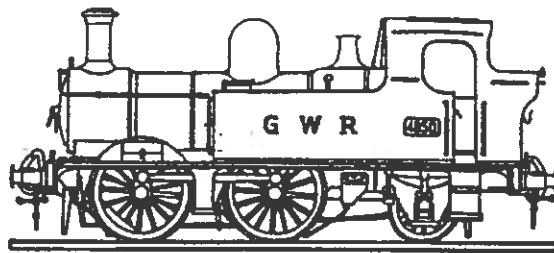


THE MARLOW DONKEY



No 49

MARCH 1989

Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As many of you will have heard, I have the honour of being your Chairman for the next year. I should like to take this opportunity to thank those members who retired from the Committee, Bas Woodward, Mike Norris and Len Stroud, for all their hard work in the past. We look forward to seeing them at the meetings in the future.

It is to the future we must now turn our attention. I do not foresee any dramatic changes in the Society's activities but a gradual evolution. Hopefully we can arrange an increasing number of visits and trips to railway installations but the number of these depends entirely on your response. The Society cannot expect BR personnel to give up time if only a handful of members attend, certainly the response to the Slough Panel visit is very encouraging.

This brings me to what I intend to make the theme of my Chairmanship, getting everyone more actively involved. The Society is not just the Committee, it is the sum of all its members and requires a certain amount of input from each of you to make it come alive and be stimulating. I appreciate that different members have various responsibilities, many of which severely restrict the commitment you can give to the MDRS but nevertheless I urge every one of you to participate

as fully as you can by attending meetings and trips as often as possible.

For our part, the committee will continue to attempt to present as balanced a programme as possible. With such a vast scope as railways it is impossible to please all the people all the time but we will do our best. It would be nice to hear your verdict, for or against, our speakers etc. following meetings. Many of you belong to other clubs, if you hear a speaker there that impresses you let us know and we will endeavour to obtain his services. OK, so you've heard the talk but the rest of us haven't. There is only a certain amount of ideas which the committee can generate, so your assistance is vital.

The easy alternative is to sit back and let someone else do the work. This soon evolves into a creeping fatal disease which is not obvious until it is too late, namely apathy. I am determined not to let it get a hold here, so expect me and the committee to be coaxing and cajoling you into life in the coming months!

To paraphrase the late John Kennedy, "ask not what the club can do for you, but what you can do for the club".

Mike

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

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

Thurs. 20th April 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 HYPHE & DYMCHURCH RAILWAY

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

Thurs. 15th June COL. STEPHEN'S RAILWAYS Les Derbyshire

A look at that scenic group of light railways including the East Kent, Kent & East Sussex, Shropshire & Montgomeryshire, Welsh Highland and Ffestiniog where anything went, almost!

Thurs. 20th July CHILTERN LINE MODERNISATION Peter Leppard

Marylebone's Area Manager explains the details of the new signalling, track layouts, station refurbishment and Networker Turbo trains BR are introducing to the former GW/GC and GC/Met joint lines.

EXCURSIONS

Bookings for the following trips can be made to Peter Robins Tel. BE 28780, Tony Caton Tel. Marlow 73723 or any member of the Committee.

26th-29th May FFESTINIOG WEEKEND

The final date for bookings to be received is 25th March, budget price around £100. There will be opportunities for riding and linesiding trains with a possible visit to the Talylyn.

Sun. 18th June OPEN DAY AT FAWLEY

We are invited to attend another of the popular steamings at our President's private railway at Fawley, an event our newer members should not miss. The railway will be open from 12.30 to 5.00 pm and tickets, which must be obtained in advance are £1.50 per person.

Thurs. 22/29th June VISIT TO SLOUGH PANEL BOX

A rare opportunity to see the working of this busy BR control centre at the end of the evening rush hour. For safety reasons each party is limited to 10, hence two dates. If numbers are large enough a third evening will be arranged. Meet at Slough station at 7 pm, please let us know if one date is preferred.

Sun. 16th July VISIT TO RHDR

Our annual family excursion this year takes us to Kent. Fares Adults £11.00 children £8.50. This is higher than the past couple of years due to the much longer and more expensive train ride.

Thurs. 17th Aug. EVENING VISIT TO PENDON

Pendon represents some of the finest railway and landscape modelling in the world. It is some years since our last visit during which much progress has been made. Come and be transported back to the Vale of the White Horse in the mid-30's.

SOCIETY NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to be able to welcome a further three new members to the Society, Clive Beard, Keith Bunker and Pat Webb, all from High Wycombe. We trust you will enjoy our activities and look forward to your company at our forthcoming gatherings.

NEW COMMITTEE

The new committee has met and appointed its officers for 1989 as follows:-

CHAIRMAN - Mike Walker
VICE-CHAIRMAN - Eddie Lewcock
TREASURER - John Sears
SECRETARY - Roger Bowen
SOCIAL SEC. - Peter Robins and Tony Caton
PUBLICITY - Martin Pink

Rob Young is also on the committee and Eddie Lewcock will take the minutes of committee meetings. Mike Walker continues to edit the Donkey.

REVISED CONSTITUTION

The draft constitution printed in the December issue was adopted without amendment at the AGM and is now in effect. New members may obtain a copy on request to the committee.

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. The annual subscription remains at £5.00, the meeting subscription is now 80p.

PARTING & FINISHING

Once again we must remind members that meetings start at 8.00 and promptly and we ask you to make every effort to be in the room by then. A prompt start will enable us to close by 10.30.

With immediate effect we shall be closing each meeting with a vote of thanks for our guest speaker and formal close. Unless you have an urgent train or bus to catch we ask you to remain seated and show our thanks in the time honoured fashion, thank you.

REVIOUS MEETINGS

John White of ColourRail was our guest at our December meeting showing his range of pre-nationalisation slides, all of which are in his catalogue, and ten sixties views of Marlow, Bourne End and High Wycombe which are not. Such was the interest in the latter that Ron made up ten sets of copies exclusively for our members, all of which sold quickly.

