

THE MARLOW DONKEY

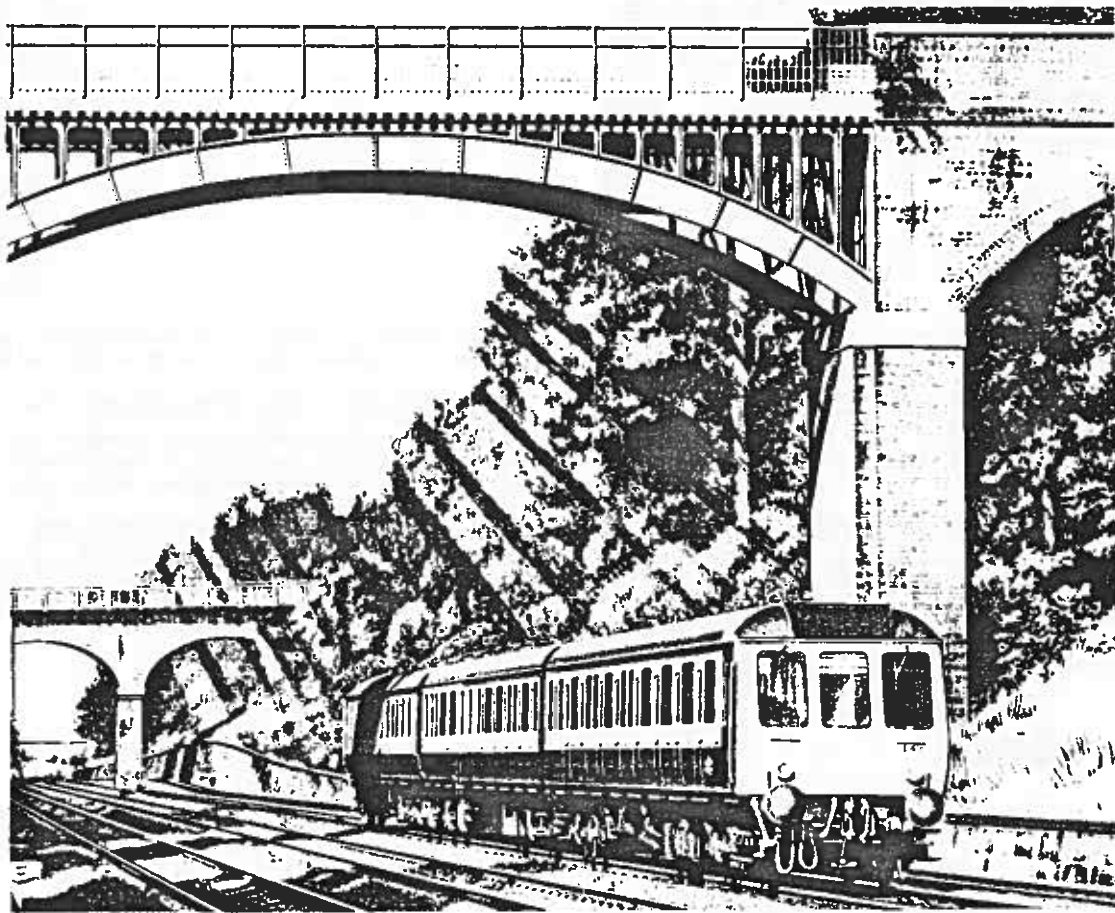


№44

DECEMBER 1987

Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Members



1988 should be the last full year of service for the WR's traditional DMU fleet. Mark Hopwood reviews the current status of these unloved but vital units on page 6.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Our Society has now existed for ten years. It has been a story of continued progress, and enthusiasm has not lessened. It seemed an excellent idea to celebrate the Society's first decade, and plans were formulated accordingly. A hearty vote of thanks must be made to all those members who contributed to the success of our three main events - the Exhibition in Court Garden, the Evening with David Shepherd and the Anniversary Dinner. The full committee met frequently during the year but I feel most of the credit for our success is due to the sub-committee of four who did the planning.

I would like briefly to recap on what took place. The Saturday of our Exhibition was possibly the wettest day of 1987. Whether the number of visitors was increased or diminished by the torrential rain we shall never know but over 700 people crowded the rooms of Court Garden. The miniature steam railway alone provided rides for over 360 youngsters - and some mums and dads! The Marlow Station of earlier days was beautifully modelled and older citizens of Marlow must have gazed at it nostalgically. Other exhibits attracted close attention and there was something there for everyone. The catering department did well. Plenty of food was donated and many hands made light of the serving and washing up.

Any doubts as to the proposal of arranging a second evening with David Shepherd were soon dispelled. The hall at Court Garden was filled to capacity and our speaker skillful!

ed his three occupations - painting, wild life and steam. By switching from film to speaking and repeating the formula he maintained the interest of everyone.

At the time of writing the Anniversary Dinner has not yet taken place. Fifteen of our earlier members were contacted and some of them intend coming to the Dinner. Our original Chairman, Les Spicer, regrets he is unable to join us but sends his greetings and best wishes; he is delighted to know the Society is still flourishing.

A brief note concerning the Society's other activities during 1987 will not come amiss. It is our usual custom to choose a "victim" who will provide a short article about the Society's July coach trip. This year's article was written by Martin Sherwood. Again the weather was disappointing although Swanage itself was sunny. Those who stayed in Swanage after the trip on the preserved railway enjoyed unbroken sunshine; those who travelled to the Tank Museum at Bovington encountered cheerless rain. John Sear's article "Three Legs No Tail" describes a most entertaining long week-end in the Isle of Man. The party of MDRS members were able to see all the attractions we heard about - and saw on slides - at a previous club meeting. Teething troubles delayed the opening of the Docklands Railway and our visit was postponed. It will have priority in 1988.

Book Reviews from Ron Brooks and Twenty-five Years Ago from Roger Bowen make good reading in the quarterly Newsletters. A welcome newcomer to our articles is Mike Norris's Video Review. Contributions like Len Stroud's Donkey Days, as also Mike Walker's earlier series on the Wycombe Railway, are always enjoyed by our readers. It is good to learn that our Editor sometimes has to hold articles over because of lack of space!

John Jeffery is the Press Officer of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. In the latest edition of Railways restored he reassures the fainthearted who sense that there is a

declining interest in steam preservation in this country. Browsing through the well-known railway magazines would surely emphasize continued enthusiasm. However, he first records the return to steam of Mallard. This famous A4 left York Museum to run to Scarborough and Hull. For a short spell she visited Marylebone and pulled the Shakespeare Express. At Barry in 1973 I photographed the rusting remains of the Duke of Gloucester, the one-off member of her class. Parts of her mechanism were by now on show in the Science Museum in Kensington. Several years of work by the devoted volunteers at Loughborough have restored the Duke to his former glory. Mr. Jeffery is particularly impressed by the exchange of locomotives - and workers - between different preservation centres. He quotes pannier tank, No.7752 based at Tyseley, Birmingham, but used for a time on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Prairie tank No.5572, travelled from Didcot to the West Somerset line when they were short of steam. The beautifully restored Quainton tank, No.9466, has appeared at Didcot and last year worked on the Swanage Railway. Normandy the former docks engine preserved on the Bluebell line, was at Swanage this summer and we travelled behind her last July.

Our Society is now into its second decade. There are many more visits to be made, fresh speakers to enjoy, and articles to be written. Rest assured that on such a sound basis the Society will continue to flourish.

A very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all our members.

Gas



TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

All meetings are held at the Chequers, High Street, Marlow at 7.45 for 8 pm.

Thurs. 21st Jan. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The agenda for the meeting is shown under Society News. The formal business will be followed by a programme of members slides.

Thurs. 18th Feb. PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Now an established part of our annual programme, your entries are invited - see Society News for details of classes etc.

Thurs. 17th Mar. ACCIDENTS & THEIR VALUE - Mike Hanscomb

Mike Hanscomb, a long standing friend of the Society and BR

signals engineer, considers the lessons which have been learnt from the fortunately rare accidents on the railways.

