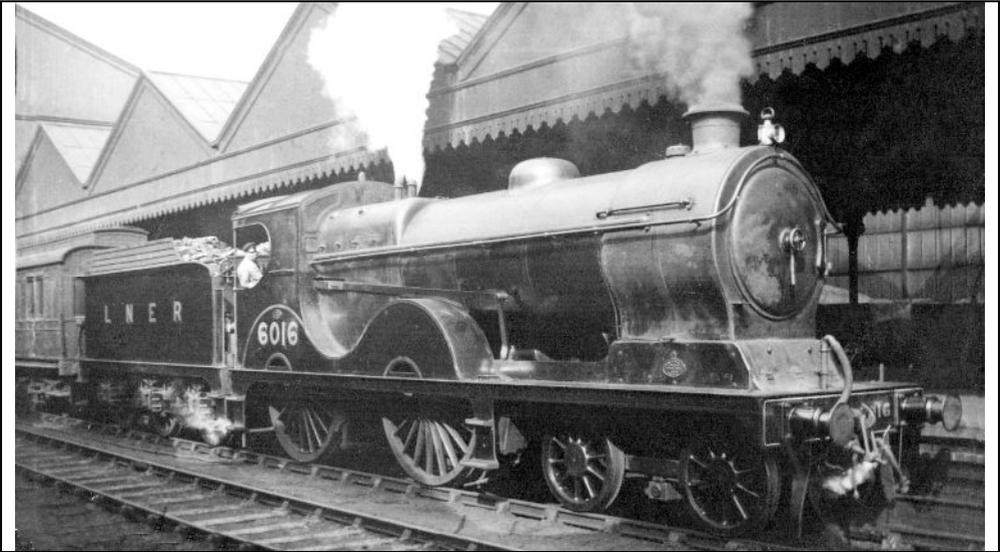


# FORWARD 173



## **Front cover caption**

LNER class D9 4-4-0 no.6016 stands at Sheffield Victoria's platform 4 waiting to depart with a slow train to Nottingham Victoria on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1933. The train will travel over the MS&L main line as far as Woodhouse Junction and then take the 'branch' to Beighton. The line from Beighton to Annesley was opened as the Derbyshire Lines of the MS&L, the section to Staveley in June 1892 and throughout to Annesley in October 1892. The remaining part of the route from Annesley to Nottingham Victoria was part of the London Extension, opened in March 1899. A journey made possible by three stages of MS&L construction.

*photo: unknown*



# The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 173 ~ September 2012

## Contents

<b>Editorial</b> <i>by Bob Gellatly</i> .....	2
<b>Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting</b> .....	3
<b>Forty years in the making: Cutting the first sod of the Derbyshire Lines</b> <i>by Alan Rowles</i> .....	6
<b>Model railway exhibition diary</b> .....	11
<b>Woodhead after closure- Part 13: 20010/11</b> <i>by Paul White</i> .....	12
<b>On Great Central lines today</b> <i>by Kim Collinson</i> .....	20
<b>Recent auction items</b> .....	21
<b>Immingham Open Day</b> <i>A colour photo feature</i> .....	22/23
<b>A class 2 model in 00 gauge for Ruddington</b> <i>by John Quick</i> .....	25
<b>The first GCR Vintage Train Supporter Day</b> <i>by Andrew Horrocks-Taylor</i> .....	25
<b>63601 on the Great Central Railway – a personal view</b> <i>by Pete Hackney</i> .....	26
<b>The Oldham Ashton &amp; Guide Bridge Junction Railway</b> <i>by Chris Booth</i> .....	29
<b>The Pollard family railway history - Part 14</b> <i>by John E. Pollard</i> .....	35
<b>Readers' forum</b> .....	38

## Editorial by Bob Gellatly

Following discussion at the AGM it was decided that the size of *Forward* will be reduced from 48 to 44 pages. This will avoid some recipients being charged for postage due by an over-zealous Royal Mail and allow for occasional flyers and membership cards to be enclosed. Unfortunately that means the crossword may not reappear.

Some significant events have taken place since the last issue. The first supporters' day for the 567 Locomotive Project took place at Ruddington on 24<sup>th</sup> June (see p26) and Immingham Dock had its centenary celebration on 22<sup>nd</sup> July (see photos on p22/23). The sales stand did good business at Immingham with the Centenary Souvenir and copies can still be obtained from Dave Smith (see below).

The Society has been highlighted in articles appearing in *The Railway Modeller* and *Steam Railway* resulting in new members joining. If you are one of those, welcome!

Details of the Autumn Meeting at Gainsborough on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct. can be found on p37.

Next year's AGM will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> May at Finchley, North London. This will be a new venue for us and an opportunity for members in the South East to attend more easily.

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## Immingham Centenary Event

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who helped to make the Immingham Centenary event on 22<sup>nd</sup> July such a success.

Mike Fish for organising the loan of tram no.14 from the Crich Tram Village and providing items from his personal collection for display.

Andrew and Alec Simpkins for bringing their Fish Engine model.

Martin Chapman for constructing and showing his Immingham-Grimsby Tram layout. I only suggested this to him in February.

Gordon Luck for his Fish Dock puzzle layout.

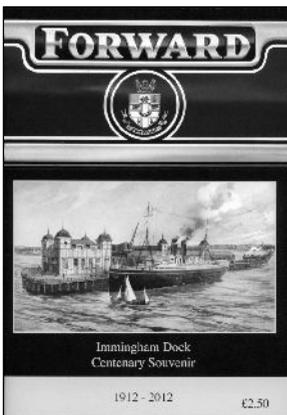
Joe Fisher and Richard Morris for their exhibits.

Dave Smith for his work on the GCRS sales/publicity stand.

And a big thank you to all members who made themselves available to help out on the day.

*Mike Hartley, Chairman*

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### **The Immingham Centenary Souvenir Edition 1912-2012**

A 'Forward' style booklet giving a pictorial review of the Immingham Dock from its construction to the present day with 8 pages in colour.

Priced at £2.50 to non-members.

Copies can be obtained by either

1. Sending your order by post with a cheque made out to 'GCRS' for £3.00 (UK), £5.50 (Europe) or £6.00 (worldwide), to Dave Smith, GCRS Sales, 34 Jenford Street, Mansfield, Notts NG18 5QX.

or

2. Sending your order by e-mail to Dave Smith at [crockett-smith@ntlworld.com](mailto:crockett-smith@ntlworld.com) and using PayPal to pay [gcrs@talktalk.net](mailto:gcrs@talktalk.net).

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at the Bassetlaw (North Notts) Railway Society club rooms, Retford Station**

Present: 38 members.

The meeting was opened at 11.00am by the Chairman, Mike Hartley.

A minute's silence was observed for deceased members – George Hinchcliffe, A.T.Hunt, M.S.W.Crampin, H.P.Smithson and A.Gander.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Brian Holyland, David Bodicoat, Richard Tilden-Smith, David Arnold, Hermann Beck, David Crossley, David Evans, William Fay, Robert Fielding, Peter Garrard, Paul Greenwood, Mark Hambly, Ian Jewell, Arthur Lee, Jason Marbeck, Alan Munday, Jack Turner, Colin Todd, John and Jenny Williamson, Chris Gilligan and Tony West.

### **2. Minutes of the 2011 AGM**

The minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting, which had been published in *Forward 169* (Sept.2011) were accepted as an accurate record. Proposed by David Grainger and seconded by Martyn Chapman. They were then signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Officer's Reports**

#### **Chairman's Report**

Mike Hartley reported that we had lost some members, but that we still have as many members as in 2002.

Meetings are still being held in the Sheffield and London Areas.

The committee decided to issue a souvenir booklet to celebrate the Centenary of Immingham Docks and this is now ready. A copy will be sent to all members in addition to the quarterly *Forwards*. Non-members will be charged £2.50. The centenary will be celebrated at Immingham on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and the society will be represented.

He finished by thanking Bob Gellatly for producing another wonderful year of *Forwards*, Colin Todd for posting them out and TSW Printers for the printing.

He also thanked all the committee members for the work done over the year.

#### **Secretary's Report**

Brian Slater reported that four committee meetings had been held during the year.

Anyone wishing to see the minutes should send Brian an e-mail and copies will be sent as a PDF.

We have now received the test etches for two of the ex D&S Kits, and we are now awaiting a new mould for the white metal parts and confirmation that the rest of the etching tools have been transferred to us, enabling some kits to be produced later in the summer.

He had been unable to help with the stand at Sheffield this year but had represented the society at the Warley exhibition at the NEC. He thanked David Alexander for his help at that exhibition.

Brian finished by thanking the NSMEE for making available a room at Ruddington for committee meetings.

#### **Treasurer's Report (including Membership Secretary's Report)**

Eric Latusek reported that the total number of members stands at 483, a decrease of 9 on the previous year. Although disappointing, the membership has remained over 480 since 2001. Eric commented on the reasons (or none) given for not renewing. 59 members now pay by Standing Order. 3 new members have been recruited since April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our new Honorary Auditor is Richard Webster and Eric thanked him for this work. Income has decreased to £7,718.92 (from £9,876.93 last year). This is partly due to the previous year's total including a donation of £2,000 from the estate of the late Hon.

Edgar Fay. This has been ring-fenced towards a permanent home for the archives. Sales are down, again partly due to the successful sale of model kits in the previous year. Expenses were £6,618.03 (£8,858.80 last year), again due to the previous year including the purchase of model railway kits for resale. The largest expense is the printing of *Forward*. Postage was similar to last year and a significant number of 2<sup>nd</sup> class stamps have been purchased in advance of the increase in postage charges for use with *Forward*. Other items of income and expenditure were explained.

The society currently has a balance of £10,396.90 (£ 9,382.79 last year) after taking into account advance payment of subscriptions. The committee are not proposing any increase in subscriptions at the present time.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Richard Woods, seconded by Bill Turner and agreed by all present.

### **Sales Officer's Report**

**Dave Smith** reported that sales were mainly of donated books, although these are getting harder to sell. Perhaps the situation will improve when the Immingham Souvenir Booklet and model kits are available.

### **Editor's Report**

Bob Gellatly reported that the supply of material for *Forward* is now more than can be accommodated in each issue, a happy position for the Editor but not for contributors who do not see their article in print. The supply of unpublished photographs is also encouraging.

He again thanked the printers, TSW Printers of Scunthorpe, and particularly Franco Grippo. He also thanked Eric Latusek, Mike Hartley and Colin Todd for their part in distributing *Forward*.

The website continues to provide information about the Society especially in the notifying of events at short notice. He then commented on the usage statistics for the site.

Some discussion about the production and distribution of *Forward* took place and the problem of some recipients being charged for 'overweight' mail.

### **Model Steward's Report**

Tony West's report was read out by the secretary. Tony started by saying that as he has been unable to attend committee meetings. He feels he may be a hindrance to the Society and if someone else wished to take the position on, he will welcome it.

The last year has been interesting for GC modellers: in 4mm scale Bachmann has issued models of Rothley Station and there are plans for issuing a D11/2 and J11 later this year.

In 7mm scale Quanton Road Models (a GCRS member) has issued a 6 wheel PBV and is collaborating in the production of a laser cut bogie fish van. Member Steve Mills has also had a laser cut model of Killamarsh signal box produced. S&T Models is also hoping to have a 1905 OCT available for the Telford show.

He has approached the HMRS regarding transfers, but they have run out of the special paper required to produce them, so this may be somewhat delayed. Some transfers are available from Dragon Models for wagons, although these are in short supply.

Brian Slater drew the attention of the members to the website of Great Central Models (our member John Bateson) who is producing etched kits of GCR 4-6-0 engines in 4mm.

### **Northern Area Rep's Report**

Ken Grainger reported that he was co-host of the Sheffield branch group meetings with Bob Gellatly. He had organised a bus tour over Woodhead to recognise the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of closure. Another bus trip is being arranged for the centenary event at Immingham on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, leaving at 9.30am from Sheffield.

He then commented on his membership of the War Memorial Committee. A replacement memorial is being prepared for Marylebone for which Ken is providing information. As Remembrance Day is on a Sunday this year, Ken is not sure what will be happening at Marylebone.

He is also making progress on Part 2 of his Derbyshire Lines book.

## **Midlands Area Rep's Report**

In David Bodicoat's absence, Brian read out his report. He reported that he had no matters to report on. If any member wishes to replace him as Midlands Area Rep he does not mind stepping down.

## **Southern Area Rep's Report**

Richard Butler said that his main activity was organising the London Area Group whose meetings are held at Keen House, Kings Cross. About a dozen are regular attendees. There have been walkabouts in the Lower Lea Valley and to City goods stations. A minibus trip visited the Spa Valley Railway at Tunbridge Wells and the annual Remembrance Day event was held at Marylebone. He will represent the Society at Princes Risborough, Alexandra Palace and Stoke Mandeville exhibitions, for which he also thanked Andrew David. There will be trips to Stanmore Village and Welwyn-Hertford Line in June & July. He concluded by commenting on the HS2 project.

## **Archivist's Report**

Geoff Burton thanked everyone who had made donations to the archive, including the three that had given him items before the meeting. He then commented on the lack of a permanent home for the archives. Mike updated the membership on the archive storage.

## **5. Election of Officers**

The following nominations had been received by the secretary for committee posts for the coming year:

Chairman - Mike Hartley, Secretary - Brian Slater, Treasurer/Membership Secretary - Eric Latusek, Sales Officer - Dave Smith, Northern Area Rep - Ken Grainger, Midlands Area Rep - David Bodicoat, Southern Area Rep - Richard Butler, Editor - Bob Gellatly, Model Steward - Tony West, Archivist - Geoff Burton.

In the absence of any other nominations, their appointment was proposed by Peter Scott, seconded by Martin Walker and agreed by all present.

## **6. Proposed Photographic Competition**

Richard Butler outlined his ideas for a photographic competition and a number of members made comments. It was generally agreed to be a good idea and the committee will take it further.

Richard Wilson had brought some photographs to the meeting that he had taken in the 1960s in Nottingham for viewing.

## **7. Any Other Business**

Alan Ashurst - to save postage, could the spring and autumn editions of *Forward* be available at the AGM and Autumn meetings? This was commented upon, especially the dispatch to those members not attending. After a short discussion, it was agreed no further action was necessary.

Brian then read out a press release received from Richard Tilden-Smith regarding the last run of the O4 at Loughborough on 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> June before going into retirement.

