

# Railway Ramblings

Issue 165

April 2024

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



61306 passing Ely Cathedral on 8 March 2015

From the presentation on 9<sup>th</sup> April at Hitchin

(Photo copyright: Roberta Scudamore)

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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 email advising the details of the change.

## During April 2024

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

9<sup>th</sup> April **Cambridge Area Railways – Yesterday & Today**

*David Scudamore*

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

30<sup>th</sup> April **That Was The Year That Was - 1971**

*Geoff Plumb*

## During May 2024

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

14<sup>th</sup> May **Steam in the 60's (Part 2)**

*Chris Wright*

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

28<sup>th</sup> May **Railtours and Specials (Part 2)**

*John Day*

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 £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 offer Zoom virtual presentations. In addition, there are “national” Zoom presentations 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.

# Presentations Offered by Neighbouring Branches

Make the most of your RCTS membership. The following details are for those RCTS branches which are geographically closest to us.

## CAMBRIDGE

The Swifts, Haggis Gap, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5HD  
- Meetings start at 19:30

9<sup>th</sup> April                      A Black & White Journey from London to Carlisle 1958 to 1968  
by David Cross.

## SOUTH ESSEX

Shenfield Parish Hall, 60, Hutton Road, Shenfield CM15 8LB  
- Meetings start at 19:30

15<sup>th</sup> April                      Interrailing for the Older Crowd  
by Dave Hepper.

## MILTON KEYNES

Network Rail, The Quadrant, Milton Keynes, MK9 1EN  
- Meetings start at 19:30

4<sup>th</sup> April                      Great Central Railway – Re-unification  
by Tom Ingall.

## WATFORD

Beechen Grove Baptist Church, Clarendon Road, Watford WD17 1JJ  
- Meetings start at 19:00

2<sup>nd</sup> April                      Branch AGM and The Story of the Travelling Post Office  
by Roland Gillott.



## Chairman's Platform

At our AGM, on the 12<sup>th</sup> March, the new Branch Committee was elected – or to be more precise - the 2023-24 committee was re-elected. This was not unexpected, but it really would be nice to have one or two new faces helping to steer the direction the branch takes. Perhaps next time?

On a similar theme, for those readers who rarely, or never, attend our branch meetings it would be good to know what would need to be on offer for you to attend. Although the attendances at meetings have been picking up again (since the Covid restrictions were lifted), I would appreciate hearing from non-attenders. It may be that meeting venues/days/times simply don't suit or it could be that we don't offer anything that appeals to you. Unless you let me know, then we lack information we could be using to shape our future direction. Email me at [hitchin.chairman@rcts.org.uk](mailto:hitchin.chairman@rcts.org.uk)

Another theme in the discussions, in the break between the AGM and the presentation that followed, was the Hitchin venue. This is an ongoing problem – we often “compete” with other activities on the site and car parking can be problematic. The hall we use is too large for our needs and the acoustics are poor. The site is not near to public transport and the rent we now pay is much more than we want to pay. I can't think of any “upsides”. We have been looking for an alternative venue but, so far, without success. If you know of somewhere you think could be the place for us then please let Dave Elsdon know – either in-person at a meeting or by email: [hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:hitchin@rcts.org.uk)

The final thing on my agenda is the August outing. We are following up the earlier suggestions and I have received some feedback. Next month I hope to give you some detail so that you can let us know if you are a possible participant!

In the meantime, it's Spring, enjoy the extra daylight and get out-and-about and I look forward to seeing you at Branch meetings.

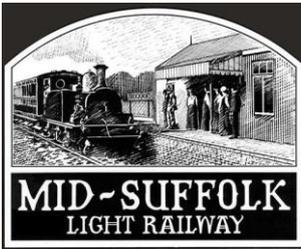
*Steve Lacey*

PS:

A reminder about badges at our meetings - If you don't yet have a lanyard badge (and feel you have been overlooked) then let me (or Dave Elsdon, Paul Holloway or John Dossett) know and we will get one ready for your next attendance. It could be that there is already one waiting for you – there should be a list at the registration desk so that you can check. If you already have a lanyard-type badge we would now prefer you to retain it – AND try to remember to wear it when attending meetings!

