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The Marlow Donkey

The Magazine of the Marlow & District Railway Society

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

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Front Cover Photographs

Top: 230001 passing Moreton-in-Marsh. 16 February 2024. Photo: Peter Robins. Article page 4.

Bottom: Metropolitan-Vickers EM2 Diana. 6 June 2023. Photo: John Tuck. Article page 5.

Bottom right: Pannier Tank 1636 at Slough. 24 June 1962. Photo: David Gardner. Article page 9.

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 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.

Thursday 18 April **A MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR** Colin Miell

In an all-digital illustrated talk, Colin will be relating his 2022 and 2023 travels, both domestic and overseas, covering heritage and 'modern' railways, plus ships, ferries, trams, buses, and inevitably a few non-transport related snaps! Hopefully something for everyone!

Thursday 16 May **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH LINES** Richard Crane

Richard will be reviewing past and present branch lines in these counties contrasting long forgotten scenes of a pre-Beeching steam railway with the much changed situation on the few surviving branch lines.

Thursday 20 June **LOOKING BACK:
AN ENTHUSIAST'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE LAST 60 YEARS** Tim Speechley

Tim, one of our former Chairmen, will be joining us for a trawl through the collection of images he has taken during his lifelong interest in transport. Whilst railways will predominate, we can expect road transport and the occasional ship to get a look in along the way.

Friday 22 March **GWR IET SIMULATOR VISIT**

We have two places available at 13:00 on this date for you to try your hand on GWR's IET simulator at Reading. If you would like to take one of these please contact Mike Walker - details opposite.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It was a relief and pleasure to be able to welcome John Tuck and Peter Rodgers onto the committee, in John's case a return as he served many years ago and has continued to play a pivotal in the production of this journal. Their appointment means our fears for the futures of the Society, which were very real and not just scaremongering, can be put behind us and allow us to plan for the future.

We have a full programme lined up for the rest of 2024 and are now starting to plan for 2025. If you have attended a talk elsewhere that you have particularly enjoyed please let us have the details so we can add it to our list. Just because it means you've already seen it doesn't mean the rest of us should be deprived.

The other area of activity we are considering is trips and visits. Sadly, long gone are the days when we'd regularly fill a full-size charabanc (partners and families would come along too) for a visit to a heritage railway. Over the years interest fell away probably as members preferred to make their own visits when they choose. However, there is still the opportunity to arrange visits to sites that you simply can't arrange for yourself such as our recent visits to the GWR Driver Training Academy in Reading to try our hands at "driving" an IET. This appears to have been thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part even if it did prove a little challenging - it's not as easy as it looks and in the real world there's even more to it, route knowledge for example.

We are giving thought to other opportunities like this but they are very restricted and not easy to arrange. One we do plan to organise is a private visit to Pendon Museum in Long Wittenham. For those not familiar with this establishment it houses some of the most stunning railway modelling imaginable (Google Pendon and all will be revealed) and having a private visit means you can get in close as see just how fantastic it is. We had hoped to do this in the spring but time constraints have pushed it back probably until September.

One thing I must mention is to apologise once again for the technical issues we had during the February meeting. We have held a post-mortem and it appears most of the issues revolve around a major update by Zoom which altered default settings and we were unaware of until we attempted to broadcast the meeting. Thankfully, our next meeting in March will not be available of Zoom as it comprises early images on slides so we have some additional time to carry out further testing to overcome these issues. No doubt as soon as we do, Zoom will do another upgrade and send us back to square one!

Finally one has to congratulate GWR on setting a new UK distance record for a battery powered train, 86 miles. Provided the forthcoming trials on the Greenford branch go according to plan there's a real possibility of a battery powered 'Donkey.'

Mike Walker

SOCIETY AND LOCAL NEWS

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

We are pleased to welcome David Sprackland who joined us in February.

Sadly, we must also record that Mike Cole, who had been a member for many years, passed away last month.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

John Tuck and Peter Rodgers kindly offered themselves for election to the committee at the AGM and as a result we have, for now, a full team.

Taking advantage of this, we have split the role of Secretary into two. Vincent Caldwell will continue in the post of Honorary Secretary, handling the general administration whilst John Tuck will be taking on the role of booking our monthly speakers.

The other posts remain as previously which means that presently, Peter Rodgers doesn't have a formal role but no doubt he will play a useful part in our proceedings as he has considerable experience on the committees of similar organisations.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Peter Robins wrapped up 2023 with his presentation to the December meeting taking us aboard the Baltic Coast Express with a look at some of the pioneering enthusiast trips behind the iron curtain.

In January we welcomed Colin Hall, Chairman of the LMS Patriot Project who gave us an update of the construction of 5551 *The Unknown Warrior* which it is fair to say has been far from plain sailing being beset with major engineering challenges that have had to be overcome.

Following the AGM in February we once again welcomed Geoff Plumb who, after some technical problems, took us back to 1971 with a cornucopia of shots taken both in the UK including a number of colliery operations and a couple of trips to both East and West Germany, as they still were then, where steam was still in widespread regular service.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

No beating about the bush, February's meeting from the technical standpoint was a shambles for which we apologise to you all.

The following day our technical team, Dave Woodhead, Richard Preece and Peter Robins, set about finding out what had gone wrong. Feedback from those attending showed there were three issues: logging on; a watermark in the form of the member's own email address appearing on screen and a difficulty in muting those taking part.

It seems that these were the result of a system upgrade carried out by Zoom of which we were unaware until we tried to start the meeting. This upgrade had altered the default settings and we were unable to change them once the meeting had got underway. We think the problems have been overcome but it is the intention of the committee to hold a test meeting before the next scheduled Zoom meeting in April to make sure.

As if that wasn't enough, those of you at Bourne End might have noticed vertical lines across the image on screen during the setting up. Investigations have revealed that this is an indication that our digital projector (now 13 years old) is on its last legs. We are purchasing a replacement.

NO ZOOM IN MARCH

A reminder that our March meeting will not be available on Zoom but only as a live meeting at Bourne End. This is not connected to last month's issues although it does give us welcome extra time to overcome those problems.

The reason is that Brian Arman's presentation on the GWR Broad Gauge will be in the form of slides and there is simply no way of successfully transmitting them by Zoom. We tried a webcam focused on the screen last time and the results were poor especially as many of the images are somewhat faded as by definition they pre-date 1892. So we have reluctantly decided not to try Zoom this time.

However, the subject is so fascinating we do encourage all of you within easy travelling distance of Bourne End to make the effort. You will not be disappointed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A polite reminder to the small number of you that have not, as yet, renewed your membership for 2024. The rate is 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.

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.

RCTS MEETINGS

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

Monday 25th March

Building Britain's Most Powerful Steam Locomotive - Chris Ardy

Monday 22nd April

Just Like The Old Days - Des Shepherd

Monday 20th May

Czech Railways Today - Robert Pritchard

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> and follow the link there.

GWR SETS BATTERY RECORD

On Wednesday 14th February GWR's 230001 set a new UK record for a battery powered train by travelling 86 miles without recharging. Two days later it ran from Long Marston to Reading, 70 miles, again without recharging and still with an impressive 55% of its maximum battery capacity remaining - a truly remarkable feat. The unit will now be based at Reading whilst further tests and trials are carried out before moving to West Ealing to commence test running on the Greenford branch, a rapid charge system having been installed in the bay platform at West Ealing.

Initially, the operations on the line will shadow the public service but at a date yet to be announced it will enter passenger service.

If the trials prove, as hoped, successful GWR are already working up plans to extend battery operation to the other Thames Valley branches, Windsor, Marlow and Henley plus some in the west of England. The company already owns the three form Marston Vale Class 230s which can be converted from diesel operation plus an additional 70 D stock cars that the VivaRail administrators included with the sale of 230001 and the rapid charge technology. These could be used to create further battery 230s and extend the MV units to three cars like 230001 - the extra vehicle enables 50% more battery capacity to be carried compared to a two car set.



230001 passing Moreton-in-Marsh running as 5Q23, the 10:25 Long Marston to Reading TCD on Friday 16th February. It performed faultlessly and was on time all the way. A mobile recharging facility was on hand at Oxford but its services were not required.

Photo: Peter Robins

SOCIETY MEMBERS TRY IET DRIVING

The past few weeks have seen several members having a go at driving a Class 80x IET thanks to GWR generously allowing us access to their impressive simulator at their Driver Training Academy in Reading.

It is one of three, the others are at Bristol and Plymouth, that were supplied as part of the overall IET project and comprises a full, fully operational Class 80x cab and was supplied by the Australian firm Sydac.

So far we have had two full days with eighteen members taking their turn in the seat with a further eagerly awaiting their turn during our final session set for Friday 22nd March. All who have taken part so far have found it an interesting if challenging experience proving that it's not quite as easy as it looks particularly the need to respond to the AWS (Automatic Warning System) and DSD (Driver Safety Device) alerts promptly to avoid an emergency brake application.

