

Great Eastern Railway Society

INFORMATION SHEET



TITLE: **THE LATE VICTORIAN PERIOD FROM THE WORKERS' VIEWPOINT**
Gleanings from the monthly A.S.L.E.F. *Journal* of 1900.

FILE No: **RH019**

COMPILED BY: B H Jackson (700) from items in his possession

DATE: July 2012

FIRST DIGITAL EDITION

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS' AND FIREMEN'S Monthly Journal.

"This that they call Organization of Labour is the universal vital problem of the world. It is the problem of the whole future for all who will in future pretend to govern men."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

"I know no better definition of the rights of man:—Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not be stolen from; what a society were that—PLATO'S REPUBLIC, MORE'S UTOPIA, mere emblems of it! Give every man what is his—the accurate price of what he has done and been—no more shall any complain, neither shall the earth suffer any more."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

Vol. 13.

JANUARY, 1900.

No. 1.

Short Story.

STAND AND DELIVER!

A TALE OF THE HIGHWAY.

IT was an unequal match, so said all the neighbours, and it was, therefore, small wonder that the bride (a "useless fine madam," as the sturdy dale-folk housewives called her) should droop and pine amid her strange surroundings, or that the widowed mistress of the farmhouse (mistress as fully in her son's time as in her husband's) lamented loudly over the strange choice "her lad" had made of a wife.

Good Mistress Allison had never thoroughly approved of her eldest son's "bookish turn," which had induced him to become a constant and grateful visitor at the old Manor House of the neighbourhood; where its elderly master, Sir Ralph Courtney, after considerably damaging his slender patrimony by associating with the fashionable world of London, had retired, in his old age, to the small Lancashire property which still remained to him, and there lived, in genteel poverty, with his only child, a girl now some eighteen years old. Anne Courtney had been born in London during the last days of her father's sojourn there; being the only child of a wife who died in giving the infant birth. Sir Ralph was ruffling at

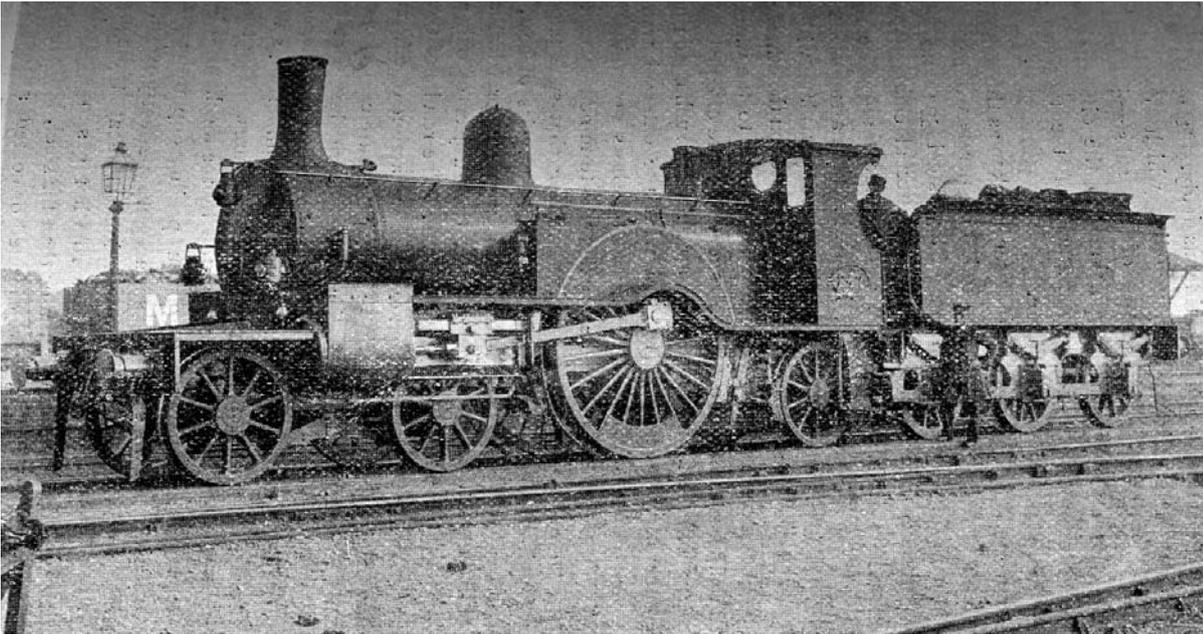
the Court then, and Queen (then Princess) Anne became the baby's godmother. But before the "little gentleman in black velvet" had raised the mole-hill which proved so fatal to King William. Sir Ralph had run through the last of his available resources, and "Nance" only knew of these gay early days from listening to her father's long stories in the evening; as the old man, living now in obscurity and penury, loved to dwell upon the prosperous time of yore.

In spite of her father's straitened means, "Nance" had been reared rather as befitted her birth than her fortunes; and when Sir Ralph's sudden death left his young daughter penniless in the world, and the distant cousin who succeeded to the mortgaged, encumbered estate evinced little desire to befriend the girl, it was a gloomy outlook for the young maiden. "Cousin William," a thriving London merchant, rather grudgingly offered to attempt to find her a position as "my lady's own woman," in some aristocratic household; but, alas, inquiry revealed that Anne lacked most of the accomplishments demanded in such a situation.

Then Robert Allison took courage to give voice to the love and the longing which he had buried in his heart ever since, as a lad of thirteen, he had been permitted by Sir Ralph to make free with the library at the

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From the *ASLEF Journal* for March 1900:



No. 247, Single-Wheel Outside Cylinder Bogie Express Engine: Great Eastern Railway.

Designed by MR. MASSEY BROMLEY and built by MESSRS. DUBS & CO, Glasgow, in 1879.

Cylinders 18in. by 24in. Driving wheels 7ft 6in. Steam pressure 140lb.

This class is now obsolete on the Great Eastern Railway.

[Reproduced from *Locomotives and Railways*]

1: INTRODUCTION

In 1900 the Victorian era was coming to an end, and the twentieth century was about to begin. Workers were joining trade unions to try to improve their working conditions, and one of these was the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (A.S.L.E.F.).

This Society produced a monthly Journal, partly to inform and amuse their members and partly to provide them with a platform to express their views. The 1900 issues constitute Volume 13. The glimpses of the times which they provide complement those offered by the more traditional sources since, unlike most documents, they give the stance of the workers, the ordinary people, rather than of management or the establishment.

Not all the content was railway related. As well as a short story each month there was a page of poetry, for instance, and a page of humour ('A sailor is not a sailor if he is a board; a sailor is not a sailor if he is a shore – but he must be either aboard or a shore, so a sailor is not a sailor.' Our sense of humour seems to have changed since those days! Simkins: "What makes your nose red, Timkins?" Timkins: "It glows with pride, sir, at not poking itself into other people's business".)

There were general articles (ranging from useful tips like 'tough meat will be much improved if rubbed with half a lemon before cooking' to an essay in praise of the philosopher Kant), but many were indeed connected with the railway. The working classes had their full share of thoughtful and intelligent individuals, and to their credit their outlook was not merely parochial. Thus there was a lot of interest in news of the high speeds of some trains in northern France and in the USA, for example, with plenty of sensible discussion concerning their pros and cons.

Nevertheless the Society's main purpose of course was to improve pay and working conditions much closer to home and this featured prominently too.

The Stratford branch seemed to be flourishing, and held a meeting on the first Monday of each month at 7pm. They met at the Castle Inn, Leyton Road in Stratford. (This pub was rebuilt in the 1960s and re-named 'Whealers', but closed in 2010.)

Its branch secretary was listed as W. Day, 1 Chandos Road, W., New Town. He contributed regular reports to the Journal.

There was a second railway union in existence at the time, the A.S.R.S. (Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants), the forerunners of the N.U.R. This was also well represented at Stratford. In many parts of the country they were regarded as deadly rivals, but in Stratford there seemed to be a good relationship between the two with occasional joint meetings.

Thus the Journal for April 1900 read:-

Stratford Branch

SIR,—At a joint meeting of the Associated [*that is, the ASLEF*] and A.S.R.S. Stratford Branches, held on Sunday, March 18th, the following resolution was unanimously carried:-

"That this meeting of engine-drivers, firemen, and cleaners find it desirable that the only way open to us to better our conditions of labour is to join a trade union, and to further our cause in this all important direction it behoves all who at present are not attached to any society

to become members as soon as possible, and so assist themselves and their fellows to obtain the object of this meeting."

