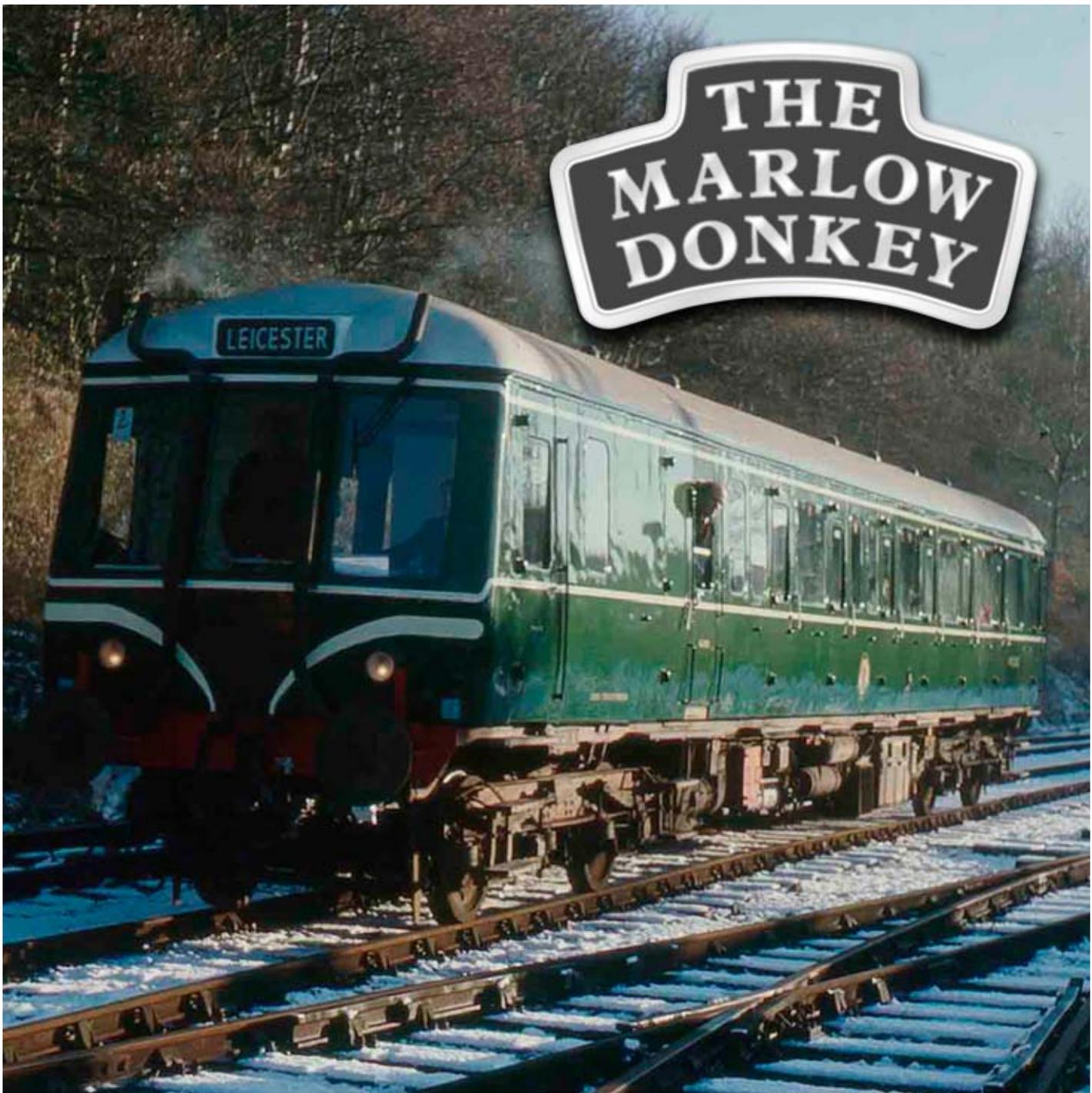


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

119

December 2007



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Local News

Shed Bashing in Scotland

Unblocking Reading

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top:

'Bubblecar' 55005 on the Shackerstone Railway 30 December 2001. Tim Edmonds (Article page 10).

Bottom:

Left photo: V2 60894 passing Hawick station on 30 September 1961. Photo: Tony Keen (Article page 5).

Right photo: London Lines MD and MDRS member Mark Hopwood celebrates the end of Silverlink operations, 10 November 2007. Photo: 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 17 January **UP THE DEVIL'S NOSE WITH THE G&Q** Mike Hyde
Mike takes us on a tour on a visit to this legendary and spectacular railway in Ecuador noted for the climb around a mountain known as the Devil's Nose by a series of switchbacks..
- Thursday 21 February **AGM AND THE FAR EAST** Adrian Palmer
Following the business of the Annual General Meeting, Adrian Palmer takes us on a railway tour of Java and Japan.
- Thursday 20 March **RAIL ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH** Andy Savage
The RAIB was set up a couple of years ago and modelled on its aviation equivalent. Andy Savage explains its role and how it conducts its investigations into incidents large and small.
- Thursday 17 April **MAIN LINE STEAM 1902-1960** Graham Stacey
Images from the collection of the late Ken Nunn a superb photographer who recorded the railway scene in these islands for more than half a century.
- Thursday 15 May **IDEALS ABOVE ONE'S STATION** Mark Evans
The talk will focus on Railway Stations around the country, large and small, from a social, geographical, economic, and industrial perspective.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Saturday 10 May **HIGH SPEED TO PARIS** by train
We propose having a day trip to Paris by Eurostar. We estimate having about 8 hours in Paris and the estimated cost is approximately £60 from St. Pancras.
Alternatively, we can arrange for a weekend visit returning on Sunday evening.
Bookings must be confirmed by 1st January 2008 - see Society News for more details.

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

So what happened to 2007 then? I seem to have blinked and missed it somewhere. I just can't believe it's Christmas again and we're heading for another new year.

I remember writing a year ago in anticipation of some special activities for our 30th anniversary and now they are all over. Getting some of those to fruition caused quite a bit of anguish and consternation on my behalf and I really did wonder if the June meeting at Fawley would ever actually happen. Of course it did and everyone who spoke to me afterwards said what a great evening it had been. What a super sunny day we had at the Beeches, as well. Perhaps I worry too much, but I'm pleased that we are returning to an "ordinary" year in 2008, with slightly less pressure.

I'm sure it will be an interesting year, with Eurostar services in full swing from the renovated St. Pancras, franchise changes on several of our main lines (good news for the paint and decal manufacturers too) and loco hauled passenger trains again through High Wycombe. Let's hope the damage inflicted on the Severn Valley and other preserved lines by the appalling weather this spring is soon repaired and they are back to running normal services. I must say I was really very touched that the SVR south-east branch representatives took the trouble to visit us at the September meeting to thank us personally for the Society's donation towards the relief fund. That's what I call good P.R.

From a personal perspective, 2007 has not been a year in which I have done a great number of railway visits beyond the Society ones. In fact, I seem to have attended more traction engine and vintage vehicle events than railway ones. As you get older it becomes harder to find new places to visit but by chance I had the opportunity to go to the Statfold Barn Railway for the first time in September. This is a private railway near Tamworth and visits are by invitation only, so I was lucky an invited friend could not go, letting me have his ticket. It is an amazing place with lots of activity and I had a really entertaining day and will be investigating the possibility of a Society visit for the future.

To round off the year, I'd like to extend a personal thank you to all the committee for their continued hard work and support, without which nothing would get done, and to Mike, for maintaining the very high standard of the "Donkey" and also for introducing his excellent News Reports for those of us on e-mail. We have an excellent programme of talks already booked for 2008 (well done Malcolm) and hope to arrange some interesting outings with the help of "the usual suspects".

Please may I extend my very best wishes to all of you and your families for a very Happy Christmas and New Year and I hope to see you at the January meeting.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The new season started in September when David Fuszard presented the life and times of 6024 *King Edward I* with particular emphasis on the preservation era and what it takes to keep a steam loco on the main line in the 21st Century.

The railways of Northern France came under the spotlight in October when our guest was Michael Bunn of the SNCF Society. He provided an insight not only to varied equipment used by SNCF and the Paris Metro but also explored many of the picturesque small towns in the region.

