

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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Contents:

30A Revisited

We're going to Leamington

Early Years

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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CONTENTS

TIMETABLE - Forthcoming meetings	Page 2
CHAIRMAN'S NOTES Tim Speechley	2
SOCIETY & LOCAL NEWS	3
30A REVISTED Tim Edmonds	5
A WEEKEND IN CORNWALL Mike Walker	9
WE'RE GOING TO LEAMINGTON! Mike Page	11
EARLY YEARS Tim Speechley	15
THE LAST JOURNEY David Gardner	19

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

*Top: 4472 Flying Scotsman at Frinsbury Park. Friday 18 March 1969
Photo: Tim Speechley. (Article page 15)*

*Bottom: Steam Railmotor 93 the 8:30 from Liskeard to Looe just having stopped at Terras crossing.
11 November 2012
Photo: Mike Walker. (Article page 10).*

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- Thursday 20 December **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**
Our annual social gathering for members and families will largely follow the pattern of previous years. Full details from Mike Hyde 01628 485474.
- Thursday 17 January **19th CENTURY MONORAIL SYSTEMS** Adrian Garner
Adrian is the author of a recent and well-received book on this subject, so expect an informative talk on an amazing variety of monorails from around the world.
- Thursday 21 February **THE RAILWAY JOURNEY IN ART** Grahame Boyes
After the AGM; Grahame Boyes, a past president of the Railway & Canal Historical Society, and author of several publications on behalf of that Society, will give a talk on an overlooked railway subject 'The Railway Journey in Art'.
- Thursday 21 March **THE RAILWAYS OF PORTUGAL** Anthony Bowles
Tony Bowles from the Restoration and Archiving Trust, and the Continental Railway Circle, will give a talk on 'Railways of Portugal', largely in the days of steam.
- Thursday 18 April **WELSH STEAM IN THE 1960's** David Mitchell
David Mitchell has a lifetime of railway knowledge at his fingertips, and takes us through his experiences in his presentation of Welsh Steam in the 1960's.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Tuesday 29 January **FGW DRIVING SIMULATOR VISIT**
Our good friends at First Great Western have invited us to try our hand at train "driving" once again this time on the new Turbo simulator or possibly the HST simulator. The visit starts at 14:30 and lasts about 3 hours.
Details and bookings from Mike Hyde 01628 485474.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Elsewhere in this issue of the Donkey you will see I have written an article about some early experiences with the "Flying Scotsman". I suppose as a result of this early contact 4472 became quite a personal favourite and quite frankly the continuing saga of the locomotive's prolonged and seemingly never-ending restoration by the National Railway Museum has saddened me. Recently the damning report on this overhaul, written by Bob Meanley, has appeared in the public domain and makes pretty shocking reading. Really, for the money (our taxpayers' money, I hasten to add) they could have built a brand new replica to run on the main line and kept the original in authentic condition for display in the museum. As it is, so much has been wasted and there's precious little, even now, to show for it. I do think this loco is a beautiful machine but ownership in preservation has been a far from easy experience for any of its custodians.

When writing my article I did have some notebooks and diaries of my own to refer to but they are not quite as comprehensive as I might have liked in some respects. With relation to the railtours I found a wonderful internet site called "Six Bells Junction" on which there are details of timings and routes for all manner of special trains. It was particularly useful but the reason for mentioning this is that when looking up the Bressingham tour, the site acknowledges a certain Alan Costello for the details and I wonder if this is "our" Alan Costello – still a member of the MDRS and now living in Weymouth. Alan, will you let me know if it was you, please.

Whilst talking of damning reports, the situation regarding the Government's awarding of rail franchises has been appalling. I think when Sir Richard Branson "threw his toys out of the pram" on hearing Virgin had lost the West Coast franchise, everybody

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just thought it was a case of sour grapes. However, time has shown that this was not the case and his subsequent actions have certainly been vindicated. One just wonders what is going to happen whilst investigations are made and new procedures adopted.

My house move took place in mid-September, in fact just two days before my "70's Miscellany part 2" show for the Society. As a result, I haven't been anywhere or done anything very much since, though I did manage to get to Wycrail 2012, the High Wycombe and District Model Railway Society's annual exhibition, held for the first time at Cressex Community School, within walking distance of my new abode. It was good to see their and our member, Ron North, being praised in their President's introduction to the exhibition guide book for his generosity in giving away not one but two of his own layouts to the Culm Valley Model Railway Club in Devon, who had combined them and brought them back "home" to display them at this year's exhibition.

Finally, my plea in my last Chairman's Notes, for a volunteer to take on the role of Minutes Secretary for the committee, has borne fruit and John Newman has offered to help with this. Unfortunately John has had to have a hip replacement recently and this means he will be unable to take on this position until the Spring but nevertheless we thank him for putting himself forward and wish him a speedy return to full mobility.

In the meantime may I wish you all the very best compliments of the season – Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Our new season got off to a flying start in September when our Chairman, Tim Speechley, took time off from unpacking all his worldly possessions in his new house and presented his eagerly awaited second part of his Seventies Miscellany. Once again it was a nostalgic trip in time and took in some road transport and shipping as well as railways. It's amazing how much has changed in such a comparatively short period of time.

