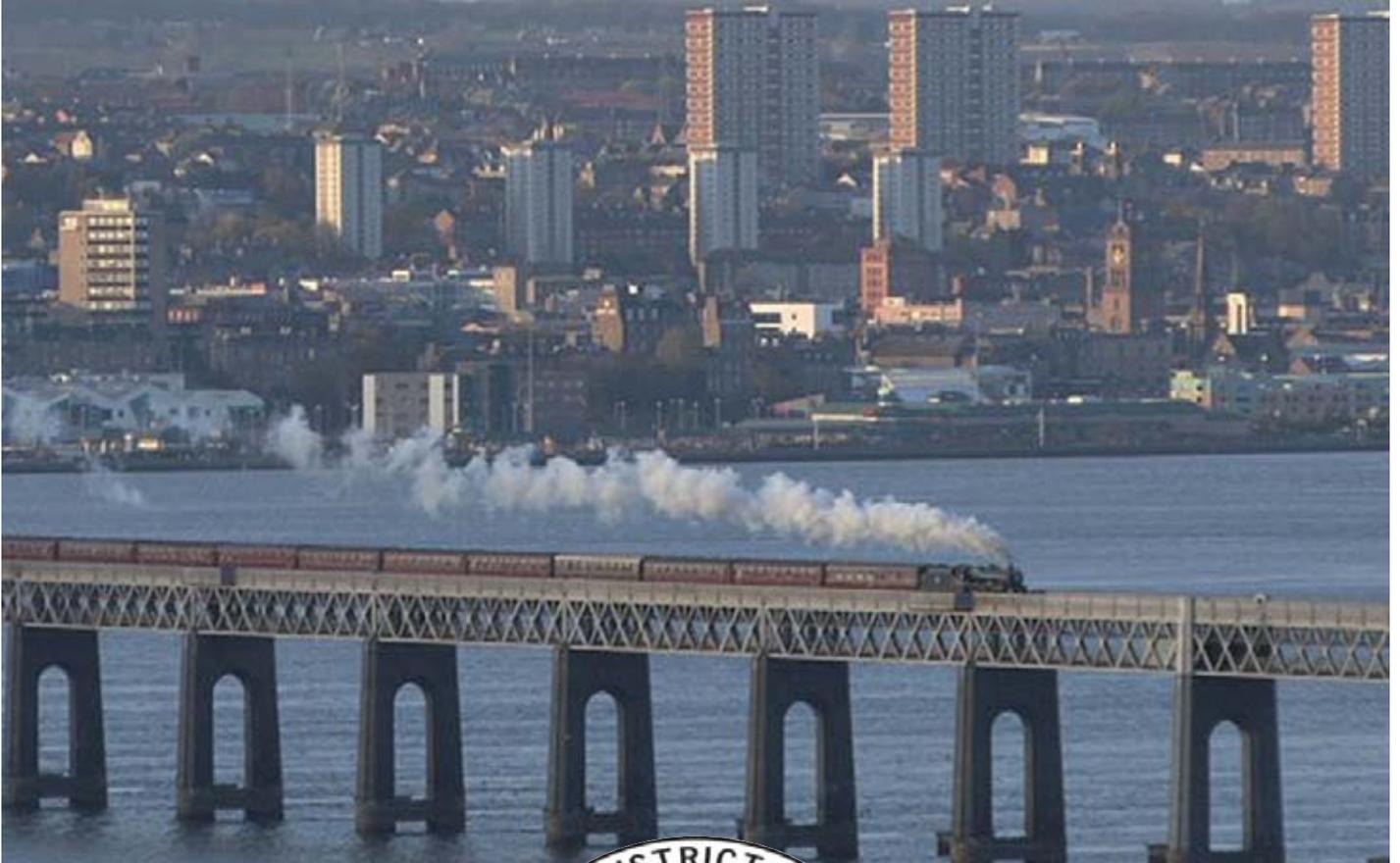
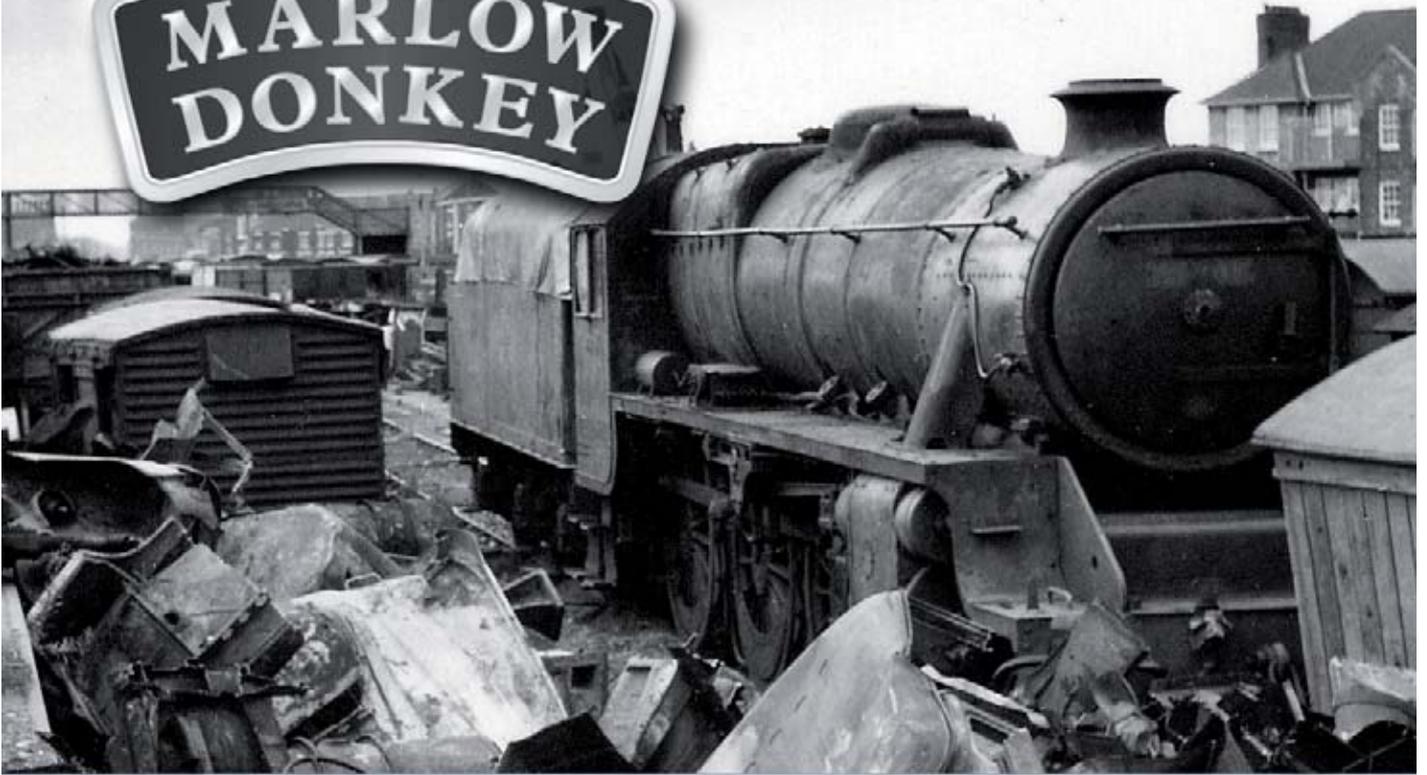


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

125

June 2009



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Where Did it all Begin? Part 2

Great Britain II

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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: Bought for scrap in 1968 by Albert Draper, 45305 at Draper's Hull scrapyards on 23rd June 1970, with 45305 set aside but as yet unrestored. Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 17).

Bottom: Black 5 45231 Sherwood Forester heads south over the Tay Bridge on 12th April, day 7 of the 'Great Britain II' railtour. Photo: Michael Field (Article page 9).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

- 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.
- Thursday 16 July **LONDON TRAMWAYS – THE STORY TO 1952** David Berguer
David's talk will cover the early days of tramways before the grouping and formation of LPTB in 1932, right through to the end of the traditional double-deck street tramcar system in 1952.
- Thursday 17 September **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GREAT WESTERN** Matthew Golton
Matthew is Projects Director at FGW and will be outlining the major works over the coming few years including, Crossrail, Reading, resignalling in the Thames Valley and South Wales, redoubling the Cotswold line, the IEP and maybe even electrification.
- Thursday 15 October **A RAILWAY RETIREMENT - THE JOURNEY CONTINUES** Phil Marsh
Now 'retired' from Network Rail, Phil is not letting the grass grow under his feet. He will tell us something about his life as a professional journalist with *The Railway Magazine* and as a footplateman on the main line and at Chinnor.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Saturday 11 July **AMBERLEY RAILWAY GALA** by car
Provisional, full details will be announced shortly.

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

As we head for summer I'm hoping to get a bit more railway activity under my belt. It is increasingly apparent that to get any proper "gricing" done I will have to leave my dear wife at home. We spent a weekend staying with a friend in Winchcombe recently and despite being on the doorstep of the Glos-Warks line, I still only managed to see one train the whole time. Those of you who have partners who are happy to accompany you on railway trips should count your blessings.

