

Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

Newsletter

Winter 2016

Free

The Museum and its Plans for 2016



Grand Central Rail since 2009

Alexander McDonnell, Gentleman Engineer

BOILERPLATE:

Where to look, blather
and who to complain to.

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Introduction

This is the Newsletter for the Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum and all members get a copy but anyone can read it since surplus copies are given away at events and a PDF version will appear on the website. Someone could be reading this almost anywhere having not heard of the Museum or the Friends until five minutes ago. (Hello!) That is the point of course and the benefits of membership are manifold but I have always thought it would be good to do something that is just for members.

As I type arrangements are still being made but this issue will include an offer exclusive to the Friends. Members will soon find out what this is about if they have not already so I shall leave it at that.

If you have not already realized how a picture of a train arriving at Piercebridge last year appears on the back cover the item starting on the next page will explain all. You may wonder how much I have been paid to plug a computer game (nothing I assure you) and I have devoted quite a lot of space to it but I hope you agree it is of interest.

Tim Ruffle, Editor

Front Cover: The Deltic prototype back on her bogies after returning to Locomotion on October 22, 2015 for a weekend celebrating the 60th anniversary of her introduction. Three production Deltics arrived by rail on the same day including 55002/D9002 *The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. KOYLI* which remains at Shildon to be repainted in two-tone green. *Photo' Tim Ruffle.*

Contacts

If you have material for the newsletter, be it an article, photo' or a short anecdote to fill the last few lines on a page, do send it- it might not get in but it will be considered. Information and announcements for members may well end up here and on the website, which I also look after, but such things should be sent to the Committee.

I much prefer to be contacted by e-mail, especially if it saves me some typing, but you can reach me by post. Note that, In a desperate attempt to be organized, the web-site has its own e-mail address. Material for both can go to either address as long as that is clear.

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This newsletter was printed by Denham Printing Co. Ltd. with whom neither the Editor nor the Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum has any affiliation except as a customer:

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The Editor looks at Train Simulator 2016 from Dovetail Games- the latest version of a game that has been developing for some years.

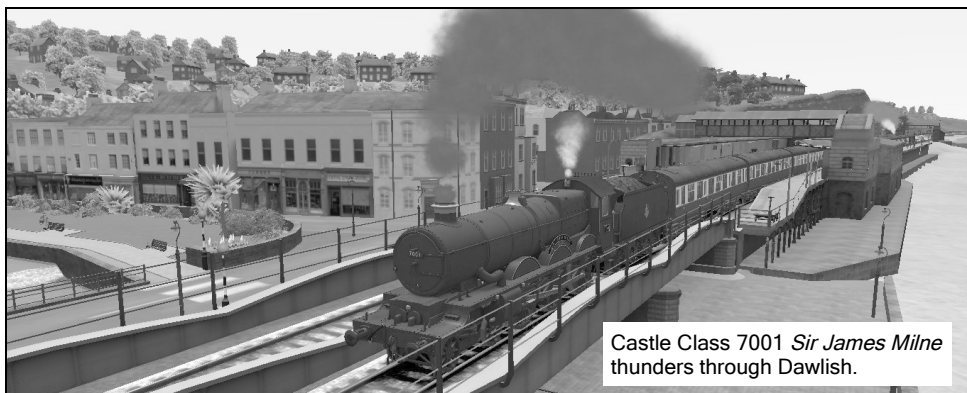
I have rather shied away from train driving simulators in the past fearing that a combination of trains and computers might prevent me from ever getting anything done again but Dovetail Games were at Locomotion last year with the latest version of Train Simulator and giving copies away. How could I resist any longer? Since this is not a computer magazine and readers may not be particularly interested in or knowledgeable about computers or games I have tried to write from the point of view of a rail enthusiast. Necessary technical information will be left until the end.

The line between games and simulators is somewhat blurred. Simulators are serious tools used to train surgeons, engineers, pilots, ship captains, racing drivers and indeed train drivers with the environment reproduced in as much detail as possible including realistic controls. Train Simulator (TS as I shall refer to it henceforth) aims to do the same within the limitations imposed by running on ordinary home computers but with the budget and some know-how you could immerse yourself further in the environment with wrap-around screens (or a 3D headset as some may have seen demonstrated at Locomotion) and even a customized control panel. There is a scoring system but it is a means of gauging your performance- no bonuses for collecting coins, running people over at level crossings or other such nonsense.

Crucially, although it is a serious program, serious is not the antithesis of fun and TS is meant to be fun- at least for those who share our interests. I suspect most people reading this will have driven trains or would give their eye-teeth to do so and TS is for them. The program comes with routes (which can be a line or an area with several individual lines and includes scenarios to run) and some rolling-stock. There is also an editing system that allows users to create their own routes and scenarios but most people wishing to expand their horizons will buy downloadable add-ons in the form of new routes and locomotives. There is some overlap between types of download (or DLCs for DownLoadable Content)- a route may include some rolling-stock while a locomotive is likely to include some new scenarios that you can run if you have the right route already installed. One could spend several hundred pounds on DLCs which is not to say that they are expensive, especially given the amount of work that clearly goes into them, but that there are many.

You can jump in at the deep end and start driving around the landscape if you wish but an Academy section allows you to learn the ropes with the computer advising you. PDF documents installed with the game help but consulting them while using the program will not be easy unless you have two computers or print sections.

An overlay or "Head Up Display" (HUD) has the main controls and information about the train and route ahead at the bottom of the screen so you can control your train no matter your point of view. Viewing options include Line-side (view your train from a series of fixed points as it passes), Helicopter (follow usually from above though you can view from any angle as long as the ground is not in the way) and Free (move around the world almost irrespective of your train). The HUD does alter to suit the traction- regulator and reverser for steam, a notchy throttle and gears for a DMU and so forth but it does standardize the control layout to some extent which makes adapting to one locomotive from another easier. Without the HUD (and you can turn it off) you would need to know the route and keep your point of view in the cab all the time to see signals, meters and gauges. When in the cab the controls are part of your view and you can move them with the mouse but I found that very imprecise- better to get used to the keyboard or a game controller. Even using the HUD I found steam locomotives hard to get to grips with but the computer can do the



fireman's job (in fact why is that not on by default?) and driver advice saw me through. The same options (including driver advice) are available throughout the game.

Three routes come with the game as standard each with a number of career scenarios.

Sherman Hill, USA, the present. A pass through the Laramie Mountains in Wyoming with two lines between Cheyenne and Laramie. Freight and shunting scenarios (or switching if you insist) can be carried out with a variety of Diesel locomotives and the insane 8,500hp GE gas-turbine "bird-burner"- an anachronism but an interesting one.

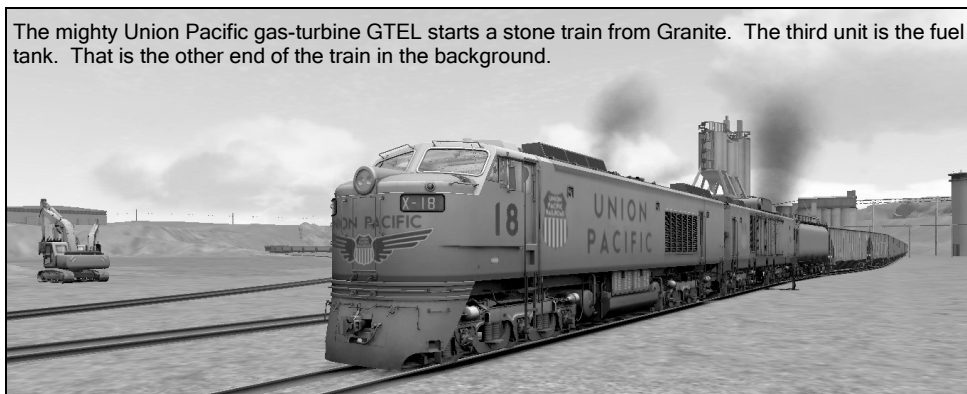
Koln to Koblenz, Germany, the present. A 60 mile section of the electrified West Rhine line with freight and local and express passenger scenarios.

