

Railway Ramblings

Issue 172

November 2024

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



7903 runs round at Cheltenham Race Course after arrival with the 14:05 from Broadway
(on the GWSR)

26 August 2024

(Photo: John Scorer)

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 November 2024

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

12th November **The 11th Colour Rail Journey**

Paul Chancellor

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

26th November **Colchester in the Age of Steam**

Dave Goodyear

During December 2024

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

10th December **Five go to Swansea (Part 2)**

Chris Jones

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

17th December **Hitchin & Potton Snippets**

George Howe

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

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.



Chairman's Platform

Last month I congratulated those brave souls, including our speaker, who made it to the Hitchin meeting on 10 September – well, 8 October was, more-or-less, a repeat, with the weather again absolutely appalling. I appreciate that none of this does anything to encourage you to come out to meetings. I also recognise that the Hitchin venue can be difficult, as parking is often very limited when other groups are also on the site – and although there is street parking not that far away, a walk through heavy rain is not an attractive proposition. We (the committee) can't do anything about the weather but, following up on some suggestions, we are now hopeful of securing a different, more suitable, venue in Hitchin. Next month, I expect to be able to update you on progress

Also in October, our catering volunteers started offering tea/coffee to those arriving soon after "doors open" for meetings. This seemed to be well received and we will continue trialling this. There are just two conditions – you need to return cups to the catering point before the presentation starts, and please leave the biscuits to the mid-session break!

You may have noticed that, on advice from colleagues, I have now started to bring only a limited number of boxes of pre-owned books to each meeting – and aim to bring different sets of boxes to subsequent meetings.

The 2025 programme of presentations has been finalised and appears in this issue of *Railway Ramblings*. The usual printed versions will also be available (shortly) at Branch meetings and at forthcoming exhibitions when the Branch has a stand. Our thanks to Dave Elsdon for the vast amount of work he has done in putting this programme together.

Yet another reminder about badges at our meetings - If you already have a lanyard-type badge please try to remember to wear it when attending meetings! Please do not "leave it in the car", or leave it "in my other jacket"!

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. These are available to our non-members as well as members. 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.

Steve Lacey

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

The 2025 Branch Programme - Hitchin

Evening meetings, held at Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Hitchin

14 January

North from Kings Cross - Photographs from the RCTS Archive - *David Jackman*

11 February

The Last Decade at Hitchin - *Richard Allen*

11 March

1960's Cine Miscellany - *David Percival*

8 April

A Caledonian Collection - *Roger Pidgeon*

13 May

Cambridge Area Railways, Yesterday & Today (part 2) - *Dave Scudamore*

10 June

A 12th Colour Rail Journey - *Paul Chancellor*

8 July

On Great Eastern Lines Since 1991 - *Geoff Brockett*

August

Outdoor Visit or Something Different - The Branch Committee invites suggestions

9 September

The Peter Bland Collection "The Midland Mainline - Bedford to St. Pancras" - *Byran Cross*

14 October

Last Four Years of Steam - *George Howe*

11 November

25 years of Early Diesels 1959-1984 by Derek Cross - *David Cross*

9 December

Steam, Sugar & Sunsets (Java) - *David Longman*

The 2025 Branch Programme - Welwyn

Afternoon meetings, held at Digswell Village Church Hall, Digswell.

28 January

Memories of a Gorleston Spotter (Part 1) - *Chris Wright*

25 February

Remembering my Lines - *Colin Brading*

25 March

AGM & German Steam - *George Howe*

29 April

Sir Nigel Gresley, his Life & Work - *Simon Martin*

27 May

That was the Year that was 1972 - *Geoff Plumb*

24 June

The West Somerset Railway plus more - *Richard Morris*

29 July

UK Railways in the 21st Century - *John Day*

August

Outdoor Visit or Something Different - The Branch Committee invites suggestions

30 September

The Doncaster Rover - *Stephen Gay*

28 October

Memories of a Gorleston Spotter (Part 2) - *Chris Wright*

25 November

The Changing Scene on Southern Section WCML-1930's to the present day - *Rob Freeman*

30 December

Six Decades of the S & C - *Michael Smyth*

Visit to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway – John Scorer

The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway is a volunteer operated heritage railway in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire offering a round trip of 28 miles. It uses part of the route of the former Great Western Railway's main line from Birmingham to Cheltenham which used to run via Stratford-upon-Avon.

