



Edition

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A Day in Paris

A Day on the Farm

Amersham Heritage Day

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

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: Belgian Thalys set at Gare du Nord, 10 May 2008. Photo: Mike Walker (Article page 5).

Bottom: London Transport Museums' 1938 Tube Stock, 14 September 2008.

Photo: Mike Walker (Article page 14).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

- Thursday 16 January **A FINAL EVENING WITH COLOUR RAIL** Ron White
Our all-time favourite speaker, Ron White returns for what he says will be his final trawl through the Colour Rail collection. An evening not to be missed!
- Thursday 19 February **AGM AND MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHIC NIGHT**
The formal business of the AGM will be followed by a members' photographic evening for which we invite your submissions. See page 3 for further details.
- Thursday 19 March **DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY** Paul Whittle
A look at one of the World's most spectacular railway lines. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway climbs through a series of loops and spirals amid some of the finest scenery on Earth.
- Thursday 16 April **TOUR DE FRANCE BY NARROW GAUGE** Michael Bunn
That great authority on all things French, Michael Bunn, returns with a look at the world of French narrow gauge, showing us there's more than the Baie de Somme.
- Thursday 21 May **FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE ADRIATIC European Steam in the 1960's** John Gulliver
A look at the many faces of steam across Europe in its final decade.
- Thursday 18 June **A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BRITISH RAILWAY SIGNALLING Part 1** Mike Walker
In the first of two presentations, Mike examines the Black Arts of railway signalling starting with traditional mechanical signalling and the Absolute Block system.

Please note: The above programme is correct at press time but subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Please check the Society's website www.mdrs.org.uk for the latest details.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I know they say that time goes by faster as you get older, so by deduction I must be getting very old indeed as this year has rushed past and 2009 looms on the horizon.

I do hope you, the members, feel the Society is giving you good service. I consider the speakers we have had this last year have provided variety and interest and we are doing our best to provide even more for next year. I attend quite a number of meetings at other societies during the year, just to try to attract new and entertaining speakers for us, but if you know of anybody you can recommend to give an interesting talk then please let me or one of the committee know their details and we will follow up the lead. I believe the "Donkey" has been at a very high standard this year and in combination with the e-mailed Newsletters I consider Mike is giving us a wonderful service. Similarly, the web site is a superb window on our Society's activities. Well done Tim and David for producing a site that far exceeds those of many much larger organisations.

Although we decided to abandon the annual coach outing some time ago we have had several very successful visits this year, all featured in this end of year edition of the Donkey - Paris, "Somewhere near Windsor", the Severn Valley and, at my personal suggestion, the Statfold Barn Railway, where, I'm glad to say, all participants had a great day out, far exceeding all expectations I suspect. At the time of writing we have also to visit the London Transport reserve collection at Acton Works. For 2009 we have some ambitious plans including one, or perhaps more, visits with that added "Hopwood Factor".

Personal disappointments this year have mainly been as a result of the generally awful weather, preventing, or at least discouraging, visits to preserved lines or trips to see main line steam. How fortuitous we were to have the sun for most of our Society outings. I especially regret not getting to see *Tornado* running-in at the GCR, despite being in the Leicester area at the right time but instead installing a son at the university rather than wielding the camera on some overbridge. I did, however, have a fantastic trip from Liverpool Street to Norwich behind 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* that produced the most superb noise from the chimney virtually all the way there and back, resulting in a grin from ear to ear most of the day. This loco symbolises the "End of Steam on BR" also commemorated this year, the 40th anniversary.

I look forward to seeing you at our January meeting, when Ron White is due to show what he has said will be his last ever presentation to our society of Colour-Rail's latest offerings. Please also bear in mind that for February we are reviving the members' photographic evening after the AGM and you are requested to supply your offerings of digital photos, prints, slides or even video sequences to Julian, well in advance, so they can all be digitalised for easy and uniform presentation at that meeting.

Finally, let me thank all the members of the committee for their hard work this year and wish everyone a heartfelt Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The new season got off to a great start in September when Alan Wilmot returned for another nostalgic evening of films from the BTF collection. These not only reminded us how much the railways have changed but also the nation in general.

In October Dave Baker presented an in-depth look at the Severn Valley Railway from end to end and from its beginnings to the present day, plus of course, a look at the recovery from the disastrous floods of 2007 - all punctuated with some appalling humour!

November saw Peter Groom present a wonderfully nostalgic look back at the last decade of steam on British Railways. Peter covered all regions and the use only of black and white images heightened the drama. The timescale was interpreted a little freely to include some shots of the impressive but flawed ex-LMS Garratts at work.

A party of a dozen or so members visited the London Transport Museum's reserve collection at Acton Works on 29th November and had an excellent guided tour after which a few had a pub lunch followed by a short tour of south-west London. Full details in the next issue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's that time again; subscriptions fall due for renewal in January. As agreed at the AGM back in February, there is a modest rise in the subscription rate for 2009 which is now £14.00 for full members and £8.00 for regular members.

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 meetings.

MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENING

Following the business part of the AGM in February we will again be giving the opportunity for you, the members, to show us all some of your photographs but with a difference.

