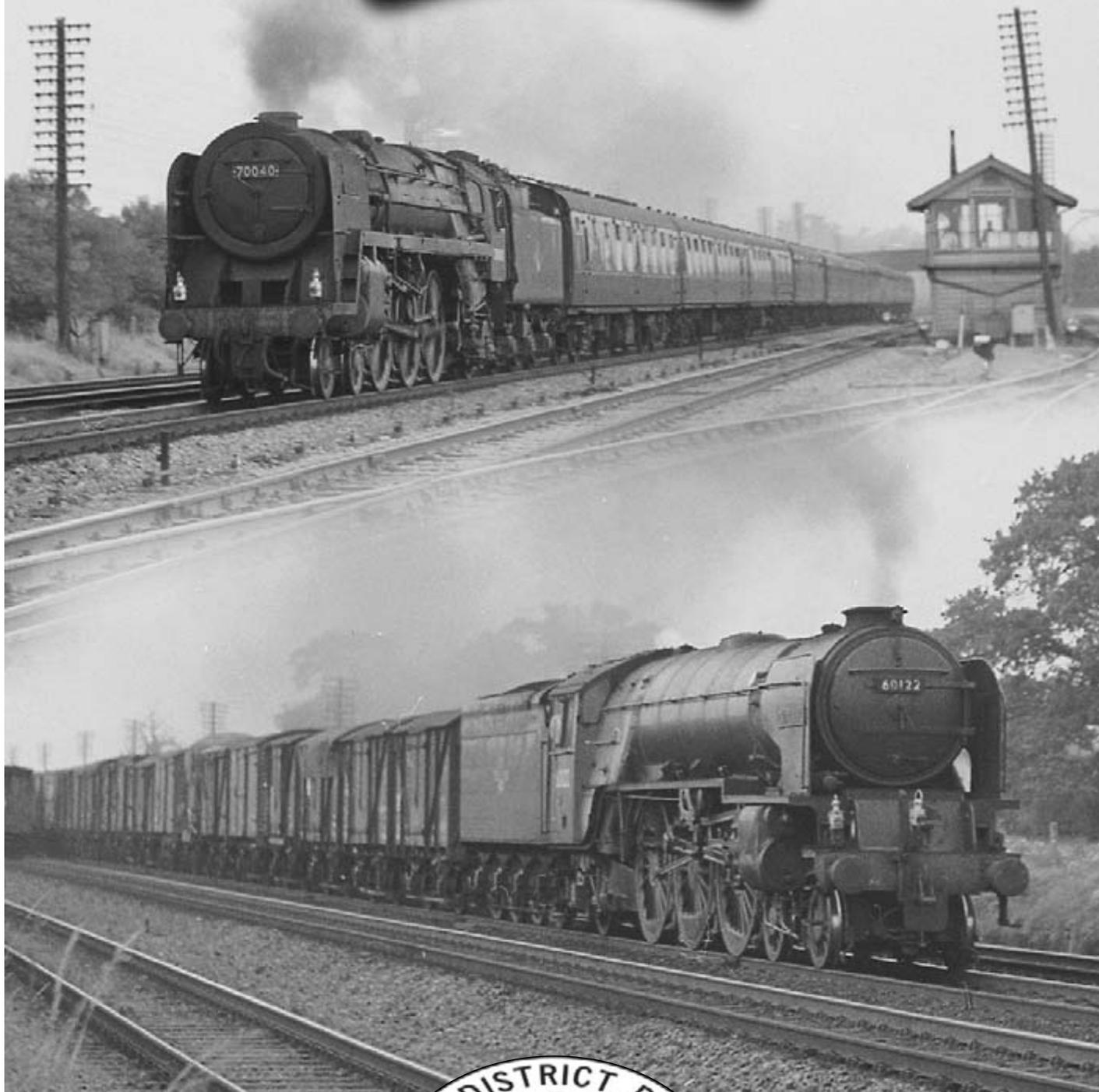


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

105

December 2003



Contents:

The 20th July Outing

Devon Delights

East Anglian Transport
Museum

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow and District Railway Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS.

Two more from MDRS member Ken Lawrie's collection of negatives from the 1950s & 60s.

