

# OLDE WHEELS

The Quarterly Magazine of the Rushden Historical Transport Society

SUMMER 2025

ISSUE 271



Free to members



RHTS.CO.UK



Non-members £1

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Front Image : WD72222 ready for Service - Sept 2025

All submissions for the next issue should reach the editor ([editor@rhts.co.uk](mailto:editor@rhts.co.uk)) by 31st December 2025. Whilst every effort will be made to include all articles received in Olde Wheels they may not appear straight away or, if space is limited, we are always pleased to accept members' photographs for publication.

**\*\* CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER NOT NECESSARILY THE VIEWS OF TRUSTEES OR THE EDITOR\*\***

# 2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND BAR COMMITTEE

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Jo Greenaway, Marisa Fereday

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES – OCTOBER 2025

*This report marks the end of the financial year for the existing RHTS charity and will be presented to at the Inaugural Annual General Meeting of RHTS as a CIO on October 29th 2025.*

On October 1st, the society came to a significant milestone when we changed to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Since this has been a total transfer of all assets and liabilities then there should be no real outward change in how we continue to operate.

The assets of the society are now held by the incorporated charity and we will continue to be run by trustees and committees and working parties. The CIO structure gives more protection to the trustees and we are now running under the CIO constitution as approved by the membership last year.

The main delay in converting to CIO structure was the need to obtain new bank accounts since the existing bank would not open new accounts for charities. New bank accounts have now been set up and over the next few months all financial activities will be transferred.

When the final accounts for the old RHTS have been finalised, a meeting will be called for their approval and the final closure of the old charity. This whole procedure has been undertaken using the guidelines of the Charity Commission.

The change to CIO structure also gives us the opportunity to assess the existing committees etc and to draw up new terms of reference more appropriate to how the society now operates and aspires to operate.

As mentioned the inaugural AGM for the CIO is on Wednesday October 29th and is primarily to elect new trustees. Also there are some amendments to the CIO constitution which need approval since there have been some changes and also some resolutions to continue the existing committees etc until new terms of reference have been decided. The latter actions will all need approval by the membership and suggestions are welcomed. Also updates for each area of activity will also be given and discussions will be welcomed.

At this important point in the history of the society where the Objects of the CIO constitution have been updated from the old society, again all approved by the membership, then some assessments on how these are being achieved are appropriate.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the degree of success in achieving the Objects has to be based on the availability of limited primarily financial resources that the society has been able to generate or obtain from other sources and not some bottomless pit of funds!

The first Object is 'the development of an establishment based on the history and operation of primarily rail and road transport. This is the key objective and has largely been well achieved over the last 40 years and something to be quite proud of.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES – OCTOBER 2025 continued**

The second is 'to establish an operational heritage railway based on the original railway line between Higham Ferrers and Wellingborough'. As we know the chances of getting west to Wellingborough are virtually non-existent now but the line is successfully established part way to Higham Ferrers. Plans are in hand for further developments but funding is the key factor. Maintenance of old rolling stock is an expensive activity when allocating funds.

The third is 'to acquire and maintain the associated rolling stock for the heritage railway' and again this has been achieved to enable the railway to operate successfully. The Pacer train is our main running unit but recently the WD Diesel has been repaired and now gives the society another option for public rides. Assessments are in hand to rationalise old stock which is not used and to acquire more appropriate rolling stock.

The fourth is 'to advance the involvement and education of the public in the history of transport'. A very wide objective, but very well achieved with the diverse offer of infrastructure, artefacts and the museum. The society is well established as a community facility and now has many visitors each year coming to visit.

The fifth is 'to establish and maintain a museum for artefacts of transport of historical interest'. The society has well achieved this object with the accredited museum with excellent exhibits plus a wide range of larger artefacts located across the site.

The sixth and final is 'to obtain larger transport artefacts and vehicles for public exhibition and education'. This has been achieved to a limited extent but will always be on a smaller scale due to availability of space for storage and display. We have a small range of vehicles and recently had the kind donation of an additional Scammell unit. Our 605 Low Decker bus is very close to being fully road worthy but needs a new set of tyres first.

So overall one can say that the society in the last 40 years has been really very successful in achieving its objectives.

Looking at the last financial year which has just ended, then the indications are that we are making a small surplus. This is allowing for increased costs all round plus considerable expenditure on maintenance of our old infrastructure and assets. Also the spending power of many of our visitors is less than the previous year.

As last year although we have had lots of activities the society overheads are now very significant particularly with insurance, utility charges and wages, and so we must continue our fundraising and find some new ideas to raise more revenue.

Nonetheless, I would like to thank the trustees, staff and the many volunteers who have contributed to the success of the last year.

In applying for grants the society was unsuccessful for the HLF bid for heating in the shed. Probably not enough to do with 'heritage' was the main comment. We are now looking at other arrangements. Also through NNC the previous government 'Levelling Up' had notionally awarded a large grant for new railway workshops etc. Unfortunately the incoming government did not honour the award which was very disappointing.

However a grant application to Mick George was successful and a new floor has been laid in the shed lower area which has eliminated all previous problems of water ingress and unevenness.

The shed toilets have also now been fully completed following the extra funding from Snowdon Homes who filled the shortfall from the original North Northants Council grant.

The toilets and shed floor were officially opened by Councillor Gill Mercer the mayor of Rushden Town Council and Councillor Lora Lawman the chairman of North Northants Council.

It is probable that future major investments will need some grant input. However, other applications are now in hand for smaller pieces of equipment and improvements.

The society has been able to organise a wide range of fund raising events during the last year with events taking place in the station bar, the railway, buffet carriage and across the site. Plus openings of the museum and model railway coach.

We have been able to establish a good community offer and we are acknowledged as a significant community asset in Rushden.

One special event organised by the bar committee was the 40th anniversary of the opening the station real ale bar. In itself evidence of the major achievements since the society started.

The Pacer Trains continue to be a very cost effective way of fundraising for the railway when themed events or driver experiences have been organised. Refurbishing the steam engine Edmundsons was included in the sadly lost government grant but has not been forgotten.

The Classic Car Show has again proven to be a very good fund raiser and was very well attended. Since donations are required for admission the takings are down somewhat but reflects the reduced cash in people's pockets.

A good range of events has taken place in the shed but the lack of heating severely limits activities during the colder weather, but this latter problem is now being looked at by a working party.

We are able to claim Gift Aid on some of the car show donations and are also now fully up to date with claims for other member donations.

Just a reminder that any donation from a member who has ticked the Gift Aid box is increased by 25% when we claim the Gift Aid. Not a bad investment and donations are always very welcome!

The car show had over 100 volunteers without which it would not be possible to organise. We are endeavouring to organise a more formal Events Group in order to create and coordinate a pool of volunteers who are able to assist at the different events but also for the construction and maintenance across the site.

Volunteers are also required for operating the railway. We need drivers, conductors, ticket collectors and responsible officers. Come down and see what is involved. Full training is given for each of the positions. You also get lots of free rides on the train!

Come down to the Station on a Wednesday or Saturday to have a look around and see how to volunteer.

Sadly this year we have lost several members which included two key members who had made significant contributions over many years. These were Richard Woodcock a founder member of the society and initial visionary and Robin West whose superb carpentry and constructions can be seen across the site. We extend our sympathy to the families of all the members who are no longer with us.

Going forward with the wide range of activities that we offer then communications and teamwork are essential. Please talk to us with your suggestions or contributions about the way forward in order to make the society sustainable.

Finally just to repeat a very big thank you to everyone who has helped to make the society a success during the last year including trustees, members of staff and all volunteers.

Please continue to help in sustaining the society and bringing to the public of all ages such a wide range of activities and experiences.

*With best wishes,*

*Richard Lewis*

for the trustees.

