FORWARD 171

Front cover caption

LNER class B7 4-6-0 no.5469 takes water from the troughs south of Charwelton while working an express to Marylebone. No.5469 was built at Gorton by the GCR in April 1922 as class 9Q - this was the last of Robinson's designs for the GCR. At the Grouping 28 had been built and another 10 were built by the LNER. They were a mixed traffic design with two outside cylinders. They all survived into BR days with no.1377 (as no.5469 became in the 1946 renumbering) withdrawn in Feb.1950.

Completion of the Charwelton troughs in July 1903 allowed non-stop running between Sheffield and Marylebone. Less well known are the troughs at Killamarsh, just south of Sheffield, brought into use 1904-05, although what purpose they served is not clear. *photo: unknown*

The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 171 ~ March 2012

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Editorial by Bob Gellatly

The main event in 2012 (no, it's not the Olympics or the Queen's diamond jubilee) is the celebration taking place at Immingham on Sunday 22 July to commemorate 100 years since the docks were officially opened on 22 July 1912 by King George V. Ken Grainger is organising another vintage bus trip from Sheffield on the day. The cost (for the bus only) will be £12. Contact Ken Grainger to book a seat. Attractions in the pipeline, as well as coach tours of the docks, include the display of the Immingham tram from Crich and the naming of a GBRf locomotive.

Over the years, John Rissbrook, the Customer Relations Manager at Marylebone, has played a vital role in enabling the Remembrance events to take place there (see the letter on p48). In recognition of this the committee has agreed to give John honorary membership of the GCRS.

The GCR 567 Locomotive Project continues to make good progress. Please consider supporting this project if you have not already done so. The idea of 567 people donating £5.67 a month is a brilliant one. Unfortunately the next instalment of Andrew Horrocks-Taylor's description of the project has had to be held over until the next issue due to lack of space in *Forward*. He will be speaking about the project at the Spinkhill branch meeting on Monday 19th March.

On the subject of space limitations, I have had a response from one member asking why we don't become an on-line magazine. This would certainly solve the problem of space but create others. Not all of our members are on-line and many would prefer a hard copy that can be picked up and read anywhere and at any time. Also the hard copy can be put in a binder and stored as an archival resource. There are successful on-line magazines such as Railway Herald but that has always been on-line and caters more for those wanting up-to-date news about today's railway rather than for those with an historical interest in railways.

The inaugural public meeting of the Killamarsh Heritage Society was on Tuesday 17th January. Howard Turner was the guest speaker who spoke about his memories of train travel on the GC. There was a good turnout. Let's hope the society's aim of rebuilding Killamarsh station will be achieved.

At last HS2 has been given the green light but with quite a lengthy timescale for completion. As one commentator has put it - "the Chinese will have high speed trains between all their major cities before we can link just two". If one of the main reasons for the go-ahead is the inability of the WCML to take any increase in capacity, then why does the new line need to be high speed? A conventional railway would be sufficient - and we could call it the Great Central. I can see the logic in travelling to the Continent on high speed trains as that is a viable alternative to air travel - but do we really want to get to Birmingham any faster? As someone who enjoys train travel the time taken by the journey is proportional to its enjoyment!

A reminder about the AGM on Sat. 19th May at the unusual venue of platform 1 on Retford station. For lunch time catering the only food outlet in the vicinity is a fish & chip shop, so if that doesn't tempt you, you will need to bring a packed lunch. I hope you can make it and the committee members look forward to seeing you there. For members in the south-east, the 09:30 from KX arrives at Retford at 10:53 and the 16:07 from Retford gets you back to KX at 17:46. Advanced fares are from £9.35. Now that's a lot cheaper than going to a football match!

Finally, if any London area members would like to meet the Editor (in person!) I will be at the London branch meeting on Friday 23rd March.

The Killamarsh Heritage Society now has a website at www.killamarsh.org.

The Pollard family railway history – part 13

by John E. Pollard

John recounts some of the derailments he remembers while working at Annesley

Now for the derailments I remember. I was fortunate in that although I saw quite a number, I was never involved personally in any of them. The earliest I can remember was on a Sunday *(9th January 1949)*. Ben Brewin, the driver, and Stan Riley, the fireman, were on the 10.45 Annesley-Woodford train *(of 53 wagons)*. I think the engine was class O4 no.63735. They were stopped at East Leake and warned to look out for a flag man The platelayers were turning rails between East Leake and Loughborough. When they had passed through Barnstone tunnel and started to drop down to the intermediate autos *(automated light signals)* they cracked a detonator. On looking out there was a flagman holding a green flag. Ben started to let the train run but what he didn't know was that there were two gangs working. As he came round the bend in the track they hit another detonator. This flagman had a red flag but it was too late! A rail was out and the train was not stopping. The platelayers scattered and no.63735 left the road. As the missing rail was on the cess side, no.63735 went down the embankment. Ben was stood in the open gap between engine and tender ready to jump off but Stan's side was closed and he went over with the engine. She stopped about half way down the embankment upside down.

The platelayers found Stan lying in the cab roof and got him out *(lengthman Coare was commended for his action)*. He was not too badly hurt. Ben however was missing. He was not found until the Colwick and Neasden cranes were working on the job. His body was under a wagon of coal which had run him over as he jumped from the cab. I saw the engine several times after that sheeted down half way down the bank as it was quite a while before she was moved. I believe her lap plate from between engine and tender is still there somewhere.

Another derailment *(on 24th Sept.1949?)* involved Annesley men Bert Duckworth and Jim Stone. A light engine B1 was stood at Leicester Passenger North starter waiting to back across the road to go to the Loco when the main line starter came off. The Leicester driver sent his fireman to the box to find out what was going on. The signalman had forgotten them and had taken a Woodford Runner. He had passed it on to Belgrave who had accepted it and then given the Runner a clear road. With all boards off the Annesley men on the Runner weren't hanging about. The signalman panicked, threw his signals back, pulled the crossover points and then the dolly signal off to allow the B1 to cross the road. The B1 started to move but the signalman in his haste reversed the points too soon causing the B1 to drop onto the sleepers.

The aftermath of the Leicester derailment.

The Runner had already passed the board at the end of the platform when it was thrown to red. It was another Tiny and the driver had the regulator open - they were going home! As they came onto the viaduct the driver saw the B1 ahead of them but it was too late. They hit the B1 knocking it into the retaining wall on the up side but she did go through it and stayed on the viaduct. The crew of the Tiny were not so lucky as the engine and tender nosedived off the viaduct and landed in the yards below. The wagons however stayed mostly on the viaduct in a big pile.

The station staff ran to the scene and climbed down to the engine to look for the crew but they were both missing. To everyone's amazement Bert and Jim shortly appeared on Leicester station platform. After crash landing in their flying Tiny, they had waited for the ongoing pile-up on the viaduct to finish before picking up their coats and bags and calmly walking to the nearest house. They then walked along the street to the station. Neither appeared to be injured and neither went to a hospital for a check up. Bert however didn't go back on the main line after that and sometime later died suddenly. Jim finished up in a sanatorium. The Leicester driver of the B1 later became an inspector. The signalman who caused the accident became a station master - so I was told!

There were two derailments at Nottingham Victoria that I remember, one at each end of the station. The one at the north end was a Runner on the up road coming into the Vic. He must have split the points and some wagons came off the road with not too much damage. A rescue engine was summoned which hauled the remaining wagons back through the tunnel. As the rescue train was approaching Carrington with the wagons, the engine slipped and gave the wagons a snatch. This unfortunately broke a coupling and a big raft of wagons set off back through the tunnel on their own towards the Vic. When the workmen at the tunnel mouth heard a rumble coming through the dark they scattered. The runaways piled into the already derailed wagons. There was quite a heap of badly damaged wagons and coal around the tunnel mouth. Nottingham Victoria came to a stand for quite a while.

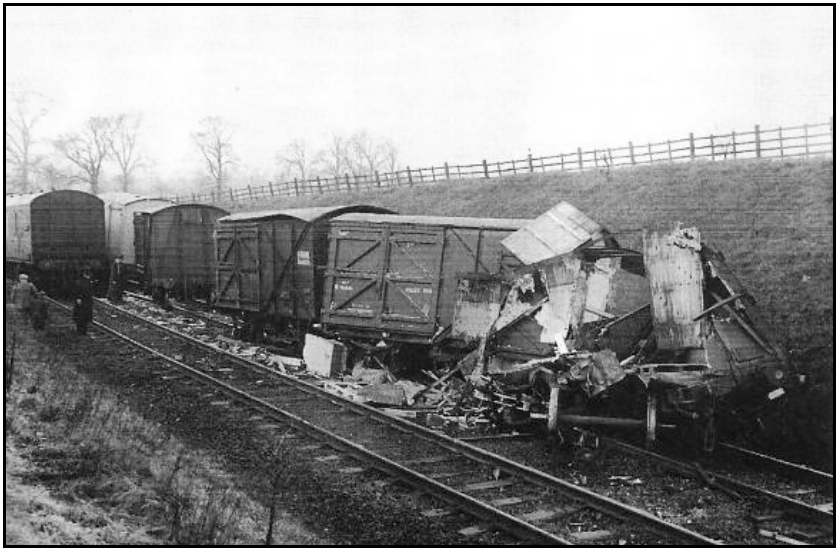
The second derailment happened at the south end and again it was a Runner on the up line. They had the back board off right away Arkwright Street. As the train was passing Vic South box, the signalman was preparing to make a move with the south end pilot. He pulled a wrong lever and changed the points right in the middle of a bogie bolster. The leading bogie stayed on the up road and the trailing bogie crossed over to the down line with the rest of the train following. As can be imagined the leading and trailing wagons either side of the bogie bolster were dragged off the road and the bolster itself finished up wedged across the tunnel entrance with the following section of the train piled up against it.

That day my driver and I signed on for a later Runner which was obviously cancelled. We were sent down to Arkwright Street to relieve a crew working home to Annesley. When we got to the Vic. my driver decided to walk through the tunnel instead of a long walk through the streets of Nottingham. We had a difficult job climbing over the wagons. When we got out of the tunnel at Weekday Cross, we found the train engine, an 01, was being used to drag derailed and damaged wagons to a point where the Colwick crane could pick them up and put them on flat wagons to be taken away. We continued on to Arkwright Street and relieved our train. We sat there for nearly seven hours until finally the down line was cleared and we set off for Bulwell. We were the first train through Nottingham Vic after the derailment.

There was another derailment between Rugby and Willoughby, this time involving an express. When the express arrived at Rugby on the up road it was sent forward over the crossover and then set back into the down platform. The up road was having permanent way work carried out between Rugby and Willoughby. The pilotman instructed the driver to go through on the ticket as the pilotman was going to follow on a later train. While these instructions were being given the engine, an A3 Pacific, lifted the safety valves. The driver misheard his orders and was under the impression he was wrong line all the way to Willoughby when in fact Barby box was open to operate the crossover back to the up road. The train was moving too fast to negotiate the crossover safely at Barby. The engine left the road and ended up in a field. The coupling broke and the coaches lined up along side each other. Some Annesley men were on the train travelling to Woodford and had a rough ride. I don't remember there being any serious injuries reported.

A collision occurred at Staverton Road box which Annesley men found quite amusing because of the two drivers involved. A Runner left Woodford for Annesley but the guard had been left behind. The signalman at Staverton Road decided to put the train in the up shunt as Staverton Road did not have a down shunt. This meant backing the train across to the up road and then going engine first into the shunt. Meanwhile a loaded train was coming on the up which would have to be held while this manoeuvre was being carried out. The fireman of the approaching train told his driver the distant was on, showing yellow, but the driver did not slow down. The fireman then shouted that the home board was red but still the driver didn't shut the regulator until it was too late. The driver put the engine into back gear but still hit the train of empties being reversed onto the up line. The driver on the empties was Bill Hallam and the driver on the loaded train was Arthur Hallam, his brother, and my old mate.

Another derailment occurred between Lutterworth and Rugby at Shawell *(on 11th Feb.1961)*. The Western Mail *(10.23pm York-Swindon)* on the up had a clear road. They had a Hall class *(6902 'Butlers Hall')* and were moving. Coming on the down road was the 1.50am Woodford-Mottram semi-fitted goods *(hauled by a V2)* and he was also running fast. A pallet van on the Mottram train left the road resulting in a pile-up. The Western Mail hit the wreckage *(at 2.48am)* and went off the road on the up side and ended up in a field. Unfortunately the driver *(A.Jones)* was killed. After recovery the engine spent some time in Lutterworth yard sheeted down before being taken home to the Western Region. They tried to blame the Woodford driver *(Driver Hearne)* of the Mottram train but after some extensive trials, pallet vans were restricted to 40 mph and eventually withdrawn altogether and scrapped.



The remains of the pallet train after the accident at Shawell.

Editor's note: Accident Reports can be found as follows
East Leake - http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/documents/MoT_Loughborough1949.pdf
Leicester – no report, but see
http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/eventsummary.php?eventID=6424
Nottingham Vic – no reports
Western Mail - http://www.greatcentraltoday.com/11th_February_1961.pdf
Barby – no report but Chris Ward has put a short video clip on Flickr to be found at
http://www.flickr.com/photos/bigkris/6561391691/in/photostream.

On Great Central lines today

by Kim Collinson

The Autumn railhead treatment trains finished during the first week of December and this brought to an end the use of class 20 locos on these services for 2011. The locos employed were 20142/20189/20227/20901 and 20905 which were observed at various locations including Grimsby, Scunthorpe, Hatfield, Worksop, Deepcar, Barnsley and Penistone.

From 7th November until 18th December track renewal work has been taking place between Penistone and Barnsley especially in the Silkstone and Dodworth areas as some of the infrastructure dates back to the late 1950s and early 1960s and several very severe speed restrictions have had to be imposed due to the condition of the track.

Due to DBS drivers being utilised for the Autumn treatment trains, the work was contracted out to Colas Rail and Freightliner drivers based at Ipswich and Leeds Midland Road depots - the first time that they have worked trains over the route. The locos employed were Colas Rail 66742 and 66745 and Freightliner 66507/09/13/20/44/52/ 66585 and 66952.

The only excursion train to run via Penistone in 2011 was a special on Sunday 11th December when the line's Rail Partnership Group arranged a return trip from Huddersfield to York and return via Barnsley formed by 3 car unit 144 017.

The protracted development of the new station at Rotherham Central, which was scheduled to open in December, has now been put back with completion not expected until the Summer of 2012. It is causing much annoyance locally with the station site resembling an abandoned building site.

During the Autumn, major resignalling work in the Manchester area saw the closure of the boxes at Ashburys (former East Jn) on the 18th September and Guide Bridge (Ashton Jn) on the 4th December with their areas of control transferred to the Manchester East signalling centre at Stockport. This now leaves Dinting as the sole remaining traditional box on the Woodhead route controlling all movements east of Newton to Glossop and Hadfield, but for how much longer?

On 23rd December four new class 70 locos were moved from Newport Docks to Leeds Midland Road depot, passing through Guide Bridge in the evening. The locos were 70013 /14/15/16.

The final steam hauled working of 2011 over GW&GC Joint lines was on the 30th December when 60163 *Tornado* worked a return excursion from Paddington to Stratford upon Avon via West Ruislip.

Passenger traffic on Chilterns new mainline services between Marylebone and Birmingham has risen by 65% in four months following the introduction of faster locomotive hauled services in September 2011. On the 24th November the Network Rail HST measurement train passed over the Northolt to Neasden section of the GC. This is possibly the first time that an HST has been in use over this part of the GC. On the 6th December the 06:55 from Birmingham to Marylebone worked by 67013 ran out of fuel at Gerrard's Cross causing widespread disruption to all services over the GW&GC Joint Line. The train was eventually rescued by 67016 sent from Wembley but it to was also delayed due to temporary engine problems at Sudbury Hill.