## **8. Venue for 2013 AGM**

Proposals included Aylesbury, Nottingham, Woodford, Chorleywood, Finchley and West of Pennines.

The committee will discuss and arrange a suitable venue.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 12.30pm.

*Brian Slater, Secretary*

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## **Loose coupled**

The July 2012 issue of *The Railway Magazine* was accompanied by a facsimile of issue no.1 from July 1897. This contained many interesting articles including 'The New Great Central Railway Extension to London' by B.Fletcher-Robinson.

## **Forty years in the making: Cutting the first sod of the Derbyshire Lines by Alan Rowles**

A short while ago, in what can only be described as a rush of blood to the head, I paid out appreciably more than I had intended on an *M.S. & L. Programme of Arrangements* brochure for the Ceremony of the Cutting of the First Sod on the Beighton to Annesley section of the above railway. As is often the situation a little interesting information leaves the reader wanting to know more and the following is a resumé of my research into the events of that day.

The ceremony took place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 1890 and preceded a luncheon at the Royal Victoria Hotel in nearby Sheffield. At the request of the MS&L board the honour of cutting the first sod was bestowed upon Earl Manvers of Thoresby Hall who was the major landowner in the area. In recognition of their status the Earl and Countess were met at Worksop station by William Pollitt the general manager of the company and conveyed by special train to Sheffield Victoria. Here the chairman Sir Edward Watkin, the deputy chairman Lord Auckland and Edward Ross J.P. the company secretary, welcomed them. Numerous other guests had arrived via a special working from Manchester and when everyone was duly assembled they boarded a second special, which departed from Victoria at 12.05pm and arrived as planned at Beighton at 12.20pm.

For those who do not know the railway geography of this neck of the woods, Beighton station was situated just under a mile from Woodhouse East Junction on a 1½ mile link line which connected the MS&L. with the Midland at Beighton Junction. For obvious reasons this short section was known as 'the branch' whilst the Sheffield-Gainsborough route through Woodhouse was classed as 'the main'. Somewhat surprisingly, when the branch was extended south from Beighton to eventually reach London, the term branch was retained and to this day the instruments in Woodhouse Junction signal box state it as such. It should be noted that the aforementioned Beighton station was the original structure which opened to traffic on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1849 and was situated 6 chains (132 yards) nearer to Woodhouse Junction than its replacement which saw its first traffic on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1893.

It is also worth mentioning at this point that if we could fast forward 52 years from 1890 to 11<sup>th</sup> February 1942, the scene in the vicinity of Beighton station would be one of carnage, for it was here at this precise spot that the tragic troop train accident occurred (see *Forward 139*). For the ceremony of the cutting of the first sod a temporary platform and pavilion had been erected on land that was later to become Holbrook Colliery sidings and it was at this location, midway through World War 2, that 14 soldiers lost their lives and many more were seriously injured.

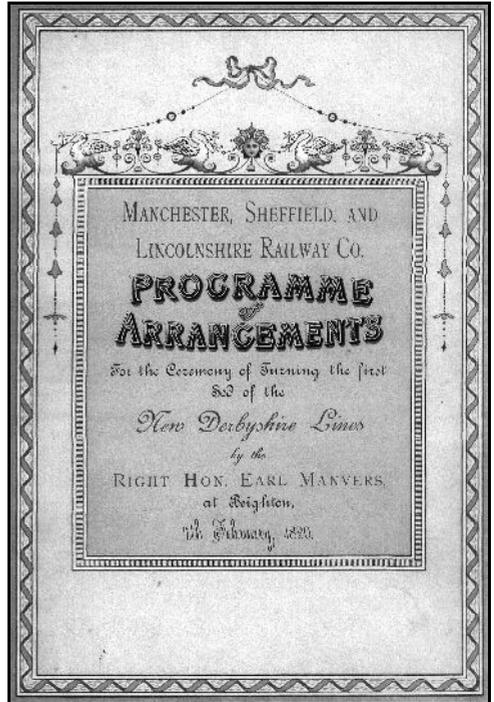
It was at the temporary platform some 250 yards south of Beighton station that the honoured guests disembarked from their train. Just beyond here, and accessed via a short covered gangway, stood a large 90ft. x 30ft. pavilion which had been supplied and erected the previous day by Messrs. Womersley and Co. of St. James Street, Leeds. Its red and white canvas roof was supported by pillars draped in red cloth and from which flew flags and streamers. Both the pavilion and platform were carpeted as was the gangway connecting the two. Considering the time of year the weather, though cold, was behaving itself and as a result, shortly before the proceedings were due to commence, a large section of the red, white and blue wall was removed to give members of the public, who had turned out in numbers, an improved view of the proceedings.

As the guests alighted from the train to be conducted to their seats on the raised dais, the band of the Yorkshire Dragoons under the conductorship of Mr M.S. Suckley played a selection of marches, overtures and waltzes. Barriers had been erected to keep the large crowd of onlookers at a sensible distance and order was kept by members of the Derbyshire police under the charge of Superintendent Wright of the MS&L Detective

Department. On the hillside beyond the village recreation ground the Union flag had been run up on the church tower to honour the day's proceedings and all was now in place for the brief but important ceremony.

In addition to the MS&L board and the Earl and Countess Manvers, numerous other dignitaries were present on the dais including Lord & Lady Auckland, Viscount Cross, Countess Beauchamp, the Lord Mayors of Chesterfield and Nottingham, the Sheffield Master Cutler and numerous local MPs. Indeed the following week the *Derbyshire Times* devoted a whole column to listing all the great and the good present at the ceremony.

When all the guests were seated Countess Manvers was presented with a magnificent floral bouquet and the proceedings duly got underway. To great applause the company chairman Sir Edward Watkin welcomed the assembled gathering. He then personally welcomed Earl and Countess Manvers and then added, "My Lord, I am desired by my colleagues, the deputy chairman (Lord Auckland) and the directors of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway Company to ask your lordship to perform this inauguration ceremony. It may seem in itself and at this moment, a little thing, but it may be taken I believe, as the planting of a seed which will lead to the growth of a new and important industry and be in the interests of manufacturing and trade" and then to more applause and "hear hear" he added "and be for the good of the country". Sir Edward then handed his lordship a silver spade and the two men descended the steps to a small area of grass that had been left uncovered. Here, to great cheering and in the time-honoured fashion, Earl



The cover of the 'Programme of Arrangements'.

Manvers proceeded to lift not one but two sods into the magnificent wheelbarrow standing alongside. The prolonged cheering continued as the Earl, who was clearly enjoying himself, wheeled the barrow outside the enclosure and deposited its contents.

The magnificent wheelbarrow and spade were specially produced for the occasion by Elkington & Co. and could rightly claim to be works of art. Constructed of carved and polished walnut, the blade of the spade and the handles and legs of the wheelbarrow were handsomely mounted in silver. Beautifully engraved on the blade of the spade and on a silver plate attached to the barrow was the outline of the latest design of MS&L 4-4-0 locomotive hauling a 12 wheeled dining car. Each also carried the inscription - "Presented to the Right Honourable Earl Manvers on the occasion of his turning the first sod of the Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire lines of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway at Beighton, 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1890." About 15 years ago, whilst playing cricket at Thoresby Hall, I was fortunate to happen upon the above items and they really are a 'no expense spared' sight to behold.

On returning to the dais Sir Edward briefly thanked the Earl for carrying out the ceremonial aspect of the proceedings and asked their honoured guest to accept the wheelbarrow and spade as a token of their esteem. He also presented Lady Manvers

with a beautiful and highly ornamental card case. With gold mountings, this was also engraved with the outline of the MS&L locomotive and carriage as well as the Manvers coat of arms. In accepting the card case Lady Manvers said, "This is most kind of you and I thank you most heartily. I feel honoured and flattered and whenever I use it I assure you that I shall wish further success to this line". When the cheering had died down Earl Manvers thanked Sir Edward and the directors for the handsome wheelbarrow and spade which he hoped would be handed down to posterity at Thoresby.

At this juncture the Rev.R.Stewart-Hare presented his Lordship with an illuminated address from his tenants in Beighton. A somewhat surprised Earl Manvers, in accepting it said that had he known the terms of the address that had kindly been read to him, he would perhaps have been more adequately able to reply. He did however thank all concerned for their kindness and as a means of showing his gratitude, promised a donation of £20 towards the construction of a cricket pavilion on the village sports ground alongside the railway. He said that he was also commissioned by Lady Manvers to give £10 to Mrs Hare to use in the parish in any way that she deemed desirable. This concluded the proceeding at Beighton and just half an hour after their arrival every one was back on board the train for the return journey to Sheffield.



*The view south from a footbridge south of Beighton station. Holbrook Colliery Sidings signal box is on the right with an up passenger on the former GC main line. The two lines on the extreme left are the original 'branch' from Woodhouse Junction to Beighton Jct on the 'Old Road' of the Midland. The Beighton Jct signal box is visible in the distance. Holbrook Colliery sidings, the site of the Cutting of the first Sod, were on the down side of the GC line to the right of the train in the photo, and close to the village of Beighton. All that remains today is the double track between Woodhouse Jct and Beighton Jct. photo: Jim Thompson collection*

On a more sombre note it was at this point that Lord Auckland, who had not felt well earlier in the day, was taken ill, and despite first aid being rendered by William Pollitt and others, it was thought by all concerned that it would be best if he returned home immediately. To this end a special train was laid on to convey him to Doncaster and thence to the family home at Edenthorpe. It was later discovered that he had suffered a stroke and regrettably, despite a brief improvement in his condition, passed away three weeks later. He had served on the board of the MS&LR for 26 years.

Once back in Sheffield the 168 special guests left the station and entered the Royal Victoria Hotel, the management of which the MS&L had taken over just five weeks earlier. Opened in September 1862 the hotel was built, despite much local opposition, at a cost of £10,000 by a concern known as the Sheffield Hotel Company. At the time it was widely believed that had not the MS&L and the GNR each subscribed £2,500 the construction would not have gone ahead. The prefix 'Royal' was added following a visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales (later Edward VI and Queen Alexandra) in 1875. On this momentous occasion the luncheon was in the charge of Mr. Rauhaut the hotel's new and first MS&L manager. In keeping with the status of the occasion the tables were decorated with magnificent epergnes and other ornaments kindly loaned by Walker and Hall, whilst the band of the Yeomanry Cavalry was stationed in the adjoining room and played a selection of music during the meal.

The obligatory toasts over, Sir Edward once again introduced Earl Manvers and asked him to speak to the assembled gathering. In his reply the Earl remarked that coal and railway interests were inextricably linked and without either the other could not exist. He also noted that the districts through which the new line would pass contained 800 million tons of coal and on the strength of this alone prospects were good. Being a shareholder with both the MS&L and the London and South Western Railway, over which Sir Edward also presided, he had every confidence in the venture. He concluded by thanking Sir Edward and the company for the excellent and agreeable arrangements that had been made for him, his wife, family and friends on this auspicious occasion. Finally to prolonged applause he proposed a toast - "Success to the Derbyshire Lines of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company". The toast was enthusiastically honoured.

The cheering continued as Sir Edward rose and thanked the Earl and Countess for the honour that they had done the company by attending the day's events. He then went on to deliver a weighty speech centred mainly on the trials and tribulations of the company's attempts to gain running powers over the Midland and access to Chesterfield. Here was a man in his element, speaking fluently and with passion on the subject of the intransigence of certain companies to accept the MS&L's expansion plans. The Midland in particular came in for scathing criticism. It was, he said, an open secret that if the directors of that company had listened to the late Charles Markham, a sound man and much-respected friend, the project that they were inaugurating today may not have been required, or at the very least been delayed for many years. As it was, by failing to grant running powers over their lines the Midland had forced the MS&L to go it alone and out of the latter's determination had come the belief that they could not only reach Annesley, but London as well.

Sir Edward said he fervently believed that the Sheffield Company were not engaged in any selfish or vain-glorious work and to applause he added that they were involved in a patriotic work that would benefit the whole country. Then to laughter he commented that he knew of some who believed London to be a sacred place. Well, he had never found it so. More laughter followed when he pointed out that the patriotic undertaking in which the company was involved was so plain and simple that even a railway chairman could not fail to see it.

Although other dignitaries spoke briefly, this part of the proceedings was very much the Sir Edward Watkin show and despite his 70 years he continued in this vein for quite a few minutes. He concluded by proposing a toast to Mr Pollitt, the general manager, Mr Ross, secretary, Mr Liddell, engineer, Mr Lingard-Monk, the company solicitor, Mr Parry, the assistant engineer, and all the other gentlemen who had contributed so much to bring about the necessary powers for the Parliamentary application. However, he humorously remarked, he would not ask them to speak as her ladyship's train was waiting and if there was one thing that had been omitted in the Commandments it was 'Thou shalt not keep a train waiting!'

The final toast was duly honoured and the day's proceedings came to a close. After forty years of plans and counter plans a line to Chesterfield was at long last up and running and who knows, maybe even the dreams of an extension to London were not now beyond the realms of possibility.

The following newspapers were used as sources of information:

*The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*  
*The Evening Telegraph & Star (Sheffield)*  
*The South Yorkshire Times (Mexborough)*  
*The Derbyshire Times (Chesterfield)*

## **The background to the MS&L versus Midland dispute**

As far back as 1850 the question of the Sheffield Company gaining running powers to Chesterfield was raised with the Midland and from time to time other schemes were prepared for obtaining Parliamentary sanctions. For example in 1872 and 1873 two very similar plans were deposited for a new line from the MS&L main line at Kiveton Park to Chesterfield. It was envisaged that much of the route could be traversed by filling in that section of the Chesterfield Canal which the MS&L now owned and converting it into a railway. The 1872 Bill was withdrawn by mutual agreement with the Midland but it was stipulated that its withdrawal should not prevent such a line being projected in the future. The 1873 Bill was a joint one with the Midland and was withdrawn because the two companies had been joint promoters of other lines in the direction of London. These included plans for a joint line from Askern near Doncaster to Rushton near Kettering and running powers for the MS&L over a proposed new Midland line from Rushton to London. This huge Bill, which amongst other proposals included a reworking of the Kiveton to Chesterfield plan of 1872, went before the House of Commons on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1873 and lasted a mammoth 30 days. A month of wrangling and conflict ended in the inevitable. The joint venture had been an abject failure and the Bill was thrown out.

