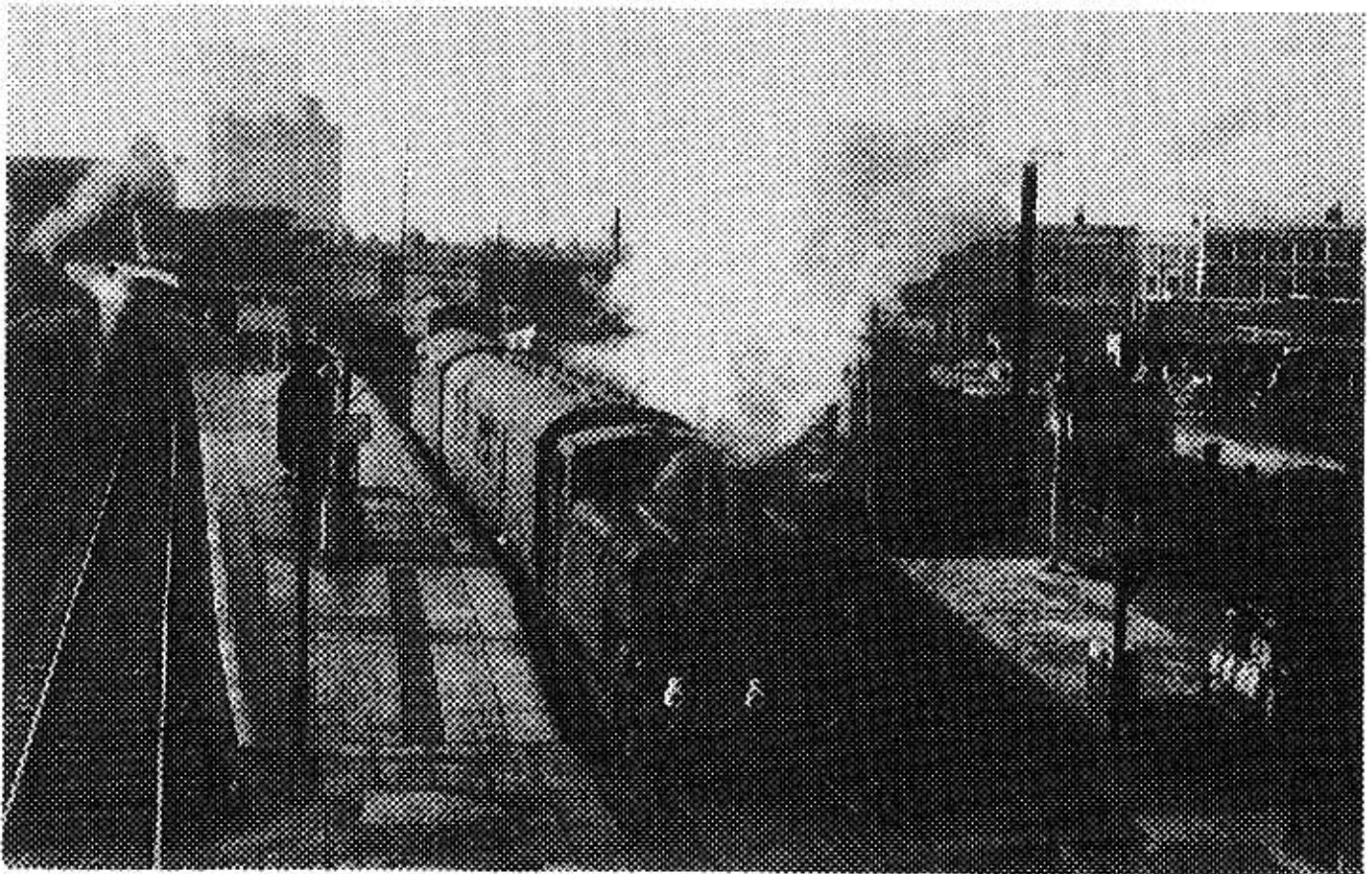


THE

MARCH 1996

76

# MARLOW DONKEY



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LOCAL PRIVATISATION UPDATE  
THE CENTRAL RAILWAY PROJECT  
MEMBER'S TRIPS AT HOME AND ABROAD



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**FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH:**

How things have changed! Former GWR Condensing Pannier Tank 9702 shunts parcels stock in the up bay platforms at Southall in 1956 or 57 whilst a steam hauled local pauses on the Down Relief. This shot won Class E - Black & White Prints for Alan Morris in the 1996 Photographic Competition

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

"What", you ask, "I thought he'd retired, so why is he doing this column?". Yes, I have but deadlines being what they are combined with the revised date for the AGM there is little time for my successor to get up to speed and prepare a column in time for this issue. It also gives me the opportunity to sum up and say farewell.

I've been Chairman for the last seven years and a committee member for ten years prior to that. It's been a largely enjoyable time and I'd like to think I'm leaving the Society in at least as good shape as when I took over the regulator from Bas Woodward in 1989. The load (number of members) has remained about constant - I would have liked a few more tacked on the rear. The biggest problem I've been unable to cure, to my deep regret, is the condition of the fire - it's burning well enough but not as brightly as I'd wish for a really good head of steam. I've tried all sorts of action, a good go round with the fire irons, having the occasional "blow-up", but still the needle hovers below the line and the valves refuse to pop.

However, I must take the opportunity to thank you all for your support and friendship, we are lucky in that we do have a great bunch of blokes on board. One of the things I'm looking forward to as I retire to ride "the cushions" is the opportunity of being able to have a good "chin-wag" with more of you at the meetings, something which the pressures of organising meetings leave little time for. I must also thank the other members of the Committee for all the hard work and support they have given in the past years, in particular to Eddie Lewcock for the excellently varied and interesting programmes he has arranged and to Peter Robins who has kept a firm and efficient control of our finances. We must not forget too, the efforts of Mark Hopwood in the production of this journal which were brought to a premature halt by other pressures or Tim Speechley who makes sure we are featured in the coming events columns of the magazines each month (and thanks to his employer, Fiat, for printing the *Donkey*) or Roger Wallis and Tony Caton who coordinate the social side. Rob Young is also retiring, reluctantly from the Committee at the AGM because of other pressures, we thank him for his efforts over the years.

This last year has brought some particularly enjoyable experiences, not least the trip to Paris through the Channel Tunnel. It was a pleasure to travel on that occasion with Bas who, as Roger Bowen reminds us in this issue, looked forward to just such a club trip in his Chairman's Notes a decade ago.

We are now in our 19th year so next year a major milestone approaches. Our last, the tenth in 1987, was marked by a successful exhibition in Marlow. It would be nice to think that my successor, as an early priority, will start the ball rolling over a debate as to how we should mark our twentieth in a suitably memorable way.

At the time of writing the identity of my successor is yet to be announced, but to whoever has the honour of being Chairman I say "you've got a good 'un, treat it well, enjoy yourself and don't let them get you down!"

*Mile*

## DEADLINE DATE

Because of other commitments on the part of the Acting Editor, this issue is going to press before the AGM in February. Therefore details of the Committee change, new officers, the Annual Report and accounts will be carried in the June issue of the *Donkey*.

# **TIMETABLE**

## **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

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

**Thursday 18th April      RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHY   P. J. Kelly**

Mr Kelly was one of BR's team of official photographers and often acted as a liaison man between BR and film companies producing classics such as *The Ladykillers*. Expect a good evening of vintage BR from angles most of us can never reach.

**Thursday 16th May      SWANAGE RAILWAY Bill Trite**

As Chairman of the railway, Bill Trite is well qualified to set the scene for the venue of the 1996 summer coach trip. After some turbulent years the Swanage Railway has now opened its extension to Corfe Castle allowing us once more to enjoy Southern steam in this classic location.

**Thursday 20th June      RUSSIAN STEAM      Adrian Palmer**

The fall of Communism and end of the Cold War has opened up the former Soviet countries to Westerners. For their part, these struggling nations are reviving their stored steam fleets to attract enthusiasts and hard currency. Adrian shows what delights are to be seen in steam's lost continent.

**Thursday 18th July      RAILWAYS IN THE CHILTERN      Roger Bowen**

Roger's part time occupation as a railway lecturer is well known, tonight he takes a look at local railway history over the past few decades.

**Thursday 15th August      STEAM UP AND BAR-B-QUE**

By kind invitation of Julian Heard we are able to hold an evening event at the Chalk Valley Railway. See Society News for further details.

**Thursday 19th Sept.      IT'S THAT MAN AGAIN!      Ron White**

Yes, it's time for another trawl through the wonderful archives of Colour-Rail with narration delivered in the unique style of Ron (it's in my catalogue, price £5) White.

**Thursday 17th October      STEAM IN CUBA      Colin Meill**

After his excellent Isle of Man presentation last year, Colin turns his attention to another "Paradise Island" for lovers of ancient steam operations.

## **EXCURSIONS**

**Saturday 18th May      SHEFFIELD AND THE SUPERTRAMS**

Another of our days out by train takes us from High Wycombe to Sheffield to ride the all-new Supertram system. Outward via Birmingham returning via London. Fare will be £25.20 but to qualify for this special rate we must have a minimum of 10 in the party. Full details in Society News.

Sunday 7th July

## COACH TRIP TO SWANAGE

Our annual summer coach trip takes us to the newly extended Swanage Railway with the added attractions of Corfe Castle and the seaside. With this in mind, we offering seaside only fares in addition to the full package for those who just want to spend the day on the beach.

Fares: Including railway -	Adults £13.00	Children £10.00
Swanage only -	Adults £8.00	Children £6.00

## SOCIETY NEWS

### MEMBER'S NEWS

Two familiar faces have been absent from recent gatherings due to injury or illness. Peter Bond broke a leg again in December whilst Alan Wheeler was an emergency admission to Wycombe Hospital just before our January meeting. He has had a rather major operation and whilst he is now at home it will be some time before he returns to meetings. We wish them both speedy and complete recoveries.

### PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Buffet and Social evening in December was a great success and particularly notable for the quality of the buffet itself which was the best yet - our thanks to the organisers. For entertainment we had an informal railway and general knowledge quiz which was won by Tim Speechley.

The results of January's Photographic Competition are below.

### PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

Once again numbers were limited but quality was extremely high. The new, simplified, voting system worked well and managed not to create any tie-break situations. The winners were:

**Class A - Colour Slides UK Steam:** PETER ROBINS with a delightful shot of 0-6-0PT 9681 on a charter photo freight at Whitecroft in the Forest of Dean.

**Class B - Colour Slides UK Non-Steam:** PETER ROBINS for a vintage shot of a class 40 hauled train at the south end of the Tay Bridge.

