

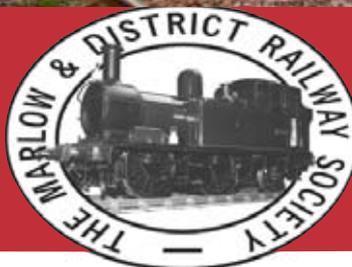
THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

146

September 2014



Contents:
Slough Panel Visit
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A Touch of Luxury
Taplow Open Day 1966

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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The contents of the *Marlow Donkey* represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Top: London Underground celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Hammersmith & City by running two weekends of steam over the line. On 2nd August Metropolitan No.1 hauls a rake of wooden-bodied stock past Ladbroke Grove.

Photo: Mike Walker

Bottom: The Changing of the guard or something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. DRS 68002 *Intrepid* makes the first run by a member of the class over the Chiltern line being overtaken by 67014 *Thomas Telford* at Princes Risborough on 5th August 2014.

photo: Geoff Plumb

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

Thursday 18 September **ON PARALLEL LINES** Ken Horan

Ken is from Sheffield, and worked on steam in the mid to late 60's but left the railway after the demise of steam. He is a great enthusiast and keen photographer and has co-authored two books. His talk "On Parallel Lines" features BR photos in monochrome, contrasting with colour images from modern preservation.

Thursday 16 October **POSTER TO POSTER** Richard Furness

Over the past twelve years Richard has been carrying out definitive research into the story of the British railway poster which has led to his publishing a series of regional books on this colourful and fascinating subject.

Thursday 20 November **EVENTS OF THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS** Bob Sweet

Those who saw Bob's last presentation a year ago will remember the superb collection of images we saw. Tonight Bob returns with a selection from the past 12 months which will include both the heritage and modern scene, many taken in his role as "(un)official photographer" for much of the industry.

Thursday 18 December **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**
Broadly following the established format of previous years, full details will be circulated shortly.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

Saturday 27 September **LONDON UNDERGROUND NEASDEN WORKS VISIT**

This private visit includes a tour of the works which have recently been modernised to accommodate the new S Stock. There may also be a chance for a cab ride.

Bookings the above should be made with Julian Heard on 01628 527005 or julian@jeh.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

We tend to think of the UK as the centre of the railway preservation world, so it was very interesting for me to attend the fantastic German "Dampfspektakel" which is detailed fully by Mike Walker in this edition of the Donkey. Spectacular it was in the breadth of operations and many of the steam trains were fitted in around a busy timetable of local services and quite intensive freight operations. The group managing the event had produced a 43 page on-line guide for visiting enthusiasts, encompassing routes, photo locations, detailed timings in both tabular and graphical forms, as well as details of other points of railway interest in the area. Amazingly, this was available not only in German but also in English and I am sure it helped the many visitors from the UK as well as all the other nationalities there, including Dutch, Swiss, Italian, French, Japanese and American. It was a truly international event and in my opinion surpassed anything we have had in the UK, which probably explains why so many Brits were there. It was very odd to turn a corner and bump into old friends, despite knowing some of them would be there, though this event covered a huge geographical area making such chance encounters less likely.

On this theme, I recently managed to see preserved steam on the underground for the first time and in the gloom of Baker Street station bumped into former member Murray Tremellen who is now working for the National Trust in Herefordshire. It was an odd coincidence, the more so because the last time we had met was at Shildon on the occasion of the gathering of the six A4's. I wonder where we will see each other next?

I used my newly acquired Oyster card during this visit to London and I have to say I found it very awkward. In some places I couldn't find anywhere to swipe in and at others I think I swiped out more than once. I did find it all very confusing and

I'm sure I will have been charged more than I should have been. Give me a good old ticket any day.

In early July I spent two days in the Leicester-Loughborough area, some of the time with my good friend Jim Bamford from Sheffield, who had been one of those enthusiasts I'd encountered in Germany. The strange thing was that although we were at Quorn for several hours, we didn't see a single train. The reason – my younger son Richard got married in Leicester and the reception was held at Quorn Village Hall (arranged completely independently by the happy couple). We stayed in Loughborough and though crossing the GCR several times on the A6, there were so many things to do I didn't have time to search out any steam. At least everything went very well and actually I did see one train – on the wedding dress.

As a railway society it seems a little ironic that the best turn out for a society trip so far this year was to Colin Billington's to see buses. We are trying to arrange visits to places not normally accessible to the private individual but in several cases interest has not been great and as a committee we need to know what we are doing wrong and whether we are wasting our time. Consequently, in due course we will be sending out a questionnaire to ask for your opinions and I hope you will all respond.

Fairly hard on the heels of Tim Edmonds' departure west to Exmoor we now have John Tuck heading the same way to take up a new enterprise in Lynton. John (and wife Sue) has been an important element in the production of the Donkey for many years and I understand hopes to continue to assist even once he has moved. I would just like to say a big thank you to them both and wish them well in their new venture.

Tim Speechley

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

June was our annual joint meeting with our friends from the RCTS and we were pleased to welcome Les Nixon as our guest. Les spoke about the railways of Scotland and recreated a tour around the country he made in 1956 with photographs taken both then and more recently for comparison.

The Crossrail project was the subject of July's meeting and we were particularly fortunate to have Richard Storer, Community Relations Manager East, as our speaker. Richard is a civil engineer by background and was able to take us through the remarkable engineering feats being undertaken to thread the tunnels under central London often with only feet to spare from existing tunnels. His visit coincided with the screening of the first of three documentaries on BBC2 which complimented the talk. Richard finished by offering to come back at a future date to update us on progress.