In the ensuing years various unsuccessful negotiations took place with the Midland aimed at the MS&L gaining access to Chesterfield and certain collieries in the area. All came to nought. However, as the years went by and local coal owners and businessmen became increasingly unhappy with the Midland's monopoly of traffic in the area, hopes of progress were rekindled. Led by the Staveley and Sheepbridge Ironworks, which both incidentally also owned a number of collieries, the MS&L board were strongly urged to once again put the 1872/73 Bill before Parliament. Dusted down, the Bill was deposited in January 1885. Negotiations were then again begun with the Midland with a view to obtaining running powers from Beighton to Chesterfield and thus negating the need for the proposed new line. With the above running powers promised, the MS&L withdrew its Bill but the Midland then moved the goalposts. Changing tack it offered running rights for passenger trains only. They had obviously no intention of giving up any of their lucrative coal and iron ore traffic and so once again the two protagonists could only agree to disagree.

Yet again its plans had hit the buffers but despite this the MS&L were far from downbeat. Next time they would go it alone and not be reliant on others. To this end a new Bill was prepared, this time not for a line starting from Kiveton, but from Beighton to Chesterfield and including intermediate colliery branches. Deposited before Parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1888 it came as no surprise to anyone that Mr Noble, representing the Midland Railway, opposed it. He once again offered the Sheffield Company running powers over certain of his company's lines and the House of Commons, being of the opinion that this would meet the needs of the MS&L declined to pass the Bill.

The decision caused great dissatisfaction throughout the district and crowded public meetings were held in the likes of Chesterfield and Eckington where resolutions were passed urging the company to not only deposit the Bill again, but also include in it an extension to the south. The board agreed and a Bill was accordingly deposited which, in

addition to the original scheme, included plans to extend the line south to connect with the Great Northern at Annesley and adding more branches en route. This time, and partly thanks to the backing of the GNR and the LNWR, the Bill was passed on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1889. To ensure their support the LNWR were granted running powers from Annesley to Sheffield whilst at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour the GNR accepted a similar offer and dropped their demands for other concessions. And so, almost 40 years to the day since the line was first mooted, the MS&L gained access to Chesterfield. At St. Mary's church in the town (she of the crooked spire) a peal of bells was rung and there was considerable celebration in the area. Of great benefit to local industry, the only losers in this affair were the Midland Railway who through their intransigence in granting running powers to one company now had three insurgents in what had been their closed shop.

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## **Model railway exhibition diary**

*Some events that may interest our readers*

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Sept: Northolt MRE at Northolt Village Community Centre, Ealing Road, Northolt UB5 6AD. [www.northolt-mrc.org.uk](http://www.northolt-mrc.org.uk)

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Sept: Bassetlaw (North Notts) Railway Society Open Day at the Club Rooms, Retford Station DN22 7DE. [www.bnnrs.net](http://www.bnnrs.net)

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Sept: Romiley Methodist MRE at Hill Street, Romiley SK6 3AH.  
<http://rmmr.urwick.co.uk>

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> & Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Sept: Gauge 0 Guild at Telford International Centre, Shropshire TF3 4JH. [www.gauge0guild.co.uk](http://www.gauge0guild.co.uk)

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> & Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Sept: Glossop MRE at Bradbury Community House, Market Street, Glossop SK16 8AR.

Sat 29<sup>th</sup> & Sun 30<sup>th</sup> Sept: Soar Valley MRE at Thorpe Hill Campus, Thorpe Hill, Loughborough LE11 4SQ. [www.svmrc.co.uk](http://www.svmrc.co.uk)

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Oct: Beaconsfield MRE at Beaconsfield High School, Wattleton Road, Beaconsfield HP9 1RR. [www.beaconsfieldmrc.org](http://www.beaconsfieldmrc.org)

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> & Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Oct: Manchester MRE at The Armitage Centre, Mosley Road, Manchester M14 6ZT. [www.mmrs.co.uk](http://www.mmrs.co.uk)

Sat 13<sup>th</sup> & Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Oct: The Elizabethan Railway Society MRE at The Summit Centre, Pavilion Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts NC17 7LL. [www.elizabethanrailwaysociety.co.uk](http://www.elizabethanrailwaysociety.co.uk)

Sat 27<sup>th</sup> & Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Oct: Hazel Grove MRE at Hazel Grove Recreation Centre, Jacksons Lane, Hazel Grove SK7 5JX. [www.hgdmsr.org.uk](http://www.hgdmsr.org.uk)

Sat 27<sup>th</sup> & Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Oct: Ecclesbourne Valley Railway MRE at Wirksworth Town Hall, Wirksworth, Derbyshire DE4 4EU. [www.evra.org.uk](http://www.evra.org.uk)

Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov: High Wycombe MRE at The Cressex Community School, Holmers Lane, High Wycombe HP12 4UD. [www.hwdmsr.org.uk](http://www.hwdmsr.org.uk)

Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov: St Peter's Church Braunston Park MRE at St Peter's Church, Woodshawe Rise, Leicester LE3 1RH. [www.stpetersbraunstone.org.uk](http://www.stpetersbraunstone.org.uk)

Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> & Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Nov: Barnsley MRE at The Horizon Community College, Dodworth Road, Barnsley S70 6JE. [www.barnsleymrc.org.uk](http://www.barnsleymrc.org.uk)

Sat 24<sup>th</sup> & Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Nov: Warley MRE at the NEC, Birmingham B40 1NT.  
[www.thewarleyshow.co.uk](http://www.thewarleyshow.co.uk)

**The Gainsborough Model Railway**, at Florence Terrace, Gainsborough DN21 1BE, is open to the public (1.30pm-6.00pm) on Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Oct, Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Dec and Sun 30<sup>th</sup> Dec. Visit [www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk](http://www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk) for more information.

## **Woodhead after closure- part 13: 2010/11**

**by Paul White**

Following the cancellation of the Longdendale bypass in January 2010 the local councils' funded "Longdendale Integrated Transport Strategy" (LITS) roadshow toured the Glossop and Longdendale areas promoting a much trimmed down version of the scheme incorporating a "spur" road from Glossop in a bid to improve traffic flow. In the absence of a bypass, the campaigners were also promoting a lorry-ban over the A628 - something dismissed out of hand by the campaigners before the bypass cancellation. Groups which had campaigned against the bypass complained that they had had no proper information about "LITS" in terms of there being "...no information as to whether any of the options would actually reduce congestion, no data about reduced travel times, decreasing pollution or improving safety and further made no mention of weight restrictions or the re-opening of the Woodhead Rail Line". Cracks also appeared at local council level with Glossop Borough councillors complaining that Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council had had "no contact" with them over the plans. There was also concern from Derbyshire County Councillors that the revised plans might even make the traffic situation in Hollingworth and Tintwistle worse.

Following the Coalition election victory in May 2010 the new MP for the High Peak, Conservative Andrew Bingham, announced that he would be seeking a meeting with the new Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond, to put the case for the full bypass scheme, but added the caveats that the Lib Dems had a policy of no new major road-building, and that it would be a hard sell in view of the £178bn Budget deficit. Announcing that he would join forces with the new Labour MP for Stalybridge and Hyde in campaigning for the bypass, he made this topic the major theme of his maiden speech in Parliament. By November 2010 it was obvious that the game was well and truly up for the pro bypass campaigners; funding set aside by the local authorities for the "cut-down" version of the bypass had been put on hold in July, and then scrapped entirely in view of government cuts affecting local authority budgets. The news was greeted with delight by the 'antis' led by the "Save Swallows Wood" campaign, and despair by the 'pros', led by Longdendale Siege Committee, which vowed to "fight on", at one point stopping all traffic on the A628 by repeatedly crossing and re-crossing all the Pelican crossings in Tintwistle and Hollingworth.

The final humiliation for the bypass campaigners came in a 26 minute adjournment debate, the last of 2010, to a near empty chamber, when Andrew Bingham was told by the Lib Dem Norman Baker, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Regional and Local Transport), that the campaigners had been "led up the garden path" by the previous Government as to which road schemes could or could not be afforded, the Tintwistle-Mottram bypass being a case in point!

Support for a re-opened Woodhead rail line continued over the period, with the successors to "Save the Woodhead Tunnel", the renamed "Reopen the Woodhead Line" group taking a leading role. In May 2010 the group reported that, ahead of the General Election, "parliamentary candidates from across the political spectrum are united in their support of the campaign to re-open the Woodhead Rail Route". The bulletin went on to state, erroneously as it turns out, that "...campaigners recently saved the Woodhead Tunnel after work by National Grid threatened to make future use for rail impossible". The campaign's chairman David Bryson added, "At this important time we believe a re-opened Woodhead Route would aid economic recovery on both sides of the Pennines as well as deliver significant economic and social benefits", and he welcomed the support of the candidates. Later in 2010 the Group made a detailed submission to the Longdendale Integrated Transport Strategy Consultation (LITS), produced for and on behalf of Tameside Council. The submission noted the LITS proposal for increased rail services between Hattersley and Hadfield/Glossop but expressed concern that there was no technical or other detail of how this was to be achieved. The group also noted that the re-opening of the Woodhead line was not contained in any of the proposed options, even



Above: A pair of class 76 Bo+Bos emerge from Woodhead tunnel with a mgr coal train. Photo is taken from the top of the signal box steps. photo: Paul G. Richman  
Below: On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012 a cyclist on the Longdenden Trail passes the site of Woodhead station. The new concrete duct for the cables from the 'new' tunnel is visible on the left. photo: Paul White



as a long-term strategy. Noting the historic investment in the 3 mile 1954 tunnel and that re-investment would "vastly improve" the connectivity of the rail network in both Northern England and the wider network, the group claimed that a reopened Woodhead line would offer the following benefits:

- Reduced environmental impact of a 70% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from people and freight crossing the Peak District National Park.
- Reduced road traffic in the National Park would lead to a reduction in accidents
- Reduction in journey time from Manchester to Sheffield from 55 to 35 minutes.
- A faster rail route between the main West and East Coast ports and the relief of rail congestion around Sheffield.

Improved accessibility to the Dark Peak

- New connectivity between South Yorks and the Eastern suburbs of Manchester and Longdendale, opening new opportunities for employment, leisure and inward investment into communities
- Integration with proposed new high speed rail services to/from London and Europe, thus providing lower carbon journey alternatives to flying
- Improved reliability, providing an alternative to the Hope Valley rail route, frequently closed due to engineering work, and thus obviating the need for bus substitutions.
- A more resilient route for freight and passengers crossing the Pennines during the winter months

This submission was made in May 2010.

In July 2010 the Group wrote to the new Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond, once again outlining the principal issues of the controversial cable laying through the tunnel, briefly repeating the history of events up to the 1981 closure and restating the arguments for re-opening made to the LITS Strategy. The letter concluded by appealing to a sense of history, citing also the reopening of a major part of the Waverley Route as a precedent and noting that three proposals for re-opening, by Central Rail, Translink and Arriva Trains had all been turned down by the previous Labour Government, and challenging the new coalition government to have "more foresight".

The reply came, not from Philip Hammond himself but Brian Welch, the Cities and Regions Policy Manager. The reply could only be described as disheartening, pointing out that while ministers had requested that disposal of railway land owned by public bodies that could form part of a reopened rail route should be halted, this did not apply to land in private ownership and therefore would not affect National Grid's proposals to complete the transfer of cables from the Victorian tunnels to the 1954 tunnel. The letter also noted that "no need" had been identified for the foreseeable future for a route across the Pennines at this location. Network Rail had confirmed through its Yorkshire and Humber Utilisation Study, "NRUS" (Northern Route Utilisation Strategy) that there remained considerable scope to lengthen passenger trains on the Hope Valley Route, and the frequency and speed of services could be improved with infrastructure spend such as passing loops and double tracking at Dore, and investment in the Manchester "Hub".

The letter further noted that "...a strategic survey of Trans-Pennine connections is currently nearing completion...both this and work carried out by Network Rail...and the Manchester Hub Study confirms that a greater need for additional route capacity across the Pennines is likely to materialise on the Trans-Pennine Route between Manchester and Leeds". At the time of writing (April 2012) this prospect is likely to become a reality with funds being made available for the proposed "Northern Hub" electrification between Liverpool and Leeds, with a probable start in 2014. The letter ended on a more hopeful, if vague note, stating "...we are not ruling out the need for additional capacity between Manchester and Sheffield in the long term and it may be that the Woodhead Route has a role to play in this, but it would not be appropriate for the Government to commit to re-opening this route at the present time".

A brief item in the local *Reporter* of 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 stated that the Government would be discussing with National Grid the options for inspecting and maintaining the integrity of the Victorian tunnels so that moving the cables back into these tunnels remained a possible option for the long term. However, on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010 the Group reported that correspondence between the Secretary of State for Transport, Angela Smith, and Friends of the Peak District indicated that talks on the future maintenance of the Victorian tunnels had been put into abeyance. A further letter from Brian Welch, DfT Cities and Regions Policy Manager, concluded that "...discussions have not been terminated and will be re-opened when the time is right", which seems a rather longwinded way of saying "sine die".



*The view from above the Woodhead tunnels looking down Longdendale.  
left: Just a single track remains through the 'new' tunnel as track lifting nears completion in August 1986. The cable duct on the right connects the 'old' north tunnel to the electricity pylon.*

*photo: John Ashton*

*right: On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012. The cable duct from the 'new' tunnel on the left can be seen running alongside the old cable duct on the right.*

*photo: Paul White*

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 the "Reopen Woodhead" group hosted "An Illustrated History of the Woodhead Line" at Glossop Labour Club, an excellent slide show and talk delivered by John Quick, which he was to repeat at the GCRS Autumn Meeting together with Steve Gay's "Woodhead - the Lost Railway" at Penistone in October. I haven't seen the club as full in many years, reflecting the great interest in the line which remains in this area. At the Glossop meeting the organisers also announced closer links between the group and The Don Valley Railway group which aims to bring passenger services from Sheffield to Stocksbridge.

The "Reopen" campaign also organised a "Rail Campaigners Summit" at Guide Bridge Theatre on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011, which was attended by over 40 representatives of different pro-rail campaigns. The meeting was addressed by Andrew Gwynne, MP for Denton and Reddish, who warned of the coming budget reduction for rail development. He cited his strong support for the restoration of a proper passenger service on the Guide Bridge-Stockport branch and the need for more capacity between Manchester and Sheffield and his belief that Woodhead could be part of the solution. Northern Rail presented their "Route 28" strategy to improve the facilities and appearance of stations on the Manchester to Liverpool via Chat Moss line and the Manchester-Glossop-Hadfield route, with particular emphasis on improving Hadfield Station.

