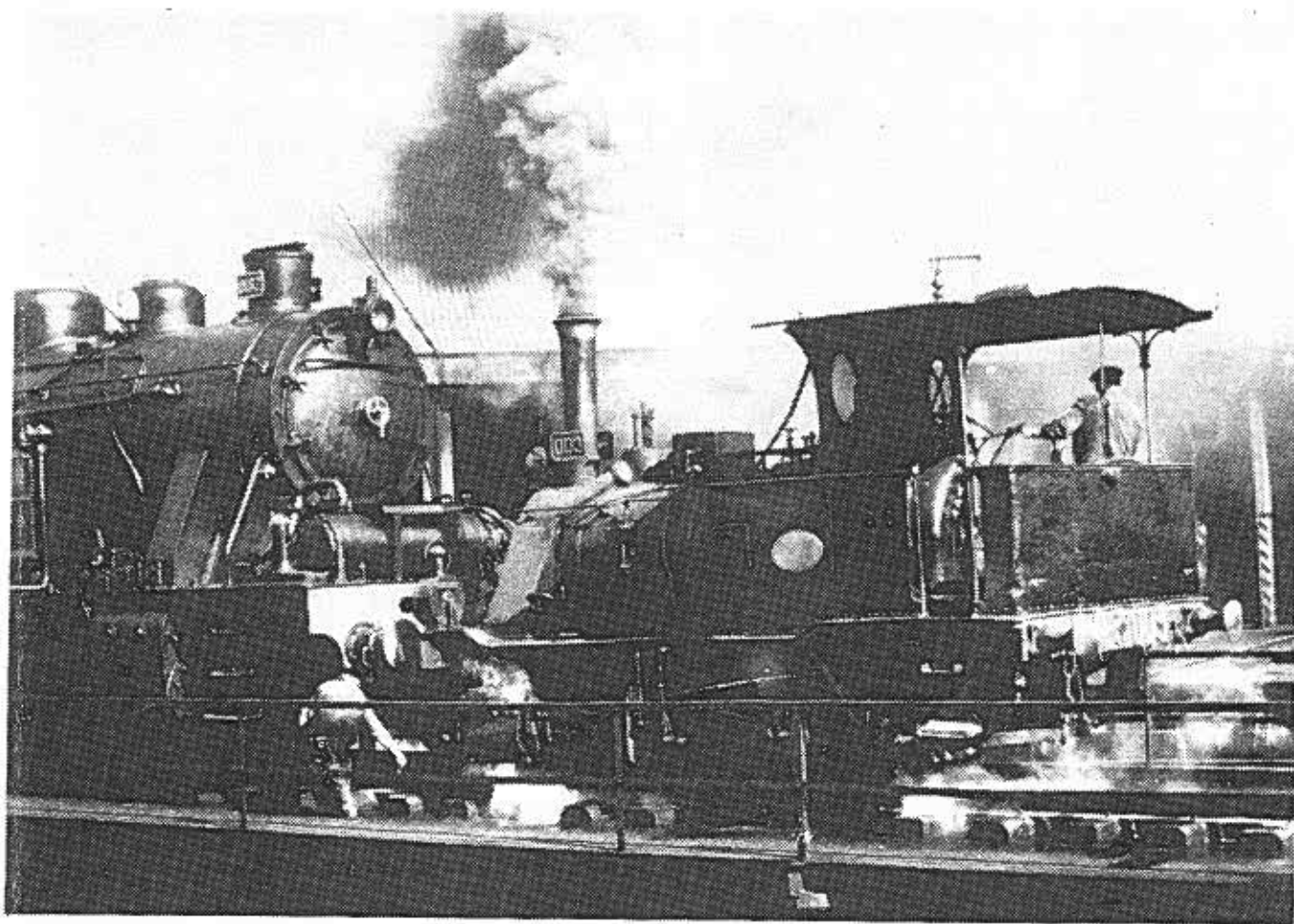


THE

SEPTEMBER 1990

55

MARLOW DONKEY



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WEST COUNTRY STEAMING
THE FORGOTTEN BREAKFAST
MAYHEM ABOUNDS UP NORTH
RISBOROUGH LOCALS IN THE 1930's



THE MARLOW DONKEY

Quarterly magazine of the
MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

No.55 September 1990

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

In the last issue I voiced the opinion that the preservation scene cannot authentically recreate the past. Perhaps this was a generalisation for just occasionally the past is vividly recalled, if only for a second or two, as I was to see even before that last column appeared in print.

The magic moment occurred on the Keighley & Worth Valley on the Spring Holiday Monday. Four of us had delayed departure to set up for the first train of the day into Oxenhope. The location was superb, a babbling brook in the foreground, the railway on an embankment and a frail wooden bridge with a field of buttercups beyond, whilst a spreading tree framed the whole shot. Suddenly class 25, D5209 popped into view superbly restored in every detail to as built condition and hauling a train of lightly weathered maroon Mk.1's. The resulting scene could just as easily have been 1965 as 1990.

Yes, a hard working steam locomotive would have made a more dramatic shot, but would it have created the same authentic timelessness? Probably not, because both the KWVR's working BR liveried locomotives were superbly maintained and clean but back in 1965 most steam locomotives were grime encrusted, wheezing wrecks, leaking steam at every joint whilst gleaming ex-works diesels were two a penny. Nevertheless it did come as something of a revelation to find it takes a preserved diesel to accurately recreate the past in a way steam could not. Perhaps we should instigate a campaign to encourage private railways to allow some of their stud to adopt typical late BR standards, certainly shots taken of 75078 hauling the same set that weekend fail to have the same magic, just because the locomotive was clean.

The resulting slide of D5209 fully lived up to the promise of the viewfinder - you may well spot it in next year's photographic competition. The Lancs & Yorks weekend was a superb occasion and you can read the whole story as told by Martin Pink in this issue. I highly recommend it and, for the record, this year the Editor's blue pencil stayed firmly capped!

Elsewhere in the last issue John Sears made reference to the treatment meted out to VIA by the Canadian Government. The background to the cuts was outlined in our December 1989 issue and, whilst a total shutdown was avoided, the heart was ripped out of the network and its final demise is probably only a matter of time. Knowing the western Provinces would never agree the closure order was made as an Order in Council during the summer recess when no debate was possible. Remember, VIA's long distance trains were not principally a means of transport like InterCity, rather they were rolling hotels bringing tourists from around the world to savour the west. The result has been dramatic and disastrous for the two principal resorts in the Canadian Rockies, Jasper and Banff, which report tourist business down by 30% and 50% respectively this year.

Watching VIA's treatment I was at least consoled to think that not even the British Government would be so crazy. Or would they? We are now threatened with the withdrawal of wagon load "Speedlink" freight services which allegedly lost £30 million last year. Railfreight is making this drastic move to meet the Government's demand for profit and the Government apparently approves. The result of this will be 30,000 extra heavy lorries on the roads, the increased congestion, transport costs (thus shop prices and inflation) and masses of extra pollution. All this announced within a week of Mrs. Thatcher making a speech saying we must reduce road traffic to reduce pollution and save the planet - Is this a coherent integrated policy I ask?

It appears we have also said goodbye to the Chunnel High Speed link. Is it really necessary? If we are honest BR doesn't really need it. Given BR's instruction to maximise profit and return on investment the obvious course is to create capacity on existing lines by removing loss making commuter trains and replacing them with profitable international trains, albeit with longer journey times than the HSL would allow but still better centre to centre than possible by air. The commuters? Oh, they can go by bus or car no doubt the money will be forthcoming to widen the M2 and M20 with little local opposition. But, does BRITAIN need the link? Yes. In 1992 Europe becomes one big country as far as trade is concerned. If you're making a product you seek to minimise your costs by manufacturing as close as possible to the centre of your market, that is why Germany is ideally placed to dominate Europe. Britain is at a geographic disadvantage, we are an offshore island. To offset this we need the best, quickest and most economical transport links possible. It is no good British industry being as, or more, productive than our competitors if it costs twice as much to get the product to the customer. If we consider our own history our industrial heart has been the Midlands and North of England, not the Isle of Skye!

Stan Verrinder will probably be despairing at me again so I'll descend from my soapbox. Stan's letter in the last issue also lamented the departure of the 14xx from the cover of the "Donkey" and several of you have made the same observation. Far be it for me to fly in the face of opinion so we shall have to see what can be done for the future.

Stan's letter was a pleasure to receive if only because it proved somebody had read the previous issue and had comments to make. As Editor, it would be nice to receive comments and observations from more of you, or don't you actually read the Donkey?

This summer has given the opportunity to examine the exhibits of the National Railway Museum in new surroundings both at York and Swindon whilst the roof, and in truth most of the walls, of the 1975 NRM building are replaced. Both temporary exhibitions are extremely well presented, the platforms of the Peter Allen Building in York giving a station look whilst at Swindon the exhibits are viewed from ground level. The exhibits themselves give a much broader selection from the Collection than is normally seen, with a number of wagons supporting the usual glamour exhibits. Proof that the collection is ever growing comes with the appearance of the old GW Track Recording Car, prototype Mk.2 coach (with Mk.1 windows and interior) and a prototype HST power car.