AND VISITS

We have a number of outdoor activities during the summer months including a visit to Slough Panel Signal Box and the Wootton Light Railway both in August and a different style of visit to the Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust's base at Fifield in June. Reports on all these appear in this issue.

Unfortunately the planned visit to David Buck's railway at Fifield on 30th May had to be cancelled as David had a number of technical issues with his locomotives. It is, however, hoped to reschedule this later in the year.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

We have arranged another visit "behind the scenes" this time to London Underground's Neasden Works in north west London which has recently been upgraded to support the new S Stock. We will have a conducted tour of the depot, hopefully including a demonstration of how they lift a complete 8-car S train in one move, and there is also a possibility of getting a cab ride. The date is Saturday 27th September and if you would like to take part please contact Julian Heard at julian@jeh.org.uk or on 01628 527005.

If we can get sufficient numbers, we hope to arrange a second visit to Slough Panel possibly in October. There were a few members who missed out on the August meeting for various reasons who are on the list for a second visit but to make it worthwhile we do need several more. If you are interested, and you can make a second visit if you were on the first, please contact Mike Walker at mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk or on 01628 483899.

The committee is currently exploring venues for visits during 2015 and would welcome any ideas you may have. If there are any places you would like to go, especially those behind the scenes place you cannot normally access please let us know through Julian using the above contact details.

PRESENTING THE TROPHY

We took the opportunity of Don Woodworth's visit to the UK in May and June to present him, albeit briefly, with the Norman Aston-Smith Trophy which he won this year for his series A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court. Don claims to be "chuffed" at the award and pleased his offering has been so well received.



Photo: Mike Walker

Members will be pleased to hear that although the series is taking a brief break in this issue to make way for more topical items, it will resume next time.

RCTS PROGRAMME

The Windsor & Maidenhead Branch of the RCTS have once again a full programme lined up for the autumn and winter months which MDRS members are invited to attend. As usual they are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, Maidenhead, SL6 3AX starting at 19:30.

Mon 22 September: The Network SouthEast Story
Chris Green

Mon 27 October: The Bluebell Railway Tony Drake

Mon 24 November Strictly Freight Pt 3 Brian Ringer

Mon 22 December Great Western Electrification
Jacqueline Day, Network Rail

STEAM RETURNS

Steam-hauled specials are slowly starting to reappear on the GWML despite the on-going modernisation work. Several are currently being advertised although these may change. Updates will be given in the e-newsletters as they become available.

Sun 28 Sept: Cathedrals Express Reading to Canterbury
via Wokingham 70013

Thur 16 Oct: Cathedrals Express Newbury to Ely via
Slough loco TBA

Plus, on Saturday & Sunday 18 & 19 October the GWS in conjunction with FGW and West Coast are running the Steam Railmotor 93 with trailer 92 on the Southall to Brentford branch. There will be 7 trips each day between 10:00 and 16:30. Full details on the GWS website.

The Marlow Donkey

PROJECTS PROGRESS

The modernisation, electrification and upgrading of our local rail network continues unabated. Here is a brief update on the status of various projects.

READING: Work on the station is just about complete and it was officially opened by HM The Queen on 17th July. All that really remains to be done is to reinstate platform 3 which will be done next Easter when the Festival Reversible Line is brought into use.

The construction of the flyover which will carry the Main Lines over the junctions west of the station is at an advanced stage and will be brought into use over the Christmas period.

ACTON UNDERPASS: Part of the Crossrail scheme, this will create an additional Up Relief Line between Ealing Broadway and Acton Main Line which will burrow beneath the exit from Acton Yard thereby eliminating conflicting moves when trains are leaving the yard. The existing Goods Lines past the yard are also being upgraded and all passenger specials to and from Willesden etc. will now go this way. The project is on schedule for completion in 2016.

AIRPORT JUNCTION: The huge span over all five lines of the GWML at the west end of the junction complex has now been slid into place and work continues with the approach structures and trackwork, some electrification masts are in place. For more details of this scheme see the last issue of the Marlow Donkey.

ELECTRIFICATION: Work on this is now apparent at several locations through the Thames Valley. Whilst the main base for the project is at Swindon, various local depots are being established including Langley, the old oil sidings, and Moreton Cutting. Large steel tubes are being piled into the trackside at various points to support the catenary masts, several of which are now in place particularly between Reading and Didcot.

RESIGNALLING: Much work is being done between Iver and Maidenhead to resignal this area and allow the closure of Slough PSB in 2017. Some resignalling and immunisation work will be done on the Berks & Hants line out to Newbury in November.



West Coast 47237 crosses Marina Level Crossing at Bourne End returning from Marlow whilst working 0Q47, a route learning/survey trip from Wargrave to Southall. 8 June 2014. This is thought to be the first time a Class 47 has visited Marlow.

Photo: Peter Robins.

MAIDENHEAD: Regrettably the trainshed over platform 5 and the canopies in general will come down in October for electrification. The former is going to Wallingford. With Crossrail going to Reading, the plan for a new platform 6 has been dropped.

BICESTER - OXFORD: Trackwork at Bicester London Road has been completed. Work is now concentrated between there and the new station site at Water Eaton. Services over that section start in May 2015.



Work progressing on the new flyover at Reading. This shows the opening which will take the new direct connections from the B&H Lines. Taken on 5th July 2014.

Photo: Mike Walker

In an effort to improve what has become a local eye-sore, this giant mural painted by artist Dan Wilson has been applied to the west wall of the old station at High Wycombe depicting a broad gauge Rover class loco and I K Brunel, although it is doubtful if either ever visited High Wycombe.

