

# Railway Ramblings

Issue 167

June 2024

---

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



On the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway  
Destination for the Branch outing in August.

(Photo: C&PRR)

---

*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 June 2024

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

11<sup>th</sup> June **A Decade of Change – 2011 Onwards**

*Peter Robins*

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

25<sup>th</sup> June **The History of the 125 High Speed Train 1975-2023**

*Richard Morris*

## During July 2024

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

9<sup>th</sup> July **The Deltics – Worthy Successors to the A4s ?**

*Michael Smyth*

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

30<sup>th</sup> July **A Further Western European Miscellany**

*Rob Freeman*

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.



## Chairman's Platform

Last month I said that, this month, I hoped to give some detail on the August outing so that you could let us know if you (and your family & friends) are likely participants. Well, I am pleased to say that detailed plans are now being made to visit the Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway on 11<sup>th</sup> August. Elsewhere in this issue of *Railway Ramblings* (page 22) you will find more detail about the day. Last year we had a great day at the Epping Ongar line and we are expecting to offer something similar again this year, although I cannot guarantee such a nice sunny day! I would emphasise that, for the time being, we do not require firm bookings from you but we do need an indication of likely numbers. Please contact our Branch Secretary, Dave Elsdon, on 01438 714277 or email at [hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:hitchin@rcts.org.uk)

This month we publish the first part of a series "Stratford Reminiscences 1988" by Hugh Driscoll. Hugh is a relatively new member of the RCTS and usually attends the meetings at Digswell. As many of you may not yet know Hugh, he has kindly provided a personal introduction and photo, which you will find on page 4 of this issue. As you will see, Hugh has an interesting background and our Editor is hoping that Hugh will be a regular contributor to this newsletter. I hope that this will encourage more of you to step forward and be contributors!

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)

Yet another 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 visit. 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!

Steve Lacey

## Short Stories by Martin Elms



We know that many of you have enjoyed the Short Stories that Martin has been writing for *Railway Ramblings*. There are a couple of stories still in reserve and the next will appear in next month's issue.

Meanwhile, Martin's regular Monthly Puzzle continues and you will find that on page 7.



## Hugh Driscoll – A Personal Introduction

I started my railway career as an engineering trainee with British Rail's Department of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering in September 1987. My training commenced with 3 months in the apprentice training school at Derby (Litchurch Lane) Carriage Works. I was then allocated to Stratford depot and its out-bases for 6 months, training with the traction and rolling stock, outdoor machinery and overhead line departments.

I spent the next three years between college and engineering placements, mainly based at the Railway Technical Centre in Derby with the Intercity and Network Southeast fleet technical organisations. I also had placements at Crewe Works, Derby Locomotive Works, and the former Metro-Cammell works at Washwood Heath in Birmingham. I finished my training in April 1992 with the third rail electrification departments "south of the river".

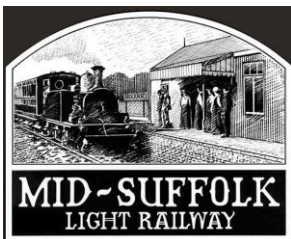
My first "proper" job was in the Technical Office at Bounds Green Intercity Depot. I carried out investigations into technical issues and dealt with staff queries and technical documentation. By that time, the Intercity 125 fleet had been reallocated to other depots, so most work came from the then relatively new Class 91 and Mk4 rolling stock. Bounds Green was also responsible for maintaining the Intercity Charter fleet which consisted of Mk1 and 2 coaching stock and Mk3 sleepers. Maintenance of this older fleet varied the job considerably.

I moved to Eurostar in May 1994, about 6 months before the start of commercial service. I worked as a technician on Class 373 units at North Pole depot, including the "station fitter's" job at Waterloo International. I then became a Workshop Supervisor. Shortly after the move to HS1 and Temple Mills depot in 2007, I became the manager of the fault finding and reliability team. This regularly took me to our partner depots in Paris (Le Landy) and Brussels (Forest), and the main works in Lille (Hellemmes), to work with SNCF and SNCB engineering staff.