The simulator is loaded with the route from Paddington to Swindon although for our sessions we have confined ourselves to the Reading to Paddington section with the odd foray as far west as Didcot. The section west of there hasn't been visited as, frankly, it's a bit boring; basically a plain, two-track railway.



Martin Stoolman finally gets to step up from Train Manager to Driver as he takes '80009' out of Paddington bound for Reading. The hoardings in front of the Crossrail works are still visible as it costs a great deal to update the graphics so it is done sparingly and only when major updates are required.



Ron North is in charge as we speed through Sonning Cutting at 120mph on the way from Reading to Paddington.



Our host, John Beeney, GWR's Driver Learning Manager (Simulation) sits at the desk from which the simulator can be operated with various scenarios being arranged.

We have a final day booked for Friday 22nd March and at the time of writing we have two places still available. If you would like to take part and experience this unique opportunity please contact Mike Walker.

Amsterdam and Beyond

by John Tuck



Tram 2037 crosses one of Amsterdam's many canals on 5th June 2023. All photographs by the author.

We had a lovely trip to The Netherlands in June last year due to having to use a British Airways voucher by a certain date. Having landed at Schipol Airport it was to be where possible public transport for the duration of our holiday. However we will start in England. I was thinking of calling the article 'the £7.90 trip' as this was our initial expenditure with Southern Railway. In April I booked two singles to Gatwick Airport from Fareham, and yes with the Two Together Railcard the fare was £7.90 for both of us! However on the day (a Sunday) a taxi to Havant was taken due to the hassle of bustitution, so we ordered the taxi for £30, so really still a bargain for Fareham to Gatwick.

At Havant we boarded a Class 377 unit forming the 13:18 to Gatwick Airport. These units are very comfortable to travel in, this particular journey is very scenic passing through the Arun Valley. This service (Southampton - Victoria) connects to another unit ex Bognor at Horsham, this takes all of 4 minutes to connect the 2 units, then fast to Gatwick. *(The latest timetable changes proposed by Southern mean that Southampton, Swanwick, Fareham, Portchester and Cosham will loose this direct Gatwick & Victoria service).*

We all know how exciting airports are, so we leap to Schipol where all went smoothly until we took the short walk to the station. All trains had been cancelled, so you can imagine the chaos.

The most reasonable queue seemed to be for the bus, so late at night we embarked on a mystery tour to our hotel. Fortunately every form of urban transport was contactless, so having to work out fares etc. was not a problem (more about payment systems later).

We were blessed with wonderful weather through out our stay, so we started our first day, a day that we would spend discovering Amsterdam (not originally intending to write an article there are several technical facts and images missing). We chose our hotel for good transport links, as a tram stop was located outside the hotel, we used the tram to travel into Amsterdam old town.

Having downloaded the GVB App for local transport ie. buses, trains, Metro and the NS (Dutch Railways) App for journeys further afield. Apps and contactless are the main way of paying for public transport in The Netherlands.

Amsterdam has 15 tram lines, there is over 59 miles of route and an interesting fact is the network consumes over 45 million kilowatts but it all comes from green sources. There are two main fleets Combinos from Siemens that went into service 2002-2005 and Urbos 100 trams from CAF into service 2020. A total of 227 tram cars make up the fleet. As with many manufacturers today the CAF tram cars have had their problems and continue to do so especially with the extendable wheelchair ramps. If you would like further reading this is a fairly long Wiki article but quite comprehensive: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trams_in_Amsterdam

We enjoyed Amsterdam, walked too much but found an excellent river cruise of 1½ hours. Very interesting and informative. If you go to Amsterdam it's a 'must do' only don't board by Amsterdam Centraal Station where you'll end up paying more. We discovered that most of old Amsterdam is sinking which is maybe not surprising considering the amount of water around and the fact that many of the houses are from the 1500s and have wooden foundations. There's hardly a straight house in old Amsterdam! The cruise takes you out to the main rivers where large cruise ships dock (since our visit cruise ships have been banned to reduce pollution and visitor numbers) a stone's throw from Amsterdam Centraal Station (built: 1889) which is built on over 6,000 piles driven down through the mud to the bed rock. Amsterdam Centraal has one of the best located hotels for those of us interested in trains as it straddles two of the platforms providing a good view of the running lines from one side of the station.

Amsterdam Centraal station is a major transport hub, not sure the UK has anything to match it in terms of size and connections, the number of transport types, and of course international

Spoorweg Museum's beautiful NS 3737 'De Jumbo' built 1911 by Werkspoor, Amsterdam looking rather GWR in green with copper capped chimney. (Unfortunately this was the best angle I could get). 6th June 2023.



connections including London St. Pancras. There's bus, tram, Metro, local, national and international rail services, also the free ferries that cross IJ Lake. The latter are very busy and well used with ferries leaving every few minutes during the rush hour. The service across IJ Lake to Buiksloterweg is every 6-12 minutes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

The station is constantly being rebuilt, extended etc. Hence the ongoing negotiations to try and find platform space for Eurostar along with the necessary border controls, so retaining the Eurostar services next year. There are 11 international destinations with services ranging from 16 a day to 1 a week and 21 national services, most of these have a twice hourly service.

We had discovered quite a pleasant walking route to 'our 'local' station which happened to be Amsterdam Sloterdijk (pronounced: Slow-ter-dick).

Day 2 and we headed off to Utrecht to visit the Dutch National Railway Museum the: Spoorweg Museum. We boarded the Intercity to Nijmegen made up of two sets of Dutch Railways(NS) VIRM stock. These are all double deck EMUs, NS has 178 of these units in a mix of 4 and 6 car sets built between 1994 - 2009. As with the UK all the usual technology is available on train and via the NS App where you have real time train information and you can report overcrowding!

On arrival at Utrecht Centraal, after grabbing an essential coffee which happened to be next to bay platform 1 where the train to Utrecht Maliebaan was waiting, this train was interestingly displayed as a 'Special Train' though a regular service. The unit was a very new Sprinter Unit No 2718, the train ran to and from Utrecht Maliebaan / Spoorweg Museum. The museum has been through many rebuilds/restorations, as part of a restoration in June 2005 Utrecht Maliebaan was reopened for the first time in 66 years!

Though the station can be used by the local population the main-passenger traffic appears to be for the museum. The Dutch are

obviously very proud of their museum and running this service is part of this pride. The very friendly guard passed through the compartment telling us not to worry when the train stops as we be travelling in the opposite direction onto the branch line for Utrecht Maliebaan. Friendliness and perfect English are almost universal in The Netherlands.

So the Spoorweg Museum! Excellent, you could easily spend a day there and we did. We viewed most of the museum in various stages but they do let out areas for corporate events, so it's 'pot luck' on whether you miss something specific. We only caught sight of WD 2-10-0 *Longmoor* as there was commercial activity in that hall. However a good representation of British built locomotives from the early days of railways are well represented, up to NS 1501 *Diana* ex. Class EM2 built for the Woodhead route.

There's some very iconic multiple units, both electric and diesel, if you like good design you'll appreciate the rather luxurious Art Nouveau 'electric motor coach' built for the ZHESM (South Holland Electric Railway Company) in 1908 and the striking multiple units from the 20s to the 50s. One such unit EMU Mat'36 252 built 1938 has recently undergone a very high standard of restoration which is very well presented by a video in English. Not only was the design of this unit striking the overall design and construction were 'cutting edge' for its day. It was assembled using electric arc welding thereby creating a lightweight unit, automatic couplings and disc brakes. One notable comment from the restoration video was that shortcuts on the production line had been noted and now the drawings had been followed the unit is most probably in 'better than new condition'.

Many of the collection's early locomotives are British built: Manchester is represented by 2-4-0 *De Bril* SS 13 built by Beyer Peacock & Co in 1865 and 2-4-0 *Grote Groene* SS 326 also built by Beyer Peacock & Co in 1881. 4-4-0 *Rhijnboog* NRS 107



Dutch State Railways SS 326 the Grote Groene – 'Big Green'. Built in 1881 by Beyer Peacock & Co. Manchester it was severely damaged in WW2 and restored in the 1950s. It is seen by the side of the original Utrecht Maliebaan station building. The main museum is on the other side of the site with the NS platform in between.



Metropolitan-Vickers EM2 Diana ex Woodhead Line. NS 1500 Class. The entire class was sold to NS in 1969.



0-6-0 Shunter 673 built Dick Kerr Works, Preston 1955-6. Originally 605 it was renumbered when a radio transmitter was fitted to allow remote control in the 1990s. The livery is reminiscent of Delft pottery.

was built by Sharp, Stewart & Co. Glasgow in 1889. One British built engine is a Dutch built replica, the original having been scrapped. 2-2-2 *De Arena* was originally built by Longridge & Co. Bedlington in 1839 to a gauge of 1,945 mm. (The Netherlands later adopted standard gauge). It was driven by Englishman John Middlemiss. There's also a replica of George Stephenson's workshop with the writer of the museum guide announcing him as their Hero!

