

Edition

81

June 1997



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From Little Acorns... Part 2

'Oh Mister Porter'

A Grand Day Out

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS: McAlpine No. 13 approaching the top station carrying The Marlow Donkey headboard on 4 May '97

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I think that everyone who attended, will agree that the special celebration at Fawley commemorating 20 years of our existence, went off splendidly and the weather, which was unpleasant in the morning, cheered up well by the time that we started. Our thanks to all the helpers who made the day such a success including, of course, the ladies who did a prodigious amount of work both before and on the day itself. One lady cooked over 100 portions of quiche at home, whilst special thanks must go to Gordon and Julian for such a terrific effort. Naturally a big big thanks thanks must go to Sir William who so kindly opened up Fawley for us. Finally a thank you to those members of the Fawley Museum Society who came along, opened the Museum and ran the railway for us, even if one of them had a spot of bother getting three wagons back into the tunnel at the end of the day!

Suitable Birthday cakes were provided, again by the ladies, which went down well at teatime. For the record we provided about 160 lunches and teas, as well as intermediate drinks.

Turning to other rail news, how many of you saw the joyous claim in THE TIMES about the new Eurostar luxury sleeping cars for night service to the Continent? The claim was made that if all the loos were flushed at the same time the train would be stopped !! The date of the article was significantly April 2nd and I suspect that the journalist had been primed before midday on April 1st.

According to the more informed railway circles the true story is rather more unfunny! The coaches costing about £150 million take so much auxiliary power that if 2-8 car sets are coupled together only one French locomotive class can operate them, the first of which has only recently entered service. Train tests have been carried out as far as Tour de Carol in France but there seems little chance of the coaches paying their way and the start of the service has been deferred.

A much brighter scene is emerging in North Wales where N. G. Garrats should be performing between Caernavon and Dinas later this year, for the restart of the Welsh Highland Railway, which has been in the official receivers hands since the mid 30s. All success to the project, financed amongst other sources from the National Lottery and Europe. It must reach the halfway mark to Portmadoc by the Millennium to qualify for the Millenium Fund payment.

Many thanks, Gordon for organising the Severn Valley outing, enjoyed by a number of our members, unfortunately I had to miss the run and will also miss Amberley due to family commitments. Again we must all thank Gordon for organising this one as well. Please do join in the Society outings if you can as we try and keep them reasonably priced.

Talking about prices, a friend recently wanted to travel from Woking to Malvern Links and back in one day recently and was quoted about £38 day return by phone on the rail answering service. At Woking station he was told day returns from Reading do not exist, so he coughed up about £54 but, significantly, was also given a complaint form! This he had reason to use for the Ticket Inspector on the Thames train he boarded at Reading said of course you can get a day return with us, it is only on the Great Western that you cannot, you have been overcharged! Correspondence is now flowing on the matter, but with computer systems in place in our railways, they have got to do a better job than this to succeed.

Finally, an unusual event in the States last December, which throws a new light on the Radio Control of locomotives. On December 4th in Nebraska, a stopped U.P. freight was maliciously uncoupled and the guy concerned knew his rail operating techniques as he closed the brake pipe cocks on both of the adjacent cars. Now the radio controlled locos cut in were further back on the train, which restarted as one train, and nominally complete. However the two halves soon separated and at one point were about 12 miles apart! The rear portion plunging through the night, running through stop lights, nearly killing a farmer and his wife on a crossing, until another driver, doubtless surprised to see the train running in two portions that night and no driver in the second portion, raised the alarm!. It was stopped after a 48 mile run. That is a new one for the books I think. The nearest to that in Great Britain in recent times probably was a breakaway on a steel train coming down to Carlisle from Shap, in which an alert signalman spotted the trains running in two halves and averted a disastrous collision in Carlisle Station between the two halves of said train by sending the second portion around Carlisle canal, in which I believe it finished up; trains with automatic brakes running in two halves are a distinct rarity fortunately.