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.

Demolition of the OA&GB Clegg Street warehouse
by Paul White

The Oldham, Ashton and Guide Bridge Junction Railway (OA&GB) ran, as its name suggests, from Oldham to Guide Bridge and was a joint venture, originally to have been undertaken by the MS&L and L&Y companies, but the LNWR replaced the L&Y when they decided not to go ahead with the venture. The two companies provided one third of the directors apiece, as did the LNER and LMS after grouping, and the line remained nominally independent until nationalisation.

Opening in 1861, the line performed a valuable function in linking the two large towns, gaining traffic from both the local cotton mills and the Park Bridge Iron Works, which was situated approximately half way between Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham. Passenger services lasted until 4th May 1959. The line continued in use for freight traffic until 1967, largely to serve a large parcels depot based at the Clegg Street Warehouse in Oldham. Now only a short 77 chain section remains open between Crowthorne Junction and the L&Y line to Ashton and Stalybridge.

With the closure of the line, the warehouse stood empty and inevitably dereliction began to set in. Because of its unusual curved plan layout the building was Grade 2 listed. There had been a number of proposals for its re-use over the years, but none had been pursued. Possibly one of the reasons for its further survival, its listing, may have been a deterrent to potential developers. The building was owned by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council who were reputed to have paid a nominal £1 to the BRB Property Board for it.

The most recent proposal for its redevelopment came in 2004 as a hotel, office and retail complex. That this did not materialise may be symptomatic of deteriorating economic conditions over recent years. The warehouse was built on a convex curve, four stories in height under a Welsh slate roof. The inner face of the curve was symmetrically planned with four loading bays under shallow gables with wooden canopies. In the face of recent concerns about the building's future, as late as the end of 2011 Oldham Council submitted a statement saying that the structure was "safe and secure"; however, within days they withdrew this statement and stated that it was in imminent danger of collapse. Recent strong winds may have contributed to this assessment.

Officers from English Heritage and Oldham Council Building Control Team undertook an emergency inspection of the structure and agreed it was unsafe. Demolition work began just after noon on 5th January 2012 and was completed in a week. I visited the site two weeks later and found a scene of total destruction. Piled up beyond the rubble were the enormous roof timbers of this remarkable structure, while among the rubble could be seen the cast-iron columns and their massive bolted supports. It is difficult to imagine a sadder sight, although it is but one among many in the last fifty years of railway history. At least the building lasted for 150 years unlike the adjoining Alexandra Retail Park, built on the site of Clegg Street Station and semi-derelict after little more than 30 years.

I am indebted to Craig Hannah, who supplied some of the information in this report as well as the remarkable photographs which accompany it.

Additional material: Institute of Civil Engineers Transport Buildings Sub-Panel Vol.4 Issue 1 May 2011

Items for sale

GCR Dining Attendant silver button. 28mm diam. **£30**

GCR Rules & Regulations for the Guidance of Officers & Men. 1/11/1897 344pp **£45**

Great Central Railway Journal

Art Paper Edition (White cover) **£5** each
Vol.IX No.7-10,12 (Jan-Apr, June 1914)
Vol.X No.1-11 (July 1914 - May 1915)
Vol.XI No.1 (July 1915)

section of front cover cut out **£4** each
Vol.X No.12 (Jun 1915)
Vol.XI No.2 (Aug 1915), 6 (Dec 1915)

front cover missing **£4** each
Vol.XI No.3 (Sept 1915), 5 (Nov 1915)

Ordinary Edition (Green cover) **£4** each
Vol.IX No.2 (Aug 1913), 6 (Dec 1913)

LNER Magazine Vol.XXIV (1934) Blue binding **£25**

Postage & Packing extra. Send order by post to: **Peter Cowan**, 135 Woodlands Avenue, Eastcote, Ruislip HA4 9QX.

LNER Shed Allocations

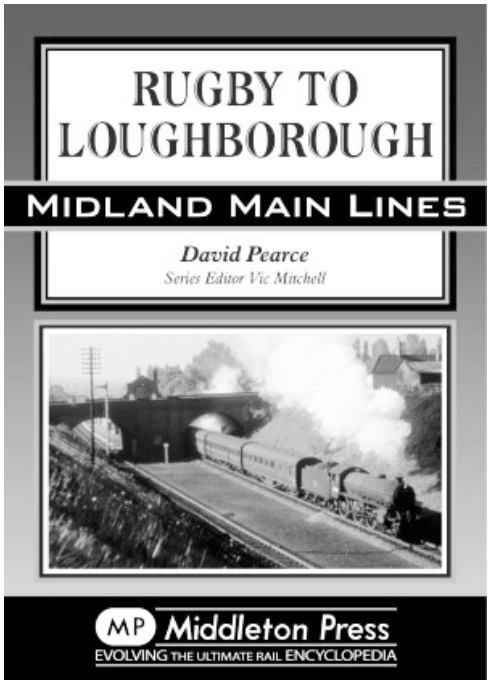
I have a complete list of all individual LNER locomotive shed allocations from 1st January 1935 until the end of steam. This also includes details of allocations of ex-WD locos at LNER sheds. In addition I have Shed Summaries as at 1st January 1948 and the same date every four years thereafter. This information was obtained from RCTS records many years ago, which in turn came from official sources.

Requests for information either by post (include sae for reply) or e-mail

Lawson Little, 1 Archers Drive, Old Bilsthorpe, Newark, Notts NG22 8SD.
email: littlerail@talktalk.net

Arrivals on the bookshelf

"Rugby to Loughborough : Midland Main Lines" by David Pearce.
Published by Middleton Press, 2012. Hardback 96pp. £16.95
ISBN 978 1 908174 12 3. www.middletonpress.co.uk



This is the latest in the long running pictorial format series established by Vic Mitchell of Middleton Press. The author is David Pearce, who grew up alongside the GC in his childhood Nottingham home. This is his first publication.

For those less knowledgeable the book title may be misleading as the subject matter is the GCR main line and not the Midland (which did have a secondary line from Rugby to just north of Wigston where it joined the Midland main line.)

These books are thumbnail sketches, intended to whet the appetite of the reader and this one is certainly just that. Unfortunately, as I have seen the original draft, the introductory historical description has been much edited and the section on passenger services made meaningless. I know that the author had no say in this. In one respect the author scores well in my eyes for avoiding a certain continental myth found in many other GC books!

There are 120 b&w photos in all, covering all periods of the line's history from Edwardian scenes to closure. Fortunately that dark period is not dwelt on for too long and of course there is the renaissance of the preserved section to enjoy. A nice selection although some have suffered slightly in reproduction.

On the whole, this is a pleasant little book and the use of OS maps helps to give a good idea of the location of the various railway installations. Various closure dates are also included for both goods and passenger traffic. I would question a few of these as they contradict first hand accounts from ex staff that I have spoken to in the past - a point in case is that of Ashby Magna where the goods closure date is given as Oct 1962, whereas I know that materials for the M1 were still being delivered until June 1965.

I feel the need to mention photo 36 - this is a view from the top of one of the cement silos in Whetstone station yard and it shows very clearly the old ex MS&L signal box that sat in the yard as p.w. accommodation. The author was confidentially informed that this was the ex Aylestone block box - there are photos dated 1910 that show it in the same spot in the yard - still a nice story though. I was once told that it was the ex Whetstone North Junction box!

In conclusion this book gives a good introduction to this section of the GC London extension, hopefully tempting the reader to enquire further into the history and services offered on this once proud and efficiently run main line. Unfortunately I think it has suffered from the publisher's rigidly applied formula and I feel that the author has been badly let down in that respect. The author is a member of the GCRS and the help he has received from society members is included in his acknowledgements.

Tony West

Building a Robinson 'Fish Engine' 4-6-0 in P4 – Part 3

by John Bateson

Based on articles first published in 'Scalefour News'

An appreciation of JGR

There is nothing I enjoy more than casting an ageing, tired eye over a trim, athletic body, one that is neither too fat nor too anorexic, but is nicely curved and proportioned with all the protuberances to classic proportions and in the right places, and one that not only looks nice but performs well with a bit of pressure in the boiler. And just to be clear, it is the Robinson locomotives of which I am writing! So why, oh why, did I ignore all the clues that pointed me towards the fact that Robinson was not only an engineer but a stylist as well.

General issues

In starting with this particular engine I had taken on the problems caused by a couple of major changes during their working lives. When the original Class 8 was taken over by the LNER it became the B1. There was an experimental B5/2 where the boiler was raised by 9.5" but this didn't last very long. After superheating, the boiler was raised by 7.5" and the cab front was modified to suit and the rebuilt locomotives were classified B5/3. Since superheating took such a long time to be completed, well into the late 1920s (the last one was May 1936), both types could be seen within the LNER areas over a considerable period. There were, therefore, two distinct models to be built from such a kit and since the finescale community is a little broader than just P4, options for EM models had to be included. The plan I ended with, perhaps too optimistically, was therefore for four model options.

The cab

This was one area where I seem to have done things correctly during the 3D design process. Generally I will only draw one side of a part since mirror images can be used, and the instructions for building this locomotive will show lines down the middle of parts which reflect this policy. It does simplify things considerably. I had decided to use the same material as the tender, namely 0.3mm brass. This represents 7/8" at full scale which is considerably thicker than the nominal 1/4" or 5/16" actually used. Given the delicate nature of some of the parts needed, I decided to err on the safe side, yet another compromise.

The curvature of the cab opening is quite distinct, and fortunately I found the radii on a couple of drawings which helped quite a bit. I suspect that, contrary to what the Isinglass drawings indicate, the cab sides for different classes were far more consistent when built than I first suspected, the indicated differences being so small as to be unmeasurable when built as a model. Robinson was, after all, noted for his standardisation practices. To produce such a drawing, first a series of lines and arcs were drawn. These were stored on the 'Cab Dimensions' layer of the drawing together with their dimension attributes (see part 2). Second, on the 'Cab' layer a series of boxes and cylinders were drawn using the dimensions as guides, and these bits added or subtracted to complete the cab side as a single entity. I found it useful to select a number of 'renditions' for different parts so that when producing drawings it was easier to identify them – and they look nicely colourful. My style guru, the lady downstairs, however, does not approve of rendering the boiler in 'copper' only to have it print out as salmon pink.

Cab fronts

In principle, the cab fronts should be as easy to do as the sides, despite there being two types. However, there are two new issues to address. First, the cab fronts include the rear splasher as an integral part and second, there are windows that are supposed to open. Opening windows are a step too far, but it was important to show the outlines proud of the cab front surface. After the fronts and window frames were drawn, the window frames were simply subtracted from the 3D cab fronts with a

copy of the window frames to be soldered in the recesses thus formed. Simple.

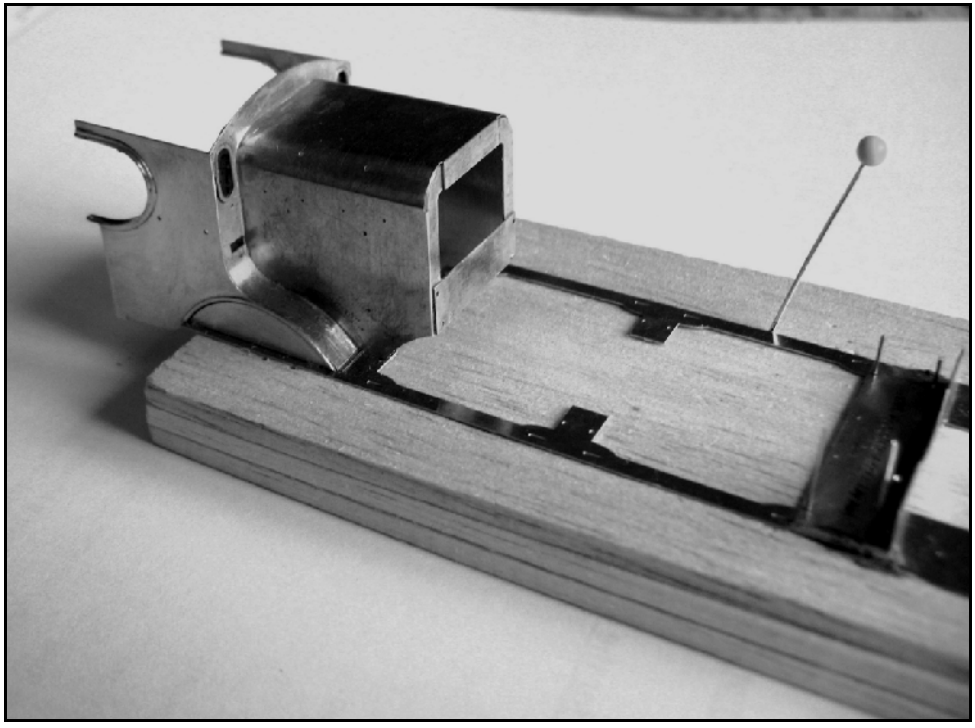
The rear splasher caused a little difficulty. I had concerns that even though springing was restricted to 0.5mm, it may still be possible for the wheels to spring too much and short on the underside of the splashers. The resolution, which is not for the purist, was simply to increase the radii of the splasher and on the cab sides, but there were, as always, unintended consequences to be handled later on.

Footplate

There is really no way around the footplate design; it is fragile and delicate, and very prone to accidental bending. The only thing I could do to ameliorate this was to produce a plate to solder temporarily across the front of the footplate, using the holes already there for the oil boxes and sand box fillers as a template. It is folded at a right angle with an indentation to match the boiler to help in setting the height correctly.

Firebox

In a similar manner, the firebox has a stiffener across the front during the initial assembly. The firebox is a two-part assembly, with the second part within the cab. Forming the typical Belpaire curve was never going to be easy, but with care (and some high-melt solder), this can look quite reasonable. It is really there only over a very small distance, since the top of the boiler matches the top of the firebox for these locomotives. Adding a layer or two of supports behind the folded arms (shown in the picture below) is a better solution.



The cab and firebox mounted on three sheets of balsa to provide rigidity and insulation. This sort of arrangement can be surprisingly rigid. Dressmaker's pins provide an easy way to fix parts ready for soldering. Just don't get caught raiding the needlework box – unless it is your own!

Splashers

The front and centre splashers and their tops will strengthen the footplate, but first they have to be fitted, and fitted correctly. The covers have a short half-etch at the ends to

represent the flat plates that were fixed to the footplate. Getting the length of the main part of the splasher tops correct so that they sat behind the splasher sides was decidedly tricky.

The drawing package I use has a very nice feature that allows curves to be measured either in degrees or in length. On the first test etch I had used the outer edge of the splasher top as the reference. This did not fit; the central part was too long. The solution was to use the inside edge of the part for the distance measurement. What I had not appreciated is just how sensitive the circumferences were to what was only a 0.3mm difference in the radius of what was a large curve. It took quite a while to work this one out and then to reflect changes where needed in other parts of the bodywork. At least I will know for the next time, assuming my sieve like memory files things correctly.

Boiler

I think one of the best tools I have ever bought is a small rolling device – from GW Models – which I bought at *Scaleforum*. This should have been done 20+ years ago when I began to corrupt perfectly flat brass sheet by rolling it on camping mats, vice-holding round bars or upper thighs. All these methods are now strongly deprecated here in North Wales. Boilers, smokeboxes and assorted wrappers are now much easier – bring them on. I suspect it will be simple charity to offer this service with the kit.

The boiler is deliberately too long so that it can slide into the smokebox, although guide marks are included to assist the positioning. Defining the positions for the various extras such as the pipes that blow steam into the smokebox to blow out the ash into the environment was a puzzle. I counted three variations on the Class 8 until the LNER decided it was on the wrong side of the smokebox! Was nothing ever right for those guys? The snifter position (the device that was supposed to detect if the superheating was causing problems) also varied. While the majority seem to be behind the chimney other positions were certainly tried.