Into the 20th Century and Britain is represented by two NS Class 600 0-6-0 shunters being built 1955 and 1956. The first 10 for Dutch Railways were built by Dick, Kerr & Co. Preston and the remaining 55 by the Vulcan Foundry, Newton-le-Willows. They are very similar to BR Class 11. The other infamous loco is of course 1501 *Diana* built by Metropolitan Vickers as Class EM2/Class 77 at Gorton works in 1955/56 for the Woodhead route. The entire class was sold Dutch Railways in 1969.

On 7th June we visited Muiden Castle, Muiderstot via train to Weesp, and connecting bus to the outskirts of Muiderstot. The Castle and small town are serene. The Castle was first built in 1280, it was rebuilt in the 14th century, was used as a prison at the end of the 18th century, then was abandoned and became derelict. Fortunately King William I prevented it being demolished, however it was another 70 years before restoration, it's now a National Museum and certainly worth a visit.

So to the 8th June, and again a walk to the 'local' station Amsterdam Sloterdijk with its Metro, tram, Dutch NS and international connections. Today was a special day, a steam day! We were heading to Hoorn on a VIRM double deck EMU to pick up a train on the standard gauge Stoomtram for a round trip by train from Hoorn to Medemblik for a boat to Enkhuizen, then via NS back to Hoorn. On arrival at Hoorn it was a short walk to the other side of the station where the main depot, works and platforms were for the Stoomtram. Once booked in using the downloaded QR code on the mobile (which appears to be the norm now). We were greeted

Stoomtram's former NS loco No 7742 Bello an 0-6-0 WT Built by L. Schwartzkopff of Berlin in 1914 stands at Wognum whilst passengers take a look at the station, shop and small museum on 8th June 2023.



by very friendly staff, after picking up the essential coffee we of course went to look at the train engine former NS loco No.7742 *Bello* an 0-6-0 WT Built by L. Schwartzkopff of Berlin in 1914. The train consisted of a good number of wooden bodied 4 wheelers, so a shaky ride ensued on wooden seats however all carriages had balconies and you could walk through to the buffet. The train left at 11:40 paralleling the NS lines, then sharply curved left into the Dutch countryside.

On the outskirts of Hoorn the train slowed while some of the crew approached a line side box, it became apparent this operated barriers and lights across 8 lanes of the N307. Yes you have just read that fact. A vintage steam train with a train of wooden-bodied 4 wheelers brings all to a halt whilst it crosses 6 lanes and 2 slip roads. It is a sight to behold! There's one station stop at Wognum where a few minutes is taken to look around the preserved station a small museum/shop and preserved items before the onward journey. We pass other stations, one superbly restored as a restaurant, another appears to be a family home. Our best and closest view of a windmill was from the train just before we arrived at Medemblik at approx. 12:00, here the railway separates the town from the 'sea', that is the Zuiderzee a massive area of sea enclosed and controlled by the Dutch.

Medemblik is a lovely coastal town, we had a very pleasant walk around the town before boarding the MV *Friesland* built



Four lanes of the N307 (eight in total) come to a halt for our loco and a train of 4 wheeled wooden bodied carriages!



Zeester, a 12m x 4m Dutch sailing barge, passes the MV Friesland.

1956 for the 13:20 departure to Enkhuizen. I could find out very little about this ship once home, sometimes there's just too much info and too many vessels called *Friesland!* However I think the pictures speak for themselves, she was just as smart on the inside as the exterior is. She has been restored to a high standard, has an excellent buffet. It was a smooth cruise along some beautiful coastline with wooden sailing barges rather like the Thames barges but larger with two masts. A magnificent 3 mast schooner had to move so we could moor at a museum near journey's end. Our journey's end was Enkhuizen a small town full of character, we enjoyed a pleasant stroll around the town before returning to Hoorn on another VIRM EMU. We arrived on Platform 2, to exit the station we used the foot crossing to Platform 1. I was able to take photos from the foot crossing of the VIRM EMU we had just arrived on!

The last day we decided to explore Amsterdam, we thought we would experience the Metro from Amsterdam Sloterdijk to Amsterdam Centraal. It was just a Metro much like any other European Metro. Most of the journey was above ground with just the final section underground, I really liked the system maps on the M5 Alstom 2013 built EMUs. In these units, on the maps the train's progress is illuminated, so it was easy to see exactly which station you were approaching or had arrived at. The Metro was established in 1977, now consists of five lines, has 90 EMUs, and the system runs on a 750V DC third rail. The only valid tickets on the Metro are purchased online or tap in - tap out.

Our departure day started smoothly with an early rise, no breakfast! 06:23 tram from outside the hotel to Amsterdam Sloterdijk platform 11 for the 06:47 Sprinter to Schipol Airport. Everything was working smoothly, what more could one ask for! Usual flight etc., on arrival at Gatwick we decided to grab something to eat as we could not be sure we'd get another chance. Just as we were thinking of making a move we noticed a bit of human congestion around the entrance to Gatwick Station. There was a power cut to the station, only the station, so I could not even collect our tickets! Notices stated no trains at Gatwick until approx. 13:00. We decided that's not too bad but after a while I thought I'd ask, the answer from the staff on the ground was more likely 17:00! (I wonder why a major station like Gatwick does not have emergency generators).

I was absolute chaos everywhere after struggling to get out of the station we queued at a mega queue for a local bus along with travellers from all over the World. Having boarded the locals were understandably upset at not being able to get on or off! Eventually we'd had enough and got off at Crawley, picked up our tickets and made our way home via Barnham where more chaos ensued but it did not effect us to much. Eventually made it home to Fareham several hours later than hoped for.

Both ends of our adventure was 'interesting' but the bit in the middle was great and highly recommended.



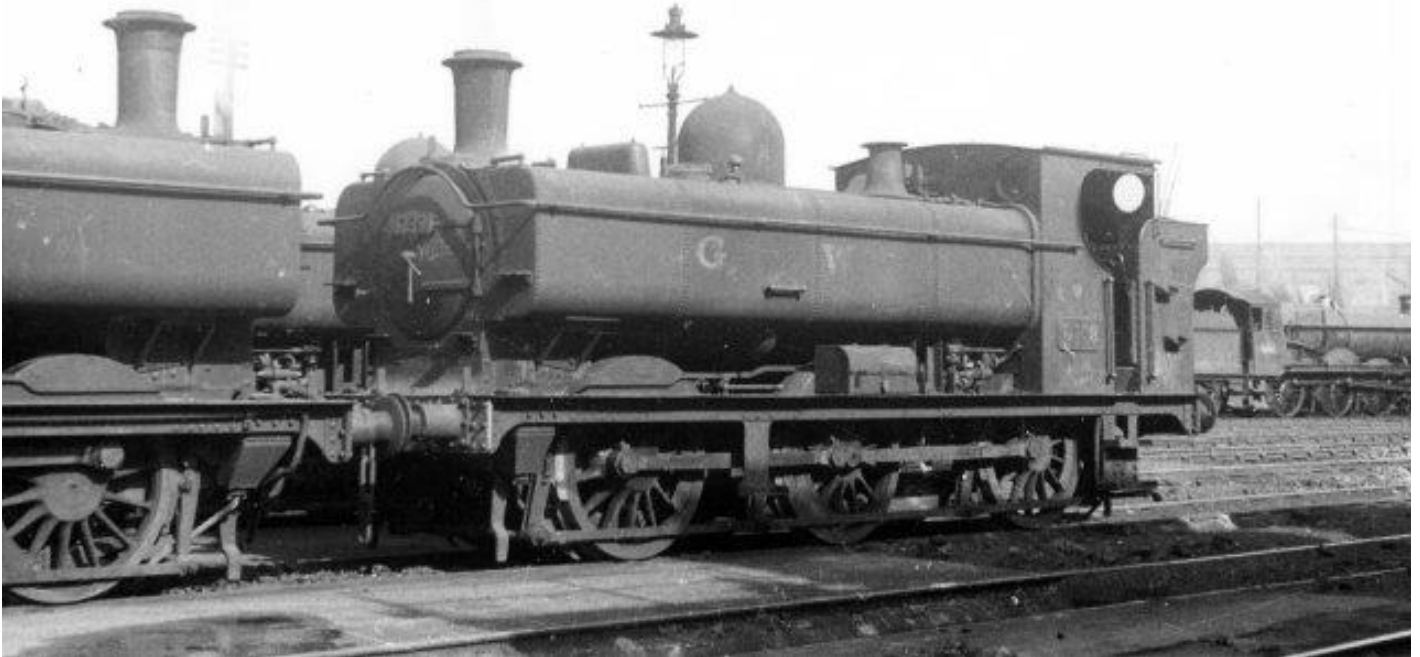
Nederlandse Spoorwegen VIRM double decker EMU 8614 having deposited us back at Hoorn awaits departure time on 8th June 2023.