06 10 2025



# Editor Notes

I'd noticed that some back issues were missing from the website, and I still have them on file if needed (apparently there was an issue with the website before and had to be rebuilt). I spoke to Catharine and Richard, offering myself up as a guest editor, with a view to possibly coming back full-time. (I was editor and designer back in 2017-2018). Cath had broken her elbow and moved away, some of the time, to Northumberland and been asking for volunteers to help with the magazine for as long as I've known her (8 years?).

I found out that it is printed in-house now, and switched over to new software, so it's a learning curve for us all! I'd been away from the society for many years, due to work and family commitments, but found that it was a good time now to try a comeback! It seems technology has moved on, as well as some people (sadly some have passed away as well). I was also sad to hear that the enamel signs were stolen, a Class I carriage lost to arson, and that Edmundsons is expensive to get back into steam.

As well as Cath, I met up with and chatted to Jane in the museum, Ian in the model carriage and Phil on the Bristol bus. Had a wander round the Goods Shed and saw the new bar, and thankfully, a lot of enamel signs still safe! Love the lamp posts in there as well. I chatted to Annaliese in the bar, Marissa and Fez at the beer festival (good to see local ales, such as Phipps and Potbelly).

My kids enjoyed the model weekend and museum, a ride on the Pacer for the 200<sup>th</sup>, and free hot dogs for the bar and museum's 40<sup>th</sup> birthdays. We found the new cat, Thomas, a couple of times as well.

Lastly, I discovered that the bar is now open to the public, but members get a discount.

It's good to be back, and I've enjoyed coming along plus helping out with Olde Wheels once again! I'm hoping to make it along to Hed to the Shed, Halloween, the Christmas Craft Fair in the coming months and reporting back in the next issue.



*M. Castro-Garcia*

**Mark Castro-Garcia**  
Guest Editor and Designer

# DOUBLE OPENING CELEBRATION FOR RUSHDEN GOODS SHED

**The Rushden Historical Transport Society was able to arrange a double opening celebration of two new facilities in the Goods Shed on Saturday May 17th.**

The Society held a members evening with some 150 members present and celebrated the opening of new internal toilets and a new shed floor with representatives from North Northants Council, Rushden Town Council and Snowdon Homes cutting the ribbons. After the shed ceased use when the railway fully closed in the 1960's the goods shed was subsequently used by Northamptonshire County Council for use as a vehicle and materials storage depot. The society purchased the goods shed in 2018 and has made extensive improvements to bring the shed into being a key venue for society fund raising events and importantly for general hire by individuals, groups and commercial companies.

The Goods Shed only had outside toilets which were not suitable for many events and also the extensive use by large vehicles had rendered the car park surface in a rough and potentially dangerous condition. The Society was very pleased to receive a Recovery and Innovation grant from the North Northants Council following the Covid outbreak which was for the building of new indoor toilets and replacing the poor car park surface.

Whereas the car park was re surfaced very quickly, by the time that the toilet plans were drawn up and approved the cost of building materials had risen significantly and the grant was insufficient to complete the work. Fortunately, a local house building company, Snowdon Homes based in Higham Ferrers, generously sponsored the toilets and was able to supply the outstanding materials needed. The society was then able to use its own member volunteers' labour in order to complete the toilets.

The first opening celebration was for the new internal toilets. The society was very pleased to welcome the Chairman of North Northants Council Councillor Lora Lawman, NNC Councillor Barbara Jenny and Chris Jackson a director of Snowdon Homes to officially open the toilets. The president of RHTS John Sugars was also in attendance.

The chairman of the society, Richard Lewis, expressed his sincere thanks to NNC for the grant which has enabled major improvements to be made to the shed which is now much better suited for the wide range of activities which can be held. To complete the double opening celebrations the new shed floor was also officially opened.

The original heavyduty floor in the shed for use as a vehicle and materials storage depot was uneven and in spite of a special coating continued to suffer from the ingress of water.

The society was very pleased to receive a grant from the Mick George Community Fund and Grantscape in order to lay a new floor in the shed. The new 150mm thick screeded floor with damp proof membrane has produced an excellent smooth surface with no water ingress, made its use much safer and has made disabled access easier. This grant has removed all of the old floor problems.

The Society was very pleased to welcome the Mayor of Rushden, Councillor Gill Mercer with consort councillor Andy Mercer and the chairman of North Northants Council Councillor Lora Lawman, to perform the opening ceremony.

The chairman of the society, Richard Lewis, expressed his sincere thanks to Mick George and Grantscape for the grant which has transformed the shed floor and much enhanced the shed for potential users and events.

The shed is available for hire at essentially any time and the society can be contacted on **0300 302 3150** or email [venuehire@rhts.co.uk](mailto:venuehire@rhts.co.uk).

The shed is always open on Wednesdays and Saturdays when please call in and have a look.

Chairman Richard Lewis thanked the dignitaries for opening the new facilities and presented each with a small gift.

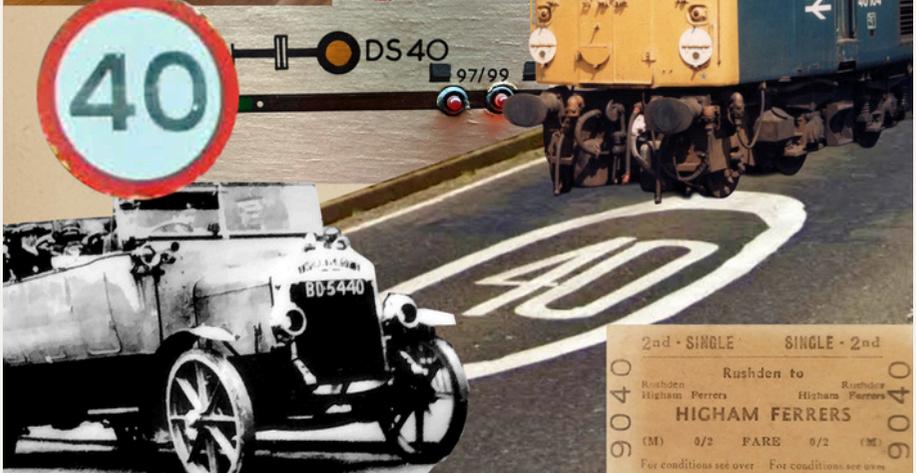
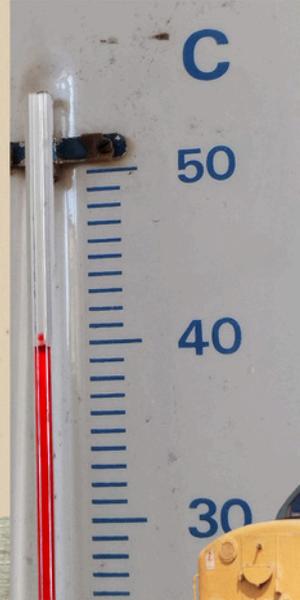
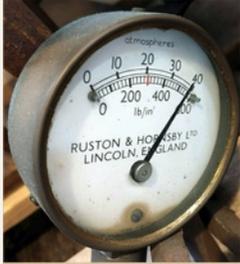


