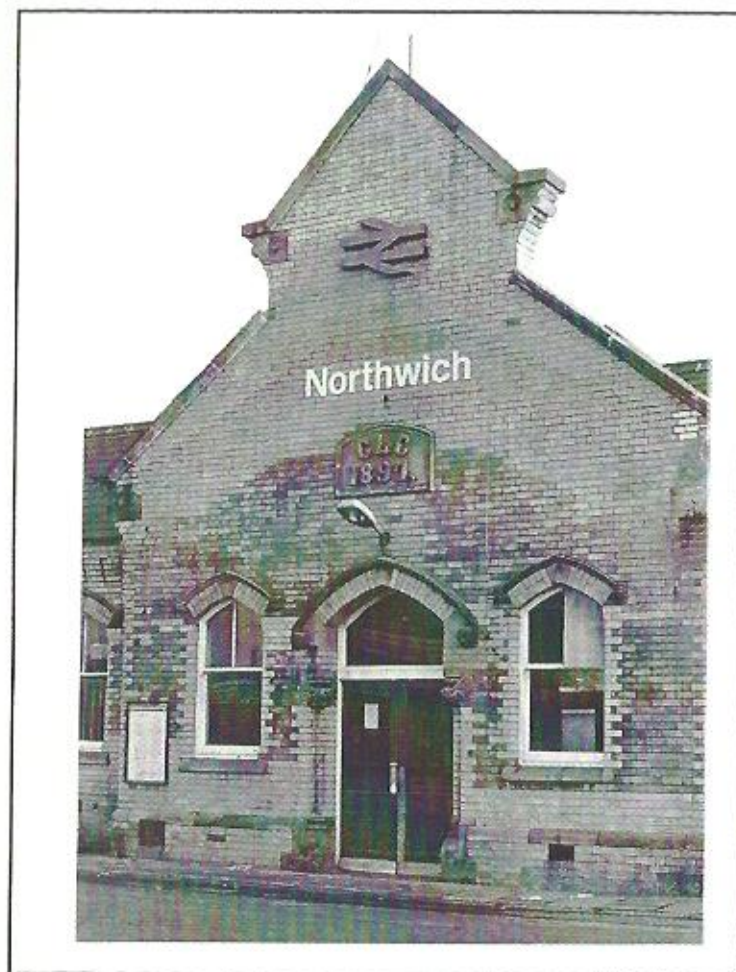




# ON SHED

**The Magazine of the 8E Association**



**Issue 44**

**Christmas 1997**

# COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Graham Roughsedge

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## Cover Picture

*Northwich Station takes pride of place on the front cover. How many passengers or townsfolk will have noticed the passing of the building's centenary this year? What a shame that there were no celebrations to mark the occasion. Has the 8E missed an opportunity for some much needed publicity?*  
(Alan Carr)

## Inside Back Cover

*Kerr Stuart 0-4-0 "Priestley" at Lostock.  
(from Tom Walton's collection)*

On Shed - Issue 44 (December 1997)

EDITORIAL

A few weeks ago, during a phone conversation with Alan Ashurst, I volunteered to put together this issue of 'On Shed'. Really, I cannot afford the time so I made some rules. Firstly, I would not write half of the magazine myself (as 8E Editors tend to do, and as I had done previously with my huge involvement with issues 40 and 41).

Secondly, I wouldn't spend weeks polishing the whole production until it was a worthy contender for the AIRPS / Railway World awards (as with issue 40). Finally, I would publish what I had, whether it be 12, 16 or 20 pages and not retype every submission to ensure a uniform presentation.

Those were my promises to myself and I have tried to keep them. This is the result. It won't win any prizes and it may look a little untidy, but it has been published (I hope on time), it does contain a good variety of articles and it keeps faith with the membership. Profuse thanks to all contributors - who I feel should be named. Here is the roll of honour:

Colin Worrall	Alan Ashurst
Len Clarke	Chris Simon
Tom Walton	Mike Lenz
Steve Worrall	

This edition is an *Internet Special*. It contains details of the 8E webpages, which essentially form an electronic magazine (referred to in cyber circles as an 'e-zine', but which I think of as an '8E-zine') which I have called 'On Line' (see footnote) and which is designed to have the look of 'On Shed'. I put these pages up some weeks ago and from time to time I update some content - especially the fixtures list. I will be happy to include contributions from the membership, please let me know if you wish to

present an item which you feel may have relevance. Point your browser to the WEB address at the foot of this page and tell your friends to surf by. Our pages have links to lots of other related sites, in fact there is a wealth of railway material on the net (not just the WEB but newsgroups as well) - the Winston Link feature inside being an example which I downloaded for this issue.

If the Internet is a mystery to you, but you feel that you would like to be enlightened I will be pleased to answer your questions if you can catch me during a members night. I can sometimes be found at home if you want to ring - see below. (Why not join my 'Computing For The Terrified' course at Hartford College on Saturday mornings? Starting January 10th.)

## Footnote:

*During a visit to the West Lancs Railway this autumn I picked up a few items of literature, amongst which was the magazine of the Eden Valley Railway Society. The title seemed familiar - 'On Line'. Not to worry, you have to pay £1 for their 'On Line' - ours is free if you have an internet account (apart from the cost of the phone call).*

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
TO YOU ALL

Alan Carr

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8E homepage ('On Line' magazine)  
<http://members.tripod.com/~northwich8e>



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1997 has been another satisfactory year with some excellent speakers, slide and film shows. Visits to Stalybridge, Grimsby and Warrington (for Alan Ashurst's railway tour) were most welcome. There will be more of the same next year.

Whilst the Committee appreciate being block voted in each year we do feel that a couple of new faces are needed to fill some vacant posts.

Mike Lenz has been an outstanding servant to the 8E for many years and is well overdue a break, so he is standing down as treasurer and we are looking for a replacement from the membership. Mike will be handing over a very simple job - only the monthly meetings need to be accounted for.

