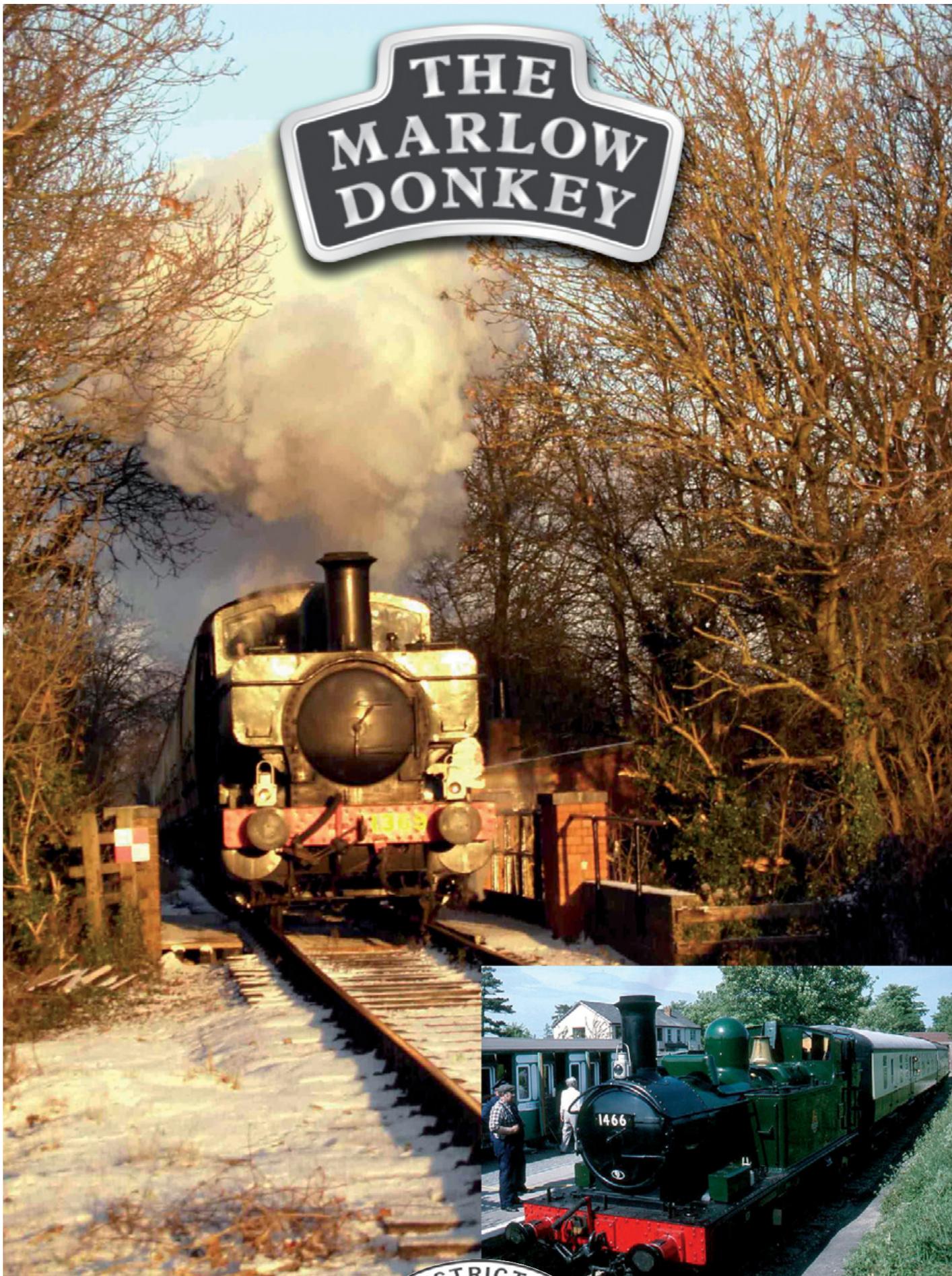


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

128

March 2010



Contents:

Three Winter Trips

Evergreen 3 Project

West London Puzzle

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: GWR pannier 1369 passing Bedlow, 19 December 2009. Photo: Mike Walker (Article page 5).

Bottom: GWR 1466 simmers at Chinnor, 25 May 1995. Photo: Mike Walker (Article page 18).

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

March and April meetings are held in the Red Cross Centre, Victoria Road, Marlow,
May onwards in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.45 for 8.00pm.

Thursday 18 March **THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 1965** Geoff Plumb

Geoff is a freelance TV cameraman and "unofficial" company photographer to both Chiltern and W&S. However he has been actively chasing and photographing steam across the UK and beyond for nearly half a century and tonight he takes us back to the mid-sixties.

Thursday 15 April **SOUTH AFRICAN RAILWAYS** Ron White

Following his retirement from running Colour-Rail, Ron returns to show us some of his own slides of South Africa. Because he has been marketing other people's images for such a long time it is not well-known that Ron is himself an excellent and well-travelled photographer and an expert on South African steam. Indeed, the society's present Chairman and Webmaster had the benefit of invaluable advice from Ron when planning a trip to South Africa over thirty years ago. This will be a great evening of erudition and entertainment.

Thursday 20 May **ON AND OFF THE FOOTPLATE** Bill Davies

Bill Davies has 42 years experience as a driver/motorman principally on the Midland line from St Pancras and has much in the way of anecdotal experience to talk about.

Thursday 17 June **REBUILDING THE WELSH HIGHLAND** Andy Savage

Andy is a leading volunteer on the WHR and brings us up to date on this remarkable project as it approaches completion.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

Saturday 20 March **FGW OLD OAK COMMON DEPOT** by train

Thanks to FGW a chance to see inside this busy depot. See Society News for details.

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

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The New Year has not started at all well for the Society. Almost the first news we got in January meant we would be looking for a new location for meetings in the not too distant future, as the Red Cross Society had decided to sell the hall in which we now meet and which has proved so ideal. This was quite a blow but as you all know we have found a new venue, that I hope will be even better, at the Bourne End Community Centre.

We start there in May and I hope you will all approve of our choice, not that there was really much choice about it, were we to retain our established meeting night. I would like to thank Malcolm Margetts in particular for doing most of the "leg work" in finding an alternative place to meet. He really does devote a lot of time to the Society and puts many of us to shame.

Following the hall debacle came the awful news about poor Dave Theobald's untimely death in Eritrea. Unlike some of the members, I had not known Dave for very many years but I had been able to do some trips with him and he always struck me as a truly likable guy, easy going, very tolerant and a pleasure to be with, especially when sharing a nice bottle of red. Fortunately he had been able to retire fairly early and had made many trips to exotic places, with and without his wife Barbara, to see railways or scenery or both and it is perhaps some consolation that he died doing what he enjoyed.

They say things run in threes, so I very much hope there isn't another disaster about to occur, because I was very hopeful this would be another successful year for the Society. We have a good range of speakers booked, several coming to us for the first time, plus there are plans for a number of visits. Some of these revolve around First Great Western, who I see have just been voted Train Operating Company of the Year at the www.mdrs.org.uk

National Rail Business Awards ceremony in London. Well done to Mark Hopwood and all his staff who have contributed to this incredible turn round. I know Mark has been very busy recently and if some of his plans for us don't come to fruition immediately, I'm sure they will, given time.

I had cause to look out some old slides from the 1980's recently. The thing that struck home most was just how interesting the railway was in those days. Today I give the current mainline scene barely a glance. The multicoloured vinyl encrusted series of multiple units that form the bulk of today's services leave me pretty cold and on the freight side, unless you are really "in the know" it seems to be just class 66's and not much else. Back then there was so much of the old infrastructure in place, like semaphores and signal boxes, station buildings and railway warehouses and there were still plenty of first generation diesels roaring, throbbing and whistling their way about the network, not only with freights but passenger trains as well. Despite being married by then I still seemed to do a lot of gricing, far more than today. I did do a lot more travelling with my work then, than now, especially "up north", where so many of the delights were to be found. Another surprise, looking at the slides, was how much trespassing I must have done to get so many of the shots! We have become so used to keeping behind fences, wires and yellow lines that you forget how much easier it was back then. Another shock was that those 1980's are nearly 30 years ago, yet the memories are only from yesterday.

Sorry chaps, I suspect I'm showing my age and suffering from "rose tinted spectacle syndrome". I'm sure I'm in good company and look forward to having a good wallow in nostalgia with you all soon. Best wishes.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBER

We have pleasure in welcoming a new member to the society. Chris Waite joined in January and lives in Slough. Welcome and we hope you enjoy the ride.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Christmas social in December was the usual enjoyable event with Mike Hyde acting as Master of Ceremonies and another fiendish quiz dreamt up by Julian Heard. Julian also provided the background entertainment with an ongoing slide and video review of the society's year.

For the January meeting Kim Fullbrook returned with a programme entitled 'Your train will be diverted'; a look at trains off their normal routes over the period 1980 to 2005. Unfortunately, the evening was overshadowed by the sad news about Dave Theobald and fittingly Kim opened with images of Deltics passing through Cambridge.

There was a change of speaker for the February meeting following the formal AGM business. In place of Adrian Palmer we welcomed Don Woodworth who was visiting from the US for Dave's funeral. He presented an excellent tribute to Dave and then took a look at his home town of St Louis. Adrian has been rescheduled to next February.

DAVE WOODHEAD JOINS COMMITTEE

The long vacant place on the committee has at last been filled when at the AGM Dave Woodhead agreed to serve. He was quickly proposed, seconded and elected! Thanks Dave!

NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

The runaway winner this year, unsurprisingly, was the late Alan Morris for his superb set of memoirs carried in the 'Donkey' throughout last year.

The trophy has been passed to his widow Margaret who says she is absolutely delighted. Margaret recently donated Alan's small collection of wagon plates to the Great Western Preservation Group at Southall where, of course, Alan grew up and did his first trainspotting.



