

BRANCH LINE NEWS

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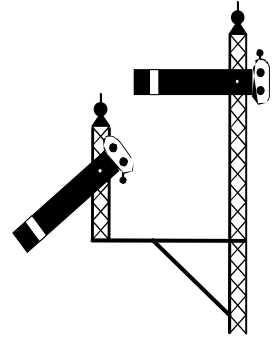
Website: www.branchline.org.uk

Membership enquiries: 22 Treemount Court, Grove Avenue, EPSOM, Surrey KT17 4DU;
01372 728677; alan.welshepsom@btopenworld.com

This newsletter covers the British Isles from information supplied by members.

An international section is also available
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Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Society.



The next issues are scheduled for Saturdays 14 and 28 July, to be compiled from material reaching the Editor by 09:00 on Saturday 7 and 16:00 on Sunday 22 July respectively, the International Editor by 16:00 on the Saturdays of the same weekends, and the Minor Railways Editor by 18:30 on the Wednesdays before those.

NEWS TEAM:- Editor: Mr W R Lynch, 14 Helston Close, Kesgrave, IPSWICH IP5 1JT; wr66lynch@orchidserve.com (subject beginning "BLN" please); fax 0871 661 8922. **Front Page Editor** (British Isles): Mr N J Hill, 73 Norfolk Park Avenue, SHEFFIELD S2 2RB; phone & fax 0114 2752303. **Minor Railways Editor** (British Isles): Mr P Scott, 93 Josephine Court, Southcote Rd, READING RG30 2DQ; pe.scott@ukonline.co.uk. **International News Editor** (outside British Isles): Mr A J Spencer, 34 Camp Street, DERBY DE1 3SD; class458@aol.com. **BranchLine Operator** (short-notice news): bls_branchline@hotmail.com; answerphone 020 8556 9697. **Distribution Officer** (delivery problems): Mr D J Monger, 6 Underhill Close, GODALMING, Surrey GU7 1NU; phone 01483 429455.

Record of Openings and Closings

552] **ROP** on Wed 13 Jun 2007 (at 17:23) **Regents Park** station (LUL Bakerloo Line) (*BLN* 1022.608). Deferred from previous day by fire certification delay. (Note that the back reference from 1022.608 should have been to *BLN* 1017.408.)

553] **TCA** on & from Wed 20 Jun 2007 **Bewdley – Bridgnorth** (Severn Valley Railway) (*BLN* 1015.MR49). Heavy thunderstorms the previous night caused major landslips and other damage.

Prospective Network and Train Service Changes

554] **Kings Cross Thameslink** (*BLN* 1030.926&936): Station closure targetted for end of service on Saturday 8 December 2007, to be replaced by new St Pancras International station on Thameslink line into service following day.

SOUTHWEST ENGLAND

555] **Cairns Quarry branch, Treffry's Tramway** (*BLN* 833.735): A section of embankment and trackbed in the grounds of a property called "Cairns" has been carefully restored to almost its original condition by the removal of growth and refurbishment of the sides of an embankment. Abutments of bridges where the line crossed a stream and a minor road remain. On the east side of a minor road the trackbed can be accessed and the shell of a blacksmith's shop and cottage alongside the trackbed can be entered. Parts of the route further east have been lost in a field but then it reappears and enters a cutting which can be followed for several hundred yards. From this point the route is heavily overgrown as it curves north to join the route to Colcerrow and Carbeans quarries.

556] **Lostwithiel:** Early in May the milk siding on the Up side was disconnected.

557] **Furzebrook** (*BLN* 1043.456): The following are distances in 60ft rail lengths from the buffer stops at the end of the line at Furzebrook, counted on 30 June 1979:-

- 0 End of line;
- 8½ Occupation crossing;
- 11½ Gradient post — level northwards, falling at 1 in 80 southwards;

- Former mile-post (near which what resembles a former railway trackbed, no doubt one of those described in *BLN* 987.95, leads off to the northwest);
- 28½ Gradient post — rising at possibly 1 in 120 northwards, level southwards;
Culvert N^o 11A;
- 48½ Blue Pool road underbridge;
Southern points of Furzebrook run-round loop;
Site of removed points in loop, formerly leading to dead-end spur at the south end;
Mile-post 129;
- 64½ Site of former Furzebrook ground frame;
- 71½ Clay siding points in loop, north points in loop leading to dead-end spur, and gradient post — falling at 1 in 78 northwards, rising at 1 in 330 southwards;
Northern points of Furzebrook run-round loop.

It was noticed in passing that fishplates had only been greased for two or three rail lengths (ie little more than a loco's length) south of the southern end of the run-round loop and that the gaps between running rails and check rails at the occupation crossing were completely filled with dirt. It is believed that these southernmost fifty or so lengths of track were left to provide a temporary store for Swanage Railway Society stock, though they may never have been so used.

