

# THE MARLOW DONKEY



JUNE 1987

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## Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

### CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The three volumes by Harold Gasson, published by OPC, giving graphic reminiscences of a GWR fireman in the 1940's, brought memories of Didcot in earlier days. This junction was then a Mecca for rail enthusiasts in the Oxford area. Although it was difficult to approach the actual locomotive shed there were certain points where we could observe trains on the four arrival lines, from Swindon, from Newbury and Southampton, from Reading, and from Oxford. Didcot had an interesting allocation of locomotives from pannier tanks with steam and smoke arrestors, Dean goods, Collett 2251 class 0-6-0's, Bulldogs, to earlier examples of the Hall class.

Now, fifty years on, Didcot again presents a most attractive venue for steam enthusiasts. The Great Western Society was founded in 1961 and six years later they purchased the "triangle" of land between the Swindon and Oxford lines.

I recently spent a most interesting afternoon at Didcot as I knew the Society was keen to celebrate "twenty years of progress". There has been a real effort to tidy up the site; so many preservation centres seem to emulate scrap metal depots. Even Maindy Hall, still in its Barry Island state of dilapidation, is almost hidden by the new, spacious shed. The turntable, broad gauge line and shed, the station, signal box and the two running lines have all been added in the post-steam years. The Small Relics Museum is full of GWR items of great interest, particularly valuable for posterity as this company "died" forty years ago. Last year we were invited to DINE at Didcot in a "Super Saloon", a nostalgic experience for those who remember the Plymouth boat trains before the last war.

I also paid a visit to the small preservation centre at Wallingford. The staff were friendly and informative but they outnumbered the visitors. The train, hauled by TWO small die-

sels, travels a very short distance as a Light Railway order has not been acquired. Moultsford, I fear, is still unattainable.

I read in my daily newspaper that BR are concerned about the continuing number of train crashes where drivers have passed a "red". The cancelling by the driver of an audible warning seems a dangerous practice. It is evident that little has been done in BR days to update safety methods to cope with higher speeds.

One correspondent remembering the system known as Automatic Train Control quotes "The 10.30 Limited" (a GWR publication of 1923):- "The primary object of this system is to give audible warning to an engine driver when his train is approaching a distant signal in the 'on' position, and, in the event of this warning being disregarded, automatically to apply the brakes so as to ensure the train being pulled up before it reaches the home signal". A second writer states that BR discontinued this idea as old fashioned and unsuited to the higher speeds of today. It was based on mechanical contact, a sprung shoe on the locomotive normally riding above a ramp between the rails. BR's Automatic Warning System of Train Control works with an electro-magnet between the rails: it too can be cancelled by the driver. No method is infallible - the human factor is paramount. At Norton Fitzwarren on 4th November 1940, the night express from Paddington to the West of England (thirteen crowded carriages pulled by "King George VI") ran through catch-points and overturned. Twenty seven people died, including the fireman. The ATC was in good order, the driver was a top-link man with forty years experience. Neither the driver nor his fireman had heeded the warning. It must have been so easy to "miss" the alarm on a noisy footplate.

*Das*

### TIMETABLE

#### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

Meetings are held at The Chequers, High Street, Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 EXCEPT OCTOBER - see below.

Thurs 16th July STORIES FROM THE FOOTPLATE Wally Richards  
BR's Slough Operations Manager recalls his early years on the footplate.

Sun. 19th July FAMILY EXCURSION TO SWANAGE

There's still time to book for our annual coach trip to the Swanage Railway and the Dorset coast, full details in the last issue. Bookings please to Peter Robins, 95 Broom Hill, Cookham SL6 9LJ Tel BE 27870. Adults £7.50 Children £4.00.

Thurs 20th Aug. DOCKLANDS RAILWAY VISIT

A chance to explore London's newest showpiece, the automated Docklands Light Railway. Meet at Paddington Station at 7.00pm and come armed with a one-day Capital Card. Details from Peter Robins.



Thurs 17th Sep. NRM ARCHIVE FILM Tony Hall-Patch

Our anniversary year would not be complete without a contribution from our most popular and regular speaker, the Curator of the railway collection at the Science Museum, who as usual will bring us the latest news.

Sat 10th Oct. GREAT MARLOW RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Court Garden, Marlow, 10am - 5pm. Your attention is drawn to the announcement on page 2 and the insert included in this issue.

Thurs 29th Oct. AN EVENING WITH DAVID SHEPHERD

Yes David Shepherd returns. This meeting will be held at Court Garden, Marlow, commencing 7.15 for 7.30 and will be open to the public. Members are urged to book in advance - see page 2 for details.

# SOCIETY NEWS

## NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome a further three new members to the Society, Ronald Croxford of High Wycombe, P. Searle and Mark Hopwood of Marlow. Mark is particularly welcome as he is a young enthusiast, a group we wish to encourage. We are also pleased to welcome back Steve Lewis of Lane End, one of our founder members who lapsed some years ago.

## COMMITTEE CHANGES

Peter Greatorex has reluctantly stood down as Secretary to concentrate his efforts in starting a new business. We thank him for all his efforts in the past and wish him every success for the future. Roger Bowen has kindly agreed to take on the difficult job of organising the programme whilst Martin Pink is handling the correspondence etc.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

March was a difficult month, the advertised Swanage Railway talk fell through but Mick Jones of Cookham stepped in at short notice with an enjoyable programme of cine films on South African Steam. To add to our troubles, the decorators were in residence!

The "Marlow Donkey" was the subject of Chris Turner's talk in April which left us all even more eagerly anticipating the book.

May's meeting comprised an audio-visual presentation by the I o M Railway Society, describing the island's railways which were the destination for a party which set off early the next morning.

Glorious sunshine accompanied our steam day at Fawley on May 10th. 0-6-OST No.31 was kept busy giving rides through our President's estate, which now bristles with all sorts of exotic animals and birds. The museum, District coach and 03.120 were available for inspection and it was good to see Bourne End's waiting room re-erected.

# RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

## NOTES AND NEWS

### DONKEY GOES PORTIS

Starting in early April, Reading based conductor-guards starting using PORTIS (PORTable Ticket Issuing System) machines on the Marlow Branch in place of the familiar Omniprinters. Meanwhile APTIS equipment is now imminently expected at Maidenhead. John Sears explained the working of these electronic machines in the last issue.

### FIRST NSE 121

W55031 has become the first of the class 121 single unit dmu's to carry Network SouthEast livery. Unlike the 3 car class 117 units and locomotives, the grey, red and white stripes are not upswept at each end, which certainly improves the appearance.

