 the station was also used by USAF servicemen who were based at the nearby Goxhill airfield. Since that time the station facilities have declined, been demolished and replaced by a simple waiting shelter. One delight did remain from pre-nationalisation, as the station boasted its original London & North Eastern Railway running in boards, rare survivors in this day and age of modernisation. However time and the weather had taken their toll on the boards one of which was propped up against the fence. Due to the concern that they would rot away to nothing, the Friends of the Barton Line (FoBL) decided to act and save them. The South Humber Bank Partnership (a major award-winning Heritage Tourism initiative) very kindly agreed to fund the work.

The LNER signs were removed from the station platforms and moved closer to the Crossing Keepers cabin for safe keeping until a solution to their condition could be found. However, due to the delicate condition of the originals, which began to disintegrate further when worked on, the decision was taken to commission new replica signs which would be true to the originals. Restoration work, funded as part of the South Humber Collection of visitor attractions, was undertaken by local specialist firm Castaway, who are based at the closed Brocklesby Station.

The new boards measure approximately 5 metres long by 1 metre high, and were built using Marine ply backing, which because of the standard size of the ply is one inch shorter than the original boards on both height and width. This is framed and lined with tanalised soft wood. All the original cast iron letters have been professionally restored. They were cleaned, and because they are hollow, reinforcement was added behind. These were then re-affixed utilizing most of their original bronze screws. Although the old boards were latterly painted all white with blue lettering, the new ones have been given a blue border, white background with blue lettering. The first replica sign was erected on the Down platform on Monday 29th June, with the Up platform replica being installed on Wednesday 8th July.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> August an informal unveiling ceremony was performed in front of several invited Friends of the Barton Line and GCRS members. Stephen Gay read out two poems, specially written for the event, about the Barton Line and there was a small display of artefacts relating to the station.

The real big day for the FoBL was to be Friday 11th September 2009 when an unveiling ceremony for the new boards, held in front of the media and TV, was performed by Anthony Berridge and Janet Driver, Secretary and Treasurer of the Friends of the Barton Line respectively together with Councillors Keith Vickers and Tim Allen both of North Lincolnshire Council, and Keith Miller of English Heritage, Inspector of Ancient Monuments. Others in attendance included John Wade of Castaway, Gill Simpson of Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council and Rhian Lonergan-White of Dare To Know (Barton Blog) and members of the FoBL. Speaking to those present Anthony Berridge said, "The boards greet people when they first step off the train to visit the Abbey and add a wonderful sense of timelessness to this historic area. It's marvellous that they have been restored to their former glory, having stood witness to the march of progress." Anthony also mentioned those who had helped in the initial rescue of the boards and thanked them for their efforts.



*Anthony Berridge (right), Secretary of the Friends of the Barton Line, and Councillor Keith Vickers (left), of North Lincs Council, unveil the restored Thornton Abbey running in boards on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2009.  
photo: Chris Booth*

Laudable though it was to have the LNER signs reinstated, the chief aim of the exercise was to increase the patronage of this underused station. Rather than adopt a defeatist attitude and allow it to fade away into oblivion, FoBL are drawing attention to its many positive attributes. In addition to being a lifeline for the local community, Thornton Abbey station is the gateway to the gatehouse of the acclaimed abbey and also provides access for rambblers, fishermen, Abbey Farm PYO and Palm Farm nursery as well as being an idyllic rural spot in its own right.

Councillor Mark Kirk, Leader of North Lincolnshire Council, has said: "The South Humber Collection is a showcase for the area's leading heritage and wildlife attractions, stretching from Thornton Abbey in the east to Alkborough Flats nature reserve in the west, and centred on the historic town of Barton on Humber. We also support a range of smaller schemes and we are especially pleased to have been able to help with the restoration of the Thornton Abbey station signs, which make a splendid contribution to the development of this area as a major tourist destination. The Barton-Cleethorpes line is also a key part of the Green Transport network that serves the South Humber Collection, enabling visitors to combine a day at Barton or Cleethorpes with a visit to the Abbey, whilst reducing their carbon footprint."

Keith Miller, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments, said: "The history of Thornton Abbey station is closely linked with the Abbey itself and it provides an ideal gateway to the magnificent monument, with its famous medieval gatehouse - recently provided with exciting new displays and visitor facilities. The railway station and its restored name boards are a colourful part of the heritage of the area and it is very good to see the name once again standing proud."

The Friends of the Barton Line was inaugurated on 16th July 1998 and meets in committee every two months at the White Swan Hotel in Barton. They are a constituted Rail User Group whose purpose is to promote and seek improvements to the services and infrastructure on the Barton branch in order to stimulate better use of this valuable



community asset. They do this by holding regular meetings with the train operator and by running special events that entail using the train. They also strive to communicate with the various Local Authorities and Parish Councils along the route and keep close links with Passenger Focus and the local branches of Rail Future. They also sit on the Barton Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership (which FoBL formed in 2005) and attend national conferences on railway policy. In 1999 the FoBL celebrated the 150th anniversary of the line and each year they continue with a range of events designed to promote the service. They also distribute timetables to many outlets in the area and produce leaflets such as last year's Rail Ale guide which entices aficionados to twenty commendable inns at all but two of the fourteen stations along the line.

*Editor's note: See also p75 of December's issue of The Railway Magazine.*

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## **The Great Garratt Gathering**

**by Paul White**

The Great Garratt Gathering took place at Manchester Museum of Science and Industry over the weekend of Friday 14<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2009, and commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Garratt type of loco. The event featured a number of Beyer Peacock products, with the "star of the show" being the first Garratt, the K1 built in 1909 for the Tasmanian Railways. The loco and its twin K2 worked in Tasmania until line closure made them redundant in 1929. Remarkably, in view of their historical importance, the Tasmanian Government accepted a "scrap" price for them and shipped back an "amalgamation" of the two locos to Beyer Peacock's, where they remained in store until the closure of the works in 1966. The loco was then purchased by the Ffestiniog Railway for display, passing next to the NRM, then to display in Caernarfon before a major overhaul at Tyseley which included the fitting in 2002 of a new all-welded boiler. The rebuilt loco was first steamed in 2004 and is now based at Dinas for service on the Welsh Highland Railway.

After the weekend the loco was transported to the former Beyer-Peacock's works for display on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August. Fortunately the erecting shop on Hammerton Road survives as a depot for the maintenance of Manchester Corporation refuse vehicles. Tours of the Beyer Peacock site were carried out over the weekend, led by former employees. The K1 loco was put on display in Tesco's Gorton car park, and flowers were laid on the grave of company founder Richard Peacock at Brookfield Church.

Other Garratts on display included the enormous "GL" 4-8-2+2-8-4 3'6" gauge loco built for use in South Africa and on permanent display at the Museum, and a remarkable 0-4-0+0-4-0 built in 1937 for use at Baddesley Colliery in Warwickshire, the largest industrial loco built for service in the UK as well as being the last working Garratt and the only standard gauge Garratt in the UK to have survived. Gresley's solitary Garratt and the LMS class were, for various reasons, poor examples of a successful type!

A number of other examples of Beyer Peacock's non-Garratt locos were on show: Works shunter no.1 of 1879 was in steam, as was L&Y "Dreadnought" 0-6-0 no.957 (BR 52044) of 1887, while later work on diesels was represented by Hymek no.D7076, built in 1963. Isle of Man Railway 2-4-0T "Pender" is a permanent sectioned display, while perhaps the oddest full-sized loco on display was steam tram no.47, built in 1885 for the New South Wales Railway but returned five years later as "unsuitable", becoming works shunter no.2 until 1959 before finding its way to the Tramway Museum at Crich where it has been cosmetically restored to its original condition.

Over 20 individual Garratt models of various gauges and scales were on display in the Power Hall, but the most spectacular was the Ttareg Shed model layout operated by the 16mm Garratt Owners and Operators Association. The event attracted a great deal of interest, and it is good that while almost every trace of the GCR's Gorton Works has disappeared, part of the works and many of the products of Beyer Peacock, a company

closely associated with the MSL and GC Railways have survived to remind us of east Manchester's engineering past.

Finally, I must thank the authors of the event's souvenir booklet which provided much of the background information for this article.



*The K1 on the low-loader.*

*photo: Paul White*

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## **On Great Central lines today** **by Kim Collinson**

As a result of a locomotive shortage on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August, the daily Aldwarke to Deepcar trip was unusually worked by 67027, the first time a class 67 has worked a freight train over the branch.

There have been very few railtours over GC routes this summer however one of the most interesting ones took place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September when a return working departed Worksop at 06:45 to Marylebone, top and tailed by 33207 and 37516. The train also ran over the freight only route between Aylesbury Parkway and Calvert.

Due to track renewal at Huddersfield all services to Sheffield ran to and from Penistone only for three weekends commencing 12<sup>th</sup> September. On the 12<sup>th</sup> five engineering trains were observed through Penistone worked by 66008/039/177/198/232.

The proposal to operate a tram-train trial over the Penistone line, first mooted in 2008, has been shelved and instead the plan is now to operate a service from Sheffield to Rotherham using the GC freight route from a new connection at Tinsley Stn Jn to Rotherham. Meanwhile in Nottingham the go ahead has been given to extend the city's tram network to Clifton using part of the former GC trackbed through Wilford.

A visit to Dunford Bridge in September has seen work continuing on the laying of National Grid power cables through Woodhead New Tunnel.

The Autumn Sandite services began in October, this year the trains are operated by DBS.

For the first time a regular TTHO service runs over the Deepcar branch. The first working over the branch was on the 13<sup>th</sup> October when the train was worked by 66086/66122 and passed Wadsley Bridge at 14:10hrs. The workings originate from Rotherham Steel Terminal and also run to Scunthorpe, Penistone and Worksop. The 13<sup>th</sup> October was also the first day of the working over the Penistone branch and 66086/66122 passed Silkstone at 04:31hrs.

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October a steam hauled railtour ran over the Penistone branch from and to Manchester Victoria hauled by Black Five locomotives 45231 and 45407 and departed Penistone at 14:50hrs.

A freight only branch rarely mentioned is the short section of the former Sheffield District Railway from Brightside to Attercliffe Goods which serves a scrap terminal. There are regular services to Cardiff and there has recently been an increase in traffic with the opening of a stone terminal. On the 13<sup>th</sup> October 66172 was observed there at 13:30hrs on a train of hoppers.

There has recently been some livery changes to the rolling stock on Wrexham and Shropshire railways as follows: 67010 is now in W & S livery, and the blue and grey cargo D coaches are being replaced by other Mark 3 coaches in W&S livery.

*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.*



West Coast Railway no.37516 in maroon livery waits to depart Marylebone for Quainton Road and Calvert with the "Merry le Bone" railtour on 5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2009. A railtour participant has provided "The Master Cutler" headboard for the occasion.  
photo: Bob Gellatly

## The Pollard family railway history – Part 5

by John E. Pollard

My short National Service (just 18 months) in the Marines was soon over and I was demobbed in September 1950 (*The date given for joining up in Part 4 should have been March 1949 - Ed.*). I returned to Annesley as a fireman.

After a couple of weeks back on the job I was put with a driver who we knew as 'little' Johnny Walker, as there was another older driver of the same name. We were given a turn where we signed on just before noon and then travelled on a passenger to Lincoln on the Midland line from Nottingham. At Lincoln we walked over to our line and waited in West Holmes signal box for our back working. On this particular Saturday I left the box to go and buy a *Green Un* to check the football results for the pools. I didn't have anything to come as usual but when my mate checked the results he said there were only three away results and he had picked them all. He thought he would be rich and was all for leaving the job and going home there and then. The guard and I managed to persuade him that this wouldn't be a good idea and to wait until Wednesday when the payouts would be announced. Eventually our train arrived and we got him home. He didn't come to work on Monday or Tuesday. On Wednesday night he turned up to work a bit sheepish. He had only won 10 shillings. Apparently the aways were certainties and everyone had them. He was well out of pocket for as well as losing two day's pay he had taken his wife along with two mates, Les Topley and Les Thouless, and their wives for a slap-up meal on Saturday night.

On that Wednesday night we arrived at Darnall to collect a back working. We went into the cabin where the timekeeper told us, "Your train is in the goods line. When you have had your food you can go. Just whistle up when you are ready." Our guard went to the brake and we stayed in the cabin for our snap. When we had finished we went out to get on the engine. As we approached the engine the fireman shot off like a rocket. The driver had already gone. I looked at the fire and my heart fell in my boots. It looked dead. There was about half a glass and pressure was down to 90psi. We checked that the tank was full and that we had plenty of coal. I opened the dampers and picked up the shovel. We had 18 coaches on an empty stock working. I started to put coal round the box and turned the jet on the fire. It began to brighten up and eventually we raised enough steam to get us going. My mate blew the brake up and said, "Let's give it a try!" I looked back and got the tip from our guard. It was a heavy load for a J39 but she responded as soon as the regulator was opened. By the time we got to High Hazels the steam was on the red line. We had a great trip. She ran like a thoroughbred. The worst job was keeping her quiet. She made light work of Staveley bank and ran well to Annesley South where we were relieved.



