

Railway Ramblings

Issue 139

February 2022

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



The "Prince of Wales" Project – subject of our Zoom presentation on 8th February
Image credit: A1 Steam Locomotive Trust

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

Special Note: In light of the current situation with Covid-19, the branch committee decided that the February meetings will be Zoom presentations. At present we are expecting to recommence live meetings in March. Everyone on the distribution list for this newsletter will receive emails advising any last-minute changes.

During February 2022

On Zoom (19:30- 22:00, access from 19:00)

8th February **The “Prince of Wales” a Brand-New Steam Locomotive for the 21st Century**

Rob Morland

On Zoom (14:00-16:30, access from 13:30)

22nd February **The Varying Fortunes of the Hatfield to St Albans Railway** Alistair Cameron

Donations are requested for participating in these events – these can be donated through the website and go towards the costs of providing the presenters.

During March 2022

At Hitchin (19:30- 22:00, access from 19:00)

8th March **Branch AGM and Members’ Evening**

At Welwyn Garden City (14:00-16:30, access from 13:30)

29th March **The Narrow Gauge Steam Railways of Nepal and Pakistan** Geoff Warren

Donations will be requested for attendance at branch meetings – these, together with book sales, go towards the costs of hiring the venues, speakers expenses/fees and the 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

Other “Zoom” Virtual Presentations

Some other RCTS branches are also offering Zoom virtual presentations. In addition, there are “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*).



Chairman's Platform

Last month I started by saying that 2022 must be better than 2021. Unfortunately, as the year started, that seems to have been wishful thinking. In the days after Christmas the new omicron variant of covid-19 started sweeping the country and, like so many organisations (and indeed individuals), our plans were thrown into disarray.

Although our Prime Minister and government seemed content to “ride out the storm”, your committee decided to take action, with the planned January branch meetings converted into Zoom virtual meetings. Much as we prefer to hold proper meetings, enjoying the company of others, we considered that the increased risk to members was too high. Many thanks to the presenters, who agreed to do the originally planned presentations but in a Zoom format.

The big question, in a volatile situation, then was “what do we do now?” For February, with the agreement of the presenters, we have again converted the meetings to Zoom presentations. Currently we are seeing Covid-19 case numbers fall substantially and, providing there is not another twist in events, we will go back to real meetings in March. In the worst scenario we will endeavour to convert more of the planned programme into Zoom presentations.

With our relatively straightforward set of rules (our “Protocol”), you should be able to attend meetings with confidence. However, I accept that nothing can make our meetings absolutely safe and I respect the view of those who will still feel that to be a step too far. For those members, and those who are unable to make the journey to meetings, there will be the “national” Zoom presentations. Details of these can be found in the Railway Observer.

I sincerely hope that you all received my email messages about the changes in January and that nobody went to the meeting places! Please look out for any further emails from me giving you last-minute updates.

Steve Lacey

Branch AGM

This will be at Hitchin on 8th March. As a supplement to this copy of *Railway Ramblings* (pages 18 to 26) you will find the agenda, the minutes of the 2021 AGM, together with the usual Officers' reports for last year (2021-22).

Please give these a read and I would really like as many as possible to attend. If you have any questions, then if you can give advance notice this will enable the Officers to give a considered reply.

Steve Lacey

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

Local Observations



All reports as seen at Welwyn North and the local area

On **Monday 20 December** we saw the last of the new *Lumo* units enter service, when 803004 & 803005 worked the Kings Cross to Edinburgh service passing here at 11:09. Unit 803005 then worked back to Kings Cross at 2037. 67007 coupled to failed Class 91127 and ran from Kings Cross to Leeds at 11:03. *Lumo* unit 803005 was in service again on **Wednesday 22 December**, running to Edinburgh from Kings Cross, here at 11:02. More units taken into storage on **Thursday 23 December** when 37884 ran from Clacton to Worksop hauling 321347 & 321421, through Welwyn North at 12:02. 66781 worked an aggregates train from Peterborough to Ferme Park at 06:58 on **Monday 27 December**, returning to Peterborough at 11:10. A triple light-engine move, from Tonbridge to Peterborough, took place at 11:46, consisting of 66744/66759/66793, with 66766 also light-engine working the same route but in the opposite direction at 13:56. This afternoon 66077 ran, with a vegetable oil train, at 13:33 from Peterborough to Highbury Vale. On **Wednesday 29 December** 66764 worked light engine from March to Upper Holloway via Hertford North at 08:03, returning to March on the same route at 14:40.

Into **2022**, with 37402 on **Sunday 2 January** operating a test train from Derby to Reading through at 15:16. Today also saw the diverted sleeper service back this way, with 92020 and 16 Mk5 coaches going to Inverness from Euston at 22:09. **Monday 3 January** started off with 92010, with the sleeper from Scotland back to Euston, at 07:40, some 40 minutes late. During the same day, the Yellow HST test train came by at 13:52, running from Darlington to Newcastle via Kings Cross. A surprise visitor was 755417 at 19:55 going to Hornsey from Norwich, this move has become quite infrequent recently. There was an engineers' train from Welwyn Garden City to Ripple Lane on **Tuesday 4 January** using 37219 & 37610 - this left WGC at 13:37. A sad day on **Thursday 6 January** when there was a fatality at Welwyn North at 11:27. Later that day, 60046 worked through with a Burton to Willesden train of new high sided open wagons at 16:59. Early on **Friday 7 January** 57312 passed at 07:55, hauling 365514 & 365534 from Doncaster to Newport for scrapping. Later 66735, hauling an empty aggregates train from Ferme Park to Bardon Hill, passed at 12:40. **Saturday / Sunday 8 & 9 January** saw a large number of Class 66's in the area during the day & night due to track renewal between Biggleswade and Huntingdon. Many of these loco's ran to Welwyn Garden City to reverse, the loco's involved were 66068/66533/66714/66760/66761/66766/66787 and 66795. Also reported were 66002 on a Tinsley to Wembley train of 22 wagons going for scrap and 66114 from Tallington to Grain carrying concrete tunnel segments. All Azuma services for both days ran via Ely & Cambridge.

