

# THE MARLOW DONKEY



## CASTLE CENTENARY EDITION



Edition

# 179

March 2023



Contents:

A Castle Centenary

Tickets Please - Part 6

A Tram Ride to Remember

Then & Now - Hayling Island

# The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

## COMMITTEE

President:	Mark Hopwood CBE	
Chairman:	Mike Walker, Solgarth, Marlow Road, Little Marlow, Marlow, Bucks., SL7 3RS Tel.: 07791 544426 email: mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk	
Treasurer:	Peter Robins. 1 Chalklands, Bourne End, Bucks., SL8 5TQ. Tel.: 01628 527870 email: pd.robins@btopenworld.com	
Secretary:	Vincent Caldwell.	email: vincent@mosesplat.uk.
Webmaster:	Dave Woodhead.	email: dave.woodhead@uwclub.net
Assistant Webmaster:	Richard Preece	email: richard.preece225@outlook.com
Outings Organiser:	Brian Hopkinson.	email: hopkinson005@gmail.com
Publicity:	Martin Stoolman	email: martinstoolman@hotmail.com
Donkey Editor:	Mike Walker, Solgarth, Marlow Road, Little Marlow, Marlow, Bucks., SL7 3RS. Tel.: 07791 544426 email: mikewalker@solgarth.eclipse.co.uk	

**Website:** [www.mdrs.org.uk](http://www.mdrs.org.uk)

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: 4079 Pendennis Castle at Didcot.*

*Bottom: 5051 Earl Bathurst also at Didcot.*

*Both photos: Mike Walker. Article page 7.*

# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Rd, Bourne End at 7.15 for 7.30pm or can be attended on-line on Zoom (see page 3).

Thursday 16 March **GETTING OVER COVID, STRIKES & CHRISTMAS** Mark Hopwood

For his latest "Presidential Address", Mark looks at the challenges that have faced GWR during the past difficult and challenging year and how the company has fought to overcome them.

As this is a strike day, Mark will be joining us remotely.

Thursday 20 April **THE ROUTE OF THE MASTER CUTLER** Richard Crane

A pictorial journey from Sheffield Victoria to London Marylebone along the route of "The Master Cutler" with pictures from the early 1900 through to 2023. "The Master Cutler" had something of an identity crisis, running at various times on the East Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and the Great Central Main Line. It is the latter route from Sheffield Victoria to London Marylebone that forms the basis of Richard's presentation. There are happy memories of this sadly missed main line, and the fine stations at Sheffield, and Nottingham Victoria etc..

Thursday 18 May **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF 48773** Jeff Ryan

Jeff's presentation will cover the development of the Stannier 8F's and starts in 1940, when Britain was embroiled in a war with Nazi Germany, a Stanier 8F 2-8-0 was built for the War Department for service overseas. This locomotive, WD No. 307, was to lead a varied and lucky life of service both overseas and in the UK and in the process became both a celebrity and a memorial to those who served with her; and continues with the life of 48773.

Thursday 15 June **150 YEARS OF THE MARLOW DONKEY** Mike Walker

Mike's presentation marks the sesquicentennial of the opening of the Great Marlow Railway. The presentation reviews the high and low points of the line's history along with a detailed look at the route and the trains that have formed The Marlow Donkey. Marlow's forgotten "other railway" and the competition will also be covered.

Thursday 20 July **THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WYCOMBE RAILWAY** David Lane

In a complimentary presentation, David covers the story of the building of the first section of the Wycombe Railway between Maidenhead and High Wycombe including some remarkable computer generated images of High Wycombe station as built, the result of many years of research by David.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Firstly, many thanks to Mike Hyde for his hard work as Chairman over the last few years.

Following Mike's decision to step down as Chairman and retire from the committee at the AGM, I was asked to re-join and have now been elected Chairman of the Society.

As members of long-standing will know this is a case of déjà vu as I did a long stint, around 10 years, as Chairman in the eighties and nineties. I have no intention of doing it for that long this time and in fact I was reluctant but with no one else prepared to offer themselves even to serve on the committee – we still have a vacancy – it was a case of stepping up or see the Society possibly fail.

A lot has changed since my last stint in the chair. I am now one of only two who were at the inaugural meeting in February 1977 that are still active in the Society, Roger Bowen being the other.

For the newcomers amongst us, the Society came about as a result of an evening educational course conducted by Roger. Those taking part wanted to keep meeting after it ended and the

Society was formed as a result. Back then we met in the Marlow Donkey pub in Marlow (appropriately) and things were decidedly informal. Later we moved to The Chequers in Marlow and then, when again we were victims of pub "modernisation" we moved on the Marlow's British Legion hall and finally to our present home at the Bourne End Community Centre.

When I was last in the chair, membership averaged around thirty, less than half today but of course all lived within a reasonable distance and regularly attended meetings. We were also able to operate an annual charabanc trip to a heritage railway, regularly managing to nearly fill a 53-seater coach with the help of family members and friends. Over the years the popularity of these jaunts declined but we did manage to arrange visits to railway installations (often with the assistance of our now President) which were popular. I have some ideas and hopefully we might be able to revive these.

Finally, can I assure you that I intend to continue as Editor - I did it before and I had a full time job back then!

*Mike Walker*

# SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

## NEW MEMBERS

We've had a rash of new members join us in recent weeks: Mike Mundy from Burgess Hill, Patrick Dennison from Kenley, Walter Wright from Durham, Ian Bromley from Jersey, Graham Adamson from Westcliff, Mike Palos of Enfield, Colin Miell from Norwood Green (who will be familiar to many of you) John Armitage from Warlingham and Chris George from Bushey. Welcome to you all.

Many of these have been attending our meetings by Zoom and have enjoyed them so much they have decided to sign up so they can continue following the committee's decision to restrict Zoom access to members only.

## NEW CHAIRMAN

If you didn't attend the AGM but have already perused the preceding pages you will see we have a new chairman, Mike Walker, who replaces the retiring Mike Hyde. The rest of the committee were re-elected unopposed and their roles remain unchanged.

We still have a vacancy on the committee which would like to fill.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

In December, our Treasurer, Peter Robins presented 'And now for something completely different' and took us on whirlwind world tour covering countries from A (Austria) to Z (Zimbabwe); mostly railways but with the odd bus and tram thrown in for good measure.

India was the focus of our January meeting when Geoff Warren gave us an in-depth look at the now dwindling metre gauge network and the extensive broad gauge system with some excellent photography and just enough non-railway images to provide variety.

