

Railway Ramblings

Issue 135

October 2021

The monthly newsletter of the RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch



7 Aug 2021 – at Welwyn North, as 66711 drags 73201, 73141 and 73212. What a livery!

Photo: Mikky Hart

Railway Ramblings is published by the committee of the Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch of The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society. Such committee does not endorse any personal opinions expressed in this publication.

Branch Programme

We remain concerned that our meetings are conducted in a safe way. Our “Protocol for Keeping Safe at Branch Meetings” is published on page 17. It is most important that you familiarise yourself with this if you are planning to attend.

We trust that you will feel that attendance will be as safe as possible and we look forward to seeing you.

For those members reading this, but not yet feeling comfortable to return, we understand your concerns and hope that, in due course, you will feel sufficiently reassured to make the change.

During October 2021

At Hitchin (19:30-22:00, doors open 19:00)

12th Oct **That Was the Year That Was 1969** *Geoff Plumb*

At Welwyn Garden City (14:00-16:30, doors open 13:30)

26th Oct **The East Coast Main Line, Kings Cross to York** *Stephen Gay*

During November 2021

At Hitchin (19:30- 22:00, doors open 19:00)

9th Nov **European Railways** *Rob Freeman*

At Welwyn Garden City (14:00-16:30, doors open 13:30)

30th Nov **A Northern View** *Stephen Batty*

Donations will be requested for attendance at branch meetings – these go towards the costs of hiring the venues and provision of tea/coffee & biscuits during the meeting. These are currently £2 for members and £3.50 for non-members.

Hitchin meetings are held at Tilehouse Street Baptist Church Hall, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2EE

Welwyn Garden City meetings are held at the Methodist Church, Ludwick Way/Cole Green Lane junction, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 3PN

“Zoom” Virtual Presentations

Some RCTS branches are still offering Zoom virtual presentations. There are also some “national” Zoom presentations (on the fourth Thursday of each month). Details of these can be found on the RCTS website (and in the *Railway Observer*).

Members of Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch will be very welcome at these Zoom meetings.

Chairman's Platform



With four “proper” branch meetings behind us, it is starting to feel that normality is returning. While we are, of course, continuing to take a number of actions to minimise any health risks, it is good to be back.

Good news for this month is that we are expecting a return to tea/coffee & biscuits at the branch meetings. Jill Elsdon, wife of our Branch Secretary, has very kindly offered to get this underway again, but we do need people, for each venue, who will step forward and offer to help. Additionally, I am expecting to get the pre-owned book table back in action.

The work of organising and running branch meetings is undertaken by a committee and you will have seen, in last month's issue, that we really need one or two new committee members. In particular, it would be good to find someone prepared to take on a role assisting our secretary. Perhaps that “someone” is you? If you give me (or Dave Elsdon) a call, or speak with us at a branch meeting, we could discuss this in a bit more detail.

Last month, due to a misunderstanding, I thought that Adrian Scrutton had decided to stand down from the committee. This was not the case and, although still Covid-19 shielding, Adrian continues on the committee. However, Martin Elms has decided to stand down from the committee. Martin has been doing sterling service on the committee for the past few years, has been Adrian Scrutton's partner behind the refreshment counter, and more recently been the creator of the puzzle page in *Railway Ramblings* (which I understand he will continue). On behalf of everyone, I thank him for his work on the committee.

Dave Elsdon has, yet again, been busy behind the scenes arranging next year's programme and you can get first glimpse of it this month (pages 15 & 16). As usual, this is an impressive programme with two meetings per month – one at Hitchin (evenings) and one at Welwyn Garden City (afternoons). Be sure to bring this to the notice of friends and acquaintances: As usual we always welcome members and guests.

And finally, as we head towards the festive season, you might want to book an outing on one of the local heritage lines. These are, in the main, Santa Specials and the most popular times do tend to get booked up early. So, if you don't want to be disappointed, don't leave it until the last minute. Be aware, if it's a Santa Special on the NVR you never know who you might encounter!