In October Graham Stacey returned for another fascinating trawl through the photographic collection of Ken Nunn. This time, in addition to homeland subjects including many the minor and light railways that existed a century ago often now almost forgotten, we were taken the near-continent to see some of the strange and weird-looking locomotives to be found across the Channel before the First World War. A truly fascinating evening.

We stayed slightly closer to home in November when Richard Crane, Chairman of The Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association took us on a tour of the line from Oxford to Cambridge as it was before much of it was closed. The timing was perfect because it came only weeks after final confirmation that the proposed Chiltern Oxford extension and the East-West Rail Link would go ahead reviving much of the route.

AND VISITS

We had only one "outdoor" event during the autumn which was a third visit to David Buck's private railway at Fifield on the 20th October where all motive power

was in operation with the exception of the Finnish Pacific on which restoration continues at a slow but sure pace. In the photo below, Mike Hyde and Vincent Caldwell study the finer points of Aveling Porter *Sir Vincent* whilst Peckett 0-4-0ST *Hornpipe* and the Andrew Barclay 0-4-0DM wait in the background.

David says he hopes to have the Pacific in steam next year and will invite us back for the launch.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions become due for renewal in January. The good news is that Peter Robins has decided to keep the rate unchanged for the coming year, that is £16.00. The reduced rate for those of you who live some distance away and therefore attend meetings only on rare occasions remains 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.

Please use the form supplied with this issue so we can ensure our records are kept fully up to date. 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*.

Photo: Tim Edmonds



SIMULATOR VISIT

Our planned return visit to FGW's driver training academy at Reading planned for December had to be postponed due to priorities within FGW. It will now take place on Tuesday 29th January between 14:30 and 17:30.

A completely new, more advanced Turbo simulator has been installed and the HST simulator refurbished. We hope to use both.

Whilst the event was fully booked there may be places if members can't make the new dates so if you are interested contact Mike Hyde as soon as possible.

WORK CONTINUES

The massive programme of works on our local railways continues. At Reading the new platforms are largely complete including the canopies as is the transfer deck. Track laying has commenced through the platforms and the "new" underpass at the east end of the station. The project is still on schedule and the new platforms will be brought into use at Easter..

Over Christmas major remodelling will take place at the west end of Acton Yard to clear space for the excavation of an underpass to take an additional up relief line. Work will also be undertaken to install a new crossover and signalling changes at Hayes.

Work has also begun on the replacement of the Duffield's Bridge at the east end of Sonning Cutting. The old, narrow bridge had insufficient clearance for electrification and being single lane, a bottleneck of road traffic.



60163 Tornado made its debut in its new early BR blue livery on 24th November when it worked a Steam Dreams 'Cathedrals Express' from Paddington to Ludlow and is seen near Cox Green.

Photo: Peter Robins

BIG POWER AT CHINNOR

Following a summer which has seen operations on the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway handled by a Peckett 0-6-0ST and a Sentinel, the autumn has seen the arrival of BR Standard 4 2-6-4T 80072 at the end of September on hire from the Llangollen Railway.

It is thought to be the first of its class to work the line and the largest steam loco at least in the preservation era. It is to remain at least into the start of 2013.

Photo: Mike Walker



30A revisited – a day at the Olympic Park

Tim Edmonds

In the summer of 2012 the eyes of the world were on one the biggest urban transformations seen in Britain – the Olympic Park in Stratford, East London. Most of the site used to be railway land, including Stratford works and shed (30A in BR days) and it is still both encircled and crossed by numerous railway lines, old and new. I had visited Stratford Depot on 14th July 1979 for a memorable Open Day, and a day at the Paralympics on 1st September 2012 enabled me to see the transformed site. It is possible to work out roughly where the depot and

works were from the surviving parts of the railway network, some of it incorporated into today's passenger system that so successfully carried the crowds throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games. There are still developments visibly in progress, notably as a result of the construction of Crossrail. The accompanying photographs, taken on a rather grey day, show some of what I saw of today's railways from the Olympic Park.

All photographs by Tim Edmonds taken on 1st September 2012 unless otherwise stated

Stratford International station and the Westfield shopping centre have been built on the land to the north-west of Stratford station which was once occupied by the old steam shed and works, and latterly by the diesel depot and the London International Freight Terminal. The new HS1 station is set below ground level and approached by tunnels from both ends. This shows the 07:14 Javelin train, on which I travelled from St Pancras, departing for Ebbsfleet International after depositing a relatively small number of early Paralympic patrons – perhaps a couple of hundred. It was a different story on departure in the late evening when each of the 12-coach trains was packed full with over a



thousand passengers, but waiting times were not excessive with queue management, loading and departures being handled well.



The Greenway Gate entrance to the Olympic Park goes under the Great Eastern main line and the Docklands Light Railway just to the north of Pudding Mill Lane DLR station. Here a DLR train to Stratford crosses Greenway Walk, with the Olympic stadium and Orbit tower behind. The Orbit is built on the site of Thornton Fields carriage sidings.



The tunnel of the new Crossrail line will emerge at Pudding Mill Lane station [**Above**] which, as a consequence, is to be relocated. This requires a new six-span viaduct to carry the realigned DLR (which will be double-tracked) and the new station, but the work in progress was suspended for the Olympics from the end of June until late September. This view shows some of the reinforced concrete supports for the diversion, with the existing station in the background.

