Railway Ramblings

Issue 194 September 2026

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



34028 *Eddystone* passing Welwyn North on 11 July 2026, en-route Kings Cross to York. (Assisted by 47802 on the rear).

Photo: Tom Gladwin

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 September 2026

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

8th September **A Wee Look Around Scotland**

Robin Mathams

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

29th September **My Railway Meanderings**

Stephen Gay

During October 2026

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

13th October **A1 Locomotive Trust – The P2 Build Update**

Liz Gibson

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

27th October **Timetable Planning Oversimplified**

Matthew Alden- Farrow

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

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.



Chairman's Platform

I am sad to report that, during August, I learnt of the passing of David Percival. Over many years David regularly featured as a guest speaker in our branch programme and he was an occasional visitor to our meetings. Many will also know of David as a railway photographer and the author of a significant number of railway books. Our sympathies go to his family and close friends.

Regular branch meetings start again this month and I am looking forward to them. Details of the September presentations feature in this issue of *Railway Ramblings.* I trust that you have noted them on your calendar and that we will have well attended meetings.

For those who go to the Digswell meetings you (and I) will be relieved to know that the bulk of the building work has now been completed and fitting-out is, allegedly, ahead of schedule. I understand that we can confidently look forward to meeting in the new hall soon. On page 23 you will find an update, including photos taken on 21 August.

I must also remind you of the commemorative lunch, in Hitchin on 3 November, to celebrate 25 years since we started meeting in that town. As this will be significantly subsidised from branch funds the number of places available has to have a limit. Our Treasurer, Paul Holloway, has started a list of participants and if you would like to be there please book your place without too much delay. November is not that far away! I should stress that this is open to all members, not just those who usually meet at Hitchin. There is a separate notice about this on page 5 .

On a more general note, we still welcome feedback, especially about our meetings. Our Secretary, Dave Elsdon, has started to put the 2027 programme together and it would be good to know what you like (or dislike). We all know that overall we have a very broad range of railway interests and we try to reflect that in what we do. It would be good to have feedback on what you would like (or not like) to see in future programmes, especially from those who never, or rarely, come to meetings. What can we do better?. Send me a message – **gricersteve@hotmail.com**

Finally, it has been good to see some new contributors to this newsletter over recent months. It would be even better to see more – and I know our Editor would be delighted to hear from you. About the only essential requirement is that contributions are railway related. Apart from our interest in the "real railway" many of us also do railway modelling, so why not share those experiences as well?

Try to keep well, and look after yourselves in this highly variable weather and I look forward to seeing many of you soon.

Steve Lacey

New Member

We welcome Mick Boyd, of Luton, as a new member of the RCTS and the Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City branch.

David Percival

A Personal Recollection

It is with sadness that I heard of the death of David Percival at the beginning of August.

David was a founder member of the Stevenage Locomotive Society and a well-known railway author and photographer. He also gave a number of railway talks, you may remember him talking to Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City RCTS branch on 11 March 2025, when he showed a selection from his cine collection of steam in the 1960's.

For many years David had lived overlooking Knebworth station and commuted daily to Kings Cross from there. Latterly he lived in New Close, Knebworth.

David often related how, when working for Ian Allan on the spotters' books, he realised he could be paid for photographs included in the books. He promptly asked advice on a good camera, which he duly ordered from Boots and set about photographing any locomotives he came across. You will find him credited for many of the photos in your old ABC combined volumes. He moved on from Ian Allen, working for WH Smith which enabled him to travel around the country, at their expense, taking photo's as he worked!

He was an acknowledged expert on all things LNER and wrote "Kings Cross Lineside 1958-1984" in 1984 and, in association with two others, "What's on the Lizzie?" in 2010. This later soft-back, lists the locomotive hauling "The Elizabethan" non-stop Kings Cross Edinburgh Waverley summer service on every occasion from 1953-1961. Strangely he has no photographic credits in the Lizzie book!

