

*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

~~Please reply to~~

THE MARLOW DONKEY NO.12

SEPTEMBER 1979

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As in previous summers our members have this year travelled far and wide to the now somewhat scattered haunts of steam traction. No doubt this Newsletter will give graphic accounts of a variety of visits. During the winter months plans will be discussed for journeys in 1980. Already deposits have been paid to our Treasurer by those looking forward to Rocket 150 next summer. Will Rainhill prove even more enjoyable than Shildon?

On an extremely wet August evening a small group of our friends travelled to Long Wittenham near Didcot to inspect the Pendon Museum of Miniature Landscape and Transport. The Madder Valley layout was first inspected, and then a long while was spent watching full-length model trains of the 1930s running through Dartmoor scenery. Upstairs the villages of the White Horse countryside await the addition of GWR track and vehicles.

The Society's annual trip this year gave us two steam-drawn rides, one up and down the Leighton Buzzard two-foot gauge line where once sand was carried to the LNWR Luton-Dunstable track, the other on the Whipsnade Umfolozi two and a half-foot gauge line through the animal paddocks of the park. Both of these rides were rather spine-shattering but as popular transformations of industrial locos and vehicles they are obviously attractive to the tourist and his family.

A journey this summer on the Torbay Steam Railway was far pleasanter and infinitely more comfortable. A group of our members travelled from Paignton to Kingswear behind 2-6-2T No. 4588, many for the second or third time. This seven-mile line in Devon offers spectacular views of the Dart Estuary and the opportunity of a crossing by ferry to Dartmouth.

The third of this season's MMPA's rail trips enabled some of our members to travel on the Moors Line between Pickering and Goathland, through Yorkshire's beautiful Newtondale. This line, a victim of the Beeching cuts, dates back to 1836 when George Stephenson constructed it for horse-drawn trains. Purists in

the party who were still recovering from seeing Clan Line at the head of a train in York Station now had the additional indignity of being pulled by an ex-Southern Railway S15 No. 841, for some reason now named Greene King. Unfortunately time did not permit us to reach Grosmont where some real ex-LNER locomotives are shedded.

A repeat journey to "La Baie de la Somme" was enjoyed by several members in June. They have plans to venture even farther into France next year.

At the time of writing two of our number are in Canada. We look forward to accounts of their travels well illustrated by slides and photographs.

There is no doubt that Steam Preservation in 1979 is still a flourishing business in spite of higher prices and oil shortages. (I almost said "rocketing prices" but this could be taken as a criticism of the projected Liverpool plans for next year.) A recent book on the steam cemetery in South Wales indicates that the steady supply of old steam locomotives available since the middle 60s is coming to an end. However, we have a wealth of steam centres and groups of dedicated enthusiasts to give us continued enjoyment for many years to come.

#### THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME OF 1979-1980 AT 1745 FOR 2000 HRS

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| 18 Oct 1979 | Railroads of the United States. Illustrated talk by George Herrman.  |
| 15 Nov 1979 | Brittania. Film and talk on the restoration of the locomotive by J. Samson. The talk on the Festiniog Railway given in the June issue is held over.                              |
| 13 Dec 1979 | Christmas Film Show "Oh Mr. Porter". Full length feature film. It was interesting to note on the recent visit to North York Moors Railway that they were showing this film soon. |
| 17 Jan 1980 | Third Annual General Meeting.  |
| 21 Feb 1980 | To be arranged.  |
| 20 Mar 1980 | To be arranged.  |
| 17 Apr 1980 | Adventures in Latin America. Colin Garratt returns for a second visit sponsored by Praktica Cameras.   |

#### NEW MEMBERS

The following new members are welcomed to the Society. J.V. Baldwin B.E. Morgan and R. Wallis.

#### CHRISTMAS DINNER

It is intended that last year's successful Christmas Dinner will be repeated. Details will be given as soon as possible.

ROCKET 150

All 12 seats on the minibus to Rocket 150 have now been taken.

TED'S TRIP

Ted Gregory raised about £350 from his 630 mile cycle trip from Inverness to Marlow in aid of the children's arthritic unit at Taplow Canadian Red Cross Hospital. Ted was the picture of fitness on his return and his clothes looked a bit bulky on him.