BLN 915, last paragraph under "Infrastructure and Terminology changes" (I&TC), reported the physical connection of the Swanage Railway to Railtrack on 3 January 2002, with more detailed information given in item MR22. *BLN* 916.MR38B churlishly commented there was still a set of buffer stops and a "physical gap of a few millimetres" for through trains to overcome. The I&TC column in *BLN* 920 claimed that the churlish pedant had read too much into the words "connection", "met" and "linking" in relation to lengths of track. *BLN* 929 updated this by saying that "a first through train from the national network, with due ceremonies, is planned for September", item 556 in that issue adding the rumoured additional detail, that Railtrack had delayed from Monday 12 August the laying of a truly connecting rail because they feared unsafe conditions might result from dealing with a private railway company. The latter were still hopeful that, on Sunday 8 September, three weeks before Virgin Cross-Country abandoned the pre-1974 county of Dorset, one of the red company's trains would reach Swanage. *BLN* 930 on 7 September could not confirm this but *BLN* 935 said that "Virgin did run a through train to Swanage on 7 September 2002." Some of the clarification sought was possibly given at the Bournemouth Railway Club's annual dinner, when it was said that that the local company's hopes of a national-network train reaching Swanage on 8 September were fulfilled; the train had crossed the Railtrack boundary the previous day and spent the night near Eldon's Siding, just north of Norden, before making a ceremonial entrance into the coastal resort on the Sunday. As far as is known, no other trains have crossed the boundary until May this year.

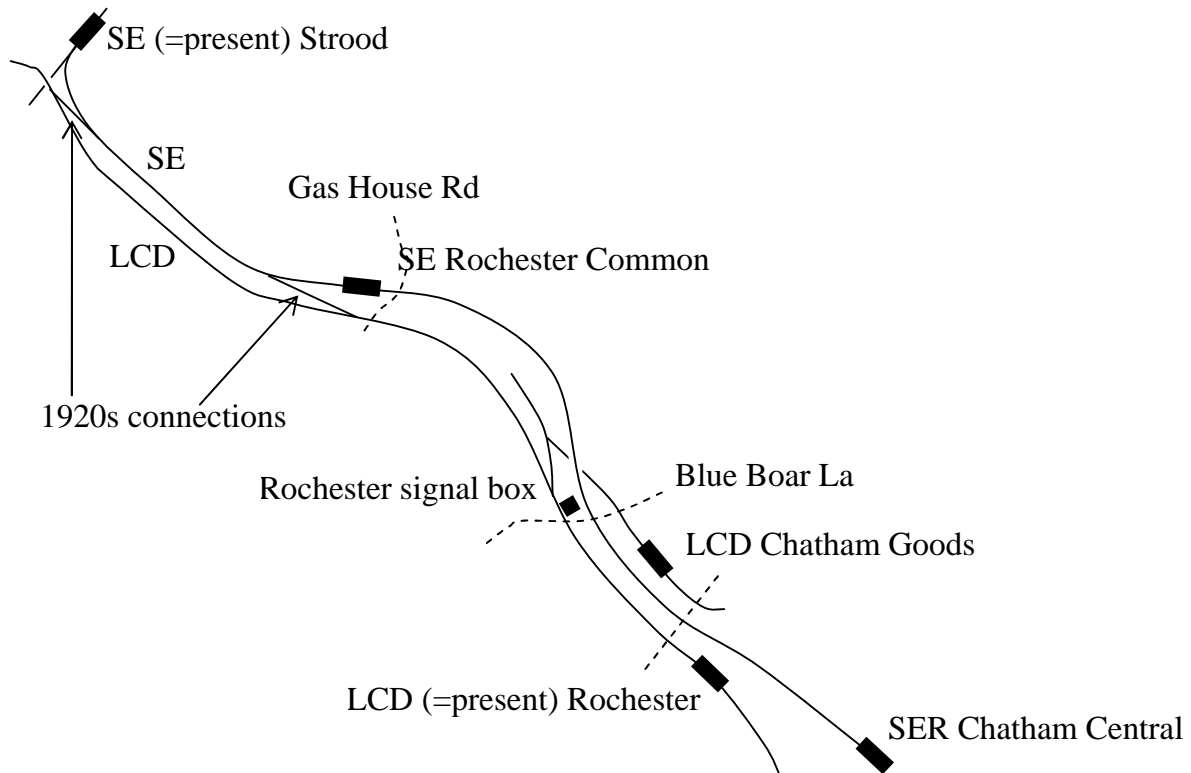
As an aside, it might be mentioned, also by courtesy of the Bournemouth Railway Club, that nearly three years ago Dorset County Council purchased three 3-car Class 117 dmus for possible use on the extended Swanage branch. The vehicles were stored at Winfrith, between Wool and Moreton, but had to vacate the site in March. One unit was moved to the Weardale Railway while the other two were taken to the Midland Railway Centre at Butterley. More recently it has been reported that a preserved 4TC set (originally constructed so that Weymouth could continue to have through trains to and from London, attached to an emu east of Bournemouth and operated in push-pull with Class 33 diesel locos west thereof) is to be based on the Swanage Railway from 2010, by which time it is expected that daily through trains to and from Wareham will be running.

