Marlow & District

Railway Society

Please reply to:

THE MARLOW DONKEY NO 22 MARCH 1982

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

"In spite of British Rail's troubles and the discomfort visited upon travellers by strikes, the disappearance of the breakfast kipper, the non-appearance of the advertised restaurant car, the horror of burgers in the buffet and the failure of the system to cope with a few inches of snow, there are still millions of people who are in love with the idea of railways." These words recently introduced a series of articles in the Sunday Observer Supplement. The writer Alexander Frater has explored some of our lesser known routes and others which run through spectacular countryside. The illustrations by Alain Garsmeur are of a similar standard. In his first article Mr. Frater describes the seventy two miles from Settle to Carlisle, built against terrible odds as the Midland Railway's reply to the LNWR's Lancaster to Carlisle route. His second article takes the reader from Carlisle along the coast to Barrow-in-Furness where high explosives and nuclear waste take precedence over passengers.

I must admit that the very genuine grief that was expressed by diesel enthusiasts at the demise of the Class 52 "Westerns" suprised us steam buffs. In fact no fewer than seven of this class have been preserved. Now another class of modern locomotives has been withdrawn, the 55's or Deltics. They were built to replace steam haulage on the King's Cross to Edinburgh line back in the sixties. On the 2nd of January No. 55015 named Tulvar made a special run to Edinburgh just for enthusiasts to pay their last tributes. One locomotive called King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry has been earmarked for the National Railway Museum at York and no doubt the Deltic Preservation Society hopes to purchase one of the remaining eleven.

It was most pleasing to find a Daily Telegraph reader providing a retort to editorial (and correspondents') anti-railway views. He concludes his excellent letter: "Sniping at the railways because they are nationalised or because we can't get our industrial relations sorted out is neither constructive nor profitable."

May I recommend to all lovers of the old GWR a 1981 publication by Bryan Holden and Kenneth H Leech entitled Portraits of 'Castles', a book in which every example of this outstanding class is illustrated and described. Most of these wonderful locomotives were cut up by Cashmores of Newport or Hayes of Bridgend, but there are still eight in existence. Three of these were Barry hulks and went to Tyseley to be cannibalised for spares to keep Clun Castle in good order. However one of these No. 7027 Thornbury Castle, is considered worthy of a rebuild. The Castle class had a great advantage over their more powerful sisters, the Kings - they could be used practically anywhere on the Western Region.

Chiltern Trains of Chinnor broke new ground recently. They hired High Wycombe Town Hall for a film evening. As in previous in 1982 they intend to run about fifteen excursions, but this year some of them will originate from stations on the Euston line. By doing this the company hopes to attract custom from the Tring, Berkhamsted and Watford areas. One repeat journey from our local stations will be the Skye Train. As one who travelled on last year's weekend journey I can recommend this venture as being good value for money.

Congratulations to the Great Western Society. On the 27th and 28th March they are celebrating their 21st birthday. The Society were very fortunate indeed to be offered the Didcot site with its large shed and workshops. Each succeeding year has seen improvements - two running lines, carriage sheds, and even a turntable has been installed.

A useful and very inexpensive booklet has recently been added to my railway reference books. For a mere 50p Ian Allan have published Preserved Locomotives 1981. In the useful notes is included the current home of each engine. Our younger bretheren will no doubt appreciate the sections dealing with diesel and electric preservations.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME AT 19.45 HOURS FOR 20.00 HOURS

15th April 1982	-	"Points and Aspects" - Talk with film by D C Webb of GEC - General Signals
20th May 1982	-	"Colorado Journey" - Talk by Mike Walker
17th June 1982	-	"Freight Train Operation in the Western Region" (to be confirmed) - Talk by London Division WR member of staff
15th July 1982	-	"6024, The Restoration, from the Horses Mouth!" - Talk with slides by D K Polley of 6024 Preservation Society
19th August 1982	-	No meeting, but provisionally a visit by coach to Pendon Museum. Details from Mike Walker
16th September 1982	-	It is hoped to have a return of Don Fendley who gave us a talk on steam in the North East two years ago

ANNUAL CLUB EXCURSION

This is planned for Sunday, 18th July to the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Details from Stan Verrinder.

