

*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

Please reply to:

THE MARLOW DONKEY NO. 10

MARCH 1979

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

At the time of writing we seem at last to have reached the end of a most unpleasant spell of wintry weather. Memories of 1947 and 1963 suggest a pattern of "every sixteen years we get this". Two Club meetings have suffered poor attendances. In January our Treasurer bravely wore several hats and coped with our Annual General Meeting. In February our guest speaker Mr. T.P. Worrall, Divisional Train Superintendent, London Division of Western Region, wisely declined to drive along the frozen M4 to what would have been a poorly attended meeting. However, we can now hopefully look forward to some kinder weather.

There seems to have been a variable spate of railway mishaps of late, many of them on the over-used and under-financed Souther region. The recent attempt to wreck a High Speed Train by placing a spare length of rail across the track is inexcusable. One wonders what motivates the mentality of these vandals. Fortunately their efforts were frustrated by the train's ability to survive even at 85 mph.

Congratulations to the enthusiasts who run the Bluebell Line down in Sussex. They have now taken ownership of a Southern 'S15' 4-6-0 No. 30847, a '9F' 2-10-0 No. 92240, a '4MT' 2-6-4T No. 80100 from Dai Woodham's dwindling collection at Barry Island, and 'Q' class 0-6-0 No. 30541 from Ashchurch. At the same time there is still a hope of extending the existing line northwards from Horsted Keynes back to East Grinstead. The Bluebell Line may not yet claim to be the foremost preservation centre of Britain but it is certainly becoming the best collection of former Southern Railway locomotives.

British Rail were well satisfied with their venture in 1978 to provide steam-drawn specials in the North of England, and intend to extend the earlier programme. The decision to mark the 125th anniversary of Brunel's Paddington Station by an exhibition and the running of King George V between Paddington and Didcot was excellent news for preservationists. The Sunday Observer refers to this occasion as "a mixture of nostalgia and hard business sense". Perhaps we may eventually get a summer service in the South of England operating the under-used GWR engines of the centre at Didcot.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

All members who have not yet paid their annual subscriptions for 1979 are reminded that these are now due.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME FOR 1979 AT 2000 HRS

- 15 Mar 1979      More Aspects of Signalling. Mike Hanscombe entertains again.
- 26 Apr 1979      Adventure in Latin America. An illustrated talk by the well known author Colin Garratt, sponsored by Praticka Cameras.
- 17 May 1979      Mid Hants Railway. D.J. Lane of the Mid Hants Railway Preservation Society.
- 21 Jun 1979      Passenger Train Operations in the London Division of the Western Region. A talk by T.P. Worrall Divisional Train Superintendent London Division of Western Region.
- 19 Jul 1979      Footplate Reminiscences. D. Fendley Divisional Traction Inspector at Reading.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The main offering at the Christmas Film Show was "The Gargantuan Triumph of Science" the story of the Tay railway bridge disaster of 1879.

The AGM on 25 Jan 1979 was depleted by the weather. A full report will appear in the next edition. Les Spicer after sterling service on the committee stood down and has been replaced by Roger Woodhams. Bas Woodward was re-elected Chairman, Roger Bowen and Stan Verrinder were re-elected Secretary and Treasurer. The other members of the committee who were re-elected are Roy Mee, Ted Gregory and Mike Norris.

The February meeting had to be cancelled because of the weather. Those who turned up, other than those around the corner, came by rail.

MARLOW MAIDENHEAD PASSENGER ASSOCIATION 1979 PROGRAMME

- Sun 10 Jun      Cardiff and Tenby
- Sun 5 Aug      South Devon. Probably both Dart Valley Railways will be included.
- Sun 2 Sep      York and Scarborough. North Yorkshire Moors Railway will be included.

