

# THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

# 108

Spring 2005



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Evergreen 2  
Wildenrath

The Times They Are A Changin

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# The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow and District Railway Society

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## FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH.

*Top: Former Northen Counties Committee 4 at Dublin's Connolly station 8 May 2004.*

*Bottom: Irish Rail 4-car diesel-hydraulic multiple unit built by CAF Spain stands at Dublin's Connolly station 9 May 2004.*

**Latest Copy Date for next issue of The Marlow Donkey May 19 2005**

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# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held at: Garden Room, Liston Hall, Liston Road, Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

### 2005

Thursday 21 April <i>(Thames Room, Liston Hall)</i>	RAIL AIR SERVICES	John King
Thursday 19 May	VIDEO FILMS	Julian Heard
Thursday 16 June	THE LLANELLY & MYNYDD MAWR RAILWAY	MRC Price
<b>Wednesday 20 July</b>	<b>Charter Train Leighton Buzzard</b>	<b>By car</b>
August	NO MEETING	
Thursday 15 September	IRISH RAILWAYS	Kim Fulbrook
Thursday 20 October	FILM NIGHT	Frank Banham
Thursday 17 November	MODERN FREIGHT SCENE	Ian Francis
Thursday 15 December	CHRISTMAS GATHERING	

## FORTHCOMING VISITS

Sunday 3 July	LLANGOLLEN RAILWAY	By Coach from Marlow
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*Please note: The above programme is subject to change*

**Please: NO TALKING DURING PRESENTATIONS**

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## EDITOR'S GOODBYE

I start with an apology that you have not seen a copy of The Donkey for 6 months. I have now been editor of The Donkey for a good few years, and it is time to hand over the responsibility to another. I have enjoyed my time as editor; it has been great to have more than enough articles for most issues, a special thank you to those who have contributed on a regular basis and also those who may have contributed one or two articles.

Please do continue to support the new editor. Some of the articles are quite professional but please do let that deter you from writing about your holiday or day trip and the railways you visit. All are interesting and it is good to see things from different perspectives. Variety is the spice of life and 'The Donkey'

Mike Walker has been re-instated as The Donkey editor, Mike has made a great job of this in the past and will do in the future, Mike also has the advantage of being an industry 'insider' and as most of you know the fount of all knowledge on USA Railroading.

So I would like to say thank you for allowing me the privilege of being The Donkey editor and I wish Mike plenty of support in the future.

John Tuck



Chiltern have recently embarked on a major £80m landmark project to enhance capacity and improve reliability. Known as project Evergreen 2 it is the first of what is known as a DBFT (Design, Build, Finance and Transfer) project. Originally envisaged by the late Sir Alistair Morton when he was head of the SRA it is a joint project involving Chiltern (who are in overall charge), the SRA, Network Rail and Carillion Transport who are the main contractors. Under the DBFT scheme, Carillion take on the entire task as the contractor and take the financial costs on board. On completion the upgraded infrastructure is handed over to NR in exchange for a fixed sum. NR recoups this investment from CR by means of an increased access charge which will be funded through an increase in CR's subsidy and above inflation ticket price rises - that's the bad news! Evergreen 2 consists of several elements which can be considered independently.

## WEMBLEY LIGHT MAINTENANCE DEPOT

Although a completely separate project called Project Viper, this is vital to the main Evergreen 2, neither is viable without the other. Located on the down side between the River Brent under bridge at 5m 75c and Wembley Stadium, Wembley LMD will take over cleaning and stabling from the existing sidings at Marylebone and carry out day to day servicing and fuelling to reduce the amount of empty moves to and from Aylesbury. The depot will consist of a long loop siding (Road 1) alongside the Down Main which will incorporate a car washer. At the Marylebone end there will be two dead end sidings (Roads A and B) for stabling and heavy cleaning whilst at the Wembley end there will be two double ended sidings (Roads 2 and 3) which will pass through the servicing building. The site is very restricted and over 1.4 million cubic feet of earth had to be moved before construction could begin. Fortunately, enlarging the cutting at the north end produced the right amount of fill to enlarge the embankment at the south end! Access to the new depot will be via the grounds of the new Wembley Stadium and across a new bridge to the first floor of the servicing shed where the offices will be situated. The fuel storage tanks will be on the up side and supplied by road. The depot is due to be opened by the end of July 2005 at a cost of £20m, which is not included in the budget for Evergreen 2. The main contractor is Mowlem. Associated with the new depot, the existing turnback siding at the Down end of Wembley Stadium station will be extended to handle 8 x 23m cars to maximise flexibility.

## NEASDEN TO MARYLEBONE

Once Wembley LMD comes on stream major changes will take place between the new depot and Marylebone. Firstly, changes will be made to the signalling between Neasden South Junction and the terminal to double the maximum number of train movements in either direction to 20 per hour. At present

there are just 5 sections protected by 3 aspect signalling over this 5 mile section which creates a major bottleneck for Chiltern. Perversely, the line capacity is greater once you get onto the Neasden - Aynho Junction section, just one of the puzzling decisions made by BR when the line was modernised 15 years ago. Two additional signals will be installed on this section and all will be 4 aspect.

## ALL CHANGE AT MARYLEBONE

Some of the biggest and most welcome changes will be at Chiltern's London terminal. With Wembley taking over, the existing four stabling sidings alongside platform 4 and the car wash plant will be removed during next winter. In their place Chiltern will build two new platforms, 5 and 6. To provide access to these, platform 4 will have to be shortened to accommodate a maximum of five 23m cars but the new ones, like the existing 1 to 3, will accommodate eight 23m cars. The new platforms will feature an "umbrella" style canopy of traditional appearance in keeping with the design of the existing station. Changes will also be made to the barrier line at the concourse to improve passenger flow.

Although the existing stabling sidings will be lost, the Up or Tunnel Siding will be reinstated. It is currently out of use as there is no safe walking route to and from it, this will be provided. The Wall siding alongside platform 1 will remain of course.

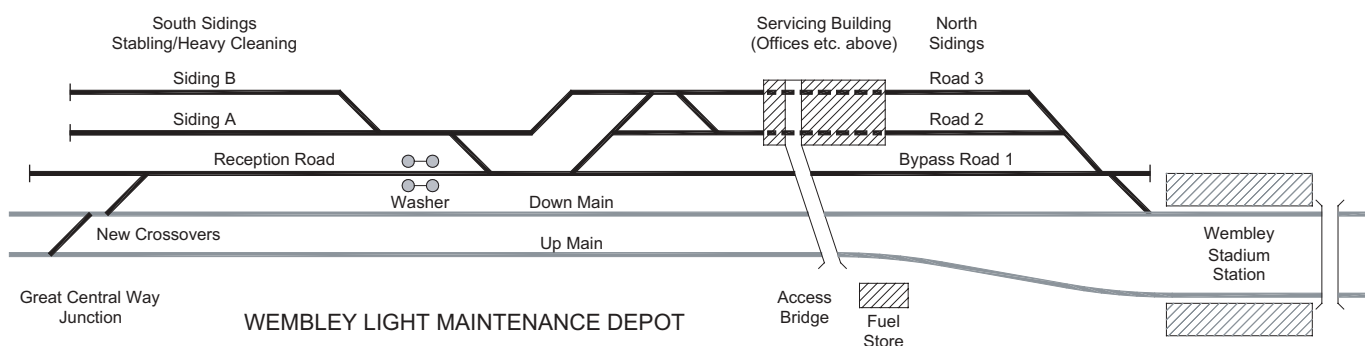
The alterations are scheduled to be undertaken during this coming winter.