Several speakers of both societies illustrated the advantages of becoming members, so that it is to be hoped a great influx of members in both societies, at no distant date, will be the result, and that a greater interest in the welfare of the workers in general will be taken.

Yours fraternally, BRANCH SECRETARY.

Other messages from the Stratford branch appear in the sections which follow, but to conclude this introduction the May 1900 Journal contained this news item illustrating the more social side of affairs:-

SIR, — The Great Eastern Railway engine drivers and firemen held their annual dinner on Good Friday, April 13th, in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, Stratford, when 113 sat down to a splendid repast, under the able chairmanship of Albert Govier, Esq., J.P., and H. Dawson, Esq., in the vice-chair, well supported by the dinner committee and Messrs. J. Saunders, C. Palmer, J. Holden, and other gentlemen of the neighbourhood, also Locomotive Inspectors T. Coleman and A. Frost.

After doing justice to the various courses of the dinner, an adjournment was made to allow of the tables being cleared before we sat down to enjoy an evening's entertainment, and to get through the programme. Our chairman gave the toast, "The Queen, Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces," in a very appropriate speech, after which we sang the chorus of "Soldiers of the Queen." Mr. R. Harrison then sang "The Troopship" in good style.

"The Great Eastern Railway Company" was given by Mr. W. Heard in a few well chosen remarks. The speaker compared the flourishing condition of our company now with its financial position 20 years ago. Mr. J. Thompson then sang "The Wedding Bells," which was well received. Mr. Frost responded. The vice-chairman then gave "The Great Eastern Railway Engine Drivers and Firemen," and spoke very highly of the abilities and the responsible duties of those men in their daily avocation. He said he was proud to be among such a noble set of fellows. Mr. R. Harrison next sang "Dada is on the Engine". This was well sung, and was a very appropriate song for the evening, seeing that our muster consisted of engine drivers and firemen. Mr. Wm. Day then suitably responded, and stated that Good Friday was the one day in the whole year on which engine drivers and firemen were able to meet together in social gatherings, not only in Stratford, but throughout the United Kingdom. Other men of our grade were that evening, he hoped, enjoying themselves under similar conditions.

...The company then gave Mr. A. Frost musical honours for the satisfactory arrangements he had made for upwards of 90 of our men to be off duty on this date.

... Mr. C. S. Bayes, with "Sons of the Sea," brought a very enjoyable evening to a close at 12 o'clock, all uniting our hands and singing "Auld Lang Syne."

W. C., Secretary of the Dinner Committee

2: PAY AND CONDITIONS

These are naturally a prime concern of a trade union, and it is pleasing to see how comparatively well-regarded the G.E.R. was in the treatment of its men. Here is a letter from the February 1900 Journal:-

Stratford Branch.

SIR,—Commencing the new year, I have much pleasure in informing our readers that we had 44 new members proposed at our branch meeting, and several more promises for next meeting night, thanks to the energetic work of driver J. Bland and his mate, A. W. Hubbard, especially. I think this speaks well for engine drivers and firemen combining together for better conditions of service.

I also enclose you a copy of a circular issued by our locomotive superintendent, giving all G.E.R. firemen and certified drivers an advance in wages, which certainly ought to inspire the rising generation with the necessity for combination. Trusting to give another good increase in membership in next month's *Journal*.

Yours fraternally, Branch Secretary.

The following is a copy of the circular referred to:-

NOTICE

I have much pleasure in giving notice to the locomotive firemen, that the directors authorize me to state that from and after Saturday, December 30th, 1899, the scale under which they will be paid will be as follows:-

	London District per day	Country District per day
	s. d.	s. d.
First year	3 9	3 3
Second year	4 0	3 6
Third year	4 3	4 0
Fourth year	4 6	4 3
When certified	4 9	4 6
When turning	5 3	5 0

(Signed) James Holden. G.E.Ry. Loco. Dept., Stratford, 3/12/99.

In a similar vein, here are some extracts from a letter which appeared in July 1900, penned by a GER employee:-

...One regrets to think that during the last few years so many of our brothers have been removed from the footplate through the eyesight test, which has never been a practical examination since it was started; and when we see that some railway companies have taken men off by the dozen, and others scarcely any at all, it seems to me

more than strange that one part of our island should be full of men of imperfect vision, whilst in the other part there should be very few. There certainly must be something radically wrong with the test itself.

The G.W.R. have lately played sad havoc with their men whilst the G.E.R. have been very lenient indeed compared with other lines, thanks to the fair dealing of our locomotive superintendent and examiners. The G.E.R. examination is roughly as follows:-

A lad applies for a situation as cleaner. Before employment his eyesight is tested with shades of wool and various sizes of letters. If found all right he is employed. The same test is again used when he is made acting fireman, also regular fireman; again after five years fireman, then again when made an acting driver, and then periodically every five years. In a few cases, where there is a slight doubt, it is a little more frequent, and with a few older men every twelve months.

I may also mention that if any man does not give satisfaction with the wools and letters, he is ordered in again after dark, and tested by the lights he works by at night. The G.E.R. men have their periodical test on at present, and I am pleased to say that up to the time of my writing I have not heard of one case yet of a man failing to give satisfaction. When this question first came in vogue on the G.E.R., our locomotive superintendent himself went and saw several cases where there was a doubt (to be sure the men had fair play) tested with the flags we work with by day, and the lights we work with by night, which I feel sure gave all our men a certain amount of confidence when they were booked in. If a man is tested practically, and gives satisfaction, that must surely prove that the practical test is the best, and for the life of me I cannot see that it is necessary to put us to all this trouble, when we find that if the lad I alluded to joins the police force, or the army, instead of the loco. staff, he does not have such a lot of performances each time he gets a stripe or two, as the case may be. I think it is an admitted fact that our eyes should be tested, but let us have a thoroughly practical one, the same as we practice every day as enginemen or firemen.

I hope and trust that our G.W.R. men will combine together, and not let the question drop until they have obtained a sensible and practical test, one which is fair to master and man alike. I heartily wish them success, and hope that we shall yet see in the pages of our *Journal* that a great number of the unfortunate ones are reinstated to their old position on the footplate, which, I feel sure, would be the result if they were tested by practical every-day working on our railways. I think that our Benevolent Fund would not then be called upon so frequently to meet such cases as in the past, although it has done grand work, when we see that a greater portion of the £16,000 paid since its establishment has assisted its unfortunate members who have fallen under this unsatisfactory system of testing our eyesight.

Yours fraternally, YOUNGSTER.

It is only fair to add, however, that matters were not always as rosy as that. A further letter from 'Youngster' in the October 1900 Journal illustrates this. Notice that his wrath is directed against the Board and the shareholders, rather than the working officers:-

It is evident that the sooner or later the workers will have to fight the great capitalistic serpent which is gradually winding its coils around us. I hope all railwaymen will take a lesson from the Taff Vale and the threatened G.E.R. strikes, which show what railway companies would do if they could only have their way.

Note the barbed wire colony on the G.E.R. When the Boers introduced barbed wire to protect themselves from a foreign invasion of money-grabbers, they were called an inhuman lot. What are we to call our railway directorates, who introduce the same thing into a Christian country because the labourer, or worker, is only striving for a living wage? The G.E.R. shareholders consist of 1,855 so-called Christian "pilots," who are supposed to teach the doctrines of "love one another."

These are important questions, which must in future be taken up by the workers, who produce the wealth, or at the finish of our labours, when we are too old to work for these rich "pilots," and are not up to the standard of efficiency for railway work, we shall be thrown upon the scrap-iron heap, like old engines which have run their race, and are no longer required.

Yours fraternally, YOUNGSTER.

Similarly here are extracts from a letter which featured in the April issue, in response to the notice about the pay rise described earlier, written by another G.E.R. employee who went under the pseudonym 'Shunting Engine'. After quoting some texts from the New Testament in his preamble, he goes on to say:-

I notice our branch secretary, in the February *Journal*, tells us of the three pence per day increase in wages conceded to G.E.R. firemen. Now, sir, I do not for one moment wish to attempt to take any credit from our employers for this concession, but still, I do think it needs a little explanation.

During the past few years several meetings of drivers, firemen, and cleaners have been convened, and this has been one of the principal objects - increased wages for firemen. During the year 1899 delegates were elected to approach our loco. superintendent, who received them and listened courteously to their representations, but informed them he could concede nothing.

