

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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September 2010



Contents:

Centenary Express

Return to Fifield

The GWR Toad

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: Haddenham 9600 with returning 'Chiltern Centurion' at foot crossing near Kingsey, 3 July 2010.
Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 5).*

*Bottom: Bledlow 9600 passing cricket ground with 'Chiltern Centurion', 3 July 2010.
Photo: Tim Edmonds (Article page 5).*

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.45 for 8.00pm.

- Thursday 16 September **THE ALAN MORRIS COLLECTION** Julian Heard
Julian presents a selection of photographic images from the collection our late member Alan Morris, taken by both himself and others.
- Thursday 21 October **FROM MY FATHER'S COLLECTION** David Cross
David has been delving into the treasures of the photos taken by his late father, Derek Cross, and will be sharing a selection of top-class pictures with us.
- Thursday 18 November **RAILWAYS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND** Ray Schofield
Ray who is a traveller and accomplished photographer will share his experiences 'down under'.
- Thursday 16 December **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**
Advanced bookings only-for members and their families/friends. See page 3.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Saturday 18 September **STATFOLD BARN RAILWAY** by car
See page 3 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

As I write this we have just had our visit to David Buck's railway. With two locos in steam, plus his antique diesel and more track than before, those who attended had a splendid evening, though it brought home to me the shortcomings of digital still photography. Even at 1600ASA my camera just could not sustain a high enough shutter speed to produce any sharp results of moving trains and they didn't move that fast anyway. Nothing seemed too much trouble for David and we are very lucky to have such an enthusiastic engine owner on our doorstep. I should say another because we must not forget our President, who also falls into the same category of course.

Looking at his part-restored Finnish Pacific I was reminded of our last visit there when Kim Malyon was present and upon whom David had been so dependent for the engineering work on all his locos. Poor Kim, who had worked on an amazing variety of restored engines over a very long period of time, died earlier this year and joins an ever growing list of well known names who are no longer with us. Every time I pick up a magazine, be it railway, traction engine, heritage bus or other preservation topic, British or foreign, there seems to be an increasing number of obituaries of the great and the good and with their passing goes so much experience of the past. Thank goodness people like Pete Waterman and Ian Riley are encouraging young people to take apprenticeships in the old steam crafts to ensure there will be some of these skills left in the future.

I don't seem to have done much railway stuff this year and I don't know why. The early summer was blessed with good weather but I failed to take my own advice and get out there to see it. There were a few main line steam specials. I only remembered the returning "Cornish Riviera" on 28 June whilst at the office, so I went to Taplow station, sans camera, after work and was stunned by the noise and spectacle of the GWR Castle and King duo. How I wish I had had the video! I was also very disappointed to have missed that elusive working of *Scots Guardsman* and support coaches through Wycombe on www.mdrs.org.uk

10 July. I last saw this loco work in about 1979, when it was in black livery, and would dearly like to see it again. Fortunately there is still time to catch up with some steam action later in the year, including our own Statfold Barn Railway visit.

With three meetings under our belt at Bourne End Community Centre and having sorted the ventilation somewhat, as well as improving the screen location so those at the back can see better, I think we now have a really excellent venue and hope you all agree. I have spoken with the steward in the bar and he seems quite agreeable to taking orders for interval drinks before the meeting starts, just like in the theatre. Some of you may wish to make use of this service, though so far I haven't experienced too much queuing anyway. I truly believe having a bar available and dispensing with the sheer aggravation of the tea and coffee rota is a major benefit, allowing much more socialising during the interval and after the meeting has finished.

In committee we have been discussing subscriptions and although the Society is far from being broke it is generally felt that a modest increase in subs for 2011 is sensible because increasing prices, especially for fuel, are likely to have an effect on the level of speaker expenses, especially as we are trying to maintain a high standard. Consequently the full membership fee will go up by £2 to £16, which I feel is still good value for 11 meetings a year and four copies of the "Donkey" (whether electronic or paper). For those who can come only infrequently, the subscription will remain at £8 with a £2 entry charge for each meeting attended. Visitors will pay £3 per meeting except our friends from the Maidenhead RCTS group who have a £2 "reciprocal" fee.

I do hope this slight increase won't frighten any of you away and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting or out on the lineside somewhere. My best wishes to you all.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

For our June meeting we welcomed back Andy Savage, who having now retired from the RAIB, brought us up to speed on progress with the rebuilding of the Welsh Highland Railway with which he is heavily involved. He was therefore able to give us an in depth look at the project and the challenges it has faced including explaining the full story regarding the entry into Porthmadog.

It was also an unexpected pleasure to be able to welcome our President, Sir William McAlpine in the audience.

Mike Walker concluded his two-part Beginners' Guide to Signalling in July with a look at modern signalling systems and associated equipment. Hopefully members found it informative - one, with industry connections admitted to learning something.

As usual, there was no August meeting but David Buck kindly invited us to revisit his private railway near Windsor and a full report appears on pages 7 and 8 of this issue.

STATFOLD BARN VISIT

A reminder that our visit to the Statfold Barn Railway open day is on Saturday 18th September. Unfortunately it is now too late to book if you haven't done so and the intention is to minimise the number of cars by sharing. This will be finalised at the September meeting but if you are going but can't attend the meeting and wish to provide or require transport please contact Tim Speechley on 01494 638090.

THE NEW VENUE

We have now had three meetings at the Bourne End Community Centre and it's fair to say that it's generally proving to be a popular choice. The room is just about the right size and having the bar next door with real ale on tap at reasonable prices is a bonus. The only unexpected downside is the parking as it appears our meeting dates clash with meetings at St. Dunstan's Church next door, but if you arrive in good time there's usually space.

If you have any difficulty in getting to Bourne End and would like help with transport please contact Malcolm Margetts on 01628 486433 and we'll endeavour to assist.

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

This is still in the planning stage but it is expected to be broadly along the lines of previous years. Once details are finalised they will be announced at the meetings and in the e-newsletter. Further details will be available from Mike Hyde.

END OF AN ERA

Tim Edmonds has advised your Editor that he will be bringing his 25 & 15 Years Ago series to a close in the December issue. This popular series, it won the Norman Aston-Smith award in 2007, has been running for ten years and that's the problem; the 15 year entries have caught up the 25 year entries!

The problem is how to fill the space. Any suggestions?

RCTS MAIDENHEAD

After a summer break, our friends at the RCTS recommence their monthly meeting programme in September and an interesting programme is on offer as follows:

Monday 27th September

Out and About - Hugh Gould RCTS President.

Monday 25th October

American Railroads in the Sixties - Roger Greatrex

Monday 22nd November

Railways of the Isle of Man - Geoff Brockett

Monday 20th December

Chiltern, a Railway Success Story - Adrian Shooter

There are further interesting bookings for 2011 including an evening with retired BR executive Chris Green.

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead, SL6 3AX commencing at 19:30. MDRS members are encouraged to attend and are assured a warm welcome.

