

THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

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Howay the Lads

A Day Out in Chester in 1964

Forty Years Gone

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: D1002 Western Explorer at Swindon Photo: Trevor Owen/Colour Rail. Article page 15.

Middle: D1023 Western Fusilier & D1013 Western Ranger passing Lands End just west of Twyford 26 February 1977. Photo: Peter Robins. Article page 15.

*Bottom: D1000 Western Enterprise at Birmingham Snow Hill August 1962.
Photo: Michael Mensing. Article page 15.*

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.45 for 8.00pm (except June which is at 7.15 for 7.30pm.)

- Thursday 16 March **THE FASCINATION OF OLD PHOTOGRAPHS** Brian Stephenson
Brian Stephenson returns with another trawl through his archive collection featuring mostly railway subjects around the country but includes some shipping, trams, buses, road haulage and an occasional aircraft.
- Thursday 20 April **THE HISTORY OF THE PULLMAN CARRIAGE IN THE UK** Phil Evans
Phil who is the General Secretary of the Pullman Society, will give a presentation on their work in the UK. Many Pullman cars still survive in preservation, and are used on the British Belmond mainline operation, and also on various preserved railways who use them on their Dining Trains.
- Thursday 18 May **MY LIFE ON THE RAILWAYS** Norman Topsam MBE
Norman started his career in 1962 based at the old Henley Town Station, before transferring to Reading where he worked for some of this period based in the Parcel Depot; before moving to the current Twyford Station in 1989. He was awarded the M.B.E. in 2005, and in 2012 was voted The Face of Henley, before retiring in November 2015 after 53 years on the Railway.
- Thursday 15 June **55 YEARS OF RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHY - PART 1** Dr. Les Nixon
The noted railway photographer makes a return visit to share his remarkable collection. Please note this is our annual joint meeting with the RCTS and will therefore start at 19:30 not the usual 20:00.

FORTHCOMING VISITS

- Saturday 27 May **EPPING & ONGAR RAILWAY**
Our visit coincides with the railway's steam gala.
- Saturday 9 September **STATFOLD BARN RAILWAY**
As usual, much has changed at Statfold since our last visit in 2015 so it's worth a return visit.
- See page 3 for further details of both these trips.**

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

What an incredibly long winter this has been. I know the weather hasn't really been that bad but it has certainly been a closed season for me so far as activities have gone. My camera hasn't been used in earnest since the beginning of November and I can't wait to get out and see some steam. Fortunately I have already made plans to go to the Keighley and Worth Valley gala in early March and then to the Great North Steam Fair at Beamish in April.

I find it very hard to believe that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the end of steam on the Southern. How old that makes me feel, for I remember well my quite frequent visits to Waterloo or Vauxhall or Clapham Junction in '65, '66 and '67, with the odd steam trip to Woking or as far as Basingstoke thrown in. I was there on the last day at Nine Elms shed and then later at Waterloo to see 35030 come in on the very last arrival. I even managed to "cab" it. The other day I got an e-mail from UK Railtours in which they were advertising "The Bournemouth Belle" in July, that will feature (I hope) a newly overhauled "Clan Line" and will use the Belmond Pullman set. In a quite untypical moment of extravagant spontaneity I booked Mrs S and myself on it. She so enjoyed her previous Pullman experience that it seems it's the only way I'll ever get her on a train in future. Of course there are several galas on preserved lines to celebrate this end of steam, with a number of them competing to have the largest

number of operating Bulleid pacifics. Currently, I think Swanage are in the lead, with five.

I'm not the only railway enthusiast in my family and it was good to see a small piece in the February Railway Magazine about the test steaming and then the reuniting of boiler and frames of an Austerity 0-6-0ST at the Mid-Norfolk Railway (somewhere I have yet to get to) because my cousin, David Bramhall, has been part of the restoration team and also treasurer for this project to return to operation Hunslet 3193 of 1944, now named *The Norfolk Regiment*. We are not a very close family and whilst for many years I have known David was a keen modeller, it came as quite a surprise when I first discovered just how hands-on he had been with this loco and I look forward to seeing it finished and running in due course.

Despite my nearby Chingford roots, I have also yet to visit the Epping-Ongar Railway but this will be rectified in May when we visit there as a society. The chosen date, Saturday 27th May, coincides with their steam gala and I hope many of you will participate. If any of you are also bus enthusiasts, you will be in for a real treat, as the connecting services are usually worked by ex-London Transport RT and RF types.

All my best to you all.

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to start the New Year by welcoming two new members to the Society, Dave Grant from Maidenhead, who has attended several meetings as a visitor and has now taken the plunge, and Tony Storrow who lives at Swallowfield.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

As Chairman of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, Peter Miles was an excellent choice to present our January meeting with a comprehensive look at the railway, its past (including some wonderful film), present and ambitious plans for the future.

Following our AGM in February, Keith Shepherd presented a programme titled Railway Safety, however it could have more accurately been titled: the "Office of Rail & Road - who we are" as there was precious little detail on the advertised subject - you can't win them all!

EPPING & ONGAR RAILWAY VISIT

We are planning a Society visit to the Epping & Ongar Railway on **Saturday 27th May** when they are holding their 5th Anniversary Steam Gala.

The E&O is a relatively recent arrival on the heritage railway scene and one many of us have not yet visited so here's your chance.

We propose travelling by train (we are a railway society!) either from the Marlow branch (09:06 from Marlow) or High Wycombe changing to the Central Line at either Ealing Broadway or West/South Ruislip.

If you like to join us please let Brian Hopkinson know on 01628 298520 or hopkinson5@talktalk.net alternatively, you can just turn up on the day.

STATFOLD BARN VISIT

Our second outing planned for this year is another visit to that "narrow gauge utopia" Statfold Barn for their annual enthusiasts' open day on **Saturday 9th September**.

Although we have made several visits previously, returns are never disappointing as the railway is in constant state of development and change, much having been added since our last visit in 2015.

As we have to book the tickets for this event in advance, it is essential you book your place as early as possible with Brian Hopkinson - details as above.

A great day out is assured - even if it rains!

CHILTERN SIMULATOR VISITS

In recent weeks Chiltern Railways have kindly hosted several sessions on their driver training simulator at Aylesbury for our members.

These have proved most enjoyable for all those who have taken part. The simulator is based on a real Class 168 cab coupled with graphics which accurately replicate



sections of the Chiltern network, in the picture above you can see the down departure from Princes Risborough. Most of the runs made by our members were on the new line between Bicester and Oxford.

Whilst all the booked dates have now been fulfilled, Chiltern are prepared to arrange further sessions later in the year if demand warrants it. Ideally, we need a group of around four for each session which allows everyone to have a reasonable time in the seat.

If you would like to try your hand at train driving - it's very realistic and great fun - please contact Mike Walker at mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk or on 01628 483899.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As in previous years, the AGM business was conducted quickly and efficiently. The four committee members due to retire were all re-elected and the officer roles remain unaltered for 2017.