Following the AGM in February Adrian Palmer took us to North Korea, Taiwan and Borneo. Several members, not least the committee, have expressed their disappointment at the quality of Adrian Palmer's presentation and, to be honest, rightly so. Of course we often take a risk when booking speakers and like to go with those which come recommended if possible. In the case of Adrian, several of us have seen his presentations in the past and they've been generally excellent. This one was definitely below par and not what we were expecting. Please accept our apologies.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS: LAST CALL

Thank you to those existing members who have already renewed their subscriptions and to the new members who have joined from last year. Could I however remind other members that subscriptions are now due. 2023 subscriptions are still held at £16 for Full members and £8 for Associate members. Payment can either be made by bank transfer to Sort Code 30-95-36, Account 62236160 (preferred), by cash or cheque at the BECC meetings, or by cheque to the Treasurer. Please note that our bank will only accept cheques made out to "Marlow & District Railway Society" or "MDRS".

Remember, under the rules of the Society, those members who have not renewed by 31st March are deemed to have lapsed and will no longer receive the newsletters or the *Marlow Donkey*.

## RCTS MEETINGS

Our friends in the RCTS have the following meetings planned for the coming months.

Monday 27th March

The Electric Railways of Merseyside - Charles Philips

Monday 24th April

A Northern View - Steve Batty

Monday 22nd May

The 1968 Hixon Level Crossing Disaster - Malcolm Garner

Meetings are held at the Cox Green Community Centre, Highfield Lane, Cox Green, SL6 3AX starting at 19:30 and like ours by Zoom. MDRS members always welcome. To register to attend by Zoom visit <https://rcts.org.uk/windsor-maidenhead/events/> and follow the link there.

## DONKEY CONTRIBUTIONS

After a healthy supply of contributions over the past year or so, my stock of articles is now, once again, getting perilously low so the annual appeal goes out once more. Articles can be on anything rail related and cover any period. If you don't have suitable illustrations we can probably come up with something.

If you feel you can help please get in touch - detail on page 1 - and we can discuss ideas.

## GWR BATTERY TRIAL

Following the collapse of Vivarail the future of the proposed trial operation of a battery-electric unit on the Greenford branch was in doubt.

Thankfully it has been saved by GWR who have, on behalf of the DfT, purchased 230001, the rapid charger and Vivarail's intellectual property relating to the system from the administrators and taken on nine former Vivarail employees to support the trials and project development.

External power supply issues at West Ealing still have to be resolved before the system can be installed but it is hoped to start the trial as soon as possible. The rapid charging system has been proved to work in test conditions but this trial is intended to provide proof of concept in everyday service to provide data for future developments.



*The prototype Vivarail Class 230 unit was converted to battery electric operation and has now been acquired by GWR whose livery it now carries. It is seen at Bletchley depot.*

## MAIN LINE STEAM



There has been a noticeable lack of main line steam specials in our area in recent months. An exception was the Railway Touring Company's *Bath & Gloucester Steam Express* on 4th February behind 45699 *Galatea* which is currently running

with something of an identity crisis, the smokebox plate and nameplates are those of 45627 *Sierra Leone* whilst the cab sides display 45562 *Alberta*. Chris Waite went to Hungerford Common for it in conditions much gloomier than forecast.

## MALCOLM MARGETTS

It is with great sadness that we have to report the passing of a long-time member of the Society: Malcolm Margetts.

Malcolm was an extremely popular member and served on the committee for many years in the role of secretary and, more recently, as archivist.

He was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease several years ago which progressively got worse preventing him from attending meetings in recent years. Following a series of falls he had been in hospital and then a care home where he passed away on Monday.

Hailing originally from the north west, he was professionally involved in the motor industry having worked for Leyland Motors for many years before moving south to Scammell at Watford who were by then a Leyland subsidiary. He then moved to AEC at Southall where he was Works Manager until the closure of the plant after which he joined a company making high end self-propelled horseboxes.

As a result of his background, it will come as no surprise that he was also interested in buses and the photo shows him on the platform of one of his beloved Routemasters. At the time London's Mercedes "Bendibuses" were regularly catching fire, Malcolm took great pride in reminding everyone that only one RM was ever lost to fire and that was due to arson!

We have sent our condolences to Wendy and the family.



# A CASTLE CENTENARY

Mike Walker



This year brings many notable anniversaries; the centenary of the Grouping; 75th anniversary of nationalisation and, most importantly, the Sesquicentennial of the *Marlow Donkey* which will be marked in the next issue. On the locomotive side it is also the centenary of at least two significant types, a well-known Pacific and, more importantly, the Great Western Castle class 4-6-0s.

The Castles were the longest lived and most useful of the GWR 4-cylinder 4-6-0s and were, of course a development of Churchward's Star class. Churchward had drawn up a series of standard designs on taking office in 1902 which included a 2-cylinder 4-6-0 with 6' 8½" driving wheels, 18" x 30" cylinders and his No.1 standard boiler intended for express duties which ultimately became the Saint class. However, Churchward was always looking at overseas practice and was interested in the French De Glehn 4-cylinder compounds and three were built for the GWR to investigate the merits or otherwise of compounding. These were actually Atlantics and the third of Churchward's 2-cylinder 4-6-0s, 171 *Albion*, was also completed as a convertible 4-4-2 to take part in comparative trials. Whilst compounding failed to impress, the Frenchmen's divided drive (where the inside cylinders drove the leading axle and the outside cylinders the trailing axle) did and resulted in the construction of another prototype, 40 *North Star* in 1906.

This retained the No.1 boiler and 6' 8½" driving wheels of the 2-cylinder locomotives but had four 14¼" x 26" cylinders laid out with divided drive. Initially it ran as a 4-4-2 for trials with the 2-cylinder and French locomotives but became a 4-6-0 in 1909. Production locomotives, built as 4-6-0s, started to appear in 1907 and eventually a total of 73 were built up to early 1923. Starting with 4041 in 1913, the cylinder bores were increased to 15" with the earlier locomotives being brought into line when passing through Swindon for overhauls.

The relative position of the inside and outside cylinders allowed the use of just two sets of Walschaerts valve gear mounted

*5043 Earl of Mount Edgumbe' and 5029 Nunney Castle are serviced at Hereford whilst working The Welsh Marches Express from Shrewsbury to Tyseley on 16th May 2009.*

*All photos by the author unless noted.*

between the frames operating the inside cylinder piston valves whilst a rocking arm operated the valves of the outside cylinder. This was possible as the cylinders on one side were 180° to each other and in turn at 90° to those on the opposite side thereby maintaining quartering. The additional benefit was to reduce the out of balance hammer-blow effect generated by a 2-cylinder locomotive giving a smoother ride and reducing impacts on the track.

