

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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Contents:

The North Briton

By New Trains to Old York

Railways in Australia - Part 2

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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The contents of the *Marlow Donkey* represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Society

CONTENTS

TIMETABLE - Forthcoming meetings	Page 2
CHAIRMAN'S NOTES Tim Speechley	2
SOCIETY & LOCAL NEWS	3
LOCOS GALORE	4
THE NORTH BRITON Mike Hyde	5
A LINE FOR ALL REASONS John Fowler	7
BY NEW TRAIN TO OLD YORK John Sears	9
25 AND 15 YEARS AGO Tim Edmonds	11
RAILWAYS IN AUSTRALIA - Part 2 Tim Edmonds	13

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: 4-8-0 NM25 at Woolshed Flat Australia. 11 August 2007. Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 14).

Bottom: Left photo: Victor Harbor Tramway car 4. 12 August 2007. Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 15).

Right photo: Red Hen railcar 412 at Victoria Harbor 12 August 2007. Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 15).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Red Cross Centre, Victoria Road, Marlow, at 7.45 for 8.00pm.

- Thursday 19 June **ITALIAN RAILWAYS** Jeremy Harrison
Following last year's talk on the railways of northern France, we take a look at the railways of Italy - another part of Europe that doesn't often take the spotlight.
- Thursday 17 July **THE pre-1923 GWR LINES IN THE WEST OF WALES** Martin Connop Price
A welcome return visit by an authority on the railways of West Wales. We are assured of an informative evening.
- Thursday 18 September **MORE CLASSIC BRITISH TRANSPORT FILMS** Alan Wilmott
By popular demand, Alan makes a return visit to show some more of the evocative publicity films produced by BTF.
- Thursday 16 October **THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY** Dave Baker
A talk about one of the country's premier preserved railways and how it has been recovering from the devastating effects of flood damage.
- Thursday 20 November **BRITISH MAIN LINE STEAM - THE FINAL TEN YEARS** Peter Groom
Peter's photos will be well-known to many through their publication in magazines and books. Here he presents a selection of pictures from the 1950s and 1960s.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Sunday 6 July **THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY** by train
We plan a visit by rail to the repaired and reopened SVR. Please let Mike Hyde know as soon as possible if you are interested.
- Saturday 20 September **THE STATFOLD BARN RAILWAY** by car
The society has some invitations to this private narrow-gauge railway near Tamworth which is also the home of the Hunslet Engine Co. We plan to travel in members' cars - please let Tim Speechley know if you wish to come as numbers are strictly limited.

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

This is being written shortly after our very successful day trip to Paris by Eurostar and thanks are due to Mike Walker for doing all the planning and advance booking and to Malcolm Margetts for obtaining an assortment of tickets and maps for the various participants when he was in Paris immediately prior to the trip, even though he was not coming with us. We were blessed by summer-like sunny weather all day and all those who went seem to have had a good time. From a railway perspective, France still sees a lot of locomotive hauled, or pushed, trains and those in the group that accompanied me to a number of the termini saw main line electric locos varying in date from 1959 (at Gare d'Austerlitz) to 2008 (at Gare St Lazare) showing that SNCF gets good value out of them. The Metro impressed me in terms of frequency and interesting features (like rubber tyres) but the seats are not comfortable and some of the interchanges quite a long walk. If there is enough interest and the prices stay competitive, we may do something similar next year - Brussels anybody?

Of course this year marks the 40th anniversary of the end

of steam on BR. I was just over 17 when the final specials ran and have to say how glad I am to be old enough to remember "proper" steam, though I deeply regret not taking up the hobby early enough to see the top link passenger locos in express service, except on the Southern. Nevertheless, I did my best to see as much as I could towards the end, Saturday morning school and poor finances permitting, including a week's Northern Railover with a friend in July 1967 and a week based at Preston in June 1968 visiting all those last steam sheds. I was lucky to have become friendly with a group of older enthusiasts at home in North London and through them managed to get a ticket on the LCGB's last day special on 4th August, about which I hope to produce an article for the September *'Donkey'*. I also gate-crashed a trip to Ribbleshead viaduct on 11th August to see the "15 Guinea" special and after that we all wondered what we would do from now on. Well, who would have imagined what delights were in store during those intervening years and those that are still yet to come?

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBER

It is a pleasure to be able to welcome another new member to the Society. John Fowler comes from Taplow and has already made a contribution to the *'Donkey'*.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The spring season has provided an enjoyable mix of presentations. In March Andy Savage gave us an insight into the workings of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch.

Graham Stacey showed a further selection of images from the LCGB's Ken Nunn Collection in April. The shots spanned the whole country and covered the period from 1898 to the 1950's. Oh for colour!

Ideals Above One's Station was the title of Mark Evans' ebullient presentation in which he reviewed the development of station architecture around the world from pioneers such as Liverpool Road, Manchester, to the grand like Los Angeles Union or the functional such as Turnpike Lane.

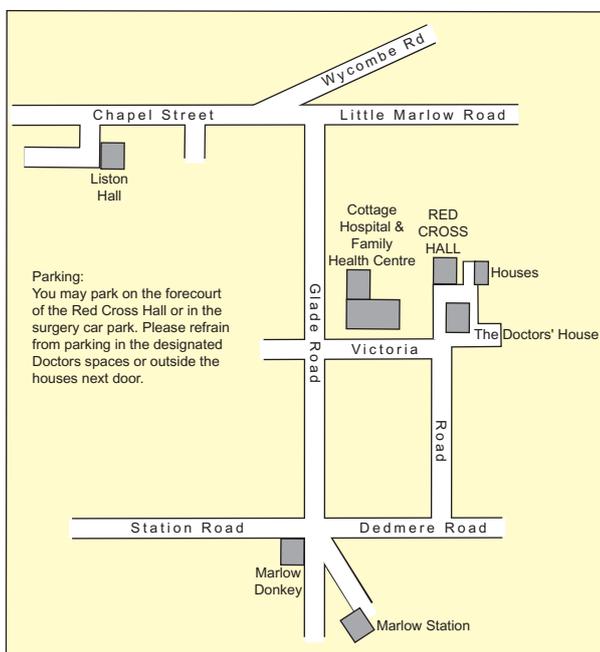
A party of nineteen had an excellent if tiring day in Paris on May 10th. A full report will appear in the next issue.

WE'RE ON THE MOVE

With effect from the June 2008 meeting, the venue will move to the Marlow Red Cross Centre situated behind the Marlow doctors' surgery in Victoria Road (see map below). There is plenty of parking on site.

The main reason for the change is to provide a more spacious, comfortable and quieter venue - meetings will not be interrupted by traffic noise or some of the more moronic members of society as they were at the Liston Hall. We thank the Marlow Community Association for making us welcome at the latter over the last couple of years.