A Fixtures Secretary is a key committee appointment. There are plenty of ideas

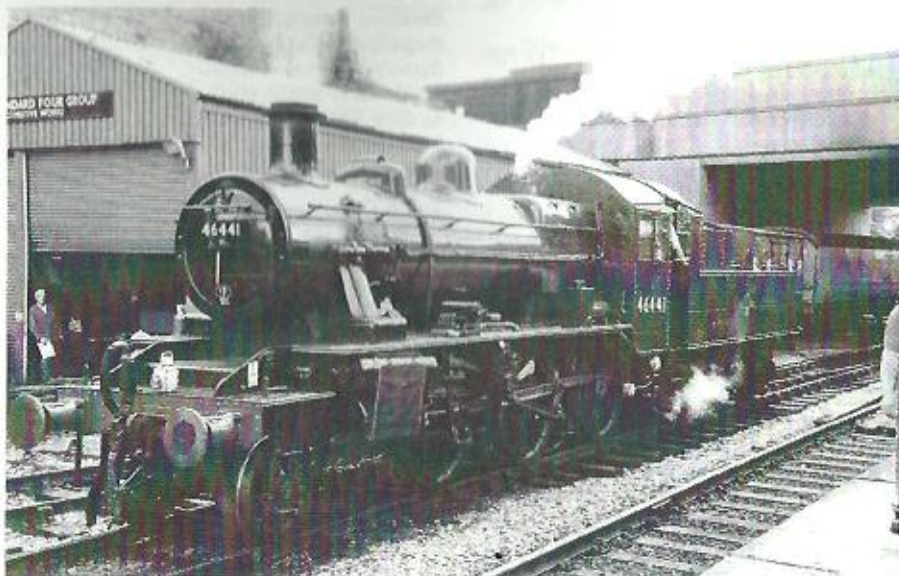
for speakers from within the committee and the membership but **organising** the whole thing (phone calls, letters, ensuring equipment is available if needed etc) is the role of the Fixtures Secretary. Your Committee have between them sorted this year, but most 1998 fixtures still have to be arranged. Come on lads, let's have some offers!

On a sad note two of our members from Warrington and Barnton, Sid Roberts and Harold Hill, passed away in 1997. We include brief obituaries within these pages.

I would like to thank my committee for their sterling work last year and I will be pleased to serve the 8E again in 1998 if re-elected.

Seasons greetings to one and all

*Colin*



Ivatt 46441 photographed at Bury during the 8E August outing. (Stephen Worrall)

## CHAIRMAN'S REFLECTIONS

*(Colin gets nostalgic in his potted history of the 8E)*

As we approach the millenium the 8E embarks on its most ambitious project to date - restoring a steam locomotive.

Who would have foreseen that, all those years ago in Northwich shed? Some will recall cleaning the 'Duchess' and discovering sand tucked away in spaces where nobody sees - built up from all those years beside the seaside.

She looked good on the outside but terrible on the inside! We were all so proud to be given custody of such a fine machine - Stanier's finest (well, almost!). He too would have been proud to have seen the Duchess leave Northwich on a Trans Pennine Express, absolutely immaculate inside and out.

What next we thought? Well we had them all - 8Fs, Black Fives, Jubilees, A4s, Merchant Navys, Lord Nelson and Lizzie to name but a few. Great days (and nights). Hangovers, trips to Carnforth and Shrewsbury and sleeping in a guardsvan on a frosty night. A certain gentleman's rubber boots well alight whilst ashing out! Characters Wilf and Plummy spring to mind. Early morning visits to Chester providing water for thirsty locos. When would it end?

Well, like all good things it did. The announcement was made - Northwich shed was to close. No more cleaning locos or footplate rides. The end? Not a chance, the 8E moved to Crewe helping out at the Railway Age.

More cleaning trips to Llandudno, Holyhead and Crewe works. Duke of Gloucester, Flying Scotsman, Taw Valley, Cornwall - the 8E cleaned them all.

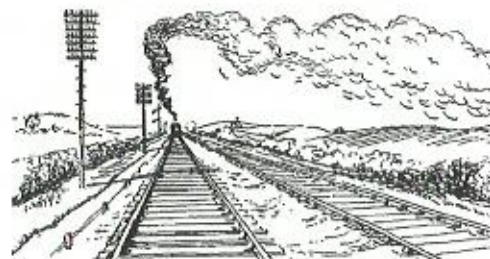
After those heady days came a period of calm with steam moving further afield and Crewe winding down but the 8E carried on. What now for those with the urge to work with steam?

Llangollen, Princess Elizabeth, Foxcote Manor, have all benefitted from the help of the 8E and continue to do so with drivers and firemen from our ranks. Even examining mainline locos and passing them to run.

I for one owe a lot to those early days, and now we've come full circle in deciding to restore a loco of our own. This will bring opportunities for all members.

There is nothing like firing and driving a steam loco. Smoke, steam, hot oil, dirty black faces, ashing out and lighting up. Seeing and hearing a steam locomotive come to life is something you can all share. So keep on supporting the 8E and it will support you.

Colin Worrall





## VIDEO DIARY

# SANTA FE 3751

What a splendid video this is. The commentary is kept to a bare minimum but is still informative and clear. There is no music to spoil the wonderful sound of 3751 hauling 16 passenger cars and two diesel helpers.

Talking of sound quality, there is an especially good effect when the loco is leaving Barstow. We see 3751 approaching from around a bend. On our right is a freight train of double stacked containers. Slowly 3751 approaches, making great music from the chimney. The sound is reflected off the wall of steel containers which are stopped right beside it.

The cameraman slowly pulls back, keeping pace with the loco, to give us an excellent view which just goes on and on. There are splendid shots taken in the open country with the plume of exhaust laid back along the length of the train.

Here are some of the technical points which caught my attention.

1. The connecting rods are tapered so that strength is placed only where needed. Presumably this is to achieve maximum strength with minimum weight.
2. The 16 passenger cars are an interesting variety of types and liveries. Particularly fascinating is the California Zephyr observation car bringing up the rear. The streamlined shape is so symbolic of 1930's design. Super!
3. I was intrigued by a tiny wisp of steam which seems to come from the

leading lip of the chimney (smoke stack?). Perhaps this is the exhaust from the Westinghouse air pump or from a Feedwater pump?

4. There was much use of the whistle throughout the journey. It was noticeable that the sequence seemed to be different each time. Is there any significance in this? Perhaps I am reading too much into what may simply be good old American exuberance!

During the return run the train needed to pass through Tunnel 5. This provided an interesting and amusing occurrence. The train was beautifully clean when entering the tunnel but was black with soot when it emerged! The subsequent effort by local enthusiasts to completely clean the three locos overnight was very reminiscent of the origins of the 8E Association which, as readers will know, was founded out of a need to service steam locos overnight at Northwich (8E) shed.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable video which I can definitely recommend to 8E members. For this and many other examples of American railroad videos see me - Mike Lenz.



Severn Valley scenes August, 1997. Pannier 5764 (bottom) and 'The Great Marquess' (top) at Bewdley. (Mike Lenz)



### Warrington Area Group Report

Our Sub - group in Warrington continues to function, although the various fixtures & events which have been arranged of late have had rather mixed fortunes. Our customary joint fixture with the North West Branch of the Great Western Society (usually held in March) was shunted back a month due to clashes with the various celebrations centred around my departure from permanent employment with Railtrack at the time. Our friends in the GWS were due to host the meeting this year but in the event problems with obtaining their usual room at the LMR Staff Club at Warrington Central Station led to a short notice transfer to our meeting venue for the joint gathering on 25th April at which Ralph Cartwright of the Welshpool & Llanfair Preservation Society gave a splendidly entertaining illustrated historical appreciation of the line under its various managements since opening of the route in 1903. This was delivered to an almost full house with around 25 persons in attendance: one of our most rewarding meetings in Warrington thus far. What a contrast then to find our May event (featuring historic slides commemorating the 30th anniversary of the end of BR Southern Region steam, along with some US rail slides from Mike Lenz) visited by just SEVEN persons!

