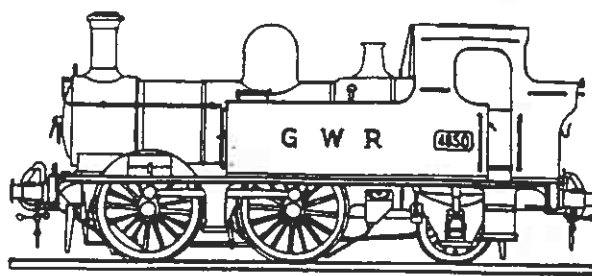


THE MARLOW DONKEY



No 51

SEPTEMBER 1989

Newsletter of the MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Those of us who visited Fawley in June cannot fail to have been impressed by the vast collection of Railwayana put together by our President, Bill McAlpine. Without doubt this must be the best private collection in the country if not the world. In a more modest way many of us have our own collections of relics; name, number and builders plates, lamps, buttons, Cutlery, tableware, publications, documents etc. John Sears is always teasing me about my collection of US track spikes - contrary to his claims, none were removed from running lines - nonest!

The collection of small relics seems currently to be enjoying a boom, if the coverage in the railway press is anything to go by, and many items which were, until recently, almost worthless are now commanding high prices. It could be that without knowing you have a valuable item gathering dust in the attic.

For this reason we have invited Lawrence Waters, curator of Didcot's small relics museum to address our November meeting. He will be giving advice on what is worth collecting and on restoration to enhance values. In addition we invite you to bring along any items in order that Mr. Waters may discuss and value them, along the lines of TV's popular "Antiques Roadshow". This, however, is one of those meetings which require your active participation for success. As I've already stated, it is in your interest to take part, you may get a pleasant surprise - so do yourself a favour.

Member participation in the Society's affairs could still see some improvement. Meeting attendances remain buoyant and our various visits this year have generally been well supported. However we are still receiving too little feedback on your opinions and views. Let me stress again that such feedback is vital if the committee is to tailor the Society's activities to best suit your needs.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

All meetings held at the British Legion, Station Approach, Marlow at 7.45 for 8.00 pm (except January 1990).

Thurs. 19th Oct. LMS MOTIVE POWER DEPOTS Dick Tildesley

Mr. Tildesley spent much of his career caring for the motive power of the LMS and tonight reflects on his experiences, one of those popular reminiscence evenings.

Thurs. 16th Nov. COLLECTING SMALL RELICS Laurence Waters

As curator of the GWS small relics museum our speaker is an expert in this field. We invite you to bring along items for discussion and valuation.

Thurs. 21st Dec. MORE FROM THE ARCHIVES Tony Hall-Patch

An ever popular way to end the year. Tony Hall-Patch will

Having known John Sears for many more years than the rest of you, it was a sad, but not unexpected, duty to accept his resignation as Treasurer. John quietly got married on July 10th and will shortly be moving away from the area to further his career on BR. I'm sure you will all want to join me in thanking him for his services to the Society over the past few years and wishing him and his bride, Ruth, every happiness and success for the future.

On returning from Willesden panel a small group called in at Old Oak Common to view the cutting up of 50.013. Whilst I could hardly conceal my delight at the demise of my least favourite BR diesel class, Mark Hopwood was obviously quite sad. On reflection, this illustrates the point I made in the last issue. Mark grew up with 50's on the Western, they were probably the first locomotives he was aware of. For my part I grew up with the 'Warships' and 'Westerns' and was sad to see them go, the fact that 50's ousted the last hydraulics probably influenced my views. I still recall how as young schoolboys at the "Wycombe Tech" we would gather at lunchtimes to watch the magnificent new 'Westerns' on the Brum trains. One day, one set off for Paddington wearing a "Tech" cap on the cab roof (not mine) as the result of a schoolboy prank.

With such a wide subject as railways we must always be tolerant of other enthusiasts likes or dislikes, and not allow ourselves to become entrenched in dogmatic ideals. I despair at some of the arguments that appear in the letters pages of the magazines and sincerely hope our members would never adopt such intolerant attitudes. It is only a hobby, enjoy it!

Mick



present more rarely seen film from the NRM Archive and keep us up to date with developments there and at the Science Museum.

Thurs. 18th Jan. AGM & PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS Hon. W.H. McAlpine

The meeting will COMMENCE AT 7.30pm PROMPT and the formal business will be kept as brief as possible to allow the maximum time for our speaker "Bill" McAlpine. AGM agenda in the next issue of the Donkey.

Thurs. 15th Feb. ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Once again our light - hearted informal competition which we invite you all to enter. Remember the success of the evening depends on you all entering. We are not looking for masterpieces, just shots you have taken and particularly like, so start thinking about your entries now.

SOCIETY NEWS

COMMITTEE CHANGES

John Sears has tendered his resignation as Treasurer as he is shortly expecting to transfer up North to further his BR career, he also got married in July.

Peter Robins has succeeded John as Treasurer, which means that Tony Caton will in future handle the excursion bookings.

Roger Bowen has also retired from the committee due to pressures of family and business life. So far we have yet to appoint a successor as Programme Secretary, but individual members of the committee are busy arranging an exciting and varied programme for 1990.

We are sure all members will want to join in thanking both John and Roger for all their hard work for the Society.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The June meeting provided a fascinating look at the life and interests of Col. Holman Stephens presented by Les Derbyshire. The extent of Stephen's influence was far greater than most of us realised, and whilst eccentric, they managed to survive much longer than could realistically have been expected.

From low-tech to high-tech. In July Peter Leppard, Area Manager Chiltern Lines, explained the modernisation scheme now in full swing out of Marylebone. Regrettably, an unfortunate clash of dates meant all the senior officers were absent!

AND VISITS

This summer has been the most hectic for years when it comes to visits. The sun shone strongly on our afternoon at Fawley on June 18th. Much progress continues to be made and this year it was particularly good to see the train looking complete and facing the right way up the hill, pity about the lack of clagg

for the photo run - more practice required Terry!

A few days later eleven visited Willesden DC Panel. Opened last year this is about as state-of-the-art as you can get right now, providing quite a contrast with Slough. On the way home a few of us went to Old Oak Common for a good old-fashioned "shed bash".

Although the sun didn't shine on the RHDR trip it was at least dry (unlike the washouts the previous two years). It was a thoroughly enjoyable day, enriched by the attendance of Stan Verrinder, in top form as usual.

A sizeable party were scattered about the 15.50 special from Chesham on July 2nd and several more members were out and about with cameras. It was good to see David Gardner up from Chippenham for the event, even if he was the only one who seemed a little put out that 9466 was standing in for Met 1 and 7715. The keenest of us returned on the 8th to catch Met 1 in service.