By the time Charles Collett replaced Churchward as Chief Mechanical Engineer in 1922 there was a need for a more powerful express passenger locomotive to handle increasingly heavier trains at greater speeds so Collett set about designing a new express passenger locomotive. On the basis of if it ain't broken, don't fix it, this was a development of the Star rather than starting with a blank sheet.

The 6' 8½" driving wheels were carried over from the earlier design whilst the cylinders were now 16" x 26" but a larger boiler was required. The original intention was to use the Standard No.7 boiler which Churchward had developed for his 4700 class mixed traffic 2-8-0 but it quickly became apparent that it would result in a locomotive which would be above the 20 ton axle load then accepted by the company's Chief Civil Engineer. As a result a new boiler, designated the No.8, was designed which was the same length as the No.7 but was 3" smaller in diameter and pressed at 225 psi. This was sufficiently lighter to ensure the complete locomotive met the 20 ton axle load limit. The locomotive produced 31,625 lbs of tractive effort at 85% compared with the 27,800 lbs of the later Stars.

In addition, Collett fitted a new, larger cab with side windows which was considerably more commodious than Churchward's somewhat parsimonious offering. This required a modification

to the rear section of the main frames as the complete locomotive was a foot longer than the Star. Unfortunately, the improvement in conditions for the crew was initially compromised by the continuing use of the low 3,500 gallon tender.

The first of the new locomotives appeared in August of 1923 and was numbered 4073 directly following the last Star, 4072, confirming that it was regarded as a development of that type rather than a totally new design. It carried the name *Caerphilly Castle* which, of course, set the theme for the following examples giving rise to them being known as the 'Castle' class although officially they were the 4073 class.

*Caerphilly Castle* was built on Lot 224 which was an order for ten locomotives so after initial testing the remainder, 4074-4082, were delivered between December 1923 and April 1924, all carrying Castle names allocated in alphabetical order from 4074 *Caldicot Castle* to 4082 *Windsor Castle*. This alphabetical arrangement of names was repeated for each subsequent batch and was a GWR tradition. The final locomotive of the batch was driven by King George V during a visit to Swindon Works on 28th April 1924 with Queen Mary. Thereafter it carried commemorative brass plates on the cabsides and became the GWR's favoured locomotive for royal train duties.

*Caerphilly Castle* was exhibited at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924-5 opposite LNER 4472 *Flying Scotsman*. The GWR's publicity department had described the Castles as the "most powerful passenger train engine in the Kingdom" which was, to say the least, provocative. The result was a series of exchange tests with 4079 *Pendennis Castle* working on the LNER and LNER 4474 – then unnamed but later *Victor Wild* – on the Great Western during April and May 1925. Despite being much larger, the Pacific only had a tractive effort of 29,835 lbs and in the trials the GWR locomotive proved superior in almost every respect leading Gresley to make major modifications to his A1 which then became the A3. A further trial took place in 1926 with 5000 *Launceston Castle* loaned to the LMS although on this occasion there was no reciprocal loan of an LMS loco to the GWR.

Meanwhile, a further ten, 4083-4092, were built on Lot 232 between May and August 1925 and a twenty more, 4093-4099/5000-5012 on Lot 234 between May 1926 and July 1927. These were regarded as a single batch and were named in one alphabetical sequence from 4083 *Abbotsbury Castle* to 5011 *Tintagel Castle*. The last, 5012 was out of sequence for some reason being *Berry Pomeroy Castle*.

In addition, five of the earliest Stars, 4000, 4009, 4016, 4032 and 4037, were rebuilt as Castles between April 1925 (4009) and November 1929 (4000). Initially all retained their original names but 4009 became 100 A1 *Lloyds* in January 1936; 4016 the *Somerset Light Infantry (Prince Albert's)* in January 1938 and 4037 *The South Wales Borderers* in March 1937. Previous to these, Churchward's somewhat unloved Pacific, 111 *The Great Bear* was more extensively rebuilt to become a Castle in September 1924, retaining its original number but renamed *Viscount Churchill* after the company Chairman.

Construction of the Castles was now paused as attention turned to the larger Kings which were the ultimate development (on the GWR at least) of Churchward's 4-cylinder design. The Kings

www.mdrs.org.uk



*The pioneer Castle, 4073 Caerphilly Castle on display at Steam in Swindon fully restored to original condition including the low-sided 3,500 gallon tender.*

were, of course, considerably larger and heavier than the Castles so what had changed in the four years since the Castles were designed? The board was anxious to reclaim the "most powerful" crown after the SR Lord Nelsons upstaged the Castles and asked Collett to produce a more powerful locomotive. This was needed anyway to handle the heavy trains on the West of England and Birmingham lines. Collett replied it would be impossible within the 20 ton axle load limit so the CCE was summoned and asked what it would take to permit a 22½ ton limit on the principal main lines. "Very little, we've been working to that for the last decade" came the reply. When the inevitable follow up question – "Why didn't you say earlier?" – was asked the reply came back: "You never asked." So, the Castles could have had the No.7 boiler after all. Well not quite, in that form they would have been almost as restricted as the Kings. As an aside, between December 1926 and March 1928, 5001 *Llandovery Castle* ran with 6' 6" driving wheels as part of the development work for the Kings – which used wheels of that diameter.

In March 1935 Collett was instructed to "streamline" a Castle and a King by the board. He was, apparently, not impressed by this but followed orders. He sent the office boy out to buy some Plasticine which he then smeared onto a model locomotive paperweight on his desk, finishing with a hemispherical blob on the smokebox. It was then sent to the drawing office with instructions to "make something like this". 5005 *Manorbier Castle* along with 6014 *King Henry VII* were the unfortunate victims. Of course, this predated the appearance of the LNER A4s but was done in such a half-hearted way that the GWR gained little kudos from it, rather derision which is possibly what Collett sought all along!

Another of the same batch, 5006 *Tregenna Castle* did get itself considerable publicity when on 6th June 1932 it hauled the *Cheltenham Flyer* from Swindon to Paddington non-stop in 56m 47s for the 77.3 miles, an average of 81.7mph which allowed the GWR to claim the title of the 'World's Fastest Train' for the *Cheltenham Flyer*.