Margaret Morris presents one of Alan's wagon plates to Bob Gorrige of the GWPG at Southall.

photo: David Dyson

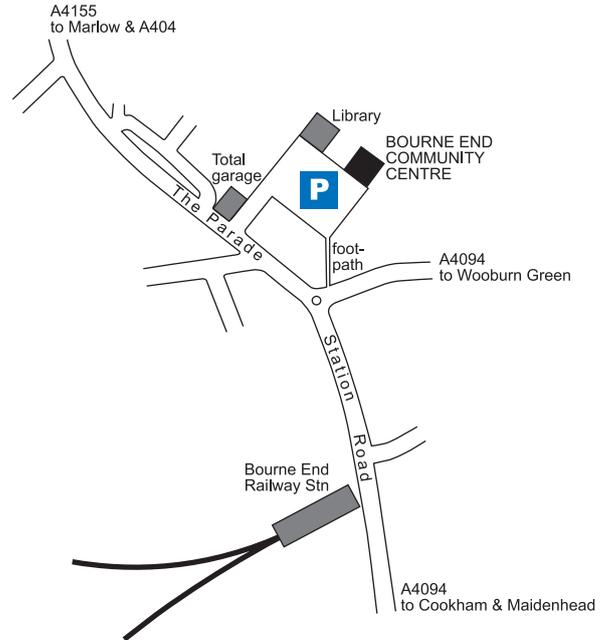
MDRS Chairman Tim Speechley presents the Eddie Lewcock Cup to John Tuck at the AGM.

photo: Tim Edmonds

NEW MEETINGS VENUE

From the May meeting we shall be relocating to the small hall of the Bourne End Community Centre due to the sale of the Marlow Red Cross hall and the unavailability of suitable alternative accommodation in Marlow.

The new venue is easy to reach in the centre of Bourne End village, has ample free parking (after 19:00), is close to Bourne End station (300 yds) and has a bar stocked with real ales!



When you enter the centre, turn right into the corridor behind the bar, the Small Hall is at the end

EDDIE LEWCOCK CUP REVIVED

At the AGM the Eddie Lewcock Cup was revived. Originally donated by past Chairman, the late Eddie Lewcock for the Best in Show at our former photographic competitions, the committee felt it should be dug out, polished up and awarded to a member who is not on the committee but does more than his share to help the society.

The recipients this year were John and Susan Tuck. John, a former 'Donkey' editor, prepares the electronic version whilst Susan slaves over a hot photocopier to bring you your favourite read each quarter.



The Marlow Donkey

SOCIETY VISIT TO OLD OAK COMMON

The society's visit to FGW's Old Oak Common depot is on Saturday 20th March starting at 10.30 prompt. Those going should by now have booked (it is fully booked) and if necessary given your shoe size to Mike Hyde so that FGW can arrange to supply the correct safety footwear. If you are bringing your own don't forget!

The easiest way to get to Old Oak is by rail to North Acton Central Line station which is a short walk to the depot. The best trains are the 09:06 from Marlow or the 09:32 from High Wycombe, change at West Ruislip.

After the visit (about 2 hours) and lunch we propose to explore some of the recent developments in London - so buy a Travelcard.

Once again thanks to Mark Hopwood for arranging this visit.

RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

Here are brief details of their programme for the next three months after which the branch takes a break until the autumn.

Monday 22nd March

Modern Traction in the Deltic Era 1961-1981,
Hugh Ballantyne

Monday 26th April

North American Wanderings
Gordon Davies

Monday 17th May

Branch AGM and members' presentations.

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Leisure Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead at 19.30 and all MDRS members are welcome to attend.

DONKEY CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

The editor's appeal last issue for material to fill the *'Donkey'* has largely gone unheeded, hence the inordinate amount of this issue which carries my by-line.

This is not something I wish to perpetuate so once again I'm appealing to each of you to assist. The alternative will be a very thin summer issue! It can be on any railway-related subject, even just a collection of favourite photos - we can scan prints or slides.

If you think you can make a contribution, please come and discuss it with me. I don't intend to write each issue myself!

FGW: TRAIN OPERATOR OF THE YEAR

First Great Western scooped the industry's premier award of Train Operator of the Year at the Rail Business Awards on 11th February in recognition of the incredible turnaround of the company's performance under the leadership of managing director Mark Hopwood which has seen it go from bottom place to seventh out of nineteen in just two years.

Earlier it had received *Modern Railways'* first Golden Whistle award as Most Improved Train Operator and a Silver Whistle for Most Improved Operational Delivery.

Mark said: "This is a really fantastic achievement I want to say a big thank you to everyone at FGW for their hard work over the last couple of years and to our customers
www.mdrs.org.uk

for their continued support. There is still more to do, but I'm really proud of everyone and what we have achieved so far."

BUT FOR CHILTERN...

Whilst Adrian Shooter picked up a CBE at New Year, former TOTY Chiltern this year had to be content with winning the 5 Star Award for Innovation in the Bucks Enterprise Awards.

FGW TURBO REFRESH

First Great Western has started a £8 million refresh programme for their Class 165/166 Turbo fleet. The work includes fitting a new GPS-driven passenger information system, upgraded and more reliable toilets, upgraded air conditioning in the 166s and new carpets, refreshed seats, overhead racks and repainted interiors.

The first unit, fire-damaged 165109 is currently being treated and the entire 151-vehicle fleet should have been upgraded by March 2012.

FORTHCOMING LOCAL STEAM

The following main line steam (and diesel) trips are scheduled for our two main lines over the coming months:

Saturday 3rd April D1015 *Western Champion*
Paddington - Bristol (one way).

Friday 16th April 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*
Solihull - Oxford - Slough

Saturday 17th April 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*
Paddington - Bristol non-stop return

Sunday 18th April 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*
Slough - Oxford - Solihull

Friday 23rd April 30777 *Sir Lamiel*
Paddington - High Wycombe - Stratford and return.

Saturday 29th May 60163 *Tornado*
Ashford Int. - London - Bristol and return.

Monday 31st May 60163 *Tornado*
Newport - Didcot - Canterbury and rtn (exact route TBA)

Saturday 26th June 60163 *Tornado*
Bristol - Paddington and return.

Saturday 26th June 6024 *King Edward I*
Paddington - Newbury - Exeter (one way)

Monday 28th June 6024 + 5029 *Nunney Castle*
Penzance - Bristol - Paddington (one way)

The above are provisional, full details, times and updates will be included in the e-newsletters as they become available.

PRESERVATION ON SOCIETY WEBSITE

Assistant webmaster David Collins has now launched a new section on the society's website featuring the local preservation sites such as Chinnor, Didcot and Quainton. There are already several interesting images there but David would like to add more. So if you have any, particularly depicting the early days at these locations please get in touch. Digital images can be sent directly to David at davidcollinsgwr@ntlworld.com whilst Tim Edmonds can scan prints or slides.

THE BIG FREEZE!



Having been warned to expect a milder than normal winter (following you will recall a promise of a barbeque summer) the winter of 2009-10 will go down as one of the coldest for more than a quarter century bringing with it lots of snow, including over Christmas, and chaos for the transport operators.

The first snow in our area arrived on December 17th but was fairly light and mostly confined to the east of the Chiltern escarpment.

two photos: Mike Walker



The weather provided suitable surroundings for Chinnor's Santa Specials on 19th December with GWR 1369 pounding past Bledlow [**Above**] and later standing at a seasonably decorated Chinnor station [**Above right**]. The cold weather had led to some delays due to frozen diesel in the 08 and the front loader used for coaling.

By 8th January things were far worse. Several inches had dropped on the area on the 6th causing much disruption and Chiltern introduced an emergency timetable. 165030 is seen [**Below**] leaving High Wycombe on the 10:20 Marylebone to Birmingham Snow Hill whilst 165034 approaches [**Right**] with the 09:12 from Birmingham Snow Hill.

two photos: Tim Edmonds





photo: Tim Edmonds



photo: John Tuck

The 10:54 Marylebone to Stratford-upon-Avon formed of 165032 is seen [Above left] leaving High Wycombe. Despite its emergency timetable, Chiltern still experienced delays and short-notice cancellations.

John Tuck decided to let the train take the strain and get him to work rather than his car and also on the 8th January recorded [Above right] FGW 165104, left, and 166221 both making additional stops at Winnersh to cover for cancelled or short-formed SWT services. The North Downs line was particularly badly hit due to the problems caused by even deeper snow in Surrey and Sussex and at this time trains were terminating at Redhill rather than Gatwick.



two photos: Mike Walker



Although the snow had finished falling by the weekend there was still plenty on the ground. However, the *Marlow Donkey* was operating spot-on time as 165121 departed Bourne End on Saturday 9th January [Above and left]. The deep snow covering platform 1 and the track is testimony to the fact that from Wednesday to Friday FGW operated basically a Saturday service on the branch and not the normal two-train peak weekday service.

This was one of the few major service revisions resorted to by FGW who managed to maintain a 90% on-time PPM figure throughout the period, something of which Mark Hopwood is justifiably proud, and better than many other TOCs.

Meanwhile, Alan Costello emailed from his base in Weymouth to enquire what the fuss was about - they didn't have any snow!