The AGM in January (see separate minutes) was followed by a programme of short talks, Mark Hopwood reviewed BR's class 50, Gerry Dearling reviewed progress at Fawley, Peter Robins gave a glimpse of steam in China - where they're still building - whilst Pete Grestorex and Mike Walker showed the autumnal outings of four US steam locos.

RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

NOTES AND NEWS

LITTLE STEAM IN '89

There will be almost no steam on the joint line this year due to the massive engineering works in connection with the re-signalling scheme and a shortage of staff as BR reduces its train crews at Marylebone in readiness for the class 165's which will be one-man-operated. As vacancies arise they are being filled only by promotion of guards which means that spare staff at weekends are scarce. The only steam workings so far planned are four "Peaks Expresses", round trips from Marylebone to Derby and Matlock on Bank Holiday Mondays on 27th, May 1st/29th and August 28th, all hauled by 4498 or Nigel Gresley with class 45 Peak 45.106 between Derby and Matlock. There will be opportunities to visit Crich Tramway Museum.

The fare is £37.50 and the SLOA Pullmans will be used. Anyone interested in a party for the August 28th trip?

NEAR MISS ON BRANCH

A near miss on Monday 20th February prevented a collision with a

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION RESULTS

Once again the number of entries was somewhat weak and disappointing, but as always the standards were very high with a number of particularly stunning exposures.

- A - SLIDES - UK
David Cooke - Thornley Colliery in 1965
- B - SLIDES - OVERSEAS
Peter Robins - QJ at Qing Bi She, Western China
- C - COLOUR PRINTS
Rob Young - SAR class 24 at Kynsa, South Africa
- D - BLACK & WHITE PRINTS
Martin Pink - 76017 at Arlesford, Mid Hants

EDDIE LEWCOCK CUP

For the second year running, the overall winner was judged to be David Cooke for his stunning sunset shot which won class A, last year he won class B.

NORMAN ASTON-SMITH TROPHY

This year's voting resulted in a dead-heat and following a tie-break vote the winner was Phil Searle with his article on the NYMR in March '88 with Rob Young as runner-up with the report on Australia's Bicentennial in September. Third was the new series on local PO Wagons. It was particularly gratifying to see that both Phil and Rob were first time contributors.

Once again your editor is appealing for additional material for this magazine. Please try to contribute something this year.

SLOUGH CHALLENGE US

The Slough & Windsor Railway Society have challenged us (amongst other clubs) to a return quiz on Friday 9th June at their clubrooms alongside the Windsor bay at Slough station starting at 7.30 pm. We intend to repeat October's win and therefore the committee will be putting together a strong team and hopefully some members will come along and give us moral support, PLEASE!

MAILBAG

Member's Letters

Dear Mike

Please convey to fellow members of the MDRS my grateful thanks for their generosity, on the occasion of my resignation from the Chairmanship of the Society. It was a very kind gesture and a very happy conclusion to my eleven years' service. The GWR books and signed picture of a Collect 2-8-0 are much appreciated.

Best wishes

Das



Jeep type vehicle which had been abandoned on the line round the sharp curve leaving Bourne End. Services were delayed for about an hour whilst the vehicle, which police report had been stolen from Spade Oak the previous evening, was removed.

CHESHAM STEAM DETAILS

More details of the steam operations to celebrate the centenary of the Chesham branch are now available. A frequent shuttle service will operate on Sat/Sun 1, 2, 7 and 8 July not just on the branch to Chalfont & Latimer but out onto the main line through Rickmansworth and then round the north leg of the Wye (not normally used by passenger trains) to Watford Met.

Both the branch and main line feature stiff gradients which will make the locos, Met. No.1 and pannier 7715 work hard. There are plenty of photographic locations with a rural backdrop. The next Donkey will feature a photo guide.

If you want to ride, tickets cost £5.00 for adults, £3.00 for children, and will be available from Chesham Council Offices or London Transport at 55 Broadway, London SW1H 0BD, Tel. 01-222-1234, from 17th April - book quickly!

REVISED BRANCH SPEEDS

New speed limit signs have been erected on the Branch of the latest design. General limits are 50 mph with 15 mph on Maidenhead, Bourne End and Marlow station approaches. A 25 mph limit applies on the curve out of Maidenhead to the Grenfell Road bridge and for departures from Bourne End to the Thames bridge.

SEAT SAVED

A former GWR seat carrying a plaque in memory of MDRS & MMPA member Norman Aston-Smith was recently removed from Bourne End station along with all the others and replaced by the horrid new BR standard design. Unfortunately the seat does not belong to BR having been donated to the Marlow/Maidenhead Passengers Association in May 1978 shortly after Norman's untimely death. Your Chairman and Social Secretary were quick to spot the error and arrangements made to restore the seat to its rightful place - even before the MMPA committee met to discuss the matter. The BR staff who removed the seat and brought it back said the reaction was so great "you'd think we'd stolen the Crown Jewels!"

THAMES & CHILTERN 47's

Old Oak Common now has four class 47/4's for Network South-East's Thames & Chiltern Sub-Sector services. 47.573 "The London Standard", 47.582 "County of Norfolk" and 47.583 "County of Hertfordshire" are all ex-Stratford and wear the old style light blue NSE livery with upswept ends whilst the newest arrival is former Bescot 47.598 (unnamed) freshly repainted in the latest NSE livery with dark blue around the windows. They join the 15 T & C class 50's and are regulars for the 17.02 ex-Paddington which runs non-stop to Maidenhead.

Old Oak has also repainted class 101 2 car unit L201 in the latest NSE livery. Nothing remarkable in that except that both cars in the unit, DMBS 51212 and DTC 54070, are recorded as still being asbestos lined and should have been scrapped!

1988 ANNUAL REPORT

The 12th AGM of the Society was held at 20.15 hrs on Thursday 19th January 1989 at the Royal British Legion, Marlow.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Bob Hatfield, Eddie Lewcock, Ron Croxford and Geoff Styche.

2. MINUTES OF 11th AGM

The Minutes of the 11th AGM as published in March 1988 edition of the "Marlow Donkey" were approved unanimously.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMANS REPORT

The Chairman, Bas Woodward, reviewed the events of 1988, an interesting year which started early in the year with our move to the British Legion in March, a decision by the membership which has proved most satisfactory.