558] **Somerset & Dorset Railway Trailway:** In April a three-span footbridge 75 m long was officially opened across the River Stour at Fiddleford (grid reference ST801138), south of Sturminster Newton, to reconnect two parts of the former Somerset & Dorset Railway, which is being converted into the North Dorset Trailway for walkers and riders. The bridge, built by Dorset County Council's engineers, utilises the abutments and piers of the original railway bridge, which was removed during the 1960s.

559] **Sharpness branch:** In November 2004 a plan to restore the rail link to Sharpness Docks (*BLN* 1038.224) was being backed by Gloucestershire County Council. However, when viewed on 10 May 2007 no recent traffic appeared to have passed over the route.

SOUTHEAST ENGLAND (SOUTH)

560] **Rochester:** A huge redevelopment scheme, sweeping away a mixture of industrial uses and dereliction, has resulted in levelling and raising with sand of the whole Gashouse Point area between the London – Dover (originally LCD) main line and the River Medway from Rochester Bridge to east of Rochester station. Little remained of the 1892 – 1911 SER branch to Chatham Central but even the landmarks to identify where it ran have now gone. The ex-LCD Chatham Goods branch, which was reached by a two-leg incline down from a junction by the former Rochester signal box and a headshunt (and originally passing under the SER viaduct), and survived for parcels traffic until the 1980s, could still be traced until last year but is now also obliterated.



GREATER LONDON

561] **Leigham Spur** (*BLN* 996.464): In the summer timetable this spur (Streatham Hill – Tulse Hill) has had its service doubled, with the addition of a train at a more London-commuter-friendly hour, namely the 08:32 Streatham Hill to London Bridge.

562] **Micro-opportunities on LUL** (*BLN* 1037.179): The planned closures listed in late June on TfL's website for the next few months strongly suggest that the following rare crossovers and other connections will be in all-day use. In alphabetical order of principally affected line name:-

Bakerloo, Willesden Junction south crossover (possibly — see *BLN* 1041.365): until 11:45 on each of 22, 29 July.

Central, North Acton west connections to & from centre road (*BLN* 1044.509): 22 September.

District, Whitechapel east crossover and (possibly — see *BLN* 1044.509) slip: 21-22, 28-29 July, 1-2, 8-9, 15-16 September, 6-7, 13-14, 27-28 October, 1-2 December. The Sunday start-up reversals at Aldgate East are expected to operate as usual except perhaps on 1-2 December.

District, Mansion House bay: 21-22 July, 8-9 September.

District, Putney Bridge bay: 15-16 December.

Hammersmith & City, Liverpool Street west crossover: 21-22, 28-29 July, 8-9, 15-16 September.

Jubilee, North Greenwich west connections to & from centre road: 15 September, 20 October, 24-25 November, 15-16 December.

Jubilee, Canary Wharf west crossovers (*BLN* 1044.509): 19 August, 2 December.

Metropolitan, Moorgate bays: 21-22, 28-29 July, 8-9, 15-16 September.

Metropolitan, southbound arrivals at Baker Street Pfm 2: 20-21 October.
Metropolitan, Wembley Park south diveunder: 24-25 November, 25-28 December.
Metropolitan, Northwood south crossover: 11-12, 18-19, 25-27 August, 1-2, 8-9, 15-16 September, 6-7 October, 1-2 December.
Metropolitan, Watford S Jn double crossover (see also item 567): 29-30 September, 14 October, 24-25 November, 25-28 December.
Northern, Golders Green Pfm 2 crossover to southbound (*BLN* 1044.509): 17-18 November.
Piccadilly, Arnos Grove all south crossovers: 1-2, 8-9, 15-16 September.
Piccadilly, some or all Barons Court Siding connections (*BLN* 1044.509): 22-25 November.
Victoria, Highbury & Islington north crossover: 14-15 July.
Victoria, Victoria north crossover: 4-5 August, 1-2, 8-9, 15-16 September.

563] **Performance very pale through Perivale:** On Friday 25 May a member happened upon the *PSUL* train at 10:10 West Ruislip to London Paddington. It was a 2-car dmu, lightly loaded, and made a very slow crawl past the Perivale area, thus justifying the extra 10 minutes over the “direct” London Marylebone trains.

564] **Footballing nonsense** (*BLN* 1040.318): One member finds it incredible that Arsenal Football Club, as part of the planning permission for their £360M+ stadium development in north London, were not made to pay for significant rebuilding of Drayton Park, and indeed Holloway Road, stations. The narrow platform at Drayton Park is no doubt a Health and Safety issue in these troubled times, but it seems typically bizarre that it’s deemed safer to make tens of thousands of spectators walk along (normally down the middle of!) busy London streets and then to queue for entry to Highbury & Islington or Finsbury Park. He guesses that the planning authority (Islington Council) had no power to force these conditions on the Club, and that Network Rail weren’t very interested anyway. He urges transport planners to get their hands on some of the Premier League’s billions to fund some infrastructure improvements!

