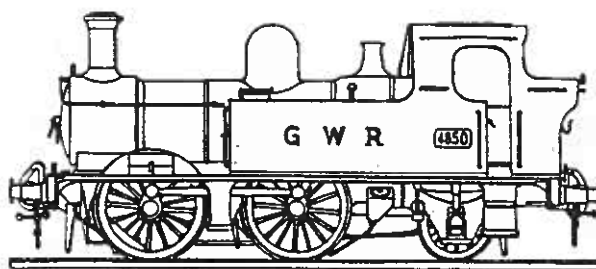


# THE MARLOW DONKEY

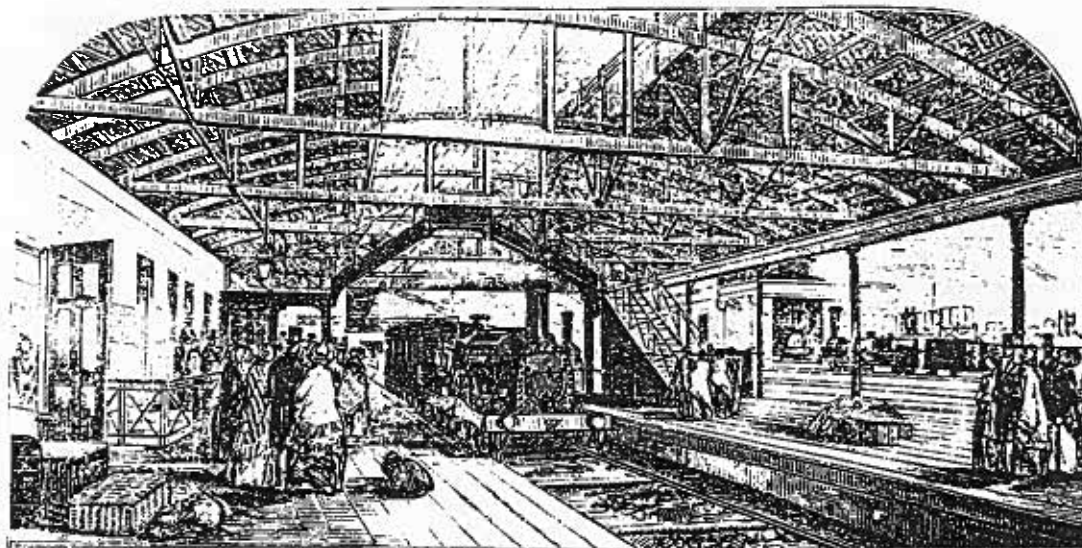


No 48

DECEMBER 1988

Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Members



The old station at Reading around 1850. A feature article on this important junction commences on page 7.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

This Newsletter, No.48, appears at the end of the Society's twelfth year. We have enjoyed twelve years of interesting talks, Film shows, exhibitions and club visits, etc. Allowing for repeat appearances at least 100 speakers have come along to our meetings. Roger Bowen, our Programme Secretary, has finally admitted he cannot find any new talkers able and willing to appear in 1989. Hence the letter you have received from Martin Pink. Please try and help. Find out whom other Societies have discovered. Retired railwaymen often prove excellent raconteurs if we can only locate them. Talks by our own members are a valuable addition to the programmes but the visitor can usually draw a bigger audience.

I shall be most interested to read the results of Martin's questionnaire. Attendances at our regular monthly meetings always reflect members' interests. 'Preservation' and 'General Nostalgia' will always be the most popular subjects, foreign railways the least. However, we should not be too parochial - there's a wealth of allied topics to hear about and we must be prepared for a BALANCED diet of Railwayana.

The fate of the 72-mile stretch of track known as the Settle and Carlisle would seem to be sealed. BR has received tens of thousands of objections to the line's closure and a final decision has now been put back to mid-1989. Correspondence in the various railway journals is most absorbing. It reflects

the good reasons for retaining the line and is suspicious of BR's attitudes. Let us hope a solution, even if privatisation is the only answer, can be found.

I would like to give support to Roger Bowen's suggestion that Mike Walker's excellent series in our Newsletters several years ago on 'The Wycombe Railway and the Marlow Donkey' be reprinted in booklet form. It would be a notable 'first' for our Society. With an expanded text, maps, drawings and photographs, this could be a popular publication. Bearing in mind Paul Karau's endless delays in launching his Marlow book we would obviously pre-date his projected publication by a decade!

You will no doubt have seen in the September Newsletter that I shall not be standing for re-election at next January's AGM. I have held the post of Chairman for eleven years out of the Society's twelve years of existence, and I think it is high time a new Chairman took over. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the various committees over the years and must pay a tribute to their continued interest and enthusiasm. The Society meets eleven times a year; the Committee even less frequently. I shall continue to attend the monthly meetings and enjoy any club outings, and I intend to provide the occasional article for possible inclusion in the Newsletter.

May I wish all our members a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

*Bas*

# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

All meetings are held at the British Legion, Station Approach Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

### Thurs. 19th Jan. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The agenda is shown on page 2. Formal business will be followed by a programme of short talks by members.

### Thurs. 16th Feb. MEMBERS PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

See page 2 for full details. PLEASE support this event and make the evening a success.

### Thurs. 16th Mar. STEAM IN THE CHILTERN & THAMES VALLEY Gerald Robinson

You are assured of an evening of pure nostalgia as Gerald takes us back to the period 1958-62 and a look at steam from all of the Big Four and BR on local main line and branches.

### Thurs. 16th Apr. SWISS ADVENTURE George Herrman

A trip through this remarkable country where the trains run with cuckoo-clock precision against a back-drop of some of the world's most stunning scenery.

### Thurs. 18th May ROMNEY HYTE & DYMCHURCH RAILWAY

Tonight's speaker will be either John Snell, Managing Director, RHDR, or George Barlow, the now retired RHDR engineer, presenting a profile of this unique railway as a curtain raiser to next July's visit.

### 26th - 29th May FFESTINIOG WEEKEND VISIT

A long weekend visiting the Ffestiniog Railway and, if time permits, the Talyllyn Railway allowing time for riding and linesiding. Budget cost £100. Please contact Mike Walker if you're interested NOW.

# SOCIETY NEWS

## MEMBERS NEWS

We welcome new member Brian Sparrow of Tyler's Green to the Society and look forward to seeing him at future meetings. Meanwhile, David Gardner is leaving us and moving to Chippenham, we wish him well for the future.

On a recent visit Stan Verrinder proudly showed off his Young Person's Railcard - not bad for one who's retired! Before you all rush off to peruse the rules, Stan is entitled to one as a full time student. Congratulations are in order to our Treasurer, John Sears, who has recently become engaged.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

September's meeting took the form of a video evening and as usual a wide range of subjects were included. Thanks to Charlie Smith for the loan of the equipment and to all who supplied material.

The Quiz against Slough was badly supported by our members which was a great pity because those who attended found the evening both entertaining and educational. Thanks are in order to our team, Terry Dearling, Peter Greatorex and Alan Wheeler (a last minute substitute) as well as Martin Pink and Peter Robins who worked hard to research the questions. For the record we won convincingly.

Keith Catchpole presented an excellent talk on the Festiniog Railway at the November meeting. Members were so enthralled that we're getting a group together for a visit in May (see below).

A feature of the November meeting was a questionnaire to members, 26 of which were returned completed. This has given us an insight into your likes and dislikes, providing valuable data for future planning.

## COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Three members, Bas Woodward, Mike Norris and Len Stroud, are standing down at the AGM and NONE IS SEEKING RE-ELECTION which is a pity as all have done much to ensure the success of the Society. Therefore we have three vacancies and seek members willing to fill these. The existing committee are anxious that the new faces are genuine volunteers and not reluctant co-optees.

