



Edition

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Contents:

A Chiltern Centenary

100 Years of the Joint Line - Part 2

Days out with Steam

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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CONTENTS

TIMETABLE - Forthcoming meetings	Page 2
CHAIRMAN'S NOTES Tim Speechley	2
SOCIETY & LOCAL NEWS	3
A CHILTERN CENTENARY Members' photographs.	5
100 YEARS OF THE JOINT LINE Part 2 Mike Walker	7
DAYS OUT WITH STEAM Mike Hyde	11
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S ONLY STREET TRAMWAY Mike Walker	12
25 AND 15 YEARS AGO Tim Edmonds	13
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RAILWAY CENTRE Mike Hyde	15

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: 48151 pulling away past 165015 at High Wycombe with the penultimate departure on Sunday 2nd April 2006

Tim Edmonds. (details page 5)

Bottom: The twice daily Blue Pullman (the Birmingham Pullman) passing through High Wycombe

Ron North (details page 10)

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

- Thursday 20 July **THE WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY** Ivan Ball
If you've been to North Wales recently or been following progress in the magazines you will know that rapid strides are being made to return the WHR to Porthmadog. Tonight Ivan Ball brings up to date with this remarkable project.
- Thursday 21 September **THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY** Keith Smith
A look at the current operations of one of the nation's premier heritage railways.
- Thursday 19 October **BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE** Chief Inspector Willie Baker
The work of the Transport Police explained. To many of us their role seems to be to prevent us taking photographs and creating inordinate delays to the clearing up operations after an accident but there's much more to it than that as we shall hear, and you have the chance to ask those probing questions!
- Thursday 16 November **THE LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY** Noel Coates
Noel is one of the leading authorities on this well respected railway that once dominated the two counties of its name.
- TUESDAY 12 December** **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**
Please note the non-standard day and date. The party will be held in the main hall at Liston Hall to overcome last year's overcrowding.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Saturday 24 June **OPEN EVENING AT THE RUISLIP LIDO RAILWAY** By car
We have been invited to attend an open evening at Ruislip. For full details see page 3.
- Sunday 9 July **DAY TRIP TO THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY** By coach
Your final chance to book for this year's coach trip. Full details and costs are to be found on page 3 of this issue..

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

I thought I should take this opportunity to write a few words having become Chairman. I never expected this to happen and I feel that with Gordon's move to Bournemouth the Society has lost a really conscientious ambassador on our behalf. I hope I will be able to do half as well. We wish him and Elizabeth every happiness in their new life down there and I am sure we will be seeing Gordon at some future meetings. Of course the Chairman is just one member of the committee and I will be depending on continued support from all the others who contribute so much to keep the Society alive. I'm writing this just a couple of days after Ron White's "Colour-Rail" presentation to us. I think you will agree it was one of the most humorously entertaining evenings we have had for a long time and how nice to see the room full. There are more interesting and varied talks on the way, so keep coming and encourage any non-members you meet to come along too. We really need to try to increase membership and it is gratifying that this year we have already attracted a small number of new people as full members - welcome to you all.

We are now entering the visits season and already a small group has visited the Baie de Somme railway's "Fete de Vapeur" (for which a report will appear in a future edition of the "Donkey") and a larger one Ireland. I was sorry to have to miss this, as all reports say it was most successful. Well-done Mike for making such comprehensive arrangements. Imminently we have our visit to the Ruislip Lido Railway's open day, which I suspect is principally for its own members, so we are particularly lucky to have been invited. Also forthcoming is the Society's principal visit of the year, to the Bluebell Railway, on 9 July. This venue was selected by the membership and it is disappointing that, as I write, take up of places has not been better. I have been in communication with the Bluebell and hope to be able to arrange some extra activities not normally available to individual visitors, so please make the effort to support this trip.

Meanwhile enjoy your own private visits to railways, wherever they may be.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

It is a great pleasure to welcome several new members to the Society, David Collins, Graham Robinson and Malcolm Stotter. In addition a long time friend of the Society, Dave Theobald has now enrolled as a member. We hope you all enjoy the club's activities and look forward to seeing you at forthcoming meetings.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

As you will know by now Gordon Rippington has retired as Chairman due to his move to the south coast and been replaced as Chairman by Tim Speechley. Gordon's seat on the committee has been taken by Roger Bowen who returns for a second stint having been our original secretary. However we still have one vacancy on the committee, any volunteers?

PREVIOUS MEETINGS & TRIPS

Mike Timms made a return visit in March under the title "35 Years With A Camera" which proved to be a varied collection of images covering just about every aspect of railways.

Our own Tim Edmonds presented a fascinating selection of images under the title "Railway Oddities" at the April meeting. Everything from unusual infrastructure to unlikely workings was featured from home and around the world.

Despite difficulties in getting to the May meeting due to an accident at Handy Cross, Ron White had us in helpless laughter once more with his particularly sharp observations on the finer points of Swindon practice and that of lesser railways. "The body may be falling apart but the brain's still going strong dear boy".

The two overseas excursions this spring, to France in April and Ireland in May were both declared to be a great success by those who took part. Full reports on both will appear in the next issue.

BOOK NOW FOR BLUEBELL

Members are reminded of our charabanc trip to the Bluebell Railway on Sunday 9th July. As you will recall, last year's proposed trip to Llangollen had to be abandoned due a shortage of members putting their names down. Mike Hyde reports that seats are selling but there are still several to be sold so please contact him as soon as possible.

