

Marlow & District
Railway Society

Please reply to:

THE MARLOW DONKEY NO. 14

MARCH 1980

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

So 1980 has been proclaimed as the Year of the Volunteer by the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. While paying tribute to the magnificent work done by so many ordinary men and women since the demise of steam the ARPS emphasises that there must be regular recruitment to achieve continuity of labour. The ending of the Government's Special Temporary Employment Scheme will adversely affect a number of railway societies which aim at attracting the tourist trade.

The ARPS made their annual award last year to the Severn Valley Railway Co Ltd. An excellent choice. As an occasional visitor to the line since 1970 I can only express my admiration for this Company's achievements. Afternoon viewers of BBC 1 are enjoying "God's Wonderful Railway", filmed last year on the SVR. A great deal of historical research has gone into this series. The script writer is a volunteer worker on the line and her husband is the film's editor. Let us hope that the BBC will repeat this programme for adult "Railway Children" at a time when they are back from work.

I have just been reading a recent Batsford publication "Surviving Steam Railways", by Jeffry Spence. It is an excellent well illustrated book aimed at the general reading public. It was an inscription on the back of the title page that caught my eye - "Dedicated to Ministers of the Crown, Government officials, Civil Servants (top), and other non-railway charlatans, who plotted, or aided and abetted, the rundown of the railway system. May God forgive them; for there are many who never will".

Perhaps in time our Newsletter will have its own Book Review column. Had we one at present I would recommend a slim volume published in 1978 by the Oakwood Press, as a "must" for our members. It is "The Great Western and Great Central Joint Railway" by Stanley C. Jenkins. The author felt that the "New Line", Old Oak to Aynho, together with the "Bicester Cut-Off", had been neglected by Railway historians.

The refusal by Windsor and Maidenhead Council to allow BR to restore the WR station at Windsor is short-sighted. With the assistance of Madame Tussaud's BR hoped to modernise the Brunel Shed, the Queen Victoria's Waiting Room. An exhibition to portray Royalty's association with this station and an upgrading of station facilities were welcomed by local citizens and shopkeepers. The Council's objections? Windsor already has

enough visitors; a refurbished railway station would add to the congestion. It might of course mean more train-borne visitors and fewer motor cars and coaches!

A cautious, but certainly not unenthusiastic, response to the invitation to our members to become more active preservationists has been evident in recent weeks. The opportunity given to us was a tonic to all of us who had a guilt-feeling about our arm-chair image. We are amazed at the willing response to this invitation and look forward to many hours of useful activity in a nostalgic setting.

FAWLEY RAILWAY PROJECT - Contributed by Steve Medway

As you will know from the letter you received we held a meeting at Fawley on 17 February to enable members to see the site for themselves and to decide if they would like to have a go at building and running their own railway. It was a pleasant surprise to see twenty six members turn up. In fact Stan Verrinder was delighted as he had accurately forecast this figure to your committee.

The prospects could not have been too daunting as the questionnaires answered by those present all indicated a desire to be involved. I would like to take this opportunity, by the way, to thank those who filled in the questionnaire as the information provided proved most helpful.

If you are wondering how I happen to be writing this let me explain that I have taken on the job of liaising between your committee and Jim Sarney of the Fawley Railway. I hope to ensure that everyone is happily involved in the work and also of course that there will be plenty for us to do when we arrive ready and willing.

Visits were arranged to get into the swing of things on Sundays 2 and 9 March. On these visits suggested rosters for discussion were presented.

Meanwhile any member who is interested but has not yet been to Fawley please contact me Steve Medway on Radnage 3224.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME FOR 1980 AT 1945 FOR 2000 HRS

- 17 Apr 1980 Adventures in Latin America. Colin Garratt returns for a second visit sponsored by Praktica Cameras.

- 15 May 1980 Some LNER Locomotives. Talk with slides by Harold Bonnett. Mr. Bonnett began as an engine cleaner at Grantham in 1924 and was later spare fireman at both that depot and Hatfield.

19 Jun 1980 To be arranged.

17 Jul 1980 To be arranged.

It is hoped that one of the above dates will be a talk on Railway Publishing. The other will be a talk with slides on "Railways in Canada" by Mike Walker and Roger Bowen.

