

Ipswich & District Historical Transport Society

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*Flying Scotsman at Hardingham (see Mervyn Russen's Report on page 5)
A3 Class locomotive No. 60103 'Flying Scotsman' pictured at Hardingham in 2021
(Picture by Steve Allen)*

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Transport Matters

No 280
May
2023

Chairman's Chat - May 2023 ...

Sylvia Kerridge



Hello All

I hope this edition finds you well. I cannot believe we are already looking forward to our last meeting of the IDHTS year! This is on 31st May, we have Peter McGee, along with his co-presenter Graham Mack, who will be presenting the history of Elmswell's Lost Aerodrome. Further details are included in this edition.

As some of you will know, unfortunately Phil Argent, the Editor of TM and Committee member for many years, was taken ill (serious heart attack) in March. I am pleased to say that I have spoken to Phil, he is now out of Hospital and is in recovery. He may need further treatment this summer before he is fully on the mend. I am sure you, like us the Committee, wish Phil a speedy recovery.

For the time being I am taking over the role of editor of TM. Please send any transport articles or just photos with a story behind it, to me (sylviakerridge57@gmail.com). We **really want your memories** of transport highlights you may have experienced in the last 60 years! Ready for our next bumper edition of TM in August.

I am delighted to say that our revised Annual Excursion to Thetford and the Mid Norfolk Railway on 1st July is now confirmed (full details can be found in this edition). At the time of writing, we only have a few spaces left. So, if you are interested in joining the trip, please let us know ASAP. Contact us on 07982 666334 or david.kerridge123@gmail.com to confirm your place (if available).

As announced in the last edition, the Committee has spent much time in planning for our very special Diamond Anniversary, the IDHTS inaugural meeting took place in September 1963. So, we want to celebrate this momentous event in a number of ways. This includes:

- In August we will be producing a 'Bumper Transport Matters Edition', commemorating our 60 years. We have agreed to post every member a printed copy for this edition only, so you have something to keep if you wish. We hope you are able to contribute extra content for this special edition.
- The September AGM Meeting on Wednesday 27th September we will launch the proceedings which we hope as many members will come to this special event. We again are appealing for more volunteers from members to help as Committee members for the forthcoming AGM meeting where when we elect a new Committee. We really do **need more support** from the membership in running IDHTS. If you are able to help, please give me a call or email me to find out more how you may be able to assist in keeping the Society running well beyond our 60 years.
- A 60th Anniversary Commemorative IDHTS Mug, with illustrations drawn by Mervyn Russen, the mug will be on display at the next meeting.
- An A4 2024 60th Commemorative IDHTS Calendar is to be produced ready for sale in September 2023. This will be Ipswich Transport through the last 60 years. Thank you to all those that have sent photos and slides in so far.
- At the time of writing this, instead of the IDHTS annual excursion in 2024, A Saturday 'All Members' Summer Lunch to be organised for June/July 2024 to mark the end of 60th Anniversary celebrations. Venue and costs to be investigated ready for launch event at the AGM in September, we would hope that as many members and ex members would be able to join us.

Therefore, all in all for 2023-24 we hope to mark an important milestone to celebrate with you all and hope you will be able to take part in these events. Lastly, on behalf of the whole committee, we wish you a Happy Summer and look forward to seeing you at our last meeting of this season or see you on the excursion! Don't forget to put the 27th of September 2023 AGM & 60th Anniversary Celebration meeting in your diary.

Kind Regards

Sylvia

Please note that we have had major issues with our landline - We often do not get calls or voicemail on the old 01473 number, please use mobile numbers only (details page 19).

IDHTS 2023 Spring Programme ...

David Kerridge

Wednesday 31st May - The Lost Aerodrome (Air) - Presented by Peter McGee

Peter, along with his co-presenter Graham Mack, will be presenting the history of Elmswell's Lost Aerodrome. The interesting story of the forgotten history from the First Air War over Britain.

IDHTS 2023/24 Programme Dates

27th September 2023

The IDHTS AGM 60th Anniversary Celebration meeting / Rail Speaker TBC

25th October 2023 - TBC

29th November 2023

Leiston Works Railway - Reviving Leiston's Railway Heritage with Julian and Roger Graham

Winter Break

Spring 2024 Programme

28th February 2024 - TBC

***20th March 2024**

TBC *(Earlier week due to Easter Preparations at the Salvation Army)

25th April 2024 - TBC

29th May 2024 - TBC

Further details to follow in the next edition of TM.

A Different Type Holiday Offer ...

To all members of IDHTS from Coalport Station

CoalPort Station would like to offer all of our IDHTS members an exclusive discount on a stay in their train carriage holiday stays.

They have two lovingly converted train carriages, set in the grounds of the old Station House in Coalport, Shropshire. Surrounded by woodlands and overlooking the River Severn, they welcome fellow train enthusiasts to come and enjoy their unique holiday experience.

Visit their website (www.coalportstation.com) for more information and if you wish to stay with them, please use the discount code: **RAILFAN23** to get **5% off when you book**. Valid on all stays booked for 2023.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact them and they will be happy to help. They look forward to receiving some of you as guests very soon.

Best Regards, The Coalport Station Team

Press/Cut-off Dates for Transport Matters ...

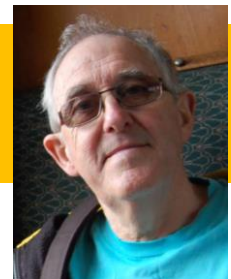
To enable the smooth running of future Transport Matters contributors should be aware of the following press/cut-off dates.

15th of each of the following months, namely January, April, July and October.

This will ensure that members will receive TM in February, May, August and November.

Meeting Report ...

Mervyn Russen



A Passion for Speed, Aircraft

Paul Smiddy

29th March 2023

An audience of 46 members and guests attended the meeting this month.

