

## NEWSLETTER March 2025

**Good day Ladies and Gentlemen.** First of all on behalf of everyone, I would like to say thank you to Neville for all the time he spends composing the Newsletter. This month's is quite a long one, with two very different topics. And I know Colin will have spent a lot of time and effort putting together his three - parter so also thank you Colin.

If you would like to include anything in the Newsletter, it does not have to be a long article, just a couple of paragraphs will be most welcome. We are also interested to hear about suitable speakers we can contact to give a talk at the Hungate Centre. With our reduced admin. team the more you can contribute the more it will help us to thrive.

The proposed Harrogate Show seems to have lost momentum, and with nothing confirmed, the Committee decided to remove it from our calendar. We have only just heard about the *Pickering Vintage Rally* on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> (Friday to Sunday) at the old Pickering showground on Malton Road. I made enquiries about having a stand there, but the big problem for us with a three day outside show, is overnight security. There is the big steel building on site, but whether the show organiser can utilise it, and whether there would be space for us in there, is currently under discussion. If we are allocated a secure pitch it's not giving us long to get organised, so it will be a case of "all hands on deck"! Have a look at [www.outdoorshows.co.uk](http://www.outdoorshows.co.uk) for more info.

Following on from a suggestion that the Club might benefit from having its own cutter grinder, next month's meeting in the Hungate Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup> April is a homegrown one. Thanks to Paul Gammon and Richard Radcliffe, Paul is going to demonstrate using his own benchtop cutter grinder, and Richard who recently joined the Club will complement the evening by telling us of his experience using and renovating a grinder.

As I mentioned previously, if we do procure our own cutter grinder, the idea is that you learn to use it under Paul's guidance, and not expect Paul to do everything.

I received notification from N.A.M.E. that *Ribble Valley Live Steamers, Edisford Bridge, Clitheroe Lancs BB7 3LA* would like to extend an invitation to fellow enthusiasts and friends to attend their open day on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June, and asked if I would pass the message on.

Finally, don't forget to let me have your menu choices for the Lunch on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

*Thank you, take care and kind regards, Jonathan.*

### □ Forthcoming Events.

- **Wednesday April 2<sup>nd</sup>** Cutter Grinder Demonstration ~ Paul Gammon.
- **Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup>** Annual Lunch, Kirkbymoorside Golf Club.
- **Tuesday April 15<sup>th</sup>** Workshop Morning.
- **Wednesday May 7<sup>th</sup>** Spring "*Bring and Brag*".
- **Tuesday May 15<sup>th</sup>** Workshop Morning.
- **Wednesday June 4<sup>th</sup>** World War 2 Radar in North Yorkshire ~ A talk by Brian Mulvana.
- **Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup>** Bradford Challenge. (Car share for a visit only).
- **Tuesday June 19<sup>th</sup>** Workshop Morning.

## Club Evening On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### The Yorkshire Wolds Heritage Railway (YWR) And The Malton To Driffield Railway (MDR 'Malton Dodger'). A Talk By Matthew Brown.

#### • Introduction.

Jonathan welcomed everyone to the meeting. and before Matthew gave his talk gave out some business news.

- **Harrogate Show:** The Harrogate show now looks doubtful for 2025. PEEMS has not heard anything from the organisers.

- **Tool (Cutter) Grinder:** As reported last month, PEEMS members have asked if it was a good idea to get a tool (cutter) grinder. The consensus was, yes, it is a good idea.

However, before any member uses this tool independently, they should have received some detailed instructions on how to use the tool. The aim is that when anyone wants to use the tool, they can approach it with confidence.

Paul Gammon has offered himself as an instructor. He has instructed apprentices and others on how to use tool grinders. He has examined a *Clarkson* tool grinder which is a good tool, and it's not expensive. It might need a motor putting on it, and it may need a three-phase inverter to get it to spin.

Having said that, if PEEMS buys the tool for the workshop and it doesn't get used, it's pointless having it, so we're still thinking about it.

Jonathan asked the members present if it was a good idea to buy the *Clarkson*, and a few members said it was.

**Q:** Would any instruction/tutorial be on a Tuesday Workshop Morning?

**Jonathan:** Probably not, because the workshop mornings tend to be very busy. The Committee will work out what the best time to hold any instruction session(s). Mike has said members can use the workshop on a Tuesday or Thursday. It might be better to do the instructing on a different day to a workshop morning.

At the next Club Meeting (April 2<sup>nd</sup>), Paul Gammon will do a small demonstration using one of his own tool grinders from his workshop. If anyone has a tool grinder they don't use, and could donate it to the Club, please let us know.

- **PEEMS Annual Lunch, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April:** The PEEMS annual lunch is once again at the Kirkbymoorside Golf Club. The menu was published in the PEEMS February Newsletter, and it was also sent out to members via e-mail. The deadline for orders is Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

- **Trevor Goodall:** Trevor thanks PEEMS for getting his lathes sold. These were advertised in last month's newsletter. For that reason, he has given PEEMS a donation.

Trevor also mentioned that when John Powell was moving from Malton, he gave Trevor a part-built clock, designed by John Wilding. Accompanying the clock there's journal and articles to aid completion. John talked in the past about starting a small PEEMS "clock making" subgroup, but that didn't flourish and was ended.

Consequently, this unfinished clock has either been donated to Trevor, or to PEEMS. If anyone is interested in completing the clock, please see Jonathan.

- **PEEMS Publicity Leaflets.**

PEEMS has just received the new updated handouts for PEEMS publicity back from the printers. The leaflets now have a QR code which takes the user to the PEEMS website.

There are 250 to be handed out. The idea is that in an ideal world, each member would take four leaflets and put these up on public notice boards or hand them out to interested parties.

Jonathan received an e-mail from Christopher Stephenson\*\* saying: *"I know that this a shot in the dark, but are any of your members collectors of model steam engines? They may have some interest in this model steam engine....."*

Christopher, who sent the request had seen a PEEMS leaflet in a barbers in Scarborough. So PEEMS has got some presence "on the street".

The idea of the publicity drive is to attract new members.

\*\* This item is for sale overleaf.

LOCOMOTIVES & TRACTION ENGINES

STATIONARY ENGINES

INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINES

BOATS

MOTORCYCLES

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CLOCKS

**PEEMS**  
Pickering Experimental Engineering & Model Society

**INTERESTED IN ENGINEERING  
OR MAKING MODELS?**

Then PEEMS - Pickering Experimental  
Engineering and Model Society - is for you

We meet in Pickering at 7pm on the first Wednesday of the month  
(except January) at the Hungate Centre, by the traffic lights. We have  
guest speakers and organise trips out.

**FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT:**  
info@peems.co.uk  
Visit www.peems.co.uk

- **Member's Contact Details:** Jonathan asked the members present at the meeting if it would be a good idea to put people's addresses or locations on the Members List. So, if someone wanted to know where someone lived, they could do. Being aware of the GDPR rules, this would be a paper list, not an electronic one. Jonathan asked the members present if that would be a good idea.

**Comment:** People could always telephone or e-mail that person to ask where they live.

**David Proctor:** I suggest that we keep the Members List as it is, as including addresses will require extra permissions from the members.

- **Items For Sale.**

**i) Table Milling Machine. Quite substantial with a few accessories.**

Best offer over £20.

Please contact Harold Hulse

Contact Details In Members List.

**ii) Model Steam Engine.**

Good morning, this is a total shot in the dark but I wondered if any of your members are collectors of model steam engines and may have interest in this.

I attach some photos of a model steam engine that my late father built from plans published by *Model Maker Magazine* in the 1980s. It's a working model with, I believe, a tubed boiler and a spirit burner.

It's now 20 years since my father, who was a skilled engineer, passed away and I feel that it is time to find a new home for this engine, hence I am offering it for sale for a realistic sum to anyone who may be interested in adding it to their collection.

The engine comes with the magazine shown in the photos together with a glass display case.

I don't know the precise scale of the model but the complete model is about 11" long by 4" wide and 9" high and of substantial weight, being constructed primarily of high-quality stainless steel, brass and copper.

I know that my late father made every component with the exception of the miniature pressure gauge.

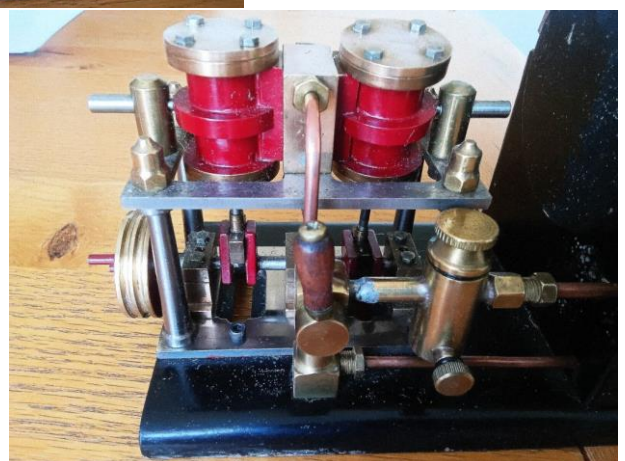
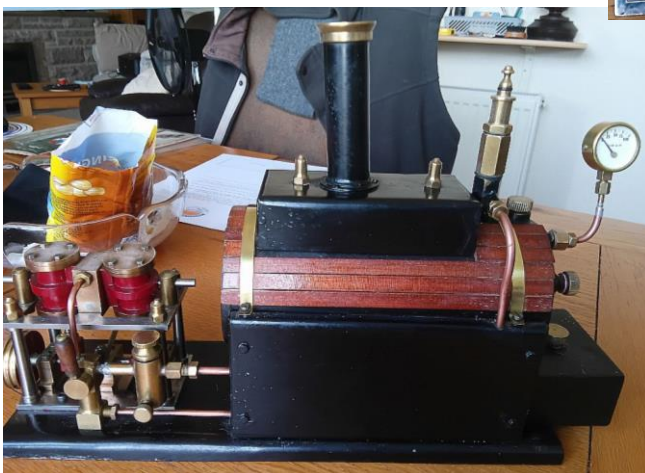
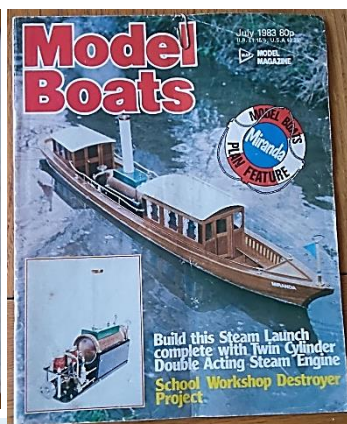
The engine has not been fired up for many years and indeed I think that my father only ran it once as a test run after he had completed the build. I can therefore make no claims as to boiler safety.

