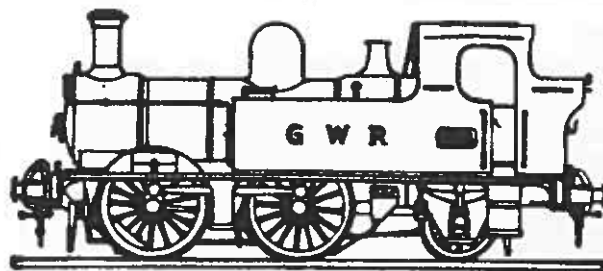


# THE MARLOW DONKEY



DECEMBER 1985 No 37

## Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Members

### FROM THE CHAIR

Several news items concerning Dai Woodham's yard at Barry Island have appeared recently. Woodham Brothers and other Barry contractors first began to cut up redundant steam locomotives in 1959. If Dai does retire soon, as he says he is planning to do, he will have been providing scrap metal for export and, more importantly, restorable steam engines for the past twenty-five years. I read that of the few locos left, only one, ex-GWR No. 3814, remains unreserved.

During these years Woodham Brothers have cut up 84 locos, mainly ex-GWR prairie and pannier tanks. However, what a remarkable supply of repairable engines has been salvaged. The final figure will approach two hundred, locos from all four of the original 1923-47 companies, and a number of survivors from British Rail's 999 "standards".

As steam approached its inevitable demise in August 1968, British Rail began to store a number of locomotives. It was a strange selection, but happily it included Evening Star, Green Arrow, Lord Nelson and Winston Churchill. Others stored were Black Five, an LNWR 0-8-0, and an LSWR 0-4-4T. A few locos went overseas, a small number reappeared in Butlin's Holiday Camps, some were purchased privately, and Swindon kept KGV under close wraps.

What would the preservation scene have been like in the eighties without the Barry locos? The Severn Valley Railway would have been SEVENTEEN engines short, the Didcot Centre

would have lacked TEN, and EIGHT others would not be in existence on the Bluebell Line. The Duke of Gloucester, Leander, two Kings, several Castles and many Halls and Manors still exist. The preponderance of ex-GWR survivors is a geographical fact of life - scrap merchants in the other regions wasted no time in the wholesale destruction of locos towed into their yards.

The exchange of preserved locomotives between the various centres has been most noticeable this year. This seems to us railway enthusiasts a thoroughly praiseworthy move. It has been a real boon to photographers visiting the centre at Didcot. The beautifully restored pannier tank from Quanton Road, the Bluebell's Duke-dog, Blue Peter and a smart Southern "Ferrier" were on the list of visitors.

As the Great Western Railway's 150th birthday celebrations come to an end, I read a number of post-scripts in the press. There are the inevitable sour comments but those who did have a very real affection for the old company have, I am sure, appreciated the attempts to mark an important anniversary in the history of our railways.

We look forward to greeting friends, old and new, at the Christmas Dinner at the Chequers on the 21st December.

A very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all our MDRS friends and their families.

*Das*

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY SOCIETY

### MEETINGS PROGRAMME

All meetings are held in the Gainsborough Suite, The Chequers, Marlow, commencing at 20.00 hrs.

Thurs. 16 January ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The agenda for the meeting is given on page 2. The formal business will be followed by a programme of short talks/slide presentations by members.

Thurs. 20 February PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Bigger and better this year! Full details are to be found on page 2. Please support this event, and don't forget a pen to vote with.

Thurs. 20 March MAINTAINING THE INTER-CITY -  
J. Cronin

Mr. Cronin is a senior engineer at the E.R. Bounds Green depot in North London and will be revealing just how an intensive Inter-City network is kept running.

Thurs. 17 April ISLE OF WIGHT RAILWAYS

It is hoped to have a speaker from the Isle of Wight Preservation Society to talk about the history of the islands railways - venue for our 1986 summer trip. (provisional)

## NEW MEMBERS:

We are delighted to welcome several new members to the Society, taking our membership back up to the half century mark again. The new faces are:- David Bradwell from Haddenham, David Abbott and Raymond Evans both of Loudwater, Robin Shepherd from High Wycombe, Geoff Styche from Early and Malcolm Taylor from Tylers Green. Welcome to you all and we hope you enjoy our activities.

Despite this increase in our ranks we still seek further members, the larger our membership the more the Society will thrive.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Attendances have been healthy this autumn and have been rewarded by an excellent range of speakers. In September, Ron White got the season off to a nostalgic start with a selection from his Colour Rail collection. British Steam in colour from 1935 to 1968 was the subject and, despite Ron's somewhat irreverent opinion of THE railway, a good time was had by all with something to suit all tastes.

October saw the return of Mike Hanscomb, accompanied as ever by an alladin's cave of visual aids. Mike's knack for making the sometimes dull subject of signalling interesting has not been blunted. A general introductory talk was followed by a lively question and answer session which could have continued all night but for closing time.

Brent Hudson's return visit in November continued his 1984 talk by taking us across the vast mysterious nation of China. As always Brent gave us a glimpse of the nation away from the railway which enhances the interest, as does his own unique style of presentation!

## THE EDDIE LEWCOCK CUP

Eddie Lewcock has generously donated a handsome trophy to the society. This will be awarded annually to the "winner of winners" in the Photographic Competition (see below). Our sincere thanks go to Eddie.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Once again as a new year approaches annual subscriptions fall due. The Treasurer is happy with our financial performance and, following last year's big rise, foresees no reason to amend rates this year. We look forward to your continuing support and receiving your "fivers" as soon as possible!

## THE NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

Another year end ritual is the voting for the best article in the year's "Donkeys". Ballot papers will be distributed at the AGM as usual. This year has seen a great number of excellent articles and competition is likely to be strong, so spend the Christmas break refreshing your memory. The Editor is always looking for material, so why not contribute? You may even win the trophy and its attendant £10 book token.

## EXHIBITIONS

We had a stand at this year's Beaconsfield Model Railway Show which consisted of a collection of photographs and relics together with a continuous slide presentation. This proved popular with the public and our thanks go to Alan Wheeler for a lot of hard preparation work. Our thanks also to Alan's and Pete Greatorex's employers for the loan of facilities. We hope to have a stand at the Chiltern Trains Exhibition in High Wycombe Town Hall in February.

## CHANGING THE CHEQUERS

Although outline planning permission has been granted to convert the "Chequers" into a hotel, detailed preparations are taking longer than anticipated and it is not expected that a formal application or start of work will happen for some time.

Meanwhile, we are undertaking some experiments with room layouts this winter following some criticism from members who dislike the usual plan. Your comments or ideas would be welcome.

## LOOKING AHEAD

1987 may seem a long way off but it will mark our 10th Anniversary. The Committee is anxious that this landmark is celebrated in an appropriate manner and therefore seeks your suggestions and opinions during the forthcoming AGM.

## THE NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is given that the 9th Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 16th January 1986 at the Chequers commencing at 8.00pm. The Agenda is as follows:-

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of 8th AGM (these were published in the March '85 "Donkey" copies are available from the Secretary).
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Secretary's Report
7. Election of Committee - see below
8. Proposals for Marking MDRS 10th Anniversary
9. Any Other Business
10. The Norman Aston-Smith Trophy

The 1985 committee has been:-

Bas Woodward	-	Chairman
Peter Greatorex	-	Secretary
Mike Walker	-	Treasurer
Alan Wheeler	-	Publicity
Roger Bowen		
Mike Norris		
Roger Woodham		

Bas Woodward, Peter Greatorex and Mike Norris are standing down in accordance with the rules and offer themselves for re-election. Any other member wishing to stand for election should enter his nomination with the Secretary Peter Greatorex, 9, Wessex Gardens, Twyford, Reading RG10 0BA, Reading 345490, not later than 31st December 1985.