'A Passion for Speed, Aircraft' was the subject of our illustrated talk this month by Paul Smiddy.

Paul is an experienced pilot himself. He learned about an incredibly intrepid lady named Mrs Victor Bruce (Maiden name; Mildred Mary Petre) when he became interested in the history of the Blackburn Aircraft Company. He also had access to an archive of her papers and two books the lady herself wrote.

Mildred Petre was a cousin of Lord Petre who owned Ingatestone Hall in Essex. She was born at the nearby Coptfold Hall and it was there she developed her great love of speed. Her childhood experiences encompassed sailing, riding, and drive a car. In 1911, aged 15, she rode her brother's Matchless motorcycle.

Her divorced mother lived with her in a mobile home later on at Shoreham. There was an airfield there which was a training ground for RFC pilots and the Canadian Airforce. It was there that Mildred had an affair with her mother's landlord and had a baby as a result. This did not stop her and in 1928 she went to London where she met Victor Bruce, the works driver for AC cars. This led her to race cars round Brooklands circuit.



Mrs Bruce driving her AC car at Brooklands

Victor Bruce entered the Monte Carlo Rally and Mildred promised to marry him if he won - he did and they did. The next year she drove for AC in the Monte Carlo Rally and won the ladies' prize.

They then drove an AC together through France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and finally planted a Union flag about 250 miles north of the Arctic Circle. It was farther north than anyone had previously driven, a record that remained unbroken until the 21st century.

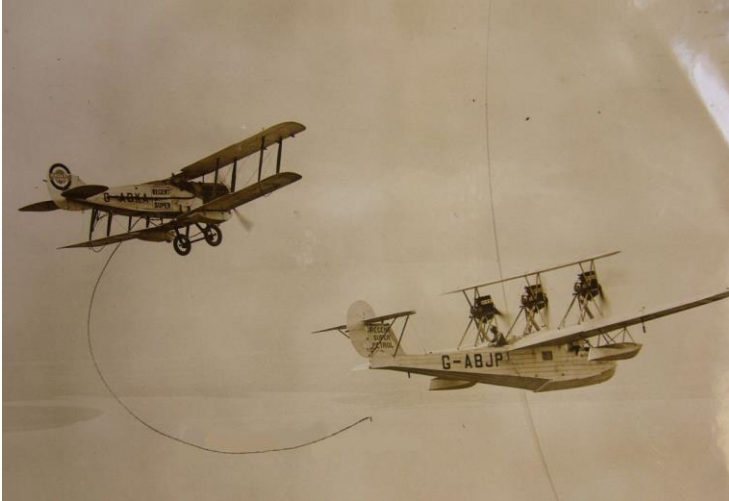
In 1929, Mildred purchased an outboard speedboat, named it *Mosquito*, and raced it at events at the Welsh Harp reservoir. On 15 September 1929, she steered the boat from

Dover across the English Channel to Calais, then decided to make it a non-stop double crossing back to Dover. The record-breaking round trip took 1 hour 47 minutes, and the manufacturer gave her a new boat to replace *Mosquito*. The latter was almost destroyed by that journey.

She learned to fly in 1930 and gained her licence on the very minimum of flying hours in the July of that year. In the same month she purchased a Blackburn Bluebird IV for £475.

On 25th September 1930, she named the aircraft *Bluebird* and took off from Heston Aerodrome. She flew east with stops in Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Syria and Iraq. After a delay of several days for repairs, she flew on to India, Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam. Torrential monsoon rains forced a landing in a jungle clearing beside the Mekong River; she contracted malaria and her flight was further delayed. She flew on to Hanoi, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Seoul, making the first flight across the Yellow Sea. On 24th November 1930, having covered 10,330 miles in 25 flying days, she reached Tokyo. She crossed the Pacific by ship to Vancouver.

Her flight across North America was not without incident: an undercarriage failure on landing in Oregon caused extensive damage and another week's delay. She finally reached New York City in early February 1931. She sailed to Le Havre, and on 19th February 1931 flew to Lympne Airport, having flown about 19,000 miles. On 20th February 1931, she was given an aerial escort by Amy Johnson, Winifred Spooner and others to Croydon Airport. She was the first person to fly from England to Japan, the first to fly across the Yellow Sea, and the first woman to fly around the world alone (crossing the oceans by ship).



Bristol fighter refuelling a Saro aircraft in the air

This amazing woman also pioneered air to air refuelling when a Saro flying boat she flew, was refuelled by a modified Bristol F2 aircraft in 1932.

Mildred eventually died in 1990 aged 94 after living many remarkable lives.

Paul was thanked by our Chairman; Sylvia Kerridge, and given warm applause by the audience.

I should also add that Paul has written a book about this lady: 'A Passion for Speed: The Daring Life of Mildred, The Honourable Mrs Victor Bruce', published by The History Press (2017).

**Historic photos in this article copyright Paul Smiddy
Picture of Paul included with his permission**



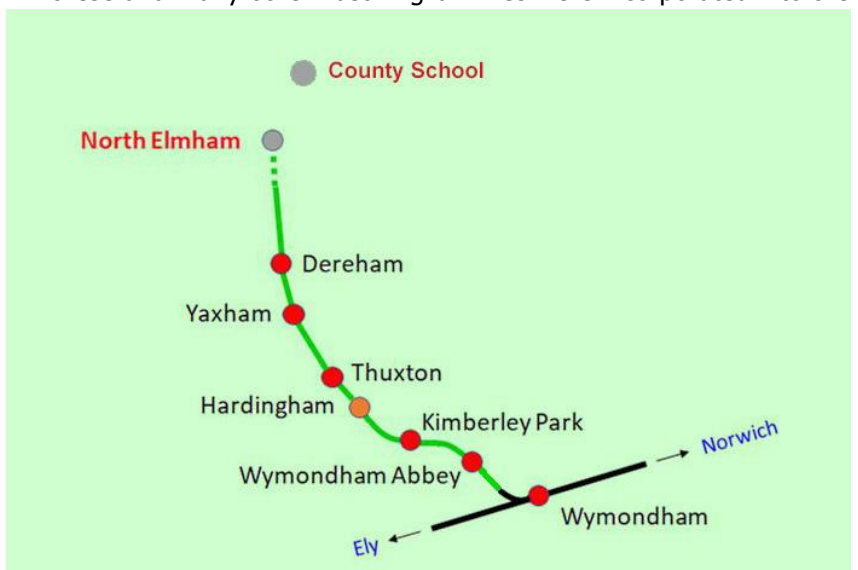
The Great Eastern Railway Heritage of the Mid-Norfolk Railway **Chris Bell** **26th April 2023**

An audience of 44 members and guests attended the meeting.