60091 worked through on **Monday 10 January** at 11:02 with a freight train from Chaddesden to Acton, this was 150 minutes late after failing and waiting for a fitter. 60091 worked a rake of almost new wagons from Chaddesden to Acton, passing at 11:02 (150 mins late). The next day **Tuesday 11 January** saw 57312 hauling 365518 & 365538 from Doncaster to Newport, for scrapping, at 07:56. Later that day, 755419 & 755420 ran from Norwich to Hornsey for attention, through here at 19:56. 66776 worked a train from Peterborough to Highbury Vale and back via Hertford North at 11:24 - returning at 12:40 on **Wednesday 12 January**. The follow day, **Thursday 13 January**, 37800 hauled 365502 from Doncaster to Sims scrapyards in Newport, here at 07:56. Later that morning 66776 worked an aggregates train at 11:18 from March to Tonbridge. There was further work on the main line again between Biggleswade and Huntingdon over the weekend of **15 & 16 January** using several Class 66 locos these were 66068/66076/66092/66713/66727 while 66745 worked an intermodal service and 66125 worked a train of tunnel segments from Tallington to Grain.

All mainlines services ran via Ely and Cambridge. 66125 worked light engine from Peterborough to Harringay and back on **Monday 17 January**, passing here at 12:38 & 14:00. On **Tuesday 18 January** 755401 ran between Norwich and Hornsey for maintenance work, through Welwyn North at 19:56 - returning at 06:40 on **Wednesday 19 January**. 37800, hauling 365540 on its final journey, working to Simm's scrapyards came past at 07:58 on **Thursday 20 January**.

(Observations courtesy of our Branch Secretary, Dave Elsdon)

The Missing Loco – A Short Story by Martin Elms

From 1957 to 1962 I was an apprentice at Crewe works. One day, in July 1959, I was selected to attend a basic theory and maintenance diesel training course at Derby. BR was preparing for when most locos would be diesel powered and needed maintaining at their works and were therefore starting a major training scheme for all workshop staff.

I told my parents that I was going to Derby for a fortnight's residential course and, as expected, I started to hear the usual five minutes monologue from my works supervisor father on all the shortcomings and faults of diesels!

However, he was interrupted mid-stream by my mother,

"Martin, you had better take some cleaner overalls with you, you can't take your usual ones. I don't want any son of mine look scruffy in front of the trainers. (Mothers worry about this sort of thing!)

I assured her that I would still get dirty anyway, even though it was mostly a theory course. She still insisted that I fetch one of my spares from my locker on Sunday.

So, after morning football, I cycled to the works. I knew I could get in as the gatekeepers, Stan and George, both knew me.

After a bit of banter from them, I walked into the deserted works past the paint shop to the locker room. Glancing out of habit through the windows into the usually crowded shop I noticed something strange, so I opened the side door and went in.

The shop, usually full of Black Fives, Crabs and other Midland or standard steam locos, was empty except for one strange looking loco. I walked all around it and its tender. It looked an old design and was painted in a wonderful glossy black livery lined in cream and red and looked brand new. Its tender equally smart had a strange, to me, crest on it, certainly not BR, and I couldn't believe that they had designed another new one. The whole scene seemed surreal, why only one loco in the shed and what was it? I noted it had a brass number plate on it showing 777.

I decided that after my course that I would have another look and try to find out about her. The trouble was in 1959 "Loco spotting" by staff was not encouraged and very few if any of my work mates were interested in the locos they worked on, being more interested in girls, beer, football and getting away from the works as quick as possible after their shift (not necessarily in that order)

On my return I investigated the paint shop on the way to my locker to return my still clean overalls, I was surprised to see it looking it's normal self-full of the usual type of steam locos and no sign of 777!

I had quick around the adjacent sidings still no sign of her.

I tentatively asked the more approachable Stan "Any new or different locos in here while I was away?"

"No – just the usual types – Why?"

I decided not to pursue it any further as I could get a bad reputation for seeing things!

"Oh, just curious if any diesels were in" I lied.

How could I find out about 777? (This was years before search engines and social media) and I didn't possess any loco history books.

That afternoon I had to work an extra hour and left the deserted works towards the gates, I saw a movement on my right, "Who's there" I called.

A youth clad in plastic mac and carrying a bulky duffle bag appeared. He was obviously "Bunking" the works

Instead of marching him out I had an idea, he must have loads of loco knowledge as I had come across his type before. "If I let you look around, with me to keep an eye on you, can you do me a favour?" I asked.

He was extremely willing to have an "official" visit and agreed to help me. I escorted him out past Stan who bravely shouted "don't let me see you here again!" at the back of the youth.

