

STOUR VALLEY

S T E A M



SPRING 2014, ISSUE 156

JOURNAL OF THE EAST ANGLIAN RAILWAY MUSEUM



**Leslie Bernard Houghton
1948 - 2014**

OVER 40 YEARS OF RAILWAY PRESERVATION



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STOUR VALLEY STEAM

EDITORIAL

In the last Editorial in SVS155 we speculated about the Museum's fortunes in the then forthcoming summer season.

Since then, there has also been substantial work on the ground in connection with the Heritage Lottery - funded schemes and some other site improvements. Indeed, there is more happening at this level than at any time since the Manpower Services Schemes of the 1980s. However, from comments received it seems we could do more to bring some of this "Good News" to the notice of the general public.

Steps have been taken to address some of the promotional failings, including the appointment of Keith Chadwick as Events Planning and Customer Services Manager. We must all work with him to improve our offering and bring it to the notice of the paying public. In addition, recently - appointed Trustee Reeves Watson will be taking the lead in developing a Marketing Strategy. The plan is for 2014 to be a time to take stock, there are to be fewer events but better managed, and there will be a concentration on improving awareness of the site itself. This should take some of the load off the General Manager, Ian Reed, and allow him to focus more on key tasks like financial management and civil engineering.

The colour pages of the last issue of SVS were well received and the Editorial Team would like this enhancement it to be continued. BUT (you will be amazed to hear) there is additional cost involved which will need improved funding if it is to be viable in the long run. You will find an article inside setting out the situation in more detail. The most "sustainable" of these options seems to be sponsorship and to this end this magazine contains an appeal for an advertiser to help us offset the extra cost incurred.

David Reeve - Editor

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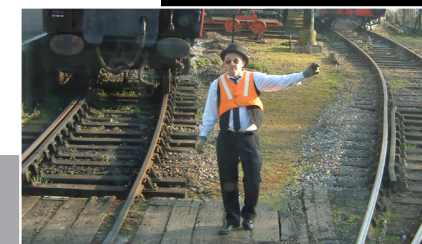
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Front Cover:
Les Houghton - Trustee,
Director, Secretary,
Member, Neighbour and
Friend of the Museum.
1948 - 2014

Funding of a New Storage Building

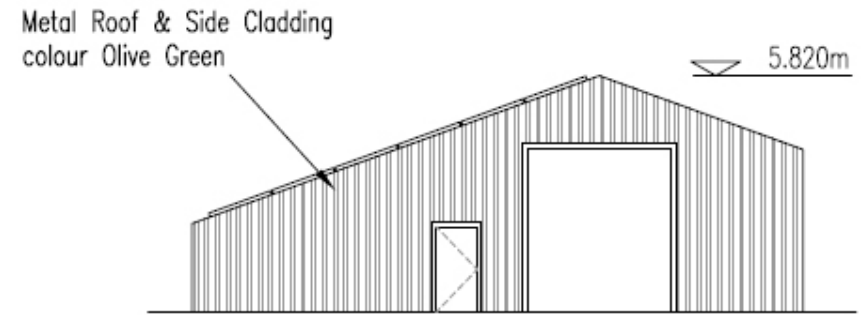
By Jeff Kilpatrick

In SVS155, notice was given that the Trustees had received an offer of part-funding for a storage building in the Orchard, on a basis similar to that previously offered (but later withdrawn when the Government-subsidised feed-in tariffs changed) by an outside entity called Lumicity. The Trustees were minded to accept the offer, but wished to hear members' views on the matter. I was the appointed conduit for the expression of views and the raising of any concerns, and this is the update I promised you.

After the proposal was made known it soon became an open secret that the offer had come from Trustee Ian Reed. Since what we might call the "exposure period" of the concept coincided with the weeks during which Ian indicated (from a thousand miles away) that he might wish to re-think his future at the Museum – a subject conclusively thrashed out at the open meeting on Saturday 28th September and recorded elsewhere in this edition of SVS - there was a fair degree of speculation about how things might pan out. In the event most of the comments were understandably delivered to various Trustees by word of mouth rather than by using the offered mail or email options, and long before the deadline date arrived it had become clear that there is widespread support for the concept and recognition that it represents a significant opportunity for the Museum. If anything, there was a concern that the offeror's apparent change of heart might jeopardise the development. But despite all this positivity it is important to consider all the concerns that were raised.

There is most importantly the issue of whether there might be a financial gain to a Trustee at the expense of the Museum, and of course with the Museum being a registered charity this would be illegal. This had been precisely the point on which we had sought clarification from the Charities Commission. They, however, had ducked the issue and recommended external legal advice – not helpful, but it did concentrate minds on getting to a fully considered decision, taking members' views, and then having the courage of their convictions and getting on with whatever was decided. In fact there can be no concern about so-called "secret profit" as the income stream being generated from the solar array would never have accrued to the Museum as it could not have afforded the installation costs without significant further borrowing. This could not have been shown to be of benefit to the charity other than possibly in the very long term. As such it was not an investment the trustees were likely to make speculatively using Museum funds. Bear in mind here that there is no guarantee that the investor will make a profit, and indeed it was because the likely return had been reduced arbitrarily by Government diktat that Lumicity had withdrawn their offer. Charities are not free to take those chances.

The deadline date given in SVS155 was deliberately pitched to ensure that there was no possibility that the development of the Storage shed site would have progressed beyond the creation of the floor slab before members had been consulted. The slab is part of the Museum's contribution to the building;



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

Where it all began - the original drawing of the West Elevation of the new storage barn, as unveiled in the Spring 2012 edition of Stour Valley Steam.

whether or not there was to be a solar array affected only the building itself, not the slab on which it stands. The design of the roof and the associated electrical facilities could at this stage still have been adapted to a change of plan in the event that members wished the development not to go ahead in the form the Trustees had envisaged. Even a decision not to build a storage shed at all could have been accommodated at that late stage, as the external cost of the slab is not that great and would anyway have provided worthwhile hard standing for equipment and stores (although having gone to the expense of obtaining planning permission it would have been a shame to let it go). With a number of concurrent developments suggesting that we might get a better deal from contractors if they were combined into a single series of contiguous activities, the floor slab was included in the "invitation-to-tender" document. In the event a tender was accepted in late- August, but at that stage there remained significant site clearance to be conducted before contractors could move in (see elsewhere in this issue for the sequence of the work now under way).

Concerns were quite rightly raised in regard to the personal standing of the individual

Trustee concerned. What if his membership were to be suspended, for whatever reason? What if he were to die? Here we are in the realms of Contract Law, which mercifully in the U.K. is largely case-law driven with very little statutory input and is in consequence mostly common sense. The Museum's lease contract with Ian will be with him as an individual, not as a member – he will therefore be free to resign, free (if the mood comes upon him) to commit such breaches of etiquette as may lead to his suspension or dismissal from membership, free to leave the country, free even to shuffle off this mortal coil (though he may not get to choose this for himself!). But the agreement will go on, with him or with his heirs and assigns. And wherever we all find ourselves when the lease expires in 25 years' time, the Trustees of the day will have the task of deciding what to do about the income stream from the solar array which will just have reverted to them! Or perhaps (less enjoyably) the task of recycling some redundant and non-remunerative hardware!

When the Magazine Editor of the day is preparing their 25-years-ago retrospective, we must hope that they will be able to think kindly of the Trustees of 2013, and the decisions we made then.

General Meeting of Members - The need for a get-together to talk out a number of issues that arose during the summer operating season had led to this meeting being announced in a flyer accompanying the last edition of SVS

By Jeff Kilpatrick

A great deal of dissension had arisen and had in turn resulted in two events in particular falling on their faces and producing very little return to the Museum, despite the effort of a few volunteers. A regrettable knock-on effect has been the decision of Platform 2 Catering to cease operations through, among other factors, diminished attendances and consequent reduced sales undermining their profitability. More importantly, as a Museum we had let down the members of the public who had attended and had found that our offering was well below our normal level of attainment.

The meeting was led and moderated by Ian Reed, who set an agenda designed to provide the background to the issues under discussion. These were the financial implications of what had happened this year, a comparison between the yields derived from events and from facilities, the importance of teamwork to both, and then a discussion of how best to address the issues raised when preparing the programme of events for 2014.

Figures presented to the meeting demonstrated the dramatic difference in profitability between, on the one hand, 'Day Out With Thomas' (DOWT) events and the Beer and Cider Festivals, and on the other hand the 'Trades and Transport of the 50s' and 'War on the line with Dad's Army' events, both of which were under-prepared but (perhaps in the event a blessing) under-promoted, and as a result poorly attended. This year's Summer Beer Festival has seen a significant improvement on last year's net yield, although some

mistakes were made in the organisation of the June Cider Festival which had led to a lower profit. But the greatest revelation in the figures (rightly remarked upon by one attendee as being the sort of figures we should have been looking at for many years) was the sheer earning power of the site itself. Facilities hire, mainly in the form of the use of the Goods Shed for events such as wedding receptions, is commanding significant levels of income with very little associated outlay other than some paid and some volunteer time during and at the close of an event. In terms of 'contribution per staff day' – a useful statistic, based on the amount of effort required to make an event happen – this is by far the most financially rewarding of our activities. A plea was made for more volunteers to assist with this aspect of operations: it needs people prepared to be the last on site to lock up and secure the premises after hirers have gone home, so a job for the able-bodied night owl!

This interesting data led to a lively discussion of what our events are for and how they fit into the overall pattern of the Museum's activities. Many relevant points were made by a variety of contributors: public events take away staff from the necessary restoration and running repairs, but at the same time they also provide a very important medium for maintaining operating competencies which, without them, might become hard to maintain. The effect of the weather on events cannot be ignored, although making events "weather-proof" is actually quite important. We should consider the possibility of devel-

oping the coach tour trade now that it is so very much a feature in the lives of many senior citizens. Also, the value of partnerships in running events should be recognised (with HIT as Thomas copyright owners and the setter of standards for DOWT events, and CAM-RA as sponsors of responsible beer drinking cited as examples that might be emulated in other spheres).

The need to corral all these thoughts and ideas was a trigger to a declaration by Ian that, despite earlier intimations to the contrary, he had offered to continue as General Manager as a result of obtaining Trustees' agreement to the creation of a new paid post of Event Planning and Customer Service Manager. This should enable us to ensure we make the most of our facilities but also to refocus on our role as an educational charity. But this new paid role will need support from a volunteer team, and an encouraging number of individuals offered their help. Our recent contract to provide facilities for trainee permanent way workers fits this brief, as does the hiring of a number of apprentices in the engineering and estate management functions. This needs to be reinforced with much greater attention to guided tours, developing our outreach work with schools where we can fit into their curricular needs, and the provision as part of our Heritage Lottery funded developments of improved visitor amenities.

At this point there was a lively series of exchanges around the subject of work organisation, the tendency of volunteers not to do anything in case it impinged on someone else's pet project, or, perhaps worse, to plough on regardless with an idea which has no support from anyone else. Also the general need for organisation and communication between volunteers so that we all pull in the same direction. The need for a shared calendar, on the members' website and on the mess-room wall, was stressed. We all know that this has been a bone of contention for

ever, and it would be good to think we might be on the verge of solving it with modern technology. [Author's note: I won't be holding my breath!]

As the debate moved on to the plans for 2014, it became clear that there is a general feeling that we need a gap year, to re-group and to get the new manager bedded-in and up to speed. We agreed to continue with the DOWT events and the Beer and Cider Festivals, as proven contributors to the Museum's finances, plus the 40s/Dad's Army event and Transport Extravaganza (but each of them for one day rather than two). 'Drivex' events can be co-ordinated with other events by sharing a week-end so as to minimise disruption to engineering and preservation work. A WW1 commemorative event in November does not need to involve running trains but can instead stress the social history aspects of our Museum activities. This was almost a seminal moment in the day's events, as we were reminded that we are a Museum, that the "living history" aspect is vital to what we are here for, and is at present being largely neglected. Perhaps the most important need is to increase the daily footfall through the Museum, organise more regular guided tours, and feature one-off events which our visitors can derive benefit from. We also need to major on our potential to deliver social history to the local populace.