The formal meeting will be followed by a programme of short talks and/or slide presentations by members, volunteers are invited to contact Pete Greatorex.

## THE ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Following last year's successful experiment we are expanding this event to fill the entire February meeting and enlarging the number of classes so more members, particularly those who choose to shoot in Britain, get a chance at the honours. Your entries therefore are invited in any of the following classes:-

- A. Colour Slides - UK subjects
- B. Colour Slides - Overseas Subjects
- C. Colour Prints - UK Subjects
- D. Colour Prints - Overseas Subjects
- E. B & W Prints - All subjects

A first prize of a £5 book token will be awarded in each class followed by a small 2nd and 3rd prize. In addition, the five first prize winners will compete for the Eddie Lewcock Cup. Judging will be by ballot of all those present.

There are a few rules:-

1. All entrants must be paid up members.
2. Entrants may enter any number of classes with a maximum of six entries per class per member.
3. All entries must be the entrants own original work.
4. There is no time limit, shots taken in 1920 or 1985 are eligible.
5. Prints, colour or black & white, must not exceed 5" x 7"
6. All entries must have a railway theme.
7. Slides should carry the entrants name but prints are to be unmarked.

Entries should be handed to a member of the committee by 20.00 on the night.

**JOINT LINE STEAM**

Recent months have seen some problems with Joint Line steam working. "Clan Line" has been at Southall for attention to its front bogie, A4 "Union of South Africa" was a non-show due to a broken driving axle spring and was replaced by 34092 "City of Wells", which has in turn been replaced by "Sir Nigel Gresley" back for its second tour of duty in place of "Flying Scotsman", whose boiler repairs are taking longer than expected, but 4472 will operate on the 29th December.

The steam working will continue into 1986. So far dates provisionally booked are 16th February, 30th March, 18th May, 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd June. These dates have been supplied by High Wycombe Travel Centre and are subject to confirmation.

**THE END AT BOURNE END?**

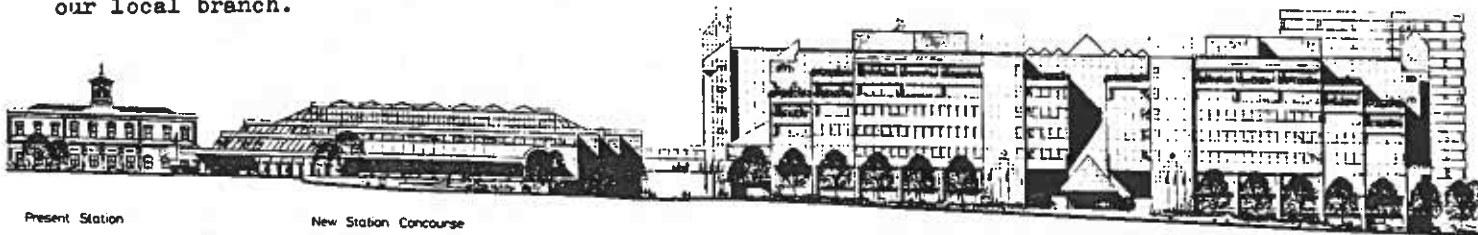
Recent correspondence in Steam Railway has attempted to identify the last scheduled train movement to be rostered for working by an ex-GWR steam locomotive. Currently the candidate is 2-6-2T 6106 which worked a coal train to Chinnor cement works on the afternoon of 1st January 1966. The engine then worked light engine to Southall by way of Bourne End, thus creating a nice little niche in history for our local branch.

**READING STATION REBUILDING**

British Rail have unveiled its plans for a new Reading General station. To be built in conjunction with the Prudential it will include a new concourse incorporating the ticket office, travel centre, waiting and catering accommodation, toilets and left luggage facilities, together with Apex Plaza, a striking 250,000 sq. ft. office development comprising of four interlinked buildings around a central atrium with a spectacular water feature. All built on the site of the former Southern station, currently a car park.

The new station will be linked to the platforms by an overbridge which will continue to a 1,600 space multi-storey car park in Vastern Road on the site of the GWR signal works. This site will also house a new Post Office and a major retail warehouse.

The existing main buildings on platform 4, which date from 1865 and are listed, will be refurbished and converted into offices for BR staff. Work is expected to start in the second half of 1986 and take several years to finish at a cost of some £50,000,000.



Reading's New Station - looking north towards tracks

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Editor,

I was browsing through my back copies of 'The Marlow Donkey' recently and was disappointed to find the following shortages in my list:-

Issue No.1 Mar 1977 (bet that was interesting)

No.2 Jun 1977

No.3 Sep 1977

These were all before I joined the club.

Issue No.6 Jun 1978

No.14 Mar 1980

No.19 Jun 1981

These were lost in various clearouts. If any member has copies of the above which I could borrow to copy, or even have, to complete my set I'd be very grateful. During my browse I came across the following curiosities regarding the numbering, which runs as follows:-

Issue No.25 Dec. 1982

No.26 Mar. 1983

No.27 Jun. 1983

No.28 Sep. 1983

No.26 (again) Dec. 1983

No.27 (again) Mar. 1984

No.31 Jun. 1984

There were no issues 29 or 30 why? Can someone throw any light on this or do we blame poor old Stan Verrinder again.

Trusting this note will help fill news space and wishing all A Merry Xmas.

G. Nutley

Well spotted! It would appear we got confused somewhere, and yes, it was in Stan's day. Perhaps we should only quote the issue date. Seriously, if any member can assist Graham complete his collection please contact him direct on HW 715622. Ed.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

**Ron Brooks**

The quantity and quality of information now available on matters of railway interest gets better all the time. There is plenty of detail available in the books reviewed this month with just a bit of nostalgia. My recent studies consisted mostly of looking at the pictures and the following selection were ideal for that purpose.

MIDLAND CARRIAGES Oxford Pub. Co. £13.95 by D. Jenkinson & R. Essery

This is a record, with diagrams and dimensions, of how one company developed their "carriages" which reflects their attitude to the cash customers. "Carriages" also covers vehicles normally coupled into or run as passenger trains, such as horse boxes and postal vehicles.

SWINDON WORKS GWR Museum £1.65 and its place in GW History

In the far off days of 1935 you could visit Swindon Works and receive, free, a very well printed booklet of fifty-six pages, fully illustrated, as a memento of your visit. The Director, Arts and Recreation of Thamesdown has now produced a facsimile edition and this can be obtained for £1.65 (inc) from The Curator, GWR Museum, Swindon. When I say that the cover is complete with facsimile dirt, is further praise necessary? Just in case it is, the text is fascinating and the numerous black and white photos are superb. Rush off your money in case Father Christmas doesn't read this article.

A PICTORIAL RECORD OF Oxford Pub. Co. £11.95  
LMS ROAD VEHICLES ISBN 0-86093-174-9  
by H.N. Twells & T.W. Bourne

It didn't take the early railways very long to realise their need for "collection and delivery" and the horse vehicle did this very well - well into the 1920's. This series of pictures and diagrams, with most informative text, shows the railways response to the need for road vehicles to carry anything to or from the railway and that includes people. It took a long time for the self-propelled vehicle to do a better job than the horse and the story is well illustrated in this book.

GW ROAD VEHICLES APPX. Oxford Pub. Co. £8.95  
by Phillip J. Kelley SBN 86093-125-0

Whereas the LMS can be covered in one volume there are two for the GWR, which is only right and proper. Buses, lorries, trailers, artics,

propelled by horse, steam, electric, petrol, diesel, all played their part and left their pictures for us to enjoy. Both the railway vehicle volumes have a large number of dimensional diagrams suitable for the needs of modellers.

STEAM IN AFRICA Hamlyn £10.  
by A.E. Durrant ISBN 0 600 34912 2  
A.A. Jorgensen  
C.P. Lewis

When the West discovered Africa they used the new fangled railways for military or political purposes and sometimes even for the benefit of the locals. This produced a quite remarkable railway scene which kept steam going (for some if not all of the original reasons) well after the various countries had achieved independence. Garratts, Mallets, Zwillings all found the country to their liking and all are illustrated here in lots of colour and black and white.