### CHANGING JOINT LINE DMU's

Last year rumours were circulating of 'new' dmu's on the services out of Marylebone. These have now appeared, but don't get excited they certainly are not the Sprinters or even Pacers but some of the oldest first generation cars still in service. Several very down-at-heel Derby built low density class 108 Driving Trailer Composites are now acting as the centre cars in class 115 sets in place of the unusual TS and TCL vehicles. In a related move several class 115 DMBS vehicles are at last being fitted with gangways, these sets being the last non-gangwayed dmu's, except on the Southern.

### MEANWHILE ON THE WR...

In further dmu shuffles, the WR London Division has received a number of LMR class 104 2 car BRCW sets formerly used on the St Albans and Bedford branches. These are very run down and retain all blue livery, however, as they contain asbestos lining, all must be scrapped by the year end. One has already appeared on the Marlow branch. Ex-Cardiff class 101 2 car Metro-Cammell units are also being used by Reading depot, usually on the Windsor branch.

## THE EXHIBITION

Plans are now well advanced for our exhibition on Saturday 10th October at Court Garden. WE NOW NEED YOUR HELP to assist with stewarding and general help on the day on a roster basis, even if you can only spare an hour or two you will be valuable.

We also request assistance with the catering, both during the event and in making or providing of fare. Hopefully, members wives, girl friends or even mothers will help here. This provides a necessary service and is an important source of income.

Please use the form enclosed with this issue to pledge your support. By the way, all those helping at the exhibition get in FREE!

## DAVID SHEPHERD MEETING

David Shepherd, wildlife and railway artist and preservationist returns on Thursday 29th October to help celebrate our ten years. This meeting will be held at Court Garden in Marlow to allow us 200+ seats enabling the general public to be admitted. In addition to David's talk, his sales stand will be in attendance, whilst Carol and Roger Shippey will operate a licensed bar.

AN ADVANCE BOOKING SCHEME will operate by which members are urged to reserve their seats before 1st September 1987, the date at which tickets go on sale to the public. Each member plus one guest will get infor 50p each, further guests and the general public will pay a f1.00 admission fee.

BOOKINGS NOW please to Peter Robins, 95 Broom Hill, Cookham SL6 9LJ. Tel. BE 27870.

## THE MARLOW LAYOUT

Our thanks to those members who have generously donated funds to help with the layout which is progressing well. Further donations and assistance with construction would be gratefully received. If you can help please contact Mike Walker on Marlow 3899.



## SUNDAY DONKEY REVIVED

Once again the WR is offering an hourly Sunday service on the Marlow branch from 17th May until the end of September.

## TOP SECRET TRAIN!

Britain's most secret train has started running a thrice daily passenger service between Bicester Town and Oxford over the old LNWR Varsity Line, which closed to passengers in 1967. Network SouthEast are running a year's experiment to assess demand, unfortunately, nobody remembered to advertise the service in the new timetable!

## MAJOR BR CHANGES

With the new timetable BR abolished the term "second class" which becomes "standard class" to, quote, "avoid offending the 85% of passengers who don't travel first".

At the same time, ownership of all locomotives and rolling stock passed from the regions to the five business sectors which now become full blown companies, the regions merely provide the tracks and crews.

## INTERCITY GREAT WESTERN

Believe it or not but that's the title adopted by the InterCity Western sub-sector whose HST's will be adorned in a modified livery incorporating a swallow motif.

## READING REPORT

In the last issue we reported that Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons were the main contractor for the new Reading Station. This was slightly in error as that contract applied to the foundations only. The building itself is the work of Turrells and is now well advanced.

## TWENTY YEARS AGO

With apologies to Roger Bowen, it was twenty years ago this summer that the old Marlow station was demolished following its replacement by the current "bus stop" on 11th July 1967. It is appropriate that it should rise again this year, albeit in miniature.

# JOINT LINE STEAM



There is a school of thought that "Green Arrow" is a mythological beast rather than an LNER 2-6-2! Following its latest no show in March, a third and hopefully successful attempt is to be made in the summer, starting with a York to Marylebone special on Saturday 18th July. The locomotive is then scheduled to work the "Shakespeare Limited" on Sundays 26th July, 2nd & 16th August.

Another elusive machine is 7029 "Clun Castle" which, following a test run in 1986, appeared on a Tyseley-Marylebone-Tyseley run on 23rd May. This will be repeated as a charter for John Player & Sons on Saturday 12th September but there are no plans for an operating season at Marylebone. However LMS Pacific 6201 "Princess Elizabeth" is due to arrive at

the London terminal overnight on 22/23 August working over the GW main line from Swindon. Its operating dates on the "Shakespeare Limited" have yet to be announced.

The "Shakespeare Limited" operating dates are Sundays 21 and 28 June; 12, 19, 26 July; 2, 16, 30 August; 13 & 27 September; 11 & 25 October. Times at High Wycombe for the 1987/88 timetable are 11.43 down and 18.58 up.

To close on a note of optimism, the turntable at Marylebone is to undergo extensive repairs, BR's InterCity Special Trains Manager David Ward has stated it will be needed for at least the next three years. Just think, steam at High Wycombe in the 1990's!

## MAILBAG

### Member's Letters

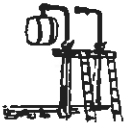
I feel I should challenge Roger Bowen's claim that the class 73's were "probably the first main line dual power locos built". Personally I have never regarded these as true dual power units, rather an electric loco with a small (600 hp) auxiliary diesel generator set.

The first, actually tri-power (diesel/electric/battery), were built in 1930 by ALCo/GE for the New York Central, principally as transfer locos but they did work passenger trains. Best known are the 60 EMD 'FL9' locomotives built for the New Haven between 1956 and 1960. These were basically stretched B-A1A versions of the standard F9 and were principally 95mph 1,750-1,800hp diesels capable of picking up current from two styles of conductor rail when in electrified territory, when the engine was shut down. Changing modes could be done at speed and did not affect horsepower or tractive effort.

The New Haven had four other dual power diesels, two built by Fairbanks-Morse to haul the lightweight Talgo trains and two by Baldwin for the rival "Train X" concept passenger train, this latter was actually a diesel-hydraulic (Maybach/Voith!) with the pick-up shoes serving two 150hp auxiliary traction motors. A similar arrangement is found on Amtrak's Rohr built "Turboliners" but with gas-turbine-hydraulic primary drive.

All the US dual power designs were created to overcome the problem of exhaust emissions in the tunnels into New York's two principle stations, city laws had previously banned steam locos from Manhattan and this extended to diesels.

Ed.



## BOOKSHELF

### Ron Brooks

Summer is here again and its time to get out and about - and go to Wales. If, as usual, the monsoon season coincides with your summer holidays, I have included something unusual this time. As we usually concentrate on steam I thought we ought to find out a little more about internal combustion. Who knows, it might catch on!