I personally am not a model maker. I live locally (Scarborough) and would welcome any interested enquiries to purchase.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

*Christopher Stephenson.*

If anyone is interested in buying this model, please see Jonathan Milner for Christopher's telephone number.



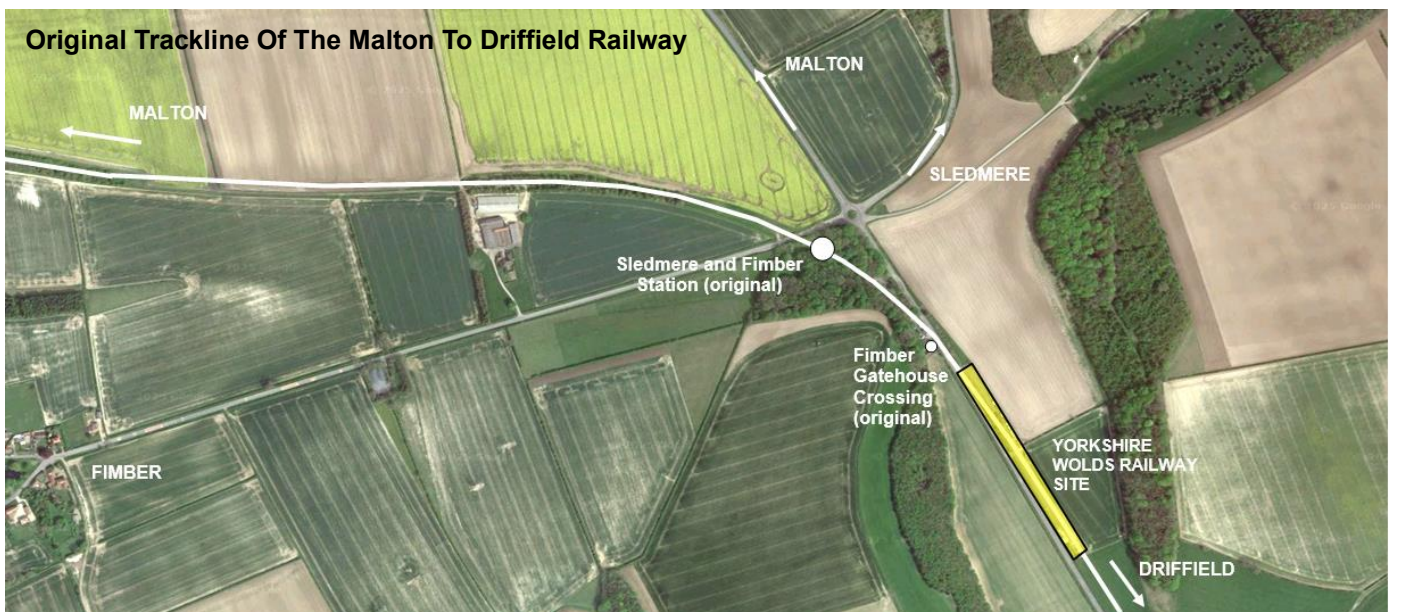
# The Yorkshire Wolds Heritage Railway (YWR) And The Malton To Driffield Railway (MDR 'Malton Dodger'). A Talk By Matthew Brown.

## o Introduction.

Matthew has been involved with the Yorkshire Wolds Heritage Railway (YWR) since it started. They had their first meeting in 2008. Matthew saw a poster around Driffield, asking people if they would like to get involved in reopening a railway line. That sounded exciting! Matthew went to the inaugural meeting. There were about eight people there, and they became directors at that point. A committee was formed and Matthew has been on that committee as a founder member since that point.

Additional interest was raised by having talks. Stan from the Eden Camp project was one of the first speakers. There was a lot of interest in the YWR project and so the committee started thinking about how to push the project forward. Landowners needed to be approached to see if they would sell some land. They sent a letter to landowner Sir Tatton Sykes of Sledmere Hall explaining the project. He was very welcoming, and said yes, he could get behind the project, but planning permission needed to be pursued before anything could start.

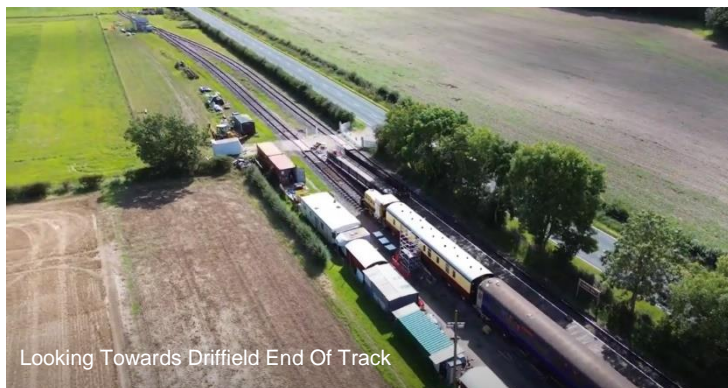
A large amount of money was raised. Two thirds of that was for the feasibility study of the project, to prove to the East Riding Of Yorkshire Council that the project was going to be feasible. The other third was for the plans to support the feasibility study. A number of people said don't bother, it will all be a waste of time, you won't get track, you won't get planning permission. That just spurred the committee on. The committee finally got access to the site in 2012. It was a 'brown site' and the area included the tracking of the original Malton to Driffield Railway, just across the road from the original Sledmere and Railway station, now demolished. It was in the area of a potato field adjacent to the B1248 Malton to Driffield road.



A lot of soil had to be scraped away, but they didn't have to go too far before they found the original track bed of compounded chalk. This made things a lot easier.

By May 2015, they were able to open to the public as an operating heritage railway. At the beginning, the track was only 30ft long, but it was a beginning. Now at Fimber, there is just under a quarter mile of track.

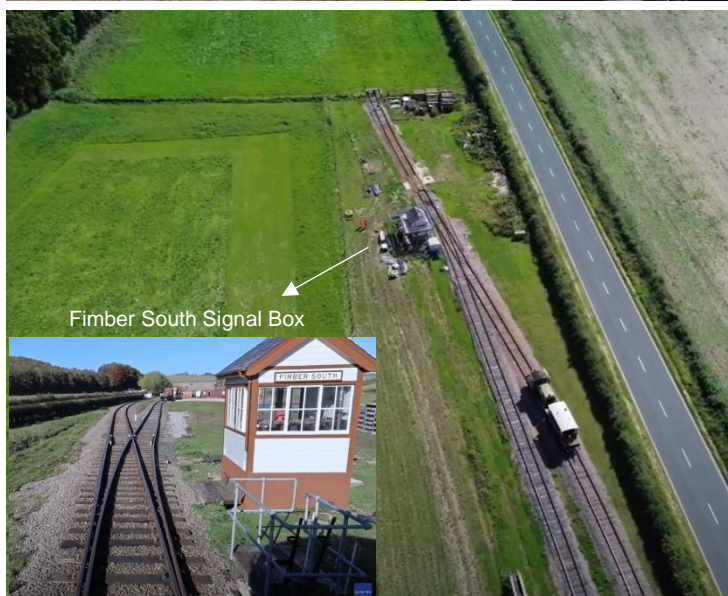
There are two locomotives, a platform and a visitor centre. There is a rake of rolling stock wagons. There is a coach and a shop and fully disabled compliant toilets.



Looking Towards Driffield End Of Track



Looking Towards Malton End Of Track



Fimber South Signal Box



Approaching Platform

Screen shots of track and drone footage from the first Youtube Video below (*Wobbly Runner Exploring*)

### o YouTube Videos

There are two very good Youtube videos of track operations (including drone footage) and also interviews with volunteers.

To view videos, click on links. To return to newsletter click on the back arrow at the top left-hand side of the screen.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twebMSdnNjY>

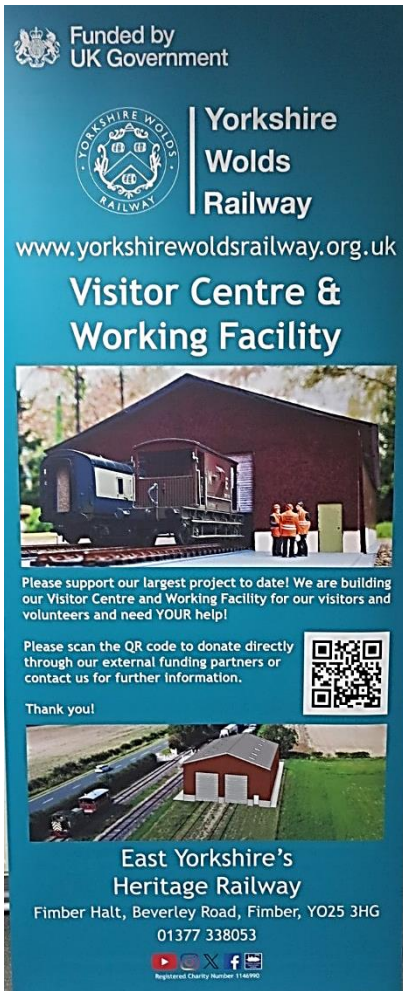
Made by 'Wobbly Runner Exploring'



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNCoyt2bJsQ&t=126s>

Made by The Yorkshire Wolds Railway.

o **Volunteers, Visitors and Opening Times.**



Funded by UK Government

**Yorkshire Wolds Railway**

www.yorkshirewoldsrailway.org.uk

**Visitor Centre & Working Facility**

Please support our largest project to date! We are building our Visitor Centre and Working Facility for our visitors and volunteers and need YOUR help!