Bas then ran through the years meetings including the entertaining talk by Trevor Radway on the Dean Forest Railway in April, Mike Hanscombe's Railway Accidents in March, our first venture into the InterClub Quis in October, with perhaps the best talk of the year by Keith Catchpole on the Ffestiniog in November.

Whilst both our Club trips to the Forest of Dean (in July) and the Docklands (in August) were very interesting, Bas commiserated over the fact that both were notable for the incessant down pours of rain. This was not the case however for the Whitsun trip to the North Yorkshire Moors where four members were treated to the sight of the Deltic on fire.

Bas then went on to mention our new asset, the increasingly useful projector. In summing up he thanked the Walkers for the excellent Newsletter, Charlie for Cinework and the Committee in general.

5. TREASURERS REPORT

John Sears produced his accounts for 1988. Whilst generally healthy, the trend has tended to be lower than the previous year. This is partially due to lower income from meetings, as on some occasions no charge was made. One major expenditure (though catered for) was the new projector.

John forecasts higher expenditure in 1989 and therefore he

READING OPENINGS

Reading's new station is now open for business. The concourse and footbridge from February 12th and the booking office from the 19th. Platform 4 was due to be resurfaced early in March, raising it by some 5". The complex is to be officially opened on Tuesday 4th April by Her Majesty The Queen.

SOUTHALL RELAYING

Southall East Junction (down relief - down main, up main - up relief crossovers) were relaid during February and March raising the crossing speeds from 40 to 70 mph. So extensive was the upheaval that the Saturday timetable was completely recast for 4, 11 and 25 February and 11th March. Both inter-City and Network SouthEast services were affected, a special 16 page booklet being published to advise passengers of what was going on.

LANDMARK GOES

David Gardner reports that another familiar landmark along the GW main line has been demolished. The factory of the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company at Chippenham was almost a mini-Swindon and was for many years the place of employment of the noted railway author O.S. Nock. The site is to be re-developed as warehouses and a hypermarket.

QUARRY BANK MILL, STYAL

They've recently been clearing silt out of an old pond using a monorail! A firm from Blanaeu Ffestiniog provided the track and stock and advice. They decided a monorail was the best choice environmentally, reducing the damage caused by the scheme. The silt was dug out, loaded into skips and hauled by a driverless loco to the unloading site upstream. Only 1 small tree had to be felled. 1 section rail about 6" high was used, with the skips and loco having opposing horizontal guide wheels to maintain equilibrium.

suggested we increased the meeting fee to 80p (up from 50p) with an option in January and February only, of members paying a £12.00 Annual Subscription (now £5.00) and not paying at meetings. If all talks were attended this would be a saving of £1.80. This proposal was carried unanimously.

SUMMARY OF 1988 ACCOUNTS

ITEM	INCOME	OUTGO	
Meetings	147.50	180.00	Room Hire
		35.00	Speakers Exes.
Newsletter		145.09	Production
		13.00	Postage
Trip to Dean Forest	261.50	271.35	
Prizes		40.40	
General Postage		25.31	
Officers Expenses		4.15	
Projector & Accessories		402.65	
1988 Subs.	210.00		
1989 Subs.	20.00		
B.S. Interest	23.32		
Transport Trust Sub.		16.00	
Ffestiniog Donation		15.00	
Collection for Chairman	26.54		
	£688.86	£1147.95	Shortfall £459.09

On hand at start of year £790.90

On hand at end of year £331.81

6. SECRETARYS REPORT

Martin Pink mentioned his role in the change of meeting places early in the year as well as his and Peter Robins role in the clubs first quiz, a harder job than first envisaged.

Martin continued by running through the results of the November Questionnaire which almost half of the members completed.

The results indicated most people in favour of Preservation Subjects, Railway Operations and Local Subjects; against the Press, Model and Miniature Railway talks, Foreign and Modern Subjects brought a mixed response.

Wally Richards was a firm favourite as a return speaker, the evening trips received a thumbs up, and in general the membership seemed quite contented with the way things are run.

Roger Bowen then took over to promote the 1989 Programme highlighting the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch, and British Rail talks, which are both sporting very high calibre speakers.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Bas highlighted the major constitutional amendments (see new constitution as in Sept. Donkey). These were reduced subs for 14-16 year olds. The Clubs newly acquired assets noted, and provisions in case of Club disbandment. A staggered fee system through the year so new members do not pay in full for only a fraction of the year. The constitution was proposed by Mike Walker and carried unanimously.

BOOKSHELF

Ron Brooks

I usually write my contribution a season behind - but this year spring is already sprung and winter nowhere in evidence - so far. No doubt we shall have the annual chaos on road and rail and the perennial excuses that it never happens regularly except, of course, in winter. The nearest William McGonagall (poet and tragedian) got to winter was "Greenland's Icy mountains" but he was very strong on railways especially the Tay Bridge. It is very difficult to find anything to follow McGonagall but the following just might provide an antidote for the giggles.

MASTER BUILDERS OF STEAM

Ian Allen
ISBN 0 7110 0177 4

How often have we been stunned by the erudition of those quoting the magic names of the great CME's and the innovations they brought about even if they happened to be colour blind! This book discusses, in some detail, with tables, diagrams and pictures the design achievements of six of the best - and the author was related to most of them! Inevitably, and fortunately, there are many glimpses of people and attitudes far removed from those found today. Join the ranks of the erudite - this book is a mine of information and a pleasure to read.

THE GREAT CENTRAL in LNER DAYS

Ian Allen
ISBN 0 7110 1271 7

A look at the railway maps of the 20's shows a great 'T' fitted in the centre of England, between Liverpool and Grimsby and Marylebone. It was once said that England was a lump of coal surrounded entirely by fish. It was further remarked, during the appropriate strike season, that only the English could have a shortage of fish and coal at the same time. The first observation appears to have occurred to the Great Central whose coal and fish traffic has a good coverage in this book. These with passengers and the famous Garratts (or infamously?) are well illustrated in black and white together with a most informative text. There are some wonderful panoramic views of yards and works.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The railway scene of the Spring of 1964 really showed the Beeching closures' taking effect.

