

# FORWARD 179



## **Front cover caption**

BR 5MT 4-6-0 no. 44984 at Woodford Halse with the 17:15 Nottingham Victoria-Marylebone service on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1966, the last day of through services on the GC London Extension. The smokebox is adorned with a funeral wreath. The platform end signals had already been removed for over a year. Luckily the track is still in place but not for much longer

*photo:Ken Fairey*



# The Journal of the Great Central Railway Society

No. 179 ~ March 2014

## Contents

<b>Editorial</b> <i>by Bob Gellatly</i> .....	2
<b>Opposition to the London Extension</b> <i>by David Reidy</i> .....	4
<b>George Stephenson's Sheffield and Manchester Railway</b> <i>by Fred Hartley</i> .....	11
<b>Some more houses with MSL/GC connections</b> <i>by Paul White</i> .....	14
<b>Modellers' corner</b> <i>by Tony West</i> .....	16
<b>Model railway exhibition diary</b> .....	17
<b>The last day of the GC main line</b> <i>by Bob Gellatly</i> .....	18
<b>A Londoner's memories of GC line journeys</b> <i>by Ron Gee</i> .....	19
<b>A 'Black 5' at Aylesbury</b> <i>a colour photo by Bill Wright</i> .....	22/23
<b>Recent auction items</b> .....	24
<b>Memories of the 'Garratt'</b> <i>by Ron Fareham</i> .....	25
<b>A walk down Gorton Lane</b> <i>with Bob Gellatly</i> .....	28
<b>Arrivals on the bookshelf</b> .....	32
<b>On Great Central lines today</b> <i>by Kim Collinson</i> .....	34
<b>Woodhead tunnels to be sealed</b> <i>by Paul White</i> .....	36
<b>HS2 v GCR</b> <i>by 'Piloti'</i> .....	40
<b>Readers' forum</b> .....	41

## Editorial by Bob Gellatly

What a winter it has been for rain and floods. My sympathies go to any readers who have been affected. I am fortunate enough to live on the top of a hill well away from any rivers. Two years ago we had extreme snow and this year it is extreme rain.

Despite the inherent robustness of rail travel, weather conditions are causing disruption on a more regular basis. As well as the usual OHL problems on the ECML whenever the wind blows, we are now seeing serious disruption due to flooding on the lines to South Wales and the South West. The sea wall at Dawlish has taken a severe beating and will be closed for at least six weeks – assuming that further extreme weather doesn't stop the repairs. All this proves that lines closed in the past for short-term economy are now desperately needed. The SR route between Exeter and Plymouth would have provided a valuable alternative to the vulnerable south Devon sea wall route.

When short-sighted closures of rail routes are talked about it is always the London Extension of the GC that generates most anger. Coming a close second is the electric railway over Woodhead. In this issue we touch on both. We take a look at the last day of through traffic on the GC and review the lack of progress in safeguarding the old Woodhead tunnels. The media is still promoting the GC route as an alternative to HS2. Just the cost of HS2 planners' pencils would cover the cost of maintaining the old Woodhead tunnels.

I expect your bookshelf, like mine, is sagging under the weight of unread books. There are now two more that can be added to the queue. Both books reviewed in this issue can be personally recommended.

Tom Ingall (those who live in Yorkshire will see him occasionally presenting BBC's Look North regional news) has contacted me to pass on his thanks to GCRS members who have responded to the 'Bridge to the Future' appeal in *Forward*. The response has been very encouraging and the work is going ahead as quickly as can be achieved.

The GCRS archive is now up and running at the Immingham Museum. The long term aim is to digitise as much as possible and make it available on-line. See the archivist's note (p3) on where and when to access the archive.

The AGM at Loughborough on 17<sup>th</sup> May is promising to be a great day as it will include our '40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special' dmu charter. I hope that many members will be able to attend as numbers attending the AGM in recent years have been disappointing.

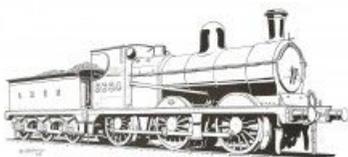
The next issue of *Forward* will be a bumper edition to mark the Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is intended to include some of the best articles from past issues of *Forward* and any suitable GC-related articles from other magazines. If you have any suggestions as to what these might be, please let me know.

---

## Annual membership subscriptions for 2014

Memberships are due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. The new subscription rates will be £16 (UK), £21 (Europe) and £24 (rest of the world). An early-bird discount of £1 will be allowed for any renewal before 1<sup>st</sup> April. Please send a cheque, made out to 'GCRS', with your membership details to the Treasurer.

*Eric Latusek, Treasurer*



## Annual General Meeting 2014

In accordance with Section 7(a) of the Society constitution, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2014** at Lovatt House, Loughborough, starting at 11.00am.

Under Section 9 of the constitution proposals for changes to the constitution, properly signed by the proposer and seconder, should be sent to the secretary to reach him no later than Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

Under Section 5(c) nominations for the committee, signed by the proposer and seconder and made with the agreement of the nominee, should be sent to the secretary to reach him no later than 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

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

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

*Brian Slater, Secretary*

---

## The Great Central Railway Society Archive

The GCRS is pleased to announce that the Society's archive will be available to members on some Wednesdays and Saturdays from March onwards. The archive is located in Immingham Museum. The museum is situated on the corner of Pelham Road and Washdyke Lane in premises that were once part of the theatre at the Civic Centre. The opening hours are 1pm to 4pm.

Gordon Luck (01469 574637) has volunteered to open the archive on the 1st Wednesday of the month and Bob Gellatly (01909 565763) will do the same on the 2nd Saturday of the month. Members wishing to use the archive are asked to telephone the volunteer first to check that they will be in attendance.

The GCRS has installed an A3 scanner and a computer which will allow members to scan material onto storage media or to send it to their own e-mail address.

*Geoff Burton, Archivist*

---

## The Great Central Railway Society Annual General Meeting Sat. 17th May 2014

**At Lovatt House, Wharnccliffe Road, Loughborough LE11 1SL**

The venue is adjacent to the Great Central Railway station. Street parking is available. The Network Rail station is 20 min. walk away.

10:00 - Doors open with tea and coffee available.  
Sales and displays.

11:00 - AGM

12:30 - Break for lunch.

Afternoon (departure time to be confirmed) - "The 40th Anniversary Special" private charter on the Great Central Railway using the heritage dmu. Tickets for the charter will only be available at the AGM at £12 per head.



*The heritage dmu is waiting for us at Loughborough station under the restored glass canopy.*

## **Opposition to the London Extension** **by David Reidy**

In view of the present uncertain future of HS2, it might be useful to look back to the opposition to the extension of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway Company (MS&LR) to London in the 1890s.

William Pollitt, the company's General Manager, was instructed to deposit a Parliamentary Bill for the extension for the Session of 1890/91, and plans were made to combat the fierce opposition anticipated. On 11<sup>th</sup> July 1890 five of the Board of the Company - Watkin, Wharncliffe, Chapman, Pochin and Hutton- formed themselves into a committee with the task of whipping up support from industrialists and traders and from the towns through which the new trunk route was to pass. To assist them, a Consultative Committee of influential outsiders was set up. Amongst its members were Hon Evelyn Pierrepont, Lord Howe, Alexander McArthur MP, Rt Hon J W Mellor QC, Arnold Morley MP, Rt Hon A J Mundella MP and C B Stuart Wortley MP.

Even without the help of this high-powered Consultative Committee, the MS&L could count on plenty of support from the business communities and towns to be served. Petitions in favour were received from the corporations of Sheffield, Barnsley, Chesterfield, Wakefield, Loughborough, Leicester, Huddersfield, Rotherham and Leeds, and from the Company of Cutlers of Hallamshire, from the inhabitants of Rothley, Ruddington, East Leake, Amersham, Chesham and Great Missenden, from Nottingham Chamber of Commerce and the Nottinghamshire and Midland Merchants and Traders Association, as well as from Buckinghamshire County Council, Leicester Trade Protection Society, the Local Board of Health for Aylesbury, the Corporation of Chipping Wycombe (later renamed High Wycombe) and the working men, traders and inhabitants of St Marylebone.

Supporters included many who saw in the advent of the MS&L a new means of driving harder transport bargains. Another group regarded the new railway as offering greater travel convenience and more prestige for themselves in a civic sense. To Sheffield there was now the prospect of a third trunk route to London, and to Grimsby a new outlet for its fish.

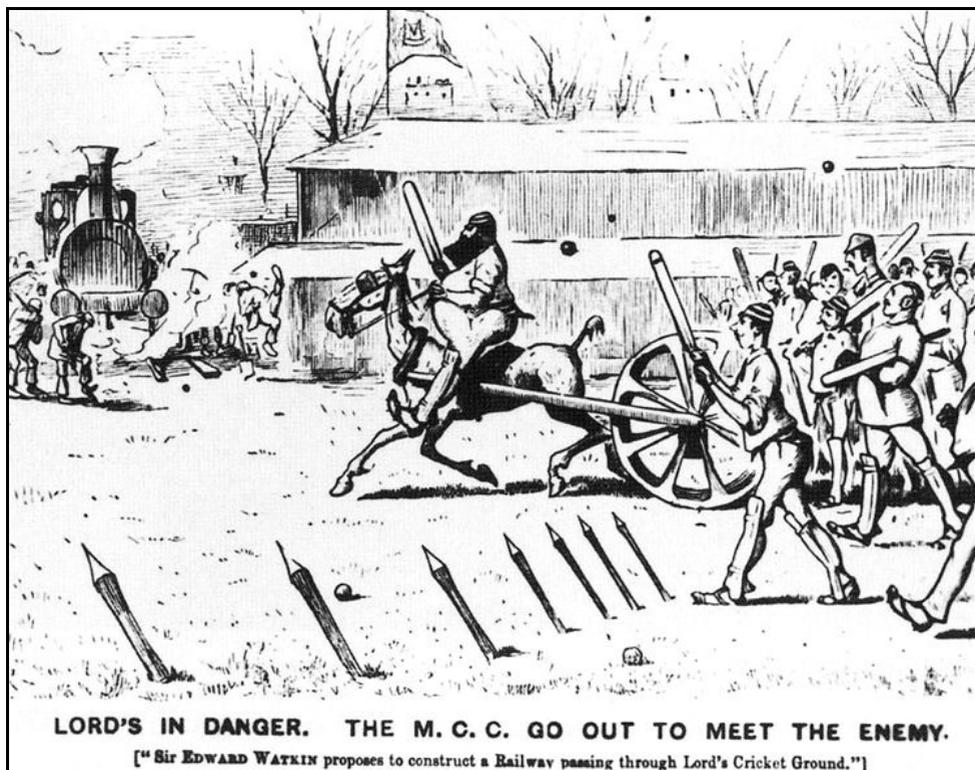
However, there was some vociferous and unexpected opposition from the artists' colony and residents in St John's Wood and from the cricketing world which revolved around the sacred turf of Lords. The cricketing world was convulsed with amazement and rage. It is no exaggeration to say that Watkin, Chairman of the MS&L, became a railway iconoclast overnight and his project a national calamity. Many and varied were the solutions put forward for preventing this act of sacrilege which he sought to commit. W G Grace was called upon to intervene. Spofforth, the demon bowler, should threaten him and if that failed, he should be crippled by Briggs, the Lancashire cricketer. And if that failed, he should be handed over to his own navvies and blown up with dynamite.

Watkin was quick to see that the greatest menace to the extension came from the cricketing lobby. If not appeased, public opinion might well jeopardise his Bill. Pollitt met the secretary of the MCC in December 1890 and by February of the following year concord with Lords was restored. Some exchange of freehold land was agreed and the land beneath which the MS&L would hide itself would be restored to its former immaculate condition and leased to the MCC for £200 a year. An eight foot boundary wall would be built and the promise was also made to present to the club most of the site of the Clergy Orphan School which was scheduled for purchase and which was in fact bought for £40,000 early in 1892. The MCC had made a very good bargain and it is only fair to concede that when the construction of the line was eventually taken in hand it offered the railway company every assistance.

The Bill for the MS&L (Extension to London) Act was read in the House of Commons for a second time on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1891 and a motion was passed to refer it to a select

committee. Ralph Littler QC opened the case for the MS&L on 17<sup>th</sup> April. The proceedings were concluded on 13<sup>th</sup> May and fifteen days later the committee found the preamble not proved. There had been forty nine petitions against the Bill. The following gives a flavour of the opposition.

The residents of St John's Wood remained obdurate in their opposition, and the undertaking not to convey spoil or construction material through the streets of that high class residential district was of no avail. Mr Edmund Boulnois, the MP for East Marylebone, giving evidence to the Select Committee, referred to a resolution passed by a meeting of a committee of residents that *"this meeting of the residents in St John's Wood desires to record its protest against the proposal of the MS&L to extend its railway into London and thereby destroying an important residential suburb without affording real or substantial benefit to the travelling public"*. He told the committee that *"This part of St John's Wood is occupied by houses with large gardens attached where people go who desire a quiet and suburban retreat."* When asked if he could suggest why the inhabitants of Lisson Grove seemed to favour the new line, his response was *"The inhabitants of Lisson Grove occupy dwellings which are densely packed - they are occupied by the working classes. It has been suggested that the making of this railway would give employment to most people and I conclude that they would naturally jump at the work which was offered to them."*



The well-known cartoon from 'Punch' showing W.G. Grace leading the cricketers of the MCC against the invading railway.