"Now can you find me as much information on a loco numbered 777?" I asked, "I am interested in it as its number consists of my lucky numbers," I lied, not wishing to tell him why I was interested. I had searched more thoroughly around the yards, again not finding any sign of her, and not daring to ask any of the staff.

I gave him my details and he promised to write to me.

A week later I was sitting having my tea when my mother gave me a letter. "Hello who's that from?" said my father with a knowing wink.

"An old school friend" I said. Getting to find this loco was making me out as a compulsive liar!

In the sanctuary of my bedroom, I opened the envelope as I thought it was from the train spotter, whose name was Simon. Inside the envelope was a sheet of paper, written in spiky writing, with a photo cut from a magazine or book. The page informed me how Simon, with the help of his father who was a member of a railway society, had researched through many railway books and magazines to trace 777. The photo showed her at Keswick certainly in a less superb condition than when I saw her. The information made me feel better, as the loco did exist. However, when I turned the page over this almost leapt out at me and made me feel dizzy -

"So, to sum up, 777 was constructed for the LNWR railway in April 1877. She was highly painted and decorated to suit her use on special duties, then, in her later life, she was used on many local branch lines in the northwest. The loco was scrapped at Crewe in June 1934"

Martin Elms

"Chasing the B1" - Paddy Carey

| B1 TRIP SATURDAY 3rd November 2001 | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| PETERBOROUGH | | | | |
| 91 107 | 43095 | 56 103 | 153 364 | 317 639 |
| 82228 | 43109 | 56 074 | 170 510 | |
| 91 109 | 43116 | 37 706 | 170 525 | |
| 91 004 | 43119 | 66 064 | 170 523 | |
| 82227 | | 66 211 | 170 202 | |
| 82229 | | 08 569 | 170 635 | |
| 91 018 | | 56 109 | 153 334 | |
| 91 021 | | | 170 204 | |
| 82209 | | | 150 203 | |
| 82217 | | | | |
| 91 128 | | | | |
| 82202 | | | | |
| 91 026 | | | | |
| 91 012 | | | | |
| 82206 | | | | |
| 91 101 | | | | |
| 82223 | | | | |
| 82210 | | | | |
| 91 103 | | | | |
| BURY ST. EDMUNDS | | | | |
| | 60 070 | | 153 314 | |
| | | | 153 335 | |
| | | | 150 213 | |
| | | | 153 311 | |
| | | | 153 306 | |
| WAKES COLNE | | | | |
| | | | 153 322 | |

I recently found an envelope of photographs labelled 'Chasing the B1' which also contained a printout of this event which took place on 3rd November 2001.

The B1 was 61264 and our friend Grahame Ainge was on this special trip to Bury St. Edmunds, but myself and two friends went to Peterborough by car and would then go on to Bury St. Edmunds, naively thinking we might see the train from the road at several points.

I understand 61264 is currently at the North Yorkshire Moors railway after a major overhaul in 2008.



When we arrived at Peterborough several things struck me. The first was the number of Class 56 and 66 diesel locomotives seen during our short stay, and Class 91 electric locomotives which would have hauled coaching stock. There were also Class 170 Turbostars - the first time that I really noticed the change from the square-shaped railcars, I used to know, to something more streamlined. There were Class 43 and Class 56 as well. Another example is seeing a photo I took of *LoadHaul*, now a part of DB. Looking back now it's amazing the changes in the 20 years since the trip

But the main locomotive to see on our trip was 61264 beautifully turned out as can be seen in the reflections from boiler and valve casing:



We chased the B1 to Bury St. Edmunds and en-route may, or may not, have seen a whiff of smoke or steam until we got to Bury.



I rather like this photo of the driving motion.

The next batch of photos from the trip is entitled 'Bury Yard' - as shown in the photos.

There was one of the *LoadHaul* diesel there, 60 070, which I believe may have been *John Louden McAdam*.



There was some kind of arrangement for return - but I really can't recall how 61264 was turned for the return journey?

Then we continued by car to Wakes Colne - having gone over a humpback bridge too fast, which affected my suspension and subsequently my car insurance!

Finally, a couple of pictures taken at Wakes Colne, showing the old and (then) current stock. This was a most interesting day out. For me very much a mix of the "old" steamers and the start of the "new" diesel era.

(photos on next page)



Wakes Colne railcar service.



“John Peel” at Wakes Colne.

A great trip with good company. We saw red kites at Peterborough which were then moving eastward: We now have them over our Hertford garden.

