

**JOURNAL OF THE EAST ANGLIAN RAILWAY MUSEUM**



**OVER 50 YEARS OF RAILWAY PRESERVATION**





▲ Steve Scruton and Ian Wyatt speak to Rob West about the Chappel Miniature Railway, live on BBC Essex on 4th June 2022 - Scruton Wyatt Media.

▼ The BBC Essex team Ian Wyatt, Jacob Ottaway, Beth Punter, Owen Ward & Steve Scruton, who broadcast live from the EARM for the Jubilee Special on 4th June 2022 - Scruton Wyatt Media.



# STOUR VALLEY STEAM EDITORIAL

In the last Editorial, we discussed how the Museum, in common with many other organisations, was starting the slow recovery back from the pandemic.

There was a need to “cut our coat according to our cloth” so for the rest of this year at least we are generally open three days a week – Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, plus Bank Holidays as well. Our marketing reflects that with an emphasis on simplicity and cost-effectiveness, and on the whole this strategy has paid off.

We were privileged to have BBC Radio Essex broadcast the “Steve and Ian Saturday Show” from the Museum over the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Hopefully this will help to raise our profile as a major attraction in the area.

On site, the new Exhibition Hall is taking shape now and when the project is complete it will allow us to display our larger exhibits better, thereby enhancing our credentials as an accredited Museum. Much has been achieved since the last Magazine was produced, but sadly much more needs to be done. Peter Martin mentions elsewhere that the Station Buildings badly need renovation, which will almost certainly need grant-funding. We do have a developing need for members with administrative and other skills, alongside our usual plea for operational and technical staff.

Finally, in spite of our forecast the existing team is still largely responsible for the Magazine, however, there has been an offer to take over from us for the next issue. As ever, we are very grateful to all those who have contributed articles, photos and any other information as all this presents as broad a picture of the Museum that can be accommodated in these pages.

David Reeve - Editor

## STOUR VALLEY STEAM

is produced and published by  
EAST ANGLIAN RAILWAY MUSEUM  
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Registered Charity No. 1001579

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Opinions expressed by this journal do not necessarily represent those of the Trustees nor of the Editor.

SUMMER  
2022

Volume 52  
Number 171

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Front Cover:  
Steve Scruton and Ian Wyatt  
of BBC Essex broadcasting  
live from the EARM on 4th  
June 2022



# Site Lines -

We hear what's been happening since the last issue of *Stour Valley Steam* in the Estates Department.

*By Tim Rice*

Well, that drainage job I mentioned last time round - what a challenge that was! Over fifty metres of 300 mm diameter pipe, one metre of which now lies underneath the new Exhibition Hall, and at its lowest point is now around five metres deep because of the built-up land! I'm glad to say that project is now behind us and the network is doing its job nicely to facilitate the free flow of ground water through the site. It was a relatively straight forward job but had to fit in between the concrete pads being cast and the structural steel frame being erected. The window was there, and we made it just in time. A small cog in a very big wheel, but we were proud to have played our part.

We have been able to watch some very skilled work recently as the shed took shape and the land around it was being brought up to finish level. As a knock-on effect of the project, quite a major area of our site will be redeveloped beyond recognition.

More recently, the Estates team has had the intricate task of relocating a major junction in the site services network. This junction used to sit just south of the old B1 building but with the level changes and proximity to the new Exhibition Hall it had to be moved. Many services flowed through this junction

so therefore a fair bit of work was needed to get these moved to a more accessible setup whilst keeping the power network live and functioning. In doing these works we have made provision for future amendments, therefore "future proofing" the network in this vicinity.

No good building project is complete without a good trail of building mess, but I am pleased to say this came and went relatively quickly so the public sides to the new shed are now looking respectable, despite works yet to be completed.

As is becoming customary, the winter of 2021/2022 saw a long-anticipated major permanent way project take place in the yard. For some time now our "back loop" track in the vicinity of the Goods Shed has been significantly out of gauge leading to some undesirable side effects. The situation demanded the relaying of around 120ft of track, replacing all

► *Tim Rice undertakes some of the cable re-routing works*  
- Peter Robinson.





the sleepers and some of the rails. The complexity was in the fact the track is “buried” in the ground and that the yard is one of the main public and eventing areas.

Collaboration with the Permanent Way team was what was needed and we rose to the challenge, donning the hi-vis, and throwing as much heavy plant as we had at the task! I think the hardest part of the project was removing the old track as the yard over the years has seen such a pounding that the ground was like rock in places. The track work had to be literally dug out of the ground before our rail crane could get it airborne for removal. From there the usual ground works took place and we were soon delivering concrete sleepers into position.

With a kind loan of a Gopro camera from Richard Swain, I managed to capture much of the works in a time-lapse and have produced some videos of the project which can be viewed on my You Tube channel or the Museum Photographic Collection page on Facebook. I know that I for one will look back on these in years to come and have a real sense of achievement.



▲ Groundworks on-going in the Exhibition Hall to prepare for the track and final floor on 6 June 2022 - Tim Rice.

By the end of the job around 30 tons of recycled road planings were used to finish off the filling in of the newly-laid track and roll it flat, thus disguising the fact anything had taken place at all! Whilst patting ourselves on the back Peter Robinson took pleasure in telling me that 6 weeks of work had resulted in moving two rails two inches closer together!

This was a real achievement and the collaboration of volunteers to get the project through to completion was great to see. Well done all involved!

In general, the site is looking tidy, despite the amount of building work going on, and judging by the works in hand and those forecast, will look even better in a year's time.



◀ The PWay gang removing the track panels near the Goods Shed on 9th January 2022 - Mike Bradley.

# Displays and Interpretation -

The Curatorial Department has been busy - read about it here.

*By Adam Culling*

## Reaching New Audiences

It is always important to think beyond the Museum's metaphorical 'four-walls' and explore new ways to reach potential new audiences. So when the Clare Castle Country Park Trust asked for assistance with a short-term display in their newly- renovated South Platform Waiting Room and Goods Shed, this provided the ideal chance to grasp this opportunity.

Many of the items on loan are on display in the old South Platform Waiting Room, which is now the Park Visitor Centre. Plans for a coin-operated working model of the Clare station and goods shed have been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, so many of the EARM's objects are on display in its place. Some of the objects include enamel and cast iron signs, tickets, luggage labels, lamps, badges, booklets, prints, and hats. Many of these items are similar to those loaned a few years ago for a temporary exhibition at Lavenham Guildhall, (*see SVS 168 for more details- Ed*) but of course this time there are more items with a direct link to Clare and the Stour Valley.

This loan affords a great opportunity to rotate some of the Museum objects from storage to being displayed, but more importantly it offers us a chance to reach new audiences. Those that may visit Clare Castle Country Park regularly may be unaware of what the EARM has to offer. Of course, our leaflets are available to visitors and hopefully many will make their way to Chappel!



▲ Adam delivering some items to Clare Castle Park on 31st March 2022  
- Clare Castle Country Park Trust.



## Appreciating Existing Audiences

As we try to develop new museum audiences, it is worth taking a moment to appreciate those who have already made the decision to visit, and revisit, the EARM. Work on the Exhibition Hall will clearly cause a little distraction to the site's appearance; that's unavoidable,

◀ The refreshed and cleared lobby to the Heritage Centre on 3rd July 2022

but we all need to try to keep the site's public-facing side as appealing as possible.