*Great Ale  
&  
Good  
Company*



*Cheers to Memories!*

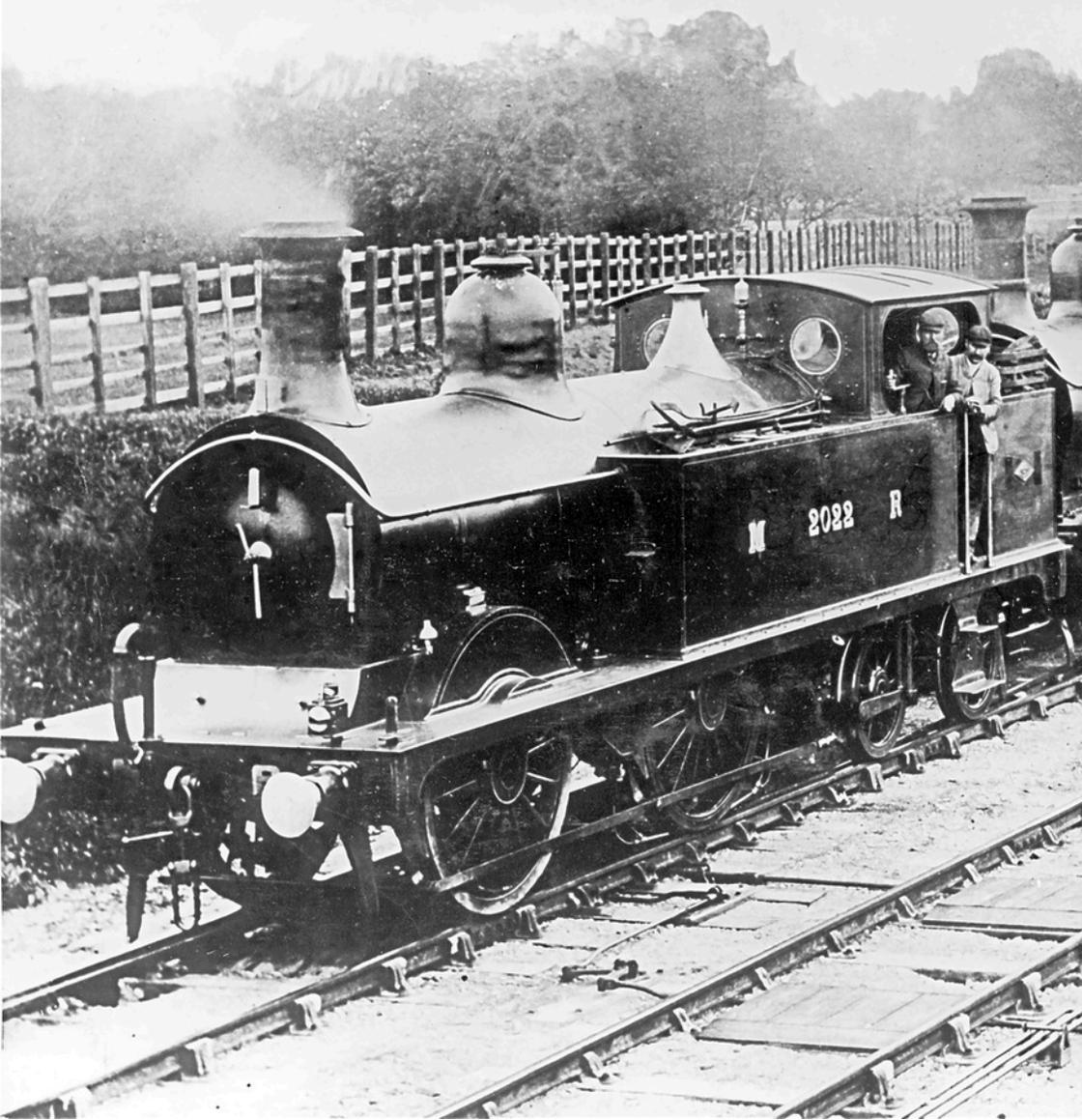


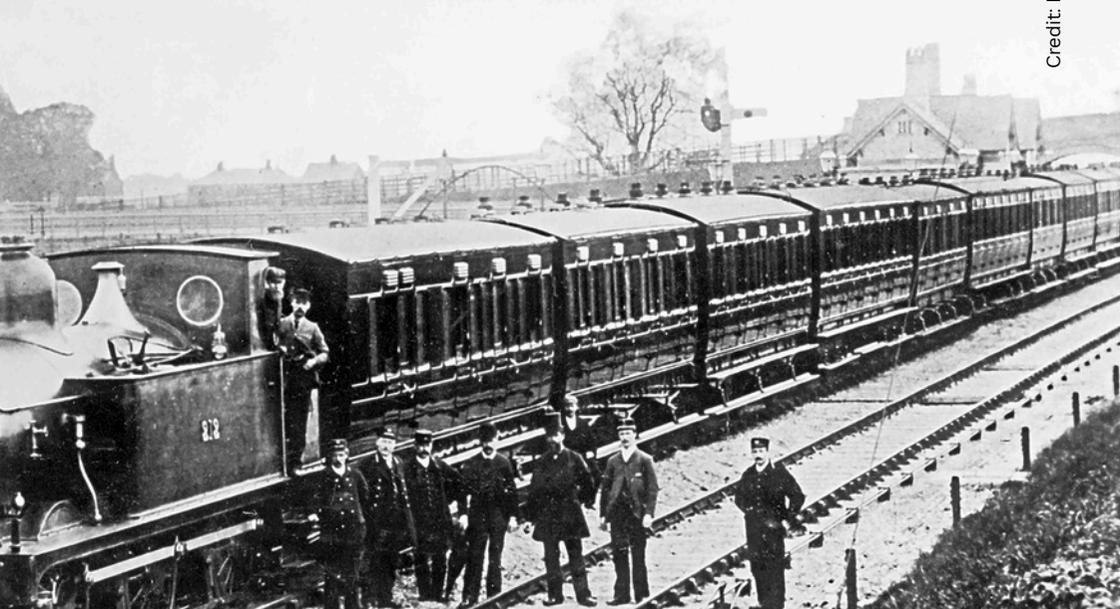


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The museum and the bar both turned 40, good turn out, lovely weather and the kids got free hot dogs! See how many museum artefacts you can spot on your next visit, which contain a "40"! You won't see a Class 40, but I added one for good measure!

# Day 1 of passenger services, 1894





The first passenger service on the Midland Railway's new Higham Ferrers branch ran on May 1, 1894, with the inaugural train departing at 7:45 a.m. Crowds gathered at stations, bridges, embankments, and even in trees to witness the event.

Two locomotives were used in double-heading\*:

- Johnson 0-6-0T No. 212 (driver: Mr. Alfred Glover, fireman: Mr. George Bollard)
- Johnson 0-4-4T No. 2022 (driver: Mr. Fred Seal, fireman: Mr. Sam James)



The train consisted of Clayton arc-roofed six-wheeled composite coaches (34 ft x 8 ft 6 in, 15 tons).

**Fares:** *Rushden to Wellingborough cost 4d; Rushden to Higham 1d; children could travel for ½d, with hundreds taking advantage of the special rate.*

Station staff: Mr. A. Roper was Station Master at Higham Ferrers and Mr. Henry Pitt at Rushden. Reports praised their calm and diligent conduct during the celebrations.

A photograph of the day, later provided by Mrs. G. Windsor of Wellingborough (daughter of driver Fred Seal), shows both engines and crews at the event.



\*The Midland's policy of building smaller locomotives often required double-heading, a practice that continued until the company was absorbed into the LMS in 1923.

# RAF HENLOW

RAF Henlow is a historic Royal Air Force station in Bedfordshire, established in 1917 as a military aircraft repair depot. Over its long history, it has played significant roles in aircraft maintenance, parachute testing, technical training, signals development, and military communications.

It is located between Bedford and Luton and officially opened in 1918, making it one of the oldest RAF stations still in operation. The airfield was built by MacAlpine during 1918. Four Belfast Hangars were built which are now listed buildings. (see below)



The RAF was only six weeks old when Lieutenant Colonel Robert Francis Stapleton-Cotton and a party of 40 airmen arrived from RAF Farnborough on 10 May 1918. The Lieutenant Colonel was to become the first CO of RAF Henlow in August 1918. Although still under construction, the Depot had achieved a limited output of Bristol Fighters and De Havilland aircraft.

