

Railway Ramblings

Issue 179

June 2025

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



DVT 82211 at Leeds on 30 April 2025

After the screen had been debugged, the washers are refilled before heading south.

(Photo: Tony Turner)

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 2025

At Hitchin (14:00 – 16:30, doors open from 13:30)

10th June **A 12th Colour Rail Journey**

Paul Chancellor

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

24th June **The West Somerset Railway – Plus More**

Richard Morris

During July 2025

At Hitchin (14:00 – 16:30, doors open from 13:30)

8th July **On Great Eastern Lines Since 1991**

Geoff Brockett

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

29th July **UK Railways in the 21st Century**

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.

The Hitchin meetings are held at St Mark's Church Hall, St Marks Close, Lancaster Avenue (off Bedford Road) SG5 1UR Note: these are afternoon meetings starting at 14:00.

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

I am saddened to report the passing of Eric Fry in April. Although most readers will probably not have known Eric, he was a member of our RCTS branch and a Vice President of the RCTS. Dave Elsdon, our Branch Secretary, has kindly written an obituary and this is in this edition of *Railway Ramblings*.

Last month I reported that your committee had been discussing options for the August outing. I can now tell you that, after further deliberation we have decided that this year we will be going to the Mid Suffolk Light Railway - and the Big Bus show at Stonham Barns. The primary "target" had been the MSLR but it was thought this would not comprise sufficient content to justify the journey. With many of you also very interested in buses, the opportunity to also visit the Big Bus Show seemed ideal. The date is Sunday 10th August. Further provisional details are in this issue of *Railway Ramblings*. We have also decided that this visit will be subsidised for branch members, utilising some of the branch funds.

In other news, those recently attending our Branch meetings will know that we were recently given a considerable number of railway books in excellent condition. I am endeavouring to bring varying selections of these for the book table at meetings. Some of these are complete sets of books and we would like to try to sell them as such – sensible offers welcome.

Coming up, in July, we will have a stand at the Letchworth Model Railway Society exhibition. This will be at the Priory School in Hitchin on Saturday 26th July 2025. If you would like the opportunity to help with our stand (and get free admission) then please talk with Dave Elsdon or Paul Holloway.

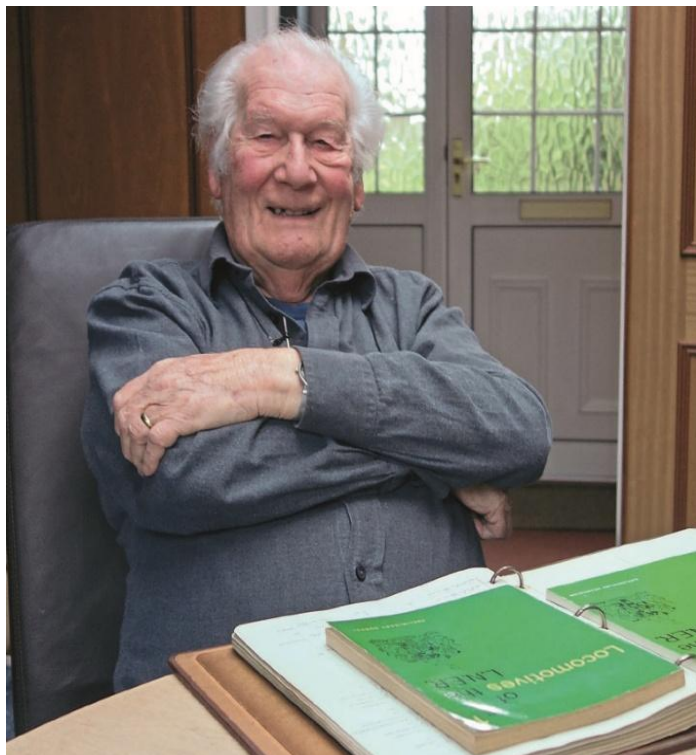
Steve Lacey



755408 at Ely on 8 May 2025 (see p6)

Photo: Tom Gladwin

Eric Fry (1927-2025)



Eric Fry, pictured in 2017

Permission to use this image was given by
The Railway Magazine.

Branch member Eric Fry (2358) sadly passed away on 17 April, just three weeks short of his 98th birthday. I have known Eric since 1985, just after moving to Digswell, when I was introduced to him by fellow RCTS members Doug White and Tom Gladwin, both also ardent railway enthusiasts.