**Class C - Colour Slides Overseas:** PETER GREATOREX with a nerve tingling shot of a Turkish class 565 "Kriegslok" 2-10-0 almost lost in snow as it climbed toward the Russian border at Sarikam in March 1987.

**Class D - Colour Prints:** GORDON RIPPINGTON with a classic study of A4 Pacific 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley* approaching Ais Gill summit with a southbound run over the Settle & Carlisle in 1986.

**Class E - Black & White Prints:** ALAN MORRIS for a fine study of Condensing Pannier 9702 shunting parcels stock at Southall in 1956/7.

The EDDIE LEWCOCK CUP for "best in show" went to PETER GREATOREX for the Turkish shot.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS - A REMINDER

Renewals have been coming in at a steady rate but there are several members who have not as yet sent their subscriptions in for 1996. Remember, you are deemed to have lapsed if you have not renewed by 1 April. Please send your cheques, payable to 'MDRS', to Peter Robins at 95 Broom Hill, Cookham, Berks., SL6 9LJ. Thank you.

## DAY TRIP TO SHEFFIELD

The last two years we have organised an enjoyable day trip by train and this year we are proposing a visit to Sheffield on **Saturday 18 May**. We must get a minimum of ten in the party to qualify for the group travel rate of £25.20 (the normal cheap day return is £34.00).

Sheffield hosts some of the most modern and extensive shopping facilities in the UK with the two facilities at Meadowhall and Crystal Peaks. Both are accessible by the brand new South Yorkshire Supertram, one of the new light rail systems and the main target of our visit.

The schedule for the day is as follows:

High Wycombe	d.	07.20	165	Chiltern Railways
Banbury	a.	08.07		
	d.	08.26	47/8	Cross-Country Trains
Birmingham New St	a.	09.29		
	d.	09.58	HST	Cross-Country Trains
Sheffield	a.	11.15		
Sheffield	d.	17.02	HST	Cross-Country Trains
Birmingham New St	a.	18.24		
	d.	19.06	47/8	Cross-Country Trains
Banbury	a.	20.05		
	d.	20.30	165	Chiltern Railways
High Wycombe	a.	21.21		

The best ticket to purchase if extensive travel is to be undertaken is the £3.95 SYPTE Rover ticket which can be purchased from SYPTE outlets, not at tram stops or on trams.

## AUGUST EVENING BAR-B-QUE AND STEAM UP

Julian Heard has very kindly agreed to host an August meeting in his back garden at 58 Chalklands, Bourne End which is home to the Chalk Valley Light Railway, his extensive G Scale narrow gauge system. All the motive power is live steam, radio controlled, and Julian says you can all have a go at driving - and it's not as easy as it looks but great fun! A bar-b-que and drinks will be laid on by the Society for which a small charge will be made. Full details in the next issue but if you'd like to know more about the line check out his article in the March 1994 *Marlow Donkey*.

## JOHN TUCK IS NEW DONKEY EDITOR

John Tuck takes the over the Editor's Chair from the next issue. Please send all your offerings to him at 35A Danywern Drive, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berks., RG11 5NS. Tel: 01734 788225. Please submit material as soon as possible as there will need to be time for typing. If you can submit on a 3½" Floppy Disk it would be greatly appreciated - John can read most word-processing formats but if you are in doubt speak to him first.

# **RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT - NOTES & NEWS**

## **MORE TURBOS HIT BUFFERS**

The run of accidents on local lines continued right up to the end of 1995 when 165.121 working the 10.15 Reading to Paddington collided with the stop blocks at the end of Paddington's platform 14 on 31 January. The leading car received some damage to the lower front end and was derailed, fouling the westbound Hammersmith & City line - fortunately no H&C train was approaching. Three passengers received minor injuries and were treated at St. Mary's Hospital nearby. Those who tuned into the local TV news programmes that evening will have seen our own Mark Hopwood giving a very brief and terse statement to the press.

Five days earlier, on Boxing Day, Chiltern 165.037 collided with stop blocks at Aylesbury Depot causing major damage to DMCL 58831 which is now out of service. DMS 58864 from this set has replaced 58816 in 165.016 as the latter has severe wheel damage.

Then on 15 February a hybrid set consisting of the DMC's from 165.108 and 165.121 (again!) collided with the buffers at Bourne End once again causing considerable damage to the platform but the leading car, 58960 from '108, was only slightly damaged. This totals NINE such incidents, two resulting in damage sufficient to require main works attention and two involving passenger injury along with countless incidents where the units have overshot stops at through platforms or signals.

Thames management say the accidents are mostly caused by slippery rail conditions (They are taking steps to fit some of the units with sanding equipment as an experiment.) or driver error. Informed sources over at Angel Train Contracts, the owners, say the trouble is entirely due to the drivers not controlling their trains properly. This is unfortunately too common in the present set up. Here we have Angel, Thames and Railtrack, all separate and competing companies, passing the buck between each other rather than concentrating on solving what is obviously a serious problem. Perhaps we shall have to wait until there is a really serious accident involving fatalities. Meantime, there are regular Thames' patrons who are now becoming very concerned at the safety of the whole operation.

## **NEAR MISS IN PADDINGTON**

A head-on collision inside Paddington station was only narrowly averted on 27 December. An arriving Great Western HST was routed, under CLEAR signals, into platform 11 where the six car 15.48 Thames Express to Oxford was awaiting departure! Fortunately, the speed of the arriving train was low enough that a full emergency brake application was sufficient to stop it a few feet short of a collision. The signalman responsible at the Slough IECC was immediately suspended from duty pending an enquiry. Equipment, rather than human, failure is thought to have been the cause.

## **MINOR DERAILMENT CAUSES CHAOS**

One of Sod's (many) Laws states that if anything is going to go wrong it will at the most inconvenient time and place. A prime example occurred on Monday 15 January when a Thames Turbo derailed on the points at the throat to Reading Depot right at the start of the morning peak. Although little physical damage was done to either the train or track, rerailing took several hours during which time 19 other trains were trapped in the depot.

As a result Thames services suffered massive disruption. Many were cancelled and buses were used to cover for the Greenford and Bourne End - Marlow services. A Great Western HST was hired and did one round trip between Reading and Paddington calling at almost all stations whilst six scheduled GW services made additional calls at Thames stations during the morning peak. Although the errant

set was rerailed by the afternoon some delays and cancellations continued through the evening peak as well.

## **PRIVATISATION HOTS UP**

On Tuesday 19 December the franchise to operate the Great Western Trains InterCity services was awarded to Great Western Holdings, a management-employee buy-out (MEBO) led by GWT MD Brian Scott and other senior managers. After an anxious period when it seemed the preferred bidder was to Resurgence Railways following the withdrawal of Sea Containers from the bidding, GWH were the only bidder left.

The change in ownership took place at 02.00 on 4 February and the franchise will run for 10 years instead of the originally proposed seven. As part of their bid, GWH has committed itself to increasing frequency and standards of service. The existing HST fleet is to be heavily refurbished and repowered, a contract being placed for the work in December. Consideration was being given to possibly splitting the sets into two and building driving trailers (similar in appearance to class 442's) to enable them to work push-pull but this seems to be losing favour. Another alternative being explored is the procurement of completely new trainsets! Much depends on the outcome of GWH's bids for other franchises.

At the same time a standard seven year franchise for South West Trains to Stagecoach Holdings Plc, the bus operator, along with the ill-fated MEBO award for LTS Rail. The latter is now back at the bidding stage.

On Chiltern the franchising process is well under way and MD Adrian Shooter is leading a MEBO bid under the title "M40 Trains Limited"(!) which will be in competition with Stagecoach Holdings at least and possibly Central Railway (See separate feature article). Bids must be in by 22 March. The winner should be in business by the summer. On Thames, which was "vested" (becoming a fully fledged company wholly owned by the BRB) in mid-December, bids are now being accepted. MD Roger McDonald and his team are organising their own MEBO. Other suitors lining up here are Stagecoach Holdings, M40 Trains (whether or not successful in their own bid) and GWH. Indeed Brian Scott seems hell bent on rebuilding God's Wonderful Railway as they intend bidding for South Wales & West as well!

The big news was the sale of Res and Trainload Freight to North & South Railways, a subsidiary of the dynamic and innovative US regional Wisconsin Central. Don't fear the US invasion. In it's eight year life WC has turned an area of US railroading from a long and terminal decline to a booming operation breaking all records - including profits. This, quite simply, marks the end of the long decline in British rail freight and the dawn of a new, aggressive era. Believe it and sell your shares in road haulage promptly! We shall be running a profile of WC in a future issue.

By the end of 1995 twenty eight businesses which previously formed part of British Rail had been sold to the private sector. Of these four, Special Trains, Res, Great Western Trains, and South Western Trains, are train operators, and three, Angel Train Contracts, Eversholt Leasing and Porterbrook Leasing, are Rolling Stock Leasing Companies. The remainder are mostly infrastructure, design, construction and maintenance operations, train maintenance depots and signalling and telecommunications businesses.

## **47's ON THE BRANCH**

The first appearance of American-owned motive power on the Marlow Branch occurred on Sunday 28 January when N&SR 47.702 and 47.711 "topped and tailed" a ballast train.



## HEATHROW PROGRESS

By late January, tracklaying had begun at Airport Junction and the erection of catenary masts was almost complete between there and Paddington with wire stringing expected to commence shortly.

As the after effects of the 1994 tunnel collapse are still delaying the project and with possible delivery and commissioning delays to the new stock thought to be likely, BAA is considering a temporary service as far as Hayes with a dedicated connecting bus link. The possibility of hiring class 323 emu's to work such trains is being explored. The Hayes terminal could either be the existing Thames station or a new one nearer the junction. Consideration is also being given to stopping some Heathrow Express services at Hayes for the convenience of Thames customers travelling from local stations - previously it was intended that all Heathrow Express services would be non-stop.

## BOURNE END - HIGH WYCOMBE STUDY

A feasibility study to be carried out by a transport planning consultancy is being jointly commissioned by Wycombe District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. This will examine the potential of the former railway line between Bourne End and High Wycombe as a corridor for new public transport provision, cycling or walking. The results of the study are expected by April 1996. Former Little Marlow councillor, Chris Wallis is currently leading a campaign to use the trackbed for a light rail system.

## CHINNOR BUYS STEAM LOCOMOTIVE

The Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway has now bought its first steam locomotive. It is an "Austerity" (J94) 0-6-0 saddle tank built by Hunslet in 1952. Painted maroon, no. 8 is named *Sir Robert Peel* and has worked on the East Lancs Railway for a number of years. It should be available to work trains on the C&PR when it reopens at Easter. Class 20 Diesel D8001 will also be spending the summer season on hire to the C&PR.