In conclusion, after a stimulating couple of hours, we acknowledged that we need to get the catering right and then to re-focus our efforts on THE CUSTOMERS. As an afterthought, the reporting of all this in SVS156 is very much in the hope that those who were not able to be at the meeting will recognise that they too may have a part to play in advancing all the good things that came out of the meeting itself – please feel free to offer any help you can with the numerous initiatives now being pursued.

Membership Matters

by Linda Robinson

The Trustees wish to extend a warm welcome to the following persons who have become members of the Museum since the last Magazine was published:

Richard Aspinell, Peter Bradbeer, David Brooks, Douglas Buck, Jack Cavie, Ron Cole, James Cook, Paul Daines, Ryan Evans, Alan Freeman, Mark Gillett & Family, Barry Heath, David James, Joshua James, Ronald Jocelyn, Peter Kettle, Simon McKay, Mark McKay, David Morgans, The Osbourne Family, Paul Graham, John Shrewsbury, Ted Smith, John Symonds, Adrian Thrower, Joseph Varletta, Malcolm Walker, Philip Waller, Steven Watsham, Michael Wilkins and Susan Wilkins.

Unfortunately, we have to record the deaths of long standing members Peter Bullock, Brian Carter and Les Houghton. Their obituaries can be found elsewhere in the Magazine and our sympathies go to all their friends and families. Condolences are also offered to Peter Martin, on the death of his father Roy.

The Trustees are very grateful to members who have made donations to the Museum during the membership year 2012/13; either directly or included with their membership renewal. We look forward to your continued support. In case you are not aware, we are still raising funds to improve our car parking facilities and any donations to assist with this would be gratefully received. We thank those who have already contributed to the "Fund Our Field" appeal and would remind those donating to complete a Gift Aid form if appropriate.

Gift Aid. We are making good progress collecting a new up-to-date Gift Aid Form from our Tax Paying members, which should enable the Museum to include subscriptions in the Annual Claim. If we have not obtained this from you yet, and you pay either Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax, please consider completing a form when next renewing your membership. Thank you.

Finally, we would like to offer our thanks all the members who hand deliver copies of the Magazines to friends and neighbours. This helps us to keep the costs down and means we can use funds for restoration and other much needed causes. If you think you can help with this please contact me by phone or email

Phyllis Robinson

As the magazine was about to go to press we learned of the death of Phyllis Robinson, wife of the late Reg Robinson and mother of Christine, Allan and Phil. Many members will know that she was responsible for Catering at the Museum for many years. Her funeral was held on Monday 17th February at St. Mary's Church Linton.

Our sympathies to all her family and friends. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of Stour Valley Steam.

Colour Pages in Stour Valley Steam

The Editorial Team would like to have some regular colour pages in the Magazine, but there are some financial facts to face.

Colour covers, in particular, are more attractive than black and white ones; they also ease some of the technical problems associated with converting colour photos to black and white.

However, Charity Law, which governs our Museum's legal status, advises us to keep members benefits to less than half the subscription. There are several options to spend more on the Magazine, without cutting elsewhere. One option is to increase the membership and another is to increase the annual subscription. Both these seem a bit unrealistic in these austere times, for different reasons.

Some of the major preserved railways, especially in tourist areas, have pages of adverts for guest houses, B&Bs etc. It would not be likely we would have that "pull" but there may be an opportunity for a niche advertiser to feel that they have materially contributed to the overall appearance of our publication.

Your views and ideas on this proposal are most welcome.

Class 315s to Braintree

After the excitement of finding Class 317s at Braintree (SVS155), Mark House has been out again and found Class 315 units working Braintree shuttle services on 26th August 2013. These units are normally found on GE Metro and West Anglia Inner Suburban services, however were used to Braintree due to overhead line works in the Ilford area requiring all mainline services to be worked by Class 321s, which would then coast from Romford to Ilford.



EARM Express News - Small amounts of Museum news, delivered to you in bitesize chunks.

Have anything to add? Email your news to svs@earm.co.uk

2014 AGM FOR EARM GROUP OF COMPANIES

Members are reminded that the Museum's AGM will be on Saturday 31st May 2014. The AGM notice has been included with your magazine, if you have not received one, wish to send apologies or have any further questions, please contact Mike Stanbury, details shown on the Principal Officers page of this magazine.

CHAPPEL COACH: 1873 GER THIRD OPEN BRAKE (ALLAN ROBINSON)

We are presently restoring the carriage that for many years resided on the bank just beyond the North Box. The body has now been separated from the underframe. Both parts are now in the Restoration Shed with the intention of restoring the vehicle to full running order.

Kevin Watson has completed the repairs to the underframe, including replacing one side sole timber as well as both buffer beams. He has now turned his attention to the body which, although basically sound, requires a fair bit of work on the frame before it can be repanelled.

Meanwhile, the Engineering Team are pressing on with the ironwork on the chassis. A replacement flitch plate has been made and fitted along with new W-irons. Other parts, such as buffer stocks and draw gear, have been rounded up from our stock of old coach and wagon parts that have been collected over the years. All the brake gear will have to be made but this can be done in-house.

The main problem we have is the axle springs. We will have to get these made by a specialist company and the cost is going to be around £750 per spring. This means we will need to raise approx £3000 to pay for this. If anyone feels they might be able to make a donation however large or small to the cost of the springs it will help speed the return to traffic of this piece of railway history. Please contact me if you can help – my details are on the Contact Page of Stour Valley Steam.

SURPLUS MAGAZINES (PHILIP AINSLEY)

The Curatorial Department has been carrying out a review of magazines which are required for reference purposes. There is now a full set of Stour Valley Steam on site, dating back to its first publication in 1970.

We are still adding to our collection of the Railway Magazine, which dates back rather earlier – to 1897 in fact! Currently, we have a complete run from 1939 and substantial numbers in the 1930s. Prior to that, our collection is distinctly sparser and we would be interested to hear from anyone who could help us add to our pre 1930 RM stock.

As a consequence of the sorting process we have considerable numbers of duplicate magazines both of Stour Valley Steam and the Railway Magazine. We need to dispose of these as soon as possible because of lack of space and unsuitable storage conditions. It is proposed to have a pop-up stall at the AGM in April. This will be the last chance to fill any gaps in your SVS collection or for newer members to get an appreciation of our own history in print. Duplicates will not be stored – and they will be disposed of soon afterwards.

Regarding "The Railway Magazine", it is suggested that you look to fill any gaps in your collection, or you could consider purchasing a year or two of forty or fifty year old publications while they are available. Duplicates will not be archived and by September disposals will be complete, so buy now to avoid disappointment!

For any queries this may raise please contact philip.ainsley@btinternet.com.

MUSEUM COLLECTION (JAKI COLLISON)

Over the years, when we were short of storage space, some of our members have been helpful and stored items of the Museum Collection. We now have adequate storage space and will soon have a brand new storage building to use for this purpose. If you do have any such item/s at home can you please contact either myself or Mike Stanbury (contact details on the Principal Officers page of this magazine) so we can arrange handover.

LIVING HISTORY APPEAL (JAKI COLLISON & KEITH CHADWICK)

As part of revitalising the displays at the museum to encourage return visits we are proposing to stage a number of changing exhibitions under the title of Living History covering various eras pertinent to the railway age from Victorian, right through to very recent times. Whilst the Curator is already engaged in procuring relevant items from known sources encouraged by the Interim Marketing Manager (who knows when he's on to a good thing!), this does cost the Museum money. Even though some funding is provided by Heritage Lottery Grant this can still be a considerable drain on resources and therefore we have another plan!

Out there somewhere (cue song!) there must be a member or two that have items stored away from their youth which hasn't seen the light of day for years and might be better off in a new home. Of course we don't expect many of you to be storing stuff away from the Victorian era (although there might be one or two going back to the Stone Age!) but if you have any items pertaining to the 1950s, 60s 70s and even 80s that you feel could be donated to the better cause of the museum, we would be grateful to receive it and promise to look after it.

All donations (and loans) of items is recorded and fully accredited and despite what our Curator thinks sometimes, we probably have more room for it here than you do at home! So if you think you might be able to help please contact either one of us at the Museum or bring the items along and leave them for our attention.

We are not only looking for railway related items and any domestic items that are iconic to the periods mentioned (including clothing) would be welcome, we could even find room for the odd car or two!

LATE NEWS ABOUT MUSEUM ACCREDITATION (MIKE STANBURY) I am pleased to inform Members that on 6th March Arts Council England again awarded us Full Museum Accreditation.

Semaphore News - Hello and welcome to what should hopefully become a regular feature in Stour Valley Steam, charting the onward progress of signalling at the Museum.

By Peter Robinson

I suppose that I should introduce myself, having taken over the role of HoD in July, with the aspirations of keeping our operational equipment working smoothly, and to improve the signalling related displays that we offer our visitors. Having spent many hours in the Signal Box fighting the facing point lock for Platform 2, I suppose I've now been landed with the task of sorting it out.

Whilst on the subject of points, I'd like to take the opportunity to explain the track and signalling works being undertaken from January to March. Our resident Track Apprentices have volunteered to help rebuild our three main running turnouts north of the crossing, with the view to keep them operating smoothly for the next 20 plus years. Since the track is coming out, it seemed like an ideal chance to overhaul the signalling equipment, replacing worn out parts and reconfigure rod and wire runs to remove existing problems. We have a nice easy first event in the shape of a Day Out With Thomas at the Easter Bank Holiday that everything needs to be reinstated for, so this could be quite a challenge!

Also on the work list is an interactive sig-

nal display as part of the Platform 5 & 6 development. Current thoughts are to relocate the structure of South Box and install a new frame along with our gate wheel, which currently languishes in the bushes of our set-down area. I'm hoping it will be an opportunity to explain the basics of block telegraph working and interlocking to our visitors. Problems to overcome include making the building wheelchair accessible, and finding enough bits for a new lever frame.



A great future is in store for our level crossing gate wheel

The eagle-eyed reader will have noticed that stealing Chappel South leaves the current 14 lever frame somewhat exposed. Options are being considered to re-instate the South Sidings signalling, in particular the point controls, although to what extent remains to be seen. Two-box operation of trains is not likely to happen in the near future so plans are leaning towards a simple and reliable solution, possibly utilising the existing frame within a sheltering structure.

I'm happy to discuss any of the above items so if you'd like to know more or offer your own ideas please get in touch (contact details

within front cover). I'm also hoping to drum up some volunteers (pressed or otherwise) particularly during February and March so if you'd like to take part let me know. There are all sorts of exciting jobs up for grabs including painting (black only), geotechnics (digging holes) and installing cranks and rodding (brute force and ignorance). There is also a high chance that free cakes will be on offer so why not pick up some overalls and join in!

Finally, I'd just like to extend my thanks to the growing group of helpers (I think they volunteered...) and in particular Jack and Tallon for their assistance – I bet you never thought you'd be cleaning dods with socks!

RAILWAY BOOKS AND DVDS *by Phil Ainsley*

We would like to continue to re-stock second hand books and DVDs for sale in the VRC. Up until now sales have been low key, but with your help I would like to raise the profile and introduce an element of continuing new supply. A recent three-box donation received from a visitor has helped and there is now some good new stock on sale.

If you need to clear some space in your library – can you release some quality railway books or DVDs? I'm hoping for greater sales from this source in future. To encourage a steady stream of stock, I shall offer members a "free issue" facility, whereby you may choose a title from reserve stock in return for making a donation. To deposit items - please do so with your name inside labelled bags for attn. "EARM Second-hand Sales" – in either the Mess Room, or the VRC. On Wednesdays I will then be able to attend to or sort books.

There is a sort process in play - specialist or technical books may be accessioned into the Museum Archive, especially if they are specific to the East Anglia region. Secondly I shall price up and place for sale in the VRC, other stock held back in reserve for re-stocking and exchange to members. Finally some books will be prepared (dis-assembled) for acceptance in recycling banks. This last option is necessary to meet the quality standards and storage space...

To ensure saleable quality – please be critical about quality (in terms of wear and or paper/photo re-production standards), - would you BUY them? If not disposal is by another method (gifted elsewhere, local charity shop). If you can, please avoid mass market "general steam photo" or totally illustrated only examples. If you haven't purchased a book by say Colin Garrett or OS Nock by now, or a very general "Great British Steam DVD" you probably never will. Some books, like magazines, were produced in tens of thousands, and we only need a small supply of them.