Steve Bagshaw of the "Re-open" campaign announced the formation of a voluntary "Friends of Hadfield Station" group. Further contributions were made on behalf of the Reddish South and Denton Station group, while the Don Valley group outlined its plans to introduce passenger services over the remaining eastern stub of the Woodhead line, first to Stocksbridge but with the eventual aim of reopening to Penistone. The "Reopen" campaign itself had Chair David Bryson and Colin Elliff delivering a presentation which set the campaign in a wider environmental context. In engineering terms, it was stated, the Woodhead Route offered the most cost-effective means of increasing rail capacity, as well as allowing for electrification between East and West coast ports.

Angela Smith MP closed the conference, praising all the groups for their presentations, and highlighting the leading role taken by women in the Reddish South and Denton campaign. While reiterating her support for the safeguarding of the Woodhead Route for possible re-opening, she again stated that the dialogue between Network Rail and the National Grid over tunnel maintenance had ceased. National Grid had offered to sell the old tunnels for a nominal sum, but the estimated cost of £500,000 per annum for maintenance would not be taken on by the Peak District National Park, and consequently the tunnels could end up by being sealed off for good. She urged all parties to keep the issue alive with the DfT.

"Reopen the Woodhead Line" concluded their public activities for 2011 with a commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the line's closure. This consisted of a series of events including a wreath-laying at Manchester Piccadilly, where the plaque commemorating the 1954 tunnel opening stands high above Platform 1, a walk/cycle to the tunnel and a symbolic meeting with Sheffield supporters at the mid-point of the tunnel on the moors above. A specially brewed real ale, "Tunnel Vision", produced by Pete Roberts of the The Harlequin, Nursery Street, Sheffield, was made available in selected pubs in the Huddersfield, Sheffield and Manchester areas. As readers will know, the GCRS mounted its own commemorative event, "The Woodhead Wanderer", a trip along the route of the line in a 50 year old double-decker bus, which set off appropriately from the Royal Victoria Hotel.

The Woodhead Route featured in a House of Commons Rail Investment Debate chaired by Albert Owen on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2011. In the debate, Kelvin Hopkins, MP for Luton North, spoke in favour of a dedicated freight route that would be able to handle European container traffic, and he stated that a very precise route was being considered, where clearances would be adequate for the largest modern containers (W10) which now had to be transferred to road. Mr Hopkins stated that he took a team of people to see Geoff Hoon when he was Secretary of State for Transport; they included representatives of supermarkets, Eurotunnel, the rail constructors and AXA, the insurance giant that funds terminals. There were 15 in the group. He thought that they answered every question put to them adequately. They could not persuade the Secretary of State then, but they hoped that the present Government might listen sympathetically, at least. What he proposed could be done very cheaply. We have a precise route, which would involve only 14 miles of new route, nine of which would be in tunnels. The route would, as mentioned, use the Woodhead tunnel. The rest would be on existing under-utilised routes and old track bed. Initially a cost of £4 billion was put on it. One of the rail constructors said it could do it for £3 billion. We are now being generous and suggesting £6 billion; but that is still one third of what is proposed to be spent on Crossrail, which he also supported. Nevertheless, the whole scheme, with its 400-mile route, would cost a third of what we are to spend on Crossrail, and would be commercially viable, because of the amount of traffic on it.

He suggested that, despite being in favour of public funding the scheme he was describing would attract outside investment. Already, at the meeting with Geoff Hoon AXA had said it would fund the terminals. It already does that. The prospect would be commercially viable. It was suggested it would take 5 million lorry loads off the roads.

Finally, the scheme would make a massive difference to carbon emissions. Heavy freight taken by road produces 12 times as much CO<sub>2</sub> per tonne-km or tonne-mile as freight taken by rail. Even lighter freight produces six to eight times the amount. This represented a massive carbon saving from rail. Every tonne put on to rail made a substantial saving in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on those 5 million lorry loads a year on a 400-mile route. That would also transform the links between the northern economies and the continent of Europe and breathe new life into the Northern, Welsh and Scottish economies. It would not just be about the southeast. At the moment lorries must get through the treacle of the southeast. With a through, dedicated rail freight route that problem would be overcome. It would be of enormous benefit to colleagues who represent northern constituencies. Instead of being peripheral to the core of the European economy they would become part of the central European economy, which would benefit them and the country enormously.

While the fate of the Woodhead Tunnel was the subject of much political manoeuvring, the day-to-day life of the former GCR lines, both extant and extinct, continued to attract public interest and press comment. Engineering and maintenance work continued on Broadbottom Viaduct, the work having begun in October 2009, made the news in March 2010 on account of high noise levels in the early hours of the morning, for which Network Rail apologised, explaining that some work had to take place when services were not running. On July 29<sup>th</sup> the *Glossop Chronicle* ran an article by Greg Smith entitled "Standing the Test of Time" consisting mainly of a potted history of the "twin" viaducts at Broadbottom and Dinting, containing some interesting statistics: Broadbottom Viaduct consumed 186,000 cubic feet of stone, quarried from nearby Tintwistle, and 142,000 cubic feet of timber in its original guise.

The article was illustrated with drawings made around the time of opening, both from the same viewpoint, but while one was an accurate representation the other looked strangely compressed! The article correctly stated that the wooden arches were removed and replaced with steel due to increasing traffic and not, as in one "local history" account I have seen because they were destroyed by fire! A plan to build another viaduct alongside for "fast" lines was mentioned, and it would be interesting to find some detail on this plan which was dropped according to the article due to expense, the cheaper option of adding extra piers being taken instead. According to the article, the brick piers were added to take the load off the viaduct when it flexed as heavy trains passed over, and in recent years swelling had caused the intermediate piers to come into permanent contact with the underside of the bridge - one of several problems that the strengthening work would rectify.

Other historical/nostalgia items carried by our local press were of a more uneven quality: the *Glossop Chronicle* "Yesterdays" section carried an article entitled "Keep on Track with Railway History" illustrated by a superb shot of a 6-car (2x3-car) C506 EMU approaching Dinting Junction from Dinting Viaduct. These units were according to the article "based on the LNER's Sheffield EMUs". (It should of course be Shenfield.) The article described the Glossop service as "in many ways unique", without specifying how, and went on to tell a tale of how "during WW2 important trains were put into the (Woodhead) tunnel during air raids to keep them from harm"....did this really happen on a busy line made even busier by war traffic? A second seemingly unlikely tale stated that "....One night Prime Minister Winston Churchill's train was held secure in the tunnel - this was without anyone realising that two trains of high explosive shells were stabled in the adjoining tunnel." One wonders if the great man was on the train or having a few beers in Hadfield!

On much less certain ground was a "Yesterdays" article of August 4<sup>th</sup>. An article entitled "All Aboard for Memories" carried two excellent photographs of trains on the Waterside Branch, one of a Midland 0-6-0 goods loco taking a short freight over the steel viaduct at Brookfield, the other a BR Standard Class 4 2-6-4 Tank loco at the head of a passenger train crossing the overbridge across the A57, again at Brookfield. The article

was sloppily written with appalling captions: the passenger train, an enthusiasts' special was said to be "hurtling" over the bridge, while the short freight was compared to "a runaway theme-park ride", while the bridge itself was described as having been "ripped down many years ago". I sent a detailed criticism to the paper and attempted to add some relevant details, which the *Glossop Chronicle* were kind enough to print under the byline "Don't go off the rails with captions". I suspect that GCRS members in other parts of the country have come across similar inaccurate and facetious examples.



above: No.76049 at Hadfield with a down freight on 8<sup>th</sup> Aug 1978.

photo: Gordon Coltas

below: The same scene on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011 showing the end of the line.

photo: Bob Gellatly



While much of the infrastructure of the "traditional" railway has been removed, the level crossing gates on Glossop Road at Gamesley have remarkably survived the Waterside Branch closure of almost 50 years ago. In February 2010 Derbyshire County Council won funding from Natural England to develop another piece of the "bridleway jigsaw" of the Pennine Bridleway. The new section is part of the Waterside Branch and involves the construction of a "Pegasus Crossing" at the site of the Glossop Road crossing. A bonus to the plan is that the level crossing gates have been removed for refurbishment and will

be returned to the site to stand as a reminder of the area's railway history.

The Dinting Railway Centre site was sold in September 2010 to an unknown buyer: the guide price was only £25,000, but the eventual selling price was a staggering £150,000. A second attempt to list the former one-road MS&L loco shed dating back to 1887 failed on the grounds that the building's roofline had been altered and that it had no "unique" features. To date nothing has happened on the site, which has had a number of failed planning applications over the years, mainly due to poor access.

The Glossop Station Lion won a readers' poll to become part of the newspaper's masthead in the *Glossop Advertiser* in October 2010 having won 24% of the readers' votes. A sinister note was struck by a number of unprovoked attacks on passengers on the Hadfield-Glossop-Manchester service in 2010, culminating in attacks on a rail guard and a PCSO at Hadfield and Glossop stations. Glossop Police and BT police joined forces to deter such attacks.

On Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 "yobs" again set fire to Guide Bridge Station, igniting plastic sheeting in the newly-constructed replacement footbridge. This time the fire was caught in time and the damage, estimated at £500 was relatively slight. Very little now remains of the once extensive station buildings. In January 2011 reports suggested that anti-social behaviour was becoming a problem at Hattersley Station. BT Police and Northern Rail invited local residents to meetings at the library to discuss these concerns, resulting in the findings that people using the station did not feel safe, especially after dark, resulting in BTP stepping up patrols in the area and urging locals to report any suspicious or anti-social behaviour.

A positive result was the formation of the "Friends of Hattersley Station", set up by local residents, which began its operations with a "clean-up" event, clearing litter and overgrown shrubs. Further landscaping and the installation of CCTV cameras took place in the closing months of 2011 plus a poetry and art competition and a Santa Claus event. Projected plans included further cutting back of overgrown hedges, painting a community mural and updating the "Friends" notice board with children's artwork, and an Easter Egg hunt. Similar positive events took place over the period at Broadbottom Station, where a "Friends" group is well established. What a pity that this original SA&M station building remains unoccupied. It also has the advantage of a huge car park. There are now "Friends" groups at Hadfield, Glossop, Broadbottom and Hattersley, which together with the regular "Folk" trains must make this remaining part of the GCR one of Britain's most community-friendly branch lines.

And a branch line is, unfortunately what this end of the former Woodhead Route will remain. As we bring our story up to date from the closure in 1981 we can see that it has been a story full of hopes denied, false dawns, and political attitudes ranging from naivety to wilful obstruction, and certainly in the case of former Transport Minister Ruth Kelly an almost total lack of understanding of the issues. An interesting coda to the Woodhead affair was the "Facebook" campaign begun in January 2010 supporting the re-opening of the Buxton-Matlock Midland main line, closed since 1968 which attracted 1500 signatures by the end of the month. £100m plans to re-open the route were cancelled in 2004 due, according the Derbyshire County Council, who had supported the scheme, to it "not being financially viable". However, the report, which had cost £885,000 recommended safeguarding the route for future rail use, thus avoiding the fate of Woodhead which is now effectively cut in two by the use of the 1954 tunnel as a National Grid cable route - a sad end to a main Trans-Pennine Route, recommended for retention and development by Beeching himself and now seemingly lost for ever due to a succession of decisions of inexplicable stupidity.

*Editor's note:* This contribution from Paul White is the last in the series. A file containing his newspaper cuttings and notes has been donated to the society's archive. I hope that this is not also the end of the Woodhead story.

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

It was observed on a visit to Dunford Bridge at the end of May that the National Grid scheme for putting cables through the 'new' Woodhead Tunnel has been completed and all traces of the construction site have been removed. Apart from the tunnels themselves, the westbound platform retaining wall and the overbridge, no other structures remain of the railway. Even the tunnel entrance approach has been tarmaced over.

On a recent walk along the Huddersfield Narrow Canal one of the barges moored at Stanedge Tunnel, named "Maria", had the logo 'MSL Rly Co' painted on the cabin sides.

During May there have been several interesting loco hauled excursions through Guide Bridge as follows. On 5<sup>th</sup> May a return charter from Chester to Skegness was top and tailed by 66078 and 66165. On 19<sup>th</sup> May a railtour from Crewe to Stirling was worked by 37604 and 37608. On 26<sup>th</sup> May a football excursion from Huddersfield to Wembley was worked by 47802 and 47805.

The movement of metal and coal traffic is rarely seen through Guide Bridge these days, however on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> May a loaded scrap train from Lincoln to Liverpool worked by 66120 was routed through Guide Bridge, along the GC main line to Ardwick and through Piccadilly. This was one of the very few freight services to travel the length of the GC in the Manchester area. This was followed on the 11<sup>th</sup> June by a MGR coal working from Milford to Earles Sidings worked by 66093 passing through around 18:30.

Class 37 locos visited the Deepcar branch on the 7<sup>th</sup> June on a Network Rail test train with 37605 and 37608 and test coach 99508. They were at Deepcar from 10:04 to 10:14.

A ballast train from Elsecar to Doncaster was routed via Penistone on the 27<sup>th</sup> April passing Silkstone at 05:16 and worked by 66115. The 17:49 Leeds-Penistone-Sheffield service was unusually worked by 155342 on the 11<sup>th</sup> May. Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May saw the class 150 track recording unit 999600/01 work over the branch, passing Silkstone at 04:40 returning at 05:35.

An unusual sight seen passing through Stainforth on the 31<sup>st</sup> May was a Network Rail test train worked by 31106 and former class 37, 97302.

High Marnham power station, which was closed in 2003, was one of the last revenue receiving terminals on the former LD&EC. It was demolished on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July.

It is ironic that in the week that the Woodhead route closed 31 years ago this July, the Government announced a major investment scheme for the railways including the Trans Pennine routes, which are already being utilised at maximum capacity. What a great waste that the best route across the Pennines has possibly been lost forever, now that the National Grid has put new power cables through Woodhead Tunnel.

*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.*

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### **Additions to the archive**

Copies of various Parliamentary Bills related to the MSL/GC. Donated by Dave Arnold.

A composite postcard in colour featuring Immingham Dock. It was posted on 25 July 1914 from Cleethorpes. Donated by Bryan Longbone.

Box of newspaper cuttings and notes used for the "Woodhead since Closure" articles. Donated by Paul White.

Signalling map for Shepcote Lane/Tinsley 1964. Donated by Kim Collinson.