VIRM stands for Verlengd InterRegio Materieel or Lengthened interregional rolling stock. They were built between 2002 and 2009 by Talbot, a division of Bombardier.

GWR PANNIER TANKS

Part 3: The Modern Classes

David Gardner



6739 at Swindon on 30th April 1950 with rivetted tanks, no whistle shield and steam brake only.

H. C. Casserley

After a gap of 28 years the GWR decided and indeed probably felt it necessary to produce some newer 0-6-0 pannier tanks and were able to take advantage of a Government Scheme to alleviate the effects of trade depression.

57XX Class Although a Charles Collett design these were little more than a modern version of the 1854 class dating back to the 1890s. The first fifty were ordered from North British Locomotive Co. 5700-24 were built at Hyde Park Works and 5725 -49 at Queens Park Works. They were all delivered in 1929 and had a wheelbase 7'3" + 8'3" and 4' 7½" wheels. At the same time Swindon Works were building 50 engines and Nos. 5750-99 were produced in 1929/30. Several manufacturers were given orders for 25 locomotives at a time which were delivered between December 1930 and July 1931. The full list follows:-

6700-6724 W.G.Bagnall 1930.
6725-6750 Yorkshire Engine Co. 1930-31.
7700-7724 Kerr Stuart 1930.
7725-7749 North British 1929-30.
7750-7774 North British 1930-31.
7775-7799 Armstrong Whitworth 1930-31.
8700-8724 Beyer Peacock 1931
8725-8749 W.G.Bagnall 1930-31.

Thereafter all subsequent 57xx class engines were built by Swindon Works but not necessarily in numerical order.

Of these outside contractors, Bagnall, Kerr Stuart and Yorkshire supplied panniers with snap-head rivetted tanks (Swindon and other contractors used flush rivets).

In March 1933 No.8700 was converted for use as a condensing tank engine then once trials had been carried out new condensing tanks with a more modern cab were delivered between September and December 1933 as 9701-10. No.8700 received a new cab and was renumbered as 9700 in January 1934.

Introduced to replace earlier Metro tanks to work over Metropolitan lines to Smithfield Market 9700-10 were fitted with trip cocks for working over electrified lines. The tanks were unusual being part pannier and part side tank which gave them an

increased water capacity of 1,230 gallons which was 30 more than the standard 57XX.

I remember getting a shock one Saturday in 1960/61 when one of these condensing tanks came through the tunnels when I was standing at Baker Street Underground station. It must have been a rare occasion for this to happen during normal daylight hours as the usual working was during the night or early morning.

Nos. 8750-98 were built between September 1933 and June 1934 with modified cabs. A second No. 8700 came out in March 1934 with earlier cab. Production of the rest of the class was somewhat haphazard and also spread over many years. No.8799 and 9711-59 came out between June 1934 and June 1935. Nos.9760-99 between September 1935 and September 1936; then Nos.3700-99 between September 1936 and December 1938. Nos.3600-99 between December 1938 and September 1941. Nos.4600-99 from September 1941 to February 1945. Nos.9600-61 from February 1945 to December 1946. Nos.6750-9 between June 1947 and September 1947. Nos.9662-72 between April 1948 and June 1948. Nos. 6760-69 brought out from November 1948 and January 1949; then nos.9673-82 between January 1949 and May 1949 and finally nos.6770-79 from October to December 1950. Top Feed was fitted to new builds from 1942 and to subsequent new boilers but during overhauls these were regularly swapped around – modellers beware! Nos. 6700-49 had steam pipe brake only while 6750 onward had later cabs as well as steam brake only. These were confined to shunting only, mostly in South Wales.

A total of 863 engines were built in just 20 years making them the most numerous class of 0-6-0 on the GWR/BRW. Several of the 57xx and 8750 class were fitted with spark arresting chimneys usually to work into Didcot Munitions Depot. In May 1946 No. 7722 was fitted with winding gear for working the Pwlllyrhebog incline near Treherbert. This remained until 1952 when the Taff Vale incline was closed. No.9795 was fitted with fireman's side bunker steps in Sept 1936 and most if not all were subsequently fitted.

9722 at Slough Shed c1954/5 with the later pattern cab and still with screw down water filler clamp. The lack of top feed indicates an earlier boiler has been fitted at overhaul.

Lens of Sutton



In October 1956 No.7711 was transferred to London Transport Executive to become L90 and this was followed by No. 5752 (L91) in February 1957, No.5786 (L92) was transferred in April 1958, followed by No.7779 (L93) in October 1958, then No.7752 (L94) in November 1959. No.5764 (L95) in May 60 then No. 5757 in Dec 60 became (L91) after the first L91 was withdrawn in Nov 60. No.7741 (L96) was transferred in December 1961; then No.7760 (L90) to replace previous L90 withdrawn in October 1961. Others transferred were No. 7749 (L97) in September 1962; No.7739 (L98) in November 1962; No.7715 (L99) in May 1963 and finally No.5775 in July 1963 which became (L89).

Several of the 8750 class were transferred to the Southern Region during 1959 and had their lamp irons altered to suit SR lamps. Nos. 3681 and 3758 were sold to the Cornish Salvage Co Ltd for use on the planned reopened Yatton to Clevedon branch in Somerset but the scheme was aborted and the engines sold to Cashmores for scrap in March 1966. Six were sold out of service to the National Coal Board and continued working until 1970. Like several of the London Transport panniers, four of the NCB panniers have been preserved along with No. 9642 which was sold to R.S.Hayes and used to shunt other condemned locos.

In April 1958 No.3711 was fitted with an oil tank in the bunker by Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns in a last ditch effort to discover if burning oil rather than coal was more economical. It was allocated to Swindon on 21st January 1959 then to Old Oak Common on 6th October 1962. Although apparently a powerful engine it saw little work at Old Oak Common and was finally withdrawn in May 1963. After a period of storage at Swindon, probably in the yard it was cut up in November 1963.

Although the standard paint job in BR days was plain black Nos 8763/4/71/3 were lined out with red/cream and grey for working empty stock to and from Paddington. Apart from No.8764 which was moved to Barry Shed (88C) in March 1960 the others remained at Old Oak Common (81A). All four were withdrawn in December 1962.

One thing that often goes unnoticed is that Nos. 8750-99 and 9711-79 retained the earlier screw down catch for the water fillers unlike other modified cab engines which had lift up catches. However those catches were sometimes replaced during works visits. One of the reasons for retaining older catches may have been to use up old stock.



9700 at Old Oak Common in the 1950s with condensing apparatus. The object alongside the smoke-box, in front of the tanks is the Weir pump used to get water into the boiler as conventional injectors wouldn't work with the hot, condensed water.

Author's collection

54XX Class. This class was introduced for Auto work to replace older autofitted 0-6-0Ts and particularly the 2021 class. No. 2080 ran for a few months from early 1930 experimentally fitted with 5' 2" wheels then after No. 2062 was withdrawn the frames were used with 5' 2" wheels and a new No. 11 boiler to become No. 5400 in August 1930. It had the same wheelbase of 7' 4" + 7' 4" as the 2021 class. However the rebuilt engine was then experimentally fitted with 4' 7½" wheels in November 1930 as a trial for the 64xx class. Production of the rest of the class progressed from Nos. 5401/2 in November 1931, then Nos. 5403-6 in December 1931. Nos. 5407-10 in January 1932. There was then a gap until May 1932 when Nos. 5411-15 were built followed in June 1932 by Nos. 5416-19 and a new No. 5400 was produced. The latter to replace the rebuilt former 2062 which was quietly broken up but never officially withdrawn. All new members of the class had standard No. 21 boilers which were similar to the No. 11 boiler.

In November 1935 engines No. 5420-3 were built followed in December 35 by No. 5424, the last of the class. From 1932 two-thirds of the class were allocated to Southall and the remainder were at Westbury and Banbury and this remained the same for nearly 20 years but with the extension of LT services to Ruislip the class became more widely distributed. Fireman's side bunker steps were fitted to most of the class between 1937-9 and whistle shields were added from 1938. Once B.R. took ownership of the class the scheduled livery was plain black but in 1949 No. 5409 received lining in the LNWR style but it did not have the cycling Lion totem. Later several members of

the class were repainted unlined green before lined green became the standard for the class.

Withdrawal started with No. 5408 in December 1956 and several were condemned in 1957/8 but three, Nos. 5410/6 and 5420, lasted until 1963 after which the class became extinct.