Please scan the QR code to donate directly through our external funding partners or contact us for further information.

Thank you!

**East Yorkshire's Heritage Railway**

Fimber Halt, Beverley Road, Fimber, YO25 3HG

01377 338053

Registered Charity Number 114690

Currently, the railway is just beginning to build their visitor centre and working facility. This building will allow the railway to do restoration work while under cover.

For the volunteers, that is wonderful, because they have just restored a brake van which they bought into traffic about eighteen months ago. That was a five-year restoration project, which was done outside under all types of weather.

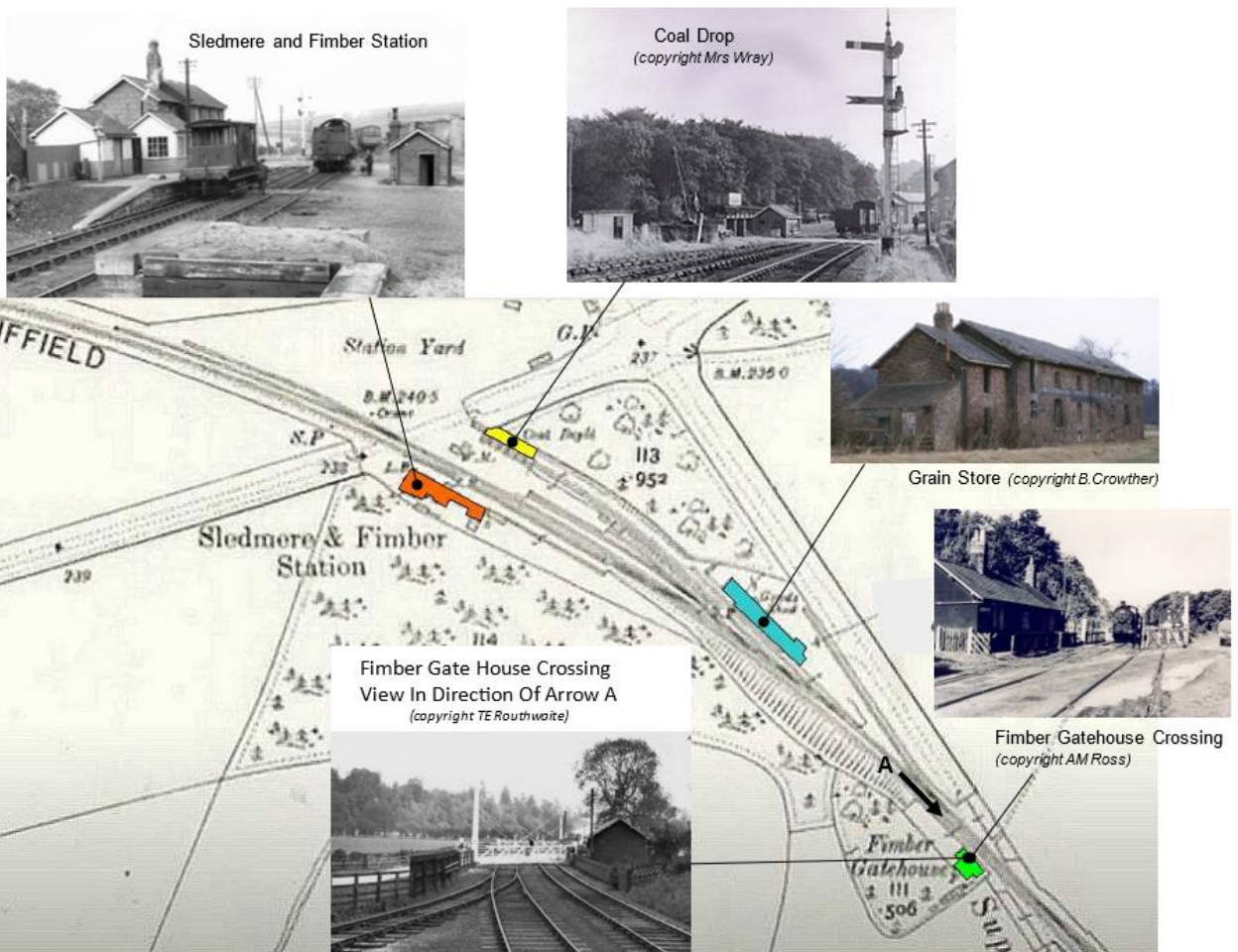
The railway could have all the money in the world, but at the end of the day, it is the volunteers which make the project work. The railway project moves as fast as the volunteers are allowed to. The railway is very grateful for all the support they get.

The railway opens up again to the public on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The railway runs every Sunday and Bank Holiday until the end of October. It also opens every Wednesday during school holidays from 10am to 4pm with trains running.

In addition, the railway opens on Wednesdays to allow access to the visitor centre only. Matthew said that the railway would like to open every day of the week, but they would need a lot more volunteers for that to happen.

On running days, wild life (deer, buzzards etc.) may be seen from the veranda of the brake van as it traverses the track. The railway celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The railway will be hosting some events so that would be a good day to attend.

o **Some Historical Context To The Environs Of The Sledmere and Fimber Station Site.**



Sledmere and Fimber Station

Coal Drop (copyright Mrs Wray)

Grain Store (copyright B.Crowther)

Fimber Gate House Crossing View In Direction Of Arrow A (copyright TE Routhwaite)

Fimber Gatehouse Crossing (copyright AM Ross)

The collage includes a historical black and white photograph of the station building and tracks, a photograph of a coal drop, a photograph of a grain store, a historical map of the station area with various landmarks and buildings highlighted in yellow, blue, and green, and a photograph of the Fimber Gatehouse Crossing. The map shows the station yard, coal drop, grain store, and Fimber Gatehouse Crossing, with an arrow pointing towards the crossing.

o **The Malton To Driffield Railway History.**

The *Malton and Driffield Junction Railway* as it was formerly known was:

- First proposed in 1845,
- Construction started in 1847 with
- Completion and opening on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1853.
- Total closure on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1958 (note: well before *the Beeching axe*).
- Alfred Dickens was a Deputy engineer, (and younger brother of Charles).

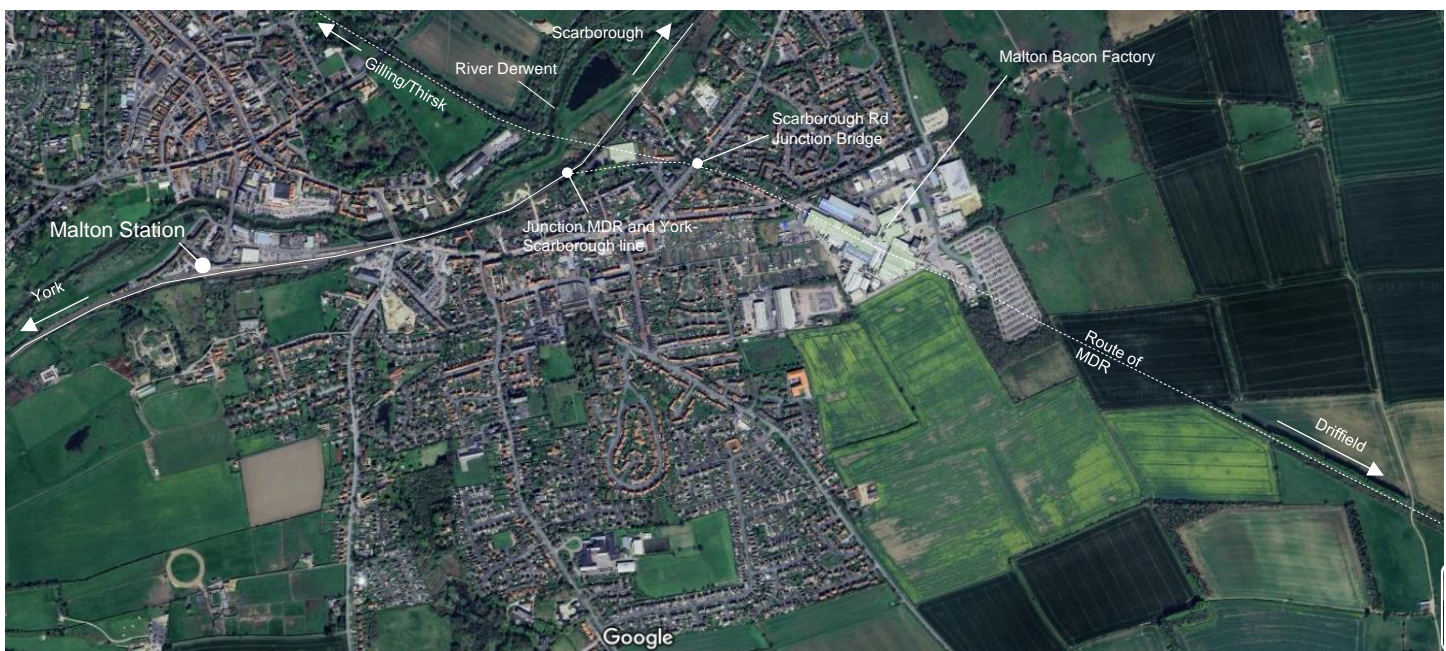
i) **Route Map Of The Railway.**



The map is not entirely to scale. As can be seen, though, the black spots are the stations and the villages and towns are the grey dots. Garton station, for example is nowhere near Garton, and it was the same with all the other stations on the route. Hence the passenger train on the route was known as *The Malton Dodger*. It was never going to work from a passenger railway perspective.

ii) **Malton Station.**

- Opened – 1845
- The Engine House was constructed in 1853 for £435. Locos from this shed worked the line until closure.
- Station facilities were extended in 1854 because of the increasing number of trains.
- There was an interesting way to cross the line before the footbridge was installed!