For July it was decided to try an outdoor event and the usual Friday evening date was transferred to a Sunday afternoon in August for what proved to be the first of two Railway & Waterway "Heritage Walks" looking at some out-of-the-way transport features in the town. There was again a very disappointing attendance with only 5 people coming along, but the day was very well received by those who had made the effort and a most entertaining afternoon in pleasant late summer sunshine was enjoyed. Time did not allow for full exploration of the intended route and so a subsequent walk was organised in October to complete the scene by examining the Wilderspool & Latchford areas in more depth. Again it was a small contingent of eight persons taking part but with another very successful outcome from the point of view of enjoyment by those who did show up. After each walk refreshments were served at our evening meeting venue for which thanks as usual go to my wife Doreen for providing the necessary drinks & eats.

In between the two walks fell the September evening meeting, for which our own gathering was cancelled as Mike Lenz was presenting his extensively revised & updated presentation on the railways of Cornwall to the GW Society at the Patten Arms Hotel on the same night. It was felt that we should support Mike with this and thus an "unofficial" joint promotion was undertaken, but as many of you will have read in the latest edition of your member's newsletter the night was a great disappointment; an audience of under a dozen in total contained just one other 8E member apart from Mike. Nevertheless the talk/slide show itself was very well received and Mike is once more to be thanked for all his hard work in doing his very best to encourage our endeavours in Warrington. Mike is in fact keeping the bulk of this presentation together in the hope of a further showing in Northwich at a later date but expanded to form a more "general interest" show on the West Country landscape and heritage as well as railways (see details elsewhere).

So where do we go from here? At the time of writing it is hoped that a better attendance will be forthcoming for our meeting on 5th December which will pay tribute to our sadly deceased member Sid Roberts by showing slides from his fairly comprehensive collection recently bequeathed to us. Mike again steps up to do another North American video show on 30th January, whilst on 27th March will fall the next official joint event with the GWS. For this we have booked Peter Crockett who is the Property Manager for "Merlin Great Northern", the organisation mandated to restore the former GNR Goods Warehouse at Manchester Central (now the G-Mex complex) who provided us with such a splendid evening

out in 1996 when we went to examine the building itself and other historic reminders of the CLC in the Castlefields area (a visit which we hope to repeat during the summer of 1998). After this a comprehensive review of future policy regarding Warrington meetings will be undertaken. We might look at a more formalised tie-up with the GWS who themselves continue to obtain only modest support, although the most likely option is to make our own events quarterly with an outdoor summer event, a winter Christmas - themed event (quiz or such like) and then two good quality speakers in the Spring and Autumn, the first of which would continue to be joint with the GWS alternating the venue each year. How do people feel about this? Some feedback would be nice so as to ascertain what members true feelings are (do we even want Warrington meetings at all, or have they now run their natural course over the last ten years?). Whatever the ultimate decision, I would encourage you all to support our fixtures in January and March 1998 which as ever will be held at the St. Hilda's Mission Church Clubroom, Slater Street, Latchford (off Knutsford Road approx. one mile from the town centre) commencing at 7.45 pm. when you will be sure of a good night out.

Alan Ashurst.

### Obituary : Sid Roberts; d. 12 May 1997

We are saddened to record the passing in May of 8E member Sid Roberts, who although not involved with our main centre of activity in Northwich had become a faithful supporter of our Warrington sub - group in recent times. Sid was a quiet, unassuming chap who had been content to enjoy his lifetimes interest in railways in a fairly personal way, until the advent of 8E Warrington gatherings led him to explore his hobby in the company of other like minded individuals in his latter years. A personal family friend and neighbour for almost forty years, his avid interest in railway matters was not really apparent to any significant degree until his attention was drawn to our Warrington meetings through the assorted publicity displayed locally, which led him to come along to see what we were up to. Obviously contented with the fairly informal style of 8E fixtures he soon became a regular at these events, leading on to eventual membership of the Association. In his own low - key way it was soon apparent that Sid derived much pleasure from attendance at our meetings, where new friends were made in the convivial atmosphere which we make an effort to encourage at 8E fixtures. Never reticent at making contributions, Sid was always quick to purchase his raffle tickets and make other financial donations & sales purchases at our meetings. His reserved but cheerful disposition is now much missed at our Warrington gatherings.

Thanks to the kind generosity of his only son Mark, a considerable amount of Sid's collection of railway video material, books and slides have come into the possession of the Association which can be used in a number of ways to hopefully support future 8E events. As a tribute to Sid it is initially intended to use a selection of his excellent slides at our Warrington meeting on 5th. December when 8E members will be able to have a look at some of his photographic exploits from the 1960's to date. It may also prove possible to use some of this material at a Northwich meeting some time during 1998.

Our sympathies are extended to his son Mark and the wider family, who can be sure that the 8E Association will see fit to remember Sid through the medium of his collection of railway material now so kindly left to our charge.

Alan Ashurst.



## 1997 & A LOT OF PAINT UNDER THE BRUSH

*(Part 1 of the secret diary of the 8E's very own celebrity - Len Clarke)*

About this time last year I rejoined the North Staffs Railway at Cheddleton. I'd been a member 20yrs previously in its early days, working on locos and carriages. I made a few donations towards, for example, the ex-Barry 4F 44422, and the North Staffs signalbox from Elton Crossing near Sandbach - the last, and now working, example from that railway.

This time last year in the run up to Christmas I was part of a small team endeavouring to get a buffet car into service for the NSR Santa Specials. We succeeded, but whilst it was hardly restored to an excellent standard it did serve its purpose (and is still being progressed and improved upon).

After Christmas I started on the interior restoration of a T.S.O. cleaning down and repainting ceilings, stripping, staining and revarnishing woodwork, removing and cleaning lights and luggage racks, dismantling seats and repairing window frames etc. There is always plenty to do inside a coach in winter and it is a haven of industry and contentment with the radio playing and a little heater to take away the chill.

The season proper started for me at the end of Jan when George Stephenson (the loco) would be making an appearance at the ELR steam gala, on its return from Scotland and the previous summer's WHR season. I suggested to Ian Storey that, whilst at Bury, it would be possible to arrange to paint the support coach - the last coach to run on BR in the now historic blue - grey livery.

The coach is owned 50/50 with the A1 Steam Trust who are building the new 'Peppercorn' A1. As a subscriber to that

project who is not yet physically involved, I thought it would be a good start.