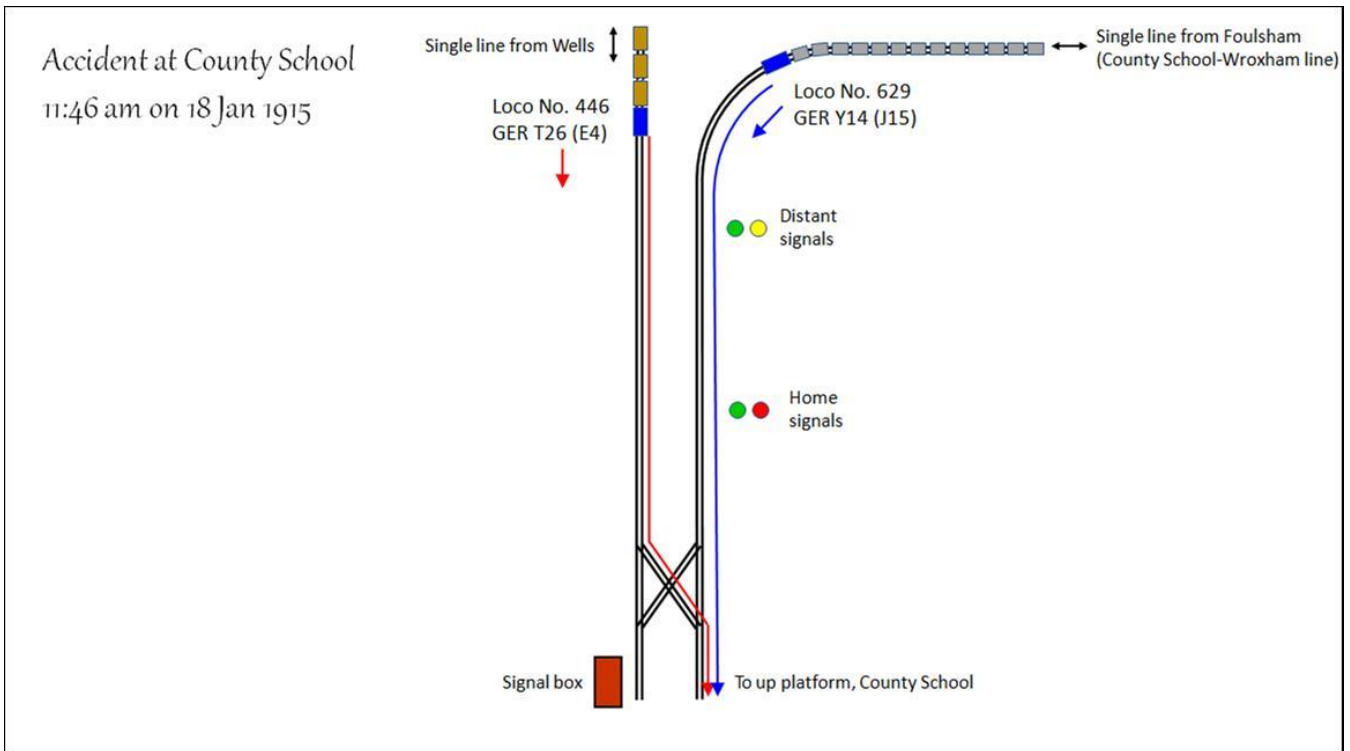
'The Great Eastern Railway Heritage of the Mid-Norfolk Railway' was the subject of our illustrated talk this month by Chris Bell.

In 1845 the first section of line as far as Dereham, known as the Norwich and Brandon Railway, was authorised by an Act of Parliament. By May 1847 the Norfolk Railway, including the line from Brandon to Wymondham, was open to both goods and passenger traffic. All these and many other East Anglian lines were incorporated into the impecunious Great Eastern Railway in 1862. This became part of the LNER at grouping in 1923 and BR in 1948.

As an interesting aside: on 20th January 1915 there was a collision between two Great Eastern Railway steam trains close to the County School station site, which saw both locomotives damaged. On 20th January 1915 a Y14 class steam engine number 629 was hauling 12 empty and four loaded wagons from Wroxham. It ran into a six-coach passenger train from Fakenham, which was being hauled by a T26 class locomotive number 446. It subsequently emerged that the driver of the Y14 was distracted by a problem with his injector. He failed to observe that his signals were at danger.



The Mid-Norfolk Railway (Based on a map supplied by Chris Bell)



Map supplied by Chris Bell

The accident happened on the scissor crossing close to the County School signal box.

Nobody was injured in the crash, which took place at low speed, although both locomotives were damaged along with other vehicles in both trains.

Today, County School Station serves as a visitor centre with a small museum and includes a display about the station and Watt's Naval School, which gave it its unusual name.

The last section of line on what became the Mid-Norfolk Railway (MNR) closed to passengers on the 4th October 1969. The first seeds of the formation of the MNR as we know it today began five years later in 1974. After much fund-raising and work on the line the first through trains ran from Dereham to Wymondham in May 1999.