Rivets around the smokebox – well, the LNER did love their sticky-out rivets. On superheating there seemed to be a full set added around the front and rear of the smokebox wrapper, put there for any rivet counter to have a field day. I'm not even sure they were consistent in doing this. Just to confuse, the horizontal row of rivets which appear on the frames just above the footplates are of a different size. And then there were the repairs. During the later stages of their lives, the B5s had extensive repairs around the smokebox and rivets could appear in almost any position – and did. Somewhere on the LNER there was a fitter employed with a random rivet generator. At least the ones on the front buffer-beam, done seemingly during the war years, seemed to be consistent.

Steps in the wrong direction

A reason why the steps suddenly emerged as a problem for the upper bodywork, was that I was in the middle of writing the instructions for it. I was getting picky about the accuracy and functionality of the drawings, reasoning that they should show to the builder, not probably exactly, not even nearly exactly, but exactly how the thing fits together. I could see several pitfalls ahead, especially if I tried to write instruction notes around a flawed diagram. I should have remembered this when working on the centre and rear steps for the 'Fish' engines because I went ahead and blithely followed the GA and the Isinglass drawings for clues as to how they were constructed and how they could be reproduced in 4mm scale. It simply did not occur to me until very recently that the rear steps on the locomotive were simply a mirror image of the front tender steps, and I could have used drawings already completed. A while ago I produced one of the standard GCR tenders which included a set of steps at each corner, all of which were identical except for being mirror images. Two test etches completed and I was re-designing important bits!

Part of the problem seemed to be that I took short cuts for some of the easier bits in the 3D drawings, essentially setting out the etch parts directly, and not from a 3D source. It

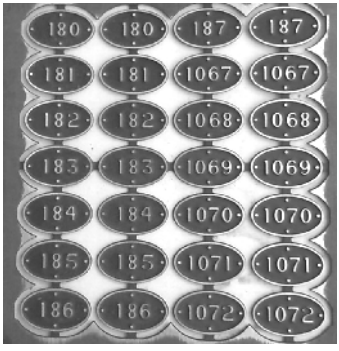
took four full days of starting from scratch in this area before I was satisfied with the results. In the end it would seem that the symmetries between model tender and locomotive may not have been very far out anyway, indeed, I have some pictures which show considerable asymmetry between tender and locomotive. The up side of this extra work is that I now have some parts that I can copy and dump into the other drawings for the Robinson classes.

One thing did puzzle me about the centre steps though. On the larger wheeled Robinson 4-6-0s, the centre steps were removed (well, nearly all of them) because it was said that the connecting rods were thrashing and hitting them. The Class 8 locomotives do have a slightly smaller wheel but since they were used on express fish trains their connecting rods would have been thrashing just as fast, yet none of them were removed. Go figure that one.

(*Health and Safety Reminder:* The reason I add extra bits to the etches, especially the very small bits, is that they enjoy finding their own way to the carpet. My usual reaction on seeing something disappear from the pliers is to jam my knees together in the hope that I can catch it before it disappears forever. This should not be attempted when the item is a dressmaker's pin!)

Reversing arm

Drawing the reversing arm was an interesting exercise and one where I think I have had a small success. When offered up against the boiler and into the access hole in the cab, it slotted very nicely over the control tab in the centre right splasher cover to meet the reversing axle exactly. However, fitting it in place was problematic. There was no way I wanted to fix permanently the body to the chassis, and the actuating arm that fits on the right of the picture below is behind the frames and behind the front splasher, so is almost impossible to get at when the body must be separated from chassis. This is one area where the 'bodge' rules. This part is getting soldered to the inside of the front right splasher.



Doing it by the numbers

Great Central locomotives had a large number plate in cast brass on either side of the cab. Any model set in a time prior to 1923 will have had these. The way these numbers and the lettering for the 'named' locomotives were done seems to have been down to a craftsman in Gorton who thought he was Salvador Dali. Definitely not Picasso, for at least the numbers were in the right order even if there seemed to be little sense in the numbering system.

This was in the time before fonts as such were properly formatted and Times Roman was all the rage. There were similarities between the Great Central version and other styles, and the present-day Bookman Old offers an approximation.

The craftsman making these moulds had no idea, of course, that a modeller would come

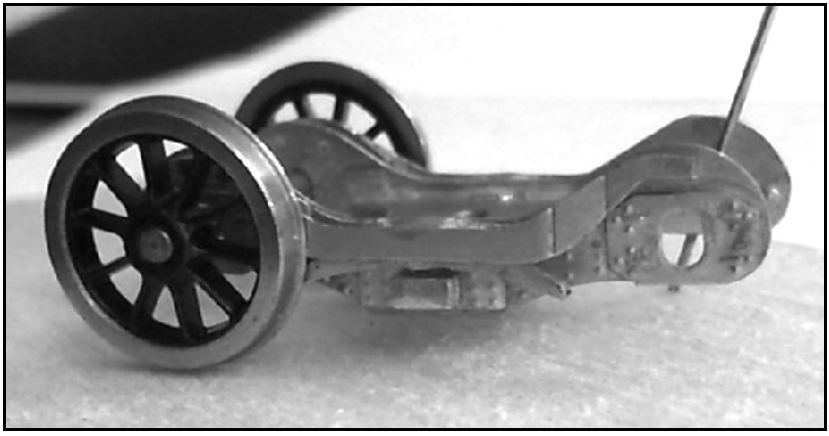
along over 100 years later and expect to get a set etched. The first picture shows the original set which I circulated to a few who might have been able to comment and I gained some very useful feedback. With hindsight it is obvious where problems might occur when etching these, notwithstanding the conventional wisdom that with materials such as 0.3mm brass there should be little or no undercut.

While I can almost guarantee the accuracy of the original drawings I made, after I received and painted the first set of numbers, I strengthened the very fine lines on most of the numbers such as the '1' and the sloping part of the '4'. The very narrow parts of the '6' and '9' needed a little work as well.

It's all down to something called 'visual acuity'. There is always a major compromise for modellers where the need to see long thin objects (at a distance) operating prototypically, conflicts with the other need in each of us to get up close and personal to the individual parts, usually with the aid of strong glasses.

A brief reversion to the chassis

The front bogie on these locomotives is a version of the standard Adams design. In principle, equalisation bars control the springing, the main frame rotates around a central pivot and side play is controlled by a pair of leaf springs underneath the bogie stretcher. There is no roll, pitch or yaw in the bogie main frame.



I think I got a little carried away with the bogie, not the least in trying to understand how the thing worked. Although I am informed that a very skilled modeller has made the equalising bars rotate about the bottom axis, this seemed to be a skill beyond me. These are fixed in place, but do have their arms around the leaf spring as in the full-size version, not just the single sheet seen in so many kits.

Springing of the wheels is done with the usual 0.3mm steel wire over the axles and through the bogie stretcher bar. Axle boxes have yet to be added but these are purely cosmetic on this model, except that they will also prevent the wheel rims touching the equalising bars. Side play is controlled by inside pins on the rear of the lower pivot which give much more movement than the full-size 2.24" allowed. To make this more realistic, the whole of the centre part of the bogie should be a separate entity and this is where I decided that enough was enough.

Next and final part

I shall try to present a final picture of the process with perhaps some pictures of the finished prototype models and perhaps some comments on their running abilities. I will also try to give a summary of the 'business' side of things, something which I started out of a private interest, just to give an indication of the cost, both in time and money, and the side issues that have arisen.

Great Central Great War Heroes Part 6 : The Railwaymen of Mexborough

by Ken Grainger

We shall probably never know what happened to the War Memorials which once commemorated the sacrifices of the railwaymen of Marylebone, of Gorton and of Sheffield's Bridgehouses Goods. Like so many others, they have simply disappeared, and those who know what happened to them aren't saying ! But thankfully the well-polished memorial to the Railwaymen of Mexborough, a classical plaque bearing the names of 32 local railwaymen who "died in War so that we in Peace might live" is prominently displayed on Mexborough's equally well tended station building.

We have already met some of them, such as 20 year-old Sergeant Cyril Levi ('Per Ardua ad Astra' - *Forward* 165) who survived the war only to die far from his 29, Dodsworth Street, Mexborough home on April 12th, 1919. Formerly of Mexborough Loco., he was serving with the RAF Observer's School in Egypt, and lies in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery. And then there were those who fell on 'The First Day of the Somme' *(Forward* 153). Among the many who died on July 1st, 1916, were Corporal Thomas Alan Burgan from 23, Lorna Road, Mexborough and Lance Corporal Fred Depledge of Swinton – both 25 years of age, both serving in the 8th York and Lancaster and both formerly at Mexborough Loco. (Fred Depledge was a "BM Helper" - whatever that means.) They fell in 70th Brigade's advance east from Authuille Wood, to the south of Thiepval and were joined by former Washer-out Private William Brookes when 9th York and Lancaster, moving up in support, was enfiladed by machine gun fire from Thiepval spur. None of them has a known grave; all are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the over 72,000 missing of the Somme.

The GCR war memorial at Mexborough.
photo: Ken Grainger

Sapper Tom Best

At least 36 year-old former Mexborough Spare Driver Sapper Tom Best from 56, York Street, Mexborough has a grave, his temporary burial being removed after the Armistice to the Aveluy Wood Cemetery, north of Albert. Originally from Sinnington, North Yorkshire, Tom Best was a veteran of the Boer War and regarded as "a reliable and steady soldier". He was serving with the 2nd (West Riding) Field Co., Royal Engineers, part of the 49th (West Riding) Division which was in reserve on July 1st and so would have thought himself safe. He was sitting with three comrades on the side of a trench some way from the firing line when he was killed instantly by the stray shell which evidently 'had his name on it'.

The first Mexborough railwaymen had fallen in 1915. Of course the earliest casualties had been from Britain's highly professional but - by continental standards -

numerically tiny regular army. Their first reinforcements, before those who had rushed to answer Kitchener's call-to-arms could be deployed, were the Territorials. They included the territorial battalions of the South Yorkshire regiments, the 5th York and Lancaster and 175th Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, both of which were brigaded in 148th Brigade, 49th (West Riding) Division, which disembarked at Boulogne in April 1915. They were flung straight into the desperate defence of Ypres where the 5th York and Lancaster's former Mexborough Signal Cleaner and Lampman, Private G.Dickinson from Paradise Gardens, Pontefract died on 31st July, 1915. He lies in the Talana Farm Cemetery, given its name by 'old-sweat' Regulars with memories of the Boer War.

The 175th KOYLI's first Mexborough railwayman to fall was 21 year-old Private Herbert Hakin (spelt "Hackin" on the Mexborough station memorial), who died on October 9th, 1915. His grave is in the earlier, somewhat haphazard rows of Ypres' Bard Cottage Cemetery. Formerly a Mexborough Loco. Engine Cleaner, Herbert was the son of Annie Maria Hakin of 42, Dodsworth St., Mexborough, and the late Thomas Hakin.

In the meantime, Kitcheners' "New Army" Service battalions of citizen-soldiers were coming into the field. The 6th York and Lancaster was amongst the first ashore at Gallipoli in April, 1915. 20 year-old former Mexborough Loco. Engine Cleaner Private Robert Carroll, the son of Agnes and Samuel Carroll of 158, Church St., Radcliffe, Manchester was amongst the many who did not return. He was killed on September 12th, 1915 and eventually laid to rest in the Hill 10 Cemetery, created after the Armistice to bring together hundreds of scattered and isolated battlefield burials.

Of course the Somme and that horrific July 1st, 1916, was the real 'en masse' blooding of the "New Army" battalions but on the Western front, the all-too-often forgotten Battle of Loos was their first major involvement. 21 year-old Private Harold Stead, formerly of Mexborough Loco., was killed on September 26th, 1915. He served with the 13th Northumberland Fusiliers (62nd Brigade, 21st Division) which had only that month arrived in France, and is amongst more than 20,000 dead with no known grave who are commemorated on the Loos Memorial, the first fallen Mexborough railwayman to have no known grave.

At this distance in time we can only imagine the daily anguish of the wives and mothers back at home, peeping from behind twitching curtains as the postman came along their street. At whose door would he stop? And would it be a letter from their loved one, or the dreaded "It is my painful duty to inform you ..." (only officer casualties warranted telegrams, letters sufficed for rankers). Harold's mother, Olivia Stead at 51, Dodsworth St., Mexborough was the following year to have her grief compounded when she was informed that Harold's brother, Newson (not a railwayman) serving in the 6th York and Lancaster, had died on 29th September, 1916, and was commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the fallen of the Somme. Like Harold, he has no known grave.

Sapper J.Hinton

It is hardly surprising that many railwaymen recruits should find themselves in the Royal Engineers and 26 year-old former Mexborough Fireman Sapper J.Hinton had joined the 271st (West Riding) Field Co. (also part of 49th (West Riding) Division) which arrived in France in October, 1915. He died of wounds on July 8th, 1916 and lies in Puchevillers British Cemetery, which was established adjacent to Casualty Clearing Stations established in readiness for the Somme offensive. Like Tom Best, Sapper Hinton was an incomer to Mexborough, originally from Silverstone, Towcester but lately in lodgings at No.1, Belmont Street, Mexborough.

The carnage of the Somme continued right into November, 1916, the 'balance sheet' only becoming more acceptable as the Tommies and their commanders climbed a steep learning curve to inflict even greater losses than they themselves

Private Thomas Eady

suffered. Former Mexborough Loco. Labourer 20 year-old Private Thomas Eady of the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, from Highthorne, Kilnhurst, fell on August 16th, 1916, as 3rd Division's 9th Brigade attack south of Guillemont was repulsed. Like so many others he had to wait until after the Armistice to find his final resting place, in Flatiron Copse Cemetery, Mametz.

A measure of how desperate was the Somme fighting, was the uncertainty about the end of former Mexborough Engine Cleaner Private Walter Nettleton, 4th Grenadier Guards. From 14, Victoria Street, Wath Road, Swinton, he had enlisted on January 8th, 1915, gone to France that October and, still only 18, was lost sometime between September 14th and 17th, 1916, as the Guards Division battled towards Lesboeufs in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. Needless to say, he too has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

6th York and Lancaster's Private Harry Newey from 32, Main Street, Mexborough was a contemporary of Walter Nettleton and another former Mexborough Loco. cleaner. The only son of his widowed mother, Emma, Harry was only 16 when he enlisted in August, 1914, whatever he told the Recruiting Sergeant. He was still short of his seventeenth birthday the following April when, along with Robert Carroll, he was amongst the first to land on the Gallipoli peninsular, where he was wounded and had to be evacuated to hospital in Cairo. After recovery he was sent first to Lemnos, then Salonika before finding himself in France, on the Somme. He was killed by shellfire in 11th Division's ferocious struggle alongside the Canadians for the Thiepval Ridge on September 29th, 1916, providing one more name for the Thiepval Memorial. He had reached his eighteenth birthday that May.

Private Harry Newey

October, 1916, was another black month for Mexborough. On the 12th, former Mexborough Fireman Private A.Crowcroft was killed in the 2nd York and Lancaster's unsuccessful attack on the Zenith Trench, north of the Le Transloy road, east of Flers. He had lived with his brother at 84, Fitzwilliam Street, Swinton, and after the Armistice his grave was removed to the Bancourt British Cemetery, to the east of Bapaume. Former Mexborough Loco. Spare Driver 31 year-old Sapper R.Olby of the Royal Engineers, but seconded to the Canadian Field Troop, died on the following day but he too had to wait until after the Armistice to find his final resting place, in the Guards Cemetery at Lesbouefs. Sapper Olby had lived with his wife, Selina, at No. 3, Pym Road, Mexborough.