However, we do still have a vacancy on the committee and with several of the current team indicating they might wish to retire in the not too distant future, it is essential we recruit new committee members if *your* Society is going to continue to flourish.

NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

Peter Robins' article Return to Mountain Ash was voted the best article in the *Marlow Donkey* in 2016 and won him the Norman Aston-Smith Trophy. Unfortunately we couldn't actually make the presentation as it seems to have been mislaid...

RCTS MAIDENHEAD MEETINGS

The Maidenhead & Windsor branch of the RCTS have the following meetings planned for the coming months:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Mon 27 March | American Wanderings - Heading East
Gordon Davies |
| Mon 24 April | Railways to Airports - a worldwide view
Andrew Sharp |
| Mon 22 May | Windsor & Maidenhead on Tour - the first
10 years, a look at the branch's activities. |

All meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, starting at 19:30.

CHILTERN TO OXFORD

Chiltern finally started through services to Oxford on 11th December with 168324 leading the first arrival [Right].

Next day 68011 was the power for 2T03, the 06:26 from Bicester Village, the inaugural Chiltern LHCS into the city. It then formed 1Y12, the 07:20 to Marylebone.

Later 68010 was named *Oxford Flyer* by Michael Portillo accompanied by (from left), Dave Penney (Chiltern MD), Chris Grayling (Secretary of State for Transport) and Mark Carne (Network Rail CEO).



Two photos below: Geoff Plumb

above: Richard Porter



REMODELLING AT MAIDENHEAD

There was no peace at Maidenhead over the festive period as engineers took advantage of a ten day blockade to remodel the station's trackwork and signalling ready for electrification and Crossrail services.

This provided the rare sight of a moving train on the network on Christmas Day as 66109 arrived with track materials whilst on the foggy conditions on the evening of 30th December provided a ghostly image of Colas tamber DR75406 standing in platform 3.

Photos: below Nigel Hunt

right Mike Walker



SPRING STEAM PLANS

There are several steam specials planned in the coming months which will visit the Great Western Main Line.

- 1 Apr *Cathedrals Express* Kettering - Bristol
- 8 Apr *Vintage Trains* Solihull - Salisbury 5043
- 20 Apr *Cathedrals Express* Victoria - Maidenhead 46100
- 22 Apr *Cathedrals Express* Paddington - Stratford 34046
- 26 Apr *Cathedrals Express* Horsham - Bristol 46100
- 7 May *Great Britain X* Falmouth - Paddington 34046+46100.

HOWAY THE LADS

Tim Speechley visits the North East Part 1 Beamish Museum



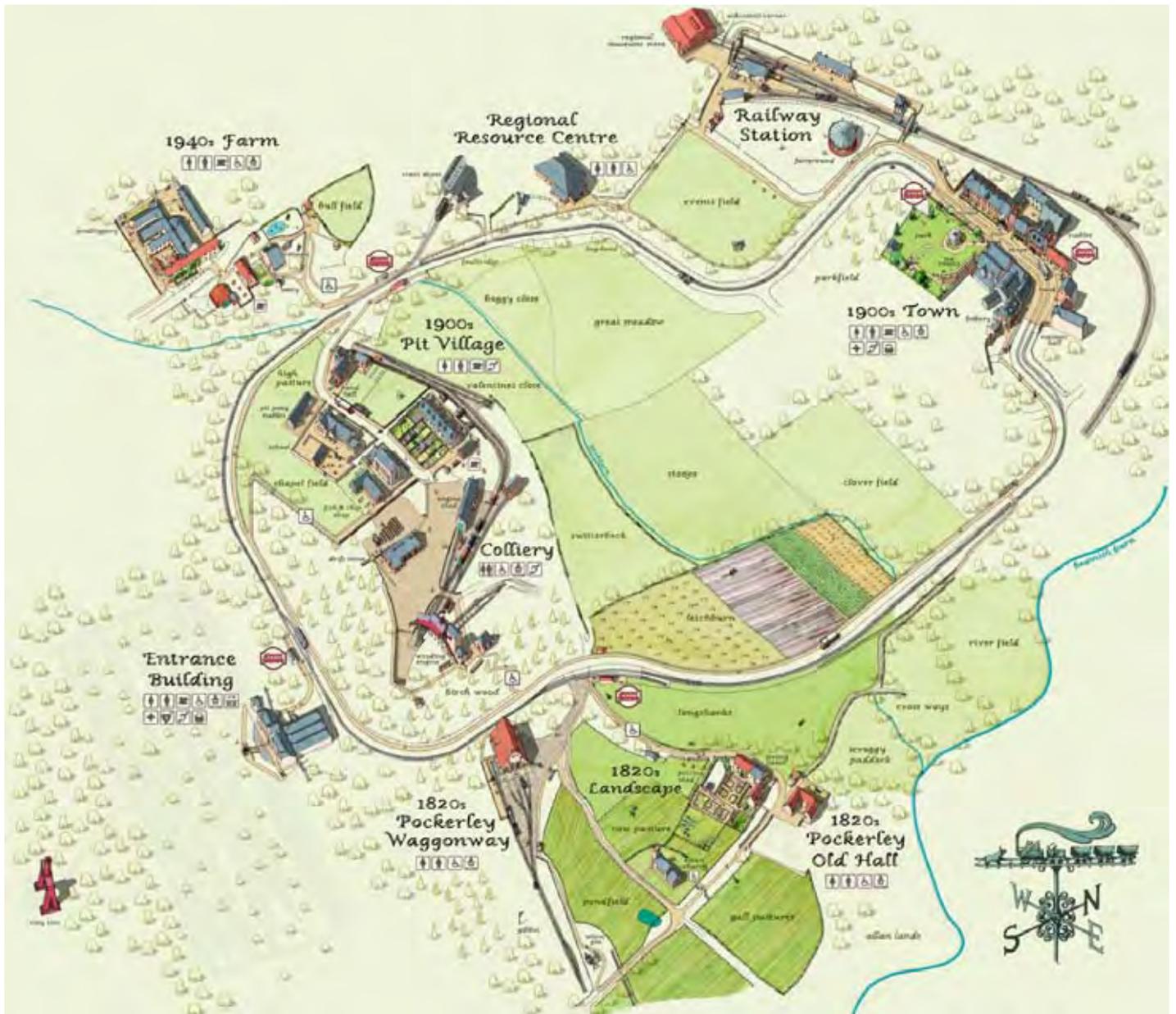
Glasgow [Left] and Sunderland trams pass in Beamish's 1900's town

Apart from a short visit to the NRM's Shildon outpost, when the six preserved Gresley A4 Pacifics were there in early 2014, I had hardly visited the north-east for the best part of 45 years. Back in the late 60's and early 70's I had managed to see quite a bit of industrial steam in both County Durham and Northumberland and, thanks to having a cousin at Durham University, had even seen BR steam in the area back in 1965 and then later at the very end in 1967. For a long time I had wanted to visit both the Beamish Open Air Museum and also its close neighbour, the industrially-themed Tanfield Railway. Planning some months ahead, I noted that the Tanfield was having a gala in early June, so I booked some very cheap accommodation at the Travelodge at the A1(M) services at Washington and waited.

