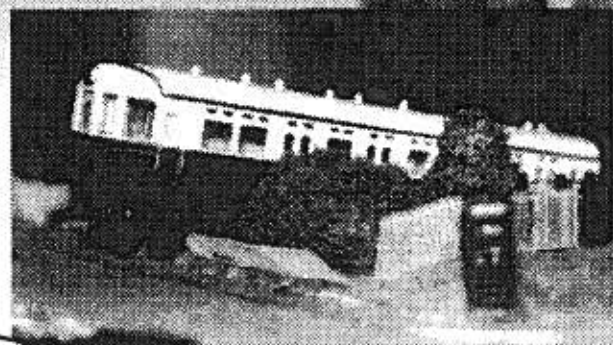
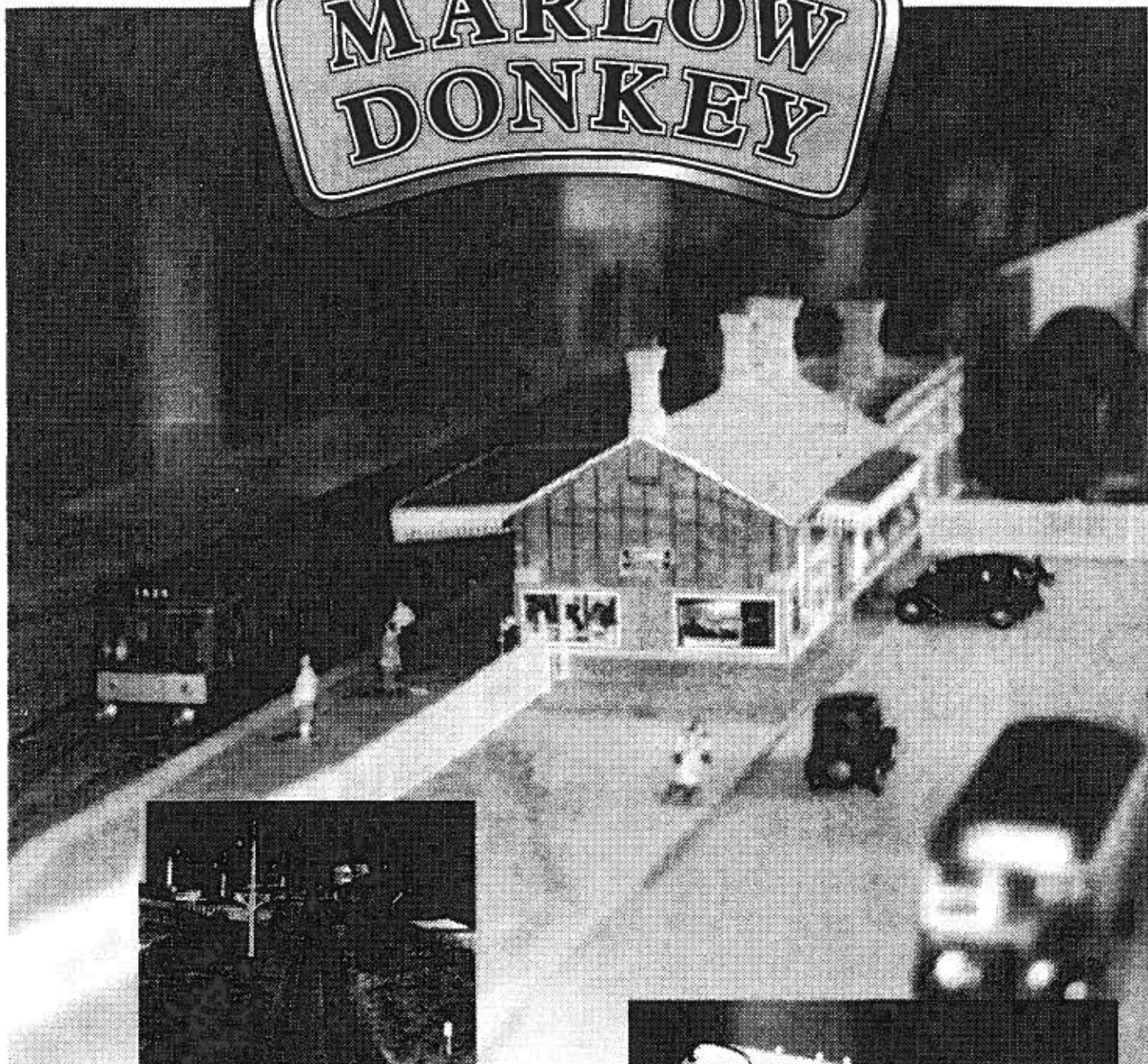


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

80

March 1997



Contents

From Little Acorns...

The Duchess gets her skirt up

Thames Trains for a day

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CONTENTS	page
CHAIRMAN'S NOTES	2
TIMETABLE - Forthcoming Meetings & Excursions	3
FROM LITTLE ACORNS...	4
MARLOW AND DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY - IT'S ORIGINS	5
RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT	5
SOCIETY QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS	7
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	8
THE DUCHESS GETS HER SKIRT UP	9
EUROSTAR RECORD FROM PARIS	10
THE CONTACT PAGE	11
VIENESSE WHIRL	11
THAMES TRAINS FOR A DAY	12
SOCIETY TRIP TO THE SWANAGE RAILWAY	17
10 YEARS & 25 YEARS AGO	18
BOOK REVIEWS	19

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS: *The Marlow Layout from the last issue reproduced again to commemorate the 20 years of the MDRS. (Photo bottom right: Driver Bert SMALL of Reading puts Auto coach goes through buffers. Spokesman Mark Hopwood stated "This will be a thing of the past when we put Turbos on the branch").*

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

(for the 1997 AGM).

I take this opportunity to review our activities over the past year starting with the 1996 AGM which was followed by a slide show by members.

In March, Roger Paddison gave an interesting talk on the L.T. Preserved Steam runs, which is now an annual event and brings a variety of Motive Power to our area and giving rides at reasonable prices.

A review of historic railway photography including some off the record shots taken during the making of the Lady Killers, was given by Mr P. J. Kelley . Following that and prior to our Swanage Summer Outing, the Chairman of Swanage Society, Mr Trite gave us an informed talk about the trials and tribulations of rail preservation. Our outing took place on a sunny Sunday and included a raffle for club funds which will continue this year.

Previously in May, we had a train outing to Sheffield organised around a timetable arranged by Mark Hopwood. This successful outing included runs on the super tram and a visit by some to the South Yorks Preservation Centre.

Roger Bowen was in his usual fine form in June and gave an interesting talk on the Chiltern Railways which I unfortunately missed. July gave Adrian Palmer a chance to give us a talk on Russian Steam and the varied locomotives that appeared must be an eye opener to many!

We must then thank Julian and Helen for our very successful and enjoyable August Barbecue in his garden complete with live steam which took place on a sunny evening.

Ron White made a very welcome return visit in September and provided us with his highly entertaining commentary on the slide shows which included a couple of remarkable examples of colour restoration from two badly faded originals.

Colin Miel's return visit provides an authoritative and well photographed Cuban Collection, with its delightful collection of antique American Steam locomotives which are still hard at work.

In November, David Pinniger and his friend gave a fascinating presentation of Irish Narrow Gauge and backed the slide show up with several attractive models..

The Christmas Social followed the previous year's pattern and caused brain boxes to work hard in the first half. After a good buffet supper provided by the steward's wife, to whom we are indebted for an imaginative spread, a slide show rounded off the evening.

We broke new ground again in January by giving members who take colour prints a chance to show them on a TV screen. I had long felt that prints, with colour and black and white had not been given a fair crack of the whip and the survey showed that an appreciable percentage of members took only prints. Several people expressed their appreciation afterwards and thanks are due to Mike Norris for his most willing help. Without him and his equipment the January colour print show and tonights video show would have been appreciably more difficult.

I have made a deliberate attempt to broaden the presentation of our activities to members so that you do not get a solo voice droning away and our thanks are due to all those who have helped out during the year.

Julian Heard not only gave the barbecue but also carried out the survey of members interests which helps the committee in their planning of future events.

Gordon Rippington and Tony Caton have very successfully handled our outings and Gordon and I worked together on the Xmas Quiz.

John Tuck nobly took over Editorship of the Marlow Donkey when pressure of work forced Mark Hopwood to stand down. John has also quietly put us on to the Internet and amongst other things, this will extend our range of potential speakers.

Thanks are due to all the Committee and to those many helpers who have typed and worked away in the background. The wives of Roger, Julian and my own Mary who has mastered Windows 95 in the cause. Also our British Legion steward and his wife.