64XX Class These were similar to the 54xx class but were fitted with smaller wheels of 4' 7½". Ten engines Nos. 6400-9 were manufactured in early April 1932 and they were intended for Auto work on more steeply graded lines and for this their 4' 7½" wheels were ideal. Nos. 6410-19 appeared in November and December 1934 then between September and November 1935 Nos. 6420-29 were built with a further ten, 6430-9, in March and April 1937.

Twenty five were allocated to South Wales operating between Cardiff and Newport Valley Lines and also on Swansea to Carmarthen lines. Eight were sent to Laira working suburban services to Saltash and I remember them on the services to Tavistock and Launceston. Four were sent to the Midlands but by 1954 South Wales gained five more at a loss to other divisions.

They were painted plain black in early B.R. days but like the 54xx class some were painted green from 1957 and lined out on later visits to Swindon factory.

As with the 54xx class their work dried up with the advent of diesel multiple units and from 1958 there was a general blitz of the class. Despite this five lasted until 1964 and Nos. 6412/30/35 have been preserved.



*5409 at Southall in 1949 is in lined black livery with no lion emblem which was introduced slightly later. It was later transferred to Slough.
Lens of Sutton*

6410 at Plymouth North Road in 1959/60 in plain black with the early emblem. The smaller splashers identify this class whilst the 54XX, 64XX and 74XX classes all have drumhead smokeboxes and the tanks covering the boiler tops.

Lens of Sutton



74XX Class These locomotives were similar to the 64XX class but were not autofitted and had an increased boiler pressure of 180 lbs giving a higher tractive effort 18,010lbs. They were used more widely on many branch line services both passenger and freight and also shunting work.

They were built as follows: Nos.7400-29 between July 1936 and July 1937; Nos.7430-39 in September and October 1948 and finally Nos. 7440-9 between Jan and April 1950. The cab roof on these engines differed from the 64XX and 54XX by being flush with the front and rear.

Withdrawals began in 1959 with No.7416 followed by Nos. 7415/38/47/11/20 and No.7401. Most went between 1960-64 but two No.7439 and No.7437 lasted until 1965, both from Llanelli.

1366 Class Built at Swindon from February 1934 these pannier tanks, Nos.1366-71, were a more modern version of the 1361 class saddle tanks from 1910. They had a 5'0" + 6'0" wheelbase and 3'8" wheels.

They were originally built to work at Swindon Wagon Works although the last one No. 1371 was sent to Llanelli before moving to Danygraig in 1936. No.1367 was sent to Weymouth in 1935 working boat trains along the Harbour Line and was fitted with steam heating and a warning bell. Nos.1368/70 had also moved to Weymouth by 1947, then by 1957 No. 1366 was at Taunton leaving Nos. 1369/71 at Swindon. By February 1947 No 1367-70 all had steam heating and No. 1369 had fireman's side bunker steps in 1960 by which time it had lost its steam heating.



*7442 at Watlington on 23rd June 1951 showing the square joint between cab and bunker also found on the later 64XX locos.
R. S. Carpenter*

Nos.1366/70/1 were withdrawn between 1960/1 having been replaced by diesel shunters, but Nos.1367-69, which by then were under SR Control at Weymouth, were moved to Wadebridge in 1962 to replace the Beattie 2-4-0 Well tanks and lasted until October and November 1964. No.1369 was then sold to Mr A J Weary of Plymouth and later moved to the Dart Valley Railway in Devon.

1368 at Weymouth Harbour Station circa 1960. Note the bell by the tool box.

M. L. Boakes



94XX Class These engines were designed by F. W. Hawksworth and were a departure from other pannier tanks in having taper or coned boilers. They were in fact a tank version of the Collett Goods 2251 class. They had a copper capped chimney and the brass safety valve cover had top feed. They were the last new design tank engine built by the GWR and had the same wheelbase 7'3" + 8'3" and 4' 7½" wheels as the 57xx class.

Nos.9400-9 were built at Swindon in May 1947 and had superheated boilers. Being red route rated they could not be used on many branch lines. Other members of the class were built between 1949-56 and had non superheated boilers.

All the remaining locomotives were built by contractors although some of the boilers were supplied by Swindon Works. Nos 9410-89/8480-99 were built by R. Stephenson; Nos. 8400-49 by W. G. Bagnall whilst Nos. 8450-79/9490-99 and finally 3400-9 came from the Yorkshire Engine Co. Some of the class did good work on local passenger and goods services as on the Maidenhead to Wycombe line. Many were used on shunting or pilot work and those at Old Oak Common spent their days on empty stock movements but many had short lives of 5-10 years. The longest was 18 years. Highest mileage was 9406 which totalled 293,620 and was a Slough engine.



9415 outside the Swindon factory on 30th April 1950 after delivery from Robert Stephenson Locomotive Works.

H. C. Casserley

Nos.8400-6 were stationed at Bromsgrove on the LMR from January 1957 for banking work on the Lickey Incline and in the same year No. 9401 was sent on loan to Stratford E.R. but remained only a short time. Eastern Region crews did not take to the unfamiliar loco. No.9400 is preserved in the National Collection. No.9466 is the only working example.

9406 shunting at Bourne End in March 1960. Note the sloping cover below the smokebox on the Swindon built examples which was missing from the contractor-built locomotives.

Colour-Rail BRW1847



1505 at Paddington in the 1950s in lined black livery.

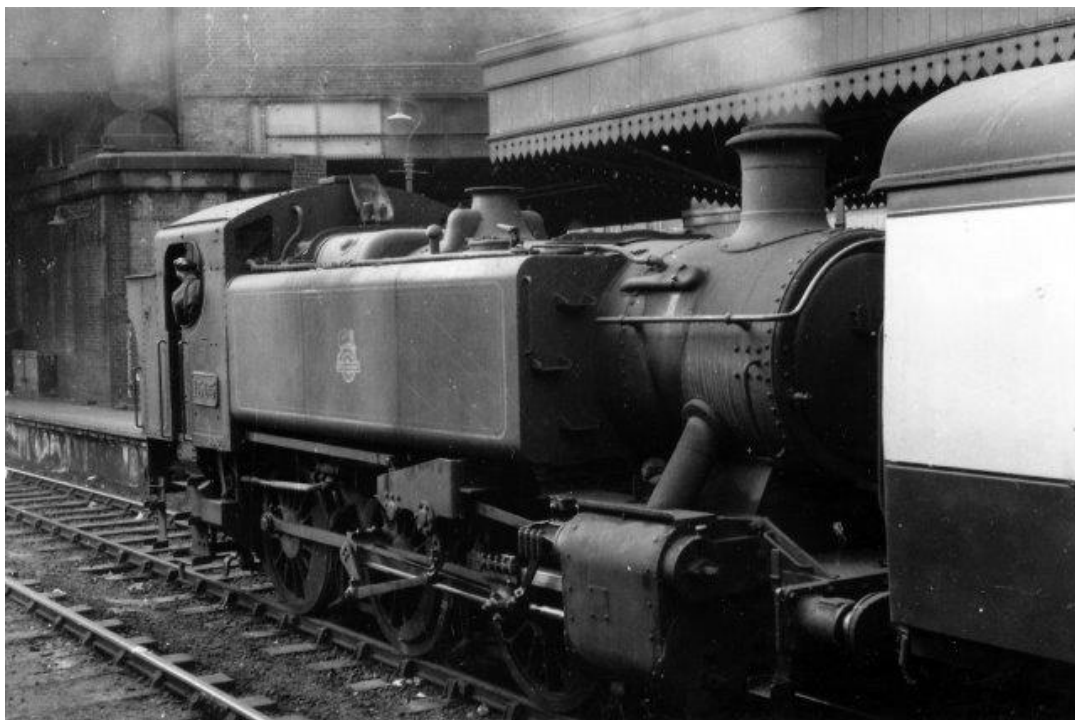
M. L. Boakes

15XX Class Nos.1500-9 were built in 1949 with a wheelbase of 6'4" + 6'6" and 4'7½" wheels and designed by F. W. Hawksworth who was nothing if not revolutionary and these locos were a case in point.

Although there was a similarity to the 94XX class they had a short wheelbase, Walschaerts valve gear and no platform under the pannier tanks which while easing maintenance along with outside steam pipes gave them a look of the Southern USA class, at least from the chassis point of view.

