

# NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY STUDY GROUP

# NEWSLETTER



July 2025 – NUMBER **I55**

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It's so nice to be able to start with some good news!

As most of you will be aware by now, last week saw the culmination of some four years work between the Study Group, Sonic Models and Rails of Sheffield with the announcement that at long last, we are going to get an accurate scale model of a NBR Glen in ready to run form. This has only been possible because of the input from the Group, in particular Euan Cameron. As a thank you for our assistance, Members of the Study Group will have access to a one-off model, namely number **408 Glen Sloy**, in original condition and at a discounted price. This version of the model will **not** be available to the general public, with distribution only being through the Group. Rails will be producing locos in the later NBR, LNER and BR liveries for the general public so modellers from these periods have not missed out but the RRP will be much higher than for our model and will not be guaranteed. Having worked so hard on this we need to ensure it is a success.

Exhibitions are touched on separately in this Newsletter but a few comments if I may. The Committee has been on the receiving end of some what I see as unfair and unjust criticism for the decision not to attend the Glasgow Show. Just so that there is no misunderstanding here, the decision was taken not because we did not want to attend, but because we could not guarantee bodies to man the Stand and if you can't do that then there is not much point in attending. We are happy to go back in 2026, but only if we have a commitment from members to help out. So if you want to see us there you know what you need to do. I do appreciate that to many members this is a day out but surely one hour out of your day is not too big a sacrifice.

On that same vein, the Falkirk Show will soon be upon us. Some of you have already volunteered, and a big thank you for that, but we need more. For personal reasons Steaurt is temporarily stepping back from his role but Keith Crombie has

stepped into the breach, so please let him know when you will be available to help.

The AGM will soon be upon us and an advance notice is included. From it you will see that nominations are required for Chairman, Secretary, and two Committee Members. The Vice Chair is also vacant. It is not really a good thing for the Group for the same people to always be there. In the past the excuse was distance for attending meetings. Now, since they are all held on Zoom, that excuse no longer exists. Anyway, I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the AGM. And don't forget to reserve a Loco!

Robin Boog

## SALES

As you may have read in the Journal, we have copies of Robin Boog's new book 'The Selkirk & Galashiels Railway' in stock. We are pleased to be able to offer this to members at a reduced price of £15 plus £3 post and packing.

If any member attending the AGM wishes to order items for collection on the day to save on postage please, contact the Sales Officer.

If any member has an unwanted copy of our publication P107 1896 Working Timetable Fife & North (102 pages) could they please contact the Sales Officer. Our master copy was sold some years ago and we do not have a PDF of the publication. I am seeking a copy that we can scan so we can once again make this timetable available for sale.

[sales@nbrstudygroup.co.uk](mailto:sales@nbrstudygroup.co.uk)

## A QUERY ?

In Newsletter 154, there was an appeal for suggestions as to the purpose of a metal plate, located on the platform coping stones in Edinburgh Waverley.

A suggestion by David Dickson is that this plate was the measuring point from which railway mileages were calculated for the Railway Clearing House.

It was removed from its position on platform 10/11 (now 7/11) by Network Rail several years ago during refurbishment of the platforms and the present location in storage unknown.

## RCTS MEETINGS

The Scottish Branch of the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society indoor meeting programme - Season 2025-2026.

Function Room,  
Scots Guards Club  
2 Clifton Terrace  
Edinburgh, EH12 5DR

Please note that the venue is not wheelchair accessible but is Stairlift equipped.

There is no admission charge but members and visitors are invited to make a donation to assist in defraying the cost at the conclusion of each meeting.

Thursday 9 October 2025 @ 14:30

### "A Scottish Pot Pourri"

Speaker: Norman Turnbull

Thursday 13 November 2025 @ 14:30

### "The Atlantic Railway A Look back at the Campbeltown and Macrihanish Light Railway"

Speaker: Gordon Casely

Thursday 11 December 2025 @ 14:30

### "Branch 2025 AGM"

Followed by Member's slide/digital presentation.

