

THE CIRCULAR

Bradford Railway Circle

No.408 – 2nd Quarter, 2024

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Editorial

Another 24-page issue for your summer reading – thanks to those who provided articles (and inspiration for articles). But apart from Part 2 of Peter's Italian trip, the cupboard is bare again – please put your thinking caps on, and send in some new material. Now that summer is with us, members will no doubt be getting out and about more, so let us know your news and experiences.

This issue gives the opportunity to remember two founder-members of the Circle – Douglas Butterfield and Geoff Butland – both sadly deceased. Their names cropped up in the news recently – see page 7 for the full story.

Enjoy summer – who knows how long it will last?

The Italian Job Rides Again, Part 1

Peter Holden

Having had my appetite whetted for not only pizza, but also Italian railways and trams, by my previously reported holiday to Italy with Ffestiniog Travel in April 2022, I decided a longer period in both Milano and Torino would be a good idea.

So, it came to pass that on Thursday 3rd August 2023 fellow traveller Andy Roberts and I embarked at Stansted Airport on a flight to Milano Malpensa Airport, Ryanair being the airline used.

You may be wondering why we decided to travel to Italy at such a hot time of the year. So am I!

Despite the heat our transfer from the airport was on a direct train to Milano Centrale. What a marvellous railway station this is, the architecture and the grand scale of the buildings have to be seen. We had chosen the Hotel Bristol as our base, it being just across the car park around 4-minute walk from the station, handy for both trains and trams. Check-in all sorted out, a walk to a nearby craft beer bar was decided on. The 20-minute walk turned out to be a good decision, as the bar not only had a decent choice of beer, but they also had reasonable food available.

Friday 4th August.

Today and the next two days were spent exploring the Milano tram system, with of course quite a few refreshment breaks along the way. It is indeed thirsty work riding on trams on a hot day.

Along with many other cities, Milano has an annoying habit of digging up the tram tracks for repair, then not bothering to tell anyone. This was the case with two of the routes near to Centrale Station and a further two route closures out of the centre. No matter, there are many other routes in Milano to keep us busy. Day tickets are available from tobacconists for the tram system, most stations have at least one such shop. They are indeed very good value and allow travel without restrictions for the whole day. Without going into too much detail we managed to cover all the lines available at the time of our visit on the 130-mile standard gauge Milano system. One of the unannounced route closures on day one was most interesting as we traversed quite a long line out to Lambrate Station which is not normally in use. This was not the intended destination of the tram route(!) but actually fitted in well with our plans. Without doubt the older 1928/30 built Peter Witt single cars are the highlight. They are simply splendidly maintained and although having modern safety systems onboard are very much as built. Around 160 of these great trams are still in service today.

There are five newer tram types also in service, these being built between 1955 and 2010. I would guess they have around 450 trams in service on the network.

To end our first day of tram ridding, a visit to The Friends Pub adjacent to route 10, the so called traditional English pub I visited the previous year. The food was very good, not so the beer sadly.

Saturday 5th August.

Continuing to explore the tram system, we were to meet one of my ex-work colleagues around lunch time, so made sure to be around the Centrale Station area in good time to meet Tony at around 11:00. Tony's daughter lives just north of Milano and he had travelled down by train to meet us. Surprisingly, Tony had never been on the trams despite very many visits into the Milano. Soon put that right! We all boarded the route 10 tram around to its terminus at Plaza 24 Maggio, this being the area Tony had decided to show us around. It was the place to be at night in Milano if you are around 25 apparently, but when 63 perhaps not so, especially at 12:30 on a Saturday afternoon. Most places were closed. We did manage to find a very good bar selling a rather nice strong dark beer, so following a walk around this quite nice area for a while in sweltering heat, we returned to the previous bar for further refreshments. Tony departed late afternoon, so a continuation of our tram travels for a further hour or two ensued, before calling it a day.

Sunday 6th August.

Today's tram tour highlight was finding a rather nice bar adjacent to a crossing of No.10 & No.15 routes at Piazzale Francesco Baracca. It was quite nice sitting in the shade of the buildings having a beer, then popping out into the bright mid-day sunshine to take a few pictures.



Plazza Le Baracca, 6/8/23

Peter Holden

The low-light of the day was waiting ages for a No. 14 tram to Lorenteggio, which was not running despite showing on the internet! A decision was made to look for a bar in the Diocleziano area. Mulligans “Oyrish” Bar! Following a ten-minute walk to the bar, sadly on arrival it was found to be closed, staff on holiday it said. A walk back along a different route brought us to a rather nice avenue of trees with two tram routes running along. Whilst taking a few pictures I noticed trams disappearing down a side street. It turned out that the Messina Tram Depot was along this side street.

The Italians are not over keen on people having a look around depots, would you believe, however I decided to follow a tram towards the depot and sneaked in. There was no one in the security office by the door, there was no one in the adjacent staff messroom, no one out working on the shop floor of the depot, but there were indeed very many trams to note!

It was decided over our evening meal to utilise the first day of our Interrail 6-day Italian pass the next day.

