

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the Catalogue and Index to the GERS Historical Collection of Records and Relics.

Once again, we must record our thanks to all of the donors of this material, and to the Essex Record Office. Our grateful thanks must also be recorded to the many Society members who have assisted in processing this vast archive of material over the years – details are shown in the ‘Credits’ section.

To those of you who are not members of the GER Society, we bid you welcome, and hope that the GERS Collection will be of interest and use to you. This collection is without doubt the largest publicly-available archive of material relating to the Great Eastern Railway and its predecessors and successors. It contains items dating from the initial proposals for railways in East Anglia in the early 1830s to the present day. Apart from the GER, the Society also caters for those interested in the other independent railways in the area that are not otherwise catered for, such as the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway, and this policy is also reflected in the material available in the Collection. There is also much material from other railway companies, where it is relevant to the area, in particular the North London Railway between Broad Street and Poplar.

The Collection currently numbers over 11,000 main catalogue entries, many of which consist of collections of related documents, plans, maps and so on. As a result it comprises several tens of thousands of individual items. Rather than look through the six hundred or so pages of the catalogue, a glance through the Index and its various sections will show you the range and scope of the material available at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, where the Collection is principally housed.

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ARCHIVIST, GERS HISTORICAL COLLECTION OF RECORDS AND RELICS

May 2025

THE GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY SOCIETY HISTORICAL COLLECTION OF RECORDS AND RELICS

History of the Collection

The Great Eastern Railway Society was formed in 1973 in order to promote interest in, and the study of, the history of the Great Eastern Railway. From the outset, it was intended to include coverage of the predecessors of the company, and its successors up to the present day. Further, it was also decided to cater for the independent and minor railways in the GER's geographical area that were not provided for by their own historical study groups. Thus, the Midland & Great Northern Railway was largely excluded, as it already had a well-established historical society in the form of the M&GN Circle.

From the earliest days, the Society found itself being offered various items of historical interest, and these formed the basis of what was to become the GERS Collection of Historic Records and Relics. The Collection was initially cared for by the Passmore Edwards Museum at Stratford in east London, and it was moved to the North Woolwich Old Station Museum at its opening by the PEM in 1984. Since this time, the GERS Collection has gone from strength to strength, and it now ranks alongside the collections of the National Archive and National Railway Museum in terms of scope and coverage.

Regretfully, the North Woolwich Museum closed in 2008, and the GERS Collection was moved to the Essex Record Office at Chelmsford. Although the Record Office is chiefly concerned with archival material relating to that county in respect of railway history the position is rather different. A scheme was set up several decades ago whereby any railway material not required by the old Public Record Office, now The National Archives, or the National Railway Museum, would be passed to the appropriate county record office for retention. Recognising that few railways fell into a single geographical county various County Record Offices were designated to receive the records of particular pre-Grouping railways and Essex was designated to take records of the GER. This means that any documents relating to the GER are accepted on deposit from the Society in which ever county they fall.

Under the agreement with the ERO the Collection is owned by the Society but looked after by the ERO which makes it available to all researchers. Indeed, it has always been intended that the GERS Collection should be freely accessible by the public. Although the scope of the Collection mirrors that of the Society's areas of study, it includes some material relevant to the neighbouring railway lines, such as the Midland & Great Northern and the North London Railways. Such items have generally been included in multiple-part donations that are more sensibly kept together.

Collecting Policy

It is a matter of policy that the Society establishes what donors wish to be done with an item if the opportunity should arise to replace it with a duplicate of superior quality in the future. In many cases the original donors have kindly instructed the Society to sell the item, and use the proceeds for the up-keep of the Collection as a whole. As a result, we are able to undertake much-needed professional conservation work on the more-deserving items in the Collection.

The GERS Collection continues to grow, and new material is being added constantly. The donations range from individual items at one end of the scale to single donations of several thousand related items. Perhaps the most significant and historically-important acquisition has been the large collection bequeathed by our late President, B.D.J. Walsh. This includes many historic early railway documents, and an enormous quantity of timetables – both public and working – plus operating notices and the like. It also includes a most important collection of *Bradshaw's Railway Guides* published between 1843 and 1961. As many readers will know, this was published *monthly*, containing public timetables for all British railways. As a result of Mr. Walsh's bequest, the GERS Collection holds at least one issue from every single year from 1843 to 1961, with almost complete coverage between 1864 and 1912.

Another important archive consists of some 9,500 original drawings from Stratford Works. Drawing Office. After the closure of the Works in 1963 the drawings and records were initially sent to Doncaster and then to Darlington. Later the general arrangement and other important drawings were selected at Doncaster for preservation the national collection. The residue which would have otherwise been destroyed, was purchased by our late member Peter Dupen thanks to the intervention of George Dow and in due course Peter donated them to the Society. As explained in the section "Accessing the Collection at the Essex Record Office" these drawings cannot normally be produced for inspection.

