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LLANFAIR
CAEREINION
Cynwch yn ofalus
Please drive carefully



Emag No 72 October 2026

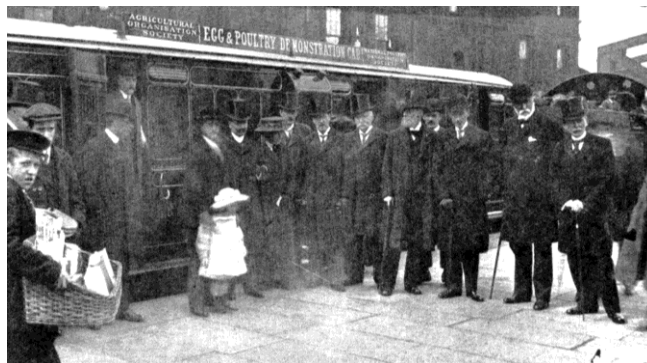
Platform Edge

West Country pacific No **34005 Barnstable** paired with an LMS tender a long way from home at Derby Midland station during the 1948 locomotive exchanges.

Photo: Unknown



The eggstraordinary sight of the Great Western Railway Egg and Poultry Demonstration car at Llandyssul Station in 1913. It was arranged by the Agricultural Organisation Society and National Poultry Organisation Societies. Below, the coach is ready to depart Paddington, seen off by the great and the good.



The LNWR also ran an exhibition train which toured all over the North Western and Cambrian Railways' Welsh networks in April and May 1913. The LNWR Gazette reported that during the 12 days of touring, 18,966 people passed through the vans, with the largest number of viewers being at Pwllheli (1,827).

The overall objective was to introduce farmers to, and implore them to adopt, modern methods of production to increase their market share against international competition. Indeed, in 1912, the UK imported nearly 2.2 billion eggs, of which just under half came from Russia.

The railways also wanted to encourage farmers to cooperate in combining their loads, so as to enable the speedy dispatch of egg trains. The Gazette reported 'the number of motor cars, traps and bicycles which were always to be seen in the station yards showed that the visitors had travelled a distance to see, as one journalist put it, "the most remarkable train that had ever left Euston." Right, the crush at Corwen station.



TO THE
TRAINS
→

Front cover:
Too hot for steam!
No. 17, a 230 hp Bo-
Bo diesel-hydraulic
built in Germany in
1979 by Diepholzer
Maschinenfabrik for
the Taiwan Sugar
Corporation waits to
leave with the 14.00
departure from
Llanfair Caereinion
on 23.06.2026

Where Are They Now?

An Express and Star Express & Star archive photo. The caption says: 'Busy taking numbers at the Oxley sheds are David Roberts (left) and Malcolm Andritt, on August 14th, 1963. Do you remember them?

Collett Grange Class 4-6-0 No **6831 Bearley Grange** arrived at Oxley in April 1962 after spending a few months at Penzance shed. Withdrawn in October 1965, it was scrapped at Kettering by Cohens.



Fordhouse Sidings, at Cross Green, Coven was a rarely photographed and now quite vanished spot which served as the carriage sidings for mainly excursion and empty stock from Wolverhampton High Level Station.

Further to the left were sidings and a crossing over Paradise Lane which served the secretive wartime MOD establishment.

A class 9 2-10-0 runs light engine to Stafford and in the distance can be seen the familiar contour of Bushbury Hill.

Photo: Wallace Sephton

The scene today as a careworn looking CrossCountry Voyager No **220018** hurries north some nineteen minutes late on the 1M34 Bournemouth to Manchester Piccadilly train.

The fields to the right remain but the large Bickford Truck Hire Ltd premises are now on the left. Crossing over Paradise Lane today will land you in HMP Featherstone, the roofline of which is just visible on the skyline.



Above in Stafford Road shed with 7001
Photo: Hugh Ballantyne



The crew of Castle Class No **5026 Criccieth Castle** have a nice relaxed chat as they wait at Bristol Temple Meads with a returning Wolverhampton to Weston-super-Mare Summer Saturday extra on 21st July 1962.

Photo: Patrick O'Brien collection

Hadley Wood station, on the East Coast Main Line at the approach to Hadley Wood North Tunnel on the 14th July 1958. The East Coast main line is being quadrupled and a narrow gauge railway has temporarily been put in place to transport equipment for the rebuilding work.

There is more on this on Page 11

The contract was carried out by Charles Brand & Son Ltd during 1955-8. The 2'-0" gauge line used no less than 28 4wd locos, all built by Ruston & Hornsby. All but four of them were new to this contract. RH No 392117, seen here, was numbered 7 and is currently based at Purbeck Mining Museum, just above Norden Station on the Swanage Railway.

Photo: Unknown



Luggage in Avance

British Railways offered a luggage in advance service between stations in Great Britain and further afield.

In the 1962 timetable prices were quoted for collection and conveyance or conveyance and delivery, both 2/6d, or Collection, Conveyance and Delivery, 5/6d, for stations in Great Britain.

Prices quoted in the timetables included delivery to stations and Ports in Northern Ireland with a separate and dearer price for stations on the former Belfast and County Down section of the Ulster Transport Authority.

Things got a little more complicated with the Channel Isles, Jersey and Guernsey, with a different price for luggage going to the islands and returning from. Also, the delivery charge only included to St Helier or St Peter Port, otherwise there was an additional charge.

The Isle of Man was slightly different in that the complete Collection, Conveyance and Delivery service was only available to addresses in Douglas the capital.

		Between stations in Great Britain and stations in the Isle of Man
		(Charge for each package)
Collection and Conveyance or Conveyance and Delivery		s. d. 3 10
Collection, Conveyance and Delivery		6 6

These charges are liable to alteration

Luggage forwarded to the Isle of Man, other than Douglas, is only accepted under the "Collection and Conveyance" arrangement, and from the Isle of Man, other than Douglas, under the "Conveyance and Delivery" arrangement.

Excess charges are payable in addition to the charge for each package if the total weight of luggage per passenger exceeds the authorised allowance (1st class 150 lb., 2nd class 100 lb.); one half of these weights for passengers holding half-fare tickets.

Note.—The above arrangements do not apply with the Republic of Ireland

Ask for a "Luggage in Advance Form" at any British Railways Station.



Left, Isle of Man Railway lorry No 24 at Douglas goods shed in August 1964. It appears to be loaded with trunks, almost certainly for luggage in advance.

Photo: A D J Mitchell

Talking of 1962, this is an early picture of the Rolling Stones who played their first show billed as "the Rollin' Stones" on 12 July 1962, at the Marquee Club in London. Here they are pictured in a desultory pose by that wonderful old departure board at Victoria station.

Despite this being the affluent South East, several of the stations above Brian Jones were to close. Although Brian was a founder member of the 'Stones' he was dismissed by the band in 1969 after his performance in the studio became increasingly unreliable due to alcohol and drug problems. Less than a month later, Jones died by drowning at the age of 27 in the swimming pool at his home in East Sussex.

Photo: Mathew Trott

One of those stations on the board was **Hailsham** seen below in this nice view by an unknown photographer but shared by **Nicola Walker**.

Any car enthusiasts care to identify the car?



Initially, Hailsham was the terminus of a short branch from Polegate on the London, Brighton and South Coast main line, opening in May 1849, the same day as the branch south to Eastbourne.

Thirty years later it became an intermediate station on the Cuckoo line when that line opened from Polegate to Eridge. For many years one of the busier stations, it became a terminus again in June 1965 when the line northwards closed to passengers with freight following in 1968.



Seen at Hailsham, a BR Standard Class 4MT works the last scheduled passenger train over the Cuckoo line 12/6/1965. Three years later, 3H DEMU No 1101 leaves Hailsham for Eastbourne, just weeks before Hailsham closed for ever. Today Hailsham is a busy market town, and the folly of closing the line, or at least not protecting the track bed, is obvious as the population continues to grow making it the largest inland town in East Sussex. **Photo: Ian Nolan**



Very early days on the embryonic Kent and East Sussex Railway as Terrier tank No 3, ex LBSC No 70 Poplar and BR No 32670 passes the mill siding, left, heading for the main line connection at Robertsbridge.



Built in 1872, it was purchased secondhand by the K&ESR in 1901. Withdrawn in 1931, it returned to service in 1933 using parts cannibalised from No 5 Rolvenden. Passing to British Railways upon nationalisation in 1948 it was finally withdrawn in 1963 and purchased for use on the heritage K&ESR.

Photo: Left, Christopher Stephens

Below: Dave Hazeldine



The recent photo shows the newly installed level crossing over North Bridge Street and the underbridge, 1, which the Terrier is about to cross in the picture above. The other arrow shows the course of the mill siding mentioned which also crossed what back then was the main A21 Hastings road. Robertsbridge village has now been bypassed, and the railway will have to cross that next year.

Back on Easter Monday, 1966, No 3 was steamed at Rolvenden after BR agreed to allow the society to operate two special trains following the signing of the sale contract for the line which was conditional on the company obtaining a Light Railway Order within nine months. With several stops along the way to close farm crossing gates and chase sheep off the line, a late arrival at Robertsbridge found the only porter dealing with the arriving Hastings line DEMU from Charing Cross before he could operate the small Robertsbridge 'A' signalbox which controlled the points for the yard. The point of the steaming was to transfer various items of rolling stock from Robertsbridge yard to Rolvenden where they could be more easily worked upon.

With the train assembled, further delays ensued whilst the society officers gave interviews to journalists and both ITV and the BBC. Departing to the sound of constantly clicking cameras, the train headed for Bodiam, stopping by the River Rother near Junction Road Halt to take water with the aid of a portable pump. Large crowds had gathered at Bodiam to witness the passage of the train and even more at Northiam where luckily the Sussex Police had sent a patrol car to control the traffic over the level crossing inundated with people waiting to take pictures. Moving out into the Rother Levels, No 3 again took water from the river whilst standing on the Rother Bridge. Another large crowd greeted the train at remote Wittersham Road, many obviously following the train by car. At Rolvenden an even larger crowd had gathered making it difficult for the passengers to disembark whilst the train was remmarshalled for the climb up to Tenterden, hindered by the mass of humanity! A sudden sharp shower, sent people scurrying to the Pullman car which by then had been detached and parked in a siding.

Eventually, much delayed, No 3 set off with two coaches for Tenterden but alas the lengthy delay had played havoc with the fire, and a five-minute blow-up was required on the bank before No 3 completed the climb in a spectacular manner. At Tenterden the reception was incredible with people rushing from their houses to join the large crowd gathered on the platform. Despite the fact that the run had hardly been advertised at all, the station was absolutely packed. Eventually some kind of order was restored and No 3 ran round the train to take those who had travelled up back to Rolvenden, where one of the two coaches was detached. Those returning to Robertsbridge crowded into the remaining coach, arriving just in time to catch the 7.06 p.m. DEMU up to London. More stock was moved by agreement with BR later in the month when the recently arrived ex-GWR railcar W20 was amongst the stock transferred to Rolvenden.

In 1931 the Ford Motor Company ordered three Bo-Bo diesel-electric shunting locomotives from British Thompson Houston Company for use at their new car plant at Dagenham in Essex. These locomotives owed something to an American 'switcher' design, which first appeared in 1925 at Fords American plant. At the time of building, they were unique in Britain and created considerable interest at home and abroad. Notably the specification stated "all materials will be of British manufacture" and they were built to the London, Midland and Scottish Railway loading gauge as their duties involved crossing the ex-London, Tilbury and Southend Railway main line. The locomotives numbered 1-3 worked for 34 years at Dagenham, during which time each one is estimated to have run well in excess of 250,000 hours.



No 1 was withdrawn on 5 July 1966 and was purchased by AEI, as successors to BTH, and then generously donated to the K&ESR, arriving on the railway at Tenterden just two days later. The journey from Dagenham to Tenterden by low-loader was not without incident as the Dartford Tunnel had to be briefly closed at 3.00am to allow passage. The tight turn from Tenterden High Street was skillfully accomplished by the driver although the kerb at the corner of the road was flattened which earned him a booking by Kent Police! Although initially numbered No 16 and later No 40, it was universally known as '**The Ford**'.

Trouble at t'mill'



Pride of Sussex would later be sold to the K&ESR in 1971
Photo: The late Jack Ray, Crewcastrian collection.

When BR closed the Kent and East Sussex Railway completely in 1961, James Hodson & Sons, who owned Robertsbridge Flour Mill slightly less than a mile down the line from Robertsbridge, were still receiving wagon loads of grain by rail. BR had told the mill owner, Tom Dadswell, in typical fashion for the time, that in future the last part of the journey would have to be made by road. Slightly tongue in cheek, Tom said if they would let him have a loco he would move them himself!

To his great surprise, BR offered a P class 0-6-0 tank, No 31556. The loco duly arrived at Robertsbridge where the BR crew gave the mill staff some minimal instruction before departing. Luckily help was at hand for the local policeman, PC Young had previously been a BR fireman and the loco went into service the next day, later named Pride of Sussex after one of the flours manufactured at the mill.

When this later required attention, the Ford was hired for several months as a replacement driven by K&ESR personnel. The Ford also had the distinction of hauling the very last train, a stock clearance, from Robertsbridge to Bodiam in February 1972 prior to BR lifting the track on that section.



Left, the loco stands inside the mill premises with the old A21 main road gate behind.
Photo: Collection of Dan Quine

Remembering Elisabeth



British Steel Corporation

Bilston, Wolverhampton and Birchley Works,
Bilston, West Midlands.
Telephone: Bilston 41171 Telex: 338991

Right, a line-up of Yorkshire Engine Company DE2s at the Locomotive Maintenance Depot of the British Steel Corporation at Bilston. These diesel electric locos had Paxman 250hp V6 engines.

The blast furnace 'Elisabeth', with an 'S' not a 'Z', was first lit in 1954 and named after the daughter of Ian Stewart, chairman of then owners Stewarts & Lloyds and not the recently crowned Queen as is often suggested.

The Queen of Bilston to many locals however was Elisabeth, not a machine that could be switched on and off. She was a massive, fire breathing, iron making mountain of a blast furnace. She ran twenty-four hours a day and commanded the labors of all those around her who carefully managed her inputs and outputs, paused her for necessary repairs and nursed her when sick. Visible for miles around she was the living heart of the works.

The essential form of transport throughout the works was the railway system and here the introduction is best provided by ex-employee Roger Deans who commented on the above picture "One point of interest in front of the loco on the middle pit is its roof section and leaning against it on the left side are two of the six pistons, these were seven inches in diameter and were removed and replaced through the side of the engine casing; this was a count your fingers before and after job...