THREE WINTER VISITS

Mike Walker & Mike Hyde

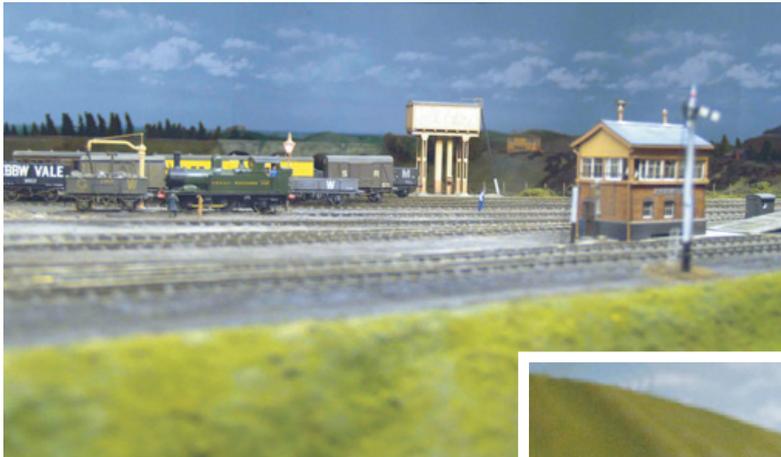


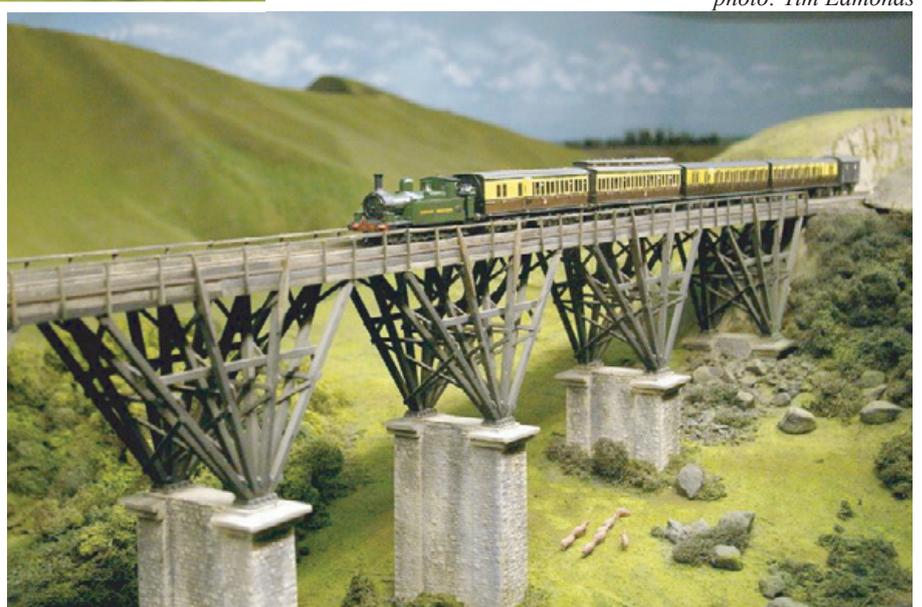
photo: Mike Walker

PENDON MUSEUM

The Society has paid at least two previous visits to Pendon, generally at about 10 year intervals. This may seem a long gap but it takes that long for any real progress to be seen!

For those not familiar with Pendon, it is a project to preserve the glories of the pre-war Great Western in miniature. But this is no ordinary model railway. The standard of work here is without equal and has to be seen to be believed.

There are two main exhibits, downstairs is the *two photos below: Mike Walker*



The Society arranged three pre-Christmas outings for members. All were arranged at somewhat short notice; hence it was not possible to advertise them in advance in the Timetable section of the *Marlow Donkey*.

Despite this, and them being to non-pure railway venues, all proved popular to members and were well supported. The first was a return to somewhere we hadn't visited for many years, then a good old fashioned train ride with a party thrown in and finally a visit to "something completely different".

Ideas for future similar visits perhaps?

photo: Tim Edmonds

Dartmoor scene [Top and above] which has an imaginary branch leaving the main line at Pen Tor Road and wandering off onto the moors across a superbly modelled Brunel viaduct.

Upstairs is the incredible Vale of the White Horse [Left and bottom left]. More than 70 feet long it depicts a section of the GWR main and MSWJ lines in the valley overlooked by the sprawling village of Pendon Parva made up of buildings from the vale in the condition they were in during the thirties when Pendon founder Roy England - that's him and his bike in front of the cottages - travelled round and was inspired to preserve rural England.

Also at Pendon is the Madder Valley Railway [Below] built in the mid-thirties by John Ahern and considered to be the first "proper" model railway layout.

photo: Tim Edmonds



DAY TRIP TO WREXHAM

This "informal" trip on December 5th was arranged at short notice when your editor became aware that Wrexham & Shropshire were offering a bargain £9 one-way advance fare between Banbury and Shrewsbury or Wrexham. A note was sent out in the e-newsletter and a party of 18 members, family and friends quickly signed up, using up the entire allocation.

At the time, W&S had just taken delivery of their second refurbished trainset and a bit of gentle arm-twisting saw the allocations for the day amended to ensure the party were able to enjoy this superbly appointed stock in both directions. DVT 82301 [Right] brings up the rear with 67014 *Thomas Telford* in charge as the outbound train



departed from Shrewsbury for Wrexham having dropped off roughly half the party.

On the way back, the company laid on a superb Christmas dinner for us, moving the party into a largely unoccupied coach where Senior Steward Lynne Williams [Left] takes our orders.

W&S have received several awards for their on-board catering which is unquestionably the finest on normal service trains in the country today. Meals are complimentary to first class customers and can be ordered, at reasonable cost, by those like us in standard. We did pre-arrange it on this occasion so we didn't overwhelm the system!

Special thanks to the W&S team including Operations Manager Mark Edlington, Business Sales Manager Christine Rowlands, and Train Managers Michelle Holbrook and Steve Holt for a great day out.

two photos: Mike Walker

HISTORY ON WHEELS - ETON WICK

To finish off the year, a number of members paid a December 13th visit to the 'History on Wheels Museum' at Eton Wick. In 3 galleries are to be found vehicles of many countries from USA to Russia, Germany, France and of course the UK. It is a mixture of military and civilian cars, vans, lorries, even tanks. Plus motor bikes of all dimensions, bicycles of many types and uniforms, insignia, memorabilia, photographs, etc. Many items in the collection are of historical interest such as Gen MacArthur's Staff Car and original items from Colditz Castle. You may recognise some of the vehicles from TV or films such as 'Allo Allo' or 'The Battle of Britain' and 'Raiders of the Lost Ark'. You need hours to do it justice and still you will miss much of it. Then there is the 'Princess Diana Collection' and a visit to the NAAFI for a cuppa is a must. This was my third visit and will not be the last. Ideal to take family, visitors or friends especially on a damp day as its all under cover. We all loved it. Sorry but no trains!

Mike Hyde

photo: History on Wheels museum



Mike Walker

In the summer of 1910 the GWR opened its Bicester Cut-off which in conjunction with its Acton to Northolt "New Line" and the GW&GC Joint gave it a route short enough to enable it to compete on equal terms with the LNWR for the London to Birmingham traffic. A century later history repeats itself as Chiltern Railways embarks on its Evergreen 3 programme which will once again allow the route to compete more effectively with Virgin's service from Euston and also, as Chiltern describes it, create the first new rail route between London and a provincial city for over a century. The project, costing around a quarter of a billion pounds will be done in two phases between now and 2013 and is testimony to the advantages of a franchise long enough to encourage massive capital investment the benefits of which can be reaped by the instigator.

Phase 1: Building a 100mph railway

Whilst the previous Evergreen 1 and 2 projects have seen considerable improvement to the Chiltern line since the BR era including the introduction of 100mph running north of Princes Risborough, the line to the south is still largely limited to 70-75mph for multiple units and even slower for loco-hauled trains. It is this which Phase 1 of Evergreen 3 seeks to address.

To enable 100mph running to be the norm between Northolt Junction and Princes Risborough an extensive programme of track renewals and minor realignments of curves will be undertaken. In addition many signals will be re-sited or replaced, particularly in the Denham - West Ruislip area to improve sighting and allow for the additional braking distances required.

In addition there will be four major infrastructure projects to allow serious increases in speed and/or the elimination of severe local restrictions. At Bicester North, the speed on the up line through the station is currently 25mph irrespective of whether or not the train is stopping, and non-stop trains fitted with ATP have to maintain this restrictive speed for ½ mile until they reach the next signal. The limit is because of a sharp reverse curve into the up platform (which used to be on a loop) which cannot be avoided because of the position of the platform and an underbridge just to the north. As part of Evergreen 3 the up line will be straightened to return to the old up through alignment and the platform extended outwards in much the same way as was done at Gerrards Cross some years ago. This will allow non-stop trains to pass through at 100mph in either direction.

The three junctions on the route, Neasden South, Northolt and Aynho will also benefit from major alteration to increase the permissible speed.

At Neasden South the "main" route is currently that towards Harrow where the speed is currently 60 for passenger and 30 for freight whilst the line towards Northolt is the "branch" and currently restricted to 40 and 30 respectively. Here the junction will be reconfigured to make the Northolt line the "main" and the same speeds will apply in each direction. To do this the actual junction will be moved from its present location north of the North Circular Road Bridge south to a point opposite Neasden LU station. The Up Harrow will be relocated through an unused arch between the present alignment and the LU lines with the Down Harrow moving to the position of the present Up line. The Up Northolt will be in the position of the present Down and the Down Northolt will go through the adjacent arch presently occupied by the chord from Neasden (Midland) Junction which consequently will be realigned, as will Neasden



Princes Risborough benefited early from Chiltern's impressive investment programme. 168112 calls with an up train on 23rd May 2009.

photo: Mike Walker

South Sidings. The passenger line speed from here to Northolt will rise from 60 to 75 which will require relocation of the island platform at Sudbury & Harrow Road.

Northolt Junction will change completely. The present down line which burrows under the Acton & Northolt Line will become a loop line used only by trains calling at South Ruislip station. The present single line alignment of the Up line will be doubled so Down through trains will no longer use the underpass. The junction itself will be realigned to increase the through speed for passenger trains from 60 to 75.

West of South Ruislip station the present speed limit in both directions is 60 for freight, 70 for loco-hauled passenger and 75 for multiple units as far as Beaconsfield where the freight limit rises to 65 (Down) or 70 (Up) as far as High Wycombe. This will rise to 100mph throughout for all passenger trains and an incremental rise for freight. The present limit from the east end of High Wycombe through to The Pastures under bridge is 50 for all trains on the Down and 35/50 on the Up line. This will remain in deference to the extreme curvature in the area. Apparently Adrian Shooter enquired of Network Rail what would be required to run at a ton through the area to which the reply came "Buy High Wycombe town centre and demolish it". Some may think this a good idea!