Paddy Carey

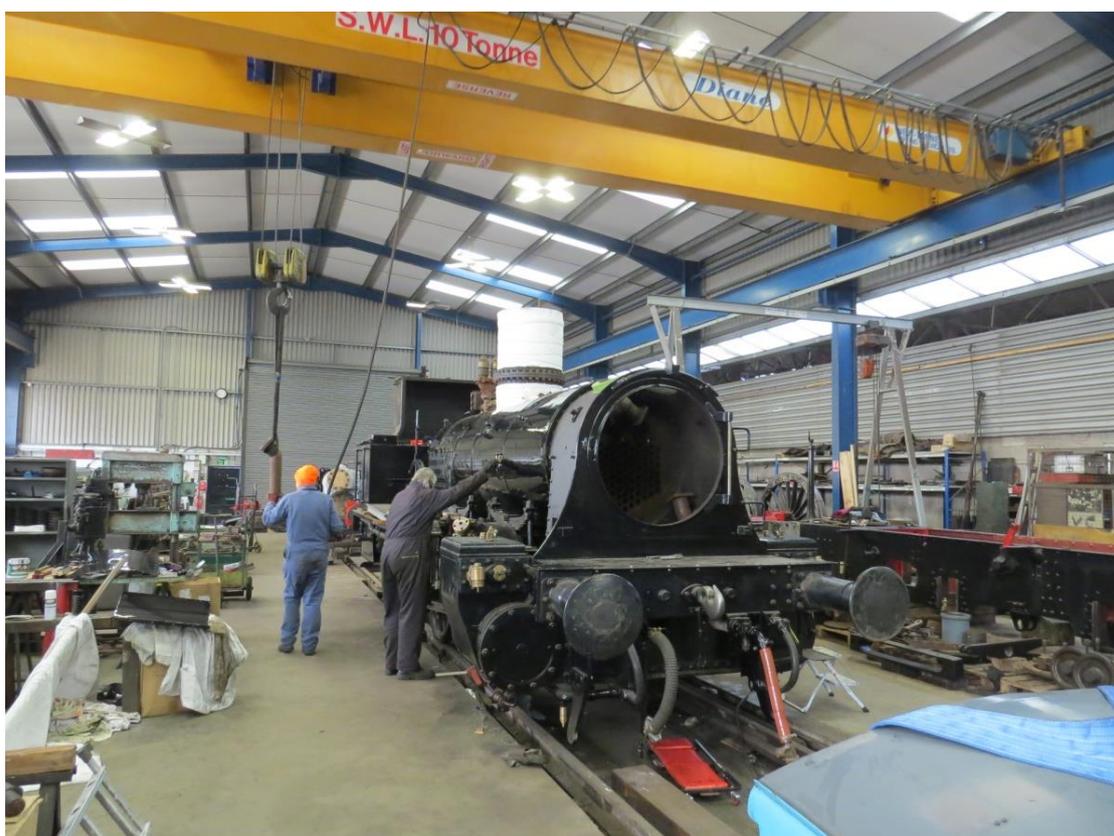
Looking for a New Mistress – Steve Lacey

Sadly, for you dear readers, John, our editor, has asked me to pen a few words on the Nene Valley Railway workshop. He wanted to call this article *Repair Shop* - I think he watches too much TV and should get out more! You will find there is not a mention of *92 Squadron* this time – I hope she doesn't sulk.

We have four sheds on the Wansford site. Two are running sheds with open ends, which act like wind tunnels, with a flicker effect as the setting sun is blocked by passing lorries on the A1 producing a strobe effect.....weird until you realise what is happening. We have one shed on the north side of the line, where the Carriage and Wagon Department do fantastic work restoring and maintaining our rolling stock. The main workshop is in the fourth shed and the subject of this article. It was built in 2006 measures 134ft x 60ft and has a 10-tonne overhead crane.



There is a single central road and a large selection of power tools. We have lathes, milling machines, pillar drills, four Matterson lift screw jacks, magnetic drills, a hydraulic press, files, hammers, some very large spanners and sockets and other hand tools. There is also a welding bay, grit blasting cabinet, cleaning bath, together with taps and dies in both Metric and Imperial sizes (we have British and Continental locomotives and stock to maintain). The 10-tonne crane is a huge asset and is named "Diane" after the wife of the donor. Unfortunately, the words "10-tonne" and "Diane" are next to each other, not earning the "Brownie points" intended! I have to say Diane is a delightful, long-suffering wife to Dave and far from 10 tonnes!



The workshop has a viewing gallery, usually open to the public when the railway is running. Caution with language, when working on stubborn nuts, is therefore advisable! Our oxyacetylene equipment is sometimes employed to heat nuts expanding them enough to release them, or if unsuccessful, gas axe them off!

We also use the public gallery for school parties, to explain about locomotive maintenance and safety on the railway. It is often me who guides the tours, so I always take the opportunity to say that we paint the buffer beams red to save time washing off the blood! Children seem to remember blood, gore and poo better than anything else! They are mostly local schools, so we tell them about the world speed record for steam haulage of 126mph, set on their doorstep by Mallard in 1938, which stands to this day!

At present the workshop is home to 73050 Class 5 MT 4-6-0 "City of Peterborough" (at the A1 end), "Tinkerbell" the Danish F Class 0-6-0T No 656 in the middle, with our most famous (for that read lucrative!) locomotive "Thomas", a 1947 Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T at the Peterborough end. Alongside "Thomas" are the boiler of "Derek Crouch", an 0-6-0ST built by Hudswell Clarke in 1924, whose frames are beside "Tinkerbell", an orange diesel engine from English Electric 0-4-0 "Muriel" and a spare green Paxman diesel engine for a Class 14 locomotive.



Access to the workshop is normally only via the viewing gallery, but at NVR Galas, escorted tours of the workshop and running sheds at ground level are often offered for a fee or donation.

In future issues of *Railway Ramblings*, I will write more about the contents of the other sheds and give more information about the individual locomotives. (Ed: Well done!)

Steve Lacey

The February Presentations (1)

The “Prince of Wales” a Brand-New Steam Locomotive for the 21st Century - Rob Morland

8th February on Zoom



2007 *Prince of Wales* a Gresley Class P2 Locomotive, by the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust

Britain's most powerful steam locomotive.