## ROYAL TRAIN COACH AT FAWLEY

The last issue carried a reported sighting of Royal Saloon 2900 on the Marlow By-Pass with the request for any information as to where it was going. Judging by the response at the December meeting it seems that the Acting Editor was the only member in the dark! However, in case any other members do not know, we can report that the vehicle has been purchased by our President, Sir William McAlpine, and was en route to Fawley. The mind boggles at how a 65' long coach and its transporter got up that lane!

## MAILBAG - LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

As one of those who participated in the day trip to Paris last June, and, I must add, thoroughly enjoyed it, I read Mike's report in the December *Donkey* with interest. Imagine my surprise when towards the end of the article I found my name mentioned suggesting that I report on how I found using Eurostar and TGV to get to the South of France during the summer. It is certainly best to keep ones mouth shut. I should know better at my age!

I did go to the South of France in August, but unfortunately in the end not by train. I did attempt to book by train, and was offered an APEX fare of £148 return Waterloo to Valence with one change

only at Lille in each direction. The journey time was about 7 hours. When I tried to make a reservation there was no problem on the outward journey on 11th August using the 12.23 from Waterloo, but much to my surprise, for the return journey on 24th August the TGV from Valence was fully booked (five weeks before travelling!) except for two seats in SMOKING. Now, as a life long non-smoker the thought of 4+ hours in a TGV surrounded by the French puffing away at their Galoise etc was more than I could stand. The reason for the heavy booking weeks in advance was explained by SNCF in this way. Many French are finishing their long summer break in the South at the end of August and every TGV is heavily booked, and the train to Lille started at Marseille, on the Mediterranean coast.

Sorry, Mike, it just didn't work out this time, instead I flew from Heathrow to Lyon by Air France and continued my journey by road. The air fare was £189 return. When I go that way again, I shall try to go by train, but I may have to book months, not weeks ahead.

Alan Morris

## **THE CENTRAL RAILWAY PROJECT**

**ROGER BOWEN**

Central Railway Plc is a private company which wishes to operate a railway running between the Channel Tunnel, London and a point just south of Leicester. The scheme would involve works to existing lines, some new track and stations and would create a railway capable of carrying existing road-based trailers. Central Railway estimate that after ten years of operation there would be four train per hour each way. Through the Wycombe District the scheme is based on the existing Chiltern Line. One of the most significant aspects of the proposal is a new passenger station at West Wycombe.

The proposal is being promoted by Central Railway Plc via a formal application under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The formal application was to be made to the Secretary of State for Transport during January 1996.

In more detail, the line from the Channel Tunnel to Ashford will require the addition of two new tracks <sup>1</sup>. West of Headcorn, the Central Railway crosses over the existing line to run on its north side past Marden and Paddock Wood.

East of Tonbridge, Central Railway crosses to the south side of the existing railway and alongside it through Tonbridge, continuing alongside the existing Tonbridge to Redhill line to just before the M23. The railway then turns north, alongside the M23, and into a tunnel under the M23 at North Downs to emerge alongside the Brighton line at Coulsdon. The two new tracks would continue on the west side of the Brighton lines, through East Croydon up to Streatham Common station. A tunnel would then be provided running north towards Clapham Junction and emerging at Olympia.

North of Olympia two new tracks are proposed to the west of the West London line, with an international motor rail/passenger facility at White City. Central railway will then reinstate tracks alongside the London Underground Central line to Acton and connect with the existing railway towards Ruislip. The company will upgrade the existing railways through High Wycombe to a point north of Princes Risborough. A spur is proposed at Denham to a lorry-on-train ("piggy-back") terminal near the junction between the M25 and M40.

From a reinstated junction at Ashendon, north of Princes Risborough, the company proposes to reinstate the former Great Central main line running via Brackley and Rugby to a junction just south of Leicester with the Leicester to Nuneaton railway. A spur will be provided to the 300 acre site of the lorry-on-trains terminal at the junction of the M1 and M6 in South Leicestershire. Connecting roads and other facilities will allow up to 250 lorries per hour to be loaded or off-loaded from Central Railway shuttle trains.

In addition to White City, passenger stations are also proposed at West Wycombe, Haddenham, Brackley, Woodford Halse, Rugby and Lutterworth.

The proposed Order will contain all necessary powers for the acquisition of land needed for a two-track railway throughout and related facilities by compulsory purchase and for the construction and use of the works. The Secretary of State will also be asked to make a directive that planning permission for the railway is deemed to be granted.

Specifically within the Wycombe District the proposal is based on the existing Chiltern line. In general terms Central Railway proposes to refurbish the existing railway, lowering the track bed or raising bridges where necessary to achieve improved clearances, installing overhead electrification, new signalling and control and increase track capacities at some stations.

From Princes Risborough towards Banbury the company will reinstate the second track which has been removed over the whole of this length. The company will install two through main line tracks and build a footbridge between the platforms at Princes Risborough.

The track to London will be lowered through the single track Saunderton Tunnel to achieve the required clearances.

It is proposed to establish a new passenger station at West Wycombe with access to the West Wycombe Road roundabout via Cookshall Lane<sup>2</sup>. At High Wycombe station it is intended to restore the two through running lines on a trackbed lowered by up to 2 metres. There may be a speed restriction of 40 mph through the station.

East of Loudwater, the railway passes through Whitehouse Tunnel. It is proposed to run one track through the tunnel to Central Railway clearances, if necessary by lowering the track. It is intended to add another 250 metre tunnel to the north of the existing line in the vicinity of Whitehouse Lane.

Under the proposals, the Government has established a framework for Central Railway negotiations with Railtrack for the acquisition of existing railway lines and other railway operational land and facilities. The company seeks to own its own track, run its own trains and encourage other railway operators to use its line at commercial rates. Under a separate initiative, the Government is currently consulting on proposals to let a franchise to operate passenger services between London and Birmingham. It is understood that Central Railway may offer to bid for such a franchise if invited to do so.

Full consultation is taking place with appropriate bodies and the proposals were to be considered by the Planning and Development Committee of the Wycombe District Council at its meeting on Wednesday 6 March 1996.

Bearing in mind the national significance of the project, it will almost certainly be then considered by Parliament, which will decide whether or not to approve the principle of the scheme. If Parliament does approve there will then be a local Inquiry or Hearing or possibly several Inquiries or Hearings.

The company believe the earliest the railway could open would be 2002 assuming the necessary approvals etc are obtained without major delay.

Anyone wishing to make representations on this initial consultation should contact Mark Callaghan, Directorate of Planning, Transport and Development, Wycombe District Council, Queen Victoria Street, High Wycombe, Bucks., HP11 1BB. Telephone 01494 421507/

<sup>1</sup> This provision will be in addition to any works in connection with the high-speed line to London.

<sup>2</sup> This will be some ¼ mile west of the site of the old West Wycombe station.

## SOME FRENCH REMINISCENCES

**Eddie Lewcock**

Visiting preserved French Railways is not easy - whilst there are quite a number of them, they are very widely distributed and with few exceptions, run only at weekends, leaving the intending traveller the option of living there in a mobile home or shuttling, at weekly intervals across the Channel, both expensive options.

However, a flavour of French preservation can be gained by going to Grenoble and then to Valence, both in the South East of France and easily reached from Paris by TGV. Careful scheduling allows a visit to the Chemin de Fer de la Mure during the weekend and a trip to the Vivarais line during the week as there is a daily run during the summer. About halfway between the two centres, lies Chatte, the headquarters of Le Jardin Ferroviaire, a French equivalent to Bekonscot but with much more stress on the railway side.

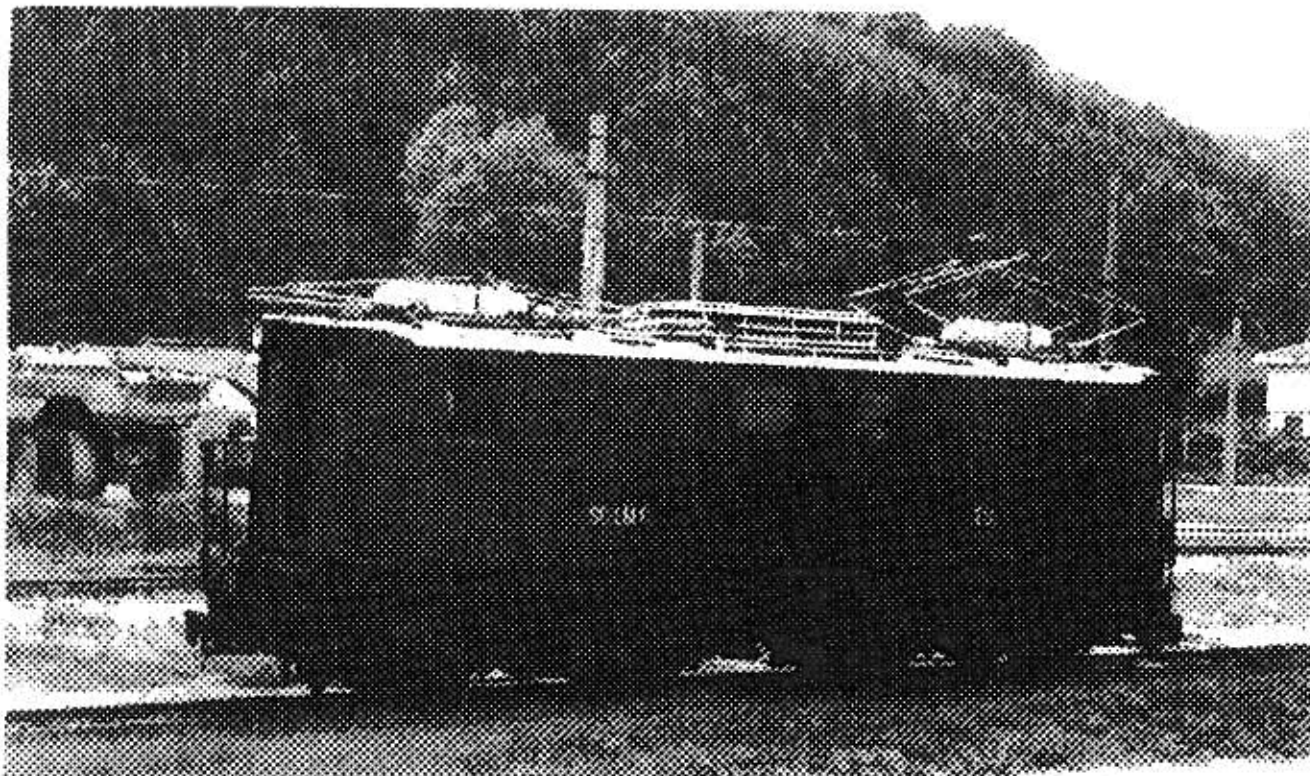
A small party of railway 'nutters' from various parts of Britain, met one Thursday at Charles de Gaulle Airport before proceeding to the Gare de Lyons for the afternoon 'non-stop' TGV to Grenoble.