Born in Hornsey in May 1927, Eric was introduced to train spotting by his slightly older cousin when he was 7 years old. These two boys wanted to see trains, but because of their age their aunt used to take them to Hadley Wood for picnics and other lineside locations to fulfil their passion. One day they wanted to go to Neasden shed which with their aunt as chaperone was easy, as the workmen left them alone once they saw this well-dressed lady accompanying them. In all Eric's many years of spotting throughout the war and beyond he never had a shed permit, just an air of authority.

When he left school, Eric wanted to work on the railway at Stratford, but his father thought he could do better and in "those days" you did what you were told and he was persuaded to apply for a job at Lloyd's of London as a trainee underwriter. Eric was with Lloyd's his entire working life, except for four years when he joined a photographic company, before re-joining Lloyds of London in 1969, until his retirement in 1990.

His hobby eventually saw him visit every Eastern Region Shed in the country, and many on more than one occasion. He did, after many years and many miles, see all the LNER locomotives. This passion was calmed after meeting his wife Helen and getting married, before moving into their bungalow in Welwyn.

Eric joined the RCTS when he was just 16 years old, they would not accept members younger than that at the time. In 1963 he took on the task of editing a new series of books for the Society, a task that eventually took 31 years to complete. This, of course, was "The Locomotives of the LNER", which ran to nineteen volumes and is still regarded as the 'bible' on the subject, for their accuracy and detail. Commonly known as the 'Green books' they are still collected and sought after today. Following this mammoth task, in retirement, Eric assisted the editorial team producing Yeadon's 'Register of LNER Locomotives' listing the details of every LNER engine. Part way through this task, which eventually ran to fifty volumes, Willy Yeadon died and Eric then volunteered himself for the task of proof reader to the publishers for the remainder of the series.



(Photo credit: Steve Lacey, 2022)

In retirement Eric also looked to further his other great love of scale modelling 00-gauge locomotives, of which he produced almost 250, along with his regular trips to the DeHavilland model railway club.

There is no doubt that the LNER was in-built within Eric's make-up. A real gentleman throughout and a Society member and Vice President who will be greatly missed.

*Dave Elsdon,
Branch Secretary*

Lanyard Badges

If you are a fairly regular attendee (including non-members) you probably have a lanyard name badge – and it is good to see you remembering to wear it at meetings. If you have not got a badge and feel “forgotten” then please let me (or Dave Elsdon, Paul Holloway or John Dossett) know and John will endeavour to get one prepared for your next visit. It could even be that there is already one waiting for you – there should be a list at the registration desk so that you can check.

For those who struggle to remember to bring their badges you have the option of leaving your badge in the box between meetings!

Steve Lacey

A Good Day at Ely – Tom Gladwin

On a comfortable sunny day (8 May) my son kindly drove me to Ely to enjoy the railway scene there.

We first visited Papworth Sidings. There, among the assortment of stored Class 153, 156 and 170 DMUs, 465 EMUs and HST cars, I “copped” my last four Class 175 DMUs. A surprise there was Grand Central’s modified DMU 180110. Due to corrosion this had been reduced from a five to a four-car unit in 2021.

Until withdrawal in 2023 the Class 175 DMUs, which were based at Chester, operated Transport for Wales North Wales services to Holyhead and the Manchester area. It is reported that they are being leased to Great Western Railway where they will replace the Castle Class HSTs and DMUs in Cornwall and Devon.

We spent three most enjoyable hours on the station at Ely. There are quiet places from which to observe operations and excellent refreshment outlets. As expected, Class 387 EMUs were on the Kings Cross to Kings Lynn services, and Class 700/0 EMUs on terminating Govia Thameslink trains. Greater Anglia’s Class 755/3 and 755/4 bi-mode multiple units were on the Norwich-Cambridge-Stanstead Airport and Peterborough-Ipswich-Colchester Services. CrossCountry Trains Class 170 DMUs and East Midlands Class 158 DMUs appeared on trains from/to distant cities such as Manchester and Liverpool.