A full-house in November hoped to greet Ron White of Colour Rail however he "failed on shed" as a result of a knee operation carried out at short notice.

Mike Walker filled in by bringing forward his tour of his Twenty Favourite Places in the US originally scheduled for January. We hope to reschedule Ron for later in 2008 or early 2009.

ANYONE FOR PARIS?

The big talking point in recent weeks has been the opening of High Speed 1. We are proposing to try it out by taking a trip to Paris on Saturday 10th May. We expect to have about 8 hours in the city during which you can either explore by yourself - this is an ideal trip to bring the wife or partner along - or we hope to arrange a guided tour of some of the Parisian rail attractions.

The cost is expected to be £55 - £60 per person from St. Pancras but to get this fare we have to book it about 4 months in advance, that is early January so if you want to come please put your name down with either Mike Hyde (01628 485474) or Mike Walker (01628 483899) no later than 1st January. If we get a party of more than 10 we can qualify as a group and hopefully get a cheaper fare.

As an alternative, we can arrange a weekend trip going out with the party on the Saturday morning and returning Sunday evening at a cost of around £165 including hotel. Ask for details if you are interested.

SILVERLINK SWANSONG

Four members joined Mark Hopwood as he wrapped up the Silverlink franchise on November 10th with an 11 1/2 hour marathon railtour around most of the company's routes. It was top-and-tailed using 37410 and 50049 which is seen with Mark at Tring. We even got hauled from Bletchley depot to the station by 08874.

The train ran virtually spot-on time all day and was 15 mins early in to Euston because as Mark put it: "We timed it, not EWS."

Silverlink goody-bags containing some useful mementos were handed out during the day. The only downside was that the bar ran dry before the halfway point!

photo: Mike Walker

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome two new members who have joined during the year, Mr F Austin from Loudwater and Murray Tremellen from Chalfont St Peter. We hope you enjoy our activities and we look forward to seeing you in the coming months. We finish 2007 with 54 members - the highest total for many years which is a great way to round off our 30th anniversary.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR BREWING

The rota for providing the refreshments needs to be renewed for 2008. It's worked well this year but now Mike Hyde is looking for "volunteers" for the coming months. If you are able to assist please contact him - if he doesn't get you first!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's that time again; subscriptions fall due for renewal in January. Once again the Treasurer sees no need to increase the rate for 2008 which means they remain at £12.00 for full members and £7.00 for regular members.

The Committee are putting together an interesting programme of meetings and visits so we hope we can look forward to your continuing support.

Please use the form enclosed with this edition and make cheques payable to the MDRS, alternatively, you can give cash to Peter Robins at the January meeting.

MARK TAKES ON A NEW CHALLENGE

With the prospect of his Londonlines empire shrinking to just c2c, Mark Hopwood decided he needed to move on to a new challenge and has been appointed Route Director High Speed at First Great Western and will be taking up the post in January 2008. However he is already making plans as to how he intends to put the "Great" back into the country's most troubled train operator.

It is surely the biggest challenge of his career and all members will want to wish Mark every success.



DONKEY BITES COWS

An unusual incident occurred on 2nd October 2007 when the 18.44 Paddington to Bourne End hit two cows that had strayed onto the River Thames bridge at Bourne End killing one and injuring the other.

It took over two hours before the injured cow could be released and the passengers were taken off the train and finished their journeys on foot. Services were cancelled for the rest of the evening. The unit, 166202 received minor damage.

MISHAP AT DIDCOT

A Freightliner driver was not looking where he was going as he brought his train into the Up Yard at Didcot on 25th September and collided with a stationary train of ballast wagons fouling the clearing point, derailing two of them.



photo: Brian Daniels

The loco, 66610, sustained minor body damage and a broken cab side window whilst the wagons suffered only superficial damage.

LEST WE FORGET

GBRf's 66715 *Valour* was at the buffers of platform 5 at Marylebone on the evening of 10th November which seems highly appropriate as the loco's nameplate replicates that of the Great Central's War Memorial loco 1165. Presumably 66715 was being used on engineering work on the Met but how appropriate it should be there on Remembrance Weekend.

MORE BARRIERS

Chiltern Railways have started to install automatic ticket barriers at Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross stations to improve revenue protection and passenger security. It is hoped they will be fully operational by the turn of the year.

FORTHCOMING SPECIALS

The last few months have seen many specials cancelled. However a few are booked for the coming weeks:

22nd Dec D1015 Paddington-Whatley-Bristol (GWML)

16th Feb D1015 Paddington-Holyhead (GWML)

15th Mar 34067 Paddington-Stratford via High Wycombe

Further details and times will be in our e-newsletters.

One train that did run was Pathfinder's trip from Banbury to Kingswear on 8th September which brought 40145 to High Wycombe deputising for 55022.

photo: Mike Walker

WSMR REVEALS ITS COLOURS



Chiltern's sister company, the Wrexham Shropshire & Marylebone Railway has revealed the livery it proposes for its trains as shown here. The trains will consist of a class 67, two Mk3 SO, a Mk3 Buffet First and class 82/1 DVT.

No date has yet been set for the start up but it is hoped to be in the April although training runs should start in February.

MORE MEMORIES PLEASE!

As Editor, I was delighted to receive Tony Keen's nostalgic article which starts overleaf (surely a strong contender for the Norman Aston-Smith Trophy) and it occurs to me that many more of you may have similar memories. If so why not share them with us?

It is hoped to devote all, or a large part of one of next year's Donkeys to mark the 40th anniversary of the end of BR steam. Tim Edmonds has already volunteered to get the ball rolling but do any more of you have specific memories of that sad summer? If nothing else it will give us an excuse to use more of Ken Lawrie's excellent photographs.

If you can help please contact Mike Walker.

MARINA CROSSING CONCERNS

There have been an increasing number of near-misses on the Marina Level Crossing at Bourne End, twenty since April with the most recent on 26th November.

Road traffic over the crossing, which is an AOCL open type with only lights and audible warnings, has increased following the building of new houses on the riverbank.

Network Rail and BTP are monitoring the situation.



SHED BASHING IN SCOTLAND, 1961

with Tony Keen

I arrived at Kings Cross Station at approximately 10.30 pm on Friday 29th September 1961. First job was to purchase a ticket to Edinburgh Waverley, cost £7 10s 0d (£7.50) return. Engines noted at the buffer stops were A1s 60125 *Scottish Union* and 60149 *Amadis* along with new 'Deltic' D9002. Other locos in the station that evening were A4 60006 *Sir Ralph Wedgewood* and Brush Type 2 diesels D5642, D5653 and D5673.

I boarded my train, the 11.20 pm to Edinburgh, and had a difficult time in locating a seat as the train was quite packed. As departure time approached no more seats were available and passengers were resorting to sitting on suitcases and bags in the corridors. I made myself as comfortable as possible for the journey thinking I shall lose my seat if I vacate it. After what seemed an eternity the Guard blew his whistle and off we went.

I can't remember much of the journey as I fell asleep soon after going through the tunnels outward from The Cross. It must have been pretty uneventful as the next thing I knew we were pulling into Waverley Station at approximately 8.00 am.

On leaving the station my first thoughts were breakfast. Walking down Princes Street I was impressed by the tall stone buildings which dominated the street to the right and the park to the left, overlooked by the Castle. Suddenly the smell of bacon and eggs wafted over me and food became my sole preoccupation again. The establishment I entered could hardly be described as a café as it had very high ceilings and resembled a great castle hall with crossed swords and tartans adorning the walls and even a suit of armour as I recall. After satisfying my hunger I returned to what my trip was about; train spotting.

After consulting my Locoshed Directory I made for St. Margaret's shed (64A) and after viewing locos from a nearby road bridge, I took the bull by the horns and made for the Foreman's office to ask permission to go round the depot (I had shed passes for a proposed Sunday trip to Glasgow but none for Saturday's visits). I think most Scots were more tolerant of loco spotters than their English counterparts as he said "yes", as did others during the day.