A small complement of associated subjects would be considered, please contact me via philip.ainsley@btinternet.com or by contacting the VRC before donating these. Likely topics will be local Essex/Suffolk subjects, some modelling, or bus and commercial vehicle preservation.

Regretfully unwanted stock takes time to sort, transport and there is a disposal cost. I ask that the guidelines noted are followed by members, and finally absolutely no magazines, or other preservation journals please. Having said all that, incoming book collections have provided a useful revenue stream, donations from the public have yielded good artefacts, and books have been placed into the Museum Archive.

Les Houghton 1948 - 2014: An Appreciation

By Mike Lake and Rob Boyce

Les Houghton sadly passed away peacefully on January 18th 2014 after a period of ill health, which was borne with his usual cheerfulness. He had been a member for nigh on forty years, both when he lived in Warley and later when taking up residence in the Old Railway Tavern, adjacent to the Museum. For a number of years he was to be seen around the Museum with his faithful dogs, firstly Basketette and later Raffle.

Originally a teacher, he subsequently moved into the world of computers and was employed in Sudbury for a number of years until he was made redundant a few years ago.

For much of this time he had been involved in multiple aspects of the Museum, undertaking the role of Secretary to both the Stour Valley Railway Preservation Society and the legal entity the Branch Line Preservation Company Limited during the 1980s. Les went on to hold the post of Director and Secretary of the Museum's Trading Company for 8 years and later on he became a Trustee of the Museum. As joint licensee for the Museum's Premises Licence, he undertook a most useful role when it came to the Beer and Cider Festivals! He was also a well-respected and highly experienced member of the operating staff for many years, being qualified as a Crossing Keeper, Guard, Signaller, Shunter, O4 Driver and Operating Superintendent. He was also an examiner and assessor in a number of



these duties. Perhaps it was because of his teaching background, but he always took a keen interest in the development of younger members and encouraged them to learn and develop their operating skills. He was involved with every Beer Festival and every Cider Festival, often putting in very long hours to ensure

that they ran well. His involvement with the Cider Festival was not just limited to serving, but in all aspects of the organisation, setting up, plumbing, etc! In the years when the SVRPS and the Museum ran rail tours he was always to the fore with his involvement, not being averse to turning his hand to prepare or serve refreshments, wield a broom, steward the trains and anything else that came along! One of Les' greatest strengths was acting as Devil's Advocate in numerous situations. Whilst not necessarily believing in some of the subject matter being discussed or debated, he put it in such a way that made you think specifically about what you were discussing with him. Many a conversation has been enjoyed in this way!

But it has not just been the Museum that benefited from Les. As a part owner of a canal boat - Soulbury - he enjoyed trips on this every year, and a number of Museum members have joined him on these voyages. He was also very active in village life, having spent a number of years as one of the governors of Chappel Primary School, including acting as Chairman.

Not seeing Les around the Museum will seem strange. Although not acting officially as "Care-taker", because of where The Old Railway Tavern is has meant he has often been "on hand" and many a time has Les helped in some way or other.

Perhaps the last words in this short but heartfelt appreciation of Les can come from an e-mail from Sean Talman: "Top bloke, gonna be missed!"

Peter Bullock – Obituary by Rob Boyce

Peter joined the Museum in the late 1980s, and soon established himself in the operating staff, passing out as a Crossing Keeper in 1991 and as a Guard in 1993. Throughout the following years, he regularly could be seen at many of our operating days, especially the Day Out With Thomas events when he always attended for every day, come rain or shine. He was also involved periodically in other work around the Museum: at one time he spent a considerable amount of time replacing broken glass in the Goods Shed windows.

In former days, he was noted as a zealous collector of old Ordnance Survey maps from the Bookshop and subsequently the Curio Coach. He was a fairly quiet person, but always steady and reliable – we knew that with Peter on duty we would be assured that his work would be carried out reliably, efficiently and safely. We will miss seeing him arriving in his ancient Sierra at the Museum, and offer our condolences to his brothers Graham and Michael, and to his twin sister Susan. His funeral was held on Thursday 6th February at Southend - on - Sea Crematorium.



Brian Carter - Obituary by Ian Jessop.

Brian Carter was a keen modeller and loved trains in general. He also liked to design and manufacture gadgets and other items.

Brian had been in poor health for the past two years meaning he had to give up operating duties. However, he was a Guard and Crossing Keeper prior to this, and still made the occasional visit to Chappel. Last year, he made an item for the Pump Trolley which enabled us to put lights on it for the Trolleys and Dollies Event.

He passed away suddenly on Friday 17th January. Always ready for a chat, Brian will be much missed. His funeral was held on Monday 3rd February at Chelmsford Crematorium.



Team Wednesday Update - It's already a year since the full Team update, although there was coverage in SVS155 of one of our completed projects, in Dave Rose's article on the improved lighting in the Visitor Reception Centre.

By Jeff Kilpatrick

As ever we have enjoyed a mixed diet of Wednesday amusements, and in the next few lines I will try to give a flavour in the hope that others will want to come along and join in the fun. Although it has to be said there has been another welcome influx of volunteers which has helped to increase yet again the number of tasks taken on and completed. The biggest of them all in terms of committed man hours has been the new shop complex, covered elsewhere in another Dave Rose article.

We eventually finished the re-cladding of Henrietta: it took far longer than anyone imagined, as we just kept finding more and more rotten timber in the frames, so that major surgery had to be undertaken before everything was covered up again. In the end, time ran out and we had to seek help from the full-time staff in getting sufficient layers of paint on her before she went back out into the wind and weather. Let's hope this time we can keep the elements at bay a bit longer than last time. The other job that was in hand a year ago was the interior of the suburban brake second (BS) which had been repainted externally: lighting was installed and all the woodwork has been removed, mended where

necessary, re-varnished and reinstalled. The station master's office on platform 1 has been re-decorated top to bottom following repairs to the plasterwork. The old carpet had been glued to the floor, so a lot of effort was needed to lift it and then remove the adhesive, but the return to the stained and polished floorboards has certainly improved the appearance of the room. The fireplace has had its Great Eastern Railway crest reinstated, and the furniture is now back (including a refurbished GER store cupboard) so the room will be open to the public soon. More recently the Ladies' Waiting Room has had similar treatment.

The catering ladies on platform 2 had asked for a toilet facility for customers that was nearer than either the VRC or the Heritage Centre, so work has started (and is progressing quickly) on building a small facility in the gap between the store at the foot of the footbridge and the 'Signals café' building in which their catering operation had latterly been conducted. Sadly, the catering company has not been a success, but it is still felt worthwhile finishing the toilet facility in the hope and expectation that a new concessionaire can be found.



Henrietta reclad and repainted

Toby the Tram Engine has been suffering for years the indignity of rotting plywood skirts covering his wheels, but now there are shiny new steel valances which look far

better and ought to have a longer life. Toby has had a couple of trips away from Chapel recently, so deserves a bit of sprucing up if he is earning his living. We had to do a quick fix before the first outing to stop the skirts whanging around, and a permanent fix seemed a good idea.

Two major pieces of work are currently under way in connection with the Heritage Lottery Fund financed project to create Platforms 5&6. The Passimeter office, formerly at Ilford station, is being carefully restored to its former varnished glory, and the exterior of the LT&SR compartments (just two compartments had been saved to show the difference between 1st and 3rd class commuter travel in pre-electrification days) are being repaired or re-clad, depending on the condition of what is there at present.

As ever, lots of little jobs have got done too: we re-painted the north-end railings on platform 2, we fixed the pump trolley again (the picture on page 23 of the Autumn 2013 edition of SVS shows the unpainted repair), our member with the steady hand has sign-written the Pooley Van and Toad, we got well into a programme of sprucing up the finger posts that guide our visitors round the site, and we re-painted the picket fencing inside the Goods Shed. Not-so-little jobs included making a new tender/riding truck for Charlie the mini-rail loco, an interactive loco cab for



The Pooley Van, with Sign Writing by Team Wednesday

young visitors to the Heritage Centre, and a pattern for 54's fire bars.

Currently, a number of our allotted tasks are "on hold" while team members as-

sist with the numerous tasks connected with the HLF-funded projects, which are covered elsewhere and will be revealed shortly. Work on the shop fronts, which are being added to, and our next big project, replacement of the main level crossing gates, have been suspended but we hope to return to them soon. As always, there's plenty to do and you will be made welcome if you wish to join us.

The Passimeter Office having been varnished before its placement on Platform 5&6



1950s Shop Complex - Earlier in 2013 the Museum decided that in support of the July 1950s event, the creation of some contemporary shop fronts would be an added attraction for visitors.

By David Rose

Team Wednesday offered their help to construct whatever was needed for this project and Ian Reed indicated that an agreed budget of £500 was available. The original idea was to use building B1 which would have had enough space for three shallow shops.

However as in any organisation there were differing views as to the best location. After several weeks and many discussions the idea of using building B1 was abandoned and a more permanent site had to be found.

Whilst wandering round the Chappel Yard I couldn't help but notice we have here a building surrounded by vintage vehicles. Next to this two vehicles - "a yellow beast"- and a PW wagon

were being stored. Next to all this was a garden area backing onto the Miniature Railway; Corinne said she had no use for it. Then an idea came to me, why don't we remove the wagons, clear some of the ground and build the shops there? We could dovetail the shops and building/vintage vehicles together to form a nice 1950's street scene.

I offered this suggestion to Ian and the Trustees who approved the idea and could see it offered a valuable use of the area plus an added attraction for the public. Great I thought,

but there is only £500 available!

After talking to my Team Wednesday colleagues they very quickly convinced me we hadn't the money available to tackle this project. It did seem a shame that we might not be able to continue, especially after talk-

ing to Kevin Watson who said he could easily convert his workshop into a garage and display his own personal collectables.

Right, the only way forward was to somehow fund it ourselves. This is what has been done, via sponsors (acknowledgements at the end of the article). Unfortunately due to the original delay in deciding upon a site and problems

with the crane the site became available too late to erect shops in time for the 50s event.

With the green light on, I turned to Mick Judd who came up with the design for a robust and waterproof construction. Our initial target was to build two shops - Hardware and Sweets with the facility to add an additional building if funds became available.

As with anything at the Museum nothing stays straightforward and seeing the shops going up next to the Miniature railway, Malcolm Margerison asked if at some time, a



The back-to-back shop front and Signal Box for Miniature Railway



signal box could be added to the rear of the shops. This was alright as far as I was concerned.

As time passed, I found we were doing quite well with our sponsorship and I established that were sufficient funds to build a third shop (one for the ladies) and to satisfy Malcolm's request for a signal box. I had a lot of luck and support from my "grovelling" to various sponsors.

Just for your information the funding came from four main sources, "Hardware" (Fork 'Andles) from the village, "Sweets" from a friend who wished to have a display in memory of his late Father in Law, "Ladies" from a Team Wednesday member and an Engineering friend of mine.

My best find was the glass which we knew would be expensive. I contacted a local glass merchant who knew the Museum and offered me the glass for the first two shops at a third of the price. I asked him if ever had any scrap glass (thinking of shop three and the signal box) and he said I could have anything "out the back" before it ends up in the skip. I loaded the car with enough to completely finish the job, plus some spares "all for free."

I have probably rambled on enough, but just to give you the final picture - we intend to marry the whole of the shop complex with a telephone box (from out the front), a village notice board, a small memorial garden and the garage/vehicles.

Maybe one of the lessons we could learn from this exercise is there may be other small projects which we could approach in the similar way and would cost the Museum little or nothing.

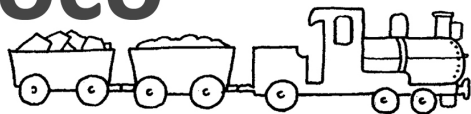
I hope that when you have had a look you will feel it has enhanced the area.

So thanks to all the sponsors, and finally thanks to all of Team Wednesday who were involved in the project.

Acknowledgements: Fork 'Andles, Hockley's Glass, D.S. Engineering, Aber Electronics, Nordic Timber, The Sign Shop, Old Road Paint/Wallpaper and Ann/Mark Evershed.