## BELGIAN LIGHT RAILWAY CENTENARY

Roger Bowen

1985 is a year of anniversaries. 150 years of the Great Western, 150 years of German Railways. The Centenary of Blackpool trams and the centenary of Light Railways in Belgium.

An obscure centenary perhaps? No, because for many years Belgium had the largest light railway mileage in Europe, and still has a reasonable mileage on the Belgian Coast, and around Charleroi.

Belgium was early in the development of main line railways and in the early 1880's the government was anxious to develop a network of light railways to complement the already state owned main lines. So it was that a semi-independent national organisation, The Societe National des Chemins de Fer Vicinaux (SNCV) was created by Royal Decree on the 1st July 1885 with the express purpose of building a national network of light railways.

The organisation adopted the metre gauge as its standard, other gauges being used only where conditions warranted it. So by 1893 the SNCV opened 587 miles of metre gauge, 129 miles of 1.067 metre gauge and only ten of standard gauge. At this time there were 253 locomotives, mainly 0-6-0T tram locomotives, 716 carriages, 140 luggage vans and 1550 goods wagons. The first electrified line was introduced in 1894 in the Brussels area. By 1914 there were 413 km of electrified lines and 3802 km of steam lines of all gauges. In the 1920's petrol and diesel railcars began to replace steam. Also the SNCV obtained powers to run buses. By 1940 there was a total of 4812km of line, 1479km of these being electrified and over all nine provinces of Belgium. A heroic operation was mounted over the 2nd World War, and as in the first war the system was largely unused by the Germans and was the only trans-

port available for the Belgians.

Gradually after the war the system contracted but even by 1962 808 kms still existed, all but 100 electrified. Gone were the magnificent lines through the Ardennes, but long branches ran from Brussels, Antwerp, Mons and Charleroi, as well as the coastal route from Knocke through Ostende to La Panne shillran. As late as 1971 it was possible to travel 20 miles out of Brussels on the metre gauge SNCV, as well as the fascinating 30 miles from Mons to Charleroi alongside roads and across countryside.

Despite the closure of the Brussels and Antwerp services new articulated tram sets are now being delivered from BN for the coastal route and the upgraded Charleroi services. A long lost relic is the short route to the Grotto's of Han, still served by SNCV autorails. A preserved line is the Tramway Touristic de Aisne, complete with steam trams and autorails. It consists of about five miles of a former long branch line in the Ardennes, the remainder of which was closed in 1955. Very well worth a visit.

The climax of the Centenary year was on the 16th July when a Centenary Parade ran from Ostende to Westende in the presence of the King of the Belgians. The highlight being the steam tram and train showing the development over 100 years.

An absolutely fascinating system unique to Belgium. If you want to know more "100 years of the Belgian Vicinal" has just been published by the Light Rail Transit Association, and an older book by the same author, W.J.K. Davis "Light Railways" (Ian Allan) is also informative.

## EIGHT DAYS TOO SOON Part II

John Sears

To operate this standard gauge line various engine railcars were bought from Drewry: 6 120 hp driving motor brake composites, 6 trailer firsts and 6 trailer seconds. The motorcars had their engines mounted on the power bogie, which could be removed as a complete unit. The powered end was under a luggage compartment. Although 3 car sets could be run, the usual was a 2 car formation. Pictures suggest that special trains operated as "loco and coaches", with at least 5 cars behind the loco in one picture.

2 power cars were built in 1931. They were also 120 hp jobs, with space for goods, and had 4 gondolas and 2 goods vans to play with. In 1932 2 300 hp petrol power cars arrived, also with goods space. These freight "locos" looked similar to the other BR's single parcels cars with 2 sets of sliding doors per

side. Interestingly, their powered bogie had coupled wheels. The petrol-mechanical freight power cars were replaced by 2 Cummins diesel-electric 300 hp locos in 1942/3. Up to 700 miles a week were got out of the cars, not bad for a line 22 miles long.

The trains served simple wayside halts. 18 had wood shelters and 4 had stone-built stations. 12 freight stations, simple platforms with lock-ups like the Great Western's, were provided, but only those at St. George and Somerset were actually used.

In complete contrast to its richly spectacular scenic meanderings. the line's financial ones were poor. Revenues were typically £45-50,000 per annum with direct expenses of £33-44,000 per annum. The maximum "profit" was £10,000, before interest and depreciation. Things

changed with the war. Patronage and revenue more than doubled but the huge backlog of maintenance meant the company was in dire trouble. The war had also resulted in a large influx of American forces and worse, they could use motorized road transport.

The, perhaps, inevitable government commission was set up to consider the options and produced its final report on 15th January 1945. Ominous phrases abounded: "it is clear that omnibus services are necessary", "serious concern" and "very careful consideration to.... continuance or abandonment". In fact the commission concluded that "the Railway Company will abandon operations long before the expiry of its franchise, and probably within 5 years". The government bought the railway on 27th January 1946 and proceeded to run it only until arrangements had been made for "rail replacement 'bus services". A fascinating glimpse into the railway's day to day life can be gleaned from the tables presented in that government commission report.

Well, let's to the Coral Beach Club for lunch. Lay off the margaritas tho': we'll be doing a lot of mopedding afterwards.

A lot of the railway out in Somerset and Southampton has been converted for vehicular use - usually for bikes and mopeds. Several "stations" are extant, White Hill and George Bay Road are both completely intact. From Georges Bay to Franks Bay the railway ran level through cuttings. It makes a very pleasant course for two wheelers. The road is twisty and hilly and definitely to be avoided. The bridge piers at Franks Bay show the course of the line, as they do at many places along

the route - Flatts, Baileys Bay and the big bridge at Ferry Point.

Several sections on to Hamilton are passable as tracks or foot-paths. Ord Road platform still exists despite another use for the old right of way. In places a pipeline has been laid using the track bed which provides a level, unoccupied path through a very built-up Island. A fine rock cutting between Rural Hill and Hospital runs close to the south side of South Road and is bridged by several driveways to houses. No trace remains into and through Hamilton, but the course can be picked up again at the Tennis Stadium. From Marsh Folly to Devon Road the track bed has been incorporated into guess what? - a relief road! On the drop down past Devonshire an underline bridge still exists. Here the line is a track and path for 2 utilities.

Lots of cuttings and embankments trace the railway's course along North Shore. Perhaps the most evocative stretch is the curving cutting and embankment leading from Ferry Point around Whalebone Bay. In the cutting are two vertical pieces of rail. One is a signal post, the other a post for a warning board, probably for the swing bridge. The final relic is at St. George, where the station buildings still exist next to a small square.

Beyond lies the "Carriage House" and a seafood supper. Lead on!

Colonel Stephens would surely have heard of the construction of the Bermuda Railway. Equally surely he would have loved to have been in charge. He died on 23rd October 1931.

#### BERMUDA RAILWAY - Commercial performance

Year	Passengers carried	Expenses £	Revenue £
1934	700,472	37,171	45,984
1936	672,494	36,494	47,266
1938	768,996	44,085	54,706
1940	587,769	33,261	41,659
1941	684,091	33,322	80,887
1942	1,425,566	55,818	99,535
1943	1,412,456	62,605	85,725
1944	1,806,592	58,172	80,530

#### BERMUDA RAILWAY - Traffic performance

HAMILTON - ST. GEORGE			HAMILTON - SOMERSET		
Train	Ax Passenger Load W/E 3-6-44	Timekeeping on 19-8-44	Train	Ax Passenger Load W/E 3-6-44	Timekeeping on 19-8-44
5.37	73	on time	5.55	20	on time
7.10	79	"	7.36	78	"
8.37	34	"	10.00	41	"
10.12	67	"	12.15	97	"
12.30	95	35 late	13.55	59	17 late
14.52	149	on time	16.00	131	on time
16.12	89	"	17.15	163	9 late
17.18	45	"	18.45	89	on time
17.30	146	22 late	23.00	79	"
18.55	78	18 late			
23.10	105	on time			

## ONE WEEK IN SEPTEMBER

Mike Walker

Do you remember the days when the posters encouraged us to "enjoy living on a Western commutoroute"? The dmu's were green, hydraulics ruled the main, Gerry Fiennes was in command at Paddington and all was right in the world. Today we're told "we're getting there", geriatric dmu's try to emulate increasingly tatty HST's in all but speed and Syd Newey rules from Swindon.