Steve Lacey

Local Observations



All reports as seen at Welwyn North and the local area

Following an accident, on 19 August, near Whittlesea, which involved 66754, when the loco struck a tractor loaded with hay bales on an unmanned farm crossing, freight services were diverted for the next three/four days. One of those diverted freight trains was the Chaddesdon to Brandon hauled by 60028 which ran via Hertford North at 10:50 on **Monday 23 August**. The week continued with the Trans Pennine units working from Edinburgh to Kings Cross, mainly with 802212. On **Tuesday 24 August** this was delayed about an hour due to signalling problems in the Huntingdon area; the unit

returned via Hertford North at 15:36. On the same day, via Hertford North (14:24), was a convoy of Class 66 loco's from Dollands Moor to Peterborough these were 66053/66162/66770/66779 & 66783. On **Thursday 26 August** 802212 ran, passing here at 10:30, to Kings Cross, returning at 12:32. On **Friday 27 August** the Dollands Moor to Scunthorpe steel empties was double-headed with 66002/66131, through Welwyn North at 11:35. A couple of different movements on **Saturday 28 August** when 47772 passed on route from Southall to Peterborough, at 16:10. Then in the evening 61306 *Mayflower* came speeding through from Peterborough to Southall, hauling just its support coach, at 19:54. On **Sunday 29 August** a test train, comprising three yellow coaches, sped through hauled by 73964/73961, at 15:40.



30 Aug 2021 – “Blue Pullman” 43046 & 43055 (1Z50), from Peterborough to Teignmouth passing Welwyn North
Photo: Mikky Hart

Bank Holiday **Monday 30 August** saw “The Blue Pullman” (Unit No’s 43045/43055) run via Welwyn North at 07:32, travelling from Peterborough to Kingswear. **Wednesday 1 September** driver training using Trans Pennine Express (TPE) 802 units 802 continued, from Edinburgh to Kings Cross - today was the turn of 802218 this was 61min. late (11:32) due to a fatality further north. Also today, a three-coach test train ran to Welwyn Garden City yard, passing here at 13:00, hauled by 73961/73964. The Dollands Moor - Scunthorpe steel empties ran again, double-headed, on **Thursday 2 September** through Welwyn North at 12:01, with 66105/66161. On **Sunday 5 September** 66053/66518 worked an engineer’s train from Junction Road to Doncaster at 12:27, this mix of company locos occurred when 66518 failed at Willesden.

Another test train ran on **Monday 6 September** when the yellow HST set passed at 13:39, both power cars were still in Virgin Trains livery, running between Heaton & Kings Cross. Further testing of 717 units took place on **Tuesday 7 September** when units 717001/717002 ran by at 09:32, followed at 10:28 by TPE unit 802206. These trains repeated these workings again on **Wednesday 8 September**, only today the TPE was delayed at Stevenage due to a broken-down train in the Woolmer Green area, so not passing until 10:46, also delaying the return working. **Thursday & Friday 9 & 10 September** TPE workings continued with 802209 followed by 802210 on Friday. Later in the day on Friday 66743/66759 ran by at 16:59 with a Whitmoor Yard to Ferme Park engineer’s train. 61306 *Mayflower* ran again on **Saturday 11 September** this time from Alexandra Palace to Great Yarmouth with 47702 on the rear, with a stop at Hertford North at 08:28 & 20:48 on the return.

Another Greater Anglia unit 755407 worked from Norwich to Hornsey on **Monday 13 September** passing Welwyn North at 19:59. **Tuesday 14 September** started with 66760 hauling a RHTT train via Hertford North at 10:57 from Peterborough to Tonbridge. Whilst 37175/37611 left Welwyn Garden City with a test train at 13:59 for Ripple Lane via Shoeburyness. 37219 arrived light engine at Welwyn Garden City from Derby at 21:28. This turned out to be a problem day on the ECML, firstly 91111 failed at Leeds prior to departure for Kings Cross, this caused all its other scheduled workings for the day to be cancelled. 700138 failed at New Barnet at 10:55 on a Horsham to Peterborough service whilst on the Down Fast 801211 failed near New Southgate on 12:33 Kings Cross to Leeds, with more workings via the Down Slow line, the Down Fast was still closed at 22:15 due to a points problem, again at New Barnet, causing both fast lines to be closed from Alexandra Palace to Potters Bar. **Friday 17 September** saw 73761/73764 work RHTT tanks from York to Tonbridge passing Hertford North at 14:23. Here at Welwyn North this week's Trans Pennine units working the driver training runs from Edinburgh to Kings Cross for the Lumo services were 802202/802206 & 802217. On **Saturday 18 September** 66708 ran a freight via Hertford North (09:41) from Southampton Docks to Doncaster. A busy night at Letchworth that night with new track laying taking place with loco's 66142/66516/66603/66615 & 66790 all around the station area. 66790 ran to Welwyn Garden City from Letchworth to run around its train before returning north on **Sunday 19 September**, passing Welwyn North at 08:18 & 09:22.