In the past this has tended to be slides only because of the difficulty of displaying prints but we are acutely aware that many of you take only prints and, increasingly, digital images so we are making changes to accommodate all.

Julian Heard will be providing digital projection equipment on the night and has additionally agreed to scan prints (colour or black and white and any size up to the equivalent of A4) and if you desire slides. If you wish to take part, please let Julian have your prints by the January meeting so he has time to scan them.

If you wish to show digital images please let Julian have them either on a CD or memory stick again preferably by the January meeting or at least let him know that you are intending to take part and how many pictures you expect to show so he can put together some kind of programme.

For those of you remaining faithful to film, or wishing to delve into your archives, the slide projector will be on

hand as well but again it would help Julian in he knows what to expect. Julian can be contacted on 01628 527005 or at julian@jeh.org.uk. Please don't send digital images by e-mail as resolution will not be good enough for projection.

Hopefully this will encourage more of you to take an active part in the evening.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR BREWING

Mike Hyde is making his annual appeal for you to volunteer to help brew up the tea and coffee in the mid-evening break during the coming year's meetings. It only need each of you to do it once and we will have plenty.

Please see Mike at the next meeting and put your name on his rota.

Thank you.

VISITS IN 2009

You will see in Timetable on page 2 that no trips are listed. But that does not mean that any are planned for 2009, far from it. Your committee is already looking at possible sites to visit. As mentioned at the October meeting we intend returning to Windsor when are given the nod that the Finnish loco and its track are ready for operating but this might not be in 2009.

Other ideas for half day or day visits are: Amberley Working Museum in Sussex (we have not had an organised trip there for some years); Hollycombe Steam Collection at Liphook (many gauges); and/or the Great Cockcrow Miniature Railway at Chertsey (again, a long time ago last visit).

We could also consider a 2/3 day trip to the Welsh Highland Railway with overnight accommodation and at the November meeting the suggestion of a trip to Scotland along the lines of the successful 2005 Irish trip was floated. In the case of the former, not only does next year see the opening of the full length of the WHR but it will probably also be the last year of steam on the Cambrian Coast line as ETRMS goes live on that from December 2009 whilst in the case of Scotland, next year provides a unique opportunity to see both the Caledonian locos in action – 419 at Boness will be in its last year of its current ticket and 828 is due back in action at Speyside early next year. Oh, the dilemma!

However, we do not propose to organise a return visit to the Baie de Somme Railway in Northern France next year but if a member(s) is going and wants to share/fill his car please invite other members.

Mark Hopwood has put forward a mouth-watering series of suggestions for visits "behind the scenes" at First Great Western which he is now working on

Finally, at least for now, we are considering a group ride on a suitable steam excursion one summer weekend. Any other ideas you might have, please let Mike Hyde know.

As soon as plans are firmed up they will be announced at meetings, in the Donkey and in the e-newsletters.

W&S DEVELOPMENTS

W&S put their Driving Van Trailers into service in October, normally on the Wrexham end as shown **(right)** with one leading the 10.17 Marylebone to Wrexham over Hughenden Road Viaduct on 19th November. Earlier 82301 was facing south whilst on test at Wrexham **(below)** on 20th September. There are five DVT's in the fleet which have been modified to work with the class 67's and incorporate sanding equipment - a first for such vehicles.

They are:

82301 formerly 82117

82302 formerly 82123

82303 formerly 82135

82304 formerly 82130

82305 formerly 82134



photo: Tim Edmonds

of Aylesbury Town station where the line crosses the A41.

STEAM ON THE GREAT WESTERN

Forthcoming dates for steam specials on the GWML are:

Saturday 13th December: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* will haul 'The London Christmas Shopper' from Solihull to Olympia, due past Maidenhead at 10.58.

Saturday 14th February: 850 *Lord Nelson* is booked to haul 'The Somerset Explorer' - times to be advised.

Sunday 1st March: 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* is booked for the 'St. David's Day Special' from Paddington to Cardiff.

Full timings will be in the e-newsletter as they become available. Regrettably, nothing is currently booked over the Joint Line in the next three months.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The annual leaf-fall season is usually dealt with on Chiltern by the "in-hose" fleet of Sandite "Bubblecars" and a converted 3-car class 117 providing water jetting. On November 13th - 15th the latter was stood down for a B Exam and in its place Network Rail sent its Reading based RHTT to cover.

This was worked by 66422 and 66423, thought to be the first visit of DRS locos to the Joint Line. The train is seen coming off the branch at Princes Risborough on the final day of operation.

photo: Mike Walker



photo: Brian Daniels

Delivery of the trailer cars from Axiom was due to start as we went to press and hopefully some should be in service before Christmas starting with the Standard class cars. The Restaurant Firsts should arrive in January.

The timetable will be improved from December. Although the number of trains operating will remain the same, end-to-end journey times will be reduced by up to 28 minutes and punctuality should improve as conflicts with other services will be reduced.

FGW's NEW CONTROL

As part of its programme to improve performance, FGW and Network Rail are constructing a £4.2 million Integrated Control Centre at Swindon. Due to open in March it will be manned round the clock by personnel from both companies to facilitate quick reaction and recovery when things go wrong.