In May 1920, RAF Henlow became the first parachute testing centre and was later joined by another parachute unit from RAF Northolt. Parachute testing was undertaken with Vimy aircraft and parachutists hanging off the wings and allowing the chute to deploy and enable them to drift back to the ground. After the First World War, Henlow was home to four aircraft squadrons; No 19 Squadron RAF, No 23 Squadron RAF, No 43 Squadron RAF and No 80 Squadron RAF. Between 1932 and 1933, Sir Frank Whittle was a student at the RAF technical College on the base. He later spent some time in charge of aero engine testing on the base before being sent to Cambridge.

During the Second World War Henlow was used to assemble the Hawker Hurricanes which had been built at the Hurricane factory operated by Canadian Car and Foundry in Fort William in, Ontario, Canada, under the leadership of Elsie MacGill. After test flying in Fort William, they were disassembled and sent to Henlow in shipping containers and reassembled. During Operation Quickforce in 1941, 100 fitters from the base were deployed onto carriers which were shipping Hurricane fighters to Malta. The finished Hurricanes were completed on the decks of the carriers and flown out to Malta. Over 1,000 Hurricanes (about 10% of the total) were built by Canadian Car and Foundry and shipped to Henlow. Henlow was also used as a repair base for many aircraft types under the direction of No. 13 Maintenance Unit.



The empty packing crates that the Hurricane aircraft were shipped in were used to make the original control tower (which has now been replaced by a more modern two-storey Portakabin type). The original tower and parts of the airfield were seen in several scenes in the 1969 war film 'The Battle of Britain

After the war a new role developed for the station, that of radio equipment calibration and signals development. A major RAF technical training college was also formed at Henlow in 1947. This was formed from the RAF School of Aeronautical Engineering, formerly at RAF Farnborough, and its purpose was to train cadets and engineering officers. The college was amalgamated with RAF College Cranwell in 1965. The RAF Officer Cadet Training Unit then moved in, but this also moved to Cranwell in 1980.

Further units were established at Henlow including the Parachute Test Unit, the Royal Air Force Technical College, the RAF Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) and the Officers' Command School & Intermediate Command & Staff Course. The base then hosted the RAF Signals Engineering Establishment and the Radio Engineering Unit, established in 1980.

The original list of RAF Stations for April 1918, Henlow counts among only five other stations which remain open as RAF stations today: Halton, Leuchars, Northolt, Waddington and Wittering. In September 2016, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced the planned closure of RAF Henlow, with a disposal date of 2020. This date has changed and the closure and disposal of the site would take place from 2026. However, a staged drawdown has commenced with flying activities halted in July 2020.

The Signals Museum housed at RAF Henlow closed at the end of June 2024 and led to the sad disposal of their exhibits to other museums and parties with an interest in the artefacts.

One of the artefacts that was housed by the museum was a National HRO Receiver, which was extensively used by the "Y" Service. The function of the "Y" Service was to monitor German radio messages, and these were passed on to Bletchley Park for decoding. Items from the museum have been sent back to their owners or passed on to other museums. However, some items are available for sale on the museum's website: [[www.signalsmuseum.uk](http://www.signalsmuseum.uk)]



Another item that will be for disposal in the near future is the Gate Guardian, a 1954 Hunter jet. The Hunter has been at Henlow for over 40 years. After the base has closed, the RAF Heritage department will try to find a suitable museum or group to gift the aircraft to.



The original closure date of the airfield was changed from 2019 to 2023. Parts of the airfield will be preserved as listed buildings, including the World War I Belfast Hangars and the Officers' Mess. The location of the site, in the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor, presents a major opportunity for redevelopment. There are plans for over 15,000 homes to be built on the site. With the new Universal Studios project coming to fruition, the future seems bright for the soon-to-be former RAF base.

*Philip Bettles & Catharine Young*

# MODEL WEEKEND 2025



I didn't use to be into model railways, but my kids are... I was captivated by a train puffing real smoke. Curious, I asked the exhibitor if it was incense. He smiled, then revealed it was a true working steam engine, showing me the hidden mechanism and explaining how it all works — absolutely fascinating! I was genuinely impressed, and wondered what else I didn't know about these!



# CLASSIC CAR SHOW 2025

This year saw the 5th annual Rushden Classic Car show held in the ground of Rushden's Hall Park. This event has grown to become one of the most important events on the calendar and one of largest events held in the Hall Park. A bumper number of cars and motorcycles were entered for the event.

The weather was kind to the event, the threat of rain in the afternoon led to a large influx of visitors before noon. The rain when it did arrive didn't last long and bumper crowds attended in the afternoon. With large crowds the food vendors did a roaring trade with several of them running out of food by mid-afternoon. The 30+ trade stalls also reported good business and one of the best events of the year.

This year's event attracted a wide variety of classic vehicles and supercars dating from the early 1920's to the latest McLaren supercar. There was also a good representation from classic car clubs. The day saw over 40 motorcycles and 450 cars on show.

There were 6 prize classes:  
*(The prizes were kindly provided by Kingtools of Rushden.)*

- **Best in pre-war (pre-1939):** Steve Shipley with his 1933 Austin 7.
- **Best in post-war (1945–1970):** Stephen Hill with his Austin Healey.
- **Best in modern classics (1970 onwards):** Jake Barnes with a Triumph TR6.
- **Mayor's Award:** 1926 Austin 20 Ascot saloon owned by George Baker.
- **Best in show:** 1970 Morris Minor owned by Robert Cottee.
- **Best Motorcycle:** BSA 250cc owned by Simon Frankish.

The walled garden was used as the exhibitor space for classic motorcycles as well as the "pop-up" Station bar.

The event was again very successful, special thanks to the volunteers from the Station who worked over the past few weeks preparing for the event and those who just came down to the park for the day. Any contribution was very welcome. There were also volunteers from local Community groups which were very much appreciated. Finally, a big thank you to the people of Rushden and surrounding areas and further afield who came along to support the event.

*credit: Drone Photos, Sandy*





In the walled garden entertainment was provided by the *Rock-ola Rockets* a 1950's Rockabilly/Rock 'n Roll Band.



# CKH 653C Update

by Mark Carrington

**Reproduced from an article in the Mechanical Horse's Society's magazine**

I thought it was time for an update on CKH 653C. Unfortunately though still running, my Scarab became separated from its trailer as I wanted to keep the tractor under cover and had no room for the trailer which was kept 25 miles away. Time has moved on and reluctantly I was considering putting it up for sale as I was giving up the storage space and no longer really had the enthusiasm for a full cosmetic upgrade which was maybe beyond my capability to do to the standard that I would expect having lost my facilities. Neither did I want to sell it to someone miles away and lose the emotional attachment I have for it. When I first bought it approximately 15 years ago I rallied it a few times and had access through my own company (King Vehicle Engineering Limited) to carry out the work necessary on it. After I sold the business I lost access to the people and equipment that supported it.

I've now found a good compromise and donated it to the Rushden Historical Transport Society, who some will know as the owners of the nicely refurbished Northampton Brewery Company 1938 Mechanical Horse. So it has recently been uplifted and moved to Rushden Station where they (probably with my help) will restore it to sit alongside their MH. I have been told that I can still take it to rallies if I choose and as it will live only 4 miles away from my house I can still retain my emotional attachment to it. RHTS were very keen to get hold of it for their collection and I know it will be in good hands and survive for a good few more years. As they say, you never own a good classic vehicle but are just looking after it for the next generation, so this Scarab will hopefully soon end up in much improved condition and be seen by generations to come which in itself will give me pleasure, as they have at the station an excellent CAMRA pub that also needs little encouragement to visit. It will be great to see the Mechanical Horse and my Scammell Scarab exhibited side by side.