Castle construction resumed in 1932 with Lot 280 which covered 5013 to 5022. These incorporated a number of alterations and improvements. They were provided from new with the high sided 4,000 gallon tender which had first been introduced in 1926 and gradually paired with all the earlier locomotives. these had the usual 6 wheel underframes but there was a single,



4079 *Pendennis Castle* as now restored at Didcot exhibits the original concave casing around the inside cylinder valve chests fitted to 4073-4099/5000-5012. It is also coupled to the standard Collett-pattern 4,000 gallon tender with flared sides.

experimental example with 8 wheels which appeared behind various Castles and Halls – not to be confused with the bogie tender built for *The Great Bear*. Visually the most noticeable change to this batch was the squared off casing to the inside cylinders' valve chest below the smokebox which on the previous examples and Stars had been concave whilst a casing for the fire irons was provided alongside the boiler on the fireman's side – both features again later retro-fitted to older examples. The were also revisions to the driving axle springing. More importantly, the design of the firebox was altered to provide greater water spaces which reduced the grate area from 30.28 sq ft to 29.36 sq ft. These changes were deemed important enough for these to be known as the 5013 class although to the Traffic Department they were all simply Castles.

Ten more, 5023 to 5032, followed in 1934 on Lot 295 followed by another ten, 5033 to 5042 on Lot 296 in 1935. Each of these orders was named alphabetically within the individual group. Starting with 5023 the method of erection changed. Until now Swindon, like all other works, had aligned the frames with wires, centre-pops and trammels but the company invested in optical alignment equipment made by Zeiss in Germany which allowed the frames and axleboxes to be set up with far greater accuracy, producing a better riding locomotive and reducing maintenance costs. The use of this equipment remained unique to Swindon and it was claimed that due to its accuracy, Swindon would scrap bearings with less clearance than the other railways started out with!

The next Lot, 303, was for twenty-five locomotives numbered 5043 to 5067 delivered in 1936-7. Initially these had the usual Castle names but lost them quite quickly. The GWR was also



5051 *Earl Bathurst*, also at Didcot, has the later pattern valve chest cover which was later fitted to most of the earlier locomotives and the short cover on the smokebox side associated with the 3-row superheater. It is also coupled to one of the Hawksworth-pattern flush sided 4,000 gallon welded tenders introduced in 1946.

building some "hybrid" 4-4-0s out of Bulldog and Duke parts at this time and the resulting "Dukedogs" were given the names of Earls. However, their lordships objected to being associated with such ancient looking machines so the names were swiftly transferred to 5043 to 5063, some not actually having made it onto the Dukedogs. The displaced Castle names were reallocated to the next batch although some of those were displaced for a second time.

Ten of the twelve newest Stars, 4063 to 4072, were renewed as Castles between April 1937 and November 1940 under Lot 317 becoming 5083 to 5092 but retaining their original Abbey names. Contemporaneously with these were another fifteen new locomotives built on Lot 310 and numbered 5068 to 5082. Most of these were again given Castle names; the exceptions being 5069 *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* and 5070 *Sir Daniel Gooch*, but 5071 to 5082 were renamed after RAF aircraft during 1940-1, the displaced Castle names going into store – some for a second time – to await use on future locomotives. Another five, 5093 to 5097 on Lot 324, arrived in June and July of 1939 all of which had Castle names which they managed to retain throughout their lives. The Second World War now intervened halting further construction of the class.

Production resumed with Lot 357 in 1946 covering 5098, 5099 and 7000 to 7007. Again Castle names were given to all but 7001 *Denbigh Castle* became *Sir James Milne* and 7007 *Ogmore Castle*, *Great Western* early in 1948 to mark the passing of the old company. Both these had already been used twice before and would be used again for a fourth time! These introduced three-row superheaters and mechanical lubricators for the cylinders, valves and regulator – changes deemed enough to officially start a new 5098 class.

British Railways continued to build Castles with two batches, Lot 367 for 7008 to 7027 and finally Lot 375, 7028 to 7037, appearing between 1948 and 1950. These too were all Castles initially with the exception of 7017 which was *G. J. Churchward* and the final example, 7037, which was named *Swindon*. This brought the final total to 171 locomotives, 145 new builds and 26 rebuilds. These also introduced a new design of welded, flat

*Although seen here coupled to 5904 Kelham Hall at Newton Abbot in 1961, this experimental 8-wheel 4,000 gallon tender appeared behind several Castles over the years.*

*Photo: J. R. Besley / Colour-Rail BRW547*





5005 Manorbier Castle sporting its streamlined additions as originally applied. These were gradually removed starting with the shrouding around the cylinders. All were gone before the war including the vee-fronted cab which the King retained until withdrawal.

Photographer unknown



sided 4,000 gallon tender which inevitably found its way onto older examples with the earlier style tenders appearing behind the BR locomotives – engines and tenders were never regarded as a permanent pairing.

Three more renamings followed: 5017 became *The Gloucestershire Regiment 28/61* in April 1954 to commemorate that Regiment's part in the Korean War; 5066 became *Sir Felix Pole* in April 1956 and finally 7005 became *Sir Edward Elgar* in August 1957, again its original name, *Lamphey Castle*, had been displaced twice before from 5054 then 5078. In 1952 when King George VI died, the Royal locomotive 4082 *Windsor Castle* was undergoing overhaul at Swindon and therefore unavailable to haul the funeral train. As a result it swapped identities with 7013 *Bristol Castle* and this continued until the locomotives were retired.

Technical improvement and innovation had continued. Nos. 4084 to 4095 were built with the GWR's Automatic Train Control apparatus which became standard from 5003 and was

subsequently fitted to the other earlier locomotives. Speedometers first appeared from 5033 in 1935 and again were gradually retro fitted.

The three-row superheater boilers fitted to 5098 upwards also started to appear on earlier examples during major overhauls but in September 1947 5049 was fitted with a boiler containing a still higher degree four-row superheater. Successful, similar boilers were fitted across the class although not universally; those so fitted could be identified by having the chimney slightly further forward and a prominent casing on the driver's side of the smokebox, the latter also found on those with three-row superheaters.

Due to coal shortages following the Second World War, the GWR, along with the other companies, experimented with oil-firing during 1947-8. Five Castles were involved, 100A1, 5039, 5079, 5083 and 5091. The last was paired with a 3,500 gallon tender but the remainder had the regular 4,000 gallon type. All had oil tanks installed in the former coal space.