The first Gresley class P2 No. 2001 *Cock o' the North* was completed in 1934 by the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) at its Doncaster works. It was the most powerful express passenger steam locomotive ever built for a British railway. Designed by Sir Nigel Gresley, the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the LNER who also designed the famous class A3 No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* and world speed record holder class A4 No. 4468 *Mallard*, the class, which was eventually to number six, was constructed for use on the arduous Edinburgh to Aberdeen route. The P2's 2-8-2 'Mikado' wheel arrangement and 6ft 2in driving wheels enabled them to haul 600-ton trains on their own, replacing two older locomotives. However, the P2s never lived up to their potential. The advent of the streamlined trains in the late 1930s and then the second world war meant that the design was never fully developed and all six were rebuilt as class A2/2 4-6-2 'Pacifics' in 1943/44 by Sir Nigel Gresley's successor, Edward Thompson, following Gresley's premature death in 1941.

The P2SLC will build the 7th member of the Gresley P2 class steam locomotives, No. 2007, *Prince of Wales*. The project will demonstrate how the most powerful class of express passenger steam locomotives to operate in the UK can be fully realised. We will use modern computer design and modelling techniques to enable it to deliver its true potential hauling passenger trains at high speed across the national network.

The P2 Steam Locomotive Company (P2SLC) is delighted to say that the name of the new Gresley class P2 2-8-2 steam locomotive will be 'Prince of Wales', named in honour of HRH Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales, to coincide with his 65th birthday. The Queen has kindly approved the use of His Royal Highness's name for the locomotive. The P2 Steam Locomotive Company is a subsidiary of The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust (a registered charity), the builders and operators of No. 60163 *Tornado*, completed in 2008 and officially named by TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall at York station on 19th February 2009.

In much the same way that *Tornado* was constructed as the 50th A1 rather than a replica of the original members of the class, No. 2007 will be the 7th member of the P2 class, likewise allowing for improvements and variations in design. The decision to closely follow the pattern set by *Cock o' the North* means that the locomotive will have the original semi-streamlining and rotary cam valve gear and will look, to all intents and purposes, like No. 2001. However, the Trust acknowledges that the original P2s had certain weaknesses and No. 2007 will have these eliminated at the design stage. Some fundamental criteria have already been decided and these will be explained in the presentation.

The February Presentations (2)

The Varying Fortunes of the Hatfield to St Albans Railway

- Alistair Cameron

22nd February on Zoom.



Smallford, looking west, in October 1967

(From 'The Hatfield-St Albans Branch of the GNR' by Roger Taylor and Brian Anderson)

The Hatfield & St Albans Railway was a branch of the GNR which connected St Albans and Hatfield. It opened in 1865 with the principal aim of allowing St Albans traffic to access the Great Northern main line at Hatfield but soon came into difficulties when the Midland Railway inaugurated a direct route to London through St Albans. Passenger receipts declined in the 1930s, resulting in the temporary withdrawal of services in 1939. Passenger services were permanently withdrawn in 1951, leaving goods traffic to linger on until December 1968. Much of the route of the line is now incorporated into the *Alban Way*, a footpath and cycleway.



SMALLFORD STATION
& ALBAN WAY
Heritage Society

The February Puzzle – Martin Elms

Similar to the puzzle in the January issue, the first letter of the correct answers to the following questions will spell the solution. This time it's someone controversial in his railway career!

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. The name of locomotive number 70035 | | |
| 2. Location of large Great Central Railway docks | | |
| 3. Cheese, gorge, and railway station in Somerset | | |
| 4. Manufacturer of diesel shunters D2950 to D2952 | | |
| 5. Locomotive number 4902 – which Hall? | | |
| 6. Brightly coloured vehicle on North Yorkshire coast | | |
| 7. Railway summit in Devon near Newton Abbot | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| 8. Name of locomotive D9018 | | |
| 9. Water troughs (and cake!) near Patricroft | | |
| 10. Name of tunnel on Midland main line near Mill Hill | | |
| 11. Name of locomotive 46113 | | |
| 12. Was at one time the most southerly station on British Railways | | |
| 13. A Halt that was near Crawley | | |
| 14. Name of locomotive 35014 | | |
| 15. Ballachulish was the station for this place | | |

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

Martin Elms



Our 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.

Branch Committee

The Current 2021-2022 Hitchin Branch Committee

Elected at the 2021 AGM



Steve Lacey
Chair



Dave Elsdon
Secretary



Paul Holloway
Treasurer



John Dossett
Newsletter



Adrian Scrutton



Roger Moulden

Puzzle Solutions

Solution to the puzzle in this issue (page 14):

1. Rudyard Kipling.
2. Immingham.
3. Cheddar.
4. Hunslet.
5. Aldenham.
6. Redcar.
7. Dainton.
8. Ballymoss.
9. Eccles.
10. Elstree.
11. Cameronian.
12. Helston.
13. Ifield.
14. Nederland Line.
15. Glencoe.

Solution: RICHARD BEECHING

Martin Elms

There will be a lot that's new in '22



From the start of the season our trains will be travelling through the new Road Bridge, and later in the Spring we look

forward to our rebuilt extension to Munday's Hill opening for passenger trains.

Come and celebrate Mother's Day, Father's Day and visit our Vintage Vehicles Rally, with other events planned also, and don't forget Halloween!