Top: Britannia Class 70040 'Clive of India' Nr. Hatfield. probably 1959. Ken Lawrie

Bottom: A1 Class 60122 'Curlew' Nr. Hatfield. probably 1959. Ken Lawrie

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TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held at: Royal British Legion, Station Approach, Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

2004

Thursday 15 January	PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENING	
Thursday 19 February	AGM/BRING & BUY	
Thursday 18 March	GWR SHEDS	Eddie Lyons
Thursday 15 April	MILITARY RAILWAYS	FL Pugh

Please: NO TALKING DURING PRESENTATIONS

Please note: The above programme is subject to change

GWR LNER SOUTHERN LMS LBSCR LSWR MIDLAND CALEDONIAN SECR GREAT EASTERN GREAT
NORTHERN CALEDONIAN GSWR

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

This year marks the 35th anniversary since the decline of steam in favour of diesel and electric traction. At the start of 1968 some 360 locomotives remained in use spread mainly across the NorthWest. Come August 11th, the final day of steam, just a handful of locomotives remained at three depots, Carnforth, Lostock Hall at Preston and Rose Grove at Burnley. This area became a mecca for enthusiasts wishing to pay their last respects to one of mans' finest inventions. During this time groups were formed, with the purpose of acquiring a stretch of line that they could operate. Many such schemes sprang up during the 1970s, most became successful despite financial problems along the way. These early pioneers in preservation have achieved remarkable things during the last thirty years, with many realising the ultimate aim, that of main line operation for both steam, and more recently heritage diesels.

How do we attract new blood? This is the problem facing many, if not all, of the preservation societies. Many of the original hard core maintenance teams are now approaching retirement and it is essential that their skills and knowledge are handed on, as mentioned by our recent speaker, Peter Adams of The Dean Forest Railway. Let us hope that this trend will be reversed and recruits will come forward to carry on the good work of those early preservationists.

A recent visit to Midsomer Norton on the old Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway proved well worth it. Situated up a hill some 300 yards from the town centre, (no signs point the way!) the first glimpse of the railway is two box vans recently acquired from Marchwood Military base. They rest against a buffer perched above the roadway on the course of the old route. Making myself known to one of the team working, I was favoured with a quick tour of the site. The main station building with fully restored ticket office is a gem, as is the waiting shelter on the northbound platform. Rail has been laid the entire length of both platforms with one lattice signal post standing guard. The signal box foundation is visible with the 'top' some way off as is the famous greenhouse located here. Piles of sleepers are stacked in the permanent way and lengths of rail, awaiting to be laid in the direction of Chilcompton. A recent tunnel walk at this point yielded some seven hundred persons paying a fiver for the privilege. My guide, an old S&D driver (1953-1964) mentioned that a small diesel shunter would be arriving shortly, also promised to the line is one of the famous Sentinel locomotives that worked around Radstock. Thanking him for his hospitality, a donation on behalf of the Society was made after signing the visitors' book. If you are ever in the area, pay them a visit, they are a very welcoming. When this time warp location becomes operational one wonders if the ghost of Ivo Peters will return to his old haunts, for it was his photography that has kept the dream alive.

With the festive season upon us may I take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Gordon Rippington Chairman

THE 20TH JULY 2003 OUTING



Standard class 4MT 2-6-4 tanks double head the 14.00 Norden - Swanage train into Corfe Castle on the day of the M&DRS visit to the Swanage Railway, 20 July 2003.

Tim Edmonds

Peter Adams of the Forest of Dean Railway entertained those members that attended our meeting on 17th July, three days' prior to our annual coach trip. Peter is their vice-chairman and was invited so that he could enlighten members with all the up to date information prior to our visit. He certainly informed us of one of the latest events at the FDR which was not what we had wished to hear. That was that their ex-GWR 2-6-2T (5541) had failed the previous weekend with a mud-hole door seal blown. As a consequence all trips on the line on July 20th would have to be hauled by a B.R Type 1diesel of Class 14, due to their other steam locomotive being on short-term hire to the Avon Railway. Peter stated that it was impracticable to have it returned for just one days' operation as he expected the Prairie tank would be running again by the 27th. By a show of hands it was then decided to transfer the destination of this years' outing to The Swanage Railway.

The talk by Peter, and his excellent slides, certainly whetted our appetites for a visit to the FDR in the not too distant future. As a bonus to us, by this time next year, their line should be open beyond the present terminus at Tufts Junction northwards to Parkend. This is certainly a possibility for our 2004 outing.

You may recall that we visited Swanage on July 7th 1996. In the September Donkey of that year, on page 13, Phil Searle wrote up the history of the line from Wareham to Swanage, so there is no reason to repeat it again. So it was that at 08.00 that Ray our driver set off with 35 passengers for the New Forest direction having been informed of the change of venue. The weather was fine and shorts were worn by some hardy soul(s)

and it was pleasing also to see that many of our lady friends contributed to the passenger complement. After the mandatory comfort stop at Rownhams, and breakfast for some, we arrived at Norden Park & Ride station just as the 11.05 service train was leaving. This was being operated by Merchant Navy 35027 Port Line running tender first. Tickets were purchased and distributed, as well as instructions to the effect that we all must be back in time to depart at 17.30. Apart from that, we were all free to do just as we liked, providing naturally that all safety rules were strictly observed.