SUMMER EXCURSIONS FROM HIGH WYCOMBE

This Summer a number of organisations are operating excursions from Beaconsfield and High Wycombe. Tickets and information from:

- Operator A; British Railways, London Midland Region,  
High Wycombe Station.
- Operator B; LNER Society, Little Tile House, Nightingales  
Lane, Chalfont, St. Giles, Bucks.
- Operator C; Chiltern Train, 1 Druids Walk, Chinnor, Oxon.
- 
- Sat 21 Apr SVR Spring Gala via Kidderminster - £5.35 -  
Operator A
- Sat 21 Apr Cambridge, March, Spalding or Nene Valley  
Railway or Springfield Gardens - £3.50-£5.40  
depending on option - Operator C
- Mon 7 May Carnforth, Lakeside Railway or Lake District  
tour - £5.75-£8.25 depending on option -  
Operator C
- Sat 12 May Chester - £4.25 - Operator A
- Sat 19 May Carnforth, Grange-over-Sands or Lake District  
tour - £4.90-£6.25 depending on option -  
Operator C
- Sat 26 May Peak District tour, Butterley and Crick or  
York - £4.50-£6.75 depending on option -  
Operator B
- Sun 24 Jun Dawlish, Teignmouth, Torquay or Paignton -  
£5 - Operator A
- Sun 29 Jul Bath, Bristol or Weston-super-Mare - £4 -  
Operator A
- Sun 26 Aug Isle of Wight - £4.25 - Operator A
- Sat 29 Sep Blackpool Illuminations - £4.30 - Operator A
- Sat 20 Oct York - £4.80 - Operator A
- Sat 17 Nov Mystery Tour - £3.50 - Operator A

BUYING BOOKS?

Avon-Anglia Publications of Bristol advise us that they are prepared to offer a discount to Society members on the purchase of their publications and those of other publishers.

Anyone who is interested in purchasing books please contact the Secretary Roger Bowen who has full details.

25 YEARS AGO - FROM RAILWAY MAGAZINE OF MARCH 1954

"The first of a new type of 2-10-0 heavy freight locomotive intended principally for working mineral traffic has been completed recently at Crewe Works. The design was prepared under the direction of Mr. R.A. Riddles. The initial order comprises 20 locomotives Nos. 92000-92019".

"The last survivor of the Saint Class No. 2920 Saint David was believed to have made its last journey with a passenger train on Thursday October 1st when it worked the 7.45 a.m. from Hereford to Worcester".

150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS FOR LIVERPOOL-MANCHESTER RAILWAY

Celebrations taking place next year to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Liverpool - Manchester railway and the famous Rainhill locomotive trials are now in an advanced planning stage. The 'Rocket 150' celebrations promise to provide a spectacle that will attract many thousands of people to a once-in-a-lifetime railway extravaganza.

Major event of the anniversary year will be the re-enactment of the Rainhill trials - plus a cavalcade of locomotives, carriages and wagons showing developments from the earliest days of railways right up to the latest complex technology of the Advanced Passenger Train. This will take place along the 1½ mile stretch of railway between Rainhill and Lea Green (near Liverpool) where the original trials took place in 1829. The first performance will be on 24th May, 1980 with repeats on 25 and 26th May.

Stands seating 50,000 spectators will be erected and special trains will run from major cities throughout the country to Liverpool or Manchester with a special local rail shuttle service to and from Rainhill.

The 150th anniversary celebrations are being promoted jointly by British Rail and the Merseyside and Greater Manchester County Councils. British Rail will be responsible for staging the rail events.

Three exhibitions of the replica locomotives and rolling stock, together with certain items from the cavalcade, will be staged after the Rainhill event. Although exact sites have not been decided, the first exhibition will be in Liverpool and last for about a month. The vehicles will then move to St. Helens for possibly two weeks; and finally to Manchester to be on display for a period to cover the official opening day anniversary on 15th September 1980.

British Rail are also hoping to run steam hauled special trains on Sundays throughout the summer of 1980 between Edge Hill and Manchester Victoria.

SOUTHERN GREECE REVISITEDROGER BOWEN

The very first article in "Marlow Donkey" No. 1 in April 1977 was on the subject of "The Railways of Southern Greece". Your Secretary was so impressed by this area that in January 1979 he decided to abandon the appalling weather and industrial unrest in England for two weeks staying in Athens.