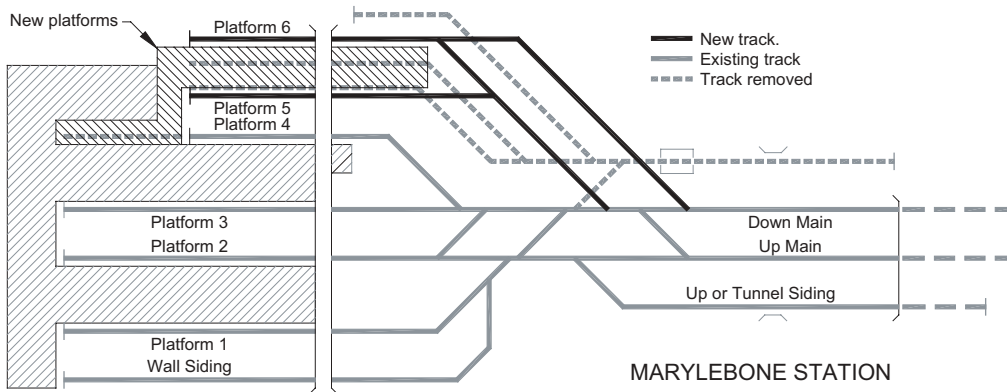
## BEACONSFIELD

Although the previously announced plan to replace the through roads is currently not on the agenda, the existing alignment will be amended to ease the reverse curves at each end of the station to increase line speed for non-stop trains from the present 40mph to 75mph. which is the line speed from South Ruislip to High Wycombe. This will probably involve extending the platforms towards London as there is little room between the existing down en and the over bridge.

## HIGH WYCOMBE TO BICESTER

One of the major bottlenecks currently is caused by the restraints due to the signalling. When BR "modernised" the line fifteen years ago it was never imagined there would be up to four trains an hour each way north of High Wycombe. Consequently the line has 2 aspect signals north of Wycombe. Currently the sections extend from Wycombe to Saunderton, Saunderton to Princes Risborough, Princes Risborough to Ashendon and finally Ashendon to Bicester. This means trains have to be carefully timed and have to run close to time if they are not to be delayed waiting for a preceding train to clear the





*168106 at Marylebone*

section. Some relief was provided when the section from Princes Risborough to Bicester was redoubled but that was only marginal. As part of Evergreen 2 an additional twenty two 3 aspect signals will be installed on this section whilst the existing signals will be converted to 3 aspect, two will be re-sited. The Up line from Princes Risborough to Bicester (the one which was used during the single line era) will become bi-directional like the Down Line and both lines beyond Bicester.

Uninterruptible power supplies for the signalling will be installed at Marylebone, High Wycombe and Dorton to ensure services keep running even if there is a failure of the national supply.

Work on the signalling upgrade has already begun and will continue through this year.

### SIGNALLING THE BRANCH

At present the single line from Princes Risborough to Aylesbury is considered as a single section worked, as is the rest of the Marylebone control area, under the Track Circuit Block system. Signals are provided only to enter or leave the line at either end. Under Project Evergreen 2 four new signals will be installed on the branch itself, two in each direction dividing the line into three sections. This will permit two trains to be on the branch at the same time (in the same direction of course!) and this will eliminate a possible source of delay at Princes Risborough. Currently if a train to Aylesbury is held at the station waiting for the preceding train to leave the single line any Up train has to cool its heels north of the station.

### GERRARDS CROSS

Not part of Evergreen 2 but it deserves a mention. As is well known Tesco are building a somewhat controversial supermarket over the Chiltern line tracks. The 13m deep cutting between the Marsham Lane and Packhorse Road bridges has been converted into a 320m long tunnel using prefabricated concrete segments which are high enough to provide clearance for any future overhead electrification that might occur. The cutting above the lining is now being filled using a mixture of 120,000 tonnes of limestone scalplings from Hanson's Whatley Quarry and 80,000 tonnes of what is known as Incinerator Bottom Ash Aggregate which is a recycled product from a refuse incinerator at Rainham in Essex. All 200,000 tonnes are being delivered by rail by EWS using 14 car 1,000 tonne trains topped and tailed by class 59, 60 or 66 locomotives. These are handled in the existing turnback siding which has been extended to accommodate them. They are unloaded by excavators and the fill is carried to the site by a conveyor system. The trains are currently running and a total of 200 will run before the cutting is full. The whole store is costing Tesco £20m and is due to open in late summer.

### TRAINS

The £17m rebuilding programme for the class 165 units is now around three-quarters complete and the returning units are impressive with bright new interiors and, apart from the first few which will be retro-fitted, full and very effective air conditioning. All the rebuilt units include interior CCTV and roughly half have so far been fitted with forward facing CCTV for trespass and incident investigation. The rebuilt units are performing well and far better than in their original form. Chiltern have also reacquired 165001-165005 from Thames/FGWL and these are being sent to Bombardier for upgrading. In the meantime they are being used coupled cab to cab inside other units as they cannot work alone on Chiltern until fitted with ATP and LUL tripcocks.

The latest batch of Clubman units are designated class 168/2 and differ from earlier batches in having Bombardiers Databus system of control within the sets. There are also fitted for VDU fault monitoring but so far this is not in use. Further 168 class vehicles are expected this year. It's a staggering statistic, but Chiltern's fleet has grown by 70% since privatisation.

Meanwhile, 55020 continues in weekday off-peak shuttle service between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough. If you haven't ridden it yet, do so. You will not believe the transformation and it shows what can be done to keep a 45 year old vehicle fresh. And it's not the only Heritage unit in the fleet - go to Aylesbury and see the veritable museum in the Branch Siding and Depot yard!

### EXPANSION

There seems to be no limit on Chiltern's ambitions. Although the SRA has prevented Chiltern from operating its planned all-day service from Marylebone to Kidderminster, the service only runs in the peak - up in the morning, down in the evening - the company took over operations to Stratford-upon-Avon from FGWL last December including through services to and from London.

Further expansion seems almost certain as Chiltern is the likely new operator of a number of Central routes when that TOC is broken up next year. In addition to the Leamington and Stratford to Birmingham services this is also likely to include Central's services from Birmingham to Worcester and Hereford. In preparation, Chiltern has already invited tenders for 60 new vehicles to replace the class 150's currently used on most of these services. The electric Cross-City service may also fall to Chiltern. We should know later this year.

Whatever the future holds, Chiltern continues to be one of the few star performers in the British rail industry. The company's stated aim is to continue to be "the best train operator in the country".