There are six stations along the line – Cheltenham Race Course, Gotherington, Winchcombe, Hayles Abbey Halt, Toddington and Broadway.

John writes:

On Monday 26th August 2024 I made a visit to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway. This was a normal operating day, with the purple timetable (two trains) in operation. For both trains the passenger stock was BR Mk.1 main line carriages.

For Train 1, the carriages were mainly the Chocolate and Cream set with a 1950s style restaurant buffet car located centrally. For Train 2, the carriages were mainly the Maroon set, with a buffet car located centrally.

Both steam locomotives in operation were to GWR designs.



2807 and 7903 await their turns of duty at Toddington

The loco allocated to Train 1 was no. 7903 'Foremarke Hall', one of the 79XX series in the last batch of the Hawksworth Modified Hall class built at Swindon in 1949 under BR auspices. This locomotive is owned by the Foremarke Hall Transport Group.



2807 runs round at Broadway after arrival with the 10:00 from Toddington

The loco allocated to Train 2 was no. 2807, a Churchward '28XX' class heavy freight locomotive, built in 1905. This locomotive is owned by Cotswold Steam Preservation Ltd. and is the oldest GWR locomotive surviving in private hands.

When opportunity permitted, I was able to discuss with the drivers of the locomotives matters relating to their engineering and operational characteristics. I give their knowledge and opinions here, as they may be of interest.



Jeff Lacey was the driver of 2807. He filled in some gaps in my knowledge of the operation of GWR locos, as follows. When the regulator is opened sufficiently to fully open the jockey valve to the sight feed lubricators, the steam feed to these is sufficient to ensure enough steam passes through the atomizers and also through the lubricator situated on the wet side of the superheater and hence into the cylinders to lubricate these also. When coasting, with the regulator nearly shut but with the jockey valve left open, this ensures that sufficient oil is present for cylinder lubrication. Apart from this, the piston valve semi-plug rings, which when operating with the regulator opened use the pressure of the steam to close the rings against the cylinder walls, contract slightly to minimise the piston pumping action of the piston and, with the cutoff set to 30% and the action of the

sniffing valves, assist in free coasting without dirt etc. being sucked into the cylinders from the exhaust.

Jeff has experience of driving, apart from GWR locos, such ones as Black Fives, B1s, Flying Scotsman and Bulleid pacifics (both original and rebuilt). Generally he has a good opinion of these including the layout of the cabs - for this, particularly, the Bulleids although he finds the operation of the reversing lever on the rebuilt ones rather stiff in comparison with the steam reverser of the originals. (I recall reading that the rebuilds had the same type of reversing lever as those used on the BR standards, possibly this problem was never solved). However, his opinion of GWR cab design was less good. He mentioned a particularly bad example of an injector water valve on a pannier tank being located in a corner of the floor on the footplate, and also cited the driver's position on the Kings as being particularly awkward. It appeared that, despite the virtues of GWR loco design, Human Factors Engineering was not something that was given sufficient consideration.



7903 runs into Toddington with the 14:05 from Broadway.

Andy Beal was the driver of 7903. Andy explained that this was one of the Class to which improved draughting was applied in early BR days, with a resultant improvement in performance; also that the Modified Halls had higher degree superheat than their predecessors. Andy also pointed out that the smaller driving wheel locos, such as the 28XX class, had an advantage on preserved lines over those with larger wheels, as the latter were more generally suited to higher speeds. Andy also explained that the 'X' on the cab side indicated that the improved Halls could haul one more coach than those not so modified. Those locos with improved draughting were designated by the letters 'ID' marked on the running board support framing behind the front buffer beam (not shown in photos). I noticed that the fireman had used the slacker pipe on the footplate. Andy explained the coal in use was better than some other from the same source, as it had less dust. And where was this source? Kazakhstan! So, is it greener to import such coal than to mine it in the UK?

The GWSR, despite its name, also has some diesel locos and DMUs. On the day of my visit, 'Peak' class 45/1 no. 45149, in BR Blue, worked the last two trips of the day. Due to limited time, I could not make these journeys. This locomotive is owned by The Cotswold Mainline Diesel Group.



