

# Railway Ramblings

Issue 158

September 2023

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



*Branch Line Society "Ips Witch" passing Welwyn North on 30 July 2023  
It ran Ipswich - North London Line - East Midlands Parkway.*

*50007, bearing number 50034 and name "Furious" on visible side, leading, with 50049 "Defiance".*

*Photo: Tom Gladwin*

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*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

**Note:** In the event of any late change to the programme, everyone on the distribution list for this newsletter will receive an emails advising the details of the change.

## During September 2023

17<sup>th</sup> September      **Branch Visit to the Epping Signalling Museum.**

Book places with Dave Elsdon ( [Hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:Hitchin@rcts.org.uk) )

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

12<sup>th</sup> September      **The Last Four Years of Steam**                                      *George Howe*

At Digswell, Welwyn (14:00-16:30, doors open from 13:30)

26<sup>th</sup> September      **The Line from Doncaster to Hull**                                      *Stephen Gay*

## During October 2023

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

10<sup>th</sup> October              **Steam in the 1960's**    *Chris Wright*

At Digswell, Welwyn (14:00-16:30, doors open from 13:30)

31<sup>st</sup> October              **The Severn Valley and The Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Railways**    *Richard Morris*

Donations are 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 now £3 for members and £5 for non-members.

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

Digswell, Welwyn meetings are held at Digswell Village Church Hall, Warren Way, Digswell, Welwyn AL6 0DH

## “Zoom” Virtual Presentations

Some RCTS branches are 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*). Members can register and then take part in any of these events.



## Chairman's Platform

The August visit, to the Epping Ongar Railway, happened on one of the seemingly rare days when the sun shone. Those of you who took part all seemed to have a good day out and we were well looked after by the volunteers at the EOR. In this issue of *Railway Ramblings* our Editor has produced a report about the visit – it is quite lengthy, but it was a rather full day!

This month, apart from the two usual monthly meetings, we have a further outing booked. This came about as a result of planning the Epping Ongar visit when we became aware of the Epping Signalling Museum. In the August issue of *Railway Ramblings* our Editor included an insight into this museum (repeated in this issue) and we have organised a Branch RCTS visit there (17<sup>th</sup> September). If you would like to participate then you need to advise Dave Elsdon as soon as possible (numbers may be limited).

This month's meetings also look very promising. At Hitchin, on 12<sup>th</sup> September, our very own George Howe offers us a steam special, and then at Digswell, on 26<sup>th</sup> September, we have a further visit from Stephen Gay. Those of you who have heard Stephen before know that his presentations are excellent and have become very popular around RCTS branches as well as our own. Further details of all the September events appear elsewhere in this issue – I trust I will see you there.

We all enjoy the cup of tea/coffee & biscuits at our meetings. These do not magically appear and on behalf of everyone I want to thank Janet Wood (at Hitchin) and David Holdstock (at Digswell) for producing this vital contribution to our meetings. At meetings there is, of course, the opportunity to “chat” and I believe this, for many of you, is also an important part of being at the meeting. However, I for one am often stuck for putting a name to a face and it feels quite difficult to ask someone you've seen a number of times who they are! Starting in October, we are going to try a solution to this – name badges – and these will be issued as you sign-in. The Committee are endeavouring to sort out the details and trust that you will give this initiative your support.

*Steve Lacey*

## The Welwyn Meeting Venue

For those who have decided that this Autumn is now the time to return to Branch meetings, a reminder that meetings in the south of our area have moved from Welwyn Garden City to Digswell Village Church Hall, Digswell, Welwyn AL6 0DH

Digswell Village Church is located in Warren Way, Digswell. Apart from the car park there is on-street parking available in Warren Way and other nearby roads.

For those travelling by train, Welwyn North Station is a short five-minute walk away.

Note:

This is “Digswell Village CHURCH Hall” - NOT “Digswell Village Hall”.

# Branch Visit – Epping Ongar Railway

6<sup>th</sup> August 2023



Our branch visit to the EOR started with the group (of 19) meeting up outside Epping Underground Station around 10:00 to take the 339 heritage bus service to North Weald Station. Our vehicle (reg. VLT 298) was London Bus Company AEC Routemaster RM 298 and, for some, reverting to habits of their childhood, there was a rush upstairs!

The conductor provided his own humorous commentary along the route. RM 298 is pictured here in the station yard at North Weald.

