

# THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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# The Marlow Donkey

## The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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*Top: O&K 0-6-0 T/T 'Sragi 14' from Java arriving at Oak Tree Halt, Statfold Barn Railway, 18 September 2010.*

*Bottom: PKP LAS class 1966 and 'Trangkil 4' on balloon loop, Statfold Barn Railway, 18 September 2010.  
Photos: Tim Edmonds (Article page 5).*



# SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

## NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome no less than four new members, John Fairlie from Cookham, Brian and Gary Hawes from Wooburn Green and Norman Marriott who have joined us this quarter, we hope you will enjoy the ride.

This means we finish the year with an extremely healthy membership of just over sixty, a slight increase on last year and bucking the trend which sees so many groups such as ours shrinking.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Our new season was started by Julian Heard who presented a programme of photographs from the collection of member Alan Morris who passed away early last year. It was nice to be able to welcome Alan's widow Margaret and several of their family and friends in the audience. There was a good deal of banter as members attempted to identify the location and/or subject matter of some of the shots. Tim Edmonds has passed your Editor a disc containing many others from Alan's collection that we will feature in upcoming issues.

Nostalgia was again to the fore in October when David Cross showed a selection of shots taken by his late father, the well known photographer Derek Cross. There was plenty there to suit all as David took us on a tour of the Southern, Western, Midland and Eastern Regions in the later days of steam and with a few diesels thrown in. David had come all the way from Okehampton so we are extremely grateful and hopefully he can be persuaded to make the long trek again some time.

November's meeting was something completely different when Ray Schofield presented his view of steam on the railways of Australia and New Zealand, a part of the world few of us have been lucky enough to visit.

Our Society's return visit to the Statfold Barn Railway on 18th September was a great success despite the indifferent weather later in the afternoon. Malcolm Margetts reports on page 5.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions become due for renewal in January. As Tim Speechley mentioned in his Chairman's Notes in the last issue, the committee have decided to increase the full rate for next year from £14.00 to £16.00. The reduced rate for those of you who live some distance away and therefore attend meetings only on rare occasions will remain at £8.00 with a meeting attendance fee of £2.00. Visitors to the Society's meetings will be asked to pay a £3.00 admission fee although that will be reduced to £2 for our friends from the Maidenhead RCTS branch in a reciprocal arrangement.

It is some years since we last increased the subscriptions and it is not undertaken lightly; however the continuing upward trend particularly in travel costs means we are having to pay more to attract good quality speakers who often have to travel long distances to visit us - see above!

We look forward to your continued support.

## NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

As usual voting will take place during the Annual General Meeting in February for the Norman Aston-Smith Trophy which is awarded annually to the author of what is considered to be the year's best contribution to the pages of the *Marlow Donkey*.

Unlike some years, no "obvious" candidates stand out but we've once again enjoyed a varied selection of high quality articles. Voting forms will be distributed with the rest of the "AGM info" in January and you are asked to look back over the past three and this issue to make your selection.

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE DONKEY

As Editor, I'm always looking for material to fill each issue and it takes quite a bit each time. Whilst I have several features both in hand and promised for upcoming issues in 2011, more are always welcome. It is nice to have sufficient in stock to more than fill the next edition and start planning the one ahead.

Articles can be on any rail-related topic, memories from your youth, a recent trip at home or aboard or a selection of photographs. It would perhaps be good to hear from our retired railwaymen or our more recent members.

Whilst it is preferred that articles are submitted as a Word document either by e-mail or on a disc or memory stick, I am prepared to type up hand-written copy from those of you without access to a computer. Photographs can either be submitted digitally by the same means or we can scan both prints (colour or monochrome) and slides.

If you have any ideas or would like advice please get in touch on 01628 483899 or email [mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk) or have a chat at a meeting.

## RCTS MAIDENHEAD

Our friends at the RCTS continue their monthly meeting programme through the winter and an interesting programme is on offer as follows:

### Monday 20th December

Chiltern, a Railway Success Story - Adrian Shooter

### Monday 24th January

Plasser & Theurer Track Machines - Mark Simmons

### Monday 28th February

Tornado and the A1 Locomotive project - Roger Dye

### Monday 28th March

An Evening with Chris Green

### Monday 18th April

The Railway Photographs of R C Riley - Rodney Lissenden

### Monday 23rd May

Branch AGM followed by Members' presentations

In June we will be holding a joint meeting with the RCTS at Bourne End on our usual evening - more details next time

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead, SL6 3AX commencing at 19:30.

## READING CHRISTMAS BLOCKADE

The first major stage in the redevelopment of Reading station takes place over the Christmas and New Year break which means the station will be closed to all traffic over a period of ten days from Christmas Day to January 3rd. During this period engineers will transfer control of the signalling system from Reading 'Panel' to the new Thames Valley Signalling Centre and install a new 750 tonne bridge across Caversham Road to the west of the station.

As a result FGW will be operating a special service with a combination of diverted services and replacement road transport as follows:

**Christmas Day** No services scheduled.

**Boxing Day** No services scheduled.

**Bank Holidays** (Monday 27, Tuesday 28 December 2010)

All train lines through Reading will be closed.

Long distance train services will run to / from London via a diversionary route via the Chiltern Line for Bristol/South Wales services or into Waterloo for West of England services. FGW will put on alternative transport for local services to, from and through Reading.

**Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 December 2010**

The same arrangements will operate as per 27 and 28 December.

**New Year's Eve**

All routes will be open. A Bank Holiday service will operate including additional trains from London.

**New Year's Day** (Saturday 1 January 2011)

The line between Didcot Parkway and Twyford will be closed. FGW will put on alternative transport between Didcot, Reading and Twyford.

Long distance train services will run to / from London via the diversionary routes.

All other routes will be open, with a Bank Holiday service in operation.

**Sunday 2 January 2011**

The line between Didcot Parkway and Twyford will be closed until midday.

FGW will put on alternative transport between Didcot, Reading and Twyford.

Long distance train services will run to / from London via the diversionary routes until midday.

All other routes will be open, with a Bank Holiday service in operation.

**Monday 3 January 2011** (Bank Holiday)

Reading Station area will be closed overnight.

**Tuesday 4 January 2011**

Normal scheduled trains services are expected to run.

Full timetables are available from FGW stations or at [www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=4888](http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=4888)

During the blockade engineers will also remove a footbridge near Iver as part of the gauge enhancement programme and make changes in the Ladbroke Grove area to bring Line 1 back into use for the first time since the Ladbroke Grove collision in 1999.



*Soon to become a regular sight over the holiday period, on 15th October FGW ran a timing/proving run over the Chiltern and South Western main lines. In dismal conditions, 43183 leads the special through High Wycombe. During the blockade, two FGW trains per hour will operate in each direction.*

*two photos: Mike Walker*

## MEANWHILE ON CHILTERN

Steady progress has been made in recent weeks with the Evergreen 3 upgrade works. During a three-day blockade at Princes Risborough in early November the track was relaid, the crossover south of the station relocated and the initial part of the new through line installed. At Bicester the up line has been straightened and the platform widened although the 25mph speed restriction remains until modifications to the signalling are complete. Elsewhere numerous minor track slewing and renewals have taken place to raise line speeds.

Major remodelling at Neasden South and Northolt Junctions will take place early next year and the whole scheme is on course to be completed by late April ready for the new timetable in May.

At High Wycombe the old goods sheds have been demolished to reveal the original 1854 Wycombe Railway station building once more (see below) whilst work has started on the multi-storey car park with the lift tower in place by mid-November.



## CHILTERN LOCO-HAULED BEGINS

With the new timetable on December 12th, Chiltern have started running a loco-hauled service on the Marylebone - Birmingham route using W&S equipment.

## NEW SEMAPHORES AT BANBURY!

To enable FGW HSTs to reverse at Banbury, two new GW-style semaphore signals have been installed at the south end of Banbury station replacing shunting discs.