We have had innovations this year such as the TV Screening of prints, the video film to come tonight, joining the Internet as we, like all active Clubs must go forward. Whilst Roger will go over 1997 activities, I must quickly mention the two special events to celebrate our twenty years of existence. Firstly Sir William McAlpine is allowing us to have a Special Steam Day at Fawley Hill, and secondly the public meeting at Court Gardens in September with David Shepherd giving us a talk. I look for a good turn out at both events.

In the meantime we are continuing to get good speakers for our meetings and may our Society long continue to flourish!

Thank you.

E. W. Lewcock

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

1997

Thursday 17 April	16mm FILM SHOW	Frank Branfield
Thursday 15 May	DIESELISATION The famous shedmaster from Stewarts Lane, Stratford East and Woodford Halse.	Dick Hardy
Thursday 19 June	Traction Engines	Steve Dean
Thursday 17 July	Station Anthology	Tim Edmonds
Monday 22 September	DAVID SHEPHERD 20th Anniversary Special	COURT GARDEN
Thursday 16 October	THE HEATHROW EXPRESS	Danny Martin
Thursday 20 November	2' GAUGE RAILWAYS	Fred Pugh
Thursday 18 December	Christmas Social	

DAY TRIPS 1997

Saturday 17 May	By train to Kidderminster for Severn Valley Railway £15.25 Return rail High Wycombe - Kidderminster	By Rail
Sunday 4 May	FAMILY DAY OUT AT FAWLEY Bring family and friends to this grand day out-Buffer inc. Tea and Coffee & Soft drinks. 12.00 - 16.00 hrs. Adults £4.50 Children £1.50	20th Anniversary Special
Sunday 6 July	By coach to Amberley Chalk Pits Museum Railways, vintage vehicles including buses many craftsmen at work from boatbuilders to printers and blacksmiths all housed in period buildings.	By Coach

EDITORS NOTES

Due to the pressure of work there are none, but hopefully in the next issue!!! But:

Following on from my internet article in the last issue. Railtrack have launched a web site to rave reviews in the design world, one reviewer gave it the acid test. First phone the 0345 484950 to find the times for a train, next obtain the same information from the web site. The result? The phone call took two minutes 14 seconds, the web site one minute 35 seconds. The address: www.railtrack.co.uk

FROM LITTLE ACORNS...

Stan Verrinder

It was a note by Bas Woodward on this 1996 Christmas Card, and Roger Bowen in the the December 1996 edition of "The Marlow Donkey" that reminded me it was, amazingly 20 years ago the Society was founded. By coincidence last year I had been clearing out a lot of my old files, and I came across the original notice that I made up in pencil for the inaugural meeting on, Thursday, 24th February 1977. As you will see it was very amateurish, but it served its purpose.

It brought back memories of getting photocopies made, and trying to persuade shopkeepers in Marlow

to display the notice in their windows. As I recall, the then Marlow librarian wasn't too happy about helping out. I have recollection that Roger Bowen went on the same publicity mission in High Wycombe. And, there were others who helped.

At the same time I came across the original notice, I also found the first list of members I made out on the inaugural meeting night, when I took 16 subscriptions. It is interesting to note how many of those original 16 are still members of the Society after 20 years. Have a look through the list below, and see how many names you recognise.

**INTERESTED IN
RAILWAYS ?**

**MARLOW AND DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY
ARE HOLDING AN INAUGURAL MEETING
AT THE MARLOW DONKEY
STATION ROAD, MARLOW
ON
THURSDAY 24th FEBRUARY, 1977
AT 8.00 PM
TALK ON PRESERVED RAILWAY LINES
WILL BE GIVEN
WHY NOT COME ALONG**

R D Bowen
R T Brooks
E E Dove
T J Freeborn
C E Gibson
B R Hatfield
E S King
J R Mee
M J Norris
L A Spicer
E S Vallis
S G Verrinder
C Walker
M Walker
A Wheeler
B P Woodward

Stan Verrinder

MARLOW AND DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY - ITS ORIGINS

Roger Bowen

As we have been telling people the Society is 20 years old this year.

The first formal meeting took place in the then restaurant of the Marlow Donkey Public House, just opposite our present meeting place on 24th February 1977. Quite a lot had happened however prior to that date.

If there is one person to be thanked for the formation of the Society it is Bob Hatfield, still very active in his railway interest, now mainly at Fawley.

In the mid 1970's Bob was Secretary of the Marlow Branch of the WEA (Workers Educational Association), and with his railway interest had included in the programme for the autumn of 1975 a course of Railway interest. I had been attracted to this course and the following year 1976, as the original lecturer was unobtainable I had been asked to tutor this course. Christmas 1976 marked the end of the course and we were told that the WEA in Marlow was closing down and there would be no more railway courses.

Everyone felt very sad at this but myself. Of the course members, Les Spicer said that it was too precious a group to lose and we should aim to form a railway society of our own. A meeting was held early in January of those on the course that were interested and it was agreed to publicise the idea and hold a formal meeting on 24th February 1977. This meeting duly took place and adapted the first set of rules for the Society, and elected Les Spicer as Chairman, Stan Verrinder as Treasurer, and myself as Secretary. The annual subscription was £2 with a 25p per night meeting fee.

By March there were already 26 members of the Society and in April issue No. 1 of what was then just called "Newsletter No.1" was produced. It consisted of only 5 sides of A4 with one page the editors comments, one page of the rules adopted at the first meeting, two pages of a single article on Great Railways and a page listing the future programme and possible visits. The April meeting was an illustrated talk by Steve Lewis on the Great Central and Main Line Steam Trust, followed by an illustrated talk with slides by Mike Halls on the Southern Electric.

By June 1977 the Chairman was able to announce that the monthly attendance had remained steady, at around 23 and invited members to do a short presentation to a meeting or write an article for the newsletter, things don't change! By the time the Society had been on its first trip - 10 members revelled on a 'Silver Jubilee Special Railtour' on 14th May 1977, joining at Reading and travelling to Swindon Works, Weymouth and Cranmore. Motive power was a pair of first class 31's whilst in the East Somerset 'Black Prince' quietly worked its way up and down the 300-400 yards of the track laid in the yard, its train consisting of the brake wagons filled to overflowing with enthusiasts.

The Society's first outing on its own account as opposed to taking part in trips set up by other groups took place on Sunday 17th July 1977. A visit to the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. I can only quote from newsletter No.3 - "A great success and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone despite and to some extent because of the mishaps."

So we can see how the early days of the Society created the framework for the Society that we know today. I wonder how many of us then thought the Society would still be thriving 20 years later.

RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

News from the Chinor and Princes Risborough Railway

After a successful Christmas program, plans for 1997 include a visit by the N7 from Great Central for about 6 weeks from Mid-May and possibility of a Pannier tank later in the season. After the visit of the Class 20 last year a Class 25 from Llangollen is expected to arrive in March for the operating season. An innovation this year is expected to be trains running on some Friday evenings.

Last Passenger Franchises Awarded

More Passenger Rail franchises have commenced operation or been awarded since the last issue of the Marlow Donkey. The following rail franchises passed into the private sector during the month of January:-

Franchise	Awarded To
Cross Country Trains	Virgin Group
West Anglia Great Northern	Prism Rail
Great Eastern	FirstBus PLC
Anglia Railways	GB Railways

MerseyRail Electrics MTL Trust Holdings

These franchises offered a number of interesting innovations, with both Virgin Cross Country and Anglia franchises seeing the prospect of new trains entering service during the length of the franchise. The MerseyRail franchise is the first franchise to be awarded with a major PTA involvement and the Merseyside Authority has decided to retain the revenue risk and marketing responsibility, with MTL being seen as just an operator in a similar form to the gross cost contracts that LT Buses in London have been utilising for some time.

The following franchises were awarded during the month of February with operation expected to transfer during March:-

Franchise	Awarded To
North West Regional Railways	Great Western Holdings
Regional Railways North East	MTL Trust Holdings
Thameslink	GOVIA (Go-Ahead/Via GTI)
North London Railways	National Express Group PLC

Central Trains	National Express Group PLC
InterCity West Coast	Virgin Group
ScotRail	National Express Group PLC

Of these awards, National Express remained the preferred bidder for ScotRail at the end of February pending the completion of discussions with Strathclyde PTE which has consistently proved the most difficult PTE for OPRAF to buy off. The Thameslink bid is on the basis of the existing rolling stock pending a Thameslink 2000 bid after the millennium. However, the other remaining five franchise awards contain firm commitments to procure new rolling stock. The Virgin bid for West Coast is by far the most exciting of these with a stated intent to replace all the existing stock with a fleet of tilting electric trains for the rejuvenated WCML.