Photo: Mike Walker



A VISIT TO SLOUGH PANEL

MIKE WALKER

Through the good offices of Network Rail, a group of twelve members got a rare opportunity to visit Slough Panel Signal Box on the evening of Thursday 7th August. This was in fact the Society's second visit but the first was way back in April 1989 since when much has changed and none of this party, apart from your scribe, was repeating the visit.

Our host for the evening was Danny Scroggins who is a Network Rail Operations Manager based at the Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot. After the obligatory safety briefing Danny took us all up to the operating floor as a single group rather than splitting in two as had been expected.

Danny then proceeded to explain how the panel works, how the signallers set the routes for trains and how that action automatically sets the required points and signals. This is done by turning a switch at the start or entrance to the required route or pressing a button at the end or exit. Such panels are therefore known as NX for eNtrance-eXit.

Slough Panel is one of twelve similar installations commissioned by British Railways Western Region between 1960 and 1973 which, with the exception of Birmingham Snow Hill and Plymouth, controlled the Western's core main lines from Paddington to Bristol and South Wales through panels at Old Oak Common, Reading, Oxford, Swindon, Bristol, Newport, Cardiff and Port Talbot.

Slough opened on 14th October 1963 and originally controlled the area from Dawley, between Hayes & Harlington and West Drayton, through to a point just short of Ruscombe between Maidenhead and Twyford. It

Member John Fowler takes a close look at the Maidenhead section of Slough Panel [Below left] which is shown in greater detail [Below right]. The buttons just above the keyboard control the token release to Bourne End (white) and from Bourne End (black). Note the protection for the out of use siding.



Our host, Danny Scroggins, Network Rail TVSC Operations Manager, explains the operation of Slough Panel to members.

All photos: Mike Walker

controlled 16 route miles, replaced 14 manual signal boxes and 74 signallers although as part of the scheme, three new manual 'boxes were provided at West Drayton and Maidenhead to control the branch lines diverging from those points and at Windsor & Eton Central where the terminal was reconfigured. Whilst semaphore signalling continued to the east of Slough's area until the Old Oak Common PSB took over the whole line from Paddington to Dawley in 1967, to the west multiple aspect colour-lights were already in operation controlled from a new 'box at Twyford opened in 1961 which contained both a NX panel to control the main lines from Ruscombe to Sonning and a manual frame for the connections to the Henley branch. This closed in 1972 with control passing to Reading.

The passing years have seen many changes to the layout and area controlled by Slough Panel. After the branch from West Drayton to Uxbridge closed in 1965 and that to Staines to passengers the same year, the new 'box at West Drayton was redundant and Slough took over the control of the Staines branch which was reduced to basic operation under what the Western called "C2 working". The new 'box at Windsor was also short lived with the branch being singled and controlled from Slough in 1968. It is covered by Track Circuit Block so no tokens are required.



Maidenhead 'Box closed in 1975 and Slough took over supervision of the branch to Bourne End and Marlow. the section to Bourne End being under "No Signaller Token" working with Slough releasing the token remotely.

Apart from the gradual reduction in the number of cross-overs and sidings in the area, the biggest change in Slough's area came last Christmas when the West Drayton area east of Iver was transferred to the TVSC at Didcot to which Reading had already been transferred in 2010. Slough itself is now in its twilight as resignalling work is well underway with the result it will close in 2016 or 2017.

Within the building itself the biggest change has been in the way the train describers are arranged. When the signaller sets a route white lights appear on the panel

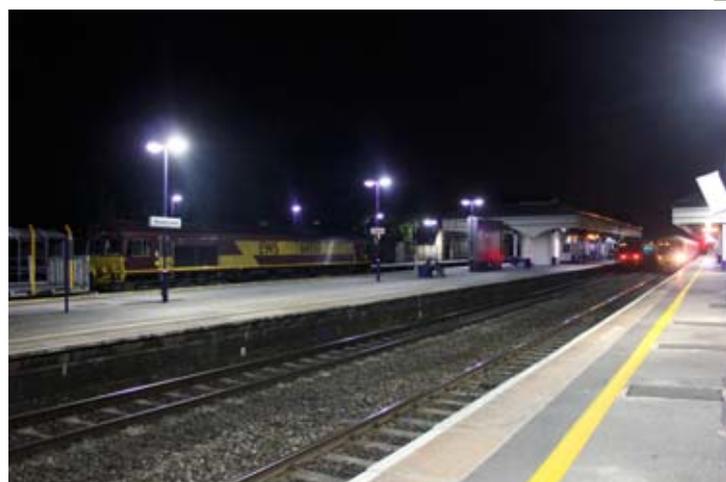


and these turn red when a train passes through. To tell the signaller exactly which train is which train describers are used.

Originally at Slough this involved having a vertical panel with the track layout repeated and mechanical indicators at every signal to show the headcode. These were notoriously unreliable and were replaced by dot-matrix LEDs which were in place at our last visit. Since then, as with most of the PSBs except Bristol and Cardiff, the vertical panels have been replaced by plain ones and VDUs installed to show the train descriptions. At Slough there are three pairs of screens [Top] which show the layout from Ruscombe to Slough West on the left screen and the remainder though to Southall on the right. This allows the signaller to see what's happening towards London.

Before leaving we took a look downstairs at the relay-based E10K interlocking. Designed by the WR this has four levels of interlocking. The first called selection is largely non-critical and uses Post Office style relays [Above left] which can fail in either position without endangering the operation. For the remaining levels, locking, detection and aspect selection, miniature relays [Above right] which can only fail safe are used.