The cost for the coach is £12.00 per person, plus £9.50 for the Bluebell (£9.00 for seniors and £4.70 for children under 16). Bluebell trains leave Sheffield Park on the hour every hour and alternate departures are formed of the Vintage Branch Line train. For family members who may not share our love of steam, there is the alternative of the Sheffield Park National Trust gardens.

RUISLIP LIDO VISIT

The Society has been invited to attend an Open Evening at the Ruislip Lido Railway on Saturday 24th June from 1800 to 2130. Transport can be arranged if required. If you are interested please contact Mike Hyde without delay.

ALAN WHEELER

Long standing members will be saddened to hear that Alan passed away in mid-May after a long fight against cancer. Alan was one of our founding members and a keen supporter of the Society until he moved to Fairford in Gloucestershire some years ago.

Our condolences go to Hazel and the family.

ONWARD AND UPWARD

The career of our high-flying youngest member Mark Hopwood continues to rise. With effect from 8th May 2006 he was appointed Managing Director of Londonlines (that's the c2c and Silverlink franchises). Congratulations Mark!

MARLEYBONE PROGRESS



The new platform canopy at Marylebone has been designed to compliment the existing station.

photo: Mike Walker

The first of the new platforms, no. 6, was brought into use on 8th May to replace platform 4 which has been temporarily taken out of use to allow it to be shortened and the new concourse to be completed. Platforms 4 and 5 will be available by late summer.

AYLESBURY NORTH TO GO AHEAD

Chiltern Railways' proposal to open a new station 2½ miles north of Aylesbury where the A41 passes under the line has been approved. Costing £12 million including upgrading and re-signalling the presently freight only line, £2.8 million of which will come from Chiltern parent Laing Rail, £1 million from Bucks CC and the balance from central government, the station will serve as a park and ride facility with 400 parking spaces and serve 3800 new homes which are to be built in the area. Detailed design work has already begun and the station is expected to open in 2009. It provides a spring board for the proposed re-opening through to Milton Keynes.

COOKHAM ON AIR

Cookham station is to take on a unique additional role this summer, that of radio station. The village has been granted a licence to have its own community radio station "Cookham Summer FM". The brainchild of local resident and children's television presenter Timmy Mallett, it will broadcast 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from the station waiting room from June 12th until July 9th on 87.9 FM to a potential audience of 35000 within a 10 mile radius.

REBUILDING HIGH WYCOMBE

Work is due to start on the rebuilding of High Wycombe's fire damaged main station building this month, subject to the approval of Wycombe District Council. The opportunity is being taken to much improve the facility. Passenger information displays and public address were finally restored at the end of March.

A DAY TO FORGET!

Monday 5th March was a day Chiltern would prefer to forget. The weekend had seen the commissioning of stage 1 of Evergreen 2, the re-signalling between High Wycombe and Princes Risborough. The signalling engineers and Chiltern's project team were patting themselves on the back by completing the project 5 hours ahead of schedule but then the wheels fell off!

Network Rail had taken the opportunity to undertake some trackwork between Bicester and Aynho and in the wee hours of Monday morning a tamper sat down on the up line near Ardley and refused to budge. It was still there in mid-afternoon. It seems another tamper had to be sent from north of Birmingham to drag it away. Why a locomotive could not have been summoned from Didcot has not been explained. Your editor suggested using one of the Aylesbury "Bubbles" but this was rejected on the grounds it might "wreck a gearbox and spares are hard to get." No trains could run north of Bicester, since although both lines are signalled bi-directionally the down cannot be used as such because a vital crossover north of Aynho Jct has never been installed. Chiltern management were livid and were threatening either to send a gang from Aylesbury and cut the tamper up on the spot or ask the RAF if they were willing to send a Chinook for a bit of heavy lift practice! Chiltern's new Engineering Director is ex-RAF.

That Monday was Trevor Fenwick's first day as the new Station Manager at High Wycombe. He's come from GNER at Leeds and on surveying the parlous state of his new domain, a service in total meltdown and with no way of being able to keep customers informed of what was going on he admits he wondered "what the hell he'd let himself in for!"

FOOTBRIDGES

A footbridge was installed at Kings Sutton in May. This replaces the previous flat crossing at the down end of the platforms. With the increase in speed and number of trains on the line this has increasingly been an accident waiting to happen. Unusually in these times this is a simple bridge with steps only. Chiltern, who are responsible for the station, have agreed to make taxis available for disabled passengers who would otherwise be unable to board or leave trains at Kings Sutton.

Denham is also going to get a footbridge as part of a scheme to rebuild the down platform which is in a serious state of decay. A new island platform will be built and the footbridge in this case will have lifts for disabled passengers. Space will be left between the up line and the new platform to permit a bi-directional through line to be installed later if required.

FIRST GO FOR "COOL" NEON



New look 43009 at Didcot on 4th April 2006.

photo: Brian Daniels

You might have seen in the railway press that First have adopted a new livery for the class 185 units on Transpennine. Known as the First Neon scheme, it has now been applied to First Great Western's prototype re-engined and refurbished HST vehicles. The above 2+3 short set powered by 43004 and 43009 and comprising FO 41003, TRFB 40752 and TGS 44049, was photographed on a demonstration run at Didcot on 4th April. Presumably this scheme will be applied to all FGW HST's as they are re-engined and refurbished, at least. In case you've lost count, that's the fifth livery they've carried since privatisation.