SOCIETY VISITS

Post Office Railway

The first visit of the year is on Thursday 1 May 1980, to the Post Office Railway. We meet at 1800 hrs at the General Post Office in Mount Pleasant London SE1. Numbers are limited to 20 and must be booked at least one month ahead with the Secretary who is now taking bookings.

The Post Office Railway is 6½ miles long and runs from Paddington to Whitechapel serving 6 sorting offices and 2 BR stations. It runs on 2ft gauge track with 3rd rail 440 volt DC traction. It carries up to 50,000 bags of mail each day. It is not open to the general public except for special visits such as ours so take the opportunity to visit this unique line. There is no charge but members must make their own way to Mount Pleasant.

Chinnor Branch Railway

The second visit is on Saturday 21 June 1980 to the Chinnor Branch Railway. We meet at 1000 hrs at the old station yard at Chinnor. Our guide will be Harold Bonnett who is the speaker at our May meeting. Mr. Bonnett has written a number of articles on the Chinnor Branch and has obtained the authority of both BR and the Cement Works to go on the property. The visit will last until approximately 1300 hrs. Bookings to the Secretary before 15 May who will have to obtain signatures to indemnify the Cement Works. As with the Post Office visit there is no charge and members must make their own arrangements to get to Chinnor.

Annual Summer Visit

The annual summer family trip this year is to the Mid Hants Railway on Sunday 20 July 1980 so keep this day reserved. It is hoped to use a double decker bus as in previous years.

PREVIOUS THURSDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

The December meeting featured that most enjoyable of Will Hay films "Oh! Mr. Porter". We beat the BBC to it as they showed it the following month.

January as usual was the AGM. Compared to 1979 the weather was kind to us and there was a high attendance for an AGM with over half the members being present.

Rob Holton gave us a first class evening in February when he spoke on the Tan-y-Grisiau extension to the Festiniog Railway. This was an evening when everyone felt that it ended too quickly.

OTHER SOCIETY NEWS

Under the heading "Thanks for Your Help" your Editor regrets that the expertise of two members was incorrectly attributed. It should have been; Mike Walker - our local railway history expert and Alan Wheeler - our window display expert.

The Annual Christmas Dinner at the Blue Flag at Cadmore End on 21 December 1979 was a great success and was enjoyed by everyone present. It was disappointing that everyone who wanted to come could not because of the limitation on numbers. The Dinner ended on a seasonal note with a two inch fall of snow. The organisers Mike Norris and Roy Mee are to be congratulated on finding such a good venue and providing those little touches which go to an enjoyable occasion.

So far only two members have enquired about Society ties and unless another ten can be found no more can be ordered.

The following new members are welcome to the Society: W. Long, D.S. Robson, D.W.J. Smith, S.W. Hatfield.

RAIL EXCURSIONS

Marlow Maidenhead Passenger Association

Our friends the MMPA are running three excursions this year from Marlow and branch stations to Maidenhead. These are Sundays

- 8 Jun - Shrewsbury Aberystwyth and Vale of Rheidol Line
- 27 Jul - Torquay and Paignton
- 7 Sep - Plymouth (BR unable to allow Newquay originally requested).

Further information can be obtained from Ted Gregory who is on the MMPA Committee or from Guy Marriott the MMPA Publicity Officer at "Woodlands" Cherrywood Gardens, Flackwell Heath (Tel: Bourne End 27044).

Excursions from High Wycombe Line

The following are being run by Chiltern Trains of 1 Druids Walk, Chinnor (Tel: Kingston Blount 52198).

Sat 5 Apr - Boulogne
Sat 19 Apr - Edinburgh Falkirk and SRPS Museum
Sat 31 May - Aberystwyth or Barmouth & Towyn (for Tallylyn Rly)
Sun 29 Jun - Bressingham Steam Centre or Norwich
Sun 27 Jul - Llangollen and Chester
Wed 30 Jul - South Coast Seaside
20/21 Sep - Scottish Highlands and Isle of Skye

Among excursions being run by BR are

Sun 12 Apr - Severn Valley Railway
Sat 17 May - Paignton
Sun 24 Aug - Windermere or Carnforth Steam Centre.

Valleybasher - 3 May 1980

Will members booked to go on the Valleybasher trip please note that the date has been changed to Saturday 3 May 1980.