Yet another of those heartbreaking "It is my painful duty...." letters would have been sent to Mrs. W.Whitham of 27, West Street, Mexborough, who had already lost her husband William, to inform her that her 25 year-old son Fred had been killed on 16th October. Fred Whitham was serving with the 272nd West Riding Field Co., Royal Engineers, and is yet another with no known grave, commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

That Zenith trench, on which Private Crowcroft had perished in an earlier futile assault, was finally taken on 23rd October by 23rd Brigade, but 2nd Lincolns were only able to make minimal gains to the North of the Zenith Trench in the face of heavy fire. Former

Mexborough Station Porter Private Charles Lawton, serving with the 2nd Lincolns, was amongst those who fell; one more name for the Thiepval Memorial.

What happened to Horace Godbold? Just 21 years old, he died on March 16th, 1917, but whether from illness or injury is uncertain. He had left home at Home Farm, Flixton in Suffolk to work as a Shunter for the Great Central at Mexborough, before enlisting in the Railway Operating Division of the Royal Engineers, quite possibly in the same capacity. Had he suffered injury in France and been invalided home, or did he die 'doing his bit' here in 'Blighty'? His was a notoriously dangerous job, regardless of any enemy action. Whichever, he was laid to rest in the churchyard of Flixton (St. Mary's), on the north side of the church, where at least his parents, George and Ellen had the consolation of being able to visit his grave.

1917 was no less bloody than 1916, to British eyes dominated first by the April-June series of battles of Arras, then the Passchendaele offensive - Third Ypres. On April 3rd, 1917, Gunner Albert Burton, the 29 year-old son of Annie and Thomas Bur-ton of Northgate, Tickhill, Rotherham, died. A former Mexborough Loco. Fireman, he was serving as a Despatch Rider with the 31st Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. He lies in the St. Catherine British Cemetery, Arras. Arras was typical of Great War set-piece battles: initial successes (spectacularly so at Arras, with the Canadian's taking the Vimy Ridge) quickly leading to an increasingly costly stalemate. On May 3rd, XIII Corps attacked alongside the Canadian Army Corps in the Third Battle of the Scarpe. The attack was called off after just two days of minimal gains at enormous cost. Former Mexborough Goods Clerk 29 year-old Private James Harold Brumby was among those who fell, and lies in Canadian Cemetery No. 2, Neuville St. Vaast, to the north of Arras.

Despite being from No.3, Wrightson Ave., Warmsworth, where he lived with his wife Elsie, James Brumby was serving with the 12th Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment - the 'Hull Sportsmen' - the third of four 'Hull Pals' battalions which comprised the 31st Division's 92nd Brigade, though the Pals Battalions had lost much of their homespun origins by the filling of yawning gaps in the ranks in the aftermath of the Somme.

Arras had been intended as a diversion, to keep the Germans' attention (and reserves) away from the much-vaunted French 'Nivelle offensive' on the Chemin-des-Dames. When that failed so disastrously with widespread mutinies amongst the *Poilus* it was down to the Tommies to keep German attentions away from the French. The result was the Passchendaele offensive, launched in July 1917. Arguments as to which were fought in the most horrific conditions, Flanders in 1917 or Picardy in 1916, only finally faded away along with those on both sides, British and German, whose memories were seared by those dreadful conflicts.

One of the many who died was former Mexborough Shunter Corporal Reginald Coultas of the 175th York and Lancaster. He fell in 49th (West Riding) Division's 148th Brigade abortive attack across the Ravebeek (west of Passchendaele) on October 9th, 1917. After prolonged rain and continuous shellfire the Ravebeek was now 30-50 yards wide and waist deep in the middle. With their left under intense machine gun and small arms fire and their right struggling in the morass, the brigade attempted to advance in line until forced to dig in on the slope in the face of additional fire from Wolfe Copse, to their left, and the heavily wired Bellevue pillboxes at the top. Unsurprisingly Reginald Coultas' body was never identified and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the all-but 35,000 Tommies who died in the Ypres salient after August 16th, 1917, but have no known grave.

Tanks had been virtually useless in the quagmire of Flanders, but their champions were allowed to show the tank's potential in dramatic style at the Battle of Cambrai on November 20th and 21st, 1917. Much of the ground gained in the initial assault was recovered by subsequent German counter-attacks, on the north side of the salient halted by the Guards Division who retook Gouzeaucourt and then, on 1st December 1917 with 1st Welsh Guards on their right the 4th Grenadier Guards fought their way back into

Gonnelieu village. Former Mexborough Loco. Engine Cleaner Private Thomas Naylor, the 21 year-old son of Alfred and Eliza Naylor, Appleyard House, Lingwell Gate, Outwood, Wakefield was amongst the 4th Grenadier Guardsmen killed. Awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in the Somme offensive (Gazetted Dec 21st, 1916), Thomas has no known grave: he is among the 7,000 commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial.

Students of the Great War tend to gloss over 1918, maybe because there weren't the awesome slogging matches of the previous years, with the correspondingly vast cemeteries, but the carnage was every bit as great. 1918 was destined to be the year of decision. Following Russia's collapse into revolution, Germany had a large numerical advantage on the Western Front - but knew this was only temporary as, if the war continued into 1919, the slow mobilisation of America's enormous resources would eventually tip the balance. Moreover, the Royal Navy's relentless blockade was exerting an ever greater stranglehold. For Germany, in 1918 it was now or never.

And the British Fifth Army in particular was ill-prepared. In a spiteful attempt to control Haig's freedom of action, Lloyd George was keeping back desperately needed reinforcement drafts. In desperation, Brigades were reduced from four battalions to three, and whole battalions had to be disbanded, dividing their manpower to bring others up to something like battle strength. Against this background, the British Fifth Army's having just taken over of more of the front from the French had left it dangerously overstretched.

When Ludendorff unleashed his elite Stormtroopers - hand-picked and specially trained - in 'Operation Michael' on March 21st, 1918, the immediate results were devastating. Despite at times heroic stands by individual units, the Fifth Army was driven back across the old Somme battlefields. The British casualties were heavy, including thousands of prisoners who had found their retreat cut-off by the initially highly successful German infiltration tactics. Again, many of the dead have no known grave, perhaps hurriedly buried by their comrades in graves which could not later be traced, or in many cases unceremoniously tipped into convenient shell holes by the onrushing foe.

The war memorial at Mexborough station is to be found on the Doncaster platform just to the right of the first bay window and next to the platform entrance. photo: Ken Grainger

On March 24th, former Mexborough Stores Clerk Lance Corporal Bernard Guest of the 13th York and Lancaster died. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, on which missing thousands from the *Kaiserschlacht* joined those from the Spring 1917 Battle of Arras. Part of 31st Division, the 13th York and Lancaster had originally been the '1st Barnsley Pals', but in the February 1918 reorganisation had incorporated the 12th and 14th battalions – the one-time 'Sheffield City' and '2nd Barnsley Pals' battalions. Also from the 13th York and Lancaster, 23 year-old Private Frank Matthews, formerly of Mexborough Loco., died on April 12th. The son of Caroline Matthews of 36, Talbot Road, Swinton and the late Charles Matthews, he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

On March 28th, 19 year-old former Mexborough Passenger Porter Private William Henry Phillimore died. He was serving with the 18th Durham Light Infantry, like the 13th York and Lancaster, a 31st Division battalion. His body was subsequently recovered and laid to rest in the Douchy-les-Ayette British Cemetery, created that August and September, which might have been some small comfort to his parents George and Jane Phillimore, back in Mexborough.

Formerly of Mexborough Loco., 30 year-old Sapper J. Flint of the Royal Engineers' 458th Field Co., the son of Henry and Mary Ann Flint of 179, Queen St., Swinton, succumbed to wounds on April 17th, 1918. He is buried in the Bandaghem Military Cemetery – like Mendinghem and Dozinghem, the British Tommies sardonic names for groups of Casualty Clearing Stations around Poperinghe, to the east of Ypres. The whereabouts of Sapper Flint's grave implies that he probably died in either the 62nd or 63rd Casualty Clearing Station.

The German's territorial gains from 'Michael' looked impressive on the map, but were as strategically worthless as when so much of the territory had been captured by the British or voluntarily given up by the Germans in 1916 and 1917 - and heavy as they were, the British losses were far, far less than they had inflicted, principally on the cream of the German army; Ludendorff's irreplaceable Stormtroopers. By July, the follow-up 'Mars' and 'Georgette' offensives, intended to destroy the British armies, had been beaten back with enormous bloody losses. The key communications centres of Arras, Amiens and Hazebrouck remained out of reach and all Ludendorffs *Kaiserschlacht* had gained, at dreadful cost, were vulnerable salients.

Sergeant H.E.Woods

The scene was set for the '100 Day Offensive' - the succession of coordinated hammer blows which would end the war. But the British and Dominion soldiers and their commanders have never really been given the credit they deserve for this feat of arms. Demoralised the Germans may have been, but they were still capable of stubborn resistance as they were driven back. There were still to be many more of those "It is my painful duty..." letters, including that telling Mrs. Woods of 43, Dale Street, Rawmarsh that her husband and their daughter's father, former Mexborough Fireman Sergeant H.E.Woods of the 7th Leicesters had been killed in action on September 11th, 1918.

Sergeant Woods had joined up on September 5th, 1914 and had been a Yeomanry 'Rough Riding' Instructor (entitled to wear the cross swords, cross guns and gold spur) before transferring to the Leicesters in March 1918. The 7th Leicesters were part of the 21st Division's 110th (Leicester Tigers) Brigade. The 21st Division had the unenviable record of having suffered the highest losses of all the 'New Army' divisions, and Sergeant Woods died in the ferocious fighting by which, after it had changed hands several times, the division finally secured the village of Gouzeaucourt, south-west of Cambrai. His was just one of over 1200 isolated battlefield burials which after the

Armistice were brought together from the surrounding area into the Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery.

As the British and Dominion troops fought their way forward, they came up against the formidable *Siegfried Stalling* - the Hindenburg Line. On September 27th, 1918, the 1st Coldstream Guards' assault on the Canal du Nord, incomplete and dry at this point but nevertheless a daunting section of the fortifications, was held up by intense fire from a commandingly sited machine gun nest. When his company commander, Captain Cyril Frisbee, called for volunteers to rush the machine gun installation, a former Mexborough Loco. Engine Cleaner, 21 year-old Lance Corporal Thomas Norman Jackson – Swinton born, on February 11th, 1897 - was the first to step forward. With two other volunteers, Captain Frisbee and Norman Jackson scrambled down the wire entangled bank and rushed the emplacement, capturing two machine guns and fourteen prisoners.

With the way now clear for the attack to continue, Lance Corporal Jackson's platoon was set the objective of clearing a German trench. With a shout of "Come on boys !" Norman Jackson was the first to leap down into the trench where, in hand-to-hand fighting, he despatched the first two defenders he met before himself being killed, by a shot to the head. With all their officers present, Norman Jackson and all his Guards Division comrades who died that day were buried by their Chaplain on the ground where they had fallen, in what we now know as the Sanders Keep Cemetery - at the time they just called it "the Hill". His headstone is inscribed with the richly deserved Victoria Cross which he was posthumously awarded on the recommendation of Captain Frisbee, and which was gazetted on November 26th, 1918.

In its 30th November, 1918 issue, the local newspaper, the Mexborough and Swinton Times devoted the best part of a page to this fine young man who, at the time of his death, was looking forward to what would have been his first leave after going on active service, but was "going to tickle old Fritz up again before I come home". He had voluntarily enlisted on December 5th, 1916 and, after training and a home leave in August, had gone to France on October 5th, 1917, where he first saw heavy action at the Battle of Cambrai.

The MS&L Times printed extracts from his unfailingly cheerful and optimistic letters home to his parents - he was the elder son of Thomas Edwin and Emma Jackson of 3, Market Street, Swinton - and to his "sweetheart", Norman's fiancée Miss Daisy Flatt of Kenley in Surrey, whom we can presume he would have met during his training at Windsor, Caterham and Tadworth. We can only hope Daisy got over the loss of her Norman and went on to enjoy a long and happy life. There were also letters of condolence to Norman's parents from Captain Frisby, and from another 1st Coldstream Guards officer, Second Lieutenant Edward Moore, MC (himself only 19 years of age and destined also to be killed in action, on November 4th, 1918, just one week short of the Armistice) - even from Mrs. Ella Moore of Portland Place, London, 2nd Lieut. Moore's mother! But perhaps most moving was the letter from an old chum of Norman's, Percy Tillotson, who was serving as a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery and who had only learned of Norman's death at second hand, from another of their pals.

Percy wrote warmly of Norman's cheerful, outgoing nature as well as of his athleticism and keenness on football, cricket, swimming, boxing and wrestling, but also of his enthusiastic membership of the Primitive Methodist Chapel and the Bible Class at which he had been a regular attender. Norman Jackson, as Percy said, would be missed by the "large circle of friends he had made along the Don Valley". Sheffield artist J. H. Bentley's splendid portrait of Norman Jackson hangs in the Swinton Public Library. Actually the portrait is a copy of the original which is at Rotherham's Clifton Park Museum, but apparently that has suffered from exposure over the years. It shows him wearing his VC, which of course was sadly not possible, it being posthumously awarded at an investiture at Buckingham Palace on Saturday March 29th, 1919, when a sympathetically disarming King George V presented Norman's Victoria Cross to his parents, with Daisy and

Norman's sister Lottie also there. Norman's medals were donated by his brother to the Coldstream Guards' museum in 1969.

With the war now in its final phase, Private M. Senior, the son of Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Senior of 33, Bridge Street, Swinton was killed on October 13th, 1918 as, after savage fighting and with the aid of tanks, 175th York and Lancaster finally captured the village of Haspres, between Cambrai and Valenciennes. He lies in Haspres' intimate York Cemetery, created that month by 175th York and Lancaster and other units of the 49th (West Riding) Division.

In an era when labour was much less mobile than it is today, railwaymen were something of an exception, relocating within their employer's network as opportunities arose. The Royal Engineers' Railway Operating Division's 28 year-old Company Quartermaster Sergeant Fred Haynes, formerly of Mexborough Loco., was originally from the Great Central's nether regions at Rickmansworth, his wife Nellie from Aylesbury. Fred died on October 29th, 1918 and is buried in the Blargies Communal Cemetery Extension, which served the hospitals around the massive supply depot there. Whether or not his death was the result of enemy action has not been established.

Private John A.Steel

On November 16th, 1918, five days after the guns finally had finally fallen silent, the *Mexborough and Swinton Times* reported that 23 year-old Private John A.Steel of the 4th Grenadier Guards Machine Gun Battalion had been severely wounded in the back and was in a critical condition in hospital in France. Formerly at Mexborough Loco., Private Steel had served throughout the war and had already been awarded his MM (DCM, the *M&S Times* says) for gallantry before the August 16th, 1916 issue of the *M&S Times* reported that he had been wounded at Ypres on July 2nd, 1916 and was recovering at the Northumberland War Hospital, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne. This time there was to be no recovery and one wonders whether his mother, Mary, at home at No. 2, Dunn Street, Swinton, already knew he had succumbed to his wounds a week earlier, on 9th November. He lies in the Awoingt British Cemetery, which served a group of Casualty Clearing Stations to the south-east of Cambrai.

The deaths did not end with the Armistice. 26 year-old Private A.E.Payne of the 2/4111 York and Lancaster, the son of Alfred and Margaret Payne of Swinton and formerly of the Traffic Dept., Mexborough, died in hospital at Rouen on December 22nd, 1918, and lies in the vast St. Sever Cemetery Extension. Was his death the result of wounds, or might he have been one of the victims of the worldwide Spanish Flu epidemic which from the Autumn of 1918 was so particularly deadly amongst young adults?

