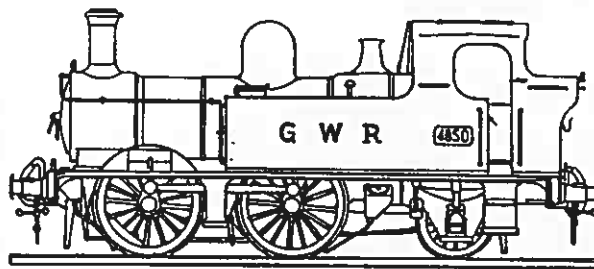


# THE MARLOW DONKEY



№ 45 MARCH 1988

## Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

### CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It was a happy coincidence that the publication of Paul Karau's latest book, *The Marlow Branch*, should have occurred as our Society was celebrating the conclusion of its tenth year. Our Editor contributed a very full review of this book in the December newsletter, and while regretting the absence of OS maps he is full of praise for a well-researched and fully-illustrated history of the branch. It is a must for everyone with affection for this still very valuable commuter link. The names of several MDRS members appear in its pages and our Editor's name is included in the section entitled "Acknowledgements".

This year's AGM was held on the correct day. On a number of previous occasions snow and ice have caused postponement or an exceptionally small gathering of members. The 1987 Committee were re-elected, but we are always happy to co-opt new blood. This group did an excellent job last year of planning and carrying out our celebratory events. It was most gratifying too to observe how all our members rallied round to support the special events. Our sincere thanks to all concerned.

Anniversaries and centenaries seem to be increasingly in the news. At present we are observing Australia's bi-centenary celebrations and I am expecting a great deal of interest later this year in Drake's destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588. My railway magazines contain excellent articles which mark the creation of British Railways 40 years ago. On January 1st 1948 the Big Four and 54 smaller railway undertakings were nationalised. On that day the Atlee government, securely entrenched by their 1945 majority (393 Labour MP's to 213 Tories) took over 52,000 miles of track, 20,500 locomotives, 41,000 passenger carriages, 1,200,000 goods wagons and 13,500 stations. One editorial (printed in Doncaster!) stated: "The railways will become as characterless as Woolworths, omnibuses and council houses". No doubt Nationalisation had its enthusiasts

but there were many opponents to the Government's take-over, not forgetting of course the shareholders and top people of the Big Four companies. What, one wonders, would have happened had a party of a different complexion been in power and the inevitable dieselisation and electrification become the huge task of the still privatised companies? Dr. Michael Bonavia thinks that the continuing transfer of goods to road transport and the great increase in car ownership would eventually have led to a far smaller network than that left by Docotr Beeching. British Rail has done its best in view of Government underfunding. As Dr. Bonavia rightly says, under private ownership our railways led the world. Were our lords and masters to emulate the example of the French in their support of the SNCF we would once again have a railway system to be proud of.

Our Programme Secretary is seeking fresh speakers for the monthly gatherings. Obviously visitors like Wally Richards with a wealth of local memories are very popular and many members find talks on some overseas railways rather tedious. I find the quality of the speaker is all-important. A very obvious example is Brent Hudson from Cambridge who is able to enliven his narrative concerning the remotest of places. So, we require a combination of good talkers and really interesting topics. Should you think of a likely speaker happy to come along, with or without visual aids, please contact Roger Bowen as soon as possible.

In the June newsletter I intend to record yet another anniversary. It is amazing to record that 20 years have passed since the demise of steam in Great Britain. August 11th 1968 saw the end of 140 years of steam traction. How fortunate we are to have retained so much - and how grateful we should be to Dai Woodhams of Barry in South Wales.

*Das*

### TIMETABLE

#### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

##### CHANGE OF VENUE

All meetings are held at the BRITISH LEGION, STATION APPROACH, Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 - SEE PAGE 2.

Thurs. 21st April DEAN FOREST RAILWAY - Trevor Rodway

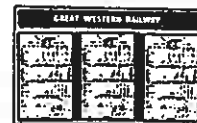
Our speaker is Vice Chairman of the preservation group and tells us something of the history and plans for the line which is the venue of this year's summer outing.

Thurs. 19th May A RAIL MISCELLANEA - Paul Smith

A collection of railway films which, as the title suggests, will cover a wide variety of subjects both in time and geographic location.

27-30 May NORTH YORKS MOORS VISIT

Any members wishing to join the party should contact Mike Norris immediately.



Thurs. 16th June THE SLOUGH-WINDSOR RAILWAY - John Coke

A look at the history of a neighbouring local branch line by the secretary of the Slough & Windsor Railway Society.

Thurs. 21st July RAILWAYS IN NORTH AMERICA - Eddie Lewcock

Eddie, one of our own members, relates a recent visit to the western USA and Canada.

Sun. 10th July TRIP TO THE FOREST OF DEAN

Our summer trip takes us to both the railway and the well known beauty spot Symmonds Yat. Full details within, please book early to Peter Robins.

Thurs. 18th Aug SNOW HILL & DOCKLANDS VISIT

An evening expedition to the newly re-opened Snow Hill Tunnel and Docklands Light Railway. A Capitalcard is all you need - more details in the next issue. See "Railway Roundabout".

# SOCIETY NEWS

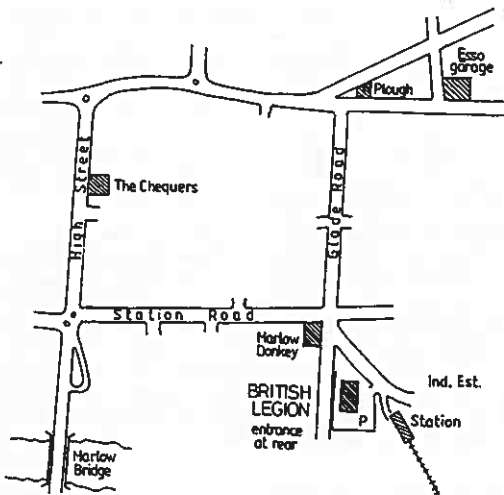
## IMPORTANT NOTICE - CHANGE OF VENUE

With effect from the March meeting, the Society's gatherings will be held at the British Legion Hall in Station Approach, Marlow.