I had a stint at Network Rail as the Rail Vehicle Interface Engineer for the Anglia Zone. My job there was to work with Train Operating Companies on reliability issues with rolling stock and infrastructure. I returned to Eurostar just before the Class 374 units were being introduced into service. Initially, my job was to liaise with NS (Dutch Railways) to provide the necessary signalling software to enable operation on the Dutch high-speed line to Amsterdam, which is equipped with the European Train Control System (ETCS). I then worked on reliability issues and modification work with both the class 373 and 374 units and maintaining the relationship with SNCF and SNCB depot staff, before taking early retirement after 33 years on the railway.

*Hugh Driscoll*

*Hugh has written "Stratford Reminiscences 1988", a personal reflection of his time there, with Part 1 in this issue of Railway Ramblings (see page 8). Part 2 will appear in the July issue.*



# Mid Suffolk Light Railway

A very busy June!

## Five Events on the Middy in June.

### 2 Jun 2024 - Steam Railway Day & Old Ram Vintage Tractor Club Visit

This will be a typical “Middy” open day featuring guest locomotive Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST no. 1219 *Caledonia Works*. This pretty little loco is very much of the Edwardian period and suits the MSLR perfectly. A tough shunter quite up to the job of hauling “Middy” two and three coach trains. The Old Ram Vintage Tractor Club will be present bringing their ancient and often delightful machines to display on the station concourse.

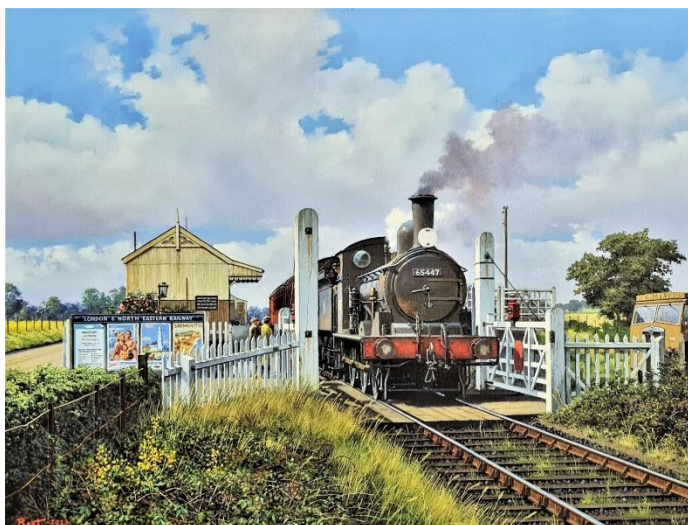
All the normal facilities will be open, Museum, Tea Room, Restoration Shed and Real Ale Bar and you can ride the trains of genuine Victorian 4-wheeled coaches as often as you like.

### 9 Jun 2024 - Steam Railway & The Big ‘O’ Gauge Model Railway Show

The Big ‘O’ Show is a first for the “Middy” - an exclusively ‘O’ gauge model railway show on one of the Steam Railway Days. Some of the best modellers in this scale will be bringing examples of their building and layout skills and have put together a mix of layouts, displays, demonstrations and traders to show how viable this scale is for home use. And there will be a special emphasis on answering questions and giving advice to anyone who cares to ask.

All the normal facilities will again be open.

### 16 Jun 2024 - Steam Railway & Railway Art Exhibition Day



Fathers’ Day and a special day hosting the second exhibition of railway art by Malcolm Root, the Vice Chairman of the Guild of Railway Artists.

One of Malcolm’s most recognisable work is ‘Middy Memories’, a brilliant scene of the branch engine J15 65447 at Laxfield at the end of the line (illustrated here). He will be on hand to answer questions about his techniques, and his ability to bring railway scenes to life. He has been a successful railway artist for over 40 years.

Trains will be running and all the Middy facilities will be open. Plus, the Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group will be operating their shuttle service from Stowmarket Station to the Middy Station.

## 23 Jun 2024 - Steam Railway Day & East Anglian Practical Classics Visit

Another return visit from the East Anglian Practical Classics Motor Club. The Middy Station concourse will be filled with vehicles with a practical and distinctly nostalgic air. A show of pride in the horseless carriage.

Whilst indulging in a trip down memory lane, the Middy will be offering the usual attractive package of rides on a steam train, as often as you like, and refreshments from the tea room or the real ale bar. The Museum and Restoration Shed will be open for visits too.

## 30 Jun 2024 - Steam Railway & Vintage Bus Day



The 2<sup>nd</sup> MSLR Vintage Bus Day with an array of delightful old friends most of which appeared last year.