The committee meets only 4-6 times a year and the duties are not onerous, the best qualification is a good imagination! If you would like to help steer the Society into the next decade please notify Martin Pink, 40 Lowfield Way, Hazlemere, (tel, Penn 6306) before 10th January 1989.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Around this time we normally invite you to renew your membership but this year it seems a slight rise in rates may be called for to offset inflation. At press time our Treasurer has yet to come to any firm conclusions, and in any case a revision will require your approval at the AGM. We therefore ask you to wait until then to renew.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 13th Annual General Meeting will be held at the British Legion, Station Approach, Marlow, on Thursday 19th January 1989 starting at 8.00 pm. The agenda will be as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last AGM (see March '88 Donkey).
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Treasurer's Report and approval of subscriptions.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Amendment of Society's Constitution (see below).
7. Election of 1989 Committee.
8. Any other business and general discussion.

The formal business will be followed by a programme of short talks by members, and during the evening there will be a presentation to our outgoing Chairman, Bas Woodward, and voting will take place for the "Norman Aston-Smith Trophy" awarded for the year's best article in the Donkey.

## REVISED CONSTITUTION

The committee has decided our constitution needs updating and a draft has been prepared and appears within this issue. It mainly affects the Society's financial and property management and defines membership groups more clearly. Please take time to consider this document which will be presented to the AGM for discussion and approval.

## ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

As usual this will be held in February and we invite ALL MEMBERS to participate to ensure a successful evening. Remember, voting is by our members based on what appeals to them not technical merit, it is after all only for fun. Whether you shoot with a Box Brownie or several hundred pounds worth of Nikon, at High Wycombe or Darjeeling you have an equal chance of success. One previous winner was definitely shot on a simple compact camera and another's owner considered it not worthy of entry so you simply can't tell. So come on and just for the hell of it - ENTER SOMETHING!

The classes this year are as follows:-

- A - Colour Slides - UK subjects
- B - Colour Slides - Overseas subjects
- C - Colour Prints up to and incl. 5" x 7" - all subjects
- D - Black & White Prints

There are a few simple rules:-

1. All entries must be a members own original work.
2. A maximum of 5 entries per member per class.
3. Slides should be marked by the entrant for easy identification - prints must be unmarked.
4. There is no time limit - shots taken in 1908 or 1988 are eligible!

Good luck!

## FUTURE TRIPS

A number of trips are being planned for 1989. Firstly a weekend visit to the Festiniog Railway is planned for 26-29th May (the Bank Holiday weekend). These trips are usually a lot of fun (see Sept '88 NYMR report) and several members are already interested. We cannot give an accurate cost until we know how many are coming but a budget estimate of £100 for the entire weekend should be taken as a guide. If you would like to come please let Mike Walker know as soon as possible - such a trip needs a lot of organising and we need to know who is going by the end of March at the latest.



An evening visit to Pendon has been suggested for August and other venues either to a BR loco depot or signal centre, possibly on a Saturday, are under serious study. Perhaps you could make your feelings known at the AGM.

Our annual family trip is on July 16<sup>th</sup> and as voted for at the September meeting will be to the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch - full details in the next issue.

## PROPOSED REVISED CONSTITUTION

**IMPORTANT! Please read and study carefully.**

### 1. AIMS

The Society exists to promote interest in all aspects of railways, narrow, standard or broad gauge; past, present and future; at home and overseas, by means of monthly meetings and field trips.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1. Membership is open to any person aged 14 and above on payment of the annual subscription. Members are entitled to take part in all the Society's activities and receive the Society newsletter.

2.2. Members aged 14 and 15 are classed as Junior Members.

2.3. Honorary Life Membership and/or the non executive positions of President and Vice President may be bestowed upon a member in recognition of special or outstanding services to the Society by vote of the full committee.

### 3. COMMITTEE

3.1. Shall consist of not more than 8 members, one of whom is the Chairman.

3.2. The three longest standing committee members shall offer themselves for re-election at the AGM.

3.3. The officers shall be appointed by the committee at its first post AGM meeting. Minimum officers shall be

Chairman

Vice-Chairman - to deputise for the Chairman

Meeting Secretary - to organise monthly meetings

General Secretary - to handle general correspondence

Treasurer - to control society finances and membership records

3.4. The committee will meet a minimum of 4 times per year. The quorum for a meeting is 5

3.5. Nominations for the committee and chairman should be made in writing to the General Secretary prior to the AGM. The committee may co-opt members if necessary.

### 4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

4.1. Each member is required to pay an Annual Subscription for the year 1st January to 31st December and a Meeting Subscription for each meeting attended. The amount of these subscriptions is determined by the full committee and approved by vote of the general membership at the AGM. Members aged 14 and 15 pay one half of the Annual Subscription.

4.2. In the event of new members joining during the year the following pro-rata rates apply:-

Jan-July 100%

Sep-Oct 50%

Nov-Dec 100% + following year

4.3. Members not renewing after a reminder by June 1st will be deemed to have lapsed.

### 5. FINANCE

5.1 The funds of the Society shall be used for expenditures as approved by the Committee.

5.2 The accounts shall be presented annually to the AGM and copies distributed to all members.

5.3 Officers expenses shall be submitted quarterly on Society forms.

5.4 Any single item of capital expenditure in excess of £10.00 to be agreed in advance by the Committee.

5.5 The annual accounts shall be independently audited by a person outside the Committee and approved by the Committee.

5.6 The Society's Financial Year is 1 Jan - 31 Dec.

### 6. ASSETS

6.1 The Committee shall maintain a complete register of all property owned by the club (including accessories) its value and its normal keeper or location.

6.2 Society property may only be disposed of by approval of the Committee. Capital items are to be disposed of only by vote of the general meeting.

6.3 In the event of closure the disposal of Society assets shall be decided by the full membership.

### 7. AGM

7.1 The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held in January. Notice of the agenda will be distributed to all members at least two weeks in advance.

### 8. AMENDMENTS

8.1 The rules of the Society may be changed only at Annual General Meetings by a majority vote of the paid up members.

## RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

### NOTES AND NEWS

#### 165 WOES

In days past 250 cars would have been seen as a big order, not today. As a result all six manufacturers asked to tender for the Class 165 "Networker Turbo" declined to make bids claiming that the order was too small to be economic.

Som it's back to the sawing board. Both Leyland and Metro-Cammell offered further batches of their 155 and 156 units but these would be unsuitable due to the lengthy loading and unloading times through the end doors only. A solution may be to add double sliding doors to the 155/156 design which would give NSE a proven, reliable, if uninspiring train. But, given the 155/156's reputation for high noise levels and cramped seating, do we really want to suffer this for the next thirty years? Whatever, the project is now deferred by at least a year.

#### NETWORKER SETBACK

Even the prestige "Networker" project is running into rough water. The bids from BREL and Metro-Cammell both being nearly 50% more per car than NSE expected, so ways of reducing costs are being explored. The proposed "Networker" family are: 465-SR 4 car high density (3+2 seating); 466-SR 2 car high density; 471-SR 4 car low density (2+2 seating) and 331 GE 4 car high density.



#### OLD OAK CREATES A HYBRID

The remaining first generation dmu's continue to provide interest for Old Oak depot has recently outshopped an unusual hybrid two car unit. L206 is formed of 56284 a class 121 Pressed Steel Driving Trailer Second, modified by the addition of a gangway, and 53155 a class 101 Metro-Cammell Driving Motor Brake Composite. The latter car is noteworthy as it was built as a Driving Motor Brake SECOND, E50155, in 1956. Latterly it served as a parcels car (no seats) at Cambridge prior to transfer to OOC. Both internal and external finish, in the latest NSE blue, are to a very high standard. 53155 may well be unique, no Metro-Cammell DMBC's were built new and no other conversions are known. The other class 101 2 car sets, L201-5, are formed of a DMBS and DTC.

#### LT STEAMS INTO CHESHAM

London Underground has confirmed it intends to operate steam services on the Chalfont & Latimer to Chesham branch on two weekends next July to celebrate the lines centenary. Motive power, supplied by Quainton, will be Metropolitan Railway O-4-4T no.1 and pannier tank 7715 (hopefully restored to its alter-ego, LT L99) working push-pull at either end of the train of original Met compartment coaches from the K&WVR. The branch is highly scenic and provides many photographic

locations. We will keep members advised of all details as they become available.