Other Railway Privatisations

Railway privatisation is not just about Passenger franchise operation. The residual British Railways Board is now just a rump with the residual franchises yet to transfer to their new owner being kept company by one other rail operator; Railfreight Distribution, for which English, Welsh & Scottish Railway is the preferred bidder. It is expected RfD will pass to Wisconsin Central owned EWSR before the end of the financial year in April 1997.

Thames Trains Developments

The MDRS's local rail operator continues to progress well as a private sector rail operator with revenue consistently ahead of expectations and punctuality and reliability of services steadily improving. A Sunday service was operated on an experimental basis on the Marlow branch during the run up to Christmas which was most successful and careful thought is being given to what level of service is offered next winter on the route.

Availability of rolling stock continues to be critical with another serious collision taking a set out of service in the medium term. A Class 166 travelling ECS along the Cotswold line from Oxford en route to Moreton-in-Marsh to form the first up train hit a car on the line in the Ascott-under-Wychwood area at 87mph. The car had been abandoned on the line by joy-riders. It is a tribute to modern rolling stock construction techniques that the train remained on the rails with no fundamental structural damage and no injuries to the driver. However, the train does now have to attend ABB Derby Works for attention.

The June 1997 timetable sees continued expansion of services to include an additional daily service from London to Stratford-upon-Avon, aimed at encouraging new traffic on this key route.

Great Western Trains Developments

Great Western Trains is now taking delivery of its first HST sets that have received full internal refurbishment and the new Great Western livery. GWT has been able to obtain an extra two HST sets and intends to utilise these on new services from the June 1997 Timetable which focus on diverting existing commuter and leisure traffic from Oxford, Newbury and Reading which currently use Thames Trains services

Class 59 to operate on DB

While the current UK Government's reduction in the road building programme is generally considered good news for

the railways industry it has had some negative connotations. For example, Foster Yeoman has seen demand for its aggregates in the south-east of England decline and it has decided to try and utilise a member of its Class 59 fleet on traffic on the DB network in Germany. 59003 has been chosen - renumbered 259 003-2 - and has a new DB based livery.

Bakerloo Line closes south of Picadilly Circus

LUL has shut the Bakerloo line south of Picadilly Circus to allow complete refurbishment of the running tunnels under the River Thames. Southbound trains arrive on the normal southbound platform at Picadilly Circus and then reverse, departing via the cross-over at the north end of the station. A replacement Bus Service was specified but very quickly the two routes confused passengers and LUL decided to combine both routes into the BL2. The route saw further changes in January 1997 when frequencies were cut after it became clear most passengers were using alternative LUL rail services rather than the bus replacements.

WC - EXPANSION CONTINUES

As well as buying Railfreight Distribution, Wisconsin Central's expansion continues at home. In late October it was successful in acquiring a group of lines in upper Wisconsin and Michigan from the Union Pacific which had originally been part of the Chicago & North Western. UP first agreed to sell these to shortline Escanaba & Lake Superior but they could not raise the money to support the bid the put in so WC got it instead! The new lines give WC almost 95% of the regions rail network and will allow WC to abandon some of its original trackage as the new lines give it more efficient routings.

WC were unsuccessful in their bid for the former Milwaukee main line from Kansas City to Savannah IL on the Mississippi River plus trackage rights on to Chicago. Instead, current owner, Soo Line has sold it to another successful regional, Montana Rail Link. This is seen as a set back for WC as it would have given them a gateway to the west where considerable expansion opportunities are likely to arise in the wake of the recent BN-Santa Fe and UP-SP mergers. However as WC and MRL enjoy a good inter-company relationship no doubt some deal can be arrived at.

The company has also entered an agreement to allow Canadian National to use its rails between Duluth and Chicago to provide the Canadian haulier a short cut for some of its Toronto - Pacific Coast traffic.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

In the US, Fox News Sunday on December 8, 1996, carried an interview with Vice President Al Gore during which he was asked if he would help save the Texas Eagle. His reply was: "The first step in saving an endangered plant or animal species is to understand the delicate ecosystems which make up our environment". The piece was accompanied by video footage of the endangered species - the AMTRAK PASSENGER TRAIN!

To quote my old friend Jim Boyd, "Sleep well America, you voted for four more years of this. Don't blame me". Personally, I find it reassuring to know we are not alone in allowing ourselves to be led by idiots!

Mike Walker

A DEVIL OF A TRIP

ALAN COSTELLO

At 0730 on 23 November 1996, I arrived at Potters Bar station to catch the 'Grimsby Reaper' Hertfordshire Railtour to Grimsby and Immingham docks. At 0755 an announcement came over the tannoy that the train had been delayed in the Hornsey area due to brake problems. (This was my second trip in a row that brake problems had occurred 3 weeks previously, about 10 miles south of Crewe, stones started to fly past the train hitting windows and the side of the coaches. On arrival at the station, it was found that part of the brakes of a coach had broken and was hitting the ballast but the only damage done to the windows was one small pane cracked).

Anyway at 0830 (45 minutes late) the train appeared hauled by RES Class 47 47745. We travelled up the East Coast mainline to Newark. There we turned east passed through Lincoln and reached Barnetby at 1110 half an hour late. There the 47 came off the front to be replaced by Class 37 37710. The 47 was then due to run round that train and go to the back (this was to have it at the right end for return leg). For an hour it stood in the sidings as local trains and freight passed through but eventually it arrived on the back of the train and at 1220 we eventually left only to come to a halt again a mile further on with the brakes playing up again.

After another hour - now over 2 hours late - we moved on and eventually passed on to the single line leading into

Grimsby Docks. After about 3/4 mile the train stopped again. Rumours (later confirmed) spread that the 47 had come off the rails. Unfortunately, as it was at the back of the train, there was no way of getting us out of the docks by rail. It was decided the only thing to do was organise a mass exodus by coach to Doncaster and join a train there. Phone calls were made to various bus companies whilst an East Coast 225 set was being sent up from London. After a 25 minute wait, more coaches arrived, and I joined the last of these and leaving about another 70 passengers behind. Just over an hour later we arrived in Doncaster where the 225 set propelled by 91003 was waiting. It was originally hoped to leave at the railtour schedule time of 1708 but due to one of the later coaches breaking down and a double decker bus that couldn't go faster than 45mph it was 1842 before we left. Time was made up as the 91 easily improved on the 47 timings and arrival at Potters Bar at 2013 was only 52 minutes late (well within Standard Railtour Time - one hour later than the schedule).

A complete refund of the booking fee was made by Railtrack - one of three that month. Isn't privatisation wonderful - over 300 miles covered free of charge.

Incase you are wondering about the title of the article, on a previous trip I had won the first prize in the on-train raffle. It was a voucher for a future tour and it was this one that I used it on. The winning number was 666.

SOCIETY QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Thank you to all those members who participated in the survey of club activities. I am pleased to report that the results indicate that the topics/speakers selected for clubnights appeal to the majority of members - a tradition the committee aim to continue. To avoid a long list of figures, I have listed the results below by an overall 'interest' factor by combining the 'Very interested and interested' figures to give a percentage. The 'Not interested' factor speaks for itself. I believe this to be the most accurate gauge for selecting the suitable subjects for future evenings and trips.

1. Steam traction 100%	10. Indian S/African etc 68%	17. Types of presentation
2. Preserved Steam 100%	11. American 74%	Talks 100%
3. Modern Traction 95%	12. Preserved railways 100%	Slides 100%
4. Types of modern traction_	13. Industrial railways 73%	Cine film 89%
Diesel 74%	14. Model railways 63%	Video 95%
DMU 15%	15. Railway architecture 84%	Additional comments included more
DEMU 10%	16. Trips/visits to	inter-gration with other clubs and
Electric 32%	Preserved railways 89%	ADs section in the 'Donkey'. After
Trams 58%	New Railways 74%	due consideration the latter has
Vintage 53%	Current systems 79%	been adopted so if you have
Preserved 58%	Museums 74%	anything to sell or are seeking,
5. Railways pre nationalisation	Depots 79%	please see John Tuck.
95%	Closed lines 53%	
6. BR pre 1968 95%	Narrow gauge 63%	
7. BR post 1968 90%	Miniature railways 53%	
8. British narrow gauge 90%		
9. European railways 85%		

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear John,

I must take issue with remarks made by Eddie Lewcock in Chairman's Notes, December. He refers to a series of accidents in the US which he claims were due to brake failures and would be avoided by the introduction of electro-pneumatic control. The pile up on Wisconsin Central, the mother of all wrecks, was caused by a broken rail not an on train problem and led to the derailment of a chemical train. The ensuing fire forced the evacuation of a town for THREE WEEKS whilst it burnt itself out and was safe to approach! As Eddie says, the runaway wreck on Cajon could have been prevented if the two-way end-of-train device now to be demanded by the FRA was used. This permits the driver to initiate an emergency brake application from the rear of his train if required. But on this occasion the train had just such a device but it was not switched on and an angle cock was closed half way

down the train so the 5000 ton train set off down the 1 in 33 hill with only half its brakes operable! The introduction of EP controlled brakes is a different issue which the railroads are pursuing for specialist traffic, there are no plans to legally require the system wide adoption of such equipment which given the size of the North American freight car fleet would be impossible to achieve.