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS

We had some production problems with the last issue of the *Marlow Donkey* with the result that a gremlin crept in during the creation of the PDF files. For reasons which aren't fully understood some of the text vanished!

For the record, the missing items are as follows:

Page 17, the final paragraph should have read:

And finally... speaking on the subject "Over bridges and viaducts" at the Marlow & District Railway Society's June meeting was one Tim Edmonds (then resident in Leicestershire) while the following month a certain Tim Speechley presented a talk on "Scottish industrials".

Page 19, the caption to the upper photo should have been:

On Saturday 17th April First Great Western and Vintage Trains joined forces to operate a high-speed non-stop steam-hauled special from London to Bristol and back as part of the Great Western 175 celebrations. Hauled by Castle-class 4-6-0 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* the down train was caught crossing Brunel's beautiful bridge at Maidenhead, a shot not usually possible as such trains are normally on the Relief Line. Later in the morning, and still under a cloudless sky, the train stormed out of Box Tunnel, by now running around ten minutes early and arrival at Temple Meads was fourteen minutes early. Network Rail have recently cleared vegetation from around Box but not, unfortunately, on the south side.

We also appear to have lost the photo credits for the *Dampfspektakel* article. They were:

Page 7, top, Chris Waite; bottom, Mark Hopwood.

Page 8, all Chris Waite.

Page 9, top and centre left, Mark Hopwood; centre right and bottom, Chris Waite.

Page 10, bottom right, Chris Waite; others Mark Hopwood.

The Editor sends apologies to all of you and we hope to do better with this issue.

CHILTERN STOCK ADDITIONS

Chiltern Railways are once again expanding their fleet. The shunter fleet has doubled in size to two. The new arrival is a second Ruston Hornsby type LSSH 0-6-0DH, identical to 01509 *Lesley*. It was built in June 1961, works no. 459518, for the MoD and served as Army AD423 *Cromwell*, later 8217, allocated to Bramley CAD in Hampshire. It was sold into preservation in 2003 and initially based at the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway before moving to the GCR(N) in 2005 where it was renamed *Churchill*. Purchased by Chiltern and overhauled, it was delivered by road to the former freight terminal at Neasden on 9th July from where was moved to the Wembley LMD by 67010. It wears fresh Chiltern blue but is currently unnumbered or named and will be used as a shunter at Wembley for moving the increasing fleet of loco-hauled equipment about the depot. *Lesley* is used for the same purpose at Aylesbury.

Some members have asked why Chiltern have not simply used some of the many surplus Class 08 shunters. The reason is that the floor structure of Aylesbury depot will not take the weight of a 08 and it makes sense to have both shunters of the same type.

A second Class 121 "Bubble Car" is due to arrive in late September. 121034 is currently being overhauled to the same standard as 121020 and will operate on the Aylesbury - Princes Risborough shuttle as a spare for the latter and permit welcome extra capacity on the shuttles to Quainton Road where the two will be able to run in multiple if required. It too had previously been in preservation, based at Tyseley.

The four Class 172s are still awaited with no certain date for delivery being given by Bombardier. The delay is due to the need to redesign the exhaust systems which create a back-pressure preventing the engines from developing full power and the units achieving more than about 45mph!

Meanwhile DB Regio is busy purchasing Mk3 stock many of which will form Chiltern's new loco-hauled sets for the Birmingham trains. So far the fleet consists of 15 DVTs, 8 RFMs, 10 FOs, 1 TSO and even 4 sleeping cars! The fleet is expected to eventually reach 64 vehicles, not including the operational WSMR fleet.

With space at a premium at Chiltern's Aylesbury and Wembley depots, the company is now storing stock at both Bletchley and Willesden TMDs whilst they await the call to works for refurbishment.

EVERGREEN 3 AND MAINLINE DELAYS

Chiltern's two big infrastructure projects are both facing delays. Evergreen 3, the 100mph upgrade of the Joint Line was to have been completed by December 2010 but this has slipped to May and possibly even December 2011. This is due mostly to the collapse of Jarvis who had been appointed main contractor and the time taken to appoint a replacement before the major works could begin.

Chiltern Mainline, the upgrading of the Oxford - Bicester line and new chord at Bicester, has also slipped following objections from residents in the Islip area which means the project is now subject to a public enquiry which is to be held in November. Assuming this finds in Chiltern's favour it is expected to delay the project's completion by a year to May 2014. Neither is endangered by spending cutbacks.

www.mdrs.org.uk

READING BLOCKADE

Network Rail are well advanced with preparations for the major works at Reading which will see the station area closed or partly closed to all traffic for a period of ten days over Christmas and New Year. This is principally to allow the change over of the signalling control from Reading PSB to the new Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot which will permit the demolition of the former early next year - an essential step in the rebuilding of the station as it stands on the approach to the new platforms. Other work will also be done including the installation of a new north span for the Vastern Road underbridge at the east end of the station, needed to carry the lines into the new platforms.

Whilst this blockade is in effect special timetables will be in operation with services terminating at Maidenhead, Twyford, Wokingham, Didcot and Newbury whilst some HSTs will be diverted via Banbury and the Chiltern Line - thought to be the first time HSTs have worked regularly over the route.

Full details in the next issue.

TESTING AGAIN

For the second time this year, Network Rail's Track Assessment train 950001 ran over the Marlow Branch in the very early hours of Thursday 12th August. Not surprisingly, there appear to be no photographs of the visit!

DROUGHT OF STEAM

After a busy period during the summer with several steam specials on the GWML only one is currently booked for the autumn. On Saturday 11th September 60019 *Bittern* is booked to haul the Railway Touring Co.'s 'Mayflower' from Paddington to Plymouth and return with 5029 *Nunney Castle* assisting west of Taunton.

Planned runs of 'The Bristolian' from Bristol to Paddington and return behind 6024 on 2nd October and 12th December have both been cancelled.

The situation could change of course and updates will be given in our e-newsletter as available.

With all the work going on along the Chiltern line it is understandable that no specials will be going that way. Only one, 6024 on 10th July, was booked this year but on the same day 46115 *Scots Guardsman* made an unannounced visit on its way from Southall to Carnforth and is seen passing Princes Risborough.



photo: Geoff Plumb

LOCAL NEWS EXTRA...

CENTENARY EXPRESS



Mike Walker



Inset: Tim Edmonds

To mark the centenary of the opening of the Ashendon to Aynho "New Line" in July 1910, Chiltern Railways' promoted a steam special from Banbury through to Chinnor on 3rd July.

A minor problem was that there is no physical connection between the "Big Railway" and the C&PRR but this doesn't worry Chiltern - they simply asked Network Rail to make a temporary connection. This nearly didn't happen. When the gang arrived they found a high-pressure gas main running across the intended site! A bit of head-scratching saw the problem resolved by doing the work by hand rather than using machinery.