Only the selection level is carried out for the whole area in the PSB building. The remaining levels are carried out here only for the immediate area, remote interlockings of the same type are provided for locations such as Dolphin Junction or Maidenhead. Communication between them is by Time Division Multiplex signals over a pair of wires.



Railwaymen always have a sense of history and a feature of Slough PSB is a number of framed prints depicting the manual 'boxes it replaced including Cookham [Above].

During our visit we'd seen the ground frame at Langley used a number of times as an electrification train was put together. After we left it departed for Maidenhead [Left] via Reading.

Our thanks to Danny for an excellent and educational evening which we hope to repeat before closure.

As a mark of gratitude, £60 was raised and donated to the appeal to preserve Slough's sister panel from Swindon at Didcot where members will be able to have a go for themselves. Danny is a trustee of the Swindon Panel preservation project.

M&DRS GOES ON THE BUSES

A respectable number of members, supported by others from Fawley and the Mazda MX5 Car Club attended the Fifield base of the Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust on Saturday 28th June braving rain and thunderstorms. We were welcomed over light refreshments by Colin Billington who then went on to make a presentation on the work of the Trust and the contents of its collection. This was followed by a tour of the various sheds which are literally packed with old buses and coaches.

Following an excellent buffet lunch we visited the workshops where, among others a 1927 Southern National Leyland 'Lion' is at an advanced state of restoration and then were treated to a tour round Maidenhead and Windsor on Colin's superbly restored 1951 Bristol LL6B Royal Blue coach.

Two of the vehicles owned and restored by Colin Billington and under the care of the Trust sit inside one of the many sheds at the site [Above]. On the left is Southern National 668, BTA59, a 1934 Dennis 'Mace' with 26 seat front entrance Eastern Counties bodywork and alongside it is the only surviving example of the Great Western Railway's bus fleet or Roadmotors as they preferred to call it. 1268, YF714, is a 1927 Guy Model FBB with a 32 seat rear entrance body by Vickers. It was rescued for preservation after spending nearly six decades as a caravan on a Cornish cliff top and the restoration is superb both externally and internally where the whiff of leather hits you as soon as you step aboard. It's mechanically sound too although Colin admits it doesn't go far under its own power as it only manages 4 mpg on petrol on a good day and the solenoid on the starter (fitted after it ungratefully broke Colin's wrist when he was starting it on the handle) does not like getting wet so it certainly wasn't to be our ride on this occasion – more's the pity. It has of course attended both the recent vintage fairs at Fawley.



Below left, M&DRS members Malcolm Margetts, Chris Waite and David Gardner prepare to board Colin's superb 1951 Royal Blue Bristol LL6B with Duple 37 seat bodywork for a tour round the area. This is another superbly restored vehicle which does get to venture out to far flung parts of the country on a regular basis as it can achieve around 15 mpg and has quite a respectable turn of speed although the slightest uphill gradient soon winds it causing Colin to deftly change down the crash gearbox, double declutching every time. A trip from London to the West Country of one of these must have been a tour d'force for both driver and passengers alike!

Former M&DRS Secretary and now Archivist Malcolm Margetts demonstrates the special below-stairs cubby hole provided for the conductor on the classic London Transport Routemaster, a type close to Malcolm's heart as he spent many years in the industry first with Leyland and finally as a manager at AEC's Southall works. It would appear to be made to measure for Malcolm.

Photo: Mike Hyde



Two photos: Mike Walker



Dampfspektakel 2014

Mike Walker



It started with a casual observation over a pre-meeting meal at the Blacksmiths noting that a Plandampf was to be held in the Neustadt area. Your Chairman and Editor both expressed moderate interest which was fatal - within a week Gordon Rippington e-mailed us with the news he'd booked a hotel! To help share costs we needed a fourth participant to join us and that place was quickly filled by Don Woodworth as part of a longer visit to see what had changed in the UK since the 1980s.

As a result the four of us loaded up Gordon's trusty Skoda early on the morning of Wednesday 28th May and headed for the Channel Tunnel and Germany. Remarkably, the Chunnel was running smoothly and to time, the first time that's happened when I've used it which was good as it was Don's first experience of it. Our chosen route took us by way of Belgium, including a mind-numbing crawl round the Brussels ring road, and a brief encounter with Holland before arriving at our excellent hotel in Germerheim which was to be our base late in the evening and tired. Fortunately the restaurant was still open!

The event was promoted under the title of Dampfspektakel 2014 and it was proposed to use ten locomotives working a variety of services radiating from Neustadt, south west of Mannheim. In earlier Plandampfs steam worked scheduled services but the increasing use of high-performance MUs on these makes this difficult to achieve so extras are run by steam. However, regular DB fares applied and most trains ran absolutely packed.

Despite being centrally located, the wide area covered by the steam-hauled services meant that we had to cover many miles each day. The Dampfspektakel website had a good downloadable brochure that gave suggestions of photo locations which was very useful.

www.mdrs.org.uk

German steam in full cry! Former DB Pacific 01 202 storms uphill towards the level crossing at Nonnental (between Neustadt and Lambrecht) with the 14:19 circular working from Neustadt (Weinstrasse) via Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens Nord and Landau on Saturday 31st May.

All photos by Mike Walker

Our first port of call was to cross the Rheine to reach Mauer. This wasn't a particularly scenic location but we did get our first glimpse of steam as Class 52 'Kriegslok' 2-10-0 52 7596, one of three taking part, arrived with a four coach train of suitably vintage stock bound for Sinsheim.

We then headed north to the bridge over the River Neckar just east of Neckargemund.