The current Pudding Mill Lane station [**Below**] was opened in 1996 as an island platform on a passing loop. Although ideally located to serve the Olympic Park it was small and not worth developing due to its imminent replacement, so it was closed for two months from the middle of July. DLR trains continued to stop there because of the passing loop – here a six-car train pauses southbound as 315816 overtakes and heads for Liverpool Street.





The entrance from Stratford International is connected to the Olympic Stadium by Stratford Walk, a wide pedestrian viaduct that crosses both the DLR and the London Overground. Here 378213 approaches with the 13:44 ex Clapham Junction at the remodelled Channelsea junctions, from where it will terminate at the main Stratford high-level station since the DLR now uses the old low-level North Woolwich line alignment. In the background are the International Broadcast Centre and the

Riverbank Arena, and the DLR to Stratford International is on the right.

Two DLR trains pass on the approaches to Stratford International station. The DLR from Stratford Low Level is aligned inside High Meads curve, which links the London Overground line to Temple Mills East Junction and the Lea Valley line.





The River Lea runs right through the Olympic Park, with landscaping and walkways along much of it. Here 378214 approaches Lea Junction with the 14:55 ex Richmond, the Orbit tower and the Olympic Stadium forming an impressive backdrop.

Stratford as it used to be – 37160 is lifted off its bogies by the overhead crane in the Repair Shop during an Open Day held on 14th July 1979. Today this is roughly where Stratford International station is located.



All that remained of the steam shed at the time of the Stratford Open Day was part of the so-called 'New Shed', which was finally demolished in 1984.



A Weekend in Cornwall

Mike Walker

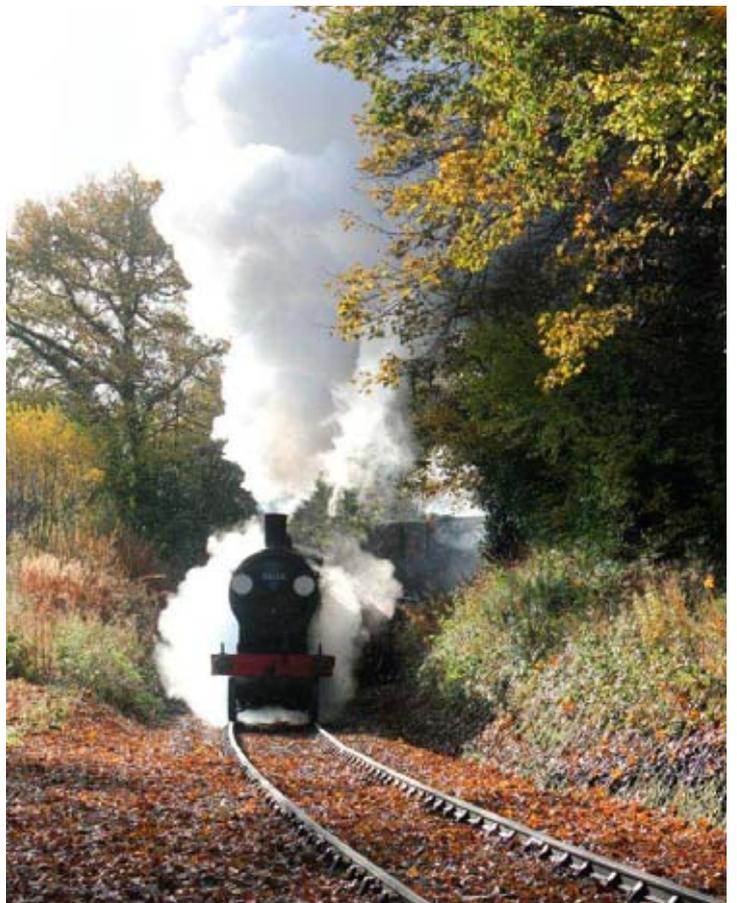
Gordon Rippington, Peter Robins and myself spent Remembrance weekend in Cornwall for two days of steam action.

On the Saturday we took part in a charter on the Bodmin & Wenford Railway organised by John Dagley-Morris and Mike Tyack of Steamscenes using T9 30120 which unfortunately, was not in the best of health with a serious steam leak on the cylinders and we had to keep waiting out showers for glimpses of sunshine.

Nevertheless some good shots were had including a well lit runby at Charlie's Gate [**Above**] in the afternoon and blasting out from the Dreason Bridge in the morning [**Right**].

The mixture of sun and showers produced a superb rainbow over Bodmin Parkway [**Below**] - unfortunately 30120 was at far end of the train.

All photos by the author unless stated.





Sunday was spent on the Looe Branch both watching and riding the Steam Railmotor which was making its debut on the national network following the previous week's cancellation due to two diesel failures.

The fact that this vintage vehicle, which has none of the modern safety devices or structural integrity, was able to operate at all is a tribute to the hard work and co-operation of FGW, the GWS, Network Rail and above all the Office of Rail Regulation which went out of its way to make it happen.

The Looe branch was an ideal location for the operation as it has no Sunday service in winter and trains on it are entirely isolated from the rest of the network. However, as we were to find out, it's a frustrating line when it comes to finding photo locations!