All events subject to any Covid restrictions at that time.

September 6th sees the return of our highly successful Dinosaur Day, this year with the added Roar of Tyrannosaurus Rex. Tickets available in March.



Keep up to date with all our special events, and sign up for our newsletter at

www.buzzrail.uk

get regular news, updates, priority booking and occasional special offers

Leighton Buzzard Railway

'England's friendly little line'

Page's Park Station, Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard LU7 4TG

Protocol for Keeping Safe at Branch Meetings

When we are again holding real meetings the safety of all of our members will be 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 could 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.
- In consideration of others, put on a face mask as you enter and wear it throughout the meeting.
- 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.

Steve Lacey (Branch Chairman)

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

Railway Ramblings

AGM Supplement

February 2022

Branch AGM Notice and Agenda

The RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch AGM will be held on 8th March 2022 starting at 19:30. The venue will be Tilehouse Street Baptist Church Hall, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2EE.

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 3 MINUTES OF 2021 AGM
- 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES
- 5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- 6 SECRETARY'S REPORT
- 7 TREASURER'S REPORT & FINANCIAL SUMMARY
- 8 ANY QUESTIONS FROM THE OFFICERS' REPORTS
- 9 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2022
(All Members are prepared to stand for another year)
- 10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Minutes of the RCTS Hitchin Branch 2021 AGM

Held on Tuesday 9th March 2021 as a virtual meeting using Zoom and commencing 19:30

1) **Present;** Steve Lacey (Chairman), Paul Holloway (Treasurer), Dave Elsdon (Secretary) Adrian Scrutton, John Dossett, Martin Elms

In attendance a further 22 Hitchin Branch members

2) **Apologies for Absence;** Roger Moulden

3) **The minutes of the 2020 AGM** had been circulated to members in February via the Branch Newsletter,

4) **Matters arising from those minutes,** NONE

5) **2020 / 21 Chairman's Report**

What a year! When I became Chairman, I thought of a number of scenarios which might present me with difficulties, but not in my wildest dreams (nightmares?) did I foresee this! Due to the help of a stalwart committee, I think we have tackled the crisis as best we could. John Dossett, as Newsletter Editor, has done sterling work in keeping you all informed and still feeling part of a group, despite us having to cancel all face-to-face meetings, due to Covid 19.

Dave Elsdon has taken his lovingly created programme and adapted it to our new environment. As many of you know, with the help of RCTS "head office", in the shape of Jeremy Harrison and David Jackman, we use the RCTS Zoom licence to set up virtual meetings. It is not the same as being together, but it is great to see many of you and be able to chat before, during the break and after the meeting. Sadly, it is not Adrian and Martin providing the tea, as you have to make it yourselves!

On the up side, I do not have to carry the books to and from meetings, but this does mean a loss of income, as does a lack of door receipts. For those who, at previous AGM's, questioned why we had such a large contingency fund, now you know!

Having said that, we still have expenses. We took a decision to pay speakers a modest fee (usually in the form of a donation to their favourite railway charity) for the effort involved in collecting the images used and the time taken in preparing talks. We have also taken steps to secure our venues, for an eventual return to live meetings. Personally, I do not think it likely that these will recommence until the autumn. I would encourage you all to join us on our Zoom odyssey, where as I am sure the Treasurer would point out; you have the choice of making a donation to the branch!

It only remains for me to thank the Committee for their support over the last year and ask you all to stay safe and well until we can meet again in person.

Steve Lacey
RCTS Hitchin Branch Chairman

6) **2020 / 21 Secretary's Report**

I would like to start by thanking all of the committee for their support and efforts in helping with the operation of the Branch both at meetings and the one exhibition we managed to attend in January before we locked down. I would particularly like to thank Chairman Steve for all his work in co-ordinating meetings and for transporting and keeping all the book stock and equipment we use at

meetings, although he has been let off for most of the year. I would also thank Paul our treasurer who has got our finances in hand and also has had a much easier time recently. One last thank you is to John Dossett who has taken over our newsletter now entitled "Railway Ramblings" and made a huge success of it, also for continuing to keep us informed throughout the year. Thank you everyone for your support and for renewing your membership.

This past year has proved difficult our last live meeting in Welwyn Garden City was on the 25th February 2020 with Dr. Rudi Newman and 10th March in Hitchin when we held last year's AGM followed by presentations by our members. Sadly, during this past year, we have lost two members, Keith Atkins (22476) in April and Chris Alton (19935) in August, if there are others I have missed my apologies but I have not been informed of any.

The committee decided in October that we should start virtual (Zoom) meetings seeing the success some other Branches were having with them. Following that decision proved successful for us also with 46 members & guests that first meeting. I currently have speakers booked through to May 2021.

During the year both Steve and I have received donations of books, DVD's and video tapes from supporters of the Branch so much so that storage, as always, is proving difficult, so once we can be back together you can be assured of some quality items on the sales table.

Unfortunately, we cannot make too many arrangements for later in the year as we have no idea when all this uncertainty will end, as you know from the Railway Ramblings. I have a full programme of speakers booked up to December for live meetings. I look forward meeting up again, whenever.

Dave Elsdon
RCTS Hitchin Branch Secretary.

7) 2020 / 21 Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present this report for the nineteenth AGM of the branch and my third as Treasurer.