Member John Sears, who works for Passenger Focus (formerly the Rail Passenger Council), observes that First told them that having shown the new scheme to focus groups the reaction was excellent - people asked said: "They'd simply get on a train painted like that no matter where it was going because it looks so cool!" Do First really think their customers are that stupid?!

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP

Whilst we were enjoying steam on the Joint Line on April Fools Day, 60009 Union of South Africa was booked to work the VSOE from Victoria to Oxford and return. This was supposed to return via the GWML but engineering works were in place closing two tracks so Network Rail banned the Streak from hauling the return train as it is restricted to 75 mph and it was felt this would delay other traffic. But...

The train was therefore hauled back to London by a class 67 leaving the A4 at Oxford to return overnight. However, what NR's "planners" failed to consider was that the VSOE stock itself is restricted to 75 mph so nothing was achieved. But it gets worse!

Normally on such occasions, the train arrives at Oxford with the 67 on the back. This then hauls the complete train back to Didcot and turns it via the triangle. These moves are made at 75 mph of course. On April Fools Day 60009 had to run round its support coach at Oxford and then set off engine and support coach for turning at Didcot. As she was running tender first each way the speed was restricted to just 35 mph! Finally when it set out from Oxford in the late evening for Stewarts Lane it was running via the GWML with just its support coach for company and thus restricted to a mere 50 mph!

Continued on page 15.

A CHILTERN



Despite an uncharacteristic lack of publicity by Chiltern and some indifferent weather, the weekend has been judged a great success. Most trains were well loaded in the "ordinary" seats although some of the dining services were poorly patronised which is perhaps not too surprising.

The advertised pair of Halls were replaced by 8F 48151 *Gauge O Guild* at the London end and Jubilee 5690 *Leander* at the High Wycombe end. This change seems to have been made in the week ending 24th March as Network Rail refused to accept the Halls as they are not cleared for the line.

Some of you might find this strange as Halls were common as muck in the "good old days", but remember that since then, and in particular over the last few months, a lot of track renewal and realignment has taken place on the line. In

view of previous "interference fits" between steam locos and the infrastructure, the Duchess at Kilburn and King losing its safety valves at Paddington come to mind, one can understand NR's reticence. One just wonders why the line wasn't gauged when the Halls were first booked. The principal cause for concern in this case was the width over the cylinders and that they might foul a platform.

A moment of near farce occurred when the LMS pair rolled into Marylebone on the Friday night, much to the surprise of some Chiltern staff. As late as Thursday 30th March, Chiltern's own internal final briefing documents were referring to two Halls! It seems that Network



Rail, Vintage Trains and West Coast Railway had made the decision between them and not kept Chiltern fully in the loop.

At Marylebone the trains were handled in platform 1 where **Malcolm Margetts** caught *Leander* (top left) before the departure with the first train of the weekend on the Sunday morning.

The previous morning retiring chairman **Gordon Rippington** found the Jubilee in full cry passing Gerrards Cross (centre left) with the unloading facility for the spoil to back fill the Tesco tunnel unused at the left.

A contrast in motive power as **Tim Edmonds** caught 48151 pulling away past 165015 at High Wycombe with the penultimate departure on Sunday 2nd April (bottom left).



CENTENARY

Of the two locomotives, 48151 appeared to put in the more spirited performances over the weekend. A rain shower of Niagaran proportions had just cleared and the sun reappeared when the Black 8 stormed through Seer Green & Jordans with the last train on Saturday much to the approval of **Mike Walker** (top right).

The locomotive was still working well and the sun co-operating for **Gordon Rippington** (centre left) when Sunday's mid-day train departed from Beaconsfield.

By contrast, Leander seemed to just going along for the ride as it emerged from White House Farm Tunnel (centre right) with the final down service on Sunday caught by our newest member **Malcolm Stotter**.



Phil Searle was on hand at High Wycombe station on the Sunday afternoon to record the two locos, 5690 *Leander* (bottom right) and 48151 *Gauge O Guild* (bottom right) departing from platform 2 for the final time.





100 YEARS OF THE JOINT LINE

Part 2 THE GLORY YEARS

Mike Walker



It wasn't long after the Joint Line opened for business on 2nd April 1906 before additions were made to the line. The first new station was South Ruislip & Northolt Junction which opened on 1st July 1908; its name was shortened to South Ruislip in 1948. Intended to kick start development in the area it was a simple two platform affair immediately west of the flying junction of the GC and the GW New Line. Basic wooden buildings were provided

on both platforms whilst the main building, also of wood, was located at street level on the up side. The next station to be added, Denham Golf Club opened on 8th August 1912 and was, and remains, a classic GWR Halt with wooden platforms and corrugated iron "Pagoda" style shelters. However it was actually classed as a "Platform" initially.

Perhaps at this point it might be useful to clarify what the difference was between a Station, Platform and Halt, at least as far as the Great Western was concerned. A Station was defined as one that was fully staffed - usually with its own Station Master - and, importantly, was a block post, i.e. had at least one signal box controlling its limits. A Platform was a smaller station with a token staff and normally overseen by a neighbouring SM and which, crucially, did not have its own signal box. Finally, a Halt was the lowest of the low, unstaffed and usually with short platforms (Denham Golf Club was an exception, its platforms were normal length) and again no signal box.