**RAIL GUN** Model & Allied Pub.  
John Batchelor/Ian Hogg ISBN 0 85242 328 4

If you had a number of spare large naval guns, and a war on your hands, what would you do? Correct - mount them on the only alternative - a railway vehicle. This profusely illustrated book tells the story and provides a mass of detail of the rail vehicles and the guns they carried. An unusual aspect of railway interest - but fascinating.

**THE BRITISH INTERNAL COMBUSTION LOCOMOTIVE** David & Charles  
Brian Webb ISBN 0 7153 6115 5

Need I say it again - another gem from D & C. Plenty of black & white pictures - lots of history and technical information on all gauges from 15" to 5'6" including the Kitson-Still which had an engine that had internal combustion on one side of the piston which could take steam on the other (generated by waste heat from the I.C. system), to give extra power when required.

## VIDEO VIEW

### Mike Norris

**STEAM SURVIVORS** Transport Video Publishing  
Price £25.00 VHS 50 mins.

This video was filmed in the early 80's and is a fairly comprehensive record of the lines in Turkey where steam still operated during that period. As steam traction throughout the World becomes a rare sight, it was pleasant to note its use on suburban services such as around Djmir.

### STEAM LOCOMOTIVES OF THE EAST AFRICAN RAILWAYS

R. Ramaer David & Charles  
ISBN 0 7153 6437 5

No - they weren't all Garratts. The first class B & W photos show a very wide selection of engine types, much influenced by its historical origins as German East Africa. I wonder what the situation is today?

**THE WELSH NARROW GAUGE RLY**

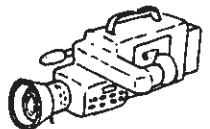
J.O.C.A Prideaux David & Charles  
ISBN 0 7153 7184 3

At this point I must make it clear that I do not have shares in David & Charles. This book is a MUST for everyone who has even heard of the Welsh narrow gauge, let alone travelled there. There are wonderfully evocative pictures, lots from late 19th century, with a quality of reproduction that belies their age. You will end up with a good knowledge of how to transport slate, but its worth it.

**RAILWAY SIGNALLING**  
Edited by O.S. Nock

A & C Black  
ISBN 0 7136 2724 7

If you want technical information this book will provide it. This is not for entertainment, although it does allow itself a peep at the future. Well produced and clear print - but a text book. Next time I'll try to find a more general book on the subject.



The locomotives featured are mainly 2-8-0's and 2-10-0's but their origins are varied in that they were built in Germany, France, America, Sweden and Britain. Stanier 8F 2-8-0's can be seen working in a fine tribute to this design which was withdrawn by British Rail many years ago. Mention must also be made of the American 'Skyliner' 2-10-0's. These powerful two cylinder locos are very impressive.

One does not normally associate snow and foggy wintry conditions with Turkey. However, this is shown in a number of scenes shot in the high mountainous regions. In fact most of the lines have considerable gradients, some of them being both severe and long. It therefore follows that there are plenty of sequences showing locomotives working hard. If you want good smoke effects, you will get your moneysworth with this tape! In fact the Turkish drivers seem to put on the 'clag' when they see a photographer.

The picture quality is generally good but lacks the clarity one associates with the 'Railscene' standard. Sound reproduction is average. My verdict - a good buy if the price was not so high.

A FORTIES MEMORY  
Price £16.00

Steam Powered Video  
VHS 23 mins.

Filed forty years ago immediately after the War in 1946-47 this is mainly a look at the Denver & Rio Grande Western Standard and narrow gauges in Colorado through the camera lens of the late Billie Bowen. Also included are several

special standard gauge excursions further afield plus some sequences on the Rio Grande Southern.

In common with the Turkish film, many of the scenes take place in mountainous terrain. The scenery is impressive and beautiful, some of it being enhanced by a covering of snow. Locomotives can be observed working hard pulling long freight trains. Some trains are double headed plus a banker, whilst one even has an extra loco in the middle.

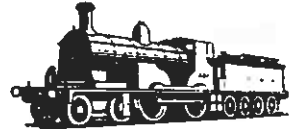
Although the sound is dubbed the result is of an acceptable level. The commentary is informative and detailed, and put over in a pleasant manner. Although filmed by an amateur cameraman, the lineside and on board shots are generally good. The picture quality after transfer to video tape is fairly good. There is an excellent and comprehensive description of the subjects shown in the film, printed on the back of the video case.

I believe this tape is slightly over priced. However if you are a follower of American Steam, you will want to add it to your collection.

## LOCO PROFILE

# MERCHANT NAVIES

Mike Walker



"Clan Line" has established itself as the most consistent of the locomotives used on the "Shakespeare Limited" since its inception in early 1985. Despite a lay-off early last season, it has proved reliable and powerful, a tribute to its original designer and those less known engineers responsible for the rebuilding in the late fifties.

There is of course a close relationship between "Clan Line" and the LNER pacifics which have otherwise dominated the service, for it was in 1937 that Oliver Bullied left his post as Assistant to Sir Nigel Gresley to succeed R.E.L. Maunsell as Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Southern Railway, taking with him some very original ideas on locomotive design.

Bullied spent his first months examining the SR fleet and came to the conclusion that, despite the spread of electrification, a large express passenger locomotive was required. Initial thoughts turned to a 3 cylinder 2-8-2 or 4-8-2, but both proposals were vetoed by the Civil Engineer, so a scheme for a pacific was sketched out and received the approval of the SR board in March 1938.

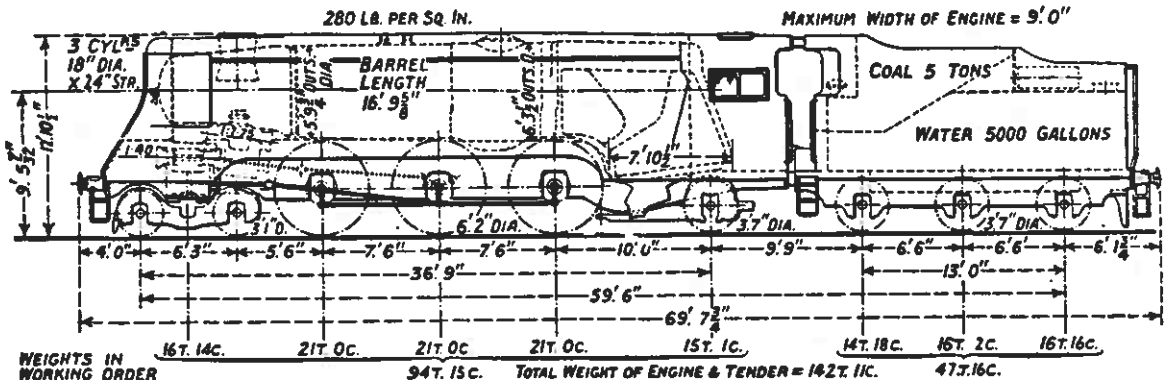
Thus was born the remarkable "Merchant Navy" class, still on the drawing board when the Second World War broke out, but by quickly redesignating the locomotive "Mixed Traffic" work was permitted to continue. When the prototype emerged from Eastleigh works in February 1941 it was a contravercial, revolutionary machine. Although assembled under wartime conditions it made few concessions to austerity with its air-smoothed semi-streamlined casing and vivid malachite green livery. However it was in the technical innovations, most out of sight, that the locomotive scored.