PREVIOUS THURSDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

The Mid Hants Railway was the subject for D.J. Lane on 17 May. He spoke so entertainingly that the Watercress Line must be the subject one year for our Summer outing.

Mr. T.P. Worrall, Divisional Train Superintendent, London Division, Western Region, kept his end up well before a critical audience on 21 June when he spoke about Passenger Train Operations in the London Division.

We had the reminiscences of a practical man of steam when Mr. D. Fendley, Divisional Traction Inspector, visited us on 19 July. Plans are in hand to try and persuade him to return as he was still full of steam when he had to finish.

The Thursday night meeting on 16 August took the form of a visit to Pendon Museum of Landscape and Transport in Miniature. Mike Hanscomb our own signalling expert described the working of the small signal box which is being constructed. The three other main exhibits, John Ahern's Madder Valley, the Dartmoor layout and modelling of the Vale of the White Horse, were fully demonstrated and explained by Pendon volunteers. The bus on its return trip had a failure in its headlights. The astonishing thing is that it happened outside a pub. The driver had the benefit of the advice of one or two of our bus enthusiasts and all was well shortly after the time for last orders.

THE TRANSPORT TRUST

The Society is of course affiliated to the Transport Trust and fully supports its aims which are simply stated to provide a "living" museum of all forms of transport by assisting individuals, groups and societies throughout the UK to preserve, restore and show their historical transport possessions.

The Trust in conjunction with Ian Allan Ltd. are publishing a new magazine called "Yesteryear Transport", price 60p, which will in future be the official journal of the Trust. We have a copy of the first issue and any member who would like to see it please ask Roger Bowen.

A relic of the utmost historical interest in Trust custody is Invicta built by Robert Stephenson & Co. which followed Rocket through the shops and opened the Canterbury and Whitstable line in 1830.

25 YEARS AGO - FROM THE RAILWAY MAGAZINE OF JULY 1954

"The first multiple-unit diesel trains to be built under the British Transport Commission £2M programme for the development of light-weight diesel passenger services on British Railways are now operating in Yorkshire. A four coach train comprising two identical two car units was demonstrated on a trial run from Marylebone to Beaconsfield and back before entering regular service in Yorkshire. It was built at Derby Works LMR with power units supplied by Leyland Motors Ltd.

The first locomotive to be built by BR specifically for working heavy express passenger services class 8P 4-6-2 No. 71000 was completed recently at Crewe works. It has been named "Duke of Gloucester" to commemorate the Duke's Honorary Presidency of the Sixteenth International Railway Congress held in London. It was designed in detail at Derby under the direction of Mr. R.A. Riddles. The locomotive is initially allocated to Crewe North mpd.

The formal opening ceremony of the new Woodhead Tunnel was performed by the Minister of Transport Mr. Lennox-Boyd on 3 June. Eleven days later on 14 June the tunnel was brought into public use.

Nearly eight years have elapsed since the Festiniog Railway was completely closed on 2 August 1946 and the line has since laid derelict. Efforts are now being made to resuscitate this fascinating pioneer 2ft gauge railway and the Festiniog Railway Society has been formed.

An exhibition of locomotives and rolling stock was held at Birmingham New Street Station from 1-3 June to mark the centenary of the opening of the station. Among the exhibits were the former LNWR 2-4-0 Hardwicke, the Midland Kirtley double frame 2-4-0, the modern pacific No. 46235 City of Birmingham and saloons used by Queen Adelaide and Queen Victoria."

RETURN TO FRANCE

The weekend of Friday 29 June to 1 July 1979 saw a repeat of the 1978 visit to Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme which must have been successful as most of the 1978 participants took part in the 1979 visit.

None of the technical details on the railway have changed since Mike Walker's article in the Marlow Donkey for September 1978 except that this time the train managed to stay on the rails for the whole of the journey.

On this trip we managed to sample both British and French hovercraft and there was no doubt British was Best - even the French hostesses were disappointing.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the Gallic cooking and wine. The railway was of interest.