Copyright Mrs Wray

This is the Scarborough Road junction seen from the Driffield side. The height of the signal box can clearly be seen to allow the signal man to see over the road bridge, across the river Derwent and also into the station.

The bridge is still there today. You drive over it to get from Malton to Norton.



Copyright Doug Hardy

This is a view looking the other way with a Darlington train going towards Gilling. The original (lower) signal box can be seen and behind the road bridge the taller signal box.

You can see the gradient the train is having to attack. This photo was taken in June 1958.



Copyright R. Casserley

This is the method used to cross the line at Malton, before the footbridge was installed.

One of the porters would throw a lever on the platform to allow the little trolley to be pushed over the track from under the platform. When a train was coming in the lever would be pushed the other way, and the trolley would be pushed back under the platform. This wouldn't be allowed today with the health and safety rules. This photo was taken in 1956.



Copyright Mrs. Mitchell



Copyright Stephen Rhodes

Here is a photo taken from the Scarborough Road bridge with the low signal box in front and the two lines on the left going into Malton. A short freight train is coming off the Gilling branch line after crossing the river Derwent and the Scarborough line. This photo was taken in 1961. At this time, the MDR was closed but this spur was still in operation. So, trains crossing the Derwent would be pulled past the junction. Then a bank engine would come out of Malton station, attach itself to the back of the train, and pull it into Malton station. The second photo was taken in 1968 at the same point on the bridge after the "Beeching axe" with the river Derwent in the distance.



### iii) Settrington Station.

- The quietest station on the MDR line, and the only one where passenger revenue exceeded freight revenue.
- The station was improved throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- A private siding served the Settrington lime works and was taken out of use in 1908 as production had ceased some years earlier.
- Apart from coal, the main freight handled was barley.



The station, as can be seen is at a distance from the village, and it was built to a cost. The line was built originally to take coals to Newcastle, (not coals from Newcastle), but the gradients were so steep, it was decided that that idea wasn't going to work. So, they decided that they would take materials from the quarries instead. It was the quarries that kept the line going well after the passenger line had finished.



This photo shows the flower display at the station in 1926. This was now the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER). All the stations on the line when it was the North Eastern Railway (NER) and then the LNER entered gardening competitions, and were very proud of their gardens.

Below is a photo of the station building in the early 1900s. You can see the station clock on the right. The box on the platform to the left of the station house was to give cover to the levers for the points and the signals. The hole under the platform below the box, allowed the mechanism from the levers to go to the signals and points.

The differing heights of the platform should be noted. The lower platform height is the original, and the platform was raised to allow passenger easy access to and from the carriages. The other photo shows an engine and brake van making their way over the road into Settrington station. The level crossing gates can be seen in the background.



An end on view of the Station House in 1957. The Station House is still there, but is now a private residence. Loco number 62387 running a Rail tour organised by *The Branch Line Society* is pulling into the station. The blackboard on the end elevation says "*British Railways*". In the early days there were two blackboards on the end elevation, which would have shown time tables and notifications of what was happening on the line, excursions etc. Note the flatness of the road. Five years later (1962), a hump has appeared, as seen in the second photo. The coal drops can be seen on the left in this photo



#### iv) North Grimston Station.

- An average station, which on its arrival gave way to the opening of a tile works.
- By 1856 *Malton and North Grimston Tile Works* had four kilns in use served by two sidings.
- The station was extended in 1895 at the request of Lord Middleton.
- The freight handled included manure, wheat and oats.



There's a fantastic humped back bridge coming in and out of North Grimston which used to carry the B1248 over the railway. The second major infrastructure project on the line, in addition to the Burdale tunnel was the three-arch viaduct, which Matthew still remembers. Sadly, it was demolished as it was a danger, especially if a loud tractor drove under it, with the resulting falling bricks.



Copyright RK Blencowe



Copyright AM Ross

The North Grimston Station buildings are still there today. This photo was taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1957. Again, this is the Rail tour organised by *The Branch Line Society*. You can make out the two station buildings. The building in the front is a long thin building, which was the original station, the two-storey building in the background is a later station building. There was a level crossing between the two buildings which can be seen in the second photo above. Like Settrington, the station buildings are now private residences.

The goods train is typical for the MDR line, a locomotive, two or three wagons and a brake van.



Copyright JW Armstrong Trust



Copyright Alan Lewis

The first photo was taken from the brake van, with 64947 nearing the lime kilns and with the white cottage seen in the second photo ahead. This derelict cottage was adjacent to the lime kilns. The paint scheme is fully signalled, it is painted in BR(NE) blue and white. The cottage is white with pale blue above the windows. Many buildings on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway are painted in this colour scheme. This is the building where the people who looked after the kilns lived. The photo was taken in 1978 when building was in a very poor state of repair. It is now a ruin.



Copyright Tony Harden



Copyright Sally Jennings

The photos are taken looking towards Driffield and show both station buildings. There is the higher platform on the original station, and lower on the newer as seen in the 1957 photo. You can see the fire buckets on the wall at the far end of the original station building. In 1970 another photo was taken in almost the same location.

## v) Wharram Station.

- Wharram Station was close to the summit of the line, and was provided with a water column consisting of a water tank on a brick base.
- Improvements were made in 1877.
- Wharram acted as sub-post and telegraph office, but only inward telegrams until 1933.
- Wharram was the second busiest station on the line for freight. The Station handled barley, wheat oats, livestock, coal and chalk. The Station handled limestone from the adjacent quarry, where there were private sidings.



The Google Map perfectly illustrates the distance from the station to the village. And it is all uphill for the passenger who alights at the station.

There is a 1933 British Pathé film on Youtube which shows the Wharram quarry in operation called “*The Chalk Getters – A Wharram Study*”. This is the only film which show railway operations on the MDR.

To view film please press on link. To return to the newsletter press back arrow at the top left-hand side.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyXtflAigY>

The opening shots are taken from the chalk silo at Wharram of a train putting the crushed chalk (lime) from the silo. One bucket of chalk was 3 tons, and the crushed chalk was taken to the blast furnaces in Newcastle. Steam shovels are shown in operation.



A majority of the infrastructure is still there including the huge silo. Matthew warned against investigations because the facilities are in a poor state of repair, although there are Youtube videos of people exploring the site on your behalf.

One such video, including drone footage of the area is by *LeiceExplore (Wharram Chalk Works)*. This is a screen shot, and shows the original track line of the MDR passing to the right of the silo heading towards Burdale tunnel. This is now a footpath.



This is a photo of the Wharram Station building and platform, taken from the top of the water tower which is now at Kirkby Stephen station on the Stainmore line. They did a good job at Kirkby Stephen by rebuilding the brick base, and then Lord Middleton of the Birdsall estate kindly gave them the tank to place on top of it.

Note the flower displays at the station.



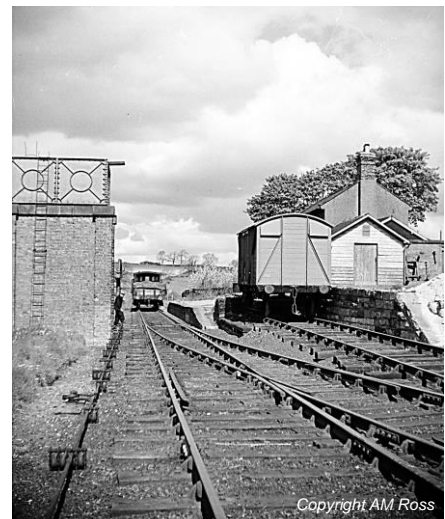
This photo was taken in 1958, and shows 64928 shunting the coal drops. The line at that time was very close to the end of operations. Station masters used to turn down higher paid promotions to larger stations because they could legitimately sell coal from their station buildings to the villagers and they could take a commission for that. They were making so much money that they didn't want to leave their small rural station for a larger one.

There is a good view of the water tower. Note how everything seems to be overgrown compared to the earlier neatness of the station buildings.



The first photo above shows a railway velocipede. This was used to allow staff to travel quickly and easily to make close inspections of the line. The tablet to allow travel along a certain section of line, can be seen on the front. Two levers would be pushed and pulled to give traction. The photo was taken on the line. There were two velocipedes in operation on the MDR. There is one in the artifact collection at Fimber, which came from the shed at Malton. *The Velocipede Society* have said this one of the best examples in the UK. This year (2025) there will be a whole display centred around that velocipede and this is a new exhibit.

The other photo was taken in 1957, and this is a RTCS (Rail Correspondents and Travel Society) rail tour to give people the opportunity to travel on the MDR for the final time. 62731 D49 'Selkirkshire' is taking on water at the north end of the station.



The first photo is looking in the direction of the Burdale tunnel, and shows how massive the chalk silo is. Also seen is the water tower and the box on the platform gives protection to the levers for the signals and points. The chimney on the left is from the electrical generating plant as there was no electrical supply to the area at the time. The other photo was taken in the other direction in 1956. This photo is included because four years later.....

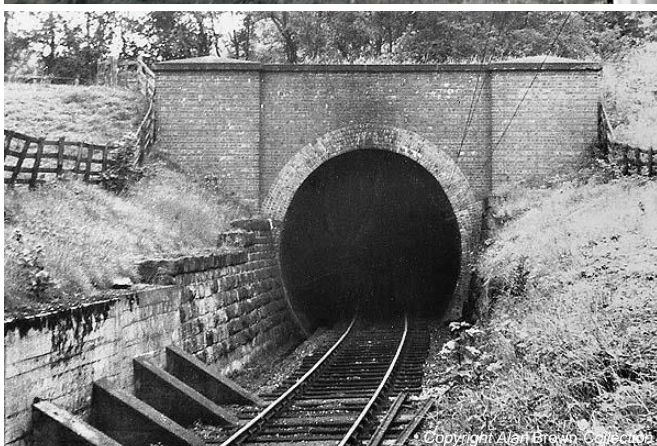


vi) **Burdale Tunnel.**

- 1744 yards long – although the actual length is debated.
- In 1845, dry chalk was anticipated but on commencement of work, two thirds was loose shale.
- Three ventilation shafts.
- Completed in 1853.
- Bricked up in July 1961.