EVENING CLASSES

Further information is now available about the course at Wendover mentioned in the December 1979 edition of the Marlow Donkey. This course commences at 2000 hrs on Wednesday 23 April 1980, at the John Collet County Secondary School, Wharf Road, Wendover. The subject is "The Great Western Railway" and the course tutor is your Secretary. Further information from Mr. B. Woledge, 28A Dobbins Lane, Wendover, Bucks (Tel: Wendover 622188).

Advance information is that it is planned that "Railways of Buckinghamshire" will be held in the autumn at the Grange County Secondary School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury. Further information should be available in the next issue of the Marlow Donkey.

OH! MR PORTER - Contributed by Roger Bowen

Some members will be interested in the location of the film shown at our Christmas film show and the identity of the two locomotives featured.

The location was the Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway, the date 1937. In particular "Buggleskelly" was Cliddesden and the final "chase" was trick photography on the line between Cliddesden and Basingstoke. The Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway was built by the London and South Western Railway, not so much to serve the area between the two towns but to prevent the Great Western Railway from extending its Reading to Basingstoke branch in the direction of Portsmouth. The line was opened on 1 June 1901 and was the first line to be authorised under the Light Railways Act 1896. Traffic was always very

sparse and as an economy measure the line closed in 1915 and the track lifted and taken to France as part of the war effort. This probably would have been the end but when the newly formed Southern Railway sought abandonment powers in its 1923 Bill there was strong opposition and the relevant clause was withdrawn. Accordingly the track was relaid and the line re-opened on 18 August 1924. However traffic was no heavier and the line closed for passengers for a second and final time on 12 September 1932. The line remained open for goods until 1 June 1936 when the southern section from Alton to Bentworth and Lasham was lifted, the remaining goods service being operated from Basingstoke. After filming lifting continued leaving only a ½ mile spur at the south end from Butts Junction Alton to Treloars Hospital and at the northern end a ½ mile spur from the main line at Basingstoke to Thorneycoft's works. Both these spurs closed in 1967.

What of the locomotives? The express locomotive used was one of Adams' 4-4-0s No. 567, built for the LSWR in 1895. Even the SR of the 1930s could not find anything archaic enough to portray the tank engine "Gladstone". This was No. 2 "Northiam" of the Kent and East Sussex Railway, a 2-4-0T built in 1899 by Hawthorn Leslie for the opening of the line from Robertsbridge to Rolvenden on 2 April 1900. The tall spiked chimney and the name "Gladstone" were fitted specially for the film. She must have made quite a sight travelling from Robertsbridge to Basingstoke for the film! She was withdrawn from traffic shortly afterwards and cut up in 1941. A photograph of her on the Basingstoke and Alton in action with tall spiked chimney appears on page 41 of "Railway History in Pictures - Wessex" by H.C. Casserley (David & Charles 1975) and in original condition on page 20 of "Colonel Stephens' Railways" by J. Scott-Morgan (David & Charles 1978). A number of photographs are also featured in "Rails to Tenterden" by J.L. Smith (Lens of Sutton 1967). The goods loco feature was also an ex LSWR Adams loco. In this case it was No. 3509 an 0-6-0 of the O395 class introduced in 1881 and temporarily fitted with a chimney from an ex LBSR 13 class tank loco. This loco lasted long enough to become BR no 30581 being withdrawn from traffic in the 1950s.

Incidentally, this was not the first time the line was used for filming. On 19 August 1928 Ex South Eastern and Chatham Railway 4-4-0 No. A148 of 1889 was staged in a collision with a steam lorry on a level crossing for the film "The Wreckers".

THE NEW LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM - Contributed by Mike Walker

Around the end of April, London Transport will open its long awaited new museum in the old Flower Market at Covent Garden which replaces the old cramped display which has been located at Syon Park, Brentford, since the Museum of British Transport at Clapham closed in 1973.

It had been LT's intention to open the new premises last summer to coincide with the 150th Anniversary of London's buses but a number of reasons precluded that. Most important of these was the unexpected availability of an adjacent building at a late stage in the planning. The opportunity to increase the display area by 30% was too good to miss, so it was back to the drawing board.