For a week in September I was forced to become a commuter between Bourne End and Reading for the first time since my first year at technical college in the late sixties, and, even allowing for the tricks of memory, the service seemed to have deteriorated badly and would have done justice to Sir Peter Parker's "crumbling edges". Firstly timetables are going backwards! The train I used, the 08.01 Bourne End to Paddington arrives in the capital at 08.58 the same as its counterpart of 1969 which left Bourne End at 08.07, so sixteen years on its six minutes slower and only two minutes faster than the GWR's 08.01 ex Bourne End which in 1909 got its Edwardian clientele to Paddington on the dot of nine using nothing more than a 2-4-0 Metro tank. They call this progress!

The dmu's are showing their advancing years badly. Despite a cosmetic refurbishment job some years ago and the undeniably sterling efforts of the fitters at Reading depot, the basic fact that they are now some years beyond their design life is now showing. Faded up-

holstery and peeling interiors are supported by increasingly noisy engines and a very rough ride, yet relief is not in sight before 1992 at the earliest.

So to the week in detail. Monday dawned clear, a considerably smaller number of passengers awaited the 08.01 than in days of old, five cars surficing instead of six. Plans to buy a weekly season were thwarted by a new rule just introduced requiring a passport photograph before purchase. Whilst this was well publicised on the railway itself, there had been no media advertising of this important point. Ever tried getting a passport photograph in Marlow on a Sunday afternoon? At Maidenhead a couple of HST's flashed past and one of the single parcel cars, W55992, followed the 08.01 into platform 4 looking, unsuccessfully, for business. My connection the 08.23 (07.39 ex Paddington) rolled in five minutes late. At Twyford West we crossed to the down main as relaying of the down relief through Sonning Cutting was still underway, I remember when that was finished by Sunday night or else. In the evening local services were running fairly well but long distance trains were delayed by emergency work north of Oxford. Then an up HST became a total failure on the up main just west of Twyford soon after five, and as the DRL was still closed the line capacity was reduced by 50%.

Tuesday. The 0801 was reduced to four cars which, to make matters worse, lacked their

supposed power leading to a 10 mph 2nd gear climb up the 1 in 82 to Cookham. Today, Berkshire's schools returned after the summer break and a surge of children piled into the shortened train. The 08.23 was closer to time. At Twyford a bunch of gleaming first years got on, and on emerging from Sonning Cutting (DRL still closed) the peace of the car was shattered as one lad realised he had left his bag at Twyford. It was hard to tell which concerned him more, the loss of the bag or the prospect of detention for being late on his first day if he returned to retrieve it.

Now Tuesday the 10th was the start of summer, the temperature passed 70°. So at Reading the announcer regretted the delay to the 17.00 to Cheltenham was due to "adverse weather conditions at Slough!". The 17.12 up stopper arrived from the east at 17.10½ but a quick turnaround got us away at 17.13. The branch train from Maidenhead had first to await the 17.11 from Paddington again delayed by Slough's phantom weather (our Slough station representative knew nothing of this) and then wait whilst driver Stacey read his paper and had a sandwich. Final arrival at Bourne End was 9 minutes late. However the delay afforded the opportunity to watch the Orient Express stock rush past toward London behind a 33.

Wednesday. The 08.01 back to five cars, including chocolate and cream W55020. The 08.23 arrived a minute early and left two late for no reason. Using the DRL at Sonning but with a 20 mph limit and a 3 minute unexplained signal stop outside Reading led to an 8 minute late arrival, par for the week. The evening brought more sloppy working. The 16.53 HST from Cardiff rolled in at 17.04, just as the Gatwick train pulled out. I wonder how many passengers wanted that connection and as a result missed an aircraft? Evenings at Maidenhead gave the opportunity to examine one of BR's evolutionary backwaters, the 4 car prototype 210.001 unit working the 17.25 down. Otherwise, except the 08.01 all locals are now 3 car units, often overcrowded. Now I remember when most were 6 cars. Another exception is the 17.11, that gets eight air conditioned Mk.2's headed by a 50 and yet

it runs only from Paddington to Twyford with Maidenhead as its only stop, where it uses platform 4, the URL.

Thursday found W55020 on the 08.01 again but reduced to four cars once more. W55992 barely paused as there was no business to drop off or pick up. Trains running erratically again, the 17.10 out of Reading was reported to be 30 minutes late but it was en route from Glasgow to Poole and 210.001, despite its 90 mph ability, was 5 late. 50.033 fresh from the paint shop passed Maidenhead living up to its name, "Glorious". Green 50.007 "Sir Edward Elgar" also provided some pomp and circumstance. On a black note a train from Reading ran into an empty train at Portsmouth Harbour injuring eight, one seriously.

Friday provided five cars at Bourne End (do I detect a pattern?) and the 08.02 to Marlow left, late, already ahead of us! At Reading 47.609 stood on the centre road between platforms 8 and 9, wearing a fresh coat of blue and carrying the name "Fire Fly" on an elaborate nameplate complete with lining out and a superb full colour GWR crest casting. On my return journey I spent an enjoyable hour perusing the GW150 exhibition train open at Reading's No.3 platform. Without the crowds it was possible to study the exhibits closely. How many members spotted the lovely shot of a green dmu passing a 6lxx 2-6-2T at Bourne End, circa 1960? Ah! those were the days.

So ended what I am assured was an average week. The weeks average for the twenty trains I used was 6 minutes late. We passengers got there in the end, but in tired, rough riding and frequently overcrowded trains. A noticeable fact was that as many people were commuting westwards as towards London, in the sixties it was just a trickle, evidence of the rise of Reading and "Silicon Valley". The next Monday I returned to the car, watching from the breakfast table as well loaded air conditioned coaches passed by on Alder Valley's Marlow "Londonlink" service. At less than half the BR fare and a quicker journey, is it surprising?

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## TWENTY - FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The most important, and long reaching, proposals of 25 years ago was the publication in December 1960 of a white paper on the future structure, working and financial re-organisation of the nationalised rail, road and water transport undertakings.

It was acknowledged that the greatest problems were with the railways. They employed half a million people and represented an asset of £1,600 million. They lost £60 million on running expenses, plus a further £75 million in interest charges. The government decided to do away with the British Transport Commission and replace it by a number of Boards reporting direct to the Minister of Transport. The British Railways Board would have underneath it the various Regional Railway Boards. The government proposed to write off part, but not all, of the Capital Debt. The railways statutory controlled charges would go, allowing the railways more commercial freedom. It was expected that these measures would come into effect in the Summer of 1962.

On a more day-to-day level rolling stock was being delivered from Pressed Steel, with A.E.I. equipment for the first stage of the Glasgow Electrification. These were three car 25kv/6.25kv units finished in Caledonian Blue.

More deliveries of a different kind were 10 1,840 hp diesel electric metre-gauge locos for the East African Railways built by Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns at Darlington with English Electric engines.

London Transport took delivery of three prototype trains from Cravens of Sheffield for the Central Line. They had various improvements over the "1959" stock and were seen as the design for the future.