Beyond here the current speed rises to 75 for MUs and 70 for loco-hauled, passenger and freight, in both directions although the descent into Princes Risborough is limited to 60 on the Down line with 65 being allowed for passenger trains though the station and junction area in both directions followed by 90 around the curve to the north after which the present 100mph applies almost continually to Aynho Junction. The speed on the High Wycombe to Princes Risborough section will be raised but possibly only to 90 and a lower limit will still apply approaching Princes Risborough due to the adverse falling gradient of 1 in 88.

At Aynho Junction the speed through the turnout off the Oxford line is presently 65 for passenger and 35 for freight. With 75 applying to passenger before and after the junction (90 for HSTs on the approach) this is because the Bicester line peels off the Oxford line against the latter's super-elevation and adds several minutes to journeys. To eliminate this, the junction will be moved some way north to make three tracks for a short distance. In the down direction, although some easement has recently occurred, loco-hauled trains are restricted to 40 mph from Aynho Park and only 25 crossing the bridge over the Oxford lines - MUs are allowed 60 - and all trains are restricted to 40 through the junction switch. This is because of the condition of the bridge and serious consideration is being given to its strengthening or replacement.

Work has started on Phase 1 and was due to be done by December this year but this has now been pushed back to Easter 2011 involving 35 weekend and two 9-day closures with a break over Christmas and New Year to allow FGW to run some trains this way during the Reading blockade. However, an accelerated timetable is due to take effect in December 2010.

Phase 2: The back way to Oxford.

The most ambitious part of the project will enable Chiltern to run trains from Marylebone direct to Oxford and will be constructed, subject to the passing of the required Transport & Works Order, during 2011-2013. The key features include:

Build a new connecting line, from a point on the Chiltern Railways line just north of the bridge over the Bicester ring road, to a point on the East-West route just east of Tubbs Lane crossing. The land required for this is already protected for railway use in the Cherwell Local Plan.

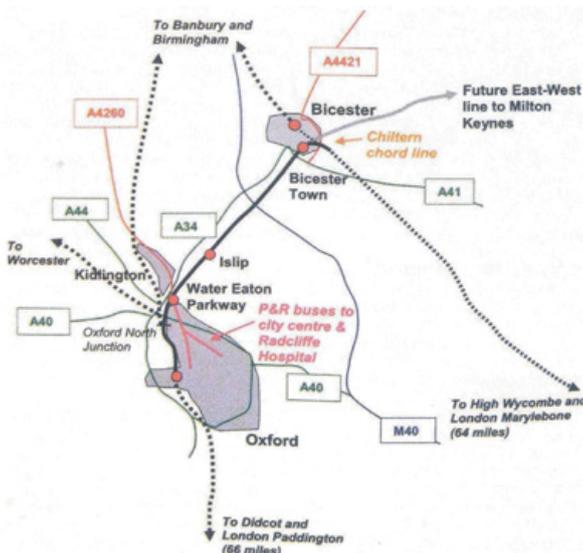
Upgrade the East-West rail route, from the junction with new line through Bicester Town and Islip to Oxford North Junction (near Wolvercote). The upgraded route will be mostly double track, thus reinstating the facility removed by British Rail. New signalling and safety systems will be provided to equip the line for 90-100mph operation, and level crossings replaced or upgraded according to their location. The Mill Stream and River Cherwell viaducts will be rebuilt. Most of the work will be within the existing railway boundary.

The sidings into the stone terminal at Banbury Road (Water Eaton) and into the Ministry of Defence depot at Bicester will be reconfigured to permit the reinstatement of double track.

A new independent line will be built between Oxford North Junction and Oxford station. This will use the trackbed of the old line that runs parallel to the existing main line, and is all within the existing railway boundary. At Oxford station the bridge over the Rewley Abbey Stream will be widened, and the former parcels depot rebuilt to give two additional platforms for passenger trains.

Bicester Town station will be rebuilt with two platforms, to allow reinstatement of double track. The platforms will be extended for 8-car long trains, and new station buildings constructed. Level access will be provided throughout, together with improved links to both the town centre and Bicester Village. Islip station will also be rebuilt with two 8-car long platforms, with level access throughout.

Finally, a new station will be built near the Water Eaton park and ride site, with direct bus links to Kidlington, north Oxford, the John Radcliffe hospital and the city centre. The station will have two 8-car platforms, with level access throughout and passenger facilities, including a ticket hall and coffee shop.



Oxford services will be worked by Class 168 units and this will replace the existing FGW service between Oxford and Bicester Town. To replace the 168s on the Birmingham trains Chiltern will be putting together a fleet of loco-hauled trains powered by Class 67s with DVTs like the W&S operation. In fact, by 2012 no fewer than sixteen Class 67 locos will be in a dedicated Chiltern/W&S fleet! Plans are also being considered to re-gear the Class 165's for 100mph operation.

THE PROPOSED TIMETABLES

Phase 1 of Evergreen 3 will start the process of revising the timetable; the iteration current in December adds two trains, making eight every hour. They will be short workings to Gerrards Cross and West Ruislip, half an hour apart, to provide the off-peak service for the stations Wembley Stadium to Denham Golf Club inclusive. They are needed to allow stops to be removed from the other services, partly to help reduce their journey times, but also to create capacity on the line. As a result, some connectivity worsens: passengers from all stations beyond Gerrards Cross will have to change there if they require Wembley Stadium. "Outbound" the connecting time at GX will be 17 minutes, "inbound" it will be 38 minutes.

The Birmingham services will remain half-hourly, with one non-stop to Banbury, the other non-stop to Wycombe, then next stop Haddenham. The stopping pattern north of Banbury will remain as now, including two-hourly calls at Hatton and Lapworth, apart from the train which calls at Wycombe, which will terminate at Moor Street. Therefore much of the improvement in journey time will be achieved by the faster line-speeds. The non-stop time Marylebone to Banbury will fall from 63 minutes to 52, and Wycombe to Moor Street will require 84 minutes rather than the current 105.

One of the Wycombe terminators is extended to Aylesbury, calling all stations from Wycombe; both will be non-stop to Gerrards Cross. The two Bicester trains will be non-standard; one will call only at Wycombe and Haddenham, the other (extended two-hourly to Stratford), will call all stations Gerrards Cross to Bicester except Saunderton.

Phase 2 sees a few more stops removed and the introduction of a ninth train in each hour, one of the two trains from Marylebone to Oxford. The other Oxford is provided by the diversion of one of the two Bicester North trains. Bicester will have two trains an hour to each of its stations, but only the Town station will have a "regular interval" timetable. Its service will be half-hourly, with two stops - Wycombe and Haddenham. North's two trains will be six minutes apart, non-stop at xx.30, and the xx.36 with six stops. As currently planned, trains will leave Marylebone for Bicester at 00, 30, 33 and 36 minutes past the hour.

One of the stops removed from the timetable will be that at Wycombe made by the Moor Street train. As a consequence, Wycombe will have only a two-hourly service beyond Bicester North, to Stratford, and no through trains to Birmingham for about 13 hours. Instead it will have two trains an hour to Oxford, calling at Haddenham, Bicester Town and Water Eaton Parkway. Islip will get a call "almost" hourly.

Chiltern's web site trumpets faster journey times from just about every station to London, but makes no mention of the impact of the proposed timetables in terms of the severe reduction in connectivity for places such as Wycombe. Now I wonder why, and whether Chiltern will remember that Handy Cross has access to and from the Birmingham direction.....?

John Sears

Travelling to Ireland in the 1940s and 50s

By Mike Page

It was in 2006 when some members visited Southern Ireland to follow the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's 'Earl of Desmond' rail tour from Dublin via Mallow and Killarney to Tralee and back. I was on the train. The run with former NCC 2-6-4T No. 4 was what one had come to expect from this sprightly tank engine. For me, the real surprise was the way old Great



Southern & Western J15 0-6-0 No. 186 galloped up the bank out of Killarney with five coaches. It was very, very different show from what I remembered of the Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE) in the late 1940s and early 1950s!

It's 1948. Our J15 has been turned on the turntable at Newcastle West. There's time yet, no need to hurry. But one imagined the crew were becoming a bit concerned about the climb up the Barnagh Bank - 1 in 50/70 over 4-5 miles to some 538 ft above sea level in the West Limerick Hills. The tender has a mixture of 'cobbles' and slack. Alright, there are only three bogies and a six-wheeler to pull, but making any steam could be another thing altogether! My mother and aunties - all from Abbeyfeale, County Limerick - had told me of the train often having to stop once, or twice, on the climb to make up steam. From Tralee through Listowel the climb was more gradual, but still a slog all the way. Which was why, perhaps, Tralee shed rostered the J15s rather than one of its ageing, Aspinall, 6ft 9in drivered D17 4-4-0s, for the Limerick job.

After WW2, the Tralee-Limerick line only had one train each way on weekdays. An AEC diesel railcar set took over some time in 1958, but the towns and villages were still emptying then, the young going off to England or the USA. Eventually the CIE withdrew the passenger service in 1963. Freight lingered on into 1975, after which, the line was lifted. But let's go back to happier, if more difficult times.

From earliest childhood memories of around 1945 through to 1955, my family made an annual holiday trip from Wolverhampton via Holyhead and Dun Laoghaire to Abbeyfeale. For me, it was pure 'magic': lots of steam engines, the 'voyage' across the Irish Sea and rides in 'strange' trains.

First, let's put 1940s travel into perspective. Up until the early 1950s, the former LMS and then London Midland Region, was plagued with run-down equipment, poor coal quality and consequent late running. The CIE had sometimes to 'make do' burning wood, turf or expensive oil in its fireboxes to offset crippling coal shortages. Sometimes trains simply did not run. To all intents and purposes, the British Railways Midland Region scene in the late 1940s was still pre-war, whilst the Irish railways offered a delightful 19th Century experience!

LMS trains as I remember them in the 1940s were dark, often externally dirty maroon coaches. Interiors often appeared to be clean, if occasionally steamy from the heating, but be careful not to pound the seats if you did not like dust! On the other side of the Irish Sea, the coaches - in their medium to dark green with broad pale green stripes and carrying the 'flying snail' CIE

emblem - always seemed to be clean: inside and out.