There will be rides around the adjacent countryside on several of them and there will also be the Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group shuttle service from Stowmarket Station during the day.

Whilst the emphasis will be on road vehicles, the Middy Steam trains will be running all day, you can ride as often as you like. The Museum, tea room, Restoration Shed and real ale Middy Bar will also be open. This will be a real transport treasury for bus fans, rail fans and families. Standard prices apply.

For further details about these events, or about the Middy in general, visit:

[Visit Us & What's on - Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum \(mslr.org.uk\)](http://mslr.org.uk)

*(Material courtesy of the MSLR)*

# The June Puzzle – Martin Elms

This month, the first letter of the answer to the following questions will spell out the name of a “controversial” proposed station on a “controversial” railway:

1. Name of locomotive 61004
2. Summit near Achnasheen
3. Preserved North British Railway locomotive 256 Glen ?


4. Station between Cambridge and St. Ives
5. Watertroughs near Midgham
6. Name of railway between Headcorn and Robertsbridge


7. Proposed name for Western diesel locomotive D1000
8. Name of locomotive 45691
9. Locomotive superintendent of Southern Railway from 1923 to 1937
10. Junction for Peterhead branch
11. ? Rewley Road
12. Name of electric locomotive 26052


As usual, best of luck – my solutions are on page 21.

*Martin Elms*

## Presentations Offered by Neighbouring Branches

Make the most of your RCTS membership. Why not attend a presentation offered by a neighbouring RCTS branch (Cambridge, Milton Keynes, South Essex, and Watford) The details are available in the *Railway Observer* and on the RCTS website.

# Stratford Reminiscences 1988 – Part 1

Hugh Driscoll

My railway career began as an Engineering Trainee in September 1987, a few weeks after my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The first three months were spent in the Apprentice Training School at Litchurch Lane Works in Derby, learning machine shop, electrical and fitting skills, producing old favourites such as a tap wrench, a toolbox, a brass plumb bob and a tool maker's clamp, all of which I still use.

I arrived for my "hands on" training at Stratford depot in January 1988, to be welcomed by the Area Mechanical and Electrical Engineer, Allan Baker, a former Crewe Works apprentice and the final Depot Manager of Finsbury Park (known for his application of white window surrounds on Deltics).

The first four weeks of my training were spent in B&C shed, the diesel maintenance shed built in the early 1960s on part of the Jubilee steam shed site. B&C shed carried out maintenance on its allocation of around 120 locomotives at that time, of Classes 08, 31, 37 and 47, plus other visitors. The 08s were used on the depot and in the remnants of Temple Mills yard, and as the Liverpool Street pilot duty, in Thornton Fields carriage sidings and in the London International Freight Terminal (LIFT), as well as in the remaining freight facilities around the area, mostly on Thames side. The only passenger work for the diesel fleet was the Liverpool Street (or Cambridge with the brief appearance of Class 86 locos) to Kings Lynn Class 47 duty.



Class 47 573 on 5 steam road (site of part of the former Jubilee shed), between B&C shed and admin building. C shed nearest the camera, offices in the centre, B shed furthest from camera. I did an A exam on this one!

*(Photo from Stratfordman72 Flickr page with permission).*

The rest of the fleet worked freightliner trains from Stratford and Willesden FLT's to Tilbury and Felixstowe ports, sand trains from Marks Tey to Mile End, petrochemicals and other products from Thames side, Ford's car and sundries trains to and from Dagenham and Civil Engineers trains from Leyton. There were various Speedlink duties from Willesden to Temple Mills and on to the Railstore warehouse at Gidea Park, Bow Midland (fuel oil, Distillers carbon dioxide and Plasmor blocks), the remaining sidings on the North Woolwich branch (Steetley's chemicals at West Ham, Coutinho's steel at Bow Creek and Thomas Wards scrapyards on the Silvertown tramway), plus destinations further afield, such as the UKF depot at Braintree and Austin's siding at St Margarets. On the West Anglia side, other destinations included the Costain's siding at Rye House, Ciba Geigy at Duxford and sand trains from Fen Drayton to Kings Cross goods. There were also household coal trains to Bow Midland and Hythe in Colchester, parcels trains from Liverpool Street to Southend and Cambridge, as well as the Norwich TPOs.