# ANOTHER DAY ON THE FARM

Malcolm Margetts



*PKP LAS class 1966 and 'Trangkil 4' on balloon loop.  
photo: Tim Edmonds*

September is usually a good month to indulge an interest in railways. The weather is mostly fine and the temperature near perfect and there is a realisation that it will be several months before another chance occurs to get out in the sun with friends and a camera without the need for several layers of extra clothing. This was the situation on Saturday the 18th when the Society mustered 21 members and two visitors to return to the Statfold Barn Railway for the Autumn Enthusiasts Day, only two years following our previous visit.

The railway is tucked away in a pleasant rural area on the borders of Warwickshire and Staffordshire, north-east of Tamworth just off the B5493 to Ashby de la Zouch or simply Ashby to the locals. Three miles or so from Statfold Barn farm is the hamlet of No Man's Heath, which until the boundary reorganisation of 1st April 1974 was half in Leicestershire and the remainder in Warwickshire, but is today wholly in Warwickshire, with Staffordshire and Derbyshire just across the fields. In the village is a four sided Mercian cross suggesting that a millennium or more ago all four counties touched.

Tim Edmonds reported the previous Society visit to the Statfold Barn Railway in Donkey 123 of December 2008 now available on the website. He wrote in much detail and with considerable enthusiasm about the railway and how it operates the three times a year when it opens by invitation to enthusiasts. Over the intervening two years since that review, little has changed and Tim's article should be regarded as the authoritative reference, with these notes simply recording some additional detail to emphasise just how rewarding an experience a visit to the SBR was, or can be in the future.

The system is on a working farm estate, but being privately owned, it is free from the commercialisation that often detracts from the pleasure of small narrow gauge railways open to the public. Access to the Railway is good, car parking is close to the action, the catering arrangements are ideal in a covered barn just in case of bad weather, but most of all there is a freedom from aggressive marshalling and a genuine feeling of

orderly enjoyment with virtually unlimited access to the extensive farm complex.

Both on the railway system and in all the other features of interest on the farm there is an overall feeling of organisational and engineering excellence, and this is particularly true of the track, locomotives and stock. The train formation and scheduling also seemed to be well managed by the capable care of a fat controller, who was not fat but young, female and attractive.

The railway has five gauges, the 7 ¼ in and 10 ¼ in sections appear to see little use and are confined to the garden railway, where they are laid within a 2 foot gauge oval with a spur towards the owners private home. The main system is the only dual gauge 2 ft and 2 ft 6in railway in the UK, indeed where else is this likely to be repeated except possibly in a commonwealth country? If you have a specialist interest in track layouts this is the place for you, there is a even a short standard gauge line that bisects the approach to the station and shed yard, producing some intriguing point work including a three gauges crossing - see below.



*photo: Malcolm Margetts  
The Marlow Donkey*



O&K 0-6-0T/T 'Sragi 14' from Java [Above] arriving at Oak Tree Halt on its way back to the main station after a trip into the fields.

Heading in the opposite direction with a freight [Above right] Hunslet 0-4-0ST, built in 2005, passes LaMeuse 0-4-0T 6 approaching Oak Tree Halt.

two photos: Tim Edmonds



Interest is concentrated on the main joint gauge part of the system, where apart from the station, loco shed and workshop shed yard, a turntable and traverser, there is the Field Railway running as far as the eye can see into the adjacent countryside, providing an overall journey of what must be almost three miles. This takes the passenger alongside a river for much of the distance with a passing loop at Oak Tree station to facilitate three or more trains in service. At the end of the line is a remarkable balloon loop incorporating a switch point to enable the 2ft gauge to retain its left running common rail. Although this might seem to be unique it seems that this must have been commonplace in the 19th century, on the Great Railway we all loved so much.

The Field Railway literally follows the field contours and the track mostly laid on standard gauge sleepers is well ballasted and in fine condition. An exciting feature is to look from the carriage window and see another train several hundred yards across the fields on what appears to be another system.

The balloon loop is the nearest point to the national rail network where the WCML passes a couple of miles across the fields at Polesworth, where in the summer of 1947 a very serious accident involving Princess Coronation class 6244 King George VI, derailed through poor track condition, the engine slid on its side for over 300 yards before coming to a halt.

In summary we had a thoroughly good day out, in no small part due to the organiser Tim Speechley who secured the invitation and organised the tickets and car sharing - all thankless tasks. Our party of four arrived just after 10am and there was still much to see well into the late afternoon. Don't even think of combining this visit with a second location this is a one day job from the Thames/Chiltern region and a return every second or third year is strongly recommended- especially in September.



Newly restored Fowler 0-4-2T 'Saccharine' heads for the fields. This massive loco was built in 1914 for a South African sugar plantation.

photo: Tim Edmonds

Something different, this Land Rover has been converted into a rail vehicle at Statfold and was giving rides.

photo: Mike Hyde



Another oddity was the replica compressed air mine loco 'Sid' posing with its builder on the mixed gauge turntable.

photo: Tim Edmonds

# SOME IMPRESSIONS OF RAILWAYS IN JAPAN

Murray Tremellen



This summer the family holiday took us to Japan, whose efficient, reliable railway network is the envy of many in Britain. However, the country also has a rich railway heritage, and during my visit I was able to sample both the ancient and the modern.

It is worth explaining briefly the structure of Japan's railway network. The old Japanese National Railways network comprised a mix of traditional 3'6" gauge lines and, from the 1960s, standard-gauge Shinkansen routes. The new lines were a great success: the first Shinkansen route, the New Tokaido Line, delivered 15% profits in its early years. Nevertheless, JNR was sinking into debt, partly because the government insisted on keeping fares low for many years for political reasons. Therefore, in the late 1980s operations were taken over by seven profit-making companies: six regional passenger operators and one national freight operator. Together these companies are known as the JR Group. However, several routes were built and operated by private companies even during the JNR era, and these maintain their independence today. One example we saw is the Odakyu Electric Railway, which runs the 3'6" gauge line from Tokyo to Hakone; this route gained international recognition some years ago as one of the routes included on Microsoft Train Simulator.

British TOCs - and LUL - could certainly learn much from commuter networks we sampled in Tokyo and Kyoto. The stations are mostly modernist concrete structures, but because they are well laid-out, well-lit and well-kept they do not have the depressing air of Euston or New Street. EMUs are universal, mostly unpainted aluminium with a single coloured stripe corresponding to the colour-coded routes. The moral for British TOCs: passengers care little what colour a train is painted, as long as it is clean and punctual! However, commuter trains do carry more advertising than in Britain,

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*Odawara station, [Above] looking down from the high-level Shinkansen platforms to the 3'6" gauge Odakyu Electric Railway platforms. An OER Series 7000 unit waits in the platform. A Series 700 Shinkansen unit departs from Odawara station [Below] on the New Tokaido line, bound for Shin-Osaka. Note the smartly-uniformed guard.*

*all photos: Murray Tremellen*

adverts being hung from the ceiling and sometimes even shown on miniature television screens. Another small difference from Britain is the ticket barriers. These usually remain open and only close when the customer fails to insert a valid ticket; this must save a lot of wear and tear on the machines.

Both JR's suburban lines - some of which run double-deck trains - and the Tokyo and Hakone Metros still run on 3'6"



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[Left] A Hakone-Tozan unit at Hakone. This line is privately-owned and, unusually for Japan, standard-gauge.

The concourse [Bottom] at Hakone-Yumoto station. Standard-gauge Hakone-Tozan Mountain Railway train on the left, 3'6" gauge OER "Romancecar" express on the right.

The Gora terminus of the Hakone-Tozan Railway [Below].

gauge. The overall size of the trains is similar to Britain's standard gauge, suggesting that our own limited loading gauge need not necessarily be a handicap. Admittedly, though, the Japanese are on average smaller than Westerners; more than once I hit my head on the ceiling-mounted handholds on the Metro!

