

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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September 2005



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Wot, No Steam?

The Oozlum Bird

More Blarney

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: Black 5 '44710' location unknown (Do you know the location?) late 50's early 60's by Ken Lawrie

Bottom left: Great Southern & Western Railway J15, 0-6-0, No. 186 built by Sharpe Stewart in 1879.

Bottom right: Northern Counties Committee WT class 2-6-4T, No. 4, built Derby 1947 both May 2005 by Mike Walker

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

Thursday 15th September	IRISH RAILWAYS	Kim Fullbrook
Thursday 20th October	FILM NIGHT (Mostly Steam)	Frank Banham
Thursday 17th November	THE UK RAILWAY SCENE IN THE 21st CENTURY	Ian Francis
Thursday 15th December	CHRISTMAS SOCIAL	
Thursday 19th January	MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENING	
Thursday 16th February	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BOOK SALE	
Thursday 16th March	35 YEARS WITH A CAMERA	Mike Timms
Thursday 20th April	TRAVEL WITH A MAMIYA AND A STEPLADDER	Malcolm Ranieri
Thursday 18th May	MORE FROM COLOUR-RAIL	Ron White
Thursday 15th June	GAS TURBINES & DIESELS OF THE UNION PACIFIC	Tom Watson

*Please note: The above programme is correct at press time but subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.
Please check the Society's website www.mdrs.org.uk for the latest details.*

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Some two years ago member Peter Bond approached me saying he wished to bequeath his book collection to the Society in order to raise funds. Sadly Peter passed away in April of this year and his collection of some 240 titles is now in our care. From the sale of these books the proceeds will be put towards a digital projector suitably inscribed in his memory. Having worked for the BBC I am sure this action would have met with his full approval.

The proposed coach trip to Llangollen on 3rd July was cancelled due to lack of numbers. Many thanks to those who expressed interest; we will attempt the same venue or elsewhere, the decision is yours (see page 3) in 2006.

Most of you will be aware that Eddie Lewcock now resides in Milton Ernest north of Bedford. During a recent telephone conversation with Eddie he expressed his delight in receiving the signed card from the Society and he sends his best wishes to all members. Having spent some of his working life at Derby it seems appropriate that he is now quite close to the Midland Mainline not far from Sharnbrook summit. His parting words "If you are in the vicinity we will be pleased to see you"

One of the Society's founder members, Mike Norris, has sadly passed away after a long illness. The funeral was

held at Amersham Crematorium on July 15th. Several members from the Society and Fawley attended, a nice touch being the passing of the coffin to music Coronation Scot. His remains will make a final journey over the Fawley incline being put in the firebox en route, a fitting end for a devoted steam enthusiast. A full appreciation of Mike's life appears on page 4.

The evening visit to the Leighton Buzzard Railway on July 20th was well attended by Society members, some 21 in total as well as those from the Severn Valley. Sadly, due to a fire on the line some days before, a diesel was substituted for the journey due to a steam ban.

The recent Isle of Man Transport Gala was attended by four members, Tim Speechley, Malcolm Margetts, Terry Dearling and myself, over three days from July 23-25th. Whilst waiting for our flight at Birmingham Airport unbeknown to us a "splinter group" of Tony Caton and Phil Searle with their wives (Should we enrol these keen girls?) were also heading for the gala. A £20 3 Day Runabout ticket was excellent value allowing unlimited travel over the island's system, which included horse drawn, electric and steam traction in addition to the regular bus services.

Gordon Rippington

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND OUTINGS

The rather obscure Llanelly & Mynydd Mawr Railway was the fascinating subject of Martin Cannop-Price's return visit at the June meeting. The line's pre-history as well as its claim to be one of the earliest lines in the country were covered. The speaker knows his subject well as he is the author of the line's definitive history.

The visit to Leighton Buzzard in lieu of a July meeting proved successful with 21 members attending. Unfortunately diesel traction was the order of the day because of a steam ban due to the fire risk. A full report appears on page 5.

Sixteen members and friends gathered at St. Pancras on Saturday 13th August for a fascinating tour of the Chambers or the former Midland Grand Hotel now awaiting restoration and refurbishment to act as a five star hotel for the new international rail terminal. This was followed by trip by bus and train following the works for the second phase of the CTRL conducted by Mark Hopwood. A full report will appear in the next edition.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

The December meeting will be our usual Christmas social. It will be held in the larger hall at Liston Hall and either a buffet or fish & chips will be provided. If you wish to have alcoholic refreshment please bring your own supplies, as, we would remind you, you can to any meeting.

NEXT YEAR'S SUMMER TRIP

Unfortunately, not enough members signed up for the proposed visit to the Llangollen Railway on July 3rd making it uneconomic to proceed with hiring a coach. This is a pity as the committee puts a lot of effort into organising these outings. Hopefully you will support next year's attempt.

In order to make the venue as appealing as possible we are giving you the choice of three possible venues. It is up to you to decide. A vote will be taken at the October meeting, but if you can't make it please send your nomination in to Julian Heard. The options are:

Bluebell Railway

Isle of Wight Steam Railway

Llangollen Railway.

THE PETER BOND BOOK COLLECTION

Our member Peter Bond, who died this year, left his collection of over 230 railway books to the society to dispose of in a way that would benefit the society. The books are mainly of a high quality and we are grateful to Peter for this generous bequest.

In view of the rapid development of digital photography, the committee has decided that the best way to use this gift is to sell the books and put the money towards the purchase of a digital projector for the society's use. At the time of writing the books are being catalogued and put into price-bands in order to obtain an approximate valuation. Our intention is to sell them as a lot to a specialist second-hand book dealer but, before we do so,

they will be available for a limited period for purchase by members.