Saturday 10 January 2026 @ 14.30

### "Photographic Review of 2024 & 2025"

Speaker: Keith Sanders

Saturday 21 February 2026 @ 14.30

### "Locomotive & Coach Liveries Part 3"

Speaker: Stuart Malcolm

Thursday 12 March 2026 @ 14.30

### "Paddle Steamer Waverley 50 years of preservation"

Speaker: Iain Quinn

[www.rcts.org.uk](http://www.rcts.org.uk)

## AGM

The 2025 NBRSG AGM will be held on 25 October.

Please see the enclosed Advanced Notice for further details.

## ON AND ABOUT THE (exNBR) LINE

### Glenfinnan Viaduct

Specialist engineers have completed a year long, £3.4m maintenance programme to safeguard its future for generations to come. Network Rail, along with principal contractor AmcoGiffen, assessed the condition of the viaduct. Concrete repairs were carried out across the structure, taking care to replicate its heritage appearance. New safety handrails for staff working at height were installed, along with renewing ballast retention systems at the ends of the structure.

Engineers also worked in the River Finnan, protecting the piers from erosion caused by the fast-flowing river. Specially trained rope access technicians descended from the viaduct, reaching and restoring areas that would otherwise be inaccessible.

The Glenfinnan viaduct opened in 1901 and is the largest mass concrete viaduct in Scotland, spanning more than 1,000 feet. The build cost £18,904 at the time, which is around £2 million in today's money.

The restoration of the viaduct is part of a broader programme of work in the Glenfinnan area. A two-year project to enhance the natural habitat by planting trees across approximately 200 hectares to protect, restore and expand rainforest and peatland habitats. Additionally, deer fencing has been installed at Ardmolich to safeguard the newly planted native woodlands from overgrazing.

### West Highland

Network Rail is set to undertake an extensive programme of tree and vegetation management work, which will also open up even more incredible views on one of the world's most scenic routes. Work will begin on part of the West Highland Line between the Falls of Falloch to just beyond Crianlarich Station, over the River Fillan, and will see trees and vegetation cleared up to six metres either side of the tracks on land within the railway boundary. Hazardous vegetation which protrudes on to the railway will also be managed where appropriate.

Train journeys on the route will be unaffected by the vegetation management programme, which began on Monday 30 June, with this phase of works expected to be completed during the winter. It will take place during daytime hours only.

Ahead of the work starting, ecological surveys were carried out to identify any nesting birds, protected species or sensitive habitat sites.

As the work is delivered, specialist ecologists will continue to monitor and safeguard protected species living within the railway and surrounding areas. Biodiversity enhancements will also be delivered where appropriate, including the installation of bat and bird boxes and habitat piles. A habitat risk assessment was completed in consultation with NatureScot.

### Castlecreary

Visitors to the Edwardian country house at Hill of Tarvit located two miles south of Cupar, will be struck by its poignant reminder of Britain's worst interwar rail disaster, which occurred at Castlecreary on 10 December 1937.

Designed in the Arts and Crafts style by Robert Lorimer and completed in 1906, the house showcased a Dundee jute baron Frederick Hugh's collection of paintings, tapestries, porcelains and furniture.

The son of the house Hugh Sharp, inherited the house on his father's death in 1932. Hugh was pursuing his own successful business career when he set out for Glasgow to meet his fiancée. In atrocious weather his Dundee-Glasgow train was stopped by signals, then run into by an Edinburgh-Glasgow express with such force that the stationary train's engine D29 no 9896 'Dandie Dinmont' was sent 52 yards down the track while that of the Edinburgh train, A3 no 2744 'Grand Parade', had to be replaced as it was damaged beyond repair. Hugh was among the 35 who were killed in addition to 179 hurt.

His sister, Elizabeth, outlived their widowed mother by only two years before dying in 1946 of cancer. The house and its collection were bequeathed to the National Trust in 1948 with the upper floors leased to Marie Curie as a convalescent home until 1977. Within the grounds is Kingarrock Hickory Golf, the only dedicated hickory golf course in the UK.