## New Member

We welcome David Rimell, of Welwyn Garden City, as a new member of the RCTS and of the Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City branch. It was good to see David at the Welwyn meeting towards the end of March.



# Mid Suffolk Light Railway Steam in 2024

The 2024 steam locomotive roster has come together well with a first-time guest locomotive now announced as 1910 Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST no. 1219 *Caledonia Works*. She was delivered new to Stewart & Lloyd Ltd in 1910 at their Clydesdale Works in Mossend near Motherwell and restored to steam at Williton on the West Somerset Railway in early 2016. Seen (right) at her home railway.



This pretty little loco will be a real asset to the “Middy” and, although the type never ran on the original line, she is very much of the Edwardian period and suits the MSLR perfectly. A tough little shunter quite up to the job of hauling “Middy” two- and three-coach trains.



Cockerill no. 2525 Steam Tram

## Cockerill 0-4-0VBWT Tram w/No. 2525

Also on the roster, this locomotive is a rarity in the UK because it is a Belgian engine. It is different to most conventional British engines in that the boiler is mounted vertically instead of horizontally. The alternative design style means it raises steam a lot quicker than other MSLR engines – less than an hour compared to three or four. As a well-tank it carries most of its water under the footplate and frames rather than over the boiler or in a tender. It is being based at the MSLR for the foreseeable future.

This tram was built in 1906 and after its working life was over it was moved to the UK for preservation. Having been restored to working order in its owner's yard it was run in on the Mid-Norfolk Railway before joining the MSLR's fleet.



Nothing could look more light railway  
Cockerill Tram on a MSLR light freight.

The Cockerill tram has already passed its boiler inspection, plus there are also further advances on the Y7 and 1604 restorations.

*(Reproduced courtesy of the MSLR)*

# The April Puzzle – Martin Elms

This month, the first letter of the answer to the following questions will spell out the name of a busy railway location -

1. Name of locomotive 46220
2. Depot with code 87E
3. Westerly station near Mallaig
4. TSMV ? Victoria (BR ferry lost on 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 1953 near Stranraer with the loss of about 123 persons including the master Captain James Ferguson. 54 passengers and 10 crew were saved.)
5. Station between Whitstable and Margate
6. Name of locomotive D212
7. SR Locomotive Superintendent 1923 – 1937


8. Station at end of the branch line from Roxburgh.
9. Name of locomotive 35002
10. Locomotive depot with code 26A
11. DMU and coach builders from Sheffield
12. ? Vale – South Wales valley line
13. Name of Derby Research locomotive 97403 (ex 46035)
14. Station east of Hastings
15. Name of locomotive D9020


As usual, best of luck – my solutions are on page 18.

*Martin Elms*

# Workshop Wanderings – Steve Lacey

## News from the Nene Valley Railway

At last, I can report that repairs to 34081 *92 Squadron* are now complete and we await a fitness-to-run examination and test-train running, before return to service on the NVR! We have also had clearance to spend a weekend at Swanage for their “Strictly Bulleid II” event from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June inclusive. “Oh, we do like to be beside the seaside!”

The last obstacle to our return to steam was the construction of a brick arch in the firebox. This spans between the sides of the firebox and between the thermic syphons. It is not now made of firebricks but of fireclay cement.....21 bags of it, which had to be barrowed across from the main shed. The purpose of the arch is to force the heat/gases from the fire-bed back towards the fire-hole door, then up and over the arch and into the main flue tubes. This ensures better combustion of the coal and avoids cold air hitting the tube plate.