Our recent visit to Swindon, courtesy of Mark Hopwood, was a great success and a full report is to be found on page 11. Suffice to say that those who participated had access to First Great Western's new control centre, not a location generally available to enthusiasts, where the staff members were happy to explain their roles and not only because the boss was there. We must not forget the contribution of our own Peter Robins, who gave a full explanation of late running attribution, despite an initial hope of being on holiday at that time. Thank you, Peter. Free travel was an added bonus and accompanying Mark for part of the trip, it was obvious how he has tried to get to know his staff at all levels. Considering the age of the HST fleet, well over 30 years now, it still gives off an air of efficient modernity and all the trains we saw were clean and very well turned out. Thank you, Mark for putting yourself out on our behalf, yet again. My only regret was that we couldn't find a suitably large hostelry in which to eat, resulting in a dispersion of participants. The visit to the "Steam" museum, my first, came as quite a surprise, it being both larger and more interesting than I had imagined.

We have other, less formal, outings planned for the Society during the year and I hope some of the newest members will

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join us. Current ideas include Amberley, in July and perhaps Hollycombe later on, sharing cars for transport. I am very pleased that we have been able to attract quite a few new people to our ranks and I am embarrassed to say that I do not yet know you personally. During our regular meetings any time for socialising is at a real premium but can I ask you to take the time, please, to grab me and introduce yourselves.

Whilst welcoming new members it is with great regret that we have also had to say farewell to another very long standing friend, Alan Morris, who died in early May, after a short battle with PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsey). Prior to Alan's case I had never heard of this appalling disease and it was strangely ironic to discover that one of the main charitable beneficiaries of the recent Eastleigh Works open days was the PSP Association, to which the Society has made a donation. An obituary for Alan by Ron North is contained within this edition of the Donkey. Ron and I attended the packed memorial service at Holmer Green Methodist Church, where it was apparent that Alan was a much loved family man with a host of very good friends and an extremely wide variety of interests, of which railways was just one. By chance, Alan had just completed his railway memoirs before becoming ill and the series continues within.

I think the lesson for all of us is really to get out there and do it now, for nobody knows what the future has in store for any of us. So with that in mind, make the most of the summer and get visiting. Remember that in this time of recession our preserved railways need you.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

MEMBERS, NEW AND PASSING

We continue to attract new members to the Society with no fewer than four having joined in the last quarter. So we welcome Robert Brasted from Prestwood, Bob Mason from Beaconsfield, G. Higginson from Marlow and Dave Woodhead from Wokingham which, now that all 2009 renewals are in, brings our total membership to 62 - thought to be an all-time record.

Sadly, however, a long-standing member, Alan Morris, passed away at the beginning of May. His long-time friend Ron North pays tribute to him the next page. Alan's excellent memoirs continue on page 5.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The spring season has featured three presentations all on overseas railways.

The March meeting took us to the spectacular Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Paul Whittle gave us not only a tour of this wonderful line but also took a look at the communities it serves and the stunning surrounding mountain scenery.

In April we stayed closer to home when Michael Bunn returned for another look at the railways of France, this time concentrating on the narrow gauge lines both past and present. France made far greater use of the narrow gauge than the UK but most is but a memory. For the second half Mike concentrated on the Baie de Somme, so even if we didn't have a visit to their Steam Fete this year (it was the following weekend) we did get our "fix".

Finally, in May John Gulliver made the long journey from Barnstaple in Devon to present "Gulliver's Travels", a look at steam from the Atlantic to the Adriatic in the 1960's. John took us to the north western tip of Spain in 1964 in the days before modern car ferries so it required a trip by passenger vessel from Southampton, then on to Austria and finally to Yugoslavia. This last section was particularly interesting as John's visits were in the late sixties and under communist control. Despite nearly getting arrested at one stage, he managed to get some stunning shots particularly of the now closed narrow gauge line through some spectacular mountain scenery between Sarajevo and Dubrovnik on the Adriatic coast.

The visit to First Great Western and Steam at Swindon on May 9th was a great success and a full report appears on pages 11 and 12.

Julian Heard has asked for his apologies for the equipment failure at the AGM in February to be passed on. He assures us that he has discovered what caused it and how to ensure it will not happen again.

YOUR DONKEY

Several members complimented us on the standard of the March edition of the *Donkey*. Whilst as editor it is nice to receive such comments, it is down to the high quality of the material being submitted for publication in recent months. I have several more excellent articles in the pipeline but please keep them coming.

Articles looking back at the past always seem popular and we all have memories of great trips or train watching experiences from the past so why not share and save them for posterity before it's too late. As Tim points out in his Chairman's Notes, none of us know what the future holds for us.

BOURNE END CROSSING RENEWAL

Network Rail has this spring been upgrading two of the level crossings on the Marlow branch. Brooksby and Marina Crossings in Bourne End have been converted from being Open (AOCL) to locally monitored and controlled barrier (ABCL) crossings. That is they are operated by the approaching trains like the ones at Cookham and Furze Platt.

Marina Crossing has been the scene of several near-misses and accidents in recent years which has put it near the top of NR's list of most vulnerable crossings. Brooksby is less used, serving only a handful of riverside properties but was included as the close proximity of the crossings means they share the same control circuits.

SNACKING AT BOURNE END

In addition to a shiny new ticket machine (the old one got vandalised in a robbery attempt), Bourne End station now sports a new snacks vending machine. This is proving very popular with the local schoolchildren who push their pocket money into it in exchange for crisps, chocolate and pop – so much for the Nanny-State's campaign on healthy eating!

ROVING AROUND FGW

Mark Hopwood has requested I include a plug for Rover tickets on FGW. Many don't realise these are still available but they are and they make a very cost effective way of exploring his patch. Full details can be found (with a bit of searching) on the FGW website but for example a day Ranger ticket covering the lines east of Reading including the branches cost just £15.50 which is only £1 more than a one-day Travelcard from Bourne End whilst the Oxfordshire Day Ranger will give you a day's unlimited travel in the area bounded by Reading, Bicester Town, Banbury and Moreton-in-Marsh for just £13.00. Rovers include a ticket giving 3 days unlimited travel over a 7 day period in Devon and Cornwall for £40.00

There's a range of Day Ranger and 3 in 7 or 8 in 15 day Rover tickets covering the whole FGW network so why not take a look at the above web page and plan a few trips this summer.

THE TWYFORD FOOTBRIDGE SAGA

Pete Greatorex has been keeping us informed on the project to replace the station footbridge at Twyford station which has been described as one of the great sagas of modern railway history.

After the initial delays in obtaining the correct planning approvals, and in erecting a temporary replacement work started on the removal of the old bridge only to be delayed by the discovery of unexplained cables attached to it and a mobile crane which fell into a ditch in Winnersh on its way to Twyford when a road collapsed under its weight! It was finally removed in the early hours of 26th April.

Progress has been more rapid recently with the new bridge taking shape and the spans and stair units being craned in - each unit requiring a separate overnight closure of both the railway and local roads.

It is hoped that the basic bridge will be ready to handle the large crowds travelling to the Henley regatta in July although the lifts will probably not be ready until December.

ALAN MORRIS

1936-2009

It is with great sadness that I record the death of my good friend and long standing MDRS member Alan Morris at Stoke Mandeville hospice on the 6th May after a short debilitating illness.

I first met Alan way back in 1967 when I joined a small company called Airflow Developments Ltd that as it said on the side of their vans were specialists in air movement technology. I was employed as an instrument assembler and was almost immediately selected, because of my nimble fingers (well practised in tinkering with Model Railways) to build a new instrument called the AM 5000. The instrument was designed by deputy drawing officer manager Alan Morris and no the AM was not short for Alan Morris but stood for Anemometer 5000, it was an intricate and delicate instrument and from the outset I got to know Alan quite well as we worked together to make the AM5000 fit for production. Difficulties with calibration of the instrument brought us both into close contact Q.C. inspector Wilf Long so inevitably when faced with some intractable problem with the AM 5000 conversation sometimes turned to railway matters.

Later on I joined the drawing office as a production draughtsman, by this time Alan was drawing office manager. It wasn't long before Alan suggested Wilf and I join him on various railway visits. This was something of a novelty for us both as I think Wilf was of the opinion that railway interest ceased sometime in the 1950's and myself with the end of steam in 1968. These early visits to places such as Reading were very enjoyable, Alan's infectious interest in the 'working railway' had us witness such trains as the prototype HST and experimental gas turbine train and in this era of corporate blue when most loco hauled trains were assigned to Brush type 4's (CL 47) almost any type of diesel such as CL40s could unexpectedly turn up at Reading. We were also there to witness the CL 52 'Western' farewell special train which I think was February '77. We rode one of the first HST's to Swansea and over the ensuing years Alan went on to organise countless trips. Alan fell into the enthusiast category of Mileage Muncher which involved travelling over as much of the network that he had not ridden on before, including charter trains to freight only lines, then back home meticulously drawing each new route travelled onto tissue paper over a map in his railway atlas.