This is highlighted by an announcement on 3rd March 1964 by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Ernest Marples, of his decision on 23 rail closure proposals. He refused consent in only two cases, the Central Wales Line between Craven Arms and Llanelly (they still spelt it that way in 1964!) and the Ayr to Kilmarnock line in Scotland. The lines for which closure was given were the Pontardulais to Swansea Victoria section of the Central Wales line, Northampton Castle to Peterborough East, Northampton Castle to Wellingborough Midland Road, Thetford to Swaffham, Salisbury to Bournemouth, Brockenhurst to Bournemouth, Taunton to Yeovil, Brightlingsea to Wivenhoe, Dereham to Wells-next-the-Sea, Sunderland to Bishops Cleeve.

8. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Three new members were required to replace outgoing Chairman Bas Woodward, Vice Chairman Mike Norris and Publicity Officer Len Stroud. No election took place but Eddie Lewcock, Rob Young and Tony Caton were proposed and accepted.

Mike Walker proposed Bas Woodward as a life Vice President this was accepted.

9. NORMAN ASTON SMITH TROPHY

The trophy for best article was decided at a tie-breaker between Rob Young and P. Searle. P. Searle won the day with his article North Yorkshire Moors at 13 to 9.

10. A.O.B.

The meeting ended with Vice Chairman Mike Norris presenting a signed print and rail books to Bas Woodward for 11 years of Chairmanship.

The meeting was concluded at 21.15 hrs.



WESTERN DIESELS in CAMERA

Ian Allen
ISBN 0 7110 0831 0

This is a familiar format - but none the worse for that. There are some colour pictures but most are well produced in black and white. The "Western's" history from start to finish is recorded in pictures and text, each picture having an extended caption. Power and lightness was achieved, and eventually scrapped in the great take over. Such is the general regard for these locomotives that they can almost be said to be honorary steam engines.

WEST COUNTRY RAILWAY HISTORY

David & Charles
ISBN 0 7153 8210 1

This is Vol. 1 of a comprehensive regional history of the railways of Britain. As you would expect this volume contains chapters on the history of all the rail links of the area together with appropriate maps and a sprinkling of photographs and diagrams. The atmospheric caper gets its share of coverage and the effect of the railway on the life of the area cannot be excluded. I wish I could afford the whole series.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE RAILWAYS in the TWENTIES

Alan Sutton
ISBN) 86299 1978

An old fashioned book with the pictures and their captions set in the appropriate places in the text. Lots about the GW lines radiating from Cheltenham which, in their heyday carried plenty of traffic some of it past the BACK OF RON'S HOUSE. Besides the GW the Midland and the Old Worse & Worse operated in the area and are well covered. What provides much interest however are the local lines built to handle stone and coal some on 3'6" gauge. Fascinating local history with good black and white photos especially of cable haulage.

All the books reviewed this month will provide interest in railway matters but McGonagall should not be missed. 'The Nairport Railway', 'The Railway Bridge of the Silvery Tay', 'The Tay Bridge Disaster' 'An address to the New Tay Bridge' are in fact contemporary reporting on happenings which are still of interest in railway circles and the poet and tragedian gets a rhyme every time. Recommended.



Carlisle to Silloth and ten services in Scotland.

Closures actually taking place at this period included Kidsgrove to Etraria and Silverdale and Stoke-on-Trent on 2nd March, Sherringham and Melton Constable, Kilmarnock to Darvel Ayr to Dalmellington and Elgin to Lossimouth, all on 6th April, Kemble to Tetbury and Kemble to Cirencester on April 5th.

Trying to be more optimistic!! London Transport placed a £2,500,000 contract with Metropolitan-Cammell for 244 cars for the new Victoria Line.

In March 1964 "School" class loco 30928 "Stowe" and three Pullman cars were put on display at the Montague Motor Museum at Beaulieu. Lord Montague emphasised that he did not intend

to develop a major railway collection at Beaulieu. Locomotives were the first love of his father in whose memory the museum was founded.

The Great Western Society announced the purchase of 0-4-2T No.1466 from Western Region. the loco was moved from Taunton to Totnes where covered shelter was being provided.

TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The "Marlow Donkey" No.10 carried an interesting comment in the Chairman's Notes - British Rail were well satisfied with their venture in 1978 to provide steam-drawn specials in the North of England, perhaps we may see a Summer service in the South of England.

The weather seemed to dominate the programme - the AGM "was depleted by the weather", the February meeting "had to be cancelled due to the weather".

TOWARDS THE 21st CENTURY

An exciting future for local rail lines

Mike Walker

There is a popular misconception afoot that, under this Government, BR have been starved of investment and resources whereas investment is currently at a record high, in real terms greater even than at the height of the 1955 Modernisation Programme. Since the launch of Network SouthEast in 1986 this has risen dramatically and now an explosion of investment is about to hit this area bringing new trains, refurbished or rebuilt stations, replacement infrastructure and signalling, and, most exciting, a new passenger line with the prospect of more to come. The next few years promise to be exciting.

NEW TRAINS

The need to replace the present Thames and Chiltern dmu fleets is now urgent. The existing class 101, 105, 115, 117, 119 and 121 units are all between 25 and 30 years old, well beyond the original design life. In spite of careful maintenance they now provide a poor quality of passenger service.

Their replacements will be known as class 165, or "Networker Turbo". After a couple of false starts the programme is now moving rapidly. The design will be based on the SR "Networker" emu bodysell suitably strengthened to take the proven diesel hydraulic transmission of the "Sprinter" trains. In other words each car will be 20m (65'6") long, of lightweight aluminium construction with two pairs of double plug doors per side and 3+2 seating. Passenger amenities will include pressure ventilation, one toilet per set, p.a., internal and external dot matrix indicators and tinted glass. Units will be gangwayed within the sets, to permit revenue collection on branches, but not through the cabs. As yet it is undecided whether the new trains will be in 2 or 3 car sets. Each car will be powered by a single Cummins NT-855R 6 cyl. 14 litre 350hp turbocharged engine under the floor driving both axles of one bogie through a Voith hydraulic transmission. The trains will be geared for 75 mph with considerably better acceleration than the present units. The fleet will number 188 cars (88 for Chiltern, 100 for Thames) and will be delivered between late 1989 and 1991.

