

*Between the Lines*



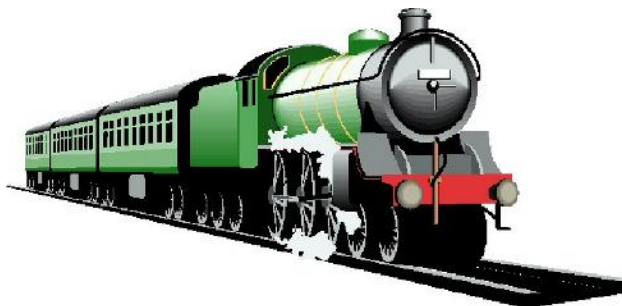
# Newsletter

**NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB**

**MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION**  
 ON SATURDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JULY 2013  
 FROM 10.00am TO 4.00pm  
 AT THE NORTHAMPTON FREE SCHOOL  
 NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL,  
 HEMPSTORY PASSWELL ROAD,  
 NORTHAMPTON NN4 6GU

Members, Visitors & Enthusiasts Welcome to all ages, families & schools  
 Large scale support available  
 Models, Trains, Track, Signalling, Buildings, Scenery, etc.  
 Refreshments available  
 Booking for all railway societies  
 What's On  
 All Competitions SA Family Relief 50%

12	11	10	8	7	
 <b>JULY 2013</b>					
<b>ADMIT ONE to Platform</b> NOT VALID ON TRAINS Issued subject to the Bye-Laws, Notices Regulations and Conditions of the Railway					
1	2	3	4	5	6



## **C O N T E N T S (of key articles)**

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**PLEASE NOTE—The exhibition posters & flyers state the opening time is 10:30. The actual opening time is 10:00. Model railway magazine adverts are correct.**

### **Rules for Club Night Attendance**

- Please park your vehicle with consideration for the flat occupants when parking outside the Kingsthorpe Community Centre.
- If you make a drink, please wash your cup/spoon up afterwards. Please wipe up any spillages.
- Don't create congestion in the kitchen. Please get your drink and return to the main hall.
- Have you paid your subs? The money is mainly used to pay our Wednesday night hall rental, plus the cost of drinks and biscuits. £1 per person please.
- Please put away any tools, layouts, tables and chairs you've used at the end of the evening.
- A clear passage way **MUST** be maintained in the entrance lobby area as an emergency exit. Also please keep **ALL** other emergency exits accessible at **ALL** times.
- Please sign in at each attendance. This ensures we know who to account for in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Current membership :	6	Junior Members
(correct at time of going to press)	29	Senior Members

Hopefully due to the next newsletter having a good selection of photos from the exhibition, means that there will be less room for other articles, so in this edition we are commemorating one of the big events that happened on the railways in 1963, namely The Great Train Robbery. In this newsletter we also look at the Travelling Post Office (TPO) coaches and how they worked. This newsletter not only looks at the 1963 heist; but read about the very first great train robbery. Messrs Reynolds, Biggs and co were not the first.

**Colin**



## Club News

### Date of next Committee Meeting

This will be on Monday 1st July 2013. If there are any items for the agenda, please let Richard have them ASAP. Email: [rjd156@btinternet.com](mailto:rjd156@btinternet.com)

### Club Night Test Track

This will be operational on the following dates:

17th July (this may be exhibition planning night), 7th & 28th August, 18th September (The Editors Birthday—that's a nice present), 9th and 30th October, 20th November, 11th December.

**ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**



### AGM 2013

This will be held on Wednesday 4th September 2013 at the Kingsthorpe Community Centre. Will all members please do their best to attend.

## **The Travelling Post Office**

by Colin Tarry

Firstly this is not going to be an in-depth history or look at the travelling post office (TPO). There are plenty of books and internet information available plus the fact there isn't room in this newsletter. This article is a brief resume of the TPO service in order to set the scene for our look at the Great Train Robbery.

The first journey by a mail train was in 1838 from London to the Midlands and more than 130 services were in use by the time of the First World War.

### How Did TPOs Work?

Sealed mail sacks arrive at the railway station on trollies. In more recent times these were specialised trollies called a York Trolley. The mail bags were then loaded onto the train.

The TPO trains had basically two types of coaches, although several of each type would make up the train. The two coach types were the stowage coach (known as a Post Office Tender or POT) and a sorting coach (POS). Sometimes the POT could be an ordinary full brake coach (BG). There were occasions where the mail coaches were mixed in with passenger coaches. There is photographic proof of this.

Once the train was loaded, the bags were opened and their contents emptied into well table below the sorting frames. From here it is then sorted into the correct destination slots on the frames and then packed into bundles. The bundles are then placed into the correct mail sack for the mails destination. These sacks are hung on racks inside the coach.

A "vague list" was available for workers to decipher any odd or unreadable addresses; but these were rarely used due to the sorters expert knowledge and experience.

