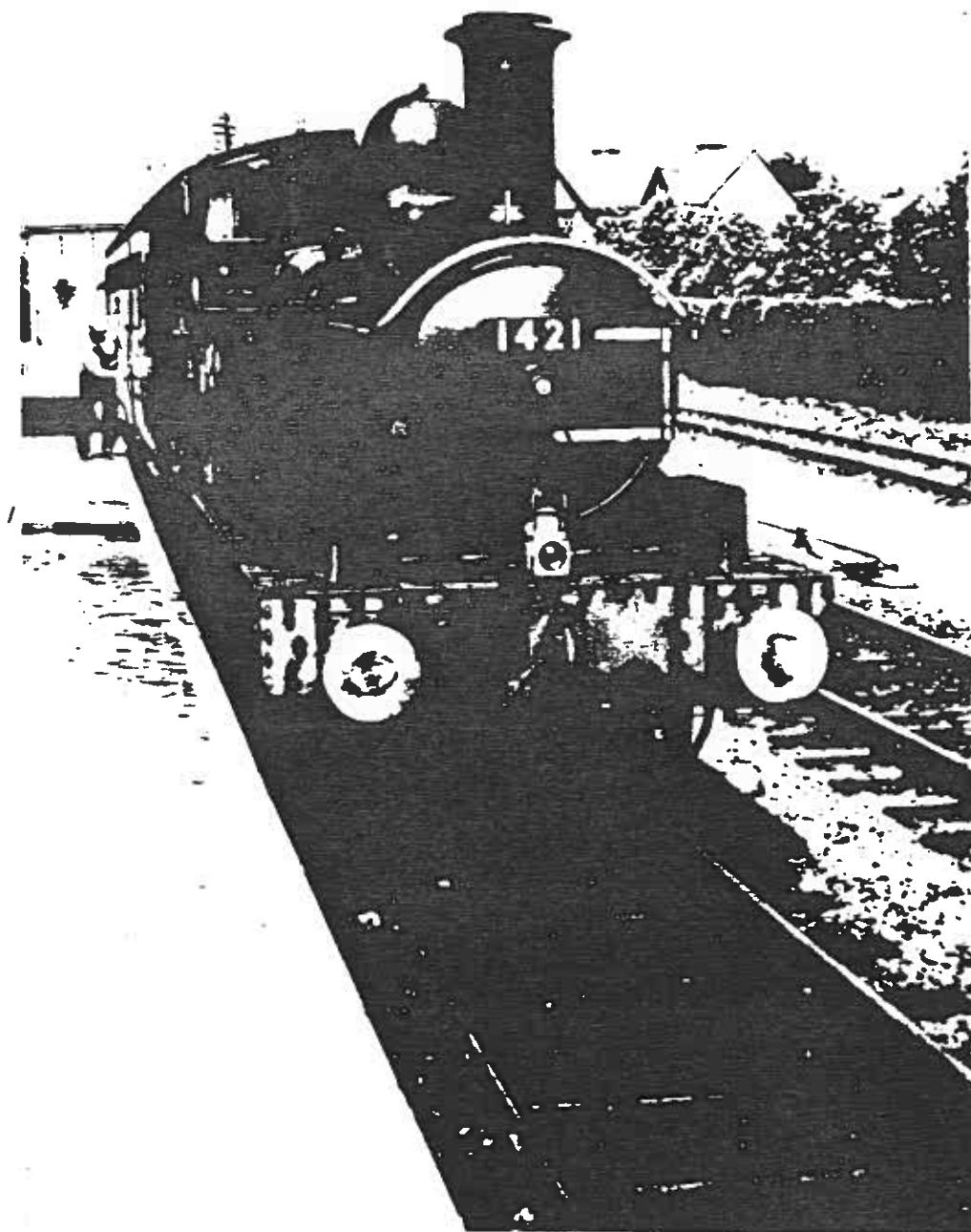


*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

WISH  
A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO  
ALL OUR MEMBERS





# Marlow & District Railway Society

Please reply to:

THE MARLOW DONKEY NO. 26 29

DECEMBER 1983

## THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS -

### A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE MARLOW AND DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

It was in September 1976 that my wife noticed a small advertisement in a local newspaper. "There's a course about the GWR to be given this term in Great Marlow School. The lecturer will be a Mr.R.D. Bowen. Why don't you go along?" I did, and thoroughly enjoyed the ten lectures. At the end of term it was proposed that a society should be formed and a meeting in the nearby Marlow Donkey public house was arranged. At this meeting a constitution was drawn up and the aims of the new society were stated:- "To increase knowledge and to further interest in all aspects of standard and narrow-gauge railways by means of discussion, films, talks by visiting speakers and by visits to centres of railway interest." A committee was formed under the chairmanship of Les Spicer. Mine hosts, Terry and Barbara Cole, would provide a suitable room for monthly meetings.

Newsletter No.1 appeared in April 1977 and the first programme of talks was included. Steve Lewis volunteered to talk about the Great Central revival at Loughborough, Bas and Roy were asked to remember earlier years in the Oxford and Bedford areas. Before long further speakers were contacted. Dave Cotterill talked of a visit to the Isle of Man, Mike Hanscomb dazzled us with science - signalling and telegraphy wizardry. An early trip by members took us to Swindon, Weymouth and Cransmore. We shall always remember the sight of Stan Verrinder standing by his oft-quoted platform seat at Maiden Newton station. The journey to see the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on the 17th of July will never be forgotten. We set off in an elderly double-decker bus which "died" on Putney Bridge, continued in an ancient Green Line coach, and finished the day pushing the latter vehicle from Marlow Bottom to the town end of Bobmore Lane. A graphic description of this day's adventures (and misadventures) was contributed by Malcolm Campbell for the next newsletter.

Another notable journey was the Thames Valley Rambler of the 29th of October. In a 3-car dmu we explored branch lines between Slough and Bicester (LNWR).

12...

It was during the summer of 1977 that we welcomed as a new member Mr. W.H. McAlpine of Fawley Hill. Little did we know then of our eventual involvement with his private railway and museum.

We were saddened towards the end of the year to learn of the untimely death of one of our members, Norman Aston-Smith. He was very well known for his railway interests particularly as they were connected with our own local line. A platform seat at Bourne End Station bears a brass plate to his memory and members attended a short unveiling ceremony.