CHILTERN TRAINS

Excursions from joint line stations including High Wycombe area as follows:

3rd April	-	Calais
8th May	-	Bulb Fields or Nene Valley Railway
22nd May	-	Boulogne and Le Toquet
5th June	-	Chatsworth House or Crich Tramway Museum, or York
20th June	-	Isle of Wight
18th July	-	Wellington, or Chester or Llangollen Railway and Canal
1st August	-	Seaside Trip
15th August	-	Carnforth and Windermere
10th-11th September	-	Dieppe and Rouen
18th September	-	Cardiff
24th September	-	Blackpool Illuminations
25th September	-	" "
16th October	-	France

Details from Chiltern Trains, 1 Druids Walk, Chinnor, Oxford OX9 4JF (tel Kingston Blount 52198).

MARLOW-MAIDENHEAD PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

Have one excursion planned from Marlow, Bourne End, etc, to Great Yarmouth. Details from MMPA, 2 Mill Court, Cores End Road, Bourne End (tel Bourne End 28810).

LNER SOCIETY

Have one excursion from joint line stations including High Wycombe to Carnforth and Lake District coach tours on 3rd May. Details from LNER Society, Little Tile House, Nightingales Lane, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4SL (tel Little Chalfont 2952).

KEITH COACHES

Coach tours of rail interest from Aylesbury conducted by your Secretary, Roger Bowen:

3rd-4th April	-	Brunel Weekend
1st May	-	Great Central Trail
23rd May	-	Mid Hants Railway
12th June	-	Great Central Trail
4th July	-	East Somerset Railway
24th July	-	Great Central Trail
2nd-3rd October	-	Brunel Weekend
23rd October	-	Great Central Trail

The Brunel Weekends are joint with BR (Western Region) and are also available from Paddington and stations to Reading (oneway coach, oneway rail).

The Great Central Trails are joint with BR (London Midland Region) are also available from Marylebone Station (oneway coach, oneway rail).

The Mid Hants and East Somerset Tours will also pick up in High Wycombe. Details from Keith Coaches, 30 Buckingham Street, Aylesbury, HP20 2LH (tel Aylesbury 28686)

SOME TRAIN! Ted Gregory

"Trotsky put in an enormous amount of work, covering thousands of miles in his famous armoured train. This train, his headquarters for 2½ years, was an amazing contraption, a small town on wheels.

In Trotsky's own words: "Its sections include a radio station, secretariat, a printing press, a telegraph office, a restaurant, an electric power station, a library, a garage and a bath.

The train was so heavy it needed 2 engines. Part of the train was a huge garage holding several automobiles and a gasoline tank.

The engines and carriages were protected by sand bags piled up behind rivetted iron plates, 1½ inches thick and reinforced with from 6 to 18 inches of concrete.

Each section possessed its own nest of machine-guns."

GOOD FUTURE FOR COAL - STEAM LOCOMOTIVES Wilf Long

Wilf has sent the Editor an interesting article from the 1980 December issue of "Engineering" which unfortunately cannot be reproduced in the Marlow Donkey. The best description of it comes from the headnote "Railways are the one form of ground transport that can run as well on coal or residual fuels as any other fuel, and America, Australia, China and several African states are looking at new design techniques. Dr John E Sharpe of Queen Mary College, University of London, outlines the economic factors influencing the choice of railway motive power suggesting that the coal-burning Rankine-cycle locomotive is greatly more cost effective than current diesel or electric locomotives and their projected developments."

If you would like to read the article please ask Wilf or Stan Verrinder so that you can borrow a copy.

25 YEARS AGO R D BOWEN

In March 1957 British Railways was looking forward to the future. Announcing the programme of improvements for the coming year Sir Brian Robertson, Chairman of the British Transport Commission, claimed that the pace of modernisation was rapidly increasing and that over a third of the total sum of £1,200 million to be spent under the modernisation plan had been committed.