Finally, perhaps as a qualified mechanical engineer he would explain to us likewise qualified, and others, just what the difference is between a Diesel engine and a Compression-Ignition engine (December meeting). If you are going to have competitions please make sure you have accurate and unambiguous answers ready.

Regards,

Mike Walker.

5th March 1997.

Dear John,

In response to Mike's letter on my notes in the Donkey, I was making a brief reference to the several serious rail accidents in the States based on information contained in appreciable columnage in a Los Angeles newspaper and articles in the Railway Technical Press; neither the paper nor I said all the accidents were due to braking problems but it is interesting to learn the Wisconsin one was due to a broken rail. However, from the stress laid on braking problems in both this newspaper and the technical journal, they do lie behind a large proportion of accidents. It is not a subject likely to be of interest to society magazine readers in G.B. but I agree with Mike there are two separate avenues that are being followed, the End of Train Device which works well if properly switched on and tested and the highly complex electronic system fitted to all wagons which is a specialist exercise and very costly.

I cannot for the life of me understand the second point in his letter. Of course Diesel engines are compression ignition (C.I.) Units. I have worked with them from World War Two including G. M. engines fitted in Minesweepers.

At the December meeting, I said that they are I.C. engines, when challenged on a question, which is also true, so for the benefit of Mike, here is the explanation dragged from the remains of my engineering experience:

Prime Movers include heat engines using fuel in two ways.

- a) It is burnt externally to the engine giving External Combustion as in a Steam or Hot Air Engine.
- b) The fuel is burnt inside the cylinder in an internal combustion engine (I.C.). This includes petrol and diesel engines.

It is also true that the diesel works on the principle of compressing air to the firing temperature for the fuel injected at the correct part of the stroke, hence the diesel is a compression ignition. (C.I.) engine which the normal petrol engine is not, as it uses spark ignition. The Diesel is thus both and I.C. and a C.I. engine.

Returning to the American scene, another problem has arisen that could have dangerous consequences. On the 4th December 1996 in Nebraska, a Union Pacific freight was deliberately uncoupled part way along the train, probably whilst stopped across a level crossing. Whoever played this nasty trick appeared to have railroad experience, as not only were the couplers uncoupled but also the brake pipes and both brake pipe cocks closed.

Now this train, like many others over there, had helper diesels, radio controlled cut into the train further back, so when the driver restarted, both sections started together but soon parted as the front portion was lighter than the rear. The distance increased until the two portions were about 12 miles apart, with the rear running through red lights and surprising people on crossings, it nearly killed a farmer and his pregnant wife. This weird cavalcade continued until spotted by another driver who raised the alarm and it was eventually stopped after a run of about 48 miles!! Shades of the Glasgow & South Western Nights Entertainment and the old Scottish miner whose comments after walking down the track to work were 'There's a lot of traffic on the line this morning. I stepped off the line to let the freight come by and was about to step on again when I was darned near run down by another. It hadn't got an engine on it either - or words to that effect.'

Yours faithfully,

E. W. Lewcock.

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THE DUCHESS GETS HER SKIRTS UP

The Duchess class of locomotive introduced to the L.M.S. by Sir William Stanier & designed by his staff while he was overseas has long been recognised as the most powerful express passenger locomotive to run on British Railways, a claim that has only recently been challenged by the Duke Of Gloucester.

What is remarkable is the enthusiasm shown by the engineers concerned with the overhaul of our preserved steam stock to obtain performances on the road, which equal those achieved in the heyday of steam. A lot of hard work is involved, rather more than screwing a few new name plates on elderly diesels or painting them in various colours!

With modern electric traction remarkably high powers are designed into the units & these figures can be doubled for short periods of time, as a consequence many gradients are virtually wiped out & the permitted line speed can be maintained up hill & down dale. In the days of steam it was a case of man & machine challenging the gradients & a lot of interest was generated in the performance of various locomotive classes working similar duties; writers like O.S.Nock wrote regular columns in the railway press & generated much correspondence on the subject.

In this steam preservation era a small band of enthusiasts have continued this tradition & it is through the courtesy of one of them, my friend Doug. Landau, that this article has been made possible.

Please remember that, unlike in the days of steam the crews are not driving & firing the Duchess on a daily basis, & have little chance to acclimatise themselves to either loco. or road, so it is all the more credit to them for the excellent work performed.

The following runs were performed late in 1996 & the first two were over the sharp rise to Llanvihangel summit about 20 miles south of Hereford on the run to Newport; the climb starts after Pontrilas which is approached by an easy downhill grade changing to an uphill climb varying between 1:170 to 1:100 for 2 1/2 miles to the summit.

On the first run on 26 Oct., Brian Dudley Ward was driving, Colin Parry firing, with Inspector Kevin Treeby. The run was recorded by M.Notley, and the load of 11 coaches grossed 442 tons with passengers.

Running with a light S.W. wind, speed had reached a peak of 76 M.P.H. at the start of the gradient & had there not been a wheel slip at the top of the 1:100 the speed would not have dropped below 61.5 but it transiently dropped to 58 at the top.

For 6.75 miles to the top, 2500 I.H.P. was averaged with an average speed of 70. For 2 1/4 miles a figure of 2906 I.H.P. was held with a transient of 3032 I.H.P.

This performance is worlds away from the weary trudges I remember, with loads of 14 to 15 coaches on the North to West trains years ago. Incidentally this was the first time Dudley Ward had driven the Duchess and in his words she was something else.

For the second run on 2 Nov, the driver and fireman changed places and the train now grossed 495 tons (10 + 1 on including a class 47 diesel). Careful calculations made from the records indicate that the diesel did not

assist in any way in reaching the maximum I.H.P. of 2994. close to 3032 made on the first run. With the heavier load, speeds were lower dropping from 71 to 54 on the climb. The performances still of an extremely high order with 65.1 m.p.h being averaged for 6.2 minutes of the climb.

The third climb was on the West of England road from just after Taunton to Whiteball summit with the same team on the footplate and Dudley Ward driving. The gross load including the 47 diesel was 500 tons.

The climb starts a little before Taunton with the grade stiffening to 1:174 before Wellington then steepening to 1:90; 1:86.; 1:80 to the tunnel mouth where it eases to 1:127. It is 3.5 miles long.

On the 16 Nov, when the Royal Devonian speed was 74 to 74.9 before Wellington with the I.H.P. peaking at the very high figure of 3286., speed slowly fell away to 62.2 just before wheel slip caused a final fall to 59. For 6 miles, including the steepest climb, speed averaged 69.2 m.p.h whilst for 4 miles to m.p.173 the I.H.P. averaged 3144. SOME PERFORMANCE, AND LITTLE SHORT OF THE RECORD OF 1939 created by the Duchess of Abercorn.

Now it can be said that these banks can be charged at speed, but what follows on the Northbound climb to Shap summit involves a long drag which can be treacherous in bad weather, particularly if your sanding does not work well - as a Castle of the G.W.R. found out years ago.

On 30th Nov 1996 the Duchess was on her last Main line run and fortunately recorder D. Velton was on board to take details of the performance, with a gross load of 560 tons, including, again, a Class 47. Driver Jackson had Firemen Hart and Santrian to help whilst Inspector Kirk was on board. There was a light NNW wind. The Crew were out to do something big!

Starting from Barton Loop a speed of 80 mph. was touched before Lancaster, whilst a continuous Indicated Horse Power ranging between about 2600 to 2866 for most of the 22 odd miles, showed that serious work was in hand. With braking to 70 at Lancaster, speeds touched 83, on the easy grades to Carnforth, where the serious work starts, up 1:134 to M.P.9 1/2. (Remember the Lancaster & Carlisle Railway!) topped at 73.7, in the dip to M.P.13. 79 was touched before the long drag up Grayrigg bank to M.P.26 topped at a healthy 47.5 mph. and with I.H.P. ranging from 3066 to 3162 between M.P. 15 and M.P. 23. The gradient ranges between 1:136 to 1:102 most of the way up.

Now bear in mind that this is a preserved engine driven and fired by men not used to this type of work on a daily basis, as on the record run in 1939!