David will be greatly missed by all who knew him as a kind chap, always ready to help with any query about his beloved LNER.

Steve Lacey

Commemorative Lunch – Book Now

Hitchin, 3 November 2026

In November this year our branch marks 25 years of meetings at Hitchin. To mark this milestone your committee have arranged a commemorative lunch -This event is open to all RCTS members.

The venue, familiar to a number of you, will be “The Orange Tree”, 100 Stevenage Rd, Hitchin SG4 9DR.



(Note: There is plenty of car parking space, both in front of and behind the building. Should you choose to travel by public transport, the 101 Stevenage-Luton Airport bus stops about 200m (3 mins) away from The Orange Tree.)

This lunch, subsidised from branch funds, is booked for Tuesday 3 November, starting at 12:30, lunch to be served from 13:00.

For a nominal charge of £10 (excluding drinks) you can enjoy a main course plus dessert and tea/coffee. There is a wide selection available from their new menu - choices will need to be made nearer the time.

Numbers will be limited so you will need to book your place and make your £10 payment in advance.

Names, with membership number, to our Treasurer, Paul Holloway, please.. Places are being allocated on a “first come, first served” basis (with a limit on numbers of 50).

Payment should be made in cash to Paul at either of our September meetings, by cheque at the meetings payable to RCTS Hitchin Branch, or bank transfer to sort code 40-24-20 account no. 81518003 account name RCTS Hitchin Branch. Once the 50 limit has been reached bookings will close.

Please note that this is an RCTS members-only event.

John Dossett

Branch History – Dave Elsdon

Our branch was formed in 2001 after David Cole had carried out extensive research through the Society membership lists looking at the postcodes for the number of members in the areas surrounding Hitchin. He found that there were more than enough members living in Hitchin, Stevenage, Bedford and Hertford - our new area would have boundaries with four other existing branches, Cambridge, Peterborough, Milton Keynes and Watford. Having contacted all members within the proposed new catchment area, David and the Society national management committee agreed to start up a Branch in Hitchin.

The first meeting was held on 14 November 2001 with 35 members attending, including the then Society President John Day and the Liaison Officer Eric Palmer who had assisted David Cole throughout the start-up process. Our speaker on this occasion was Bob Ballard, a Society Officer and Milton Keynes Branch member. His talk was “Reflections of the 1960’s”.

Initially, David Cole formed a committee with himself as Chairman, Stuart Little, Secretary and Stuart Saunders Treasurer along with Adrian Scrutton and Dave Elsdon. The meetings were held in the Hitchin Christian Centre until 2013 when the building was sold and everyone had to move on elsewhere. A new venue was found in The Walsworth Road Methodist Church. This was a very convenient location as it was half way between the town centre and the railway station, unfortunately we had to move on again after a couple of years, as their long-standing meeting groups needed more space and we had been the last ones in. This was in 2015 and was when we moved to The Tilehouse Street Baptist Church Hall, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin. We moved to our current premises in St Marks Church Hall, Lancaster Avenue, Hitchin at the start of 2025.

David Cole who instigated the Branch in 2002, did all the initial hard work in ensuring everything was operating smoothly, then withdrew as Chairman after six months, handing over to Cyril Crawley. David remained on the Branch committee for many years. The Branch then continued with a long period of stability. Our finances improved when we began to get involved in attending local model railway exhibitions, primarily in St. Albans, Letchworth and Royston selling books, slides and photographs, We were approached by the Society asking if we could exhibit on their behalf at exhibitions at Alexandra Palace and at The East of England Showground in Peterborough. We also represented the Society for five years at The Warley Model Railway event at the NEC in Birmingham, until the major exhibitions became too expensive to finance for the return achieved.

Over the years there have been very few changes within the positions of the Branch Officers. Sadly, Branch Secretary Stuart Little died unexpectedly in 2011 his post being taken on by Norman Hill until Dave Elsdon took on this role in 2013. In 2009 long standing committee member Adrian Scrutton started producing *The Hitchin Flyer*, a monthly newssheet publicising meetings - this proved very popular with members.