Monday 7th August.

Following a hearty breakfast including unlimited tiramisu, we boarded the 08:20 Millano Central to Colico, here changing units onto a service to Chiavenna.



ETR 104 017B Chiavenna, 7/8/23

Peter Holden

A very scenic area indeed which is not too far from the Swiss border, a distance of 70 miles north of Milano. Having planned a full day’s train travel we caught the same unit back as far as Colico, then on to Lecco for a service to Bergamo, this being

another 70-mile journey. Bergamo would you believe has a tram system. Not a very big one! Having read up about it, I can report that along with many other Italian ventures it appears, the building of the tram network was stopped well before completion. They have however bought enough standard gauge trams for around three or four routes, but only bothered to build one. Hence fourteen trams when probably five would be more than enough. It was no great hardship having traversed the 8-mile line, to make our way back to the station to continue our onward travels.

From Bergamo south to Traviglio, east to Brescia, then to complete this triangle from Brescia back to Bergamo. All trains today had been quite modern units, our next train to Monza was our first loco hauled train of the day. A quick change at Monza and we return to Milano Centrale around 20:00. Study of a map would show that we had covered many of the available lines in the Bergamo area.

It was decided over our evening meal that a trip east to Venezia would be a good idea for the following day.

Italian Railways are sort of privatised, or at least split into different sections or companies. There were three companies operating from Milano, all had separate ticket offices and would not sell tickets other than for their own services. What a farce!

Tuesday 8th August.

Leisurely start for a change today. First class tickets purchased on the high speed Frecciarossa (this being possibly Italian for very fast red train?) service leaving at 09:35 to Venezia S. Lucia. The thing is this train was not on my timetable or my Italian railway App timetable anywhere, and there was a similar service just ten minutes later at 09:45. It did however exist, so we made our way to our booked seats for the high-speed journey to Venezia with not many calling points, whilst enjoying our two complimentary thimbles of coffee! Ristorante Roma adjacent to the Grand Canal was our lunch destination.



ETR400 set 07, Venezia S. Lucia, 8/8/23

Peter Holden

Following one or two, possibly four or five beers, a great pizza and also watching the local police deal with a couple of “incidents” in a slightly heavy-handed manner, we made our way back to Venezia S. Lucia Station to catch regional services back to Milano this journey necessitating a change of train at Verona Porta Nuova. It is indeed quite scenic around Verona and Lake Garda.

Wednesday 9th August.

Time to check out from the hotel Bristol following our five-night stay and walk across to Centrale Station for the last time of this holiday, where we boarded a regional loco-hauled train to our next destination, Torino. Most of the loco-hauled services were in the hands of class 464 electrics, of which 717 were built between 1999 and 2014. The 11:15 to Torino Porta Nuova was quite a long train with around 10 carriages, it did fill up as we continued our 1 hour 39-minute journey. This possibly as there are not many regional services as compared with the faster services which require reservations. We left the train at Torino Porta Susa as our hotel was very close by.

Having deposited our cases at the hotel, we made our way back to the station to board the 13:25 Torino Porta Susa to Aosta. This turned out to be a splendid journey being most scenic indeed. The line heads north towards the Alps and then turns west towards the border with France and Switzerland, the Matterhorn being not too far away. The same unit brought us back. Of interest this service is not running at the time I write this article, it is instead a bus replacement. There do appear to be very many long term bus replacements (I do wonder if they should in fact be called “Train Replacements”?) in Italy - sadly, these do nothing for the planning of a day out on the train. You do have to be very careful when doing your planning as a bus substitute is not at all welcome and needs to be avoided like the plague.

On our return, check-in at the Hotel Dock Milano, Torino was now available. My research had sourced a couple of craft beer bars not too far away, so a steady 20-minute walk to the “Skjuma” finds two real ales on hand pump! I was not expecting this, they had a bitter and a porter - both were fine, also a surprise. However, the joy was very soon to evaporate (the beer did not have chance to evaporate!). They were doing food, I asked for a menu but was told that I needed to scan a QR code on the back of the beer mats. Now I’m not one for a lot of this modern rubbish, but we had not eaten since breakfast. “Can I have the code for the internet?” “we don’t have internet” “I have no signal on my phone, so how can I order food?” This was met with a vague look from behind the bar. What a farce! We left and found a small snack in the Bar Dock, located in the same building as our hotel.

Thursday 10th August.

A day traversing quite a few of the local lines around Torino. Following breakfast, a walk from our hotel to the main station in Torino “Porta Nuova”. First train of the day was the 08:35 to Alba, a distance of 35 miles. From here we retraced our steps. Next branch line was out to Chieri, the intention being to stay on this train, returning back through Torino and out to the north along the branch to Rivarolo Canavese. A good

hour possibly two was now wasted as the train was terminated just north of Torino for some unknown reason - all we could find out was the line had been closed. The train crew suggested we stay on and ride back into the city.