Alan was always liked and respected by all those that knew him at Airflow but this aspect of Alan's hobby met with some gentle ribbing, folk could not comprehend why anyone would want to do it. By the time Wilf retired from Airflow there were about six of us with a railway interest and I think we all came in for a certain amount of stick for being a bit odd. It was Wilf that persuaded Alan and myself to join MDRS which opened up a new chapter in our railway interest, we inevitably stuck together at meetings and trips, and as by now Wilf was getting on in years, we compared ourselves with the TV drama 'Last of the Summer Wine' Compo Clegg and Foggy out on a last fling together with the occasional guest invited along, usually Alan's cousin or friend David.

Would I have travelled literally hundreds of miles on charter trains, travelled to now closed London Stations such as Broad Street, Addiscombe, North Woolwich, and Ongar, travelled on the Docklands and Croydon light rail systems, ridden the last Routemaster bus route without Alan organising it? I don't think so. How fortunate then that Alan was a Mileage Muncher, not a Puffer Nutter or worse a Number Cruncher.



Alan Morris (right) in typical pose studying his railway atlas to check progress on a railtour to the Isle of Grain in January 2001 with his friends David (left), Ron North (centre, back to camera) and the late Wilf Long who isn't in the picture because he was taking it.

As I myself have now retired I can no longer look forward to trips out with Alan which is hard to believe because until recently Alan led a very active life style, being involved with a local Natural History Society, a Carers association, helping out at a local Residential Home and with a charity called 'Workaid'. He liked keeping his garden in immaculate condition, and was always involved in some way helping son daughters and grand children.

Since Alan was diagnosed with his dreadful illness his family organised for them all to travel on a steam special hauled by a Britannia to Cardiff which Alan enjoyed, they also intended to take him on one last holiday to a cottage in Dorset but sadly he had become too ill to go. Alan's wife Margaret has been a tower of strength to him in these last difficult months so condolences to her and the family on the loss of Alan.

He will be missed by all of his friends.

Ron North

Alan had a great affection for Dorset so it is perhaps fitting that we end this tribute with this picture he took of a Class 121 'Bubblecar' at the desolate Bridport station on 22nd August 1967.



HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN? 1943 to 1968

Alan Morris looks back on a quarter-century of memories.



Alan submitted his memoirs for publication over a year ago before he became ill. Whilst he lived to see the first part in print it is sad he did not see the whole series which will continue for the remainder of the year.

Enjoy the rest of the story which we are proud to present as a tribute to Alan.

Editor

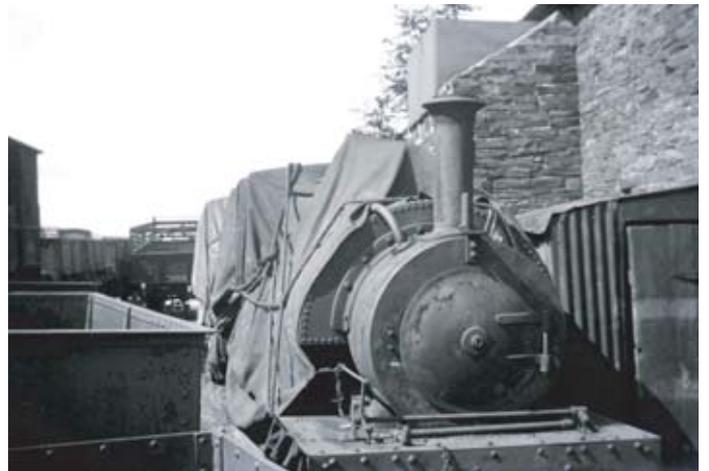
In 1950 I had become interested in the narrow gauge railways of North Wales and had read a book on the subject by J I C Boyd. My parents never had a car, so long journeys were a rare treat, and usually by train. I asked them if we could go to North Wales. They agreed, and we booked to stay in a Guest House in Corris, I can't remember why, perhaps it was the only pronounceable place name within miles!

We travelled on 'The Cambrian Coast Express' from Paddington and were hauled by a Castle to Birmingham Snow Hill, a mogul to Shrewsbury, and a Manor on to Machynlleth where it was pouring with rain. We went on to Corris by Crosville bus. I remember wondering what my parents and I had let ourselves in for, with a disused quarry with masses of slate debris opposite the Guest House, and the owners of the property only speaking the Welsh language to each other, and a little English to us. They told us that they didn't have mains water supply, but not to worry, as they had small dam above the house on the hillside, and a pipe connecting the two. It rained for all the evening and no doubt that topped the dam up, if it needed it!

The father of the household worked in a slate mine at Aberllefeni near Corris and the Corris Railway used to take the slate down to Machynlleth for onward dispatch, prior to its closure in 1948. This occurred due to a bridge over the River Dovey near to Machynlleth being damaged by floods, and it was not considered worth

One of Alan's favourite locos, 'Bulldog' class 3418 Sir Arthur Yorke at Southall loco depot in August 1949.

All photos by Alan Morris



Corris Railway nos. 3 & 4 rest in storage at Machynlleth on 26th July 1950. Later in the day, Talylyn Railway no. 2 had arrived at Towyn with what was feared to be one of the last trains. For all three preservation was an undreamed of future.



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repairing it as the railway was due to close soon afterwards. The drift mine specialised in making the slate bases for billiard tables, and the father asked us if we were interested in a visit. A few days later we went and found that the Corris rail connection was still in use if only to take the newly mined slate out from inside the hollow mountain to a processing shed a short distance away. The slate was cut to the required sizes and then removed by road. The rail wagons were horse drawn. We were allowed to enter the mine, walking along the track to see the great cavity inside the mountain. We were given torches, but no hard hats! It wouldn't, of course, be permitted nowadays.

A few days later, we went to Machynlleth and saw the end of the Corris Railway near to the main line station. The two remaining Corris locomotives Nos. 3 and 4 were still there even though the closure had taken place more than two years before. They were covered in tarpaulin sheets held down with ropes. I had the audacity to partially remove these sheets and took some photos. During our stay in Corris, I saw at the mainline loco. shed in Machynlleth, ex-Cambrian Railways 0-6-0's nos.849, 864, 892 and 894, 4500 Class 2-6-2T's nos. 4512, 4549, 4555 and 4571, 4575 Class 2-6-2T no. 5524, as well as a number of 'Dukedog' 4-4-0's. Whilst staying at Corris, we visited Aberystwyth, saw the start of the Vale of Rheidol Railway, but didn't travel on it, but the best part of the whole holiday from a railway enthusiast's point of view was a visit to the Talyllyn Railway. Before going to North Wales, I had written to Towyn to ask for a timetable for the railway, which was promptly sent.

One morning, my parents and I set out from our Corris base to walk to Abergynolwyn, the then upper terminus of the railway. It was about a six mile walk and took longer than expected, so when we arrived at the bottom of the slope leading up to the station, it was time for the train to depart. I ran up and asked the train crew to wait,
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On the Isle of Wight, O2 class 0-4-4-T W23 Totland runs around its train at the delightful Ventnor Town station on 27th August 1952.

which they obligingly did, until my parents arrived. We had an extremely rough ride to Towyn, as the track was in an appalling state, and I found out that the future of the railway was in doubt, as only two weeks before the owner of the railway, Sir Henry Haydn Jones, had died. Railway preservation was virtually unknown at the time and I expected to be one of the last passengers to ride on this railway. We also went to Portmadoc by train and walked to the terminus of the Festiniog Railway which had been closed soon after the Second World War. It was quite depressing as there were rows of rusty slate wagons, with weeds growing up around and through them. Fortunately, we all know the wonderful preservation story of both these railways.

In 1951 I paid my first visit to the Isle of Wight and managed to travel on all the lines except the connection between Sandown and Merstone. I cannot remember why I missed that bit of line. Most trains were hauled by O2 Class 0-4-4T's, except the branch to Ventnor West when the loco was an A1X Class 0-6-0T.

On October 13th 1951 I paid my first visit to Eastleigh works where there was the usual collection of Southern locomotives including ex works 'Remembrance' Class 4-6-0 32330 *Cudworth*. Awaiting scrapping were a number of ex LSWR L11 4-4-0's, which had been converted to oil burning not long after the war due a coal shortage which had, I guess, been resolved by then.

In the late forties and early fifties some friends and I used to go cycling to places of railway and bus interest. The Rickmansworth Church Street branch from Watford was closed on 3rd March 1952. I never managed to travel on this branch but visited it about a year later and took a photo of Church Street Station.



9789 shunting at Watlington on 7th April 1953 . The branch closed to passengers on 29th June 1957 and to goods south of Chinnor in 1960.