The wheels, for the first time in Britain, were of the North American "Boxpok" cast steel design which provided a greater degree of support for the tyre than the conventional spoked pattern. The three cylinders had valves actuated by chain driven gears running in a 40 gallon oil bath between the frames. This was intended to reduce routine maintenance, in particular the driver's oiling round. In fact it was intended that the valve gear would need little attention between intermediate works visits when an oil change was planned, just like a car. The boiler, which on the first ten was subcontracted to the North British Locomotive Company, featured an all welded steel firebox, to reduce weight, thermic syphons in addition to superheating to increase the evaporative area and a working pressure of 280psi, the highest of any conventional British boiler.

Other novel features included clasp brakes in place of the usual single shoe variety, a turbo-alternator to work electric marker, cab, instrument and exterior inspection lights and steam powered reverser and fire doors. The cab was laid out so that the crew did not interfere with each other when performing their duties, indeed the whole design was intended to be ergonomic and labour saving. Even the locomotive number 21C1 broke new ground, being based on French practice. The name "Channel Packet", number and title "Southern" were all carried on large brass plates.

Upon completion 21C1 and the second engine, 21C2 "Union Castle", were found to be too heavy at 90t 3c empty and so large holes were cut in the frames and stretchers, thinner sheeting used in the casing and the brass plates replaced

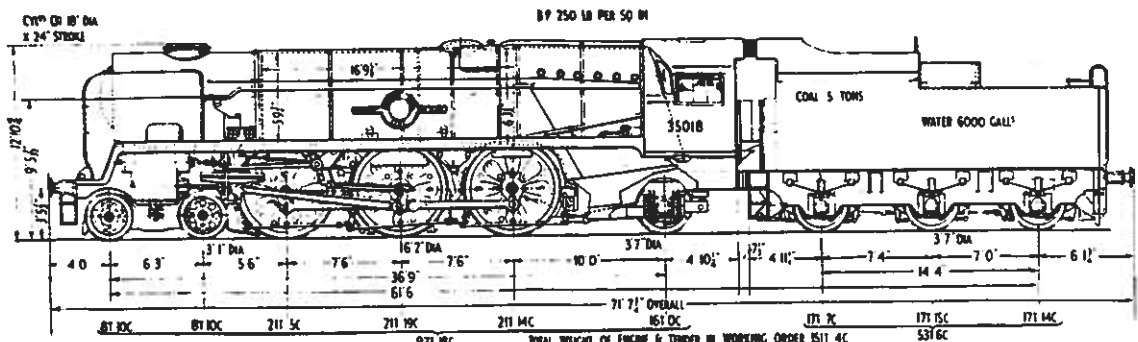
MERCHANT NAVY as built ▶



Tube heating surface	2176 sq. ft.
Superheater surface	822 sq. ft.
Firebox heating surface (incl. thermic syphons)	275 sq. ft.
Road heating surface	3273 sq. ft.
Fire grate area	48 1/2 sq. ft.
Tractive effort (at 65% B.P.)	32800 lbs.

• In 1951 the boiler pressure was reduced from 280 to 250 psi reducing the tractive effort to 33,493 lbs

MERCHANT NAVY rebuilt ▶



(except the name) by painted characters. This reduced the weight to an acceptable 86t 11c empty or 96t 6c in working order. The remaining eight of the first batch, delivered by 8/42, incorporated these changes from new.

Initially the MN's were restricted to Salisbury-Exeter and were found to be extremely free steaming, powerful engines, although they did exhibit a tendency to slip violently at the slightest provocation. Their biggest weakness however was the air-smoothed casing. This was designed primarily to enable the engines to be washed in normal carriage cleaning machines, but it hampered forward vision and the exhaust clung to the top and sides of the casing. Various experiments were tried but the problem was never fully cured.

A second batch of ten was ordered with delivery beginning in late 1944. These incorporated a number of improvements in the light of experience mostly affecting the exterior appearance. The front end of the casing was revised with short smoke deflectors, and a lip over the smokebox door to assist smoke removal, and the contours of the cab and tender sides were altered.

The final batch of ten did not appear until after nationalisation. From the outset these bore BR numbers 35021-35030, the earlier engines being renumbered 35001-35020. This BR batch brought more modifications. The front end featured longer smoke deflectors, whilst the cab was further modified with enlarged, angled spectacle windows to improve forward vision. The rear pony truck was changed from the original cast design to a fabricated one. A new pattern tender enlarged from 5,000 to 6,000 gallons water capacity, and fitted with French TIA water softening equipment, was provided.

Eventually most of the cosmetic changes were incorporated in the earlier members and the class gradually took on a uniform appearance in BR Brunswick Green although a few wore the experimental blue for some years. The class took part in the 1948 locomotive trials with 35017 on the LMR and 35019 on the WR, both with LMS Coronation tenders as the normal SR tenders did not include water pick-ups. 35018 (with normal tender) ran controlled trials on the Southern. 35020 was prepared and held in reserve but not used. Other experiments by BR involved fitting 35005 with an American mechanical stoker in 1948, which proved unpopular with dining car/Pullman crews as the fine coal dust was ejected from the chimney and got everywhere, it was none too popular with housewives on washday either! Later 35014 briefly lost its thermic syphons and 35019 exchanged its standard large chimney and multiple-jet blast pipe for a single blastpipe and small chimney. Both were later restored to normal. All had their boiler pressure reduced to 250psi in the early fifties.

The MN's were principally found on the western main lines from Waterloo to Bournemouth or Exeter but a small number were on the eastern working such trains as the "Golden Arrow" and "Kent Ferry" between Victoria and Dover. Generally they were popular with their crews but did have their weak points.

The visibility problem was never cured and the steam reverser had a habit of moving from its set position, they could, however, tackle any task set them. They were less popular with maintenance staff. The air smooth casing restricted access to

the boiler and the valve gear, far from reducing maintenance, was plagued with oil leaks often resulting in fires in the boiler lagging. The labour and cost saving devices moatly failed resulting in the Bullied pacifics being some of the most expensive locomotives to maintain on BR, although the operating costs were quite good, thanks to reasonable fuel consumption.

