

# Railway Ramblings

Issue 188

March 2026

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



Harwich – 1 June 1960 - 65445 13:51 to Parkeston Quay workmen's train

*Photo: Dave Goodyear*

Part of the 31 March 2026 Branch presentation at Digswell

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*Railway Ramblings is published by the committee of the Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch of The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society. Such committee does not endorse any personal opinions expressed in this publication.*

# Branch Programme

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

## During March 2026

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

10<sup>th</sup> March **Timetable Planning – A Dark Art, Plus More**

*Dave Hepper*

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

31<sup>st</sup> March **The Harwich Branch**

*Dave Goodyear*

## During April 2026

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

14<sup>th</sup> April **The Vintage Trains Story – to a Train Operating Company**

*Mike Corbett*

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

28<sup>th</sup> April **Branch AGM** followed by

**My Travels in 2025, Rail 200 and More**

*John Tigg*

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 RCTS 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

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



## Chairman's Platform

As regular attendees at our meetings will know, for quite a few years I have brought boxes of pre-loved books to the meetings and the funds raised by selling them have been a useful contribution to branch funds. Over time the number of boxes I have at home has steadily increased and parts of my home now resemble a storage centre. I am also “not getting any younger” and am struggling to cope with moving the boxes to-and-fro. This cannot continue and your committee have decided that we need to change direction. In this issue of *Railway Ramblings* you will find a statement of what will happen in future.

In April, at the Digswell meeting on 28<sup>th</sup>, we have our branch AGM . Appended to this issue of *Railway Ramblings* you should find the paperwork for the meeting. Please try to find time to read the various reports. If members have any questions to raise at the meeting it would be helpful to know of these in advance in order that we can give a considered response. Please also consider if you would be prepared to join the committee – there are six of us at present. (Only members can stand for the committee).

Our AGM is important to the smooth running of the branch but, unless something exceptional arises, it will only take a short time and we can then enjoy a presentation from John Tigg. I expect to see a good attendance again.

Please take the opportunity to invite a friend or two to join you at meetings. To make it easy we will just ask for a nominal £1 each for anyone accompanying a member to meetings in March. Just sign them in and add your membership number beside their name.

And finally - repeating what I said last month - over the next month we are more than likely going to see some more bad weather – during which we will, as usual, try to run our scheduled programme BUT please keep an eye on your emails if you are intending to attend the meetings as messages will be sent to everyone on the email distribution list if weather conditions are such that it seems imprudent to hold a meeting.

*Steve Lacey*

## New Members

We welcome Dave Cornelius, of Stotfold, as a returning member, and both Tony Humphries, of Kempston, and Stuart Pigg, of Waltham Abbey, as new members, of the RCTS and of the Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City branch..

## 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)



## New Arrival at The Middy

The Mid-Suffolk Light Railway has announced the arrival of the historic former Great Eastern Railway Coach number 14, that has been bought by members of the railway.



Arrival at Brockford, home of the Middy

The coach is the most important addition to the railway that has been made for many years, as it is the only known surviving coach that was used on the original Mid-Suffolk Light Railway. As such, to successfully acquire this historic item has been of great importance to the railway.

The Chairman of the Railway, Ian Meigh said: "This is a great day for the railway and fills an important gap in our collection. We have been in discussion with the previous owner of the coach for some time, he is also a supporter of the railway, and we are all so pleased we have managed to come to an arrangement that secures the coach for the future."

The addition of GER Coach 14, now means that the Middy has four 19<sup>th</sup> Century coaches, two of which are brake coaches. This also now means that the railway can begin a rotation of its coaches to allow a programme of restoration to commence without impacting the public operating days.

The new coach was originally built as order G24 at Stratford works and completed in December 1889 for use by the GER's chief engineer. As originally built, the coach was 27'6" long and was mounted on a long wheel base four-wheel frame. Later, the coach was lengthened by 4'6" and the under frame changed to the six-wheel frame seen today.



GER Saloon No14 with the other three GER coaches at the Middy

No.14 was the first GER carriage to have electric light from new. Built for observation, one end has large windows and guards-type lookouts. The main saloon originally had fixed couches either side and a table.