Thurs. 21st April DEAN FOREST RAILWAY - Trevor Radway

A review of this rapidly expanding preservation scheme by their Vice Chairman, and a look at the railways background. The DFR is the venue for our summer excursion in 1988.

28th - 30th May VISIT TO NORTH YORKS MOORS

A long weekend visit to the North Yorks Moors Railway, giving plenty of opportunity to lineside trains as well as ride them, enjoy good food and a friendly break. More details in the March issue.

SOCIETY NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome six more new members to the Society: Kathryn Bull of Marlow, Joss Mullinger of Maidenhead, D. Coyde of Woodley, Cyril Cowell of High Wycombe, Henry Freyne from Slough and Barry Hoper of Walters Ash. Welcome to you all, we hope you enjoy our activities and look forward to your company at the Chequers. This brings our total membership to 66, an all time record.

PREVIOUS EVENTS

Its been a busy season which will long be remembered. Tony Hall-Patch's presentation from the NRM's archives in September seems an age ago but once again a memorable selection of films were shown. As always, Charlie Smith was our projectionist and we extend our thanks for his regular assistance on these occasions.

Full details of the exhibition are contained within this issue.

Charlie was again in action in October to support David Shepherd whose second visit to the Society was a sell out, even with the size of Court Garden, it was literally standing room only. We have since received a letter from David thanking us(!) for an enjoyable evening and raising so much for wildlife preservation.

John Blythe presented a fascinating programme in November reviewing various unorthodox German locomotive ideas and culminating in Hitler's mind-boggling 3 metre broad gauge railway

proposals. All present were over-awed by the thought of locos up to 300 ft long, 22 ft high and 20 ft wide, and capable of producing 20000 or more horsepower.

Thirty-three members and guests, including several lapsed early members, gathered at the Chequers on 14th November for the Anniversary Dinner which, in the traditions of the Christmas gatherings was a pleasant social event.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions fall due for renewal on 1st January 1988. Having had a successful year the rate continues at £5. Please send your renewals promptly to the Treasurer, John Sears, at 32 West Fryerne, Parkside Road, Reading, RG3 2BY, making cheques payable to the MDRS. New members who have joined since October are reminded that their subscription are valid to January '89.

NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

This award, a GW Signal Arm and Book Token, is made annually for the best article in the "Donkey" ballot papers are distributed at the AGM.

DONKEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The editor reminds members that contributions are always welcome. Any railway related subject is accepted and contributions can vary from a news item for Railway Roundabout, a letter to the editor or a whole article or even series.

Contributions do not need to be typed - just legible! This issue includes an article by Mark Hopwood, our youngest member, the first of many hopefully.

MARLOW ON SHOW

The Society's model of Marlow Station has been booked for further exhibitions early in 1988, at Chiltern Trains' Transport Day on Saturday 13th February at High Wycombe Town Hall, where John Huntley will again present a film show, and at Slough on Saturday 26th March.

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 11th Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 21st January 1988 commencing at 8.00 pm at the Chequers. The agenda is as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of 10th AGM (these were published in the March '87 Donkey).
3. Matters arising.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Secretary's Report.
7. Election of Committee - see below.
8. Allocation of Exhibition profit.
9. Any other business.
10. The Norman Aston-Smith trophy.

The 1987 committee is as shown on the back page. In accordance with the rules, Mike Walker, John Sears and Peter Robins are standing down and offering themselves for re-election. Further nominations are invited and should be notified to the Secretary Martin Pink, 40 Lowfield Way, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, tel. Penn 6306, not later than 31st December 1987.

The formal meeting will be followed by a members slide show for which contributions are invited. Please contact Roger Bowen on HW 713887.

RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

NOTES AND NEWS

APTIS PROGRESS

BR's new APTIS ticket machines are now turning up in the quieter backwaters of the system, being introduced at Cookham and Bourne End on 24th September. Both these are peak hour only offices as is Furze Platt, which was converted early in October. High Wycombe went live from 21st October. All local stations are now equipped - except Marlow!

DONKEY BITES CAR AGAIN - TWICE!

Level crossing collisions have been much in the news this autumn. On 15th September a Marlow to Maidenhead train struck a Bedford Astra van at Cookham station crossing, the van driver escaped with minor injuries, as usual protesting that the road signals were not working. The last Sunday "Donkey" of the season dealt a severe blow to the rear of a Nissan car on Furze Platt's North Town Crossing on 4th October. On this occasion the driver admits the lights were flashing, but he thought this was a malfunction as trains don't run to Marlow on Sundays! Prior to these incidents BR had already decided to convert both these busy and somewhat blind open crossings to the Automatic Half Barrier variety next year.

SPRINTERS - NOW ITS OFFICIAL

It has now been confirmed that Network SouthEast expects to take delivery of 94 two-car Sprinter dmu's for suburban services from Paddington and Marylebone to Aylesbury, Banbury, Didcot, Reading and Newbury in 1989/90, replacing the current motley assortment of classes 101, 104, 108, 115, 117, 119 and 121. Although NSE publicity photos show a 155 unit retouched into NSE livery no actual order or class designation has been made, however the trains are likely to have more doors and higher density seating than the basically cross-country 155's. In 1992 a series of "Super Sprinters", diesel versions of the new "Silver Bullet" Bournemouth electrics, will enter service on the Paddington-Oxford and Waterloo-Exeter services.

210 REBORN

In our last issue we reported that several cars of the 210 stock had gone to Derby for overhaul. In fact they are being converted to an electrical multiple unit for GEC Traction to carry out experiments in 3 phase motor drives. Meanwhile set 210.002, the three car unit, remains in traffic but reformed using the trailer composite 60450 from 210.001 in place of trailer second 60400 which went to Derby with 210.001. The survivor can usually be found on the Kennet Valley locals.

STAN VERRINDER

Our only life member, Stan Verrinder, has announced his retirement from his long career with the Inland Revenue at the end of the year, taking advantage of a generous early retirement scheme. He will remain in "exile" in Seaford for the time being and hopes to enrol at Sussex University next year to study history. We wish Stan and Eileen a long and happy retirement..

ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Now an established annual event which needs your continued support, with entries for the following classes:-

- A - Colour Slides - UK subjects
- B - Colour Slides - Overseas subjects
- C - Colour Prints - up to and inc 5" x 7" all subjects
- D - Colour Prints - size above 5" x 7" all subjects
- E - Black & White Prints - all subjects

A prize of a £5 book token is awarded to each class winner which then compete for the "Eddie Lewcock" cup. Judging will be by ballot of members 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 5 entries per class.
3. All entries must be the entrants own original work.
4. There is no time limit - shots taken in 1920 or this year are eligible.
5. All entries must have a railway theme.
6. Slides should carry the entrants name or initials, prints unmarked.

Entries should be handed to a member of the committee by 8.00 pm on the night.



LOCOMOTIVE SABOTAGED

The engine of 47.598 was virtually destroyed and the locomotive badly damaged at Reading diesel depot on 3rd October. A piece of wood had been jammed into the fuel rack forcing it wide open with the effect that when the engine was started it did so at more than full throttle and the 12 cylinder Sulzer exploded. The loco had been prepared as standby for the last loco hauled train to Newquay, a 50 tum, and class 50 fans were suspected. However the sabotage needed a great deal of technical knowledge and a former BR employee with a grudge is now suspected.

ONLY IN AMERICA

Its hard to believe but 1987 has seen a preserved steam locomotive scrapped. The unfortunate victim was former Grand Trunk Western pacific 5629 which had stood neglected for many years at the former Rock Island engine shed at Blue Island near Chicago. Owner Dick Jensen had ignored requests by METRA, Chicago's commuter rail authority, to move it, so after legal hearings a judge ruled METRA had the right to scrap 5629 - and they did! Remember "Flying Scotsman" only narrowly escaped a similar fate when rescued by our President as Burlington Northern sought to recover bad debts.