Apart from some minor operational problems that delayed the first couple of runs as the crew found their feet, all went very well. The first train of the day, the 08:30 Liskeard to Looe is seen restarting **[Top]** from the compulsory stop at Terras open level crossing just over a mile north of Looe.

The second run, at 10:30 from Liskeard, was largely run under leaden skies or pouring rain. This working also made a stop for two minutes at 11:00 as an act of remembrance.

We were fortunate to obtain tickets for the 12:30 train, which was an interesting experience, and the sun shone brightly on the 14:30 trip which is seen departing from Looe **[Middle]** whilst Peter Robins bagged the shot of the day as it approached Terras Crossing **[Bottom]**.

The event was judged a success and Mark Hopwood's verdict was: "We must do this again."

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WE'RE GOING TO LEAMINGTON!



Whenever my mother announced that we were going to Leamington, it raised excitement. Longer train journeys were confined to a few times a year, but a trip to see the Irish relatives, remembers MIKE PAGE, meant a fast, if relatively short run, with a 'King' class locomotive and occasionally, an afternoon on Leamington Spa (General) station.

While my Irish mother and one of her sisters had settled in Darlaston, West Midlands, her other two sisters and many of my Irish cousins and their friends from the County Limerick/Kerry border had chosen Leamington Spa. The attraction was the well-paid work at the large Lockheed Clutch & Brake automotive/airspace component manufacturer. There they met their future husbands or wives. One exception was my cousin Tony who worked for some months at Leamington locomotive depot (84D) in the mid 1950s before being drawn into 'Lockheed's'. I was very amused by his saying that he had had no idea steam engines were so big until he had to clean one!

So it was through these visits to see the Irish relatives every month or so that I got to know the ex-Great Western Railway's Leamington Spa (General) and its lesser neighbour, the London Midland & Scottish Railway's (Avenue) stations.

The first two Irish Aunts arrived in Leamington in the late 1940s, so my mother, being the eldest, soon wanted to see how her sisters were faring one Saturday in 1949. For some reason, our Saturday morning 'stopper' from Bilston (Central) to Birmingham (Snow Hill) always seemed to be pulled by

Observing the speed restriction on the southern approach to Leamington Spa General on January 27 1962, Wolverhampton Stafford Road shed's 6006 King George I, comes through non-stop with the 14.10 Paddington-Birkenhead express. The 'King' will come off the train at Wolverhampton to be replaced by a 'Castle' or a 'County' for the onwards run to Chester. A local class 116 diesel multiple unit sits in the bay with a train for Birmingham.

At the north end of Leamington Spa General, Oxley shed's 6870, formerly Bodicote Grange, arrives with the 10.45 Wolverhampton - Weymouth on August 6, 1965. The buildings of the 'Avenue' station with its distinctive chimneys can be seen on the right where a mineral train stands.

All photos by Mike Page

84D's '81xx' 2-6-2T 8109. There were still engines to be seen carrying the legend 'GWR' and some of the 'Castles' and 'Kings' (except the blue 'Kings') carried 'G W' with the GWR coat of arms in between. A few locos still had the GWR's art deco 'monogram'. The new legend: 'BRITISH RAILWAYS' in GW style lettering or plain sans serif could be seen too.

Changing trains at Birmingham (Snow Hill) was always exciting, particularly when a goods train blasted out from Snow Hill Tunnel the loco's exhaust echoing loudly under the extensive overall roof. There were some curiosities to be seen such as one of the Stourbridge or Kidderminster ex-GWR railcars working off-peak services to Dudley and beyond. Perhaps one of the local pick-up goods coming through would produce a 'rare cop' in the form of a South Wales or Bristol '57xx' or even a 67xx pannier tank in shiny black after repairs at Tyseley (84E) or Wolverhampton's Stafford Road works.





The down 'Pines Express' arrives at the General station on October 20, 1962: in charge, unusually, is Old Oak Common's very clean 'Castle' Class 4-6-0 5057 Earl Waldegrave.



The 116 DMUs arrived in 1957 and this one is to go to Hartlebury via Snow Hill and Stourbridge Junction on August 6, 1965. Saltley's 8F 48133 comes by with an up fitted freight.

There was always a fair crowd waiting to board the 11.35am (ex Wolverhampton) to Paddington, which would rush up the bank from the 'Jewellery Quarter' cuttings and short tunnels with its blue Stafford Road (84A) 'King' or green 'Castle'. On one occasion it was my 'favourite' engine that whisked us to Leamington: Stafford Road (84A)'s 4000 *North Star*.

'Our' engine, once given the green flag, would bark authoritatively into the Snow Hill tunnel and quickly gather speed down the incline into the 60s/70s. You had to look out at Bordesley for the Camp Hill line crossing above, where on one trip I saw Hasland (18C)'s 'Beyer-Garratt' 47992 forging uphill with a coal train. Bordesley and Tyseley yards were very busy, often producing a 'cop' in the form of a Pontypool Road 28xx, WD or 'RoD' 2-8-0 or a 43xx 2-6-0 from Bristol St, Philip's Marsh (82B).