Whilst at the station do visit 'Le Train Bleu' restaurant to see the setting - typical of the 'Belle Epoque'. Do not however buy anything serious as the prices are rather hot. The ceiling is highly ornate but relates to the simple pleasures of the seaside rather than the Gods having it off with their girls. Everything is original and beautifully preserved.

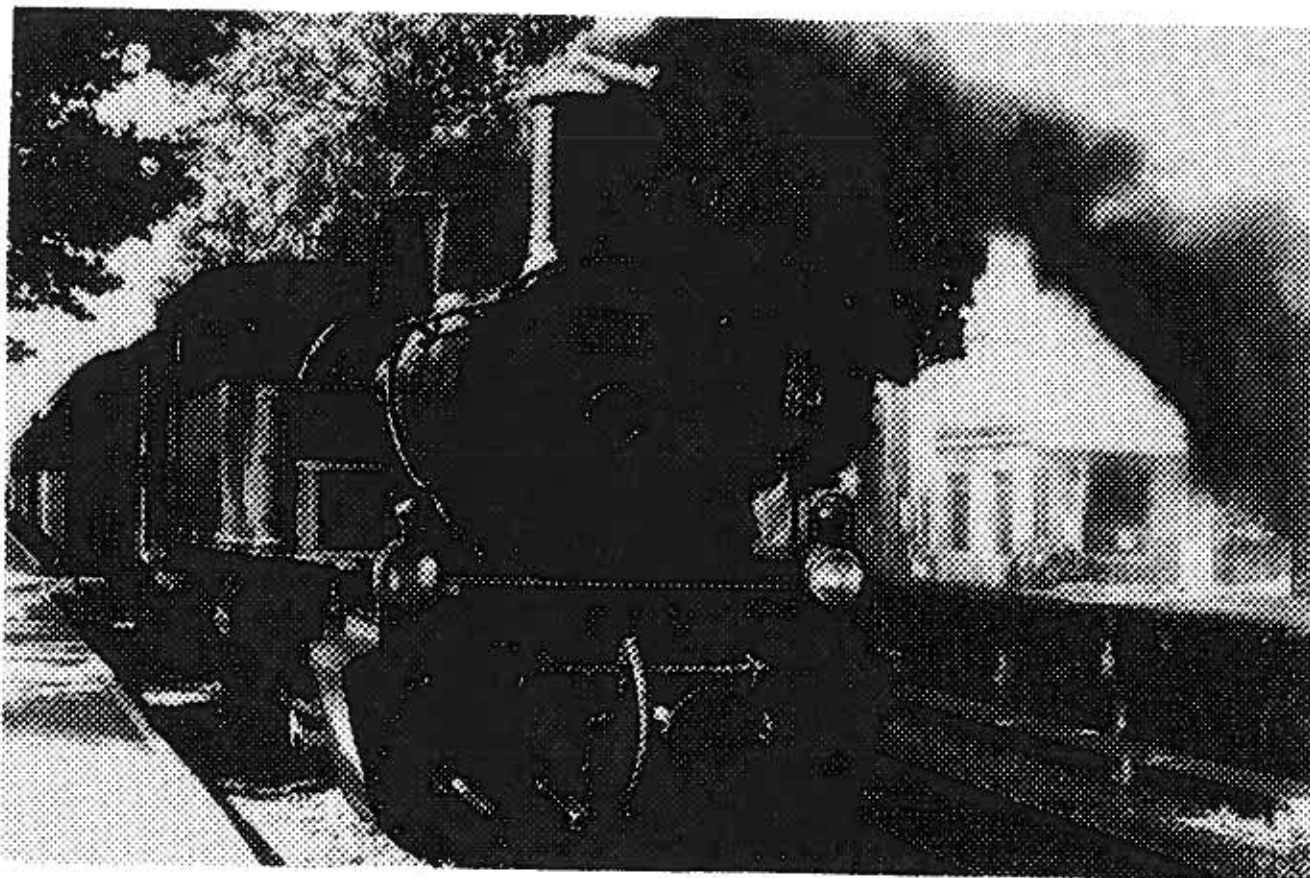
Grenoble is a thriving city of about 400,000 with a large University and a 7,500 bed hospital complex - we know, as one of our party had to use it following a heart attack on the TGV; by great good fortune, a top cardiologist was travelling on the train and the support offered was superb in every way.

My first experience of a diesel driven trolley-bus was in Grenoble. I watched with some amazement as it stopped for passengers, wound down its poles, started the engine and drove away as a diesel bus! Additionally some very up to date trams run on two routes and all are two car articulated sets with a short centre section over the middle bogie. A wheelchair friendly step automatically comes out of certain doors at stops.

The CHEMIN DE FER DE LA MURE lies 19km south of Grenoble and is easily reached by SNCF train - a point not know at the Tourist Bureau! It is electrically operated at 2400 volts and was used for anthracite haulage before becoming a tourist line.



A vintage Bo+Bo electric locomotive used for hauling tourist trains on the Chemin de Fer de la Mure.



One of the few Mallet compounds still working, Vivarais Railway 414, a 0-6-6-0T, waits at Tournon ready for a run to La Mastrie.

Two photos: Eddie Lewcock

It was originally opened in 1888 and operated by a batch of Cab Forward Tank engines; understandable when you consider that the present 30km line has 18 tunnels in addition to 12 bridges, some of considerable height. The line meets the SNCF at St Georges de Commiers - 382 metres above sea level, climbs in 25km to 1071 metres then drop to La Mure at 881 metres at 30km. The line is tortuous and was the first high voltage electrification of any length in the world, the date being 1903.

On arrival, the line presents a delightful appearance of disorganisation. Our money for the return trip was readily taken but after that we were on our own! We boarded a coach on the first train (2 being advertised), only to be thrown out again as a man wrote Reserved on the side of the coach.

Seats were found elsewhere just in time, as the train filled up suddenly with coach parties, the female portions of which proceeded to use the 'hommes' as well as the 'dames' with blithe unconcern.

A working party 100 metres down the line, next caused some concern, the overhead wire did not seem to be there and much activity took place to get something up; this was managed eventually sometime after the due departure time. Then occurred my missed opportunity of the trip! With no arrangement in the loco for lifting the pantograph, a broom - and handle - presumably passed for 2400 volts insulation was pressed into service to raise it - and I MISSED THE PICTURE!

The start was full of uncertainties but after a minute or so we settled down to a steady speed and the fun on the open platform coach began, we squealed round curves with view after view appearing at regular intervals as we progressed up the Drac Gorge and to the lake of Monteynard where we stopped for photographs.

The climb is on a steady 1:33 gradient for 15 miles and a stop for drinks and food is made at La Motte, where the locals turn out in force to offer cheap but very edible eats and drinkable drinks.

Arrival at La Mure was at the platform at lunch time - departure however was from a siding about 2½ hours later and on return to St Georges, the enormous amount of decaying meter gauge stock was noted during the long wait for the SNCF train, which arrived punctually.

### LE JARDIN FERROVIAIRE

This is situated at Chatte about 4km from the SNCF station of St Marcellin, which is about an hour's train ride from Grenoble. Five of our party went over one day and were met by Christian Abric the creator of the layout, based on LGB and Bachmann models to a scale of 1:22.5.

The grounds occupy 1300 square meters and we were given a guided tour, including the workshops by Christian, who explained that nine people were involved in building and operating the layout, which is 1,100 metres long and has about 10km of electric supply wire. To prevent collisions each train cuts off the electric supply in its rear and 42 such sections exist.

Whilst trains of various nationalities are mixed up together, a large number of most attractive settings have been created in a very well planned system and there are plenty of scenes that require more than one viewing in order to gain the fuller picture. Additionally electronics and sound effects bring not only steam locomotives to life but also cattle wagons!

This layout was full of surprises during the tour, there are about 100 locomotives of various shapes and sizes, steam, diesel and electric. Those in regular service cover considerable distances to the tune of 8,000 (yes eight thousand) km (4,800 miles) per year - plenty of us do not drive our cars that far! The locos on view had all travelled at least 30,000 (18,000 miles). The motors were Buhler, made

in both Germany and USA. Nylon gear wheels lasted only about 3 weeks so their use was discouraged in favour of metal gears!

Our return to St Marcellin with 5 people in a taxi for 3, proved a finishing touch to an enjoyable afternoon.

## THE VIVARAIS RAILWAY

This tourist line is all that remains of a once much larger metre gauge system serving the ARDECHE country lying to the west of the River Rhone, near Valance, (an hour's TGV ride south of Lyons). The main system was built at the end of the 19th century in order to open up the area for trade and some of the lines penetrated areas not reached by the road and this is true of the Vivarais line today. At one time it formed a branch line running from a junction at Le Cheylard to Tournon on the banks of the Rhone. In 1968 it was about to be broken up for scrap but it was saved by a group of enthusiasts who took over the 33km section between Tournon and La Mastre, re-opening it a year later in 1969! In summer, a 48 Ton Mallet Compound Tank engine hauls the 200 Ton train up 1:45 Gradients from Tournon to La Mastre.

The line is operated by the CFTM, a public Company set up to conserve the historic nature of the railway, with about 12 full time employees and an unpaid management staff. It works closely in with the SLAV, which is a non-profit 300 strong organisation of Volunteers who work to save and maintain old vehicles. Between them they run both the Vivarais line and the Haut Rhone line at Montallieu, which we did not have time to visit.

Tournon on the west bank of the Rhone lies opposite to Train L'Hermitage on the east. This is the birthplace of Marc Seguin, who was responsible for buying two of Stephenson's locomotives in March 1828 and for which he built a multi-tubular boiler at the same time as Robert Stephenson built the Rocket. The multi-tubular boiler gave four times the steam generated by the existing boilers.

One further step back in history, the Seguin family was related by marriage to the Montgolfier family and Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier were the inventors of the hot air balloon!

Whilst Tournon has a passenger station on the SNCF, there is no service, so arrival by train must be at Tain, then one of the 3 suspension bridges built by Marc Seguin, is used to reach the Vivarais line.