Arrangements for refreshments remain the same and it is an appropriate time to remind you that Mike Hyde is still seeking volunteers for later in the year.



BUILDING WORK

A large amount of building and construction work is underway in the area this summer. On the Chiltern Line, work continues on the construction of the second level of the car park at Beaconsfield. Several problems have been encountered during the work which has delayed the project with completion not now expected until July.

At Denham work has started on the new Down platform which is being constructed on the right hand side of the line on the former alignment of the Down Through Road. Its position will leave room for the addition of a bi-directional through line to be added in future if required and it will be connected to the Up platform and main offices by a footbridge and lifts rather than the present subway. The existing Down platform has to be replaced as it is in a poor state of repair and is slipping down the embankment.

Work has also started on the new Aylesbury North station which is expected to open next year. The line between Aylesbury and the new station site was relaid and upgraded to passenger standards earlier this year.

Over on the Great Western line work has started on the reinstatement of a full length platform 1 on the Down Main at Maidenhead and the booking hall, subway and buildings on platforms 4 and 5 are being refurbished and reconfigured. This work is due to be completed by late summer.

Down the line at Twyford, work is scheduled to begin on a new footbridge immediately after the Henley Regatta weekend. The present bridge forms part of a public right of way across the railway so its replacement will be wider with segregated flows for passengers changing platforms and those using the right of way. This will enable FGW to install ticket gates at Twyford - something which is not possible with the current layout. Lifts will also be provided to ensure full disabled access.

SPECIAL TO CARLISLE

Pathfinder Tours are running a special train from Joint Line stations to Carlisle on Saturday 5th July. The outward run is via the Settle & Carlisle line with the return via Shap after a two hour break in Carlisle. The train will be worked by an EWS class 66 south of Crewe and by a pair of the Network Rail class 37/9's from there to Carlisle. Pick up from High Wycombe is 06.50 and the standard fare is £59.00. For more details go to www.pathfindertours.co.uk

THE HOPWOOD EFFECT

Mark Hopwood seems to be having a positive effect at FGW as the company's performance is showing a marked improvement. The PPM figure for the four weeks ending 28th April was 90.56% - the first time in many years FGW have had a figure starting with a 9 - and a considerable improvement on recent years.

However, it should be remembered that spring is traditionally a good time for train performance generally. As summer unfolds a number of challenges present themselves; heat related speed restrictions and rolling

stock problems (although the refurbishment of the HST fleet should reduce these) and staff vacations - again FGW are committed to recruiting additional staff which should help.

It will be interesting to see how the company performs as the year goes on.

BOURNE END WOES

Not helping FGW's performance recovery is the ongoing unreliability of the new signalling and control arrangements at Bourne End (see *March Marlow Donkey*). There have been numerous failures of the equipment during the spring resulting in lengthy suspensions of the service at least between Bourn End and Marlow and on occasions the whole branch. Network Rail is endeavouring to resolve the problems.

LOCOS GALORE!

There was a time, not too long ago, when the Joint Line was a pretty boring place to watch the action - a continual parade of DMU's and just one scheduled freight train each way. Suddenly that's all changed thanks to the start of the Wrexham & Shropshire services which bring up to five class 67 hauled trains through town daily in each direction whilst freight traffic has increased up to four each way on weekdays.

In addition to the long standing EWS 'Binliner' from Northolt to Calvert, which is usually 59/2 or 60, similar trains are worked by Freightliner using their 66's or occasionally a hired in example from DRS.

The most recent addition is a EWS operated train conveying decontaminated spoil from the Olympics site to Calvert where it is used to cover the landfill. Consisting of 17 JNA bogie box



A rare visitor to the Joint Line was Network Rail's ultrasonic test unit 950001 which passed through en-route to Derby on 16th April 2008.

Tim Edmonds happened to be passing with his camera (never leave home without it!) and caught the purpose built unit.

wagons, it is normally hauled by a class 60 or 59/2 but 66's have been seen too. How long this flow will continue for is uncertain, it is running as a special hence the Z headcode.

And don't forget Chiltern are planning to add peak hour loco-hauled trains, topped and tailed by class 67, but the start date for these has still to be announced. The trains will be:

1H11 07.17 Banbury - Marylebone (pass HW about 08.03)
1N55 18.33 Marylebone - Bicester North (due HW 19.05)

The times of the other services are shown below. Please note that the passing times at High Wycombe are approximate only - freight times in particular can differ greatly depending on day to day operations. It would appear that mid-morning is a very interesting time!

WREXHAM SHROPSHIRE & MARYLEBONE

UP	Mon - Fri					Saturdays				Sundays		
Wrexham	05.42	07.25	11.10	15.10	18.10	05.51	08.55	12.55	17.25	10.45	14.00	17.13
High Wycombe	09.23	11.16	14.47	18.46	21.40	09.22	12.41	16.43	21.04	14.32	17.47	21.17
Marylebone	09.54	11.49	15.23	19.22	22.15	09.56	13.15	17.21	21.40	15.06	18.21	21.51

DOWN	Mon - Fri					Saturdays				Sundays		
Marylebone	06.45	10.17	13.17	16.10	20.03	08.17	12.17	15.17	18.37	09.12	15.16	19.17
High Wycombe	07.16	10.47	13.47	16.45	20.32	08.45	12.45	15.45	19.05	09.46	15.48	19.49
Wrexham	10.44	14.28	17.25	20.28	23.57	12.28	16.29	19.29	22.37	13.28	19.18	22.25S

S: terminates at Shrewsbury

FREIGHT SERVICES

DOWN			
Train ID	Operator	Description	Pass HW
6Z47	EWS	10.03 Willesden-Calvert spoil loads (MX)	11.30
6M22	Freightliner	09.21 Cricklewood-Calvert refuse loads	13.05
6M80	Freightliner	13.12 Dagenham-Calvert refuse loads	16.05
6A55	EWS	19.51 Northolt-Calvert refuse loads	20.15

UP			
Train ID	Operator	Description	Pass HW
6A56	EWS	09.56 Calvert-Northolt refuse empties	10.45
6M23	Freightliner	19.39 Calvert-Cricklewood refuse empties	20.25
6L81	Freightliner	21.49 Calvert-Dagenham refuse empties	22.35
6Z48	EWS	23.30 Calvert-Acton spoil empties	00.15

Joint Line loco action: 67012 tails the first WSMR down train 1J80 into High Wycombe on 28th April (Below) whilst 66044 had charge of the 6Z47 spoil train on 13th May (Right).



photo: Tim Edmonds
www.mdrs.org.uk



photo: Mike Walker

THE NORTH BRITON

Mike Hyde

Following the great success of Railway Touring Co's unique 'Great Britain' nine day steam excursion last year, a more modest but equally enjoyable trip took place April 2008. But first, to introduce their new premium service consist, the launch of RTC's newly liveried train, the 'Royal Scot', was celebrated on Friday 11th April.

