



WELCOME to our tenth newsletter. After his sterling work on producing our previous nine newsletters, Mike Neighbour is taking a well-deserved break. I have taken over producing the newsletter into 2021, which explains the changes in format.

FLEETVILLE DIARIES AGM. Given the impact of Covid-19 restrictions the formal AGM has had to be deferred to next year and membership extended through 2021. Our 2020 Annual Report provides an update of our activities and accompanies this newsletter.

LAID TO REST STORIES. Romaine and I, with advice and assistance from Mike, are starting to prepare cases for a proposed fifth Laid to Rest walk. Suggestions are most welcome, and if you can provide some additional background information or family contact or help research the person even better. The only criteria are that the person (in body or ash form) is now a resident of Hatfield Road Cemetery, and we can find enough material to make an interesting story of their life and times to fill a 5 to 10 minute stop by or near their graveside. The names of most of the people in the four current Laid to Rest walks are given on Mike's [St Albans Own East End website](#). If the person was identifiable on their tombstone c.2012, the [Hertfordshire Burials website](#) will list it with an approximate location and photograph of the grave; it will also indicate the same for several other local cemeteries (but not that of St Marks Church at Colney Heath).

We need at least a dozen names of which the following are already being, or considered for, investigation:

1. William Bird (Master of St Albans Union Workhouse), The St Albans mayor of the same name is commemorated in the Abbey Memorial Garden.
2. Herbert James Read (manager, electrical engineer, who died at Hill End level crossing)
3. Rance family of Camp View Road.

ALBAN WAY. Our branch line features on a new DVD from local specialist producers Transport Video Publishing at Wheathampstead, entitled [Railways of Hertfordshire volume one](#). If you are interest in our local railway heritage scene it is worth getting a copy – just click the link to follow. Notable inclusions are some good scenes of military vehicles including tanks in residence at London Road station in the 1980s and archive film of Smallford Station. Other sections cover the Abbey line, the now closed branch lines from Watford to Rickmansworth and Croxley Green, and Napsbury and St Albans stations. It was filmed on location in July 2020, with Tony Furse of St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust presenting. At Smallford station he interviews Jeff Lewis on the work of Smallford Station & Alban Way Heritage Society, and at

Nast Hyde Halt Mike Izzard describes his work there. I noted a few local historical inaccuracies, the most significant being describing Nicholson's coat factory alongside Fleetville siding as the print works and the ...

...DERAILMENT AT SANDERS SIDING. Tony, whilst standing at the site of the points for the Salvation Army siding, relates how the points were interfered with overnight, and a train heading **to Hatfield** entered the siding, went through the buffers and blocked a public footpath. The first four wagons of a train of 26 were also derailed. The accompanying photos show the Salvation Army siding c.1902 and a derailed engine with recovery crane at Sanders siding in 1955. These photos and many more relating to the Alban Way as a working railway can be seen in the [Roger Taylor collection](#) on the Smallford Station & Alban Way Heritage Society website. In essence the story is as related in Taylor & Anderson: *The Hatfield and St Albans branch of the Great Northern Railway*; Oakwood Press 1988, though they say the train was coming **from Hatfield**, and in M Neighbour: *St Albans' Own East End, volume 2 Insiders*; page 280, which includes another picture of the 1955 derailment before the wagons had been removed (viewable online in Mike's blog of [14 October 2012](#)). The 1955 pictures show the engine still partly within the damaged track and no footpath nor buffers disrupted or otherwise, so what is the explanation?

Actually there were two derailments, and their accounts have become conflated. Both were caused by interference with the Sanders Siding points and both involved the first train of the day which was a goods train **from Hatfield**. The first was on Friday 21st May 1948, when early that morning the points were set for the siding. The train duly entered the siding at 30mph, ploughing through the buffer stop and across the footpath to Vanda Crescent, with the engine entering the back garden of 19 Vanda Crescent. The train crew were badly shaken but otherwise unhurt. The engine was a class N7 tank still carrying its LNER number of 9695. Unlike the Salvation Army siding, Sanders siding continued at the angle to and thus became separated by a low grassy bank from the through route, hence explaining the trajectory of the engine.

The second was on Friday 19th August 1955, when early that morning the Sanders Siding points were again interfered with, the blades being jammed out of alignment by stones. This time the train was travelling much more slowly but was derailed by the misaligned points, causing disruption of the track as it came to a stop on the through route before reaching the footpath, leaning against the aforementioned bank separating it from Sanders siding. The engine was another class N7 tank, number 69637.

If by chance anyone has any photos showing the Camp Road old railway bridge from the city side, or of Sanders Siding with its loading platform, I would love to see them.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR. This leaves me with just enough space to send our Seasons Greetings to all our readers and best wishes for a return to normality in 2021.

Comments, information, details of photos, ideas and Laid to Rest suggestions to myself, Alex Bell, by email: alexbell@argonet.co.uk. Thank you.