The Display & Interpretation Team will be doing our bit by refreshing existing displays and working on new ones. The Heritage Centre lobby area is undergoing a simple refresh; including a fresh coat of paint, decluttering the area near the baby changing toilet for pushchairs, and a new "Welcome" display board explaining the vision for the Heritage Centre. The new 'Local Lines' displays will also be completed before the summer school holidays, and will include new display boards and a few new items from the archive store. With so many new items entering the collection in 2021/22, we will be introducing a 'New Arrivals' display. While we cannot guarantee every object that enters the Collection will go on display, our 'New Arrivals' display case ensures many of our new items will go on display, even if only for a short period of time, ensuring the displays are continually changing for those who regularly visit the Museum.

► *The former platform building at Clare Castle Park which includes a small Museum - Adam Culling*



## The Chappel Woodland Project -

*By Jaki Collison*

A few years ago I came up with a concept to turn an area of the Museum into a mini-wood. This area was part of the old orchard and filled with brambles and items that had been stored for years. The Trustees accepted the idea and work began with the aid of lots of people to clear the brambles and to remove and sort all the items that had been stored and become overgrown. Small work parties then took on looking at how to manage what was left and to get it under control. We also planted a hedgerow, still to be completed, to separate the managed area from the area left to remain wild. This wild area also acts as a separation zone to stop people wandering onto the miniature railway tracks.

The new Exhibition Hall had a large impact on the plans for the mini-wood as trees needed to be removed from the area of the shed. Those that could be saved were replanted in the mini wood and most look like they have survived the transplanting. Some of those that couldn't be saved are being repurposed. One of these was turned into a log seat and wood from other trees will be turned into other seating for the mini wood.

Work is still on going to enable it to be ready for people to use it and the aim is for it to be ready next year. Nature does take its time so it will be many years for the trees and hedge we have planted to mature.



# Membership Matters -

*By Darren Johnson & 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:

Sara Shepherd and Family, William Shirley, The Hardz-Stotz Family, Adam Warr, Cole Hockett, Elliot Munson, The Chapman Family, Garry Coombes, Ian Sparkes, Terry MacAvoy, Philip Ward, Benjamin and Brian Hays, The Clarke Family, Allen Morton, Lloyd James, Mick and Carol Lang, Alistair Smith, Iwan Jenkins, Alex Tapley, Lance Decena, Ben Minett, Conor Mahon, Jake Seaman and Family, Kevan Griggs, Alan Seymour, Angel Vaughan, Robbie Voss, Peter Boyden, John Evans, Steve Clayden, and Brian Thompson.

We are saddened to report the deaths of members Derek Davy and Trevor Skeggs, as well as the deaths of former members John Hale and Roger Pepper. We offer our best wishes to all those members who are recovering from surgery or who are otherwise unwell.

We would also like to congratulate Museum members Michael Sanders and Amy Rogers on the birth of their son, Edward on 13th February 2022.

Thank you to everyone who renews their membership in good time each year, chasing non-renewals adds to the work load of volunteers. Active members are reminded that in order to partake in onsite activities (including operating) you must be a member for insurance purposes.

We are trying to move member communication over to electronic communication to save money on postage as well as the use of paper. Postage costs continue to increase and this is money which would be better spent on restoration of Museum exhibits.

It is now possible to renew your membership via the Museum's ticketing system. Please go to <https://earm.merlintickets.co.uk> and choose the option for Memberships. Thanks to those who responded to our requests in recent times for email addresses, if you wish to provide or update your email address with us, please email [membership@earm.co.uk](mailto:membership@earm.co.uk).



The Trustees are very grateful to all those members who have made donations to the Museum during the current membership year; either directly or by including a donation with their renewal form. We look forward to your continued support in this respect.

If you need to contact us regarding Membership Queries, please preferably email us, via [membership@earm.co.uk](mailto:membership@earm.co.uk).

# Chappel Miniature Railway - *By Rob West*

Another year has passed, and the Chappel Miniature Railway is now looking towards its second full season.

Various changes and additions have been made since the railway first opened in October 2020, and these past few months were no different. For one thing, the new Exhibition Hall has begun to take shape behind Starston depot – quite a striking new neighbour! The earthworks involved in this project have unfortunately rendered our original road/rail transfer bay inaccessible, but a new one will soon be created by adding a 90-degree curve to the end of the existing track. Also because of the new structure, our level crossing has seen increasing use by road vehicles, as this is now the only access to the set-down area and the relocated staff car park.

Our resident steam loco Frederick departed for the Moors Valley Railway in November, where his ten-year overhaul is being carried out. The MVR have kindly loaned us one of their own locomotives, 2-4-0 tender engine Horton, to cover for Fred's absence until he returns. Horton is a good runner, although because of the steep incline, he runs best with three-coach trains rather than the full rake of four. Winter weather caused a problem over the last weekend in December, as condensation in the fuel storage drums dampened the fire-lighting wood, thus hindering attempts to get Horton steamed up. So for those two days, Ricardo boldly stepped in to run the service, albeit as a single-coach train. The storage drum has since been altered to keep the wood free from condensation in the future.



▲ *Frederick having returned from overhaul at the Moors Valley Railway on 24th May 2022 - Michael Sanders.*

Further additions to our rolling-stock and infrastructure will be seen in the coming months. A generous sponsor has kindly ordered a new coach from Denver Light Railways, which is designed to accommodate a wheelchair; however, it can also be used as a conventional four-seater, like our existing coaches. Following a vote by Museum hands, the newcomer will be named after Fred Youell – a former member from the Museum's early days, who notably was responsible for preserving our iconic N7 locomotive. Meanwhile, the lineside fencing has been



improved with extra chains, and holes have been dug at the station ready to install the first semaphore signals, which are currently in storage. They were built by Chapman Miniature Engineering, who also provided an electric tail lamp for the trains. Once a powered headlamp is obtained for the locos as well, maybe it'll be possible to run the trains in the dark!

◀ *The new PRM Coach for the Miniature Railway when it was delivered on 26th June 2022.*

# Tour Guiding at the Museum

*By Phil Ainsley*

At the Museum, railways can be seen and demonstrated, but for the lay person to understand more, a Tour Guide may help explain these technicalities to them.



▲ *Phil Ainsley lets the students of Chappel Primary have a go in the Signal Box*

This has been a particularly successful year for tours, with eight visits to date. A recent change has been marketing an “Early Years” version for children aged 5 -8, offering a simpler showover tour, with the group asked to provide some self-generated project work. In this way there is aged-related learning activity, in which there is no expectation that a Guide be familiar with current teaching practice.

Tour guiding is a skill - an example question being – “What type of train is that?” One reply could be “A Class 108 DMU built in 1958”, which may be suitable shorthand to a railway enthusiast. There are other ways of saying this, and perhaps an adult of more mature years may understand its design was an improvement over older slow two-coach steam trains. Other adults with young children might compare these units with present-day trains like the new Sudbury line units which feature further improvements, with easy access and information displays. It is an example of demonstrating design progress.