(Observations courtesy of our Branch Secretary, Dave Elsdon)



Book Table

Familiar to those who attend branch meetings, the book table should be making a return at meetings this month. This is an opportunity to purchase a pre-owned book (or two) and thus contribute financially towards the branch running costs.

You can also contribute books which you no longer want – which will free-up space on your book shelves for new volumes!

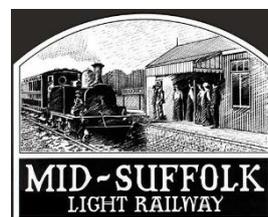
The “Middy” Santa Specials



With the summer season over, the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway has started publicising its Santa Specials. The MSLR Santa Specials are special steam events where you can take your (grand)children on a magical journey from Brockford Station to meet Santa at North Pole Halt. Bookings open on 2nd October.

For timetable & ticket information, go to the MSLR website: <https://www.mslr.org.uk>

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How & Where Did It All Begin? - Paddy Carey

Part 6 - The continuation of Paddy's recollections, about how his interest in railways developed, will now appear in the November issue.

Newsletter Distribution

This e-newsletter is distributed by the Branch Chairman (Steve Lacey). If you do not currently receive a copy directly but would like to do so, provide him with your email address and you will be added to the list. Conversely, if you currently receive a copy but wish to be taken off the distribution list then please advise him accordingly. Steve's email address is gricersteve@hotmail.com

A Love Affair (Part 14) – Steve Lacey

When Steve wrote his articles about the restoration of 34081 "92 Squadron" he promised to write about the subsequent in-service issues.

Last time I talked of the importance of fund raising. Remember the old joke "How do you become a millionaire airline owner.....start as a billionaire!" Sadly, the same is true of locomotive owning groups.

As we approached Christmas 2020, the Nene Valley Railway had come out of lockdown and were running Santa Specials (modified to be Covid compliant) and *92 Squadron* was again earning steaming fees.



Then disaster struck.

A small weep was noticed at the top of the inner firebox. At this point Peterborough went into Covid-19 restrictions tier 4 so, although passengers were not allowed to alight at Peterborough (NVR) and Wansford was still in tier 3; the railway was forced to shut down. This also meant volunteers were banned from Wansford, so we were unable to strip the loco to assess the repair needed. Finally, in March 2021 we were allowed back on site and started stripping the cladding back to expose the faulty area of the firebox. Inspection by the boiler smith from Locomotive Maintenance Services (at Loughborough, but not the GCR) and the boiler inspector, revealed more extensive cracking, broken stays and thinning of the plating than had been signalled by the weep initially observed. In view of the amount of work needed, it was decided for speed and cheapness; we would take the locomotive to LMS rather than have them travel back and forth at great expense.



92 Squadron - seen leaving Wansford at the end of April on a low loader, LMS is not rail connected and anyway 92 is not mainline certified.

Once at Locomotive Maintenance Services, four areas were cut out where there was cracking and thinning of the plating. Four patches were formed and beautifully welded in by their coded welder.



It had also been noted that some of the washout plug threads were worn. These plugs are steel, weigh about 2 kilos and give access to the water space between the inner and outer firebox, allowing the scale and sediment that forms to be washed out every six weeks. This helps thermal efficiency, in the same way as you descale your electric kettle. Should a plug thread fail, with 250 lbs/sq inch of steam pressure behind it, the plug would blow-out at high velocity, rapidly followed by a jet of superheated steam. You really would not want to be on a footplate when this occurred. Apart from a possible fatal injury to the crew, sudden depressurisation of the boiler, combined with associated water loss, would wreck the firebox. We therefore had new washout plug seats welded in (the round objects in the photos above). The repaired area was then re-stayed, hydraulically tested, a few leaking stays caulked and passed fit. Caulking is the process of hammering around the stay end to seal any leaks. This is a horrible, noisy job, in a confined space.

Just as we thought our problems were over, the threads on the safety valve bolts were noted to be somewhat wasted and these were also replaced. Launching 50 kilos of safety valve into the sky will also win you few friends!

At last, on the 10 September 2021, she arrived back on a low loader.

We turned 92 on the turntable and reunited her with the tender, prior to steam testing. Hopefully, after reaffixing cab and cladding, she will back in steam by the end of October, ready for the Santa Specials.

