THE MARLOW DONKEY

Edition
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THE MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

Contents:

The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

COMMITTEE

Website: www.mdrs.org.uk

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Front Cover Photographs

Top: Pannier 2055 waits for the road at Maidenhead. October 1945. Article page 14.

Bottom: 43130 and 43146 pass the site of the closed Exminster station. 4 September 1999. Photo: David Mitchell. Article page 4.

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 (except March).

Thursday 21 December **THE BALTIC COAST EXPRESS** Peter Robins

In 1990, Enthusiast Holidays ran a tour called the *Baltic Coast Express* from London via Poland, the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to Leningrad, now St. Petersburg. The return journey was via Finland, Sweden and Denmark. It was only the second major railway tour to Russia and whilst there were a few minor teething problems, the tour was a success. This presentation starts with images taken between 1975 and 1985 on previous visits to Germany and Poland then follows the tour through Russia to Finland.

Thursday 18 January **THE PATRIOT PROJECT - UPDATE** Colin Hall

Colin Hall, the Project Chairman, will give a presentation and will bring us up to date on the ups and downs of the project to the present day.

Thursday 15 February **THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 1971** Geoff Plumb

A very busy year for Geoff Plumb, covering railways in the UK, including British Railways, industrials, some North Wales narrow gauge, last of steam on London Transport, Humber paddle steamers, and the Bulmer's Cider Train return to steam. Interspersed with several trips to West Germany and also East Germany

Thursday 21 March **A BROAD GAUGE JOURNEY - PART 3** Canon Brian Arman

Brian continues his journey along the GWR in broad gauge days through his remarkable collection of early photographs.

Please note, this programme will NOT be available on Zoom.

Fridays 19 January & 2 February **GWR IET SIMULATOR VISITS**

GWR have kindly given us the use of their IET simulator at Reading for two days. We have 12 places each day in groups of four. If you would like to take part please let us know by 14 December. Lifts can be arranged if desired from Marlow or Reading station.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As another successful year for our Society draws to a close it is time to look to the future. Sadly, two of our committee members have announced they will not be standing for re-election; Vincent Caldwell, who had intended to retire last year but was persuaded to serve another year, and Brian Hopkinson who is standing down for health reasons. I'm sure you will all join me in thanking them for all their hard work, helping to make our Society such a success.

This does, of course, mean we have two vacancies which we must fill to ensure the future of the Society. Please do give serious thought to whether or not you can serve. All too often the item of "Committee Elections" on the AGM agenda leads to a collective sitting on hands and staring at the floor until it passes - and, sadly, this is not unique to the MDRS!

But without a full committee it will be impossible for the Society to continue; meetings, etc., do not organise themselves. So it's up to *you* not the other guy. The committee meets 5 or 6 times per year, lasting around an hour and are conducted on Zoom so you don't need to be local - Martin Stoolman lives in Exeter!

If you can help please get in touch. likewise if you wish to nominate another member; but please ask them first!

Something we are looking forward in the new year is our visits to GWR's Training Academy in Reading to try our hands at "driving" a Hitachi IET. Having already done this myself, I shall be passing on this opportunity but I can tell you it is something not to be missed. The simulator consists of a complete, fully equipped cab and the graphics are so realistic that you soon forget the view through the windscreen isn't real, backed up by sounds and movement.

As GWR have generously given us two dates, we have places for a total of 24 - each day will be broken into three sessions each with four participants. At the time of writing, twenty members have signed up so we still have four places available. If you are interested please let us know by 14th December - it would be helpful if you could tell us if you have a date/time preference and if you need a lift either from Marlow or Reading station, the academy isn't within walking distance and no buses go that way.

The other proposed visit, to David Buck's private railway in Fifield is still on hold as we await news of David's health. We are hoping to arrange a date in the spring. Stay tuned for details.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuing support, in particular contributions to the newsletters and 'Donkey, and wish you and your families the best for the festive season and coming year. Mince pies will be served to those who attend the December meeting in person.

Mike Walker

SOCIETY NEWS

NEW MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome Nicholas Snell from Prestwood who joined us at the October meeting.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

In September we welcomed Simon Colbeck once again, this time to present a fascinating programme on the railways of Sri Lanka, combining modern shots he'd taken himself with archive material.

In October we welcomed Tony Stead, Vice-Chairman of the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway who gave a superb presentation covering both the history of the branch and the present day preserved line including the "challenging" reconstruction of the former Maidenhead train shed at Wallingford..

November's meeting saw the return of Colin Brading with the story of an often overlooked line but vital to the community it served, the Liverpool Overhead Railway - affectionately known to "Scousers" as the "Docker's Umbrella".

IET SIMULATOR VISIT

Through the generosity of Great Western Railway we have been granted exclusive use of their IET simulator at Reading for two whole days; Friday 19th January and Friday 2nd February. We can accommodate a maximum of 12 participants each day in three groups of four, making a total of 24 places. At the time of writing, twenty had been filled.

If you wish to take up one of the remaining places please let Mike Walker (see contact details on page 1) know by 14th December or at the December meeting.

This is an unique opportunity not likely to be repeated so don't miss out!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions become due for renewal in January. The good news is that Peter Robins has decided that the proposed increase for 2024, approved at the 2023 AGM, is not required at this time and can be deferred. The rate will therefore be unchanged for the coming year, that is £16.00. The reduced rate for those of you who live some distance away and therefore attend meetings only on rare occasions remains at £8.00 with a meeting attendance fee of £2.00.

However, the anticipated rising costs of room hire and speakers' expenses mean the rates might mean an increase in 2025. A proposal will be put to the AGM for a vote.

Remember, the Society now has a bank account with Lloyds which has a number of advantages over the previous account for both members and the treasurer. If you have on-line banking, you may make bank transfers to the Society.

The sort code is 30-95-36
The account no. is 62236160

If you wish to pay your subs by this method, please put "SUBS" and your name (including initial) - e.g. "SUBS-J.BLOGGS" - in the reference, and MDRS in the "Pay" box if required.. You could also set up a Standing Order to pay MDRS every 1st January which would be most convenient for both parties.

If you wish to pay for anything else by this method, please reference accordingly - e.g. "XMAS-J.BLOGGS" (Xmas) or "DON-J.BLOGGS" (Donation) or as advised. If you have any issues with the reference, please drop an e-mail to pd.robins@btopenworld.com advising of the payment.

Of course you may still pay by cash or cheque. Please note that ONLY cheques made out to "MDRS" or "Marlow & District Railway Society" will be accepted by the bank.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As usual the Society's AGM will be held at the beginning of the February meeting and as in previous years, the relevant documentation will be distributed in advance to all members. Please take a look at these on receipt to allow business to be conducted swiftly on the night.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

As you will see from Mike's Chairman's Notes on the previous page, Vincent Caldwell and Brian Hopkinson are both standing down from the committee.

These are crucial roles in running a successful society such as ours so we really need some of you to step up and offer your services for the committee. Not necessarily in specific posts, we can possibly reallocate roles within the existing committee, but the vacancies must be filled.

If you feel you can help, please contact Mike or Vincent - contact details on page 1.

RCTS MEETINGS

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

Monday 22nd January
An Evening With Father's Slides - Derek Cross

Monday 26th February
South Western Railway Update - Claire Mann MD SWR

Monday 25th March
Building Britain's Most Powerful Steam Locomotive - Chris Ardy

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.

MAIDENHEAD MODEL EXHIBITION

Following a highly successful event last year, the Marlow, Maidenhead & District Model Railway Club will once again be holding their annual exhibition on Saturday 6th January from 10:00 to 17:00 and the location is the Cox Green Community Centre, details as above.

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.

TICKETS PLEASE!

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

Martin Stoolman

47811 passes Rewe, east of Exeter, on 12th July 1999 with the 08:27 Exeter to Paddington.

Photo: David Mitchell

Most of the world enjoys celebrating the arrival of a New Year; there are always high hopes that we can draw a line under the year just gone, and somehow January 1st will usher in much better times for us all. The reality is of course that usually nothing changes and the New Year turns out to be just as bad as the old! However on the trains the arrival of 2001 really did mark a turning point. The back end of 2000 marked a deep low for the nation's railways, but the 19 or so years from 1st January 2001 until COVID struck in 2020 saw an amazing but gradual revival. There were still a few more horrible train accidents to come in those earlier years, but reliability, timekeeping and passenger numbers all steadily improved. Network Rail took over the managing of the track and signals albeit with a huge backlog of maintenance to be carried out, and many of the absurdities of privatisation were ironed out. Of course grumbling in the mess rooms persisted ('twas ever thus) but the truth, in hindsight, is that we probably "never knew it so good".