Another golf club which received its own station, the GW & GC Committee were obviously keen to attract the business of the golfing fraternity, was Beaconsfield in the depths of winter and the midst of the First World War on 1st January 1915. Initially known as Beaconsfield Golf Links, then Seer Green from 1918 and finally Seer Green & Jordans by BR, it was also classed as a Platform. It had two platforms connected by a footbridge and wooden buildings on both. The main building was on the up side whilst the down side had a simple waiting shelter and access directly to the golf course club house.

Passenger services were split between the two partners. The Great Western routed nearly all its London to Birmingham expresses onto the Joint Line following the opening of the Ashendon - Aynho section in 1910 and ran only a limited local service whilst the Great Central concentrated on local services preferring to continue to



Thompson's B1s were the mainstay of former GC services in the late LNER early BR period. 1187 leads the 12.25 Marylebone to Manchester Central past West Wycombe in September 1947.

H N James/Colour-Rail NE9

route most of its long distance services via the Metropolitan although peak hour services did tend to be routed via High Wycombe including the long-standing 18.20 Marylebone to Bradford. Both companies operated considerable numbers of freight services daily over the Joint Line.

Initially around 20-22 local services were operated by the GC to and from Marylebone. Their country terminals were mostly High Wycombe but some

continued north to Aylesbury, Wotton and even Brackley. By contrast the GW operated only five each way between Aylesbury and Paddington and five between Oxford and Paddington. In addition there was a single late evening up service to Paddington which started from High Wycombe having arrived via Maidenhead. Of these GW services, one morning train from Oxford and an evening train to Aylesbury were routed via Ealing Broadway rather than Park Royal whilst on Sundays three of the five trains in each direction ran via Ealing Broadway.

The earliest motive power on the Joint Line consisted of GC class 9K and 9L 4-4-2T's (later called classes C13 and C14 by the LNER and BR) on local services but these were soon displaced by Robinson's massive class 9N (A5) 4-6-2T's, sometimes known as Coronation Tanks, which were introduced in 1911 and were a fixture on the line until well into the BR era. Long distance passenger services were hauled by the Jersey Lilly 4-4-2's and later by Director 4-4-0's and Robinson's 4-6-0's whilst goods services drew the Pom-Pom 0-6-0's, the 8K or O4 2-8-0's (the well known ROD class) or the rarer IB class 2-6-4T. Local passengers travelling over line would have seen a marked improvement with the coming of the GC service as new stock was built especially for them incorporating electric lighting and the GC's patented anti-overriding buffers on the ends. By contrast the GW's services continued to comprise a hotchpotch of aging vehicles, mostly gas lit.

GW motive power was equally varied. The through services to Birmingham almost from the beginning got Star and Saint Class 4-6-0's with occasional County 4-4-0. The latter were also to be found on the services to and from Oxford along with Atbara and Flower Class 4-4-0's. GW tank engines were somewhat rarer than you might expect, mostly being confined to services via Maidenhead and Bourne End. They included the well

known Metro 2-4-0T and 22xx County 4-4-2T as well as the rarer 36xx or Birdcage 2-4-2T. Goods services could produce anything from a saddle tank or Dean Goods to an Aberdare 2-6-0 or 28xx 2-8-0.

Amongst the more unusual and un-remarked services to operate over the Joint Line in its early years were a service to and from London Victoria! From October 1910 the GW operated an up service from Wolverhampton which called at High Wycombe and arrived at Victoria (SECR side) at 10.00, the return working leaving at 20.15. From May the following year this became a "Continental Boat Train" by conveying through coaches to Queenborough Pier and Folkestone to connect with ferry sailings. A second service to Victoria was added in 1911 by detaching a portion at Greenford which was then taken forward via Ealing Broadway arriving at Victoria at 18.15. These services were short lived being withdrawn in February 1912.

One GW local service that did serve the Joint Line in part was the rather complex pattern of West London railmotor services. Although the routing of these changed quite frequently, the principal two routes were from Westbourne Park out via Park Royal to Greenford where it would reverse and head round the Greenford Loop to Ealing Broadway and thence to Willesden Junction (High Level). The second ran from Kensington Addison Road (now Olympia) via Ealing Broadway to Greenford and thence to Denham or Gerrards Cross before reversing and calling at Uxbridge High Street. This routing rendered the east curve at the Uxbridge branch junction redundant and it never carried a regular service and was soon closed, later becoming a stub-ended oil siding. The branch itself closed to passengers on 31st August 1939 but remained open for goods until 1965.

The coming of the Grouping in 1923 did little to change the line. Although the LNER absorbed the GC the latter's name continued to grace the line - only the branding and livery of the trains changed. The GC tank and goods engines became plain black whilst the express engines swapped their GC Brunswick Green and maroon frames for Apple Green.

The interwar period saw additional halts added along the



5971, formerly named Merevale Hall, departs from High Wycombe with a down service.