Steve Lacey



Santa Specials on the Nene Valley Railway



Santa & his Wansford Station team have all the dates for his Santa Steam Journey's for Christmas 2021 booked, confirmed & set in their diaries. We know it's early but we all need something to look forward to... .. and you never know who you might meet!

Selected dates from 27th Nov to 24th Dec 2021 are now open for booking: <https://nvr.org.uk>

Diesel Gala on the NVR

Meanwhile, in October, there is The Three Peaks Challenge Diesel Gala on 8th, 9th & 10th. The star attraction is Class 44 "Peak" D4 *Great Gable*:



All material reproduced courtesy of the NVR.

A Day at Welwyn North Station – Tom Gladwin

Saturday 4 September 2021, with additional observations.

For over 61 years since moving into our Digswell bungalow in October, 1959, I enjoyed watching trains through Welwyn North from the bottom of our garden. That pleasure is no more for, in February 2021, Network Rail erected a six-foot high metal fence along our boundary. We had been earlier visited by a kind official who explained that the purpose of the work was partly to reduce trespass on the line. He illustrated this with examples of the costs incurred, including fare refunds, when such incidents occur. Looking at the causes of a significant number of recent cancellations and late running, I am yet to be convinced the measures are proving as cost effective as expected. I digress no further.

Although I must have seen all the LNER and Hull Trains *Azumas* I had collected but few of their numbers. Thus, I decided to correct this failing by spending much of the daylight hours on 4 September on Welwyn North Station. It continues to be a most peaceful location to enjoy just watching trains. I was not disappointed. Indeed, there was as much, if not more, to interest me than when I first started collecting train numbers there in 1947.

I arrived complete with a printout of the day's diagrammed movements, from the RealTime trains website, and my copy of *The Railway Observer* for September. The latter, as ever full of absorbing material, I read from cover to cover. (As a life-long naturalist I was greatly amused by the achievements of the beavers (p.580) whose dam blocked a culvert and so flooded the line between Perth and Stirling at Gleneagles.)

Passenger usage of the station at Welwyn was low. Usually fewer than fourteen boarding the up-trains, and six the down services.

Car-park usage was also low. Excluding reserved, pick-up/put-down, and taxi slots, there are 250 marked parking spaces at the station. These include three "disabled" spaces on the down-side, and two "disabled" and six "premier" parking places on the up-side. Occupancy at noon on 4 and 6 September, the latter a working day, was as follows:

Car Park	Number of spaces	Number of Spaces Occupied on 4 Sept 2021	Number of Spaces Occupied on 6 Sept 2021
Up-side	76	7	25
Down-side	174	15	32
Total Spaces:	250	22	57
% Occupied		8.8%	22.8%

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic the car parks were almost if not completely full. In addition, some passengers avoided the fees by parking their vehicles along sections of New Road so designated to effect traffic calming. It is evident that a large number of former regular travellers are still furloughed, working from home, or cautious about leisure travel. Thus, revenues must be well below pre-pandemic levels.

The following table of scheduled services shows the numbers of trains that ran, and those that were cancelled. Cancellations included 35% of Thameslink and 15% of Great Northern scheduled services.

As might be expected there were equal numbers of up and down passenger services.

Time keeping was generally excellent.

Number of Scheduled Services, with Cancellations (x) at Welwyn North (WLW)
on Saturday 4 September 2021