#### NEW KODAK SLIDE FILM

KODACHROME 200 is now becoming available on the amateur market, three years after its launch in the US and a period of professional only sale in the UK. Retaining the superb colour and definition of K-64, its 200ASA speed is a full two stops faster making the film useful for those typical overcast British days. It costs about £1.00 more than K-64 and is process paid. Supplies can be had from EFC at West Drayton.

There is one drawback, trials by rail photographers in the US have shown K-200 is NOT suited to night photography, on long exposures it develops a distinct red cast.

#### BARRIERS COMING

BR have confirmed their intention to install locally monitored automatic half barriers at Cookham and Furze Platt level crossings during 1989 following a DOT report into the

## JOINT LINE STEAM

First the bad news. There will be no steam workings from Marylebone for the next two years. The good news is that they will operate from Paddington instead whilst the approaches and signalling at the former GCR terminal are being completely renewed.

Trains will originate from Paddington's 1A platform meaning that LT's Royal Oak station will provide an excellent vantage point for photography (providing an HST doesn't pass at the critical moment!) Engines will be based and serviced at Southall using the Greenford loop for turning. The WR Chief Civil Engineer has put a limit of one trip per month, but

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The winter of 1963/64 seems to have been a fairly quiet one as far as railways were concerned. Indeed the London Midland Region followed the Western Region by withdrawing all services on Christmas Day. On the Southern services finished by mid-afternoon and on other regions services were severely curtailed and certain branch lines and suburban stations closed.

New stock deliveries were thin on the ground. The only new types recorded were for three exle 50 ton 311 bhp diesel-hydraulic shunting locos delivered to the Post of Bristol Authority by Sentinel (Shrewsbury) Ltd.

Other news - the last steam locomotive to be overhauled at Doncaster was completed - on a Gresley A4 Pacific "Union of South Africa".

The National Trust accepted the deeds of covenant for 3½ miles of the world's oldest existing railway, the Middleton Railway, Leeds, of 1758. The line is operated by the "1758 Middleton Railway Trust".

The winter timetable saw a significant drop in the number of through coaches from Waterloo to the West Country. Bude, Bideford and Torrington lost their through portions of the "Atlantic Coast Express", their only through coach link with London. Indeed all Sunday services were withdrawn between Bude and Okehampton.

The withdrawal was noted of the five prototype diesel-electric locomotives, 10000 and 10001 built at Derby and 10201, 10202 and 10203 built at Ashford and Brighton.

## THE NEW GWR

The Winchcombe station buildings are now up to ceiling level, but nothing much has happened for some time. The track from Winchcombe station up to Greet tunnel has been cut and slewed over so that the two 'halves' now follow the alignment of the old 'up' and 'down' lines. Work is proceeding to insert points and carry on the new alignment from the tunnel to join the existing 'run-round' track. The object of this quite large effort escapes me but it carries on and I will give you

safety of level crossings. Both crossings were converted from the old manual gates to the open type in 1981/82 since when there have been several accidents as this column has reported.

#### REBUILDING THE JOINT LINES

BR have commenced a major modernisation programme on both the lines served by Marylebone. The terminal itself is being renovated and improved whilst a new servicing depot is being constructed for the 165 trains.

Much track relaying, realigning and rationalisation is being undertaken as part of a complete resignalling scheme (except for the Neasden-Amersham LT controlled section) controlled from a new "Panel" at Marylebone. Risborough, Aylesbury and Great Missenden boxes will go in November '89, High Wycombe and Gerrards Cross in February 1990, West Ruislip to Neasden the following month and finishing with Marylebone itself in May 1990.

We will keep members informed of progress in forthcoming issues, but in the meantime savour those semaphores while you can, and get those shots now!



given the less than sparkling record of steam traction on the WR, one must be grateful for small mercies. The running dates for 1989 have yet to be announced.

There are however three more steam workings from Marylebone before alterations commence. 35028 "Clan Line" will operate to Stratford and return on 29th December whilst 4498 "Sir Nigel Gresley" is to work a private charter to Stratford on 14th January returning the following day. There will be no "Santa Specials" between Marylebone and High Wycombe this Christmas.



The closure of the quay branch at Newhaven (the opposite side of the river to the main harbour) had rendered the last five remaining Terrier class loco's redundant. All five were stored at Basingstoke pending advice on disposal.

At the end of November British Railways new diesel maintenance depot at March was brought into use, marking the virtual end of steam on the Great Eastern line of the Eastern Region. Its allocation has 61 main line locos and 29 diesel shunters compared with 200 in the days of steam.

Under the Craig programme for putting transport in Northern Ireland on a "realistic basis" the dissolution of the Ulster Transport Authority before 1967 was envisaged and also foreshadowed a Province without railways. Even the future of the Dublinmain line within Northern Ireland was in doubt.

A fund was opened to purchase one of the oldest locomotives owned by British Railways, ex LBSCR A1x class "Terrier" No.32636, formerly "Fenchurch" and present it to the Bluebell Railway. The locomotive was built in 1872. £400 of the £750 asking price had been collected.

The condemned London suburban electric stock of the London Midland Region was moved from Stonebridge Park to sidings between Verney Junction and Winslow Road station for storage.

On December 23rd Brush type 4 diesels took over the Wolverhampton-Paddington service from "Western" class diesels.

A mixed bag of news for the winter of 25 years ago - nothing startling but of historic interest I'm sure.

**RON BROOKS reports from  
deepest Gloucestershire**

the occasional report. Local rumour has it that the immediate aim is to get as far as Prestbury racecourse at which venue, those of the membership whose interest extends from Iron Horses to the sweatier variety will know, is held the prestigious Cheltenham Gold Cup - and hence very large crowds eager for a ride - and possibly an escape from road traffic congestion. I wonder how much I could charge for B & B in race week? I shall continue to train my binoculars on your behalf.

# AN EVENING IN DOCKLANDS (via ThamesLink)

Eddie Lewcock

Just before 7pm various members of the Society could be found creeping out from various parts of the woodwork and congregating at the meeting point sign now prominently displayed on the Lawn at Paddington. First contact made by the writer with other members was in the ever useful loo area and next strike being made in the buffet; after which the party set forth promptly at 7, armed with travel cards, journeying into the Eastern part of London starting with a Metro run to Kings Cross.

Here ThamesLink, no doubt on grounds of neutrality, has set up its own station up Pentonville Road and away from anything smacking of Great Northern or Midland influence. A large sum of money has been spent on creating a bright new station presence from what were for many years derelict platforms upon the old Moorgate extension and all look clean, bright and modern with the glaring exception that, whereas North bound passengers are regaled with visual information on the destination of trains which would only work on the Midland line to either Luton or Bedford; South bound passengers who are faced with the need to take choice of several routes on the Southern, have no destination indicators provided.

This apart, the new stock was pleasantly set up and provided a rock-steady ride as far as London Bridge. The riding qualities appear to be increasingly approved of by passengers who have for many years suffered with the rather uncertain Southern region riding qualities; whilst the provision of loos in the formation will undoubtedly be of assistance to lager drinkers and older members of the population.

SnowHill Tunnel itself was taken at a careful speed as also the run from Blackfriars to London Bridge across the famous and over-used Loughborough Junction. In passing, it is understood that whilst a number of Southern Region motormen are happy to go upon the single route of the Midland, there are a number of Midland men who don't see muchpoint in learning vast areas of the Southern network and have joined an unofficially named "ChickenLink" terminating at Farringdon.

From London Bridge to New Cross a coach of the older Bulleid type stock provided transportation, landing us conveniently on the platform alongside the Metropolitan-District lines for going Northwards under the Thames to Shadwell, where we de-trained for the Docklands Railway.

A short walk through the "Jack the Ripper" type area brought us to the Station where the tickets for local run on the line itself not only had to be bought but validated; a new way of thinking in London which is to fit in with the new method of automatic ticket issuing on the Underground itself.