Models built by John Quick for the OO layout at Ruddington.

above: GCR Class 2 4-4-0 no.567.

below: The 6-wheel third no.946 and the 'Barnum' brake no.695.

photo: Andrew Horrocks-Taylor

photos: John Quick



Above left: Chris Reed examines the GCR donor tender for no.567 prior to commencing tank component drawings. Above right: Pat Sumner emerges from painting the inside of GCR/MSL&R 6- wheeler compartment No.4.

photos: Andrew Horrocks-Taylor

## The Immingham Centenary Open Day

The Port of Immingham opened its gates on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012, exactly 100 years since its official opening, and over 5,000 visitors came to have a look round. And the sun shone!



HMS Tyne, a fisheries protection vessel, is moored alongside the Grimsby & Immingham tram no.14 on loan from Crich. This view was taken early in the morning before the crowds arrived.

*photos: Bob Gellatly*



The GCRS publicity/sales stand outside the Seafarers Centre, next to the Dock Offices, was kept busy throughout the day. The Immingham Museum had arranged a display inside the Centre with help from GCRS members.



*above:* Members of the GCRS arrived from Sheffield in style by bus which then took its place in the vintage transport display. Visiting modern railway traction included GBRf no.66707 'Sir Sam Fay' seen on the right.

*right:* An excellent view of the Dock Offices, the only recognisable structure, other than the dock itself, from those photos of the official opening 100 years ago.



**Some recent items from Great Central Railwayana Auctions**

The next auction at Stoneleigh Park will be on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012.



Dinner plates by Copeland for use in the directors' saloon. *upper*: with GCR crest. *lower*: with MS&L crest. Sold for **£320** each.

An original oil-on-canvas painting by Philip D Hawkings depicting a GCR shed scene. Sold for **£2,200**.



Locomotive nameplate, EARL ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, from GCR Class 1A 4-6-0 no.446 (later LNER B8 no.5446/1357). Named after the British Boer War military leader. A rare self-standing nameplate. Sold for **£22,500**.



Shed plate 38B Annesley. Sold for **£310**.

Shed plate 38C Leicester (GC). Sold for **£520**.

Shed plate 38E Woodford Halse. Sold for **£310**.



A Stratford-Upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway cast iron gate notice. This style of plate was unique to the line. Sold for **£380**.

## **A class 2 model in 00 gauge for Ruddington.**

**by John Quick**

There must be few GCR enthusiasts who are unaware of the 567 Locomotive Project. The progress made by the group is both astonishing and encouraging. Earlier this year the chairman of the group, Andrew Horrocks-Taylor, dropped a large hint about having a model of one of these 4-4-Os made. At that time I was extremely busy on another project. However, that situation improved quickly and I was able to think seriously about Andrew's idea.

The class 2 was the first of three very similar classes of 4-4-0. Although they were very slightly smaller than a Pollitt 11A, I reasoned that a kit for the Pollitt engine could be used as a basis to make a class 2. The major alteration was to put the 11A firebox/boiler on one side and replace it with a round top equivalent. The tender came from an old Magna Models class 9H 0-6-0 kit. It had to be cut down in order to better represent the smaller 3,080 gallon type attached to the class 2. The model is finished in Pollitt condition c.1897-1902. The green is not the Brunswick shade but my idea of the earlier lighter shade, often referred to as 'middle chrome green'.

I was given some scratch built, about half-finished, GCR carriage bodies many years ago. After inspecting them I decided to make appropriate vehicles to run with no.567; a 6-wheel third no.946 and a 'Barnum' brake no. 695. As the real no.946 is not too far from completion, I finished the model in French grey and dark chocolate brown. The work involved fitting the footboards, axle boxes, wheels and other smaller details. The brake required less work. I had to fit new bogies and an interior. I am afraid the real no.695 is far from being restored.

All these models were built to run on the Ruddington layout and were, therefore, made to 00 gauge. I hope that they will help to raise the profile of the 567 Loco Project group and also of the GCR Rolling Stock Trust.

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## **The first GCR Vintage Train Supporter Day**

**by Andrew Horrocks-Taylor**

A new event, the GCR Vintage Train Supporter Day, was held for the first time on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at the GCRN Ruddington. The GCR Vintage Train is the joint vision of the GCR 567 Locomotive Group and GCR Rolling Stock Trust who aim to recreate, with a new build locomotive and original carriages, a Great Central Railway Vintage Train from the time when the line was first built around 1900. Artwork had been commissioned to illustrate this vision and this was unveiled at the event showing new build N° 567 locomotive leaving a rebuilt East Leake station with a rake of restored GCR 6 wheelers. Limited edition prints will be available to support personal sponsorship packages that will be available once components have been accurately costed.

The project was explained; the fact that three GCR 6 wheeler carriages are already operational at other preserved railways, one being braked means achieving such a vision is perhaps not so far fetched, especially if secure covered space is available on site at the GCRN. The Ruddington based carriage once restored making a rake of 4 matched GCR vehicles possible.

There were lots of opportunities to talk to the builders and restorers, see and touch the restoration projects and locomotive components. During the workshop tour Doug Atkins explained the complexity of carriage door restoration and Tony Keeble explained how carriage no.946 was initially saved and restored from a seemingly impossible condition to a point where paint was being applied and upholstery was being ordered. Jeff Cox also explained how work to generate machined components for 567's cylinder block had commenced and Andrew Horrocks-Taylor, with support from Alan Bullock, explained the minor modifications to the donor cylinder block required to suit the frames of a GCR class 2 locomotive. Historian John Quick gave a talk on the historic carriages and GCR

Class 2 and his superb 00 gauge model of 567 in earliest GCR middle chrome livery pulling GCR 6 wheeler and Barnum stock was to be seen on the 00 gauge Ruddington Station layout in the model railway building.

The GCR 567 Locomotive Group also held its AGM and revealed it had the funds to purchase the cylinder block and also for the locomotive frame main side-plates and stretchers. The group had already approached potential suppliers for frame quotations.

The day rounded off with a live steam talk on the platform from 567 Chief Engineer Mike Fairburn and a trip down the line with an organised slowing of the train so that 567's donor tender could easily be seen at Asher Lane sidings by the supporters on board. The 567 group had three pledges to sign up as supporters on the day and this has been followed by a further person signing up taking us up to supporter No.100. A further pledge to be supporter no.101 was also received.

We look forward to a bigger meeting next year, as all who came expressed they had enjoyed the event and would look forward to perhaps seeing assembled frames and a near operational 6 wheeler carriage next year!

567 Locomotive Group supporter forms are available to download from the website [www.gcr567loco.co.uk](http://www.gcr567loco.co.uk)

Carriage Donation forms are available to download from the documents section of the website [www.gcr-rollingstocktrust.co.uk](http://www.gcr-rollingstocktrust.co.uk). The current priority being funding the completion of the dedicated building/workshop for wooden carriage restoration to be known as No.4 Barnum Building Workshop.

General Postal Enquiries:

GCR 567 Locomotive Group Administration  
c/o Mrs Dawn Bullock, 19 Hartridge Walk, Allesley Park, Coventry CV5 9LF

Alternatively you can follow us via Facebook and Yahoo Groups (search for GCR 567 Loco).



*Water colour of no.546 leaving East Leake with a rake of 6 wheelers.*

## 63601 on the Great Central Railway – a personal view by Pete Hackney

Picture this. It's circa 1960 and a group of 10 year olds are gathered on a bridge overlooking Thorne Junction where the Goole line leaves the ex-GC line from Doncaster to Scunthorpe and Grimsby. An old steam engine pulling a long rake of mineral wagons appears from the west and as it passes under the bridge the kids zoom off on their bikes to beat the train to Kirton Lane level crossing to the east. It was never that difficult because the O4 2-8-0s on the heavy trains were slow and lumbering and negotiating the 4-track to 2-track section slowed them even more. One of those Frodingham-based O4s was the now preserved 63601.

Fast forward 52 years and one of those boys is on shed at Loughborough underneath an O4 2-8-0 cleaning out the ashpan. A filthy job but it's a labour of love dropping the last fire for some time on centenary 63601. After a couple of extensions, the boiler certificate finally expired on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and a full overhaul is needed before she steams again.

Following withdrawal from Frodingham in 1963 and preservation as part of the National Collection it was another 34 years before restoration began in earnest at the modern GCR in Loughborough. With donations from the public including *Steam Railway* readers and the GCR's charitable support fund, 63601 was repaired and returned to steam in January 2000. Craig Stinchcombe, now the GCR's Chief Mechanical Engineer, headed the restoration team.

Shortly after 63601's return to traffic I began volunteering at Loughborough and my relationship with her began. As a trainee, firing through the tiny flap didn't come easy and to open the large firehole door was certainly not allowed but after a while you learnt to put less coal on the shovel and to direct it to the right place. I have a strong attachment to this fine locomotive because I became a Passed Cleaner and had my first "solo" turn as a fireman on her in August 2003. Up to withdrawal this year I have accumulated 28 turns cleaning or disposing her and 42 turns rostered as fireman.

The boiler is a fireman's dream, steaming on the proverbial candle. When not working hard it's almost embarrassing how small the fire can be and still the pressure gauge needle hovers round the 180psi red line. Many engines like a big back but woe betide the fireman who builds a 'Black 5'-sized back on the O4. She will be blowing off all the way to Leicester! Injectors can be the bane of a footplate man's life but in my experience



*63601 standing in the yard at Loughborough the day after its last run which was on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June.*

*photo: Pete Hackney*

both injectors on 63601 work very effectively. The tender water valve is usually set, so it's open the water adjustor valve, ensure water flows through the overflow, open the steam valve followed by a slight twist of the adjustor (a satisfying click) and then the injector picks up cleanly, singing away beautifully.

Capable of about 45mph the O4 wouldn't keep up that sort of speed for long and since its speed limit on the GCR is 25mph it doesn't get the chance. Without a speedometer the driver has to judge the speed by experience. However, 63601 has a built-in governor because with a full tender at anything over 25mph, coal propels itself forward onto the footplate due to the to-and-fro motion. So when you're looking at your driver over a huge heap of coal you know he hasn't quite judged it right!

In common with many of the Edwardian railways the loco crew's comforts were not uppermost in the designer's mind. It's not the Pennine moorland but tender-first running across Swithland viaduct in winter is an uncomfortable experience and running through a hailstorm is positively painful. In that cab there is nowhere to hide.

Cleaning the O4's firegrate before lighting up is a test of the fireman's muscles with no modern aids such as rocking grates, etc. The long narrow firebox requires a long weighty shovel to paddle out the still-hot ash and heavy clinker. If it's not too hot, climbing into the firebox through that large door to lift a few bars to drop the clinker through is a relatively easy alternative. It's certainly a warmer alternative on a 6am mid-winter start.

The driving controls are simplicity themselves; regulator, reverser, steam brake, large/small ejector and vacuum brake, but I can fully appreciate the skill needed to control a heavy unfitted train with just the engine's steam brake and the guard's brake to stop you. True, she is no longer hauling heavy trains of coal wagons over Woodhead anymore but the sight and sound of the O4 on the GCR's rake of 16 tonners rattling through Quorn is still very evocative. Now in the restoration queue, I can't wait to see 63601 back on the Main Line again.



*Pete on the footplate of 63601.*

*photo: Roger Howes*

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### **Welcome to the following new members**

Mr P. V. James, St Macoux, France  
Mr I. T. Dunkley, Portsmouth  
Mr M. J. Reade, Pinner  
Mrs B. F. Trueman, Buckley  
Mr D. E. G. Whitmore, Skegness  
Miss J. K. Edwards, Hawarden  
Mr K. F. Adams, Wootton

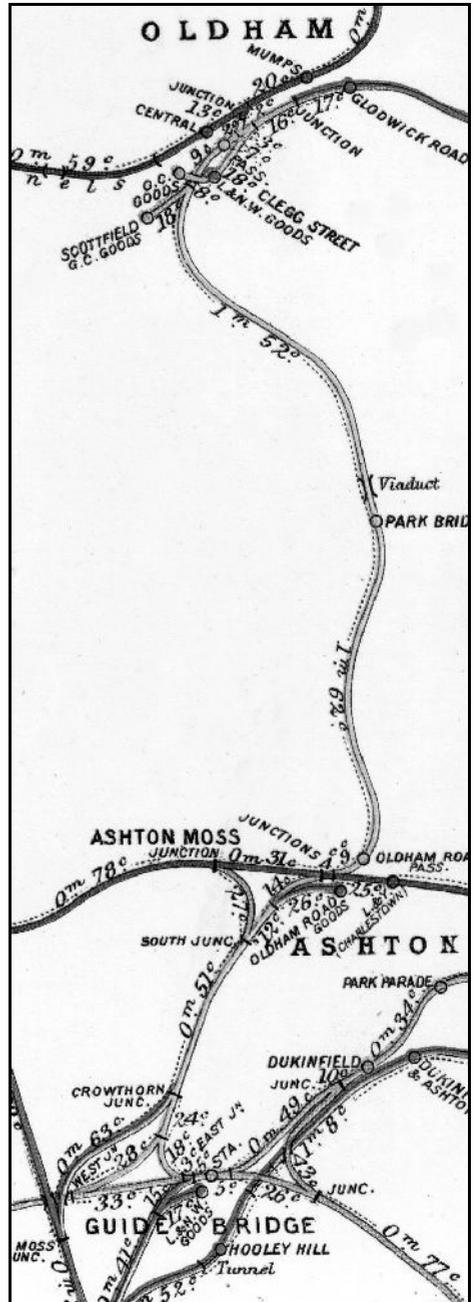
Dr W. J. Quick, Loughborough  
Mr B. T. Humphries, Builth Wells  
Mr M. F. Jackson, Wellingborough  
Dr D. J. Cooke, Loughborough  
Mr E. M. Wood, Cape Town, South Africa  
Mr M. J. Smith, Shirebrook  
Mr J. E. Zientek, Leicester

# The Oldham Ashton & Guide Bridge Junction Railway (and an electrification mast)

by Chris Booth

In September 2011, I paid a visit to Ashton Moss North Junction signal box for the first time. This box was built by the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway in 1911. Seeing a certain item of hardware (see later), I became interested in the area and had a look at the history of the line that was to become the Oldham, Ashton & Guide Bridge Junction Railway (OA&GB).

The Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway first attempted unsuccessfully to get an Act through Parliament for building a railway between Oldham and Guide Bridge in 1847, but it wasn't until ten years later that the Act authorising its construction received the Royal Assent. The scheme was a joint venture, initially with the Lancashire & Yorkshire which subsequently withdrew, and then with the London & North Western Railway. The OA&GB was incorporated by an Act of 10<sup>th</sup> August 1857. According to the Act the line was to be in five sections. The first section of 4 miles and 7 yards ran from Oldham station to a junction with the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway near Charlestown, Ashton-under-Lyne. The second section of 1 mile 3 furlongs and 17 yards ran from a further junction from the L&YR a few yards towards Miles Platting to Guide Bridge. The third section was a spur of 2 furlongs and 6 yards at Ashton, the fourth a spur of 5 furlongs, 8 chains and 11 yards from Wood Lane to Moss Coal Pit, and the fifth a spur of 2 furlongs, 6 chains and 8 yards from Lower Allhill to Rochervale. The authorized capital was £140,000 in £10 shares, with powers to borrow an additional £46,600. The MS&LR and the L&NWR each subscribed £50,000 in return for which they had the right to appoint a third of the Directors. The line opened on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1861 although goods trains didn't start running until 1<sup>st</sup> February 1863. It was vested jointly in the MS&LR and L&NWR at 4¾ per cent by an Act of 30<sup>th</sup> June 1862. Stations were built at Oldham Clegg St, Park Bridge and Ashton Oldham Rd and an initial end to end local service was supplemented by a couple of trains from Oldham to Manchester London Rd using a North to



The OA&GB from the Railway Clearing House map.

West curve at Guide Bridge, abandoned in 1938. The L&NWR also later ran some trains through to Stockport via Denton and a number of OA&GB trains also continued beyond Oldham to Greenfield over the L&NWR branch via Lees.

The local trains were initially well used, but later began to suffer due to competing tram and bus services. OA&GB trains ceased using Glodwick Road station when that closed in April 1955, afterwards reversing at Clegg Street station. They were withdrawn totally on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1959. Goods and parcels traffic continued for several years thereafter but the Ashton to Oldham section was abandoned when the parcels depot at Oldham Clegg Street closed on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1967, with the track being lifted three years later.

### *Signalling*

Block working over the line was started in the late 1870s, the contract for signalling being let to McKenzie & Holland and all boxes built during this period were to McK&H's standard gabled type most built entirely in brick up to the roof-line. On the Oldham Glodwick Road to OA&GB Junction section there were signal boxes at Oldham Junction, Waterloo Sidings, Oldham Station, Sheepwashers Lane, Honeywell Lane, Park Bridge, Ashton Oldham Road and Ashton OA&GB Junction. And on the section from OA&GB Junction to Guide Bridge, there were boxes at Ashton Moss South Junction, Crowthorn Junction and Canal Junction.

Oldham Junction SB was a very early small square hipped roof all wooden box close to Mumps station, which probably controlled trains into Glodwick Road and Mumps stations. The next box along was Waterloo Sidings. The first box here was a another small square hipped roof, all wooden one which had a roof mounted signal post. It was erected on the embankment side adjacent to the Waterloo Street bridge when the OA&GB lines were built adjacent to the L&YR lines over that road. In later years, with land being filled in and more tracks being laid, this box was removed and replaced by a standard GCR type 5 Box directly opposite the L&YR Mumps No1 box. Prior to closure in 1967, the box had a RSCo 60 lever frame with 44 worked levers and 16 spare. It was open Monday to Friday between 5am and 11.30pm and Saturdays 5am to 12.15pm primarily for parcels traffic. It closed in May 1967 when its operations were taken over by the new Oldham Mumps box that was erected adjacent to it.



*Looking west towards Oldham (Clegg Street) station (on the left) and Oldham Central (on the right). The two signal boxes are Waterloo Sidings (on the left) controlling the OA&GB lines and Oldham Mumps No.1 (on the right) controlling the L&Y lines. Waterloo Street passes under all these lines just this side of the signal boxes. Behind the photographer is Oldham Mumps on the L&Y lines and Glodwick Road on the OA&GB. All that's left today is the temporary Metro tram line to Mumps.*

*photo: Dr J.W.F.Scrimgeour*

Next was Oldham Clegg Street Station SB and just beyond this was Sheepwashers Lane SB which was a Mck&H box situated adjacent to Park Road bridge just outside Clegg Street station and it was another box that closed in 1967 and was replaced by the new Mumps box. The next box at Honeywell Lane was an early casualty, no date for its closure yet forthcoming. After Sheepwashers Lane came Park Bridge SB, this being situated at the south end of the down platform of the station of the same name. This was a standard Mck&H gabled design and it had a Mck&H 23 lever frame. It closed when the route was shut down throughout on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1967.



above: Sheepwashers Lane signal box looking north towards Oldham Clegg Street with the L&NW goods warehouse on the right. below: Park Bridge station and signal box looking north on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1956. photos: Dr J.W.F.Scrimgeour



Ashton OA&GB Junction SB was located by the Down Main of the Manchester to Stalybridge route controlling both the junction with the OA&GB line south to Ashton Moss South Junction and the junction with the OA&GB line north to Oldham. It was an 1873 built Saxby and Farmer signal box which was built very tall to see over the adjacent road overbridge. This box lasted until the early 1960s and was replaced by another Ashton OA&GB Junction box which was a British Railways London Midland Region Type 15 design. This new box was built on the other side of the bridge closer to the Oldham junction. It was fitted with a 40 lever London Midland Region Standard frame. This newer box closed on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1996 when the absolute block section was extended to between Ashton Moss North Junction and Stalybridge signal boxes, however the box lingered on until it was demolished in early 2000.



*left: The original Ashton OA&GB Junction SB on the south side of the L&Y Droylsden-Stalybridge line. The OA&GB comes in from Ashton Moss South Jnct on the right. The Oldham junction is beyond the overbridge.*

*photo Dr J.W.F.Scrimgeour*

*right: The new Ashton OA&GB Junction SB dating from the early 1960s. It was on the other side of the overbridge closer to the Oldham junction.*

*photo: Dave Ingham*

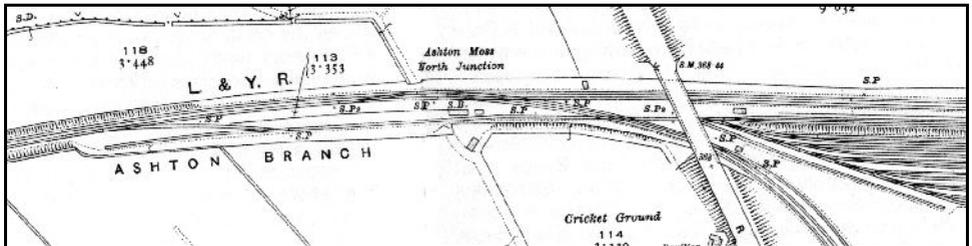
Ashton Moss South Junction SB was located by the Down Main line a short distance east of Richmond Street overbridge in Ashton-under-Lyne. It was opened in 1911 in connection with the Great Central Railway's 27 chains connecting line to Ashton Moss North Junction box on the L&Y's Droylsden-Stalybridge line. It was a GCR type 5 design built by the Railway Signal Company (RSCo) and had a 70 lever GCR Tappet frame also by the RSCo. It took over the operation of Crowthorne Junction when that box closed in 1970. Itself closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1991 along with the curve to Ashton OA&GB Junction, the absolute block section then being extended to between Ashton Moss North Junction and Denton Junction signal boxes. The box remained, becoming vandalised and derelict until it was demolished in the late 1990s.

Crowthorn Junction SB (*see article in Forward 169*) was constructed by Saxby & Farmer and the architecture is of a style used between 1868 and 1876 and therefore pre-dates the provision of block signalling on the line. The box opened c1871 and was built to such an exceptional height to allow the signalman to see trains approaching from the Ashton direction, as the view would otherwise be obstructed by the two bridges. It controlled the junction between the line from Guide Bridge and that from Stockport via Denton Junction, which comes in from the left. The box closed on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1970, the junction becoming motor-operated from Ashton Moss South Junction. The line towards Guide Bridge was to close on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1983 leaving the route towards Denton Junction in use today. Following Crowthorne Junction was Canal Junction SB. Nothing is known about the box here other than the junction was where trains could either go towards Guide Bridge or towards Audenshaw and Manchester. Traffic along the 18 chain long spur towards Audenshaw ceased in June 1930 when the box closed but was still in situ in 1940, and some track was still in situ by 1944.

### *Ashton Moss Sidings*

In 1910 the GCR built a 27 chains long curve from Ashton Moss South Junction to Ashton Moss North Junction creating a triangle with the Ashton OA&GB Junction. The L&Y built Ashton Moss North Junction box in 1911 to control the junction with the Stalybridge to Manchester line. A 12 road exchange yard was built inside the triangle between Ashton Moss South Junction and Ashton OA&GB Junction. This yard was built by Herbert Ashley at a cost of £11,328 and held 312 wagons. As time progressed the original yard was usually congested and so a further 12 road yard capable of holding 347 wagons was constructed. This ran more or less at right angles to the original yard, west to east along the 'top' of the triangle parallel with the L&Y line. All but two of the roads were dead ends. This is shown on the OS map of 1922 as already being in situ which could indicate that they were built prior to Grouping.

The headshunt for this yard had a standage for about 20 wagons to the west of Ashton Moss North junction and ran behind the signal box to a buffer stop or via a set of points (No12 & 11) connecting with the L&Y line towards Droylsden. Arriving trains from Ashton Moss South Junction box ran towards the buffer stop and then pushed back into the yard (or were pulled back by a shunt loco). Departing west-bound trains from the LNER yard normally ran behind the box and through No12 & 11 points towards Manchester, although there was a double slip in the headshunt allowing moves from yard to front of box and vice versa. Loco changes on through trains normally involved the forward loco standing on the headshunt west of No12 points. The arriving loco detached and went onto the Up LYR, then set-back wrong road across the front of the box and through a slip on the branch into the yard; the forward loco could then drop back onto the train.



*Ashton Moss North Junction from the 1922 OS map.*

With the advent of the Manchester Sheffield & Wath electrification, the section of OA&GB line from Guide Bridge East Junction to the sidings at Ashton Moss was electrified to allow access for electric trains to the exchange sidings. The use of electric locos was a rare occurrence but the process of engine movements was to be reversed to that of steam or diesel haulage, as only the headshunt and two through roads in the yard were electrified. So the electric loco would be detached and stand clear of the train in the headshunt west of No12 points and the forwarding loco would come round the front of Ashton Moss North Junction box and reverse onto the train. Once the train had gone, the electric loco could go back along the headshunt, either into the yard or back to Guide Bridge. The eastern side of the Ashton Moss triangle was abandoned in 1991 and today a Sainsbury's supermarket car park occupies the trackbed.

The curve from Crowthorn Junction to Guide Bridge East Junction was taken out of use in 1982 and removed shortly afterwards. Today the short 57 chain section between the site of Crowthorn Junction and Ashton North Junction is the only section of the OA&GB that remains open for goods traffic and ECS moves to and from Newton Heath and periodic passenger diversions when the main Manchester Piccadilly to Stockport line is closed for engineering work.

And so to the certain item of hardware mentioned at the beginning of the article. When I paid my visit to Ashton Moss North Junction box I was surprised to find that the line that

once formed the western side of the Ashton triangle and the trackbed of the headshunt behind the box still had several overhead line (OHL) stanchions in place from the long abandoned MS&W electrification, this area losing its wires before at least 1974. Not only that, but one of the gantries looked a bit different to the usual ones that were found along the electrified lines when they were in operation. There were various types of OHL supports on the MS&W, but the standard ones were produced from "H" section galvanised steel with a size of 6"x 6" weighing 25lb per foot, being referred to as "Cargo Fleet" after the steel works near Darlington from where they were supplied. These were usually assembled with two uprights and a cross member, with riveted triangular steel gussets of 3/8in steel plate to strengthen the joints. Apparently there were 27 different configurations of overhead mast supports to suit whatever contingency was required. Most of the fittings on the cross members were held in place by 5/8in diameter bolts. However, in 1953 trials were made at Ashton Moss with an experimental tubular mast for OHL equipment and it is one of these that remains in situ today. These tubular masts were a product of Tubewrights Ltd who were a subsidiary of Stewarts & Lloyds and were of welded construction instead of riveted as had been favoured previously. It was reported at the time that these masts could withstand 2½ times their design loads with 50mph wind conditions at 20°F being simulated. It is said that two or three masts were used and this is one of them. From other photographs studied, at least one other was situated on the Ashton Moss South Junction to OA&GB Junction line. By the time of these experiments most of the OHL masts were in place already, remembering that the MS&W electrification was begun pre-war, so this is the most likely reason that the welded design was not perpetuated on the MS&W. This type of OHL support was however to be used extensively on the Euston to Crewe 25 kV AC electrification.

So, should this relic of the past be saved for posterity, after all, it was the progenitor of future electrification masts, or should it go the way of all the other masts that were

removed after the electrification was abandoned? Perhaps a word in the ear of someone at the NRM might be the order of the day? Not as glamorous as a locomotive perhaps, but still an interesting part of the history of the MS&W electrification.



*The tubular OHL stanchion seen at Ashton Moss North Junction photos: Chris Booth*



## **The Pollard family railway history - part 14**

**by John E. Pollard**

*John continues his account of accidents he remembers while working at Annesley.*

One morning a Woodford to Annesley train was stood at Weekday Cross down home board waiting for a Grantham to Nottingham passenger train off the GN line. It was very foggy and the brake van was sixty five wagons back round the curve over the Midland line. The guard, who had his back door open, heard a train start off behind him. He grabbed his detonators and started to run back. He had not gone far when he saw a train coming towards him. He put a detonator down and then ran forward shouting. The driver saw him and then cracked the detonator. He shut the regulator and slammed the brake down but hit the brake van, not too hard but hard enough to put the van onto the ballast. Then the guard walked forward towards the front of the train and found he only had sixteen wagons. The train had become uncoupled between the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> wagons. There was no damage to hook or coupling. Meanwhile the Woodford crew, unaware of anything amiss because of the fog, had set off with the other forty nine wagons and eventually arrived at Bulwell loop. No one had noticed that part of the train was missing. The train had passed eight signal boxes between Weekday Cross and Bulwell without a tail lamp. I never heard what the result of any enquiry was.