BR class A2 4-6-2 no.60526 'Sugar Palm' at York in 1962.

photo: J.R.Carter

The following week we were on the "The Veg" as described earlier (*in Part 4*). I arrived at Bulwell to find my mate had missed and I had got a spare driver, Wilf Edwardson. We travelled down to Nottingham Goods and waited by the water column for our train. We could hear it coming but couldn't recognise what engine it was. We had not heard anything like it before. When in view we could see it was bigger than the usual "Geordie" or "Green Arrow". It was Peppercorn A2

Pacific no.60526 with the name *Sugar Palm*. It was the first A2 I had seen and it was to be the only one I would work on. Why it was on this working I don't know. (*At the time 60526 was based at York and was often used as a replacement loco for failures but normally on main line passenger services not goods!- Ed.*). We climbed aboard and relieved the Woodford men who had brought it in. We filled the tank and while the pilot was busy taking off Nottingham wagons and putting on York wagons we had a good look round our new engine. After the Master Cutler had passed we were let out to follow it to Victoria station. On approaching the station we were surprised to find that we were given the right away and passed The Cutler stood at the platform. My mate said, "We will really have to go for it to stay ahead of The Cutler! If we stop that we will be in trouble." We set off in fine form, expecting to be shunted at Bulwell to let The Cutler pass, but no, we were still given the right away. Wilf opened her up even more and we still had the right away at Hucknall and then at Annesley. The next place we could be shunted was Kirkby Bentinck but again we were given a clear road. We went up Tibby Bank like a greyhound. The speedometer showed 70 as we reached the top. After that it only needed a breath of steam to get us to Staveley and Woodhouse, where we were turned onto the goods line through to Darnall. On arriving at Darnall we had to wait for The Cutler to catch us up before we could be switched into the station to fill the tank and be relieved by York men. Many years later I was walking my dog at the side of the Midland line, near where I live at Kirkby in Ashfield, and got talking to a man about railways. I told him about my experience on "The Veg" with *Sugar Palm*. He said that he was working at Bentinck Colliery at that time and would often wait on the bridge to see The Cutler go through. He remembers how surprised he was that day to see *Sugar Palm* come through on a goods ahead of The Cutler.

We had a Midland driver who had transferred from Westhouses to Annesley. One day he joined another driver and myself on a road learning trip to Woodford. I didn't think he seemed particularly interested in learning the road and he wouldn't take over any of the driving. After 12 weeks of road learning he had not signed for any road, so he was confined to shed duties. I don't think he ever did take an engine past the outlet board. I always suspected that he was a shed labourer whose transfer had got mixed up with a driver's!

We had another job which we called "Round the World". We usually had a J39 engine that had come in from Ardsley. We would turn it and get it ready. On this particular morning we signed on about 7am, got the engine ready and then picked up our train in the down yard. It was a pick-up job. First stop was Kirkby Bentinck, then it was New Hucknall, Tibshelf, Pilsley, Holmewood and Heath Junction. At Duckmanton South we came off the main line by the flyover that took us onto the Chesterfield-Lincoln line. Then it was on to Arkwright Town and over the tall viaduct to get to Bolsover where we would usually have to wait for the passenger to Chesterfield Market Place to pass before entering the single-track section through the tunnel. Even so, it was restricted clearance and you were not allowed to put your head out of the cab whilst in the tunnel. Once through the tunnel it was Scarcliffe and Langwith Junction. We always filled the tank at Langwith and then it was on to Warsop loops to put off and pick up. Out through Warsop station to Warsop colliery sidings. We seldom stopped there. Then on to Clipstone where we left the LDEC and went onto what was originally called The Mansfield Railway until the GC took it over. We went to the Concentration Sidings where we usually had to wait before we could get in. Once we were waiting at the home board waiting to draw up when suddenly we heard a loud bang. We looked across and saw a brake van and about 20 empty wagons push past the blocks at the end of a siding and disappear down the embankment. Someone had given them a rough shunt! Mansfield Concentration Sidings were always very busy, serving collieries at Mansfield, Clipstone, Bilsthorpe, Rufford, Blidworth, Warsop, Welbeck and Ollerton. After we had finished at the Con. we headed for Mansfield Central station to put off and pick up. Then onto Sutton in Ashfield Central and our last stop at Kirkby in Ashfield Central. Then it was home via Kirkby South

Junction, through the tunnel and into Annesley up yard, where we left our train and took the engine to the Loco. As far as I am aware it was the only job where the engine arrived back from a shift's work facing the opposite way to when it left having gone round in a big circle, hence the name "Round the World".



*BR class J39 0-6-0 no.64955 on no.7 road at Annesley on 7 June 1953.*

*photo: Chris Ward*

Towards the end of 1950 I moved to the Woodford Link and what followed could be described as the worst three years of my railway career. I was looking at the list with another fireman to see who we had been booked on with and when he saw my name next to my driver's he said, "I don't envy you, pal. His last four mates have all left the job and the longest lasted only three months." I said I would wait and see. I soon found out, as we started off on the wrong foot and things never got straight between us after that. The only relief was when he either swapped with someone or was sick or on holiday.

Our first job together and my first on the Woodford link was on an afternoon Bulwell-Woodford. These trains were booked for GC "Tinies" or "Austerities", but you could get anything that was going. On this day we got a K3 "Jazzier" with a full load. We drew out of Bulwell yard onto the main line and set off through Nottingham Victoria and past Weekday Cross. We had a clear run until Ruddington's distant was against us. We were run into the loop and stood there as a stopping passenger passed, then an express, then another stopping passenger, and then two fish trains. When the board eventually came off I had let the fire down. I looked back, got the tip from the guard and told my mate we were clear to go to which I got a grunt. I bent down to pick up the shovel and mend the fire when my mate deliberately opened her up and went for it. I was struggling with the vacuum brake. Any other driver would have shut off steam to help me with the brake, but he didn't and I wouldn't ask him to. He just sat there on his seat and kept saying, "She only wants firing." I knew that, but as I had let the fire go it would be a while before I could build it up again and the way he was stroking her gave me little chance of doing that. Against all odds I managed to keep her going and she started to come round. We cleared Gotham bank without coming to a stop but we must have lost time. I kept at her down to Loughborough where we stopped for water. When I had put the bag in I went over to the down side loop phone and told the signalman to tell

Leicester to send another fireman out for this job. I went back to the engine and threw the bag out. I had a good fire on now and we had no more trouble. As we were passing Leicester Passenger South my mate said, "What are we going in here for?" I put my coat on, picked up my bag and said, "They are giving you a fresh fireman." We were stopped at the Goods South signal and I started to get off the engine. The shed master was there with a young passed cleaner. As I climbed down he told me to get back on the engine but I refused. I said, "He (my mate) says 'It only wants firing' so let him have a fireman." The Leicester lad got on the engine. A Woodford-Annesley job was approaching so I waved him down so I could jump on the brake as he passed. So I returned to Annesley. I turned up for work the next day as normal. I had learnt my lesson at Ruddington and would not let the fire down again. My mate didn't thrash the engine either, but we never spoke to each other for three years unless we had to. I always passed on warnings about signals on my side but I heard nothing from his side - I just had to guess.

The week after our disastrous start on the Bulwell-Woodford we were sat in Bulwell cabin about 9am when the door opened and Inspector Whitehead came in. He stood against the door and said to both of us, "Outside, both of you!" He set off towards the south end of the platform at a brisk rate and we had a job keeping up with him. When he stopped he turned round and said to my mate, "Well driver, what happened?" My mate then started in with quite a story. I had been brought up fairly strictly by my father who always insisted that I tell the truth. He also taught me not to interrupt when someone else was talking. I waited patiently for my mate to finish his tale. Inspector Whitehead then turned to me and said, "Right fireman, let's hear your side of it." I accepted that I had been caught out by letting the fire down while stopped in the loop at Ruddington but I did not "lump the fire" as my mate had said. All the coal that went on the fire had gone through the trap door. Also I had not said 'I was leaving the job'. At this point my mate was about to interrupt but the inspector stopped him with, "You have had your say, let your fireman speak." When I had finished telling the inspector what really happened, he turned to my mate and said, "I hold you totally responsible for the whole fiasco. You knew how long you would be there (at Ruddington) as you had worked the job many times before, whereas your fireman hadn't. You should have warned him beforehand." He then turned to me and said, "Don't ever do that again or you will be in serious trouble."

About two weeks later we were on another Woodford turn. It was a day job. We went out to meet our train and Inspector Huskinson was stood on the platform waiting to travel with us to Woodford. We relieved the crew. I looked back and got the guard's signal and told my mate. He replied with his usual grunt. The inspector then said, "Right, fireman, you fire this engine to my orders." I thought, "O dear, here we go." The engine was an O1, a converted "Tiny". A very good engine. The fireman who had brought her down had left a good fire so I did not need to touch her until we were through Nottingham Victoria and approaching Arkwright Street. I started to build the fire up but after eight full shovels, four down each side, the inspector said, "That's enough, fireman, put the shovel down." I smiled to myself as I put the shovel down for I knew we would be in trouble. Each time I picked up the shovel the inspector stopped me until eventually we began to struggle. We were approaching East Leake and my driver (I won't call him 'mate' any more) got up off his seat and picked up the shovel. This was the only time I ever saw him with a shovel in his hand. I was stood in front of the fire hole door and he told me to move. I said, "No, I'm firing this engine to his orders (nodding towards the inspector) and this is how he wants it." He put the shovel down and sat back in his seat. I turned to the inspector and said, "If you go and stand behind the driver I will show you how to fire one of these if you will let me without interference." The inspector agreed and I started to repair the fire. Eight shovels were no good on a converted "Tiny", they needed eleven - four down each side and three down the middle. By the time we got to Leicester I had got her round. We filled the tank and set off again with nearly a full boiler. I let it come down while the water settled in

the tank then set the injector fine. She was running on the red line at 225psi and we ran up Ashby bank without any problems. As we approached Woodford I let the fire run down so it would be just right for cleaning. When we stopped in Woodford yard I opened the fire hole door, pointed to the fire and said, "Will that do you inspector?" He took a look and said, "Alright, fireman, you have made your point." It turned out that Inspector Huskinson had never fired a converted "Tiny" and was unaware of their particular requirements. His nickname was Inspector Essolube as his first job as an inspector at Annesley was to check the oil keeps on WD engine's pony trucks.

We did occasionally get some bad trips. Sometimes it was the coal and other times it was the engine. We had two "Austerities" with bad reputations - nos.90025 and 90052. There was also an O1, no.63895, that wouldn't go. Eventually they found that she had a blow in the smokebox main steam pipe. It think it remained undetected for so long because it was hidden by the self cleaning grill. Another O1, no.63901, was a poor runner.



*BR class O1 2-8-0 no.63865 on the shearlegs road at Annesley on 22 May 1959. photo: Chris Ward*

On one occasion my driver swapped with another driver, George Plumb. I knew a swap was coming as soon as George's fireman, Roy Penny, asked me if I could swap with him! I refused. George was a good driver to work for and because he actually liked night shifts he would often be asked to swap by other drivers who didn't. We were on a Woodford job with a converted "Tiny". The coal was terrible. It had been picked up from the stacks with a tractor and the driver had dug into the ground so we finished up with a right load of rubbish - soil, house bricks and some slack all mixed in. It was a struggle all the way. As we approached Staverton Road I asked George to stop at the box as we were not going to make it to Catesby tunnel. I got the clinker shovel down and was about to start cleaning out the fire when George stopped me and said, "Just wait for her to come round. Give me a whistle when she's ready". And with that he disappeared into the box. I tried the dart on the fire but it didn't seem to do much good. Eventually she started to come round and when I had got a full boiler and a full head of steam I gave George a whistle. As soon as George opened the regulator the steam started to drop again. We got through Catesby tunnel. As we approached Charwelton I went over to George and told him not to go over the bank. I said, "If you do, we will drop the plugs."



I had the injector on before we came to a stand. After ten minutes we had enough steam to get us to Woodford. We literally staggered into Woodford yard well behind schedule. When the Woodford men got on to relieve us I told the fireman he had a bad fire full of dirt.

We went up to the cabin to have our food. The shunter came in and asked for my driver, saying that Control wanted to talk to him. George went into the shunter's cabin to speak to Control. They wanted to know what we had been playing at. George explained in no uncertain terms what 'we had been playing at'!" If that had been my regular driver he would have blamed me for the problems.