The first thing was to build shuttering inside the firebox, capable of supporting the half-ton of fire cement, curved to produce an arch. This was a horrible job in a confined space, made worse this time as a recent boiler test had left the area very warm! The good news was that we had done the job before, so had retained the precut wood used to manufacture the shuttering ... sadly it had not been labelled, so was a bit like an Ikea kit but without the instructions! Luckily my dimensions mean I couldn't get in there (a job for Ian and Twiggy), but I did have the job of lifting countless buckets of fire cement up onto the footplate and passing them through the fire-hole door to those inside. Boy, did I ache the next day! The cement had been mixed to the correct consistency by a team outside the shed, using an electric mixer, then barrowed into the shed for lifting. Team of eight!



Shuttering in place in firebox, before cement pouring.



Mixing - John (left) and Alan (right) - and barrowing (Barry).



After pouring the upper surface of the arch (in reality there are three arches) it was smoothed to make cleaning easier.



Ian (left) and Twiggy (right) relieved to have emerged alive! Having sulked in the dirty running shed for months, a determined effort was then made to retouch the paintwork under the nameplate and to refit our nameplates and badge.

All that remained was to clean the locomotive ready for a re-launch into traffic.

(Photographs by Steve Lacey, Barry Noble and Kingsley Harris)

*Steve Lacey*

## Harold's Newspaper

– a short story by Martin Elms

“Welcome to Cambridge station restaurant and cafeteria,” said the imposing manageress.

“My name is Ivy” she continued, in a loud voice which had a large smattering of authority in it, “Let me introduce the other full-time staff, this is Gwen, over there Betty, near the serving hatch Madge and on the cash till Tracy”.

Gwen gave me a soft handshake and smile, Betty a finger-crushing grip, pulling me towards her and I was almost suffocated by a wave of cheap perfume.

“Hello cheeky face” she said with a large wink. I had a dread sudden nightmare fear of being trapped in the larder or beer cellar with her!

Madge seemed to almost jump out of her skin when her name was called, merely smiling at me. The teenage Tracy, who had blond hair tied up in a ponytail and unfortunately appeared to be suffering with acute acne, just stared at me from her high swivel-stool and sniffed. I suppose she didn't regard me highly, not coming up to her teenage pop idol expectations

Let me explain how I came to be with these odd ill-assorted female work colleagues. I had left school and further education with a string of O-levels and, after being accused by my parents as being the most highly qualified layabout they knew, I had decided to attend a career exhibition. This resulted in me joining British Railways Catering Division. Railway catering was being rebranded at this time and re-emerging as "Travellers Fare."

I was taken on as sort of apprentice and my first task in "learning the ropes" was to be allocated to an existing railway catering establishment. Cambridge was selected being the closest to my home in Long Stanton. I was also required to attend day-release and night classes to learn the theory of management and, hopefully, some practical cooking experience which I hoped to inflict on my long-suffering parents!

The restaurant was a huge cavern of a room with lofty ceilings complete with chandeliers. It was probably built, along with the station, in the 1860's and was originally designed for use with sit-down meals, complete with waitresses.

Despite being modified in the 1950's, the operation was completely unworkable and very inefficient. The room was dominated by an exceedingly long counter shielded from the seating area by a waist-high polished brass handrail. It was expected that, on entry, customers would go to the counter, take a tray and, by sliding it along a metal shelf, past the self-service area which comprised a number of plastic compartments, opening at the front, allowing the self-selection of various sandwiches, cakes, biscuits, and other snacks. Behind the counter Ivy and Madge lurked, taking turns to assist customers. In the summer, some of the compartments contained glasses of brightly coloured jellies. Towards the end of the counter was the hot drinks area with a tea/coffee urn. Only plain coffee was available, this being before the time of Latte or any other exotic coffees. There was no takeaway system, you drank your drink from white, later green, china cups on saucers at a table in the restaurant while waiting for your train. Finally, at the end of the counter, you arrived at the ancient hand-operated till. Here, Tracy had a frequent habit of staring blankly over the till at customers through her heavily mascara eyes. She was surprisingly quick adding up the purchases and took money and gave, also amazingly, the correct change.

Most food served was of the "on toast" variety. However, due to Ivy's persistence a main cooked meal and sweet was also available each day. This was prepared by her with two lunch-time helpers, Sally and Anne, who also noisily washed up.