The company's overall performance has continued to improve throughout the year although it "slipped" a little during the recent leaf-fall season but was still around 10 percentage points up on the same period last year.

AYLESBURY VALE OPENS

Chiltern's new station, Aylesbury Vale Parkway, opens for business with the new timetable on 14th December offering a basically hourly service. It is located about 2½ miles north www.mdrs.org.uk

A DAY IN PARIS



On Saturday 10th May a party of 20 members, partners and guests sampled Eurostar for a day trip to Paris. An early start from High Wycombe gave us the chance to admire the reborn St Pancras along with Sir John Betjeman (**left**) before boarding the train.

On arrival in Paris, Alan and Margaret Morris were met by friends and spent the day with them whilst the rest of the party split into small groups to explore Paris via the Metro.

Tim Edmonds got two Metro Line 6 trains crossing the river in front of Paris's most familiar landmark (**above**), before catching another at the nearby Bir-Hakeim station (**right**)

Meanwhile Mike Walker found a Belgian Thalys set at the Gare du Nord and a SNCF 7200 class diesel at nearby Gare de l'Est (**below**)





photo: Tim Speechley



MDRS members watch a double-decker local depart from Gare St Lazare (above).

photo: Tim Speechley



photo: Tim Speechley

There is still some of the "old order" in Paris. Two generations of electric locos, DC 9257 at left and dual-voltage 22364, await their next duties at Gare d'Austerlitz (top left) Over at the Gare d'Lyon TGV's predominate with this impressive line up (left).



'Sybic' electric 26053 awaits departure time at the Gare d'Austerlitz (above).

photo: Tim Speechley



photo: Tim Edmonds

The unexpected can be found in Paris like the short funicular to the top of Montmartre (left) and a Russian sleeping car on the back of an overnight train to Munich at the Gare du Nord. (right)



photo: Mike Walker



As we prepared to come home this line up of Belgian, French and British owned Eurostars awaited us at the Gare du Nord (left) - we travelled on the British set of course. Everyone had a good day - at least they were still smiling on the way home! (right)

photos: Mike Walker



SOMEWHERE NEAR WINDSOR. . .

Story by David Collins, pictures by Tim Edmonds



On Friday 18th July at 7.30pm, twenty MDRS members met at a private steam railway near Windsor for a special evening steaming. This site was discovered by member Trevor Jones who was out walking and spotted the Finnish 5ft gauge pacific No. 1016 (pictured above), which the owner is restoring, and made enquires.

As well as a short length of 5ft gauge track, on which the Finnish loco will run once returned to steam, there is a few hundred yards of standard gauge track is not quite laid to main line condition (suffice to say that I wouldn't want to try running a King or a Duchess Pacific on it) plus a small signal box acquired from Maidenhead. Also round our host's garden there is a raised 3½ inch & 5 inch gauge railway which was under repair.

On 18 July Aveling & Porter 0-4-0WT *Sir Vincent* was being steamed outside the shed on our arrival. This locomotive is of the "traction engines with flanged wheels" built in 1917 for Vickers Armstrong, the armaments manufacturer, later being sold to British Oil before being purchased for preservation in 1966. Locomotives of this type were used relatively locally on the Brill Tramway from 1872 until it was absorbed by the Metropolitan Railway, and more recently an example was based at Fawley Hill in the 1970s. It had been hoped to offer us footplate rides on this loco, unfortunately, shortly before our arrival, she suffered an injector failure and was unable to run.

Also on site was Peckett 0-4-0ST *Hornpipe*, which was originally owned by the Holoborough Cement Company in Kent. Prior to coming to the site she was a regular performer at Quanton Road. She had too failed with a faulty injector but was available for us to view in the engine shed where our host had a collection of railwayana, which included station signs and an assortment of headboards. Incidentally both standard gauge locomotives had passed their boiler tests that afternoon.

Whilst the engineer tried (in vain) to repair *Sir Vincent's* injectors our host took us to see the Finnish Pacific which was

much photographed and examined, with many of us (not me) climbing onto the footplate and the tender. It should be interesting to see her in action. Access to the loco was gained by walking over rough ground through long grass which was not ideal as the weather had been rather damp.

On returning to the shed we were told that *Sir Vincent* was not going anywhere, so our host gave us two trips up the line on a diesel powered contraption called a "Trakrat" (see below), which is some sort of permanent way inspection vehicle, before returning to the shed for a welcome cup of tea and homemade cakes. On the second trip this also failed leaving the railway with no serviceable motive power - the curse of MDRS seemed to have struck again!

Despite the lack of steam action and the weather being less than perfect, we had a enjoyable evening and we would like to thank our host and his family for their hospitality - we hope to revisit sometime in the future when 1016 is in working order.

Finally, just a reminder that this railway is a private site which is not accessible to the public, and we were only allowed to visit by invitation of the owner, David Buck, to whom we extend out thanks..





Owner David Buck leans against Peckett 0-4-0ST *Hornpipe* (1756/1928) as he welcomes MDRS members to his private railway.

Sir Vincent, one of those curious Aveling & Porter built "cross-over", part traction engine, part railway loco, stands outside the shed.