The start is over one of the few multi-gauge tracks left in operation in Europe. At the point where the tracks split there is a steady juddering for several metres as the train runs over rails topped with Tungsten steel for signal contacts. This line then breaks away to run past vineyards where the St Joseph wines are produced. History was made here, both in Roman times and with the French Resistance fighting the retreating Germans in the last war.

At Douce-Plage, a stone arch bridge 51 metres wide is passed through. This road bridge was built in 1583 and is an impressive structure for its date.

The line now climbs steeply through a thickly wooded valley, winding sharply round tight curves, passing on its way, a hydro-electric barrage and a station used for the BBC film 'Clochemerle'.

At Monteuil station, the 45th Parallel is crossed and curiously cooking with butter in the North gives way to cooking with olive oil in the South.

On our run a stop for refreshments was made at St Barthelemy where several stalls selling local 'goodies' were set up near the main cafe. Water was taken and the fire made up again with good 'clag' producing coal and briquettes.

The scenery continued to be spectacular all the way to Lamastre, a busy little market town, which much activity and cafes for life support!

A good collection of rolling stock is also to be found, including several rail cars which provide a second and faster service daily. During summer they have a maximum speed of 60k.p.h. compared with the steam of 40k.p.h. and include four Billard designs, one De Dion and one Brissoneau et Lotz.

Steam stock includes five 48 ton 0-6-6-0 Mallets, one Pinguely 0-6-0 double cab locomotive, two Corpet 0-4-0, one Mallet 0-4-4-0 and one Pinguely 0-6-0 locomotive.

Carriages come from several railways including Breton, Provence, Montreaux Oberland Bernais, Brunig and Gruyere lines.

As mentioned earlier, this line is operated daily during the high season and for anyone visiting that area of France, a ride on the 'old time' is a must!

## SOMEBODY HAS TO DO IT

Mike Walker

As some of you may have noticed, I was absent from the September meeting. This was because I was escorting a party of some twenty seven Americans on a tour of the UK using first class rail travel, where available, to visit various preserved railways and staying at top quality hotels. Okay, I know it's an awful job, but somebody had to do it and I drew the short straw. However, it did give me a chance to see something of my own country and get a rare opportunity to see how others see us and to sample a wide range of BR services, and a BR much removed from the stereotypes we often apply. The tour was organised by my old friend Reggie Tonry from New York, who has given up driving Long Island trains for organising overseas rail trips, and sponsored by Hal Carstens who publishes *Railfan & Railroad* and *Model Railroad Craftsman* magazines.

The party arrived in the UK on the morning of Sunday 10th September from various points in the US along with a token Canadian. Having got them to their central London hotel I was amazed that a small group wanted to do an immediate tour of London's mainline terminals rather than sleep off the jet lag. So we set off to visit Kings Cross, St Pancras, Paddington, Victoria, Waterloo and Liverpool Street. An immediate impression was made by the overall roofs at each, our visitors quickly located the "builders plate" at St Pancras and were impressed and amazed by the "new" roof at Liverpool Street.

The tour proper started on the Monday with a journey on the 08.00 Kings Cross-Glasgow Central, the *Scottish Pullman*, as far as York. Not just First Class but Pullman no less to enjoy the famous BR Great British Breakfast. On this day there was a second tour group on board which, along with other travellers meant that the two and a half First Class cars were almost full and all wanting breakfast. The Chief Stewardess was only told of this when she booked on but she and her staff did a superb job, breakfast being completely served by the time we reached Stoke Summit. Our visitors were impressed at the quality of the silver service and the standard of the meal. An on time arrival at York after miles of 125 mph running helped get the tour off to a great start.



Americans, of course travel light. They assure me they were travelling light on this trip which is why their luggage only occupied two thirds of the floor space in the DVT! At York we sought BR's help to move this baggage mountain which completely filled two BRUTE's and was delivered to our hotel, the adjacent Royal York, by BR. Porters not being common these days meant that the handling team included the Duty Manager!

We next visited the NRM. This was a first for me since the latest alterations and the place is now totally mind boggling. Even at a brisk pace it took us 6½ hours to go right round, and that didn't allow time to really study the small exhibits. One of our party was an Administrative Assistant at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, generally accepted as one of the world's finest, and even he could not believe the size and quality of York. The day ended, where else, in a pub where our visitors tried Theakstons "Old Peculier" having seen me savouring this sacred brew. To my amazement they liked it and it became the favoured choice for most during our three night stay at York.

Our two days in York were taken up with a coach trip to the NYMR on Tuesday and a visit to the KWVR on Wednesday. The former had *Dame Vera Lynn* and, appropriately, the USA S160 2-8-0 running. Unfortunately the Yank was working the opposing train so while I took some on the coach to Moorgates for lineside photography the rest held a photo session at Goathland. It delayed the trains a little but the NMYR didn't object. The Worth Valley does not operate midweek at this time of year but opened specially using Railbus E79962. It was a day for basic rail transport as after a trip on an over hot 158 from York to Leeds, *Pacers* provided our transport from Leeds to Keighley and back (seemingly the only journeys not being worked by refurbished 308's!) and onto York via Harrogate. Needless to say the *Pacers* made a big, but unfavourable, impression on our visitors.

At various times members of the party gathered on York station to watch the action, the intensity of which they found mind-boggling. During one such session Hal Carstens and I were watching an IC225 depart for London. I took great pleasure in pointing out 91007's nameplate, *Ian Allan*, and suggested he got Amtrak to name one of it's new diesels after him. He replied that I could be "replaced with a human".

The York stay concluded with a memorable dinner at The Sidings restaurant where we enjoyed superb cuisine as the nocturnal parade of the ECML passed by including one of the Royal 47's on the Up Postal.

Then it was back on the *Scottish Pullman* to continue to Edinburgh. First class again but no breakfast, however the refreshments were free. The Mk4 cars are superb to ride in and First Class does pamper you, it's great value if someone else is paying! At both York and Edinburgh BR moved the luggage between hotel and train. The hard core group boarded a 150/2 *Sprinter* to view the Forth Bridge from South Queensferry in the afternoon whilst the rest explored the city. An unexpected reunion occurred for me at Edinburgh with ex-Thames class 117 dmu's still hard at work for Scotrail and looking smart in RR livery.

Next day, Friday, we set off for the Highlands on another 158 with questionable air conditioning which took us to Aviemore for a visit to the Strathspey Railway, another first for me. The star here was Caledonian 828 a superbly restored 0-6-0 looking absolutely fabulous in Caley Blue. The need to take a boat trip on Loch Ness meant we only got to ride the Strathspey one way but it looked impressive, I must get there again some time.

When I was last in the Highlands of Scotland, during the heyday of John Diffey's Chiltern Trains, the standard train was a class 37 and Mk1's. Today it's all 156 *Super Sprinters* and it was one of these which on Saturday morning took us from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh from where we crossed

by ferry (in the shadow of the new bridge) to Skye. A tour of the island was followed by another ferry from Armdale to Mallaig where we actually found a 37 and Mk1's, a Hertfordshire Railtours "Gricex" about to leave. We followed on another 156. As we had retired US drivers and signalmen among our party the opportunity was taken during the day to demonstrate how RETB works. Our visitors, whilst impressed, wondered if it was overkill. It probably is to a nation which protects single lines by verbal instructions and written orders.

We spent the night at Fort William in a hotel overlooking the station and the stock of the Sleeper which was much in the news as it had just been reprieved - it does not run on Saturday nights. Next morning I asked the Scotrail Duty Manager if it would be possible for the group to visit the loco depot to see the two steam locos used on *The Jacobite*. He said it would have been possible in the old days but now Railtrack, Transrail and West Coast Railway would all have to agree, but, if a few "bunked the shed" they'd probably get away with it. We didn't bother.

However BR can still rise to the occasion. On Sundays the first train from Fort William south is at 12.03 and by 11.40 our party (and luggage mountain) had joined a large group of German backpackers and other travellers on platform 1 awaiting the arrival from Mallaig whilst a four car 156 set waited at platform 2 to head for Mallaig. When the Glasgow train arrived it was a two car 156. To make matters worse the seat reservations computer had gone down and they were unable to put out the reservations which Mark Hopwood had worked hard to secure for us. It didn't take a genius to see we had a problem here. However, a quick staff conference and a phone call to control led to two of the Mallaig cars being moved to ours and we finally set off just 10 minutes late. Late trains only get later of course so we had to wait at Crianlarich for the Oban portion to limp in having suffered an engine failure en route. We finally got to Glasgow Queen Street about 12 late, the only late BR arrival of the entire tour which included 23 journeys covering 1534¾ miles. A transfer to Glasgow Central put us on the 17.00 IC Cross Country to Carlisle behind 86.226 *Royal Mail Midlands* which had hauled MDRS members from Manchester to Birmingham in May.

The second week began with a trip on the Settle & Carlisle, again by 156. Throughout the trip the weather had remained fine despite weather forecasts which showed much rain around the country. Today was no exception for, whilst it was obviously raining on distant hills, the S&C was bathed in sun.

From Leeds another 158 took us over, or more correctly under, the Pennines to Manchester Piccadilly where North West Regional Railway's Project Manager Smart Cards, John Sears was on hand to greet us. John had prepared a "window gazer's guide" for the next part of our journey to Llandudno. This took us over part of the Liverpool & Manchester and WCML before joining the North Wales Coast Line. The train was yet another 158 and full marks to NWRR as it was the only one of it's type we rode where the air conditioning worked! On arrival at Llandudno most of us sampled the Great Orme Tramway.

John also did his bit by persuading his colleges to ensure the green liveried 101.658 was on the correct working on the Conwy Valley line the following morning. The driver confirmed it had been swapped over with a 153 specially and entered into the spirit by opening up the cab blinds at both ends. At Blaenau Ffestiniog we switched to the FR but let the first train go as it was a diesel operated push-pull set. I'm sorry, but in my book the FR is becoming a pastiche. It cannot decide if it's a narrow gauge or a mainline. Our train was worked by the new Fairlie *David Lloyd George*. Can you imagine what our visitors reaction was when they found it was built by volunteers in 1993? We then passed *Earl of Merioneth* at Minffordd and finished with a visit to Boston Lodge.

As Porthmadog has only one hotel large enough to accommodate our party, the somewhat run down Royal Sportsman, we spent the night at the Royal Goat at Beddgelert which provided an opportunity

to walk the old Welsh Highland trackbed in the Aberglaslyn Pass. Roll on the day when South African Beyer-Garatts will blast up this spectacular valley. By now our party were realising that in preservation we really do do the impossible at once whilst miracles take a little longer. They had some trouble appreciating that the preserved lines are run largely by volunteers and finance is mostly raised by and from enthusiasts. In America they expect to be paid and have States or companies to run the preservation lines.