Chairman Cyril Crawley was extremely enthusiastic about the Branch and Society, and in 2014 he did all the preparation work for the Branch to start holding afternoon meetings in Ludwick Way Methodist Church in Welwyn Garden City. These proved to be well attended as public transport was much more available than for the evening meetings. Adrian started an additional newssheet entitled *Garden City Express* to complement *The Hitchin Flyer* for

the new venue. It was at the 2014 AGM Cyril decided to stand down as Chairman due to his poor health, and our present Chairman Steve Lacey took office.

During 2015 our Branch suffered a double loss when Treasurer Stuart Saunders passed away on 9 September and almost immediately afterwards, following a long illness, former Chairman Cyril Crawley also died on 30 October. Roger Moulden volunteered to become Branch Treasurer. Our final Branch Officer change was in 2017 when current Treasurer Paul Holloway took control of the finances. After many years of producing the newssheets Adrian Scrutton handed on this task to John Dossett in April 2019. The newssheets were then relaunched as a more substantial newsletter *Railway Ramblings* - which you are reading now.

Between both venues RCTS Hitchin & Welwyn Garden City Branch now hold twenty-two meetings a year, excepting August when we usually have a Branch outing to somewhere of railway interest, and we also attend a number of local exhibitions.

The current committee consists of Steve Lacey (Chairman), Paul Holloway (Treasurer), Dave Elsdon (Secretary), John Dossett (Newsletter & Website), Hugh Driscoll, Tony Stratford and Dave Cornelius.

Dave Elsdon, September 2026

Mangapps Railway and Museum – Visit Report



A group from the branch visited Mangapps on 16 August 2026. This went very well – after several weeks of exceptionally hot weather this day was fortunately much more tolerable. The group were well looked after by the owner John Jolly and a number of other volunteers on-site that day. For whatever reason the number of other viisitors to the museum that day seemed very low and consequently getting around the site was easy.

We had previously had a branch meeting presentation from John Jolly and had been looking forward to seeing his newer acquistions. We were not disappointed. If anything the most dramatic change since our visit in 2018 has been the erection of a number of new large buildings to house many of the locomotives and quite a bit of rolling stock. This must make many heritage lines envious – especially as stock

under restoration and those already restored can now be protected from the elements and any unwelcome “visitors”. As John Jolly tells everyone, all this has been made possible by the sale of some land for housebuilding. The new housing estate and the roads within it have all been given names with railway connections! How appropriate.

Even though investing heavily in providing shelter for his extensive collection there is also a marked increase in the number of locos and the amount of rolling stock.



The volume of railway paraphernalia is simply vast - in just a few hours it is impossible to do more than select a few topics to look at in detail.

We heard many tales of how items had been acquired and then conveyed to Mangapps. A couple of exceptional ones were the purchase of the signal box (now appropriately positioned for the station trackwork) and the Canadian Pacific caboose (purchased in the USA with no thought about how to get it to Mangapps). John Jolly certainly buys on impulse!

At a personal level I was sorry that a few of you who had intended to be there were, at the last minute, prevented from attending for a variety of personal reasons.

For readers, especially those unable to make the trip, you might want to visit the Mangapps website: **Mangapps Railway Museum Home Page**

Being a Sunday visit, road traffic was fairly light and the journey time was 1½ hours in each direction.

John Dossett

Return of the Racehorse – Colin Conway



On Friday 31 July the Deltic Preservation Society returned D9015 *Tulyar* to passenger service after a gap of 29 years & 3 months, looking like a brand new loco. Having last worked a passenger train at the Midland Railway Centre in April 1997 the overhaul, which was not planned to last so long, by volunteers & with 2 other locos to keep running, was completed earlier this year at the DPS Barrow Hill depot.