# TRAIN NO 1 TO MILE 132

by Tim Edmonds

Mike Hyde's article on Canada (Donkey 107) included a description of transport in Vancouver, British Columbia, and commented on the "huge hole" left by the end of passenger services on BC Rail. On the basis of a trip that I made over a small part of the system many years ago, I heartily agree. It passes through an area of magnificent natural beauty and is notable for its recent construction - most of the railway has been built since World War II to tap the natural resources of the Canada's northern vastness.



*Early morning at North Vancouver station, with three Budd RDCs waiting to depart at 08.00 as train No 1 to Prince George. (16 April 1976)*

It was the oddly-named Pacific Great Eastern Railway (PGE) that began construction of a line to Prince George at North Vancouver in 1912, but work on this section was soon cut short and instead the main line was built inland from the port of Squamish, 40 miles to the north. The railway had reached Chasm (175 miles from Squamish) by 1915, but the PGE was already in financial difficulties and the provincial government moved in to take it over. Building continued slowly through remote and difficult terrain and eventually reached Prince George (422 miles) in 1953, where it made a junction with the Canadian National line from Jasper to Prince Rupert. Then in 1956, 44 years after it had been started, the missing link between Squamish and North Vancouver was completed and a fleet of Budd RDCs (Rail Diesel Cars) was purchased to operate a North Vancouver - Prince George passenger service.

In the north it was the lure of potential freight traffic, including coal, that spurred further extensions and in 1958 a line was opened from Prince George

to Fort St John, with a branch from Chetwynd to Dawson Creek. Further branches were opened from Kennedy to Mackenzie (1966) and from Odell to Fort St James (1968) while an extension from Fort St John to Fort Nelson, 979 miles from North Vancouver, was completed in 1971. In 1972 the provincial government decided to drop the old PGE name in favour of the more appropriate British Columbia Railway (BCR) and the push north continued with the extension of the Fort St James branch to Takla and on towards Dease Lake. But times were changing; the last section was abandoned in 1977 when track had reached Chipmunk, in the middle of nowhere some 200 miles beyond Fort St James. With the system now at its zenith there was another name change to BC Rail in 1984.

The railway became better known among tourists and the railway fraternity with the commencement of steam specials in 1974. This successful operation used the Canadian Pacific (CP) 'Royal Hudson' 4-6-4 2860, which had been rescued from the scrap lines in 1964 but had failed to find a secure home. This magnificent oil-burner was bought by the provincial government, restored to working order, and began a seasonal service of excursions over the North Vancouver - Squamish section using a set of restored CP cars. These trains proved to be very popular, and with an 11-car consist and a long lunch stopover at Squamish they provided a big boost to the local economy. Alas, in recent years passenger train operations became increasingly uneconomic and, with the RDCs nearly life-expired and a downturn in

*Train No 1 skirts the shore of Anderson Lake after depositing three passengers at the flag stop 'Mile 132'. (16 April 1976)*





*The view from Ian's 'front garden' at Anderson Lake. The BCR skirts the shore on the right. (16 April 1976)*

North American tourism, BC Rail announced the cessation of steam and RDC passenger operations from the end of October 2002. The line remains busy with freight traffic, of course, but the scenic pleasures of this wonderful railway are presently denied to the general public.

My opportunity to travel over the BCR came during a three-week holiday in the Pacific North West in April 1976. I spent the last week staying with a former next-door neighbour from my childhood, Daphne, who was living on the edge of North Vancouver and who was well aware of my interest in railways. Her sister Jenny also lived in Vancouver and the three of us planned a trip on the railway to visit Jenny's friend Ian, who was living a pioneering life in a log cabin at Anderson Lake, in a remote part of the the mountains accessible only via dirt roads or the BCR. We set forth on Good Friday, 16 April.

At that time there was a daily passenger train over the 156 miles from North Vancouver to Lillooet, working through to Prince George (461 miles) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Similarly there was a daily return working from Lillooet, the train originating at Prince George on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. With six exceptions all the intermediate stations were flag (request) stops, many of which appeared in the public timetable, but there were some further flag stops serving isolated settlements and which appeared only in the working timetable. Ian's cabin was one such place, served by the flag stop known simply as 'Mile 132'.

There were five RDCs in the BCR fleet and we arrived at North Vancouver station to find that train No 1, the 08.00 to Prince George, comprised three of them. The station was crowded with people getting away for the Easter holiday but there were seats for all. For the first part of the journey we followed the route used by steam excursions, weaving along the coast

and through six tunnels to Squamish at the head of Howe Sound. Although this was a delightfully scenic stretch, the spectacular stuff began ten miles further on where the line enters the Cheakamus Canyon at the start of a 25 mile climb, most of it at a 2.2% gradient (that's about 1 in 45). With snowdrifts either side we entered a landscape of ice-covered lakes and snowy mountains to reach a summit 2100 feet up at Alta Lake, a ski resort. From there the railway dropped back below the snow line and followed the Green River into Pemberton Valley, again at 2.2% grades. A shorter climb over the 1575 ft summit at Birken (up at 2%, down at 2.2%) brought us to Anderson Lake, glistening in the clear mountain sunshine, where the railway follows the western shore for 15 miles. At 12.20 the train stopped two thirds of the way along the lakeside to let us off beside milepost 132 before continuing to Prince George - still some ten hours away.

Ian was waiting, and a walk along the railway track and up the hillside led us to the cabin where he lived with his dog, cat and a stunning vista of snow-capped mountains over the lake. A trained geologist, Ian now divided his time between cultivating his land (including a vineyard) and working for the BCR - about the only possible employer in the vicinity. We talked railways, of course, and using his knowledge of the trains we walked to watch a southward freight hauled by five MLW 3000HP M630 C-C diesels - then BCR's most modern locos. There were three units at the front with two more cut into the middle. Ian



*Stored awaiting the start of the 1976 steam excursion season on the BCR, 'Royal Hudson' 4-6-4 2860 (MLW 69292/1940) peeps out of CP's Drake Street roundhouse, Vancouver. (17 April 1976)*

kindly gave me a copy of the working timetable, which showed a speed limit of 20 mph for freight trains on this section, the maximum anywhere on the line being 40 mph (50 mph for RDCs).

Our return train was due at Mile 132 just before 17.00 and turned out to be a single RDC. By then the light was fading and the latter part of the journey was completed in darkness, reaching North Vancouver at 21.30. The cost of a ticket for this superb round-trip of 262 miles (North Vancouver station is short of the zero milepost) was only C\$11.90 - equivalent to just over £6 in 1976. For comparison, this was less than half the price per mile that I'd paid the previous week for a 189 mile round trip on the CP's Esquimalt & Nanaimo line on Vancouver Island.

The withdrawal of passenger services by BC Rail was not without controversy and subsequently there have been attempts to franchise third party tourist trains over this and the CN's Prince Rupert line. Certainly the tourist industry has felt the loss of the steam excursions and it is significant that the 2010 Winter Olympics will be held at Whistler, conveniently beside the railway near Alta Lake. It will be interesting to see how this develops. However, there is one section of BC Rail which has managed to retain a regular passenger service. For some Indian

communities in the isolated area around Anderson and Seton Lakes the railway is their only transport link with the outside world. With the RDCs gone the solution was a new service using two 20-seater RSVs (Rail Shuttle Vehicles) based on a guaranteed minimum daily train between Seton Portage and Lillooet, extended to D'Arcy, and with further trips, depending on demand. So remarkably it remains possible to travel to Mile 132 by a passenger train, but whether Ian is still there to enjoy the view I do not know.