BR finally grasped the nettle and in 1954 a design team was set up under R.G. Jarvis at Brighton to rebuild the Merchant Navies. Authority was given for 15 conversions in 1955 and the first, 35018 "British India Line", emerged from Eastleigh in February 1956. The transformation was remarkable, the oil bath chain driven valve gear was replaced by three independent sets of Walschaerts gear. The outside cylinders were the original but a new inside cylinder cast integrally with the new smokebox saddle was provided. The original boiler was retained with new cladding and a completely new smokebox, although the latter retained the original door. The firebox required rocking grates and a self emptying ashpan which were curiously missing on the original engines. A screw reverser replaced the steam reverser and the steam firedoors were dispensed with. The lubricants were removed from below the smokebox to the running plate. The cab was little altered in appearance but nine of the 5,000 gallon tenders were rebuilt to 5,250 gallon capacity.

The most remarkable change was in appearance. Gone was the air-smoothed casing and in its place was a locomotive which resembled the BR pacifics but the lower running plate and large boiler gave a better proportioned design. Large deflector plates finally cured the smoke problem. The resulting locomotive was arguably the most handsome, functional and powerful looking steam design ever to run in Britain. In service they were more reliable and cheaper to maintain, so eventually the entire class was rebuilt ending with 35028 "Clan Line" in October 1959. Crews were divided over their preference, the rebuilt engines rode slightly rougher and the driver had more oiling to do, but visibility was improved and for the fireman, disposal was easier.

In rebuilt form only two, 35010/35015, ran briefly on the eastern section, the rest were working out of Waterloo and put up some remarkable performances in the twilight of British steam. The first withdrawals came in early 1964 with 35002 and 35015 both less than six years after rebuilding. The others gradually disappeared, but seven were remaining to bring down the curtain on British main line steam when the Bournemouth line was electrified in July 1967. To 35023 "Holland-Afrika Line" fell the dubious honour of hauling the 08.30 Waterloo-Weymouth on 9-7-67, the last revenue run by these magnificent machines.

Most went for scrap, except 35028 "Clan Line" which was bought from BR for preservation in July 1967. However a further eight have been rescued from Barry for restoration but none is currently operational, although 35005 "Canadian Pacific" at Carnforth will probably be the first. The final irony for one of Britain's most unconventional designs is that 35029 "Ellerman Lines" has been restored for exhibition at York sectioned to show the workings of a typical British steam locomotive!

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The summer of 1962 saw the fruition of a number of modernisation plan schemes and the introduction of two prototype high power diesel locomotives.

On 18th June the fully integrated services of the Kent Coast electrification came into operation. Increased frequency of services and faster journeys between Charing Cross and Ashford Folkestone, Dover Priory and Ramsgate were notable. Additionally there was a considerable acceleration of Continental boat trains between Victoria and Dover or Folkestone. The down "Golden Arrow" was accelerated by 15 minutes between London and Paris, the up train by 24 minutes.

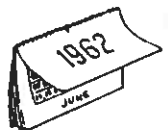
The same date saw the inauguration of a full service of electric trains between Crewe and Liverpool, being the second stage of the London Midland Region 25kv electrification of the Euston-Birmingham-Manchester-Liverpool lines. The Crewe-Liverpool section comprised 37 route miles and 154 track miles. Long distance passenger and freight trains were hauled by type "A" 3,300 hp locomotives designed for 100 mph top speed. Intermediate passenger work was covered by four car multiple unit sets with a top speed of 75 mph.

Yet another new scheme was the introduction of a full diesel service of suburban services from Marylebone to Aylesbury and the High Wycombe line. Between Aylesbury and Marylebone an

hourly service was introduced, reducing the journey time from 90 to 59 minutes. On the High Wycombe line an hourly service in 50 minutes was also introduced, with certain trains extended to Princes Risborough and Aylesbury. The units used were built at the British Railways Carriage & Wagon Works at Derby, the four car sets powered by four 230 hp diesel engines supplied by the British United Traction Ltd. The maximum speed 70 mph. Freight services and main line trains from Marylebone to Nottingham continued to be operated by steam, however the engine sheds at Neasden (14D) and Aylesbury were closed.

The prototype 2,800 hp diesel-electric locomotive "Falcon" built at the Loughborough Works of Brush Electrical Engineering Ltd. was in service on the Great Northern main line, principally hauling the Kings Cross to Sheffield Pullman Expresses. It had a general purpose loco fitted with two high speed engines as fitted in the "Western" class diesel hydraulics. It was of Co-Co wheel arrangement and a maximum speed of 100 mph.

The other prototype locomotive was the 2,750 hp "Lion". Powered by a Sulzer engine, it was a Co-Co locomotive built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. Ltd., with electrical equipment by Associated Electrical Industries Ltd. Also with a top speed of 100 mph the loco was in use on the Western Region.



Both locos were private ventures for the competition to meet the latest type 4 requirements for British Railways.

June 23rd saw the opening of the new Great Western Railway Museum at Swindon. The museum is housed in a former chapel, and was a joint venture of the BTC and Swindon Council.

The Keighley to Oxenhope branch of the North Eastern Region closed to all traffic on 18th June and a preservation society was formed to purchase and operate the line.

The passenger service between Oxford and Fairford, Western Region, was withdrawn from 18th June, and between Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable North, London Midland Region, from

2nd July.

8th July saw the last steam hauled "Marlow Donkey", replaced by a "more economical" diesel unit. Friday 23rd July saw the withdrawal of passenger services between Wellington (Salop) and Much Wenlock, Western Region.

A fascinating mixture of events from 25 years ago. The major schemes of the modernisation scheme bearing fruit, i.e. London Midland and Kent Coast electrifications. Prototypes for the second wave of diesels and, finally, a growing number of branch closures, and this before the shock waves of the Beeching Axe.

## MAJORCAN MISCELLANY

Eddie Lewcock

The summer of 1986 found my better half and self in Majorca, supposedly for the Sun and relaxation. The former did not appear until after several days of the worst weather in twenty years which then enforced the latter. By that time we had wheels, having rented a car, and there was a keen personal desire to find out more about the railways. These like Caesar's Gaul are into three parts divided.

The first, a line to Inca from Palma, the last part of a once fairly extensive system reviewed recently in the "Continental Modeller".

The second was the Soller Line for the Tourist trade and the third, a tramway extension to the second, rolling down to Port Soller.

Our first approach was the tramway, as wheels in the form of a Panda (Fiat) possessing a gear box with a mind of it's own, rolled us over the Sierras (they reach 5,000 feet) down into Port Soller one sunny afternoon.