At Grayrigg the climb stops and for 6 miles you can get your wind back for the final climb, also a p.w.s. to 40 m.p.h. was in force, so Tebay was passed at 44 mph. climbing on 1:146 steepening to 1:75 for 4 miles. Speed rose to 47 after Tebay and against the gradient, then fell slowly back to 34.5 mph. at the top, the I.H.P. at the lower speed than on Grayrigg, ranging from 2416 to 2463.

For a distance of over 41 miles from milepost 5.5 to 26 (measured from Lancaster), speed averaged 70.58 mph.

and an average I.H.P. of 2624 was developed with a peak average of 3062 I.H.P for over 10 1/4 miles.

This was surely going out in a blaze of glory and it is worth just noting how the timing from Lancaster to Shap compared with the 1939 record in which the load was 20 coaches of 607 tons gross including Dynamometer Car.

With a lighter load of 560 tons gross, the 1996 time to Carnforth was a half minute better at 5 min 19 secs but the 1939 run had gained a few seconds to pass Tebay at 75 mph. in 32min 05secs, still longer than 31min 23 sec in 1996. With a time of 39 min 10secs to Shap the 1939 run just beat the 96 effort of 39 min 21 secs due to the faster speed at Tebay, however it is interesting to note the speed at Shap was 30 mph. in 1939 compared to 34 1/2 mph in 1996!! What an ending to main line steam running for the Duchess of Hamilton to produce a performance so close to the 1939 record run! All concerned should be very happy indeed with their efforts which were in a classic mould.

Comparison of Performances between Duchess of Abercorn (1939) & Duchess of Hamilton (1996)

Duchess of Abercorn. 26/2/39. Load 607gross tons. 20 coaches Crewe-Glasgow

MILES	PLACE	SPEED	TIME	I.H.P.
0	LANCASTER	0	00	
6.3	CARNFORTH	75/67	5m 50s	
19.1	OXENHOLME	75/41	17m 15s	3209.
32.2	TEBAY	75	32m 05s	2806
35.2	SCOUT GREEN	48		
37.7	SHAP Summit	30	39m 10s	2963

Carnforth - Oxenholme. 12.96 miles
Av.Speed 68 m.p.h. cut off.-20/25%

Oxenholme - Tebay. 13.08 miles.
Av speed. 53m.p.h. cut off.25% .

Tebay - Shap summit. 5.69 miles.
Av speed 47.9m.p.h. cut off.25/35%

Duchess of Hamilton.

30 /11/96 Load 560 tons gross. 11+class47.

MILES	PLACE	SPEED	TIME	I.H.P.
0	LANCASTER	73	0 00	
6.3	CARNFORTH	81	5m 19s	2670
19.1	OXENHOLME	67	15m 21s	3041
26	GRAYRIGG	47.5 p.w.s.	22m 23s	2283
32.2	TEBAY	44	31m 23s	2434
35.2	SCOUT GREEN	37.5	35m 33s	2508.
37.7	SHAP summit	34.5	39m 21s	2416

Grayrigg - Shap summit 17.7 miles 16m 57s.

Carnforth- Shap summit 31.4 miles 34m 2s.

Lancaster - Tebay 32.23 miles 31m 23s

FULL gear used on the final 1:75 to Shap.

E.W.Lewcock.

EUROSTAR RECORD FROM PARIS

Mark Hopwood

Despite the problem of the Channel Tunnel fire the cross channel rail services - passenger and freight - now seem to be establishing themselves. Eurostar, in particular, is performing well and the service seems to have much potential. This potential was made clear to me on a record breaking run which I took from Paris last May.

It was an ordinary scheduled service train that still holds the record for the fastest journey yet recorded from Paris Nord to London Waterloo. Until the second running tunnel in the Channel Tunnel is restored it seems most unlikely that this record will be broken, but improvements to Infrastructure in the Kent and South London make future attempts possible and improvement likely in the medium term.

I had been away in Europe on a railway holiday that had taken me to Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and France over a two week period. The Saturday afternoon of 11th May 1996 (FA Cup Day) saw me at Gare du Nord for the 15.13 departure. However, a last minute fault on the Eurostar set

led to a change of sets and the catering equipment had to be switched. Accordingly, the train left Paris Nord 17 minutes late and was scheduled to run non-stop to Waterloo. Total journey time in the end was 2 Hours and 37 Minutes, saving a full 17 minutes on the schedule.

The vast majority of time gained was saved in Kent which Peter Semmens of Railway Magazine considers may be due to the large number of people at home watching the FA Cup and hence a lower overall demand for the national grid, enhancing the third rail supply on the former Southern Region and increasing the power available to the Eurostar trains, which are normally restricted severely when running off the third rail supply.

Highest speed reached on the French LGV section was recorded as 182 mph and the speed through Staplehurst and Marden in Kent was 99 mph. The end result was that our service achieved an average start-to-stop speed of 116.9mph which may well make it the fastest capital-to-capital average achieved anywhere in the world.

THE CONTACT PAGE

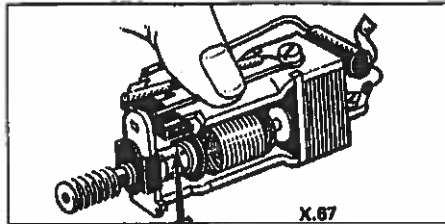
HELP

Would you like answers to a technical query or an historical fact or are you after an out of date publication. Then this is the place to ask.

As Editor I am going to start the ball rolling by asking: Has any member a copy of a 1940's or 50's timetable for the Reading to Waterloo service?

DO YOU KNOW

Does any member know where I can obtain brushes or complete motors such as this one?



New Page
New Feature

FOR SALE

Do you have something to sale? Then this is the place to advertise and it is free to members.

Julian Heard

Has Steam Railway Magazines for sale from Issue No.1 to 1994.

Offers invited.

VIENNESE WHIRL

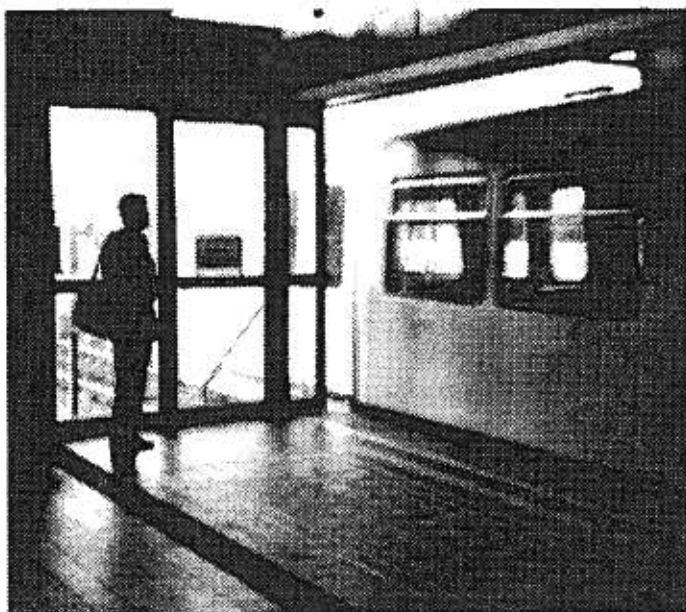
On a recent visit to Vienna, an interesting piece of operation was noticed at the Western terminus of U4 bahn in Hutteldorf, a suburb of Vienna. After arrival and the train emptied of passengers, the driver closed all doors and got out of his cab. He then moved to a wall mounted control panel. When the trains entered the single line terminal length of the line, it is stopped, the point was reversed and the train driven back automatically to the entrance to the station where it stopped with the driver's door by the driver, now on the opposite side of the platform. After getting on board, he moved the train into the platform for the passengers to get on board.

Interestingly enough, while this ensured a short headway between trains, I found that the turn round time at the new Picadilly Terminus of the Bakerloo line even quicker. Here only one platform is being used and speed is achieved by having a driver waiting to get on board at the rear of the arriving train. No sooner had the passengers got off and on, we started back Northbound, the whole process not being much longer than a minute.

Eddie Lewcock



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

THAMES TRAINS FOR A DAY

Keith Brown

Imagine if you will that you are indulging in a spot of lineside observations alongside the local G.W mainline in the late afternoon come early evening. Armed with the current Thames Trains (T.To timetable you endeavour to identify the passing trains. You may then become confused as some that pass are empty of passengers on their way to Paddington and later what was a three coach set going eastwards returns coupled to another three coach set. Add to this a review of the local Marlow line timetable which identifies the first Mon-Fri departure as 06.11 whereas the first arrival is at 06.35, some explanations are therefore required.