The remainder of the room comprised a bar, roped-off out of licensing hours. Tended by Betty, it was frequented by male railway staff going on or off duty (or at times between) and was always full of cigarette smoke – there being no segregation then. She was assisted by yet another part-time helper, Brian, who spent a lot of time unsuccessfully trying to date Tracy.

I soon settled into the work, finding the ladies helpful and willing to show me how the restaurant ticked over.

I was saddened to learn from my training classes and visits of my boss that Cambridge was to be reorganised and bought under the "Travellers Fare" wing which would allegedly bring many alterations, "improvements" and economy – in other words redundancy for existing staff and new brooms bought in with much plastic and bright fittings.

I kept this news to myself as no date had been given and with luck my career would have moved me on before long.

I had spells in the old, antiquated kitchen with its vast gas stove range and enjoyed making the in-house sandwiches with the nervous Madge. We had a memorable time one day when the saucepan of eggs being boiled for sandwiches cascaded over, putting out the gas. I hurried to find Ivy. Madge usually tried to avoid both Ivy and resetting the range and took her wrath – although the dark clouds were on the horizon, with a contract to buy readymade sandwiches having been signed.

I also teamed-up with Tracy, to be shown the workings of the till. This was also ancient with a seemingly bad-tempered attitude which included the cash draw flying out and snapping rapidly shut. If Tracy were any larger or slower it would have done her damage. I enquired if she had lost any fingers in it.

“No, only damaged nails” she replied with almost a smile. Progress!

Then on my first Friday with her, she pointed out a man approaching us.

“That’s Harold” she said. “He used to work at the ticket barrier. He comes in here at the same time every Friday. Ten thirty, always with his shopping. He always has a cup of tea – and because he is or was staff gets CS (Company Servant) rate. That means all of one penny off. He also has a toasted tea cake. I think he is lovely and really nice” She finished speaking, by now breathless. This was the most she had spoken to me all week.

Harold paid promptly, with the correct change tendered, and got a smile from Tracy. He sat in the far corner and immediately produced a newspaper from his shopping bag. When I took the freshly toasted tea cake over to his seat I could see he was deeply engrossed in the newspaper.

Harold had the dubious honour as our only regular customer. The others were passengers always in a hurry and mostly rude and impatient.

Then it happened. The date was Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 1969, and I was approaching my final service at Cambridge.

I was near the till again, waiting to relieve Tracy on another of her frequent breaks. A large, impeccably dressed, arrogant woman accompanied by her son approached and demanded service. She clicked her fingers impatiently in my direction.

“My Cedric wants a bottle of Coke a Cola with a straw, not a glass“, she demanded.

I obliged, Cedric snatched the bottle and they swept away without a word of thanks. I resisted wicked thoughts on what I would like to do to her and the boy with the bottle and watched with anticipation as they approached Tracy. This was not a good day. Tracy had advised us all earlier that she had just experienced an “affair of the heart” In other words a row with her latest boyfriend. She was now more truculent than normal.

Meanwhile, Harold who had arrived before the woman was patiently awaiting his tea cake. I went to serve him passing behind Tracy. I then heard the woman loudly complaining at the price of the drink.

“It costs less than that in Harrods” she stated.

I was out of range of Tracy’s reply, which I bet was almost rude!

I put the plate on Harold’s table where he was as usual engrossed in his newspaper.

He looked up. I noticed he didn’t appear well and, with that, he slid off his chair onto the floor.

“Get an ambulance”, I shouted to Tracy, who had seen what happened, vacated her swivel chair and dashed into the kitchen to phone for help.

As my First Aid was limited, I also called out for assistance and luckily a young man, who said he was a doctor from the nearby hospital Addenbrookes, came over to assist.

I busied myself with moving the other customers away. They were just watching and hindering attempts at First Aid. It gave me a great deal of pleasure to see Cedric, who I had to request firmly to move away, take a large suck of his drink than persistently cough followed by repeated hiccups. Unbeknown to his mother, Cedric then spilt a large amount of the drink down the back of her white dress.