The day finally arrived for my trip north but it was not to be a simple drive up the A1 because I had arranged to take a load of my old magazines to the Vintage Carriages Trust at Ingrow, on the Keighley and Worth Valley line. My car was extremely well laden and Keighley was quite a major diversion from the direct route, but for years I have wanted to thin out my collection and these days there are very few organisations prepared to take them but I couldn't face the alternative solution of just binning them. The chaps at Ingrow helped me unload them and with sighs of relief from the car's springs, I was on my way again.

I can't say that staying at a motorway service area is a very good thing to do but at £31 a night for a room with up to 3 beds, it's wonderful value. Fortunately, having done a little research beforehand on Google maps and Streetview, I was aware the A1 northbound area had pedestrian access to the outside world and amazingly, about 400 yards up the road was a truly excellent Italian restaurant where several dinners were enjoyed along with the odd bottle of vino rosso.

Next morning was Friday and after a spell of quite lovely early summer weather it was dull. I found the local (Birtley) branch of Morrisons for the statutory full English breakfast and once replete headed for Beamish Museum. Being a weekday in term time it was very quiet, certainly when I arrived, and during the day the only children I saw were part of school visits, for which the majority had dressed up to suit the era, which for much of the site is 1913, the eve of the First World War, after which nothing would ever be the same. As you can see from the map, Beamish is huge and the vast majority of what is there has been created on a green field site. You can travel around the museum on buses (old fashioned looking but built on modern running gear) or on trams (the real thing) but I opted to walk. From the entrance I went clockwise, following the tram tracks and by-passed the 1940's farm (I never did get to see it), going instead to the tram depot, for



which access is restricted, and then on past some outdoor exhibits, including an enormous steam excavator and a four-wheeled electric loco, to the Regional Resource Centre which has storage for a vast collection of smaller items. Amongst these my eye was taken by a row of seats with ladies' hair driers from an ancient hair salon, a map showing all the collieries in the NCB Durham area and a booklet extolling "Mining – a Career for Durham Boys", a number of British made washing machines and cookers, an advertising poster showing a dozen assorted types of Fry's chocolate and a vast array of enamel adverts and signs.

Thence downhill to the railway station and adjacent Beamish Waggon and Iron Works building, a huge corrugated iron structure which houses many large exhibits, such as an old aero engine and machine tools. In front of this is a smaller shed and here a steam roller had its smoke-box, headstock and front roll removed and was in the course of being retubed. Other ancient vehicles were also present and the museum's resident electrician was in attendance with his van, a 1940's Hillman. The museum has several operable old vehicles and rather than use them only on special occasions they are utilised internally by the www.mdrs.org.uk

staff. Later on I saw a Model T Ford pick-up delivering wooden offcuts for lighting-up purposes.

Unfortunately the railway was not in operation this day. Standing outside, dead, was a grey Avonside 0-6-0ST I.W & D No 34 (Inland Waterways and Docks) that turned out to be *Portbury*, visiting from the Bristol Docks Railway, and carrying the livery it wore when new in 1917. I had a look at the station and signal box and moved on to the 1900's town but not before photographing an eight wheel Sentinel steam wagon that was raising steam outside the station.

The town has many buildings, including houses, shops, a garage, stables, a bank and I'm pleased to say, a pub, "The Sun", where I partook of a pint of bitter that unfortunately did not come at a 1900 price. All these buildings have been brought from elsewhere and re-erected here to recreate the town either side of the dual tram tracks. I visited the Annfield Plain Co-operative shop, split into two parts, grocery and hardware, and at the latter I was able to purchase the perfect gift for Mrs S, a bar of red carbolic soap (how that smell takes you back to your childhood !). Photos of trams were taken and then it was on towards Pockerley Old Hall, which is the only part of the museum



1863 Lewin at the Beamish Colliery with No 5 Malleable and the FR Moelwyn in the background.

Sheffield tram outside Barclay's bank in the 1900's town.



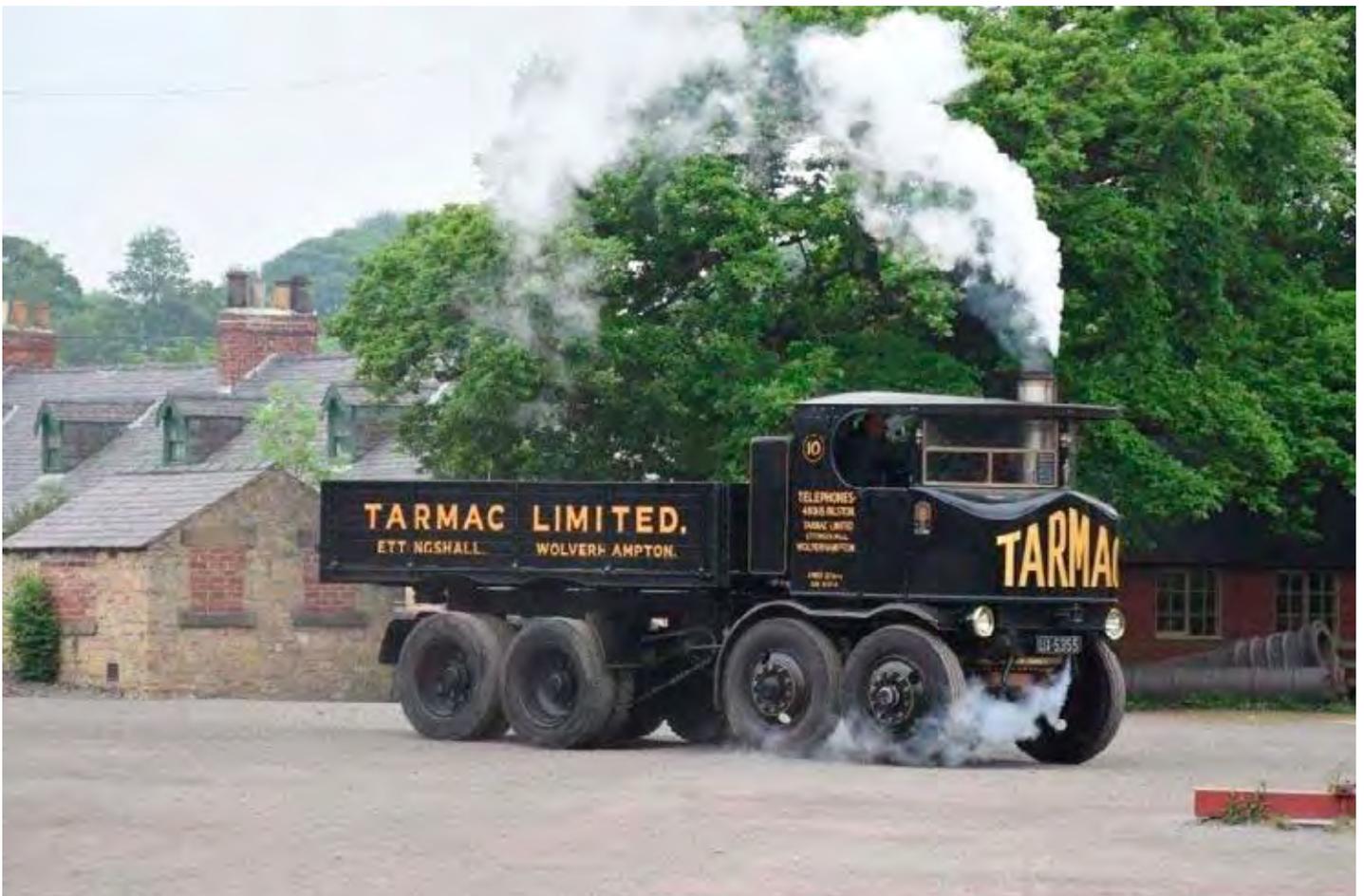
that existed here before its creation. No transport stuff here, so on again past the newly rebuilt Eston church until I arrived at the 1820's waggonway, where they have recreated the steam railway at its very beginnings. Operating today was a replica of the *Puffing Billy*, William Hedley's 1813 loco for the Wylam Colliery. I had a ride behind her and it struck me that when new this would have been real cutting edge technology, the space travel of its time. Nestled in the shed area, were the other replicas of *Locomotion* No.1 and the *Steam Elephant* and this part of the museum provides a unique experience. Seeing one of these early locos wheezing its way through the countryside truly gives an impression of what it was like all those years ago.