464 595 Torino Porta Nuova, 10/8/23

Peter Holden

Finally, we boarded the 14:45 Torino Porta Nuova to Susa a 33-mile journey west to the French border area. On return to Torino, it was decided to find a place to eat. A nice meal and a few beers were enjoyed at one of the restaurants near to our hotel.

[to be continued]

Two Gentlemen of Bradford

Ian Button

Two Circle members (thank you, Michael & Jim) drew my attention to a paragraph in the Yorkshire Post on 8th May: the “Auction Results” article reported that Tennants in Leyburn had sold collections of railway photos on 3rd April, gathered by old Circle members G Butland and D Butterfield. Long-standing Circle members will remember Geoff Butland and Douglas Butterfield – they were founder members of the Circle in 1945 and leading lights for over half a century after that. Their story will doubtless be of interest to current Circle members, whether or not they had the pleasure of meeting the two gentlemen.

I'll start at Tennants. Their "News" webpage includes the following :-

Results: Toys, Models & Collectables Sale 3rd April 2024 A unique archive of British Railway photographs and slides dating from the 1940s to the early 2000s sold for £5,500 (all figures exclude buyer's premium) in Tennants Auctioneers' Toys, Models, Collectables and Sporting Sale on 3rd April. The collection consisted of over 44,000 images, half of which are photographs, half are slides, taken by D. Butterfield and G. Butland, and were sold with copyright. Primarily depicting locomotives, the collection is comprehensively catalogued in notebooks and folders, with the majority annotated with location, date and other pertinent information. From the sale collection was a further lot of over 2,800 photographs and slides of British Buses (sold for £780), and a collection of over 8,000 images of the Swiss Railways (sold for £950) – both of which were assembled by Messrs Butterfield and Butland. Also with Railway interest was a large LNER Hunt Class locomotive Fox [emblem], once mounted on *The Craven* locomotive, which was withdrawn from service in January 1961 (sold for £1,200).

Tennants' auction catalogue (online) gave the following details :-

Lot 3202 - A Large And Comprehensive Collection Of British Railway Photographs And Slides taken and collected by D Butterfield and G Butland; the pictures date from the 1940's to the early 2000's and the majority individually annotated verso with location, date and other information. For example, one box dated 1960-67 contains b/w photographs 5½ x 3½": 7-8-61 Wadebridge depicting BR Mogul 31853, 21-5-61 Polmadie depicting 4MT 80056, 5-3-61 Settle Junction depicting A3 60074 Harvester, 3-4-61 Sevenoaks A Signal Box depicting the signal box, 1-4-61 Basingstoke depicting Class 61 tank locomotive 6107 at the station; the collection primarily includes locomotives and is comprehensively catalogued in various notebooks and folders. The collection consists of over 44,000 images roughly half photographs and half slides. The photographs and slides taken by D Butterfield and G Butland are sold WITH COPYRIGHT; the others including the commercially produced examples are not sold with copyright. Estimated at £800 - £1,200, Sold for £5,500

Lot 3207 - Swiss Railways Photographs and Slides A collection of over 8,000 images dating mostly from the 1970's and later, the majority annotated with dated place and other details. The photographs were taken by D Butterfield and G Butland and are sold WITH COPYRIGHT. Estimated at £200 - £300, sold for £950

Also **Lot 3161 British Buses Photographs and Slides** A collection of over 2,800 photographs and 2,200 slides of buses, trolley buses and trams taken largely in the West Riding of Yorkshire, mostly annotated verso with date, location and other details. The photographs were taken by D Butterfield and sold WITH COPYRIGHT Estimated at £100 - £150, sold for £780.

So – let’s now remember our two doyens, Geoff and Douglas:

Geoff Butland 1910-2000 (by Frank Robertshaw, from his “History of the Circle”)

Geoff was a founder member of the Circle; he joined the Circle at its inaugural meeting and was a member till he died in June 2000 at the age of 90 years.



Geoff Butland “in action”

Frank Robertshaw

In the early days of the Circle, there were a lot of outdoor trips and Geoff made a record of everything that was seen on these visits, as a record for future members of the Circle. They recorded every locomotive seen on every visit. Reports were published in the early Circulars under the title "The Outer Circle", and most were republished in the 2000's for a new generation of members to enjoy them.

Geoff was the Circle's Honorary Secretary from 1947 when he took over from the original Secretary Frank Lea. He held this post till ill health forced him to reluctantly resign in 1979.

Geoff spent most of WW2 as a guest of the Germans in a prison camp. After the war he went back to find and visit the local people who captured him and formed a friendship with them that lasted many years. He was proud of the fact that at one time he had a price on his head. His captors were awarded ten shillings (50p) as a reward for capturing him. He later made a slide show of his days in the RAF.

Geoff was very much a family man but he had two other great loves in his life. They were Switzerland and the Swiss Railways, and the Settle and Carlisle Railway. His first talk about Swiss Railways was on 2nd October 1946 but it was not his last as he returned many times and always had something new to tell us about. His first talk

about the Settle and Carlisle line was in 1961 but in the 1980's he gave a 7 part series of lectures about the line called "Land of Green Ginger".