The aim is that the catalogue will be available at our September meeting, and from then until the October meeting members can bid for any book - provided that they meet the minimum suggested price for the price-band into which that book has been placed. If more than one identical offer is received for a book, then those members will be invited to make another bid, and the highest offer will obtain the book.

For those unable to obtain a copy of the catalogue at the September meeting, please contact me and I will send one to you. I will also be happy to answer any questions about the books.

Tim Edmonds

GERRARDS CROSS TUNNEL

At approximately 19.30 on 30th June the part built "Tesco Tunnel" at Gerrards Cross collapsed. Fortunately no trains were passing through at the time but the 17.40 Stratford-upon-Avon to Marylebone was already at the station and the driver alerted control who were able to stop down services safely.

Approximately 30 metres of the 320 metre long tunnel at the eastern end (under the proposed car park) had collapsed depositing an estimated 10,000 tons of fill material on to the line.

Work started immediately to clear the site, assess the damage and cause, and work towards a resumption of services. Network Rail initially said this would take "a few days" but this was clearly unrealistic. Later, it was hoped that services would resume on 15th August but this too proved impossible.

By early August 60m of the tunnel had been removed with 25,000 tons of spoil being taken away by a fleet of lorries operating 24/7. Ironically, it was to avoid this and the damage it is doing to the village's roads that the original planning permission insisted that all the fill material had to be brought in by rail. It could not leave that way as trains would have had to enter the collapsed tunnel to access the siding.



The tunnel immediately after the collapse. Note how the fill has been piled on top not equally at each side causing the arch to deform.

The cause is believed to be that the original work plan was not adhered to. The tunnel lining consists of interlocking concrete segments and when installed they are arranged with a slight gap at the crown of the arch which is designed to close as the fill is added. This, obviously, should be added from both sides simultaneously and equally but it seems it was not. Fill was added unequally and even on top of the segments. Add to this the extra weight caused by heavy rain in June and the collapse seems inevitable.

A major meeting of all affected parties was held on 5th August which appeared to have resulted in impasse. Tesco and their contractors believed the remaining tunnel was safe to reopen the line and be reconstructed. Network Rail, the HSE and Chiltern were not convinced that a further collapse was totally impossible but 10 days later agreement was reached to reopen the line although the future of the tunnel and store was still unresolved at that time and will be the subject of further studies and meetings between the interested parties.

Services finally resumed on Saturday 20th August. During the blockage special services were introduced with a shuttle operating between Marylebone and Denham and an hourly service between Birmingham Snow Hill and Beaconsfield. Another hourly service

operated between Marylebone and Birmingham Snow Hill, reversing at both Aylesbury and Princes Risborough. To accommodate these, a number of Marylebone - Aylesbury local services were suspended as were normal services over the Princes Risborough - Aylesbury branch. The services to Stratford-upon-Avon were also suspended. Express bus services replaced these and operated from High Wycombe to Amersham and Beaconsfield, Seer Green and Gerrards Cross to Denham. Perhaps Chiltern is fortunate that it had such a high reputation among its customers prior to this that it has managed to escape customer backlash - most of which has been aimed firmly at Tesco! What the long term effect, particularly on Chiltern's "bottom line" will be remains to be seen. Tesco have agreed to fund £8.5 million of Chiltern's compensation payments to its customers.

The presence of Tesco in Gerrards Cross was controversial from the outset and the villagers could not contain their glee at first, but as the disruption dragged on this turned to anger.

One senior Chiltern manager confided to your Editor when the proposal was still being considered: "I can't think why Tesco want a store there, surely the locals send their 'man' to Fortnum & Mason?!"

MIKE NORRIS

1935-2005

The passing away of Mike Norris on 9th July 2005 was a great blow to the Society. The name might not be familiar to some of our more recent members as Mike has not been able to take part in the Society's activities since suffering a massive stroke four years ago which left him paralysed down his right side and unable to speak, read or write. However he continued to take a keen interest in our activities and enjoyed having the contents of the *Donkey* read to him.



Mike was one of the Society's founding fathers having attended Roger Bowen's now infamous evening classes at Great Marlow School during 1975-76. When those came to a conclusion it was Mike along with Bas Woodward, Roger Bowen, Roy Mee, Stan Verrinder and a handful of others who proposed forming a railway club in the town to continue the camaraderie that had developed at the classes and in the pub afterwards. He was elected to the original committee and was to serve for many years. His role was unofficially that of "ideas man" and he put his professional skills in marketing and sales to good use in promoting the Society and coming up with ideas for activities beyond our monthly meetings. It is no exaggeration to say that the Society's early and continuing success was in no small part thanks to his efforts.

A native of Essex, Mike also lived in Kent and Warwickshire before settling in Marlow. Despite having thus lived in the territory of all of the Big Four, it was the LNER that was his life long favourite - for which he regularly took some light-hearted "stick" from fellow

members. However, he was passionately interested in all aspects of the railway scene past and present, at home and aboard.

When the MDRS was invited to assist our President with his private railway at Fawley, Mike was an immediate volunteer and remained a member of the separate Fawley Museum Society when that was set up, again serving on its committee as Treasurer and acting as the Fat Controller during operating days. He

spent many happy weekends there, getting his hands dirty.