Similarly Edward White, a member of the Marylebone Vestry, stated that *"his committee are of the opinion that a station with a goods depot placed at this position of St John's Wood would be a very serious nuisance to the neighbourhood and would be very*

*detrimental to the residential character of St John's Wood, and also it would be seriously detrimental to property and the lines converging upon this station through which all this heavy goods traffic would have to pass."*

Thomas Harris, architect to the Vestry, agreed, stating that *"my principal objection is the position of the station. The terminus access seems to me to be in the wrong position."* Sir Edwin Galsworthy, chair of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and a member of the Marylebone Vestry, thought that the effect on all the property near or adjoining the station *"would be very serious and detrimental to it."*

John Clayton, a surveyor resident at Fairfax Road, spoke of the sense of panic amongst his neighbours. *"People are beginning to talk of leaving the neighbourhood and I am thinking of doing so if the railway is made. I went there expressly because it had the appearance of great quiet which I very much appreciated."*

John Christopher, architect to the Eyre Estate, said that the railway *"would very materially depreciate the value of the whole district. The introduction of a large goods station and coal depot will bring a great quantity of heavy traffic. It will bring a great amount of dirt and a rough element who will interfere with the general amenity of the neighbourhood."*

Rt Hon George Lefevre, President of the Board of Works and Chairman of the Society for the Preservation of Commons and Open Spaces, told the committee that *"The Society have carefully considered the whole scheme and they have come to the conclusion that that portion of the scheme which proposes to make an access to London and requires for the making of a station on thirty two acres of land in St John's Wood is decidedly opposed to the interests of the public in that part of London. We consider that St John's Wood, in which the Eyre Estate is situated, is an exceptional district in proportion to the buildings. It contains a very large amount of open land. I believe I am right in saying that of those thirty two acres proposed to be taken, only five acres are actually built upon. The result is that this land forms a kind of lung to that heart of London across Regent's Park from Hampstead and Highgate, and of course all that part of London is greatly benefited by it."*

Lord Grimthorpe, governor of the Clergy Orphan School, considered the proposal *"a very serious one with regard to the School."* And Lord Portman, a substantial central London landowner, advised the committee that he opposed the Bill, not merely on his own account but as representative of almost all his tenants saying that *"the area had a residential character and was very little disturbed by traffic of any kind. The Bill would be the destruction of the neighbourhood."*

Similar opposition was voiced by local clergy. Canon Robinson Duckworth, vicar of St Mark's, St John's Wood, said that he had had *"abundant opportunity of conversing with residents of all classes since the first threat of the railway reached us, and the feeling which I have heard expressed has been unanimously in opposition to it. I have never heard a single expression of opinion in its favour. I have not heard of any benefit which seems to me at all to counteract the inconvenience and injury that will be done to the neighbourhood."*

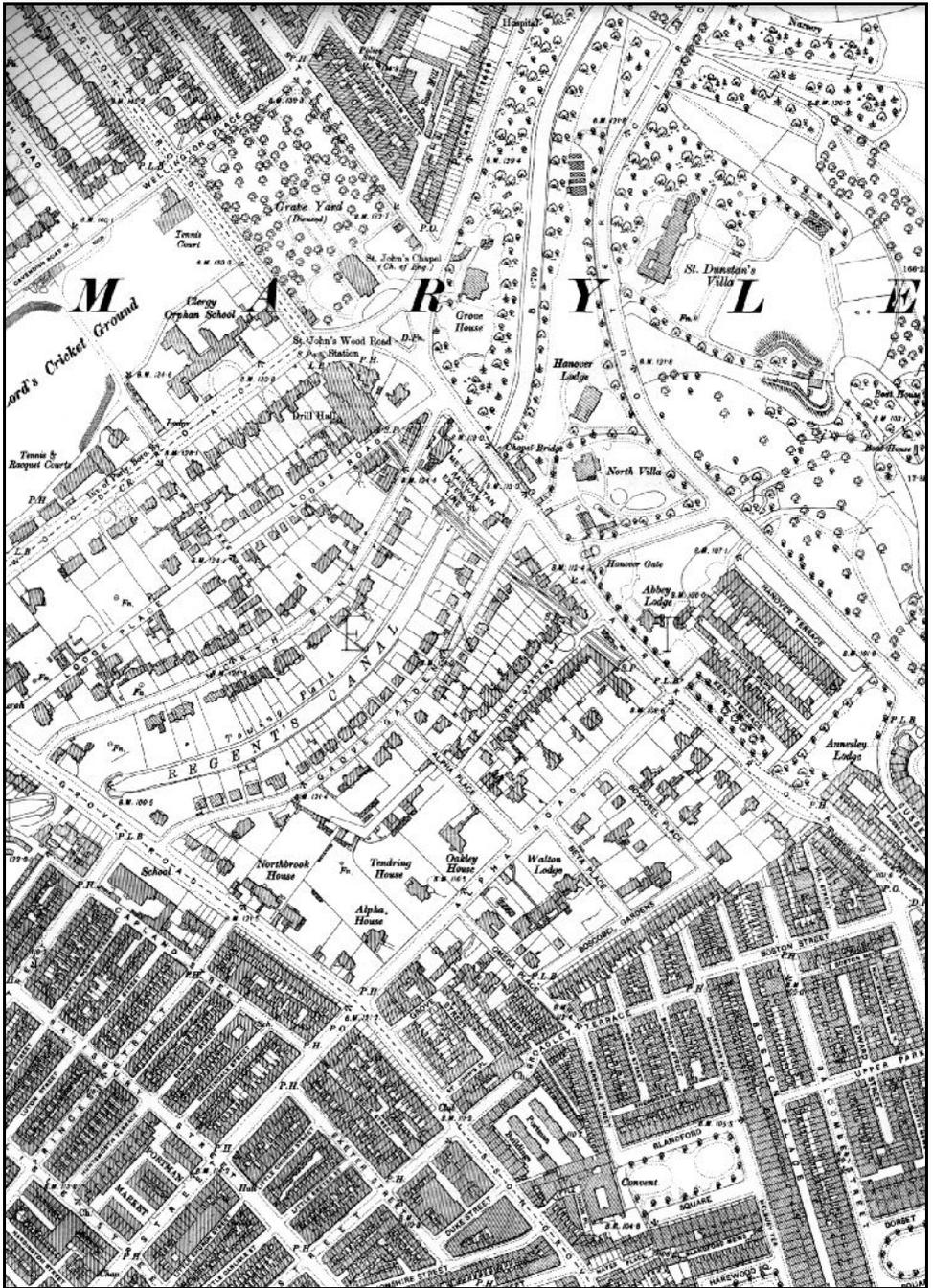
Rev Canon Leigh, rector of St Mary's, Bryanston Square, said that *"all the different classes in my parish would suffer, including the poor. It would be likely to change the class of residents in the Gloucester Place district and would induce the better class of residents to leave."* Likewise Rev G S Delaney, Missionary Rector of the Church of Our Lady in Grove Road, stated that *"I have not met one person who was not hostile. I view with considerable alarm the prospect of this grave interference. I am quite sure the better class of residents would leave."* And Rev Edward Midwinter, vicar of St Paul's Marylebone, stated that the railway would have a bad effect saying *"it will remove about 378 houses and some 4,000 of the population. The vicarage and schools would go and my church itself may possibly have to be removed."*

As mentioned earlier, opposition also came from the local artists' colony. Mr Briton Rivière RA, of 82 Finchley Road, mentioned the great many members of the Royal Academy and other eminent artists who lived in St John's Wood. *"The neighbourhood is sought after by artists particularly because of its quietness and openness. I and other artists view with great alarm the proposals of this railway scheme. It will seriously interfere with the neighbourhood and the peace and quiet which artists seek. Artists have been driven to two quarters in London - Kensington and St John's Wood. These are the only areas where we can set up workshops with any degree of success The railway would bring noise and coal dust and a deterioration in the light. Artists are obliged to be as central as possible so they may be near the different societies to which they belong."* Lawrence Alma-Tadema RA, of 7 Grove Road, and H W B Davis RA both agreed that the railway would have a prejudicial affect on the neighbourhood. And the sculptor George Simmonds, of 21 North Bank, Regent's Park, stated that *"the railway would make houses of considerable less value. It would be a very serious detriment and would be most injurious to the interests of the profession and is regarded with alarm by the artists' colony."*

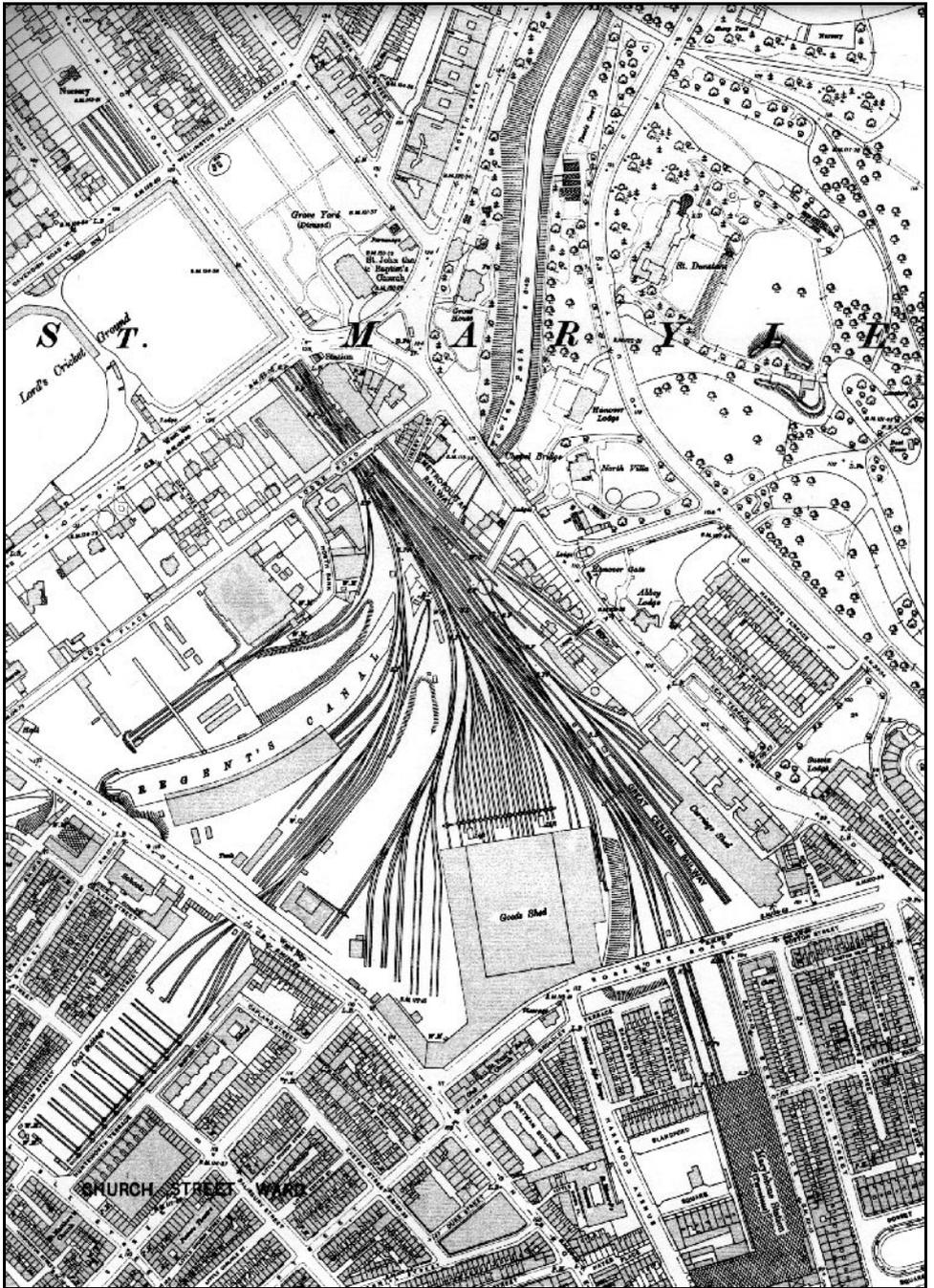
Other London opposition included that of Dr Charles Routh, consulting physician to the Samaritan Hospital in the Marylebone Road. He said that *"the railway would be extremely injurious to the efficiency of the hospital and to my patients who come a long way for quiet recuperation."* James Smith, a grocer of 5 Grove Road, said that *"the scheme would deprive him of 75% of his takings and he would receive no compensation."* George Lawrence, a journeyman butcher of Mills Buildings, Great John Street, Marylebone, spoke on behalf of the St Barnabas Institute, the members of which were *"very much against the scheme."* Miss Octavia Hill, the well known philanthropist, said that *"the roads from Lisson Grove to Regent's Park were very quiet and wide. Children were able to get to the Park with great safety - they were almost like country roads. Regent's Park was a playground for all the poor children from Lisson Grove. The railway scheme would result in a much increased volume of traffic which would be dangerous for children and would have the effect of practically shutting up the Park to them and confining them to courts and alleys without fresh air."*

As far as other railway companies were concerned, Pollitt faced implacable opposition from King's Cross. Sir Henry Oakley, General Manager of the GNR, told the Committee that the Bill would be a direct violation of the terms and conditions of the Agreement of October 1860 under which the two companies were to do their best in every respect to promote their joint interests. The LNWR offered no opposition and expressed no interest in a central station in Nottingham, but the Midland's view was that the railway would duplicate and almost parallel its system, nor would it open up any new route to any place of commercial importance except for Lutterworth which was considered unimportant. Nottingham and Leicester already had the GNR and LNWR competing for traffic with the Midland, and at Loughborough the LNWR was a competitor. George Turner, the Assistant General Secretary of the Midland, was asked whether there was any traffic of any consequence which the proposed line would afford accommodation to which it was not already provided for by existing lines. He told the Committee *"I say certainly not to any extent. All the places that are newly served are unimportant. It is necessary for me to remind you that the insufficient accommodation of the districts which the proposed scheme of the MS&L will traverse is not admitted by the Midland Company."*

Away from the Metropolis, Lord Barrington, owner of the Westbury Estate in Buckinghamshire, told the Committee that *"I cannot think any such line is necessary at all. It would be a disadvantage to our district to have it interfered with. Our locality is entirely agricultural and considering the nature of the population and its sparseness, we are extremely well served - I have a station at Westbury a half mile away. The great attraction of the county is the hunting and this line would pass through the very best of it."*



The OS map of 1893. Points of interest are Lord's Cricket Ground, the Clergy Orphan School, the Regent's Canal, Regent's Park (top right), the Metropolitan Railway and St.John's Wood station. Of note are the many well-to-do residences in semi-rural surroundings in the St.John's Wood and Regent's Park area.



The OS map of 1913. The orphanage has gone and the land given to the MCC. New construction includes the canal-side wharves, the goods station, the carriage shed and the passenger terminus. New roads, Rossmore Road and Harewood Avenue, have been built, the former offering a fine view of the terminus, as it does today.