When the Aire Valley line was electrified in the 1990's he followed progress with great zeal. He photographed every stage of the work, often donning his orange coat and hard hat and going out at night for photographs. He was well known at all the sites and he was rather amused that the workmen referred to him as "The Gaffer" and in some instances "The Old B****r". By the end of the contract he had over 500 pictures and what is probably the most comprehensive record of the contract made.

I once asked his wife Ruth if she ever worried that he was out with another woman, when he left home late at night on his photographic forays. She said that he did not have time for another woman and was too old anyway.

Apart from local work Geoff would think nothing of driving 200 miles just to get one photograph. He drove all the way to Mendip and back in one day for a visit.

He did a slide talk every year to the Circle entitled "Seen in Camera" and this ran to 20 parts. His last talk to the Circle was Part 20 on 26th August 1998. In all he gave 87 talks to the Circle, on all types of railway subjects. In the last couple of years of his life he was unable to go to the Circle and I used to visit him on a fairly regular basis. He was always pleased to see me and wanted to know what was going on at the Circle. We had some good chats.

He always had good sense of humour and always got up to things he should not.

Where he lived was non-smoking establishment and he was often in trouble for setting off the smoke alarms whilst having a sly smoke of his pipe.

There is much more that could be told about Geoff but it would fill a book on its own. Geoff was very much part of the Circle for many years and when he died in 2000, the Circle was well represented at his funeral at Esholt Church.

Douglas Butterfield (DB) 1924-2009 (*obituary by Frank Robertshaw, reproduced from Circular 351*)

Douglas had many interests which included photography, music, Bradford Bulls, Switzerland and of course railways and buses. He was not a family photographer but loved taking transport photographs and had many pictures published. He had no time for pop music although he did agree with me, when I would say that if he took the trouble to listen to it he may enjoy some of it. He liked classical music and went to many concerts by his favourite "Hallé Orchestra". He also liked jazz and I had the pleasure of going to several jazz concerts with him. He proudly boasted that he had supported "The Bulls" since 1936 when they were "Bradford Northern". Some years ago the team recognised this achievement when he and Audrey were invited to a special reception for him when he met the players and he partook of one of his other loves, food. His favourite country was Switzerland and he visited there, armed with a Swiss Rail Pass many times, sometimes accompanied by his lifelong friend Geoff Butland. [*In later years Douglas always stayed at the same hotel (I forget which town), in the same room overlooking the main line – Ed.*]



Douglas & Audrey Butterfield

Frank Robertshaw

Of course as a railway group we remember him best for his interest in railways. His knowledge was amazing and even when I visited him in the last year, when he was not well and could not speak too well he always could tell me some fact about railways. He always said that he was not a founder member of Bradford Railway Circle as he only joined at the Circle second meeting. But as the first meeting was an inaugural meeting it does not count and as far as myself and most members are concerned, he was a Founder Member.

The Bradford Railway Circle was always a large and important part of his life. He was President from 1978 to 1981 and sometimes served on the Committee. With the help of his wife Audrey, he stapled together and distributed *The Circular* for 55 years. He would say that he knew most people but could not remember their names. Even when we knew each other a long time and would go all over together he would come to me and as a joke say "and what name are you?" One of the biggest contributions he made to the Circle was his slide and other talks. He holds the record for the most talks which now stands at 180 talks. This record is not likely to be beaten. He would speak 5 or 6 times some years. One of the things that I liked about his talks was that he did his homework for each one and I never found them boring.

The first railway trip I did with Douglas was to Shrewsbury to see *Princess Elizabeth* (the locomotive). We went by train of course and fitted many things into the trip, which included photographing stations, signal boxes and trains, including asking at some boxes if we could look inside. We were usually successful. We also found time

during the day for the odd half of lager. This was to be the first of many days out together.

Douglas had what we in Yorkshire would call a droll sense of humour. I remember visiting Paris for a few days with him and as we were staying in the area of Pigalle, one evening I took him for a walk around the “Red Light Area”. He was not impressed, especially when young ladies approached him for a chat. The same night he got his own back on me by making me walk up the hundreds of steps to the Cathedral.

He made no secret of the fact that apart from his family he had little time for children. He always said that the children on Swiss trains were “rowdies”. I went to Glasgow with him once, and we were on the train ready to come back and he had made himself comfortable in his favourite seat at the rear of the train. A Glaswegian lady with several noisy children got on and sat near us. Douglas sat giving them one of his famous scowls and the lady said “I think we will move farther up the train”. Douglas looked at them and said “That’s right, b****r off” and that’s what they did.

These then are a few of the many memories I have of Douglas. He was good friend and we had some good times together. He had a bottomless knowledge of railways and the time I spent with him was memorable.

We at Bradford Railway Circle will miss him but no doubt his name will crop up here for many years to come. I like to think that he is somewhere at a lineside having a good natter with Geoff Butland and Harold Smith.”

Additional notes by Ian Button.