In adapting the building for its new role, LT architects have kept the original structure as unaltered as possible. The glass roof is retained and the wide spacing of the exhibits will make photography easy. A shop, cafe, library and workshop have been added.

The exhibits will feature, in addition to examples of London's buses, trolleybuses and trams, several railway items. These include the Aveling geared engine from the Brill Tramway, Metropolitan 'A' class 4-4-OT 23 built by Beyer Peacock, Metropolitan Bo-Bo electric No. 5, a Q23 class surface stock motor coach and a 1938 Tube stock car. There is also a City & South London "Padded Cell" coach and Metropolitan Milk Van, a glorious vehicle in varnished wood. A full collection of small relics, models and photographs support the collection which is the largest devoted to one urban transport undertaking in the world. It is a collection which will grow as space is still available. It is expected that a District line CO/CP car will be added, whilst within LT some still dream of the day when Metropolitan O-4-4T No. 1 (LT's L44) will be liberated from its exile somewhere in North Bucks!

The new Museum is easily reached. The nearest underground station is Covent Garden (Piccadilly Line) and although no buses pass the door it is a short walk from well served thoroughfares like High Holborn, Charing Cross Road, Kingsway and the Strand. From Paddington take a number 7 to Tottenham Court Road station and from Marylebone a number 1 (Monday to Friday only) to Leicester Square station or Bakerloo/Piccadilly tubes changing at Piccadilly Circus.

WHEEL NOTATION - Contributed by Ron Brooks

At meetings of our learned Society I have often heard mention of Moguls, Baltics, and other such names applied to our favourite subject - steam railway engines.

There may be one or two, like me, who do not know these names, so this list is offered to make us all experts, or nearly so!

0 4 0	Four Coupled	0 8 0	Eight Coupled
2 4 2	Columbia	2 8 0	Consolidation
4 4 0	American	2 8 2	Mikado
4 4 2	Atlantic	2 8 4	Berkshire
4 4 4	Double Ender	4 8 0	Twelve Wheeler

0 6 0	Six Coupled	4 8 2	Mountain (Europe) Mohawk (America)
2 6 0	Mogul	4 8 4	Northern (Europe) Niagara (America)
2 6 2	Prairie	0 10 0	Decapod (Europe)
4 6 0	Ten Wheeler	2 10 0	Decapod (America)
4 6 2	Pacific	2 10 2	Santa Fe
4 6 4	Baltic (Europe) Hudson (America)	2 10 4	Texas
		4 10 0	Mastodon
		4 10 2	Southern Pacific
		4 12 2	Union Pacific

A CASTLE RETURNS TO THE GREAT WESTERN - Contributed by Alan Wheeler

The cold, cold, morning of Saturday 19th January saw the return to main line running of the GWS 5051 "Drysllyn Castle". She ran with the 8-coach vintage train from Didcot to Stratford-upon-Avon and return, a total of nearly 140 miles behind steam.

Arriving at 8.30 a.m. I found her coupled to her train adjacent to the water column. The "light" was foggy and poor, most photographers found 1 sec at f2 a bit much! That is assuming they could stop shivering long enough! About 8.50 she started to back the train out. However, with an icy track and the slight incline, slipping occurred. A few shovels of cinders under her wheels got her moving.

To get to Didcot station from the sheds the train has to run oversidings before getting onto the down relief line, some ½ mile up from the entrance to the shed. For this movement to take place the Didcot avoiding line is blocked. On our train leaving, a 47 hauled passenger train was halted on the avoiding line. This named 47 - Izambard Kindom Brunell - standing on one side and a pair of 31's on the other presented a picture Izambard Kingdom Brunell, Churchward and Collett would have been proud to see.

Leaving Didcot 5 minutes late at 9.15 we soon heard the smooth 4-cylinder beat of a Castle. Oxford was reached on time, having gained the lost 5 minutes. Leaving Oxford the crew opened her up; despite an official maximum of 60 we held 75 with ease. At Banbury a quick inspection showed she had "popped her corks", losing the lubrication corks on her driving crank pin. However, a replacement cork was fitted, and water was taken. 6 minutes were lost between Banbury and Leamington due to checks. 60 was quickly re-attained, and so onto Hatton Bank. Storming up the bank the beautiful 4-cylinder beat was a treat to hear, as all the lineside recorders found. A signal check at the top of the bank caused a rapid drop in speed, and we came to an unscheduled stand in Hatton Station for 6 minutes. A 3-car DMU appeared from the other direction and we then got the off. We arrived at Stratford 15 mins. late.