Attached to this report is the Income and Expenditure report for the year in two formats – the first shows comparison with last year and the second splits the year being reported by location. The year to October 2020 only reflects transactions for the period to March 2020 as we have been unable to hold meetings from then on.

There is an overall loss for the year due mainly to the poor sales at exhibitions. This reflects the lower quality of books we had available to sell.

The increase in the door/raffle money per meeting for members from £1 to £2 and visitors from £2.50 to £3.50 came into effect in September 2019. No amendment to the rates is anticipated for the current financial year as and when we manage to hold live meetings.

With regard to the funds shown as held by the Society, please note we, as a branch, are not allowed under Society rules to keep any funds in excess of £2,500 with the balance being transferred to the Society and held by them in a ring-fenced account. This means they cannot use it and it is available as and when we need to call some down. Any interest earned on these funds is retained by the Society but at 0.1% would only have given us £3.50 in the year. The slight reduction in funds held by the Society reflects transactions with them during the year.

It is anticipated that we will make a further loss in the next financial year as nearly all of exhibitions we attend take place over the winter and this year these have been cancelled. Let's hope 2021/22 will see us back to normal.

Paul Holloway
RCTS Hitchin Branch Treasurer

Income & Expenditure Report – Year Ended 31 October 2020

| | | Year to 31/10/2020 | Year to 31/10/2019 |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| INCOME | | | |
| | Sales and Donations | 620.80 | 1,972.26 |
| | Door monies/Raffle | 465.50 | 1,035.55 |
| | Total | 1,086.30 | 3,007.81 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| | Room Hire | 606.00 | 1,111.00 |
| | Speakers Fees/Expenses | 171.00 | 687.32 |
| | Purchase of books for resale | - | 170.00 |
| | Exhibition expenses - inc stand fee & travel costs | 236.48 | 374.62 |
| | Postage, stationery etc | 29.89 | 145.65 |
| | Programme printing | 68.00 | 60.00 |
| | Refreshments | 13.92 | 98.44 |
| | Computer/sound system purchase & maintenance | - | - |
| | Total | 1,125.29 | 2,647.03 |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR | | - 38.99 | 360.78 |
| BRANCH BALANCE | | | |
| As at 31 October 2019 | | | |
| | Held by Branch | 1,588.13 | 1,102.60 |
| | Held by Society | 3,683.41 | 3,808.16 |
| | | 5,271.54 | 4,910.76 |
| As at 31 October 2020 | | | |
| | Held by Branch | 1,588.90 | 1,588.13 |
| | Held by Society | 3,643.65 | 3,683.41 |
| | | 5,232.55 | 5,271.54 |
| Movement in year | | - 38.99 | 360.78 |

Income & Expenditure Report – Year Ended 31 October 2020

(For the year, split by location)

| | | Hitchin | Welwyn GC | Exhibitions |
|---|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| INCOME | | | | |
| | Sales and Donations | 52.00 | 67.00 | 501.80 |
| | Door monies/Raffle | 151.50 | 314.00 | - |
| | Total | 203.50 | 381.00 | 501.80 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | |
| | Room Hire | 306.00 | 300.00 | - |
| | Speakers Fees/Expenses | 85.50 | 85.50 | - |
| | Purchase of books for resale | - | - | - |
| | Exhibition expenses - inc stand fees & travel costs | - | - | 236.48 |
| | Postage, stationery etc | 14.94 | 14.95 | - |
| | Programme printing | 34.00 | 34.00 | - |
| | Refreshments | 6.96 | 6.96 | - |
| | Total | 447.40 | 441.41 | 236.48 |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR | | - 243.90 | - 60.41 | 265.32 |
| SPLIT EXHIBITIONS 50/50 | | 132.66 | 132.66 | - 265.32 |
| REVISED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR | | - 111.24 | 72.25 | - |

8) Questions arising from these reports NONE

Acceptance of these reports. Proposed by Martin Elms, Seconded by Paddy Carey
Carried unanimously

9) Election of Officers for the coming year.

All current officers are prepared to stand again, no additional volunteers were forthcoming from the membership.

Proposal that the current officers be re-elected en-block

Proposed by George Howe, Seconded by John Dossett

Carried unanimously

10) Any other business NONE

Meeting closed at 0750 hrs.

Next year's AGM to be held in the Hitchin meeting on 8th March 2022 at 1930 hrs.

David Elsdon
Hitchin Branch Secretary

Reports for the Branch 2022 AGM

Chairman's Report 2021-22

When I took on this job, I never expected to be reporting on such a year! However, with the support and commitment of my committee and the branch members, we have survived! It has taken innovation, aided by the main RCTS in helping us mount the initial Zoom meetings and dare I say it, co-operation with Bedford and St Albans LCGB to start running our own Zoom programme. It is great to see the railway clubs helping each other with our common aims. When Covid abated a bit we ran some "live" meetings, but with understandably reduced numbers. This has resulted in losses over the year despite the ability to donate to meetings via the RCTS web site. At least, I no longer have to answer questions about our large contingency fund at AGM's! In case you have not been there recently, you will notice the club website has been re-vamped and is now much better, in my opinion. It now, also allows our editor to download directly into our pages and I thank John for many last-minute alterations, which have had to be made over the last year. Email has proved invaluable in keeping you all abreast of changes, so if we do not have your email please drop me a note on gricersteve@hotmail.com and I will add you to the list. I must also thank Dave Elsdon for producing an ever-changing programme, Vic for clawing money from you at the door and their wives for providing refreshments in the last few live meetings. Stay safe and well, as we look forward to a more hopeful year.

