

*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

Please reply to:

MARLOW DONKEY NO.19

JUNE, 1981

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

In recent months I have driven on several occasions between Colnbrook and Staines and noticed considerable activity along the branch line which ran south from West Drayton. I was not surprised to find it had become a victim of the M25 the new motorway now making its progress round the west of London. The account of our secretary of his journey last January on the excursion named "The First and Last" made fascinating reading. Apparently the old GW building known as Staines West is now linked on to the Southern Region line and the special proceeded to Windsor Riverside. An article entitled "The End of the Staines Branch" by Chris Leigh appeared in the May issue of Railway World.

Another "last train" has just been run on the Cholsey and Moulsoford to Wallingford line. It is some time since passengers used this line but the track had latterly served a maltster's factory on the outskirts of Wallingford.

A recent book by H.I. Quayle and Stanley C. Jenkins under the title of "Branch Lines into the Eighties" described no less than 40 survivors from the Doctor's axe. Doubtless this list will be eroded as BR continue to fight its losing battle for additional finance. So far our own area seemed to have survived fairly well, not only have we the Bourne End and Marlow Branch, the line to Henley-on-Thames, the Chesham section off the old Metropolitan line, the Windsor branch, but also the useful Greenford loop which can take charter trains from Buckinghamshire onto SR tracks.

The pro-railway and anti-railway factions in the Daily Telegraph continue to delight and amuse me. A Mr. M.D. Noar wrote in April that if only Karl Benz had preceded George Stephenson the railways would never have been built and would not now be a "huge burden" on our economy. A Mr. R.V. Banks points out that in 1980 while BR had not one single passenger fatality the average daily death toll on our roads was TWENTY.

The familiar cry of "Lets turn the railway into roads" is still with us. The comparative narrowness of most track beds would seem to make this absurd. One writer even suggests using the existing overhead wires for a type of updated trolley bus which presumably would run from Euston and all stations north - albeit with a mere 55 passengers.

I have just been re-reading my copy of Railway World for June 1971. For this I was charged a mere 17<sup>4</sup>p. While France had only recently finished its remaining steam operations there was still considerable use of steam in Western Germany. Although ex-LMS No.6100 Royal Scot and No.6233 Duchess of Sutherland moved into Alan Bloom's collection at Bressingham and ex-GWR No.4983 Albert Hall arrived at Tysely there was a dearth of preservation news. It is heartening to

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realise that in such a poor economic climate since 1971 many new enthusiast groups have been created and are flourishing.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME AT 1945 HRS. FOR 2000 HRS.

- 16 Jul.1981 "Return of Flying Scotsman". Unfortunately Derek Cross cannot come but Ken Woodham has kindly agreed to step into the breach.
- Aug.1981 No evening meeting but see below for half-day tour.
- 17 Sep.1981 Films British Transport. It is hoped to include "Devils Dyke - a Victorian Pastime", "Elizabeth Express", "Snowdrift at Bleath Gill" and others.
- 15 Oct.1981 "The Railway Collection of the Science Museum". Tony Hall-Patch who is the Assistant Curator will tell us about the collection.
- Nov.1981 Members' 15 minute talks. Offers of talks welcome by Roger Woodham who is collecting names.
- Dec.1981 This is usually a feature film of railway interest. In recent years we have had "Ghost Train" and "Oh Mr. Porter". Have you any ideas for this year?

ANNUAL FAMILY TOUR SUNDAY 12 JULY 1981

To the Nene Valley Railway. Leave Marlow Donkey at 0930 picking up at High Wycombe Princes Risborough and Aylesbury and then to Peterborough. Return to Marlow about 2130. Inclusive of rail travel the fare is £4.50 for Adults and £2.25 children. There are only a few seats left so please see Stan Verrinder as soon as possible.

AUGUST HALF-DAY TOUR - SUNDAY 16 AUGUST 1981

This half-day tour replaces the August Thursday evening visit to overcome the problems of members leaving work early. The tour will visit the Quainton Railway Collection and will leave the Marlow Donkey at 1400. We hope to have a conducted tour of the site followed by a visit to a few places of Great Central interest between Quainton Road and Calvert. Return to Marlow will be around 1900 hrs. Fare including entry fee £3.00. See Stan Verrinder for bookings.