We had three Shinkansen trips during the course of our stay, all in the latest 700-series trains. On the platforms, the entrances to each coach are marked and one must queue along a marked line. (These lines are universal - even at bus stops - and the Japanese will not hesitate to correct you if you fail to follow them!) At the termini a small army of cleaners descends on the train, to ensure its spotless presentation and to turn the seats to face the direction of travel for the return journey. Both seating and windows are airline-style, but larger and more comfortable, with far more legroom than anyone actually needs! (Presumably this is necessary to allow the seats to be rotated.) The downside, however, is that luggage accommodation is limited. Larger suitcases have to be forwarded; this service is efficient but quite expensive. Just as in Britain, it is advisable to reserve a seat before travel. Nevertheless, the Shinkansen really is rail travel at its best.

There are a number of railway museums in Japan, but I was only able to visit one, the Umekoji Steam Locomotive Museum



in Kyoto. Originally founded to commemorate the centenary of railways in Japan in 1972, it is now administered by JR-West, along with the Museum of Modern Transportation in Osaka.

The Umekoji might fairly be described as "the Didcot of Japan"; it is based in a 1914-built half-roundhouse bordered by a railway triangle. In 1996, the 1904-built former Nijo Station House was rebuilt behind the roundhouse to serve as the museum entrance. The station is built in traditional Japanese style and is the country's oldest surviving wooden station building.

On arrival at the museum the first thing one saw was a photograph of Mallard! The Umekoji and the Museum of Modern Transportation were celebrating the 10th anniversary of their twinning with our own NRM. The most surprising feature of the museum was a room dedicated to the preserved railways of Britain! This featured photographs, a video, and cases containing British railway leaflets and Hornby models; one



*An overview of the Umekoji Museum [Top Left] which contains among others [Left-right Above]: 1935-built 2-6-4T No. C11 64; 1914-built 2-8-0 No. 9633; and No. 1080, as described in the main text.*

wonders what the inventors of the Shinkansen think of the models of a Virgin Pendolino and a Grand Central HST. Even the children's play area is modelled on Oxenhope station!

Apart from this, however, the Umekoji really is a steam locomotive museum. There was only one modern traction exhibit, an EMU driving coach. Even more surprisingly, there were no historic carriages or wagons on display. The displays inside the museum were almost entirely devoted to the technology of steam locomotives; this contrasts sharply with most British transport museums, which now place an increasing emphasis on the social impact of transport. Nevertheless, the locomotive collection is very impressive, currently comprising 19 engines. Five were on static display outdoors on the day of my visit, with the remainder undercover in the roundhouse. Unfortunately, the roof pillars tend to obstruct photography, though on the positive side, many of the cabs are open for inspection. Although most of the locos do carry English information boards, their content is sadly limited. Fortunately, after my return home I found an excellent English-language website containing information on all the Umekoji locos, as well as Japanese steam in general. This can be found at <http://homepage3.nifty.com/EF57/>

The collection's oldest locomotive is also its newest addition. No. 1080 was originally built by Dübs & Co. in 1901 as 4-4-0 No. 651. She was initially used for express passenger traffic on the Tokaido line from Tokyo to Osaka, Japan's oldest trunk route. In 1964, the New Tokaido line became the first Shinkansen route to open; thus, 1080 is the British-built predecessor of the bullet trains! In 1926 she was rebuilt as a 4-4-2T, becoming No. 1080 of the 1070 class; in 1940 she was sold off into industry, finally retiring in 1969. She was retained for many years by her owners, the Nittetsu Mining Co., while schemes to preserve her locally were discussed, but none came to fruition. Finally, in 2009 she was donated to the Umekoji and cosmetically restored.

There is a very short demonstration line at the museum; on the day of my visit, 8620 class 2-6-0 No. 8630 was in steam. These very elegant moguls were the first passenger locos to be designed and built in Japan, in 1914. At this stage, British influence was still strong; Japanese locomotive design became gradually

Americanised after WWI. Sadly, the coaches she pulled were theme-park style vehicles, complete with speakers playing the Japanese version of I've Been Workin' on the Railroad! 8630 has been confined to the museum since 1979, but two Umekoji locos are passed for main line operation: 1939-built 2-6-0 No. C56 160, and 1937-built Pacific No. C57 1.

Japan has much to interest the railway enthusiast and there is more that I would like to see, such as the main line steam operations and the 15" gauge Shuzenji Romney Railway. However, anyone considering a visit to Japan should be warned that they will face a real culture shock: English food - except McDonald's! - can be difficult to find, for example, and the language barrier is far more of a problem than in Europe. The heat and humidity during August can also be quite unpleasant! Nevertheless, those who are not put off by these difficulties should find a trip to Japan a rewarding one.

For more information on the history of the Shinkansen lines, *The World's Fastest Trains: From the Age of Steam to the TGV* by Geoffrey Freeman Allen is recommended.

*No. 8630 shunts into a siding for disposal after a day on the demonstration line.*



# CHILTERN'S NEW BIRMINGHAM TERMINAL

Mike Walker

From the start of the new timetable on 12th December 2010 Chiltern Railways have finally been able to use the terminal platforms at Birmingham Moor Street bringing to full cycle a story that began just over 100 years ago in July 1909 when the Great Western opened a temporary station which was replaced by a permanent structure in 1914.

Moor Street was built to serve the local trains from the North Warwick line from Stratford-upon-Avon and Leamington Spa to relieve congestion at Snow Hill station just 3/4 mile to the north. Because it occupied a rather cramped site between the Bordesley Viaduct and Snow Hill Tunnel it incorporated two unusual features. First the bay platforms (there were no platforms on the through lines originally) had traverser tables rather than crossovers to release locomotives whilst most of the goods accommodation was underneath the passenger station, reached by three electrically-powered hoists.

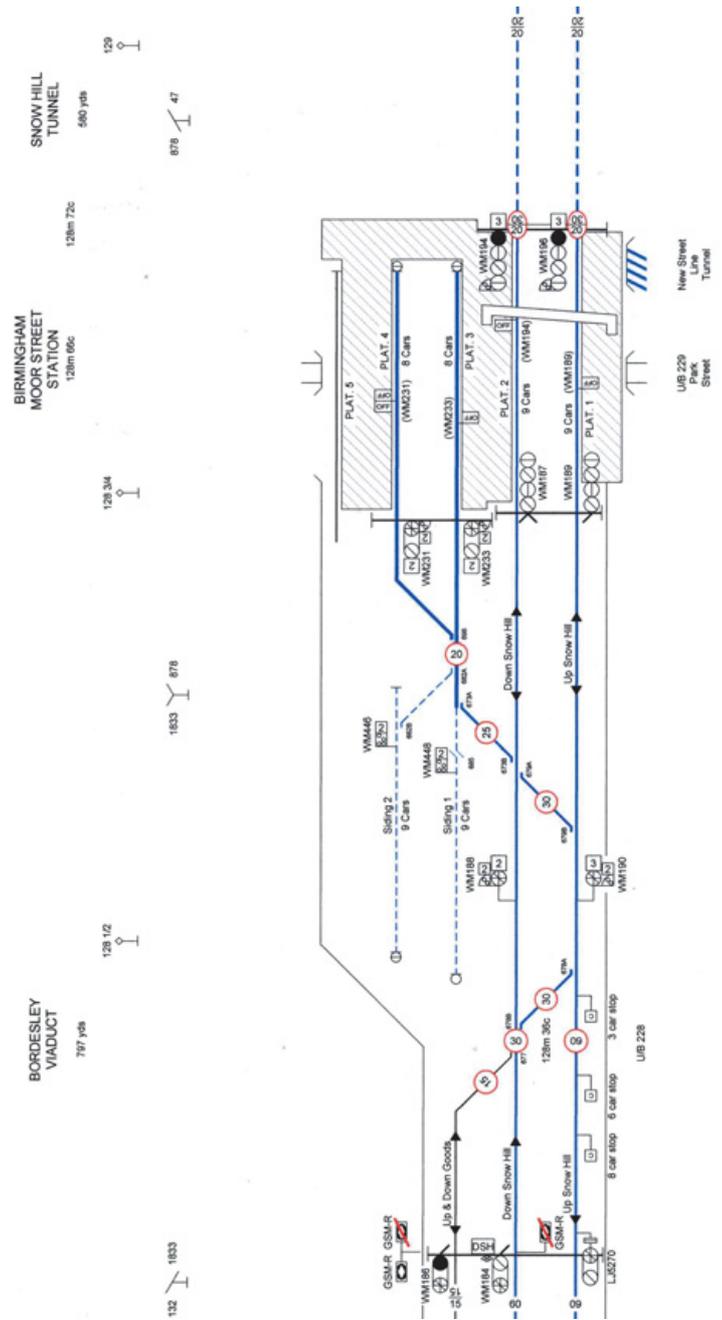
With the completion of the WCML electrification in 1967 Snow Hill closed and most of its services diverted to New Street although local services terminated at Moor Street. It had been intended to close this too but a lack of capacity at New Street reprieved it although the station was allowed to become very shabby.