LOCOS ON SHED ST. MARGARET'S (64A) 30th September

5MT 45244
A4 60004 *William Whitelaw*
A1 60139 *Sea Eagle*
V2 60816, 60860 *Durham School*, 60873 *Coldstreamer*,
60892, 60894, 60927, 60957, 60958, 60959
B1 61242 *Alexander Reith Gray*, 61261, 61308, 61317,
61324, 61345
J35 64479, 64533
J37 64547, 64572, 64582, 64590, 64601, 64613, 64614,
64625
J39 64794, 64795, 64946
J36 65224 *Mons*, 65251
J38 65912, 65922, 65927, 65934
V3 67606, 67666, 67669
Y9 68095
J83 68470, 68477
N15 69128, 69135, 69138, 69219
WD 90756



V2 60894 passing Hawick station on 30th September 1961.

all photos: Tony Keen

Next on my agenda was a visit to South Leigh which was a sub shed of St. Margaret's. As this was some way I travelled by bus, making one change en route and alighted at Seafield Road by Leigh Cemetery. Locos on shed here were J37 64569 and J36 65334.

Seafield sub shed was visited next as it was in close proximity to South Leigh. With the high level line on one side and the sea on the other, I walked down the rough road to the shed where I found J37 64591 and 64599 and J36 65327 and 65344.

After this I returned to Seafield Road and caught a no.12 bus and alighted at Russell Road for a visit to Haymarket Shed (64B). My thoughts were on Pacifics and particularly the four surviving Scottish 'Directors' (D11) I hoped I might still find. A good spattering of the former were seen but no luck with the 'Directors' as I had left the Scottish trip a bit too late. (Sadly I only saw one I could definitely underline in my ABC on the whole trip, but I did see two and possibly three the day after at a distance on the Edinburgh to Glasgow line at a place I was told was Stop Cross, presumably dumped in the sidings there. If anyone can positively identify them I would still like to hear from them.)

LOCOS ON SHED HAYMARKET (64B) 30th September

5MT 44968
A4 60009 *Union of South Africa*, 60027 *Merlin*,
60031 *Golden Plover*
A3 60043 *Brown Jack*, 60073 *St. Gathen*, 60094 *Colorado*,
60101 *Cicero*
A1 60137 *Redgauntlet*, 60160 *Auld Reekie*
A2 60529 *Pearl Diver*
V2 60920
B1 61081, 61221 *Sir Alexander Erskine-Hill*, 61260
J37 64847
J36 65243 *Maude*
V3 67615, 67620
J83 68481

Next on my itinerary, a visit to Dalry Road (64C) where the most notable locomotive on shed was McIntosh '19' class 0-4-4T 55124 in immaculate condition along with similar '439' class 55217. Other locos present were: Fairburn 4MT 42204 and 42273; Black 5's 44879, 44881, 44994, 45023, 45036, 45085, 45127, 45170 and 45477; 'Royal Scot' 46105 *Cameron*

There were still many pre-grouping Scottish locomotives around in 1961. Former NBR C class, LNER J36, 65330, built at Cowlairst in 1900, was on Hawick shed on 30th September [right] whilst Caledonian 92 class 0-4-4T 55124, St. Rollox 1895, was resting at Dalry Road shed in Edinburgh earlier in the day [below].



Highlander; McIntosh '652' class 0-6-0 57634 and 57645 along with Pickersgill '294' class 57654; J37 64569 and J39 64986.

After this and a quick bite of late lunch, I made for Waverley Station for a quick dash down to Hawick. On making enquiries as to time etc to the above named destination I encountered blank looks when Hawick was mentioned. "You know", I said, "about 40 miles to the south." Suddenly it dawned: "Och, ye mean Hoick." A ticket was purchased and off I went. More disappointment I'm afraid, only seven locos on shed and what's more the D34 I particularly wanted to see was at Carlisle on a freight. Locos on shed were: V2 60824; J36 65316, 65330 and 65331; BR 2MT 78047 and 78049 and BR 4MT 80114 plus V2 60894 on a freight at the station.

I caught the 5.36 pm return to Edinburgh. Notable cops on the journey were A1 60161 *North British* and A2 60532 *Blue Peter*, the latter happily still with us. After arrival around 7 pm I had to find accommodation for the next two nights. After wandering around for some while and not finding anywhere I then bumped into a Policeman. After explaining my situation he said "I know just the place" and the next thing I knew we were knocking on the door of a large three storey house where an elderly lady answered who, on hearing my plight, offered B&B for two nights at a cost of, I think, £1 10s (£1.50). After settling in my thoughts turned to my trip to Glasgow the next day.

Sunday 1st October. I caught the 9.30 am departure from Princes Street station arriving at Buchanan Street, Glasgow about 11 am. The old lady I was lodging with had kindly made me some sandwiches so no distractions and it was straight on with my objective.

After a short walk to Hope Street the quietness of the Sunday morning was temporarily interrupted by a clanking and the squealing of steel on steel. Approaching was a tram negotiating a tight radius curve under the nearby railway bridge en route to Maryhill. It must have been one of the few left in service as trams stopped running in Glasgow soon afterwards I believe. I then caught a no.52 bus to Hawthorn Street and proceeded to Eastfield Shed (65A). I walked over some waste ground to the side of the main shed and was excited to see my first K2 61764 *Loch Arkaig*. At the end of this siding two engines were dumped, another K2 61788 *Loch Rannoch* and my first sighting



of a D49 class loco 62744 *The Holderness*. More excitement inside the shed, amongst many other cops was D34 62496 *Glen Loy*

LOCOS ON SHED EASTFIELD (65A) 1st October

5MT	44702, 44707, 44787, 44908, 44956, 44968, 44976, 44996
B1	61134, 61148, 61197, 61342, 61355, 61396
K2	61764 <i>Loch Arkaig</i> , 61788 <i>Loch Rannoch</i>
K3	61962
D34	62496 <i>Glen Loy</i>
D49/2	62744 <i>The Holderness</i>
J37	64540, 64546, 64571, 64576, 64578, 64579, 64581, 64622, 64623, 64630, 64633, 64638, 64639
J39	64884, 64914, 64950, 64964
J36	65218, 65228, 65315
J38	65901, 65910, 65923
V1	67601, 67602, 67603, 67664, 67680
V3	67600, 67644, 67650, 67667
J83	68479
N15	69131, 69163, 69183, 69188, 69191, 69212, 69218
BR 5MT	73077, 73078
WD	90049 90128

D49/2 62744 *The Holderness* had already come to the end of the road and awaited its fate at Eastfield shed on 1st October.

67601 was at Eastfield on 1st October 1961. One of Gresley's V1 class many of which later received higher pressure boilers and became class V3. Both types were mostly seen only in Scotland.



The next shed visited was Polmadie (66A) which had the largest allocation of locos on the whole trip including 'Clans' 72001 and 72002.

LOCOS ON SHED POLMADIE (66A) 1st October

4MT	42056, 42057, 42058, 42059, 42129, 42143, 42167, 42170, 42171, 42242, 42243, 42244, 42246, 42268
6P5F	42850, 42875
5MT	44193, 44251, 44256, 44318, 44322, 44668, 44783, 44991, 45029, 45066, 45100, 45172, 45173, 45459, 45478
Jubilee	45635 <i>Tobago</i> , 45665 <i>Lord Rutherford of Nelson</i> , 45697 <i>Achilles</i>
Royal Scot	46104 <i>Scottish Border</i> , 46107 <i>Argyll & Sutherland Highlander</i> , 46121 <i>Highland Light Infantry</i> , 46125 <i>3rd Carabinier</i> , 46140 <i>The King's Royal Rifle Corps</i> , 46142 <i>The York & Lancaster Regiment</i>
Coronation	46222 <i>Queen Mary</i> , 46223 <i>Princess Alice</i> , 46224 <i>Princess Alexandria</i> , 46227 <i>Duchess of Devonshire</i> , 46230 <i>Duchess of Buccleuch</i> , 46231 <i>Duchess of Atholl</i>
4F	44001, 44011
8F	448375, 48773
2P '439'	55201, 55220, 55223, 55228, 55265, 55267, 55268
2F '498'	56159
3F '782'	56298
2F '294'	57239, 57239, 57244, 57250, 57268, 57271, 57275, 57288, 57291, 57292, 57317, 57319, 57349, 57360, 57365, 57367, 57369, 57389, 57417, 57418, 57432, 57463
3F '812'	57563, 57564, 57581, 57586, 57597, 57603, 57620, 57622
3F '652'	57632
3F '670'	57674, 57682
Y9	68104, 68117
Britannia	70019 <i>Lightning</i>
Clan	72001 <i>Clan Cameron</i> , 72002 <i>Clan Campbell</i>
BR 5MT	73055, 73056, 73059, 73060, 73061, 73062, 73064, 73072, 73075, 73098, 73099
BR 4MT	80001, 80002, 80003, 80006, 80022, 80023, 80027, 80054, 80055, 80057, 80058, 80086, 80106, 80107, 80108, 80109, 80110, 80115, 80121, 80129, 80130
BR 3MT	77007, 77008
WD	90004, 90039, 90060, 90198, 90229, 90234, 90320, 90387, 90536, 90596, 90616, 90640, 90690, 90705, 90751, 90763

On leaving Polmadie, after a short walk to Aikenhead Road I caught a bus to Victoria street and changed to a no.59 (Moss Park) alighting at Drumbeck Road to visit Corkerhill Depot. Quite a mixed bag here: "Naval" 'Jubilees' *Valiant*, *Warspite* and *Indomitable* and a good spattering of McIntosh Caledonian locos.