Steve Lacey

RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch Chairman

Secretary's Report 2021-22

As always, I would like to thank all the other committee members for their time and assistance in helping me with all aspects of organising the Branch over this very different year. I would also like to thank Martin Elms for all his help in the past at meetings and exhibitions, Martin chose to leave the committee earlier in the year. We also have modified the name of the Branch to represent our wider interests and reflect on where our membership and activities primarily take place.

Our Chairman Steve has done a great job setting up and hosting our Zoom meetings and always expressing a great appreciation for our speakers at all our meetings, I thank Paul, our treasurer for keeping the finances under control and re-arranging payments etc. with the banks who now wish to charge for making payments. John Dossett also deserves all our thanks for the great monthly newsletters "Railway Ramblings" that he produces and for keeping contributors on their toes for getting articles in on time. John has also undertaken the job of Branch website co-ordinator and that also is working out well. One final thank you is to Vic and Janet Wood for all their assistance at live meetings.

Finally, I thank you our membership for your continued support at whatever meetings we hold, I hope you are all ready to come back to live meetings and exhibitions very soon when the days get longer and hopefully warmer than it is on this very cold January evening when I'm writing this,

Dave Elsdon

RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch Secretary.

Treasurer's Report 2021-22 and Accounts for Year to 31st October 2021

I am pleased to present this report for the twentieth AGM of the branch and my fourth as Treasurer.

Attached to this report is the Income and Expenditure report for the year (to end-October 2020) in two formats – the first shows comparison with last year and the second splits the year being reported by location. The coronavirus pandemic has had a major effect on the figures for both years with last year only covering the 6 months to March 2020 when we entered the first lockdown and the current year covering zoom meetings in the earlier months and live ones from August 2021.

There has been no income from exhibitions since Stevenage in January 2020 and the sooner we can get back doing these the better.

The door/raffle money per meeting for members at £2 and visitors at £3.50 has been the same since September 2019 and no amendment to these rates will be made for the current financial year.

With regard to the funds shown as held by the Society, please note we, as a branch, are not allowed under Society rules to keep any funds in excess of £2,500 with the balance being transferred to the Society and held by them in a ring-fenced account. This means they cannot use it and it is available as and when we need to call some down, which we expect to do to enable us to pay bills in the current year. Any interest earned on these funds is retained by the Society but at 0.02% would only have given us 73p in the year. The slight reduction in funds held by the Society reflects transactions with them during the year.

It is anticipated that we will make a further loss in the next financial year until we get back to attending exhibitions and our members feel more able to attend the restarted live meetings.

Paul Holloway
RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch Treasurer

Income & Expenditure Report – Year Ended 31 October 2021

| | | Year to 31/10/2021 | Year to 31/10/2020 |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| INCOME | | | |
| | Sales and Donations | 39.50 | 620.80 |
| | Zoom meeting donations | 88.00 | - |
| | Door monies/Raffle | 105.00 | 465.50 |
| | Total | 232.50 | 1,086.30 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| | Room Hire | 327.00 | 606.00 |
| | Speakers Fees/Expenses - live | 167.35 | 171.00 |
| | Speakers Fees/Expenses - Zoom | 190.00 | - |
| | Exhibition expenses - inc stand fees & travel costs | - | 236.48 |
| | Postage, stationery etc | 23.40 | 29.89 |
| | Programme printing | - | 68.00 |
| | Refreshments | 7.38 | 13.92 |
| | Total | 715.13 | 1,125.29 |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR | | - 482.63 | - 38.99 |
| BRANCH BALANCE | | | |
| As at 31 October 2020 | | | |
| | Held by Branch | 1,588.90 | 1,588.13 |
| | Held by Society | 3,643.65 | 3,683.41 |
| | | 5,232.55 | 5,271.54 |
| As at 31 October 2021 | | | |
| | Held by Branch | 1,181.51 | 1,588.90 |
| | Held by Society | 3,568.41 | 3,643.65 |
| | | 4,749.92 | 5,232.55 |
| | Movement in year | - 482.63 | - 38.99 |

Income & Expenditure Report – Year Ended 31 October 2020

(For the year, split by location)

| | | | Hitchin | Welwyn GC | Exhibitions |
|---|--|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| INCOME | | | | | |
| | Sales and Donations | | 12.50 | 27.00 | - |
| | Zoom meeting donations (50/50) | | 44.00 | 44.00 | |
| | Door monies/Raffle | | 39.50 | 65.50 | - |
| | | Total | 96.00 | 136.50 | - |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | |
| | Room Hire | | 162.00 | 165.00 | - |
| | Speakers Fees/Expenses - live | | 61.45 | 105.90 | - |
| | Speakers Fees/Expenses - Zoom | | 95.00 | 95.00 | - |
| | Exhibition expenses - inc stand fees & travel costs | | - | - | - |
| | Postage, stationery etc | | 11.70 | 11.70 | - |
| | Programme printing | | - | - | - |
| | Refreshments | | 3.69 | 3.69 | - |
| | | Total | 333.84 | 381.29 | - |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR | | | - 237.84 | - 244.79 | - |
| SPLIT EXHIBITIONS 50/50 | | | - | - | - |
| REVISED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR | | | - 237.84 | - 244.79 | - |

- End of AGM papers -