In the mid-eighties BR decided to reopen Snow Hill, or more correctly open a new station on the site, as part of a new cross-city route. As part of this two new platforms were provided on the through lines at Moor Street and the terminal platforms closed. They were not demolished but left to decay further and become an eyesore.

Chiltern Railways decided the terminal would be perfect for their now twice-hourly services from Marylebone and in conjunction with the Birmingham Alliance undertook a £11million restoration of the station which was completed in 2002. The work was to a very high standard and returned the station to its GWR appearance even to getting special permission for period style signage and building a steamera water tower! It was hoped the terminal platforms would be reconnected to the network in 2003 but that proved optimistic to say the least.

First, Network Rail said the work could not be done until the area was included in the West Midlands resignalling project which would be 2005 or 2006. Both dates came and went. Then the DfT said it could not be done using any public funds. Finally everything came together this year.

One train per hour will now terminate or start from Moor Street which is closer and more convenient for both New Street and the Bull Ring centre than Snow Hill.



The superbly refurbished concourse [Above] and looking along platforms 3 & 4 [Left] towards the terminal building in 2008. The tracks have since been completely relaid without the crossover.

photos: Mike Walker

# THE LAST DAYS OF THE SLOUGH ESTATES RAILWAY

Peter Robins

The sprawling industrial estate north of the main line between Slough and Burnham dates back to the height of the Great War in 1917 when a depot was set up to repair motor vehicles being used in the conflict. When peace returned it developed into a commercial site and was served by its own railway.

This connected with the main line at the west end of Slough yard and having passed under the Farnham Road it divided into three branches running along the estate's three main avenues. There was also a passenger station within the estate but this was fed by a separate line branching off the main line at Farnham Road 'Box', west of the road bridge. There was no connection with the internal system except for a short period during the Second World War.



*photos by Peter Robins*

In its latter days, the system was reduced to a single line serving the estate's power station along Edinburgh Avenue. Originally this had burnt coal but was later converted to oil. The final traffic was therefore largely confined to tankers and was handled by one of two 0-6-0 saddle tanks.

The end finally came on 27th April 1973 when rail service was replaced by a pipeline from the BR exchange sidings. Fortunately, both locomotives survive in preservation.

Specially cleaned for the last day, No.3 emerges from the shed **[Top]** for the last time to start work. She was built by Hudswell Clarke, no. 1544, in October 1924 and delivered direct to Slough Estates - their first new locomotive purchase. It is now owned by the Slough & Windsor Railway Society who have just returned it to service on the Swindon & Cricklade.

Two days earlier, on 25th April, No.3 left the exchange sidings **[Middle]** with eight four-wheel tankers whilst an express passed by on the main line.

In better times, sister locomotive No.5 was running round in the exchange sidings **[Bottom]** on 22nd December 1970. Another Hudswell Clarke product, no. 1709, this was almost identical to No.3 and was supplied new to Slough in October 1939. It too is now preserved and is currently awaiting overhaul at the Emsay and Bolton Abbey Steam Railway.



On 20th July 1972 **[Right]** No.5 was being flagged across one of the many unguarded road crossings within the estate. In addition, much of the track was laid along the roads tramway fashion.

Later on the same day the locomotive returns from the exchange sidings **[Below]** with seven loaded tankers in tow. Note the classic cars in the factory car park. Two Ford Anglias, a Vauxhall Victor estate and a Triumph Herald - a sight to stir our Chairman's juices!

With what would become the railway's penultimate trip on 27th April 1973, No.3 **[Below right]** and seven tank wagons approach the Farnham Road bridge with the BR exchange sidings just beyond.



Naturally, I managed to bag a footplate ride on the very last trip as empties were taken down to BR **[Right]**. That's me in the cab **[Below]** as No.3 approaches the Farnham Road bridge for the last time.

*photo: Vaughan Machin*



# SKIPS FOR HIRE

Mike Walker



It is now more than a decade since the Class 67 locomotives first appeared on our railway network since when they have become a familiar sight up and down the country, particularly on the Joint Line where they operate the Wrexham & Shropshire services and, from next year, Chiltern's Birmingham services. It is perhaps therefore, an appropriate time to throw the spotlight on these machines.

At the time of privatisation in the late nineties, the Royal Mail was already expressing concern at the reliability of the ageing Class 47/7 locomotives used by BR's Rail express services (Res) division on its mail trains. To minimise disruption it was becoming common for services to be double-headed or top-and-tailed. When US-based Wisconsin Central made its bid to purchase Res it included a commitment to purchase a fleet of new locomotives but nothing happened until WC had also acquired the three BR trainload freight companies and brought them and Res under the English Welsh & Scottish (EWS) banner. It was now intended to order a fleet of 250 new Co-Co locomotives for freight services and a further 30 for the mail trains and use on charter and other trains.

As WC President Ed Burkhardt and his Vice President Motive Power Jim Fiske were both dyed-in-the-wool General Motors disciples it is not surprising that after the briefest of investigations as to whether this requirement could be met by UK suppliers, GM were awarded the contract. The freight locos became, of course, the Class 66 and for ease were based on the Class 59 bodyshell but with a completely re-engineered power train and running gear. Initially it was proposed by WC and GM that the passenger/mail loco would be an adaptation of this design on high speed bogies and with Electric Train Supply (ETS) equipment. The sub-class 66/4 was initially allocated to this variant within EWS.

It soon became apparent that there was no available three-axle self-steering high speed bogie available to use although whether the bogie used by Brush on the Class 89 prototype (a loco known to be a smooth rider whereas the HTC-R bogie under the 66's has a reputation for a rough ride) was considered is not known. In addition Railtrack expressed concern at the proposed design and in effect rejected it on the grounds of its weight and effect on the track especially as it was intended to have a top speed of 125mph. So it was back to the drawing board.

With GM's Electro-Motive Division in the US having little, indeed no experience of building high-performance passenger

*67014 passing High Wycombe with a W&S training run on 8th April 2008.*

*all photos: Mike Walker*

locomotives it turned to its European partner Alstom for assistance in fulfilling EWS's aspirations. Fortunately Alstom already had a family of locomotives which it had developed for the European market which it called its 'Prima' series which, with some redesigning to fit the UK loading gauge, could be modified to meet the EWS specification.