The bizarre way the year 2000 ended was somehow summed up for me by two contrasting logs for two separate days. Back then, in addition to the trusty High Speed Trains we still had a handful of traditional loco and coach sets knocking around, and they didn't always appear on their correct workings, thus throwing the schedules. Back to work after Christmas, driver Andy Braund and I were probably looking for a nice easy train to take up to Paddington on Wednesday 27th December and this was provided when our 12:52 Penzance to Paddington turned up at Exeter formed of a 125mph HST instead of the booked loco hauled set. Routed via Bristol and Swindon due to engineering work, we were non-stop Exeter to Reading and were soon running early. In fact we were 10 minutes early through Bristol Temple Meads, 20 minutes early through Swindon, and 25 minutes early through Didcot Parkway! By the time we drew into the platform at Reading we were a full 33 minutes before time and, unsurprisingly, this completely confounded both the automated information screens on the then platform 5, and the staff who assumed we were another service. However our train's window stickers prompted them to query it with me, and then of course there was consternation. We were blocking the Up main line platform, but they weren't supposed to allow us to go early, in spite of plentiful alternative non-stop trains from Reading to Paddington. So what to do? Eventually common sense prevailed (it was still used occasionally back then!) and we were allowed to proceed after a short delay. Arrival at Paddington was exactly 30 minutes early, no doubt amazing the passengers and giving me and the driver a nice extended break!

The contrast with the following day, Thursday 28th December, could scarcely be more stark. This time my up service, the 14:42 Penzance to Paddington, should have been an HST but was instead 47832 on seven mark 2 coaches. Earlier mechanical problems plus sheep on the line meant that our departure from Exeter St David's was 58 minutes in arrears. Again we were non-stop Exeter to Reading but this time we were 61 minutes late through Bristol Temple Meads, and 69 minutes late through Swindon. We made it to Reading 80 minutes late, finally drawing into Paddington at 21.52, a full 104 minutes in arrears. This was not popular with my passengers, and it was also

of course bad news for my return working, the 21:30 Paddington to Exeter via Bristol which had already been in the station waiting for me for 22 minutes! However with a driver and passengers eager to get home I dispensed with my break (something not approved of these days for safety reasons) and we left Paddington just 28 minutes late after another Guard had prepared the train for me. Four minutes were regained to Exeter giving an arrival time of 01:19 – late enough!

While we're on the 21:30 Paddington to Exeter, I can safely say that this was nobody's favourite train. It was the last "daytime" service from the capital to the West Country and it stopped at pretty much every station via Bristol. In some ways it was a throwback to the "milk trains" of old – except of course that it didn't carry any milk! Unfortunately it was very much a job for an Exeter Driver and Guard and equally unfortunately it operated throughout my career. Naturally it stopped at Reading (Slough too in the early days), Didcot, Swindon, Chippenham and Bath, but then after leaving Temple Meads at around 23:20, it went on to call at Nailsea & Backwell, Yatton, Worle, Weston Super Mare, Highbridge, Bridgwater, Taunton and Tiverton Parkway, finally reaching Exeter St David's just before 01.00 if we were lucky. The departure time from Bristol was of course perfect for late night revellers, this also being the last train heading west from there. Needless to say trouble followed you around on this train, and with an eight coach HST you really needed eyes in the back of your head!

Generally we were rostered onto this train for a whole week at a time, as was the case for me on the week commencing Monday 2nd July 2001. Needless to say alcohol (or an excess of it) plays a big part at this time of night, and on the Monday we had only just left Paddington when a young girl for Reading came up to me in tears because she had lost her handbag. She was so drunk that she had no recollection of when she last had it. All I could do was make sure she got off safely at Reading having taken a contact phone number in case the bag turned up on the train later in the journey. I recall that just persuading her as to the reason I wanted her contact number was hard; she became convinced that it was so I could date her! In any event there was no sign of her bag so no such call was required....

Often this train was affected in some way or another by late night engineering work, and that evening was no exception as the loop serving Weston Super Mare was closed meaning we were unable to call there; instead we went non-stop from Worle to Highbridge via the avoiding line. Now it does not matter how many announcements you make, there will always be somebody who either wasn't listening or thought they knew better ("But this train always stops at Weston"). My log says that I was accosted by a "Mad Frenchman" needing to go there. The temptation if he was abusive might have been to leave him to his fate in the isolated settlement of Highbridge. However, perhaps in the spirit of Anglo-French relations, I decided to take him through to Taunton where I knew staff there would organise a taxi to take him back to his desired destination.

Having left Taunton, one might have thought that the excitement of this Monday night had finished, but no! For reasons better known to himself the signaller at Exeter decided to route us into platform 6 at St David's where there was already a train parked up. Now this is not in itself unusual or indeed unsafe; sometimes a short train (typically a 2-car unit) might be at the far end of the platform by the signal waiting to go onto the depot, leaving plenty of room in behind for an 8-car HST. The train would be signalled in by a "calling on" signal (two white dots) instead of the main aspect, so the driver would know he could proceed but "being prepared to stop short of any obstruction". On this occasion however there were two problems: firstly the other train was actually shut down and locked in the middle of the platform, positioned there deliberately to form the first service of the morning up to Barnstaple. Secondly our HST, instead of stabling overnight at Exeter, was tonight booked to carry on empty (ECS) to Plymouth's Laira depot for maintenance, so this 2-car unit was well and truly in the way! Fortunately I had a senior Exeter driver at the helm, and he saw the unit in plenty of time and stopped short of it. However we now had the problem that only the power car and the first two coaches of our train were fully in the platform, the remainder stretching out over Red Cow level crossing and towards Cowley Bridge! After the signaller had been alerted and the Duty Station Manager had got involved, it was decided to unlock our train and escort those passengers at the rear through the unplatformed coaches to the point where they could safely alight. The next challenge was to find a spare driver qualified to start up the unit and move it out of the way via the station's west end, in order that we could fully enter the platform and the HST could ultimately continue its empty journey to Laira. A slightly early arrival had been on the cards as we approached Exeter, always good on this late shift. However both the driver and me obviously had to remain with our train until we were finally able to clear it from the main line, so sleep had to wait a further 25 minutes! As for the passengers, the ones in first class at the rear had the longest walk through the train in order to get off, followed by a marathon across the station, that end of platform 6 being as far away from the exit as you can get. The only ones in first class happened to be my solicitor and two members of his team who had been for a jolly watching the tennis at Wimbledon, and for several years afterwards he delighted in reminding me of this incident, fortunately with a smile on his face!

As for the rest of that week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday passed off relatively peacefully until we got to Friday. Now Friday you just know you will have a fair few on who have had rather too much to drink, and no doubt that was the case even if I did not record it. What I did note down was that, on arrival at Chippenham, I was confronted by a lot of angry customers – none of whom were anything to do with my train I hesitate to add! Our train was booked to call at 22:48 and, even at that comparatively early hour, Chippenham station was in those days (and probably still today), completely unstaffed. Their last train to London had come up on the screens as cancelled so they had every right to be displeased; unluckily for me I was the one in railway uniform who happened to turn up! I had no choice but to delay my train while I rang Control to find out what was going on. The answer was that there were major signalling problems in Box

Tunnel, between there and Bath; the other train was coming but was diverted, and because of it being off route the automated Customer Information Screens had assumed it was no longer coming and had cancelled it off the screens. I was therefore able to reveal this positive news to the London bound passengers which I guess saved me from a possible lynching!

Meanwhile the closure of Box Tunnel did of course have big implications for me, with my 20:30 being next stop Bath. And so here is a question for you: how can you avoid Box Tunnel and yet still stop at Chippenham and Bath? The answer is that you turn left at Thingley Junction about two miles out of Chippenham, taking the single line through Melksham. When you get to Bradford Junction shortly before reaching Trowbridge you stop and reverse. You then proceed northwards again to Bathampton Junction, rejoining the main Paddington to Bristol route about three miles before arriving at Bath Spa, with the train now of course in reversed formation and having lost 29 minutes! The fun bit is, when the train reverses direction, watching the faces of those tired Friday night revellers who think you are taking them back to Reading and Paddington from whence they came. Arrival at Bath going "backwards" was therefore greeted with relieved incredulity, as though you had performed some ingenious railway conjuring trick on them! They were probably still trying to puzzle it out as they lay in their beds having finally wended their weary ways homewards.....

But this was by no means the only time that a train I was working had to do an "out of course" reversal of direction. Much later in my career, on Saturday 28th February 2015, I was working a busy 07:29 Exeter St David's to Paddington via Bristol. We left Temple Meads punctually at 09:00, only to come to a grinding halt at the signal approaching Bath Spa. There had just been a reported bridge strike ahead and all lines were blocked. Eventually the decision was made that the driver would change ends and we would reverse, taking what is called the Rhubarb Curve, re-joining the main line between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway at the foot of Filton Bank and on to Swindon and Reading that way. Very sensibly Control ordered us to make an additional stop at Oldfield Park (in the suburbs of Bath) in order set down passengers for that city. My driver had changed at Temple Meads from an Exeter one to a Bristol based one, so when I was asked whether the driver and me "signed the route" via the Rhubarb Curve I declared, without hesitation, that we did.