A private venture was a 2,700 hp gas-turbine, designed and built by the English Electric Co. at the Vulcan Foundry, Newton-le-Willows. It had started trials on the London Midland Region and was hoped to enter service between Marylebone and Nottingham later in the year. The loco was of 4-6-0 layout and not unlike a conventional steam loco in appearance.

Other news:- Diesel production was well under way - English Electric had by the turn of the year delivered its 100th 2,000 hp loco for British Railways. The January 1961 "Railway Magazine" featured two photos of local interest, the Marlow branch train leaving Bourne End with 0-4-2T No.1447 and the same loco with a two coach pull-and-push set at Marlow.

BR announced the 4 position train classification, destination and identification system to replace the "steam style" four position light head code. This was to be displayed on the front of locos, in working timetables, etc. Lines closed over the period included the former North Staffordshire "Churnet Valley Line" and the Eastern Region line between Louth and Mablethorpe. However it was decided not to close the line between Penrith and Workington via Keswick. In the first 3 months of operation the newly opened "Bluebell Line" carried 15,023 passengers.

The 1st February 1961 marked the end of the last of the many narrow gauge lines in Ireland with the closure of the West Clare Railway. More than 500 miles of 3ft gauge line were built over the years.

On the 2nd January 1961 the passenger service between Buckingham and Banbury (Merton Street) was withdrawn. A daily goods service however

survived, as did the passenger service between Buckingham and Verney Junction.

Clearly the turn of the year from 1960 to 1961 was to herald a great change on the Railways - the new order signalled by the White Paper which led to the formation of the British

Railways Board and its famous chairman Dr. Beeching. The 1960's were to be a very different and traumatic period for the railways compared with the 1950's which we have been considering up to now in this series of articles.

## THE OLD OAK COMMON OPEN DAY

Steve Medway

As part of the GWR 150 celebrations, Open Days were held at many of the WR Maintenance Depots, proceeds from these to be donated to charity.

Old Oak Common's Open Day was to be on Sunday, 15th September and a voluntary committee was set up in June to deal with the organisation.

Almost immediately the Depot administration office was inundated with applications for stalls from Preservation Societies, trade vendors and the like. A deposit account was opened enabling interest to accrue on money sent in the form of deposits.

A total of 15,000 leaflets, 1,500 posters and 6,000 programmes were ordered from the printers. These were in the style adopted by the Region for the anniversary, being an attractive cream ground with chocolate coloured characters after the style of the GWR magazines of the '30's.

In order for there to be something to see on the Open Day arrangements were made with other depots and regions to make available stock which on the day gave a wide selection of modern BR practice. Also involved of course were the private companies and Preservation Societies such as RH & DR, CW Society, Bulmers and many others.

A great deal of work was required for the supply of power to all the stalls, supply of extra toilet facilities, laying of lengths of rail either side of a length of track for the broad gauge Iron Duke. A temporary platform was required for use by the Paddington shuttle, which was generously supplied and erected, free

of charge, by McAlpines.

On the morning of the Open Day a queue was already growing as the gates opened at 10 o'clock, and the first of 8,318 people to buy tickets there thronged into the Depot. A brass band and fine weather, together with the aroma of hot dogs lent a carnival atmosphere to the proceedings. These crowds were further swelled by 4,381 passengers arriving on the Chocolate and Cream DMU shuttle from Paddington, where queues at one stage stretched a platform length and back again.

On show were the Green 47's, 50007 and 08944, Railfreight Grey 31 and 56, Executive liveried 87, and of course, a blue 47 posing on the jacks. Added to these liveries were King George V and 5572, LMS Maroon Duchess of Hamilton, BR Diesel Green D200, two tone green D7018 and yellow ochre on D1015. Rarely can so many liveries have been seen together in one place. Also plentiful were gauges of track 5", 7½", 15", 4'8½" and 7'0½", all running parallel, offering a fascinating comparison. Star of the day must have been the Broad Gauge Iron Duke. Although many photographs can be seen of the Broad Gauge, it can only be fully appreciated when compared alongside standard gauge as was possible here.

The day was considered to be an outstanding success with over £17,000 made to be distributed to three charities, Capital Radio "Help a London Child" Appeal, Friends of Hammersmith Hospital and Woking Rail Care Centre.

## DONKEY DAYS Part I

Len Stroud

Since I joined the MDRS after moving back to my birth place, it became increasingly apparent to me that many of our members had never seen or even imagined MARLOW STATION as it was in its heyday. Many of course have come to the town in recent years, others live in "Foreign parts" and very few of us are senior enough to know the GWR Marlow-Bourne End branch of the 1920-30 era.

I do not claim any unique position - I was not even a Railway man in my working life - and others of my generation may well surpass the anecdotes that rise from my memories of those days. My father had been with the GWR a great part of his working life (and a barometer hanging on the wall "from GWR Staff and friends at Marlow Station" for ever reminds me) and as a boy I tended to gravitate to the platform and came to know many of the men - and some women - employed in those days.

Here let me say that a new book on the Maidenhead Branch, including the Marlow section, is "on the stocks" and if it meets the quality of the Henley branch volume it will be worth the money in its wealth of detailed plans and illustrations. For that reason I do not intend to give a planned lay-out but an impression of life as I saw it within the confines of what was a solid Victorian Railway Branch terminus and no comparison to the shameful degeneration that BR has thrust upon us in later years - no more than a bus shelter and a platform in a coalyard. Unfortunately I have no early issues of the MDRS news sheets but no doubt plans and photos have been included in earlier numbers. To start with visualise the area covered by the station, its approaches, and its goods yard and depot. Standing on the corner with "The Marlow Donkey" public house behind you imagine that on the approximate site of the phone box - no great distance - was the buffer

stop and the extreme end of the line. Adjacent to this stood a small cattle pen and the start of an extended platform area with the run-on means of loading cattle, horses and items of a semi-portable or wheeled nature. As only one truck was accommodated beyond the run-round points it can be imagined the amount of shunting, coupling and uncoupling involved on a busy day.