Once we had swept around the curves through Tyseley Station, and particularly if the train was running a few minutes late, our engine would begin to accelerate into the 80s. There would be no let-up until slowing for the 60mph speed restriction through Hatton. Then all went quiet as we drifted down Hatton Bank with me on the look-out for a train on the down goods loop, such as Banbury (84C)'s WD 90572 with a heavy load of iron ore hopper wagons being banked by 84D's 51xx 2-6-2T 5194 or, on

Called forward by the home signal, Wellingborough's 9F 92082 creeps towards Avenue station with a freight off the Rugby line, April 27 1963.



one occasion, 84D's 2933 *Bilbury Court* was acting as banker. The banker resided in a short siding at the north end of Warwick station.

The brakes would come on as we crossed the River Leam giving a grand view of Warwick Castle on the west side. Next landmark as we ran up a short incline out of a cutting was the Ford Motor Company's iron foundry on the west side. There would be one or two of 84D's 57xx pannier tanks around, such as 3619 or 3631, shunting the Ford sidings or in the yard on the east side. In 1949 one of the shunters could have been 84D's elderly '2721' pannier tank 2772.

As we slowed for entering the up main platform there would usually be 84D's diesel railcar W26W sitting in the down bay waiting to make its next trip to Stratford-upon-Avon. The frustration was the speed at which my mother wanted to leave the station. Usually as we emerged into the forecourt, our 'King' or 'Castle' would be barking echoingly across the bow truss girder bridge getting up speed for the climb to Harbury. Another sight of interest was the Midland Red bus garage opposite the station.

It was usually twilight or dark when we returned to the station, where on a Saturday evening the platforms looked bleak with no trains present. We'd sit on the platform seats until the down platform starter suddenly dropped. Shortly afterwards, two



lamplights suddenly appeared from around the bend and often it would be one of 84A's 'Castles', with safety valves simmering, that would come gliding by with its welcoming, cosy-looking lit coaches.

It was a great thrill to stand at an open window to hear our 'Castle' working hard up Hatton Bank and then to tear through the stations such as Knowle & Dorridge and Solihull at a good speed; trains always seemed to go much faster at night! The lengthy roof canopies on those stations amplified the sound and dynamism of our rapid passage. Then as the train rushed into Snow Hill Tunnel and slowed you'd hear the clanging of a device hitting the wheels to let the engine crew know that the train was still moving up the steep climb in the dark tunnel. As the train emerged, there would be a loco seen sitting at a dimly-lit subterranean parcels platform on the left, before finally we

On the south side of Leamington, at the start of Whitnash cutting, Oxley's 6831 Bearley Grange climbs towards Harbury with a load of ballast on August 31, 1963. In the distance on the right can be seen Leamington locomotive shed; the ex-LMS line to Rugby and Weedon lies beyond it.



On the bitterly cold day of February 2, 1963, Tyseley's 6861 Crynant Grange is backing a lengthy freight into the up sidings from the station avoiding lines at the General station. On the right can be seen Avenue's station buildings. It appears that the footbridge has recently been repainted ready for the station's closure in two year's time! Local trains from the Birmingham direction often arrived and departed from the bay platform. Note the bay's starter signal with indicator board on the left.

reached the open air of Snow Hill station. From then on, it was an all-stations crawl to Bilston Central in a steamy compartment and hauled by a 51xx 2-6-2T.

Sometime in 1948 this six-year-old had been given the booklet Famous Locomotive Types No 5 – Kings and Castles of the GWR by O.S.Nock, which for the next four years or so was my only book with GW numbers in it! It limited me to collecting 'Kings and Castles only', though I had pencilled other numbers on the pages such as Lydney's '2021' pannier tank 2121 and Leamington's 2933 *Bilbury Court*. The only other 'Saint' I ever saw was 2920 *Saint David* sitting in Moor Street station sometime in early 1953



Saltley's 44841 slows through Whitnash cutting on April 27 1963 with a train of mostly vans heading north to Birmingham.



At Whitnash, Newport's 5939 Tangle Hall has Gresley coaches forming a Wolverhampton-Weymouth train on August 31, 1963.

Leamington shed (coded LEAM then 84D) had two 'Saints' when British Railways opened for business in 1948. The other 'Saint' was a famous 'Lady': 2902 *Lady of the Lake*: she lasted until August 1949. 2933 was running around in unlined green until January 1953. One of her regular diagrams, reported the *Railway Observer*, was on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays involving: the 09.25 Leamington-Birmingham; 15.10 Birmingham-Leamington; 19.50 Leamington-Oxford (overnight); 08.05 Oxford-Paddington; 12.10 Paddington-Oxford; 15.30 Oxford-Wolverhampton; 20.00 Wolverhampton-Birmingham and 21.30 Birmingham-Leamington. An Oxford engine worked the diagram for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

It would seem that after repairs at 84D on July 3 1952, 2933 was confined to lesser duties such as pushing freights up Hatton Bank where she was seen at work in November 1952. According to the *Railway Observer* 2933 made her last trip to Swindon for scrapping on January 16, 1953. At that time 84D could choose from three 'Halls' to do the diagram: 4987 *Brockley Hall*, 5966 *Ashford Hall* and 6924 *Grantley Hall*. Other engines at 84D at the time included four 57xx pannier tanks (3619/24/31/7702), seven '5101' 2-6-2Ts (4112/71/5104/61/85/92/4), two 81xx 2-6-2Ts (8100/9), two 66xx 0-6-2T (6657/97), two WD 2-8-0s (90010/483) and one diesel railcar W26W.