A few changes seem to have taken place in the past two years but in many cases little seems to have altered. Incredibly enough a steam locomotive was again seen in use at the main standard gauge sheds outside Pireaus. This time, however, it was one of the ex US Transportation Corps O-6-OT's similar to that purchased by the Southern Railway in England. There was still a long line of "dead" steam, apparently unchanged from 1977 and including both ex British War Department Austerity 2-10-0 and USA Class S160 2-8-0's, as well as the Italian and US types purchased direct by the Greek Railways. The metre gauge loco's referred to in the previous article as "unidentified metre gauge steam seen dumped west of Athens" - have been identified. There are three loco's in number, two are 2-6-OT's built by Krauss in 1926 and a 2-8-0 built by Link Hofmann in 1925. Their actual location is Anargiri in the suburbs of Athens where the now closed branch to Laviron left the metre gauge main line. The 750mm gauge loco's built by Cail in Paris in 1891-94 were still to be seen at Diakofto.

There do not appear to have been any further additions to the present day diesel stock of the Hellenic Railways. The "very recent deliveries of diesel multiple units from East Germany" were in fact built by Ganz of Budapest, Hungary in 1976. There are three car standard gauge and four car metre gauge versions. The unidentifiable Roumanian loco's are some Bo-Bo's built by Faur in Roumania in 1972 for the standard gauge. As well as the types given in the previous article a batch of Bo-Bo's by Alsthalm, France were in use on the standard gauge, as well as metre gauge Bo-Bo's built in 1967 by Mitsubishi in Japan and some articulated diesel railcars by De Dietrich, France.

The greatest difference which will be seen in the future is the double tracking of the standard gauge main line north of Athens. At present double track extends north only as far as Inoi, 38 miles north of Athens. Earthmoving is already taking place, at least as far north as Levadia, 45 miles beyond Inoi, for the second track, with some re-alignments being made on tight curves.

As far as the Athens Electric Railway is concerned, there does not appear to have been any changes. However, the tramway owned by this railway has now closed leaving Greece without any tramways.

The reasonable costs referred to in the previous article still apply, although there have been inevitable price increases. The official timetable now costs 50 drachmae (approximately 65p at current exchange rate). The railways of Greece are still well worth visiting despite the lack of steam. If any

member does not have a copy of the original article of April 1977, your Secretary can, on request, supply this which together with these notes will, it is hoped, encourage others to visit Greece and her railways.

THE WYCOMBE RAILWAY AND THE MARLOW DONKEY

MIKE WALKER

Part 3 - The Great Marlow Railway

By 1870 the nearest railway to Marlow was nearly four miles away along an indifferent road at Marlow Road Station. The trains were met by a small horse bus. There were mixed views as to whether or not a branch line should be constructed to the town, as described by Ted Gregory in the December 1977 issue of this journal.

Ultimately the Great Marlow Railway Company was formed by a group of Marlow businessmen, to construct a single track railway  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles in length, from the Wycombe Railway's station at Marlow Road. The directors, under their chairman Col. Higginson OP Wethered, spent almost £1,000 guiding an Act through Parliament authorising the line. Vice-Chairman of the new company was Mr. Borgnis of Highfields and the board included two other members of the Wethered family, Sir William Clayton and Charles Scott Murray.

The line was laid to standard gauge, the WRC having recently been narrowed. On leaving the south end of Marlow Road Station the line turned westwards by a sharp curve of about 10 chains radius. The line now followed the river which was never more than 30 yards distant for the first  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. About 3 furlongs from the junction the line spanned the stream which flows through the Abbotsbrook estate, this bridge is the only civil engineering feature on the branch. From Spade Oak the distance between railway and river increased to about 100 yards as far as Marlow Point, near the two mile post, where the line turned north west and ran straight to its terminus situated at the south east corner of the town, at the end of Glade Road and land already in the possession of the Wethered family. Despite its short length the branch must have established a record for level crossings, there being no less than thirteen! Only one of these was for a public road, the rest being of the accommodation type some allowing vehicular access to the river bank, the remainder for footpaths.

The station at Marlow had a single main platform, some 650 ft long on the down side. The goods yard, also on the down side, had four sidings one of which was cut into the main platform as an occasional bay. The station building was superb example of Victorian architecture, constructed in red brick with stone trimmings. The section nearest to the stop blocks had a gabled roof in grey slate and contained the Station Master's and Booking Offices, and General and Ladies Waiting Rooms. Canopies graced both faces of the building with a style of valence quite different from those usually found on GW stations.