Also at Toddington, there is a narrow-gauge (2 ft.) railway, operated by The North Gloucestershire Railway Company. Unfortunately, time did not permit of a ride on this line. The loco in operation was 'Justine', built by Arnold Jung in 1906.

'Justine' leaves Toddington with the 14:00 departure.

With thanks to Paul Gosney (GWSR Admin.) for his assistance in the preparation of this article, and to drivers Jeff Lacey and Andy Beal for taking the time to answer my questions.

An interesting day spent on this line, which is well worth a visit.

John Scorer

In case it is of interest, here are details of the cab side power and weight classifications as shown on GWR standard gauge locomotives since 1920.

The letter represents the Power Class, as determined approximately from the tractive effort.

Power Class Letter	Tractive Effort (lbs)
Special	Over 38,000
E	33,001 – 38,000
D	25,001 – 33,000
C	20,501 - 25,000

Power Class Letter	Tractive Effort (lbs)
B	18,501 – 20,500
A	16,500 – 18,500
Ungrouped	Under 16,500

The colour of the circle represents the routes on which the locomotive is permitted to work.

Circle Colour(s)	Permitted Routes
Double Red	Limited to certain main lines (applies to 60XX class only)
Red	Limited to main lines and lines which may carry heavy locomotives
Blue	Additional routes
Yellow	Nearly the whole system
Uncoloured	More-or-less unrestricted

John Scorer



Santa Starts Early this Year

23, 24 & 30 November

All aboard the Santa Steam Specials! Take a magical steam train ride from Princes Risborough to Santa's Grotto at his North Pole station (Chinnor). Here, little ones can share their Christmas wishes with Santa himself!



On 23, 24 & 30 November, all trains will depart from Princes Risborough Platform 4, where Santa's stewards will warmly welcome everyone onboard. During the journey, the Elves will entertain the children with puzzles and 'Letters-to-Santa,' while the box-crazy ladies offer nimble craft projects for a modest additional cost.

The steam train will take you to Santa's enhanced Workshop and Grotto at the North Pole station. Here, you can enjoy refreshments, chat with Santa, take memorable photos, and receive the first Christmas present for every child. On the return journey, volunteers will ensure all children are delighted with their gifts.

Travel in comfort in 1950s carriages, named after Santa's reindeers – Rudolph, Blitzen, Dasher, and Prancer. Seats are booked at tables to keep families together. Enjoy the traditional elements of the Santa experience: the steam train ride, hot and cold beverages, mince pies or biscuits, and a magical visit with Santa.

These early season specials are just £22 per person. Complimentary refreshments are included: mince pies for everyone and a drink of tea / coffee / chocolate or a warm cordial is included in the ticket price and will be served at Chinnor station. Christmas comes but once a year, and the C&PRR aim to make it truly memorable. Santa and our volunteers look forward to welcoming you and your family onboard for a festive experience filled with joy and magic!

The peak season dates are 01, 07, 08, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23 December 2024 - Adult/Senior or Child 1-12 years £27 per person.

For more information, please call on 07979 055366 (10.00 - 16.00 hours) or contact by email at:

[Santa Steam Specials: A Magical Christmas Adventure: « Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway \(chinnorrailway.co.uk\)](http://chinnorrailway.co.uk)

(Reproduced courtesy of the C&PRR)



Driving Experiences

2nd and 3rd November 2024



Arrive at the Nene Valley Railway's Wansford Station for a timed departure in either the morning or afternoon of Saturday 2nd or Sunday 3rd November 2024. You will participate in a short tutorial about the driving of a diesel locomotive, delivered by one of the resident drivers. You will then be given an insight into working a freight train from the perspective of a Goods Guard.

Once the theory is done and dusted, the practical fun begins and you will be able to put into practice all you have learnt as you get to drive a freight train over part of the 7½ mile line. You will either drive from Wansford to Peterborough or from Peterborough to Wansford as part of the experience. Once you have finished with the train, you will have the opportunity to visit Wansford Signal Box and witness the duties and responsibilities of the Signaller on duty.

This course is limited to a maximum of 8 people each day, so early booking is advised. Each participant is permitted to bring a guest to ride in the Brake Van, and other guests are welcome but will not be able to travel on the train due to limited space.

The whole package is priced at £150.00 per person.