## TROUBLE ON THE BRANCH

One of the more unusual incidents on the Maidenhead-High Wycombe branch during the last war was the crash of a De Havilland "Mosquito" onto the line near Pinions, High Wycombe on 8th June 1944.

The aircraft, NS555 of 654 Squadron, flown by a USAAF crew from RAF Watton in Norfolk was returning from a photo-reconnaissance mission to record the progress of the Normandy landings, Operation Overlord. Shortly after take-off following a refuelling stop at RAF Booker the plane crashed into the west side of the embankment about 200 ft south of the bridge over the A40. There were no survivors among the crew

## TEN YEARS AGO

Marlow Donkey No.9 saw our Chairman, Bas Woodward, in his opening notes observing on his "earliest railway memories".

Previous meetings recorded was a talk in October on "Irish Steam" by Leslie McAllister and in November a series of short talks by Ron Brooks, Malcolm Campbell, Ted Gregory, Steve Medway and Stan Verrinder.

Main articles in the "Donkey" were one by Roger Bowen on the first "Railway Preservation Symposium" held at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London. Speakers included John Bellwood of the National Railway Museum, Nigel Trotter from North York Moors Railway, Alan Garraway from the Festiniog

Our first experience of the delights of computerisation on the railway started off with the time display sign announcing the number of minutes to wait for the next train. This sign managed to go through "ten minutes" three times before going down through the traditional form of counting generally approved for daily use.

The train itself was under control of the train Captain and during the evening it was clear that no trains were using the computerised control system, in normal service.

As the Captain is not normally supposed to drive, there is no seat available and he or she, if feeling weary, has to sit down on the passenger seat as no designated area has been provided. This could provide problems at periods of heavy use when on manual control, and it seems a little surprising that this point hasn't been allowed for in the initial design.

Our first run was to Tower Gateway and then we took the same train back to Island Garden passing some of the very modern developments on route which is turning the Isle of Dogs into very much a yuppie area.

The platforms are exact length for the trains which therefore cannot be strengthened in the rush hour, financial restraints preventing sensible provisions being made for any future expansions. The absence of line side signals is somewhat uncanny, also some of the curves are reminiscent of old fashioned tramway systems, but the cars themselves are pleasant enough to ride in, if somewhat spartan.

For the return working up to Stratford we had an attractive young lady in charge, who religiously stood all the way through the run. Approaching stations is done with singular care and caution and is in stark contrast to the days of the old Great Eastern steam operation. With the acceleration of the train continuing to at least a few feet short of the next station platform, brakes were then flung on with great elan resulting in the train stopping satisfactorily in the platform length, time and time again.

The evening was rounded off with a return run down the Central line, various sections of the party disappearing at different points along the route after a tour that had been interesting and entertaining. The classic remark of the night must surely have been overheard by Mike from a pair of partially sighted people who alighted from the Docklands train at Stratford with the crisp comment that "as a transport system is is a totally invalid concept but is a great thing for the yuppies to play around with".

MIKE WALKER recounts an incident from World War II.

and due to its wooden construction, the Mosquito was totally destroyed. The larger components penetrated up to 10 ft into the embankment.

The wreckage remained undisturbed until the spring of 1972 when, following the closure of the branch, members of the Booker Aircraft Museum were given permission to excavate the site. The largest relic being recovered was a badly distorted Rolls-Royce "Merlin" engine which with several smaller items is now displayed at Booker. A valuable ring recovered was returned to the crew member's family in Texas.

Roger Bowen

and David Ward and Richard Hardy of BR.

A second article was by Ernie Dove on an MMPA excursion to Llandudno - an article which warranted the editor's footnote "Ernie is to be congratulated on writing the first article on one of our trips without mention of alcoholic beverages or a public house".

The final article was part two of Mike Walker's serial on "the Wycombe Railway and the Marlow Donkey" - this one was titled "To High Wycombe and beyond".

The above will bring back memories to some members and to others act as a reminder of how busy we were Ten Years Ago.

# CLASS 50's

Mark Hopwood



Probably the most controversial locomotive to enter service on BR in recent years has been the English Electric 2700 bhp Type 4 (now Class 50). Since the demise of the Class 52 'Westerns' and the Class 55 'Deltics' they have become, beyond doubt the most followed locomotive on BR today.

The Class 50 story begins back in 1962 when on 2 May English Electric's "Diesel Prototype 2" (or DP2) entered service on the LMR. Based on the 23rd Deltic bodyshell, it contained one of the new English Electric 16 cylinder four stroke engines - the 16CSVT - an uprated version of the engine fitted to the English Electric 2000 bhp Type 4s (now Class 40). However English Electric felt that DP2 was not being worked hard enough on 2000 bhp diagrams and that its 2700 bhp would be better utilised elsewhere. So in June 1963 it entered service on the ECML on 3,300 bhp Deltic turns and over 58 consecutive days of this it covered 43,000 trouble-free miles - a very good achievement indeed.

Regrettably DP2's brilliant career was abruptly terminated on 31 July 1967 it derailed south of Thirsk after hitting a derailed cement train while hauling the 1200 Kings Cross - Edinburgh express and was never to run again - being dismantled during 1968. Its final mileage was 627,000.

By early 1964 both the London Midland and Eastern regions were trying to secure a fleet of Type 4s based on DP2. However from 24 September BR's standard Type 4 had been rolling out of the Brush locomotive works at Loughborough and BR had committed itself to this design. It appeared that whatever the success of DP2 Brush were to get the order for all BR's requirements for Type 4s. That was until someone realised that with the impending electrification of the Euston - Crewe section of the WCML the difference in time between the Euston - Crewe section utilising 4,040 hp Class 86s and the Crewe - Glasgow section using single 2000 hp Class 40s was going to produce a conspicuous disparity between the two sections. Action was needed quickly.

At this time BR was finding serious structural weaknesses on the Sulzer 12LDA28C engine used in the Brush Type 4 (later Class 47) which led to the need to derate 512 locomotives. Hence BR were not enthusiastic about ordering another 50 Brush Type 4s geared for 100 mph (the existing Brush Type 4s were geared for a maximum speed of 95 mph) and redesigned for multiple-unit control. BR therefore settled for the EE Type 4 although they were to be leased from English Electric.

In August 1967 D400 was wheeled out of the Vulcan Foundry and the other 49 followed in succession until December 1968 when D449 emerged. Only the first two of the class, D400/1 were to carry multiple control leads on the front of the cabs, although the other 48 were wired internally for it and their multiple control wires were fitted soon after.