The GWS had produced an information sheet covering the journey and it included, apart from timings, a map of Stratford and, most important, a list by CAMRA of suitable places in Stratford.

Our return trip was due to start at 14.05. However, at 13.45 no locomotive. The coaching stock was parked in an adjacent siding. At 13.50 she appeared and was manoeuvred into a small bay to take on water, this being from a fire hydrant and hose supplied by the local fire service. (Note to Stratford residents - don't have a fire). The final section of the hose had either a mouse nest in it or something similar, for despite good pressure it took nearly an hour to get enough water on board, all in the cold.

We left Stratford 50 minutes late and as a result our time slot had been lost, so many checks occurred and speed seldom reached 60. At Oxford Station (at which the PA system announced that the train "was not for public use") we stood for 13 minutes on a loop to allow 2 passenger trains to pass. We arrived back at Didcot 1½ hours late at 17.35.

Despite the cold and the water problems it was well worth while, and a credit to the small band of workers who restored the Castle. I photographed her at the commencement of restoration in 1976 as an O-2-0. A week later she was an O-0-0. Lining has yet to be applied, indeed it is probably true to say that some of her paint had been applied only a few days earlier.

THE WYCOMBE RAILWAY AND THE MARLOW DONKEY - Contributed by
Mike Walker

Part 6

by 1906 the railway system in the area had reached its peak. However, many additional halts remained to be added to the map. The first of these were erected in 1906 when the GWR introduced steam railmotors between Oxford and Princes Risborough. Horse-path Halt and Garsington Bridge Halt between Wheatley and Littlemore, Iffley Halt near Kennington Junction, Abingdon Road Halt and Hinksley Halt between the junction and Oxford. However the railmotors were not a major success on this line so they were withdrawn around 1920 when these halts were closed and soon dismantled.

In the event the closure of Garsington Bridge Halt proved to be premature for in 1925 William Morris commenced the construction of his car factory at Cowley alongside the line adjacent to the site of the halt. Three sidings were laid on the down side opposite the works and at the end of 1926 a new station was opened. This was known as "Morris Cowley", a somewhat unusual artificial name chosen to avoid confusion with Cowley on the West Drayton to Uxbridge branch. It was a simple station with a wooden building on a wooden platform on the up side. As the motor works expanded so too did the railway facilities. In 1927 further sidings were laid on the up side, into the works.

A signal box was opened in 1928 followed a year later by an austere corrugated iron goods shed and three additional sidings on the down side. The Morris works were to bring a great deal of traffic to the branch in the form of incoming raw materials and components as well as outgoing wagons loaded with the finished products. These included much export traffic handled via Brentford Docks, where a special transfer shed was erected, and block trains were operated each year to the Scottish Motor Show.

Morris Cowley was a staffed station, but in the period up to the outbreak of World War 2 a large number of unstaffed halts were erected in the district. On the Watlington branch, four such structures opened, Bledlow Bridge Halt (opened September 1906), Wainhill Crossing Halt (opened September 1925), Kingston Crossing Halt (opened September 1906) and Lewknor Halt (opened September 1906).

Ilmer Halt, on the joint line between Princes Risborough and Haddenham, opened on 1st April 1929 being quickly followed on 11th November 1929 by Monks Risborough and Whiteleaf Halt on the Aylesbury branch. The joint ownership of this branch was reflected in the South Aylesbury Halt, which opened on 13th February 1933, and which was constructed by the LNER.

Two new halts appeared on 5th June 1933 on the Princes Risborough - Oxford branch. Towersey Halt was between Bledlow and Thame, whilst Horsepath Halt was on the site of its earlier namesake, reinforcing the view that the GWR was always prepared to admit it was wrong! Both these halts were typical of their breed, short timber platforms with a corrugated iron waiting shelter of the "Pagoda" style.