At the gala the ELR CME Ian Riley asked me to have a look at the L&Y 'A' class No. 1300. I had, only the previous spring, restored the loco to full L&Y livery at the request of its owners for the 100th anniversary of its building (also the 150th anniversary of the opening of the original ELR from Bury to Rawtenstall).

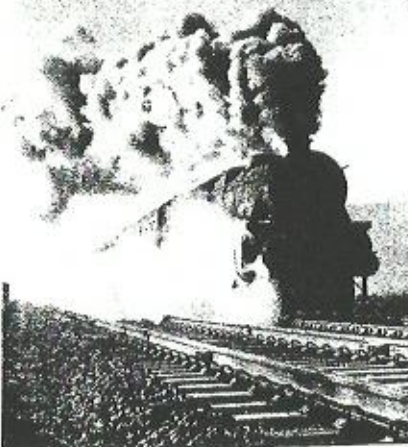
Being a Victorian loco it had been used in a number of lucrative period film contracts. In its last filming on the NYMR, to make the loco look mid-European and less British, the film makers had disguised the ornate L&Y livery with something akin to carpet tape. The removal of this took off the paintwork, lining and lettering back to bare metal. I looked at it and thought "dear mother, it's a bugger!"

Had they used masking tape it would have created no more than an hours work to remove, with minimal damage to the L&Y livery. As it was it took 4 days, using heat applied from a propane torch and teasing the tape off with fingernails. After that the adhesive required dissolving and removing from the surface using cellulose thinner - another couple of days!

The film crew had said that all it needed was the use of a hair dryer! Now I know that films are fantasy but just what sort of fairies do they think we steam men are? February is not the time of year to be tackling jobs of this sort, but the loco was needed for a gala at the end of the month and so it had to be done. Dark mornings, early evenings, cold and

damp weather inhibit progress, besides making the blood and enthusiasm run thin.

About this time Ian Storey asked about the possibility of doing the support coach, but I espied in the 'Steam Beano' that G.S. was to participate at the 150th anniversary celebration of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, whose first president was G.S. - the great man himself. The loco would then work a



schoolchildren's special down the ECML to the National Railway Museum at York.

A fortnight before this the loco would work a train from Preston - Newcastle for positioning. A couple of trips to savour! Ian agreed, we'd do the engine instead.

There was no time to be lost. The loco had not seen a paintbrush since its last overhaul in '91. After seasons on preserved lines, a number of seasons on the WHR, and BR steam specials the paintwork was decidedly weary to say the least. The Class 40 group offered to take on the coach and knowing their competence with their locos the offer was immediately accepted.

A respectable intermediate repaint required a thorough washing down and degreasing then sanding down and washing down again. Make good areas with filler, undercoat, gloss and a final coat of varnish after application of transfers, lining out etc. In one paragraph it looks simple enough but the job took over 4 weeks, mainly due to short, cold and damp days.

In spite of my efforts on the paint side and Ian and his merry band on the mechanical, and the fitting of spark arresting grills in the smokebox the 2 trips were cancelled because of fire risk - BUGGER! Still, G.S. looked and performed well on its season on the WHR.

With 2 engines completed for their target date I thought it would be time to sit back and take stock, and perhaps progress the coaches on the NSR, when I had a phone call from Tony Moseley at the Railway Age. Their painter would be on holiday. Could I give them a hand while he was away.

The new franchisees would not allow a million pounds worth of loco to be standing idle when it should be out on the main line showing off its bright new shiny image. The result, 14 consecutive days work on a class 90015 out of Intercity and into Virgin livery. Also a rather tasty FO into GW livery for Riviera Travel.

Only a bit different a 7yr old Class 90. Flat sides, no substantial preparation. A good clean down and sand down, done for me in dry, clean conditions and warm spring weather to boot. Ah, bliss! What a way to earn a crust.

*Len*

*(Len has more of his exertions to recount. Look forward to Part 2 in the next issue of 'On Shed'.)*



## STEAM LOCOMOTIVES STEAL THE SPOTLIGHT

This extract from the 'Smithsonian Magazine' (October 95) was published in on the Smithsonian website (<http://smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian/issues95/oct95/railroad.html>)

**Photographer O. Winston Link documented the final days of steam engines on the Norfolk and Western Railway, the last main line to use them.**

In January 1955, when photographer O. Winston Link hurried through a commercial assignment so that he could go see Norfolk and Western Train No. 2 on its run from Roanoke to New York, two durable pieces of American technology were nearing the end of the line.

Steam engines had been replaced by diesels on every main railroad line but the N&W. And the cumbersome large-format camera was being supplanted by the compact 35mm-type and the "candid" photographs that it made possible. A train buff since childhood, Link spent the next five years making 2,400 photographs—each meticulously planned and composed on his big cameras—to document the final days of steam.

This monumental effort by Link can be seen in *'The Last Steam Railroad in America'*, with text by Thomas Garver, published by Harry N. Abrams.

Link, who quickly won the support of N&W president R. H. Smith, recalls: "I never knew what word he passed down the line, but it seemed to me that he gave me 2,300 miles of track, 450 steam locomotives and all the employees of the N&W to help me get the job done." His most spectacular photographs—technical masterpieces—were made at night. "I can't move the sun—and it's always in the wrong place—and I can't even move the tracks, so I had to create my own environment through lighting." After studying the site, Link would spend hours in the darkness strategically placing flashbulbs to illuminate every relevant detail. With such elaborate setups, he usually could make only one shot—an image of power frozen in time.

Today, at 80, Link has outlived the age of steam, but in Thomas Garver's words, "He photographed America as he wished it to forever remain."

## PORTRAIT OF THE PAST

A review of O. Winston Link's book *'The Last Steam Railroad in America'* reprinted from *'The Roanoke Times'*, Thursday, November 30, 1996. (published on the Internet at <http://www.cccyclery.com/owlinkbg.htm>)

The book represents the light at the end of a long tunnel in which Link's life had been stalled in recent years. He's battled ill health, including heart bypass surgery, cataracts and failing knees. And then there's the stress of a bitter divorce from his second wife, Conchita Mendoza.

This summer, Mendoza was indicted in Westchester County, N. Y., for grand larceny in the disappearance of 1,400 of Link's prints, valued at more than \$1 million.

But Link has weathered it all. He remains basically soft-spoken and easy-going, though he doesn't mind playing the cantankerous old man from time to time, and he's not above the occasional four-letter word.

Some 40 years after he took his famous photos, he still is not tired to talking about them. There is a passion in his voice, and a gentle reverence for the people and the culture he captured forever in those pictures.