Similarly Major Green of Chetwood Priory said that *"the existing railway facilities were quite sufficient and that the proposal would be a disadvantage to the district."* Lord Lanesborough was also against the railway as it would interrupt the view from his house. *"The trains and the railway,"* he said, *"would be very conspicuous objects and would be a serious detriment and interference with my estate."*

Several small traders in Nottingham voiced their concerns at the railway scheme. William Case had been trading as a tobacconist at 16 Trent Street for over thirty years. His premises were to be taken from him without compensation and the business distributed. And Herbert Woodcock, a wardrobe dealer of 48 Glasshouse Street, said that the shop was proposed to be taken over by the MS&L without compensation and as a result all his trade would have gone. William Radford, a Nottingham civil engineer, appeared before the Committee as the representative of 109 petitioners who were owners and occupiers of property in the city. *"All would be more or less affected by the scheme. There would be permanent closures and diversions of public streets and this would lead to damage to properties."*

In its minute of 19<sup>th</sup> June 1891 the Board resolved to renew its efforts in the following Session if the shareholders agreed. A fresh approach was made to King's Cross in July in an effort to eradicate its opposition, and after long exchanges between Pollitt and Oakley the feud was brought to an end. The outlook also brightened in other directions. Both the Metropolitan and the South Eastern, no doubt at the instigation of their MS&L directors, offered to subscribe towards the capital required for the new line, and the Staveley Coal & Iron Company and the Sheepbridge Coal & Iron Company did likewise. Even the Midland, with whose Chairman Watkin continued to exchange sarcastic correspondence, offered to withdraw its opposition if the MS&L cared to run over its little-used Leicester-Rugby line instead of building a new line between these two towns.

By the end of March 1892 it was known that most of the thirty one petitions against the second attempt of the MS&L were confined to the London terminal, where Pollitt had planned a station and hotel in the Marylebone Road. There remained the artists, but they proved to be something of a damp squib. More serious was the attitude of the LCC who sought to make the MS&L responsible for widening streets and making new ones, at a probable cost of half a million pounds. One of the petitioners was removed by the purchase of sixty four of his houses in Blandford and Harewood Squares for £61,500, one of the first London extension property deals to be mentioned in the company's minutes. Soon afterwards further houses in Broadhurst, Greencroft and Canfield Gardens were acquired, together with others in St John's Wood Road, Boscabel Place and Grove Road, the latter for the artisans whose homes had to be demolished.

On 12<sup>th</sup> April 1892, after sitting for a fortnight, the Committee considering the Bill had declared the greater part of it proved, and six days later passed it completely, having put an end to the aspirations of the LCC to milk the MS&L. Thereafter that body did all it could to obstruct further progress of the Bill through the House of Lords, but without any success. Before the end of June it was virtually passed, but the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury asked for a dissolution of Parliament on 29<sup>th</sup> of that month and all unfinished legislation came to a halt. An election followed in July and a new administration was formed under Gladstone. Royal Assent was given on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1893 to the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire [Extension to London] Act 1893 [56 & 57 Vic cap 1].

The original estimated cost of construction of the line was £3,132,155. However, in the event it cost £11.5 million (£1,251 million at 2012 prices) ie nearly four times the original estimate. In comparison, the latest estimate for Phase 1 of HS2 (excluding rolling stock) is £53 [billion](#).

Interestingly, George Stephenson had said some years before that a trunk line through Aylesbury would be the best route from London to the Midlands. I wonder what he would have thought of the Great Central's new line.

*Finally, I acknowledge the assistance of the staff at the Parliamentary Archive.*

## **George Stephenson's Sheffield & Manchester Railway** **by Fred Hartley**

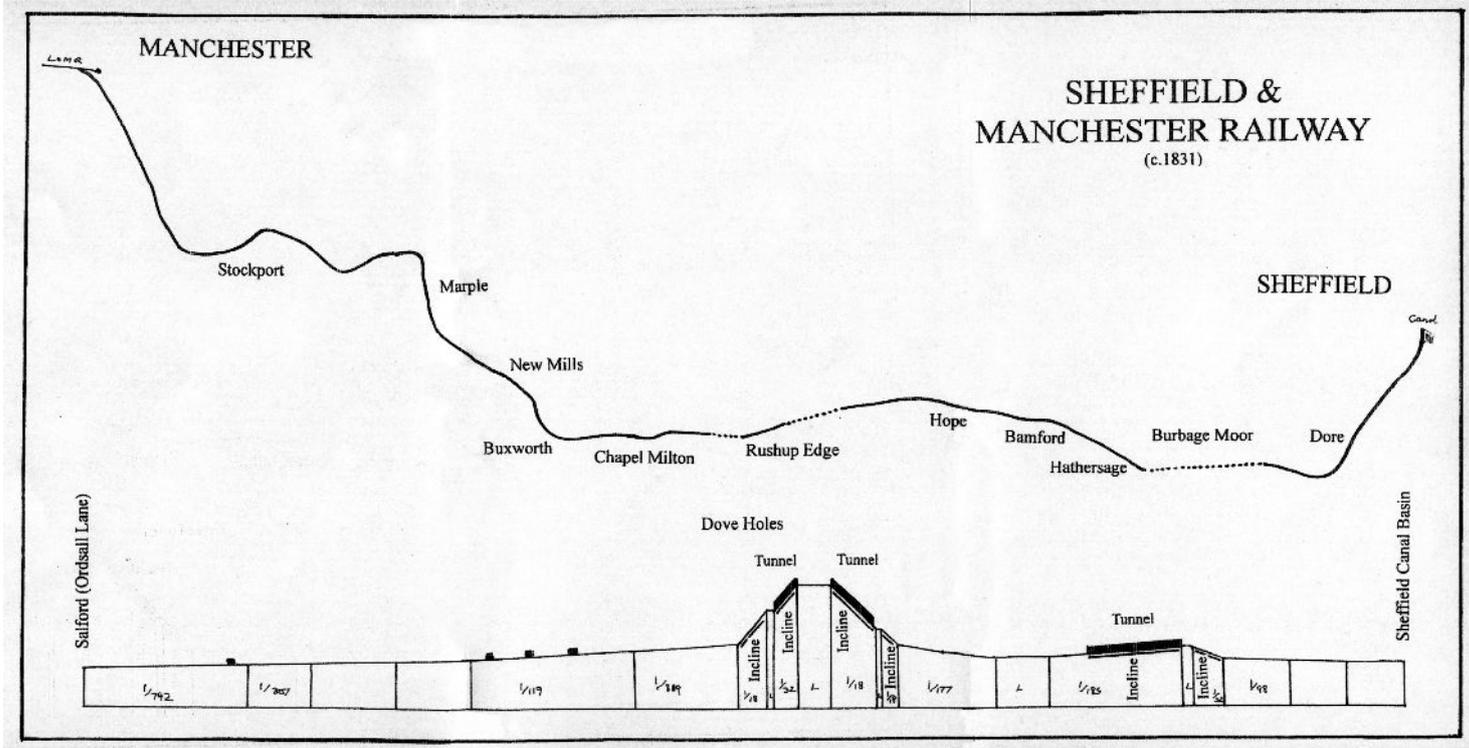
On a recent visit to the Leicestershire Record Office (having previously done an on-line search of the collections) I looked out a railway survey made by George Stephenson and Son. The plan (Ref. DE3214/8303) has only recently been catalogued, having been found in a huge archive formerly stored in outbuildings at Exton Park, Rutland. It shows the proposed route of the Sheffield & Manchester Railway and is attributed to George Stephenson, Engineer, and the surveyors W.S.Hall of Warrington and John Palin of Chester. My drawing is a simplified small-scale version of this plan.

The plan is not dated but it apparently relates to the proposals which George Stephenson described in a document dated September 20<sup>th</sup> 1831, and is quoted at length by George Dow in chapter 1 of volume 1 of *Great Central*. Starting from a junction at Oldfield Road, Salford, the line rose on gentle gradients to Stockport, passing through the town partly on the route of the later CLC line through Tiviot Dale. It followed the Goyt Valley to Buxworth and thence to Chapel Milton. At this point Rushup Edge blocked the way, and the line was to cross this with four cable-worked inclines, two up and two down. There were then easy gradients again to Hathersage before the next great obstacle, Burbage Edge, through which Stephenson proposed a three mile tunnel on a cable-worked gradient of 1 in 185. Beyond the eastern portal of the tunnel another shorter cable incline led into the Sheaf Valley and an easy route alongside the river to the Sheffield Canal Basin.

Dow was dismissive of the Stephenson proposal, which of course was much inferior as a main line to the Woodhead route. However it is interesting to compare Stephenson's plan to today's railway route from Sheffield to Manchester via the Hope Valley. The present Sheffield (Midland) station is exactly on his line, and as far as Dore the alignments are never more than 100 yards apart. The Midland dug their tunnel at Dore a mile or so south of Stephenson's, but the two routes follow exactly the same line between the stations at Hathersage and Hope. The Midland then sweeps northwards through Edale to the Cowburn tunnel, but beyond it, from Wash near Chapel Milton, through Chinley to New Mills (and on to Marple) the routes always lie within about 400 yards of each other and often coincide. In summary about one fifth of the present route follows Stephenson's very closely, and about one tenth is fairly close alongside. In sad contrast the only bit of the SA&M route still used is the mile or so from Ardwick to Manchester London Road (Piccadilly) which it shared with the Manchester and Birmingham.

Although Stephenson's route might appear impractical, it is perhaps less so if we try to see it in context. Two years before (July 1829) Stephenson had been asked to plan a Stockport Junction Railway, and despite the pressures of work on the Liverpool & Manchester he had sent Joseph Locke and John Dixon to survey a route from Manchester (Water Street) to Stockport, Marple and Whaley Bridge, where it would join the Cromford & High Peak line. The plans for the SJR line were deposited in November 1829, and signed by Stephenson, who earned a rebuke from Charles Lawrence of the Liverpool & Manchester because the plans had been drawn up in the L&MR drawing office without permission of the directors. Joseph Locke was appointed engineer to the line, and a branch to the Dove Holes limestone quarries was also planned.

The Stockport Junction line was abandoned in August 1830 in place of the Sheffield & Manchester, the route of which had probably been sketched out by George in the summer of 1830, and handed to Hall and Palin to do the detailed levelling. This was before the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, and before it had demonstrated the huge demand for rapid passenger travel. The Liverpool and Manchester had two cable-worked inclines in tunnels under Liverpool and everyone was confident that they would work and succeed in conveying all the goods from the Liverpool docks and also the passenger trains to and from Crown Street.



In addition, the Cromford & High Peak Railway was partially opened in May 1830, and was to include no less than nine cable-worked inclines. It was backed by prominent industrialists and designed by Josias Jessop, and in the mid-1820s there had been ambitious plans which would have linked it to London.

The Sheffield & Manchester scheme was strongly criticised by some commentators who were concerned about the inclines and the amount of tunnelling. However the railway was given Royal Assent on August 23rd 1831. Stephenson apparently produced revised proposals in October 1831, with just two instead of four inclines at Rushup Edge. Despite this the scheme was not carried through, either because the shareholders had second thoughts or because finance was lacking. Had it been pushed forward promptly the line could have been completed by about 1836. Although the inclines would soon have needed by-passing, the railway would have had a strong position in the Manchester - Stockport - Chinley area, with plentiful local goods and passenger traffic. It also offered the first route between the growing towns of Manchester and Sheffield. There would probably soon have been a branch to the Dove Holes quarries and Buxton, with the potential for a route onwards towards Derby. However either the criticisms directed at the project, or difficulty raising the money, meant that work was never started, and it was formally abandoned in 1832. This had a detrimental effect on the C&HPR, which had been completed to Whaley Bridge in July 1831. For over a decade it remained isolated from other railways, dependent on canals at each end, and having little to offer as a through route for goods and passengers.

Putting the S&MR in context again, it is significant that two other trans-Pennine routes were surveyed in the autumn of 1830 and were also not built. They were the alternative plans for the proposed Manchester & Leeds Railway. One was the Calder Valley route, again planned by George Stephenson, and the other was James Walker's route via Ashton under Lyne, Mossley, Delph and Elland. Both were rejected by Parliament during 1831.

The Sheffield & Manchester and the two Manchester & Leeds proposals were very different. The Calder Valley route was circuitous but easily graded and (as first planned) needed no very long tunnels. The Mossley route would have needed the longest railway tunnel yet built (about four miles), while the Sheffield and Manchester had both long tunnels and objectionable inclines. Of the three, only the S&MR obtained the approval of Parliament, probably in the main because it had no concerted opposition from established canal companies.

One suspects that Stephenson himself always preferred the Calder Valley line, and he was ready to take it to completion when it was successfully relaunched in 1836. He also retained an interest in the potential of a route between Derby, Bakewell, Buxton and Manchester, and this was the last railway project he remained involved with in his later years. The Sheffield and Manchester route was forgotten, but gradually parts of it were realised by the MSLR and the Midland, the final component being the Dore and Chinley line of 1894.

Judged both in the context of its time, and the broad view of history, Stephenson's Sheffield & Manchester line was surely not as impracticable as has been suggested. Many of Stephenson's contemporary engineers regarded cable-inclines (and even total operation by cable or by atmospheric pipe!) as being the best way to operate railways. His route had good traffic potential for minerals, and of course the Buxton limestone traffic still flourishes after all this time. It is quite possible that had shareholders in the original Sheffield & Manchester stuck to their guns they might have seen a better return than those who later invested in the Woodhead route!

## Some more houses with MS&L/GCR connections by Paul White

### **Part 1: Edward Watkin**

My recent hunt for the Robinson residences spurred me on to find the homes of other prominent GC and MS&L characters in Manchester and none could be more prominent than the Chairman himself, Edward Watkin.