Well that is enough for now folks, enjoy plenty of distant pleasant rail travel this summer and don't forget our second special event in the autumn with David Shepherd.

TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

1997

Thursday 17 July	16mm FILM SHOW	Frank Branfield
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

Sunday 6 July	Amberley Chalk Pits Museum	By Coach
Railways, vintage vehicles including buses many craftsmen at work from boatbuilders to printers and blacksmiths all housed in period buildings.		
Seniors £ 12.50 Adults £13.00 Children £8.00		

EDITORS NOTES

Last chance to Brunel's Paddington

Railtrack has launched its big spending plans in a blaze of publicity. It will change the appearance of nearly all the London Termini and many other major stations, Paddington will be the first to be implemented.

This £50m project is one of the largest and will introduce a mezzanine floor above the present concourse, having seen the artist impressions of the development it extends out at least as far as the existing buffer stops. The architect chosen designed Waterloo International and has quoted 'If the whole travelling experience is fraught, it's not the right environment to be spending money in either'. Needless to say most of the development will be retail, but there will be improved customer facilities such as toilets, CCTV and booking facilities.

The work starts this summer!

A Meeting at Euston

I recently used meeting facilities at Euston which are part of the first class lounge facilities. They are most impressive, situated on the eastern side of the concourse on the first floor entry is by entryphone where upon you enter a modern, clean and air conditioned environment and smart uniformed hostesses on hand. From £80 for the day they represent exceptional value for central London, Tea, coffee, slide and overhead projectors are all included in the price.

Whether this will survive the redevelopment we will have to wait and see.

EDITORS DETAILS

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FROM LITTLE ACORNS... ...PART 2

07 April 1997

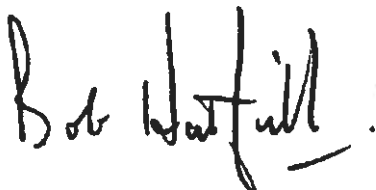
Marlow Donkey Editor
35A Danywern Drive
Winnersh, Wokingham
RG 415 NS

Dear Sir,

Ernie Dove was kind enough to show me a copy of edition 80 of the Marlow Donkey which included articles by Stan Verrinder and Roger Bowen on the origins of the society through a WEA class which I had organised. What Roger modestly failed to mention was that the tutor for the first year's course was in fact a tram devotee - what's more electric trams - very lightly disguised as a railway enthusiast. Roger's encyclopaedic knowledge of railways became apparent during the course, which is why we asked him to convert from student to lecturer in year two: this he did so successfully that he began lecturing regularly (and I hope still does).

I was always impressed by the energy, enthusiasm and time that the founder members of the society contributed to give it such a good start, not least in producing what quickly became an outstanding club magazine. I would like to wish the Marlow and District well for the next twenty years, and in the shorter term, we very much look forward to welcoming you to your anniversary event at Fawley on 4th May.

Yours very sincerely,



(BOB HATFIELD)

Copy Date
for the next issue of the
Marlow Donkey

30 August 1997

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

A LOOK BACK INTO THE PAST

Keith Brown

Our editor's plea for more articles at our January meeting had me considering what I could contribute as outings at this time of the year for me at least are for the necessities of life and not for rail observations. However, a visit to my loft to return the Christmas decorations and tree for use next year gave me the idea to look at my rail library for suitable material. I picked up a copy of my late Fathers Railway Magazine for October 1918 and started to read but as the loft was rather a cold reading room I returned to our lounge with twenty copies ranging from 1918 to December 1922. It soon became obvious that here was the basis for an article which I felt would be of interest to our members. Incidentally the Railway Magazine was founded in July 1897 and in 1918 the annual subscription was 13/6 (671/2p) including postage paid. Like most magazines advertising revenue is essential to keep the costs to reasonable amounts and the following are just a few examples of them.