REFLECTIONS ON THE SEVERN VALLEY VISIT

Story and pictures by Tim Speechley

The principal reason behind our making a visit this year was really to give some support to the Severn Valley following the disastrous floods and track wash-outs they had suffered in 2007. As a Society we had given a modest donation to the flood appeal and had been thanked in person by a visit from representatives of their South East Branch. The date of our visit was also the closest we could manage to commemorate 40 years since the end of steam on BR.

By using Chiltern Railways' excellent 4 for 2 offer travelling by train was the relaxing option and 12 members and one guest met at High Wycombe to catch the 08.44 as far as Birmingham Moor Street. With 13 travellers (not divisible by four) it took your writer as far as Bicester to calculate how much everyone should pay and who owed what to whom! Arrival at Moor Street in Birmingham more or less coincided with the departure of 4965 *Rood Ashton Hall* on the first of the day's 'Shakespeare Express' trains and only the more fleet of foot managed to get a photo. Sufficient time was had here to enjoy a drink in the beautifully restored terminal part of the station, as yet unused by trains. I had not been here before and was surprised how close it is to the central hub of Birmingham. GWR 2-8-0 number 2885 from Southall is on display here.

From Moor Street it was onward by Sprinter to Kidderminster, where arrival was around noon. We had passed through a lot of very derelict Black Country industrial scenery and spotted the Parry People Mover in a shed at Stourbridge Junction. There are still semaphore signals on the main line at Kidderminster. Once tickets had been bought for the SVR, there was just time to imbibe a quick beer before catching the 12.45, hauled by a tender-first 7802 *Bradley Manor*. It is running with a large tender from something else and personally I don't think it suits the loco. At Arley we passed the 12 o'clock dining train with 45110, wrong road. Apparently it had had to stop there for some time as a passenger had been taken ill.

Most of us got off at Highley to visit the new 'Engine House' visitor centre. It is a good way of displaying out of service locomotives (and making some money from them, as there is a separate admission charge) but the building itself is rather



7802 Bradley Manor is reflected in a puddle on Kidderminster station as it waits for the MDRS party to board.

strange architecturally, bearing very little resemblance to any railway installation of the steam era I have ever seen. Inside the locomotives are well presented and the building has a nice balcony area giving excellent photographic opportunities for trains passing, though the writer always seemed to be in the wrong place when trains came along.

From Highley most participants caught the 14.42 northbound train consisting of small prairie 4566 hauling the lovely LNER teak rake. Having enjoyed a fair amount of sunshine so far, this arrived in the middle of a short but heavy rain shower. It was sunny again at Bridgnorth but not much time was to be had here before we returned south again behind 4566 and the teaks. On this leg we travelled in a 1922 built GNR coach, newly restored in 2008. We passed 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* at Hampton Loade, 7802 at Bewdley and 45110 at Kidderminster.

Left: *The superbly restored GWR-style concourse at Birmingham Moor Street.*

Below: *A day short of the 40th anniversary of taking part in the end of BR steam, 45110 runs round at Kidderminster.*





The Engine House provides an excellent way to display out of service stock and an excellent view of passing trains - pity about the architecture!



In addition to the SVR's own stock, the NRM's superb Midland Railway compound 1000 is currently displayed at Highley.



Amid a brief but heavy shower, GWR 4566 arrives at Highley to take the MDRS party on to Bridgnorth.

It was a shame we couldn't travel behind this loco because, of course, it had brought down the curtain on BR steam when it hauled the final leg of 1T57, the 'Fifteen Guinea Special' just a day short of 40 years previously and was to be taken out of service for overhaul the next day.

At Kidderminster there was time for a swift half, or whatever else took the participants' fancy, before walking over to the Network Rail station ready to catch the Sprinter to Birmingham. We alighted at Snow Hill this time. It's a rather dark uninspiring place really (a bit like New Street) but we had an opportunity to see one of the trams that share it before getting our 18.40 Chiltern train back to Wycombe, on which we had a fairly uneventful journey. All in all, a good day out.

On shed at Bridgnorth, 5164, Hunslet 686 The Lady Armaghdale (posing as Thomas), 9017 Earl of Berkeley and 5764.



A DAY ON THE FARM

TIM EDMONDS



Sragi No.1 on the balloon loop with a freight train including the two bulk seed hopper wagons (left).

Tim Speechley (below) captures the atmosphere of a busy steam shed on camera. The locos are Harrogate and Sragi No.1, the latter making its first appearance since restoration.

Standard gauge FD&E Co No.3 on the triple gauge track at the loco shed alongside 2' gauge new-build Hunslet Jack Lane (bottom).

All photos: Tim Edmonds unless stated.

I had heard and read much about the Statfold Barn Railway and was expecting the society's visit to the Enthusiasts Day on 20th September to be a good day out. However, this was a trip that exceeded all expectations, with non-stop steam action from no fewer than eleven railway locomotives - including a Mallet - as well as traction engines and road rollers, plus there were numerous static exhibits. Travel on passenger and mixed trains was available all day, with motive power being switched from train to train to keep the interest high. There were few restrictions on access, so that it was possible to savour the atmosphere in the loco shed and to walk the lineside as well as to visit the gardens. There was incident as well as action, to give the day some spice, and - oh yes, the weather was perfect too.