Ambulance staff appeared quite quickly. They recognised the doctor and together they reassured, the now mostly recovered, Harold before helping him leave our premises.

With the help of a tearful Madge, we cleared the table, and I retrieved his newspaper. This had fallen apart on the floor. Putting the pages back together again, I realised that it was in mint condition. Harold must have bought it today, with his shopping. The basket which would have contained the newspaper, when Harold arrived, was on the floor. I intended to put the newspaper back inside and keep it safely for him.

I looked at front page of the newspaper, now returned to its proper order. It was "The Cambridgeshire Times and Weekly Advertiser"- I was not aware of the title of this publication.

However, despite the near pristine appearance of being bought on this day, the date of publication jumped out at me:

Friday June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1957

*Martin Elms*



## Nene Valley 2024

For the 2024 season, the NVR will be running Steam services every first and third weekend of the month, and Heritage Diesel services every second and fourth weekend of the month. Please check with them before you visit: [Nene Valley Railway Ltd \(nvr.org.uk\)](http://nvr.org.uk)

When *Thomas* is running, a Rover ticket will cover the full line including the *Thomas* shuttles. If you only wish to travel on *Thomas*, you can buy just a *Thomas* shuttle ticket.

Advance notice: 60163 *TORNADO* to visit the NVR 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024



# 60163 TORNADO

New Steam for the Main Line

Details: [LNER A1 Tornado](http://lner.co.uk) | [Nene Valley Railway Ltd \(nvr.org.uk\)](http://nvr.org.uk)

*(Reproduced courtesy NVR)*



# Saint and Hall Weekend

27 and 28 April



A Great Western weekend, sees recreated Saint Class locomotive 2999 *Lady of Legend* and EOR's own Hall Class locomotive, 4953 *Pitchford Hall*, working their services. Expect to see both locomotives working trains on their own and double-headed.

The engines will need to work hard on the challenging gradients. You should expect that at least one double-headed train will feature.

All trains will be running in conjunction with the EOR fleet of vintage London buses, which will provide connections with Epping Underground and Shenfield National Rail station.

About the visiting locomotive:

Recreated Great Western Railway Saint Class locomotive, 2999 *Lady of Legend*

The Saint class locomotives were introduced by the Great Western Railway (GWR) from 1902. They served for half a century, but all were scrapped by 1953. The Great Western Society (GWS) has rebuilt a Saint using a later development of the Class, rescued from a scrapyard, as a donor locomotive for the boiler and frames.

2019 saw the completion of a project, 45 years in the making, to build locomotive 2999 using parts from 4942 *Maindy Hall* (one of the Classes developed from the Saint design). 4942 had been purchased in the early 1970s with the specific purpose of recreating a Saint, by reversing the process the GWR had used in 1925 when the prototype Hall Class was produced by the conversion of *Saint Martin*, but early attempts floundered and the prospect of success remained a dream until 1995 when the project started in earnest.

For decades, the project had been considered beyond the capability of preservationists and prohibitively expensive. Major new components were manufactured while the frames from 4942 were extensively modified and strengthened. Many other components, including the boiler, were refurbished, while still more came from surviving parts from other GWR locomotives – further testament to the far-sighted Swindon practice of standardisation. Parts include a connecting rod from 2906 *Lady of Lynn* and the whistle from 2910 *Lady of Shalott* and the chimney from a 68XX Class.

The new locomotive has been numbered 2999, taking the next number in the sequence allocated to the Saints – the previous one, 2998 *Ernest Cunard*, having been outshopped in 1913! The winning entry in the competition to name the locomotive was *Lady of Legend* as it evokes the GWR practice of naming early members of the class after mythological or historical ladies.