Douglas gave his first talk to the Circle on 20/8/47 – it was titled “British Atlantics”. ! His last talk was on 15/10/2003, titled “Looking Back 1947-50”. I remember the Circle committee had a team task in those days, to collate, staple & envelope the Circular; the task was undertaken at the Butterfield home, with a slap-up tea provided by Douglas’s delightful wife Audrey. Douglas passed away on 22/11/2009.

Douglas worked as a draughtsman for English Electric – hence his beautifully inscribed notes accompanying the photos. Geoff’s profession was as an auditor for Redmans, the stone company, and this explains his meticulous approach to recording all the relevant facts associated with his railway adventures.

The photograph collections

Naturally, both Geoff & Douglas were keen railway photographers, and both built up their own collections. Douglas inherited Geoff’s stuff, as he told Duncan Eccles that deciphering the information in his copious notebooks was a real problem. Apparently, Geoff’s notes regarding his trips were VERY comprehensive, including visits to cafes, items bought and prices paid! Duncan recalls that Douglas sold quite a lot of his own negatives, maybe to Neville Stead (Neville’s collection is now in the Transport Library).

We aren’t sure who inherited the remainder of the collection on Douglas’ passing – maybe it stayed in the family. The excellent prices realized by the three collections

sold (British railways, Swiss railways, and British buses) show that they must have gone to a collector or institution that will treasure and preserve them.



Both photos: Copyright: Tennants' Auctioneers, Leyburn





Both photos: Copyright: Tennants' Auctioneers, Leyburn



Many thanks to Tennants for allowing me to quote from their online catalogue, and for kindly supplying hi-res photos. Thanks also to Frank Robertshaw for permission to copy his pieces, and to Duncan Eccles for his contributions.

Huddersfield Railway Circle – Programme 2024

All meetings at Huddersfield Town Hall. 19:30–21:15.

Secretary: Chris Davis, 1 Cleveland Grove, WAKEFIELD, WF2 8LB

Tel: 01924 369525 (mobile 07990 802897) email: chrisdavis19527@gmail.com

Date Subject/Speaker

Wednesday

July 3rd - The Ralph Martin collection, part 1 (original slides)

July 17th - Members' Open Evening (short slide and digital presentations)

July 31st - Deltics Over the Pennines - Mark Allatt

Aug 14th - Railroad wanderings across the Pond - Chris Taylor

Aug 28th - Trans-Pennine loco hauled - Robert Clarke

Sep 11th - Colour Rail 1964 - Paul Chancellor

Sep 25th - Railways in the Cornish landscape - Stephen Gay

Oct 9th - The Huddersfield & Sheffield Junction Railway (Penistone line) - Alan Lewis

Oct 23rd - Switzerland's Bernina Line - Philip Lockwood

Nov 6th - 69th Annual Dinner

Nov 20th - A Railway Photographic Selection - Anthony Hicks

Dec 4th - From Ossett to Penzance via Wick - Roger Hepworth

Dec 18th - Chairman's Evening (presentation & social gathering) - Robert Clarke

Notes & Rumours

Did anyone else see the BBC article about the Leeds model railway enthusiast whose layout incorporates various Yorkshire landmarks? – see

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c51n26462edo>

From Bill Jagger - Reading the April issue of BackTrack, I came across a mention of the Circle by Walter Rothschild. He is a regular contributor to the magazine's letters. What I didn't know before is that he is an ex-member of the Circle - number 150. So – Walter - the Circle is alive and well, and thanks for the mention!

There are three current members with a membership number less than 150 and four in the 150's There can't have been many Rabbis as members.

Photographic Puzzles – Pt.7

Robert Anderson

Here are the last issue's puzzle pictures . . .



Photo 13 – At which major northern city (now electrified)? Philip Lockwood emailed: “Taken at the west end of Leeds City, the Italianate towers in the background being the giveaway”. **Robert’s answer:** Leeds City: no date but probably mid-50’s, with 45505 *The Royal Army Ordnance Corps*.



Photo 14 – Philip’s response: “Taken near Mirfield, in the background the Monastery Towers on the hillside. Showing the L&Y Calder Valley route and the L&NW line. I believe the Jubilee might be on the Leeds New Line.”

Robert’s answer: Heaton Lodge 30.04.1955, with 45701 *Conqueror*. The photographer is to be congratulated, for I have never seen a photograph taken from such a high vantage point at this popular location. The train is probably a Manchester to Leeds semi fast and is on the 'New Line' between Spen Valley Junction and Battyeford.

Now – two more pictures, for readers to identify the locations:-



Photo 15 – 64322 on 6/11/1955 - Location?

Clue 1. The overhead wires and catenary top right are 1500 volts DC

Clue 2. After its closure by BR the shed became home to some illustrious operational preserved steam locomotives including 'Bahamas' and 'Scots Guardsman'



Photo 16 – 60116 and two other A1's - Location?

Clue. This was a principal depot on the East Coast Main Line, renowned for its dirty Pacifics.