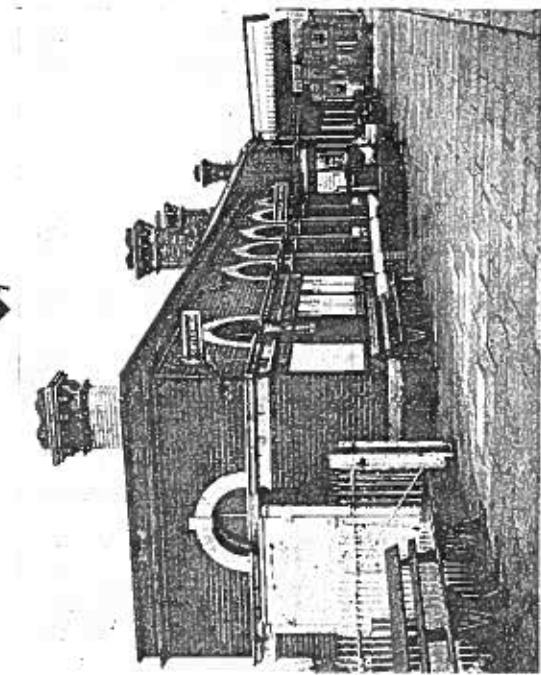
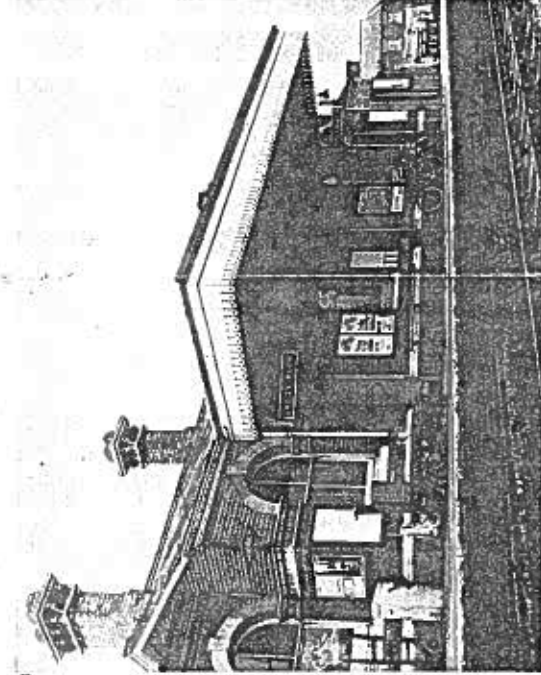
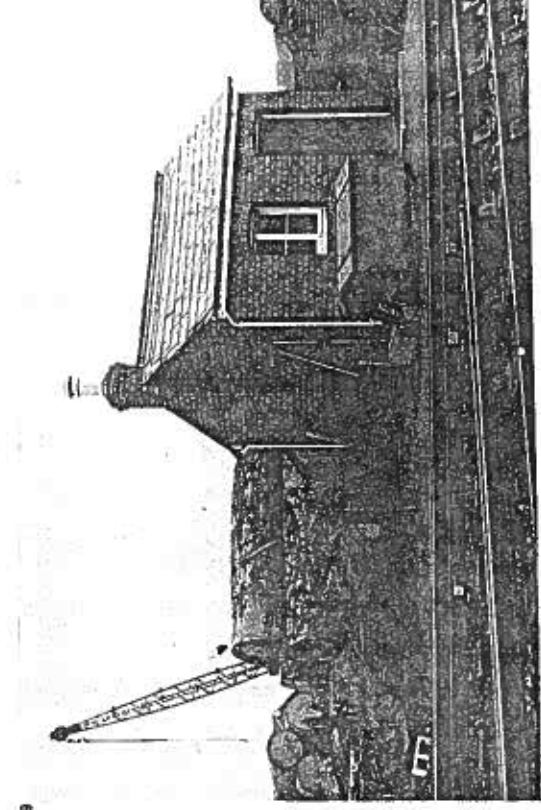
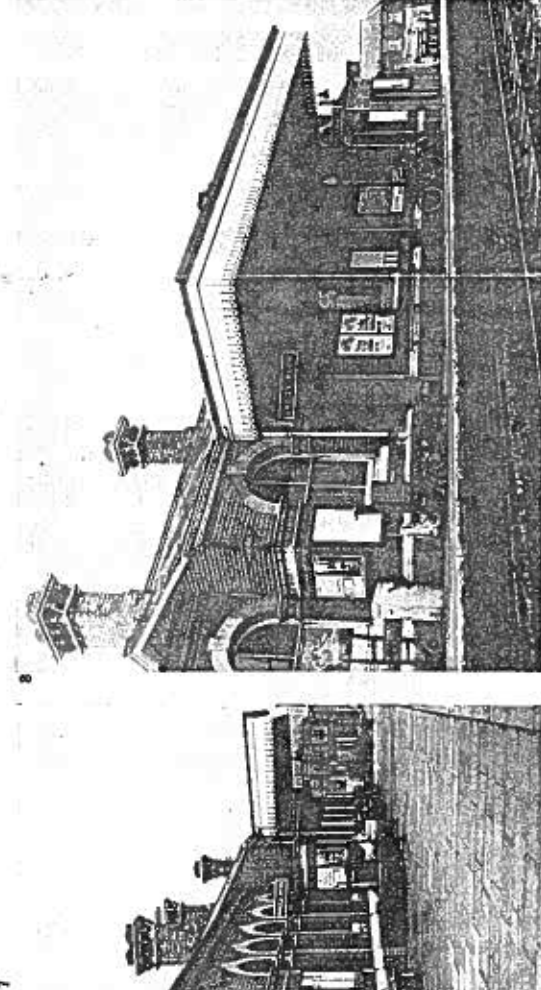
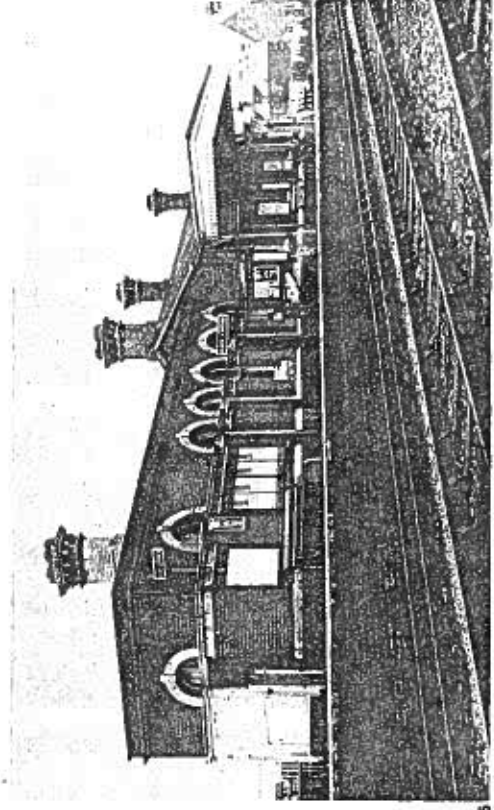
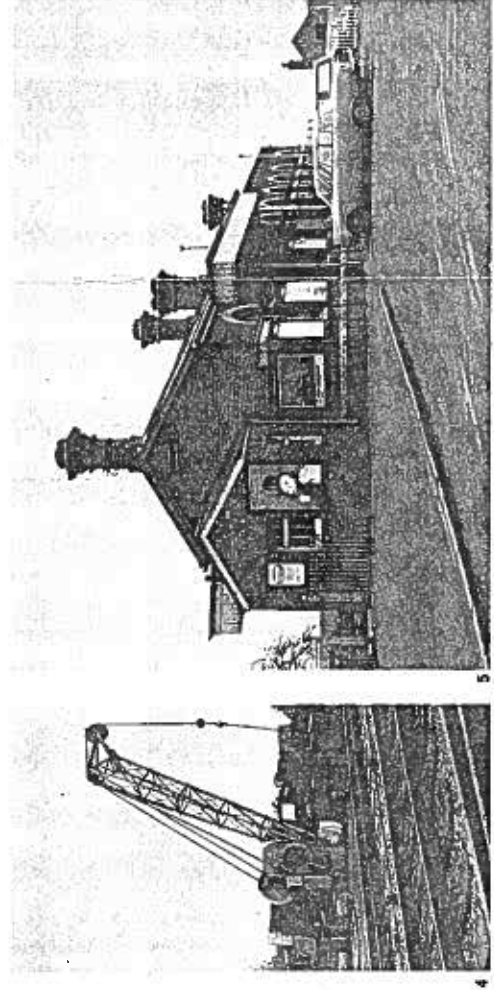
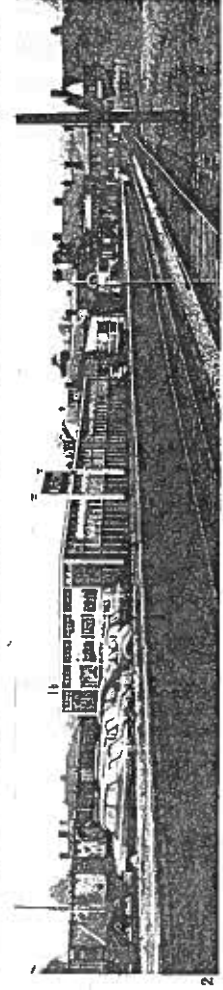
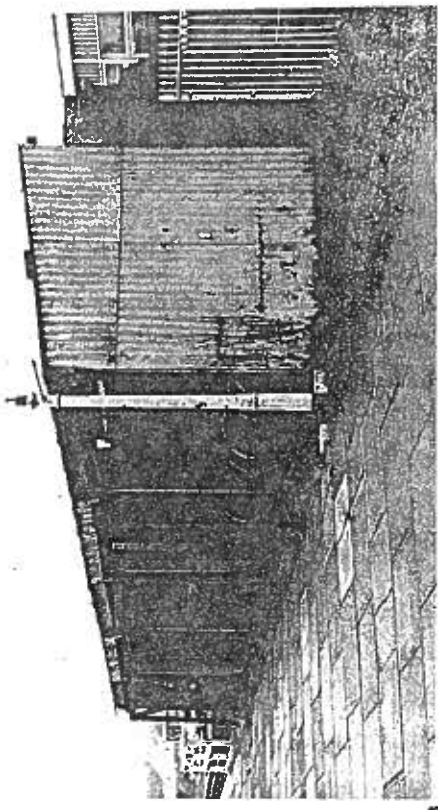
The station approach ran parallel with this, roughly as it is now to a point short of the entrance to the Thames Industrial Estate as we know it. On the right as we stand, the British Legion occupies the site of a once thriving cattle market which raised its own problems with escaped beasts from time to time - not to mention the ordure and the odours. It was not always the hot oil and steam that remains in my memory. The present Cafe and the building alongside were two coal order offices, by the way.