The ends of the planks were semi-circular with large holes bored in them. The other section of the building was slightly narrower, had a flat roof and contained the parcels office, porters room and gentlemen's toilet. All the doors and windows had semicircular tops and the whole building was surmounted by four elaborate brick chimneys, all similar, but of different sizes.

Situated on a spur from the run-round loop opposite the south end of the platform was the engine shed. This building, large enough to house a tank engine, was in red brick with a slate roof and arched windows. Behind the platform was a similar goods shed.

The line continued beyond the platform to the stop blocks right up by the cross roads. Adjacent to the blocks was the cattle market situated between the station approach road and Lock Road. At the top of the approach was cross roads dominated by a large gas lamp. The Wethered's brewery built a hostelry on the south west corner, which bore the name 'Railway Hotel'.

The Great Marlow Railway opened to the public on 23rd June 1873, just in time for the Regatta. Like the WRC the Great Western operated the services on behalf of the GMR and accordingly an O-4-2ST No. 522 was allocated to Marlow. The railway was an immediate and unexpected success, with more than 1,700 tickets being sold in the first week. As a result the horse bus between Marlow and Marlow Road station was quickly forced out of business, a subscription being set up for its driver.

Marlow Road station was renamed Bourne End in 1874 and during the construction of the branch it was much altered, a bay platform on a sharp curve was provided on the rear face of the original which meant that the newly erected goods shed had to be demolished and replaced by a similar structure on the up side. A second up platform with a wooden shelter was provided, staggered to the south from the original. The main building was extended and a second gable in red brick added to the north end of the station house.

The Great Marlow Railway remained independent until 1897 when the GWR acquired the share capital and therefore control. It is interesting to note that in 1895 a third class day excursion to London cost 3/6d (17½p) whilst a yearly first class season to London would have cost a Victorian commuter £35. Today an 'Awayday' ticket is £2.48 and an annual first class season no less than £765!

As an appendix to this part layouts of both Bourne End and Marlow stations are attached. These are reproduced from the official GW drawings of 1910. It is hoped they are of interest.

Finally, how did the branch train acquire its nickname 'The Marlow Donkey'? No one is quite sure but it seems that the title was in use by the late nineteenth century. It is suggested that the name originated from the term 'Donkey Engine' used to describe a small steam locomotive. Another suggestion comes from an incident many years ago at Bourne End. The engine had run round and backed on to its train. However, the

crew became so involved in a conversation that they forgot to couple it up. On receiving the 'right away' the driver and fireman set off, getting halfway to Marlow before realising they had forgotten something. Somewhat red faced they beat a hasty retreat to Bourne End. The title 'Ass' was bestowed upon the little train and this has evolved to become 'Moke' and later 'Donkey'!

#### Errata to Part II

The editor had some trouble reading my handwriting so a few errors crept into part two. The area guarded by the West Midland Railway was the 'Mid Western District' whilst the station between Thame and Oxford was, of course, Wheatley not Whestley. More serious was my clanger. The reason why no trace has been found of the WRC station at Saunderton is because it did not exist. The station here was not opened until 1901 as will be detailed in Part V. My apologies.

STOP PRESS.

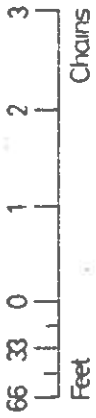
Ted Gregory still has a few Club ties available at £1.80 each.