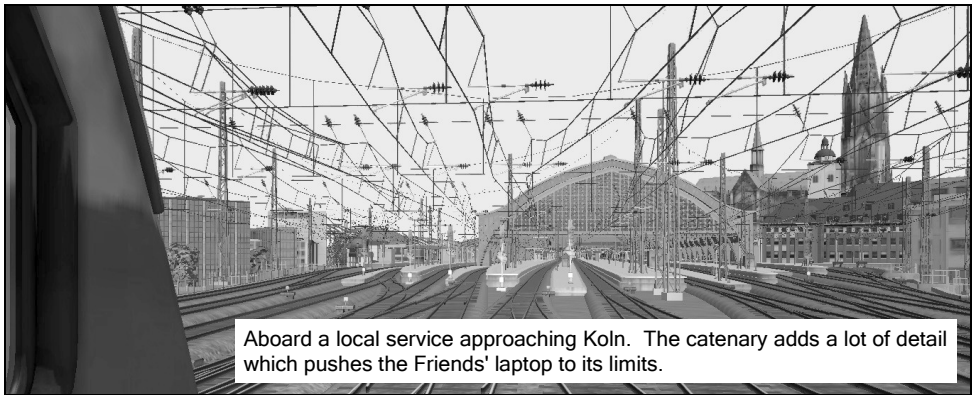
The Riviera Line in the '50s. The Great Western route from Exeter to Kingswear including the seafront section through Dawlish. Scenarios include shunting, freight and passenger work driving steam locomotives from pannier tanks to Kings.

Career scenarios set tasks which vary in difficulty and the time they take to complete so being able to pause and save your progress at any point is handy. You score points or lose fewer if you keep to your timetable or buffer up gently when shunting. At the end, presuming you reach the end, there is a report and your score out of 1,000- anything less and you see where you could have done better. Your score also gets added to an overall total the purpose of which is unclear since it does not appear to count towards anything.

It seems natural to start with the easier scenarios but there is no onus to attempt them in any particular order or at all. You can make your own or download others created by TS players from the Steam site for free though the degree of expertise evinced does vary. Of those I tried some require DLCs not mentioned in their descriptions and do not work but others are derived from time-tables and traffic research.

The mighty Union Pacific gas-turbine GTTEL starts a stone train from Granite. The third unit is the fuel tank. That is the other end of the train in the background.





In Free Roam mode you have a route to yourself, pick a locomotive, set the points and go where you please. Quick Drive is similar but you choose a start and destination (from an oddly limited subset of locations) and the path is set for you. Not all locomotives and routes are compatible with Quick Drive but from those that are you can choose to drive whatever you want wherever you want so you can start a Castle from the top of Sherman hill and have a crack at *Mallard's* record. 145mph since you were wondering.

TS does have its limitations as a simulator. The smoke from a steam locomotive will go through a bridge rather than billowing around it and, in Quick Drive, you can take the Union Pacific GTEL along the Riviera even though it is hopelessly out of gauge fouling platforms, bridges and other line-side features which it simply passes through. I also doubt very much that a Castle would reach 145mph even on a twenty-five miles descent or stay in one piece if it did. The amount of extra computation needed to accurately represent every single physical part of a train and its interaction with every other part and all of the environment would be immense so I believe such a compromise can be excused. Similarly when at a station you will notice that passengers appear out of thin air, occasionally walk in the platform rather than on it and are clearly based on a few stock figures albeit with different coloured clothes. They are best considered part of the scenery and do not detract from the experience of driving the train.

The promotional edition came with an extra route normally available as a separate download: the *Weardale and Teesdale Network*. Set in the '60s just before the axe fell this is centred on Bishop Auckland with the lines to Darlington, Barnard Castle (and on to Middleton in Teesdale), Wearhead and Durham as well as the Darlington to Barney line, and the Haggerleases, Crook and Spennymoor branches (but *not* the ECML from Durham





A view in the cab of a Class 101 DMU with the “Head Up Display”. (This picture is a composite of different images to represent the in-game display and does make the HUD look a little blurry.)

to Darlington). Freight and passenger scenarios explore most of the network. In spite of my Western Region upbringing it is this that most interested me, indeed it prompted this write up, and I would guess the same to be true for most readers.

Since the Darlington to Stanhope stretch survives it offers an opportunity for comparisons between the real world and the simulated. The stations I am most familiar with are Stanhope now on the Weardale Railway, Durham, Bank Top and, of course, North Road and all are instantly recognizable. Shildon and Heighington stand in marked contrast to the featureless platforms of today while closed stations like Piercebridge and Broomielaw compare well with photographs. Landmarks such as the long pedestrian bridge now at the western end of Locomotion add to the effect. So much of the scenery was identifiable in fact that I was slightly surprised not to see some details such as Timothy Hackworth's cottage or Stanhope's distinctive water tower and it does seem odd to model the track to Barnard Castle freight station but not the station itself. The route includes Classes 08, 25 and 37 loco's and a Class 101 DMU as well as Mk1 coaches and wagons. The seven scenarios use only the rolling-stock available with the route. They might not work otherwise but it is a bit odd to get to the main line and not see any express trains.

The easier scenarios are passenger runs and since my train driving experience consists entirely of about 18 miles in the Wensleydale's Class 101 DMU a few years ago I found this

North Road Station in Darlington. The surrounding railway buildings and industries including the Gasworks in the background have vanished but readers may be interested to know that the real Station, built by the S&DR in 1842 and extended several times since, is now a museum.



a particularly good starting point. I was genuinely surprised and delighted by how familiar everything seemed and how right the unit's response to the controls felt. It sounds good as well from the engines and whooshing of brakes to the clicking of the pneumatic system as you change gear. I cannot comment on the locomotives except to say that they sound convincing. The only quibble might be that coasting trains lose little speed on curves which would slow you dramatically in reality.