Since then, much work has been done upgrading equipment and buildings by hard work and transferring redundant examples from elsewhere, such as:

- The signal box at Dereham Central was transferred from the former Great Eastern station at Stratford Southern and occupies the site of a former box. The building includes a working lever frame.
- A signal box was also transferred from Spooner Row (between Wymondham and Attleborough) to the new future station at Wymondham Abbey. This move was accomplished just before Storm Eunice struck on the 18th February 2022 with several people's fingers crossed at the time.



Y14 Class locomotive No.629 pictured after the County School rail accident in 1915 (Picture from Chris Bell)



Dereham Central signal box after move from Stratford Southern (Picture from Chris Bell)



A4 Class locomotive No. 60009 'Union of South Africa' pictured at Dereham in 2019 (Picture by Merv Russen)

446 (later 7446) was designed by James Holden and was one of the third batch of locomotives of the class built in 1891. A class eventually comprising of 100 locos.

Number 446 may have survived the accident and returned to traffic, but it was still the first of the class to be subjected to the cutters torch, together with sister loco number 7430. They were withdrawn in April 1926 after 35 years of service.

The last Class E4 engine, number 62785 (formerly number 7490) was withdrawn in December 1959 after a career lasting almost 65 years and is preserved at the National Railway Museum at York. It spent the last years of its career in the Cambridge area and was latterly regarded as the station pet by the railwaymen and university students there.

GER Class Y14 number 629, the other engine involved in the accident, was one from the second batch of twenty of the class built in March 1884 from a design by Tom Worsdell. The class eventually totalled 272 machines.

Ironically this locomotive only lasted five months longer than the E4, as it was withdrawn in September 1926 after 42 years of service. The last Y14 or LNER Class J15 was number 7564 or BR number 65462. It was withdrawn from traffic in September 1962 after fifty years of service. It is preserved and owned by the North Norfolk Railway.

I leave you all with one question: Why does Ian Allan's ABC Locomotives book of 1955 not list 62785 when she was not withdrawn until 1959? The ABC book of British Railways Locomotives (covering the same period winter 1955/56) does list her in the class.

The only explanation would seem to be that the locomotive was awaiting a change in shed allocation - What do you think?

They have had many distinguished visits from famous locomotives to work the line including A4 Pacific number 60009, *Union of South Africa* in August 2019 and A3 Pacific number 60103, *Flying Scotsman* in October 2021. The former, a year or two before she became a static exhibit in Scotland.

Recently they have had problems with track issues near Crownthorpe Bridge but a limited service will begin at the end of this month between Dereham and Thuxton.

After a Q and A session; Chris was thanked by our Chairman; Sylvia Kerridge, and the former was given warm applause by the audience.

Further Research

The two locomotives involved in the 1915 County School accident both came from long-lived classes. Both were built at Stratford Works.

The T26 or LNER Class E4 engine number

Picture of Chris Bell included with his permission



Ghost Trains to Maldon ...

John D Mann

The Witham-Maldon branch was desperately unlucky not to survive the 'Beeching Axe' whilst neighbouring lines to Braintree and Sudbury continue to prosper. The late Dennis Swindale in his admirable little book 'Branch Lines to Maldon' reported regular freight trains carrying mainly canned fruit and agricultural machinery continuing for a further two years after the withdrawal of passenger services, clattering over decaying trestle bridges near Witham and Wickham Bishops, where, Dennis tells us, 'The termites held hands to take the strain'. These life expired timber structures became major players during the closure debate. A journey between the two towns through mid-Essex farmland by DMU or Railbus was indeed swift, just 12 minutes including two stops.

Today, Maldon is a vibrant, busy place - a rail connection to the GE main line would be well utilised. However, it all ended one unseasonably cold day in spring 1966 as the last freight left in driving sleet.

Decades on and the River Blackwater still winds its way through Wickham Bishops passing under the 'preserved' trestle bridge, now an ancient monument fighting for its life a second time!! Of the closure Dennis Swindale writes 'Future generations will curse us' - maybe they already have!!

Further reading:

'Branch lines to Maldon' - Dennis Swindale, EARM Publications, 2007

'The Witham to Maldon Railway' - Len Wilkinson, Essex Transport Publishing, 2010



*Maldon and Heybridge
Station exterior*

16th September 1963

*Photo by B I Nathan
SAP Archive*



The living railway

*Cravens two-car DMU
runs into Maldon*

16th September 1963

*Photo by B I Nathan
SAP Archive*

*A freight train from Maldon passes
Langford and Ulting halt hauled by
class J69 tank loco 68573*

Circa 1950s

*Photo by J R Besley - courtesy John
Brodrigg collection*



The dying railway

*Maldon East signalbox
5th May 1975*

*Photo by John D Mann
SAP Archive*

*Drivers eye view
crossing the Wickham
Bishops trestle bridge
quietly rotting in the
spring sunshine*

5th May 1975

*Photo by John D Mann
SAP Archive*





The trestle bridge at Wickham Bishops in 2008

*Photo by John D Mann
SAP Archive*

Topical Heritage News ...

David Kerridge

Heritage Railway Challenges Ahead!

We hope to introduce this column in every issue highlighting some recent news items in regard to Heritage transport related stories.

As widely reported in both national and local press, Heritage railways face a challenging future due to a 'double whammy' situation in 2023. This is due to much higher operating costs and potentially, lower revenue levels due to visitor numbers that are expected to fall in the current financial climate.