In regard to the drawings selected for the national collection these passed to the National Railway Museum where our member, John Watling, listed these and many thousands of other Stratford Works drawings at the NRM where the schedules may be consulted.

The drawings donated to the Society were comprehensively listed by several members. They principally cover locomotives, carriages, wagons and road vehicles, as well a number of other subjects and comprise component and assembly drawings, ranging from single nuts, bolts and brackets, up to complete underframe drawings, motion assemblies and so on. This collection has already proved its worth is assisting with the restoration of the preserved GER 0-6-0, 4-6-0 and 0-6-2T locomotives, several items of rolling stock, and in the on-going re-creation of one of the GER 2-4-2 tank engines.

A further huge archive is the donation by Railtrack/Network Rail plc of over 15,000 prints of drawings from their archives, as a result of another project undertaken by GERS members. Prior to privatisation, the drawings from many of the regional Civil Engineer's Departments of British Rail were transferred to Waterloo. The GERS was asked to assist in the identification and cataloguing of the Eastern Region drawings, so that they could be scanned onto their master database. In return for this service we were allowed to have copies of any material that was thought to be of interest. These drawing copies, the 'Folded', 'Rolled' and 'Bridge' Plans, are catalogued in the 3000, 5000 and 6000 series, and there are items of relevance to almost all of the stations, yards and other locations in East Anglia, and a great number of the under- and over-bridges, footbridges etc.

Finally, the Collection also includes a large number of photographs, although details are not shown at present in the Catalogue. Photographic archives pose their own problems in terms of storage, archiving, cataloguing and copying. However, we are currently scanning and cataloguing the 20,000-odd items to hand, and we hope that they will be available for inspection in the near future.

THE COLLECTION CATALOGUE: GENERAL NOTES

The Society maintains a Master Catalogue for the Collection. Each donation — or ‘piece’ is numbered from 1 upwards, but many such pieces consist of two or more related items — in some cases, several thousand. These are given a basic catalogue number followed by a slash symbol and suffix number, “144/01, 144/02” and so on. Where such multiple-part pieces consist of a large number of items, the piece is merely summarised in the catalogue, and full details are produced as a separate ‘Supplement’.

This ‘public’ catalogue is an edited version of the Master Catalogue, and therefore it only shows the material that is currently available for inspection at the Essex Record Office, plus details of the few small relics that the Society maintains in store. Readers may notice that there are many ‘gaps’ in the catalogue numbers, and these represent material that is not yet available for inspection, being the subject of special study or conservation; numbers that have yet to be used; or items that have been renumbered to group them with other, similar material. To avoid any confusion, catalogue numbers are not re-used if the original item is withdrawn or renumbered.

In some instances, specific catalogue numbers have been used for particular items. In this system, the railway lines in the GER area are numbered from 01 to 76. Most are simple end-to-end lines, such as Broxbourne to Hertford East. Some include sub-branches, such as Line 03: Hackney Downs to Enfield Town, which includes the branches from Lower Edmonton to Angel Road and Cheshunt, identified as Lines 03A and 03B. The range of railways covered by this system includes the London, Tilbury & Southend and the Midland & Great Northern Joint. Also included are all of the minor lines in the GE area, such as the Southwold, as well as that part of the North London Railway between Broad Street and Poplar.

Each station, goods station, marshalling yard and engineer’s depot is given a location code between 001 and 999. Generally, GER passenger stations are numbered 001-399, Goods stations, yards etc. in the 400s, GN&GEJR stations in the 500s and so on. In the case of Stratford – Location 002 – the area is so complex that it has been subdivided into Location Codes 561 to 570 dealing with different parts of the site. Full details of all these codes are given in the Appendix files, which also contain four sets of maps: A diagrammatic map of the GER area; a similar map of the London area, showing the various goods depots; a Stratford area map and – a new addition this year – a detailed set of maps of the complex of depots along the Blackwall Line and Bow area.

This system of location codes has been integrated with the catalogue numbers, principally when dealing with the Railtrack ‘Folded’ and ‘Rolled’ plans, which are numbered in the 3000 and 5000 series. In these instances, the ‘location code’ is added to the base catalogue number. Thus, the folded plans for Cambridge — location code 057 — are grouped under piece number 3057, and sub-divided 3057/001, 3057/002 and so on. There are therefore blank numbers where there is no material available for a particular location. For example, if there are no folded plans for Westerfield, code 214, the catalogue number 3214 is blank. However, it can be seen that the number is available, should suitable material come to hand in the future.

