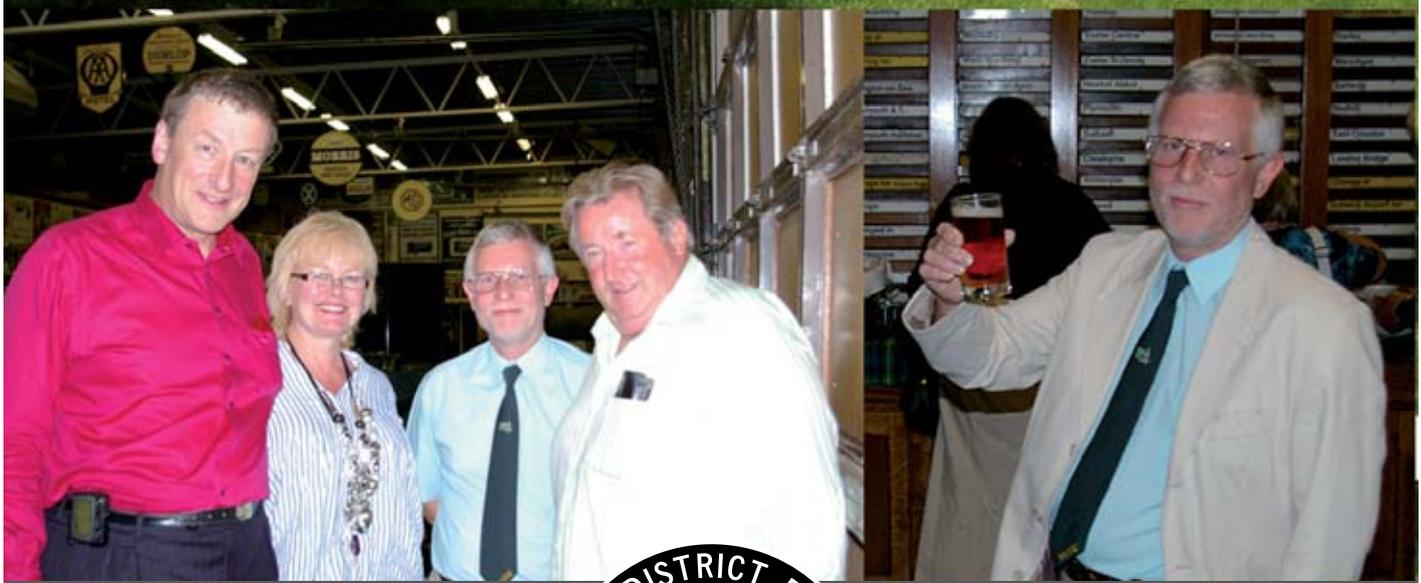


# THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

# 118

September 2007



Contents:

- Celebrating 30 Years
- Visit to Bletchley TMD
- Going for an Indian

# The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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### FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

*Top: Darjeeling Himalyan 19 at the Beeches Light Railway on 26 August 2007. Mike Walker (Article page 9).*

*Bottom: Left photo: Adrian & Barbara Shooter, Tim Speechley and Sir William McAlpine, Right photo: MDRS Chairman raises a glass to the next 30 Years. Both photos 21 June 2007 taken by Tim Edmonds (Article page 3).*

# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

- Thursday 20 September **6024 KING EDWARD I** David Fuszard  
David is a member of the support team and will give us an insight into the work needed to keep this high-profile locomotive active on the main line in the 21st Century.
- Thursday 18 October **A RAILWAY TOUR OF NORTHERN FRANCE** Michael Bunn  
A look at the railways of our nearest continental neighbour. The coverage will be from the Channel coast as far south as, and including, Paris.
- Thursday 15 November **MORE FROM COLOUR-RAIL** Ron White  
Such a special year would simply not be complete without a visit - the 8th - from our most popular speaker. What this selection will be is unknown, but you are guaranteed a hilarious and enjoyable show!
- Thursday 20 December **CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
The year wraps up with the usual celebrations, fun and games.
- Thursday 17 January **FIFTEEN FAVOURITE PLACES** Mike Walker  
Mike takes us on a tour to fifteen places that have drawn him back time after time. Expect an evening of big trains and spectacular scenery.