Another time I signed off for a Woodford job and the train was cancelled due to a derailment on the up road between Hucknall and Bulwell. I was sent down to relieve the guard. I travelled to Hucknall on the bus that had replaced the Dido. This ran from the crossing gates near Newstead Colliery. I got off the bus at the Byron Cinema and walked up Watnall Road to Hucknall Central station. I went down onto the platform and walked past the box. I could see the brake van some distance down the line. When I got to the van I put my traps in and went to meet the guard. It was Neville Lightburn, a much younger man than me, who had been sent on the job by the Labour Exchange.

When we got in the brake I asked him what had happened. He told me that when he got in the brake at Annesley yard he had lit his lamps and fire then had a look at his train ticket. He then walked down to the front end. As he could see his engine was on the train, he started to pick the brakes up on the wagons. When he got to the front he tied the engine on, got the engine number and the driver's name and told the driver the load. He told him to whistle up when ready. He walked back to his brake van and as he got in the train started to move. The train ran out onto the main line but stopped just after the brake had passed Annesley South's up starting signal. He then made the mistake of taking the brake off instead of going to find out why he had stopped. As he released the brake the train started to move again. He let it get some speed up not knowing that his train had split and all he had were just two wagons. As he passed Hucknall station the men on the platform, waiting for the Dido to Annesley for the 6am shift, were shouting at him but Neville just waved back. The rest of the train was now well ahead and was stopped opposite the down home board for the crew to get on the telephone. When they heard the approaching wagons they got back on the engine and tried to get away but were too late - the two wagons and brake caught them and there was one great pile up of wagons at the back end of the train. With the engine being on the move it escaped damage and took about ten wagons forward with it, eight being off the road. After uncoupling the eight wagons, the engine went on to Bulwell with the remaining two.

I asked Neville for a look at the train ticket. It said '39 wagons steel and coal' but underneath it also had 'plus 2 steel' written on. I knew then what had happened. The train preparer had put two extra wagons on and forgotten to tie them on. I told Neville to put the ticket away safe and not give it up to anyone no matter who asked for it. I also told him not to tell anyone about him stopping near the up starter at Annesley South. I also told him he would have to attend an inquiry the next day and only then was he to bring the ticket out as his evidence.

After he had left to go back to Annesley I walked down the train counting the wagons. I counted 30 wagons in the first pile then 8 wagons in the second pile. His first detonator was only one 100 yards from the derailment on the down road so I picked it up and took it with me. I had collected the second detonator before I put the first one down at a quarter mile. Then I picked up the third before I put the second down at half a mile. I carried on and put his third down at three quarters of a mile and then went back to the train. I was a wagon short somewhere: 2 at Bulwell and 38 in the pile up only made 40. So it was back down the train again, this time slowly. This time I found it. A sixteen ton steel wagon was completely embedded in a wooden wagon. What I had thought were the wooden wagon's wheels were in fact the steel wagon's wheels. I was now satisfied my numbers added up.

The detonators I had laid down were cracked by the approaching Colwick breakdown train. When the officials arrived on the scene they asked me if I was the train guard. I told them I had relieved him, so they said I could go back to Annesley as I was no longer required. So that was it for the day. Two or three days later I met Neville and asked him how he had got on. He said that the Inspector, the Yard Master and the Train Preparer had all asked him for the train ticket but he had refused to give it up. Then he was asked what had happened and he told them he did not know. When he got to the inquiry the next day and was called in he brought out the train ticket and told them exactly what I had said happened. They came to the same conclusion - the train preparer had not tied the two extra wagons on and was held responsible.



*Leicester Passenger South signal box as seen from the 8.15am Nottingham Victoria-Marylebone service on 27 Aug 1966. The line closest to the box is the down line along which the Western Mail would have been approaching the station as the Annesley driver crossed the line to return to his train in the up loop. The centre lines lead to the bay platforms at the south end of the station.*

*photo: © Michael J Chapman / [www.railwayanamichael.com](http://www.railwayanamichael.com)*

We had three deaths of Annesley men while I was there. I have already mentioned Driver Ben Brewin (*part 13 in Forward 171*). The other two were another driver and a guard. The driver was on a night train to Woodford and his train was stood in Leicester

station up loop. He left his fireman on the engine and went into Passenger South box to talk to the signalman. After a while the signalman told him he would be going soon, so the driver left the box. He did not know the Western Mail was approaching. The Western engines were very quiet runners and he stepped in front of it from the bottom of the signal box steps and died from his injuries. The odd thing was that when he was a fireman he was on the tender of his engine at Leicester Goods South getting water when the up Western Mail came through. His driver stepped back from the water column and was killed by the Mail train. This happened many years before my time.

The Annesley guard who died was a former Midland man, who had transferred from Beeston yard. He once told me it was very hard to get any overtime at Beeston and he had never earned as much money as he got at Annesley. His favourite job was the afternoon Shirebrook turn and he would swap anybody for this job as you could stop out as long as you liked as long as you cleared the branch of wagons. (On this turn, when I was a fireman, you used to travel out to Sutton Town GN station and relieve the day turn. You had to walk across Sutton from the Central station to do this and then walk back to the Central station to get back to Annesley and sign off later.) The afternoon shift took a fresh engine out. When the guard had his accident he was working the afternoon turn. He was picking up the last load up at Summit colliery to work back into Annesley and it was now the early hours of the morning. The driver had brought them out of the loaded sidings and was backing them onto the rear end of the train. The wagons came together and the driver stopped the engine, then after a while he asked the fireman, "What is he doing?" "Holding a steady green light," answered the fireman. The fireman was watching all the while and the driver later asked again and got the same reply so he told the fireman to go and see what was happening. The fireman set off down the train. Shortly after he came running back shouting, "He's dead!" The driver went back to look then went to the signal box and told the signalman to get in touch with the police and to inform control. If any man had bad luck it was this guard. We had a lot of continental wagons after the war. They had been made for the war traffic and had screw couplings but these were seldom used because you always used the three link couplings on the adjacent wagons. As a result the screw couplings got very stiff and rusty. On this train the guard had got two of these continental wagons together. On going between the two wagons to couple up by hand he misjudged it and was trapped by his head between the buffers. He was being held there with his lamp still in his hand showing green for caution to the engine.

I walk my dog over this area now. It is all derelict and abandoned and I often stop for a few moments and remember what happened to Frank.

*Editor's note:* Would a green light be used for caution?

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## **GCRS Autumn Meeting - "The Gainsborough Special"**

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012

This will take place at the **Sun Hotel**, 1 North Street, Gainsborough DN21 2HP.

The Sun Hotel occupies a corner position at the junction of Market Street and North Street in the centre of Gainsborough. There is a pay-and-display car park behind the premises accessed from Roseway, the next street off North Street.

09:30 Doors open with coffee and tea available.

10:30 A presentation by local historian Paul Howitt-Cowan: 'A History of Gainsborough'.

12.00 Lunch break. Food available at the Sun Hotel.

14:00 - 16:00 Visit to the **Gainsborough Model Railway**, Florence Terrace DN21 1BE. The railway will be operated during our visit. Adjacent on-street parking available or use the nearby Tesco car park.

Trains from Sheffield arrive at 08:57 (Central) and 09:38 (Lea Rd). Trains depart for Sheffield at 16:20 (Central) and 16:48 (Lea Road).

## **Readers' forum**

### **Forward 172 p10: A signalling error at Ashendon Junction**

**from E.M.Johnson, Manchester**

With reference to the incident at Ashendon Junction with the wrongly-routed passenger train, I have spoken to several ex-railwaymen, and also several enthusiasts, and below I give the collective responses obtained.

There were several possibilities put forward:

Possibility No.1: The one that finds the most favour is where a second engine is despatched to buffer up to the rear of the train. The ensemble moves forward across the junction at Grendon Underwood before reversing. However, this is not as simple as it might appear: the interlocking would not permit a train to move forward from the Down Main line, through crossover 13 and on to the Princes Risborough line - the facing point lock (FPL) 11 would prevent this. So the ensemble would have to move forward on to the Up Aylesbury line clear of the crossover and junction. A further reversal would then be needed for the ensemble to clear the crossover and junction points before re-gaining the Princes Risborough line. The rear loco then becomes the train engine and moves back to Ashendon Junction before reversal there to continue on its intended route.

Another ex-railwayman made the point that passing a wrongly-set junction signal by mistake carried the same penalty as passing a signal at danger, thus earning the driver a three-day suspension without pay.

Possibility No.2: It is stated that the train, the 6.10pm ex Paddington, got as far as Grendon Underwood from where the mistake needed to be rectified. There would be no question of the train being allowed to reverse "wrong line", the distance is far too great. And looking at the signal box diagram for Grendon Underwood, there is no way the locomotive could run round its train and return along the Up line.

Possibility No.3: The train could continue to Calvert where it could have been shunted into the Down loop, the engine run round, back along the Down line, forward through points 24 and then back on the Up line to Ashendon. But this would depend on the length of the loops (not known). However, here the movement required for the loco to regain the front of the train is baulked at Ashendon by the lack of a second crossover. This is where the situation begins to take on the proportions of a chess manoeuvre!

The latter situation is further complicated by the crew's lack of route knowledge. A GW crew wouldn't have "signed the road" for the GC, it is as simple as that. An interesting hypothesis: So could the train have continued and, somehow regain the GW route? One ex-railwayman has put this hypothesis: A pilotman could have been sent for. A lengthy wait, but feasible. The train then continues along the GC as far as Woodford. Here it takes the south-west chord to the East-West Junction line (SMJ) as far as Fenny Compton. Here it could be reversed back onto the GW to continue to Leamington Spa where there is a choice of two routes to Birmingham Snow Hill and beyond. However, this is a mere hypothesis as the south-west chord was closed in 1900! The intention was to allow the GCR access to Birmingham, but railway politics dictated a change in the course of history.

A final note. An elderly retired driver from Gorton was, reputedly, on "freedom of the shed" due to his actions regarding "an incident at Ashendon Junction". I have no further details of this at present, but will endeavour to find out more.

**from Adrian Vaughan, Fakenham**

The solution to this Grendon Junction incident is simple. It came to my mind as an experienced signalman immediately. I would have followed the instructions of Signalling Regulation 14 (a) (iv). This Regulation states: "If the train is removed from the section by being drawn back to the box in rear under the authority of Wrong Line Order D (Rule 184).....".

Rule 184 states: "If in the case of accident, or other exceptional cause, it is necessary for a train to return in the wrong direction to the box in rear the Guard or Fireman must first go or send a competent person to the Signaller there and obtain his permission in writing - Wrong Line Order Form D."

### **from Rob Lane, Monks Risborough**

In answer to George Huxley's signalling error at Ashendon Junction query and how was this blunder sorted out. My source of information for this is two retired signalmen who can remember the incident but not the date.

First the misdirected train was signalled forward and then reversed back towards Quainton Road to behind the signals that protected the junction. This let the 6.15pm from Marylebone (The Master Cutler) pass by and go on its way. By this time Quainton Road box had been informed of the situation as the 6.10pm Marylebone-Woodford was due.

Grendon Underwood Junction said, "We need an engine to get the train back to Ashendon Junction as the Western driver does not know the road." Quainton Road replied, "We have one here in the yard," and after finding out if the driver and fireman knew the road to Ashendon, it was sent off to Grendon under "section clear junction blocked". After passing Grendon distant great care was needed. They were called on by the guard and coupled up to the train. It then proceeded north towards Calvert until the rescue engine was clear of the crossover. The rescue engine now became the lead engine and off they went back to Ashendon through Akeman Street and Wotton. At Ashendon the signalman said, "Keep on going until the Western engine clears the crossover. I will hold him there until you uncouple." After uncoupling, the Western train set off to Birmingham and the rescue engine returned to Quainton Road. It was all done in less than an hour. GC men knew how to get things done.

Yes, there was a special bell code related to the Banbury and the GC routes. The previous signal box to Ashendon was Haddenham. After the normal codes "attention, train on line etc." an extra code was added which was 1-5-1 for trains going to Banbury. If this code was omitted then the train was for the GC. Is this what happened? I don't think we will ever know.

How did Ashendon Junction get its orders for extra trains etc? There was no station and no road access. Signalmen using their own car or motorbike had to leave it in a farmer's yard and then walk across two fields. A push bike could be ridden along the side of the track from Wotton.

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### **Forward 172 p36: Photos by John McMeekin from Peter Witts, Cheltenham**

I note with interest the photos taken by John McMeekin on the MSLR's London Extension in *Forward 172*. The first thing I noticed is that the clouds in the photos all look very similar despite being in different locations and I think this would have been added by the photographer.

Photo 1: 'Rocket' (Manning Wardle 871/1883) was an M Class loco with 13x18in cylinders and 3ft driving wheels. Logan & Hemingway employed a fleet of over 60 locos over the years, nearly all built by Manning Wardle. Whereas most Manning Wardle engines had a canopy or cab for the protection of the crew, the men working for L&H had to put up with a very meagre spectacle plate. Only a very few of the engines ordered by L&H carried names. As was usual at the end of a contract, surplus plant was auctioned off and 'Rocket' was sold to the Hucknall Colliery Co. and disappeared at an unknown date.

Photos 3 & 5: The engines in photos 3 and 5 would be L Class engines with 12x18in cylinders and 3ft driving wheels, nine of which were built for L&H during 1888-90. Note the circular smokebox door on the engine in photo 5. Older MW's used the archaic flat doors. The livery of L&H was "Midland colours" of crimson lake lined yellow and black.

Happily, one of the L class engines (MW 1210/1890) owned by L&H is still with us in the shape of 'Sir Berkeley', the name given to it by the Cranford Ironstone Co. and which now resides at the Middleton Railway, Leeds. Indeed, it could even be one of the engines in the photos.

I note that John Buchanan Marshall McMeekin was born in Glasgow and in 1891 and was an engineering student at the Royal Indian Engineering College, Coopers Hill, Egham. This college ran between 1872 and 1906 to train civil engineers for the Indian Public Works Department. It would be interesting to know if he ever made it to India. Such a large project as the London Extension would have been very appealing to a young engineer. From at least 1919 he was living at Poole but by the late 1930s had moved to Bassett near Southampton and appears to have remained in Hampshire until his death.

#### **from John Quick, Sheffield**

Photo 1: I believe the caption for this is correct. The date is about May 1895. Another, almost identical view also exists.

Photo 2: 'Rocket' was also recorded by S.W.A.Newton at New Basford station platform during construction and I am sure that this view is also in that area. The building at the rear and the fact that the engine is standing on permanent way, not contractor's temporary way, leads me to think that 'Rocket' was photographed in front of New Basford carriage sheds.