This train of invited guests was formed of a fleet of red and cream BR Mark1 carriages hauled by A4 Pacific No.60019 *Bittern* from London's Euston to Victoria on a circular routing via Guildford and Redhill. Whilst the continuous use and crossing of main commuter lines did not allow many bursts of speed, the loco behaved impeccably and the afternoon tour was most pleasurable.

So to the main event: The 'North Briton'. *Bittern* departing Kings Cross on Saturday 12th April for Scotland was soon through the Gasworks and Copenhagen tunnels (no lady killers here!). We made our first pick-up at Peterborough station then into the West Yard for a generously timed water stop. A further water stop in Doncaster RMT did get us out a little quicker and we rolled into York ahead of schedule. *Bittern* gave some very spirited running with maximum allowed speeds achieved to everyone's enjoyment. She was rested here and from the NRM came No.71000 *Duke of Gloucester* to take over our special train.

As always, at least in my presence, the Duke performed impeccably and



Stranger in the camp, 60019 Bittern with 'Royal Scot' headboard at Euston on 11th April (Above).

71000 Duke of Gloucester takes over the 'North Briton' at York (Below).

photos: Mike Hyde



speedily. We took water at Tyne and at Berwick upon Tweed before racing on to Edinburgh for our first overnight stop. With over 300 passengers and staff this necessitated using four hotels with transport as required.

Next morning A4 60009 *Union of South Africa* took over the haulage with a prompt but unusual start out of Waverley station. As steam is not allowed through the western end tunnels (at least we were not) to our great delight we took the largely freight line, known as the Suburban route (proposals for an Edinburgh metro-type commuter line have been mooted), in a south circular journey with some very tight radius curves for our loco and train. 50 minutes later we were crossing the famous Forth Railway Bridge into Fife. A pleasant run to Leuchars then across our second (in)famous Scottish bridge, over the River Tay into Dundee.

Now we were of course facing the 'wrong' way towards Aberdeen (originally this was to have been our routing but gauging problems ruled this out). Also our locomotive was at the 'wrong' end. But since we had planned

to add on another engine, Black 5 No. 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier*, at Perth to assist our train over the summits further north, she ran down to Dundee to sit on the rear of our train. Thus we proceeded, one engine each end, tender first, to Perth.

At Perth we joined the main line north after watering both engines. This took some time as water pressure was poor. Eventually both locos assumed their vanguard position with the Black 5 leading. A few brief stops en route at Pitlochry and Blair Atholl with a lengthy stop at Aviemore for water allowed several Scotrail scheduled services to pass or cross. Then we were away with two leviathans heading into the hills and a snow shower over Slochd summit. Up until now, and in fact throughout the 5 day tour, we had excellent weather apart from this white fall and a rain shower later. At Inverness we disembarked for our several hotels.

Next day presented a choice. A day of rest and recreation or a ride by steam to Kyle of Lochalsh. Most opted for the latter on a shortened but full train. On duty today was No. 45407 for this run from the east to the west coast along this very scenic line. There was some slight concern about gradients beyond Garve but we sailed on comfortably. Photographers followed us on all legs of our journey and none more than along these glens for what must have been cracking shots.

At Kyle a fleet of coaches awaited to take passengers to Eilean Donan Castle (of Highlander, James Bond and BBC Interval fame) for a short photo opportunity before moving on over the bridge to Skye. Fine weather all the way made for a wonderful journey through the southern half of the Misty Isle to Portree. There was time for a swift half or two, tea and cake or a wander down to the harbour which was painted 'Balamory-like'. On return, a quick look in the station museum at Kyle and our steam train was off. Passing Plockton, Stromeferry and Strathcarron. Then came the first major problem of the tour.

There are some tricky gradients east or westwards plus curves on the highest climbs. Black 5 No.45407 was well loaded, running tender first when she came to a standstill. We struggled but no-way was she going to overcome the grease and oil on the rail just a few hundred yards from safety. Sanding did not help and a consortium of brains considered the choices. Whilst the road was not far away, it was down a steep slope, across an ice-cold river and a climb up the other side. No way José, unless you were one of the deer or sheep we had seen earlier.

A plan materialised. We would drop off the Generator car and one coach. www.mdrs.org.uk

Passengers would move through to the other coaches. All done in good spirits, I must say. These 2 coaches would be braked and left till later. The remainder of the train moved on to Achnasheen where passengers chose to disembark to await results. The Black 5 detached, and ran back to collect the 2 coaches left behind. All this took time but the scenery and sunshine helped to cheer up the gathering until it started to cool off in the breeze. Naturally, intense discussion took place as to what would happen next when (if) the engine came back? How to attach coaches at the rear? What time might one get to bed that night? Since everyone was 'an expert' the combinations and variations on the outcome could have led to a book being opened.

The engine and coaches came into view. The 2 coaches were dropped off just short of the points with the loco ready to move on to the front of the train, push it back onto the 2 coaches, couple up and away. However, the points were sprung against the 'run-around' move so had to be manually overcome. It was done eventually but not without some difficulty. Some 2 hours late we were away but not before we had to take water, the road tanker (and passengers) waiting patiently all the while.

What if it were to happen again on another climb? Plan C or was it D, even E, came into play. Four road coaches were dispatched from Inverness. These had been due to meet the train at the station and convey passengers to hotels. Since they had been used in the morning and on Skye, drivers were out of hours and a fresh team had to be found. These coaches awaited us at Garve where passengers had the option of coaching to their hotels direct or continuing by train to Inverness with a later arrival.

The general view was "we came to travel by train and so we will". As events turned out no more mishaps occurred and apart from passing/crossing trains on the main line at Muir of Ord, no more delays arose. The train passengers arrived about 1½ hours after

the road coaches to find the city still open for business. Just one more thing, since the steam train blocked the line to Kyle, scheduled trains, one from either end, were cancelled and road coaches provided. Apparently a majority of the passengers from Kyle were from the tour party but not on the steamer. The official outcome is awaited in public but clearly a combination of circumstances came together at the same time - sods law!

'The Fusilier' and No.9 took us out of Inverness next day to Perth with a water stop at Kingussie. Some very pleasant running over the hills and glens put yesterday out of our minds. We said farewell to the Black 5 and rode on to Glasgow Central where we also said our farewells to the A4. Our final day saw the Duke taking us to Abington and to Kingmoor for water stops, then via Carlisle, Haltwhistle and Wylam on to the East Coast Main Line with a call at Tyne for water. No. 71000 hauled us on to York with time to spare.