*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](http://www.mdrs.org.uk) for the latest details.*

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Recent activities on the main line and preserved railways in the south have brought it home to me just how old I'm getting. The commemorations for 40 years since the end of steam on the Southern have been quite poignant because all those years ago I was there. As a 16 year old I was at Vauxhall and Nine Elms and Waterloo to witness the death throes of main line steam and I cabbed 35030 *Elder Dempster Lines* at Waterloo on that last Sunday, after it had brought in the final up train. It was a sad time but who could ever have imagined then just how much and what quality of preserved steam would be available all this time later. We are indeed so lucky in this country to have so much choice.

Notable this "summer" has been the appalling weather with record high rainfall and flooding in many places. You will all know that several preserved lines have been damaged, notably the Severn Valley line that has been washed out at many locations. Thank you to all those members who contributed to the collection for their Emergency Appeal at the July meeting. We raised over £90 and have added to this from Society funds to give a

donation of £150 recently. I know this is just a drop in the ocean (perhaps not the best terminology) but every little helps

The weather has certainly reduced my outings this year and we must be very thankful for the brilliantly sunny day we have just enjoyed at Adrian Shooter's "Beeches Light Railway". For those who were unable to attend, you missed a real treat. Pictures have been on the Society web site since immediately after the event and others appear in this edition of the "Donkey"

As I write this, news has come in of the death of long standing member Wilf Long, at the age of 89. He had been taken very seriously ill before Christmas and we were pleasantly surprised when he reappeared at meetings earlier in the year. Unfortunately, it seems this recovery was only temporary. Wilf always supported Society activities and trips and he will be sadly missed. Our condolences go out to his relatives.

*Tim Speechley*

## SOCIETY NEWS

### PREVIOUS MEETINGS & VISITS

Our 30th birthday party held at Fawley in June was a great success and a selection of photographs appear on the next page.

Alan Willmott of Windjammer Films was our speaker at the July meeting during which he showed a collection of classic British Transport Films including 'Elizabethan Express', 'Farmer Moving South', 'Train Time' and 'A Future on Rail'. However it was Alan's final offering, his own work, that proved most interesting to members as it

[www.mdrs.org.uk](http://www.mdrs.org.uk)

included views of the *Marlow Donkey* along with the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury, Chesham and Staines West branches.

### ON-LINE NEWS SERVICE

We have started a new service of sending out newsletters by e-mail if there is hot local news to share such as special trains. It is sent to all members for who we have e-mail addresses, so if you have one but haven't let us have it please do if you wish to receive these alerts. However, if you are receiving them and would rather not, let us know.

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



Our 30th birthday was marked by a party at Fawley on 21st June hosted by our President, Sir William McAlpine and our special guests were Adrian and Barbara Shooter seen with Chairman Tim Speechley [centre left].

Following a welcome from Tim, one of the MDRS's founding members, Bob Hatfield, looked back at the Society's formation [top left]. This was followed by an entertaining talk by Adrian Shooter who recalled his life long interest and career in railways, which has taken him from hiring trains from BR as a schoolboy to being Chairman of Chiltern Railways, after which we enjoyed a meal and conversation with friends old and new [top right].



More than 30 members plus in many cases wives and partners attended. Some had travelled considerable distances including former Chairman Gordon Rippington enjoying a coffee in the station [left] with Brian Sparrow, Mike Hyde and Malcolm Margetts, and John Sears who'd made it all the way from Preston and was comparing notes with Malcolm [bottom left]. John is a native of Bucks who has migrated to Lancashire whilst Malcolm has made the opposite journey.

Tim Edmonds took these photographs and video was shot by Julian Heard [bottom] who will be showing the result at the Christmas party.

The event took much organising by the committee to who we express our thanks and to Sir William for hosting the event and Adrian for entertaining us.

The evening ended with Tim raising a glass to the next 30 years!