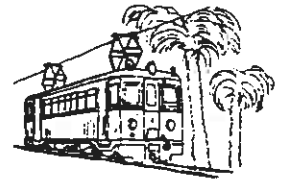
Whilst the topless beauties - and a few plain ones - disported themselves on the beach we made pilgrimages to travel on a veteran San Francisco type car on two toast rack trailers in perfect antique detail and travelling on pure Emmet track. 10 mph was pushing your luck and good for the liver. Half way along we came to the only passing loop where the second operational power car and trailers passed us with all the due solemnity of a railroad meet.

At the start, the track had run between the sea and the road, now it hugged the road but soon crossed the latter to run down the back alleys of Soller itself. Here we met an old Spanish custom; we rode in the rear trailer and on stopping at the main square did not restart, whereas the power car did and slid off out of view, to return rather smuggly ten minutes later having visited the main station unbeknown to its foreign passengers.

The next experience, the Inca Line was prepared for with some care, as a friend reported having gone to the station and found that nothing arrived or left. A recce trip, whilst touring one day, established a second old Spanish custom. - Don't believe all that you see! The station - a nice one - was provided with a handsome painted timetable over the booking office window. However, by mere chance, I spotted a grubby strip of paper elsewhere and was given a copy of this time table by an official. All these times were completely different, but correct and the train, a two coach railcar, ran punctually to them. In fact once an hour on Saturdays.

The railcars were rather shabby but hopped along at a fine speed, I guessed 50 mph plus. All crossings had automatic barriers and the civil engineering side was distinctly good. The line was clearly well used by the locals some of whom both crossed themselves and counted their beads before the start so maybe we had missed something!

The Soller line was a gem and should not be missed if you visit Majorca. It is quite different to the Inca line and was joined by us at an intermediate station, after yet an-

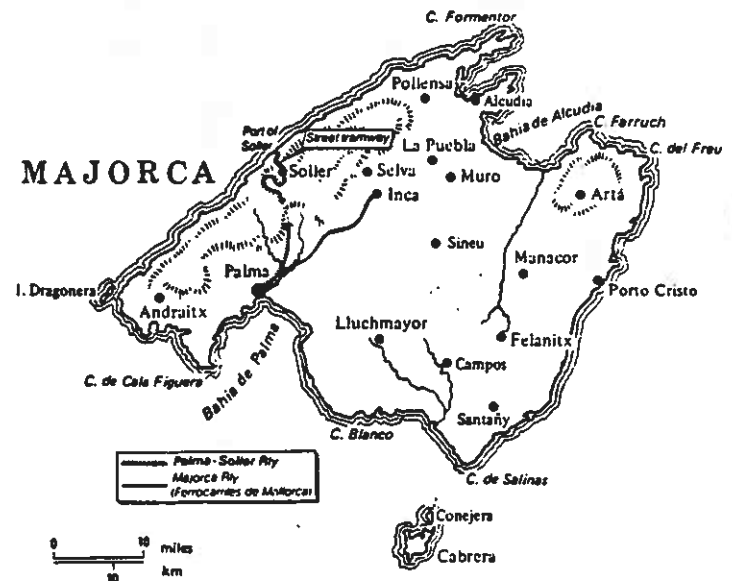


other recce to establish if the train stopped there. One's natural inclination is to expect this sort of information at the end of the line but well - old Spanish custom again.

We boarded the "Tourist" train which left Palma at 10.40 and was packed solid on the way out. A relief train would have helped but its an old - oh why say it! Motive power was an electric railcar, whilst the coaches were of the delightful open ended wooden variety, reeking of nostalgia. The trip through the Sierras was a passable imitation of Switzerland, with the track winding back on itself, to gain and lose height through the pass to Soller. Tunnels and dramatic views were plentiful including a photo stop at one point overlooking Soller.

Soller station has the trainsheds and workshops immediately adjacent, set amongst the trees and shrubs of the area. No Crewe works this place! Close inspection of the railcar revealed a builder's plate of 1929, Carde y Escoriaza of Zaragoza. The countersunk brass screwheads shone as brightly in the woodwork as the day they were put in service and all the windows were cleaned, right into the corners.

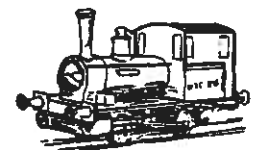
With the crowds on the outward journey looking for a return ride probably later rather than sooner, we took the early return train which was comfortably full and a position on the rear coach balcony was reserved. It was an exhilarating run back; not for the speed but just to watch the world go by and the scenery unfold, just as many an old timer would have done in the days before hermetically sealed air conditioned stock. The trip ended all too soon with the feeling that modern travel had lost a lot compared to old times.



## THE WANTAGE TRAMWAY

Bas Woodward

Visitors to the Great Western Society's railway preservation centre at Didcot often pause curiously to stare at a small 0-4-0 well tank bearing the name "Shannon". The letters WTC are on her cab sides. This tiny engine is probably Britain's oldest steamable locomotive and was included in the Grand Steam Cavalcade of 1975 at Shildon which marked the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.



"Shannon" was built in 1857 at a cost of £800 by George England & Co. at Hatcham Ironworks in New Cross. Captain Peel, son of Sir Robert Peel, used "Shannon" on his four mile long railway, the Sandy and Potton in Bedfordshire. Five years later the LNWR, having purchased the Sandy and Potton line, removed her name plate and then she became just No.1104. After unsuccessful trials on the very curved and steeply

graded Cromford and Peak Railway in North Derbyshire, "Shannon" became works shunter at Crewe.

In 1878 she was bought by the Wantage Tramway Company, and as Engine No.5 trundled with her wagons and carriages along the side of the road between Wantage Road Station (GWR) and the small Berkshire country town of Wantage (since 1974 in Oxfordshire). "Shannon" became known as "Jane" to the locals. As the tramway only ceased to run in 1945 many of us older railway enthusiasts have memories of this unusual rail link and of "Shannon" herself. When the tramway closed it seemed an excellent idea to place her on a plinth and beneath a canopy on one of the platforms at Wantage Road Station. When the station closed in 1965 the Atomic Energy Research Establishment provided a temporary site until the GWS could accommodate her.

When Isambard Kingdom Brunel was planning his railway connecting London with Bristol he must have regarded the White Horse Vale as an obvious section of his line. Any suggestions that Wantage, two and a half miles off the projected route, was worthy of a station, were not even considered. Local businessmen toyed with the idea of a branch line but nothing was decided. However, in 1870 the Tramways Act was passed and the possibility of a horse-drawn train was mooted. A Public Meeting in Wantage Town Hall on Wednesday, 22nd October, 1873 gave enthusiastic approval and the necessary monies were soon provided. Construction began in 1874 and track soon connected the GWR with a depot in Mill Street near the town centre. Goods traffic began to be moved on 1st October 1875, passen-

gers a few days later, travelling slowly along the side of the public highway.