NORTH YORK MOOR RAILWAYS

The feature of the MMPA trip to York and Scarborough on 2 September was the visit to the North York Moors Railway. The journey to York via London and Bedford was uneventful except that the forecasts of a number of experts who shall remain nameless as to the probable route were proved to be incorrect. Your contributor is still puzzled about the route so to prevent any mistakes he will remain silent. At York we had a special treat when we saw Clan Line on its circular tour.

The train made a special stop at Malton to drop off the NYMR party where a bus was waiting for the trip to Pickering, the southernmost station of the NYMR. At Pickering Greene King a SR stranger was waiting for us and we immediately set off. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to go the full length of the 18 mile line to Grosmont and we had to get off at Goathland and returned by a diesel hauled train to Pickering.

The journey through Newtondale is breathtaking and we were lucky in that we had a fine sunny day. The hills were covered with heather and the purple blooms showed everything off to perfection. It is not the place to get stuck in the winter.

It was a pity that there was no time to explore the NYMR headquarters at Grosmont but on the return there was a little time at Malton awaiting the train from Scarborough to look around the BR station buildings. It is a fine station built in the local stone with an overall roof very reminiscent of that at Thame. The waiting room which was closed looked exactly as it must have been in the last century with its stuffed leather chairs and sofa.

The return journey was by a different route and was made in fine time except that this was spoilt waiting half an hour to get on the main line at Acton as there was no signaller on duty.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD AND WHIPSNADE

Those members who believe that the Summer outing would not be the same without a crisis were not disappointed. The double decker bus which was due to arrive at 0900 hrs was 40 minutes late as the driver who came from Aylesbury thought that our revered pub was either in Wendover or High Wycombe.

Nothing daunted the intrepid 53 members, friends and children set off on Sunday 15 July in fine sunny weather. With pick-ups at High Wycombe and Wendover the bus made it to Leighton Buzzard in time for the 1100 hrs special from Page's Park. The good time may have had something to do with the Treasurer threatening to stop payment of the cheque for the bus.

The LBGRS had Pixie laid on for our trip which unfortunately did not go the full length of the line. However, everyone enjoyed the journey along the 2ft track which is remarkable for the number of road crossings and the number of houses which have the track at the bottom of their gardens. What a fine feature to mention in sales particulars.

During the trip the guard provided us with one of those minor operating failures which enlivens any trip. He leaned out of the carriage and lost his cap. Frantic efforts were made to attract the attention of the driver which took some time as the emergency system consists of a pair of lusty lungs and the trip is not exactly silent. The train eventually set back and the errant cap was recovered. The poor guard had to endure some ribald comments which he will long remember.

Whipsnade was reached in time for lunch in the beautiful park-land surroundings. Afterwards everyone delighted in the animals and facilities of this remarkable zoo which was the prototype for all the safari parks in that it started in the 1930s. Two features caught everyone's attention. The 2'6" gauge Whipsnade and Umfolozi Railway with its fine stable of saddle tanks and the superb display by the dolphins.

We arrived back at headquarters slightly before 1900 hrs and Barbara afforded us the privilege of a slightly advanced opening time. The trip was rounded off with a pint of the Marlow Donkey's best bitter which was a suitable ending to a successful Summer outing.

#### PIXIE - Contributed by Roger Bowen

Many of you who travelled with the Society on the recent road motor excursion to Leighton Buzzard may have wondered about the history and origins of the diminutive locomotive Pixie that hauled our train.

Pixie was built in 1922 by Kerr Stuart & Co.Ltd. of Stoke-on-Trent, Works No. 4260. She was of their standard Wren class intended for use by public works contractors and was in fact sold with two others, 4250 and 4256, to William Muirhead, Macdonald, Wilson & Co.Ltd. for use on their contract to build the Southend Arterial Road for the Essex County Council. She is an O-4-OST with 6"x9" outside cylinders and Hackworth valve gear. Her weight in working order is 4 tons 3cwt with 1'8" driving wheels and a boiler pressure of 140 psi. The first Wren class was built in 1903 and the last in 1926.