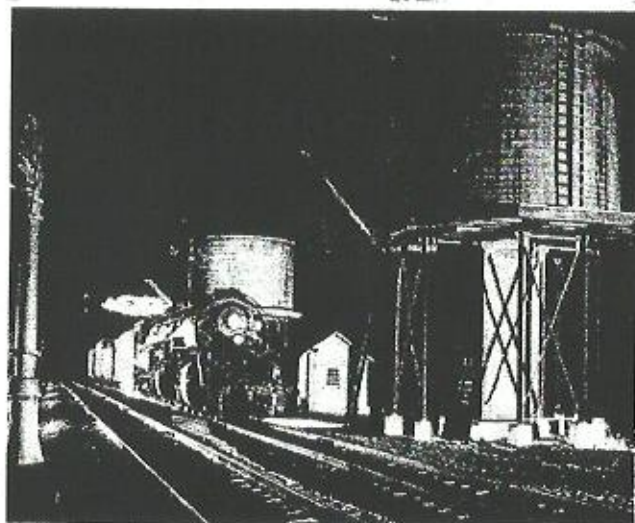
His success has been a long time reaching the station; Link's train photos weren't really discovered by the art world until 13 years ago. But then, fame is not what he was after anyway. "I never expected that. I didn't aim for that. All I wanted was to get some nice pictures of trains at night". But when Link got to Virginia he found much more than trains. An entire culture was built against the tracks from Shaffer's Crossing down every line of the railroad. It was a dying bit of Americana.

"I found that when I got there", he said recently from his home in New York.; "it was a great American portrait, of kind and decent and gentle people."

This latest book, more than his first one *'Steam, Steel and Stars'*, focuses on the people as much as the trains themselves. Among the 127 illustrations are many portraits of everyone from passengers and conductors to engineers and the announcer at the Roanoke passenger station.

*'The Last Steam Railroad in America'* covers the Norfolk division, the tiny Abingdon Branch, and downtown Roanoke and Shaffer's Crossing, where Link started his whole project. Between the two books, he's now covered every part of the N & W (now part of the Norfolk Southern system).

Unlike *'Steam, Steel and Stars'* the new book contains daytime pictures and color plates. Link took more than 2,000 pictures of the N & W but he said, "this is the cream of it."



A superb night study, typical of Link's work on the Norfolk & Western.



## SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS

If we're all unique, all different -  
And some say the fact is plain -  
Can anyone tell me why it is  
That, whenever you get on a train,  
You meet the same predictable types  
Over and over again?

It could just be coincidence,  
But I can't believe it, so  
I'm working on a theory that  
Some British Rail P.R.O.  
Actually hires these archetypes  
To maintain the status quo.

You've all seen the sort I'm talking about:  
The Scotsman, unconscious at last,  
Surrounded by empty McEwans cans;  
The frail lady - ex-first-class -  
Who nods at the green good manners  
Of the English fields that pass.

There's the beauty who sits by the window and  
reads;  
But who never will catch your eye,  
The man who fidgets and will unloose  
Banalities, by and by;  
And the lady who's checked with *everyone*,  
twice,  
That this train *will* stop at Rye.

There's the business man: two types are found -  
The one with inch-thick piles  
Of photostats and export bills  
Who scribbles and ticks and files;  
And the one who's asleep as he hits the seat  
And snores for the next eighty miles.

There's the eater who's trying terribly hard  
To eat without making a mess;  
To masticate politely - you  
Can see he's in distress  
And the eyes of the carriage are all upon  
His vast French sandwich . . . with cress . . .

There's always an elderly couple, arm  
In arm, across the aisle;  
He provides the compulsory struck-match  
smell,  
She is silent for mile after mile;  
He smokes a pipe, has a rolled plastic mac,  
A thermos and a smile.

There's the impresser, usually a man,  
Pretending to read Solzhenitsyn  
Or something else intellectual  
With Greek and Latin bits in;  
But the cover, you'll note, is very wide  
So that Asterix just fits in.

There's the child, all curls and plastic pants  
Who, tired of counting her toes  
And colouring purple cows and sheep,  
Turns her mother a rich shade of rose  
By pointing out to the carriage at large:  
'That man's got a pimply nose!'

There's the mental dwarf with the personal  
stereo  
Used most *impersonally*,  
Which fills the air with the mad despair  
Of a trapped, soprano bee;  
A kind of prolonged but effective do-it-  
Yourself lobotomy.

There's the crossword doer who fills in *The  
Times*  
In five and a half minutes flat;  
When he goes to the loo he leaves it behind  
And when you look at it under his hat,  
He's filled it with Zixxov and Qwerdip and  
Sproo,  
And clever words like that.

And which type are you? I'd hazard a guess  
The cool beauty will get the most votes;  
Are you sure you don't recognize yourself  
In the other sheep or goats?  
Me? Oh, I'm the one with the little brown book  
Furtively making notes.

*Nigel Forde*



LMR Jubilee 4-6-0 5741 'Leinster' coasts towards Euston with a clean exhaust and no waste steam. The assorted stock with a clean Crimson & Cream livery suggests a date in the fifties.  
(British Railways)

## HAROLD HILL

Harold Hill was a man of the mid-Twentieth Century and representative of a career path and interests which will pass into history as typical of that period. His early life, and I know of it only from his articles in *The SE Magazine*, was not without the harshness of the thirties (his father was a "village Bobby" in north Cheshire). He took an apprenticeship in a major manufacturing plant, and afterwards went to sea for a while. He spent some time in Africa and then returned to work in industry at home. This was relatively unremarkable and yet distinctive of the time.

Harold once told me a story about his musical interest which starred a couple of personalities still renowned, but representative of an era now passed. Whilst at sea he arrived in downtown New York to stay at an Officers Club, located in the upper storeys of an hotel. Waiting for the elevator, he was surprised when the doors opened and trumpet-player Harry James, one of his musical idols, stepped out. Too surprised to say or do anything at the time, Harold never forgot the meeting. Harry James was still (Harold confided) married to Betty Grable at the time.

Harold was a character himself and we will miss him.

C.S.



## AMTRAK EXPERIENCE

(Chris Simon, the 8E's roving reporter, presents his 'Letter from America')

In September 1997, Mary & I were on holiday in California and able to sample travel on US trains. These are some of my reflections.

Our base was Carpinteria, a seaside town, south of Santa Barbara, where a new station (unmanned) opened in July. It stands on what maps describe as the Southern Pacific Railroad. Our plan was to return from a long weekend in San Francisco by train to Carpinteria. In the event, we did make the journey, not so much by train as by Amtrak, for despite there being a through route and passing trains, the only convenient timing on services which served Carpinteria was by the San Joaquin.

This involves bus transfers at both ends (there are no mainline stations in SF). The analogy is taking a train from Edinburgh to get to Hartford, but having to take a coach from Edinburgh to Dunfermline then a train to Leeds, with a coach connection over the M62 to Hartford with a call at Warrington en route.