After testing the loco was transferred by road to the GCR at Loughborough for light engine & loaded mileage accumulation.



Friday 31 July was for DP Society members & the locomotive worked 6 trouble-free return journeys to Leicester North. Prior to the first departure *Tulyar* moved down from the loco shed to the station, breaking through a commemorative banner at north end of platform as shown in the following photos.







The final picture is *Tulyar* awaiting departure from south end of Loughborough Central Station with the 17.00 to Leicester North - with various Mk1 & DMU stock on view.

Colin Conway

Autumn Diesel Gala

25, 26, 27 September 2026

The diesel fleet come to the fore for three Autumn days of fantastic action over the EOR challenging gradients.









As usual, EOR will be running a 3-train intensive service throughout the weekend with evening Real Ale trains on Saturday - these are included in your great value fare.

You'll be able to see EOR blue locomotives hauling their rake of blue and grey coaching stock, travel on shuttle trains into Epping Forest and hear the locomotives working hard over the challenging gradients!

Vintage London buses will provide connections to Epping Underground station (Central Line, zone 6) with all EOR train services, with some bus services also operating to Shenfield station (for Greater Anglia and Elizabeth Line services)

For details and bookings visit:

Autumn Diesel Gala | Epping Ongar Railway

(Details reproduced courtesy of the EOR)

The Middy and RAF Mendlesham



During World War II, RAF Mendlesham (Station 156) played a critical role in the fight against Nazi Germany. As a base for the 34th Bomb Group of the United States Army Air Forces, it became a launch site for heavy bombers that conducted missions deep into enemy territory.

But keeping an airbase running was no simple task. Every mission needed fuel, bombs, spare parts, and supplies—all of which needed to be transported efficiently. This is where an unexpected local railway, the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway (MSLR) — or “The Middy” — became a key part of Mendlesham’s war effort.

The Mid-Suffolk Light Railway, originally built for rural farming communities, found itself playing a much bigger role when war came. Although small and unassuming, it became a vital transport link, delivering fuel, bombs, and essential supplies to RAF Mendlesham from larger railway hubs.

Trains carried high-octane aviation fuel, ammunition, and equipment to Brockford station, just a mile from the airfield, where military lorries completed the final stretch. The railway's efficiency and effectiveness kept the airbase fully stocked and its aircraft ready for action.

During busy operational periods, extra trains ran overnight to ensure that planes were armed and fuelled, ready for the next morning's missions.

The railway wasn't just about supplies—it also carried people. With nearly 3,000 American personnel stationed at Mendlesham, many used the Middy's small trains to travel to nearby towns or connect to the wider rail network.

Some took short trips to Ipswich or Stowmarket for a brief break from base life. Others travelled further to London on leave, experiencing England's capital before returning to their wartime duties.

For many American airmen, their first experience of England was through the window of a steam train on the Middy on the way to their new home at RAF Mendlesham.

Between May 1944 and April 1945, the 34th Bomb Group flew 170 missions, targeting German military infrastructure, transportation networks, and industrial sites. Their operations played a crucial role in weakening enemy forces and supporting major Allied campaigns—including the D-Day landings.

The proximity of the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway to the airfield allowed Mendlesham to maintain a constant state of readiness. Every mission depended on prompt deliveries of fuel, bombs, and equipment, and the railway ensured these arrived when needed.

However, war brought moments of tragedy as well as success. On 20 January 1945, a B-17 Flying Fortress named "Gallopin' Ghost" crashed near the railway line after sustaining battle damage over Germany. Two crew members lost their lives, and the wreckage temporarily blocked the railway—a stark reminder of the dangers faced by those who served.

It is truly fitting that the Mendlesham Airfield Association (MAA) and 34th Bomb Group Exhibition is now housed within the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum, reuniting two wartime allies whose cooperation was essential during World War II. Just as the Middy once delivered vital supplies to keep the airfield operational, it now provides the perfect setting to honour and preserve their intertwined history.