Only a short walk away from here is the colliery area and I was surprised to hear a steam loco exhaust coming from that direction. On arrival I realised that the noise was coming from the ancient Lewin 0-4-0ST that had worked for decades for the Seaham Harbour Company and had been built in 1863. It seemed to be rearranging the contents of the shed, initially moving a dead 0-4-0 vertical boilered loco (built by Thomas Head in 1871) and later shunting a wagon carrying one of the 2 foot gauge North Wales quarry Hunslet 0-4-0 saddle tanks, *Edward Sholto*. Another saddle tank, rather unkempt, was sat in the sidings along with several old wooden chaldron wagons. This is No 5 *Malleable* whose origins seem a little unclear but it may have been built by Stockton Ironworks around 1900 and then rebuilt by Hudswell Clark at a later date. There

were also some narrow gauge (2 foot) tracks here but I was unable to get near to the rolling stock, amongst which was an old diesel loco that I thought looked like *Moelwyn* from the Ffestiniog Railway and subsequent research revealed that indeed, yes it was, almost certainly going to Beamish earlier in the year for their World War 1 themed transport event, having been built originally by Baldwin for the French army. Also moving around the colliery area was the Sentinel waggon I had seen earlier at the station.

By now museum closing time of 17.00 was not far off but I had time to see if they were still doing visits to the underground drift mine and was lucky enough to have an exclusive tour with just me and the guide, who outlined in graphic detail the hardships of miners in days gone by. That finished, it was a short walk back up to the entrance building. I had still not seen quite a bit of the museum (like much of the pit village) but had every intention of returning later in the weekend, for which the standard entry ticket, an unlimited pass valid for 12 months, would be very useful and exceptional value for we seniors at just £13.50.

I returned to the Travelodge for a cuppa and clean up and then later headed south to Chester-le-Street station to pick up my old friend Jim Bamford, who had travelled up from Leeds after work there. We dropped his stuff at the hotel and headed for the Italian for a very nice meal and bottle of wine which guaranteed a good night's sleep.



UX5355, the Sentinel DG8 wagon (8016 of 1929) steams its way towards the colliery loco shed to take water. Weighing in at 12 tons, it is chain-driven with just two forward gears.



The replica of William Hedley's 1813 Puffing Billy puffs through the landscape.

A close up of Puffing Billy in action. It was built in Beamish's own workshops in 2006 whilst the original is in the Science Museum in London.



A day out to Chester in 1964

Mike Page



Working at GKN Sankey's Hadley Castle factory near Wellington, Shropshire in 1964 positioned me closer to interesting railway centres such as Shrewsbury, Crewe and Chester. After my first two weeks in 'digs' in Hadley village, I got restless, so I thought I'd see what the current 'steam action' scene in Chester was like.

Still with me were many childhood memories of the seemingly cavernous Chester General station. Riding the 'Irish Mail' to and from Crewe to Holyhead for holidays at my mother's hometown in southwest Ireland, Chester always seemed busy even at night. It was not often I saw it in daylight, except when going with my parents from Wolverhampton (High Level) on occasional day excursions to Rhyl. At a very early age (about six) I remembered us stopping in Chester General alongside *Indomitable* (a black Jubilee No. 5720, which in 1948 was based at Patricroft).

'Rush hour' at Chester on 21st March 1964: 'Black Five' 45231 and Fairburn 2-6-4T 42212 (both are 6A) come through the Chester General station while fellow 'Black Five' 45140 (8F Springs Branch, Wigan) on an Up goods and Stanier 2-6-4T 42459 (8H Birkenhead) take the station avoiding roads in the background.

All photos by Mike Page unless stated.

Wrexham Rhosddu (6E) as pictured in 1952 shows two N5 0-6-2Ts 69346 and in the background, 69350 as well as C13 4-4-2T 67430. The ex-GWR Shrewsbury-Chester line lies to the right of the shed. Quite a surprise if you weren't expecting to see ex-LNER/GCR locos in Wales! In 1952 the shed had two J11 0-6-0s, five C13 and two C14 4-4-2Ts, one J63, two J67 and one J72 0-6-0Ts, seven N5 0-6-2Ts and two Stanier 3MT 2-6-2Ts. The locos worked the ex-Cheshire Line Committee lines in Denbighshire, Flintshire, Cheshire and the Wirral.

Photo: Paul Bolger/Mike Page collection



Until the 1960s, Chester General had an overall roof seen here, which was partly replaced with platform canopies. Engines are Birkenhead's Stanier 3MT 2-6-2T 40110 and Chester (GW)'s 2-6-2T 5179.

Photo: D Ibbotson/Mike Page collection

A week at Llandulas (between Rhyl and Colwyn Bay) in a caravan in August 1952 right by the Chester-Holyhead main line gave the impression that one in five trains were still pulled by ex-LMS 'Compound' 4-4-0s. There were also one or two new engines having numbers beginning with '7' that were not in my ABC of British Railways, London Midland Region. And yes, Chester General had at least two 'Compounds' on show when we had stopped there briefly on our way to Rhyl.

Llandulas had to be reached by bus from Rhyl station.

The 'draw' of the new 'Standards' and not having seen any '80-thousanders' in the West Midlands enticed myself and a school friend to visit Chester General on Saturday May 19 1956 where 6A (Chester) had recently gained ten Standard 4 2-6-4Ts. The 'cheap day' return fare from Wolverhampton (Low Level) to Chester for us 14-year-olds was 8s (40p) each. Chester's (84K) 'Castle' 5061 *Earl of Birkenhead* took us via Shrewsbury and on the way out through Oxley yards we saw one of the growing numbers of diesel shunters (08) in the West Midlands: Oxley's (84B) 13191. 84B's others were 13034-39.