Another 1977 journey was the Midland Jubilee well reported in our newsletter by Mike Norris. His grimy-faced delight watching from the carriage window his favourite A4 Sir Nigel Gresley should have been photographed for posterity. Other steam locomotives involved on this excursion were King George V, Princess Elizabeth and Clan Line.

At the 1978 AGM Les Spicer stood down as Chairman. He was thanked for his help in the successful launching of the Society and was replaced by Bas Woodward. Bas has held this position during the past six years.

1978 saw the first of our visits to the Baie de Somme Railway in France. The party travelled by mini-bus and stayed at a hotel in St. Valery. Society journeys included a trip to the Isle of Wight and after a short look at the Brockham Railway Museum a pleasant afternoon on the Bluebell Line. An evening was happily spent in Amersham signal-box and a Saturday morning at Willesden Traction Maintenance Depot.

At the end of 1978 Mike Walker began contributing a series of articles on the Wycombe Railway and the Marlow Line. As there is no available literature at present on our local line one would have liked these articles illustrated and expanded to become our first MRDS published booklet.

On 1979 we began to use "Chiltern Trains", the brain child of John Diffey. This Chinnor-based organisation provides an excellent programme of day and two-day excursions.

We have two American members in our Society, One of these is our projectionist, Charlie Smith, who provides the visual aids and invariably works imperturbably behind the scenes on film nights. The other member, George Herrman, gave an excellent talk on American Railroads at our gathering in October 1979. We await his next talk as something special.

Our first visit to Pendon Museum of Landscape and Transport in Miniature took place in 1979. Earlier that summer our Family Excursion took us to be the narrow-gauge line at Leighton Buzzard, followed by a ride on the Umfolozi Railway at Whipsnade Zoo. A second river trip skippered by Ted Gregory was a great success. Five intrepid members paid a visit to Aberystwyth and saw the Rheidol Vale locomotives enjoying their winter rest.

In 1980 we were invited to Fawley Hill to see if our enthusiasm extended to PRACTICAL rather than sedentary activities. Mr. McAlpine would welcome assistance in getting his railway centre back in operation. Rosters of willing volunteers were formed. Eventually the organisation became the Fawley Museum Society and we have recently seen the excellent results of the hard work done by voluntary Sunday work parties.

The visit to Mount Pleasant and the Post Office Railway in London was well supported. A group of enthusiasts led by Harold Bonnett walked the Chinnor branch towards Princes Risborough. Our annual outing was to the Watercress Line in Hampshire.

Rocket 150 was an event to remember. A party of members went by mini-bus to Rainhill to celebrate the trials of 1830. We were comfortably accommodated in a Southport hotel for two nights. TV cameras filmed the event and actually showed rear views of our members perched on the top seats of one of the grandstands.

In 1981 our cross channel group went to the Chemin de Fer Froisey-Dempierre. Some of last year's "Valleybashers" forsook Wales for England and became "Fenbashers". Chiltern Trains took several of us to the Kyle of Lochalsh and the Isle of Skye. Peterborough and the Nene Valley Railway were visited in July. This unique, international collection of locomotives and rolling stock was well worth inspection.

In 1982 the Great Western Society celebrated their 21st birthday. No club visit was planned so I made my way to Didcot on my own. For some strange reason Didcot (like Quainton) has never attracted a Society visit. Keith Coaches of Aylesbury ran a very successful train/coach trip to Bristol. The Brunel "connections" were highlighted by the courier, Roger Bowen. Our July outing was to the Kent and East Sussex Railway. We saw the workshops at Rolvenden, enjoyed lunch in Tenderton and travelled behind steam to Wittersham Road Station and back.

In February 1983 our friends of the Marlow and Maidenhead Passengers' Association staged an exhibition to mark their tenth birthday. Alan Wheeler and several colleagues provided an excellent stand and incidentally increased our Society's membership. The Family Outing in July was to the Severn Valley Railway. As the "~~anti~~-double-decker" faction had been out-voted at the AGM a luxury coach was provided on this occasion.

Our newsletters have varied in content and quality. A recent "success" has been Ron Brooks' Book Review. Good reading for everyone.

In september we experienced a memorable day at Fawley Hill. We were able to enjoy a barbecue, travel behind steam and cast an appreciative eye at what has been accomplished in a comparatively short time.

1984 will be the beginning of our EIGHT year. I can only hope the Society's next seven years will be as eventful and pleasurable as the last seven.

THE NIGHTRIDER

by Alan Wheeler

The gent on the phone was quite explicit, the instrument had just been serviced by me in Maidenhead, and was once again faulty. What was I going to do about its repair - under warranty? So it came about that I went to check the equipment where they use it - Kirkcaldy, Fife (Kirkcaldy is on the north side of the Firth of Forth as Edinburgh is on the south side). How do I get there? Boss-by plane to Edinburgh, taxis to and from airports both ends. Please I want to go by train - I prefer it and its cheaper - Oh, cheaper-OK.

Consultation with timetables, great time. Travel overnight on sleeper, do job, return during the day. Kings Cross seemed the logical start for the overnight sleeper, however only one sleeper was applicable to Kirkcaldy arriving at 05.34 - a little too early for my liking, on its way to Aberdeen (08.00). Further study of BR timetables, sleeper section, produced a sleeper picking up at Birmingham New Street 23.25 and finishing at Edinburgh, vacate berth by 07.30. However the last train from Reading to Birmingham N.S. gets in nearly 1 hour earlier, further study revealed the sleeper started at Penzance, via Bristol. So HST to Bristol Parkway, 20 minutes wait would mean on train 21.37 - a reasonable hour-cost same either way. The sleeper goes up the West Coast route, my return would be HST from Edinburgh to Kings Cross, on the East Coast route then Paddington - Marlow, the only duplicated part of the route was Edinburgh/Kirkcaldy, which meant crossing the Forth Bridge-twice!

Tuesday 23rd August waiting on Reading Station for the 20.24 to Bristol Parkway a Paddington bound HST leaves, the rear unit emitting popping noises and large volume of black smoke. I board by train 1st class coach (booked 1st class all way) and departed on time. Swindon works was lit and deserted as we passed. A short wait at Bristol Parkway then 45-112 with a 2 line military name longer than the loco pulled in with 14 on. 14 coaches, 7 for Glasgow 7 for Edinburgh.