Avoiding technicalities is necessary for younger children, so the approach here is closer to the historical origin of museums, presenting a “Curiosity Cabinet”. Here we show unusual things and we can introduce the idea that museums are a storehouse of objects. A good example of this is inside the Booking Office, with Edmundson paper tickets and tickets rack, trunks and cases, railway lamps, coal fire, typewriter and a mechanical calculator. We talk about the idea of moving elephants by train, and point out that there are three places in the Museum where such animals are noted!

Older children tours enter the Museum’s operational signal box to see semaphores and moving levers in action. It is a place where the progression of communication can be talked about, from telegraph to telephone, how even the internet has telegraphic-like qualities.

► *Richard Gourlay explains the goings on in a ticket office to the Chappel Primary School children.*





### **Past, present and future.**

A Guide can talk as a time-traveller: in the past about what has been built, its buildings and its collection; in the present with volunteers engaged in restoration and operations; and the future as an ongoing quest to better display artifacts. It's a matter of pride of place, but guiding will also test us personally, when having to acknowledge known current Museum deficiencies in display, presentation and accessibility. Guiding people around gives instant feedback about visitor engagement and that is of interest, for it changes group by group.

You never know what questions are going to be asked, which gives this activity great variety.

Adults may interject with their reminiscences, or add opinions or facts that are not quite right. We aim to be careful to not say "no" but to gently correct incorrect assertions. For early years groups a guide has to understand children's language, or finish an incompletely thought through question. A questioner is never wrong, they can be guided to an understanding.

Interesting questions may test your own knowledge, but there's a lot of knowledge out there -you may ask another volunteer for the answer. A query is never boring and gets you thinking yourself for the solution.

Tour guiding is always open to new recruits, and training can be given. Alternatively, if you wish act as an observer and to see if that is something you might be interested in doing, you're more than welcome to contact: [schools@earm.co.uk](mailto:schools@earm.co.uk).

► *Richard Gourlay, the students of Chappel School and Phil Ainsley with 'Jeffrey' outside the Museum.*



## **Volunteer Coordinator's Update**

*By Martin Gibbons*

We ran a very successful volunteers recruitment day which coincided with the steam loco Training Day on the 14th May. This resulted in 8 new volunteers joining the Museum.

They are: James Lloyd, Lance Decena, Alistair Smith, Alex Tapley, Ben Minett, Iwan Jenkins, Kevan Griggs, Alan Seymour. I would like to thank everyone for making this event successful, especially Mike Bradley, Phil Ainsley and Darren Johnson who assisted me in running the event and showing the attendees around the site.

Additionally we have also had the following Volunteers join in 2022. Elliot Munson, Terry Macavoy, Garry Coomber, James Lloyd, Angel Vaughan, Andrew Fleetwood, Robbie Voss-Bowyer. If you see the new volunteers around site please say hello.

# EARM Permanent Way

*By Andrew Cullum*

Over the winter and spring months a lot of Permanent Way work has been going on. This was made possible due to the quiet periods when the Museum was not operating trains or the occasional Beer Festival!



The Goods Yard sidings needed attention as the original sleepers, which had been buried, had rotted quite badly (*as shown left in Mike Bradley's photo*) and were no longer holding their chairs in place correctly. This meant that the inlaid track was out of gauge and rolling stock was essentially travelling on sand.

The siding close to the Goods Shed was chosen to work on first. As it turns out, the other sidings will have to be worked on next winter as there was not sufficient time to do the whole yard this time. The track had to be entirely lifted out and the track bed dug out and levelled, and the use of the rail crane made the job a lot easier. Jack Plumb and Peter Robinson showed their expertise here. Tim Rice (Estates) then did sterling work with the digger to get the track bed ready for replacement

► *The gang remove the old track on 9th Jan 2022 - Mike Bradley.*



bullhead chaired concrete sleepers; the idea being that concrete lasts longer than wood. Many other volunteers helped to get the job finished and be ready for public access to the site.

The Museum is very lucky in having the required plant and machinery to enable jobs like this to be done, without relying on outside contractors. It also helps having skilled volunteers to operate them. Eventually, the sleep-



▲ *Platform 4 points are excavated - Andrew Cullum*

ers were all lined up and most of the original rail was laid back down. The old chairs and fish plate bolts went for scrap. The track was then infilled and levelled with new topping. The points in the centre, which control access to Platform 4 and the Restoration Shed, were also excavated and restored to working order. A lever system will be installed eventually but for the moment lever bars still have

to be used.

Further work will be done on the South Yard where a number of bearers need replacing. A continuing war against weeds will also commence! Other plans include a connection line from the old Picnic Siding into the new Exhibition Hall, which will enable stock to be shunted in for display.

The PW Department is always looking for new volunteers so if you fancy getting a bit fitter please get in touch. [andrew.cullum@earm.co.uk](mailto:andrew.cullum@earm.co.uk)

► *The new track being laid on to bullhead concrete sleepers*



## Archived Records

*By David Reeve & Graham Wing*

The archiving of the Museum's records has proceeded steadily along the well-established lines that have been detailed in past issues of "Stour Valley Steam". Over 600 updates to the listings have been made to date, and posted to the Museum's shared computer drive since this project started some years ago.

Since the pandemic, of course, much of this work has had to be done virtually and we have made use of Skype in order to keep in touch with each other.

Our current focus is on getting the more recent minutes into order but relevant documents can be added into any appropriate category as they come available.

The years 2016-2018 seem to be some of the worse affected for the HOD files, mainly due to changes in personnel. We are anxious to close this particular gap in our Collection, as we try to complete a run of HOD Minutes from 2000 onwards. Inevitably, there are gaps and David would like to hear from anyone who has either paper or computer files from this era, so we can add them to our files.

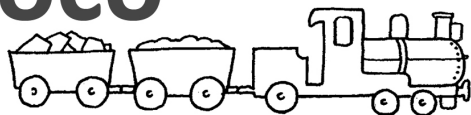
As the Collection gradually takes shape, we anticipate more enquiries as to its contents. If you are wishing for specific material ideally contact one of us so we can thoroughly search the archives for it. If it is necessary to borrow a file whilst we are not on site please leave a visible note saying what has been borrowed and when. If possible, follow up with an email to David (address below) with all the details so it can be properly logged.

We would also like to explain that if documents are duplicated, we are always careful to take it home for recycling or shredding, if the contents are confidential.

Finally, I would like to repeat our usual plea for Museum-related Records or Ephemera to add to our Collection. Thanks you all who brought items in in the last few months and if you have anything you would like to donate, ideally contact David Reeve on ([d\\_e\\_reeve@hotmail.com](mailto:d_e_reeve@hotmail.com)).



# Pete Martin's Plumb Loco



Having been hit by this Covid thing, one has to say that life has become a little foggy lately, and I found it frustrating to be isolated and 'off grid' for a couple of weeks. There are only so many times you can watch the repeats on telly of "Train Truckers", "Bangers and Cash", "Abandoned Engineering", and "Architecture the Railways Built". However, Tim Dunn's excellent presentation of "Secrets of the London Underground" has been a fascinating and welcomed alternative to the above.

Through a haze of pills and potions, it has given me time to reflect on where we are, and having survived the past year of uncertainty, the Museum now finds itself emerging into yet another period of uncertainty with the developing situation elsewhere - the repercussions from which are still unravelling.