The environment of a Heritage Railway is physically demanding and so a reasonable level of fitness is required to participate in this course. On the grounds of health and safety, the NVR cannot accept participants under the age of 18 years. Sturdy footwear is essential, such as shoes or boots. The environment of a locomotive can be a dirty place and so consideration should be given to clothing worn by participants as the NVR will accept no liability for damage to your best suit!

For full details go to:

[Before the Snows of Winter Goods Weekend and Driving Experience | Nene Valley Railway Ltd \(nvr.org.uk\)](https://www.nvr.org.uk)

(Reproduced courtesy NVR)

The November Puzzle – Martin Elms

A Scottish theme this month. The first letter of the answer to each of the following questions will spell the name of a locomotive in the same theme.

1. Name of locomotive 62470 “Glen ?”
2. Station between Wick and Lyster
3. ? for Renfrew
4. Locomotive depot with code 60B
5. Name of locomotive 37676 “? Rannock”

6. Patrick ? locomotive superintendent of the GSWR 1853 – 1866
7. Station south of Inverness
8. Station near Greenock
9. Locomotive depot with code 62A
10. CR viaduct near Annan

11. “ ? Highlander” preserved GNS. locomotive number 49
12. Name of locomotive 46103 “? Scots Fusilier”
13. HR station north of Keith
14. NB station near Partick

Best of luck.

My answer to each of the questions and solution to the puzzle are on page 14.

Martin Elms

A Day Out – Welwyn North to Shoeburyness

On Saturday 12 October our daughter came to visit Jill for the day, which gave me the opportunity to go out spotting. Something I wanted to do for some-time was to travel by c2c to Shoeburyness to see some the new Class 720/6 units on that line.

I caught the 10:16 train from Welwyn North (700055) to Kings Cross, I had purchased an all zones travelcard £12.18 and a return ticket Barking to Shoeburyness £11.70. From Kings Cross, I planned to go via the Metropolitan to Aldgate, having got to the platform, there was a train in with Aldgate showing on the side indicator panel, unbeknown to me this was a Circle Line train, as during this weekend engineering works all Circle Line trains were terminating at Aldgate. Arriving there, I walked the short distance to Fenchurch Street station. The indicator board told me I had four minutes before the train departed for my destination. (357035 / 036) was an all -stations service at 11:03, which suited me fine as I wanted to checkout East Ham depot, as we passed by, and anything else that was stabled along the line or in a station. During the first few minutes we travelled beside the Docklands Light Railway. Along this stretch of line to West Ham we had already passed two of the new units going into Fenchurch Street. On reaching East Ham depot there was one (720606) parked outside the shed but with the shed doors were closed, nothing else was visible. Barking, the largest station on the route, produced nothing, just an empty station. From here, we ran alongside the District Line to Upminster.

It was an extremely good ride through the Essex countryside. Stopping at Basildon, the new town was where majority of passengers alighted. Travelling on, after passing Pitsea where the Tilbury Branch rejoined the main line, we started running along-side the Thames estuary, the tide was out and the mud flats visible. The cockle sheds at Leigh-on-Sea were open but business looked quiet, bespoke houses, some of unusable design, overlooked the railway at Westcliffe, the stop at Southend virtually emptied the train of most of the remaining passengers. I was one of just four that eventually alighted at Shoeburyness at 12:42. 720611 was in the platform to greet me. The storage yard is visible from the platform, there were 22 Class 357's there but no other 720's. I walked the length of the car park towards the yard just to check the situation but saw nothing of interest. Having a brief word with a driver coming on shift, he told me that the new units were currently being used on the Tilbury Branch.

I returned to catch my train back to Liverpool Street (13:13), when 750610 arrived from Fenchurch Street. The return journey on 357037 / 038 was uneventful, except for some nearby unruly children who kept climbing on seats and running around, mother oblivious of them. This time at Barking, a Freightliner (66515) was waiting for a path to Ripple Lane. From here my train called at Stratford and Liverpool Street only, arriving at 14:42, both stations were very busy, although there were no other trains in the platforms at Stratford. I had a quick walk around Liverpool Street checking on the trains that were in. There were six 720/1 and 720/5's plus two 745 units, before heading for the underground back to Kings Cross. As luck would have it, a Metropolitan Line train was again in the platform, so I managed to get back to the Cross, with a few minutes to spare, to catch the 14:58. Again 700055, was my train back to Welwyn North. Unusually the driver announced that we would also be calling at New Southgate, Oakleigh Park and New Barnet, something I do not recall happening for a very long time.