Locally, on top of the current financial issues, the **MID Norfolk Railway** have had major engineering issues due to track and bridge repairs. This resulted in a delayed opening in 2023 and the launch of a 'Back on Track Emergency Appeal'. It was announced on their web site that 'The Mid Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust is launching an appeal for funds to make a significant contribution to the overall infrastructure work required to fully reopen the line. The initial target of the appeal is £95,000. This appeal forms one strand of the overall new business model and is designed to break the cycle that such work will be only funded by existing self-generated railway revenue. The focus of the Appeal is to secure the funds required to reopen Crownthorpe Bridge to all rail traffic and other associated infrastructure work during the summer of 2023.' *credit MNR*
<https://www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk/>

Further afield **The Severn Valley Railway** have warned that a viable future for the railway is at risk without an urgent injection of cash and are appealing to supporters for help. The railway has launched a £1.5 million Survival Fund appeal to enable it to overcome the current financial crisis and to implement longer-term plans for its future. Writing to more than 25,000 shareholders, members and donors, the SVR has explained the profound impact on the railway of changes in the financial climate over the past three years, including the pandemic, the major increase in coal and energy costs, post-Brexit supply chain issues and the cost-



of-living crisis. "We're facing the double whammy of escalating costs and lower revenue," said Chris Walton, who recently took on the role of interim chairman of SVR (Holdings) Plc, the railway's operating company. "Costs across the railway have spiralled, including utilities, coal, diesel, steel, copper, catering supplies and interest rates. For example, in the past 12 months alone, our electricity bill has more than doubled, and this year it will not be far short of £500,000. All of these factors are outside our control. "Put this against the fact that passenger numbers were down last year by about a third, compared to pre-Covid. That equated to around £1.5 million in lost revenue, which has left us badly weakened. Interim managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "Our programme of events and services this year is as vibrant as ever. It is crucially important to us to continue to attract visitors, as this will play a huge part in getting us through the challenges we face. We're confident we can deliver on and surpass visitor expectations. Follow this link for interesting video that covers all these issues <https://svr.co.uk/survival/> <https://www.heritage railway.co.uk>



The Flying Scotsman that is now 100 years old, could be run on Coffee! No, it's not a joke, it was reported recently in the Times newspaper, that the owners of the Flying Scotsman are looking at alternative fuels such as the derivative from roasting coffee 'torrefied biomass' or biocoal. It was reported that Judith McNicol, the director of the National Railway Museum in York, insists that sustainability is a priority, with a commitment to achieve net zero by 2033. "Progress is certainly being made with new forms of coal. Considerable investment and research are being carried out on alternatives, primarily on products referred to as biocoal." Though it

was pointed out that the results so far were inconsistent as biocoal has a lower calorific value. This means that it burns faster than natural coal and a loco's fireman is unable to stock the extra supplies needed for longer journeys. J McNicol insists that like many others in heritage sector, we will continue to work with our partners to monitor the situation regarding the quality, cost and availability of coal and ecoal alternatives.

The **Clacton Express Preservation Group** have now made an agreement in principle to take on a donated complete four-car 'Classic' Class 321 in order to preserve it. Once preservation work is complete, the Mk3 EMU will be the first complete vehicle of its kind to be preserved in the country and will be used in a static display at a new site in Harwich. The four vehicles will take on a new purpose providing space for a Community Cafe, Events Space and Museum. All proceeds made from the vehicles will go on to fund the Clacton Express Preservation Group and will support the upkeep of its heritage vehicles. *Sources Greater Anglia and <https://www.railadvent.co.uk/news#>*

If you have any interesting stories that you think might be interesting, please send me the link or story! (david.kerridge123@gmail.com)

Please send articles for the next Transport Matters to Sylvia Kerridge (see page 15 for details) AND Sharon at services@sharward.co.uk by 31st July 2023

The IDHTS Annual Excursion on 1st July 2023

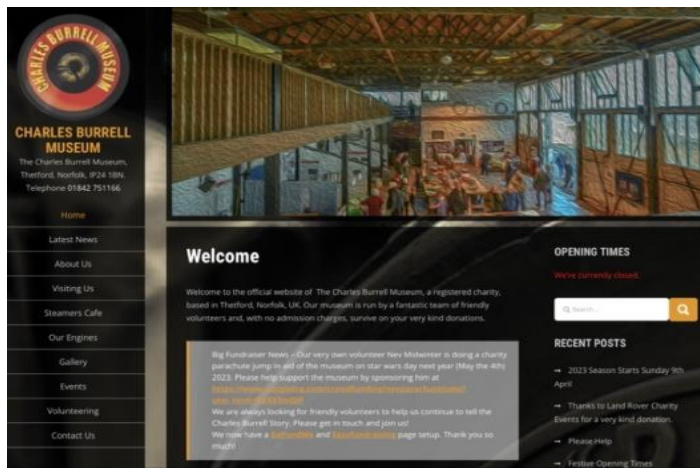
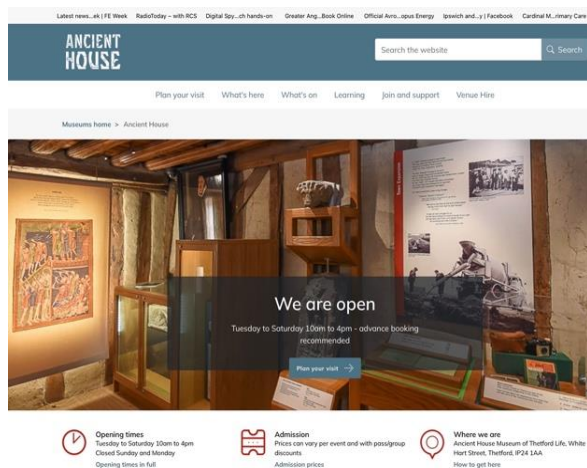
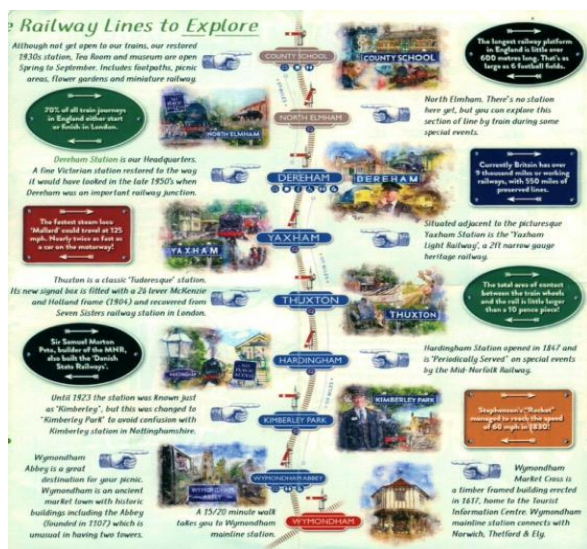
Due to engineering issues at MNR, we have changed the itinerary for our Annual Excursion, which is now confirmed as going ahead.