That aside, there are many organisations like ourselves that have pressed the "Restart" button and found that there has been a heartening return in visitor numbers and income on the days that it has been open. The ever-popular Thomas events haven't yet lost their flavour and are still a major source of income, although there have been challenges with staffing. However the post-Covid recovery is traded off against the recent increased costs in running expenditure, utilities, and materials,

and all you end up doing is chasing your tail. So there is still need for a cautious approach to our sustainability and as to where our re-investment is best placed.

As many are aware, the most significant investments have been the constructions of first the Running Shed and now, the Exhibition - Hall - Barn - Shed (whatever you like to call it). I say that whilst many are aware of these projects, I'm sure that many members do not fully appreciate as to the enormous amount of work involved, their attentions being perhaps more focused elsewhere. Both these projects have been in the melting pot for years, and over the intervening time have evolved for one reason or another into what we have today. Who'd have thought that a year ago neither of them were there, and the fact that they are is due in no uncertain terms to the tenacity of a few who have supported the projects and have steered them to fruition. Every cloud has a silver lining, and the lockdown closure period enabled much of the

► *Foundation holes for the Exhibition Hall full of water, September 2021 - Pete Martin*





◀ *Exhibition Hall from the south end on 1st January 2022 - Rob Boyce*

infrastructure work done (in isolation with no parties!).

To date - as far as the Exhibition Hall (to give it its proper name!) is concerned, there is still a way to go with the continuation of embankment earthworks and installation of track and other facilities. We are indebted to those who screwed it all together and to Allan Robinson who rose to the challenge with much of the drawing and planning stages - and baling foundation holes out! There's one heck of a lot more to it than that, and for those who didn't know, much of it was funded by significant bequests previously held in reserve specifically for that project. There have been suggestions about a blue plaque in honour and memory of Peter and Barry Clampin, who kindly bequeathed those funds and had previously supported the Museum for many years. Some may remember Peter, but his brother Barry was more into traction engines and wasn't seen so much at Chappel, but nonetheless, was still an avid supporter of the Museum.

Coupled into this is the next phase which is the replacement of the BDJ Heritage Centre which has been living on borrowed times. It was unfortunate that it fell foul of the local planning authorities, and although it had a life extension granted, it has still got to go. Whilst this is bound to cause major upheaval, this cloud has another silver lining in the fact it will enable the construction of a more purpose-built facility for display of our smaller

and more sensitive artefacts, and opens the door to enable continuation of our Museum Accreditation on a more stable footing and our eligibility for grant funding.

Going forward, it has been identified by many visitors numerous times - and it shows on site occasionally - that there is an emerging change in the demography and culture of our visitors and members, whereby a diminishing skill base is changing the focus away from full-scale restoration and more toward conservation. At a recent HRA awards ceremony where Brian Sermons and I represented the Museum, we were awarded the equivalent of a Crackerjack Pencil for our work on our unique DRB, there was much discussion amongst several smaller railway groups and museums that are exploring our options based on that fact. To a degree, we too are moving down that line of endeavouring to future-proof the Museum with the current works and further diversification.

It begins to change the perspective when you look around those vehicles we have on site, and the Trustees and Curatorial teams are reviewing the future of many items which have had nothing done to them for years, where it has to be said that the Collection has got to the point where it has exceeded the ability to look after it, and is affecting what we are trying to portray.

Whilst we sing the praises of what's going on, let us not forget the Station Buildings, where some moves to explore the future of those comes to the fore. The main building is a shadow of its former self, having been knocked about courtesy of Dr Beeching, and if it hadn't been for our tenure of many years it would have been demolished and replaced by a bus shelter akin to the one at Bures.



▲ Two views of the Lamp Room - showing the poor condition and missing roof.

As time goes on, we have to consider - preferably sooner rather than later - that it is going to need significant work, and is beyond our own resources. Some background exploration has taken place, but the finer details are really a separate item and would bung up this prestigious publication, but basically the following is proposed:

#### Stage 1.

Lamp room and Porters rooms: This is the oldest part of the building but is not integral with it. However, the building is also in someone else's back garden and needs serious work, starting with the stabilisation of the exterior and a re-roof. If we were to strip the former Ladies Toilets of their fittings the room could be converted to office accommodation. This would enable relocation of the office from the life-expired BDJ centre, and also puts a presence back on Platform 1, which has often been devoid of life.



Stage 2. The antique period gents loo retains it's 'patina', but is currently locked out of use having been vandalised. It could be refurbished to 'unisex' for office and staff use.

Stage 3. Main Station Building. Refurbish exterior brickwork and repairs to roof vent above the erstwhile Ladies Waiting Room which is leaking water. Further evaluation required to internals. This room is currently unused except by staff on larger event days, and could be converted for office use or as a small exhibits extension.

Stage 4. Exterior frontage. Major works are required to the front staircase and windows. Restore 'pagoda' style canopy to stairway. This project could the subject of possible grant funding.

Oh dear. I'll stop there for fear of getting too boring, but it all goes to show that there's much more to our Museum than you might think.....



Major works needed to the Men's Toilet on Platform 1 ▲

◀ Returning to Nature - the Men's Toilet on Platform 1





▲ Antony Fobister on Railx duties in the Goods Shed on 18th June 2022 - Mike Bradley.

◀ Amy Rogers and Michael Sanders prepare for a trip on the DRB on 1st June 2022 - Jack Plumb.

▼ David Reeve, Darren Johnson, Isaac Ferneyhough & Martin Gibbons recruiting new volunteers at the Colchester Arts Centre on 10th April 2022.





▲ The PWay gang having finished the trackworks around the Goods Shed pause for a group photo in March 2022- Mark Cornell.

▼ Adam Pepper, Phil Robinson, Brian Sermons and Pete Martin watch Allan Robinson undertake some work on the Toad in early 2022 - Peter Robinson







▲ Greg Kiteos, Mark House, Robert Varletta, Isaac Ferneyhough, Harry Brooks and Aimee Archer with Number 11 in the background on 3rd May 2022 - Greg Lancaster.

▼ A group photo of various Museum members with the Railway Experience Course participants and their families on 18th June 2022 - Chelsea Wagland.







▲ Jack Plumb at the controls of the Class 04 during the Museum's Jubilee Weekend Special event on 5th June 2022 - Josh Fortescue.

Rob West explains the Signal Box operation to Driver Experience Session Participant Emma Mocock on 21st May 2022 - Darren Johnson. ▲

▼ Laurie Rose explains the workings of a Steam Engine to participants Jake Seaman and Emma Mocock whilst Mike Bradley looks on, during the Driver Experience Session on 21st May 2022 - Darren Johnson.



# The Model Railway Dept *By Gordon Humphris*

The Model Railway Club continues to thrive and is basking in the afterglow of both the Christmas and Easter Thomas Events. We try to respond to the type of event through railway themes on the Club Layouts on display. We are fortunate to have almost all the main characters and a few obscure ones as well! This always goes down well with the public visiting and children will always arrive excited and often unwilling to leave! The profile of layouts in the main room continues to demonstrate the hobby it's many scales and forms with both OO and N gauge well represented. Down the corridor in the O Gauge Room, much progress has been made on Chappel High Road. Lots of scenic items for the public to view and work on the two control desks is almost complete. We are gearing up for being open to the public in August during the summer Thomas event, and although we might not be able to show Thomas and his Friends in O Gauge scale we should be able to entertain visitors with the wonder of sound and an entertaining array of locomotives and rolling stock. It's still a work in progress but great strides have been made and it is quite presentable to the visiting public.