This photo was taken in 1957 on the RCTS Rail tour special, leaving the Southern Portal of the Burdale tunnel. This gives an idea of how much land is above the tunnel and how deep it was. This is the only photo Matthew has of a passenger train leaving the tunnel, and it is unique.

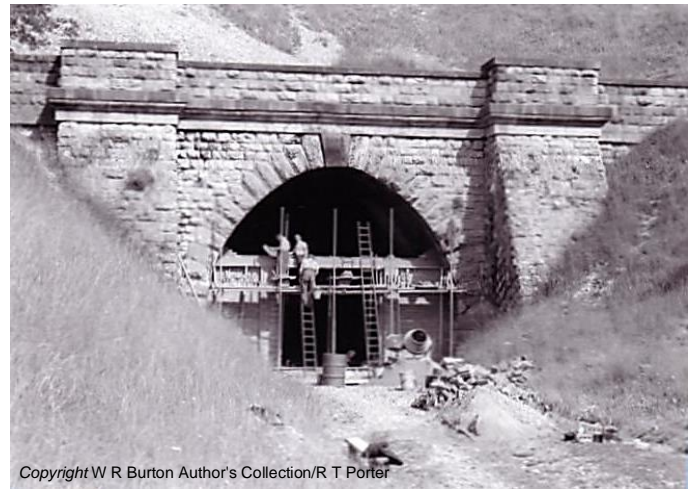


This is the Northern Portal. Note the differences in construction. The Southern Portal is solid York Stone, and the Northern is simple red brick. Originally double track was going to go through the tunnel (they started tunnelling from the southern end) and changed their minds, hence the narrower and more simple Northern entrance.

Note the buttressed wall on the side with the concrete blocks.



Copyright www.transporttreasury.co.uk



Copyright W R Burton Author's Collection/R T Porter

The Southern portal of Burdale tunnel. The post shows H/Y showing the boundary between the Hull and York areas for permanent way maintenance. The second photo is from 1961, with the Southern Portal is finally bricked up. Bob Foster is on the ladder, Jerry Leason is on his left, whilst Ken Bilton looks on. The tunnel is now collapsed in three places. There is a bat colony in there, and people check them at least once a year.

### vii) Burdale Station.

- Burdale station was the remotest station on the line, and after Garton, the least busy.
- The station was painted in 1871 after a successful tender from George Robson of £111 to paint all the MDR stations.
- At the opening of Burdale quarry, large quantities of chalk were removed via Burdale – peaking at 50,000 tons in the late 40s. It was the quarries which kept the MDR operating.
- The Burdale quarry closed in 1955 which led to the full closure of the MDR line two years later.



Copyright Andy Barwick Collection



Copyright Mrs Wray

The Station Master and his family pose for this wonderful photo. We think it is of Benjamin Moate? Note the superb NER uniforms and station lamp posts. The second photo shows the station towards the end, with the vegetation overgrown. Typical of the stations on the line, double height platforms, the originals lower and the newer higher. There is also the hole under the platform to allow the control rods for the signal and points to come through, and the box on the platform to protect the levers from the elements. This is looking towards Sledmere and Fimber.



1960

Copyright GNSRA (Forrest)/transporttreasury.co.uk



1977

Copyright Alan Lewis



The first photo was taken around 1950 and shows the quarry engine at Burdale with Peter Pudsey driving. There were two locos operating at the quarry, and the loco in the photo was actually called "*Burdale*". The second photo was taken in 1958, and shows J27 65844 about to enter Burdale Tunnel's South Portal from Driffield, with a short goods train. The building beyond the workman's hut was known as "*Tunnel Cottage*", which no longer exists.

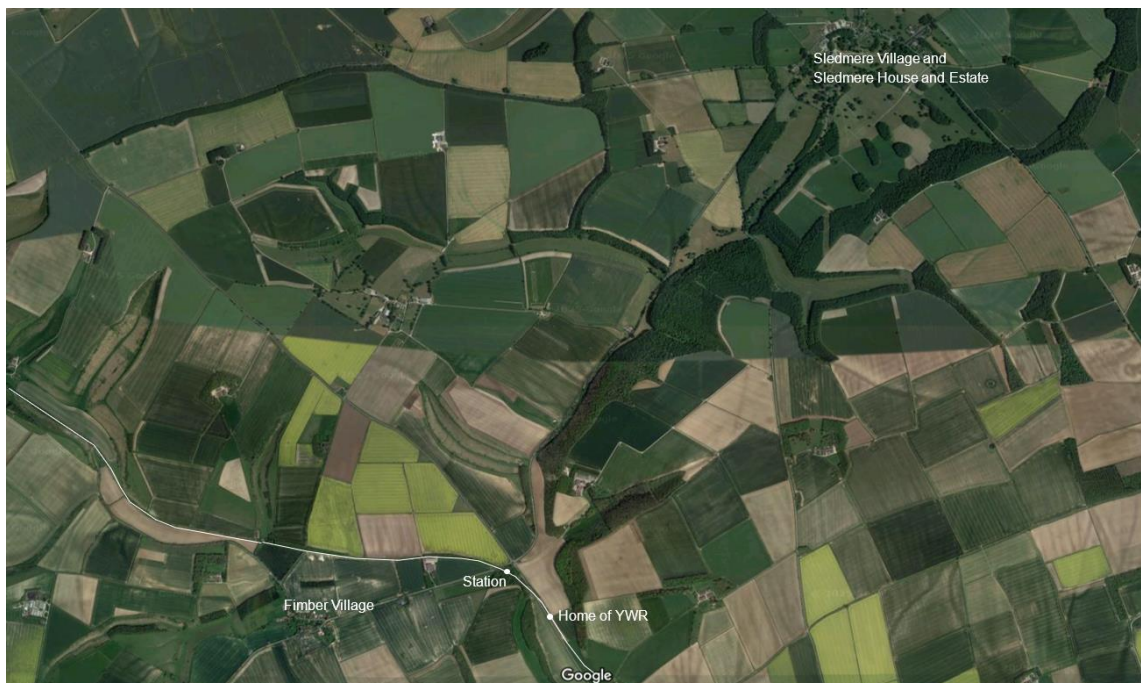


This is a photo of Burdale quarry taken from the road above, showing how vast it was.

The trackway can be seen and Burdale station was just around the bend.

### viii) Sledmere and Fimber Station.

- Opened as Fimber and renamed Sledmere in March 1858, and then Sledmere and Fimber in 1859. The original sign was about 10ft to 11ft long. The YWR have the '*Sledmere and*' part of the sign, but don't have the 'Fimber' part. If anyone knows where it is please let YWR know.
- Sir Tatton Sykes of Sledmere house had a private waiting room at the station. This later became the 'ladies waiting room' when the station was improved in the 1890s.
- The only signal box on the MDR was located here (apart from Malton and Driffield).
- The station was used twice by the Royal Family, once in the 1880s by Queen Victoria and in 1948 by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.





The preceding photo shows just how far the station was from both Fimber village and Sledmere Village and estate.



The first photo shows a car crossing the Fimber road level crossing travelling towards the roundabout at the crossroads. The signal box can be seen on the platform behind the station house. The station house and all other buildings no longer exist, and the area is now a picnic site. The second photo is looking in the opposite direction and again the signal box can be seen. The YMR's brake looks identical to the one at the platform.



The last train from Fimber in 1958, is shown here. L-R: Raynor Bretherick (ran coal business from station), Tony Birdsall (assistant to the next chap), George Newby (joiner from Wetwang, Charles Russell (Station Master), unknown, then possibly "Pop" Freer (from Green Lane level crossing). The second photo shows *The Wolds Waggoners* appearing to attend a practise event outside the station. The *Waggoners* were formed just before World War 1. Do you know what is going on here? The crossing gates at Fimber Gate house can be seen as well as the grain store at the station. This was the biggest grain store in the area, and was due to the Sledmere and Birdsall estates being local to the vicinity with a lot of farming produce in transit through the station to all corners of the UK. The Sledmere station also used to transfer a lot of Sir Tatton Sykes' horses including race horses. The height of the level crossing gate posts are notable, and were necessary to support the very long level crossing gates. The left-hand gate is now the entrance gate to the YMR.



*The Wolds Waggoners* going to war in 1914, with many not returning. The boy on the right-hand side is James Albert Lowe, and girl in white pinny is Kathleen. Do you know any others? The second photo shows the grain store in 1968. The incline led to the coal drop.



Copyright Fimber Village



Copyright Mrs Wray

The first photo from 1948 shows the flower display on the platform. The second photo shows a superb view of the station showing a crane, signal, level crossing and coal drops, indications of a very busy station.



Copyright J.E. Southwaite



Copyright AM Ross

These two photos show the Fimber Gatehouse crossing in both directions. The first photo was taken in 1936. If you look closely on the left, you will note the road zig zags over the line as opposed to going straight over. You can see the width of the gates and height of the posts. The field on the left is where *The Wolds Waggoners* were practicing in the previous photo, and the furthest gate is the location of the entrance to the YMR site. The second photo taken in 1957 shows the opposite view, with a short goods train crossing the road. On the MDR, all the level crossing gatehouses were of the same design housing families.



Copyright B. Crowther



This is the same view of the Fimber Gatehouse in 1968, with the grain store still extant 10 years later. The building is still there today, but the grain store has been demolished and the area is now a picnic site. The photo of the Garton Slack level crossing is included to show the commonality of level crossing gatehouse design on the MDR.

## ix) Wetwang Station.

- Wetwang station was the busiest station on the MDR for passengers.
- The whole platform was lifted, unlike others on the line.
- A lockup warehouse for parcels was added in 1876.
- Eventually it had the biggest Station Master's house on the line.
- The station won many floral competitions run by the LNER.