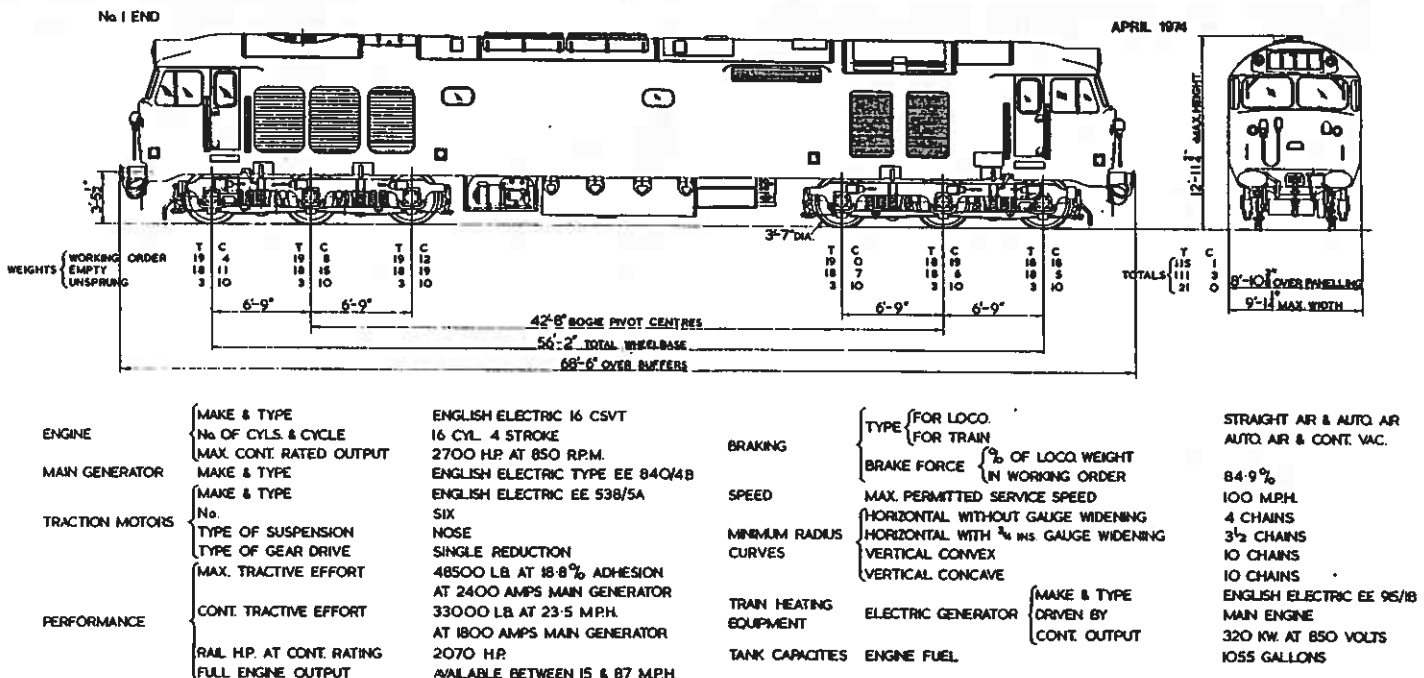
In 1970 the Anglo-Scottish services switched from using a single Class 50 to a pair, driven by one driver in the front cab who controlled the second locomotive through the multiple unit control leads. The 5400 hp was soon put to good use as the 50s showed off their good performance on these heavy trains. While based on the LMR the Class 50s were allocated to D05 or the Stoke division - housed and maintained at Crewe Diesel Depot, with other depots such as Carlisle, Kingmoor and Polmadie (Glasgow) also involved in the day to day operation of the class.

In 1972 with electrification of the WCML soon to be completed the Class 50s headed south to the Western Region with D401 arriving at Bristol Bath Road on 11 October 1972. It was soon joined by further examples of the class and by May 1974 the number had risen to 35 locomotives. The transfer was with a view to kill - the Class 52 'Westerns' being the intended target. The transfer also allowed the use of air-conditioned coaches on the Paddington-Bristol services since the WR diesel-hydraulic fleet and most of the WR Class 47s at that time were incapable of providing the necessary ETH to power the air-conditioning equipment on the coaches.

The Class 50s had hardly been popular on the LMR, where their entry into service had coincided with the withdrawal of steam powered locomotives from the LMR (and BR as a whole) in 1968 and their introduction allowed Class 40s to take over the remaining duties for steam engines. Now on the WR they were being held 'responsible' for the death of the 'Westerns'.

However by 1976 all the Class 50s, or 'hoovers' as they became known to enthusiasts due to the distinctive sound of their fan equipment, were based on the Western region and were hauling most of the expresses between Paddington and Bristol/West of England. In October 1976 the 50s were themselves to be ousted from a route since the Western Region was to be the first region on BR to operate the now infamous HST sets and the Class 50s now found themselves with increased work on West of England services. However by 1980 more HSTs had arrived and the decision was taken to train drivers on the type who were based at Salisbury and Waterloo so that the under-powered Class 33s could be replaced by 50s and thus allowed substantial improvements in the timetable of this route. The Southern Region men took to the type straight away regarding them as the best locos they had ever got their hands on. The draught-free cabs, ability to make-up time and good acceleration were the basic reasons for their popularity. Meanwhile at the same time Saltley (Birmingham) and Wolverhampton were also getting their first taste of the 50s for use on Paddington-Birmingham/Wolverhampton services to free Class 47s for work elsewhere.

However, by the late 1970s the Western Region was beginning to be concerned by the rather low availability figures of the



2700 H.P. E.E. Co. TYPE 4 C-C DIESEL ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE CLASS 50

50-a X



50s. A refurbishment programme was decided upon as the answer and 50006 (now named Neptune) was chosen to act as a 'guinea pig' for the programme. It emerged in November 1979 and was followed by the other 49 members of the class, the last one being 50014 Warspite which emerged from works on 6 December 1983.

Throughout the early and mid 1980s the 50s found themselves regularly operating on the remaining loco-hauled services on the Paddington-West of England route as well as those services on the 'Lickey' route from the west to Birmingham. They were also the prime power for the Waterloo-Exeter line, Plymouth-Penzance locals and Paddington-Hereford/Birmingham services.

However things began to go down-hill for the 50s as 1987 approached when the news arrived that the InterCity sector would have no requirement for the class from the May 1987 timetable. Soon after it became apparent that BR's new maintenance scheme relied on increasing the number of spares available, and as a result, it was decided that 50011 Centurion was to be taken out of traffic to provide this. However, Centurion still has a future since it is currently used to test 16 CSVT engines at Crewe Works. Alas, Centurion was soon joined on the withdrawn list by 50006 Neptune (4/87), 50014 Warspite (12/87), 50013 Agincourt (3/88) and 50047 Swiftsure (4/88).

Meanwhile 50049 had entered Laira depot at Plymouth for conversion to new Class 50 sub-class 50/1 and emerged in the new rail-freight livery as 50149. However, Railfreight were not prepared to pay for sanding gear for the loco and its performance was not substantially different from that of a conventional Class 50. No further conversions are likely to be undertaken, and from April 1988 all overhauls on the type ceased.

On present plans the Class 50s seem set to end their BR career by 1992, although no doubt some will be purchased for preservation. BR seem to loathe the superior performance of the Class 50 against any other Type 4 and the fact that these complex machines are more suited to a preventative style of maintenance than the BR method of dealing with problems when they occur seems, along with their small numbers, to have resulted in the reduced life for these locomotives.

There is no doubt that as the class enters the twilight of its life, more and more enthusiasts will be attracted by their undeniable character - its 16 cylinder engine which makes the right noise when revved hard, a set of catchy names and a maximum speed of 100 mph have resulted in these locos being the most followed on BR today.

## BOOKSHELF

Ron Brooks

Byron, who omitted to write a poem on Steam Railways, and thus is artistically inferior to Walt Whitman, W.H. Auden and John Betjeman, did, however, comment on "the English winter ending in July, to recommence in August". What a pity he never left an 'Ode to Blenkansop'. The following, while unlikely to last till July, might well serve as a hint to F. Christmas's local representative.

THE BRITISH STEAM RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE 1825-1925 Bracken Books  
E.L. Ahrons ISBN 1 85170 103 6

This magnificent book has all the answers. Innumerable line drawings and photographs with diagrams, tables, 372 pages of text and a generous index to find your way about. Opened at random it will enrich an idle moment. A reference to the index could well settle an obscure query. The first engine, 1825, was built the year after Byron died but that's no excuse - there were plenty of horse drawn railways! The book was first published in 1927 and to have it available again and in time for Christmas is a great bonus.

GARRATT LOCOMOTIVES of the WORLD Bracken Books  
A.E. Durrant ISBN 1 85170 141 9

The Garratt is always worth a second look and this book will provide enough pictures to satisfy everyone, mostly black & white but some in colour. Design development is covered together with the continued development in those areas of the world that used these magnificent machines. Try page 182 for a 4-8-4 + 4-8-4 and page 145 for a TRIPLE header - all Garratts!

IRON HORSE Michael Joseph  
P.Lorre & C. Garratt ISBN 0 7181 2896 6

This is a volume of superb pictures with an informative text. It shows a double-headed Garratt hauled train on p.161 and some very attractive scenery on p.166. A detailed search will reveal the dreaded Kitson Meyer in grubby colour. Most, if not all, the other Iron Horses have fixed wheelbases, engineers preferring widely curved track to flexible locos.