170101 in latest CrossCountry livery

The pattern of diagrams of some Train Operating Companies serving Ely is complex and added much to our interest. For example, there is a unique CrossCountry Trains service (1L98) from Bristol Temple Meads to Stansted Airport, with a journey time of 5¼ hours. The return service terminates at Birmingham. Thus, passengers returning to Gloucester and Bristol are required to make a change there.

Examination of the timetables revealed there are several Greater Anglia rush-hours services between Ely and Liverpool Street using Class 720 EMUs.



On 7 April, Maersk completed its move from Felixstowe to London Gateway. As a consequence, Freightliner have switched some ten trains a day from the former to the latter destination. Nonetheless, we observed eleven Class 66 hauled freight movements.

A most enjoyable day out.

Tom Gladwin



Fare Specials on Father's Day Sunday 15 June



Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway has an Adult Day Rover at just £8.00 for every Dad on Sunday 15 June! The regular range of adult fares, including discounts for seniors are also available.

Combined Day Rover and Cream Teas in a box - every Dad's combined price on their special day is just £15.50 - book ahead for a relaxing visit with a reserved seat in the restaurant car.

Kids-for-a-Quid Day Rover - just £1 for accompanied 3-15 yrs (no charge for infants 0-2 yrs).

Pull & Push children's railway layout - when you come for a 'big train ride' with younger children then be sure to pop into Chinnor station marquee - where dedicated volunteers John and Jack from the Children's Leaflets & Activities Group have a great area for families to enjoy (open until 15.30); including their fantastic 'Pull & Push' children's play railway layout, ideal for kids aged 3-7 years!

(Reproduced courtesy of C&PRR)

The June Puzzle – Martin Elms

A similar format to last month. For each block of five questions (below), the first digit of the number (pre-TOPS) of the five locomotives will give you a new 5-digit number. That number should give you the identity of another locomotive!

1. Scottish Borderer		
2. Lulworth Castle		
3. Ladas		
4. Tavistock		
5. Marble Hall		

6. Roedeer		
7. Sherwood Forester (diesel)		
8. Parthia (diesel)		
9. Australia		
10. Preston Hall		

11. Exeter		
12. Lion (diesel)		
13. Sharpshooter (diesel)		
14. Dunley Hall		
15. Huntingdonshire		

Best of luck.

My answer to each of the questions and solutions to the puzzle are on page 23.

Martin Elms

Bounds Green 1992-4 (Part 4) – Hugh Driscoll

In Parts 1 & 2, published in March & April, Hugh covered the development of the depot up to his time there and described the work being carried out. Last month, in Part 3, Hugh gave details of some of the work he had carried out at Bounds Green. This month he concludes his reminiscences with other tasks undertaken:

Pantograph head replacement at Kings Cross

We often received calls from the Kings Cross maintenance team supervisor for advice and requests. On one occasion a Class 91 had arrived at Kings Cross after the pantograph automatic drop device (ADD) had activated. The driver had isolated the ADD and the pantograph raised OK, but the ADD air pipe appeared to be adrift at the pantograph head. The train continued to Kings Cross with a consequent delay on arrival.

It was possible to locally isolate and earth the overhead line on former loco sidings on the up side of Kings Cross, by the old York Way platform and the “new” power box. The Kings Cross team were in possession of a ladder and harnesses so could carry out limited roof and pantograph repairs on these sidings.



Class 91 no. 91 011 on 14 Road. Photo: David Burrell.

In this case, a new pantograph head was requested, as its air fitting appeared to be broken. While the loco was being uncoupled from its set and shunted onto the loco sidings, I obtained a pantograph head from stores and headed for Kings Cross. I arrived at Finsbury Park and, having just missed a main line train, I headed down the spiral stairs to the Victoria line. With the benefit of hindsight, I can tell you that getting through the ticket gates at Kings Cross Underground whilst carrying a pantograph head is not easy.

Up on the roof of the loco, we found that one of the pantograph carbon air galleries had been impaled by a “dropper” from the overhead line. This caused the loss of pressure in the air circuit, activating the ADD. From the ground, this looked very much like a detached ADD pipe. It was a bit of a miracle that the loco had made it back to Kings Cross without further incident. After replacing the pantograph head and informing the Overhead Line gang, the loco was shunted back onto its set and I headed back to Bounds Green with the defective item.

Class 91 Power Converter Cubicle Overheating

The original cooling system of the Class 91 power electronics cubicle was an Achilles heel, and did not function as well as the design intended. Two locomotives in particular suffered from spurious activation of their fire extinguishing systems on hot days, due to excessive heat build-up within their power converters.