One of the highlights was to see what was on Wrexham (6E). It did not entirely disappoint: the resident J69/1 0-6-0T 68585 was taking on coal while two of 6E's Ivatt Class 2 2-6-2Ts 41232 and 41244 simmered in the shed yard. There was no sign of the C13 4-4-2Ts, such as 67430, seen last year, when Dad had taken my sister and me on a day excursion one Sunday to Birkenhead. We crossed on a ferry to Liverpool where we rode the whole length of the Liverpool Overhead Railway. I can still picture the battleship *King George V* in a dry dock as well as the liners *Empress of Canada* and Cunard's *Coronia* at the quaysides.



Back to 1956: during our stay at Chester General, 6A had rostered four of its Standard 4 2-6-4Ts on trains for us to see that day (80045/8/50/63). We also trekked up to Chester (Northgate) station and shed (6D), which produced Wrexham's N5/2 0-6-2T 69274 on a local train. The little two-road shed produced Fowler Class 3 2-6-2T 40004 (17E Heaton Mersey) and Ivatt 2-6-2T 41215 (6D). Standing in the yard were Gorton's (39A) 04/8 2-8-0s 63895 and 63575. Back at the 'General' we saw more 'Standards' (Class 4 and 5 4-6-0s) before heading back home.

Moving on in time to Saturday March 21 1964 I had caught a Stafford-Shrewsbury local departing 07.57 from Hadley. The Fairburn 2-6-4T was not one of Stafford's but 42104 from Rugby (2A). One could guess that 42104 might have worked a Rugby-Stafford 'Trent Valley local' the night before and that Stafford (5C) had 'borrowed' her. We had now drawn to a halt in Shrewsbury's station where Ivatt 2 41209 (6D Shrewsbury) was acting as station pilot. The station had by now lost all of its overall roofing and looked rather naked.

In the half-hour or so's wait for the 09.50 to Birkenhead (ex Paddington) the station was quite busy. Croes Newydd's (6C) 80096 rolled into one of the west side bay platforms with a local from Welshpool followed by 'Grange' 6879 *Overton Grange* (2A Tysley) backing down from the shed to pick up a southbound parcels train left by 45230 (24L Carnforth). Then 6D's 6922 *Burton Hall* coupled up to the Welshpool arrival and removed the stock to free up 80096. That task completed, the down road through the station was clear for the passage of Stanier 8F 48404 (6D) with a freight off the Central Wales line. She was followed by 'Warship' D824 *Highflyer* (83A Newton Abbott) coming off the



Chester Northgate terminus on April 5 1943: D6 4-4-0 5865 (renumbered under Thompson as 2104, but withdrawn in 1947) waits with the 6.38 pm train to Manchester Central.

Photo: V R Webster/Mike Page collection

Welsh Marches line with a parcels train for Crewe. D824 was followed by Oxley's 6980 *Llanrumney Hall* with a freight for Chester. Yet another freight approached heading for the Chester line, this time Ivatt 41304 (82E Bristol Barrow Road) on a pick-up. This loco was quite clean, perhaps ex-works from Crewe or Oswestry.

Now it was the turn of my connection, the Paddington-Birkenhead pulled, surprisingly perhaps, by 'Black Five' 45231 of Aston, Birmingham (21D). So off we set, picking up speed quickly (only six coaches) into the 70s before slowing for Gobowen where another Ivatt tank, 41285, formerly of Leamington Spa (2L) had presumably ousted one of the 14XX 0-4-2Ts usually used on the Gobowen-Oswestry push-pulls.

There was not much to see at Ruabon or Wrexham and Ivatt Class 2 2-6-0 46470 (formerly of 1C Watford), now wearing a Chester 6A shedplate and acting as station pilot,

greeted us as we pulled in under the extensive signal gantry with an array of lower quadrant London & North Western Railway (LNWR) semaphores to one of the two 'Great Western' bays at Chester General. Most of the semaphore signals around the station were still ex-LNWR. 45231 uncoupled as Fairburn 2-6-4T 42236 (6A) backed on the rear to take the train onwards to Birkenhead (Woodside). Any ex-GWR locos were now serviced at 6A as the former Chester GW shed (84K, then 6E) had closed.

The station's traffic was predominantly in the hands of Stanier 'Black Fives', with a few Fairburn and Stanier 2-6-4Ts handling local parcels traffic, shuttling between Chester and Birkenhead with locals or the Paddington & Birkenhead trains. The south end station pilot and yard shunter were 6A's 'Jinty' 0-6-0Ts 47389 and 47371 respectively. We saw one of Patricroft's (26F) Caprotti valve geared 'Standard Fives': 73127 on a mid-day Manchester-Holyhead service. Mr. Caprotti's efforts were also

RIGHT: *Chester General in 1964 had lost its overall roof – and gloominess. 'Britannia' Pacific 70027 Rising Star, formerly of Cardiff (Canton) and ousted by diesels to Aston shed in Birmingham, has been released from the 13.10 arrival of a local train from Crewe. The two-car 'Derby Lightweight' diesel multiple unit waits with an afternoon local to Rhyl on 21st March 1964.*



BELOW: *Stanier 'Black Five' 45045, based at Llandudno Junction (6G) arrives at Chester General with a Holyhead to Manchester (Exchange) express.*



represented by Stockport's clean 'Caprotti Black Five' 44752 working through with a down fitted freight. A few Stanier 8Fs worked through with freights, like Llandudno Junction's (6G) 48771 and Royston's (55D) 48076. Spectacular in their own way were two of Aintree's (27B) WD 2-8-0s, 90381 + 90282 double heading a long heavy train of pre-fabricated track panels. Halted on the Down avoiding lines at the side of the station, the two locos had to work hard to get their load of track panels on the move again.

The only ex-GWR engine to be seen all afternoon was 6D's 6964 *Thornbridge Hall* arriving with 09.10 Paddington - Birkenhead. Stanier 2-6-4T 42478 took the train on to Birkenhead. The loco was surprisingly from Willesden (1A).

Before we took a return trip to Crewe, the only other named engine to appear in Chester was Aston's 'Britannia'

Pacific 70027 *Rising Star* arriving with the 13.10 local from Crewe. Unfortunately, we did not get 70027 on the 14.05 local back to Crewe: we had 6A's Fairburn 42213. 70027 was sitting near the coaling stage as we passed 6A.

The Crewe line was quite busy. A Down block oil train passed us south of Waverton with Birkenhead's (8H) 9F 92057: this loco did not survive 1964. More freights passed us such as 8F 48076 now moving her empties onwards south and then Mold Junction's (6B) 8F 48455 south of Tattenham Road. While we waited in Beeston Castle station, 6A's 'Black Five' 45198 rattled through with a mixed goods.