*Left: still at work in 2015, then aged 50!  
Bottom left: off to its new home.  
Below: loading the Scarab.*

# WD72222 0-4-0 War Department Loco

**This summer saw the return to action of one of the society's WD shunters, WD72222. For the past few years the loco has been sidelined by a gearbox issue. However this year the gearbox has gone under a complete rebuild. After months of work the loco ran under its own power this August. This was a great job by a team of volunteers, including Nick Arnold, Brian Clayton, Paul Marlow, Alfie Bryan and Dave Chambers.**

## **A Wartime Workhorse**

The WD72222 is a standard 153hp War Department (WD) 0-4-0DM locomotive fitted with a Gardner 6L3 engine. The contract to supply this class of locomotive was given to Andrew Barclay, Sons & Co Ltd (AB), of Kilmarnock (who were also builders); and the Drewry Car Co Ltd, of London (DC), who being only being suppliers (not builders), subcontracted the construction to Vulcan Foundry Ltd (VF).

WD72222 was built in 1945 at the Vulcan Foundry Ltd (VF) located in Newton-le-Willows and was given the works number numbers DC 2177 and VF 5258. In 1952, the War Department having disposed of most of its war time locomotive fleet, renumbered the locomotives which it had left, WD 72222 becoming WD 831.

With the War Department was merging with the Admiralty and the Air Ministry to form the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in 1964, the War Department locomotives became MOD (Army Department) locomotives. This led to a further renumbering in 1968, with WD 831 becoming ARMY 249. The loco was at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Ruddington in Nottinghamshire and it later served at the Proof and Experimental Establishment at Eskdales, and then Central Ammunition Depot at Longtown, both in Cumbria.

It is thought the loco worked for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) until 1978, when placed into storage at the MOD depot at Long Marston. It was in 2012 that WD72222 was purchased by several members of the Society and brought to Rushden.

## **Restoration**

The loco underwent minor repairs and repainting ready for service on the ½ mile of track at Rushden. Duties included shunting rolling stock around the site, providing driving experiences, train rides for customers using the brake van and a converted tube wagon.

The loco underwent minor repairs and repainting ready for service on the ½ mile of track at Rushden. Duties included shunting rolling stock around the site, providing driving experiences, train rides for customers using the brake van and a converted tube wagon.



## **WD72222** continued

The loco began to suffer issue with its gearbox, unfortunately this issue has ensured that it has not been operational for the past few years. The loco was sold to the Society This enabled work to be undertaken to repair the gearbox and recommission the loco. This work was undertaken this year and in late August WD72222 is once more operational.

## **Overhauling the WD gearbox**

Earlier this year the railway purchased the green WD 72222 shunter with a view to restore it for service. Robert approached me as to the possibility of doing at least an inspection in house. I agreed that we could take this on over the road within the workshop area. Early February saw the gearbox being removed by Dale and Sam with Brians help on the forklift. We then took at what exactly this large heavy lump required in terms of getting it working. I decided fairly soon that it needed to be completely stripped down to establish just what had prevented it working after an apparent overhaul previously.

Along with many parts strewn around we found a similar but empty casing. On closer examination this was seen to be from a railcar, having different mountings etc. The box was lifted such that we could remove the shafting vertically and all components laid out for cleaning prior to inspection. The first thing we noticed was that the original input shaft was in a box of bits and had suffered severe heat/friction damage. On comparing this with the one we removed it was noted that they had different length shaft ends. This meant that the installation as we found it would never have coupled up to the engine!

Delving deeper we found two bronze bushes were badly worn and allowed a lot of play between the two shafts. We were to take quite a few weeks establishing exactly what required repair and how it all worked. We fortunately had printed out the Self Changing Gears service manual which helped in this. We considered that although there were still some questions we could between us take on the overhaul. Considering the potential hours involved sending it to a repair company would involve considerable cost.

I concentrated on looking at the shafting and bearings whilst Paul and Brian began inspection and overhaul of the brake bands and casing. I found that the input shaft casing was from the spare and had a very different bearing arrangement so this had to be exchanged with the original. Brian then overhauled its air piston arrangement and manufacture a new end cover for one of the air cylinders. The original input shaft was found and was badly damaged. The clutch centre had been turning against another steel spacer and had literally melted and flattened the bolts holding the basket onto the shaft. Fortunately this was indeed bolted to allow its removal. The shaft itself was taken back to my workshop and put up in the lathe where I was able to grind the residual rough wear back to a flat surface using a Dremel in the toolpost!

The unworn basket from the wrong shaft was then bolted on. This gearbox has two very large deep groove ball bearings as the main support for the rotating assembly, at about £7,000 for a pair I was relieved to find two among

them that were in good condition. To restore the running fits of 0.0015" on the shafting two large billets of leaded bronze were sourced by Chab.

Back at Overstone, these were made to replace the worn ones. Although not cheap at several hundred pounds this was to remain the only major expenditure on this project. Meanwhile Brian and Paul had worked hard on the brake band and clutch areas and we had a test under air to confirm operation to our satisfaction. Work then had reached a stage where we were ready to start re assembly. The output end has its large bearing fitted along with the fiddly job of fitting the eccentric oil pump at the same time. Now with the box vertical the other rotating parts were gradually put in with close reference to the drawings.



During the re build we found several anomalies, small changes in dimension and hole pitching caused a lot of head scratching which slowed progress. Getting each gear drum to align all the teeth proved frustrating, it taking ages to get things to fit being out of view. With all the new pintle and shaft bushes lubricated with copper slip and liberal amounts of oil to the bearings we eventually got the input end cover to seat properly after a

frustrating days work. Several coats of paint made it at least look the part along with nice shiny new BSF nuts securing the end covers! We made a air test rig to allow the individual actuators and clutch to be adjusted and tested, this was Paul and Brians department and a complicated procedure it was following the manual. With final test to include rotation of the shafting some means of driving it was required. I decided to use the Lister D as the motive power and turned a vee on the flat pulley to drive up to a 10" pulley on the input shaft. To do this and have means of tensioning the belt required some lateral thinking. With the box on the forklift this allowed precise adjustment and worked well. After sorting a few problems on the Lister we eventually got rotation, a run for one hour in direct drive proved successful followed by another hour using various gears.

Finally we could relax and hand the gearbox over to the railway in August. During the re build Alfie had spent hours sorting the loco by cleaning years of muck and accumulated junk away. The team then lowered the box into place using our forklift. From this point Alfie took on the big job of connecting the box up with air and couplings from engine and reverse gearbox. Various air leaks required fixing before a test up the line. This happened with Alfie at the helm and our little team as passengers in the cab. All went well as we trundled up and down through the gears, a huge moment for all concerned.

*by Nick Arnold*

# Museum Matters

**What a year it has been volunteering in the museum - looking back I wonder how I had time for it all!**

It all started when the museum management group (MMG) realised that the museum laptop couldn't go on much longer; so, we applied for a grant from Museum Development Midlands. Well, what could be difficult with that? Everything, it seems! I was guided through the process well enough, but it still took interviews, form filling, budget proposals and reviews until we were finally successful, with the proviso that we had a campaign to attract additional volunteers to engage in a collection review programme.

You might remember our newsletter requests for volunteers (thanks, Amber). Our small easy-going group meet on Friday afternoons to re-examine the collection's documents and photos to improve their storage and see what might interest visitors.

The MMG knew that our 'Accreditation Return' with the Arts Council was due this year and sure enough, the invitation came to submit the online form and supporting documents by July. Another adventure in bureaucracy as every policy, plan and procedure had to be reviewed to bring them up to date and passed through the Trustees (thanks, Richard). With help from our Mentor, Peter Field, the application was successful, and we have retained full accreditation status.