The reason for this sudden change is that the Committee's formal objection to the Chequers regarding the alteration of the December meeting was met with a demand from Carol Shippey to increase the hire charge to £35 per month, claiming that the present £15 did not cover their costs. It has been increasingly obvious in recent months that the Chequers no longer wanted us, the service at the Dinner this year was appalling and many members have expressed dissatisfaction with the room since the alterations.

The British Legion Hall is much larger with a low stage, more comfortable seating and its own bar. There is a large car park and, as it is next to the station, convenient for those members who come by rail. A further advantage is that drinks are much cheaper than local pub prices.

As the British Legion Hall is covered by a club licence members are asked to ensure they have their membership cards with them when attending.



HOW TO FIND THE BRITISH LEGION

## STARTING & FINISHING

Once again we must remind members that meetings start at 8.00 pm promptly and we ask you to make every effort to be in the room by then. A prompt start will enable us to complete the meeting by 10.30 which enables members to catch the last train from Marlow at 10.41. Additionally, please remember the mid-evening break is 15 minutes. With closing time at 11, this will give ample time at the end for social gathering. Your co-operation will be appreciated.

## DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The Society's Annual Dinner will be held on Saturday 19th November. The venue is under consideration.

# RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

## NOTES AND NEWS

### BOURNE END DEVELOPMENT

The whole character of Bourne End station is undergoing a dramatic change and not for the better. A 6000 sq ft office building is being erected on the site of the old Marlow branch bay and means the former "down" platform has been considerably reduced in width. One effect of the work is to reveal just how much land the CW owned at this location. It will be remembered that in addition to the bay track, there was also a run round loop here but in recent years nature has taken over obscuring the site.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION RESULTS

Once again the number of entries was somewhat weak but the standard was extremely high, making the job of choosing the winners delightfully difficult. The winners were:

### A - SLIDES - UK

Peter Robins - Newton Abbot West Box at Dusk

### B - SLIDES - OVERSEAS

David Cooke - SNCF Pacific 231K22 at Calais

### C - COLOUR PRINTS UP TO 5" x 7"

Martin Pink - GW 5572 at Minehead

### D - COLOUR PRINTS ABOVE 5" x 7"

Ken Ball - 8233 on Royal Victoria Bridge, Arley

### E - BLACK & WHITE PRINTS

Martin Pink - Duchess of Hamilton at High Wycombe

The overall winner, taking the Eddie Lewcock Cup, was David Cooke for Class B with Peter Robins as runner up for class A.

## NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

Mark Hopwood was this year's winner for his article 'WR DMU's Today' in the December issue. As you know, at the time Mark was our youngest member and this was his first attempt. Congratulations Mark, and let no other member now claim he can't write a contribution.

Your Editor, on reviewing the voting, found that just about every article on the ballot paper received at least one vote which is encouraging as it shows that most members found something of interest during the year - assuming writers were not so vain as to vote for themselves!

The appeal for material in the last issue brought a modest response but more contributions are always welcome.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS - A REMINDER

A number of members have, as yet, not renewed their subscriptions which we trust is just an oversight. Please forward your subscriptions to the Treasurer promptly. Members not renewing by 31st May will be deemed to have lapsed.

## PROJECTOR PURCHASED

Following the vote at the AGM the Society has now purchased a Kodak Carousel slide projector with long lens and remote control, the total cost of which almost exactly matches the profit from last year's exhibition. This will considerably enhance our gatherings, making its debut at the February Photo Competition.

## MARLOW ON SHOW

The club layout's next outing is to the Slough & District MRC's exhibition at The Community Centre, Farnham Road, Slough on Saturday 26th March.

We are now making dates for later this year and even into 1989. Should any members wish to give a hand operating the layout, you would be most welcome. Please contact Mike Walker or Peter Robins.



## FURZE PLATT REBUILDING

The smallest of the branch stations, Furze Platt on the northern outskirts of Maidenhead, is being completely rebuilt. The ticket office was replaced some years ago when the original, which doubled as the signal box, was removed to make way for the open level crossing. Now the sleeper built platform dating from the station's opening in 1937 is life expired and is being replaced by a modern concrete structure.

## NOW ITS 116's

Yet another source of geriatric dmu's has been tapped for drafting to the WR's London area services. The latest recruits are Derby built class 116 high density units displaced from the Cardiff Valleys services by Sprinters. Similar to, but older than the traditional 117 units, they are in poor condition and their appearance is not enhanced by crudely painted out Valley Train logos. However a set formed of Motor Brake Seconds W53083 and W53820 worked the Marlow branch on 26th January and made short work of the 1 in 83 climb from Bourne End towards Cookham, taking advantage of 600 bhp for 73 tons.

## READING PROGRESS

By the early part of 1988 the basic structure of the new Reading station was complete and the steelwork for the roof and forecourt canopy was being erected. On the north side of the line the new multi-storey car park is well advanced and work has commenced on the new connecting footbridge. to permit this bay platform 6 has been temporarily shortened.

Nearby, continuing progress on the town's Inner Distribution Road means that the Vastern Road overbridge finally spans the dual carriageway ring road twelve years after it was constructed for the purpose!

## SOUTHERN NEW LOOK

The Southern's reputation for boring trains has taken a severe knock with the arrival of the class 442 units for the Weymouth electrification. The 5 car sets are based on Mk3 bodysells and incorporate an attractive new front end with wrap around screens, lower air dam/pilot and a dot matrix destination display in the gangway door, even the mu connections are stowed behind doors when not in use. Innovative features include plug doors, air conditioning (an SR emu first), modular catering and, by popular request, a return to first class compartments. Finished in a new version of the MSE livery based on the IC style with silver-grey lower panels these are without doubt the most stylish mu's ever to run in Britain. One SR tradition remains, however, the traction motors have been recovered from the former 4REP sets.