Trade after the War

If you contemplate erecting a

NEW WORKS *or* FACTORY

in an ideal position with the advantage of

<p>CHEAP POWER GOOD WATER SUPPLY HEALTHY SURROUNDINGS</p>	<p>SIDING ACCOMMODATION EFFICIENT TRANSPORT FACILITIES</p>
--	--

Write Great Central Railway Publicity Office, 216, Marylebone Road,
London, N.W. 1, stating your requirements.

SAM FAY, General Manager.

Most of what we now refer to as the pre-grouping companies advertised in this way from Cornwall to Scotland. Other advertisers were:

THE HUNSLET ENGINE CO. LTD, England designers and builders of **LOCOMOTIVES** for any gauge, climate or service. Telegraphic address "ENGINE LEEDS"

THE ROBINSON LOCOMOTIVE SUPERHEATER

will effect an all-round improvement in your locomotive service. Apply to **THE SUPERHEATER CORPORATION Ltd**, 14 New Burlington Street London W1

THE RAILWAY CLUB 92, Victoria Street, London, SW1
Founded in 1899 for the purpose of bringing together those who are interested professionally or otherwise in the practical working of railways.

THE GWR ENGINE BOOK

Contains locomotive illustrations; List of all GWR Engine numbers and names; Chapter on naming of Locomotives, etc., etc. A book that should be possessed by every one interested in the GWR locomotives. Price 1s net. By post 1s11/2d. (5p = 53/4d). (Was this what gave Ian Allan the idea to start his business)

The format of the magazine were such that besides articles which were of great detail accompanied with maps, photos and gradient profiles were appropriate, there was a section dealing with answers to readers questions called "The Why and the Wherefore" and a section called "Pertinent Paragraphs" dealing with short articles.

A few examples of the contents of the above categories which I found of interest.

Pertinent Paragraphs

In the issue for January 1919 details were given of the "Daily Naval Special." This train ran daily except Saturdays all year round and ran from Euston to Thurso departing at 15.00 from London and arriving at Thurso 13.45 the following day. If you think this was a long journey then the Naval Leave trains which ran from Plymouth to Invergordon were even longer. Departure from Plymouth was at 09.45 and arrival was not until 10.30 hours the following day. Refreshment stops were made at Taunton 1/2 hour, Shrewsbury 40 mins, Carlisle and Perth both being stops of forty minutes.

An interesting article in the October 1918 issue under the heading "By Air or Rail" discussed the time taken from city centre to city centre between London and Glasgow. It was assumed that by air the journey would take 4 1/2 hours (90mph) plus 45 minutes at each end to and from the airport making six hours in total. The train was scheduled to take eight hours but as meals could be taken and work carried out on the train the conclusion was that "I cannot see anything which would point to serial passenger routes becoming numerous or popular."

Why and the Wherefore

A reader had asked how tractive effort was calculated. The reply being:-

$$T = \frac{d^2 \times S \times p \times .8}{D}$$

where d diameter of cylinders.

S piston stroke,

p boiler pressure

D diameter of driving wheels.

Note: This should be multiplied by 2 for our four-cylinder engines.

The ideal Gauge was the subject of a reply to another reader. In view of the problems now in this country it is worth quoting the full reply.

"It would appear from the adoption of a gauge closely approaching the Continent of Europe, that this is regarded generally as the ideal width between rails for all general purposes. As regards the loading gauge, however, it is safe to say that the largest practicable loading gauge is the most ideal. British railway companies are considerably hampered in rolling stock development by the lack of sufficient width and height in loading and construction gauges, as compared with the standards obtaining abroad and in America."

Articles

A regular feature was Cecil J. Allen's British Locomotive Practice and Performance where individual journeys are analysed in full. The October 1918 edition was the one hundredth such article and the opportunity was taken to reprint the best from each Railway. The example of the Great Central Railway will take some beating as the table below will show.