Postscript: Although I was too early in the season to sample steam haulage on the BCR, I had been told that the loco was stored at the CP roundhouse at Drake Street. Daphne was game to try a spot of shed-bunking and we succeeded in finding 2860 without too much difficulty the next day.

*Four years after the name was dropped, this freight car in the CP yards at Vancouver still carried a Pacific Great Eastern logo. (20 April 1976)*



## THE LOOE VALLEY LINE



*Wessex Class 153.318 DMU ready to take the Looe Valley Line from Liskeard station. Sep 04*

On the many occasions I have travelled through Cornwall, I have often wanted to ride the Branch line from Liskeard to Looe. A recent weekend centred on Plymouth not only allowed me to retry the South Devon Railway at Totnes and the Tamar Valley line to Gunnislake with onward passage via Okehampton to

Exeter, it also gave me a chance at last to try the Looe Valley Line.

I am pleased I did because the experience was charming. A single coach Class 153 DMU (318) did the run with the on board Ticket Collector also acting as Guard and Shunter. The line has a fascinating heritage. First a canal was built from Looe to Moorswater to carry lime required to neutralise the valley's acidic soil. When the copper mines came into production the canal was replaced in 1860 by a railway. It was officially only for goods so any passengers could not be charged, but hats, umbrellas and parcels could be! However they still had a long uphill walk from Coombe to Liskeard station on the main GWR line.

On 15 May 1906 this walk was relieved by the opening of a rail link from the Junction to Liskeard station - another of the West Country's marvels of railway engineering - a horseshoe curve of over 2 miles to overcome a height difference of 150 feet and a direct distance of half a mile.

The line has faced many changes. First it was taken over in 1909 by the GWR as were many independent





*Looe road bridge between West Looe (right) and East Looe (left). In the foreground the trackbed of the line extending from the present station to the site of the former GWR terminus just beyond the parked cars. Sep 04*

has to detrain with the token and staff to switch the points each journey. In the past, steam engines ran round here but nowadays the driver simply changes ends. Then there is St Keyne, followed by Causeland and finally Sandplace before reaching (east) Looe. A few crossing for walkers and vehicles slows the train which usually takes just under 30 minutes each way.

In the upper reaches views are often blocked by trees but it is still possible to see remains of the former Looe Union Canal and some of its locks. By Terras Bridge where the train slows for the road crossing, the river Looe opens up and being tidal provides an everchanging scene particularly for bird spotters. All the intermediate stops are 'by request' and each can allow an interesting diversion or a photo opportunity. Try it.

Mike Hyde. Aug 2004

branch line companies. In 1935 work started on a new line from Trerulefoot, near St Germans on the main, to Looe which would have replaced the need for the valley line, but the coming of war cancelled the project. The line was due to close in 1966, but 2 weeks before it was due to happen the line was saved. Nevertheless it has been cut back from its original terminus at Looe by several hundred yards meaning a longer walk for pedestrians!

The run starts from a separate platform at Liskeard, at right angles to the main. There is a connecting loop between the branch and the main which was originally for goods trains to/from Moorswater and now allows the DMU to return each night to its base down the line and to provide an extra coach when required.

After the horseshoe curve the line passes under the main line which was on one of the many Brunel viaducts in Cornwall. Before the 1901 link was opened, the line ran on to Moorswater connecting with the Caradon mineral lines. The major user is now tourism, which has replaced the lime, copper and cider industries.

There are several 'stations' on the branch. First is Coombe, just up from the junction where the Guard



*Train crew (right) resting at Looe station. Sep 2004.*

*Unidentified King on  
The Royal Duchy, down  
main Maidenhead*

*Early 1950s  
Ken Laurie*



# WILDENRATH

John Sears

The BA Embraer 145 G-EMBD, operating as BA1688 from Manchester to Dusseldorf, leaves on time at 17.35. The TransPennine Express 175/1 (Sumatran Tiger - named thus because the beast is a denizen of the South Lakes Wild Animal Park at Dalton, in Furness, which park offers reduced admission for rail passengers) operating North Western's 13.53 Blackpool North to Manchester Airport had regained two minutes of the 9 late departure from Piccadilly. All part of the SRA's grand strategy for improving the services in the north of England, poor old North Western first had its Welsh services transferred, together with the 175 fleet, to Arriva Trains Wales, then, from 1st. February, had its Cumbrian inter-urban services handed to TPE. In this grand simplification, the 175 fleet is leased by one TOC, sub-leased to another, and then further "traded" to cover North Western's Blackpool to Manchester Airport services. Turn-rounds at the airport mean that what comes in as a TPE train, goes out as a North Western train, and vice-versa. The traded out services provided by TPE finish with this December's timetable. More units, more crews, and the railway costs too much. Hmm.....

Such delightful musings are forgotten as the plane takes us on a tour of Greater Manchester; taking off to the south west, back round to pass between Manchester and Stockport, with a good view of the city centre - even Rail House is visible, just to the right of the gleam from Piccadilly's trainshed.

We're all let into Germany and make our way to the monorail that links Dusseldorf Airport to the station on the main line north from Cologne. The cars rock slightly at the undocking procedure, and sway slightly as we follow the sinuous course. At one point it crosses over the suburban line that actually serves the Airport. The docking repeats the movement of the cars as they are clamped into place at the stations. It's 20.32 and an electric is pushing new double-deck cars south on the double track main line. Rock steady, very quiet, they have been built by Bombardier. They are not, however, exactly DDA compliant: the entrance vestibule is about 6 inches below the platform, and slopes down into the centre of the car.

The next morning sees the party join the 8.37 from Koln Deutz, another inter-urban train, on route RE7 via Neuss to Krefeld Hauptbahnhof. The station is large, with an impressive overall roof and plenty of weeds, and we leave by the back door, as it were, to

join the bus that Siemens has provided to take us to their works at Uerdingen. It's not far; on the way there are metre gauge and standard gauge trams to watch, even a stretch of dual gauge track. Security at Siemens works is tight, though on leaving we are all allowed to keep our "visitor" ID tags! A brief presentation is made about the 350s, the re-jigged 450s that South West Trains "decided" they didn't need. The SRA couldn't resist the bargains on offer, and snapped them up for the West Coast Main Line. They'll be used on three separate services: by Silverlink on peak stoppers to Tring and on semi-fasts to Northampton in the off-peak; on Central locals between Northampton and Birmingham, and the Birmingham to Liverpool/Preston regional expresses.