AFTER THE STORM

The big storm of 16th October caused more disruption to road than rail traffic locally. However, an early train on the branch encountered a fallen tree at Bourne End, and despite there being no emergency tools in the van the crew made alternative arrangements and cleared the line in under half an hour. Impressed, David Gardener wrote to BR complimenting the crew on their initiative. BR's reply thanked him for his letter "about the toilets at Bourne End". Well, the word processor doesn't have a standard letter for hurricanes!

JOINT LINE SANTA STEAM

We are well into the Santa season and again demand has necessitated additional trains. Motive power will be "Clan Line", "Sir Nigel Gresley" and a newcomer LMS Black 5 5305 which replaces "Flying Scotsman" which is receiving new tyres. All trains include Ethel heating units. Remaining dates are Dec. 19, 20, 28, 29, 30 & 31 and 2nd Jan. with two return trips daily.

BOOKSHELF

Ron Brooks



A Merry Christmas to all, and those who have sent previous book reviews to Father Christmas will now reap the benefit of their foresight. This group of books are mostly concerned with things gone forever - like Christmas past.

Milk Churns to Merry-go-Round
R.T.Munns

David & Charles
ISBN C 7153 8666 2

We all wallow in nostalgia - but this book tells how the railways made money (mostly!) until they were helped by the politicians and with friends like that Dr. Beeching was almost superfluous. You will read about marshalling yards and siting thereof, problems of wagon usage leading up to TOPS and the merry-go-round system. A book packed with information - to be taken in small doses - but it will improve the condition of the nostalgia.

The lost pleasures of the GREAT TRAINS
Martin Page

Wiesenfeld & Nicolson
ISBN O 297 76988 x

One of the minor pleasures of reading Sherlock Holmes (which, my dear Watson, I trust you do regularly), is his habit of consulting his watch and his Bradshaw and setting off for absolutely anywhere by train. This book starts off to describe the very long transcontinental journeys available to Sherlock but becomes far more entertaining when it is shunted into the machinations of George Mortimer Pullman and even better Georges Nagelmakers, with his Train Bleu and his Compagnie Internationale. A jolly good read.

London's Lost Railways
Charles Klapper

Routledge & Kegan Paul
ISBN O 710c 8378 S

Sherlock's London was well served by railways but in addition there were many freight links across the capital. Unfortunately the two key maps on pages 8 & 126 have been transposed. One shows the old railway network the other new proposals. Such is the pressure on communicators in the London Area that there are apparently moves afoot to think again about some of these freight links - and that was before the Channel. An interesting book especially if you know London fairly well.

Rail Across India
Paul C. Pet
Geoffrey Moorhouse
Brian Hollingsworth

New Cavendish Books
ISBN O 904568 70 9

Hands up all those who read my March '86 review Railways of the Raj? If you did you will be unable to resist this "photographic journey" (I quote) across India. The colour pictures are vast and superb and there is a substantial rail content in the copious illustrations. The pictures cover the past and the present, narrow gauge, broad gauge, plains and hills - in short a book that surpasses description. Hopefully the library has it - otherwise take out a second mortgage, its worth it.

Trains of the Past
J. Joyce

Ian Allen
ISBN O 7110 0923 6

Mr. Outram and his rails developed from horses into steam hauled vehicles on tracks - and these magnificent photos from the collection of Dr. H.A. Whitcombe who was mainly interested in steam. Most informative especially pages 18 - 31 "Steam in the Street" and "Steam Worldwide" but I'll bet you go on to "Cable Cars" and who could resist "Oil and Gas".

BOOKSHELF EXTRA

THE MARLOW BRANCH
Paul Karau & Cris Turner

WILD SWAN PUBLICATIONS
ISBN O 906867 54 1

It seems to have been years in preparation, but now the Marlow Branch book has finally arrived and is well worth the wait. A lavish publication, its 216 A4 size pages (80 pages to the mile!) are printed on the best quality heavy glossy artpaper and are packed with an in depth history of our favourite branch line from the first suggestions in 1864 to the closure of the old station at Marlow in 1967, the subsequent story is given only summary coverage. There is an interesting collection of photographs showing the evolution of Marlow and Bourne End stations, the line in between and a few general photographs of Marlow and Bourne End street scenes to set the scene.

The book sets new standards for Branch line histories, this is no limp paperback, there are many main lines which haven't received a fraction of this coverage. There are however a few

somewhat surprising omissions, there is only an outline sketch map of the branch not the usual OS maps, although both stations are well represented, and only one timetable (1950) is reproduced. On the credit side there is a full list of known locos and excellent coverage of the sawmill. The acknowledgements page is littered with MDRS members' names, supported by such nationally known names as Mike Esau, Nick Lera, Dick Riley and Tony Hall-Patch. Senior Porter Len Stroud Snr seems to get inordinate photographic coverage whereas the well known figure of Fred Funnell, Station Master and Driver Vic Hoare play supporting roles.

In conclusion then, an excellent publication for which £15.95 is not too high a price. Every member will no doubt wish to add to their collections and there's still time to get that special request in for Christmas!

M.W.

THE EXHIBITION IN RETROSPECT

Despite the best efforts of the weather, The Bucks Free Press (who forgot to print the advert) and we suspect our "friends" in the local model railway club, our 10th Anniversary Exhibition was an unqualified success. Somewhere in the region of 750 visited the show, we shall never know the exact figure as at times people were paying admission money faster than we could issue tickets.

All the exhibitors booked turned up promptly and thanks to the help of our members we were ready to go by the 10.30 opening time. The star of the show was of course "Marlow" which, in spite of some last minute finishing, performed near faultlessly all day receiving many compliments and possible future display bookings. It was well supported by Ron North's own layout, John Benson's "Moss End", Keith Gloster's "Camelot Halt" and the magnificent "Fraser Canyon" layout from Staines, which held the attention of many of our members not normally known for a love of overseas railways. Outside, despite pouring rain, Eddie Lewcock and Alan Wheeler were kept busy with their steam railway giving around 350 rides!

The Society's own stand presented an eye catching display of

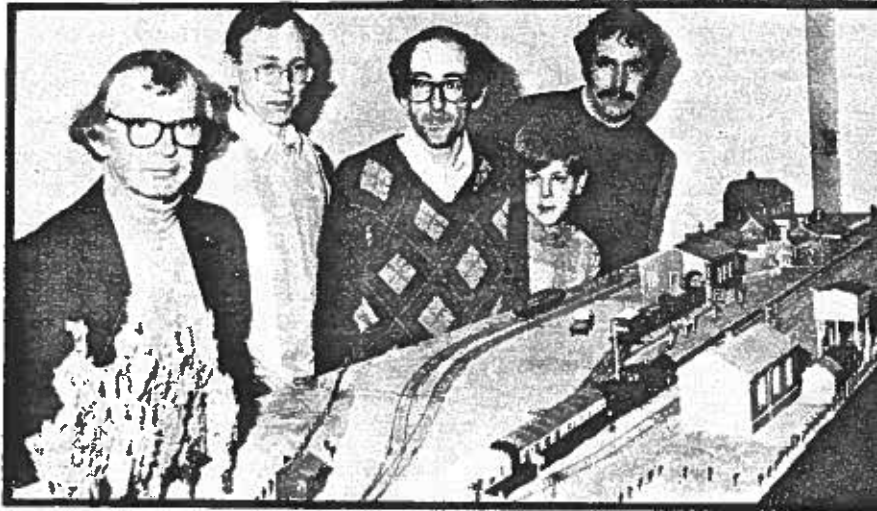
photographs, information about the Society, members relics and, to attract attention, a continuous slide display and a video presentation by Mike Norris.

Special thanks go to those members who gave part or all of the day to help and we must not forget a big thank you to all the wives, mothers, girl friends etc. (not forgetting the bachelors) who provided such a delicious array of refreshments, which received numerous compliments for their quality and variety. The catering realised about half the profit. Without your help the event would not have been such a success, the committee is very grateful.