There was a reasonably good turn out at Pendon on August 17th and again it was encouraging to see the progress being made in this superb miniature reproduction of between-the-wars Berkshire/Wiltshire.

Finally, the party for the Peaks Express on August 28th was small, only four taking part. The high cost of BR steam specials, and the lack of good photo opportunities put off the rest

THE 1990 AGM

The AGM on January 18th 1990 will start at 7.30 pm not 8.00. This is because the business part of the meeting will be followed by an address by our President, the Hon. W. McAlpine. This is a great honour for the Society as he is not a regular speaker to societies. We urge you all to attend.



RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

NOTES AND NEWS

NEW LINES PROGRESS

The BAA now proposes the Heathrow branch tunnel section extends to beyond the M4 at an extra £11 million to overcome the objections of the House of Lords to the original scheme. (see June Donkey)

The Government has now given its agreement in principle to the East - West Crosslink (Paddington - Bethnel Green, see March Donkey) with the exception that the Marylebone branch is replaced by a new link between Neasden and Old Oak. BR will now prepare a Bill to place before Parliament, probably in November 1990.

PERKINS FOR 165

Breaking with the standard specification set for the existing 'Sprinter' fleets, the forthcoming "Networker Turbo" class 165 fleet will have Perkins not Cummins power units of about 300hp each.

DONKEY BITES STATION

The 20.56 Marlow - Bourne End collided with the stop blocks at Bourne End on August 9th causing considerable damage to the platform structure. Fortunately there were only two minor injuries to passengers and little damage to the train.

"Normal service" was resumed on September 1st when a train and car were involved in a collision at Furze Platt crossing. The driver of the G-reg. car was uninjured and drove away after briefly stopping to inspect the considerable damage to the rear of his new car.

THAMES GETS 47/7

At the start of the summer timetable one of the Edinburgh - Glasgow Push-Pull locos., 47.714, was reallocated to Old Oak Common for Thames & Chiltern routes. Formally "Grampian Region", the locomotive received the latest style NSE livery during overhaul at Crewe and is now nameless.

The remainder of the 47/7's are expected to move south to replace NSE's remaining 50's when the 158 Sprinter Express units are delivered this autumn. However InterCity are said to be anxious to acquire the locos which have 1295 gallon fuel tanks and 100 mph top speed.

Meanwhile, those 47/4's with 1295 gallon tanks (720 gal is standard) are being renumbered into the 47/8 series.

MORE DMU NEWS

The ink wasn't dry on the last issue when a further hybrid unit appeared at Old Oak Common. Set 705 consists of two high density motor cars, 53820 a Derby class 116 DMBS formally at Cardiff and 51319 a BRCW class 118 DMS which had remained in the London area as a spare car after the remainder of the 118 fleet was reallocated.

Like all the twin motor car sets in the 70x series, 705 normally works the Gospel Oak - Barking service which requires three sets at any one time. However 705 appeared on the Marlow branch on June 10th.

Another hybrid 2 car motor/trailer set has also appeared. L210 consists of class 116 DMBS 53083 and class 121 DTS 56289, the latter now gangwayed. It will be noted that, unlike L200-207, L210 is standard class only.

From the current timetable Old Oak Common has assumed maintenance responsibility for the Colchester-Sudbury branch units. A two car unit is allocated to the service weekly with local servicing being carried out at Colchester. This could result in even more variety on local branches.

The two GRCW class 128 diesel parcels cars, 55991/55992, have been reallocated by their new owners, Parcels Sector, to Cambridge last winter and are no longer seen in the Thames Valley.

5 GOING ON 9

Foster Yeoman's fifth class 59, 59.005, duly arrived from EMD in early June. It is almost identical to the first four. This is not the end of the story however as Foster Yeoman's biggest competitor, ARC, have ordered four units which will be based at the Whatley Quarry near Frome and widely used on ARC traffic in the south of England. Due for delivery in August 1990 they will wear ARC olive and grey with running numbers 59.101 to 59.104. 59.005 has been named "Kenneth J. Painter" - Yeoman's director responsible for rail operations.

MORE ON THAT BRAKE

More information on that SR brake van in the new railfreight colours mentioned in the last issue is now to hand. The vehicle has been identified as ADB56303 and is allocated to the Railfreight - Construction depot at Acton Yard for use on local trip transfer runs to Brentford, on which branch local conditions require the retention of a brake van. It may usually be found at Acton or Southall.

EALING VICTIM

The locomotive involved in the derailment at West Ealing following an outrageous act of mindless vandalism on 6th August was 50.025 which as a result has been condemned. It had already been decided to withdraw a 50 as NSE were over budget on repairs to the class, high engine hours 50.032 being the target. However, it will now remain in traffic with the engine

MAILBAG

Member's Letters

Dear Editor,

I have recently been reading a book entitled "Hazlemere" by D.H. Gantzel which has a short reference to railways in the area.

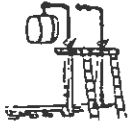
One is a proposal in 1889 to run a line "north of the Central Board School at Wycombe, up Benjamin towards Green Street (a gradient of 1 in 48) then to Terriers and along to Tylers Green through Penn Bottom to link up with Chalfont Road station or Rickmansworth. A single station at Penn was envisaged to cater for Tylers Green and possibly Beaconsfield."

Does anyone know anything about this proposal? Presumably it was a Metropolitan Railway proposal off its teln recently con-

from 50.025 which had one of the lowest figures since the last overhaul.

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

Passenger to Amtrak conductor, "If US Air get engine failure they open the bar". Reply: "Buddy, if you get engine failure up there you got big trouble, we just stop!"



structed line between Rickmansworth and Chesham.

The other reference is somewhat obscure. This refers to the fact that when the joint line was built in 1906 "there was a small stopping place near Rayners known as Penn Halt. This was little used and was demolished in 1932". Personally, I have never seen any reference to this halt in any other book.

Does anyone know anything about this halt? Or is it the figment of someones imagination.

I would be grateful for anyones observations on either of the above two items.

Roger Bowen

VIA THE END?

If you've ever dreamed of taking one of the great railway journees, crossing Canada from coast to coast, you'd better be quick. The Conservative government of Brian Mulroony wishes to make Canada the first major industrial nation to abandon all long distance and inter-city rail passenger service.