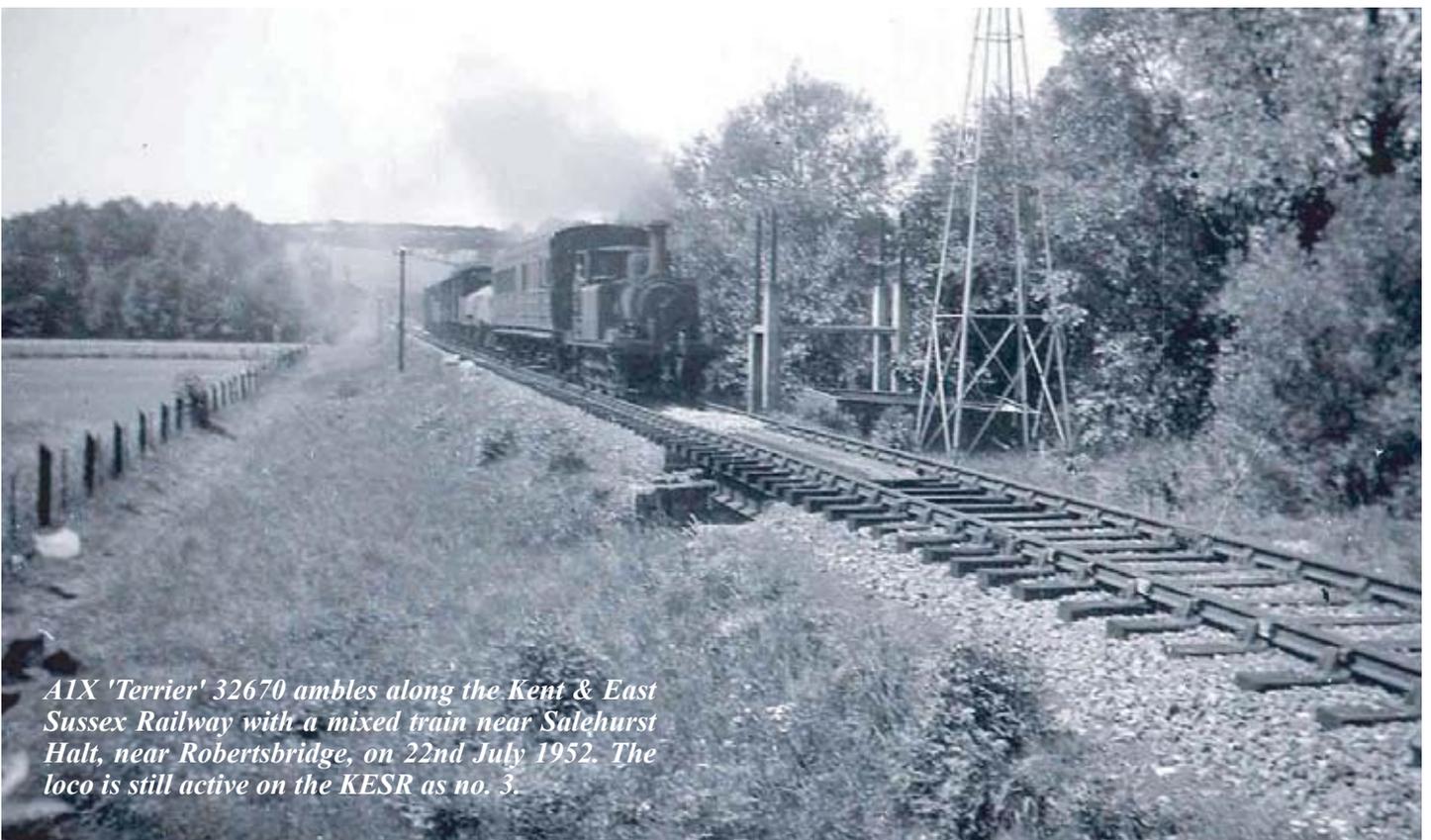
and I had to pay. I became quite attached to this former Col. Stevens Light Railway and when I heard that it was to close in January 1954 some friends and I went on the last day - a typical cold and foggy January day. After travelling from Robertsbridge to Tenterden, we went on by train to Headcorn, pulled by an ex-SECR O1 Class 0-6-0, running tender first. This part of the old K & E S R is not part of the preservation scene and is largely forgotten.

On April 7th 1953 we went initially to Chesham and saw ex GCR 4-4-2T 67416 working the branch from Little Chalfont, then on to Princes Risborough where we went on the train to Aylesbury, back to Risborough and by bicycle on to Watlington, where I took some photos of 0-6-0PT 9789 shunting.

My first visit to Kent and East Sussex line was in 1952 when I went with my parents by train via Charing Cross to Robertsbridge and stayed at the nearby village of Salehurst. On 22nd July we caught the passenger train to Tenterden, from Salehurst Halt, where we had to hand signal the train to stop. The train was pulled by A1X 0-6-0T 32656 and consisted of a single coach plus some goods wagons. I remember that the guard came along to sell us our tickets, but this was complicated by us having a dog with us and he had to return to his compartment to look up the fare for the animal. I never knew why, but the dog ticket cost 1/6d, which was more than my parents

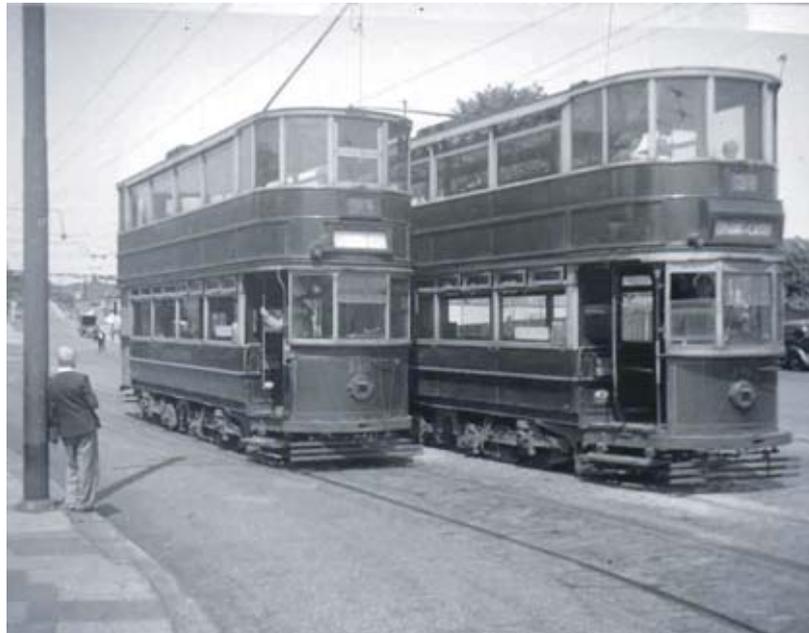
In the early fifties my interest in trams increased, mainly, I expect, due to the forthcoming extinction of trams in London. I went on most of the remaining routes before they were closed, including, north of the Thames, through the Kingsway tunnel on route 33, two days before closure on 5th April 1952. Most of the remaining London tram network in the last years was south of the Thames and on the very last day, 5th July 1952, I managed to travel on all the remaining routes. These included from the Embankment to Abbey Wood (route 38), Woolwich to Eltham (route 44) and Woolwich to Southwark Bridge (route 46). I managed to photograph the last private hire tram in operation on the Embankment in the evening.

At Southall in the late 1940's and early '50's, train watching inevitably led me to have some favourite locomotives. One of these was 1901 class 0-6-0T 1925, one of only two of the class which had not been converted from saddle tank to pannier tank (the other was



A1X 'Terrier' 32670 ambles along the Kent & East Sussex Railway with a mixed train near Salehurst Halt, near Robertsbridge, on 22nd July 1952. The loco is still active on the KESR as no. 3.

LT trams, 340 on the left, at the Abbey Wood terminus of route 38 from the Victoria Embankment on 5th July 1952, the last day of tram operation in London.



2007 based at Worcester). 1925 used to do some local trip workings or shunting and we often saw it leaving or entering the loco shed. Late in 1947 it was in a very run down state and was abandoned at back of the shed. We thought it would soon go to the scrap yard, and eventually it disappeared. Imagine our amazement when one afternoon a group of us were on the footbridge by Southall station, 1925 came down from the Swindon direction and went on shed. It had been overhauled and repainted and looked pristine in its green livery with GWR on the tank sides, even though the railways had now been nationalised. I can only guess that the repaint was begun before 1st January 1948. It soon reverted to its former grubby state and sadly was withdrawn in April 1951. I remember the end of the GWR at midnight on 31st of December 1947. I was in bed and could hear dozens of locos whistling on Southall shed to welcome in the new era of British Railways.

Another loco that was a favourite of mine was Bulldog Class 4-4-0 3418 *Sir Arthur Yorke*. This was the only one of its class allocated to Southall and in its last few years seemed to be employed on miscellaneous duties including passenger, van and occasionally freight trains. Eventually it was parked at the back of Southall loco shed for some months before being summoned to Swindon for its inevitable fate in August 1949.

In 1952 I started working at EMI as an engineering apprentice. Part of my time was spent at Hayes, some time at Feltham and at least one day a week at Technical

College. At Hayes I worked in a drawing office and, as I had a very junior role, I was regularly sent to get drawings printed in the company print room. From where I worked, this meant a walk of about a quarter of a mile adjacent to main line from Paddington to the West and if I managed to time it right I could watch the 'Bristolian' go past at high speed in the morning usually hauled by an immaculate 'Castle'. Within the huge EMI complex at Hayes, there was an extensive railway system operated by a single 0-4-0ST which seemed to have plenty to do every day. Adjacent to the EMI site there was an extensive storage area for building equipment owned by the building company (if my memory is correct) McAlpine. On this site were stored a number of industrial steam locomotive between on site deployments.

to be continued.