Simply put, when the driver shut down the cab desk on arrival at a terminal station (effectively placing the loco in “standby mode”), the power electronics cooling oil pumps and radiator fans ran until the cooling oil temperature had dropped to a defined value. The fans and pumps then shut down and would not start again until the loco was taken out of “standby mode”, by placing the loco back in service. This was achieved by opening the cab desk up again in either the loco or the Driving Van Trailer at the other end of the train.

However, on a very hot day, without forced cooling, the latent heat in the power converters built up inside their cubicle. On the two particular locos, this latent heat built up sufficiently to trigger the local temperature sensor, activating the fire extinguishing system. The locomotive was then declared a failure (usually in Edinburgh Waverley station), giving Craighentiny depot and York Control a headache.

Investigation of this fault involved fitting temperature indicating stickers to various parts of the power converter to locate problem “hot spots”, as well as jumping on locos just after completion of service and checking areas with an infra-red temperature gun. The Derby Project team were informed of our findings so that modifications could be developed to rectify the problem.

As a short-term measure on the two most susceptible locos, with a Technical Supervisor, we adjusted the cooling system control thermostats to operate the fans and pumps until a slightly lower cooling oil temperature was reached. This resulted in the power converter being cooled sufficiently to avoid “false alarm” activations, by dissipating more of the latent heat build-up. (We both got in trouble for this, as it was an unauthorised modification. However, the reliability and availability of the fleet was improved as a result, and we saved a few fire extinguisher bottles too). The original Class 91 cooling system was improved with modifications but was not completely rectified until the locos were refurbished in the early 2000s.

Mark 4 Service Vehicle Cell Phone fitment

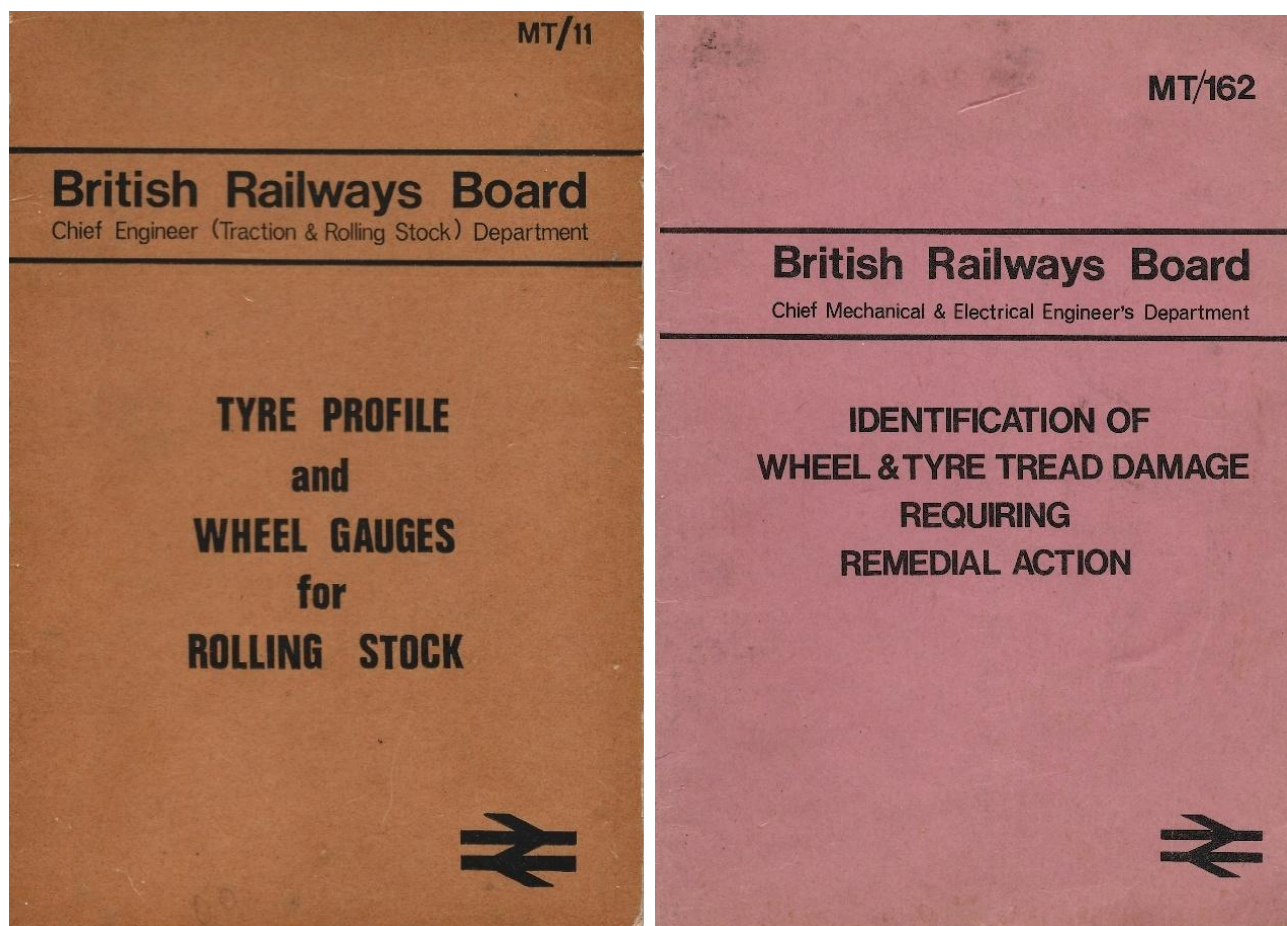
The mobile phone was becoming more widespread in the 1990s (albeit analogue) and BR decided to fit catering vehicles with cell phones. Defects, stock levels etc. could now be reported by phone, in real time, by the catering staff. These were expensive bits of kit, and the Technical Office was entrusted with their fitment. Essentially a Motorola car phone, these were fitted in the SV buffet bar area. There was a bit of work involved with the fitting of a power supply and small antenna.