Looking further ahead comes the class 465 "Networker" high density emu due to arrive in Kent in 1990. A full size mock up recently went on display at Victoria for public comment and shows another stylish and innovative design in total contrast to the boxy 317 and 455 units.

# JOINT LINE STEAM

Bill McAlpine's "Flying Scotsman" has now moved into its new home, the former Southall diesel depot where it is making use of the wheel drop to permit retyring of the driving wheels. It is expected that the other locos used on the Joint Line will move in shortly as Marylebone depot is now merely a stabling and fuelling point whilst the Great Western Preservation Group will also move in later this year.

Details of the steam programme for this year are now to hand, although provisional and subject to change - often at short notice. The number of BR specials is reduced to approximately one per month which is probably just as well, as at £45.00 (adults AND children!) demand will probably be low. On the other hand there will be a number of "specials" and charters, some one way in connection with LSWR 150, whilst SLOA will run

## THAMESLINK STARTS

The long abandoned tunnel between Blackfriars and Farringdon under the heart of London re-opens at the start of the new timetable in May, enabling the Bedford Midland electric service to run through to points on the Southern. Special dual voltage (25kV o/h/750 Vdc 3rd rail) class 319's will operate the route. The MDRS will be visiting the new connection on Thursday 18th August as part of an evening trip which will include the Docklands Light Railway.

## DAYS OUT BY RAIL & ROAD

After many years pressing, the Marlow/Maidenhead Passengers Association have been successful in arranging an excursion from Marlow to Weymouth on Sunday 24th July. A DMU will work the branch connecting with the loco-hauled special at Maidenhead and is expected to leave Marlow at approx 08.15 returning at 22.40. Additional stops will be made at Reading, Bournemouth and Poole. The fares are £7.00 adults, £3.50 children and details can be obtained from Ernie Dove on Marlow 73735 or Mark Hopwood on Marlow 3487.

Earlier, Roger Bowen, in conjunction with Kingdom Tours, is organising a coach trip to the Kent & East Sussex Rly and a nearby Vineyard on Sunday 15th May. Fares and pick-up details can be obtained from Roger Bowen on HW 713887.

## LATE SURVIVOR

In the course of his duties installing APTIS, John Sears recently discovered Bicester North, a booking office unchanged by time, looking just as the GWR built it except perhaps for a change from gas to electric lighting. Right up until early February passengers were issued traditional Edmondson card tickets, stamped in the time honoured way through a hole in the wall window. John says it is very unusual to find such an unaltered office these days.

## STOP PRESS!! SPRINTER SUBMISSION

As this issue goes to press news comes that Network SouthEast have submitted an investment plan to the DOT for 125 2 car Sprinter sets to be known as class 165. They are planned to replace all existing dmu's working local services out of Paddington and Marylebone in 1989/90 subject to early approval. More details in the next issue.



some Marylebone-Sheffield return trips, steam hauled throughout for a modest £30.00 (children £25.00).

The dates are, BR Marylebone-Stratford return: Sundays 17 April 29 May, 12 June, 17 July, 14 Aug, 11 Sept, 2 & 16 Oct.

### Specials:

9 Apr	5305 Marylebone-Sheffield return (SLOA)
23 Apr	5305 Marylebone-Tyseley return (Princes Risborough MRC)
14 May	777 York-Marylebone one-way (LSWR 150)
21 May	5305nb/34092sb Marylebone-Sheffield return (SLOA/LSWR 150)

lms Jubilee 5593 "Kolhapur" will be standby loco on 9, 23 April and 29th May.

# 11th ANNUAL REPORT

The 11th AGM of the Society was held at 20.00 hrs on Thursday 21st January 1988 at The Chequers, Marlow.

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Bob Hatfield.

## 2. MINUTES OF 10th AGM

The Minutes of the 10th AGM published in March 1987 edition

of the 'Marlow Donkey' were approved unanimously.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

## 4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman, Bas Woodward, reviewed the events of 1987, a

very successful year in which the membership reached an all time high of 66, and average attendances at meetings were between 35-40. Bas highlighted:-

- (a) The 10th Anniversary Exhibition which introduced us to 6 new members; also the very successful David Shepherd evening, when we opened our doors to the public. He commended the Exhibition Sub-Committee who worked very hard on both events as well as the not so well attended but pleasant Anniversary Dinner.
- (b) The Annual visit to Swanage Railway was very interesting but marred by appalling weather. The intended visit to a local beauty spot was cancelled in favour of the (drier) Bovingdon Tank Museum. The August evening visit to the newly opened Docklands Railway was cancelled due to teething troubles.
- (c) Wally Richards Railway recollections proved very entertaining in July. Whilst Chris Turner's talk on the Marlow Branch and John Blythe's study on Hitler's Railways proved most interesting.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mike Walker (and Mrs. Walker) for the continuing high standard of the News Letter.

#### 5. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, John Sears, reviewed the balance sheet for 1987 stating that the balance of £277.88 had increased to £790.90 by the end of the year. Whilst some of this was due to the success of the Exhibition and David Shepherd Evening, He also emphasized a great deal was also due to the very low outgoing expenses. In 1987 no speaker charged us for expenses, although we did donate £50 to the David Shepherd Trust. Overall the year was deemed a financial success.

#### 6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Martin Pink outlined his activities whilst Roger Bowen, as Programme Secretary announced that 1988 was booked until June. He appealed for suggestions from members on future speakers and floated the idea of the August Evening trip being to the Snowhill Tunnel and the Docklands Railway. The spring trip to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway was also highlighted.