The men then decided to go a step further, and appeal to the board of directors. These gentlemen gave our delegates a most courteous reception, and listened very attentively to the questions which I have every faith to believe our delegates ably laid before them, and promised to give the matter their serious consideration. After taking several weeks to consider it, they politely informed the men they could not see their way clear to alter the decision of the loco. superintendent.

I cannot tell you how bitterly disappointed the men were on the receipt of this letter, for they had built up their hopes that the board of directors would certainly give them justice, and in a moment these bright hopes were dashed to the ground. Then a few weeks later this notice was posted up, telling us our superintendent had great pleasure, &c. Now, sir, if this concession had been made when the men appealed, it would have been received with far greater satisfaction, for it looked as if our employers would not give us justice, no matter how we approached them, till they thought fit.

Now why should our employers treat us thus? In my opinion there are two great reasons. First, self-interest. On one occasion, when our delegates approached the superintendent on the question of increased wages for firemen, he told them the company could not afford it, as there were many poor shareholders who had invested a life's savings in the company's shares, and depended on the dividend for a living. Now who *are* these poor shareholders? I have no doubt in my mind that those who hold high official positions on our railway companies also hold shares to a great extent, and these are the poor shareholders who must be considered. It does, indeed, seem hard that those who invest their life's labour to earn these dividends should be a secondary consideration, but so it is. Then the second reason is because the ranks of the workers are so disorganized. When we consider that we have only half the locomotive men of this country enrolled in our two great trade unions, is it any wonder we are made the tools of our employers, to produce big dividends?

The Society members all had to contribute to the benevolent fund for supporting colleagues in difficulty. In principle they fully approved of this, but in practice they were concerned lest these contributions (whose payment made some workers reluctant to join a union) should get out of hand. In particular they did not want to pay twice for pensions, once to their company and once to the union.

A further letter from 'Youngster' expresses these concerns, and in the process gives some details of the G.E.R. pension schemes:-

Our Superannuation Fund.

...First, shall we be able to stand the strain which will undoubtedly be brought to bear upon our funds in the course of another 20 years, seeing that some railway companies are now taking their men off the footplate at 60 years of age? The eyesight question will undoubtedly give us a look in later on, and I find that other railway companies are now adopting pension funds on a very large scale.

As an illustration, the Great Eastern Railway Company, of which I am an employee, have two funds. One gives 10s. per week at 65 years of age, irrespective of health, for 5d. per week contribution; the other gives £1 per week at 65 years of age, for 10d. per week contribution, and if members so wish, by ill-health they can retire earlier at a reduced pension accordingly, and they are also in the form of a savings bank as well.

Great Eastern Railway Society

I should occupy too much of your valuable space to fully quote the benefits of these funds, suffice it to say that the G.E. employees are joining in large numbers, locomotive men included, so that so far as pension or superannuation for old age is concerned, we, the members of these funds, do not necessarily require to pay into any other society for such benefits, as men did years ago before these funds started.

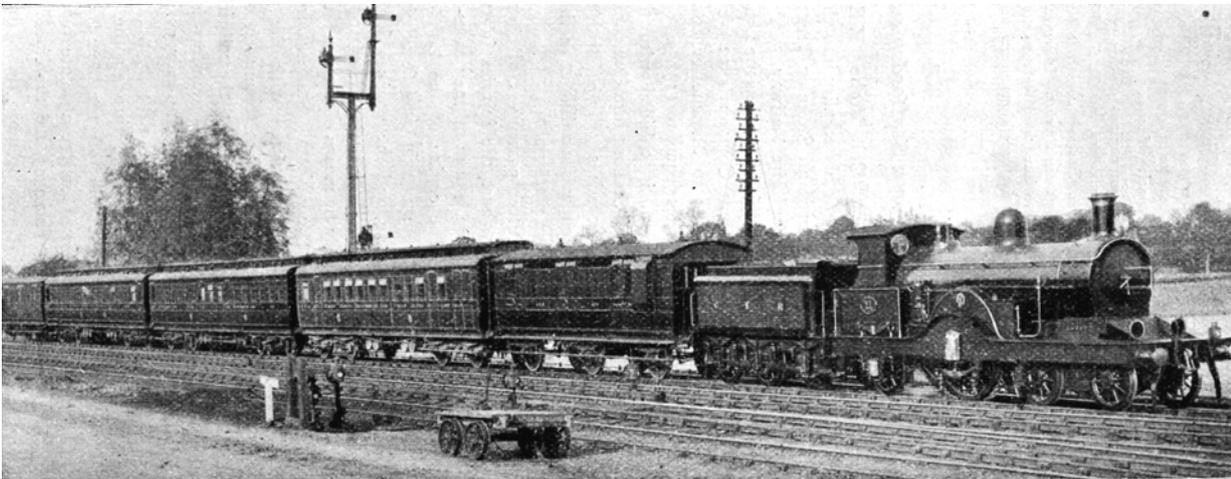
...Let us try and put our house in order, and keep up with the times. I, for one, would like to see our Superannuation Fund abolished rather than continue on the lines it is now worked, and would support a scheme where we could give a better sick benefit, say, for instance, 14/- per week, and in place of the superannuation grant, as is now stated in the Rule Book, I would like to support the Executive Committee's suggestion to give a lump sum as per years' membership, or give a retiring allowance to members, say two thirds of the contributions back they have paid in whilst members, less the amount of sickness they have previously received.

Speaking as a young man, I believe this will be the thing of the future, and seeing the strain that is brought to bear upon the rising generation, with the worry and anxiety of footplate work as it is at the present time, we require more sick pay when off so as to recoup our strength. In my own branch several of my fellow-members have spoken about the smallness of the sick allowance in comparison to other sick societies' benefits ...

Yours fraternally, YOUNGSTER

The amount each branch was called to pay to fund distressed members' benefits was recorded every month in the Journal. June was typical. Presumably this figure was based on the number of members, since Warrington only had to pay 1/9 and Didcot 8/5. Out of 115 branches, Stratford was rated sixth highest at £5.10.0 – an amount exceeded only by Battersea, Paddington, Grimsby, Sheffield and Openshaw in Manchester (which was assessed at a massive £13.6.5).

From the *Journal* for February 1900:-



Special Restaurant Dining Car Express: Great Eastern Railway

Engine No. 11, one of MR HOLDEN'S 7ft single-wheel express class with 18in by 26in cylinders, 150lb steam pressure and 1,292sqft of heating surface

Reproduced from "*The World's Famous Railway Trains*"

[A posed photograph, judging by the signals]

RH019. The Late Victorian Period from the Workers' Viewpoint

The Benevolent Fund of the union worked in this way:-

Benevolent fund.

Since the commencement of this fund in 1890, the sum of £15,007 15s. 9d. has been paid to 410 unfortunate members, and to the widows and orphans or nominees of deceased members.

RULES.

1. This fund is formed for rendering assistance to those of its members who lose their situations through misadventure, also to assist the widows and orphans of deceased members, and that any member having attained the age of 60 years, and being compelled by ill health or the company's rules to retire, it shall be equivalent to discharge, and provided he has been a member of this fund for 20 years, a call shall be made on his behalf; also any member discharged, or resigning from locomotive work, or not following that occupation again, if he has been a member of the fund for ten years may be allowed to continue his payments to this fund, and shall be entitled to a call at death only.

2. Any member of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (under 40 years of age - all ages to be given at time of joining) desirous of becoming a member of this fund, shall be elected by a majority of votes of the members of his branch, who are subscribers to this fund, and shall pay an entrance fee of 1/-, and if a full member, 1d., 2d., 3d., or 4d. per call as required; half-member, half the amount of a full member. No person shall be considered a member until his entrance fee has been received at General Office, and not entitled to any benefits until he has been 12 months a member. Every member must nominate some person to receive the amount due, and shall pay 3d. for nomination.

3. Any discharged member claiming the benefits of this fund shall send a true statement of the cause of his discharge to his Branch Secretary, and if the members of his branch are of opinion that he has been unjustly discharged, they shall recommend the Executive Committee to make a call upon the members on his behalf as follows:— If twelve months a member a call of 1d.; if two years, 2d.; if three years, 3d.; and after four years, 4d. A call of 4d. per full member, and 2d. for half member will be made for the benefit of the widow and orphans of a deceased member.