When the GER and the original Mid Suffolk Light Railway were amalgamated as part of the creation of the London and North Eastern Railway, the coach continued in service with the Engineers Department, first based at Ipswich and later at Norwich.

The coach survived into British Railways service and was last used in Yorkshire before being sold in 1973. GER No 14 was restored by a private owner and has been based at the Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway for many years before its sale and move to the Middy.

On arrival it will now begin the next stage of its life as a star part of the Middy's collection to be experienced and enjoyed by those who come to visit the Mid Suffolk Light Railway museum and it's demonstration line.

## Middy 2026 Season

The first public operating days of the 2026 season is the Easter weekend 5 & 6 April when it is planned that two steam engines *Illingworth* and *May* will be operating.

*(Information and photographs reproduced courtesy of the MSLR)*

# The March Puzzle – Martin Elms

This month it is a Scottish flavour

The first letter of each answer should spell a Scottish location.

1. Name of locomotive 62468 - ? Orchy	
2 Junction near St Boswells	
3. Locomotive depot with code 67C	
4. Station east of Forres	
5. Most northerly station	
6. Locomotive depot with code 63D	
7. Name of locomotive 62440	
8. Station - ? Berwick	
9. Station north of Lybster	
10. Name of locomotive 62472 - Glen ?	
11. Locomotive superintendent of G&SWR 1853 - 1866	
12 .? And Wigtown Joint Railway	
13. Station on Dornoch branch line	
14. Locomotive depot with code 65G	

Best of luck.

My answer to each of the questions and solution to the puzzle are on page 15.

*Martin Elms*



# Diesel Gala Weekend

7 & 8 March 2026



Join the Nene Valley Railway for an action-packed Diesel Gala weekend, featuring an exciting mix of visiting and home-fleet locomotives, intensive services, and a wide range of attractions across the railway.

Taking centre stage will be a Class 66 (66xxx), visiting courtesy of GBRf, with funds raised in support of Great Ormond Street Hospital. The exact locomotive number will be announced in due course.

This appearance is particularly significant, as this will be the first time the attending Class 66 has hauled passenger trains (subject to subject to availability)— making this a truly historic occasion for diesel enthusiasts. Experience the Nene Valley Railway with complete flexibility. A Freedom Travel Day Pass gives you unlimited travel on NVR heritage services for the date of your visit — allowing you to hop on and off, explore the stations, and enjoy everything the Nene Valley has to offer at your own pace.



The following locomotives are planned to appear, subject to operational availability:

- Class 66 (66xxx) – visiting courtesy of GBRf
- Peak Class 45041
- Class 14 No. 14029
- DL83 Sentinel (Saturday)
- Barabel Sentinel (Sunday)
- Pacer 143602 (Saturday)
- Swedish Railcar No. 1212 / 1987 (Sunday)
- HST 125 set with new Midland Mainline livery on 43048

Across the weekend, visitors can enjoy:

- Intensive diesel-hauled services across the railway
- Mk1 coaching stock in use
- Fletton Branch services
- Licensed buffet cars operating on trains
- Ale on Rail available from the buffet cars throughout the weekend

Ticket Prices – Gala Day Passes (Pre-Booked)

Adult / Senior: £25.00

Child (3–15 years): £15.00

Family (2 Adults & 3 Children): £75.00

Carer: £15.00

Toddler (1–2 years): Free

Baby (Under 1 year): Free

Dog: £2.00

Ticket Prices – Gala Day Passes (On the Day)

Adult / Senior: £28.00

Child (3–15 years): £17.00

Family (2 Adults & 3 Children): £85.00

Carer: £17.00

Toddler (1–2 years): Free

Baby (Under 1 year): Free

Dog: £2.00

For further details and to make bookings visit: [Diesel Gala | Nene Valley Railway Ltd](#)

*(Reproduced courtesy of the NVR)*



**EPPING ONGAR  
RAILWAY**

## Mothers Day

### Fizz and Cream Tea

15 March 2026



### The Experience

The experience starts at North Weald station, where there are a choice of departures at 12.30 or 3.00pm. The diesel hauled train will make a return trip from North Weald.. Your heritage train will call at Ongar station where there will be time for a look around the historic listed station building. During the trip you will be issued a parcel containing your delicious cream tea, including a luxury scone, jam and rich dairy cream. You will also be astounded and amazed by our resident magician and his own brand of magic at your table. The journey will last approximately 1 hour.