*A rare view of 100 A1 Lloyds on an Up train at Reading in April 1947 during the brief period it was running as an oil-burner; note the tank in the tender coal space.*

Photographer: H. N. James  
Colour-Rail GW9



*5080 Defiant at Toddington on 14th October 1990 during a visit to the Gloucestershire - Warwickshire Railway. The locomotive retains its original single chimney and 3-row superheater.*

Following the successful application of double chimneys to the Kings in the mid-1950s it was decided to do the same with the Castles starting with 7018 *Dryslwyn Castle* in May 1956 considerably improving the performance and fuel economy. Eventually, 67 were so fitted.

As mentioned, the full fleet of Castles numbered 171 but not all co-existed as 100 *Al Lloyds* (the former 4009) became the first to be withdrawn in March 1950, two months before the final batch started delivery. The earliest rebuilds followed, understandably given their age and origins as Stars, with 4016 and 4032 succumbing in September 1951 followed by 111 in July 1953 and the pioneer 4000 in May 1957. Only 4037 managed to survive not being withdrawn until September 1962. The last unrebuilt Star, 4056 *Princess Margaret* was retired in October 1957.

It was 4091 *Dudley Castle* that had the ignominy of being the first true Castle to be withdrawn in January 1959. Thereafter withdrawals continued at an increasing rate with the arrival first of the Warship and later Western Diesel-hydraulics that would initially replace them. The years 1962-1964 were the worst

with only eleven making it into 1965. The final example in service was 7029 *Clun Castle* withdrawn in December of that year coinciding with the “official” end of steam on the Western Region. On 11th June that year it had worked the last scheduled steam departure from Paddington, the 1M48 16:15 to Banbury.

That wasn't the end of the story as eight examples have survived in preservation. The pioneer 4073 *Caerphilly Castle*, withdrawn in May 1960 was sent for display in the Science Museum following restoration to original condition (including a 3,500 gallon tender) at Swindon. Both 4079 *Pendennis Castle* and 7029 *Clun Castle* were purchased from BR in serviceable condition by private buyers in 1964 and 1965, the former being exported to Australia in 1977 where it remained until 2000 when it returned to the UK and was returned to active service by the GWS at Didcot last year. *Clun Castle* was initially preserved by Patrick Whitehouse and is now in the care of the Birmingham Railway Museum at Tyseley where it is operational and main line registered. It and 5043 are the only double chimney examples in preservation.

*7029 Clun Castle is suitably decorated as it arrives at Beaconsfield with the 16:15 Paddington to Banbury on Friday 11th June 1965, the last scheduled steam departure from Paddington.*

*Photographer: Tony Caton*



7029 Clun Castle this time leaving Stratford-upon-Avon with the Shakespeare Express returning to Tyseley on 9th June 1985 as part of the GW150 celebrations. It has a double chimney and 4-row superheater.



The other five: 5029 *Nunney Castle*, 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*, 5051 *Earl Bathurst*, 5080 *Defiant* and 7027 *Thornbury Castle* all passed through that well-known used locomotive dealer in South Wales before entering preservation. 5029 was originally sold to a consortium of private individuals and the GWS in 1976 and restored to main line condition. It is now owned by Jeremy Hosking and is stored at Crewe awaiting overhaul. 5043 was sold to Tyseley in 1973 and is currently operational and main line registered. 5051 was rescued by the GWS in 1969 and moved to Didcot where it remains and was fully restored. However it is currently out of ticket and in the long queue for overhaul, if it ever happens. 5080 was acquired by Tyseley in 1974 as a source of spare parts for 7029 but it was actually restored to main line operating condition until 1997 when, upon expiry of its boiler certificate, it was put on static display at Quainton until 2017 when it returned to Tyseley where it is currently stored pending a possible overhaul.

7027 was also sold to the Birmingham Railway Museum in 1972 but has never been restored. Some parts were removed for use on 5043 and it was later sold to Pete Waterman. In 2016 it was sold again to Jonathan Jones-Pratt, chairman of the West Somerset Railway. He intended to restore it but little was done before it was sold once more to a private buyer and moved to the

Great Central Railway where serious restoration finally got underway. Sadly the owner had a change of heart and in August 2022 it was reported that it had been acquired by the Didcot-based group building a new 4700 class 2-8-0 principally for its boiler despite it not being correct for a 4700. This was highly controversial and the GWS had a rapid change of heart but the future of the locomotive is currently uncertain.

To mark the centenary of the class Tyseley-based Vintage Trains ran a special train from Birmingham Moor Street to Didcot and back for VT shareholders on Saturday 4th March double headed by 5043 and 7029. At Didcot the pair were posed outside the shed alongside 4079 and 5051. Then on Saturday 13th May the same pair will head a public trip from Birmingham. This is to run by way of Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury, Hereford, the Severn Tunnel then along the GWML to Didcot before heading back to Birmingham by way of Oxford. A spectacular and fitting way to honour this remarkable class of locomotive.

*The Great Gathering under grey skies at Didcot on 4th March 2023. Left to right: 4079 Pendennis Castle; 5043 Earl of Mount Edgcumbe; 5051 Earl Bathurst and 7029 Clun Castle.*



# TICKETS PLEASE!

Recollections of a Great Western Train Guard 1999 to 2018 (Part Six)

Martin Stoolman



*A FGW HST led by 43176 in the original First livery heads towards London at Cholsey on 20th March 2003.*

*Photo: Dave Theobald*

Monday 25th September 2000 saw the beginning of the Winter timetable, and me making it through to the end of my first Summer as a Guard. More importantly for all us Guards on First Great Western we were “restructured” on that day. No longer were we Senior Conductors, we were Train Managers, with better pay but also more responsibility. We now didn't just look after our train and its passengers, but we were also made officially responsible for looking after (managing) the catering staff, and they became Customer Hosts. And if for some reason we were short of catering crew, we were (other duties permitting) expected to step in and open the buffet ourselves, or provide trolley refreshments in First Class.