LOCOS ON SHED CORKERHILL (67A) 1st October

2P	40596, 40615, 40620, 40621, 40637
6P5F	42833, 42882, 42883
4F	43899
5MT	44159, 44189, 44198, 44323, 44330, 44699, 44706, 44723, 44791, 44798, 44877, 45082, 45112, 45164, 45171, 45362, 45365, 45366, 45460, 45467, 45480
Jubilee	45621 <i>Northern Rhodesia</i> , 45673 <i>Keppel</i> , 45677 <i>Beatty</i> , 45692 <i>Cyclops</i> , 45707 <i>Valiant</i> , 45720 <i>Indomitable</i> , 45724 <i>Warspite</i>
2P '439'	55203, 55206, 55621, 55625, 55266
3F '782'	56364
2F '294'	57236, 57300
BR 5MT	73100, 73101, 73102, 73103, 73104, 73121, 73122, 73124
BR 4MT	76092, 76096, 76097, 76098, 76099
BR 4MT	80008, 80009, 80020, 80021, 80024, 80025, 80030, 80046, 80047, 80048, 80049, 80050, 80051, 80053

The last shed visited in Glasgow was Parkhead, the rumour of two 'Directors' on shed was unfounded.

LOCOS ON SHED PARKHEAD (65C) 1st October

4MT	42578
4MT	43135, 45138
5MT	45030
B1	61067, 61117, 61333, 61344, 61404
J35	64461, 64514
J37	64563, 64573, 64588, 64609, 64610, 64621, 64626
J36	65211, 65230, 65239, 65246, 65273
V3	67607, 67608, 67611, 67621, 67625, 67626, 67632, 67633, 67662, 67675, 67676, 67678, 67679, 67681
V1	67622, 67630, 67631, 67655
BR 4MT	76090, 76091, 76094, 76114
WD	90534

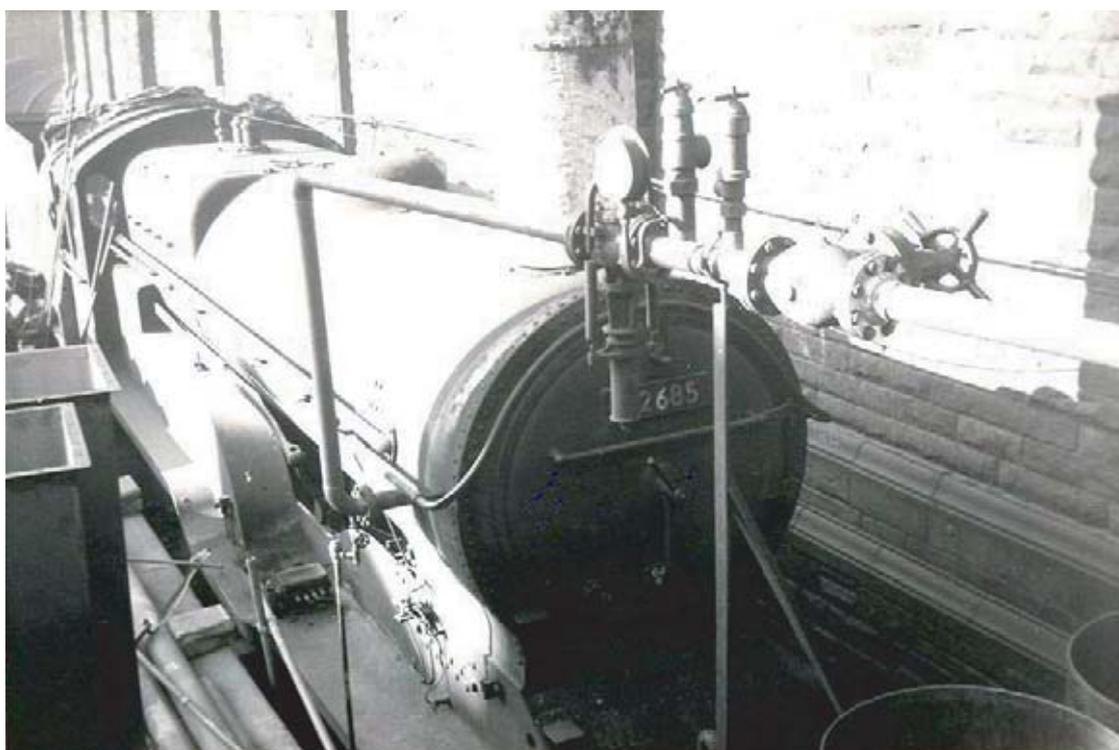
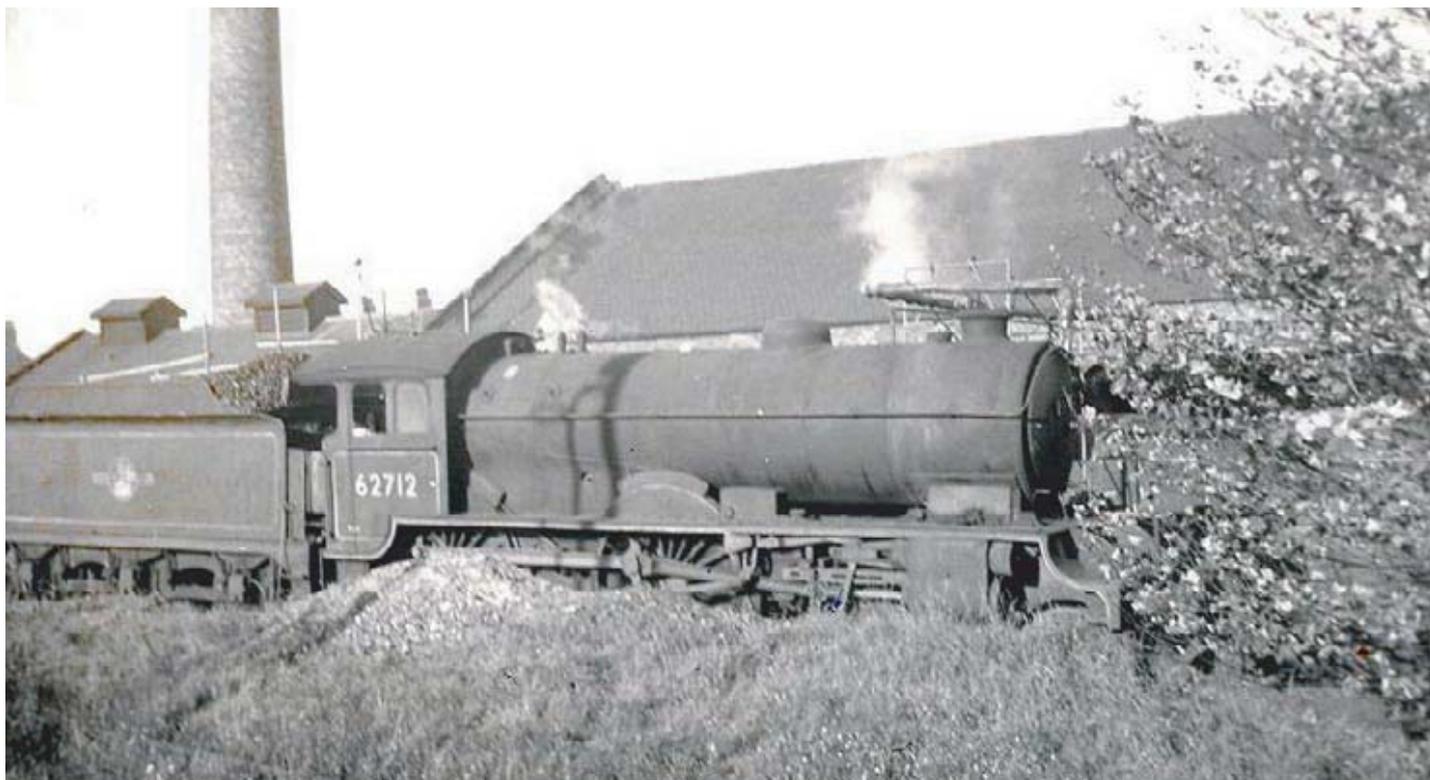
I arrived back at Princes Street (Edinburgh) in the early evening and visited the siding at the rear of the Caledonian Hotel to see a 'Director' (at last) 62685 *Malcolm Graeme* being used as a stationary boiler for the hotel facilities. The fireman/man-in-charge kindly allowed me aboard so not only did I manage to see a Scots 'Director', I cabbid it as well. Although very grimy and with coal strewn all over the cab floor it seemed quite snug on the chilly October evening and was a fitting climax to my Scottish trip.