To emphasise this fact the BTC placed contracts at the end of March for 60 complete electric locomotives, plus 40 sets of equipment for BR built locomotives for the Crewe-Manchester and Crewe-Liverpool electrification schemes. Orders were also placed for five high speed diesel-electric de-luxe units with the Metropolitan-Camnell Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd of Saltley, Birmingham, for use on new Pullman services between St Pancras and Manchester (Central) and between Paddington and both Bristol (Temple Meads) and Wolverhampton (Low Level).

At the end of March 1957 the first four of 57 three car electric units with GEC electrical equipment built at Eastleigh Works, Southern Region were delivered to Stonebridge Park Depot, London Midland Region for Watford line services.

Abroad, nearing completion, were two prototype "Class 10" Pacifics for the German Federal Railways. These locomotives, three cylinder simples built by Krupp, were intended for 100 mph working on lightweight inter-city express trains.

Unfortunately troubles in Ireland are not a recent problem. On 2nd March 1957 IRA men "hi-jacked" a GNR(I) freight train at Londonderry and sent the locomotive, Class SG3 0-6-0 No 13 careering crewless into the terminus.

The death occurred on 9th March 1957 of Robert H Whitelegg, who was appointed Locomotive Superintendent of the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway in 1910 and in 1918 became Locomotive Superintendent of The Glasgow and South Western Railway. After the 1923 grouping Mr Whitelegg joined Beyer Peacock and Co Ltd as General Manager, retiring in 1930.

In April 1957 the Western Region West of England line saw its first Pullmans since the days of the "Torquay Pullman". The reason was a dockers dispute at Southampton resulting in passengers from the RMS "Queen Mary" being transhipped at Plymouth from Cherbourg. Trains of SR Pullman car stock was worked from Plymouth (Millbay Docks) to Paddington by "King" and "Castle" Class locomotives. The 4-4-0 "City of Truro" was at this time regularly working the 12.42 pm Didcot to Southampton, and 4.56 pm return, via Newbury and Winchester (Chesil) of course.

New locomotives were being built in profusion in March 1957, two diesel-electric 0-6-0's; four class "5" 4-6-0's; two class "4" 4-6-0's; two class "4" 2-6-0's; one class "2" 2-6-2T's and five class "9F" 2-10-0's.

Le Awayday à Lyon — **Mike Walker** /

Recently I found myself with a free day in Paris so the opportunity was taken to sample the SNCF's new high speed service south to Lyon. Much has been reported of this project in the press, not least the £800m. it cost, so what is it really like?

On arrival at Paris Gare de Lyon early on a cold December Sunday morning, TGV sets 11 and 23 were already standing in the station awaiting the 07.15 departure of train 607. Seat reservations are mandatory, and necessary for despite the early hour and use of two sets in multiple, most of the 772 seats were occupied.

There is no denying the TGV is an impressive machine. The power cars have a sleek nose with high set wrap-around cab windows. The passenger cars are low slung slab sided vehicles with air operated sliding plug doors. The whole train is finished in a striking orange livery with dark grey window surrounds, lined out in white and a broad white band below the windows.

The majority of the TGV units are dual-class "2 + 8" formations consisting of a driving power car, motor van first, two trailer firsts, a trailer buffet second, three trailer seconds, a motor second and another driving power car. Sets 33 - 38 are to be all first class. The two power cars are carried on two four wheeled monomotor bogies and are slightly over 70' long. The roofs are equipped with two pantographs one for 25kv 50Hz AC operation and the other for 1500v DC. When operating, all appropriate pantographs are raised. The power cars are rated at 4,325hp each, slightly less when working on DC lines. Solid state rectification and power control is employed. Braking from high speed down to about 100km/h is by electro-rehostatic, or regentative means, after which disc brakes take over. The traction motors are mounted in the car body, not on the bogie, to reduce unsprung weight, final drive being by a carden shaft and bogie mounted gearbox as on our own APT. TGV's 81 - 87 are to have power cars capable of operation on the German/Swiss 15kv 16⅔Hz AC system as well as the two French systems.