Watkin's Manchester connections are well known. His residence, *Rose Hill* in Longley Lane, Northenden, Manchester was bought by his father, Absalom Watkin in 1832. Sir Edward Watkin extended the house in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, adding "a single storey loggia of the finest ashlar with Doric order pilasters....toy battlements appear elsewhere. The interiors are especially fine". The house was renowned for its spectacular stained glass; this is in evidence in the present-day appearance of the house, though it surely cannot be original as the house was heavily vandalised before its restoration early in the last decade. Above the main door the motto NISI DOMINUS FRUSTRA appears. The usual translation of this is "All is in vain without God", which is the message of Psalm 127 and also serves as the motto of the City of Edinburgh and The King's Own Scottish Borderers, founded in 1689 and now part of the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

The fortunes of *Rose Hill* sank during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and like many large houses it became a children's home, or more properly a remand home, closing under a cloud in the 1980s, embroiled in allegations of child abuse in Manchester's children's homes in the 1980s and 90s. During its time in this role in the 1970s a major landscape painting by the American artist Frederick Edwin Church was discovered in a little used room of the building. It had apparently been bought by Sir Edward in 1863 for a reported £10,000 and subsequently forgotten.



*'Rose Hill' - once the home of Edward Watkin and now divided into apartments.*

The house presented a sorry sight when it was featured in the *Manchester Evening News* of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2001. The house became a Grade 2 listed building on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1991 but had been empty for fifteen years and had been badly vandalised. The house featured in a Granada documentary entitled "Derelict Discoveries".

In 2003 *Rose Hill* was rescued from dereliction and turned into an exclusive apartment development, while the extensive gardens have been turned over to housing development. The stone boundary walls can be seen on Longley Lane, and the site of the entrance gates is now the beginning of Bronington Close.

Despite the fame and achievements of Sir Edward Watkin and his father, Absalom who was a diarist, cotton merchant and political activist, there is nothing locally to commemorate father or son, apart from a memorial in St Wilfrid's Church, and there is some support locally for a commemorative plaque or similar to be mounted on the restored house, or for the name to be commemorated in some other public way.

## References

*Lancashire: Manchester and the South East (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England)* by Clare Hartwell, Matthew Hyde & Nikolaus Pevsner.

*Manchester Evening News* 27<sup>th</sup> April.2001.

*North Cheshire Family Historian* July 2005: article "The Treasure of Rose Hill" featuring the painting 'The Icebergs' by Frederick Edwin Church\*.

*The Forgotten Men of Northenden* pub. by Didsbury Village Bookshop.

\*'The Icebergs' is an 1861 landscape oil painting by American painter Frederic Edwin Church that was inspired by sketches created on an 1859 voyage to the North Atlantic. He was accompanied by his friend, Louis Legrand Noble, who documented the voyage in his book *After Icebergs with a Painter*.

In 1863, the painting was shipped to London. In the meantime, Church had added the broken mast in the foreground. Maybe he was hinting at Franklin's ship. The painting was bought by Sir Edward Watkin and was more or less forgotten along with the artist. In 1979 it surfaced again, to fetch a price of \$2.5 million at a New York auction. It is now exhibited at the Dallas Museum of Art.

## Part 2: Charles Sacré

Charles Reboul Sacré was born in 1831. His earliest railway employment was as an apprentice on the Great Northern Railway under Archibald Sturrock, later becoming Assistant Loco Superintendent at Peterborough. He moved to the MS&L and was Chief Engineer and Locomotive Engineer from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1859 until his retirement in 1886.

His designs consisted of a number of double-framed types, and he was said to be on friendly terms with the workers at Gorton, and indeed the drivers. A broken crank axle on one of his 4-4-0s was responsible for the Bullhouse accident of 1884. Among the 24 passengers killed was Massey Bromley, who had been Locomotive Superintendent of the Great Eastern Railway. Although in no way responsible for the disintegration of the axle, it is said to have played on Sacré's mind.

He retired from his post in 1886 and committed suicide by shooting himself in 1889. His Manchester house, *Sunnyside* still stands, and is part of Manchester University's Dalton-Ellis Hall halls of residence of and is in use as a library. It is a massive Gothic style structure of almost-white brick, designed by the architect Richard Lane, who is best known for the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester. Sacré lived there from 1875 to his death in 1889.



'Sunnyside': once the home of Charles Sacré and now a university library.

## References

*Great Central Vol 2* by George Dow, pub. Ian Allan.

*Manchester Compendium* by Ed Glinert, pub. Allen Lane.

## Modellers' Corner by Tony West

Our friends at Bachmann have been busy once more and have released models in 4mm scale of a 2,000 gallon parachute water column and a goods shed based on the design used on the northern division (Lutterworth to Annesley) of the London Extension and found at most small stations.

By the time you read this the Bachmann class 9J (J11) might even be available. One thing that strikes me is the difference between British manufacturers and those in say Germany. Let me explain. If you wanted to model a German railway, say pre-1920, the equivalent of our pre-grouping era, there is a lot available from the leading German manufacturers covering most of the 'Landesbahn' old state companies, from the imperious KPEV (Prussian), Wurtemberg, Bavarian and even the Sachsen system. For these systems there are locos, carriages and wagons in the correct liveries. We however have only locos with nothing to run behind them, though I suspect that these are seen as collectors' items and so destined to spend their lives in their boxes or on display without any need to provide accompanying stock.

So here we are, Bachmann have provided a GCR class 8K, a 'Director' and they are about to market a 9J 'Pom-Pom'. They also provide an excellent range of London Extension architecture and yet ...not one item of rolling stock! Given the longevity of GC stock that survived through the LNER and even into the BR period, is anyone interested in getting together a list of 'sensible' wants that could be presented to Bachmann?

Back in 7mm land ....Quinton Road Models are getting ever nearer to marketing the bogie fish vans D50 and D50A. As you can see in the accompanying photo the test build captures the essence and character of the prototypes. Ragstone Models have now been supplied with drawings for their projected 40 ton bogie coal wagon kit, a huge thank you is due to Nigel Yule for his help on this one . The opportunity has also been taken to supply HMRS with details for lettering the bogie coal wagons ....which of course leads neatly into transfers! By the time you read this it's just possible that we will have learned whether HMRS consider GC transfers viable. Will keep you posted.



*The GCR 15t bogie fish van D50 test build from Quinton Road Models.*

## Model railway exhibition diary

*Some events that may interest our readers*

Sat 1<sup>st</sup> & Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> March: Mansfield MRE at St Peter's Centre, Church Side, Mansfield NG18 1AP. [www.mansfieldmodelrailway.co.uk](http://www.mansfieldmodelrailway.co.uk)

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> & Sun 9<sup>th</sup> March: Macclesfield MRG at Tytherington High School, Manchester Road, Macclesfield SK10 2EE. [www.macclesfieldmrg.org.uk](http://www.macclesfieldmrg.org.uk)

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> & Sun 16<sup>th</sup> March: Nottingham MRE at Haddon Park High School, Harvey Road, Bilborough, Nottingham NG8 3BB. [www.nottingham-modelrailway.org.uk](http://www.nottingham-modelrailway.org.uk)

Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> March: Chesham MRC at The Elgiva Theatre, St Mary's Way, Chesham HP5 1HR.

Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> & Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> March: The London Festival of Railway Modelling at Alexandra Palace, London N22 7AY. [www.model-railways-live.co.uk](http://www.model-railways-live.co.uk)

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> & Sun 6<sup>th</sup> April: Tame Valley Scouts MRS at Astley Sports College, Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 5BL.

Sat 5<sup>th</sup> & Sun 6<sup>th</sup> April: Sheffield MRE at Birkdale School, Oakholme Road, Sheffield S10 3DH. [www.sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts.com](http://www.sheffieldmodelrailwayenthusiasts.com)

Sat 19<sup>th</sup> & Sun 20<sup>th</sup> April: York MRS at York Racecourse, The Knavesmire, York YO23 1EX. [www.yorkshow.org.uk](http://www.yorkshow.org.uk)

Sat 26<sup>th</sup> & Sun 27<sup>th</sup> April: Liverpool MRE at Old Christ Church, Waterloo Road, Liverpool L22 1RF. [www.lmrs.org.uk](http://www.lmrs.org.uk)

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> & Sun 11<sup>th</sup> May: Leicester MRG at Humphrey Perkins High School, Cotes Road, Barrow-upon-Soar, Leicestershire LE12 8JU.

Sat 24<sup>th</sup> & Sun 25<sup>th</sup> May: Risborough & District MRC at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 9PP. [www.rdmrc.org.uk](http://www.rdmrc.org.uk)

Sat 7<sup>th</sup> & Sun 8<sup>th</sup> June: Wingfield Railway Group at the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1AH. [www.wingfieldrailwaygroup.co.uk](http://www.wingfieldrailwaygroup.co.uk)



*5MT 4-6-0 no.44847 stands at Woodford Halse with a Nottingham Victoria - Marylebone train as the crew change takes place. Taken in 1965. photo: Michael J Chapman / [www.railwayanamicheael.com](http://www.railwayanamicheael.com)*

## On the last day of the GC main line compiled by Bob Gellatly

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1966 was the last day of through working on the GC main line. Many rail enthusiasts turned out to take this last chance to travel between Nottingham Victoria and London Marylebone. As well as the 'Ords' it was the day of the LCGB railtour which ran from London Waterloo to Nottingham Victoria and points north, returning to Marylebone.

The table below shows the workings over the GC on that day from 08:15 and into the early hours of the next morning.

<b>service</b>	<b>loco</b>	<b>notes</b>
08:15 Nott Vic - Marylebone	'Black 5' no.44872.	Failed at Aylesbury and replaced by a class 24 diesel.
08:38 Marylebone - Nott Vic	2 x class 115 dmu (8 car).	
08:30 Newcastle - Poole	D1572	
09:00 Waterloo - Nott Vic	MN 35030 'Elder Dempster Lines'.	LCGB 'Great Central Railtour'.
10:54 Poole - Newcastle	D1572	
11:15 Nott Vic - Neasden parcels	'Black 5' no.45292.	Chalked inscription on the smokebox door "THE LAST DAY GREAT CENTRAL". Chalked on buffer beam "ANNESLEY".
12:20 Nott Vic - Marylebone	2 x class 115 dmu (8 car).	
d. 13:01 Nott Vic - Nott Vic	B1s 61173 + 61131.	LCGB 'Great Central Railtour'.
14:38 Marylebone - Nott Vic	D5000	
16:38 Marylebone - Nott Vic	'Black 5' no.45292.	See above.
17:15 Nott Vic - Marylebone	'Black 5' no.44984.	Wreath carried on smokebox door.
18:20 Nott Vic - Marylebone	MN 35030 'Elder Dempster Lines'.	LCGB 'Great Central Railtour'. 35020 then worked the empty stock to Clapham Jn via Neasden.
22:45 Marylebone - Manchester newspaper	'Black 5' no.44984.	See above. Replaced by a diesel at Nott Vic.
York - Swindon mail (d. Nott Vic about 01:30)	'Black 5' no.44858 from Nott Vic to Leicester.	
Manchester - Marylebone mail (d. Nott Vic 01:52)	'Black 5' no.44858 from Leicester (d. 02:35) to Woodford. Diesel from Woodford to Marylebone.	44858 ran light loco from Woodford to Banbury. The last through train on the GC.

'Black 5' no.44825 had been cleaned and rostered for the 17:15 ex Nott Victoria but was failed with injector problems at the last minute. The state of all the other 'Black 5s' was pitiable. Both 35030 and the two B1s were in a fairly clean condition.

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society had planned a trip from Leicester Central to Aylesbury and return but this was cancelled. Any idea what stock was rostered for this?

No time was lost in ripping up the track just to make sure that the GC had really died.

## A Londoner's memories of GC line journeys by Ron Gee

During the 1960s my employer, the Ministry of Defence, sent me on a variety of journeys during the swan-song of steam. These included three trips from Marylebone over the former GC line.

The first trip was to Nottingham on the 8.38am from Marylebone. Unfortunately this was a dmu but it did offer the advantage of a forward view behind the driver. The annexing of one of the front seats for myself was somewhat to the chagrin of a driver and fireman who were returning home on the cushions. They told me that they had brought a freight train down to Cricklewood which they described as a "dirty place". We discussed the run-down of the GC. The driver said that he used to drive commuter trains into Marylebone with 700 passengers on board. I shall refer again to this matter.



*A Derby-built class 115 dmu at East Leake, working the 8.38am Marylebone-Nottingham Victoria on a wet day in January 1966.  
photo: Robert Carroll collection*

emissions of smoke from the chimney. Some of the southbound trains just hauled a brake van. I suppose they were going to pick up a northbound freight. And so to Nottingham. The return from Nottingham was by steam, the locomotive being an ex-LMS 'Black 5'. There was no trouble getting a compartment to myself.

Another return day trip was to Brackley because I had volunteered to act as a marshal at Silverstone. It was not possible to buy a day return from Marylebone to Brackley, so I purchased a day return to Aylesbury and then another from there to Brackley. Only three or four passengers alighted at Brackley. From Brackley to Silverstone there were no buses in the morning, so I hitchhiked. I returned that afternoon by bus to Brackley. Although Brackley was slightly closer to Silverstone, dedicated buses were never provided to convey passengers to the racetrack. I suppose the London Midland Region was biased in favour of Blisworth for rail-road interchange on excursions to Silverstone. (On a Saturday in 1954 I did go to Silverstone by excursion train from Euston. At Blisworth, the buses were provided by Northampton Corporation on hire to United Counties, whose bus fleets were probably already committed to conveying shoppers on this day of the week.)

My third trip on the GC was after services to Manchester had ceased on the former GC. However during the period when the London Midland line south of Crewe was being electrified, overnight passenger services to Manchester were being routed via the GC route, so in order to get to Blackburn, a colleague and I travelled overnight from Marylebone to Manchester Piccadilly. Our locomotive was a 'Black 5'. We were both rail enthusiasts so we found a compartment near to the front. My colleague, who actually

As we passed Aylesbury I noticed a BR standard class 4 tender locomotive shunting the yard. No other freight trains were observed until we were past Woodford Halse. At Calvert, by this time closed to passenger services, the porter who was still employed at the station gave us a wave as we sped by.