Today, at Brockford Station, where trains once transported munitions, fuel, and personnel to support the war effort, the MAA Exhibition ensures that the airmen who served, the infrastructure that sustained them, and the local community that welcomed them are all remembered.

(Information primarily from the Mendlesham Airfield Association website)

Newsletter Distribution

This e-newsletter, *Railway Ramblings*, is distributed by the Editor (John Dossett). 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. John's email address is **John.Dossett@btinternet.com**

The September Puzzle – Martin Elms

A Great Western theme this month.

The first letter of each answer should spell a Great Western location.

1. Station near Liskeard	
2. Name of locomotive 6984	
3. Locomotive depot with code 81D	
4. Joint Railway with LSWR, ? and Church Hope	
5. Junction for Hemyock	
6. Name of locomotive 1023 *County of* ?	
7. Locomotive depot with code 86B	
8. Station near Bloxham	
9. GWR Locomotive Superintendent 1864 – 1896	
10. Name of locomotive 7800 *Torquay* ?	
11. Locomotive depot with code 83G	
12. Tunnel near Kemble	
13. ? Vale Railway	
14. Water troughs south of Exeter	
15. Name of locomotive 6801 ? *Grange*	
16. Station on branch line west of Patney	

Best of luck.

My answer to each of the questions and solution to the puzzle are on page 26.

Martin Elms

The September Presentations (1)

A WEE LOOK AROUND SCOTLAND



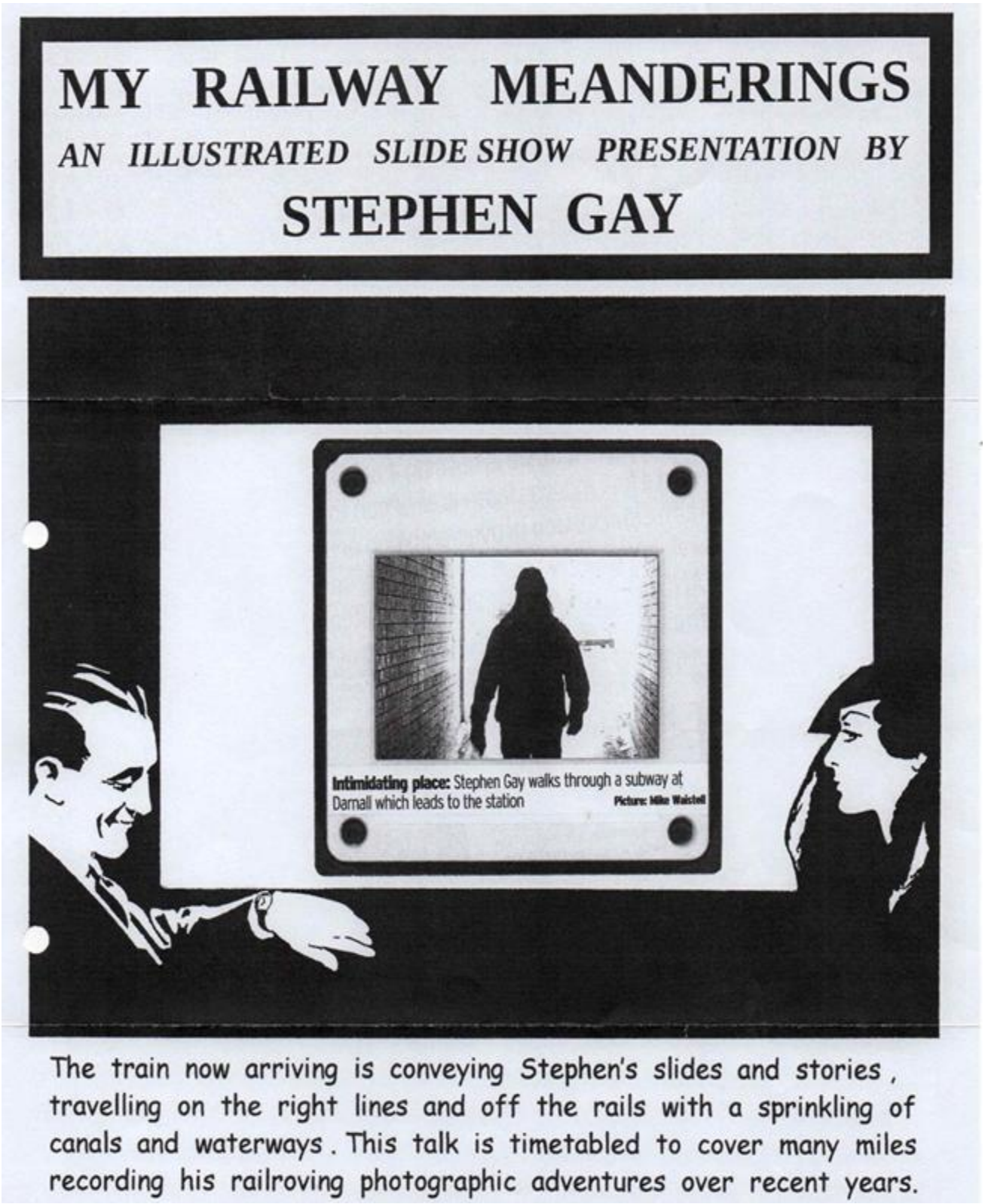
A scan of a 35mm negative on Ilford FP4 film of a Gresley Class V2 No. 60818 of Dundee Tay Bridge shed (62B) approaching Saughton Junction on the western outskirts of Edinburgh with a train of vans bound for the north via the Forth Bridge in 1964. Saughton Junction is where the lines to Fife and Glasgow part company. 60818 was withdrawn in August 1966.