The train was possible because engineering work south of Princes Risborough had reduced the service north of there to one train per hour each way. The train was supplied by Vintage Trains at Tyseley and hauled by pannier 9600. From Bicester to Princes Risborough it ran

Tim Edmonds

"wrong road" on the Down line and was caught leaving Brill Tunnel [Top] shortly after it had been overtaken by 47773 [Inset] running light to act as a "Thunderbird" after piloting the loco and stock from Tyseley to Banbury.

After running-round at Princes Risborough the special made its way cautiously over the temporary connection [Centre] onto the C&PRR at Thame Junction.

A good-sized group of onlookers were on hand as the special steamed past Bledlow cricket ground [Bottom] on the last stretch into Chinnor.



Keith Bailey



On arrival at Chinnor the loco was watered [**Right**] and the passengers disembarked - a process that took some time as the seven coaches were full and Chinnor's platform is only four coaches long [**Centre**]. This was probably the longest passenger train ever to run on the branch and almost certainly the first including Pullman cars.

Not surprisingly, Adrian Shooter, Sir William McAlpine and other worthies were present and were impressed with the



Both: Mike Walker

C&PRR's ability and professionalism - their words. A lot of preparatory work went into the day and many members turned out to take on the many roles. The shop just about coped (second hand railway books were popular), a beer tent and the local pubs managed to supply the masses and the buffet kept the bacon baps (a speciality on open days) coming to meet demand.

On the return run, 9600 was working hard as it passed the foot crossing at Kingsey [**Below**] south of Haddenham but unfortunately it sparked a small lineside fire which was being dealt with as 165018 passed at caution [**Inset**] with the 13.12 Birmingham Snow Hill to Marylebone.

Apart from that minor incident the day was a great success but within 48 hours Network Rail had removed the connection once more isolating the Ickneild Line from the network.

Both: Tim Edmonds





RETURN TO FIFIELD

David Buck kindly invited the Society for a return visit to his railway collection in the extended garden of his home at Fifield on Thursday 12th August - the "Glorious Twelfth". A heavy shower over Marlow around teatime didn't bode well but apart from light drizzle soon after we arrived, the skies cleared and we had a pleasant if chilly evening. Later we were even able to view the Perseid meteor shower.

Since the Society's first visit in July 2008, much has changed. The standard gauge track has been extended and now forms a sharply-curved balloon loop. A short platform has been built near the shed and several signals erected.

Unlike our last visit when several gremlins had infiltrated the proceedings, both steam locos were fired up and operating for us and there's a new addition to the collection in the shape of a Barclay 0-4-0 Diesel-mechanical shunter which gave us short footplate rides whilst both steam locos were used for trips around the loop.

Work is progressing on the Finnish Railways Pacific 1016

Hornpipe was built by Peckett (1756/1928) for the Holborough Cement Co., Snodland, Kent and was previously at Quainton [Left].

The Finnish Pacific 1016 [Above] is closer to steaming than it might appear.



Two photos: Mike Walker



A group of MDRS members take a trip round the loop behind Hornpipe [Right] with David Buck at the regulator.

A more unusual locomotive at Fifield is Aveling & Porter Sir Vincent (8800/1917) built for Vickers Armstrong in Erith, Kent and later serving with nearby British Oil & Cake Mills. It is a two-cylinder compound more in common with road engines than rail, having a large flywheel and gear drive. What appear to be coupling rods at first sight, do not actually move but rather merely tie the axles together.

Before moving to David's railway, it too was a resident of Quainton.

Photo: Chris Waite



Photo: Mike Walker



Photo: Malcolm Margetts



Two photos: Mike Walker

which now bears the name *Lady Patricia*. David says he hopes to steam it by the end of this year and will lay short section of 5 foot gauge track to run it on. He's promised to invite us back to see it in action, provided we bring half-a-ton of coal!

The evening concluded with tea and cakes served inside the shed. Once again our thanks to David and his wife Patricia for their hospitality and a superb evening.

Sir Vincent [Above left] propels David's GWR AA19 Toad on the straight section of the loop - the latter's wheelbase is too long for the curved section. On another trip members rode on the loco's running board - hanging on for dear life!

The newest addition is Carlton No.3, a Barclay 0-4-0DM (352/1941) previously at the Rutland Railway Museum.

50 YEARS OF THE A STOCK

David Collins

2010 marks a number of anniversaries in the railway world; one which has local connections is the 50th anniversary of the A60/62 stock in service on the Metropolitan Line, making it the longest serving stock on the sub surface lines of London Underground (and equalling the 1938 tube stock's career span in London Underground service).

The origins of the stock go back to the London Passenger Transport Board's 1935-40 New Works Programme, which envisaged the extension of electrification of the Met northwards towards Amersham and Chesham. At the time it was planned to convert the locomotive hauled "Dreadnought" stock to become T stock (then in use on the Watford branch), but the Second World War put the project on hold, and by the time the proposal was re-examined, the Ministry of Transport would not sanction the use of non-corridor stock on the narrow, single bore tunnels between Baker Street and Finchley Road. Post war there were various other proposals suggested for the line, including express EMUs, complete with buffet cars, to work from Aylesbury to Baker Street in 45-50 minutes and light weight diesel electric locomotives to haul multiple unit stock beyond the extent of electrification. Various mock ups for new stock were built in Acton Works, including two prototype cars erected on T stock chassis which ran in service between 1949 and 1953, formed within existing T stock trains; this required the trains having a second guard in order to work the air operated doors, which the compartment based T stock were not fitted with.

When work commenced on the electrification in the late 1950s, an order was placed with Cravens of Sheffield for 248 cars of a new type of stock, designated the A (for Amersham) stock, which made up 31 eight car trains formed of two, 4 car double-ended units. A further 27 trains were subsequently ordered as the A62 stock, although the two types are completely compatible and interchangeable, the most significant difference being in the design of air compressor fitted. The introduction enabled all services on the Met main line to be worked by one type of stock; prior to this the Uxbridge service was worked by former District Railway F stock (with distinctive oval cab windows) and P stock (subsequently transferred to the District Line) with open saloon type interiors, Watford services were provided with T stock, while the main line services to Aylesbury and Chesham were comprised of the "Dreadnought" compartment stock. This was hauled by the former Metropolitan Railway electric locomotives as far as Rickmansworth, beyond which they were steam hauled with locomotives being provided by British Railways, continuing the arrangement with the LNER dating from the absorption of



A special working in connection with "Steam on the Met" approaches Rickmansworth on 16th May 1992.

Photos: Tim Edmonds unless noted

the Metropolitan Railway into London Passenger Transport Board from 1933.