The next day saw an overcrowded 153 take us to the birthplace of the British preserved railways, the Talylyn. Here another new locomotive hauled our train, *7 Tom Rolt*, built in 1991 whilst *1 Talylyn* was in steam during our visit to Pendre works. Returning to BR another 153 took us to Dovey Junction where we took a 158 to Aberystwyth in time to see VoR 8 *Owen Glendower* arrive with the last train of the day before heading for Shrewsbury. The day ended with a treat, a 1953 Burlingham Seagull bodied Leyland Royal Tiger took us to our hotel.

The next day was a coach again but a modern Bova replaced the Leyland for a trip to Bridgnorth by way of a short photo stop at Ironbridge. The SVR got itself in a muddle and decided to reform the 10.35 train at 10.30 so we set off down the line 15 minutes late behind 7714. The Stanier Mogul awaited us at Arley and we continued to Kidderminster for lunch. More mind-boggling followed as I explained to our guests that none of what they saw there existed ten years ago. On the return trip a delightfully authentic photo opportunity was created at Arley as 7714 awaited 7325. With both in BR livery and hauling Mk1's it was a timeless image. Whilst the SVR was operating its basic service it was busy preparing for the following weekend's Gala. We had a tour of Bridgnorth shed where no fewer than SIX locos were in steam, one of the party summed it up for all, "I think I must have died and gone to Heaven".

The tour was now nearly over as we continued to Stratford upon Avon for the night, and a theatre visit, by way of the Royal Worcester porcelain factory where we took the tour. If you get the chance to do this take it, how they make and paint the figures is fascinating, and it's rail related - the firing kilns run on rails!

The final rail journey was by Thames Turbo Express from Stratford upon Avon back to London Paddington. Having done the big build up that Thames Trains are *always* on time, a 166 rolled in 10 late! Departure was prompt but soon the reason for the inbound delay became apparent as we slowed to a virtual crawl near Claverdon, Phyllis Carstens said it was probably sheep on the line and as it turned out she was right! A further delay due to errant points at Hatton meant we arrived at Oxford behind the Worcester portion and made an instant coupling before opening the doors. Total station time 2 minutes - very impressive. A typically fast run up the GW main line had us in Paddington a minute early.

The tour concluded with a farewell dinner followed by a slide show for our guests to show them the delights which survive just 90 miles from the US coast which they are forbidden to visit, the island of Cuba. Next morning most set off for home whilst a few went on to Paris by Eurostar for a few days.

The whole trip was a most enjoyable experience, the participants came from a variety of backgrounds and yet by the middle of the first week all were behaving like one big family group and lots of new friendships were forged. Many of the party were making their first trip abroad (Amazingly, only about 5% of Americans hold a passport) and the old country made a favourable impression on all, many were already planning a return visit. BR certainly was on its best behaviour with excellent service and timekeeping throughout. In addition to the staff at the sharp end who went above and beyond the call of duty, thanks should also go to both Mark Hopwood and John Sears for their assistance with the arrangements.

# HOLIDAY '95

Alan Costello

After last year's holiday in the Yorkshire Dales, we moved to another part of England this year - but where? If you can answer any of the following questions you will know the answer.

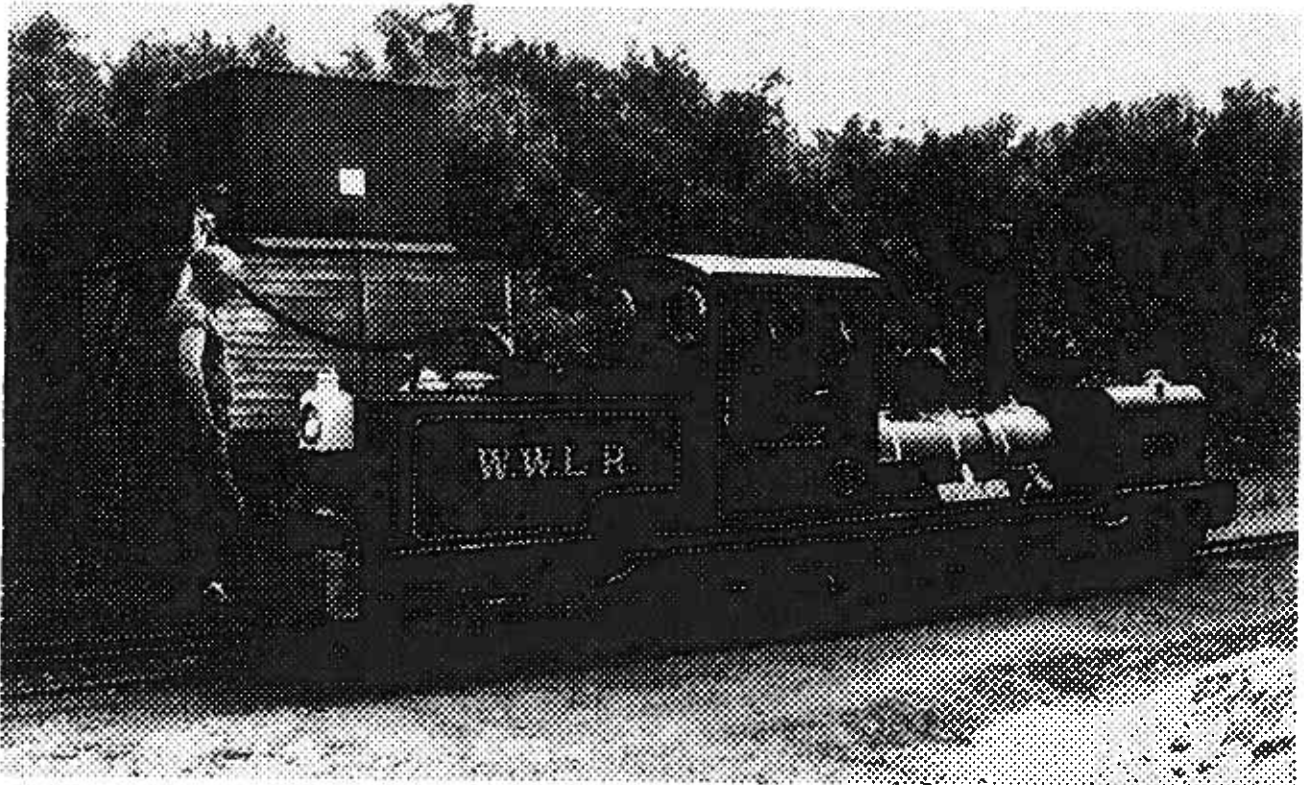
1. Where is the longest 10¼ inch railway in the world and what is unusual about the motive power?
2. Where do you go to school to see the trains?
3. At what station do you need to be positive vetted to take photographs on the platform?
4. What 15 inch gauge line started in 1990 using steam locos borrowed from the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway?
5. What standard gauge line had its ex LNER loco returned from East Germany, after a major overhaul, in December 1994?

By now you should have realised that our destination this year was North Norfolk. On the 17th June we arrived at the small village of Worthing - our home for the next week.

The Wells and Walsingham Light Railway (W&WLR) is a 10¼ inch line that runs the four miles over the old track bed from Little Walsingham to Wells-next-the-Sea. Despite rumours that East Anglia is flat, all the lines had some steep gradients. The W&WLR has a gradient at one point reaching a maximum of 1 in 29! Possibly because of this its only engine is a unique 2-6-0+0-6-2 Garratt specially built for the line in 1986. The terminus at Walsingham consists only of a run round loop. There are no buildings or car park. Parking is available close by but may be full at times due to people visiting the local religious shrines. The terminus at Wells has a small car park, toilets and the bottom of the original signal box has been converted into a shop/cafe. The rolling stock is either completely open or covered-in. The journey takes about 30 minutes each way and is rather uncomfortable when passing over rail joints. If you want to drive the Garratt, shares are available at £250 each. You become part owner and are entitled to have lessons to drive it.

The W&WLR was built at the northern end of the Great Eastern line from Wymondham to Wells. If you trace the line south from Walsingham the station of County School is reached. The station is leased by the GE Railway Trust and was used by the Mid Norfolk Railway to store its railway stock. Relations between the two groups have recently broken down (partly because the GER sold the track at Dereham, a few miles further south, for scrap). The MNRS is moving its stock to Yaxham south of Dereham and is hoping to run trains between the two stations later this year. Two class 20 (20.069/206) are already at Yaxham with class 08 08.631 and a class 115, 3 car DMU waiting in the yard at County School to follow. County School has just acquired 3 industrial steam locos from the North Norfolk Railway and are hoping to be able to steam one soon. There are also some ex industrial diesel shunters stabled in the platform. The station was deserted apart from a lady working in the shop/cafe. Due to the Health and Safety Act, visitors are not allowed to visit the sidings to look at the stock - not worth a visit.

If you are in the area of Sandringham, why not visit the preserved Royal station at Wolferton? It is privately owned and has been turned into a museum with objects and photos connected with the Royal Family. The station was regularly used by them and their guests, especially at the beginning



W&WLR 3, the 2-6-0+0-6-2 Garratt, takes water at Wells on 20 June 1996. It is difficult to remember that such a huge locomotive is only 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ " gauge.

Photo: Alan Costello

of the century, when visiting Sandringham. A notice on the door to the platform forbids cameras on the platform unless the person has been vetted. I asked the curator who told me the police were afraid that people may take pictures of items and then return at a later time to steal them. The station signal box is across the road and, unusually, is attached to a row of cottages.

The Bure Valley Railway is a 15 inch gauge line running from Aylsham to Wroxham on the Norfolk Broads. It opened in 1990 with its own diesel loco but borrowed steam engines from other railways for a time. In 1994, two engines were delivered from the workshops of Winson Engineering based in Wales. They are 2-6-0 tender locos based on the Indian Railways ZB class. Also present on our visit was a tank that had been converted from a diesel as well as a proper diesel. The main station at Aylsham has a restaurant and gift shop/ticket office. The first train left at 1015 so when we arrived at 1030 the indicator outside the station showed the next departure was 1130, so we went and bought the tickets and walked on the platform where a train was waiting. Thinking it was the 1130 I walked up the platform to take a photo, and the guard on the platform asked if I was joining the train - which in fact was the 1015 running late! So we got on and after 50 minutes arrived at Wroxham, where passengers had the opportunity to have a boat ride on the Broads or catch a British Rail train from the nearby station. There was a choice of 3 types of coach - open, open with a roof and covered - a comfortable trip. On the downside, our tickets were not checked in either direction and the guide book on sale was issued in 1991 and listed out of date rolling stock but included a supplement produced in 1994 and was reduced from £1.50 to 50p. Worth a visit.