Statfold Barn Farm is located just north-west of Tamworth, where Staffordshire meets Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire. This remarkable place is the home of Graham Lee who, when he ran an engineering business near Burton-on-Trent, negotiated the purchase of Hunslet and Andrew Barclay as going concerns. In addition to a working organic oil seed farm, here he has private railways on five gauges (yes, that's right, five!) and an engineering workshop specialising in restoring railway locomotives and rolling stock.

The railways began as an oval of 2ft gauge track around the lake in the garden. What sparked the rapid expansion of recent years was the repatriation in 2004 from Indonesia of 0-4-2ST *Trangkil No 4*, the last industrial steam loco built in the UK (Hunslet 3902/1971). This loco was regauged from 750mm to 2ft and restored for use on a new line built out into the fields and used during harvest to bring in seed to the oil plant. Graham imported several more steam locos from Indonesian sugar mills, since when the engineering and restoration side has been greatly expanded and the field line extended. It now runs as a dual 2ft/2ft 6in line from a new terminal station at the farm to a balloon loop in the fields. Additionally a short standard gauge line was built to cater for several acquisitions in 2006, while 7¼ in and 10¼ in gauge lines were added between the 2ft tracks on the garden railway.

On arrival it was clear that there was plenty to choose from - including travelling, linesiding, shed-bashing, viewing static loco exhibits, looking round the workshops or browsing the



displays of steam and other road vehicles. At first Veronica and I spent some time around the shed, which was bustling with activity as it continually received and dispatched 2ft and 2ft 6in locos working the field line. Awaiting duty was 0-6-0ST *Harrogate* (Peckett 2050/1944) while particularly impressive was the big 4-4-0T *Isibutu* (W Bagnall 2820/1945), resplendent in lined green livery. Also present and in steam was ex-Falmouth Docks standard gauge 0-4-0ST FD&E Co No. 3 (Hawthorn Leslie 3597/1926) which occasionally



The magnificent Isibutu basks in the autumn sunshine on shed. This loco was built for the sugar industry in Natal and came to Statfold Barn from the North Gloucestershire Railway at Toddington.

shunted down its short operating track. A brief walk took us to look at the station, without a canopy but nevertheless boasting fine Eastern & Midland Railway canopy supports from the closed Yarmouth Beach station in Norfolk.

After spending a while watching the busy operations at the station throat, we walked through a gate into the tranquil world of the garden and joined a train headed by modern 2ft gauge 0-4-0ST *Howard* (Hunslet 3905/2007) for a leisurely trip round the lake. This loco was working the line all day - on this occasion the other two gauges were not in use. We then walked out into the fields and followed the mixed gauge line out to the halfway station at Oak Tree Halt, taking lineside pictures as we went. The mode of operation was that a train leaving the terminus at Statfold (and thereby releasing the loco that had brought the stock in) would pass a returning service at Oak Tree. Meanwhile another train would be waiting for the return road at the balloon loop while the next outward train would be getting ready at Statfold. It was a slick operation that ensured a variety of loco/stock combinations throughout the day, using both gauges and enhanced by some interesting double headed loco pairings.

We decided to return from Oak Tree Halt by train and have our picnic in the gardens. The next arrival was hauled by 0-4-0T *Pakis Baru No.1* (O&K 614/1900) and happened to be a freight, but two of the three seats at the back of the brake van were vacated at Oak Tree so we were in luck. The remaining occupant looked familiar and our conversation confirmed that he had been a fellow-traveller on a tour we had done around sugar mill railways in the Philippines in 1982. We had last seen John in Tokyo in 1983!

After lunch we picked up a train at Statfold station and travelled the length of the field line behind 0-4-0ST *Statfold* (Hunslet 3903/2005), alighting at the balloon loop and

Mixing three gauges creates some interesting trackwork.



Trangkil No.4 heads out on the Field line past one of the traction engines



An amply-crewed Isibutu leaves the loop at Oak Tree Halt heading for Statfold.



Pakis Baru No.1 takes the curve round the edge of the field between the balloon loop and Oak Tree Halt. (Why was it carrying that posy?)



The Garden railway has its own loco shed, incorporating an original 1896 datestone, and an impressive signal box. Here Howard waits to take out a passenger train past Simplex 4wDM Charley. Note the triple gauge track, 2', 10¼" and 7¼".