Although he led us to believe he made little use of a still camera, it seems he did take a number of railway shots it was just that he felt overshadowed by other members. We hope to feature some of Mike's work in a future *Donkey*. However, Mike enthusiastically seized the emerging video technology of the 1980's and proceeded to film virtually every trip and event the Society undertook. After a shaky start (Your editor can never hear the theme to *Chariots of Fire* without thinking of Mike's first IoM film.) he was constantly improving his technique and upgrading his equipment as each new generation of camera came along. Working in conjunction with his good friend David Johncock from Flackwell Heath, Mike became an accomplished amateur film-maker. He took it very seriously, woebetide anyone who spoke when the camera was running which inevitably meant Mike was often the victim of chattering children, barking dogs or worse. One day we were at the Mid Hants where Mike was filming a wide pan shot in a field and as the train

passed so did an aircraft - between them! "Did you get the aircraft?" I asked. He didn't believe me until the footage was played back. On another occasion we were on the footbridge halfway up the climb out of Grosmont on the NMYR, Mike's favourite line. It had been raining and the trains were struggling for grip. Mike was busily recording the fight of the 4MT tank up the hill oblivious to the fact that the train was being banked by the GW 0-6-2T. We couldn't alert him for fear of incurring his wrath, so he was somewhat surprised when the banker burst out from under his feet!

Mike had a wonderful way of looking either confused or lost and asking innocent questions, usually beginning: "Am I right in thinking..." which could lead to hilarious results. On the occasion of the Society's first visit to the Baie de la Somme, we were walking through Ste Valery when Mike spotted an imposing building flying the Tricolour and sporting "Hotel de Ville" (Town Hall) above the door. "That looks a nice hotel, why didn't we stay there?" Making his first visit to the USA in 1997 he was like a kid in a theme park, fascinated by everything he saw. After a typically fine meal in Durango, Colorado, Mike became fascinated by the gun on a local cop's belt and proceeded to examine it VERY closely. How he got away with it we will never know! By contrast, during a 1992 visit to western Ireland Mike was reluctant to walk up to Claremorris village from the station alone. Quite what danger he thought he might face we can only speculate on. He was always great company, particularly on an extended trip, and we've missed him greatly in recent years.

In addition to railways Mike's other passions, apart from his family of course, included cricket and fine food, indeed the latter was to benefit his fellow members as

Mike would always try to seek out the best eating establishments during extended trips and was never slow in complaining if the resulting offerings did not match up to his extremely high standards. It was perhaps fortunate that Mike was able to continue to enjoy his food to the very end - probably the last real pleasure he had.

The 21st Century was to be cruel to Mike. First he underwent heart by-pass surgery which didn't go quite according to plan as he suffered a serious post-operative infection. No sooner had he conquered this when he suffered his stroke. So massive was it that we actually didn't expect him to survive but he did. However for his last few years he endured a poor quality of life, being largely confined to his room at the Kingfishers Home in Bourne End (able to hear but not directly see the Donkey) with only the television, his memories and visitors for company. Whilst David Johncock visited him almost weekly and Pete Greatorex, Julian Heard and I tried to visit as often as possible, it was a pity that his other old friends from the Society couldn't find time to drop in occasionally - he delighted in seeing people he hadn't seen for sometime, his memory remained fine to the end.

It was on his 70th birthday, 26th June that his health finally failed with a chest infection and renewed heart trouble. He was transferred to Wycombe Hospital the following day but there was little they could do for him and he returned to Kingfishers some 12 days later. He is survived by his second wife Pat and their sons Simon and Alexander to whom we send our sincere condolences. Following cremation at Amersham, his ashes were to be scattered at Fawley with the assistance of no.31.

We will miss you Mike, thanks for all the great times and memories. Rest in peace old friend.

Mike Walker

Wot, No Steam?

Julian Heard reports on the Leighton Buzzard visit

The July meeting was re-scheduled to Wednesday 20th July for members to enjoy an evening steam charter train on the Leighton Buzzard railway instead of sweltering in the usual confines of a hall. Having endured just over a week of baking hot weather, which was about the only summer we got, intrepid members of the society arrived at Pages Park in good time for the 7.30 departure only to find that something was missing - STEAM.

Unfortunately, the heat wave and coal fired locos had left the railway prone to lineside fires, the most recent destroying a resident's shed. Understandably, steam was banned pending a drop of the familiar wet stuff, so our train was to be hauled by 'Infernal combustion' power. However, the operational steam locos were brought out of the shed for our perusal. They consisted of Orenstein and Koppel - no 11 *P C Allen*, Andrew Barclay - *Doll* and Orenstein and Koppel - no 740 from India. The latter is the largest loco on the line and has radial axle boxes so the engine actually steers round sharp curves. A look inside the shed revealed the line's little gem *Caloner*, two rakes of coaches and couple of non-



Standing in for steam, Beaudesert waits to head the Society's special at Leighton Buzzard. It was built for the LBR by Alan Keefe using Simplex parts.

photo: Tim Speechley

operational locos.

With the steam power safety put back on shed, our train was shunted into the station with Beaudesert in charge. This diesel loco was built especially for the railway utilising parts from a 900mm gauge Simplex loco built originally for the Coal Board and later used as a shunter on the Channel Tunnel Project. It is fitted with a 112hp Dorman engine, weighs 10.75 tons and has a top speed of 18 MPH.

We were hustled quite literally, onto the train by our guard who whose customer relations skills were somewhat rusty, and this became even more apparent throughout our visit. Fortunately, all the other staff we engaged were of the friendly variety!. The train made steady progress, crossing numerous roads and negotiating several sharp curves through to Stonehenge. It is a very long time since I last rode on this line and all I could recall was a distinctly rough ride and being told of frequent derailments. That has all changed, the permanent way is of a very high standard and the coaches give us a smooth comfortable trip. For the first few miles the scenery is the relatively new housing estates through which the line passes but after crossing Vandyke Road, there are clear views into the distance providing a more pleasant scene.