We were once again pleased to have A4 No. 60019 *Bittern* to lead us to Retford for water and on to Peterborough. Here the final leg was taken by 67005 *The Queen's Messenger* to Kings Cross arriving a little ahead of time. So the tour was completed behind some very fine running by all steam engines and hard working footplate crews. Support crew and operation staff all performed well with outstanding service from Premier Catering staff. A small team of RTC staff assisted passengers, conveyed luggage by van in Scotland, handled local and touring coaches. The excitement and interest of the Kyle expedition was a talking point but left no bad feelings, quite the opposite. Scottish hospitality and weather was first class so whilst a repeat performance may not actually be on the cards for next year, I am sure it would be fully booked if it did run.

Black Five 45407 Lancashire Fusilier at Perth waiting to take over the North Briton on 13th April.



A LINE FOR ALL REASONS

JOHN FOWLER finds there's more to the Harz than steam.

I read Dave Theobald's and Mike Page's pages article "Visiting German Sunny Skies" in *The Marlow Donkey* (120) with great interest. From 1995 onwards I have been a frequent visitor to the narrow gauge lines of the ex DDR, with slides and later video to prove it! In 2006 we, the Today's Railways tour, visited the three lines described in the article although we started on the Baltic coast and came south to the Harz.

One of the reasons I fell in love with these lines is that they are "proper railways" providing local transport, mostly passenger, in their area and not just preserved lines with limited services. Although there are couple of those, which are also, well worth a visit.

With this in mind I thought I would elaborate on the use the HSB make of the 12 kms of line from Nordhausen to Ilfeld Neanderklinik which is a single platform, no loop, station North of Nordhausen on the line to Eisfelder Talmühle. Which in turn is the junction for the Harzquerbahn to Wernigerode and the link to the Selketalbahn and Quedlinburg, see the map from the official HSB web site <http://www.hsb-wr.de>.

Why this stretch of line in particular? This is because it illustrates the important roles the HSB plays in the transport needs of the area, so what are these roles?

Firstly, it is tourist railway with its route to the Summit of the Brocken. Although the majority of tourists use the service from the Northern terminus at Wernigerode HSB still considers it worthwhile to run a steam hauled, through train complete with buffet car from Nordhausen to the Brocken and return. There are also other steam hauled trains run for special occasions or as private charters using this section.

The Brocken train is usually hauled by one of the 2-10-2 tanks out stationed at Nordhausen. This loco works an interesting diagram, in that it doesn't actually scale the Brocken but only takes the train as far as the junction at Drei Annen Hohne. Here it swops trains with a Wernigerode loco which has bought the lunchtime through train for Eisfelder Talmühle which it hauled from Wernigerode. The Nordhausen loco then does a return journey to Eisfelder Talmühle with the through Wernigerode train whilst the Wernigerode engine takes the Nordhausen train to the Brocken and back. The engine swop is repeated 3 hours later. If you ever get to Drei Annen Hohne it is worth trying to be there for around 12:00 or 15:00 to see these swops and how slickly they are



performed. If you want to see what locos railcars and ED trams are in access www.ig-hsb.de and click on Treibfahrzeuge on left hand index to find out where what the status of every loco and railcar is at the date shown.

Secondly it is local railway serving the towns and villages of the Harz region, particularly for school children these are usually run by diesel railcars. These services provide all stations stopping trains from Nordhausen to Eisfelder

The image normally associated with the Harz: 2-6-2T 99 6001-4 waits at Wernigerode but as John finds, the Harz is a fully-functioning part of the local transport network.

all photos: John Fowler

Talmühle, where some terminate but may connect or are through trains to Wernigerode or the Selketalbahn These are not necessarily an all year round or even 7 day services some being confined to school days. They are also used by





One of the Harz dual-power ED trams which provide a through service between the HSB and the Nordhausen town system.



ramblers to reach some of the remoter stations there are several which are just a low platform in the middle of the forest. Unfortunately these are the services most at risk, particularly on the Selketalbahn, as although they provide a valuable service they are not necessarily well used (except for the school trains) as cars and buses tend to be quicker. For instance trains to Benneckenstein and Hasselfelde both being around 30 kms from Nordhausen take 1 hour 15 and 2 hr 12 min respectively.

Thirdly as well as the through trains mentioned above Ilfeld Neanderlinik is northern terminus of the ED trams from Nordhausen mentioned in the article. Along with the railcars they provide a commuter service into Nordhausen, not just to the Hauptbahnhof but also onto the town network usually terminating at the Krankenhaus (hospital). On the town network they are electrically powered whilst on the HSB they use diesel power. The diesel engine is housed in an enclosure on one side of the middle segment of the tram. It is about 2m long by 1 m wide and 1 m high it makes an ideal luggage rack! The trams make use of the new connection from the HSB yard alongside the North side of the HSB station connecting into the South terminal loop of the electrified town tram system.

Fourthly and probably uniquely it is a freight railway and heavy freight no less. This freight consists of rail ballast conveyed in standard gauge bogie hopper wagons from the quarry at Unterberg on the line from Eisfelder to Steige. How does a metre gauge railway convey such traffic? Well as is shown in the photographs each axle is conveyed on a four wheel "Rollbok" thus there a four Rollboks per wagon with 16 narrow gauge wheels. This reduces the axle load from something like 20 tonnes loaded on the standard gauge to 10 tonnes on the narrow gauge. The wagons are coupled using their normal standard gauge screw coupling buffers and airbrake pipes. Surprisingly the Rollboks are not coupled, however, as they are the road wheels they need brakes. Especially when you consider that the gradient for loaded trains from the quarry to

Eisfelder Talmule is 1 in 30 down all the way, good brakes are essential. The Rollboks are, therefore, connected by special air pipes to the wagon air brakes and to each other. See photographs.

Now you may be wondering how do they get the wagons on and off the Rollboks. To be quite honest I've seen the facility at Nordhausen but have never seen it operating, but can surmise as follows. The HSB metre gauge line leaves Nordhausen in an easterly direction parallel with the standard gauge lines to the south. There is a mixed gauge yard in between. After 600m the HSB turns north and a standard gauge line comes into to run parallel on the West side. About a kilometre from Nordhausen is the transfer facility. This consists of standard gauge siding between the standard and metre gauge lines. A metre gauge siding runs down the middle of the standard gauge siding in a low trench. The Rollboks are, therefore, just below the standard gauge rails. Between the transfer siding and the narrow gauge running lines are racks for the air pipes.

The standard gauge wagons are shunted into the transfer road from the north. I then assume that the folding axle grips on the Rollboks are raised to engage with the axles of the standard gauge wagons and the air pipes coupled up. Then the HSB C-C diesel, which is a converted ex-DR V100 B-B diesel hydraulic, nicknamed "coat hangers" on the standard gauge and "red camels" on the HSB, couples up from the south. It must then pull the wagons off the standard gauge siding. The rails of which must drop slightly at the end so that the wheels of the wagon come to rest on the Rollbok as shown in the close up photos.