Pakis Baru No.5 is a 0-4+4-0T Mallet from Indonesia.

photo: Mike Walker

returning on foot. This gave us the chance to see plenty more action as well as to examine some features of the trackwork, including the unique point that crosses the innermost of the three rails from one side of the mixed gauge to the other on the balloon loop. We then had the opportunity for a close view of 0-4-2T *Sragi No.1* (Krauss 4045/1899) which was making its public debut after restoration and made a fine sight in its brown livery at the head of the green Statfold seed hopper wagons. We also saw here a manoeuvre whereby the motive power on a double-header ran round its train, the locos concerned being the 0-4+4-0T Mallet *Pakis Baru No.5* (O&K 1473/1905) and the visitor from Hollycombe, 0-4-0ST *Jerry M* (Hunslet 638/1895). The train stopped on entering the loop and the locos were uncoupled individually. Each completed the balloon in the normal anti-clockwise direction and reversed to couple onto the back of the train. Now, with *Jerry M* leading, the train was drawn out to clear the points and reversed into the loop at its exit to allow the next train to enter. We were approaching Oak Tree on foot when there was a minor drama featuring Statfold on an outbound train when its brakes stuck and held up traffic for a while. Further drama unfolded shortly after our return to the terminus when 0-4-2ST *Stanhope* (Kerr Stuart 2395/1917), a visitor from the West Lancs Railway, derailed on the points at the station throat towards the end of proceedings. Careful work with blocks of wood did the trick of re-railing, but it meant that several trains were at a standstill up the line, with a various members of the MDRS group stranded on board - the curse strikes again!

That was the end of the day, which had come all too soon. I hadn't had time to see the traction engines in action, nor to visit the museum and many of the other attractions on offer, but it had been a terrific day out and packed with action. Indeed this was a model of a well-organised event. The trains were beautifully turned out and the staff were friendly and enthusiastic. Visitors were made to feel welcome and were trusted to behave themselves. If there's another opportunity to spend a day on the farm at Statfold Barn then don't miss it - you will not be disappointed. We owe a big thank-you to Graham and Carol Lee for their generous hospitality and to all those whose hard work made the event possible - including Tim Speechley for initiating and organising the trip for the society.



Stanhope derailed on the mixed gauge points at the station throat.



Among the other displays were this magnificent steam-powered delivery van - it was working - and a superb collection of cast signs representing almost every railway in the land.

photos:

Left: Mike Walker

Right: Mike Hyde



The Marlow Donkey

AMERSHAM HERITAGE DAY

David Collins



photos: Mike Walker

On Sunday 14th September Amersham Town Council held its annual Heritage Open Day. As part of the celebrations the London Transport Museum ran two heritage underground trains on the Metropolitan Line from Amersham to either Watford or Harrow on the Hill. One was former BR Southern Region 4TC EMU purchased by LUL in the 1990s and recently repainted in a fake teak livery to resemble the Metropolitan Railway dreadnought coaches. This unit was top and tailed by Class 20 No. 20189 (on loan from the Midland Railway Centre **bottom**) and the former Metropolitan Railway electric locomotive No. 12 *Sarah Siddons* (**above**). Built in 1922 as a batch of 20 locomotives by Metropolitan Vickers, she was used, along with her sister locos, to haul trains from Liverpool Street and Baker Street as far as Harrow initially, and later Rickmansworth, where steam locomotives took over for the remaining journey to either Chesham, Aylesbury or (before 1937) Verney Junction. When London Transport completed electrification to Amersham and Chesham in 1961 these locos were used initially on services until the A stock was delivered. This in turn is due for replacement in the near future by the new S stock. When retired from passenger duties No. 12, along with No. 1 *John Lyon* and No. 5 *John Hampden*, was deployed as a shunter at Ealing Common District Line Depot, hauled the Sandite Train on the Met in the 1970s and in the 1980s and 1990s worked a number of railtours on the Metropolitan and the Southern Region, including providing air braking during the Steam on the Met Events. She was recently overhauled by Metronet and restored to her Metropolitan Railway appearance (complete with replicas of the original nameplates) and this was her first appearance on public trains since the last steam event in 2000.

The other train was the LTM's 1938 tube stock unit (**centre**). Although this type of train never saw service on the Amersham line, it has got historic connections to both Harrow and Watford as it worked the Bakerloo Line services over the London Midland dc lines to Harrow & Wealdstone and Watford Junction, as well as working over the old Metropolitan Railway branch to Stanmore when this was part of the Bakerloo.

Back to the event itself, from 11:40 the two trains worked alternatively to Watford and Harrow (*Sarah Siddons* and 20189 working 3 trips to Harrow and one to Watford, whilst the '38 stock worked 2 trips to each destination). This provided plenty of opportunities for lineside photography, although

some of the bridges that were popular with photographers during the steam events have now been given high fences or vegetation has been allowed to grow to obscure the views. However good views could be gained from immediate stations north of Moor Park, particularly at Chorleywood where staff opened barriers to allow easy access to the platforms. As well as the action on the railway, vintage London Transport buses, including RTs and Routemasters, provided shuttles between Amersham station and Amersham Old Town, where various activities were taking place, with some former Green Line vehicles provided by the Amersham & District Motorbus Society operating longer routes.