First encounter: Former ÖBB 2-10-0 52 7596 approaches Mauer with the 08:09 Neustadt (Weinstrasse) to Sinsheim service on Thursday 29th May. It was built as a 'Kriegslok' for the DR by Floriston, Vienna in 1944 (b/n 16944) and passed to the ÖBB post war.



Former DB Pacific 01 202 storms across the River Neckar at Neckargemünd with the 11:11 Neustadt (Weinstrasse) to Heilbronn service.



We then partly retraced our steps to get another shot of 52 7596 as it made an effortless climb out of the Neckar valley past the former Bammental station which is now a private dwelling having been replaced by a modern station for the electric S-Bahn services.



ÖBB 2-10-0 52 7596 climbs out of the Neckar Valley from Neckargemünd towards the old Bammental station with the 13:38 Heidelberg to Sinsheim train.

Böhl-Iggleheim was our next location and whilst awaiting two steam trains in half an hour we were joined by Pete Greatorex who was travelling with Gordon Adams and Geoff Warren whilst a voice shouted "Tim" from a passing S-Bahn train - it was Tim's friend Jim Bamford and his son David. It's a small world!

Former DB oil-burning 2-8-2 41 360 storms through Böhl-Iggleheim with the 14:47 Bensheim to Neustadt (Weinstrasse) with sister 41 018 on the rear. Half an hour later former DR 01 118 passing through at the head of the 15:10 Darmstadt to Neustadt (Weinstrasse)



The day ended at Schifferstadt where we able to witness the remarkable sight of one steam-hauled train being overtaken by another. This was a planned move and the on-time running which had applied all day ensured it took place as expected.

In all no fewer than 27 steam-hauled trains employing seven locomotives operated on Thursday which we discovered was a German public holiday - Father's Day.

Pacific 01 202 stands at Schifferstadt with the 16:25 Heilbronn to Neustadt (Weinstrasse) alongside 52 7596 with the 17:29 from Weinham to Neustadt (Weinstrasse).





In contrast, Friday, being a working day was quieter in terms of the number of steam-hauled services operated.

We started just south of Hockenheim where the “classic” line parallels the high speed line on which three ICE trains passed. At the second location of the day we had another bonus as 103 113-7 of the DB Historic fleet passed with an express before the steam.

Our next location didn't go quite to plan thanks to our unfamiliarity with area but following a quick sprint from the car I at least managed to get a spectacular “grab-shot”.

The day ended with an open-house at Neustadt shed where all the locos were posed for photos and spun on the turntable at regular intervals.

Former DR Pacific 01 118 heads the 09:15 Neustadt (Weinstrasse) to Karlsruhe service south from Hockenheim on Friday 30th May. Ninety minutes later it raced along the Karlsruhe to Heidelberg line at Km 35 north of Rot-Malsch with the 11:55 Karlsruhe to Neustadt (Weinstrasse).

The grab shot. Pacific 01 202 storms through Neckarzimmern with the 11:40 Neustadt (Weinstrasse) to Heilbronn.

Friday evening line up at Neustadt shed. Left to right: Pacifics 01 118, 01 150; 2-8-2 41 018 and 2-10-0s 52 4867 and 8134-6. The two vacant roads were reserved for 01 202 and 41 360 which were still out in service.



Saturday was scheduled to be the busiest day of the Plan-dampf in terms of train movements so we elected to go to Neustadt and spend the morning leaning on the wall overlooking the east end of the station and watch the action.

And what a spectacle it was! The regular arrivals and departures of steam-hauled services were punctuated by an equal number of empty stock and light engine moves to and from the yards and loco sheds. If this wasn't enough

there was also the intense service of regular trains being operated by DB to watch comprising everything from local S-Bahn and Regio-Bahn services to international trains - the frequent Paris - Frankfurt trains run this way, a mixture of German ICEs and French TGVs which provided an amazing contrast as they passed the steam locos. There was a lot of freight activity too.



DB 'Kriegslok' 52 4867 draws the empty stock out of Neustadt (Weinstrasse) station having worked the 09:16 from Alsenz.



Former DR 3-cylinder 2-10-0 58 311 approaches Neustadt (Weinstrasse) with the 10:51 train from Bad Dürkheim.

Eventually, we tired of the action and joined by Jim we set off for the lineside. At Nonnental Pacific 01 202 put in an impressive display of hill climbing (see page 8) after which we went to Lambrecht to see Kriegslok 52 8134-0 depart followed by a welcome cold beer in the station bar. We returned to Neustadt for the evening to observe the return of the trains to the yard and shed from the platform of the suburban Böbig station.



A 110-year contrast in motive power at Neustadt as DB ICE set 4680 forming IC 9550, the 19:01 Frankfurt to Paris Est passes the industrial 0-6-0 'Speyerbach' with 2-8-2 41 360 in the background.

Industrial 0-6-0 "Speyerbach", built by Humboldt (b/n 210) in 1904, in the yard at Neustadt (Böbig). Normally based at the Kuckucksbahn at Lambrecht it was used during the Plandamf to operate empty stock between the yards and station.



Former DR 'Kriegslok' 52 8134-0 makes a rousing departure from Lambrecht with the 15:32 train to Neustadt and Landau.

DB oil-burning 2-8-2 41 018 brings up the rear of empty stock entering the yard at Neustadt (Böbig).



Sunday was another comparatively quiet day. We started in the hills at Wilgartswiesen then on to Winden where we bumped into Chris Waite before going back to Lambrecht - more beer! Our final location was at our base, Germersheim which was visited by steam on Sunday only.