4. The amount received at each call shall be paid to such discharged member, or to the widow and orphans or nominee of a deceased member, providing the amount does not exceed £50 to full members, or £25 to half members; if the amount exceeds £50 or £25 as the case may be, it shall be held in reserve towards paying the next calls. No member shall be entitled to receive more than one call from the funds.

5. The Executive Committee may call for such evidence as they may deem necessary (no case of felony, drunkenness, or gross neglect of duty will be entertained) and shall decide the case; but any member or branch feeling aggrieved at such decision, may, on giving to the General Secretary at least ten days' notice of his intention to do so, appeal to the next assembly of Delegates, whose decision in the matter shall be binding and final on all parties.

6. The Branch Secretaries shall send a list of all members' names to the General Secretary, along with their entrance fees, and shall furnish a list of all members' names who pay to this fund.

7. No member shall be allowed to transfer from half to full benefits, except a Fireman, and he shall transfer when he is promoted to a Driver, and no member shall transfer from full to half benefits, unless he is reduced in position.

8. Any member omitting to pay to each call within 14 days after such call has been made, and any branch neglecting to remit the amount received for such call, to the General Secretary within one lunar month, shall be excluded from all benefits unless a satisfactory explanation be given to the Executive Committee.

These rules to come into operation January 1st, 1900.

It was possible to join the union without becoming a member of the Benevolent Fund and having to respond to 'calls' made.

The details, as given in very small print on a page in every Journal, are shown on the next page.

In effect, each member of the benefit fund was asked to put his hand in his pocket to support fellow-members in distress. The calls came in each edition of the Journal:-

FELLOW MEMBERS, The following calls have been recommended by their respective branches and sanctioned by the Executive:-

A call of 4d. each for E. J. Whitehead, misadventure, G.C.R.; T. Judge, failing to pass G.W. eyesight test, Slough Branch; Thos. Rogers, failing to pass the G.W. eyesight test, Swansea Branch; and a call of 2d. for A. G. Watkins, failing to pass the G.W. eyesight test, Aberdare Branch; and C. Yeatman, failing to pass District Railway eyesight test, West Brompton Branch; and calls of 4d. each on the deaths of Joseph Jodrell, Buxton; Joseph Wood, Salford, and John J. Davies, Swansea Branch.

So please make eight calls on members (2/6) [2/4?], and remit to General Office not later than February 18th. Secretaries are requested to send with these calls a list of all members of this fund for re-registration.

Yours faithfully, T. G. SUNTER.

Each month too there were acknowledgements from those who received benefits, such as this one:-

Pontypool Branch.

Kindly allow me to tender my thanks to the members of the Benevolent Fund for the handsome sum of £38, received from Mr. B. Hawkins, secretary of the Pontypool Branch, through being unable to pass the G.W. R. eyesight test. I hope that every member of our Society, having seen so many of their fellow-workmen taken off the footplate, like myself, will join this fund if they have the opportunity, and so secure some benefit for themselves in time of need. Wishing the fund every success.

Yours fraternally, DAVID JENKINS

In today's money £38 probably equates to a bit over £1500. He was one of no fewer than three long-serving drivers from Pontypool with a good record who had lost their jobs on the footplate that month as a result of failing the G.W.R. eyesight test - no wonder there was some concern that the calls on the fund might get out of hand.

Great Eastern Railway Society

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen.

ITS OBJECTS AND BENEFITS.

The objects of this Society are to form funds by entrance fees and weekly contributions, for the relief of its members in sickness, incapacitation by old age, or accident from following their profession or calling, by paying a sum of money at death of members or their wives, and for the relief or maintenance of members when on travel in search of employment, or when in distressed circumstances, and to advance the interests of its members in their various professions and callings, by procuring a reduction in the excessive hours of labour, regulating the speed of trains, the adoption of modern improvements for the general safe working over all Railways in the United Kingdom, and generally in such other manner and to such extent as the Executive Committee may determine.

SCHEDULE OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND BENEFITS OF SOCIETY.

PAYMENTS.	ENTRANCE FEES	If 18 years and not exceeding 25.	Two Shillings and Sixpence.
		If 25 years and not exceeding 30.	Five Shillings.
		If 30 years and not exceeding 40.	Seven Shillings and Sixpence.
	CONTRIBUTIONS.	Full Benefit Members.	One Shilling per week ; if over 35 years of age, 1s. 2d.
Half Benefit Members.		Sixpence per week.	
Contributions for Protection Members		Protection Members only.	Fourpence per week.
DONATIONS.	Death of a Member.	If a Member 12 Months.	Twelve Pounds.
	Death of a Member.	If a Member 18 Months.	Twenty Pounds.
	Death of a Member's Wife.	If a Member 12 Months.	Five Pounds.
	Death of a Member's Wife.	By paying 20/- within 3 Months after 2nd Marriage.	Five Pounds.
BENEFITS.	Sick Benefit.	26 weeks.	Ten Shillings per week.
		Remainder of Sickness.	Six Shillings per week.
	Superannuation.	If by Accident.	Five Shillings to Seven Shillings per week.
		By old age if 20 years a Member.	Five Shillings per week.
		By old age if 25 years a Member.	Six Shillings per week.
		By old age if 30 years a Member.	Seven Shillings and Sixpence per week.

TRADE PROTECTION BENEFITS.

BENEFITS.	Entrance Fee for Protection Members	Any Age.	One Shilling.
	Out of Work.	12 weeks.	Twelve Shillings per week.
		14 weeks.	Six Shillings per week.
	Incapacitation.	Legal Defence.	For any act not criminal in itself.
			By accident on duty (if 18 months a member) £20.
	Protection to Members and Delegates.	In case of Dispute if withdrawn.	Twelve Shillings per week, and Two Shillings for each child under fourteen.
		If a Delegate is discharged.	One Hundred Pounds, and Fifteen Shillings per week for 12 months if still out of employment.
		If a Delegate is reduced.	Former wages to be made good until restored.
		If discharged for organising by order of Executive.	Any sum not exceeding £50.
		Allowance to Members whilst suspended.	Twenty-four Shillings per week. Unjust fines re-funded.
Half Benefit Members.		Half the Benefits, with full Legal Defence.	

Those men who do not wish to join for full benefits, may join for trade purposes only at an entrance fee of 1/- at any age, with a contribution of 4d. per week, which entitles them to out-of-work allowance of 12/- per week, and 24/- per week while suspended, with legal assistance to any amount for any act not criminal in itself.

If fifteen men in any district are desirous of opening a branch, a letter to the General Secretary will ensure the necessary arrangements being made.

Solicitors: Messrs. Ford and Warren,
Albion Street, Leeds.
London Solicitors: Messrs. Tippetts and Sons,
11, Maiden Lane, Queen Street,
Cheapside, London, E.C

Bankers: The Yorkshire Penny Bank.
General Secretary: Mr. Thomas G. Sunter
Head Office: 44, Park Square, Leeds.

3: NEWS OF THE GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY

The G.E.R. was accorded a definite measure of respect, compared to some of the other companies. Thus in the edition for October 1900 this news item appeared:-

In his address to the shareholders at the last half-yearly meeting of the Great Eastern Railway, Lord Claud Hamilton, the company's chairman, testified to the punctuality of the trains arriving at Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street stations during the month of May. The figures were compared with similar statistics taken in 1890, and were as follows:-

	1900	1890
Number of business trains arriving at Liverpool Street	2,213	1,300
Percentage of such trains to time	82.47	50.69
Percentage of such trains one and two minutes late	14.64	37.46
Number of business trains arriving at Fenchurch St. Station	837	806
Percentage of such trains to time	53.76	41.32
Percentage of such trains one and two minutes late	33.81	53.72
Total number of passenger trains of all descriptions arriving at Liverpool St. Station	11,596	8,396
Percentage of such trains to time or not more than 3 min. late	93.39	88.73
Percentage of such trains between 3 and 5 min. late	3.77	5.72

This is a very good record. Indirectly, it reflects great credit on the engine drivers. Even in 1890 the percentage of trains either actually "on time" or only three minutes late was fairly high, but it will be seen that a considerable advance on this has taken place. The Great Eastern Railway Company is to be congratulated on the working of its passenger traffic, and it would be well if every other railway could show as good a time sheet.