As we rounded the curve past Crewe Works English Electric 'Type 4' (40) D255 from Carlisle Upperby accelerated by with a local for Chester. There were no signs of any 'Duchesses' in steam at 5A. The only Pacifics in sight were Willesden's 70049 *Solway Firth* and 5A's 70025 *Western Star*. On view too were 'Jubilee' 45586 *Mysore* (Crewe South, 5B) and 45534 *E. Tootal Broadhurst*, which appeared to be dumped. By now, 'copping' a 'Black Five' was a rare event for me, but I had not seen Barrow's (12C) 45451 before.

LEFT: By 1964, the 30 British Caprotti valve geared 'Standard Five' 4-6-0s were divided equally between Patricroft, Rowsley and St. Rollox (Glasgow). The LMR-based 'Caprottis' had begun life at Shrewsbury and Derby as well as staying at Holyhead and other depots. They were very free-running engines. Patricroft's 73127 is seen arriving at Chester General on 21st March 1964 with a Manchester (Exchange) to Holyhead express.

BELOW: Two of Aintree's WD 2-8-0s, 90381 leading 90282, heave a heavy load of track panels away from Chester General's avoiding lines towards the North Wales coast on the same day. Both locos seem to have a good head of steam, if a bit leaky!



The station was fairly quiet and so I caught the next train back to Chester: a diesel multiple unit, one of the early BR 'Lightweights' from Derby. The driver had not pulled the blinds down, so I had a good view of 6A's 'Black Five' 45044 passing by with an Up mixed goods near Beeston Castle.

Only one loco could be clearly seen as we slowed past 6A: Stanier 8F 48139 had come from Warrington (8B) and stood by the coaling stage. Another Down trainload of track panels waited behind the station, this time with one WD 2-8-0 90626 from Gorton (now 9G). One has to avoid thinking that the Stanier 'Black Five' shunting nearby was the first one: namely 6A's 45000. The first one had been 45020 of 1934 vintage. While shunting was in progress, another Stanier 8F, 48361 of 16A Toton came by with an UP fully fitted goods.

Now passenger traffic was getting busier with Llandudno Junction's (6G) Stanier 'Black Five' 45311 slowing with an express for Manchester (Exchange) due to depart at 16.20. An opposite working from Liverpool, the 17.12 departure from Chester to Llandudno approached with Edge Hill's (8A) 'Black Five' 44768. Then it was the ex GWR's turn, as Bristol (Barrow Road - 82E)'s 'Hall' 6900 *Abney Hall* crept into one of the 'GW bays' with a train from Paddington. As 6900 uncoupled, 6A's Stanier 2-6-4T 42606 was already backing down to take the train on to Birkenhead.

Shortly after 42606 had departed, 6A's Fairburn 2-6-4T came around the curve from Birkenhead with a Paddington train, which was to be the one I would return to Wolverhampton with to join my parents for the rest of the weekend. It was beginning to get dark as 42202 uncoupled and 6A's 'Black Five' 45403 came onto the back to take the train south.



Stockport's 'Caprotti Black Five' 44752 waits on Chester General's avoiding lines with a freight.

Well I read the March 'Modern Railways' (picked up on a bookstall at Crewe) during the journey back. I only noted 'Standard 4' 2-6-4T 80070 arriving in Shrewsbury station with a local from Welshpool, which brought me back to the reason for visiting Chester back in 1956: to see '80-thousanders'!

Of the local loco sheds mentioned during the visit, Wrexham Rhosddu (6E) closed in 1960, but redundant locos were stored there into 1964. Chester Northgate (6D) also closed in 1960 while the station fell foul of the Beeching Plan in 1964 or so, remaining services were transferred to Chester General. The former Great Western shed at Chester (84K) was converted into a diesel depot in the late 1950s while the London Midland and Scottish shed (6A) closed in 1967.



On 21st March 1964, 6A still had three of the Fowler 3F 'Jinty' 0-6-0Ts such as 47371 waiting for signals at Chester General.

FORTY YEARS GONE

MIKE WALKER looks back at a much missed Diesel classic.

26 years and 3 months isn't a long career by railway motive power standards when considered alongside most steam locomotives and even the forty plus (and counting) years' service of the HST but in their short lives the *Westerns* carved for themselves a unique place in the affections of many enthusiasts.

With their distinctive styling wrapped in the early days in a variety of liveries, sounds and stirring names they represented the last hurrah of Western independence.

My own first real exposure to the type occurred when I started attending the Wycombe Technical High School (then in Easton Street) in September 1963. Lunch times were spent sitting on the wall around the subway at the London end of the station and each day two of the class would pass on expresses between Paddington and Birmingham or points north.

They were conceived at Swindon as a development of the earlier D800 series Warships using the same form of stressed-skin integral construction but increasing the power output to 2700hp and using the C-C wheel arrangement. The distinctive styling was the work of industrial designer Professor Misha Black and was based on that which had originally been prepared for the Warships but which had been rejected by the BTC in favour of the scaled down German V200 design. Very much a change for the better.



The names were inspired but came late in the development. Early design images show D1000 carrying the name Cheddar Gorge with the others getting 'West Country' names but it is said that the final choice came from a secretary at Swindon Works who interrupted a meeting saying; "Why don't you call them all Western Something?" It was immediately adopted.

The livery choice for the prototype was also striking. At the time BR was experimenting with ways of making Diesel and electric locomotives more visible to track workers with various patterns of warning panels on the end and trial liveries. D1000, now named *Western Enterprise*, was painted in what was called Desert Sand. Initially this was applied with a matt finish and the numbers and names were applied in raised characters on a borderless plate but the more conventional style and gloss finish were applied before it entered service in December 1961.



TOP: D1023 Western Fusilier and D1013 Western Ranger passing "Lands End" just west of Twyford with the Western Tribute railtour on 26th February 1977 running from Paddington to Swansea then on to Plymouth before returning to Paddington which marked the curtain call for the class.

Photo: Peter Robins

LEFT: Back at the dawn of the class D1000 Western Enterprise in its original Desert Sand enters Birmingham Snow Hill with the 6.30am Birkenhead to Paddington train in August 1962. It had entered service the previous December.

Photo: Michael Mensing/Colour Rail

RIGHT: The second locomotive, D1001 *Western Pathfinder* appeared in maroon, although not quite the same shade as that used for coaching stock, with a lemon yellow on the buffer beams and shanks. D1005- D1010 and Crewe-built D1039-D1041 were also originally turned out in this style.

Photo: Colour-Rail

BELOW: Whilst deciding on future policy, Swindon-built D1002-D1004 and Crewe-built D1035-D1038 came out in standard green with yellow warning panels and red bufferbeams, none and numberplates. D1002 *Western Explorer* at Swindon.

Photo: Trevor Owen/Colour Rail



Following a period of testing with D1000, the second, D1001 *Western Pathfinder*, emerged from Swindon Works in February 1962 wearing another experimental livery of maroon with the area around the buffers painted yellow although this was lighter than that we have become used to. This was followed by three in standard green livery with yellow warning panels as were the first four to emerge from Crewe.