At Stonehenge works we were allowed access to the comprehensive narrow gauge museum site with our ORDERS regarding departure time. Here the exhibits included examples of tipper trucks used when the line conveyed sand not passengers and small ex WD Lister

diesels which replaced the earlier petrol locos. Other artefacts included a Ruston Bucyrus crane and of course different varieties of portable track. In the meantime our locomotive had run round the train and all to soon we were being commanded to re join the train by our 'customer (un)friendly' guard.

The return journey was broken by a very pleasant stop at the 'Clay Pipe' public house, where more than the odd swift half was consumed by members before embarking on the final leg back to Pages Park and visit to the station shop.

Shame about the lack steam power but overall it was a pleasant evening out. A DVD of the visit will be shown at the Christmas event



Vice Chairman Tim Speechley and former Chairman Eddie Lewcock enjoy a pint at the Clay Pipe.

THE OOZLUM BIRD

Get out your atlas and follow KEITH BROWN around the Midlands.

This excursion was advertised as "a convoluted tail-chasing rail tour around freight-only lines in the Midlands", the relevance to the title being a mystical bird that kept disappearing up itself! I decided to book myself on the trip and duly arrived at Ealing Broadway at 07.30 on Saturday 14th May 2005. The advertised departure was 08.21 which gave time to chat to the guard for the train who was sent down the previous evening from Doncaster and stayed overnight in a local hotel and like me was waiting for the stock to arrive from Old Oak Common. This duly came at 08.15 having turned on the Greenford loop in order to be facing eastwards with 67019 and thirteen Mk.1 coaches.

Departure was punctual and the train was routed via Acton and Brent Curve Jct. This section has not been defoliated and branches of overhanging trees and shrubs brushed the windows continuously. After joining the MML stops to pick up were made at St. Albans, Bedford and Kettering where we left with a full complement of passengers. Leaving the MML at Kettering North Jct. we diverged on to the eighteen-mile freight line via Corby to Manton Jct. near Oakham. Corby steel works now is but a shadow of the past and only the Tube Works now produce any steel products using coil brought in by rail from Margam, South Wales. At Manton Jct. the line from Peterborough trails in from the right and we continued through Oakham and Melton Mowbray to the

three junctions at Syston. Here we used the east and north ones to gain the line to Loughborough and Sheet Stores Jct. and on to Burton-on-Trent. After leaving the brewery town the train turned left on to the Coalville line for the 29 miles to Knighton South Jct. passing the site of the last open day at Coalville in 1991 and the branch line to Bardon Hill. Coming off the freight branch the line to Nuneaton and Water Orton was traversed and a right fork at the latter took us on to the last of the freight branches for the day the twelve-mile Sutton Park line to Walsall.

Leaving Walsall and passing Bescot, where a line of Cl.37s were stored, we ran through Birmingham New Street, platform 3 and took the right hand fork at St. Andrews Jct. to Lifford East Jct. Here the train changed direction on a very tight curve with wheel flanges screaming and objecting before we took the line through Bourneville and Selly Oak back into Birmingham New Street, this time through platform 7 but in the same direction as previously. This rather confused the spotters on the platform end.

This time it was a left turn passing Saltley and on to Water Orton, Hinckley and Narborough to rejoin the MML at Glen Parva Jct. and back to Ealing Broadway. At no time was the train more than 15 minutes early or late. An enjoyable trip, but the lack of an opportunity for a leg-stretch on a twelve-hour journey being the only negative from my point of view.

MORE BLARNEY or... IT'S A LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY

MIKE WALKER pursues the RPSI's Suir Valley Railtour



The remorseless march of Irish railway modernisation and the prospect of a particularly varied annual international railtour being planned by the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland meant that the Emerald Isle was calling me back in May. No fewer than six days of main line steam action were planned over an eight day period using two locomotives and two sets of stock. I had hoped that other members would join me but for various reasons this was not to be. What follows is what you missed!

The star of the show was the newly restored Great Southern & Western Railway J15 class 0-6-0 no. 186 built by Sharp Stewart in 1879 and therefore surely the oldest main line passed steam loco in the world. Her marathon started in Belfast on Tuesday 10th May with a leisurely run down to Dublin but I chose not to fly out until the next day, meeting Fred Heidie, a friend from the US and RPSI regular, on the way. We spent the day playing cat and mouse with freights in Dublin before enjoying a traditional Irish meal in Dublin's Temple Bar district.



Thursday saw 186 take the RPSI's Dublin set to Waterford as a positioning run and I was in position for what I considered to be the must have shot as 186 traversed what is unquestionably the most scenic section of line in Ireland, on the cliffs at Bray Head just south of Dublin (*top*) in the brilliant sunshine which was to remain for the next four days.

Next I drove to Gorey (Due to unfamiliarity with the area I had a two mile walk to and from the Bray Head shot only to find I could have parked 100 yards away! Still I needed the exercise.) where 186 was booked to take water from the genuine tank (*above*) still in situ and useable 45 years after regular steam finished in Ireland. In fact with its train of wooden framed stock in 1950's period CIE livery there was virtually nothing in the shot to suggest it was not half a century ago.

My second "must do" was Wexford where the main line runs along the quayside (*bottom left*) and once again 186 looked perfectly at home.





At Rosslare Harbour - now known as Europort - 186 was taken off the train to visit the turntable (*above left*), one of many still serviceable in Ireland, for another timeless image and servicing before continuing to Waterford. Since the resignalling at Killarney, Rosslare Strand has one of the best collections of semaphores in the country so I went and asked the Bobby if I could walk along the line for some shots. He was quite happy, so long as I kept off the track - imagine that here today! The new houses behind the station spoilt the illusion (*top right*) but there was nothing out of place as it approached the up distant for Grange Big Gates (level crossing). Note the typical Irish red distant arm (*centre right*) a throwback to pre-grouping British practice.