One of the last surviving GWR saddle tanks, 1925, at Southall in 1949.



THE GREAT BRITAIN II

Mike Hyde



Departing 6th April from London Victoria, Platform 1, 'Battle of Britain' Class 34067 *Tangmere* headed for Reading via the old Southern route, then on to Great Western rails to Bristol via Newbury and Bath. This was the third in a row large scale steam-led tour of the UK by the Railway Touring Co. in consecutive years. However, it was only the second such trip from Cornwall to Scotland (hence Great Britain II).

Tangmere was terrific and was to become the saviour of the tour. The next day we travelled to Penzance behind heritage diesel power with immaculate D1015 *Western Champion*. Relaxed in our first and Pullman carriages the run through Dawlish, over the Devon Banks and across the Royal Albert Bridge at Saltash was most enjoyable. At Penzance we had planned to meet 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* and 5029 *Nunney Castle* but the latter had failed earlier in the week. Instead, the previous night, *Tangmere* had sped down to Cornwall to act as substitute for *Nunney Castle* (by now camped out at Newton Abbot). So we departed double-headed back the way we had come with *Western Champion* to Bristol without delay with *Tangmere* and *Oliver Cromwell*.

Once again we were to be disappointed when 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* was unable to join us at Bristol. Never fear, *Tangmere* is here! So our faithful Bulleid took us through the Severn Tunnel to the outskirts of Newport and on to Hereford and Shrewsbury, thence to Crewe (a sight of "*Lizzie*" in the steam centre) and on to Preston. Next day 46115 *Scots Guardsman* took charge and gave us a good run to Penrith and Carlisle via Shap. The target was Glasgow which we made on time. So far the weather had been perfect and the engines had each reached their allowed maximum of 75mph.

Two Black 5s, 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier* and 45231 *The Sherwood Forester* hauled us out of Glasgow Central in a large

Dwarfed by its surroundings, Black 5 45231 Sherwood Forester heads south over the Tay Bridge on its way from Dundee to Edinburgh on 12th April, day 7 of the 'Great Britain II' railtour.

photo: Michael Field

circle to head north for Stirling, Pitlochry and finally Perth for ater. Meantime two mini-kilt clad young maidens had handed out miniature scotches to passengers to ensure they did not suffer cold! A few male passengers however did suffer shortage of breath during the dozens of photo-calls. A stop at Aviemore



46115 Scots Guardsman comes on to the 'Great Britain II' at Preston on 9th April having taken over from 34067 Tangmere.

photo: Mike Hyde

The Marlow Donkey

soon passed and then it was up and over Slochd Summit, later Findhorn and Nairn Viaducts thus into the City of Inverness.

Here, on a 'free' day, an option was a steam train ride to Kyle of Lochalsh. Motive power was provided by K4: 61994 *The Great Marquess*. We set out optimistically but we unfortunately fell foul of a flange lubricator on the 1 in 50 climb from Fodderty Curve to Raven Rock. After hand sanding of the rails we arrived late at Garve where we had an unscheduled water stop thus adding to our delay and to those of passing/crossing Scotrail services. More water at Achnasheen saw us to Kyle. Here our 3 hour break was axed in half and planned coach journeys to Eilean Donan Castle and Plockton (having previously cancelled a visit to Portree due to shortage of time) were limited to the Castle and a brief run over the Skye Bridge to Kyleakin and return. But it went well and Plockton was viewed from the comfort of our carriages en route.

What a magnificent line this is and yet unlike the Fort William-Mallaig line, there is no tourist (steam) service. The line is well geared for its local DMU railcar service with single track and passing loops in most stations (which are miles apart) and long block sections. But woe betides any late running steam (or diesel) service which throws all schedules out of the window for 24 hours.

Come Sunday we were heading generally southwards from Inverness to Aberdeen via Keith. The two Black 5s took charge to Dundee when 45231 took the train over the Tay Bridge, but not until after a reverse and a second run up the considerable climb out of Dundee station from a level standing start mid-station. A brief stop here had allowed us to view and photo 'RRS Discovery' in the dry dock nearby.

Soon we were flying down through Fife and over the Forth



60009 Union of South Africa on arrival at York on 13th April, the end of the final steam-hauled leg of the marathon tour .

photo: Mike Hyde

Bridge into Edinburgh. This was our last night of the eight day tour and next morning we left for York behind A4 60009 *Union of South Africa* (No.9 to you and me). A fitting end to this wonderful excursion around Britain. Even given the two slipping episodes, all engines performed exceedingly well as did the train crews, support gangs and our caterers. Ah Yes! How did we get back to London? All week we had been followed by a class 47 from West Coast Railways and so she led us from York to Kings Cross.

Sunshine all the way!

61994 The Great Marquess at Garve on its way from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh on 11th April.

photo: Michael Field



MDRS VISITS FGW AND SWINDON

Mike Walker



photo: Tim Edmonds

photo: Mike Walker

rectified by adjusting the timetable or perhaps altering fleet maintenance procedures.

The other group moved to the main control room which is an impressive sight as you enter [Above]. Covering almost the whole of one floor, it is divided into a number of distinct areas, covering the three FGW divisions, High Speed, London & Thames Valley and West of England each staffed by both FGW and NR controllers working side-by-side so that instant decisions can be taken when problems arise. Other sections of the control look after communications to stations and the media and staff and equipment management.

The group was further divided into two to be more manageable. One was escorted by Mark the other by Control Centre Manager Chris Prior, second from left [Left] and Senior Controller Phil Mayton explaining the workings of one of the workstations to members. Each of these contain a number of flat-screen monitors which show a variety of information including track diagrams for all the lines covered by modern signalling systems (the vast majority of FGW's network) which enables the controllers to see at a glance where every train is. Other displays give the actual timing of the trains.

When we entered, all these screens were showing green for almost every train showing them to be on-time (by PPM), two were yellow, being close to exceeding their PPM target and one, 1A83 the 08.52 Penzance - Paddington was red having recently left Exeter 12 minutes late. There was no obvious reason for this and efforts were being made to contact the Train Manager to

photo: Tim Edmonds

photo: Mike Walker



Hidden away in an anonymous modern office block a few minutes walk from Swindon station is the Great Western Integrated Control Centre, a newly opened £4.5 million facility jointly operated by First Great Western and Network Rail which the Society was invited to visit on 9th May; the first group from outside the industry to do so thanks to an invitation from FGW Managing Director and MDRS member Mark Hopwood.

Given our history, Mark was taking a chance. On previous visits he's organised the "Curse of the MDRS" has seen an On-Track Machine fail at Pitsea and a points failure near Bedford bringing chaos to parts of c2c and Silverlink respectively. On this occasion, however, all was running to plan.

Our party of 22 travelled by train, most on the 09.06 from Marlow with complimentary tickets generously supplied by FGW. Others joined us along the way including Mark at Reading. All trains used were running on time!

Having arrived at Swindon, Mark formally welcomed us [Bottom left] and made a presentation about how FGW was "Getting better". When he joined the company in January 2008 they were struggling to run 80% of trains on time, now it is in the mid-90s. Mark explained that time-keeping is defined by the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which requires their High Speed services to arrive at their final destination within 10 minutes of the advertised whilst the rest have to be with 5 minutes.

The group was then broken into two. One stayed behind for a presentation by MDRS Treasurer and FGW Senior Performance Analyst Peter Robins [Bottom right] on delay attribution; the art of deciding who's responsible when things go wrong. Peter also explained how analysing delays can identify recurring problems which can then be



ascertain the reason. We later discovered it was due to an unusually large number of customers boarding at Cornish stations. Regulating decisions made jointly by FGW and NR controllers as a result saw 1A83 have an unobstructed run into Reading which was left 8 minutes late. Unfortunately a slight delay at Slough meant it was 9 minutes late at Paddington but still within the PPM target.

This sort of intervention is going on continuously to ensure that delays are kept to a minimum. Occasionally one train will be deliberately held to give another later one priority. To the casual observer or passenger this may seem crazy or frustrating but when the "bigger picture" can be seen, it makes sense.

The groups later swapped over and the whole visit repeated. The visit exceeded the expected time and proved fascinating to all who took part providing a unique insight to how the modern railway is operated. Our thanks go to Mark for the invitation and to Chris and Peter for giving up their Saturday and to all the control staff for their patience and answering all our questions. As we left we had a last look at the screens showing the day's performance which showed FGW running at 97% slightly above mid-table.

We then moved on for lunch which was followed by a visit to the Steam Museum which is located in one of the former works buildings and has replaced the former Great Western Museum which occupied a former chapel in the Swindon railway village. The new museum is much larger and is laid out in a series of dioramas depicting various aspects of the GWR. These include a part of the Swindon stores [Below] where MDRS Chairman Tim Speechley and Pete Greatorex had obviously been sent for a "long weight".



photo: Mike Walker

photo: Mike Walker



photo: Mike Walker



photo: Dave Theobald

Elsewhere, Tony Caton was on 2516 [Right] no doubt asking: "Did you know my Dad?" Tony is always trying to locate former colleagues of his father, a driver at Old Oak Common.