The only operational standard gauge railway in the area is the North Norfolk Railway running from Sheringham to Holt. We joined the train at Weybourne where the workshops are located and visits to the yard are still allowed. On the depot was the newly restored B12 8572, recently returned from Germany, looking resplendent in green livery, waiting for its turn on the line at the next weekend.

Also on shed were a number of industrial locos plus ex BR diesels - shunter 12131, class 25 D5207 and class 37 37.032. Looking towards Sheringham from the footbridge, trains can be seen (and heard) working hard up the 1 in 80 incline for a number of minutes before arriving on the journey to Holt. The terminus at Holt has been built to replace the original station which was demolished when the bypass was built. A horse-drawn bus service operates to and from the town centre connecting with the trains. At the other end of the line is the original station at Sheringham - across the road from the British Rail bus shelter terminus. Refreshments, gift shop and a small museum can be found there plus some more rolling stock including 2 coaches from the electric Brighton Belle. Also present on loan for the summer was class 20 20.227 - one of the engines used on the London Transport specials in May. Another line worth visiting especially if the B12 is operating.

## RAILROADING AMERICAN STYLE

Mark Hopwood

A cold Thursday in November saw me check-in at Heathrow for flight BA 217 to Washington, timed to depart at 12.55. Although I has visited the States before, my previous trips had been holidays of a more general nature, with my experience of railways in the USA being rather limited. My trip was to prove an excellent introduction to American railways and it got off to a good start just after departure from Heathrow,

When the Captain introduced himself over the PA I realised he was an old acquaintance who lives in Marlow and a most interesting flightdeck visit was arranged. Later in the flight, a Stewardess came to my seat and said the Captain had requested my presence on the flightdeck for landing. Returning to the flightdeck, the 'Jump Seat' had been reserved for me and a headset prepared so I could listen to conversation on the flightdeck and with Air Traffic Control. We undertook a simultaneous approach with a brand new United Airlines Boeing 777. After a perfect landing I bade farewell to Captain Post and his crew and alighted, with the First Class passengers, into the elevated bus used by Dulles airport to ferry international passengers to the terminal.

After quickly passing through US Immigration I was en route to my Hotel in downtown Washington DC. I divided my time in Washington into two, with some time spent exploring the political and cultural attractions, including the White House and Congress, where I passed Republican politicians Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole! The remainder of the time I spent exploring the local railway networks of Amtrak and MARC (Maryland Department of Transportation).

Three days later I departed Washington DC's impressive Union Station on Train No. 174 *The Minuteman* bound for the "Big Apple", as New York is frequently known. Electrified main-lines are rare in the US, restricted to the north-east corridor between Washington DC and New Haven. Accordingly, it was two AEM-7 11kV electrics that stood at the sharp end of Train 174 as I boarded. By heading for the extreme end of the train I was able to have almost a whole carriage to myself. We departed a couple of minutes late following the traditional cry of "All Aboard" and then the radio instruction to the engineer "Amtrak Train 174 - Highball", which is our equivalent of "Right-Away" We headed out through the suburbs of Washington and north through the states of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Our penultimate stop was Penn Station in Newark, New Jersey and I caught a glimpse of the infamous Manhattan sky-line before the train delved into the Hudson tunnel to make our way into New York's Penn Station, where I arrived just after lunch. A classic New York taxi-cab took me uptown to my hotel on Broadway.

New York is an incredible place, the like of which there can be no equal across the world. After settling into the hotel, I made my way down to 34th Street and to the Empire State Building, which allows you to ascend, by elevator, 102 floors to the observation deck, where unrivalled views can be obtained across New York. The best and biggest of everything can be found in NY. So it was that I sampled my best fillet steak and lobster ever in an excellent steak house on Times Square.

Monday morning saw me climb aboard an ex-London Transport DMS double-decker bus for an extensive 2 1/2 hour tour of Manhattan Island, followed in the afternoon by a meeting with Reggie Tonry, a former employee of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) which our own Mike Walker had kindly arranged. He had generously used his well-placed connections to fix up an excellent half-day of events which offered a useful behind the scenes insight into the operation of the busiest commuter railroad in the States.

We headed for Penn Station, where an empty train conveyed us through the East River Tunnel and out through Brooklyn into Queens to Jamaica station, which is the hub and headquarters of the LIRR operation. We headed straight for the LIRR HQ building, where I was introduced to some of the management team of this massive undertaking. Much dismayed shaking of heads took place as I tried to explain the privatisation process of BR to these managers of the state-owned railroad. Despite America's perceived role as the head of the capitalist world, it still sees a vital role for a well-funded, state-owned rail network in key urban areas.

Soon, I was in the LIRR Control Room where a team of seven oversaw activity with the aid of the latest computerised support, well ahead of anything we have to access to on Thames Trains. This was followed by a trip out to Reggie's house by LIRR electric multiple unit, where he and his wife welcomed me for the evening with dinner, followed by a slide show of American railroads over the previous 20 years.

For my return to New York City, Reggie drove me over to the diesel operated route from Speonk. I was introduced to the crew of the evening service back towards the Big Apple, which had a large diesel on the rear propelling the train with an ancient diesel at the front now devoid of its main power plant and fitted out with an auxiliary generator and used as Driving Trailer in push-pull mode. My presence on the footplate was requested and I headed out towards the carriage sidings, where I climbed aboard the leading engine with the Engineer. After receiving our train orders by radio, we set off out of the sidings towards the station platform and a small number of New York bound passengers climbed aboard. Then we were on our way en route towards Jamaica. Initially, we made stops at each station and between two stops there was an almighty bang and the sound of metal sheeting banging under the train, followed soon by the auxiliary generator cutting out. A strange silence was soon broken by the Conductor restarting the generator and the train continued with apparently little concern from the crew. Once we reached the area of frequent electric services, the train ran non-stop towards New York City.

After about an hour and a half we drew into a cold Jamaica station, where this train terminated since diesel engines are not permitted into central Manhattan due to the length of tunnels. It was therefore a LIRR electric multiple unit that conveyed me back to Penn Station, and then a cab back uptown towards my hotel where I was able to get some sleep before my trip the following day to sample some main-line diesel haulage on the Hudson valley route.

My aim on the Tuesday, as I headed once again for Penn Station, was to sample the most modern diesel traction in the Amtrak fleet, combined with the absolute classic American engine - the soon to be extinct - FL9. As previously explained, diesels are banned from working into Penn station, but Amtrak get around this by either using 11kV overhead locos on north-east corridor services, or by



Long Island Railroad 269 and a sister EMD GP38-2 await departure from Speonk NY for the eastern tip of the island at Montauk.

Photo: Reggie Tonny

fitting the diesels with third rail pick-ups to draw off the 650v DC supply and supply the DC traction motors. As I descended from the concourse towards Train 245 the 08.20 departure for Albany, it was brand new Genesis II locomotive, No. 704, which awaited departure.

Amtrak have, over the past couple of years, begun to take delivery of these new General Electric AMD-103 Genesis Bo-Bo diesels with 16-cylinder 4,000 hp engines. The Genesis II differs from the original design by having a slightly smaller engine and less fuel capacity in order that it can house the additional electric equipment necessary to allow these engines to draw off the third rail supply.

Services from New York along the Hudson valley towards Albany, Toronto, Montreal and Chicago via the Lake Shore route traditionally departed from Grand Central Terminal, which is the other main station in Manhattan and home to an extensive commuter operation of the Metro-North Rail Road. However, Amtrak was keen to concentrate all activity at one station, reopening a former New York Central route through the Riverside Park Tunnel, linking it to Penn Station with an underground curve. All Amtrak services to and from New York City now serve Penn Station with GCT restricted to the commuter operations of the Metro North Rail Road, although these form a vast operation on their own.

It was this new route that we took as Train 245 headed away from Penn Station in tunnel. At Spuyten Duyvil we crossed out of Manhattan into The Bronx and joined the Metro-North route from Grand Central Terminal, hugging the bank of the Hudson River all the way. This is a busy commuter railway and there are an extensive number of stations along the route, served by a regular EMU service. In addition, Metro-North operate a fleet of push-pull diesel service which operate beyond



Croton-Harmon, which is the limit of the 650v DC electrification. These services continue as far as Poughkeepsie, after which Amtrak trains are the sole passenger services, although the route is now owned by "Conrail" - the Consolidated Railroad Corporation. The scenery along this route is superb as the train heads towards 'Upstate' New York and the state capital of New York, where Amtrak now serves the station of Albany-Rensselaer, a short bus ride across the Hudson from the actual city of Albany.

After a brief visit to the city of Albany, I returned to the Amtrak station by bus and was able to watch preparations for the arrival of the *Lake Shore Ltd*, although it was running around an hour late - most long-distance US rail services seem to encounter some delay and passengers seem to expect this as a matter of course. The *Lake Shore Ltd* divides into two portions at Albany, which is, in itself, an interesting operation to observe. There is an extensive collection of baggage to remove first, since most Americans seem unable to travel without at least fifteen suitcases. Once complete, the Boston portion, which retains the F40 diesel which has travelled from Chicago, draws forward onto a curved extension of the platform but clear of the main-line. Amtrak attach additional coaches at Albany for New York, so these are already coupled to the new engines for New York, on this occasion a pair of FL9s in the form of 484 and 487. These then reverse on to the main portion where the Boston portion stood and the train is coupled. A good run was had back towards NY City, although I was all too aware that this would probably be the first and last journey I would ever undertake behind these engines, whose demise was probably only weeks away, being replaced by the Genesis II units previously referred to.

The following day I was to depart New York, where I only just begun to dabble in the vast amount of railway activity to be seen. It is very easy to become brain-washed into believing that the US offers very little of interest in the form of railway activity, particularly in the passenger sphere, and then to be overwhelmed on arrival. Departure from New York was at 11.06 on Train 172 *The Patriot* bound for Boston. A sprightly run was had as far as New Haven behind another AEM-7 electric, before a F40 diesel was attached for the remainder of the journey along the non-electrified route to Boston South Station. Electrification is, however, in hand and a fleet of brand new 25kV X2000 sets have been ordered for this operation when the scheme is complete.