But if you thought that the Train Operating Company giving the staff new titles and new roles was going to help the trains run on time, you would of course be wrong. I didn't work on that Monday so it was Tuesday 26th September that I worked my first train in this brave new world. This was the 06:30 Plymouth to Paddington via Bristol and Bath, which I took over at Exeter. First of all it should have been an HST but instead 47815 appeared on just six coaches. Not only did that mean reduced seating for the customers but it also had implications for our schedule. The maximum speed for an HST is of course 125mph whereas for a class 47 loco it is 95mph. But there is worse. In order to run even at that speed there must be a minimum of 7 coaches to ensure sufficient “brake force”. Having just 6 on brings the permitted speed down by 10mph giving a maximum on this journey of 85mph. So a substantially late arrival at Paddington was already assured even before some contractors working for Railtrack managed to sever a cable at Parson Street just

outside Bristol. A departure from Temple Meads 81 minutes late eventually became a 90 minute late arrival at Reading where Control had arranged for a Paddington Train Manager to relieve me so that my “back working” to Exeter would not be delayed by having to wait for me. Unfortunately my relief did not appear for a further 10 minutes thus delaying that train even further – and that was before 47815 embarked on its 85mph crawl towards London, pretty much guaranteeing an arrival time at Paddington not far shy of two hours late. There was one good thing though. As part of the re-structuring of our role, we could authorise free refreshments from the buffet for the first time if the train was substantially delayed; this was an early chance for me to do just that.

But if I thought my new badge and Train Manager title was going to relieve me of some of the less glamorous work of being a Guard then I soon found that not to be the case. On the Sunday following, 1st October, I was booked a trip to Penzance on the 10:15 from Paddington. I relieved the Paddington Train Manager at Exeter with the train on time and he reported no problems; however he thought I should know that just before departure time at Paddington a cyclist had come running up with his bike aiming to put it in the cycle spaces in the van at the front. This would have delayed the train so he had unlocked the rear power car and allowed him to put his bike in there. “Don't worry though,” the TM said to me, “he is going through to Penzance so you will have plenty of time to unload it.” Although this meant I would have to walk up the platform on arrival at Penzance to unlock the power

car, I was comfortable with that. Now over the years I have worked dozens and dozens of trains to Penzance, and more often than not it is dry in Devon but raining when I enter Cornwall. The natives talk about “Cornish mizzle” but I find that generally it is chucking it down. Such was the case on this particular Sunday as we drew into Redruth. The down platform there is almost entirely open to the elements; we were on time and neither me nor the platform staff wanted to hang about. Just as I was about to give the driver 2 on the buzzer (the signal to proceed) a bloke appeared through the driving rain panicking that he could not find his bike. I quickly worked out that this was the cyclist mentioned by that nice (?) Paddington TM. Unfortunately Redruth's platforms will not accommodate a full length HST set, and I looked behind me for the power car containing this gent's bike which to my horror was hidden within the confines of Redruth Tunnel! The station is on a right hand bend too so the driver was unaware of what was going on. I had no choice but to get the train drawn forward, involving coming to a clear understanding with the driver through the use of a less than perfect intercom and buzzer codes, locking and unlocking the doors each time the train moved. And all this in driving rain! I did it, and incurring only a 5 minute delay was pretty good in the circumstances, but I have rarely been as sodden and soaked through in my life. It was probably just as well that I did not bump into my Paddington Train Manager colleague again until some while afterwards....

Going back to the re-structuring of our roles, FGW's managers had come up with a revolutionary new idea in association with this. Each Train Manager was to work permanently with a nominated Customer Host, the idea being

that we would build up a good understanding and work much better as a team. I thought it was a great idea in principle, but there were problems. Firstly it relied on some clever crew rostering to make sure you always worked with your nominated Host (or at least as much as possible). Secondly you needed the requisite number of Customer Hosts in each depot to balance with the number of Train Managers. And there was a particular problem at Exeter: unlike all the others, our depot in 2000 did not even have a catering department! So this had to be set up, and some 20 Customer Hosts recruited in very short order. Unfortunately not enough time was allowed for this, bearing in mind all the training required etc., and I think at the start of this new venture we only had around half the number required. To cover for this some of us Train Managers offered our temporary services. It was probably good for us as it certainly taught me what a hard job it is! Bob Marles (an Exeter colleague) and I still share fond memories of trying to provide the catering on a packed Friday afternoon train out of Paddington during this period, me doing the buffet and him doing the first class trolley. Of course we had had no formal training, and our only knowledge of the job was what we had picked up through observation. It was chaos, akin to Laurel and Hardy in fact, but at least the customers received some semblance of a service on this key train as opposed to no catering at all.

*Redruth station showing the sharply curved platform and the proximity of the 47 yard long tunnel.*

*Photo: Mike Roach / Cornwall Railway Society*





*A mixed livery First Great Western HST approaches Dawlish on 17th October 2003. Photo: Dave Theobald*

The above teething problems could arguably have been foreseen, and perhaps in time the concept of dedicated Train Managers and Customer Hosts working permanently with each other might have been made to work. What could not have been foreseen by any of us was what happened on Tuesday 17th October 2000, less than one month later. A Kings Cross to Leeds express was derailed on the East Coast main line at Hatfield, Hertfordshire, killing 4 people and injuring more than 70. Metal fatigue in the rails was quickly established as the cause, and “gauge corner cracking” suddenly became a term that we all got familiar with. The accident exposed the huge failings of Railtrack in not maintaining the whole rail network, and it wasn't long before the fall out sent the railways into meltdown. Train schedules and crew rosters went out of the window, and FGW's attempts to pair up Train Managers with Customer Hosts quickly got forgotten as the sheer survival of railways in this country became the only priority.

The memory tends to think that all this was immediate following the crash; in fact my log books prove that it was almost a week before the West Country's train services began to suffer. Even on Monday 23rd October my 06:15 Paddington to Paignton via Bristol was only 3 minutes late into Exeter “due to a 20mph EROS (Emergency Restriction Of Speed) at Twyford and another 20mph EROS at Cullompton”. Wednesday 25th October saw me working the 13:33 Paddington to Penzance as far as Exeter, with 47815 and a set of coaches once again deputising for an HST. Nonetheless we were only 23 minutes late into St David's with my log mentioning that “we also lost time due to an increasing number of EROS in wake of Hatfield

derailment”. However things were starting to get serious two days later on Friday 27th when I worked the down Sleeper train from Exeter to Penzance in the early hours. Departure from Exeter was 54 minutes late, and by the time we got to St Erth we were 114 minutes in arrears, with people missing the connecting ferry to the Isles of Scilly. By now a 20mph EROS had been imposed all the way from Dawlish Warren to Teignmouth along the sea wall stretch – very painful.