There were other things I noticed such as the galleries of heavy white LMS teacups left on the windowsills of the buffets at Crewe and Holyhead stations: their users having had left them in a hurry to get on a train or ship. There were still soldiers and kitbags about. Trains were often crowded (travelling in the

factories' 'holiday fortnight') and you sometimes had to spend the journey perched on a suitcase in the corridor.

There were the changes at Crewe in the 'small hours', surrounded by the intense hurried activity of porters and GPO staff pulling trollies full of mailbags, parcels, baskets and boxes. Some trollies had iron wheels, which would bang along flagstoned platforms. The staff and porters were all shouting instructions, acknowledgements or pulling their mates' legs as they loaded the heavy sacks and boxes into luggage vans.

There was always a 'Jinty' tank engine shunting vans about. A black 'Royal Scot' drifts by on a centre road. A GWR 'Hall' simmers at a bay's buffer stops, waiting to be freed of its mail and parcels coaches. I watch how the eerie pale illumination of gas lamps caused the minerals to sparkle in the coating of soot on neglected parcel vans. And always, there was the exciting smell of hot oil and coal smoke.

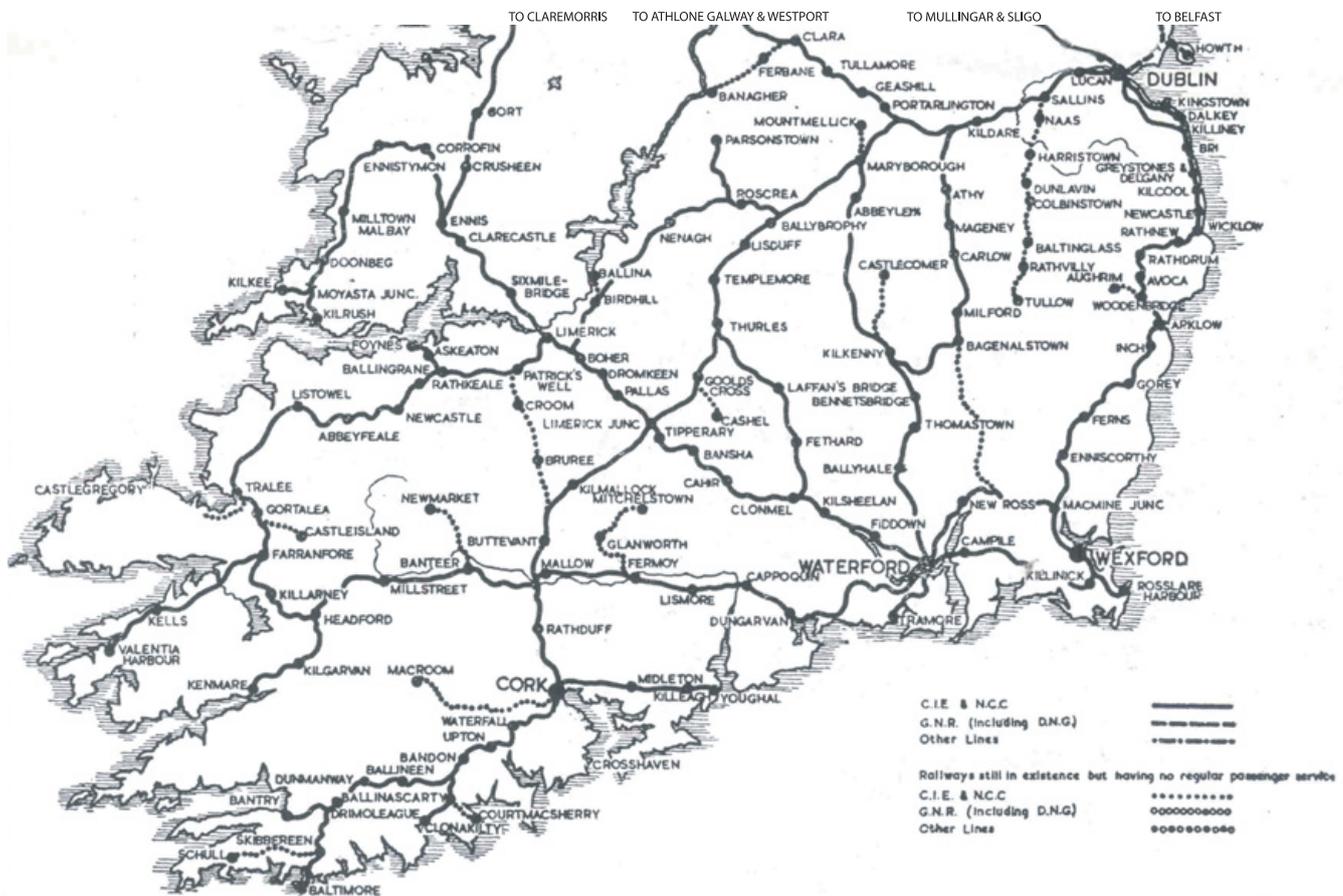
On Carlisle Pier, you could sit on the hard wooden, bench-like seats in the older, six-wheeler coaches included in the make-up of a boat train from Dun Laoghaire to Dublin. The seat backs were low, so the 'grown-ups' had to be careful not to collide with the people's heads sitting behind you. There would be a puddle of water, with its dead flies, rhythmically swashing about in the gaslights' large glass bowls above your head, watched anxiously by those below. And how the boat train seemed to crawl along, as if it had all the time in the world available to complete its 6-mile or so journey to Dublin Westland Row (now named Pearse).

On the western side of Westland Row's covered train shed, where the boat train terminated in a bay platform, our J15 0-6-0, a Cronin 4-4-2T or even a 2-4-2T looked at the line of horse-drawn hansom cabs - hansom cabs? Yes, because fuel shortages plagued Ireland in the 1940s, so hansom cabs soldiered on into the early 1950s in Dublin.

There would also be a handful of taxis, mostly big American Fords. The lucky ones who grabbed a taxi were the ones let off the train first - the porters locked all doors on the boat trains, not so much to keep us in as more to keep the locals out. The porters usually unlocked the coach doors from the front, working back along the train, which was why there was always

The J15 Class of the GS&WR were the most numerous in Ireland with 111 being built between 1866 and 1903 and were considerably larger than their Great Eastern namesakes. The preserved 186 is seen at Gorey whilst on a tip from Dublin to Waterford in May 2005.

photo: Mike Walker



a scramble to get off the ship first to get in the front of the train and so hopefully grab a taxi. Only occasionally the waggish porters at Westland Row would catch the hopeful taxis seekers out by unlocking the train from the back first! The furious expressions on the irate passengers' faces as you passed them trapped at the front would have stopped a horse!

We are in Bilston. It's a summer Friday, 1948, and the school clock seems to get slower and slower as the 'magic' evening approaches. Excitement had begun to build up ever since the sailing tickets had arrived a week before. Then a few days ago, an LMS railway van had collected some suitcases from our house on a council estate in Moxley, near Darlston. Normally we would catch the 10.43 pm from Wolverhampton High Level, due into Crewe at 11.34 pm. There, we would squeeze onto the 'Irish Mail', due in at 12.06 am, or a welcome relief train, if one was running.

In 1949, we broke the routine and went via Leamington Spa and Rugby, to meet up with relatives. By then, I was seven, and had been given an Ian Allan ABC, London Midland Region (winter 1948 edition) and had begun to take a more detailed interest in LMS locomotives.

As I had only Ian Allan's 'Kings and Castles of the GWR', I did not note the number of the 2-6-2T that took us, on a Friday lunchtime from Bilston Central to Birmingham Snow Hill, where a 'King Henry VIII' took us on to Leamington Spa General (to meet up with two of Mom's younger sisters). The father of the Dawkes family, where one of my aunts was living, worked at Leamington Spa Avenue station. He was there, along with one or two relatives, to see us off on the 8.17 pm to Rugby. Our engine, Webb 2-4-2T 6683, brought us to Rugby Midland at 8.49 pm. There, we had to wait for the 10.32 pm (Irish Mail) to Holyhead.

Rugby was very impressive and I was at last writing down my first LMS 'namers', like: 'Royal Scots Grey', 'Comet', 'Princess Elizabeth', 'Ocean' and 'City of Stoke on Trent'. I had noticed a big girder bridge at the south end of the station and had been

fascinated when a bright green engine galloped across it with a train of brown coaches. I begged for someone to take me to the end of the platforms to see these wonders. One of my aunties took me, and after a patient wait, another bright green engine clattered across with a train of those brown coaches - my only real memory of seeing the old LNER.

We eventually rejoined the others, as the light was now going. Then a very shiny, blue 'Coronation' - 'City of Lancaster' - arrived. On reflection, 46243 must have not long been out of the works - it was the last 'Coronation' to be streamlined. Our train eventually arrived, probably with one of Holyhead's rebuilt, and shiny black 'Royal Scots' - 46146 'The Rifle Brigade' - as it was the last number to be written down that evening. So we missed the scramble at Crewe. Only at around 2 am, as we slowed on the approach to Holyhead harbour, was I allowed to look out of an open window: "Look at the ships!" insisted my mother. Two enormous black bows, with white fairings, reflected in the harbour lights, seemed to tower above us, as we climbed out of the train to join the boarding queues.

Then came the bustling inside the Customs shed where all suitcases were opened and checked, then chalk-marked. We envied the few First Class passengers, who strolled along separately, while we joined a queue for the Third Class gangways.

The ship was packed. My mother was thankful we had not been asked to join the 'relief' ship. The old 'Princess Maud', moored behind our ship, the new 'Hibernia'. 'Princess Maud' was notorious for giving rough Irish Sea crossings. My mother and her sisters had found a corner on the boat deck for shelter, as the saloons and lower decks were all full. One wonders what today's Health and Safety officials would have thought of families spending three hours huddled together on an open boat deck, on a rainy night in the rough Irish Sea!

The arrival at the wooden Carlisle Pier head of Dun Laoghaire was around 6 am. The Irish customs officers were also opening and searching every suitcase and adding their chalk marks too. Once marked, we were allowed out onto the wooden platforms where two boat trains waited.