The majority of the party opted for the next service train, the 11.40, hauled by B.R. Standard 2-6-4T (80104).

However a small party of walkers from our group were observed en-route to Corfe Castle as this train passed. Many alighted here for lunch and a glass of ale. The latter though could not be dispensed until the hands of the clock reached noon. What silly licensing laws we have to contend with. Fully refreshed we arrived at Swanage and took the opportunity to walk up over the bridge and in to the gardens where conveniently placed seats had been positioned overlooking the turntable and shed. From here some good video and photo opportunities existed for departures. There should be no shortage of slides for the next photographic evening.

The 13.25 departure from Swanage was double headed with both B.R. Standard tanks 80104 being piloted by sister 80078. The reason for this was not apparent until about an hour later when the signals came off for a movement in to the sidings to the north of the main platforms. Port Line ran back very quickly in to the siding and then moved even quicker over the inspection pit, skidding some twenty or so yards in the process. Urgency was evidently the flavour of the time and the young fireman worked frantically to drop the majority of the fire. It transpired that whilst working up to Norden steam had started to escape in to the cab, having found a weak passage past a gauge glass seal. After the 14.35 had departed Port Line moved off to the sidings on the south of the line to cool down.

The shop on Swanage station was doing a very brisk trade and from the filled shopping bags being returned later to the coach the towns' shops did not do at all badly either. The buffet car on the station was advertising Dorset cream teas which looked very mouth



Tickets are distributed to M&EDRS members shortly after arrival at Norden Park & Ride station, Swanage Railway.

Most then caught the 11.40 train, hauled by 2-6-4T 80104. 20 July 2003. Tim Edmonds

watering but the words belts and bodyline came quickly to mind so it was just a cuppa and a cake. All the Swanage Railway staff that we met were most helpful and polite and certainly it was good to see so many youngsters working for this preserved line. Gradually folk gathered from all parts of the town and promenade. Some ventured in for a paddle so they said. The eventual arrive at Norden was completed with a head count and with no gains or losses of personnel we set off home at the appointed time.

Despite the very good weather the roads were not choked with traffic and after another call at Rownhams arrival back at Marlow was around 20.30. After the disappointment of not going to our original destination the alternative was deemed a very great success.

Thanks must be given to our chairman who organised

everything (twice) as we all had experienced a memorable days' outing.

For the record, other stock observed were:-

Diesel Class 08 D3591 (08476); Class 20 D8188 (20188); Class 33's D6515 (33012 Stan Symes) and D6552 (33034).

Steam was represented by M7 0-4-4T 30053; S15 4-6-0 828 (30828); BB 4-6-2 34072 257 Squadron; plus a tender, thought to belong to WC 4-6-2 34028 Eddystone which was by the rear of the shed, the locomotive presumed to be in the nearby Herston Works.

The Class 20 mentioned above had recently returned from working on the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link. It was having its crankshaft re-machined in situ. The company carrying out this work being named Insitu Ltd.

Keith Brown.

WD 2-8-0 90630 on the Down Relief White Waltham 1959

Ken Lawrie



DEVON DELIGHTS

by Mike Hyde



5239 'Goliath' an ex. GWR 5205 Class 2-8-0T built 1924 on the P&DSR 13 August 02

Mike Hyde

A weekend stay in Exeter during July 2002 enabled me to visit some old Dartmoor haunts. First up was a day trip to Totnes and thence onto the South Devon Railway for a 30-minute run to Buckfastleigh. As all will know this line was once part of the GWR branch to Ashburton, later adopted by the Dart Valley Railway (they of the Paignton line). It is picturesque run through the middle reaches of the river Dart if a little darkened by the abundant trees often close to the line. Pannier tank 5786 was on duty this day. BR diesel 11216 was performing shunting duties at Buckfastleigh in between passenger train movements. A little rain did not spoil the day and a 20 minute walk (vintage bus does not run Fridays) to Buckfast Abbey was enjoyed. Others did the butterfly and otter sanctuary. Departure from Exeter Central had been by Wessex 150 with the reverse at St Davids

station. Return from Totnes was by a FGW 125 to St Davids.