A good day out and very enjoyable.

Dave Elsdon



Signal Box Experience

Take control of the railway in North Weald Signal Box alongside a trained volunteer



Unlike signalling simulators, if the sequence of signalling is wrong trains really can get stuck in the wrong place causing genuine inconvenience to real people. So, why not come and learn for yourself how it's done at one of the EOR signalbox experience days.

You will have the chance to work in the hub of an operational railway and control trains for just £175!

EOR include two All Day Rover tickets (worth £18 each) and a return cab ride in the diesel locomotive so you can see the signals and points that you have used in the box. This experience day is an ideal choice for a birthday gift or special treat just for yourself - and remember to bring your camera.

Available on selected standard operating days you will start at 09:30 at North Weald where you will meet the duty signaller. After a brief introduction to the signal box,

the first train will depart to Ongar at 10:10. You will be shown the token procedure and how to set a route allowing the train to depart for Ongar, this includes the all-important liaison, using bell codes, with Ongar Signal Box and allowing the token to be released.

Throughout the day you will operate mechanical and electrical points, signals and exchange tokens, during which you will gain an understanding of how a signal box operates and familiarise yourself with the different levers and their meanings. The day will end at approximately 16:30 after the last train has arrived at North Weald.

For more details, on this and all events, visit the EOR website:

[Upcoming Events \(eorailway.co.uk\)](http://eorailway.co.uk)

(Reproduced courtesy of the EOR)

Solution to the November Puzzle (Page 12)

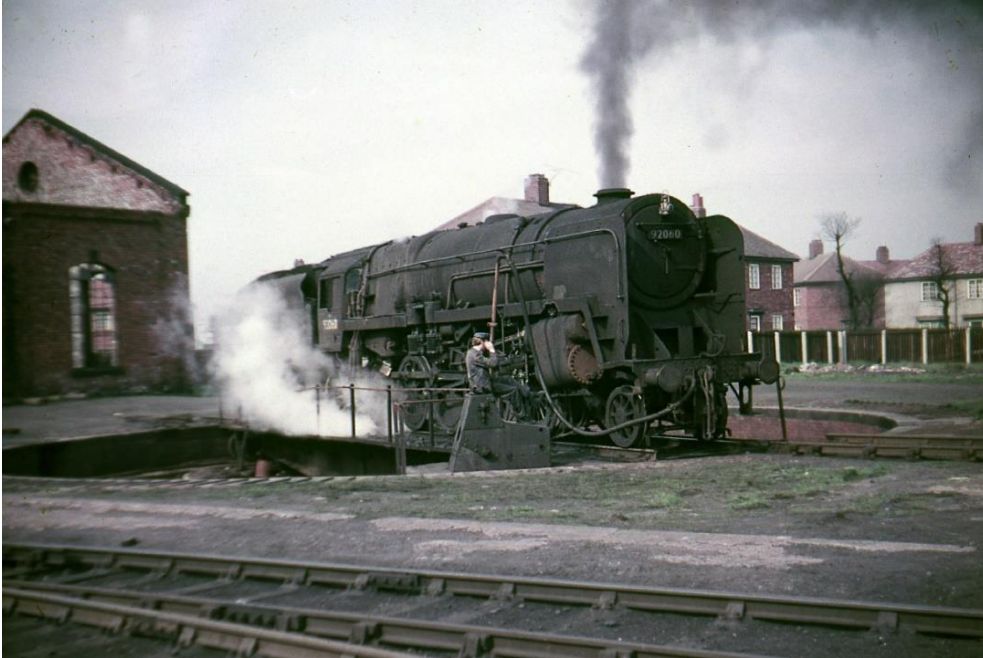
1. Roy. 2. Occumster. 3. Yoker. 4. Aviemore. 5. Loch. 6. Stirling. 7. Culloden (Moor).
8. Overton. 9. Thornton. 10. Solway. 11. Gordon. 12. Royal. 13. Enzie. 14. Yorkhill.