Next comes the replacement for the loco-hauled commuter trains to be known as class 171. No firm decision has yet been reached as it depends on whether or not the Basingstoke-Exeter line is electrified, employing a further build of class 442 "Wessex Electrics". In this case class 171 will be based on the proposed SR class 471 low density "Networker" emu with 2+2 seating and possibly gangways through the cabs. If the third rail does not reach Exeter, class 171 will take the form of a diesel version of the 442. Either course of action will result in a unit with 100 mph capability. The class 171 is expected to enter service in 1992.

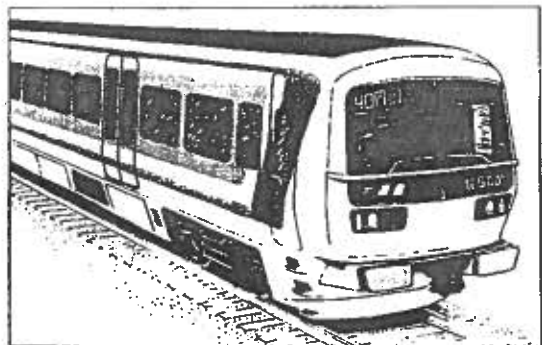
The WR's first emu's will be class 341 due to enter service on the Paddington-Heathrow express. The 13 3 car sets will be purchased by Heathrow Airport Ltd., a subsidiary of BAA, and operated by BR. Currently envisaged as a further development of the low-density Networker but with additional luggage areas a 3 probably no gangways in the cabs although, because of the long tunnel into the Airport, end emergency doors, a class 319, may be required. The units will be geared for 100 mph

On 14th April Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother officially opened the Glasgow Museum of Transport in Albert Drive, in what was previously the paint shop of the Coplawhill tram works.

A fairly dismal collection of news from twenty-five years ago - perhaps a reflection of the very pro-road anti-rail feeling at the time.

A marked comparison with today was a full page list of excursions from High Wycombe, by British Railways, Chiltern Trains and LNER Society, try Chester for £4.25, Dawlish or Paignton for £5, or mystery tour for £3.50. Why has today's BR dropped out of the excursion market? They were such great fun.

Articles in Marlow Donkey 10 included "150th Anniversary of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway, Southern Greece Revisited, and Part 3 of "The Wycombe Railway and the Marlow Donkey".



Spearhead of Network SouthEast's Thames & Chiltern improvements are the class 165 NETWORKER TURBOS due to enter service in 1990-91.