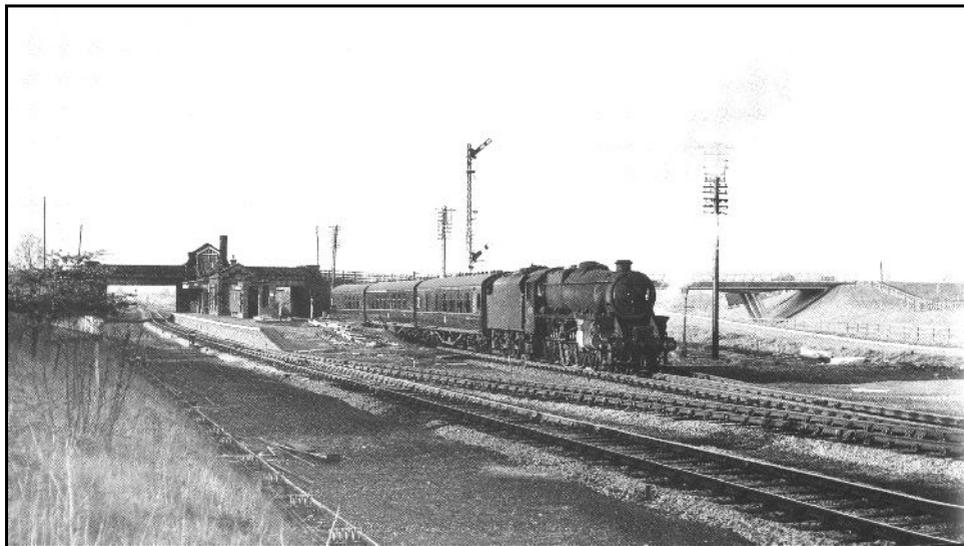
Otherwise no noteworthy features were observed en route to Woodford. North of Woodford Halse, several southbound freights were observed, usually hauled by 9Fs with impressive

built model steam locomotives, reckoned that one of the locomotive's pistons was giving trouble causing vibration which transmitted to the carriage. By Leicester the locomotive crew had had enough and we observed them phoning for help. This was not forthcoming at Leicester, but at Nottingham Victoria a diesel locomotive was provided to take over the train. The station was of course devoid of passengers, but two British Transport Policemen arrived to watch the locomotive change with interest. I hoped that at Sheffield an electric locomotive would be provided to finish the journey but the diesel worked all the way through to Piccadilly.

In describing these trips I have referred to commuter trains and bus services. North of Aylesbury the GC line ran through countryside with a low population. This led to an inevitable paucity of passengers and once the express and freight service started to decline in the 1960s, so the route became the victim to Beeching or pre-Beeching cuts. Although the reported conversation with the locomotive driver recorded that he reckoned that a commuter train to Marylebone conveyed 700 passengers, I have my doubts as to accuracy of this figure.

A glance at a United Counties bus map and timetable will illustrate the paucity of bus services in the Woodford Halse and Brackley areas. As an example a 1969 United Counties timetable records that the towns of Brackley and Northampton were linked by Midland Red bus service number 512 which ran only on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The contrast to bus services in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, where the population density is much higher, is quite marked.

A further factor influencing passenger numbers is how would these passengers get to and from the nearest station from their village. Today, if one looks out from a train passing Harpenden or Radlett stations, one will observe a sea of cars parked in the former goods yards. Such provision would have been necessary in the 1960s to fill a train to Marylebone. Last but not least, remember the attempt by the Metropolitan Railway to increase custom from Verney Junction in the 1930s. There was not enough demand to make the commuter services viable. This does not mean that I condoned the closure of the GC route. Indeed now is the time to re-open it instead of building HS2.



*BR 5MT 4-6-0 no.45288 setting off from Ashby Magna with the 3-coach 6.15pm Nottingham Victoria - Rugby service on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1966. The parallel M1 motorway was opened in Nov. 1965. Its construction required the removal of the station goods yard and cattle dock. The station remained open until the very end - 5<sup>th</sup> May 1969.*

*photo: M.Mitchell*



*above:* BR class 5MT 4-6-0 no.45234 with an up freight between East Leake and Loughborough in September 1964. photo: David Ford

*below:* BR class 5MT no.44936 at East Leake with the 17:15 Nottingham Victoria-Marylebone service in the late summer of 1966. The state of the locomotive is worse than many already despatched to the scrapyard. The headlamp, which appears to be spotlessly clean, should be on the non-existent top lamp bracket. There seems to be a distinct lack of urgency about the departure with passengers taking the opportunity to chat with the driver. photo: Tony Cave





**A 'Black 5' at Aylesbury.** BR 5MT 4-6-0 no.44920 takes water at the north end of platform 3 at Aylesbury. The train is the 14.38 Marylebone – Nottingham Victoria and the date is 10<sup>th</sup> June 1966. Through services on the GC line finished on Sat. 3 Sept. 1966, following which the line between Rugby and Calvert was closed and the track lifted with undue haste. *photo: Bill Wright*

## Some recent items from Great Central Railwayana Auctions

Auctions will take place at Stoneleigh Park on 12 April, 12 July and 11 Oct.

[www.gcrauctions.com](http://www.gcrauctions.com)



**AYLESBURY TOWN**

A totem from Aylesbury Town, a GW&GC Jnt/GC& Met Jnt station. Sold for **£760**.



**WEST RUISLIP**

A totem from West Ruislip, a GW&GC Jnt station. Sold for **£660**.



**GLENALMOND**

A nameplate, GLENALMOND, from GCR class 1A (LNER B8) 4-6-0 no.4, the first of the class built at Gorton in June 1913 and named after the Scottish home of the GCR Chairman Sir Alexander Henderson. It spent most of its working life at Annesley, moving early in 1947 to Sheffield from where it was soon withdrawn in November of that year. Sold for **£13,500**.



An LNER enamel platform lamp tablet from CHESTERFIELD CENTRAL. A GCR station on the Heath to Staveley loop, closing in 1963. Sold for **£440**.



An LNER enamel platform lamp tablet from CLOWN & BARLBOROUGH. An LD&ECR station between Shirebrook and Killamarsh, closing in 1939. The suffix was only added in 1938. Sold for **£380**.



An MS&LR ceramic inkwell. Sold for **£150**.

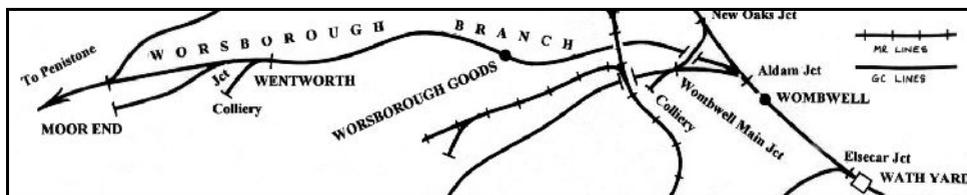


A GCR silver plated ashtray by Walker and Hall, 5" diameter. Sold for **£260**.

## Memories of the 'Garratt' by Ron Fareham

In the 1940s, the mineral and freight traffic originating inland passing through South Yorkshire and going westward to Lancashire and Cheshire, was enormous. The biggest obstacle to the progress of this traffic was the Wentworth Incline on the Worsborough branch - 2½ miles of 1 in 40 gradient. The Worsborough line was originally a dead end branch terminating at the Moor End Colliery, but because of the gradients and the severe congestion caused by working all westbound traffic through the town of Barnsley - with the assistance of two extra engines - it was decided to connect the west end of the Moor End branch with the Barnsley to Penistone line at West Silkstone Junction, thereby creating a Barnsley avoiding line. The difference in levels between Wentworth Junction and West Silkstone Junction was such that the 2½ mile connecting line had to be graded at 1 in 40, a severe gradient for a railway.

The line, because of the driving of the Silkstone Nos. 1 and 2 tunnels of 75 and 290 yards long, took four years to construct, from 1876 to 1880. This 1 in 40 stretch was always known by enginemen as 'Plevna', and in my early days nobody seemed to know the reason for this. However, research has revealed that the four years of construction coincided with the period of the Russo-Turkish war, and during that conflict the siege of Plevna, a town in what is now Bulgaria, took place. The siege lasted for six months and was of serious concern internationally. It was a strange habit of the Victorians to name structures and places after international events, and this, although the memory of it had now faded, was obviously the reason why the name of a small town in the Ottoman Empire was given to a short piece of railway in South Yorkshire! The name was in use right up until the Worsborough Branch was closed in 1983. Incidentally, the town of Plevna is now called Pleven.



*Map of the Worsborough branch before the 1906 remodelling of Aldam Jct.*

The object of this diversion into nineteenth century history is to set the scene for the introduction of a remarkable and controversial locomotive - its sole duty for nearly thirty years was to push trains up 'Plevna'. It was the most notable engine ever to be stationed at Mexborough shed. I refer, of course, to the 2-8-0+0-8-2 locomotive built in 1925 by the firm of Beyer Peacock at Gorton, Manchester. It was the most powerful steam locomotive in Britain and was the sole example of an articulated design built for the LNER. The engine was always known simply as 'the Garratt'

There had been many theoretical solutions put forward for solving the Wentworth bank operating problem. Before the First World War J.G. Robinson's idea was to use two Q4 'Tinies' back to back as a single unit. This was later amended to use a pair of the larger and more powerful O4 2-8-0 'Superheaters'. There was also a plan to use a three cylinder 0-10-2 tank locomotive with a tractive effort of 46,987 lbs. and Robinson had even produced drawings for this project. Another scheme was for the electrification of the line. The pressing reason for a solution was that British coal production had reached its peak in 1913 and the amount passing up the Wentworth bank was increasing in proportion. The original Garratt scheme was for two such locomotives, a minimum required to work the volume of traffic up the bank. Trains could not be delayed by waiting for a single banker to return from its previous duty. Because of the war, nothing was done with these projects by the Great Central

Railway and, after when the future of the pre-grouping companies was threatened by Lloyd George, any scheme for the Worsborough line was held in abeyance.

After the 1923 Grouping, of course, Nigel Gresley became involved in all matters affecting locomotive development and the final design for the Garratt involved two of his class 02 three cylinder 2-8-0s instead of the 04s. This gave a total of six cylinders and a tractive effort of 72,940lbs. It was numbered 2395 and appeared in August 1925

'The Garratt' was never looked upon with favour by Mexborough, Barnsley or Wentworth men - particularly the firemen - as they were in effect doing the work of two men. Wentworth was a separate depot for promotion. There were nine sets of men there for the three engines involved, the Garratt and two 04s. If the Garratt was out of commission for some reason, two more 04s were sent either from Barnsley or, more likely, from Mexborough, and an extra set of men for the fourth engine sent from Barnsley. Wentworth was not a depot in the true sense, only a small cabin for signing on and waiting if traffic was light, which was not very often. It was a cosmopolitan little place with, in my early days, men from places such as Neasden, Ipswich, March, Retford, Northwich and Frodingham, as well as Barnsley, being stationed there.

Firing the Garratt on two successive days was forbidden, so it was an 'every other day' roster. It was despatched to Mexborough shed for even minor defects. The long main steam pipes to the two sets of cylinders had flexible pipes because of the extreme length of the engine. These were regularly leaking steam owing to flexing when passing through crossover roads (ie four times per trip). Blowing joints obscured the lookout forward and of course they were a particular problem when such a long locomotive was buffering up behind a train. A further defect when buffering up to a brake van was the steam brake. The steam pipe to the brake cylinders was necessarily a long one and the steam tended to condense into water below a certain temperature. The regular Wentworth drivers always went up to a train "on the regulator", ie using small intermittent applications of the regulator at very slow speed.

Taking out the Garratt from Mexborough shed on a Monday morning was always regarded as something to be avoided. This job was in the bottom link (where else?) and the crew signed on at 02:15. Two hours were allowed for preparation (double the normal allowance) and departure time was 04:15 so as to be at Wentworth for a 05:00 start. Making up the fire before departure was like filling a cellar with coal; you could shovel for twenty minutes and not see any difference on the 56.5 sq.ft. of firegrate. Before leaving shed, the crew always went under the coal stage and topped up the bunker. When the engine arrived at Wentworth the Mexborough men were relieved by the regular Wentworth crew, and the first job they did was to take it up to Wentworth Colliery to top up the bunker with coal again. Such was the appetite of the Garratt!

My booked driver in the bottom link in 1942 was Cliff Porter and he always took Monday off when it was our turn to take out the Garratt, so I usually had a passed fireman as a driver. He always said, "I'm not getting up at one o'clock on a Monday morning to take the Garratt to Wentworth. It's their engine, let them come and fetch it!" This was, of course, impossible as there was no way there they could get to Mexborough at that time on a Monday morning. Cliff always considered himself a gentleman driver, which of course, he was, and he objected to oiling round for someone else.

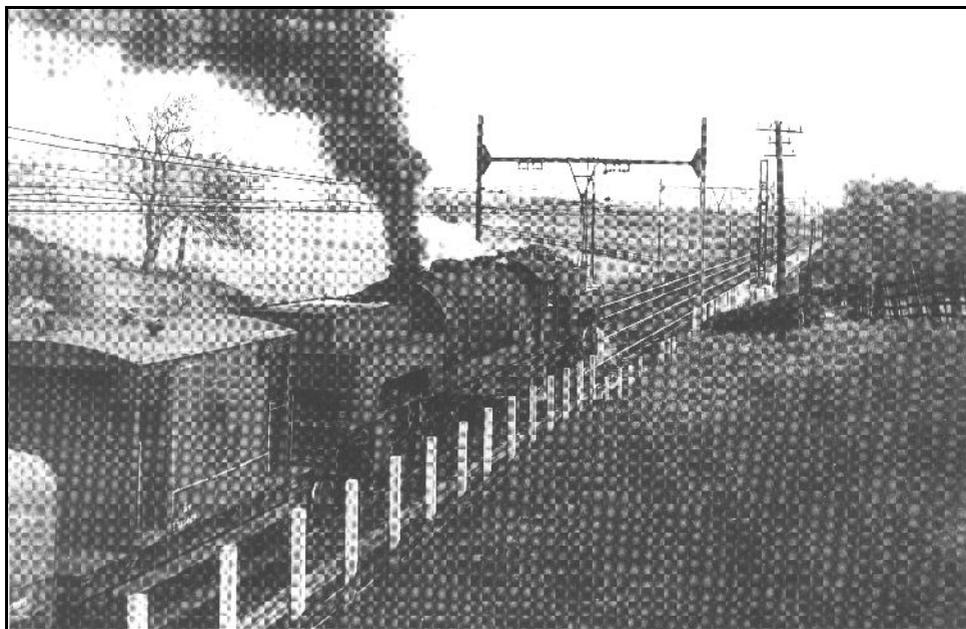
Ron Silverwood, an eminent old Barnsley driver who had fired and driven the Garratt for many years is on record for the statement 'The Garratt was 178 tons of nothing!'. This was the universal view at Wentworth, Barnsley and Mexborough - though the latter was only marginally involved.