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## **From a locomotive man's diary** **by Allan Brown**



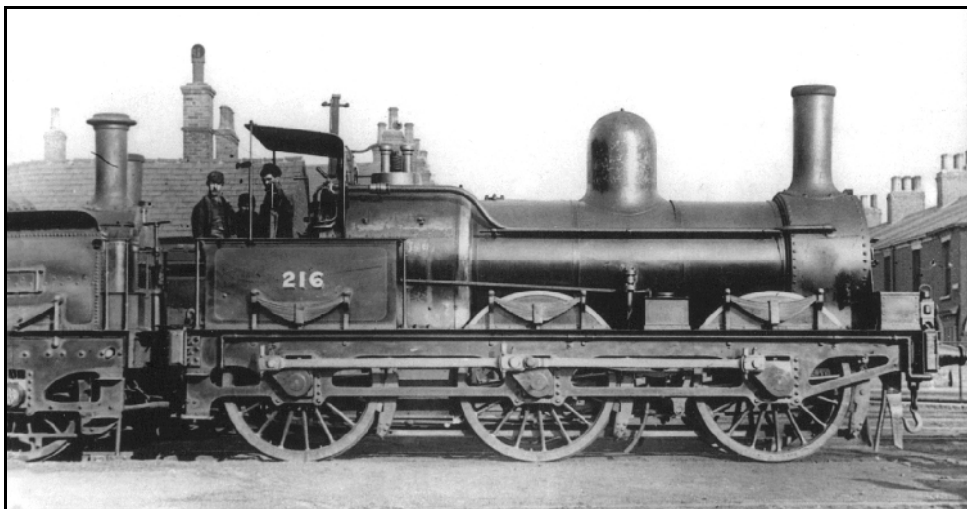
Edward Abey was based at Grimsby locomotive shed in the latter part of the 19th century as a fireman and was subsequently passed for driving at Gorton on November 17<sup>th</sup> 1888. Abey kept a diary giving details of his daily work, the length of time on duty and details of the locomotives involved. The diary is now kept at South Humberside library at Grimsby. For a number of years Abey fired for Driver Oglesby and their regular locomotive was MS&L no.216, a class 23 goods loco built by Sharp Stewart in November 1866 and scrapped in January 1906. In 1885 no.216 was replaced by no.194 of the same class, but one year older, having been built by Neilson in September 1865. It was withdrawn in August 1909 and cut up in June 1910. Both locos were typical Sacré goods locos having double frames with 16inch cylinders and 5ft coupled wheels and raised round topped firebox with an outside length of 6ft 7inches. The grate area of 21 square feet was an enormous size for the 1860s and appears to have been designed to provide sufficient steam for the steam tenders which were to be found on some of the Neilson built locos. These were later converted to conventional tenders.

On Monday November 19<sup>th</sup> Abey was booked to work a butter special with no.216 from Grimsby to Manchester and lodge at Gorton. This was a regular working with butter imported from Denmark and the usual return working was a goods from Ardwick the following day. The working was however altered and no.216 with Driver Oglesby was sent to Beyer Peacock's to collect newly-built locos and take them to Lincoln. At the time Beyer's were building four locos for the Lynn and Fakenham Railway which became M&GNJnt Railway numbers 25-28. The four locos were part of M&GNJnt class A, a long-lived class in East Anglia, the last being withdrawn in the 1930s. The M&GN Circle published a well researched book on the class which records that locos nos.27 and 28 delivered on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 1883, the day after Abey had taken them to Lincoln. The GNR would have take over and duly deliver the new locos to their owners at Spalding. Abey and no.216 finished their day with a goods from Lincoln to Grimsby, making it a working day of fourteen hours.

The photographs (*on facing page*) show no.216 on Grimsby shed in the 1890s after being reboilered with a boiler having a firebox of 5ft 2in as used on earlier class 23 locos; both boiler types could be used on the class as required. It is more than likely that Oglesby and Abey are on the footplate at the time of the photo. The photograph of no.217 shows a sister loco with the longer firebox as built. The third photograph shows loco no.219 after its 1901 rebuilding in Great Central days.

I have to thank Bryan Longbone for initially telling me of Abey's diary and subsequently providing me with a copy.

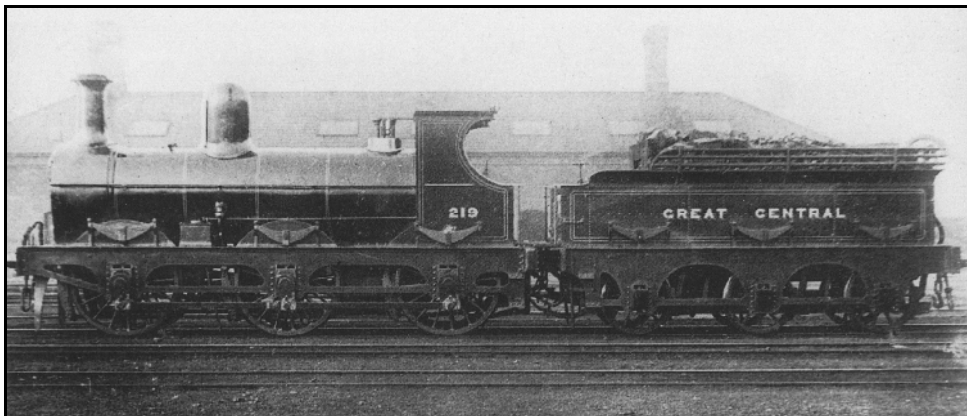
*Photos opposite from the author's collection.*



MS&L class 23 0-6-0 no.216 at Grimsby shed in the 1890s.



MS&L class 23 0-6-0 no.217 at Grimsby shed in the 1880s.



GCR class 23 0-6-0 no.219 at Trafford Park shed in the 1900s.

## **Braunstone Gate bridge, Leicester** **from 'Private Eye' 1245 (18 Sept-1 Oct 2009)**

*submitted by Harry Smithson*

There is talk of building a new railway line for Eurostar trains north of London to connect with the Channel Tunnel: very sensible, necessary - and expensive. So it's sad to recall that we once had such a thing until it was destroyed by Dr Beeching.

The Great Central Railway opened in 1899 from Marylebone to the Midlands and ran through the centres of Leicester and Nottingham. It was Britain's last main line, built not only for high speeds, with gentle gradients and curves, but to a continental loading-gauge (the gauge is the same abroad but the carriages are wider) in anticipation of connecting with the Channel Tunnel promoted by the company's megalomaniac chairman, Sir Edward Watkin, in the 1880s.

Most of the Great Central was closed in the 1960s, two decades before work on the tunnel finally began. The great viaduct over the Ouse at Brackley has been destroyed and a tawdry shopping centre built on the site of the station in Nottingham. In Leicester, however, the steel bowstring Braunstone Gate Bridge that took the railway over the River Soar survives - but now Leicester city council wants to demolish it. The council bought the bridge and a length of the abandoned railway in the 1970s but, after getting young people to paint it as part of a youth employment scheme, neglected to maintain it. The public footpath over it was closed in 2000 because the bridge was deemed unsafe (repairs might cost about £775,000). It is now proposed to demolish it, along with a decent Victorian pub in Duns Lane called the Pump & Tab, as part of a deal with De Montfort University. Demolition will cost some £472,000. De Montfort wants the land so it can build a £6m swimming pool and sports centre. A petition against the destruction of bridge and pub has been signed by 1,300 people.

If the Great Central line is revived (as it ought to be) as a high-speed route, it will probably not go through the centre of Leicester so this bridge won't be needed; but that is not the point. The bridge may not be beautiful, but it is an impressive structure and tangible relic of Leicester's industrial past; besides, local people like it. Bridge and pub should stay.



*Braunstone Gate bridge on 5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2009.*

*photo: Robert Carroll*

**Items sold recently by Talisman Auctions**  
(see page 29 for auction house details)

 <p>A hanging lamp with a glass chimney and a brass plate. The plate is embossed with "CHESHIRE LINES" and stamped with "SKELTON JUNC. SHUNTERS CABIN".</p>	 <p>A rectangular cast iron sign with raised lettering. It reads: "HULL AND BARBEELEY AND GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAYS JOINT COMMITTEE PUBLIC WARNING PERSONS ARE WARNED NOT TO TRESPASS ON THIS RAILWAY OR ON ANY OF THE LINES STATIONS WORKS OR PREMISES CONNECTED THEREWITH. ANY PERSON SO TRESPASSING IS LIABLE TO A PENALTY OF FORTY SHILLINGS. OLIVER S. ROLT SECRETARY".</p>																																				
<p>CLC hanging lamp. Brass plate embossed "Cheshire Lines" and stamped "Skelton Junc. Shunters Cabin". Sold for <b>£320</b>.</p>	<p>H&amp;B and GCR Joint Committee cast iron trespass sign. Sold for <b>£400</b>.</p>																																				
 <p>A card cut-out of a steam locomotive. The locomotive is green with red and white text. It reads: "SHEFFIELD TO LONDON IN 3 HOURS WITHOUT A STOP! DEPT 8.50 A.M." Below the locomotive is a timetable table.</p> <table><tr><th>FROM</th><th>TO</th><th>DEPT</th><th>ARR</th><th>DEPT</th><th>ARR</th><th>DEPT</th><th>ARR</th><th>DEPT</th><th>ARR</th><th>DEPT</th><th>ARR</th></tr><tr><td>SHEFFIELD</td><td>LONDON</td><td>8.50</td><td>11.30</td><td>8.50</td><td>11.30</td><td>14.0</td><td>17.0</td><td>14.0</td><td>17.0</td><td>14.0</td><td>17.0</td></tr><tr><td>LONDON</td><td>SHEFFIELD</td><td>10.20</td><td>11.40</td><td>11.20</td><td>14.0</td><td>14.0</td><td>17.0</td><td>14.0</td><td>17.0</td><td>14.0</td><td>17.0</td></tr></table> <p>THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY. THE CIVIL ENGINEER: G. O. GENTLE, 23, HAYMARKET, LONDON, S.W.</p>	FROM	TO	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	SHEFFIELD	LONDON	8.50	11.30	8.50	11.30	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0	LONDON	SHEFFIELD	10.20	11.40	11.20	14.0	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0	 <p>A dark blue handlamp with a brass plate on top. The plate is stamped with "WATH 28316".</p>
FROM	TO	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR	DEPT	ARR																										
SHEFFIELD	LONDON	8.50	11.30	8.50	11.30	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0																										
LONDON	SHEFFIELD	10.20	11.40	11.20	14.0	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0	14.0	17.0																										
<p>A card cut-out of the Sheffield (Victoria) to London (Marylebone) timetable, dated 1903. Sold for <b>£60</b>.</p>	<p>Restored LNE-C (GCR pattern) 3 aspect handlamp. Oval brass plate to top "LNE-C 28316". Body stamped "Wath 28316". Sold for <b>£110</b>.</p>																																				

## Models of GCR locomotives by Tony Newton

All OO gauge and painted with Humbrol enamels.



### BR class J11 0-6-0 no.64294

First kit I built years ago from a BEC kit with a simple uncompensated chassis in 1/16 inch brass, Romford wheels, MRRC 5 pole motor and Romford 40:1 gears. The drive deteriorated as time wore on so the motor was removed. An Airfix 4F tender underframe was adapted by re-profiling the steps to look less Midlandish.



### BR class O4/1 2-8-0 no.63719

Anchorage kit with chassis part compensated, Romford driving wheels, Ultrascap pony wheels and 12/19 Portescap motor. Otherwise more-or-less as out of the box.





**BR class J10 0-6-0 no.65187**

DJH kit, compensated chassis with Ultrascaple wheels and Portescap 12/19 motor with replacement gearbox sides.



**BR class A5/1 4-6-2T no.69812**

Craftsman kit with some added detail. Chassis fully compensated between all six axles and pick-up on the leading five. Wheels are Ultrascaple, with largish (16x30) can motor and modified Exactoscale gearbox. Suspension works like a dream - oozes through lumpy track as though it was dead smooth but drive still has tight spots that show up embarrassingly with non-feedback controllers. Cellulose painted then lined and weathered with Humbrol.



John Smith of First GB Railfreight (*left*) and John Lee (*right*) by the replica 'Valour' nameplate and the painting by Graham Lee of GCR no.1165 *Valour*.



Past and present members of the War Memorial Committee. From left to right : Stephen Gay, Ken Grainger, Kevin Curran, Howard Turner and Hermann Beck.

*photos: Bob Gellatly*

## The Sheffield Special

by Bob Gellatly

By 12 noon on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, about sixty members and friends of the GCRS were to be found crowded into the foyer and bar of the historic Royal Victoria Hotel in Sheffield. Some were able to take advantage of the very comfortable armchairs and sofas. Others mingled around greeting friends and making new ones. The more affluent had ordered coffee or even something stronger from the bar.