My supervisor had gone to fit a cell phone to a vehicle in the repair shed, which was positioned on the jacking road. After about an hour, I received the standard test-call which we made to check the equipment. My supervisor sounded a bit hesitant, and asked me if I could bring a ladder out to him. Although, as safety conditions mandated, he had padlocked the road to prevent any train movement, he hadn't realised that the vehicle was about to be jacked up for bogie replacement. By the time he had finished the job, he was 10 feet up in the air. We all had a chuckle as he descended the ladder. However, he did congratulate the repair team on the smooth vertical ride!

Other work

Other jobs I undertook, in addition to the day-to-day technical support, were:

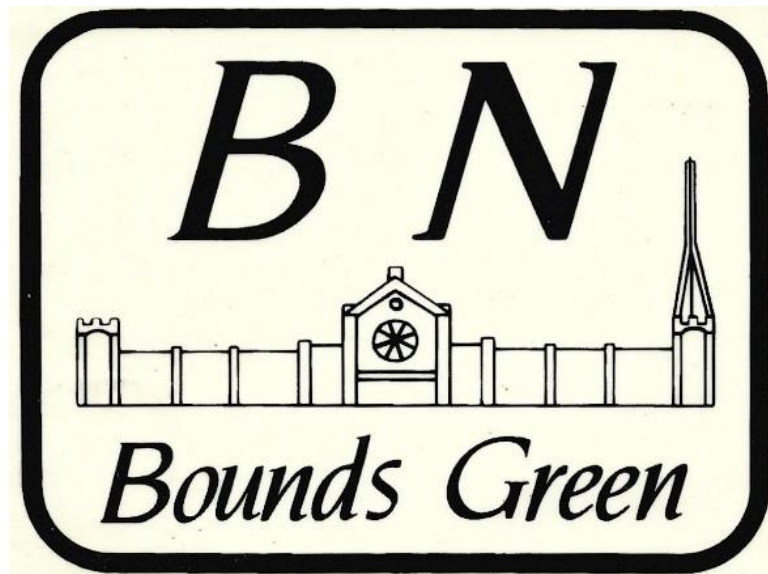
- Additional wheelset checks (over and above scheduled maintenance checks) on the entire fleet of Mk4 vehicles to collect data as part of a wheel condition investigation with the Derby team.



The wheel examiner's bibles.