(A gluten free option is available and can be specified when booking.)

## Don't forget the Fizz!

Included in your parcel is a 250ml bottle of prosecco (or a soft drink option which can be specified when purchasing tickets).

## Price

2 people sat at an exclusive table: £50.  
3 people sat an exclusive table for four: £75.  
4 people sat at an exclusive table: £100.

Availability is limited and advance booking is essential.

There is no vintage bus service for this event.

Car Parking will be available at North Weald station (CM16 6BT).

For further details and to make bookings:

[Mother's Day Cream Tea | Epping Ongar Railway](#)

*(Reproduced courtesy of the EOR).*

## Book Sales at Branch Meetings

### New RCTS Books

These will continue to be available at branch meetings, by ordering from the Branch Chairman. This saves you the cost of postage. Discounts are usually available to RCTS members.

### Pre-Owned Books

Substantial stocks have accumulated over recent years. This stock will be available for purchase until the end of May 2026. After that, most of it will be given to worthy causes or destroyed.

New collections (normally from the estate of former members) can still be received and will be on offer for four branch meetings after receipt, after which any remaining books will be given to worthy causes or destroyed.

These changes will be reviewed in 2027.

## Back Issues of Railway Ramblings

If you want to view back issues of Railway Ramblings, you can find those from recent months on Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City branch pages of the RCTS website [www.RCTS.org.uk](http://www.RCTS.org.uk) These are available to members and non-members. Earlier issues are available by contacting the Editor [John.Dossett@btinternet.com](mailto:John.Dossett@btinternet.com)



# Diesel Gala - Classic Diesel Traction

Between Friday 20 March and Sunday 22 March



After a very successful gala in 2025 the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway are putting on another three-day 'Big Diesel Thrash'.

Currently there are two visitors - with more being signed up - big classic diesel locomotives visiting the railway, joining the resident fleet Class 03 (D2069), Class 47 (47402/D1501 and 47715/D1945), Class 08 (08825/D3993) and Class 37 (37227/D6927) to provide the traction across the event.

The visitors are Class 26 '26043' owned by The Cotswold Mainline Diesel Group and a permanent resident on the GWSR, and a Class 66 owned by GBRf. (Pictures on next page).

It's heavy haulage at its best, and with gradients like the 1 in 68 Chinnor Bank (and there are others as in Bledlow Cutting and the 1 in 100 from Thame Junction into Princes Risborough), this will be a truly intensive, three-day big diesel 'thrash'.

Tickets are available for 1, 2 or 3 days.

For further details, timetables and ticket prices visit the C&PRR website:

[\*\*Diesel Gala - Classic Diesel Traction « Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway\*\*](#)

*(Information and photographs reproduced courtesy of the C&PRR)*



# The March Presentations (1)

## Timetable Planning – A Dark Art, Plus More - Dave Hepper



Train Planners essential requirement  
(tea !).

One of First Great Eastern's little jokes.



10<sup>th</sup> March

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

After a career in Operational Planning, retired Anglia Train Planning Manager Dave Hepper will be talking on how (and how not) to plan a timetable. But not just timetabling, Dave will also explain how traction and traincrew diagrams resource the timetable, and touch on traincrew rosters too.

A complex subject, but by using examples from the Elizabeth line timetable, where Dave retired after 43 years service, hopefully the myth that timetabling is a 'Dark Art' can be dispelled.

# The March Presentations (2)

## The Harwich Branch

- Dave Goodyear



-31<sup>st</sup> March

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

The Harwich branch has a rich and varied history, with its combination of named boat trains to Parkeston Quay and extensive freight services for the Harwich Train Ferries, as well as local passenger and goods services. The line was electrified in 1986 but this unfortunately heralded the start of major changes in traffic flow which resulted in the loss of much of the branch traffic.

This talk will cover the branch history from its opening in 1854 through to the present day, showing the variety of trains through the steam, diesel and electric eras, along with the key branch infrastructure.

## 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, Peterborough, South Essex, and Watford) The details are available in the *Railway Observer* and on the RCTS website.