565] **Gricing becomes an Olympic event!** Members of the Olympic Commission visiting Britain to inspect progress towards the 2012 Games became the first rail passengers from Stratford International to London St Pancras. It is reported that the feat was accomplished on the first day of their 3-day visit, from which 12 June is deduced.

566] **Stratford opens new Dock** (*BLN* 991.270): Platform 4 closed on Friday 15 June, no DLR trains served Stratford over the weekend, and the south side (numbered 4a) of the new DLR island platform opened on Monday 18 June. The north side is numbered 4b but will not be in use until the autumn because the connection to Platform 4 is still in situ and fouls the route into Platform 4b. Passenger access is only from the concourse or Silverlink/Jubilee line platforms via an enclosed walkway through Canary Wharf-style doors. The entrance is nice and wide, in contrast to the narrow Platform 4 with heavy-rail services running right alongside! The Society was represented on the first morning, though maybe not on the first train.

567] **Watford South Junction** (*BLN* 1044.512): Because of earlier signal problems and delays at Wembley Park, the 10:28 from Rickmansworth on Monday 18 June was diverted across to the southbound Local Line — some others may have been as well. The present timetabled “sociable-hours” trains doing this connection are (Mon-Fri) 16:00 south from Rickmansworth and 16:02 and 18:10 northbound from Moor Park.

SOUTHEAST ENGLAND (NORTH)

568] **Naze-al Sniffiness on The Name** (*BLN* 1043.467): Although tabulators like everything to fit neatly into a set column width and dislike situations where foot- or end-notes are required for most entries, before worrying about the “official” date of change on signs and in documents they might ask what is the name of the place served by the station. Taking the 1968 edition of the One-Inch Ordnance Survey map of the Ipswich area as a basis for the most likely correct name at that date, The Naze (a name cognate with Ness and nose) is a peninsula to the north of the town of Walton on the Naze (note, no hyphens), the summit of which, at 72 feet above sea level, is the highest point east of Frinton-on-Sea (note, fully hyphenated). About a third of the nominal land area of The Naze

is marsh with a local summit 8 feet above the waves and at least one of its public footpaths lies below the high-tide mark. So Walton on the Naze and Frinton-on-Sea might be taken as the “official” names of those towns. (The Post Office in October 1961 gave (hyphenated) Walton-on-the-Naze as the name it would recognise as the post town in properly addressed mail.) However, the civil parish, probably an Urban District in 1968, includes both places — and The Naze itself — and is a wholly unsuffixed and non-hyphenated Frinton and Walton. So why did the railways drop the “the”? Bradshaw might have done it to save space, avoiding the need to widen the stations bank column or use two lines for the full name; other clerks with responsibility for compiling lists and not familiar with the town might then have copied the shortened name, believing it to be correct, and so is an error continued until almost everyone believes it. Why no mention in “Clinker”? That gentleman strongly preferred an internal memorandum stating that a station shall have a different name with effect from a specific date. If no such note was available and if railway-company timetables and other documentation vacillated between two or more variations of name, particularly with regard to double-barrelled (“X & Y”) names or local geographical suffixes, he had a tendency to ignore such “changes of name”. The introduction to Michael Quick’s *Chronology* expands considerably on this difficulty of precisely pinpointing name changes or even the names themselves.

Along the coast are Holland-on-Sea and Clacton-on-Sea, which once shared a station fully named with nine syllables. In 1969 BR, since it seems that the cost of signs was calculated not only by size required but also on the number of letters thereon, cut this elephantine ensemble down to the seven letters and two syllables of Clacton. The 1968 OS map, while naming the town Clacton-on-Sea, shows the coterminous civil parish as Great Clacton, presumably after the original settlement centre a mile or so inland; the adjacent parish and village to the north is appropriately Little Clacton.

569] **Bletchley “Worcester curve”** (BLN 1043.468): John Swift, in his SRS signalling diagrams, shows the “Worcester” curve as the Down Goods Connecting Line. A member who started work at Bletchley in July 1965 recalls that the curve was still there, even though Bletchley Power Box opened in the same month. He can recall travelling in the Royal Train ECS, which was turned regularly on the triangle (how fortunate for him!) but cannot recall which way they did it. He thinks the line would have closed soon after as it does not appear on the Bletchley PSB drawings.

He quotes from Middleton Press, “the triangular junction was opened in 1854, to facilitate through running between Euston and Worcester, the passenger service ran until September 1861. It was lifted in 1864 and partially relaid as a siding for brick traffic. It was re-connected for through running on 31/8/42, and was finally disconnected prior to main line electrification”, and he guesses that was well before the end of 1965.

WESTERN MIDLANDS

570] **Parry to move into Stourbridge**: The West Midlands rail franchise from November 2007, awarded in June to Govia, has as a key feature the use of Parry People Movers’ lightweight railcars on all services on the Stourbridge Town branch. Two new vehicles are to be built for the purpose, as is a new depot for them somewhere on the branch itself, and they are expected to enter service in 2008.