Pete Martin's Plumb Loco



With apologies to Victor Meldrew

As the seasons change, we plunge headlong into that time where the hearing becomes numbed by the annually repeated and time-worn Christmas ballads emanating from every supermarket PA system. A time where the commercially led market leaders hypnotise us into a false land of wonderment and well – being, goading us on to part with our diminishing cash to buy that latest must-have gizmo that will be obsolete next week. (Batteries not included). A time where the adverts on the boring telly invite us into blatant over indulgence of food and booze, after which we can settle down afterwards to engross ourselves in the umpteenth viewing of the 1975 Morecombe & Wise Christmas Show.

“Anyone for another mint spy? No thanks, they’ll be banging them out at Tesco on Christmas Eve for a BOGOF, or free with 16 rolls of wrapping paper, when it all gets shoved to the back of the shop on Boxing Day to make way for the walls of chocolates. So as the Christmas lights dim, and the tree gets shoved back in its box or dumped on the A12, the appearance of chocolates is disguised as “Thank You” gifts to the hard pressed Mum who has been trying to produce a festive fare, half of which ends up in the bin. A festive fare where the turkey doesn’t fit the cooker, steaming piles of Brussels sprouts that nobody eats, kids running amok with presents where the batteries have already gone flat. Dad’s whose only purpose on Christmas Day is to open the wine or carve the recalcitrant bird, although he couldn’t carve toffee.

And where would we be without it? Well, I know where I will be, and that isn’t sitting around waiting for the stores to open again for the January sales. I’ll be up at the Museum doing constructive things. So Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to our reader, and here follows the latest resume of the goings on so far at Chappel.

[Editors Note - Plumb Loco was originally put together in December 2013, however the following section has been updated March 2014]

54 (Alias Thomas).

Has performed in The Netherlands and ,once the Thomas – Santa Combo period is out of the way, the loco has successfully passed a half - life boiler examination in preparation for the forthcoming new season where it is anticipated The Netherlands will not be the only place to which it is going .

Jubilee.

Jubilee is available for traffic in the coming season.

No. 11.

The ancient Barclay is moving forward with the boiler repairs, required for the 10 year overhaul.

The N7.

Continues in operation at the Churnet Valley Railway. It has seen replacement of the piston packings, which according to comments of the staff at the CVR have transformed

the loco from a fog machine to something that is now a pleasure to drive! The loco is due for its 10 year boiler examination and negotiations are in hand to confirm further usage at the CVR, once the testing is completed.

Lamport No 3.

The history of how this loco has become part of the Chappel scene has become rather chequered. Realising that 54 (Thomas) has a revenue earning potential, we required another six- coupled loco to replace No. 54 when it was out on hire to other railways. Ideally its usefulness would have been enhanced if we had one of the same type so if something went wrong with No.54, we would swap the Thomas conversion bits over and carry on. It transpires that there were only 7 of that type in preservation, and none of them are in working order. In fact out of all of them, No.54 is the only one that is operational. “Lamport No 3” was secured as part of an overall part of the scheme to provide a medium for negotiation to secure one of the un-restored locos of the correct type. Work has now commenced on renewing its boiler tubes.

Suffice to say that exploration of obtaining a direct replacement for No.54 (Thomas), has produced a big fat zero. All our exploration has shown is that over the years, there are forgotten bits of our industrial railway heritage lying under bushes and trees at various locations, having been obtained by groups of well -meaning enthusiastic types 20 – 30 years ago - and sadly will never run again. The logistics of moving them is prohibitive in itself – let alone picking up from where others left off. The Barry 10 have got nothing on this lot.

Having given up all hope of continuing in our original quest, a recent decision now sees



Works Continue to the Railbus in March 2014

“Lamport No 3” being brought to the fore at Chappel, where work has already begun to evaluate the boiler condition. The motion and running gear being left alone. It is rumoured – but not as yet confirmed – that it will need a replacement inner firebox. Oh – do I hear howls of derision? Have we bought a pig in a poke? No we haven’t. When you weigh up all the pros and cons and consider what other options aren’t available, then it has to be said this is a cheaper one. If 54 breaks in the meantime, we mend what we have.

W & M Railbus No. E79963

Someone else said something similar about the W&M railbus No. E79963. Have we bought a pig in a poke? No we haven’t. It’s the most appropriate vehicle to the Museum because it ran on the line. How good is that! With that in mind, work progresses well with the completion of the replacement of corroded bodywork and flooring in the vicinity of the centre vestibule doors and fitting the new sliding door nose rubber seals and cushioning. Alternators are replacing the dynamos on the electrical charging system, and a staged reconstruction of the centre vestibule flooring and interior is next in line. The re-flooring of this area is approximately 50%

complete at the time of going to press. Work has now started on the north end passenger compartment flooring. Body work repairs will then start at the south end of the vehicle – which is as yet untouched. Lastly, I would like to thank all those who have kindly donated towards the rejuvenation of the railbus so far.

TB 308.

The chassis of this vehicle has now been split from its body. On the chassis part, work on the TB 308, the 1873 vintage 4 wheel coach, used as a chapel at Great Wenham near Ipswich, progresses under guidance from Allan Robinson with the manufacture of spring hangers, and axlebox 'W' irons. Replacement of one of the main side frame beams and side plates and two replacement headstocks by Kevin our stalwart chippie completes the woodwork aspects of the job. Various brackets, buffer housings and drawbar sections have been found for fitment. It is anticipated that a rolling chassis will be achievable during 2014 as Kevin attends to the restoration of the body and framing. However, building work elsewhere on site has slowed its progress somewhat.



TB 308 - The chassis in the foreground and the body in the background, after many years of being used as a P-Way store on the bank next to Chappel North Signal Box

Team Wednesday have been busy with shops and the LTS coach section, and also re-varnishing the Ilford York Road Passimeter Office. When I used to go to see my Nan, we used that station entrance and I used to swing on the little gates on the side of it and so would like to know where they went. Probably the same place as North Woolwich Museum – but that's another sad story.

Class 306 Shenfield Unit.

Since its arrival, it has to be said that very little has been done to this unique item of our Electric Age. Ownership is still retained by the National Railway Museum with whom negotiations are in hand to explore their longer term aims while the unit is stored at Chappel. Whilst the EARM remains supportive, and it is within our Collecting Policy - it remains outside of our own collection and consequently restricts what we can do with it.

With another successful Santa and Thomas combo under the belt, it is time to say thanks to all for their participation and continued support over the past year. We look forward to the next one, where exciting new developments are in hand to enhance our displays and visual aspects on site to enable us to move forward into a new era.

Want to know more? Why not come along and look for yourself. See you soon.

The View from the Top - Since the last magazine was published so much has occurred both on site and behind the scenes! Read about it in the General Manager's Report

By Ian Reed

With the AGM now planned for 31st May, the day after an official opening of the new facilities, make a note in your diary, schedule or however you plan your days, come to the AGM and I believe you will be amazed.

People.

It was the impending start to project-managing £250,000 worth of investment and all the challenges of co-ordinating contractors, staff and volunteers that led to the Board of Trustees agreeing to appoint a further paid member of staff to take on Customer Services and Marketing. It was an enormous relief therefore to be able to welcome Keith Chadwick, better known as the volunteer Head of Mini-rail (a position he still holds), to take up an initial six month contract from the beginning of October. I knew that I would not have had the time to devote to the projects, financial management and general duties which have been needed over the past six months without him taking up his role. Going forward, the challenge will be to justify the salary cost but as the 2014 event season now kicks off we are expecting a lot of Keith to raise the visitor numbers, customer satisfaction and improve our events: not much to ask is it?

October was memorable in many ways for other new staff coming on board; we had an offer from Essex County Council to support two Apprenticeships at the Museum and also two six month Work Opportunity placements. Never one to turn down support for our work we quickly interviewed and appointed an Engineering Apprentice working under the direction of Allan Robinson, and a Carpen-

try Apprentice working under the direction of Kevin Watson our Building and Carpentry Foreman. At the same time we were able to welcome our Decorative Skills Apprentice back for his second year. The Work Opportunity lads work directly for me in my capacity as Head of Estates.

There have been a few difficulties along the way, not least with getting Colchester Institute to get the Apprentices registered on appropriate courses. As it turned out it was all too late and we reluctantly had to let the Carpentry Apprentice leave due to there being no suitable course, without which there was no grant from ECC to pay him. Whilst the management, and payroll, of staff can have its problems it is still rewarding to see what can be achieved when people are working three, four or even five days every week. Meanwhile, our great volunteer teams continue to go from strength to strength, with new faces almost every week.

One last mention of volunteering: we tend to think only of those who join as members and then come either as part of Team Wednesday, the weekend team or the few stalwarts who make an appearance a number of days each week. We were fortunate to be contacted by a volunteering group based at Essex University who were looking for work for undergraduates during the October half term week. We offered them a day painting things black and thus one memorable Wednesday I counted nearly 100 people working on site at one time.

[Continued on Page 24]



▲ The Concrete Foundations of the Storage Barn being Laid, 11th Dec 13 (David Reeve)

▼ Storage Shed Steelwork from East End of the Building, February 2014 (Ian Reed)



▲ Platform 5 and 6, plus Canopy Taking Shape on 10th March 2014 (David Reeve)

▼ Cattle Dock Ramp and Setts Installed, Prior to Edging Bricks, March 2014 (Ian Reed)



[View from the Top, by Ian Reed, Continued from Page 21]

Our traditional Wednesday team was supplemented by a now well-established Engineering Department group, our normal and short-term paid staff, two sets of contractors plus a large group of undergraduates. I suspect it must rank as the greatest number of people ever working together on one day at the Museum but I stand to be corrected if you can remember an earlier occasion when this occurred?

Front Car Park.

Back to September, and the front Car Park improvements got off to a slow start when we sent out Invitations to Tender to four contractors but only two gave us full responses. The others dropped out during the response period citing success in getting other work, which meant they were unable to commit to starting when we wanted.

Proving that cheapest is not always the most cost effective we have had problems with the appointed contractor initially starting works but pulling staff away for other jobs. When we pushed for continuous activity it coincided with the start of the longest period of wet weather for years! On top of this, it soon became clear that the contractor had not properly costed the work and they were attempting to recover costs from extras and challenging the specification. Eventually we had to accept them re-costing the three unstarted projects (shed base, P5/6 and yard structures) but we held them to the original price for the Car Park works.



Front Car Park with Roadway and Matting nearly complete in November 13 - Ian Reed

At this stage I can hear people saying why didn't we hold them to the initial contract price? Not only would this have stopped work on site for many months but hard experience shows the only real winners when you take legal action are the lawyers! Thus our costs for the Storage Building base rose from £26k to £46k but fortunately the other projects were broadly similar in cost and we agreed a new contract

going forward. The Car Park was broadly on budget but the contractor maintains that he lost significantly on the job and this has not helped the flexibility we expected from him on the subsequent projects.

Work on the Car Park took longer than expected; the weather did not help, and the job was only really finished – bar the grass seeding – for the start of the December “Days out with Thomas and Santa” event. For this we needed some additional temporary boarding in order to get the cars parked – another £1k – but we managed to accommodate everyone who came and although the numbers for the final day were slightly down on 2012, overall the results were healthy.

The event went off with the usual challenges on staffing and anyone and everyone who could be pressed into service helped at various times at the front of the station. Even I ventured out to direct people to the different entrances according to whether they had pre-printed online tickets, online vouchers to exchange for paper tickets and those looking to purchase tickets on the day. Make a note, need more volunteers to help at future DOWT events to work the queues between 1000 and

1200 helping people get the fastest possible entry according to ticket type. Can you help at Easter? Just turn up and ask for me, preferably from 09.30 so you can be briefed prior to the start – see you there.

Platform 5 and 6.

Again hampered by the weather, December saw the start of work on the foundations and excavations for the new Platform 5/6 area. The adjacent ditch added to the problem as the water coming off the field to the north drained into it which meant that the site became a veritable bog. Eventually we decided to excavate out the ditch and lower it to fall away to the corner of the field and run a new storm water drain to the south to take water away from the worksite. This finally cured the problem and the foundation pads for the canopy went in, followed by the platform wall foundations and then the platform walls themselves. Infilling the platform area was undertaken once we had cleaned down and primed the ex-Mill Hill cast iron canopy columns which were fixed down to the foundation blocks – two of which contain drains as the end columns contain the rainwater downpipes from the canopy.