Robin Mathams, a keen amateur photographer and railway enthusiast, has taken railway photographs since the 1960s and has given many presentations to railway societies over the past 40 years. This presentation is a selection of photographs from his Scottish collection from the 1960s to the present day including a close look at Edinburgh. There are also some photos of the Scottish Landscape

He moved from his native Edinburgh to the Midlands in 1974, but still makes trips to Scotland at least once a year. He attended the Royal High School which was within earshot of Waverley Station. Now living near Stafford, he is a member of the LNWR Society, the Sutton Coldfield Railway Society, and is a volunteer with Amerton Railway.

8th September
At Hitchin (14:00 – 16:30, doors open from 13:30)

The September Presentations (2)



29th September
At Digswell, Welwyn (14:00 – 16:30, doors open from 13:30)

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** These are available to members and non-members. Earlier issues are available by contacting the Editor **John.Dossett@btinternet.com**

How It All Began, Part 5 - Derek Boothby

Off to Work I Go

Eventually the time came for me to venture into the world of working for a living. This brought me south to St Albans where I settled into a bedsit a short distance from work and the station. I had been subscribing to The Railway Magazine for a number of years and as usual I perused the July 1965 issue as soon as it arrived. In it I found an interesting looking advertisement. The Watford Railway Enthusiasts Club had organized a trip by rail and coach to eight Eastern Region Depots. I immediately wrote to the contact address to reserve a place.

And so on Sunday 25 July 1965 (that's almost 61 years ago to the day as I draft out this article) I went to St Albans station and caught a train to Luton where I joined the rest of the party, who had travelled from St Pancras, in a couple of reserved compartments. At Chesterfield we alighted and transferred to a small coach for the tour round the sheds. Apart from myself and a slightly older gent sporting a Southern Region driver's cap, and who never disclosed where or what he drove, all the other members of the party were in their mid-teens. There were probably a dozen or so of us. Whereas everyone else dashed around with their pencils and paper collecting engine numbers I wandered around more sedately taking photographs. Because of this somewhat eccentric behaviour I was considered a little odd, if not completely bonkers.