The eight passenger cars are each around 64ft long, short by modern standards in Europe, and are articulated, riding on nine bogies. The outermost bogies are driven by a motor in the car body and are similar to those on the adjacent power cars. All are air conditioned using aircraft type equipment. The interior of the second class is a little basic to one used to the refinements of a BR Mk.III. The floor is covered with rubber and the 2 + 2 face to back seats are trimmed in vynil, either green, blue or black. However, they proved more comfortable than they look and do recline slightly. The walls are trimmed in a blue cloth up to and including the parcel racks, which gives a warmer appearance than the clinical creams and whites on a Mk.III. First class is more like BR decor with 2 + 1 face to back seating in orange-brown cloth, orange curtains and brown carpets. Illuminated signs at the end of each car show the location and status of the toilets and buffet. The former are of the latest aircraft style while the latter serves drinks, continental breakfasts and light meals. English style - chips with everything - a la microwave!

So much for the technical details, how does TGV perform? Well at 07.15 the train left Paris and once clear of the city speed built up to around 100mph, the maximum permitted for the first 90 miles to Ct. Florentin which still uses the old PLM grade many lower speed restrictions abound on this section for sharp curves and junctions. Because of the noiseless iron inside the train, TGV does

not tilt, so the degree of super-elevation on some of the curves must be quite excessive despite the passage of slow local passenger and freight trains.

At St. Florentin we slowed to negotiate the connection onto the completed portion of the new high speed line and promptly came to a stand for 13 minutes. An apology was made over the p.a. and having finally got the all clear we took off. With no less than 23 hp/ton (APT 17.5hp/ton and HST 12hp/ton) the performance is fantastic, taking only 5 minutes or so to reach the current line speed of 260 km/h (162mph). The new line, of which 168 miles are currently in use, is a magnificent piece of civil engineering and a great contrast to all existing railways. Laid out for eventual 300km/h running (187½mph) it has gentle, well super elevated curves. The gradients are testimony to TGV's great power. This line does not bother with cuttings or tunnels to negotiate hills but instead goes over the top with gradients as steep as 1 in 28! At one point the line climbs steeper than a parallel main road winding up a hill, yet the speed remins a steady 160mph power on uphill, coasting down. There is one speed restriction not for a bend but where a 1 in 28 climb becomes a 1 in 28 descent and speed is reduced to 137mph to prevent the TGV becoming airborne at the apex!

Two intermediate stations are provided at Macon and Montchanin, train 607 pausing briefly only at the latter. Both have loop lines off the main line serving the platforms which have well designed red brick and glass buildings and plenty of shelter. The pointwork for these loops and the regular emergency crossovers is barely noticeable even at 160mph. The track is of course pf long welded rails on concrete sleepers, although these consist of a block under each rail joined by a tie bar.

This brings us to the ride which, frankly, was a little disappointing. On both the old and new track there is a slight but constant lateral oscilation. The ride is nothing like as bad as the normal WCML offering but fails to match the superb ride of an HST on the WR's billiard table out of Paddington. The new track is still of course bedding down and much overnight tamping work appears to be in progress whilst the SNCF is still fine tuning the TGV suspension of air and coil springs which should improve matters. Sound insulation is second to none. One could pass another TGV and not know it unless one looked out of the window, despite a closing speed of over 300mph!

No fixed signals are displayed alongside the new line, instead a cab display indicates the state of the track and any speed restrictions etc. to the driver.

The original PLM route is rejoined just north of Lyon and the final approach to the city is round a series of sharp curves and several short tunnels before the stop at Lyon Botteaux. From here it is a short journey to the TGV's terminus at Lyon Perrache which is reached by a viaduct over the River Rhone which was in flood, as was the Siene at Paris and much of the countryside between. Arrival at Lyon was 10 minutes late due to the delay at St. Florentin.

As befits the second city in France, Lyon Perrache is a busy station with a constant stream of trains arriving and departing, hauled by a variety pf electric and diesel locomotives sporting SNCF's exotic styling and liveries. Venerable emu and dmu sets provided a contrast with the TGV, whose Grenoble connection was formed of one of the ETG gas turbine multiple units.

The return journey was by train 618, the 11.50 from Lyon, which having called at Botteaux, runs non-stop to Paris. Again two train sets were used, Nos. 25 and 27, and were well loaded. They covered the 265 miles from Lyon Perrache to Paris Gare de Lyon in 2 hours 45 minutes, arriving 2½ minutes early, at an average of 96.3 mph. The 168 miles of new line took a mere 65 minutes or a staggering 155.07mph average! Unfortunately my seat was on the wrong side both ways to read the kilometre posts, so an accurate log was not possible.