Ron North

line and its connections. On 24th September 1928 Harefield Halt opened just east of Denham East Junction. Later renamed South Harefield this failed to attract the anticipated traffic or surrounding development and was closed completely on 30th September 1931. More successful was Ruislip Gardens which opened for business on 9th July 1934, despite its relative proximity to South Ruislip. North of Princes Risborough, the Aylesbury branch saw two additional halts added, Monks Risborough on 11th November 1929 and South Aylesbury on 13th February 1933. Services on this line were worked by LNER push-pull trains which worked through to Verney Junction until 4th July 1936 and occasionally south to High Wycombe. North of Princes Risborough, the GW added halts at Ilmer, 1st April 1929, and Dorton, 21st June 1937. These were served by Autotrains between Banbury and Princes Risborough or High Wycombe.

The passenger services remained mostly unchanged throughout the interwar period but the equipment changed. On the Marylebone local services the original GC stock was replaced by Gresley's cramped articulated stock which was no doubt not appreciated by the commuters of the day. The semi-fasts and expresses were taken over by A3 Pacifics from 1938 until war broke out, including 4472 Flying Scotsman which was allocated to Neasden for some years, and the V2's plus occasional B17's.

The GW bestowed names on its principal joint line services. From 1928 the 09.05 Birkenhead - Paddington and 16.10 return were dubbed the *Belfast Boat Express*. Until 1933 the summer weekdays only 09.25 from Paddington to Stratford-upon-Avon was known as the *Shakespeare Express*. In 1937, another summer only service, leaving Paddington at 10.10 on Fridays and Saturdays only became the *Cambrian Coast Express*. During the period, GW motive power was upgraded with Castle and King Class 4-6-0's becoming a regular sight on the expresses whilst the former Birdcage and County tanks were replaced by the 61xx class 2-6-2T.

As part of the newly formed London Passenger Transport Board's 1935 New Works Programme it



6015 King Richard III passing High Wycombe Middle 'Box' with the 12.00 Birmingham - Paddington on 25th June 1962.

Colour-Rail MAR15



Still looking remarkably clean, 7902 Eaton Mascot Hall departs Beaconsfield with an up freight on 3rd May 1962.

Colour-Rail MAR13

was proposed to extend the Central Line alongside the GW New Line and GW & GC Joint from North Acton to Denham to replace GW local services. Whilst preliminary work was carried out, construction was brought to a standstill by the Second World War. It resumed in 1946 but was curtailed at West Ruislip although the design of the LT terminal there was such as to allow extension westwards and some earthworks were undertaken. The first section opened as far as Greenford on 30th June 1947 and replaced the GW's Autotrains from Westbourne Park. The second section from Greenford to West Ruislip opened on 21st November 1948. Although the Joint Line stations at South Ruislip and West Ruislip remained open, Ruislip Gardens Halt was replaced by a Central Line station.

Initially, under British Railways control little outwardly changed apart from the liveries and insignia which once again affected the ex-GC operations more than the Western. The GC route expresses started to be hauled by Thompson's B1 class from 1946 and the A3's made a return in the early 1950's. The immediate post-war era saw a difficult period for the local services because of increasing difficulties keeping the aging A5 tanks in service. For a period it seemed that anything with wheels would appear on the services including N2's, the ex-GC L3 (1B) 2-6-4T's and even the C13 4-4-2T's that had predated the A5's! Eventually, the new L1 class 2-6-4T became the standard power for these services. The Eastern Region even bestowed a name to the long standing evening express, now the 18.15 Marylebone to Sheffield, which became the *Master Cutler* and regularly drew an A3 for power. It ran hard on the heels of the 18.10 Paddington to Birkenhead which was booked for a King. What a fine sight these must have made for 1950's spotters at High Wycombe. The Western gave the name *Inter City* to the 08.20 Paddington - Wolverhampton and 16.35 Wolverhampton - Paddington long before the title was used generically. The *Cambrian Coast Express* had been revived in 1951 and now ran daily, year-round.

Both the trains were King hauled and from around 1957 onwards were almost guaranteed to be formed of solid rakes of chocolate and cream mk1's as the Western sought to stamp its own identity once more

A major change in management came in 1958 when the Railway Executive decided to redraw the boundaries of BR's Regions away from the old company territories to a more geographically logical region. As a result, the Eastern lost its interest in the Joint Line to the London Midland Region and with it came the start of many changes. Within weeks the L1's had vanished from the locals to be replaced by various LMS and BR Standard 2-6-4T's whilst the Gresley "Artics" were replaced by former LMS and BR mk1 non-corridor stock. The long distance trains were gradually withdrawn and replaced by a semi-fast

service as far as Nottingham - the *Master Cutler* was diverted to the East Coast Main Line from Kings Cross - and Black 5's and perhaps the occasional Jubilee became the normal motive power.

From 1960 diesels started to appear. Initially these were the confined to DMU's on the services to and from Paddington via Maidenhead but in June 1962 four car Derby built sets replaced steam traction on the Marylebone line. Although more powerful than the WR sets, these LM sets (later to become class 115) were in many ways inferior. Some of the Nottingham semi-fasts received class 40's.

Although the former GC operations had been curtailed by the transfer to the LMR, it was to be that region's electrification of the Euston line in the early sixties that saw a last glorious Indian summer for the WR services on the Joint Line. To allow the engineers extra access to the WCML, the majority of Birmingham - London services were diverted to the WR via the Joint Line. Flagship of



42090 waits at High Wycombe with an up local service to London Marylebone on 12th March 1961 just prior to replacement by DMU's.

GTR Slides 1924

The Marlow Donkey



A weary looking Castle 5076 Gladiator departs Princes Risborough with a down express probably not long before it was withdrawn in 1964.