Just as the steel arrived for the engineering department to make the main canopy steelwork it was pointed out that the need to lower the columns to keep the canopy roof

at the same height as the temporary Heritage Centre meant the decorative cast iron brackets came down low enough to be a hazard walking past. This had not been evident from the plans but now we needed to do something and eventually we decided that although the roofline would be higher eventually, when the Heritage Centre

is replaced and comes down, we can extend the canopy at the new height and overall it would look better from an aesthetic point of view.

At the same time there were many concerns expressed about the sheer size and weight of the steelwork to go on the cast iron columns. We questioned the need for the size of beams but despite assurances from the architect and the structural designer we still were not happy. Thus, we got quotes from other designers for a review but a structural engineer went through the plans with Allan Robinson and identified why the frame needed the size of beams specified. Once this was made clear to us we could see the sense of what had been designed. It was just a shame that the architect and original designer did not deem it necessary to explain this when we queried the matter with them. So with yours truly driving the crane lorry we were able to erect the frame on top of the now raised columns and get it all bolted together.

The work of erecting the timber canopy rafters and boarding plus decorative canopy edgings falls to Kevin but it soon became obvious that with the raised height and the over sailing of the canopy to the platform edges a simple moveable scaffold would no longer suffice. We have had to pay for a full scaffold access platform under the whole canopy area which will remain in place until the canopy is complete and decorated. Meanwhile this means that the work of placing the Passimeter Office and associated fencing is delayed and also the platform surface tarmac has to wait until everything else is in place and completed.



Scaffolding around the Platform 5&6 Canopy on 26th March 2014

Meantime the excavation of ground to the south of the new platform and the Heritage Centre required new piers to be constructed to support the latter. Levelling the land for the track revealed yet more drainage problems and further pipe runs required as soakaways in the clay were likely to prove inadequate. A ballast bed was prepared and chaired sleepers laid in just awaiting rail to complete the siding, ready to receive the Gresley coach and WD wagon in due course. The concrete pad to the north side is now ready to take the NLR Brake Coach body and the refurbished LT&SR coach section, whilst the pad and walls are in for the South Box to be relocated following imminent repairs.



Track laid out in front of the Heritage Centre on 26th March 2014

Storage Building.

The saga of this building goes back a couple of years now when we were approached by a firm called Lumicity who were looking for Solar Panel spaces on barn type structures. The original deal fell through due to the Government reducing the feed-in tariff rate at short notice hence we had a design, planning permission, building consent and even agreement for connection to the National Grid only to find the investors withdrawing just before signing the contract. It is no secret that I offered to put up the same contribution as Lumicity in return for the same type of contract which put all the risk on me rather than the Museum. Because of concerns expressed as to potential conflict of interests and pecuniary gain the matter had to be put to the Charity Commissioners, and ultimately to members, but agreement was forthcoming and thus we could place an order for the building.

In the event, the costs spiralled since the original estimates when the floor slab was estimated to cost £28k and the building £33k. The floor slab construction increased in complexity and required more ground excavated to bring the slab down totally to a layer of sand/clay which would be less likely to suffer heave than the heavy clay overlayer. When the contractor recosted the slab the cost moved up to £46k whilst the building costs rose owing to the decision to have it insulated to minimise thermal cycling inside the building and avoid condensation damaging the Archive Storage area under specific weather conditions (now forecast to be more regular than in the past).

Thus the final building cost went up to £55k and, lastly, due to pressure on time and the added complexity with the insulated sheeting we agreed to pay £15k for professional erection and cladding of the building.

The 35m by 15m slab was cast in two sections; each was the largest size possible to be cast in one day without using specialist construction methods. The constant procession of concrete lorries soon indicated where the money was going, the site joke is that we have the base now for a new nuclear bunker. With completion by early January of the slab we expected the building to go up early February but despite delivery of materials at that time the originally quoted two weeks on site soon turned into five weeks. At the time of writing this report we are still awaiting two missing panels to finish the east end wall plus the ridge cover and corner covers along with the fitting of locks to the pedestrian access doors before the handover occurs.

Yard structures

These comprise the replica Cattle Dock north of the Goods Shed, an end loading dock, handcrane plinth alongside plus the bunkers and foundation for the Coal Merchant's Depot to the south of the Goods Shed. Specialist bricklayers have been busy for weeks now building on the foundations installed by the ground works contractors. They have now infilled the spaces and cast the concrete slabs ready to take the blue engineering patterned setts recovered a few years ago from North Woolwich – originally from Stratford. These projects have involved quite a lot of involvement by volunteers, cutting and drilling rails for the posts on the platform, making the Coal Merchant's Office, moving sidings and vehicles to allow construction work.



New Sewer Installed and Trackbed Ballasted for turnouts, March 2014 - Ian Reed

We took the opportunity to have improvements to site drainage and utility ducts installed for future ease of improvements in lighting, communications and signalling. Unfortunately a 1980s diversion of the sewer from the Station Cottages has been a constant source of problem with blockages and raw sewage flowing over part of the track outside the North Signal Box. We decided to bite the bullet and lift out the two turnouts there that are for Platform 3 and Goods Shed North so that a straight route for the sewer to the replacement sewer installed through most of the site early in the 2000's, could be achieved. At the same time the surface layer of ballast and soil were removed, the underlying layer of sand/clay taken down 400mm and a geotextile laid on top prior to installing a bed of new ballast ready to take the turnouts again.

Of course, once lifted out the turnouts revealed far more decay to the timber than was

evident on the surface and instead of replacing one in five we actually replaced nearly half the total number of timbers in both turnouts. All of this work was meant to happen late January early February but problems with the rail crane resulted in nearly a month's delay such that it became a rush to get the turnouts out, overhauled and replaced within three weeks. Appeals for help with the work have been rewarded with good attendances on Saturdays and at the time of writing we just have to lift and pack the turnouts and also the curve to Platform 3. As all the connections from the North Box to the turnouts and signalling had

to be removed for this work, they then had to be reinstated and the opportunity has been taken to replace some poor work with the rodding benches.

Finally, to facilitate the various projects and enable materials to be provided for many of them hundreds of tonnes of

'stuff' that was moved to the lower of the two orchard fields over the past eight years has had to be cleared. Most has gone to temporary storage in the top field, where unfortunately it is on display, but some was relocated to the new Sidings Area which we constructed on the east side of the lower field last year. Some interesting discoveries have been made during the moves of which more will be written in future articles. I can only hope this rather long article conveys something of the frenetic pace of the past six months and whilst not finished yet the projects are coming to completion and hopefully by the end of May most completed and providing new interest to the Museum and facilities. I hope to welcome you to the AGM and be able to show members what has been going on, not least where we have now invested over £300,000 for the future.

It's a Gate Life! - The job of the Crossing Keeper is not generally seen as one of the most glamorous roles at the Museum but is there more to the job than meets the eye?

By Keith Chadwick

When a train is due, shut the gates and when it has gone past open them again. As job descriptions go, it is both very basic and unlikely to sell the job to anyone even during times of a depressed job market. However, it does describe the basic function which trainee Crossing Keepers have to master during their period of training and just this basic function alone is very important and indeed essential. As the crossing is our main point of public entry from the end of Platform Two, the Keeper is in fact ensuring the safety of our visitors as they cross our 'main line'. This alone should be enough reason for anyone to do the job willingly if tasked as without a Crossing Keeper either trains wouldn't run at all or if they did, people wouldn't be able to access the site to reach them. This would rob us of the reason to run them in the first place! Of course, inclement weather conditions can conspire to make the job at times less than pleasant but if it gets too bad between trains one can always retire to the spacious, welcoming and comfortable embrace of the Crossing Keepers Hut which offers all the facilities one might require except for shelter, warmth, somewhere to make a brew and somewhere to take anatural break! Ah but when the sun shines it is very pleasant to be able to bask in its glory while enjoying the carefree life of a Crossing Keeper as we open and shut gates, open and shut gates, op.....

Yes, a very pleasing picture of bucolic charm is conjured up by the term 'Crossing Keeper' but in truth like many other roles undertaken by the operating staff, there is more, much more involved in the job than just open-

ing and shutting gates. Oh really? I hear you ask, do tell. Alright, I shall as you asked so nicely! Firstly on running days when there are no staff at the gate on Platform One, the Crossing Keeper is likely to be the first point of contact for the incoming hordes (well we can live in hopes can't we?) and one job that often gets neglected but is very important in ensuring the maximization of our income is checking tickets. What better opportunity exists for asking visitors to display their tickets than when we have them penned up against a solid, closed and locked crossing gate? True enough but unfortunately at those times the conscientious crossing keeper will be watching out for straying bodies or things falling out of or off of approaching trains so that they can take the necessary action to prevent nasty things from happening if required. Never mind, the tickets can be checked once the gates are open again can't they? Well yes they can, unless the train that has just passed over the Crossing is heading in towards Platform Three. Then it becomes the lot of the Crossing Keeper to hot foot it over to the unguarded crossing at the south end of that platform in order to stop people crossing the track while the train pulls in, just in case there is a nasty bout of the overruns. This particular task can be made more interesting when a spiteful Signaller delays unlocking the gates of the main crossing long enough to make it into a straight race between train and crossing keeper to see who reaches Platform Three first! Luckily on days when trains are running in and out of the Goods Shed and the gates across the goods road are kept permanently open to the railway, the Crossing Keeper is

spared this duty for fairly obvious reasons. Even an Olympic sprinter would have trouble reaching the Platform Three crossing before the train if they had to run all the way round the Goods Shed first wouldn't they?

Right so, the gates have been opened, we don't have to trot across to Platform Three and all's right with the world, now we can check some tickets. Oh no we can't! The last train over the crossing is destined for Platform Two and so we now have to act as steward and make sure our beloved customers keep well back from the edge of the platform as the train approaches, because the poor dears can't see it coming around the bend. Wait a minute, has anyone thought about the branch train? If it is anywhere in sight, we shouldn't be running into Platform Two should we? Usually the signaller is on the ball and has his eye on the times but just occasionally when the branch train has been delayed a chance is taken. If this is so the Crossing Keeper should have been informed of the situation (another job, answer the phone in the keepers hut) and asked to keep an eye out and be prepared to stop the Museum train should the one on the branch suddenly burst upon the scene. Now does the job sound dull and boring? It does? Never mind there is still more to exercise mind and body and there are still those tickets to check.

One of the first jobs the Crossing Keeper should do before the start of the operating day is to check that the gates and locks are all working and not damaged in any way and then the crossing boards should be swept clear of any odd pieces of ballast and other



Crossings-a-plenty at the Museum

bits which tend to gather ready to attack the unwary. If the weather is wet or frosty, the boards can become very slippery. In these conditions, sweeping off may not be enough and one may have to resort to applying sand; depending on the number of people using the crossing and the continuing of adverse conditions, it might be necessary to apply more sand during the course of the day. Bearing in mind the 'someone's going to pay for this' society in which we seem to be living these days, the prudent (if over-worked) Crossing Keeper will remember to warn users to be careful when crossing in these conditions. The easiest way of ensuring they do not rush into the site at least being to stop them first to inspect those tickets! It is something to look out for as for some reason there is nothing quite like the sight of a gate about to be closed for provoking even the tardiest human being breaking into a trot in order to avoid waiting for a few minutes and that leads us on very nicely to another very exciting moment in the day of the Crossing Keeper. The gates are closed to the railway, there is a flood of visitors making their way across the line in both directions and there is a train beating up the gradient from the south end towards crossing. Close the gates too soon and detain

a crowd of sometimes impatient bodies or leave it too late and possibly delay the train by bringing it to a stop at the home signal? It is often a finely balanced decision but as always, safety must come first. Although the Signaller will probably be chomping at the bit to get the gates locked and the signal 'off' it is perhaps safer to bring the train to halt at the signal than it is to hurry the hordes across the track, especially if it is slippery underfoot. Yes sometimes it feels that the perfect candidate for Crossing Keeper would be a cross between an octopus and a fly, plenty of arms with practically all-round vision! Well then at least you would stand a chance of seeing those people that stray onto the crossing behind you as you open the first gate then have to be moved back so they don't get swept away when you open the opposite one. Yes, I know you ask them to wait until both gates are open—don't you? But still they wander on as soon as the way is unbarred; sometimes I wonder if we all speak the same language then realise that these days we don't. But that as they say is another matter!