Boston offers a completely different atmosphere to New York. Although clearly American, it offers a more European feel with older buildings and a slightly more relaxed pace of life. Rail services in Boston serve either the North or South station, although all Amtrak services are concentrated into the South station. The commuter rail services of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) serve both stations with a large fleet of F40 locos push-pulling a mixture of single and double-deck cars. They are operated for the MBTA in much the same way as BR operates services for, say, West Yorkshire PTE.

Boston has the oldest subway system in North America, construction of which commenced in 1897. There was much to do in Boston and I sampled some of the commuter rail services, although not as extensively as I would have liked, as well as viewing the Amtrak operations at South station. In addition, I took the opportunity to visit Harvard and Back Bay in Boston during a rather cold November.

All too soon it was time to return home and it was a BA Boeing 767 that returned me from Boston's Logan airport to Heathrow. It was the first time I had flown across the Atlantic with only two engines, but all went well, and it was a cold, wet London Heathrow that welcomed me back to Britain on a Sunday morning. There was so much of interest on this trip that I felt I was only just scratching the surface of a tiny geographical chunk of North America. I was already forming ideas in my mind as to where I could head on future visits across 'the pond'.

# BOOKSHELF

Alan Costello

## SIGNALLING IN THE AGE OF STEAM

Michael A. Vanns

Ian Allan

ISBN 0 7110 2350 6

This booklet (together with the next reviewed) looks at the history of signalling from the beginning to the present day. In the days of horsedrawn wagons, the man leading the horse was capable of controlling the speed and seeing which way the points were set. Introduction of steam, with its greater speed, required a change. Policemen were replaced by the late 1830's by the signal. The development of the signal is looked at followed by chapters on the telegraph and block system. The book mainly concentrates on the workings of the signalbox and its instruments. At the end of the book a list of the bell signals in 1960 is given.

## BR SIGNALLING HANDBOOK

Stanley Hall

Ian Allan

ISBN 07110 2052 3

This book brings the story of signalling up to the present day. the increasing use of colour signals is looked at together with the modern power signal box. AWS and ATP (the latter in use on the Chiltern and Paddington - Bristol lines) are covered. Other topics include Radio Electronic Token Block system used on single lines, level crossings and how the Hot Axlebox Detector works. The booklet takes a look at the future developments and end with a Glossary of technical terms and abbreviations.

## THE DIRECTORY OF RAILWAY STATIONS

R. V. J. Butt

Patrick Stephens Ltd. ISBN 1 85260 508 1

Amongst my collection of railway books is Clinker's register giving details of the closure of stations on the mainland. This book goes further by not only listing closing dates, but also gives opening, and in some cases, reopening dates. The only problem with a book like this is that it can only list events up to its date of publication. Photographs of stations and tickets now long disappeared are included in this very useful reference book.

## BRITISH RAILWAY POCKET ATLAS

M. G. Ball

Ian Allan

ISBN 0 7110 2339 5

A handy atlas showing the lines of British Rail (or should it be Railtrack these days). It also shows the new light railway systems that have appeared over the last few years and preserved lines. Unlike other rail enthusiast's atlases there is no way to distinguish freight from passenger lines. Nevertheless, you can put it in your pocket and although the scale is small, the layout is clear with a larger scale showing the lines in city areas.

**Guinness Publishing      ISBN 0 85112 764 9**

Another book on railways by Guinness but is not the same as their earlier *Railway Fact and Feats*. After sections detailing the history of railways and motive power, the first British 'privatisation' in 1923 is covered listing the composition of the four new companies. After a look at BR since the war and its future re-privatisation, there is a look at the Channel Tunnel and a list of tourist railways.

The next part of the book gives details of the railways in the rest of the world giving a short history and line details. Light transit lines are looked at next and finally a section on longest bridges and tunnels.

## **TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO**

**Roger Bowen**

The spring of 1971 saw the publication of a British railways five year corporate plan. The main points from the plan, announced by Sir Henry Johnson, chairman of the BRB were:

- 1: A £60 million investment in the wagon fleet eliminating the four wheel wagon fleet by 1975.
- 2: Revenue from Inter-City passenger traffic to increase by 25%.
- 3: Electrification of the former Great Northern suburban services from Kings Cross.
- 4: A constant workload for British Rail Engineering Ltd. but anticipating 13% of work to come in from private parties.

Grants for unremunerative railways, announced by Transport Minister Mr. John Peyton, totalled £43 million outside London.

All London Midland Region promotional excursions were for the first time combined into one schedule under the title *Merrymakers*. About fifty were being arranged including "Look and Book" trains to Welsh holiday resorts at £1.50 each adult fare with one accompanied child free.

A little late news. On 28th November 1970 Chesham signal box closed resulting in the abolition of the bay road and siding at the branch terminus.

On 24th January 1971 rolling stock belonging to the Wight Locomotive Society was transferred from Newport station to Havenstreet. The O2 class 0-4-4T 24 *Calbourne* was specially steamed for the 4¾ mile journey to haul the remaining rolling stock at Newport to Havenstreet.

Merioneth County Council was due to hold public meetings in April 1971 into proposals to establish two light railways on the disused formation between Ruabon and Morfa Mawddach. One would run for about four miles from Bala Junction to Llanuwchllyn and the other for about seven miles from Morfa Mawddach to the outskirts of Dolgellau.

29th January 1971 marked the end of an era on Weardale. On that day the fire in the last working steam locomotive crane at the Doxford Shipyard at Pallion, Sunderland was dropped. The internal railway system was one of the final oases of steam in County Durham. Its purpose was to transport steel plate from BR served sidings to various prefabrication shops in the steel yard. Operation was by five Hawthorn Leslie and Robert Stephenson 0-4-0 Crane Tanks dating from 1902 onwards.

Liverpool Ocean Terminal was abandoned at the end of February 1971. Opened in 1895 the station was built and operated by the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board to give passengers direct access to ships at the adjacent landing stage. As a result of this closure Ocean liner Specials ran to and from Lime Street with a road transfer to the docks.

Butlins Ltd. had arranged with Bressingham Steam Museum in Norfolk for two of its four large ex-LMSR locomotives at holiday camps to be transferred to Bressingham on loan. They were 6100 *Royal Scot* from Skegness and 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* from Ayr.

An interesting selection of notes for the first quarter of 1971.

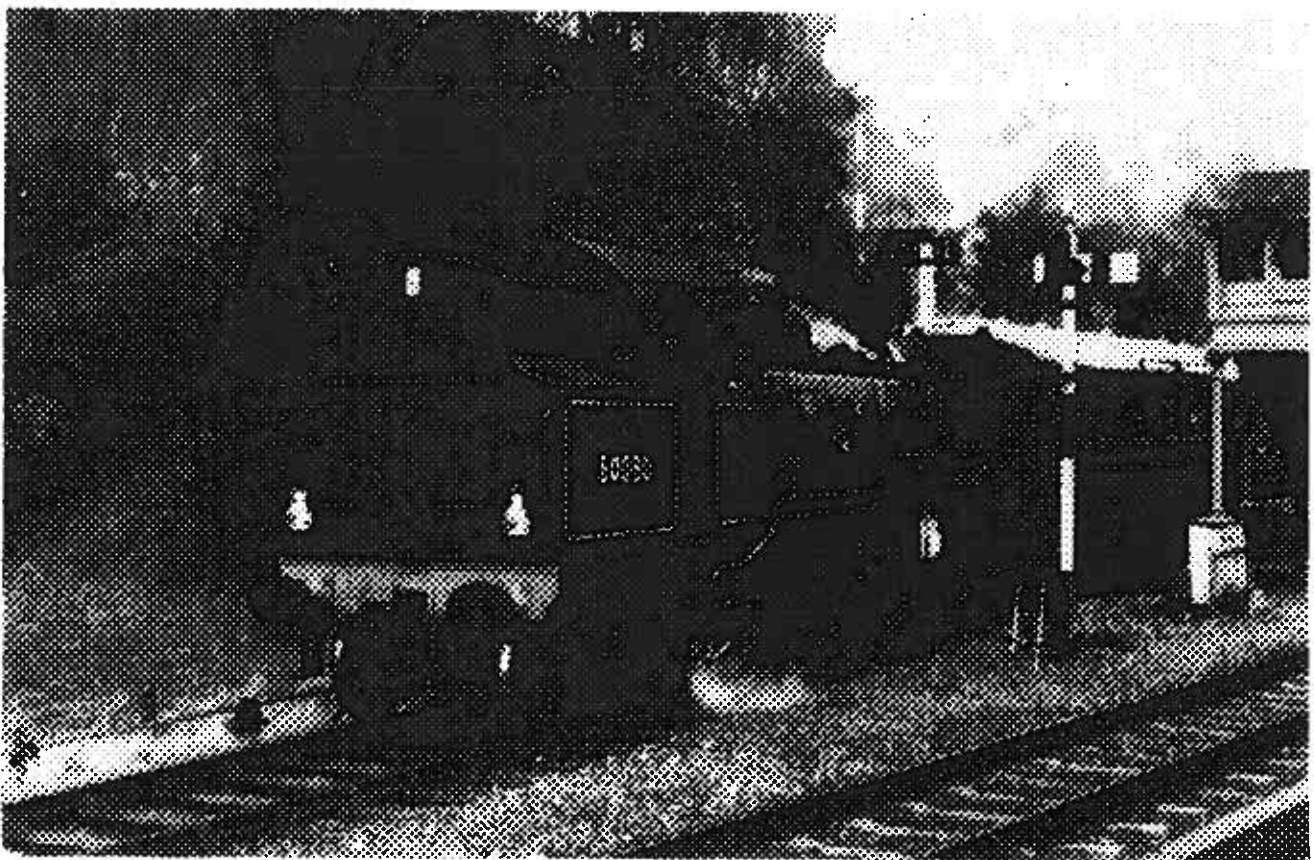
## TEN YEARS AGO

Roger Bowen

From the *Marlow Donkey* of March 1986.

The Chairman, Bas Woodward, noted that the 1986 Annual General Meeting was our 100th meeting. Suggestions were sought for celebrating our 10th birthday in 1987. Also referred to was the twin rail-only tunnels linking Britain and France to be opened in 1993. Bas's final quote was "What price a future Society excursion incorporating 31 miles beneath the English Channel!"

Articles in the *Donkey* included one by Mike Walker on *SteamExpo '86* to be held in Vancouver later that year. The other main articles were *Donkey Days - Part 2* by Len Stroud, a fascinating article reminiscing on the Branch, and *Not in the News* giving a personal account by eddie Lewcock of a breakdown train rescue in 1948.



This shot of the Severn Valley's BR class 4MT 2-6-4T 80080 standing at the head of a train at Bewdley won Class E - Black & White Prints in our 1995 Photographic Competition for Julian Heard.