Next day the sun shone brightly for our run to Paignton. Once again the Wessex 150 reversed at St Davids before heading down Gods Wonderful Railway alongside the Exe, through Dawlish, Teignmouth and Newton Abbot. Prairie tank No 5239 'Goliath' was soon ready to take on our train but not before a SW Trains 158 had arrived and loco-hauled Virgin 47 'Severn Valley Railway' had left, much to the pleasure of local photographers. BR 08 D3014 was stationary in the yard. We were soon on our way in the reserved P&DSR heritage coach. Goodrington, Churston (former junction for Brixham) and in 30 minutes it was Kingswear. Our party had combined rail/ferry tickets so it was only a matter of minutes before we were sailing across to Dartmouth and had sight of the Britannia RN College. I opted for a river trip with some friends and an interesting, informative and enjoyable hour's ride it was. Did you know Brunel had hoped to cross the river roughly where the Greenway viaduct is located, in order to reach Dartmouth? Local opposition thwarted him so Dartmouth became a town with a station but no trains (until you crossed to Kingswear). The station is now a restaurant and it is said that a condition of sale was that it remained in GWR colours and style The journey back was uneventful and very pleasant.

Sunday was the highlight for me. The former Southern Railway route to Okehampton was made by Wessex DMU Class 150. It has been several decades since I travelled this route to reach Devonport. Dartmoor Railway is now the name given to 15 miles of track from Coleford near Crediton, to Meldon. Okehampton station is a real joy and very nicely renovated. Half my party and I opted for a bus ride on route 118 to Gunnislake via Tavistock. About 1½ hours on classic green (First) Western Nation 1506 Bristol VR Reg. OTA 290G. A stop for an ice cream at Tavi' then on across the edge of northern Dartmoor. Absolutely wonderful. A short time after our arrival the Wessex Rail Tamar Valley Line (TVL) 150249 appeared, to take us via Calstock, Bere Alston and Bere Ferrers (or Ferris as on the signalbox) to Plymouth. BF is the home of the 'Tamar Belle', a collection of coaches (some teak), trucks and diesel



Class 47 'Severn Valley Railway' at Paignton

13 August 02

Mike Hyde



The former Dartmouth railway station

13 August 02 - Mike Hyde

shunters. The LSWR opened up this isolated peninsula in 1890 for the transport of flowers, fruit and passengers to Plymouth or Tavistock. Some of my party chose to alight at Calstock for NT Cotehele House, but most stayed all the way. I busied myself talking to the TVL volunteer steward and the Tourist Board hostess which (on my return home) won me a couple of local sweat/T shirts. At Plymouth I could have taken an hour out to visit the Hoe but instead went for tea and cake. Some of the group left for the beautiful bus ride over Dartmoor back to Exeter. Something I hope to do next time. Soon our train was off again, retracing its steps past Devonport Dockyard, under the Royal Albert Bridge and running up the magnificent River Tamar. From Gunnislake our transport was FWN 4463 (reg. R463 CCV) Dennis Pointer lowfloor single decker. 60 mph down country lanes is quite exhilarating to some but it

coach and operated as a push/pull with Austerity saddle tank 68006 at the rear. I talked my way into the cab for the 10-minute ride then strolled over the famous Meldon Viaduct. A marvellous structure now holding the 'Granite Way' cycle/walkway rather than a railway line but who knows....one day the rail link to Bere Alston might be remade?

Finally for this weekend, a morning ride by ubiquitous Wessex 150 to Exmouth for a breath of fresh sea air. Running down the opposite side of the Exe river,

I could see the occasional FGW or Virgin 125 or Wessex 150 (but of course). They looked like tropical caterpillars



Tamar Valley Line 'Wessex Trains' Class 150 '150.249' at Plymouth

14 August 02 - Mike Hyde

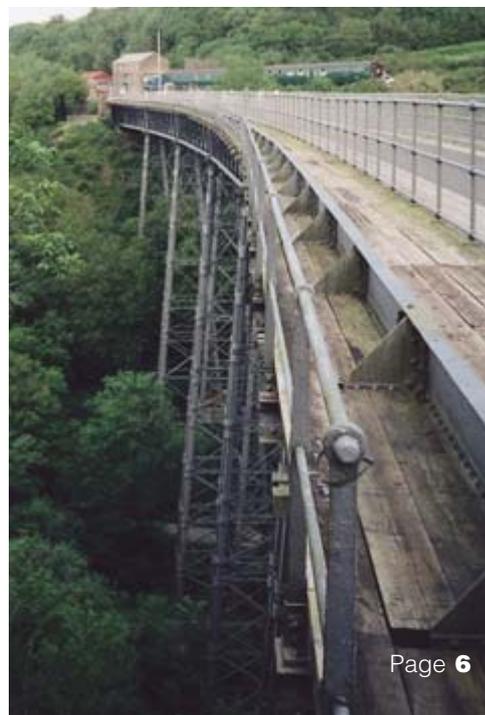


The 'Dartmoor Railway' Okehampton station with Wessex 150 244 from Exeter on the left and Dartmoor Railway push-pull unit on right.