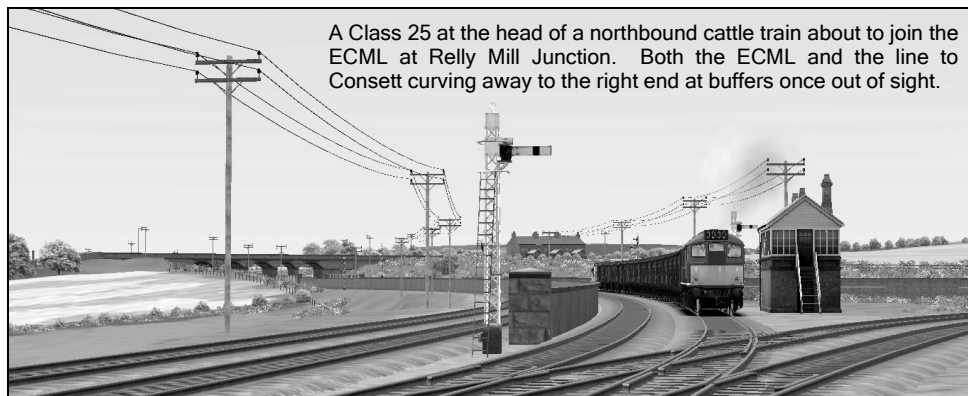
I particularly enjoyed two scenarios over metals most of which I have never seen. One involves taking the DMU from Bishop Auckland to Wearhead and I would happily have driven it back again had that been asked of me. The other puts you in charge of a Class 25 and empty stone wagons from Bank Top to Middleton. Both take about an hour and, to my mind, have the same pleasures as a leisurely drive through the countryside- except that one is driving a train which is better. The trickiest is a short coal train from Shildon to Darlington Gas Works in filthy weather- yes you do need the wipers on. It was the only scenario I found at all frustrating since you have to shunt it together first and set points (would the driver ever do that?) against a tight schedule but I will go back to it now my shunting has improved.

This is very much a first impression of TS. I have not tried using the editing functions to create new routes or even scenarios within the routes already available for to understand them would require no little time and close study of the manual (as will the DB signalling system). All I have done is drive trains and that has been a ball.

The Technical Bit

Train Simulator 2016 runs on versions of Windows from Vista onwards and calls for a 2.8GHz Core 2 Duo processor or equivalent, 2GB of RAM, a Direct-X 9 compatible graphics card with 512MB of RAM, a sound card and at least 6GB of free hard-disk space to install it all. This is not basic but not outlandish for most new PCs (bought with Windows 8.1 or 10). Older machines, particularly those running Vista, will probably struggle unless they were pretty high spec' in their day and note that this is a recommended minimum. As is always the case with games that render a changing 3D environment TS will run more smoothly and look better with more and faster everything.

I can only describe installation from download but, bar the waiting, the process should not be too different from working from disk and anyone who has installed software on a Windows PC will be able to cope. I began with a code and a line of instruction saying where to enter that code on the Steam website which was all that was needed although I would advise you to think of a good password before you start since the first step involved setting up a free Steam account. Next a Steam program was installed which downloaded and installed TS in turn... eventually. The TS download is over 6GB or well over three hours at the 5Mbps my by no means slow broadband manages. Steam remains integrating itself with TS and giving access to the Steam market place and DLCs both free and paid for. It also acts as a sort of social network for users



who like that sort of thing but is unobtrusive otherwise. Note that, although you need the Steam account and broadband to access extras and run updates, you do not need to be online just to play the game.

TS makes a poor first impression by trying to play a video which, in my experience, has not worked properly yet- happily one can skip it by pressing Escape then turn it off altogether. The only real bug encountered affected the mouse cursor which disappeared when I tried to drive anything. This is a well-known clash readily solved by turning off mouse-trails in the Windows control panel. A minor niggle but it should not happen and I for one find mouse-trails helpful in general use so having to turn it off just to accommodate TS is annoying.

I have installed TS on two Windows 8.1 machines: a fairly basic desktop PC with a 2GHz AMD A4 processor and the Friends' laptop which has a 1.7GHz Intel Core i3 (both CPUs are more modern than a Core 2 Duo and, particularly in the case of the i3, make up for their relatively slow clock speeds in other ways). Both have a generous 8GB of RAM but their integrated sound and graphics systems are far from top of the line and, crucially, share the main system RAM with the CPU which compromises both.

Both machines cope about equally well with TS which is to say adequately. Both take some time to set up a drive- certainly long enough to put the kettle on. Initially the frame rate was painfully slow which was hardly surprising since both have big high-resolution screens. I reduced the game resolution and the amount of detail which is easily done. The game now runs more smoothly though it can still slow particularly on the Rhine route where the prevalent catenary adds a great deal of complicated detail. Some subtlety is lost- buildings can look like boxes with windows drawn on and there are harsh edges. There are other signs that both systems still work hard to keep up as scenery pops into view in the middle distance and occasionally trees appear in mid-air before the hills they stand on.

Due to the lack of dedicated RAM for graphics the computers I used stretch the minimum requirements and neither would impress a dedicated gamer but, even with the compromises and the odd graphical glitch TS remains an atmospheric and eminently enjoyable experience. If you do have beefier hardware, particularly graphics hardware with its own RAM, the experience will be better. It should be noted that, with the exception of the picture on the back cover, all the screen shots used to illustrate this feature were taken from the laptop at the reduced detail level.

TS has an RRP of £29.99 and can be bought on disk or from the Steam website. The Weardale and Teesdale pack is £24.99 and only available by download. Other versions of TS are available which bundle different routes and rolling-stock and some DLCs are also sold in bundles. Special offers may apply to the program, DLCs or both.

The Dovetail Games website is www.dovetailgames.com from which you can find the link to the Rail Simulator page of Steam. There are many videos on YouTube and other sites showing gameplay footage and tutorials posted by dedicated users.

A freight train with a Class 37 in charge crosses Lands Viaduct over 160ft above the Haggerleases branch and River Gaunless.



CHRISTMAS:

Railway Quiz
10 December 2015

December's Christmas get together was fairly quiet. Perhaps people were taking advantage of the good weather but those present enjoyed refreshments and a film about RAF Goosepool now Durham Tees Valley Airport. Goosepool was the base for RCAF bomber squadrons during the War- perhaps an unlikely topic for a group of rail enthusiasts but the film was an interesting local history document.

John Dodds' return as quiz master was greeted with cheers, weeping and dancing in the streets after 2014's fiendishly difficult (so I'm told) quiz. You can see if you agree right now. Answers are on page 19 at the end of Mixed Goods.

1. What is the name of the new road just to the north of North Road Station?
2. In North America what does letters C.P.R. stand for (in a railway not first aid context)?
3. Which Leeds station was served by the Great Northern Railway?
4. A4 Pacific number 2512 or 60017 had what motif on its boiler sides?
5. What year did the current Bank Top Station open? (It is the third built on the site.)
6. What locomotive class does an HST (IC-125) power car belong to?
7. What is the name of Carlisle's station?
8. What is the name of the rod linking the driving wheels on a steam engine?
9. What is the specific type of automatic door that moves out and to the side of the entrance when it opens called? (Used on, amongst others, Virgin Electric trains.)
10. Who starred in the comedy film *The General* (B/W, 1926, silent)? (He also wrote and directed.)
11. Who was the fireman on *Mallard's* record run?
12. Which firm made the Valenta Diesel engines originally fitted to the HST?
13. What is the "working fluid" in an internal combustion engine?
14. Who was the star of the film *Oh, Mr. Porter!* (B/W, 1937)?
15. What is the trade name of the rail welding process that uses aluminium and iron-oxide?
16. Who wrote the "verse commentary" for the short film *The Night Mail* (B/W, 1936)?
17. What was the name of the pub' at the level crossing on Byerley Road in Shildon?
18. ...And what was the name of the rope-worked incline immediately to the west of it?
19. Name the three-stage steam exhaust system developed by French engineer André Chapelon incorporating a second-stage nozzle designed by the Finn Kyösti Kylälä.
20. Who wrote the novel *The Heart of Midlothian*?
21. Which has the longer wavelength- red light or green light?
22. What does T.P.W.S. stand for?
23. What is the name of Hull Station?
24. What is the name of the rail servicing depot to the east of Edinburgh?
25. The Shinkansen service between Tokyo and Shin-Aomori which opened in 2011 is called the Hayabusa. What does that mean?