The first photo shows Wetwang station in 1910. During Covid, the YMR closed for two years, but once they were allowed, as a charity, for work to continue, they developed a skeletal work programme. Initially six people were allowed on site at once, and during that time someone rang up to ask if the railway was interested in some scrap. They went out and the *WETWANG* sign above, was found in a shed. Please note the station clock and the lamp. Many years ago, there were two of these lamps in a farmer's building in Welwick in the East Riding. Eventually these were up for sale, but fortunately for YMR this was advertised as a farm sale, so other railway enthusiasts were unlikely to turn up. So YMR acquired these two lamps at a very good price. These lamps ran off paraffin. YMR are in the process of converting one to electric. Once again, the protection for the signalling/points gear on the platform and the access from under the platform for the control rods.

The second photo taken in 1958, close to the line closing, shows a typical short goods train (one wagon and a brake van) from Driffield heading towards Malton. The lever box is seen on the platform.



On the map above, the Wetwang Green Lane crossing is marked on the left. Mr Ross asked for a brake van ride and asked also permission to take photographs. He took this photo at the Green Lane crossing in 1956. This is facing towards Sledmere and Fimber station, and YMR's *Fimber Halt* is a mile around the corner.

YMR have planning permission to extend the track to Green Lane. As soon as the railway has enough money and volunteers, they will extend the track to here. This is their initial intent. They would like to extend to Wetwang station, however, the YMR are pragmatic and realistic about their plans.



Copyright JW Armstrong Trust



These are photographs of Wetwang station before and after closure, from almost the same spot. The first photo was taken in 1958 and is looking East towards Driffield. The wooden building in the middle is a parcels lockup.



WOLDS DISTINCTION.— Admiring the Wetwang Station floral display, which won a first prize in the L.N.E.R. contests.

Copyright John Lister

And finally, as mentioned previously, many stations on the MDR entered floral competitions. This is a photograph from the Times September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939. The caption says “Wolds Distinction – admiring the Wetwang Station floral display which won first prize in the LNER contests”.

How the World would change the following day with the commencement of WWII.

**x) Garton Station.**

- Initially, Garton was a very basic station.
- It was considerably improved in 1895 for £200.
- Three sidings were controlled by a ground frame on the platform.
- There were fewer passengers than for Burdale, but on a par with Settrington for freight.



Google

Once again Garton is a typical MDR station at least a mile from the local village.



As mentioned previously, the MDR stations entered the NER and LNER 'Best Kept Station' competitions. The 1948 certificate above is for a third prize for Garton. This certificate is in the YMR's archive.

The 1956 photo is by Mr Ross who is travelling away from Garton Station towards Driffeld on the brake van of a pickup freight train. The incline up to the coal drops is seen on the right.



Two photos of the Garton Slack level crossing. Note, that the 'narrow lane' is the now the A166 the main Driffeld - York road. This is the crossing gatehouse side of the track looking in the direction of Wetwang. As shown on the previous Google Map, the area surrounding the crossing gatehouse (still there) is an equestrian centre. The second photo shows a short train rushing over Garton Slack crossing with what looks like "Pop" Freer in front from Green Lane level crossing. Neither photo is dated.



It is believed that the first photo shows Garton Station near its closure, with the notice posted next to the open door being the closure notice. This is looking towards Driffeld. There are a number of people of varying ages around, but nobody knows what was going on. Also note the double height of the platform. The station is now a scrap yard, as it was in the early sixties when the second photo was taken.

**xi) Driffeld Station.**

- Opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1846 by the York and North Midland Railway at the same time as the line from Hull to Bridlington. The independent MDR got parliamentary permission to run a line from Driffeld to Malton, but had to wait until 1853 to run traffic.
- Records exist of 125 train movements before lunch. Trains were going to Hull, Scarborough, Malton and Market Weighton.
- At one point there were eight signal boxes controlling trains.
- The Goods office employed five clerks with eight trucks.
- One truck was dedicated to serving *Woolworths*.
- The station employed approximately fifty people.



The Google Map above shows the routes of the now non-existing lines from Driffeld to Malton, and Driffeld to Market Weighton, which joined and then crossed the Beverley Road at the Driffeld West Junction. The lines then continued and joined the Driffeld to Hull line before entering the station. Owners of the new bungalows, seen on the map just north of the junction, realising that there had been some rail tracks nearby, asked Matthew to come up with a name for their close. Matthew suggested *West Box Close* and *Holland Close* after the manufacturers of crossing levers 'Holland and McKenzie', and those are now the names adopted.



The colour photo on the left was taken in 1950 and it is thought to be part of a classic car rally passing over the Driffeld West crossing on the Beverley Road. A good photo of the signal box too.

The photo below of Driffeld station in 1905. The roof was the original fully enclosed style similar to the roofs of Beverley, Filey and now Pickering station which recently reverted to the original style.

Of note is the crossing keeper's box known as '*Station Gates*'.

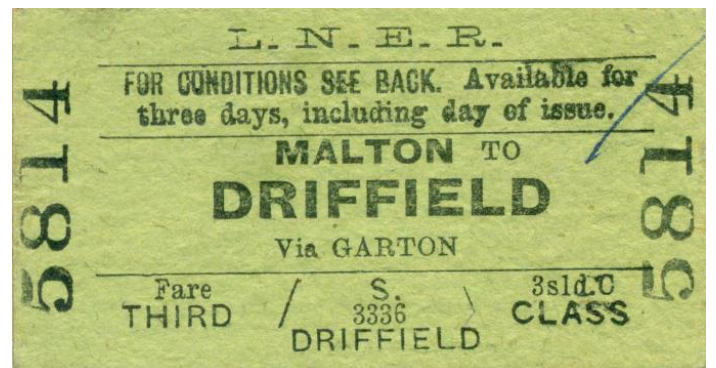


Copyright John Law



Two photos inside the station, the first from the early 1900s with the gaslights and clock. The second photo shows the W.H. Smith kiosk on the platform. This photo came into the YWR archive fairly recently.

The two photos below show D20 62387 on the Branch Line Society (BLS) rail tour in June 1957, about to return to Malton. The first photo shows the locomotive, which brought the train all the way into Driffield tender first, uncoupled and about to run around the train. Behind where the locomotive is standing, on the Bridlington side of the station, a level crossing is seen along with its gates, and that is now a footbridge. That footbridge takes pedestrians over the three tracks that remain. When the photo was taken in 1957, there were nine tracks there. At the side of the loco are the Sugar Mills, which are now gone. They were in ruins for decades, and the site has now been cleared. The second photo shows the engine back onto the train, ready to return to Malton. Notice the later platform canopy roof, which is the roof configuration in 2025.



The 'Malton Dodger' prepares to leave Driffield. Note the school boy train spotter on the platform with notebook.

### Questions and Answers.

**Q:** When you've built your new Visitor Centre and Working Facility, are you going to put solar panels on the roof to reduce your electricity bill?

**Matthew:** Currently the only service the YMR is connected to is water. There's no electricity, The crossing keeper's cottage, across the road from the entrance, has power. If the YMR want single phase like they have, there's a transformer outside the cottage, across the road, but it will cost £25k to plug into that. To have three phase, which is what's really needed, that would cost £80K. That's a 10 year old estimate too.

**Matthew:** (continued) The mobile signal is patchy at best. So we have our own generator. There are no solar panels proposed for the building yet. It would be good to have solar panels, if the site is ever connected to the grid. Until very recently, on operating days, YMR ran solely on solar powered lighting, and the electric till ran on solar power too. So on operating days it could be argued that YMR was the only heritage railway running solely on solar power!

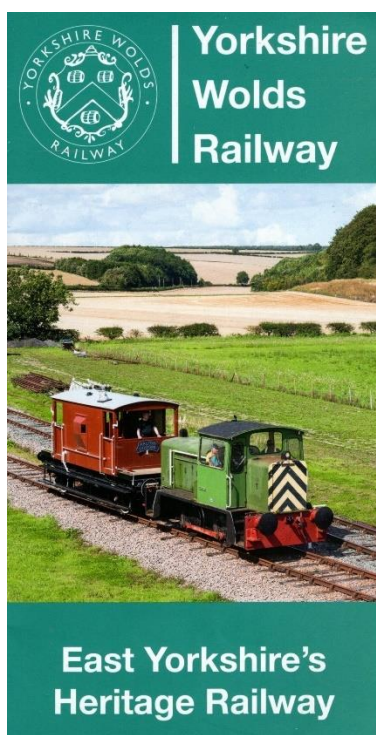
On a work party day, yes, we already use the generator, because the bigger tools need to be powered. Because the site is getting bigger, we need to upgrade the panels, the batteries and inverters, and that would cost in the region of £6K which is currently unaffordable. One idea is to take our existing solar down to the signal box at the end of the track, which is being built in conjunction with the Hull and Barnsley Railway Stock Fund. The box originally came from Spotborough, Doncaster, and will house all of the levers to operate the points, to offer access to the Visitors Centre and Working Facility and back onto the sidings. The solar equipment would provide lighting for the Signaller and provide a charging facility for mobile phones.

**Q:** You said the railway was closed in 1958, was the track lifted shortly afterwards?

**Matthew:** Yes, it was lifted very quickly. The ballast and sleepers were disposed of very quickly because BR wanted to be rid of them. Incidentally, the station buildings at Fimber were still there until the very early 1980s.

**Q:** How supportive of the YMR are the people of Fimber and Wetwang?

**Matthew:** As far as YMR are concerned, they are very supportive. We need public engagement in all the local villages, the parish councils, etc. Everyone from Director, members etc, are all volunteers working because of their passion for the project.



PEEMS thanks Matthew for a very interesting and informative talk.

**Please Note:** PEEMS thanks *The Yorkshire Wolds Railway* (YMR) for kindly giving permission to use their archive photographs in this article. These photographs must not be reproduced without permission from the copyright holder (as noted on the photos) or the *Yorkshire Wolds Railway*.