Not long after the arranged time, the assembled crowd was encouraged to migrate in the direction of the Great Central Room, outside of which, in the corridor, a stray sheet of bed linen had been used to conceal the objects that would be the focus of this ritual. The limited space in the corridor meant that after the participants in the unveiling ceremony had taken their places there was little room for anyone else to observe the proceedings. As there was no coverage by closed-circuit TV the majority of the crowd had to content themselves to a listening role only.

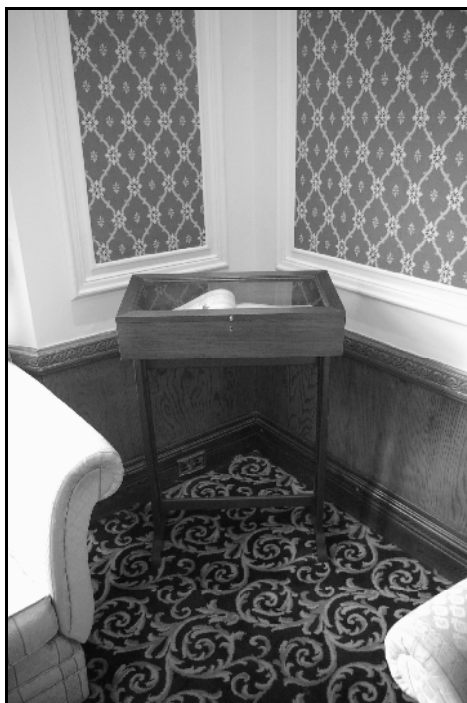
Ken Grainger played the part of master of ceremonies, by first introducing John Smith, managing director of GB Railfreight (it's not just policemen who seem to be getting younger!) who unveiled the replica nameplate of 'Valour' as carried by 66715. There was a chance that the locomotive might be in attendance on the adjacent track but it was required for revenue earning service. Then it was the turn of John Lee who had kindly donated the oil painting of GCR's 'Valour', by his late brother Graham Lee, to the hotel. He spoke about his brother, who was a railwayman, and how proud he would have been to see his painting on display for all to enjoy. The painting was unveiled to appreciative applause.

The focus of attention now moved from the corridor to the lobby ante-room where a new display cabinet for the Roll of Honour had been installed. This fine piece of furniture had been made by Dave Scargill, who was, unfortunately, too ill to attend the event.

As this may well be the last episode in a long and successful campaign by the War Memorial Committee, the opportunity was taken to gather past and present members of the committee together for a final photo opportunity next to the restored war memorial.

Lunch was provided by the hotel for all those attending the event - thank you Hermann! And there was more! After lunch we were treated to an entertaining presentation by Sheffield's own Howard Turner on 'Cravens of Sheffield'.

All those involved in organising the Sheffield Special are to be congratulated on making it such a memorable occasion.



*The new display cabinet, enabling the book to be displayed open, was made by Dave Scargill.*



## Memories of the Sheffield Blitz

by Elsie Maynard

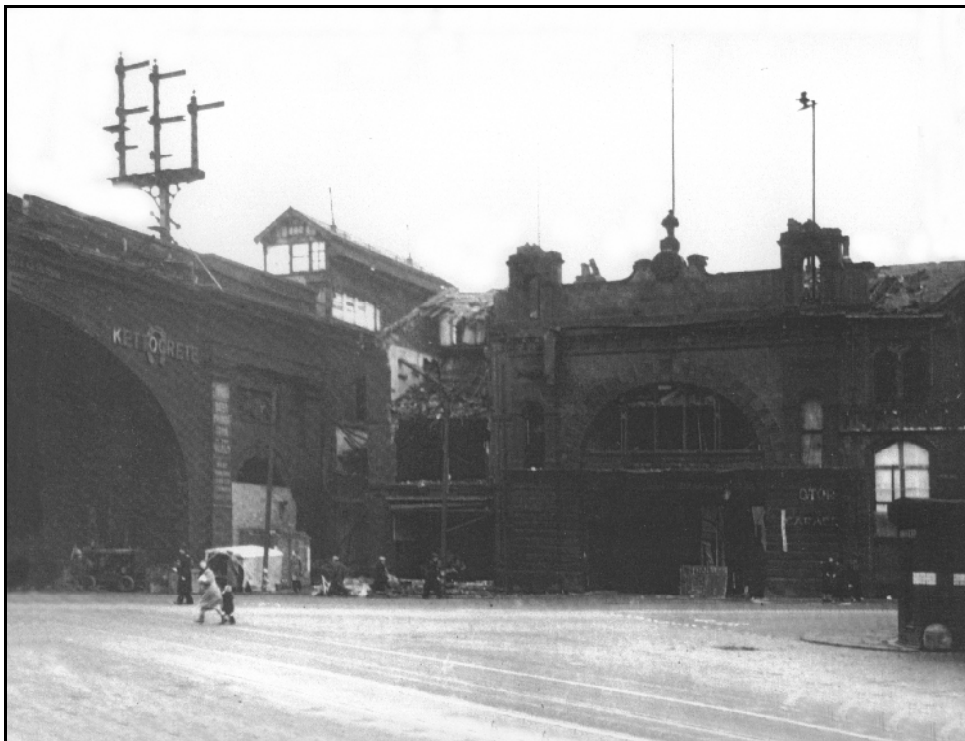
*This is my mother's account of the night of 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> December 1940 (The "Thursday Night Blitz"). She was working at Wicker Goods Yard when enemy bombers came low over Sheffield and bombs landed like rain. My mother's name was Elsie and she was working on nights as an unloader at the yard. She travelled from Heeley by tram. It was the usual thing to set off early as the foreman had said, "Better to be here together than be on your own when the sirens go." So here is the story told in my mum's words which I can remember well. She told us many times and she relived it every time. Fear is indelible within the mind. - Alan Maynard.*

I set off early as usual and my mam had packed me up a bit extra. My brother Alfred had arrived home on some rare leave and had brought a mate whose family lived in London and he could not get any news of them. The house was like a stopping off place and often people were found sleeping in a chair or on the floor. But that was life then, you just did what you could, like everyone else. I walked down Well Road on my way to the tram stop by Heeley station. Dad had always said that it was the safest place because the station approach went underground and was a good place to shelter. The tram came and we sat in our usual seats - five girls who had become close friends while doing men's work in Wicker goods yard. We unloaded things that had come from somewhere and were going somewhere else. You didn't have to know where as that was the foreman's job. He was a stickler for getting it right, so you just got it off and put it on them there little lorries as he said, "That on that lorry, that on the back of that" and so on.

We had been at it for some time when the sirens started. They often went and we would carry on as usual, but this time the foreman stopped and cocked his ear on one side and said, "Better get under the wagons girls, they're on their way." There was no mistaking it - this time the sound of the planes was much louder and the searchlights at Manor Top were lit and the others were lighting up. There was already the sound of gunfire and bombs going off. Thanks to the foreman we just had time to get under the wagons.

I had two mates with me under our wagon and two others under another in the next bay where we could see each other. The foreman did what he usually did and went with the drivers under one of them big parcels wagons. The noise got louder and louder, you sort of knew that this was different. Well we sat it out as the bombs came down. There was a blast close by, then another. I did look up once and I saw two faces in one of the planes, they were just young men. Well the bombing seemed to go on for ever and we sat with our arms around each other. Eventually we could hear a distant all clear, not the usual siren near by which must have been destroyed. The moonlight lit up a scene which did not look like the same place we had come to work at earlier as everything was in a mess. There was fire, smoke and dust everywhere. The wagon under which the foreman had been sheltering was in pieces. One of the older women shouted, "Come on girls let's go to the shelter." We did not take twice telling. The shelter windows were out, the door was hanging off, and this old chap had come back with a few beers he had pinched from the "Hole in the Wall". (*The "Wicker Brewery Inn" on Savile Street was also known as "Hole in the Wall" - Ed.*).

We stayed in the shelter for the rest of the shift and then the five of us set off home, if we had homes. Outside the yard in the Wicker it was a mess. The Wicker Arch was still there but there was a big hole in it. Two policemen were stood under it. They said, "Come on girls, there is still one that has not gone off." As we walked passed we couldn't resist the temptation to look in the hole above us. We had no choice but to walk home as no trams were running. Fortunately I still had a home to walk to.



The north side of the Wicker Arch following the Sheffield Blitz. The Wicker Goods Yard (once the terminus of the Sheffield & Rotherham Railway) was situated in the vee formed by Savile Street, on which the photographer is stood, and Spital Hill. The start of the boundary wall can just be seen on the right. Sheffield Victoria's No.3 signal box, seen on the arches above, controlled the west end of the station. The building shown in the photo has now been replaced by the Inner Relief Road (see photo on p27 of *Forward 153*).

### **Talisman Railwayana Auctions**

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## **Sir Sam Fay. The L&SWR Years - Part 2**

**by Bill Fay**

*An article compiled from diaries and other anecdotal notes left by Sir Sam Fay, relating to his time with the London & South Western Railway Company between 1872 & 1901.*

*First published in "Southern Way No. 5" (publisher Kevin Robertson – Noodle Books) January 2009.*

In the diaries he mentions many changes in clerical staff up and down the line. Sam applied for a few of these. He reports on one of these occasions: Mr Pettit's written recommendation "He is a good clerk, and I shall be sorry to loose him, but I must not stand in his way to keep him back. I have therefore much pleasure in recommending him for the position for which he asks." Sam's reaction is a fairly brusque one - "He could not say much more and he could certainly not say less!"

Interestingly many of the staff changes seem to be brought about by misdemeanours or fraud by clerks, for example:

"I hear that Mr Greig, who used to be at Surbiton, cashier at Nine Elms has defrauded the company to the tune of about £1,000" (about £85,000 at today's values),

"I hear that my friend Guyatt at Kensington has resigned. He was suspended for swearing at the clerk in charge"

"Benning at Southampton Docks has, I hear, gone wrong for a thousand. A good help to the guarantee"

In one instance he recorded that, at Wimborne: "Gale put in a Lunatic Asylum."

Ambitious he may have been but he did not lack generosity. When his father hit hard times with the farm, Sam turned over to him all the savings he had in the Southampton Savings Bank and two or three pounds a month out of his own pay. He was also generous to friends in need. A bookstall clerk at Kingston, one Haycock, was desperate for cash and could not raise it elsewhere. "The young fool has lost it betting and card playing." Sam lent him £9, having himself borrowed some of the amount from his manager against a promissory note. Sam was not optimistic of the loan being repaid fearing "he will go to the bad in the end." Within a week Haycock tried to borrow a further "sovereign" but Sam was not that generous! Repayment was promised in six weeks time. A year later he had not been repaid and he does not record if it ever was.

Today, Sam would probably be described as a company man, for he was certainly loyal to his employers. When another bookstall clerk, Compton, pinched some used tickets to take himself and four others to Waterloo, Sam (together with Osborne) turned him in to Pettit, and Compton was forced to pay up. Quite obviously this generated ill feeling between them, not made any easier by their both lodging with Mrs Redfern at the time. He took pride in his work and did not have any problems with his monthly cash returns to head office or with the regular audits.

As well as the many staff changes he took an interest in what was happening elsewhere on the L&SWR, for instance the opening of the Aldershot and Ascot line, the doubling of the main line between Surbiton and Woking and a number of railway accidents. These ranged from a comparatively simple "engine off at Richmond in evening, blocked the up line for several hours" to the more serious "bad accident on our line at the Loco Junction at Nine Elms, five or six killed and a lot injured." This accident happened in torrential rain when the 10.01pm train, hauled by the engine Firefly from Cyprus Station (the south station, part of the sprawl of the original Waterloo) ran into a goods engine standing on the main line and waiting to enter Nine Elms locomotive depot. After striking the goods engine the train continued in the six foot for 110 yards, the first carriage ended on top of Firefly and, according to The Times, several other coaches were "smashed to atoms and reduced to matchwood." There was little damage to the heavy goods engine and its crew were uninjured but Firefly's fireman, James Arnott was killed



Sam Fay c.1895

along with five passengers. The driver, Samuel Taylor, died later from his severe injuries. Major Marindin's report to the Board of Trade blamed the accident on the signalman, Almond, and the boy (presumably a pupil signalman), Kempson, forgetting they had a stationary loco standing on the main line. (*Shades of Quintinshill to come in May 1915.*) The Board of Trade report, not for the first or last time, recommended the installation of continuous train brakes. Major Marindin was of the opinion that this would have reduced the speed of Firefly and its train at the time of impact from 30mph to 10mph thus preventing the loss of life. The weather was to blame for a couple of other accidents. Snow blocking the up main signal at West London Junction resulted in a train of empty carriages running into a Goods and also fog at Woking causing a smash between the Southampton and Exeter Goods trains; "smashed up a rare lot of trucks."