So this excellent plan was put into place and off we went, but of course as far as the passengers were concerned we were going backwards. Until we finally rolled into Paddington no amount of explaining from me was going to convince some of them! But back to the Rhubarb Curve. Did this Exeter Guard really "sign" it? The answer is no I didn't, but I wasn't about to disrupt the journeys of 300 people and destroy a very good plan by being truthful. So technically I was very naughty, but it was the weekend and I was confident I wasn't going to get any comeback – and I didn't. Perhaps this article should be called "Confessions of a Great Western Guard" rather than "Reflections"!

To be continued...

43130 and 43146 pass the site of the closed Exminster station (between Starcross and Exeter) on 4th September 1999 with a Paddington bound train. Photo: David Mitchell

FIRST AND LASTING IMPRESSIONS

JOHN SEARS, having culled from his archives both mental and material, presents some first occasions which have lasted the various tests of Time, and left lasting impressions.

***The Canadian* Kamloops to Calgary August, 1969**

The Sears family had reached British Columbia on their eastbound trip from LHR, and were on the platform of the Canadian Pacific station in Kamloops. Even though number 2, the eastbound *Canadian* was due to depart at 03:20, the friends we'd stayed with, no doubt keen to make sure we left, were there to see us off. And friends of theirs were there to meet number 1, the westbound *Canadian*; due at 02:55, so likely running late. By Salmon Arm on Shuswap Lake, 65.1 miles into the 390.6 miles to Calgary, it was light enough for your scribe to find a front seat in the coach class dome car. He stayed there, spell-bound, almost unto Calgary. What a railway!

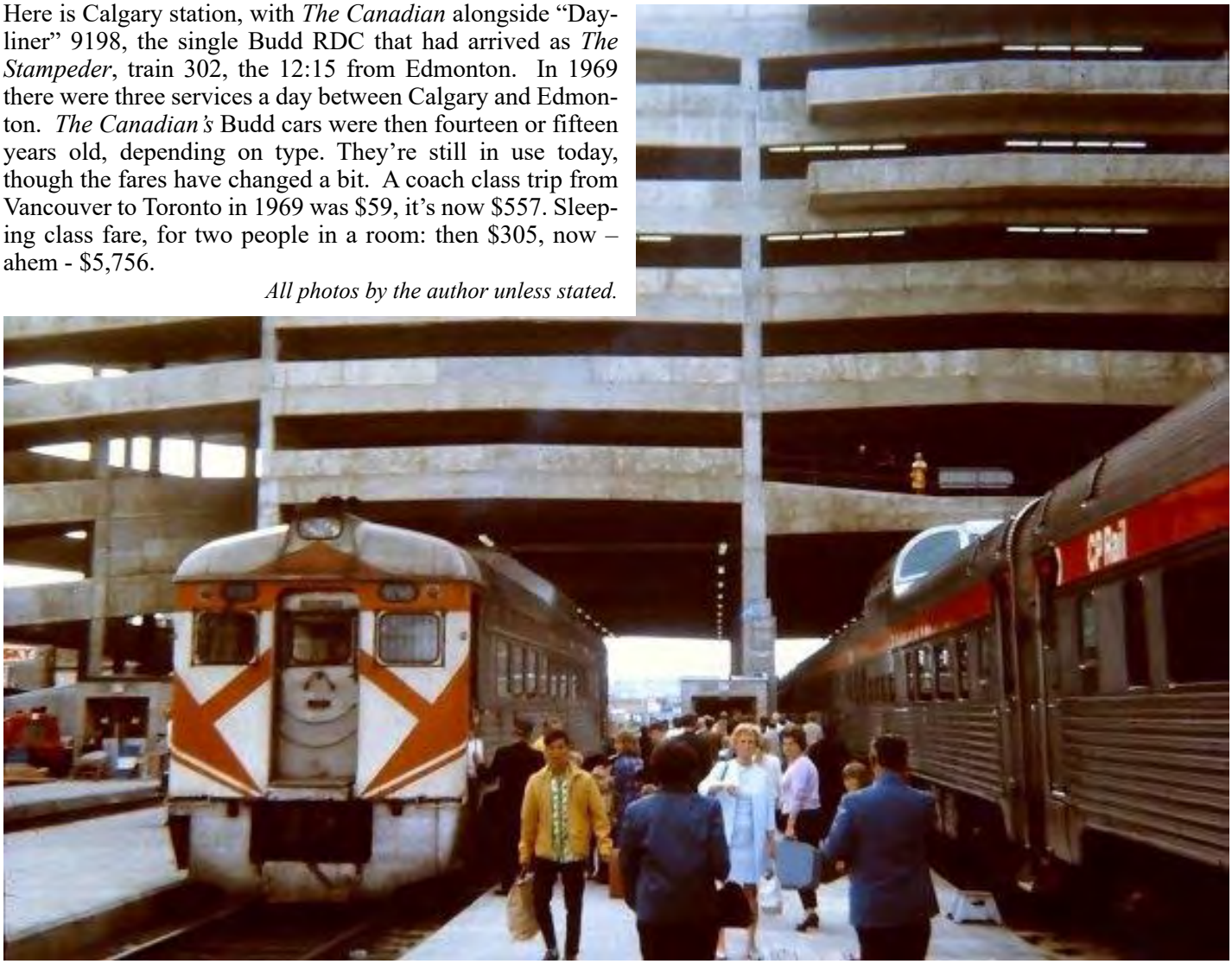
After Salmon Arm it's on east past: Craigellachie, where in November 1885 the final spike joined the Canadian Pacific together; Eagle Pass, discovered by watching where eagles flew through the mountains – the raptors use the lowest passes; across the Columbia into Revelstoke; up the valley of the Illecillewaet River to Glacier, and on through the Connaught Tunnel, opened in 1916 under Roger's Pass, where several fatal avalanches over the years forced the railway to re-route the line away from the pass by digging the five-mile tunnel, down to the Columbia again, this time at Golden, on the way flying 325 feet above Stoney Creek.

Here's number 2, headed by an FP7A in CP's then new "action red" "Multi-mark" livery, and three Geeps in the previous, rather more stately scheme, crossing Stoney Creek bridge.

Then it's up the canyon of the Kicking Horse River to Field, at the base of the climb at 1 in 45 through the Spiral Tunnels to the Continental Divide. From Field to the summit the railway climbs 1,300 feet in 14½ miles. Once over the summit it's downhill for the 120 miles to Calgary, past the stations at Lake Louise, then Banff, both stations for what were then Canadian Pacific hotels – the Chateau Lake Louise, 800 feet higher up, by the eponymous lake, and, between 1912 and 1930, linked to the station by a 3 foot 6 inch gauge tramway, and the Banff Springs. The two hotels were built by the Canadian Pacific in 1890 and 1887 as part of its campaign to generate traffic for its new railway. Lake Louise station building is now a restaurant, and is listed on Canada's Historic Places register, which also lists Kicking Horse Pass. This first journey on *The Canadian* ended at Calgary, where CP had recently rebuilt the station in the ghastly style so loved in the 1960s.

Here is Calgary station, with *The Canadian* alongside "Dayliner" 9198, the single Budd RDC that had arrived as *The Stampeder*, train 302, the 12:15 from Edmonton. In 1969 there were three services a day between Calgary and Edmonton. *The Canadian's* Budd cars were then fourteen or fifteen years old, depending on type. They're still in use today, though the fares have changed a bit. A coach class trip from Vancouver to Toronto in 1969 was $59, it's now $557. Sleeping class fare, for two people in a room: then $305, now – ahem - $5,756.

All photos by the author unless stated.



First restaurant car meal - on the up *Flying Scotsman*

June, 1969, and time to head back home at the end of my first year at uni. in Glasgow – Strathclyde, not Strathkelvin, as we liked to call Glasgow University, which is located near the River Kelvin, a right-bank tributary of the Clyde. I'd decided to travel back via Edinburgh and catch the *Flying Scotsman*. Back in the days of Deltics it was hit and miss whether your train ran as booked, or had a 47 in lieu, which was the case that day. (It was similar with the double-headed 50s on the WCML, often only one could make it.) I also decided to take lunch, and chose the second sitting, moving up to the restaurant car somewhere south of Newark. It was marshalled beyond the kitchen car and I chose a table on the down side, two or three rows from the front of the car. There weren't many diners, with just one in front of me. The main course, steak and kidney pudding, was in plentiful supply with just me and another to share it between. I had to tell the steward to stop as he piled my plate, and soon after heard the other diner also ask him to stop. We were served as the *'Scotsman* flew down Stoke Bank, flashing across all those level crossings with their waiting motorists. Delicious food, and as well, ah - the sweet taste of the railway's superiority as a means of transport!

Another lunch on the up *Flying Scotsman* was enjoyed in July, 1973, returning with Mum and Dad, and Grampy Sears, after my graduation. That time we did have Deltic haulage, with 9009 *Alycidon* doing the honours.