Other locos in the museum include 9400 and 92220 *Evening Star* [Top] and 4073 *Caerphilly Castle* [Centre]. Hidden away in a display case were the seals of the various components of the GWR including both the Wycombe and Great Marlow Railways.

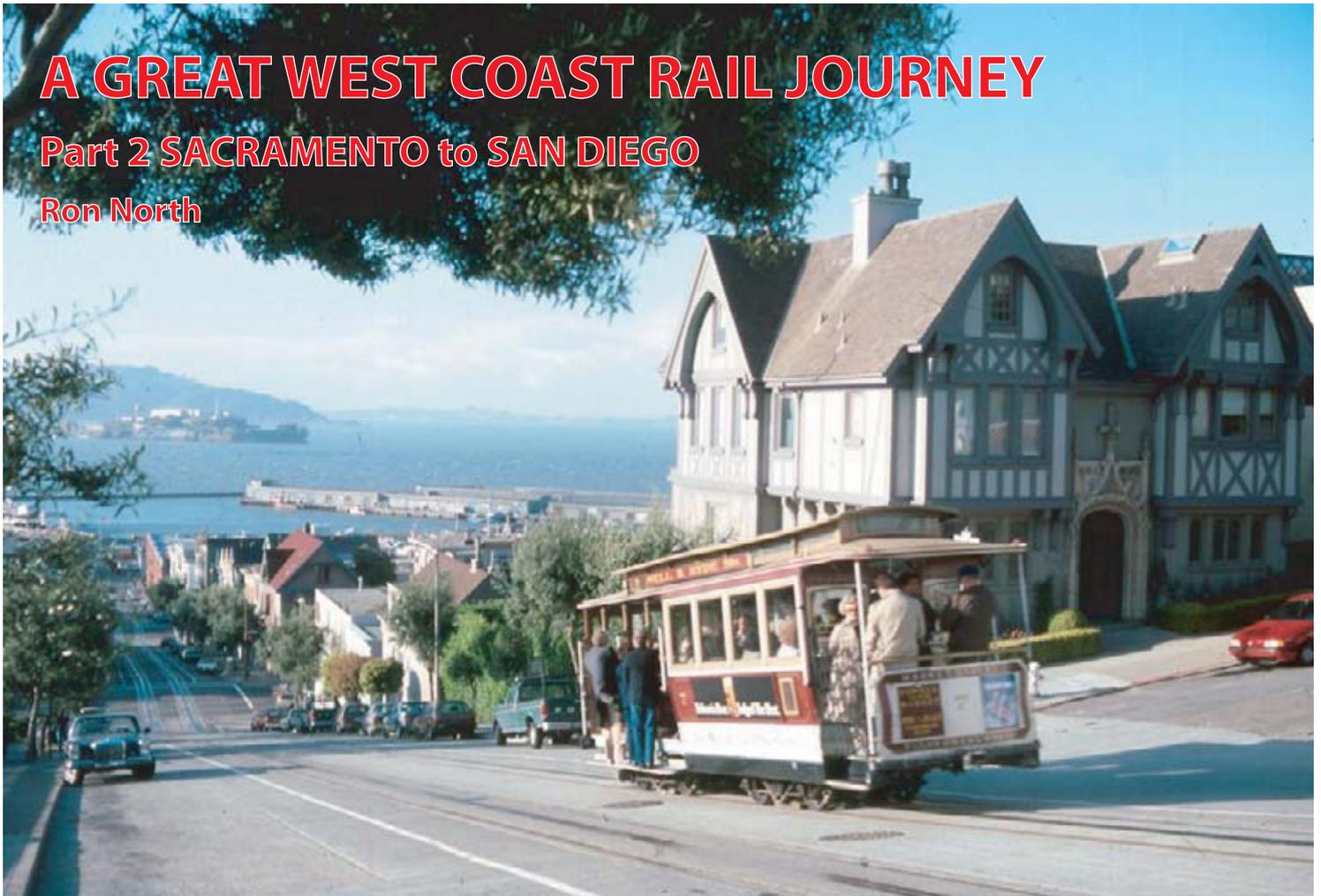
We made our way home independently after an excellent and memorable day.



A GREAT WEST COAST RAIL JOURNEY

Part 2 SACRAMENTO to SAN DIEGO

Ron North



For those that have never been to Yosemite I can do no better than quote a few words from the tour brochure - "it features towering granite cliffs, thundering waterfalls, dramatic mountains and deep alpine lakes. A tour of the valley takes in views of Half Dome, the 3,000ft (914m) vertical granite monolith of El Capitan, and the spectacular Bridal Veil Falls."

It's now hard for us to imagine just how difficult access was to this place since it was first visited by sightseers in 1855; early pioneers endured great hardship to reach it by following Indian trails. Stage coach routes were opened in the 1870's but the overland trip still required two days of hard going. The Yosemite Valley Railroad was opened most of the way to El Portal in 1907 a bus link still being required from the railhead, later a road was built which helped to kill off the railway. Our coach driver said as we approached the park that he had the choice of using the old road, a shorter distance featuring steep grades, hairpin bends and stunning views or the new road that

A Powell-Hyde cable car of the San Francisco Municipal Railway makes its careful descent on Hyde Street. That's Alcatraz on its rock in the Bay and Fisherman's Wharf is at the bottom of the street.

photo: Mike Walker

we used, longer but less severe, he was glad to be driving an older coach with a more powerful engine.

Today this wild beautiful place is just too accessible by car. It has become a major holiday destination and an interesting exercise in trying to avoid spoiling a place so many have come to see. What a pity the railroad (closed 1945) didn't survive, today it would have been a tourist attraction in its own right, I purchased a booklet it's an interesting read, it was a stunning line. Our park tour guide incidentally was a dead ringer for Harrison Ford dressed as Indiana Jones, he even had the accent.

Day 5 The wonders of Yosemite

We boarded our coach after a comfortable stay at the Yosemite Lodge, situated at the foot of Yosemite Falls. Today we are to visit The Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad. Today's Sugar Pine is not one of the lines that connected with the original 'Yosemite Valley Railway' it is in a different place called the Sierra National Forest, it has been built on the bed of a former logging line, many of these are now forest trails and roads for the forestry and park authorities.

A 'Shay' locomotive takes tourists on a winding twisting ride on a downhill grade which conveys a very fair impression into what these lines must have been like. At the lowest part of the line the train enters a large loop and stops to take on water, which provides the inevitable photo opportunity.

Typical of the spectacular scenery that attracts millions of visitors to Yosemite National Park every year, these are the Bridal Veil Falls.

photo: Ron North

The Marlow Donkey





*Both sides of Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Shay no.15. The 3 truck loco was built by Lima in 1913 and acquired from the fabled West Side Lumber Company.
photo: Ron North*

The return trip provides train buffs the opportunity to observe a 'Shay' working very hard back up the hill, which looks much steeper going up than it did going down. Back at the terminus staff provided what they described as a barbecue but what some of our tour party were quick to point out was a salad lunch. The Americans are good at providing these little extras which encourage visitors to hang around longer and spend money in the shop, (yes we did!)

In the afternoon we arrived at our driver's home town of San Francisco where we were to spend the next four nights at the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway.

Day 6 Seeing the sights of San Francisco

Started with a sightseeing tour which included the Golden Gate Bridge, the downtown shopping and financial districts, and Fisherman's Wharf with its Pier attractions, including the resident seals at pier No 39.

In the afternoon a cruise and a visit to Alcatraz Island to enjoy an audio tour of the famous prison had been arranged.

Day 7 The Napa Valley

We boarded a coach and headed out of town across the Golden Gate Bridge for a visit to the Napa Valley and its famous wine train. Its home is in one of California's most successful wine growing regions it consists of restored luxury heavyweight Pullman cars hauled by a pair of Alco FA units. It wends its way gently past the vineyards while its passengers are wined and dined in fine style, all this provides a great day out with a difference. I wasn't expecting much from the Napa Valley but we enjoyed our visit.

Day 8 Freedom to explore!

Was our free day so we took the ferry across the bay to Tiburon (on our last visit we hired bikes and cycled there via the Golden Gate Bridge) this time however we visited its museum which was housed in an old railway depot, this being the last remnant of a once large railway presence in the town.

Napa Valley's ALCo FA's 70 and 71 head the beautiful wine train through the vineyards of its eponymous valley.

photo: Mike Walker





Amtrak California 2011 runs down the middle of Oakland's Embarcadero as it approaches Jack London Square station with a Sacramento - San Jose 'Capitol' service.

photo: Ron North

The museum staff have built a large working 'HO' layout to show how extensive it all was. Freight was once car floated across the bay to San Francisco, high security prisoners such as Al Capone arrived here at night by train, and the entire passenger train was loaded on board the car float under the watchful eye of armed guards and floated across to Alcatraz.