High Wycombe - Woodford

Train 10.00 Marylebone to Bradford.

Engine Director Class 432 Sir Edward Fraser
4-4-0

Load: 20 axles, 166 ton tare, 175 tons loaded

Miles		Actual	Speeds
0.0	High Wycombe	0.00	
2.3	West Wycombe	4.40	
5.0	Sauderton	8.05	50 1/2
8.2	Princes Risborough	11.20	80 3/4
13.6	Haddenham	15.25	75
17.6	Ashendon Junction	18.30	83 1/4
19.0	Wotton	19.40	75
25.5	Calvert	24.45	75
31.2	Finmere	29.45	72 1/2
36.0	Brackley	34.00	61 1/2
44.1	Culworth Junction	41.10	77 1/2
45.8	Woodford	43.55	stop


Other detailed articles at the time were:

- Oct 1918 The Croydon and Oxted Joint Railway
The Midland (LT & Southend section) of today.
Military trains in India.
- Dec 1918 Automatic Continuous Brakes on Railways
East to West via Switzerland
An Internal Combustion Engine
French and Belgian Railway Tickets
- Jan 1919 North British Railway's Edinburgh & Glasgow
Main Line
New Mallet Locomotives: Virginian Railway
Antofagasta (Chile) and Bolivia Railway
The Maddwy Railway (Merionethshire)

Should any member be interested in any of the above I will willingly loan the issue in question.

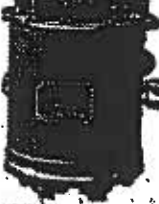
Keith Brown

PROFITABLE "SHOP" ASSISTANTS



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STANDARD AIR COMPRESSOR**

hung on a wall or column or "tucked away" in a corner, near the boiler, can be relied upon to furnish a continuous supply of compressed air at very small cost, and with only occasional attention to lubrication.



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THE WESTINGHOUSE BRAKE CO., LTD., KING'S CROSS, N.1.

'OH MISTER PORTER'

Mike Hyde

The sight of No.9 (60009 Union of South Africa) outside the shed at Bridgnorth was reason enough for the visit to the SVR on Saturday 17th May 1997. That, and the real ale in the Railway Inn on the station.

The day began on Wycombe platform 2 at just after 7am when the multitude (15) arrived under the watchful eye of Uncle Gordon - celebrated by the LMR also at Bridgnorth shed, a rather uneventful trip by Chiltern Trains 165039 (out and return) got us to Birmingham Snow Hill some time late due to unexplained stops en route so we missed our first planned connection. Nevertheless we did see a bright red fox trainspotting from on top of an Oxfordshire embankment, and caught a glimpse of 'Defiance' in steam at Tyseley.

The first rays of the sun did not come till late in the day, followed quickly by a shower of rain on the Kidderminster platform, but it was otherwise dry - albeit low mist/cloud till mid day.

At Snow Hill a half hour wait enabled us to view progress on the new tram route under construction to the west side, but little else. Then the first of our sightings of the Midlands - Class 150 picked us up. By the end of the day we probably had seen all or most of them due to the regular service in both directions. A brief wait at Stourbridge Junction, then on to another 150 to Kidderminster.

Many of us viewed and commented on a disgusting display by our driver returning to Birmingham, not waiting for the connection from Stourbridge Town. I am advised this is the shortest branch line in operation with a single car DMU running a shuttle service, taking all of 10 minutes return. Our driver pulled out with the branch train in sight, and left a handful of passengers waiting a quarter of an hour for the next service. Just the way to encourage passengers.

And so to Bridgnorth. An excellent period station built from scratch and putting the main line to shame.

It was the Heavy Horse weekend so we were treated to examples of horses with well turned out carts outside in the station forecourt. Throughout the day horses were to be seen at each station - at Highley one was hauling a log up and down the yard, whilst another was towing a closed van to the sidings. A fine reminder of the place horses had in railway affairs many years ago.