Then just as you thought it couldn't get any worse, it did. The weather decided to add to all the mayhem! Two days later again (Sunday 29th October) my 18:15 Paddington to Penzance had to reverse at Westbury and continue via Bath and Bristol “due to flooding at Bruton” (47 minutes late into Exeter). I then had Monday and Tuesday off, but by the time I came back on Wednesday 1st November Cowley Bridge (just outside Exeter) had succumbed to the floods and the line between Exeter and Tiverton was closed for two weeks. The timetable simply collapsed, and the only way you could get to London from Exeter was by bus to Tiverton Parkway, train Tiverton to Bristol, joining the regular (but disrupted) Bristol to Paddington service at Temple Meads. There were no direct services via Newbury. Revised schedules were issued but even these were nominal, and anybody brave enough to attempt a journey from Paddington to Exeter would have needed to allow 5 hours at least. You could of course go via Waterloo, but with the speed restrictions I seem to remember that that was no better. Exeter based Guards and Drivers

spent the time either working shuttles between Tiverton Parkway and Bristol (with taxi rides to/from Tiverton) or specials between Exeter and Plymouth/Penzance. Indeed on that Wednesday 1st October I worked what ended up as a 12 hour shift, but all I actually did in that time was go to Bristol and back, and then to Plymouth on a 21:13 Exeter to Penzance HST. On the latter we left Exeter 24 minutes late and proceeded to take 89 minutes to get to Plymouth due to the speed restrictions and great difficulty getting out of Totnes up the hill to Marley Tunnel thanks to slippery rails. Well if Railtrack couldn't be bothered to maintain the rails in 2000 they were hardly likely to worry about removing the Autumn leaves! By the time we made Plymouth there was no train to take me back to Exeter so a taxi had to be provided to get me home. So of those 12 hours I spent working that day, a good proportion was spent being driven around in taxis!

There were no shortage of highlights (lowlights?) during that two week period but I will just mention one. Surprisingly perhaps an attempt was made to run the overnight Paddington to Penzance sleeper services, although with the line severed, only the desperate attempted it! Certainly on Sunday 5th/Monday 6th November the Paddington to Penzance sleeper was not really a sleeper. I was rostered to work an 04:05 HST from Exeter to Penzance (the sleeper's normal departure time from Exeter) but with extended running times, not due to arrive at the Cornish terminus until 08:20. The poor passengers (what there

were of them) had had a train from Paddington to Bristol, transferring to a road coach for the whole of the Bristol to Plymouth leg. Departure was 66 minutes late due to waiting for the coach, so we left at 05:11. All the passengers were easily accommodated in the first class section of the HST. Unfortunately not long after departure one of the power cars died. Now in previous years there would have been a spare locomotive (and even a driver) at Newton Abbot to assist our train over the Devon banks. Even by the year 2000 all that had gone. My experienced Plymouth driver protested to Swindon Control that there was no way he was going to make it up Dainton Bank on one engine in the Autumn but they insisted we try. My log shows that we left Newton Abbot at 05:43 (76 minutes late), arriving back at Newton Abbot at 06:14 after inevitably slipping to a stand halfway up the bank and then reversing back into the station. The poor passengers were sent forward on the 07:15 service train to Penzance, a 2-car class 150 DMU. As for the HST a Virgin Trains class 47 was sent up from Laira to rescue it, fortunately with a shunter to save me having to do the coupling up! I was able to travel back to Exeter "on the cushions" for an early finish.

The line past Cowley Bridge eventually reopened on 11th November and I had the honour of being the Guard on the first train through. But sadly that was not the end for the railway's woes....

*To be continued*



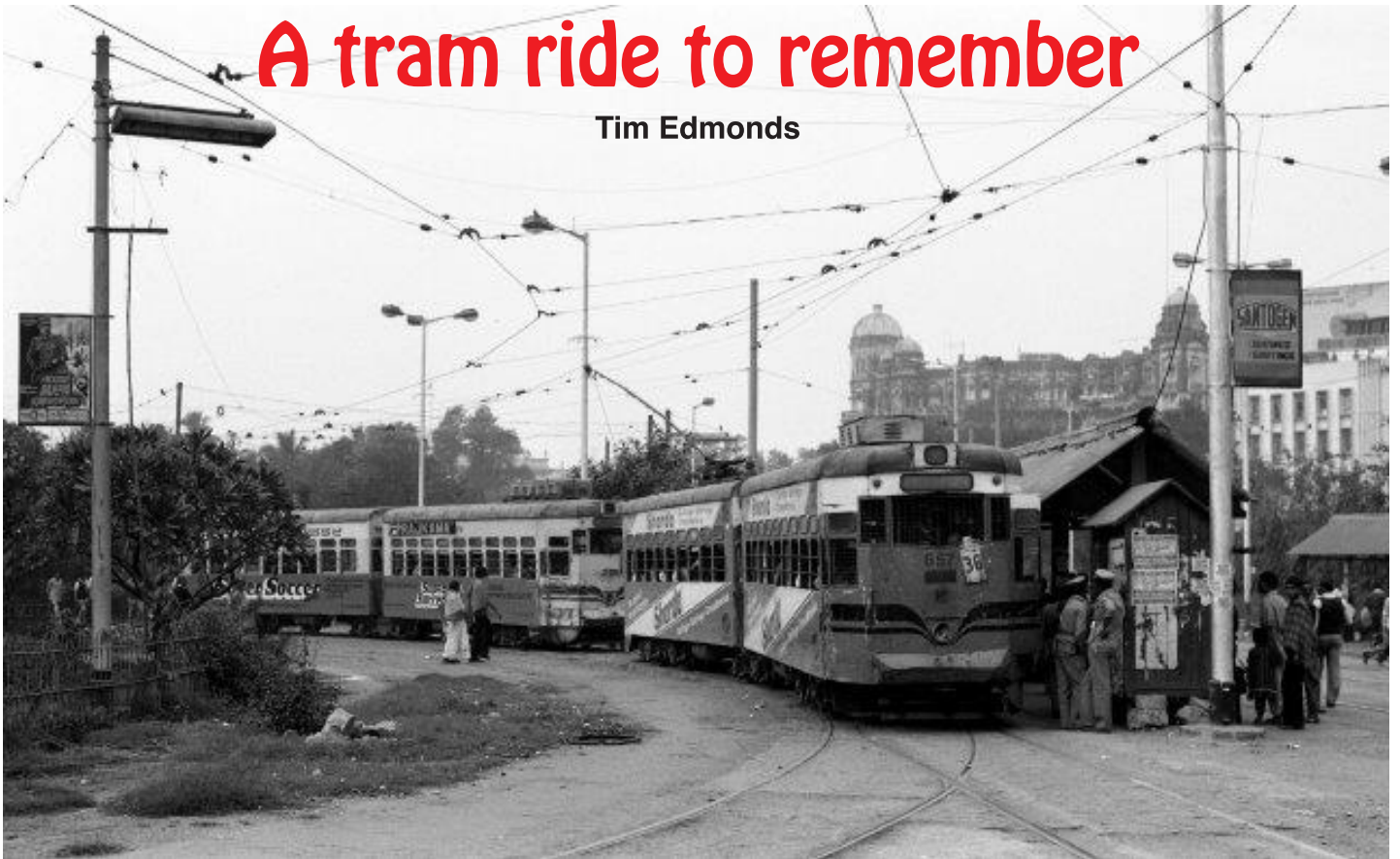
47280 Pedigree is seen arriving at Newton Abbot dragging the 06:05 Leeds to Plymouth on 23rd November 1991. The errant power car was 43156.