Realising that horse-power was slow and decidedly old-fashioned the Company purchased a double-decker vehicle, John Grantham's Steam Car. After a prolonged testing period the Grantham Car came into use in August 1876. She performed excellently on the tramway but was eventually sold in 1891. Several small steam engines were used for the line but only "Shannon" survived the passing years. In the Company's final months there was also a derelict 0-4-0 tank in the engine-shed at Wantage. She was No.7, a Manning Wardle locomotive built in Leeds. She was sold to A.R. Adams & Sons of Newport but was soon scrapped.

Obviously bus services were offering Wantage passengers a better service, for at the end of July 1925, the WTC decided to continue with the movement of goods only. The Tramway survived the Second World War but was finally wound up on the last day of 1945.

When I visited Wantage Museum last summer I was pleased to find generous space had been given to the WTC, the Company which for seventy years provided a useful link between a small market town and its nearest main line.

For further reading I suggest:-

"The Wantage Tramway", by S.H. Pearce Higgins. Abbey Press 1958  
"The Wantage Tramway", by Roy Wilkinson. The Oakwood Press 1976

## BRECON MOUNTAIN RAILWAY

North Wales is renowned for its narrow gauge railways. Less well known is the one narrow gauge line in South Wales, the Brecon Mountain Railway. This line, which is a privately owned line as opposed to a preserved one, runs from the edge of Merthyr Tydfil through part of the most attractive Brecon Beacons National Park.

The line, which is of 1'11½" gauge is laid out on part of the track bed of the old Brecon & Merthyr Railway, closed by BR on 31st December 1962. A 5½ mile section from Pant to Torpantau was purchased including the Torpantau Tunnel, at 1313', the highest in Great Britain. At present only the 1½ miles from Pant to Pontsticill is open. Pant is in fact a new station just outside the National Park boundary and is the only place one is allowed to join trains.

The narrow gauge line opened to traffic in the summer of

### GWR LONDON AREA BRANCHES - 2

## WEST LONDON LINES

Mike Walker

The West London Railway is probably one of the most important links in the London area, indeed, until the reopening of the Snow Hill Tunnel between Farringdon and Holborn Viaduct, it provides BR's only north-south cross London link.

Its origins date back as far as 1844 with the opening of the West London Railway, leaving the London & Birmingham Railway at Holsden Green, Willesden and running almost due south to the Kensington Canal basin. A passenger service was tried but lasted only six months, it was resumed by the LNWR on 2nd June 1862. The WLR crossed the GW main line near what became Old Oak Common, about 2½ miles west of Paddington.

Initially the GW had neither an interest in or connection with the West London but an Act of 1859 brought into being a new railway, the West London Extension Joint Railway, to link Kensington with the LBSCR and LSWR near Clapham. The GWR and LNWR each subscribed one third of the capital whilst the LBSCR and LSWR each subscribed a sixth. In addition the GW took a half share in the LNWR's original West London line.

To reach the WL the GW laid in connections from its main line which was known as West London Junctions south to join the WLR at a point which became North Pole Junction. Thus up or down GW trains could join the southbound WL but not the north, alternative arrangements were to follow many years later. The WLEJR ended at Latchmere Junction where the line split in four directions, eastwards to join the LSWR into Waterloo and the LBSCR into Victoria, or via Longhedge Junction to South London, and westwards to join both the LSWR (Putney Line) and LBSCR at Clapham Junction. The accompanying map hopefully makes this clearer. The GW laid mixed gauge track over the entire WL line and on into the eastern or LCDR side of Victoria. A further GW connection joined the

## ROGER BOWEN describes a less known Little Train of Wales

1980, and has established itself as a major tourist attraction. In 1976 the main motive power in use was a 1908 0-6-2WT built by Jung and acquired from East Germany. The back-up power was "Sybil" a 0-4-OST by Hunslet from the North Wales Quarries. In store was a most interesting loco a 1927 Garratt built by Hannomag for South Africa.

A most interesting line to visit with an excellent restaurant at Pant. Unfortunately, for some reason no booklets or stock-lists of the line were available, and only two postcards, despite a pleasant "gift shop" selling "Welsh souvenirs". A major deficiency in revenue earning surely.

For those travelling by car, Pant station is located one mile from the A465 Heads of the Valley Road, and is well signposted. It is approximately four miles from Merthyr Tydfil BR station.



WL in 1864 when a spur was laid in from the Hammersmith & City at Latimer Road (see the last issue of the Donkey), whilst in 1872 a branch was laid from Kensington Addison Road to join the District at Earls Court.

Great Western passenger services were initiated over the West London line on 1st April 1863 with eight daily services each way between Southall and Victoria (LCDR). These called at all stations (except three which passed Hanwell) and in addition to Kensington Addison Road. West London stations were provided at Uxbridge Road, West Brompton, Chelsea and Battersea. GW trains also called at Grosvenor Road but this was for ticket collection and did not appear in public timetables. These trains were initially standard gauge but by the following October broad gauge trains started running with the service increased to 10 trains a day, one of which started at Reading. The following year saw the 8.10 am express from Bristol take a slip coach from Reading which was detached at West London Junction for onward conveyance to Victoria, in addition the same year saw Victoria to Windsor workings both as separate through trains or as portions detached from or joined to Paddington to Windsor services. Broad gauge trains were withdrawn in October 1866 and from then the number of GW trains started to decline until by 1896 there were only four. Sunday services were withdrawn as early as 1875.

The GW started operating trains between Kensington and Farringdon on 1st July 1864. To begin with these were provided by portions detached from or attached to Hammersmith & City trains. However, as there was no run-round facility or station at the junction, the locomotive propelled its coaches to and from Kensington. This was not push-pull op-

eration as we came to know it later, as both members of the loco crew remained on the footplate. To prevent passengers mistaking the stop at the junction for a station, iron railings were erected alongside the track close enough to prevent doors being opened. This method of operation left much to be desired and thus from 1st April 1865 a separate half-hourly Farringdon to Kensington Addison Road service was introduced. This was extended from 1st August 1872 via the District spur to Earls Court and then on to Mansion House. This was known as the Middle Circle and was further extended from Farringdon to Aldgate in December 1876. The Outer Circle was also introduced in 1872 and was worked by the LNWR from Broad Street, via the North London, to Willesden Junction then the WL to Kensington and then to Mansion House.