The reverse happens with the loaded wagons. They must be pushed into the metre gauge transfer siding with the standard gauge wheels engaging with the ends of the standard gauge siding rails and rising off the Rollbok so that the axle grips can be lowered and air pipes removed. Do any members have any further information? I've tried Googling Rollboks but haven't found much even



A V100 diesel hauls standard gauge wagons over the metre gauge on Rollboks. See text for details.

My view is that this 12 kms of railway shows what can be done if there is positive attitude to public transport in general and rail in particular. Even more remarkable is that it's metre gauge.

Can you wonder that all being well, I shall be back in the Harz in October? We will do most of the HSB from Quedlinburg via to Wernigerode plus the Broken with steam but unfortunately we will not get to Nordhausen.

If you have enjoyed this article there is a lot more that can be written about the HSB and the railways of the Harz region in general. As a taster did you know the Russians removed part of the Selketalbahn in 1946, it was only rebuilt in 1984.

THE SPECTRE OF THE BROCKEN

Reading through Dave and Mike's article on their visit to Germany, I note that they didn't see the Spectre of the Brocken - seems the weather was too good! In case you haven't heard of it, I'll replace my anorak with my ex-Met Office Sou'Wester.

If the top was slightly misty (but not enough to block out the sun) a person's shadow appears on the mist and it seems as if there is a person some way away and that person looks gigantic-hence spectre. This illusion can appear at top of other hills but in Met circles it is named after the Brocken mountain.

BY NEW TRAIN TO OLD YORK

John Sears tries out Grand Central



It's April, 1965, and your author is exploring New York's Grand Central Terminal on his first visit to the United States. Our return from Barbados on "free passes" has been extended by a detour from Bermuda via what was known as a "shuttle" in BOAC parlance, a trip that didn't return to Heathrow. For some years BOAC operated a New York to Bermuda return trip as an extension of one of their Heathrow to JFK flights. The trip from Bermuda had been my first in a Super VC10 - my first experience of that amazing take-off climb.

Grand Central was equally amazing - platforms just about visible in the gloom through the gates, incredibly old-looking electric motors resting at the head of arrived NY, NH & H RR trains - well, maybe the script was not quite that ornate, but it wasn't Gill Sans. Where were all those initials? New York, New Haven and Hartford, but of course. The timetable racks produced a few interesting fliers, including some for another company whose name was a list of places, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. The leaflet for their Streamlined Fleet exhorts me to "Travel the Chief Way" between Chicago Texas and California. It's a fold-out of photos and illustrations of scenes in and from the trains, with an imposing old maitre d' in the diner asking a young couple if their fruit cocktails are satisfactory.

The timetable for the *Super Chief* ("Issued April 26, 1964") shows it leaving Chicago - Dearborn Station, a fact only mentioned in the points of interest along the way - at 18.30. By early the next morning the Super is racing over the Kansas prairies, averaging 77 mph between Dodge City and Garden City, and on into Colorado, with the 100 miles to Lamar booked to be covered at an average of 82 mph. And they were - nine years later what was by then Amtrak's South West Limited covered those hundred miles in a minute less than the times in the Santa Fe's 1964 timetable. In another hour the Super's at La Junta - The Junction - where the line to Denver heads away. Eighty minutes for the next eighty-two miles sees the train at Trinidad, gaining over 1,900 feet in altitude. Then comes the climb over Raton, through Raton Tunnel at 7,588 feet above sea level: "½ mile long and highest point on Santa Fe". Arrival in Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal was booked for 8.00 the second morning.

Another flier is for the *El Capitan*, whose bi-level cars were still only a few



years old back in 1965. It was "devoted to serving economy-minded coach-fare travelers". Well, not that economy-minded, as it was an "Extra fare service". Nevertheless, it offered a "Dining Club Meal Book" for \$10, which covered all meals between Chicago and Los Angeles, and a go now and pay later scheme. The Hi-Level cars were the precursor of Amtrak's Superliners and had their seats eight feet "above the clickety-clack of the rails" with all baggage checked (for free) on the lower level, near the dressing rooms and toilets. The last brilliant flowering of North American passenger car design?

We're now back near the present, waiting for a train that is formed of what many believe to be last flowering of British passenger car design. Grand Central's 12.30 from Sunderland is due in the Cross at 16.05 and it's up on the screen as "due 16.30". It's to form the 16.50 back to Sunderland, non-stop to York, due there at 18.44, 188½ miles at 99 mph. Your scribe is waiting near the country end of platform 8 watching emus and National Express (not "East Coast") trains. The indicators outside the tunnel mouth show for which platform inbound trains are heading, and at about 16.25 one shows 5. Sure enough the buffers of 43068 appear out of the gloom and head for number 5, followed by two firsts, a restaurant car, three seconds and 43067. All adorned in Grand Central's black livery, with doors in what could be called "gold". It does, indeed, arrive at 16.30.

How long before we can board, bearing in mind Grand Central's buy on board without penalty policy? The platform entrance is open and a rivulet of passengers is walking, unchecked, to the train. No staff of any company are attending to the passengers, and the train cannot have been cleaned. Neither, it

Grand Central 43084 leads a London bound train out of York on 21st April.

photos: Dave Theobald

turns out, have the reservation labels been placed.

The train is formed in the conventional way, with first class at the buffer stops end of the platform. Evidence of the lack of cleaning is visible through the windows of first class, with used mugs and wrappings on the tables. Grand Central's black livery doesn't seem quite as glossy as it has in photographs. The first class doors have a large 1 on them, and the restaurant car - no meal service is available as of the time of writing - has the crossed knife and fork. My plebeian seat is in car C and, sure enough, the seat labels are those for the up journey and there's no label on my seat - 12F. I realise with a shock that it's been a very long time since I've sat in a reserved seat that indicated the direction of travel.

Seat 12F is a window seat, on the down side of the train. The gap between the seats and the table is larger than normal, because the seats have been re-spaced in standard class so that facing pairs of seats exactly match the space between window pillars. Working at the table could be awkward for small people, requiring them to sit on the edge of their seat. There are only 63 seats in the car, with 36 of them round tables. Car B has a similar layout, with car D, the third standard class car, having all its seats round tables. B and C both have a large area at one end for a wheelchair. The two first class cars have 48 seats each, with no space for a wheelchair. Car E is a TRSB, with 34 seats, all but six around tables.

The interiors have been refurbished to rather a limited extent, with new fabric in shades of grey on the seats, new grey

The Marlow Donkey

carpets (including the Mk III style of carpet on the lower part of the body sides) and panels fixed on top of the tables in faux wood veneer, with Monopoly and chequer boards incorporated. (Presumably passengers would have to swap seats if they faced the wrong game board.) The body panels have not been repainted and the seat mouldings and fittings (reservation label holders, etc.) have not been replaced. In car C the letter d in "Grand Central" at the top of the end wall panel picture of Marilyn Monroe has been covered by a label with the letter C on it. If the intention is to indicate which car it is, the effect is amateurish. There is plenty of room to the right of the vestibule door to display a label saying "This is car/coach C." The general impression of the interior is that it is not new and not particularly good quality.