Solution: ROYAL SCOTS GREY. (D9000 and 46101)

The November Presentations (1)

The 11th Colour Rail Journey

- Paul Chancellor



12th November, at Hitchin

The spotter of 1964 could record some 280 different classes of locomotives and units if they travelled throughout the country and we will see most of them during our ramble around the UK. A Derby Lightweight unit is seen here at Sheringham, whilst in the North East at Tyne Dock shed the 9Fs that were fitted with air pumps could be found working the Iron Ore trains to Consett.

The November Presentations (2)

Colchester in the Age of Steam

- Dave Goodyear

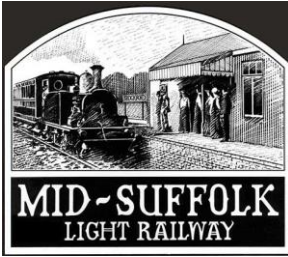


26th November, at Digswell

Colchester has much to interest the railway enthusiast and historian. Within its original borough boundaries it had a major junction, three stations and associated goods yards, a motive power depot and a quay tramway. Passenger traffic included large numbers of holiday trains to the Norfolk and Essex coasts, and boat trains to Parkeston Quay in addition to the regular services. Local industries and the quay at Hythe provided for significant goods traffic.

In the period up to the end of steam in September 1962 the area underwent major changes, with the rapid introduction of diesel traction, the first application by BR of 25kV AC electrification and a major station rebuild with associated track layout changes.

Dave Goodyear



Mid Suffolk Light Railway

Looking forward to Christmas



The 2024 open days have now finished. The next events are the Santa Specials in December, followed by the New Year's Day Steam Up and Historic Lighting Exhibition.

The duty loco for the Christmas period will be the Andrew Barclay 0-6-0T 'Swordfish' built in 1941 for Stanton Ironworks, later Stewart & Lloyds. "Swordfish" is the first of its type to run on the Middy and is coming to the MSLR from the Colne Valley Railway.

For further details of this, go to the Middy website:

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

(Material courtesy of the MSLR)

Exhibition Volunteers

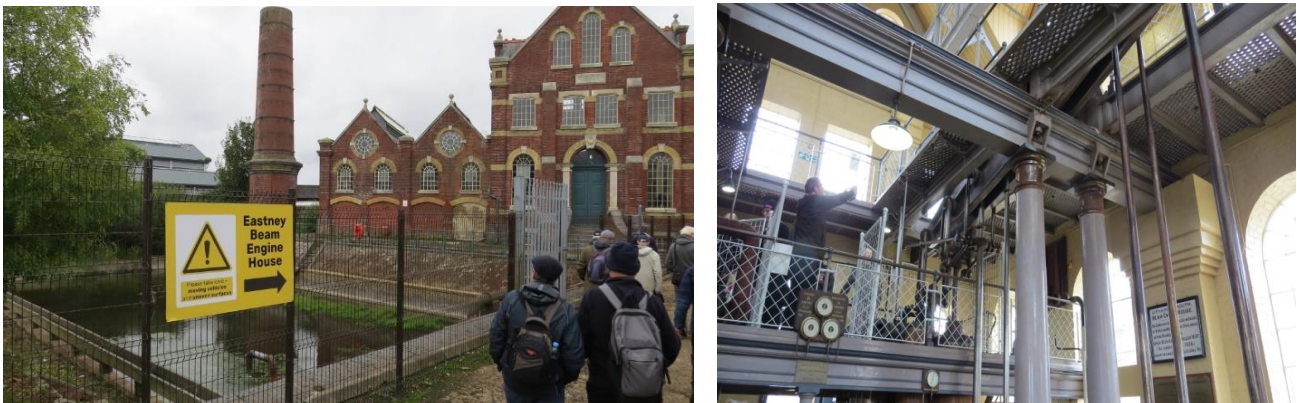
We are still looking for members who would be prepared to occasionally assist in manning our RCTS stand at exhibitions. This is not particular arduous and, of course, gives you admission to the relevant exhibition. We are not expecting anyone to commit to doing this on a regular basis. If you are interested then talk to me, or Steve Lacey, at one of our meetings.

Dave Elsdon

The RCTS Members Weekend 2024 – Steve Lacey

26 Sept saw Carol and myself heading off to Portsmouth in atrocious weather, at one point, travelling at 16 mph on the M25, due to terrible visibility, through the rain squalls! The member's weekend was based at The Royal Maritime Hotel, about 300yards from the historic dockyard gate. A very comfortable hotel, originally built to give a place for sailors away from their home port to stay. The original was destroyed in World War 2 and the current building was erected in the 1950's. It now operates as a charity and takes bookings from anyone.