At present 17 trains operate daily each way, thirteen provide a basic hourly Paris-Lyon service, three of which continue to St. Etienne. The other four operate via Dijon and a shorter section of the new route. There are also three daily round trips from Paris to Geneva via Lyon Botteaux. When the new Paris-St. Florentin line opens in 1983 there will be an even more frequent service and a flat 2 hour schedule between Paris and Lyon. Air Inter, France's internal airline is known to be very worried about the new trains. The fare is 318 francs return (about £30) with a supplement of 8.50f on some trains.

I left the TGV highly impressed at the courage and commitment of both the SNCF and French government. The investment has been high, 20 times BR's APT project, but the heavy loadings appear to justify the gamble. If the Channel Tunnel gets built we may see a modified version of the TGV working into London, who knows? Certainly one is left asking even bigger questions about the viability of APT and the whole attitude of our governments to BR.

Footnote

TGV not only provides the worlds fastest passenger service, on the 26th February 1981, slightly modified TGV 16 set up a new world speed record of 380km/h or 236.12mph! Several test runs have seen standard TGV's operate easily at just over 200mph. It seems the Blue Ribband will be in France for some time to come.

125 YEARS AGO

On 19 December 1856 The Bucks Free Press printed its first edition which consisted of only 4 pages and cost 1½d. For such a small paper there were a remarkable number of railway items which are reproduced below. The present paper costs 15p and has 32 pages.

ADDRESS!!

—o—

THAT Wycombe, one of the most important towns in Buckinghamshire — the centre of a large parochial Union—and of a County Court District—a Corporate Town sending two representatives to the imperial legislature and possessing a large manufacturing population, and many institutions for moral and intellectual advancement, should be destitute of a **weekly organ of communication** with its extensive neighbourhood, has often been matter of surprise; still more manifest has been this want since the opening of the Branch Railway from Maidenhead; the old county divisions are now of little importance, the railroad having bound in a new and enduring tie districts which disregard these old arrangements. It is this newly formed district of the Wycombe and Maidenhead Railway and the associated neighbourhoods that the "**South Bucks Free Press**" proposes to enter upon and diligently to cultivate.

The line was opened in 1854 2 years before the founding of the newspaper.

A dreadful and distressing accident took place on Thursday last, at Louth, Lincolnshire, by which an estimable clergyman was, in a few seconds, deprived of life. The Rev. W. Mason, vicar of Bilsby, near Alford, was standing on the platform with one of his daughters, waiting for a passenger train, by which he purposed returning home. He had on a long coat. On a sudden an engine belonging to a goods train rushed past, the crank connecting the driving wheels caught his coat, whirled him several times round, and tossed him dead on the platform.

Reverend gentlemen were and still are known for their railway travels but they must have been somewhat careless for two of them to get killed in a short space of time

The Rev. W. Snell, curate of Fleet, Lincolnshire, died at Hornsea from injuries received on the Great Northern Railway. The directors took one of his sons into their service—the Snell now in prison on a charge of fraud.

Mr. Senior, a clothier, of Dewsbury, has been accidently crushed to death, at the Doncaster Station, by the buffers of two carriages.

At the Doncaster Railway Station, a few days ago, no fewer than sixteen carriages had their handles wrenched off and carried away.

Tester, one of the allege ullion robbers of the South-Eastern Railway Company, was, in September, 1855 (five months after the enormous robbery was effected), appointed traffic-superintendent of the Royal Swedish Railway, with a large salary, having received from his employers testimonials of the most highflown character. And yet it is said that his collusion with the gold robbers was suspected from the first. The revelations of November, 1856, led to his retirement from the Swedish Railway.

THAME RAILWAY.

To the EDITOR of the "SOUTH BUCKS FREE PRESS."

Sir,

Not being a judge of omens I do not know whether to auger well or not for the success of your paper from the fact that at the very moment you are starting to supply the Wycombe Railway district, an attempt is being made to convert the Wycombe Branch into a Thame Branch. I hope however that your success will be beyond your anticipations, while I also hope that the attempt to carry the Wycombe Railway on to Thame will prove utterly abortive.