At North Weald we were greeted by our coordinating host, Bob Good, and there was a short opportunity for tea/coffee. Chairman Steve called for a group photo but the exercise proved to be “a bit like herding cats” and the following photo (missing several of the group) was the best achieved:



Then it was time (11:00) to board our first train, destination Ongar. This comprised Class 31 diesel 31438 and three somewhat miscellaneous looking carriages. Completely repainted in BR corporate blue with the correct transfers for the period and with yellow cab ends, the locomotive's colour scheme as she would have looked ex-works in 1982. This locomotive had returned to traffic in September 2013.



31438 Class 31 preparing to depart North Weald 6 August 2023

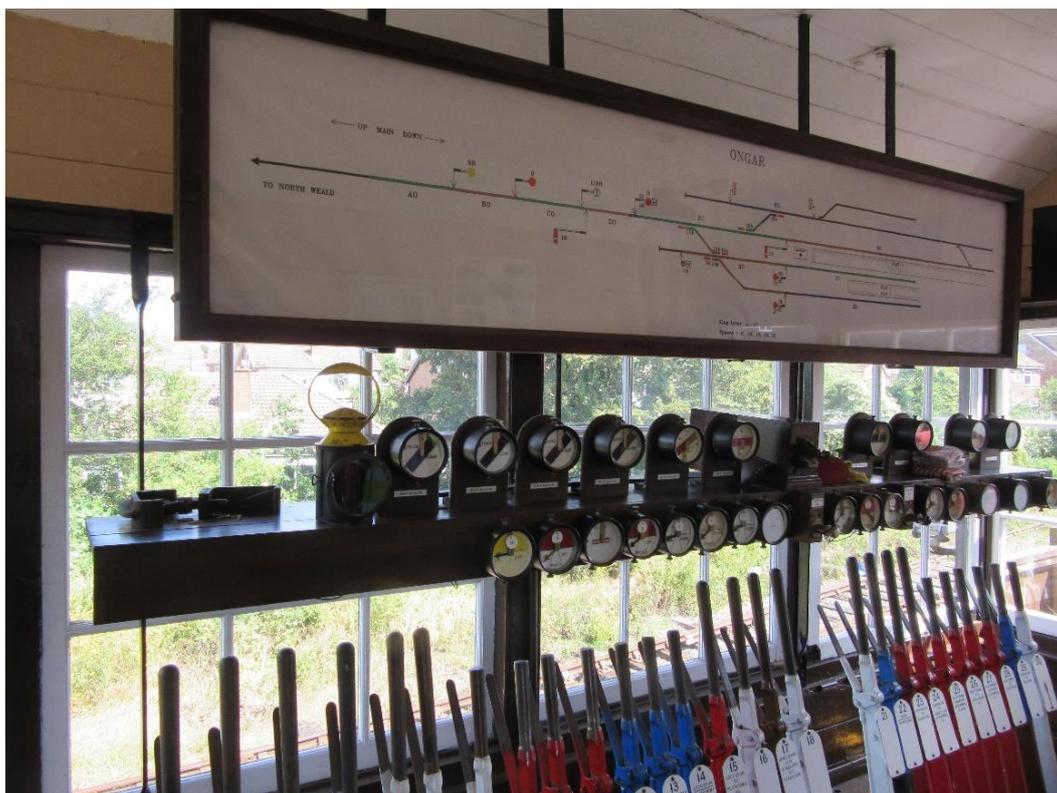
Leaving North Weald behind, we passed through attractive countryside and Blake Hall Station, previously London Underground's least used station with around 6 passengers per day. Bob Good explained that the EOR is a privately owned railway operated by a volunteer society (EORVS) and the owner of the line is having the old station building at Blake Hall converted into his private residence. Building work in progress was very evident.

On arrival (11:15) at Ongar Station we divided into two groups. The first visited the Penny Salon – more about that later – whilst the second group were given a brief illustrated history talk by Malcolm Batten (EORVS) about the Ongar signal box.

On the platform, close to where the group stood, was the “foot warmer” building. This was where, prior to carriage heating, foot warmers were prepared for First Class travellers. Also, there is a blue plaque to the memory of Father Thomas Byles who left Ongar Station en-route to the ill-fated *Titanic* in 1912.