(Photos 13-16 are © Copyright of Robert Anderson Archive ©)

Shingle Slide Shows Autumn Programme

Thanks to Peter Mann for passing a copy of the programme to us. Note some familiar names! :-

Sep. 6th Saudi Arabia – Land of Sand & Oil, by Geoff Budd

Sep.20th Cistercian Monasteries, by Mike Obst

Oct 4th Photos of Old Baildon, by Mike Lawson

Oct 18th Preserving Your Memories – Charting the 1960's, by Malcolm Johnson

Nov 1st Around Britain by Rail, by John Holroyd

Nov 15th Around Britain 50 Years Ago, by Roger Hepworth

Dec 6th Upper Wharfedale – Grassington to Cray, by David Alred

All shows are at Shingle Library Meeting Room at 7:30pm (all dates are Fridays).

Admission £3 including refreshments.

Website: <http://www.shinglelibraryslideshow.co.uk>

Vintage Signalling – pictures from Michael Leahy



Lower-quadrant signals still in use at St Erth, Cornwall, photographed on 15/5/2024.

Special Traffic Notices

Would members please take note of the following points :-

- **Fire Precautions.** Please familiarise yourselves with the positions of fire exits and extinguishers at Bradford Mechanics Institute Library.
 - **Members' Discounts.** In return for free advertising in *The Circular*, members receive 10% discount on cash purchases at Frizinghall Models and Railways, on proof of Circle membership (e.g. a valid Circle membership card). See inside rear cover of *The Circular* for details.
 - **Contributions to The Circular.** Original material, preferably in electronic format (almost any PC word-processor, preferably Microsoft Word or text format), or by email to ianbutton1@btinternet.com) or typescript – the Editor can scan & OCR (optical character recognition) typed pages.
 - **Railway Magazine bound volumes.** Any member wishing to read any volumes (we have c.1929-2010) should contact Eddy Lumb.
 - **Pictures for The Circular.** Photographic material submitted for consideration for reproduction in *The Circular* is accepted at the owner's risk. Landscape format is preferred for half-page reproduction, obviously, although if the photo is spectacular a vertical format full-page layout may be possible, or the picture might be used for our *Circular* cover picture.
 - **Disclaimer.** The opinions expressed in *The Circular* are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee.
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New books from Pen & Sword

Here are new titles issued by our friends at Pen & Sword since the last *Circular*.

If any member is interested in receiving a free electronic copy (PDF file) of any of the following titles, in return for writing a review for Pen & Sword (suitable for publishing in *The Circular*, so railway-related titles preferred), please let me know.

- The Railway Grouping 1923 to the Beeching Era, by Bob Pixton
- Spirit of Northern Rails, by David Goodyear
- Railways and Industry on the Vale of Neath - Pontypool Road-Crumlin Viaduct-Hengoed-Nelson and Llancaiach-Treharris, Taff Vale Extension, by John Hodge
- North British Type 2 B-B Diesel-Hydraulic Locomotives [D63xx], BR Class 22 - Volume 1 - Setting the Scene, by Anthony P Sayer
- The Railways of the Isle of Sheppey, by Graeme Gleaves
- Great Western, 0-6-0 Tender Goods Locomotive Classes, by David Maidment
- Volvo, MCV - The Story of a Global Partnership, by David Barrow
- Railways Around York, by Mike Wedgewood
- Class 56 and 58, by Mark Pike

- Rail Freight - Eastern England, by Paul Shannon
- The London MB and SM Buses - A London Bus Disappointment, by Jim Blake
- The Great Eastern Railway, The Late 19th and Early 20th Century, 1862–1924, by Charles Phillips
- Euston - A history and modelling the 1875 station, by David Ashwood
- The Early History of Railway Tunnels, by Hubert Pragnell

For more info on the above, and more titles to choose from (Pen & Sword seem happy to offer us any transport title in return for a subsequent review publishable in The Circular) head over to <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Transport/c/65> and explore.

Meeting Reports

Philip Lockwood

3rd April – 1960’s Railway Scene (as seen by Leslie Metcalf), by Chris Taylor (report by Ian Button)

Chris treated us to an excellent show of digital images scanned from photos originally taken by Leslie Metcalf and now kept by Huddersfield Railway Circle. In fact, we had time to see everything twice – once in a rather rapid “slide-show” mode, and then at a more leisurely pace that enabled us to take in the scenes more comfortably. One set of shots that stood out for me were of the stricken V2 at Mirfield, as featured in recent Circulars.

1st May - 50 Years Back 1974, by John Holroyd

When introducing John's show, I mentioned that 1974 was a vintage year. Well John's presentation certainly confirmed that, with lots of interest on the railways, canals, etc. There is so much variety in subject matter that John observed and pointed his camera at, that I am unable to cover everything in detail in this report. So I think I will stick to the things which particularly appealed to me. As always, in the attic, John's railway - the East Morvern and Wick Railway. Visits to Snailbeach in Shropshire, with the remains of the narrow-gauge railway and lead mines; the Humber paddle steamers; and visits to Bill Stocks' "Heatherfield Light Railway". The show also covered the end of steam mill-engines, buses from many towns, and of course a speciality of John's - the humour of unusual signs, and the people sharing the jaunts with him. For me I think it would be about this time when I first became acquainted with John, so I am pleased that I can say that in many ways we have experienced fifty years of friendship. Vote of thanks by Ian Button.