Luckily, on Friday 27 Sept the weather had improved and the afternoon offered a 35 min trip by service bus (pass!) to the Eastney Beam Engine and pumping station. Built initially in 1868 and furnished with Clayton Beam engines, as Portsmouth grew, they were later augmented in 1887 by the huge Boulton-Watt beam engine. Despite being modernised in 1922 by the installation of electric pumps, the original engines were kept in working order as a reserve until 1954 and transferred to Portsmouth Museum in 1968. Victorian engineering at its best. (I wonder how long the new London Tideway Scheme will last?)



For reasons best known to herself, my wife Carol decided on a walk of 400yards to the shops and cafes on Gun Wharf instead!

At the end of the visit we returned by service bus (bus pass again for most!) to central Portsmouth where the members from Solent branch took us on a guided walk retracing the branch from Portsmouth & Southsea to the dockyard gates, then back to our hotel, via Brunel's birthplace site (destroyed by WW2 bombing) and his memorial.



Despite the branch having closed in 1977, the crossing gates on Bishop Crispin Way remain in place!



Stone marking site of Brunel's birthplace - destroyed in WW2 blitz and Brunel memorial nearby

In the evening, after a meal, we were treated to an illustrated-talk on Southern Steam followed by a film " Memories of the Hayling Billy".

On Saturday I visited Eastleigh works in the morning and the Watercress line in the afternoon. Carol spent the day in Portsmouth! There was an alternative visit to the Isle of Wight Steam railway, but this was made difficult by South West Trains closing the Island Line for maintenance! At least for those taking this option they could make further use of their bus pass!



3-car 313 201 - the note in the cab window says, do not rob for spares! We were told the unit was due to be stored at Worthing. 700 106 was there for repair having run over a shopping trolley!



Before and after! 142 007 after and 73 101 before, following filling and rubbing down prior to repaint.

Some of the stock seen at Eastleigh Works –



73 101 *The Royal Alex* .



Wessex Electric/ Gatwick Express 442 401



57 303 *Chad Varah* (founder of The Samaritans), up on the jacks for serious overhaul/engine change. 50 026 *Indomitable* outside in the sunshine.



Ex-07 Class 2991 *Bruce* with 71A shed plate. "Flying Buffer Beam" *Cheviot* part of site owners fleet.

In the afternoon we took the minibus to the Mid Hants railway, "The Watercress line", where we took a ride along the line, then had a tour of the workshops at Ropley.



S15 No. 506 runs round at Alton, with a beautifully restored Queen Mary bogie brake in the siding. Class 08 outside the shed at Ropley, showing part of the ex-Kings Cross GNR footbridge.



Ropley shops showing *Lord Nelson*, boilers under repair, and 35005 *Canadian Pacific* nearing completion.

On our return to Portsmouth there was an evening dinner followed by a talk from Rebecca Dalley, CEO of the Mid-Hants, about her route to CEO via Duxford, Shuttleworth and Hendon.

On Sunday morning we had the Officers Conference, discussing the future of the RCTS, with discussion of links with other societies, Health and Safety documents for Branches, and next years members weekend (to be based in Darlington).

In the afternoon, we took the ferry to Gosport and then quite a long walk to the Royal Navy Submarine Museum. (A good tip here, is to take the waterbus from just inside Portsmouth Historic Dockyard direct to the submarine museum!)

Here, we saw the first RN submarine, Holland 1, a midget submarine X7 from WW2 and a cold war submarine HMS Alliance. Carol joined us on this visit and, apart from the long walk, enjoyed it, especially, much to her surprise, a guided tour through HMS Alliance!





- Little and large!
Starboard engine controls of HMS Alliance.
Engine controls of Holland 1!

But of course this is not all I was up to during the weekend, I had also taken a supply of new and shop-soiled RCTS books to sell to members over the weekend!

If I have wetted your appetite, the next members weekend will be centred on Darlington. Watch out for the adverts in the Railway Observer, see you there!

Steve Lacey

Workshop Wanderings

Steve Lacey reports from behind the scenes at the Nene Valley Railway (NVR) - and his other recent activities.

The next update will appear in the next issue of Railway Ramblings.

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.