As passengers board, the effects of the failure to place the seat reservations quickly become obvious. The train is going to be full (it's Maundy Thursday) and so plenty of passengers are looking for seats. Some move several times as people arrive and claim their booked seats. The aisles become full of people. However, Grand Central staff are making good efforts to seat all passengers, who are all found seats soon after departure. The process is helped because the conductor has a manifest. The standard class accommodation is full.

At 16.45 the first announcement is made, it lists stops, but not invalid ticket types - one benefit of Grand Central's streamlined fares policy. Buy on board, buy on the internet, buy at a booking office, the price varies only by class or if the passenger is 60 or older. Not all the announcement is audible; it appears that only one loudspeaker is working. At 16.52, two minutes late, we depart. The train's running appears a little slow, and I wonder if the rear power car is "dead" - it was quiet as I passed it on my way to the train. Stevenage is passed at 17.13, whereas East Coast trains are timed to depart Stevenage 19 minutes after departure from Kings Cross. However

speed builds and the miles to Huntingdon are covered at an average of 118 mph. The reverse curves at Offord, realigned to remove the speed restriction, see the down slow line within a few feet of the River Ouse.

Peterborough passes at 17.38, an average of 99 mph from London, exactly what's required to reach York on time. We're through Grantham at 17.55, but the train runs slowly for several miles starting two signals south of Newark, passed at 18.06. The eleven minutes pass to pass compares very unfavourably with the nine and a half minutes start to pass taken by the 17.03 Kings Cross to Leeds a week later. The probable cause is revealed as we pass Retford at 18.19 - the 16.35 from Kings Cross, booked to call at Retford at 18.04, is just departing. It appears the delays have been triggered by the 16.30 from Kings Cross, due to call at Newark, running late, and delaying the 16.35, which doesn't call there. A further delay occurs south of Colton Junction, for no apparent reason (the signal after the junction is green and we don't pass any train on the slow line), and the final two miles into platform 11 at York are at a very slow speed. We arrive in York at 18.54 and 30 seconds, 10½ minutes late. About half the passengers in car C leave the train, with - a guess - thirty passengers waiting to join the train for its remaining journey to Sunderland.

So, was all the effort by Grand Central's management team worth it? The overall impression is that Grand Central is rather like one of those small local coach operators, who have a fleet of second-hand coaches that were top of the range rather too many years ago. The ever-so-slightly mom and pop nature of the business is shown by things like the catering trolley. No sandwiches (what? on a train leaving at 16.50?), no plastic money taken, but rather a plastic pencil case for the money. The hot water is in two flasks. Even though the assistant conductor who came round checking and selling tickets had an Avantix machine, she didn't have a pin machine. Grand Central made great play of its simple

fares structure, but then announced that from the tenth of March they would make a surcharge for travel on its peak trains. Their web site mentions it, but then goes on to sell tickets at the basic fare. No mention of the surcharge was made on the train, and even those buying on board paid the basic fare. So, why announce a surcharge, and then not collect it? Just a bit of a public relations cock-up.

Despite the slightly amateurish nature of the travel experience they provide, Grand Central does use the MkIII coach. Even though the design is now more than thirty years old, it does provide interior space which is so much better than that of a Voyager, Pendolino or 185. The ride down the ECML was a good deal better than either the WCML or the GWML - it was quiet, steady and comfortable.

As for their future, well, time will tell. Like the big TOCs, they really have got to get to grips with providing a really consistent service. The lack of any contingency for dealing with the late arrival at Kings Cross was painful to watch. Exactly a week after the trip reported here, a very lonely looking 43065, stabled facing north in a siding at Newark, and the sight of the 16.50 ex Kings Cross passing Peterborough at least four late, with only five cars and a dead rear power car, suggest a hard struggle lies ahead. Grand Central deserve to succeed, but will they generate enough profit to replace those HST power cars and ex Virgin West Coast Mk IIIs? Slam doors in 2008 are very "heritage" (pace Great Western) and the best will in the world is surely not enough to see the trains running into their sixth decade, as are Via's Budd cars. Now there's another classic!

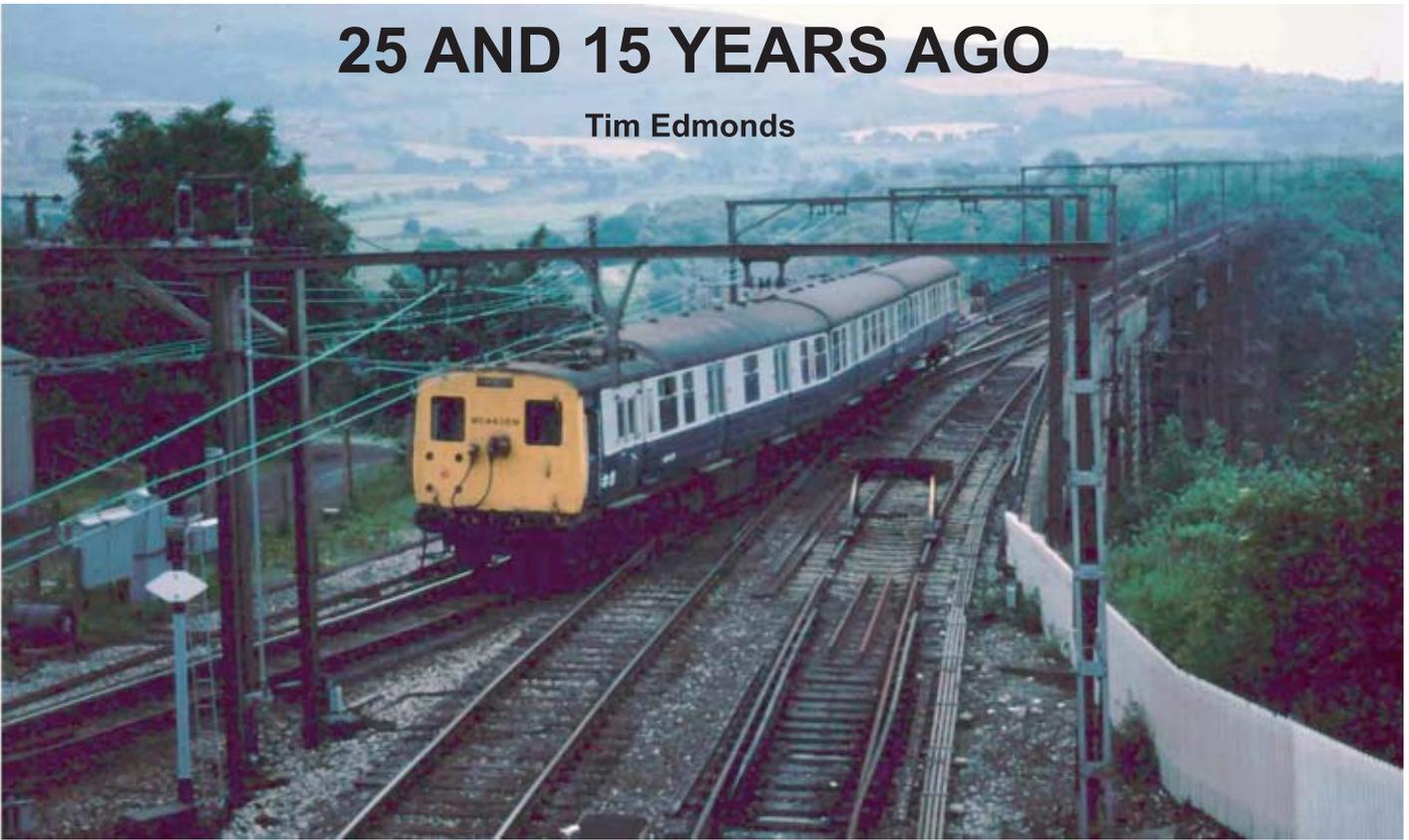
One of our founder members, John now lives in Preston and works for Passenger Focus. This article is based on his report for that body on the GC passenger experience as a "mystery shopper".