Each A stock 4-car unit is formed of two driving cars and two trailer cars. These units are coupled together to form eight car trains on most services, with the exception of the Chesham shuttle and formerly services on the East London Line. The car bodies were constructed from light aluminium on a steel framework and underframe and originally carried an unpainted silver finish with maroon car numbers and London Transport lettering (replaced by Underground roundels in the 1980s). The driving cars are fitted with 54 seats and the trailer cars have 58 and, uniquely amongst underground stock, the seats are all of a transverse layout and have high backs to give greater comfort and reduce draughts on the longer journeys. Another unique feature is the provision of

luggage racks and umbrella hooks in the passenger saloon, a throwback to the compartment based stock the units replaced. Each bogie on the driving cars is powered by two traction motors manufactured by the General Electric Company, capable of developing 1,370hp for an 8 car set. The trains are the only passenger fleet remaining on the underground fitted with independent braking and traction control, and the only one which still uses friction braking exclusively (all other fleets use the traction motors as generators for service braking above 10mph).

The stock was built to the enhanced Metropolitan loading gauge and is consequently the widest fleet on the UK network - the length of the cars being 53 ft with the width being 9ft 8in. When built the stock had a top speed of 70 mph, but this has since been limited to 50mph due to the forces imposed on the traction motor windings when running at higher speeds.

The trains were built for crew operation, the guard being situated in the rear car with door controls. However in 1986 One Person Operation (OPO) was introduced on the sub surface lines which meant the door controls were relocated to the driving cabs. In order to reduce costs, not all units had this work done on both cabs, leaving most units unable to work as a 4 car train (known as 'single-ended'; full-conversions are 'double-ended'). At the same time a few units were seen with maroon roofs upon overhaul at Neasden - a scheme that was short lived before the more normal grey was applied.

As well as providing services on the Metropolitan, from 1977 to its closure in 2007 for conversion into part of the London Overground Network, the East London Line was provided with 5 four car units of A stock (supplemented in the 1980s by D Stock units from the District) to replace the 1938 stock trains previously used. In order to accommodate the wider stock, the



A 4-coach A stock set forming the shuttle to Chalfont & Latimer departs from Chesham on 26th February 1977.

track around St Marys Curve (Aldgate East - Shadwell) had to be slewed and passing of trains on the curve prevented due to substandard clearances. In the early 1990s the units allocated to the line were painted in a number of experimental liveries in conjunction with the London Docklands Development Corporation. Among these were the present LUL corporate livery and a variation with the cars painted plain white with blue doors (the cab ends in all of these applications were painted in red). All A stock cars received the livery during the refurbishment at Bombardier between 1994 and 1998, in an effort to reduce the effect of graffiti vandalism, the repeated application and removal of which had left the aluminium bodywork discoloured and tatty. Those single-ended units had the unused cab painted in the same livery as the bodysides, since this cab would never lead a train (except in Neasden depot). Shortly after the refurbishment, intercar barriers were fitted between cars to reduce the chances of passengers falling between cars - since either end of a double-ended unit could be in the middle of a train, both cab of these units had to be equipped with the brackets, not doing anything for these cars' looks.

As the outer reaches of the Met are vulnerable to icy weather conditions some A Stock units were fitted with de-icing equipment. One trailer car is equipped with a tank containing de-icing fluid on the underframe, and when the pumps are switched on (denoted by a blue light on the cant rail) the fluid is spread on the conductor rails, preventing ice from forming. This is normally done when the trains are in service, but if a cold night is expected, the traction current will be left on all night so the trains can continue to lay fluid. In addition, a spare trailer was converted for Sandite duties as a Rail Adhesion Car, involving the installation of tanks for the adhesion improver in the former saloon and pumps to feed this onto the running rails. This is formed into an ordinary unit (temporarily removed from passenger service) during the autumn, and it then covers all portions of the Metropolitan line north of Harrow on the Hill twice a day to maintain rail adhesion and thus maintain braking performance despite fallen leaves and other contaminants.

The A stock is now reaching the end of its service life. In late 2009 the first unit of S stock, which is to be standard for all of the sub surface lines, was delivered and is currently undergoing testing between Wembley Park and Watford / Rickmansworth, mainly on the 4 track section north of Harrow. By the end of 2012 this stock should have taken over all services, and by May 2013 all there should be no more A stock trains available



An Uxbridge to Baker Street service at Rayners Lane on 10th February 1980, framed between a Piccadilly line train in the turnout neck and the 1935 LT signal box.

for regular public service. One 4 car unit of A Stock is scheduled by preservation by the London Transport Museum, and another will be retained for operation with the Rail Adhesion Car. Whether any more will be preserved remains an open question - as electric multiple unit trains with air doors and centre buffers they would be unsuited to the requirements of heritage and preserved railways for normal passenger operation, but the success of Cravens Heritage Trains points the way for privately preserved units operating on London Underground.

A refurbished set at Chorleywood on 14th September 2008.

Photo: Mike Walker



AN HOUR AT NEWPORT

Story & pictures by Tim Edmonds

On 3rd June 2010 Veronica and I spent a day with a friend from Cardiff exploring various sites of transport interest in South Wales. We travelled FGW from Reading to Cardiff but since our tour finished in the Newport area we decided to pick up our return train, the 17:28 from Swansea, at Newport. We were deposited at the station in good time for a booked departure at 18:39, only to be greeted by an indicator which showed our train with a tag of "delayed". Station announcements told us to wait for information. Frustratingly, the cause of the delay was not revealed, although it was clear that some other services were affected. We were offered an alternative of taking the 18:30 Cardiff - Portsmouth Harbour train to connect into the 19:30 Bristol - Paddington HST, but the prospect of standing in a crowded DMU to Temple Meads did not appeal and we decided to sit it out at Newport.

An unplanned wait on a pleasant sunny evening at Newport turned out to be an interesting one. In addition to the passenger trains on the main line from London to West Wales there is a variety of cross-country services, including some on the north and west line via Hereford, some via Birmingham and those heading for Portsmouth or the west country via Bristol. The main station buildings are on the south side and lead onto platform 1, which does not appear to be in regular use and which is separated from the island platform by two through roads. Platform 2 currently handles all the down passenger trains; most up trains call at platform 3, but some now use the side platform 4 on the north side. This has recently been refurbished as part of improvements currently being carried out to the northern entrance from the car park; these include a new footbridge at the west end of the station.



Passenger traffic is only part of the story because Newport is also something of a freight hotspot. Indeed, on our arrival 66007 was waiting in the up through road with 6M82, the departmental working from Newport Alexandra Dock Junction to Crewe Virtual Quarry. We had come in at the platform 4 entrance, and before heading for the island platform, I paused to photograph 158820 [Above] in the sunshine at platform 3 on the Arriva Wales 16:55 Swansea -Manchester Piccadilly service. I reached platform 2 just as 66007 [Below] was setting off. There was still no definite time offered for our train so we headed for the buffet, from which I emerged onto platform 2 just in time to get a shot of 66054 heading west [Opposite top] through the station with 6X52, the 17:33 Portbury - Mossend car train. This does not travel via the Maindee loop to reach the Hereford line, as you might expect, but reverses at (presumably) Alexandra Dock Yard and heads back through the station about an hour later.