First down five-hour *Royal Scot* 6th May 1974

A small group of Slough Area employees arranged a day off on the first day of the summer, 1974, timetable to try out the new "Electric Scots" timetable, specifically the down *Royal Scot*, 10:45 from Euston and five hours to Glasgow, with one stop, Preston. We were through Crewe in 105 minutes, a fraction over 90 mph average, 46 minutes on to the Preston stop, down to 66½ mph. On over the hills of Cumbria, delayed around Penrith by a freight finding a loop, we took, or rather 87015 took, 74 minutes for the 90.1 miles to passing Carlisle, only 73 mph. A typical 390 time is now 65 minutes with two stops. The current timetable, devised by several disparate minds, contains some eye-brow twitching morsels such as three down Anglo-Scottish departures from Preston in the space of nine minutes! They are: 08:54 to Glasgow (07;07 ex Brum), 08:58 to Glasgow (08:12 from Lime Street) and the 09:03 to Edinburgh (08:04 Manchester Airport). To add to the mix the 06:30 from Glasgow Central to Euston is 09:01 off Preston…..

Back in 1974 the first five-hour *Royal Scot* passed Carlisle at 14:32 and then took 72 minutes for the final 102¼ miles to Glasgow Central – 85.2 mph. I seem to think we were about nine minutes late past Carlisle, but my notes show a Glasgow arrival one minute early. The average between Carlisle and Motherwell was 92.28 mph – given the then-current PSRs, rather more than "good going" through the reverse curves along the upper Clyde.

87015 at Euston ready to work the inaugural electric *Royal Scot* on 6th May 1974. In days of old and more recently, such an auspicious occasion would have warranted a headboard.

Photo: Mike Walker

First trip on the *Rio Grande Zephyr.*

An early start for a Saturday in November, 1974 – 07:00 for train number 17, the westbound *Rio Grande Zephyr*, from Denver Union to Salt Lake City, 570 miles over the tracks of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad – "through the Rockies, not around them". And how. In the almost 50 miles from Denver to the summit in Moffat Tunnel the line climbs 4,039 feet. (Imagine leaving Paddington and arriving in a Reading that's 2,748 feet higher in altitude.) By 1974 the *RGZ* was the sole reminder of the *California Zephyr*, the streamliner introduced in 1949 by the Burlington, the DRGW and the Western Pacific between Chicago and Oakland. The WP had finally received permission to discontinue its portion of the route (Salt Lake City to Oakland) and did so in 1970. The Burlington continued to run its portion, Chicago to Denver, as a three times a week connection for the Rio Grande's Denver to Ogden train. It had been instructed to keep operating it as part of a Denver to Oakland route. Very soon the D&RGW terminated its Zephyr at Salt Lake City and provided a connection by road, described as a "limousine" in the timetable. In reality it was a people carrier, and it carried three passengers when I travelled. Amtrak took over the operation of the Southern Pacific's Ogden to Oakland train in 1971; it became the *San Francisco Zephyr*, a Chicago to Oakland train, at first running over the Union Pacific between Denver and Ogden, but after 1983, when the Rio Grande finally joined Amtrak, re-routed through the Rockies.

Three F units, 5771, an A unit – with a cab – and two B units, 5762 and 5763, plus a steam generator car, headed the train, which was formed of a combine (BSO in UK speak) for baggage, office space for the conductor and, if required, over-flow passenger space, all five painted "Aspen gold", a shade of yellow, and four stainless steel ex-*California Zephyr* cars: two dome coaches – *Silver Pony* and *Silver Mustang*, then *Silver Banquet*, the diner, and terminating with *Silver Sky*, the sleeper-dome-observation lounge car. The Rio Grande had one set of cars for the *Rio Grande Zephyr,* which started from Denver on a Monday, returning on Tuesday, then taking Wednesday off for maintenance, then resuming the out one day, back the next, cycle.

Here's *Silver Sky* on number 18, eastbound at Grand Junction in May, 1976, in all its stainless steel glory.

And here's the view from inside the front dome on the *RGZ* on a later date, October, 1981, this time with eight cars, including a former Union Pacific diner ahead of this dome car. It's at Tolland, just short of the Moffat Tunnel, passing an eastbound coal train that shows how difficult the line is to operate: there are eight locos on the head-end and another two at the rear end. The Long Drag with twice the grade and three times the distance: even downhill it's a real test.

Fourteen hours through 570 miles of Colorado and Utah, that is: mountain climbing up the front range of the Rockies, passing through 49 tunnels and past the 6, 7, 8, and finally 9,000 foot contours up to 9,240 feet in the Moffat Tunnel. Opened in 1928 as part of the old Denver & Salt Lake Railroad, it removed the need for trains to stagger over Rollins Pass at 11,600 feet. However, like a lot of grand railway names, this one misled - the DSL only got as far as Craig, still rather more than 220 miles from Salt Lake City. Finally, in 1934, 38 miles of new railway between Orestod and Dotsero (get it?) cut 175 miles from the Denver to Salt Lake City route of the D&RGW. West of the Continental Divide we followed the Colorado River through many of its canyons through the Rockies and Glenwood Springs to Grand Junction, named so because it's where the Colorado – once called the Grand - and Gunnison Rivers merge. Through the Utah deserts, past the Book Cliffs before turning north through Helper, the base for the extra power required by freights over Soldier Summit, down through the loops at Gilluly. The last miles either side of Salt Lake City are by road; south thereof by train enjoying street-running along 5th. Street West, north by the "limousine".

Lunch - and dinner - in the diner helped fuel a glorious day. And, somehow, the dinner menu strayed into my possession, as did one of the pencils used to mark ones choice on the meal check. It was even more of a treasure, as it was marked *California Zephyr*. Alas it has since vanished……

One day on Sherman Hill

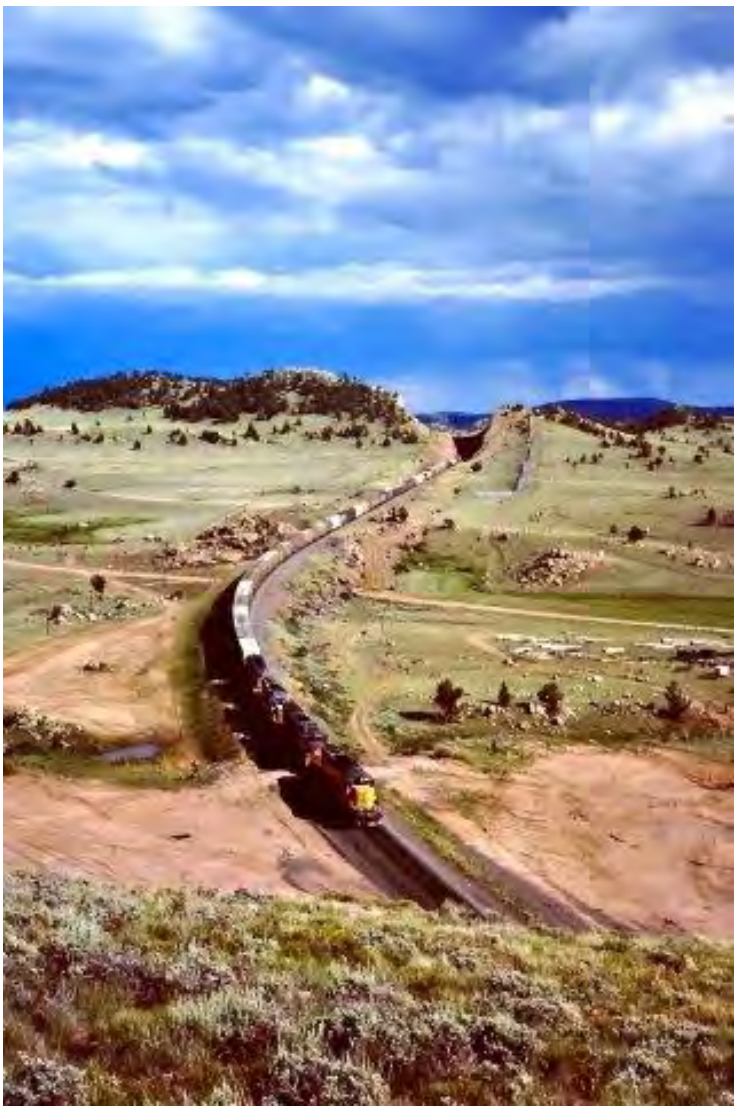
We'd arrived in Cheyenne and after signing our lives away had toured the remains of the roundhouse to see some of Union Pacific's treasures: 3985, the Challenger; 838, one of 844's fellow 4-8-4s; 1243, a 4-6-0; a 2-10-2, and an immense rotary snow-plough which we were allowed to "cab". Lunch-time prompted thoughts of eating at the Denny's restaurant we had passed on our way into town. One look at the queue changed that decision, we could easily manage without lunch. After all, the Union Pacific's main line, serving "all the west" heads that way out of town to climb Sherman Hill, and was a much tastier prospect. So, off we drove for several miles before turning left down a local road until we came to a bridge over two of Union Pacific's three tracks up to Dale.