571] **Pens date fallen through the Nett** (BLN 1042.443): BLN 941 p46/03 said that a scheme which would have led to reopening of the Pensnett branch had fallen through, implying that the branch was at that time closed. It is shown in the current Sectional Appendix as “out of use” (and has been for some time). Can anyone say at what date it went out of use?

572] **Albion at Smethwick** (BLN 1012.171): The former oil terminal at Albion (on the Down side) now rejoices in the name European Metal Recycling, although still non-operational.

573] **Rugby progress** (BLN 1044.518): The two spans of the new footbridge ¼ mile north of the station were lifted into place over the weekend of 9/10 June. These are about 2 m higher than the bridge they replace, for catenary clearance, so some marrying up is required to connect them with the remaining sections of the old bridge that are no longer over railway land and are now the responsibility of Rugby Borough Council. The local paper suggests that the bridge will not be available for use until September.

574] **Nuneaton – Rugby Up Slow Line:** The only passenger train currently booked to use this line — and hence the track outside the Rugby north-end flyover — is the 06:37 M-F Crewe to Northampton.

EASTERN MIDLANDS

575] **Ratcliffe-on-Soar developments:** The former south-facing connection in the Up Slow at Ratcliffe South Jn and crossover thence to the Down Slow were removed during track renewal work in progress in this section in May and June. It is believed the work is related to the proposed station for East Midlands Airport (*BLN* 896.273) on which (long-delayed) construction is now beginning. The plain-lining severed the access to the former loop layout within the Ratcliffe Power Station site which served the Fly Ash Loading Bunkers and had no physical connection with the Coal Loop, which is entered from the north and remains active (*BLN* 1000.652). The fly-ash circuit had been disused for some years, though some of the track visible from the main line remains in situ (*BLN* 879.539). It was built with the power station by the CEGB, and was still in limited use after PowerGen takeover when traversed by the IME *East Midlands* railtour on 6 April 1991. The fly-ash trains to Fletton for brickpit filling were then reported to have ceased from 28 February that year but occasional tanker trains continued for oil deliveries as the discharge equipment was on the north side of this circuit after the ash loading bunkers.

576] **Gainsborough’s hidden centre:** A correspondent commented in *BLN* 1038.244 on the spartan character of what is left of Gainsborough Central station, when viewed from the train. Another correspondent actually alighted at it on a Saturday in May. As he stepped on the bare platform he noticed that the three other alighting passengers promptly set off southwards, walking purposefully beside the track in best East European style. Their choice of route became understood when the correspondent looked around for directions to an official exit from the station and initially couldn’t see one. A double row of traffic cones curved away from the bottom of the platform ramp so he followed these across rough ground and they led him to a “station” sign in the undergrowth and to what was presumably built as the station approach road. He continued downhill along the utterly deserted road for a couple of hundred yards, initially between the looming bulk of a derelict steel fabrication plant and the unreal landscape of an abandoned steel stockholding yard. At a sharp bend a temporary fence across the road prevented any incoming cars from venturing further up it to deliver or collect passengers, and a “private road” notice would have completed the unwelcoming impression if it was not for a faded “station” sign attached to the fence behind it.

With such a tortuous and eerie approach to the station, and with passenger trains serving it only on Saturdays, it is questionable whether many Gainsborough residents even know that their “central” station is still open.

NORTHWEST ENGLAND

577] **Wirral-ly mixed up indeed** (*BLN* 1044.527): The re-opening date of 29 May 2007 is questioned on the grounds firstly that it was a Tuesday (and not many re-openings happen on Tuesdays); secondly that the Wirral Loop re-opened on, suspiciously, exactly the same date last year (when it fell on a Monday) after a comparable blockade; and thirdly that no mention of the start date of this year’s alleged closure is recalled (though *BLN* 1039.264 predicted its closure between Monday 23 and Friday 27 April). [*A five-week closure between unstated, but implicitly recent, dates this year has been reported in the commercial railway press.*]

578] **Chorlton Junction – Heaton Mersey:** This portion of former MR main line closed in 1969 but its route is included in one of Metrolink’s long-term projects for reopening (*BLN* 1040.334, below.579). As Manchester’s housing extended southwards in the 1920s and 1930s, several roads were built over the line, all with bridges wide enough to allow for future quadrupling. These bridges remain in good condition. Two parts of the route can be walked today: about a mile from Chorlton Jn to the Princess Road (A5103) bridge, and from School Lane just east of Didsbury station to the site of Heaton Mersey station (1½ miles). In between the trackbed is overgrown, and waterlogged in places. Part of a boundary wall and a setted approach road indicate the position of Withington station. Didsbury station’s site is marked by a “Slug & Lettuce” inn. At Heaton Mersey

the whole area has been landscaped and nothing remains of the station. Metrolink's planned route to Stockport would continue close to the MR's alignment for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, then cross the Mersey three times. But as funds for current Metrolink extensions are hard to obtain, the prospects for later lines seem extremely poor.

579] **Manchester's plans** (BLN 1031.993): Greater Manchester PTE have listed quite a few schemes on their website, <http://www.gmfuturetransport.org/schemes_az.php#ae>, which they propose to implement by 2012, funded by a new congestion charge for the city. Here are those that relate to heavy rail and Metrolink:-

Platform extensions and thereby longer trains.