VIA, the body set up by the government in the late 70's to operate all former CN and CP services, has had a history of rocky relations with its political masters. In 1982 one fifth of all services were withdrawn, including the "Super Continental" and "Atlantic", only to be restored in 1985. The Canadian designed LRC trains took six years to debug and have not fulfilled their original promise, straining relations further with Ottawa. Plans for a new generation of transcontinental cars were scrapped but not before the locos to haul them had been purchased. Now a small number of the old cars are being upgraded to work with the new locos, but not enough to maintain traditional train lengths.

All this at a time when the transcontinental trains are fully booked months ahead and loadings elsewhere are rising. However the trains recover only about 40% of their costs in fares and it is the need to reduce the huge public subsidy as part of a programme to restore Canada's faltering economy that has

caused the axe to be poised. Yet at the same time the Government finances the Dash 7 STOL airliner, airports for them and hundreds of miles of super highways upon which you can drive for hours and not see a soul.

Not that the Government has instructed VIA to shut down you understand - that would be political suicide. Instead they have reduced VIA's subsidy dramatically whilst legislating to retain a handful of services to remote communities with no road access. By coincidence the loss encountered on these balances the reduced subsidy, leaving no support for the long-distance or inter-city services which VIA will therefore be forced to abandon. This way politicians can blame management, unions and everyone but themselves.

Recent sampling has shown that VIA nevertheless remains a first class operation, superior to its US cousin Amtrak. The staff somehow remain cheerful and attentive; the stock, despite of its age, is clean and attractive, whilst the stations have been cleaned and refurbished. Marketing is imaginative and aggressive.

Surely common sense will prevail, but dont bank on it. The future for VIA and the Canadian passenger train is black indeed.



BOOKSHELF

Ron Brooks

When John Keats was born in 1795, horse drawn tramways were thin on the ground. The Little Eaton, in Derbyshire, connecting various quarries and ironworks to a canal, was one of them and it was built by James OuTRAM. When Keats died in 1821 the Stockton and Darlington was well under way although its historic opening was still 4 years away. Fortunately for this introduction, Keats had commented on Autumn as "Season of mists and mellow Fruitfulness" but had left no poetic gems on railways - possibly because he had never heard of them. To combat the mists and accompany the mellow fruitfulness some of the following nostalgia might not come amiss.

LONDONS UNDERGROUND SUBURBS
Dennis Edwards, Ron Pigram

Bloomsbury Books
ISBN 1 870630 16 5

For me this type of book is irresistible, it has innumerable pictures, of necessity black and white, of the period before, during and after, the construction of the railway and the development of the now familiar LONDON suburbs. Always relevant street scenes abound and current advertisements add atmosphere to information. A text is provided for each picture in addition to an easy-to-read narrative for each section. Anyone who has lived within walking distance of the Underground can't fail to be fascinated by this collection of information and pictures. Hands up all those who rode on a Feltham tram through Hillingdon to Uxbridge (p 93) as I did.

BRITAIN'S SMALL RAILWAYS

Although now out of date this is a nicely produced "catalogue" of fourteen of the best known narrow gauge railways preserved and running. For good measure there are brief notes on 10 more. Each of the major 14 has a good map and colour plates together with a potted history and a stock list with notes. It is a nice record of how things were in the 1970's and is still a pleasant 'read' and can still serve as a reminder of the odd railway that hasn't hit the headlines for some time.

THE BRITISH RAILCAR
R.M. Tufnell

Photo Precision Ltd.
ISBN 0 85944 003 6

David & Charles
ISBN 0 7153 8529 1

This book is packed with information, B & W pictures and line diagrams which covers the subject from "Fairfield" in 1848 to today's HST. It needs a fair amount of concentration to get into the text - but this book is for the edification of the enthusiast. The "carriage and wagon" men regarded railcars as engines while the locomotive men knew they were carriages and the poor things remained unloved and therefore not as exploited as they might have been. The ugly duckling of those years grew unexpectedly into the HST swan, but this time the potential has been realised. For the ordinary railway reader - good stuff, but best in small doses.



Due to a fundamental rule of nature, known among the more respectable members as the "cussedness of Inanimate Objects" the ideal traction motor is probably still one which operates on Direct Current at relatively low voltages, while the ideal means of conveying large quantities of electricity from the power station to the point of use is a very high voltage alternating current. A.C. motors can be, and are, used, and with modern solid state technology they are sweeping the board. However for a very long time 500v - 600v DC and a third rail (and sometimes a fourth) served the railways well. This most interesting book explains the whole matter of DC traction and (if any modellers are among my readers) the diagrams have dimensions! Those who cannot be sure Watt Ohm is best and are doubtful as to the difference between AC and DC and R.C.'s and Parsees should leave this book in the library, where its mass of information would be available for their reference.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The most significant item to report for the Summer-Autumn of 1964 was the entry into service of the prototype "Project XP64" stock.

This stock was placed into service on the East Coast Route between Kings Cross and Edinburgh throughout the summer. Production of the eight coaches followed a period of intensive research into passenger rolling stock design. Following mock ups put on display at the Design Centre, London, the stock was ordered from British Railways Derby Carriage Works.

The new coaches were intended to combine physical comfort and good appearance to a high degree, and give a smoother and quieter ride. They had forced air heating and ventilation, better sound proofing, five foot wide windows partly double glazed, improved lighting, seats scientifically designed, improved access through wider entrances and folding doors. The coaches were painted in a new livery of "Monastrial" and pale blue and were hauled on a demonstration run between Marylebone and High Wycombe on May 28 and 29 by a Brush type "4" No. D1733 painted in a matching blue. Beginning on June 15 and all summer train was running between Kings Cross and Edinburgh on the "Talisman", transferring to the "West Riding" Leeds service in October. In January it was to be transferred to the Euston - Heysham boat express.

A new locomotive type also entered service. These being the first type "1" locomotives of the 650 hp D9500 class which marked a departure from British Railways practice of providing bogie units for line service work in that they were three axle diesel hydraulic 50 ton locos for general service on the West-

ern Region. 56 of these locomotives were on delivery from Swindon Works being fitted with a six cylinder Paxman Ventura 6YJX engine of 650 hp driving through a Voith/North British turbo-transmission.

New coaches for export also featured in this period. Seventy all-metal second class coaches were being built for Coras Iompair Eireann. The coaches were designed by Cravens Ltd of Sheffield, the first 10 supplied fully erected, followed by 30 shells for completion at CIE's Inchicore works and 30 to be built entirely at Inchicore. The first all metal coaches for CIE they featured the first use of BR's B4 bogies for use outside Great Britain.