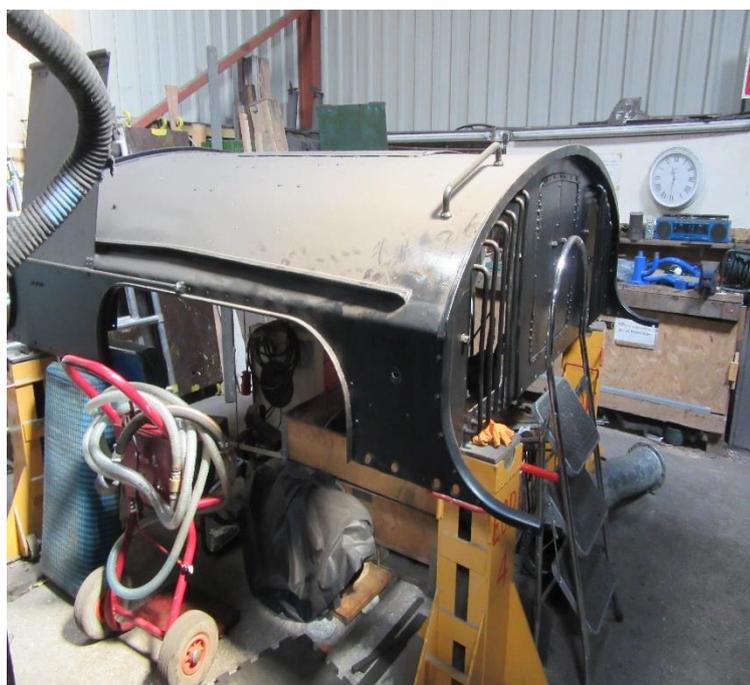


The talk on the signal box history was followed by a rather brief opportunity to go into the box.



Ongar Signal Box frame, instruments and track diagram

At this point, with station staff urging us onto the 11:35, we set off back to North Weald where our two groups again split taking a lunch break/visiting the engine shed alternately. Our shed guide was Bob Good. First "item" in the shed was Great Western Railway 5101 Class, Large Prairie (2-6-2T), No. 4141 undergoing a major overhaul. Interestingly, the reassembled bunker has fake rivets!



GWR 4141 in pieces

Next in line in the shed was GWR Hall Class No.4953 *Pitchford Hall*. Following a major overhaul, lasting over 5 years, this locomotive returned to traffic in December 2019 and currently wears BR lined black livery.



GWR 4953 *Pitchford Hall*

Others in the shed were a “Permaquip” Maintenance Vehicle, PM002 - "*Badger*", two Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn 0-6-0ST, works numbers 7667 and 7761, originally owned by Stewarts and Lloyds who, at the time, ran the large steel works at Corby. These saddle tanks are awaiting restoration one day!

There was also Hawthorn Leslie 0-6-0ST No. 3437, named *Isobel*, in traffic but only suitable for light loads.

Outside, in the yard, where the original curved pit had to be supplemented by a straight pit to accommodate *Pitchford Hall*, was a number of other locomotives, the most striking of which was GWR 4575 Class 2-6-2T locomotive, No.5521. In May 2013, at the request of London Underground, this locomotive was painted in red London Transport livery and numbered L.150, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Metropolitan line.



Also in the yard were Class 47 47635 *Jimmy Milne*, Class 03 D2170 (03170) and Class 20 D8001 (20001).

Lunch and shed visits over, it was time to take the 13:10 DMU service towards Epping, although operationally the service stops in the forest, short of Epping Underground Station.

At North Weald, some of the group visited the signal box (the others had the opportunity at the end of the day). We were greeted by signalman John Stratton and watched him in action.



John Stratton signalling a train away from North Weald.

John is one of some 250 active volunteers in the EORVS.

The signalman's log is still an essential part of daily operations. In the frame on the wall is the working timetable from the time when the line was somewhat busier.



Then it was off, on the 14:00 DMU service, to Ongar where the two groups had either the signal box talk or visited the Penny Salon. The Penny Salon is in the Ladies Waiting Room at the station! Here Geoff Silcock, a railway volunteer and professional photographer who specialises in steam photography, gave a short but most interesting introduction to his work. Geoff's work is very impressive and we will, hopefully, have a presentation from him at a future monthly meeting.



The DMU returning from Epping Forest, approaching North Weald Station ...

... and our bus to take us back to Epping Underground Station for our journeys home.

A packed and enjoyable day. Even the weather was great. Our thanks to all at EORVS.