The driver of the Edinburgh train was committed to court on a charge of culpable homicide (the Scottish equivalent of manslaughter) for supposedly driving too fast for the weather conditions, but the charge was dropped. The Inspecting Officer concluded that it was the signalman who was principally at fault for the disaster. This was also Britain's worst snow related rail crash, others of note being Elliot Junction in 1906 and Abbots Ripton in 1876.

Castlecreary Community Council created in 2007 a memorial to the accident. Situated off Castlecreary Road, near the site of the disaster, it is constructed from railway sleepers, pieces of track and a train wheel.

### Galashiels

From 14 June until 30 September, a free exhibition titled 'Old Gala Club goes by Train' is on at the Museum room of Old Gala House.

It shows the history of the Waverley line and looks at Galashiels and each of the three stations on the four lines from Gala.

### Railway 200

2025 marks the 200th anniversary of the modern railway, inspired by the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825, a journey that changed the world forever. Under the banner of Railway 200, nationwide celebrations are planned throughout the year, showcasing how the railway shaped Britain and the world and how its pioneering pedigree continues today and is shaping tomorrow.

An exhibition train will visit Scotland this October as part of a national celebration of the 200th anniversary. The schedule for the train, named Inspiration, now covers 27 locations across Scotland, England and Wales, showcasing rail's past, present and future.

- Glasgow Central 11-12 October
- Bo'ness Heritage Railway 13-14 October
- Strathspey Heritage Railway 16-17 October
- Aberdeen 19-20 October
- Edinburgh Waverley 22-23 October

Curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum, Inspiration will comprise four eye-catching carriages. Rail's pioneering pedigree will be explored in a 'Railway Firsts' coach, highlighting landmark moments in rail's development. Alongside will be a 'Wonderlab on Wheels', inviting visitors to test their engineering skills with hands-on exhibits. Next will be a 'Your Railway Future' carriage, showcasing some of the more hidden roles in rail and encouraging people to join the railway to shape the next 200 years. The final coach is a 'Partner Zone', offering free, flexible exhibition space.

The carriages are currently being fitted out, supported by a £250k grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

More than 200,000 people, including many schoolchildren, are expected to visit by prior booking. Admission to the train will be free, but normal entry charges to heritage railways and private sites where it is located will apply.

[www.railway200.co.uk](http://www.railway200.co.uk)

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**New Members:** We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

**Change of Address:**

**Email Only change:**

**Deceased:** We are sorry to report the death of the following members:

**Lapsed:** In the absence of any subscription payment for 2024-25, the following 21 memberships have been lapsed:

### MONKLAND & KIRKINTILLOCH 200

In 2025 we have seen widespread celebration of 'Railway 200', the bicentenary of modern railways. This commemorates the first successful attempt on a public railway to match the new steam locomotive technology with a modern edge-rail that was able to support heavy engines and allow them to pass along at reasonable speed.

This took place on the Stockton & Darlington Railway in September 1825, using the revolutionary rolled malleable iron rails that were patented by John Birkinshaw in 1820 and manufactured at Bedlington Iron Works, Northumberland. Only eight months later, the first public edge railway in Scotland, the 10 mile Monkland & Kirkintilloch, was opened, using exactly the same rails as the Stockton & Darlington. Under its 1824 Act of Parliament the M&K had powers to use steam locomotives, so it seems appropriate to celebrate 'Railway Scotland 200' in May 2026. The first commercial train on the Monkland & Kirkintilloch, a horse drawn coal train from Gartsherrie to the Forth & Clyde Canal at Kirkintilloch ran on 17 May 1826.

During the spring months of 2026, various events to commemorate this bicentenary are being organised at the Kirkintilloch end of the line by East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture Trust and Kirkintilloch & District Society of Antiquaries.