Finally the best news of all, John Sears reports an overall profit of £370, a truly remarkable figure. Our problem now is what to do with it, this is currently under consideration by the committee. We are anxious that the money is used for something which will help the Society for years to come and not fritter it away. Various ideas are in the pot but the final decision is to be left to you, the members, at the AGM in January.

The next exhibition? Well let's think about it!

Eddie Lewcock braves the rain with another load of children behind his 5" gauge LMS 0-6-0 Dock Tank.



Some of the 'Marlow Crew', left to right Derek Robson, Geoff Styche, David Gardener, Gareth Styche and Peter Robins, with an excursion entering the station.

THE MAKING OF A MODEL RAILWAY

David Gardener

It all started in October 1986 when Mike Walker mentioned that as part of the MDRS 10th Anniversary Celebrations it was planned to hold a Model Railway Exhibition and a major part of this would be a model of Marlow Station as it appeared in the 1930's. A plan of this proposed layout was produced, which attracted great interest and as I expressed a wish to contribute some practical effort Mike soon drew up a list of jobs for myself and the other volunteers. One thing we quickly decided on was that the fiddle yard sidings would be in the form of a transverser. Next month Mike gave me a couple of photostat sheets from a May 1979 Model Railway Constructor detailing how to convert 4 Ratio 'GWR' coach kits into a 'Clifton Downs' set. This he said was to be my Christmas project!

Peter Robins was given the task of making the baseboards and Ron North the job of producing an engine shed. Mike meanwhile had made the station building which he brought along to one of the meetings. Over the Christmas break Mike, Derek Robson and yours truly fitted the boards together and started laying the track. By February 1987 the track was laid and those in our group became busy in painting the rail sides track colour to resemble rust and also toned down the sleepers to a more realistic appearance. I think anyone who has attempted this job will agree it is somewhat tedious to say the least, but the final result was worth all the effort.

Meanwhile having obtained 4 Ratio kite I had been kitbashing these in an attempt to produce a pair of coaches which would resemble the 'Clifton Downs' set as used on the Marlow Branch until 1949.

Despite many false starts which involved making the Auto end 3 times and a few similar antics, by March I had a complete coach body plus two home made bogies, which I was able to try out on the track and board section in my possession at that time.

After an airing at, I think the March club night, board No.1 which contained the station building, engine shed etc., was put on show in the Anglia Building Society window for a week during April.

Things were not going too well with my project however, as despite the great encouragement I was getting from looking at other peoples models, other things kept getting in the way. Due to the smallness of our house, little or nothing could be done until my two small children were in bed. The garden needed tidying up and a relative from Australia came to stay with us, then we had the house replumbed and all that it entailed, and so on and so forth. The part manufactured Auto coach was therefore shelved for nearly two months and I hadn't even started on the second coach. During August I made a concerted effort to get the project finished but then a holiday got in the way. At least by the time our break north of the Border was over I was refreshed and had been further inspired by a model of Arbroath I had been to see. This and the fact I visited a couple of really excellent exhibitions should have been enough, but time was running out and I could only effectively work on the modelling at weekends and about two evenings per week.

I started getting up a 4am on Saturdays and Sundays and putting in as many hours as possible before anyone was about, then perhaps 3 to 4 hours in the evening also. Although this meant getting everything out whenever I wanted to work on the models, putting same away when the children were about, things worked remarkably well and towards the end of September I had two coach bodies and roofs plus both sets of hand made bogies and chassis' ready for detailing. On 20th September a small band of volunteers got together and erected the completed boards in Mike Walker's garden. It had been intended to use the Little Marlow Cricket Pavilion but it was already booked. Luckily it

was a fine, warm day so all was well. Buildings were put in place, including Derek Robson's fine water tower and coaling stage, and some poplar trees made by Geoff Styche. Now we were able to admire the entire layout and it looked pretty good too.

Mike made most of the model buildings and had even got the 'Marlow Donkey' (formerly 'Railway Hotel') and Jameson's office buildings in their rightful place. We tried everything out to our satisfaction and then put the whole lot away in Mike's loft. Over the next couple of weeks I fitted removable interiors, complete with seats, passengers etc., to the coaches and finished the underframe detail on the Auto which was also partly painted. The second coach was as yet completely unpainted and it was in this condition that I took the set along with an Airfix Auto and 14XX engine and a 57XX tank - all items Mike requested - along for an operators training session which took place in the Cricket Pavilion this time, on Sunday 4th October. With less than a week to go before the actual exhibition comments were made about the 'Clifton Downs' set being far from ready and also its habit of derailling on approaching the station limits. I was using a rigid type coupling manufactured by Bill Bedford which, while very realistic in appearance, needed careful fitting to avoid overriding its fitting hole or slot. Obviously I had to get round this problem if I wanted to continue using the coupling. The next few days were critical if I was to finish my projects in hand and I spent every possible moment I could, even taking a days' holiday in order to do this. One thing that is often forgotten when constructing model gas lit coaches is the piping that carried the gas to each lamp top on the roof. I was determined to include any normally visi-

ble piping and had great difficulty in getting information on how it was arranged on these vehicles, particularly the Auto. In the end the completed set was something of a compromise but at least looked like a 'Clifton Downs' unit but I wasn't able to finish detailing the Auto and the paint finish was more or less a disaster area. The night before the big day I slapped matt black paint all over the 14XX body and despite my lack of care in doing this, it gave a good impression of how these locos looked in the 1950's. However I wonder how many noticed that it was completely devoid of any identification!, time having run out to do this.

Meanwhile I was still working on the coaches until just before the public were admitted. The last job being to stick the roofs in place.

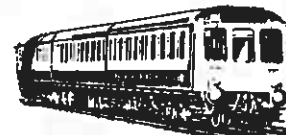
It was even rumoured that Swindon carriage works was operating behind the curtains of the Marlow layout Ha! Ha! The exhibition was a great success, despite the appalling weather and our layout drew a lot of attention, it was even featured in the Maidenhead Advertiser the following Friday.

We had very few operating problems other than Derak Robson and myself's difficulty in connecting 3-link couplings and I'm pleased to say the 'Clifton Downs' set didn't derail itself once.

After 20 years of absence from the practical side of railway modelling I learned a lot from this exercise and enjoyed being involved in the project. However, in retrospect, had I known the difficulties involved in kitbashing I would have scratch built the whole thing - far easier.

LOCO PROFILE WR DMUs TODAY

Mark Hopwood



The DMU's have been with us now for nearly 30 years. Although considered boring by some, I find DMU's quite an interesting area, although I agree that the sight of a DMU passing through a station is not quite the same as that of a Class 50 and 10 or 11 coaches thundering along the main-line. When first introduced the DMU appeared in a green livery and by the late 1960's most had been repainted into the dull all-over blue. In the late 1970's several DMU types were selected for refurbishment and those appeared in a not very practical livery of white with a blue stripe along the side. However, by the early 1980's most units which were regarded as having a long term future were outshopped in the standard blue and grey livery as applied to all hauled stock. Until May 1987 the lines in our area were operated almost exclusively by Class 117's (Pressed Steel 3-car units) and their single car counterparts the Class 121's (Pressed Steel Driving Motor Brake Second DMBS and Driving Trailer Seconds, DTS) with the occasional appearance by a Class 119 (Gloucester C & W Co.) Cross-Country set.