- A lot of work to get the dishwashers (!), fitted inside the Mk4 service vehicles, to work. There were a lot of wiring and circuit board problems to overcome with the manufacturer.
- Discovering wiring errors (from build) with Mk4 SVs whilst working on dishwashers, necessitating time working at Kings Cross to carry out safety checks and any rectification work (thankfully not much!).

- Getting the Class 91 traction control electronics test box to work, and writing an instruction to make it more widely useable.
- Working with the Derby Project team to fit and evaluate replacement traction motor field contactors and improve hydraulic parking brake system maintenance and reliability on Class 91 locos and Mk4 DVTs.



Depot allocation sticker, designed by a former Bounds Green apprentice

My time spent at Bounds Green was very enjoyable and two years passed very quickly. It taught me a lot about the variety of work on traction and rolling stock maintenance and engineering, shift work and outstation working. Liaison with project teams, manufacturers and suppliers was also key to the job. I made a lot of new friends and re-acquainted myself with several “evacuees” from the recently closed Stratford Major Depot.



Later in my career, a depot manager informed me that electric trains were very clean. I told him that he was wrong.

Author in the Supervisor's office, 1993.

I left Bounds Green Intercity depot in May 1994, as a chill wind was beginning to blow through the UK rail industry. Appropriately, my next stop was North Pole depot with Eurostar.



A final view of 91 018 on 13 road, on the author's last day at Bounds Green, May 1994. Note the modified horn grille and sealed covers over the nose end jumper cable connections, just above the head/tail lights. Photo: Hugh Driscoll.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Paul Kearley, Graham Williams, Jeremy Gould, David Burrell and Adrian Nicholls for their kind permission to reproduce their photographs in this article.

Hugh Driscoll

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



Wartime Rationing Weekend

14 and 15 June



Visit the Epping Ongar Railway for a taste of life during wartime and rationing.

Come and step back in time with the EOR, immerse yourself in a flavour of what a rural British steam railway could have appeared like 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 go to-and-fro.

Ride on the EOR beautifully preserved fleet of vintage buses, included in your fare! Stations and passenger trains will be specially adorned and decorated. From the moment you arrive, you'll be immersed in the sights, sounds, and spirit of wartime Britain, with music, entertainment, and re-enactments bringing the era to life.

Passengers are encouraged to come dressed in 1940s style civilian clothing.



Heritage steam trains will be in operation between North Weald 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!

For details and bookings:

[Welcome aboard the Epping Ongar Railway | London's Heritage Railway](#)

(Reproduced courtesy of the EOR).

Hitchin Flyover – Tony Turner

Nowadays, it's hard to imagine trains leaving Hitchin towards Letchworth and Cambridge having to cross the East Coast Main Line 'on the flat' waiting, for a gap between northbound and southbound expresses, to negotiate the junction onto the Cambridge branch. That all changed with the opening of the Hitchin flyover in June 2013, a wonderful time-saver that we now all take for granted.

About a month before it opened to traffic, Network Rail invited members of the public – particularly those good at spotting inconspicuous little news items in local papers – a chance to admire their new construction by walking along it, in exchange for a small donation to local charities. Here are a few photos from that May morning.



We joined the new line just south of where it met the existing one, between Hitchin and Letchworth – the fact we were walking against the normal direction of travel, plus an S-bend that seemed to be taking us towards Arlesey rather than Hitchin, was a little confusing at first but we soon got the hang of it.



Fortunately, the organisers had provided plenty of expert guides who knew exactly where we should be going, not to mention the 'live' bits of railway we certainly shouldn't be exploring. The extent of the earthworks was also mighty impressive – nowadays almost completely greened over, with barely a trace visible.

Soon the track turned towards Hitchin and we had our first sight of the actual flyover. We thought it looked reassuringly robust.



The closer we got, the bigger it seemed – quite a surprise for those of us expecting a glorified over-bridge. The approach slope also looked as though it might make some heavily loaded steam excursions huff and puff a little.



Journey's end in sight, with some hi-viz clad Network Rail person ready to show us where to leave the flyover and also, hopefully, shoo away any trains that fancied making a premature trip over the flyover!

Looking at the photos, the weather that day wasn't great for the time of year but it was an interesting outing that was a one-off.



As we left the flyover site, I took a final shot underneath the arches, with a special guest appearance by a modern incarnation of Flying Scotsman in one of the many largely forgotten ECML liveries.