How many others might have come home maimed or horribly disfigured is not recorded: the above are the 32 Railwaymen of Mexborough who did not come home at all. But, inexplicably, only 31 of them appear on the Great Central Railway's Memorial Roll and on its War Memorial in Sheffield. Even more incredibly, the one not included is Lance Corporal Thomas Norman Jackson, VC! How do you forget a VC? As would be expected with a not uncommon name, there are several Jacksons on the memorial, but no "TN", none from Mexborough, and most definitely no VCs.

But there is an area of blank space at the foot of the last of the eighteen columns of names of the fallen, and it is there that determined efforts are now afoot to add the name " JACKSON T.N. (VC)" A Great Central Great War Hero indeed.

Photo and portrait of Thomas Norman Jackson VC painted by J.H. Bentley.
Rotherham Museums and Galleries

34002 *Salisbury* at Aylesbury Town. The RCTS "The Great Central Rail Tour" ran on Sat. 13th August 1966. 'West Country' 4-6-2 no.34002 *Salisbury* is seen here taking water at Aylesbury Town on the first leg of the tour from Waterloo to Nottingham Victoria. After laying over at Colwick, *Salisbury* took the last leg of the tour back to Marylebone via High Wycombe. The tour itinerary north of Nottingham included travelling over the Mansfield Railway behind Stanier 8F 2-8-0 no.48917. Others locos used were B1 4-6-0 no.61131 and EMI Bo+Bo no.26053. A similar tour with the same name was run by the LCGB just three weeks later on Sat. 3rd Sept. with 'Merchant Navy' 4-6-2 no.35030 *Elder Dempster Lines*. With the passing of time, memories of the two rail tours can be easily confused. Can you spot the one member of the station staff? And not a hi-vis vest in sight! *photo: Robert Carroll collection*

Some recent items from Great Central Railwayana Auctions
Forthcoming auctions at Stoneleigh Park will be on 14 April, 14 July and 13 Oct.

A GCR brass paperweight, 3¼" diameter, the top stamped twice with the company's initials. Sold for **£190**.

A vesta case from the MS&LR hotels and refreshment rooms. The back is marked Bryant and May wax vestas. Sold for £100.

An MS&LR builder's plate cast within an inspection panel for a lamp standard which was situated at the company's Royal Docks at Grimsby. Overall 10"x9", the front repainted. Sold for **£220**.

A locomotive worksplate from GCR class 1A (the "Glenalmonds") no.441. It was withdrawn in May 1947 and presumed scrapped at Gorton Works. Cast brass, 10½"x6¾", the front of the plate has been repainted, the back is stamped 1352. Sold for **£600**.

SIR SAM FAY nameplate from GCR class 1 4-6-0 no.423, built at Gorton in December 1912 and named after the Railway's General Manager. It was withdrawn from Immingham in April 1947. Cast brass, 44½" including 5" ears. The plate is in original condition and was acquired direct from the LNER by one of the company's senior managers and has remained in the family ever since. Sold for **£21,000**.

Signalling on the Mansfield Railway - part 2
Rufford Junction to Clipstone Junction
by Chris Booth

In Part One we considered the Mansfield Railway from Kirkby South Junction to Mansfield Colliery. We now continue the journey to Clipstone Junction.

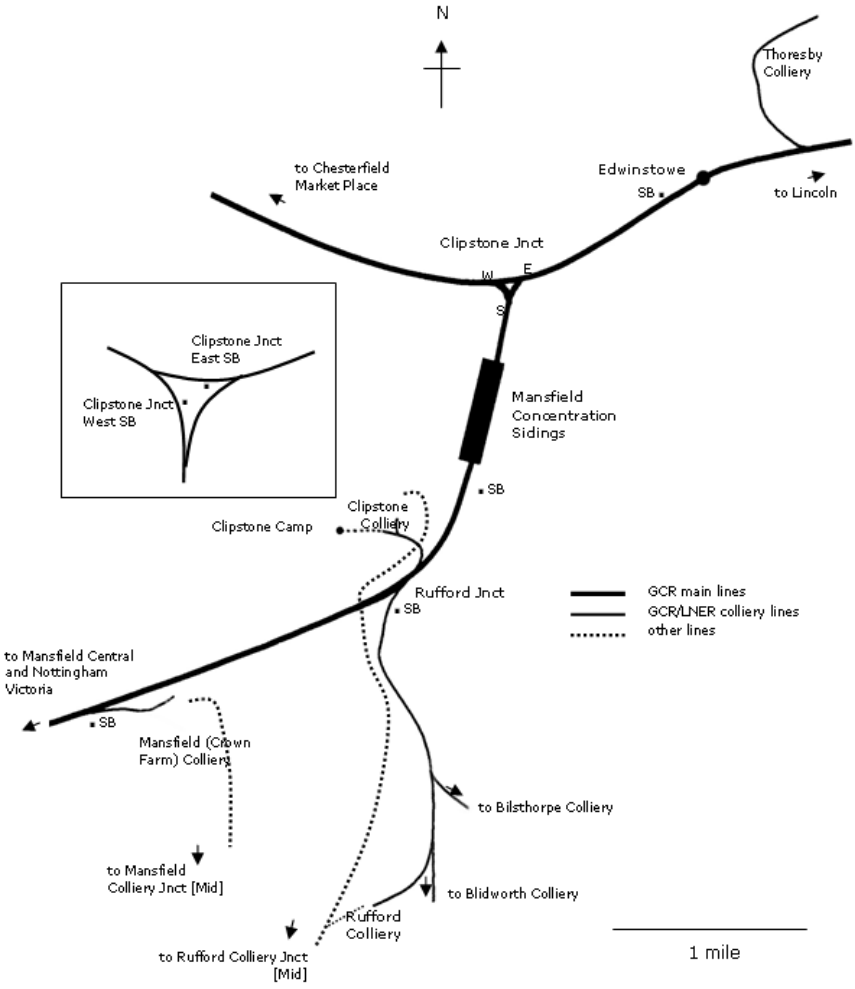
Rufford Junction

In the words of Colonel J.W.Pringle: "Here there was a double line to Rufford Colliery and a single line to Clipstone Colliery, each of which had double line junctions with the main line. There was a crossover between the main lines at the Clipstone end of the Junction and a trailing connection with then up and also the down line form sidings. The signal box contained a 65 lever frame - 43 working and 22 spare."

Rufford Junction signal box was built to the GCR Type 5 design, the 65 lever frame being an R.S.Co. Tappet (4½" centre) GCR pattern with front catch handles. It opened for business on 6th June 1916, controlling the branch to Clipstone Army Camp and Clipstone Colliery, which opened on 13th June 1916. The line was worked under One Engine In Steam regulations with a 15 mph maximum speed.

An inspection was made by Colonel J.W.Pringle on 13th December 1918 and his report read: "This branch commenced at Rufford Junction and terminated at Clipstone Colliery empty sidings. The total length of the single line was 45.63 chains. At the termination of the branch the Clipstone Camp Military Railway commenced. The permanent way on Railway No.2 consisted of second hand 86lb single head rails in 30ft lengths laid on 50lb cast iron chairs, which were supported on transverse sleepers of the usual dimensions, twelve to a rail length. There was one brick arched underbridge with a span of 12ft. *(an overbridge was constructed later to cross the LMS Clipstone Colliery connection when that was built in 1928)*. The steepest gradient was 1 in 75 and the sharpest curve had a radius of 8 chains."

The GCR box at Rufford Junction looking towards Mansfield Concentration Sidings. Notice the motorbike propped against the post. This post being where drivers would drop the single line Key Token pouch when returning off the branches. *photo: Derek Talbot*



The branch was to be worked by One Engine In Steam, carrying a staff. An intermediate connection leading to the colliery full sidings was worked from a 2 lever ground frame (GF) controlled by the key on the staff. At the terminus the junction with the military railway and the siding connections to the colliery were controlled from a GF with 9 levers, of which one was spare. This operated two signals on the approach to the empty sidings, one for the sidings and the other for going to the military camp, and two signals on the military line for returning traffic approaching the empty sidings. There were also two ground signals, one for the exit of the empty sidings and the other in the screen sidings, and two points with facing point locks (FPLs). There were no distant signals, but in view of the fact that the speed over the branch was restricted to 10 mph they were not considered to be necessary.

The Clipstone branch was intended as a colliery line, but in order to meet military requirements, passenger working was adopted between Rufford Junction and Clipstone Camp platform, which was separated by a distance of about 300 yards from the empty sidings GF at the terminus of the mineral line. A separate staff was used over the

military line between the empty sidings GF and the camp platform. The connection to the military platform was worked from a 5 lever GF controlled in some cases by the key on the engine staff, and in others by a special key.

The military section of the line was not submitted for inspection, but as passengers were booked in the ordinary routine to and from Clipstone Camp and there were no arrangements for detraining them at the terminus of the mineral line, Colonel Pringle thought it advisable to look at the working arrangements at the passenger terminus. He thought that they may be accepted as meeting the requirements in a case of this description, where the speed was restricted to 10mph. He recommended to the Board that they approve the Clipstone branch under the Mansfield Railway Act 1914 for passenger working in the manner and at the speed described.

Facing point locks were fitted on the Clipstone branch connections at Rufford Junction due to the troop trains working onto the branch. The run round loop for the Clipstone branch was also trap protected for the same reason

Mansfield Concentration sidings

Known as Con Sidings, these were required due to the increasing number of collieries in the area and subsequent increase in traffic and with it the difficulty of marshalling trains. The nearest yards were at Warsop and initially trains had to travel there for re-marshalling. To try and alleviate the problem the new Concentration Sidings were constructed between Rufford Junction and Clipstone Junction and originally consisted of 5 roads for empties on the up and 4 sidings plus a reception road on the down. There was also a water crane on the up side. Colonel Pringle inspected this box and sidings on 19th February 1918, his report on this section reading: "At the request

The GCR box at Concentration Sidings looking towards Clipstone Junction. It was originally built on wooden piles to allow an all-round view of the sidings, however as these rotted over the years, they were replaced by brick pillars. The wooden "shed" propped up is a fogman's hut. photo: Derek Talbot

of the Company, I also inspected the new signalling and connections on the Mansfield Railway in connection with the Concentration Sidings which lie immediately south of Clipstone Junction. I attach drawing (No.91) showing the permanent way lay-out and signalling. The points and signals are controlled from a new block post known as Concentration Siding signal box. This contains a mechanical frame with 22 working and 10 spare levers or spaces. Here also there are track circuits on both up and down main lines, with the necessary signal interlocking and indications".

The drawing mentioned by Colonel Pringle was produced by the R.S.Co as drawing No. 4227 and was stamped 20th October 1916 and approved by R.Elliott Cooper on 12th Feb 1918 for the signal box and sidings. The signal box was a GCR type 5 of 24'0" x 12' 0"x 14' 0" with a 32 lever R.S.Co. tappet (4½" centre) G.C.R. pattern frame with front catch handles It was situated 1,277 yards from Rufford Junction and 1 mile from Clipstone West Junction with Clipstone East Junction a further 220yds. To give the signalmen a good view over the sidings, the box was situated on high wooden pilings.

According to the R.S.Co. drawing the box had 15 levers for 15 signals, 3 levers for 3 discs, 3 levers for 6 points and 1 lever for a FP lock bar. There were 22 working, 8 spare and 2 spaces giving 32 in total. The spaces were Nos.27 and 28 and the spares were Nos.14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22. There were two track circuits which were indicated in the box and locked Nos.3 and 30 signals.

These sidings soon became too small to manage the large amounts of coal being transported and so an additional reception road and 15 new sidings were built, 10 of which were on the down side. Facilities for coaling and further locomotive watering points were also added.

A busy scene at Mansfield Concentration Sidings during the 1960s. From left to right: a 350hp diesel shunter, a 9F 2-10-0, a former GCR 2-8-0, what looks like a B1 moving a brake van and on the right a WD 2-8-0 approaching with steam to spare. The yard is full of 16 ton wagons of coal, a far cry from today when all that can be seen is a forest of birch trees. photo: Derek Talbot collection

Between Rufford Junction and Con Sidings, on the down side, was originally one reception siding. Later a second line was added and these became known as the down reception siding and up reception siding. Almost opposite Con Sidings box was a scissors crossover on these roads and a two lever GF operated by the shunters. This was slotted

with No.12 signal to prevent moves from the down main conflicting with movements along the down reception siding.

An NX Panel is installed in Concentration Sidings box.

During 1981 a resignalling plan was put in place for the worn out mechanical signalling at Rufford Junction and a new brick remote interlocking building was built almost opposite Rufford Junction box, this being built across the 'shortcut' through siding from the Clipstone Colliery run round loop to the up & down reception roads in Con Sidings. New colour light signals and clamp lock points replaced the mechanicals, and there was some track rationalisation with track circuiting installed. No. 30 semaphore signal on the up main became the interface between semaphore and colour lights and as such, the former Rufford Junction outer distant semaphore beneath it (No.65), was converted into a colour light distant. This only showed an aspect when No.30 was cleared - at other times it was not illuminated.

An NX panel was designed at Sheaf House Sheffield and built by BR at York. It was specifically designed so that should the electronic link between the signal box and the relay room be lost, it could be unplugged, placed in a van and transported down to Rufford Junction relay room. Here, there were plug-in points on a shelf below the maintainers panel to which it could be connected and the panel worked from there. However, it is doubtful that the Operating Department would have allowed that to happen, as the rules state that the signalman must be able to give instructions to an operator of a remote panel and use his panel as a guide. This would not be possible if the whole panel was removed from the box to the relay room. A good idea in theory but not in practice.

The down reception siding was removed along with the scissors crossover between it and the up reception, although the shunters GF remained to control No.12 signal. The up reception siding became the up and down reception and all access to the down sidings was through this. Other track removed included the up line from Rufford Junction. to the former spring points in the direction of Rufford Colliery. This then became the up & down Rufford Branch as far as Bilsthorpe Junction, then the up & down Blidworth/Rufford Branch.

All the colliery branches except the Blidworth one were converted to One Train Working (without staff). At Blidworth Junction a key token machine was provided with an Annett's key for operating the GF. The key token was released when the route was set from Bilsthorpe Junction and 0124 Track Circuit occupied.

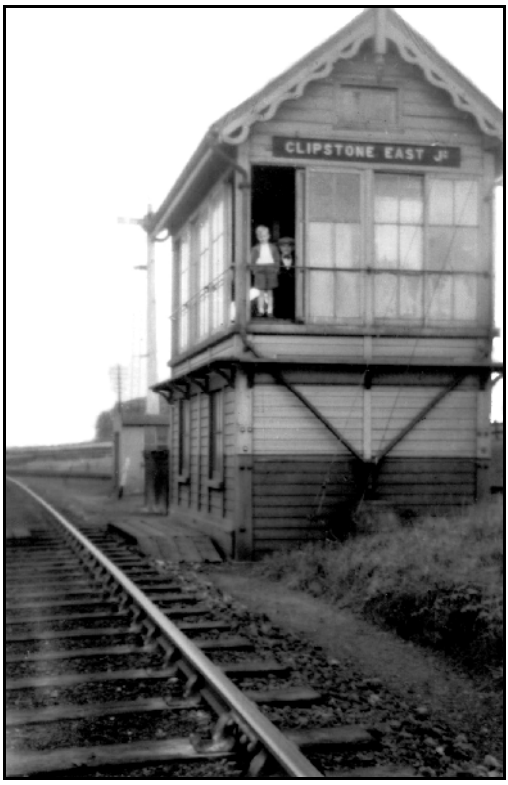
Rufford Junction box was finally abolished on 4th July 1981 and control of the area passed to Concentration Sidings box.