*Photo: Peter Robins*

"By 'eck 'Arry, that's blown it; there's some b\*\*\*\*r 'ere wiv a camera takin' photos."

# A tram ride to remember

Tim Edmonds



Kolkata, in West Bengal, India, is a city with a long-established system of tramways. Development began in the late nineteenth century with horse-drawn trams running on the metre gauge. Limited use of steam power soon followed, but it was electrification in the early twentieth century that triggered major expansion and involved conversion of the system to standard gauge – noteworthy in a country where the main lines were all 5ft 6in or metre gauge. The system was taken over by the West Bengal government in 1951 and reached its zenith in the mid-1960s with a network of 61km over 33 routes. It has since been cut-back because of road construction and the development of the Metro system so that just six routes remained, then in May 2020 Cyclone Amphan struck causing the suspension of all services. The lines were gradually reinstated, the last one in 2022, although there have been further temporary closures.

Veronica and I made two very brief visits to Calcutta, as it then was, during a tour of various steam-operated lines in northern India with a TEFS group over the Christmas and New Year holiday period in 1985-6. Travel was mainly by railway, with our party using two bogies (carriages) attached to service trains which, with seats converted to bunks, also served as overnight accommodation. However, it also meant that our itinerary had to be linked to specific trains so that the necessary shunting manoeuvres could be scheduled. The original plan was for a single visit to Calcutta at the end of the tour, where a tram charter was planned. There was no active main line steam at Calcutta, although a few steam shunters were thought to survive in occasional use at the Calcutta Port Trust and a visit might be possible. Unfortunately, additional traffic and timetabling difficulties around the New Year holiday meant that instead of travelling directly from Patna to New Jalpaiguri (for the Darjeeling line) we were rerouted, and our bogies were attached to trains via Calcutta. This much longer journey involved a scheduled departure from Patna at 19:25 on 30 December by the *Upper India Express*, arriving at Sealdah station in Calcutta at 12:30 the next day and heading out again from Sealdah for New Jalpaiguri by the Darjeeling Mail that evening at 19:15. The result of this was that we lost time in Darjeeling (not too disastrous – a landslide and then an accident had closed the lower part

*Two trams at Esplanade terminus by what appears to be an office with uniformed officials on the right.*

*All photographs by the author and taken on 4th January 1986.*

of the line) and instead had an unexpected free afternoon in Calcutta, where we opted to take a tourist sightseeing trip by coach. This proved to be a good choice since there was an excellent guide and the city has many attractive buildings and green spaces. Transport delights seen during the tour included assorted trams, double-decker buses, pulled rickshaws and stations under construction on the new Metro system (also built to standard gauge).

We returned to Calcutta on the Darjeeling Mail, arriving at Sealdah 35 minutes later than the booked time of 08:15. Alas, it had not been possible to arrange a charter tram ride, but instead we were promised steam at the docks and boarded our bus for the port area, south of the city centre. In fact, diesels had taken over at the Calcutta Port Trust and steam was virtually finished. Of the fleet of broad gauge 0-6-2Ts, 14 were dumped in the yard and four were serviceable as spare locos, with one steamed to run up and down for us and the rest stored in the shed. But this disappointing outcome was not the end since Calcutta offered an opportunity for a ride with a difference to return to the city centre. One of the tram routes terminated near the port area at Kidderpore (Khidirpur) and for any that wanted a tram ride this was an alternative to using the group's bus, which dropped us off near to the large tram depot at the terminus of route 36, which ran for just under 6km to Esplanade, on the southern edge of the city centre. The articulated trams we saw appeared to be of two types: K class, British-built in the 1930s, and L class, built at Nonakpur in Calcutta between 1942 and 1951. However, I cannot confidently identify which is which since there appeared to be variations within classes and there had clearly been some renumbering. Some were in blue and white livery, some in orange and white, and most were in a work-worn condition.

A second class ticket to Esplanade cost 30 paise, which was equivalent to less than 2p for a half hour journey. This was certainly a ride to remember as, packed in with the locals on hard





*A tram is loaded and ready to depart from Esplanade. Meanwhile, having presumably made some sales to its passengers, a snack seller has put his basket down and disappeared off-shot.*

seats, the route took us through the colourful clamour of the city and along the main road through the Maidan, a large area of open space which included the racecourse and Eden Park cricket ground. The Esplanade tram station was large and busy, with several tram routes terminating there, and was conveniently

close to the Oberoi Grand Hotel, where lunch had been arranged. There was just time to walk back to Esplanade after lunch and finish off a black-and-white film before transferring to the airport for a flight back to Bombay to connect with our London flight. In the event a 'real' tram ride proved a far more appropriate way than a charter to complete our Indian experience.

*Two trams at Esplanade, showing how large and spacious this city-centre terminus was.*





*Kidderpore Tram Depot – note the spider's web of overhead lines!*

*The route 36 tram terminus at Kidderpore, with a well-filled tram on the left ready to depart, while another on the right is ready to form the next service to Esplanade.*





*The city-centre terminus at Esplanade with an already well-filled tram on route 35 taking on still more passengers. Note the classical-style building in the background.*

*A loaded tram at Esplanade in the dusty murk of a Calcutta afternoon. Note the seated tradesman on the right making a sale to the suited businessman.*



# THEN AND NOW: HAYLING ISLAND



Terrier 32650 leads the 15:05 Havant to Hayling Island off the Langstone Bridge and onto the island in June 1958. The opposing signal is off because the bridge 'box' is switched out.

*Photographer: C. Hogg / Colour-Rail BRS895*

Today, only the bases of the trestles remain along with the cylindrical stump of the swing span. However, the signal seen in the view above has been restored to its original position although it has, sadly, fallen victim to some vandalism

*Two photos: John Tuck*