*John Dossett*

## EOR or EORVS ?

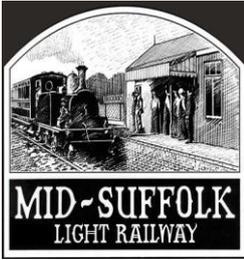
Shortly after 1994, a private company 'Pilot Developments' purchased the Epping to Ongar section of the line. Despite assurances that they would run a passenger service within five years of the purchase, no trains ran. In the early part of the new millennium The Epping Ongar Railway Volunteer Society (EORVS) was formed. Initially, this consisted of a small group of enthusiasts, volunteering their time to repair and preserve, damage and wear and tear, to the neglected buildings and track. Working alongside the owners the volunteer group gradually restored the line and station building at Ongar so that trains could run once again and provide a passenger service to North Weald. On 10th October 2004, almost ten years to the day since the line closed, the first EORVS train service left Ongar.

A further change in EOR ownership occurred late in 2007. It was then decided to cease running trains for a while and to concentrate on improving the infrastructure to secure the long-term future of the branch. Services restarted in 2013.

*Details reproduced courtesy Epping Ongar Railway*

## Newsletter Distribution

This e-newsletter, *Railway Ramblings*, 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 [glicersteve@hotmail.com](mailto:glicersteve@hotmail.com)



# Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

Steam Railway Day with a special visitor

3<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2023



The 3<sup>rd</sup> September is the last of the summer season openings for this year, and the MSLR will be welcoming Malcolm Root, the Vice-Chairman of the Guild of Railway Artists. Malcolm has recently completed a magnificent picture of Laxfield Station in the last days of British Railways ownership and will be signing limited edition prints during the day.



The Old Ram Vintage Tractor Club will be putting on a grand show of veteran machinery in the station forecourt.

There will also be a display by the Ipswich Model Engineers whose wonderful work has been shown at the Middy before. Visitors will find their exhibition in the Workshop Building by the main entrance to the station concourse.



This will be the last day (until the 26<sup>th</sup> November Vintage & Bygones Fair & Exhibition) when visitors can enjoy the Middy Museum and railway, with unlimited rides in steam-hauled Victorian 4-wheel coaches, and sample the delights of the Middy Tea Room and Real Ale Bar. A fine end to the 2023 Summer Season

*Reproduced courtesy of the MSLR*



An insight especially for those thinking of participating in the Branch visit on 17<sup>th</sup> September.

This museum opened a very short while before the start of the Covid-19 restrictions and has therefore only been going properly again for just over a year. Situated alongside live running Central Line trains on the approach to Epping station is this unique LONDON TRANSPORT signal cabin. It is the only Cabin on the entire Underground network in preservation and open to the public. It is this signal cabin and Locomotive L11 that together make up Epping Signalling Museum.

The most striking exhibit as you approach the gate is the bright yellow 90+ year old former shunting locomotive L11. Museum guides will show you around and explain the signalling and other safety systems that keep London Underground one of the safest railways in the world. You are welcome to climb on board and sit at the controls of a genuine London Underground train, not forgetting to watch for the lineside signals and working set of points. All this whilst Central Line trains clatter past on the other line!



The next destination will be the downstairs room of the signal cabin, originally called the Relay Room. This is where the collection of railway artefacts and memorabilia is housed. There are working signals and warning indicators, an illuminated track diagram, a guards door panel, and of course relays! There are original Underground station signs from long forgotten stations. 'Behind the scenes' equipment such as Train Sequencer machines are also on show.

Then, upstairs to the highlight of the exhibition - the Signal Cabin operating floor itself. Directly overlooking the Central Line and with a view of trains as they leave the station or approach from Theydon Bois, this is where the signaller worked. They would have controlled trains in and out of not only Epping station but, in days gone by, the goods yard and gas works siding as well! The 47 fully interlocked chrome plated levers controlled all the signals and points in the Epping area, even the ones towards North Weald. Guides will explain how it all works, and then it's over to you to use the levers and simulator to signal a train into Epping station and beyond!



Our RCTS visit will be tailored to our requests so our experience at the Museum should suit whether you're a former signaller, railway expert, generally interested in railways or just looking for "something different". Looking on *Trip Advisor* shows many very satisfied visitors and that a duration of 2+ hours is needed.

A Sunday afternoon visit (17<sup>th</sup> September) has been arranged. Car parking would be in the station car park at Epping (£6 for the day). Access to the museum is from the car park. Depending on numbers, a larger group will be split so that all can get the most from the visit. The museum makes no admission charge but donations are very much welcomed. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided (without charge) during the visit!