#### 7. ELECTIONS

As no new candidates were forthcoming, the committee will remain the same as the later part of 1987, being:-

Bas Woodward - Chairman  
 Mike Norris - Vice Chairman  
 Martin Pink - Secretary  
 John Sears - Treasurer  
 Roger Bowen - Programme Secretary  
 Len Stroud - Publicity Officer  
 Peter Robins - Social Secretary  
 Mike Walker - Editor

#### 8. ALLOCATION OF EXHIBITION PROFIT

Mike Walker floated the idea of the Society purchasing a Kodak Carousel Slide Projector (cost approx. £400). Alan Wheeler was in favour but added, a new and higher screen would also be desirable.

Roger Bowen made the point potential speakers would find a well equipped club attractive. The general consensus was in favour of purchasing not only a projector but stand and screen as well. The committee will make the final decision at their next meeting.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Society discussed the events of the December meeting where due to double booking the usual room at The Chequers was unavailable. It was agreed the Secretary write to Mr. & Mrs. Shippey stating our concern. Mike Walker displayed the club plaque for erection outside The Chequers, and later suggested the possibility of repeating the MDRS Exhibition in the future. The general consensus seemed not to be in favour on this point (but perhaps later on).

#### THE NORMAN ASTON SMITH TROPHY

The Signal Arm was this year won by Mark Hopwood, who not only is our youngest member, but "WR DMU's Today" was his first article in the News Letter.

The Chairman concluded the meeting at 21.20 hrs..

#### SUMMARY OF 1987 ACCOUNTS

ITEM	INCOME	OUTGO	
10th Anniversary Dinner	305.50	347.91	
Meetings	160.60	135.00	
D. Shepherd Meeting	119.00	20.00 * 55.00	Room Hire Donation
Newsletter		146.35 5.20	Production Postage
Trips: Swanage	263.50	258.50	
Fawley	39.00	39.00	
10th Anniversary Exhib. **	918.86	525.82	
Prizes		41.83	
Postage		17.38	
Officers Expenses		40.26	
Stationery		3.40	
1987 Subs.	276.25		
1988 Subs.	70.00		
B.S. Interest	20.83		
Overpaid	1.00		
Stamp bought	13		
Trans. Trust Sub.		16.00	
N.EL.P.G. Donation		10.00	
	<u>£2,174.67</u>	<u>£1,661.65</u>	<u>£513.02 surplus</u>

On hand at start of year £277.88  
 On hand at end of year £790.90

\* £10 dep. paid in 1986 - total hire fee £30.

\*\* Full details of exhibition accounts available on request.

# BOOKSHELF

Ron Brooks

Spring, I hope, is bustin' out all over. Was it always so? Reference to the Illustrated London News would settle this question and many others of (then) topical interest like the new fangled railroads that were being opened with ever increasing speed. There is lots of history this time - but very easy to read.

**NINETEENTH CENTURY RAILWAY HISTORY** David & Charles  
Through the Illustrated London News ISBN 0 7153 8521 6  
A.J. Lmabert

Beautifully produced by my favourite publishers. The line drawings are a joy and the selections informative and entertaining. Besides articles on individual railways there are articles on signalling and a full account of the famous electric telegraph which apprehended a murderer! On page 121 is a very full description of the first stages of driving the Channel Tunnel and you cant be more up to date than that, or can you? The article is dated 4 March 1882!

**THE FOUR GREAT RAILWAYS** David & Charles  
M.R. Bonavia ISBN 0 7153 7842 2

This book tells the story of the LMS, LNER, GWR & Southern from their beginning in 1923 to their demise in 1948, that is 5 years after the end of WWI to 3 years after the end of WWII. Both wars ran the railways well past their limits and political solutions were tried to avoid the obvious need for money to put things right. This book takes a look at many of the facets of railway operation and policy during the independent period which is fast becoming history. There is a good bibliography and a good index, together with maps and some black and white illustrations.

## TAKING THE WATER

The simple act of taking water on a steam loco may seem innocent enough but can be fraught with surprises for the inexperienced, especially with the solid type of spouts more typical of American practice than the traditional British canvas bag. For example the spout should be swung over the tender before opening the filler hatch. Swinging one of these spouts around takes just about all the strength you can muster up and performing this with an open hatch behind you can easily result in your sudden disappearance from view in about three feet of water at the bottom of the tank.

Once you get the spout into the hole, plant your foot securely on the top of the spout before opening the water valve. A column of water over forty feet high in the typical tank generates a lot of pressure in a ten inch water column and opening the valve without holding down the spout will, most certainly, dampen your spirit as the spout stands straight up out of the hatch and dumps hundreds of gallons of water on you before you can get the damned thing shut off.

An interesting variation on this theme happened many years ago to a rookie fireman at Oceanside, on the Santa Fe's Surf Line in California, whilst working on one of the old 900 class engines with a low sided tender. This feature caused the spout to be slanted down at an unusually steep angle into the tank. While paying more attention to a blonde on the station platform than the business at hand, he crammed the spout into the tank and pulled the valve wide open. The spout flew up out of the tank and stood straight out with the surprised fireman riding astride it. The geyser of water ricocheted off the top of the tender almost drowning him; then, to further heighten the excitement, the spout swung round and locked parallel to

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The most important railway happening twenty five years ago was arguably the most important railway event since nationalisation in 1948. This was the publication of the report "The Reshaping of British Railways", better known as the "Beeching Report".

The report outlined a seven year programme in a 148 page report supported by 12 maps. It was divided into three main heads - the nature of the problem, an analysis of that problem, and the improvements required and steps proposed to achieve them. This

**ROLLING STOCK WORTH MODELLING**  
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0 85153 454 6

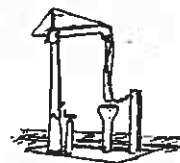
Each of these books holds more than 20 4mm/ft drawings of goods vehciels with at least end and side views and, where required, a top view. Even a non-modeller can enjoy these attractive plans.