Coming back up the afore-mentioned platform we come to the paved platform proper and the station buildings as listed thus:- Station Master's office and booking office - booking hall and entrance through the general waiting room (with early morning bookstall) - ladies waiting room, parcels office - porters room and lamp room - stores - gents toilets, finishing with a timber built loading bay for parcels traffic, to which in the early days a canvas topped horse van backed up, superseded over the years by a motor vehicle in the GWR colours.

Beyond the ramp came the buffers of the bay and it will raise a doubting eyebrow or two when I say I have seen 3 trains in Marlow at the same time - all in use and rakes of mainline stock at that! This needs explanation - the platform length including the extensions

# MARLOW

The old station as it was circa 1965. The goods shed stood on the site of new factory in photograph 2.



- 1 A general view of the approach to Marlow and the yard exit as seen from the platform.
- 2 Marlow station today, with the site of the engine shed in the right foreground. Note the new building in the yard in the background.
- 3 The cycle shed at Marlow; this ramshackle building, and the decapitated lamp post alongside, would make an excellent subject for modelmaking.
- 4 The small fixed crane in the general yard, used mainly for unloading and moving scrap metal.
- 5 The main station building at Marlow as seen from the road approach.
- 6 The ornamental single-storey station building at Marlow, seen here from the platform side, is typical of many on GW branches.
- 7 The parcels office section of the main building. Note the platform steps, benches and counter-mounted gas lamp.
- 8 The booking office and waiting room sections of the main station building.
- 9 The livelike hut adjacent to the stair leading to the wood yard. Although small, the hut has much detail of character.



to the buffers mentioned earlier ran sufficient length to allow two rakes and a third train ran into the bay. I remember Summer Sundays when combined passenger tickets covering a trip on Salters steamers and a return by train were very popular. Add to this the normal Sunday branch service running to the Bourne End bay platform and occasional arrival of the Territorial Camp specials for troops camped in bell tents in Westhorpe Park - marching off from the station approach.

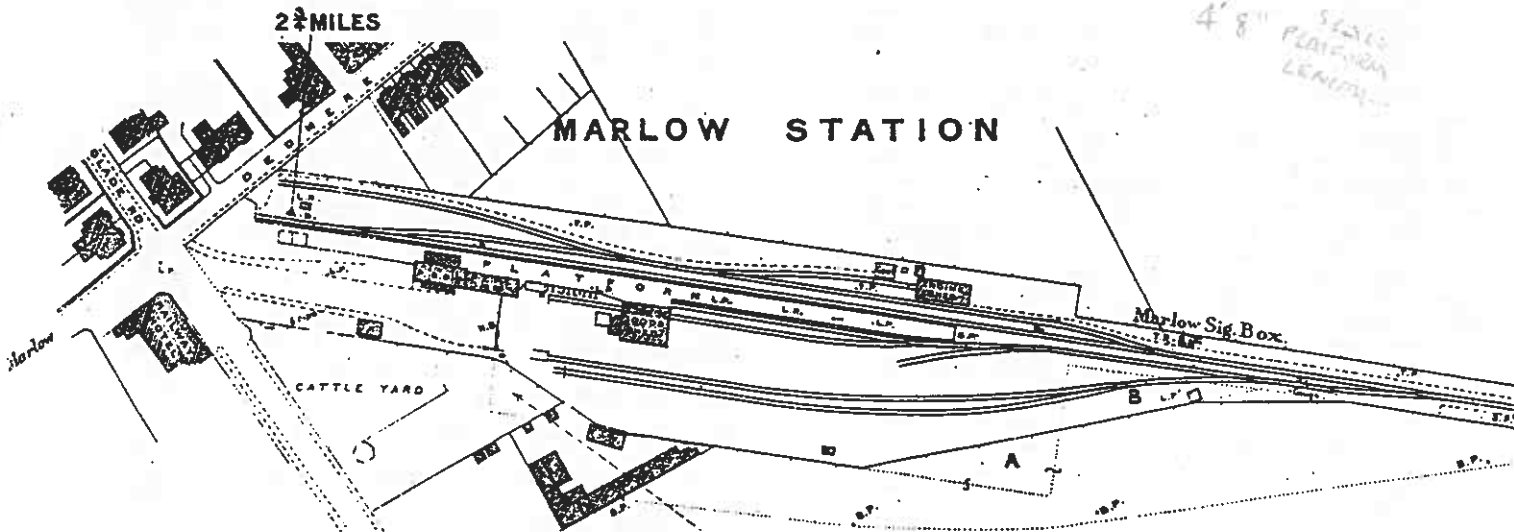
To my memory trains ran to quite an extensive time-table (even on Sundays) and the weekdays service was arranged so that a break occurred approximately at 11 am to allow the one loco used for shunting purposes and to make up mixed traffic goods train drawn from the sidings which at that time consisted of 3 tracks in the main goods yard spaced out for loading and unloading - with another line running beside the bay giving access to the goods shed where perishable and smaller items were unloaded and loaded, weighed and documented. Considerable coal traffic was maintained with grain, timber and cattle making up the major items of the yard. The present BR platform roughly occupies the outermost line of the layout where coal was unloaded.

Referring to the platform area a run-round line ran parallel and from this line one further line ran back to a second buffer - this line having mixed use as parking for wither passenger, stock or empties awaiting return from Marlow in the form of coal, box, open wagon or cattle trucks. Also in view from the platform a short line ran off to the water tower, coaling area and finishing at the engine shed, which held one loco when resting. At no great distance stood, in line with the engine shed, the signal box at the point in the

general position where all lines converged to make the single line to Bourne End.

Referring again to the daily shunting period when all traffic was expected to be completed, the single line was used for assembly as far as the first level crossing (still in existence under the motorway). The completed outward mixed goods then steamed off to Bourne End and was left for further marshalling to continue to Maidenhead or Wycombe. The Branch loco then returned "light" to Marlow to pick up the next passenger train out. Readers will guess that to accomplish all this nearly every weekday between 11 am and mid-day entailed a hectic co-operation between rail staff and merchants who may be off loading at this time. I can guess that the more co-operative amongst them made up their own suitable hours for attending the yard. Lesser shunting operations of single trucks entailing minimum times of operation were fitted between trains including watering and coaling. Despite the use of only one loco for this work timetables were exact, bearing in mind connections had to be made at Bourne End with both up and down trains from Maidenhead and Wycombe.

The total of "yard" staff is an inexact figure in my memory (I would guess some four or five including a goods clerk and loading staff in the shed). Unlike platform staff who worked 2 shifts from 8 am to 5 pm or 1 pm to 10 pm, the yard gates closed at 5 pm locking off this area from the station approach proper. So much for the general layout and working - present day appearances belie one time activities. Beeching made sure in later years that many such branch line termini as Marlow could well duplicate the picture I have tried to paint. With editorial approval I may be allowed more detailed anecdotes of station life in times past - some humour but much hard work.