Typical of the antique locomotives and rolling stock to be found in Ireland until well into the 'fifties is this delightful GS&WR Class G2 2-4-0 no. 650 thought to be at Dublin Amiens Street (now Connolly) in the 1930's. It was built for the Midland & Great Western Railway around 1895.

photo: Bernard Edmonds [Tim Edmonds collection]

With the train wheels squealing and groaning musically, our diminutive tank engine - probably an F1 or F2 2-4-2T - drags a motley collection of six-wheelers and wooden bogie coaches, with their rooftops sporting a castellated array of all sizes of ventilators, around a sharp curve and over a level crossing, watched by some interested locals and squealed at by flocks of seagulls. We dive into a tight, curving tunnel with rocky walls. Almost immediately, we join the Bray-Dublin line in a grey, stone walled cutting. We whistle under a bridge, past the very clean and tidy Town station and then out into the open. Looking back over the sea wall, we can see our ship and all the small boats in the harbour. Now we are lazily accelerating to a comfortable 25 mph or so, paralleling the beautiful sandy beaches of Dublin Bay, to be seen stretching way around to Howth on the northern horizon.

The local trains seen passing us from our compartment's windows, going south to Bray, all seemed to be much faster than our train! But the seaside is leaving us and we are now running on a low embankment past smart suburban back gardens, then warehouses and then across a bridge over the Central Canal, which gives a brief view of ships. Then we grind our way over points into a bay platform at Westland Row at around 7.30 am. Windows are dropped down and heads appear, impatient for porters to unlock the doors. We leave our few suitcases at Westland Row to seek out an Irish breakfast of thick, lean, smoke bacon, meaty sausages and fried eggs and bread for under 1s (5p) a head! That would take about an hour. Then we take a cab or a tram to bring us to Kingsbridge (now Heuston) for the 9.30 am departure of the direct train to Limerick.

In 1949, I would have been restrained to stay with the family, to drink tea in the buffet, with its polished wooden counter, and cakes you could not have, displayed under glass covers.

By 1951, I was allowed out, alone, onto the platform to explore. This I did. Our train was already in a bay at the outer end of the station. It had no six-wheelers, except for a six-wheeled brake, sporting a very prominent guard's lookout. There were about five coaches, including a massive clerestory coach. No engine had appeared yet. The only action was from, for me, a real novelty, a diesel shunter, number 1001, shunting the large goods yard. One or two trains, probably freights or 'specials', went by in the near distance, avoiding Kingsbridge and taking the Phoenix Park line to Amiens Street (Connolly).

"It will never do it!" I gasped to myself, as a small, ancient-looking, high-wheeled 4-4-0, sporting a very tall, impressive dome, backed down towards our train. Now, on reflection, it was probably an Aspinall D14 or D19. It hardly looked capable of moving itself, let alone a train. After coupling up and perhaps mistaking my incredulity for interest the driver invited me onto the footplate. Suddenly that little 4-4-0 had become the most exciting engine in the world! It was my first ever time on a locomotive's footplate. How I would have loved to ride on it all the way to Limerick!

My mother caught up with me and I persuaded her that the clerestory coach was the one to ride in. Eventually our 4-4-0 made a slow start and seemed to be making heavy weather of getting the train on the move - I did not know then that it was a stiff climb up to Inchicore. We slowly puffed past that large depot, which had an imposing, green 4-6-0 towering above the kettles and long chimneys of the smaller fry. I had begun

taking Irish numbers in 1951, and it was 801 'Macha' that stood among the 4-4-0s and 0-6-0s that day. We then passed a long train of cattle wagons waiting to follow us behind a fat-boilered 2-6-0, the 369 I think it was.

We then made a surprisingly speedy progress as far as Ballybrophy, arriving at 11.30 am. There, the 4-4-0 deserted us and went onto a nearby turntable, before returning to what was the back end of our train. It was then, after grinding its way around a very sharp curving left-hand junction, that we seemed to leave the 20th Century far behind. We took a single track that sometimes seemed to pass almost through the middle of farmyards. We scattered hens, raised hissing geese, disturbed pigs and caused indignation of the horses waiting at crossing gates. Only the cows and immobile donkeys seemed unperturbed by our passage. Those donkey carts, with black-shawled old, and not-so-old ladies, who waited patiently at level crossings, looked as if they had not moved all day!

The train is stopping at all the stations, sometimes appearing among thatched or red-painted corrugated iron roofed cottages,

or near nowhere at all. The stations have well-tended gardens. It is the peaceful, timeless, greenery of central Ireland, with trains that had hardly changed much - apart from liveries - since 1900.

We reach Roscrea, where we cross with a J15 0-6-0 on a cattle train. As we enter the station, our 4-4-0's fireman does a classy, juggled exchange of token staffs with the signalman 'on the fly', before we halt. The signalman goes to his box; levers are pulled, and then he gives a staff to the J15's crew. The engine takes up the slack, the brown and white cows protest at the disturbance, and the J15 pulls away. The signal is clear for our train and we amble out, heading steadily towards a reasonably on-time arrival at Limerick at 1.20 pm.

TO BE CONTINUED.

In the concluding part next time, Mike continues his journey to Abbeyfeale and recalls the mysteries of Limerick Junction as he makes further visits to the Emerald Isle.

Class D14 no.60 arrives at Ballybrophy on the Dublin to Cork main line with an up train in 1939. Through Limerick trains had to reverse and make a complicated shunt here before continuing their journey.

photo: RPSI collection



CHRISTMAS QUIZ SOLUTIONS

- 1: The last 7' 0¼" gauge operation was on Holyhead breakwater in 1911.
- 2: If '0' was Middlesex and '6' Cornwall, Bucks was '1' as in 1001 - the GWR 'County class.
- 3: All were CME's in Ireland before moving to England, three at the GS&WR, Aspinall (1883-6), Ivatt (1886-96) and Maunsell (1911-3) whilst Robinson served the Waterford Limerick & Western 1888-1900.
- 4: Western Star is a Class 67, 67025, but the others were Class 52s, D1022, D1038, D1006 and D1056.
- 5: Box is missing, they are the first tunnels encountered on each GWR route from Paddington.
- 6: Bourne End was originally known as Marlow Road.
- 7: Channelsea North Jct to Stratford Low Level 9th April. The Oldham Loop 3rd October.
- 8: Kylchap.
- 9: Ark Royal was one of the NBL-built A1A-A1A examples, D602. The others were the B-B series of which Vanguard was built at Swindon, the others by NBL.
- 10: Saunderton's first station was burnt down by militant suffragettes in 1913.
- 11: Charles Bernard Collett.
- 12: All were built by North British. 7760 24048/31; SR 777 23223/25; WD '90775' 25438/43 and LNER: 1306 26207/48.

THE WEST LONDON PUZZLE

Mike Walker unravels some complex tracks.

Whilst learning the road ready for the upcoming diversions in connection with Evergreen 3, some of the Wrexham & Shropshire drivers seemed to have trouble understanding the complex system in west London, particularly the Wembley-Willesden-Old Oak triangle, so I was asked to provide a geographic map in addition to the usual schematic diagrams.

In preparing the map I was struck by the fact that none of the various atlases generally used by the railfan get the layout and nomenclature right. This is partly due to changes of both layout and names over the years and misunderstandings the biggest of which appears to be where Willesden Junction is?!

So, presented here is an adaptation of the resulting map with additional historical data added and the correct line and junction names as recognised today by Network Rail and train operators.

The first line through the area was the London & Birmingham from Euston in 1837 followed a year later by the Great Western from Paddington. It should be remembered that initially the latter was to run to Euston which would have probably required a routing approximating to the Poplar Lines and then cutting across what became Old Oak Common to meet the L&B.

The first junction in the area came with the opening of the West London Railway in 1844. This left the L&B 5m 23c from Euston at what became, and is still called today West London Junction. It went south to Kensington and initially tunnelled under the Grand Union Canal then crossed the GWR on flat crossing. Whilst there was no passenger station at West London Junction on the L&B, passengers used "Willesden" opened in 1842 around 3/4 mile north, there was an interchange station at the GW Crossing but the only "junction" was by way of turntables. Confusingly this was also called West London Junction! It became a GW and LNW joint property in 1854.

The next entrant was the North & South West Junction which in 1853 opened a line from West London Junction on the LNW (which had replaced the L&B in 1846) south west to Kew on the LSWR. This crossed the GW by a bridge, as it does today. Passenger services were provided by the North London Railway which ran over the LNW from Camden Junction in Chalk Farm.

In 1860 the Hampstead Junction Railway opened and had a profound effect on the Willesden area. Leaving the NLR at Camden Road it ran north of and parallel to the LNW through Hampstead to join the LNW at a point just south of that company's Willesden station, what is today called Harlesden Junction.

Opposite West London Junction, the HJ spawned two branches to the south both of which bridged the LNW. The westernmost met the N&SWJ at what became Old Oak Junction whilst the other curved sharply to join the WLR at Mitre Bridge Junction. At the same time the WLR was realigned to cross both the canal and GWR by bridges, slightly west of the original flat crossing which was abandoned and the lines north of Mitre



Southern's 377213 on an East Croydon to Milton Keynes working has just left the West London Line and is threading its way through West London Junction below Willesden Junction High Level station and is about to take the Down Willesden Relief Line towards Wembley. The diverging rails of the points under the front of the unit lead to the South West Lines to Acton Wells. On the extreme left of the picture are the WCML fast lines and in the right background Mayer Parry's scrapyards.

photo: Mike Walker

Bridge Junction passed to the LNW whilst in 1863 the GW opened an improved connection from what was still called West London Junction (about 5c west of the crossing and later controlled by Old Oak Common East SB at the same spot) to North Pole Junction.