The journey from Emeryville (the station serving SF) to Bakersfield (from where we had the long coach connection) was aboard double-deck, comfortable and well-appointed rolling stock. Joining the train was a like boarding a double-deck Blackpool tram, but having climbed the stairs, the layout was very similar to a BR Mark III. There

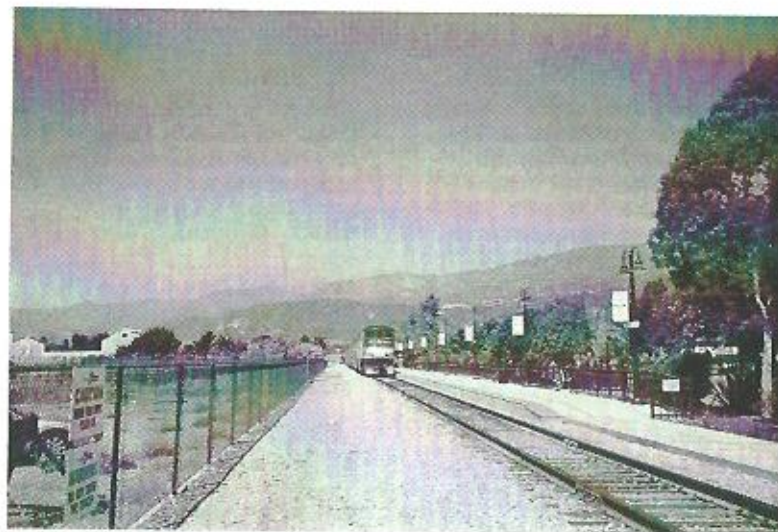
was adequate catering and we had an excellent view.

The journey was considerably longer than Edinburgh-Leeds, but the train travelled so slowly and stopped for passing so often, that it seemed to compete for length with the journey from Heathrow. Given the circuitous route and the slow progress, the experience was like BR on a Sunday!

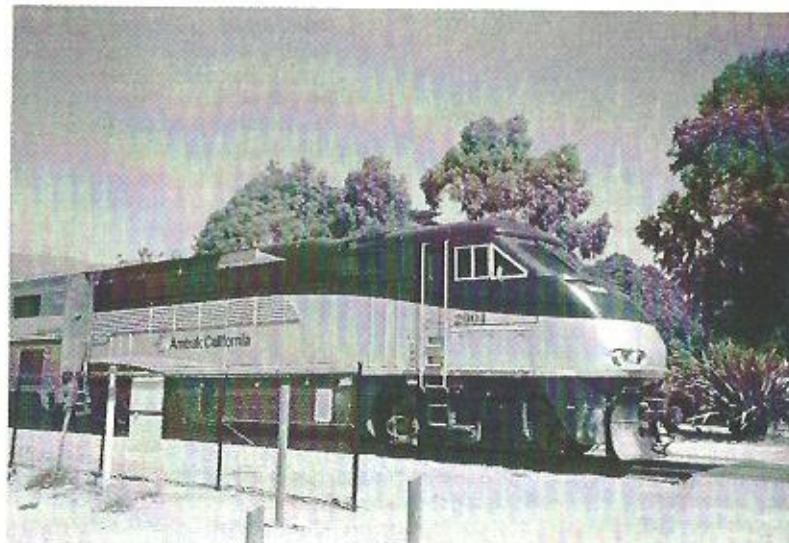
There was some interest in scenery and observing fellow-passengers, but to me the railway scene was absorbing. Freight is still very much alive. Every factory seemed to have rail connection; tankers, coal, motor car transporters and the ubiquitous (containers stacked 2-high) are very much in evidence.

We passed Fresno where the yard was as bustling as Basford Hall in the fifties, but with modern image rolling-stock. Santa Fe, Burlington Northern, Union Pacific and other "house-styles" splash the whole thing with colour. I wondered how traction units are accounted for, let alone rolling-stock, as they seem to be abandoned at remote locations. Our train was controlled by radio, with the Engineer and the Conductors (one per carriage) being in constant contact.

Our first journey came to a pleasant conclusion, the frustrations of the



The new station at Carpinteria (Ca) opened July 1997. A single platform with minimum facilities. Opportunities to encourage commuters to nearby Santa Barbara seem to have been missed. Note the staggered rail-joints.



Close up view of a double height power unit, with 1990's styling. No technical details are available, but the presence of older Amtrak diesels in support on many trains seems to indicate teething problems. Tracksides posts indicate the presence of a trans-continental fibre-optic cable.



journey being smoothed by a friendly Amtrak Thruway Coach driver, who invited me to sit beside him so that he could expand his knowledge of England. His grandfather was an Engineer with the Pennsylvania RR, he remembered going to the train station as a boy to see him go by: "He always threw down a nickel, and said be good!" Don Wright now has a picture of Foxcote Manor to put up in his den.

Living close to the railroad in our apartment gave the opportunity to train-watch. The passenger trains soon become commonplace, but it is difficult to ignore the freight trains. Sometimes with four units at the head, with different liveries, the hundred or so container-length trains seem interminable. The haunting whistle (these days a horn) suggests Glenn Miller arrangements, though the 01:35 and 03:35 northbound were just slightly disturbing to sleep patterns.

Problems with the crossing gates led to the arrival of vis-vests from time-to-time. One interesting observation was that whether gates were open or not, school buses always made a halt before crossing the track.

*We look forward to reading more of Chris & Mary Simon's USA adventures in the next issue of this magazine. Does anyone else have a story to tell? The editor or any committee member will be pleased to receive contributions for issue 45. (It would be WONDERFUL if, like Chris, you were able to supply your contribution on a floppy PC disk, suitably word processed. Don't let the lack of PC facilities prevent you from producing your masterpiece however.)*

The second trip we made was to San Diego, which was by train throughout over AT&SFRR metals and gave the opportunity to see Los Angeles Union Station, Mission Tower, Mission stations and a lot of coastal scenery. The trip suffered from poor timekeeping, though one leg was twenty minutes early into LA where crews were relieved and the train reversed. This experience might be covered in a further article.

So what is the conclusion about Amtrak travel?

- Trains are slow and unpunctual
- Stations are often well out of town and have minimal facilities.
- It is not easy to get information on train travel.
- Trains are unfashionable, regarded as a poor man's facility, but they are cheap.

Reluctantly, I would advise would-be visitors to take a train ride for the experience, but not to base a holiday around their use.

CHRIS SIMON

## THE "ROBERT" PROJECT

Work is progressing steadily to date. The current status is as follows:

### BOILER

This has been removed from the frames. The main steam pipe, 'J' pipe and middle longitudinal stay have been removed to permit access inside. We are currently needle gunning the whole external surface, following up with two coats of red oxide primer.