Lit by shafts of sunlight, Pacific 01 202 storms away from Wilgartswiesen with the 08:27 circular working from Neustadt (Weinstrasse) to Landau, Pirmasens Nord, Kaiserslautern and Neustadt.

Pacific 01 118 passes Winden non-stop working the 11:17 Karlsruhe to Neustadt (Weinstrasse) service.



Three hours later 01 118 storms uphill through Lambrecht heading the 14:19 Neustadt (Weinstrasse), Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens Nord, Landau, Neustadt circular.



52 8134-0 waits to depart from Germersheim with the 16:55 train to Neustadt (Weinstrasse).

A timeless conversation piece at Neustadt shed on Friday evening.

Gordon Rippington takes a well-earned rest at Lambrecht and contemplates the long drive home on Monday.



A TOUCH OF LUXURY FOR ONE DAY ONLY

TIM SPEECHLEY

I'm not noted for being the most extravagant chap, so the thought of spending a great deal of my own hard earned cash on something luxurious and short-lived is not something that comes to mind very often, if ever. Consequently, one of my main leaving presents when I retired from Fiat at the end of June 2013 was the perfect choice – a voucher for use on the Venice Simplon Orient-Express. The Company had been very generous as I had £800 to spend and in my naivety I wondered how far this would get us towards Venice. A quick look at the web site brought me down to earth very quickly – about as far as Balham (gateway to the



South, for those who remember). In fact 800 smackers get you two tickets for the rather less exotic *British Pullman* dining train that runs regularly from Victoria for a four hour tour of the home counties whilst the passengers enjoy lunch. Still, without the gift it's a trip I would never have contemplated.

Moving forward to 23rd May 2014 found Mrs Speechley and yours truly suitably "toggled up" at Victoria station ready for our experience of a lifetime. Incidentally, we had travelled up to London on the Metropolitan line from Amersham, my first experience of travel on the new "S-stock", with which I was very impressed. Initially there seemed to be a certain amount of chaos on the station because VSOE have very little space to accommodate their customers whilst awaiting the arrival of the Pullman stock. There is a fairly small room where you book-in and a few people can wait within but the majority have to mill around on the platform, getting in the way of ordinary passengers going to and from normal service trains. A four piece jazz group was playing in an attempt to keep the punters amused and then around mid-day, 67.026 pulled into platform 2 with our train.

We had been allocated seats in car *Cygnus* but before boarding I made a quick note of the train formation, which was, from the rear, a Mark 1 vehicle (I forgot to note which), *Lucille*, *Audrey*, *Ibis*, *Minerva*, *Phoenix*, *Perseus*, *Cygnus*, *Gwen*, *Vera*, *Zena*, Mark 1 GV no.6313, and then the MNLPS support coach and of course, 35028 *Clan Line* at the head. I remember thinking it was a shame we were so far back from the loco but really

Bulled-up to perfection, 35028 Clan Line waits at Victoria to haul the VSOE British Pullman [Above] on 23rd May 2014.

"Welcome aboard," an immaculately liveried steward greets passengers as they board.

All photos by Tim Speechley with a little help from Gay and fellow revellers!



What's wrong with photographing your lunch ?

this trip isn't about the motive power, though I had ensured I had booked us on a steam-hauled trip, of course, and we were fortunate because *Clan Line* was not available for its next scheduled duty on the train. I would certainly have been disappointed to have had a diesel up front.

We were shown to our seats by an immaculately uniformed steward, who with others would be looking after our every need for the duration of the trip. Gay and I had a two-seater table, with another couple on a similar one the opposite side of the gangway but otherwise our section of the coach, with other small tables, was not occupied. Having located our seats I had a quick dash up the platform to try to get a shot of *Clan Line* though photographic possibilities were not brilliant. Then it was back to *Cygnus* to enjoy the journey and a very generous glass of champagne was provided almost as soon as we took our seats along with some delicious canapés. These seemed to fit the opulent surroundings of our Pullman very well.

A typical table setting.



Contented diners.

Soon we departed and made a slow climb away from Victoria and over the Thames. *Clan Line* was almost inaudible so I guessed 67.026 on the back was giving us a pretty good shove. All too soon we had a signal check and were passed by ordinary service trains. This is when you first get to feel rather special, white linen, silver service, champagne glass in hand. Off we went again and the first of our five courses (Ham hock terrine with beetroot and red cabbage slaw, mixed leaves and basil pesto) was served somewhere around the Feltham area. Suffice to say, all the food was truly excellent, beautifully presented and in sufficient quantities, so much so that all courses were photographed for posterity (is this sad? We once had such a phenomenal English breakfast in a B&B in Keswick I felt compelled to photograph that too). As part of the experience a bottle of wine is provided per couple and on the basis of the menu we had chosen the "house" white (is that the right term on a train?) though for the discerning and probably either personally affluent or corporate diner there were others available at a supplementary price of up to £258 a bottle.

I had left our booking until May because I felt it would give a better chance for a bright, sunny and fairly warm day without the need for top coats nor any likelihood of being stiflingly hot. It wasn't a bad move, though there was some quite heavy rain whilst we were on the train

Now that's what you call a cheese board.





The opulent interior of Cygnus.

and this was to have some effect later on. Our route took us on through Staines, Egham and Virginia Water but the views outside were rather secondary compared with the delights inside, both visual and edible. We were quite impressed by the ride qualities of *Cygnus*, no doubt assisted by the ample upholstery of the Pullman's armchair seating.