All of the above questions and many more were answered when I obtained a set of T.T Turbo diagrams for the period 3rd June-27th Sept. which covered the duration of the Summer 1996 services. These diagrams became compulsive reading to me and as I got to understand how they were compiled and more and more interesting as I analysed them. I hope this article will perhaps answer some of your own queries and give you an insight in to the complex of Thames Trains.

To start with the T.T fleet consists of 166 coaches comprising of:

85 D.M.C.L - Driving Motor Composite with lavatory 43 D.M.S - Driving Motor Standard 38 M.S - Motor Standard

These 166 coaches are formed in to 64 sets designated as follows:

Class	Coaches per Set	Type of Coach	Set Numbers	Total	Designated
165/0	2	1 DMCL + 1 DMS	165001-165006	6	Network Turbo
165/1	2	1 DMCL + 1 DMS	165118-165137	20	Network Turbo
165/1	3	1 DMCL + 1DMS+ 1 MS	165101-165117	17	Network Turbo
166	3	2 DMCL + 1MS	165201-166221	21	Network Turbo Express
				Total	64

All 64 sets were built at the now closed B.R.E.L works at York, latterly A.B.S. Works between 1991-1993 and are now all based at Reading D.M.U. depot.

To meet the Mon-Fri Summer 1996 public time table a total of 52 diagrams are required. A diagram being the individual timetable for a particular set of coaches. The diagrams are numbered as follows:

Class	Coaches per Set	Sets Available	Diagrams Required	Diagrams Numbers	Spare Sets
165/0	2	6	4	RG101-RG104	2
165/1	2	20	17	RG201-RG217	3
165/1	3	17	14	RG 301-RG314	3
166	3	21	17	RG401-RG417	4
Total		64	52		12

You will see from the above that the two coach 165/0 sets are allocated diagram numbers in the range RG101 - RG104. To even out mileages and wear and tear on wheel sets the set operating diagram RG101 on a Monday will operate diagram RG102 on Tuesday, RG103 on Wednesday, RG104 on Thursday and reverts to RG101 again on Friday. The two spare sets cover for routine servicing exams, overhauls and accident damage repairs. The same cyclic systems operates for the other three groups.

For the purpose of the following statistics I have used a twenty-four hour timespan of 02.01 Wednesday 4th September to 02.00 Thursday 5th September. This is due to the fact that 25 out of the 52 sets still being in operation at midnight. The location of the sets at 02.00 on a Thursday morning is therefore clearer to define as:

In service 2 - 0136 (RG213) Reading - Paddington and
0125 (RG410) Paddington - Reading

Paddington 1, Redhill 3, Old Oak Common 9, Oxford 12, Worcester 2 and 35 nominally at Reading but some sets could be away for major repairs at Eastleigh or at Derby for repairs to accident damage.

SUMMARY of the 52 diagrams for Wednesday 4th September 1996

Class/Subclass	165/0	165/1	165/1	166	Total
Coaches in Set	2	2	3	3	
Diagram Numbers RG--	101-104	201-217	301-314	401-414	
Diagrams required for day	4	17	14	17	52

Mileages

In revenue usage	1636	6241	5192	9646	22715
average per set	409	367	371	567	437
Total for day inc. E.C.S trips	1664	6666	5467	10128	23925
average per set	416	392	390	596	460

Journeys

In revenue usage	68	429	169	151	817
average per set	17	25	12	9	16
As E.C.S workings	11	86	69	108	274
average per set	3	5	5	6	5

Time

From Start to finish of Diagram (hrs)	68	314 1/2	244	311 1/2	938
average per set (hrs)	17	181 1/2	17 1/2	18	18
In revenue usage (hrs)	631 1/2	257	172	2431 1/2	736
average per set (hrs)	16	15	12 1/2	14	14
E.C.S and stabled (hrs)	41 1/2	571 1/2	72	68	202
average per set (hrs)	1	31 1/2	5	4	4

Notes: a. The 938 hours in operation of the diagrams equates to 75% of possible time (52x24 hours = 1248 hrs)

b. All averages are based on 52 diagrams. For full fleet averages values should be divided by 64.

Now to put some meat on to the above information, these extremes may be of interest to you.

Mileages

Empty stock workings amounted to 1210 miles in the day. The diagram entailing the most being RG407 with 105 miles which took this set empty from Oxford to Stratford-upon-Avon to form 1F25 06.55 departure to Paddington. This diagram then calls for the set to operate the only direct service from Paddington to Windsor 1W28 10.18 ex. Paddington. After returning to Slough as 2W29 the set travels to Reading as E.C.S for fuelling, washing and interior clean. After this attention it is E.C.S again to Oxford to form 1F57 15.15 Oxford to Paddington.

The diagram with the most miles in a day is RG408 which covers nine revenue journeys viz: Oxford to Paddington. Return trips, Paddington to Oxford, Paddington to Hereford and Paddington to Bedwyn and completing the day with a single trip to Banbury and returning to Reading for a total of 761 miles. The return (Paddington - Hereford trip of 300 miles is the longest covered by any set in a day.

By contrast the least mileage diagram is RG203 which covers only 130 miles of which 64 of these are as empty coaching stock. This diagram covers two revenue earning trips from Hayes to Paddington in the morning rush hour and two single trips in the evening rush hour, one to Twyford and the other to Maidenhead from Paddington.

Journeys

By far the most revenue earning journeys in the day is the set on diagram RG209 which makes 45 round trips on the Windsor branch from Slough. The opposite is in fact RG203 with only four, discussed earlier in connection with the least mileage in a day.

Utilisation

In any business it is most important to utilise ones capital stock for as long as possible in the day while there are passengers to contribute to the revenue. Diagram RG213 is top of the class in this respect leaving Reading at 01.27 and not completing its duties until 01.03 the next day, a total of 23 hours 36 minutes. The set involved commences its work with 2P01 01.36 Reading-Paddington and the return 2R04 03.25 Paddington-Reading arriving at 04.20. Then it is an e.c.s to Maidenhead to take up 2B00 05.38 to Marlow arriving at 06.00. This working is not however shown in the public timetable and answers of the queries I posed in the opening paragraph of this article. The remainder of the day is spent on the branch until the last departure of the day the 00.11 from Marlow 2B63. Even the least utilised set still operates for

nearly 131/2 hours leaving Reading as diagram Rg313 a 06.11 to work to Paddington. Then it is a single return trip to Slough followed by three return trips to Henley and return to Twyford followed by an exs trip back to Reading arriving at 19.33.

Fuel

The diagrams are so constructed that each set has to return to Reading Depot for fuel prior to completing 1200 miles which is a sets maximum range on full fuel tanks. Only at Reading are sets refuelled and this is carried out on every visit irrespective of the miles covered. Diagram RG210 calls for three visits and fuelling is carried on each visit although the set concerned only covers 270 miles in the day. This set is stabled for over eight hours during its sixteen hour tour of duty.

The set with the least in the tanks when it returns to Reading is the one covering diagram RG410 on day one leaving Reading at 15.35. Stabled at Oxford overnight this set assumes diagram RG411 on day two and also stables overnight in Oxford. In day three duties for RG412 are taken up and arrives at Paddington at 08.55 from Banbury. The compilers of these diagrams have played safe as it is noted that this set returns to Reading coupled to the set on diagram RG306 as an ecs working just in case fuel consumption has been excessive. RG412 in theory should only have sufficient for another thirty seven miles.

Interior Cleaning

Everyone of the 52 sets forking, except one, in internally cleaned during the day. The exception being RG209 the ninety journey set working the Windsor branch. To make up for this the set is cleaned three times the following day whilst working diagram RG210. Cleaning is performed at Old Oak Common, Redhill, Oxford and Worcester as well as at Reading Depot. During the course of the day 94 cleanings are carried out and three sets RG242, RG306 and RG313 are attended to no less than four times.

Exterior Washing

This function is only performed at Reading Depot when it arrives for fuel. Thirty three washings were planned on the day of my analysis.

Watering

Very essential this is as these sets have toilet facilities. Watering is carried out at the same locations as interior cleaning but according to the diagrams not on every occasion. On the day in question thirty six waterings took place.