The Great Northern, for one, enjoys a most unenviable reputation for lateness as regards its business trains. I shall not be very far wrong if I say that the percentage of such trains arriving to time at King's Cross and Moorgate Street stations is practically *nil*. Some allowance has to be made for the congestion of traffic arising - at present - from unavoidable causes, but the day is still far off when one will be able to say that the number of business trains arriving to time was 82.47 per cent., even for a whole month!

Another aspect of the G.E.R. which was praised concerned train brakes. The union said it did not mind what sort of brakes were used, so long as they always stopped the train! The G.E.R. had the Westinghouse brake system, while several of the other companies (the Great Northern, Great Central and Great Western for a start) used the vacuum brake which ASLEF considered far inferior. In January 1900 came this news item:-

Continuous Brakes

An examination of the Board of Trade Brake Returns for the five years commencing 1st January, 1894, and ending 31st December, 1898, brings to light some important particulars as to the brakes failing to pull up, and causing trains to "overrun" stations or signals. During the five years, 76 cases are reported of trains thus failing to stop. Of these, 61 are charged against the Automatic vacuum brake, and 15 against the Westinghouse automatic. The vacuum cases show that 12 were due to the fault of men and 49 to the brake system; and of the Westinghouse, the men are responsible for 11 cases and the brake system for 4. The vacuum system suffers considerably from the effect of drawing obstructions into the main pipe, and the Westinghouse from taps being left shut.

In October the Journal provided in table form a full company-by-company analysis of failings by each type of brake (not reproduced here), with comments by Clement Stretton - a well-known engineer of the time - which included:-

From the first introduction of automatic continuous brakes into this country, I have always recorded their performances most carefully, with the result that facts show that the Westinghouse automatic has always proved itself to be the safest appliance ever invented.

The vacuum brake, in past years, has been greatly improved, but the Board of Trade returns show each half-year that it is still subject to a large number of failures.

Turning now to the annexed statements extracted from the last Board of Trade returns, it will be found that, fortunately, no case occurred coming under Class No. 1, that is "Failure or partial failure to act when required in case of an accident to a train or a collision between trains being imminent."

However, under Class No. 2, "Failure or partial failure to act under ordinary circumstances to stop a train when required," we find seven cases recorded, and of these no less than six are charged to the vacuum brake:-

Great Eastern Railway Society

- (1) The vacuum failed, and a Great Central train overran the platform at Newton.
- (2) The vacuum failed, and a Great Western train "overran" Solihull.
- (3) Another failure took place at Gobowen, and the platform was overrun.
- (4) At Harrow, vacuum failed, and platform overrun.
- (5) At King's Langley, vacuum failed and platform overrun.
- (6) At Tring, vacuum failed, and platform overrun.

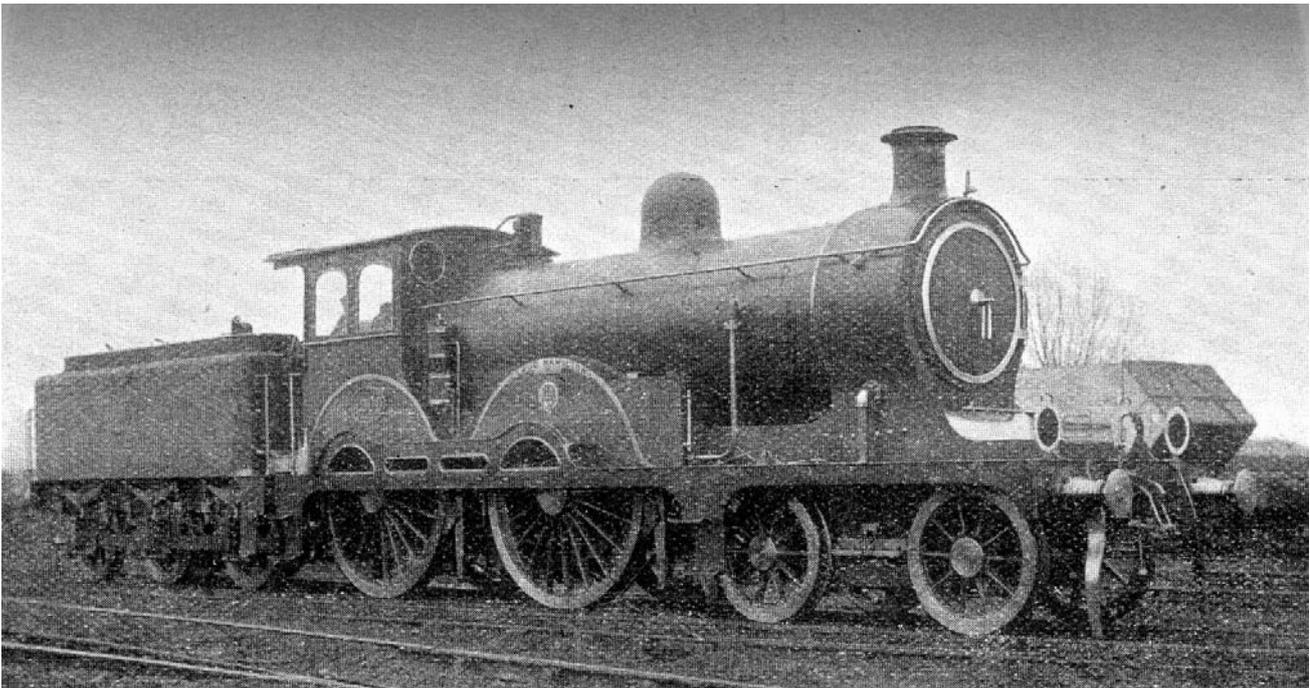
On the other hand, there was no Class 2 failure of the Westinghouse brake, the only instance being that on the South-Eastern and Chatham, when the men neglected to couple the pipes together in one case.

In view of such facts as these, it is plain that the vacuum is more liable to fail, and always has "failed to act" in a proportion unknown in the Westinghouse system.

The men were interested to hear of plans for the Paris Exhibition that year, and in April they learned:-

It is now stated that the Great Eastern Railway Company do not intend sending a single-wheel express engine to the Paris Exposition, but a large locomotive of the coupled type. The design combines a leading bogie, 7ft. four-coupled drivers, and inside cylinders 19in. by 26in. The diameter of the boiler is 4ft. 10in.!

The chimney and smoke-box front are after the G.W.R. style; the cab is like the North-Eastern pattern, while the coupling-rod splashers are slotted out similar to those of the L.&N.W.R. "Teutonic" class of compounds. The actual engine for the Exhibition is named "Claude Hamilton" [*sic*] and bears the cypher 1,900. I understand that it was completed at or about the end of February, and that it is not to be the only one of its class. Not since 1885, I believe, have any other inside-cylinder bogie tender engines been built at Stratford, or elsewhere, for the Great Eastern Railway.



No. 1,900, 'Claude Hamilton'.

New Four-coupled Bogie Express Engine: Great Eastern Railway.

Designed by MR JAS. HOLDEN, and built at the COMPANY'S WORKS, STRATFORD, 1900.

NOW BEING SHOWN AT THE PARIS EXHIBITION

Cylinders 19in. by 26in. Coupled wheels 7ft. diameter. Boiler 4ft. 9in. by 11ft. 9in.
Total heating surface 1,630.5 sq.ft. Steam pressure 180lbs per sq.in.

[Reproduced from *Locomotives and Railways*]

4: THE BIG ISSUES

There was plenty of discussion on some of the main topics of the day, and this section gives an idea of the sort of thing that was being said.

Nationalisation of the railways was one such topic. In the January issue, for instance, someone called F. W. Brewer argued against it:-

Many and various have been the efforts of the League [*the Railway Nationalization League*] to establish the soundness of its propositions and, to quote a well-worn phrase, they are deserving of a better cause.

It is the uncertainty about Nationalisation that I do not like - the danger of jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. And yet the arguments seem so convincing, the advantages so great, and the results so very beneficial to everybody! They are a little too utopian, I am afraid. At any rate, until some exceptional reason for the State purchase of our railways arises, we may content ourselves by leaving well alone.

From a shareholder's point of view there is certainly at the present moment not much of an encouraging nature to record. The expenses are increasing faster than the receipts, partly due to the companies ceding to their servants some of those very benefits which are among the stronger inducements to Nationalisation which the League offers.