29th May – Stately Trains, by Stephen Middleton

Having sampled a couple of "Strawberries and Cream" specials run by Stephen and his wife, I was looking forward to finding out more about the restoration of the coaches I travelled in. You have certainly to admire the standard of restoration. Stephen comes from a railway family and would appear to have been smitten at an

early age. He obviously has a great love for what will be described as the golden age of passenger coaches. One of his first restorations was of one of the very first Pullman carriages imported from the USA as a kit of parts! By far his most ambitious project has been the restoration of the NER petrol electric railcar complete with matching trailer. The unit was built in 1903 and withdrawn in 1931 and subsequently used as a holiday home near Kirkby-Moorside. This splendid vehicle can now be seen working on the Yorkshire Dales Railway. Message to Peter: how about a Circle special sometime in the future [*with Strawberries & Cream, please – Ed*]. Vote of thanks by Ian Button.

Ben's Gas Bits (culled from old issues of Historic Gas Times)

Ben Burrows

From HGT No.49 (Dec. 2006)

Bradford's main gasworks from the 1880's has been resited at Birkshall, about a mile south of Exchange station, on the side of the main line to which it was connected for the delivery of about 1000 tons of coal daily to produce 12 million cubic feet of gas per day following enlargement in the 1920's and 1930's. This was handled on site by a steam loco and following further enlargement in 1948-9 by two new Fowler 0-4-0 diesel locos in 1961, named Sutcliffe after a member of the board, and West after the works Engineer. The diesels were both 150hp and handled over 1600 tons of coal and coke daily. I wonder what happened to them after the arrival of North Sea gas which resulted in the discontinuance of gas produced from coal. The new gas was delivered by the new high pressure gas grid and had required all existing gas burning equipment to be converted for the new gas to be used. Some of you may remember hundreds of holes to be excavated onto dried-out (and therefore leaking) mains joints to be resealed due to North Sea gas being "dry" as opposed to the "wet" former gas because the existing pipe network had to be used at a higher pressure. Standard sectional gasholders had a 20 ft deep ground tank full of water and the lifts were sealed from one another by a channel filled with water so the stored gas became "wet".

When the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway were constructing their line connecting Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells in 1880 through East Sussex they established a station at Heathfield in the Weald. For a convenient water supply, they decided to bore an Artesian well at the Heathfield Hotel. Gas, instead of water, was discovered at 228 feet deep, but the well was then sealed. They had another go at one end of their station and again struck gas at 312 feet, which was at a better pressure than before, but after drilling another 50 feet they decided to cap this well. After some experiments the gas was used to light the station. In 1902 other wells were drilled, including one at Mayfield, near the local gasworks. A gasholder was established at Heathfield, advertising that it held natural gas. The station was lit by natural gas until

1934, when the railway changed over to town gas. The well was sealed again in 1963, but the whole country is now on natural gas.

Whilst I am still looking at Historic Gas Times, I note that at Glynllifern Park, near Caernarfon, a small gasworks was constructed in 1857 by J R DeWinton of Caernarfon – a company usually associated with vertical-boilered steam locomotives. The building still exists, but without the two small gasholders and retort bank originally provided.

In London, Samuel Clegg designed and managed a small gas works, opening in September 1813. It subsequently lit the whole of St Margaret's Westminster parish. It produced 20 million cubic feet of gas per annum, but it grew to have 18 gasholders of average capacity 15,000 cu.ft. It continued as a holder station after reorganisation in 1852. In 1937 all gasholders were removed and the ground water tanks of the two largest (2 million cu.ft.) holders were converted into reinforced strongholds ("The Rotunda") able to hold several thousand government employees in bomb-proof safety, and connected to other offices in Whitehall and The Mall by an underground railway – does this still exist? [*The London Underground Railway Society asked the same question in a newsletter of 1970, but no response is known – Ed.*]

Harrogate Gasworks was built in 1845, to the north-west of the railway sidings at Starbeck. Rail-borne coal was delivered to the works by horse & cart at first, then by steam traction engines towing 7-ton wagons which damaged the roads. To overcome this, a 2ft gauge railway (for cheapness) was built by the gas undertaking in 1908-9 for the 1¾ miles from Bilton coal depot to the works. This required a 1000-metre long tunnel with limited headroom, so the 0-6-2 locomotive was built with a lowered cab by Thomas Green & Co. of Leeds and named Barber after the chairman of the gas committee. On closure of the works in the 1960's it was donated to the Leeds Industrial Museum and later loaned to the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society for restoration and operation by 2003, to be available by 2009 for its centenary. The Historic Gas Times donated a whistle costing £400 to the restoration project. The line at Harrogate terminated at 5000-ton coal hoppers which had twin conveyors under Ripon Road and on to the works.