Tie Break Question: How many pistons does the Napier Deltic engine have?

Sarah Gouldsbrough gave a comprehensive review of the Museum's current and future activities. Report by Richard Wimbury and Tim Ruffle.

The Museum's Curator and Manager Leona White-Hannant is currently on maternity leave having given birth to a healthy son, Arthur, in early December. Both are well and Arthur has already made his first visit to the Museum. Sarah is acting as head of the Museum; Kelly deals with administration and events; There are three regular visitor assistants plus several casual staff. All the staff are undergoing dementia friendly training.

A new permanent employee, Alison Grange, was taken on in 2015 as Collections and Learning Assistant after her work on the World War One project which is only possible because Leona saves a salary by doing two jobs. Chris, an ex-teacher, is a temporary appointment covering Sarah on learning and access.

The Santa at the Station event in December was sold out with over 600 children visiting over two weekends. Several stalls and groups participated including the model railway club and the Stockton and Darlington Railway Youth Team which, amongst its other activities, has adopted North Road Station. There were many positive comments and the event reached out to many new visitors.

The Museum's educational role remains vitally important with thousands of children coming to the Museum every year in school parties. There will be Design Technology workshops after Easter.

Flying Scotsman is finally back on the rails looking very striking at the moment in wartime black. She will visit Locomotion in July and the Museum is in discussions with the NRM about ways of supporting (and, it is hoped, benefiting from) the occasion.

The Museum has received several small donations over the last few months. These are mainly books which include Code of Conduct instructions such as *The Railway's Correct Procedure for the Cleaning of Lavatories*.

Some of the non railway related items in the John Mallen collection, which the Museum holds jointly with NERA, are to be transferred to the Mining Institute in Newcastle. These are items and records associated with colliery workings and few people seek them out at the Museum so the Institute will be a more appropriate home for them.

Projects for 2016

The WWI project funding came to an end in September but work has continued into 2016 since the volunteers involved are keen to see the job finished properly. Cross checking as many sources as possible to ensure that no names are omitted from the lists is expected to be completed around the end of February. Sarah was full of praise for the volunteers and the job they do going through archived material much of which is hand written. With handwriting changing over the years and some records fading they can be difficult to read- so much so that the County Record Office gave a days training for the volunteers. The archive has formed the basis of a "pop-up" exhibition- a series of six banners around the Museum relating railway and family history.

With such an able and willing group of volunteers available discussions have started as to the next project they could be involved in. It may concern transcribing sickness and insurance records in a similar fashion.

The long term "River Tees Rediscovered" project is covering the Tees from its mouth to Piercebridge improving walks and leisure facilities as well as carrying out archaeological work. The Roman fort is well known but Piercebridge was also the site of a skirmish in the Civil War and the project will seek traces of it. Like the Museum the Piecebridge site is Council run with a great deal of management overlap so, although it is not railway related, the Museum will be involved in that peripherally.

The North Road Works Memories project to mark 50th anniversary of closure has begun. Anybody who might be interested should contact Alison. There are more details in Mixed Goods (p.18).

Events

The Singular Exploits of Sherlock Holmes is a one man tribute to Arthur Conan-Doyle's immortal sleuth. In June History Wardrobe will return with *The Very Victorian Lady* showing how Victorian women from all walks of life dressed. In June and July Darlington's Green Theatre Company will commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death with evening performances using the Museum portico as a stage.

That will be in addition to all the events we have come to expect. There will be family art and craft events in school holidays throughout the year, the usual Easter Sunday Special, the vintage vehicles rally in May, a summer fun day in July with all sorts of entertainment and activities. September will be particularly busy with the Model Railway Club having its show over the first weekend, Heritage Open Days on the second weekend and the Stockton and Darlington Anniversary being marked on Sunday 25 by a Victorian family fun day. There will be a Hallow-e'en event in October and Santa will return to the Station for a couple of weekends in December. Your editor wonders how he finds the time.

Exhibitions

The fruitful relationship with the North Eastern Railway Association will continue with NERA curating three exhibitions. *175 Years of the York to Darlington Line* will be followed up with *Loco's and Famous Expresses on the York to Darlington Line*. *150 Years of the Forcett Branch* will describe the freight line that joined the Darlington and Barnard Castle line at Forcett Junction near Gainford (not the Fawcett Branch as some listings have it).

Other exhibitions will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group and *The Splendour of Steam* will show paintings by local artist Stephen Bainbridge who works with acrylics. Exhibitions on non-railway subjects will be about Lego thanks to the Brick Alley LUG (Lego Users Group) who Sarah noted were most impressed by the Lego train-set she has had since childhood. *Safe and Sound* will be about the emergency services in the region (with Tees Valley Museums) and *Little Works of Art* will display 100 years of greetings cards.

The Museum's website is www.head-of-steam.co.uk. The 2016 Programme is at the printers at the time of writing but the Diary section (p.20) includes a précis.

TALK: Alexander McDonnell, Gentleman Engineer

2 July 2015

Andrew Everett MA has spoken to the Friends several times and stepped in at short notice to tell us about an Irish engineer whose career included a brief period as Locomotive Superintendent at the NER. Report by Richard Wimbury.

Alexander McDonnell (1829-1904) was the scion of a long-established Irish family with lands in Co. Antrim; his ancestors had become Lords of the Isles and consequently gained land in Scotland. He was born in Dublin by which time his family belonged to the professional classes and were mill owners. He studied mathematics at Trinity College in Dublin, graduating in 1851. He then joined a firm involved in the manufacture of ropes, communication cables and locomotives and which had involvement in railways in the Balkans after the Crimean War.

From 1854 to '57, he was Civil Engineer for the Newport, Abergavenny and Hereford Railway (NAHR) during the construction of the Taff Vale extension with its remarkable Crumlin and Hengoed viaducts. 1857 to '58 saw him studying in France and then he returned to the NAHR and was responsible for the construction of Hereford station. On 17 February 1862, he left the company receiving several presentations in gratitude from them.

In 1861, he gained his MA from Dublin and the same year began a long association with the IEEI (Irish Engineers). From 1862 to '63, he was engineer for the Danube and Black Sea Railway and was also responsible for commissioning

A McDonnell Great Southern and Western Railway Class 101, No.186 in steam at Whitehead in County Antrim in 2010. She and one surviving sister, No.184, comprise the most numerous preserved class of steam locomotive in Ireland. This is quite appropriate since the class was by far the most numerous in Ireland. Designed for freight but very capable all-rounders 111 were built from 1866 to 1903, the vast majority at Inchicore, with only minor modifications to the design between batches.



locomotives from Beyer-Peacock. From 1864 to '82 he held the position of Locomotive Superintendant of the Great Southern & Western Railway, Ireland (GS&WR), and during this period his aims were to improve and standardise locomotives and rolling stock, improve the track, keep reliable records and make the line self-sufficient within a tight budget. He was also involved in philanthropic activities during the Irish famine.

McDonnell was particularly noted for encouraging younger engineers and furthering their careers- among those nurtured by his "Inchicore School" were Sir John Aspinall, H.A. Ivatt and R.E.L. Maunsell.

From 1865 until his death, he was a member of the IMechE (England), and showed particular interest in train brakes and crankshafts. In 1866, he produced his first standardised 0-6-0 locomotive. He wanted to ensure a standardised livery, cab, footplate dimensions, cone-shaped chimney, folding smokebox doors and Ramsbottom safety valves.