On completion of the Southend Arterial Road contract she was sent to her owner's plant depot at Barkingside. In 1927 she was sent to Thos. W. Ward Ltd.'s yard at Grays as No. TW147. In 1927 she was sold to Devon County Council and went to their Bideford depot. It was at this time she first acquired the name Pixie. 4250 and 4256 were also acquired by the Council 4250 being named Lorna Doone and stationed at Tavistock and 4256 Peter Pan at Beacon Down Quarry, Parracombe. Pixie at a later date joined Lorna Doone at the Wilmingstowe roadstone quarry, Tavistock. After the war she was retired to her shed almost under the Southern Railway viaduct at Tavistock.

In the early 1950s the Industrial Locomotive Society was looking for a typical Public Works Contractors locomotive to preserve and selected Pixie. In July 1957 Pixie was moved from Tavistock to the garden of an ILS member in Berkhamsted. In September 1964 she was moved again, this time to a field at the rear of a public house in Harpenden.

Not long afterwards negotiations took place between the ILS and the newly formed Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway Society and in December she arrived at Leighton Buzzard. She worked on the line for a number of years but in 1977 the boiler was condemned. This was sent to Maskells of Bedford for rebuilding and the locomotive re-entered service in August 1978.

Happily both her sisters are preserved. Lorna Doone is now at the Museum of Science and Industry in Birmingham. Peter Pan initially went to J.H. Hardy at Bromsgrove for preservation in 1959 but joined Pixie at Leighton Buzzard in 1972. It was sold away from Leighton Buzzard in 1975 but paid a short visit in August 1979.

## HISTORY OF RAILWAYS - PART TWO - Contributed by Roger Bowen

### Steam Power

The first practical application of steam power was by James Watt for pumping engines mainly in collieries. These engines were too big and cumbersome to be considered for traction purposes. The real solution appeared with Richard Trevethick's high pressure steam engine of 1800. He tried this first on the roads and built a successful steam carriage in 1801. Due to the state of the roads being too rough Trevethick married his steam power to the plateway at Pen-y-daven Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales in 1804 and to the railway with flanged rails at Gateshead-on-Tyne in 1805. These were not totally successful. Blenkinsop and Murray's locomotive at Middleton Colliery near Leeds in 1812 was an improvement and Hedley's Puffing Billy on the Wylam Waggonway in 1814 was a further improvement.

Watching the developments was George Stephenson, an engineer at Killingworth Colliery. His locomotive Blucher of 1814 so impressed local colliery owners and merchants led by Edward Pease that they decided on steam power for their proposed new railway from Darlington to Stockton-upon-Tees.

The Stockton and Darlington Railway opened to traffic on 27 September 1825 with a ceremonial first train hauled by Locomotion driven by George Stephenson. One may ask what was so special about the Stockton and Darlington when as previously recorded lines in the North East dated back to 1605 and steam power in 1804. The answer is that this was where all the essential features came together. The railway was the first Public Carrier Railway of goods and passengers with steam traction - in short the first modern railway.

This railway attracted attention from all over the country. In particular a group of Liverpool and Manchester men who in 1826 had obtained an Act for a railway between their two cities. George Stephenson was appointed engineer and the line opened on 15 September 1830 - the first railway line to join two major centres - the first main line. The line justified its construction. By the end of 1830 70,000 passengers had been carried and in the first 18 months 700,000 had been carried. Previous to the opening the Rainhill Trials had been held where various locos had been pitted against each other. The successful loco was Stephenson's Rocket.

Other lines were quick to follow. The Canterbury and Whitstable, a much smaller line, also opened in 1830. The Dundee and Newtyle Railway opened with cable haulage in 1831 and adopted steam traction in 1833. The Leicester and Swannington Railway opened in 1833 and the Bodmin and Wadebridge in 1834. The first line to serve London was the London and Greenwich in 1836.

### Three Trunk Lines

(a) London and Birmingham/Grand Junction; later the London and North Western. Stephenson was the engineer to the London and Birmingham. Joseph Locke engineer and Thomas Brassey contractor to the Grand Junction.

The first section of the London and Birmingham to open was between London and Boxmoor on 20 July 1837. Boxmoor to Tring followed on 16 October 1837 and the line completed on 17 September 1838. The most notable feature was the Doric Arch at Euston. The new railway towns of Wolverton and Crewe should also be noted.