British Railways announced a £17 million plan for the modernisation of its workshops. This followed the formation of a "Workshops Division" of BR rather than control by the Regional Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineers. The plan envisaged the reduction in number of workshops from 47 main workshops to 16, all the latter to be modernised to give them up-to-date layouts, equipment to handle future work load and bringing up to modern standards. The 16 workshops concerned were Ashford, Barassie, Crewe, Derby C & W, Derby Loco, Doncaster, Eastleigh, Glasgow, Horwich, Inverarie, Shildon, Swindon, Temple Mills, Townhill, Wolverton and York.

One unfortunate happening reported however "From September 7th Paddington will become the main gateway for Exeter and beyond, trains from Waterloo will terminate at Exeter St Davids". Part of the plan to rationalise passenger services.

Once again a mixed bag of news of 25 years ago.



TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

From Marlow Donkey No.12 - September 1979

A review of previous meetings listed T.P. Worrall, Divisional Trains Superintendent, London Division of Western Region in June, Don Fendley, Divisional Traction Inspector in July and a visit to Pendon Museum in August.

There was a short article on the Transport Trust to which the Society is affiliated, and a report on the "Return to France" weekend to the Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme. Other visits

REFLECTIONS ON ROMNEY

Both Dave Cooke and Len Stroud were kind enough to submit reports on our summer outing. As both chose to write differing and complimentary viewpoints, both follow for your enjoyment.
Ed.

ALL EXCEPT THE CHAIRMAN David Cooke

On a grey but dry morning we joined the coach at Wycombe and after a slight detour to collect the main body of the party outside the Marlow Donkey, we set off for the south coast via the M4 and M25 and despite the usual roadworks traffic was not too heavy. Following a brief stop at Dorking (for leg stretching, refreshment etc.) we continued on via the M26, M20 and A20 to Hythe passing many hundreds of motor-cyclists who were apparently returning from an 'Event' in Romney Marsh. We also passed a number of strange signs protesting about some proposed Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

included a day trip to the North York Moors by train, one of the MPA trips and the annual family excursion, this year to Leighton Buzzard and Whipsnade. The customary double decker had its usual crisis, this year problems in getting fuel, there being a fuel shortage at the time.

The major article in the "Donkey" was a further three pages on Mike Walker's "Wycombe Railway", and a shorter one on the Leighton Buzzard Railways little tank loco "Pixie".

On arrival at Hythe (about 12.30 hrs) the coach was duly parked and members were free to 'do their own thing' until 13.30 when our train was due to depart. After a brief walk to the town and back we boarded the train hauled by blue-liveried locomotive No.8 'Hurricane' and departed spot on time for Dungeness. After an untroubled journey (no delays or strikes here!) we all alighted at Dungeness - except for our Chairman who seemed to have gone off by himself - and spent an interesting half-hour drinking our tea, licking our ice-cream and wondering how much radio-activity was falling on us from the adjacent Nuclear Power Stations.

Again on time we left this delightful spot and proceeded to New Romney where after some initial confusion we visited both the model Railway Exhibition Hall and the Locomotive Depot. The highlight of the former was the Multi-National 'oo' gauge layout complete with 'rolling rat' and, at the latter, all

locomotives not working were on view complete with over blankets and 'buffer gloves'. All locomotives appeared to be complete and immaculately clean except for No.9 'Winston Churchill' which was having its cylinders rebored (insitu).

In what seemed no time at all we all boarded the rather full 16.35 hrs train, hauled this time by locomotive No.2 'Northern Chief', for return journey to Hythe (again missing our Chairman who had been observed passing by in the opposite direction on the footplate of No.7 'Typhoon'). After yet another uneventful journey we arrived at Hythe and some members watched the locomotive being turned and watered ready for its return run to New Romney. Following the departure of this train we all returned to the coach to await the eventual arrival of our

LITTLE MARVELS - GREAT JOB Len Stroud

Discounting the gloomy overcast sky all else went to plan when members and friends set out by coach for the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on July 9th. Rain held off until our journey home but those members who went on the original run to the RHDR some years ago had fears of a repetition of a very late arrival home, through several breakdowns and final manhandling of the bus. Not so this time - our coach ran well and no delays were met other than homegoing motorway traffic.

We travelled down by what could be called "The Pretty Route", avoiding the main towns and cutting through the rolling hill-sides with a coffee stop in the Box Hill area. On again to arrive at Hythe RHDR station in the midday hour. Here we had a very pleasant surprise when we were greeted with the beaming face of our old friend, past Treasurer and Hon. Life Member Stan Verrinder, who had been advised of our coming and purposefully came over to join us. If one could say as Billy Bunter's friends would say - "The ribaldry was terrific" that would fit this happy meeting. A lot of earlier rivalry was banded about in jest over the next few hours - O 'Happy Day'.

However we did come to see the railway and the party boarded the 1.30 train from Hythe to Dungeness arriving there at 2.35 via New Romney. We were hauled throughout the round trip by No.8 "Hurricane" one of the excellent fleet of 11, 15" gauge steam locos that keep up an exacting timetable between March and October - not forgetting Santa Specials and especially mentioning the service they give to school commuters and the general public in this shingle strewn area of caravan and bungalow. Apart from the wonder of this "Longest Miniature

Chairman who appeared at 18.10 hrs in a somewhat grimy condition much to our amusement.

Leaving Hythe at 18.20 hrs we returned via our outward route at a slightly slower rate due to heavy traffic on both the A20 and M25. Even so we still managed to arrive back in Marlow at 21.15 hrs (but without a stop on the way) and finally in Wycombe just after 21.30 hrs.

Summing up, I think most people had an enjoyable day (albeit a little long and tiring for some) and must have been impressed by the efficiency of the R.H & D.R. and its wonderful locomotives.

PS How many members spotted the old SER Tram Depot in Hythe - complete with rails! (standard gauge?).

Railway ever Built" many of us remain puzzled as to why anyone would wish to settle in the area at all, but that is a side to our visit that needs deeper understanding. The railway opened in 1927 and was extended on from New Romney to Dungeness in 1928 - some 13½ miles using ½ scale steam locos, with one more recent addition of a "Handsome" (their word) diesel which admittedly cuts a fine figure and has done yeoman service. The round trip took 3 hours and a long stop was made for a guided tour of the loco sheds and workshops at New Romney with a visit to the Model Exhibition - another fine layout of 30 trains in fine background scenic mock-ups.

A very full description was given on each loco in the shed at the time of our visit, including Green Goddess, Northern Chief and Winston Churchill - all under wraps with "work proceeding". Some of the locomotives were on loan to other railways of the same gauge, this is a very lucrative asset to their funds.