But there are still ways left to the railways for retrenchment other than by handing their concerns over to the tender mercies of the State, which, like a Corporation, has neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be excommunicated! It would be sheer rubbish to suppose there would be no grievances under State control, while the chances of their being remedied would be less than at present, with the Board of Trade and Parliament to appeal to. The Board of Trade has sometimes been abused, but both the railway servant and the railway passenger have much to thank that Department for. The Nationalisation of railways is a very grave question indeed, and we shall do well to pause before taking any definite action with regard to it.

A certain W. Wilson of the Railway Nationalization League frequently made his points in the pages of the Journal, and he duly responded the next month:-

...if Mr. Brewer studied this question on its merits, and not as a mere railway man [*not likely to appeal to most of the readership, surely?*], he would see that it was not an academical or Utopian scheme.

...The results would benefit all the nation, with the sole exception of the multitudinous boards of directors [*Mr Wilson had previously stated there were 260 separate companies*], in whose interests the railways are speculated, and whose occupation, like Othello's, would be gone.

The interests of the shareholders and general public are of secondary and third rate importance. Under State ownership the shareholders would have a safe, guaranteed interest, averaging quite as much as the fluctuating one they now receive and the general public would have fares and rates as low as on the Belgian and German State Railways. The German State Railways pay the late shareholders, or present bondholders, 3½ per cent average dividend, besides 3.65 per cent to the Treasury...

...Is our Government less competent than that of Germany or Belgium, or than that of British India, Ceylon, Australia, Cape Colony or New Zealand, where State Railways are a boon and a blessing to both Governments and peoples?

...With State Railways, any one of the 670 MPs could make matters warm for mismanagement, but who can check or control the 2,500 titled, wealthy, territorial magnates on separate railway boards, or on a dozen at the same time - and who represent themselves in Parliament in opposing all schemes opposed to their private interests?

It is easy to forget that the country was at war at the time though, unlike in the two World Wars to come, the hostilities did not make a direct impact on these shores. The enemies were the Boer farmers in distant South Africa.

It prompted a passionate article by a contributor who signed himself as 'Cromwell'.

Militarism

SIR_, As I have noticed a tendency towards "Jingoism" on the part of some contributors to the *Journal*, brought on, no doubt, by the South African War, and as even the "'Gentle Theophilus" [*a correspondent from Shrewsbury*] seems to be in danger of being mesmerised, either by the warlike spirit of the "proud Salopians" who went to the front, or by the cheers of those who stayed behind (which cheers did not cost much), perhaps a few lines on one of the probable results of the war will not be out of place.

I believe that it is generally understood that one result of the war will be that an attempt will be made to convert us into a military nation. (Some people think that we are a military nation now, but they only arrive at that idea by thinking of the millions of money we spend yearly. The people of France used to think so too, but in 1870 they discovered that, although they spent millions yearly, it did not necessarily follow that they had anything for their money.)

But by a military nation I mean that every man will have to go through a military training, and then be liable to be called upon for military service whenever, in the opinion of the Government of the day, necessity demanded it, so that we shall be under military domination for the rest of our natural lives. I am told, by way of justification, that all European countries of note have some such system, or worse, with wonderful results in the way of liberty of the subject.

It is said of Russia that if a man expresses opinions, or is even suspected of holding opinions contrary to officialism, he is banished to the mines of Siberia. I hear that Germany has an emperor who is head of the military, and all other institutions, and almost claims relationship with the Deity. Woe betide the subject who dares dispute or discuss in a controversial spirit any order the head of the army and of everything else chooses to issue.

Great Eastern Railway Society

It is rumoured that Austria has borrowed and spent too much on the military craze that a well-known banking family could bankrupt the State at any time. France - well, the high morality, etc., of military France was duly exhibited to the world in the Dreyfus case [*This concerned a case which in 1900 was still on-going. Alfred Dreyfus was a young French officer who was accused of conveying military secrets to the German embassy; he was convicted of treason in 1894 and sentenced to life imprisonment. It later emerged the culprit was a more senior officer. The establishment closed ranks, got the real wrong-doer acquitted and forged documents which heaped more blame on poor Dreyfus. His eventual pardon was still to come but was finally granted in 1906, when he resumed his army career and served with distinction through the whole of the First World War.*] Italy, which has become a nation within my recollection, is supposed to be already up to its neck in debt, through trying to imitate the other nations in the professional cut-throat business.

Altogether the results of militarism are anything but tempting to thoughtful Britons, but as according to one authority, the people of these islands are mostly fools, I will not deal with the whole, but confine myself to railwaymen, in the hope that they may possibly be in the minority who are not fools, and I ask the question, What effect will conscription have upon railwaymen in relation to their trade unions?

In my opinion it will have a far-reaching effect. By complaints which I hear from all quarters, there is as great a possibility of ruptures and strikes in the future as there have been in the past. Now what effect would conscription have in the case of a strike of railwaymen? Simply this. Every railwayman, being a soldier as well as a railway-man. could be called upon by the Government for military service at any time. Consequently, when they go on strike, the Government will be able to call them up as soldiers, and order them (for the public benefit) to work the railways, not as railwaymen, but as soldiers, and none dare refuse to obey military orders on pain of being shot!

There, my Jingo friends, how do you like the prospect? Of what value will trade unions be to railwaymen then? Do you think it cannot be done? Why, I have known soldiers put to gather the harvest, when poor farm labourers were on strike for better pay; and if those poor farm labourers had been under military domination, they would have been ordered to do the work as soldiers, for the public benefit, of course.

I am aware that some of our Socialist friends are looking forward to the prospect of conscription, and the use of fire (and other) arms with jubilation, for the following reason: They say that when the working-men of this country have the keeping of, and have learnt the use of a "gun," they may possibly be able to obtain those reforms with the assistance of that "gun" which they have been unable to obtain by other means!

Oh, the rascals! Of course, Sir, my readers will not support such a sentiment. It looks too much like the measures advocated by Tom Smith's acquaintance, who wanted a pole-axing day, or a gun and a week off. But seriously, it behoves us all to be on the alert to protect our liberties, and the liberty of railwaymen to battle for their rights, when they deem it necessary, can be entirely swept away under a system of conscription, in addition to which a military training breeds a sort of subserviency to our "pastors and masters," which is fatal to all our ideas of manliness and independence. No wonder that it is strongly advocated by the upper classes; it is just the sort of physic they would like to dose you with.

CROMWELL

'Cromwell' clearly subscribed to the conspiracy theory of history, but one can see his point. Here he is again in a different edition of the Journal:-

...we all know that the capitalist was never so powerful as he is to-day; this is easily proved by the war in which this country is now engaged. He has, by his influence, goaded our Government into a diabolical war. He has bought up the press of this country, and by this means has perverted and misled the public into supporting his policy. He has such an influence, even on the pulpit, that certain so-called followers of the "Prince of Peace" are now shouting in favour of bloodshed and slaughter louder than they ever shouted in favour of salvation. He has disgraced us by introducing forced labour in certain parts of Africa. He has said that when the Transvaal is conquered and handed over to him, he will introduce it there. His next move will be directed towards you, for the press, which is his property, is beginning already to clamour for conscription. There is no power on earth which can cope with him but a thorough combination of labour....

Speaking of the Boer war, the brother of an engine-man from Colwick drove trains in South Africa. A letter had come from his sister-in-law, and that appeared in the Journal. Here are a few extracts:-

We had to clear out of Ladysmith for as you see by the papers, the beastly Boers shelled the town..... On Monday, that was the first day the Boers started shelling the town, we kept well at the back of the house in case one might fall on it. One burst just in front of the house and a bit went right over it, and just missed the back verandah. Another one fell at the corner of the pantry, and the shock knocked my little girl down (Mabel, the eldest), and she went off in a fit with the fright that she got. When she got up and recovered from the fright, she said the shell hit her in the head; she thought it did. We were not so frightened at first, but after the child got in that state we did not like it..... Fred could not get away to come with me; they would not give him leave, so he stayed behind. He was working to Mooi River with the armoured train, and they wanted him to bring troops up.... Fred was in the battle of Elandslaagte with his armoured train; shells were flying all around them, but not one hit it.

A news item elsewhere reported on the armoured trains:-

On several of the armoured trains which are being used for the conveyance of troops against the Boers in South Africa there is a steam pump attached to the locomotive. The pump is of Merryweathers' "Valiant" pattern, and takes its steam from the locomotive boiler. Sufficient hose is carried to enable water to be pumped from any stream or other source passed on the way, the water being stored in a tank carried on one of the trucks, and available for boiler feeding or drinking purposes.