The progress in the Exhibition Room on the Halstead layout has been incredible; much has been achieved through new buildings and a second track! Although not quite prototypical, the ability to run two trains in both directions adds to the visual for the public when they press the activation button!! A new outdoor project is in the planning stage and a proposal will be presented to the Trustees in the next month or so which will see a large scale (Garden Scale) layout between the building and the playground fence providing an added attraction on open and running days. Future announcements about this project will be made on the Museum and Club websites and Facebook pages.

As the season starts to get going we are continuing to provide an attraction and support to the Museum. We are, at times, unable to open due to lack of available members to man the building adequately, but we will co-ordinate with the various event managers and give the best possible service where practicable. Jack Cavie, our Events Manager, is still finding his feet but has grasped the position with gusto and as a volunteer Fireman is ideally placed to co-ordinate with the Museum Events Team. All departments should contact him for all matters regarding Railway Club Events participation.

As always we welcome new members and members of the EARM to visit, the Clubrooms are open on Monday nights, Tuesdays (O Gauge Group) Wednesdays and Thursdays (in the main clubroom) during the day. We were sad to see Emily Webb leave us due to health issues but we in turn welcome new member Ian Sparks to the Club. Steve Knight our Secretary has now co-opted Membership to his duties and should be approached on matters to do with joining the Club. We are basically got back to normal running and looking forward to exciting times ahead. More details of our activities can be found on our web-site ([www.braintree-halstead.co.uk](http://www.braintree-halstead.co.uk))



▲ Chappel High Road in the BHMRC Layout.

# **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](mailto:svs@earm.co.uk)*

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

There are many ways to reach the public and our target audience. Our web presence, marketing e-mailings and, increasingly, social media content are all important. Content is now being produced on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, by Katie Kappel, James Cornell and Greg Kiteos. This is a very fast-moving platform, where feedback and comment are freely exchanged.

Two good examples of interactions lately were: firstly, Jack Plumb explaining signalling to a young visitor, then a second from a vintage vehicle enthusiast blogging about the Transport Extravaganza. In both cases the target audience was beyond the traditional railway fraternity, where potential visitors have normally come from in the past.

## **MAINTENANCE WORKS**

Winds cause damage – named storms now invariably seem to come with urgent repair action and costs. While not generally newsworthy, maintenance and repair are also essential. To acknowledge some recent works; Brendan Sothcott has been attending to the SK coach, where a periodic exam revealed all the brake blocks on the vehicle needed changing. In the Permanent Way world, oiling of fishplates to stop track defects is an annual task. This has been undertaken by a team led by Andrew Cullum; without the attention to maintenance there will be no events! Thanks go to others doing the unseen maintenance tasks about site.

## **CURATORIAL DECISIONS**

Within the WhatsApp internal community, there have been some useful discussions about vehicles and their value either visually or their use at the Museum. Curatorial decisions are not easy; whether to make a vehicle serviceable for use – or for display only. Both options have safety and cost implications; there is a need to get an agreed policy together for exhibits in the Exhibition Hall.

## **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

Efforts have been made to increase membership numbers; to this effect two recruitment days have taken place. Firstly, at the Colchester Arts Theatre on 10th April. Colin Burwood, Isaac Ferneyhough, David Reeve, Darren Johnson and Martin Gibbons were in attendance to talk to potential volunteers and other community groups. This was followed up by Volunteer Day at the Museum on May 14th, again ably assisted by many - which resulted in nine people attending, of which five signed up for membership.

## **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

This year's Chappel Winter Beer Festival (March 3-5) returned a very creditable financial return. Many other festivals had been cancelled, and it is pleasing to note the September Festival (Tues 6th to Sat 10th) will proceed. <http://www.chappelbeerfestival.org.uk/>



£419 was raised for the N7 restoration by collecting unused tokens at the Beer Festival. Another useful additional fund comes from the “Driver a Diesel” activity. On May 2nd for example, £150 was raised with all the slots fully booked. Commercial railway training has been taking place again, and our educational aim as a Museum has again been demonstrated.

### SAVING MONIES

Raising cash is one side of a coin, but conserving it is another. It has to be said money is a scarce resource, but limited funds can be expended with HOD approval supported by an Invoice or Receipt sent to [finance@earm.co.uk](mailto:finance@earm.co.uk)

Changes to electrical systems are being considered by the electrical team of Rod Terry and Colin Burwood. We really should watch heating costs – plus there is a potential for providing solar power which is again being further investigated.

Some costs can be avoided. Recycling items, avoiding importing rubbish, attention to security generally would all help. Recent diesel fuel thefts have been reported locally; please check that buildings are secured, and the back gate closes behind you.

*I would like to thank Phil Ainsley for compiling this edition of Express News - Ed.*

## Semaphore News

*By Jack Plumb*

Recent months have once again seen the Department complete scheduled maintenance activities across our points, signals, Signal Boxes and the level crossing for winter maintenance. A start has also been made on installing new steel crank beds in the North Box area owing to them starting to fall into poor condition. This causes us issues with point adjustment as the cranks start moving on the rotten wooden beds. Replacement of these beds will be fitted in around normal operations so as not to impact on our busy events calendar.

Over the summer and autumn we are also hoping to progress more parts ready for the electrical detection work – it feels like slow progress at the moment as you’re not seeing anything out on the track but Peter Robinson is slowly building a collection of parts so when we’re ready to start it should be a case of bolting it all together...with a bit of minor adjustments (big hammer) I’m sure! There’s also a couple of signal overhauls and re-paints to plan in, a demonstration signal box to progress and more developments on South Box to work on. As ever we’re always interested in those who wish to give us a hand with S&T. We’ve got plenty of plans just not enough time to do them it seems...



► *One of the new crank beds installed at the Museum - Jack Plumb*

# John Hale - Obituary

*By Jeff Kilpatrick*

John Hale passed away on 19th April 2022; he was taken to Broomfield Hospital on 8th April where he peacefully passed away five days before his 91st birthday. He was born on 24th April 1931.

John had been a Team Wednesday stalwart for 16 years until ill health made him give up driving. In 2019 John was diagnosed with vascular dementia and over the next 3 years his health gradually declined.



He left school at 15 and started an apprenticeship as a wooden pattern maker at Lake and Elliot in Braintree. At 18 he was called up for National Service in the RAF, but much to his disappointment he was unable to complete the two years as he was discharged on medical grounds. He returned to Lake and Elliot where he worked until they closed down in 1985. He then worked at Miller and Walker until he retired at 65. John also joined the Fire Brigade as a retained fireman; he did this for 22 years and was awarded a long service and good conduct medal.

In 1955 John married his first wife, Sybil, who died in 1999. They had one son, Barry, who died in 2016. In 2005 he married Pat, with whom he had once worked, after a chance meeting when they discovered they had both lost their

spouses in the same month. John had many interests: he was an avid stamp collector, as well as amassing a large collection of model cars; he grew cactus and pelargoniums, enjoyed going to antique fairs, and played carpet bowls.

An article in the Braintree and Witham Times about volunteers at the East Anglian Railway Museum at Chappel prompted him to join Team Wednesday, putting his carpentry and practical skills to good use. His prodigious collection of chisels and gouges found valuable use on many projects. Those of us who knew him will remember his cheeky smile and twinkling eyes and good nature, with affection.