All joking aside, the Crossing Keeper is in the ideal position to relate to our visitors and will often find themselves in the front line for fielding questions so it pays to have a good knowledge both of site facilities and the agenda of activities for the day; it could save a great deal of embarrassment! Public relations and in particular visitor satisfaction are very important in creating a lasting, favourable impression and while the crossing keeper need not be a Blue Badge tourist guide, being able to converse with the public politely and knowledgeably is certainly a useful attribute for the job. It is surprising how good one feels after sending a member of the public joyously on their way having been able to efficiently deal with their enquiries.

So the job of the crossing keeper does indeed entail opening and shutting those gates a number of times over the course of a day's running but that is only one, the most obvious of many duties that the incumbent of that position is expected to carry out. Perhaps the job is never going to have the glamour attached to that of driving steam locomotives or the perceived prestige of Guard or Signaller for instance but it is nonetheless a very important role and a very public one and it is one of the front line positions that needs to be filled every time trains run on the Museum's railway. It is one of the first operational jobs that becomes available to younger members and is good grounding for learning practical skills that can be carried forward when training for other tasks. Nevertheless, it shouldn't be regarded as a mere 'first step on the ladder', a day on the crossing can be fulfilling enough for even the most experienced of staff! Don't believe me eh? Well go on, if you haven't done a turn for a while ask the Traffic Manager to pencil you in for a shift; I'm sure you'll enjoy it but remember to bring waterproofs with you, just in case!

Dawn Neville

As the magazine was about to go to press we learned of the death of Dawn Neville, wife of Bob Neville and mother of Tim Rice, along with sister Rowena, and brothers Toby, Jack and Alex, who died after a short illness. Her funeral was on Friday 28th March at the West Mersea Free Church.

Congratulations, and Happy Birthday go to Ray Palmer who celebrated his 90th Birthday on 15th March, Ray has been involved with the Museum for many years and has helped generate funds from his sales of second hand books.

Coal Office *by David Rose*

As part of the HLF project Team Wednesday was asked to build a Coal Office to go along side the Coal Dock which is currently being constructed. With their usual "gusto" (if that is possible from the aged group) some sketches were drawn and a plan of attack agreed. However, you may notice from the picture that not all went well, and there were a few issues to resolve.

The Team treated this in a light hearted manner so please look at the captions to go with the picture, which outlines their thoughts.

Possible captions

- * "What scale did you say"
 - * "What are these millimetres all about"
 - * "I thought you wanted an office for the Miniature Railway"
 - * "Maybe we should have got Lawrence to draw it"
 - * "Never mind Thursday tomorrow"
- Pick your Favourite!

This article is intended just to show we can have a bit of fun and do eventually produce the goods (no pun intended), If you want to join us please come along and you can be sure of a welcome.



Closure of EARM North London (Enfield) Branch

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the East Anglian Railway Museum North London (Enfield) Branch, the members voted for the Branch to become an 'independent' transport group, thereby disconnecting its 43 year association with SVRPS and the Museum at Chappel. It does not intend to align with any other transport group, either local or national, and will take the name of The Enfield Transport Circle (TETC).

The Trustees have had to accept this decision with some regret, but this has been a trend with other branches such as South West Essex and Colchester, and as branch circumstances have changed so much since the inception of the organisation, it is not surprising.

TETC members were pleased to make a donation of £50 to the Museum, and thanks have been expressed with the hope that those individual members of EARM with the Circle will continue their membership at this exciting time in the history of the Museum, and we wish the Circle well in its future activities

Branch Lines

Reports from the EARM Branches

Colchester - David Reeve, 01206 793923

Branch meets at Friends Meeting House, 6 Church Street, off Head Street, Colchester, CO1 1NP

North London - Roger Elkin, 0208 363 0697

Branch meets in the First Floor Meeting Room, The Drill Hall Sports Club, Old Park Avenue, Enfield, Middx. EN2 6PJ

South West Essex - John Rayment, 01376 561778

Branch meets at the New Windmill Hall, St. Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex

COLCHESTER

The Colchester Railway Group meeting on Friday 4th October 2013 was our Annual General Meeting, held as usual at the Friends Meeting House. Once again, the existing officers offered themselves for re-election and were quickly confirmed in post before they could change their minds. Therefore, Dave Cornell remains Chairman, David Reeve Branch Organiser and Roy Anderson our Treasurer, with Phil Ainsley and Chris Johnson as Committee members.

The main news was that our funds were in better shape than normal and we were able to make a £300 donation to the restoration of the W & M Railbus. This was greatly helped by a £133.56 windfall coming from the closing of the Co-Op Dividend Account, formerly run by our late Chairman, Bob Hammond. As many people from the Museum contributed to this over the years it was felt better to put the funds to this cause rather than for purely Branch purposes. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this scheme in the past.

Branch funds have also been helped by sales of second hand railwayana of various types. Our annual attendance at the Colchester Model Railway Exhibition is very helpful in this respect and we are not averse to members and visitors bringing a few items along to sell at the Branch Meetings. Please contact

David Reeve if you need more information on this topic.

At the time of going to press our evening 2014 meeting list has been finalised but the one or more afternoon ones are still to be arranged. The programme is however now available in downloadable form from the Museum website and from David Reeve by phone or SAE. A copy of the AGM minutes is available on the new web site, under the Meeting Programme page or by request from David Reeve.

Following the AGM David Mummery and Rob Murton presented to the meeting on German railways. It began with the background of the developments in the early part of the 19th Century when railway groupings occurred, followed by standardisation in the 1930s. David Mummery was fortunate to be working in the former East Germany before the fall of the Wall where steam was, in the 1980s, routinely still in daily use in the 1980s. Today, several heritage railway systems remain, especially on the narrow gauge. Starting at Berlin in the 1980s, various shots were shown of trains and military personnel. Loco 17008 appeared in typical continental livery, with the East and West German railway systems then completely segregated. Further shots followed on the architecture of that time, 64007 in a platform, various shots of suburban trains heading for Berlin and pre-war V36 0-8-0 number 103 019-6. At the conclusion of an interesting evening, a range of accompanying books was available for study.

The last meeting of the year was on 6th December when Mike Stanbury provided a presentation on the lines heading north from Sudbury, with his first section covering the line to Bury St Edmunds that closed in 1965. Beginning at Sudbury with shots in 1964 taken before the station eventually gave way to a swimming pool. Scenes included what is now the Chappel Station footbridge in situ at Sudbury, as well as a Wickham DMU in the then single track platform and of the site of the former signal box. We quickly moved through Long Melford showing it as it was and as it is today, then on to Lavenham with a J19 and its two articulated coaches and a Craven unit in the platform. Also E4 No 62785 and Black 5 No 44876 were shown hauling their loads. Next were various photos of Cockfield Station (whose Gent's urinal ended up on Platform 3 at Chappel). Welnetham with its large station building serving a small village from just a single platform face, Bury Eastgate that closed back in 1909 and finally Bury St Edmunds with its grandiose and ornate buildings. Here there were pictures of extensive freight sidings along with two centre through roads between the lines serving two platform faces.

The second section from Mike covered the journey from Sudbury to Cambridge. We began at Glemsford with several shots which included a railbus and a departing DMU in the station before moving onto Cavenish with the same railbus. Here there were some earlier steam shots and also some of the level crossing. Most of the stations had the same almost standard pattern of station architecture (known in GERS circles as the "1865 style" from the date the first examples were built). Next was Clare with some station scenes, Stoke with its single platform, and then Sturmer. Haverhill had an extensive two-track layout, yet was built to the same design of buildings except for a unique canopy valence. Yard shots from 1911 station and photos of E4 No 62785 and N7 No 69651 were also featured. Bartlow (formerly the junction

for Saffron Walden had another railbus shot and then there was Linton station before we finally arrived at Cambridge. The show concluded with a variety of infrastructure shots. It had been an exciting and nostalgic evening that was enjoyed by a large audience. Seasonal refreshments, kindly prepared by Jean Richards, were likewise appreciated.

Meetings commence at 7:30pm at the Friends Meeting House in Church Street, Colchester, where admission is £3.00 including refreshments. New members are always welcome. Further details and dates from David Reeve on 01206 793923 or e-mail: d_e_reeve@hotmail.com. Alternatively, we now have a new web site for the Colchester Railway Group at: <http://colchesterrailwaygroup.wordpress.com/>

NORTH LONDON

In July we enjoyed another selection of Dave Baker's vintage 16mm transport films, including some relating to the 150th anniversary of the London Underground. Since the meeting we have heard that Dave has suffered a stroke more recently, so sadly this may well have been his last show for us.

After the summer break Peter Watson treated us to some fascinating videos from the 1980s. These included the last days of the Folkestone Harbour branch, the Severn Valley Railway, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and also air shows at Fairford and Boscombe Down.

For October we had something completely different – an evening about digitally controlled model railways. This consisted of a presentation on the subject followed by the opportunity to try out some of the equipment at first hand and to ask individual questions. Although some of our members are not inter-

ested in model railways this was balanced by some extra visitors from local model railway clubs. All in all, it was a very interesting and successful evening.

The following month Stephen Jupp came and told us about the complex history behind the Welsh Highland Railway. He brought us up to date with its recent re-opening by the Ffestiniog Railway Company and all the work that is currently going on at the Harbour station, Porthmadog to enable it to accommodate both Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland trains at the same time.

The autumn season concluded in traditional style with Dave Alison from Cumbria giving us another of his excellent slide shows about his travels in the last 12 months. This mainly covered rail travel in Great Britain, but he had also visited Germany for the "Plandampf" scheduled steam services, plus Italy, Ireland, and France for the Baie de Somme Railway Gala. As well as trains, Dave showed some slides of boats, planes, buses, cars and even a horse with railway connections! It was good to finish the year with a "full-house" attendance, and the usual seasonal refreshments of mince pies, sausage rolls and chocolates.

SOUTH WEST ESSEX

The July meeting was held much earlier in the month than normal as The Windmill Hall was in the throes of a major refurbishment programme. Revelling in the smell of fresh paint, a good sized audience were entertained by John Margerum who took them across the USA by Amtrak. American railroads have, by European standards, a relatively sparse network of passenger lines, but their freight routes provide much that is worth seeing. Starting on the East Coast, John moved us eventually to Seattle, with a healthy dollop

of Chicago on the way. All very inspiring, unless of course you are stuck at a level crossing waiting for an interminably long freight train to clear the road.....

To nobody's great surprise, July was followed by August and whilst autumn was looming on the horizon our venue was still warm enough for the odd member to wear shorts... as indeed did our speaker, Russell Newland. Russell battled his way to Upminster from Chadwell Heath to talk to us about the British Railways Standard Classes, and particularly the "Clans", and the Hengist Project to build a new one. It was interesting to learn just how many Standards were originally planned to be built – several thousand, rather than the 999 that we ended up with. But time and technology marched on, and the working lives of most of the engines were pitifully short. Despite early problems with their steaming, it seems the "Clans" were popular with their crews. But much as most of us would like to see a new one built, one does wonder what was the original point of the class....?

We wish the Hengist Project well. Is there room for a Standard Pacific at Chappel?

Members of South West Essex Branch do not just meet up on the Last Wednesday Of Every Month (December Excepted), but also use their Senior Railcards and Freedom Passes to explore the world beyond Upminster. Recent triumphs include Penzance and back in a day for £35, ditto Liskeard and Looe; Kidderminster (for obvious reasons); the Bluebell and Forest of Dean Railways; the London Overground complete circle; the Welsh Valley lines, including Barry Island (about which the least said, the better); Loughborough for the Great Central, and the Mid Hants Railway. Bonus trips have been, of course to the Chappel Beer Festival...

It is pleasing to note that on all these trips, Britain's trains all ran swiftly and to time.

Which is why we love them.

John Jolly is rightly famous, especially in Essex, for his construction and operation of his railway museum at Mangapps Farm, near Burnham on Crouch. He visited us for the September meeting, and rather than sticking strictly to the advertised topic, he talked to us about the history of the project, which now stretches back over some 30 years. Travels to North America (as advertised) brought him several artefacts from the far side of the North Atlantic, including a Canadian Pacific caboose and a pump trolley from the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad, along with some insulating pots from redundant telegraph poles!