As you would expect the colour pictures are very good but, as a well known Philistine, I like my pictures as sharply defined as possible and some of these are artistically soft focus or so I suppose. Nevertheless a wonderful collection of interesting pictures.

ILLUSTRATED HISTORY of RAILWAYS in BRITAIN  
Marshall Cavendish Books  
ISBN 0 85685 714 9

This is the modern equivalent of those informative books intended for boys in the 20's. It is profusely illustrated and fellow Philistines will be pleased to notice that all the illustrations, including very old ones, are crystal clear. It starts with the horse tram roads that Byron missed and ends with the 125 - well not quite. The text is a pleasure to read and the whole book provides a very firm 'scaffolding' on which to set, or even discover, one's own special interest. I feel the book should carry a warning "once opened cannot easily be closed". F. Christmas would do well to lay in a stock for boys, old boys and ancient Britons.

GREAT RAILWAY STATIONS OF BRITAIN David & Charles  
G. Biddle ISBN 0 7153 8263 2

In Sept '84 I mentioned 'The Railroad Station'. This covered the development of the station in America with a touch of Europe. The present volume covers Britain and completes the picture. I never cease to marvel at the odd things there are to learn about railways. This volume, and the previous one, will leave you knowing lots more about station layouts, architecture, people handling (is there a word for it?), hotels, roof structures plus something of local politics.

My two readers, who have bankrupted themselves, or perhaps the local library, keeping up with my selections, could at a pinch make a stab at building and running a railway. Now they could improve the whole thing with station buildings and probably the off Golf course and hotel. A good book - but only if you follow the Prince Charles school of architecture.

## CHANGE AT READING

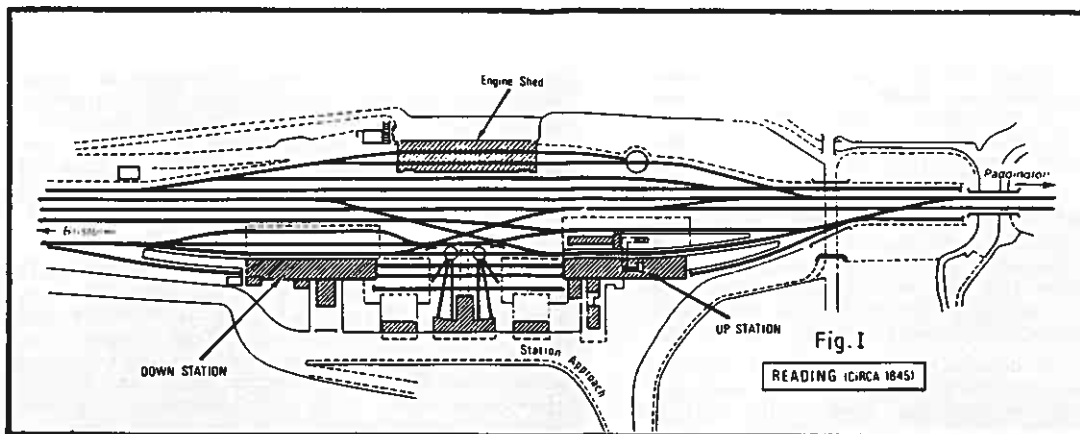
Mike Walker

The forthcoming opening of the new station buildings at Reading, scheduled for mid-January 1989, provides an ideal opportunity to examine the history of this station which has grown to be the busiest, in terms of trains handled, on the Western Region.

Reading was a quiet Thameside country town, county seat for Berkshire, in the mid-1830's when it found itself on Brunel's proposed route for the London-Bristol railway, the Great Western Railway. The chosen site for the station was on low lying land between the town and river. Considerable earth works were required in the form of low embankments to maintain Brunel's near level alignment down the Thames Valley.

The station itself was the first of Brunel's unusual single side stations. This in effect consisted of two separate stations next to each other, one for up trains, the other for down, and separated by a small goods station. The logic was simple. As the town was on one side of the line, put the facilities on one side. However, the layout was full of conflicting movements and in those days before interlocking it is a miracle an accident never occurred. The track layout is shown in fig.1 and it will be noted that non-stop trains could pass along the main lines without entering the stations. Disaster nearly struck on one occasion when the crack "Flying Dutchman" was mistaken for a stopping train and diverted





through the platform, only the stability of the broad gauge preventing a serious derailment.

Each of the station buildings were large country house style brick structures on timber piles driven into the new embankment. Awnings were provided over the carriage approaches and 200' long train sheds, constructed in timber with open sides and low arched corrugated iron roofs covered the platforms.

The first trains started running on 30th March 1840 when the line was opened from Twyford. Reading was briefly the terminus for two months until the next extension, to Steventon, opened on 1st June. The entire London-Bristol line being completed the following year. Reading first became a junction when a branch to Newbury and Hungerford opened on 21st December 1847 leaving the main line just west of the station. A second branch left this at Southcote (about 1 mile from the main line) for the Basingstoke opening on 1st November 1848.

Until now the GWR had had Reading to itself but on the 4th July 1849 the South Eastern Railway completed a line from Farnborough to its own terminal station immediately south and east, and slightly below, the GW station. Initially there was no connection between the two lines, the SER of course being standard gauge. Trains of the London & South Western Railway from Waterloo via Ascot started using the SER tracks between Wokingham and Reading from 9th July 1856.

In the meantime the down trainshed of the GW station had been rebuilt with a "temporary" structure following an incident on the night of 12th October 1853 when an open door on a passing goods train demolished the supporting columns of the trainshed. In 1861 the up and down stations were joined by a makeshift structure with a tarred felt roof supported on rough wooden posts.

1861 also saw the installation of mixed gauge rails between Reading West Junction and Paddington, opened on 1st October. Mixed gauge rails had been laid between Oxford and Basingstoke via Reading West in 1856. To avoid unnecessary trackwork complications, narrow platforms for standard gauge trains were provided outside the trainsheds and alongside the main lines. During this work a connection between the GW and SER lines, including a 1 in 40 gradient, was provided permitting through goods services.

By now the GW stations were becoming increasingly inadequate and in poor physical condition. Reading Corporation registered a complaint in 1853 and the following year the matter was raised at the town's Quarter Sessions, the potential for disaster involving conflicting moves being a particular concern. As a result the directors commissioned a new station building which opened in May 1868. Designed in an impressive Italianate style topped off by a clock tower and constructed in buff brick, the building has remained in use until today. However, the platform arrangements remained basically unchanged with all the foregoing inadequacies. A good photograph of the station in this condition can be found on p.144 of Great Western Way by J.N. Slim, HMRS 1978.

Reading had a locomotive depot from the earliest days, the original shed being across the main lines from the station. This was replaced in 1880 by a new depot in the triangle formed by the Berks & Hants/Basingstoke branches. Centrepiece of this was a square "roundhouse" consisting of a 45' turntable inside a 210' x 150' brick building. A lifting shop, raised coaling stage and carriage shed were also provided. The area vacated by the old shed was used to expand the goods facilities.

In 1859 the company's Signal & Telegraph Department established its works in Caversham Road north of the station. This expanded to become the Swindon of the S & T supplying not only signals but level crossing gates, block instruments even complete signal boxes, in short everything the department needed was manufactured and/or maintained. A comprehensive

signalling school was incorporated on the site. The works were considerably enlarged in 1906.

With the final abolition of the broad gauge in May 1892 the GWR was finally able to consider the complete rearrangement of Reading station which by then had become the last survivor of the one sided design. In 1896 a contract was awarded to Pattison of Westminster for the complete reconstruction which took more than a year and cost a mere £6,000 at pre inflation costs. In its new form there were ten platforms, four (nos. 4, 5, 8 and 9) were for through traffic, the remainder bays, 1, 2, 3 and 7 facing west, 6 and 10 east. A through up fast line was provided between nos. 4 and 5 but the centre road between 8 and 9 was for storage only.

Apart from the main buildings on platform 4, which were modified and extended from the 1868 structure, each platform was provided with neat red brick single storey buildings trimmed with blue brick and buff stone - one of the earliest applications of what was to become a GW house style in the early 20th century. All platforms were notably spacious, nos. 5 and 8 were 1,150' long (exceeded only by Taunton on the GWR) and covered by extensive canopies supported on rivetted lattice iron columns. A wide subway 300' long connected the platforms.