Eventually the indicators showed our train with a delay time that varied from 35 to 50 minutes, but still with no explanation. However, the imminent arrival of the 19:00 FGW Cardiff - Taunton caused me to head hastily to platform 3 where 'Thunderbirds' 57305 *John Tracy* and 57308 *Tin-Tin* arrived top-and-tail [Centre]. In the summer timetable this service was due to have been taken over by class 150 DMUs cascaded from London Overground, but the delays in the delivery of class 172 sets has given the loco-hauled services a stay of execution. I thought I would get a distant shot of the whole train departing if I returned to platform 2. My hasty move was the right decision for the wrong reasons. I got there just as 170107 was pulling in with the 16:08 Nottingham - Cardiff Cross Country service as 60039 passed it on the through line [Bottom] with 6B47, the 17:22 Westerleigh - Robeston Murco empties. Until a few weeks earlier 6B47 had been a class 66 working, so to get the 60 was a real bonus, and as the picture shows, had the XC been a few seconds earlier I would have been got nothing! It was a real spot of luck.

Ours was the next train at platform 3 and by now was barely ten minutes ahead of the following London-bound HST, the 18:28 off Swansea. It had recovered a little of the delay by the time it reached Newport. We relaxed into our seats belatedly and, when we were drawing into Bristol Parkway, the on-board announcer told us that the hold-up was due to a vehicle colliding with a bridge near St Fagans (a few miles west of Cardiff). Why the station announcements couldn't have told us this beats me. It was clearly not FGW's fault and a delay of this kind will get some passenger understanding and sympathy - if we are told. Peter Robins later confirmed to me that at 17:31 a road vehicle had struck a bridge at Peterston-Super-Ely, about 7 miles west of Cardiff, and our train was held at Port Talbot for 37 minutes whilst the Bridge Examiner came and took a look. At 18:21 he had allowed trains to pass at 5 mph.



THE GWR TOAD - a not so brief history

David Gardner



While visiting the Pendon Museum in November last year the subject of GWR brake vans or Toads as they were generally known was discussed by MDRS members and why there were so many variations. As I have a particular interest in railway wagons Mike Walker asked me if I could explain the complexities involved. Despite my protests that I was no expert, he does have a very persuasive manner and so won in the end.

Before dealing with the various types of Brake van it should be mentioned that the name 'Toad' was the Telegraph code for this type of vehicle that began in 1892. All vehicles and many instructions were coded this way and the railway produced a Telegraph Message Code book for the purpose.

Codes were added to over the years but were revised in 1943 so that 'Open' became 'High' and 'Open C' - 'Tube'. Covered goods vans were known as 'Mink' which was simply changed to 'Van' or 'Vanfit' if the vehicle had vacuum brakes. The more specialised vehicles had the code painted on the bodywork or solebar and this perpetuated well into BR days with the 'Tops' computer system being a more modern update.

Before leaving the Telegraph Code system I should point out the word 'Toad' generally referred to unfitted brakes, where as 'Toad A' later changed to 'Toadfit', had vacuum brakes.

Like all railway vehicles 'Toads' were given a diagram number and this began with AA1 continuing through to AA24 but they were not necessarily built in that order. Strictly speaking the earliest was the double verandah AA8 built 1888-90 for use on the Pontnewynydd Branch to a restricted height of 9' 10 1/2" and 18' length. From floor to roof the side height was only 4' 3" rising to 6' in the middle so guards weren't meant to spend much time in the cabin and then only sitting down. A much earlier van also 18' long but with an outside frame was built from 1882 without a diagram No. but in 1919 were fitted with clasp brakes and most with new self contained buffers and given the diag. AA16. They were rated as 12 Ton which was an increase of 2 tons on their original specification.

The Toad brake van at the rear of a goods train was one of the many distinctive features of the Great Western. Today, many are preserved including 68501 a 20 ton AA15 van built in 1925 and now at the Severn Valley Railway.

Photo: Mike Walker

The first true 'Toad' was Diagram AA3 and these were built from 1889-1901, were 20' long and 16 Tons laden weight. There were two types, the standard and a 'Road Van' which had outside frame double van doors on the side. The latter were also vacuum piped as opposed to vacuum braked. AA3 vans lasted well into BR days and I photographed one as late as 1964 while on Signal Dept duties.

Of the other 20' long brakes AA1 was a six-wheel heavy goods van built 1900-2 with a 25 Ton weights for use on long heavy coal trains. AA2 was a four wheel version constructed in much greater numbers from 1902-10. AA4 of 1892 were for use through the Severn Tunnel and had a boarded up verandah. Only three are known to have been built. Between 1893 and 1901. 22 Diagram AA5 were constructed as Ballast Plough brake vans. Originally they had a large open verandah but this was later boarded up.

From 1890-1900 51 Permanent Way brakes were built similar to the enclosed AA5s but without ploughs. They were Diagram AA6 and included three converted from ex Broad Gauge vans in 1892. AA7 were 12 short GBV built specially for use on Metropolitan Lines and were 16' long with a 9' wheelbase. A batch of five 24 Ton P.W. brakes were built between 1905 and 1908 then a single Ballast Plough van of 25 Ton. These were Diagram AA9 and AA10 respectively. AA12 were originally intended as P.W. vans but 35 were produced in the years 1914/5 and at the same time a single P.W. brake to AA14, using the same body parts as AA12 but with boarded over verandah. This concluded the 20' long vans. Incidentally all had 13' wheel base and clasp brakes.

From 1912 the first of the improved GBVs came out which were 24' long with a 16' wheelbase. These were Diagram AA11

The Marlow Donkey



56956 is an example of the AA1 heavy six-wheel 20' long Toad rated at 24 tons. Such vans were commonly used on heavy mineral trains where the extra brake force was useful.