If all that was not enough to do, out of the blue came an invitation to become a 'Guest Curator' in the Northampton Museum & Art Gallery's (NM&AG) exhibition 'Histories of Northamptonshire in a Hundred Objects'. The MMG considered that it would be a great advertisement for the RHTS as well as the museum and voted to send our drayman's boots for consideration. Our submission was accepted, and work began to research into the boots and their owner and write for different publications - the exhibition information, the book entry, and a website and app information. It was fun engaging with museum professionals and other guest curators at various meetings and exciting, if not a little nerve racking, doing a podcast with John Griff. All the work was worth it, the exhibition is currently on in Northampton until February 2026 and, being chronological, it ranges from rocks to graffiti, with our boots being no.87 within the modern section. I hope you will go along to see the free exhibition, but if you cannot get to Northampton there is a dedicated website at <https://timeline.northamptonmuseums.com>. There is also an app available for Apple and Android that takes you on a fully immersive hunt for the objects at their location, great fun for families. The app also has a link to all the podcasts which are also on YouTube; there is so much to find out. Our boots were captured in a beautiful photo by a professional photographer for us to share.

Yes, it has been quite the year for the museum and if you would like to volunteer in our friendly group to keep the museum open to visitors as much as possible, then please contact: [museum@rhts.co.uk](mailto:museum@rhts.co.uk) to arrange a chat.

*Jane Demet*

*Left to right: Jane Demet,  
Peter Field (Mentor),  
Philip Bettles*





**RUSHDEN, HIGHAM & WELLINGBOROUGH RAILWAY**  
**SATURDAY 25TH & SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER**

**REFRESHMENTS  
AVAILABLE**



# **HALLOWEEN GHOST TRAIN**

**RIDE THE GHOST TRAIN IF YOU DARE!**

## **TRAIN TIMES**

**SAT: 4PM, 4.45PM, 5.30PM, 6.15PM, 7PM, 7.45PM**

**SUN: 2.30PM, 3.15PM, 4PM, 4.45PM, 5.30PM, 6.15PM**

**TICKET PRICE: ADULTS - £6 CHILDREN - £3**

**BOOK ONLINE AT [WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/RHTS](http://WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/RHTS)**

**RUSHDEN STATION, STATION APPROACH, RUSHDEN, NN10 0AW**

**[WWW.RHTS.CO.UK](http://WWW.RHTS.CO.UK)**

**[ADMINISTRATOR@RHTS.CO.UK](mailto:ADMINISTRATOR@RHTS.CO.UK)**



**[RUSHDENRAILWAYSTATION](https://www.facebook.com/RUSHDENRAILWAYSTATION)**

# Higham Ferrers Station Plans, 1890

Part two of my visit to the Midland Railway Study Centre, I found the original 1890 plans and supporting documentation for the Rushden and Higham stations/lines.

In my last issue (#247), I mentioned that one thing I found out was that it was originally called the *Irchester & Raunds branch*, but it never ended up extending as far as planned.

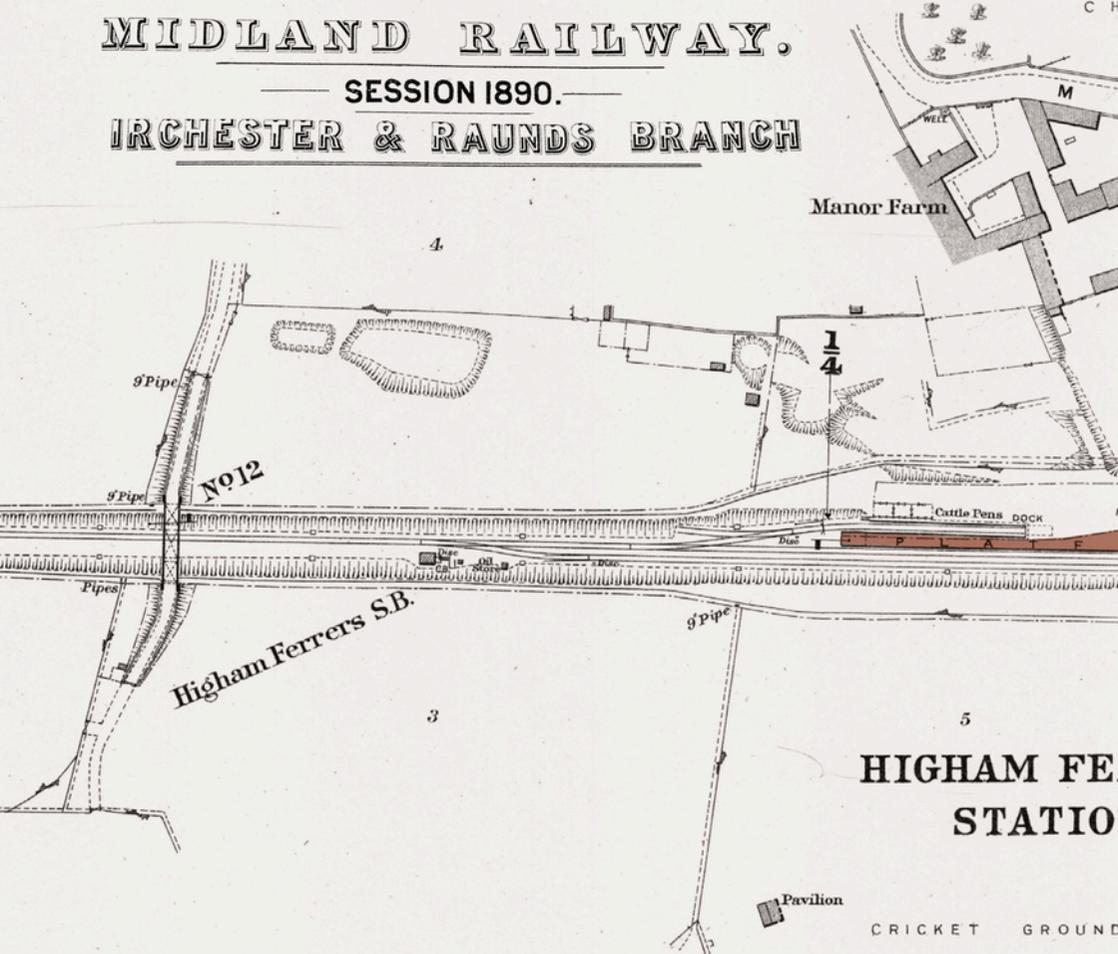
Below are the original 1890 station plans of Higham Ferrers station.

Images are courtesy of the Midland Railway Study Centre, with thanks to Dave Harris.

Mark Castro-García



## MIDLAND RAILWAY. SESSION 1890. IRCHESTER & RAUNDS BRANCH





# BEER & MUSIC FESTIVAL 2025

I popped along Friday evening, Saturday lunchtime, and Sunday afternoon – I counted 35 ales and 33 ciders on the ‘aleway train – plus 12 on tap in the bar, so 80 in total! Strongest ale was 7.2% Tring Brewery and cider was 8.4% Sandford Orchards!

**Mark Castro-García**



There was also a Land Rover meet up in the Goods Shed on the Sunday, and in the car park as well.



## **Obituary - Richard Woodcock (*The Colonel*), former chairman of RHTS**

**It is with great sadness to hear of the passing of one of the founder members of the Society, Richard Woodcock.**

In 1976 Richard placed an advert in the Evening Telegraph to see if there were enough people willing to form a Society interested in old transport. The inaugural meeting was held in the Rose and Crown Public House to which 8 members of the public attended. The Society was formed that evening and the name for the Society, Rushden Historical Transport Society adopted.

After a couple of years of monthly meetings, trips, and small exhibitions it was suggested a model exhibition be held at Rushden Hall Park with one or two old cars. This event in 1979 was the first Cavalcade which grew to one of the largest events of its kind in the country.

The Society took on the tenancy of the old railway station, overcame the threatened demolition of the building in 1990 followed in 1996 by the outright purchase of the building.