However since May 1987 the situation has radically altered, this is mainly due to sectorisation. The units which used to be seen around our area were split into two 'pools'. Provincial Services' Sector took, for some reason, more than actually used on the Oxford-Worcester-Hereford line (where the Provincial London Area sets were used). When it was decided from May 1987 that the Oxford-Hereford DMU's would be supplied from St. Philip's Marsh, Bristol and not Reading, this meant that Provincial Services Sector could take their share of the units away to Bristol, Cardiff and Tysley. Consequently L416, 422, 426 & 427 were transferred away along with several Class 119 sets. Many of the 'Cotswold Line' diagrams had 'fill-in' trips on Network SouthEast services in between their Oxford-Hereford duties. The result of these wrangles meant that Network South-East was short of trains. Therefore it had transferred to it, some units from East Anglia, made surplus by electrification. These units were Class 101's (Metro-Cammel design) and have been numbered L201-5. All are 2-car sets, some are twin power cars, others a power car and trailer. In addition to these new transfers, Cricklewood Diesel Depot closed its doors in May 1987. Consequently the 5 two car Class 104 (BRCW) sets which

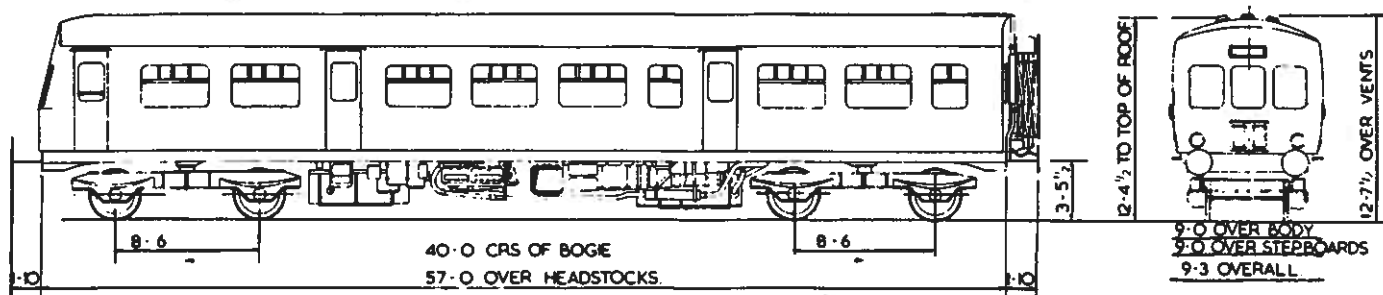
were maintained there were sent to Old Oak Common, together with 2 spare cars, one spare car (53540) found itself deputising for a DMBS in L410, consequently almost all of the Network (West) area was visited, including Marlow. Old Oak Common now has to provide 3 two car sets to St Pancras every day, from where they go to work the Gospel Oak Barking line.

The main reason for this change was to help accomplish Network SouthEast's eventual aim of having as much of their diesel multiple unit resources under one manager (Network West) at either Reading or Old Oak Common. A further step towards this was taken when, on October 12th 1987, control of the 'Chiltern Lines' from Marylebone to Banbury and Aylesbury passed from the London Midland Region to Western Region hands, along with its allocation of Class 115's and some Class 108 vehicles. About 25 years ago this line was controlled by the Western Region who used to run Paddington-Birmingham expresses over it using the Class 52 'Westerns'. Although at the moment the units continue to be maintained at Marylebone (ME), with major work done at Bletchley (BY). There is a smaller stabling point about to be built at Marylebone to carry out fuelling and minor checks, when this is open the ME depot will close and the units will become allocated to Old Oak Common.

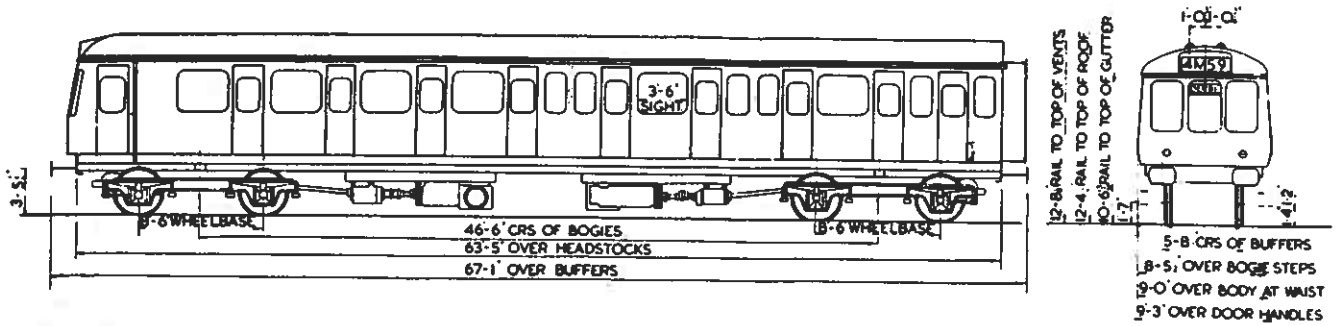
Many transfers have taken place in our area recently, another reason for this is the planned elimination of Class 119 units, all except 4 of which contain blue asbestos. The 4 'clean' sets have been refurbished and still have some life left in them. This does, however, raise the matter of replacement. This comes in the form of more Class 101 units, although where these will come from is not yet clear. These 101's will mostly operate on the lines to the Southern Region (Guildford, Red-Hill, Tonbridge & Gatwick). At present one set (L830) is at Reading being evaluated on these and other services as a 3-car set. Their use is an improvement but nowhere near Sprinter levels of comfort or ride.

The different types of DMU tend to be used on a common user basis. However, as a whole the following is a brief resume of each type's operations:-

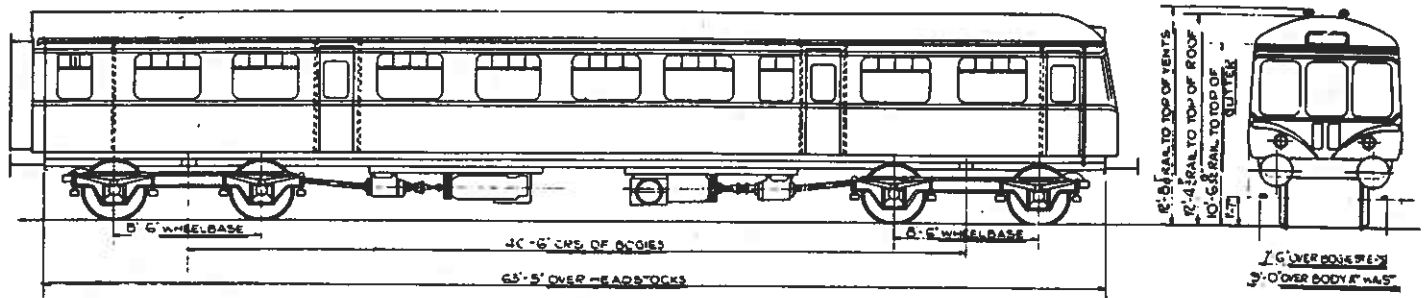
Class 101 - 2 car (L201-5) Marlow, Henley & Windsor branches as needed and some trips on the main line, (usually with a Class 121 trailer).



Class 117 - 3 car (L401-429, except 416, 422, 426, 427 - taken by Provincial Sector to other areas) - All 'Main line' - Paddington-Reading-Oxford and Reading Bedwyn with trips on the branches as availability permits.

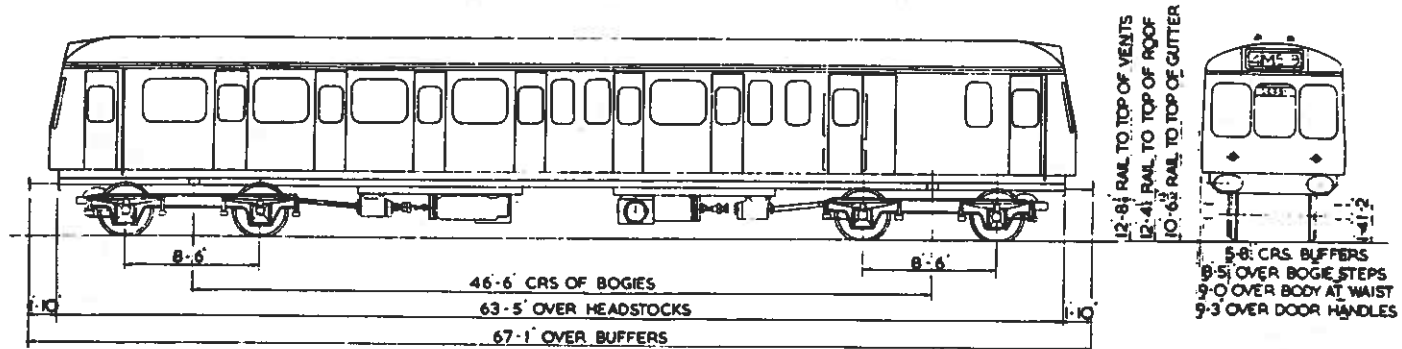


Class 119 - 3 car (L571-82, except B577 + L584-94, except B586 590/1) - Reading-Tonbridge/Gatwick. (Being replaced by 3-car Class 101's).