This visit is not on a public opening day. As the number of museum volunteers required as guides for the visit depends on the number of visitors, please book as early as possible.

Please let Dave Elsdon ([Hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:Hitchin@rcts.org.uk)) know if you are interested.

*Information reproduced courtesy of the Epping Signalling Museum.*



## Epping Ongar Railway

### Restoration of the Line

Both Ongar and North Weald Stations have seen long over-due investments in their infrastructure in the efforts to undertake an authentic restoration of the branch: But, as we already have quite a lot about the EOR this month, more about those in future issues of *Railway Ramblings*.

# The September Puzzle – Martin Elms

This month, the first letter of the answer to the following questions will spell the name of the manager of many Light Railways:

1. Locomotive depot with code 6A
2. West Highland ferry port
3. Name of steam locomotive 73113
4. ? Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway
5. L.S.W.R. locomotive works from 1839 – 1844
6. The name of a recently opened cross-London railway
7. Station at end of branch line from Liskeard


8. Name of locomotive D228
9. British ? Houston main contractor and supplier of some electrical equipment for diesel locomotive Class 15 (D82XX)
10. Railway junction City whose Cathedral is nicknamed the “Ship of the Fens”
11. Ivo ? prolific writer and photographer of the Somerset and Dorset Railway
12. Lord Claud ? 1843 – 1925 chairman of the G.E.R.
13. Light railway which ran from Alne to ?
14. Name of loW locomotive W18
15. Station at end of branch from Sandling Junction


As usual, best of luck – my solutions are on page 22. No cheating!

*Martin Elms*



# GWR Saint Class Visit

9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, & 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023



The NVR will host GWR Saint Class no.2999 *Lady of Legend* for a visit in September

No.2999 is unique in being the only type of its class that is preserved as all the others were scrapped by the mid-50s, and no.2999 was painstakingly rebuilt and re-engineered, by preservationists at the Great Western Society, from a later class of locomotive after steam was axed.

The Saint class were introduced on the GWR from 1902, but by 1953 all were scrapped. Designed by G.J. Churchward, the Saint class proved to be a highly successful class of steam locomotive, which used innovative ideas picked up by Churchward while studying locomotive design practises in the USA. The class established the design principles for GWR 2-cylinder classes over the following fifty years. This was shown by Charles Collett, Churchward's successor, who converted 'Saint' no.2925 '*Saint Martin*' into the prototype Hall class of locomotives, as well as serving as a template for the other GWR 4-6-0s such as the Grange, Manor and County classes.

No.2999 *Lady of Legend* was developed and built by reversing what Collett did to no.2925 to become the prototype Hall, by taking Hall class no.4942 *Maindy Hall*, which was purchased from Barry in the early 1970s, with the sole intention always being to recreate a Saint. The project didn't fully get underway however until 1995, due to the costs involved and the amount of work which would be required to undertake the back conversion. Major new components were required, such as three new sets of 6' 8 1/2" driving wheels to replace 4942s 6' ones, two sets of bogie wheels, two new identical half cylinder blocks were required to recreate the

inside cylinders which are fed by a straight steam pipe that was an integral part of the Saint design, a complete new lever reverser was made from new, and the frames were heavily modified and straightened, as well as other major components were thoroughly overhauled and rebuilt, while others were sourced from other GWR locos, which proves how well the standardisation of Swindon's locos worked. A connecting rod from 2906 'Lady of Lyn' and the whistle from 2910 'Lady of Shalott' have also been used on the rebuild of no.2999.

The loco was numbered no.2999 as this would have been the next production number for a Saint, the last, no.2998 *Ernest Cunard* being outshopped from Swindon in 1913 some 110 years ago this year, and 106 years between both locos being completed!

Thanks to Didcot Railway Centre and the GWS for allowing 'Lady of Legend' to visit the NVR!

While at the NVR *Lady of Legend* will undertake two weekends of running - an evening fish and chip train running as 'The Cambrian Coast Express', a pasty and pint train followed by live music running as 'The Cornishman', driving experience courses and a full line daytime photographic charter with the freight train. Full details of these can be found on the NVR website [Nene Valley Railway Ltd \(nvr.org.uk\)](http://Nene Valley Railway Ltd (nvr.org.uk)) .