The two sheds which comprised B&C were built back-to-back with stores, mess facilities, workshops and supervisors' offices between them. Plant and battery rooms lurked beneath. Each shed comprised four roads, each road could hold two locos. All roads were equipped with pits and the running rails were raised, to facilitate inspection, bogie and battery work, traction motor brush and brake block replacement. Concrete platforms ran between each road, at solebar height, so cabs and engine compartments could be accessed on the level. Light maintenance was carried out in B shed, such as A exams (every 3-5 days approx.) and B exams (every 20-25 days approx.), minor modifications and fault finding. C shed was equipped with overhead hoists so heavier maintenance was carried out here, such as C exams (every 40-50 days approx.) and D exams (every 160-200 days approx.), component exchange and diesel engine top end work. Intermediate work was also carried out, for example attention to generators and light repairs.



Members of Class 37 and 47 undergoing maintenance, I'm fairly sure this is C shed but it looks very tidy! Note the rails raised on stanchions, the lower centre pits and the raised concrete platforms, allowing level access to cabs, bodysides and engine compartments. Also lubricating oil filling points mounted on concrete platform pillars.

*(Photo from Stratfordman72 Flickr page with permission).*

For me it was a wake-up call. It was busy, dirty and smoky! I didn't know that it was possible to fit so many expletives into one sentence, indeed even in between individual syllables of the same word. One of the Workshop Supervisors had obviously been practicing this art for years and had become an expert. Another Supervisor persuaded me to give up sugar in my tea, and savour the flavour. 35 years later, I still don't touch the sweet white stuff, so thanks Bob.

Many of the staff were ex-steam apprentices or former London dock fitters or electricians. But they all knew their stuff. The Traction Standards Inspector was a biker and a railway modeller, but had an uncanny knack for fault finding. He asked me to remove a suspect engine governor from a Class 47 Sulzer engine immediately after a run on a freightliner train from Felixstowe to Stratford FLT. It was hot! He had a good giggle watching me trying to juggle this expensive, heavy, oily bit of kit.

I spent time with his assistant fault finding an errant Class 37. The loco had been reported "snatching" when in running in multiple with other members of its Class. After riding the loco to Ipswich on a freightliner, it was obvious that the crashing and banging between locos occurred on the first stage of traction motor field diversion. The fault finding required a van ride over to Bounds Green to borrow their Wheatstone Bridge instrument in order to recalibrate the field divert resistor. This took a while to set up, but we got the required result. On the post-repair test run, the driver climbed up into number one end cab, removed his overcoat and went to hang it up in the clean air compartment. Unfortunately, he opened the wrong door in the cab bulkhead, into the radiator room, and nearly lost his coat, his documents, his wallet and his small change into the howling radiator fan!



Refurbished Class 37 890 passing the fire station. These 37s were outbased at Ripple Lane for petrochemicals traffic from Thameshaven. Note the broken, jagged remains of the cast iron water tank behind, from the old steam depot. Admin building in the background on the right.

*(Photo from Stratfordman72 Flickr page with permission).*

*Hugh Driscoll*

*(Next month – "Stratford Reminiscences 1988"- Part 2)*



# Princes Risborough North Signal Box

## Background Information



This signal box stands just to the north end of Princes Risborough station, which is served by mainline Chiltern Railway trains as well as the Chinnor & Princes Risborough heritage railway. Frequent mainline trains call at Princes Risborough from Birmingham (Snow Hill), Birmingham (Moor Street), Oxford, Banbury, Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Beaconsfield, Wembley and London (Marylebone).

The partly restored box has a reduced set of working levers which control the points and signals on the C&PRR, to the rear of the box, which runs parallel to the Chiltern mainlines at the front. Further restoration work continues.



During the Branch visit to the C&PRR, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024, there will be the opportunity for the enthusiasts in the group to visit. (Numbers will be limited)

For readers wishing to know more about the fascinating history of this box, and the restoration effort being made, visit their very informative website:

[Risborough North Signal Box \(risboroughbox.org.uk\)](http://risboroughbox.org.uk)

*(Reproduced courtesy of the C&PRR)*

# Workshop Wanderings – Steve Lacey

## Travel Report and News from the Nene Valley Railway

So why were you spared this last month? Well, I had wandered a bit further afield! Initially by Eurostar to Amsterdam, then a river cruise taking in Ypres, Ghent, Arnhem then and finally back to Amsterdam for Keukenhof Gardens. If you have never seen the gardens, I would thoroughly recommend them, my pictures don't do them justice.