**THE LORE OF THE TRAIN** Nord Bok  
C. Hamilton Ellis

This large volume needs protection as the colour plates of locomotives are crying out to be framed. It also has a most informative and readable text which covers the technical history and development of the railways. Lots of colour and even more black and white line diagrams of great clairty. This is a book which requires a large comfortable chair and lots of leisure but the enjoyment is very great!

**TRAINS** Treasure Press  
V. Hand and H. Edmonson ISBN 0 907407 47 1

This is an all colour book of railway operations, mostly steam, in spectacular settings. All the pictures, and there are 80 pages of them, are in crystal clear colour with the odd map here and there. There are pictures from America, Asia, Europe, Australia and Africa, which I suppose is fairly good continental coverage. All the pictures require a second look - and probably more!



the track. The startled fireman, now riding some eighteen feet above the ground, was afraid to shut off the water for fear that the spout would then drop allowing him to slide off. The remainder of the crew, seeing a certain amount of humour in the event, stood by yelling "Ride 'er cowboy!" while the gathering crowd of passengers on the platform, though somewhat mystified by the rather unorthodox proceedings, joined into the spirit of the occasion with calls of encouragement to the rider. The conductor, taking stock of the situation and noting the ballast was washing away from the sleepers, turned the spout back over the tender giving the fireman another bath as he sailed over the top. Cowboy finally managed to get the water going in the right direction and the San Diego passenger train came and left taking the still smiling audience with it. Just as well, what could he have done to top that performance?

Having filled the tender tank it is advisable to check that the filler hatch is securely fastened, particularly if the next replenishment is to be from track water troughs, and the locomotive involved is of an idiosyncratic design such as the GW's infamous "Great Bear".

The water pick-up was in the middle of the bogie tender and a questionable feature was the siting of the manhole for filling in the dome covering the top of the pick-up scoop. One day someone either forgot to fasten the manhole cover or did not fasten it securely, and at the first set of water troughs the strong upward rush of water burst it open and surged over the tender with sufficient force to burst open the gangway door of the leading coach, flooding it throughout to a depth of 18"!



would "almost eliminate the railways deficit by 1970".

15 steps to achieve the improvements were recommended. These included the discontinuance of many stopping passenger services closure of a large number of small stations, rationalisation of routes, increase block-train movements of coal, study of "liner train" concept and continued replacement of steam by diesel for main line services. In an apendix to the report was given a long list of passenger services to be withdrawn. In all

it was proposed to close 1299 stations and halts in England, 435 in Scotland and 190 in Wales.

New stock was still in the news. In March an exhibition was held at the Design Centre, London, entitled "New Designs for British Railways". The centre piece was a full scale mock-up of sections of new main line passenger carriages. Also on show were new wagon and container liveries and new designs for uniforms, perhaps the first main change in uniform design this century.

As to actual vehicles the main new delivery to British Railways were a batch of four car "Inter-City" diesel trains for use between Cardiff, Birmingham and Derby, and between Cardiff and Bristol. Built at Swindon Works with two power cars and two trailers the power cars were each fitted with two 230 hp 6 cylinder Leyland diesel engines. The leading ends of the power cars were of a new design incorporating wraparound windows on each side of the gangway.

Other new deliveries were the first of 30 diesel electric loco's of 1,850 hp for the Sudan Railways being built at the Vulcan Works of English Electric at Newton-le-Willows, Lancs,

Preservation news features more greatly than in the past. On 29th May 1963 the large exhibition hall of the British Trans-

port Museum at Clapham opened to the public for the first time. Locomotives on view ranged in size from the large Great Central "Director" class "Butler Henderson" to the diminutive "Pet" built in 1865 for use in Crewe Works. On 6th August 1963 the first part of the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway re-opened to traffic after its closure by British Railways on 3rd November 1956. The re-opened service would run from Llanfair Caereinion to Castle Caereinion but the inaugural train ran specially through from Welshpool goods yard to Llanfair a never to be repeated operation as the preservation society were banned from purchasing the town section from the goods yard to Raven Square.

On 25th May London Transport celebrated the Centenary of the Metropolitan Railway with an exhibition of rolling stock, pride of place being the 4-4-0 tank locomotive No.23. This took place at Neasden Works.

An interesting comment on nameplates. A readers letter in the April 1963 Railway Magazine bemoaned the price British Railways wanted for old loco nameplates. Two years ago the Eastern Region quoted between £2.10.0d and £5.0.0d, now in 1963 the Western Region wanted £7.10.0d for an ex GWR number plate and £15 for a nameplate!!

A hectic and fascinating quarter. One which heralded the biggest change in railways since 1948, the post Beeching era,

## TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The March 1978 "Marlow Donkey" was No.5. It was a 13 page issue. Features of note were reports on recent meetings including the showing of "Night Mail" and by coincidence on 16th February Mike Hanscombe on signalling. Mike also contributed a fascinating article on "An evening of signalling entertainment".

It was reported that the Society now had 37 members and that at 31st December 1977 there was £79.76p in the bank. Other items included a list of some of the items left by Norman Aston-Smith catalogued by Alan Wheeler, and an article by Roger Bowen on the "Railways of Sicily".

Quite an active society in early years!!

## LOCO PROFILE

### BIG WHEELS, SMALL WHEELS & HILL CLIMBING

Eddie Lewcock

In the modern context of steam locomotive design, if one was looking for good hill climbing capabilities then, with good size steam passageways and long travel valve gear, a designer would automatically think in terms of relatively small driving wheels, say 5'6" to 6'0" for standard gauge engines. Probably the British Railways class 9F was the finest locomotive of its standard range which would be admirably suitable and which was way ahead of the pre-nationalisation designs. Its all round performance ranged from the "all out" effort requirements of the Tyne Dock-Consett trains to the "Pines Express" on the Somerset & Dorset where it arrived several years too late.