# LOCAL NEWS

## WYCOMBE STATION REPAIRS START

Work finally started in August on repairing the down side buildings at High Wycombe which were severely damaged in the November 2005 fire. By the end of the month the roof had been replaced allowing work to begin on the interior.

Plans are still awaiting approval for a more extensive redevelopment of the station area.

## MAIDENHEAD PLATFORM 1 REPLACEMENT

Platform 1 serving the Down Main at Maidenhead is to be rebuilt, possibly in time for the start of the December 2008 timetable. It was reduced to half its length some years ago and is currently used only in emergencies.

## WREXHAM TO MARYLEBONE RIGHT AWAY

The Office of Rail Regulation has given the go-ahead for Laing Rail's Open Access service between Wrexham and Marylebone which they hope to start in Spring 2008.

It is intended to run 5 services each way daily (4 on Saturdays and 3 on Sundays) calling at Ruabon, Chirk, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wellington, Cosford, Tame Bridge Parkway and Banbury. Up trains will set down only at Banbury, down pick up only. Most will operate south of Tame Bridge Parkway (near Bescot) via Aston, Stechford and Coventry to Leamington Spa but one each way will operate via Birmingham New Street to ensure driver's route knowledge is maintained in case of diversions.

Four rakes of ex-Virgin Mk3s have been purchased by Laing and are being refurbished. Motive power will be drawn from the EWS 67 fleet, up to five being hired daily.

So after 15 years we can look forward to regular loco hauled trains through High Wycombe once more.

## READING TO BE UNBLOCKED

As part of the High Level Output Specification the go-ahead has been given for the rebuilding of Reading station in a £425 million scheme which begins next year.

The junction west of the station will be re-modelled to reduce conflicting movements and 4 extra platform faces will be provided.

As part of the scheme, Reading PSB will be replaced by a new Thames Valley Signalling Centre which will be located at Didcot and will also replace Slough, Oxford, Swindon A and, eventually, Westbury Panels. These areas will also be re-signalled.

A full account of the proposed work will appear in the December *Marlow Donkey*.

## SAVING WYCOMBE'S OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

This is the name of a new on-line resource set up jointly by Bucks County Council High Wycombe library and the Bucks Free Press aimed at preserving, and making accessible, a photographic record of the district's past. It already contains some fascinating railway images (see page 15) and they are seeking more material. So if you are willing to share any of your old shots, both railway and non-railway please get in touch with them.

To see for yourself go to [www.buckscc.gov.uk/swop](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/swop) and use the search facility. It's a great way to while away a few hours!

[www.mdrs.org.uk](http://www.mdrs.org.uk)

## TESCO TRY AGAIN

Tesco have confirmed they intend to continue with their efforts to construct a store over the railway at Gerrards Cross. Plans are currently being studied by Network Rail and if approved will see the existing part complete frame removed and a new structure erected. There are also reports that Packhorse Road will be diverted through the new development although it is not clear if this will lead to the demolition of the existing three arch structure at the east end of Gerrards Cross station. Work is due to start in February 2008 but might be brought forward if approval is received. Network Rail and Chiltern intend to have engineers on site full time to ensure the work is being carried out correctly this time.

Chiltern have reached agreement with Tesco regarding compensation

Tim Edmonds took this shot of the ill-fated structure on 14th July 2007.



## SILVERLINK GO OUT IN STYLE

Silverlink Trains and Pathfinder Tours are teaming up to run two tours from Euston on Saturday 3rd and Saturday 10th November to mark the end of their franchise. Both will feature unusual routes including track not normally used by scheduled passenger trains including Willesden, Bletchley and Northampton TMD's, the Willesden Relief Lines, Wembley Carriage sidings, the Bletchley Flyover and Swanbourne Sidings and will be loco hauled, the first by a pair of class 37's topping and tailing, the other by a class 37 and a class 50 (Why are we not surprised?!) also topping and tailing.