14 August 02 - Mike Hyde

did seem over the top to me. The return route 187 took us a longer ride via Morwellham Quay (historic river port and copper mine) and closer to the former trackbed, for example at Lydford Gorge. The speed must have been official because we only arrived 2 minute ahead of schedule. Rather than return to Exeter within minutes, I took the short rail ride to Meldon Quarry. The lead of 3 carriages was a converted Southern third rail

across the estuary by Starcross and Dawlish Warren. A bird watcher's paradise, sun worshiper's Shangri-La, and my piece of Devon heaven. My route back home via Basingstoke, Reading and Maidenhead was the more enjoyable with the memories of the Dartmoor Tour. The whole day 'Dartmoor Sunday Rover Ticket' was £4.50 for Seniors but not including Meldon Quarry or an ice cream! Beat that if you can. For another view on this value for money ticket, see Keith Brown's article in the 'Marlow Donkey' No.90 Sept 1999.



Meldon Station viewed over viaduct.

14 August 02 - Mike Hyde

G.W.R. Word Search 4-6-0's

This grid contains the names of 44 G.W.R. 4-6-0 locomotives with their class suffix excluded.

Having identified the names, there remain 13 letters, which when rearranged, form the names of two cities on the Great Western Railway.

Names can be found across, downwards and upwards and diagonally, in any direction and letters may be used more than once. *Keith Brown*

T	I	N	T	E	R	N	A	B	B	E	Y	U	S	K
H	N	N	O	T	L	O	R	T	R	O	P	W	E	N
O	C	A	L	C	O	T	B	T	T	R	A	H	T	O
R	E	N	R	I	D	H	U	R	S	T	I	O	E	W
N	W	N	E	D	E	N	R	E	O	N	R	O	Y	S
Y	I	E	W	S	L	E	Y	V	T	Y	E	K	M	L
C	N	R	S	D	E	R	S	O	O	B	E	N	U	E
R	E	T	X	T	N	P	N	R	T	N	C	O	R	Y
O	W	H	T	O	O	H	I	H	N	E	O	R	A	C
F	E	S	I	H	O	L	A	O	E	T	G	T	S	A
T	L	B	S	J	D	B	T	W	S	F	E	O	C	R
P	L	I	G	L	N	U	N	N	E	Y	F	N	D	A
A	B	N	E	Y	E	P	U	R	L	E	Y	Y	O	D
R	I	P	O	N	Y	N	O	T	T	O	O	W	L	O
K	C	I	W	R	A	W	F	O	Y	T	N	U	O	C

Below - 9F 92178 Nr. Hatfield 1959 - Ken Lawrie



LAST DAY AT ASTON ROWANT

The following pictures were taken by Ken Lawrie on the last day of a passenger train to Aston Rowant. I am sure there are one or two members that could provide the details of the last train/day. Please let the editor know so we may publish the full details.



THE EAST ANGLIAN TRANSPORT MUSEUM

by Alan Costello

The East Anglian Transport Museum (EATM) is situated 3 miles SW of Lowestoft on the B1384. The layout is similar to Crich but a lot smaller. It contains a collection of trams, trolleybuses, buses and various vintage road vehicles as well as a 2 foot gauge railway.

It normally operates at Easter, Sundays in May and Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays during June to September but also every day in the summer and autumn school holidays.

The EATM was started on a disused meadow in 1965

with its first tram track laid the following year. Building continued and in November 1971 a Blackpool tramcar operated under its on power. This was followed 3 months later by a London Transport trolleybus using trolleybus overhead wires, although it was almost 10 years before regular operation of trolleybuses began.

It was opened to the public in May 1972 and has been operating every summer since then. The following year a 2 foot gauge railway opened using stock from various industrial sites. All the exhibits are maintained in their on-site workshops, although any major repairs require them to be sent away. The power required to operate the trams/trolleybuses is provided at 600volts d.c. via a transformer/rectifier from the local electrical company, although they have a standby diesel generator.

As well as buses, trams, trolleybuses, vintage cars and lorries there are a number of smaller exhibits such as telephone and pillar boxes, bus and tram stops, advertising and road signs and even a trough and drinking fountain from Lowestoft. Although most of their public transport vehicles are from this country, they also include items from Holland, Switzerland and Denmark. One of the trolleybuses, which was due to be returned to service, was London's last - built in 1940.

The trolleybus route is about 300 yards with a loop at one end and a triangle at the other. The trams run about 50 yards further into an area of woodland.