It was a real railway event for us and little was seen of Hythe itself, apart from a short time walking up to the Old Town or having our lunch on the grass by the Royal Military Canal (another local wonder) and so away at 6.15 pm. Home by the motorway non-stop to Marlow - and for us a final memory of one red cap - one Chairman - one footplate - one happy man!

I suppose one should mention the nuclear power station at Dungeness which dominated that extreme tip of shingle - or is it best left unmentioned - it somehow seemed to fit the landscape.

Here's to next year - maybe the West Somerset Line?

MAYHEM ABOUNDS IN WALES

Martin Pink

Friday 26th May saw the commencement of the 1989 Spring excursion to the railway wonders of North Wales. All began well with a prompt departure from Eddie Lewcock's at 7.30 am, or was it 7.45, no, on recollection it was 8.15 am with a late arrival from our Chairman Mike Walker.

From thereon the Magnificent Seven (as we were not to be known) departed northward to our first stop at the Llangollen Railway. Eddie, Mike Norris, Peter Greatorex and myself arrived at the station to be confronted by a nice shiny green dmu on a service we had assumed wasn't running. After hurriedly purchasing tickets we boarded the green machine to be transported, albeit slowly, through some splendid Welsh countryside beside the River Dee. On arrival at Berwyn, an interesting mock Tudor station situated by a viaduct, we noticed some familiar faces photographing our means of travel, 'twas Mike Walker, Peter Robins and Geoff Styche.

Llangollen proved to be a most interesting little line. Though steam wasn't in evidence that day, it was nice to see the two Manors, a panier and an assortment of industrials on shed.

After a brief adjournment in some dwelling known as a 'pub' the seven again proceeded north to the prime objective of the trip namely the Rheilffordd Ffestiniog. Indeed we were fortunate to photograph the double Fairlie "Merddin Emrys" at three or four different locations. (Four was to prove to a doubtful Martin it could be done but led to an ongoing joke regarding an Astra for the rest of the trip, further reference to which has been censored by the Editor). On finishing the day at the Madoc Hotel, complete with a glass of intoxicant, it seemed a most successful start to four days of chasing trains.

The second day commenced with Peter Robins depriving myself of sleep and food waiting for two class 37's rostered for a 7.30 am working. In reality we had to make do with one 37, a Sprinter, and late breakfast. The first train from Porthmadog Harbour station proved not to be late as ALCo 2-6-2T "Mountaineer" hauled the seven of us towards Blaenau in a most effortless manner. The ride proved to be so spectacular, on return to the car four of us couldn't wait to chase back up the mountains to capture the ALCo yet again on Kodachrome (or

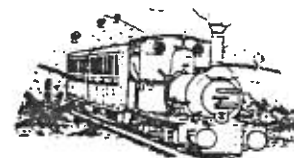
Agfa, or Fuji or Ilford). For myself, being totally unfit, this proved to be the hardest part of the break, as Mike W, Peter R and in particular Geoff, who displayed the agility of a mountain goat, scaled 450 ft in about 20 minutes to beat "Mountaineer" to the Ddauit spiral.

Despite a lot of puffing and blowing (by myself) the location was certainly worth the effort, as we then spent approximately 2 hours enjoying the views, sun and comparative solitude; 'twas a little bit like "not quite the Last of the Summer Wine".

Day three started with an early morning visit to Boston Lodge works where we found the volunteers in the process of restoring one of the earliest locos, "Palmerston" as well as building a modern push-pull coach for winter services. Our next destination was the Talyllyn Railway and, after a pleasant drive past the Talyllyn Lake, we arrived at Abergynolwyn station to board a toastrack coach hauled by the ex-Corris Railway loco "Sir Haydn". The following trip was a pleasant amble down into Tywyn, though not so dramatic as the two previous rail journeys. Essential refreshments were then taken (apple juice actually) preceding a browse in the well stocked shop and the well arranged museum. This houses one of the amazing dual gauge Guinness brewery line locos from Dublin. On return to Abergynolwyn the more usual car assisted linesiding took place, no doubt next year's Photographic Competition will include entries taken at the classic Dolgoch Falls.

The day's gricing ended with four of the party paying a fleeting visit to the Fairbourne Railway. Here we were fortunate to be guided around the workshops; the half scale Lynton to Barnstaple 2-6-2T "Yeo" was of major interest to moi, whilst a half scale Darjeeling loco took Peter Greatorex's interest. The line itself is not remarkable, only worth visiting if one is already in the area.

Our last evening was an experience as we all decided to dine a mile or so from the hotel, after a debate on whether to drive or not so Mike and Eddie should be able to drink. The question was rendered academic when the waitress reminded us it was



Sunday and we were dining in a DRY country. Still, we all needed an early night as the last day proved to be another full one.

Day four comprised of two separate journeys as Mike Walker, the two Petes and Geoff proceeded to Snowdon whilst Eddie, Mike Norris and moi decided to visit the diminutive Welsh Highland Railway.

We were pleasantly surprised, as we were expecting a smaller version of the "Quainton Scrapyard", but actually found a very professional (if short) and neat railway. Four locomotives were in steam; two guests, Leighton Buzzard's "PeterPan" and the Ffestiniog's "Britomart" together with the immaculate Welsh Highland "Russel" and ex-Rhodesian "Karen". Much as we wanted to we only stayed an hour or so, then proceeded

NOT QUITE THE END

As Martin has mentioned four of the party, Geoff Styche, Mike Walker and both Peters, elected to follow a different itinerary for the final day as the creeping dieselisation of Snowdon meant this would probably be the last chance to observe plenty of steam on Britain's only rack and pinion line. Whilst the others were visiting the Welsh Highland, our journey took us through Beddgelert and we were able to view the abandoned trackbed passing through the spectacular Pass of Aber Glaslyn a deep rocky gorge totally unlike any other in Britain. This is the ultimate objective of the WHR and we must wish them every success.

In spite of the powerful sun which has accompanied the trip thus far being replaced by an overcast sky and cloud obscuring the summit, a good crowd had gathered to part with £9.80 a head for the ascent by the time we reached Llanberris, ensuring there would be plenty of trains on the mountain. So having recorded one departure from the base station we drove as far as possible and then walked on up to a point between Hebron and Halfway Stations. From here we had a clear view of the trains as they climbed until vanishing from sight over the ridge above Clogwyn, in the valley below lay Llanberris and its lake. Although both diesels were in use, five steam work-

STEAM IN THE PEAK

Phil. Searle

Most of you will be aware of the activities of a dedicated body of enthusiasts whose main aim is to re-open the Buxton-Matlock line. This section forming part of the direct route from London St. Pancras to Manchester was closed in 1968 and thereafter trains re-routed via Sheffield and the Hope Valley line. The Peak Rail society was first formed in 1976 and is now supported by a commercial company known as Peak Rail Operations Ltd., whose current share issue has netted nearly £200,000.