An afternoon on Leamington Spa (General) would produce a reasonable flow of freight traffic, often with more 'cop' potential than I would experience on my local GW line at Bradley Lane near Bilston (Central). In addition there were the few trains to be seen at Leamington Spa (Avenue). These were often 'push-pull' trains running between Nuneaton, Coventry, Leamington, Rugby and Weedon.

In 1948, Warwick (then 2E) still operated four of the elderly and rapidly disappearing Webb 2-4-2Ts (46669/73/83/6749), though I only saw 46666 (2C Northampton) and 46683. 2E also operated two Fowler 3MT 2-6-2Ts (40009/44), three Stanier 3MT 2-6-2Ts (40109/35/203), two Webb 'Cauliflower' 0-6-0s (28487/8531), one Johnson 2F 0-6-0 (58308) and five 'Duck Eights' (48897/8910/22/4/9384), I am sorry, G1/G2a 0-8-0s.

By 1952, two new Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2Ts had already sent two of Warwick's (now 2C) Webb tank engines to the grave while another Johnson 2F had presumably disposed of the 'Cauliflowers'.

To be continued next time when the Southern invades Leamington.

Majestically, Old Oak Common's 6019 King Henry V accelerates the 14.35 Wolverhampton-Paddington express through Whitnash cutting on a Saturday afternoon in early May 1962. Both sides of the cutting are covered in trees and dense bushes today, with houses on both sides.



EARLY YEARS

(or Getting Dirty with a Scotsman)

Tim Speechley



As a youth, many years ago, I was very fortunate indeed to be introduced to a group of North London enthusiasts who met regularly in Edmonton, not too far from my home in Chingford Hatch. It was all down to luck. I saw an advertisement for “Symphony in Steam”, an all-night programme of railway films to be shown in the Odeon (maybe the Classic by then) Chingford Mount, in aid of the B1 Locomotive Society, then based in Chingford (and ultimately successful in the original purchase of 61306). I called at the address given to buy a ticket and, having established that I was a proper enthusiast, the organiser asked if I was interested in meeting other like-minded people and so, the following Wednesday evening, I accompanied him to my first visit to Bob Todd’s. Here I found a small terraced house with its walls covered with loco nameplates, works plates, cabsides, whistles and the like. Crammed into the tiny front room were about 12-15 chaps and we were entertained by Bob’s 8mm cine films and others’ slides, all to a very high standard. Bob still lived with his (very tolerant) parents and at half time tea and cakes were provided for the masses. At the end of the evening I asked if I could come back again and so started 40 years of Wednesday nights at Bob’s, a pivotal part of my life.

I got roped in to help with the film show, along with many others of the “Marshside” group (as Bob’s was unofficially dubbed) and got to meet more helpers. The show was in conjunction with the recently formed North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group, who, if I remember, had secured the J27 but were concerned the Q6 would still go for scrap. Fortunately it didn’t and I would like to think we may have contributed in some small way. The cinema was packed solid for the show and it paved the way for several more.

As time moved on I also got friendly with another group in Tottenham, dubbed the Midland and North Eastern Railway Circle, members of which had also been involved in the film show. This met weekly, at the home of Ken Symonds, who had an enormous 00 model railway in a shed at the end of his garden. This group was fewer in number and we would operate the layout and then come indoors later to chat and show slides.

4472 Flying Scotsman as most of us remember it in the early days of preservation simmers at Finsbury Park on a beautiful Friday 28th March 1969.

All photos: Tim Speechley unless noted.

Although I had not remembered anything about it, an entry in one of my old diaries indicates that perhaps the MNER Circle had some pretensions of grandeur, because on Thursday 27 March 1969 they held a proper AGM at which I was adopted as a full member of the group.

Somehow Ken had got in touch with Flying Scotsman Enterprises (George Hinchcliffe) and had offered our services to clean 4472, then the only steam loco allowed to operate on the main line, whenever it came to London to work specials. They obviously appreciated the offer and we did this on several occasions, initially I think at Hornsey depot and later at Finsbury Park. I have records of going there on Friday 21 February 1969, having waited at Potters Bar to see the loco heading south, where it was two and a half hours late. It worked a special out of St Pancras the next day (I saw it at Elstree) but it must have failed because the Sunday special out of Kings Cross was diesel hauled and 4472 headed back north to Doncaster on the Monday.

We were back at Finsbury Park diesel depot on Friday 28 March (the day after my “adoption” by the group) and had to wait for the loco to arrive. She looked magnificent as she backed into the shed area but still needed a lot of hard work to get her really clean. I seem to remember that I used to get the wheels to clean whereas the more “senior” members tended to do the cab, boiler cladding and tender sides and, of course, the prestigious tasks of the nameplates and works plates. I have a feeling we used some form of oil to clean the engine but the full details have disappeared with time, though I can recollect the application of brick dust to the rods to bring up the shine. It’s a horrific thought now. Things were very relaxed back then but I think we did have official letters to get us access to the diesel depot. There wasn’t much thought for health and safety though, no hard hats, hi-vis

vests or safety boots and people would physically climb all over the engine to get to the more inaccessible parts. We would generally spend about three to four hours on the loco and it would be spotless when we finished, though whether the shine lasted until departure from Kings Cross I'm not sure. At least we had done our best.