As the TPOs were a moving sorting office, the way that mail was sorted on board changed with different journeys. This included interchangeable sorting strips on the pigeon holes on the sorting frame. These sorting strips were called 'fillets'. On early TPOS these were chalked on.



*The sorting pigeon holes in the sorting frame*

At a certain point on the journey, sorting to a plan would cease. Letters would be deposited into the mail bags and the 'fillets' would be changed for the new plan. The bags from the previous plan would be tied up ready to be dropped off by the apparatus from the coach into receiving nets by the line side or dropped off at the next station. Additionally newspapers, packets and registered letters could also be sorted on the TPO.

Letters could also be posted directly into the sorting coach from the station platform. Posting a letter this way guaranteed an overnight service. Such mail was usually postmarked on the train with a special hand stamp. Additionally a "Late Fee" was charged for these letters which was set at 2d in 1880 and rose to 1p in 1974 before the fee was finally abolished.

The inside of a TPO sorting coach. The sorting pigeon holes on the frame are on the left and the mail bags to receive the sorted mail from the current sorting plan are on the right.



### **Travelling Post Office routes 2003**

Newcastle-Darlington-York-Doncaster-Derby-Birmingham-Cheltenham-Bristol-Exeter-Plymouth-Truro-Penzance (both directions)

Newcastle-Darlington-York-Peterborough-London (both directions)

Carlisle-Warrington-Stafford-Rugby-Watford-London (both directions)

Norwich-Ipswich-London (both directions)

London-Tonbridge-Dover (both directions)

London-Reading-Taunton-Exeter-Plymouth

Swansea-Cardiff-Newport-Bristol-Reading-Slough-London

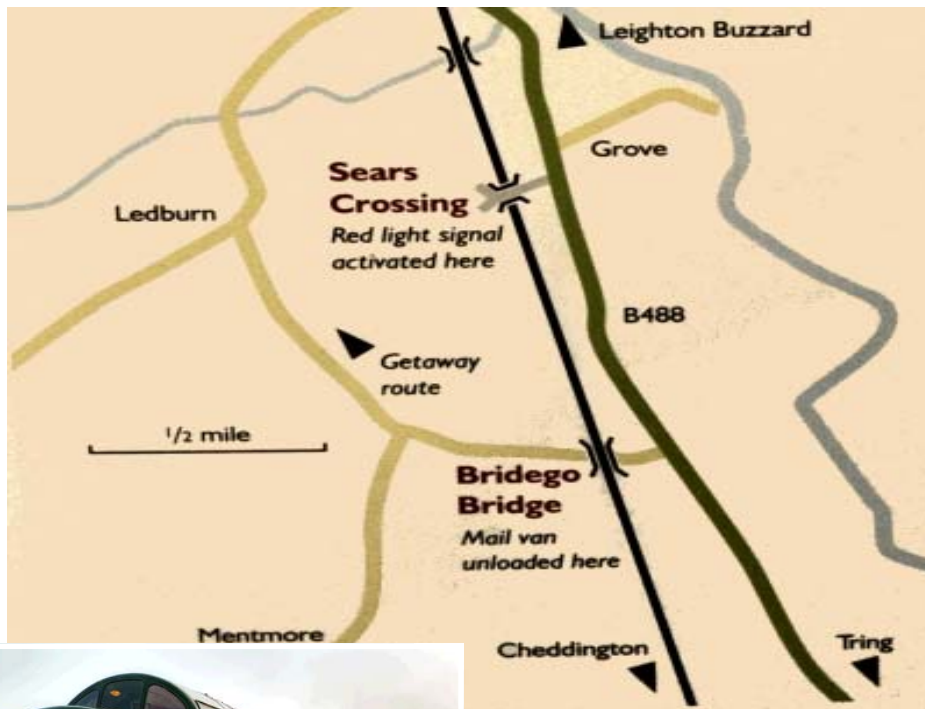
Plymouth-Exeter-Reading-Slough-London

The last mail train ran on Friday 9th January 2004.

## The Great Train Robbery

*[This is not a detailed account of the robbery its self just an article to commemorate this event in British railway history. It is not an event we can use the term "celebrate" due to the violence used on the driver, co-driver and some of the Post Office sorters ]*

This took place on the 8th August 1963 at Bridego Bridge at Ledburn near Mentmore in Buckinghamshire. £2.6 million was stolen making it the largest value robbery in British history until the Securitas Kent Depot Robbery in 2006. Most of the money was never recovered.



The locomotive hauling the mail train was an English Electric Type 4 which we later know as the Class 40. The locomotive was number D326 (later 40126). The locomotive was not allowed to be preserved at the request of the rail unions.