Half of my working life was spent working on the locomotives in the loco maintenance shop – just one department of many in the steelworks that was part of a reasonably well-oiled machine that without any of the others there would have been no production and no two and a half thousand jobs.

I saw the good times in the Sixties and early Seventies, the steady planned decline of the industry, I saw the heart torn out of Bilston when 'Elisabeth' was wiped from the skyline and the hopes of next generations went with it. I finally saw the desolation that is now another suburban housing estate. The steelworks will soon be forgotten, I hope these photographs and remembrances will keep part of the great steelworks in people's minds."



Left, here is '*Elisabeth*' shortly after delivery from Yorkshire Engine Company in April 1953. Note the 'S & L' marked slag pot, and steam locomotive in the background.

Right, Andrew in the harsh conditions of twenty-four-hour working. Note the shield to protect the front of the loco from the intense heat given off from the freshly stripped ingots seen to the right of the track – and also the tight curves with which the locos had to cope. This image also clearly shows the distinctive red smoke from the open-hearth furnaces, most noticeable when being charged with scrap – the melting phase.

Taken from Bilston Iron & Steelworks – A Retrospective



BUS STOP SPOT

Or should that really be COACH STOP, in a picture we can date to post- March 1961 when **D335**, just visible on the left, entered service at Crewe North.



East Kent **GFN 260**, unusually this company did not use fleet numbers, started life as a Leyland TD5 double-decker. Due to the acute shortages of materials after WW2, John Beadle of Dartford took components from prewar buses or coaches and build them into patented all-alloy integral construction as new full-fronted single-decker buses or coaches.

Although very much a stop-gap when delivered in 1952, these two Beadle rebuild coaches still looked good and would not be withdrawn until 1966. The question is, **where are they?**

A rather nice colour picture to illustrate how sublime the red and cream East Kent livery was, in this case preserved Beadle **FFN 446**. All three of the BET operators across Kent and Sussex had examples of these Beadle coaches and alongside at the Detling M&D Centenary event in 2011 is Maidstone and District **OKP 980**, fleet number **CO 252** which also utilised pre-war Leyland running units. M&D later downgraded some of their Beadle coaches for bus work, but I remember they retained the sumptuous coach seats!

Photo: Mike Hodges



Two diesel hydraulic locomotives built at the North British Locomotive Works at Polmadie, Glasgow in 1953 for the Mauritius government on a test train at Glasgow Central, when we did things like that!

The two 0-6-0DH locos were numbered A1 & A2, the only diesels ever purchased for the railway which, unusually for an island like Mauritius, was standard gauge. At the time of the system's closure in 1964, the oldest surviving steam loco dated from 1865!



Corris Railway Kerr Stuar 0-4-2 saddle tank No **4** of 1921, poses before departure from 'the other' Machynlleth station. All concerned are standing very still for the photo including the driver with his arm around a young lady, the guard with ticket machine and money bag and is that a minister near the back? The loco survives today as No 4 Edward Thomas on the Talyllyn Railway, having carried the same number though the ownership of four different railway companies, the Corris, Great Western, British Railways and Talyllyn-surely a record?



SRUBLUK and NIGLERS-Part 2



Concluding Ned Williams explanation of these early railway organisations, this time the NIGLERS, which if you remember his parents had christened after looking at the initials of the Narrow Gauge & Light Railway Society.

Right now, I cannot put a date on when the NG&LRS actually came into existence, and I took on the job of producing a newsletter. I think it must have been late 1957 or sometime in 1958 and it must have been linked to my acquisition of a large secondhand Gestetner duplicator. Parallel to my interests in certain railways, I was developing an interest in how magazines could be printed and was exploring the finances of acquiring a printing machine.... But that's another story.

I used my mother's ancient typewriter to cut the stencils that were loaded onto the cylinder of my duplicator and somehow a very poor-quality newsletter could be produced – but it was more efficient than trying to make several carbon copies. We were certainly no threat to *Trains Illustrated* or the *Railway Magazine* and we weren't a patch on the journals produced by the RCTS and SLS.

Apart from production problems we also had to resolve the question of what could be put into our newsletters. There was still a world of branch lines to be explored and described, but when it came to light railways; most of them had become a thing of the past – the best we could manage was to report on exploring trackbeds and the remains of derelict stations. I recall an early expedition made by myself and John Wickham to explore the remains of the Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway. A long walk of about sixteen miles gave us very little to write about, and certainly nothing much to photograph. There was also the question of cost so some exploring was restricted to what we could reach by bike! From Adrian's home we set off to explore the remains of the Elsenham & Thaxted Light Railway which had closed in 1952. From my own home in Ilford, I managed to cycle to the remains of the Corringham Light Railway – out in the remoteness of the Thames estuary, where a few yards of the railway were still in use.

Although Jack Nelson was an excellent guide to the LNWR and to the world of railway modelling, he knew nothing about the world of light railways or narrow gauge lines. I was lucky to have met a man named Francis Ashley who took me on as his apprentice helping to build a large Gauge 2 model railway using pre-First World War equipment. I was "paid" by being given access to his comprehensive library. By endless consumption of old magazines, I was able to learn about narrow gauge railways as a result of reading the work of people like James Boyd, and in pre-war *Railway Magazines* I was able to read firsthand accounts of light railways generally in their twilight years.

Francis Ashley suggested a trip to explore the remains of the Selsey Tramway which I had been a very lightly laid line linking Chichester with the seaside township of Selsey and a pioneering book by Edward Griffiths. (Edward Griffiths also produced a pioneering book on the Alton Light Railway and a wonderful book on the Bishops Castle Railway.)

There was very little left to see of the Selsey Tramway, but I religiously photographed what we saw – producing some of the least interesting photographs ever taken!

Francis was convinced he had travelled on the line when he was a young boy who had relatives in nearby Portsmouth. While other railway enthusiasts were photographing the twilight of BR steam, we were immersed in recording the sight of a rotten sleeper or vague remains of an unsubstantial station platform!



Another key enthusiast who contributed greatly to the life of the NG&LRS was Roger Crombleholme who later produced several railway books, edited an annual publication devoted to railway preservation, became a prolific railway film-maker and presenter before moving on to the production of kits for builders of everything from tramcars to Irish railways! I met him while exploring the railways of the Isle of Wight – probably during the summer of 1958. Roger was slightly older than myself and was therefore more knowledgeable and somewhat more prosperous when it came to rail travel and railway modelling. Also, he and I lived on completely opposite sides of London but we soon found ways of keeping in touch and Roger became a keen member of the NG&LRS.

By 1958 Adrian and I had become owners of Adana printing presses. I saved up earnings from my paper-round (50p a week!) and bought a brand-new Adana machine from the company's shop in Holborn. It was the smallest machine in the range and could print an area 5" x 3".

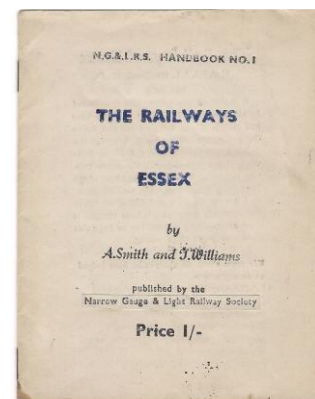
Adrian acquired a larger machine capable of printing an are “5x 8” but it was very second hand and was in desperately in need of new rollers – ie the two rubber rollers that transferred the printing ink to the type. I was also lucky in that my school appointed me to the school press which had an even bigger treadle-operated machine – and it was there that I received tuition in the art of printing.

Production of the newsletter had to continue being “duplicated” but all this activity in the printing world led Adrian and I to think about printing a book – perhaps the first of many that could be published on behalf of the NG&LRS. We were not afraid of being amateurish – after all R.W. Kidner’s Oakwood Press booklets on light railways could be accused of that! However, we vastly underestimated the difficulties of book production using the equipment available to us. We did not have enough type to print a whole page, so the book was printed almost one paragraph at a time! But we were naïve enough to believe we were producing a real book and when completed we sent a copy to the British Library to consolidate our copyright.

This led to the book being listed in the British National Bibliography and led to all sorts of enquiries from interested customers. Some must have guessed it was merely the efforts of a couple of schoolboys who were “way out of their depth”, but some were kind enough to offer encouragement! The book was modestly called “Railways of Essex”.

As membership grew and the society engaged in ambitious projects like book production it became inevitable that adults would hear of our existence and seek to join our ranks. There were various reactions to their discovery of our true age and abilities. I recall that M. Lawson Finch, who was writing the first proper history of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, was forgiving and supportive. Others were more outraged. For example, we had a letter from the secretary of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society who accused us of trespassing in his society’s territory. He suggested we should close our little society and tell members to join his society which had the means to do the job properly.

Increasing membership certainly put a strain of newsletter production and eventually Roger Crombleholme took over as editor and printer. My parents thought I had passed on the baton because I was going to take O levels and A levels seriously. Really it was because I had invented other demands on my time and I knew that Roger would make a better job of it anyway.



When it came to identifying the branch lines we had to explore, we took our inspiration from the lists compiled by the founder members of SRUBLUK. The problem was partly financial - how could we afford to go and see them all? Here we see Adrian Smith posing in front of an H class 0-4-4T at Allhallows on Sea - a remote branchline on the northern Kentish coast near the Thames estuary. We rode our bikes to Tilbury, left them padlocked to some railings, and used the ferry across the Thames to Gravesend to reach the branch - quite an adventure at the time!



Another important line to visit was the Hawkhurst Branch which I think we reached on the penultimate Saturday of the line's passenger service. This station building was our first sight of Col. Stephen's corrugated iron buildings - and the birth of another life-long obsession....



By 1958 Adrian and I had become owners of Adana printing presses. I saved up earnings from my paper-round (50p a week!) and bought a brand-new Adana machine from the company's shop in Holborn. It was the smallest machine in the range and could print an area 5" x 3".

Roger continued newsletter production for many years but at some stage passed the task of editing to someone called Brian Critchley. Roger went on to further book production – his first book published by the society being a history of the Hawkhurst Railway. It came out in 1961 and exploited the “new technology” of off-set litho printing. Other books followed and then Roger amazed us all by buying a real locomotive – the Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST called “Sir Berkeley” – rescued from the scrapman after going out of use in the limestone quarry at Byfield. The purchase was made in the name of the society, but Roger deserves all the credit for making a successful achievement. The “newest” newsletter I can still find in my files is the January 1965 edition in which Roger describes the short notice removal of “Sir Berkeley” from Byfield to its new home on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway on 18th January 1965. The removal cost £90. (That's nearly £2000 in today's money.) Reunited with its original weatherboard which had been discovered at Cranford, it took part in the BBC Television production of The Railway Children.

Just a stone's throw away from the where it was originally constructed, veteran Manning Wardle 'L' Class 0-6-0 saddle tank 'Sir Berkeley' (works No.1210 built in 1891) on the Balm Road branch of the Middleton Railway on 22nd September 1996. A photographic charter organised by the Battle of Britain Locomotive Society.

Photo and caption: Gordon Edgar



I had left my London home in the autumn of 1962 and had begun a new life in the Black Country. Five years later Roger joined me in Dudley but by that time the Narrow Gauge & Light Railway Society had disappeared into the past. Both of us now find it impossible to remember exactly how it did fade away! Since those times the world of narrow gauge railways and light railways have become much better known and there are many ways of pursuing an interest in them and the railway preservation world has expanded beyond all expectations.

Roger Crombleholme would later be instrumental in finding Terrier-sized industrial locos from the Midlands ironstone mines and fitting them with vacuum brakes to work early passenger trains on the embryonic Kent & East Sussex Railway.



Scouting trips identified two 0-6-0 saddle tanks locos of interest, a Hunslet named Hastings (£250) and a Manning Wardle Charwelton (£280). This led to the formation of the Kent & East Sussex Locomotive Trust and eventual purchase of the two locos.

Photo: Wikipedia

Picture Perfect

Paul Kearley has a large selection of acquired negatives often with no details and appealed recently for help locating this view. It took no time at all for it to be identified as Greenwood just north of New Barnet coming out of Kings Cross on the ECML. This is before the late 1950's when Greenwood signed box was demolished to make room for quadrupling from here to Potters Bar including three new tunnels. What you see now is beginning of two lines only, a big bottleneck since the Great Northern Railway days.

The T board, lit from behind with an oil lamp, indicated the Termination of a Permanent Way speed restriction. Previously there would have been a C board indicating the Commencement of the works and a speed restriction board.

To the right the locking bar for the Facing Point Lever is visible together with the operating rod in the foreground and the crank and link. Mike Shaw could tell us more! **Photo: Paul Kearley**



Left, from a closer view, the name of Greenwood signal box near New Barnet, can be seen as an unknown 'streak' hurries south bound for Kings Cross.

Photo: Steve Bersey



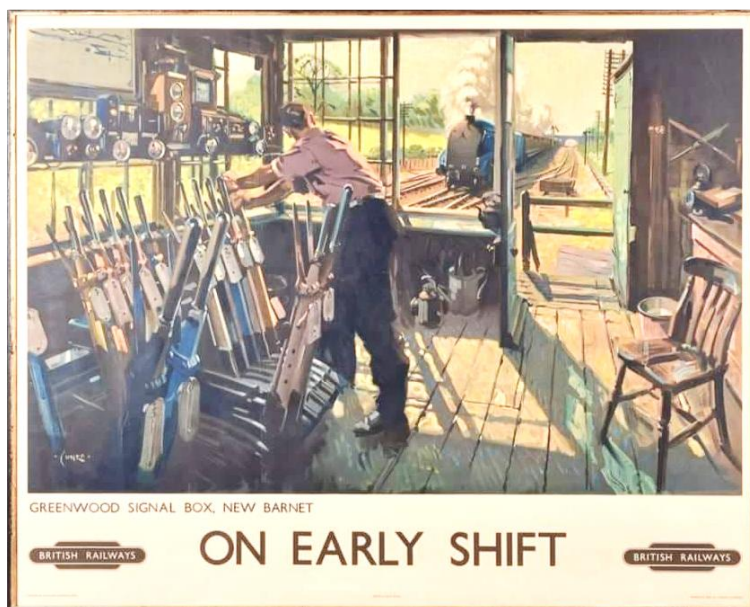
In his memoirs, *The Mouse and His Master*, Cuneo recalled: "Another [poster] I particularly enjoyed was the signal-box poster, *On Early Shift*."

This shows the interior of a busy, one-man box on the London and North Eastern Railway main line, just south of Greenwood tunnel, now, alas, dismantled. I attended all the shifts, the early, the midday and the night, in order to decide which would shape best pictorially.