## The facts:

- 🍏 30 sets
- 🍏 dual ac/dc
- 🍏 4 bogies powered (both bogies of outer cars)
- 🍏 up to 3 sets in multiple
- 🍏 air-conditioned
- 🍏 2+2 seating, even in first class
- 🍏 power sockets only in first
- 🍏 1 "universal" loo (disabled), 1 "standard" loo
- 🍏 catering trolley stowage point
- 🍏 24 first, 202 standard, 9 tip-up
- 🍏 infra-red passenger counting system
- 🍏 increased pitch "priority" seats offer 1,900 mm; "row" seat 760 mm in standard, 816 mm in first
- 🍏 doors at 1/3, 2/3 - very suburban, no vestibule doors
- 🍏 no luggage stacks in driving cars, just overhead racks
- 🍏 no bike stowage
- 🍏 no guard's office
- 🍏 gangwayed between sets

## The sets are formed:

DMOS1 - Driving Motor Open Standard - 60 seats

PTOSLW - Pantograph Trailer Open Standard  
Lavatory Wheelchair - 50 seats

TOCL - Trailer Open Combined (sic) Lavatory  
- 32 standard/24 first

DMOS2 - Driving Motor Open Standard - 60 seats

Note the strange use of "combined" for composite - the compo in the Meridians is described as "compound" - is that a sign of poor translation, or Midland loco. practice?! Whilst the point is powering

- or is the power pointing? - visible through the windows of the brand new admin. block is some live action in the works sidings. A small shunter collects a wagon from one road and moves it to another, then shuts down again. No doubt relevant in the greater scheme of things. Now it's time to have a look at the works, where Siemens are building, from aluminium, a range of stock, from German ICE trains to low-floor trams, oh, and some 4 and 5 car train sets for some strange, overseas, railways.



*Above: Heathrow Connect driving car on left, West Coast 350 on right.*

*Below: Not quite Budd, but it is aluminium, after all. 350 front end - note the welder on the roof.*



The factory is two main sheds, with an alley between them which is just wide enough to allow full length body fabrications to be turned through 180°. The fabrications, balanced on a trolley, are pushed out by a tractor. A fork-lift truck then lifts the far end, pulls it round and the tractor can finally exit the shed and complete the manoeuvre. The sheds are full of cars in all stages of construction and we can have a good look around. There is no sign of any work on the 185s for TransPennine Express; work won't start on them until October. Inside one of the 350 cars is an e-

mailed snagging list, including faults such as misalignment of the waste outlet from the lavatory module and the hole in the car body.

Once complete the cars are transferred to the test site at Wegberg, the old RAF base known as Wildenrath. We transfer aboard the bus, down a motorway across the flat landscape of this part of Germany. The individual cars are assembled into complete trains and commissioned, which takes about 12 days. In total units spend from three to four weeks at the test site. The site has two ovals, one is 6.1 kilometres in circumference, equipped with British style third rail, and has a maximum speed of 160 km/h, the other is 2.5 km and is limited to 100km/h. There are stabling sidings and some ultra-sharp curves for testing trams.

Stabled in the sidings are at least three 444s - the new units for South West Trains' faster services to Portsmouth. They seem very well finished, with an attractive look; first class certainly looks the part. Even the 76 seats in one of the standard cars don't make it look overcrowded; it's quite a contrast to a Voyager. Also in the sidings are plenty of the latest version of the ICE trains, and a fair few 450s. The 450s give a good idea of what the 350s will be like in service, although there are a few interior design differences: the 450s actually have bike storage spaces and a glass tank for the conductor, disliked by some of the South West crews because, no doubt, they can't hide with their papers.

*Below: Those suburban doors - note the beam for the collector shoe. Final livery. First class will have the cant rail stripe*



It's time for a trip round the circuit, and so we make a brief trip in the bus to a platform the length of Boscarne Exchange Platform. It's located at the point where the connection from the test track to the DB network crosses the circuit by means of a removable flat crossing. It's not a special working, but a stop order has been issued for a booked test run.

Eventually the set appears - 450050 - and it stops for us to board through the one door that the platform permits. No, we didn't test to see if SDO was in operation! All aboard, so off we go, for a total of three circuits of the main oval. Although it's fit for speeds up to 100 mph, the suspension has to be adjusted to permit the maximum. A good thing too, to judge by the curvature. The ride is very good - Siemens obviously haven't felt the need to replicate any Southern wet spots or angular curves. The units are quiet, the air-conditioning makes the loudest noise, and yet again the superiority of electric over diesel for multiple unit trains is confirmed.

Time to go, and it's back on the bus for a final short trip, this time to the station at Wegberg, on the branch from Monchengladbach to Dalheim, on the Dutch border. It's single track, fully signalled, but with unstaffed stations. The bus driver has to stop in Wegberg, a place about the size of Pangbourne, to ask a local for directions to the station. We arrive to find a very large station building, partly used by a restaurant. We're on a locally-funded line, operated by Regio-Sprinters, and here comes the 17.06 to Monchengladbach. It's lightly loaded, rather tram-like inside, and, with surprisingly loud engines, it's noisier

*Below: picture of interior of local diesel*



than a 142, but much more like what a local train should be in terms of interior layout, right down to the view out of the front. Soon after we join the main line from Aachen, sidings on the west side of the line holding a number of sets bound for England are visible, but a cunningly positioned row of trees screens them from close view. At Monchengladbach we have 15 minutes before joining another inter-urban, this time on route RE8, back to Cologne. This one is a mixture of single deck cars, some new, some older and not exactly pristine. The run back to

Cologne is through farmland. Pulheim, the last stop before Cologne, is having a new platform built. Just before the junction with the line from Aachen we get a glimpse of a class 66 clone running light westbound. After trundling across the Rhine on the huge six track bridge we arrive back in Koln Deutz a minute late.

That evening there's a chance to explore the local tram network, as we head into the centre of town for dinner. A couple of hundred yards down the road from the hotel is the local tram stop, in a central reservation in the road. We join a four car train for a one stop ride. Immediately after departure the tram lines leave their reservation for the middle of the road where it narrows to pass under the line into Deutz station. We transfer to an underground tram station and join another tram. On departure from the first stop the line climbs back to the surface, and, on a tight right hand curve, continues to climb quickly to a bridge over the Rhine. Acceleration, climb, and curve are rapid, steep and sharp - it's exhilarating stuff!



*Above: City-bound tram at Koln Messe Osthallen, stop in central reservation.*

The next morning we're down on platform 11 of Koln Deutz, waiting for ICE 624, the 7.30 from Frankfurt (Main) to arrive on its way to Munster. It's due out at 8.45, northbound from one of the two platforms built on the goods line that provides a north-south route through Cologne. They were constructed so that ICE trains on the route do not need to reverse in Hauptbahnhof. It's one of the new sets. The interior is much more like an inter-city train than the 390 "Pendolinos" - the advantage of non-tilting, wider, bodies. Seats are dark blue, with grey plastic frames, arms and tables. The ride isn't particularly good, and there's a fair amount of noise on curves and indeed generally. There's obviously plenty of power, but there's a long stretch of single track out of Deutz and the short journey to Dusseldorf, at an average speed

71.25 mph, and the even shorter one on to the airport station, 62.5 average, don't allow the train to reach maximum speed. We're two late.

BA manage to get their BAe 146 into the air nearly 30 late, with the captain at first announcing he didn't know what was delaying us; it turned out to be a "baggage discrepancy". The flight takes us back across the North Sea and we cross the East Coast overhead Grimsby, providing passengers on the starboard with a very good view of Spurn Head. TransPennine's 158 gets us back into Piccadilly just as the North Western 156 that left the Airport 15 minutes earlier pulls out of 14 on its way to Liverpool.