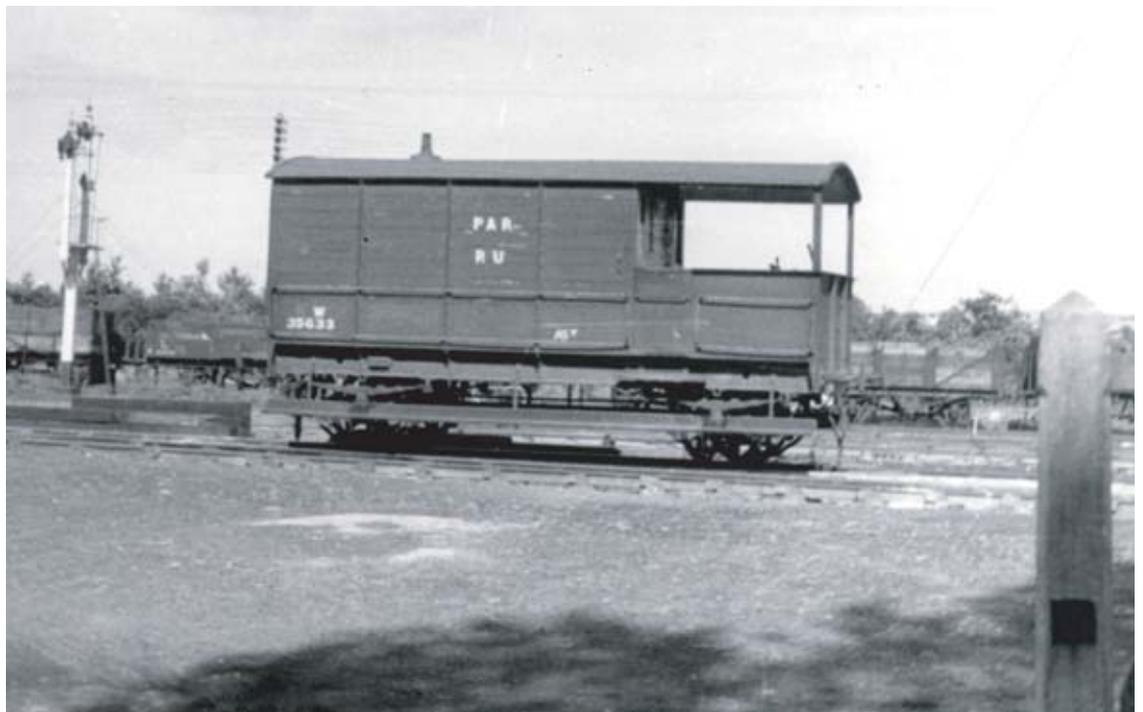
Branded for Newport Maesglas, this example in late GW livery was at Henley-in-Arden on 7th May 1948.

Photo: P J Garland

35633 represents the AA3 version which was the first true Toad design built between 1899 and 1901. They were 20' long and rated at a mere 16 tons.

This example seen at Par Harbour on 6th August 1951 retains its late GW livery but the G has been painted out leaving just the W which under BR would normally have prefixed the number.

Photo: H F Wheeler



and had an 8' 6" verandah two feet longer than the 20' long vans. In all 35 were built to various weights of 13, 16 and 20 Tons. The 275 AA13 were similar but had the central stove moved to one side. Between 1918 and 1927 a total of 378 Diagram AA15, very similar brake vans were constructed but with self contained buffers and another 14 AA18 in 1926/7. Just two AA17 enclosed vans were built in 1919/20 for use in the Severn Tunnel. Production continued along the same lines with another 221 GBV in the years 1927-31 but the self contained buffers gave way to earlier spindle type and received the Diagram AA19. From 1934-43 a further 354 vans were built with only minor differences and were identical externally but given Diagram AA20 then in 1939/40 Government finance meant that 100 Vacuum Fitted AA21 GBV were manufactured.

Another Severn Tunnel van was built to Diagram AA22 in 1939 then with the war in full swing production continued with AA23 which now had ribbed buffers. A total of 326 were built with the last coming out in 1949 with a 'B' prefix to the No. All the above were 20 Ton weight and could be called the standard

GWR brake van and certainly the one most people think of in connection with that company. Great Western brake vans all had a 12" solebar and the space was filled with scrap metal to the required weight. Because they were generally single verandah GW vans were not officially allowed to work beyond the system so carried an 'RU' on the side which stood for Restricted User. They were therefore not 'Common User' unlike the double verandah types of other railways. However GW and BRW guards treated them as 'Regular User' so BR stencilled 'Not in Common Use' on the side later removing the 'RU' to avoid double confusion. GWR goods vans were also given specific locations to work to and from thus High Wycombe, Bourne End and Marlow had their own home GBV's. Some long distance vans even had all the locations and times the train would call at and this continued well into BR'W' days. The very last Diagram to be issued in 1947 by the GWR was AA24 for two of the short open verandah Pontnewynydd Branch vans similar to the AA8's which they were to replace but it wasn't until 1949 that they were finally commissioned.



The later standard Toads were 24' long and rated at 20 tons as represented here by 68684 a Diagram AA15 van now preserved in pre-1936 livery at Didcot.

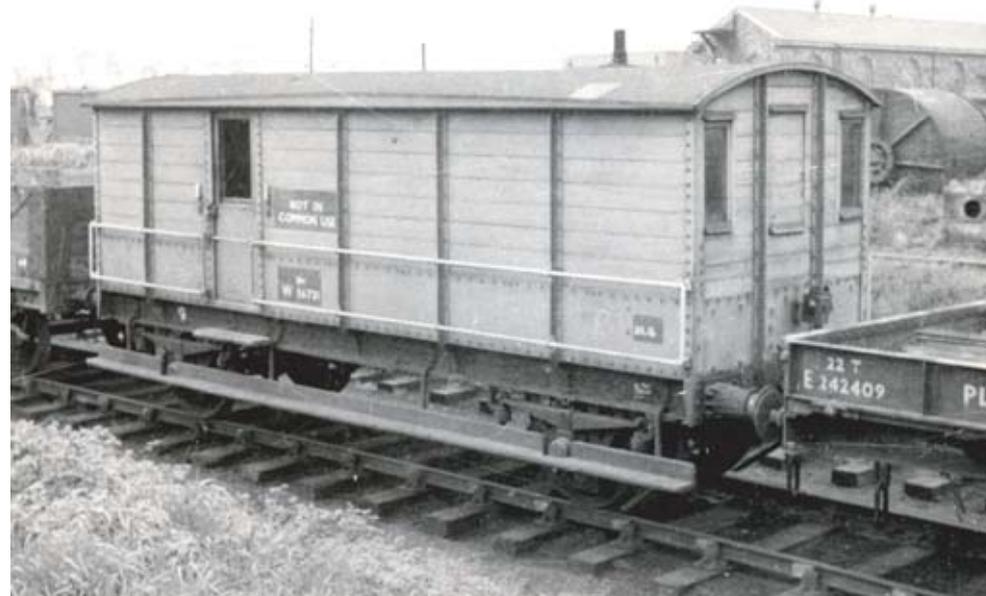
This version had self-contained buffers, that is with coil springs inside the buffer housing rather than transverse leaf springs behind the headstocks.

Photo: Mike Walker

56956 is an example of the AA16 design which was originally built from 1882 onwards and rebuilt from 1919 with clasp brakes (two shoes per wheel rather than one) and self-contained buffers although in this case the original buffers have been retained.

It was photographed at Tyseley carriage sidings on 9th June 1948 by when it was serving with the S&T Dept. Note the ladder on the running board, no Health & Safety back then.

Photo: D Larkin



56731 is one of two fully enclosed Diagram AA17 vans built in 1919/20 use on trains through the Severn Tunnel.

By 1963 it had acquired BR grey livery with the number W56731 found its way to Crewe possibly in Departmental use or for scrapping.