## Solution to the March Puzzle (page 6)

1. **G**len. 2. **R**avenswood. 3. **A**yr. 4. **N**airn. 5. **T**hurso. 6. **O**ban.  
7. **W**andering Willie. 8. **N**orth. 9. **O**ccumister. 10. **N**evis. 11. **S**tirling.  
12. **P**ortpatrick. 13. **E**mbo. 14. **Y**oker.

Answer - GRANTOWN ON SPEY

*Martin Elms*

## Exhibitions in March

### 21 & 22 March

#### The London Festival of Railway Modelling at Alexandra Palace

The usual large exhibition at the Ally Pally, with over 40 layouts and over 90 trade & society stands, including an RCTS stand staffed by our Branch. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> year for this exhibition at this venue.

For all the details visit the website at:

[The London Festival of Railway Modelling 2026 | 25 Years at Alexandra Palace - World Of Railways](#)

### 28 March

#### Royston & District MRC 2026 Exhibition

With 21 layouts expected, this exhibition will be open on Saturday 28th March from 10:30 until 16:00. The RCTS stand will be provided by our Branch. The club website gives details of all layouts and exhibitors - [Annual Exhibition info](#)

The location (as usual) will be the Village College, in Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, just North of Royston.

The venue is all on one level for ease of access with signed car parking next to the entrance for customers with mobility issues. There is free car parking at the adjacent sports centre.

The preserved Eastern Counties Coach No. RE896 will provide a shuttle bus service between Royston bus & train stations and the exhibition. Refreshments and cakes/biscuits will be available for purchase in the refectory.

Entry price for adults is £5.00; no charge for accompanied children.

# Workshop Wanderings – Steve Lacey

On the Saturday of the RCTS member's weekend 2025 we were bused to Beamish. Carol and I had been there several times before, but there is always new to be seen. On this occasion we were excited to see the newest area to be added, our era .....the nineteen fifties! This had been a construction site when we last visited, but was now complete.

When you arrive at the huge Beamish site, set in a valley, you are given a map and decide your own itinerary. It is impossible to get around the whole museum in one day even by using the free transport around the site.



As you can see our trip was blessed with a fine October day. We rode “264”, a beautifully restored Sheffield tram, to our first stop at the Edwardian street where there is a wonderful recreation of a Co-op, sweet shop, dentists, bakers , garage and restaurant, housing, etc.



From the Edwardian street we walked around the corner to the Fifties area where we found a hair dresser, typical council housing, a pair of police houses, a cinema showing films of the period, village hall and my personal favourite, the toy shop. I was immediately transported back to being seven years old constantly saying " I had one of those" pointing at games, Bayco and Dinky toys.



It was then on to lunch in the miners area, by "Old Bill" bus.



Here there is a recreation of a pit village with mine, washery, school, chapel, miners cottages and, the object of our visit, the coal-fired fish and chip shop, frying in beef dripping.....never mind the coronary arteries for one meal!



Also on the extensive Beamish site there is a steam fair, railway station and demonstration track, farm house and Pockerley Old Hall plus much else.

Sunday morning was devoted to the Officers conference, which in future years will be moved away from the member's weekend. Following the meeting, we joined the coach again to visit the National Railway Museum collection at Shildon. Many of you will have been here before so I will concentrate on the new hall which lies separately from the original building. This has meant that some of their precious exhibits can at last be accommodated under cover. There is one important fact which you should bear in mind when visiting the new building. Despite being fully accessible, it has no toilet, so leave plenty of time to scuttle back to the main building!