However, study of early writings from Victorian times shows, rather surprisingly at first sight, that small wheels for hill climbing did not always turn out to be the best idea under their operating conditions. In fact some large driving wheel engines became quite famous for their hill climbing exploits in Britain and a case in point is Benjamin Connor's Single driver on the Caledonian Railway.

These engines were designed in 1862 with 17½" x 24" cylinders, 8'2" driving wheels and 1172 sq ft of heating surface.

The class's reputation was made on climbs over Beattock Summit, on the face of it an unpromising performing ground for single drivers; yet they took the 8 or 9 coach loads over from the LNWR Compounds and Precedents for 20 years without any time keeping problems.

Coming south, we find the Bristol & Exeter using the broad gauge 4-2-4 Pearson tanks with 9' driving wheels - the largest diameter ever used - and with 16" x 24" cylinders. Their total weight was 42 tons. Now not only do you find fast flat stretches of track which enabled them to record speeds up to 80 mph but no one complained about their performance over Whiteball Summit with gradients of 1 in 80 to 1 in 40 westbound and 1 in 125 eastbound.

Turning to records prepared by that classic writer E.L. Ahrons, the Stirling single drivers of the Great Northern spring to mind.

Neither the climb out of Kings Cross to Potters Bar, nor the short southbound out of Grantham were easy tasks; but in Ahrons' words "the GN 8' singles took loads on express trains

of greater weight and at faster speeds than those of other railways.

Engine No.48 with eleven six wheeled coaches climbed to Potters Bar in 17 minutes 40½ seconds covering 8 miles of 1 in 200 climb at 47½ mph.

Compared with the Stirling 7'1" singles of 2-2-2 wheel formula and the 6'7½" 2-4-0 engines, both with 17" x 24" cylinders, the 8' singles always had the best of it to Potters Bar.

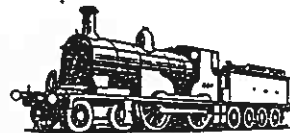
Again on the Great Eastern, the Bromley 18" x 24" singles with 7'6" diameter wheels, 1205 sq. ft. heating surface and 17.1 sq. ft. grate area are on record as climbing the very steep Bethnel Green bank out of Liverpool Street with loads of 15 or 16 coaches in an "astonishing manner".

Turning to the Midland Railway, it was the 6'8½" large wheeled 2-4-0 of Kirtley's design which out performed the 6'2½" wheel 2-4-0 of No.1 class over the heavy gradients of the Settle & Carlisle line.

This experience was similar to that of the rival London & North Western Railway, whose 6'7½" large wheel "Precedents" supplanted the smaller wheeled 2-4-0's on the arduous climb over Shap Summit. Ahrons in his classic work "The British Locomotive 1825 - 1925" examined the relative work of these LNWR classes at some length.

In more recent times, thoughts turn to the Somerset & Dorset line with the steepest main line gradients in England (as compared to 'Banks' such as Hemerdon or Lickey). Here the large wheeled 4-4-0 class 2P held sway for many years prior to the arrival of the modern design "Black 5" class of the LMS. Even so, the load limit of 220 ton for the 2P made a respectable comparison to the 270 tons for the "Black 5's" and the later Bullied Pacifics.

The reason for this inversion of what was right for the job came down to the old time valve gear with its restricted openings and high degree of "wire drawing" meant that the pressure of steam arriving at the steam chest somewhat down from boiler pressure was even more down by the time it got into the cylinders at part travel of the piston. Old time tests show that the difference of the steam pressure in the cylinder at the beginning of its stroke and then just before cut off could



be as much as 25-28% at high piston speeds. Thus if the piston speed was kept down there was a much better chance of getting some real work done by the piston. This lower speed was achieved by using large diameter driving wheels.

A curious point emerging from the records of the time is the number of single drivers that were good hill climbers as compared with coupled wheel arrangements (on passenger trains of course; the ubiquitous 0-6-0 had been introduced very early on for freight working).

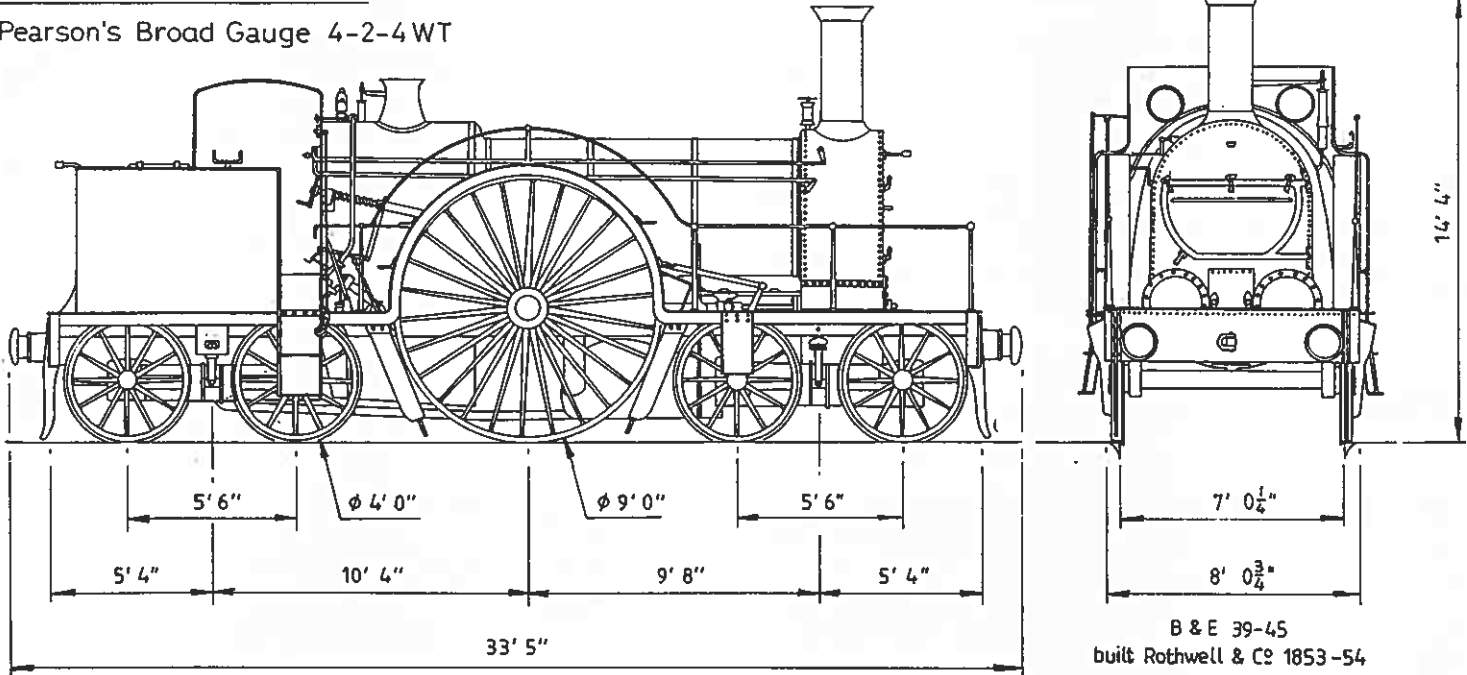
The large diameter driving wheel not only enabled piston speeds to be kept down, but enabled a good contact area to be main-