Although I finally chose the early one, I always remember the splendid character on the night shift. He was a signaller of the old school and took a terrific pride in his job and in the appearance of the box itself. "He would never dream, for instance, of touching the levers without a chamois leather between his hands and the steel."

If Cuneo had produced his Barnet railway poster five or six years later, it would have featured his trademark mouse. From 1953, all Cuneo paintings feature a mouse, after his pet Abyssinian cat, Cleopatra, strolled into his studio one day and deposited a dead field mouse, as a gift, at his feet. Cuneo was liked and admired by the Royal Family and in 1953, five years after he produced his Barnet railway poster, he was made the official artist at the Queen's Coronation. The Queen contributed to the cost of the bronze statue of Cuneo that was unveiled at Waterloo Station in 2004.

Below, another 'streak' approaches the box this time from the London direction in this British Railways poster 'On Early Shift', painted by the late Terence Cuneo, probably one of the greatest painters of steam locomotives. Dating from 1948, it is one of the very first posters produced by the newly-formed British Railways. How that little box must have shook!



Taken from the signalbox, Gresley N2 0-6-2T No **69540** has steam to spare working a suburban train to Welwyn Garden City in June 1956. Built by the North British Locomotive Co. in 1921, this batch was built with condensers, right-hand drive and a short chimney to conform with the Metropolitan loading gauge.

The first N2s were put to work on the Metropolitan Railway Widened Lines between King's Cross and Moorgate, displacing the remaining C12 4-4-2Ts and most of the N1s. The N2s were an immediate success. Rapid housing developments in the North London area led to Kings Cross having forty N2s on its roster by 1925. As well as suburban services, the Kings Cross N2s also hauled most of the empty coach workings for the main line expresses.

All 107 N2s survived into British Railways ownership and in 1948, the allocation was Kings Cross (57), Hornsey (10), Hatfield (14), Hitchin (2), Colwick (5), Neasden (3), Parkhead (8), and Kipps (8). The Scottish N2s performed their duties well enough but they were never very popular and acquired nicknames such as "Metropolitans" or "Bulldogs". The Scottish fitters found them troublesome, and the engine crews found them crude and uncomfortable.



Photo: 53A Models of Hull Collection.



A single member of the class survives in preservation owned by the Gresley Society and now based on the North Norfolk Railway. No. 1744 is also a film star, having played the part of 'The Scotch Flyer' in the film *The Railway Children*.

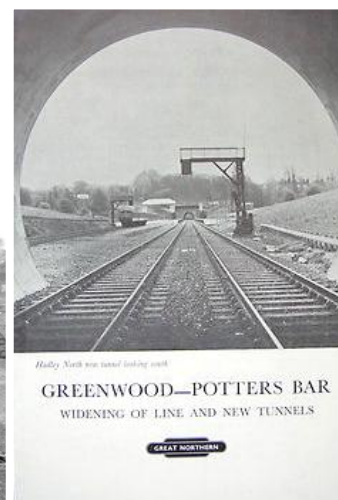
Left, after a lengthy and expensive overhaul. No **1744**, the only surviving Gresley tank engine, returned to work on the North Norfolk Railway in July this year.

Photo: North Norfolk Railway.

For down trains after leaving Wood Green, the gradient rises for some eight miles at 1:200 hence Class A3 pacific No **60064 "Tagalie"** is working hard with a down express on the approach to Greenwood signalbox, also in June 1956.

Within a short while the area would be transformed with the widening of the line and new tunnels to accommodate four tracks between here and Potters Bar

Photo: 53A Models of Hull Collection.



Based on a true story, this 1962 film, *The Password is Courage*, follows Sergeant-Major Charles Coward (Dirk Bogarde), a brave British soldier captured by German forces during World War II. When he's thrown into a prisoner of war camp, he immediately plans his escape. Masquerading as a wounded German soldier, he makes it as far as the medical tent, where the deceived enemy forces award him the Iron Cross. Though he is ultimately discovered, he goes on to courageously pursue his freedom with a whimsical audacity. Retired driver **Arno Brookes** adds a little more to the story for us...



Does Fowler class 4MT tank **42325** still exist? **Photo: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer**



All my working life I was a train driver. I started at Cricklewood depot on the Midland in 1973. Several of the older drivers had been involved in the making of the film *The Password is Courage*. It involved British prisoners of war working in a German railway depot - actually Cricklewood. A few miles north, at Scratchwood in Hertfordshire, the Midland Railway had established a large dumping ground for old ballast and other rubbish, stuff from restaurant and sleeping cars etc. The place had its own internal rail system and was used for the crash scene. In the film, the POWs sabotage a train and No 42325 is used. In the crash, the loco rolls down into a gully. I was told by the drivers involved in the filming that it was not worth recovering the loco, which was bulldozed over and left.

About 30 years ago I became interested in the fate of 42325. I visited the site several times and did research. In the intervening years the M1 motorway was built over the abandoned dump. After a lot of work, I concluded that 42325 is buried directly beneath the southbound side of the M1 about 3/4 mile north of London Gateway Services where the carriageways curve to the west. No doubt certain unreasonable people would object to closing the M1 in order to dig up 42325, so, I imagine it will stay there for many more years! Despite being an editor that would not allow a good story to get in the way of the truth, I spent some time researching this. The normally reliable BR Database site has it at Kentish Town until withdrawal in September 1961 and scrapping in April 1962 although it doesn't say where. Many local railwaymen believed it was buried on site whilst others say photos exist to prove it was cut up on site-I couldn't find them!

This drama is based on John Castle's 1954 Second World War memoir of the same name and is a light-hearted take on the true story of Sergeant-Major Charles Coward. The film has raised much debate over the years but does contain some excellent railway scenes, elaborate and spectacular for their day. The entire film is set in Nazi-occupied Europe yet was filmed in England. The first railway sequence has Bogarde and his comrades being taken to a POW camp in a train of cattle trucks hauled by a BR Fairburn Class 4MT 2-6-4T. Bogarde is then sent to work in a railway works and repair yard, which is actually Cricklewood Depot, North London. A large number of ex-LMS locomotives are present in these scenes but actual numbers are impossible to discern. Some Fairburn Class 4MT 2-6-4Ts, a Fowler Class 4MT 2-6-4T, a 4F Class 0-6-0, a Class 5MT 'Black Five' 4-6-0 and an Ivatt Class 4MT 2-6-0 are all visible.

After this, Bogarde sabotages a goods train, which results in one of the most astonishingly destructive crash scenes of the time to involve railway stock in film. The locomotive is BR Fowler Class 4MT 2-6-4T No.42325, withdrawn from service by the time of filming but in steam, fitted with smoke deflectors and with 'German Cross' insignia on its side tanks. Hauling a trainload of wagons, it is driven over an embankment at speed with the wagons piling up, around and behind it. The final railway scene features Bogarde attempting an escape by taking a train journey across Europe. This involves him boarding a train at Radlett station on the Midland Main Line which is hauled by an ex-LMS Class 5MT 'Black Five' 4-6-0 and arriving at Brighton station on a train hauled by BR Standard Class 4MT 4-6-0 No.75075. A couple of Southern Region EMU's are just visible in the background of the scenes filmed at Brighton. All in all, this is a film that provides enjoyment for the railway enthusiast, though the whole remains rather tongue in cheek.



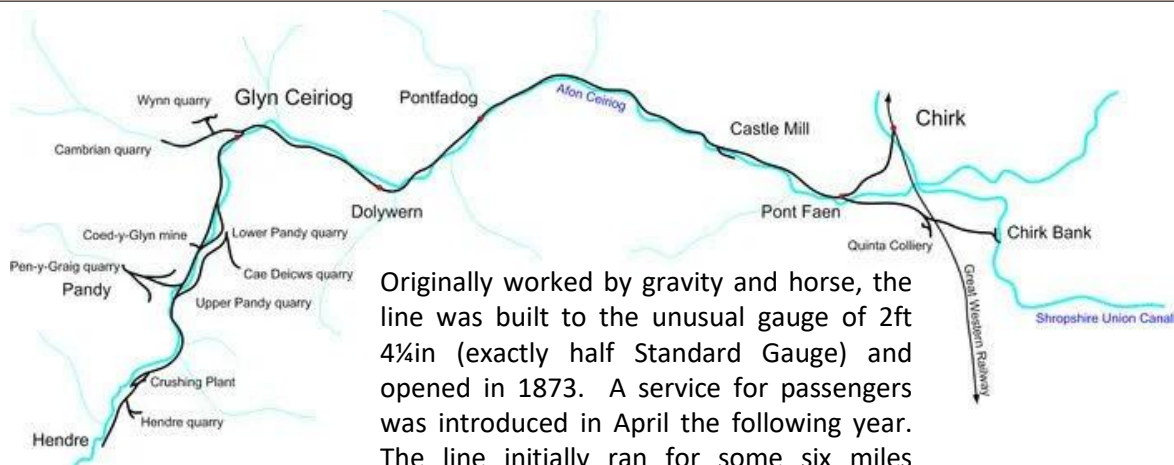
The Glyn Valley Tramway

The Glyn Valley Tramway for most of its route meandered alongside a former toll road close to the swift flowing waters of the Afon Ceiriog. For around 60 years it provided an important lifeline to those who lived and worked in this beautiful Welsh borderlands valley.

Promoted as an easier, safer and cheaper means of transporting slate and granite from the Cambrian & Wynne Quarries above Glyn Ceiriog, down the Valley for onward distribution to buyers via the regional canal and rail networks, the Glyn Valley Tramway was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1870. It was unique among Welsh narrow gauge lines in that it didn't run to the coast or connect with the Cambrian Railways.



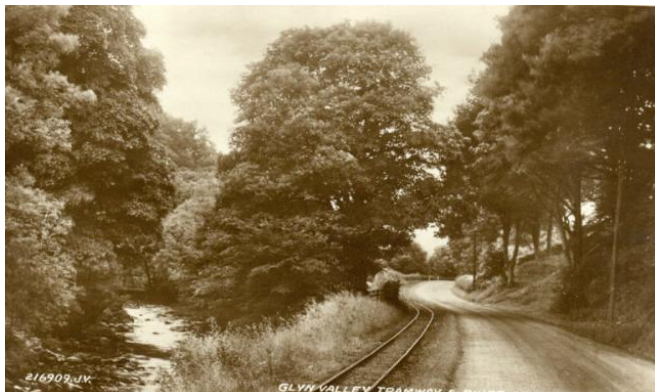
A 1920s view of a Glyn Valley train. Remarkably, two of these four-wheel coaches have been nicely restored as first-class and run on the Talyllyn Railway on new underframes.



Originally worked by gravity and horse, the line was built to the unusual gauge of 2ft 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (exactly half Standard Gauge) and opened in 1873. A service for passengers was introduced in April the following year. The line initially ran for some six miles from Glyn Ceiriog to Gledrid Wharf (near Chirk Bank) on the Shropshire Union Canal.



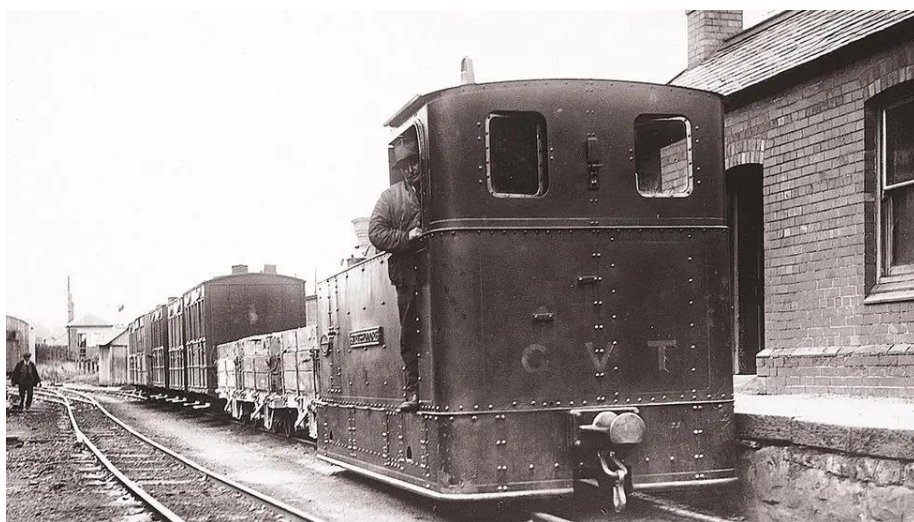
Until the early 1920's, the canal was controlled and vigorously promoted by the L&NWR for the simple reason it invaded the territory of the GWR and Cambrian Railways. The granite handled by the line was road metal which the canal boats delivered to many a village wharf or roadside landing spot. Inevitably this traffic was lost to both road and rail when lorries began to convey the stone straight from quarry to site,



The passenger service ran between the New Inn (now the Glyn Valley Hotel) in Glyn Ceiriog and Pont faen, the remainder of the journey into Chirk having to be made on foot or by alternative means. Intermediate halts were at the Queens Head (Dolywern), Pontfadog, Herber Toll Gate and Castle Mill. Spur tracks were laid at Castle Mill (for the nearby Bronygarth Lime Kilns) and at Trehowell Bridge (for the Quinta Colliery and an interchange with the Great Western Railway).

In 1885, a further Act of Parliament authorised diversion of the line from Pontfaen to a new interchange with both the Shropshire Union Canal and the Great Western Railway at Chirk, conversion of the Tramway to steam power, and a mineral line extension from Glyn Ceiriog to Hendre Quarry. The passenger service ran between the New Inn (now the Glyn Valley Hotel) in Glyn Ceiriog and Pontfaen, the remainder of the journey into Chirk having to be made on foot or by alternative means. Intermediate halts were at the Queens Head (Dolywern), Pontfadog, Herber Toll Gate and Castle Mill. Spur tracks were laid at Castle Mill (for the nearby Bronygarth Lime Kilns) and at Trehowell Bridge (for the Quinta Colliery and an interchange with the Great Western Railway

A year later, the horse-worked passenger service was suspended, although freight continued throughout the conversion process. Heavier section rail was used for the 'main line' and the gauge widened to 2ft 4½in. To assist with the construction work, two steam locomotives and a large number of wagons were hired from the Snailbeach District Railways in Shropshire. The larger hired locomotive was a 0-6-0ST engine called Fernhill, built by Barclays & Co of Kilmarnock in 1881. The smaller one was a 0-4-2ST engine called Belmont, built by Henry Hughes & Co for the Ifton-Rhyn Colliery & Brickworks Railway in 1873 and similar in outline to the Corris Railway engines built by the same manufacturer.