Prior to the trip on the Mid Norfolk Railway with a Full Afternoon Tea on board a train, we will now be stopping at Thetford. Leaving Ipswich at **09.45** (Ipswich Transport Museum car park), arriving in Thetford at around 10.50. At Thetford you will be free to choose the suggested venues which include: The Charles Burrell Steam Museum, The Dad's Army Museum, The Ancient House Museum or just walk around Thetford town centre.

We will then board the coach at around 13.45 arriving at MNR around 14.30. Boarding the train at 15.30 train for our full High Tea (details below), during the trip hopefully we will have our own guide pointing out features and facts about the line. We will depart Dereham at 16.45 arriving back to Ipswich at around **18.30**.

It will be a relaxing day and a fabulous afternoon tea as a bonus, all for the lower price of ***£46!** If you would like to book a place, please let us know **ASAP** as we now only have very limited spaces. Family, friends and non-members are most welcome. Please contact David Kerridge on 07982 666334 or email by david.kerridge123@gmail.com

Please advise if you have dietary requirements.



*** MNR train and Afternoon tea is included in the price:** A selection of freshly made sandwiches, homemade sausage roll, two freshly baked plain and fruit scones served with clotted cream and jam, a selection of homemade treats. Accompanied with a choice of teas or filter coffee.

Most Thetford museums are free, though donations are welcome, these are not included in the excursion price. For more information go to:

<https://www.charlesburrellmuseum.org.uk>
<https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/ancient-house>

<https://dadsarmythetford.org.uk>
<https://www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk>

The Water Tower (Ipswich Station) ...

Mervyn Russen

Graham Austin was a great character and he had a long and distinguished career as a railwayman. Many of his experiences were documented in articles he wrote and were published in Transport Matters a few years ago. Sadly, he died a couple of years ago, but during the time I knew him he became a much-valued friend. He was a

great one for rescuing photographs from skips after they had been dumped from the offices at Stratford Works. He also took some photographs of his own during the time he worked as an engineer on the former Great Eastern Railway.



Safety is obviously of prime importance here!

Several years ago; I gave a number of talks on the subject of the construction of Stoke Hill Tunnel in Ipswich. Graham knew of my interest and told me that he had been involved in the removal of the metal tank on the top of the water tower by the northern entrance of the tunnel. In steam days water was pumped from the 'Loco' beyond the other end of the tunnel to the tower. The latter fed water to the platform water columns in the station area. One was at the tunnel end of platform two and another at the northern end of platform three.

In 1964 after steam working ended on the line: it was decided that the metal tank on the top of the brick supporting tower would be dismantled. The former had been constructed in sections and these were separated and remove using a crane. Graham took photographs of the dismantling which I show here.

In 1964 after steam working ended on



The crane in action probably on a Sunday morning



The floodlights at Portman Road football ground can be seen beyond the houses in Burrell Road

The brick base of the tower is still in position to this day and below is a photograph I took in 2011. The tower is fast disappearing beneath the undergrowth.



Below is a 1932 view of the northern tunnel entrance. It shows the Gresley 'Hush Hush' number 10000 arriving for a railway exhibition at Ipswich.



It also shows some other interesting features pictured in the area at the time:

- To the right of the exhausted steam from the loco is the water tank in its original state.
- Across the tunnel entrance is a signal gantry which is long gone.
- On the extreme left is the water column at the end of platform two as mentioned earlier.
- To the right of the water column can be seen an ash pit beneath and between the rails.

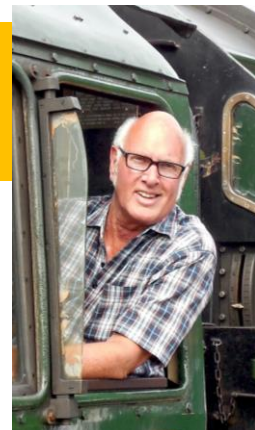


Another interesting picture owned by Graham shows a 1950s shot of bricklayer; Alf Brookes, repairing the internal roof of Stoke Hill Tunnel (see below). The ash is just about to fall from that cigarette!

I have to thank Graham Austin's widow for permission to publish all the monochrome pictures accompanying this article. One exception is the 'Hush Hush' picture which is shown with the approval of David Kindred.

The Great Britain XV Tour ...

Martyn Hunt



44932 with Great Britain XV headboard is seen approaching Levington Bridge en-route to Felixstowe on 23rd April 2023

Photo: Martyn Hunt

The tour was promoted by the Railway Touring Company and operated by West Coast Railways (WCR) using a mix of ex London Midland Region steam locos including Black Five 44932, Jubilees 45596 Bahamas and 45690 Leander + Royal Scot 46115 Scots Guardsman. A WCR class 47 diesel locomotive was employed for 'insurance purposes' and short sections of the tour including shunting movements.

For a sum quoted of circa £3,000 the tour commenced at London Paddington on the 15th April 2023 and finished at London Liverpool Street on 23rd April 2023. Locations visited included Plymouth, Wales, Blackpool, Edinburgh, Aberdeen before heading back south to Scarborough, Kings Lynn and Felixstowe.