Our sympathies go to his widow Pat, and all his friends and family.

# Roger Pepper - Obituary

*By Rob Boyce*



Some sad news for members of the Museum is that Roger Pepper recently passed away at the age of 79. He was buried at Colchester Cemetery on June 22nd 2022; it was a private family funeral. As well as being sometime in charge of the Estates Department and Chairman of the Heads of Department Committee, he also assisted greatly on event days such as Day Out With Thomas and took an active part in the social life of the Museum, including joining other members on canal holidays. His wife Faye, who passed away some years ago, was also involved with the catering at the Museum.

Our condolences go out to all his family and friends for their sad loss.

Museum member Martin Stubbins adds these comments “Roger was actually my Dad’s apprentice when he started in the building trade after he left school. He was a good family friend. I encountered him when working for Anglian Water, I then worked alongside his department for 13 years. It was me who convinced him to join EARM.”

## Platform Two Cafe

Platform Two café is open every day that the Museum is open serving delicious food, home-made cakes, cream teas and lunches. This is scheduled to be Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays until the end of the year. (Please check the Museum website – [www.earm.co.uk](http://www.earm.co.uk) for the latest information. Some details of the café’s menus and other items can be found on the Home Page).

The café is run by Stour Valley Catering – our on-site team who also provide the catering on Event Days.

For more details, please visit the website: [www.stourvalley-catering.com](http://www.stourvalley-catering.com); they can also be found on Facebook. To make a booking, please call 01787 224473 ext 246.

Also, just a reminder that Museum members on site, during those days when the café is open, can dial 246 on the EARM’s internal phone system to pre-book their order and claim a discount on their food.





# Team Wednesday -

Our regular update from everything Wednesday at the Museum

*By Tony Foster and Gordon Humphris*

To add a little context to the following, we were joined last year by Colin Burwood and Rod Terry who were formerly members of Team Thursday. This team stopped working with the departure of one of their number away from the area. Colin and Rod's work rate on joining us has been impressive. Rod was an electrician in his working life. Together they have become the utilities team. Many electrical problems around the site have been dealt with. Low consumption LED bulbs have replaced other more costly lights in various buildings including the VRC. A 'period' lamp post has been erected and wired in at the front of the Station by the main stairs. The light from this lamp is effective enough so that other security lights in this area can be removed.

A number of plumbing problems and water heating issues have also been dealt by Rod Terry, who has also commenced monthly emergency lighting tests in various areas of the Museum. As well as this, he is carrying out PAT ( portable appliance) testing on site , including power tools in the workshop.

The majority of Team Wednesday's labours,



however, have been on the Pub coach which has taken a lot of resources and manpower since it was started last August. The Pub coach project has progressed from a pile of rotten timbers, roof, doors and panels in various states of disrepair to a re-formed coach. The rear of the vehicle was clad in feather board as this will be on the side not visible to the public. The front has been restored to a very presentable standard with windows replaced with acrylic sheet and the trim work, at time of going to press, is ongoing. The talents of TW members engaged on the project have been put to the test and have not been found wanting. A quick calculation has found that only 29 working days have gone on the project, though in reality it's

◀ *Rod Terry and Colin Burwood installing a new lamp outside the VRC - David Reeve*

### ► *The Pub Coach in April 2022*

been nine months!! The coach is water tight and secure with working doors in the centre of the vehicle. It will soon be ready for paint. .

The Running Shed is now fully glazed thanks to Team Wednesday volunteer Jonathan Rowntree, who cut the 270 plus glass panels to size. He was joined in this repetitive glazing task by Colin Burwood and Keith Tomlinson. Nick Hazell has painstakingly restored and painted another platform bench, picking out the detail on the cast-iron bench supports. It now sits on Platform 2.



One or two volunteers such as Phil Leggatt have been helping out with car parking duties on busy DOWT days i.e. Christmas and Easter. Other volunteers have been assisting Phil Ainsley acting as guides for the school parties that have been visiting the Museum in recent weeks. Some TW members have successfully undertaken an in-house scaffolding course which can only be of benefit as we tackle other tasks. We always welcome new volunteers to the Team and, of course, encourage former regulars to return.

Finally, very recently Gordon received a request to replace a broken window in the ‘Bungay Coach’, a victim of “Storm Eunice”. He replaced the broken unit with one that matched in size one that we had retrieved from the refurbishment of the pub coach. A splendid example of recycling!

## A Year of Marketing

*By Darren Johnson*

We reported in the last magazine that the new website had gone live last August, and I find it amazing that as I write this I’m already getting renewal reminders for the web hosting. Where has the time gone! Thanks to everyone who has supported us in Marketing, either by sharing our posts, distributing leaflets or helping us in some way create the content which lets the visitors know about our events. We always welcome new photos to use in our promotions, if you have any of recent events you are happy for us to use, please email them to me.

To date we have been pleased with the numbers attending our events and open days, as we now only open on Weekends and Wednesdays, plus some Bank Holidays, it concentrates the visitors to those days, rather than spread across the week.

If you are on any of the social media channels, please help the Museum by sharing our posts to local groups in your area, or if you can display a poster locally for our events, please let me know by emailing [marketing@earm.co.uk](mailto:marketing@earm.co.uk). I also thank Martin for his continued help and support this year, it’s certainly been an interesting year, you could even say it’s been magic.

# Transport Extravaganza 2022

*By James Cornell*

Our annual Transport Extravaganza returned this year in its full capacity following the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the Jubilee, we had to schedule the event for the Saturday and Sunday rather than our normal Sunday and Monday, as we had lost the Bank Holiday. However this didn't stop our determination to put on a good show! This event saw No.11 on the MK1's, the DMU and also the Pump Trolley in operation. Our Pump Trolley has seen more and more use at our events due to its huge popularity with our visitors. In our advertising prior to the event we had many comments from people saying they could not wait to have a go on it! From my quick research, we seem to be the only railway within a very large radius that actually offers opportunity for what is literally a "hands-on" experience.

Overall the event was a massive success with Sunday maintaining its status of 'busiest day'. Saturday visitor and exhibitor predictions were a grey area prior to the event, since we had not held the event before in a full capacity on a Saturday. It was only during Covid



*Scammell in the field with the cars - James Cornell ▲*

when we ran a Saturday for a three-day small scale event. Saturday turned out to be the nicest day weather-wise that really helped show off the polishing work on the vehicles. The day turned out to be quite quiet despite this nice weather. Out of the 67 vehicles booked in, just over half turned up which was rather disappointing to see as it wasn't much of a 'Extravaganza'! Visitor numbers were around what we expected for a Saturday with just over 200 admissions. We put this down to the weather drawing people to the coast. Still, we all had a good day with lots of positive comments. Sunday was much busier, like it always has been, with just over 130 vehicles turning up out of the 185 booked. Sadly, the weather was less kind to us with on and off heavy rain. However, despite the gloomy weather we were surprised at just how many

exhibitors turned up and stayed on site, which made sure that there was a 'Extravaganza' for our paying public to come and see. Sunday was busier in terms of



*◀ The Display on the Sunday of the event - James Cornell*





visitor admissions, too, with over 300 tickets sold. This has been one of our lower figures; however the weather was enough to put most people off. If the weather had been like it was on Saturday then we are certain we would have seen at least 160 vehicles and a minimum of 350 admissions. Nevertheless, everybody enjoyed the event and we have had many nice reviews. A particular comment that our female workforce would be pleased to hear was how nice it was to see women doing operational duties in what so many people stereotype as an 'Old Blokes' hobby.