John's presentation was fluent and humorous, and delivered without notes or illustrations. It was instructive, entertaining and a great way to spend a couple of hours in down-town Upminster. Thoroughly recommended.

Adrian Wright is an old friend of the Haverling Transport Circle, and always gives excellent value for money. His knowledge of railways in general and East Anglia in particular, is extraordinary, and in October he focused on Railways to the Seaside. As Adrian pointed out, in the mid-19th century Walton was already a thriving (if small) seaside resort, whereas Clacton was just a couple of hamlets some way inland. Times change, and whilst the Great Eastern Railway and the LNER were instrumental in the fortunes of both, it was Clacton that ended up with a double track to London, plus Pullman cars in The Season. Alas, no Pullmans now.

Remaining on the local front, Adrian looked at the traffic to Southend, both at Central and Victoria stations, as well as the Pier Railway, which is with us still. Rolling stock old and new were examined, along with the lavish facilities at the various stations – although Clacton could hardly be described as "lavish"

until the LNER rebuilt the site in the 1920s. A photographic trip along the various lines allowed us to see the architectural features of the wayside stations and their associated facilities.

It is always a pleasure to listen to Adrian, and as ever we were grateful for his amusing and instructive presentation.

November. Not my favourite month, with Christmas looming on the horizon, with all that is expected...But the Romford Recorder had a 2-page article by EARM's Ian Reed, which was a good read before we meandered through the mist to learn all about The Southwold Light Railway. Nick Evans gave a very professional presentation, covering the history of this East Anglian gem and the plans for the future. Until the line was built, Southwold was almost off the edge of the planet, and the line made a significant contribution to the town's (continuing) prosperity.

Nick's talk was extremely well illustrated and presented, and we wish the rebuilding project well.

The Branch AGM took place after Nick's session, and all the existing Committee were re-elected. However, John Rayment announced that he would not be able to carry on in his role as Secretary beyond next year and asked that the members give this fact due consideration. John has done a terrific job over more years than most of us can remember, and huge thanks are due. His programme of meetings has never failed to stimulate our interest, and he will be hard act to follow.

But follow we must.

Beyond that, the cost of our monthly accommodation is sky rocketing, and as a consequence the Committee have had no option but to increase the "subs". They have not felt able to make a financial contribution to the

Museum, but this will be reviewed as the year progresses, as will our accommodation and its associated costs.

As Gloria Gaynor (almost) sang “We will Survive...”

Mince pies and pork pies were there in abundance for the December meeting, as were a gratifyingly large number of members. Branch Chairman, Secretary and general all-rounder John Rayment had raided his film archives to show us “Britain by Rail”, although rather cheekily he did not actually include many trains in his presentation. But it was good stuff, focusing on the holiday destinations of the 1950s, when apparently it never rained and menswear made the 1970s look like a decade of haute couture. (Why did English males wear suits and trilby hats at the seaside...and was plastic jewellery on women ever a good idea?). We travelled around the West Country (all sunshine and cream teas), down potholes in Yorkshire and amongst the rose gardens of Harrogate (sweeping vistas and good beer) then around East Anglia. (Flat.)

One piece of railway footage that escaped the censor was of an unrebuilt Bullied Pacific climbing up from Ilfracombe, banked by an M7. The Branch Treasurer was heard to be in the throes of ecstasy in the back row. Either that or he had forgotten his medication.

This was a fine end to another successful year in South West Essex, and in the car park the members were able to gaze up into the clear night sky for a rather fine display of stars over Upminster, with musical accompaniment from the rattle of the nearby District Line. We are truly blessed

The last Wednesday in January 2014 might truly be described as The Day The Rains Came (or The Day The Reins Came if you travel by horse), as it really was very wet. But Peter Groom still managed to splash his way up from Broxbourne to present a talk on East Midlands Steam. This really was a master class in black and white railway photography, covering the 1950's steam and diesel scene in an area bounded roughly by Rugby, Derby, Saxby and Market Harborough. Peter was quite apologetic about showing so many pictures of Beyer Garrets on the Midland lines, but nobody seemed to mind as the diet was leavened with several pictures of ex-LTS tank engines far from their origins on Thameside. We looked at the curiosities on the GN & LNWR Joint line in Leicestershire, the intricacies of Seaton Junction and Uppingham, plus the glamour of the 9F hauled runners on the Great Central, all amidst the smell of fresh paint in the Windmill Hall. The audience left well satisfied – and into the rain again.

From the article opposite:

Built to last: the concrete filled cast iron supports for the swingbridge survive at Alresford Creek, circa 2008. Photo J D Mann



Colneside Tragedy - John D. Mann re-opens the case of the Wivenhoe to Brightlingsea Railway, closed fifty years ago in June 1964

By John D Mann

December 7th 1953 was a damp, miserable day in Brightlingsea but spirits were high amongst several hundred townsfolk gathered on the station to witness the re-opening of their railway after months of closure due to the devastating East Coast floods.

Just eleven years later, Dr Beeching had the last word - trains ceased from June 14th 1964 - not even an MP's intervention could save it! Before any reasonable opposition could be mounted, rails were ripped up in great haste with the 'poor condition' of the Alresford Creek swingbridge cited as the main 'problem'

As branch lines go, Wivenhoe to Brightlingsea was a 'gem'. A single track branch line left the Clacton to Colchester line east of Wivenhoe on to a low embankment crossing low-lying fields close to the River Colne. Much of this is still visible covered with mature trees. With woods and expanses of water (or mud) passengers were spoilt for choice as trains slowed to cross the 462ft swingbridge.

It is a tad draughty at this exposed site, no wonder steam crews preferred tender cab J15s or Ivatt 2-6-0s! Views towards Fingringhoe and Mersea are simply magnificent . . .

The line traversed saltings and open farmland, passing behind beach huts and into the substantial terminus at Brightlingsea, 9½ miles from Colchester.

Today the branch is largely forgotten (but tantalisingly almost complete) - I wonder if people in the town will celebrate 'fifty trainless-years' I rather think not.

Further reading - The Brightlingsea Branch by Peter Paye, The Fighting Branch by Paul Brown Both volumes are now out of print but can be viewed in Colchester Library reference department.

The Museum Publishing Team are considering a pictorial history of the line - perhaps you have some photos? If so, please contact Rob Boyce

Superbly clear conditions at Brightlingsea indicate a cold 'easterly' in March 1952. Overcoats are in evidence as the tail lamp is walked along the platform. J15 65432 (with tender cab) has just run round the train. Photo B I Nathan



The German Girl -

The 1950s were a difficult time for the nation's railways.

By Nick Ridgway

In the post-WWII period, the dearth of maintenance and investment, and the competition from road transport as people's domestic and career aspirations grew, meant that the demand for rail travel and goods forwarding was falling away. British Railways published its Modernisation Plan, advocating the investment of £1.6 billion in 1955 terms that would replace steam traction with diesel and eventually electric. The return-on-investment was put at around 6% per annum and the Government of the day bought-in to it.

Something needed to be done about stemming the losses on poorly-patronised branch line routes and with that in mind a generation of self-propelled coaching stock was conceived. These diesel-powered vehicles were intended to bring economies to operations in the form of closure of signalboxes, withdrawing station staffing, rationalisation of track layouts, shed arrangements and better revenue collection. It is arguable that, without their introduction at that time, much more of the network would have been pruned during the Beeching period that followed. The new trains became known as "multiple units" – the concept being that one would simply couple sufficient self-propelled vehicles together to form whatever accommodation was needed for any particular service.

However, the basic minimum of two vehicles was still too much for some services and with that in mind, a series of single vehicles in the form of four-wheeled "railbuses" was pursued for the lightest-used lines. With the typical experimental vigour of the time, sev-

eral manufacturers' types were ordered as follows:

- British United Traction produced 11 vehicles employed mainly in the Midlands. Seven were powered and four were trailers.
- A.C. Cars Ltd. also produced five vehicles for use on former Great Western branch lines, displacing the familiar locomotive-hauled "auto-trains" towards the end of steam there.
- Park Royal of West London produced 5 modern-looking vehicles that were deployed mainly in Scotland. An enterprising manufacturer produced a plastic model construction kit for these at the time.
- D. Wickham of Ware produced 5 lower-power vehicles also for former Great Western lines.
- Bristol produced two low-powered vehicles for use in Scotland with bodywork by Essex Coach Works.
- and the German firm Waggon und Maschinenbau Fabrik of Donauworth produced five for deployment in East Anglia. Germany had at that time been enjoying considerable success with similar vehicles there and the five were a development of those to the then-current British Railways requirements.

The Germans weighed only fifteen tons in working order and were originally powered by non-standard Buessing engines, a factor that was to reduce their availability initially as spare parts were difficult to obtain; four of the five were subsequently re-engined with British equipment common to other diesel units. They had a driving cab at each end that extended only half the width of the vehicle,

meaning that those in the front seats could enjoy a driver's-eye-view of the line ahead. Passenger access was via a sliding door and a vestibule in the centre of the vehicle. The interiors were light and airy and seated fifty-six. It is understandable with the lingering undercurrent of sentiment at the time and their tendency to make light of things that railway staff began to refer to them as "wagon-bashers".

They arrived in April 1958 on the Hook-of-Holland to Harwich train ferry. They were immediately put to work on services such as:

- Haverhill to Bartlow, reverse there, then Ashdon halt, the Acrow factory halt and Saf-ron Walden to Audley End, to provide Haverhill with a regular London connection; the line through Haverhill pointed better towards Cambridge, and Haverhill had been the subject of some post-war development as a London overspill town.
- Chappel via White Colne, Earls Colne and all stations along that route to Haverhill.
- Witham via Wickham Bishops and Langford halt to Maldon East.
- Witham via White Notley and Cressing to Braintree.

Although traffic picked up because of their use, they were eventually unsuccessful at preventing the closure of the first three lines. The Braintree line was different; traffic developed to the point where they couldn't cope with demand, and the larger diesel multiple units were put on instead. Eventually, the Braintree line became electrified and today it enjoys twelve-coach trains direct to London Liverpool Street in the morning and evening peaks.

Their cousins elsewhere deferred closure of a

number of lines by several years.

By the time the 1960s closed, they had all been displaced. With no more work for them on the cards, recycling, to use a modern term, beckoned. However, unlike most of the others, four of the five Germans survived.

Two went to the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway initially, where they were used on mid-week shoppers' services to Keighley at that time.

Two others went to the North Norfolk Railway, maintaining their East Anglia connection, and were used on the line being re-laid



W&M Railbus, E79963 at Sheringham on 13th November 1973 in a brown livery.

from Weybourne towards Holt. As the railhead approached the newly-built platform at Holt, traffic demand for travel on the route had developed to the point where they could no longer cope, "they were like sardines in there" being one comment overheard. With no run-round loop

and no larger alternative vehicles available, the North Norfolk had become desperate to complete its run-round loop at Holt so that longer locomotive-hauled trains could be reintroduced. A group of seven experienced volunteer Platelayers from Chappel joined in with the final thrust there, meaning that, once again, the Germans were displaced from their regular duties as undersized, just as at Braintree.

So it is both pleasing and particularly appropriate that one of the Germans, E79963, has now come to Chappel for a well-earned working retirement. Being a grandparent in many ways of the vehicles in use on the Sudbury line today she represents success in reviving rail travel on two lines in the area, one con-

tinuing in service and the other in heritage use, and a brave attempt to save many others across the country. It is unlikely that she will see “sardines” here, though!

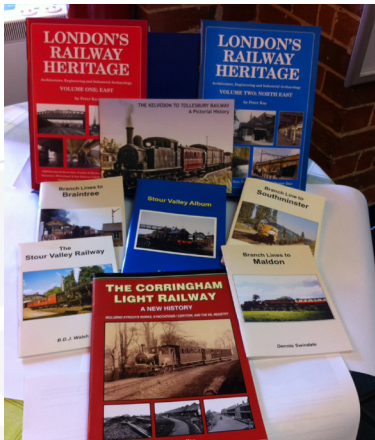
Since arrival, an attempt to turn the engine over on the starter motor to check it hadn’t seized up resulted in the engine actually starting, which was a surprisingly good sign. The holes in the fuel tank have been repaired. Bodywork repairs are underway and the repairs to floors, seats and their upholstery will follow. And very soon, the German Girl will join the other exhibits here in action, telling her own part of the continuing story of the railways of East Anglia.