Reporting Numbers

Thames Trains issue diagram numbers for each of the operating sets. These diagram numbers must not be confused with the four digit train reporting numbers such as 2P01 mentioned earlier in connection with train identification. These train reporting numbers used to be shown in the deadcode panel of early DMU's to allow signalmen to identify a particular train but nowadays the pre-reporting numbers are not displayed but Railtrack still require each train movement to have a unique number in a particular area of the country. In the Thames Trains area reporting numbers used are:

Digit	Alpha	2 Digits	Key
1			Fast Passenger
2			Slow Passenger
5			Empty Stock Working
	B	*	Marlow-Bourne End Branch trains
	C	*	To/from Reading on Oxford line
	D	any	Fast passenger from Paddington terminating at on or before Reading
	E	*	Hereford line to/from Oxford
	F	odd	Fast passenger up to Paddington from Hereford and points eastwards
	G	*	Greenford branch trains
	H	*	Henley branch trains
	J	*	Basingstoke line trains
	K	*	Newbury and Bedwyn services
	N	any	Paddington to Oxford or Maidenhead
	O	any	Trains to the Gatwick line
	P	any	Trains to Paddington from Banbury or south of
	R	any	Down trains Paddington to Reading
	S	any	Down trains Paddington to Slough
	V	any	Trains from Gatwick line
	W	*	Windsor branch trains

Note. D and F only used by fast passenger trains (1 as first digit)
 * Even last digit signifies down train
 * Odd last digit signifies up train
Examples: 2P29 is 09.08 Slough to Paddington
 2S40 is 13.11 Paddington to Slough

Route Codes

You will probably have noticed that in the T.T timetable at the top of each column there is a two digit route code which is also displayed alongside the destination screen on the leading coach of each set. I had originally thought that each code was unique to the exact stopping places of each train but this is not the case as you will see from a summary of those codes in the range 42 to 57. Basically the route codes are grouped according to the start and finish points irrespective of direction of travel but some codes are duplicated and other not used at all.

Code range	Service
07	Paddington - Greenford also Reading - Basingstoke
10 - 13	Paddington - Oxford fast service
14 - 17	Paddington - Worcester line services
20 - 23	Paddington - Stratford-upon-Avon line services
26 - 29	Services to Banbury
30 - 39	Services to Oxford
42 - 49	Services to Newbury line
51 - 57	Paddington to Reading
61 - 69	Services to Henley
70 - 79	Services to Maidenhead and Marlow branch
80	Slough to Windsor
86 - 87	Paddington to Slough also Gatwick line services.

Route Code	42	43	44	46	47	48	49	51	53	54	55	56	57
Paddington	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Acton Main Line													*
Ealing Broadway		*			*				*	*	*	*	*
West Ealing												*	*
Hanwell												*	*
Southall											*	*	*
Hayes & Harlington										*	*	*	*
West Drayton											X	*	*
Iver											X	*	*
Langley											X	*	*
Slough	*	*		*	*				*	*	*	*	*
Burnham									X	*	X	*	*
Taplow										*	X	*	*
Maidenhead	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*
Twyford				*	X			*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Reading West			*	*	*		*						
Theale	*	*	*	*	*	*	*						
Aldermaston		X			*	X	X						
Midgham					*		X						
Thatcham	*	*	*	*	*	X	X						
Newbury Racecourse					*		*						
Newbury	*	*	*	*	*	*	*						
Kintbury		*	*	*	X	X	X						
Hungerford		*	*	*	X	X	X						
Bedwyn		*	*	*	X	X	X						

* = all trains with this code stop

X = only some trains with this code stop

Multiple Sets

To accommodate passengers on certain trains in the morning and evening rush hours two sets are coupled together. Within this article each set is monitored separately. The coupled sets in revenue service on the day of my survey were:

Mornings

Diagrams	Departure Time	From	To	Reporting Number
RG208+RG314	06.00	Maidenhead	Bourne End	2B02
	06.21	Bourne End	Maidenhead	2B03
	06.36	Maidenhead	Bourne End	2B06
	06.52	Bourne End	Maidenhead	2B07
	07.08	Maidenhead	Bourne End	2B10
	07.25	Bourne End	Paddington	1F11
	08.18	Paddington	Reading	2R19
	09.28	Reading	Paddington	1F29
RG216+RG409	07.08	Twyford	Henley	2H02
	07.33	Henley	Paddington	1H03
	08.37	Paddington	Reading	2R21
RG306+RG414	07.32	Oxford	Paddington	1F23
RG401+RG404	06.57	Newbury	Paddington	1K11
RG406+RG416	07.27	Newbury	Paddington	1K15
	09.18	Paddington	Oxford	1D15

Evenings

RG416+RG417	13.15	Oxford	Paddington	1F51 (A)
RG408+RG417	16.15	Oxford	Paddington	1F63 (B + C)
	17.48	Paddington	Newbury	1K50
RG203+RG207	16.53	Paddington	Maidenhead	2N55
	17.38	ecs Maidenhead	Paddington	5D65
	18.23	Paddington	Twyford	1D65

Note A. RG417 leads RG416 from Oxford. RG416 arrived at Oxford with the 11.55 from Stratford-upon-Avon at 13.10 1F49. RG417 arrived at Oxford with the 11.42 from Great Malvern at 13.07 1F51. At Paddington the sets are uncoupled and RG417 covers the 14.48 service back to Oxford, 1D37 arriving at 15.46.

B. RG417 leads RG408 from Oxford. RG408 arrived at Oxford with the 15.01 from Worcester Shrub Hill at 16.10 1F63.

C. RG408 continues to Bedwyn whereas RG417 returns e.c.s to Reading depot.

The maximum number of coaches in a revenue earning train is six but there are instances of ten coaches coupled together on empty stock workings.

Thames Trains serve 104 stations although Three Bridges is only visited by the first train of the day from Reading. The extremities of their operations are Paddington, Hereford, Stratford-upon-Avon, Bedwyn, Basingstoke and Three Bridges. Branches served are to Greenford, Windsor, Marlow, Henley and Bicester Town.

So next time you are out and about watching Thames Trains along our local lines you will, I hope, appreciate the complex operation that is involved to provide the service that is perhaps taken for granted.



SOCIETY TRIP TO THE SWANAGE RAILWAY

BY TIM SPEECHLEY

Following on from Phil Searle's article in the September edition of the Donkey the following is a personal account of the society's trip on 6 July 1996.

I went to the Legion to meet the coach which, with my timekeeping, had arrived before me having already picked up a few members in Wycombe. On this occasion Gavin seemed to have procured a superior set of wheels and it provided comfortable transport during the day. Patronage for the trip was very good and I found that I had to sit on the back seat - a position I had always associated in the past with the more rowdy members of any coach party. However with such companions as Messrs Lewcock, Robins and Greatorex this was not the case on this occasion.

The weather forecast had not been particularly promising with a strong likelihood of rain but our journey was mostly in bright sunshine. A stop was made at Rownham services near Southampton but it was so incredibly crowded that some of the party had difficulty in buying what they wanted. I walked via a pedestrian underpass to the facilities on the Eastbound side which were virtually empty and enjoyed an unhurried cup of coffee albeit on my own. Once on the move again there was surprisingly little traffic and we arrived at Swanage by about 11.45.am. The first but not last rain shower of the day fell as we approached but had finished by the time we disembarked. Some of the back streets we followed to reach the station were remarkably narrow and Gavin did a splendid job negotiating them with what seemed to be a huge coach to one used to driving a mere car.

At Swanage we were joined by a far flung member David Gardner, who had made his own way from Chippenham. The group was met by Swanage Railway chairman Bill Trite who of course had given us such an interesting talk about the history of the preservation of the line back in May when he impressed me by speaking for two hours without any notes at all.

At this meeting Phil Searle and others had asked about the possibility of footplate rides when we visited the railway and Bill's first action on our arrival was to hand out a number of indemnity forms which would admit members to the footplate. I did get one of these but then gave it to somebody else- how magnanimous of me! - only to get another, thanks I think to Gordon Rippington's intercession on my behalf. As events turned out I owe Gordon many thanks.

Bill suggested we visited the loco shed straight away and as he had warned earlier those who participated had to wear high visibility orange waistcoats in order to satisfy Health and Safety requirements. We had brought quite a number with us gleaned from a variety of sources and he managed to find a few more from the railway's stores.

Now "doing the shed" at Swanage is hardly like having a trip around Crewe South or Carlisle Kingmoor but at least we had permission. Outside the single road shed building on the incredibly short turntable was the Yugoslavian built copy of a USA tank which carries the fictitious number 30075. Inside under repair was M7 0-4-4T 30053 which always looks just right when working on the line. Photographs were taken and the volunteers working on 30053 explained what they were doing - but I've forgotten

what it was! On the way back to the station we called in at the old goods shed where coach restoration was under way. We had a walk through and saw a Mark 1 being renovated and I think it's the first time I've had a close look at a coach being worked on. Only then did I realise that "just out the box" look and is just like a B.R loco in clean condition. I asked again about the possibility of a ride on the footplate and this time I was ushered up. It had been a very long time since I'd been on a big loco anywhere and the last time on an unrebuilt Bulleid was 1966 or 1967 at Waterloo and only with it stationary.