The Wycombe Railway according to statements made by competent authority to a meeting of the Great Western Shareholders, is the very best paying branch they have and has also been asserted to be the most profitable branch in England with one or two exceptions; while at the same time it has been proved before the magistrates when the rating of the Branch was appealed against that it was worked at a loss of £300 per mile. From this we may fairly infer that the Great Western could prove a similar result to the Wycombe Branch shareholders if the fact of their having leased the line to the Great Western did not render it unnecessary, and we may also fairly infer that if the Branch were worked alone, however great the trade, something like such a loss would infallibly fall upon the shareholders.

Now let us see how this state of things applies to the extension of the line. First, the Wycombe line must be reconstructed to make it a double line and to avoid some of the extraordinarily steep inclines and sharp turns. Besides this almost every station is in a hole, so that the engines very often have to back some distance to get the assistance of an impetus to enable trains to leave the station. How would the cost of such alterations suit the shareholders of the present branch? It answers every purpose for which it was intended thoroughly well, and affords to the public greater accommodation in proportion to the traffic than any other, which must be entirely altered if carried on to Thame.—Why not therefore let such a state of things alone?

Let us suppose however an attempt is made to carry on the line to Thame without altering the present line in any way and what will be the result? why that we shall have three trains a day at the outside, a sad falling off for the neighbourhood availing themselves of the five and a most imperfect supply for the district further down. A statement has appeared that to secure even such facilities by such a line Thame and its neighbourhood must become responsible for £30,000; but how can such a sum be expected to make fifteen more miles of railway even by the Thame people in their eager anticipation of railway accommodation? They cannot coolly calculate upon less than £10,000 per mile, and though a great part may be borrowed the shares must be liable for the interest. Then look down towards Thame and see what trade for a Railway can reasonably be expected there when it has already been proved before a Committee of the House of Commons that there is no probability of their being sufficient to justify an outlay however small it would be.

Depend upon it this movement is only set on foot by the Great Western Railway to answer their own purpose, and a main feature in their calculation is that of excluding disagreeable competition. They know well enough that as cheaper and more ready means of constructing railways come into use it cannot be many years before a more direct line from London to Oxford is wanted, and then would be the time for Thame to be really well accommodated. I would therefore advise them to pause before they encourage a little line and think for how many years, and perhaps for ever, this imperfect branch may be the means of stopping a really good trunk line.

I say to the landowners see that you have a really good line before you consent to have your estates cut to pieces, and remember that having a bad line will not only most certainly at some day be a great means of preventing a better one being made, but will do all the damage that a good one would, while the advantage of the inferior accommodation such a line would afford to the adjoining property is very doubtful.

I say to the proposed shareholders take care that you do not invest your money for the benefit of the Great Western Railway instead of your own; and bear in mind however good an offer they may make you they have already been paying hardly any dividends at all, and who knows how soon the active competition of other Railways may prevent their being able to make good any reckless bargain. And do not forget also, if you think of working the line with them how easy it is for them to prove a loss instead of gain, and how still more certain the loss would be if you work the line by yourselves.

I say finally to the public do all you can to keep this little Branch as it is. It affords unusually great advantages to you and pays a fair remuneration to the Shareholders, although I feel sure the latter might be increased by lowering the fares, and giving greater facilities for Goods Traffic, such for instance, as is now afforded by the North Western line.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

High Wycombe, Dec. 17, Q.

The writer did not get his wish as the Thame extension was built only 6 years later in 1862 and 2 years later was in Oxford.

The comments on the quality of the line was echoed by MacDermot in his "History of the GWR where he said " It was a single line of cheap construction".

The leasing of the line by the GWR from the Wycombe Railway for a fixed rent was not an unusual arrangement; there were several examples of this. The shareholders had a bargain because they received 5% whereas the GWR interest rate in 1856 was only 2¾% and stayed around that for nearly 30 years.

Who was the writer of the letter? He must have been well-known locally to be given so much space. I suspect it was the owner of the newspaper.