The AJN 825 Preservation Group came to support the event once again, and also give free bus rides to our visitors. This attraction has always been a very popular addition to the event and we do get people come just to see and ride with them. An extra special thanks goes to the Group this year on the grounds that they still chose to do rides completely free, despite the massive hike in fuel costs. Without the buses and rides, our event would not be as unique and fail to stand out as much from other shows. I would also like to say a massive "Thank You" to everybody who was involved to help maintain the high standards expected from this event, from the prep work, my marshal team and operations. Work for next year's event will start end of December this year.

A full collection of images from the 2022 Transport Extravaganza can be found on the Museum's Facebook page under "Photos".

## Volunteer Comms

*By Martin Gibbons*

Could all existing Volunteers please check they are receiving my email communications from [volunteering@earm.co.uk](mailto:volunteering@earm.co.uk), are they are in your SPAM folder? If you are not getting these, please let me know.

As a member, any time you are able to spare us will help - whether it is a couple of times a week or only a couple of days a year at our "Day Out With Thomas " events. Also, could you help us behind the scenes by applying for building restoration grants, etc?

If you would like to volunteer then please email: [Volunteering@earm.co.uk](mailto:Volunteering@earm.co.uk)

# Words from the Works -

*By Allan Robinson, with additional material by Pete Martin*

Life has been a bit hectic recently, but there is not so much on the loco front this time as the main thrust of the Engineering Department's work has been on completing the Running Shed, and the on-going work on the new Exhibition Hall.

However, Jubilee has been re-tubed and is ready for the new season. No. 11 is up for its annual boiler exam but should also be available for the coming season.

Progress is still being made on Lampport with the lubrication system complete, new brake blocks have been fitted and the sanding gear is well on its way to completion, all thanks to John Bicknell. Other items of note are the continuing work on Lampport's boiler and work integral to smaller fittings and platework.

We have also seen the very recent out-shopping of the refurbished Pooley Van and tarpaulin wagon excellently decorated by Robert Varletta. There has also been continuing work by Kevin with his skilled rebuild of the bodywork to the 'Queen Mary' Brake Van. A 'make do and mend' job was undertaken on the GW "Toad" Brake Van, which has produced a splendid refurbishment and looks very pretty.

The WD diesel loco 72229, which has been with us for 6 years or so, was looking rather neglected, and work has started on a cosmetic job. However, as usual with all these vintage items, you don't know what you're going to find until you pull it to pieces, and it is going to be more than just a paint job!

The N7 remains an ongoing project, and the boiler reconstruction is subject to extended timescales being influenced by increased material costs and delivery.

At the time of this composition, No.54 - alias "Thomas" - is suffering from an emerging problem with overheating of the rear axle-box bearings, and is in process of being jacked up to check the lubrication system and bearing condition.

► *The Pooley Van and Hi-Bar Wagon having had their first move out of the Restoration Shed in June 2022 - Peter Robinson*



# The Great Eastern Railtour -

*Saturday 30th July 1983*

This tour was organised by Carl Lombardelli, author of 'Braintree and its railway in pictures' (now out of print) and 'Branch Lines to Braintree', an updated edition of which can be obtained from the VRC at Chappel for just £4.95. The following text comes from the information sent out with the tickets: many thanks to Iain Scotchman for providing this information:

"This tour, utilising a Stratford based diesel multiple unit (Class 105, 53362 + 54449 was used) has been arranged to visit much of the territory of the former Great Eastern Railway. The route includes the main line from Liverpool Street to Ipswich and Stowmarket, which is soon to be changed by modernisation and electrification, and several branches and secondary lines which rarely see a railtour, for example Braintree. On the Sudbury branch it is hoped to set down and pick up at Chappel & Wakes Colne so that patrons can have 40 minutes at the Stour Valley steam centre if desired. The return will be via Bury St Edmunds, Ely and Cambridge.

ROUTE: Liverpool Street (0820), Stratford (pick up), Romford (pick up), Shenfield (pick up), Witham, Braintree, Marks Tey, Sudbury, St Botolphs, Walton on Naze, Colchester, Ipswich (lunch break), Felixstowe, Bury St Edmunds, Ely, Cambridge, Broxbourne, Hertford East, Tottenham Hale (set down), Stratford (set down), Liverpool Street (1907).

FARE: £11.95 including a detailed route description. As a special bonus, patrons will receive a free copy of the pictorial album Braintree and its Railways in pictures (value £1.50) which was recently published to mark five years of the line's electrification."

A late change took place when it was decreed that the railtour could not take the place of the Braintree branch train because of too high loadings on the 0940 from Braintree. The tour train therefore stayed at Witham with passengers being given the opportunity to travel to Braintree and back on the service train, which was formed of 312797.

► 2G70 formed of Class 105, 53362 + 54449, arriving at Thorpe-le-Soken on 30th July 1983 - Stephen Swingwood





# Parkeston's Last N7s -

*By John D Mann*

Parkeston depot, shed code 30F, closed to allocated steam in early 1961. During 1960, it became an outpost for a fascinating collection of Class N7 locomotives, retained primarily for use on the Walton-on-the-Naze branch. These included a motley assortment of displaced examples from various corners of the region.

'30F' could easily have lost its N7s in 1960. Strong rumours abounded in January stating Class N2s were being considered as replacements - the London area requiring N7s. The N2 0-6-2Ts were certainly no strangers to the Great Eastern services, eight class members were allocated to Colchester (30E) and 30F periodically from 1951-6, and were regularly seen on local services between Manningtree and Harwich and Colchester to Clacton-on-Sea. As the year progressed, no further news of this transfer materialised, and 30F continued to acquire a curious mix of N7s from miscellaneous East Anglian depots.

## **N7/5 69651 - push/pull fitted**

Post Nationalisation, this N7 had a fascinating career prior to arrival in Essex. Sent to Colwick (38A) in April 1951, 69651 worked passenger trains between Nottingham and Grantham. After receiving push/pull control gear in October 1951, reallocation to Annesley (38B) followed with 69651 periodically working the 'DIDO' (Day In, Day Out) service which ferried depot staff to and from the various suburbs of Nottingham. On October 20 1956 69651 was sent to Cambridge joining 69690 and 69692 in replacing G5 tanks on Saffron Walden push/pull services. Surplus to requirements, all three were sent to Stratford (30A) on September 13 1958 from where 69651 was sent to Kings Lynn (31C) in August 1959, returning to 30A a month later. No 69651 subsequently arrived at Parkeston on January 30 1960 and was regularly utilised

at Walton until returning to Stratford in July 1960: however, she was back at Parkeston on October 22 1960. 69651 was withdrawn after working the last allocated steam services at Walton on December 31 1960 and spent the following two weeks stored at Colchester in the company of Saffron Walden stablemate 69690. Both N7s made their final journey to Stratford on January 13 1961.

## **N7/3 69673 - Westinghouse fitted**

This loco was one of two Colchester (30E) long term residents. After that shed closed 69673 came to Parkeston on November 1 1959. Re-allocation to Stratford followed on January 24 1960. The loco did not return to Essex, lasting at 30A until withdrawal in September 1961.