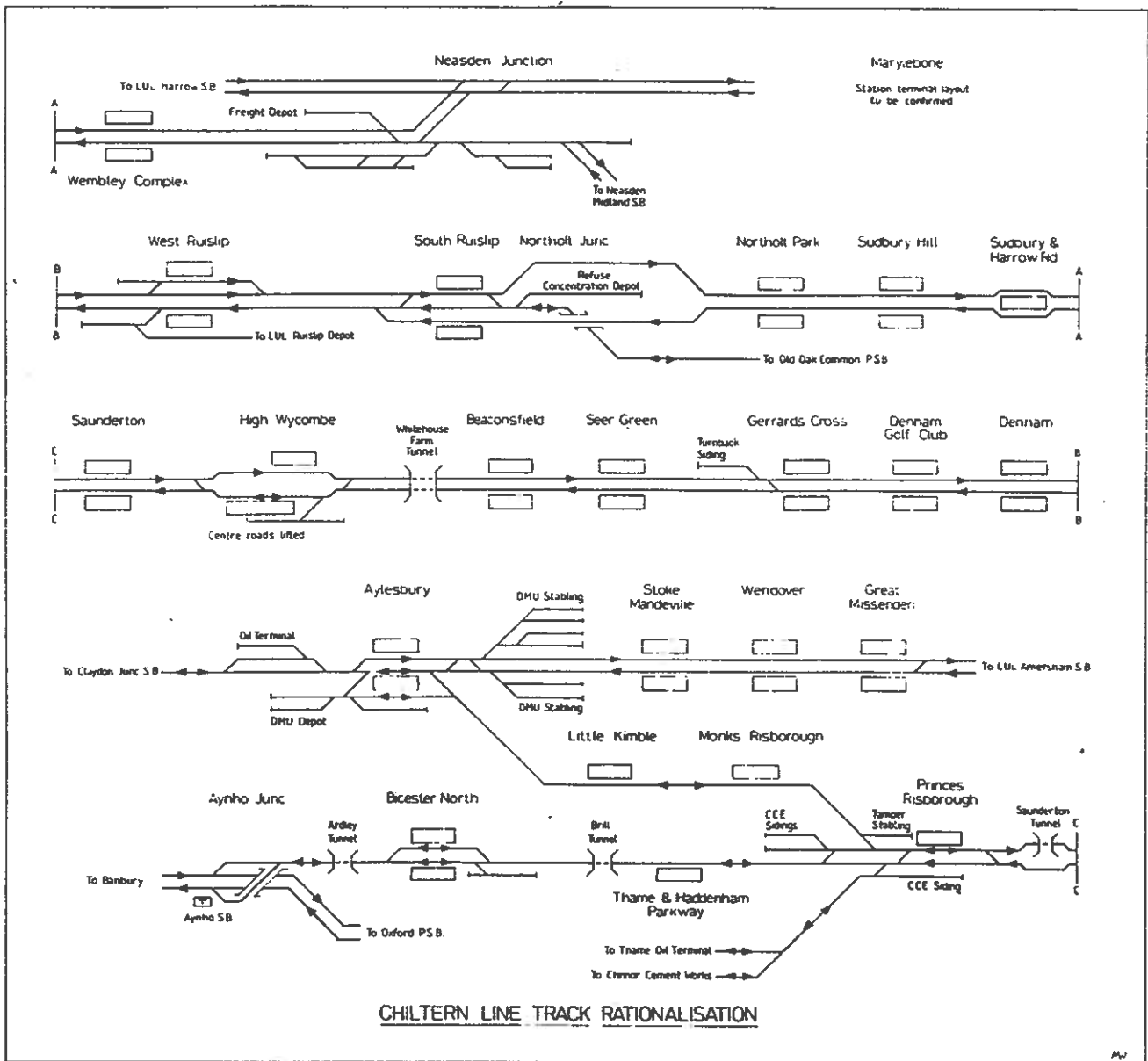
REFURBISHED INFRASTRUCTURE

Probably few lines have suffered so badly from deferred maintenance and a lack of investment as the Chiltern line services from Marylebone to Aylesbury and Banbury due in no small measure to the uncertainty which surrounded the future of that terminal in the mid-eighties. The lines are the last main NSE route to retain semaphore signalling. However much we enthusiasts may like these monuments of the past, they are no longer suited to modern requirements. BR are now committed to an £11 million scheme to resignal both lines (except the LT controlled section between Harrow and Amersham) and rationalise and relay the track. The new signalling system will incorporate the very latest solid state interlocking and VDU's to replace the conventional panel type signal control centre. The Marylebone Integrated Electronic Control Centre becomes operational from November 1989 and will be complete the following May.

In addition, £30 million will be spent on the new dmu's, £2.5m on a new depot for them at Aylesbury, £3 million to convert the line for driver-only-operation and £4 million to improve stations. When all is finished, the new trains and signals together with the removal of the tight speed limits by track renewal will permit the Marylebone to High Wycombe journey to be cut by 8 minutes, to Aylesbury by 9 minutes and 20 minutes to Banbury. A more frequent service will be provided to High Wycombe with a new viner suburban service to Gerrards Cross where a new turnback siding will be provided.

The scheme will be described in greater detail by Chiltern Line Area Manager Peter Leppard who speaks to our Society's July meeting.

At first glance the main line out of Paddington has far fewer problems with its well maintained track, constant parade of HST's and colour light signals. Once again the urgent need is



to replace the dmU fleet and as we have seen this is now in hand. However the signalling system dates from the early to mid sixties and is rapidly approaching the end of its useful life as the number of failures are beginning to show. In many respects the march of technology has rendered the WR's signalling as obsolete as that on the Chiltern Lines. Plans are now being laid to resignal the WR main line using the latest technology as employed at Marylebone. It is expected that eventually the present Old Oak, Slough and Reading "Panels" will be replaced by one new Integrated Electronic Control Centre. Fortunately, there is one development which dictates urgency at least for the eastern end of the proposal, namely the Heathrow Branch and electrification from Paddington. The present installation is not immunised against electrical interference and whilst it could be modified the cost cannot be justified in view of its limited life particularly as there will be a number of changes between Paddington and the new junction at Hayes.