These include:

- An Exhibition at the Auld Kirk Museum, Kirkintilloch
- A Talk on Early Scottish Railways by John Yellowlees
- A Talk on the History of the Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway by Don Martin
- A Guided Walk along the northern part of the M&K Railway

- Launch of a Book of Photographs of the M&K line, taken during the 1960s
- Inauguration of a National Transport Trust Red Wheel at Kirkintilloch

The Monkland & Kirkintilloch exhibition will be held at the Auld Kirk Museum from 21 March until 20 May. It will include significant archival documents held in East Dunbartonshire Archives at the William Patrick Library, Kirkintilloch, including a contemporary drawing of the first Monkland & Kirkintilloch Locomotive, another early drawing that shows a remarkable Horse Trial on the M&K in 1828 and a large contemporary coloured map of the M&K line.

It will also include a range of objects relating to the Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway, including rails, chairs, stone sleeper blocks and an Edmondson Ticket Dating Press with a representation of Monkland Railways tickets. A local model railway society will provide a range of appropriate models of locomotives and wagons.

The Monkland & Kirkintilloch was the first of a group of early North Lanarkshire lines that formed the core of the Scottish railway network. This functioned by means of numerous links and junctions between the early lines that later served as points of contact between the North British and Caledonian railway systems.

The Monkland & Kirkintilloch (NBR) linked with the Garnkirk & Glasgow Railway (CR) at Gartsherrie and with the Wishaw & Coltness Railway (CR) at Whifflet. Between Gartsherrie and Garnqueen South Junction the M&K (NBR) route doubled as part of the CR main line between Carlisle and the north-east of Scotland, via Stirling and Perth to Aberdeen.

*Don Martin*

### FSLs WEEKEND

Five railway companies shaped the Scottish railway network, each with its own characteristics. Nowadays all of these lines have a society which researches these characteristics and keeps their memory alive with magazines, books, models and talks. The societies work together, and the Museum of Scottish Railways is a partner.

To mark Railway 200 and the anniversary date of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, the Scottish Line Societies are coming together at the Museum of Scottish Railways at Bo'ness to celebrate the achievements of our five lines.

Over the weekend 27 & 28 September, all are welcome to visit the Museum and:

- meet the people preserving the history of Scotland's railways.
- view restored, full-size vehicles from all the pre-Grouping companies.
- see the Railway 200 exhibition showing the evolution of Scottish rail travel and the way it transformed the country.
- enjoy the sight and sounds of fully signalled trains running on the 'Sidmouth line' with guest model railway, *Cadhay Sidings*.
- meet with Ken McKee, author of *Three Generations on Scottish Railways*
- join groups to visit the Carriage and Wagon Workshop to see restoration in progress

Plus, the Bo'ness O Gauge Group will be running model trains from the days of the CR, GNoSR, GSWR, HR and NBR.

The Museum of Scottish Railways is reached via the footbridge or the adjacent pedestrian crossing and is open 1100 - 1630. Normal admission charges to the Museum apply.

## MODELLING NEWS

### 247 Developments

A recent release is for the NBR Dia.68 ; LNER SSA Dia.100B 15T Machinery Truck, coded Mac E by the LNER.



With the first built in 1907 at Cowlairst (44713), two more were added in 1915, built by Leeds Forge (27339/40).

All three were still in service into British Railways days, with the last 27340 believed to have been withdrawn in the 1960's.

The kit is 3D printed and requires buffers, wheels and couplings to finish.

Available in 4mm & 7mm scale, priced at £15.00 & £40.00 respectively.

[www.247developments.co.uk](http://www.247developments.co.uk)

An etched brass kit in 7mm scale for this prototype is also available in the Celtic Connections range, priced at £41.00.

[www.taffvale.wales](http://www.taffvale.wales)

## MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITIONS

We will be attending the Five Scottish Line Societies Event as part of Railway200 at the Museum of Scottish Railways in Bo'ness on the 27 & 28 September.

We are also attending the Falkirk Model Railway Show on the 15 & 16 November.