The 'Prima' range comprised both Bo-Bo and Co-Co models mostly with GM-supplied power trains but others had both Ruston or MTU engines and Alstom electrical equipment. The series was built for Sri Lanka and Israel prior to the EWS order and later for RENFE in Spain, Syria, Iran, New Jersey Transit in the US and SNCF Fret in France. Apart from the NJT fleet which are single ended, all have the styling which would soon become familiar in the UK and were built at the former Marcosa plant in Valencia, Spain.

The Wisconsin Central specification for the new locomotives called for as much commonality with the Class 66 as possible to contain costs by reducing spare parts inventories, simplify maintenance procedures and staff training. Consequently the same engine was used, the EMD 12N-710G3B-EC. This is a two-stroke 45° V12 of 230.18mm bore and 279.4mm stroke giving a total capacity of 139.56 litres and developing 3200hp at 904rpm. The unit is turbocharged and inter-cooled but like all EMD turbocharged engines, the charge device is actually a turbo-supercharger. Because the engine is a two-stroke it has to be force scavenged on every cycle to remove the spent exhaust gas from the cylinder through the ports in the cylinder wall (on a four-stroke the upward exhaust stroke of the piston forces the gases out of the exhaust valve) so at low speeds, when the engine is idling, the charger is gear-driven from the crankshaft. As engine speed builds a centrifugal clutch disengages and the exhaust gas is passed through the turbine section of the charger as in a conventional turbocharger.

The engine is coupled to the main alternator which because of the different performance characteristics of the locomotive, differs from that of the Class 66. In that type it's an EMD AR8 whereas the Class 67 has a model AR9. Both have the same auxiliary alternator, model CR9 which is piggybacked onto the main alternator and provides power for exciting the main alternator field windings and powers the locomotive's auxiliaries and charges the batteries. Also mounted piggyback

The Marlow Donkey



67025 Western Star on a FGW service at Cardiff Central on 19th August 2009. This is the no.2 end with the cooler group.

fashion on the Class 67 is an EMD HEP7 alternator which supplies the power for the Electric Train Supply (ETS) or Head End Power (HEP) as it is known in North America.

The engines were manufactured at EMD's La Grange plant in suburban Chicago Illinois whilst the electrical equipment was sourced from their Canadian plant at London Ontario and shipped to Valencia for installation in the bodyshell. The engine and alternator assembly is mounted within the body with the alternators facing the opposite end to the radiators or no.1 end. Unlike the Class 59 and 66 which follow North American construction practice with a heavy structural underframe, the Class 67 construction is closer to previous UK practice with an integral load-bearing body structure. The electrical compartment housing the solid-state rectifiers and control equipment are also contained at the no.1 end.

The locomotive rides on two four-wheeled Alstom designed and built bogies. These fabricated units have wheelbase of 9' 2" with 3' 2" wheels. The traction motors are EMD D43FM dc units which are frame mounted and are gear driven to the axle unlike the D43TR motors in the Class 66 which are axle-hung nose-suspended units. However the two variants share the same major components including brushes, commutators and armature/field windings. The use of frame mounted motors in the Class 67 is to reduce the unsprung weight and therefore potential track damage.

The completed locomotive is 64' 7" long, 8' 9" wide and 12' 9" high with the bogies pivoted at 38' 1" (total wheelbase 47' 3"). The 1,201 gallon fuel tank is mounted under the frame between the bogies. In cross-section the locomotive is built to almost the maximum allowed by the UK loading gauge and the original design weight was specified at 88 tonnes although the final weight turned out to be 90 tonnes; by far the heaviest of any British four-axle diesel locomotive, others being typically 70 to 78 tonnes although the electric locos weigh up to 84 tonnes.

Performance, on paper, is impressive. The power at the rail is 2,500hp; the other 700hp being lost in the transmission, auxiliaries and ETS. Equipped with EMD's "Super Series" traction control system, the maximum tractive effort is 31,770lbf whilst the continuous tractive effort is 20,200lbf generated at 46.5 mph.

They are unusual, and unique within the British fleet, in having both disc and a single composition tread brake on each wheel. This gives them a brake force of 78 tonnes or about 86% of the total weight. Typically, most British diesel locomotives have a brake force of approximately half their total weight. Only air brakes are fitted. They are equipped for multiple unit operation with Class 59 and 66 locomotives using the AAR (Association of American Railroads) system with the jumper cable being stowed in the carbody when not in use. They were also all fitted with RCH jumper cables to enable them to work with the PCV vehicles at slow speed on mail trains within the Railnet [www.mdrs.org.uk](http://www.mdrs.org.uk)

terminals. They cannot work with the TDM-equipped (Time Division Multiplex control) DVT's originally used on the East and West Coast routes. In addition to conventional screw couplings, they are also equipped with swing-head buckeye couplers. When deployed, these protrude sufficiently from the front of the locomotive to ensure the buffer heads do not touch those of the adjoining vehicle. As a result the buffers do not have to be retractable as they are on coaching stock. When the buckeyes are in use they take all the buffing as well as pulling action.

The first locomotive was completed in the July 1999 and EMD allocated it their model designation JT42HW-HS in their export series. This alphabet soup translates as follows:

J: Twin cab carbody.

T: Turbocharged engine.

42: 12 cylinder 710 series engine.

H: Head End Power

W: Standard or wide gauge.

HS: High speed.

EMD's order number was 968742 and despite being built in Spain, forms the locomotive works numbers as 968742-1 to 968742-30. The '96' indicate the year the order was entered into EMD's books (although it was right at the end of the year!) and the 8xxx series is used to indicate an export order. Alstom allocated its serial numbers 2041 to 2070. Although ordered and operated by EWS, they are owned by Angel Trains and leased to the operator. This is common practice and removes the high up-front capital expenditure from the operator's books.

Upon completion, 67001 ran initial trials on the test track within the Valencia plant whilst 67002 was taken by road for high-speed testing on a newly completed section of the Spanish high-speed line at La Sagra near Toledo, the "traditional" lines in Spain being broad gauge of course. The first locomotive to be shipped to the UK was 67003 in October 1999.

Entry into service was delayed by a number of issues. First when the locomotive was placed on the track it exhibited a distinct list to one side but this was found to be caused by the locomotive not settling correctly on its bogies. However, acceptance to run on the national network took some weeks due to the weight issues. Railtrack eventually allowed the locos to start work over specified routes but imposed an operating speed limit of 80mph. It was not until mid-2001 that they were authorised to operate at 125mph following modifications to the bogie design. In practice they have seldom, if ever, operated at that speed in service and were soon restricted to 110mph. They carry Route Availability 8 but even so there are several routes from which they are barred or subject to local class-specific speed restrictions due to their weight.

All thirty had been delivered to the UK by the spring of 2000 and swiftly replaced the Class 47/7 locomotives on Royal Mail services becoming a familiar sight up and down the country. But in March 2004, the Royal Mail suddenly terminated its contract with EWS removing at a stroke most of the work for the fleet. From the start they had been used for charter trains but there weren't enough of them to employ a fleet of nearly new and very expensive assets.

The type is largely unsuitable for freight service particularly if shunting is required en route. This is because the driving position is, like an HST, closer to the locomotive centre line than other designs and therefore the driver can not look out of the side window to observe ground staff and operate the controls. On other freight duties their adhesion is inferior to a Class 60 or 66. Several of the class were placed in warm storage for a period but fortunately other work was starting to appear.

First, GNER contracted EWS to provide several daily for "Thunderbird" duties on the East Coast Main Line. These are

stationed at strategic points along the line, crewed and ready to go to the rescue of a failed train. Next, the type was used to replace Class 37/4s on the sleeper trains in Scotland. Their introduction here was at first problematic as complaints were received from passengers about abrupt braking and EWS found that the brake shoes were wearing out after only one round trip! At first EWS blamed ScotRail's drivers accusing them of being too heavy-handed. Tests and trials showed that the problem lay with the brakes themselves and their interaction with those on the Mk3 sleeping cars which are set-up differently from those on other Mk3s. The cure was to replace the composition brake blocks with cast iron ones but as a result those locomotives were restricted to 80mph. In addition to this restriction, the 67's are also subject to several severe local restrictions as slow as 20mph over some underbridges in deference to their high axle-loading. As a result the journey times on the Highland sections of the Caledonian Sleepers has been extended since the days of the Class 37s. There are currently five members of the class, 67004, 67007, 67009, 67011 and 67030 equipped with cast iron brakes and those locos are also fitted with RETB (Radio Electronic Token Block) equipment for operation on the West Highland lines. As a result they are in a special WABN pool and are seldom seen outside Scotland.