Multi-modal interchanges at Altrincham, Bolton and Rochdale.

A range of park-and-ride sites.

Extensions (beyond Chorlton St Werburgh's Road) to the airport and to East Didsbury of Metrolink 3b.

Extension (beyond Droylsden) to Ashton-under-Lyne Town Centre of Metrolink 3b.

Infrastructure enhancements (additional turnbacks, power supply upgrades, etc) to support extra trams.

A loop through Oldham town centre.

A spur into Rochdale town centre.

A second city crossing by Metrolink, taking cross-city trams from GMex to Victoria bypassing St Peters' Square and Piccadilly Gardens.

A "public transport link with LRT capacity" from East Didsbury, across the M60 motorway and the River Mersey, and subsequently joining Chestergate to reach a terminus point adjacent to Stockport bus station. The feasibility is also being examined of converting the Manchester – Marple rail line to Metrolink-style operation.

Extension of Metrolink to the Trafford Centre via Manchester United Football Ground.

A contribution towards the full upgrading of Manchester Victoria Station.

580] **Metrolink update** (BLN 1044.534): The Metrolink block was extended to Manchester Victoria (exclusive) on Thursday 21 & Friday 22 June. This was to commission the reinstated crossover. On and from Saturday 23 June the block will be Bury – Crumpsall, with trams reversing out of service over the crossover at Crumpsall.

The work has moved on speedily. For instance, at Bowker Vale tram stop the inbound-platform ticket machine was removed during the week ending 17 June, and the other was taken on the afternoon of 20 June. The station is now completely closed to the public, with a combination of boarding and temporary galvanised fence panels. The bridge is behind the barriers. The PTE booklet says "Tickets for travel on the day of purchase will be available from the majority of Metrolink ticket machines. Day tickets will also be available from replacement bus drivers where Metrolink ticket machines are not available."

Inbound track panels had been transferred on to a train of rail flat wagons before 09:30 21 June.

581] **All this vandalism makes you doubly sick:** BLS members, being responsible people, ought not to condone graffiti daubers and their like, but one sight caused a correspondent to chuckle recently. Some of the letters had been removed from one of the platform signs at Mills Hill station so that it read "ill ill".

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

582] **Paddy Waddell's Railway:** This line was to run for 10½ miles from Lingdale Junction, south of Skelton (grid ref NZ691172) in North Yorkshire, to a junction with the Picton to Grosmont branch of the North Eastern Railway (now the Whitby branch of Network Rail) in NZ778064, a short distance north-northwest of Glaisdale station. It was intended to tap extensive ironstone deposits on the North Yorkshire Moors between Moorsholm and Gerrick. The original Act of Parliament for its construction was passed in 1873 but work did not commence until nine years and various further Acts later. Funds ran out after about two years' work and despite many extensions of time, the line was officially abandoned by Act of Parliament in 1898. The line would have included some heavy engineering, including a viaduct 127 feet high and a quarter-mile-long tunnel,

neither of which was built. Some of the earthworks and one stone overline bridge are still extant and it makes an interesting piece of detective work to follow the course of the line. The exploration is described with several photographs and maps at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/redcar.rotary/PaddyWaddell.htm> [and BLN 255 p127/74 said "a booklet by Mr R F Moore on the intended line has been published by the Whitby Literary & Philosophical Society, Pannett Park Museum".]

NORTHEAST ENGLAND

583] **Cliff House falling** (BLN 1014.286): As a prelude to recovery of Cliff House signal box, between Seaton Carew and Hartlepool, the trailing crossover by the box and the connection from it to the Down Sidings were removed in May. The connection from the south end of the Up Goods to the Up Main has had its catch-siding end plain-lined, suggesting the Up Goods may at a later stage be brought back into use.

SCOTLAND

584] **Govan Branch:** This short (1562 yd) branch was opened by the C&GSWJtR on 1 May 1868 to serve a concentration engineering works on the south bank of the Clyde. The passenger service led a chequered existence; it commenced on 2 December 1868, was withdrawn in 1875, reintroduced 1880, closed 1899, reopened 1902, closed 1906 and reopened in 1911, with the service finally withdrawn on 9 May 1921. There were stations at Ballahouston (opened 1843, closed 1845, reopened and renamed to Ibrox 1871, closed 1967), Ibrox Football Platform (closed 1965) and Govan. The branch remained open to serve Govan Shafting Co until closure 1 May 1972.

It diverged from the Glasgow & Paisley Joint (G&PJt) main line at Ibrox station (NS552643) and curved north, passing under Edmiston Drive to serve electricity, boiler, iron, engine and tube works on both sides of the double-track line. A north-to-west curve was constructed with track laid from Moorpark Junction but it is doubtful whether it was ever joined to the main line. At Govan there was a two-track loco shed, which opened c1899 and closed 1923. The Glasgow District Subway, which passed under Govan station (NS554657), had its Broomloan surface car sheds, reached by a hoist, located on the east side of the goods yard, and they were extended on to the Govan site in 1992.