If you are available and willing to help on our stand at either event please email:

[exhibitions@nbrstudygroup.co.uk](mailto:exhibitions@nbrstudygroup.co.uk)

### BO'NESS

27 & 28 September 2025,  
The Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway  
Bo'ness Station, Union Street  
BO'NESS, EH51 9AQ

[www.srps.org.uk](http://www.srps.org.uk)

### FALKIRK

15 & 16 November 2025,  
Forth Valley College, Grangemouth Road,  
FALKIRK, FK2 9AD

[www.falkirkmrc.com](http://www.falkirkmrc.com)

### Scottish Wagon Works

The NBRSG has been working with John Duffy in the research and development of a 7mm kit for the **NBR Dia.97 ; LNER SSA Dia.28B 18T Mineral Wagon**. Introduced 1920, the LNER continued to build them through 1923.

From the census counts, 2,985 existed in 1927, 2,984 in 1934, 2,973 in 1939 and 2,309 in 1947.

It will be seen that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of those built survived into BR ownership, with general withdrawal from the mid 1950's onwards.

The kit will be 3D printed and will include the Spencer Mouton buffers and oil axleboxes. It is intended to allow the option of centre cupboard doors with replacement vertical wooden planks, as seen later in their life.

If this kit is successfully received, it may be the first of several wagons commissioned from Scottish Wagon Works, with the earlier 16T Mineral Wagon and later 20T Loco Coal wagon under consideration.

Initial release will be restricted to NBRSG members before later becoming part of the Scottish Wagon Works general range.

More information and prices to follow.

[www.scottishwagonworks.com](http://www.scottishwagonworks.com)

### Ferryhill

The surviving body of an 1872 Ashbury NBR 4-wheel, 4 compartment First, stored for many years at the Tanfield Railway near Newcastle, has been donated to the Ferryhill Railway Heritage Trust in Aberdeen.

The carriage which is to NBR (1908) Dia.115, had been previously a grounded body at Rothley Station.

### Carlisle

The Carlisle Waverley Viaduct, which spans the river Eden from Newtown on the south bank to Etterby on the north bank, is subject to two applications to Cumberland Council to carry out structural improvements.

Historic Railways Estate, which oversees the structure on behalf of its owner, the Department of Transport, has lodged a proposal to install scour countermeasures at piers two and three to prevent potential future collapse.

## PHOTO ARCHIVE

Work has been continuing on the Group's Photo Archive, and a substantial number of images have been added over the past few weeks. We are very grateful to Derek Stephen for lending photographs taken by his late father, RD Stephen, in the 1950s and 1960s. These are now available for members to view as Batch 7456.

We are also grateful to Dr Kenneth Leiper for sending scans of photographs at Crossgates and other stations, showing his great-uncle David Dutch, who was stationmaster there, and family members. These are now available as batch 7457.

Work has continued in making the Bill Lynn collection available and valuable assistance has been given by our Chairman, Robin Boog, who has checked the prints and marked them with locomotive numbers, by Graham Roberts, who has digitized hundreds of prints ready for uploading and cataloguing, and by Michael Rudkin, who has been checking catalogue descriptions and suggesting improvements.

There are now 46,427 images available to members in the Members' Area of the website. In many cases we have multiple copies of the same image and in the long term hope to cross-reference these in some way.

*David King*

### Ed McKenna

The Committee were saddened to learn of the death of Ed McKenna, who died peacefully after a period of illness. Ed was a longtime member of the Group and Archivist for the Group for some ten years between Xmas 2012 and March 2023. Married to Jennie, who predeceased him, Ed had two daughters and four grandsons to whom we have extended on behalf of the Group, our deepest sympathies.

In his working life, Ed was a civil engineer who specialised in water and drainage. Despite a hefty work load and family responsibilities, he still found time to scour archives and other areas of interest. Along with Mike Williams, they were preparing three books on Scottish Trader's Wagons, the first of which is I believe, at the printers as I write with Mike intending to complete the remaining two volumes.

His funeral was earlier this month and the Group was represented. *Robin Boog*

The North British Railway Study Group is a registered Scottish charity, Number SC044351

Website: [www.nbrstudygroup.co.uk](http://www.nbrstudygroup.co.uk)

Please email items for the next Newsletter to [newsletter@nbrstudygroup.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@nbrstudygroup.co.uk) or post them to the Newsletter editor: [REDACTED] no later than 7 NOVEMBER 2025