In conjunction with the new station the junction with the Berks & Hants was reconfigured and a new connection with the SER (SECR after 1899) immediately east of the station from the main lines opened in 1899. To control these new layouts two major signal boxes were opened, Main Line East with 115 levers and Main Line West which; at over 100' in length, with 198 levers, ten block bells and three signalmen plus a booking boy per shift; was the largest box on the GWR. Both were in a unique and imposing design quite unlike their more humble cousins.

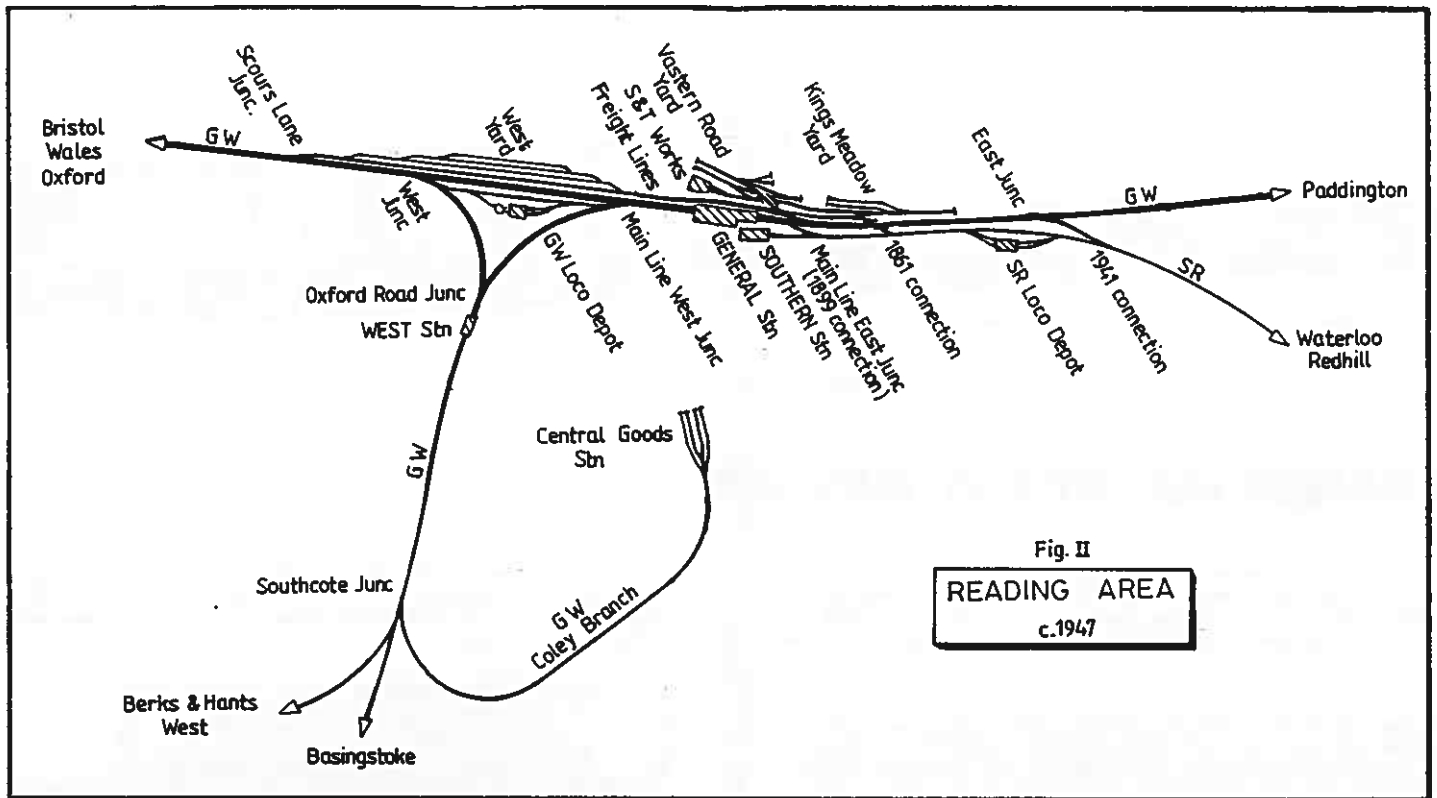
After these upheavals the twentieth century career of Reading General, as it was now known, was relatively stable up to nationalisation. A new 65' turntable was provided in the shed yard in 1925 and five years later the shed was replaced by a new 9 road straight shed with separate repair shop and repositioned coal stage now at the west end of the shed rather than south of it. At this time the allocation included "Duke" and "Bulldog" 4-4-0's, ROD and a single 28xx 2-8-0's, the trio of ex-MSWJR 2-4-0's; Dean Goods and Moguls; "County", "Birdcage", 31xx, "Metro" and 517 tanks and steam railmotor 41, a total of 74 locomotives. By 1938 Collett Goods had replaced most of their Dean counterparts, "Saints" and "Halls" most of the 4-4-0's and 61xx's monopolised the suburban trains whilst 41 had been replaced by diesel railcar 18.

During World War 2 a large amount of traffic passed through the town en route to the south coast particularly prior to and following D-Day. To ease the flow a third connection was added between the GWR and what by now was the Southern. This was some distance to the east and was unusual in that the GW end was controlled remotely by a small Westinghouse power frame in the Main Line East box with power operated semaphore signals again supplied by Westinghouse and equipped with GCR finials! The SR provided a new box to control its end of the connection which opened on 1st June 1941.

Initially nationalisation had little effect but the impending dieselisation of suburban services was provided for by the opening of a new diesel servicing depot with a three road shed in 1959. Situated south west of the steam shed, but still within the triangle, a diesel locomotive servicing shed was later added and, of course, the steam shed closed in January 1965.

In 1965 the Reading resignalling scheme was implemented with rationalised track layouts, multiple aspect colour light signals and power operated pointwork controlled from a new power box, the "Panel", opened on 26th April and was situated at the north-west end of the station.





As part of the scheme the Southern station was closed from 4th September 1965 and services diverted over the 1899 connection into a new bay platform, 4A, built alongside the London end of platform 4. This was electrified for the use of Waterloo services, the third rail having reached Reading Southern in 1938. Diesel services to and from Tonbridge generally operated over the 1941 connection to reach platform 6 having to cross the busy WR main lines in the process. With proposed introduction of the express service to Gatwick airport the number of conflicting moves would become unacceptable so a second new bay, 4B, was provided, also electrified, and brought into service on 4th May 1975.

The Gatwick service was Reading's second airport link. In May 1967 a contract was awarded to the then Thames Valley Traction Company to operate an experimental dedicated non-stop coach service between Reading General and Heathrow via the M4. The service proved an immediate success soon requiring bigger coaches and improved frequencies. Thames Valley and its successors, Alder Valley and now BeeLine have always used their newest and best vehicles on the service. Initially the coaches had to share the forecourt with country service buses of Thames Valley, Aldershot & District and Oxford but these departed for good with the opening of the bus station in September 1967 allowing BR to tidy up the chaotic traffic flow outside the station.