(b) The Great Western. Originally planned to run from London to Bristol. Designed by I.K. Brunel on the broad (7'0½") gauge with Daniel Gooch his locomotive engineer at the age of 21. Opened from Paddington (old station) to Maidenhead (old station) on 31 May 1838 and from Maidenhead to Twyford on 1 July 1839. The whole line including a branch from Swindon to Cirencester was opened on 30 June 1841 by which time the first section of the Bristol and Exeter that from Bristol to Bridgewater had been opened since 14 June 1841. The most notable features were Temple Meads Station at Bristol, Swindon New Town and Locomotive Works, Maidenhead Bridge and Wharncliffe Viaduct. The most famous of all was Box Tunnel which was 3200 yards long and at one time had 4000 men and 300 horses engaged on its construction.

(c) London and Southampton Railway; later the London and South Western. Engineered by Joseph Locke. Opened from Nine Elms to Woking Common on 21 May 1838, Woking Common to Winchfield on 24 September 1838 and throughout to Southampton by 11 May 1840. This brought yet another railway town in Eastleigh.

THE WYCOMBE RAILWAY AND THE MARLOW DONKEY - Contributed by Mike Walker

### Part five - The Joint Line

In 1893 the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway obtained powers to build the last great main line in this country, its London extension by way of Chesterfield, Nottingham, Leicester and Rugby. To mark its expansion the MS&L changed its name to the Great Central Railway on 1 August 1897.

Meanwhile the Metropolitan Railway was expanding out into the country heading for Aylesbury, and purchased the Aylesbury and Buckingham Railway on 1 July 1891. The section between Aylesbury and Verney Junction was now operated by the Metropolitan and the line was doubled during the mid-1890s. The northern section of the A&B between Verney Junction and Buckingham was henceforth part of the LNWR. The last section of the Metropolitan's main line from Baker Street, that between Chalfont and Aylesbury, opened on 1 September 1892.



The Great Central's new main line joined the former A&B just north of Quainton Road station and then enjoyed running powers over the Metropolitan almost into the centre of London, leaving the Metropolitan for its own terminus at Marylebone.

Passenger services over the London extension commenced on 15 March 1898 but initially relations between the Great Central and the Metropolitan were at times stormy and the shared section was soon found to be reaching maximum capacity. About the same time the Great Western was becoming anxious to re-establish its image following the abolition of the broad gauge and, in particular, wished to have a shorter route between London and Birmingham to enable it to compete with the LNWR.

The result of this was the formation of the Great Western/Great Central Joint Committee to build a new line from Northolt to Grendon Underwood on the GC main line via Gerrards Cross, Beaconsfield, High Wycombe and Princes Risborough, which was approved by Parliament in 1899. In connection with this the GCR would build a new line from Neasden to Northolt whilst the GWR would build lines from Old Oak Common to Northolt and from Ashenden (about 9½ miles north of Princes Risborough) to Aynho on the Oxford to Banbury Line.

The section of the new GW/GC route between High Wycombe and Princes Risborough would follow the course of the existing former Wycombe Railway and accordingly this section was transferred from GW to GW/GC ownership from 1 August 1899. Before any construction work started on the new joint line an additional station was opened by the GW at Aunderton on 1 July 1901.

The contract for the new line between Northolt Junction and High Wycombe, including the reconstruction of the station at the latter point, was awarded to Pauling & Company of Westminster for £580,000. Paulings started work in mid-1901 and set up their headquarters at Gerrards Cross. They employed 1500 men who used 34 locomotives, 4 steam cranes, 12 steam navvies, 765 tip wagons and 120 permanent way wagons.

West of Beaconsfield the route passed to the north of the village of Holtspur on a high embankment before tunnelling through a chalk ridge to reach the Wye Valley. This short tunnel, known as White House Farm Tunnel was 347 yards long and caused the only major problem in the construction of the line. On 6 September 1902 six men were trapped and killed by an unexpected rock fall. A memorial to them was erected in High Wycombe cemetery. On emerging from the tunnel the line ran onto another high embankment and crossed the drive to Sir Philip Rose's estate on a red brick viaduct of three 40' spans. The remainder of the route into High Wycombe followed the north side of the Wye Valley, joining the line from Maidenhead just outside the station.