EVENING CLASSES - AUTUMN 1981

Your secretary Roger Bowen will again be tutoring two 10 week courses this autumn, this time the subject is "Steam Railways since 1948". One course commences on Monday 21 Sep.1981 at the Roans County Secondary School Amersham; the other on Wednesday 23 September 1981 at the John Colet County Secondary School, Wendover. Details of the Amersham course from Keith Simpson Amersham 6224 and of the Wendover course from Mr. G.Jenkins Wendover 623311.

RAILWAY TRIPS AND VISITS - 1981

The Marlow and Maidenhead Passengers' Association are running the following trips from Marlow.

28 JUN'81 - Cardiff and Tenby  
23 AUG'81 - Taunton, Torquay and Paignton

On the 23 Aug., trip the stop at Taunton is to enable a trip on the West Somerset Railway to be made. These trips are absolutely bargains and all members are urged to support the MMPA.

Chiltern Trains of 1, Druids Walk, Chinnor (Tel. Kingston Blount 52198) will have the following on the Wycombe line.

28 JUN'81 - Chester Conway or Ffestiniog for slate quarry or railway  
2 AUG'81 - Hastings or Kent and East Sussex Railway  
9 AUG'81 - York or North Moors Railway  
30 AUG'81 - Lake District  
26 SEP'81 - Blackpool Illuminations  
17 OCT'81 - Dunkirk  
24 OCT'81 - York

BR Merrymaker excursions on the Wycombe line. There are various excursions mainly by scheduled trains. Ask BR for brochure.

LNER Society Railtours of Little Tile House, Nightingales Lane, Chalfont St. Giles (Tel. Little Chalfont 2952) has the following on the Wycombe line.

26 SEP'81 - Carnforth or Ravenglass

Keith Coaches of 30, Buckingham Street will run the following escorted and guided coach tours with your secretary Roger Bowen.

5 JULY'81 - Brunel Tour including the SS Great Britain, Clifton Suspension Bridge and Swindon Railway Museum.  
From Aylesbury, Wendover, Amersham, High Wycombe and Marlow.  
27 SEP'81 - Didcot Enthusiasts Day and Pendon Museum. From Aylesbury, Stoke Mandeville and Princes Risborough.

BR Merrymakers are operating a number of excursions to the Great Central Railway on Sundays 28 June, 30 August and 25 October from Baker Street (!! ) joining coach at Aylesbury where your secretary is the courier. Included is a return journey on the GC line between Loughborough and Rothley. Details from Area Manager BR Marylebone.

LONDON AND SOUTH OF ENGLAND BUILDING SOCIETY

This Building Society is operating a scheme where if you are a member of it then we can benefit to the tune of £1, for each member. We have 6 names already further names please to Stan Verrinder.

25 YEARS AGO - Contributed by Roger Bowen

In May 1956 the Minister of Transport announced the approval of a system of automatic train control which has been undergoing lengthy tests and developments on the East Coast Main Line between Kings Cross and Grantham. Technical details were not announced but it was known to combine the inductive system of the Stowger - Hudd installation on the Tilbury lines with the footplate indications of the Western Region direct contact apparatus.

In June 1956 the new BR emblem was displayed on 70016 "Ariel", officially described as "a demi-lion rampant holding between the paws a silver locomotive wheel, the lion is issuant from a heraldic crown of gold on which are arranged the rose, the thistle, the leek, and the oak-leaf". The new BR Standard coach livery of maroon with black and yellow waistbands appeared on coach sets for the "Midlander", "Merseyside Express", "Mancunian", and "Royal Scot". Three Western Region trains had been turned out in chocolate and cream, the "Bristolian", "Cornish Riviera Express" and "Torbay Express".

May 1956 saw the withdrawal of the celebrated Lickey Incline banker "Big Bertha", No.58100. Built at Derby Works of the Midland Railway in 1920 she spent her whole 36 year life blazing away at the back of trains toiling up the two mile 1 in 37½ Lickey Incline, and then coasting down the hill again from Blackwell to Bromsgrove.

A celebrated event of May 1956 was the Ian Allan charter train "The Pennine Pullman". This was a train of eight Pullmans, and two BR Standard coaches, which left Marylebone behind 60014 "Silver Link". The route was via Princes Risborough, which was passed five minutes early, Ashenden Junction, Woodford Halse and Leicester Central. On through Nottingham to Sheffield Victoria where Co-Co electric 27002 took the train on over Woodhead into Lancashire. The return was via Rochdale and Todmorden behind "Directors" 62662 "Prince of Wales" and 62664 "Princess Mary" to Rotherwood where 60014 "Silver Link" was to return the train to Kings Cross.