The lack of a road bridge across the Barrow Estuary made it difficult to chase 186 to Waterford so I broke off and spent the night at Carlow.

Friday was a rest day for the steam locos and their crews so I took the opportunity to catch up with some of the current Irish loco-hauled operations before their replacement by DMU's, scheduled to be completed late in 2006. The driver of a down service at Carlow had been very scathing about this saying: "I'm glad I'm retiring next year, I didn't take this job to become a glorified bus driver!"

The real challenge was to get the combination of a loco hauled train and semaphore signals and after some research, the Sligo line seemed to offer the best chance of success so I headed for Enfield, 26 miles west of Dublin. Here I was rewarded with GM 073 heading the 07.40 Sligo to Dublin Connolly formed of Mk11d stock beside the Royal Canal (*bottom left*).



With nearly a 4 hour gap before the next train on the Sligo line I moved to Newbridge on the Dublin to Cork main line. Double track and protected by colour lights maybe, but it was busy with a constant parade of 071 and 201 class GM's on expresses punctuated by a single round trip by a DMU to Kildare (displaying Cork as the destination both ways!) and a pair of class 141 "Baby GM's" heading west with a container train (*bottom right*) their chanting non-turbocharged and only slightly silenced 567 engines sending me nostalgically back to the days when early Geeps ran on American main lines.

A return to Enfield to see the 13.35 to Sligo pass the 13.10 from Longford was disappointing as the latter was a DMU but I got the old and new shot as the Bobby exchanged train staffs. An abortive attempt at getting the next train a Mullingar (got stuck in traffic!) was followed by a return to Dublin for another visit to the North Wall freight yard followed by another meal with Fred at Temple Bar.





Saturday saw the start of the RPSI tour with NCC (Northern Counties Committee) WT class 2-6-4T no. 4, built at Derby in 1947, taking the RPSI's Belfast set comprising five ex-NIR Mk2b's painted dark green and three Irish Rail Mk2d's from Dublin to Waterford following in 186's footsteps.

Once again I started my day at Bray Head and was amazed to find myself alone leading to the worrying thought, have I missed it? Whilst the sun still shone brightly a gale blowing straight in off the sea made the wait somewhat unpleasant.

After the train had passed I hit the road and beat it to its first water stop at Avoca (*top*), better known to millions as Ballykissangel as this was the location of the popular television series. Not waiting to watch the watering I

continued on my way but was stunned when the special overtook me near Gorey - neither of us was hanging around in fact it must be admitted that I showed little respect for Irish speed limits! Oh, so they are in km's, sorry! Luckily speed cameras are unknown away from Dublin.

IRISH SERVICE

Fred was booked to travel on all the steam trips but it was planned that he'd spend some time chasing with me. Seeing me on the bridge at Avoca he got off, even though the station has been closed, only to find I'd left! The first I knew of this was when his fellow passengers asked me where he was at Enniscorthy. So it was something of a surprise when he reappeared at Rosslare.

Seems he got a taxi from Avoca to Enniscorthy but disaster further struck when he realised he'd left his camera in the taxi!

Fred spoke to the RPSI for guidance and they spoke to Irish Rail who in turn contacted the Garda (Irish Police) who sent their local constable in Avoca to retrieve the camera which was then handed to Bus Eireann (Ireland's state bus service) who got it to Waterford in time for Fred to pick it up on Sunday morning, the bus station being conveniently between their hotel and railway station. Remarkably, no charge was made - it's all part of the friendly Irish way.



I managed to beat it to Enniscorthy where a photo stop was planned and then got a fine shot (*centre*) as it crossed the River Slaney as it left the station and prepared to enter Enniscorthy Tunnel.

Again I got shots on Wexford Quay and at Rosslare and Wellingtonbridge before continuing to Waterford. By the time I arrived the special had been in town some time and having disembarked its passengers, 4 collected 186 which had been stabled in the bay platform with the Dublin set before departing for Waterford yard where it would be serviced and allowed to cool whilst 186 was prepared for Sunday's round trip to Limerick.

The pair are seen (*bottom*) leaving Waterford beneath the magnificent Central Signal Box - the only one of its kind in Ireland.





Having done a "reccy" on Saturday evening I headed first to a field just west of Carrick-on-Suir on Sunday morning (*top*). 186 was in charge of the Belfast set plus one of the Mk2d's which looked slightly out of place! Also at this spot were some local gricers so I asked them where the good spots were. The answer was that it was hard to explain without OS maps so I'd better follow them.

Among the spots they took me to was Nicholastown where 186 made a fine sight (*right centre*) on a reverse curve and departing Tipperary (*right lower*). By this time my rental car had amassed over 700 miles from Dublin whereas the direct route is around 140 so I couldn't help thinking of the old song...

At this point a mobile phone trilled and some of the locals broke off as word came that 134, the last surviving single cab GM in traffic was running a timber train from Dublin to Waterford but I stuck with the special.

186 would be turned at Limerick Junction and complete the run into Limerick tender first so I headed straight there where "big" GM 219 was waiting to leave and "baby" 144 waited to shunt the special. On the return journey 186 made a fine sight on the curve at Woods Farm and was then caught crossing the Dublin - Cork main line at Limerick Junction (*bottom*) before continuing to Waterford.