We departed tender first at 15.55 with four of us in the cab - the driver who I think was a fireman under instruction, the fireman who I think was really a driver and another guy - possibly another trainee driver plus me - 45 going on 15 grinning like a Cheshire Cat and loving every second of it! I was surprised how small the firebox seemed to be. My recollection of 34002 "Salisbury" thirty years earlier was of an absolutely enormous mass of fire but although wide that on 34072 seemed incredibly short - obviously one's perceptions change over the years.

The Bulleid shuffled up the bank through Herston and on to Harman's Cross making that uniquely distinctive woolly beat of a Southern pacific. It was working harder than I had expected for a large loco on a short train but the gradients are quite severe in parts of this line. One of the final steam specials in BR days with a pair of 2-6-2 tanks stalled several times and finally the train had to be split.

At each stop I had expected to be turfed off by another member with a pass for the footplate but we got all the way to Norden without this occurring. As we ran round the train we stopped opposite the buffet and a tray with four cups of tea was passed over into the cab - very nice too.

Again nobody appeared at the front end at Norden so I just stayed put. We departed at 15.55 and the sun was out most of the way back to Swanage. There was a surprising amount of uphill working in this direction and in places the loco was making an impressive amount of noise. Quite considerable quantities of coal were carefully flung into the firebox but I didn't really pay too much attention to the way the loco was being worked, I suppose in all honesty because I was enjoying just being up there on that footplate seeing, hearing and smelling the loco and the lovely scenery through which it was passing.

All too soon Swanage was reached and I had to get off the loco. It had been wonderful to experience the thrill of the footplate again after such a long time and it felt as if so many years had slipped away temporarily.

There was just time to have a look at the shop on the platform before we had to get back on the coach and we left at about 5ish. There was considerably more traffic on the way out of Purbeck than there had been on the way in but once beyond Wareham we made better progress and were only held up as we approached Rownham's services on the M3 where another comfort stop was made. Thence back to Marlow and Wycombe after a splendid day. My only regret? - that I hadn't taken my video camera though memories of my footplate trip will linger long in my head if not on tape.

TEN YEARS AGO

MARLOW DONKEY No 41 MARCH 1987

Roger Brown

Eight Sides of A4 paper the 'Donkey' opened with the Chairmans notes referring to 'Tory plan to sell of BR after Election' on a newspaper article - Bas closed his notes with "It is a sobering thought that the anti-railing faction are very strong in the Britain of 1987". What's new?

The main articles in Donkey No 41 were one on BR's 03 shunters by Mike Walker. 'Get the Money' an article on 'APTIS' BR's then new ticketing system by John Sears, and one on the Hammersmith and City Line by Mike Walker. Steam trains on the joint line were running at fortnightly intervals, locos included LNER V2 2-6-2 'Green Arrow' which was on the line for 3 months from March 1987.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Roger Brown

The news in the Spring 1972, and preservation projects were in the air! The Dart Valley Railway was going ahead with its scheme to takeover the 6³/₄ mile long line from Paigton to Kingswear. It was hoped that there would be no break between BR and DVR Service on the line.

Further north, Derby Corporation purchased from British Railways the 6¹/₂ miles of track from Crich Junction, Ambergate to Pye Bridge together with the Swanwick branch, so that the Derby Museum Midland Railway Project Group would re-create a section of the Midland Railway.

Under a further agreement with Swindon Corporation 'King George V' would remain in the custody of H P Bulmer Ltd until 'at least 1976.'

Although BR's last steam ran in 1968, twenty five years ago no less than 57 steam locomotives remained with the National Coal Board at 26 different sites in South Wales.

The West Somerset Railway Company made an offer to BR to purchase the branch line from Norton Fitzwarren to Minehead for £175,000.

Of local interest and as part of the revolution of the station building programme. High Wycombe had a new entrance and circulating area constructed and included in the £30,000 programme was a Travel Centre.

BR's motive power and rolling stock building programme is of interest. Crewe works was completing the prototype power cars for the High Speed Train and also starting work on the first of 34 class 87 electric locomotives. Derby, Litchurch Lane Works was completing more Mk IID air conditioned vehicles along with 73 similar vehicles for CIE in Ireland. York Works was completing an order for 72 4-CIG and 38 4-VEP units for the Southern Region and Works on order of 105 100-tonne iron ore tippler wagons for the British Steel Corporation.

London Midland Region 'Merrymaker' excursion programme in the London area included 93 trips between February and December with fares ranging from £1.50 and £6.50.

6th March saw the last of the surviving services between Birmingham Snow Hill and Wolverhampton Low Level.

The Great Western Society's occupation of Didcot motive power depart was confirmed by the signing of an agreement with British Railways.

Headed by Mr W H McAlpine a consortium of railway enthusiasts purchased 75% of the shares of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway to guarantee its existence.

At a meeting on 4th March the Strathspey Railway Association has formed to support the reopening project for the Aviemore to Boat of Garten line.

30th April 1972 saw the withdrawal of the 'Brighton Belle'. Sir Laurence Olivier had managed to get the kippers restored on the menu but replacement stock for the train was a different matter. The Divisional Manager has quoted "the over-riding factor was the economic one - better utilisation of stock" - an honest admission that trains were run to suit the railway operators convenience rather than that of it's clientele. In such a climate of progress no gracious "Belle" could possibly survive, even with a tradition reaching back 63 years.

BOOK REVIEWS

MARCH 1997 - ALAN COSTELLO

BRITISH RAIL SUPER CENTRES LONDON G.W. LINES

Laurence Waters

Ian Allan

ISBN 0 7110 2164 3

A photographic record of the former G.W. lines out of Paddington together with branch lines as far as Henley and Marlow. Chapter cover various topics including a look at the Hayes Creosote Works. A variety of Motive Power is covered from steam days to the present time when nearly all passenger services are wither 125's or Thames Turbo. The diminishing freight traffic is also featured. Appendices give allocations of locos at depots in the area at various dates.

RAIL ATLAS GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

S.K. Baker

Oxford Publishing Co

ISBN 0 86093 534 5

If you travel through the coaches of an enthusiast's charter train, together with the glasses of real ale, a copy of "Baker's Bible" will be seen on many tables. This is the eighth edition of a book first printed 20 years ago. The standard layout is kept with lines colour coded - black for passenger, red for freight, green for underground and local transit lines and blue for preserved lines. With the increased interest in Irish Railways the pages covering Ireland have been increased and now include Peat railways. Since the last edition (4 years ago) it is encouraging to see freight lines becoming passenger lines (e.g. Robin Hood line in Notts) and new lines appearing (e.g. Birmingham's Jewellery line) although on the down side a number of freight lines have closed. Also included are tunnels, viaducts, depots, stabling points and junctions. An essential book for frequent rail travellers.

TRAINS ANNUAL 1957

Ed Cecil J Allan

Ian Allan

U.K. Railways predominate this edition, with chapters on South Devon, North Wales and the Great Central. Another chapter looks at designs, produced by the various companies, that were never built including a Gresley 2-6-4-4 loco. Overseas, New Zealand railways are look at together with modern (1957) U.S passenger coaches and the 11 day battle to get the Canadian Continental Limited out of the snow drifts in Frasier Canyon in the Rockies. This year's colour plates includes a West Country class at Southampton Docks with the Queen Mary in the background.

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF TRAINS IN TROUBLE

Alan Earnshaw

Atlantic

ISBN 0 906899 69 9

During the 80's Atlantic produced a volume series of books containing photos of railways accidents and later produced 2 more because of the interest. Alan Earnshaw has now issued a revised and updated combined edition covering over 200 accidents that occurred between 1868 and 1968 in chronological order. Very little attempt is made to explain the reasons for the accidents as the subject of the book is photographic.

The last steam accident on British Rail is covered in a postscript. That was the derailment at a set of points of 8F 48661 at Rose Grove depot on 3/8/68.

BRANCH LINES OF DORSET

Colin Maggs

Dorset is probably the only county to have 2 lines that reach quays by running through streets. The one at Poole only carried goods traffic, but at Weymouth 12 coach passenger trains can still be seen going through the streets, although now these are only charter trains, rather than the boat trains that used to connect with the Channel Island steamers. Even these may go as this summer an experimental tram is being tried out. Other lines finishing up on the coast including Abbotsbury, Bridport and West Bay, Lyme Regis, Easton (on the Isle of Portland) and the now preserved line to Swanage. All these lines are looked at, as well as lines in the Poole area. Freight traffic in Dorset included clay, oil and stone as well as the fruit and vegetables that arrived at Weymouth by boat. Each branch is looked at giving a description of the line together with some anecdotes of branch life. Although all the main lines are still intact most of the branch lines have now been closed apart from some in the east of the county.