1869 saw the production of a standardised 2-4-0 express passenger loco, followed in 1870 by a 0-4-4 tank engine for lighter passenger duties. In 1871, he became a member of the ICE (England), his particular concerns being repairs and renewals of locos. 1871 to '72 saw him in Bavaria studying a peat-burning locomotive but it proved too expensive for Ireland. In 1873 he was interviewed for the post of Locomotive Superintendant for the Midland Railway, but was not appointed. A standardised 0-6-4 tank loco for shunting and banking duties appeared in 1875 and 1877 saw the introduction of the lightweight 4-4-0 Class 2s which were such a success on the lightly laid Kerry line they became known as

Alexander McDonnell at the NER

McDonnell succeeded Edward Fletcher at the NER. Fletcher had begun his career apprenticed to George Stephenson and been Locomotive Superintendent at the Newcastle and Darlington Junction Railway then the NER since its amalgamation in 1854. He was immensely capable and ahead of his time- having noted the increasing weight and speed of trains he favoured large engines and retired leaving the NER with 0-6-0 freight and 2-4-0 passenger locomotives that were notably superior to those of its rivals. A Northumbrian he fitted in well, indulged the variety of practices the NER inherited from its constituent companies and was esteemed by the company and engineers. He was always going to be a tough act to follow.

The NER was well aware that Fletcher's tolerance for variation, although probably helpful in the patchwork early years, had led to a lack of standardization- locomotives in the same class had variations even in boiler and frame dimensions as different builders saw fit. McDonnell was appointed with the express aim of reorganizing three months before Fletcher retired and perhaps he was seen to have usurped Fletcher's position since he received a frosty reception and never enjoyed any great measure of popularity. Even minor changes to Fletcher designs were greeted with dismay and his insistence on a left-hand driving position company wide was beyond the pale. The reorganizing of Darlington and Gateshead works went slowly greatly reducing production capacity so when his own locomotives were introduced some had to be built at Hawthorn & Co. and Robert Stephenson & Co. introducing variations within the classes ironically.

McDonnell designed two loco's for the NER both considerably larger than anything he had produced for the GS&WR. The graceful Class 38 4-4-0 express loco' was a similar size to Fletcher's Class 901 2-4-0 and introduced the swing-link bogie to English rails but all round performance was poor. This may have been due to design deficiencies (in ►►

Kerry Bogies (they were the first European loco's with American type swing-link bogies) though they were used more widely.

1882 saw his move from the GS&WR to the NER at Gateshead, where his agenda was to rationalise and standardise production, and rationalise pay grades amongst other things. He continued to produce papers for the professional societies. In 1884 he resigned his position; there had been poor financial returns and disagreements with both management and unions but the question remains- did he jump or was he pushed? He then worked for two years as Boiler Works Manager for Sir William Armstrong at his Elswick works. In 1887 he moved to London, which remained his main base until his death. He acted as a consultant in electrical engineering and was involved in the production of the Thorsen Nordenfelt submarine in Barrow-in-Furness. 1888 saw him in Brazil and perhaps in Australia as a railway consultant and in 1889 he was arbitrator in a dispute between the NER and the Whitby Scarborough Railway. In 1894 he produced a paper on the Liverpool Overhead Railway and was involved with Hiram Maxim's attempt at steam powered flight.

McDonnell had married Isabelle Blanch Grenfell in 1867 and they had three children. On 4 December 1904, he was on his way back to Ireland when he suffered a stroke on the train. He continued to Holyhead where he died in the Station Hotel.

Two of McDonnell's GS&WR Class 101 0-6-0s are preserved by the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland. Andrew Everett's biography of Alexander McDonnell will be published at Easter 2016 by Melrose Books

particular the boiler appears to have been too small) or, it has been suggested, crews not accepting them. They were swiftly reallocated to secondary routes and an order for a third batch cancelled. (The Tennant committee used materials and parts already in hand to make the eight strong Class 8- undistinguished 0-6-0 shunters later LNER J74). His Class 59 freight 0-6-0 (LNER J22) lacked the power of Fletcher's Class 398 which, along with almost every other aspect of its design, made it a target for criticism.

The failings of his locomotives appears to have triggered McDonnell's downfall at the NER. Marginalized he resigned considering his position untenable but the company would benefit from his brief tenure for the rest of its existence. His eye for talent had led to the hiring of several people including Wilson Worsdell and Walter Smith who would go on to become significant NER figures while his drive for standardization had made significant albeit rocky progress and would be continued. He received a years salary as a "golden handshake" so it seems his efforts were not entirely unappreciated.

It was a year or so before McDonnell was succeeded (by Thomas W. Worsdell) and the NER still needed an express loco'. The Class 38's place was taken by the Class 1463 2-4-0's (LNER E5) designed by a committee chaired by the NER's General Manager Henry Tennant after whom the class became known. In spite of their hasty development (the first entered service before the last 38s) the Tennants proved excellent. They did use some components already made for the cancelled 38s but, rather pointedly, were developed from Fletcher's Class 901.

The 38s appear to have coped well with their lighter duties but only one survived into LNER ownership and that for a mere 47 days. The hostility towards the Class 59 seems to have dampened once McDonnell was gone and some crews rated it the NER's best goods locomotive of its time but most were rebuilt with right-hand drive. They did last longer than the 38s withdrawals beginning in 1924 with the last two scrapped in 1930.

*The Friends have had a talk about Grand Central Rail before. **Sean English** is a career railwayman who has worked for GCR since its early days and is Chief Operating Officer and acting Managing Director. He is also Chairman of the Northern Committee of the Railway Benefit Fund for retired and active railway personnel. **Jonathan Kirby** is Area Customer Service Manager South. Together they brought us up to date and **Vic Branfoot** described his experience as a Station Ambassador at Hartlepool for GCR. Report by Bill Ferguson.*

The Past

Grand Central is an Open Access operator running on a commercial basis purchasing individual slots to run services unlike a franchise. It was established with the aim of serving towns and cities which did not already have direct services to London. Under the Open Access framework new services must increase traffic rather just poaching from the franchises and when GC first applied for access rights in the early 2000s it failed to convince the Rail Regulator.

A clearer case for services from West Yorkshire was presented in 2005 and naturally that persuaded the Office of the Rail Regulator to grant access rights for North East (Sunderland) to London services. The delay cost GC their original choice of rolling stock (Bombardier 222's) and GC's options were further limited by the terms of access which specified 125mph stock. Most operators lease trains from ROSCOs (rolling stock leasing companies) but GC ended up buying three HST sets from Porterbrook's train "graveyard" in Long Marston for restoration to running order. This, and some opposition, caused further delays before the service finally launched in December 2007. 30 year old HSTs stored in a field would not have been the first choice but GC was in business running one train a day each way building up the service as rolling stock became available.

The service expanded to four trains a day in 2009 with the lease of two Alston Class 180 DMUs from the ROSCO Angel and in March 2010 Grand Central sold their HST sets to Angel leasing them back. This freed capital for further refurbishment including replacing the original Paxman Valenta engines with MTU units as part of a programme already initiated by Angel. The Paxman engines fail current emission and noise standards and the MTU engines are now fitted in nearly all HSTs. The work also improved reliability which



An HST at Kings Cross on 18 December 2007- the first day of Grand Central Services. Photo' Wikipedia Commons.

had been a cause for concern. The Class 180 units were not without their own issues, indeed their poor reputation was part of the reason that they were available having been returned to Angel by First Great Western. As with the HSTs they were not regarded as an ideal choice but, thanks to an industry wide effort by operating companies and Angel, reliability has come on in leaps and bounds.