Class 121 - 1 car (L120-131) - Ealing Broadway-Greenford and the Marlow & Henley branches as necessary. Also stalwarts on Oxford-Banbury service.

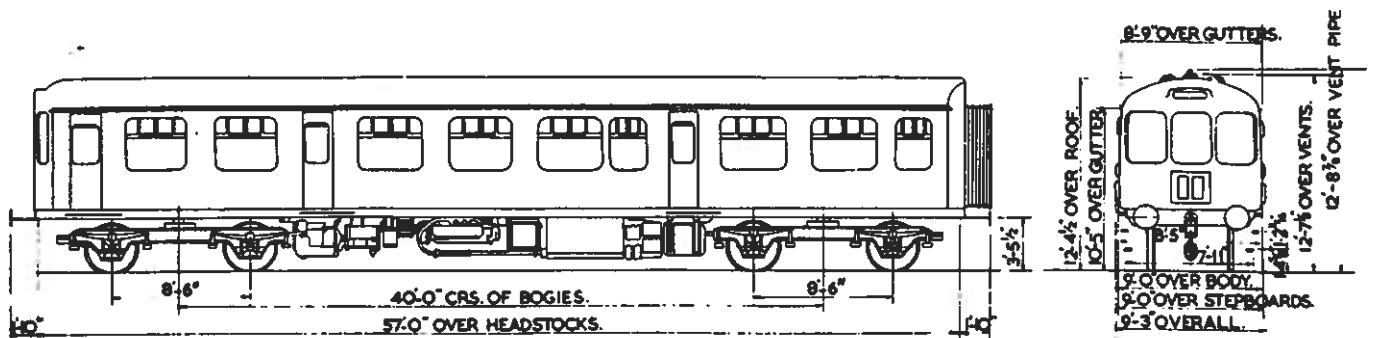
1 car driving trailers (L280/3/7/9) - as needed, anywhere! But mainly on service supplied by Old Oak Common.



In addition the 3 car 101's are to be used as the Class 119's are and Old Oak Common's allocation of Class 104 (L701-5) are exclusively for Gospel Oak-Barking line.

Looking towards the future now, and replacement by Sprinters is scheduled to commence in 1991. These will probably be similar to the Class 155 units not entering service at Cardiff. These sets and variations of them, will render most of our conventional DMU's and the Class 50's and hauled Network services extinct. The latter being particularly tragic but that's another story.

Obviously the above is all on paper and although this is what 'should' happen any DMU can appear anywhere and I'm not surprised by anything now!



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The path of British Railways and its modernisation scheme rolled on relentlessly as 1962 moved into 1963. The parade of new diesel classes, withdrawal of steam and closure of lines moved on apace.

A very significant introduction was of the "latest" type of class "4" diesel electric locomotive to be delivered from the Brush Electrical Engineering Works of Hawker Siddeley Industries Ltd. No. D1500 was the first of an initial batch of 20 locomotives for service on the Great Northern Line of the Eastern Region. The traction rating was 2,750 bhp making it the most powerful single engined diesel electric supplied to British Railways at the time, yet lighter than previous class 4 locomotives, and with a 95 mph rating.

Another new type was the first of 88 900 hp diesel electric locomotives built by the Clayton Equipment Company Ltd. for the Scottish Region but adopted as the new standard for type "1" locomotives. The loco had a centre cab and was powered by two 450hp Davey Paxman diesels. No. D8501 and its fellows were designed for short distance freight or local passenger trains.

New multiple unit stock was on its way too. Nineteen three-car diesel electric units were being constructed by Eastleigh Carriage Works for the Oxted route to Eastbourne and Brighton. The units were powered by 600 hp English Electric engines, and were based at St. Leonards West Marina.

The London Midland electrification was extending southwards, as from January 7th 1963 services north from Stafford would be hauled by type "A" 3,300 hp locomotives.

Rail closure news still abounded however:- October 15th 1962 from Cheltenham to Kingham, on December 31st to Brecon from Moat Lane, Hereford and Newport, also Plymouth to Launceston and Oxford to Princes Risborough, also local services between Banbury and Princes Risborough. On 7th January 1963 Palace Gates to Stratford and Nottingham Victoria to Pinxton South.

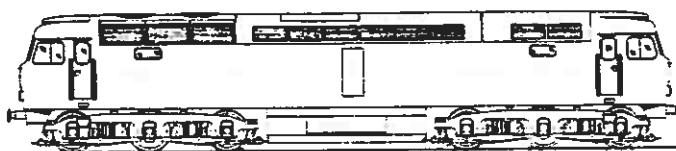
Loco news included that the "King" class had been reduced to only 5 members, withdrawal of the first LMS "Pacific" 46200 "Princess Royal" and the only BR standard 3 cylinder 4-6-2

No.71000 "Duke of Gloucester" only nine years old. Ex LBSCR E4 class 0-6-2T No.32473 had been sold to the Bluebell Railway.

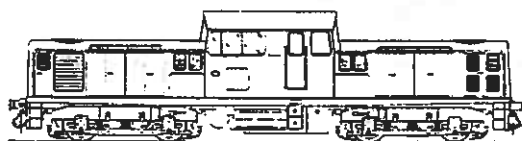
At the beginning of 1963 there were 13 steam locos in the London Transport fleet. Nine, Nos. L90-98 were ex Western Region pannier tanks, two 0-6-0T built by Hunslet in 1931 for the District Railway (L30 & L31) and two 0-4-4T ex Metropolitan Railway "E" class of 1896. A fourteenth locomotive, L52, recently withdrawn was being retained for possible inclusion in the forthcoming Metropolitan Railway Centenary celebrations. L52 was originally Metropolitan Railway No.93, one of four "F" class 0-6-2T's built in 1901 by the Yorkshire Engine Co. initially for passenger work on the Aylesbury services.

Another historic locomotive, Francis Trevithick's "Cornwall" built at Crewe Works in 1847 was transferred in December 1962 from store at Nine Elms Goods Depot for permanent preservation at the Museum of British Transport at Clapham.

Another interesting period with extensive withdrawals of the most popular steam classes, King and Princess Pacifics, and the introduction of what was to become the largest and most ubiquitous main line diesel class, the D1500 or later "Class 47" the workhorse of the 1970's and 1980's.



1962 success - Brush class 47



1962 failure - Clayton class 17

TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

Following our successful "ten years" anniversary it is now of course possible to start a "ten years ago" series of articles. Older members may recall that the twenty five years ago series started with a taunt that it was not possible to do extracts for the "Donkey" of 25 years ago. At least now we can do the "Donkey" of 10 years ago.

The "Donkey" of December 1977 was issue No.4 and consisted already of ten pages. The Chairman's report mentioned a club outing on 19th October to various (now mainly closed) Thames Valley branches and there was a detailed report on the trip by Bas Woodward. There was notice of the first AGM and members were reminded that the committee consisted of Les Spicer as Chairman, Roger Bowen as Secretary, Stan Verrinder as Treasurer and other committee members Bob Hatfield, Roy Mee, Mike Norris and Bas Woodward.

The previous quarters meetings had been a film show, Roy Mee and Bas Woodward speaking on the Railways of Bedford & Oxford and David Cotterill on the Isle of Man Railway.

Eleven new members were recorded, making the membership up to

39, including our first lady member.