The next stop was Cheltenham where the timetable shows 1 minute stop, why we took 1 hour 35 minutes is the reason for these notes. we arrived at 22.22 right on time. Looking out from the window of my 1st class sleeper window, a number of people were on the platform adjacent to a rear coach, the signals were still red. 5 minutes later, signals still red, BR types milling around. Whats the problem? Hot box and fire! The coach had been evacuated, as the grease/oil around the axlebox had ignited. Fire extinguishers taken from the train and used on the coach. 22.30, blue flashing light accompanied by a fire engine arrive. The engine stops alongside the station railings (and me), the gates are locked but bolt cutters make short work of the padlock/chain. A hose is run down the platform to the coach and water applied to the box. 35 minutes after stopping, and with water still being applied to the box, it is still steaming. The examiner arrives from Gloucester at 23.00 23.16 the red signal goes amber and at 23.18 we moved very gently forward at about 15mph max onto a loop line just passed the station. Almost immediately a freight train overtakes us on the main line.

We come to a stand. From now on, shunters and others involved in the following movements were all done with hand signal lamps and was in itself a classic demonstration of their use. The train was parted behind the faulty coach, and we pulled forward leaving 5 of the Glasgow coaches until we returned to the main line. Handlamp signals and we travel back over a crossover and into a loop on the other side of the main lines. The faulty coach is detached and we reverse the operation. 23.50 we approach the Glasgow portion, hand signals galor, however we still managed to hit the Glasgow coaches with some force. 23.57 we depart as a 13 coach train. I go to bed.

During the night we made up some of the lost time, arriving 45 minutes late at Edinburgh. After breakfast I boarded a train pulled by 45-451 "The Queen Mother" past Edinburgh airport - closed by fog and over the Forth Bridge, misty, but still a great sight, to arrive at Kirkcaldy. After the work I boarded a 3 car DMU-front seat to side of driver for the return trip to Edinburgh. We crossed the Forth Bridge at midday in hazy sunshine, I hope the photos will show the marvelous views I had from the bridge. I boarded the Kings Cross HST at 13.00 and after a short trip on the underground, and a fast to Maidenhead, returned to Marlow at 19.00.

I had travelled 960 miles in 22½ hours. The service call? Proved to be operator problem, no reason for the visit.

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Seen at Doncaster recently. 2 ex-GWR toad brake vans coupled together. Painted bright YELLOW with white handrails.

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Competition to find worst UK station.

My entry: Manors Station, Tyne and Wear. Shown as connection between BR and Metro line. Consists of a triangular slab littered with bricks, metal etc. No complete buildings and a notice "trains stop here" had to be seen to be believed as being an operational station. (Table 46 BR timetable).

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## NORWEGIAN JOURNEY

by R.D. Bowen

Norway, a country of staggering beauty, is one which seems to be off the beat of most railway enthusiasts, indeed the last mention of its railways in "Railway Magazine" was as long ago as 1972.

A country which because of its size, shape and climate is very difficult for railways to cross saw its first railway in 1854 from Oslo to Eidsvall, a distance of 42 miles. The next line followed in 1862 but by the mid 1870's much construction was on the 3'6" gauge. By 1900 it was, however, decided to standardise on 4'8½", even though 800 miles of 3'6" gauge line had been built. The final conversion of a trunk 3'6" gauge line did not take place until 1944 under the unwelcome pressure of the German occupation.

Our own visit took us over two main lines and one spectacular branch line.

The Bergen Railway, part of the Norwegian State Railways, runs 300 miles from Bergen to Oslo, its highest point is 4266 ft. above sea level, with 200 tunnels; the longest 5 miles long. It was opened in its entirety on 1st December 1909, although the section from Bergen to Voss had been converted from 3'6" gauge on which it had been built earlier. The line truly runs across "the Roof of Norway" as even in summer the snow lies along the side of the line as it threads its way around the frozen lakes near Finse. Not surprisingly the line has 18 miles of snow sheds on it. It was electrified in 1964 and the through Oslo-Bergen journey takes about 8 hours. Long distance rolling stock is loco hauled by Norwegian built locos, shorter distance by mid 1950's built 3 car electric multiple units. Freight traffic seems heavy, not surprisingly when the only road route between Bergen and Oslo involves a ferry crossing.

The most spectacular branch line is the Flåm line which runs 12½ miles from Myrdal on the Oslo-Bergen line to Flåm at the head of the Aurland fjord. In the process it drops 2,845 ft. with a maximum gradient of 1 in 18, surely a near record for adhesion on a passenger carrying standard gauge line. The line doubles back on itself a number of times giving spectacular views, between the 20 tunnels!!!

The final line sampled was the Røros line, from Oslo to Trondheim via Hamar and Røros. Opened in 1877 the line was built of 3'6" gauge and only converted completely to standard gauge in 1944. It is now only a secondary route between Oslo and Trondheim, the alternative Dovre route being opened in 1924. The latter had been electrified but the Røros route is deiselized, using Swedish built locomotives. The Oslo to Trondheim via Dovre route journey time is 6½ hours by the latest train which has carriages which are planned to be fitted with tilting mechanisms, the older deiselized route via Røros takes 9 hours. The route is naturally very attractive and passes Hamar, the location of the Norwegian Railway Museum. It was founded in 1896 and moved to its present site in 1956. Its oldest locomotive was built by Robert Stephenson in 1861. There are 11 standard gauge and six narrow gauge loco's in its collection.

Finally of interest to many people are the tramways at Oslo and Trondheim, the only ones remaining in Norway. The Oslo lines are quite extensive, on the standard gauge, being re-equipped with modern Düwag articulated trams from Germany. Also in Oslo are a number of suburban lines, some with very handsome wooden bodied electric railcars.

The Trondheim trams are down to two routes, metre gauge. The existing trams appear quite adequate but new ones are on order, again from Germany. One route has an extensive section on its own private right of way distant from roads, no doubt the reason for retaining it. The Trondheim Transport people use a very sophisticated computerised ticket system, far in advance of any in use in England, despite the fact that it is designed and manufactured by Control Systems Ltd of Uxbridge.

Thus a brief introduction to the Railways and Tramways of Norway. A beautiful country, friendly people, clean trains running to time, the only thing you don't want is to have to pay Norwegian prices of a "half" of beer, up to £2 in some bars!