With the electrification of the Worsborough branch pending in 1951/52 the Garratt (now numbered 69999) was sent to Bromsgrove, south of Birmingham on the London Midland Region, in March 1949, to serve as banker on the Lickey Incline. This portion of the old Midland Railway main line between Birmingham and Bristol, was similar to the Wentworth Incline both in length and gradient, two miles at 1 in 37½.

However, there were a few accidents at Bromsgrove, mostly when the Garratt was buffering up behind passenger trains. With this rolling stock, tight coupled, there was no give in the train, only in the springs of the rear buffers, and on one occasion the rear of a coach was badly damaged. After this, the Garratt was used bunker first, as this placed the driver nearer the point of contact. At all times whilst in South Yorkshire the Garratt was worked chimney-first up the gradient to protect the firebox crown sheet. Reversing this procedure at Lickey would always put the crown sheet in some danger.

The Garratt was returned to Mexborough in Nov. 1950 where it remained in store until returned to banking duties on the Worsborough branch in Feb. 1951. In August 1952, in preparation for a second spell at Bromsgrove, the Garratt was sent to Gorton where it was converted to oil burning and to help with the buffering problem, a large electric lamp was fixed to the back of the rear water tank, with a Stones steam generator fitted to the side of the smoke box to provide the power. After a less than entirely successful test run (stalling at Hadfield and Torside) the Garratt was despatched to Bromsgrove in June 1955. Its time as a Lickey banker was short lived and the Garratt was put in store in Sept. 1955 and eventually withdrawn in Dec. 1955.

It is interesting to surmise what the outcome would have been had Robinson built his pre-Grouping version of the Garratt. Those familiar with GC engines would expect Robinson's design to have been more successful than Gresley's turned out to be.



*BR class U1 2-8-8-2 no.69999, the 'Garratt', is giving a helping hand to a York-Mottram working at Moor End on the approach to the Silkstone tunnels. This would have been in 1951/2 when the Garratt worked its second spell on the Wentworth Incline. The catenary is in place for the first stage of electrification between Wath and Dunford Bridge which was implemented on 4<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1952. The route of the Worsborough branch is now the Dove Valley Trail. photo: ER Morten*

## A walk down Gorton Lane with Bob Gellatly



Finding myself staying in Manchester overnight last summer I thought I would make good use of a fine evening by taking a walk down Gorton Lane. Armed with the Godfrey Edition map for the area (104.12 Openshaw 1912) I set off from the Manchester Sportcity Travelodge to find out what is left in modern Manchester of Gorton Works. The locations are shown on the map on the following page. It saddened me that there was no memorial or information board to mark the site of Gorton works.

**A** – The railway bridges over Bessemer Street. The empty parapets carried the lines into Gorton shed on the left from the main line. The surviving bridge that is furthest away still carries the main line. The road has a peculiar dog-leg shape as it passes under the long bridge causing drivers to sound their horn as they approach.



**B** – The original Victorian St Barnabas church in Openshaw has been replaced by a more modern structure. Whether that is an improvement is debatable. It was from the original St Barnabas that the 'Valour' nameplate went missing.

**C** – This travel agents specialising in South Asian destinations was once the Station Hotel adjacent to the original Gorton station which was accessed by the driveway to the left. The present Gorton station is sited further east.





**D** – Much of the site of Gorton shed and Gorton Works is now a wholesale market. This is the entrance on Whitworth Street. Opposite the entrance is an open grassed area on which a plinthed locomotive would make an excellent memorial to Gorton works.

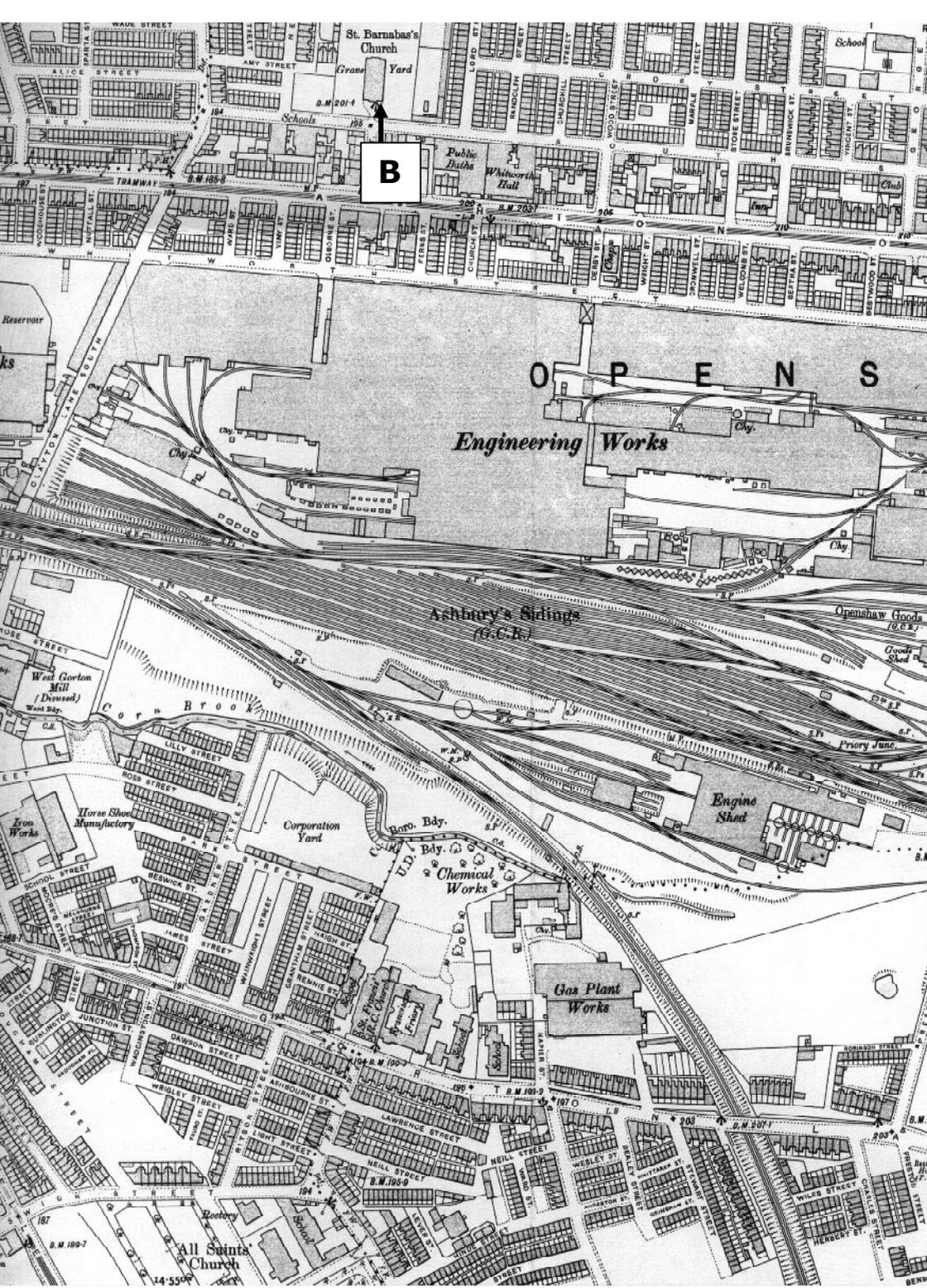
**E** – Part of the Gorton Works site is a police training centre. This is the entrance on Lawton Street. It is on the site of the Gorton works foundry.



**F** – The Gorton shed and works were divided by Wellington Street, a cul-de-sac that lead to a footbridge over the main line. The abutment for this footbridge is still in place on the north side of the tracks. Viewed from Railway Street.



**G** – A water tank still standing on the Gorton works site. Also viewed from Railway Street.



**B**

**O P E N S**  
*Engineering Works*

*Ashbury's Sidings (G.C.R.)*

*Chemical Works*

*Gas Plant Works*

*Engine Shed*

All Saints Church  
14-5300



## Arrivals on the bookshelf

### "Steam over Woodhead – Part One" by Eddie Johnson

Published by Book Law Publications ([www.booklaw.co.uk](http://www.booklaw.co.uk)), 2013 at £23.99.

ISBN 9781 909625 12 9. Softback 144 pages.

Woodhead electric. For many railway enthusiasts the words go together like coffee and cream, but in his latest work Eddie reminds us that for more than a century - over three-quarters of its existence - the Woodhead line was operated by steam.

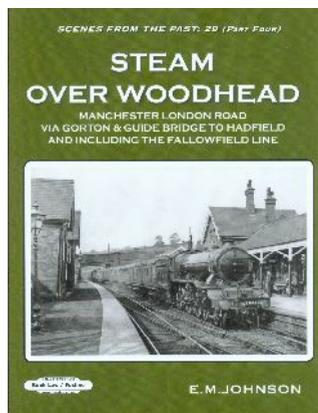
Members will be aware of Eddie's Woodhead earlier trilogy, published as Parts 1 to 3 of Foxline's 'Scenes from the Past: 29'. Parts 1 and 2 portrayed the route either side of the Woodhead tunnels (with steam aplenty), then part 3, *The Electric Railway*, learnedly detailed the 1,500 volt DC electrification and its operation. Many (including your reviewer) would have thought that was that, but now we have *Steam over Woodhead Part One* which is subtitled 'Scenes from the Past:29 (Part Four)', with a promise of at least one more still to come, as part 4 only takes us from Manchester London Road to Hadfield. Ironically that is the extent of the surviving western section of the route today, though Eddie's beautiful book underlines how much has been lost as the line has cruelly been stripped of its main line status, nowhere more brutally than at once burgeoning Guide Bridge. And they tell us our railways are full to capacity!

This book, Eddie advises, was prompted by the fund of new photographs he has unearthed since the original trilogy was published. Superbly reproduced, as ever, by Amadeus Press, they comprehensively illustrate the route, starting from Manchester London Road then, after a break of journey at Gorton to trace the Fallowfield line, continuing through Guide Bridge, Godley and across the Etherow and Dinting Vale to Hadfield. Finally, a Manchester Central reprise (if you haven't got Eddie's *Manchester Central and the Great Northern Goods Warehouse* it can be earnestly recommended) completes the Fallowfield loop at Chorlton Junction.

There are well over 200 photographs ranging from MS&L days through to the British Railways era, with just a few latter day shots "under the wires" - though, as Eddie says, "not a Bo+Bo or Co-Co in sight". Pride of place must go to the Great Central era, with trains headed by John G. Robinson's lovely engines. It seems churlish to pick out individual favourites from such a wealth of beautiful photographs, but immaculate Atlantic no.1092 at Fallowfield on page 61, or sister-engine no.358 to the east of Godley Junction competing across pages 110-111 with class 11A 4-4-0 no.855 cannot fail to command attention. The photographs are excellent, with many, probably most, being published here for the first time, but however delightful, this book must not be regarded as a photo album. The photographs illustrate a text the easy readability of which disguises the wealth of thoroughly researched information within - Eddie Johnson's trademark qualities.

Again, it is perhaps unfair to pick out individual highlights but for your reviewer, the fabulously illustrated in-depth look around Gorton Tank (look at that of the paint shop on page 37) had a particular appeal, including the posthumous recollections of Frank Rushton. His memories of 49 years service, encompassing the Great Central, LNER and BR eras, were recorded by Allan Brown in 1980, just a year before Frank died.

This is a lovely and valuable book for which Eddie deserves our congratulations and thanks. The Woodhead trilogy was excellent: 'Steam over Woodhead Part One' is arguably even better. Roll on Part Two.



Ken Grainger

## "My Life on British Railways from Nationalisation to Privatisation" by Jack A. Turner

Self-published by Jacett Publications ([www.jacettpublishing.co.uk](http://www.jacettpublishing.co.uk)) at £12.95.

ISBN 978 0 9576871 0 3. Softback (A5 size) 225 pages.

Having become interested in railways as a boy growing up during the 1930s and early 1940s in the Buckinghamshire town of Aylesbury, Jack Turner had a desire to become a steam locomotive driver, joining the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company in 1947. Although Jack became a fireman, his ambition to be a driver was thwarted by events out of his control. However, as the result of a chance conversation with a fellow railway worker, he then became a signalman, which led to a steady upward climb through the waged and salaried staff grades to the lofty position of Chief Operation Inspector, responsible for many operating issues on two major trunk routes heading north from London Euston.

Along the way, Jack spent periods of time working as a relief signalman, a booking office clerk and a relief station master, also being responsible for the operational elements of many improvement projects.

In this book, Jack relates a miscellany of stories about his forty-six year career on the railways, these being a mixture of the informative, the funny and the sad, all of which took place against the background of the most drastic changes that have taken place on the domestic railway network in its near-200 year history.

*Publisher's notes*

Jack Turner, who is a member of the GCRS, will supply copies of his book to other members for £12 post free. Please send a cheque made out to 'Jack A. Turner' to Jacett Publications, 2 Regency Court, Alexandra Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 4AX.

I will be happy to receive a review of this book.

*The Editor*

---

### Poets Corner

We don't often see poetry in this journal but Stewart Donohoe was inspired to write a piece of doggerel (sorry, I mean poetry) when he saw the photo of GCRS Sheffield branch members at Kiveton Park on p20 of the last issue of *Forward*.

*There once was a laddie called Luff  
Who's photos we aint seen enough  
But in Forward, page twenty,  
Pictured are GC members-a-plenty,  
Some in shorts and looking quite rough!*

If other readers feel inspired to write some poetry then please let us all enjoy it!



*photo: Mel Luff*

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

In November the Department for Transport announced that the old Victorian Woodhead steam tunnels were to be sealed, now that work is completed on installing the new National Grid power cable through the new tunnel. This will effectively preclude any possibility of the Woodhead route ever reopening again, despite the fact that capacity on the existing trans-Pennine routes is already becoming a problem.