Given that our own Mark Hopwood is the MD at Silverlink (Hence the class 50) it might be a nice trip for members to take The standard class fare is £75.00. More details at [www.pathfindertours.co.uk](http://www.pathfindertours.co.uk)

## 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 October 2007**

# MDRS Visit To

# Bletchley TMD

David Collins



two photos: Tim Edmonds

*Between Berkhamsted and Tring our train was overtaken at great speed by a Virgin Pendolino in spite of us doing 95 mph - Tim Edmonds was disappointed the 321 didn't quite reach the 'ton' whilst he was in the cab. At the depot representatives of classes 150, 321 and 313 were lined up for us to inspect (below).*

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May sixteen MDRS members attended a visit to Silverlink's Traction Depot at Bletchley. This was kindly organised for us by society member Mark Hopwood (Managing Director of London Lines, which covers the Silverlink, c2c and Gatwick Express franchises) with a cab ride for each participant and free travel across the whole of the Silverlink Network thrown into the bargain.

For me the day started at 8 am when Julian Heard and Tim Speechley picked me up from my home in Chalfont St. Giles. We drove to Gerrards Cross station in time to catch the 08:36 train to Marylebone, with time to discuss what motive power was used on the Great Western & Great Central Joint Line in steam days. The train (a class 165 unit) was on time and had most of the other MDRS group on board. The journey into London was uneventful, passing under the famous Tesco tunnel, a ballast train just north of West Ruislip, LUL's Ruislip depot (which contained, apart from the Central Line's 1992 tube stock, battery locos, the Tunnel Cleaning Train and some derelict 1962 tube stock), the new station and stabling point at Wembley Stadium before arriving into Marylebone at 09:12. As there were engineering works on the Circle Line that weekend we decided to take the 205 bus to Euston. Although we had quite a long wait for one (and when we got to Baker Street we were overtaken by another one) we arrived at Euston in time for the 09:54 departure. We were met at the platform by Mark who issued us all, with a letter which

permitted us to have free travel for the day. We clambered aboard the 321 unit's first class compartment and Mark then organised the cab rides with Driver Team Manager Kevin Wiseman and Driver Mike Rudge. I took the first section with Tim Speechley as far as Watford, which meant we saw the best of the track, including the rare view of lines with both overhead and third rail electrification as well as Willesden yard. We passed several trains including other Silverlink services, Pendolinos, Class 60s, 66s, 87s and 90s on freight and container trains and 1972 Bakerloo Line tube stock from Queens Park to Harrow & Wealdstone. Beyond

photo: Mike Walker



The official record of our visit.  
 Left to right: Mark Hopwood, Dave Theobald, David Collins, Pete Greatorex, Julian Heard, Tim Speechley, Luke Ripley, Ron North, Keith Brown, Pip Burston, Mike Walker, Peter Robins, Alan Morris, John Tuck, Brian Hopkinson, Tim Edmonds and Malcolm Stotter.

photo: Silverlink Trains



Watford I enjoyed the comfort of the first class whilst the others took turns to go up front.

We arrived at Bletchley at 10:42, and when the service train had departed a special unit was despatched to transport us into the depot, where we were greeted by Ian Brooks, the Silverlink Fleet Manager (who was also a fireman on the Ffestiniog Railway) and Ron Bailies, Head of Operations Services for London Lines. After a brief preparatory talk we were given the free run of the depot which at the time contained a couple of 321s, a 150 diesel multiple unit (which we were permitted to walk under as it was over an inspection pit) and an 08 shunter named *Catherine* (after a member of Silverlink staff) – pity there were no 8Fs, Black 5s, Jubilees or Fairburn tanks.

Silverlink's 321 fleet is the most reliable fleet of trains in the country and was then running at around 58000 miles per casualty, although it has been as high as 105000! Also Mike Walker tells me that Mark has the best performing fleet of the "new generation" EMUs in the c2c 357 Electrostars which

are now averaging the high 40000's mpc. The average daily mileage for a Silverlink 321 is about 400 or around 2500 per week. As they were introduced about 1989, that works out at over 2¼ million miles per unit! By contrast the 313s are only achieving about 11000 mpc but they are undertaking a programme of reliability improvements.