5: RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

The ASLEF Journal considered itself duty bound to report railway accidents in detail, and informed their members of the recommendations made by the inspecting officer.

There was only a single accident on the G.E.R. over this period, but that was one which made all railwaymen shudder. It was the boiler explosion at Westerfield.

Here is a news item in the issue dated November 1900, followed by an editorial from that same issue. They appear to have been written independently of one another, and both contain inaccuracies.

Westerfield station was on a main line of the GER, the one from Ipswich to Yarmouth South Town, not the main line. The date of the incident, which they disagree on, was 25 September 1900. The engine, only a year old, was actually No. 522. It was a Y14 0-6-0, a class which later became LNER J-15.

The train was a freight from Ipswich standing at the signal by the level crossing, awaiting access to the Felixstowe branch.

Explosion on the Great Eastern Railway.

A fatal accident, caused by the bursting of the boiler of a locomotive, took place on Tuesday, October 16th, at Westerfield Station, on the main line of the Great Eastern Railway. At about half-past seven a goods train left Ipswich for Yarmouth and pulled up at Westerfield, the signal being against it. While the train was at a standstill the boiler burst and the engine was carried off its frame and hurled a distance of some 50ft. on to the top of the gatehouse keeper's wooden hut. A police constable named Goodwin and a newspaper boy were in the hut. The boy escaped serious injury, but the police constable had to be removed to hospital. The driver of the engine and the fireman, William MacDonald, were both killed. The body of the driver was blown into a coal yard fifty yards away and the fireman's body was found in the fourth truck from the engine. A porter and platelayer had a miraculous escape, the boiler passing over their heads. The inquest was adjourned.

About midday the engine of a train from Felixstowe, for which Westerfield is the junction, ran off the metals about a hundred yards from the scene of the explosion and the passengers had to be transferred to the Yarmouth train.

The editorial read:-

The locomotive boiler explosion which occurred on the 25th September at Westerfield, on the Great Eastern Railway, serves to remind us - though in this case in a very regrettable manner - of the comparative immunity which we enjoy from such accidents. The engine was No. 523, a six-coupled goods engine; it had been rebuilt, it is said, only last year. It appears that on the day mentioned the engine, with a train attached, had been brought to a stand at the signal which is placed within a short distance of the level-crossing on the down line. After some time, steam gathered at the safety-valve and was blowing off when the explosion took place without warning of any kind. The driver and fireman were killed on the spot. The boiler was carried by the concussion some 120 feet in an apparently direct line with the station. It alighted on the permanent way at the crossing and then rebounded on to the end of the platform, demolishing a porter's cabin and razing a huge telegraph post to the ground, besides doing other damage.

Any speculation as to the cause of the explosion would, of course, be futile and out of place; we must look to the Board of Trade Inspector's report for an explanation of the matter. Taking into account the fact that there are now something like 20,000 locomotives in the British Isles, it speaks well for the high standard of efficiency in which they are kept that the number of boiler and fire-box failures having serious consequences is extremely small.

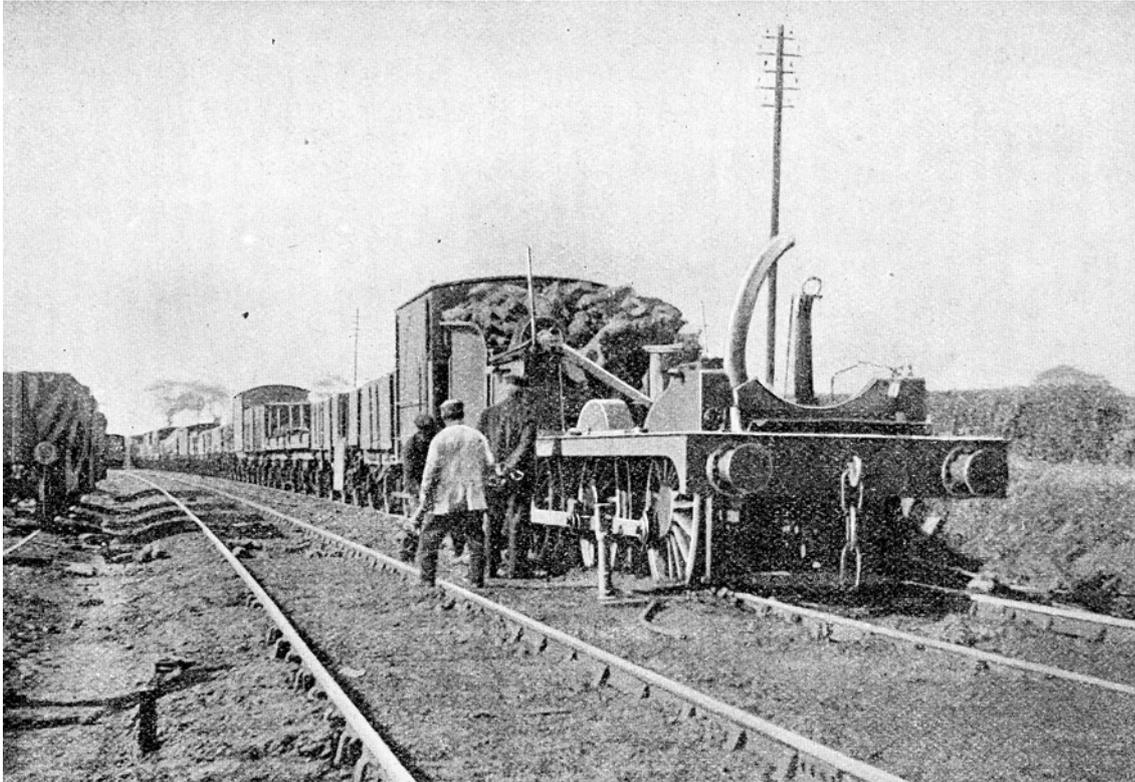
All railwaymen were keenly interested in the cause of the explosion, so in December 1900 the enquiry was reported in detail:-

TOPICS OF THE MONTH

The coroner's enquiry respecting the death of the driver and Fireman who were killed by the locomotive boiler explosion at Westerfield having been concluded, some remarks may be offered with regard to the evidence adduced. The testimony of the principal witnesses was of a somewhat conflicting nature. The immediate cause of the explosion turned on the question as to whether the boiler was short of water at the actual time when the failure took place. It appears that before the engine left the Ipswich goods yard, Walter Church, another engine driver, got upon the footplate of the goods engine No. 522. He pointed out to the deceased man Barnard [*John Barnard, the driver of 522*] that the water-gauge glass was empty.