Ron North

the enhanced service was the *Birmingham Pullman* which used one of the Blue Pullman sets which made two round trips a day over the route. From 1962 the new Western class diesel hydraulics replaced the Kings but their tenure initially was to be short lived. Further tinkering with regional boundaries saw the line north of Banbury pass from WR to LMR control and the latter took a dim view of these strange fluid drive locos on their patch so Brush type 4's became the norm, although the WR did later try to deploy the North British Warships on the line with a similar result!

The completion of the electrification into Euston saw the end of the enhanced services over the Joint Line including the *Birmingham Pullman* and the *Cambrian Coast Express* which came to an end on 4th March 1967. From now on the line would fall into a long decline and even be threatened with part or total closure as we shall see in the final part of this series.



ABOVE LEFT *BR Standard 9F 92234 heads north towards Bradenham with a fitted freight.*



ABOVE RIGHT *The end of an era as 7029 Clun Castle sweeps past West Wycombe with a special to mark the end of through services on 4th March 1967.*

RIGHT *The twice daily passing of the Birmingham Pullman through High Wycombe was probably one of the highlights of the diesel era.*

all Ron North



DAYS OUT WITH STEAM

Words and Pictures by Mike Hyde

FUN 4A DAY

March saw me waiting on St Albans station at an early hour for 'The Yorkshireman' steam special. On time our train came into view, hauled as expected by Class A4 No. 60009 *Union of South Africa*. I had last ridden behind No.9, as she is affectionately known, some 20 years ago when because of possible political problems, she was temporarily renamed *Osprey*. I well remember the positive run over the Settle/Carlisle line from Blackburn only to be let down on the return leg by 4472 *Flying Scotsman* running late due to firing problems. However today our plan was to run to York for a 4 hour break in the city.

The route was to be unusual, partly to cover interesting or freight lines, but also due to engineering works. Pick ups were at Luton, Bedford, Wellingborough, Kettering and Loughborough. A connecting scheduled service also brought in passengers from Market Harborough and Leicester. The train was full due to good advertising in the Leicestershire press which attracted many new comers to steam travel. On board dining for some, buffet or sandwiches for others, led to a happy atmosphere and time for a pub visit in York, if needed! No. 9 performed just great with several fast runs particularly down the main line on the return leg.

The only delays were from adverse signals which caused a 15 minute late arrival at York; not the loco's fault. Return to St Albans was achieved in 3 minutes under time! One of the best steam runs I've had for years and behind a magnificent engine. What more can one ask.

61264 at Peterborough on 1April 2006.



60009 Union of South Africa at York on 18 March 2006.

BE ONE BY THE SEA

April 1st was anything but April Fool's Day this year. RTC ran 'The Lincolnshire Poacher' from Kings Cross to Cleethorpes. The plan was to be hauled by diesel class 33025 to Peterborough and there pick up steam. Routing was by Stevenage, Huntingdon and later Grantham. The stock was late coming into KX so departure was 20 minutes down and difficult to make up. It meant we lost our slot for passing or following trains several times. Nevertheless Class B1 No. 61264 joined at Peterborough and behaved impeccably throughout. Footplate crew got the best out of the loco and she never faltered, even on hills from a standing start. My favourite part of the trip was the South Yorkshire Joint Line. This was coalmining territory but it was hard to tell due to planting and visual

improvements. Many of the communities we passed through lost their stations in 1929 - Aston, Dinnington and Laughton, Maltby, Tickhill and Wadworth (1911). Onwards to Scunthorpe and our terminus Cleethorpes where, inspite of being 90 minutes late, a crowd and the sunshine awaited us. Time to stretch our legs, buy an icecream, look at the North Sea and Humber estuary, then off down the New Holland branch. Our expected call into Lincoln on return was scrubbed by Network Rail which meant a hurriedly arranged brief stop at Doncaster to drop off some passengers. Here we exchanged steam for 47826. We were again held several times at signals or sidelined but never due to our steamer or our timings at watering stops. It added up to a 2 hour late return into KX. Nevertheless a good day out, great train ride with a spirited engine.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S ONLY STREET TRAMWAY

Mike Walker

The county of Buckinghamshire was not generally noted for street tramways but there was one exception which was noteworthy, the Wolverton & Stony Stratford Tramway which was built in the 1880's to provide a means of transport for the workers at the London & North Western Railway's Wolverton Works and the nearby McCorquodales printing works. Many of these lived in the town of Stony Stratford nearly three miles from the works and walked or cycled to work as the only alternative was a horse bus which charged a fare of 6d each way.

In 1881 a group of Stony Stratford businessmen proposed that the two towns should be linked by a light railway and in 1883 a Tramway Order was granted to Frederick Charles Winby to build a line 2 miles 54 chains in length and of 4 foot gauge. Three years were to pass before the line was constructed by Charles Herbert Wilkinson who undertook the project for £13,325 of which £2000 would be paid in shares. The line was actually built to a gauge of 3' 6" and opened on 17th May 1887.

The line was a classic street running tramway and started outside the LNWR station in Wolverton. It headed west along the middle of Stratford Road which became Wolverton Road as it entered Stony Stratford. It then made a sharp right turn onto the High Street (or A5 Watling Street) and headed north crossing the River Great Ouse and county boundary into Northamptonshire before terminating at the crossroads by the post office in Old Stratford where there was a turntable and terminal building, part of which still stands.