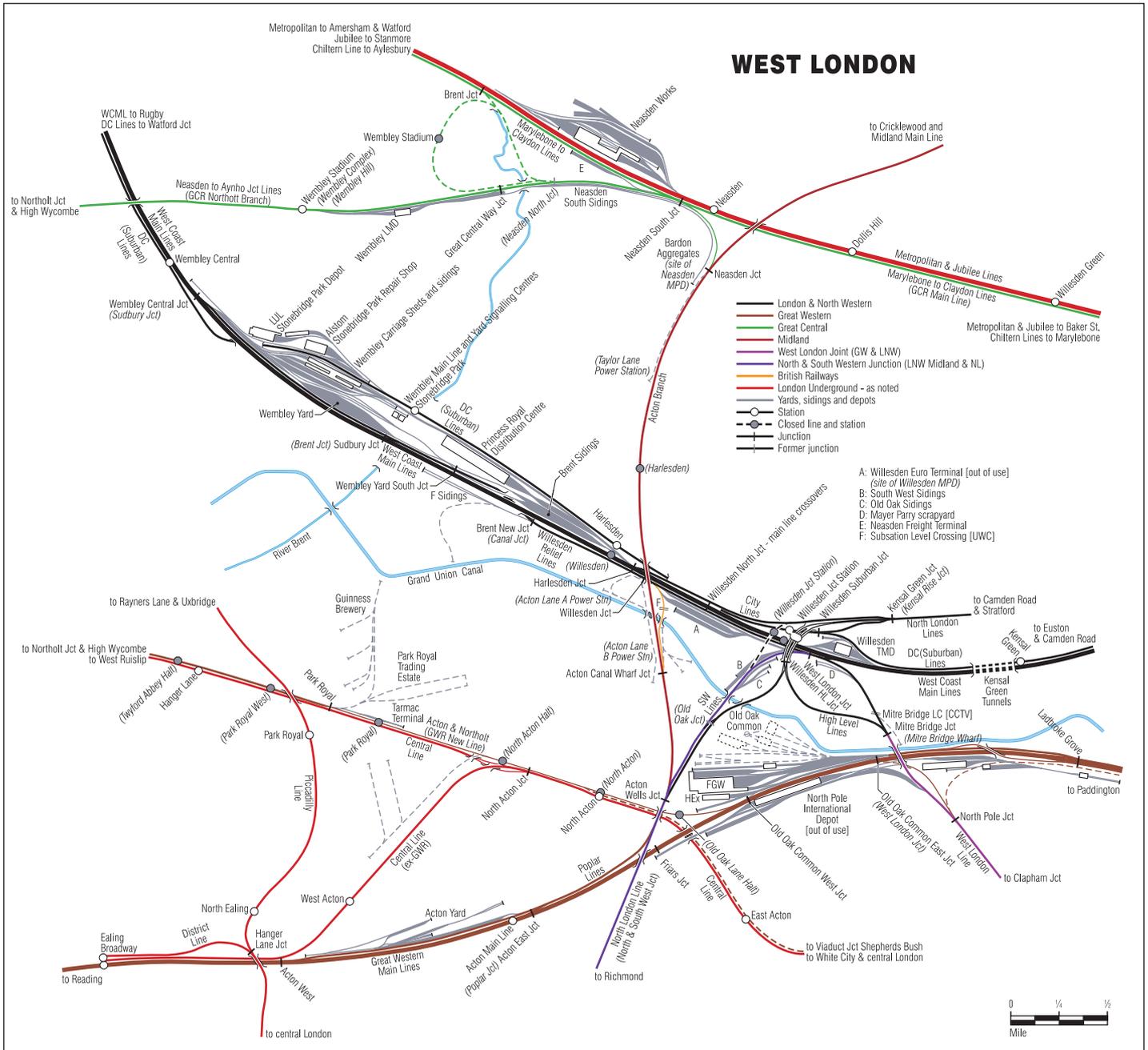
As with the N&SWJ, the HJ contracted with the NLR to run its passenger services continuing so to do after the LNW took it over in 1867. It is important to note there was no passenger station at West London Junction at this time

That came in 1866 when Willesden Junction opened. This was actually three separate, interconnected stations on two levels. The low level platforms served the LNW main lines and were between two high level stations at each end serving the two branches of the HJ. Upon the opening of Willesden Junction the old LNW Willesden station was closed.

The Midland Railway entered the scene in 1868 when it opened a branch from Cricklewood south, crossing over the LNW just south of the former Willesden station and connecting with the N&SWJ at Acton Wells, just north of the GW main line. This never carried a passenger service but was a busy freight line. In 1871 the LNW, Midland and NL jointly took control of the N&SWJ with the NL continuing to run the passenger service.

In 1877 the GW opened a short branch from Acton to Acton Wells and in 1885 the LNW opened a short spur from Old Oak Junction to the WL High Level platforms at Willesden Junction allowing the closure and removal of the western station and lines.

This concluded construction for the 19th century although the remaining years saw the development of the extensive yards of the LNW and GW in the area.



The dawn of the 20th century saw the opening of the GW's "New Line" from Old Oak Common West Junction to Greenford and eventually Northolt where it met the GC.

In 1912 the LNW opened its electrified "Suburban" or "New" lines from Camden Junction to Watford Junction. These ran alongside the main lines almost to Willesden Junction where they veered slightly to the north. A fourth section of the station was added and was known as the "New" station although since the main line platforms closed in 1962 it has been known simply as Low Level. From here the electric lines swung around the rear of the yards at Stonebridge Park before diving under the main lines to reach Wembley Central, continuing to Watford on the south side of the main lines.

Around the same time, two additional running lines, designated the Willesden Relief Lines, were laid along the south side of the main line starting at West London Junction. Near the 6½ milepost they dive under the main lines and continue on the north side to Wembley Central with an additional connection at Sudbury Junction.

The GW opened the Ealing & Shepherd's Bush in 1917 which was operated by the Central London. After the Central was extended to Ruislip after World War II, two additional lines were laid alongside south of North Acton for freight until 1964.

The final new construction was undertaken by BR sometime in the late 1960s and consisted of the 35 chain link from Acton Canal Wharf down to join the Willesden Relief Lines underneath the Midland overbridge. It is this connection is known today as Willesden Junction, 6m 00c from Euston.

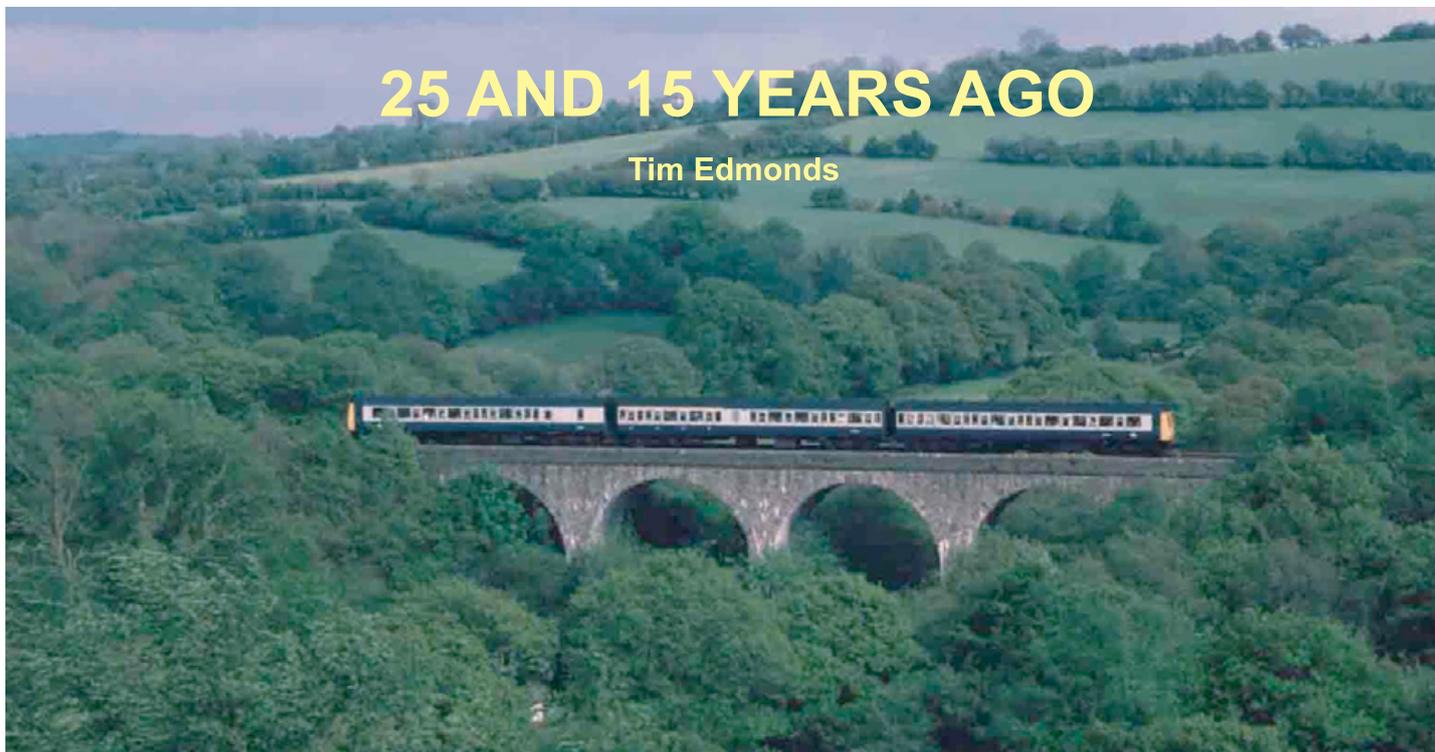
Much of the confusion in these parts stems therefore from Willesden Junction *station* and the fact that the LNW had no less than nine signal boxes called Willesden No.1 etc between West London Junction and the Relief Lines underpass.

Today the complex starts with a series of crossovers from the four main lines to West London Junction and the Relief Lines. Trains from the WL can access the Down Fast at WLJ and in the opposite direction from the Up Fast. A further set of crossovers at 5m 52c opposite the Euro Terminal (formerly 1A) called Willesden North Junction allow DF-DS and US-UF moves. At Harlesden Junction, the City Lines can only be accessed from the Slow Lines and as mentioned the Acton Canal Wharf branch is only connected to the Relief lines with a connection to the DF. Finally, it should be noted that there is no connection to the DC Lines except the Kensal Green Junction to Willesden Suburban Junction link.