A somewhat similar system has been used for other multiple-item pieces in the collection, in which the sub-division number relates to the item itself. For example, Piece 1457 consists of 34 BR Weekly Operating Notices for 1988-9. Each notice is identified by a ‘week number’, and thus the notice for week number 25 — 10th to 16th September 1988 — is identified as catalogue number 1457/25. We do not currently have a copy of the notice for the previous week, number 24, and so the catalogue number 1457/24 is left blank.

THE CATALOGUE DESCRIBED

The Catalogue shown here is in four main parts: the Catalogue itself; the ‘Supplements’; the Index; and the ‘Appendices’ Each is further sub-divided as described below:

1: CATALOGUE PARTS

The catalogue files are identified as ‘Part 00’, ‘Part 01’ and so on. Generally, each part gives details of a thousand catalogue numbers, and so ‘Part 00’ lists pieces 1-999; ‘Part 01’ lists pieces 1000-1999, and so on. However, ‘Part 03’ actually summarises pieces 3001-3999, which are detailed in separate ‘Supplement’ Files — see below. The same is true of Parts ‘05’ and ‘06’. There is no Part 07 in the main catalogue, as the catalogue numbers 7000-7999 have been set aside for photographs that are currently being catalogued in a separate spreadsheet.

The main catalogue basically shows details of each piece: its catalogue number, description of the item and identity of the donor.

In front of the catalogue number is a location reference, either ‘REL’, ‘LOAN’ or the letter ‘E’ and a number. The code ‘REL’ identifies those few smaller relics retained in store — see the Introduction above. ‘LOAN’ refers to items currently on loan to other museums etc. Items identified by a red ‘E’ number – **E925** for example – denote the Box Number that the item is in, and that it is located at the Essex Record Office. If the number is orange – **E900** for example – this denotes that the item is in temporary store. Such items comprise recent (post-1970) train alterations notices and the like, advertising material and so on, plus some recently-acquired material retained for further study and identification. Such items can be however produced within a few days’ notice, upon application to the GER Society. If the ‘E’ number appears followed by asterisks – **E***** – this indicates a multiple-part item that is split between two or more boxes, details of which are given in the list of the various parts.

NOTE: As regards the catalogue number, this must be prefixed by ‘D/Z 346’ when ordering each piece for viewing at the Essex Record Office. Thus, piece 144/01 in the GERS Collection must be ordered from the ERO as ‘D/Z 346/144/01’, stored in box **E426**.

The details shown in the catalogue of many official printed items are followed by a code number in square brackets — [A.293] — for example. These code numbers are those that appear on many official items of stationery, forms, instruction books and so on, being the railway companies’ ordering codes, and of interest to those studying railway stationery.

The identity of the donor of each piece is shown, as is also their membership number (if known) if they are or were a member of the GER Society. Some donors wish to remain anonymous, whilst in some cases it is unknown. In the latter instance, we would appreciate further details so that the correct donor can be properly credited, and we do apologise sincerely for any breakdown in the system that has caused this to be the case.

As indicated earlier, some pieces comprise of many individual parts. Where the number of parts is such that full details would take up excessive space in the main catalogue, the entry merely summarises the contents and refers the reader to a separate ‘Supplement’ — see below.

2: SUPPLEMENTS

The ‘Supplement’ Files are identified as ‘SUP 767’ – for Supplement 767 – and so on. Each Supplement generally consists of a tabulated list of the items concerned. ‘SUP 3001’, ‘SUP 5001’ and ‘SUP 6001’ are particularly large files listing the Railtrack/Network Rail ‘Folded’ and ‘Rolled’ Plans relating to locations, and the drawings relating to Bridges. These Supplements are presented as Excel spread-sheets, and Supplement 3001 is divided into two

parts, suffixed 'A' and 'B'. Each of these Supplements also has an introductory page, and in some cases it also has its own appendices.

Supplement 154 is a full listing of the Dupen Collection of Stratford Works Tracings. There are a total of five files in all, dealing with Carriages, Locomotives (2), Wagons and General Subjects, plus a General Introduction, and these are all contained in a separate folder.

3: INDEX

Note: Preparation of the topic indexes is a very labour intensive process. The current documents mainly date from version 9 of the Catalogue in 2013. Supplementary information was created for added documents up to 2022. They may still be a useful guide to material deposited up to that date, but we cannot be sure if or when they will be updated, as the whole future format of the Catalogue is under consideration.

In preparing the 'public' version of the Catalogue, it has only been necessary to edit out the material that is not yet available for public access, blank numbers and so on. This is by no means as simple with the Master Index, so it is presented here as it stands. Therefore, it must be borne in mind that it may provide references to items that are not shown in the catalogue. In such cases, please contact the Archivist — in writing or by e-mail — as it may be possible to arrange inspection of the material, or at the least to provide fuller details.