A CHRISTMAS STORY

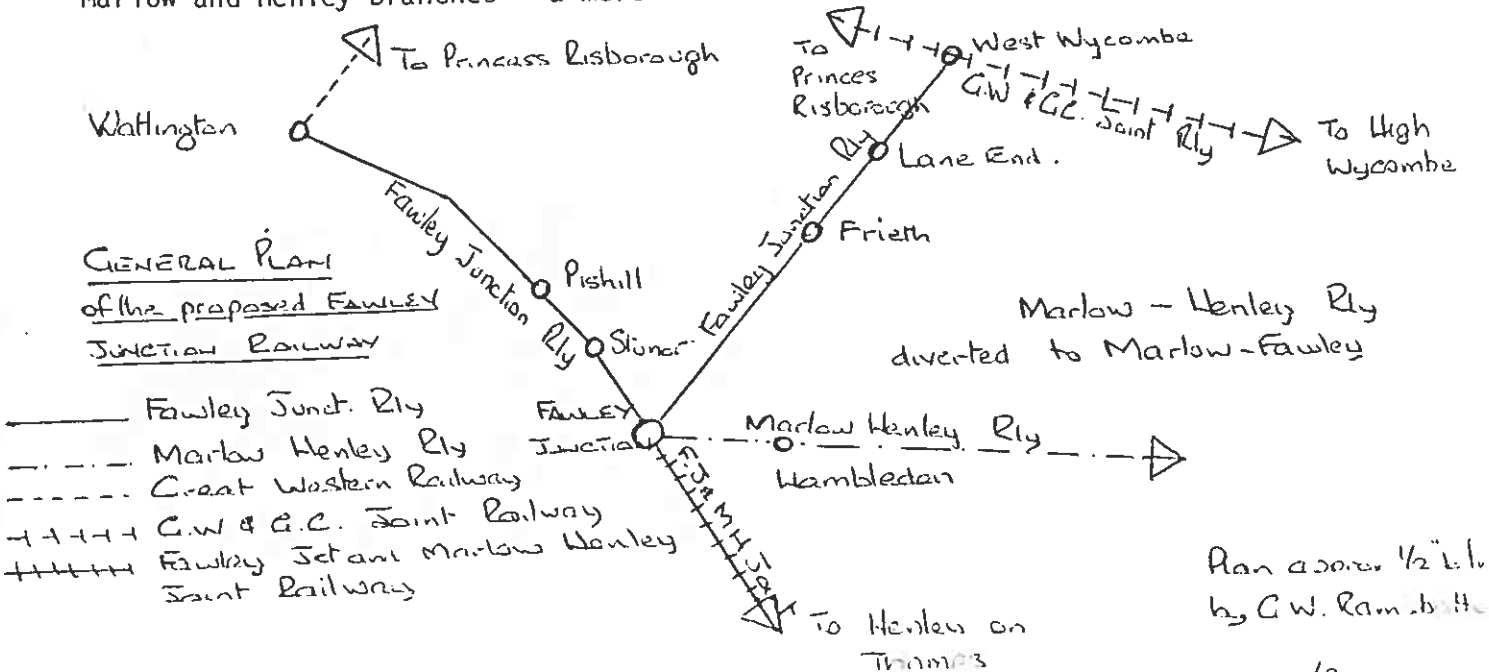
I should never have had cold bangers and pickles for supper after the Marlow and District Film evening. Mind you, I felt well enough when I turned in and put the light out. That was when I heard the loud clanking noise, not chains, but more like loose coupling rods. And then he, or perhaps I should say it, came through the bedroom wall and stopped with a long drawn out hiss. The apparition, wreathed in blue smoke, said, "I am the ghost of railways past, especially those forgotten". "What has that to do with me?" I said. He waved a green lamp at me and said, "You have the opportunity to bring the history of the Fawley Railway to the membership of the Marlow and District". "What if I don't, I said, "and in any case I have no information". His lamp changed to red, "As to the first", he puffed, "failure will mean that you will forever ride the trains up and down the valleys until you see my sister". I shuddered. "As to the second", he said, changing his lamp to yellow, "I have papers here for you to read so that history can be recorded". With this he blew out a great cloud of blue smoke, clanked a bit, and handed me a folio of papers. "I'll be back at dawn", he said. "see that you read the lot for the benefit of all. I'll have your 25p. now!", and with that he disappeared into his own smoke.

With such an awful fate in store, well, you never know, do you, I started on the papers and was soon fascinated by what was there; maps, cuttings from newspapers, bills, letters enough for a dozen books. It didn't seem long before he was clanking back, and pausing only to touch me for another 25p, as it was a new day, he gathered up his papers and saying, "Remember the valleys", he was gone.

I looked at the clock, I'd only been in bed an hour or so, but the information he gave me was luminously clear in my mind. The following history and description of the Fawley Railway may be of interest. It is essential for my peace of mind because I wouldn't recognise his sister anyway.

AN HISTORICAL GUIDE  
to the  
FAWLEY RAILWAY  
embellished with  
original illustrations

The FAWLEY RAILWAY was originally proposed early in 1901 by the Mayor and Burgesses of Fawley, when they heard that plans were being made to link the Marlow and Henley Branches - a mere 2 miles of track would suffice.





No. 34 Passing the Box.