*(Reproduced courtesy of the EOR)*



## Congratulations !

### The Icknield Line – Celebrating 30 Years of Running Trains 1994-2024

On 20 December 1989, a Class 47 diesel (47258) together with 35 hopper wagons made the final journey into Chinnor cement works, with the locomotive sporting a headboard with the legend “Last BR Train on the Watlington Branch”. Maintenance of the branch, from Chinnor to the junction with the Thame branch near Princes Risborough, was given to the Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Association from January, 1990.

The Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway (C&PRR) was granted a Transport and Works Order under section 6 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 on 04 July 1994, the order coming into force on 26 July 1994. Thus the legality of the C&PRR status was assured and passenger services could recommence.

A new platform, suitable for two coaches, was completed in May 1994 and the restoration of operational passenger and goods stock was also completed that year. 1994 was an historic year with the freehold of the branch purchased by the Association in August for £125,000, and the first public service (since 1957) ran on 20 August 1994, with round trips to Wainhill Halt. In April 1995 the passenger carrying line was extended some 2 miles to Horsenden Lane. A further extension to Thame Junction opened at the start of the 1996 season, where a run round loop was been constructed.

*(Reproduced courtesy of the C&PRR)*



## How the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway is Signalled

The C&PR comprises a single line between its termini at Chinnor and Princes Risborough, with an additional run-round loop at Thame Junction (just outside Princes Risborough) which for many years served as the Princes Risborough terminus.

The line is operated to a version of traditional One Engine in Steam (OES) signalling regulations. No train may occupy the single line unless its driver has the 'token' (which is like a giant engraved key) as his authority. Since there is only one of these, he is guaranteed not to meet another driver coming the other way!



Princes Risborough North Signal Box (2021)

The C&PR terminus at Princes Risborough has a run-round loop alongside rebuilt Platform 4 as well as a couple of sidings beyond the London end of the station. The commanding 1904 built signal box north of the platform – Princes Risborough North Box – has levers that control the points and disc signals just outside. The levers are normally locked but are released by the single line token being inserted. This is a temporary installation pending full re-signalling once the Independent Line is rebuilt.

At Thame Junction there is a simple run-round loop controlled by a ground frame of levers, again released by the token. Though limiting, the ground frame provides a simple system which has served the C&PR well through its formative years and still has its uses today if a train can't proceed all the way into Princes Risborough station for any reason.

The other terminus, at Chinnor, is currently more complex. The points and signals are worked by levers in an even older 1890s built signal cabin (re-located to Chinnor in 2007). Recent track and signalling work there has focused on bringing the run-round loop up to passenger traffic standard (it was formerly only of siding status). This now allows a loco to run round a passenger train without needing to ask all the passengers to get off every time – particularly welcome for some private charter and evening dining services!



Signal Box and pedestrian crossing at Chinnor (2021)

The signals at each end of the line are mechanically operated semaphore and/or disc signals as once used on the Great Western Railway and the Western Region of British Railways. The equipment was rescued some years ago and has been restored and installed by members of the Signals & Telegraph Department. The signals and signal box at Chinnor give the look and feel of a true GWR branch line station.

The foot crossing at Chinnor, which is used by visitors to access the station, has staff operated gates which are supervised from the signal box and interlocked with the signals for safety. The line has two intermediate vehicular crossings at Wainhill and Horsenden Lane which are also operated by volunteer staff, and stand normally with their gates closed across the line. Depending on the timetable and the numbers of staff (all volunteers) available, the crossings may be worked by train crew or by a keeper based at the crossing. Each crossing is protected by “Stop” boards, and authority for trains to pass these is given by a green flag once the gates have been opened.

There are also several user-worked crossings. At these, it is the road or bridlepath user who is responsible for making sure there are no trains coming, and then working the gates so they can cross. Generally, these are found on private roads giving access to a farm or between fields.

The railway was extended and commenced services to their new platform at Princes Risborough in August 2018 with trains travelling between Thame Junction and Princes Risborough over a Network Rail siding, requiring much procedural paperwork! Alongside this NR siding lies the track bed of the former Chinnor & Watlington line which closed in 1989. New point-work is required at both ends and once done, C&PR trains will use this “Independent Line” instead of the NR siding.