The last new station to be opened was Furze Platt Halt on the northern outskirts of Maidenhead on 5th July 1937. The platform here was again of timber but long enough to accommodate a six coach train. The waiting shelter was more attractive than usual being of timber and possessing a door and windows, in recent years, however, the local vandals have destroyed the building despite the efforts of BR. Unlike most Halts, Furze Platt was staffed, passengers could purchase tickets from the North Town Crossing signalman. This gentleman had a small office to contain the block instruments and booking facilities, but the three level frame was still in the open.

Besides these new stations a number of existing buildings received attention. 1913, the thirteenth year of Saunderton station's existence, proved suitably unlucky, for in the early hours of 10th March it was set on fire by militant suffragettes and almost completely destroyed. Littlemore's original wooden buildings were also destroyed by fire early in the century. Both stations were rebuilt in standard GW red brick style.

To permit greater line capacity between Maidenhead and High Wycombe Cookham and Loudwater stations were altered to provide passing places for passenger trains early this century. At Cookham the loop was on the down side and the new platform was provided with a red brick waiting room with blue brick trimmings, slate roof and canopy. A covered footbridge connected the two platforms. An unusual feature of Cookham was the cattle dock which was on the up platform, obviously little traffic of this

nature was expected, although what commuters would have said to sharing a platform with a herd of cows can only be imagined. At Loudwater the loop was also on the down side but here the waiting room was only a "Pagoda" and no footbridge was provided.

1927 saw a programme of improvements at Maidenhead. A new canopy was erected over platforms 2 and 3, the island platform, with an extensively glazed waiting room below. The London end of the up platform (Nos. 4 & 5) was also provided with a new canopy which covered a Buffet. Another Buffet room, constructed of corrugated iron, was erected on platforms 2 and 3 during the 1939-45 War but was demolished in the late forties.

The train services over the system in the first half of the present century consisted of a number of self contained branch services, although a few through workings from Oxford and Aylesbury to London via Princes Risborough, High Wycombe and Beaconsfield or Maidenhead remained. During the Twenties and Thirties Marlow became host to an increasing number of excursions from various parts of the country, bringing stock not only of GWR ownership but of other main line companies to the branch. Passengers would alight at Marlow and make their way to Higginson's Park to board a steamer for a cruise down river to Windsor to rejoin their train which had worked empty from Marlow to Windsor in the meantime. Such specials, some of which were private charters were usually worked by a "Hall" or "Castle" but occasionally really unusual power appeared, as will be detailed in a later part of the series.

A feature of the twentieth century, particularly since the end of the first war, has been the challenge to the railway's previous near monopoly of passenger and freight transport from road vehicles. No review of the area's railways would be complete without a brief description of the rise of bus services in the area. The GWR itself was not slow to recognise the potential of the omnibus as a feeder to its railways.

In 1904 the GW introduced motor buses between Slough and Windsor via Eton and between Slough and Beaconsfield via Farnham Royal. The latter passed to London General and survives as London Country's 441/443 services, the oldest motor bus routes in the London area. Other GW services connected Slough with Burnham Beeches and Maidenhead with Bray, Twyford and Reading.

Other early motor bus services were provided by the London General with routes from Uxbridge to West Wycombe, Windsor to Maidenhead and Packham Rye to Maidenhead, all worked by Old Bills!

The major operator was, however, Thames Valley Traction which started business in July 1920 as a subsidiary of British Automobile Traction which had been active at Maidenhead since 1915. TV grew rapidly and absorbed many independents in the twenties. In 1929 it acquired the GW services in the area (in exchange for a GW shareholding and position on the TV board).

One other bus company deserves a mention. Marlow & District founded in 1925 had an independent existence of only four years. Started by Mr. R.F. Clayton, a member of an old Marlow family, M&D could never have been viable. In fact it was never intended to be. The Claytons owned Karrier Kars Ltd. of Huddersfield and M&D used, with one exception, all Karrier buses and acted as a proving and demonstration fleet smartly kept in a chocolate and primrose livery. In 1929 Thames Valley acquired the company, giving Mr. Clayton a seat on their board, but the M&D name was retained until 1933. In 1931 TV transferred YW1721 to the Marlow fleet. This 1927 Maudsley charabanc was formerly owned by the GWR (1229) at Oxford. One of M&D's more notable exploits was during the 1926 General Strike when they ran a fleet of vehicles up to London for commuters.