Tony Turner

Exhibitions

Milton Keynes Model Railway Society - Annual Exhibition

Saturday 7th June 2025

The Ridgeway Centre, Featherstone Road, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK12 5TH

OPENING TIMES: 10:00 – 16:30

ADMISSION: Adults £8.00 Children £2.00

Visitors will be able to see a variety of operating layouts ranging from within the club and from visiting clubs and individuals. These will be seen alongside a variety of trade stands, demonstrations, preservation societies and local railway groups displays.

25+ Layouts

The June Presentations (1)

A 12th ColourRail Journey

- Paul Chancellor



© Paul Chancellor

10th June, at Hitchin
(An afternoon presentation starting at 14:00)

Our twelfth Colour-Rail Journey will be the last and in a change for those preceding it, it tells about the life of a trainspotter from those first experiences to the twist and turns that led to a keen interest in railway photography, both archive and current. However, note that it does not mean that Colour-Rail is closing!

Tales of spotting expeditions that went to plan, but also some that did not, would not be believed possible by today's younger generations. These are illustrated with pictures from the 1950s to the present day which will stir memories of your own 'spotting lives.

Paul Chancellor

The June Presentations (2)

The West Somerset Railway – plus more

- Richard Morris



Washford Station on the West Somerset Railway © Richard Morris

24th June, at Digswell

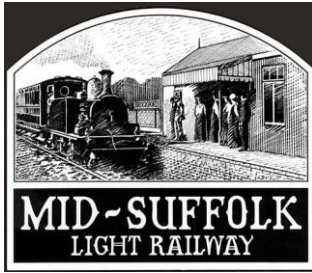
Following the opening of the Bristol and Exeter Railway in 1845, there were soon thoughts about connecting it to the West Somerset and North Devon coastal towns. These discussions didn't get very far until Mr Brunel was engaged.

In 1862 a railway was constructed and opened between Taunton and Watchet. This was extended to Minehead in 1874. "There were minerals in "them therr Zummerzet hills" which were waiting to be mined.

Thankfully the West Somerset Railway has survived and we know it now as one of the longest heritage railways in the country.

The second half of the presentation will be a mix of all sorts of things, modern traction, steam from around the country, a little bit from a European holiday, and from being 'out and about' in 2024.

Richard Morris



Steam Railway Day

8 June

A day to simply enjoy the Middy and its feel of an Edwardian country railway (with the added attractions of a museum, tea room and bar of course).

In 2012 the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway was voted the Heritage Railway Association's Interpretation Award Winners for recreating the unique atmosphere of a rural light railway. The MSLR have continued to try to keep that ethos alive by using only rolling stock and station buildings of the period of the first half of the twentieth century. Unfortunately none of the locomotives, carriages and wagons of the original Middy have survived, but they do have several original buildings which are in use around the site. And it could be argued that the relatively obscure position is very much in geographical keeping with the old Middy as it wended its way through small villages and lightly populated countryside. With steam hauled trains of genuine Victorian carriages you can really experience and enjoy a step back in time.



On duty today (8 June) will be the 1951 built Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST, new to the Middy this season and, they hope, to become a long term resident.

(Reproduced courtesy of the MSLR)



Murder Mystery – M.U.R.D. Radio

28 June



A 1960s radio recording studio, recording a performance of a murder mystery show when one of the cast is killed live on air. But the show must go on ... but who has the most to gain from this heinous crime? Cast, crew or management?

- Have you got the super-sleuth skills to find and solve the clues?
- The detective persona to interrogate the suspects?
- The judge and jury deliberation to identify the killer?

Then NVR Murder Mystery evenings are the perfect way to enjoy an evening with friends, a ride on the train, a delightful bottle of wine and a savoury snack basket (snack basket and bottle of wine served per table of 2). The snack baskets are suitable for both gluten-free and vegan diets.

£120 per table of two.

The evening is fully scripted (apart from the improvisation element depending on what questions are asked): nothing is left to chance. Every look, line, movement and positioning is precise, to give the outcome we desire. The team of writers and actors work tirelessly on their characters, back story and preparation for questions. In fact, it takes more time to prepare for that than it does for these fabulous actors to be script down!