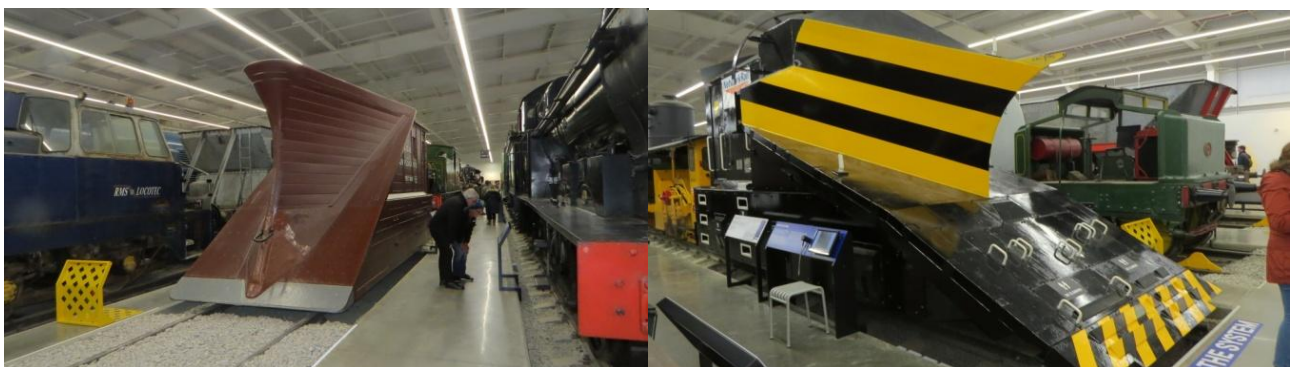
View from the new hall back to the old hall.

The new hall contains many exhibits locos and rolling stock, but mainly freight vehicles. Who would have thought the humble 16-ton mineral wagon would be a museum piece! Having said that, had Dai Woodhams not have got a contact to cut them up, we would not have half the preserved locos (including *92 Squadron*) that exist today. For those who do not know the story, he had a yard full of locos and wagons at Barry. As the wagons were easier and cheaper to cut up for scrap, he concentrated on getting his money back by cutting the wagons first. By the time he was ready to cut the locos, these mad preservationists were happy to buy the locos from him, for more than their scrap value and he didn't even have to cut them up!

Some of the displays in the new hall –



There are many contrasting types of freight vehicle both ancient and modern.



Two types of tank! Ok, I know it's a Bren carrier!



I don't ever remember seeing such a shiny Class 31!



But I suppose my favourite view at Shildon has to be the classic.

*Steve Lacey*

# Meetings at Digswell

As those who attended the February 24 meeting at Digswell already know, work on rebuilding the Digswell Village Church Hall has now started. This work will continue throughout the year.

The church itself will soon be adapted, with the pews removed and replaced with the chairs from the hall to enable us (and other hall users) to continue our meetings there.

Temporary facilities (toilets & kitchen, etc) will be built and proper access paths installed. The main thing we will lose will be the car park as it is required by the builders. However street parking is not a problem for the hours of the day that we meet.

No doubt things will be different (possibly each time we meet) but the church officers and the builders will ensure that conditions are “safe”.

For anyone interested in the detail of what is being built the most authoritative source should be the WHBC website. On their “Planning Applications” section look for application 6/2025/0777/FULL and chose “documents”.

*John Dossett*

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# Railway Ramblings

AGM Supplement

March 2026

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## Branch 2026 AGM Notice and Agenda

The RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch 2026 AGM will be held prior to the Branch meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026 starting at 14:00. The venue will be Digswell Village Church Hall, Warren Way, Digswell, Welwyn AL6 0DH

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 3 MINUTES OF 2025 AGM
- 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES
- 5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- 6 SECRETARY'S REPORT
- 7 TREASURERS REPORT & SUMMARY
- 8 ANY QUESTIONS FROM THE OFFICERS REPORTS
- 9 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2026-27  
(All current members are prepared to stand for another year)
- 10 RAILWAY RAMBLINGS,  
Review and Comments
- 11 THE FUTURE OF THE BRANCH
- 12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dave Elsdon  
Branch Secretary

# Minutes of the Hitchin & WGC Branch 2025 AGM

Held in Digswell, Welwyn on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 starting at 14:00.

Present: Steve Lacey (Chairman), Paul Holloway (Treasurer), John Dossett, Dave Elsdon (Secretary) plus 19 members

## 1. Introduction

Chairman Steve Lacey introduced the meeting and explained the forthcoming procedures and formalities. He thanked everyone for their attendance and the committee for their efforts in the past year, hopefully this will continue during the next year.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

None

## 3. Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The minutes had been circulated to the membership. These were agreed unanimously. (Proposed Tony Stratford, Seconded John Curry).