East Midlands Shed Tour - Langwith Junction







East Midlands Shed Tour - Doncaster





East Midlands Shed Tour - Canklow

Sometime around the mid nineteen sixties I began to realize that railway modernisation would lead to the disappearance of many characteristic features of the railway environment, and that these ought to be recorded. From this time almost all my photographs are of 'railway accessories'. I made a decision to use black and white film because enlarged prints can be made from these. Much easier to do today with digital images. I managed to obtain a couple of lineside passes but mostly used station platforms or public rights of way, and made use of any opportunity to travel to explore anything interesting on route. About this time I joined The Historical Model Railway Society many of whose members indulge in collection of information. The London Area Group organised twice yearly outings to places of interest which I attended.

Having procrastinated over the years I decided 6 months or so ago to start cataloguing my collection of photographs. It was the discovery of the photographs taken in my schooldays that set these reminiscences in motion.

Derek Boothby

Brake Van Rides

20 September 2026



There's something extra special on Sunday 20 September at the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway - Sentinel Engine 'Joyce' will be offering Brake Van Rides at Princes Risborough between service trains, running between 10:30 and 15:30.

The Brake Van rides will take place between Platform 4 at Princes Risborough to the section signal on the independent line, offering a chance to travel behind a unique locomotive, on track that is not often travelled in passenger service.

Even better, you don't have to pre-book - just turn up and wait on the day.

C&PRR don't charge for these, but suggest a cash or card donation of between £2- £5 for travelling.

There's no restrictions on the age of travellers, but there will be a limit of 10 people on each trip.

Please note that if you have a brake van ride you will need to catch a later train back to Chinnor.

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

Mail by Rail

12 September 2026



Experience Britain’s postal railways in action

For over 100 years, Britain’s postal trains worked through the night, collecting and delivering mail across the country at speed. Now at the Nene Valley Railway you can step into history and see how it worked.

Join NVR for Mail by Rail and ride aboard their authentic Travelling Post Office train, watch dramatic mailbag exchanges from the lineside, and try your hand at sorting letters on the move — just like real postal workers once did.

Board the Travelling Post Office train at Wansford Station and travel along the line as the onboard team demonstrate how the railway handled mail.

During each session you will:

- Step off the train to watch live mailbag exchanges
- Re-board and continue the journey
- Take part in hands-on sorting activities while the train is moving

Each session includes three live mailbag exchanges.

Morning (dep 10:50) and afternoon (dep 13:05) sessions available..

Due to the historic nature of the coaches and the mailbag exchange site, this event is not wheelchair accessible and NVR apologise for any inconvenience.

- There is very limited seating in the TPO carriages, so the experience is not suitable for visitors unable to stand for the duration of the journey
- Buggies cannot be taken on board, but they may be left with the Station Master during your trip
- Passengers will need to step on and off the train during the experience



Make a Full Day of It

Continue the story of Britain's postal railways in the evening with our Night Mail Pie & Postal Express — a dining train combining heritage travel with a traditional meal.

Two unique railway experiences in one memorable day. (This is not included with the Mail by Rail ticket and must be booked separately).

For further details and to make bookings visit:

Mail by Rail | Nene Valley Railway Ltd

(Reproduced courtesy of the NVR)

Meetings at Digswell – Update



The work to rebuild the Digswell Village Church Hall is progresing well and it seems that we are likely to be in the new hall for the October meeting. For September we will again be in the temporary accommodation in what is the main body of the church, which is now covered in scaffolding and protected from the elements. This picture shows what will be the new main entrance to the hall, with level access.



Remodelling and fitting out the hall is progressing. This second picture shows along the side of the hall with the considerably extended kitchen area. Doors and windows are going in soon.

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

If you have any concerns about coming to meetings while the work is still in progress please contact our Branch Secretary (Dave Elsdon) on 01438 714277.