Beyer, Peacock & Co loco **Sir Theodore** at Chirk with a typical mixed train. Despite its name suggesting a knight in shining armour, it was in fact named after a local nabob who wrote a biography of Queen Victoria!

It wasn't until 15 March 1891 that the first steam-hauled passenger service was introduced between Glyn Ceiriog and the GWR station at Chirk, after which the Pontfaen to Gledrid Wharf section of the original horse-drawn tramway was abandoned and the tracks lifted. The converted and re-routed line was operated initially by two 0-4-2T steam engines built in 1888 by Beyer, Peacock & Co of Manchester, No.1 Sir Theodore and No.2 Dennis. A further engine to a similar design, No.3 Glyn, was supplied in 1892, whilst a fourth and final steam engine was acquired second-hand in 1921, an un-named War Department 4-6-0T locomotive built by Baldwin of Philadelphia in 1917.

The Tramway had a significant number of 4-wheeled rolling stock - 14 open and enclosed carriages, 2 brake vans, 2 goods vans and some 250 wagons of varying types.

Up until the First World War, the steam-powered Tramway operated as a viable concern. But after 1918, labour costs rose significantly while revenues from mineral and passenger traffic did not. Income and the overall financial position steadily declined throughout the 1920s as road access and surfaces improved and commercial lorries began to collect mineral products directly from quarries. In 1932, a new motor bus service was introduced to the Valley, easily able to beat the Tramway's 12mph permitted speed limit. Unable to compete despite slashing its fares, the Tramway withdrew scheduled passenger trains from 6 April 1933. The end of mineral and freight services followed on 6 July 1935 when the Tramway went into voluntary liquidation. Sadly, all four of the Tramway's locomotives were scrapped by 1936 along with most of the wagons and carriages. The rails were sold off to other enterprises and scrap dealers.

Tom Rolt in his wonderful 1952 book 'Lines of Character' wrote of the rapid downfall, not only of the Glyn Valley but of the whole narrow gauge in Wales. He recalled a journey just before the line closed when his train was expected to cross a Chirk bound train in Pontfadog station. After waiting a while, the driver resumed on his leisurely way only to come to an abrupt halt, or as abrupt a stop as his limited braking power could muster!

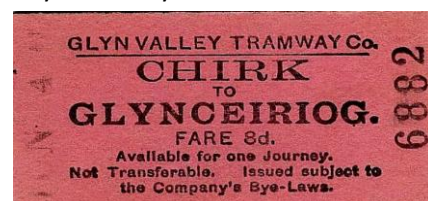
Alighting to discover the reason for this, Tom discovered the crew had spotted the stationary Baldwin loco on a goods train with one wagon derailed and turned on its side, having partially decanting its load of granite into the hedge. The combined efforts of two loco crews, passengers and sympathetic passing pedestrians soon had the wagon righted, re-railed and its load shovelled back. The Baldwin, pictured **right**, and its train then retreated before Tom's train back to Glynceiriog.



Tom concluded, "It was a fascinating and romantic chapter in the history of railways which, with the single gallant exception of the Tallyllyn, has been closed forever". Time would of course prove him wrong!

The New Glyn Valley Tramway & Industrial Heritage Trust is a membership charity with a museum visitor centre located in Glyn Ceiriog, northeast Wales. They own and maintain the former Glyn Valley Tramway engine shed, station yard and coal wharf at Glyn Ceiriog and the passenger waiting room at Pontfadog. They have acquired and display at the Museum a wide variety of items associated with the former Glyn Valley Tramway and the industries of the Ceiriog Valley which the tramway served from 1873 until its closure in 1935.

They have constructed replica items of Glyn Valley Tramway rolling stock to the authentic track gauge of 2ft 4½in for display and demonstration at our Museum and are also re-creating a little piece of the Glyn Valley Tramway in the village of Glyn Ceiriog as a reminder of the past, an educational experience and an attraction for visitors.



A number of enclosed carriage bodies were sold off to local farmers and others for use as sheds or field huts. Fortunately, two of these survived long enough to be identified and acquired by the Tallyllyn Railway Preservation Society in the late 1950s, who subsequently restored them with new underframes for running on the Tallyllyn Railway.



Tallyllyn Railway coach number 15 is one of the ex Glyn Valley Tramway carriages built by The Midland Railway Carriage and Wagon Company of Birmingham in 1892.

Photo: Voice of Clam



Original Glyn Valley Tramway Glyn Ceiriog 2-ton yard crane purchased from H & J Ellis of Salford in 1874.



Pontfadog Waiting Room



GVT Engine Shed & Station Yard at Glyn Ceiriog



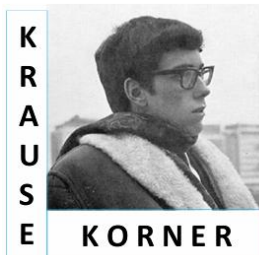
GVT Coal Wharf at Glyn Ceiriog

Site Photos: Glyn Valley Tramway & Industrial Heritage Museum

An explosive story worth repeating.

The last week of August 1966; three friends and I drove from London to Scotland to photograph the demise of steam. One of our ports of call was to be Charlestown, on the banks of the Forth; I had vague memories of a W.J.V. Anderson shot with a J36 which I wanted to emulate on my newly-acquired Rolleicord. We cast up at Dunfermline shed, without a permit. 65288 was in steam in the yard, and I marched into the shed master's office, and asked whether it could work the train on the following morning, which was booked for a Clayton diesel.

No was the reply, but a B1 could replace it for a small bribe - 20 Rothmans and a handful of dosh. Signed, sealed, delivered.



Left, J36 0-6-0 No **65288** simmers in the yard at Dunfermline 62C on the day of Ian's visit. In a SLS report dated May 1st, 1965, "the withdrawal list represents complete withdrawal of all steam locomotives allocated to the Scottish Region, with exception of two J36s, 65288 at Dunfermline and 65345 at Thornton. 65288 is rumored for private preservation" but in the event, both locos were broken up in November 1967 at Arnott Young, Carmyle.

Ironically, the North British 200 bhp Diesel hydraulic 0-4-0 shunter with its number No D2704 on the buffer beam, one of a small class of eight locos, lasted a mere twelve years, being cut at the same place the month before the J36's who had given seventy-two years service! ,

The following morning, we drove down to Charlestown. **61350** arrived, tender-first, and reversed into a siding. And then, all hell broke loose. Sirens blared, men with machine guns appeared, and we were surrounded and searched by men you definitely wouldn't argue with. The canny foreman had failed to tell me that the train went to a top-secret ammunition depot, not the wee harbour at Charlestown. But all's well that ends well, and this was the shot we'd risked our lives for!



Left, BR built Class B1 4-6-0 No **61350** was always a Scottish engine spending its last six months at Dunfermline. Ian had photographed it further up the line at Pitliver.

Small World! New reader **Phil Bevan** emailed to say many thanks for the Emag Leon. It looks extremely interesting. I was particularly interested in Krause Korner as I was at the same school with him (many years ago !) and went on shed bashes with him in the school Transport Society.

Vectis Valedictory

Paul Milner's family left Leeds for a holiday on the Isle of White in 1965, 1966 and 1967.

This little steam enclave captured my heart, all those O2s beavering away and with their panting Westinghouse air pumps, they fascinated me. In 1967 BR steam finished on the island and these lovely Class O2 0-4-4 tanks were done with. While 24 Calbourne survived for preservation, the rest were doomed.



Initially No W24 'Calbourne' and No **W31 'Chale'**, were retained for a couple of months in January 1967 to assist with electrification works trains, whilst all the rest were withdrawn on 1 January 1967. During the 67 holiday I visited Ryde twice and the second time, W31 Chale had lost part of its side tank although dismantling was paused to allow for a last-ditch preservation attempt. Sadly, this was to no avail and 'Chale' was broken up on site by Kings of Norwich across August and September 1967.

When the Southern Railway acquired the Islands three railway companies at the 1923 grouping, they found the inhabitants critical of high fares and dilapidated passenger carriages. The General Manager, Sir Herbert Walker arranged a Director's visit to the island and promised that rail services would be improved. This was followed by quite a number of such trips by senior officers of the Southern who found that a day on the island could combine business with pleasure.

The 18 tank locos inherited were a real mixed bunch with the oldest dating from 1864. Four of the ex-LSWR Class O2 tanks were quickly sent to the island followed by 17 more when they were found highly suitable after fitting enlarged bunkers. All received names as was the custom on the island although no island loco ever sported the name Parkhurst! The Southern continued the practice of 'cascading' old carriages from the mainland with ex-LSWR and SECR bogie sets arriving. SR utility vans were received to move the mountains of summer luggage, and virtually all of the islands five-hundred odd wagons were replaced by 12-ton open wagons. The shortness of many journeys on the island meant the railways were vulnerable to road competition and in 1929 the SR purchased the bus business of Dodson Bros and then transferred the management and half the equity to the Tilling Group under the name of the Southern Vectis Omnibus Co. Ltd. Vectis was the Roman name for the island.



Photos: Paul Milner

No W 31, one of 8 locos in steam on the final day. During July 1966 I kinda bonded with this loco, travelling behind it several times. Most memorably, riding in a half compartment close to the smokebox, along Ryde pier at low tide with the shadow of the train clearly defined below us on the rippled sand. The coupling rod had an unmistakable rattle that came through clearly on my tape recording.
Paul Milner

In April 1951, a correspondent of the Stephenson Locomotive Society visited and reported that W 31 was one of several still in Southern green, however all Ryde engines are now in lined black and beautifully clean.

The End!

Derek Gawn was there at the last



On the last day of steam passenger working, 31 December 1966, eleven 02's remained, twelve if you include the partly cannibalised hulk of W18 'Ningwood' at Newport, which was broken up at the Cement Mills the following month. Of these eleven at Ryde, one was already withdrawn, W35 and two were out of traffic with terminal defects, W20 and W33.

The other eight, W14, W16, W17, W22, W24, W27, W28, W31 were all in steam on the final day, although W16 and W22 didn't venture south of Ryde.

As we know, W24 'Calbourne' and W31 'Chale', were to be retained for a couple of months to assist with electrification works trains, thus all the rest were withdrawn on 1 January 1967. Despite that, W22, was used for at least the first three days of the new year, instead of W31. By 13 January 1967, when I took this snap from the road to the coal merchants' yard at Ryde St. John's Road, six of the withdrawn locos had been shunted, by D2554, into the upper coaling road.

That is the shelter over the coaling stage that you can see.

From the front here you see W16 'Ventnor', W17 'Seaview', W28 'Ashey', W22 'Brading', W14 'Fishbourne', W35 'Freshwater'.

The other three withdrawn locos, W20 'Shanklin', W27 'Merstone', W33 'Bembridge', were scattered at various locations around the shed yard.

A fortnight later, on Saturday 28 January 1967, all nine were taken to Newport, hauled by 'Calbourne', in three trips of three locos each time.

They were the last ever BR workings over the Smallbrook to Newport stretch.

'Merstone', which had been left in pole position, was steamed on 18 April 1967 - thus becoming the last 02 to work for BR - to haul the others to the throat of the Freshwater Yard, where they were broken up by H B Jolliffe of Somerton, between April and August 1967.



Before that final journey, we vowed to go as a little group to Newport the next Saturday, to see what we could do about tidying the old locos up, to restore a little dignity to them in their dying weeks.

So, this old Instamatic was taken on the up platform at Newport just after lunch on Saturday 4 February 1967.

We are looking at the six locos left in the up bay, nearest to furthest, W17 'Seaview', W28 'Ashey', W22 'Brading', W14 'Fishbourne', W33 'Bembridge', W27 'Merstone'.

Although we didn't know it at the time, W27 'Merstone', being a good steamer, had been left in pole position, as she was to be steamed one more time, to haul the others the short distance to the chosen 'killing field' on 18 April 1967.

We set to work that day by accumulating all the oily waste and cotton waste that we could find left in each loco. We had, of course, had experience of loco cleaning parties at Ryde Shed in happier times. We spent the morning stuck in to cleaning W17 'Seaview' and W14 'Fishbourne'.

When my wife, Lesley, was reading the waffle that accompanied the above image, she looked up, bemused, and said "why did you clean locos that were about to be scrapped?". I suppose I can see the logic to that question fifty-nine years later, but it was just something that, at the time, we felt was the right and proper thing to do, as we had loved those old locos. Perhaps, with hindsight, we were all still very young and innocent to the ways of the world unfolding around us. We only fully cleaned two locos, but the rest we did our best to tidy up, adding names, bunker numbers, and shed codes, in chalk.'



Photos: Derek Gawn enhanced by Colin Fairweather

I must admit that I look at this shot all these later - now in my twilight years - and still feel a pride in knowing that my (nearly) fourteen-year-old self helped make W17 'Seaview' gleam like this in the February sunshine, as she awaited being moved the short distance to meet her executioner a few weeks later. To achieve this, we had rounded up all the still full oil cans that we could find left abandoned in the loco's cabs, along with wads of discarded cotton waste. You can see some of our equipment on the platform. It looks as though we were just about the tackle the 'splasher', going by the presence of the nearby oil can on the running plate. Also visible is the old Midland Railway crane and its match wagon, both preserved today at Havenstreet.

By this date the Cowes line had already been closed to passenger traffic for nigh on six months. However, coal, engineering, and condemned stock workings continued over the line for the best part of a further year. The last coal train had left the Wharf in the Cowes direction in early May but loco coal and the third rail for the Shanklin line electrification were being landed at the Wharf, so there was still a need for at least weekly workings (sometimes more) between there and Ryde. The last of these ran on 24 October 1966, after which workings only used the Smallbrook Junction to Newport stretch for a further three months, and which was downgraded to a lengthy engineer's siding for the purpose.



W31 'Chale' at Medina Wharf, 15 August 1966. Photo: Michael R Berry

It can be seen that W31 is carrying her temporary nameplates, as they are today known. All of the still surviving locos had their brass plates removed for safe keeping in early 1966. In an attempt at them keeping at least a little dignity until the end, Ryde Works knocked up these tinfoil replacements and attached them to each loco in early June. They were painted black with cream stenciled lettering. W31 had actually lost its brass plates earlier than its sisters, when one was stolen and the other hastily removed. During the period that she ran with no nameplates at all, she frequently had "Fireball" chalked where the plates should have been. In this photo she is displaying the Shanklin line headcode of one single white disc.