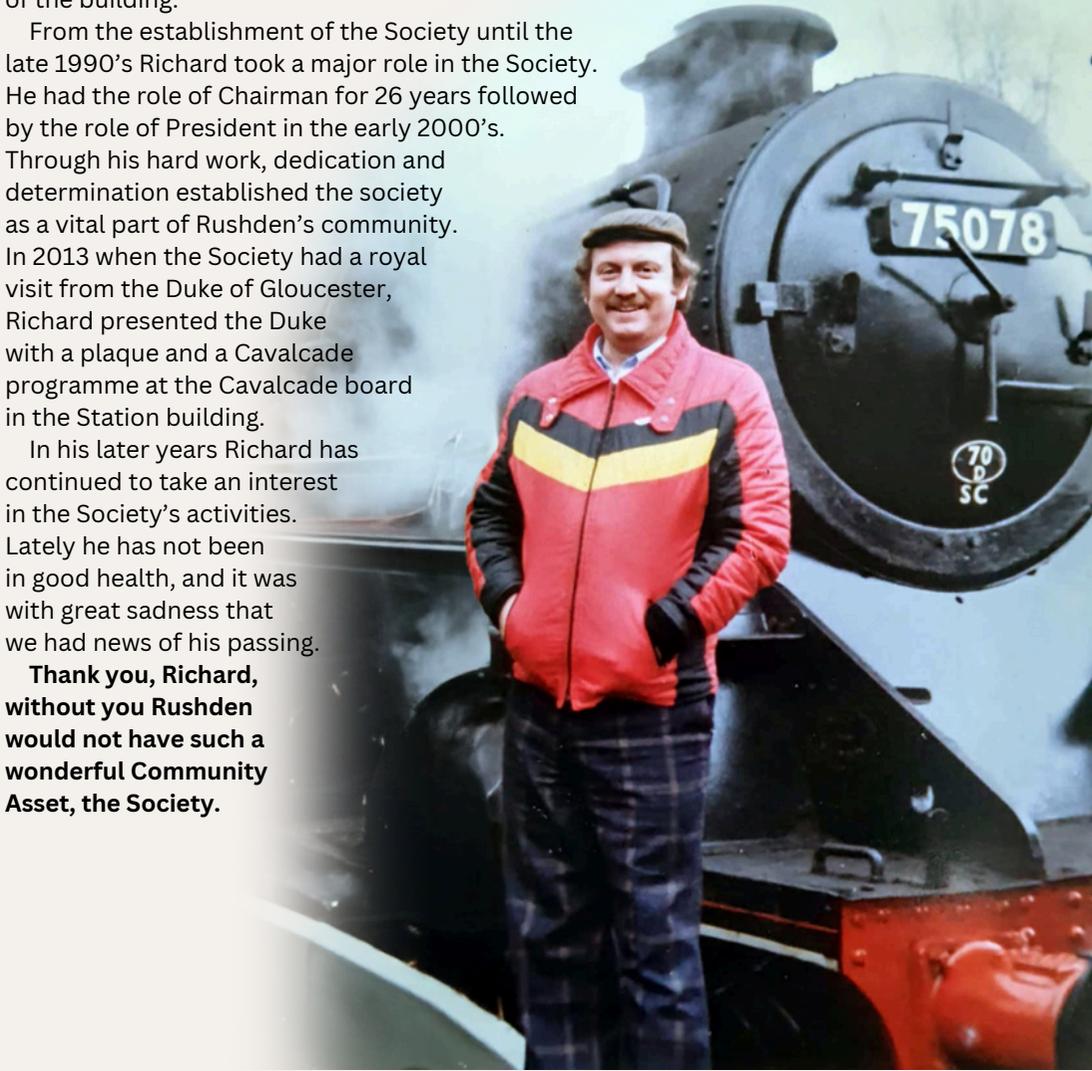
From the establishment of the Society until the late 1990's Richard took a major role in the Society. He had the role of Chairman for 26 years followed by the role of President in the early 2000's.

Through his hard work, dedication and determination established the society as a vital part of Rushden's community.

In 2013 when the Society had a royal visit from the Duke of Gloucester, Richard presented the Duke with a plaque and a Cavalcade programme at the Cavalcade board in the Station building.

In his later years Richard has continued to take an interest in the Society's activities. Lately he has not been in good health, and it was with great sadness that we had news of his passing.

**Thank you, Richard, without you Rushden would not have such a wonderful Community Asset, the Society.**



## Obituary - Robin West

**It is with great sadness that the Society learnt in July of the passing of one of its stalwart members, Robin West.**

Robin was a member of the Society for over 30 years and was heavily involved in many of the building projects that have taken place within the Society. He worked as a carpentry foreman for the local firm Marriott's of Rushden for many years. He brought this expertise, along with the ability to lead a group and clearly convey his ideas to his fellow volunteers.

Robin was one of the volunteers who helped to construct and lay the track for the re-opened railway in the 1990s and 2000s. His woodworking skills and knowledge were invaluable when work was required to bring rolling stock back into use.

The R.H.T.S Soapboxes were designed by Robin and much of the woodwork was constructed by him. He was also involved in the restoration of the Scammell undertaking some of the woodwork required for the cab. He took great pleasure in driving the Scammell Mechanical Horse to different shows and more recently to our own Classic Car show.

He frequently undertook repairs to the Station building, and the new noticeboards on the outside of the Station are examples of his craftsmanship.



When the Goods Shed was purchased in 2018, it brought with it a renewed enthusiasm for Society projects. Robin was able to take an idea from paper to completion in no time. Examples of his work include the entrance to the Shed, the storage area, and the first version of the Goods Shed Bar.

In the past couple of years, Robin had been suffering from ill health but still managed to advise members of the Goods Shed team on what needed to be done. Whenever possible, he was brought down from his home by his wife June and could be seen zipping around the Goods Shed on his scooter. In honour of his contributions, his fellow volunteers affectionately named the new toilet block the "West Wing."

**He will be very much missed.  
R.I.P. Robin.**

# Obituary - Mike Carlile

**Sadly, in mid-September the Society learnt of the passing of member Mike Carlile. Mike was an active member of the Society up until the Covid period. Mike served as a Police Officer with the Nottinghamshire force in the city of Nottingham. After leaving the Police he worked for Northamptonshire Social Services and lived in Rushden.**

He joined the Society and after several years became a member of the Bar Committee.

He took the role of Bar Manager for a short period and also served on the Main Committee. During this time Mike's health suffered after being diagnosed with throat cancer. With a deterioration in his health, he left his position on both committees in the autumn of 2019.

The Society is grateful to Mike for his years of service as a volunteer at R.H.T.S. We must also thank him for his public service as a policeman and then working in Social Services. Condolences to Delph and his family, a lovely man who will not be forgotten.



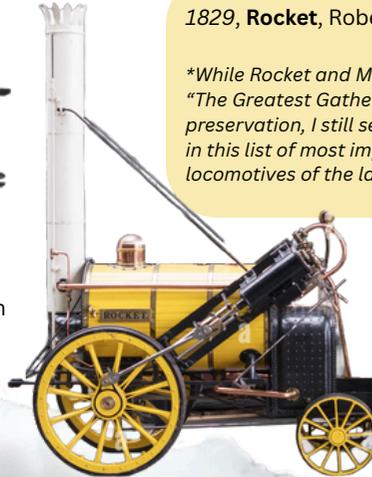
***Raise a glass to his memory.***

# 200 years of train travel

**200**  
Years of Train Travel  
Since 1825



1825, **Locomotion No1**, Robert Stephenson



1829, **Rocket**, Robert Stephenson

*\*While Rocket and Mallard did not attend "The Greatest Gathering", due to their preservation, I still see fit to include them in this list of most important and famous locomotives of the last 200 years.*