The Middle Circle was cut back to Earls Court on 1st July 1899 and then to Kensington on 1st February 1905. The WL was then electrified between Kensington and the H & C in 1906 and from December that year the remains of the Middle Circle was operated by the H & C Joint stock, terminating at Edgware Road from 31st October 1910. The service was suspended due to air raid damage on 21st October 1940 and was never restored.

Meanwhile, the GW services over the WLJR and WLEJR to Victoria enjoyed a revival from 1897. There were now five up trains from Southall, two from Windsor and one morning peak service from Uxbridge Vine Street. From Victoria there was one down train to Slough and five to Southall. Between 1898 and 1915 a mid morning down train linked Victoria with Reading calling at all stations to West Ealing then West Drayton, Slough, Taplow, Maidenhead and Twyford. From 1904 to 1911 there was a through Victoria - Staines West service. Sunday services, albeit summer only, resumed in May 1904 with the 9.50 am Victoria to Henley, which called at all WL stations then Taplow, Maidenhead and Shiplake. The return train left Henley at 8.10 pm. This service was discontinued after 1913.

The foregoing trains have all been of a local nature but the GW also ran some long distance services via the West London. From October 1905 a through coach was operated from Birkenhead to Dover. Conveyed by 10 am from Chester it was transferred to the 2.05 pm Southall to Dover. The return journey operated via Paddington by way of the H & C line. The same route was taken by a short lived Paddington to Brighton train introduced in 1906. Formed of LBSC stock, this was the only passenger train to use the "Crystal Palace Loop" between the main line and H & C at Westbourne Park, avoiding Subway Junction. There was a Victoria, Bicester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton service introduced in October 1910 and from the following May this included through carriages over SECR to Folkestone for ferry connections.

Long distance GW services over the WL were withdrawn on 1st February 1912 whilst ordinary GW trains ceased to serve Victoria on 15th March 1915 and railmotors a week later. From then on the only GW services were freight, the Company having depots at both Kensington and Chelsea Basin. In addition there was the large depot of London Wholesale Dairies at Wood Lane which generated considerable milk traffic from far flung parts of the GW system.

The Ealing & Shepherds Bush branch opened on 16th April 1917 leaving the WL at Viaduct Junction, Wood Lane and running to Ealing Broadway via Acton. Although built by the GW, only freight services were operated, passenger services were provided by the Central London Railway. The exception was a GW unadvertised workmen's service from Greenford to Kensington which started in 1922 and was extended to Clapham Junction in 1933. The service was withdrawn in 1938.

Upon nationalisation control of the entire West London line was vested in the LM Region. The line remained an important inter-Regional freight route but no regular passenger services remained other than a Clapham Junction - Kensington workers service, even the LT service between Earls Court and Kensington only operated during events at Olympia. By the

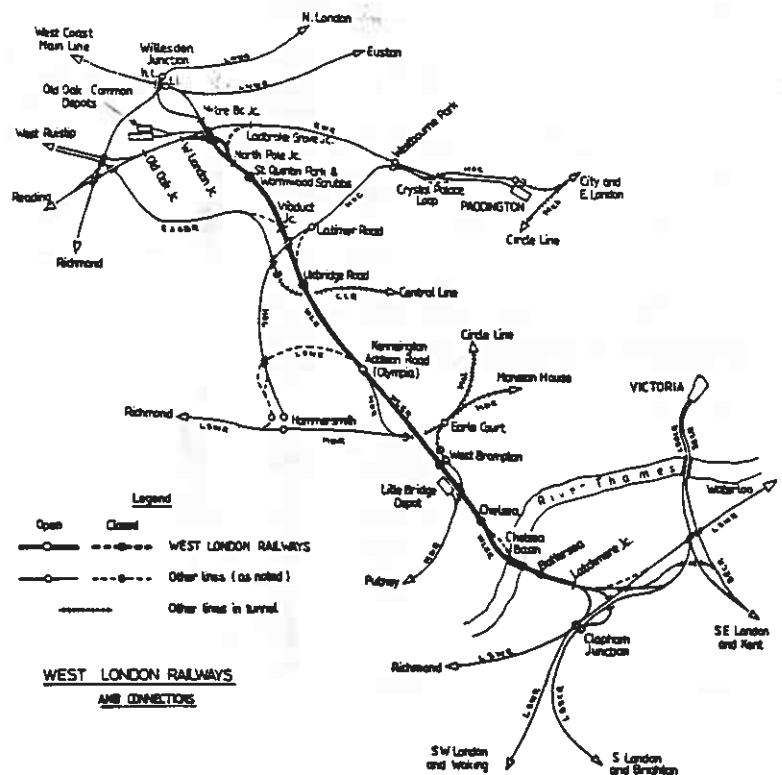
late sixties the freight depots at Kensington and Chelsea had gone as had the West London East Junction, Viaduct Junction and Latchmere Junction to Waterloo connections.

In 1966 Kensington Addison Road was renamed Kensington Olympia and refurbished to become the London terminal for the "Motorail" car carrier services. These ran to various parts of the country including Fishguard and St. Austell on the Western Region. The peak of these services was reached in the early '70's but since then the improvement of motorways has reduced their popularity and led to a major re-organisation of "Motorail" services, which ceased to operate out of Kensington in 1981.

For five weeks between 15th October and 19th November 1967 the WR undertook a major track renewal and resignalling programme on the approaches to Paddington. Many commuter services terminated at Ealing and Birmingham trains were diverted to Marylebone. However, on weekdays seven Inter-City services into and out of Paddington were switched to Kensington on Saturdays this became 9 down and 8 up with 2 down and 4 up on Sundays. The affected trains were mostly on the West of England and Worcester routes.

The latest phase in the story of the West London line began in May 1979 when BR commenced a daily through train each way between Manchester and Brighton. Routed via Reading this train follows the Old Oak - North Pole connection onto the WL. Building on the success of this service Inter City introduced a whole series of cross London trains linking the north-west with Brighton and Dover starting in May 1986. Most of these however operate over the WCML via Willesden Junction.

The future for the West London line looks bright, further expansion of cross-London Inter City can be foreseen and the Channel Tunnel will lead to International expresses using it, although BR intends using Waterloo as a terminal for these services. On top of this the line remains a busy freight route both for local trip working and trunk "Speedlink" services.



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President: The Hon. W. H. Mc Alpine

Chairman:	Bas Woodward	40 Heath Road, Holtspur, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 1DG.	Tel.: Beaconsfield 3476
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Publicity Officer:	Len Stroud	68 Oak Tree Road, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3ET.	Tel.: Marlow 3740
Social Sec.:	Peter Robins	95 Broom Hill, Cookham, Berks, SL9 6LJ.	Tel.: Bourne End 27870
Editor:	Mike Walker	"Solgarth", Little Marlow, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3RS.	Tel.: Marlow 3899