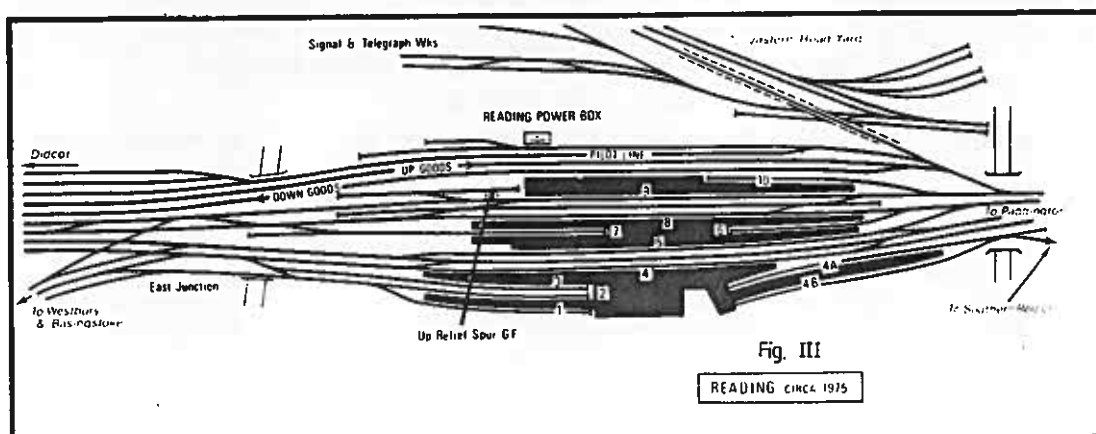
The station layout of the mid-seventies is shown in Fig. III. In the following decade Vastern Road yard and the Kings Meadow yard have been closed and lifted, the latter being replaced by an industrial estate whilst the former was re-developed as part of the new station. The changing pattern of freight traffic meant that even a town as large as Reading no longer enjoys wagon load traffic. What little traffic remains is handled in the West yard. The increasing use of contractor

supplied power signalling rendered the old GW works redundant closing early in the eighties. The S & T engineers moved to a new workshop and stores at Woodley airfield of all places and the old works were demolished to be replaced by a new postal sorting office and retail warehouse.

By the 1980's Reading station was becoming increasingly inadequate. With the upsurge of both population and business activity in the Thames Valley the number of passengers using the station daily rose to more than 30,000. Various proposals to rebuild the station had been made in the preceding two decades without success, but now the lack of adequate facilities was becoming critical, particularly as the railways became increasingly market aware and image conscious. Stations were hampered by a Grade II listing of the 1968 building which effectively prevented demolition or even major alteration.

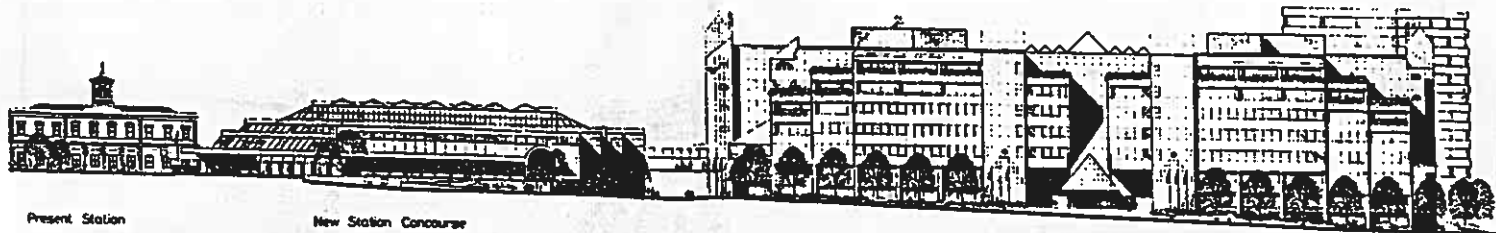
The solution has been to construct a completely new terminal building on the site of the former Southern station which since demolition had been a car park. This in turn is replaced by a multi-storey car park on the site of the old Vastern Road yard and linked to the platforms and new terminal building by a footbridge. The platform buildings themselves are remaining unchanged for the present, a repeat of 1968. Work started on 1st July 1986.

The new terminal is a modern octagonal structure faced with yellow brick, arched windows and attractive steel and glass roof. The design being intended to compliment the old station. The new building will contain a 10 position ticket hall, travel centre and several small retail units like those to be found at Paddington. there will be separate areas for private cars and taxis, and the Railair coaches to load and unload. The existing building will be refurbished to provide a new



InterCity lounge, an improved buffet and extra offices for BR staff. The entire project is costing more than £50 million and is sponsored principally by InterCity assisted partly by Network SouthEast. Finance has been largely provided by the BR Property Board's sale of the remainder of the old Southern site to the Prudential, who are erecting a 250,000 ft office complex, Apex Plaza.

During the early site clearance, an unexpected relic of the 1840 station came to light, the abandoned entrance to the subway at the east end of the platforms as shown in Fig.1. A link with a glorious past as Reading station prepares for an exciting future.



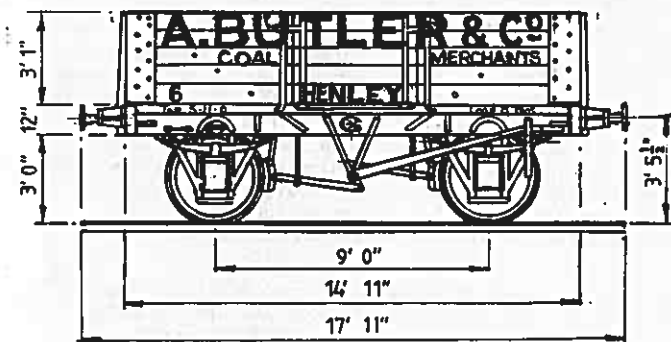
Reading's New Station - looking north towards tracks

## THAMES VALLEY P.O. WAGONS

The first installment of this occasional series provoked a request from Terry Dearling for information on PO wagons based at Henley so that the Fawley C & W Dept might take up the challenge given them at that time. Your editor is pleased

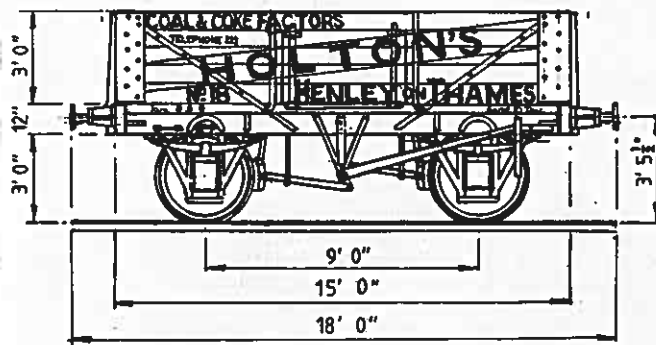
Holtons of 50 Queen Street are believed to have had about 10 wagons and sold out to Toomers in 1942. Wagon No.18 was a five plank mineral wagon whose builder and date are unknown. Unfortunately the only known photograph is too fuzzy to distinguish details like the telephone no. or tare weight. Load was probably 10 ton. Livery was black with white unshaded lettering except "Holton's" appeared in black on a diagonal white panel.

to offer the wagons below although, Henley did not appear to be over provided, the majority of its coal being supplied by Toomer R. & Co. of Reading whose large fleet will be featured in a later installment.

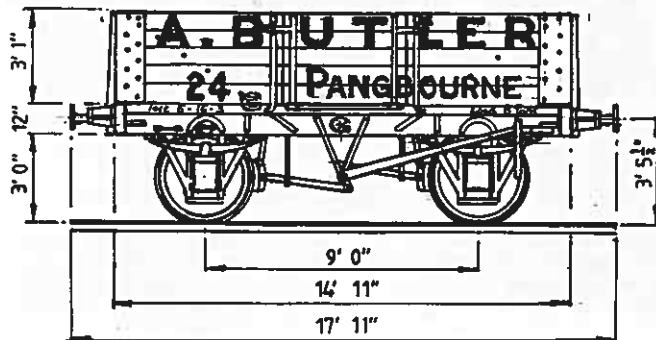


A Butler of Pangbourne, presumably another branch of the same firm, operated a similar wagon, No.24, again a GRCW 5 plank built in 1899 carrying 8 tons with a tare of 5-16-3. Painted black with white lettering. No.4 was identical.

George Dunlop of Henley also owned wagons (and later took over Porters in Marlow) but no details are known. The next installment will feature some Marlow wagons unless you have any other requests.



A. Butler was another company serving Henley. Wagon 6 was a standard GRCW 5 plank from around the turn of the century, the exact date is unknown. It was painted black with plain white lettering. Load 8 tons tare 5-11-0.



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