To bring the “Independent Line” into use also needs the development of the signalling systems at Princes Risborough and that has already started. All the work at the Princes Risborough North Box, restoring and refitting it, and installing the signalling equipment beside the line, has been funded by donations to a dedicated appeal.

For full details visit the C&PRR website: <https://www.chinnorrailway.co.uk/>

*(Reproduced courtesy of the C&PRR)*

*(Photos: John Dossett)*

# The April Presentations (1)

## Cambridge Area Railways – Yesterday & Today (Part 1)

- David Scudamore



34027 and 70000 at Cambridge Coalfields Yard 19 Oct 1991 - copyright David Scudamore

9<sup>th</sup> April, at Hitchin

In this presentation (Part 1 of a series) David will look in detail at all aspects of the Cambridge railway scene including its history, infrastructure, artefacts, trains & locomotives from the steam age to the present day. He will then take us north along the line to Ely and, time permitting, may also look at the Cambridge to St Ives line.

## Puzzle Solution

Solution to the puzzle in this issue (page 7):

1. Coronation.
2. Landore.
3. Arisaig.
4. Princess.
5. Herne Bay.
6. Aureol.
7. Maunsell.
8. Jedburgh.
9. Union Castle.
10. Newton Heath.
11. Cravens.
12. Taff.
13. Ixion.
14. Ore.
15. Nimbus.

Solution: CLAPHAM JUNCTION

*Martin Elms*

# The April Presentations (2)

That Was The Year That Was – 1971

- Geoff Plumb



King Class 6000 George V, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1971

30<sup>th</sup> April, at Digswell, Welwyn

1971 was a very busy year for Geoff. In this presentation he covers railways in the UK, including British Railways, industrials, some North Wales narrow gauge, the last of steam on London Transport, Humber paddle steamers, and the Bulmer's Cider Train return to steam. Interspersed with several trips to West Germany and also East Germany.

## 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 [gricersteve@hotmail.com](mailto:gricersteve@hotmail.com)



# In Steam on the NVR in 2024

## DSB F Class 656



No. 656 was built by Frichs, Aarhus in 1949, following the Second World War, after the devastating attacks left the Danish railways in short supply for shunting locomotives. The post war 'F' class locomotives were built on the original drawings by Otto Busse, but with slight modifications, such as stronger buffers and buffer-beams, and a larger capacity coal bunker. During its life working for DSB (Danske Statsbaner – Danish State Railways) 656 would have carried out shunting, light-goods trains and small passenger workings, and the remaining railway ferry duties that remained in place. 656 was withdrawn from service and placed into store at the Aarhus Depot.

In 1975, 656 was purchased from Aarhus and was transported to Peterborough. It was steamed for the first time on the railway in 1976, before entering regular service after the formal opening of the line in 1977 on the lighter off-peak trains. 656 is fitted with a bell which can be heard as the locomotive moves around stations and past crossings. 656 carries the colour of the Danish flag (red and white) around its chimney. The locomotive was taken out of traffic in 1986 with a failed firebox, and spent the next 16 years in storage in Wansford shed awaiting overhaul. In 2004, John Snasdell, the previous owner of 656, generously donated the locomotive to the railway. The loco finished an extensive overhaul and returned to traffic in January 2024