An extension was promoted from Old Stratford to the village of Deanshanger. This followed Deanshanger Lane west from the terminal to terminate outside the Fox & Hounds public house on The Green at Deanshanger a distance of 2 miles 3 chains. This extension opened on 24th May 1888 and was primarily aimed at generating goods traffic; Messrs E & H Roberts had been manufacturing agricultural implements there since the 1820's. However, passenger service also operated and the fare for the 4¾ mile journey between Wolverton and Deanshanger was 4d.

The tramway was unusual in that it was operated by steam locomotives. Originally these were four coupled tram locomotives built by Krauss of Munich. There are reports of 3 or 4 being in use but the company's returns to the Board of Trade in June 1887 count only two, the others may have been loaned. They had 8" x 12" cylinders, 2' 6" diameter wheels and a boiler pressure of 175 lbs/in². Rolling stock consisted of two massive 100 seat double deck cars 44' in length, an 80 seat double deck car with upholstered seating and a 20 seat single deck car. In addition there were two coke wagons and two covered goods wagons all built by E & H Roberts at Deanshanger. The 100 seaters proved too heavy for the Krauss locomotives so later in 1887 two locomotives were acquired from Thomas Green & Sons of Leeds. These had 9" x 14" cylinders along with 2' 6" wheels and 175 lbs/in² boilers. They were typical partly enclosed steam tram locomotives and employed condensing gear to

keep emissions to a minimum. They were 11' 6" long, 6' wide and 9' high and were capable of hauling both the 100 seat trailers loaded.

The line soon ran into financial difficulties and was declared insolvent in 1889 and was closed down after only two years of service. The Deanshanger extension was even shorter lived and its rails were quickly removed but the Wolverton to Old Stratford section remained in situ. In 1891 a syndicate from Bedford led by Sir Herbert Leon took over the line and under the cumbersome title of the Wolverton & Stony Stratford & District Tramways Company, reopened the line on 20th November 1891. In this second incarnation the line proved highly successful and a further locomotive was acquired from the Brush Electrical Company of Loughborough in 1900. Generally similar to the Green locomotives, but slightly larger in overall size and weighing 9½ tons in working order. It is not known if the original Krauss locomotives were still on the property.

Prosperity was short lived and by 1906 the tracks were deteriorating leading to many minor accidents involving cyclists and motor cyclists. This led Bucks County Council to institute proceedings against the company under the Tramways Act of 1870. Some deliberation followed before the company started to repair the tracks and carry out some realignment to accommodate the growing number of motor cars which had suddenly appeared in the district. Bad weather during the winter of 1906-7 delayed the work somewhat and services were suspended whilst it was being carried out.

By 1915 the tramway was again in financial difficulties (despite a fares increase) and facing competition from local motor bus services. Services were reduced to provide only workmen's facilities to and from Wolverton Works but even that did not secure the line. In 1918 the LNWR railway acquired the company to ensure a service was maintained for its workers. Under LNWR control a further locomotive was acquired in 1921, a conventional 0-4-0 tank engine although the wheels and motion were covered by skirts. In addition the chimney was found to be too short causing discomfort for passengers so a stove pipe extension was added.

The General Strike of 1926 was to be the final undoing for the tram. The staff joined in and as a result the line closed on 14th May and never reopened.

Remarkably, the tramway had employed steam traction throughout its life. Generally steam trams had a short life in this country, most had been replaced by electricity by 1901 but the Stony Stratford line stayed loyal and became the last steam worked tramway in the UK.

One of the 100 seat trams has survived and has now been restored under the care of Milton Kenyes Museum which has built up quite a collection of artefacts and photos of the line including some of the original track which was uncovered during the building of the Stony Stratford by pass. Much of their material was used in preparing this article and can be viewed with photographs at www.mkmuseum.org.uk/exhibit/tram.htm.

25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds

25 YEARS AGO

The end of fish traffic between Milford Haven and Paddington took place on 1 July, with the withdrawal of a solitary fish van still in service. BR thought the £6000 annual income from the service made it uneconomic to continue with the use of the vehicle.

Originally scheduled to take place on 1 June, complete closure of the Woodhead route across the Pennines took place from 18 July. The brief reprieve followed trade union pressure, including a threat of strike action by 250 members of the NUR in the Sheffield and Manchester areas. The last train through Woodhead Tunnel was the 20.53 Harwich (Parkeston Quay) - Liverpool "Speedlink" service, hauled by 76014 and 76006.

The BR two-car class 140 lightweight railbus was demonstrated to potential users and to the press in various parts of the country during the June and July, including Leeds, Newcastle, Carlisle, Chester, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Bristol, Plymouth, Derby, and Cambridge. On 13 July it began a four-week period of service on the North Warwickshire line from Birmingham to Stratford-upon-Avon. 140001 was based on the experimental LEV-1 single-car, which had been made up from two Leyland National single-deck bus bodies on a four-wheel underframe.

Chinese Railways KF class 4-8-4 607, built by Vulcan Foundry in 1938 for the Yueh-Han Railway, returned to Britain by ship from Shanghai to Rotterdam and thence by lorry to York via Immingham. The loco was a gift from the Chinese Minister of Railways to the National Railway Museum.