Unfortunately the good weather didn't continue and Monday's return high speed trip by no. 4 to Dublin, via Carlow, and Belfast was conducted under dark grey, drizzly skies. However, it was a fantastic weekend and leaves the RPSI with the simple problem of matching or surpassing it next year!



LIKE TO SEE IT YOURSELF?

If this article and Kim Fullbrook's talk at the September meeting has fired your interest why not see the Emerald Isle for yourself? The 2006 RPSI tour is due to head for Tralee with a chance also to see the revived Tralee & Dingle NG and Listowel & Ballybunion monorail as well as being the final call for loco hauled service trains in Ireland.

Mike Walker is heading off there and invites interested members to join him. Let Mike know if you want to go along.



AN EXMOOR SOJOURN

David Gardner

On the second Monday in May, Rosemary my wife and I caught the 08:46 First Great Western train from Chippenham to Exeter. Here we were due to catch the 10:58 Wessex service to Barnstaple but our train was trapped in a siding by another unit which had broken down. After what seemed an interminable delay, it was actually 40 minutes from when we arrived at St Davids, we were on our way. Although there are 12 stations on the line most trains stop only at Crediton and Eggesford then Barnstaple. Crediton dates back to Broad Gauge days and houses a 7mm scale model of the original station. The scenery is very pleasant and because most of the route is on un-welded track you still get the once familiar clackety clack of the wheels going over rail joints. We caught a bus for the short distance into Barnstaple town centre where we had lunch at a pub before continuing our journey to Lynton and as we had through tickets we didn't have to pay for the bus trip.

Having dropped off our bags at the flat we were renting for a few days we walked into Lynmouth, the lovely little coastal village which was half destroyed by floods in 1952. After a good wander round and visit to the museum we got on the cliff railway back to Lynton. The Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway was designed by George Marks, later Baron Marks of Woolwich and funded almost entirely by Sir George Newnes publisher of *'The Strand'* magazine and *'Tit Bits'*. This wealthy entrepreneur also built Lynton Town Hall and promoted the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway. He also had a mansion built on Hollerday Hill high above the town. The Cliff Railway works on a water balancing principle with each car having a 700 gallon tank mounted between the wheels plus a smaller 10 gallon tank as a reservoir for the braking system. No pumps are used but the water is piped from the West Lyn River over a mile away and stored in reservoirs. When the cars are loaded and ready to start the lower car tank is discharged and as the heavier top car descends so the lower one goes up. There is of course a continuous cable and pulley arrangement and the braking system has a Dead Man's Handle first patented in 1888. The railway opened on 9th April 1890 and has operated safely ever since including during both World Wars.

On the Tuesday we got a bus to Minehead, which with its twisting, cliff hanging roads was an interesting if slightly hairy journey.

The view from the descending car on Lynton & Lynmouth Cliff Railway as it meets the ascending car at the halfway point.

all photos: David Gardner

On arrival at the West Somerset Railway we caught a train to Bishops Lydeard hauled by Standard 4, 80136. After visiting the museum while there, we returned to the terminus. Although I have travelled over this line several times it was Rosemary's first trip and one she much enjoyed.

On the third day we had decided to visit the Lynton and Barnstaple railway base at Woody Bay. Having studied an O.S map I concluded it might be possible to walk along at least part of the track bed and the distance of about 2 miles wasn't too far. I then changed my mind and suggested going by bus but Rosemary was still keen on walking there. Lynton station building is still extant though a dwelling house and part of the track bed there after is built over. This posed us a problem as we couldn't find a way up into the woods where the track bed continued so we had to walk along a mainly pathless A39. Having gone about a mile or so we asked at Barbrook Post Office if we could get to the L&B without having to continue along the heavily used road and were advised to take the longer but considerably quieter back lanes. We therefore turned off at Dean, funnily enough just about where the railway would have crossed the main road. After winding our way for another mile or so I suggested crossing a field via a footpath to avoid an even longer trip round the road. However the path wasn't too well defined and what's more there were cows in one area, Rosemary's greatest fear. Thus having gone into another field to avoid said cows we then had to climb through a barbed wire fence to get out. This brought us back onto the A39 with high hedges on each side so it was fortunate we didn't have more than a quarter of a mile to go. Woody Bay station is actually about 3 miles from the place it is named after and at 980ft above sea



level the summit of the line. The building, like Lynton and Blackmoor is built in the Swiss chalet style. This and just under a mile of line were reopened on 11th May 2003, so exactly 2 years to the day we were there. We had to wait about half an hour for a train as an expected coach party arrived just after us. This gave time for a cup of tea and a look round the shed which contained a fully restored L&B coach which we were allowed to go into and a Hunslet diesel. At the time of our visit there was only a Simplex diesel 0-4-0 operating the single coach train but a steam loco was expected to be in service for the summer. A steam engine, *Emmet*, another 0-4-0 was specially built for the line by Jim Haylock but not being fitted with air or vacuum continuous brake never worked on a passenger train and we were told had been removed to another location by its owner. At present time, two L&B locos are being built, a replica of *Yeo* the first engine used on the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway and *Lyd*. A replica of *Lew*, the last L&B loco, is under construction at the Ffestiniog Railway workshop at Boston Lodge. A 1915 Kerr Stuart 0-6-0 named *Axe* is being restored by L&B volunteers, so for the future the locomotive situation looks very rosy. Despite having closed as long ago as 1935 a large part of the track bed remains intact and also most of the stations survive. The main engineering structure Chelfham Viaduct was fully restored by Railtrack a few years ago as it is a listed building. To my mind this is a railway with a future and I for one certainly fell under its spell. After our earlier experience we took a bus back to Lynton.