GC interiors: Standard Class - note the Marilyn Monroe mural and game board tables (Left), and First Class.



25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



A class 506 EMU departs Dinting station on 25th June with a suburban train on the 1500v DC line to Manchester Piccadilly. This line was converted to 25kv AC shortly afterwards.

Industrial steam still clung on in a handful of British locations in 1983. One such place was the Glaxo chemical factory at Ulverston, which was shunted by an Andrew Barclay 0-4-0F (2268/1949). The loco used steam from the factory and was photographed at the charging point on 30th June.

photos: Tim Edmonds

25 YEARS AGO

Robert Riddles, the last in a long and distinguished line of British steam locomotive engineers, died on 18th June at the age of 91. He began at Crewe as a premium apprentice and continued his career with the LNWR, LMS and BR - including two periods of war service. At BR he was responsible for more locomotives than any previous British Chief Mechanical Engineer. He will be particularly remembered for the Austerity locos of the Second World War and the BR standard steam classes of the 1950s.

Modernisation of the last British 1500v DC electrified line took place during the summer and autumn, with the conversion of the Manchester Piccadilly - Glossop/Hadfield line to 25kv AC. This was the last remaining part of the Woodhead electrification.

Maintenance work on the smokebox, superheater elements and motion of 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*, which had begun during the winter months, continued throughout the year. Taking its place on the short standard gauge footplate-ride shuttle at Bressingham Steam Museum was Norwegian Kriegslok 2-10-0 5865 *Peer Gynt*.

On 18th August BR published its Corporate Plan for 1983-88, forecasting a reduction of its subsidy from the taxpayer of £235m. This was to be achieved without any major changes to the size of the network, the exception being the closure of the Settle & Carlisle line between Ribbleshead (ARC stone terminal) and Appleby (military traffic from Warcop).

Various events were held to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of London Transport. These included two 132 mile tours for enthusiasts, on 11th September and 9th October, lasting nine hours and covering sections of seven different underground lines. Looking to the future was an exhibition called 'Forging Ahead' which showed various proposed developments including the Docklands Light Railway, passenger information systems and station modernisation.

In steam at Bressingham on 10th July was 5865 Peer Gynt, a German 2-10-0 Kriegslok built in 1944 and delivered new to Norway.



On the evening of 4th June, 45231 and a set of unrestored wagons make a convincing recreation of a BR-era train at Woodthorpe on the Great Central Railway.



15 YEARS AGO

Filming of scenes from the film 'Shadowlands' took place on the Great Central Railway in May, for which Black 5 45231 was painted in lined BR black and given a work-worn coating of dirt. It remained in this form during the summer and was in demand as the motive power for several specials and charter trains. On the evening of 4th June it hauled a rake of as-yet unrestored 'windcutter' coal wagons, to recreate an authentic-looking goods train from the BR era.

Photographer and author Pat Whitehouse died suddenly on Thursday 17th June at the age of 71. A steam enthusiast with a particular interest in the narrow gauge, he would travel many miles to record events worthy of attention and built up a large photographic collection. He is particularly remembered for his partnership with John Adams on the pioneering TV series 'Railway Roundabout' and as the founder of the Birmingham Railway Museum at Tyseley.

Speaker at the meeting of the Marlow & District Railway Society on 15 July was Tim Speechley, whose subject was 'Industrial Steam'.

On 25th August it was announced that Waterman Railways, owned by record producer Pete Waterman, had merged with Sir William McAlpine's Flying Scotsman Enterprises, to form Flying Scotsman Railways. Among other things this meant that 4472 'Flying Scotsman' (which had recently been out-shopped in late BR livery with German-style smoke deflectors) became jointly owned.

One of the final parts of the £200m Total Route Modernisation plan on the NSE Thames line was completed on 27th September when the Transport Minister, Roger Freeman, formally opened the extended Reading Low Level Depot. This was to be responsible for looking after the entire Network Turbo fleet allocated to the Thames line.

After many months of planning, the prototype Deltic was moved from the Science Museum in London, where it had been for 30 years, to the National Railway Museum at York. Extracting the loco was a complex operation since many changes had taken place at the Science Museum since 1963, such that a direct roll-out was not possible and the body and bogies had to be lifted and moved sideways to reach the rear

www.mdrs.org.uk



In its condition from the filming of 'Shadowlands' and prior to working an evening special on 4th June, 45231 is seen near on the Great Central Railway at Rothley.



Tim Speechley waits for a loaded train to climb from Bedlay Colliery to the BR exchange sidings on 24th August 1977. Was a picture he took on that occasion featured in his presentation to the society in July 1993?

car park. Removal took place on 16th October, with road transfer to York taking from the 18th to the 21st October. Once there it had to gain access by rail via the ABB Transportation works sidings and York North Yard.

Railways in Australia - a holiday scrapbook

Tim Edmonds

In the last issue, Tim looked at the urban, suburban and local rail scene Down Under. In this concluding part he turns his attention to the main line and preservation.

MAIN LINES

I saw little of the main long-distance passenger services since there are so few of them, with leisurely timetables organised by which day the trains run rather than at what time. The CountryLink services between Sydney and Melbourne are relatively frequent - two a day each way - and I saw one of the HST-lookalike XPT trains that work these services at Sydney Central. The tourist-orientated trains west of Melbourne are operated by Great Southern Railways and during a brief stopover at Alice Springs I sought out the station, served twice weekly in each direction by 'The Ghan' between Adelaide and Darwin, but it was inaccessible behind locked gates as no train was due that day. The only sight I had of the twice-weekly Sydney - Perth 'Indian Pacific' was seeing the train in Keswick Terminal station at Adelaide after dark.