Local Railway Books

A reminder to Members that the VRC stocks a wide range of local interest railway books, some produced by EARM Publications - The Stour Valley Railway, The Stour Valley Album, Branch Lines to Maldon/Braintree/Southminster and the new book by Mark House, the Kelvedon and Tollesbury Light Railway.

There is also a number of local books on other railway lines by Peter Kay, along with many from the Middleton Press.

Come along and have a browse next time you are on site.



1950s Exhibition at the Museum

Until the 23rd May 2014 we are staging the first of a planned series of themed displays and exhibitions, visitors can try on some clothes from the period, listen to music from the juke box and discover some items which were around at the time.

The display is open every day and is located in the former Ladies Waiting Room in the main station building which has recently been restored and transferred back into public use, having spent many years as the Curator’s Office.

Why not come along and have a look?



Stour Valley Steam Through the Years

– Our regular look back at articles from previous editions of SVS

40 Years Ago - Stour Valley Steam 1974

We start with an piece about a railway line between Mistley, Thorpe and Walton which never came into existence.

AN EAST ANGLIAN LINE THAT NEVER WAS

The Mistley, Thorpe & Walton Railway was authorised in 1863 to run from a junction with the Harwich branch on the east side of Mistley to Walton, distance of approximately 12 miles. The proposal was rather odd to say the least as for the last five miles the line was to run between Thorpe and Walton in very close proximity to the extension of the Tendring Hundred Railway which had been authorised In the same year.

The G.E.R. who were to work both lines were very concerned with this duplication and after due consideration stated a preference for the M.T&W. alignment.

Unfortunately although the two local Companies accepted their preference it was too late amend the T.H.R Act so, in due course, the T.H.R route was agreed.

The M.T&W. then sought powers to join the T.H.R at Thorpe and to abandon its own route to Walton, this was authorised in the summer of 1864 Meanwhile work had started on the line at Mistley but the company soon were in dispute with the contractor which ended in a fight when they tried to take possession of the line early in 1865. Financial difficulties followed slowing down progress and work ceased towards the end of 1868.

In the meantime the T.H.R. had reached Walton. Application for abandonment was granted in 1869 and although a half hearted attempt was made to revive the project in 1873 under the name of the East Essex Railway nothing came of the scheme and the works remained derelict. The line today is almost untraceable as in the second World War most of the remains were converted into an anti-tank ditch defence. After a lapse of a hundred years it is very difficult to imagine what the good folk who promoted the line hoped to attain.

20 Years Ago - Stour Valley Steam 1994

Geoff Hutton was able to free himself from the Romford traffic issues and let us know what he thought of the Class 309 units being replaced on GEML services.

Red is the Colour - Geoff Hutton

So, farewell, Class 309s. And hello 312s and 321s, although already we know you well. Hardly a fair swap, you might say. Whatever their merits, these latter units could never be mistaken for full-blooded express passenger trains. The 309s could rarely be thought of as anything else. The Red Electrics, we called them - we denizens of the Colchester Royal Grammar School. The B1s were still pounding up and down to Liverpool Street on the Parkeston Quay boat trains in the summer of 1962 when the New Units appeared on the scene in preparation for through electric working from London to Clacton and Walton.

To obtain a different perspective on our evening train-watching habits at Chitts Hill (see Stour Valley Steam, Autumn 1987), we pedalled our bikes up the track leading to Whitehouse Farm. This crossed the London to Colchester line just west of Stanway sidings - a curious set of facilities dating from Great Eastern days, whose original purpose remains a mystery to me. Bumping along the rutted surface we soon reached the brick overbridge - and there they were. Two sidings full of brand new maroon electric trains, British Railways' first 25kv a.c. express multiple units, their smooth dark lines nestling comfortably amongst the shrubbery next to the up line. They were much better looking than the stock then working from Colchester to the coast - somebody had actually designed the cab windows, rather than just sticking panes of glass in a coach end.

When we got to ride on them a few months later, we could see and feel the differences there as well. Double glazing cut down on the noise even if it did fill up with water after a few weeks and need redesigning! The Commonwealth bogies gave a smoother ride - but

threepenny bits did not stand on their edge quite as promised (Marks Tey was a good place to test this one). But they were comfortable, spacious, fast - and unique to the Great Eastern. As I flit through the memory banks, various images of the 309s emerge. Returning from shed bashes around London and standing by the (empty) drivers' cabs and watching the speedometer needle nudging 90 as we plunged through Ingatestone, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon leaning out of a door window at Colchester North, saying goodbye to a girlfriend as I returned to Reading, our cheeks wet with tears swinging over East Gates level crossing and down alongside the Colne to Wivenhoe, taking the children to Walton-on-Naze returning from the coast, brushing sand from the buckets and spades off the seats drinking ginger beer in the Griddle Car (circa 1968) catching a mid-afternoon Clacton train home from work, first stop Romford (giving the almost sensuous experience of not stopping at Stratford, Ilford and all those bloody little stations in between). And finally - peering at Mark, Dickie and Colin over a pile of beer bottles and Gazetteers on The Clacton Sunset, January 15th 1994, as we hurtled down Parsons Heath bank and up through Colchester on a 95 minute run from Norwich to Liverpool Street.

We were sitting on a real train, with tables, compartments, leg room, slam doors and windows that you could stick your head out of at 100 m.p.h.. We are the poorer for their going. Well - not quite finally. The following Saturday was their last day in service. The wife and daughter had gone shopping, and the boys had disappeared, so I went to Chelmsford and caught the last 309 up working from Clacton, and returned on the final run, the 18.00 from Liverpool Street.

Dickie was in the front coach, and Mark, and

various other EARM luminaries. After a faultless run from London, I stepped off the train at Chelmsford, and watched the taillights disappearing into the dark towards Springfield.

But it is no good looking backwards all the time. It was the first time I had used - as opposed to passed through - Chelmsford station for many years, and I was very impressed with its rebuilt state. It was a nice County Town complement to the splendours of Liverpool Street. So some things are improving!

10 Years Ago - Stour Valley Steam 2004

Once again Phil brings us the latest news (in 2004) from the Trustees Meetings.

FROM THE BOARDROOM by Philip Ainsley

Publicity this year has been the subject of difficult decisions. Our main leaflet was well received by all, its design by conceived by the Marketing group, desktop publishing produced by Keith Martin. If you look at the leaflet all our special events are covered with additional Panels about Railway Experience Courses, and Membership avoiding separate print runs. Pride of place in the centre spread is site plan for visitors to navigate the museum.

Reports from Weybourne on the North Norfolk railway suggest that the N7 Locomotive overhaul works are proceeding well. This is mainly work on the boiler and replacement of consumables (superheater flues, crown stays, tube plate and firebox repair).

Marketing Group - The Chair has now passed to Mark House, this year's first event this year is Spanning the Century event on 14th March. Extra displays have planned around the themes of TRAINS, TOYS, TRINKETS AND TREASURES. This was conceived as a way of adding value to a simple early season steam day, readers will be able to judge the result. Membership of this group, who effectively manage the nonoperational railway aspects of events, is open to any memberwilling to contribute. Grateful thanks

extended to Gordon Adams and Penelope Tuck for their contributions. as their planned standing down having injected energy and enthusiasm especially in the last year.

Future plans

Catering provision this year has been considered by the Trading Company. It has been agreed that Mark House and Rob Boyce will evaluate and take such steps as are necessary to improve the catering offering to our visitors. Encourage the development of volunteer effort in catering; evaluate the need for subcontracting catering and approving suppliers who might be involved such that we are able to provide a regular catering service to our customers and to members.

Members should have received a mailshot pointing out the possibility of constructing a Conservation Shed. This is being considered mainly for Rolling Stock. To enable the next stage of planning we need indications of practical support that can be offered. At this time no firm proposals have been tabled, but the proposal is consistent with our last Long Term plan issued back in 2000 which of course is a year away from a five year review date.

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on SVS No 155, and thank you for the Happy Birthday note on page 41. I was at the inaugural meeting at the USC in Romford, along with my esteemed colleague Dave Gibson, and we have both been closely involved with the South West Essex Branch/Hornchurch Transport Circle ever since. If memory serves me correctly, local members of the Society were invited to the USC by a Wally Banks – but he never appeared, and Don Thompson took the chair and it went onwards and upwards from there!

The location has shifted over the years to the Old Windmill Hall in Upminster, Langtons in Hornchurch, a social hall in Gubbins Lane at Harold Wood and now the New Windmill Hall.

Do the maths – we have held around 480 meetings, and as far as I can recall only had to cancel one, due to heavy snow. Whilst our involvement at Chappel is not as great as when we were all young men, the members can be proud of their fund raising in the 1980s and 90s via the Romford Railway Exhibition.

Not a bad record.

Geoff Hutton - South West Essex Branch

STOUR VALLEY STEAM 157 - AUTUMN 2014

Stour Valley Steam is now published every six months, deadline for copy for *Stour Valley Steam* 157 will be 30th June 2014 at the very latest, with an intended publication date of August 2014.

We welcome submissions from all members, either related to Museum activities or railways in general. It's your magazine, so please help make it interesting for people like you to read. Ideally articles should be sent in Microsoft Word compatible format, with any photographs sent separately, in their unedited (i.e how you download them from your camera) state. Photos sent within Word documents are unable to be reproduced due to the low resolution. Items sent via email should be sent to svs@earm.co.uk

If you are not big on computers we still welcome your submissions, please send these via post to the Editor at the address shown inside the front cover. If you need any assistance please contact the Editor who will be happy to help.

Last Call for Stour Valley Steam 156

We apologise for the late arrival of this edition of the magazine, it was held back to allow a firm date for the AGM to be set and publicised, and to allow postage cost sharing between the Magazine and AGM notices.

We're sorry that we've been unable to have colour sections in this edition, this attracts around a £100 premium on the printing, if anyone has any sponsorship ideas (or donations!) please contact the Editor, contact details can be found inside the front cover of this magazine. That's it for now, we'll see you at the AGM on Saturday 31st May 2014.



Letters to the Editor

Events Diary

April

Friday 18th	Day out with Thomas
Saturday 19th	Day out with Thomas
Sunday 20th	Day out with Thomas
Monday 21st	Day out with Thomas
Wednesday 30th	South West Essex Branch: A Third Colour Rail Journey by Paul Chancellor

May

Tuesday 13th	Enfield Transport Circle: Waterloo - Bournemouth & IoW in Steam Days by Kenneth Livermore
Friday 23rd	Chappel Cider Festival
Saturday 24th	Chappel Cider Festival
Wednesday 28th	South West Essex Branch: Delivering the Goods by David Eatwell

June

Friday 6th	Colchester Branch: Driver's Eye View by Dave Newell
Wednesday 25th	South West Essex Branch: Brooklands into the 2nd Century by Tim Morris
Sunday 29th	Living History Event - 1960s

July

Wednesday 30th	South West Essex Branch: History of the Stow Maries Aerodrome and Museum by Russell Savory
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August

Sunday 2nd	War on the Line, World War 2 Event.
Saturday 23rd	Day out with Thomas
Sunday 24th	Day out with Thomas
Monday 25th	Day out with Thomas
Wednesday 27th	South West Essex Branch: Kelvedon & Tollesbury Light Rly by John Manning

September

Tuesday 9th	28th Chappel Beer Festival
Wednesday 10th	28th Chappel Beer Festival
Thursday 11th	28th Chappel Beer Festival
Friday 12th	28th Chappel Beer Festival
Saturday 13th	28th Chappel Beer Festival

Unless stated, events are at Chappel, Meeting locations for the branches are as follows:

Colchester meet at the Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Off Head Street, Colchester.

Enfield Transport Circle meet in the First Floor Meeting Room, The Drill Hall Sports Club, Old Park Avenue, Enfield, Middx. EN2 6PJ (former North London Branch)

South West Essex meet at the New Windmill Hall, St. Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex

Back Cover: 4E33 11.33 Felixstowe North to Doncaster Railport (GBRf) uses the new "Bacon Curve" in Ipswich on 24th March 2014 . Photo by Mike Stanbury



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