Steam on the line comprised LMS 5P4F (2.60) 2968, 80079 BR4MT 2-6-4T, and GWR Pannier 5764 0-6-0PT. An 08 Diesel Shunter rearranged the stock at Bridgnorth.

Our first trip was behind 5764 hauling 7 carriages mainly ex LNER Teak stock. What a weight, the brave pannier struggled with her load over some of the gradients. Judging by the effort she needed. Coal was loaded at Bridgnorth by mechanical shovel till it rose like a pyramid at the back of the cab.

Some of the group took the opportunity to visit Bridgnorth and view (even ride on as did Baz) the Castle Hill Venicular railway. I was informed by the operators it was

a quiet day but the following bank holiday would bring in the trippers! The town itself would be an interesting visit given time.

On return we few hopped off at Bewdley not before sampling the TV delights of HATLEY (otherwise Arley) and the amazing row of fine victorian cottages standing outside the station. It is said another series is to be filmed so you have been warned! 6521 Blossom was on shed at Bridgnorth.

At Bewdley activity was minimal apart from the passing trains. Whiskered green DMU Class 108 (19608) was ticking over for more than an hour waiting its turn on the evening dining service. Hidden behind a rake of GWR carriages was 1501 GWR 0-6-0 PT much to the satisfaction of Tim. It was also interesting to see Class 50's Hood, Ark Royal, and Exeter (sounds like a pre war review of the fleet) sitting at anchor just outside Kidderminster Station which reminds me we also saw Western Ranger and Western Courier under wraps at Bridgnorth plus The Great Marquess K4 Class 2-10-0 LMR Gordon, and a gaggle of Manors, and a clutch of 2MT's and GWR tanks.

Soon we were en route to Birmingham. This time we stayed aboard till we reached Moor Street via the recommissioned tunnel. We watched our Chilterns 165 pass through to Snow Hill and it picked us up on its way back. Interesting to see the old Moor Street Station, almost intact, to the south side with rails laid and station signs on the posts - what a wonderful base for a worship railway museum perhaps linked to the Tyseley! But I guess it will go for development, being a prime central site.

We ran home quite smoothly and quickly. Tired and hungry - there was no buffet trolley on board. We returned to our vehicles in Wycombe at 8.30ish having had a good day out on the SVR (at discounted rates, eventually). Many thanks from the combatants to the organisers.

Photos next issue, Editor



RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

Now its not only Euro Tunnel in trouble with tunnels, The Swiss have bumped into quite a problem in the new Gotthard tunnel that they have started to build recently. Apparently there is a 300 metre streak of Sugar Dolomite which they have to cut through during construction. The difficulty in getting through this stuff is shown by the latest estimate of cost at Sw Fr 700 million or about £290 million. Say roughly just under a million pounds a metre. Even the Swiss are scratching their heads on this one.

Eddie Lewcock

DOWN THE WEST SOMERSET

A Gala day on the West Somerset this spring, brought out the cameras, closely followed by the visitors to the line, where our pilgrimage to all things Great Western, started in brilliant weather at Bishops Lydiard complete with stalls, coffee and model railway. On 21st March an immaculate 4160 provided motive power for the Minehead run through charming country in the full flush of spring. The only fly in the ointment being the ghastly name of Stogumber for one of the delightful villages on route. Gradients are steep on the line and 4160 was soon making the echoes sound with that crisp GW exhaust. At Watchet, the old track bed of the West Somerset Mineral Railway starts and continues alongside the line to Washford, whence it continues inland whilst we turn towards the sea again. Watchet harbour is full of interest and would be ideal for a small model layout in period setting.

The run along the coast passes thro' Dunster, famed for its castle, before reaching Minehead where a quick snack was taken at the local hostelry.

Whilst GW locos were out in force from King Edward down through a Castle, Hall, Mogul, Collet 0-6-0 to a Pannier Tank, the intruder at Minehead was the S. & D. 2-8-0 No 88 now in rather run down state mechanically and in need of major repairs.