First ScotRail also uses the type, generally from the WABN pool to work two diagrams on the Fife Circular services operating out of Edinburgh. Sister company First Great Western has also made use of the type for the past two-three years employing a pair each day to top-and-tail a train on a Taunton - Cardiff corridor. This past summer saw these switched to a Paignton - Cardiff diagram whilst Virgin Class 57/3s supplied by GBRf took over the original diagram. However when problems were experienced with the latter, FGW cancelled that contract and hired in a second pair of Class 67s as a replacement. FGW has also been using them on its Summer Saturday Bristol to Weymouth relief trains. With further Class 150 Sprinters now beginning to move to FGW, one of the 67 diagrams was stood down in early October 2010 and the second ceased on 12th November. It is not yet known if the Weymouth service will be loco-hauled next year.

Three members of the class have been prepared for special duties. Two, 67005 and 67006, have been selected for operation on the Royal Train replacing the former two dedicated 47/7s and have been painted in the Royal Claret livery. When not required for their prestigious role they form part of the general pool and can be found on any duty including the occasional freight. They seem to be a particularly popular choice for enthusiast trips. For use on the EWS executive train, 67029 was repainted in a silver livery and fitted with a TDM decoder to operate in push-pull service with the matching EWS DVT 82146. Again, when not required for executive train duties it can appear anywhere - including getting filthy dirty on railhead treatment trains in autumn.

Open-access operator Wrexham & Shropshire opted to use Class 67's in push-pull operation with DVT's and Mk3 stock. Five locomotives have been placed in a dedicated pool (WAWN) for their use and modified. This includes fitting remotely operable fire extinguishing equipment on the locomotive. The five DVT's operated by W&S were modified to operate on the AAR system and the necessary jumpers added and to the W&S rolling stock. The AAR system was chosen over the TDM system as it was seen as more reliable although the DVT's retain the TDM equipment to permit them to operate with similarly equipped electric locomotives if required. The five W&S locos have also been repainted in the company's classy silver and grey livery.

When one of the WAWN pool locos is not available and one of the "regular" Class 67s is substituted (except 67029) it is necessary for the locomotive to be manned when pushing even



*67027 Rising Star on a rare freight working at Great Rocks on 26th October 2006. This is also the no.2 end but shows the other side with the central air intake at the far end.*

though it is being driven from the DVT. This is in case a fire breaks out. Similarly, when two of the class are being used to "top-and-tail" a train, the trailing locomotive is normally shut down and dragged. In such situations the battery is isolated and therefore the integrated tail lights are not lit so it is normal practice to place a portable tail lamp on the rear. If the trailing locomotive is running, for example to supply ETS in the event of a defect on the leading locomotive, then the trailing locomotive has to be manned.

From probably December 2011 a number of Class 67s, possibly as many as six, will be employed daily by Chiltern Railways to work with Mk3 stock on its Marylebone to Birmingham trains. These will operate in push-pull mode so they will need to be modified in the same way as the W&S fleet. At present no decision has been taken as to whether they will be in a common pool with the W&S examples or a separate one and whether they will wear a version of the Chiltern livery debuted on 82302.

Whilst in service the class is quite well thought of by operators for its general reliability, it is less popular with drivers. Enthusiasts may have bestowed the sobriquet "Skip" on them (because of their appearance when turned upside-down) but drivers would refer to them by the same name for different and closer to home reasons. For a start, the cab is cramped and badly laid out. EMD is well known for getting an attack of the vapours if a customer should have the audacity to request something non-standard. Whilst the 67, and 66, are by any measure non-standard for EMD, there are limits. For many years, American locomotive cabs have featured a "control stand"; a large box-like free-standing item at the driver's left containing all the main controls. Among them is the throttle which you pull towards you to increase power as is common practice on all locomotives and units around the world. When it built the original Class 59s EMD took this control stand and simply turned it round to be on the driver's right (remember they drive their trains on the wrong side too - just like their cars) with the result that to take power you push the throttle away from you. This arrangement was retained on the Class 66 despite it being the biggest single order EMD had ever received, 250 locomotives or 500 cabs! One would have expected the well laid-out and highly thought of Class 60 control desk would have been used but no, EWS's American owners obviously wanted to stick with what they understood.

In the Class 67 this poor design is compounded. The control stand was done away with and more conventional desk controls adopted. But, the throttle is the same unit only it has been turned on its side and placed on a centre console extension to

the desk. When mounted in a control stand, the reverser, a brass handle with three positions, forward, neutral and reverse, is below the throttle but when the unit is mounted in a 67 this control is between the driver and the throttle and one's wrist is continually banging into it when adjusting the throttle! In another piece of stunningly bizarre design (if that's an appropriate term) the windscreen wiper control is mounted on the right lower corner of the same centre console with the result that, unless one is very careful, it is almost impossible to enter or leave the second man's seat without switching on the wipers yet the driver, unless he has arms proportional in length to those of a chimp, has the greatest difficulty in reaching it from his seat! The view forward is restricted and almost non-existent to the sides which means it's like looking down a tunnel. Whilst the cab interior is reasonably quiet and the ride fairly smooth, unlike the widely disliked Class 66 which is both noisy and rough-riding, during the many miles your writer has travelled in Class 67 cabs I've noticed a background hum and vibration that does become wearing after several hours.

Despite their impressive power output on paper, their acceleration, or lack of it, is legendary. On my first cab experience we left Shrewsbury headed for Crewe. Admittedly, it's slightly uphill, on a fairly tight curve and we did have six Mk3s and no less than three dead 67s on the drawbar but progress was painfully slow even with the Super Series control in action giving a gentle shudder akin to the traction control or ABS kicking in on your car. I quipped that our driver ought to release the brakes which received a very blunt reply! Later when the load was reduced to three coaches and a single dead 67, an EWS driver/conductor who had taken the controls south from Crewe, joked that the 67s have a special alarm; "We set it to wake us up when we reach fifty". On another occasion, a Virgin driver conducting on the WCML north of Stafford pointed out the 90mph restriction through Norton Bridge but remarked our driver could safely ignore it as our "Skip" would probably not even reach that speed by the end of the restriction - it didn't! HST power car substitutes, they are not.

Recently, whilst discussing braking risks with Mark Edlington, Operations Manager for W&S, he remarked that it's "not the stopping we have issues with, but getting the damn things going again." Thanks to the combination of disc and tread brakes, their ability to stop is indeed impressive even on poor railhead conditions. For that reason, W&S (and in future Chiltern) are specially authorised to operate the type with Mk3 stock at the same speeds on the Chiltern Line as the Class 168 units whereas all other loco-hauled trains including 67s with non-Mk3 stock are restricted to slower speeds.

It is ironic then that the only major accident to date involving a Class 67 was due to a brake problem. On 1st November 2000 67002 ran away down Filton Bank near Bristol whilst working a mail train. With no brakes available, the train crashed into the rear of a loaded coal train that was just starting to move out of Lawrence Hill station. The 67 became detached from its train and rode up on top of the rear four coal hoppers before being stopped by an overbridge. Fortunately the driver received relatively minor injuries and remarkably little damage was inflicted, a testament to the strength of the design, and after repairs the loco returned to service. Having spent a whole day with 67002 earlier this year, I can vouch that you can't see the join! Subsequent investigation showed that the reason for the brake failure was that the locomotive had been set up wrongly following shunting operations at the Stoke Gifford Railnet terminal rather than a fault on the locomotive itself.