The line, which will be opened in stages, is scheduled for completion in 2002, the last phase of which will be from Monsal Dale to Buxton. British Rail still runs stone trains along its Ashwood Dale freight line which forms part of the last link in the reopening of the 20 mile line. At the present time Peak Rail sees that their trains will terminate at Millers Dale during week days because of line capacity problems over this single track section due to much stone traffic and light engine movements.

Much of the route has been kept open to date due largely to the efforts of the Peak Park planning committee (in conjunction with BR) for the creation of a trail which walkers and cyclists, and I believe horse riders too, can enjoy amidst the splendour of the Derbyshire countryside. The trail follows the course of the railway (with only four slight deviations necessary) between Chee Dale where Peak Rail has opened up its first rail served halt, and a point just beyond Bakewell. The four sections concerned are where the tunnels at Chee Tor Tuns, Litton, Cressbrook and Headstone have been blocked off. These tunnels incidentally are inspected annually and maintained in good order. To have continued the Monsal Trail through these tunnels would have entailed the installation of lighting schemes throughout their lengths, the cost of which was thought to be too high.

The Monsal Trail runs through the very heart of the Peak National Park with its wonderful scenery, and marvelous variety of wildlife. It is the Peak Park's committee's intention that the railway and trail will run parallel with one other, the two being safely fenced off and proper crossings for walkers incorporated where these are deemed necessary.

My wife and I stayed in Buxton for a week in May and visited both the BR and Peak Rail sites during that time. There is a

south to the Welshpool & Llanfair. another remarkable Taffey line.

The Welshpool is an eight mile line with a gradient at one point of 1 in 29, GWR ancestry and a mixture of African, Belgian, Austrian and Asian stock. Regrettably, time was against us so we could not ride the line, but by subtle positioning at the centre, we managed several passable snapshots; and there ended a tiring but unforgettable gricers weekend.

Should anyone be tempted to join us all next year in an orgy of steam, the seven of us came up with a unanimous decision to do a round trip of East Anglia, South Devon, Northern France, Eire, the West Highland, West Yorkshire, Kent and the East Lancs Railway - before lunch!

ings passed us in a couple of hours.

We then journeyed on to the W & L and obviously only just missed the other group. After a look around Llanfair Caereinion we took to the road and chased first "Joan", an 0-6-2T refugee from Antigua, then one of the native W & L Beyer Peacock tanks "Countess" with the last train of the day. The lowering sun giving some superb lighting effects.

It was almost 5pm when we left Welshpool and headed for home, but one more thing was in store. Somewhere around Birmingham on an unusually quiet M6, one of the Peters suddenly said "isn't 'Bahamas' returning to Tysley tonight?" As our journey took us onto the A41 a short detour to Hatton station was in order. Sure enough a group of gricers were gathered on the bridge. It had been a long weekend and we were tiring, so the fact they were all facing the wrong way didn't register, neither did a distant chime whistle. Instead of 'Bahamas' going north we got "Sir Nigel Gresley" and the FSE Pullman train returning from Derby to Marylebone, coming straight out of the sunset and doing 60 or more. A glorious image to end a superb weekend, topped off by an excellent meal at the nearby "Waterman" inn, quite rightly recommended by both Peters.

Mike Walker

good sized depot at Buxton housing classes 20, 37 and 47 when we were there. The evening is the busiest time at the depot where you could watch these locos coming on shed (the 20's & 37's usually in pairs) after the end of their hard days work. On the passenger side the older generation dmu's had all but handed over to the sprinters which were sporting their new North West logos, and we did find time to travel on one, the Saturday 11.30 am train to Manchester. This was a shoppers' special, priced at £2 return, but the local enthusiasts outnumbered the shoppers 4 to 1. One of our fellow travellers turned out to be a railway author of note, who was most helpful in pointing out features of interest along the route, including a nicely lettered Midland Railway warehouse at Stockport.

Our driver Albert was apparently going for gold that morning, as the train was non stop all the way to Piccadilly. The signmen at Whaley Bridge and Stockport Edgeley had other ideas though and arrival at Manchester was 1 minute late! On arrival we saw a good variety of modern traction, ranging from the new class 82 DVT's to S7's, S6's and 47, and a first generation dmu painted in Royal Mail colours and based at Cambridge.

All this is a long way from what I am supposed to be relating, so back to Buxton where we have Peak Rail's northern terminus. This is the truncated Midland station site which lies adjacent to the BR station which is of LNER origin. The site had been laying derelict since closure some twenty or more years ago, the station building was situated where Safeway's supermarket car park is now. The old goods shed is now the locomotive works, whilst the sales and refreshment facilities can be found in some converted newspaper vans and Mk1 coaches. There are two 9F's on site 92214, 92219 which are fairly long term projects, together with a jinty and some small industrial saddle tanks. There is an 08 diesel shunter and class 25 diesel and in a much more advanced state of restoration is 8F No.48624 which is likely to be the first of the mainline stock likely to be running. Peak Rail's facilities at Buxton are isolated from the BR line due to the absence of the bridge over Bridge Street (where else) having been demolished some years ago. The plinths of the new bridge are in position and just await the fitting of a new steel girder assembly, which is being built by a local company.

We visited the other end of the line at Matlock where the station has been restored to magnificent condition and houses a smart buffet, a book shop and the Condor Video Centre. Inside the goods shed is the elusive Metro Vick Co-Bo D5705 and outside, under sheeting, were D100 Sherwood Forester, 45-135 The 3rd Carabinier and D8 Penyghent.

The main focus of activity on the line at the moment is the tracklaying at Darley Dale, this is proceeding very steadily and professionally towards Matlock. When this first section

(2 miles) is completed and the trains are running, Peak Rail will at last be able to obtain some of the much needed revenue to fund the remaining sections of the line still to be opened.

Well that briefly is what Peak Rail are doing and is a little of what we saw. The Peak District is well worth a visit, both for the railways and for its own natural beauty. For those of you who don't know the area, pay it a visit you won't be disappointed!

LOCO PROFILE

THE WESTERNS

Mike Walker



"Mr. Barman had suggested to Mr. Grand that the 2700 hp locomotive shall be designed with a distinctive styling which would be recognised as typically WR". So read the minutes of a meeting at the Swindon drawing office in November 1958 which led to the largest and finest of the six classes of diesel-hydraulic locomotive.