*Details courtesy the Nene Valley Railway*

## Reader Photos – Share yours



Deltic 55009 *Alycidon* approaching Ashwell & Morden on the "Capital Deltic Reprise" Railtour from Willington to King's Cross, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The oily mark behind the name plate is apparently what you get if you ask a Deltic to potter around for too long on a light throttle – a very visible 'dirty protest'.

*Tony Turner*



With the Shark brake van behind them, a few members of our group visiting the Epping Ongar Railway gaze towards the GWR 4575 Class 2-6-2T locomotive, repainted ten years ago in red London Transport livery and numbered L.150.

*Steve Lacey*



35018 *British India Line* at Welwyn North on 15<sup>th</sup> July working the RTC trip from Kings Cross to York

*Mikki Hart*



# Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway

Behind the Scenes - FREE Guided Tours



On Sunday 15 October adult-only visitors are invited to see parts of the railway that are rarely accessible to the general public! In addition to the “Behind the Scenes” FREE Guided Tours the Standard Steam and Vintage Diesel train services will operate throughout the day with the regular range of adult discounts and concessionary fares.

See what goes on beyond the end of the platform at Princes Risborough and down the tracks past the crossing gates at Chinnor.

Guides will be on hand at both Chinnor and Princes Risborough platforms from 11.00 until 16.30 to show you around and answer your questions, including about the benefits of becoming a member and volunteer. (All of the staff you see at the C&PRR are unpaid volunteers, and maybe you too could become a volunteer.)

Please note: For safety reasons the tours will be arranged between train movements at both stations. Also, because of the nature of the tours they are adult-only, limited to those who are aged 16 years and over. You may be walking over railway ballast and other uneven surfaces for part of the tour, and so you are asked to wear sensible and robust footwear.

For further information use this link:

[See Behind the Scenes on our FREE Guided Tours: « Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway \(chinnorrailway.co.uk\)](http://chinnorrailway.co.uk)

*Information reproduced courtesy of the C&PRR*

# The Anniversary – a short story by Martin Elms

“Is it safe to cross young man?”

The elderly grey-haired gentleman who, well-dressed complete with kilt and deer stalker hat, paused by the level crossing gates.

After checking the train location indicators, I replied “All O.K.”

I am the level crossing attendant at Great Glen crossing on the Highland main line.

The owner of both sides of the line at this glorious remote rural location had recently allowed stone extraction on the east side. This resulted in the level crossing – previously only for farm traffic - now becoming busy. To offset any problems, part of the planning agreement was that the crossing was to be used by the contract lorries only between seven in the morning and six or sunset on weekdays only. The crossing was to be manned during these times. It was to be closed overnight with then only authorised key holders allowed to use the crossing, at their own risk. This required using the telephone provided for train location information and to obtain permission to cross the railway by the Signaller.

I was employed to perform crossing duties guided by train describers installed when the crossing use increased.

The gentleman had a daily walk and crossed over the crossing here at precisely at nine fifteen every day, always checking with me if it was clear, even in clear weather.

I wished him good day. He only acknowledged me by nodding his head as he ventured over the crossing, walking in the direction of the quarry. I busied myself after checking the indicators before opening the gates to allow a lorry across. One of many movements this and every weekday

After performing this duty for some eight months I saw “my gentleman” as I christened him every day. He arrived at the crossing punctually at nine fifteen. He always asked, “Is it safe to cross young man?”

I was due a week’s leave and planned for a relief to take over my duties.

On the Friday afternoon before my leave a car arrived at the crossing. The driver left the vehicle and introduced himself as Angus. He said he was to relieve me on Monday and had come for a recce.

I showed him around ensuring he understood the train indicators and where the kettle was!!

“You know “he said as we participated in a cuppa “This crossing was the scene of a tragedy almost twenty years ago. Actually, on the eighth of October 1962”

“The landowner – the Laird - a Mr McDonald had his only son and grandson killed when their Land Rover was hit by a train in fog. They apparently failed to use the telephone located at the crossing to ensure that no trains were in the location. Land workers had alleged that the telephone was faulty, but was found to work OK. when evaluated by the Signal people just after the accident”. He paused to sip his tea and noisily crunched a biscuit.

“Poor Mr McDonald, his daughter in law, being of course greatly upset, moved back to her family in Glasgow leaving him alone. He had been widowed years previously. Although he had a cousin, but they had quarrelled a while ago and vowed not to speak to each other ever

again. Then on the tenth anniversary of the tragedy his body was found on the line a few hundred yards away. The Procurator Fiscal called a Fatal Accident Inquiry, and it was determined in the verdict to be suicide.”