After that, D1005-D1010 from Swindon and D1039-D1041 from Crewe were out-shopped in the same style as D1001. However, the practice of painting buffer beams yellow did little to enhance the warning abilities, quickly getting dirty, so starting with D1011 *Western Thunderer* the standard yellow warning panels and black buffer beams were applied becoming, with one glorious exception, the norm for the rest as built. Those with yellow buffer areas were quickly modified to the standard and even D1000 received yellow panels in November 1962 although it retained its Desert Sand livery until turning maroon in November 1964.

The glorious exception was D1015 *Western Champion* which emerged from Swindon in January 1963 wearing a striking golden ochre livery, the shade being similar to Stroudley's "Improved Engine Green" on the LBSC. It also initially had a non-standard sized warning panel at www.mdrs.org.uk

one end topped by "whiskers" that wrapped round the cabside but this did not find favour and was removed before the locomotive entered traffic but until it went blue, it retained, uniquely, square corners to its warning panels at both ends.

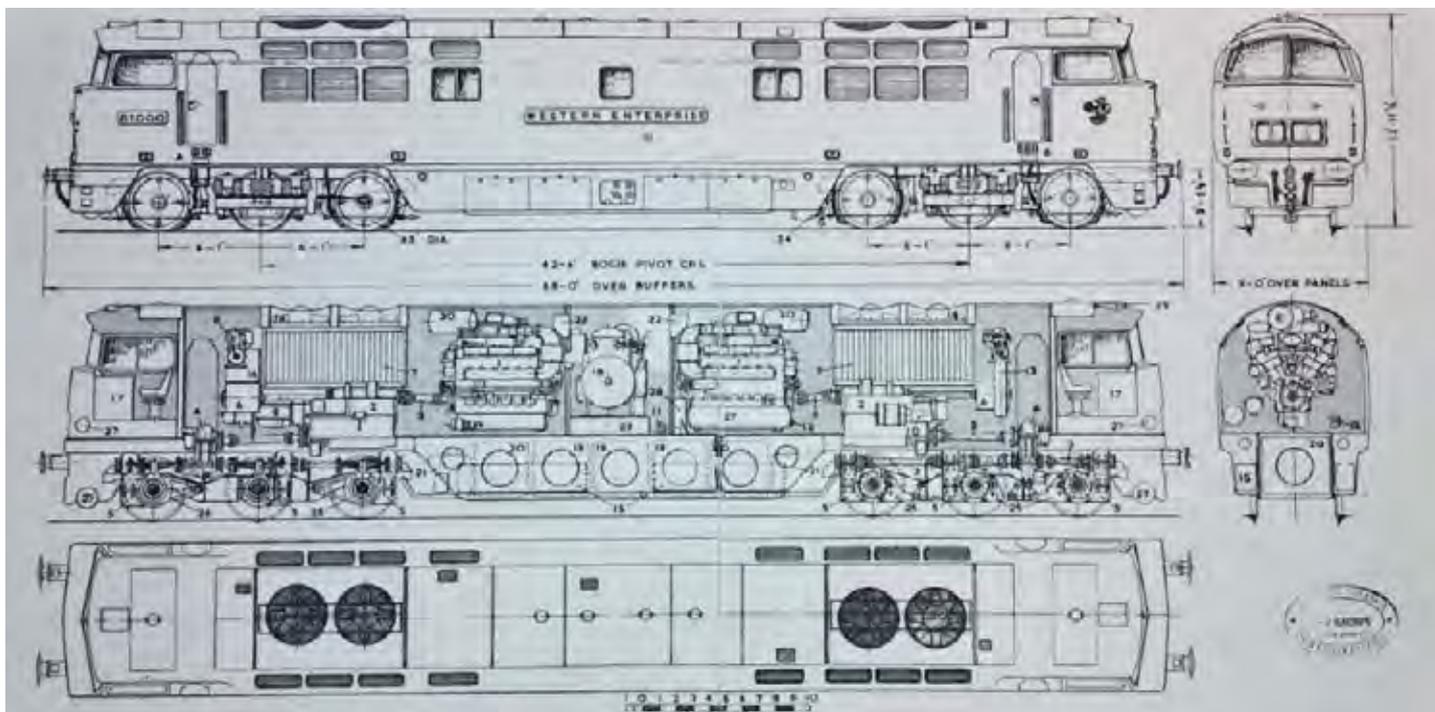
Originally it had been intended that the first 35 would be built at Swindon and the remaining 29 at Crewe but with production falling well behind at the former, just one or two completed per month in 1962, it was decided to switch D1030-D1034 to Crewe. Whilst Crewe's first example, D1035 *Western Yeoman* didn't appear until July 1962 they completed all theirs including those switched from Swindon before Swindon completed its last, D1029 *Western Legionaire*.

Purists claim that Swindon took longer as they were better built - indeed if you looked along the side of a Crewe built Western you would find the stressed-skin cladding was rippled whereas the Swindon ones were smooth.

The construction method used on the Westerns followed that used on the D800 series Warships and was quite unlike that used on other BR Diesel and electric designs. In place of the heavy underframe and non-structural bodywork, these two types used a monocoque structure which was extremely strong yet lightweight. An idea of the structure can be gained from the photograph on the following page.

Whilst the D800s were around 50 tons lighter than contemporary Diesel-electrics of similar power, in the Westerns the difference was least marked, at 107 tons in working order they were only around 10 tons lighter than a Brush Type 4.

The Westerns also represented a hybrid of the two types of D800 Warships. The engines were supplied by Maybach as they had been in the Swindon built D800s albeit the MD655 which had larger bore cylinders giving a total capacity of 76.82 litres compared to the 67 litres of the smaller MD650 but most parts were interchangeable.