Great Eastern Railway Society

The December 1900 magazine also included two photographs from Westerfield:-

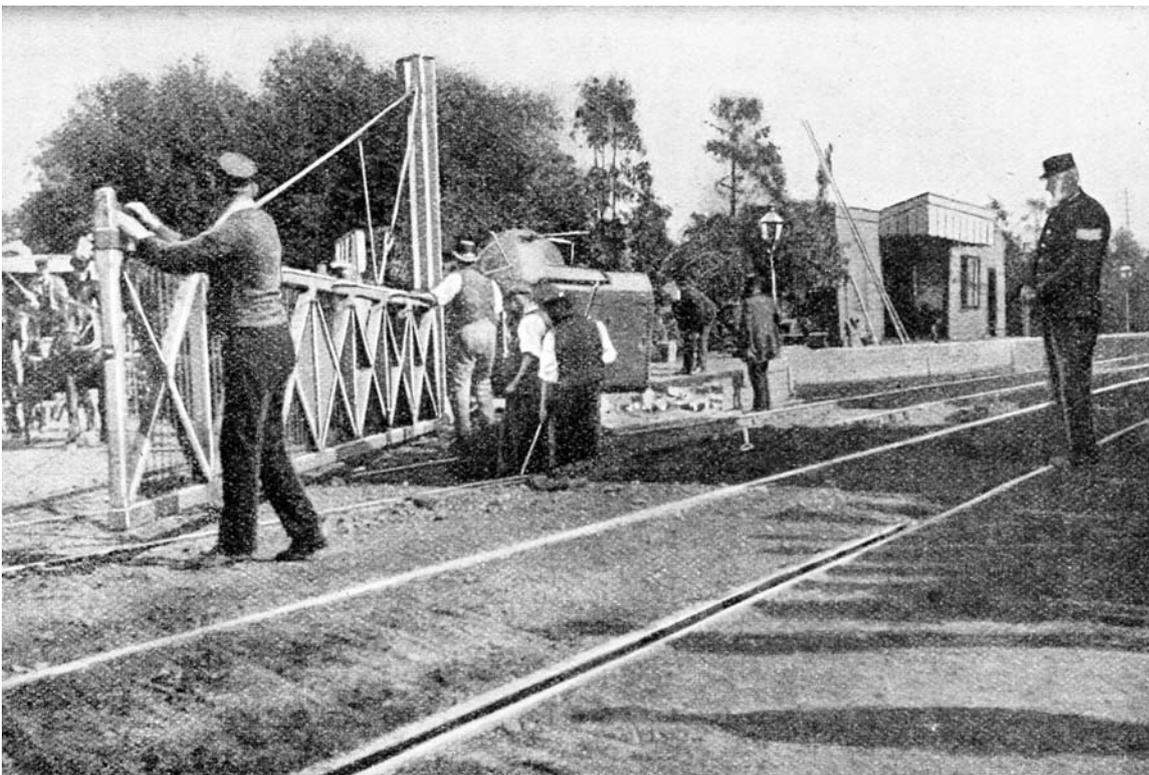


[From a photo by H. WALTERS, Ipswich]

Boiler Explosion at Westerfield Junction, Great Eastern Railway. Engine No. 522

The engine of the 7.15 Great Eastern goods train from Ipswich to Felixstowe exploded at Westerfield Junction recently, killing instantaneously the driver John Barnard, who had been forty years in the company's service, and also his mate, the fireman, named MacDonald. Both men belonged to Ipswich. A passenger in an up-train, which was alongside in the station at the time, was also severely injured.

[The top view is looking towards Ipswich from the level-crossing. The view below is looking in the other direction, and shows the down-platform of the station.]



[From a photo by H. WALTERS, Ipswich]

Clearing the Line after the Explosion

Barnard, on the other hand, was of opinion that the glass was simply full-up, and said so. Driver Church, however, endeavoured to blow the glass through but was unable to do so. According to the Board of Trade surveyor the drain-pipe was stopped up. If this was the case the gauge could not be blown through, and it is quite possible that Church may have been mistaken in supposing the glass to have been empty. Nevertheless, this theory of shortness of water was supported by Mr. T. G. Knight, boiler inspector, of the Boiler General Insurance Company, Manchester. Mr. Knight stated that he had examined some 7,000 boilers. In his opinion the explosion in the Great Eastern goods engine, No. 522, was entirely due to overheating, brought about by an insufficiency of water, and he had noticed that some of the stays of the fire-box were more or less fused. The representative of the Board of Trade differed altogether from the view taken by Mr. Knight, and held that there was no evidence of recent over-heating. His own view was that the failure was due to defective stays, of which he found there were at least thirty. Further, about fifteen or sixteen of the stays did not fit the threads in the fire-box plate.

* * * * *

The stays were made of Stone's bronze, but the Board of Trade surveyor considered that copper was in many respects preferable to bronze. Here, again, expert opinion was at variance. Mr. James Holden, the locomotive superintendent, was in favour of bronze stays, while Mr. Knight thought that bronze stays were all right as long as they were new, but he qualified his opinion by adding that, if corroded and overheated, such stays lost a great deal of their virtue, and consequently they required more frequent renewing than copper stays. However this may be, the bronze stays as used in the G.E.R. goods engines of the "522" class were, as will be understood, capable of withstanding a considerable load before breaking, while the maximum stress brought to bear on each stay was less than one-sixth of the stress which would suffice to tear the stay away from the plate. Now a curious feature of the explosion was that none of the side-stays were broken, although the Board of Trade surveyor assumed that the failure commenced at the lower part of the left-hand side of the fire-box, which had bulged inwards. If this was so, then the ripping of the plates extended to the fire-box crown, which was supported by headed bolts screwed into the bridge stays. It is a remarkable fact that no less than 88 of these bolts were snapped clean across, while the crown of the fire-box was torn down from the girders.

The side-stays were expanded, I believe, according to the method originated by Mr. J. C. Park on the North London Railway. A 7/16-in. hole is drilled 3/4-in. to 1-in. deep into each end, and the stay, after being screwed into place, is then tightened by means of a drift driven into these holes. So far, it has been considered that this plan is a good one, as it renders the riveting of the ends of the stays unnecessary. *The Engineer*, however, in commenting upon the Westerfield boiler explosion states that "the only lesson to be drawn from it seems to be that it is always well to rivet over the heads of side-stays." It is to be remembered that the kind of stay used in the Great Eastern engine depended entirely on the screwed threads for its holding power. The advantage of drilling a hole into each end of the stays is that a leakage or fracture can be quickly detected.

* * * * *

Turning to the facts of the matter as adduced at the inquest, it appeared that the engine had been several times reported for minor defects and for fire-box leaking. A boiler-smith in the employment of the Great Eastern Railway Company, W. G. Salmon, had frequently attended to leaking stays, while according to the Government surveyor, there had been some bulging of the sides of the fire-box previous to the explosion on the 25th September. Moreover, the different drivers who happened to have had charge of the engine had constantly reported it for some defect or other, but chiefly, it may be surmised, for fire-box troubles. As stated last month, the engine was practically new.

It was constructed to the designs of Mr. Jas. Holden, who said that it was, in every sense of the word, as good an engine as was ever built. After most careful trials, bronze had been selected as a material for stays, for the reason that it had a greater tensile strength, and also because it did not lose it in the way that copper did. Bronze was more expensive than copper, but generally gave less trouble.

There followed a lengthy technical discussion which described the materials and methods used by other Companies to stay their boilers. It was clear that nobody really knew the cause – the 'experts' who contributed could only give their opinions, and there was no consensus amongst them.

This is not the place here to go into the full report which can be found elsewhere (such as at http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/documents/BoT_Westerfield1900.pdf), but a significant item in the Journal was that contributed in the December 1900 edition by the brethren of the Stratford branch.

Note that they name the driver as David Barnard while other sources call him John (the latter being confirmed by his headstone at Ipswich Old Cemetery, which also has a carving of a Y14 on it). This illustrates the difficulty of acquiring accurate information in those days and also serves as a warning against placing too much reliance on secondary sources, even contemporary ones!

Stratford Branch

SIR, - I have much pleasure in again reporting progress in the ranks of our branch and trust it will continue throughout the Society, and that all new members will bring another one with them. On Sunday, October 21st, 1900, a joint meeting of engine-drivers and firemen of the A.S.R.S. [ASLEF's rival trade union] and our Society was held in the St. Paul's School-room, Queen Street, Stratford, at 3.45 p.m., when 300 men were present, to take into consideration the recent sad disaster at Westerfield junction, when David Barnard and his mate, Macdonald, were killed by engine 522 boiler exploding, and the evidence tendered at the inquest, and after a lengthy and very interesting discussion the following resolutions were unanimously carried :-

(1) "That this special meeting of G.E.R. engine-drivers and firemen, at Stratford, are of opinion that the evidence, as quoted in the *East Anglian Daily Times* of October 12, 1900, of Driver Walter Church, was very unfair and misleading to the public in general, and far from practical every-day working of locomotive engines on our railways, and we also deeply regret that it should tend to place the blame upon the two unfortunate men who were victims to this sad disaster, and unable to refute the statements made, seeing there was no evidence of the engine having been short of water; and we earnestly trust that the recommendations of the coroner's jury will be strictly carried out in future, and that this resolution be forwarded to the President of the Board of Trade and also to the Press."

(2) " That this meeting of engine-drivers and firemen also deeply sympathise with the relatives of the two unfortunate men who lost their lives in the execution of their duty, and that we pass a vote of condolence to them in their bereavement." We sincerely hope that recent events on the G.E.R. will convince every engine-driver and fireman of the necessity of belonging to a trade society, so that should similar misfortunes overtake any of them during our dangerous calling, they may have the benefit of proper legal assistance, and feel assured that justice will be done for them as far as possible. I very much regret that although the firemen on the G.E.R. have recently had an advance of 1s. 6d. per week on their wages, very few have at present seen their way to speculate a few coppers per week in a trade union to try and still further their calling, and greatly raise the standard of a poorly-paid class of men.

Yours fraternally , BRANCH SECRETARY.