This is the original transcontinental railway; Cheyenne had been reached in November, 1867, track extended over Sherman Summit to Laramie in 1868. There was extensive re-aligning in 1901, and the line was doubled in 1918. In 1953 Union Pacific engineered Track 3 at an easier gradient of 1 in 122. The ruling grade on Tracks 1 and 2 is 1 in 64½. To achieve its lesser gradient Track 3 is ten miles longer than Tracks 1 and 2; it takes 46 miles to get from Cheyenne to Dale Junction. The 1901 re-alignment moved the railway a few miles south, and the original

summit at 8,247 feet asl was replaced by one at 8,015 feet asl. Cheyenne is 6,062 feet above the sea.

The three tracks join at Dale Junction, and the line is double-track for about three miles through the Hermosa Tunnels. West of the tunnels three tracks run down grade to Laramie (7,165 feet asl). Here Track 3 is on the original alignment, with a ruling grade of 1 in 52. Track 2 was added as part of the 1901 works, with 1 added in 1976; their ruling grade is 1 in 122.

Back in 1984 we were standing on the bridge waiting for trains when a car arrived with three people who turned out to be railfans. They greeted us with "Three people standing on a bridge over a railroad – you must be railfans!" They carried a very valuable piece of paper – a "line-up", a list of trains expected that day – and invited us to follow them as they drove to locations along the line. But first, it's time for "Centennial" 6929, leading four SD40s, one of which was a Katy (MKT – Missouri Kansas Texas) loco, on an eastbound manifest freight. It was the Centennials' last summer of use, and my first sighting of one of these fabulous machines. They are 98 ft. 5 ins. long, 17 ft. 4 ins. high and 10 ft. 4 ins. wide, have 8,200 gallon fuel tanks and weigh 243 tons.



Then we were off, joining Interstate 80 and heading west through Wyoming. At one point we made an "interesting" manoeuvre across the median strip at a point where the eastbound and westbound carriageways were some distance apart. Our guides had missed the exit! We headed south on a local road, past the Ames Monument. It commemorates two brothers who were "major financiers" of the Union Pacific, and

stands at the summit of the original route. When we met the railway we headed west, along the maintenance of way access track, alongside the tracks. Such liberties are now impossible, I'm relieved to say. Being overtaken by a westbound train as we drove made me feel even more uncomfortable. Luckily the train crew didn't see fit to report us. Nerves were forgotten once we arrived at Dale Junction. A westbound was due on Track 3, so we scrambled up the knoll that stands in the vee of the tracks as they converge at the junction. During the afternoon we saw plenty of Centennials, unfortunately which was not recorded! The final one was heading one of the last two trains we saw, at what we were told was Tie Siding, just west of the Hermosa Tunnels.

Here is that westbound, approaching Dale Junction on Track 3, with a raft of stock cars carrying pigs at its head-end. The junction is over our right shoulder, and Tracks 1 and 2 are behind us. Note the depth of the distant cutting!

First 390 trip and an APT

Thanks to working for a "stakeholder", colleagues and I were invited to travel, on the 14th of June, 2004, on the "Inaugural West Coast Tilting Journey". According to the certificate "signed" by Chris Green and Richard Branson we "travelled on the first tilting Pendolino from London Euston to Manchester Piccadilly". There are several spots on the WCML that really show the effect of tilt – Berkhamsted, Linslade Tunnel, Wolverton. Perhaps the double reverse-curve at Weedon is the ultimate, always a bit of "fun" in a loco-hauled train, how would it be in a Pendolino? Well, the answer was – someone wondered where we were, and we all looked up to find we were already approaching the final curve. Very impressive, though not quite as much fun as my trip almost twenty-two years earlier on 25th of October, 1982, in an APT powered by power car SC49005. Not my first in an APT, but the first all the way from Glasgow Central to Euston. There were two cars in front of the power car, and five behind it. I was in car B, possibly the penultimate one. My notes described it: "Very low ceilings, but sitting down no real feeling of smallness – next to window tho'. By a window pillar one would notice the bodyside. Tatty screws in bodyside panels. The cars rock and sway quite a lot as people walk around!"

Due out of the magnificence of Central at 07:00, we left 45 seconds late. A typically delayed run got us to the Motherwell stop at 07:19. Unfortunately it was to be a typical West Coast run, with delays making us, I think, about half an hour late into Euston. There were times when the tilt really came into play. The first was through Carstairs. I was sitting on the down side, facing, and it was a case of, literally, going full tilt through Carstairs' island platform. The effect of the tilt combined with the low window level brought the platform surface very close! Beattock Summit to Lockerbie went at an average speed of just over 115 mph. Other highlights noted were Carnforth to Lancaster at 123 mph, and Stafford to Tamworth at 117.5 mph.

What might have happened if its development had continued? One train we really did miss…….

Virgin Trains' Pendolino 390042 *City of Bangor/Dinas Bangor* shows off its tilt capability as it enters the Old Linslade curve running as 1H18, the 10:20 London Euston to Manchester Piccadilly on 2nd July 2014.

Mike Walker

GWR PANNIER TANKS

Part 2: The 'Small' Pre-grouping & Absorbed Locomotives

David Gardner

850 Class panniers 1969 (above) and 1990, the latter with a spark arresting chimney. Note the H-section wheel spokes.

Following on from the pre-grouping "Large" panniers described in part 1, we now turn our attention to the "Small" classes with 4' 1½" driving wheels.

850 class Built at Wolverhampton under George Armstrong and William Dean. They had a 7' 4" + 6' 4" wheelbase and originally 4' 0" wheels but this was increased with thicker tyres to 4' 1½". Nos. 850-73/ 987-98/ 1216-1227/1901-2020 were built in two lots between 1874-77 and 1881-95. They received pannier tanks from August 1910 to December 1937. Only seventeen remained as saddle tanks. These small, short wheelbase engines were found to be very useful and up to 1927 were regularly used on empty stock workings in and out of Paddington. However, they were most used in dock areas, notably Bristol, Plymouth, Birkenhead and Llanelly but also in the Cardiff Valleys and Central Wales. Like the 655 class a number were reinstated after withdrawal and all but one of these lasted into BR days. ln all 43 passed into BR stock and one no.2001 was painted green with British Railways lettering. As numbers diminished engines were concentrated at Llanelly and Birkenhead which was to prove their last stronghold and from April 1953 Birkenhead shed was transferred to the LMR. Eight locos were sold although three of these, nos.855/64 and 873, were saddle tanks. No.993 went to the Alexandria Docks & Railway Co. returning to GWR stock in August 1922. Four found their way to the NCB: no.1923, scrapped in 1959; no.1956 went in October 1950; no.1966 lasted until April 1961 and finally 2020 broken up in 1957. Of the ones in BR stock no.2012 lasted until June 1958. Nos.1925 and 2007 were the last saddle tanks of the class surviving into BR days.

1925 retained its saddle tank for special duties at Southall where it is seen circa 1949. Photo: Alan Morris

2021 class. Built at Wolverhampton between 1897-1905, they came under William Dean and G. J. Churchward's tenure. They were numbered 2021-2160 and with a 7' 4" + 7' 4" wheelbase and 4' 1½" wheels, they were a slightly larger and more modern version of the 850 class. Nos.2028/57 and 2128 were the only members of this large class to remain as saddle tanks. All the rest of the class received pannier tanks between November 1912 and December 1936. Thirty-eight of the class were fitted with domeless boilers with the safety valve being where the dome would normally be. Nos.2097 and 2158 reverted to saddle tanks between October 1928 and January 1934 and September 1922 and September 1924 respectively. Several of this class were autofitted and 2080 had 5' 2" wheels fitted in February 1930 as a try out for the proposed 54XX class but by April 1930 the 4' 1½" wheels were put back, then in August 1930 no.2062 was withdrawn and its frames used in construction of engine No. 5400. The autogear was taken off no. 2160 and put on the former no. 2062. However, it still retained its original cab so 5400 (2062) was replaced with a new no.5400 in June 1932 and the old engine quietly withdrawn about the same time. Between February 1939 and January 1940 ten of the 2021 class were given increased braking power and were renumbered as 2181-90 and all these made it into BR ownership with the last of these to go being 2182 in August 1955. All but twenty of the original members of this class passed into BR and some including nos.2089 and 2115 were lettered 'British Railways' on the pannier tanks sides. Several carried a bell behind the chimney as a warning while working in dock or street areas. Only two were sold off by the GWR and these were both saddle tanks; no.2057 in November 1907 and no.2128 in January 1911. No.2053 was taken out of stock in April 1954 and transferred to the National Smelting Co., Avonmouth in September of the same year. It survived until March 1961. No.2034 went to the NCB in September 1955 and no.2092 was also taken on by the NCB in December that year. Both survived until 1964. During their working lives the class worked over most of the system and no.2112 was a Slough engine until transferred to Birkenhead in November 1952.