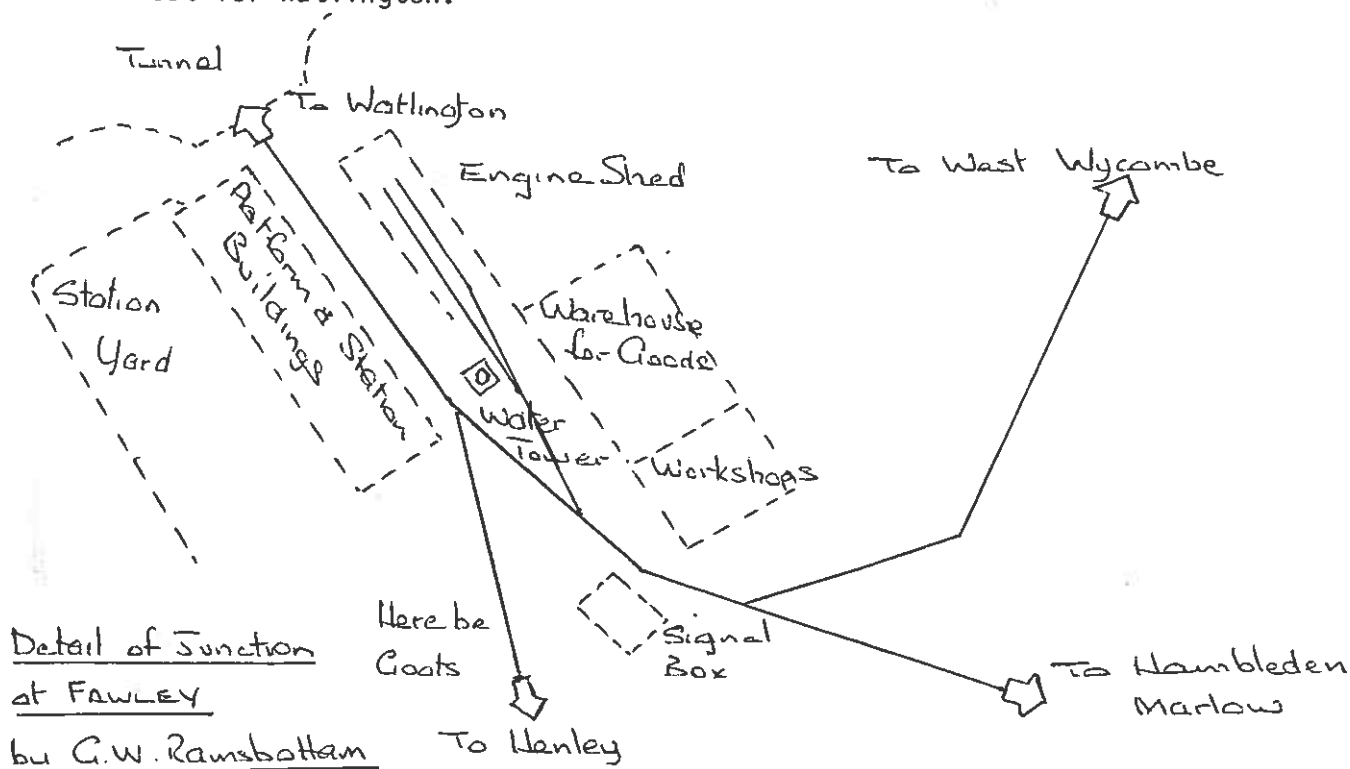


Station Buildings.

The Goat Gate.



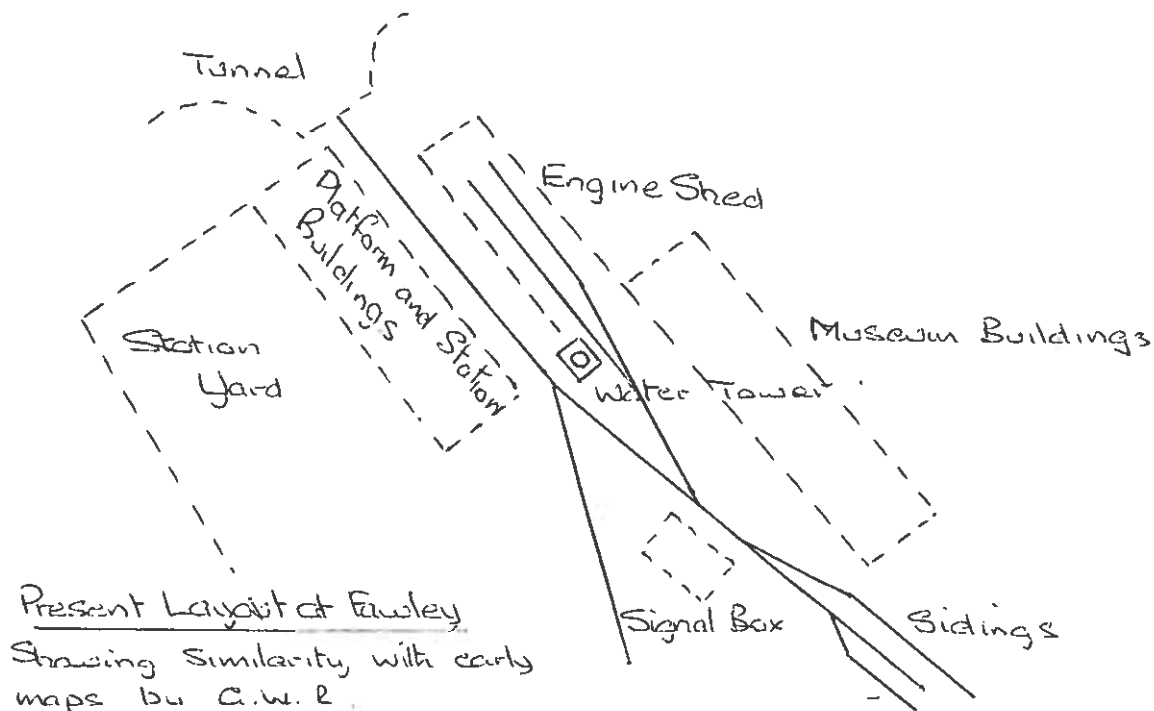
It is recorded that much enthusiasm was given to a further proposal that another 6 miles be laid to Watlington to form an end on junction. There was no lack of finance. The farmers and horse breeders of Fawley had always had difficulty in getting rid of surplus manure and now the railway would transport the suddenly valuable commodity to the market gardens of the Thames Valley and the Vale of Aylesbury. Rumours had just reached Fawley of certain goings-on at the Caves in West Wycombe and some of the more worldly council members felt that plenty of traffic would be generated in that direction, and as prospective Directors they might get a free pass. No word of dissent was heard and Parliamentary approval was obtained in 1903. Brunel was approached to build the railway track but as he was heavily engaged at the time trying to trace a sixpence he had swallowed, it seems that one of his assistants, or perhaps it was an assistant to the assistant, commenced the work. With so much local enthusiasm, relatively unlimited funds, and a desire to make his name, work was commenced in all three directions at once. South East for the Marlow-Henley junction, North East for West Wycombe and North West for Watlington.



It was unfortunate that for some considerable time the bustle and noise of the buildings hid from notice the fact that the Marlow-Henley connection was not to be and that the West Wycombe Purity League had closed the caves. When this was realised the proprietors laid up the work done and the line was eventually lost under trees and bushes.

One day, however, Jasper, Mr. Bill's dog, while looking for a lost bone, discovered what remained of the works and set off a sequence of events that led to the present Fawley Railway. What does the visitor see now of the works so eagerly commenced?

Of the West Wycombe branch, alas, nothing remains. It appears that the available permanent way was lifted to form sidings on the Marlow extension. Something approaching a mile of the Henley track still survives, however, and the following sketch map can be compared with Mr. Ramsbottom's map of 1901.