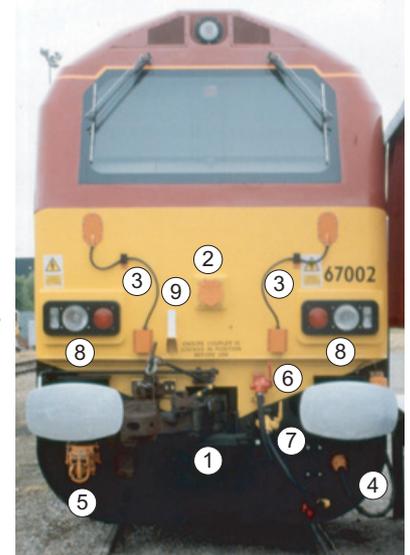
Today the locomotives are familiar sight and will remain so for many years to come. None have joined the exodus of Class 66s to work in France although at the time of writing, mid-October, three (67001, 67009 and 67011) are currently stored serviceable as part of DB Schenker's "tactical reserve". This [www.mdrs.org.uk](http://www.mdrs.org.uk)

leaves only three available for the sleeper services. Apart from the Royal, W&S and Executive locos, all still wear the factory applied maroon and gold livery although some are beginning to look a little jaded. The exception is 67018 which was repainted in a bright orange-red last summer to mark the retirement of Keith Heller as the company's chief executive. Contrary to some reports, this shade of red is not that of DB Schenker but rather that used by Canadian National on its locomotives in recognition that Mr Heller spent most of his career with CN.

It is not widely known, but at one stage Virgin came close to ordering a fleet of similar locomotives for its Cross Country services. Unlike the 67, it would have been single ended and operate in push-pull service but otherwise would have shared roughly the same appearance and specification. In the end they went for Voyagers instead of course.

The Class 67 is by far the most cosmopolitan of locomotives ever to operate in the UK. Ordered by Americans, built by an American-Spanish partnership, owned by a British company and used by an operator successively owned by American, Canadian and now German companies! From redundant Posties they've moved on to become the industry's preferred hire loco, picking up a Royal warrant along the way.

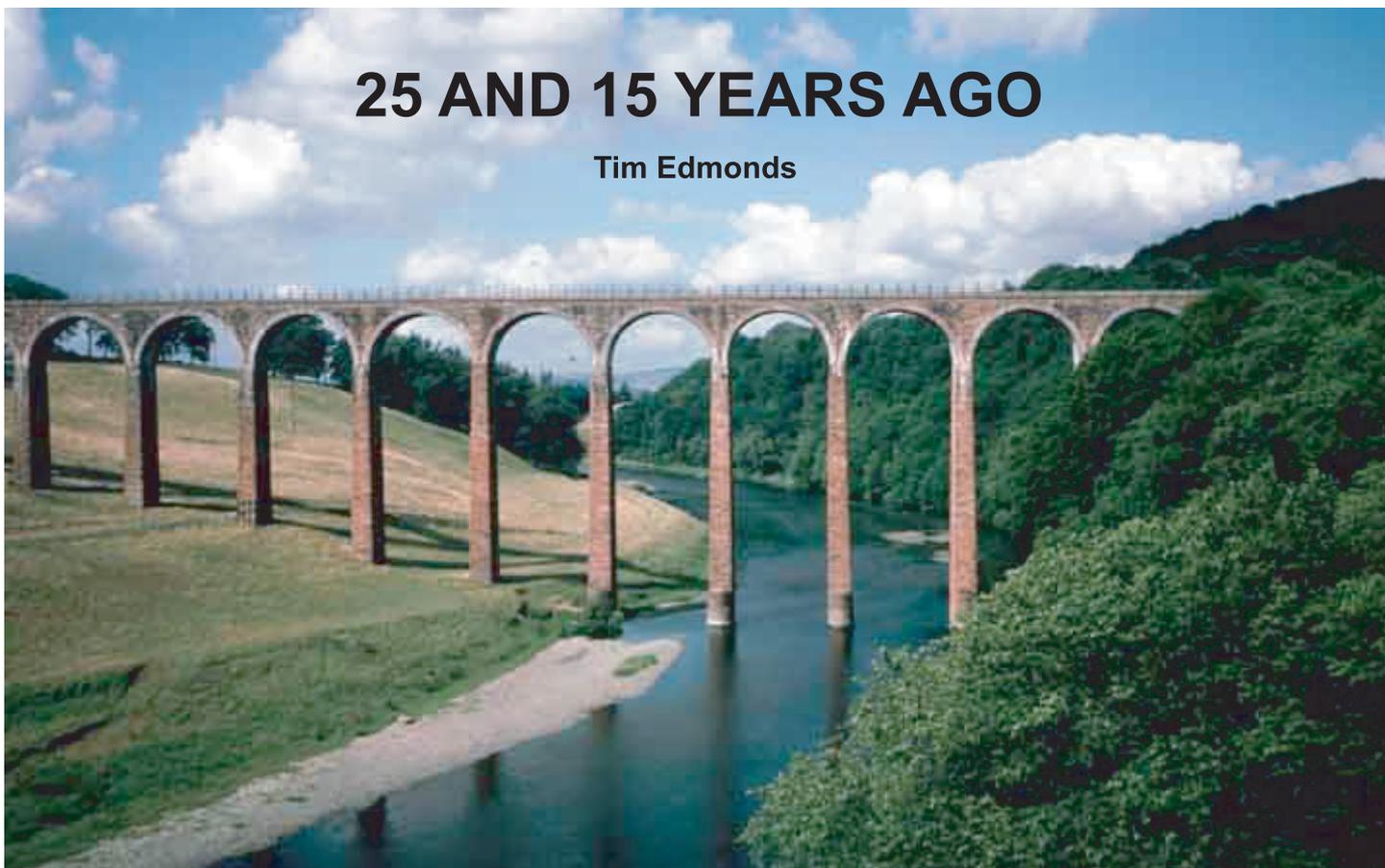
- 1: Swing-head coupler
- 2: AAR MU socket
- 3: RCH jumpers
- 4: ETS jumper
- 5: ETS receptacle
- 6: Brake pipe (red)
- 7: Main reservoir pipe (yellow)
- 8: Head/tail/marker lights
- 9: Lamp bracket



- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1: Reverser                       | 8: Ammeter               |
| 2: Throttle                       | 9: Horn                  |
| 3: Automatic (train & loco) brake | 10: NRN radio set        |
| 4: Independent (loco only) brake  | 11: EM2000 computer      |
| 5: Speedometer                    | 12: Q-Tron data recorder |
| 6: Air reservoir gauges           | 13: AWS reset            |
| 7: Brake pressure/flow gauges     | 14: Wiper controls       |

# 25 AND 15 YEARS AGO

Tim Edmonds



## 25 YEARS AGO

Discussions were taking place in December 1985 about the future of the magnificent 19-arched Leaderfoot viaduct over the Tweed at Drygrange, near Melrose. Disused since the withdrawal of goods services from the last remaining stub of the former North British Railway line from Reston to St Boswells in 1965, BR had applied to demolish the viaduct four years previously. Among the options being considered was a transfer of ownership to the National Trust for Scotland. Nothing came of that, but eventually the viaduct was saved and restored.

On 22nd January four GM 3,300hp diesel-electric locos ordered by Foster Yeoman for working heavy stone traffic were unloaded at Southampton Docks. On 24th January 59001/2/3/4 were hauled to Westbury by 47294 before delivery to their purpose-built depot at Merehead the following day. The new locos then travelled to Derby for a period of testing by the Railway Technical Centre before entering regular service.