Time Period	Train Operator							
	LNER (GR) ²	Thames Link (TL)	Great Northern (GN)	Hull Trains (HT)	Great Central (GC)	Lumo (LD) ³	Other ¹ (ZZ)	Total
0001-0600	1 (-)	19 (4)	3 (1)				15 (13)	38 (18)
0601-0700	4 (1)	11 (2)	4 (1)			1 (1)	1 (1)	21 (6)
0701-0800	7 (-)	12 (3)	4 (-)					23 (3)
0801-0900	8 (-)	12 (6)	5 (1)	1 (-)			1 (1)	27 (8)
0901-1000	9 (-)	12 (3)	5 (-)		2 (-)	1 (1)		29 (4)
1001-1100	9 (-)	12 (4)	5 (1)	2 (-)				28 (5)
1101-1200	7 (-)	12 (7)	4 (1)		3 (-)			28 (8)
1201-1300	9 (1)	12 (-)	4 (-)	2 (-)		1 (1)		28 (2)
1301-1400	8 (1)	12 (3)	4 (-)		2 (-)		2 (2)	26 (6)
1401-1500	10 (-)	12 (6)	4 (-)					26 (6)
1501-1600	9 (2)	12 (4)	4 (-)	2 (-)	1 (-)			28 (6)
1601-1700	9 (-)	12 (5)	5 (1)		1 (-)		1 (1)	28 (7)
1701-1800	9 (1)	12 (5)	5 (1)	1 (-)	1 (-)			28 (7)
1801-1900	10 (-)	12 (5)	5 (-)	1 (-)	2 (-)	2 (2)		32 (7)
1901-2000	9 (-)	12 (3)	4 (1)		1 (-)			26 (4)
2001-2100	7 (-)	11 (3)	4 (2)	2 (-)	1 (-)			25 (5)
2101-2200	4 (-)	10 (9)	4 (1)				1 (1)	19 (11)
2201-2300	2 (-)	10 (4)	4 (-)					16 (4)
2301-2400		8 (3)	5 (1)					13 (4)
Totals:	131 (6)	225 (79)	82 (12)	11 (-)	14 (-)	5 (5)	21 (19)	489 (121)

¹Other - includes freight and empty stock movements.

²GR, the TOC code for LNER trains, was used by its predecessor Virgin Trains East Coast.

³LD, the TOC code used for Lumo Trains, is designated "East Coast Trains".

Most cancellations are service reductions in response to the effect of the coronavirus epidemic on passenger numbers. The figures include trains which only “run when required” but did not do so on this occasion. Given reasons for cancellations included;

“Cancelled due to an issue with the train crew”,
“Cancelled due to the late arrival of an inbound service,
and most commonly,
“Cancelled due to a planning error”.



Three Class 91 locos, 91107, 91109 and 91111, with Mk 4 formations, were in use on services to and from Leeds. The Great Northern, ex-Gatwick Express, red-liveried 387208 was also in service with its partially amended, and as a result misleading, logo (see photographs). Also noted was 700111 in “NHS We Thank You” livery.



On Tuesday 7, I returned to Welwyn North to observe the 10:30 up Transpennine Express Azuma 802206 on a resumed Lomu crew training run (see left-hand photograph). Much to my surprise Hull Trains Azuma 802302 appeared on the return down run (see right-hand photograph). Due to an “untimely” visit by our Chairman, Steve Lacey, our Branch Secretary, Dave Elsdon, who lives opposite Welwyn North Station, unexpectedly missed this event. Meeting them shortly afterwards I was of course obliged to show Steve a yellow card!

Oh yes, how did I fair with the LNER Azumas? I copped 22. Ten to go.

Tom Gladwin

Back Copies of Railway Ramblings

Back copies of *Railway Ramblings* are now available on the RCTS website: <https://rcts.org.uk/hitchin>



Epping Ongar in October

The EOR is operating every weekend during October. The standard steam & diesel timetable will operate on 2nd/3rd, 16th/17th and 23rd/24th.

On the 8th/9th, 10th there is the London Transport Weekend celebrating the Epping Ongar's links with London Transport featuring up to three London Transport liveried locomotives working together, including:

- London Transport steam locomotive L.92 (Great Western Railway 5700 class Pannier Tank locomotive, 5786), courtesy of the South Devon Railway and Worcester Locomotive Society.
- Great Western Railway small Prairie locomotive 5521 in London Transport maroon livery, courtesy of Bill Parker and the Flour Mill.
- Class 20 diesel locomotive D8001 (20001)
- With further locomotives to be announced



As well as a regular steam and diesel hauled service, the EOR are planning a Saturday evening Real Ale Train and a static bus display of London Transport buses through the ages, as well as their regular route 339 heritage bus service from Epping Underground and Shenfield stations.

Great value fares apply and allow unlimited travel on all train and heritage bus services: Adult: £30, Child: £16
Family (up to 2 adults and 3 children): £77

The last week in October is "Fright Week" with a Ghost Train service operating from North Weald (North Weald) station! All trains depart from North Weald station, CM16 6BT. You will not be able to join these services at Ongar.



Great value fares apply.

These are only valid on the booked train, and, if appropriate, the connecting heritage bus service.

Adult: £16, Children (aged 3 and over): £10
Exclusive compartment for up to 6 people: £75

For full details, and bookings for October visit <https://www.eorailway.co.uk>

All material reproduced courtesy of EOR.