## 4. Matters arising from those Minutes

None

## Officer's 2024-25 Reports

The Officers Reports all had been previously circulated.

### 5. Chairman's Report

Agreed (Proposed John Atkinson, Seconded Tony Stratford).

### 6. Secretary's Report

Agreed (Proposed John Atkinson, Seconded Derrick Chappel).

### 7. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer explained a few points in the accounts, particularly concerning the move to our new venue in Hitchin and the benefit from having two afternoon meetings per month.

Agreed (Proposed Geoge Howe, Seconded, John Dossett).

## 8. Matters Arising from the Officers Reports

None.

## 9. Election of Committee for 2025-26

Two members offered to join the committee, (Hugh Driscoll & Tony Stratford). They were welcomed and thanked by the Chairman.

All current Officers, existing committee and the new members were elected (Proposed, George Howe, Seconded John Atkinson).

## 10. Railway Ramblings; Review & Comments

A short summary about the RR was given by the editor John Dossett. There was only praise for John's efforts as this has now become a valued & well respected part of our Branch.

## 11. The Future of the Branch

We are still attending exhibitions, and currently have 4 booked in the coming months. We are also looking for suggestions for our 2025 August outing, we are needing your help with this.

## 12. Any Other Business

A question was raised regarding the Society's merger with the SLS. The Chairman explained the current situation about this.

Meeting closed at 14:25.

The 2026 AGM will be on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026 in Hitchin

# Officers' Reports for the 2026 Branch AGM

## Chairman's Report 2025-26

Once again I must first thank my fellow committee members without whom the branch could not function. I particularly wish to thank Hugh Driscoll and Tony Stratford, who joined the committee last year.

As you all know increasing age and space constraints at home have made storage of large numbers of second-hand books an issue for me. The committee have agreed that we will gradually reduce the number of books taken in, cull those not selling and sell at low prices to reduce our stocks. The book sales help to keep our branch finances healthy, for example selling 160 books at The East Beds Model Railway Show (Biggleswade) was a great help! To mimic the National Rail service "See it, buy it, fund us"!

We also play a large part in supporting the main RCTS club with Dave Elsdon taking the minutes of the Board of Trustees and John Dossett and myself serving on the National Strategy Committee. I am also National Exhibitions Officer, yes, holding more book stocks!

After Covid, when the numbers attending our meetings initially reduced, thanks to Dave's excellent programme of talks, we have seen a steady increase in our numbers.

I hope that the improvement works at our Welwyn venue will not put you off. We have been promised that our meetings will not be badly affected. Keep up to date with progress by reading the information in our excellent newsletter, produced monthly by John Dossett.. Any last minute programme changes will be sent by email to anyone on the newsletter circulation list (please keep us aware of any changes, or additions to the list).

I also wish to thank John (again!) for organising the excellent summer outing to the Middy last year. Members of the committee and their wives also helped provide the excellent refreshments at our Christmas meetings.

Finally I wish to thank you all for coming and supporting the meeting programme in 2025/26 and look forward to seeing you all over the next year and into the club's Centenary year in 2028.

Steve Lacey  
RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch Chairman

## Secretary's Report 2025-26

I must start by thanking the other committee members for all their time and effort they have put into keeping the Branch running in such a successful way. This year our membership has seen an average increase at meetings and our companionship has also improved. I believe this is down to be our more compact venues and all sharing the same space over the break and around the sales table. Individually thank you Steve for all his help with organising all the meeting equipment and books plus their storage and transport whenever we need it, and for the amount of time you give to the Society as their Exhibition Officer. Paul for his accounting skills and keeping the Branch on a steady course financially, I have never known such superb accounting records in all my time with the Society, and John who keeps us so well informed about meetings, events and happenings in our area by producing the "Railway Ramblings" every month. All are doing a great job along with our two new committee members, who volunteered at our last AGM, Tony Stratford and Hugh Driscoll. In addition, I must thank Vic Wood and his wife Janet for helping with the door registration and the refreshments at Hitchin, Janet has now retired from this post, and to David Holdstock for being "tea boy" in Digswell, thank you David for also now taking on this roll in Hitchin.

Our outing this year was to the Mid Suffolk Light Railway and an adjacently linked bus rally, again fortunately in good weather and well attended, but as always at these events the more the merrier.