Before we departed the museum we were viewing a small 'HO' layout depicting a car float operation. Mrs N flipped a turnout motor switch, the red button came off and landed on the floor, do you think we could find it? I was on my hands and knees, no sign of it. No one to tell, we put a donation in the box and left, I can just imagine a member of staff scratching his head and saying 'Look at that! Joe public will nick anything!'

Day 9 San Francisco to Santa Barbara

Began the second leg of our trip on the 'Coast Starlight'. We were coached from San Francisco for a 9.30 am departure from Oakland. A couple on our tour said the last time they used this service it ran two hours late! ha! ha! We arrived at the station to be told our train today was running three hours late through no fault of Amtrak. Apparently the lift bridge at Portland had been raised to allow a ship through, only for the tracks to not align properly when it closed. The train had also suffered a paint ball attack, the staff having to clean paint off the windows. I learned later that this train typically runs anything from five minutes to an hour late.

We passed the time at Oakland watching passenger trains barrelling down the middle of the street, lights blazing and horn blasting, our party either went for a stroll round the area or just hung around in the waiting hall. One of our party, an architect, was intrigued by the modern roof structure, he certainly had plenty of time to study it.

Once on board the train, Amtrak had provided the services of a voluntary Park Ranger who gave us a running commentary on the train's PA system, pointing out anything of interest along

the way. In fact because we were running so late Pamela found the Ranger to have a better knowledge of our estimated e.t.a. than on train staff. The other disadvantage was that the run down the dramatic coastline of California was in late afternoon/evening, the only compensation being a superb sunset, lots of photos were taken!

On arrival at Santa Barbara we were bussed to our hotel 'The Peppertree Inn'.

Day 10 Relaxing on the Riviera

Was our free day to relax and explore Santa Barbara described as the American Riviera at our own pace.

Day 11 Santa Barbara to San Diego

Saw us back at station to catch another Amtrak flagship train 'The Pacific Surfliner' this one was a push-pull train; it arrived with the loco facing north. (When it gets to Los Angeles's stub end station the loco departs facing south.)

We still follow the coast for a short way, and we soon find ourselves threading through the urban sprawl of Los Angeles or Concrete Jungle as some prefer to call it. On arrival we are told our train is running about ten minutes late, so would only stop for about ten minute's so don't wander off.

As our train headed south out of LA there was plenty of railway interest for me to observe, and also something for our party to be intrigued by was the cat and mouse pursuit, and final apprehension of a young woman who had deliberately got on board at LA without a ticket. I have a photo of her being escorted by two burly officials down the platform at Santa Anna.

I briefly stepped off the train at Oceanside to take a few photos because our club has built an N scale layout based on this location.

On arrival in San Diego we were transferred to our hotel 'The Sofia.'

Day 12 San Diego

Started with a tour, San Diego is an interesting city. It was only the briefest of visits but we packed a lot into our time there.

The tour took us over to Coronado Island where it has a luxury hotel which we were able to visit. It is where Edward Prince of Wales met Wallis Simpson; she was married at the time to a naval officer stationed at the naval base.

Next the tour took us to Balboa Park where we skipped it to visited the model railway museum, and also the San Diego Zoo which is described as the best zoo in the world. There was a huge Aircraft Carrier moored in the harbour, which we would like to have visited but there just wasn't time.

Some of our party took the trolley seventeen miles south to Mexico, they said it was easy to cross the border, not so easy to get back again.

The citizens of San Diego are proud of their city, as well as the modern towers they have preserved many historic buildings which includes the still in use ex-Santa Fe depot. Apparently Santa Fe wanted to demolish it when their passenger trains ceased in 1971.

Day 13 San Diego to LAX, time to reflect.

We had the morning free, before boarding the coach that would take us back to Los Angeles for the flight home.

Time on the coach to reflect on the tour, they say that with 'Great Rail' you feel you need a holiday to get over your



EMD F59PHI 3001 of the San Diego Northern Railroad stands at San Diego's Santa Fe station between runs. Coaster is the name given to the commuter service north to Oceanside.

photo: Ron North

holiday, and I think that's true of this one. We had a great bunch of folk to share the holiday with, both Amtrak and Gray Line staff were always polite and helpful, more so than they needed to be. And Pamela, when she told us before departure at Heathrow that she had never been to the U.S.A having been mainly based in Switzerland, we were all a little dismayed.

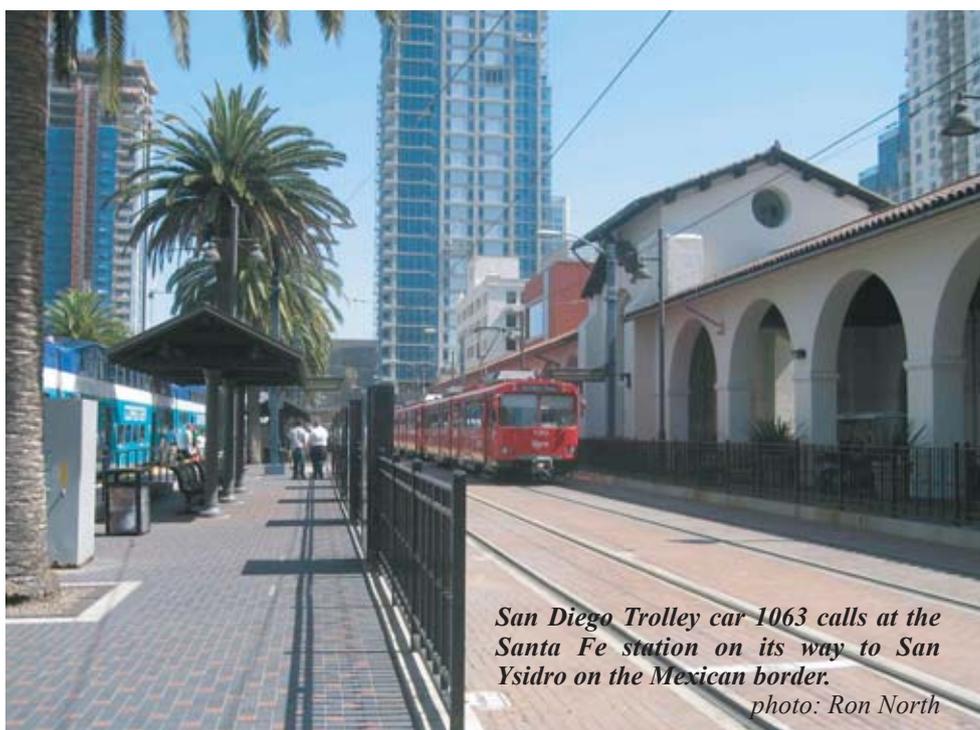
I think this tour was like a baptism of fire for her, and before we even left Seattle Airport she was dealing with the first crisis when one of our party tripped over his suitcase on the escalator which could have been serious, she was dealing with all manner of problems, ranging from stropky hotel staff, to retrieving lost property ranging from cameras left in shops to glasses left on coaches.

She told us that at a recent seminar someone held an Amtrak timetable aloft and proclaimed 'Behold the greatest work of fiction known to man' she thought at the time he was exaggerating but can see now what he meant.

So the holiday we took to celebrate forty years of married bliss was almost over, and we have gone some way to help spend the kids' inheritance.

Day 14 Homeward bound.

Well, we think it's day 14. We are on the plane now and the monitor in the back of the seat in front indicates we are flying over the Great Lakes, only another 3700 miles to go. We have been served with a meal and they are now about to dim the lights. How can they expect us to sleep with all this turbulence, it feels like the plane just dropped forty feet, maybe that one night on board the train wasn't so bad after all.