The sidings house some 14 assorted vehicles. The tunnel, bored with such high hopes, just stops but the workings remain dry. The Station has now been restored to its originally intended glory, while the Signal Box instruments now gleam and work for a junction which now can never be.

Two steam engines are still at work although now they are assisted by a Diesel.

A museum has been established which not only houses some things remaining from the Fawley project but has preserved many interesting items from other larger and more successful projects.

Next year I'll leave out the pickles!

R.T.B.

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BOOK REVIEW

Ron Brooks

Christmas is nearly with us and you couldn't do better than leave a marked review in strategic places - or you could simply send it direct to Father Christmas.

BRITISH STEAM RAILWAYS AND LOCOMOTIVES by O.S. Nock      Blandford £6.95  
0 7137 1312 7  
0 7137 0350 4

This volume is really two previous works combined to give over 380 colour illustrations of engines, rolling stock, signals and heraldry. In the usual Blandford format all the information, and there is lots of it, for each of the illustrations, is assembled into two places. I usually look at the pictures but the text is a mine of information.

BOOK REVIEW - continued

GREAT STEAM LOCOMOTIVES OF ALL TIME by O.S. Nock

Blandford £3.50  
0 7137 0787 9

Sixty-four colour pictures. Text (see comments above) well up to expectation but printed in old style monotype which gives it a clarity you had forgotten. Keep your glasses on, however, to enjoy the illustrations all the more.

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ATMOSPHERIC RAILWAYS by C. Hadfield

David & Charles £4.50

George Stephenson, or was it Queen Victoria, referred to it as "that atmospheric caper". Like so many incredible Victorian inventions it was "a damned close run thing" (as the Duke of Wellington said of Waterloo). With plastics instead of leather for the seals and telephones to the pumping stations the Underground might well have been pneumatic instead of electric. Enthralling.

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THE COUNTRY RAILWAY by David St. John Thomas

David & Charles

This, I rather suspect, is what we turn up at meetings for - the very feel of the railway in times goneby when the railway really meant something and you would have thought the branch line, your branch line, would go on for ever. Father Christmas could well take the hint.

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RAILWAY JUNCTION DIAGRAMS 1915

David & Charles £7.50  
7153 4347 5

This is a reprint of an "in house" Railway Clearing House publication used to calculate distances, and thus rates for freight; but the maps are sheer enjoyment and the railways of 1915 are complex indeed. The maps for the London area can nearly been assembled to give continuous coverage - if that's the sort of thing that grabs you!

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NORTH AMERICAN NOTEBOOK - Annual Review of '83

The end of the year is a good time to reflect on the events of 1983. The year started with the complete merger of the "Family Lines"; that is the Seaboard Coast, Louisville & Nashville and Clinchfield, into the Seaboard System Inc. (SBD). The new road remains as one half of CSX with the Chessie. The Norfolk Southern Corporation has purchased a major holding in the Santa Fe which brings the possibility of the nation's first single owner transcontinental a step closer. Canadian National's Grand Trunk subsidiary continues to seek control of the Milwaukee, whilst Canadian Pacific's US subsidiary, the Soo, has been locked in battle with the Chicago & North Western for the purchase of ex-Rock Island track from the Twin Cities to Kansas City. If the Soo is successful it may seek rights over, or purchase, the Kansas City Southern and give Candians direct access to the Gulf. Three roads have been up for

sale, CN's Central Vermont (since withdrawn), the Illinois Central Gulf (no offers), and government owned Conrail which announced its first operational profit in 1983 and which may be purchased by its employees, like our own National Freight Corporation.

The passenger business saw some changes. On 1st January Conrail, as a precursor to sale, got out of the business of Congressional instructions and passed their remaining commuter services to the states of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania which prompted a series of major strikes over employment contracts. Down in Georgia, the Seaboard closed a chapter in railroad history during the summer when it withdrew mixed train facilities (passenger accommodation) from its Atlanta to Augusta main line freights and the branches to Washington, GA and Macon. The last survivors of the pre-motor car age. Amtrak started the year chilled by the recession but has enjoyed a steady improvement since, aided by the appointment of a new President, W. Graham Claytor Jr., late of the Southern, who has done much to improve on train service and meals. The only major Amtrak service change of the year was the rerouting of the "San Francisco Zephyr" which unfortunately led to the demise of the finest train of all, the "Rio Grande Zephyr". Even the gods appeared to look on this unfavourable.

The rerouting was to have taken effect on April 25th, but the spring saw the south west experience some of its worst storms for years, remember the Royal Tour? On April 14th a vast mudslide cut the DRGW at Thistle, Utah. A six mile diversion had to be built, including a 1,000 yard tunnel. This was opened on July 4th allowing the new "California Zephyr" to take up its intended course twelve days later. The same storms played havoc with the Southern Pacific which suffered over 12 million dollars of uninsured losses in California alone, at one stage hardly any main lines were passable, whilst the subsidiary North Western Pacific closed for good having suffered 3 million dollars worth of damage.

Other than washout repairs, the major construction work of the year was in Canada where the British Columbia Railway has been pressing on with its 80 mile branch line from Anzac to the new Tumbler Ridge coal field. Due to open early in 1984 it includes a 5½ mile tunnel and will be electrified at 50kV.

The BCR therefore has seven 6,000hp electrics on order from GM incorporating ASEA components. Generally motive power sales remain slow due to the recession. General Motors have started to sell more of its 3,500hp "50 Line" including the first to Canada, four SD50's to CN. by contrast only one of the once popular SD40-2 (the 4512th!) was sold, Soo 6617, in 4/83. Recently General Electric sales have started to overhaul General Motors. To reinforce their attack, GE unveiled their "Dash 8" range in February which signals the third generation diesels. The new models bristle with advanced systems and for the first time an on board computer system monitors all systems and provides an interface between the driver and his machine to ensure the locomotive operates in the most efficient and economic method possible. Prototype trails have been successful and pre-production models are due. The "Dash 8" represents the biggest advance since the alternator-rectifier replaced the generator in the early sixties. GM's rival design is about the start prototype testing but awaits the new 710 engine before production can start.

On the debit side, the summer saw the final demise of the classic Pennsylvania GGI's. These 4-620hp 2-C+C-2 electrics have been the trade mark of the New York to Washington line for 49 years. Of the original 139 only 8 survived at the end on commuter service with New Jersey Transit with a further 13 in preservation. Canadian Pacific have retired the nations only GM 'E' units and the last Baldwin diesel. 7070 a 1948 DSA-4-10 switcher. Representing an earlier age, the Southern Pacific's GS4a 4-8-4 No.4449 has returned to excursion work in Oregon, whilst a fifth Rio Grande 2-8-2 and an ex-Rio Grande Southern 2-8-0 (42) have returned to service on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge line in Colorado.