Next morning, after a hearty breakfast, I went back to the Caledonian Hotel to photograph 62685. I then set off on my last objective before the long journey back to London. This was south of the city to Slateford British Transport Commission Laundry where I was informed D49/1 62712

Morayshire was again being used as a stationary boiler. After a good look over the loco and another photo session I made my way to Waverley station to catch my train back to London Kings Cross. Around midday I boarded my train hauled by A3 60068 *Sir Visto*. Passing St. Margaret's shed WD 2-10-0 90756 and class N15 69150 were noted. Near Alnmouth J27 65786 was copped among others.

At Newcastle an immaculate J72 68736 was the station pilot, also spotted were B1s 61288 and 61382. On to York, this yielded A3 60046 *Diamond Jubilee*, A2 60512 *Steady Aim* and a grubby V2 60839.

I dozed off soon after York and awoke as we entered the tunnels on the approach to Kings Cross. Was this all a dream I asked myself? I think not was the reply.



For some there was a sort of afterlife. D49 62712 Morayshire [above] was supplying steam for the BTC laundry at Slateford, Edinburgh on 2nd October but this was to ensure its survival into preservation. It can be seen at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway where it has recently been returned to traffic. Indeed a surprising number of the locos Tony spotted on this trip are still with us, no fewer than six to be precise.

Less fortunate was D11 62685 Malcolm Graeme pumping steam to the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh [left] on the same day, it was scrapped in July 1963.

25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



The Clayton West branch closed on 22nd January 1983. Five years earlier a DMU is seen at the terminus after arrival with a train from Huddersfield on 6th April 1978.

photos: Tim Edmonds

25 YEARS AGO

At Doncaster on 9th December 1982, Philip Norman, Managing Director of BREL, formally handed over 58 001 to Henry Sanderson, BRB Freight Director. This was the first of a class of 35 3,300HP class 58 diesel-alternator locomotives, costing approximately £800,000 each, and was turned out in the grey and red livery used on the Speedlink air-braked freight vehicles, with the word 'Railfreight' on one cab side and the loco number on the other.

The official opening of Slaithwaite station, between Huddersfield and Marsden, was performed on 13th December 1982 by West Yorkshire PTE's former Director General, Robin Ward. The unstaffed station comprised two staggered platforms of sectionalised wood, with stone waiting shelters. To celebrate the event a special train took local children to Leeds and back, with Father Christmas handing out goodies on board.

Southern Railway 'Merchant Navy' Pacific 35027 *Port Line* left Woodham's Barry scrapyards by low-loader on 18th December 1982. Saved by the Port Line Locomotive Project, it was taken to the Swindon & Cricklade Railway's Blunsdon site for restoration.

The Serpell Report on Railway Finances was published on 19th December 1982, preceded by several 'leaks' and much rumour. The committee was divided and produced a majority report (three members) and a minority report (one member). The majority put forward no firm recommendations, but laid six 'options' before the government, the most extreme of which was a reduction in the network to 1,600 miles. The consulting engineer Alfred Goldstein said in his minority report that the majority concentrated too much on the short-term and had not made a sufficient analysis of railway revenues.

Two branch closures took place early in 1983. On 8th January the last trains ran on the Kilmacolm branch - a sad irony being that intermediate station at Crookston featured on the May page in the BR Scotland calendar that year. Withdrawal of financial support for the Clayton West branch by the West and South Yorkshire PTEs meant the line closed after the last train on 22nd January.



Twenty-five years ago a common scene at many preservation sites was a 'Barry wreck' awaiting restoration. Here 'West Country' class 34007 Wadebridge sits forlornly at the Plym Valley Railway's Marsh Mills base on 5th February 1983.



The reopened station at Slaithwaite came into use on 13th December 1982. This view was taken from the end of the Huddersfield platform when a Leeds-bound train called at the other, staggered, platform on 24th February 1984.



In a bitterly cold and wintry Rugby on 29th December 1992, 31512 and 31185 come to life in the stabling point in the bay platforms at the south end of the station. Also present is 86239 L S Lowry.

15 YEARS AGO

The first class 122 single-car unit to be bought for preservation, by the Shackerstone Railway Society, arrived at the Battlefield Line on 11th December 1992. Unit 55005 was built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Co in 1958 and the intention was to restore it in due course to its original green livery.

The branch from Maidenhead to Bourne End and Marlow was cleared for operation by class 165/166 'Turbo' DMUs from 7th December 1992 and the first set worked over the line the following day, when 165120 operated between Maidenhead and Marlow.

The last train of limestone from Redmire Quarry to BSC Redcar was worked by 60086 *Schiehallion* on 18th December 1992. Several railtours were run over the line from Northallerton during the Christmas and New Year period to mark the closure of the branch, although the track was to remain in situ for at least three months to allow time for any preservation groups to make a bid. One such group, the Wensleydale Railway Association, which was a pressure group attempting to keep the line opened, responded by forming a limited company with a view to making an offer for the line with the long-term aim of re-establishing the connection with Garsdale.

Following the passing of the Transport and Works Act in 1992, a new system for authorising railways, tramways and inland waterways in England and Wales came into effect on 1st January 1993. The new system involves Ministerial Orders, rather than private Bills, and Parliamentary consideration would only take place when the Secretary of State decided that the proposals are of national significance.

The Steam Locomotive Operators' Association (SLOA) appointed retiring Chairman Dick Hardy as its first President. The new Chairman was Brel Ewart, owner of 'Princess Royal' Pacific 46203 *Princess Margaret Rose*.



'Bubblecar' 55005 arrived at the Shackerstone Railway on 11th December 1992 as the first class 122 to be bought for preservation. It has since been beautifully restored and is seen leaving on its first day back in service nine years later, resplendent in original-style green livery, 30th December 2001.

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 January 2008

UNBLOCKING READING

Mike Walker

Reading. For many years it has been a byword for delays and congestion, particularly with the explosion in train numbers following privatisation. On a typical weekday between 500 and 600 trains pass through, start or finish their journeys at the station which in 2005/6 saw 13,297,027 passengers start or finish their journeys and another 2,267,360 change trains, making Reading General the 18th busiest station (in passenger numbers) on the network and second only to Birmingham New Street for train movements outside London. The problem in simple terms is: there are too many passengers and trains trying to use too few platforms and tracks. The result is trains queuing to get into the station causing delays which spread out across the network like the ripples of a pebble thrown into a pond. The station presents one of the biggest single causes of delay and disruption to First Great Western services. Before being moved to other duties, former FGW Managing Director Alison Forster pointed out that whoever held the Greater Western franchise would experience the same challenges and problems until Reading was sorted out. To a point she was right although there are those who consider that the "Reading factor" is to often used as a convenient excuse.

Over the years various proposals have been made to overcome the problem but all have withered on the vine. Now, following the publication of the Government's 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' report (known in the industry as the High Level Output Statement) in July the tackling of the Reading bottleneck has risen to the top of the agenda and £425 million has been set aside for the project. At last it seems things are going to happen.