We would have done this cleaning just for the prestige of getting close to the locomotive but Flying Scotsman Enterprises came up with free tickets for some of their special trains, so on this occasion, the next morning, several of us found ourselves on what was called the "Mystery Tour No. 3" from St Pancras. It went straight up the Midland main line to Leicester, Loughborough, Trent and on to Pye Bridge Junction, where we turned right to Kirkby in Ashfield, Mansfield, Shirebrook and Warsop, where we stopped for water. From there we were due to go directly east to Lincoln and then north through Market Rasen to New Holland, where we would catch one of the remaining Humber paddle steamers to Hull. Unfortunately this was not to happen, for not many miles up the line, at Clifton-on-Trent, we came to a halt. It transpired that there was a derailment of a train ahead of us and we ended up reversing back to Shirebrook with a couple of Brush type 2 diesels

The volunteer cleaners get to work to ensure Flying Scotsman is in fine shape for its next railtour at Finsbury Park on 16th May 1969.

Two months earlier they had posed for a group portrait. Can you spot our more youthful Chairman?

Photo: Don Smith, Tim Speechley collection.



on the back and then heading north again via Shireoaks before turning east to Worksop, Gainsborough, Barnetby, Grimsby and finally Cleethorpes, where we arrived at 17.44. We didn't depart from there until 20.12 and I'm not sure what we found to do there for 2½ hours. The return was via Louth, Boston, Sleaford, Barkston Junction and then onto the East Coast main line. My notes say we got back to Kings Cross at 01.20, I have a feeling after they had held up a permanent way occupation of the main line until we had got through. I can recollect some very fast running in the dark (no 75 mph limit in those days). Despite not going to plan, it had been an excellent day for the track bashers, certainly living up to its "Mystery Tour" name, though personally I had been very disappointed to have missed the paddler.

Within a couple of months it was back to Finsbury Park on Friday 16 May 1969 for another cleaning session. At this time I was in a gap period between school and university, working as a school laboratory assistant, so getting away in the middle of the afternoon was very useful. I had also passed my driving test in February, so coupled with my parents' extreme generosity with the family car meant I was a very mobile young man and the trip from Chingford to Finsbury Park relatively easy, even during the Friday rush hour.

On these cleaning sessions we would sometimes see Alan Pegler and also members of the Flying Scotsman Enterprises support crew, though there was no support coach in those days. Pegler always looked very dapper, even in overalls, and I now wonder if even they came from Savile Row. On other occasions he would arrive in a crisp suit with an attractive young woman on his arm (not always the same one, woman that is, not arm) but seldom stayed long, perhaps having other activities on his agenda.

More tickets had been made available for us for the Saturday's special. This time it was a trip to Bressingham, with a civilised start from Kings Cross at 09.45. Our route was outward via Hitchin, Cambridge, Ely, Thetford, Wymondham and Norwich,



With a humble brake van for a "support coach" 4472 Flying Scotsman at Finsbury Park on 28th March 1969.

where *Scotsman* ran round the train, and then Tivetshall (where my notes say we saw two traction engines threshing) and finally Diss (arrive 14.19). Road coaches took us from there to Alan Bloom's Bressingham Gardens for about a three hour visit. Here a lot of traction engines were in steam along with the 2 foot gauge garden railway using ex-North Wales quarry locos. The greatest attraction was 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* but as it ran up and down such a short length of track one was left with that "caged lion" feeling. All too soon the road coaches were ready to take us back to the train, this time from Stowmarket, where we departed at 18.29. The return route to Kings Cross was via Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Cambridge and then the reverse of the morning's one. Arrival back in the capital was at 21.26.

My final close-up encounter with the *Scotsman* and some oily rags was in August 1969. The loco ran down light engine from Doncaster on the Friday, the 29th, and my diary of the time says that three of us, Ken Symonds, Ted Lane and I, dropped in to Finsbury Park that evening just to check there were cleaning materials on board. Obviously there were, because we cleaned the loco on the Saturday morning. It must have been a busy day

for me because, after the cleaning session, I obviously dashed home, changed and then attended a wedding of the daughter of some of my parents' friends. Then in the evening I was off to Edmonton, to Bob Todd's, for a get together with well-known Southampton enthusiast (of trains and ships) Barry Eagles. Oh to have that energy of youth again now !

Our cleaning was to prepare the loco for a special, run I think by the LNER Society, to York and Newcastle. The loco was part prepared for its visit to the USA and had been fitted already with a big whistle on the side of the smokebox and a bell at the front. From recollection, I think the whistle was a deep

4472 Flying Scotsman with bell and large whistle already fitted in anticipation of its US visit awaits departure from Kings Cross on 31st August 1969.





Leaving York bound for Newcastle 4472 Flying Scotsman approaches the Holgate Bridge on 31st August 1969.

hooter type rather than a chime. Of course the standard whistle fitted to the loco in preservation (from its service days) was always a poor affair, never really producing a very clear sound.

Amazingly there were yet more free tickets and four of us were able to participate in the tour. With a 9 o'clock departure from Kings Cross, it was a straightforward blat up the East Coast main line, passing Peterborough at 10.29, stopping very briefly at Doncaster for just a minute (12.12 - 13) and arriving at York at 12.50. My basic timings are notable in that there are no lengthy stops for water and, of course, this is because at this time the Flying Scotsman was running with its two tenders, which obviated the need to stop for that purpose too often.