On 24 July 1902 the Joint Committee accepted a tender of £116,797 from Mackay & Davies of Cardiff for the reconstruction of the former WRC between High Wycombe and Princes Risborough. On the same day Louis P. Nott was awarded a contract worth £170,276 for the line to Grendon Underwood.

The reconstruction of the WRC involved the construction of a new viaduct of four 46' spans alongside the former single track structure across the Hughenden Road. Immediately beyond this a new goods yard with a capacity of 200 wagons was provided on the down side. The main West Wycombe to Princes Risborough road was crossed by a brick skew bridge of 65' span. From here to Saunderton the original WRC trackbed can still be seen at a lower level on the down side.

Between Saunderton and Princes Risborough the new double track split into two single lines. The down line followed the original WRC line. The up line climbed through a deep cutting and a short 84 yard long tunnel. This involved a facing gradient of 1 in 167 on the up line and avoided a climb of 1 in 100 and 1 in 88 which would have faced up trains if both lines had followed the original route.

From Princes Risborough the line ran straight for over 4 miles crossing the River Thames by the Cheersley Viaduct of five 40' spans. From Ashendon the line turned north east and ran for a further 5½ miles to meet the GCR at Grendon Underwood, 2½ miles north of Quainton Road. This last section contained intermediate stations at Haddenham, Wooton and Akeman Street.

The line from Northolt to Haddenham was the responsibility of the Great Western whose resident engineer was Mr. G.H. MacKillop. All the stations were built to the then current GW standard design in red brick with blue brick trimmings. The stations at Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross each had two platforms located on loop lines, capable of holding trains of up to 80 wagons, leaving the main lines unobstructed.

High Wycombe also had its platforms on loops and had in addition a bay provided on the down side for branch trains from Maidenhead. The two main platforms were staggered and the down platform faced a huge retaining wall, containing around 1½ million blue Staffordshire engineering bricks, which held back Totteridge Road and Priory Avenue. The original goods yard behind the down platform was retained and the original goods shed much enlarged. A typical GW water tank stood at the down end of the up platform.

West Wycombe and Saunderton had no refuge loops provided although space was left at West Wycombe for the later provision of through lines if required. Princes Risborough had a brand new station provided slightly south of its original. As four different routes diverge at the north end the layout was quite elaborate. The main platforms, 500' long, were located on loops and bays were provided at the north end, that on the down side for the Watlington branch and the up side for the Aylesbury branch. Thame and Oxford trains used the main platforms. The goods yard was on the up side at the London end.

The signalling was also the responsibility of the GWR and Gerrards Cross, Beaconsfield and Princes Risborough each had two boxes, whilst there were three at High Wycombe. The West Box at Beaconsfield was removed in 1923 when the points at that end of the loops were electrically operated from the East Box, the first such installation on the GW.

Freight services commenced over the new line on 20 November 1905 with passenger services following on 2 April 1906. Initially these consisted of local services to Marylebone and Paddington and through GCR services.

Coinciding with the opening of the GW/GC line to passengers, the line from Quainton Road to London became the Metropolitan/Great Central Joint Committee. On 1 July 1907 the GW/GC Joint Committee took over the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury branch and Aylesbury Town station became the responsibility of two joint committees, a very unusual occurrence. The original layout for Aylesbury had a sharp reverse curve at the south end of the station where the Metropolitan joined the original WRC line from Princes Risborough. This caused a lot of problems for the operating departments therefore in 1907 the Met/GC Committee re-modelled the approaches so the main line had a clear run through. This work cost £9,000 and took about a year. The GCR provided the signalling and two boxes, North (30 levers) and South (55 levers). The original buildings were later renewed by typical GCR style structures.

The GWR's direct line was completed on 4 April 1910 when the Ashenden Junction, Bicester and Aynho line was opened. From then on the Paddington-Birmingham trains were routed via High Wycombe and the old Wycombe Railway became a collection of disconnected branches.