It has been suggested that the adoption of hydraulic transmission was merely another example of GW independence continuing after nationalisation. Perhaps so, but there was a clear and reasoned argument for doing so. During 1955 the WR board had set up a management study led by General Manager K.W.C. Grand to consider how the Modernisation Plan and impending dieselisation would affect the region and how best it could be implemented. Given that there was no prospect of electrification on the WR, little or no experience of electric transmission, and in the mistaken belief that non-fitted freight stock would soon be a memory, the investigation of powerful, lightweight diesel-hydraulic locomotives made much sense.

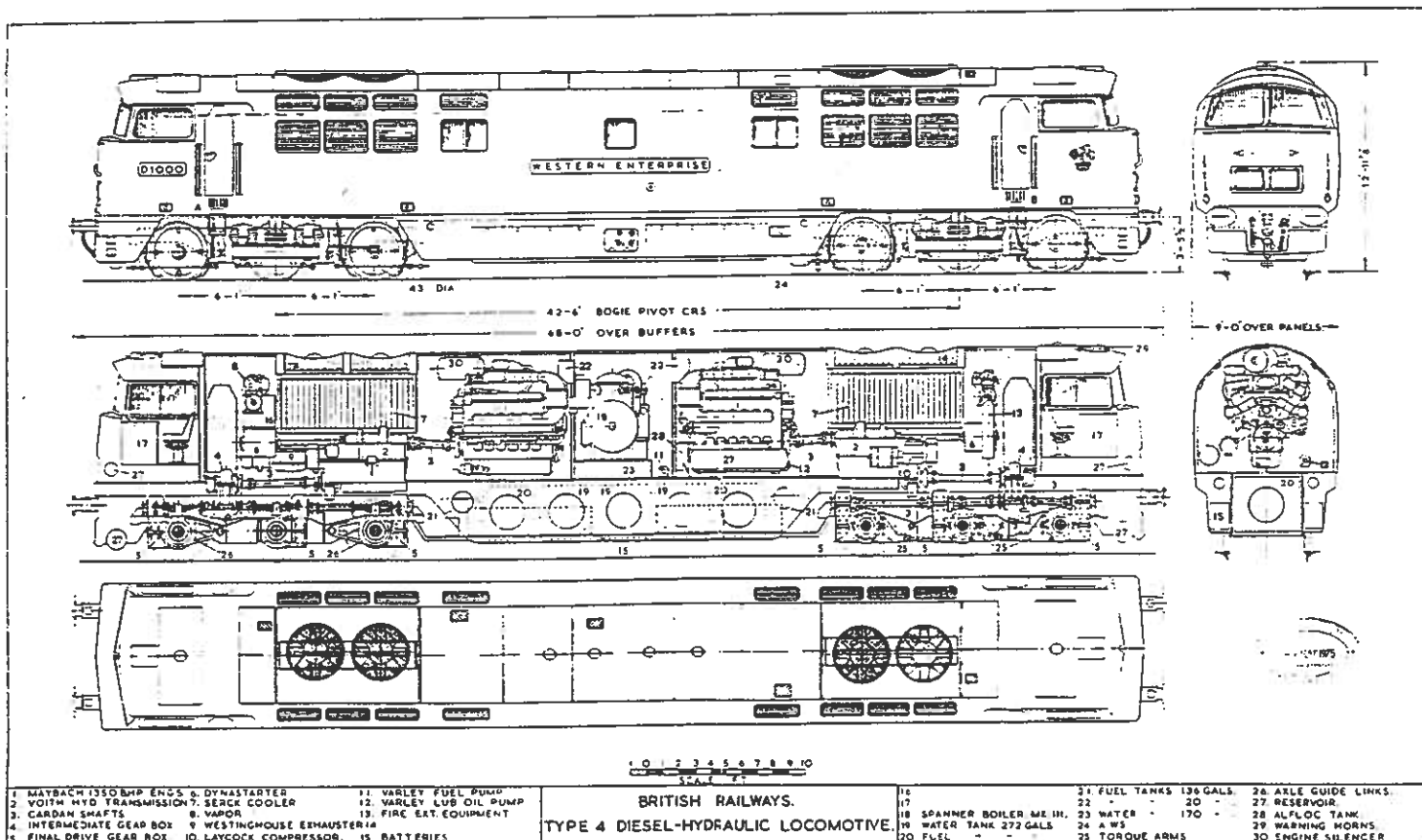
Two years previously, the German Federal Railways had introduced its famous V200 class, a B-B 2100hp diesel-hydraulic weighing around 80 tons, when contemporary British diesel-electrics of the same power were weighing around 130 tons and carried on 8 axles. The WR prepared a reasoned case for similar locomotives based on lower initial cost, reduced locomotive and track maintenance costs (due to lighter weight), the lower cost of converting steam depots to handle hydraulics compared to electric transmission and the necessary retraining of staff. Based on this argument the BTC included three diesel hydraulic designs in its pilot scheme, a 1000 hp B-B and 2000 hp ALA-ALA, both built by North British, and a 2000 hp B-B built at Swindon to a modification of the V200 design. The

latter design, uprated to 2200 hp, was later expanded to 70 units known as the D800 'Warships' built at both Swindon and NBL.

Even before the first production 'Warships' had entered service the WR management were considering the more powerful machine which would be required to accelerate services to remain competitive with the explosion of road and air competition expected in the sixties. Once again a German locomotive, the 3000 hp Krauss-Maffei ML3000 demonstrator, was used as a prototype but a greater proportion of original design came from Swindon than was the case with the D800's.

At the heart of the new design were a pair of German designed Maybach MD655 engines. Built under licence in Britain by Bristol-Siddley, these turbocharged four stroke V12's had 185mm bore, 200mm stroke cylinders giving a total capacity of around 65 litres, each producing 1350 hp at 1500 rpm, considerably faster than the engines in contemporary diesel-electrics. Each engine drove all three axles of one bogie through a Voith L6-30V torque-converter, also German designed but built by NBL, together with intermediate and final drive gearboxes connected by cardan shafts. The sectioned drawing shows the drive line.

Perhaps at this point it may be useful to review how torque converters operate. The unit consists of three main components the engine driven impeller, output turbine and the fixed wheel or stator all mounted co-axially within an oil filled housing. The engine turns the impeller through whose blades hydraulic is forced by centrifugal force onto the blades of the turbine on the output shaft, imparting a torque which causes the turbine to rotate. The oil then passes through the vanes of the



stator back to the impeller, the oil being constantly circulated whilst the locomotive is in motion. The diesel-hydraulics gearboxes are fixed ratio units which distribute and redirect the drive.