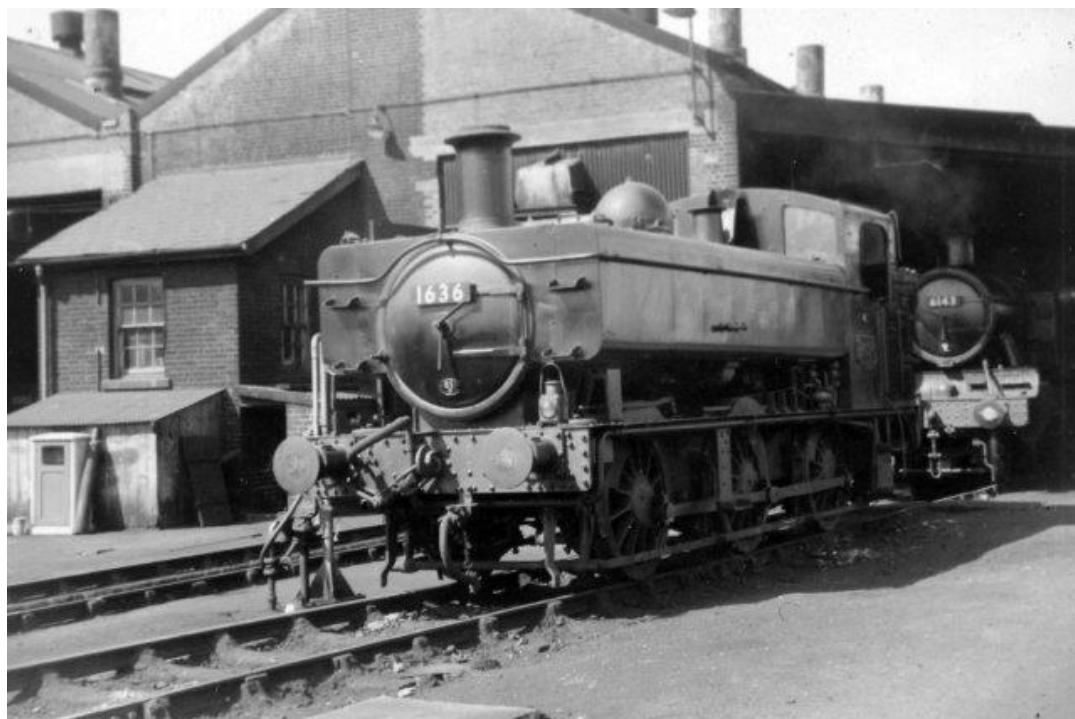
Nos.1500-5 were all at first sent to Old Oak Common where they were used for shunting and empty stock movement and were painted in lined black which gave them a smart appearance. However No.1501 moved to Southall in November 1950 where it replaced the last surviving saddle tank, 1925, and was used to shunt on tightly curved sidings at Greenford. No. 1502 moved to Didcot a month later whilst Nos.1506/7 and 9 were sent to Newport and No.1508 to Severn Tunnel Junction then to Cardiff Canton in May 1956. No.1507 moved from Newport Pill to Old Oak Common in April 1960.

In August 1959 No. 1509 was sold to the NCB and used at Coventry Colliery. The engine proved itself and Nos. 1501/2 followed in February and June 1961 respectively. Although they kept their GW number plates they were fitted with wire spark arresters in January 1967 and lasted until November 1969. No.1501 was acquired by the SVR in 1970 along with some spares from Nos. 1502/9. The rest of the class were withdrawn between May 1962 and December 1963.



16XX Class Nos 1600-29 were built at Swindon in 1949/50 followed by Nos. 1630-49 in 1951 and lastly Nos. 1650-69 in 1954/5. They had a 7'4" + 7'4" wheelbase and 4'1½" wheels and were an updated version of the 2021 class dating back to 1897-1905. They were the last Hawksworth design, if they can be called that considering their ancestry. They were built to a restrictive loading gauge to work routes with low overbridges.

They were widely spread in Wales, the Midlands and the West Country though No. 1605 went new to Southall. No. 1617 was first allocated to Oxford and Nos. 1647/8 and 58 went to Swindon when new. Nos. 1646/9 were transferred to Helmsdale (60C) in February 1957 and July 1958 respectively to work the Dornoch branch, then after the line closed they worked as Station pilots at Dingwall until withdrawn in December 1962. No.1636 was moved from Oswestry to Slough in June 1962, being withdrawn two years later in June 1964. No.1652 had the shortest working life of less than six years going in January 1960.



No.1600 withdrawn in March 1959 was sold to the NCB working Risca then Nine Mile Point but was scrapped in 1963. No. 1607 was also sold out of service in September 1965 having been withdrawn the previous month and worked at Cynheidre until laid aside with cracked frames in January 1969. Two of the class Nos 1638 and 1628 lasted until August and September 1966 respectively and No. 1638 was sold to R. D. Butterell straight out of service to work on the Dart Valley Railway but later moved to the K&ESR.

1636 at Slough shed on 24th June 1962 soon after transfer and in very clean condition.

David Gardner

TICKETS PLEASE!

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

Martin Stoolman

A few weeks ago our Chairman secured an opportunity for the Society's members to try using the IET driver simulator at Reading, courtesy of Great Western Railway. I was very happy to have a go, and, sitting in the driver's seat, it really did feel that I was driving a train from Paddington to Reading. As ever, this provoked a question that I have often been asked: "Did you not ever want to be a train driver, Martin?" After all, Guard to Driver is a natural progression. The answer is that I never have.

Train driving is not all that it is cracked up to be. True, you are tucked nicely away from the general public and all their moans, groans and problems. But actually it is a pretty lonely occupation and you never get any praise from anybody for the job you do. You are *expected* to drive the train appropriately, obeying speed limits, stopping in the right place at stations, and doing everything in accordance with the rule book. The only interaction with management is when you get things wrong – you fail to stop at a station, or, woe betide you, you have a SPAD (Signal Passed At Danger). As far as job satisfaction is concerned, I would say that a Guard has far more opportunity.

This may seem strange to somebody visualising a scenario where the poor Guard is having to deal with a load of unruly football supporters on his train while the driver enjoys the quiet comfort of his cab, blissfully unaware of events taking place behind him. Certainly I've had a few instances of having to deal with rowdy football supporters, the worst being on Saturday 27th September 2003 while working the 20:30 Paddington to Exeter via Bristol. A large group of Bristol Rovers supporters were returning from playing one of the London clubs, and decided to illegally avail themselves of some First Class comfort in coach F, close to the buffet car. Unfortunately I did not become aware of their presence until just after departure from Paddington. They were of course well intoxicated, had already caused some damage, and I rapidly came to the conclusion that trying to move them into Standard Class on my own would have been fruitless. In such situations you have to consider the whole scenario. The Standard Class coaches were very busy, so trying to re-seat them would have created considerable disruption and pain for the poor people already sitting there. The only other member of staff on the train was the Buffet host, and I could have asked him to help. However that would have meant a large number of customers being denied refreshments (the buffet is always busy on such trains), as clearly in order to assist me he would have had to shut the buffet. I worked out that actually, where they were, they were contained in a relatively small area and were not impacting on any of the First Class customers in the other two coaches (although the latter would have had to run the gauntlet in order to access the buffet of course).

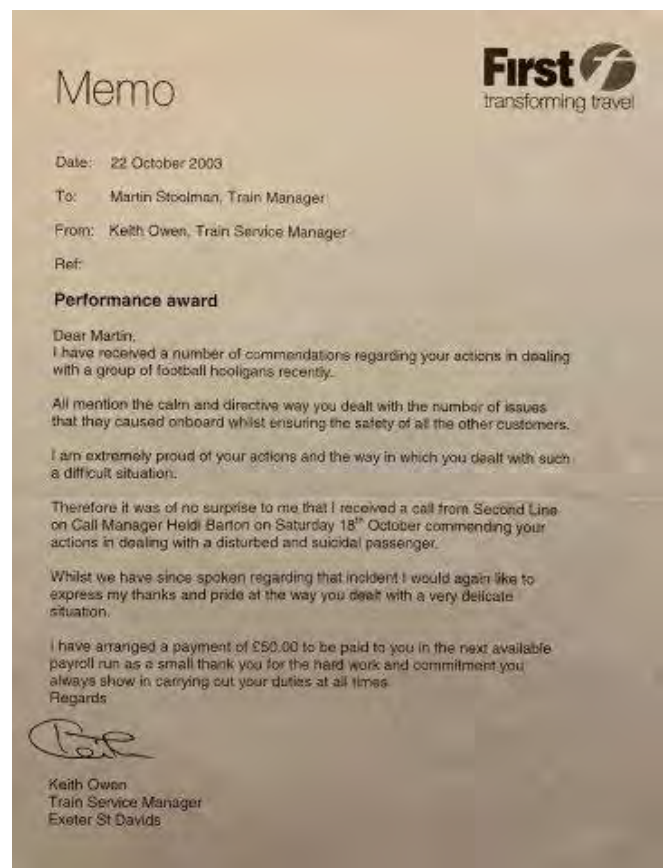
I did ring British Transport Police on the off chance that they might have spare resources somewhere who could assist, but, it being a Saturday night they were fairly non-committal. So I chose to remain in that carriage, and put up with the insults and abuse that came my way when I tried to intervene in order to minimise the vandalism. I did manage to identify the group's unofficial "leader" and, by engaging with him, got a degree of banter and common sense injected into the proceedings.