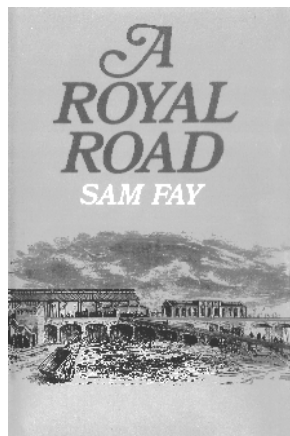
For those who like to know details of station changes; he records on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1881 – "More alterations being made on the High Level Station here (Kingston), the slope to the down main and the steps to the up are to be covered in, together with a part of each platform, the latter are to be raised several inches"

Apart from being provided with a good basic education Sam Fay rose to senior railway management by his own efforts. In mid 1881 he brought about the event which first introduced him to the senior management and the directors of the L&SWR. Whether or not this was his intention is not known. In his own words:

"Thu. 28<sup>th</sup> May: I have an idea for a paper called the South Western Gazette, which would be devoted to matters affecting the LSWR such as giving the promotion and changes in the staff. It would take well if the profits were handed over to the Widows' and Orphans' fund. I saw Goffe (a clerk in the General Manager's office) about the idea this evening. He agrees with me and proposes to start on June 1<sup>st</sup>."

With typical Sam energy events moved quickly. The next day they enlisted Dyer, the secretary of the South Western Institute and Club, who started to put together a programme and wrote to L&SWR agents in the country seeking contributions. A prospectus was produced within a week and printers engaged "on very good terms." A print run of 500 was anticipated. By the middle of the month correspondents were agreed for Exeter and Southampton and others promised articles. On the 21<sup>st</sup> May they "got a great deal of the copy down to the printers. 1,100 orders in." 2,000 copies were collected from the printer on 31<sup>st</sup> May which were despatched the next day. A week later they ordered 350 more and, significantly, Sam comments: "The directors are very pleased with it and have bought several copies." At the end of June the second edition was sent out with a total order of 2,400.

Sam's diaries end at this point. He must have found his spare time fully taken by the South Western Gazette and his next project. The prospectus for the Gazette shows a history of the South Western Line as being promised. He duly wrote this, with the help and encouragement of a friend, William Drewett, a Kingston printer and former editor of the "Surrey Comet". It was published as a book, under the title "A Royal Road" in 1882 (a facsimile edition was published in 1972). He always felt that this 'little book' was responsible for his subsequent railway career. From these events he learned the value of publicity and would use it to great effect in his time on the Great Central. That is outside the scope of this article but those who wish to pursue the thread should refer to the third volume of George Dow's excellent history of the Great Central, aptly subtitled "Fay Sets the Pace".



Before we move on from Kingston a couple of anecdotes, which Sam left us, are worth recording. The pay of railway clerks was poor and a number of them got together, making Sam their secretary. He produced a petition to the Directors which was presented through the General Manager. Having obtained an interview they had to wait some time at Waterloo. During this wait one of their number had a drink or two, no doubt for Dutch courage. "We all got increases in pay except the clerk who looked upon the wine when it was red." This was in the days when trade unions were in their infancy. During one of the Directors' annual inspections of the line, a saloon was requested. Because of a telegraphic error a fine salmon was provided, much to their amusement.

### *Waterloo & Nine Elms*

In 1884 he was asked by the Superintendent of the Line, E.W.Verrinder, to join his office, and a year later was appointed Chief Clerk. His boss was evidently not an easy man to get along with, nevertheless Sam remained in his office for seven years. He recorded that Verrinder "had an idea that scowling at an employee was the best way of enforcing discipline. He went around the office at Waterloo and strafed everyone for errors never committed." Matters came to a head with Verrinder when one of Sam's subordinates was appointed a District Superintendent. Sam objected on the grounds that the appointment should have been his, and appealed to the General Manager. The upshot was his appointment as Assistant Stores Superintendent at Nine Elms.

He recalled, concerning the General Manager Archibald Scott, "At 11am every morning it was the custom to have a refresher in the shape of a pint of beer. I often found myself standing at the refreshment counter between a porter and Archibald Scott, the General Manager. Mr Scott's drinking habits were peculiar. He frequently left the refreshment room by one door to enter by another, then take a second draught."

### *M&SWJR*

He remained at Nine Elms for nine months, before getting his first taste of real management power. The small Midland and South Western Junction Railway was in severe difficulties and in receivership. The directors of the line asked Charles Scotter, who had succeeded Scott as General Manager, if he could recommend someone to take on the post of Secretary and General Manager of the M&SJR. He did: Sam Fay was interviewed and accepted the position. Sam had previously applied for the vacant Manager's position of the Waterford and Central Ireland Railway, being recommended by the senior management of the L&SWR. He was interviewed at Kilkenny by the Directors. However the prospects did not appeal to him, he made his excuses and declined the post, "glad to escape from an uncomfortable position ...."

The M&SWJR is outside the scope of this article. It is sufficient to record that he succeeded in putting the line on a sound footing and removed it from receivership. At the end of his time there it is said that a local Cheltenham newspaper editor commented that Sam "had made an empty sack stand upright." On a personal level he felt that his seven years at Cirencester were amongst the happiest of his life. In his leaving speech, as reported in the "Gloucester Standard", Sam gives fulsome praise to the railwaymen, managers and directors in their unity and cohesion. This touches on one of his significant abilities as a manager, the ability to put together a strong team and to lead and support it. This would be demonstrated again in his days on the Great Central.

### *Superintendent of the Line*

In his absence, Verrinder had died in July 1893 and was succeeded as Superintendent by G.T.White. When he too died in March 1899 Sam returned to the L&SWR, taking up the appointment of Superintendent of the Line under the General Manager, Charles Scotter. Incidentally Scotter, like Sam Fay, rose from junior clerk to become a General Manager. He came up through the ranks of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway to Goods Manager, leaving after 32 years to take up his position with the

L&SWR. During Fay's time as Superintendent one of the most significant events was the introduction of low pressure pneumatic signalling to British railways. This had its origin in an inspection visit he made to New York in 1899, during which he was shown such signalling in use at Grand Central Station. He reported positively to the General Manager and the company decided to trial it at Gt. Grateley. The work included replacing the original two signal cabins by a single one on the up platform. It was undertaken by a newly formed company, the British Pneumatic Railway Signal Co. Incidentally this company's "outdoor assistant", presumably equivalent to today's site engineer, was one Arthur Bound, who was to go on to be one of the leading signal engineers of his day with the GCR, LNER and finally as Chief Signal and Telegraph Engineer of the LMS.

The installation was opened, with due fanfare, on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1901. Among those attending were: J.T.Allen, Assistant Superintendent (later Superintendent) of the Line from the GWR, H.G.Drury, Superintendent of the Line from the GER and J.Alexander from the GNR, whose duties I have been unable to establish, as well as luminaries of the L&SWR, including Dugald Drummond and the contractors. The celebrations involved much champagne, Sam's recollection was "the waiters got drunk and rolled out underneath the tent. A local paper said I was as bright and smiling as the morning itself."

Waterloo had grown in a seemingly haphazard way but following a report by Sam Fay to the directors, Waterloo Station was to be rebuilt and enlarged. The new station was finally opened in 1922 and then stood largely unaltered until Waterloo International was opened in 1994.

One of the duties of the Superintendent was to travel in charge of royal trains. The Prince of Wales (subsequently Edward VII) once complained about his breakfast getting cold, it having been sent to Waterloo in a hay box to keep it warm. To improve matters Sam had a coal gas oven installed on the train. On arrival at Southampton the foreman footman sought out Sam saying "see what you have done to me." The poor chap had allowed the gas to build up in the oven before lighting it. His eyebrows were burnt and his hair singed. The prince, however, had not noticed being too busy with his fish, eggs and bacon!

Sam Fay had a competitive nature and was a believer in improving and speeding up services in order to compete with neighbouring lines; something he was to do successfully for the Great Central. In 1899 he ran a trial train from Waterloo to Bournemouth, completing the 108 miles in 110 minutes. His instinct was to boost Bournemouth as a seaside resort in competition with Brighton. The day after this run he was sent for by the Chairman and told, "Don't do it again Sam, not in my lifetime." Apparently his Chairman had been on the train and was rather shaken by the hard riding.

The London and South Western had considerable experience of working with the military in view of the number of military establishments in its area. Sam's first encounter with the War Office did not impress him. He recalls in "The War Office at War", his World War I memoirs, that in 1886, while on Verrinder's staff, there were fears of civil unrest in the capital. The L&SW was ordered to put on a train to move a regiment from Portsmouth to London. The train was provided but the regiment never appeared. Sam was sent to the War Office to sort this out. He was met by total indifference by the officers, both civil and military. In the end "I rapped the desk of one individual who did not look up when told of my errand, and demanded to see the Quartermaster-General." He later commented that the War Office may have found the regiment, but the railway never did.

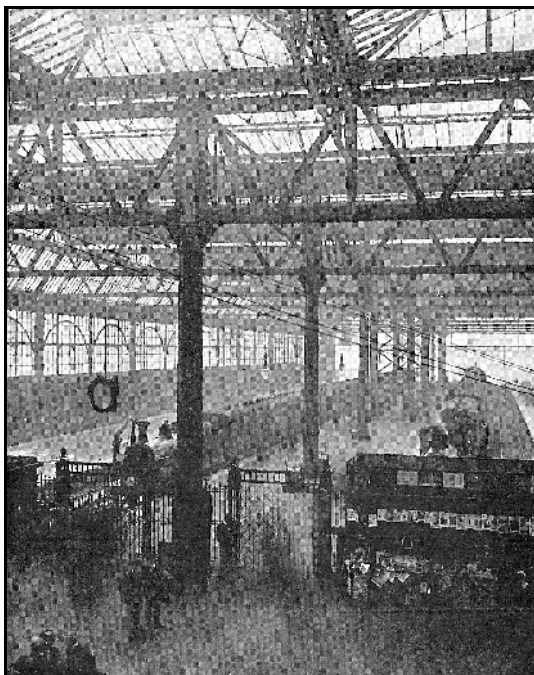
By the time he was next to experience the War Office, the latter had improved immensely. He worked closely with them throughout the Boer War as most of the troops and equipment for the campaign were shipped through Southampton. The L&SW acquitted themselves well, being able to supply and operate all necessary trains and dock facilities. Sam recorded that in the first seven months of the war the railway transported 212,370 officers and men, 27,000 horses and 1,186 wagons and other

vehicles; felt to be a great feat at the time. This experience stood him in good stead when he was appointed to the War Office during the Great War when vastly more men and military materials had to be shipped from and to UK shores.

#### *After the L&SWR*

At the end of 1901 the Great Central Railway needed a new General Manager to replace Sir William Pollitt. Their chairman, Alexander Henderson, later Lord Faringdon, wanted Sam Fay for the post and he accepted. The L&SWR did not wish to see him go and he was warned off the position by Colonel Williams, one of their directors – "The Great Central will be in receivership before the year is out. I am their banker, I know." Sam was aware of the GCR's financial position but did not believe it to be quite that serious. His faith was justified and under his management the GCR batted well above its position in the railway league.

Leaving the L&SWR was, however, not the last of his connections to what was to become the Southern Railway. He had been asked, in 1902, by Sir John Blundell Maple MP, son of the founder of Maple's



*Waterloo in the early 1900s.*

furniture store, to value the Isle of Wight railways. Not an easy job as none of the three lines made money. Sir John's intention was to purchase land and the railways with a view to developing the island. He made a start by acquiring a majority of shares in the Freshwater, Yarmouth & Newport line. When, the following year, Sir John died, his executors sold the shareholding to Frank Aman, who had hotel and land interests at Totland Bay. Sam Fay took a seat on the board of the FY&N and played a significant part in directing the company. Sam contributed much professional advice and played a major part in 1913 when the Freshwater took back the running of the line from the Isle of Wight Central Railway. He took a leading role in negotiations with the Isle of Wight Central, recruited suitable management (the new General Manager came from the Great Central Railway), and arranged for the purchase of locos and rolling stock. The company was always stretched for cash and Sam Fay, with Frank Aman, was appointed joint receiver in 1913. The company never paid a dividend but Sam expressed himself as very satisfied with the capital payment received in 1923 from the Southern.

He retired from active railway management, upon Grouping, at the end of 1922, having served at the War Office during the Great War, latterly as Director General of Movements and Railways, a position which gave him a seat on the Army Council. Grouping did not see the end of Sam Fay's railway interests (by then Sir Sam, being knighted by George V at the opening of Immingham Docks in July 1912). He continued to be an active director of two Argentine railways and was Chairman of locomotive builders Beyer Peacock from 1923 to 1933.