*(Reproduced courtesy NVR)*

# Model Railway Exhibition

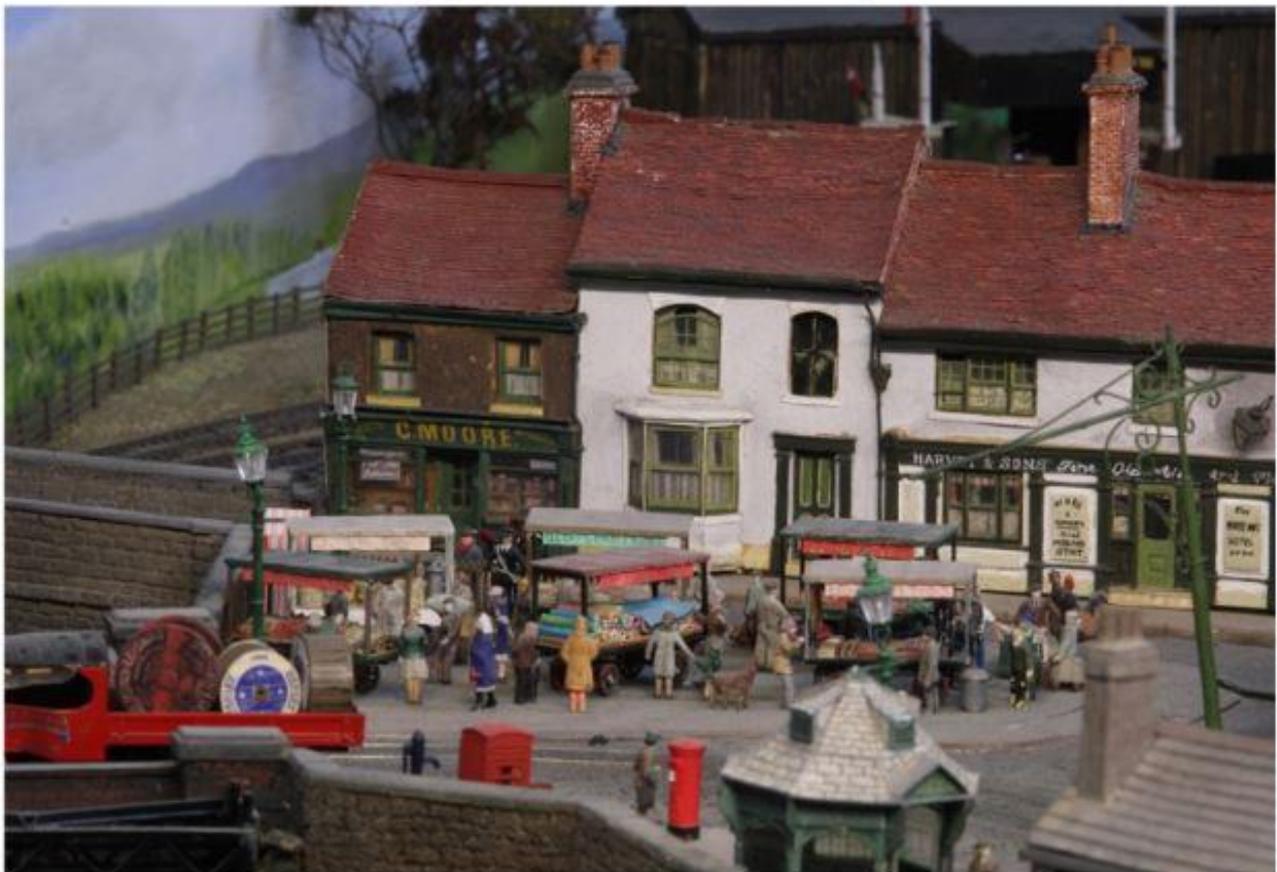
**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

10.00am – 5.00pm

**Welwyn Garden City**

**Ludwick Way Methodist Church, AL7 3PN**

(by Woodhall Parade)



**De Havilland Model Railway Society**

**Over a dozen layouts in a variety of gauges + trade + refreshments**

**2 floors of exhibits with access for limited mobility**



Adult-£5.00, Child-£2.00 (under5's Free)

# The Tilbury-Gravesend Ferry

Reading Martin Elms' short story (January RR) about crossing the Thames on the Tilbury-Gravesend ferry prompted Chairman Steve to provide the following pictures which readers might find of interest:



Tilbury-Gravesend passenger ferry "Rose" as I remember it, as a child (about 1956).



My wife Carol, with her mother, on board the same ferry, with two other ferries, on Tilbury pier.

Steve Lacey

*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) and John Dossett (Newsletter Editor). The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered with the Charities Commission.*