'The Overland' runs each way three times a week and we picked up the Thursday train from Melbourne at North Shore Geelong, where it left from a short standard gauge platform alongside the broad gauge station. Unlike 'The Ghan' and the 'Indian Pacific' this is a relatively short daytime run, so it is a short train with no sleeping accommodation. Ours comprised NR 107 (Co-Co diesel-electric), a baggage car and six coaches. These had been recently refurbished and were big, spacious and comfortable. The refreshment service to our seats was excellent, but the pace was leisurely and we ran late into Adelaide. It was clear that there was a fair amount of freight traffic on this route, mainly containerised, but this was one aspect of Australian railways that I had little opportunity to investigate.

Don't visit Alice Springs station on a Wednesday - this is the sign at the (locked) gate to the approach road. 1st August 2007



A CountryLink XPT set shortly after arrival at the long-distance terminal part of Sydney Central station on 28th July 2007, with power car XP2000 at the rear.

As is well-known, these trains were an Australian built version of our own HST. Built by Commonwealth Engineering the power cars are basically similar but the trailers are constructed of stainless steel.

For more details of these trains, there is an excellent website at www.railpage.org.au/xpt/

*all photos: Tim Edmonds
The Marlow Donkey*

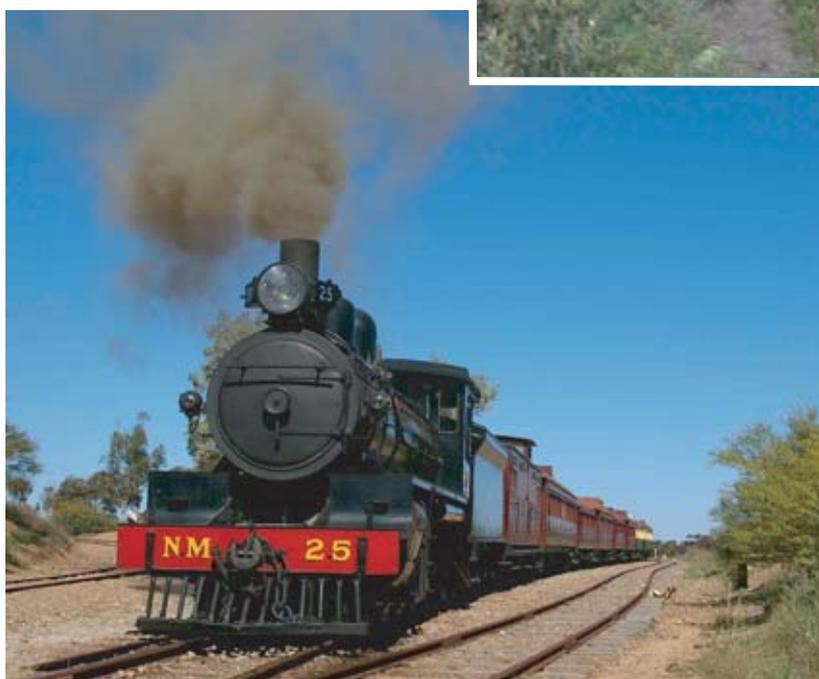
PRESERVATION

I managed to visit four operational preserved lines, one broad and three narrow gauge, plus the National Railway Museum, a local museum and one non-operational narrow gauge line. All were very well-presented and staffed largely by volunteers. The 2ft 6in gauge Puffing Billy Railway on the outskirts of Melbourne is Australia's premier preserved line and is justly popular, with a highlight being Garratt haulage over the famous trestle bridge. After a chat to the conductor on the return journey my request as to whether access to the workshops at Belgrave was allowed resulted in an introduction to the duty manager, who showed me round in person. We also had an escorted visit to the NRM workshops but, alas, off-limits access was not possible at some places because of the insurance restrictions that bedevil many preserved lines.

This was the case at The Old Ghan Railway Museum at Alice Springs, based on part of the original 3ft 6in gauge line. At the other end of the popularity spectrum from Puffing Billy, this is at a remote location and was not able to run trains in 2007 because, true to the prototype, part of the formation had been washed out. In contrast, another part of the original Ghan line is preserved as the flourishing Pichi Richi Railway in South Australia, with a superb scenic ride behind steam in vintage



On the Puffing Billy Railway, 2-6-0+0-6-2 Garratt G42 (BP 1926) heads over the Monbulk trestle bridge with the 2.15 p.m. from Lakeside to Belgrave on 2nd August 2007.



rolling stock. The Bellarine Peninsula Railway near Geelong is a narrow gauge line built on the trackbed of a broad gauge branch and has a large collection of 3ft 6in gauge locos, although not many are currently operational - and the industrial loco that pulled our train ran short of steam and had to stop to brew-up on the way.

During its stopover at Woolshed Flat, and after turning on the triangle, 4-8-0 NM25 (Thompson 51/1925) brews up ready for the return to Quorn, Pichi Richi Railway on 11th August 2007.

The SteamRanger Heritage Railway in South Australia grew from the preservation work of the local branch of the Australian Railway Historical Society. In 1986 it took the SteamRanger name and began operating excursions between Adelaide and Victor Harbor and a shorter trip between Goolwa and Victor Harbor, the 'Cockle Train'. One of the effects of the Melbourne - Adelaide gauge conversion was the isolation of some former broad gauge branches, including the line from Mount Barker Junction to Victor Harbor, since when operations have been cut off from the main system but a variety of trains are run. The 'Cockle Train' was worked by a Red Hen railcar when we travelled on it - quite an experience in itself - and at Victor Harbor another delight awaited us. Linking the town and Granite Island over a long trestle viaduct is a remarkable horse-drawn tramway which operates all year round with a fleet of four double-deck cars and Clydesdale motive power - and it's broad gauge.

There's an awful lot more of Australia than we managed to explore in a few weeks, including the two largest states of Western Australia and Queensland and the island state of Tasmania - all with significant 3ft 6in railway systems, so I am keen to return. Yes there is a lot of travelling involved, both to get there and to move from place to place within the country, but I can recommend the experience. My impressions of the railways reflected those of the country itself - friendly and open, with lots to see and a great welcome for visitors.

Ex West Australian Government Railways 2-8-2 V1209 (RSH 7778/1955) is on display at Queenscliff, Bellarine Peninsula Railway, 5th August 2007. (Top)

After arriving with the 'Cockle Train' from Goolwa, Red Hen railcar 412 (built 1960) runs round its trailer at Victor Harbor. on 12th August 2007. (Centre)

'Jock' is the motive power for Victor Harbor Tramway car 4 as it crosses the trestle from Granite Island 12th August 2007. (Bottom)