## **N7/3 69675 - Westinghouse fitted**

A Stratford based loco for most of its working life; this N7 came to Parkeston on November 17 1956, returning to 30A on January 30 1960. On January 9 1960 69675 was pressed into extraordinary service heading the 10.52 from Walton to Thorpe-le-Soken consisting of a single suburban coach E34356 from the morning paper train, deputising for a failed EMU.

## **N7/3 69679 - push/pull fitted**

One of two N7s carrying 'Whittaker' tablet-catching equipment fitted in 1948 for use over the Cromer to Sheringham section of the M&GN. Since Nationalisation 69679 had spent many years at Norwich (32A) and Yarmouth (32D) and Lowestoft (32C) before coming to Stratford (30A) on February 7 1950. Some confusion surrounds this loco. Yeadons Register No.27 states removal of the apparatus came when the N7 left the M&GN section on February 1 1959. It appears that this was not the case, as the tablet catcher was still in situ on the left hand side when 69679 was photographed at Walton in September 1960.

Another view taken at 30A on April 14 1959 reveals this was removed on the right hand side. The view taken on September 1 1960 confirms 69679 was working on the branch two months before 'officially' moving to 30F on November 26 1960, possibly on loan from 30A. The loco returned to Stratford (30A) on January 1 1961 and was withdrawn on January 17 1961.

#### **N7/3 69686 - Westinghouse fitted**

No. 69686 came to 30F from 30A on July 30 1960, staying three months before returning to 30A on October 29 1960.

#### **N7/3 69690 - push/pull fitted**

After periods at Norwich (32A) and Lowestoft (32C) this N7 found itself reallocated to Cambridge (31A) on September 30 1956, joining 69651 and 69692 on the Saffron Walden push/pull trains. 69690 returned to 32C on July 30 1958, before being transferred in April 1959 to 30A. A move to Parkeston occurred on January 24 1960, where the loco spent its final year on the Walton branch, often in the company of Saffron Walden companion 69651. The pair were withdrawn on January 1 1961, and returned to 30A via Colchester on January 13 1961.

#### **N7/3 69691 - push/pull fitted**

Arriving at Parkeston January 30 1960, after periods at Plaistow (33A) and Tilbury (33B), this N7 was noted on the Walton branch during April 1960. It was also recorded at Harwich Town heading the workmen's train before transfer to 30A on July 30 1960.

#### **N7/3 - 69694 - push/pull fitted**

Allocated to 30F October 22 1960 after working from Tilbury (33B), Kings Lynn (31C) and Stratford. Barely a month later 69694 was withdrawn.

#### **N7/3 69708 - push/pull fitted**

The second Norfolk N7 fitted with a 'Whitaker' tablet catcher. for use on the Cromer-

Sheringham section of the M&GN. On January 30 1960 came to 30F with the apparatus removed, although recesses on the tank sides remained roughly patched. The loco was regularly observed on the Walton branch during 1960 and remained at 30F until January 1 1961. Having returned to 30A shortly afterwards 69708 was withdrawn on January 13 1961.



#### **N7/3 69730 - Westinghouse fitted**

The year 1960 did not start well for this N7, as on January 4 in thick fog 69730 became derailed on catch points leaving the loco spurring at Thorpe le Soken due to a signalling 'misunderstanding'. (shown above) The Colchester breakdown unit was duly summoned and arrived behind North British Locomotive Company Class 21 diesel D6122. A hawser was attached to both locomotives' coupling hooks and the N7 was re-railed. The following day J20 64691 returned 69730 to 30F, but it was soon back on branch duties on January 9, obviously not badly damaged. During another incident (date not recorded) 69730 was again in trouble, having dropped onto the sleepers while shunting in the yard at Frinton on Sea. This N7 had come to 30F from 30A on November 29 1959. Returning there on January 24 1960, in July 69730 was back at 30F, curiously noted delivering new electric stock to Clacton on several occasions, a task usually entrusted to a B1 or WD locomotive. 69730 left 30F on October 16 1960, returning to 30A.



### **N7/3 69732 - Westinghouse fitted**

This long term resident of Colchester (30E) came to 30F after the shed closed in November 1959. It was soon reallocated to 30A on January 24 1960.

### **Conclusion**

The Great Eastern was undoubtedly under pressure to eradicate steam. The 'test bed' electrification had been activated in the Spring of 1959 between Colchester, Clacton and Walton leaving the through Liverpool Street services requiring loco haulage until wiring was completed between Colchester and Chelmsford. The unreliability of early diesels resulted in steam being retained on Walton-Thorpe le Soken portions of through trains and freight for a further twentyone months. With Colchester shed closing in the autumn of 1959, these locomotives were supplied by Parkeston depot from the somewhat bizarre collection we have already seen,

◀ 69679 at Walton-on-the-Naze showing Whitaker tablet catching apparatus still fitted on 1st September 1960

which it has to be said left a lot to be desired regarding reliability!

However, Ken Austin's unique diaries reveal to us several occasions when branch locomotives were able to 'save the day':

- A train from London was unable to detach the Walton portion at Thorpe-le-Soken, running complete to Clacton. To avoid stranded passengers it was suggested that they could travel in a goods brake van. All agreed, an N7 fetched one and everyone was happy!
- N7 69651 was sent light engine to Weeley from Thorpe le Soken to rescue diesel D6123.
- N7 69690 was commandeered to rescue the morning goods at Thorpe le Soken and push it to Clacton.
- An unrecorded N7 assisted a 'sick' Britannia loco with the 1740 to Clacton from Liverpool Street

With the last two N7s leaving Parkeston in early 1961, a page in Essex railway history was turned.

### **Acknowledgements**

This article could not have been possible without the observations of Kenneth L Austin, trainee signalman at Thorpe le Soken circa 1959/60. The author is also indebted to Robin Summerhill for assistance and information.

## **Last Call for Stour Valley Steam**

This edition of *Stour Valley Steam* was edited and produced by David Reeve and Darren Johnson - we came back to provide one last edition whilst the future of the magazine was confirmed. We are pleased to say there has been an offer for a replacement for ourselves, who will take on *Stour Valley Steam* from Issue 172. They have done it before in the past so we are sure they will continue to provide a top quality magazine for you the members.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in the last 12 years, by submitting articles and photos, providing positive feedback, to Jeff Kilpatrick our proof-reader, and Paul Mallett from Atlas Print (paul@atlas-print.co.uk) for producing a quality product each time and the help and support with the printing process. Please continue to send anything for inclusion in *Stour Valley Steam* in the future to svs@earm.co.uk.





▲ Rob West and Bob Norwich take a test run on the Miniature Railway with the new PRM coach in the formation on 26 June 2022 - Mike Bradley.

Peter Robinson carrying out maintenance work on the Platform 3 starter signal on 18 November 2021 - Jack Plumb. ▲

▼ Jack Plumb at the helm of a particularly mixed freight consist under stormy skies on 24th May 2022 - Peter Robinson.



Back Cover: Rob Varletta drives Number 11 on 3rd May 2022 during the May Day Trains Event - Greg Lancaster.





ISSN 0307-482X



9 770307 482007  
Stour Valley Steam 171  
£1.25 (where sold)