“What a sad to do” I commented “just out of curiosity what did Mr McDonald look like?”

I was interested as no one, including workman from the quarry who I later asked knew who the gentleman crossing user was. He may have been the cousin perhaps of the current landowner and moved here.

“I believe he was a tall gentleman with grey hair he was always dressed smartly complete with kilt. He was famous for wearing an old, battered deer stalker hat and he also was known to always walk over most of his land daily at the same time including crossing here at nine fifteen and walking over to where the quarry is now”

This remarkably was a likeness to my gentleman, but of course it could not be. It was probably someone else. Dressed similarly and unknown to the people I had spoken with. Angus added that the cousin had died a few years ago in Inverness.

Angus left, reassuring me he would look after the crossing in my absence. Laughingly concluding that he would ensure my gentleman would be provided with safety guidance to cross the railway.

I returned from my holiday finding Angus had looked after the crossing well. He had kept the hut tidy and topped up the necessary tea supplies!

Angus told me he had been pleased on the Monday to see the gentleman arrive punctually to cross the railway at the crossing. He made his usual enquiry about the state of the trains. I was surprised that he made no comment of my absence. I think on reflection he did not make any other conversation except about the crossing being clear with me since from the time I started operating it

The contract to extract the stone was ending and I arrived to work on a foggy morning. I noted noticing the - date eight October 1982. “Why was this familiar?” I could not answer that nagging question.

“Of course, it was the anniversary of the story” Angus told me “Although I believed he had embellished it to make it scary to me being alone at the crossing with the anniversary of that occurrence approaching.

The train indicator rang to notify me of a late running down direction train approaching on the single line. The time being nine twelve.

I went to the gates to tell a lorry driver waiting to cross of the delay.

The train arrived, rumbled over the crossing. Behind me swirling fog was a mixture of different distance visibility. I felt very chilly. I also had a strange feeling of dread and despair.

The indicator cleared and I started to open the gates for vehicle and pedestrian users. Turning away I started to push it across the tracks.

Something had stopped the gates progress. I was shocked as I saw a body on the track.

It was my gentleman, and regular pedestrian user of the crossing.

I looked at him, then my watch. It was nine fifteen.

*Martin Elms*

# The September Presentations (1)

The Last Four Years of Steam

- George Howe

12<sup>th</sup> September at Hitchin



Class B1 61138 on 3E03 parcels passes Langford Bridge signal box.

Summer 1964

“Through the fence” is a Black 5 on the ash pit at Carnforth shed

20 June 1968



1964 saw me making a change from black and white prints, to colour slides. This just happened to be four years before the end of steam on British Railways, hence the title, The last 4 years of Steam. I travelled the British Isles to many areas where steam was still well in evidence. I travelled by train quite often, to most of the country where steam was on the decline, but some trips were by Vespa 150cc scooter. The trips, by whatever mode, mostly included many loco shed visits, very handy by scooter.

As steam was nearing the end it was mostly in the North West of England - Crewe, Manchester, Liverpool, Preston areas. The Scooter also had a ride then, quite often on the 05:26 from Bedford to Manchester Central, visiting several sheds, and back on the 17:30 from Preston alighting at Bletchley at 20:13, and back home on the scooter.

Wonderful days; come along to see what I saw.