NEW LINES

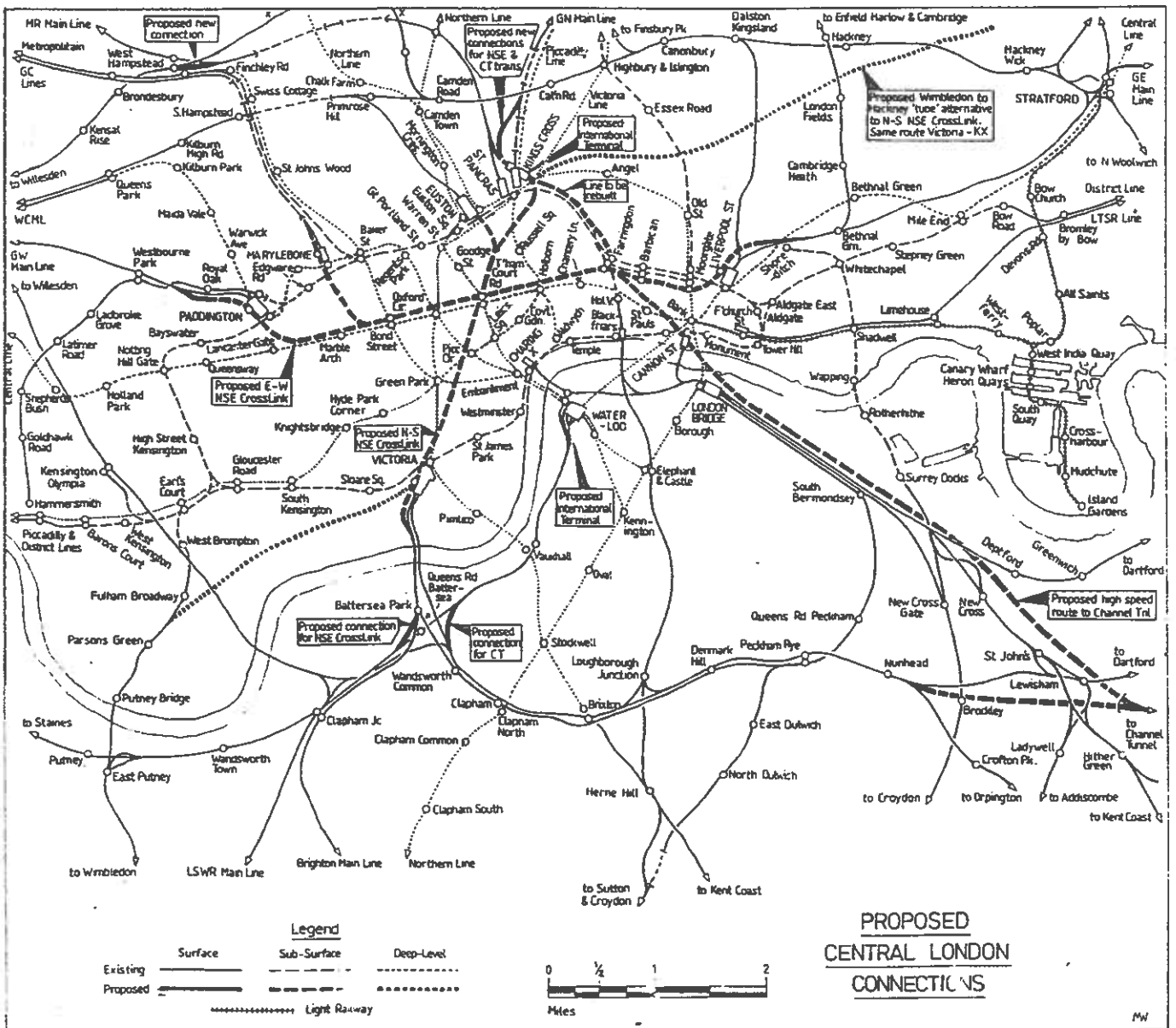
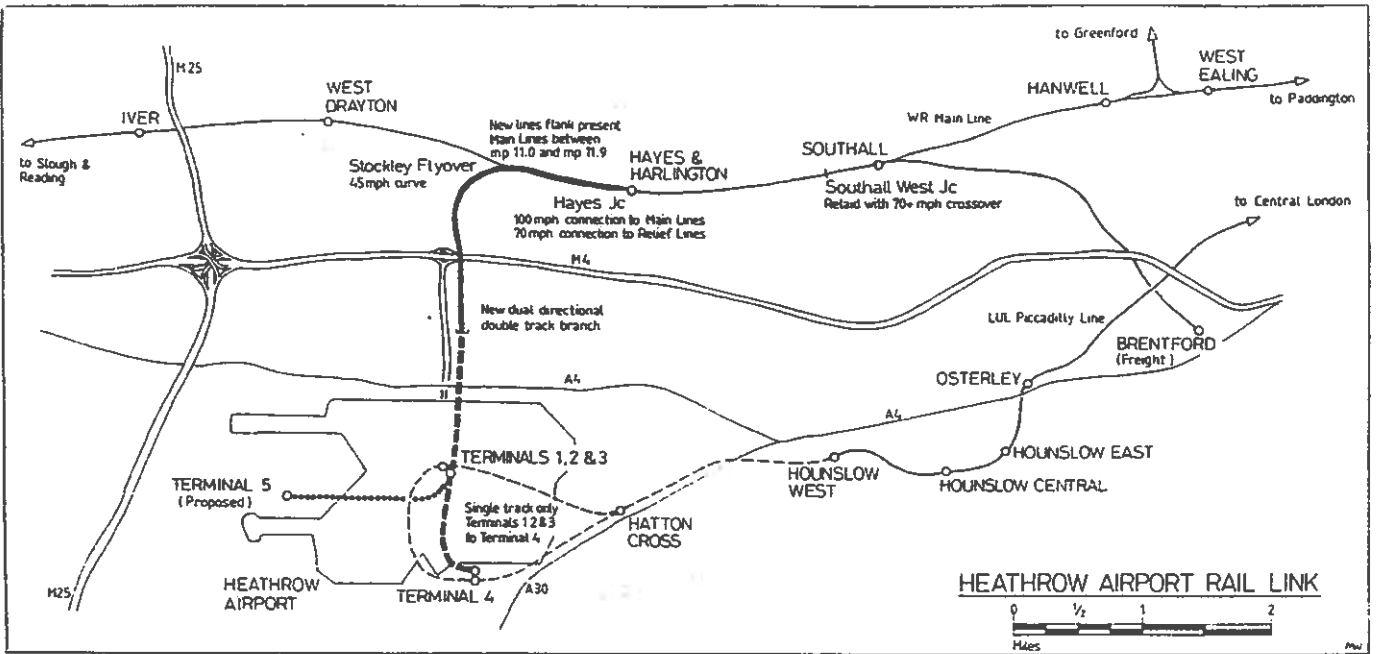
After years of closures it is good to be able to look forward to new openings. First it was new stations, Thame Parkway and Winnersh Triangle and Martins Herron on the Waterloo-Reading line then came the reopening of the Oxford-Bicester line. The reopening of the Aylesbury-Bletchley-Hilton Keynes link remains a goal of the Bucks County Council even if BR is lukewarm.

Most exciting is the prospect of completely new lines. First comes the new branch line into Heathrow Airport built in conjunction with the BAA. Planning is almost complete and, subject to Parliamentary approval, construction should begin

next year with opening planned for May 1993. The 4 mile long double track branch will leave the WR main line with a 100mph flying junction just west of Hayes station, turn south and on the surface until, having crossed the M4, it enters a tunnel for the rest of the journey with single track between Heathrow Central (Terminals 1 - 3) and Terminal 4. The design allows for an extension to Terminal 5 on the west side of the airport if and when that is built. The project will cost some £190 million which includes the electrification of all four running lines out of Paddington and the terminal area. It is intended to operate non-stop trains every 15 minutes with a 16 minute journey time.

The Central London Rail Study published in late January contained a proposal for a new east-west cross London BR line linking the lines into Paddington and Liverpool Street. Despite being only a proposal it seems very likely to go ahead, an announcement of intent may come as early as April with a bill going before Parliament by November. The idea is to relieve the chronic overcrowding on the Central and Metropolitan lines which currently carry all the east-west traffic by allowing BR passengers from the Thames Valley and Essex to complete journeys to the West End and City without the need to change to LUL services. The public liking for cross-London links has been amply demonstrated by the ThamesLink service.

The new east-west line would leave the WR main line near Westbourne Park and descend into a tunnel with new deep level stations at Paddington, Oxford Street, Tottenham Court Rd, Farringdon, Barbican, Moorgate and Liverpool Street before emerging to join the Great Eastern mainline near Bethnal Green. Naturally, the line will be electrified throughout and



it is expected that on the WR catenary will be extended at least to Slough and Possibly Maidenhead. The services which would initially use the new tunnel would be the linking of existing inner suburban services providing for example a Slough-Shenfield or Maidenhead-Colchester service, or the extension of the Heathrow services into Essex.