## Can Hi-fi Ruin Your Life, Will A Thermionic Valve Bring Happiness? Colin Bainbridge.

### Part 3 – A Question Of Balance.

The difficulty with having an absorbing hobby / obsession (delete as appropriate) like ours, is that you never quite know when it's unwittingly going to get you into trouble. Following last month's Postscript, I foolishly mentioned over the boiled egg and soldiers the other morning, that I was thinking of asking the electricity board if they would put a pole up outside the house with an 11kv transformer on it, so I could carry out a few experiments using the large valves I had recently bought on eBay ...and well, I am beginning to think a wiser man might have kept quiet and thought a bit more about that old adage, *what the eye doesn't see etc.* before dashing headlong into courting controversy.

Anyway, reassured that at least one other person has been reading my musings, albeit only the Editor, I am hopeful there will probably be 'a' another reader that will have either gone out by now and availed themselves of one of these thermionic wonders, or are wavering and are on the cusp of doing so, or have just remembered that bit of Hi-Fi gear they put up in the loft in 1976; both of whom now want to know about spares, particularly replacement valves. Not an unreasonable thought, for we are talking heritage here. Anyway, it is only to be expected a bit of T.L.C may prove quite timely now and again beyond just running a chamois over the paintwork.

So here I can offer you the benefit of my extensive knowledge, gained over at least three months in the field, by telling you that extraordinarily as far as audio valves go, you shouldn't have too many problems picking up replacements, and would you believe, new ones.

#### • Who makes Valves today?

I do not say this is an exhaustive list, but those companies that can supply new valves are: *Mullard, Geneflex Gold Lion, Tung –Sol, Svetlana, JJ, Psvane, Telefunken, Electro-Harmonix, Western Electric, LinLai, Langrex, Pentalabs, Sovtek* and of course not forgetting, *Takatsuki-Denki*; and just getting a British toe in the door, *Brimar* (more anon). However just as with the valves of yesteryear, a closer look at some of the names listed, and you will find though many in number, a lot of roads lead back to just three or four real manufacturers, and in this case I am sure it will be of no surprise to know they are nearly all located in either China or the eastern bloc nations.....do they know something we don't?

Should you however insist on seeing "*Made in Britain*" glowing on your valves, and why not, then until *Brimar* get up and running (still more anon), you should be looking for the letters N.O.S on your website or catalogue. For the nomenclature stands for '*New Old Stock*', which in theory means it's unsold stock from the time when Britain did make valves, but don't be surprised if it still comes from overseas, perhaps from a Commonwealth country, as that doesn't necessary mean it's not genuine, unless of course you have reason to believe it maybe counterfeit.

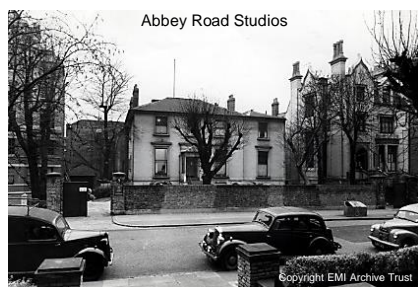
Usual caveat, always look round to get a feel of prices before committing, for as with most things today, someone somewhere will try and rip you off.

Just an aside, but still in the historical vein, I discovered one unsettling fact during my researches, and that is having sold everything off over the years, including the names of our companies, you never quite know who owns what now. And should things internationally turn umpty in the future, and someone tries and demolishes a sandcastle on the moor between Pickering and the coast, I for one will be just a bit miffed if when I come out of my cave, I find a valve in the wreckage labelled, *Mullard...."Made in Russia"* (yes they own the name now), for it will leave me to wonder if we may have sold off more than we should in the dash for cash and globalisation (if any of this paragraph has been redacted I have been censored).

#### • The Backroom Boys of Audio – Alan Dower Blumlein.

I couldn't do justice to the subject of valve amplification and stereo without telling you about a couple of the important backroom boys of history who have played a major part in developing the science.

Mr Alan Blumlein was probably one of the most important contributors to the development of audio (and other areas of electronics), which England produced in the first three decades of the last century. He may possibly be a name new to you, and if so I would strongly advise researching him further, for in his short life he filed over 100 patents many of which we are still benefiting from years after his death.



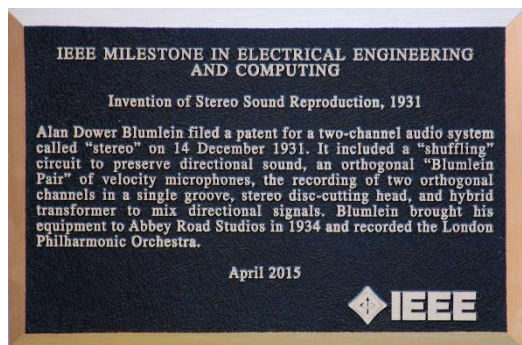
I will however just mention a couple, for his work covered various fields including those of line communication (Telephone & Vision), sound recording and reproduction, 405 television, radar and early computing.

In the late 1920s Blumlein worked for the *Columbia Gramophone Co.* in London, where he reported to Isaac Schoenberg its head of research.

At this time electronics used in the recording of sound was still developing, and professional amplifiers of any quality were still a relatively new concept, with nearly all being made by American companies that required payment of a royalty for their use.

As this royalty was levied on each individual record pressed, there was a great incentive for a recording company to find a way to avoid having to pay it, so Blumlein was tasked by Schoenberg to design and have built equipment to overcome these American patents and thus save the company money.

This he achieved leading a small team to develop a string of new ideas resulting in British patents 394325, 350954 and 350998 (1929, 1930).



In 1931 *Columbia* merged with *The Gramophone Co (HMV)* to form *EMI*. Here Blumlein become one of its senior research engineers working once more to Isaac Schoenberg, who had also crossed over to the new company to become its Director of Research. In same year *EMI* opened the doors of its now world-famous *Abbey Road Recording Studios* in London using Blumlein's new recording equipment.

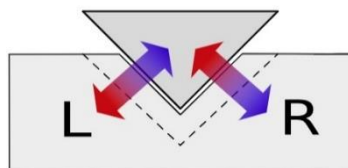
Blumlein's new patents had covered disc cutting, microphones and improved amplification (possibly including the 'Ultra-linear' output), but had also tantalisingly (and ahead of its time) included a proposed system to record and reproduce stereo sound from disc or film, a process he called '*Binaural Sound*'.

As this was the era of the 78rpm shellac record and of crackly talking pictures in cinemas, it would have been a forlorn hope that his patents for stereo would have found immediate use.



However, using a disc cutting lathe to cut stereophonic discs using his proposed 45/45-degree process to produce Master discs for subsequent pressings, and what is known as the 'M/S microphone technique' have endured and are still used today, though with the passage of time under at least one other patent.

The beauty of the Blumlein 45/45 process was that it was immediately mono compatible (which is a great comfort for those of us still having our childhood *Dansette* record players under the bed), and the M/S technique, sometimes called 'Coincident Pair' 'Middle and Side' or 'Sum and difference' is considered by some purists to be the only 'true' way of recording stereo sound. However, as most stereo reproduction in the home today is straight left/right, even if something is originated M/S, it will usually have to be matrixed at some point to suit this way replaying it. Analogue FM stereo radio broadcasting on the other hand is one area where the benefits of M/S can be used partly because it neatly overcomes the mono compatibility issue.



One more Blumlein patent of significance from these years was his circuit for the 'Long Tailed pair' (LTP) or differential amplifier which was designed initially to overcome problems in line transmission of early vision signals. It was later adopted in many other areas of electronics including one of Britain's early computers, the ACE Pilot computer from 1950.

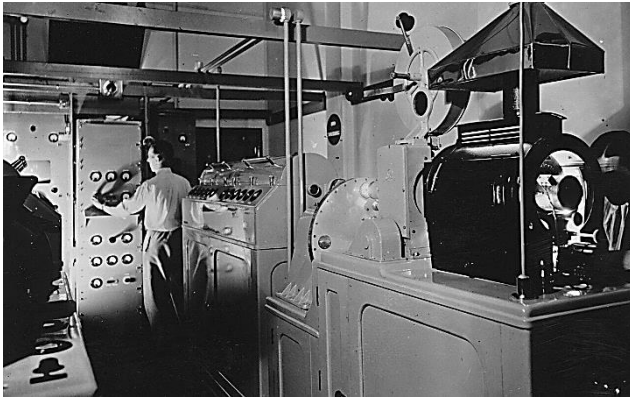


EMI Super Emitron Camera.  
© 2020 The Museum Of The Broadcast TV Camera.

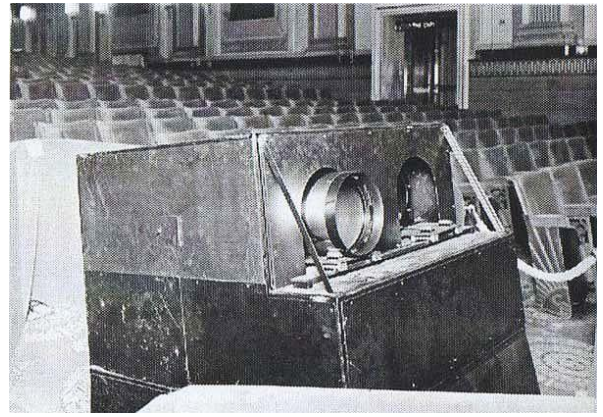
By the early 1930s the BBC had set up the world's first experimental television service using John Logie Baird's crude 30 line system whilst looking ahead to develop the idea into a High-Definition service (minimum 240 line resolution).

By the mid-1930s HD television was still unproved, so the BBC decided to trial two different systems at their new Alexandra Palace Studios, an improved Baird system (240 line) now using live film transfer (telecine) to improve its pictures and a new 405 line all electronic system from EMI.

Following his work at Abbey Road, Blumlein's next project was as part of the team developing the 405 line television process for EMI at their laboratory in Hayes. Here he was responsible for developing much of the circuitry required including some for the all new Emitron studio cameras; with much of this work leading to further patents being filed.



Baird Tele-film processor with Nipkow disc scanner.



Baird Cinema Television Projector.

The BBC ultimately chose the EMI 405 line picture for their new High-Definition service to start in 1936, and the rest as they say is history.