The 2 foot gauge railway is about 300 yards long and uses a bogie coach built at the museum in 1987 on a 80 year old underframe, and a passenger carriage/brake van (that can be used for wheelchairs) built in 1995 on a Simplex chassis from a loco built in 1932. They have



Above - 1964 built 4wDM No. 6 Thorpeness waits at Chapel Road Station. 4 September 03

Below - Blackpool Corporation tram No. 159 built 1927, Amsterdam Tramways No. 474 built 1929 and trolleybus No. 39 from Biel. 4 September 03





Two trolleybuses having a wash. On the left No. 260 built in 1936 for London Transport and on the right No. 24 from Derby built in 1959. 4 September 03

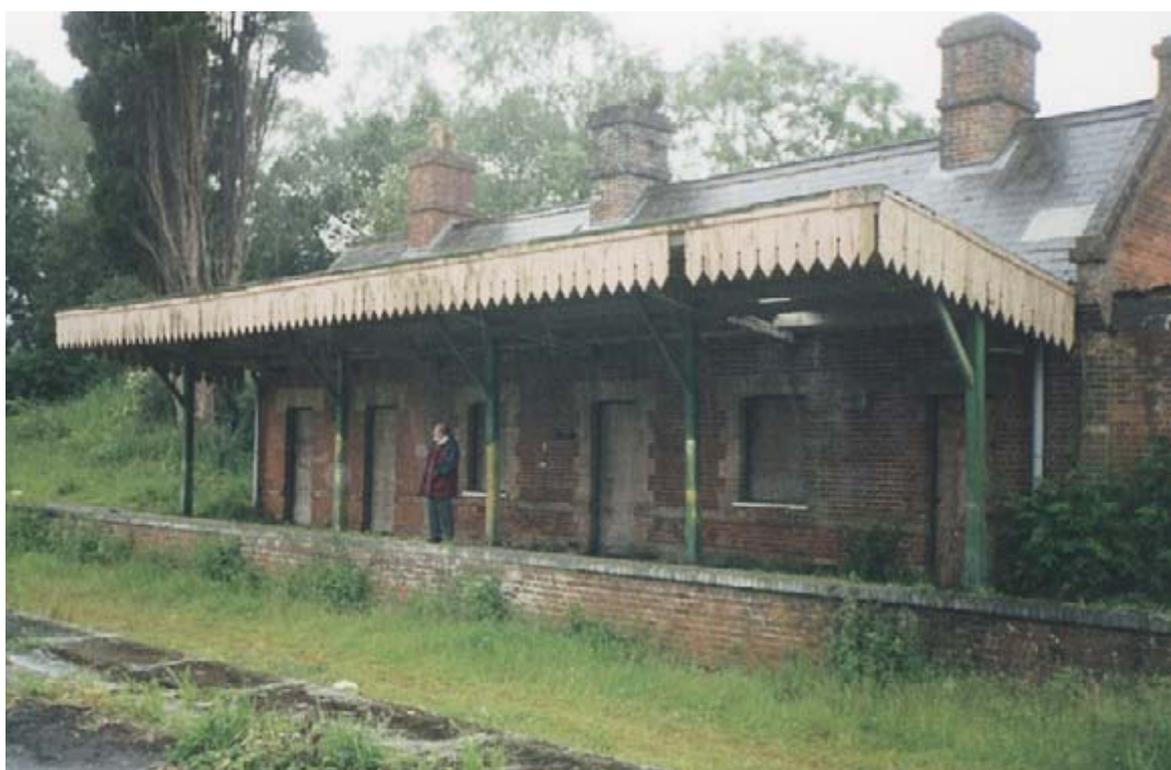


Bournemouth trolleybus No. 286 built 1959 waits its next duty. 4 September 03

4 4wDM locos, 2 built in the 1930's and 2 in 1964. There is a signal box (built in 1903) moved from Laundry Lane on the Lowestoft-Yarmouth line and a signal gantry obtained from Norwich goods yard. On the day we visited, 2 trams, 2 trolleybuses and 1 loco were in operation at various times.

The trams were single decked No 474 built in 1929 and used in Amsterdam and double decker No 159 built in 1929 for Blackpool Corporation. The 2 trolleybuses were single decked No 39 from Biel in Switzerland in 1948 and double decked ex Bournemouth No 286 built in 1959. Diesel loco No 6 built by Motorail in 1964 was on the one coach train.

The entrance fee (£4-50 for adults) includes unlimited rides on all the vehicles that are running. If anyone is in the area and has a few hours to spare, why not drop in - you won't be disappointed.



R. Croxford waits at Shillingstone station on the S & D to renew his MDRS membership as soon as he can get back to Marlow!

2002

AUTUMN HUES IN 1978 AND 1988

Compiled by Tim Edmonds

25 Years Ago

On Sunday 17 September the third Gala Day and Collectors' Sale was held at the London Transport Collection, Syon Park. This was the final such event at Syon Park, which was to close at the end of the year in readiness for moving the collection to Covent Garden in 1979.