They were of course destined for Bristol but, approaching Bath, all of a sudden they decided they were getting bored and decamped there, no doubt intent on causing more mayhem in the city centre. As they got off, so four transport police officers appeared and surveyed the damage. All the curtains had been pulled down, one of the tables had been damaged, and spilt beer was everywhere. In anticipation that the police might want to

follow them and even make an arrest or two, I pointed to the exit through which they had gone. I'm afraid their attitude was "Oh, if they're off the station that's the regular police's problem now" and, having purchased a round of tea from the buffet, disappeared on arrival at Bristol. I do have examples of where BTP were very good, but this was not one of them.

Of course you will now be asking why I have picked this as an example of why I wanted to remain a Train Manager and not go for a driving job. At the time it was all very hairy and unpleasant, but I was quickly able to look back on this with great satisfaction, knowing I had done all the right things, with 95% of the other passengers arriving at their destinations pretty much on time and happy, unaware of events elsewhere on the train. That was backed up when my Manager a little while later thanked me, and made me aware of customers who had written in praising the way I had handled it (*see below*). The Buffet Host too had apparently said something similar to his manager. Meanwhile Bill Ashman, my driver, received no thanks for driving the train in his usual exemplary manner, bringing the train into Exeter St David's just two minutes late.

But it doesn't matter how much you try there will always be members of "Joe Public" who do not help themselves. I well remember an occasion in the evening peak when my down West of England service was the subject of a last minute set swap with a Bristol bound train on the adjacent platform. (This usually occurred because of problems with one of the HST's power cars – an HST will happily get to Bristol on one working power car, but not over the banks to Plymouth). I made copious announcements over the tannoy and it seemed like the whole operation had been undertaken as smoothly as it could have been. However on reaching the front of the train checking tickets somewhere between Newbury and Pewsey, I had to disturb a gent with his headphones on who, while handing me his season ticket,



complained about the length of time the train was taking to reach Swindon! He clearly hadn't even been looking out of the window, let alone listening to my announcements or been aware of the actions of his fellow travellers. I assisted him in plotting a way back via Westbury and Bath, but of course it was all my fault that he was going to be late home for his dinner.

Equally though, us railway folk can be the guilty ones. When I started, and for years afterwards, the Up Sleeper train from Penzance stopped at the same stations through Cornwall all week long. The only exception to this was the Sunday train which, probably to do with Newquay connections, did not stop at Par. Unfortunately Long Rock depot where the train was prepared, always managed to place the weekday window labels on the Sunday train too, understandable with all the other stops being exactly the same. I tried to remember to check the labels before departing Penzance but didn't always remember, and have always felt guilty about one poor lad in particular being overcarried to Bodmin as a result.

The above of course brings to mind the old Jethro joke with the famous punchline: "Train don't stop Camborne Wednesdays", and shows that there was an element of truth in it. I was caught out on many a Wednesday when working a train through Cornwall, by people asking me whether the train was stopping at Camborne. I would reply "yes", at which point I would be regaled with "but train don't stop Camborne Wednesdays", to the hilarity of any mates within earshot. Over the years this wore pretty thin but I did used to make the effort to raise a smile. Jethro died on 14th December 2021, and I was always a bit surprised that I never knowingly had him on one of my trains. I did get to meet many other celebrities of one form or another down the years however, and probably checked the tickets of many others without having a clue who they were! Being a cricket fan though I was aware of the great Sir Garfield (Gary) Sobers travelling down to Exeter to participate in a book signing event. Then on Sunday 8th May 2011 I was working the 16:11 Penzance to Paddington when Mike Atherton and Bob Willis got on at Taunton. They were lovely, and were happy to indulge me in cricketing conversation. Four years earlier, on Friday 8th June 2007, Jonathan Dibley and Bill Oddie were travelling up to London together; they were rather less friendly as I recall.

Royalty has crossed my path. Princess Anne is a regular on Great Western, travelling from/to her residence near Kemble, Gloucestershire, and on Thursday 18th December 2003 I was told in advance that she would be travelling on my 21:33 from Paddington as far as Swindon. I was also advised of the protocol which is not to converse with her but to deal with her bodyguards, one of whom presented me with her ticket. Little did I know that, a few years later, I would be attending meetings of Great Western's Advisory Board in my role as the elected Employee Director, and would become friendly with her husband Sir Timothy Lawrence who sat on the same Board, a very good man and a big supporter of the railway. I would also engage with another famous Royal on a train towards the end of my career, but more of all this in a future article.

Arguably my biggest "catch" however came in the first year of my career, on Wednesday 16th August 2000. After booking on at Exeter, I proceeded to platform 4 to await the 10:45 Paddington to Paignton which I was to take through to its destination. I relieved an experienced Exeter colleague who told me that there was "some pop star" in First Class Coach G, and that, being a youngster, I would probably know who she was! It turned out to be Victoria Beckham, formerly Posh Spice of the Spice Girls, and recently married to England footballer David. I went down to make sure all was well, and there she was with all her minders, happy to tell me that she was trying to launch her solo career by performing at the Radio 1 Roadshow in Paignton. However a few minutes into the journey it was learned that a crowd of young fans had descended on Torquay station, intent on storm-

ing our train between there and Paignton. My advice was sought and a plan was hatched whereby a taxi would be summoned to Torquay (rather than Paignton) for her. Luckily I knew there was an alleyway leading from the rear of the down platform straight to the car park, the entrance to which would pretty much line up with the rear door of Coach G, so the taxi was positioned at the other end. It worked perfectly, and just as she disappeared down the alley, around a hundred screaming kids boarded at the front end and ran up the train, autograph books in hand. I had to inform them that she had already got off. Arrival at Paignton saw hundreds more kids on the platform waiting to greet her... what a shame!

However that wasn't the end of it. I worked the same HST back up to Exeter as the 14:17 Paignton to Paddington, had a break, and then took over the 14:33 Paddington to Penzance which I worked as far as Plymouth. Here I picked up a set of loco hauled coaches with 47811 at the front, forming the 18:30 Plymouth to Paddington. Arriving at Newton Abbot I was amazed to see Victoria Beckham and her entourage on the platform waiting to board. Somebody from her party approached me and asked me to go and see her. A few of her sound engineers only had Standard Class tickets and she asked me whether I would allow them to sit in First with her. Of course being the softie that I am I agreed (well, it's good for PR!), and as she carried on chatting I asked her how it had all gone, and she confided in me that she wasn't happy with her performance. (As it happened her career as a fashion designer turned out to be a good deal more successful than her career as a solo singer!). Anyway if you would like to locate your treasured copy of Ms Beckham's memoirs from your bookshelf, you will find that I am mentioned in there as the "nice helpful train manager" (or words to that effect). Fame at last!

However I haven't always covered myself with glory I'm afraid, as far as famous people are concerned. I was too ashamed to record the date or the circumstances but, since it happened, my wife has never allowed me to forget it. In fact it is one of her favourite dinner party stories. I got chatting to a lady in First Class who I believed to be the famous actress Felicity Kendall. I mentioned the TV series "The Good Life" but she just burst out laughing and declined to say anymore. Well, I was right about one thing, she was a famous actress but I had got the wrong one – it was Zoe Wanamaker! In my defence, if you compare photographs of them they do look remarkably similar. Oops! Exit one very embarrassed Train Manager.

to be continued...