After the wedding of the Prince of Wales with Lady Diana Spencer on 29 July the couple were conveyed to Romsey on a three-coach train hauled by 73142 *Broadlands*. They were to spend their honeymoon at Broadlands.

The prototype two-car lightweight railbus, 140001, was tested on various parts of the BR network during 1981, including a visit to the Gunnislake branch on 3 July. It returned for a longer spell four years later and is seen on the approach to Gunnislake on 24 May 1985. For several minutes beforehand its arrival was heralded by non-stop screeching round the curves all the way from Calstock station.

photo: Tim Edmonds



Loco haulage was the norm on fast services between Exeter and Barnstaple in the summer of 1981. Here 31420 passes Lapford with a rake of Mark 1 stock heading for Barnstaple on 20 June 1981.

photo: Tim Edmonds



On the Nene Valley Railway, ex-Polish Ty2 'Kriegslok' 2-10-0 7173 is seen after arrival at Wansford on 7 July 1991.

photo: Tim Edmonds





15 YEARS AGO

The first revenue-earning operation of bi-modal road/rail transport started running between the Pedigree sidings at Melton Mowbray and Cricklewood in June. The daily service was formed of 14 Charterrail lorry trailers carried in Tiphook "Piggyback" wagons.

Steam Traction, a Suffolk-based railway engineering and restoration company, purchased 29 ex-Russian Army 'Kriegslok' 2-10-0 locos, recently taken out of the strategic reserve and offered for sale. They were to be moved to Poland for storage and repair.

The BR electric services between Manchester and Bury were withdrawn during the summer to enable the line to be modified as part of the Greater Manchester light rail system. Manchester Victoria to Crumpsall was closed from 13 July and Crumpsall to Bury followed on 16 August.

Having undergone acceptance testing in the Derby area during March and April, and made their debut on the

On 6 July 1991, two days before the start of electric services on the North Berwick branch, 150254 waits to depart 'under the wires' at the terminus.

photo: Tim Edmonds

Chiltern Line in May, the first class 165 'Turbos' began to make appearances in the Thames Valley during the summer. 165 001 was noted on a test run at Maidenhead on 11 July, while 165005 made a first appearance at Bourne End on 31 August for a Marlow - Maidenhead Passengers' Association exhibition.

With the start of the summer timetable on 8 July, electric services went into operation between Edinburgh and North Berwick. Services were operated by refurbished class 305 units, replacing class 150 and 158 diesel units.

1991 saw the introduction of the class 165 Turbos. 165001 is seen at Maidenhead on its first test run on 11 July (bottom left) and 165005 becomes the first of the type to arrive at Bourne End on 21 August (bottom right).

both photos: Mike Walker



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RAILWAY CENTRE

Mike Hyde poses a question

Question: Why not visit Quainton Road railway centre?

Answer: It's a dump and worthless.

That's as it was, so you could not have been there in the past two or three years. Now it's even better. Not only is the former 1851 Oxford Rewley Road (LNWR/LMS) station re-sited there but there is so much more to see. Chose a Sunday when steam is on or a Special Event day, be it 'Transport' or 'Traction Engines'. If you want to avoid the crowds, not bothered about a ride and desire to save a few pence, try a non-steam Saturday.

Recently the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, home to the Quainton Railway Society, achieved Registered Museum status. For visitors a large collection of railway exhibits awaits from 4 platforms of carriages and wagons, some fully restored and some awaiting attention, to a variety of artefacts and railwayania. A large area of railway equipment from a horse-drawn cart to the PO underground train is laid out next to a full sized W H Smith platform book shop - remember them? This leads on to the small relics collection now displayed in super large glass cases.

This newly opened museum is worth the entry fee alone but of course you get the Rewley Road Visitor Centre with refreshments and well stocked shop, access to the whole site including the miniature railway, when operating (Sundays), and get the opportunity to view the countless static objects from a South African class 25NC to an Egyptian Sentinel Railcar currently under renovation. If there is work taking place in the extensive Workshop or in the Shed, then those facilities are open as well.

Don't be surprised when you are there, if a Class 66 or 67 passes through the site with the regular bin-train to Calvert. It keeps the rail connection a live possibility for the future. Most Bank Holidays a Turbo or Heritage DMU operates a shuttle service from Aylesbury station to the former Quainton Road station. Do first check for timings. There is plenty of FREE surfaced car parking and room for picnics if that's your style.



The interior of the reconstructed Oxford Rewley Road station at Quainton Road.



A view from the station footbridge looking westwards. The sheds cover the route of the old Brill Tramway. They are obviously expecting troublesome visitors!

both photos: Mike Hyde

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: 31st July 2006

Continued from page 4.

So all in all, even more trains were delayed by this inept performance by "Notwork Fail" and VSOE's punters did not get the full steam ration they expected and paid for. The Americans have a wonderful expression for this - Snafu - Situation Normal All Fouled Up, or words to that effect!

Meanwhile, the MP for Maidenhead, Theresa May recently asked Transport Minister Derek Twigg about the proposed new timetable for train services from Maidenhead from December. The minister told Ms May that it was a matter she should take up with the relevant train operator - South West Trains (sic). Missing the chance to score a modest victory, the MP, who apparently does not know her constituency, did as she was told and spoke to SWT who, sympathetically, pointed out they don't operate those services and suggested she talked to FGW who in turn replied they are only operating the service specified by the Department of Transport.

You really can't make this sort of thing up!