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**BOURNE END STATION**

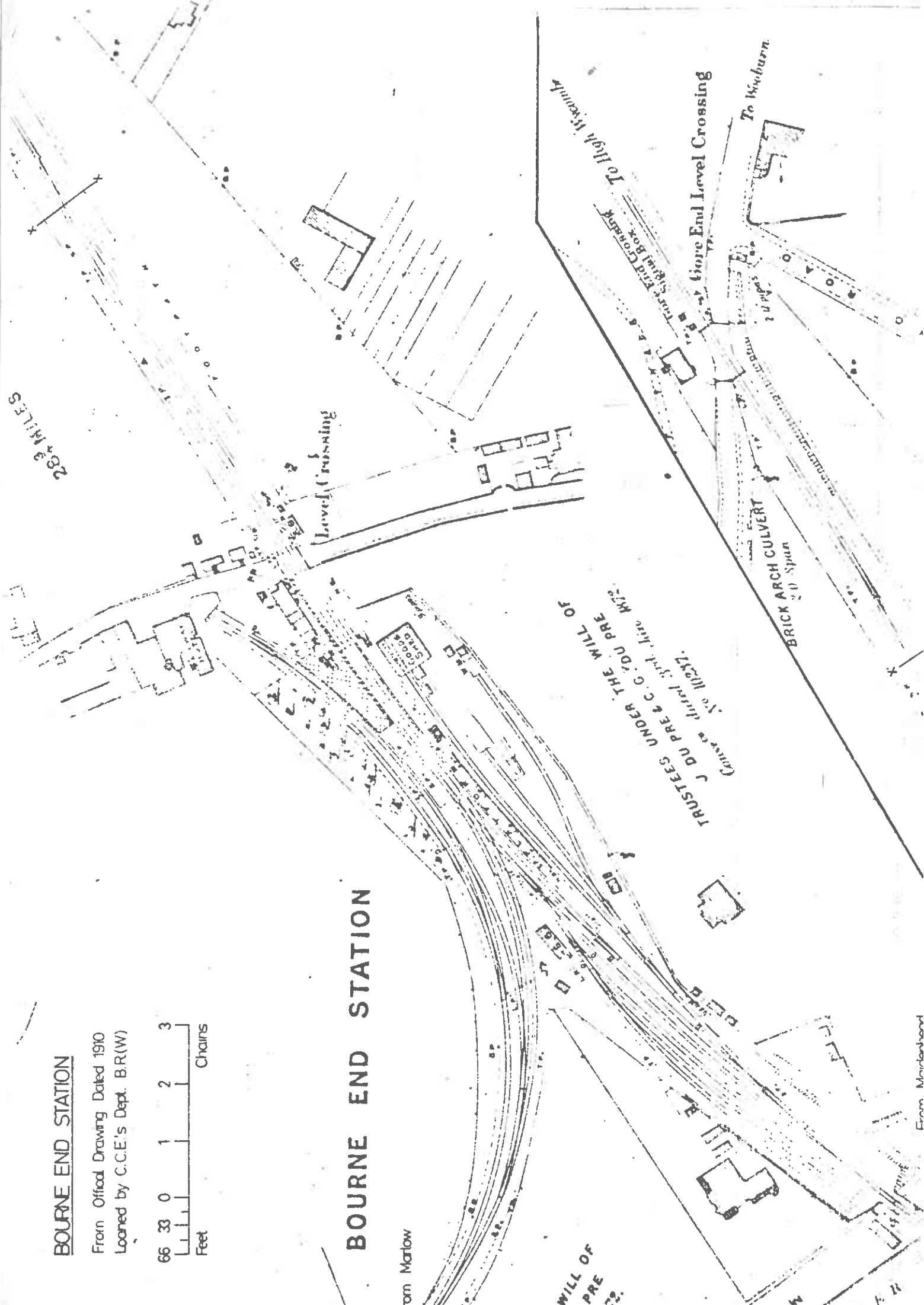
From Official Drawing Dated 1910  
Loaned by C.C.E.'s Dept. B.R.(W)



**BOURNE END STATION**

From Marlow

WILL OF  
'PRE  
172.



From Mirkland

**P**  
**A**  
**R**  
**I**  
**S**  
**II**

2 1/2 MILES

L. W. WETHELED  
 Convey dated 14th Mar 1873  
 No 10230

**MARLOW STATION**

L. W. WETHELED  
 Convey dated 14th Mar 1873  
 No 10231.

2 1/2

Marlow Sig Box

CATTLE YARD

Land out of Cos possession  
 See correspondence in Deed  
 Dep't No 10239.

COL. O. P. WETHELED  
 Convey dated 2nd Sep 1904.  
 No 14261.  
 (Mines & Minerals)

Level Crossing to be extended,  
 The Land marked A given up by the  
 Great Marlow Ry Co to Messrs Wethered  
 in exchange for Land marked B. See  
 Extract dated 1873 to 1876.  
 (Deed No 10238.)



**MARLOW STATION**

From Official Drawing Dated 1910  
 Loaned by C. C. E.'s Dept. B. R. (W)