## VIDEO REVIEW

**"The March to Hinton"** Steam Powered Video  
30 mins. £19.50

Referring to 2857's run to Newport, Steam Railway stated "that where steam is concerned, the improbable can, and often does, happen". No more improbable event than the series of trials conducted in West Virginia in January 1985 can be imagined and these form the subject of this tape.

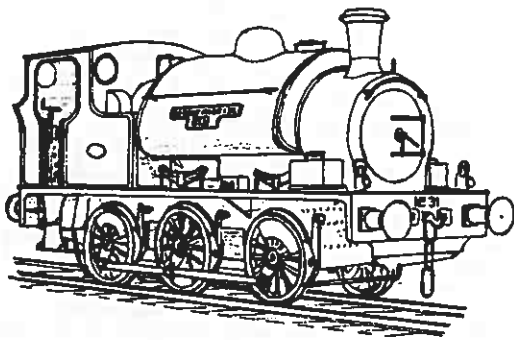
These trials, using Chesapeake & Ohio 614, a Lima 4-8-4, hauling 5,000 ton coal trains, were designed to collect vital test data for the forthcoming ACE3000 new generation steam loco. Undoubtedly one of THE steam events of the year, it went largely unnoticed in the British enthusiast press.

The problem with reviewing this tape is not to go overboard with superlatives. It is definitely the best production out of the SPV/Video Rails stable to date. 614 is shown working its heart out in temperatures as low as -80°C which is an instant recipe for magnificent smoke and steam effects often blotting

out the low winter sun. The sheer cold can almost be felt, particularly in one sequence, when 614 blasts past a rock face covered in icicles literally several hundred feet long watched by a lone dog standing in the six-foot wagging his tail.

In another sequence, 614's booster fails on a rising grade and sharp curve. She restarts her 5000 ton train with volcanic eruption from the stack, but not a hint of wheelslip, defiantly whistling at a diesel hauled freight passing the other way. Ross Rowland, owner and leader of the project, reveals that comparing the cost of running 614 on \$45/ton coal and modern diesels on 85¢ gallon diesel fuel, "there's nothing in it" and ACE3000 will be three times as efficient as 614!

If one has to be critical, one can point to there being only one shot of the entire train passing the camera, or the tape could usefully be longer! However, the tape exudes atmosphere and is sheer delight. If you buy only one railway video, this must be it. In short - Spectacular.



For the last two years I have been haunted by the Ghosts of Christmas past and present, both of whom insisted that the MDRS members needed to know, first, the history and then the current situation regarding the FAWLEY JUNCTION RAILWAY. As earnest students of the subject will remember, I ascribed these apparitions to over-indulgence and a hot sun and determined that an abstemious life and a solar topee, not to mention the difficulties with cracks on the M25 experienced by travellers from Eastbourne, would protect me from further visitations. In order to make assurance doubly sure I went into hospital at the time when an article for the Christmas issue of the 'Marlow Donkey' needed to be prepared. All this was in vain, for as I lay in bed contemplating the plumbing to which I was connected I suddenly realised that one of the pipes was coupled to an exhaust injector while another was delivering water to my tanks. Fortunately, provision had been made for over-flows so I wasn't unduly alarmed.

This time the ghost was not very distinct and shimmered a bit round the edges. "My two friends were quite pleased with your previous effort" he said (which cheered me up because I was always under the impression that nobody ever read my articles). "Your very last task" he went on, "is to give the MDRS some idea of what the immediate future holds for Fawley." Well, this didn't seem too bad - and after the appalling threats made on previous occasions the scissors the ghost was waving over one of my more important pipes seemed quite unnecessary but then you expect them to go over the top to get their own way! So here goes:-

Motive power seems set to continue with the recently overhauled tank engine and the ever faithful diesel shunter - BUT the platelayers have introduced a new idea - leg power - used to propel their locally made trolley.

A new, and very decrepit, signal box awaits erection at the lower junction and when rebuilt will allow the installation of various forms of telegraph signalling apparatus between the present upper box and the lower junction box. Research is going on to devise some means whereby the boxes can be informed as to the occupation of the line. Unfortunately, the apparently simple track circuit - much beloved of model railways, and real ones for that matter, will not function at Fawley but the S & T gang are still optimistic that something can be made to do the job. Two complete telephone systems are available - one exclusively reserved for OPERATIONS with provision already made for the lower box. Successful tests of a system providing taped information about the FAWLEY MUSEUM and RAILWAY have been carried out and a full script and revised equipment are in

process of preparation. This facility will be available from an ex GPO box now installed at the Station.

The goats, revelling in their success in eating the signal wire laid to keep in touch with the lower junction, have been re-inforced by a troop of guinea fowl, and they have re-introduced the game of "last across". This game went out of fashion, due to the demise of regular players, when I was at school. A leap of wallabies has reduced consumption of Fosters at steam-ups due to the number of members signing the pledge after a surprise sighting. The sheep continue to carry out their duties as continuous mowers, while the rest of the local wild life keeps a very low profile whenever the sentinel magpie warns them of a steam-up or work day.

A new member stated that his most fervent desire was to be in the sole charge of a steam engine. Where else would such a wish be completely fulfilled? Any visitors will see him energetically stoking, cleaning and operating a magnificent steam pumping unit - now used for high speed fill-ups on steam days. He has admitted that his specification wasn't precise!

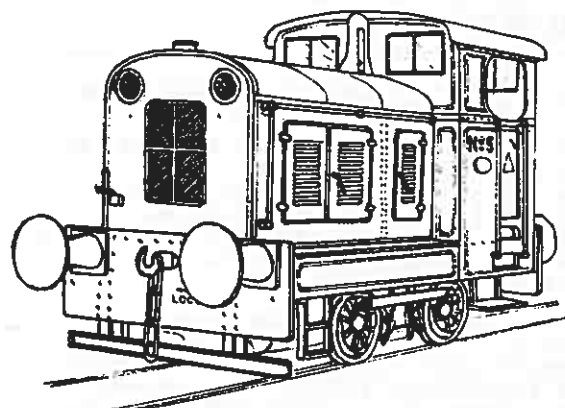
A small steam generating plant is due for renovation so there is a distant possibility that this, too, will provide some further interest for visitors.

The carriage and wagon department have already carried out extensive minor overhauls to the stock, together with major work on two open trucks and the shunters truck. Work has commenced on the toad and mutterings have been heard regarding the crane but the fumes from the anaesthetic obscured my view of the outcome of this.

The station building continues to be well looked after by our own little Ern. Furniture has been reinstated and re-upholstered and Mark Neale, of Bradford (page 47 "Steam Railway" Oct. '85) can be assured that there is STILL a working nameplate machine, a weighing machine and a chocolate bar machine, although regrettably, they have to cost more than the old penny!

What else can the future hold? The Volunteers have now settled into their own favourite interests but are still eager to welcome new recruits going to extraordinary lengths to satisfy their every whim (see above!).

As a final note to the Editor, I have now given up spicy food, permanently wear a hat to keep off the sun, and have decided to give up having operations; besides, even Dickens only had three ghosts.



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Chairman: Bas Woodward	40 Heath Road, Holtspur, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 1DG	Tel: Beaconsfield 3476.
Secretary: Pete Grealorex	9 Wessex Gardens, Twyford, Reading, Berks, RG10 0BA.	Tel: Reading 345490.
Treasurer: Mike Walker	"Solgarth", Little Marlow, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3RS.	Tel: Marlow 3899
Publicity: Alan Wheeler	8 Spinfield Mount, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 2JU.	Tel: Marlow 2995.

President: The Hon. W. H. McAlpine