A glimpse into the future; also - who knows? - perhaps even the future of rail transport in British conurbations.



*A southbound ICE3 train at Koln Deutz - note the main station at right angles above.*

## A DECADE AT CHINNOR



*Train with Autocoach waiting to depart Chinnor for Risborough.*

The Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway celebrated its 10th Anniversary last summer. On Sat 21st and Sun 22nd August appropriate stock was hired in. A Collett design pannier tank engine No.9682 (the last 5700 Class 0-6-0T, built at Swindon 1949) in BR black coupled to a former GWR Autocoach W225W (on loan from South Devon Railway) in BR crimson operated on the branch much as would have been the case in the 1950s. It certainly reminded many visitors of their early travelling days whether for shopping or commuting to work. The train really looked the part sitting in Chinnor's award winning reconstructed brick and flint station.

The 'Icknield Line' looks forward to the day it can run into Princes Risborough station again and link up with the former main line. Of course, work behind the scenes continues on the PW and in the Yard. Volunteers are always welcome

Mike Hyde. 13.09.04



*9682 approaches Horsenden Lane crossing with the afternoon service returning from Thame Junction.*



*Late evening freight to Thame Junction (with a few passengers who had missed the last bus?)*

# THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN'

Mike Walker

One of the finest yet often overlooked events of the railway calendar is the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's annual three-day International Railtour which takes place over the second weekend in May. To my regret, my only previous participation was back in 1992 when the tour visited Westport. I fell in love with Ireland's laid back railways and the easy going approach to running rail tours and vowed to return soon –

it took me twelve years! So it was I was to be found at Luton Airport at some un-Godly hour on May 4th to catch Ryanair's 07.00 flight to Dublin where I met up with my old friend Fred Heidie who'd flown in from Newark, New Jersey a few minutes before. We picked up a hire car and headed west to spend a few days sightseeing before the tour began.

Driving into increasingly heavy showers we headed first to Limerick where we called in at the station to see what was going on and I got my first sight of how fast Irish Rail was changing. Instead of open stations and short loco hauled trains that typified the system in 1992 we found sliding glass doors between the concourse and platforms and large signs proclaiming that photo ID had to be offered in addition to tickets before boarding! With true Irish logic though we soon found a back way in via the bus station. And the trains? Well they all seemed to be dmu's apart from one train to Dublin that was formed of Mk3's hauled by one of the 201 class diesels, a cousin of our class 66.

From Limerick we carried on in deteriorating weather to the small town of Listowel. We hoped to see and ride the recreated Listowel & Ballybunnion monorail but although we soon found it, we were disappointed to see the site was all shut up despite the web site saying it would be open. We headed for the town's tourist information office where the young lady said that neither the monorail nor the tourist office were open but she'd help us anyway – very Irish! The head man of the monorail project (and local bank manager and town mayor!) was summoned and he took us back to the monorail and gave us the grand tour.

I'm sure you are all familiar with the uniquely eccentric Listowel & Ballybunnion Railway which was built in 1889 to link the two towns of its title, a distance of some



*Early morning full house at Killarney on 6 May 2004. On the left is JL8 151 waiting with a local whilst JT42HCW 202 prepares to depart for Dublin. A ballast train stabled in the siding is testimony to the route upgrading between Killarney and Tralee.*

9 miles. It ran until 1924 when it was closed down and dismantled but not forgotten. As a Millennium project a section of line has been recreated at Listowel complete with a replica locomotive, no.4 (albeit diesel powered) and three coaches. The line although short, incorporates all elements of the original railway including the unique turntables which replaced conventional pointwork and a standard turntable to turn the locomotive.

The only thing currently missing is one of the drawbridges that allowed vehicles to cross the line but one is planned. The recreated line is actually on the trackbed of the former GS&W line from Limerick to Tralee and the foundations of some of the original L&B structures can still be seen alongside the old GS&W Listowel station.

After a night in excellent B&B recommended again by lady at the tourist office, we set out in only slightly improved weather conditions (so this is why they call it the Emerald Isle!) for Tralee. No station security here but no trains either! In best UK standards the line between Killarney and Tralee was shut for two days for track renewal. It seems that millions of Euros are being pumped into Ireland and the railways are benefiting with new track, resignalling and new trains, but with it the character is being lost. After a brief look at the short recreated section of the Tralee & Dingle (again not operating) we followed the old track bed of this narrow gauge line to Dingle and then drove round the stunningly beautiful Dingle Peninsula including Sleah Head, the westernmost point in Europe. We then headed for Killarney for the night.

Killarney to me, still epitomises all things Irish when it comes to railways. When trains are running to Tralee they run into the terminus before reversing out again and climbing up a steep bank out of town. Up trains reverse the procedure. The station sees only four trains each way per day yet it still has a staff of six per shift! Needless to say the station which has a wooden trainshed not unlike Kingswear, is kept in superb condition. A veritable forest of semaphores control the unusual layout from a 'Box that's open round the clock – add three Bobbies to the payroll. When we arrived at the station a class 141 EMD Bo-Bo had just run round

its train of three elderly Cravens built coaches and a steam generator/guards van which was working and pumping steam down the train, leaking out of the joints in liberal quantities. When did you last see that on the UK national network? Looking round at this wonderful time warp I couldn't help but wonder what IE's recently appointed Chief Operating Officer must think of it all. Richard "Dick" Fern was the MD of the Thames & Chiltern Sector of NSE before privatisation and latterly Zone Director – Midlands, Network Rail. It's hard to conceive of a greater contrast! We chatted to the charming young lady driver and Fred took a digital picture of her in the cab which he promised to e-mail to her. As she said, all this will be history soon, at which moment another 141 arrived with a ballast train. By the end of next year the track will be all welded, the signalling colour lights controlled from Cork or Dublin and dmu's will run all the local services. To hell with the showers, savour it while you can!

After a night in another comfortable B&B overlooking the station and with the climb to Tralee only feet from the window (thankfully trains weren't running!) our whistle stop tour headed for Cork. Eire's second city, it lies at the end of a double track main line from Dublin and sees frequent loco hauled InterCity services to the capital and a recently introduced dmu commuter service between Charleville to the north and Cobh to the south. Fred and I were intrigued by the paint damage all the 201's sported immediately behind the cab windows, several have had Perspex panels placed over them. So we asked a driver who explained it was caused by the token slamming into the bodyside as they change it a speed. He went on to tell us what he thought of the newest and largest members of the fleet. In brief: rough riding, noisy, too heavy, stuffy cabs like greenhouses in summer and generally unreliable, particularly the ETS alternators that burn out regularly hence the continued use of the Mk3 generator vans. Apart from this last gripe his comments could have

come from any UK driver forced to work on 66's, and this guy's views were mirrored by many other IE drivers we chatted to.