The advantage of the system is that the lower the turbine speed the greater the torque, and thus tractive effort. This drops as the turbine, and road speed, increases; just what the locomotive designer seeks. The 'Westerns' developed a starting tractive effort of 67930 lbs at 27.6% adhesion dropping to a continuous TE of 45200 lbs at 14.5 mph, considerably in excess of any British diesel-electric until the advent of classes 59 and 60 with their electronically monitored controlled slip adhesion systems.

Like the 'Warships', the 'Westerns' employed a unique German method of construction which had its origins in the aviation rather than rail industry. Whereas most diesel and electric locomotives are built on a heavy fabricated frame, the "frame" of the 'Westerns' consisted of two steel tubes running the length of the locomotive. Onto these were welded several box like fabrications which would become the fuel and water tanks. This assembly was then stressed to produce an upward curve which flattened under the weight of the completed locomotive. Onto this base was constructed a framework of light steel sections to the outline shape of the locomotive upon which the thin sheet steel panelling was welded. This panelling was in very large sections, the side panels for example extended the whole length between cab doors and from just above the skirt to the centreline of the radiator grilles. These panels were preheated prior to finally being welded and then cooled rapidly with water creating what is known as Stressed Skin construction, an immensely strong but lightweight structure. The completed 'Western' weighed only 107 tons compared with around 120 tons for similar power classes 47 and 50.

The styling of the locomotive came in for much attention from the BTC's Design Panel led by the noted industrial designer Prof. Mischa Black. Starting with the basic Anglo-German design, the presence of two of each major internal component allowed a superb symmetry in placing grilles etc. The smooth sides were given a curved profile, or tumblehome, to match the BR Mk1 coach whilst the ends featured squared off corners. The cab windows were large with slender frames and high set in the roof line which took full advantage of the loading gauge and ended with peaks over the windscreens. Design and style is very much a matter of personal taste, but arguably the 'Westerns' were the most stylish and imposing diesels ever to grace British rails. The final touch was the livery, but more of that anon.

Adding to the distinctive appearance were the bogies, all three axles had inside journals the wheels being visible outside the frame. They had no central pivot, rather they pivoted on a number of spring borne pads on each side. These bore on a frame extension which hid much of the centre wheel from view. Again this was based on German practice but the idea was not new to Swindon, being used on passenger stock of the Dean era.

74 of the new locomotives were ordered off the drawing board, 35 from Swindon and 39 from Crewe. Due to delays in the delivery of transmission units the first, D1000 "Western Enterprise" did not appear until December 1961. Crewe's first, D1035 "Western Yeoman", came out in March 1962 and production quickly overhauled Swindon so that manufacture of D1030-34 was switched from Swindon to Crewe. The last to be delivered, D1029 "Western Legionaire" entered service in July 1964 after some months with the Research Department. Incidentally, until 1967 the locomotive had nameplates spelt Legionaire.

At the time the locomotives were entering service the regions enjoyed considerable autonomy. The WR was painting passenger stock chocolate & cream and steam locos as small as a 14xx in lined green but seemed unhappy with the latter on diesels. As an experiment D1000 was finished in a striking colour called

Desert Sand whilst D1001 and D1005-8 were in carriage maroon with yellow buffer beams. While these were evaluated D1002-4 and D1035-38 were painted standard green with yellow warning panels. Other liveries considered but not applied included turquoise, bright red and black & silver. The public were invited to comment and ultimately maroon with yellow warning panels was adopted as standard except for D1015 "Western Champion". This came out in golden ochre, the old LBSC "Improved Engine Green" colour, with a dark olive roof. All carried their names and numbers on cast aluminium plates whilst the round carriage crest was applied to the cabsides diagonally opposite the numbers. The exception was D1000 which until repainted blue carried a cast lion-and-wheel emblem like the a.c. electric D1030 which was the first to go blue early in 1967 but in a lighter shade with small yellow panels and red buffer beams. Subsequently standard blue with full yellow ends was adopted.

Even before delivery was completed the winds of change were blowing. The BTC had gone and in 1963 the newly formed British Railways Board soon curtailed regional autonomy. In service the "Westerns", which after a spell on the Paddington-Birmingham route came to dominate the West of England and South Wales lines, proved somewhat indifferent in service. In good order they were superb, immense haulers with rapid acceleration, often exceeding their official 90 mph maximum. But they suffered more than their fair share of engine and transmission failures mostly due to poor initial manufacture, at one point availability dropped to 60%. This could have been, and was to an extent, overcome but policy at BR level favoured replacement by diesel-electrics. To their credit with twin engines and transmissions they could usually limp home.

Like a good wine however they improved with age and received several modifications to keep them in front line service. In 1968/69 they received train air brakes which entailed removal of one fuel tank, and BR AWS in addition to the original GW ATC equipment. The introduction of air conditioned stock on the WR in 1973 saw their demise from front line service. Contrary to popular belief, they could have been fitted with auxiliary eth generators in place of the boilers, but in view of the limited life expectancy this would have been uneconomic.

1973 was a bad year for the class. It opened with only the "Westerns" and a handful of "Hymeks" remaining of 364 hydraulics built for the WR. D1023 "Western Fusilier" was the last to get a heavy overhaul at Swindon in September. Withdrawals had commenced in May with D1019 "Western Challenger" followed by D1004, D1017/18, D1020, D1024, D1032, D1038/9, D1042 and D1060 by the end of the year when the first of their intended successors, class 50's D400/401 appeared in advance of the remainder of the class in May 1974 upon completion of the WCML electrification. Initially the 50's were even more unreliable than the "Westerns", which by now had become class 52 but were not renumbered. Withdrawals continued at a steady pace and by late 1976 only a handful survived, and with the arrival of the HST they were finally surplus.

In their final days the class were confined to commuter and freight traffic, doing much to establish the Foster Yeoman traffic which took them onto the Southern regularly. Always favourites with enthusiasts they took on cult status with a series of both BR and privately sponsored farewell trains, the first of which ran as early as April 1975. The actual final trip by D1013 and D1023 on 26th February 1977 brought down the curtain not only on the class but on BR's hydraulic era with a level of adulation not seen since the end of steam. Seven of the class survive in preservation but it is 12 years since the WR echoed to the scream of the Maybach engine, yet they are still fondly remembered by enthusiast and professional alike.

To close a what might have been. Swindon left provision in the design to install two V16 Maybach MD670's as used in the Hymek with the idea of producing a "Super Western" of around 3500 hp. Now that would really have been some machine.

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