The Ipswich area is pretty much starved of steam specials these days so it was good to see 44932 on the last leg/day 23rd April 2023 head to Felixstowe after an overnight stop at Kings Lynn. Because of no turning/run round facilities at Felixstowe the train was hauled to the Claydon siding adjacent to Sackers Recycling by the diesel locomotive before the concluding run to Liverpool Street in pretty wet conditions - a report I received from friend John D Mann who saw the train crossing Cattawade Bridge said that it was good to have an enthusiastic crew on the footplate which gave for some excellent running.

The Ipswich, and no doubt other areas, turned out in good numbers to see the tour and soak (no pun intended) up the atmosphere.

Black5 no 44932 on the way to Felixstowe going through Westerfield. It has come from Kings Lynn as part of the Great Britain XV by the Railway Touring Company. 23rd April 2023 at 11.30am.

Photo: Chris Jay



Very Early Days on the Poppy Line ...

John D Mann

Today the North Norfolk Railway is a premier East Anglian tourist attraction. During the mid-sixties its future was far from assured.

It's 29th August 1966, a Morris Minor 1000 arrives at the old steam depot at March in Cambridgeshire. The driver is a nineteen year old enthusiast from Essex, armed with a Kodak Instamatic camera. He had heard exciting plans to restore a three mile section of the former M&GN railway - but first he wanted a glimpse of two classic steam locomotives purchased from BR awaiting delivery to North Norfolk. He wandered unchallenged into the dark and leaky confines where J15 65462 and B12 61572, in the company of former Departmental No 26 (B1 61138), were stored.

The intrepid journeyman, well out of his comfort zone, arrived at Weybourne during the afternoon. It was then a semi-derelict country station, recently taken over by the preservation movement. Original plans to save the complete Melton Constable/Sheringham section had been abandoned.

Frantic eleventh-hour negotiations with BR prevented further track removal by contractors, already beyond the Webourne platforms. At Golf Links crossing near Sheringham a single sleeper placed over the line marked the extent of Society ownership, a length of track had also been removed prohibiting further progress. At this time BR still used the original station - securing this site would become a future problematical exercise!!! In those early days there was precious little to see - sections of track through Weybourne had been replaced, and the signalbox rescued from Holt was roughly in position. The yard, which would evolve into the railway's operational centre, was trackless and overgrown. For the Society to reach this seemingly tenuous situation with no guarantee of success was indeed a notable achievement undertaken by a few dedicated individuals who were sadly edged out as the railway gain popularity.

After a night of fitful sleep in the car, the enthusiast set off for home. Many years of hard graft and further heartache followed before the railway opened its door to the public.

Returning in August 1967, the enthusiast found the Preservation Society had secured Sheringham Station, and taken delivery of the two locomotives, railbuses, plus some rolling stock. J15 65462 receives some remedial attention. At this time the railway had no engineering facilities



Weybourne Station, August 1966



The approach to Sheringham Station at Golf Links Crossing, August 1966





B12 61572 as delivered from BR stands in sidings being the Police Station, Sheringham August 1967

All photos in this article courtesy of John D Mann SAP Archive

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CAR PARKING:
 On-street parking in the surrounding area. Car parks at Victoria Place and Promenade Way. We also have limited accessible parking - please contact us to book a space.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT:
 There is a bus stop outside the museum, for details of services and timetables please refer to: www.firstbus.co.uk/essex



GROUP VISITS:
 We look forward to welcoming schools and groups. Please phone us to discuss your visit.



A Motor for the Millions ...

Doug Harper

The Austin Seven was announced in Autumn 1922 and deliveries started in Spring 1923.

It broke the mould of small car production in Britain and without doubt saved the Austin Motor Company from failure in very uncertain times. In the 1920s over 60% of British Car Manufacturers became bankrupt, ceased



production, merged with other companies, made other products or otherwise departed. Herbert Austin who had founded the company in 1905 wanted to make a 'baby car' which he believed would solve the problems but could not persuade the board to authorise any development and in September 1921 he lost patience, and 'kidnapped' Stanley Edge, a young and talented member of the design office, to work with him at his home evenings and weekends on the concept. The board promptly rejected his design, but he eventually got grudging permission to set up a team of six picked men with Stan Edge to 'oversee', that is carry out Herbert's wishes, in a bay at Longbridge, plus access to 'one off' facilities with a remit to produce a maximum of three prototypes for test and evaluation.



Work started in Easter 1922 and Herbert demanded that by Whitsun he would have a car available at all times for testing. In fact, by then he had two cars running, number three was well under way and an illicit prototype racer was more than just a gleam in Herbert's eye. The car was demonstrated at the annual Longbridge Fete to a mixed reception. Much of the Board and many of the important Agents were opposed in spite of the car's performance and an enthusiastic response from much of the specialist press (after being given road tests in the prototypes).



Herbert announced that production would start before Board Authorisation had been obtained, and the initial delivery rates were pitiful, but the demand was there. It certainly preserved the Company's position and had no serious challengers until 1927 when Morris introduced the OHC Minor and Triumph the Super Seven neither of which made much impact. Even in 1933, when both Morris and Ford produced larger 8HP models, the Austin maintained its position as a result of continuous development and it was not until 1938-9 that production ceased being replaced by the less advanced 'modern' design the Austin 8. By then Herbert was sick and no longer the force he had been.

The original car aimed squarely at those who needed a small family car who could neither afford to buy, run or store contemporary cars was 8 feet 8 inches long and 3 feet 10 inches wide, it offered accommodation for two adults and two or three children under a canvas roof with side curtains (standard for the time). The engine was a four-cylinder side valve unit originally 696cc (increased to 747cc at car number 100). It had an aluminium crankcase with detachable head and block and, unlike most low-cost engines of the time did not rely on 'splash and hope' lubrication, was strong enough to run continuously at up to 5,000rpm, could tolerate supercharging so that it had a lively performance and the first competition win was obtained in the 1100cc class at Brooklands with one of the

standard prototypes. Four-wheel braking was standard (not standard on Rolls Royce until 1928). The original car turned the scales at just over 6cwt which gave the ability to out-perform the Austin 20hp produced at the time.