Clipstone Junction

Clipstone Junction, on the former LD&ECR, was situated between Clipstone Sidings (1,451yds to the west) and Edwinstowe Station (1m 189yds to the east). The former LD&ECR Lincoln to Chesterfield line had been taken over by the GCR in 1907. The box here which contained 20 working and 12 spare levers opened with the Mansfield Railway line in 1916. It has been suggested that this box was second hand from Calow on the LD&ECR line between Chesterfield Market Place and Langwith Junction, as that box had closed in 1908. This has not been confirmed but what is known is that it was a Saxby & Farmer built box of the type supplied to most of the LD&ECR with a 32 lever Saxby & Farmer duplex tappet (4" centre) frame. It was manufactured in 1893, so this further leads to the speculation the box was second hand. Looking at the signalling diagrams, No.7 starting signal on the up main originally had Edwinstowe Station distant beneath it, whilst No. 32 down distant had Edwinstowe starting signal above it. These were removed when Edwinstowe Station box closed in 1955 and the block section was extended to Thoresby Colliery Junction. Also removed was No. 14 main to main crossover and Nos. 13 & 15 ground discs.

A siding was provided on the Mansfield up line just south of Clipstone Junction and was known as the "Duke of Portland's Siding". It was worked from a 3 lever GF which was released by means of an Annett's Key. This Annett's Key was fitted to No.29 lever (the inner home signal for the Mansfield direction) in Clipstone Junction box. Once removed from the lever it locked No.29 signal and allowed the operation of the GF points. An instruction in the Sectional Appendix stated that "After the work in the sidings was completed the Guard was required to return with the Annett's Key to Clipstone Junction Box". Operation of this siding passed to Clipstone West Junction when that box opened and Clipstone Junction box was renamed Clipstone East Junction.

On 29th November 1970, Clipstone East Junction box was abolished and its area taken over by Clipstone West Junction box.



A young David Wooton stands in the window of Clipstone East Jnct box in 1946. The signalman, Ernest Talbot, was his uncle and is stood behind him. photo: Derek Talbot collection

Clipstone West Junction

A new south to west curve at Clipstone opened whilst still incomplete on 21st January 1918 to enable coal traffic from the Mansfield line to run towards the west (Warsop Sidings) without reversal, along with a new signal box to control it, this being known as Clipstone West Junction. This was an all timber GCR Type 5 box with a 44 lever. R.S.Co. tappet (4½" centre) GCR pattern frame with front catch handles. The section of line was known as Railway No.5 Western Curve at Clipstone (10m 66.08 chains). Initial reports said that the line was ready for passenger operation on 10th December 1917, and that the curve opened for goods on 21st January 1918. However the works stopped for four days for final preparations for passenger services and an initial inspection by R. Elliott-Cooper was postponed until 5th February. The Board of Trade announced on behalf of the Mansfield Railway, that the curve would be available for passenger use from 11th February 1918, and inspection of said curve from that date was required.

Colonel Pringle's report of the inspection read: "I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade that, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 12th instant, I made an inspection on the 19th instant of the new works on the Mansfield Railway No.5 of the Act 1914. These consist of a length of 18.98 chains of double line, forming a connection between the Mansfield Railway near Clipstone and the G.C.R. double line Chesterfield-Lincoln. The formation of the new Junction Railway is on embankment with curvature of from 10 to 12 chains radius. The maximum gradient is 1 in 100. The curve is equipped with a check rail and a speed restriction of 15 miles an hour has been laid down. There is one under-bridge with two skew openings. The permanent way consists of 96 lb. service rails supplied by G.C.R. on cross-sleepers and is in good order, with the exception that the top ballasting is short in quantity. The steel plate girder spans in the under bridge proved stiff under test load

and have sufficient theoretical strength. The new double junctions at each end of the curve are controlled from a new signal box known as Clipstone West which contains a mechanically worked frame with 36 working and 8 spare levers. The lay-out and signalling arrangements are as detailed in the drawings submitted by the Company. A section of the up line is track circuited at the south end of the curve, and another section of the down line at the north end of the curve. The usual indicators and interlocking are provided in connection with these track circuits. The interlocking in the lever frames in both these cabins is correct and the general arrangements satisfactory. Subject to the early completion of the ballasting work, I therefore recommend the Board of Trade to finally approve these new works."

Another memo sent on March 17th 1918 said that the works had been completed and that it was proposed to open the line to passenger traffic on the 2nd April and that another inspection of the line would not be necessary as they were to assume that the speed limit of passenger trains would be limited to 25 mph until the conditions contained in the last paragraph of Colonel Pringles report, dated the 21st February 1918, had been fulfilled.

As mentioned, the operation of the Duke of Portland's Siding was passed from Clipstone Junction (which became Clipstone East Junction) to Clipstone West Junction. This was via No.12 points with Nos.8 and 13 discs. The siding was latterly used for sugar beet trains, however it had become disused by 1966 and had been removed by 1968.

Clipstone West Jnct box on 3rd May 1994 shortly after a repaint into grey and cream. A colour photo taken after the May 2010 refurbishment can be found in Forward 165. photo: Chris Booth

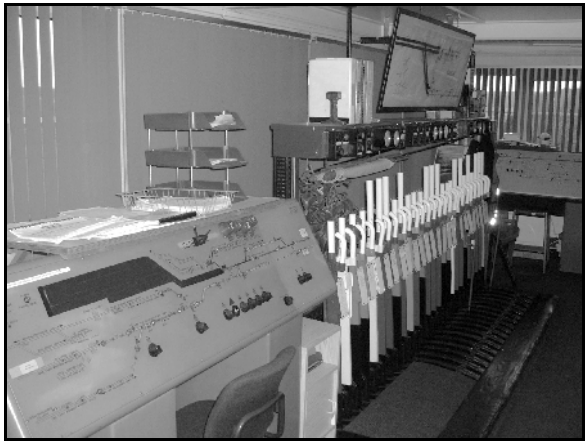
A guard's telephone was provided at Clipstone West Junction so that if a train was stopped at Clipstone East's No.3 home signal with the tail lamp of the train not visible from Clipstone West, the signalman was able to give Train Out of Section to Clipstone Sidings and take in another train. As such the guard of the train was required to ring Clipstone West to report his train was complete.

Groundsmen were employed at Clipstone West during foggy weather, their duties being to check the tail lamps of trains between Clipstone West and South as these trains did

not pass near enough to the box for the tail lamps to be visible. In foggy conditions, signals had men positioned at them to repeat the indications to drivers by way of hand lamp and detonators.

Clipstone West had mechanical fouling bars (MFBs), the description being properly applied to either electrical fouling bars or MFBs. These were the forerunner of the track circuit and were positioned in places where the signalman struggled to see if a train was clear of a junction or set of points as a result of a bridge or awkward line curvature. A MFB worked like a facing point lock bar in that it would be linked to the points concerned (but often not close to them) and unless the train was clear the bar would not lift and the points could not be pulled. There was one at Clipstone West ahead of the junction diamond which worked in connection with No. 21 points. If the train going towards Clipstone East was not clear of the junction diamond when the signalman tried to move No. 21 points the associated MFB would be unable to rise and the lever would be locked.

In the special instructions for the area, Working in Wrong Direction was authorised for light engines or engines with not more than 3 brake vans from Con Sidings to Rufford Junction on the down goods independent, Rufford Jct. to Con Sidings on the up goods independent and Clipstone West Junction to Con Sidings north end on the down goods independent. To send an engine into the down goods independent loop from the up Mansfield branch at Clipstone West, the loco would go beyond No. 8 disc and stop. It would then cross through No. 9 crossover to the down western curve beyond No. 11 disc, then facing road through No. 4 points to the down loop. Permission had to be obtained from the Yard staff before the move could be made. The engine would then stop in the yard on the road where its train would be waiting to be attached. The train would then draw forward along the down loop towards Nos. 1 & 5 signals. At this point a brake van would be rolled out the yard under gravity to be attached to the rear of the train and the yard staff would then ring the box to say where the train was destined. With permission of the yard staff it was possible to send more than one engine facing road.



Clipstone West Junction box interior as seen on 22nd Feb. 2006. The panel ex Concentration Sidings is on the left, with the remains of the lever frame beyond. At the far end is the NX panel which was installed after the closure of Welbeck Colliery Junction in 1997. photo: Chris Booth

Upon the closure of Clipstone East Junction box a new window was let into the back wall of the West box to enable the signalmen to see the tail lamps of trains using the East Junction.

On Sunday 18th July 1976 there were changes to track and signalling when the connection from down loop to down western curve was abolished (the direct line between Nos. 7 and 4 points). The points at the Con Sidings end of the connection were retained as outlet trap points for the down loop, which was renamed up/down siding. No. 2 signal, the miniature arm signal applying from down loop to down western curve, was abolished and the left hand bracket miniature arm signal applying from up/down siding (down loop) towards that signal, would then apply to down western curve via the down Mansfield line. No. 11 ground disc signal, applying set back from down western curve to down loop, was also abolished.

The disc signal on the down Mansfield which read towards the up Mansfield, then also read towards the up/down siding. Also removed were No.6 FPL and bar. The frame was then relocked to allow No.1 signal to read via Nos.7 and 21 points reverse in connection with the abolition of the direct line.

Concentration Sidings close and Clipstone gets its NX panel

The former Midland access to Rufford Colliery and Clipstone from the Mansfield direction was closed on 12th December 1983 and a new link was put in between the former Midland Clipstone branch and the former GC Rufford Branch during 11th/12th December 1983. After that time all traffic for Rufford used the former GC line and the new connection. New colour light signals (400, 401 and 403) and motor points (300) were fitted at the Junction.

When Concentration Sidings box took over Rufford, the Train Staff's for the branches were kept in the signal box. That was until the yard charge man, Norman York, decided that the signalman was too busy to leave the box and give drivers the staff, so they were removed to the chargeman's office in the sidings and kept in a locked cabinet until issued to a driver.

The decline in wagonload traffic continued, so much so that Con Sidings were reduced to a mere fraction of their heyday. The sidings at Warsop that had over the years become disused due to Con Sidings use, were returned to use and on 14th July 1986 Con Sidings signal box was closed. The NX panel was removed and transported on a small trolley to Clipstone West and installed there. A new section was added to control the remaining former Con Sidings frame area, which was re-signalled with clamp lock points and colour light signals. Clipstone West now had an NX Panel and a lever frame. On 9th December 1990 alterations were completed to Rufford Coal Stacking site and the former Blidworth Branch lifted beyond the new Rufford discharge hopper. 29th November 1991 saw Nos. 16 & 19 semaphore signals (the down branch-down western curve/down branch) replaced by a colour light with a route indicator, and plated No.C19 and No.23 (former starter for Con Sidings) replaced by automatic colour light No.C214. 1992 saw Clipstone West given a repaint into grey and cream. Then in 1999 the box was partially refurbished with replacement UPVC windows and repainted from its BR colours into the former post 1912 GCR colours of all over dark green with cream windows.

During the weekend of 20th & 21st December 1997 Welbeck Colliery Junction box closed as part of Railtrack's Project EROS. A new NX TEW SM48 panel was installed in Clipstone West to control the area with an associated remote interlocking at Welbeck Colliery Junction. At the same time, at the suggestion of the resident signalmen, levers Nos.1-18 were removed as these were all redundant. This would allow for relocating of the original NX panel for a better floor layout and more space for lockers etc.

That concludes this part of the Mansfield Railway story. In part three we will consider the colliery branch workings, the run down and closure of these branches, and the final days of the Mansfield Railway.

The LNER Society returns

The LNER Study Group has reverted to its original name of the LNER Society following the adoption at its 2011 AGM of a new constitution. The LNER Society was formed in 1965 to promote interest in the London and North Eastern Railway and its constituents. Members at the AGM also elected Mark Allatt, Chairman of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, to the Society's Committee. Mark is a life long LNER enthusiast.

Membership details are available from the Membership Secretary - **David Woodward**, 29 The Spinney, Sandal, Wakefield WF2 6JN. Tel: 01924 251633.
Email: membership@lnerstudygroup.org.uk (Previous "LNER Study Group" email addresses will be used for the time being.)

Modellers' corner

by Tony West

It would seem that my opening comments in the last issue of *Forward* were tempting fate a little as one long promised loco kit in 7mm scale has been put on hold. Gladiator Models have shelved any further work on their long promised 9H/J10. This is purely down to the present economics and falling sales. Which is a real shame for if the comments that I've heard are anything to go by then it would have been a good seller. Still, it will be something to look forward to once our beloved government lead us out of this recession.....could be a while yet then!

On a brighter note Qainton Road Models are still forging ahead with the planned six wheelers in 7mm. The photo of the 29ft PBV looks very promising and yes, the springs are not the correct ones! This is why the kit has been held up, but release is imminent....will keep you all informed.

The PVB by Qainton Road Models.

I've also included a photo sent to me by society member Bill Tooke, who I think deserves some recognition for his modelling skills. It is a Pollitt class 11A, entirely scratchbuilt, mostly in nickel silver, in 7mm scale. Only the wheels, motor/gearbox and some castings were bought in. Bill has been meaning to paint it for a while now....he finished the construction some twenty years ago! Which leads neatly into...I would love to feature the work of society members on these pages....even just a humble wagon! Has anyone built the QRM fish van yet? Anyone finished an S&T cattle wagon?

Bill Tooke's class 11A 4-4-0.

Model railway exhibition diary

Some events that may interest our readers

Sat 3rd March: St Anselm Church MRE at Ventnor Ave., Harrow HA7 2HU.

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th March: Mansfield MRE at St Peter's Centre, Church Side, Mansfield NG18 1AP. www.mansfieldmodelrailway.co.uk

Sat 10th March: International Model Railway Group show at Malcolm Arnold, Trinity Ave, Northampton NN2 6JW. www.northamptonmodelrailwayshow.co.uk

Sat 10th & Sun 11th March: Macclesfield Model Railway Group exhibition at Tytherington High School, Manchester Road, Macclesfield SK10 2EE. http://macclesfieldmrg.org.uk

Sat 17th March: Chesham MRC at Elgiva Theatre, St Mary's Way, Chesham HP5 1HR.

Sat 17th & Sun 18th March: Nottingham MRS at Harvey Haddon Sports Complex, Wigman Road, Nottingham NG8 4PB. www.nottingham-modelrailway.org.uk

Sat 24th & Sun 25th March: The London Festival of Railway Modelling at Alexandra Palace, London N22 7AY. www.nottingham-modelrailway.org.uk

Sat 31st March: Belper MRG at Strutts, Derby Road, Belper DE56 1UU.

Sat 31st March & Sun 1st April: Sheffield MRE at Birkdale School, Oakholme Road, Sheffield S10 3DH. www.sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts.com

Sat 14th April: Amersham MRS at Amersham Community Centre, Chiltern Ave, Amersham HP6 5AH.

Sat 21st April: Heathcote Group at Shepshed School, Forest Street, Shepshed LE12 9DS.

Sat 21st & Sun 22nd April: Bingham MRC at Cotgrave Welfare, Woodview, Cotgrave NG12 3LA. www.bingham-mrc.co.uk

Sat 12th & Sun 13th May: Leicester MRG at Humphrey Perkins School, Cotes Road, Barrow-upon-Soar LE12 8JU.

Sat 12th & Sun 13th May: Cleethorpes MRS at The Memorial Hall, Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes DN35 8AH. www.cleethorpesmodelrailway.co.uk

Sat 12th & Sun 13th May: Mickleover MRG at Moorways Sports Centre, Allenton, Derby DE24 9HY. www.mmrg.org.uk

Sat 12th & Sun 13th May: Stockport & District RM at Stockport Grammar School, Royle Close, Stockport SK2 7AQ. www.sdrm.co.uk

Sat 19th May: Lutterworth RS at Lutterworth Sports Centre, Coventry Road, Lutterworth LE17 4RB. http://lutterworthrailwaysoc.webplus.net

Sat 26th & Sun 27th May: Risborough & District MRC at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Harvey Road, Aylesbury HP21 9PP. www.railex.org.uk

Sat 2nd June - Sun 10th June: Railfest 2012 at the NRM, Leeman Road, York YO26 4XJ. www.nrm.org.uk/railfest2012

The Gainsborough Model Railway (at Florence Terrace, Gainsborough) is open to the public (1.30pm-6.00pm) on Sat 7th & Sun 8th April (1.30pm-6.00pm) and Mon 9th April (10.30am-6.00pm). Visit www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk for more information.