### FRAMES

The frames have been stripped of axleboxes, pistons valves and all motion. The handbrake mechanism and pole reversing lever have also been removed.

One of the hardest jobs to date was the removal of the foot framing plates (the bits you walk on around the loco). In the loco's days at the NCB someone thought it a good idea to weld the entire foot framing to the main frames and support brackets. This was done with 1" long welds every 6" over the entire edges of the plates! It has proved to be very hard work to free each plate with our burning gear. However there now remains only about 4ft to remove. Following this we are needle gunning the frames both inside and out, and applying the red oxide primer.

When we removed the smokebox floorplates we found the cylinder casting below to be buried in water soaked piles of rust. This has been removed, the casting being needle gunned, cleaned and primed.

### SMOKEBOX

This is irreparable and requires a complete replacement of sideplates, frontplate door rings and internal wear

plates. The door itself had been remade prior to our takeover of the project. Work on the smokebox will have to take a back seat at the moment as we must concentrate on the boiler and frames.

### WHEELS

These have been removed and are currently standing alongside the frames. The tyres will do but would be replaced if a lottery grant were available. *(We are currently no nearer obtaining a lottery grant, and are looking at extending the loan period to enhance our chances.)* One journal has been badly scored sometime in the past and will require returning.

The rest of the component parts are mostly stored in our CCT van and are too vast to detail. Suffice it to say that few parts are missing. The CCT itself is in need of body repair but at the moment time and money do not permit this. It is however watertight, has a very dry interior and is securely locked.

### WORKSHOP

We have taken possession of a small workshop (formerly the work's rat catcher's store) under Midge bridge. This has electric lighting, powerpoints, work bench and a vice. This has proven to be a boon and is for our sole use.

### AMENITY

We have also been fortunate enough to take possession of the old volunteer's amenity. This is a solid brick building with kitchen, running water and electricity. Acquisition of this has made meal breaks more civilised. Unfortunately, over the last few weeks, a progressively worsening roof leak has developed. Because we see this building as a key asset we donated a whole day



to repairs at a cost of £10 for materials. If this proves successful it will have been time and money well spent.

#### ACQUISITIONS

Since commencing the project we have acquired the following:

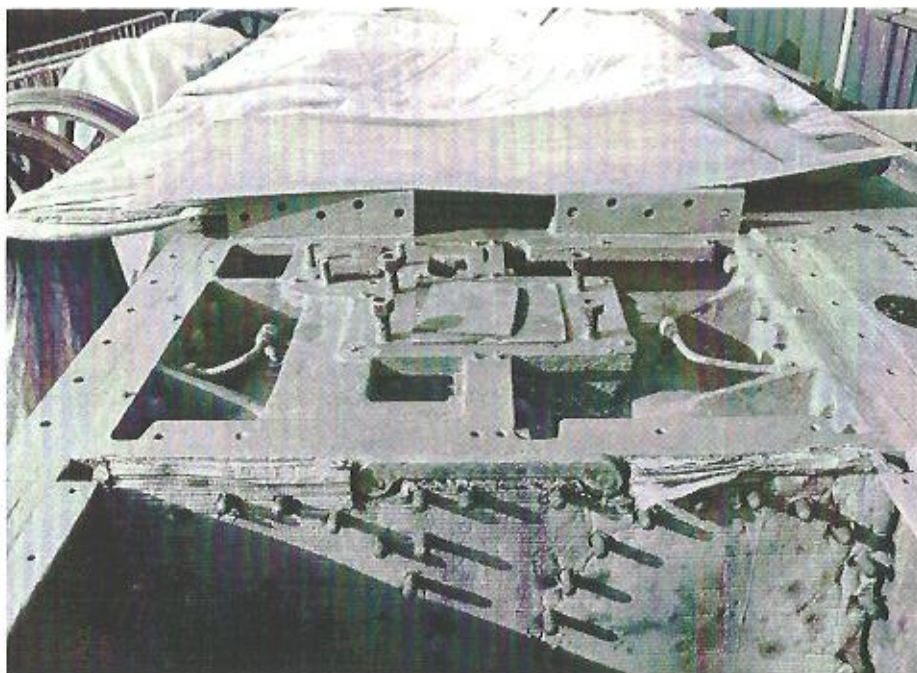
- A full set of burning gear with truck
- Two needle guns
- Air line (compressor made available through the generosity of Pete Waterman)
- One sight feed lubricator body (to replace scrap item)

- Two reproduction brass works plates for the loco
- Two original steel BR registration plates (as fitted to Austerities)
- One wheelbarrow
- A variety of hand tools

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have assisted, whether it be by labour, donations or buying a lottery number at each club night.

Thank you all

**Tom Walton**



ROBERT's cylinder block after cleaning and painting. (Steve Worrall)



ROBERT photo update. Tom Walton heating the steam pipe prior to cooling, to release it.  
(Photo : Steve Worrall)





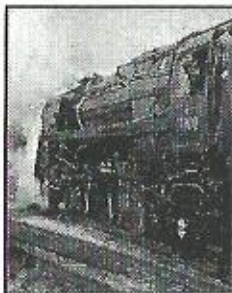




# ON LINE

## The Northwich 8E Association's Homepage

- About the Association
- The 'ROBERT' Project
- Meetings & Events
- Photo Gallery
- Links to Other Sites



For more details (e-mail here)

*This page is the 8E Association's 'homepage' on the WEB.*

*The two following pages are a sample of our e-zine webpages.*

*Whilst monochrome paper copies do not do justice to webpages, which are designed for high resolution colour viewing, hopefully you can still get a flavour of 'On Line' from these samples.*

## about the 8E Association

The 8E Association was formed by a group of local railway enthusiasts who had become involved in servicing the steam locomotives stabled at Northwich prior to the 1980 'Rocket 150' celebrations at Rainhill. The same group continued to service the visiting locos at Northwich MPD and decided in 1981 to form the association, taking its name from the shedcode (8E) of the former Northwich steam depot.

Over the years many locos were '8E serviced' including Lord Nelson, Duchess of Hamilton, Leander, Evening Star, Clan Line, Princess Elizabeth, King George V and Flying Scotsman.

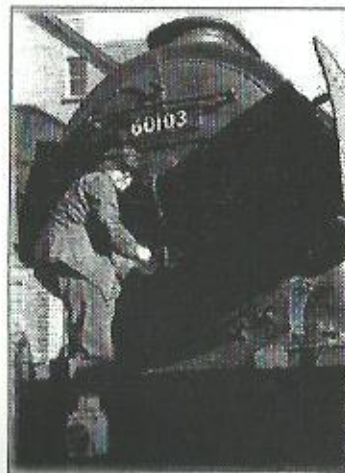
Following the closure of Northwich MPD (Nov 1984) servicing activities continued at Chester, followed by Crewe Heritage Centre from 1987. Although no longer servicing main line steam locos as a group, the 8E remains closely linked to Crewe Heritage Centre and has recently been asked by them to undertake the restoration of an ex-NCB 'Austerity' tank engine - Robert. This is likely to take several years and will remain an 8E project.