On the Thursday we visited a very interesting shop in Lynton selling railway memorabilia, maps, postcards and the like. After a few purchases we popped into the old cottage that is Lynton museum where there were more railway items, then after another walk into Lynmouth got the cliff railway back up again. The afternoon was taken up with a visit to Arlington Court, a N.T. property, which holds a large carriage collection, Horse-drawn ones this time though. We did take a ride in one but I wouldn't recommend it - very uncomfortable.

On the Friday we caught a bus at 11.15am which largely followed the route of the L&B railway and it was from this bus that we passed Blackmoor station now extended and operating as a public house. We also went past the impressively white looking Chelfham Viaduct. After lunch in Barnstaple at the same pub as before - well it was so good we just had to go there again - we made our way back to the station and home. It was only after we left Barnstaple that I was looking at a 3D type map we had of the town and there was Old Town station. Maybe not as it was, but the station site no less and we hadn't even seen it! Of the whole 5 days it was the only low point but then there's always next time.....



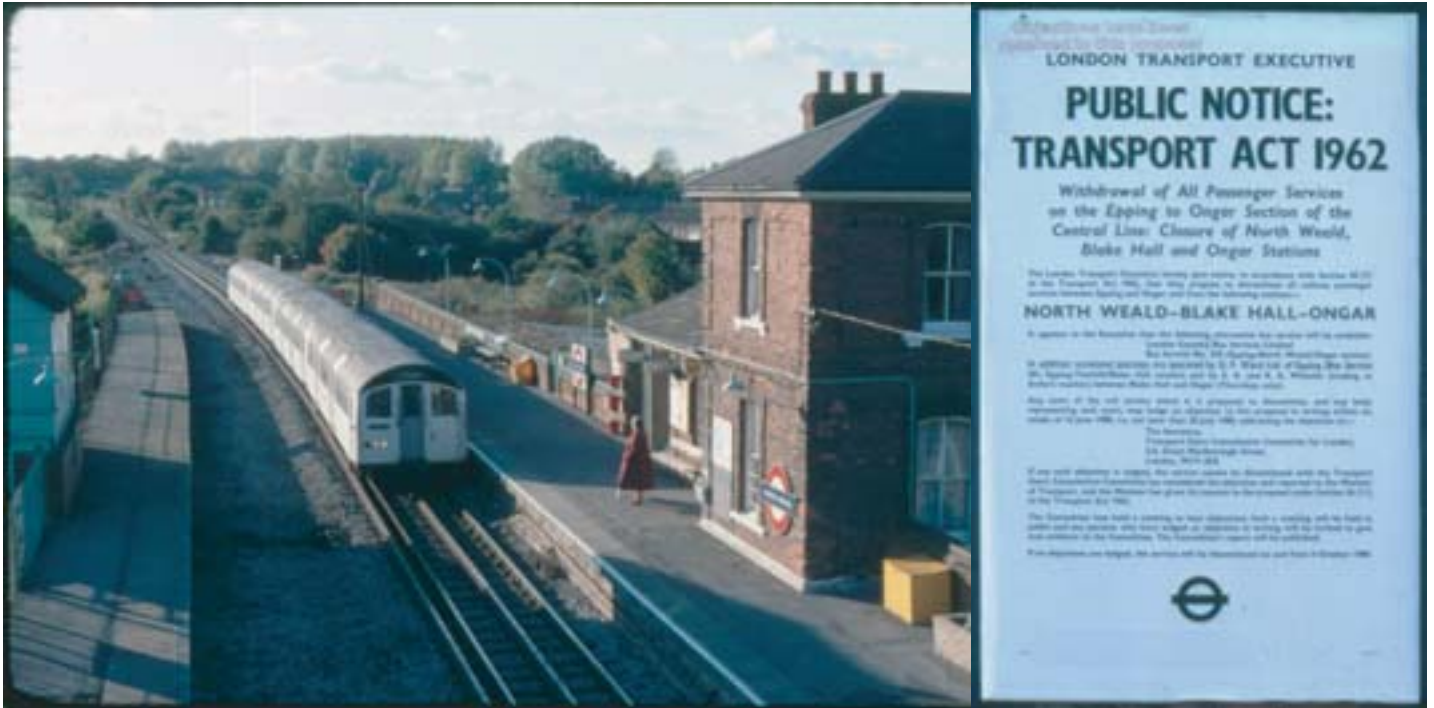
For the present, internal combustion power is the order of the day for the fledgling Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. An 0-4-0 Simplex was the motive power on 11th May 2005 and is seen in the sylvan surroundings of Woody Bay station.



Although none of the original L&B locomotives survived, remarkably some of the passenger stock did as garden sheds or summer houses including this third class coach which has been restored to its former glory at Woody Bay.

25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



OCTOBER 1980

Following the announcement in the summer by London Transport of plans to close the six-mile Epping - Ongar section of the Central Line, including stations at North Weald, Blake Hall and Ongar, more than 500 objections were received by the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for London. Consequently closure did not take place on 6th October, as planned, but was postponed pending a public enquiry.

Introduced by the LMS over forty years previously, in 1939, the second generation electric stock on the former Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway's Liverpool - Southport line was finally withdrawn after a special working on 4th October. Latterly this stock was classified as 502.

As part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway earlier in the year, a 'Rail Trail' had been opened from Edge Hill station to historic sites including the remains of the famous Moorish Arch in the cutting at Chatsworth Street. There the original stone steps of the arch were clearly visible, as were the rooms cut out of the rock sides. Public access to the site ceased from 12th October.