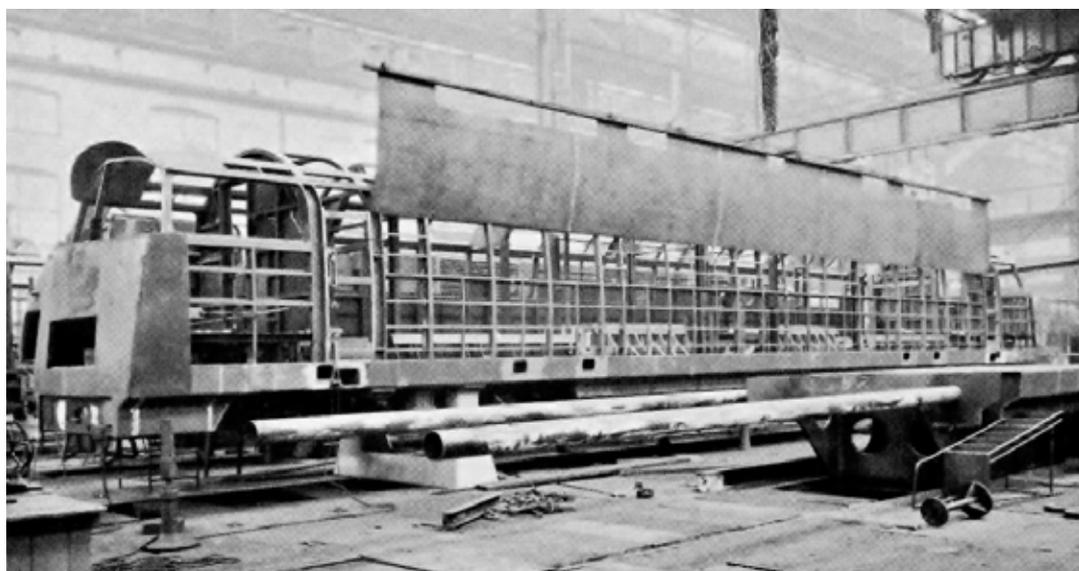


- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Maybach MD655 V12 1,350BHP engine | 11. Varley fuel pump | 21. Fuel tank (136 gallons capacity) |
| 2. Voith-NBL L8-30rV three stage torque converter | 12. Varley lubricating oil pump | 22. Fuel tank (20 gallons capacity) |
| 3. Cardan shafts | 13. Fire bottles | 23. Boiler water tank (170 gallons capacity) |
| 4. Intermediate gearbox | 14. Radiator cooling fans | 24. AWS receiver |
| 5. Axle mounted final drive gearbox | 15. Batteries | 25. Torque arms |
| 6. Brush dynostarter (engine starter) | 16. Battery switch and Davenset | 26. Axle guide links |
| 7. Serck cooler group radiators | 17. Electrical control cubicle | 27. Air reservoir |
| 8. Vapor-Watchman cooling water preheater | 18. Spanner MkIIIA train heating boiler | 28. Alfloc tank |
| 9. Westinghouse exhauster | 19. Boiler water tank (272 gallons capacity) | 29. Air warning horns |
| 10. Laycock compressor | 20. Fuel tank (272 gallons capacity) | 30. Engine silencer |

The hydraulic transmissions were Voith units built under licence by North British and comprised three torque converters in series as were those in the NBL Warships whereas the Swindon Warships used Mekydro transmissions which matched a single torque converter to a 4-speed automatic gearbox.

The locomotives were put to work on all the principal passenger services to the west of England, Bristol, South Wales and, as noted earlier, to Birmingham and Birkenhead. On this latter route in particular, they put up some impressive performances but by 1965 they had been bumped from the route by Brush Type 4s allegedly at the insistence of the London Midland Region.

In the foreground a Western underframe is taking shape. The basis is two tubes the full length of the body, over which the underframe box sections are slid then welded into position. With the underframe complete the body framework is built up as illustrated by the locomotive behind. The body side panel is about to be positioned and will be tack welded to the framework. Then it is stressed by heating with oxy-acetylene equipment and cooling rapidly with water. This shrinks the metal skin adding to the strength of the locomotive structure.



They were equally employed on parcels and freight services from the beginning and were particularly useful on the latter as their starting tractive effort of 72,600lbs was by a good margin the highest of any BR Diesel locomotive and was not surpassed until the arrival of the Class 59s a decade after the Western's demise. Appropriately, therefore, they were the locomotive of choice for the Foster Yeoman stone trains from Merehead Quarry in the early days.

Not everything was perfect. Particularly in their early days they did prove temperamental with both the Maybach engines and the transmissions causing problems. At one stage around 1965 their availability was as low as 60%.



LEFT: D1015 Western Champion in its distinctive ochre livery, takes the through road at Reading with 1A35, the 07:20 Carmarthen to London Paddington 'Red Dragon'. How different this view is today.

Photo: Brian Swain/Colour-Rail

BELOW: D1030 Western Musketeer on display at the GWS Taplow open day on 17th September 1966. This was the first Western to be repainted and received a non-standard variant of BR blue livery using a brighter shade and having red buffer beams and small, hand painted "arrows of indecision" logos.

Photo: Ron North

Eventually, most of these problems were sorted out and in their mature years they became reliable and competent machines.

One major modification which took place during their lives was the fitting of air brakes in the early seventies. All were done and the work involved the removal of the 136 gallon fuel tank at the B end to provide space for the compressor and air reservoir. This, of course, reduced the range and more than once a Western came to an undignified halt mid-journey having run out of fuel.

Other less dramatic modifications revolved around the cab. A problem with both the Westerns and Warships was that the cab was located directly over the transmission and as a result became quite warm - toasty in winter but uncomfortable in summer, so various additional ventilations were tried. Some had slot-like intakes added in the lip above the windscreen whilst others got a square air intake below the headcode indicators on the front panel. Neither were wholly successful so in summer it was common practice to travel with the windows (and even cab doors) wide open.

Incidentally, cab conditions account for why the Westerns were relatively so much heavier than the Warships. On the latter, the engines were mounted directly behind the cabs with the radiators inboard. This resulted in a lot of noise and heat entering the cab. Originally it was intended to configure the Westerns the same way but in the end both the engines were mounted in the middle with the radiators directly behind the cab. This required the body structure to be considerably more robust to support the greater weight centrally and hence the greater weight.

For a time D1006 *Western Stalwart* and possibly one or two others (and definitely EM2 electric 27002) was fitted with a circular marine type wiper unit on the driver's side in place of the normal windscreen wiper. It didn't find favour and was soon replaced.

By 1966 maroon livery had spread to all of the class including both D1000

and D1015 except for D1036 which retained green livery. In that year Swindon started to apply blue livery but initially got it wrong using a lighter and brighter shade of blue with small warning panels. Among those so treated were D1017, D1030, D1036, D1037, D1043, D1047 and D1057 after which the standard livery was applied.

With the regions stripped of autonomy, the centralised BRB became hostile to the WR's hydraulics and the writing was on the wall particularly as they could not be equipped to work electrically heated/air conditioned stock. The smaller locos went first with D1019 and D1032 the first to be withdrawn in May 1973. An early casualty was D1007 which was involved in the Ealing derailment in December 1973. D1001 and D1055 were also withdrawn after accidents. With the exception of the seven saved for preservation, all were cut up at Swindon.

In their final years they gained cult status and the final survivors were much in demand for railtours many of which took them to pastures new such as York. Today D1015 carries the torch as the sole engine registered for the main line although a recent engine failure means plans to mark the 40th anniversary of their farewell have had to be cancelled.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

This time we have three images from the large collection taken by member KEN LAWRIE.

First we see an unidentified King speeding west past the former Maidenhead West Signal Box with the down *Cornish Riviera Express* in July 1957, a year after the WR reintroduced the chocolate and cream livery of its principal trains and they didn't come more important than the *Riviera*.

This location was at the west end of the goods yard nearly down to Boyn Valley.



One of the early Swindon-built Inter-City DMUs on the Up Main at "The Gullett", a wooded area opposite Maidenhead West Signal Box, in 1958. Ken passed the spot daily on his way to Desborough School.

These units spent only a short time on the WR before moving to Scotland and were more usually to be found in the Bristol - South Wales corridor.

A stranger in these parts, Eastern Region B1 61166 takes the Wycombe branch out of Maidenhead in June 1959 probably heading one of the excursions from many parts of the country that visited both Marlow and Windsor allowing their patrons to take a river cruise between the two towns.

The coaches on the left are parked on a long siding that ran alongside the branch main almost as far as Grenfell Road.