He returned to the land of his ancestors in 1923, when he bought a substantial property, Awbridge Danes. Family legend has it that, in his youth, he had worked there as a boot



boy, swearing that one day he would own it. Myth it may be but it does ring true to his character. Sam Fay died on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1953. What great changes he had seen in his beloved railways. He is buried at Awbridge in Hampshire.

### *Acknowledgements*

I am, of course, very grateful to Sir Sam Fay for leaving us his Kingston diary and other writings. He had had some idea of writing his autobiography, but sadly this never happened. What a mine of information and insights into railway management that would have been. I am grateful to my father, His Honour Judge Edgar Fay QC, for passing on to me various Sam Fay papers, and also for his permission, as Sir Sam Fay's surviving Executor, to quote from these and from Sam's publications.

I must also thank Geoff Merritt for the photograph of Stockbridge station and Audrey Giles of Kingston University for providing me with a copy of Sam Fay's L&SWR staff record.

Kevin Robertson inspired me to write this article and my thanks are due to him for his assistance and encouragement. The errors are mine, not his.

An extremely useful source of additional information has been *The Times* on line archive. I would thoroughly recommend this to anyone searching for contemporary newspaper accounts and obituaries.

The following books have also proved useful to me in providing background information:-

*Branch Lines of Hampshire* by Colin G. Maggs (Sutton Publishing, 1997)

*The Midland & South West Junction Railway* by Colin G. Maggs (David & Charles, 1967 & 1980)

*The Freshwater, Yarmouth & Newport Railway* by R.J. Maycock & R. Silsbury (Oakwood, 2003)

*A Royal Road* by Sam Fay (EP Publishing, 1973; Kessinger Publishing, 2008)

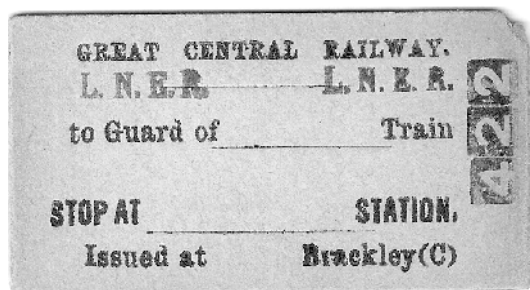
*The War Office at War* by Sir Sam Fay (Hutchinson, 1937; EP Publishing, 1973)

I can also recommend George Dow's *Great Central, Vol. 3* (Ian Allan, 1965, 1971 & 1985) which covers Sam Fay's GCR career. In writing this article I have studiously avoided rereading this book as George Dow had access to some of the same source material and I wanted to avoid the trap of using his phraseology, even subconsciously.

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### **Stop At ... Station ticket**

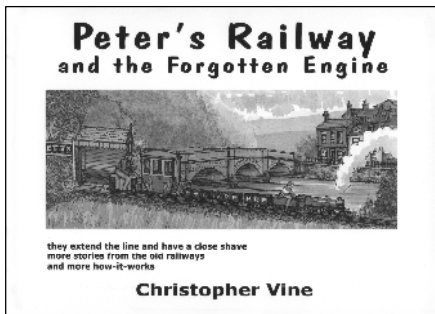
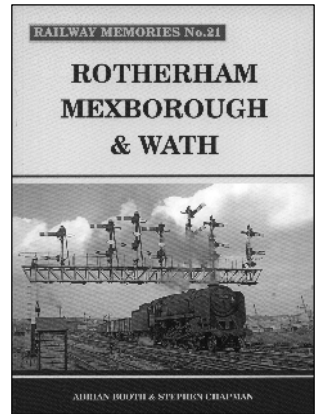
This unused ticket was recently aquired by Brian Slater. It was originally printed for the GCR but has been overprinted with 'L.N.E.R.' The issuing booking office is at Brackley. Its purpose is to instruct the guard of the train that the holder wishes to alight at a request stop. It is interesting to speculate which stations this could be used for when travelling from Brackley.



## New arrivals on the bookshelf

**"Rotherham Mexborough & Wath"** by Adrian Booth & Stephen Chapman.  
Published by Bellcode Books, 2009.  
ISBN 9781871233216.  
Softback with 112 pages.  
Cover price £13.95

A collection of black and white photos taken mostly by Adrian Booth. Comprehensive captions and some text by Stephen Chapman. Printed to a high quality by the Amadeus Press.



### **"Peter's Railway and the Forgotten Engine"** by Christopher Vine.

Self published, 2009. [www.petersrailway.com](http://www.petersrailway.com)  
ISBN 9780955335938.  
Hardback with dustjacket. 95 pages.  
£11.99 + £1.50 P&P from the author.

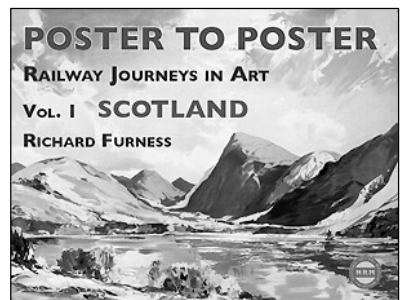
Aimed at keeping youngsters interested in railways once they have grown out of Thomas, this is the third in the 'Peter's Railway' series. (The second was reviewed in *Forward 160*.) The same format is used with the story of Peter and his Grandpa's railway

interspersed with technical information. It is illustrated with colour drawings and printed to a high quality by the Amadeus Press.

### **"Poster to Poster. Vol.1 : Scotland"** by Richard Furness.

Published by JDF and Associates, 2009.  
[www.railway-posters.com](http://www.railway-posters.com)  
ISBN 9780956209207.  
Cover price £35.  
Hardback in large format. 330 posters illustrated and 550 listed.

This is the first in a series of seven volumes, listing the posters produced by British railway companies. The classification is not by the companies that produced them but by the locations depicted. The author intends this to become the definitive work on the subject.



Volume 2, to be published shortly, will look at North East England which covers the area from Berwick-on-Tweed in the north to Sheffield in the south.

by Paul White

Reports in the *Manchester Evening News* in May 2005 of a feasibility study by "ULTRASPEED" into a £16bn London to Scotland "MAGLEV" line were followed on June 6<sup>th</sup> by a much more detailed account in the *Guardian*, with illustrations of the Shanghai Airport system, where trains levitating above the track take a mere 8 minutes to travel 19 miles. Advisers to Tony Blair were said to be enthusiastic, as such a line would make internal air travel "redundant". The scheme was being backed by a German company, Transrapid International, which had designed the Shanghai system. Ease of engineering was cited, with the system being less susceptible to gradients and winter weather. And the connection with Woodhead? Twofold: the *Guardian* stated that "existing, but unused tunnels through the Pennines have been identified for part of the route". A further connection can be made in that Atherton-born Professor Eric Laithwaite first successfully tested his MAGLEV system using a converted platelayers' trolley in the former Gorton Works of the GCR after its closure in 1963. And as with so many dramatic scheme announcements, nothing has been heard of this since.

Local news on transport issues was heavily dominated throughout 2005 by the A628 Mottram-Hollingworth-Tintwistle Bypass campaign, which had reached a critical moment. Most of the momentum seemed to be with the "pro" campaign, with almost weekly high-profile publicity in both our local newspapers, with the projected cost now being put at £90m. Tameside Council, the scheme's most enthusiastic backer took half a page in the *Tameside Reporter* with an item headed "Important Public Information", giving a series of bullet-pointed reasons for backing the by-pass, with a cut-off slip to be sent to the Engineering and Environmental Services director of Tameside Council stating "we need this bypass and I urge all those affected to support its early implementation." The absurdity of a council trying to get members of the public to write to one of its own departments was commented on by many. There was no provision on the slip for anyone to express their opposition, which led to well-founded accusations of bias. With the benefit of the knowledge of more recent events, this could be seen as a critical moment when panic 'began to set in amongst the bypass supporters' – perhaps their beloved scheme wouldn't be built after all. The local press tried to balance the views of supporters and opponents of the bypass alike; no-one could explain why the local authorities had not pursued the option of an HGV ban across the A628, a point taken up in the *Guardian* of October 16<sup>th</sup> 2005.

Under the heading "Campaign of the Week – Save Swallows Wood" the argument for a lorry ban was succinctly put: there is of course absolutely no valid reason why Local Authorities should not follow this option except that they choose not to do so, preferring instead grandiose schemes and the prestige that goes with them. Local opposition was focussed on the loss of local beauty spots such as Swallows Wood. The "Re-Open Woodhead" option promoted by Translink at the beginning of the anti-bypass seemed to have been quietly dropped, possibly due to a recognition by the campaigners that its present promoters could never make it a serious option. Meanwhile, the detailed planning for the Bypass was on view at local council offices for the statutory period of 21 days, leading to protests that this was "insufficient time" to take all the details in. Nonetheless, it was enough time for the planned Public Enquiry to receive an enormous number of objections.

Meanwhile, local rail matters took a far more prosaic course. There had been a number of complaints about the untidy state of Glossop and Hadfield stations, partly due to the lack of waste bins which had been withdrawn for "security reasons". A local businessman, well known over the years for some rather eccentric forays into local affairs, donated a new clock to go over the former waiting room door, having taken over one of the former waiting rooms as an office. He then offered, through the press, to recruit members of the public to clean up the stations and their surrounds. This attempt having failed due to a lack of public response and well-founded health and safety

concerns, he then used the local press as a vehicle to accuse the local population of "not caring". Perhaps the largest item of litter to disfigure railway land was a derelict lorry dumped at the end of Hadfield Station platform. The efforts of the "Friends of Glossop Station" have improved things considerably since, without any fuss or grand gestures.

On May 26<sup>th</sup> 2005 the *Glossop Chronicle* ran an article recalling the planned closure forty years earlier of the Manchester to Glossop and Hadfield line to passenger traffic. The line would have been closed on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1965. The article recalled opposition from, among others, the "fifty-plus members of the Stockport and District Pigeon Fanciers", Longendale UDC, and Bert Turner, the then Mayor of Glossop and a railwayman himself. As is well known, this was one of the few closures that was turned down, as was the proposal to close the Buxton branch on the same date.

Once again, the Gamesley station issue came to the fore in 2005: it featured in the High Peak Local Plan for 2005 which cited "the problem of congestion within Glossopdale and the role that a new park and ride railway station would play in improving accessibility and sustainable transport in the valley". The report saw the development of a small amount of housing near to the proposed station site as a way to stimulate the development ("pump priming"). This led to an enormous front-page headline in the *Glossop Advertiser* of November 10<sup>th</sup> 2005 : "STEAMING AHEAD WITH STATION", complete with a photo-montage showing a train passing the station at high speed! Local Councillors Dave Wilcox and Anthony McKeown were quoted as saying, "This is really good news – now is the nearest it's been for the past 25 years." And again, to date (Oct 2009) absolutely nothing has happened.



A map showing the rejected Longendale bypass scheme with the Glossop spur. The bypass would run from the end of the M67 in the west to a point above Tintwhistle in the east. This would remove through traffic, much of it lorries, from the communities of Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwhistle. At present these communities are gridlocked with traffic at peak times.

## GCRS publicity in 2009 and 2010

by Andrew David

Some members may be aware that the Society has two stands (one for the north of the country and one for the south), which are used for publicity at railway related events. The stands consist of display boards showing photographs of former GC trains and locomotives at various locations, along with reproductions of some GC posters. There is also a stock of badges and past numbers of *Forward* and some second hand books which we sell: and of course we give out membership forms and encourage interested individuals to join on the spot! We also give out a single sheet

to interested enquirers, explaining how we differ from the Great Central Railway (Loughborough), and with some information about other related GC interest groups (such as the Nottingham Heritage group and the Quainton Railway Society, among others). All proceeds go towards the financing of local events or are forwarded to the Treasurer for Society funds.

In 2009 the 'southern' stand was at RISEX model railway exhibition in Princes Risborough and RAILEX model railway exhibition in Stoke Mandeville. Tony West was at the Gauge O Guild events at Kettering in March and at Telford in September. Mike Hartley has also taken the 'northern' stand to various events, including the Sheffield model railway exhibition. The presence of the stalls at these events would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of the members and supporters who give their time for this important publicity and a window on the world for the Society, and keeping up our public profile.

So we are most grateful to Mike, Tony and to all who have enabled the stalls to be displayed at the various events, and I would like to extend particular thanks to Richard Butler and his wife, and to local members, Peter McCarthy and Robin Lane, as well as Len Bunning and Brian Holyland, for their invaluable support in keeping the stall 'personed' throughout the two Buckinghamshire shows. It was also a great pleasure that our President, Richard Hardy, was able to be present at both shows: many exhibitions visitors were delighted to see Richard, and in one case to get him to sign a copy of one of his books! We were also delighted to be able to display Paul Bambrick's O Gauge model of an Altrincham 2-4-0 tank with attendant push and pull six-wheeler carriage, such as ran on the GC and Met. Line between Verney Junction and Aylesbury. Paul has nearly completed an O Gauge layout named 'Weedon Road', based on Waddesdon Manor and Grandborough Road stations, which is due to be featured in the Model Railway Journal in the near future, and to be exhibited in full running order at RAILEX 2011.