Part of the magnificent Amsterdam station.

During our stay we also travelled on the Hoorn to Medemblik steam tram railway which travelled through the bulb fields.



1922 builder's plate and a rather poor picture of our tram loco

- so much light reflected from the shiny loco!

The view from the train, of the bulb fields, was spectacular:



But totally eclipsed by the Keukenhof Gardens near Amsterdam!



Meanwhile, closer to home *92 Squadron* has now re-entered service on the Nene Valley Railway, *Tornado's* overhaul has overrun again, putting her visit to the NVR back until August 20th- 26th. Class 55 Deltic D9009 *Alycidon* arrived at the NVR as scheduled last week, where she will be appearing as 55013 *The Black Watch*. She is doing footplate experiences and running service trains alongside our Class 45 Peak, Class 14 and Pacer. *92 Squadron* also gets in on the name change act, becoming 34111 *Royal Auxiliary Air Force*, after a renaming ceremony on Sat 25th May - in celebration of their centenary. *92 Squadron* runs in that guise until leaving for Swanage's Strictly Bulleid's Event, which is over 6th to 9th June!

At Swanage there will be a swift change of identity from *Royal Auxiliary Air Force* back to *92 Squadron* !

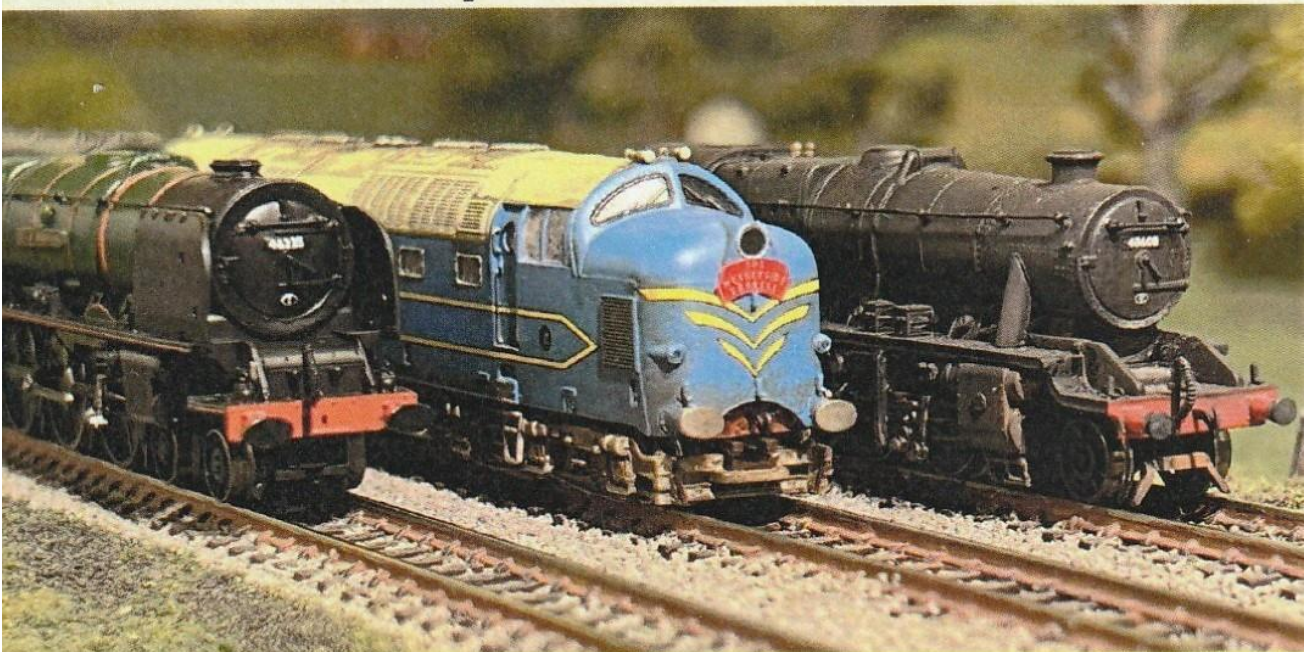




# MODEL RAILWAY

## EXHIBITION

Saturday 8th June 2024



**10:00am – 4:30pm**

The Ridgeway Centre, Featherstone Road, Wolverton Mill, Milton Keynes, MK12 5TH

**Adults £6    Children (5–16) £2    Under 5s go free**

Supported by



Layouts in all the major scales - Traders

Refreshments - FREE parking



# Nene Valley – Mail by Rail

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> June



Join the Nene Valley Railway this weekend to explore how mail has been moved around the country for over a hundred years, as some of the mystery behind what really happened on the night of The Great Train Robbery is revealed. From the humble postman's bike to a modern express mail train, find out how a simple letter travelled from A-B from the nineteenth century, right through to the modern day.