On 11th June, 1956 the Eastern Region inaugurated through electric services between Liverpool Street, Ingatestone and Chelmsford by extending services the ten miles from Shenfield on the 1500 volt dc system. Early in July London Transport confirmed rumours that it was to revive the pre-war scheme for four tracking from Harrow to Watford South Junction and electrification from Rickmansworth to Amersham and Chesham.

On 15th June, 1956 "B1" class 4-6-0 No.61185 worked through to Windsor with a schools excursion from Barnsley and Penistone. After the train had been offloaded the locomotive took it to Bourne End for stabling and then repaired to Slough until it was required to pick-up the stock at Bourne End for the return journey.

New locomotives entering services in June 1956 were one "9400" class 0-6-OPT; one diesel mechanical 0-4-0; 4 diesel mechanical 0-6-0; 9 diesel electric 0-6-0; 2 class "4" 2-6-4T and 4 class "9F" 2-10-0.

A VISIT TO BR ENGINEERING LTD (BREL) - Contributed by Graham Nutley  
and Derek Smith

On a grey March morning we set out for Wycombe station and completely forgot to pick up Graham Hudson despite furious broolly waving and shouting. A run before breakfast is good for you.

Right on time 47107 (headcode 1Z12) from Cricklewood rolled in with Coach J next to the loco and not Coach A as had been announced. Chaos reigned for 5 minutes but was finally sorted out and we moved off towards Princes Risborough. On passing through Ardley tunnel out coach was found to be lacking in lights. The glow worms were asleep or perhaps we were too far from the loco for the juice to reach. We therefore ordered candles for the return journey. On through Leamington and Warwick to Tysely where a brace of steam locos were spotted in the sidings. Picking up a fresh crew at Saltely we sped north through Tamworth to reach Derby on time at 1005.

It was pouring down as we made our way to the double decker bus to take us to the Litchurch Lane works of BREL. At the works we split into 5 parties for various tours.

We wandered through the wood machine shop and detail shop seeing huge tape controlled machines creating various parts for the coach bodies as well as a raw material waste factor of 30% (because its cheaper that way). Via the machine and fitting shops to view the parts jig assembled and Plasma-arc welded into complete shells. It was explained how coaches were made deliberately bowed so that when they were fitted and loaded with seats and passengers they sit flat and true (sometimes?). Also explained were the problems of passengers being flung around in an APT because some designer lost his marbles when they rolled off a table they were supposed to stay on whan cornering.

On to the lifting shop to have the intricacies of various bogies pointed out and to view the third version of the Leyland railbus standing on jacks. It seems once fitted the body wouldn't come off its chassis again and all sorts of trouble ensued. Next a climb into an APT cab seemed in order and to have the works of the couplings and buffers explained. On again to see wheels being turned retyred and fitted in matched pairs to the bogies and to have fun on the turntables fitted in the floor at each work station.

Finally out via the trimming and painting shops to see a batch of Mk III sleepers coaches under construction and Tanzanian narrow gauge stock with its Asian loos and gaudy lining of green, orange and blue. The outside main colours were custard and blood and looked quite smart apart from the brush paint finish. Out once more into the rain to view the new 210 commuter stock in the yard and more Mk III sleepers scattered about.

From BREL we went onto the Derby City Museum to view an O gauge model of a MR layout a 3½in gauge model of a 4F and a small collection of MR relics.

The next port of call was the Silk Mill Industrial Museum to view the Rolls Royce aero engine collection and then on to the BR Training School.

The visit was split into two parts. One on signals and telegraph and the other diesel engine maintenance, braking systems and air conditioning plant. The S & T party were shown a mock-up of the modern electrical power box with its associated relay racks and this was followed by a visit to the track telephone exchange and a demonstration of the wheel counting and hot box detection unit. Lastly on the S & T side was a demonstration of a level crossing operation with closed circuit TV. On the engineering side we saw how brakes operated working diesel motors with load testing equipment and finally refrigeration equipment.