My notes of what we did in York are very sketchy, not to say non-existent. I suspect this tour ran in two sections, London to York and York to Newcastle. We certainly went only as far as York but had time to get to Holgate Bridge to photograph the train heading north to Newcastle, so it obviously stopped in York for quite a while before departing. Presumably the places of those opting only to go this far, were replaced by other people doing just the York to Newcastle leg. After seeing the train we had a visit to York shed, still operating then as a diesel depot but within the roundhouse were both 532 *Blue Peter* and 60019 *Bittern*, which at the time were both owned by Geoff Drury. The latter was sporting a coat of unusual yellow undercoat which did not do much for its appearance – more Flying Banana than Flying Scotsman. We didn't depart from York until nearly 8 pm and were back in the Cross by 11.30, having enjoyed a lot of running at around 75 mph.

4472 headed back north on the Tuesday and I went to see it at Potters Bar. Soon afterwards the loco departed for the United States and we very nearly never saw her again. Alan Pegler's life was never to be the same again and I always felt very sorry for him whenever I saw him in later years, obviously not very well off and doing the sorts of jobs you would not have associated him with in earlier times. Nevertheless he was always in good humour and seemed to enjoy being involved with

railways. We do owe him a great debt in saving the loco in the first place, though she must have been the most costly mistress he ever encountered.

My life changed almost immediately. I went to university in the September and found new challenges and friends but never lost touch with either Bob's or Ken's groups, from which I still have close lifelong friends. Though I was not aware of it at the time, some years later my association with the Flying Scotsman was to be renewed, once it had been repatriated from across the Atlantic, thanks to our President, and perhaps there is scope for more reminiscences at some time in the future.

More Flying Banana than Flying Scotsman, 60019 Bittern presents a bizarre sight in yellow undercoat inside York shed on 31st August 1969. Contrast this with the locomotive's superb condition today.



THE LAST JOURNEY

By David Gardner



It was the start of the school holidays and Will and his younger brother, Michael, were eager to go out of the house to play. "Now mind where you go boys" said their mother, "and keep away from the river and the railway line. Make sure you look after your little brother won't you Will?"

At nine years old, Will was two years older than Michael and sometimes resented being told to take care of his brother, particularly as Michael was the one who was always running off and getting into scrapes. However, that wasn't going to happen this time as Michael had promised to stick with Will.

It was the late 1950's and not uncommon for children to be out playing or roaming the countryside unsupervised. They would keep clear of the river. Michael had fallen in more than once and almost drowned on one occasion, and although it was Will who waded in and saved him, it was he who got a real scolding from his mother and it was lucky she said nothing to his father; otherwise, he would have got a beating. Why was it always him who got into trouble, when he was really the good one of the two? It wasn't fair but never mind, all would go well this day.

They headed for the woods first, where they pretended to be famous explorers and they also played Cowboys and Indians. However, the lure of the railway was too much for the pair. They clambered down the embankment onto the track of the old branch line.

The line had closed to all traffic a few years earlier, though apart from the heavily rusted rails, weeds and small trees that were growing in and around the ballasted track, it still looked to the boys as if a train might come along at any time. Our pair had explored the area before of course, with no mishaps, but only a few days previously they had overheard their parents discussing certain mysterious happenings in the area.

People had apparently heard the sound of a steam locomotive and its two coach trains chugging up the incline to the small station and others had heard the sounds of slamming doors and voices. Will and Michael were intrigued by this and wondered if they would hear or even see anything for themselves.

Midland 3F 0-6-0 43419 at Templecombe Low Level.

Photo: A W V Mace Collection of David Gardner

They walked the short distance to the station site. The platform and buildings were still in place though much overgrown, several windows were broken and there was a door open. They ventured inside but there was an eerie atmosphere about the place and Michael for once kept by his brother as they explored the cupboards and shelves, but apart from some torn notepaper and bits of old tickets, there was no treasure to be found.

A couple of mice scurried across the floor, then a much louder rustling noise before a large rat ran over their feet. That was enough to scare the boys and they both rushed out of the door, then raced along the platform, through the yard gate and up the bank that led to the edge of the tunnel.

Hearing another sound they looked towards the station. There before their eyes was an engine with two carriages drawing into the station. Doors opened and slammed shut, voices were heard but no one got on or off, in fact, there was nobody to be seen. A whistle blew and the train set off towards the direction of the two boys and the tunnel. As the locomotive came alongside, Will and Michael noticed the crew standing motionless and staring ahead. In the coaches there were passengers but they too looked blank and lifeless. Turning their heads in the direction of the tunnel, the boys watched as the train moved relentlessly onward.

Will shouted "STOP", but there was no crashing noise as the engine and its train disappeared into the bricked up entrance to the tunnel. Only then did the young boys realise what they had seen was a phantom train and all the people were ghosts. Michael was crying all the way home, so Will got a ticking off. 'Nothing changes', he thought.

The next day a real train did visit the branch, but only to remove the track from the tunnel towards the mainline junction. It was the last train ever to journey along the branch. However, Will and Michael were not there to witness the fact, nor did they return for many a long year.