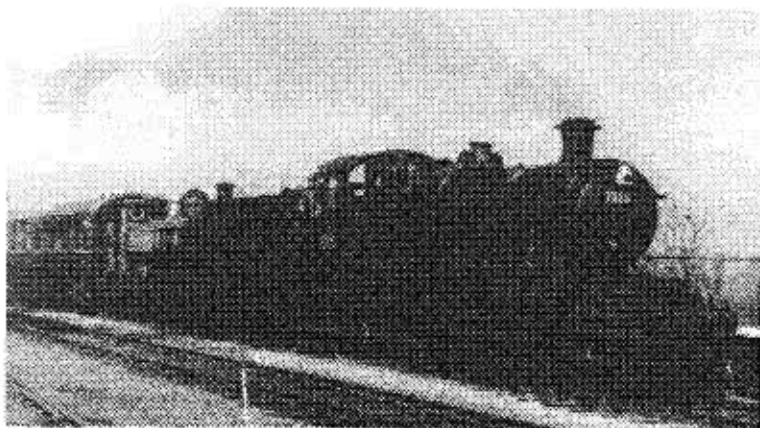
One of the reasons for my trip was revealed to my friends by the statement that I was descending from the train at

Washford to study the S & D. Museum. This is split 3 ways, firstly an exhibition of small items, tokens, lamps photos etc within the station building, second a reproduction of Midford Signal Box and thirdly, a collection of S & D wagons, coaches etc in the adjacent siding. Here were found two sets of items reminding me of my Bristol days. Firstly photos taken of the Bristol Railway Circle visiting the Eclipse Peat Company Railway near Ashwick one summer evening and second, photos of the Shillingstone Light Railway, owned by the late Sir Thomas Salt, which acted as a pig farm railway on weekdays and a passenger line at weekends. There was a passenger coach but any overflow passengers had to use a swilled-out wagon with temporary seats!

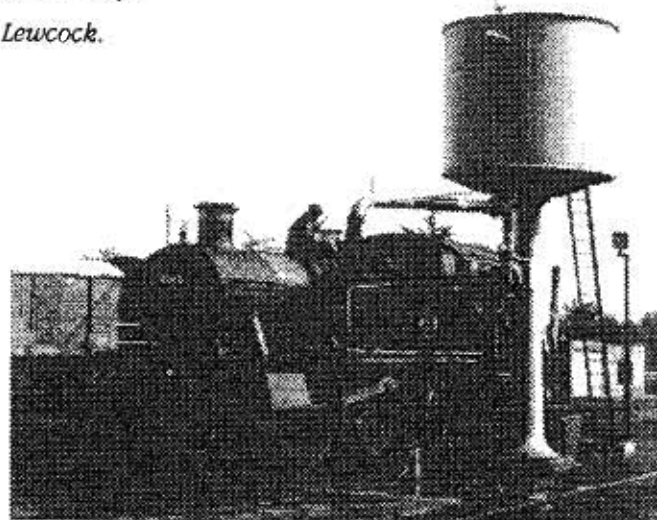
After a good look around in the Museum, the return run was resumed in the late afternoon with the train being pleasantly full, unlike the following days which I understand were crowded in the extreme.

Arrival at Bishops Lydiard enabled another visit to be made to the stalls with the purchase of a book on the M & G. N. locomotives, before adjourning to a village hostelry near Taunton for the night. A trip to the GWR at Toddington on the following morning rounded off a pleasant two days.