tained between the wheel and rail, particularly as the latter was light and flexible. As is well known, power sanding with steam or air gave the single driver an extended lease of life for several years as several old time designers preferred their lack of complexity. Coupled wheel arrangements were compared with "boys running with their breeks doon".

As train weights increased and modern valve design came in from the United States through Churchward on the GWR the tables were turned and the days of big wheels for hill climbing a thing of the past, and merely an episode in the fascinating story of steam locomotive development.

## BRISTOL & EXETER RAILWAY

### Pearson's Broad Gauge 4-2-4WT



## FOR A FEW RUPEES MORE....

## PETER ROBINS concludes a rail journey through INDIA.

The next day we took a coach to Jaynagar, from where we travelled by train to Janakpur in Nepal. Customs procedures were not carried at the station but at the local police station, about two miles distant, or a two rupee rickshaw ride away. The four coach train was ancient and grossly overloaded with people on the roof and hanging out of the doorways. We were slightly luckier in our four-wheeled first-class coach, as we could just shut our doors. The loco was "Seeta", an Orenstein and Koppel 2-6-2T. Over the border into Nepal we came to Khajuri where the line has its works. We approached the foreman to see if we could take some photographs, and he was pleased to let us do so. He was typical of all Nepalese we met, quiet spoken and friendly. We returned to Dharbanga and took an overnight train to Katihar. From there we travelled by day to Siliguri Junction.

After a good nights sleep in a hotel, the best part of the holiday began. The locomotive was "B" class 0-4-OST No.779 "Mountaineer" built by Sharp Stewart in 1881 and the destination was Darjeeling. This little loco with its crew of five - driver, fireman, Fireman's assistant and two sanders on the front of the loco - barked its way up 1 in 25 gradients, four spiral loops and five zig-zags to the summit at Ghum, 7407 ft. above sea level. After a short descent we came to Darjeeling, which nestles in the beautiful mountain scenery. From Tiger Hill, seven miles away, one can see the Himalayas including Mount Everest and Kanchenjanga. The people look different being Indo-Chinese and are much cleaner and friendlier than the average Indian. The Darjeeling area was however having its share of political troubles. At present they are part of West Bengal, but they want to become a separate state within India called Gorkhaland. After seeing the filth and squalour in West Bengal, I can sympathise with them. We had two more days in this superb area before travelling overnight to Calcutta. En route at Burdwan Junction, we encountered the local fruit and nut case. He ran up the platform half naked with a large club, swiping at waiting passengers and smashing three windows in the

next coach to us. This delayed us another 30 minutes, making us 4 hours late into Calcutta. This city is one seething mass of populus. It is to be avoided if one doesn't like crowds.

We travelled via Kharagpur and Raipur to Waltair, and on the last section from Vizianagaram we had a superb cab ride in WP Pacific No.7346. This loco had a very young crew of three, who were obviously intent on giving us a good performance. The style of driving was very different, the regulator was used to control the loco instead of the reversing handle. Speeds must have been touching 70 mph and the ride was very lively indeed.

From Waltair, the next day, we had a cab-ride in an early single-ended Alco diesel to Rajahmundry. Here we found a very busy and active steam shed with about twenty WP Pacifics waiting to work trains. There was also a W.G. 2-8-2 No.9314 with "Coaching Shunting" painted on the tender, denoting its purpose in life.

One problem we encountered all over India, and especially here, was that most of the steam hauled trains departed after sunset, even if they were timed to depart earlier.

We then took an overnight train to Madras. This train made an unexpected on-time arrival - 04.45.

From here we went to Mettupalajam and on to Ootacamund via the Nilgiri rack railway. This railway is operated by "X" class 0-8-2T with separate cylinders and valve gear for the rack. Our loco was No.37391 "Bhagiratha" which thrashed its way slowly up the rack section to Coonoor. At Coonoor we changed locos for No.37390 "Bheema" which took us to Ootacamund.

Ootacamund, or Udagamandalam (present name adopted by the state of Tamil Nadu, or Ooty - more popular name) is a well spread out town with some very British looking buildings. There is a large lake overlooked by St. Thomas's R.C. Church. We were told that about 25 European families still lived there but the majority of the population were Indians.