There will no doubt be many occasions when both stalls will be on display in 2010 and up and coming invitations to show the 'southern' stall have been confirmed for:

- Warley Model Railway Exhibition 21/22 November 2009.
- RISEX (Princes Risborough) 20 February 2010 (one day).
- The London Festival of Model Railways at Alexandra Palace 27/28 March 2010.
- RAILEX (Stoke Mandeville) May Bank Holiday weekend 2010.

So come along and support us at these events, and if you would like to help with organising and/or 'personing' either stall in your local area, please do not hesitate to contact either myself (via the Editor) or Tony West ('southern' stand) or Mike Hartley ('northern' stand).



*The GCRS stand at RAILEX 2009. From left to right: Robin Lane, Brian Holyland and Len Bunning.*

## **A visit to the Harrietstown, Ballysophia & Cashelcorinna Railway by Bob Gellatly**

On 15<sup>th</sup> August, a small group of GCRS members visited the home of Professor George Huxley and his wife Davina. A display of models, photographs and books had been set out for our inspection but the main purpose of the visit was to enjoy seeing the garden railway in operation. It was a beautiful summer's day and the typical English garden of flowerbeds and lawns made a perfect setting for the gauge O system which emerged from the indoor workshops, based in a small outhouse, to complete a circuit of the garden. The rolling stock was of mixed pedigree but well represented by GCR items as illustrated in the photos below. The source of motive power was by clockwork, battery, electric motor, or by horse power (the source of which seemed rather static!). The afternoon was rounded off with tea and cakes taken under the shade of a cherry tree.

GCR class 8B 4-4-2 no.192.  
Model by Leinster Models, Dublin.  
Battery powered.



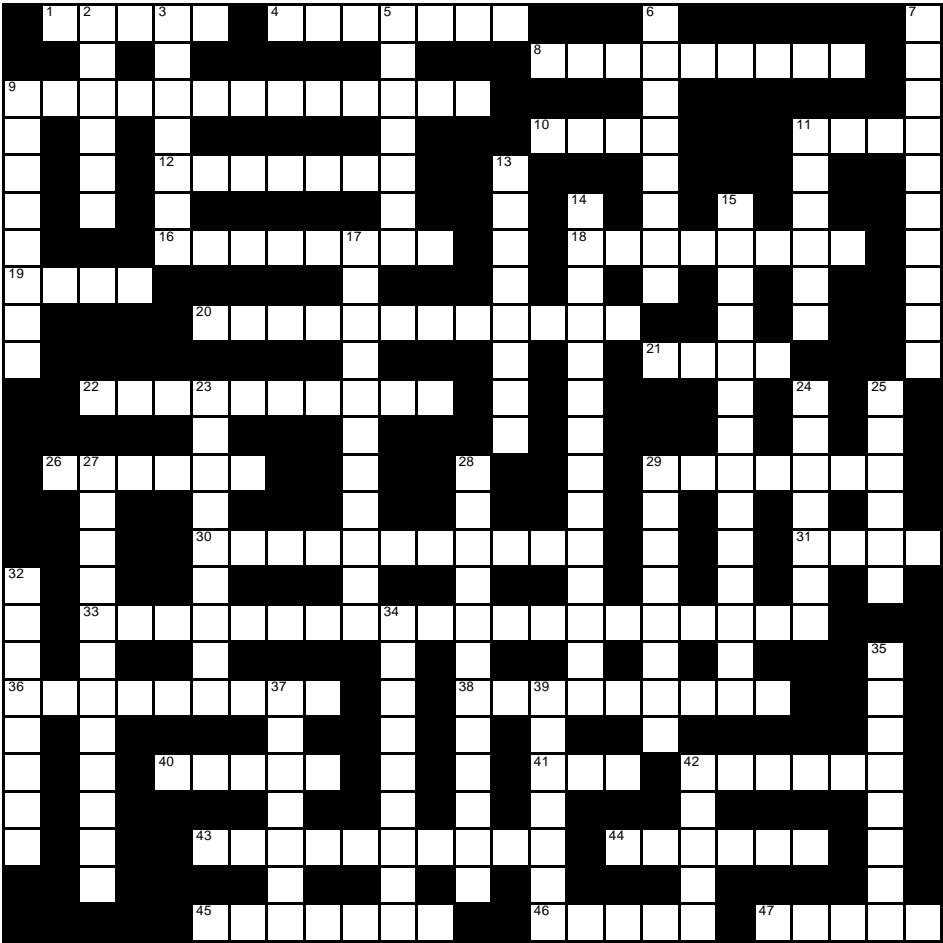
GCR class 13 4-2-2 no.967.  
Model by Arthur Parsey.  
Electric motor via stud contact.



GCR class 8K 2-8-0 no.966, the first  
of the class, built in 1911.  
Model by Leinster Models, Dublin.  
Battery powered.



**Crossword (*Forward 162*)** : Answers in the back of this issue.



**Across**

- 1 Long handle of a tool or weapon. (5)
- 4 Signal box south of Lutterworth. (7)
- 8 To make a copy. (9)
- 9 Type of sidings near Clipstone on the Mansfield Railway (13)
- 10 A shunter's tool. (4)
- 11 Main traffic from Grimsby Docks. (4)
- 12 Steam locomotive articulated in three parts. (7)
- 16 Where rails sleep? (8)
- 18 Photographic vantage point at east end of Wath Yard. (4,4)
- 19 Destroyed by a fire at Cleethorpes in 1903. (4)
- 20 Wrote a book about railways in USA and Canada in 1852. (6,6)
- 21 Name carried by GCR no.501. (4)
- 22 CLC station at the west end of the Widnes Loop. (5,5)
- 26 To rest in light steam. (6)
- 29 Device used on the 'Wath Daisies' to increase power. (7)

- 30 Steam with a greater capacity for expansion before condensing. (11)
- 31 Valley north of Nottingham used as a route by three railways. (4)
- 33 The RSC but not Shakespeare. (7,6,7)
- 36 Destination indicators used at Leicester Central. (5,4)
- 38 Supposedly the most important person on the railway. (9)
- 40 Not in the dictionary. (5)
- 41 In your diary for 8th May 2010. (3)
- 42 Type of repeater signal. (6)
- 43 A CLC terminus. (4,6)
- 44 Full of flues. (6)
- 45 A drain that passes under a road or railway. (7)
- 46 The Road of the L&SWR according to Sam Fay. (5)
- 47 Type of railway 'collected' by Colonel Stephens. (5)

## Down

- 2 Part of Woodford's station name when opened. (6)
- 3 Goods. (7)
- 5 Warning board found on approach to a railway foot crossing. (7)
- 6 Station in the Dukeries. (8)
- 7 The exchange sidings at the limit of the Woodhead electrification in Sheffield. (10)
- 9 Holds the connecting rod and crank together. (8)
- 11 The front of a building. (6)
- 13 On this kind of train the journey is more important than the destination. (8)
- 14 Opened by King George V in 1912. (9,5)
- 15 Bridge under threat of demolition in Leicester. (10,4)
- 17 Carved edgings found on platform canopies. (11)
- 23 First station out of Wrexham on today's Borderlands Line. (9)
- 24 Home to the Ellis Tea Room. (7)
- 25 Colliery branch between Woodhouse and Beighton. (6)
- 27 Type of mechanism found in a signal box to prevent conflicting movements. (12)
- 28 A term for a railfan used today in a derisive way. (12)
- 29 Model manufacturer to produce a OO gauge Robinson 2-8-0. (8)
- 32 Unfair nickname given to GCR class 9Q (LNER class B7). (5,3)
- 34 Authority figure with the task of making sure that everything is done correctly. (9)
- 35 Station served by the Cleethorpes-Barton service. (8)
- 37 Present day manufacturer of rail clips. (7)
- 39 A stop signal that controls entry into the block section ahead. (7)
- 42 Terminus of the Wotton Tramway. (5)



*Thornton Abbey montage created by Chris Booth.*



## **A war-time fire at Rushcliffe Halt**

**by Alf Henshaw**

*Submitted for publication by John Hitchen*

Near the end of 1940 I was released from war service in an R.A. Field Regiment to resume duties as Assistant Controller in the Nottingham District Office. This had recently been evacuated to a new purpose-built block to accommodate the Passenger and Freight trains staff, typists, and a telegraph clerk as well as the Control Office staff, and was situated near the entrance to the goods yard at East Leake.

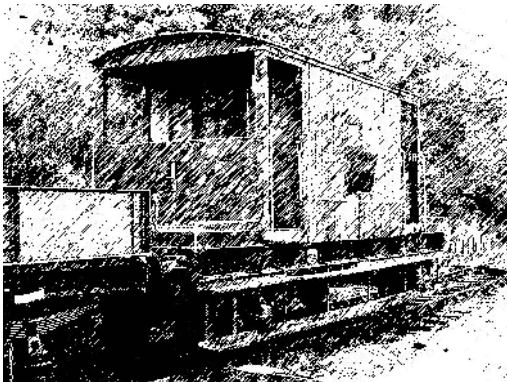
Although each shift booked the usual 8 hours (6am-2pm-10pm), most of the staff continued to travel from Nottingham on booked passenger trains or a special of two or three coaches (occasionally a steam rail car on Sundays). This special working, known as "The Nazi" by signalmen, brought the Sunday shifts from Nottingham at about 7.30am and about 8.30pm, returning with the relieved shifts.

As the day shift travelled by the 6.25am Nottingham-Woodford passenger, the night shift was extended to ten hours. Furthermore there was no return passenger service to Nottingham until 7.35am. Consequently, in fair weather, I would bring by bicycle on "The Nazi" when on night shift and cycle home from East Leake. I really enjoyed the fresh air and exercise after ten hours in a stuffy, smoke filled atmosphere, with all the windows closed and steel shutters on the outside.

This preamble is to explain why I had the bicycle on hand in the following incident. I was working as Guard's Relief, possibly in 1942, when the Banbury Section Controller reported that smoke had been seen at about 2am at Rushcliffe Halt. This was a wooden structure and was in a shallow cutting with grass sides. Hotchley Hill signal box was closed for the night shift, leaving the block from Gotham Sidings to East Leake. Realising that I had my bicycle, the Deputy Chief supplied me with a hand lamp and ordered me to investigate, there being no train in the vicinity going in that direction.

Upon arrival at Rushcliffe Halt I found the fire on the up platform and realised that it could easily spread, particularly if the grass sides of the cutting were to catch fire. After trying to put the fire out, rather ineffectively, by stamping around on it, I heard an up freight climbing towards Barnstone tunnel. Twisting the hand lamp to show a red aspect I stood near the platform edge and brought the train to a stand. With the aid of the fireman's shovel, grass sods were cut and placed over the smouldering area and it was then well stamped down. It was then doused with the water hose. When satisfied that there was no further danger, the driver offered me a lift back to East Leake, but having already stopped for 15-20 minutes and a bank to climb with a full load for Woodford, I declined the offer and cycled back. Surprisingly the guard of the train never came forward to see what the problem was and I saw no sign of him as the train pulled away.

The sequel to this tale brought a wry smile to my face. I was talking to an ex-Annesley guard recently and he told me a story involving another guard who had been on a train during the war when there was an air raid and an incendiary bomb had set fire to Rushcliffe Halt. The train had stopped and the crew had dealt with the fire. As far as I can remember there never were an air raids in that vicinity. I wonder if the guard was actually asleep throughout the incident and this was the version given to him by the crew on arrival at Woodford!



## Readers' forum

### from Jim Thompson, North Anston, Sheffield

Re. *Forward 161* p44: letter from Paul Allcock - 'Lord President' at Annesley.

I can also remember the occasion when 'Lord President' was on Annesley shed. Although I do not have the exact date I think it was late 1957. At that time, my cousin's husband, Roy Warhurst, was a fireman at Annesley. I was staying with my uncle at Hucknall and Roy took me up to Annesley shed on the Sunday. We saw 'Lord President' dead and forlorn stabled up by the shed wall. Roy enquired as to how it came to be there and was told that it had been taken off the previous day's (Saturday) York-Bournemouth with a hot box. The loco was allocated to York at the time. Naturally we had a good look round the footplate, and the firebox seemed enormous to me. I hope this answers Paul Allcock's query, at least in part.

### from Ken Grainger, Woodhouse, Sheffield

Re. *Forward 161* p28: article 'Cheshire Lines - Part 5'.

I am grateful to my friend Alan Ashurst for pointing out that the "girder bridge to nowhere on the stub of the direct line" (p28) to the east of Warrington Central is not, as I had thought, the stub of the 'Direct Line', the junction for which was further east, just a couple of hundred yards west of Padgate station. In fact the bridge gave access over Marsh House Lane into extensive CLC and industrial sidings on the north side of the line, and into Battersby Lane signal works.