Hopefully the map will explain the rest of the area's rich heritage.

25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



The 17.15 "Moorslink" service from Okehampton to Exmouth crossing Fatherford viaduct on 25th May 1985. Such a view is not possible today - it is obscured by the dual carriageways of the A30 Okehampton by-pass.

all photos: Tim Edmonds unless stated

25 YEARS AGO

Lord Beeching, better known as Dr Richard Beeching, died on 23rd March at the age of 71. He succeeded Sir Brian Robertson as Chairman of the British Transport Commission in 1961, becoming Chairman of the new British Railways Board the following year. Although he was responsible for some important innovations in modernising the railways, he will forever be associated with the closure of around 2000 route miles of railway and over 700 passenger and 900 goods stations.

As part of the GW150 celebrations, the Duke of Wellington named the Science Museum's replica of the GWR broad gauge 4-2-2 *Iron Duke* on 3rd April. The ceremony took place in Kensington Gardens, beside the Albert Memorial, where a short demonstration line of broad gauge baulk road had been laid by the Civil Engineering Department of BR(WR). The loco and one replica six-wheeled coach then gave public rides over the Easter holiday until 9th April.

The build-up to the GW150 events was clouded by announcement of the news of the planned closure of Swindon Works by March 1986. The impact was immediate, with staff voting to boycott the centrepiece exhibition that was to have taken place at Swindon Works throughout August. This forced its cancellation in June.

Metropolitan Railway 0-4-4T No 1 was steamed for the first time in more than 20 years and made its public debut at Quainton Railway Centre over the May 5th/6th holiday weekend.

Backed by West Devon Borough Council, a passenger service over the Crediton - Okehampton line was run on 25th May using a three-car DMU. Billed as "Moorslink", two round trips were run from Exmouth on this and three summer Saturdays - 27th July, 10th and 24th August. Regular passenger trains over this truncated section of the former L&SWR main line had been withdrawn on 5th June 1972

The replica of broad gauge Iron Duke running on a demonstration track opposite the Royal Albert Hall in Kensington Gardens on 8th April 1985.



Metropolitan Railway 0-4-4T No 1 (L44) awaits duty outside the shed at Quainton Road on 5th May, when it made its public debut in steam for the first time in over 20 years.





On its epic trip from Manchester to St Pancras via Derby, 44767 George Stephenson approaches Market Harborough with 'The Palatine' on 25th March 1995.

15 YEARS AGO

On 3rd March LNER B12 4-6-0 8572 was formally recommissioned into traffic after 32 years by former shedmaster Dick Hardy. The green-liveried loco made its debut in public traffic on the North Norfolk Railway on 4th March - alas it failed the next day with a smokebox steam leak which was, fortunately, quickly repaired. On 20th April Dick Hardy was the speaker at the MDRS meeting, when his subject was "Stewarts Lane".

On 24th March the first steam-hauled commuter train for 28 years was run into Waterloo - and with Pacific power. 35028 *Clan Line* worked the 06.50 from Woking and an evening return from Waterloo at 19.09 in an event arranged by Woking Borough Council as part of its centenary celebrations.

Elsewhere, the main line steam programme got off to a promising start with a new operator, Days Out, running two specials using Black Five 44767 *George Stephenson*, the second of which brought steam back to St Pancras with a train it worked through from Stockport via Derby. Alas, things did not go so well for 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* on 8th April, when its return to the main line after three years resulted in numerous lineside fires on its route from Stockport to Newcastle via Stoke and Derby. On the same day a Waterman Railways special using 70000 *Britannia* and class 4 75014 caused a fire at Patchway which damaged signalling cables. These incidents resulted in the complete cancellation of the Easter steam programme and several more trains in the spring, with the consequence that bookings for the rest of the year were greatly reduced.

In contrast to the problems on the main line, the LUL "Steam on the Met" event on 20th and 21st May was an outstanding success, with standing room only on some trains. The highlight was on the Sunday, when BR class 4s 75014 and 80079 ran parallel on the four-track section out from Harrow-on-the-Hill with trains for Watford and Amersham respectively.

On the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, services throughout May were operated by GWR 0-4-2T 1466 from Didcot. These were the first steam-hauled passenger trains on the former Watlington branch for 33 years.



35028 Clan Line storms through Weybridge with the 06.50 Woking to Waterloo on 24th March 1995 [Above] whilst 1466 simmered at Chinnor on 25th May 1995 [Below].

two photos: Mike Walker



As part of the trimming of loss-making services in the lead up to privatisation, InterCity withdrew the last remaining Motorail trains at the end of the winter timetable on 28th May. Latterly the services were operated by attaching car-carrying modified GUV vans in InterCity livery to normal day or sleeper trains.

DAVE THEOBALD 1947-2010

It is with great sadness we have to report the passing of one of the Society's most ebullient and enthusiastic members, Dave Theobald on January 21st. He was on a rail trip in Eritrea and whilst linesiding it seems he complained of feeling unwell and had returned to the hotel. He was later taken to hospital where he suffered a massive heart attack but could not be revived. He was only 62.

Despite living in St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, Dave had been a regular feature at our meetings and outings for many years, seldom missing a fixture unless he was out of the country which was a fairly common event. He had been introduced to us through his friendship with Pete Greatorex and your editor and for many years attended as a visitor before being persuaded to become a full member some years ago. He was a regular contributor to the *Marlow Donkey*, both with articles and pictures.

For your editor, the news was a great shock as Dave was not only a fellow member but also a good personal friend for more than a quarter of a century. Over the years we've enjoyed countless day trips and longer visits both in the UK and in Europe and North America, but this was small fry compared to Dave's wanderings which took him to the four corners of the earth in search of steam and railways in general. He was the perfect travelling companion, always on the move but totally laid-back and could be relied upon to keep calm when things went wrong (as they invariably did), quickly coming up with an alternative plan. He was also always great for a chat; if I was feeling down, I'd always give Dave a call and after a few minutes banter all problems would melt away. He was one of those folk it was impossible not to like, always jovial, he never had an ill-word to say of anyone and I can't recall him ever getting annoyed. He was also a terrific organiser. Pete Greatorex, who had known him for much longer, was devastated by the news as was Gordon Rippington.

Whilst steam was Dave's first love, he was interested in anything that runs on rails but a vociferous opponent of the St. Ives (mis-)Guided Busway project. As an engineer, he would take a close interest in all technical aspects of the industry but was



just as happy to simply ride a train for pleasure (as above on our December Wrexham trip with trademark glass of red wine held aloft) or being at the lineside with his camera. Over the years he'd amassed a collection of thousands of slides and had only recently completed the mammoth task of making digital versions of them all, becoming skilled in the mysteries of Photoshop to restore or enhance them. In addition to the MDRS, he was a member of many other groups including the Cambridge Railway Circle and Continental Railway Circle, being a leading member of the management committee of the former.

After an early career in aeronautical engineering with Marshall's of Cambridge, Dave and partner Ben Taylor set up their own company, Theoben Engineering, to manufacture air-rifles. Dave was a perfectionist in everything he did so it comes as no surprise that their products became the Rolls Royce of their field being sold worldwide (more excuses for gricing trips!) and used in the highest level of competition. They sold the business in 2003, although Dave retained ownership of the buildings which are on the site of Somersham station, now at Fawley. After this Dave's travels became even more frequent.

Away from railways, Dave had a passion for fast motorbikes and cars, owning many over the years and getting into various scrapes with the law as a result. Peter Greatorex recalls his ownership of a Sunbeam 'Rapier' with overdrive gearbox in the seventies. On one occasion in those carefree days before speed cameras they were headed for York but were going so

fast they completely missed the city. It was only when they got to the Northallerton exit of the A1 they realised something was amiss! On another occasion when pulled over; Dave admitted to the cop that normally he'd be going even faster but he was running-in.

His passing is, of course, devastating for his second wife Barbara and their family to who we extend our deepest sympathy. In Barbara, Dave found the perfect soul-mate. She is one in a million, they were devoted to each other and whilst Barbara doesn't entirely share Dave's obsession she not only tolerated but actually encouraged it - even giving her blessing to him going off on a rail trip over Christmas on a number of occasions and could often be found accompanying him on a train trip if the destination appealed, or occasionally at the lineside. At home, she also tolerated Dave's total lack of "domestication" (he claimed that as a child his mother had told him men should not go into kitchens as there were too many dangerous objects within) and both had a rude awakening a couple of years back when Barbara was laid up for many weeks with a badly broken ankle forcing Dave into parts of his house he'd seldom explored. They would have celebrated their silver wedding later this year.

The only "good" thing about his passing is that he did so doing what he loved. If you'd have asked him I'm sure this is how he would have wanted it, just not quite so soon. He once confided that his great horror was the thought of ending up like our mutual close friend Mike Norris who spent four years trapped inside a useless body following a stroke. He joins a sadly growing list of members who have left us for the great engine shed in the sky.

Several hundred mourners, including ten society members, packed the Cambridge crematorium for his funeral on February 22nd and heard excellent memorials from his long-time friends Mike Page, Don Woodworth and Brent Hudson plus a moving poem written and read by Dave's niece Gill Durrant (see below). As the curtains were drawn, Dave set off on his last journey to the sound of a hard-working departing steam locomotive.

He was irrepressible and irreplaceable and will be greatly missed by all of us.

Mike Walker

Early Morning Train by Gill Durrant

HUSH.....it's freezing -25
The air is still. The silence complete,
but the inner sound of heartbeat.
Hush.....The darkness is challenged.
A glow which grows and shards of light
splinter out,
Sunrise floods the sky about.

Hush.....A distant rumble travels the line.
There through the dimness in the gentle
amber frame
Its clouds enfold the billowing steam train.
The dark engine looms strong and imposing,
Pale riders' faces peer at the frozen
landscape,
While its rhythmic motion the ground

Hissing and clunking, whistling and chugging,
Firebox blasting, pistons driving, advancing fast.
Hard metal flowing on the tracks at last.
Suddenly the sun's peachy glow illuminates the
puffing vapours light.
Press the shutter and capture forever,
This mystical, magical sight.