After lunch in the mess room we boarded our special train back to Bletchley where Mark showed us the control centre which controls the entire Silverlink County service from Euston to Northampton (plus Bletchley to Bedford). Mark gave us a detailed explanation of the operations. Unfortunately the staff were a bit busy because of an earlier points failure at Bedford St. John's and they were organising taxis for stranded passengers.



*It's not all glamour being the MD! Mark believes in helping out at all levels including serving up a curry lunch to members.*

*Silverlink's only loco, 08874 'Catherine' was in the shed for our inspection.*

photos: Mike Walker

Mark explains the workings of the Bletchley Control Centre to members while his staff grapple with the effects of a points failure on the Bedford branch

photo: Tim Edmonds

In recognition of its high standards, Bletchley TMD received the Golden Spanner Award in 2005 and 2006. The 321's carry these stickers to mark the honour.



After this we were left to our own devices, so we decided to do the Bedford branch, and go then go up to Northampton to get a fast train back to Euston. So we boarded the 13:57 train (a 150) and headed off. However when we got to Bedford the points had failed again so we had a 20 minute wait for the problem to be rectified. Mike spoke to Mark – who had left us before the failure and said the curse of MDRS had struck again – I understand a failure occurred on the Upminster trip which brought the much of c2c to a halt. The extra time was spent watching the action on the Midland Main Line, with some Meridian units, Capital Connect 319 units and a freight hauled by a class 66.

We got back to Bletchley at about 15:50 (I had a snooze on the return trip) and crossed the footbridge to the ticket hall to see if there was a station buffet, which there wasn't and the next train to Northampton was in 50 minutes, so we decided to get the 16:17 train to Milton Keynes and get a fast train back to Euston from there. So we got aboard the above mentioned train (having watched a passing Pendolino beforehand) and travelled to Milton Keynes Central. Here we had a quick refreshment stop before catching the 16:58 train (a Desiro unit, in which we travelled first class) to Euston, calling at Bletchley and Leighton Buzzard en-route, getting in at 17:43.

two photos: Mike Walker



As in the morning we got the 205 bus back to Marylebone where we got the 18:24 train (which started from Platform 6, one of the recently constructed platforms), on the approach to Neasden junction we passed one of Metronet's class 66s which was hauling a train of track panels, presumably from the engineering work on the Metropolitan and Chiltern Lines north of Harrow on the Hill (pity it wasn't an ex-Metropolitan Railway tank engine, or a 5700 ex-Great Western Pannier Tank in LT livery). The train got back to Gerrards Cross at 18:54 where Julian, Tim and I disembarked to continue our journey home by car, whilst the rest of the party continued on to Beaconsfield.

All in all, it was a good day out, one that I will remember for a long time, and I'm looking forward to the next MDRS outing.

Oh, one thing I was thinking is that it's a bit ironic that a train operating company which operates over the West Coast Mainline shares its name with a steam locomotive which was a flagship of the East Coast Mainline!

*We were able to inspect the workings of 150127 (left).*

*The newest Silverlink units are the 350 Desiros which are not maintained at Bletchley. Further units of this type will replace the 321s with the new London Midland franchise which takes over from Silverlink in November.*



# UP TO SPEED AT CHINNOR

Mike Hyde

Two things will strike you if you have not visited this branch line for several months or more. First an addition - a signal box now stands at the foot of the down end of the platform just across the pedestrian crossing to the station. Whilst not fully furnished or decorated, the Box will be a welcome addition to the line. The Box recently came from a garden off the A4 at Littlewick Green. This was after much preparation at the garden end and a lot of work at the Chinnor site. The Box was originally sited near Chester and is said to have a GWR heritage albeit the lever frame is marked 'CLC' - Cheshire Lines Committee. (The Box has the looks of a CLC structure and is thought to have originally been Mouldsworth Sidings Ground Frame and dates from 1894 - Ed.) It may not be required in an operational capacity for some years, perhaps until the rail connection to the mainline at Princes Risborough is established. Meantime, when fitted out, it will provide shelter for the Crossing Keeper and possibly serve as a signalling display case for visitors to the railway.