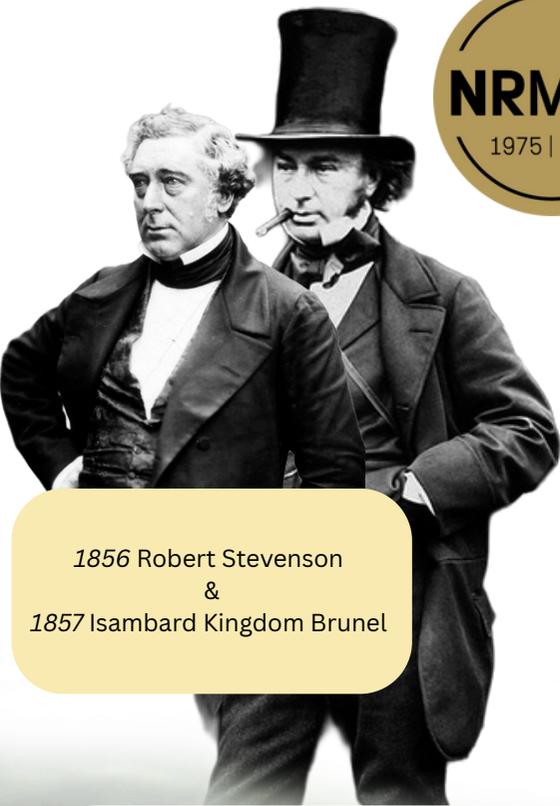


1923, **Flying Scotsman**,  
Nigel Gresley

I took this photo (right) in November 2017 from the Finedon Road bridge, Wellingborough and my son took the one below at Wellingborough station in June 2019.



**NRM 50**  
1975 | 2025



1856 Robert Stephenson  
&  
1857 Isambard Kingdom Brunel



1938, **Mallard**, Nigel Gresley  
I took this photo in July 2016 in the National Railway Museum in York. They're now celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year!



1911 Nigel Gresley &  
1913 William Stanier

1938, **Duchess of Sutherland**, William Stanier  
I took the photo below in December 2016 at Wellingborough station. The Duchess also attended The Greatest Gathering in 2025.



**65** Brunel Broad Gauge  
Bridge Rail

**Railtrack**  
Iron  
About 1840



Stephenson's gauge was spread over more of the country. Where both gauges served the same town sometimes unique dual gauge track was laid. The third rail added complexity and cost.

An 1846 government enquiry found that although Brunel's Broad Gauge had merits, Stephenson's served its purpose and restricted further GWR expansion. Stymied, the GWR started to convert to Stephenson's gauge and by 1892 Broad Gauge no longer existed.

This particular piece of rail was being used as ballast on a working narrowboat in Northamptonshire. It is a link to Northamptonshire's railway history.

**Mike Ringwood and Peter Bryce,**  
Northamptonshire Industrial  
Archaeology Group (NIAG)

Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the Chief Engineer of the Great Western Railway. His genius was to theoretically determine that a railway track gauge of seven feet and a quarter inch was better for speed, stability and load carrying than Stephenson's already established gauge of four feet eight and a half inches.

The GWR line between Bristol and London opened in 1838. Their region included South West England, South Wales and into the Midlands.

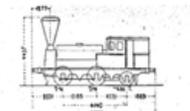
In 1850 a line was built from Oxford to Banbury, which entered Northamptonshire with a station at Aynho, this was the only station in the county to have broad gauge. At its peak the GWR had around 550 miles of track.

1840 Brunel Gauge, Aynho

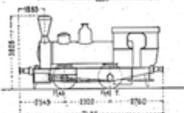
Northampton Art Gallery and Museum's "A History of Northamptonshire in 100 Objects"

**"Whyte notation" of locotypes**

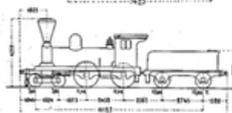
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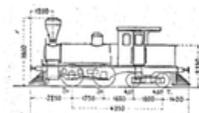
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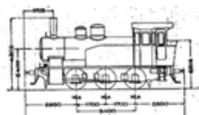
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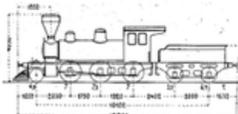
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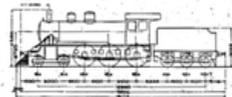
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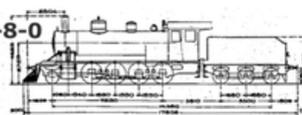
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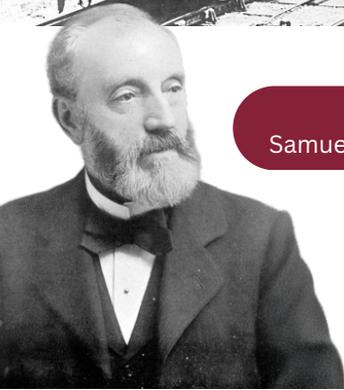
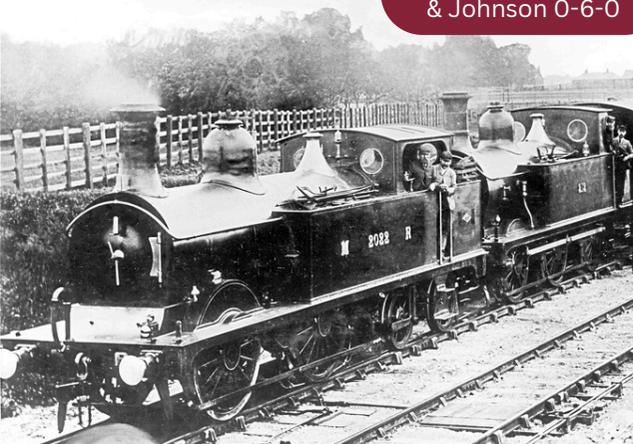
**4-6-0**



**2-8-0**



**1894 Johnson 0-4-4  
& Johnson 0-6-0**



**1898**  
**Samuel Waite Johnson**

Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Midland Railway from 1873 to 1903. He designed both the 0-4-4 No. 2022 and the 0-6-0 No. 212, which ran passengers from Higham to Rushden for the first time, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1894



1959, British Rail Class 2, Robin Riddles

The last passenger train to run on the Higham and Rushden branch, before it's closure.



British Railways'  
Robin Riddles

While I can't compare the 3 trains below to the likes of famous trains, such as *Rocket*, *Mallard* or *Flying Scotsman*, we still took part on September 27<sup>th</sup> 2025, which is 200 years to the day that *Locomotion No 1* took the world's first passengers, on the Stockton & Darlington Railway!

We ran the Pacer, and the Open-Carriage & Brake Van



See the next issue for  
more! inc. diesels



RUSHDEN HISTORICAL TRANSPORT SOCIETY

Charity no: 285535

# CHRISTMAS GIFT & CRAFT FAIR

AT RUSHDEN GOODS SHED

Thurs 27th & Fri 28th November  
4pm - 8pm  
Free entry

Handmade Crafts  
Christmas Gifts  
Stocking Fillers  
Decorations  
Christmas Cards  
Handmade Jewellery  
Cakes & Sweets  
Candles & Wax Melts  
Pet Accessories ✕  
& Much More



Rushden Goods Shed, John Clark Way,  
Rushden, Northants, NN10 0FW  
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Rushden, Higham & Wellingborough Railway



# Santa Special

**Sat 13th & Sun 14th December**

Take a ride on our Santa Special and visit Mr & Mrs Claus!

Tickets include: A diesel train ride, a drink & biscuit (mince pie for adults) and children receive a present.

Train Times: 11:00, 12:00, 13:30, 14:30, 15:30

Ticket Prices: Adults - £8, Children - £13.50,  
Babies under 12months - £6 or free without a present

Book online at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/rhts](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/rhts)

Rushden Railway Station, Station Approach, Rushden, Northants, NN10 0AW  
[www.rhts.co.uk](http://www.rhts.co.uk) 0300 302 3105   [Rushdenrailwaystation](https://www.instagram.com/rushdenrailwaystation)

# RUSHDEN HISTORICAL TRANSPORT SOCIETY

EST. 1976