History

The GWR arrived in Reading on 30th March 1839 and three months later the line opened westwards towards Bristol. The original station was a classic example of Brunel's "single-sided stations", which were in effect two separate stations for up and down trains next to each other on the down, or south, side of the line - nearest to the town - the up station being at the London end. By the late 1860's the familiar main building had been constructed but the single sided platforms remained although linked together.

Reading first became a junction with the opening of the Hungerford branch in 1847 and the branch to Basingstoke the following year. The former would eventually become the GW's principal route to the West. In 1856 the west curve was opened allowing trains to run directly from the south to the west or vice-versa without reversing at the station. To serve the two branches a short platform was constructed approximately on the site of the present island platform and connected to the main one by a footbridge and an overall roof. This layout survived the arrival of mixed gauge in 1861 and the end of the broad gauge in 1892.

The South Eastern Railway arrived in Reading in 1849 building a line from Redhill which terminated at its own station on the south east side of the GW station. In 1856 LSWR trains from Waterloo started to use the SER station, using running powers from Wokingham.

The GWR undertook major alterations to the General station early in the 20th century whereupon it took broadly the form it has today. The main island platform with bays at both ends and the up relief platform (today's 9) date from that time as does most of the track layout although there was some rationalisation and the provision of bi-directional signalling on all through lines during the resignalling scheme of 1965.

That year also saw the closure of the Southern station and the diversion of services up a ramp to a newly constructed bay platform, 4a, in the General station. There was originally no direct running connection between the two companies but in 1858 a tunnel was dug beneath the GW lines east of the station to connect the SER yard with the GW's low-level yard. This was supplemented by a connection outside the stations in 1899 and in 1941, as a wartime measure, a new double track connection was built to the east which remains the main connection today.

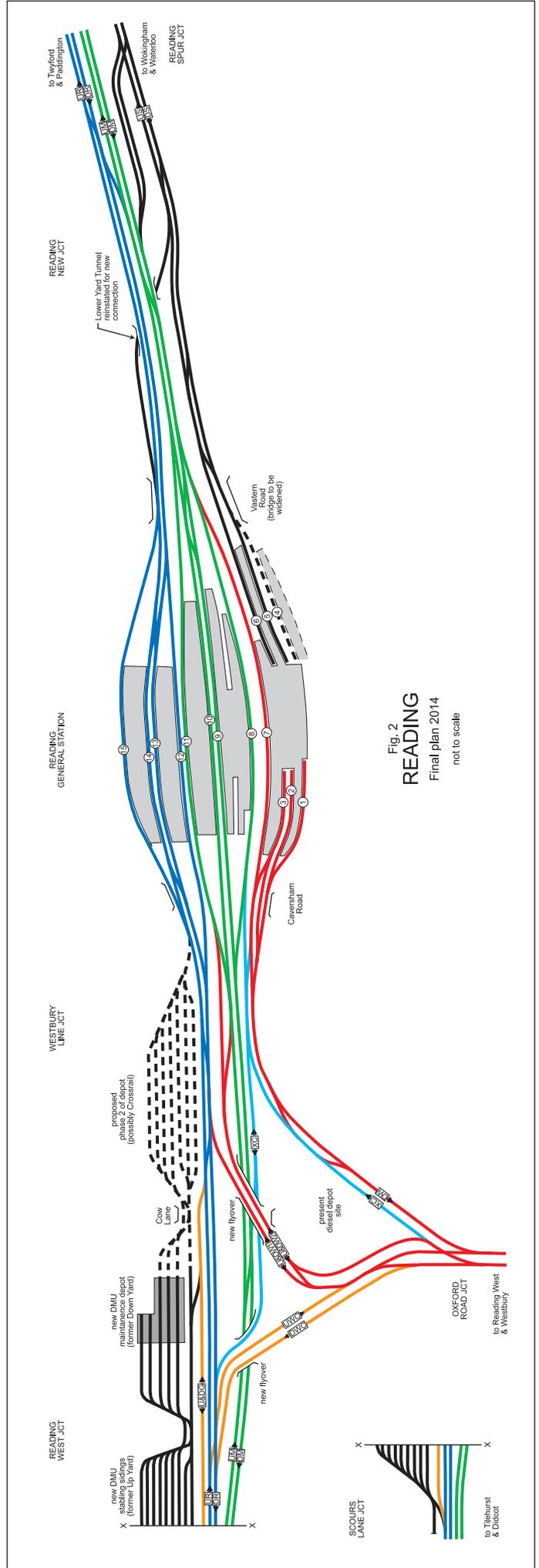
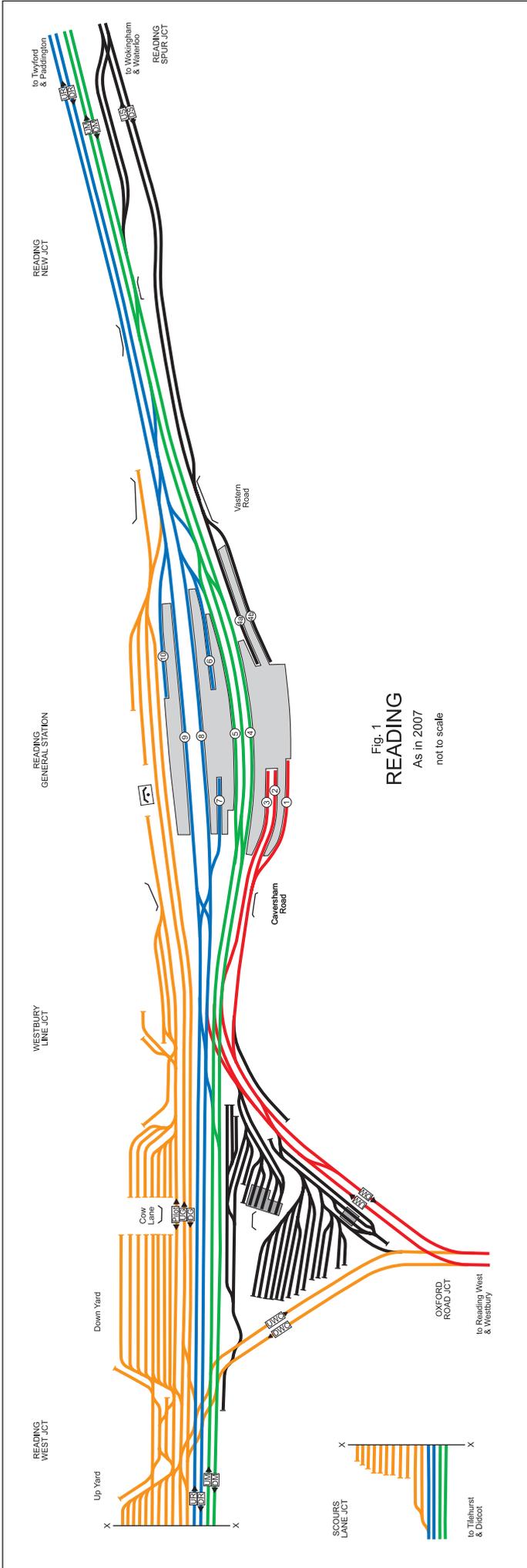
By the 1980's the passenger numbers had already risen to the point where the ticket hall and entrance arrangements in the 1868 building were woefully inadequate. As the building was grade 2 listed there was little that could be done and instead it was decided to build a new station building partly on the site of the old Southern station which would provide spacious ticket counters, retail facilities and a wide footbridge connection to the platforms. The remainder of the Southern site was sold for commercial development which largely financed the new station. The new building opened in 1989 but whilst it eased the lot of passengers arriving at the station it did nothing to solve the operational problems. A few minor revisions were carried out and a second bay provided for SR and Gatwick services but they did little to solve the underlying problems.

The Problem

Although today's station has 12 platform faces only four of them are through ones. In effect this equates to one for each of the main running lines each side of the station for, although all are bi-directional, the number of trains running on each line provides little opportunity for signallers to allow, for example, two down expresses to occupy platforms simultaneously without knock-on delays to other trains. At peak times, trains are running at headways as close as 3 minutes on each line so, with the large numbers of passengers using the station causing often lengthy dwell times at the platform, trains are often to be seen queuing to get their turn at a platform. At peak times it is not unusual to see two trains standing at consecutive signals. This immediately causes trains to lose time, an effect which is instantly passed on to following trains. Dwell times could perhaps be contained by more proactive action by platform staff but it is doubtful if the average British passenger would appreciate being herded Japanese style onto their trains.