The highlight of the weekend will be the 'Mail Train Experiences' where you can ride on the Travelling Post Office (TPO) train. Visitors then alight before watching demonstration run-pasts to experience how mail was exchanged, in heavy leather pouches, from a moving train.

On the Travelling Post Office train you can test your mail-sorting speed, a hands-on activity for young and old.

On Saturday 1st June the TPO train will be hauled by BR Class 45 'Peak' 45041, and on Sunday 2nd June by BR Class 14 9529.

Admission to the Travelling Post Office train is standalone and costs £10 per person. This will allow you to travel on all Travelling Post Office/Mail by Rail trains during the day. Standard charges apply to the service train.

*(Please note, due to the historic nature of the TPO coaches and the mail exchange sites, there is no access for disabled passengers or toilet facilities. NVR apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.)*

For further details and bookings visit: [Mail by Rail | Nene Valley Railway Ltd \(nvr.org.uk\)](http://nvr.org.uk)

*(Reproduced courtesy NVR)*

# The June Presentations (1)

A Decade of Change – 2011 onwards

- Peter Robins



*1A79, 06:47 Penzance – Paddington, with HST power car 43162 leading a full rake of First Great Western blue-liveried trailers, passing Langstone Rock, Dawlish on 14 May 2019, four days before the end of full HST working on GWR.*

11<sup>th</sup> June, at Hitchin

Following my move to digital photography in 2011, this country-wide presentation takes a look over the following decade, including some steam charters, showing that our railways were still undergoing many changes. The subject matter of many of these "modern" 21st century images is now consigned to history.

This presentation went up to 2020, but now also looks at 2021-2024. There has been just as much change so there may be a part 2!

*Peter Robins*

# The June Presentations (2)

## The History of the 125 High Speed Train 1975-2023

- Richard Morris



*First Great Western's 43094 - at Casnewydd (otherwise known as Newport), South Wales on 23rd October 2006. The power car had been recently outshopped in the, then, latest FGW livery and had also just been fitted with an MTU 16V4000 power unit.*

25<sup>th</sup> June, at Digswell, Welwyn

The Inter City 125 High Speed Trains were introduced to the Great British public in 1975 after the Advanced Passenger Train project stalled a bit. The HSTs were intended to be a stop-gap, but ended up forming the core Inter City fleet for Britain's Railways for more than 40 years, serving the Western Region, Eastern Region and Midland Main line, along with Cross Country services. The programme will take a look back from the early days and bring us up to 2023.

*Richard Morris*

# 1940s Weekend

15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June



Visit the Epping Ongar Railway for a taste of life in the 1940s!

Step back in time, immerse yourself in a flavour of how a rural British steam railway could have appeared in the height of summer, as 'forties-dressed civilians and British and Allies military personnel, Home Guard, ARP Wardens, American GIs and other re-enactors mingle with passengers, and period road vehicles.

Ride on the beautifully preserved fleet of vintage buses, included in your fare! Stations and passenger trains will be specially adorned and decorated. Passengers are encouraged to come dressed in 1940s style civilian clothing.



1940s weekend



Dancing 1940s style

Steam and diesel trains will be in operation between North Weald, Epping Forest and Ongar, together with connecting vintage London buses from Epping Underground station and Shenfield stations. These, and all the other attractions, are included in the great value fares!

You can get to the EOR via the London Underground and Elizabeth Line and Greater Anglia services. EOR inclusive vintage London buses will run from right outside the front of Epping Underground station (Central Line, zone 6) and from Shenfield station (for Elizabeth Line and Greater Anglia services), connecting with EOR train services at North Weald and Ongar stations.