One disappointment for me was the lack of time and opportunity to explore the rest of the train. The carriages all have their own distinct décor and history and it would have been very interesting to have had the chance to wander about and view the exquisite marquetry and fittings of the different vehicles. That just wasn't possible for two reasons. Firstly, you're too busy eating and drinking and secondly, it would be rude to stroll about whilst others were dining. As a result we only got to see the inside of *Cygnus* itself, though all participants received a small guide to the train's vehicles and also a copy of Shirley Sherwood's book "Pullmans of the Venice Simplon Orient-Express" which goes into much more detail about the creation and restoration of the train by her husband, James Sherwood of Sea Containers Ltd.

Cygnus was built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Co. Ltd to a design dating from before the war, though not completed until 1951 when it went into service on the revamped Golden Arrow service, on which it served until that ended on 30 October 1972. It was also popular for use by royalty, visiting heads of state and

famously as part of Sir Winston Churchill's funeral train. A 26 seat parlour car, the interior decoration is by Waring and Gillow and even the lavatory compartment features a specially designed mosaic floor. Sold out of service, initially to Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, by 1976 it was in use on the North York Moors line from whence it was used in the film "Agatha" (Vanessa Redgrave and Dustin Hoffman) before being bought for full restoration by VSOE in 1977.

Back to our journey and having dived under the LSWR main line near Brooklands we then join it at Byfleet and New Haw and head south west. By now we have probably just got through the second course (garden pea soup with minted crème fraiche) and somewhere like Woking the main course of beautifully presented Scottish salmon arrives. We come to an unscheduled stand in Guildford station for some time and envious travellers on the platforms watch us finishing our main courses. I think the stop here is to allow a First Great Western Turbo to get ahead of us with a Gatwick train. Eventually we start again and pass the site of the old MPD that I remember bunking sometime in 1966. We don't go very far, as once we get through Shalford Junction and off the main line to Portsmouth we come to another lengthy stand in Shalford station where we are due to take water for around 20 minutes. It tips down with rain outside whilst we chat to the couple across the gangway, who are celebrating her 50th birthday, and take some pictures.

As we finally leave Shalford I can properly hear the Merchant Navy up front for the first time. The combination of persistent rain and a heavy train takes its toll and we make slow progress up Gomshall bank with the Pacific slipping frequently and speed probably just into double figures. I think to myself “good job we’ve got that 67 on the back or we could be in trouble”. *Clan Line* has no difficulty making steam and is blowing off but continues to grind up the bank awfully slowly but finally we reach the summit, indicated by a long whistle of relief, and accelerate rapidly down the other side. Only when we have returned to Victoria do I realise the 67 comes off once it’s banked us out of the terminus, so had the crew not made such an effort to keep us going there may have been quite a delay.

Whilst this battle is going on the cheese board arrives. Wow ! now that’s what I call a cheese board, with a vast choice of British varieties. We pig out (in the most refined way) and Gay surprises me by insisting we have the optional port to go with the cheese (only £6 a glass – what the hell !). We enjoy this as, once over the top, we head for Dorking, Reigate and then meet the Brighton line at Redhill where we turn left and start our return journey to London. *Clan Line* is running pretty fast on this stretch but I imagine she has to, in view of the density of traffic. Around East Croydon dessert arrives (gooseberry trifle with ginger shortbread) and is consumed with relish.

All too soon we are at Clapham Junction, so where’s the coffee ? Just beyond here we seem to go into a sort of loop line where we stop for a while and my query is answered – coffee and petit fours arrive. It is hard to believe this fantastic experience, anticipated in the mind for such a long time, will soon be over, gone in a flash. We start moving again and thread our way back to Victoria, arriving bang on time at 16.04. The train crew, no doubt tired from their exertions, are keen to de-train us passengers as quickly as possible, so my plan to walk through the carriages in front of us is thwarted and we end up on the platform along with all the other well fed and probably somewhat inebriated clientele.

Any chance of a decent shot of the loco ? Fat chance, it’s surrounded by well-dressed gentlemen and ladies taking photos of themselves on smart phones and i-pads. However, I have one stroke of luck and by some miracle end up on the footplate for a very brief minute, only too aware that a cream jacket is probably not the ideal bit of gricing apparel. I mention the slow and difficult climb out of Shalford up to Gomshall and the crew admit it was all pretty touch and go and that’s when they tell me about the absent class 67. I thank them for a super trip and regain the platform hoping I’ve avoided the worst of the grease and grime. I have.

Any thoughts of hanging about to have a better look at the loco are soon dismissed as it is apparent that several service trains have not departed on time and a quick enquiry reveals that there is a signalling problem preventing trains leaving. It’s 4.30 Friday afternoon and the last place I think we should be is a London terminus filling up with angry commuters facing delayed trains home. We run for the Victoria line and are lucky to get a train almost immediately and then get straight onto a crowded Bakerloo at Oxford Circus. It’s back to reality now and I need to decide whether to go back to Amersham from Baker Street or by Chiltern from Marylebone, so we are very lucky to get seats either side of a gentleman looking at a timetable. I say just one word to him, “Amersham?”, and he responds “The Met from Baker Street” and so our route to normality is decided. I thank him for the information and we and many others dash upstairs to get our semi-fast. No armchairs, no stewards, no *Clan Line* but at least we have escaped the bustling metropolis for leafy Bucks during this Friday rush hour.

All too soon we are back at the car and then home. Was it all a dream ? Well no it wasn’t, instead it was a truly fantastic experience, though it does all go by in a whirl and just as you’re getting used to the opulence you arrive back at Victoria. If you can afford to try it then do so, it’s like nothing else. I can only repeat my thanks to my former employer for giving me, somebody who has always been rather “careful” with his money, the opportunity to enjoy the high life, even if it was just for one day.