Our membership takes a wide ranging interest in railways past & present - which is reflected in other aspects of our activities. A lively programme of regular evening fixtures is promoted at two venues when guest speakers from B.R. and the preservation movement address the group, often with slides and films of both current and archive material.

Our membership includes both enthusiasts and railwaymen - some of whom are involved in the preservation scene at Llangollen (see photos above & left showing Flying Scotsman at Llangollen with 8E member Tom Walton), East Lancs, Butterley, Severn Valley etc. Members receive a magazine twice a year and members' notes every two months. Some wish to become involved with our projects, others merely wish to spend a pleasant evening in convivial company at our monthly meetings.

Meetings are held at Northwich (Lion & Railway Hotel) at 7:45pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month - excluding July & Aug. Warrington (St.Hilda's Clubroom, Slater St., Latchford) at 7:45pm. on the last Friday of alternate months (Jan, March, May etc.). If you live locally why not come along and see what we are all about? Distant members are very welcome too!



For more details (e-mail here)

← Return to 8E Homepage



## monthly meetings

### NORTHWICH MEETINGS

Monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (excepting July & August) at the 'Lion & Railway' Hotel, Northwich (opposite the railway station). The meetings start at 7.30pm and embrace a variety of railway related topics.

#### Tues 13th January 1998

LESLIE OPPITZ - 'Historic Trams & Trains of Cheshire & Shropshire'

Slides / AV show on historic / closed rail systems in these two counties.

#### Tues 10th February 1998

JOHN MASSEY - (Shropshire Railway Soc.)

Slideshow - rail scene (current) around Shrewsbury & railways of N.Wales (historic & current).

#### Tues 10th March 1998

LEN POINTON - 'PC Steam Simulation'

Drive the 1950's Midday Scot from the keyboard of a PC

#### Tues 14th April 1998

this fixture to be announced shortly

watch this space for details of this meeting



### WARRINGTON MEETINGS

Meetings are normally held on the last Friday of alternate months at the St. Hilda's clubroom, Slater St., Latchford (off the A50 Knutsford Rd). The meetings start at 7.45pm.

#### Fri 30th January 1998

MIKE LENZ - 'Video Evening'

An evening of North American railroad video from his extensive collection.

#### Friday 27th March 1998

PETER CROCKETT & BRIAN PROCTOR

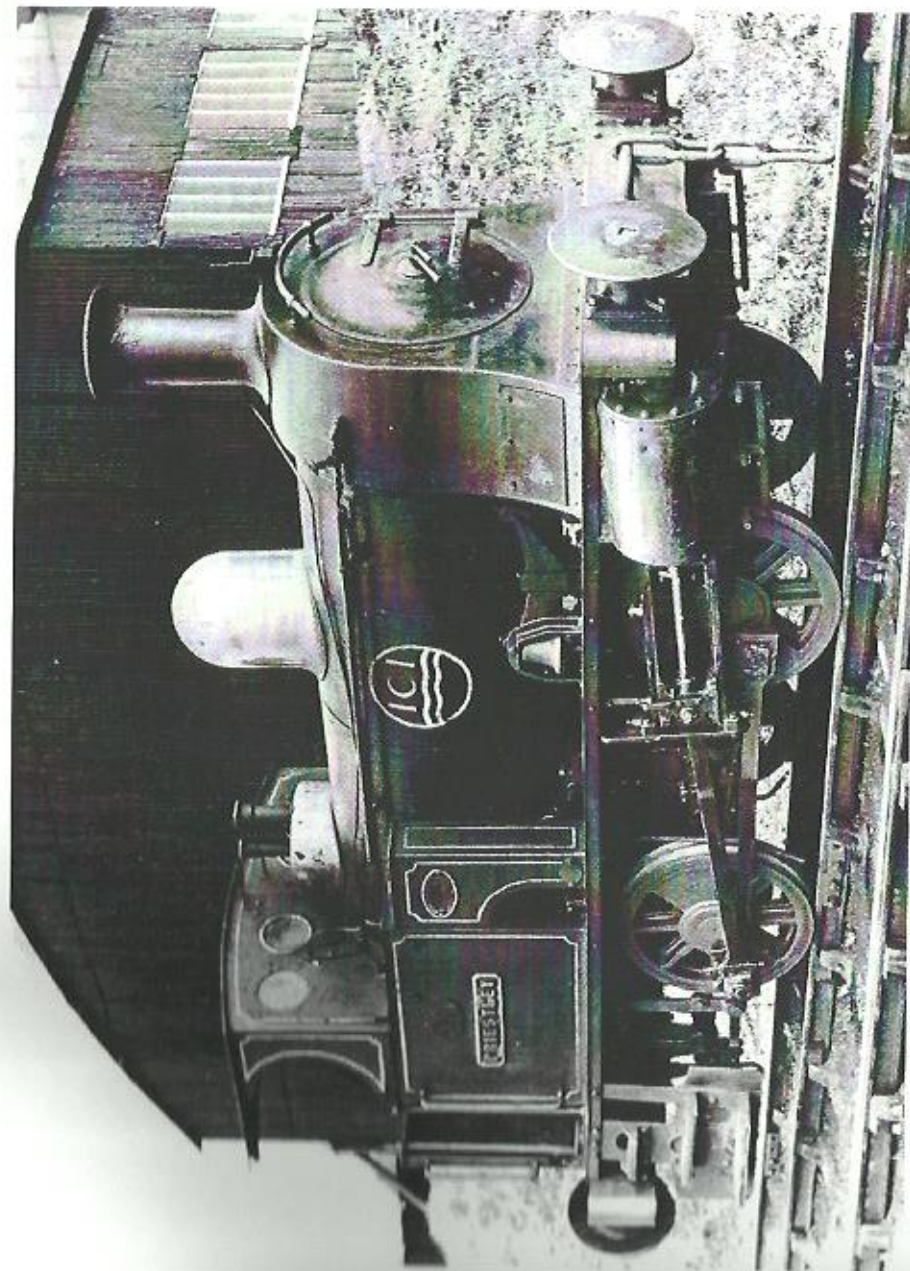
An AV show depicting the restoration of Manchester Central Station as 'G-Mex' & insights into the proposed restoration of the Great Northern Goods Warehouse nearby.

n.b. this is a joint meeting with the North West branch of the Great Western Society.



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### NORTHWICH INDUSTRIAL LOCOMOTIVES - No. 2







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