Station rebuilding seemed to be in vogue, with work taking place at Holyhead, Radlett, Silvertown, Portsmouth & Southsea and Crewe.



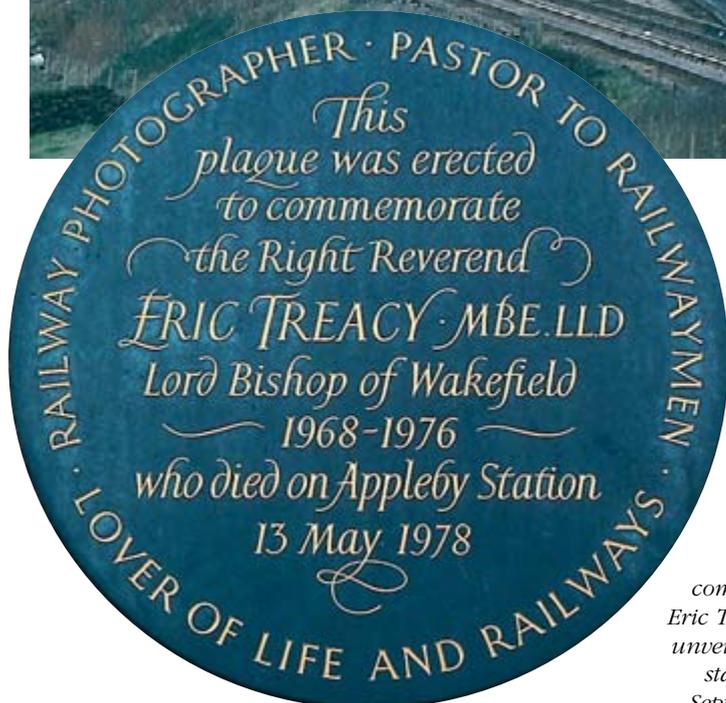
Above - 5900 'Hinderton Hall' and 7808 'Cookham Manor' with the Great Western Society's vintage train at Wilmcote on a special from Didcot to Tyseley, 15 October 1978.

The completed new station at Bedford Midland Road was formally opened by Sir Peter Parker, Chairman of the British Railways Board, on 9 October.

Electric locomotive 86 101 was named 'Sir William Stanier FRS' in a ceremony at Liverpool Lime Street station on Friday 27 October, after which it hauled the 13.04 departure for London. The nameplates were sponsored by the North West of England branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain. This was the first of the class to be named.



On a rare outing from Dinting Railway Centre, 6115 'Scots Guardsman' passing New Mills South Junction with the 'Yorkshire Venturer' railtour, 11 November 1978.



The plaque commemorating Eric Treacy that was unveiled at Appleby station on 30 September 1978.

Two tunnels on the East Coast Main Line were enlarged by lowering the tracks to allow them to accommodate the latest international size freight containers. Stoke was tackled in the six weeks up to 21 October, then Peascliffe from 23 October to 2 December. Work on Penmanshiel tunnel was to follow in December.

There was plenty of main line steam action throughout the autumn, including rare outings by 6115 'Scots Guardsman' on 21 September and 11 November. On 30 September 4472 'Flying Scotsman' and 92220 'Evening Star' both hauled special trains to Appleby, where a plaque was unveiled to commemorate the railway photographer Eric Treacy, who had died on Appleby station on 13 May.

15 Years Ago

On 11 September, 4472 'Flying Scotsman' was propelled to Tilbury and transhipped onto the container ship 'New Zealand Pacific' to begin a voyage to Australia. Unloading at Sydney took place on 16 October.

Sunday 18 September was the day on which the Great Western Preservation Group's stock was moved from the former goods shed at Merrick Road, alongside Southall station, into the former locomotive depot at Southall.



Above - 08 651 propels 0-6-0PT 9682 and 2-8-0 2885 towards their new home in the former loco shed at Southall, 18 September 1988.



Left - Work in progress craning out the GWPG stock from the goods shed at Merrick Road, Southall, 18 September 1988.

Junction, Brixton, Maidstone East, Dover, Faversham, Swanley, Willesden Junction, Stratford, Cambridge and Hitchin on the way.

With the successful conclusion of negotiations for the sale of the Vale of Rheidol line to the Brecon Mountain Railway, 5 November was the 'real' end

of BR steam operations. An intensive service was operated for the day, using all available motive power.

The Hertfordshire Railtours 'Malt & Hops' train speeding through South Acton station behind 50036 'Victorious' and 50032 'Courageous'. 29 October 1988.

This involved lifting out the stock over a 4ft wall onto the running lines by means of two mobile cranes, then shunting it into the depot. Eleven items of stock were thus moved, including 2-8-0 2885 and 0-6-0PT 9682.