North Weald in the 1940s



A final farewell on the train

For further details visit: [1940s Weekend | Epping Ongar Railway \(eorailway.co.uk\)](https://www.eorailway.co.uk)

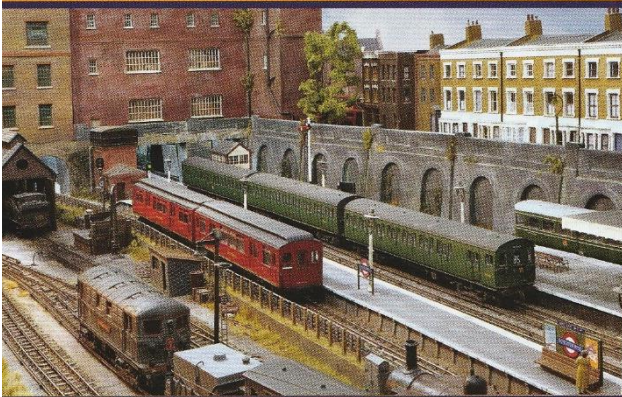
*(Reproduced courtesy of the EOR)*

## 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)

# St Neots Model Railway Club MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

The Priory Centre, St Neots  
Cambridgeshire PE19 2BH



Rossiter Rise

Photograph by Trevor Jones.

**Sat 15 June 2024**  
10am - 4.30pm

*Layouts in all popular  
scales, trade stands  
& demonstrations*

**MOVING  
TO JUNE FOR  
ONE YEAR  
ONLY!**



For further information visit:  
[www.stneotsmrc.com](http://www.stneotsmrc.com)



**The Priory Centre, Priory Lane,  
St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 2BH**

**Entrance from 10am**

St Neots MRC reserve the right to refuse admission

**Car parking**

Large car park at Riverside Park  
Limited parking in town centre (see map above)

**Disabled parking**

at Priory Centre & town centre car parks

**St Neots railway Station**

25 minute walk 1.5 miles, bus service R61  
to/from town centre

Refreshments available, tea, coffee, soft drinks,  
sandwiches, cake and biscuits

For further information visit:

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

## Puzzle Solution

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

1. Oryx. 2. Lub. 3. Douglas. 4. Oakington. 5. Aldermaston. 6. Kent and East Sussex Light Railway. 7. Cheddar Gorge. 8. Orion. 9. Maunsell. 10. Maud. 11. Oxford. 12. Nestor.

Solution: OLD OAK COMMON

*Martin Elms*

# Branch Outing - August 2024

We are currently in discussion with the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway (C&PRR) to develop a detailed plan to visit them in August 2024. This year, C&PRR, known as the "Icknield Line", is celebrating 30 years in operation. 1994 was an historic year with the freehold of the branch purchased by the Association in that August for £125,000, and the first public service (since 1957) running on 20 August 1994, (see article in April 2024 *Railway Ramblings*).

The current situation for our Branch outing is that we have an agreed date - August 11<sup>th</sup> - and an outline plan, which includes "behind the scenes" (numbers for "the yard" and Princes Risborough North Signal Box will be limited) as well as "riding the trains". There is a mixed steam and diesel timetable on that day and Rover tickets will be provided.

All members and readers of *Railway Ramblings*, including family and friends are invited to take part. We are also specifically inviting the Watford and Milton Keynes RCTS branches to join us. At this time, it will greatly help the detailed planning to have a good idea of likely numbers. Please let our Branch Secretary (Dave Elsdon) know if you are likely to take part and how many would be in your party: [hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:hitchin@rcts.org.uk) or call 01438 714277.

Participants should meet at Chinnor Station at approx 10:15, in time for the 10:45 departure. (The C&PRR have a dedicated platform at Princes Risborough Network Rail station and if participants wish to travel there by train suitable arrangements can be made to join our party at Princes Risborough).

C&PRR have a café at Chinnor serving a variety of snacks & drinks – all at very reasonable prices. There are large open areas close to Chinnor station suitable for picnics, etc.

The price per person will be approx £14-£15. Nearer the date we will ask for firm bookings and will request a non-returnable deposit of £5 per adult. (All participants will need to be booked in advance of the visit).

## Become A Presenter

Your Branch Secretary, Dave Elsdon, has started to produce the 2025 programme of Branch Presentations. This will no doubt feature some familiar faces but it is also an opportunity for new faces and new subjects. If you, or someone you know, would like to make a presentation in 2025 please get in touch with Dave – either at Branch Meetings, by email to [Hitchin@rcts.org.uk](mailto:Hitchin@rcts.org.uk), or by phone 01438 714277.

*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.*