2120 in late condition with enclosed cab. Both the 850 and 2021 classes can be spotted by the buffer beams protruding above the running plate. The 2021s had conventional spokes.

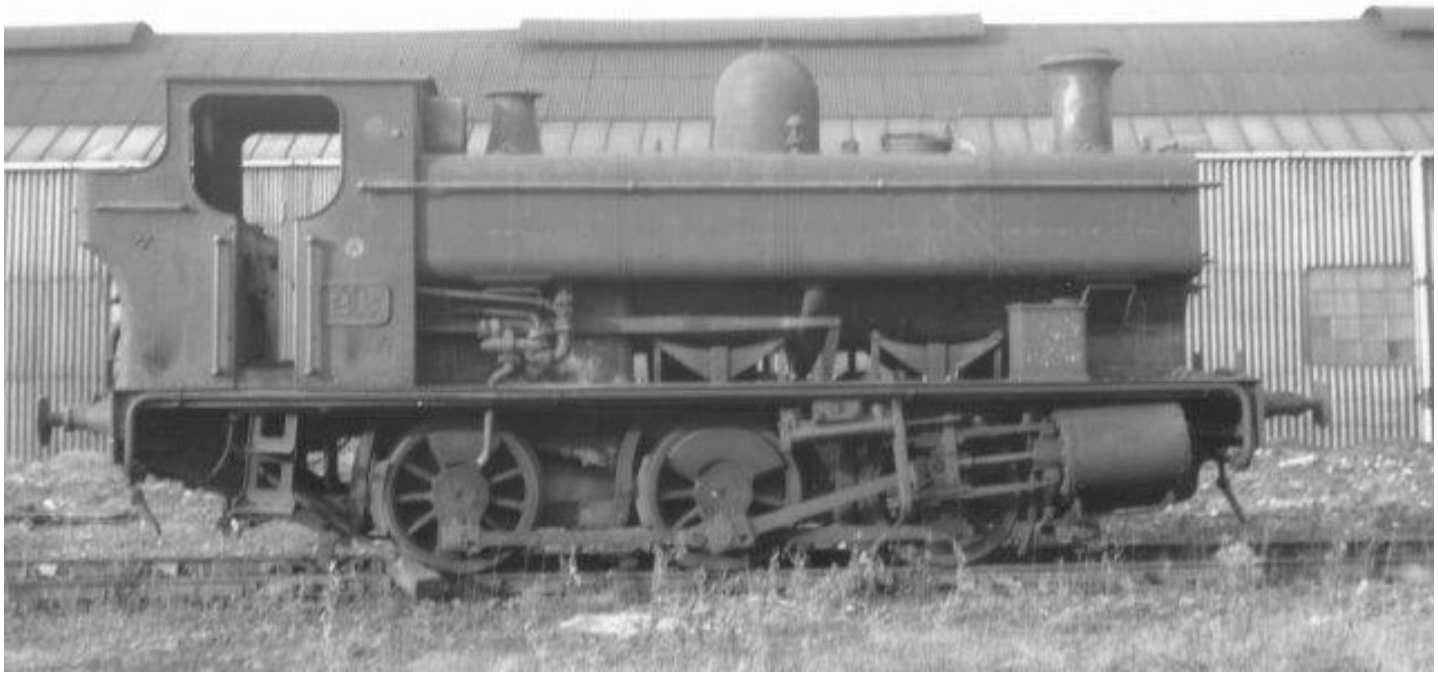
H. C. Casserley

2144, with spark-arresting chimney, taking water at Cleobury Mortimer whilst working the SLS 'West Midlands Railtour' on 21st May 1955.

R. Williams

2055, still with open cab, waits for the road having just taken water at Maidenhead in October 1945.

H. N. James / Colour-Rail GW43



Former Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors Light Railway Cleobury *as GWR 28 in Kidderminster shed yard on 21st November 1948..*

R. S. Carpenter collection

Absorbed locomotives

A number of saddle and side tank locomotives acquired by the GWR at the grouping were rebuilt with pannier tanks.

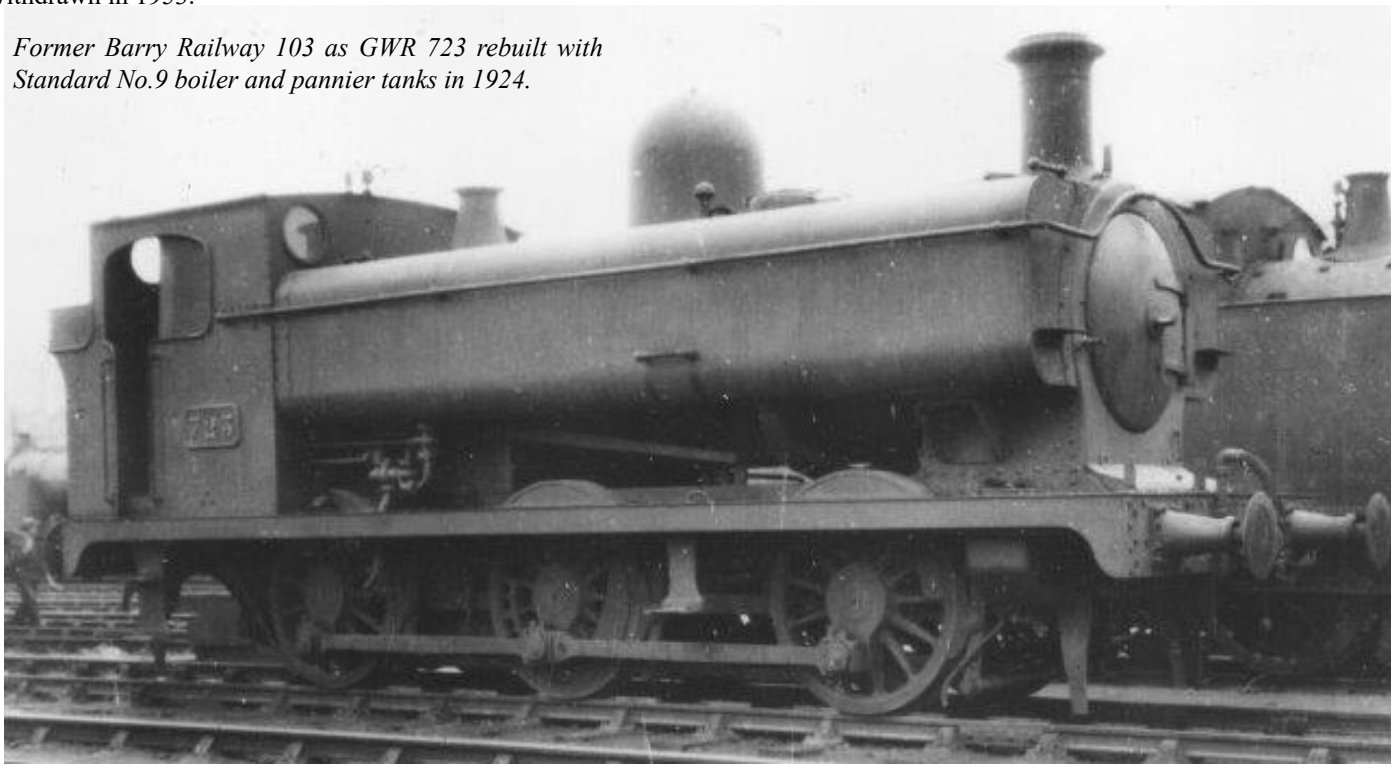
Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors Light Railway

In 1905 Manning Wardle & Co. supplied two small saddle tank engines to the Cleobury Mortimer & Ditton Priors Light Railway carrying the names *Cleobury* and *Burwarton*. They had 4' 10" + 5' 8" wheelbases, 3' 6" wheels and had outside cylinders. Taken over by the GWR in 1927 they were numbered 28 (*Cleobury*) and 29 (*Burwarton*). ln 1924 no.29 was rebuilt with pannier tanks, and GW dome and brass safety valve cover. No.28 was rebuilt in the same way in 1931. Both engines continued to work on the CM&DP until 1938 when passenger services were discontinued. No.29 was then used at Hereford, Gloucester, and Worcester before being sent to Kidderminster in 1951 then withdrawn in 1954. No.28 was loaned to a Wrexham colliery before ending its days at Dock Street Newport, being withdrawn in 1953.

Barry Railway

F Class Twenty eight 0-6-0 saddle tanks were built by Sharp Stewart, Vulcan Foundry, North British and Hudswell Clarke between 1890 and 1905 for heavy shunting in Barry Docks. They had 4’ 3” wheels spaced at 7’ 5” + 7’ 0”, 18” x 26” cylinders and a boiler pressure of 150 or 160psi. After grouping most were rebuilt by the GWR to various degrees and eight, GWR nos.710/4/8/21/3/5/80 and 803, received no.9 boilers and pannier tanks at Swindon in 1924/7. Withdrawals took place between 1932 and 1936 with five being sold for further use: 718 and 723 to the Ashington Coal Co., scrapped 1962 and 1960; 721 to Ocean Coal Co., Treorchy, scrapped in 1953; 725 to R H Longbottom, Northwood, scrapped 1950 and 780 to Burnyeat Brown & Co. Nine Mile Point Colliery, scrapped in 1964.