*George Howe.*

# The September Presentations (2)

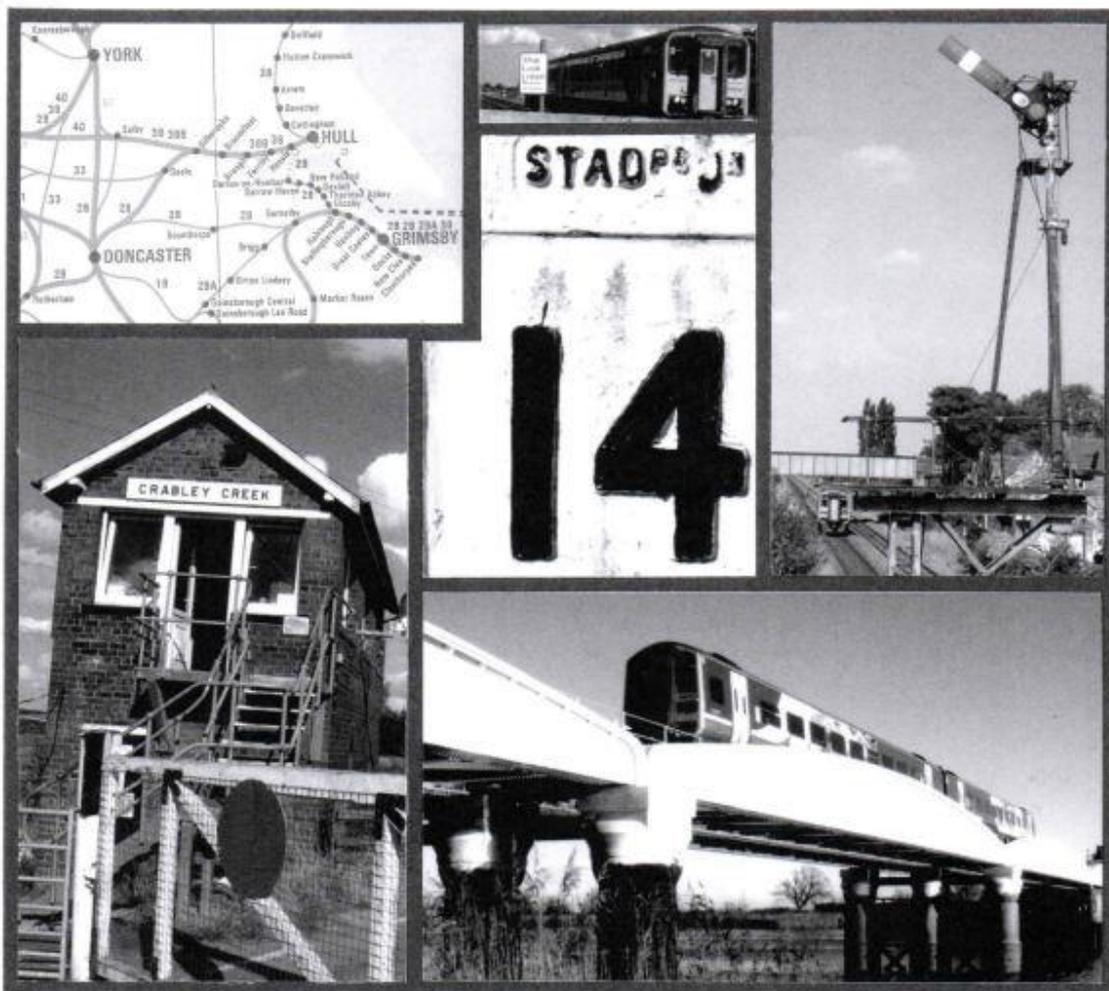
The Line from Doncaster to Hull

- Stephen Gay

26<sup>th</sup> September at Hitchin

Details as provided by stephen Gay:

**A Railway Journey from Doncaster to Hull**  
*An illustrated slide show presentation by*  
**STEPHEN GAY**  
( Waterways , historic buildings , iconic landmarks and poetry will also be included )



**RCTS** *The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society*  
- Hitchin and Welwyn Garden City Branch -  
**TUESDAY 26th SEPTEMBER 2023**  
CHURCH  
The Village Hall - Warren Way - Digswell - Welwyn - Doors open at 13.30 for 14.00 START  
*Non-members are most welcome £5.00 which includes refreshments and raffle tickets .A sales stand will also be present .*

# Puzzle Solutions

Solution to the puzzle in this issue (page 13):

1. Chester.
2. Oban.
3. Lyonesse.
4. Oxford.
5. Nine Elms.
6. Elizabeth Line.
7. Looe.
8. Saxonia.
9. Thomson.
10. Ely.
11. Peters.
12. Hamilton.
13. Easingwold.
14. Ningwood.
15. Sandgate.

Solution: COLONEL STEPHENS

*Martin Elms*



## Reminder

As mentioned in *Chairman's Platform* there is an addition to the previously published Branch programme – a visit, on the afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> September, to the Epping Signalling Museum. See page 11 for more details.

This visit is not on a public opening day. If you wish to participate in this visit please contact Dave Elsdon ([Hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:Hitchin@rcts.org.uk)). As the number of museum volunteers required as guides for the visit depends on the number of visitors, please book as early as possible.

*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) and Alan Cheetham. The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered with the Charities Commission.*