The freight business continues to bump along in the doldrums awaiting, like us all, the promised but seemingly ever distant up turn in the US economy. Of the 35 class 1 railroads only four, the Milwaukee, Duluth Winnipeg & Pacific, Chicago & North Western and the Florida East Coast, could report increased carloading and freight revenue in the first quarter of 1983. The first three can thank extra cross border traffic from Canada. By contrast the Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific remained stable whilst up to 20% declines were experienced by the Bessemer and Missabe roads due to nearby factory closures, the Delaware & Hudson and Denver & Rio Grande Western, both due to nearby mergers. The latters problems would not be helped by the weather! However, new systems and trains were launced. Both Conrail and the Illinois Central Gulf started to operate the Bi-Model Corporation's "Road-Railer" equipment on selected routes, remember BR's experiments with similar equipment 20 odd years ago? Taking the honours from the Santa Fe's "Super C", the Seaboard's new "Orange Blossom Special", a container/Piggy-back flyer, is now the nation's fastest freight, covering the 1021 miles from Orlando, Florida to Wilmington, Delaware in 22 hours, an average of 70 mph, who says American trains are slow?

Finally, a word of explanation on the meaning of "class I" etc. This is a grading used by the Institute Commerce Commission and Association of American Railroads to group roads by annual revenue. Class I cover those who have more than 50 million dollars in revenues and there are currently 35, all the big boys of course. Class 2 covers the range 10 to 50 million dollars and 21 roads whilst Class 3, below 10 million dollars, covers the many short lines across the nation.

Well, thats a brief review of the milestones of 1983. Next year will no doubt unfold further major changes which will be reviewed in the December 1984 "Donkey".

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME AT 19.45 HOURS FOR 20.00 HOURS

- 19th January 1984 - Annual General Meeting followed by members slides.
- 16th February 1984 - South American Railways. Talk with slides by our globe-trotting member Peter Greatorex.
- 15th March 1984 - Great Central Railway. A speaker from the Main Line Steam Trust telling us of their railway.
- 12th April 1984 - Railways in South Africa. Talk with slides by our member Ray Freeman.

### GREAT LITTLE TRAINS OF WALES - LECTURES

On Thursday from 10th January for 10 weeks at 19.30 hours at the Roans County Secondary School, Amersham, tutored by your Secretary. Details from Keith Simpson at the school, Telephone: Amersham 6224.

### GREAT LITTLE TRAINS OF WALES - EXCURSIONS

On 31st March and 1st April 1984 visiting Talyllyn and Ffestiniog Railways, overnight in Criccieth. By rail from Western Region Stations, also Euston and Watford Junction. Coach transfers on Sunday. Out via Cambrian Coast Line, return via North Wales Main Line. Escorted by your Secretary. Details from Kingston Tours, 33, Kingsbury, Aylesbury, Telephone: Aylesbury 33999.

### ANNUAL SUMMER EXCUSION

Provisional date is Sunday 15th July. Great Central has been suggested.

### 25 YEARS AGO

R.D. Bowen

As 1958 turned into 1959 the future seemed bright for British Railways. On November 26th the first a.c. electric locomotive on BR, the converted Metropolitan - Vickers gas turbines engine, made its initial run in public from Wilmslow to Mauldeth Road on the Styal line of the London Midland Region. Early in January the first of 13 2,500 h.p. d.c. electric locomotives was completed at Doncaster Works with English Electric equipment for the Southern Region. Clearly it seemed an "electric" future for the railways.

Yet the January 1959 "Railway Magazine" reported an editorial in a recent daily newspaper "that the time was approaching when long journies by motor coach could be made at high speed over the new trunk roads (motorways) at a fraction of the cost of railway travel." Who may yet be right 25 years on?

BR was still in the thick of its modernisation plan. The first of 20 1,200 h.p. mixed traffic locos No.D5700 was delivered from Metropolitan - Vickers, the unique Co-Bo class with a Crossley V8 two stroke engine. These were intended for Midland Division trains based at Derby. Also entering service were 20 single unit diesel cars built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co for the London and Birmingham areas of the Western Region.

Closures occurred too; on January 4th 1959 Monmouth lost both its two branches. A number of small stations on main lines were also closed on the same date. However, the new Banbury Station was opened and plans unveiled for the amalgamation of Leeds City and Central Stations.

Points of interest were the drafting of Western Region 0-6-0 Pannier Tanks on empty carriage duties at Waterloo and trails on the Folkestone Harbour branch. London Transport opened the first stage of its new depot at Upminster, On December 5th the Royal Train from Bristol arrived at Windsor behind 5057 "Earl Waldegrave" and 5035 "Coity Castle".



On a final sad note. On December 15th, 1958, the 7,331st and last steam loco to be built at Crewe works left for services, No.92250, a standard class 9 2-10-0, the highest numbered BR steam locomotive.

### SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Seventh Annual General Meeting will be held at the Marlow Donkey on Thursday 19th January, 1984 at 8.00 pm.

The members of the committee who will be standing down in accordance with the rules and will be eligible for re-election are Mike Norris, Roy Mee and Stan Verrinder. Any other paid up members who would like to serve on the Committee should send his nomination in writing to the Secretary, Roger Bowen not later than 1st January 1984. Should there be more nominations than vacancies an election will be held at the A.G.M. The new committee will meet after the A.G.M. to elect the Society's Officers for 1984.

If you have a subject for general discussion please give the Secretary prior notice so that time can be allocated.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting held on 20th January 1983.
3. Matters arising
4. Chairmans Report
5. Treasurers Report
6. Norman Aston Smith Trophy
7. Announcement of events in 1984 by the Secretary.
8. Items for general discussion
9. Election of three committee members.

The present committee is Bas Woodward (Chairman) Roger Bowen (Secretary) Mike Walker (Treasurer) Roy Mee, Mike Norris, Stan Verrinder, and Roger Woodham.

If time permits the A.G.M. will be followed by a showing of members slides. The Secretary will be pleased to receive offers in advance so that he can arrange a programme.

The Norman Aston Smith trophy is an annual award for the best article in the Marlow Donkey in the previous year.

If you have no copy of the Minutes of the last A.G.M. or Rules of the Society please ask Roger Bowen or Mike Walker for a copy.