In 2009 Grand Central was granted access rights to run services from Kings Cross to Bradford and the West Yorkshire service began in May 2010 after some delay acquiring rolling stock in the shape of three more Class 180 units. The Class 180 can operate all of GC's services but, although HSTs used to run to Bradford, they are no longer suitable for the route and only work the North East trains.

From the start Grand Central kept the fare structure simple eschewing booking fees and allowing passengers to pay on the train. The company is now owned by Arriva (which is in turn part of Deutsche Bahn) which bought it in November 2011. Happily GC has kept its own identity while benefiting from the support of a large company.

Present

Grand Central now uses six of its eight train sets per day to run up to eighteen services stopping at fourteen stations and carries well over a million passengers per year. It has about 130 employees over 90% of them recruited from the markets the company serves and Grand Central goes to some lengths to foster community links. It has spent some £400,000 on station improvements most notably initiating and contributing to the complete renovation of the station building at Wakefield Kirkgate on the West Riding route. Previously Wakefield was rated as one of the worst stations on the network. Locally GC has funded improvements to Eaglescliffe and Northallerton car parks.

On a smaller scale the company supports the various "Friends of the Station" voluntary groups who try to improve their stations and their surroundings with tidying, decorating and other touches such as planters. It also began the Station Ambassador scheme in concert with Friends groups which is described in greater detail in the box-out. Liaising with local groups at events such as this talk is an important part of GC's strategy to improve its service.

Grand Central is not above joining in with other events or staging its own. Trains have carried red noses for Comic Relief and the wings of GC's Art-Deco style logo have been modified to look like a curly moustache for Movember. GC have run a charity Ghost Train for a couple of years suitably decorated, with amateur dramatics groups providing ghosts and poetry readings, staff donating their time and Network Rail donating the path.

Station Ambassadors

Station Ambassador Vic Branfoot, erstwhile Friends Membership Secretary and Hartlepool resident, described the scheme which was the idea of Tom Clift, the late Managing Director of Grand Central.

Clift was concerned that unmanned stations were an obstacle for boarding passengers who required any kind of assistance- particularly GC passengers who typically travel long distances. The Station Ambassador scheme was introduced at Hartlepool (which is unmanned on Sundays) in 2010. Hartlepool now has twelve Station Ambassadors who work in pairs and the scheme spread to include Eaglescliffe in 2012 and Brighouse in 2014. GC passengers boarding at northern stations are almost invariably heading south and the Ambassadors are present to cover the first three of the four Sunday services (not all are available for the last service and GC has opted to have no coverage for it rather than inconsistent coverage).

Ambassadors are volunteers but in all other respects accredited GC employees, starting their day checking in with Headquarters in Birmingham. As a matter of routine they keep themselves informed so they can answer enquiries about punctuality, the ►►

Future

For passengers, attention will be paid to improving train interiors on both the HSTs which are showing their age and the Class 180s which are little changed from their original First Great Western specification and not well suited to the type of service GC offers. The slam-doors on HST sets are to be replaced by electronically operated doors and the WiFi on all trains will be improved to accommodate the increasing demand from all kinds of connected devices.

Even with MTU engines the HSTs will become non-compliant in 2020 by which time they will be well over 40 years old anyway and Grand Central aims to replace them by 2018 with more Class 180 units. Five are currently operating on the Great Western main line and will become available once electrification is completed which should happen eventually. Since they can work in multiples having all services worked by Class 180s introduces the possibility that both a North East and West Riding service could run together to and from Kings Cross with the northbound trains separating at Doncaster and the southbound joining there. Using a single ECML path would not just save money for GC but free up some of the busy line's capacity.

Grand Central's access rights have been extended to 2026 and in that period they intend to invest £7.6m in stations and rolling stock. GC has clearly impressed its parent company and Arriva, through its Alliance Rail Holdings division, may it use it as a model to open up a West Coast route as far as Blackpool. Such services may carry the Grand Central brand though another suggestion is Great North Western Railways. It is still under discussion and Sean English's personal view is that GC will remain focused on its east coast services and he would like that to be seen to be the case rather than having the brand plastered on other operations.

The company will focus on growing markets, adding capacity, keeping their sign, brand and product differentiation from the other main operators on common routes. Their future focus will be to meet targets; ensure safety; manage costs and maintain their high customer satisfaction ratings

This was an excellent afternoon marked by their being, by invitation, much discussion, comments and questions all of which was conducted in a very frank and honest manner by the Grand Central speakers. The mode was very much like a seminar with questions about the pros and cons and economics of getting motive power amongst other things. Clearly Grand Central is market and customer driven and seeks to differentiate itself from other train operators. Their website is www.grandcentralrail.com.

type of train (Class 180 or HST) and its orientation or even where a particular coach may be when the train stops.

Having a presence at the station can be particularly useful in the event of any disruption to service. If a train runs late passengers will be kept informed and the ambassadors can arrange alternative transport if that becomes necessary. On one occasion extreme disruption was caused by vandalism closing the line at Stockton. North bound trains had to run to Newcastle then double back to Hartlepool and south bound passengers were conveyed to Darlington to start their journeys. Even though it was not a Sunday GC contacted the ambassadors to help at a moments notice.

Vic gave other examples of specific situations where ambassadors were called in to help- for instance the special trains laid on to convey Hartlepool United football fans to matches against York. The two trains each way are reckoned to carry to over 1,300 passengers. Extra trains also ran to take racing fans to the Ebor Handicap and shoppers to the York Christmas Market in early December. The Ambassadors passed on comments about the last noting that people would have liked to go to the Market in late November and the special timetables in future will reflect this.

MIXED GOODS:

Stuff That Doesn't
Fit Anywhere Else

Membership Matters

June Palmer the Friends' Membership Secretary suffered a stroke at the end of last year. She is back at home after her stay in hospital but, for the moment, membership matters are being dealt with by our Chairman Gillian Wetherell. E-mails to the Membership Secretary address membership@friendsofdrcm.org will go to both June and Gill and anything that was sent to June's postal address should already have been passed on so if you have sent off your membership renewal and not heard anything it would be best to get in touch again.

Committee News

Don Whitfield and Jennifer Doran have both resigned from the Friends' Committee recently citing ill health. Derek Reeves departed last year. Bill Ferguson and Stephen Myrddin-Baker have joined so the net loss has been one member but the Committee was already too small and that is not the whole story.

You have just read about June Palmer and family and other obligations may keep any member away reducing numbers still further. The latest meeting had three members present which is unworkable. Gillian Wetherell makes no secret of the fact that she wishes to cut back on her activities and indeed is under medical advice to do so but, as well as being Chairman and now acting Membership Secretary, she has been arranging the speaker programme for some years. Treasurer John Carter is rarely able to attend any meetings these days due to work and would like to relinquish the position though he continues to oversee the accounts for which we may all be immensely grateful.

The Committee needs more members especially members who would be willing to take on positions such as Programme Secretary and Treasurer. Greater numbers would also allow some breathing room to better consider projects to support the Museum and the build up to the 200th Anniversary of the S&DR.

North Road Works Memories

The Museum is appealing to local people for their help to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the closure of North Road Works.

The aim of the *North Road Works Memories* project is to collect the reminiscences of men and women who were employed at the works or had relatives who worked there. These accounts are being used to create a 'blog'- an online archive available to the public which is already taking shape at: www.northroadworksmemories.wordpress.com. The year long project will include a series of events including one to mark the closure on Saturday 2 April. It will finish with an exhibition at the Museum in early 2017.

Former employees and relatives are invited to contribute memories by completing a form that is available at the Museum, The Centre for Local Studies in Crown Street Library and online at www.head-of-steam.co.uk. For more information see the website or contact Alison Grange at the Museum.

Rail Tours in the Region

This information is taken from www.uksteam.info, www.railtourinfo.co.uk and the various rail tour operators own websites. No locomotive movements are listed- although websites do list some movements they tend not to be arranged as far ahead as tours and are much more subject to change. This list is not claimed to be comprehensive and, although the information here is repeated in good faith, you are advised to check nearer the time. How much information there is available about rail-tours varies greatly from operator to operator.

Thursday 17 March. Steam Dream's *Cathedrals Express* is now bound for Lincoln not York.

Saturday 2 April. The Railway Touring Company's *Wansbeck* to Newcastle stopping at Darlington and Durham then explore the Blythe and Tyne Railway and Lynmouth line, double back to join the ECML at Newcastle leaving it at Tursdale to go via Stockton and Middlesbrough and along the Boulby freight line topped and tailed by LNER K4 61994 *The Great Marquess* and K1 62005. The steam locomotives will be exchanged for a Diesel which, it seems, is not worthy of note at Grangetown on the way back to Darlington from where the tour will head to Newcastle then return to York.

York 06:21, Darlington 07:15, Durham 08:10, Newcastle 08:50.
(Diesel) Newcastle 20:13, Durham 21:07, Darlington 21:35, York 22:18.

Saturday 9 April. Pathfinder Tours' *Deltic Borderer* will make its way from Derby to York where 55009 *Alycidon* will take over up the Northumbrian coast to Edinburgh and Tweedbank on the new Waverley line. 55009 will be back in charge from Edinburgh to York on the return.

York a. 8:30, 21:15.

Sunday 10 April. PT's *Maybach Yorky* will run from Derby to York and back behind D1015 *Western Champion*. Approximate times for York: a. 13:00, d.15:30.

Tuesday 10 May. Steam Dreams' *Cathedrals Express* is listed on UK Steam and in SD's online brochure but nowhere else on SD's website. It should run from York to Newcastle and return behind 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. No timings are listed.

Tuesday May 10. GBRf's *Atlantic Star* (promoted by UK Railtours) will run from King's Cross to York behind a vintage electric either 86101 or 87002. At York there will be some fuss made unveiling 66779 (the last class 66) before the return behind a Diesel. No times are listed,

Saturday 14 May. RTC's *Coast to Coast Express* will run from Liverpool to Scarborough and return behind LMS 46100 *Royal Scot* or 461115 *Scots Guardsman*.

York 11:30, Scarborough a. 12:30, d. 16:00, York 17:00.

Tuesdays from 17 May. UK Steam notes that West Coast Rail's *Dalesman* which was to have run to the Settle and Carlisle from York has been cancelled but actually seems to have been rescheduled for Thursdays.

Thursday 19 May. Steam Dreams' *Cathedrals Express* is listed on UK Steam and in SD's online brochure but nowhere else on SD's website. It should run from King's Cross to York and return behind 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. No timings are listed.

Thursdays 19 May to 5 August. West Coast Rail's *Dalesman* will start from York and pick up on its way to the S&C and Carlisle then return. Steam locomotives are not listed.

York d. 8:33, a. 22:00

Saturday 11 June. RTC's *Tynesider* will start at Cleethorpes with 60103 in charge, make its way to the ECML via Grimsby, Barnetby and Scunthorpe thence to York, Newcastle and Morpeth (via the Blyth/Tyne) and return directly to York where a Diesel will take over to complete the return journey.

York 10:00, Newcastle 12:30, Morpeth a.13:40, d. 16:30, Newcastle 16:50, York 19:00.

Quiz Answers

1. Bonomi Way.
 2. Canadian Pacific Railroad.
 3. Leeds Central.
 4. A Silver Fox.
 5. 1887.
 6. Class 43.
 7. Citadel.
 8. The coupling rod.
 9. Plug doors.
 10. Buster Keaton.
 11. Tony Bray.
 12. Paxman.
 13. Air (heated and expanded by combustion though it may be).
 14. Will Hay.
 15. The Thermit process.
 16. W.H. Auden.
 17. The Masons Arms (now The New Masons).
 18. The Brusselton Incline.
 19. The Kylchap exhaust (*Kylälä-Chapelon*).
 20. Sir Walter Scott.
 21. Red (brake and fog-lights are red because particles and moisture in the air have less effect on longer wavelengths).
 22. Train Protection Warning System.
 23. Hull Paragon.
 24. Craigentinny.
 25. Peregrine Falcon (the name has also been used for a motorcycle, a space probe and in Britain for a demonstration hybrid power high speed train using Hitachi systems installed in an HST power-car also called the V-Train 2).
- Tie-break:** 36 (two in each cylinder).

Friends Meetings for 2016

Meetings are at the Museum usually taking place in the Conference Room on the first Thursday of the month. To reduce the expense to the Museum of hosting the Friends *all* meetings for the foreseeable future will take place in the afternoon allowing it to save considerably on lighting, overtime, etc. Meetings commence at 1:45pm with the talk starting after announcements to members.

All the dates listed are Thursdays, usually the first Thursday of the month but please note that there are two exceptions. The second September talk near the anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway is on the 22nd (yes- the S&DR actually opened on the 27th so the 29th would be closer to the anniversary but we avoid having meetings on consecutive weeks). The December meeting is on the second Thursday (the 8th) a little nearer Christmas. There is no meeting in August as usual.

3 March **Streamlined Trains and *Mallard's Record Run***. Chris Nettleton.

7 April **A.G.M.** then talk: **The National Collection**.
Anthony Coulls (Senior Curator, Rail Vehicle Collections NRM).

5 May **BANG! The History of Boiler Explosions**. Ray State.

2 June **Railways of the Great War**. Colin Hatton and Bruce Coleman.

7 July **The Twilight of World Steam**. Dave Whitfield.

August **No meeting**.

1 September **Locomotion Under New Management and *The Flying Scotsman***.
Gary Campbell.

22 September **Hitachi Rail, Newton Aycliffe- The First Year**.
Darren Cummin or Simon Richards.

6 October **Rescues and Restorations** Richard Pearson
(Workshop and Rail Operations Manager, Shildon).

3 November **The Railways of Sierra Leone**. Anthony Coulls.

8 December **Christmas Get-Together**. Christmas quiz and film show.

This list is offered in good faith but errors can creep in and plans can change due to unforeseen circumstances. The programme is listed on the Events page of the Friends' web-site which will updated as soon as possible in the event of any change or correction.

Museum Programme

See the Museum's website (www.head-of-steam.co.uk) or call 01325 405060. For details of the Museum's educational workshops for schools contact Sarah Gouldsbrough (01325 405541 or e-mail sarah.gouldsbrough@darlington.gov.uk)

the Museum's Access and Learning Officer or, again, see the Museum own website or programme.

Exhibitions

Lego®. Saturday 5 March to Saturday 30 April 2016. Brick Alley LUG, Darlington's newly formed Lego® Users Group, present shows how the toy has been exercising the creativity and imagination of children and adults for over 50 years.