For anybody that doesn't know, Medina Wharf was situated immediately to the south of Cowes on the western bank of the River Medina, which here can be viewed at low tide to the right, with the eastern riverbank beyond.

As you can see, the Wharf had become hopelessly overgrown by this stage. There is nothing much left to see there today other than a few bits of infrastructure in the vicinity of the exchange sidings.

The Ryde to Ventnor line was closed between 1 January and 19 March 1967 for completion of third-rail electrification and raising of the track at stations so that platform step heights conformed to the tube stock. The section from Shanklin to Ventnor was closed permanently with the eight-a-half-mile line to Shanklin being converted to third rail electric operation in just eleven weeks,



Photo: Derek Gawn

A rail-replacement service ran during that time seen here with ECW bodied Bristol MW No 806. Amazingly, that board survives in the IoW bus museum as does the bus itself.

Although not technically a rail-replacement service, Southern Vectis also ran a seasonal Saturdays limited stop service 16A, later 16X, the Ventnor Limited, every thirty-minutes, only calling at the major points, and covering the journey in forty-minutes. BDL578B, No 602, a Bristol Lodekka FLF6G with ECW body waits at Ryde Esplanade to work a service 16A to Ventnor. On a hot sunny day, the sign over the radiator grille isn't going to help the cooling of the engine and might yet still provide steam at Ventnor!



Photo: Leo Roberts >



Photos Richard Rickard

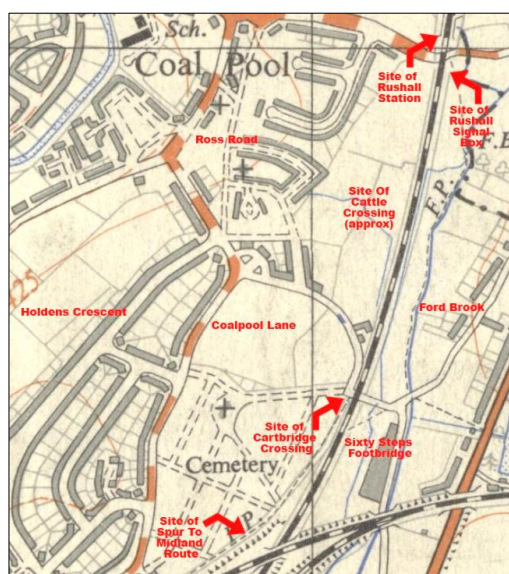
Rob Selvey shares another of legendary Walsall historian Jack Haddock's writings from 1979 **CARTBRIDGE RAILWAY CROSSING**

On The 9th April 1849, the South Staffordshire Railway opened their line between Walsall and Lichfield. For Rushall village residents this was the first stage of a life of rural tranquility gradually becoming involved with the industrial revolution.



When the horse and cart were the only means of transport, Rushall people probably only travelled as far as Walsall for market days. The South Staffordshire Railway saw Rushall's potential and erected a small station that was situated at **Cartbridge Crossing**. The original road from Rushall to Leamore and Bloxwich was down Cartbridge Lane, to cross over the Ford brook and so into Coalpool village. This first Rushall Station must have consisted of two small platforms and a Crossing Keeper's house. The keeper operated the signals and ticket office.

On the 1st February 1861, the lease of the South Staffordshire Railway was acquired by the L.N.W.R. Company. This was a period of expansion for the L.N.W.R. and (it is assumed that) during the 1860's and 1870's; the new Rushall Station was opened to deal with increased traffic. This situation was also nearer to the village centre. The old station was demolished but the crossing at Cartbridge continued to be manned and controlled, working twenty-four hours a day until just after World War II.



Outside the Crossing Keeper's house there was a small ground frame exposed to the elements. In L.N.W.R. days, the outside ground frame operated two small Semaphore home and distant signals. These signals protected the Cartbridge Crossing. However, in L.M.S. days the "up" home signal was always worked by Ryecroft Signal Box, with the "down" signal worked by Rushall Signal Box. Local railwaymen are of the opinion that the distant signals of these two high Cartbridge Crossing signals were fixed and could not be altered by the signalmen. It is suggested that the ground frames at one time also operated points to a **spur leading up to the Midland Railway** Line from Lichfield Road Junction to North Walsall Junction. No local maps show a connection between the L.N.W.R. and Midland Railways at this point, but until about 1955, the remains of sleepers could be observed in the ground.

Another school of thought is that on the site of today's Ryecroft Cemetery there stood three small coal pits. Perhaps for a short while before the turn of the century, this spur was a siding for loading coal wagons.

On the Ryecroft side of Cartbridge Crossing was situated a footbridge serving a pathway from Ryecroft to Cartbridge Lane. This path was known as "Collier's Walk" because many local Ryecroft men walked along it to the Walsall Wood and Aldridge Pits. The footbridge was always known as the **"Sixty Steps"**. It was demolished in 1969. The Cartbridge Crossing was closed to transport after a disastrous fire, but a public footpath is still available to pedestrians.



Above, an 8F passing under the 'sixty steps' footbridge.

Left, Black five No **44805**, its home shed of Saltley painted on the buffer beam lest it should get lost, passes the Cartbridge crossing when reduced to a public footpath.

RUSHALL STATION

Until the turn of the 20th Century Rushall Station was a viable financial proposition. It was never considered a busy station – its platform length had a limit of only two coaches. Senior citizens are of the opinion that Walsall's Tuesday and Saturday market days brought in most passengers. Probably the only day Rushall Station was to deal with the maximum number of passengers would be the annual "Lichfield Bower". This day of festivity was known to grow in popularity with the coming of the railways.

Another useful asset for passengers occurred in 1898, when a Mr Turner opened the Coalpool Pleasure grounds, some few hundred yards from Rushall Station. The Pleasure Grounds consisted of a large circular pool for boating and fishing.

A central island provided tennis courts with a small area for playing marbles. With its tree lined pathways and stalls for games and refreshments the Pleasure Grounds, although primitive by today's standards of entertainment, were a Mecca for children in such times of poverty. Subsequently many local lodges and Sunday school organisations, from Birmingham and the Black Country, came to visit Coalpool during the long hot summers of those by-gone days, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. Mr Turner's son, now aged 86, remembers his father often going to Rushall Station to personally escort his guests for a day's pleasure.

Mr Turner junior is of the opinion that the L.N.W.R. worked party trips with extra coaches attached to local trains.

As regards the casual rail traveler, Rushall Station could never be regarded as busy. Most Rushall people used the service to Walsall, but with the opening of the tramway service between Walsall and Walsall Wood, the writing was on the wall for Rushall Station. By about 1908, the success of the half hourly tram service, at approximately the same fare, was beginning to affect bookings from Rushall Station. Passengers to Walsall could travel direct from the centre of the village, thus eliminating the walk down Station Road and consequently the L.N.W.R. company decided to close down Rushall Station on the 1st March 1909. The platforms were removed shortly after closure but the station buildings, which had living accommodation for the Stationmaster, were used as a residence for railway servants until 1966. In 1969, the buildings were demolished and the land levelled for use as a storage park for railway permanent way motors.

RUSHALL SIGNAL BOX

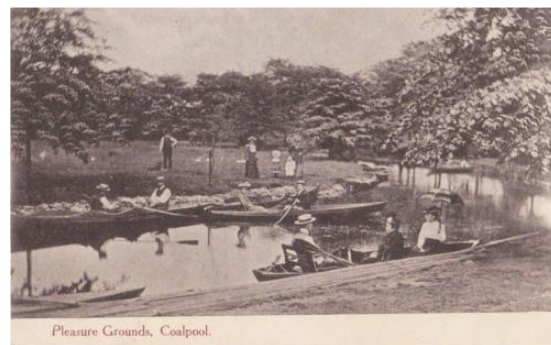
No records exist concerning the time when the first signal box and level crossing were opened. General opinion is that in South Staffordshire Railway days a small pedestrian crossing served a pathway between Rushall and Coalpool village. When the station was erected by the L.N.W.R. the road now known, as Station Road would have been enlarged for horse transport. Possibly the first crossing would have had hand-operated gates.

In 1871, the L.N.W.R. appointed Mr Francis William Webb as its Chief Mechanical Engineer and he embarked on a policy of standardisation of the system. The signal box standing today, in 1979, is typical L.N.W.R. design. It was a standard type "D" signal box with 20 levers and length eighteen feet. Before about the mid 1930's there was little motor transport along Station Road – there were just a few horse drawn carts for local farms. Nighttime duty at Rushall Signal Box before 1930 was lonely and eerie. The view from the box looking north and west was one of rural tranquility.



Brush Type 2 No 31155 passes Rushall box.

During the late 1920's, the Ellis family was resident in the old station building. Mr Ellis senior had three sons who each became signalmen. This dim oil lit signal box is well remembered by Jack Ellis. He recalls being taken up to the signal box as a small boy on a dark, windy, gloomy winter's evening, to visit a signalsman who was nearly due for retirement. This old fellow was of a nervous disposition and whenever anyone ascended the wooden steps to his cabin, he unlocked the cabin door and produced a revolver. This did not scare local railwaymen, who knew him, but any strangers had a shock, for they were not to know the revolver was only one of Woolworth's sixpenny imitations for boys playing cowboys! However, it must have given the old chap a bit of confidence.



Taken around 9pm on a June evening in 1975, Freightliner service 4S88, Cardiff - Newcastle & Edinburgh accelerating over Rushall Crossing hauled by Sulzer Type 4 No **45023, Royal Pioneer Corps**. Note the beer keg in the consist, which I understand were Newcastle Brown empties heading back to base! This was the direct route from Bescot to the north-east until closure in March 1984. Watching the passage of the train is signalman David Jennings, who was a true enthusiast as well as an excellent railwayman, rising to a senior role in the area signalling department. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to enjoy his retirement-RIP.

Photo and caption: John Whitehouse



CATTLE CROSSING

Between Rushall Crossing and Cartbridge Crossing there was, until about 1930, a small **cattle crossing**. This was to transfer cattle from the farms situated on the Coalpool side of the line to the water of the **Ford brook**, which ran parallel with the railway on the Rushall side. Over the years, passing trains killed a number of cattle. After the usual farmer's claims and bad feeling the L.M.S. finally closed this small crossing. Today, anyway, there are no cattle and the Ford brook water would be more deadly than the trains!

During the early 1930's, Rushall Crossing began to have a new problem. Motorcars and lorries were beginning to appear in increasing numbers. The traffic volume between Rushall and Leamore contributed to more work for the Rushall signalmen. They had almost no respite on an eight-hour shift – hauling at the hand-operated wheel. Lorries belonging to the Castle Brick Company, with loads of seven tons, began to break up the crossing's wooden pads and the verges on the approach roads. The L.M.S. at the time evidently claimed damages and compensation, but this did not deter lorries from using the crossing.

The advent of World War II retarded the evolution of road transport. During the war, railway traffic at Rushall Crossing reached its peak and when the war was over a gradual decline of movements from rail and an increase in the use of road transport began to take place. By 1960, the road could be classed as virtually a main road.

Even in 1965, a Rushall Signal Box log records the 6.00am to 2.00pm shift accepting 54 train movements. 1964 saw the withdrawal of the Burton-on-Trent to Wolverhampton passenger trains. The closure of many Cannock Chase pits resulted in the run down of Norton Junction for coal trains. By 1977, a similar box log on a 6.00am to 2.00pm shift only records six train movements. By this time the road traffic was immense. If the original movements had survived into today's road traffic, an impossible situation would have confronted Rushall Signal Box. In today's rush hour traffic, it is common practice for a Rushall signalman to stop a train owing to the density of road traffic, until a gap in the traffic gives him time to open the gates.

From about 1960, accidents began to occur on Rushall crossing, a thing hitherto unknown. Most accidents involved motors hitting the closed gates. One accident, in July 1963, was indeed serious. About teatime, a relief signalman, Chris Clerk, duly accepted a passenger train into the section. It was a two car D.M.U. working the local Burton-on-Trent to Wolverhampton service. The rules were applied, and with the gates closed to road traffic and the D.M.U. was about half distant, travelling at about 60m.p.h. Then, from the Coalpool direction, a Sentinel 10 ton lorry approached the crossing loaded with coke. On pulling up the lorry's brakes failed and smashed through the gates and came to rest across both up and down lines. The train motorman saw this mishap and immediately applied his brakes and retired quickly down the first coach, warning his passengers. The relief signalman threw his signal to danger then jumped out of the rear window of his cabin to take shelter down a bank. The lorry driver also leaped out of his cab and jumped over one of the remaining fences, breaking his ankle in the process. The resulting crash derailed the D.M.V. from the up line to finish across the down line some 20 yards on the Walsall side of the level crossing. Fortunately, with only about six passengers on board the motorman, 64-year-old Mr. J. Jones of Codsall just had time to leave his driving compartment to walk up the first coach and brace his passengers for the crash. One woman was treated for cuts from flying glass and shock. The lorry was completely wrecked, with coke scattered inches deep around the signal box. The line was blocked for two days, and then returned to normal service and, fortunately, no serious accidents have occurred since. However, many cars have broken through the gates, but, thanks to ever-alert signalmen, trains have been stopped in time.

The local passenger trains were axed in January 1965 and the closure of the Norton branch and collieries brought about a sharp decline in rail traffic. Traffic today along the old South Staffordshire line varies, for the line is considered a useful link for steel trains between the northeastern steelworks and South Wales. A regular traveler to Edinburgh, freightliner 4S.88, passes Rushall in up and down directions during the five working days. In addition, at various times express passenger diversions on Sunday's pass Rushall during engineering operations between Saltley and Wichnor Junction. Rushall Signal Box usually opens at 6.00am Monday and closes at 6.00am Saturday. A three-shift system is in operation. Before 1965, the box was manned 24 hours for seven days.



A view from Rushall crossing box shows the road crossing, the station being just the other side of the gates on the Pelsall side of the road. Those Wolves fans get everywhere!

By 1978, the mechanical state of the crossing gate finally caused British Rail to decide to modernise and introduced automatic barriers. Under government rules all old hand operated crossings had to be phased out in the interests of safety. Of course, this also enabled British rail to economise on manpower. Money became available for the modernisation of Rushall crossing and work commenced on Sunday 25th November 1979.

The 10.00pm to 6.00am Friday/Saturday shift was the last mechanical operation of Rushall Signal Box. That Sunday the old wooden gates and hand wheel were taken out of service. The installation of the new barriers including new signalling was completed for testing on the 9th December 1979. From the first 6.00am to 2.00pm shift on the 10th December 1979 Rushall crossing became fully automatic. Now, in 1980, life for the signaller on duty in the old L.N.W.R. signal box is easy, as regards manual work.