During a brief stop at Mallow we were taken by surprise by a 141 which stormed through with a northbound cement train. Not to worry, a few miles north we spotted a level crossing closed across a side road. Acting on a hunch, I swung off at the next turning and found an overbridge. There was the cement train stopped at a signal in glorious sun. A few seconds later a down freight appeared and stopped alongside to exchange crews before both trains continued on their way, a real "Brucie bonus"! Next a visit to Limerick Junction – it's nowhere near Limerick. This railway crossroads is one of the most eccentric spots in the country. The station consists of a main platform alongside the Dublin – Cork main line with a bay at each end. Until 1967 the layout was such that no train could call without backing either in or out of the station! The main line trains no longer do that but the layout still resembles one of Brunel's early one-sided stations and trains to/from Limerick and Waterford still back in or out – the latter are currently suspended due to the viaduct collapse at Caher although it was hoped the line would reopen during the summer. From "The Junction" as it's known to all Irish railwaymen, we returned to Dublin.

Back in '92 Dublin's Heuston station had made a great impression. Evening peak hour was a frenzy of activity with arrivals and departures plus the associated empty stock and light engine moves. Platform 1 provided an excellent vantage point (like 1A at Paddington) to view the action. Eagerly I headed back this time but, oh dear, they've ruined it. The existing platforms have been lengthened and given roofs whilst extra ones have been added including one (number 10) out near Islandbridge Junction on the loop line round towards Dublin Connolly. It's so far from the main terminus that IE runs a shuttle bus for passengers!

As an overture to the main tour, Friday 7th May saw the RPSI run a coach trip from Dublin to Athlone where we boarded a boat for a cruise down the Shannon. After lunch at Shannonbridge we visited the Bord na Mona (Irish Peat Board) to ride on one of their 3' gauge trains into the peat bogs to see how "Irish Coal" is "mined" before returning to Dublin.

Last year's RPSI tour was dubbed the Slieve Kimalta and would run from Dublin to Limerick on the Saturday then return to Dublin and onto Belfast on Sunday with a series of trips out of Belfast on the Monday. Saturday dawned bright and warm as we gathered at Connolly station for the 08.10 departure. The train consisted of five of the Cravens coaches, one kitted out as bar car to serve that vital fluid of Irish life, and a steam generator/guard's van. Motive power was Northern Counties Committee 4, a 2-6-4T of distinctly Fowler/Stanier overtones built at Derby in 1947.



*Former Northern Counties Committee 4, a WT class 2-6-4T built by the LMS at Derby in 1947, waits for departure time at Dublin's Connolly station with the RPSI's Slieve Kimalta Railtour bound for Limerick on 8 May 2004.*

Departure was slightly late but a built in pause before joining the main line at Islandbridge Jct made up time. We now flew down the main line at up to 75 mph and despite two unscheduled stops for erroneous hot box detectors and another at Portlaoise to put off a suspected heart attack victim we kept close to time all day.

In the old days the RPSI specials featured photo runbys and/or lineside chase buses but the increasing demands of safety regulations and more intense regular services have put paid to this. Fortunately for me, Dave and Barbara Theobald were chasing the train so in view of the glorious weather at Thurles I bailed out and spent the rest of the day with them getting several good lineside shots. One of the advantages of a tank loco is it needs frequent water stops allowing chasers to leap-frog. Irish roads are not suitable for chasing but Dave was in top form racing down lanes whilst poor Barbara attempted to make sandwiches for us on the rear seat!

Having flown down the main line to The Junction, the special did some reversing and turning before heading back towards Dublin as far as Ballybrophy where more complex shunting was required to get it onto the Nenagh line to Limerick (in true Irish fashion there is no direct connection at Ballybrophy). We meantime descended on Roscrac station and decided this would be a perfect shot, country station, semaphores and signal box. The only trouble was by the time the train came it seemed the whole town had turned out to see! Our last lineside shot of the day was of the special beneath its namesake hill near Limerick.

Sunday was again blessed by fine weather as our 2-6-4T headed bunker first (for the only time of the trip) from Limerick to The Junction where it ran round to point the right way then a blazing trip along the main line to Dublin which was reached in the early afternoon. Connolly station was busy enough to entertain us whilst no.4 was serviced and turned (IE has TWO working turntables at Connolly!) before taking us up the old Great Northern mainline as far as Dundalk. Here we had to leave our special as the coaches were required over at Sligo for a very early train to Dublin on the Monday morning and we were to continue to Belfast on a special provided by Northern Island Railways. This duly arrived at Dundalk formed of one of NIR's three EMD 111 class locos and the "Gatwick Set" a train of Mk2F's recently acquired from..., well guess, which now represent the NIR's entire loco hauled fleet. No sooner had we boarded than we were turned off! It seems that the Belfast – Dublin Enterprise had failed at Portadown (another 201 had gone bang!). A railcar had been dispatched from Newry to pick up the Enterprise passengers and bring them to Dundalk where they would transfer to the Gatwick and then the railcar would take us to Belfast. In due course the railcar appeared, (think of a badly maintained Mk2 version of the Southern Thumper demu) and the swap was made. Sunday night consisted of Fred, myself and

several others being entertained royally by the RPSI officers in The Crown bar across from the infamous Europa Hotel and Great Victoria Street station.

Whilst IE in its old fashioned way is efficient and accommodating, NIR couldn't really organise a p\*\*\*-up in the Guinness brewery as Monday morning would prove. We were supposed to have the Gatwick set take us back to Dundalk where we'd rejoin the IE Cravens after their trip to Sligo and then head for Bangor behind steam. First hiccup came at Great Victoria Street. The NIR guy on the ticket barrier was refusing us entry even though departure time was two minutes away. After a verbal altercation with another NIR employee he relented and let us through. Attempting to board the Gatwicks on platform 2 we were shooed away, NIR were keeping it in case another 201 went bang on the Enterprise (confidence, eh?) so board the class 80 demu at platform 1. We'd all just settled when someone noticed the fuel gauge was below a quarter. "Everybody off, go to the train on platform 4" – another of the truly awful 80 class.

Arrival at Dundalk was very late and we expected our steam loco to be right behind us coming down from the RPSI base at Whitehead. It wasn't. However, the IE delivered our Cravens set back on time behind freshly repainted 141 herself – pass the dark glasses, please! For those who don't know, IE locos are orange with a black band edged in white and day-glow red ends! IE also entertained us with a EMD class 071 diesel topping up its radiator from a steam age water crane but still no steam loco! Eventually GNR(I) 85 Merlin a 4-4-0 three cylinder compound built by Beyer Peacock in 1932 came ambling down the mainline at the very moment the Enterprise was due! The latter consequently was also late but contained a surprise for all, pushing at the rear was IE 209, one of four 201's specially painted in the Enterprise's green, grey and purple livery –

*Former Great Northern Railway (Ireland) 85 Merlin, a V class 4-4-0 three cylinder compound built by Beyer Peacock in 1932, waits at Dundalk prior to heading the RPSI Slieve Kinalta tour onward to Belfast and Bangor on 10 May 2004*





reliability is so poor the quartet are seldom seen on their intended duties.