Just for the sake of balance, I would comment that although Baird was considered somewhat of an eccentric and many of his early inventions were rather Heath Robinson, relying on electro-mechanical means for them to operate, it was he who first originated and demonstrated a crude 30 line television picture in 1926. However, when the EMI system was eventually shown to be superior, he accepted its concept, moved on and in 1938 developed a large-scale television projector for use in cinemas (Baird Cinema Television System) which enjoyed some success in England and America.

Shortly after he also demonstrated a two colour television picture for home viewing which he called *Telechrome*. Both these ideas could now be said to have been a couple of decades ahead of their time.



*Cinema Television Ltd* was eventually bought by the mighty *Rank Organisation* who particularly wanted to further develop Baird's 'Nipkow Disc Flying Spot' film transfer process. The resultant series of machines they produced were marketed under the name Rank- Cintel where they enjoyed world renown. As film is still being used today even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Cintel machines are still available, though its latest incarnation is now made by an Australian business called 'Black Magic design'.

*Rank Cintel MK3 Telecine Machine.*



Blumlein's last project was during the war when his specialist knowledge was put to use as part of the team developing the H2S airborne radar that later in the war was to help British bombers successfully locate their targets.

He was however killed in a flying accident during the trials and before the project was finished. The work was eventually completed by others who had worked closely with him on the process. From my own limited research, it would appear his death and that of the rest of the crew may have been due to faulty maintenance of one of the aircraft's engines that caught fire whilst the plane was over Wales.

[ Ed. Caused by an 'Erk' not tightening an engine tappet nut correctly three hours before the flight! ref: Wikipedia]

- **David (Theo) Williamson.**

I am sure by now there will one or two readers still troubled by the lack of metal engineering in my piece to date, so I am glad to make amends.

As I mentioned in part 2, the post war interest in quality sound and amplifiers for the home, was firmly put on the electronics map by Mr Williamson (apparently *Theo* to his intimates). This at a time when there was no Hi-Fi market, and commercial amplifiers were thin on the ground. It was therefore natural that the home experimenter and constructor constituted that market, and it was to this audience our Theo presented his ideas, through the pages of "*Wireless World*".

In the immediate post war years where amateurs led, very often the commercial world followed, and it appears Theo's ideas did eventually play quite a large part in shaping and influencing circuit designs of commercial amplifiers in the 1950s.

**THE WILLIAMSON AMPLIFIER**  
The first production model endorsed and signed by the designer



*D. S. N. Williamson.*

**SPECIFICATIONS**

- Output: 15 watt peak, 12 watt undistorted, within 0.2 db from 10 c/s to 20,000 c/s; harmonic distortion at full output within 0.15%; noise level better than 90 db below full output.
- Output Impedances: Choice of 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49 and 64 ohms by series/parallel arrangements of 8 secondary windings, so matching, without losses, a wide diversity of speaker combinations.
- Tube Complement: Two 6SN7, two KT66, one 5Y4 rectifier.

Construction: The power and amplifier units are on separate chassis 12" L, 5 1/2" W, 6 3/4" H. All filter condensers are oil filled paper. Transformers and chokes are specially wound and are screened in matching compound filled steel cases. Its output socket for supplying power to a control unit. Adjustable balancing controls and metering jacks are fitted. All ticks and sockets are of standard American type. Replacements of all specially machined parts are available in the U.S.A.

Price \$150.00 net in U.S.A.\*  
DEALER ENQUIRIES INVITED

Engineered in England to precise standards, this Amplifier is an integrated design and gives a guaranteed performance with reliability and consistency.

\* Prices for Canada and South & Central America on request.

**BRITISH RADIO ELECTRONICS, LTD.**  
ONE THOMAS CIRCLE • WASHINGTON 5, D. C.

Advertisement *AUDIO ENGINEERING* October 1952.

Catering for the home constructor, not only the original but also the improved '*Williamson*' amplifier was made available in kit form by a couple of suppliers, the kit now including the all-important output transformer, in this case supplied by '*Partridge*' transformers (another name to drop when discussing vintage Hi-Fi).

While his ideas gained interest from around the world, Australia and to some extent America it seems. really took the design to their hearts with a couple of modifications to allow it to be used with equivalent American valves.

Evidently a highly capable sort of a chap, Theo next applied his broad engineering knowledge and skills whilst working for *Ferranti*, where amongst other things in 1953, he patented the '*Ferranti Optical Grating*' measuring system (accuracy of 5 micrometers over 1.5 meters), a standard that played a part in another important development, that of the '*Coordinate Measuring Machine*'. Later he was also responsible for innovating and patenting the '*System 24*' automated workshop process that saw numerous CNC operations all interlinked. This in its turn led to the '*Format Manufacturing System*' (FMS) being developed where an entire factory could be automated.

Now, speaking as one who has put his hand to more than one cigarette in his life, I was astounded to learn that the next company where Theo worked (and FMS was actually developed), was *Molins Machine Co*, which was the world's leading manufacturer of cigarette processing machinery.

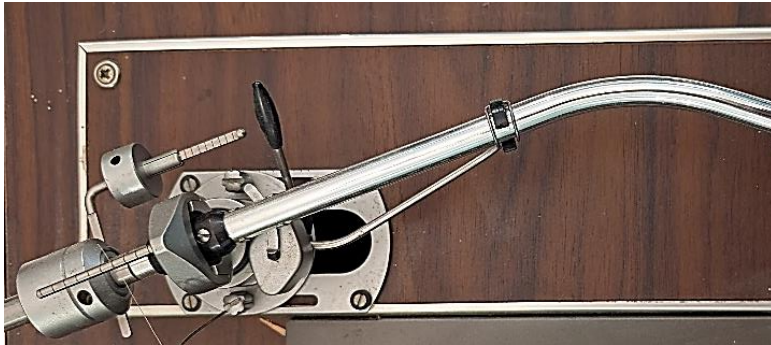


And if that doesn't sound overly exciting and you feel couldn't have amounted to anything more sophisticated than having '*Carmen*' operate an overgrown Rizla cigarette rolling machine (opera fans won't need this explaining, otherwise I aim to inform), then you really need to look at the history of this company; for the machines they produced and continue to produce show every sign of being comparable with anything to which a respectable machine tool company would be happy to put their name.

Rank Xerox next benefited from Theo's talents where in 1973 he became their Director of Technical Development before retiring in 1976.



Here's a moment to tempt you, are the pictures not showing a thing of beauty, would that not make a nice project for a model engineer to get his or her teeth into? You may already be mentally reaching for your notepad to sketch an outline, mulling what materials to use and what tolerance to make things to, possibly you are also thinking about how to put that gentle set in the tube; and what about that bearing assembly might you plan to use knife or point contact there?



*SME Tone Arm*



- **Alastair Robertson-Aikman.**

It's only natural for the pictures to stir the blood of a model engineer, for what you are looking at is the work of a model engineer, Alastair Robertson- Aikman. It is possible I am stretching it to say Mr A.R-Aikman was a model engineer himself, but it is likely. For he started a company after the war called, *Scale Model Equipment Co. (SME)* that produced models and components for the model engineering trade.

Alastair was also a hi-fi enthusiast who was concerned by the absence of a really top-quality tone arm suitable for the reproduction of the (then) new stereo records coming onto the market at the end of the 1950s. Being an engineer, he decided to do something about it by putting his skill and knowledge into designing and perfecting the product you see.



I will let the picture tell the story, for what you looking at is an *SME 3009 tone arm* probably the world's most successful quality pick-up arm that since its introduction in 1959 has, along with its successors, sold in the tens of thousands.

Though you may not realise it, your teenage grandchildren would consider you the coolest person on the planet if you made one for them (you might get away with just explaining how a bought one was made), for as you may have heard, the sales of vinyl records are now soaring again thanks to a new generation seeking a different take on the quality of the music they listen to.

The company *SME* still exists, though no longer making anything for the model engineer, but still making tone arms and now also high-end turntables as well. As Mr Aikman insisted on precision in all his work and from all those who worked for him, it is perhaps not surprising that there is also today a thriving branch of the *SME* Company which is dedicated to the manufacture of precision components, undertaking work for the likes of Formula 1, automotive, medical and the aerospace industries.

- **Last track before the Label.**

There are of course many other *back-room boys* who have played an important part in the story of valves and audio; however, our esteemed Editor has reminded me the price of digits has gone up recently and I must therefore rein in my enthusiasm, and instead draw things to a close.

Last year when I started to feel Nat King Cole was losing his appeal, sending me off to seek auditory balm elsewhere, little did I realise the journey of pleasure and discovery that awaited me and of the many interesting people I would come to learn about along the way. As even though electronics has been the main theme, it has frequently crossed over to other aspects of engineering, and in so doing has certainly made a deeper connection with my engineering soul.

I know my own journey of discovery is still ongoing, but I hope I have succeeded in bringing you with me for at least part of the journey, and that maybe some aspect has stimulated you enough to want to know more.

Now that you know there is at least one other enthusiast for these thermionic wonders in the Club, you don't have to be shy, you too can now have the confidence to place one or two valves unnoticed onto the mantelpiece in amongst the ornaments, or slip the odd one into the china cabinet to be admired and used later.

You could even consider saving money on the central heating by buying yourself (and naturally your best beloved) the biggest valve amp you can get into the sitting room...then to sit back keep warm from the glow and ENJOY!

Foot note: And why did Nat king Cole sound like Cleo Lane? I had put the CD back in the wrong case.

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• **Suggested Further Reading:**

The Inventor of Stereo The Life and Works of Alan Dower Blumlein – (1999) ISBN100240516281

The Set Makers – (1991) ISBN0951704206

Saga of the Marconi Osram Valve – (2000) ISBN0953912701

Scale Model Equipment Co, its history 1946 – 60 – (2017) ISBN9781846831782

Wireless World 1935 – 1965

Also one could wander the pipes of the internet.

**Contact:** If you would like to contribute to the Newsletter, the contact is:

Nevile Foster Tel 01751 474137 or e-mail [nevf123@outlook.com](mailto:nevf123@outlook.com)

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