Also from 12th October, all train services were temporarily withdrawn from Barmouth Bridge, on the Cambrian Coast line between Morfa Mawddach and Barmouth. This was necessary because of work to test and assess the effects of an infestation of the common shipworm, *teredo navalis*, a marine boring mollusc, on the timber piles of the viaduct. During the closure, train services were maintained by separate services north and south of the bridge, with strengthened local bus services around Barmouth and additional express bus links between Pwllheli and Bangor.

The experimental railbus LEV-1 began a two-month trial on passenger services over the East Suffolk line

A lone passenger waits to board a Central Line train at North Weald station for Ongar on the eastern extremity of the Central Line. This was nearly two weeks after the proposed closure date which had been deferred after objections. (18th October 1980)

Closure notice for the Ongar branch, posted at Blake Hall station in the wilds of rural Essex. Note the addition at the top of the note that 'objections have been received'.

photos: Tim Edmonds

On the last day that it was open to the public, as part of the 'Rail Trail' from Edge Hill station, this was the site of the Moorish Arch on the Liverpool & Manchester Railway in the cutting at Chatsworth Street. The view is framed in the mouth of Wapping Tunnel. (12th October 1980)



on 13th October. Plans were for it to operate four trains Monday to Friday, and passengers were being invited to comment on the vehicle for a research survey.

The final 'Night Ferry' service from London to Paris and Brussels left platform 2 of Victoria station at 21.25 on 31st October. The withdrawal was blamed on high costs of replacing the distinctive dark-blue Wagon-Lits first-class sleeping cars, which were shunted on and off the ferry at Dover and at Dunkirk, and a fall in passenger numbers.

OCTOBER 1990

One hundred years of the Forth Bridge were celebrated on 7th October with a spectacular display of music, searchlights, lasers, fireworks, and water from fire-fighting tugs. The final act was the switching on of the bridge's now-permanent floodlighting installation. Earlier in the day A4 60009, carrying the name *Osprey* as a politically-correct gesture, hauled a special train over the bridge.

The four Class 59/1 locos for ARC Southern arrived at Newport Docks on 20th October, after crossing the Atlantic from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and were unloaded the same day. Each locomotive then had to be 'unpacked' from the white nylon glove, with cardboard and plastic foam strips, with which it had been protected during the voyage.

On 28th October London Underground held an Open Day at Ruislip Depot on the Central Line. Among the attractions were displays of underground rolling stock, old and new, electric loco No 12 *Sarah Siddons* and a class 322 Network SouthEast 'Stansted Express' unit. Metropolitan Railway 0-4-4T No 1 (L44) was in steam and gave rides the length of the yard. A surprise visitor was the Deltic 9000 Fund's preserved Class 55 Co-Co 9016 *Gordon Highlander*.

The historic moment of the first Channel Tunnel breakthrough came at 19.30 on Tuesday 30th October, when a probe 50mm in diameter was used to drill a hole from the British side through the remaining 100 metres separating the two sides of the service tunnel.

Plans to scratch-build an LNER Peppercorn A1 Pacific locomotive were announced by a newly-formed group calling itself 'The A1 Locomotive Project'. The official launch took place on 17th November at the York Railway Institute, overlooking the East Coast Main Line. With financing from deeds of covenant the group was embarking on the building of the first main-line steam locomotive in Britain for over 30 years. The loco will be numbered 60163, which would have been the next in the A1 series. No name had yet been decided.



A 'Deltic' in unfamiliar territory - D9016 'Gordon Highlander' was one of the star guests at London Underground's Ruislip Depot Open Day. (28th October 1990)



Against the backdrop of Torbay, 2-6-2T 4555 brings a train around the coastline between Churston and Goodrington on the Torbay & Dartmouth line. (15th September 1990)

CONTRIBUTING TO THE DONKEY

The *Marlow Donkey* is your Society's magazine and needs your contributions. The Editor welcomes articles of all sorts so if you have a pet subject or have been on a trip recently share it with your fellow members. Articles typed and submitted on disk or by email are preferred but hand written contributions can be accepted (They may take a little longer to appear!) Pictures can be prints, slides or digital images.

Please contact the Editor, address on page 1, for further advice.

Deadline for next issue: 31 October 2005

THE GREAT GATHERING - CREWE 1952



46200 'The Princess Royal', 46221 'Queen Elizabeth' and Black 5 44830 at Crewe Station on 8th April 1952

Sadly this is one of a very few photographs that I took which has survived from my teenage years

It was taken on a day trip to Crewe on Tuesday 8th April 1952 and I think it was possibly an open day at Crewe Works which I know took place in '52, but I can't be certain of this. The photo date is however correct and was endorsed on the reverse of the print.

The survival of the print over the intervening 53 years is interesting and warrants some comment.

I was accompanied on the day by my life-long friend Harold Kirkham who rediscovered the print in 1996, and presented it to me shortly afterwards. As school boys we were inseparable and spent much of our spare time following our interest in transport. Crewe, York, Chester and Carlisle were our principal sources of railway interest.

Sadly Harold died after a very short illness in August 2002, only weeks before he was due to retire. His widow

Trudy visits us in Marlow occasionally

Examination of the print suggests that the Princess Royal was green, and the Duchess blue. but the decision to change from blue to green for class 7(8) locos was made in the final weeks of 1951, and if the loco had received a heavy overhaul it should be green.. This suggests that 46221 may have visited the works for mechanical attention only, or possibly Crewe were using up stocks of blue paint. I have been able to track down that 46221 was released from Crewe Works the previous day. The other two locos 44830 and 46200, certainly appear to have been repainted and look as if they were ready for duty.

The other interesting point is the three doubledeckers on the station over-bridge. These were Crosville Bristol "K's" with ECW bodywork, the *Lodekka* model only reached Crosville a year or two later.

Malcolm Margetts