This way of life for Rushall Crossing that had existed for over a hundred years finished on the 19 March 1984 and the box suffered the final indignity of being burnt out shortly afterwards. Freight had continued to use the line after closure to passengers until the section from Angelsea Sidings to Ryecroft Junction was closed to all traffic in 1984, the track being lifted two years later. A stub from Angelsea Sidings to Lichfield City continued to see usage to serve an oil terminal at Newtown, Brownhills until 2001, when the stub was closed and mothballed by Network Rail. The section towards Walsall is now a leisure greenway.



Local historian, documenter and photographer, author and community stalwart, **Jack Haddock** was the son any town could be proud to have. Born in Hospital Street, Walsall in 1927, he lived in the same council house until his death and spent his free time recording his beloved town – trains, buses, buildings and people. Jack spent lots of time at the Local History Centre and was never too busy to talk, never too proud to help. A true gentleman, kind and funny – he was always in conversation with someone. Rob Selvey.

Photos: All by Jack Haddock from Rob Selvey collection except where stated

Quiz Time

A popular destination much altered over the intervening sixty-odd years. Whatever is happening involves the installation of a Tannoy, a man on a chair, a man on a ladder and a man with a dog.

Where are we?

Photo: Unknown but shared by Stewart Harding

September Quiz answer: Blyth, Northumberland



Nostalgia Spot. Colin Moss looks back...

I was just two months into my teen years when I took this photo at Plymouth North Road in May 1967.

At No.1 in the pop charts was the Tremeloes "Silence is Golden" (3 weeks). Consecutively following was "A Whiter Shade of Pale" by Procol Harum (6 weeks); The Beatles were next with "All You Need is Love" (3 weeks) then came Scott Mackenzie with "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair)" - 4 weeks. No wonder 1967 was to be always remembered as the 'Summer of Love' !!

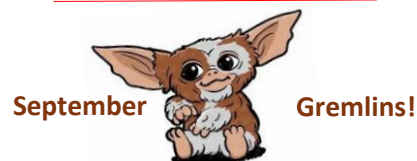
The photo recalls the autonomy of the Western Region of British Railways, which had already been declared as 'non - standard' (1965) by those short-sighted oafs, who sat in their ivory towers at Marylebone. All this was lost on a mesmerized 13-year-old, who gazed in wide wonder at the joy he had found.



Diesel Hydraulics : 'Hymek' **D7079**, still sporting pleasing original livery, and 'Western' **D1017 "Western Warrior"** newly painted into BR Blue, but one of the seven of the fleet to wear small yellow warning panels. Completing this pleasing, colorful image is a lovely TPO vehicle. Take me back.....



Left, Phil Bevan's father saved the long drive back to London by using the car-carrier seen here loading in Perth in 1963. The FB series Vauxhall Victor was introduced in 1960 and ran until 1964 with a substantial improvement regarding rust protection. **Photo: Phil Bevan**



September

Gremlins!

Unfortunately, they stole **David J Hayes** credit for the Class 99 piece and a chunk of **Tony Beresford's** article-here it is...

29th May 1996 was my first, and as far I can recall, only trip on by service train up the Conwy Valley Line. As ever, the service was sparse and I remember setting off early from Tutbury & Hatton station before my Coast and Peaks Rover ticket was valid (0845 back then) because I couldn't get to Blaenau Ffestiniog and back the same day if I didn't. The conductor grudgingly accepted my explanation, waving his finger and advising me not to make a habit of it. Regional Railways North West provided Longsight allocated refurbished unit CI.101 679 (51224+51533) for the scenic journey up the line from Llandudno Junction. After arrival and with barely any time to explore the questionable delights of Blaenau, it was time to return down the branch. Shortly after arrival at Betws-y-Coed, we were informed the train could not continue further and that a dreaded rail replacement bus had been summoned. As far as I was concerned, the unit had behaved itself thus far and appeared to be happily throbbing away in the background. Thirty years later, I can't recall the reason for bustitution, but it wasn't flooding, so often the Achilles Heel of this route.

Night sank: like flakes of silver fire
The stars in one great shower came down;
Shrill blew the wind; and shrill the wire
Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

In Romney Marsh (1894) by **John Davidson**



37219 seen at the Dungeness Railhead in the wee small hours
19/08/2026 with the Marshlink Line Ultrasonic test train
about to depart back towards Ashford.
Photo: Rowan Clark

Our speaker at Codsall in November is Peter Berry who will present 'The Robert Whitfield collection....UK Steam 1948-1960'. To wet our appetite, he has sent a couple of shots to give an idea of the photos in the collection. This looks a very interesting evening so make a date in your diary!



Two very different locos at the platform ends.

Left, LMS Coronation Class No **6239** *City of Chester* sporting black livery in 1948 at Liverpool Lime Street with an up train. Valves blowing, tender full and driver about to mount his steed!

Right, Chester in 1952 with GWR Castle class No **5075** *Wellington*, the former Devizes Castle on a London train. Robert Whitfield's two sons watch as the driver waits for the 'off'. This loco had gone new to Stafford Road and bounced between there and Chester several times until transfer to Laira in 1958, never to return north.

Variety at Oxley North

Simon Dewey explains more.

Arguably, the Birdcage at the end of Fox's Lane was the optimum place to go for local trainspotters in the late 1950s and early 60s, with not just trains passing on the Low Level to Shrewsbury line and others passing across the Stour Valley viaduct on the High Level to Stafford line, there was the busy activity of locomotives going on and off Stafford Road shed : enough to keep spotters well happy for a couple of hours or more at a time.



For those living in the Claregate and Aldersley area there was also Oxley North Junction, a lesser spot but still worth visiting although only Western Region trains could be seen. Here, the north western arm of the triangle of lines at the northern end of the Oxley Branch joined the Shrewsbury line and there was an accessible (albeit by trespassing) open space between the Branch and main lines, reached off Oxley Moor Road by a short path from a gateway in the post and wire boundary fence for use by the signalman to reach the Oxley North Junction signal box. It was a convenient place from which to watch the trains and while none of the LMS line trains could be seen, as well as the Shrewsbury line trains there was the opportunity to see trains coming off or joining the Branch. Also, there was the chance (given a friendly locomotive crew) to get up onto the footplate of an engine waiting at the junction to join the main line to head north towards Codsall and beyond when frequently the train off the Branch could be held for quite some time.

I quite often used to visit the location although never staying for the length of time I would at the Birdcage. The signalman was usually quite tolerant of the small group of boys that gathered there but would occasionally tell them to clear off and on one occasion we were all booked by the local policeman and ejected from the railway territory, he possibly having been called there by the signalman but nothing came of it and no more than a few days later the spotters would have gathered again to watch the trains!



I was particularly fortunate on a couple of occasions while by myself, in the summer of 1962 when I had visited to take some photos, to be invited into the signal box from where I took a shot (sadly only one), of a long freight for Oxley Sidings behind a 38XX 2-8-0 slogging up from the Codsall direction. The signalman also allowed me to climb the post of the signal controlling the Down main line from where I took a photo, **Left**, of *"King George V"* on the Up Cambrian Coast Express. For some reason, while I have a number of photos of trains at the junction, none are of the "Castles" which at the time handled most of the expresses, an omission I regret.

Steam trains taken in subsequent years (from ground level) included "Granges", Standard Class 5s and GW "Halls", such as **6864 "Dymock Grange"**, seen approaching with a northbound express for Shrewsbury and Chester in 1964 and Standard Class 5 **73067** with a southbound express on 21st August 1965.



Northbound trains on the Branch were frequently held waiting access onto the main line, such as Hughes-Fowler Crab No **42900** of Saltley shed with a train of sheeted wagons in April 1962 and “Grange” No **6843** “**Poulton Grange**” with a train of empty mineral wagons in April 1963. The concrete post of the signal controlling access to the main line is noteworthy. Locomotives joining the main line after standing had to work hard to get their trains under way.



Regular Diesel activity through the junction had commenced in 1957 with the arrival of 3-car BR Derby-built DMUs (later to become Class 116) on Lapworth to Wellington services which replaced steam workings on the local stopping trains.

A Derby DMU in its green livery with cream “speed whiskers” approaching the junction and crossing Oxley Moor Road bridge in early 1963. The snow on the ground had started falling at Christmas and lasted until February.

Photo: Doug Nicholson

Diesel locomotives (other than a very occasional 08 from Oxley) did not appear until about 1960 and then only infrequently but in 1962 this changed with the arrival of the Class 52 “Westerns” which took over the express workings that had previously been the role of the “Kings” and “Castles”. These were replaced by Brush Class 47s after only a couple of years which saw out active use of the Oxley Branch and effective closure of the junction in March 1965.

Below, an unidentified “Western” heads south past the signalbox with an express in 1964 and a Class 47, in its original 2-tone green livery, No **D1687**, with train of vans on 9th March 1966



The triangle of lines between Oxley Middle, Branch and North Junctions were used for turning the Birmingham Pullman to even out wear and tear on the leading unit and it was photographed on one such move at the North Junction one evening in August 1962 leaving the main line to work round to Oxley Branch Junction, from where it would reverse and return round the Eastern leg of the triangle to rejoin the main line at Oxley Middle junction to head back to Cannock Road carriage sidings where it was stable and serviced. In earlier busy times, particularly during the summer peak, when engines were returning to Stafford Road shed from Saturday extra workings and access to the turntable there was crowded, engines would use the triangle to turn.

This was one of the few photos I took of a Blue Pullman joining the Branch from the southbound main line at the junction. One other was of a real rarity: Departmental loco **PWM 654** running light past the signal box and joining the Branch also in August 1962 presumably in connection with engineering works further down the line. The locomotive was one of a class of five "Permanent Way Machines" based at various locations around the Western Region. PWM 654 was at the time based at Hookagate Welded Rail Terminal at Shrewsbury but was subsequently reallocated away. It was built by Hudswell Clarke in 1959, works number 431761. Under the TOPS system of numbering, it became 97 654.



The Branch closed in March 1965, but track remained in situ until lifting began in May 1967 when the junction was removed and the signalbox closed. A year after closure of the Branch but before its removal, an old GWR 1903 Dean-built clerestory roofed non gangwayed 3rd Class coach relegated to Departmental use and numbered **DW 14571** was parked on the Branch Down line, **Below**, just short of the actual junction, where it was photographed on 9th March 1966.



Little trace of the junction remains now and the bridge over Oxley Moor Road that carried the Branch was removed in 2016, leaving only its brick abutments and, in the pavement of the road leading down to the bridge, a cast iron GWR boundary marker.

Right, Ray Jeffs photographed it in 2024.



The abandoned ex Great Western Railway line from Kingswinford Junction at Oxley Branch Junction looking north on 9th June 1967. The line had closed in March 1965 and was lifted in the autumn of 1967. Just beyond the boarded crossing the single track ran into two diverging double track lines, the one on the left leading to Oxley North Junction and the one on the right leading to Oxley Middle. On the right of the picture is the boarded-up little Oxley Branch signal box. **Photo & caption: David Rostance**



Lonely Corrou

James Carron's blog from Secretscotland.



Corrou is the highest and most remote mainline railway station in Britain at an elevation of 1,340 ft above sea level and is only accessible by train or by hill track. Located in the heart of Rannoch Moor, a vast plain of grass, moss and bog, the nearest public road is over 10 miles away and the train is the main means of transport in or out.

Today, the station, on the scenic Glasgow to Fort William West Highland Line, consists of a single island platform, protected from the encroaching moor by heavy rails of iron. The only concession to passenger comfort is an airy, wooden shelter. It is rudimentary to say the least. But when you are venturing into one of the few areas of true wilderness in Britain, the last thing you expect is luxury.

The station is a gateway to one of the country's most spectacular and unpopulated landscapes, and it is well used by walkers, climbers and anglers. When it opened in 1894, it was a vital lifeline for those who lived and worked on Corrou Estate.

Although the station is no longer manned it was for decades staffed, usually by a husband-and-wife team who looked after not only the coming and going of trains, but also a tiny Post Office. The job of stationmaster at Corrou was undoubtedly one of the loneliest roles in Britain, akin to manning an offshore lighthouse, but with no leave. For 19 years from 1944, Sandy Thompson was stationmaster here, living with his family in a lonely cottage adjacent to the station. In those days, there was a booking office, siding and goods yard, originally built to serve the estate. Sandy's experiences at Corrou were documented in a short BBC film, *The Station on the Moor*, which was recorded and broadcast in 1965. The interview offers a fascinating insight into the isolated life of a stationmaster on Rannoch Moor.

Born in Joppa, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, and brought up in nearby Millerhill, Sandy left school at the age of 14 and started on the railways as a train register boy at Millerhill signal box. After a short period at Berwick, he was put in charge of his first signal box, at Esk Junction, near Edinburgh. In 1925, he moved to Mallaig Junction, before transferring to Arrochar & Tarbert and then Crianlarich Upper where he remained until 1944 when the post at Corrou came up. 'I was very keen to get a stationmaster's job and had thought that if I got the position at Corrou then I would have the necessary qualifications to allow me to get a stationmaster's job,' he told the BBC. 'When we got to Corrou, we got to like the place and after that I forgot all about stationmaster's positions. We just wished to remain in Corrou.'

Sandy and his family arrived in the depths of winter – there were three feet of snow on the ground to welcome them – but soon settled into the station cottage across the rails from the platform. Alone on the moor, their nearest permanent neighbors were four miles away at Corrou Shooting Lodge. His three children attended Tulloch School, leaving home every weekday morning on the 9.14am train and returning at 4pm while his wife was employed as signalwoman. The couple worked long days, starting at 3am and continuing until the final train of the night cleared Tulloch – the next station down the line – at 7.50pm. Before breakfast they dealt with three goods trains and a passenger service, accepting each from Rannoch Station, to the south, before handing it on to Tulloch. At 9am, the Post Office at Corrou opened with mail – which arrived on the 9.14am train – to sort, postal orders to sell and telegrams to send. In those days, a lot of Corrou Estate's shopping was done by post, and the lodge postman would visit each morning. The stationmaster also oversaw the loading of timber in the goods yard, the unloading of estate supplies, all of which arrived by rail, and a steady stream of passengers, the majority of whom arrived during the shooting season. Winter was a particularly testing time at Corrou, the exposed station frequently battered by the elements. 'It was pretty grim at times, but we just had to get on with it,' Sandy said. 'I've seen five or six surface men and sometimes the flying squad out there to keep the points clear and let the trains through. It was impossible for us really to work shifts about because there were times it was impossible for any person, especially a woman, to be working in the cabin during snow and blizzards. It was very difficult to see anything in the snowstorms. It was just blowing like smoke, and it was very choking.'