The second item of note is a deletion - rather a demolition. The cement works are rapidly coming to an end. A team of contractors is knocking down, tearing up and generally removing the industrial buildings. One day it will be the turn of the chimney to come down, but slowly. Local planning provides for housing and commercial development on the works site with a revised entrance. There will be some changes to the railway; however, cooperation and understanding prevail. The CPRRA look forward to a new and exciting future, not least of all, a return to the mainline, in due course.



*Coming: Chinnor's new signal box was well advanced on 19th June 2007 [top]. Its CLC ancestry is obvious.*

*Going: The cement plant chimney, long a local landmark [centre] will soon be a memory. Bubble Car 55023 sports 'Causton' as a destination having been filming for Midsomer Murders.*

*Among the restored diesels now at Chinnor is D5531 on 19th June [bottom right].*

*three photos: Mike Hyde*

*The C&PR marked the 50th anniversary of the end of passenger services by recreating the last train. 9682 running as 4650 with W225W passes Bledlow on 1st July 2007 [below].*

*photo: Mike Walker*



# GOING FOR AN INDIAN...



After the dismal "summer" we were fortunate that Mother Nature showered us with sun rather than a monsoon when we visited Adrian Shooter's Beeches Light Railway on 26th August. After a welcome by Adrian (**left**) Darjeeling Himalayan 19 put on a fine show (**above**) before a pig-roast lunch during which new-build Hunslet Dinorwic Quarry loco *Jack Lane*, driven by its builder Graham Lee, ran on a short train of DH goods vehicles.

A replica of a DH station has been built (**bottom left**) and was suitably busy even if the ethnic mix was unauthentic! No.19 and its replica cars (built at Boston Lodge) looked right at home as it sat out the lunch break (**bottom right**). Peter Robins remarked it sounded right as well.

*photos: Mike Walker unless noted*





Adding to the atmosphere was a typical Indian Ambassador car (derived from a 1950's Morris Oxford) parked trackside **(above left)**.

During the afternoon 19 suffered an air compressor failure and retired to the shed **(below left)** leaving *Jack Lane*



to work a shortened passenger train **(above right)**.

The afternoon ended with a small fire in the adjacent field. No doubt with a mind on current events in Greece, Adrian took charge of putting it out **(below right)**.

*photo: Keith Bailey*



## NARROW GAUGE TO HILL COUNTRY



Regarded as one of the world's most spectacular narrow gauge lines, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was opened in July 1881. Starting at Siliguri, in north east India, it climbs to 7407' at Ghum (the highest rail point in India) before dropping to 6812' at Darjeeling. The 51 miles include five spiral loops, one as sharp as 60' radius, and three sets of reversing switchbacks.

Typical of the scenery is this view of 788 (a sister of 19) negotiating the loop at Batasia between Darjeeling and Ghum 4th January 1999. In recent years the prominent memorial to the Ghurkha soldiers who died in recent conflicts, dominates the garden in the loop.

*photo: Dave Theobald*



# SCOTTISH RAMBLES



Mike Hyde



Every year, I take one or two groups to a favourite UK destination - the Highlands and Islands. The scenery, peacefulness, the hospitality and the interesting railway journeys all add to make it special.

Early June saw me on 2 tours in the area of Mallaig and Skye. The weather can be unpredictable but this year we had sunshine and blue sky.

The Jacobite steam train from Fort William to Mallaig and return runs daily throughout the summer. Usually a B1 or a K1 but on my second visit it was a Black 5 No.45231 *The Sherwood Forester* [above]. With no turntable (yet) at Mallaig steam engines run chimney first outward and tender first on return. At Mallaig passengers' attention was distracted by a Seagull's nest between the sleepers of the platform where the Jacobite is positioned for the return journey [centre right]. The nest bird made no move as the train reversed in and simply sat on its nest - beneath her/him an egg had hatched!