Three main articles were one by Mike Walker on a visit by club members to the Severn Valley Railway by train from High Wycombe, the Bas Woodward article on the "Thames Valley Rambler", and "Midland Jubilee" by Mike Norris, the tale of a "four steam loco special" in October for Jubilee year. The highlight was 135 miles of steam traction from Chester to Newport behind, namely, "Sir Nigel Gresley", "King George V", "Princess Elizabeth" and "Clan Line".

The final item in the "Donkey" was a Railway Crossword by Les Spicer.

For a club only less than a year old a very creditable journal and a wonderful range of activities that had taken place.

Comments would be appreciated on whether this should become a regular series like "25 years ago", or should the editor print extracts of 10 years ago (like Railway Mag does of 50 years ago), or should we drop the whole thing?

Its your journal. Comments please!!

FOR A FEW RUPEES MORE....

PETER ROBINS commences a rail journey through INDIA.

The first time I went to India was January 1981. It is a country of great extremes, and has been described as a rich country full of very poor people. Parts of India like the Taj Mahal of Agra, the Golden Temple of Amritsar, and the town of Darjeeling nestling in the Himalayas are very beautiful, but other parts like the suburbs of Bombay, Calcutta and most of West Bengal, are filthy with people living in absolute squalor.

I had decided that this was a "one-off" tour, but after a little persuasion from two friends, I changed my mind. After six months careful planning, New Years Eve found us at Heathrow Airport waiting for a flight to Bombay.

We arrived at Bombay International airport at 05.00 in the morning, shattered after our overnight flight, and made our way to Bombay Central station. Here our problems started.

"I would like 3 reservations on train 25Up to New Delhi today" I asked.

"Sorry, all reservations are made at Churchgate, 4 stops on the suburban line" came the reply.

Half an hour later at Churchgate - "I would like 3 reservations on train 25Up from Central station to New Delhi today" I asked.

"Sorry, reservation sheet has gone to Bombay Central. Go and

see the station superintendant" came the reply.

Half an hour later at Bombay Central - "Have you got the reservation chart for train 25Up" I asked.

"Oh Yes!" he said, smiling and shaking his head.

"I would like 3 reservations please" I again asked.

"Oh No! that train is full" he said, still smiling and shaking his head.

"Could I then reserve on train 152Up today" I asked, getting a bit irritated by now.

"Oh Yes! All reservations are made at Churchgate, 4 stops on the suburban line" came the reply.

After creating a bit of a scene at Churchgate, we eventually got our reservations on the 'Radjhani Express', very clean, air-conditioned with free meals.

At New Delhi we spent most of the morning making other reservations, and in the afternoon we took a train to Agra. On arrival we were mobbed by taxi drivers who wanted to take us to the Taj Mahal. They could not believe their ears when we asked to go to Igdah loco sheds. We returned to New Delhi by train and then took a trishaw to Delhi Junction, which is in Old Delhi.

A note on Indian taxis is perhaps called for here. About 90% of all Indian taxi cars are called "Ambassadors" and are a straight copy of a Morris Oxford. A trishaw, or autorickshaw is a three wheeled vehicle with a vespa scooter engine which appears to have a two position throttle - on and off! These nippy little vehicles can (not legally) and usually are driven on either side of the road, pavement or pathway, irrespective of oncoming traffic, pedestrians or other trishaws.

There is constant use of the horn and on one occasion in Ahmedabad in 1981, a hammer was used on the side of a bus. An exhilarating ride is always guaranteed, but I do not recommend them for persons of a nervous disposition. A rickshaw is a pedal tricycle with a large bench seat at the back, usually licensed to take two passengers but for a few more rupees more will take three.

From Delhi Junction we took the overnight train to Moradabad, enroute having a cab ride in the streamlined WP Pacific No.7084. This loco was desparately in need of some maintenance, with leaking steam, knocking big ends and a wildly off-beat exhaust. It seemed that we barely touched 45mph with this run down example.

After visiting Moradabad and Bareilly, we came to Lucknow shed where we went through the "pre-shed visit chay ceremony". Chay is the Indian form of tea, usually served with lots of sugar.

- 1) Enter foremans office.
- 2) Shake hands with the foreman and his assistants.
- 3) Foreman clicks his fingers and a chay walla instantly appears with the required number of cups of chay.
- 4) Foreman reads our permits and anything else in the folder not connected with our shed visit, i.e. airline tickets, Indrail passes, Bombay street map, at great length.
- 5) Foreman passes all paperwork, including Bombay street map to at least three other assistants who also read everything at great length.
- 6) After a good half hour you can generally go round the shed.

Here at Lucknow, we saw a W.G. 2.8.2 shunting wagons; when suddenly it started making heavy weather of the proceedings, and slipped violently. Closer inspection revealed that three wagons had become completely derailed and were chewing up the sleepers and an asphalt path leading to the shed.

The next day we were at Gorakhpur with broad and metre gauge trains and to our surprise an Alco diesel. Here we saw a WP Pacific No.7075 waiting with a full head of steam at the front of the train.

"What time does this train go?" I asked a passing railway employee who looked fairly intelligent.

"Oh No! That train has gone!" he replied.

"But its still there" I said, looking at him a little bit puzzled.

"Yes, but it will be gone soon" he said smiling.

Many Indians whilst trying to be genuinely helpful, do not have the command of the English language that they think they have.

We photographed here until mid-afternoon, when we were told to move on as the "Railway Protection Force" (R.P.F) training school was nearby. The R.P.F. generally do not understand that crazy Englishmen photograph trains for a hobby. They are the Indian equivalent of our British Transport Police but treat anyone with a camera and no permit as a sort of spy. We did however have a permit which explained what we were doing and authorised us to take photographs at various locations. This satisfied the R.P.F in every instance except one.

Our permit refused us permission to photograph at Samastipur but allowed us to do so at Barauni Junction, so that is where we went next. En route we had a cab ride in streamlined WP Pacific No.7427 which did not leak or knock and probably attained 60 mph. We were photographing a metre gauge YP Pacific, when an R.P.F officer approached us and asked to see our permit, which we duly showed. I don't think he understood it, so we were escorted to an office on the station. Here another RPF officer with a couple of stripes on his arm read it. He didn't seem to understand it either, so we were escorted to a table on the middle of the main platform, at which sat a fat RPF officer with yet another stripe on his arm. He slowly read the permit in between chewing tobacco and spitting out the red residue on the platform. We pointed out that we wanted to catch the 11.45 departure to Dharbanga which was just about to go, so this fat Indian Hitler decided to search our bags. He watched the 11.45 train depart - this was the only train on our trip which departed on time - decided that all was in order, but we still could not photograph. While we waited a further five hours for a train, we were prey to all the local beggars and head-cases in Barauni.

On arrival at Dharbanga, which was somewhat behind schedule, we took a rickshaw to the Regal Hotel. The lights were off and the door locked.

"It okks closed" I said

"Yes sahib! it is closed" said the rickshaw walla.

"5 rupees"

We refused his offer to take us to a hotel that was open for another 5 rupees and decided to find one ourselves. The Hotel Ashoka was a somewhat inferior hotel with resident mosquitos and a six inch lizard in the toilet.