In March 2001 the branch was accessible on foot through a broken gate at the end of Broomloan Court (just north of Ibrox Jn). The junction of the west curve (which served a refuse destructor) had been infilled. A short distance beyond Edmiston Drive bridge the line was fenced off; the trackbed beyond was used as a test track for Subway cars. There was no trace of Govan station and virtually none of Ibrox, but the mutually adjacent bridges still exist under Edmiston Drive over the Govan branch and the Princes Dock branch (BLN 1044.539). The track was still there in 2001 but looked little used; the BLS had traversed it by special train on 8 November 1980.

585] **One Railway's One-Ticket:** One-Ticket seems to be the name of a co-ordinated series of rail+bus fares offered by a consortium of rail and bus operators centred on Edinburgh and extending to Dunbar, Shotts, Perth and Dundee. One railway is all that's available for the various operators' trains to run on, of course, and one ticket is all you've ever needed for most purely rail journeys!

GENERAL BRITISH ISLES NOTES

586] **Staff halts** (BLN 971.241): A correspondent seeking to list the staff halts currently in use on the Network Rail system has found these:-

Durnsford Road (Wimbledon) (BLN 972.261A): 04:00 M-S and 04:58 M-F Guildford to Waterloo; 04:52 M-S Twickenham to Waterloo; 05:35 SO Epsom to Waterloo; 05:31 SuO Wimbledon to Waterloo. No down trains booked to call.

Battersea Pier (BLN 1032.1021): 10:07 M-S, 10:37 M-F, 11:37 M-F, 14:07 M-S East Grinstead to Victoria. No down trains booked to call.

Hoo Junction (BLN 952.464): Can't find any booked use.

Folkestone East: Are the (much shortened) platforms used as such?

Are there others?

In addition to those on Network Rail, LUL has them at Northumberland Park, Stratford Market and New Cross depots.

The Oakwood Press book by Croughton et al, listing unadvertised stopping places, does not give an opening date for Wimbledon (alias Durnsford Road) Staff Halt. However, an article about to appear in *BRC News*, the magazine of the Bournemouth Railway Club, concerning a journey from Bournemouth to Waterloo in March 1956, includes the statement, "I also noted a new halt for the use of railwaymen between Wimbledon and Earlsfield."

587] **Door pranks recalled** (BLN 1041.389): Some lateral thinking arising from the "open door" correspondence took one member back to his schooldays in the 1930s, when he used to travel in GWR compartment stock where the doors were not self-fastening. The brass handles could only be turned from the outside, which meant lowering the compartment window with a leather strap, leaning out to close the door and then raising the window again. On alighting one should have raised the window and closed the door with the handle if no-one else was entering that compartment or wait for them to enter. Needless to say, almost no-one followed this procedure and the porters became adept at giving the right-away and then twisting the handles as the train left (except when working to rule!). If the train was of any length, say more than four coaches, they reached a frantic twisting speed as it accelerated from the platform.

Of course, an empty compartment with the window still lowered would become decidedly damp in the event of rain and there was another down side in that schoolboy vandals (oh yes, they existed then!) would cut off the leather straps, effectively marooning any passengers entering as the boys left. Often they could not even lower a window to summon assistance and were over-carried. Who said, "Happy days"?

588] **Network Rail Freedom of Information petition** (BLN 1032.1022): Anyone who thinks Network Rail should be brought under the Freedom of Information Act should consider "signing" the "PM Petition" at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/NetworkRail-FOI/>. Apart from any idealistic motivation, it has been observed that such a ruling might force it to release weekly notices, working timetables and so on.

589] **Stationary-challenged Station Roads** (BLN 1043.458): Following Station Road, Bishops Itchington, Warwickshire, would eventually have led one to the GWR's Southam Road & Harbury station, but neither Southam nor Harbury had a such a road, and nor did Long Itchington, which shared an L&NWR station with Southam.

Station Road, Child Okeford, Dorset, led half a kilometre west from the centre of the village into Hayward Lane, which after another kilometre became Bere Marsh, passing under the Somerset & Dorset Joint line. Turning left on to the A357 and passing along Cookswell would bring the station-seeker to Station Road, Shillingstone, and the restored (but still trainless) railway station.

Station Road, Cowie, Stirlingshire, used to lead to Plean station (sometimes called Plean for Cowie) but did not continue directly through to Plean.

The Station Road in Loxwood, close to our printer's village, is not easy to explain. If one drives east along Station Road and continues east along Loxwood Road for another 4 km to the A281 at Bucks Green, turns right there and then takes the first left into Rudgwick, there are Station Road and The Sidings on the left after half a kilometre, but this is certainly stretching the point that Station Road should lead to the station.

If the atlas indexes are to be believed, some places had more than one Station Road. The one leading south from the centre of Broxburn, West Lothian, does eventually reach the closed Drumshoreland station, closed in 1951 but originally known as Broxburn until 1870, but further west and actually in the contiguous village of Uphall another parallel Station Road runs south to Uphall Station village and its eponymous station.