A further plan calls for a possible branch from Hyde Park to join the Chiltern line near Marylebone with an electric service as far as Gerrards Cross or High Wycombe. There is also a proposal for further north-south cross London line linking Kings Cross/St. Pancrass and Euston with Victoria whilst the construction of the new underground Kings Cross International

station for Channel Tunnel traffic will give the opportunity to further improve the ThamesLink services with connections to the GN lines.

These new links will cost some £3 billion, but subject to finance being available, the private sector and passengers being expected to help share the cost, the Government seems to be committed to these projects if London is not to grind to a complete halt. Even so it will be the turn of the century before all is operational. Then there's the very high speed line to the Channel Tunnel and possibly further lines across the country but that's another story. A new age of Railwaymania is dawning.

SEVERN VALLEY - Then & Now

Bas Woodward



The Severn Valley Railway of today is a full-size standard gauge line operating steam-hauled passenger trains along the 16½ miles from Bridgnorth in Shropshire to Kidderminster in Worcestershire. Not only steam enthusiasts enjoy the journey, following closely the meandering course of the River Severn, but tourists also enjoy the largely unspoilt scenery and get a better view than the motorists on the main road across the river. The rural stations and nearby riverside walks are nostalgic. The idea of preserving this line sprang from a meeting in Kidderminster, fired by the enthusiasm of a local MP, Sir Gerald Nabarro. From its early days in 1965 it was May 1970 before passengers could reach Hampton Loade. Alveley Colliery was abandoned in 1969 and BR closed Bewdley Station in the following year. The SVR purchased the track-bed right through to Kidderminster and the line has been reopened by stages over the succeeding years.

The original Severn Valley Railway as it existed for just over one hundred years ran from Shrewsbury to Hartlebury near Worcester. The present Bewdley - Kidderminster spur was not part of the SVR but was useful for passengers travelling to and from Birmingham or Wolverhampton. The old "Worse and Worse", more politely known as the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton, was among those in the 1840's who were considering a rail link between Worcester and Shrewsbury. Local interests thwarted their plans.

After several abortive schemes Royal Assent was given, and in 1858, Messrs Brassey, Peto & Betts undertook the construction work. John Fowler was the engineer in charge.

Four years later the line was completed. Both passenger and freight trains began to operate along the 40 miles of track. Now Buildwas, Ironbridge, Bridgnorth and Stourport were linked to areas north and south. Only Coalport in this district had a rail link. The LNWR had reached the small industrial town in 1861.

Originally the SVR had no locomotives or rolling stock and they had to rely on help from the West Midland Railway. During the 1870's the GWR became increasingly involved in running the Company. In 1878 the Kidderminster spur through Foley Park Halt was added.

It is sad to relate that the SVR was never a viable proposition. It was a product of the "Railway Mania", responsible for much duplication of rail construction. The motor car gradually killed the SVR after 1945, but during two World Wars there was heavy traffic moving munitions and service personnel. It was found to be a safer passage than the lines through the Midlands conurbation. Dr. Beeching had no time for such insignificant lines as the SVR and his "axe" fell in 1963. The last through passenger train left Bridgnorth on the 30th of November.

No real attempt to reduce operating costs and up-grade the passenger service was made. The line's transfer from the Western Region to the Midland Region spelt out the inevitable closure.

However, railway companies cannot be run on sentiment, they require profits. In 1862 there were four passenger trains between Shrewsbury and Bewdley, two from each station. In 1962 only one train ran in each direction and that was in the morning. Extra trains were run for fishermen!

Freight movements were much more in evidence. Coal left Alveley Colliery in both directions, several times a day. Pick-up freight trains collected and delivered farm produce throughout the line's existence.

Locomotives to be seen at the beginning of the century included 2-4-0 Metro tanks and Barnum 2-4-0 tender engines. "Dean Goods", those stalwart little 0-6-0's, were widely used and so also were the Churchward "Prairies", the 45xx 2-6-2 tanks. Troop trains for RAF Bridgnorth in the last war brought 43xx 2-6-0's, 51xx 2-6-2 tanks and Manor 4-6-0's. Even North Eastern J25 0-6-0's appeared occasionally. Dukes and pannier tanks were common after the war, and then Collett's attractive little 2251's, 0-6-0 tender locos, were found to be an ideal class. The SVR's 3205 was a regular user of the line. GWR-built diesel railcars began to appear, both the streamlined and razor-edge varieties. Railcar W22W was in frequent use and survived into preservation days.

From 1956 BR standard class 3, 2-6-2 tanks of the 82xxx series replaced the ex-GWR 45xx tanks, and in 1960 Stanier class 3 2-6-2 tanks appeared, followed soon by the Ivatt type. From 1962 onwards the Class 4 2-6-4 tanks of the 80xxx series were used. No.80079 is still to be seen on the SVR in the 1980's. The last through train over the SVR on Saturday, 8th September 1963, was hauled by No.80101. On the following day the last train south was worked by two pannier tanks, Nos. 9624 and 4665.

Unusual locos used SVR lines in the war years. Castles and Granges came northwards and ex-GWR 2-8-0's and ROD's came down the northern section as far as Bridgnorth.

Some varied carriages were to be seen, seldom with corridors. A Hawksworth carriage of 1950 might appear with Churchward vehicles of 1921. Even green carriages from the Southern Region could be seen on bank holiday specials.

Now in 1989 the new company, known again as the Severn Valley Railway, possesses one ex-LNER engine, 1 ex-SR, 10 ex-LMS, 15 ex-GWR, 3BR, 4 diesels including two "Westerns", and 7 industrial tanks. Not to be forgotten is Gordon, the former War Department engine from Longmoor. There are 27 ex-GWR carriages, 13 ex-LMS, as well as 18 ex-BR Mark 1 coaches. In addition there are 7 ex-LNER carriages and 6 ex-Metro-Cammell Pullmans. A number of freight wagons are occasionally used on the line. The SVR also owns 2 30 ton steam cranes.

In my copy of D.J. Smith's "The Severn Valley Railway", to which I am indebted for certain information in this article, there is a small advertisement. "HAVE YOU BEEN TO SEE US YET?" I would add. "IF NOT. WHY NOT?"

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