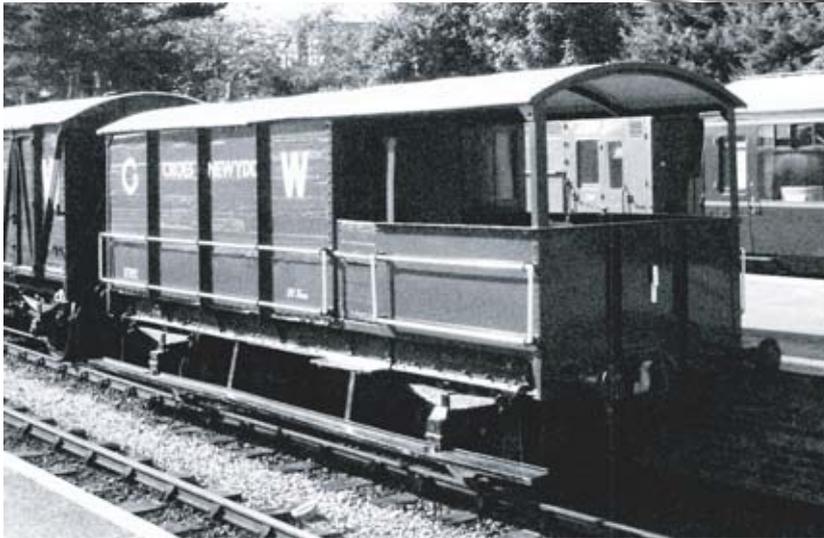
The PW brake vans were very similar in appearance but were 20' rather than 24' long as were the Shark, but the ballast ploughs between the wheels identified them.

Photo: D Larkin

114808 represents the Diagram AA19 design 221 of which were built between 1927 and 1931. Still 24' long and rated at 20 tons, note the additional diagonal bracing and a return to spindle buffers with the springs behind the headstock. The buffer design is to the RCH standard. Common parts such as buffers, springs, axleboxes and brake components were being adopted by all the Big Four at this time.

It too had managed to escape its normal habitat when photographed at Carnforth on 10th July 1963. The letters "XP" indicate it has a through vacuum pipe but hand brakes only.

Photo: D R Rowland



In 1939-40 the Government helped to finance the construction of 100 vacuum fitted Toads to Diagram AA21. Apart from the brakes and deletion of the additional bracing they were similar to the AA19 above.

17392 from this build has been preserved by the Gloucestershire-Warwickshire Railway and is seen at Winchcombe during this year's GW175 gala.

Photo: Mike Walker

The final GWR design was the Diagram AA23 of which 326 were built with the final examples being constructed by BR.

35232 at Radley on 5th September 1963 is one of these and has been retro-fitted by BR with a through vacuum pipe.

Photo: P J Garland



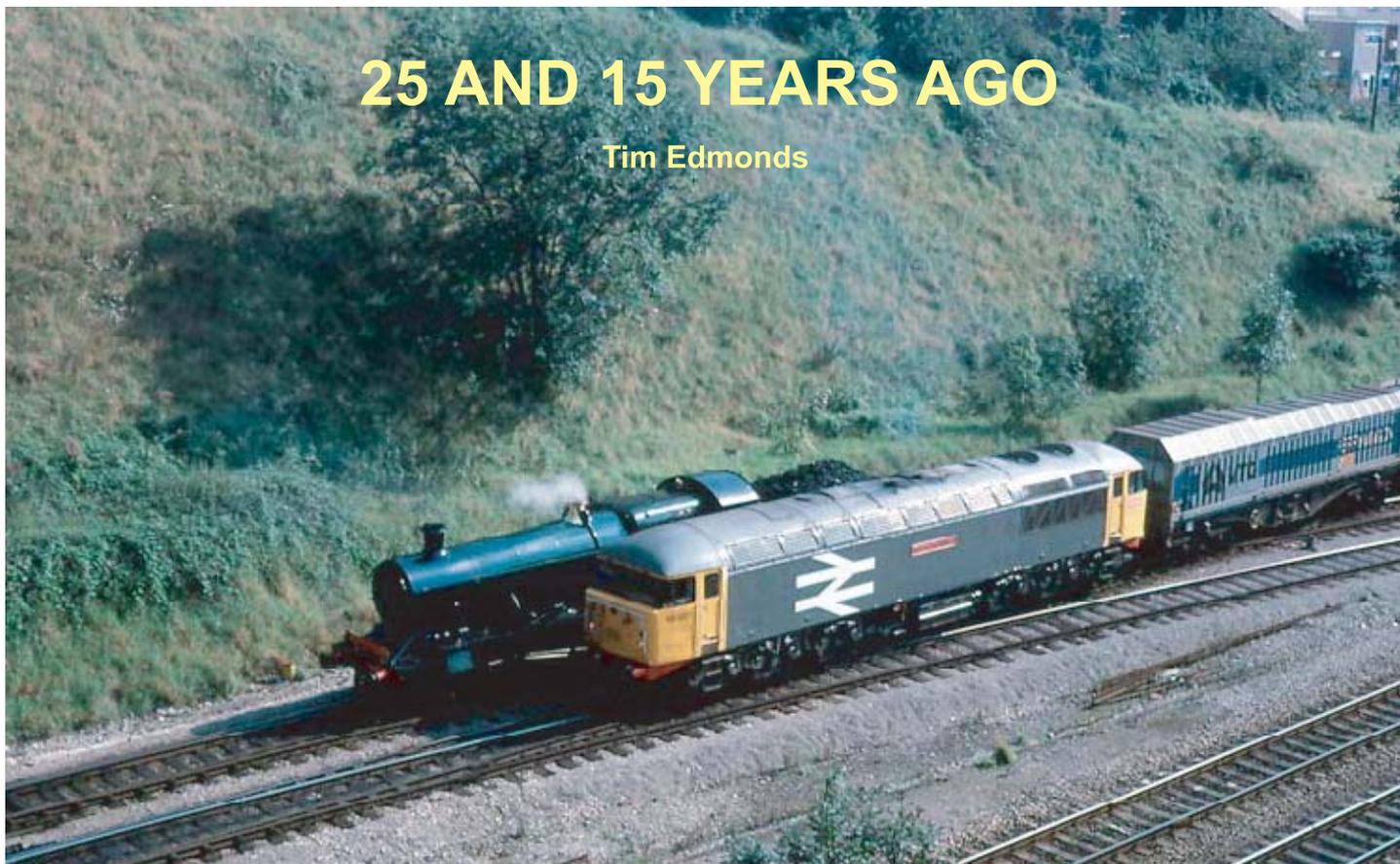
The most unusual of the Toads were the special low-profile vans built for service on the steeply-graded Pontnewynydd Branch in South Wales. Banking engines were regularly used on this branch and the unique design allowed their crews an unobstructed forward view. However the guard had to remain seated, stand in the open or be "vertically challenged"!