With summer over our new season begins, with some excellent talks scheduled as outlined in Timetable. I look forward to seeing you on these mellow, misty autumn evenings.

Mike

COVER

Dave Cooke has enjoyed considerable success in our photographic competition, this year being no exception with this Class B - Overseas Slides - winner, which also took the Eddie Lewcock Cup as overall winner. Taken at Contumil Shed in Oporto, Portugal, in May 1970 it shows a vintage and diminutive 0-4-0WT, 003, built by Societe John Cockerill in 1890 manfully struggling to drag 2-6-4T 062 onto the turntable.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

MEETINGS

Thurs. 18 Oct BR AND THE CHANNEL TUNNEL A.G. Dunlop
Mr. Dunlop is BR's External Relations Director responsible for the Tunnel. He will be describing the project and the effect it will have on the entire BR network. He will introduce the train designs to be used.

Thurs. 15 Nov MORE FROM COLOURAIL Ron White
Once again Ron delves into his collection to bring views that may or may not be in his catalogue. Having recently acquired more vintage local views Ron proposes another limited edition set for members.

Thurs. 20 Dec THE WYCOMBE RAILWAY David Lane
David is researching the line and has amassed more than 200 slides depicting the changing face of the WRC and its successors from broad gauge to today, Maidenhead to Aylesbury and Oxford.

Thurs. 17 Jan. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The formal business will be followed by a programme of short talks - see below.

Thurs. 21 Feb. ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION
Once again your entries please for the following classes.
A : colour slide - UK
B : COLOUR SLIDES - OVERSEAS
C : COLOUR PRINTS
D : B & W PRINTS
And remember the winners will illustrate the covers in '91.

Thurs. 21 Mar SOUTH AMERICAN ADVENTURE Jim Jarvis
An evening exploring the highest railways in the world, still largely steam worked.

Thurs. 18 April EAST COAST ELECTRIFICATION D.W. Barnes, BR Project Director
With just a month to go before completion the full story of BR's biggest single electrification project to date, the renewed infrastructure and InterCity 225's.

SOCIETY NEWS

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Unfortunately business commitments prevented Pete Greatorex from giving his presentation on World Steam in June. However he arranged for two of his friends Geoff Warren and Dave Moulden to take over and we enjoyed a superb evening of steam in Pakistan, India, Indonesia and China. A brief look was included at the railways and steam power of Nepal, definitely off the beat and track and most welcome.

The subject of the "Great Train Robbery" for the July meeting was off beat and different. Unfortunately attendance was a little low due no doubt to holidays and the very hot weather, however you missed an absolute gem. Retired Det. Insp. Cliff Wraite, a rail enthusiast by nature, had the good fortune to be among the men of Scotland Yard invited to investigate, and he turned out to be one of those rare speakers who can present a humorous, entertaining talk, albeit being serious about the worst aspects of the crime. Special thanks to the member who is a serving officer for acting as fall guy and taking it so well!

AND OUTINGS

Once again we've had a successful series of outings this summer. The trip to Swindon's 'NRM on Tour' exhibition was postponed until 30th June as we were led to believe both "Kings" would be in steam that day. In the event both were present but only 6024 was in steam but stationary. Despite this there is much to see at Swindon (open until 31st October) and afterwards several of the party moved onto the GW Museum nearby whilst two chased 71000 in the Hereford area.

The Annual Family Day to West Somerset on 15th July was blessed by bright sunshine, in spite of choosing St Swithen's Day, and was a great success attracting just about a full coach load for only the second time. A full report by Len Stroud follows, but it should be noted that he omitted to say that the party's reserved accommodation was in a Mk.II open second - on a preserved railway?

Two groups, a week apart, made visits to the rarely viewed Post Office Railway under Mount Pleasant Post Office. This unique narrow gauge line has a frequent driverless train moving more than a million items of mail daily between Paddington and East London.

NEW PHONE NUMBERS

Those of us who reside in Marlow now have new telephone numbers following the integration of the Marlow exchange with Maidenhead. This effects the following committee members:-

Mike Walker : 483899
Tony Caton : 473723
Rob Young : 474649

The MAIDENHEAD dialling code, 0628, should be used.



ANYONE FOR A SHORT TALK?

The formal business of the AGM in January will be followed by a programme of short talks of 15-20 minutes by our members. We are therefore looking for volunteers. Your choice of subject, interested? Please contact Mike Walker or Eddie Lewcock.

IDEAS WANTED

Our committee works hard organising talks and visits. Whilst we have long lists of potential speakers we always welcome suggestions from the members, particularly in the way of ideas for places to visit - so why not let us know?

AND MEMBERS

As always we've lost a very small number of members this year and whilst this is not serious it would be nice to recruit further new faces. We do of course put details of meetings in the railway press and some new members join that way but most come through personal introduction. So if you know of a railway enthusiast at a loss for entertainment on the 3rd Thursday of the month why not bring them along.

THE NEW SEASON

Timetable shows our plans for the first part of the 1990/91 season and you will see that we have a very varied and exciting programme planned, probably the best for some years. Please make the effort to attend as many of these meetings as you can to ensure healthy audiences.

RAILWAYS SOUTHEAST

By now most members will know of that excellent publication 'Railways SouthEast' which is published twice yearly in late March and September, but do you realise it can be purchased through the Society at a discount? Orders must be placed in advance, ask Mike Walker for details.

A NEW FEATURE!

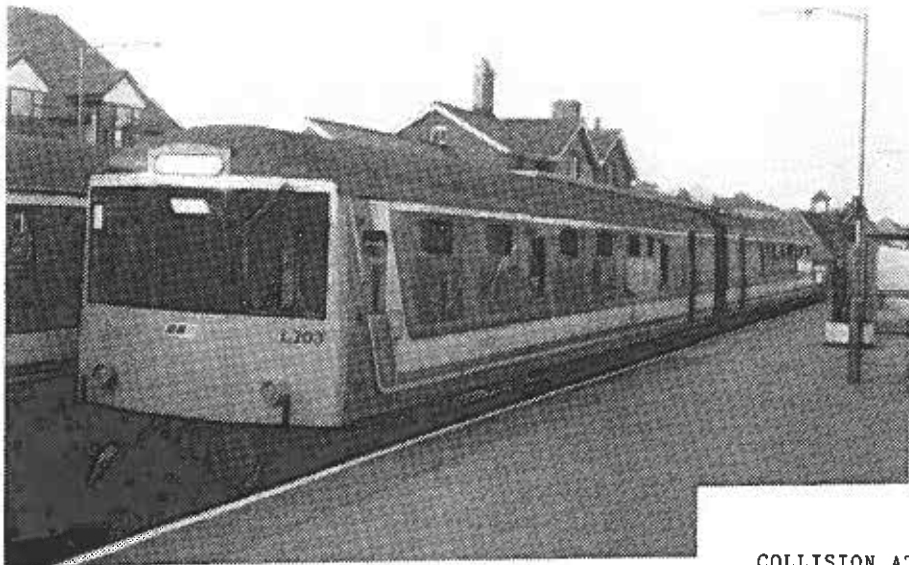
Having perfected our photographic reproduction, a new feature begins in the next issue, "Photoline". In each issue it is hoped to feature a selection of photographs shot by a member. This will be a pictorial feature with only minimal supporting text, the subjects can be related or various and cover any location or period. Contributors could pick a specific theme or just half a dozen "all-time-best" shots.

If you would like to contribute please contact Mike Walker. Don't delay though as these articles take a little more preparation and it would be nice to have several in the pipeline for future issues. Remember black & white or colour prints or slides are useable and the process does not damage your shots.

Next issue: David Gardner presents a surprising variety of motive power at High Wycombe.

RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

NOTES AND NEWS



SOMETHING DIFFERENT

As the first generation dmu era draws to a close the days of predictable set allocations are long past. Among the more surprising survivors are the BRCW class 104 outer suburban units which were supposed to have a short life expectancy a decade ago. Eight DMBS vehicles have wound up at Old Oak Common formed into four 2 car units for the Gospel Oak-Barking service, pool NGBX, and all now wear NSE colours. Very occasionally they stray elsewhere and on Friday 25th May 1990 L703 (53429/53470) spent the day on the Marlow branch. It is seen here at Bourne End during the evening peak. Just visible alongside is another rare visitor to the branch, a GRCW class 119 cross-country set, probably L576, the only such unit allocated to the NWRX Paddington suburban pool.

Photo: John Sears

THAMES 50 FINALE

The final operations by class 50's on services out of Paddington occurred early in July bringing to a close a 17 year era. The final two in traffic were 50.023 'Howe' and 50.035 'Ark Royal'. The latter failed in traffic on 10th July leaving only 50.023 which performed the final round trip on the 18.08 Paddington-Oxford and 21.36 return, with appropriate headboard on Thursday 12th July. On return to Paddington it departed light engine to Clapham Junction to take up new duties on the Waterloo-Exeter services where 50's will remain active for two or three more years, although the Departmental locos at Laira will be gone by October.

Among the replacements are at least four more Scottish 47/7's. 47.702 'Saint Cuthbert' was repainted by Springburn before migrating whilst 47.707 'Hollyrood', 47.715 'Haymarket' and 47.716 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award' all arrived in Scotrail livery but were soon repainted into NSE colours at Old Oak and unlike 47.705 and 47.714 transferred last year, retain their nameplates for the present. There are now eighteen 47/4 and 47/7's in the NWR pool.

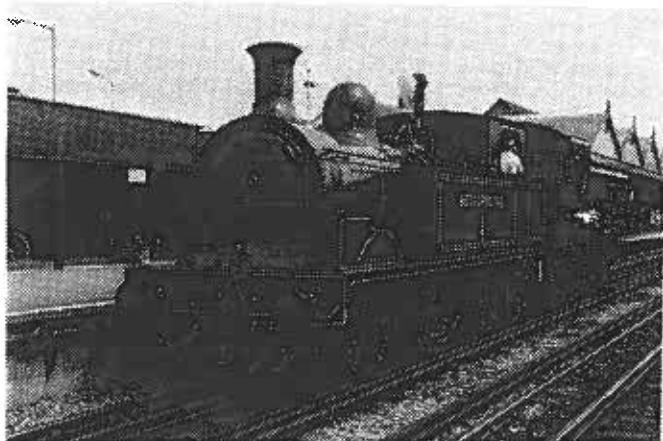
COLLISION AT READING

On 1st August the 07.01 Tonbridge-Reading formed of class 119 dmu L576 with DMBC 51062 leading collided head-on at approximately 20mph with class 423 (4VEP) emu 3508 waiting to leave platform 4A at Reading General as the 09.24 to Waterloo. 41 people were injured, mostly on the dmu, 29 needing hospital treatment and two being detained including the Redhill based driver of the dmu who was trapped in his crushed cab for two hours.

It is understood that BR's internal inquiry has found the cause as being the Tonbridge train passing the final signal before the station which was showing red as the road had been set up for the departure of the Waterloo train. A DoT inquiry is also being held and its findings are awaited. The DoT has expressed concern over increasing numbers of incidents involving "signals passed at danger". Perhaps there lies the cause, the trend to refer to a red signal as "danger", perhaps we should describe such a signal as simply STOP.

ANOTHER CROSSING INCIDENT

There was another collision at Wharf Lane Crossing in Bourne End, involving the 12.30 from Maidenhead which struck a Land-Rover on Saturday 9th June. Once again there were no serious injuries. As always BR thoroughly tested the equipment and managed to flatten the batteries in the process, a problem not discovered until the following Monday.



MET STEAM - 2

A second programme of steam on the Metropolitan saw operation between Harrow-on-the-Hill and Amersham on 22, 23, 29 and 30th July. Quinton based Met 1 and GW 9466 were taking water at Amersham before double heading the 16.10 back to Harrow on the 23rd. The train arrived behind Butterley based B0080 and was formed of LT&S emu 305.517, two ex-BR coaches in LT service and battery-electric loco L44 for braking.

two photos: Dave Little



WEEDING

The only things growing this summer have been weeds, a particularly fine crop was to be found covering the track at Bourne End! Relief was at hand during August when the weed-killing train worked by Hunslet-Barclay owned 20.901 "Nancy" and 20.904 "Janis" spent two weeks spraying all trackage between Reading and Paddington including main lines, branches and yards.

Unfortunately an attempt to spray the Marlow branch on 12th August failed when, upon arrival of the Chipman train at Maidenhead, it was realised that no guard was available to work the ground frame etc at Bourne End! After sitting in the bay for several hours it departed for Windsor.

STEAM OFF WR

A sudden severe shortage of drivers caused the cancellation of the programme of steam specials scheduled to operate on alternate Sundays out of Marylebone this summer. The trains were to be diverted to operate out of Paddington with diesel haulage as far as Didcot. However the continuing drought and fire risk has led the WR to impose a total steam ban until further notice.

The staff shortages have also led to cancellations of service trains on the Chiltern Lines.

CLASS 92 ORDERED

Railfreight Distribution has placed an order with Brush for twenty new Co-Co electric locomotives. Looking much like a class 60 the new machines, to be class 92, will have more

rounded cabs and operate off either 25kV 50Hz overhead or 750V dc third rail supplies. Due for delivery in late 1992 they will operate the trunk freight services to and from the Channel Tunnel.

ARC 59's EXPECTED

At the time of writing the next batch of class 59's, ARC 59.101 - 59.104 were expected to be delivered by early September and be in service shortly after. They will become a familiar sight hauling ARC stone trains on the GW main line. Apart from the livery they should be virtually identical to the Yeoman 59/0's but have been built by Diesel Division GM Canada at London Ontario, although it is likely they will visit EMD's La Grange plant near Chicago for inspection prior to shipment. This is normal practice for special order locomotives.

MEANWHILE YEOMAN THINK BIG

Having successfully hauled Britain's heaviest ever train, 50 hoppers weighing 5100 tons behind 59.005 between Merehead and Acton on 19th June, Yeoman are now suggesting a train of between 7000 and 8000 tons (thats around 75 hoppers or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in length). Such a huge train would be hauled by a single 59 throughout but a second 59, or possibly 60, would be used as a banker as far as Savernake summit. No doubt some line occupation problems would arise, but Yeoman are anxious to reduce their ton-mile costs, no doubt with one eye on the competition "over the hill".

RISBOROUGH LOCALS IN THE 1930's

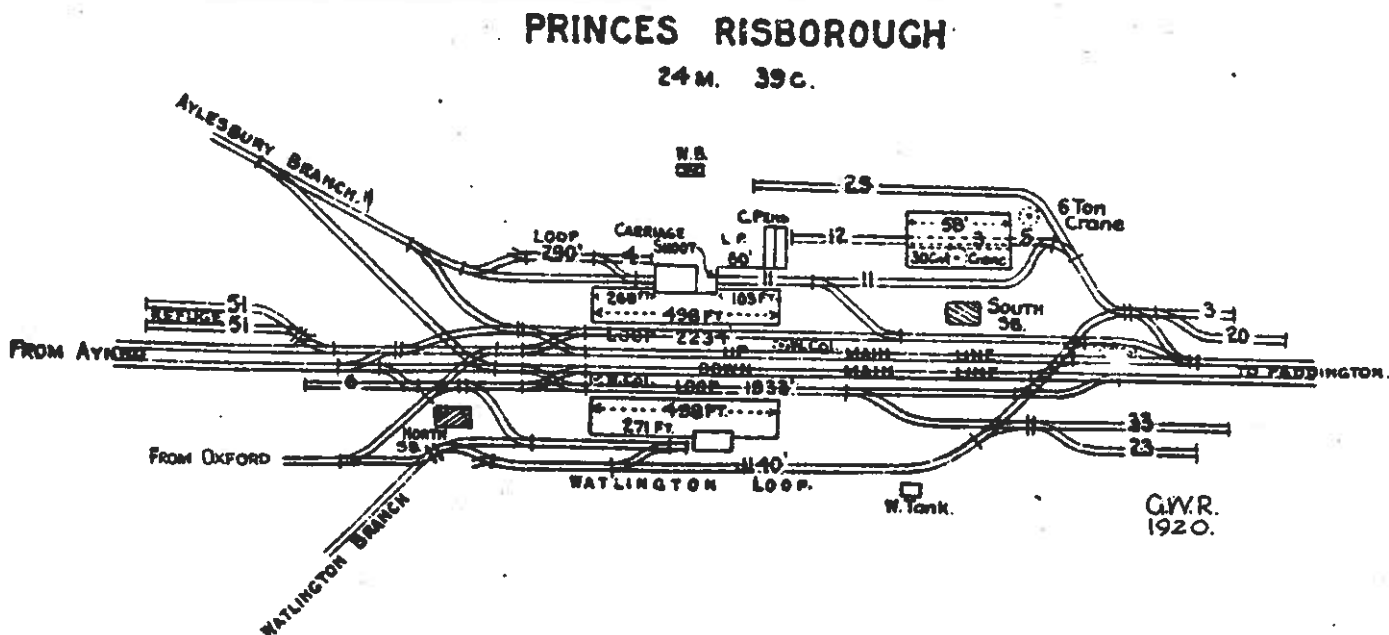
Peter Bond

Not for nothing did the splendid GWR Princes Risborough North signal box, still the length of a cricket pitch, once house nearly a hundred levers. The GW & GC Princes Risborough layout was unusually interesting because the four-track section through the station fanned out into four routes at its North end and three of these - Oxford, Aylesbury and Main Line - had access to or from each track as well as one of the two North bays, whilst the fourth line - the Watlington branch - could be reached by a goods loop at the back of the down platform and, of course, from the down bay. Scissor crossings, ladders and double slips were all in evidence as were fine arrays of GWR lower quadrant junction signals.

Local train services in the Thirties were equally complex and

mostly Great Western. Only two or three LNER suburban services from Marylebone each day ventured beyond High Wycombe and these did so solely to serve the linking line from Ashendon Junction to Grendon Underwood, and incidentally Haddenham, to terminate either at Wotton or Brackley (Central) or Woodford.

The basic London service North of High Wycombe was provided by through GWR Oxford and Aylesbury trains from and to Paddington via Beaconsfield calling at almost every station North of Greenford or Ruislip, and sometimes the Ealings as well. Only one down GWR local train (and none up) continued on the main line to Haddenham, Bicester and Banbury. Usually, on weekdays, there were four Oxford and six Aylesbury through trains each way, not counting an additional odd one or two via Maidenhead.



The Oxford trains normally comprised five or six assorted GW coaches, including at least one corridor vehicle, pulled by a Hall class loco. In the case of Aylesbury trains non-corridor stock was more usual with 6LXX tank engines in charge. Trains on both routes carried small destination boards on the coaches reading "High Wycombe, Maidenhead and Paddington" or "Beaconsfield, High Wycombe and Oxford". The LNER local trains were totally anonymous.

There were a few fast services. Each morning around 9.15 the LNER stopped its Mansfield to Marylebone express and a GWR fast train from Birmingham to Paddington called shortly afterwards. In the down direction there was a Marylebone to Bradford visitation at lunch time and a slip coach off the 7.10 from Paddington to Shrewsbury offered a non-stop evening service.

M&DRS on tour -1

WEST COUNTRY STEAMING

Len Stroud

The time had come once again for the members annual outing and with no adverse reflection on ventures in past years some of us thought this one took some beating. So it was that early on Sunday 15th July - early for a Sunday that is - 8.30 Gavin arrived with his coach at the "Donkey" to pick up virtually a full load of members and their families. A few had joined at Wycombe and we made good connections with others on the way, Terry Dredge at the Bath Road roundabout and a very well timed rendezvous at Leigh Delamere service station* where we made a comfort stop for 30 mins. It happened that some months ago David Gardner had moved from Bourne End to Chippenham but maintained contact with the Society and had in fact met some of the lads at Swindon a week or two earlier. It would be nice to mention that he brought his 5(?) year old daughter with him and she was a delightful poppet who never, during the whole day, showed any fretful tantrums which can so often spoil other travellers pleasures - and probably a Society record for "youngest member".

Gavin kept up a reasonable cruising speed and we took full advantage of a very clear, very warm day to see some vistas of the English countryside as we travelled west to our destination which was the West Somerset Railway at Minehead. I gathered from several of the party that they were surprised at the impression that this resort was not the sleepy little town they expected, bearing in mind of course that the holiday season was peaking. It was certainly active with entertainments and eating places, four in hand cycles and water sports. We arrived in the midday hour and some who had not carried food with them avoided the town restaurants and used the WSR Buffet and Restaurant Coach parked adjacent to the platform. I understand the food (and cost) compared well with many other railway venues - extremely well against British Rail.

We were timed to catch the 14.05 from Minehead to Bishop Lydeard (all stations) with a reserved coach for our party. The day was still progressing well and we pulled out on time headed by 2-8-0 ex Somerset & Dorset 7F 53808 (built at Derby) which seemed to have no trouble hauling a fair rake of coaches, albeit at a leisurely pace probably reminiscent of the early running days of the 20's and 30's. I cannot admit to any gasp of pleasure - "she" was adequately clean and capable but showed up badly against GWR liveried locomotives in the yard and in steam - it was not "The Old Lady's" fault - it was just the type she was constructed to be.

We made contact on route at Dunster, Doniford Beach, Blue Anchor and at Watchet with caravan camps right on the shore and at Washford, on the return journey, those who wished could break the journey to visit the Somerset & Dorset Railway Museum - where also the footpath covers the track of the old WS Mineral Railway.

There are 10 stations in all on the line with Williton as a passing point - where we met a smart 0-6-0 Pannier (GWR) known as the "Flockton Flyer" - she was pulling a rake of 4 which somehow seemed the right tonnage for such a locomotive. Hazards of undergrowth fires on an exceptionally hot day was shown by many charred trackside patches and on this particular journey our train was halted beyond Williton by a fire obviously started by the "Flockton Flyer" being the last to pass the spot on the single line. Our train was delayed while our "brave train crew" tackled the blaze and we heard distant fire engine sirens without sight of the engine. In this rolling hilly country, contact with scenes of fires is not easy and much must rely on railway staff working lineside or on trains.

Then, of course, there were the branch trains which generally speaking provided connections for the lines not directly served by a train from or to Paddington and also connected with each other. These were the Watlington, the Aylesbury auto and the Banbury auto. The last named provided the local service Northward on the main line and was reputedly known as the "Risborough Dasher".

There was also a morning train from Banbury to Risborough via Oxford and the Aylesbury auto made occasional forays to Thame. For a while, on Tuesday mornings a coach was detached from an Aylesbury train from Thame Market Day. The autos were all GWR, but, at one time, there was a curious morning working to High Wycombe and back by the LNER push and pull from Aylesbury which normally operated to Quainton Road and Verney Junction.



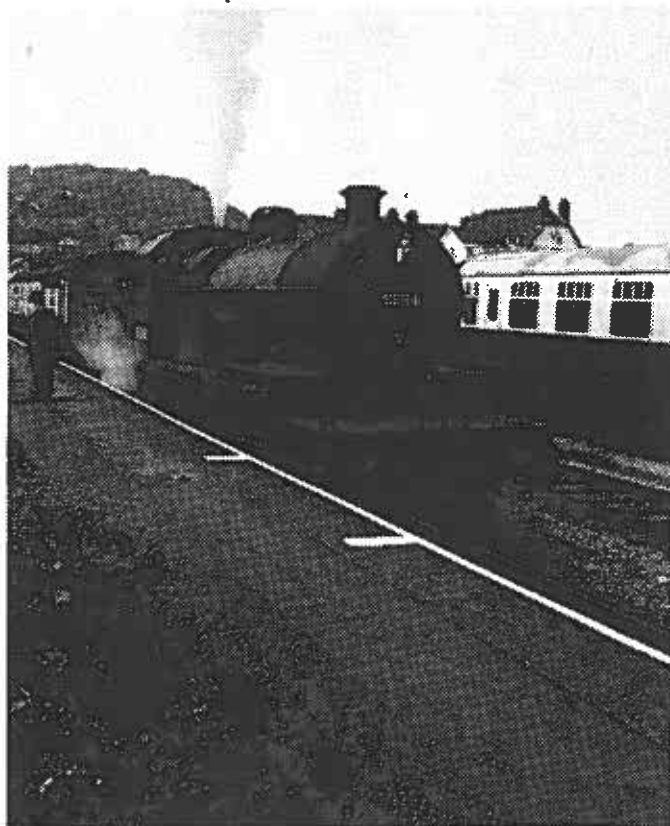
This hazard did not delay our return to Minehead from Bishop Lydeard at 1600 hrs collecting on the way those of the party who had "dropped off", although we did pick up some later at Washford and Dunster on the coach on the way home.

There was no shortage in viewing the amount of restoration on the route. Rolling stock was a problem in itself; track maintenance would occupy many months labour; station buildings already have received much reclamation, although one long platform deteriorated into open space and I wondered at the safe length of the rake used!!

The station at Williton is of the 1860's variety and was well restored. The very titles of Taunton Deans and the Quantock Hills can only hint at the lovely country we enjoyed on this 20 mile track - and we could look seaward also at the beach stations and out to Watchet Harbour.

I must admit that it was a glutinous mess when the tide was out! And so away at 5.30 (sorry 17.30 WSR time) and an enjoyable run through hill and vale to the motorway - where the rot set in with tailbacks and speed restrictions - and one or more unfortunate souls at roadside with bonnets up. Never mind you Jack - we arrived home safely.

* David knows better.



Ex- S&D 7F 2-8-0 53808 waits to leave Minehead conveying the MDRS party on the West Somerset on 15th July.

Photo: Mike Walker

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The autumn of 1965 saw the usual mix of locomotive withdrawals line closures and new rolling stock.

The new rolling stock comprised the first of fifty type AM10 four car electric multiple units built by Derby Carriage and Wagon Works with English Electric equipment for outer suburban services between Euston, Bletchley, Northampton and Rugby. Rated at 1050 hp and with a top speed of 75 mph these units were the first production run coaches to be finished in the then new "rail-blue" livery with yellow end panels.

In early June high speed tests were conducted on a special train from Paddington to Plymouth. Double headed by two type 3 locomotives D6881 and D6882, giving a combined horsepower of 3,500, the 10 coach train of 9 'XP64' type coaches and the Western Region track testing car travelled the 173.5 miles from Paddington to Exeter in 132 minutes 21 seconds. In 1965 this 78.8 mph average was a new record.

On the subject of speed, the fastest timetabled trains in the 1965 summer timetable were 3 runs between Rugby and Crewe at a speed of 74.85 mph. The fastest Western Region run was the 9.21 Badminton to Didcot at 72.13 mph.

Electric trains ran for the first time to and from Reading General station on the 6th September. This was made possible by linking the Western and Southern systems at Reading preparatory to the closure of Reading Southern station.

20th September saw passenger services withdrawn between Chippenham and Calne.

On 27th September the death occurred of Sir William Stannier, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the LMS from 1932 to 1944. Born in 1876 Stannier began work as an apprentice at Swindon Works and worked through the Swindon hierarchy before moving to the LMS in 1932.

5th September saw the last of the Summer only passenger service on the Ulverstone to Lakeside, Windermere branch, originally Furness Railway.

Negotiations were being opened with British Railways by the Horsham & Guildford Direct Railway Society to lease the 15½ miles of single track line recently closed between Peasemarch Junction and Christs Hospital.

18th September saw the first open day of the Reading Group of the Great Western Society at Taplow. More than 1700 people attended. On view were 4079 "Pendennis Castle" Brush type 4 and Hymek type 3 diesels and the then latest BR standard first class coach.

One final item of note, new Garratt type locomotives were still being built!! Not in England unfortunately. The South African Railways had recently placed an order with Hunslet Taylor Consolidated (Pty) of Johannesburg for eight 2-6-2+2-6-2 Garratt locomotives of class NG/G16 for their two foot gauge system.

An interesting mix for the autumn of 1965.



TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

From the Marlow Donkey No.16 of September 1980.

The Chairman's opening article referred to a recession in the preservation scene, in particular the number of steam excursions. Articles in the "Donkey" included details of a derailment at Fawley and a report on a visit to Bressingham by several members on a Chiltern Trains excursion. Other articles included a report on a visit by twenty-eight members and friends to the Chinnor Branch Railway, a tour conducted by Harold Bonnett; also an article on the work of the Transport

Trust to which the Society is affiliated. The final article was part 8 of Mike Walker's "Wycombe Railway".

Meetings in the summer had been an illustrated talk by Roger Bowen and Mike Walker on their tour of Canada the previous year, Roger again with Alistair Watson on the Society's visit to "Rocket 150", and the August "visit" in 1980 - this was to Old Oak Common organised by Steve Medway. Finally the summer family outing was to the Watercress Line and the Tasker Traction Engine Museum at Winchester.

BOOKSHELF

Ron Brooks

William McGonagall (poet and tragedian), 1825-1902, was, and probably is, the odds on favourite for the title of the worlds worst poet. His Railway Bridge of the Silvery Tay; The Newport Railway; The Tay Bridge Disaster; An address to the New Tay Bridge and Saving a Train, demonstrate that he knew a good subject when he saw one - and all these manifestations of his art are recommended - not as poems, but as contemporary reportage. On the subject of Autumn he wrote 'And the leaves are withered and falling off the trees, by the nipping and chilling autumnal breeze'. So we had best look for some 'fireside' books - some with weight, lots with nostalgia, but none, fortunately, in the excruciating metre of McGonagall's poetry.

The Royal Trains
Patrick Kingston

David & Charles (Spring)
ISBN 0 600 56287 5

McGonagall was a great admirer of Queen Victoria (my favourite pin-up) who presided over the Empire and for whom numerous royal trains were constructed. This book is devoted to these magnificent vehicles and to the less sumptuous creations provided for subsequent monarchs. The royal vehicles were a golden opportunity for innovations and most, or course, for Queen V. They included corridor connections (which Q.V. would not use), electric lighting (which Q.V. would not use) and toilets (which Q.V. would never mention and did not find amusing). Each monarch has a chapter and the details and regulations surrounding the running of a royal train make fascina-

ting reading. All the illustrations are good, one or two of the interiors are superb. There are lots of drawings for modellers.

The National Railway Collection

Collins
ISBN 0 00 218215 7

This is by no means a mere catalogue of the marvels at York, with or without the second turntable. It covers the museum artefacts - but using the museum items as specific illustrations of the general railway world. A beautifully produced book with 100 or so colour pictures plus another 200 in black and white. The type face and paper are likewise most satisfactory. Just the book for short reads by the fire, especially if an eventual visit is planned.

Railway Road Vehicles
L. Geary

Ian Heatty
ISBN 0 86025 411 9

This is a useful little book which reminds us that the railways soon rumbled the advantages of using local cartage services to and from their stations. As soon as they were reliable they used petrol buses instead of building ever more expensive branch lines. Unfortunately the best illustration is on the cover! There are numerous interesting pictures of vehicles but the reproduction process is on a par with news print. The text is interesting and the print is clear but the font is one I dislike. A book most useful for reference but not for pleasure.



As might be expected this book has very good 'then & now' pictures taken in and around London - grouped in areas. Each pair (sometimes more) of pictures has a most comprehensive text covering track, buildings, rolling stock and a host of other relevant details. An ideal reference book and even better for short educational 'reads'. There is a railway map for each area and the 'then' pictures are around 1900 giving a wonderful look at an age that expected to last for ever - and blew up in 1914. A surprising number of buildings seem to have survived which, if you happen to be familiar with any of the stations pictured, is a guaranteed generator of nostalgia.

If there is a text book on this subject, this is it. However it is also easy to read and wherever they are required you will find an appropriate table or map. The layout of the book goes from large towns to small, demonstrating a mastery of the subject which is confirmed with pleasure on every page. The impact of the railways, good and not so good, is all here ready for study, reference and enjoyment. It is a salutary experience to see how few, if any, history books ever even mention the railway. This book handsomely restores the balance

M&DRS on tour - 2

MAYHEM ABOUNDS UP NORTH

WORTH VALLEY

Martin Pink

The time had come but once again, when young and old men alike did turn their minds, to smut and filth, and grease and grime, those wondrous machines that hissed and clanked, whose wheels ran upon metal rails, that once did cross our fair land.

Their thoughts did follow the road to the North, away from wives and bosses (the same you say), awkward clients, the almost daily bills and office drills. T'was late spring, near to the end of May, eight thirty one Friday morn, saw mad Mike the video buff, with Eddie the chauffeur beside at the wheel. Along came a cod piece, a mountain goat and a man who only spoke of Uncle Sam, there was a boy shortly to pass through a rusty iron curtain and a chap called Bond, some said Basildon Bond. Oh! and I nearly forgot, and who could forget, the man who wasn't there.

So off they went the seven of them up the road that seemed so long, but that they didn't care, the chatter was fast, the mood was frivolous and much was made of mad Mike, his cows, and where to make for before supper.

Midday saw the spires of York, and was not long before beer merrily was consumed, and beef as well putting Mike in quite a fright. The noon did pass and the seven did enter York's favourite and famous railway centre. Much was made of locos and stock, painted and polished but sadly stuffed, stationary and silent. Silent like the man who wasn't there.

And time did pass and Vulcans loco seen, along a B road and over the Moor the seven did venture to see a "Bronte"saurus and a kindly "Old White Lion", that beckoned with promises of clean sheets, good food and flaggons of ale. The day was ended and the seven fulfilled, even mad Mike ate his supper and re-

tired to rest his head and dream; of reams of tape, of steam and clag, and spectacular sounds with a battery that never went dead.

And so day one had started of the 1990 MDRS sojourn to the railways of Yorkshire and Lancashire, risking another war of the roses, we had bedded down at the "Old White Lion" at Haworth, nr. Keighley, a town famous for its local railway, Hovis commercials, BBC television dramas and some obscure family of dead writers. The hotel as already intimated was very atmospheric, well equipped, comfortable and excellent in the food and drink line. It was however at the top of a bloody great big hill from the railway station. This however enabled us to walk off our dinners each night before retiring to the residents lounge for, in my case, several tots of Jamesons! And what may you ask is the reference to the man who wasn't there, well Peter Greatorex, the 8th member of our party had to cancel his booking at the last minute. However, I'm sure he was really with us in spirit, especially when he finds out what he missed.

Day two started with the five of us STILL cameramen venturing of to the route of the Settle & Carlisle line, while our two compatriots with moving eyes settled down to record, in their own way, the Worth Valley line for posterity. So myself, Eddie and Geoff settled down in the rear of Monsieur Walker's Dagenham Dustbin (sorry Mike - luxury Sierra) expertly navigated by Peter (globe trotter) Robins for a whirlwind tour of the Pennines.

After a timetable check at Keighley, we sited ourselves in a field north of Skipton. An hours wait ensued before we were rewarded with the sight and sound of Jubilee class "Bahamas"

Former LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 'Bahamas' rounds a curve and passes the distant signal marking the approach to Hellifield bound for the Settle & Carlisle line on 26th May 1990. The train ran as far as Appleby and returned behind ex-SR 777 "Sir Lamiel".

All photos Martin Pink



Black & white reproduction and a steam leak help to tone down that "bloody awful" yellow livery worn by pannier tank 5775 as it storms up hill out of Keighley with the 12.00 to Oxenhope on 27th May. The fictitious GN&SR livery has been reapplied to mark the 20th anniversary of the film 'The Railway Children'.



snorting past as she might have on that very line thirty odd years ago. Time waits for no man and before long the faithful Sierra was scraping its way along country lanes towards the Ribbleshead Viaduct. I say scraping because of the weight in the rear of the car, the mudflaps remained in contact with the ground for most of the journey. Mike was convinced that what read "Maidenhead Autos" at the start would only read "Maidenhead" by the time we had finished.

Our timing was spot on, as after a climb to our photographic positions (along with several thousand others), a forage into a bag of peanuts and a swig of juice, "Bahamas" again came into view. This time she seemed to step gently onto this famous and grand old structure, as if she had been told how important the viaduct is and had heard about the battle to keep the line open. Lunch was taken at a pleasant hostelry near Dent, I say lunch, ale and KitKat was all we had time for before setting up our positions at Ais Gill, another famous and equally beautiful spot. This time round we had quite a wait before King Arthur class "Sir Lamiel" chugged into view. However, it was well worth it and, indeed, we caught it twice again before we retired back to ye old and friendly hostelry.

Day three and, as the Americans might say on a whirlwind tour, this must be the Embsay Railway. Embsay is quite a pleasant little line which has potential, but is certainly overshadowed by its more established neighbour. One of our party rather cruelly suggested it was a northern outpost of Quainton Road, probably because all the locos there are of industrial heritage. However, the line boasts a rather splendid Midland station building and the loco on duty that morning was a very nicely turned out, and aptly Leeds built, 0-6-OST called "Beatrice". A wander round the yard brought about the discovery of several Gresley coaches in need of restoration, an impressive collection of rail chairs and an old friend from home, in the shape of Slough Estates No.5.

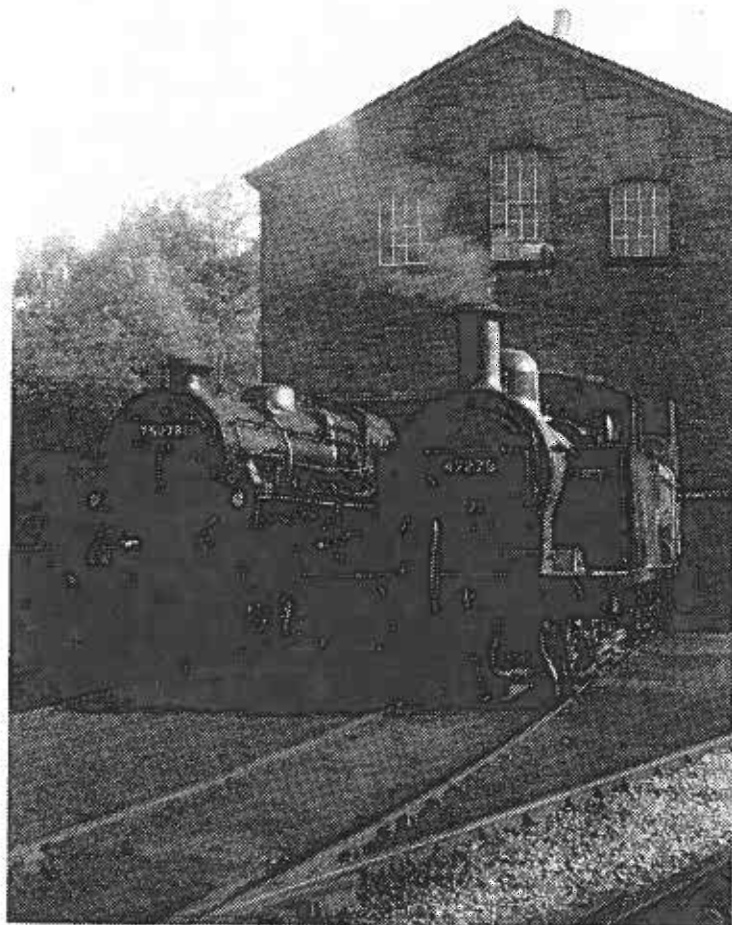
Whilst the Dales line proved pleasant, we really had to do justice to the real intention of our visit - the Keighley & Worth Valley - location of the "Railway Children", home of "Bellerophon", "City of Wells" and originator of the most peculiar loco livery in British Railway preservation.

Not to be surprised our first "phot" of the day was the GWR Pannier sporting the "EMI" - "GN & SR" livery (similar to Colmans mustard) leaving Keighley on the noon departure. A lovely loco but a bloody awful colour. However after a pleasant wait at Damens Crossing we were rewarded with the sight and sound of a British Railway's Class 4, in lo and behold BR Black! We were to catch both locos several more times that day one of the most photogenic points at a viaduct just before the short Mytholmes tunnel prior to Haworth. Most of the stations along this short line have quite distinct characters, Keighley being the matter of fact junction with British Rail, whilst Oakworth, where the Railway Children was set, certainly has the feel of a forgotten branch line backwater. Ingrow which unfortunately I didn't have time to visit, houses the Vintage Carriage Museum, and shortly to be the base for the homeless Dinting Mob.

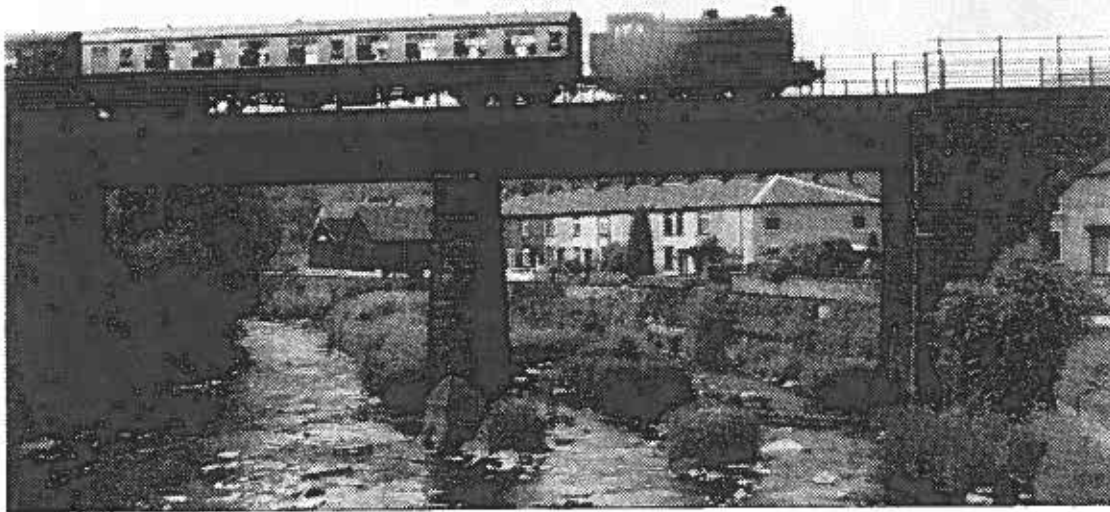
Oxenhope, the terminus of the line, houses a pleasant coach bound buffet, which sells excellent meat pies, has an obligatory souvenir shop and a substantial museum of at least a dozen or so locos, including a WD2-10-0, a Black Five, two L & Y Pugs and a wealth of industrials.

However, the heart of the line has to be at Haworth, a pleasant Midland station just along the line from the bustling Motive Power Depot. Here we found "City of Wells", a brace of rail cars, locos in bits - in process of restoration a BR "Rat" Class 25, an 08, a Midland 4F, the Class 4, the Yucky Pannier Tank and a delightful Jinty. Needless to say Haworth Shed was the destination for many a morning stroll down the steep hill for the more keen of us. (No really I did manage it once, honest!)

Whilst I can't really do justice to the professionalism of the Worth Valley line I must really pass on to day four when the seven venture into Lancashire. Shortly after breakfast Bank Holiday Monday, we "bade farewell to the kindly Old White Lion", in all seriousness an excellent hostelry, reasonable



Proof of an early morning foray to Haworth shed. BR4 4-6-0 75078 and 'Jinty' 47279 await their days labours on 28th May.



'Austerity' saddle tank 193 crosses the impressive Summerseat Viaduct with a northbound train from Bury to Ramsbottom on the East Lancs Railway on 28th May and shot from the pub garden during lunch!

prices and good old Yorkshire hospitality. It was on Sunday night that one of the gang mentioned over dinner "Do you know I'd quite like to stay here" and a wag quipped, "But..... you just have".

Anyway day four and whilst 4 stayed a little longer at the Worth, the Fawley dual member contingent made their way over the Pennines to "deepest Lancashire". Bury was the first stop (not over impressive) and the East Lancs line, our destination. The Bolton Road Station must rank as contender for preservation most dreary looking station with an indifferent 1950's style frontage, although to be fair at platform level things did start to look up. The bulk of the East Lancs stock is situated under the road in a quite substantial goods shed; a motley collection of industrial diesels, steam engines, trucks and even one or two cranes. Feeling slightly guilty (as I know how important they can be to preservation) but I just can't help not getting enthused over yet another industrial saddle tank hauling yet another rake of ex BR Mk1 coaches. Wrong though I may be, that's the way it is. The three of us took quite a pleasant trip along the line, fairly urban to start but with a pleasant stretch around Summerseat and towards the end at Ramsbottom. The track passes through two tunnels and over one longer than average viaduct, it is due to be extended in September so perhaps it might have quite a rosy future. One thing that puzzles me, a stalwart of the railway is the Hudswell-Clarke 0-60, formerly of the Manchester Ship

Canal and it is called Gothenburg - surely this isn't a Lancastrian name. Answer on a postcard please!! Well lunch time rolled around and all the team met up at the Waterside Hostelry in Summerseat for a barbie, a couple of photos as the train passed nearby and then bade farewell as we again went our separate ways.

The last destination on our Whitsun trip was to Manchester's Industry and Science Museum, a large spread of buildings, although we only had time to do justice to the power house. Other than working stationary engines, an ex Isle of Man loco, a Stannier Black Five and an ex Pakistani loco, it also housed one of the largest Garretts exported to (and returned from) South Africa. Truly an impressive loco, it is not hard to understand how Britain was once called the workshop of the world, though by now we just seem to be a theme park. Still we started with a museum in York and we finished with a museum in Manchester.

It was a very pleasant weekend trip and where to go next, well that's another question?

PS Our illustrious Editor mentioned at the AGM this year that my "Diary" of the 1989 MDRS trip was the first article in the "Donkey" he's ever had to censor, so for those wondering whether he's done it again



A Canadian Farewell

THE FORGOTTEN BREAKFAST

John Sears

In the last edition we had the facts and figures, so come now on a run on No.1, the westbound Canadian. Windsor Station, Montreal, and there she is, all 6 cars and 2 locos. We're off at 11.15 for the run to Sudbury, where we'll be combined with the Toronto section. It's 11.47 so this must be ... Beaconsfield. Already 30-40% of the land is forest, a foretaste of Ontario tomorrow. After leaving Ottawa we indulge in a little of the manoeuvres that North American railways love. After branching off the main, we stop then reverse over a level crossing of the main line we've just left, then, after a mile, through a junction onto another line where we stop. We then recommence our journey, rejoining the line we left just before but now travelling forwards. The result is clear at Smith's Falls, passed about 90 late. However by Marathon at 8.14 the next morning we're only 41 late. At Sudbury the Toronto portion was added, but the train's still only 7 cars long. We gained an extra sleeper and now are baggage, coach, dome coffee shop coach, diner, 2 sleepers and the dome obs., 109 coach seats and all of 54 sleeper berths.

It's best up in the dome. Here you can see all around, watch ahead for the signals or trains in sidings, all the while listening to one's fellow passengers. Despite some frighteningly right-wing women in the dome out of Sudbury; much more interesting is the old lady from Winnipeg. The conversation

ranges through economists, social history, meals in VIA and Kalamazoo!

Most of the second day is spent crossing western Ontario, which is trees, rocks and lakes with a few towns and many, many miles twisting along a ledge above Lake Superior. Don't be misled by anything in Canada. All those trees, rocks and lakes sound the same, but just why is that lake frozen and that one not? and just look where that tree's managed to find a root hold. Lake Superior lives up to its name, of course. It's really a sea, no land is visible on its far side, and those waves are big. It's amazing what you see on the railway, too. Heading east at Schrieber on a flat car is a British double-decker bus!

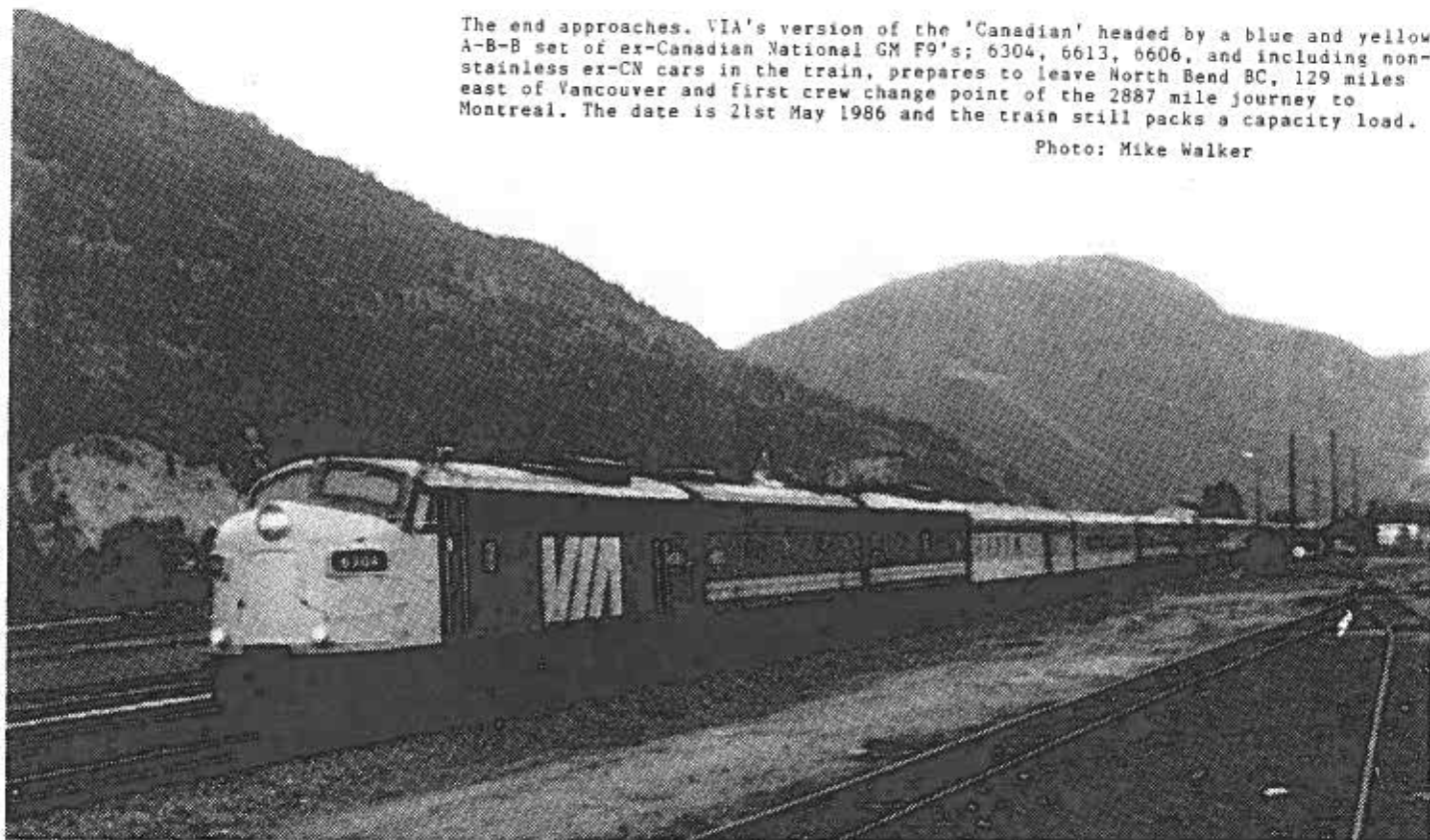
Thunder Bay is a major grain trans-shipment port at the west end of Lake Superior and gives a hint of the prairies to come. It's double track from here on and the terrain allows for faster running. Perhaps that's why 27 minutes after leaving Thunder Bay a hot-box detector is flashing O20 - definitely not a case of "high-ball the scanner No.1". We halt and the axle is checked. 4 minutes later we're off again. Frequently the detectors are responding to sticking brakes, or even the heat from the diner's galley.

One odd practice, considering the weather and the thousands of miles involved, is the North American habit of hanging the



The end approaches. VIA's version of the 'Canadian' headed by a blue and yellow A-B-B set of ex-Canadian National GM F9's; 6304, 5613, 6606, and including non-stainless ex-CN cars in the train, prepares to leave North Bend BC, 129 miles east of Vancouver and first crew change point of the 2887 mile journey to Montreal. The date is 21st May 1986 and the train still packs a capacity load.

Photo: Mike Walker



signalling cables from good old-fashioned telegraph poles. To judge by the number that stand in several feet of water, or at very drunken angles, a fair amount of trouble must be caused by the poles falling.

There's plenty of traffic. In the 300 miles since Thunder Bay we've seen 11 eastbound freights and passed 1 westbound, of 100 empty grain hoppers with one loco, No.5619, an SD40-2 of 3,000 hp.

Winnipeg is reached safely and now we could, if travelling whilst VIA's long stop campaign was underway, leave the train for a guided tour round Winnipeg on a River Rouge double deck 'bus. Well, we've got over three hours, so why not? We visit the french area of St. Boniface, some rather posh suburbs and the provincial legislature. The interior is gorgeous, with its colours of dark gold, light and mid blue. Before rejoining the train we stop at one of the River Rouge cruise boats for lunch. Yes, it is on the Red Riviere. An uprising of Metis in 1885 was quickly snuffed out because the railway ensured the speedy arrival of troops. The government was impressed, and produced extra funds to complete the CP in the mountains far to the west.

A later war was resolved in the railway's favour in 1983, when the "Crow's Nest Pass" Agreement of 1897 was repealed. As we leave Winnipeg a CN freight departs eastbound, mostly grain hoppers, one of which proclaims "Keep the Crow!". Definitely

not painted by a railroader. CP estimated that, by then, it and CN were losing \$200 million per year on grain traffic. The "Crow" forced the railways to carry grain at 1897 rates! Now the rate's been deleted and CP can afford to build the new line under Mount Macdonald.

Well, we're deep into the source of most of that grain here. At milepost 8 the headlight of an eastbound freight is espied; it's 6 miles further before we meet it, stopped at Meadows. Names in Canada come from a wonderful mixture of sources. England - Sudbury; Scotland - Calgary; Wales - Radnor; Canada - Illecillewaet, and from most places and peoples in between. Despite most people's preconceptions, the prairies are not flat. Try the March - Ely line for flat countryside, not the prairies. They undulate, and the railways, surveyed on the ground, and not on some blank "map", reveal that fact. The track twists to a surprising extent to avoid hills and there are some impressive climbs out of river valleys. The landscape is often what I term "golf course topography"; patches of trees, rough, curving patches of arable and quite hummocky. Through that lot there has been quite a lot of realignment; cuttings dug through hills to reduce curvature are common.

My last westbound trip in 1986 was delayed severely by a combination of mechanical trouble between Montreal and Sudbury, left 117 late, and general operating troubles on to Winnipeg, left about 4 hours late. By the time Medicine Hat arrived, we were 265 late. Timekeeping was normally much better - earlier



trips ranged from 2 early to 13 late, but the impression in 1986 was very much "who cares". Bilingual comments scrawled on the woodwork of Lake Louise's unstaffed station confirmed that.

Calgary has a major yard, and workshops at Ogden, and is a main junction, with lines south to Lethbridge and the US, and north to Edmonton. Much sulphur traffic is collected here and joins the flow of grain in block trains to the Pacific. The station has been rebuilt, redeveloped is today's more fiscal phrase. A tower, once the Husky Tower, now just plain CP Tower, rises 626 ft above the station and reveals eyestretching views round the compass. Westward range the Rockies, so, remembering Mr. Greeley's command off we go.

Er, no, we don't! Despite it being the 14th of May, Mother Nature has sent about 5 inches of wet, heavy snow, which a strong wind has drifted most effectively over a totally unsuspecting Alberta. The airport's shut, schools are closed, power is out. The result, as far as CP is concerned is, basically, no signals. Hence No.1 is posted as being 5 hours late! Oh well, at least I can try out Calgary's LRT system, which is smooth, rapid and very impressive.

Here's No.1 at last, 11 cars and 5 hours 22 minutes late. Never mind, its only 82 miles to Banff and we regain 21 minutes. We're really into the mountains now, with peaks rising up to 5,000 ft above us. The line follows the Bow River valley through pine forests. The trees climb the mountain slopes to amazing heights, the lone sentinels at the top defiant of geology and meteorology. Avalanche trails sweep light grey gashes through the dark green, a reminder of the youth of these mountains. They've been forming for about the last 70 million years; that fact together with the effects of the glaciers, which retreated only 10,000 years ago, makes for very steep, unstable slopes. Many of the mountains have very distinctive shapes. Castle Mountain looks just like a rectangular fortress Mount Rundle dips in a very uncomfortable way. The strata reveal themselves in great lines above the trees.

Unlike Swiss mountain scenery, or other European mountain areas, there are no alps, or mountain pastures. Apart from small towns such as Field, Golden and Revelstoke, population about 10,000, you and the train are very much alone. Between Lake Louise and Field lie the spirals, with their curved tunnels, built in 1908 to reduce the grade. They replaced 4 miles of 1 in 22, and loop the railway down on its way from the continental divide to the flats of the Kicking Horse River. A "point of interest" marker on the Trans-Canada Highway shows road-bound fools where to pull-in for a view of the ultimate in transport. From a wooden gallery the entrances to the lower tunnel can be seen. An average freight reappears from one mouth whilst still disappearing into the other. Two freights, one down grade and one up grade, obliged with a spectacle. The echoing of the locos' horns round the mountains, the steady throb of 12,000 horsepower as the eastbound ground its way uphill with 7 or 8,000 tons of freight, and the natural splendour of the Rockies combine to create a little bit of heaven.

Down the canyons from Field we wriggle until at Golden, No.1 turns north into the Columbia River Valley. Here the Columbia is flowing north before Big Bend round the Selkirks. We're now in British Columbia, as opposed to American Columbia. At Beavermouth, the mouth of the beaver Valley, we turn south and begin to climb up to the Connaught Tunnel. The railway clings to the west side of the valley, climbing ever higher through the forests. There are several bridges over tributary streams; Stoney Creek is the least passenger friendly. It leaps 484 ft across the creek, 325 ft above it and gives a clear view right down the rapidly falling creek to the main valley floor - it's a very, very long way. Connaught Tunnel is five miles long, and was, until 1959, double track. It was singled then to reate more headroom for the higher freight cars. Tri-level auto racks are around 19½ ft tall. There will be no clearance problems with the new Mount Macdonald Tunnel, which is 25 ft 10 inches high and 17 ft wide!

From Glacier at the western end of the tunnel we follow the Illecillawet River down to Revelstoke, where the Columbia reappears, now flowing south, towards the States. Revelstoke marks the end of the mountain climbing. From here to Kamloops the land is more relaxed, though still akin to the Highlands, rather than say, to the Lincolnshire Wolds. Kamloops is at the confluence of the north and South Thompson Rivers and heralds the canyon running which takes the railway 180 miles to Agassiz. At Lytton the Fraser Canyon is reached. All down these canyons the CP line, the CN line and the highway cling tenaciously to the unstable slopes. Because the CP was first, it has the best alignment and forces the CN route built nearly 30 years later, to find whatever course it can.

Those canyon miles are usually, unless very late, covered during the dark, which is probably best, especially at times of flood. The rivers rise very quickly and look like liquid mud as they carry their load of toppled trees down to the lowlands. Eventually, the Fraser Delta region is reached and the train unwinds briefly on a flat, straighter course. Vancouver is a compact, clean, sea-girt city with a marvelous mountain background. It's a fitting terminus to the Canadian's continental span.

It's the 17th of May and No.2 is late. Due off Field at 9 hrs it still hasn't appeared at Stephen, by Wapta Lake. Oh well, let's have some breakfast. 5 minutes later, with first fork-full poised, glancing through the window out across the Lake - what's that? No.2! Forget the breakfast, quick out to that car! We chased that train right to Morant's Curve, 12 miles. Ah me, that was satisfying! How about another go at breakfast? Lining-up to pay for our second (well, she was No.2!) attempt, we're told "that's okay, you've already paid". Do you think they're used to the quirks of us railfans?

There used to be another such train; domes, stainless steel and masses of scenery. She was called a "Silver Lady". Me-thinks the Canadian was the "Silver Princess". Thanks for all those thousands of miles of memories. Are you really not here?

A class way to punctuate a train! Every 'Canadian' was trailed by one of the 18 'Park' class dome-observation-sleeping cars built in stainless steel by Budd in 1954. In addition to the 24 seater dome each of the 85'5" long, 15'10" high, 65 ton cars contained a bar and lounge below the dome, three double bedrooms and a family bedroom, or drawing room (all with private toilets), ahead and the observation lounge at the rear - see diagram below. They were probably among the finest general service passenger cars ever built. The "Sibley Park" brings up the rear, "markers", of No.1 west bound at Medicine Hat Alberta on 29th September 1976.

Photo: Mike Walker