Our last hours in Derby were spent at the Nottingham Arms where we were made extremely welcome with good cheap ale and Irish folk songs. The whole party were then requested to dance with a young (well!) lady by the name of Marian who it appeared worked at BREL and wondered why anyone should travel so far to see it. After one round of dancing followed another all except for a certain Mr. Walker who slipped out the back to reappear later on the safe side of the barrier at Derby Station.

The return journey was made in fine style. The lights on Coach A had been repaired and let it go on record that the 2325 excursion to Derby arrived at High Wycombe at 2230. A truly magnificent end to an enjoyable and interesting day.

Thanks Chiltern Trains BR and Marian (Tel. No. on request).

#### THE SKYTRAIN - Contributed by Roger Bowen

Chiltern Trains most ambitious rail tour yet left Princes Risborough for Kyle of Lochalsh four minutes late at 1959 hours on Friday, 10th April, 1981. So started a memorable week-end for four members, one wife and one mother. The Princes Risborough start was necessitated by lack of spare paths between West Ruislip and Princes Risborough in the peak hours, so that our hardy travellers reached Princes Risborough by scheduled train from High Wycombe.

Once our train had been stacked high with provisions for the night, and most importantly tea urns, the train left Princes Risborough behind 47 408. An uneventful run brought us to Birmingham New Street where the Derby - Bristol Postal was noticed in an adjacent platform. The use of post office labels marked "GW TPO UP" was quite evocative. Loco change at Birmingham brought 83 015 which was immediately failed by its driver. Eventually 85 040 was found and took us out 28 minutes late at 2208. Your secretary then got down to the serious business of demolishing two bottles of Theakstone Old Peculiar before getting some fitful sleep. Loco's were again changed at Mossend Yard, outside Glasgow, where 40 150 was put in charge. Travelling through the night our passengers committed the crime of sleeping through Stanley Junction. Up early for a Highland dawn and an on-time arrival at Inverness at 0658 on Saturday morning.

A quick breakfast at Inverness, where John Diffy of Chiltern Trains was seen helping to make the sandwiches in the "Travellers Fare" buffet. Off again, this time headed by 26 025 and 26 043, three minutes late from Inverness. A delay at Garve at a passing loop on the single line resulted in the train being nine minutes late into Kyle of Lochalsh.

Across on the ferry to Kylekin we joined "Clan Coaches" ex Glenton Tours AEC Reliance BAN 113H with its unusual centre entranced body. The weather was a little dismal with some rain over the Cullin Mountains as we entered Portree, the capital of Skye. After a short stop in Portree we travelled to the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale before returning to Kylekin and the ferry for Kyle of Lochalsh. Our same pair of class 26 locos left Kyle of Lochalsh on time but after Garve it was obvious that there was trouble as one loco was spewing out an oily mixture all over the train. A quick check at Dingwall and a decision to press on and Inverness was reached six minutes late at 1916. The trouble apparently was that the exhaust pipe had disintegrated.

The night was spent at the excellent "Station Hotel" where we were served with a traditional Scottish dinner, with the haggis being piped in. The fare was very good with Bas explaining to his wife that if she cooked swedes like that served at the hotel he would eat it at home! After dinner a quick walk around Inverness followed by a "wee dram" and bed.

Up at 0730 on Sunday for breakfast at 0815, train leaves Inverness at 1008, 8 minutes late due to carriage cleaning needed as a result of the "oily" episode the previous day. Our loco 47 197 heads off for Aberdeen and Dundee. John Diffy gleefully announces that due to trackwork our train will go over the Tay and Forth Bridges and not via Perth as expected. Even so there was single line working on the Forth Bridge. Onto Edinburgh Waverley where our 47 runs around and takes us onto Carstairs. On time at Carstairs 85 040 returns to whisk us down the West Coast Main Line. A slight delay at Carlisle to replenish the tea urns but still arrive 30 seconds early at Birmingham New Street, booked time 2044. A fast departure behind 46 023 so that we can get ahead of a diverted Shrewsbury - London train at Leamington Spa. Despite doing this we get checked at Aynho awaiting a unit off the Wycombe line. Ultimately we arrive 6 minutes late in High Wycombe at 2238.

So ended a great week-end - 1,331 miles of rail travel, an immense amount of work by BR staff, also to John Diffy and his colleagues whose organisation was superb. The unanimous consent of all was "well done John, when is the next Scottish Weekend"!!!