Also, I misremembered the surviving Parcels Office fragment of Liverpool Central's station buildings as being "The Caff   Noir" (p34) - it is in fact "The Caff   Nero" (the double f is correct).

Apologies for the misinformation.

### from John Quick, Oughtibridge, Sheffield

Re. *Forward 161* p46: letter from Dick Bodily - Specials on the SMJR.

Dick Bodily asks for details of specials which worked over the SMJR. The only one that I am able to help him with is that of June 27<sup>th</sup> 1912. This was when the GCR ran a special non-stop dining car train of six vehicles from Manchester to Stratford-on-Avon. The train, which was hauled by class 8D 4-4-2 no.258, took the Home Trade Merchants of Manchester for their annual picnic. At Stratford, motor charabancs were waiting to take the party for a 33 mile ride around Shakespeare country. Further details, and a rather nice view of the train at Stratford, may be found in the *Great Central Railway Journal* vol.VIII, no.2, p.50. A very interesting item regarding this, is that on the previous year's tour, the GC had a film made of the day. I wonder if this still exists.

Re. *Forward 161* p47: letter from Bob Pixton - Strike breakers.

I believe the picture on p.47 is at Oldham, probably the LNWR yard, judging by the signals to the right.

*Editor's note:* The LNWR yard at Oldham was next to Mumps station. It is now an industrial estate. Mumps station is now closed and will reopen at a different site when the line to Rochdale has been converted to tram running as part of the Metrolink system expansion.



### from P. Moffatt, Bicester, Oxfordshire

*Photo request*

Can anyone supply me with a photo of preserved GWR 'Castle' no.5043 *Earl of Mount Edgemore* at Marylebone on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009?

**from George Huxley, Church Enstone, Oxfordshire**

Re. *Forward* 160 p47: letter from David Garrick on the "Neasden Tankies"

Attention has been drawn to defects in the design of the valve gear of the Great Central 4-6-2 tank locomotives of class 9N and to the difficulties in maintaining them at Neasden from 1946 onwards. David Garrick writes: "In response to the requests of the shed master, two LNER A5s arrived - nos.1760 and 1766. What a difference! Darlington was given the task of building some more A5s and what did they do? Having just built a batch of J39s, they simply fitted J39 cylinders with 8" piston valves of modern design to the A5s. That solved the problems."

Nos.1760 and 1766 became 9835 and 9836. They were classified A5/2 and were members of a batch of thirteen built at the order of Gresley between September 1925 and March 1926. They had, in comparison with the GC locos (LNER Class A5/1), cut-down chimneys and reduced boiler mountings and they were equipped with both Westinghouse and vacuum brakes. The A5/2s were set to work in the territory of the former NER but were they built at Darlington? W.A.Tuplin in *Great Central Steam* (George Allen & Unwin, 1967) pp83-85 states that they were built by Hawthorne Leslie, and Hugh Longworth in *British Railways Steam Locomotives 1948-1968* (OPC, 2005) p251, records the same origin. Could it be that Darlington was given the task of re-designing the Robinson valves but the construction was carried out at Hawthorn Leslie?

The Robinson 4-6-2Ts were variously estimated. At first known as "Coronation Tanks" from the date of their introduction, 1911, they were intended to haul the heavier new suburban sets out of Marylebone. As George Dow recalls in *Great Central Vol.3* (Ian Allan, 1965) p317, the 9N became popular with locomotive enthusiasts, so much so that Bassett-Lowke Ltd of Northampton sold models of the locomotives from 1912 onwards. The replicas, of Gauge 2, had powerful clockwork mechanisms. A model of an L&NWR 4-6-2 tank locomotive was introduced by Bassett-Lowke about the same time. The description of the 9N model is followed by the note: "N.B. - A sample of this Locomotive was submitted to J.G. Robinson Esq., the Locomotive Superintendent of the Great Central Railway, who was delighted with the model". P.H.V.Banyard is quoted as saying of the 9N: "I always considered this class to rank among the supreme best" (in *The Harmonious Blacksmith Robinson* by A.C.Hancox (SLS 1995) p28), but perhaps those who had to drive, fire, and maintain the "Coronations", at least in their latter days, would not have agreed. The basic defect in the design as stated by W.A. Tuplin on p83, and referred to by David Garrick, was that there was "imposed on the steam a more awkward path from valve to cylinder end than was normally found even with flat valves." An improved arrangement is proposed in Tuplin's Fig. 4 on p121.

David Garrick mentions a tendency to sluggishness in 9N locomotives, a problem duly reported by drivers. I recall in memory a report of the late 1940s of an A5/1 having to be taken off a train on the GW&GC joint line. The replacement, a former Great Western Pannier Tank, performed spectacularly well with the heavy train. Homer sometimes nods and one must regretfully agree with David Garrick's words: "The 9N was certainly not one of Robinson's best designs".

**from Patrick Oates, Canberra, ACT, Australia. e-mail: apo@tightfitz.com**

*Information requested:* Journey from Rotherham to Didcot in 1968

I thought I would take this opportunity to contact GCRS members and seek their views on the following. A bit of personal history to start with. I am from Rotherham in S.Yorks and was around in the late 50s and early 60s, trainspotting at Rotherham Masborough and Holmes. We lived quite near the centre of town then and I also used to visit Rotherham Central, but mainly on my way to the Midland line at Masborough. After leaving school (South Grove Sec. Modern) in 1967, I got a job for a year at Parkgate Iron and Steel and towards the end of that year saw a job advertised in the *Daily Mirror*

for positions as Trainee Scientific Officers at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, near Didcot. As the interview was first thing in the morning, and at that age (18yr) without a car, I travelled down on the train the previous day.

I was successful in getting offered the job, but didn't take it up for various reasons. I didn't think anything about this for a long time afterwards and then found, fortunately, that my father had kept all my correspondence. I had been sure that I went down to Oxford from Rotherham Central, getting a lift to the station in my grandfather's (he was a local builder, called Fred Moncaster) early 60s Hillman Minx. I seemed to remember it all so well, getting to the station, travelling down via Derby and Birmingham and then to Oxford where I changed trains to a local for Didcot. I seem to remember being excited by the fact that the train engine was going to be either a steam loco or one of the new diesels. I can't remember which way round now though! But, it appears from what I have seen and read subsequently, that Rotherham Central was closed during 1966 and as my journey took place in May 1968, I can't have travelled out via Rotherham Central. This image has been so firmly fixed in my mind over the years that it was hard to let go of this fact and accept I must have gone from Rotherham Masborough. Can any of your members confirm this and perhaps tell me which train it may have been? I left around mid-day and arrived at Didcot around 6pm, taking a taxi to AERE and staying in one of the large residence blocks that were on site. These were demolished a while ago and the whole site has now changed a lot. Strangely, I got a job back in the area, for a year, in 1999 and worked right next door at the Rutherford Appleton Labs and so was able to have a nostalgic poke around the place I almost ended up working at 30 years previously!

I returned the following day after my interview and tests, travelling again via Oxford, Birmingham, Derby/Burton and so to Rotherham Central/Masborough. In this instance I have a vague feeling it was Rotherham Masborough and hence I couldn't have travelled outwards from Central.

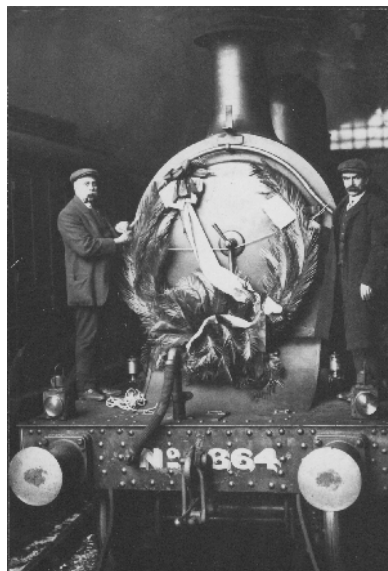
Members may be interested in my rail website at [www.rail.tightfitz.com](http://www.rail.tightfitz.com) which has pages of pictures of various sorts - one series of which is a nostalgic look at the GC line through Sheffield, with a video taken on the 'station' at Sheffield Victoria in the summer of 2008. There are pictures at each of the main locations along the GC route all the way down to Killamarsh. There are various other sets amongst which is one of the rail diversions which took place toward the end of last year when Bradway Tunnel was being maintained and trains were diverted via the 'GC' line into Sheffield.

*Editor's note:* You seem to have answered your own query, Patrick! It is a little unnerving when we realise that something we have always felt sure about proves to be wrong.

**from Allan Brown, Chorlton**

*Caption information requested: no.864 at Manchester Central*

Can anyone help me with identifying the occasion on which this photo was taken. It depicts Pollitt class 11A 4-4-0 no.864 at Manchester Central with a funereal style decoration on the smokebox being tied on with string by two gentlemen.



**from John Pollard, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts**

*Information requested: First aid award to Tom Liddell*

I have a medal in the shape of a shield. On the front is the coat of arms of the GCR with the words 'GREAT CENTRAL' at the top, 'RAILWAY COMPANY' at the bottom and 'FORWARD' in the centre. The inscription on the back is 'Awarded to Tom Liddell for first aid rendered at Hucknall Town June 24<sup>th</sup> 1904.' I do know that there was an occasion when painters working on a bridge were injured by a passing train but have been unable to find any confirmation of this. Any further information would be welcome.

**from Mike Esbester, e-mail: m.o.esbester@reading.ac.uk**

*Information requested: Safety on the GCR*

I wonder if it would be possible for me, as a non-member, to pose some questions to the GCRS members, through *Forward?* I'll elaborate on them here, and if they sound suitable, I'll write them up a bit more formally, with some more context. Hopefully this would bring a new topic to the attention of members and help me in my research. I'm interested in the safety of railway workers in the twentieth century. My work so far has concentrated on the GWR, but I'm interested in all of the companies, particularly in the pre-Grouping era.

I'd like to pose two questions to Society members about worker safety. Firstly, I'd like to find out what steps the GCR took to ensure the safety of its workers. I have a feeling this will come down to: the rule book, circulars, supervision, and warning signs/notices at points of danger. It would be interesting, if possible, to know a bit more about the attitude of the managers and workers to safety issues.

This leads into the second question. In 1914 the GWR issued each of its workers with a safety booklet, showing them safe and unsafe ways of working. Many of the other companies followed suit, often using the GWR's booklet, directly reprinted, although several of the larger companies (the LSWR, the NBR, the LNWR and the L&Y) printed their own booklets. However, so far as I am aware, the GCR didn't use any such booklets. Given the size of the Great Central, I am a bit surprised about this. So, I'd like to ask members whether any such booklets did ever exist on the GCR, and if they didn't, why they think this might have been the case.

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**Crossword Solution**

**Across:** 1 Shaft, 4 Shawell, 8 Duplicate, 9 Concentration, 10 Pole, 11 Fish, 12 Garratt, 16 Trackbed, 18 Moor Road, 19 Pier, 20 Edward Watkin, 21 Mons, 22 Hough Green, 26 Simmer, 29 Booster, 30 Superheated, 31 Leen, 33 Railway Signal Company, 36 Clock type, 38 Passenger, 40 Slang, 41 AGM, 42 Banner, 43 Lord Street, 44 Boiler, 45 Culvert, 46 Royal, 47 Light.

**Down:** 2 Hinton, 3 Freight, 5 Whistle, 6 Ollerton, 7 Rotherwood, 9 Crankpin, 11 Facade, 13 Railtour, 14 Immingham Docks, 15 Braunstone Gate, 17 Bargeboards, 23 Gwersyllt, 24 Rothley, 25 Birley, 27 Interlocking, 28 Trainspotter, 29 Bachmann, 32 Black Pig, 34 Inspector, 35 Habrough, 37 Pandrol, 39 Starter, 42 Brill.

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**Rear cover caption**

LNER class B6 4-6-0 no.5053 on the turntable road at Leicester (GC) shed. There were only three members of the class, formerly GCR class 8N. They were built as a small-wheeled 2-cylinder version of the Robinson GCR class 9P (the 'Faringdons') and intended for mixed traffic work. Here no.5053 still retains the top feed which was removed in the 1930s. This loco was involved in the Orgreaves accident of 1926\*.

The GC loco shed at Leicester was almost at ninety degrees to the running lines, the access lines curving away from the up side goods loops at the southern end of the Leicester Goods yard. The eastern boundary of the shed yard was the River Soar. The southern boundary was the embankment which carried the Midland's line to Burton, which then crossed the river on the bridge seen in the background. Under the Eastern Region it was 38C. From 1958, under the Midland Region, it was 15E and finally 15D before closure in July 1964.

\*<http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/docSummary.php?docID=2120>