Former Barry Railway 103 as GWR 723 rebuilt with Standard No.9 boiler and pannier tanks in 1924.

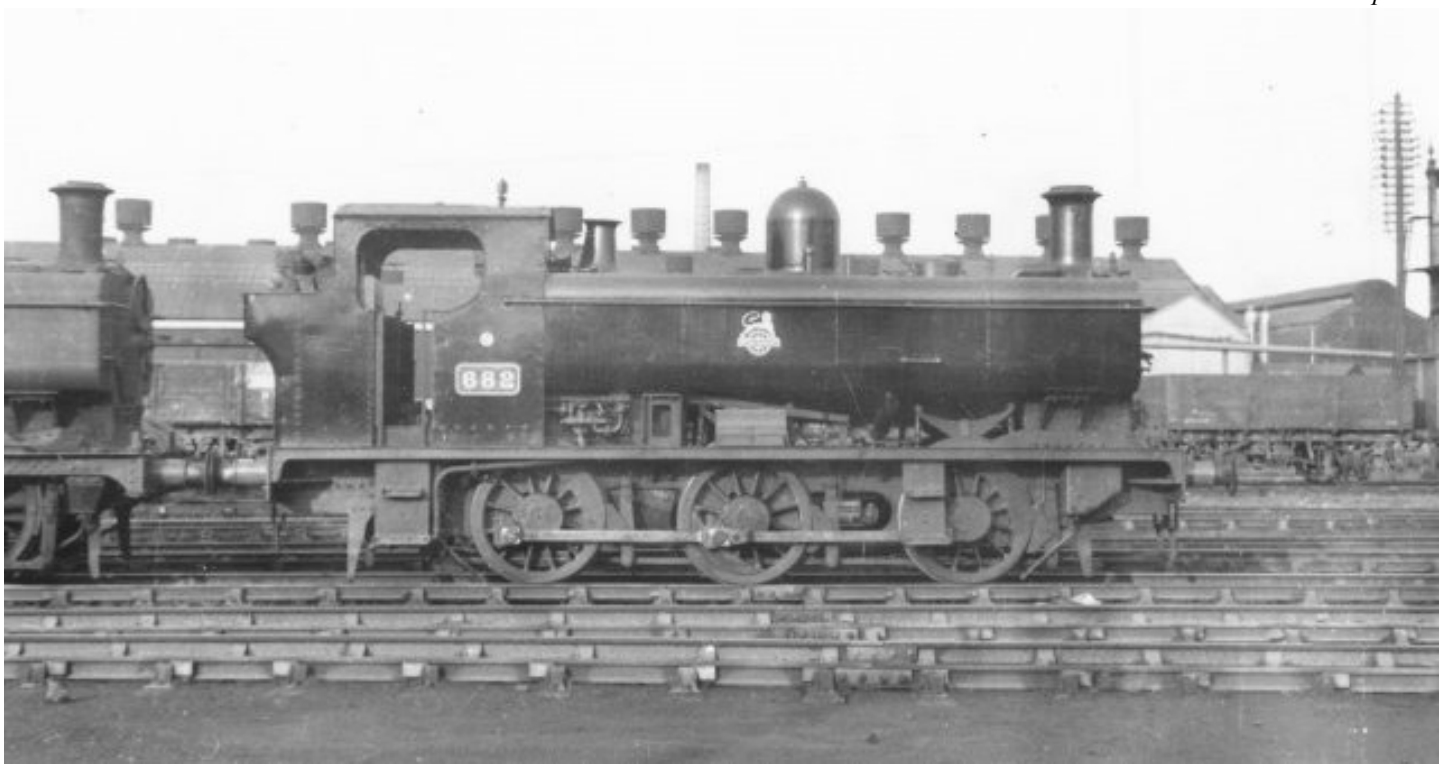


Brecon & Merthyr Railway

Nos. 2169-73. Two saddle tank locos were ordered from Kitson in 1896 for the Brecon & Merthyr Railway and given Nos.22 and 24 and had a wheelbase of 7' 5" + 8' 5" with 4' 6" wheels. ln 1900 three similar engines were ordered from Naysmith, Wilson & Co. and given nos.27-9 but after being taken over by the GWR they renumbered them as 2169-73. Between 1922-3 three of them, nos.2169/72/3 received Belpaire fireboxes, '2301' boilers and pannier tanks, GW cabs and bunkers and according to the drawing in GW Absorbed Engines by Russell the wheelbase was amended to 7' 3" + 8' 5". All had double frames with strengthening pieces between the wheels. Apart from this the rebuilt engines looked similar to the 1076 or 119 class. All five were withdrawn between 1927 and 1932.

Former Brecon & Merthyr Railway 29 as GWR 2173 rebuilt with '2301' boiler, closed cab and pannier tanks.

R. A. Simpson



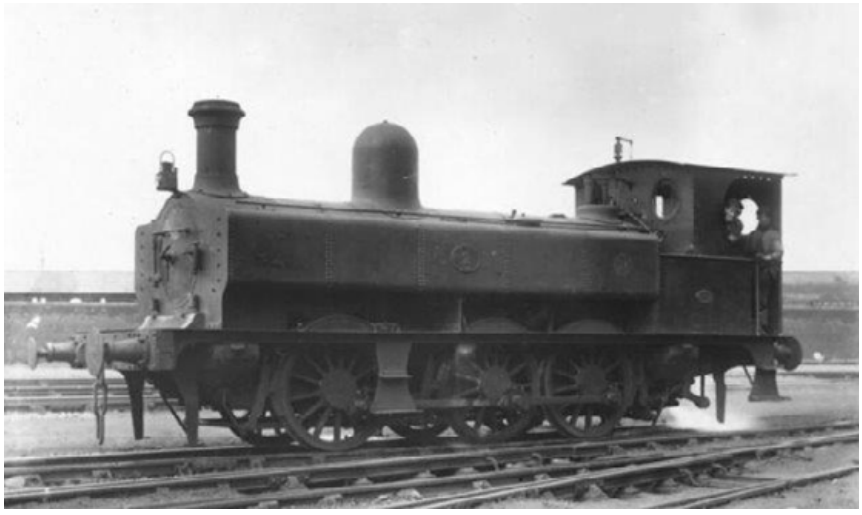
Former Cardiff Railway 72 as GWR 682 rebuilt with Standard No.11 boiler and pannier tanks at Cardiff East Dock on 5th May 1951.

P. J. Garland collection

Cardiff Railway

681 class Built by Hudswell Clarke & Co. in 1920 for the Cardiff Railway, these four saddle tanks had a 6' 9" + 6' 3" wheelbase and 4' 1" wheels and were originally Cardiff Railway Nos.14, 16, 17 and 32. They were absorbed by the GWR at the grouping in 1922 and renumbered as 681-4. Between 1926 and 39 they were reconstructed at Swindon Works with a standard No. 11 boiler and GWR boiler fittings, new bunker and pannier tanks. They continued to work in the Cardiff area until 1954/5.

No. 693 was built in 1882 by Kitsons and had a 6' 4" + 4' 5" frame and 4' 6" wheels. It was supplied to the Cardiff Railway as a pannier tank and had a very short wheelbase but had rather a long overall length. Originally given the No.2, which it carried on the tank sides, it was taken over by the GWR in 1922 but apart from changing its number it was not rebuilt and finally cut up at Leeds in 1925. Although fitted with pannier tanks they were unlike those of the GWR and did not extend to the top of the boiler. Also the handrails were on top of the tanks giving a rather strange appearance.



Cardiff Railway no.2, later GWR 693 a Kitson "Long Boiler"0-6-0 built as a pannier tank in original condition.

Locomotive Publishing Co.

Former P&M no.5 after sale to Pontardawe Sheet & Tin Works who named it Dorothy although still carrying its GWR number 795. *Derek Chaplin*

Neath & Brecon Railway

As recorded in part 1, the Neath & Brecon picked up four former GWR locomotives, 1563, 1591, 1715 and 1882 which became N&B 14-16 and 3 in the pre-grouping period.

Powlesland & Mason

No. 795. ln 1903 Powlesland & Mason ordered an outside cylinder 0-4-0 saddle tank from Brush Electrical. It had a wheelbase of 5' 9" and 3' 6" wheels. Given the no.5, it was joined in 1906 by no.6 a similar engine and they were put to work on the Swansea Harbour Trust Lines on behalf of the GWR who rebuilt no.5, after renumbering to no.795, with Swindon boiler fittings and pannier tanks. After working the Swansea Docks lines for many years it was sold in 1929 to Richard Thomas Baldwin and given the name *Dorothy*. It then passed onto Gilbertson & Co. Pontardawe Sheet & Tin Works before being scrapped in 1961. It had outside cylinders and was possibly the only 0-4-0 to receive pannier tanks.