The second major cause of delays is the complex flat junctions west of the station. A study of the present day layout (Figure 1) will reveal the number of conflicting moves this causes. A train arriving from the Oxford Road Junction direction and heading towards London blocks at least the Down Main as well as the Up. Delays result as soon as any train deviates even slightly from its booked time.

Freight traffic causes major problems. Today there are two major flows, from the Westbury line towards and from London and from Basingstoke to and from Didcot via the west curve. The former is dominated by stone traffic usually in long and heavy trains which present particular challenges for the signallers. There are no places to recess such trains in the area and if they cannot get a clear run through the station, and they usually have to run to or from the Relief lines, restarting from a signal stop is a slow process which can tie up the whole station for many minutes. Whilst the latter group, dominated by container traffic between Southampton and the Midlands and north, can be held on the West Curve or Up Goods Reception line away from passenger traffic to await a gap in the traffic,



they too are slow to restart compared to passenger trains and block all the running lines for several minutes as they cross Reading West Junction. Fortunately Basingstoke and Kennet Valley services use platforms 1-3 and therefore do not need to cross any of the main running lines.

A further complication is caused by the Cross Country services most of which reverse direction during their Reading station stops causing longer dwell times than ordinary services, although since the replacement of loco-hauled trains (which were usually dealt with at platform 9) by Voyagers the time taken is reduced. Originally it was intended to accommodate Voyagers in no.3 but this proved impractical so they now usually use bay no.7.

Even the diesel depot adds to the problem. Being located in the triangle, units coming on or off shed have to cross most of the lines at Westbury Line Junction particularly as the majority of such moves are suburban units coming from or going to the Relief Lines. The depot itself is inconvenient being in effect in two halves. The older lower depot built on the site of the old steam shed is largely used for heavy maintenance whilst the upper depot, built when the Turbos came into service, handles light inspections, cleaning and stabling. Any movement between the two sections involves not only tying up the Up Westbury line but also Westbury Line Junction!

Only the Southern and Gatwick lines are immune from the congestion although they do have their own bottleneck in the short single track section across the Vastern Road bridge. In practice this causes few problems, priority being given to departing trains even if it means further delaying a late arrival.

In view of all these potential conflicts and constrictions it is perhaps surprising that the delays aren't worse and a tribute to the regulating skills of the signallers at Reading panel.

The Cure

Figure 2 shows the proposed final layout. Like figure 1 it is colour coded to show the different groups of lines, green for the Main lines, dark blue for the Relief lines, red for Westbury and orange for Goods lines. The design appears to remove just about every conflicting move and provides two through platform faces for each of the main running lines, each capable of handling trains of twelve 23m vehicles.

The present main and island platforms will be largely unaltered although the latter will lose its bays. To the north three new island platforms will be provided. The existing platform 9/10 will be replaced as at present it is separated from the island platform by a wide gap as a centre siding used to be provided. As the station area is actually on an embankment space is at a premium, although there is currently quite a wide area behind 9/10 occupied by the Up and Down Goods lines and a couple of sidings. Provision is also being made for an additional bay for Waterloo services to be provided at a later date - the Vastern Road bridge being widened for this and to eliminate the current short single line section mentioned above. Note that most platforms will be renumbered. The present 1-3 are unaltered but 4a and 4b become 5 and 6 (4 will be the extra bay) and the present 4 becomes 7, 5 becomes 8 and 8 becomes 9.

To eliminate conflicting moves radical changes are being proposed. To the east of the station, whilst the 1941 connection is to be retained, the 1858 low-level tunnel will be brought back into use for a single line connection to allow trains between the new northerly platforms and the Wokingham lines to run without interfering with the Main and Relief lines.

West of the station will be two new flyovers the first on a new link from Oxford Road Junction, across the present diesel depot site, over the Main lines and giving direct access to all but one of the through platforms. The second will replace the existing Reading West Junction carrying the West Curve over the Main lines and connecting to the Relief lines. Whilst direct

connection to the Main lines will be lost here, access can still be made at Tilehurst East Junction and in most cases train will be running on the Relief lines anyway.

The diesel depot will be removed to an all-new facility on the site of the present Up and Down Yards (both largely disused) which will be properly laid out and have easy access at both ends to the Relief lines. Provision has been made for a second phase to the depot on the site presently occupied by the Cattle Pens PW depot which it is suggested might be in connection with bringing Crossrail on from Maidenhead to Reading which seems to be logical. It is thought the present plan to terminate Crossrail at Maidenhead is purely to avoid that project being saddled with a share of the Reading rebuilding bill!

How it will work

When finished the station will be divided into four sections for main line, local, Westbury/Basingstoke and Waterloo/Gatwick services. Trains from the Down Main will normally use platforms 8 or 9 but can use 10 or 11 as all platforms and lines will be bi-directionally signalled. Those heading for the Westbury line will use platform 7 (the present 4) and then have a clear run away. Those on the Up Main will normally use either 10 or 11 but again can call at 8 or 9 in an emergency. Up Westbury services will use the new flyover using the right hand line (Up & Down Westbury 2) to access 10 or 11 - again 8 and 9 can be accessed if required.

Down Relief trains will normally be calling at 12 with 15 being used by their up counterparts. Services to Gatwick will use 13 and 14 and the underpass east of the station although these platforms can also be used by trains on the Relief lines. The use of 13 and 14 by Gatwick services will allow them to be easily extended to the west should this be desired. Relief line trains running to or from the Kennet Valley or Basingstoke will use the left hand line of the flyover (U&DW1).

Kennet Valley and Basingstoke local services will continue to use platforms 1-3 if terminating. Special provision will be made for Cross Country services (shown light blue on Figure 2) allowing them to use platforms 7 or 8. Trains arriving from the south will take what is now the Up Westbury between Oxford Road and Westbury Line Junctions whilst those from the west will be able to use the flyover at Reading west if running on the Relief lines via a new connection which is also connected to the Main lines by crossovers below the Westbury lines flyover.

Freight trains should benefit from non-stop passages through the area whatever route they are taking, particularly those running through the station as multiple routing options are possible in either direction. Even if it is necessary to hold a train on the West Curve to await a path it will not interfere with traffic on the Main Lines.

The only flat junction remaining in the area liable to cause conflicts is Oxford Road but traffic through here is relatively light compared with the other parts of layout so it shouldn't present any major regulating problems.

Resignalling

Obviously such extensive revisions will require complete resignalling of the area but there is an additional problem. The Reading Power Signal Box stands right where the new Relief Line platforms are to be sited and has therefore to be replaced before any real work can be undertaken. As a result work has already begun on the new Thames Valley Signalling Centre (TVSC) to be located beside the station car park and EWS fuelling point at Didcot. Scheduled to be operational by the end of 2008 it will initially assume all of Reading's responsibilities on a like-for-like basis followed by replacing Slough PSB and Slough New IECC as Crossrail develops. It will eventually also replace Oxford, Swindon A and B and Westbury PSB's.

This is a welcome development in its own right as Slough, Reading and Swindon A PSB's and their associated equipment date from the 1960's and are now life expired with resulting in poor reliability which is another major factor in FGW's service reliability.

When will it happen?

The work will be divided into two phases. The first between 2009 and 2011 will see the remodelling of the station area including the new platforms and the eastern underpass. Following a pause in 2012 to ensure there is no unnecessary disruption during the Olympics, the flyovers will be constructed during 2013 and 2014.

Considerable disruption and lengthy blockades are to be expected as the project progresses in view of the amount of work to be undertaken. The northernmost new platforms, 14 and 15, will be provided first allowing the demolition of the

present 9 without reducing capacity or causing too much disruption. The other new platforms can then be built.

Building of the new depot can be undertaken as a stand alone project with virtually no impact on operations allowing FGW to simply move in when finished, releasing the present depot for demolition and allowing the new Westbury lines and flyover to be built.

It will be a long-term project but the final effect will be worth the pain. Hopefully the full scheme will be brought to fruition and not curtailed by spending cutbacks. At last the "Reading factor" should be history and Reading will become a by-word for efficient operation. The irony is that completion will coincide with the end of FGW's franchise and it will be for whoever holds it next to reap the benefits.