...To be continued

GW LONDON AREA BRANCHES - 4

ACTON and GREENFORD LOOPS

Mike Walker

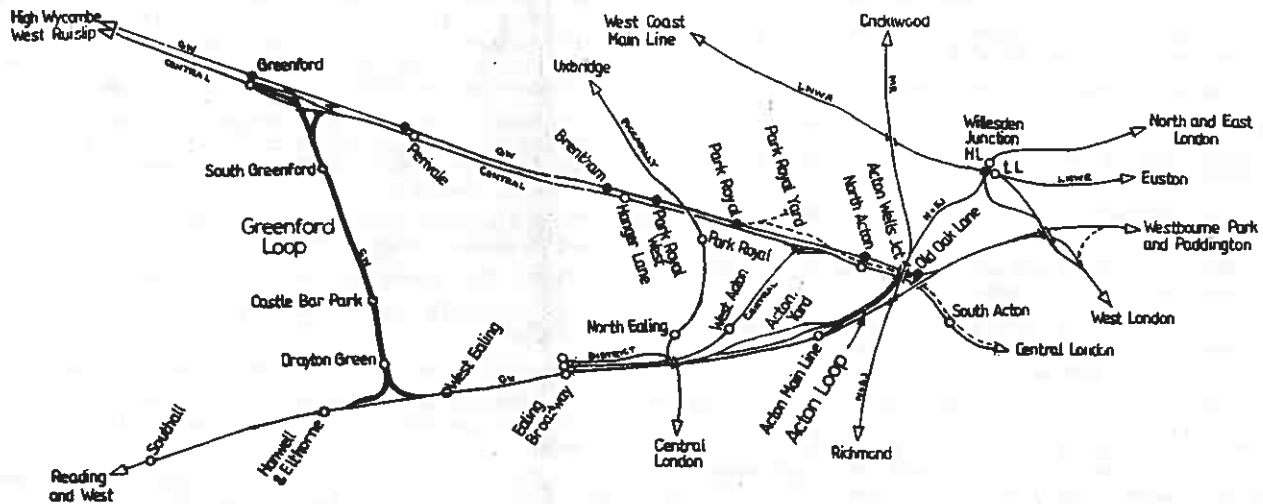
The Greenford Loop is well known to enthusiasts but its neighbour the Acton Loop is often overlooked but nevertheless was a vital link for the GWR in the London area, and indeed remains so to this day.

The Acton Loop, just 55 chains long, was completed late in 1876 having originally been authorised by the GW Branches Act 1853 and revived in an Additional Powers Act in 1865. Leaving the main line at the east end of Acton yard behind Acton Main Line station it headed east, parallel to the north side of main line, and climbed quite steeply to a trailing northwards connection with the North & South Western Junction Railway at Acton Wells Junction. From here trains could turn left to travel over the Midland to join that company's main line at Cricklewood or turn right, and after passing through Willesden Junction (High Level), pass around north London giving various connections to the Great Northern and Great Eastern Railways and, most importantly, London's docks. To the south of Acton Wells the N & SWJ continued to a connection with the LSWR at Richmond.

Initially the Acton Loop was intended for freight service only but in January 1888 the GWR introduced a service of twelve trains each way, Monday to Saturday, between Southall and Willesden Junction, one of which was later extended to Staines (West). Curiously, Ealing Broadway was the advertised interchange station for these trains with the GW main line suburban services. At Willesden Junction connections were advertised to such diverse destinations as Rickmansworth by the LNWR, Broad Street (North London Railway), Hatfield (GNR) or by further connection to the GE to Stratford, Hackney or Woolwich. Through bookings could be made from any GW station between Acton and Windsor to stations on the Hampstead Junction and North London Railways. A summer Sunday service was offered commencing on 12th July 1891 with one return semi-fast journey from Willesden Junction to Taplow and one return all stations to Southall. The latter became the western terminal for all Acton Loop trains in 1897 and the Sunday service was withdrawn after 1899.

These services were conventional loco hauled trains but from





ACTON AND GREENFORD LOOPS

1st October 1904 steam railmotors were used, many journeys operating between Willesden and Westbourne Park via the Greenford Loop. However, these services were not well supported and were withdrawn from 11th March 1912. Since then, apart from occasional excursions, the Acton Loop has been freight only. Today it is kept busy by a procession of Speedlink, Freightliner, bulk oil and other trains, including the Yeoman stone traffic. If proposals to terminate all London sleeper services at Euston comes to fruition, the "Night Riviera" will re-establish scheduled passenger service over the Acton Loop.

The Greenford Loop is a by-product of the GWR's turn of the century Direct Birmingham line project which diverged from the GW main line at Old Oak Common and struck out through Ruislip, High Wycombe and Bicester to rejoin the old Birmingham line at Aynho. Between Northolt and Ashenden this was, of course, a joint line with the Great Central. Incorporated in the project, authorised by an Act of 1897, was a link between the new line at Greenford and the old line at West Ealing which would allow freight traffic from the new line to reach the North London line and Docklands by way of the Acton Loop.

Initially the 2m 52c long line was to have only west to north and north to west connections at its south and north ends respectively but additional powers granted in August 1902 permitted the construction of the Hanwell and Greenford East loops providing triangular junctions at both ends. A halt for railmotor cars was provided at Castle Bar Park from 1st May 1904, joined ten months later by a similar provision at Drayton Green and at South Greenford in September 1926.

The first passenger trains to run over the Greenford Loop did so in June 1903 in connection with the Royal Agricultural Society's show at Park Royal during which a 20 minute service was provided from Paddington via Ealing and the Greenford Loop to Park Royal and thence back to Paddington direct. In addition a Southall-Park Royal service operated via the Hanwell loop. Unfortunately torrential rain not only washed out the show it also undermined the newly completed roadbed leading to the closure of the new line after the show for stabilising.

The route opened formally for passenger traffic on 1st May 1904 with steam railmotors based at Southall shed operating 14 trips each way daily between Westbourne Park and Southall, via Park Royal. Following the opening of the east curve at Ealing on 1st July 1904 a second service was provided of 10 Park Royal-West Ealing-Acton trains and 9 in the reverse direction. Initially both routes followed the Greenford East curve but in October 1904 they commenced using the west curve to serve Greenford station, where reversal was required. In addition four of the Park Royal-Acton trains were extended to Willesden over the Acton Loop from this time.

Further changes to the basic service came in October 1905 when the Westbourne Park-Park Royal-Southall service was withdrawn and replaced by extension of the Acton-Park Royal service at both ends to become Westbourne Park-Park Royal-Greenford-Ealing-Acton-Willesden, a route which crossed over itself at Acton! This continued until 11th March 1912 when it was cut back first to Acton and subsequently to West Ealing.

Another railmotor service over the Greenford Loop, originating at Kensington Addison Road, commenced in August 1904 running as an out and back loop via Old Oak, Park Royal, Greenford, Ealing, Acton and Old Oak. From April 1905 the service was continued to Clapham Junction and the following October two journeys continued as far as Victoria. The circle was broken at Old Oak in October 1913 cars running Clapham-Acton-Ealing-Greenford-Park Royal-Old Oak. However the through service was restored in May 1913 and retained until the service was withdrawn completely on 22nd May 1915.

Gradually during the 'teens and 'twenties the GWR steam railmotors were superseded by the familiar push-pull auto-trailers powered at first by 517 and Metro tanks and subsequently 48xx (14xx) 0-4-2T's or 54xx 0-6-0PT's.

As related in the last issue, London Transport's 1935-40 New Works Programme included extension of the Central Line from North Acton out to Ruislip and Denham. This was to be on the south side of the GW line and would replace local GW services. The LT Greenford station was elevated on a massive concrete structure over the Greenford Loop east and west curves. A bay for GW services was to be provided at the south end of the island platform access to which was by a steep line climbing between the LT lines from Greenford South. World War II interrupted construction work between 1940 and 1945 but the LT line was opened as far as Greenford on 30th June 1947.

On this date GW auto-train services between Westbourne Park and Greenford via Park Royal were withdrawn and the Greenford Loop service diverted to Greenford LT whilst at its south end Ealing Broadway became the terminal, a stabling siding being laid between the main and relief lines at the 'up' end. Steam continued through the 'fifties when among the trailers in use were the two named Hawkesworth cars, 220 "Thrush" and 221 "Wren". Inevitably, class 121 diesel railcars took over in July 1962 and continue in service to this day, one of the few regular duties for a single car on its own these days.

Currently the Greenford Loop is served by a half hourly service on weekdays rising to a twenty minute headway during the day on Saturdays, there is no Sunday service. The decline in the importance of the GW/GC Joint Line as a freight route has been reflected on the Loop, but freights do still operate, notably oil trains between Thameshaven and Thame.

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