Eventually we set off north more than an hour late and in contrast to the fast running on IE the pace today was positively pedestrian. Eventually we made it to Bangor where 85 ran round and we were told departure would be at 16.00. But again NIR messed it up and changed departure to 15.50 without notice! Consequently several patrons were left behind and had to chase us to Belfast Central by service train, another of the awful 80's. At Belfast Central 85 ran round ready to run the final stage to Whitehead. But we were so late that I had to leave the train here in order to catch my flight home so I stayed on the station to await departure. NIR had one more inept trick up their sleeve. The signal was green and with much whistling on the platform the train was given the Right Away. 85's driver was just releasing the brake when the signaller decided to drop the signal back to red to allow a service train to Bangor to leave. Fortunately the crew were alert and spotted it in time!

So ended a thoroughly enjoyable and relaxing week. I've told myself I must return again but not wait another twelve years – the times they are a changin' and I must get back before the old order is gone forever.



*The new order. One of twenty 4-car diesel-hydraulic multiple units recently delivered to Irish Rail by CAF from Spain for working the outer suburban services around Dublin stands at Dublin Connolly on a Drogheda service on 9 May 2004.*

*Note to MDRS Committee:- How about a Society party on a future RPSI weekend?*

*PS: All good things come to an end. Killarney lost its magnificent array of semaphores in mid-February 2005.*

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## AN AUTUMN ALMANAC, 1979 AND 1989

Compiled by Tim Edmonds

### 25 Years Ago.

To commemorate the centenary of the first British dining car train, which ran on the Great Northern Railway on 1 November 1879, the BR catering subsidiary Travellers-Fare celebrated "100 years of Refreshment" with various events and promotions. A special train, made up mainly of historic catering vehicles from the National Railway Museum, made a special run from Leeds to King's Cross on 13 September. On 15 September it worked from

Marylebone to Shrewsbury, on to Hereford behind 6000 "King George V", then back to London before embarking on a tour of provincial centres, finishing at York with a circular steam tour on 29 September.

BR announced that it was to build a prototype two-car railbus seating about 100 passengers. This will be a cheaper alternative to conventional vehicles for use on less-busy lines and will be based on Leyland National bus bodies on an underframe with two-axle running gear.



*47 203 approaching Willesden Green with the Travellers-Fare Centenary Express exhibition train from Marylebone. (15 September 1979)*

On 27 September an InterCity 125 HST covered the 305 miles between Penzance and Paddington in 4 hours 44 minutes, an average speed of 64.4 mph, which BR claimed as a record. This was achieved on a demonstration run to mark the extension of HST services to the West Country, with the full service due to be implemented in May 1980.

It was reported that the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Association was purchasing land in North Devon with a view to reopening the narrow-gauge line, initially from near Lynton towards

Blackmoor Gate.



*5051 'Drysllwyn Castle' leaving Stratford-upon-Avon with the returning "The Sunset" railtour - here seen somewhat before sunset in low winter sunlight. (16 January 1980)*

After restoration at Didcot, GWR 4-6-0 'Drysllwyn Castle' made its main line debut in January with specials on two consecutive weekends: "The Phoenix" on 19th and "The Sunset" on 26th.

### **15 Years Ago.**

On 4 September current was switched on between Copmanthorpe and Skelton Junction to complete the ECML electrification between London King's Cross and York. Then on 20 September BR ran a return press trip from King's Cross to Doncaster and Leeds using the first InterCity 225 set (class 91 loco and Mark IV stock) with impressive sustained running at 130-140 mph.

The first public use of 2-8-0 45160 (British 8F/TCDD 45151 class) took place at the Swanage Railway Gala on 16 September. The loco was in unrestored ex-Turkish condition, having arrived in the UK in June, and had a temporary six-month boiler certificate. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 'World Steam' organisation a special train for members ran in the evening and, with the loco clearly in need of overhaul, an 'interesting' journey ensued. (Your compiler knows - he was on the footplate when

efforts were being made to prevent the loco from expiring in the depths of Dorset after dark!)

Railway Photographer W.J.V. Anderson, well-known for his pictures of trains in the landscape of the Scottish Highlands, died of cancer on 23 September at the age of 57.

From 20.00 on Saturday 14 October to 06.00 on Monday 30 October services between Settle and Appleby were suspended to allow BR to carry out major reconstruction work on Ribbleshead viaduct to renew the waterproof membrane and decking. Work was also undertaken on bridges at Garsdale, Kirkby Stephen and Langwathby.

For the first time, BR took part in the BBC's "Children in Need" fund-raising event on 17 November. High-capacity fuel tank class 47/8 no 47 821 'Royal Worcester' hauled a train of stock from the Bounds Green Inter City Charter Train Pool from Glasgow Queen Street to Paddington via Edinburgh, Berwick, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester Piccadilly, Birmingham International, Cardiff and Bristol Temple Meads.



*45160 (British 8F/TCDD 45160 class) in steam at Swanage station in Turkish operating condition. (16 September 1989)*



*47 821 'Royal Worcester' takes the VSOE Pullman stock through the Berkshire countryside at a location that fifteen years later would hit the headlines - Ufton Crossing. (25 November 1989)*

# THE MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY GOES ONLINE!

On 21 February 2005 the Society's went 'live' on the internet. Since then we have had a website which can potentially be visited by anyone connected to the internet, worldwide. If you are 'online' please take a look – the address you need to type into your browser is <http://www.mdrs.org.uk>.

## Why do we need a website?

It is designed for two main purposes. First, it is our 'shop window' to the wider world. A website makes our presence known to a much larger audience than we can ever achieve through the traditional channels of the local and railway press. As the electronic word gets passed around through 'search engines' and links on other websites, it means that more people are likely to find out about us and to see our current programme. We may get a few more visitors to our meetings and, who knows, we might attract a few more members.

Second, it is a resource for members to use. The current programme is displayed there and can be updated quickly if, for example, we are forced to make a late change because a speaker pulls out, or if arrangements are changed for an outing. There are some 'Gallery' pages which currently contain photos taken on society outings in recent years – your contributions are welcome and I can scan images for you if you take slides or prints. There may be scope for including other photographic contributions from members – perhaps as a 'picture of the month' or 'hot news'.

## So what else is on the site?

At present it is a very simple site with a page of information about the society, a programme page, several Gallery pages and a Donkey page. Currently there is one back-number of The Marlow Donkey available to download as a PDF (Portable Document Format) file, and in due course I shall make more back numbers available that way (but not the current one – we don't want to give away membership privileges to the whole world).

The website provides an email address for communicating with the society. This means that we know which enquiries come via the website and any incoming emails can then be passed to the appropriate society officer.

## Will there be anything else added?

A page devoted to links will be added soon (and may already be there by the time this appears in print). This will contain links to websites of other local railway societies and railway companies serving our catchment area, plus other sites of railway interest. I'd welcome suggestions from members for additions to this, especially of lesser-known sites that people have found particularly useful or interesting.

Beyond that what happens depends on what members would like to see, and whether I am able to provide it. Please take a look at the website and let me know if you have any ideas.

**Tim Edmonds, Webmaster,**





*6012 King Edward VI on the down main Maidenhead nr. West Box. Built April 1928. Double chimney fitted February 1958. Withdrawn September 1962. Early 1950s - Ken Laurie*



*2800 class, 2831 down relief Maidenhead gullet, Maidenhead West box just out of sight on right.*

*Early 1950s - Ken Laurie*