As well as Station Road at St Georges, which served Puxton & Worle station, Worle has its own Station Road, applicable to Worle Town station on the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Light Railway.

Patrixbourne, Kent, has a Station Road that crosses into the adjacent parish of Bekesbourne to find the railway station.

MR105] **Isle of Man Steam Railway**, Isle of Man (*MR* p12) (*BLNs* 967 p74, 1007.MR251, 1010.MR15): With the large numbers of visitors to the Isle of Man for the centenary TT (41 000 visitors to an island of 80 000), IOM Transport ran commuter trains from Port Erin and trams from Ramsey for the 8 days: 29 May – 1 June and 4 – 7 June (8 June being a Manx Bank Holiday as well as 28 May) in order to ease traffic congestion. Unfortunately, pricing and timing together with general apathy meant that they were not a great success. From Port Erin, the car takes 30 minutes, the express bus takes 45 minutes at £4 return and the train was timetabled for 60 minutes at £6 return. Reports suggested that on most days there was only one person on the tram from Ramsey, leaving at 07:10, arriving Derby Castle at 08:25 and returning at 17:40. Your correspondent travelled on the train from Port Erin on 6 out of the 8 days, departing Port Erin at 07:45, arriving Douglas at 08:42, with the return at 17:15. In the first week there was never more than 20 passengers. The first day saw N^o 10 *G H Wood*, recently repainted in Ailsa green, heading 5 coaches — slight overkill for 19 passengers. By the third day the train was down to a sufficient if less comfortable single coach, but after that the formation increased to two or three coaches. On the last evening patronage had increased to 40 for the 17:15 from Douglas to Port Erin, but still hardly enough to justify the service. The train was booked non-stop between Ballasalla and Douglas, leading to an unusual run straight through at Port Soderick. In fact, on most days there was no patronage at Ballasalla and the train only slowed for token exchange. The evening service usually left late because of the late arrival of the 16:15 from Port Erin, due to arrive in Douglas at 17:12. However, the slack timetable usually allowed the time to be made up — on one evening the run was completed in 45 minutes. On Thursday 7 June vast numbers of tourists went to Port Erin during the day, so that every available coach was in use — including F26, which was released from the paintshop with lining completed on only one side. The 16:15 from Port Erin was formed of 10 coaches with N^o 4 *Loch* leading and N^o 13 *Kissack* pushing. The train was full with an estimated 400 passengers. On arrival in Douglas at 17:20, both were removed and N^o 8 *Fenella* took two of the coaches to form the 17:15. Because two rakes of coaches had to be stabled in Port Erin each night, F63, F25 and F62, which are usually stored in the carriage shed at Port Erin awaiting restoration (or scrapping), were moved to the rarely used goods siding at Port St Mary for the fortnight. It is unfortunate that the experiment was badly supported as it is unlikely to be repeated. However, it was wonderful for a fortnight to be able to commute to work by steam train.

MR106] **Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway**, Hampshire (*MR* p17) (*BLNs* 1026.MR183, 1028.MR202, 1032.MR230): A visit to this 7¼"/10¼"-gauge railway on Sunday 10 June found that the tunnel was out of use. This meant trains were using the new(ish) facing crossover at Monks Brook Halt, to allow them to return to Parkway station wrong-line. Another "rare" crossover allowed them to return to the correct line approaching Parkway. The reason for this is the tunnel is in the process of being extended — the work is likely to be completed by the end of July. Until then the "rare" moves occur for all trains.

MR107] **Fairbourne Railway**, Gwynedd (*MR* p28) (*BLNs* 993.MR84, 995.MR100, 1042.MR81): The railway's web-site news page (<http://www.fairbournerrailway.com/railway-news.htm>) has a slightly different slant on one of the halt renamings: Golf Halt retains its long cod-Welsh name ("... the long name is shown in small letters underneath the new sign"; the timetable leaflet says: Golf Halt formally known as Gorsaf...).

MR108] **Tralee & Blennerville Steam Railway**, County Kerry (*MR* p25) (*BLNs* 1019.MR99, 1021.MR122, 1023.MR145): The official response to the current lack of trains is "Regretfully, due to maintenance delays, the T&D Steam Train is unlikely to get back in service in 2007. We hope to be back on the rails in 2008". The railway is run by Tralee Town Council through a subsidiary company. The [Irish] Railway Safety Commission reports that no documentation has been received as yet for the railway's safety case. (This is required for those operators who are defined as Railway Undertakings under Article 2 of the RSA 2005). However, the Commission state that the railway is "not in operation this year". Apparently, there is also a problem with 2-6-2T N^o 5 and the Council seem reluctant or unable to finance its repair.

MR109] **Cavan & Leitrim Railway**, County Kerry (*MR* p26) (*BLNs* 815 p359, 832.MR158, 909.MR250): On 13 May, returning from Sligo, a member visited this 3ft-gauge railway at Dromod. Besides some railway interest there are buses, fire engines and even aeroplanes! The steam