Former Rhymney Railway K Class 0-6-2T 93 at Caerphilly in 1932 as GWR 136 and rebuilt with pannier tanks.

Rhondda & Swansea Bay Railway

Again as noted in part 1, five 1076 or Buffalo class tanks, 728/957/1167/1652 and 1660, were bought by the R&SB. Of these, 1167 and 1660 had pannier tanks. All regained their original GWR numbers at grouping. In addition, 1854 class 1710 and 1756; 1813 class 1825 and 1834 and 2721 class 2758 were acquired. All except 1710 and 1825 were pannier tanks. They were R&SB 36/5/7/0/3 respectively and returned to their former numbers in 1922.

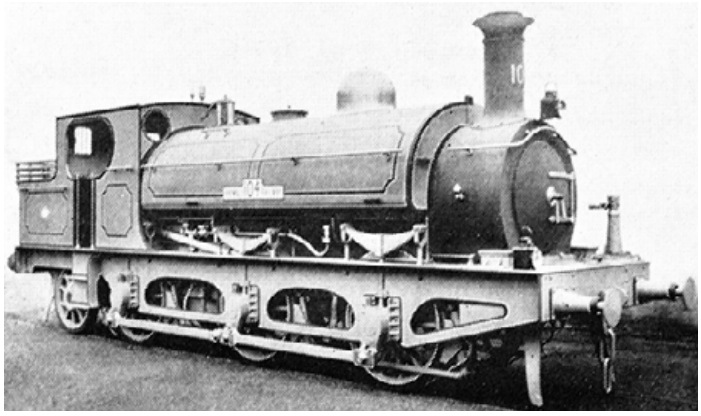
Rhymney Railway

Nos. 97, 122, 136, 138, 139 and 141 These were former Rhymney Railway K class 0-6-2 saddle tanks. The first was built by Vulcan Foundry in 1891, the second by Sharp Stewart in 1897, followed two from Hudswell Clarke and the last two Neilson Reid in 1900 as nos.67/85/93/5/6 and 99. They had double frames although the trailing wheel was exposed. They were reboilered and converted to pannier tanks at Caerphilly Works between 1926 and 1931. The first two were retired in 1932 and the others in 1934.

South Wales Mineral Railway

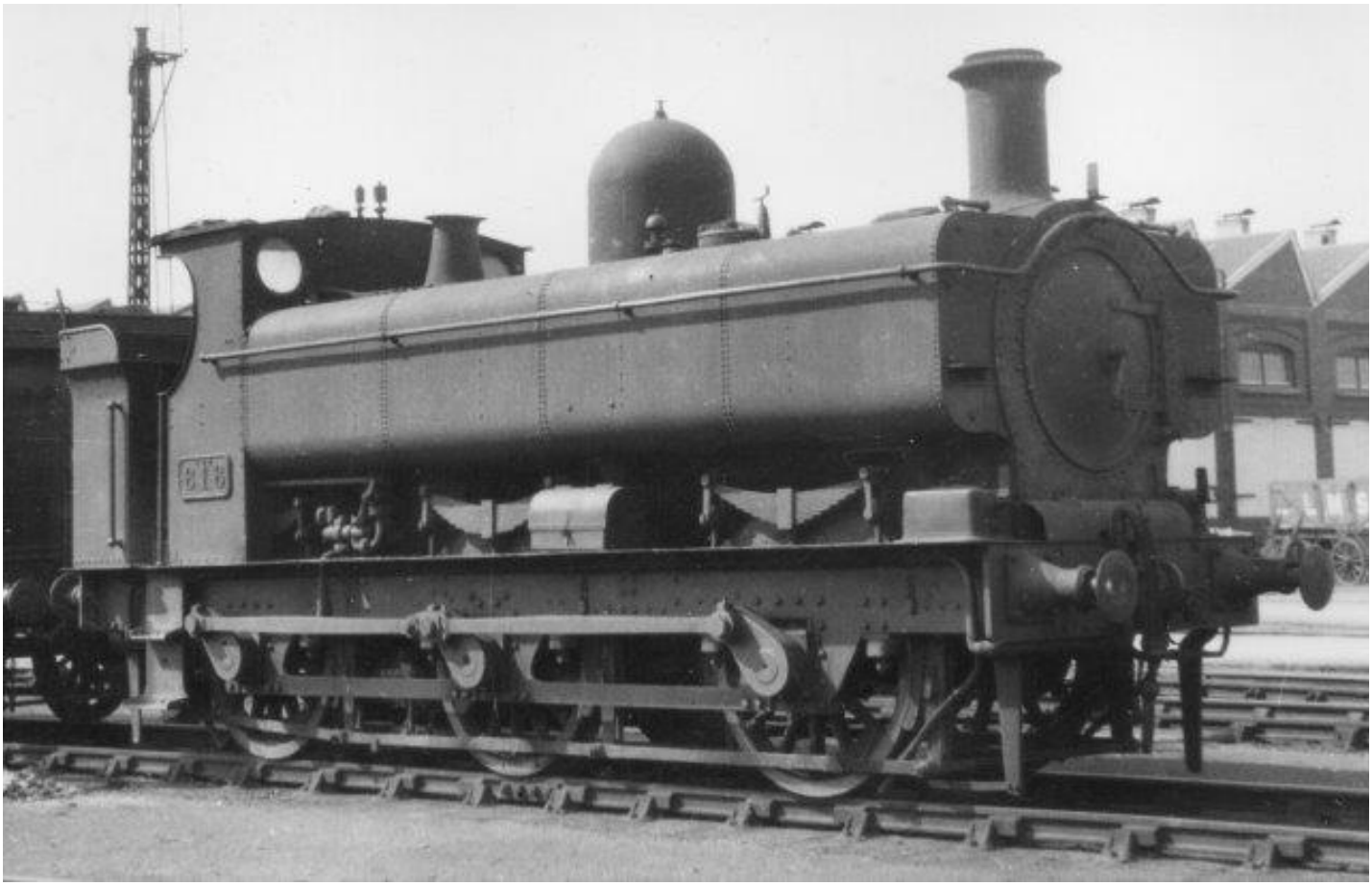
817, 818 These two had an interesting back story. Built by Avonside in 1873, they started life as broad gauge locomotives with the South Devon Railway; 2167 *Emperor* and 2165 *Achilles*. Converted to standard gauge, they became GWR 1317 and 1324 and were then sold to the SWMR as 6 and 7 in 1905. They returned to the GWR at the grouping becoming 817 and 818. The latter was fitted with pannier tanks in 1924 and survived until 1932.

GWR 818, the former South Wales Mineral Railway no.6, shows little of its origins as a broad gauge South Devon Railway 0-6-0ST as it sits at Swindon in 1932 awaiting its fate.



Rhymney Railway K class 0-6-2ST 104 in its original form. This locomotive became GWR 147 and was withdrawn in 1928 without receiving pannier tanks.

In 1939 ten 2021 class panniers were given extra weight to increase their braking power and renumbered 2181-90.



THEN AND NOW: HALESWORTH

Halesworth is an intermediate station on the East Suffolk Line between Ipswich and Lowestoft. For many years the main north-south road through the town (present A144) crossed the railway on the level immediately north of the station. The station replaced an earlier terminus just to the north and was opened in 1859. In 1888, to accommodate trains of increasing length, the platforms were extended over the level crossing using moveable sections. When positioned over the road they prevented pedestrians and vehicles from crossing and when over the railway they allowed vehicle to pass and provided a raised walkway for pedestrians. In 1958 the A144 was diverted over a new road and bridge, seen in the background, and the crossing was permanently positioned over the former roadway. Pedestrians could still cross by using the station footbridge at the other end of the station and then, after its removal, by a foot crossing.

All three photos show up trains arriving at Halesworth past the formerly moveable platform sections, which were refurbished in 1999. The first was taken on 26th October 1999 and shows two-car Sprinter No 150231 in BR livery on a Lowestoft to Ipswich service. At this time the main station building was disused and in a poor state but has since been refurbished and is presently occupied by Halesworth Museum, which has good displays covering local railways. The second shot was taken on 15th August 2009 and shows Anglia Railways three-car Turbostar unit No 170207 arriving on the 16:58 Lowestoft to Liverpool Street. These through workings to London ceased in 2010. In both these pictures the prominent stop signs are associated with the Radio Electronic Token Block signalling implemented on the line in 1984, which was replaced in 2012 by Track Circuit Block signalling to enable hourly services to be operated. The final picture was taken on 28th September 2023 of Greater Anglia 4-car Stadler FLIRT No 755 420 on the 11:06 Lowestoft to Ipswich service. When this train was in the station a pedestrian arrived on the down platform and, after it had left, used the foot crossing and up platform exit to cross the line and continue walking up the old main road.

Photos: Tim Edmonds