175th Anniversary of York to Darlington Line. Wednesday 6 April to Wednesday 25 May. This exhibition is to be curated by the North Eastern Railway Association (NERA), www.ner.org.uk.

NELPG Exhibition. Saturday 7 May to Sunday 3 July. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group (NELPG), www.nelpg.org.uk.

Safe and Sound, Stories of Emergency Response in the Tees Valley. Saturday 9 July to Sunday 4 September. Telling the stories behind the modern emergency services keeping our communities safe and sound.

The Splendour of Steam. Saturday 10 September to Sunday 30 October. Artist Stephen Bainbridge's works in acrylic, limited edition prints, and cards.

Loco's and Famous Expresses on the York to Darlington Line. Wednesday 7 September to Wednesday 30 November. Curated by NERA.

Little Works of Art. Saturday 5 November to Sunday 8 January 2017. 100 years of Greeting Cards with 280 Christmas, New Year, Easter, Birthday and Valentines cards from 1850's to 1950's.

150 Years of the Forcett Branch. Wednesday 7 December to Wednesday 22 February 2017. Curated by NERA. *This is the freight only Forcett Railway which branched south from the Darlington and Barnard Castle line east of Gainford not the Fawcett Branch as it appears in some listings.*

Activities, Events and Talks

Where prices are not mentioned entry will be covered by the Museum's usual charges. Year pass holders or Friends of DRCM members are free unless otherwise noted.

Family Arts and Crafts. Thursday 18 and Friday 19 February (half term) from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, Craft sessions for all the family

The Singular Exploits of Sherlock Holmes. Sunday 21 February, 1.00pm. Jonathan Goodwin's one-man homage to Conan-Doyle's creation presented by Don't Go Into The Cellar! Theatre Company. £8.50, booking essential.

Family Arts and Crafts. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 25 March to 8 April (Easter holiday) from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Craft sessions for all the family.

Easter Special. Sunday 27 March, 11:00am to 3:30pm. Activities including Egg Hunt, face painting, arts and crafts and more. £1 entrance fee per person, family members go free.

Vintage Vehicle Rally. Sunday 22 May, 11:00am to 3:00pm. Rare and unusual vehicles from across the region in the Museum gardens with mini-train ride, arts and crafts, juggling and balloon making. £1.00, family members go free.

Family Arts and Crafts. Tuesday 30 May, Thursday 2 and Friday 3 June (half term) from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Craft sessions for all the family.

Shakespeare at the Station. June and July. Performances in collaboration with the Green Theatre using the Museum's portico as the stage. Schedule and pricing to be arranged- contact the Museum for details

History Wardrobe: Very Victorian Lady. Sunday 19 June, 2:00pm. Four very Victorian working women tell their stories through clothes. Marvel at the maternity corset and find out what to wear on the factory floor. £8.50, booking essential.

Summer Fun Sunday. Sunday 17 July, 10:00am to 4:00pm in the Museum and gardens. A family fun day with entertainment, face painting, mini train ride and other activities including a special themed trail. £1, under 5s and family pass members go free.

Family Arts and Crafts. Thursdays and Fridays throughout the summer holidays from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Craft sessions for all the family.

Time Travel Tuesdays. Tuesdays 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30th August, 10:00am to 3:00pm. A taste of life at a different historical period each week. Activities provided by That History Bloke included.

Darlington Model Railway Club Exhibition. Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 September, 10:00am to 4:00pm. Members and visiting layouts from the North East in various scales and gauges.

Heritage Open Days. Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 September, 10:00am to 4:00pm. Free entry to the Museum including guided tours by the Friends.

Victorian Family Fun Day. Sunday 25th September 2016, 10:00 to 4:00pm in the Museum and gardens. Children's entertainer, flea circus, punch and Judy, face painter, mini train ride, arts and crafts and a Victorian themed trail. £1, family members go free.

Halloween at Head of Steam. Sunday 23 October, 11:00am to 3:30pm. Children can wear their Halloween costumes to the decorated Museum and enjoy spooky storytelling, balloon modelling, treasure trail, face painting, mini train ride and arts and crafts.

Family Arts and Crafts. Thursday and Friday 27 and 28 October (half term) from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Craft sessions for all the family.

Santa at the Station. Weekends 10 & 11th and 17 & 18 December, 10:00am to 4:00pm. Meet Santa in the Museum grotto (booking essential) or just enjoy the face painting, mini train ride, Christmas music, arts and crafts and Christmas themed trail.

THE FRIENDS: Introducing the Friends and Darlington Railway Museum

The Newsletter is given to all members of The Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum but other copies circulate so it is possible that it has been your introduction to the Friends and even the Museum. If that is the case it is hoped that you have enjoyed reading it and that it has piqued your interest. Presumably your having read this far is a good sign.

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

The Museum, also known as "Head of Steam", is housed in the old North Road Station building the main part of which was built by the world famous Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1842 and much expanded over the following 30 years. The S&DR marks the point in the history when industrial wagon-ways trundling from mines to the nearest canal or harbour became modern railways and the Museum tells the line's story with George Stephenson's *Locomotion*, built for the Railway's opening in 1825 and the first steam locomotive to haul a passenger train, taking pride of place. She stands with three Darlington built locomotives surrounded by interactive displays, artefacts and vintage photographs illustrating the history of railways and Darlington.

Visitors unfortunate enough not to have a consuming interest in railways, perhaps accompanying those who do, will discover much about the general history of Darlington, a varied programme of exhibitions on non-railway subjects and can enjoy refreshments. The Museum's facilities include the Northern Rail Activity Room, a children's play room, a meetings room with A/V equipment and the Ken Hoole Study Centre with its extensive archive of railway records, books, papers and magazines and other media.

The Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

The Friends is a non-profit organization existing to help promote and support the Museum. It presents a year round programme of talks principally for members but which all-comers can attend although we do ask non-members for a donation. The programme is varied so whether you are interested in the history or future of railways, their engineering or operation it is likely to have something for you. Benefits also include this Newsletter and free entry to the Museum and you do not have to visit very often for it to be worth joining for that reason alone. There are rates for senior citizens and the unwaged and joint memberships for couples and families.

If you think you might be interested in joining the Friends you can download an enrolment form from the website listed below or contact the Membership Secretary June Palmer at membership@friendsofdrmc.org.

The British Association of Friends of Museums (BAfM)

The Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum is itself a member of the BAfM, an independent organization for friends groups and individuals supporting not just museums and galleries but anything of historic interest including preserved railways, ships, parks, bridges and castles.

The BAfM has links with organizations including The Museums Association and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, holds national and regional events and publishes handbooks and pamphlets full of useful information as well as a thrice yearly magazine. It can also arrange public liability insurance for organizations that may need it.

To find out more about the Museum, the Friends or the BAfM please visit one of the websites listed below. Remember if you do not have Internet access your library does.

www.head-of-steam.co.uk www.friendsofdrmc.org www.bafm.org.uk

A Darlington to Barnard Castle service about to set off from Piercebridge in 2015. There's always someone who has to stand in the... Wait! What? (p.3)



Progress at Darlington Works. Frames, bearings and wheels for new-build Gresley P2, 2007 *Prince of Wales*. www.p2steam.com. Photo's Tim Ruffle.

A Grand Central Class 180 unit departs Hartlepool on April 14, 2015 (p.15). Photo' Tim Ruffle.