2008 YEAR OF THE JOINT LINE LOCOS AND OTHER VISITORS

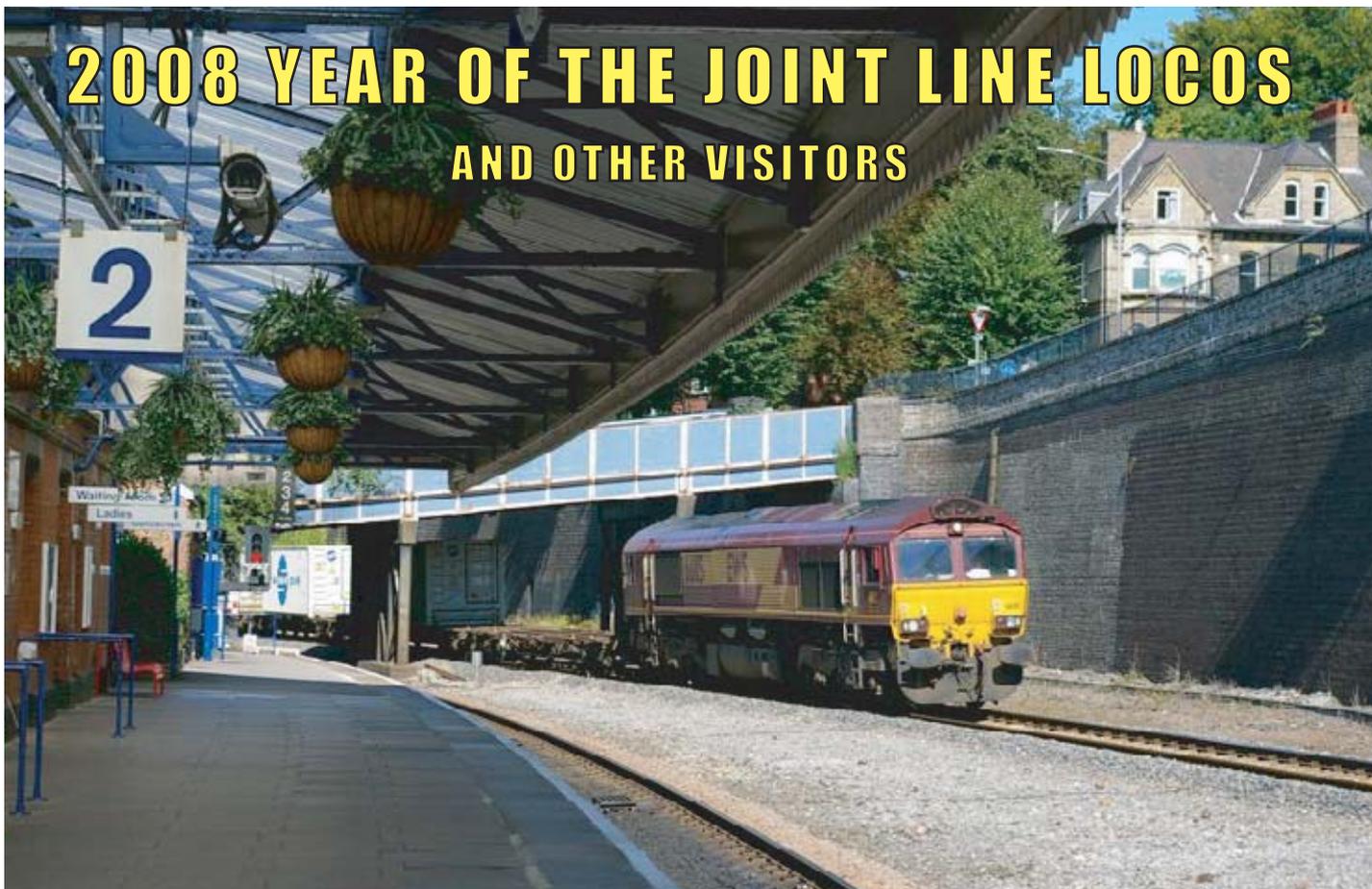


photo: Tim Edmonds

Only last year train watching on the Joint Line was pretty monotonous, a constant parade of DMU's and just the occasional freight. All that changed this year with new services and diversions off the West Coast Main Line bringing a variety to the line not seen in more than a decade.

First off was the start up in April of Wrexham & Shropshire services using class 67's in their distinctive colours. On 2nd September 67014 *Thomas Telford* [bottom left] led 1J83, the 16.10 Marylebone - Wrexham through High Wycombe. Since the introduction of DVT's in October, the locos are now on the London end.

June saw the start of weekend diversions by Virgin to avoid the works on the WCML at Rugby. Although booked to be worked by paired Super Voyagers such as 221143 and 221103 passing the station on 28th June [right], on at least two weekends class 57/3's and Mk3's were used such as 57313 *Thunderbirds-Tracy Island* leading the 11.00 Euston - Wolverhampton on a dismal 24th August [bottom right].



photo: Mike Walker

photo: Mike Walker photo: Peter Robins



Freight activity was increased in late August and early September with weekend and weekday diversions off the WCML. One such was 4A03 from Trafford Park to Wembley, seen here [opposite top] at High Wycombe station behind 66115 on 23rd August.

Two days later 66079 was passing Saunderton at speed [right] with the diverted 6A42 MO 12.33 Warrington to Wembley 'Enterprise' service.

66041 had charge of a lightweight 6X82 on 2nd September [below right], heading from Wembley to Washwood Heath with three car carriers loaded with X Type Jaguars.