Check in at 5:30pm, Curtain up at 6:00pm

Take your seats on the train at 6:45pm, Train departure at 7:00pm

Arrive back at Wansford at 8:15pm, Conclusion and evening ends at 8:45pm

For further details and bookings: [Murder on the Railway | Nene Valley Railway Ltd](#)

(Reproduced courtesy of the NVR)

Branch Outing – Sunday 10 August 2025

A Visit to the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway AND The Big Bus Show

(These locations are approx 6 miles apart.)

The Big Bus Show is at Stonham Barns, Pettaugh Road, Stonham Aspal, Suffolk, IP14 6AT and commences at 10:00. It is expected to feature over 100 vehicles. Details are available on their website: [Big Bus Show 2025](#)

It is proposed that our group parks there, and uses the included bus service to go to (and from) the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway. Journey time from our area to Stonham Barns is likely to be just over 1½hrs (obviously depending on your starting location).

The MSLR is at Brockford Station, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 5PW. The MSLR opens at 10:30. There are buses from Stonham to Wetheringsett scheduled for 10:40, 11:10, 11:40, 12:40 etc.

The MSLR website is: [Mid-Suffolk Light Railway - Suffolk's only standard gauge heritage railway](#)

At the MSLR it will be a normal Steaming Day and the new track extension will be in service (it opens the previous weekend). Our visit will include access to the restoration shed and the workshop.

There are lunch facilities at both locations.

Branch funds will be used to subsidise this outing. Places booked in advance will be £10 per head for our branch members and plus ones. £14 for non-members, and RCTS members from elsewhere. Late bookings will be “at cost”, which should still be well below published rates.

Bookings can now be made – contact Dave Elsdon.

NOTE: Arrangements detailed are provisional.

Workshop Wanderings – Steve Lacey

This report will be mercifully short, as time at the Nene Valley Railway has been a bit limited, due to other RCTS commitments. My last visit, on 21 May, revealed *Tornado* in light steam preparing for weekend mainline duties. Making *Tornado*'s BR green livery look positively mundane, *Helga* was standing in the yard, now reunited with her trailer car. In the dazzling Swedish Railways bright orange and yellow livery, there is no missing her!

In the shed, replacing *Helga*, is a very rotten (in the sense of rusty) BR CCT, which I believe is No 94796 built in 1961 at Earlestown, lot No 30614 to diagram 816. Sorry to be a bit vague, but when I saw it, I was giving a "Stay Safe on the Railway" talk to 8 lively 7-year-olds! I will check when I next go and will correct any mistake I made. Hopefully, I will also get a photograph of this sad sight. Knowing the work that Karl and his team in the carriage shop

do, it will reappear unrecognisably immaculate. *Blue Circle* (the traction engine on railway wheels) continues to make steady progress in the workshop.

Our attempts to remove *92 Squadron's* spares container from its captivity at the NVR continued. The plan is now to unload all the contents into crates that can be loaded onto a flat-bed lorry, whose owner has been persuaded to transport them to the East Lancs Railway for the cost of his fuel! So many generous people in this world! The hope is that having reduced the weight from 10 tons to 1 ton we will then be able to lift the container free from its prison and follow the spares to the ELR. A good start was made on Wednesday and will be completed next week. Well, that's the plan!

The old charity shop at the NVR has now been demolished (the floor was rotten) and replaced by a 70-foot metal container, which has joined the old 92 shop as the new Charity "Shopping Mall"! The new venture will be officially opened Wednesday 28 May.

Last to report this time, is that *92 Squadron* remains out-of-traffic at the ELR; repairs being assessed and costed, prior to a decision being made on the best course of action.

Steve Lacey

Solution to the June Puzzle (page 8)

1. Scottish Borderer - **46104**. 2. Lulworth Castle - **5002**. 3. Ladas - **60067**.
4. Tavistock - **34011**. 5. Marble Hall - **5907**.

Answer – **45635 Tobago**

6. Roedeer - **61040**. 7. Sherwood Forester – (D) **100**. 8. Partis – (D) **227**.
9. Australia - **45563**. 10. Preston Hall – **5911**.

Answer – **61245 Murray of Elibank**

11. Exeter - **34001**. 12. Lion – (D) **0260**. 13. Sharpshooter – (D) **843**.
14. Dunley Hall - **5953**. 15. Huntingdonshire - **62722**.

Answer – **30856 Lord St Vincent**

Martin Elms

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