Mallaig is a compact harbour [bottom left] with ferry and fishing boats alongside. Caledonian MacBraynes run to Armadale for Skye regularly, to Rum and Canna, and to Eigg and Muck. All the islands are well worth visits. Also in the sheltered harbour ship building and repairs are carried out on railed slipways. A large Ice Factory takes up part of the quay and a delightful coloured mural is painted on one side of a building. 'Jaffy's', as shown in the picture [bottom right], is a local Fishmonger occupying part of the station premises. A line used to run down to the harbour but no longer. Nor is there any trace of the former loco shed,



turntable or sidings, now a car park. The overall roof of the station has also been removed.

At Fort William the station is the end of the line from Glasgow and the start of the West Highland extension to Mallaig. The First Scotrail Highland Sleeper is stabled here in the daytime as well as occasional freight and the summer resident steam locomotive(s). Approaching Fort William you see, at Banavie, the Southern end of the Caledonian Canal with Ben Nevis in the background. (The line from Inverness to Dingwall crosses the northern end of the canal). There is an extensive flight of locks named 'Neptune's Staircase' and a swing bridge to take the railway line over the canal [below]. Before the West



Highland Extension was built a short line ran from Fort William to the locks in order that passengers could board pleasure boats for a circular trip by rail and water.

Another tour another day led me to Aviemore where I took a run on the Strathspey Steam Railway. Power for

the day was No.17 *Braeriach*, a 1935 Andrew Barclay 0-6-0T smartly turned out in a Highland Railway style livery [top]. This return ride to Broomhill (otherwise BBC's Glenbogle) was a very pleasant run. It was followed by a dash to the Keith & Dufftown Railway 45 minutes away. This very friendly line runs a 2 car DMU set named *Spirit of Speyside* [bottom left] - a reference to the many distilleries in the area (it's a must to visit at least one!) - from the old station at Dufftown to Keith Town, half a mile short of the Aberdeen - Inverness mainline station. A lovely run down a rural glen with a lookout kept for deer and birds of prey. A few years ago when riding in this train I looked up above the door to see the Network SouthEast route diagram for the Thames area including the Marlow Branch!!

Finally, in the Dufftown station sits Brighton Belle Pullman coach No. 3052 [bottom right] still in brown and cream livery with coat of arms, now in use as a static dining car.

All these lines and places plus many others, are well worth visiting so do not exclude Scotland from your list of short break holidays - see you there. Mike McHyde



# 25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds

## 25 YEARS AGO

Trains started running once more from Templecombe station, on the Salisbury - Exeter line, which had been closed to passengers in 1966 with the demise of the Somerset & Dorset line. Following sustained local pressure, BR agreed to stop the 08.30 Basingstoke - Paignton and the 16.40 return at Templecombe on Sunday, 5th September. More than 200 passengers were carried and further trips on 19th and 26th September were fully booked. Further excursions were planned in October and the Templecombe Station Working Committee was campaigning for a regular service to be restored.

On 29th September, BR Eastern Region celebrated movement of the 750,000th tonne of steel coil in 18 months from the British Steel Corporation hot strip mill at Lackenby, on Teesside, to the BSC tube works at Corby, 180 miles distant. Normally there were two 'Tubeliner' trains a week, carrying some 10,000 tonnes of coil in 15 or 16 wagons, hauled by two class 37 diesels.

From 4th October, Bakerloo Line trains of London Transport ceased to run over the third-rail suburban lines from Stonebridge Park to Watford Junction. Latterly there were only four Monday - Friday peak through services, morning and evening.

On 9th October 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley* made a last appearance on the main line before overhaul, heading the SLOA 'Pennine Pullman'. The train originated at Carlisle, with the A4 taking over at Blackburn and running to Carnforth via Manchester Victoria and Leeds. Also out on the main line in West Yorkshire on a private charter that day was 'Black Five' 5407, while 5051 *Dryslwyn Castle* worked a Great Western Society railtour between Didcot and Birmingham.

In October Sid Weighell, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen for the past seven years, gave three months notice of his resignation, citing serious differences with some members of his executive. At a meeting of the union a week later, as urged by Mr Weighell, delegates voted to accept a 6% pay award from BR of the Railway Staffs National Tribunal arbitration - which also recommended major productivity improvements and efficiency concessions.