The car was available in many guises including four-seater tourers, saloons (standard and specialist coach-built), vans, pick-ups as well as a range of sports models and racers, all based on the standard chassis/engine set-up. The first BMW car was the Austin Seven built under licence and known as the Dixie, similarly the Rosengart was built in France. The only failure was a heavily vulgarised venture the Bantam in USA. Over the years the car was developed steadily, power output in standard spec was increased, the wheelbase was increased and pressed steel bodies replaced the timber frames etc.

In the early thirties special attention was given to selling cars for District Nurses, Midwives and ladies in general. One amusing advertising slogan was 'Many ladies have their first experience in a Seven, many more will in the future'.

Still the Seven rumbles along. In July 2022 over 1,000 of all types were at a Centenary Rally at Moreton-in-the-Marsh. A truly iconic design which influenced more affordable cars until this day.

Sources used include:

Pre-War Austin Seven Club Records, the writings of Stan Edge, 'The Austin Seven' by R J Wyatt and Austin Seven Club Association Magazines.

Robert (Bob) Malster – an Obituary ...

Martyn Hunt

Robert better known to most people as Bob was a member of the IDHTS since the early 1970s.

He was born in Norwich in 1932, served his National Service in the Royal Air Force, married into a 'fishing family' and in later life lived in Holbrook, Suffolk.

Bob started his journalism life with the Lowestoft Journal, also doing extensive reporting for the EADT, he took over a Freeman of Norwich title from his Father.

He wrote several books many of which were sea / water related and had a huge following of the fishing industry and the RNLI - his depth of knowledge was huge and his death means a great loss of a historian who retained a very distinctive accent.

Bob also served in recent years as a volunteer at the Ipswich Transport Museum.

Records show that Bob gave four presentations to the IDHTS as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 17th January 1974 | 19 th Century East Anglian Shipping. |
| 19th March 1976 | 175 th Anniversary of Suffolk Lifeboats. |
| 14th April 1998 | The Railway Photos (and others) that appeared in my books. |
| 11th September 2007 | The Little Ships of Orford (this followed on from the Societies AGM). |

Bob died in Ipswich Hospital on 16th April 2023 at the age of 90 years.

IDHTS Contacts ...

Chairman	Sylvia Kerridge, 197 Ashcroft Road, Ipswich IP1 6AF Tel: 07948 395381 Email: sylviakerridge57@gmail.com
Hon Secretary	Vacant
Publicity Officer	Vacant
TM Editor	(Temporary) - Sylvia Kerridge
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Treasurer	David Kerridge, 197 Ashcroft Road, Ipswich IP1 6AF Tel: 07982 666334 Email: david.kerridge123@gmail.com

Local Meetings ...

Martyn Hunt

31st May 7.30pm	Ipswich & District Transport Society David Kerridge 01473 424904	Salvation Army Citadel 558 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich	The Lost Aerodrome by Peter McGee
2nd June 7.30pm	Martlesham Heath Aviation Society Howard King 01473 274300	Martlesham Community Centre Martlesham Heath	Silver City Airways by Paul Ross
7th June 11.00am	Suffolk Family History Society Howard King 01473 274300	Outside visit	Great War Huts, Brook Farm Camp, Bells Lane, Hawstead IP29 5NW
7th June	Ipswich Aviation Society Barry Turner 07789 168430	Outside visit	Excursion to RAF Hendon Museum
7th June 7.30pm	Ipswich Maritime Trust Geoffrey Dyball 01473 214004	University of Suffolk Ground Floor Waterfront Building, Ipswich	AGM + 'The Way Forward for the IMT' Committee/Membership
14th June 7.30pm	Suffolk Industrial Archaeology Society Steve Worsley 01473 405116	Outside visit	Clifford Road Tunnels (guided tours) entrance via Tennyson Road
17th June	Ipswich Transport Museum website / 01473 715666	Ipswich Transport and Model Festival	Ipswich Transport Museum Ipswich Railway Modellers Ipswich Model Engineers
24th June	Ipswich Society (see website for details)	Holywells Park	Cobbold 300 Celebrations
5th July 11.00am	Suffolk Family History Society Howard King 01473 274300	Salvation Army Citadel 558 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich	Lord Gwydr of Stoke Park by Yvo Henniker-Heaton
5th July	Ipswich Aviation Society Barry Turner 07789 168430	Ipswich Sports Club, Henley Road, Ipswich	The Wrong Side of the Fence By Bob Archer
7th July 7.30pm	Martlesham Heath Aviation Society Howard King 01473 274300	Martlesham Community Centre Martlesham Heath	Tales of a Tiger Moth by Clive Denny
12th July 7.30pm	Suffolk Industrial Archaeology Society Steve Worsley 01473 405116	Outside visit	Outside visit to the Guildhall, Guildhall Street, Bury St Edmunds
13th July 7.30pm	World Ships Society Derek Sands 01255 507017	Seafarers Centre, Felixstowe Port	John Hall Memorial Show (compilation by Derek Sands) of John Hall's photo collection
April-December	01449 766899	Mid Suffolk Light Railway	See full events programme on the MSLR website
April-October	Martlesham Heath Aviation Society 07707 711104	Martlesham Heath Control Tower / Museum	Control Tower open Sunday afternoons - see MHAS website for details
June-July	Ipswich Transport Museum 01473 715666 enquiries@ipswichtransportmuseum.co.uk	Ipswich Transport Museum Cobham Road, Ipswich	Museum OPEN on selected dates - see ITM website

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