The October Puzzle – Martin Elms

This month I have a further 21 miscellaneous questions for you, to test your railway knowledge:

1. Which steam loco holds the record for the longest allocation at the same depot?
2. What was the most widely used type of steam loco used in the British Isles?
3. Which company was the largest user of this type, and approx. how many were built by it to various designs?
4. The NER had a loco shed (disused since 1924) at Sprouston between Tweedmouth and St Boswells – what was the “refugee” it hosted during the second world war?
5. In the early 1920’s, which type of loco would possibly haul you from Kings Cross to Aberdeen, and by three railway companies?
6. What was the last Atlantic loco in service?
7. When was the first British Rail Combined Timetable?
8. Where were the highest water troughs in the world?
9. ... and the lowest?
10. Which pre-grouping railway company owned the most ships?
11. Where was the first automatic track- circuit controlled signalling system in Britain?
12. Where were the first two-aspect colour light signals introduced?
13. Where was the first automatic half-barrier level crossing?
14. Which railway stations have booking offices but have never had any trains?
15. Which four stations had London trains departing in both directions?
16. What is the longest running railway periodical?
17. Which are (probably) the three best-loved British railway films?
18. When did Great Britain issue its first railway stamps?
19. What was the unusual extra task given to the Station Master at Ribbleshead?
20. What was the only 4-6-4 tender loco to run in Great Britain?
21. What was the only railway line to have been planned, financed and opened by the same person?

Best of luck – solutions are on the next page. No cheating!

Martin Elms

Puzzle Solutions

Solutions to the puzzles in this issue (page 13):

1. North British Railway 0-4-0 tank no.547 (BR 68092) allocated, from new in 1882 to withdrawal in May 1955, at St. Margaret's. **2.** The 0-6-0 tank. **3.** The GWR with approx 2,400 locos constructed between 1860 and 1956. **4.** The GWR loco *City of Truro*, in safe keeping, from the railway museum at York. **5.** An Atlantic type of loco, over the GNR, NER and NB. **6.** No.32424 *Beachy Head*, withdrawn in 1958. **7.** It operated from 6 May 1974 to 4 May 1975. **8.** Garsdale, on the Settle and Carlisle line at 1,100ft above sea level. **9.** Hest Bank near Lancaster only forty-five miles away, they were at sea-level. **10.** The L&Y with 29, including some jointly owned with the LNWR. **11.** Installed by the LSWR between Andover and Grateley, introduced 20 April 1902. **12.** On the Liverpool Overhead Railway, in 1920. **13.** Spath Lane, Uttoxeter on the Churnet Valley line, on 6 Feb 1961. **14.** Dartmouth, and also the ferry which served Hull Corporation pier where the GC had a booking office. **15.** Chester, Plymouth (North Road), Exeter (St David's) and Trent - where trains to and from London called at the same platform. **16.** *The Railway Magazine*, July 1897 to the present day. **17.** *Oh! Mr Porter*, *The Titfield Thunderbolt* and *The Railway Children*. **18.** 13 August 1975, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. **19.** His office had meteorological instruments installed to record the weather conditions, from which he transmitted hourly coded reports to the Air Ministry. **20.** The Gresley "Hush Hush" (Class W1) of 1929, later BR 60700, withdrawn in 1959. **21.** The Duke of Sutherlands railway, from Golspie to Helmsdale, opened on 16 May 1871.



Branch Committee

Please consider joining your branch committee.

Anyone prepared to take on the committee role is invited to discuss this with Steve Lacey or Dave Elsdon in the first instance.

A Hitchin Informal Meeting Place

One of our regular Hitchin meeting attendees, John Scorer, along with a few others, has been informally meeting at Molly's Tea Room in Hitchin. The proprietor has now decided to make Wednesday afternoons, 3-5 pm, a regular time for railway enthusiasts to call in, meet up, and have a chat - as this is a time that is otherwise quiet. Although this is not an RCTS meeting you might want to take up John's open invitation to participate.

Molly's can be found at 96 Bancroft, Hitchin, SG5 1NQ

Provisional Branch Programme 2022 at Hitchin

To help you plan ahead.