In 1985 the famine in Darfur prompted an EEC-funded project to improve railway communications to the area. The programme included refurbishment of six Sudan Railways North British class 310 2-8-2 locomotives by the British specialist firm Hugh Phillips Engineering. While the main repair work was undertaken in Sudan at Atbara, the boilers were brought to Tredegar, in South Wales, for renovation during the winter of 1985/6.

A ministerial visit to the new Baker Street Control Centre on London Underground made news in February because of the new technology being used - a mouse-controlled computer. Transport Minister David Mitchell tried out the new device when he was shown the computerised signalling system for the Metropolitan and Jubilee lines on 4th February. The new centre was due to go into use between September 1986 and January 1987 for the entire Jubilee line and the parallel section of the Metropolitan between Finchley Road and Wembley Park. It would later be extended to cover the entire Met as well as parts of the District and Circle lines.

*The elegantly beautiful Leaderfoot viaduct across the Tweed at Drygrange, on the former Reston to St Boswells line, as it was on 21st August 1977. Twenty-five years ago it was under threat of demolition, but has subsequently been restored and is now grade A listed.*

*all photos: Tim Edmonds*



*On 20th June 1986, Just a few months into service hauling bulk stone from Merehead, 59001 is seen passing Pewsey station with a loaded train. The footbridge was relocated from Cookham.*

*From Sudanese sunshine to a Welsh winter - the boiler from one of the six NB class 310 2-8-2s rests outside the Hugh Phillips Engineering workshops during the renovation programme at Tredegar, 13th February 1986.*





*The restoration of Barrow Hill shed was in the news 15 years ago. It is seen here in its operational days with 08871 and 20046 resident on 25th February 1979.*

## 15 YEARS AGO.

One of two surviving vehicles from the two four-coach units comprising Bulleid's 4DD class of double-decker EMUs, the driving vehicle from unit 4002 was bought by the East Kent Railway after a long period of uncertainty over its future. Withdrawn from Slade Green depot in 1971 and arriving at the Northampton & Lamport Railway in 1984, this unusual vehicle was almost scrapped on two occasions and had latterly been stored in a deteriorating condition at Pitsford & Lamport station.

In 1995 Chiltern Railways became only the second train operating company to win the prestigious Charter Mark award for excellence in public service - Anglia Railways having been the first. The presentation was made to Chiltern's MD Adrian Shooter on 4th December.

In the 50th anniversary year of *The Three Railway Engines*, the first of his railway books, the Revd Wilbert Awdry was awarded the OBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list for his services to children's literature. Aged 84 and too frail to travel to Buckingham Palace to collect his award, the author was represented by his son Christopher, for whom the stories were written.

Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST *Sir Robert Peel* was bought by the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway and became the first steam loco to be based permanently on the line since passenger operations started. Formerly owned by the East Lancashire Railway, the loco had been based on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for the past three years.

The plan to reopen the former Midland Railway roundhouse at Barrow Hill as a working centre for steam and diesel locomotives took a step forward following a decision by Chesterfield Borough Council to authorise repair work costing £350,000. Work started in February 1996, with an expected completion date of January 1997, and already the project was oversubscribed by owners wishing to bring their locos to Barrow Hill.



*On 18th October 1995, shortly before its sale to the East Kent Railway, one of the two surviving Bulleid double-deck EMU coaches was stored in a shockingly neglected condition at Pitsford & Lamport station.*

## POSTSCRIPT

It was ten years ago that John Tuck, then Editor of *The Marlow Donkey*, approached me to ask if I'd like to write a regular article reviewing happenings from 25 and 15 years ago. I decided to give it a go... and it just kept going! This proved to be an ideal excuse to browse through my back numbers of *The Railway Magazine* (from whose pages about 80% of the material has been obtained) and my own photographic collection (from where most of the pictures originate) to come up with a selection of stories and incidents that might be of interest. However, now that the 15 years ago of 2001 has become the 25 years ago of 2011 I will be in danger of repeating myself, so it seems like a good time to stop. It's been fun - and if you have enjoyed it too, then so much the better.

# CHRISTMAS BOOK REVIEWS

With Christmas fast approaching here are reviews of two recent publications with a local flavour you might be considering giving or hope to receive.

## **Sir William McAlpine - A Tale of Locomotives, Carriages and Conservation**

**John Chatsfield Oakwood Press £10.95**

**ISBN 978 0 85361 688 7**

I am not a great reader of biographies and those that I do are rarely connected with railways but this was a must for me. The book is not large being merely 120 pages but packed with information and photographs concerning the man known to many as "Mr Bill" and latterly as "Sir Bill". The first two chapters deal with his early life and family connections that go back to almost pre-history. Then we move onto the Fawley Hill Railway and here the MDRS connection is mentioned.

Next is the RH&DR episode, a railway which might have well been lost had not William McAlpine intervened. Chapter 5 intervenes. Chapter 5 concentrates on the saving of Flying Scotsman after the bankruptcy of Alan Pegler and Flying Scotsman Enterprises, the company he had set up.

The former iron ore quarry site at Market Overton is dealt with next. Bill took over the rail connected site

## **The Branch Lines of Buckinghamshire**

**Colin G Maggs Amberley Publishing £16.99**

**ISBN 978 1 84868 342 6**

This slim, 144 page softcover does exactly what it says on the cover and in doing so can be a frustrating read. It covers each line with a separate chapter starting with the Wycombe Railway from Maidenhead to High Wycombe and then working its way clockwise around the county to the Leighton Buzzard to Dunstable line and ending with the Midland's Bedford to Northampton line which passed briefly through the far north east of the county at Olney. It also covers the two Joint Lines and the Great Central and Great Western lines beyond on the grounds that under BR both had been reduced to mere secondary lines although what Adrian Shooter thinks of his reinvigorated Chiltern Line being so described can only be imagined!

However it sticks strictly to the County boundaries so those lines which cross into other counties get only partial coverage. For example the Wycombe Railway chapter makes only a passing reference to the section from Maidenhead, starting its coverage with the viaduct at Bourne End. Likewise, the Princes Risborough to Oxford and Watlington (Chinnor) branches are covered only briefly as far as Bledlow and Bledlow Bridge respectively. The depth of coverage of each line can also be patchy, some very detailed whilst others are light on historic detail and concentrate on more recent developments.

On the other hand it does give the best coverage I've seen in print of the "military" branch to Halton and a good chapter on the Wolverton & Stony Stratford Tramway. The aborted proposal to construct a tramway between Newport Pagnell and Olney is also covered.

Curiously omitted are the two branches to Windsor and the West Drayton to Staines line all of which passed through the County when defined by its pre-1974 boundary. Perhaps the Author bases his work on the present County although this is not explained in the text.

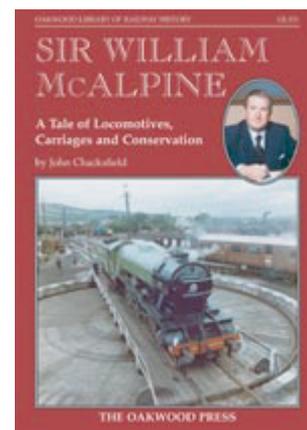
as a safe storage area for his and other preserved steam locomotives. I have to admit to previously being completely unaware of this episode.

We then move on to Steamtown, Carnforth then two chapters on carriages then the Railway Heritage Trust and how it was set up. The final chapter brings us up to date with Sir William's current interests.

Every MDRS member should read this book and I am surprised that copies have not been sold at a discount from a bulk order to our membership.

One last point; in Appendix Two an A to Z of Sir William's subscriptions and associations is listed, and very impressive it is. However a sad omission is that the title President does not appear alongside the Marlow & District Railway Society.

*David Gardner*



Many of the lines featured are of course covered by their own dedicated books but in summary this book is a good primer for anyone with a general interest in the development of the County's rail network but is to some extent an opportunity lost.

*Mike Walker*