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Treasurer wishes to remind members that Annual Subscriptions are due in January. Once again this is to be pegged at £2. Please use the form attached to this newsletter and remember to send it to the new address, "Solgarth", Little Marlow, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3RS., telephone Marlow 3899. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to "Marlow & District Railway Society".

As you are all aware our Treasurer Stan Verrinder is leaving the area to take a new assignment in Eastbourne.

We are all sorry to see him go and I know that in speaking for all past and present members of the Society we wish him well in his new post and thank him for all the time and effort in helping to give the Society the Standing it has today. Thanks Stan.

ODE TO STAN.

So to Ebbw Vale our Boyo went  
To work the engines down in Gwent  
After which he joined the Khaki train  
Newports loss but countries gain

Verrinders numbers now were military  
Everyone meaning nothing dilatory  
Relinquishing his countries arms  
Rejoined the Service Civil to spread his charms  
In Wight of Isle and Dorset too  
No place was safe from you know who  
Down at Maiden Newton Station gloom  
Ever present bench in waiting room  
Reclined this man of transportation

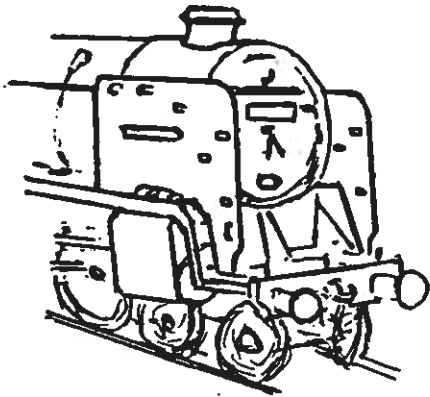
Many other places he did roam  
At Marlow now his place of home  
Renewing his love of railway propriety  
Lent help in forming our beloved Society  
Our Stan as ever to the fore  
We heard that cry of subs and more  
So off to Eastbourne now the Southern Shore

Lets say farewell but not good-bye  
Our own treasurer that wonderful guy  
So thanks again for your time and trouble  
STAN VERRINDER mines a double.

OLD BOY. MAKES GOOD

Our longer standing members will remember Andy MacMillan who married our first lady member Jenny Young before they moved out of the district. Andy is now making a name for himself in the world of model railways. Always a competent and artistic modeller, he was involved in the Pendon project for several years, he had now set up his own business building models to order under the name "Countryside Models". He has purchased an old malt house near Westbury and has a very full order book and hopes to exhibit a new layout based on the GC/Met line at exhibitions next year. He sends his best wishes to members old and new.

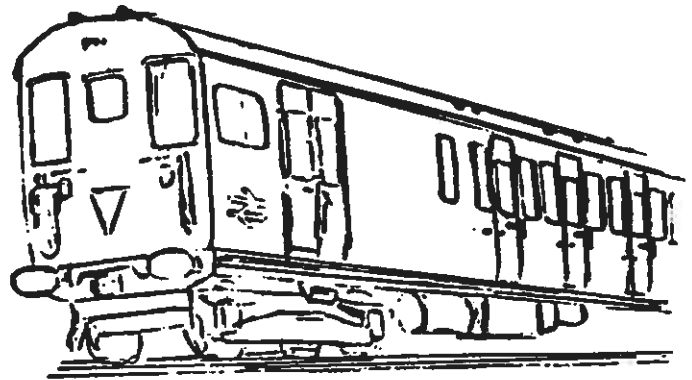
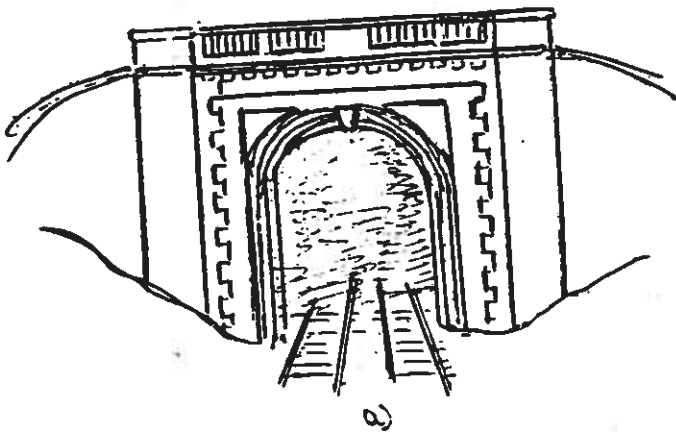
# PICTURE QUIZ



1. What region had smoke deflectors such as this on "Brittannias." ?



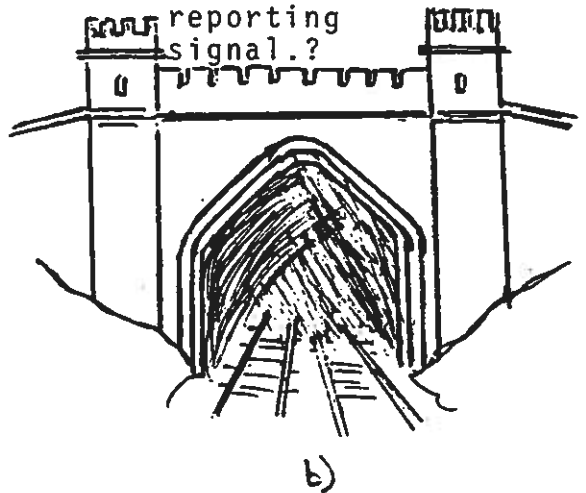
3. What does this indicate on a semaphore signal.?



2. What class of S.R. emu is this.?



4. Which W.R. train carried this reporting signal.?



5. Which tunnels. ?



6. Which operators.?



*Handwritten signature*



*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

Telephone: Marlow 3899

*Please reply to:*

Mike Walker  
Solgarth  
Little Marlow  
Bucks SL7 3RS

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

I enclose the annual subscription for renewal of my membership of the Society for the current year.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

I hereby apply for membership of the Society and agree to abide by the rules and to pay the subscriptions as set from time to time.

Name:

Address:

Tel No.

Date:

Signature:

Special Interests(if any):

The current annual subscription is £2 for the calendar year. New members joining after 1 September in the year the subscription is only £1 until the end of the year. The meeting attendance fee is 25p. Cheques etc should be made payable to the Society.

For Official Use

Subscription of £      paid

Membership card issued on:

Membership No:

Signature:

Date:

