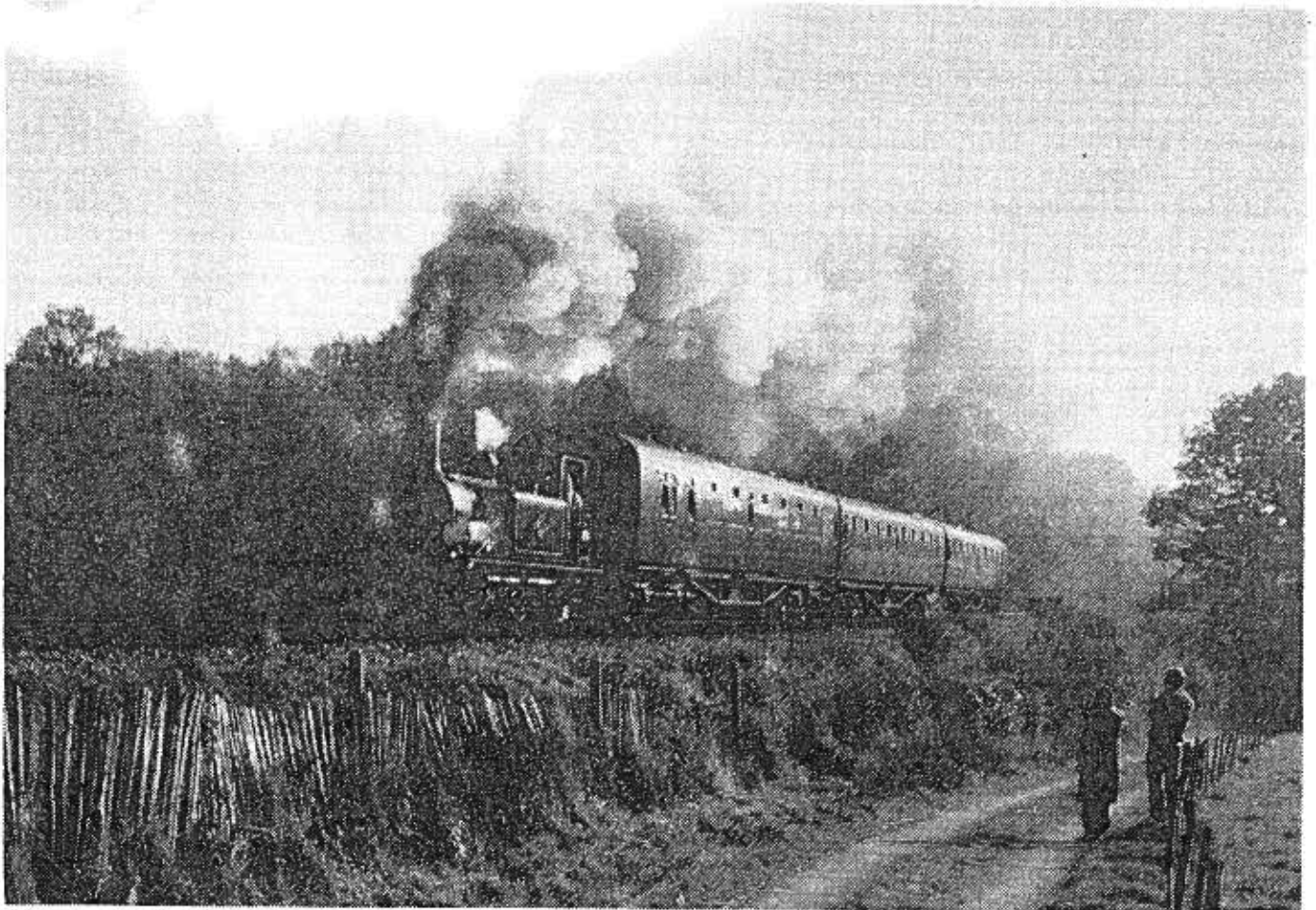


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JUNE 1993

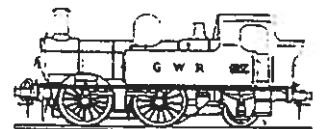
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# MARLOW DONKEY



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**TRAIN TO PLANE  
FIRSTS AND LASTS  
A VIEW FROM COLCHESTER  
JOINT LINE STEAM - THE END?**



# THE MARLOW DONKEY

Quarterly magazine of the  
MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

No.66 JUNE 1993

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Sorry Folks, but there was no time to let you know that "Duke of Gloucester's" trip through High Wycombe on 9th May was to be the last steam hauled run over the Joint Line. I only found out when I picked up my copy of Steam Railway the day before. It seems the bombshell was dropped by Thames & Chiltern towards the end of April in a brief memo to SLOA citing the introduction of DDO on the Chiltern Line from 17th May and the consequent non-availability of guards as the reason. This appears to be a "red herring" for, as we all know, Chiltern Turbos have been DDO since January 1992 so why make this decision now?

Rather it seems to be another part of a creeping steam ban which is spreading throughout BR. A quarter century ago we knew where we stood - a total ban was declared, even if the reasons didn't hold up to reasoned argument. Now we are seeing a ban by stealth. First Regional Railways cancel trips at short notice citing the fire risk, then they introduce a ban on locomotive hauled trains (read steam - presumably locos will haul engineers trains) on some routes to "reduce maintenance costs". This wears thin, after all we are only talking about the occasional journey, increased wear and tear on the track would be barely detectable. On Network SouthEast, Steve McColl brought a fresh attitude with a highly innovative and successful programme last year. Just when he was planning even greater things he was moved to an obscure post in the newly formed Heritage Unit. Meanwhile, InterCity's David Ward seems to be doing his bit to kill off the Settle & Carlisle by running one trip every weekend through the summer - surely there is not the custom available.

It seems that managers and staff at BR are now becoming so demoralised as they face privatisation that everything is becoming too much bother. Elsewhere in this issue Roger Bowen reports on the differing experiences he and a friend encountered trying to take advantage of the recent Boots offer. Although to be fair to BR it seems that Roger did not fully acquaint himself with the conditions of the offer, they did encounter the usual stream of misinformation from BR staff who either cannot be bothered to understand the full conditions or deliberately set out to mislead the public. I know from experience how my mother was on the receiving end when trying to take advantage of the special deals for Senior Citizens when they were in operation a few years ago. Mike Norris and I recently encountered an example of the most anti-public BR employees who believe in the old school of a job for life in which the public are an unwelcome intrusion into their own little world, divorced from reality - "pigging public" is a quotation which comes to mind.

In this column recently I've given the impression I'm anti-privatisation. Well I'm not in principle, merely to the way this Government proposes to do it. Were it to be done like BT or British Gas it would at least concentrate minds and change attitudes. Those who don't make the change would be out. BR today is largely staffed by people who put themselves and their interests before that of the business or its customers.

I work in private industry and among our major customers is BR, in particular one of its prestige projects and as a result I've had a unique opportunity to see how money and time is wasted by the incompetence of BR managers who are incapable of making a decision and spend their time trying to score points off each other. Is it any wonder Paddington's resignalling scheme is a year late when recently, I understand, a tamper crew spent the entire night shift doing nothing, other than drinking tea, whilst two lots of managers argued over who would have their services! Such behaviour would get short shrift in the private sector.

Roger handed me his copy saying he was trying to be provocative and controversial. I've continued this theme here and can I finish by turning the argument in his direction. He considers large public bodies to be bureaucratic and inefficient, I wonder if he includes his own employer, Wycombe District Council, in this way?

Enough of this whinging, the private (preserved) railway movement continues to go from strength to strength with a number of exciting developments taking shape. During our visit in July we will be able to view progress on the Bluebell's extension towards East Grinstead which is now well advanced. The Great Central is making great strides towards its goal of a double track main line, even four tracks in places, and has raised the first £300,000 of its £2 million share issue, allowing it to proceed with its new terminal at Leicester North. This ambitious scheme, a mini-Marylebone, will make the Severn Valley's magnificent Kidderminster Town terminal look like a country halt. Another railway which has confidently moved into the first division is the East Lancs Railway. So regularly does this feature in the railway press that we tend to take it for granted as one of the old established lines, yet ten years ago it didn't even exist. This summer it hosts the biggest gathering of British steam power since "Rocket 150" in 1980 to mark the 25th Anniversary of the end of real BR steam. I for one will be there.

Whatever your plans for the summer I trust you will find time for some serious train watching. Here's to plenty of blue skies!

*Mike*

### COVER

There was no difficulty choosing the winner of Class B and the outright winner of this year's photographic competition. This superb image by Peter Robins of "Terrier" 32636 climbing Freshfield Bank with the 12.00 to Horsted Keynes on 6th November 1988 has all the subtlety of an oil painting.

# TIMETABLE

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS & EXCURSIONS

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

### MEETINGS

Thurs 15 July INDUSTRIAL STEAM Tim Speechley  
Once ignored, the end of BR steam saw enthusiasts seeking out these grimy labourers in the twilight of their careers, Tim among them.

Thurs 16 Sept DOUGLAS TO DURANGO Jim Jarvis  
Today the Isle of Man and Durango & Silverton are jewels of the narrow gauge preservation. However, Jim Jarvis was fortunate to visit both these 3' gauge lines 40 years ago and capture timeless images on Kodachrome.

Thurs 21 Oct EARLY DAYS Dick Hardy  
Dick Hardy is known as one of the characters of the railway world. A couple of years back he recalled his days as Shedmaster at Stratford, tonight he looks back further to the beginning of his career.

Thurs 18 Nov MORE FROM COLOURAIL Ron White  
Ron returns for another of his popular selection of images from his vast collection of "trannies" narrated in his own unique and irreverent style.



Thurs 16 Dec BUFFET & SOCIAL EVENING  
Once again an informal social evening punctuated with a few short slide programmes. We wish to hear from volunteers willing to present short general programmes.

Thurs 20 Jan ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thurs 17 Feb PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

### EXCURSIONS

For bookings contact Tony Caton on 0628 473723

Sun 4 July BLUEBELL RAILWAY  
There are still seats available for our annual coach trip which this year takes us to this recently extended line on one of its Vintage Transport Weekends. We will also take a look at progress on the yet to be opened northern extension and have guided tours of the workshops. There will also be an opportunity for the ladies to visit Sheffield Park gardens if they wish.

Fares: Adults £11.50 Children £9.00  
(Coach ONLY for Sheffield Park garden £6.00)

## SOCIETY NEWS

### MEMBERS NEWS

We are again pleased to welcome another new member, John Tuck who comes from Wokingham, we look forward to seeing him regularly at our monthly gatherings.

With our nominal April deadline for subscription renewals past we can report our total membership stands at 56, which is about the average for recent years. However we are always pleased to welcome further members so please mention the Society to other enthusiasts.

John Colverson was unsuccessful in the semi-finals of 'Mastermind'. Despite taking British Model Railways as his specialist subject he unfortunately came last, in circumstances which have received considerable coverage in the national press.

### PREVIOUS MEETINGS

We have enjoyed three high quality talks this spring. In March Tim Edmonds presented an unusual and entertaining programme on Railway Archaeology which was in no way the dry subject it may have appeared. Tim reviewed a variety of abandoned rights of way and structures, leaving us with encouraging proof that old rights of way do sometimes come back to life after years of silence.

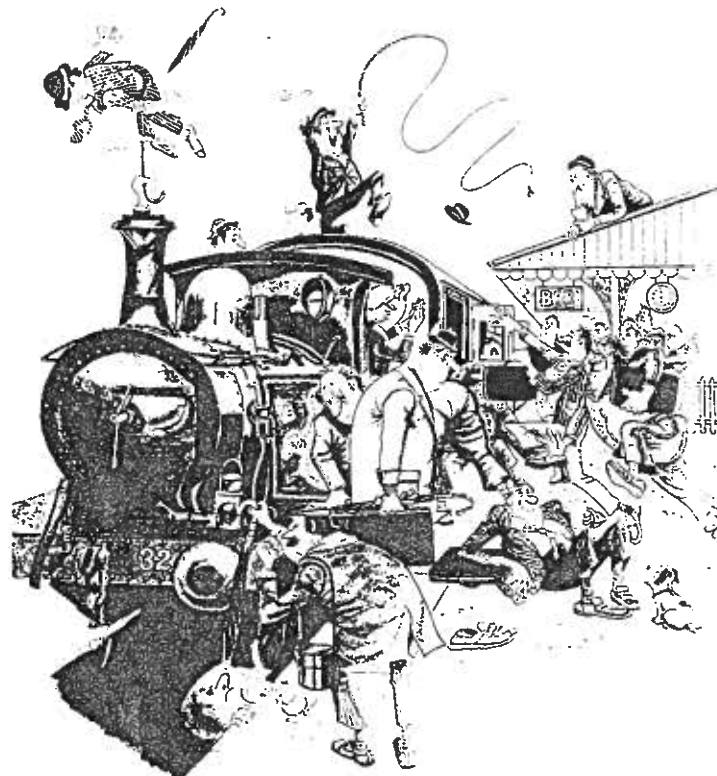
The Great Central's London Extension, or more precisely the section between Quainton Road and Rugby, came under the spotlight in April with a fascinating collection of vintage slides presented by Stuart Banks who reviewed the construction of Britain's newest mainline, its heyday and a thankfully brief look at its demise.

With the Bluebell Railway the destination for our summer trip Klaus Marx a founder member of the BRPS, gave us a detailed study of the history of the line and the extension to East Grinstead. He was able to tell us that the previous weekend the Newcombe Bridge at West Heathley had been completed, the last major hurdle to be beaten, allowing the re-opening to Kingscote next Easter. Incidentally bookings are going well for the 4th July trip but there are still plenty of seats available.

### A SLIMMER DONKEY

This issue is a little thinner than the recent bumper editions for two reasons. First, our deadline was a week earlier due to the early June meeting but, more importantly, the editor's file of material is somewhat empty! I've been promised some interesting material but so far it hasn't arrived, so I'm appealing to YOU ALL for contributions - I can't print promises!

*Join us for a jolly day  
on the  
BLUEBELL RAILWAY  
Sun 4th July  
ALL WELCOME!!*



# RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

## NOTES AND NEWS



### THAMES TIMETABLE POSTPONED

The continuing delays in the Paddington resignalling scheme led to the postponement of the new Thames timetable due to have been introduced on 17 May until at least mid June, although even that date looks increasingly doubtful. Another problem for NSE is that the 21 Class 166 units have been delayed due to the changes from the 165 specification being greater than had originally been expected.

Once the new timetable does start it will feature a much enhanced and faster local service from Paddington to the Thames Valley. Highlights will include an hourly all-night Paddington to Reading local service for the first time ever and reinstatement of through trains between Bourne End and Paddington with two up trains in the morning peak and two back in the evening. The 166 operated Network Expresses will be in some instances extended to Worcester.

The Chiltern Line's new timetable started as planned on 17 May and its principal innovation is the extension of some Marylebone-Banbury services to Birmingham Moor St. whilst West Ruislip is now closed on Sundays. Two trains are now scheduled to arrive at Marylebone at 10.00, they leave High Wycombe at 09.25 and 09.30, how's that for a frequent off peak service!

### NEW DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR

Roger McDonald was appointed Divisional Director, NSE Thames & Chiltern, in mid-April. A former Area Manager at Cardiff, he was most recently Retail Manager for InterCity Great Western at Swindon.

He replaces Dick Fearn who has been in charge at Reading since the Sub-Sector was formed in June 1991. He has become Divisional Director, NSE South East, replacing Geoff Harrison-Mee who has moved to Railtrack.

### OLD OAK COMMON RUNS DOWN

Once the centre of locomotive operations for the GWR, Old Oak Common depot is winding down rapidly. The "Factory" closed completely on 20th March 1993, 47.701 "Old Oak Common Traction & Maintenance Depot" being the last locomotive to receive repairs. A small ceremony involving 47.701 along with 6024 "King Edward I" and D1015 "Western Champion" marked the end.

Old Oak currently serves as the base for the NSE T&C Infrastructure fleet of class 47's but these will be phased out soon, those involved in the Paddington resignalling being withdrawn whilst the remainder will be replaced by 37's from a new NSE Infrastructure pool being created at Stratford to cover all NSE routes north of the Thames. NSE also use OOC for stabling Heritage dmu's but the days of these are of course numbered.

InterCity removed its final allocation of HST power cars to Bristol and Laira with the start of the new timetable reducing the Old Oak HST depot's status to fuelling, stabling and 'A' exams.

Meanwhile, across the tracks, the new North Pole International Depot is all but complete and ready to go, all it needs is the delivery of the class 373 "Three Capitals" sets currently expected late this year.

### BOURNE END BRIDGE PROGRESS

The accompanying photographs show the progress on the new footbridge being added to the upstream side of the Thames bridge at Bourne End on 9 May, the date which had been suggested as a possible opening date. As can be seen it was far from complete, only the concrete footings for the stairways and the cantilever brackets for the main span having been installed at that time.

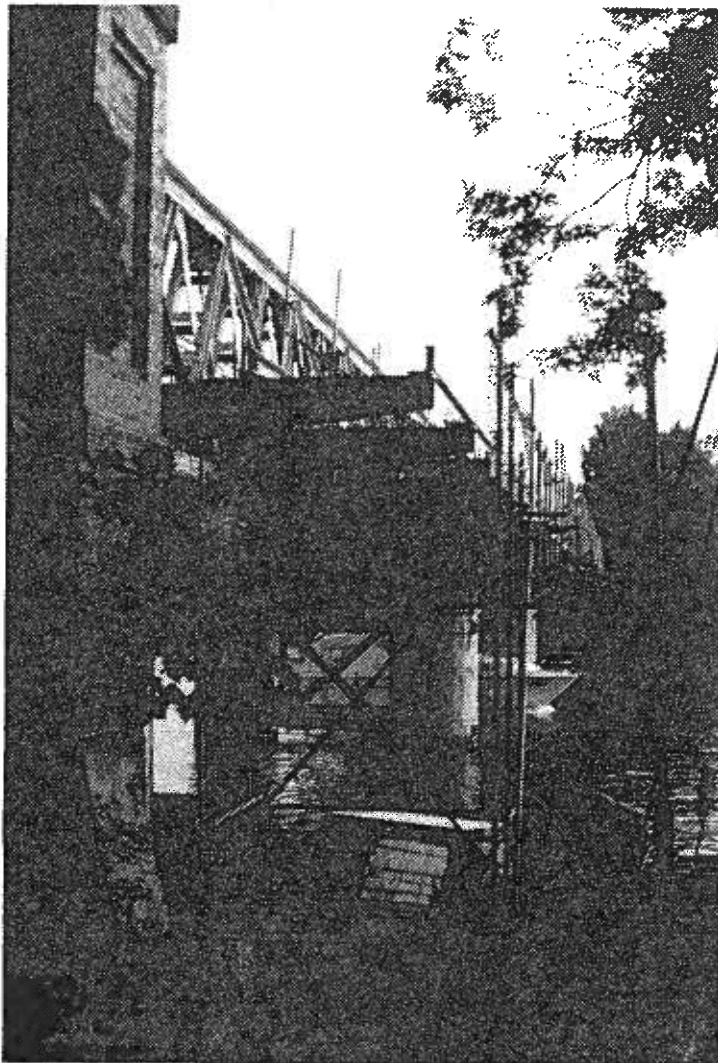
### BICESTER-BLETCHLEY CLOSURE

Freight services over the former LNWR "Varsity Line" between Bicester and Bletchley were withdrawn from the beginning of May and the line officially "mothballed" pending a decision on its fate. The only regular traffic recently has been a daily Avon to Calvert rubbish train which ran via Oxford and Claydon Jct. It will now run via Reading, Greenford, Princes Risborough and Aylesbury.

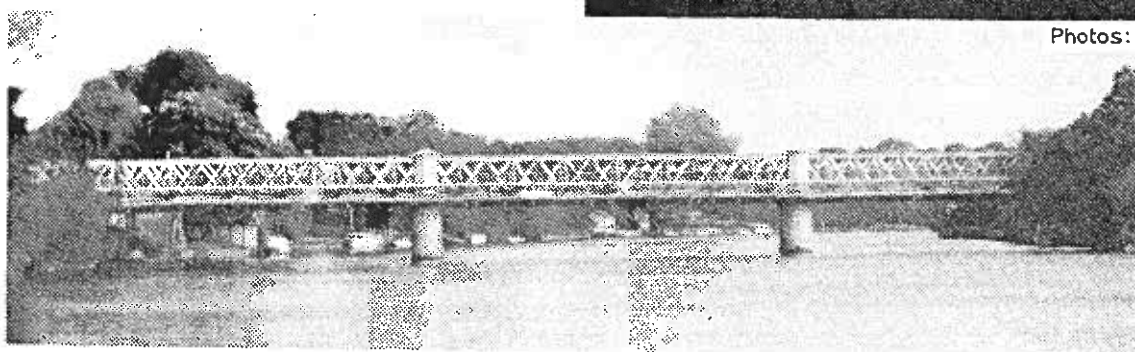
The passenger services between Oxford and Bicester Town continue for now but as NSE will now have to pay the full infrastructure costs its future is uncertain. As it is still officially experimental it can be withdrawn without the usual closure procedure. It also casts further doubt on the chances of introducing an Aylesbury-Milton Keynes service for which much pressure is mounting in the north of the county. Through Oxford-Bletchley passenger services ceased in 1967.

### BRIGHTER BRANCH

The stations along the Marlow branch are the latest to receive the new higher powered platform lights being installed throughout Thames & Chiltern. The project is intended to improve passenger security and the performance of the CCTV cameras used in conjunction with driver only operation of Turbos.



Photos: Mike Walker



## A GREEN BUBBLE

As a parting gesture NSE have repainted class 121 "Bubble Car" 55023 into its original green livery with cream cab roofs and lining and small yellow warning panels. Unfortunately the car now works from Bletchley on the Bedford branch.

55023 will be remembered as the "Flying Bubble Car" which landed on its side after colliding with the debris of a derailed stone train at Maidenhead East in October 1989. Reports of its demise after that altercation were premature to say the least!

## HEATHROW BRANCH WORKS START

Work finally started on the Heathrow Branch in advance of the official statement in the Budget on 16th March. So far visible progress consists of clearing the land alongside the down main west of Hayes & Harlington including demolition of a

# MAILBAG

## Member's Letters

Dear Editor,

Well Mike is trailing his coat tails in the steam of American 4-8-4 passenger locomotives, a fascinating breed of machines which peaked in power about the end of World War Two and ran at speeds no longer found on many lines in the USA.

Which design was the most powerful, makes an interesting discussion point, but of the few facts immediately to hand it seems fair to say that, whilst the N&WJ class was amongst the top rank there are one or two others that could claim equal or better right.

The rather less attractive looking S1b class of the New York Central set up performances which equalled the J class with a best recorded drawbar horsepower of 5100 at 58 mph and 5050 at 62 mph much in line with those shown on page 11 of "ours" with a boiler setting of 300 psi. Incidentally the maximum Indicated Horsepower was 6600 hp at 77 mph.

However even these figures are beaten by a class that can best be described as the "Maria Callas" of US passenger steam when on form they were unbeatable but when bitchy, they were bitches. I refer of course to the extraordinary T1 class of the Pennsylvania. On their good days they could beat the pants off most steam rolling in passenger service. Locomotive 6111 rolled a 16 car train of 1142 Short Tons (1020 tons) at an average of 102 mph for 69 miles on the Fort Wayne Division

They were also highly fleet of foot, one engineman's report read that the spring rigging did not respond well at 125 mph! On test the drawbar horsepower peaked at just over 6000 between 65 and 85 mph (see page 78 of "One Man's Locomotives" by V.L. Smith).

# A TALE OF TWO BOOTS VOUCHERS

Roger Bowen

We have all seen a mass of articles in the railway press, all appearing to condemn the government's privatisation programme for the railways. Perhaps they are wrong and the government have got it right after all.

Most of the objections seem to be based on the creation of small franchises which it is claimed will not publish joint timetables or agree to through ticketing. The 150 pre-grouping railways did (the Railway Clearing House and "Bradshaw") and of course its still done in Switzerland where there are a myriad of small railway companies.

That's the alternative? Either the status quo, a large monolith state organisation not responsible to anyone, or a large private monopoly such as British Gas or the Electricity Companies.

Which brings me to the title of the article. A colleague of mine was the proud possessor of a "Boots Voucher". He and his wife decided a nice little trip was a run from Long Harbrough to Malvern. He decided to buy his ticket in advance. This was no problem, a saver, at a price different to a previous quote from the same ticket office. He had planned to go with relations who had been assured that they could buy their tickets at the station. No chance, no staff! Travelling ticket collector says he's not allowed to issue tickets against Boots vouchers. After 30 minutes arguing stated that they would have to pay day return fares and get a refund when they

redundant bridge abutment and the erection of scaffolding around the overbridge just west of the station which is to be rebuilt. It is expected the heavy work will be well under way by the autumn with the opening set for summer 1997.

See separate feature in this issue.

## NOT JUST PIGS ANYMORE

It was always said that pigs could cross the USA without changing trains, people couldn't, until now. From 4th April Amtrak have extended their existing Los Angeles to New Orleans "Sunset Limited" to Jacksonville and Miami, a distance of 3071 miles. This is the first regularly scheduled passenger train to run from coast to coast. Currently operating thrice weekly it is hoped to start daily service later this year as an additional 140 double decker Superliner cars are delivered.



Much of the credit for these figures must go to the Franklin Valve Gear which helped fill out the corners in the indicator diagrams to such an extent that a re-built Pennsy K4s (No. 5399) heaved a 1000 short ton (893 ton) train up to 94.7 mph on tests and gave a creditable 3934 drawbar horsepower at 56 mph on the Altoona Test Plant.

However on a power/weight basis even the American figures are eclipsed by the fabulous Chapelon 4-8-0 locomotives. On 31st May 1941, hauling an 800 ton train, a drawbar horsepower equated to level of 3600 was obtained giving a power weight ratio of 33 horsepower/ton. (The engine weighed 109 tons). A world record which I believe still stands.

The 228 ton Pennsy T1 gave a power weight ratio of 26.7 horsepower/ton when developing 6100 drawbar horsepower.

I can find indicated horsepower figures, only for the S1b locomotives (which were about level with the J class) and the figure is 31 indicated horsepower/ton at 212 tons weight. This figure is remarkably close to our "Duchess" class which on 105½ tons weight gave 330 IHP on trials in 1939 and shows a power weight ratio of 31.3 IHP/ton. No other British Pacifics were as powerful although Duke of Gloucester may yet do it (and ought to!).

Both these American and British figures were beaten by the Chapelon 2-4-2-A1 design which unfortunately never became a class. It weighed 148 tons and gave 550 Indicated horsepower on test showing a remarkable ratio of 37 IHP per ton.

Eddie Lewcock

got to Malvern. Finally when my colleague returned he was told he couldn't return that evening as you had to stay overnight on a Saver! News to him, news to me, but why the inefficiency and why the jargon - BR staff may know what a Saver is but does anyone else?

The second Saver story is mine. Having thought about a day trip to the seaside I find that even with one free ticket the rail fare was heavier than taking the car. Back to the drawing board. Day trip to London. I normally go from Amersham: a LT's fares are much cheaper than BR's (another argument for competition) but the attraction of one free ticket - No chance - Boots vouchers only available for "Away Breaks" (that's a new title on me - anyone else heard of them?) not day returns. OK I'll have an Away Break. Sorry no chance we don't do Away Breaks to London only day returns. You can go to the coast with one. I don't want to go to the coast I want to go to London.

The above two tales seem to me to typify the jargon ridden organisation still staffed with people who think that the railways are for them to run and not for the passenger (sorry customer). Small business run units looking for competition seem ideal.

Well, I wonder if this will bring out any comments from readers?

# JOINT LINE STEAM - THE END?

Mike Walker



Back in late 1984 Roger Bowen rolled up at a meeting with the unexpected, and at the time almost unbelievable news that BR were going to allow steam specials to operate out of Marylebone. As we know he was right of course and on 12 January 1985 4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley' steamed into the almost forgotten terminus and two weeks later the programme of return trips to Stratford-on-Avon began.

With equal suddenness the end came on 9th May. In late April NSE's Thames & Chiltern Division sent a memo to SLOA/FSS stating that the Chiltern Line would no longer be available to steam specials after 17 May. The reason given was that from that date all Chiltern Line services would be DOO and therefore no guards would be available, a curious excuse as DOO has been in effect since January 1992 and in any case guards could be hired from InterCity, they are IC trains after all! It has also been suggested that steam and ATP are incompatible, again unlikely.

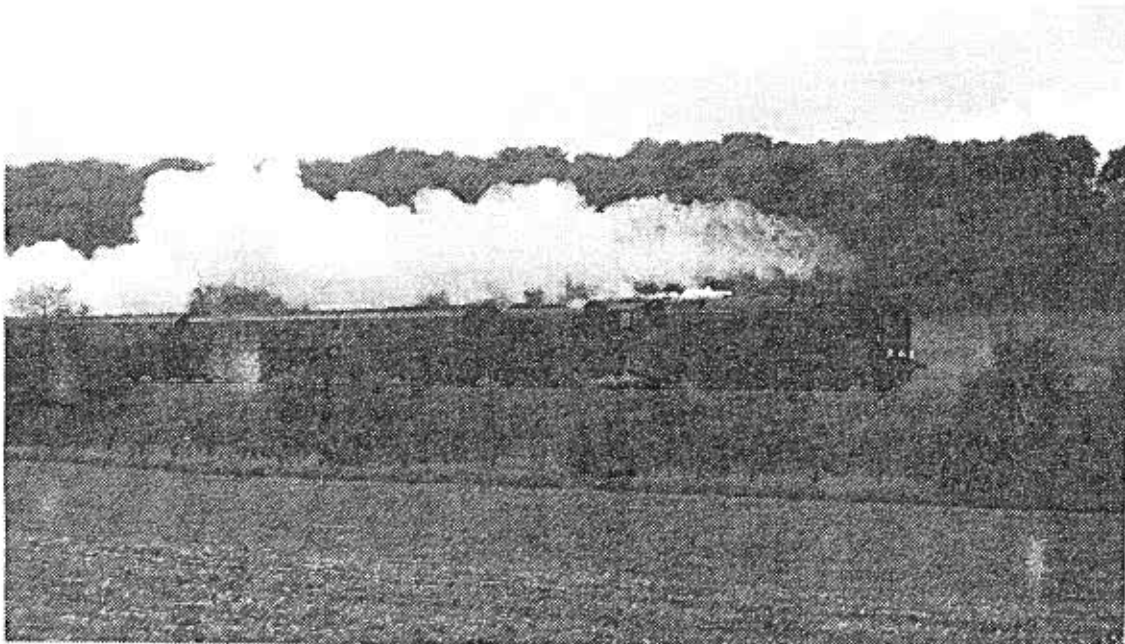
Still it was great while it lasted. Perhaps the peak was the summers of 1985 and 1986 when trains ran weekly, even midweek and occasionally twice on Sundays. We enjoyed two seasons of Santa Specials between Marylebone and High Wycombe along with trips further afield to Derby, Sheffield and York as well as the Stratfords. The success of the trains rubbed off on Marylebone which was transformed from threatened closure to a showpiece of Total Route Modernisation. This forced steam out but a new London terminus was found at Paddington, only to fall victim to TRM again and causing Ealing Broadway to be-

come the starting point and the Greenford Loop an unlikely steam route.

Locomotives from all four main line companies and BR standards have been used over the line, from class 4 Moguls to class 8 Pacifics. The crews at Marylebone reacted with enthusiasm, testing each locomotive to its limit on the 1 in 164 climb to Saunderton which became almost as famous as Ais Gill on the "Long Drag". The power record seems to be held by 46229 'Duchess of Hamilton' which achieved no less than 3119 edbhp on a 420 ton train with full regulator and 45% cut off on 26 May 1985. The speed record is 69 mph at the summit by 35028 'Clan Line' on 1st September 1985, although mile-a-minute crossings of the Chilterns were commonplace. And who will forget the day when Marylebone's modest dmu depot did its famous impression of "Top Shed" with 'Mallard', 'Flying Scotsman' and 'Sir Nigel Gresley' all lined up, in steam!

Representing the two ends of the era, 4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley' (TOP) trails a clean exhaust across the Chearsley Viaduct on the frosty morning of 16 February 1985 whilst 71000 'Duke of Gloucester' (BOTTOM) attacks the hill for the last time on 9 May 1993. Unfortunately it did not complete its journey, failing at Banbury.

It may be over but the memories will live on in photos, on video and in the mind. Our thanks go to all those at BR, SLOA and the locomotive owners who have made it a glorious eight years.



Photos: Mike Walker

# A VIEW FROM COLCHESTER

Mark Hopwood

In October 1990, I left Marlow to attend university at Colchester. As I near the end of my period of study, it is, perhaps, a suitable time to review the railway activity I have witnessed.

I had lived in Marlow for as long as I could remember, and my association with railways had evolved in the Thames Valley with Class 50s and Class 117 dmsus! A move to Essex was bound to be quite strange for me. To start with, it was my first experience of living on an electrified route. In addition, my local station - Marlow - must be one of the most basic upon BR. On the other hand, Colchester station, I observed, had a most complicated, indeed curious layout. It is a matter of contention whether Colchester station possesses Britain's longest platform - however the combined length of platforms 3 and 4 is about twenty-six carriage lengths.

Colchester is the junction on the Great Eastern main-line between the route to Norwich and that to Clacton. Colchester station possesses four through platforms and two bay lines while to the south of the station is a Motive Depot and extensive siding space. The station area is controlled by Colchester Power Signal Box, which controls the route through to Ipswich and Norwich. However, the route to Clacton is still controlled by conventional lever-framed signal boxes, all be it with colour light signalling installed. The fringe box on the Clacton route is East Gate Junction. At present, resignalling the route from Liverpool Street to Colchester is underway and eventually Colchester PSB will interface with the new Liverpool Street IECC complex.

The Motive Power Depot (Code: CR) consists of a two track inspection shed and classes 08, 31, 37 and 47 are all frequent visitors. However, the depot is scheduled for early closure. Although Electric Multiple Units stable at Colchester in large numbers, the MPD is responsible for maintenance on diesel traction only. Primarily, it is Great Eastern Civil Engineers locomotives of classes 08, 31 and 37, of Stratford depot, that receive maintenance at CR, where fuel and basic 'A' exam inspections are available, although the shunters receive attention up to a 'C' exam, which includes a repaint. Some shunters have emerged in rather strange liveries from CR of late! From time to time, main-line Railfreight Distribution locomotives appear from Ipswich for maintenance. Such visits are primarily of classes 37 and 47. EMUs that stable are from the fleets of those based at Ilford and Clacton - classes 312 and 321 respectively.

The main station is known as Colchester North, there also being Colchester Town (formerly St Botolphs) located on a branch from the Clacton line, controlled from the signal box at East Gate Jct, which also manages two busy level crossings - one outside the box and another at Hythe.

Quite a large variety of trains pass through Colchester. Let us begin with InterCity, whose Anglia/Gatwick Express division is the operator of the London-Norwich route. Trains are operated entirely by Class 86/2 locomotives which form a self-contained fleet of locomotives (IANA) based at Norwich's Crown Point depot. When Class 86s first arrived on the Great Eastern they were still based at Willesden, then subsequently at Ilford, transferring to Norwich in 1990. The week of my arrival in October 1990 heralded the scheduled introduction of push-pull arrangements on the route, with the Class 86 locomotives being controlled in the down direction by DBSOs made redundant from the Glasgow-Edinburgh route. Rolling stock is almost exclusively the latter version of air-conditioned Mark II vehicles. However, five Mark III Restaurant/ Buffet vehicles are now utilised on the premier trains, other services having to make do with Mark I Restaurant cars - which while refurbished give a poor quality ride. Push-pull operation can give rather a jerky ride at the far end of the train if severe braking/acceleration is utilised (contrary to Mr Sear's comments about the WCML - probably because John



A Class 321 on a Liverpool St to Clacton service calling at Colchester represents the newest Great Eastern stock.

insists on riding near the loco. Try the far end by the Driving Trailer, its more fun!)

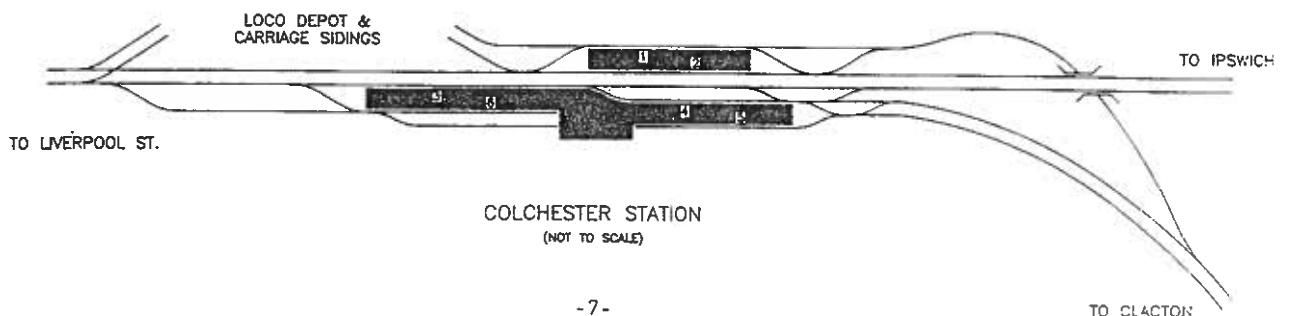
Naturally, all does not always run to plan. The push-pull arrangements caused problems initially and these led to delays. The Class 86/2 fleet has suffered bouts of severe unreliability at times. When available, Class 90s have been borrowed from other businesses to power Anglia services - although drivers at Norwich are not trained on the type. Tighter control of locomotives of late has led to Class 90s making fewer appearances. Diesels can also be requisitioned, particularly to assist failures. Last summer, I had the good fortune to travel behind 37245 on the 1840 InterCity express from Liverpool Street - a return to the good old days indeed!

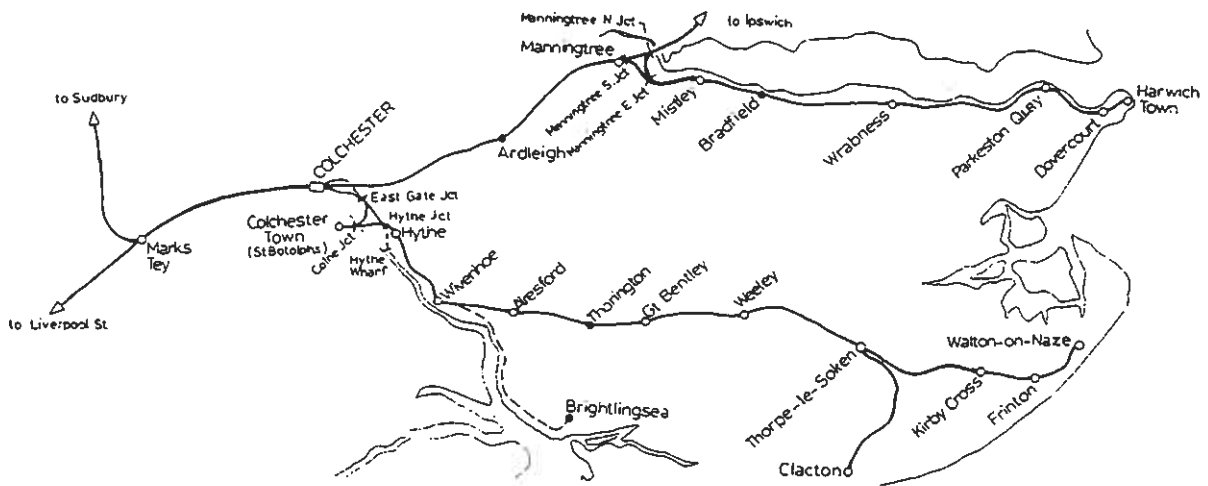
Network SouthEast services are almost entirely in the hands of Electric Multiple Units. The type most associated with the route are the Class 309 'Clacton Express' sets, which have been reduced in number of late. 1991 saw several withdrawals from the Clacton based fleet as more modern Class 321 units were made available from the Euston to Northampton route. Primarily, in use only on some peak-hour services from Liverpool Street to Ipswich/Harwich/Clacton and Walton-on-Naze, the sets remain a firm favourite with Essex commuters. Monday - Friday, they retain some daytime workings but performance is rather poor these days as the sets often operate with traction motors isolated and 30 years plus of main-line running is taking its toll on these sets, which still remain my favourite traction on the route.

The remainder of services are in the hands of Clacton-based Class 312 emus and Ilford-based Class 321s, which are the lines most modern trains. The inner-suburban Class 315 emus rarely stray beyond Shenfield. Until May 1992, this type did stray to Colchester on an over-night staff train.

Since Network SouthEast (Great Eastern) own and maintain the route, they also have the responsibility to maintain the locomotives required by the civil engineers on the route. Stratford depot in east London is now a shadow of its former self, maintaining a small fleet of ballast locomotives sponsored by Network SouthEast and a few for Regional Railways in the Norwich area.

Regional Railways does not stray south of Ipswich, although it did so until May 1992, when a Class 156 operated a daily service from Birmingham via Ipswich. Perhaps this is now an appropriate point to discuss the sole remaining diesel-powered route in the area, that from the GE main-line at Marks Tey to Sudbury. This was traditionally operated from the extensive fleet of dmsus maintained at Stratford for the





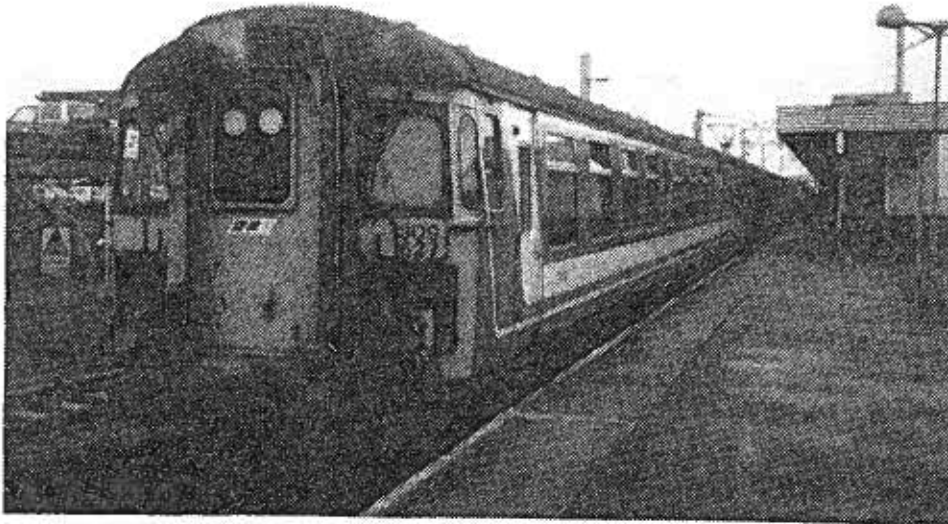
large number of routes in the area retaining diesel traction. However, for about four years, the route has utilised traction from Cambridge (CA) depot. The electrification of the Kings Lynn route led to the end of dmu maintenance at CA, and from September 1992 the route is now operated by the same fleet of two Class 101 dmus, but maintained by Norwich Crown Point depot under the auspices of Regional Railways. However, the same agreement that is to see Class 165s operating from Marylebone to Birmingham Snow Hill will see the Marks Tey - Sudbury line being operated by Norwich based Class 156 Sprinter dmus very shortly (by the time you read this, no doubt).

Another major operator in the area is Rail Express Systems (RXS) - who, may you ask?! RXS is a division of BR which mainly serves the Post Office as the operator of a variety of mail and parcels services around the country. At Colchester, this takes two forms. Firstly, there is the operation of a small fleet of converted Class 302 emus which ply between Liverpool Street and Norwich on mail/parcels duties, painted in the attractive Royal Mail red colour scheme. In addition,

a small number of loco-hauled trains remain on the route, utilising one of the Crewe-based RXS Class 47s.

Freight through Colchester is not substantial, and dominated freightliner traffic from Harwich and Felixstowe to Willesden and points north. These are generally in the hands of the Crewe-based Class 86/6 and 90/1 locomotives, although a few trains retain diesel traction. At Ipswich, trains bound for Felixstowe will exchange their loco for either a Class 47 or a pair of Class 37s. The coal depot at Hythe - my local station - is now virtually closed, and the sand facility at Marks Tey still sees the odd train on an occasional basis.

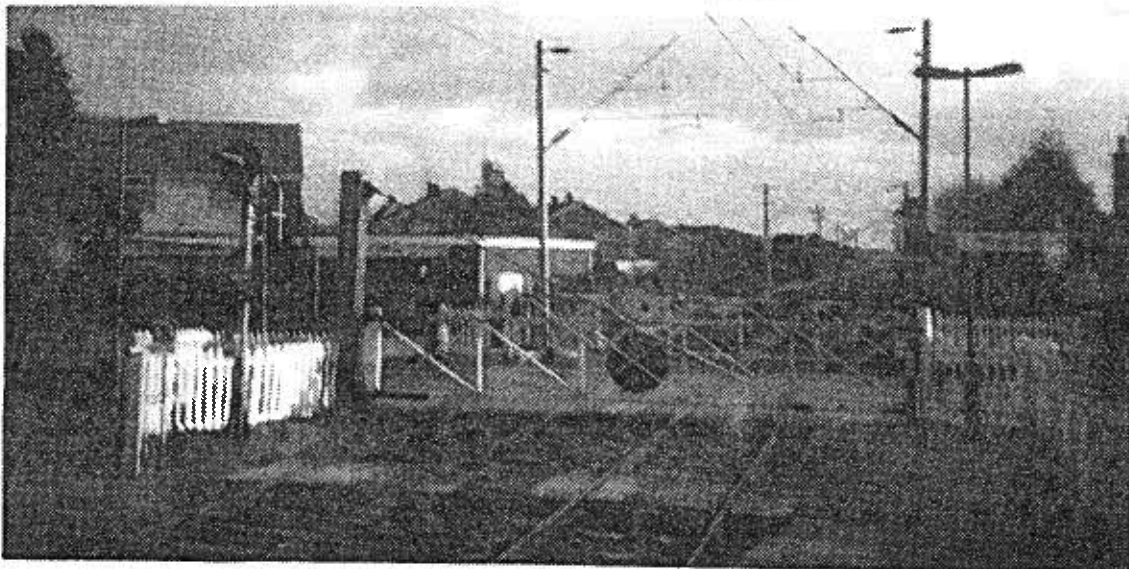
So that is about it. Overall, I've found my time at Colchester enjoyable from a railway point of view. My best memories? Well firstly, summer 1991 and the chance to ride behind 50017 'Royal Oak' on a special from Liverpool Street to Harwich and Clacton. Secondly, the day in June 1992 when 37245 backed onto the 1840 Liverpool Street to Norwich and ahuled it throughout - non-stop to Manningtree!



Amongst Mark's favourite types of traction on the Great Eastern main line are the 'Essex Express' Class 309 units such as 309.627 seen here calling at Colchester on a Liverpool St. to Clacton working, and why not, they are the emu version of the WR's much missed Swindon Inter City dmu's.

Some parts of NSE's Great Eastern Division have been little touched by the march of modernisation. At Alresford on the Clacton line the level crossing is still protected by traditional heavy gates and single lens searchlight signal, both rare these days.

photographs: Mark Hopwood





# TRAIN TO PLANE - THE HEATHROW PROJECT

Mike Walker

At long last it seems that Heathrow, Britain's largest and busiest airport, is to be connected to the BR network starting in March after what has seemed a lengthy period of wrangling during which it seemed the line might never be started.

Heathrow opened for business in March 1946 and grew rapidly. Its first rail link was established in 1977 with the extension of the London Transport Piccadilly tube line from Hounslow to a station below the central area serving Terminals 1, 2 and 3. When Terminal 4 opened in 1986 this was extended to form a balloon loop with an additional station under the new terminal, trains running clockwise round the loop. Incidentally this means that Piccadilly trains are the only ones on the LUL network which get turned in regular service. Whilst the line provided a useful link, journey times are slow as the trains stop at most stations between central London and the airport, only three stations served by the District are passed non-stop.

By contrast London's other two airports, Gatwick and Stanstead, both enjoy express services from the capital and long distance services to other destinations. Gatwick pre-dates Heathrow having served commercial aviation since 1935 and, thanks to its position alongside the Brighton main line, has always been served by main line trains, originally via the old Tinsley Green station which later became Gatwick Airport and was replaced by the present station in 1958. Starting in 1980 a dedicated "Rapid City Link" service linking Victoria with Gatwick using modified 4VEP's (4VEG's) was introduced along with a semi-fast service from Reading using dmu's. The Victoria service proved so successful it was upgraded in May 1984 to the present push-pull InterCity service, the "Gatwick Express".

Stanstead is the result of a lengthy debate which raged through the 70's as to where London's third airport should be throwing up such unlikely suggestions as Wing in north Bucks or Foulness in the Thames estuary in the process. Eventually an abandoned wartime airfield north east of Bishops Cleeve was selected for development in 1984.

The plans included the construction of a 3½ mile branch line leaving the former GE Cambridge main line at a triangular junction between Stanstead Mountfitchet and Elsenham stations and passing through a 1622 yd tunnel. Opened in March 1991 it is served by a half hourly express service from Liverpool St worked by dedicated class 322 units and Regional Railway services to the Midlands and north west worked by 156 and 158 Sprinters.

BR's first attempt to serve Heathrow began in March 1967 when it contracted with the old Thames Valley bus company to provide a dedicated non-stop coach service between Reading General and Heathrow via the M4. It was an immediate success and continues to operate today. As a result further "Railair Link" coaches were introduced from Woking and High Wycombe, although the rundown of long distance services on the GW/GC Joint line meant this was short lived.

The idea of a BR link into Heathrow first surfaced around the same time, along with the proposal to extend the Piccadilly Line. The original BR plan was to construct a branch some two miles in length which would have left the former LSWR Reading line at Feltham, which is actually the closest point on the BR system to the airport. However, BR were unable to finance the project internally and, as ever, Government finance was unavailable but as LT were able to finance their scheme from revenue and serve the industrial area at Hatton Cross, it was that proposal which went ahead.

Passenger numbers continued to increase and by the mid eighties some 35 million a year passed through Heathrow. In 1987 a Government report, the Heathrow Surface Access Study, proposed either quadrupling the Piccadilly west of Northfields or, preferably, a BR link. This proposed a branch off the Great Western Main Line at Hayes. Whilst this would be twice as long as the Feltham proposal it would provide much quicker journeys to and from the centre of London as the Feltham to Waterloo route would be over suburban tracks with frequent sharp curves, junctions and stopping services. Things now moved quickly, the BAA was privatised and thus free to raise commercial capital to finance the scheme and jointly with BR it presented a Private Bill before Parliament in 1989.

This called for a branch diverging from the GWML just before

MP12 and head south to cross the M4 by a bridge and then enter a tunnel into the airport. Unfortunately this Bill failed because of opposition to the M4 bridge and the lack of a triangular junction with the main line. A modified Bill providing for the tunnel section to be extended north of the M4 but without the triangular junction was presented in 1990 and received Royal Assent in 1991, it was hoped the service would open in 1995. However, 18 months of financial haggling was to follow. Would BR get any help from the Treasury? BAA entered into a dispute with the airlines over landing fees claiming that if they did not rise they could not afford the rail link and then got into a heated dispute with BR over apportioning of operating costs. By late 1992 it seemed the whole project was near to abandonment.

Fortunately the winter of 1992/93 saw serious negotiations between BAA, BR and Government behind closed doors with the result that in the Budget on 16th March the go ahead was finally given. In fact work had started around a month before

So now the project is underway what is involved? New works will begin at Airport Junction at MP11½ just west of Hayes & Harlington station. From here westwards for ½ mile the main line will be slewed to the south and the reliefs to the north to allow the double track airport line to rise between them on a concrete ramp and then turn south towards the airport at 11m 70c from Paddington, 24c west of the site of the old Dawley Signal Box. A convenient gap in the industrial buildings south of the GWML here will be used as the new line drops to ground level then descends to enter the tunnel about ¼ mile south of the main line. Passing under the M4 and A4 to the east of the former's airport spur, it turns south west below Heathrow's northern runway to reach its Terminals 1, 2 & 3 station beneath the existing bus and tube stations. From here it becomes single track and swings through a broad 180° left hand curve to terminate beneath Terminal 4 roughly 4½ miles from the main line.

The branch will be electrified throughout at 25kV 50Hz overhead and all four tracks between Paddington and Hayes will also be wired. The present resignalling and remodelling at Paddington have taken in the requirements of the airport service. At Paddington, platforms 5 and 6 will be used exclusively by the service and a special terminal facility will be built. In addition an f1m programme of road improvements in the station area will be undertaken.

To work the service thirteen car emu's will be ordered. These will be owned by BAA and are expected to be a variety of the Networker design with 100 mph top speed, 3 phase drive, air conditioning and additional luggage capacity. The BAA will also own the new track but, under present plans, NSE will actually operate the service, although by then NSE T&C could be franchised and BAA could operate the service themselves.

Trains will operate every 15 minutes between 05.00 and 23.00 taking 16 minutes to Terminals 1, 2 & 3 and another four minutes to Terminal 4. A premium fare currently proposed at £9 single, £14 return, will be charged but travel between Terminals in the airport will be free. It is hoped the line will be ready for service in the summer of 1997.

Whilst the present scheme focuses on the dedicated Paddington service a number of developments are possible. First, a branch will be built to serve the proposed Terminal 5 on the present sewerage works site at the west side of Heathrow. However, your writer is of the opinion that if the line to T4 swung through a wider loop like the tube, a station could be built under T5 without a separate branch, lower costs and a more flexible service. Further ahead the triangular connection with the main line may yet be built allowing through services from the west whilst electrification of the Acton East Jct - Acton West Jct link and a new connection to the northbound WCML would allow fast inter-airport services to Birmingham and Manchester possibly operated by the airlines or on their behalf, much like the links provided by DB and Lufthansa in Germany.

Finally what of that other great construction project, CrossRail? In his Budget statement the Chancellor said the Government remains committed (John Major is reputedly enthusiastic) but wishes to rethink how the project is to be financed wishing the private sector to make the major contribution - at a time when it is prepared to contribute to the high speed line on the grounds that commuter trains will use it. Draw your own conclusions as to how and when CrossRail will materialise

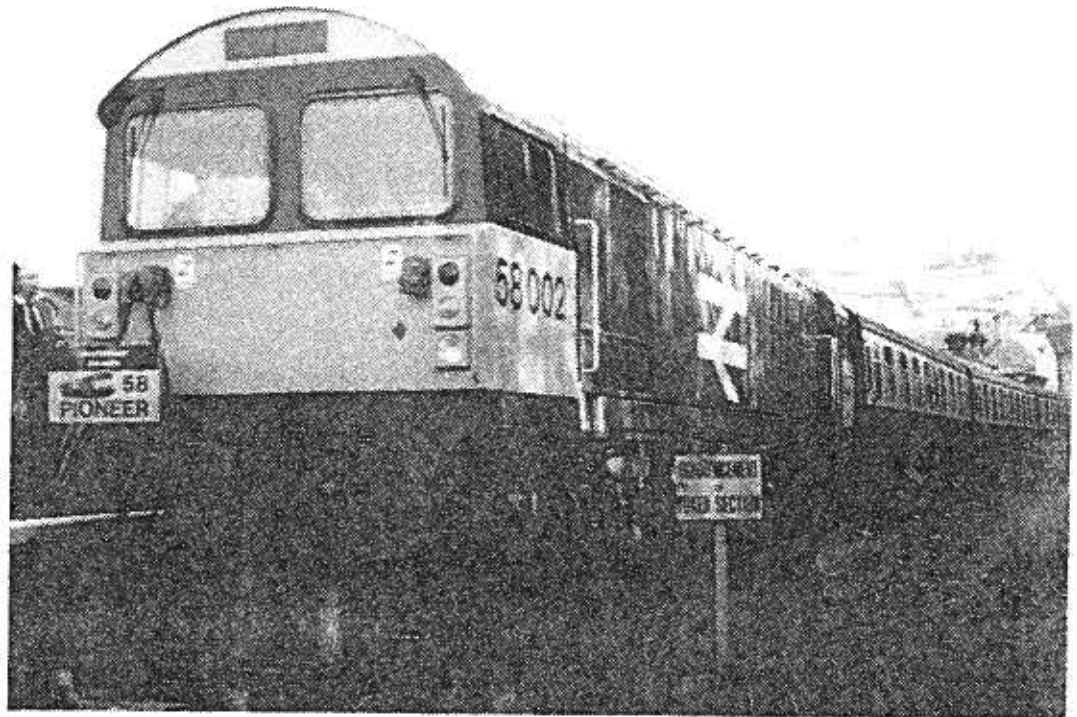
# FIRSTS AND LASTS

Tours organised by charter groups catering for rail enthusiasts are quite common these days. Unusual motive power is often requested and some of these trains are the last of that type, or in the case of locomotives the train may be the first scheduled passenger train by that class.

Five of the photographs shown in this collection come under those headings and were taken on tours organised by Hertfordshire Railtours (HRT), Southern Electric Group (SEG) and the Locomotive Club of Great Britain (LCGB).

Doncaster completed the first of fifty Class 58 freight locomotives in May 1983 and although teething troubles were encountered, HRT decided to try and run the '58 Pioneer' railtour four months later.

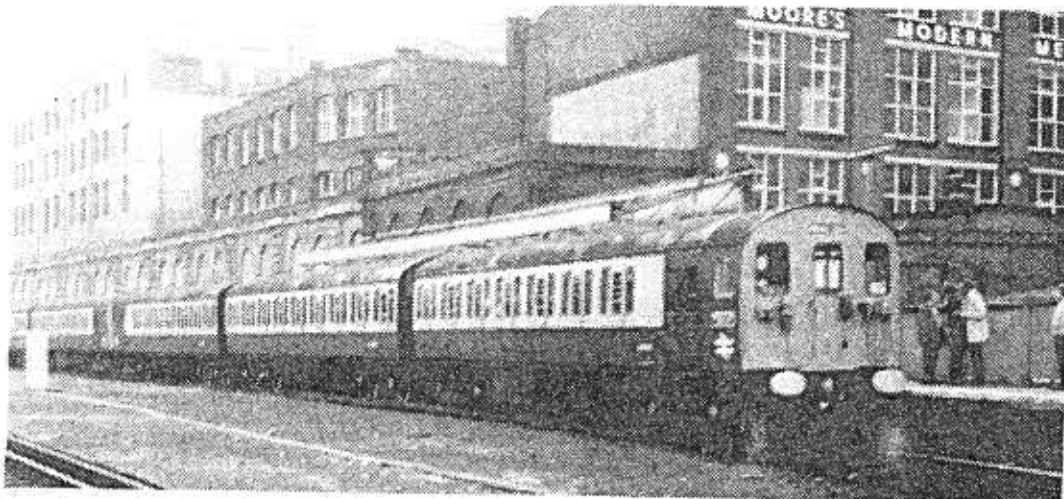
So on 18 September '83 50.013 'Agincourt' left Paddington and after visiting the Birmingham area, reached Nuneaton 5 hours later. Much to the relief of the organisers the only serviceable member of the class, 58.002, was waiting to take the train on to Nottingham where direction was reversed and a visit to Matlock (TOP LEFT) was made.



The train then returned to Nuneaton where the Class 50 took over again for the return to Paddington.

PHOTOLINE

Alan Costello

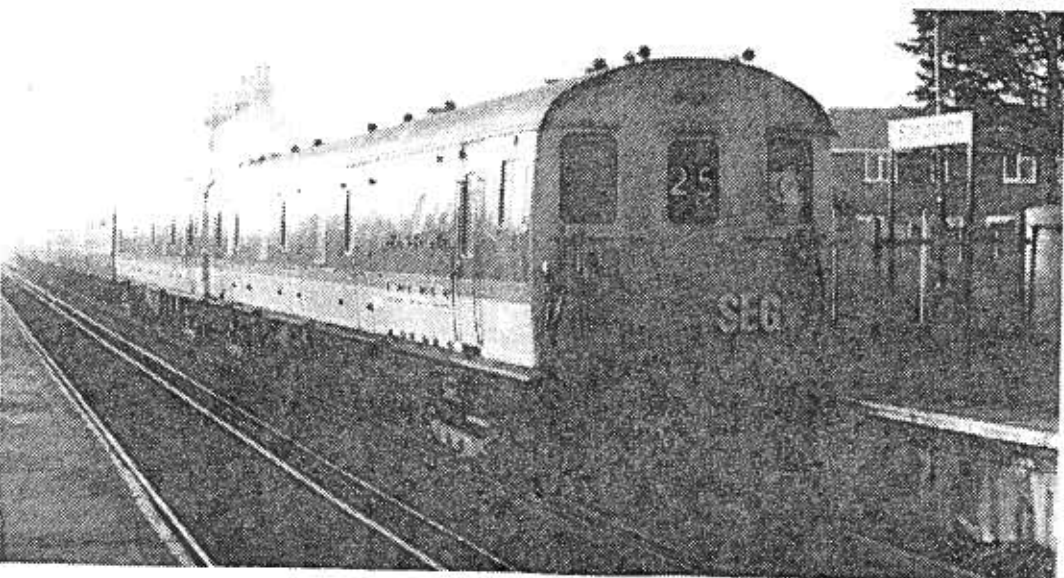


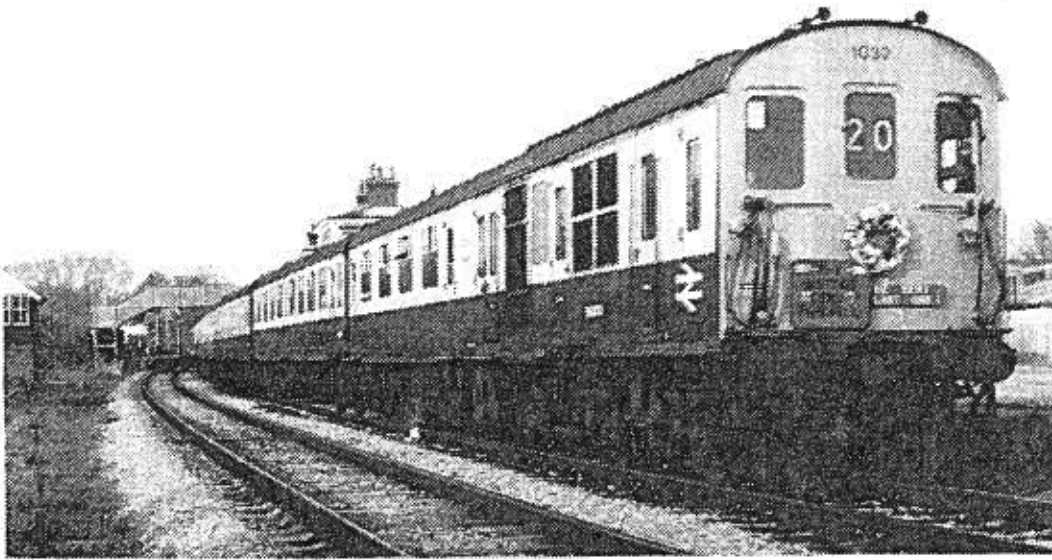
On 11 May 1985 the LCGB and SEG combined to run the 'First And Last 501' tour. This ran on the last weekend of the Watford DC units. Unusually for a rail tour it began at Broad St. and after traversing the normal lines to Watford and North Woolwich, the train left Richmond and crossed over to the Southern Region (not for the first time as they were built at Eastleigh). A tour of the Central Division then took place reaching Holborn Viaduct (CENTRE LEFT) and as far south as Horsham before returning to its home territory.

The Southern Region had ten Motorised Luggage Vans (MLV) built to carry the luggage of passengers travelling on their boat trains. On 15 March 1986 the SEG and LCGB combined to run the 'Vulcan Van Tour'.

Once again the tour started at Paddington with a Class 50, this time 50.025 'Invincible', and travelled to Hastings where 33.206 took over as far as Ashford. There the train was split into two, a pair of MLV's, 68001 and 68005, were attached to the first portion to take 5 coaches on a circular tour via Dover including a photographic stop at Sandwich (BOTTOM LEFT), while 33.206 took the second half to Folkestone Harbour.

On their return the MLV's and Class 33 swapped trains and repeated the trips. After arriving at Ashford for the third time, 50.025 returned the train to Paddington.





Two months later the 'Hastings DEMU Farewell' tour was run by the same two groups. Starting this time at Hastings on 11 May 1986, two 6 car sets, numbers 1002 and 1032, ran to Aylesbury where they were split. Visits to the London Transport branches to Watford and Stanmore were made before meeting up again at Marylebone. The train then returned to Hastings for what was hoped to be a nonstop run to Charing Cross. Unfortunately due to a signalling problem a 6 minute stop was made at Battle. The lost time was made up on the rest of the journey and nobody on the train will ever forget the speed the units went over the points at Metropolitan Junction.

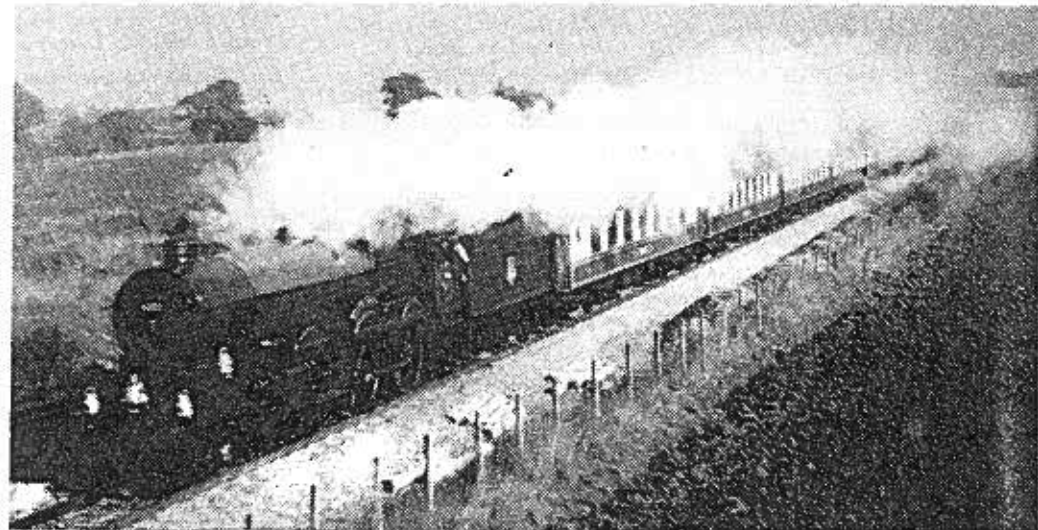
The units carried various head boards and wreaths as shown by 1032 (TOP RIGHT) during a photographic stop at Rye.



The last open day at Coalville took place on the 26 May 1991. As usual HRT ran a special and this produced two firsts. The train was double headed by a pair of Class 60's, 60.032 'William Booth' and 60.057 'Adam Smith', the latter making its first revenue trip. Because of congestion caused by the single track at Coalville and trying to fit in three charter trains as well as shuttle trips from Derby and Leicester trains ran very late and the final train to arrive (a charter from Liverpool) reached Coalville after it had closed and all it could do was pass slowly through the depot and continue to Leicester.

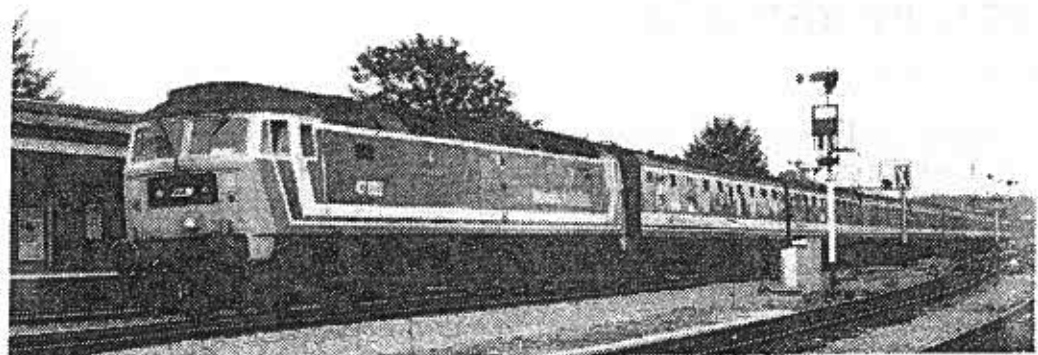
60.032 and 60.057 are seen at St. Albans, their first pickup after leaving St. Pancras.

In 1971 British Railways decided to see what the public response and technical problems would be to bringing back steam haulage. So on the morning of 2nd October 8000 'King George V' left Hereford pulling the Bulmer Cider train on the first stage of a circular trip around the Western Region. The first leg took the train via the Severn Tunnel to Oxford and Tysley. Two days later it left Birmingham Moor St. then after passing through High Wycombe stopped for the day at Kensington (Olympia). On 7th October it ran as far as Swindon passing through Shrivenham (LOWER RIGHT) on the way. The final leg on 9th October return it to Hereford.



Because the tour was so successful it was decided to continue with running steam on certain routes and the rest is history.

Finally, the only non railtour featured ran on Friday 10 August 1990. Over the next two days the semaphore signals at High Wycombe were dismantled. The picture (BOTTOM RIGHT) shows the last loco hauled passenger train, the 17.48 Paddington to Banbury with 47.582 'County of Norfolk' in charge, to pass under the signals.



# BOOKSHELF

Alan Costello



CHILTERN LINE RAIL TOUR  
Silver Star Books

John M.C. Healy  
ISBN 1 87202 405 X

This is the latest book by the local author covering the Great Central lines. It starts with a list giving the opening and, where appropriate, the closing dates of Chiltern line stations. An early history follows together with the Metropolitan line. Another chapter covers the changes since 1945 and the future prospects, such as CrossRail. Extracts from some newspapers are also reproduced. Quite a few pictures are included covering the past up to the present with the new Turbo units in action.

THE SOMERSET & DORSET THEN AND NOW  
Pat Stephens Ltd

Max Hawkins  
ISBN 0 85059 797 8

This book contains around 250 pages of photos (mostly black and white) showing the Somerset & Dorset in the years before its closure, and what the places featured in the pictures looked some 20 years later. The original photos were taken by a number of people but the majority are by Ivo Peters. The author travelled the whole line in 1985 taking pictures from as close to the originals as possible, even if this meant using a forklift truck!

The book starts at Bath and follows the route to Bournemouth West and then covers the branches to Wells, Bridgewater and Burnham. Maps show the exact points where the photos were taken. There are a few colour photos included but not in sequence, I assume due to publishing problems. Well worth looking at.

THE LAST STEAM LOCOMOTIVES OF BRITISH RAILWAYS  
Ian Allan Ltd

P. Ransome Wallace

This is a photographic book showing examples of classes still running in this country around 1955-1956. No new classes were

introduced after those dates although the last steam loco - Evening Star - was not completed until 1960. Tender classes are covered first, working up from the 2-4-0 to the 2-10-0, and then the tank engines follow. Any major modifications between engines of the same class are normally shown, such as the Coronation class with and without streamlining. Information at the back of the book gives the dimensions of each class and how the power classification was calculated. All pictures are black and white and have very informative captions.

STEAM ON THE SHED  
Ian Allan Ltd

P.H. WHITEHOUSE  
ISBN 7110 0080-0

Another book full of photos by a well known photographer. This time, as the title states, all are taken at running sheds, over a period of 50 years. Narrow gauge as well as standard lines are covered with most of the photos taken all over the British Isles, but there are a few taken abroad in Europe and America. Again, an excellent reproduction of a large number of black and white pictures.

THE GUINNESS RAILWAY BOOK  
Guinness Publishing Ltd

John Marshall  
ISBN 0-85112-359-7

This is the successor to the publisher's 3 editions of their Rail Fact and Feats. It starts off with the beginning of railways and continues with the Pioneers and Organisations then onto motive power, speed records and accidents. It concludes with the Arts and Railways listing authors, artists, architecture and music. A detailed index is included together with nearly 200 colour and black and white photos.

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

The event of 25 years ago was what we all thought was to be British Railways last steam journey over standard gauge track, a 314 mile round trip from Liverpool on Sunday 11th August 1968.

This was the famous "15 guinea special" (remember guineas - a crafty way of extracting more money out of people often for professional services). For those that don't know 15 guineas was £15.15.0d or £15.75p in new money. Anyway I couldn't afford it as 15 guineas then is the equivalent of £166 now and I'd just left college.

So, a friend of mine, who had an extinct ex Civil Defence Land Rover (remember Civil Defence), myself and two other friends decided to get some photos. We camped in Blackpool and then set off on that fateful Sunday. The train left Lime Street behind 'Black 5' No.45110 for Manchester Victoria then from Manchester via Blackburn and Ais Gill to Carlisle behind 70013 'Oliver Cromwell'. People were everywhere. Thanks to the Land Rover we got miles from anywhere and got shots of the train going over Dent viaduct. Our "intelligence" informed us that "Appleby was closed" due to an excess of gricers so we set back and got some more shots in the Clitheroe area.

## TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

As recorded in "marlow Donkey" No.27 - June 1983.

Only a six page issue! However the editor was appealing for articles, even anonymous ones! The only articles the editor had were yours truly's "25 years ago" one and "Farewell to the Silver Lady" - Mike Walker's North American Notebook - this recorded the run of America's last privately owned and

The train returned double headed by 44871 and 44781 and returned back to Liverpool. So ended an unforgettable day.

To add to the memories we then went on to the Isle of Man where the railways had re-opened under the auspices of the Earl of Ailsa. All the network was open and well I remember the race to leave St Johns between the Peel and Ramsey trains and the viaducts on the lovely western shore on the Ramsey Branch. One memory, too, was a late evening journey to Port Erin on the ex County Donegal Railways railcar - oh happy memories (However unlike most people's memories it wasn't wonderful sunshine and "why don't we have summers like we used to have" because I can remember it rained all week until the morning that we came home!!)

Other news - 29th June 1968 saw the re-opening of the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. It was the first re-opening to traffic of a standard gauge branch line since the official opening of the Bluebell Railway in 1960. The first train was double headed by Ivatt class '2' tank No.41241 and ex USA tank No.30072. The return fare between Keighley and Oxenhope was 4/- adult (20p).

Just a flavour of that memorable summer of 1968.