40126 being broken up at Doncaster in April 1984

The mail train was the 6:50pm Glasgow to Euston Royal Mail service. The train consisted of 12 carriages and carried 72 Post Office staff who sorted mail. The mail was loaded on the train at Glasgow and also during station stops en-route, as well as from line side collection points where local post office staff would hang mail sacks on elevated track-side hooks which were caught by nets deployed by the on-board staff. Sorted mail on the train could also be dropped-off at the same time. The second carriage behind the engine was known as the HVP (High Value Package) coach where registered mail was sorted and this contained valuables including large quantities of money, registered parcels and packages. Usually the value of these items would have been in the region of £300,000, but because there had been a Bank Holiday weekend in Scotland, the total on the day of the robbery was £2.6 million equal to about £172 million in 2011.



As a result of the great Train Robbery the British Railways Rule Book was amended. If stopped by a red signal, drivers were no longer allowed to leave the loco cab and use the line side telephone to contact the signalman/signal box. Also they now had to keep their loco cab doors locked. These rules remained in force until the last mail ran in January 2004.

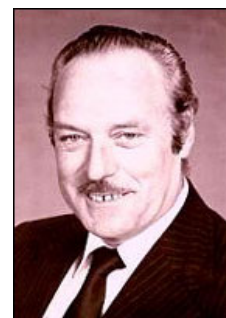
Driver Jack Mills was coshed on the head with an iron bar causing a black eye and bruising. He was taken to Aylesbury hospital. Mills recovered but never returned to work. He died of Leukaemia in 1970.



Second man David Whitby was badly affected by the attack and his treatment. He was 25 at the time. He returned to work but died of a heart attack in 1972 aged 34.



The main investigator of the robbery was detective Superintendent Jack Slipper of the Metropolitan Police. He became known as "Slipper of the Yard", and became so involved with the investigation that he continued to hunt many of the robbers after his retirement. He died aged 81 on 24th August 2005.



## Notes from the Committee Meeting held on Monday 3rd June 2013



### Club Premises

The old school in Duston officially reopened on June 2nd for community use. There is still no permanent space for the Club to have use of.

### Exhibition 2013

Stuart is organising the Tombola in storing the prizes and numbering them up.  
Planning and finalising arrangements for the day continue. Currently about 15 traders and 25 layouts are attending plus some demonstrations and society stands.  
Kitchen facilities at the school are very good.

Richard Deacon      Club Secretary



### Web Site of the Month

This months web site is dedicated to DCC. DCCWiki is a DCC encyclopaedia about Digital Command Control used in model railways and is written collaboratively by many of its readers. It's a US based site so expect American terminology i.e. railroad.

The web site has a Book creator facility which enables you compile a book of the topics of your choice. The menu for the various options is on the left hand side.

*<http://www.dccwiki.com>*

# NOTICE BOARD



## TOMBOLA

### TIME IS RUNNING OUT

Stuart Barker has very kindly agreed to store any items for the 2013 Exhibition Tombola for us.

Will members please bring in a small prize gift each month for the Club Tombola. Keep an eye out for any supermarket special offers for example. A prize should be worth at least £1, be new or in very good condition and if perishable be 'in-date' by the end of July 2013.

Please give your items to Stuart Barker

### Future Saturday Workings

For the foreseeable future there will not be any more Club work days on Saturday mornings due to the fact that the Kingsthorpe Community is now taken by another organisation. The afternoons after 12noon are available but on making enquiries at club who would be interested in that the answer so far is only one person.

### First Great Train Robbery

Did you know the first great train robbery took place on the night of 15th May 1855, when three boxes of gold bars and coins were stolen whilst being sent from London Bridge station to Paris. In today's terms £2.6M was stolen, ironically the same amount stolen in the 1963 heist. The great train robbery continues today; except this time it's the railway companies who are doing the robbing!

## **Club Information**

### **Committee Members**

Les Pace (Chair Person)  
Colin Tarry (Treasurer )  
Richard Deacon (Secretary)  
Bert Dewdney (Exhibition Manager)  
Stephen Lloyd (Publicity)  
Michael Castledine  
Roger Whiffin

Web site: [www.ndmrc.org](http://www.ndmrc.org)  
Email: [feedback@ndmrc.org](mailto:feedback@ndmrc.org)  
Club Night: Wednesday  
Meeting Time: 19:30—22:00  
Venue: Kingsthorpe  
Community Centre,  
Thornton Hall Close,



Kingsthorpe,  
Northampton, NN2 6PT

Secretary: tel: 01604 890275  
email: [rjd156@btinternet.com](mailto:rjd156@btinternet.com)

### **Newsletter Editor**

Colin Tarry email: [ndmrc@cjv.org.uk](mailto:ndmrc@cjv.org.uk)

### **Club Subscription Rates**

Club membership runs from the first Wednesday in August or part of the calendar year, and ALL expire on the last calendar day of July, becoming due for renewal on the first Wednesday in August. Membership £35 per year (with reduced rates on a pro rata basis if joining in or after November. Additionally there are reduced rates for junior and senior citizen members).

### **DISCLAIMER**

Any views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Northampton and District Model Railway Club, its Officials or Members unless so stated.