‘The winter of 1946/47 was a very bad one, the deer lying dead in their groups here and there down the back of the snow fences. It was just blowing a hurricane. ‘I worked 24 hours a day for almost three weeks in 1947. But the trains got through. The snow ploughs worked all night, just one after another running backward and forward between Crianlarich and Fort William.’



The family's groceries arrived by train and there were occasional shopping trips to Fort William. If anyone in the area fell ill, word would be sent to Tulloch and the railway company would send an engine and coach with a doctor or a nurse. Sunday was the only day off and with no church nearby the family would listen to a service on the radio before venturing outdoors. Sandy said: ‘We would be hiking in the hills or walking round the loch (Loch Ossian). We would go to the top of Benavreich (Beinn a'Bhric) where there was a big rock called the Witch's Chair which was shaped something similar to a chair and it was the custom to sit there and wish a wish.’ While Sandy also enjoyed shooting and fishing, his children made their own amusements, spotting wildlife, sledging on iced pools during the winter and fishing in the summer. ‘We did feel it a bit lonely at times, but we just knew we couldn't get away and we had the wireless which kept us,’ he added.

As time passed, Sandy witnessed changes on the line, most notably the replacement of steam locomotives with diesel engines. ‘We missed the old steam engines. I think it was more homely seeing the old steam engine coming chugging round the corner,’ he recalled. Eventually the time came to reluctantly bid Corroul farewell and in 1963, with their children grown up, Sandy transferred to the signal box at Corpach and he and his wife moved into a house in the nearby village of Caol. ‘I did like Corroul,’ he said. ‘We find it's a big change from being in the moors by ourselves. We were never in the habit of having so many neighbors round us. We took it strange at first.’

Corroul for its part continues to welcome travelers, although the goods sidings are no more and the station has been unmanned since 1988 when the signal box closed. It served as a bunkhouse for climbers for a time – known as Morgan's Den – and now offers boutique B&B. The station house, home to the Thompson's for nearly 20 years, was demolished and replaced in 2000 by a Scandinavian-inspired structure which is now a restaurant. Despite the passage of time, the station on the moor remains as remote and isolated as ever.



LNER double header with Peppercorn Class K1 2-6-0 No. **62005** (posing as 62012) and Thompson Class B1 4-6-0 No. **61264** (posing as 61243 SIR HAROLD MITCHELL) on the climb towards Corroul station with the 08:35 Fort William to Crianlarich photographers' charter on 5th October 2002.

Photo & caption: David Rostance

London & North Western Railway co. Buses 1913.

Rob Selvey shares another of Walsall historian **Jack Haddock's** writings

In order to better co-ordinate the movement of isolated communities to travel by rail, the London North Western Railway introduced double deck buses into service in several parts of the countryside in 1913.



One such service was introduced between Brownhills and Hednesford stations, serving Chasetown, Chase Terrace, Heath Hayes and Boney Hay, mining villages on Cannock Chase. Brownhills station was the hub of the operation, garaging 2 Milnes Daimler and 1 Commer cars vehicles on land at Brownhills Goods yard and canal interchange basin. Brownhills after the turn of the century was a hive of activity, several horse and dray sets distributing parcels and goods throughout the area after transfer from rail. Two vehicles were in daily use, the third being spare and available for covering maintenance or repair as necessary, the buses in use being timed to make passenger train connections at the two stations, an early attempt at traffic integration.

Drivers were recruited from the staff at Ryecroft (L.N.W. Shed 9) at Walsall, younger men being preferred to their more senior colleagues. The chosen men were Sidney Trubshaw Hayes, Sidney Broughton and William Bate and were given instruction in driving and maintenance before commencement of the service on the 13th June 1913. All lived adjacent to Ryecroft Depot and signed on there before proceeding to Brownhills by local passenger train (on the cushions) or in the cab of one of the many freight locomotives passing through Brownhills over the old South Staffordshire line. Conductors were recruited from the office staff at Walsall station and Ryecroft Depot, their names having gone unrecorded, takings and receipts being handed in to the chief cash clerk at Brownhills station.



On the opening date of this experimental commuter bus service crowds gathered at both termini and along the route to witness this innovation. The chain driven buses with open cabs, looking immaculate in L.N.W. Livery and being well patronised, surmounted the several steeply inclined roads along the route linking the busy little villages. Children in the street liberally spotted with horse droppings broke off their play to watch in amazement as the vehicles slowly accelerated from the bus stops closely tied to the village centres, principal shops and public houses, leaving a blue haze and a sound signature that soon became part of village life. Parcels accommodation was provided over the driver's semi canopy which provided sparse protection against the elements.

On the journey over the exposed and windswept Cannock Chase, the drivers resorting to waterproof rugs for primitive vehicles, where creature comforts were much inferior to the foot plate of a Webb coal engine's cab front plate and spectacle windows. The service was successful but was quickly terminated by the outbreak of World War One when the vehicles were quickly militarised and converted for war service as troop carriers offering flexibility and greater speed. Two of the three drivers volunteered for army service; Bill Bate finding himself in the Royal Army Medical Corps as an ambulance driver working with Ford model T units. Sid Haynes knowledge of motor vehicles saw him drafted into the Royal Army Service Corps where he drove a variety of early vehicles and remembered seeing ex-railway buses being also used as ambulance and mobile field dressing stations, with another becoming a mobile pigeon loft for pigeons carrying messages from the front line.

On cessation of hostilities the bus service was not reinstated, Walsall Corporation being granted powers to run services over Cannock Chase including the pioneering railway bus routes. Sid Broughton returned to Ryecroft to work at the depot until his retirement at the age of 65 years, after the 1914 withdrawal of the bus service, joined by Bill Bate after his return from wartime duties. Sid Haynes however, on demobilisation, joined Walsall Corporation working on it's expanding bus fleet as it developed a wide network of routes in the 1920's. He was promoted to motor bus shed foreman and remained so until his retirement. All three ex L.N.W. bus drivers retired about 1954, coincidentally all being residents of Webster Road, Walsall, Haynes lived at No 1, Bate at No 77 and Broughton at No 102.

Living in Webster road since 1929 a couple of hundred yards from Ryecroft shed I consider myself privileged to know and live with these men and collected these notes from the "Bus" men by conversation or tape recording, especially Sid Haynes who I worked with at Birchills bus depot, Walsall, during World War 2, myself being a maintenance engineer and fitter.

Several differing location photos were taken by local businessman Mr Tinsley, who had them made into a series of black and white postcards, very popular with visitors or enthusiasts in the area, at the same time giving the 1913 L. & N.W. service welcome publicity. The excellent originals are typical of the era, where "slow" films with very fine- grain structure preserve much fine detail and definition, and can be enlarged to impressive prints on modern papers.

The buses were chain driven to the rear axle, with a body mounted plaque stating simply, "Keep Well Oiled", to ensure efficient lubrication. Well sited lettering was emphatic, "Speed 12 miles per hour", a ponderous limitation to our generation, but probably very realistic for early questionable suspensions and brake capabilities available on such early vehicles. The open topped upper deck was gained by climbing a spiraling staircase from the rear platform to seats of slatted wood. Such an exposed observation area would have been fine in summertime, but not so well patronised in driving rain or exposure to the bitter winds which were typical of the open and exposed parts of Cannock Chase in winter.

Selected ambitious, young men were chosen to crew the buses, drivers being given training in elementary maintenance and fitting, enabling attention to be given to an ailing or failing vehicle to get it back to base. A simple tool and spares kit would have been carried (spanners, spark plugs, hoses, oil, chain-links and lifting jacks) to overcome shortcomings in reliability over the rough potholed and un-metalled roads of the 1910's, such early road vehicles never being able to approach the reliability records off a steam hauled railway. Full uniforms and caps were worn, smart looking and a far cry from the typical overalls of the footplate crews. The turnout of both men and machines was purposeful and impressive, as befitted the enterprising new venture. Parcels storage was available on top of the canopied open cab, and large destination boards clearly indicated the routes. The open road beckoned. The "omnibus" pioneered an industry.

A very creditable model of these early buses was released some years ago by Corgi Models, one of the series being painted in full North Western livery and proudly carrying an impressive board displaying Hednesford as the destination. This range of model, Thorneycroft built open-toppers, both accurate and highly coloured in a range of different owner's liveries, vividly depicts these early vehicles and local transport which caught on quickly enabling sedentary populations to at least have mobility to explore and visit towns and villages 20-30 miles away.



These pioneer North Western bus crews, perhaps never to achieve fame on a locomotive footplate, became "Kings of the Road", respected and revered in their daily meanderings over the beautiful and steeply inclined early roadways on the Chase, pioneers of the public service road industry and heralding services allowing both rural and urban populations, cheap and timetabled travel which would liberate, stimulate, challenge and encourage travel as we know it today.



A WEDNESBURY WINTER'S NIGHT- Part Two

By David J. Hayes. Images As Credited



The Dudley line through Wednesbury was opened by the South Staffordshire Railway (SSR) in March 1850. Its passenger services were withdrawn in July 1964 and the line survived for almost 29-years as a Black Country freight-only byway until its closure in March 1993.

The 1970s was a particularly busy period and, as of December 1976, Wednesbury No. 1 Signal Box was potentially signalling well over 300 movements each week (see later) and operating on a three-shift basis from 6am Monday through to 6am Saturday, with weekend working as and when needed. The shifts themselves were as follows: 6am-2pm, 2pm-9pm and 9pm-6am. The one chosen for the purposes of this article commenced at 9pm on the evening of Wednesday 8th December 1976.

Having arrived for duty at 8:55pm and exchanging pleasantries with his fellow signaller colleague, and wishing him a pleasant evening, our man, David Jennings, signs himself as being on duty in the Wednesbury Train Register (WTR) and begins to settle into the surroundings that will be his second home for the next nine hours. First things first, he wastes no time getting his priorities in order by boiling the kettle ready for a brew! While the kettle's boiling, it's worth giving mention to the signalling arrangements at Wednesbury No. 1 Box as of 1976.

Wednesbury No.1 acted as a fringe box to Walsall PSB (Power Signal Box) at Pleck Junction, about two miles distant in the Down (north) direction; this section was operated using track circuit blocks. The next signal box up the line from Wednesbury was Eagle Crossing, in Eagle Lane, Great Bridge, roughly one mile distant in the Up (south) direction. Conventional absolute block signalling was used on this section. The arrangements for the Princes End line, opened in September 1863 and much of which had been singled in the mid-1960s, was electric token block working on the single line section, with an auxiliary token machine located near to Wednesbury's Down starter signal. The said singled section ran roughly from a point adjacent to Ocker Hill Power Station to Princes End Signal Box, which was located in Upper Church Lane (around two miles from Wednesbury); Princes End acted as a fringe box with Wolverhampton PSB.

Circa Summer 1974: Wednesbury No. 1 Signal Box with the gate wheel for opening and closing the level crossing gates in Potters Lane visible through the end window. Meanwhile, Class 40 No. **40 129** (ex-D329) reverses a block tanker train into Wednesbury Exchange Sidings. The service is 6G31, the 05:15 SuX AIR COY from Stanlow (due Wednesbury at 8:22am), which has arrived via the Princes End line and is laden with oil for the Patent Shaft Steelworks. This service could alternatively run to Witton Imperial Metal Industries (arr. 8:16am), but with a heavier payload and along the more direct Grand Junction route from Bushbury Junction. **David Edwards.**



Kettle boiled, David Jennings pours himself a cuppa, removes a Kit-Kat from his lunchbox and makes himself comfortable. It may have been bitterly cold outside and snowing heavily, but inside Wednesbury No.1 it was cosy and snug, the overhead heaters giving off a warm orangey glow in the subdued light. It was spotless inside, the floor having an almost shiny newness to it after having been given a good mopping-over by the previous signaller just before the end of his shift. In addition to the familiar signalling equipment and levers etc. to be found in such a place of work, at the Potters Lane-end of the box is a large diameter wheel (more suited to the bridge of a steam ship than the confines of a railway signal box!), which, when manually turned by the "Bobby", opened and closed the level crossing gates in Potters Lane. These heavy-duty gates had been replaced by push-button operated lifting barriers, complete with associated flashing lights and audible warning siren, by the time I started making regular visits to Wednesbury No.1 from 1984 onwards, by which time several other changes had also taken place.

I believe the new level crossing infrastructure was installed circa December 1981. This was probably around the same time that the pedestrian footbridge in Potters Lane was removed along with the remaining semaphore signals, all of which can be seen in the pictures accompanying this six-part feature. The bridge carrying the GWR main line over that of the SSR alignment was removed in October 1982, but a new span was later installed to carry Route One of the Midland Metro in the late 1990s.

A London & North Western Railway structure, Wednesbury No.1, in 1976, was flanked by two bridges. One of these was the lattice footbridge of metal construction, which could be used by pedestrians to cross the line when the crossing gates were closed against road traffic in Potters Lane (it also provided a good vantage point from which to photograph trains), the other being the GWR bridge carrying what was once the Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton Low Level route. This had opened through Wednesbury with mixed-gauge tracks in November 1854 and had formed part of the GWR's main line from London Paddington to the Wirral (Birkenhead Woodside); Wolverhampton became the northernmost limit of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's beloved broad-gauge empire. A mixed gauge connection was provided at Wednesbury between the GWR and the SSR in June 1859, which eventually evolved into what became Wednesbury Exchange Sidings. Following the full inauguration of electric services on the Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton High Level - Stour Valley - main line in March 1967, the old GWR route between Birmingham and Wolverhampton lost its main line status overnight and became something of a passenger byway. Its surviving token peak-hour Class 122 "Bubble Car" passenger shuttle between Birmingham Snow Hill and Wolverhampton Low Level was withdrawn five years later in March 1972. The line's status was then further relegated to that of a fragmented freight-only byway between Wednesbury and the Swan Village coal depot at Black Lake, and likewise from Wednesbury to Wolverhampton Steel Terminal.