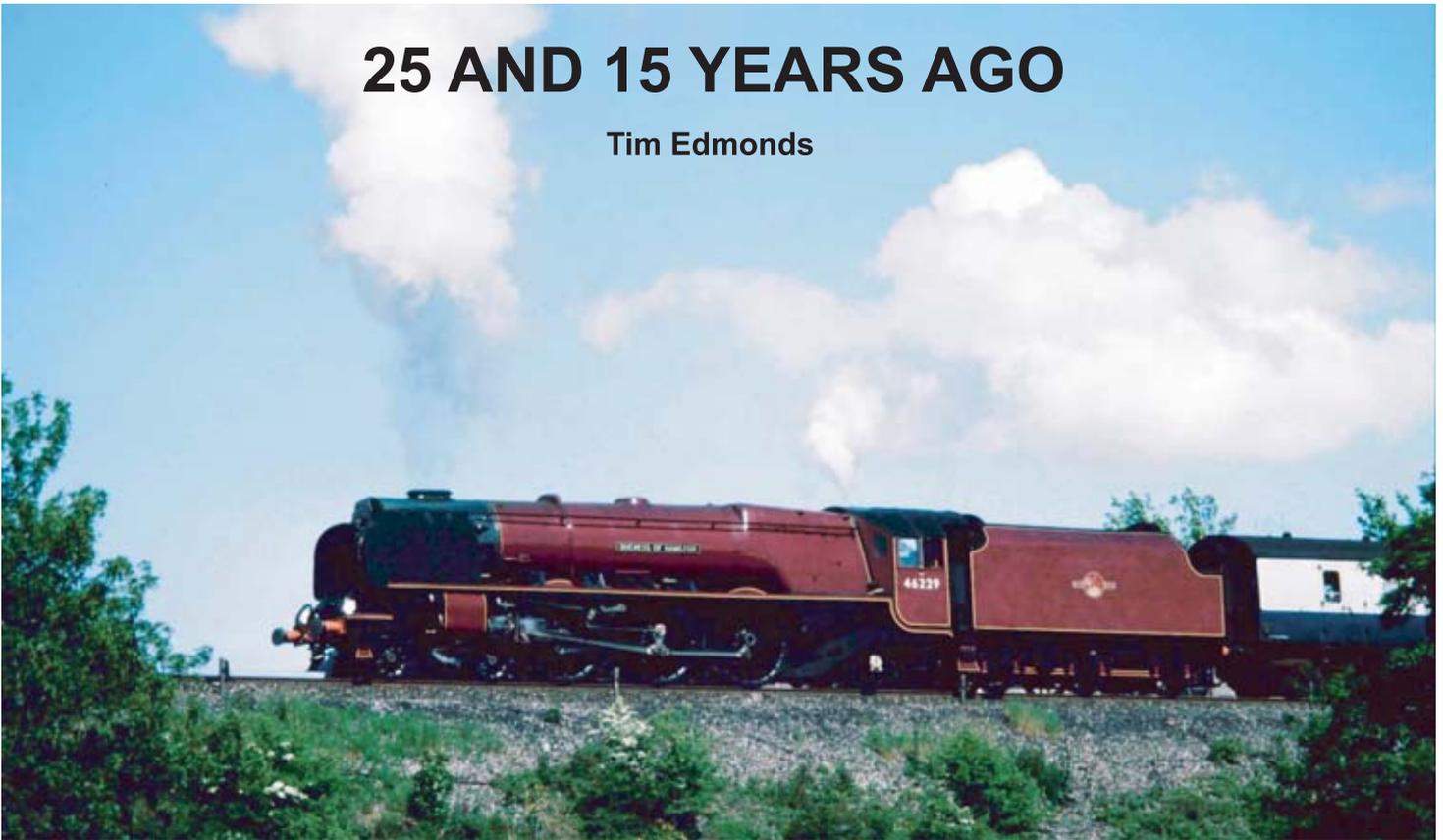


San Diego Trolley car 1063 calls at the Santa Fe station on its way to San Ysidro on the Mexican border.

photo: Ron North

25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



25 YEARS AGO

A contract was signed between BR and Avon County Council to carry 150,000 tonnes of household refuse - half the county's waste output - to the London Brick landfill site at Calvert. The contract was for 15 years and worth £1million per annum and was planned to start in the autumn of 1985.

The rundown of the Settle and Carlisle line continued with the announcement of the withdrawal of the successful weekend 'Dalesrail' services from Blackburn and Clitheroe to local stations on the S&C. Steam-hauled specials continued to be popular, with Pacific haulage on the 'Cumbrian Mountain Pullman' services, whilst regular loco-hauled passenger trains were still in operation between Leeds and Carlisle.

'The Wedding Belle', a one-coach special hauled by 31117, ran between High Wycombe and Shrewsbury via Coventry and Wolverhampton on 23rd June. It conveyed just-married Mr & Mrs Tony Parkins, who had met in May 1983 when she was travelling on a Chiltern Trains charter to the Spalding flower parade and he was assisting on the train as a courier. Tony was Chairman of the Rail Tour Operators Association and the special was operated by RTOA member Western Tours.

On 17th July, as part of a programme of full-scale tests on nuclear fuel flasks, the Central Electricity Generating Board and BR staged a collision between a train of formed of locomotive 46009 and three mark 1 coaches travelling at 100 mph, and a derailed wagon containing a nuclear fuel flask. The test was carried out on the BR test track at Old Dalby and resulted in the complete destruction of the loco, but the flask survived intact.

At York on 24th July Bill Tong, the Mayor of Hedon, East Yorkshire, named preserved ex-LMS 'Black Five' 5305 after one of his predecessors, Alderman A.E. Draper, before it departed with the 'Scarborough Spa Express'. Albert Draper, who owned a scrapyard

at Hull which was responsible for the destruction of many steam and diesel locomotives, had bought the loco for scrap in 1968 on its withdrawal from Lostock Hall shed. He then decided to preserve it as a memorial to the age of steam and it remains owned by his family company. Although still in Hull, the company has since moved to the east of the city where its site is named 'Black Five Works'

46229 'Duchess of Hamilton' departs north from Appleby with the 'Cumbrian Mountain Pullman' on 2nd June 1984. [Top].

Bought for scrap in 1968 by Albert Draper, 45305 survived because the scrapyard owner chose to preserve the loco. This is the scene at Draper's Hull scrapyard on 23rd June 1970, with 45305 set aside but as yet unrestored. The loco was named after its saviour in 1984. [Below].

all photos: Tim Edmonds



15 YEARS AGO

The summer of 1994 was marred by strikes triggered by a signalling dispute. A hark-back to the poor industrial relations of the 1970s, nobody gained anything - passengers suffered, Railtrack lost both revenue and public image, train operators lost customer loyalty and the signal workers lost union solidarity and job security. The resolution was not helped by the removal in July of Transport Secretary John MacGregor, who was replaced by Brian Mawhinney.

The summer of 1994 saw the commencement of everyday operation by Regional Railways Central of the first phase of the 'Ivanhoe Line'. This was effectively the re-introduction of local services over the Midland line between Loughborough and Leicester, and involved the construction of new stations at Sileby, Barrow-upon-Soar and Syston, plus the building of a third platform at Loughborough. Phase two, the reopening to passengers of the line from Leicester to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, with a further 12 stations, was due to open in the autumn of 1995 but remains incomplete to this day.

As part of its 25th anniversary celebrations, the Great Central Railway turned out 'Jubilee' 5593 *Kholapur* in the guise of sister-loco 5552 *Silver Jubilee* - black with chrome boiler bands and numbers. The prototype had been named to commemorate the jubilee of King George V in 1935. The transformation of 5593 was completed for the railway's Jubilee Gala on 4th and 5th June and the loco continued in this form for the rest of the year.

First of a batch of ten GM JT42HCW Co-Co diesel-electric locomotives for Iarnrod Eireann, no 201 was delivered to Ireland on 8th June by air from London, Ontario, via Gander (Newfoundland) and Reykjavik (Iceland). This is believed to be the first time that a locomotive, complete with bogies, had



been airlifted in this way anywhere in the world. The fast delivery was required in order to start a testing and training programme - the remaining nine locos in the class were delivered more conventionally by sea.

1994 was a landmark year for the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway. Having completed a new platform at Chinnor station in May, in August the C&PRR Association purchased the freehold on the line for £125,000 and on 20th August began a public service to Wainhill Halt - the first over the branch since 1957.

A two-car class 156 unit, 156 418, leaves the new station at Sileby after calling with a Leicester - Loughborough Ivanhoe Line service on 13th June 1994. [Above].

Making a magnificent sight in the afternoon sun, 5593 Kholapur passes Woodthorpe on the Great Central Railway on 13th June 1994, disguised as 5552 Silver Jubilee. [Below].



JOINT LINE SUPER SATURDAY

Saturday 23rd May 2009 will probably go down as the busiest day ever on the Great Western & Great Central Joint Line with a total of no fewer than 186 trains being scheduled through High Wycombe between 07.00 and 22.00 - that's almost one every 5 minutes!

In addition to the normal Chiltern and WSMR services the line played host to further diverted Virgin services due to continuing work on the WCML whilst WSMR ran three special trains in connection with Shrewsbury's appearance in the League 2 play off final at Wembley which unfortunately they lost to Gillingham.



Two of the WSMR specials were worked with borrowed Chiltern Clubman units running in 8 car sets. The first return working, 1Z80, was headed by 168217 passing High Wycombe [**Left upper**] whilst 168002 lead the final train, 1Z92, approaching Princes Risborough [**Left middle**].

The second special, 1Z88 [**Top**], was the longest train yet operated by WSMR and was formed of 67010 and 67021 leading five ex-Virgin and three of WSMR's "own" Mk3s with 67012 dead-in-tow bringing up the rear. The impressive ensemble is seen approaching Princes Risborough with driver Paul Belton in charge and WSMR Operations Manager Mark Edlington riding shotgun. Paul didn't look happy; perhaps he's a Shrews supporter!



Among the Virgin diversions was 1Z29, the 19.03 Euston to Birmingham New St [**Bottom left**] formed of 221144 and 221106 whilst freight activity was represented by 4057, the 15.13 Daventry to Dollands Moor which passed Princes Risborough [**Bottom right**] spot on time at 20.06 behind 66008.

Inevitably with so many trains on the line and with 75mph 165's working on the 100mph Birmingham trains timekeeping took a bit of a hit during the day (95% PPM) and a few Chiltern services got cancelled but it was a day to remember and the sun even shone for most of the day!

photos: Mike Walker