Photo 3: This is a picture of one of the temporary wooden viaducts constructed in early 1895 and is adjacent to the alignment of the Valley Road embankment. The wooden arches are already in place to allow a road tunnel to be built under the embankment.

Photo 4: The caption for this picture is correct. The date for this view is June 1895. S.W.A.Newton took two very similar, but slightly later, photographs from more or less the same position. One of these pictures shows New Basford station platform in place and Perry Road bridge in the distance.

Photo 5: This photograph was taken in July 1895 and is of the temporary bridge over the River Trent at Wilford which was erected in late 1894/early 1895. The sections of large diameter tube which are loaded on the first few vehicles may be the cylinders which were later sunk into the river bed. They were filled with concrete and helped form foundations for the bridge piers.

Perhaps there are more of these fascinating pictures at Dulwich College? (*The archivist says 'No'.* - Ed.)

#### **from Chris Gilligan, Nottingham**

Photo 1: This is shown in a 1978 publication *Around Nottingham* and is captioned 'Some of the large workforce employed on Bulwell viaduct'.

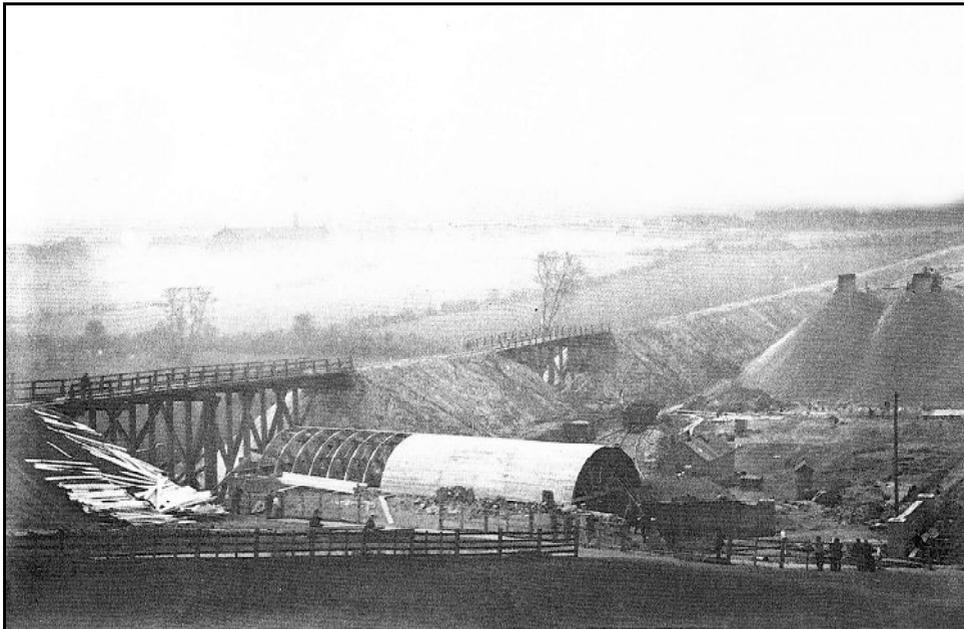
Photo 2: The same publication shows 'Rocket' at Basford Station Yard. (Brief details of the loco appear on page 33 of Leicester Museum's *Contractors Locos GCR.*)

Photo 3: This is the construction site for Valley Road, Nottingham. The timber shuttering shown under the temporary bridge is not stored but is in situ being prepared for the bricklayers. I attach a photo taken from the other side of the temporary bridge showing more details along with the embankments being tipped. Once completed the original Bagthorpe Junction signal box was constructed on the embankment directly above this bridge. The bridge when completed was 25' wide and was demolished in 1936/37 when Valley Road was widened to 80', the brick structure being replaced with the girder bridge which lasted until the line's closure. The signal box was demolished at the same time with its replacement being built slightly to the north.

Photo 4: The 1978 publication shows the same view but at a later stage.

Photo 5: I have seen this before but cannot locate it at the moment. From memory I think this is captioned as 'The temporary bridge over the Trent at Wilford'. There is also a photo from the other side with the same loco in view.

I always assumed that these were S.W.A.Newton's photos.



*A view of the Valley Road embankment under construction taken from the east side with the contractor's railway on the left. photo: Chris Gillagan collection*

**Additional notes by the editor**

Photo 1: This can be found at [www.picturethepast.org](http://www.picturethepast.org) where it is credited to S.W.A.Newton and dated 1897. Significantly photo 1 does not feature the clouds referred to by Peter Witts. Could John McMeekin have acquired copies of some of Newton's photos, including this one, which then became part of his collection?

Photo 2: The photo referred to by John Quick of 'Rocket' taken at New Basford station by S.W.A.Newton can be found at [www.transportarchive.org.uk](http://www.transportarchive.org.uk).

Photo 3: The double arch culvert through which the Day Brook flows can be seen under construction beneath the loco. See the Newton photo below taken from the same side after construction was completed. The Day Brook culvert is on the left and the Valley Road tunnel on the right.

Photo 5: This view is taken from the south side of the Trent. The photographer is stood on the alignment of the main line. See the Newton photo below for a view of the impressive viaduct taken while stood on the contractor's line. The approach embankment is not yet in place.



## **from David Wrottesley, Sheffield**

### *Immingham Dock Centenary Souvenir*

The Immingham Dock Centenary Souvenir is magnificent, and a credit to everybody who contributed. The presentation by Bryan Longbone at the Spinkhill meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June was also excellent and informative and I was fascinated by the 1947 detailed track diagram that was on display.

I first learnt about Immingham when aged 18 in 1958. I was a junior railway clerk in the BR(ER) Timetable Office at King's Cross. I am a Londoner by birth and my early trainspotting days never extended to the delights of North Lincolnshire. I was amazed that we had the timings of the Hull-New Holland ferry in one of the WTTs, let alone the Immingham tram, which I made a special pilgrimage to see in 1960. I have always found the whole area a fascinating and complex part of our railway system which is always changing. I was very pleased and proud in the latter part of my railway career at York, both with BR(ER) and Railtrack, to be the Timetable Manager responsible for the timings of all passenger and freight trains in the area. This before I retired in 1998 as Railtrack Timetable Development manager for LNE Zone at York, dealing with the timetabling aspirations of the both passenger and freight train operating companies.

I always found Immingham very hard to keep up with as regards infrastructure/traffic conveyed, the tracks/sidings/signal boxes, let alone the details of the actual docks/quays/loading and unloading points/roads/warehouses and now the extended off shore jetties in the river as well. I was quite fascinated looking at the detailed 1947 track map as it showed the elevated loaded coal sidings to the overhead conveyors. The empty wagons were cleared away to adjacent gravity sidings that actually dived under the inward loaded sidings - a brilliant GCR designed operation. I suspect there were at least three shunting engines involved in drawing the loaded wagons from the loaded storage sidings and into the three parallel shunt necks and propelling the loaded wagons onto each of the seven coal hoists on the coal quay. I imagine there were two more engines in the two empty shunt neck roads for drawing empties from the four empty dive-under roads and propelling them into the empty storage sidings.

Ken Grainger says on page 3, paragraph 5, that there was "a double track passenger station" at the outer end of the Eastern Jetty. This is taken, I am sure, from Dow's *Great Central Vol. 3* page 260. I think however looking at the track diagram and photographs, particularly on page 40, that it was a double track access to about halfway along the Jetty before it became a single track with, at the extremity, an open single wooden platform/stage. This was capable of handling a tender locomotive and six carriages. Longer trains of up to ten plus van were also handled, but passengers to and from vehicles seven and above on inward trains would have to have needed ladder access to the jetty timber walkway unless they walked through to the front carriages. In one picture of *SS Orontes* that I have seen, I think I can see refrigerated vehicles on the Eastern Jetty platform. Presumably they were unloading stores. I think the jetty was last used in 1939.

## **from Bill Taylor, Skegby, Notts**

### *Immingham Dock Centenary Souvenir*

What a nice surprise when the Immingham Dock Centenary Souvenir book dropped through my letter box. It's good that the Society has, with the aid of Immingham Museum, produced this to mark the occasion. The foresight of the Great Central Railway management and directors all those years ago has left a tremendous and most valuable legacy to this country.

May I just add two or three odds and ends which may interest those who read *Forward*. First and foremost I must congratulate Ken Grainger for his Introductory piece which contains a great deal of information and detail and which obviously required some careful research. It is a necessary part of a booklet of this type, for to launch into illustrations with just a few lines would have been insufficient. This brings me to the

comment about the special train which travelled, "somewhat improbably, from Chesterfield". I believe there is a plausible explanation for that train.

The date is significant, July 1906, the LD&ECR having been snatched from under the noses of the hesitant GNR and the "amalgamation" Bill in its advanced stages in Parliament with agreement reached with all objectors, I would submit that several of the directors and shareholders of the Chesterfield based company, as well as their allies and customers, such as the Bolsover and Clay Cross Colliery Companies would be feeling quite pleased with themselves, and no doubt the GCR would wish to make them feel important in the new situation. In its eventual form the LD&ECR's main purpose was to move coal rapidly to the east and a vital feature demanded by its promoters was a coastal outlet. Despite the violent thunderstorm I suspect that Messrs. Arkwright, Byron, Houfton, Bainbridge, Willmott and others enjoyed a splendid day out.

As for the official opening in 1912, to stage such an event the GCR certainly called upon staff from locations well away from the Humber estuary to assist in the proceedings. There is no doubt that detailed planning happened over a period of many weeks and this is confirmed by the content of a letter (doubtless standard in format but signed in person by the sender) received by Mr Caunt, a Goods Guard stationed at Langwith Junction. The details of the addressee and the signature of Sam Fay are in handwriting. The phrase "duties allotted to you" indicate that careful advance planning had taken place.

Finally, it has always been unfortunate that no photograph of the ill-fated "Blackburn" has come to light, but for those interested in railway ships in general and those of the Great Central sailing from Immingham in particular the website of Simplan Postcards ([www.simplonpc.co.uk](http://www.simplonpc.co.uk)) is worth checking out.

*Editor's note:* Several e-mails and letters have been received commenting favourably on the Immingham Dock Centenary Souvenir. They are much appreciated.

#### **from John Quick, Sheffield**

*Forward 172 p48:* Photo of train near Chaloners Whin.

Regarding the photo belonging to Sam Woods for which further information was requested. Firstly, the engine, no.1018, is a member of class 11D, having been rebuilt from class 11B with piston valves and superheated boiler in August 1919. It was allocated to Sheffield Neepsend from April 1921 and I suggest a date for the photograph of 1921/22.

Much more interesting, however, is the train itself. It appears to consist of N.E.R. stock and the third vehicle, which may be a restaurant car, exhibits the odd-looking 'fish belly' underframe. It seems very unlikely to be a Bournemouth but one or two new cross-country trains were being introduced at about this time. The celebrated Aberdeen-Penzance, which first ran on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1921, may be the answer. It left York at 6.25pm which tends to agree with the position of the sun. Who was the photographer? Three names come to mind; R.J.Purves, S.Ellingworth or C.Ord.

#### **from Maurice Barrick, 319 Pelham Road, Immingham, Lincolnshire DN40 1NB**

*Request for information:* East Halton signal box

Recently a copy of the *Great Central Railway Journal* came into my possession. The date of the Journal is October 1911. I was interested in "Staff Changes" and there was one which set me wondering and I would like further information.

The entry which attracted my attention was "J.L.Leedham Porter Stallingborough to Porter Signalman at East Halton". Although I have lived in the area for over eighty years I had no idea that there was a signal box at East Halton. If any reader has a picture of the signal box I would appreciate a copy and any information regarding those early years on the Barton and Immingham Light Railway.

### **from Rob Lane, Monks Risborough**

*Forward 172 p44:* letter re. Barby accident

The driver who was killed in the Barby accident was Charlie Simpson and the fireman who was seriously injured was A.D.Nethercott.

### **from Dave Peel, 'South Bay', Northport, Wareham, Dorset BH20 4AS**

*Request for information: 'Starlight Specials'*

I am seeking photographs of trains that were rarely photographed! These were the 'Starlight Specials' that ran overnight between St Pancras and St Enoch, and between Marylebone and Waverley, and were some of BR's most successful and long-running excursion trains.

Introduced in 1953 as 8-day or 15-day period return excursions, they ran outbound on Friday nights and returned on Saturday nights a week or a fortnight later. They were cheap fare, 3rd class only (non-sleeping car) trains with a centrally located overnight buffet service, and only ran Easter to September for the years 1953-62 inclusive.

No loco headboard was carried (though a train reporting number was) and only a few carriages bore roof boards. Stock was either entirely post-war LMS compartment or entirely pre/post-war Gresley compartment/open, no BR Mk1s ever having been used.

As you can see from the above, the trains were not easily distinguished and even more difficult to photograph. as only the evening departures/early morning arrivals around Glasgow or Edinburgh were in daylight, plus early morning arrivals into London and it is these in particular that I'm after. Clearly these services are well outside GCR days, but the heavy involvement of Marylebone throughout this period leads me to think (hopefully) that you might have either photos or publicity material for 'Starlight Specials' amongst your archive, or may know someone who has. Copies of Special Traffic Notices covering these years would be equally welcome, as these trains did not appear in the public timetables.

Any assistance you can give would be much appreciated!

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### **Loose coupled**

Four new books by Chris Vine in the Peter's Railway series have been published. They are *The Picnic* (for younger readers 3+) and *Now and Then, A Big Smellie Bogie* and *Molten Metal* (for older readers 6-12). Available from [www.petersrailway.com](http://www.petersrailway.com) and [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk). Ideal gifts for your grandchildren!

Sheffield Railwayana Auctions has been bought by Great Central Railwayana Auctions. SRA will continue to operate from Derby but will now follow the GCRA format including the free catalogue distribution. See [www.gcrauctions.com/sheffield.pdf](http://www.gcrauctions.com/sheffield.pdf).

Michael J.Chapman, who provided the photo on p36, has a website which he hopes readers will visit at [www.railwayanamichael.com](http://www.railwayanamichael.com).

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### **Rear cover caption**

BR class C13 4-4-2T no.67415 leaves Romiley with a Manchester-Macclesfield train in 1952. Romiley was on the Sheffield (*MS&L*) & Midland Joint - a network of lines south east of Manchester with frequent suburban services in the capable hands of Robinson's Atlantic tanks (originally GC class 9K).  
*photo: M.Whitehouse Collection*