4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley' at the head of the 'Pennine Pullman' near Batley on 9th October 1982.

three photos: Tim Edmonds



5407 working hard at Crossgates with a private charter special on the same day.



Eastfield depot closed in 1992 but in its heyday was a major diesel depot - here is a typical array of motive power; classes 03, 08, 20, 25, 26, 37 and 47, under a grey Glaswegian sky on 3rd August 1978.

## 15 YEARS AGO

During the autumn work took place to quadruple a section of the track of the GW main line between Wantage Road and Challow west of Didcot. This was to cater for the new import coal flows to Didcot Power Station.

On 8th September the Bluebell Railway came a step closer to its ambition of running into East Grinstead when the ten-arch Hill Place, or Imberhorne, Viaduct was given to the railway by Network SouthEast. At a special ceremony, NSE director John Nelson and Bluebell Railway Chairman Bernard Holden fixed a commemorative plaque to the structure.

The distinguished locomotive engineer, E.S. Cox, died on 15th September. His career began in 1917 at the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway's Horwich Works, where he worked in the drawing office. Under the LMS in 1927 he was placed in charge of the dynamometer car at Derby, moving to Euston as Technical Assistant in 1931 before returning to Derby as Assistant Locomotive Works Superintendent. In 1938 he became Personal and Technical Assistant to the CME, Sir William Stanier, to whom he was appointed Chief Technical Assistant in 1941. After nationalisation he was first Executive Officer (Design) at Derby, where his work included working on the design of the BR standard steam locos under R.A. Riddles. He rose to become Assistant CME in 1958 and retired in 1965.

ScotRail's Eastfield Diesel Depot was closed from the end of September, with all work going to other depots. Its fleets of class 08, 26 and 37 locos were transferred to Immingham, Motherwell and Inverness, with daily servicing of the 37s being undertaken at Thornton.

The first public event at Swithland, on the Great Central Railway, was the inaugural run of the 'Windcutter' mineral wagons on 7th November when GWR 2-8-0T 5224 hauled a Loughborough - Leicester North freight past assembled photographers. The purchase of the wagons was the result of a £17,000 appeal by *Steam Railway* magazine including a donation from the Society.

On Saturday 26th September the MDRS visited the East Somerset Railway and the Foster Yeoman quarry at Merehead. As our visit to the former was ahead of the first scheduled train of the day, we had our own special train complete with headboard.



5224 provides clag for the photographers with the inaugural 'Windcutter' at Swithland. On the right the upper part of the former Aylesbury signal box is installed on a new brick base on 7th November 1992 [above]. 60532 'Blue Peter' was based on the Great Central Railway in 1992 and here is seen outside Loughborough shed on the same day [below].

two photos: Tim Edmonds



75029 'The Green Knight' proudly displays its 'Marlow Special' headboard at Mendip Vale on 26th September 1992 [above]. Foster Yeoman's SW1001 44 'Western Yeoman II' was at the Merehead loader that afternoon. [left].

two photos: Mike Walker

# SUMMERTIME VISITORS

It might have been a summer worth forgetting weather-wise, but we have had a few rare visitors to the area over the last few months.

On 9th June 6024 *King Edward I* hauled the Railway Touring Co.'s 'Cambrian Coast Express' from Shrewsbury to Paddington, seen **[top]** approaching White House Farm Tunnel. This was the first public outing of the controversial extra water tender which is not easy on the eye to say the least.

Next day, London Underground's 12 *Sarah Siddons* made a welcome return to the main line for the first time since 2001 and was caught approaching Amersham **[bottom right]**.

The NRM's Beattie Well Tank 30587 visited its sister 30585 at Quainton Road for the Spring Bank Holiday. The two locos operated side-by-side on 26th May **[below]** with 30587 closest to the camera.



# FROM THE ARCHIVES



Among the images on the 'Saving Wycombe's Old Photos' website is this view of the intermediate High Wycombe

station (1864-1904) looking west. A 'Metro' tank awaits departure to Maidenhead. *photo: Bucks Free Press*