Since the spring the Joint Line has also benefited from the "Olympic Effect" with the running of daily trains taking spoil from the Olympic site to Calvert to use as landfill. Usually a class 60 job, on 14th May 6Z47 was in the charge of 59204 *Vale of Glamorgan* [below left].

photo: Tim Edmonds



photo: Tim Edmonds

photo: Mike Walker



photo: Brian Hopkinson

The year saw very few passenger specials and those that did run were mostly diesel hauled. However, just as the sun was going down on 19th July LMS 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* called at Beaconsfield [right] with a Steam Dreams 'Cathedrals Express' from Chester to Paddington.

We didn't get the promised Chiltern loco-hauled trains due to the delivery delays of Wrexham's own stock - Chiltern were to use the Cargo D stock - but it was a memorable year. Nothing is forever, it looks as if next year will return to more normal fare.

All this activity kept Chiltern's Route Learning Bubblecar 960014 (the former 55022) fully employed. On 8th August [left] it was caught passing Saunderton on the up line whilst introducing Virgin drivers to the delights of the Joint Line.

The annual leaf fall season has seen the remainder of Chiltern's fleet of "Departmental Heritage" units busy over the line in recent weeks including the former class 121 units applying sandite and the water-jetting 3 car class 117.

photo: Mike Walker



25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds

25 YEARS AGO

The eminent railway historian Charles E. Lee died on 6th December 1983 at the age of 82. He wrote a number of important books on early railways as well as contributing to various magazines, including *Railway Gazette* and *The Railway Magazine*. [Compiler's note: I was privileged to attend a lecture given to the Camden History Society in April 1975 by Charles Lee. He was a memorable figure, impeccably turned out in Edwardian-style formal clothes, including a wing collar and bow tie.]

Restoration of the former London & Birmingham Railway station building of 1838 at Curzon Street, Birmingham, won a Civic Trust award. Saved from demolition in 1978, and restored under a Manpower Services Commission scheme, it was being used by young people for local community and other projects.

Local railways were in the news over the winter for a variety of reasons. At Maidenhead work started on rebuilding the A308 road underbridge at the station, to improve access from the town to the M4. The Marlow/Maidenhead Passengers Association carried out a leaflet campaign to assess demand for a Sunday service over the branch. Meanwhile the National Bus Company put forward a scheme for converting the line from Northolt to Marylebone into an express busway and goods services were withdrawn from High Wycombe.

The Secretary of State for Transport authorised the construction of 100 medium weight DMU cars of class 150. The design was to be based on prototypes being built to a common specification by Metro-Cammell and BREL.

The 15in gauge Fairbourne Railway was purchased by Dr Sidney Ellerton of Essex for £95,000. Owner of the closed 12in gauge line at Muir-de-Bretagne in France, Dr Ellerton was expected to use some of the equipment from the French line at Fairbourne.



On a desolate winter day at Rose Grove 25 years ago there was little remaining to remind of the events of 1968 commemorated in the last edition of the Donkey. On 24th February 1984 a DMU from Colne sets forth for Preston past derelict sidings, while on the right only a grassy area and the M65 exist where the bustling steam loco shed once stood.

two photos: Tim Edmonds

Threatened with demolition only a few years earlier, the restoration of the magnificent former station building at Birmingham Curzon Street won a Civic Trust Award in 1984. This picture was taken on 14th May 1995.



15 YEARS AGO

The London Transport Museum at Covent Garden reopened on 15th December 1993 after a £4million refit taking nine months. The opening ceremony was performed on 14th December by the actor, writer and broadcaster Michael Palin, who was also President of Transport 2000.

The direct rail link between Leicester, Nuneaton and Birmingham was reopened on 20th December. It had been closed for almost nine months for repairs to Arley Tunnel, which had been damaged by mining subsidence. The work, which cost £6million, included altering the loading gauge to accommodate Freightliner containers on Channel Tunnel workings.

Former Western Region gas-turbine A1A-A1A locomotive 18000 arrived at Tinsley depot on 12th January 1994 for cosmetic restoration. Since 1975 it had been stabled on an isolated section of track at Vienna Arsenal in Austria, and its return was the culmination of a campaign masterminded by former BR Freight Engineer David Russell.

The well-known signal box at Barmouth South, on the Cambrian Coast line, was dismantled in February for re-erection on the Llangollen Railway. Made redundant by the introduction of RETB signalling, the box was sold by Regional Railways for a nominal sum. It now stands at Glyndyfrdwy.

150003 was the third of the production batch of Sprinters ordered in 1983. Twenty five years later and increased to three cars it departed from Birmingham Moor Street on 10th August 2008.

photo: Tim Speechley



In February 1994 the signal box from Barmouth South was relocated to the Llangollen Railway. Here it is seen in operation on 5th June 1977 controlling the departure of an excursion returning to Stroud behind 25131.

photo: Tim Edmonds

STATFOLD POSTSCRIPT



Some wondered about the heritage of the E&MR canopy supports at Statfold. They were from the Eastern & Midlands Railway, later better known as the M&GN Joint. Here is one in its original position at Yarmouth Beach station on 14th June 1980.

photo: Tim Edmonds

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 2009

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Ken Lawrie



GWR 2-6-0 5318 stands in the yard at Maidenhead on 26th August 1956.



GWR 3440 City of Truro approaches West Wycombe on 28th September 1957.