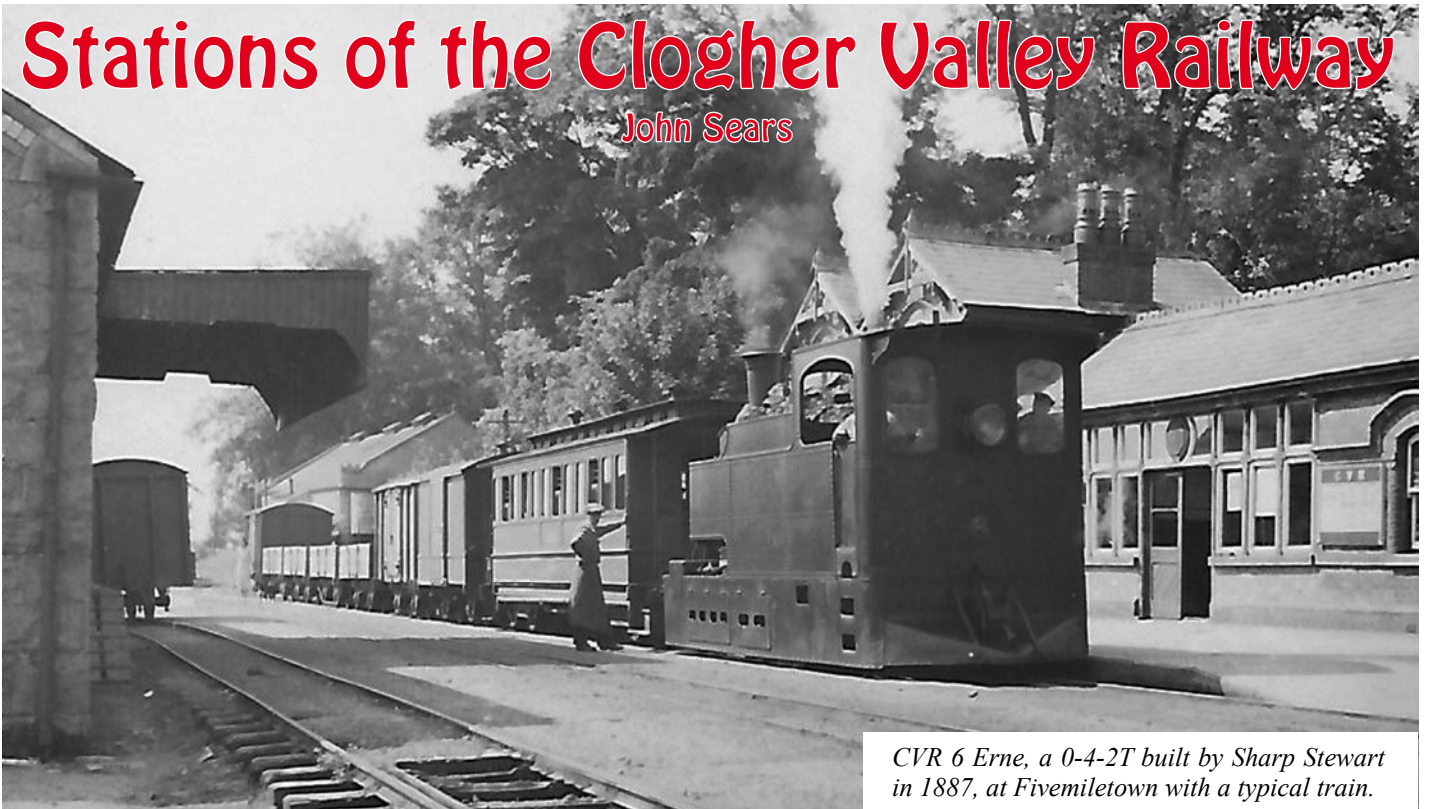


"Happy as a Train Manager". Martin can just be seen leaning out of the window of the guard's van as his train, the 10:33 (SO) Paddington to Paignton, enters Goodrington Yard for servicing on Saturday 14th September 2002. The loco is Fragonset-owned class 47 no 47703. The line furthest away is the Paignton & Dartmouth Steam Railway.

Photo: Rev David Hardy

Stations of the Clogher Valley Railway

John Sears



CVR 6 Erne, a 0-4-2T built by Sharp Stewart in 1887, at Fivemiletown with a typical train.

One of the most fabled, and fabulous, of rural railway enterprises, the Clogher Valley Railway, began its life in December 1883 as the Clogher Valley Tramway Company. Typically, it had been incorporated only after years of plans and counter-plans. Its arrival was helped by the passing that year of the “Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act”, which provided financial backing for such businesses. The bureaucracy involved, and the hurdles to leap, were considerable. Some of the financial aspects were carefully crafted to transfer expense to the local areas – one such was the payment of a dividend of up to five percent. The ultimate transfer would be the taking over of the undertaking by the county Grand Jury, whose ability to run a railway would doubtless be sorely tested.

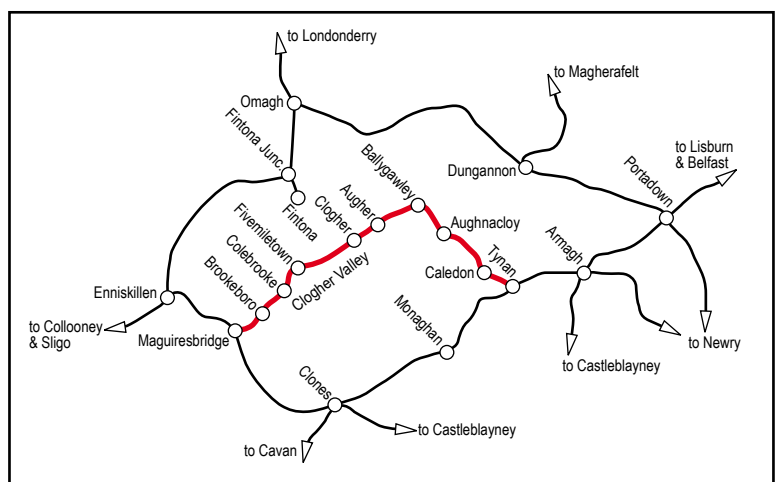
Authority to begin work was granted on the 7th August 1884. The invitation to tender was issued on St. Patrick’s Day in 1885 (17th March) and the contract for £32,000 was awarded to a Belfast firm with plenty of experience in building railways. They got to work on the 1st May 1885, and, with the usual “discussions” over scope-creep, increased costs, and criticisms by a Mr. Willson, the County Surveyor for Fermanagh, finished early in 1887. Major-General C.S. Hutchinson reported to the Board of Trade on the 13th April and added considerable hindrances to the operation of the line. The 1883 act revised operational requirements, and although trains were restricted to 12 mph when running by the road, if the track was more than 30 feet from the centre of the road, speed was unrestricted! However, the major-general imposed 17 “absolute stops” at level crossings, 13 restrictions to 4 mph at road crossings, plus two of 6 mph, and a 10 mph limit going down gradients of 1 in 30 or 31.

The 37 miles of 3’ gauge railway opened on Tuesday, 3rd May 1887, with a timetable for the day of excursion trains, priced at a flat fare “available over the whole line for the day”. Four shillings first class, two and six third class. The line had eight stations and 28 halts along its route from Tynan on the GNR (Ireland)’s line between Portadown and Cavan, and Maguiresbridge on the GNR’s Clones to Enniskillen line.

The line showed typical narrow gauge ingenuity throughout its life. Henry Forbes, of the County Donegal Railways, had been appointed to the “committee of management” in 1928, and his experience of diesel railcars in Donegal led to a successful trial of one on the Clogher Valley in May 1932. Walker Brothers of Wigan built one for the CV at a quoted price of £1,950 delivered to Belfast, and it went into service that December, with a 26% increase in passenger numbers. From 1933 to 1936 patronage increased by a bit over 100% to 57,072 journeys.

Alas, transit gloria mundi. Felix Pole, late of the GWR, reported in 1934 on transport in Northern Ireland. In those days some things were done quickly – the inquiry opened on the last day of April, and its report was published 84 days later! It recommended closure of the Clogher Valley. Local protests gave the government an excuse to delay implementing the report, but they finally issued an order that the railway was to close on the 31st December 1941. The last train, the railcar, actually ran on New Year’s Day, at 0.10 from Fivemiletown to Ballygawley, reached at 1.23, thence empty to the line’s headquarters at Aughnacloy.

Although there are precious few traces of the Clogher Valley’s right of way, most of the station buildings are still standing. Here are some views of those your author has visited.



Ballygawley

Here is the road side of the station; Maguiresbridge is to the right (west). Uniquely, the building has been rendered, and the round tops to the window openings removed.



Here is the platform side, Aughnacloy and Tynan to the right (east). The single-storey extension this end is original, but its roof has been rebuilt with a slope. The park and ride stop for Translink's long-distance bus services between Belfast and Enniskillen, and Omagh is off-shot to the right. The village of Ballygawley is about half a mile straight ahead - the buses used to pass down main street until the A4's new dual-carriageway was built.....

Clogher

The view of the rail side, looking east, towards Ballygawley. Again, some alterations have been made – the two-storey building's roof was originally twin gables facing the tracks, and the nearer single-storey building has been given new window openings, and has been extended as well as rendered. There were three running lines where the lawn is.



Colebrooke

Although listed as a halt, and closed in 1926, Colebrooke was given a substantial station building in the CVR style. It was built to serve the Brooke family's estate at Colebrooke. One of the family, Sir Basil, was chairman of the committee of management from 1929 to 1941, and prime minister of Northern Ireland from 1943 to 1963. He became Viscount Brookeborough in 1952. This is the platform side, viewed from the A4, the main road to Enniskillen.

Brookeborough

Here is the road side of the station, which is to the west end of the village. It is now well looked after following restoration in 1997 by the Brookeborough and District Community Development Association. The left-hand (western) single-storey section was added then. It is used by Brookeborough and District Community Playgroup as a pre-school.

The rail side, with track and a kit-bashed passenger car – the lower half of a Belfast tram body on a new underframe. The rectangle on the centre section is the station nameboard.



Maguiresbridge

No structures of the CVR remain here, the line's western terminus, but there are short sections of the Great Northern's platforms. The other side of the road the CVR's low embankment curves across the fields, 37 miles from the eastern terminus at Tynan. Could sentiment be why it's not been levelled? Let's hope so!