One final point, the final design is attributed to one Mr. R. Bowen!

RTC's AUSTRIAN STEAM SAFARI

1st-11th August 2007

Mike Hyde

This tour comprised a Standard Gauge tour across Europe on Eurostar, Thalys, ICE, Inter City and Regional trains to reach some of the nicest Narrow Gauge lines on the Continent. We utilised rack and adhesion lines on scheduled and chartered trains. Not to miss the opportunity for a tram ride or two, several members covered the systems of Innsbruck and Vienna plus Metro and local rail lines.

Three nights in Innsbruck allowed us to ride the Achensee rack railway from Jenbach to the lake for a see cruise. An interesting experience in a delightful setting. Next morning a visit to their depot was arranged. This got us off to a good start which was followed by a visit to the Zillertalbahnhof which runs from Jenbach but in the other direction on a slowly rising gradient to Mayrhofen. The 'Crystal' barcar provided the necessary cooling agent from the sun.

I wrote earlier about trams. Whilst some enjoyed the sights of Innsbruck or shopped, others visited the tram depot, still with its complete track layout including a circular loop and shed lines. Alongside is the museum full of local photographs, memorabilia and souvenirs. Some took the tram to Igls and others went way out in the countryside. The hotel being close to the railway station made for ease of use of the popular day ticket.

On by train to Bischofshofen where we met with our coach which thereafter conveyed our luggage and/or ourselves. First to St. Gilgen for another see cruise and train ride. Here at St Wolfgang we joined the exciting rack ride up the Schafbergbahnhof. The views from the mountain top were terrific in all directions. Our overnight stay was to be at the

www.mdrs.org.uk



The charming station at Grunberg on the Steyrtalbahnhof. The train is ready to return to Steyr on 6th August 2007.

photos: Mike Hyde

picturesque town of Steyr in the Romantik hotel by the meeting of two rivers.

A short coach ride to the museum (heritage) railway station introduced us to the Steyrtalbahnhof and our first opportunity for run-past photography. This was one of my personal favourites both railway and town/hotel. All too soon we were off again this time to Kienberg-Gaming for another line. This was the Ybbstalbahnhof. An interesting situation where the OBB (state railway system) had decided to cut out a section of track but continue to serve both ends.

The missing link is now run by volunteers as the tourist steam line OGLB at weekends. In my view theirs was the nicest and most challenging section with gradients in part over 3% as it climbed the side of a hill and descended the other side to Lunz Am See. A few more photo-stops were enjoyed in the sun, our loco being 1902 Krauss 0-6-2T No. Uv1.

The original plan had been to do the Mariazellerbahn but shortly before our UK departure their steam loco failed. RTC's OBB contacts came to the rescue with a day tour of the other part of the Ybbstalbahnhof meeting up with OGLB at Lunz Am See. Here we had 0-6-4 No. Yv2 again with splendid photo-stops.

Vienna hailed so we went to the capital for a free day. A optional run out in the morning to the Das Heizhaus Railway Museum at Strasshoff proved to be a reward. It covered a large area, much full of scrub and trees behind or under which were to be found locos and rolling stock of all kinds. We were taken on a short ride to the nearby mainline, diesel hauled but in elderly coaches. The shed was more like a giant exhibition hall full of engines in all conditions. Clearly much finance and

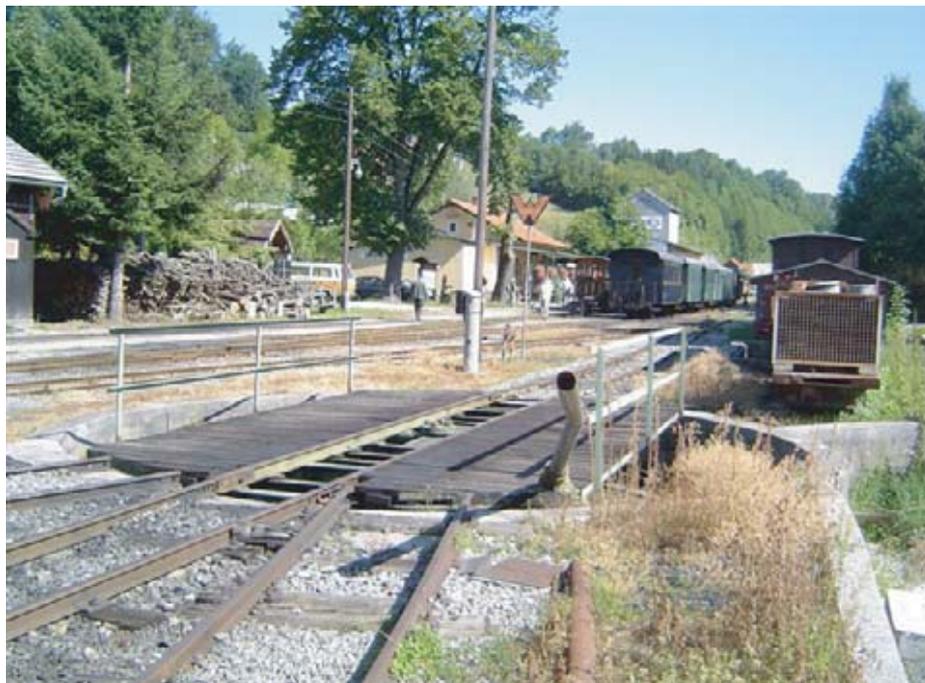
effort is required by the volunteers who run the museum but nevertheless a good place to visit. More tram rides back in town.

The next day we took the train to Gmund to join the NG Waldviertal railway. Our arrival was greeted by a light fall of rain which lasted for 20 minutes thus creating an atmospheric shot for our first photo runby! But it soon brightened and we were doing well as the train gathered itself for a sharp climb towards Gross Gerungs. Suddenly an emergency stop! Heavy rain the previous few days had filled the tracks at a farm crossing with sand and stones. This caused the leading wheels of the 0-8-0 to rear up then derail. It seems nobody had thought to check the track before our special though it was done before weekend runs. Nevertheless no one was hurt and a track gang plus diesel was despatched to rescue us. A brief visit to an unusual hostelry in the woods (residents sleep in giant beer barrels, empty of course) soon had us relaxed and it was not long before we were back at the start and on our return to Vienna. We learnt later there had been terrible thunder storms and flooding not far away and a bomb scare in a Vienna station.

So our safari to Austria came to an end. An overnight stop on the way at Wurzburg saw us homeward bound. A small cloud had hung over us during the tour with a threaten rail strike by German drivers but in the event it came to nothing during our time. An enjoyable 11 day tour with good company and comfortable hotels. Lots of steam should lead to plenty of pictures.

The turntable at Grunberg on the Steyrtalbahn Heritage Railway. 6th Aug 2007. [top]

OBB 0-6-4T No.Yv2 on the Ybbstalbahn entering Waidhofen to head for Lunz am See on 7th August 2007. [right]



WILF LONG 1917 to 2007

I first met Wilf when I joined Airflow Developments Ltd. In Lancaster Road, High Wycombe in 1966. He was employed as an Inspector (nowadays called a Quality Controller). This position was very apt for Wilf as he believed in focusing on engineering detail. It wasn't very long before we discovered an interest in common - railways. Wilf's enthusiasm began when his father took him to see trains as a child. They lived in the Wycombe Marsh area so he probably saw trains on the joint line (GWR./LNER) through High Wycombe. During the second world war, Wilf was in the RAF and served in various parts of the world.

Many times Wilf joined Ron North, some others and me on rail trips over the years, particularly on Hertfordshire Rail Tours excursions and MDRS outings and had been a Society member for around 25 years.

Wilf had other interests and was a skilled repairer of clocks and watches. He also belonged to a local Astronomical Society which met at Woodrow High House, near Amersham.

Wilf's last visit to a Society Meeting was in May 2007 for the talk on London Underground. He really wanted to come to Fawley in June, but he just was not well enough.

Wilf died in late August at the ripe old age of 89 after being diagnosed in 2006 with lung cancer despite being a non-smoker. His death made it a difficult year for his only daughter as Wilf's wife Joan, to whom he had been married for 57 years, died only about eight weeks before.

Wilf was a quiet gentleman, and I enjoyed his company and miss his companionship.

Alan Morris