It is also sad to report that trans-Pennine freight traffic, which still uses sections of the GC in Manchester, has declined to its lowest level since Woodhead closed in 1981. Only the following services are still running regularly in December as follows: the daily waste trains from Northenden/Pendleton to Scunthorpe and return; the twice weekly Enterprise from Warrington to Doncaster and return; the Tinsley to Liverpool loaded steel service on Thursdays and the returning empties on Fridays; the weekly loaded scrap service from Attercliffe to Liverpool.

Network Rail test trains continued to be observed over various sections of the GC in November as follows: Class 150 unit 950001 was seen on track recording duties at Guide Bridge on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> and working over the Penistone Branch on the 10<sup>th</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup> 31233 and 36782 top and tailed a test train from Doncaster to Derby via Sheffield to Broughton Lane where it reversed before working to Deepcar thence via Darnall. On its return it passed Woodburn at 13:57 to be followed at 14:05 by the RHTT worked by 20302/312 en route to Deepcar. This brought four different types of traction to the branch in one day. Then on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of November 31465 was in use on another test train this time working over the Penistone branch. Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> saw a private excursion organised by the Penistone Rail Partnership work from Huddersfield to Nottingham via Penistone and return, formed by a three-car 158754.

Despite the use of the RHTT to Deepcar, November was a bad month for trains slipping on the branch. This was partly due to the railhead conditions and the increase in tonnages being conveyed to Stocksbridge with trains regularly conveying loads up to 2,000 tonnes. On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> 66121 passed Rotherham at 18:04 but did not reach Deepcar until four hours later! On the following day 66126 became stuck beyond Victoria and was assisted in the rear by 60063 arriving 3 hours late. The Rotherham drivers working these services reported that the Class 66 locos were just not powerful enough for the loads being moved and as a result the trains were then worked by Class 60 locos whenever possible and as a result fewer delays were incurred. Locos used included 60039/59/63/65/92.

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December a railtour from King's Cross to Hull worked by 67007 and 60020 travelled over the GC from Retford via Worksop to Deepcar thence through Mexborough and Hatfield.

The first delivery of the Class 350/4 Desiro electric units arrived at the Siemens TransPennine Depot at Ardwick on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013. By January 2014, 10 units numbered 350401 to 410 had been allocated to the depot and will be used on services from Manchester to Scotland.

A new Network Rail control and signalling centre is being built at Ashburys and when it is operational sometime in 2016 it will be replacing all the existing power and manual signal boxes still operational in the NW of England.

At Guide Bridge station a new booking office is being constructed adjacent to the westbound platform. One of the more unusual workings along the GC line between Guide Bridge and Manchester is the HST measurement train formed of power cars 43013/014, which runs approx every 2 months from Heaton to Derby and back. On the 20<sup>th</sup> January it passed through Guide Bridge around 21:00 on the outward journey.

*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.*



*above: DB Schenker no.60020 passes through the sylvan surroundings of Beeley Wood in the upper Don Valley on its way to Deepcar with a King's Cross – Hull charter on 28<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2013. It's difficult to imagine that this was once part of the busy electric railway over Woodhead. photo: Alan Padley*

*below: Three class 350/4 units at the TPE Ardwick Depot on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2014. This modern depot has been built on land that was once part of the GC goods yard at Ardwick on the north side of the line between Ardwick and Ashburys. The Siemens/TPE depot opened in 2006 to maintain the class 185 dmu fleet and will now also maintain the class 350/4 emu fleet intended for the TPE Manchester-Scotland services. photo: Stewart Higham*



## **Woodhead tunnels to be sealed by Paul White**

On November 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 the Department for Transport put out the following Press Release:

### **The Woodhead tunnels will not be purchased by the government**

The Woodhead tunnels are located on the former Manchester to Sheffield railway line, known as the Woodhead route, which was closed to passenger traffic in 1970 and to freight in 1981. The original single bore Victorian tunnels were replaced in 1953 by a new tunnel when the line was electrified. In the 1960s, National Grid bought the Victorian tunnels and installed high voltage cables to transmit electricity. When the line finally closed in 1981, National Grid purchased the modern tunnel with a view of installing new cables in the modern tunnel and abandoning the Victorian tunnels when cables needed renewing some 30 years later.

In 2007, National Grid began work on this project. This is now close to completion and a contract will shortly be let for the permanent sealing of the Victorian tunnels.

In 2007 to 2008 ministers received many representations urging them to protect the Woodhead tunnels so that the Woodhead route could be re-opened to rail traffic in the future. There was no case then for taking any steps to halt National Grid's plan but Ministers did agree to consider, at the appropriate time, whether or not to instigate an inspection and maintenance regime on the Victorian tunnels. This would leave open the option to move cables back into the Victorian tunnels and re-use the modern tunnel for rail traffic in the future. With completion of the work imminent, that decision needs to be made now before the tunnels are sealed.

Since 2008, much has happened which has helped inform my decision. The government has committed funding to the Northern Hub programme. This includes schemes to increase capacity and line speeds on the Hope Valley route. A study recently carried out by Network Rail indicates that demand for travel between Manchester and Sheffield could more than double in thirty years.

With the planned investment, the Hope Valley line and its trains could accommodate this growth. If freight grows, schemes have also been identified which could enable more freight trains to run.

The Victorian tunnels are not in a good condition and would require on-going funding to keep them in a condition necessary for possible re-use. These costs would fall on the taxpayer or mean less money for other vital rail investment in the north.

If an additional rail route was ever required between Manchester and Sheffield, it is unlikely that even the modern tunnels would be suitable for re-use and, given advances in tunnelling technology even since 2008 as witnessed by Crossrail, the best solution is most likely to be the construction of a new tunnel.

I am therefore announcing that the government will not be purchasing the tunnels from National Grid in order to instigate an inspection and maintenance regime and I shall be informing National Grid accordingly.

Before reaching my decision, I wrote to over 40 MPs representing constituencies both east and west of the Pennines, and received three replies. I also wrote to other statutory bodies with an interest in the tunnels and Network Rail. In total just seven replies were received by early September but I have given them full consideration.

My decision does not rule the possibility of re-opening the Woodhead route to rail traffic in the future, should a new line ever be required. Also large parts of the closed route are protected from development and will continue to be available for the enjoyment of cyclists, horse riders and hikers passing through the magnificent landscape of the South Pennines.

*Stephen Hammond MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport)*

Our local campaign group "Reopen the Woodhead Line" are aware of the DfT's decision, and while the Undersecretary mentions the "possibility" of the route being used for rail in the future, two factors militate against this being achieved; the cost of re-boring along the route of the two original tunnels, which would offer a better option regarding speed, and the fact that, as the "new" tunnel has not been in rail use for the past 32 years it would no longer be of sufficient proportions for a double-track railway due to the lack of evacuation walkways. This provision does not apply to railway tunnels older than the 1954 tunnel - in other words, all the rest. A further issue is the probable use of the rail formation between Woodhead and Hadfield to bury cables and thus end the "eyesore" of the current overhead lines. This would make reinstatement virtually impossible. The campaign group is urging its supporters to write to their MPs to ensure they are aware of views against the further destruction of Woodhead as a future rail route. This sits oddly with Mr Hammond's statement (above) that he contacted 40 MPs for their views but heard from only seven.

With this in mind I sent the following email to MPs Clive Betts, Paul Blomfield, Angela Smith, Meg Munn, Andrew Gwynn, Jonathan Reynolds, Lilian Greenwood and David Blunkett:

I have recently read the statement from Transport Under Secretary Stephen Hammond on the Government information website, which appears to confirm that there is no prospect of the Woodhead Line being re-opened. This is very sad news, as it remains the best-engineered of the Trans-Pennine rail routes and certainly better than the parallel Hope Valley line, which has over 7 miles of wet, high-maintenance Victorian tunnelling and is having yet more millions spent on it to bring it up to modern standards, while another Trans-Pennine route, that to Huddersfield via Rochdale is having to close for four months due to tunnel problems. National Grid have got the new Woodhead Tunnel for next to nothing because they would not spend some of their vast wealth on maintaining the "old" Woodhead tunnels through which their cables have run since 1963 and Stephen Hammond, the current Transport Under Secretary, no doubt as badly-advised as his predecessors, will not commit any money to the maintenance of the old tunnels, so they will be sealed and effectively abandoned.

Let us remember that the Woodhead Route was electrified in 1954 at a cost then of £12.5 millions, the new tunnel itself, concrete lined and dry to this day costing £4.5 million of that sum, and was selected for development as a major freight route in the second Beeching Report (1965). Long before our environmentally-conscious days the electric trains over Woodhead were putting power back into the grid by means of regenerative braking. Closure was short-sighted, short-termist, and bitterly fought by trades unionists, environmentalists, local councils and conservation groups and even produced political unity with the local Conservatives also joining the fight, a fight in which I was proud to play a significant role.

The tunnel, at over 3 miles long, was described on its opening in 1954 as "...an event of immense importance in the history of Britain's railways". Closed a mere 27 years later, it is now just a convenient hole in the ground to put a cable through. All of that investment has effectively been wasted when it could be turned to good use by renewing the line as a fast trans-Pennine link for a mere fraction of what our current government is prepared to commit to the controversial HS2 project.

A recent statement by Network Rail suggests that the demand for rail services to Sheffield will increase by 56% by 2029, which would seem to be a compelling argument for maintaining the route throughout. In conclusion, it is a sobering thought that both road and rail communications between the major cities of Manchester and Sheffield are significantly poorer than they were 40 years ago;

the Woodhead rail route is no longer available, the Hope Valley route suffers from endemic maintenance problems, the trunk road via Castleton has been permanently closed since 1979 due to landslips, the A57 is also beset by landslips and is frequently closed, while the A628 Woodhead Pass is frequently closed by the weather and is subject to many, often fatal accidents often involving HGVs and of course contributes to traffic problems when it meets the A57 at Hollingworth.

I cannot think of any other developed European country that would allow such a retrograde situation to arise.

I and many others would appreciate your support on the above matters. The whole question of transport communications between Manchester and Sheffield needs addressing in an integrated way.

The results of this exercise could hardly be regarded as encouraging, and I received the following replies:

***reply from Meg Munn MP for Sheffield Heeley***

You may be aware that as I am not your MP I cannot deal with the issues you raise in detail. However I can confirm that I agree that much more needs to be done about links between Manchester and Sheffield and I would have liked to see the tunnels re-opened.

***reply from Clive Betts MP for Sheffield South East***

Thank you very much indeed for your e-mail about the closure of the Woodhead Tunnels. I agree with much of what you say but we are not going to persuade the Government to alter their minds, unfortunately. Your last sentence is, however, also extremely important. Already discussions are beginning between MPs, Councils and Chambers of Commerce on both sides of the Pennines with a view to asking Government to undertake a comprehensive study of transport links between the Sheffield City region and the Manchester City region. For two of the most important population centres in the country the links are, quite frankly, deplorable.

I am not sure whether we will even get the Government to agree to a study let alone to do anything about the findings of a study but at least there are many of us who agree with you and want to press for this to be done.

***reply from David Blunkett MP for Sheffield Brightside & Hillsborough***

Thanks for being in touch. My colleague Angela Smith MP, who represents Penistone and Stocksbridge, has been leading us on this issue. We have been banging away on this with no effect. The latest Government pronouncement back in November has really put the kibosh on what would have been an excellent initiative.

I understand entirely the pressure that exists and the difficulty that this causes, particularly to those west of the pennines.

I think this is a lost opportunity and given the Government's attitude and what is now happening, I am afraid it is a lost cause.

***reply from Jonathan Reynolds MP for Stalybridge & Hyde***

Thank you for your recent e-mail regarding the sealing of the old Victorian Woodhead tunnels.

I am very much of the view that we need to see much better Transpennine (*sic*) transport options across the board, including both rail and road links. Whilst I agree that there are possible long-term improvements to transport around the Woodhead line that could be served by the old tunnels remaining unsealed, these are currently unfunded, and could have a large number of possibly negative impacts to the wider area.

Indeed, keeping Woodhead in its current state would require significant investment to ensure that it is kept safe. This cost, that would have to be borne by the Dept. for Transport to maintain the tunnels but currently there is no budget for this. This could

therefore mean that other projects in the Longdendale area would be put at risk as funds are diverted to do this.

In addition, any changes to the tunnels could impact on the proposed improvements to services to existing train services to Manchester. Services through a reopened Woodhead in the future would also have to use a lengthy circular route via Penistone to get to Sheffield and Network Rail believe that even with 98% growth in passenger numbers by 2040 the existing lines between Manchester and Sheffield will be able to cope.

Like most people I feel a tremendous emotional attachment to the tunnels, but at present I cannot see a case for keeping the older Victorian tunnels open. I am, however, always willing to consider any case that is made.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me and please do not hesitate to do so again in the future.

---

The replies are interesting; three broadly supportive but resigned to the situation as it is, while the one from Jonathan Reynolds is almost entirely negative.

At the present time substantial investment is being put into the Hope Valley line in terms of work to increase capacity of the railway between Sheffield and Manchester planned by Network Rail. A new section of railway and new platform at Dore and Totley station to serve Hope Valley Line services is planned, together with loops to allow express passenger trains to overtake slower passenger and freight trains at other locations. The work is scheduled to run from 2016 to the end of 2018. Network Rail says that demand for rail services to Sheffield will be up by 56% by 2029 and according to Mr Reynolds by 98% by 2040. This, together with the ongoing work on the "Northern Hub", with the Standedge Trans-Pennine Route electrification already ongoing puts any hope of a reopened Woodhead into context - certainly not in my lifetime, if at all.

In view of all the above, I put in a request to National Grid regarding organising a possible visit to the tunnels before they are sealed, but this has unfortunately been refused on Health and Safety grounds. I have, however, been assured that the original stone portal structures at each end will still be visible. The final closure of the portals across the face of the structural concrete walls will be made in stone. The permanent seal will take the form of a reinforced concrete wall at each portal. This is for safety reasons in order to prevent access. Whilst this could technically be reversed, National Grid state it would be highly dangerous to enter the tunnels while there is no ongoing structural monitoring to assess their condition. Sealing the tunnels is seen as the only option at this point on the grounds of public safety.