John Dossett

Workshop Wanderings – Steve Lacey

Since my last report our branch had a stand at Letchworth MRE selling books and recruiting new members. As you know, I was away on a family holiday near Frome so Dave Elsdon, Paul Holloway and Dave Cornelius managed the stand. Attendance at the exhibition was disappointing, but with the extremely hot weather and holidays against us, we could have anticipated poor attendance/sales. Our sale of second-hand books was much lower than on previous occasions.

Although a family holiday, on the 30 July, I managed a couple of hours by the lineside with my son and grandson as we were close to the great western mainline. We found a bridge (see picture for details) near Westbury overlooking the junction where the line split. The line to the right going through Westbury station, the other is the avoiding line.



Bridge plate and view looking west towards Frome with unidentified IET approaching junction.



Looking the other way from the bridge towards Westbury, you get a good view of the line, with the White Horse on the hillside also visible. Despite good weather, the day we went here the weather was slightly overcast.

Being near to the Mendip ballast quarry, in the short time we were there we saw eight trains in all, with a good selection of passenger and freight stock (Classes 66, 59, 166,165,158 and IET) We then moved on to Westbury station for a 20 minute stay (the max duration for free parking!) where we saw two stabled Class 70's (806 and ?) in addition to more Class 158,165 and 166's. It is a very pleasant station with a lovely Victorian post box set on the platform.





From there we moved on to Whatley Quarry, west of Frome, where another bridge over the railway gave a good view of the quarry and locomotive stabling point. Here we saw three unidentified Class 08 shunters (one in action), 66618, 59004, 59206 stabled and as we watched 59005 (*Kenneth J Painter*), which we had seen earlier on our journey, arrived with a train of empties, promptly uncoupled and joined its fellows in the very tight loco stabling point. Three different liveries in one yard. Who says there is no variety on the modern railway?





While in the area, I also visited the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton which is good, but expensive (£21 for an advance ticket, more if you just turn up). No locos except a "Tug" with wheels for moving aircraft around!

While on holiday, we also visited Bath, where naturally you have to visit Sainsbury's. As you may know, it is built on the site of the old Somerset and Dorset Station at Green Park. A nice touch is that the approach road is named “Ivo Peters Way” as a nod to the famous Bentley-driving photographer of the S&D before the line closed. The grandeur was slightly marred by some construction work, but at least it is still there.

Since returning from holiday, I have sold some of our old stock of second-hand books to a dealer in Hitchin Market for £44 and the rest have been donated to Cancer Research. For those patiently waiting for a new stock of second-hand books your wait is over. I already have at home, the first six crates of books from the late Cyril Crawley's brother, with the next 12 crates due to arrive on the 26 August! I will fit as many as I can into my car for the September meetings. So, please bring your wallets to your next meeting! As agreed, they will remain on sale for at least two meetings at each venue, before they are sold-on, or donated to charity.

Steve Lacey

Solution to the September Puzzle (page 14)

1. **M**enheniot. 2. **O**wsden Hall. 3. **R**eading. 4. **E**aston. 5. **T**iverton.
6. **O**xford. 7. **N**ewport (Pill). 8. **H**ook Norton. 9. **A**rmstrong. 10. **M**anor.
11. **P**enzance. 12. **S**apperton. 13. **T**aff. 14. **E**xminster. 15. **A**ylburton.
16. **D**evizes.

Answer - MORETONHAMPSTEAD

Martin Elms

Reminder - Lanyard Badges

If you already have a badge please remember to bring it with you and wear it at meetings. A few new ones have been issued recently but I am sure that there are now quite a few fairly regular attenders who do not have badges. If this applies to you please ask John Dossett (or any of the other committee members) and we will willingly produce one for you to collect on your next visit. These badges are available to members and non-members.

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), Dave Cornelius, Hugh Driscoll, Tony Stratford and John Dossett (Newsletter Editor). The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered with the Charities Commission.