Signalling within the Woodhead Tunnel
a few questions answered by Paul Armstrong

Taking the points in the 'Signalling within the Woodhead Tunnels' article by George Huxley in *Forward 170* (page 8) in chronological order.

The signal box in Woodhead Tunnel

Volume Two of Dow's magnificent *Great Central* trilogy (pages 344/5) states that a signal box was installed in the up tunnel at manhole no 12, opening towards the end of 1899. I quote: "Signalmen prepared to man it for a reduced shift of six hours were not easy to find, and smoke made it difficult to read the signals and observation of tail lamps extremely difficult. Moreover, drivers of trains stopped by the signals found restarting a troublesome job on the rising gradient. It was closed about 1909."

I have seen a notice earlier than this stating that the box was switched out until further notice, although it may have reopened at a later date. I cannot find any Board of Trade inspection of this installation. Supplement No.2, dated October 1900, to the Appendix of 1897 adds 'Woodhead Up Tunnel signal box', but the opening hours are shown as 'Closed'. No.4 Appendix of 1905 shows no signal box between Woodhead East and Dunford No.1, and neither does No.5 Appendix of 1908, so the 1899 signal box must have been abolished by then.

The minutes of the GCR Traffic Committee commenced in September 1899 and add details of yet another installation. There do not appear to be any Traffic Minute books before this date in the National Archives – have they been lost or was the committee only established then? The minute numbers would seem to indicate the latter, in which case (presumably) it is necessary to look in the Board minutes for 1898-99 for authorisation of the No.12 manhole signal box. Was this Dow's source? Relevant minutes after 1899 are:

minute 884 (Nov 1904) - In Woodhead Tunnel a box was to be built by the British Pneumatic Railway Signal Company subject to the approval of the Board of Trade (estimate £2,100).

minute 1365 (Oct 1907) - Woodhead Tunnel box is fixed and experimental working in operation.

minute 1378 (Nov 1907) - Woodhead Tunnel box, experimental working continues.

(Nothing further noted. RAIL226/29 to 31)

The Intermediate Block Signals are described in the book *Power Railway Signalling* by H. Raynar Wilson and published in 1909 *(and currently available as a facsimile).* They are described as follows:-

"There is a length of 3 mile 416 yards between… Woodhead East and Dunford No 1 that control the Woodhead Tunnel on the main line of the GC, and, as the up line rises on a gradient of 1 in 200, considerable difficulty was experienced in getting the traffic, which is heavy, over the main line, but this difficulty has been overcome by the provision of automatic signals in Woodhead Tunnel, as shown by fig 288. At Woodhead the tracks are in separate tunnels, which are nearly three miles long. The new signals are not intended for passenger trains. Track circuits are provided from Dunford Bridge starting signals H G to Woodhead East starting signals A B. Signal A applies to goods trains only and cannot be lowered unless the line is clear to 531 yards passed the automatic home signal D. Signal B cannot be lowered unless the line be clear to signals G H are "off". B applies to all passenger trains and is lowered for goods trains also when there is a clear road through the tunnel.

The tunnel is very wet, and it has been thought advisable to limit the length of the track circuit sections to 440 yards……Signals C D are equipped with full-sized spectacles, but signal-arms are not necessary. The slots on signals A B are of O'Donnell's rotary type. Audible signals are fixed 200 yards in rear of the signals C D to warn drivers that they are approaching the signals. Signal D is controlled from Dunford Bridge box, and the

positions of signals C D are repeated in both Woodhead and Dunford Bridge Boxes. The state of the signals A B and 531 yards on the Dunford side of signal D is also indicated in both boxes."

I presume that the audible warnings are provided by gongs. Unfortunately no indication is given how signals are controlled from Dunford No 1 signal box, probably from a small power frame as the equipment was provided by the British Power Company, who specialised in power frames. This company was the successor to the British Pneumatic company, which was also involved with the power signalling at Ardwick to Newton, Wath Yard and elsewhere on the GC, and later at Keadby. John Patrick O'Donnell was the driving force behind these companies. It is not clear from the above, which is the only description of the equipment that I can find, how the trains were signalled between the two signal boxes.

The O'Donnell's Replacer does not appear to be visible in the photograph on the cover of *Forward 169*, although Raynor Wilson's diagram of this equipment does not give any indication of its size. His diagram is given below, but I have not included his description of its operation.

This equipment appears to have been brought into use in 1909, but how long it lasted is not clear. I can find no mention of it in the 1914 Appendix to the Working Timetable, or any subsequent LNER edition of that publication. Again the work was not inspected by the Board of Trade.

It is possible that the equipment did not last very long, and I would have expected that drivers would have had difficulty finding the exact position of the signals in the smoke filled tunnel, and would also had difficulty restarting a train from them, as drivers did at the signals worked from the box. It is possible that the improved ventilation in the tunnel carried out during the years before the First World War would have made the observation of these signals easier, but I have seen no comment on this in the reports that I have seen on this work.

The 1914 GCR Appendix shows that mechanical gongs were provided in the up and down tunnels to indicate to the drivers that they were approaching the distant signals only. Presumably these signals did not have arms relying on the moving spectacle plate to give the signal indication, making them an early form of colour light signal. It is probable that that the Woodhead East distant signal, located within the tunnel, could not be cleared until the Woodhead West box distant was cleared.

The location of the distant signal helps to date the F.Moore image as a diagram of the signalling at Woodhead in a Board of Trade inspection report for 1909, does not include the arm, although several prior to this do include it.

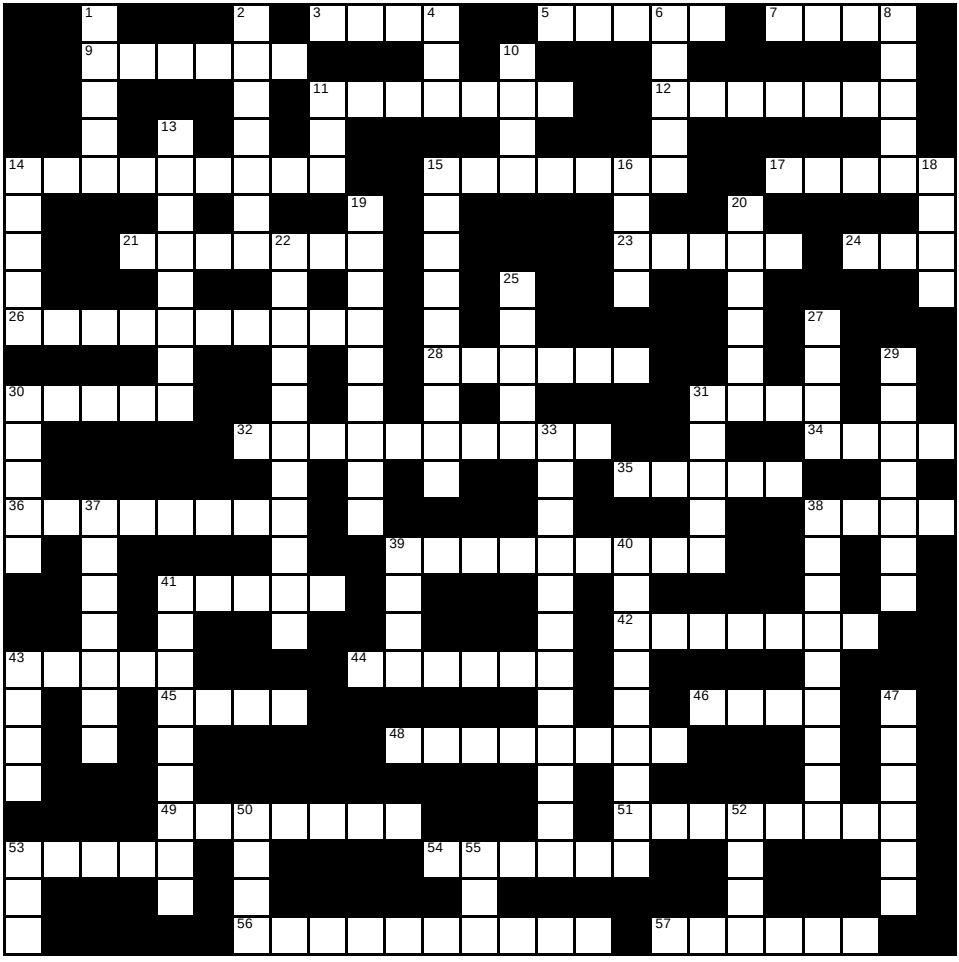
The third Woodhead Tunnel and the signals within the Tunnel

The inner and outer distant signals on the up line worked automatically on the clearance of the home signals at Dunford East. Similar inner and outer distant signals were provided on the Down line worked by Woodhead signal box. The signalling through the tunnel also enabled single line operation to be brought into use on either line and inner and outer distant signals were also provided for this mode of signalling. There were no stop signals in the new tunnels.

This method of working the distant signals was not unusual on the Woodhead line, as I recall. Trains were worked under the absolute block system in both directions through the tunnel, and the tunnel was no longer the bottleneck it had been prior to electrification, with the major problem being braking heavy westbound trains safely down the gradients, rather than the gradient facing eastbound trains.

I am indebted to Reg Instone for his help with this article.

Crossword (*Forward 170*) : Answers in the back of this issue.



Across

3 see **15** Across.
5 Signalling equipment manufacturers: "----- & Farmer". (5)
7 To sharpen a tool eg with a stone. (4)
9 To save from danger. (6)
11 Canine that features in "Woodhead the Lost Railway". (7)
12 A round building usually with a domed roof. (7)
14 Freight only branch off the Woodhead line between Mottram and Dinting. (9)
15 and **3** Across. GC station opened in 1906: "------- & Harrow ----". (7,4)
17 and **42** Across. Held at Marylebone on 9th March 1899. (5,7)
21 and **16** Down. A place to put your bags. (7,4)
23 Used by a surveyor as a measuring device. (5)
24 Location of The National Archive. (3)
26 Both the GC and the Midland main lines suffered from this in coalmining areas north of Nottingham. (10)
28 Platform transport. (6)
30 and **54** Across. Location of demolished OA&GB warehouse in Oldham. (5,6)

31 Name used for the outer side of a double-track formation. (4)
32 About 500 for the GCRS. (10)
34 Also known as the GWR 6000 class. (4)
35 and **50** Down. Present day rail infrastructure company that has expanded into rail freight provision. (5, 4)
36 GCR Accountant: "Frank --------". (8)
38 LNER parlour/observation coach: "Beaver ----". (4)
39 Local government area in North Nottinghamshire. (9)
41 Scrap dealer at Leicester: "Vic -----". (5)
42 see **17** Across.
43 Pigment dispersed in solvent/resin. (5)
44 see **46** Across.
45 Wood used in the Barnums. (4)
46 and **44** Across. Name given to Robinson's class 8. (4, 6)
48 Local landowner whose family name was used for the GC's station at Kirkby-in-Ashfield. (8)
49 Can be mathematical or chemical. (7)
51 Sheffield shed replaced by Darnall. (8)
53 "The Railway & ----- Historical Society". (5)
54 "Akeman ------". (6)
56 Brand name given to OS maps since 1973. (10)
57 "------ Henderson". (6)

Down

1 River crossed by the GC near Neasden. (5)
2 Without this many noble projects fail. (7)
4 Old name for the river Don. (3)
6 MOD sidings south of Rugby. (5)
8 ----- of thought? (5)
10 Signage assumes that people can do this. (4)
11 and **53** Down. Local name for Mansfield Concentration Sidings. (3, 3)
13 Reorganisation of Britain's railways in 1923. (8)
14 They flourish on untreated track. (5)
15 'West Country' visitor to Colwick. (9)
16 see **21** Across.
18 Vertical clue in a crossword. (4)
19 Deserving of respect, but often used on the railway to describe old stock. (9)
20 Great and Little but the GC only served the Little. (6)
22 Date that coincides with that of an earlier event. (11)
25 "Walter ----- Gair". (5)
27 To take a chance. (4)
29 Out of breath sound. (7)
30 Top of the firebox. (5)
31 Colliery branch on the LD&ECR between Chesterfield and Arkwright Town. (5)
33 In between. (12)
37 Modern term for renting. (7)
38 Successfully developed by Bell. (9)
39 To combust. (4)
40 It keeps things moving. (9)
41 Experimental lamp described by John Pollard in *Forward 169*. (9)
43 A piece of paper or a small boy. (4)
47 Found in the smokebox of a superheated locomotive. (6)
50 see **35** Across.
52 One of the pieces that make up the whole. (4)
53 see **11** Down.
55 In Saxon times when attached to someone's name it denoted 'the place of'. (3)

Readers' forum

from Richard Dunlop, St. Albans, Hertfordshire. e-mail: richard.dunlop@star-reefers.com

Query re. London Extension demolition

As a small child I used to travel from Marylebone to Woodford Halse in the early 60s to visit my grandparents in Hinton and I still have recollections of the journeys. I would also regularly visit the station where my aunt sold the tickets. A distant uncle was, I think, also the shedmaster until he was transferred to Nuneaton.

My question is concerning the actual demolition of the London Extension and in particular the lines south of Rugby. I know that they were taken up at Rugby only three days after closure but recall that a crane derailment in Catesby tunnel delayed matters further. However I was quite surprised when my grandfather took me to an overbridge south of Culworth Junction about two years later *(I think it was 1968)*, to see the remaining up line was still intact but in the process of being removed by a JCB which was simply lifting the detached rails and sleeper into waiting wagons. Two days later the demolition gang were just south of Culworth station where I took a picture *(see below)*. I remember the demolition gang foreman was quite surprised that anyone would want to take a photograph.

Is there any record of the dates for the removal of each section of line on the London Extension and why there appeared to be a large gap between the removal of the up and down lines, or maybe it just took that amount of time to do the job?

Track removal south of Culworth. *photo: Richard Dunlop*

from Bill Taylor, Skegby, Notts

Forward 170 p9, article by Bill Taylor 'Working for Sir Sam'

Just a short note to point out an understandable typesetting error made by the Editor in my article. In the table A. Wright should be listed as the stationmaster of 'Warsop Junction' not 'Warsop'. As you may note, there is nobody in the list shown as being in charge of Langwith Junction. This was because that station was under the auspices of the man in charge of Warsop Junction where there never was a station. An odd arrangement but that was how it was.

from Allan Sibley, March, Cambridgeshire

Forward 170 p44, letter from Dick Bodily re. F.Moore

Regarding the Locomotive Publishing Company and "F.Moore", the contents of Dick's letter refers to the paintings by Thomas Rudd and the coloured postcards derived therefrom. However, LPC also had a prodigious output of monochrome photograph postcards, sometimes credited to "F.Moore". This is dealt with in an entry on the National Archives web site at

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/A2A/records.aspx?cat=756-lpc&cid=0#0

which for the benefit of those without internet access is as follows. Note the references to Mr Rudd as John, not Thomas, and to the Reading Room at the NRM which has long since been replaced by the "Search Engine" facility, but presumably the collection is still accessible to the public:

"The Locomotive Publishing Company was established in 1900, and was probably the first organisation to make railway photographs commercially available. The LPC had sprung from the 'F.Moore' trading company founded by two railway enthusiasts apprenticed to the Great Eastern Railway, A. and A.R.Morton Bell. In 1896, joined by a third brother, W.J.Bell, they had commenced publication of the first popular railway periodical, Moore's Monthly Magazine, which soon changed its name to the 'Locomotive'. It drew on an archive of railway images the brothers had acquired from the steadily growing band of railway photographers, and the LPC successfully marketed these 'F. Moore' photographs to a new phenomenon, groups of railway collectors and enthusiasts. The business expanded during the first decades of the twentieth century, with increasing numbers of photographers supplying negatives to the LPC or placing them on loan for copying. The LPC also used some official photographs and commissioned work, including images taken by W.J.Bell.