And there the matter rests. A 168 years of transport history are sealed away forever beneath the Pennines, while a major modern tunnel has become a cable-duct. A route which has carried millions of passengers and countless tons of coal, steel and mixed freight has spent the past thirty years as a route for walkers, cyclists and the horseriders, and may yet adopt another revenue-free role as a piece of landscaping. It says much about Britain today that communications by road and rail between two principal northern cities are worse now than they were fifty years ago, and with nothing positive on the horizon.



*The Woodhead portals today. The old single bore tunnels are on the left and the new tunnel, with the cable ducts, is on the right. photo:Paul White*

## HS2 v. Great Central by 'Piloti'

*Reproduced from Private Eye 1354 by kind permission (www.private-eye.co.uk).  
Submitted by Paul White*

Though the HS2 rail project is still uncertain and threats to individual buildings are not yet urgent, one thing has been clear for some time: as planned, bringing HS2 into Euston will involve a swathe of destruction between the station and Primrose Hill and the demolition of some 300 homes.

As can be seen elsewhere, today's railway engineers conspicuously lack the sensitivity and taste which characterised the pioneering railway builders who were concerned to do as little damage as possible and designed very elegant structures. So it is good to learn that a group of architects and engineers, the Pan-Camden HS2 Alliance, has come up with an alternative proposal for rebuilding Euston.

This envisages a double-deck station which will have a much smaller footprint than the proposed crude rebuild by Grimshaw and Arups, and will not require massive demolitions. Providing the great Doric propylaeum, the "Euston Arch", so wickedly demolished by the British Transport Commission and Harold Macmillan, is rebuilt in front, as the Euston Arch Trust advocates, this is a very good idea.

As the civilised and influential engineer Alan Baxter, author of a report on the impact of HS2, has said: "With a scheme of this intensity and impact, it's important there are plenty of alternative ideas bounced around... It's very important at Euston that we don't just accept the first proposal from the in-house team. It might be right but it's valuable to have alternatives."

But is the present proposal for HS2 as a whole right? Responding to the criticism that it is an absurdly expensive way to enable executives to travel from London to Birmingham a few minutes quicker, the government now says it is not about speed but capacity. If so, perhaps a better solution is to reopen the Great Central Railway, as some politicians are now advocating and this column suggested way back in 2009 (see *Eye* 1245).

The Great Central was Britain's last main line. Superbly built in the 1890s to a Continental loading gauge (ie wider), it ran through the middle of England, from just outside London through Rugby and Leicester to beyond Nottingham. With a sublime lack of foresight, it was closed by the egregious Fat Controller, Dr Beeching, between 1966 and 1969. Reopening it - even through the cities, removing the horrible Victoria shopping centre which replaced Nottingham Victoria Station would be much cheaper and less destructive than HS2. Why not?

---

### The Gainsborough Model Railway

at Florence Terrace, Gainsborough DN21 1BE, is open to the public (1.30pm-6.00pm) on Sat 19<sup>th</sup>, Sun 20<sup>th</sup> and Mon 21<sup>st</sup> April (from 10.30am), and Sat 14<sup>th</sup> and Sun 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Visit [www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk](http://www.gainsboroughmodelrailway.co.uk) for more information.



*LNER class B8 (GCR class 1A) 4-6-0 no.5279 'Earl Kitchener of Khartoum' passing Hornsey on the layout of the Gainsborough Model Railway Society.  
photo: Bob Gellatly*

## Readers' forum

**from Chris Wilson, Montreal, Canada**

*Forward 176 p34*: Review of 'The Detective Vignoles' series by Stephen Done.

I have just finished the latest Stephen Done novel *New Brighton Rock*. At the back of the book there are two pages headed "What readers and reviewers say about the Inspector Vignoles series." The fifth one down quotes from my review in *Forward 176* :

"Just as Aidsfield was the anchor for the TV series "Heartbeat", so is the London Extension of the GCR the patch of Vignoles and his colleagues. It is populated with a host of well developed railway characters. The working and housebound women are also treated with respect and his wife, warm and tolerant, is even a bit of a sleuth."

I did not know that I was prescient, but in *New Brighton Rock* Vignoles' wife Anna works as an almost equal in the investigations. It is a good read, with all the hallmarks of Done's style, and three interwoven crimes, including two murders. However the railway action is confined to a few miles of the Wirral Railway and one station on the GCR Bidston-Wrexham line. I was going to offer a review for *Forward*, but frankly, apart from the "spotting" of a few GCR tank engines, I don't think there is much of value for our readership, unless there is a big Merseyside contingent. Stephen Done himself lives in New Brighton. He mentions a forthcoming novel for 2014, *Blood and Custard*, which might put him on more central Great Central lines.

**from John Quick, Oughtibridge, Sheffield**

*Forward 178 p44*: The Lincoln & Barnetby Railway

I was interested in Fred Hartley's note concerning the Lincoln - Barnetby line. The M.S.&L.R. board Minutes of the period in question give the following details.

February 10<sup>th</sup>. 1847 - The Lincoln - Market Rasen line let to Messrs. Waring, completion January 1848.

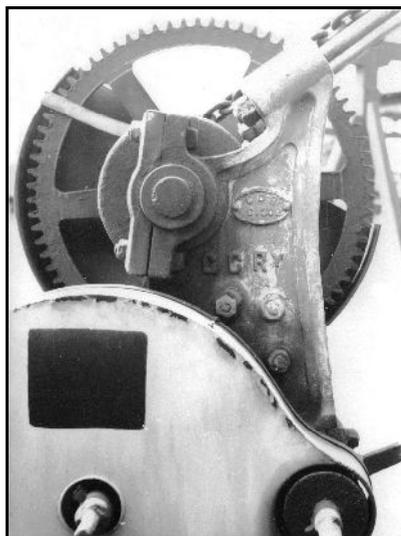
August 18<sup>th</sup>. 1847 - Market Rasen line etc. delayed by non-possession of land. Stations let to Mr. Kirk.

August 31<sup>st</sup>. 1853 - Claim by Kirk & Parry on a/c of stations in Lincolnshire settled for £23,090.14s.9d.

There is no mention of James Myles, but I assume that 'Mr. Kirk' was Charles Kirk, contractor of Sleaford.

*Forward 178 p41*: John Ambler's GCR crane plate

I am sure that John Ambler's brass plate G.C.R. C.447 on p. 47 was removed from a yard crane. I own a similar plate C.367 and this is virtually identical. I enclose a photograph of the crane in Godley yard which carried the C.309 plate.



Crane in the goods yard at Godley with plate C.309. photo: E. Harrison

---

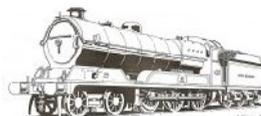
## Welcome to the following new members

Mr P. MacCarthy, Aylesbury, Bucks

Mr L.R. Wells, Scunthorpe, Lincs

Mr R.G. Chapman, Stockport, Cheshire

Mr R. Gee, Sidcup, Kent



**from Dennis Boardman, Baston, Lincolnshire**

*Forward 178 p41:* John Ambler's GCR crane plate

I have an identically sized plate to that bought by Mr Ambler. It is marked GCR J.119. On the back of it is written "Jigger Plate. Ducie Street Goods Warehouse".

It seems most likely therefore that Mr Ambler's plate is from a crane at a similar

**from Dave Cousins, Swinton, Manchester**

*Forward 178 p25:* book review 'Robinson's Locomotive Liveries on the GCR'.

I have a copy of John Quick's book on GC Liveries and what a superb volume it is.

There is a description of worksplates (my own particular interest) on page 34, so perhaps I might add a comment or two.

Only three types of worksplates – all shown – covered the vast majority of GC locomotives. They are related to different periods.

The types are (my classification)

A : 1897-1905 (late)  $6\frac{5}{8}$ " x  $4\frac{3}{8}$ " (*small*)

B : 1905-1913  $9\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $5\frac{1}{4}$ " (*medium*)

C : 1913 (see note) – 1922  $10\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $6\frac{5}{8}$ " (*large*)

Only four engines were built in 1897 under the GCR – two class 5 saddle tanks and two class 11A 4-4-0s. All of the class 5 tanks seem to have had the small plates, including three built under the MS&L, as did the 11As. The earliest plates of this time that I have seen in auctions were from 1901, from class 9H or 9J.

Regarding the type B and C plates, an anomaly seems to exist with regard to the class 1 engines. From photos, no.424 and no.426, built in early 1913, had type B plates, but no.428, built Dec. 1913, had type C. But it appears that *Sir Sam* himself, built earlier in 1912, acquired the later type C plate

There were also a small number of odd plates. The ones on the 'Lord Faringdons' were larger than type C. It appears, from the photo in John's book, that 9Q no.472 also had one of these larger plates.

Another odd plate that has turned up in auction was size 10"x6" but undated. I am unsure whether this was a one off – it certainly defeated the knowledge of the auctioneers. I would welcome comments from those more knowledgeable than myself about any of the above.

*Forward 178 p41:* Robert Stephenson plate No.3773.

Regarding the Robert Stephenson War Dept. plate No.3773 bought by John Ambler, I note that it is different from all the previous ones that I have seen. John's plate has "CONT. N°..." under the works number whereas other examples have "INDENT N°..." under the works number. I bought one of these plates in the January Great Central Railwayana auction with the usual "INDENT N°..." (see photo below).



photo: GCRA

**from Ron Gee, Sidcup, Kent**

Query: 'Mallard' at Killamarsh



On the Killamarsh Heritage Society website (<http://killamarsh.org>) is a picture of *Mallard* at Killamarsh Central Station. It would appear to be a special occasion. What was it?

*Editor's reply*

The following information can be found on p133 of Vol.2A of the RCTS series on the LNER: When *Mallard* was withdrawn in April 1963 it was restored to its original condition at Doncaster. It was then hauled to Nine Elms at the end of Feb. 1964 (no actual date given). It was moved by road to the museum at Clapham on the night of 29 Feb/1 March.

The movement was also captured by Tom Greaves, whose photo appears on p102 of *Railway Memories No27 Sheffield* by Stephen Chapman. It shows B1 no.61121 at Broughton Lane, Sheffield, with a mixed consist including *Mallard*. The date given in the caption is late 1963 which doesn't agree with the date given in the RCTS publication.

Can anyone give more precise information?

**from John Greaves, Bucknell, Shropshire**

Query: Sam Fay's visit to America

I am a relatively new member of the Society but regrettably a rather late one. My father worked for the GCR/LNER/BR from 1915 to his early death on Oxford Road Station, Manchester, in 1955. I was a clerk/trainee manager in the Hotels Department for the LNER/BR at Manchester London Road/Manchester Central stations from 1945 to 1958. But better late than never!

At present I am researching a biography of Sir Sam Fay (Bill Fay has been a great help) and I wondered if readers could assist me with a few questions, please?

According to one source I have read "Fay and other officers of the GCR visited the Altoona marshalling yards of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1903."

1. Is there any substantiation for that?
2. If true, how did Fay get the authority for the visit so soon after his appointment as Manager?
3. Did the visit influence the design of Wath Yard?

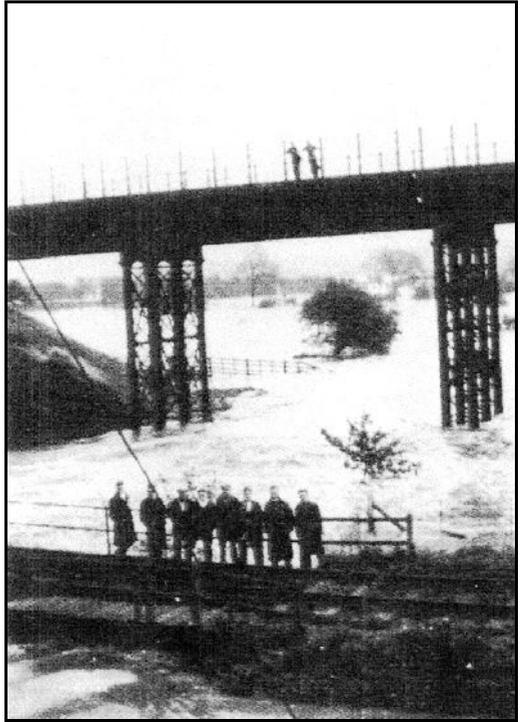
## River Rother in flood

With flooded railway lines making the news over the past few months I thought it would be appropriate to include this photo of the river Rother in flood at Killamarsh which I came across whilst looking through the photo gallery on the Killamarsh Heritage Society website.

It shows the LD&EC line at the higher level and the single track branch to Glover's Mill (to the right of the photographer) on the lower level. This line left the LD&EC north of Killamarsh Jn and passed under the North Jn – South Jn spur before crossing the river. The photographer is stood on the GC main line. I suspect that the people in the photo are railway workers sent to keep an eye on the flood waters.

The area between Killamarsh and Beighton has always been prone to flooding – Beighton station used to suffer regularly until the track level was raised. This flooding looks particularly severe. Any ideas on the date?

*Editor*



*River Rother in flood at Killamarsh.*

*photo: Steve Wood collection*

---

## Rear cover caption

GCR class 9L 4-4-2T no.1129 is posed for an official photograph at Gorton. The Robinson Atlantic Tanks were based on Pollitt's class 9G 2-4-2 tanks. The class 9K appeared first – 12 from Vulcan Foundry in 1903 and 28 from Gorton in 1903-5. To increase their range Robinson modified the design to include wider tanks and a higher coal bunker - designated class 9L. One batch of 12 locos was built by Beyer Peacock in 1907. The LNER maintained the distinction and gave them the C13 and C14 classifications.

The Atlantic Tanks were not just good looking engines, they were also popular with their crews. They were used on local passenger and branch line services. They were displaced from Marylebone services by the class 9N 'Coronation Tanks' but continued to work in Lancashire, Cheshire and South Yorkshire and even East Anglia until withdrawal in the late 1950s.

No.1129 was built in June 1907 and survived until Dec.1957 when it was withdrawn as BR no.67449.

*photo: NRM Collection*