Held at Tilehouse Street Baptist Church Hall, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2EE on the Tuesday evening from 7:30 to 10:00 (doors open from 7:00)

11 th January	The Work of the Railway Heritage Trust	<i>Andy Savage</i>
8 th February	The Prince of Wales, a Brand-new Steam Loco for 21st Century	<i>Rob Morland</i>
8 th March	Branch AGM & Members evening	
12 th April	On Shed	<i>Robert Warburton</i>
10 th May	The Bridge is Down, the Tay Bridge Disaster	<i>Dr Rudi Newman</i>
14 th June	A 9th Colour Rail Journey	<i>Paul Chancellor</i>
12 th July	This is a Luxury I Can't Afford	<i>Bernie Holland</i>
August	No Meeting	
13 th September	Hitchin, the Last Few Years	<i>Richard Allen</i>
11 th October	A Swiss Railway Trilogy (Part 1)	<i>Steve Olive</i>
8 th November	The Southern Past & Present	<i>Des Shepherd</i>
13 th December	Potton & Hitchin Chit Chat	<i>George Howe</i>

Note:

The dates are set but the content of the programme is provisional and the confirmed programme will be published in due course.

Provisional Branch Programme 2022 at Welwyn Garden City

To help you plan ahead.

Held at the Methodist Church, Ludwick Way/Cole Green Lane junction, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 3PN on the Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 to 4:30 (doors open from 1:30)

25 th January	North from Euston, from the RCTS Archive	<i>David Jackman</i>
22 nd February	The Varying Fortunes of the Hatfield to St. Albans Railway	<i>Alistair Cameron</i>
29 th March	The Narrow Gauge Railways of Nepal & Pakistan	<i>Geoff Warren</i>
26 th April	A Modern Image – Not Quite	<i>Peter Robins</i>
31 st May	Half a Century has Passed	<i>Geoff May</i>
28 th June	Construction of HS1 – The Channel Tunnel Link	<i>David Kelso</i>
26 th July	The Great Northern Railway and Kings Cross	<i>Ray Schofield</i>
August	No Meeting	
27 th September	York to Edinburgh – Part 2 of his Journey from Kings Cross	<i>Stephen Gay</i>
25 th October	Great Western Loco's in Preservation / British Transport Mix	<i>Richard Morris</i>
29 th November	The History of the Paris Metro	<i>Mike Bunn</i>
20 th December	150 years GNR from Wood Green to Enfield	<i>Dave Cockle</i>

Note:

The dates are set but the content of the programme is provisional and the confirmed programme will be published in due course.

Protocol for Keeping Safe at Branch Meetings

As we restart our meetings the safety of all of our members is paramount.

Coming to branch meetings might be nice-to-do but is almost certainly not something to do unless there is virtually no risk. Many of us are of an age where catching Covid-19 is likely to carry serious consequences. The following measures will apply at our meetings in order to provide you, our members, with a safe low-risk environment.

- Do not come to meetings if you are feeling unwell.
- Put on a face mask as you enter and wear it throughout the meeting.
- Avoid touching door handles as you enter (committee members will act as “doormen”).
- Use the hand-sanitisers as you enter, and after touching any surfaces.
- Move seats to feel “comfortable” and please use the same seat throughout the meeting.
- Maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- At the end of the meeting, apply hand-sanitiser as you leave.
- Should you test positive for Covid-19 or have symptoms within fourteen days of attending a meeting please let the Branch Secretary know.

As usual there will be a register of those attending and this will be used to assist in contact tracing should the need arise.

If we all follow the rules our meetings should be a safe environment.

This Protocol was reviewed after the August 2021 meetings and will be further reviewed further in the light of ongoing experience.

Steve Lacey (Branch Chairman)

More from the Photo Album



717001 and 717002 passing through Welwyn North on a test run to Peterborough on 8 September 2021

Photo: Tom Gladwin

If you have photos (old or new) that you are willing to share with other members please supply them, with a suitable caption, to the Editor, John Dossett, at hitchinnewsletter@rcts.org.uk. They should be your photographs!

Contributions to Railway Ramblings

You will have seen that we have recently had a number of new contributors to this newsletter but we still need more of you to “put pen to paper” and write articles. Use your knowledge and/or experience to help provide a rich variety of material for the benefit of all - photos and/or text – please contact the editor, John Dossett, at hitchinnewsletter@rcts.org.uk

Railway Ramblings is published by the committee of the Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch of The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society. Such committee does not endorse any personal opinions expressed in this publication. The committee comprises Steve Lacey (Chairman), David Elsdon (Secretary), Paul Holloway (Treasurer), John Dossett (Newsletter Editor), Roger Moulden and Adrian Scrutton. The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered with the Charities Commission