E. W. Lewcock.



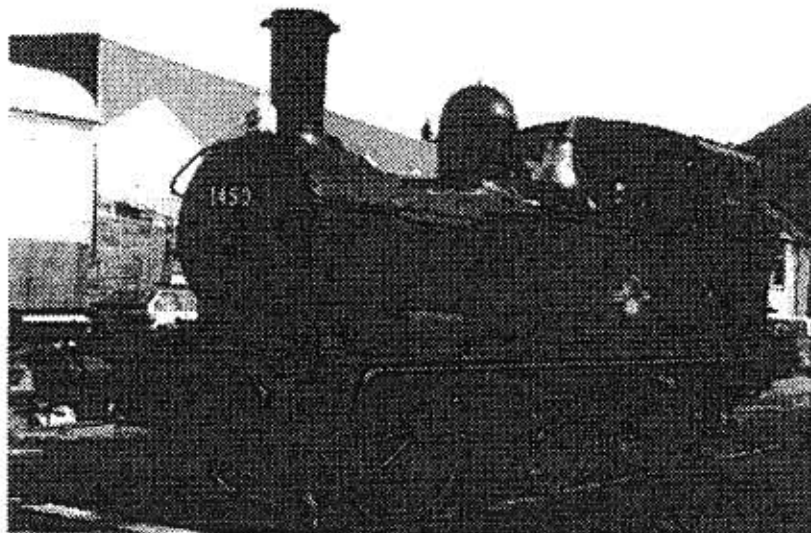
GWR Mogul and Pannier arriving at Williton



4160 at Minehead



Reproduction poster at Bishop Lydiard



1450 at Minehead

A GRAND DAY OUT

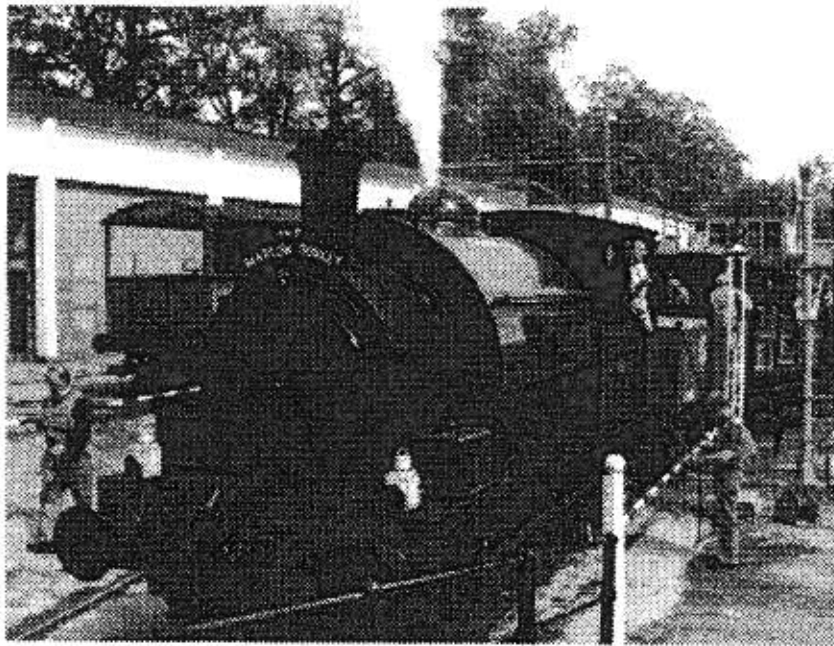
The forecast was gloomy but the outlook interesting for the weekend for this Bank Holiday weekend.

A lot of planning had gone into Sunday 4th May the MDRS grand day out at Fawley, so it was with some apprehension that the day started. The first task how to fit numerous quiches in the car without damaging them, then a careful drive to Fawley which is not that easy as you approach Fawley.

I arrived at about 10-15 to find all the Fawley workers and Gordon Rippington already there. Some of the Fawley members had been there since 7am to prepare No.13 for the days work.

Julian Heard was cooking breakfast in the firebox in the traditional manner, I was given a rasher and my daughter a sausage. Maybe the next MDRS barbecue could be done this way! After breakfast the Fawley members got back to shunting the stock into the right place for the days proceedings.