The next day, we hired a taxi for the day from George Hawkes and son rourist taxis - British influence here somewhere - to chase the train from Mettupalaiyam to Ooty. After we had taken a couple of shots, our driver said that the engine must be "Nilgiri Queen" as it had left the first water stop 7 minutes early. When we came close to the engine, we saw that he was right and that it was No.37393 "Nilgiri Queen" and steaming well. We used the taxi to full advantage photographing the trains and taking in the superb scenery.

Two days later, we were in Mysore, a city well spread out with beautiful buildings. We were more interested in the superb half roundhouse almost full with metre gauge YP Pacifics and YG 2-8-2's.

We had planned to have the last two days on the line to Vasco da Gama in Goa, photographing the non-standard TD 2-8-2's. This proposed grande finale turned into a big disaster. On arrival at Londa Junction, we saw a YD No.30158 on shed. It looked promising but the fire was not burning well. The fire door had not been closed properly and we thought no more of it. We went to the station for breakfast and returned to No.30158 some 30 minutes later. The fire had certainly. It had come through the open fire door setting fire to the cab. The crew were busily removing burnt wood from the cab roof and cleaning the blackened gauges, whilst suffering a severe ear-bashing from the shed master.

## NORTH YORKS. MOORS

After seeing the paragraph about the forthcoming May visit to the N.Y.M.R in the December 'Donkey', I was prompted to write about our week spent at Goathland station last July.

Our accommodation was one of the camping coaches owned by the N.Y.M.R SC59099 which was a Trailer First Restaurant Buffet car, once formed in a Glasgow-Edinburgh Inter-City DMU set and withdrawn from service in the early 70's, being replaced by push/pull class 27's and conventional stock. The coach was substantially as built except for the substitution of bunk beds in the first class compartment and the addition of showers/washing facilities etc. These are now 8 berth vehicles and ideal for two families.

Goathland Station is arguably the most charming along the line and as a 'resident' its tranquility or activity throughout the day could be viewed in comfort from our private vantage point.

I did take a video camera with me having borrowed this from a friend, but these first experiments in the art of film making were not very successful so I bought the N.Y.M.R's own video 'Images of Steam' which I would thoroughly recommend.

With our holiday 'package' was included all free travel on the line (save for the wine & dine Pullman) this facility we enjoyed to the full, soon becoming well known to the staff on the trains. During a trip up the line to Pickering, on the Tuesday, behind 80135, I mentioned to my wife that I quite fancied a footplate ride but surely this would not be permitted.

On arrival at Pickering I was promptly pushed through the door of the General Manager's office by my wife only to emerge five minutes later clutching the much coveted footplate pass which would entitle me to eighteen miles on a Steam Loco footplate, I couldn't believe it! what engine could this be, as it turned out it was none other than 44767 George Stephenson, perhaps the Star of the line at the moment, and ours was the 5 o'clock departure to Grosmont.

This was my very first experience on the footplate of a MOVING STEAM LOCOMOTIVE and can only be described as wonderful! The volunteer driver and fireman had been on duty all day and per-

Dieselisation of the Vasco da Gama line was planned for early 1987, but we did not expect this by the middle of January. The YD's were all in store at Castle Rock, the summit of the line. All were clean and still well greased. As we descended the steep gradients towards Goa, we could see clinker and ash deposits between the rails at passing loops. We decided on a complete change of plan for our last two days, so on arrival at Vasco da Gama, we marched into the reservation office and reserved a compartment on the evening train to Miraj Junction.

"Have you enjoyed your stay in Goa" asked the friendly reservations clerk.

"We've only been here 15 minutes" I replied. We travelled via Bombay to Vadodara, formerly Baroda. Within easy reach of here there are a dozen or so narrow gauge lines. We travelled by train and bus to visit some of them, the latter form of transport being more reliable. The Indian narrow gauge has a charm of its own. My favourite was the system based at Nadiad with "WT" class 0-6-4T's of 1925 working most services. At one point the narrow gauge crosses the double track broad gauge main line on the level.

Alas all good things come to an end and the next day we were on our way home. We were dirty and tired after a tough four weeks but after a days rest and a good bath, I was ready to face the Western world again.

## PHIL SEARLE sets the scene for the May weekend visit.

haps at that particular point in time would have had a different word for it!

I have always been a bit of a GW fan spending the formative years within earshot of the sounds of panniers and prairies at Slough 81B and since July have experienced a footplate ride on 6998 Burton Agnes Hall at Didcot, but Mr. Stanier's Black five is now a firm favourite for me!

Goathland Station is at the summit of the mostly 1 in 49 climb from Grosmont and this incline provides all the engines with quite a severe test. On one particular morning we witnessed the spectacular approach of the NER P.3 No.2392 blasting its way into Goathland Station sending out a pall of black smoke into the sky. This must be a unique sight on a preserved line today and just the spot for 'THE' photograph.

The line is of course well known as being most picturesque and we saw it during a week of unusually sunny weather, which helps a bit!

The staff, some of whom we got to know quite well were most helpful and patient, they came from all walks of life and various parts of the country, one volunteer and his wife living in Haworth! but lifetime N.Y.M.R. members.

There is a wealth of stock at Grosmont, the listing of which is not necessary here as the line is well publicised but, for the diesel fans D7029 was a regular performer, notably on the Pullman wine & dine trains run on two evenings, and I believe the Deltic gets a run every Sunday.

I did manage to get a shot of the P.3 wending its way through Newtondale Gorge, with its train, I (with my brother in law) climbed to Skelton Tower, which is about a mile uphill from Levisham Station. This is a well known vantage point and has been used many times on N.Y.M.R. publicity photos, well worth the climb if you are fit.

My railway holiday in Yorkshire was the highlight of the year and something to be repeated in the not too distant future. Coming a close second was our week in September at Crowcombe in Somerset (WSR) but that's another story!

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