I have tried to be much more selective where I source our speakers from, this year I hope to have found speakers able to give you wider and different range of topics and subjects.

Finally, I am always looking for assistance when trying to find speakers, so if you have any contacts who could help, I will be grateful to hear from you.

Thank you all for your support.

Dave Elsdon  
Branch Secretary

## Treasurer's Report 2025-26 & Financial Summary for the Year to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025

Wow what a year we had with a record surplus achieved.

Attached to this report is the Income and Expenditure report for the year in two formats – the first shows comparison with last year and the second splits the year being reported by location.

The surplus has been made for four reasons:

- 1) Savings on hall hire costs following the move to St Marks Church for the Hitchin meetings and a full year of lower costs for the Welwyn meetings.
- 2) Increased attendances – the move to afternoon meetings in Hitchin has proved a success.
- 3) Many speakers are not charging us for their attendance which is very much appreciated.
- 4) An increase in sales of books both at our meetings and outside sales. The latter include books that have been donated but have been sold prior to bringing them to one of our meetings

The April meeting at Digswell, when the talk was about Sir Nigel Gresley, gave us a surplus of more than £200 on its own.

The door donation money per meeting currently is £3.00 for members and £5.00 for visitors and the committee do not foresee any increase in the current financial year.

In the closing balances the funds shown as held by the Society are there as we, as a branch, are not allowed under Society rules to keep any funds over £2,500 with the balance being transferred to the Society and held by them in a ring-fenced account. This means they cannot use it and it is available as and when we need to call some down. The balance held by the Society has been increased to reflect the surplus in the year so that we do not exceed the £2,500 limit locally.

Paul Holloway  
RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch Treasurer

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2025**

	Year to 31/10/2025	Year to 31/10/2024
<b>INCOME</b>		
Sales and Donations	1,393.50	442.76
Exhibitions	592.50	408.87
Annual outing	112.00	313.00
Door monies/Raffle	1,771.50	1,492.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,869.50</b>	<b>2,656.88</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Room Hire	871.50	1,056.00
Speakers Fees/Expenses - live	275.35	269.00
Exhibition expenses - stand fees etc	75.00	45.78
Branch administration	94.94	35.65
Programme printing	37.50	36.00
Xmas gifts, food etc	228.07	40.00
Refreshments	105.91	79.97
Annual outing	165.00	313.00
Bank/Credit card charges	77.00	81.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,930.27</b>	<b>1,956.99</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>1,939.23</b>	<b>699.89</b>
<b>BRANCH BALANCE</b>		
As at 31 October 2024		
Held by Branch	1,451.55	1,933.25
Held by Society	4,000.00	2,818.41
	<b>5,451.55</b>	<b>4,751.66</b>
As at 31 October 2025		
Held by Branch	1,390.78	1,451.55
Held by Society	6,000.00	4,000.00
	<b>7,390.78</b>	<b>5,451.55</b>
Movement in year	<b>1,939.23</b>	<b>699.89</b>

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT  
YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2025**

	Hitchin	Welwyn GC	Exhibitions & Outings
<b>INCOME</b>			
Sales and Donations	445.50	513.00	435.00
Exhibitions	-	-	592.50
Annual outing	-	-	112.00
Door monies/Raffle	686.00	1,085.50	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,131.50</b>	<b>1,598.50</b>	<b>1,139.50</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Room Hire	541.50	330.00	-
Speakers Fees/Expenses	108.80	166.55	-
Exhibition expenses - stand fees	-	-	75.00
Branch administration	41.23	32.91	20.80
Programme printing	18.75	18.75	-
Refreshments	11.95	93.96	-
Xmas gifts, food etc	94.03	134.04	-
Annual outing	-	-	165.00
Bank/Credit card charges	37.40	37.51	2.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>853.66</b>	<b>813.72</b>	<b>262.89</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>277.84</b>	<b>784.78</b>	<b>876.61</b>
<b>SPLIT EXHIBITIONS &amp; OUTINGS 50/50</b>	438.31	438.30	- <b>876.61</b>
<b>REVISED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>716.15</b>	<b>1,223.08</b>	-

- END OF 2026 AGM PAPERS -