Cheers ! Our happy Chairman raises a glass to day to remember and his former employer who made it possible.

NEXT TIME...

Vincent Caldwell reflects on a similar trip, this time aboard the British Pullman’s Asian sister train *The Eastern Orient Express* from Bangkok to Singapore.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE 1966 TAPLOW OPEN DAY

Before moving into Didcot the Great Western Society's collection was scattered across many locations including Ashchurch, Bodmin, Buckfastleigh, Taunton and Taplow. A number of open days were held at these during the mid-sixties including a couple at Taplow.

Ron North was among those who attended the event on 17th September 1966 recording these images for posterity.

The GWS collection at Taplow, which included 6106, was kept in the old goods shed and yard on the down side, now the car park.



Enthusiasts queue to visit the footplate of 4079 *Pendennis Castle*. At this time it was in private ownership having been bought from BR by Mike Higson in 1964 and later being acquired by the Hon. John Gretton and Sir William McAlpine before being sold to Australia in 1977. Twenty two years later it was repatriated and is now in the ownership of the GWS undergoing a full overhaul at Didcot which will return it to the superb condition seen here.

The GWS chartered a special train from Birmingham Snow Hill to Taplow for the event hauled by 7808 *Cookham Manor* which had been acquired by the Society and was at that time based at Ashchurch. The special ran to Taplow via the GW-GC Joint Line and Greenford Loop and is seen arriving. The stock was stabled in the up side sidings whilst the loco went on display in front of 4079. The return trip was by way of Reading and Oxford and not via the branch as had been thought so the loco never got to Cookham.





BR supported the event sending along its exhibition train which showed films among other things and a pair of proper diesels, North British built Class 43 Warship D837 *Ramillies* still in green livery and Class 52 D1030 *Western Musketeer*. This was the first loco Swindon out-shopped in

blue livery and they got it slightly wrong not only applying red buffer beams and smaller than specified hand painted symbols but they used the wrong shade of paint. Lighter than that we became accustomed to, it had a slight metallic pigment. It ran like that for several years.



6106 operated short shuttles up and down the yard carrying passengers in a pair of Super Saloons which the GWS had acquired. In those days the public was deemed to have common sense so only a thin rope separated the visitors from the action on the main lines which carried on regardless. An unidentified *Western* thunders past at 90 mph with probably no more than a toot on the horn. Today's Health & Safety crowd would have apoplexy but did anyone get run over or even hurt? Of course not.

Oh, happy days!

The Wotton Light Railway

Story and pictures by Julian Heard

A group of around 35 people which included a number of MDRS members were privileged to visit the 15" gauge Wotton Light Railway on Saturday 16th August and found what turned out to be a little gem of a private line which opened in 1996.

Set in land adjoining North Lodge in part of the extensive grounds of Wotton House, Wotton, we were greeted by the railways owner Sir Jeremy Sullivan (Lord Justice of Appeal since 2009 and also appointed Senior President of Tribunals in 2012) and his wife welcoming us with wine and selection of very tasty nibbles. Jeff Price, our contact, was also present making finally preparations to *Sandy* a 0-6-0T built by the Exmoor Steam Railway no. 307 in 1996 in readiness for the first run. Our train consisted of one closed saloon, and three semi toast rack coaches, one of which was fitted out with tables as a dining car. In addition two dropside wagons, a well wagon and a tool/brake van were in a nearby siding. All were purpose built by Alan Keef Ltd. I also noted a 4 wheeled taker marked 'Weed killer' stored in the garage which judging by the immaculate state of the trackbed, sees regular use.

During our visit there were four return journey's along what is clearly very well laid permanent way as the ride was surprisingly smooth especially in the comfortable seating of the closed saloon. At each end, trains turn round using the balloon loops with automatic spring points. Spring points are also used to set the route through the passing loop. The tunnel was created as a feature for the benefit of, in Sir Jeremy's words, children of all ages! There is no signalling as such but whether some sort of block working is used for two train operation is unknown. The scenery as you would expect is typical of our rural areas with the hilltop village of Brill overlooking the grounds.

The trains were driven alternately by Jeff Price and Sir Jeremy who obligingly stopped at several locations to give a run past for photographers accompanied by a good hand-ful of regulator !

With thanks to David Collins for providing the contact information which made this visit possible.

Running through the passing loop with Geoff Price driving and David Collins also on the footplate'. The alignment of the Kingswood branch is directly to rear of the train at this point.



Sandy has a working pressure of 120psi, 12" diameter driving wheels, and 4" bore x 5" stroke cylinders plus lever-operated Walschaerts valve gear and weighs about 3 tons

All items of rolling stock are double bogie, are fitted with parking brakes and single line, fail safe air brakes. Heywood style couplings are fitted throughout - design is from Sir Arthur Heywood's minimum gauge railway.



Sandy has two stable mates:

Pompey [Left] a Bo-Bo DM built by Alan Keef Ltd no 64 of 2001. Fitted with a 3 cylinder Perkins 900 series 2.7L engine and an International Transmissions SS400 power shift unit with drive via carden shafts to both inboard axles and then chain drive to the outer axles. The bogie bolsters are carried on rubber suspension units. Estimated weight 4 tons

Pam [Right] a 0-4-0DH built by Alan Keef Ltd No 52 of 1996. Fitted with 3 cylinder Kubota engine driving a Sauer-Sundstrand 90 series hydraulic pump feeding HTL piston type hydraulic motor with chain drive to rear axle. Estimated weight 1.5 tons.

Sir Jeremy stated that Pam sees regular use, sometimes daily, when he checks around that part of the estate or simply enjoys a run out on the line.