Carriage Lighting

In 1895 one railway company used to send large containers of high-pressure gas to stations, to be fed into smaller containers on carriages for lighting. The carriages had smaller cylinders fed by flexible tube and a male screw on the coach. On one occasion the screw thread got crossed and the pressure of 150 lb/sq.in. blew the male screw out and released gas which was ignited by a nearby lamp. The heat made the large cylinder very hot, and it eventually exploded, affecting the area for a mile all round! The station was scorched and many windows were broken, and the large cylinder was destroyed, along with its carriage. The cylinder, which was made of 1-inch thick metal, shattered and half of it was blown into gardens 150 yards away.

Gas holders were water-sealed between lifts, and to prevent ice forming, steam was injected into this water during winter. At Northampton Gas Works in the 1950's this was obtained from an out-of-use vertical-boilered locomotive standing on some nearby railway track. It had no can and was nicknamed The Coffee Pot. Could it have been a De Winton? Was there a company called Chapel as a possible maker? Wolverton was a railway town, and after nationalisation British Railways continued to operate the gasworks until it was eventually handed over to the East Midlands Gas Board in the mid-50's, and the works closed, including the removal of the ex-BR boiler. As the holders remained, the gas board had to purchase a new boiler.

Barrage Balloons

Barrage balloons were used in World War II for several purposes – namely, to defend towns, cities and installations from air raids and to interfere with enemy installations. They were 64ft long and 25ft diameter, 600lb in weight, made of aluminium-finished cotton and had a horizontal interior diaphragm. The upper half contained 19,150 cu.ft. of hydrogen and the lower one was filled with air from a scoop at the front. The GWR gas works at Swindon supplied some of the hydrogen in high-pressure cylinders (30 cylinders filled a balloon) at 3000 psi, and costing £50 each. Some balloons were sited to defend cities, and some were equipped with hanging steel cables with hooks on the end so they could be launched into a suitable wind to fly over France and Germany to engage with overhead electricity lines and railway catenaries to cause trouble. I wonder if they also interfered with signal wiring? With high-voltage lines shorting phase-to-phase to activate circuit-breakers and be difficult to put right. One notable occurrence at a power station caused unbalance in an alternator rotor, which ultimately caused it to explode and burn down the 250MW power station at Bolen, near Leipzig – it wasn't rebuilt. The Luftwaffe also had to provide fighters to shoot down the balloons. 25,000 balloons were sent, causing nearly 5000 incidents in France alone, all wasting assets and labour. Curiously, our Air Ministry were obstructive to the scheme – a bit like their non-acceptance of Whittle's jet engine. Sweden and Switzerland complained about the effect on them, but the balloons kept on coming from the UK.

Secretary's Page

Peter Holden

I do hope this note finds you all well.

A first for me is the fact that I am writing this note whilst sitting in carriage 26 of the OBB 05:25 Railjet service from Villach Hbf to Leoben Hbf.

Hopefully by the time you read this article we will have held our outside visit to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway to enjoy the Fish & Chip Special. I am pleased to report that we have 22 members and guests joining Bradford Railway Circle for what hopefully will be a great day out, especially with the inclusion of a Day Rover ticket as well!

May I send best wishes on behalf of the Circle to Dave Peel. Dave has had a fall recently and as a result he will not be able to travel up to Bradford from Wareham to give his booked talk on Wednesday 21st August. When I spoke to Dave he was in good spirit and eagerly looking forward to the Swanage Railway's forthcoming Steam event which was to feature 4 Bulleid Pacifics. (I saw *City of Wells* on a low loader traveling on the M62 earlier this month, on its way south possibly?). Presently, I have not yet booked a replacement speaker for that date. Please keep an eye on the Circle website for updates.

Looking ahead to next year we are hopefully going to hold a few special events to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the formation of our society. I can report that following on from the excellent talk recently by Stephen Middleton of Stately Trains, we are to possibly make a special visit to Embsay next year to be guests of Stately Trains and have the use of one of their wonderful carriages for a few return journeys. This will possibly be held on an "off-Wednesday" in Summer. Obviously, we would like as many as possible to take part. We will look into possibly providing transport to and from Embsay. One point Stephen stressed to me is he will need to know "numbers" quite early. I will endeavour to keep you posted on developments. I have completed next year's Meetings Diary now. This task is now much easier, with only one meeting per four weeks.

Circle Diary 2024

Please watch the website <http://www.bradfordrailwaycircle.co.uk> . Meetings are held at Bradford Mechanics Institute Library every 4 weeks, starting at 2pm.

P	June 26	A Mixed Bag of Trains	John Whiteley
	July 24	50 Years of Scottish Railways & Travel	Chris Davis (date swap)
C	Aug. 21	t.b.a.	
P	Sep. 18	AMTRAK's California Zephyr	Julian Halstead
	Oct. 16	Steam Memories from the David Lane Archive	Ben Gordon Taylor
C	Nov. 13	Where Would You Like to Go?	Anthony Hicks
P	Dec. 11	AGM plus Members' Night	
C - Copy date for <i>The Circular</i> – 4 weeks prior to ...			
P - Publication – around the end of March/June/September/December			