The surviving section to Wolverhampton also served two scrap metal merchants in the Bilston area, Arnott Young and Norton Barrow, and a small Esso oil depot at Priestfield. Of those three mentioned, only Norton Barrow, at Moxley, survived into the 1980s and continued to dispatch rail-borne scrap to central Scotland (Clydesdale), North Kent (Sheerness), South Yorkshire (Aldwarke and Stocksbridge) and South Wales (Cardiff) until August 1992. The oil depot at Priestfield had previously been supplied by rail from Fawley and then later from Bromford Bridge, which had a pipeline connection with Fawley, but its traffic is believed to have finished at the end of March 1976. The section of line beyond Moxley to Wolverhampton Steel Terminal was officially closed in May 1983, thus requiring all steel services to the terminal having to be routed via Bescot, Soho Road and the "Stour"

Wednesbury to Black Lake, which passed through the 412-yard Hill Top tunnel, finally closed in December 1981, although its traffic to Swan Village coal depot had most likely finished before then. This section had usually been traversed by one of the two Wednesbury Class 08 Pilot engines whilst engaged in the tripping of wagons to and from the said coal depot. Quite often a rake of 16-ton coal wagons could be seen stabled on the GWR bridge spanning the Dudley line at Wednesbury. Condemned wagons, with "Cond" crudely written on them, could also be found laid up here as well, no doubt awaiting final movement to nearby Cashmore's at Great Bridge for disposal or perhaps for breaking and melting-down at the Patent Shaft Steelworks, which, during the 1970s, also received block train deliveries of oil from Llandarcy, Ripple Lane, Stanlow, Teesport and Thames Haven.



These two November 1986-dated images may give some idea of how the interior of Wednesbury No. 1 might have looked a decade earlier back in December 1976. Ian Johnston is the signaller on duty. Both **David J. Hayes**.

Much of the former GWR alignment between Birmingham and Wolverhampton now forms the aforementioned Midland Metro. Opened at the end of May 1999, this was initially traversed by Italian-built T-69 trams, which left the GWR formation at Priestfield and took to road-running for the last mile or so to Wolverhampton St. George's. The Metro has since been extended, especially at the Birmingham end, and today it is Spanish-built Urbo-3 bi-modal trams (battery and electric powered), introduced in September 2014, that now glide between the two cities, a far cry from the "Castles", "Kings", "Westerns" and Blue Pullman units of yesteryear! A further extension was expected to open in 2026 from Wednesbury to Dudley by using the former SSR formation (closed March 1993).

Other than a faint ticking coming from the wall-mounted clock positioned above the desk, all had been quiet in Wednesbury No.1 since coming on duty. The snow was still coming down with a vengeance, the outside silence occasionally punctuated by the muffled sound of freshly fallen snow being compacted as the occasional motor vehicle cautiously negotiated its way along Potters Lane and rumbled over the level crossing, but other than that it was quite peaceful. At 21:30, the bell code 7-5-5 (“ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding” – “ding, ding, ding, ding, ding” – “ding, ding, ding, ding, ding”) is received from the “Bobby” at Princes End, indicating that the Princes End line and box were now closed for the night and wouldn’t re-open until 6am the next morning. The last train to use it that evening, as recorded in the WTR by the previous signaller on duty, had been an 8Z20 inter-regional special to Spring Vale Steelworks (see later). Although traffic was ever diminishing, Wednesbury in 1976 was still something of a rail freight “hotpot”. Based on information contained in the official Working Time Table (WTT) and Local Trip Working (LTW) booklet for the period covering December 1976, there were still some 340 potential booked movements each week (including Light Engine moves), of which 287 were freights. However, as I have often mentioned before, I say “potential” because what was booked to run and what actually did run on any given day could totally be at odds to what was shown in official WTT/LTW publications. Of those potential 287 freights each week, 77 were booked to traverse the Princes End line, the lion’s share of these (roughly 50 trains per week) being generated by Spring Vale Steelworks.

The busiest day at Wednesbury, again based on WTT/LTW information, was a Wednesday with a total of 61 freights being scheduled to appear, but only 15 of these were shown as routed over the Princes End line, which at this time was booked to be used by 14 or 15 freights most weekdays (18 on a Monday). The daily figures for Wednesbury equated to between 50 and 61 freights (seven on a Saturday between 00:01 and 05:00). These included steel trains from Cardiff, Corby, Scunthorpe, Teesside, Tyneside and Workington conveying various products such as bars, beams, billets, coils, pig-iron, plate, reinforcing rod, tubes etc for unloading at such locations as Aston Goods, Brierley Hill, Coventry Goods, Great Bridge, Pensnett, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton; block trains of oil from Bromford Bridge, Cardiff Docks, Immingham and Thames Haven to Shrewsbury (Abbey), Soho Pool (Texaco), Albion (Gulf) and Wednesbury (Patent Shaft Steelworks) respectively; china clay from Cornwall to the Potteries; Freightliner workings from Cardiff Pengam Freightliner Terminal (FLT) to and from Edinburgh Portobello FLT, and from Dudley FLT to and from Glasgow Gushetfaulds FLT; traditional mixed wagonload freights to and from Bescot, Gloucester and Severn Tunnel Junction; and raw materials to Spring Vale Steelworks. There were also various local trips and ad-hoc engineers’ trains, too, the latter often bringing spoil and/or spent ballast for disposal to the engineers’ tip at Wednesbury and departing with any empties. Wednesbury was also one of several designated ballast concentration points for the region, served by ballast trips from Nuneaton.

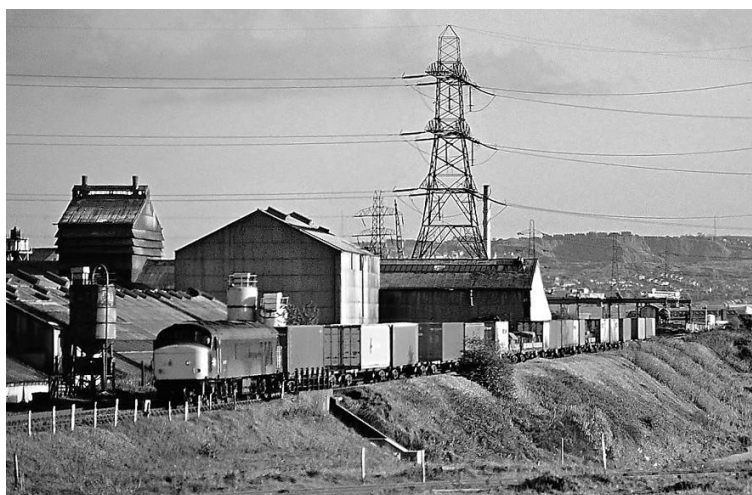
It’s now 9:40pm and just as David Jennings tops-up the kettle in readiness for another brew a little later on to accompany his sandwiches, notification is received of a train awaiting permission to reverse out of Wednesbury Exchange Sidings. The level crossing gates are duly closed and, moments later, train 8Z73 begins its cautious propelling movement, brake-van first, through the blizzard-like conditions along the Down line towards Walsall, the train’s Guard attempting to keep a close eye on proceedings from the veranda of his brake-van. Before long, the locomotive can be heard reverberating beneath the GWR overbridge. The huge 138-ton bulk of Class 46 No. 46 004 (ex-D141) then rumbles past the box, over Potters Lane crossing and through the surviving remnants of Wednesbury Town station before coming to a halt just beyond the distant Holyhead Road overbridge. With the route set and the “peg” in the “off” position, the “Peak” draws forward with its lengthy consist and takes the Up line towards Dudley at 9:47pm. The service, an inter-regional special, may well have been conveying steel empties retuning to South Wales. With a visible trace of smoke wafting from the brake-van stove pipe, the rear of 8Z73 glides gently over Potters Lane and passes beneath the old GWR formation for the second time as it heads sedately into the darkness with the train Guard now safely snug inside. Although such a working may not have normally required Banking assistance from Great Bridge to Dudley, railhead conditions on this particular evening may well have dictated otherwise. The locomotive for 8Z73 had actually arrived earlier, at 8:25pm, as a 0Z73 Light Engine movement from off the Princes End line. Based on an entry made in the WTR by the signaller previously on duty, it is believed to have been worked by the loco off the 8Z20 inter-regional special to Spring Vale Steelworks mentioned earlier. This had been held at Wednesbury (19:18 to 19:39) to await the arrival of the Banking engine from Great Bridge for the climb to Princes End. The said Banking duty, 0T06 (sometimes referred to as T6) was usually diagrammed for a Class 25, which also assisted trains from Great Bridge to Dudley as well. The loco also acted as yard pilot at Great Bridge Steel Terminal, which was still a busy railhead back in the mid-1970’s handling traffic from some of the country’s major steel producing regions, such as South Wales and Teesside.

One of its main traffics as at winter 1976, was that of billet from the Duport Steelworks at Llanelli, conveyed to the Black Country by block trains from Llandeilo Junction. These had previously been off-loaded at Langley Green, believed at the premises of Cox & Danks Ltd, but had recently switched to running to Great Bridge in 1976. Unfortunately, production at Duport's ended in 1981 and Great Bridge closed soon after but subsequently found re-use as an operating base for Project Mercury Telecommunications trains. It later became an "overflow" facility to Wednesbury Steel Terminal during the early 1990s before closing for good in November 1992, together with Wednesbury Steel Terminal and Wednesfield Road Goods, the latter acting as a "satellite" site to Wolverhampton Steel Terminal.

As David Jennings enters the relevant details of 8Z73 in the WTR, the 3-2-5 bell code ("ding, ding, ding" – "ding, ding" – "ding, ding, ding, ding, ding") is received from the Great Bridge "Bobby" at Eagle Crossing for 4S88, the 16:15 SSuX Cardiff Pengam to Edinburgh Portobello Freightliner (booked through Wednesbury at 9:23am). Crossing gates, again, duly closed, and having no doubt passed 8Z73 somewhere in the vicinity of Great Bridge, the snow encrusted snout of sister "Peak" Class 46 No. 46 006 (ex-D143) looms out of the darkness beneath the GWR overbridge, at 9:56pm, with its Scottish-bound 'liner, windscreen wiper blades working frantically in a gallant attempt to provide good visibility of the road ahead. Although a Class 4 working, 4S88 is travelling considerably slower than its permitted top speed of 75mph. Even so, the rail joints immediately outside Wednesbury No. 1 are still taking quite a pounding as the heavy 'liner passes quickly over them, the rhythmic vibrations being felt underfoot in the box. This service was booked for Banking assistance from Stourbridge Junction and was scheduled to call at Dudley FLT (19:56-21:05). Further stops for traffic purposes were scheduled to be made at Darlington (for Stockton FLT) and Newcastle Follingsby FLT before arriving in the Scottish capital the following morning, the service passing its southbound counterpart (4V73) en-route, which would also be seen at Wednesbury several hours later (to be detailed in part 5).

As the rear of 4S88 clears the level crossing, passes beneath the Holyhead Road and recedes towards Walsall with some considerable mileage still to cover, the large flakes of falling snow swirl violently in the vortex created in its wake. After re-opening the crossing gates in a deserted snow-covered Potters Lane, entering the required details in the WTR and with the time now a little after 10pm, David Jennings can now relax as he settles down to tucking into his sandwiches and second mug of tea of the evening.

To be continued ..



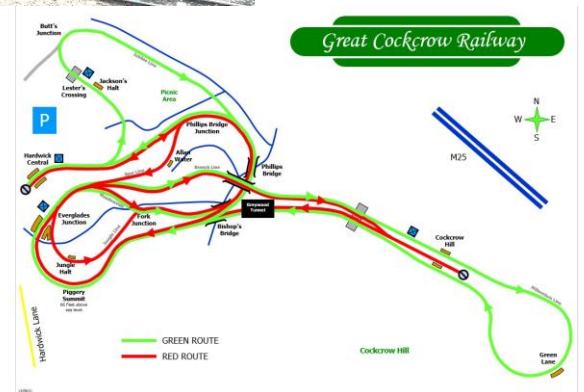
Above Left, Tuesday 9th July 1985: This mid-1980s image depicts a movement similar to that performed by 8Z73, as mentioned in the article. Class 45/0 No. 45 013 (ex-D20) has reversed its train out of Wednesbury Exchange Sidings (WES) and, having just passed beneath the Holyhead Road bridge, is now switching from the Down to the Up Dudley line with 6V70, the 13:58 SSuX Speedlink from Cliffe Vale (Stoke) to Severn Tunnel Junction, which has also called at Bescot Yard (16:29-17:26); note the facing cross-over from the Up to the Down running line, giving access to WES, which had been further re-configured by this date compared to how seen in Part One. The consist of 6V70 is formed of three empty PBA "Tiger Clay" wagons from the Potteries returning to Devon/Cornwall and a number of mainly empty SPA steel carrying wagons, collected at Wednesbury (booked 17:34-18:02), returning to Allied Steel & Wire, Cardiff. A further call for traffic purposes may also be made at Brierley Hill Steel Terminal (booked 18:29-18:58).

Above Right, Friday 23rd June 1986: Possibly resembling the Cardiff to Edinburgh Freightliner (4S88) mentioned in the article, "Peak" Class 45/0 No. 45 040 (ex-D50 and minus its King's Shropshire Light Infantry nameplates) approaches Wednesbury, at 7:43pm, with 4S50, the 19:20 FO (18:55 FSSuX) Freightliner from Dudley FLT to Glasgow Gushetfaulds FLT. The service will be electric-hauled from Bescot Up & Down Goods Loop (D-E 19:48-20:17), going forward via Soho Road and the Stour Valley main line. The alignment seen here closed in March 1993 but was expected to re-open in 2026 as an extension of the Metro from Wednesbury to Dudley. **Both David J. Hayes.**



Mike Morgans sent photos of the **Great Cockcrow Railway** at Chertsey, Surrey.

The GCR has over 45 steam and 8 instant start locomotives, many of which will be operational during summer. The majority are miniatures of engines that would have run on the four main pre-War British railways and BR. At the GCR they have two different routes that you can take whilst visiting the railway, green and red.



Both routes have equal ride lengths of 1¼ miles and will take about the same amount of time (approx. 20 minutes). However, they do take in different elements of the railway, whilst weaving themselves in and out throughout the whole journey.

Your chance to comment on previous items, add a photo or story, correct our mistakes and generally add to our knowledge... we would love to hear from you!

Kidderminster Courier

No, not the local paper but **David J Hayes** sent this after a recent visit.



Looking good at 63-years of age, Class 52 "Western" No. **D1062 Western Courier** makes for a fine sight basking in the late afternoon summer sun whilst resting at the Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster station on Tuesday 25th August 2026. Looking equally impressive, at 78 years, on the right is a 1948-built Western Region (WR) inspection saloon No. 80969, which was used by Divisional and District Officers to visit various railway sites.

The WR's Black Country inspection saloon was housed in a special shed located opposite the Butlers Brewery, just outside Wolverhampton Low Level station (with special thanks to Paul Dorney for additional details).

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