B950541 is a replacement van built by BR in 1949 to Diagram AA24 to replace the original AA8 design. They were 20' long, rated at 12 tons and have verandahs at both ends.

Photo: R S Carpenter

25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



During the 'Railfreight Spectacular' on 10th September, GWR 2857 and BR 56037 Richard Trevithick run side-by side towards Newport station.

photo: Peter Robins

25 YEARS AGO

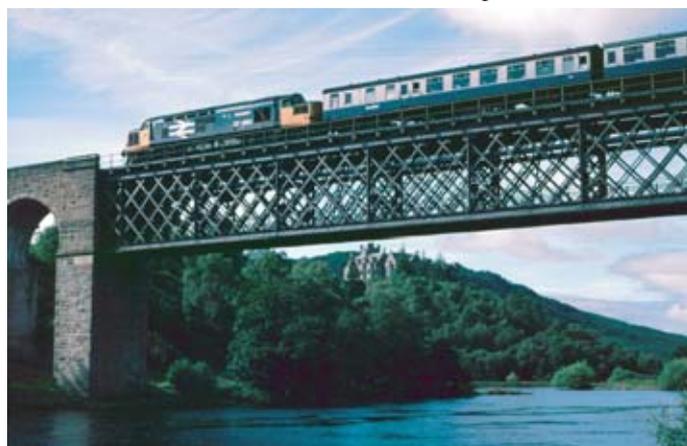
As part of the GW150 celebrations, and with sponsorship from brewers Whitbread, BR organised a 'Railfreight Spectacular' at Newport station on 10th September. Guests of the brewers travelled on a special train to Gloucester and back behind 7029 *Clun Castle*, while on show in the station were GWR 2-8-0 2857 and the replica 4-2-2 *Iron Duke* (on a well-wagon). Highlight of the event was a cavalcade of past and present freight trains through the station - 2857 pulled 32 wagons, mainly from the Severn Valley Railway, while 56037 *Richard Trevithick* hauled a train of modern stock which earlier had been on display in platform 1.

To commemorate 50 years since closure of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway on 29th September 1935, Councillor Barry Hobbs - the Mayor of Lynton - drove Ruston 4wDM *Brunel* on a 'special train' to carry first-day postal covers at the railway's former Lynton terminus. The event was organised by Bill and Eileen Pryor, who own the station, and the loco was built the year after the line's demise.

Construction of a new station at Winnersh Triangle, between Winnersh and Earley on the Waterloo - Reading line, began on 14th October. It was to serve major new industrial and residential developments in the area.

The planned building of a road bridge over the Dornoch Firth, to shorten the route of the A9 north of Tain, was under investigation for dual use by the Highland 'Far North' line from Inverness to Wick. This would have saved 30 miles compared to the circuitous route via Lairg, also serving the important town of Dornoch, but alas the proposal was dropped - although it has resurfaced in recent years.

The last train painted in London Underground red made its final run in ordinary service over the Bakerloo Line on 20th November. The seven-car train of 1938 stock had been refurbished in 1984 and was subsequently available for use on special workings.



On 10th September 1985, 37260 Radio Highland heads past Carbisdale Castle across the Kyle of Sutherland at Invershin with a service from Wick and Thurso to Inverness. This section of line would have been closed had the proposal to build a shorter route over the new road bridge come to fruition. Ten years later freight services were reintroduced on the line.

The former Lynton & Barnstaple Railway terminus at Lynton had survived remarkably intact on 10th January 1981.

two photos: Tim Edmonds



The Marlow Donkey



71000 Duke of Gloucester at Church Lawford, near Rugby, heading for Coventry with the 'Children in Need' special on 26th November 1995. Shame about 47768...

photo: Tim Edmonds

15 YEARS AGO.

For the first time since their introduction in 1976 an HST was involved in a serious fire, when on 8th September the 18.30 Paddington - Swansea was passing Taplow. Part of the fuel tank of the leading power unit, 43190, came adrift and fractured then diesel fuel was ignited by sparks. The train came to a halt near Maidenhead, where one person jumped out of a window in panic and was struck and killed by the 17.15 Bristol - Paddington. The fire was quickly put out, but traffic was disrupted until mid-day on 9th September.

On 27th September, the 170th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, a trust fund was launched at Darlington North Road Museum to raise half a million pounds, the objective being to buy the Weardale line in County Durham and run it as a community and tourist railway. The Weardale Railway Society had been formed in 1993 and had succeeded in keeping the track in place from Bishop Auckland to Eastgate; then Weardale Railways Ltd was set up, headed by Sir William McAlpine and Pete Waterman, to operate the line.

The first freight service to run the full length of the 'Far North' line ran on 29th September, when 37430 powered Transrail's 'Caithness Entrepreneur'. The traffic carried comprised two wagons of steel for Norfrost Ltd at Georgemas and ten coal containers, five each for Wick and Thurso. This was the precursor to a proposed weekly 'Enterprise' service over the route to reduce the problems caused by heavy lorries on the A9 north of Helmsdale.

The final regular broad-gauge (5ft 6in) steam working in India took place on 23rd November when WL class 15100 hauled train 8JF, the 17.35 from Jallunder to Firozpur. The loco survived only another two days before being dismantled at Firozpur shed.

Steam returned to Euston for the first time since the 1960s on 26th November, when 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* worked the second leg of a 'Children in Need' charity special north to Manchester Piccadilly via Coventry, Stechford and Aston. Unfortunately for photographers, RES liveried 47768 *Resonant* was positioned between the Pacific and its maroon stock to provide train heating.



The weeds grow apace at Stanhope, the major intermediate station on the Weardale line, on 19th July 1994. Note the superb NER footbridge. Moves to reopen the line took a major step forward in September 1995.

photo: Tim Edmonds

EDITOR'S NOTE

Tim has informed me that the next issue will be the last in this popular series as after ten years the 15 Years has caught up with the 25 Years. Any suggestions as to how to fill the space?

FROM THE ARCHIVES

35 Years ago on the Joint Line with Peter Robins.



The 'Western' Class 52 Diesel-hydraulics were a familiar sight on the Joint Line in their early days working the Birmingham trains but were soon displaced by Class 47s. Thereafter their

appearances were more sporadic. On 8th April 1975, 1058 *Western Nobleman* emerged from White House Farm Tunnel with the Hayes & Harlington to High Wycombe parcels.



This superb photograph shows 47032 passing High Wycombe North Signal Box and yard on 22nd April 1975 on the Thames Haven to Thame oil tanker train. The rusty line on the left is the siding to the Broome & Wade works and Wycombe Borough Council depot. All the infrastructure seen here has long since

vanished with the exception of the main lines, the Focus DIY store occupying the site on the right, and the townscape beyond has changed almost beyond recognition too. The loco is still with us however, built as D1611 in 1964 it is now Virgin's 57311 after a spell as the notorious purple Porterbrook 47817.