Please also note that the Index only shows the main catalogue numbers — the ERO Box Numbers will have to be extracted by cross-referencing with the main catalogue and its supplements.

The Index is divided into various parts:

1. GENERAL

This is divided into main and sub-headings, under which are listed the catalogue numbers of pieces that are relevant. In general, pieces that are indexed in the other sections of the index are not included in the 'General' section.

2. GEOGRAPHIC

This section deals with material that is relevant to particular areas of the GER area, and is sub-divided into two parts.

2A. Lines

The first headings in this section are for general maps, and other material relating to two or more railway lines in the GER area. The remainder of the section is sub-divided under individual lines. Under each heading appear various sub-headings, and the catalogue numbers of relevant material.

2B. Stations

This section is sub-divided alphabetically by location name, with sub-headings and references to the relevant catalogue numbers. By convention, location names used are those current in 1922, at the end of the GER's independent existence. Included also are headings for stations opened after 1922, or locations on other railways that are relevant to the GER and associated lines, such as St. Pancras. Where a location was re-named, the alternate names are also listed as main headings, with a cross-reference to the correct location name in the index. When looking for material relating to a specific location, reference should also be made to the relevant line index (2A), as some pieces in the collection cover two or more locations — Parliamentary Plans, for example. Reference should also be made to Special Supplements 1, 2 and 3.

3. TIMETABLES

For ease of reference, this section gives full details of all timetables held in the Collection. It is divided into six principal sections covering various time periods, and divided into 'Public' and 'Working' timetables. There is also a section dealing with other privately-published timetables. Also included are details of special timetables issued in connection with holiday and emergency workings, Appendices to the Working Timetables and so on.

The keen-eyed will note that the main Catalogue lists a large number of the small 'pocket' timetable leaflets that were issued by BR from the late 1960s onwards, and then by the newly-privatised Train Operating Companies, and that these items are not shown in the Index. The Society has determined that the main reason for establishing a collection of timetables is for the information that they contain. Therefore – provided that the information is contained in the larger timetable books represented in the Collection – these small pocket timetables will be withdrawn in due course, except for a few selected examples.

4. BOOKS

This section lists general published railway books, as opposed to books of rules, instructions etc. issued by the railways themselves, which are covered in Part One of the Index. The section gives full details of each title held; catalogue number, title, author, publisher, date of publication and edition. The books are listed twice; 'SECTION 4A' in alphabetical title order, and 'SECTION 4B' by broad subject headings.

5. PERIODICALS

This section details the periodicals held in the Collection under various headings; Professional, House Journals etc. Full details are given of each item held.

4: APPENDICES

Appendix 1 is a list of those relics from the original Collection that have been transferred to new ownership following its removal to the Essex Record Office. It is included as this information may be of interest to those with earlier versions of the catalogue.

Appendix 2 gives details of the Line Codes.

Appendices 3A and **3B** show the location codes, in alphabetical and numerical order respectively. Also included is a coloured schematic map of the Line Codes, plus a similar detail map showing the goods yards, depots and so on in the London area that were separate from stations, such as Manor Road Sidings, Picketts Lock Creosote Works and so on. There is a map showing the various 'areas' that the Stratford complex has been divided into and a set of more-detailed maps of the Blackwall line and Poplar/Bow area, and the Stratford to North Woolwich line, Docks and Beckton Gas Works areas.

We have aimed to give as much information as possible about each piece in the Collection, in a clear and concise manner. We realise that much additional information could be given and — to this end — we are in time hoping to produce a 'General Appendix' to the Catalogue. This will give fuller historical information of selected items, and will be of especial use to users of the Collection with little or no knowledge of railways. The Appendix will also include historical details of some of the personalities connected with many items, as well as many of the donors.

SEARCHING THE CATALOGUE

Previous versions of the Catalogue have usually required a free text search of the main Catalogue which currently runs to over 700 pages. This was not only slow but missed a lot of references which only exist in the Supplements. With this issue of the Catalogue (version 12) all the supplements have been converted to PDFs and a fast index created which covers the main Catalogue and all the Supplements. Thus one search will find all references in the Catalogue and all the Supplements. To do this, click on the file GERSHC.pdx (using Adobe Acrobat Reader – other PDF readers may not work). You'll be asked to confirm that Acrobat may access the files, then use the search window. It's generally best to select Whole words only and Case Sensitive options.

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Please contact in writing for general enquiries; comments, suggestions, corrections etc. to the catalogue; offers of material for the Collection.