LPC initially issued its photographs as 10x8 and 8½x6½ ins prints or as 'cartes de visites' but in the early years of the twentieth century the company became involved in the new postcard-collecting hobby and sold large quantities of these cards. They included 'painted photographs' and copies of paintings by John Rudd, who signed himself 'F.Moore', and both printed and genuine versions of photographs.

Having survived bombing during the Second World War at its home in Amen Corner, London and a subsequent move to Horseferry Road, the company was sold in 1951 to the publisher Ian Allan. In 1992 the archive, together with its associated rights, was acquired by the National Railway Museum, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

LPC images cover a wide range of subjects relating to railways in Britain, with particular emphasis on locomotives. All of the main line companies are represented, together with light, narrow gauge and industrial railways, and many of these images have been published since the archive was first established. Among the photographs represented in the collection are those of Major S.A.Forbes, who was responsible for many Scottish subjects of particularly high quality; P.Caldecott's views of Scottish locomotives; R. Welby King's images of moving trains of the GNR and LB&SCR; W.J.Reynolds; B. Mashiter's photographs of NER subjects in the Whitby area; F.Snary's GWR scenes and F.W.Blauvelt's views of locomotives in the USA. There are numerous images by F.E. Mackay, regarded by many contemporaries as the finest images of trains in motion and extensively featured in the railway press. Negatives by R.H.Bleasdale and P.W.Pilcher were added in the inter war years. (Further references to Reynolds, Bleasdale and Pilcher may be found in other NRM collections.)

The collection is listed, ordered by railway company and locomotive type. Published lists produced by Ian Allan Ltd, divided by railway company, locomotive type or location are also available. Reference prints for many of the images are available for consultation in the Reading Room."

from Chris Booth, Worksop, Notts

Forward 170 p8: article by George Huxley 'Signalling within the Woodhead tunnels'.

In response to George Huxley's article and in particular the final paragraph: "There were colour light signals in the new Woodhead electrified bores. They would have been semi-automatics. How many were there and from what box or boxes were they controlled?"

Yes, there were colour light signals inside the bores, these being auto distants, which are not the same as an automatic/semi-automatic signals. For a signal to be designated as a semi-automatic or automatic it must be capable of displaying a red aspect as the designation is on the signal plate which governs the actions of a driver stopped at it – trains are not stopped at distant signals which cannot display a red aspect. The Woodhead signals cleared of their own accord when all the associated stop signals were off, they did not have a lever in the box to operate them. They were three aspect (green/yellow/double yellow) and two aspect (yellow/green) and some were double headed or splitting distants to differentiate routing of trains on to Main or Goods lines at either end of the tunnel. To allow them to be kept at caution when necessary, they would have been fitted with Emergency Replacement Switches.

Dunford West box controlled the Up Line signals inside the bores, which were:-

Up Outer Distant-comprising three aspect + two aspect splitting distant at 21 mile 3674 feet (1102 yards from Home signal).

Up Inner Distant-comprising three aspect + two aspect splitting distant at 22 mile 232 feet (462 yards from home signal).

Up Splitting Home - to Up Goods (No.7) or to Up Main (No.17) on the approach to No.9 points. These were repeated on the Down line but only illuminated for single line working.

Woodhead box controlled the down line signals inside the bores, which were:-

Down Outer Distant comprising three aspect distant at 20 mile 110 feet (1360 yards from home).

Down Inner Distant comprising three aspect + two aspect splitting distant at 19 mile 3146 feet.(612 yards from home).

Down Home (No.17) two aspect splitting signal which acts as the Down Second Inner Distant for Down Main/Down Goods reading to No.18 signal with route indicator for Down Goods.

First two repeated on Up line but only illuminated for single line working.

Inner and outer distant signals were probably provided to keep trains moving. Woodhead Tunnel was something of a bottleneck and with trains following each other closely many would not receive a clear outer distant signal (double yellow) at the full braking distance out. However, sight of the clearance of the inner distant (single yellow) would allow the driver to apply power and pick up speed again sooner than if he had to wait for sight of the home signal, thus making the best of the limited line capacity.

My thanks to Andrew K. Overton, Greg Sherlock and Mike Addison for helping with information and I hope it answers George Huxley's questions.

from Richard Morton, Sheffield

Forward 169 p16: book review by Richard Morton of 'South Yorkshire Railway Stations'.

In the interests of historical accuracy, which is what this society is all about, I think that I should point out an error in my list of errors! Rotherham Road's main station building was, indeed, on the Doncaster bound platform (curiously this was the Up platform) and I was wrong to suggest otherwise, especially as I'd been shown round the station buildings by the then owners in around 1969! Had the buildings been on the other platform they would have been in the canal. I suppose that this goes to prove that memory is the most fallible of information sources!

from D.C.Clay, Forest Town, Mansfield, Notts

Forward 170 p32: article by Chris Booth 'Signalling on the Mansfield Railway - Part 1'. After receiving my Dec. issue of *Forward*, I was delighted to see the article on signalling on the Mansfield Railway.

My interest in the GC started when I found that the last sizeable remnant of the Mansfield Railway, Sutton-in-Ashfield station, was to be demolished. In my occupation as a HGV driver, I was a regular visitor to what was then the works of Helical Bar, who used the station as their offices. I took some photos and rough measurements and from there made some enquiries into its history.

As I gained more knowledge of the line, this led to more interest in the GC. In time this would take me to the Society's AGM at Mansfield in 2009. After listening to the talk by Bill Taylor I decided to join the Society and have been fully satisfied by that decision.

Where I live in Forest Town I actually overlook the line and was able to watch the movements of coal from Mansfield Colliery before closure. Anyway, I decided it was such a shame for the station at Sutton to be demolished that I decided to build an O Gauge model to be part of a garden layout. As such it was built more for strength rather than fine detail but it is a good representation. I have now moved on to work on the signal box area. I also intend to include a model of Mansfield Central station of which the shell is already complete.

As is usually the case in construction projects, more information has come to light since I started, an example being the article by Chris Booth. (I eagerly await the remaining instalments.) I did show the Sutton model to some of the older employees at Helical Bar and they said it was a good likeness. Apparently the line was still operational when they moved into the station site and they remembered the smell of the 'Fish Train'.

Unfortunately I didn't photograph the old weighbridge and associated building when in use. It was found to be too small for the modern 'artics' and a modern weighbridge was installed. I returned more recently to photograph the walled recess where the signal box had stood. The manager was really interested and asked for copies of my photos of the site.

If any readers can help with more photos and information on the buildings at Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield Central I would be most grateful.

Finally, I attended the Autumn Meeting at Penistone, travelling by train, as many others did also, over GC tracks.

Model of Sutton-in-Ashfield Central in O Gauge by D.C.Clay.

from Ken Grainger, Sheffield

Forward 170 front cover caption.
What a pity that the Great Central Railway Society's own publication should peddle that hairy chestnut of the Faringdons' shortcomings when working out of King's Cross! But doesn't it underline how deeply ingrained those slanderous allegations have become?

To read a genuine appraisal of the Lord Faringdons and their cousins, from one who knew them at first hand, worked with them and lived with them day-in, day-out, read Richard Hardy's 'Poggy Men and Poggy Engines' (*Forwards* 141-144). Richard's comments on the B3s, both with original Stephenson gear and the Caprotti rebuilds, are spread over parts 3 and 4 (*Forward* 143 and 144) but as he always has and always will, Richard talks primarily of the enginemen, infinitely more important to him than their locomotives.

Perhaps his most telling comment on the B3's besmirched reputation is in part 3. To save members the bother of looking through their back copies, or for those who don't have them, this is what Richard had to say:
"Now we come to the big Robinson engines about which so much has been written ..... but my goodness, some nonsense has been churned out, mostly based on scuttlebutt. For example, the great Cecil J.Allen made most of his judgements on the B3s on the Pullman jobs on what he was told by GN Driver W.Sparshatt of King's Cross of all people. Famous he may have been but he was a 'Mankiller' if ever there was one. On the other hand, there were unknown men at King's Cross, not members of his fan club, who got on very well with their Faringdons, knew how to economise on coal and appreciated the comfort and the glorious ride these big-wheeled four-cylinder engines gave them."

"Patchy" the Faringdons' performances on the Pullmans might have been, but perhaps that was down to their handling rather than any shortcomings in the locomotives. Richard concedes they were not the equal of a Great Western 'Castle'. Like other engines of their era, rather than multiple narrow piston rings, they had the single, wide rings which, over time, allowed steam leakage, and the benefits of long-travel valve gear were still to be appreciated. Nevertheless, with a tapering fire, open regulator and notched up cut-off, they were good engines, strong and fleet. Regrettably it seems their sullied reputation is too firmly entrenched to be dislodged now, but at least it ought not to be promulgated by ourselves in the GCRS.

Editor's note: The comments in the caption were taken from Part 2B of the RCTS publication *Locomotives of the LNER* pages 21/22.

from Carl Lardner, Herne Bay, Kent

Forward 170 p9: Bill Taylor's article 'Working for Sir Sam'.
The proposal by Bill Taylor for the photographing of all the staff records in the National Archive for use by genealogists has a far more important use. One of the three big questions about the formation of the GCR has not only never been answered, but has never been even asked: "How did the MS&L manage to staff the GCR?"

All the necessary data is in the staff registers at the National Archive, but I for one could never imagine being able to devote enough time to study them there - indeed, my recollection of trying to get some gen about my grandfather from the CRO was a very cumbersome procedure. I had to agree that I would only record data appertaining to that one person!

What do I mean by the question "How did the MS&L manage to staff the GCR?" Take the statement on p254 of Dow's *Great Central Vol.2* : "... an immediate start with the fabrication of spikes, points and crossings at Gorton and of telegraph apparatus at Godley; and the placing of contracts for steel rails." This refers to the start of the building of the London Extension. I infer that the MS&L already had a number of employees fully occupied in these manufactures, but with the new increased output

targets, I would expect that the staff would need to be increased. By how many? At what level of responsibility and skill? Were they all trainees? Were they poached from other railways? Did they all stay at Gorton or Godley when the Extension was opened? If not, how many went to other depots? Where were these other depots?

Probably all departments were increased in size - Audit, Accounts, PW, Loco, C&W, station staff, S&T etc. Did all departments start expansion at the same time? Were senior staff (eg stationmasters) recruited early in the process? Were they from internal or external sources? Were they on promotion? Where did the new staff undergo training? How were they introduced onto the Extension - dept. by dept. or a station at a time or at the same time all along the line? What was the time scale for putting staff into place in advance of the opening of the Extension? Did it vary according to dept. or station?

If Bill Taylor's objective is achieved we would be able to put names to these pawns. A big undertaking - both for the MS&L and for the Society. If the data is entered into a computer database it is essential that spellings and abbreviations are standardised to allow cross reference. But what a splendid objective!

Finally, a little about my own personal search for information about my grandfather. I was unable to find anything at the PRO but from other sources I was able to learn the following.

1897 - Living in Worcester and working as a shoemaker.
1899 - Living in Mottram and working as a wagon sheet maker.
1906 - Living at Woodford Halse and working as a railway sheet maker.

This shows that he was part of the movement of staff onto the London Extension. I am still lacking details about the circumstances of his death. I would also like to know how my grandmother, who was 31 at the time of her husband's death, was able to cope. She had had five children, one of whom had died. Welfare support in 1887 wasn't like it is today.

from Huw Edwards, e-mail: huwedwards42@hotmail.co.uk

Information requested: Brymbo branch.

I am currently researching the Brymbo branch of the GCR. After the takeover of the Wrexham Mold & Connah's Quay Railway on 1st January 1905, the GCR shortly afterwards opened three new halts and introduced what the timetable called "Motor Cars with the exception of Saturdays after 2pm".

These "Motor Cars" could be one of the following:

1. One or more of the three steam railmotors introduced in 1905.
2. One of the push-pull trains, similar to the more widespread Great Western version, using a 2-4-0 tank class 12AM (LNER class E8) plus a railway carriage trailer.
3. GCR Petrol Electric Railcar- although it is unlikely that this particular railcar worked the branch.

The branch closed on and from 1st March 1917.

Despite research at the National Archives, I have not been able to discover which of the above type of train worked the line. A locomotive allocation list for Wrexham engine shed for the period 1905 to 1917 would settle the question. Perhaps one of you readers might be able to shed some light on the matter.

from David Grainger, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

Forward 170 p3: report of Remembrance Events.

John Rissbrook, the Customer Relations Manager at Marylebone, deserves rather more than the mere recording of his name in the caption of the group photograph taken on November 11th 2011 at Marylebone. The 2011 Armistice Day Ceremony would not have occurred without the interest, enthusiasm and hard work put in by John leading up to

the event. With the non participation, for operational reasons, of GBRf, the entire operation was, with the approval of Chiltern Railways, organised by John.

Additionally, following the prompting of John by a GCRS member and his prompting of Chiltern Railways, a form of memorial to the men of the GCR who worked in the Marylebone area and gave their lives in the Great War is to be installed at the station. The form of this new memorial, to replace those memorials lost from the station and the goods depot over the years, is not yet known but hopefully the GCRS will have some input.

John, and for that matter Chiltern Railways management, are what I would describe as old fashioned railwaymen who take a pride in the work they do. John's honorary membership of the GCRS has been well earned.

Crossword Solution *(Forward 170)*

Across: 3 Road, **5** Saxby, **7** Whet, **9** Rescue, **11** Thunder, **12** Rotunda, **14** Waterside, **15** Sudbury, **17** Grand, **21** Luggage, **23** Chain, **24** Kew, **26** Subsidence, **28** Barrow, **30** Clegg, **31** Cess, **32** Membership, **34** King, **35** Colas, **36** Williams, **38** Tail, **39** Bassetlaw, **41** Berry, **42** Banquet, **43** Paint, **44** Engine, **45** Teak, **46** Fish, **48** Bentinck, **49** Formula, **51** Neepsend, **53** Canal, **54** Street, **56** Landranger, **57** Butler.

Down: 1 Brent, **2** Funding, **4** Dun, **6** Barby, **8** Train, **10** Read, **11** The, **13** Grouping, **14** Weeds, **15** Salisbury, **16** Rack, **18** Down, **19** Venerable, **20** Kimble, **22** Anniversary, **25** Burgh, **27** Risk, **29** Panting, **30** Crown, **31** Calow, **33** Intermediate, **37** Leasing, **38** Telephone, **39** Burn, **40** Lubricant, **41** Butterfly, **43** Page, **47** Header, **50** Rail, **52** Part, **53** Con, **55** Ton.

Rear cover caption

LNER class B5 "Fish Engine" 4-6-0 no.5184 stands at Gorton with what looks like a fresh coat of black paint on 29th May 1935. The "Fish Engines" (GCR class 8) were the first of Robinson's 4-6-0 designs for the GCR. Initially used on fish trains from Grimsby they saw mainly passenger work in their later years. They were built in two batches - 6 by Neilson (1902) and 8 at Gorton (1904). No.5184 was a Gorton engine. Unchanged during GC days, the class all received superheated boilers as LNER engines. As well as the higher pitched boiler, they were given side-window cabs and reduced boiler mountings. The effect was to ruin the graceful lines of Robinson's original design. No. 5184 was withdrawn in July 1947 as no.1687 (1946 renumbering).

photo: unknown

5184
L N E R