Radio Electronic Token Block (RETB) signalling was brought into operation on the Cambrian lines, Shrewsbury - Aberystwyth/Pwllheli, covering 139 route miles and representing an investment of £1.75 million. Machynlleth then became the only manned signal box on the line, and the only operating signals remaining were in the Machynlleth station area.

With the new timetable on 3 October, new stations were opened at Martins Heron, between Ascot and Bracknell, and at How Wood, between Bricket Wood and Park Street. Meanwhile a 30 minute service throughout the day, Monday to Friday, was introduced on the Croxley Green branch.

The 21st anniversary of the class 50 diesel-electrics was marked by the Hertfordshire Railtours 'Malt & Hops' special on 29 October. This started at Watford Junction and terminated at Kings Cross, visiting such places as Clapham



WINTER BLUES IN 1978 AND 1988

Compiled by Tim Edmonds

25 years ago

At its meeting on 18 December 1978, East Grinstead Town Council recommended to Mid-Sussex Council that Planning Permission be granted to the Bluebell Railway for its extension from Horsted Keynes to East Grinstead, provided that this was completed 'within five years of such permission being granted'.

Conversion of the first class 47 for push/pull operation on the Edinburgh - Glasgow service was completed in January 1979 when 47 701 'St Andrew' (formerly 47 4793) emerged from Crewe Works.

15 years ago

On the morning of 12 December, 34 people were killed in a three-train crash between Earlswood and Clapham Junction as a consequence of signalling failure. A Basingstoke-Waterloo train was stopped a signal when it was run into from behind by a Bournemouth - Waterloo service. An empty train travelling in the opposite direction then ran into the wreckage.

The 'far north' lines to Wick, Thurso and Kyle of Lochalsh were isolated from the rest of the BR network on 7 February 1989 when part of a bridge over the river Ness at Inverness was swept away by flooding. A bus link was provided between Inverness and Dingwall, with full services maintained onwards using stock isolated by the breach.

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You Couldn't Make it up	Mike Walker

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP!

Welcome to You Couldn't Make It Up, an occasional offering of some of the lighter or more farcical things that go on in the railway industry that you won't get to see in the mainstream magazines.

SELECTIVELY STEAMED UP

The good folks at the Health & Safety Executive have got their undergarments terribly knotted over the question of selective door opening on new stock, a facility that allows the traincrew to release only some of the power operated doors for the passenger to open. In brief, they are against it. As usual this is throwing up some anomalies that would be funny if they weren't so serious.

Take Beaulieu Road in the New Forest. Its platforms will accommodate five 23m cars but for years SWT and before them BR have been happily stopping 10 car trains of Wessex Electrics (442's) there. The Conductor simply advises passengers wishing to alight to go to the front half of the train and uses the selective door opening controls. Now the HSE are refusing to allow 10 car formations of Desiros (444's) to stop there unless the platform is doubled in length – an uneconomic proposition for the few passengers who use it. This is despite the Desiros having the same type of selective

door controls as the 442's! The same goes for Teignmouth, An 8 car HST can stop there although it's too long for the down platform and the passengers can open any door and step into oblivion but an 8 car set of Voyagers can't because although they have selective door opening, because they are new trains the feature is not allowed to be used.

HSE justifies this ban on selective door opening on new trains by saying it's possible that the conductor or driver could make a mistake and open the wrong set of doors! Okay, let's accept this nanny state ruling but why stop here? All trains have doors both sides, right? But not every station has a platform face on both sides. Surely the driver or conductor could make a mistake so either the HSE should insist trains only have doors one side or extra platform faces must be provided at all stations.

Sounds an unlikely mistake to happen? Well it has recently. A Met guard opened the doors on the wrong side of his train and a Thames driver stopped his six car set at Slough's 2 Car Stop and released the doors allowing one passenger to exit stage left into the dark and a big drop!

So it's good to know the HSE are looking after us – I feel so much safer, don't you?

LNER V1 class, No 407 designed by Nigel Gresley. Built between 1930 and 1939. The LNER underwent a renumbering during the 1940s when 407 became 7663. This engine would have become 67663 at nationalisation.

Picture possibly taken somewhere on the former Great Eastern lines.

Photographed by Ken Laurie's father





4003 Lode Star. Built February 1907. First shed allocation Old Oak Common. Swindon no. 3 superheater fitted May 1911. Elbow type outside steam pipes fitted March 1949. August 1950 and last shed allocation Swansea Landore. Withdrawn July 1951. Seen here at Swindon waiting for museum space. Approx 1956 - Ken Lawrie



2821 on the up relief at White Waltham. Approx 1956 - Ken Lawrie