While we were preparing the food there was a call from Julian "We are doing a trial run down the line would any



one like to come" without exception we all downed tools and joined the train. Most of us riding in the brake van though a few did brave the open wagon. Going down Fawley Hill (the steepest standard gauge line in Britain) standing at the back of the brake was certainly an interesting experience. It must really test the skill of a driver to get down the hill even more so than going up.



We reversed to the very end of the bottom running line, then ran the full length of the line. There were so many interesting artifacts scattered around the grounds it really needs a second or third visit to appreciate these. It would be nice to walk the grounds to study and view these items. The climb back up the hill is spectacular, those of you who were there with video cameras must have some great footage.

The weather was turning for the better and the crowds were beginning to arrive. My wife, Helen Heard, Elizabeth Rippington, Mary Dove and Margaret were busy preparing food for the day. The weather continued to improve as Roger Wallis and helpers put out the tables and chairs so we could all sit outside in the bright sunshine and take in the unique atmosphere. What more could one ask for (well actually I was wondering whether Sir William might be preserving a railway pub next).

The museum is an experience in its self and like other parts of the site requires a second or third

visit to appreciate all that is there. As the day drifted to a close those that stayed on to help witnessed some very interesting shunting movements. The most interesting by our esteemed Chairman who held up the proceedings somewhat.

On behalf of all those who attended I would like to thank all the members of the Fawley Society for giving us an enjoyable day out.



The ladies doing the washing-up

E. W. Lewcock, Chairman,
27 Rupert Avenue,
HIGH WYCOMBE,
Bucks HP12 3NG.
Tel No: 01494 525638.

8th May, 1997.



Mike Norris telling them how it's done

Sir William Mc Alpine,
The Museum House,
Marlow Railway Station, Marlow, Bucks.

Dear Sir William,

On behalf of the Marlow and District Railway Society I would like to express our thanks to you for enabling us to enjoy a wonderful trip to your railway and museum last Sunday.

We were most fortunate with the weather which started very badly in the morning but improved dramatically during the day, to enable everyone to enjoy either an open air or under cover lunch served to about 160 people, including Fawley Museum Society members.

The turn-out was very gratifying as quite a number of members and their wives had put a lot of work into the preparations whilst Gordon produced us a suitable headboard for the day.

The animals played their part well even down to the goslings and our Society is greatly indebted to you and Lady McAlpine for allowing us to have such an enjoyable celebration in our 20th year.

Yours sincerely,

E. W. Lewcock, Chairman.



CASTLE CLASS WORD SEARCH

Keith Brown

Hidden in the square are the names of 32 members of the G.W.R. Castle Class locomotives.

The remaining letters when rearranged spell out the name of an old well known G.W.R. station

Note: Names can be located horizontally, vertically, diagonally either backwards or forwards, letters can be used twice.

B	E	R	K	E	L	E	Y	Y	E	W	O	F	B
E	T	N	A	I	F	E	D	E	S	O	O	O	D
R	N	U	L	C	N	I	N	C	E	C	D	Y	E
R	E	A	D	I	N	G	U	S	Z	S	N	E	R
Y	T	I	O	C	R	K	S	I	I	E	B	L	O
P	B	U	L	I	T	H	K	W	V	R	A	D	M
O	T	Y	B	N	E	T	S	O	E	T	T	U	G
M	I	N	A	N	D	Y	R	P	D	A	H	D	I
E	N	O	O	D	E	E	K	C	I	W	R	A	W
R	T	T	I	N	L	E	M	R	O	T	S	E	R
O	E	P	N	C	H	I	R	K	E	F	R	O	C
Y	R	U	B	R	A	B	H	H	T	A	E	N	W
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STEAM OFF THE RAILS

BY TIM SPEECHLEY

For any members looking for something different in the way of steam, I can thoroughly recommend the Great Dorset Steam Fair which is held annually at Tarrant Hinton near Blandford Forum during the week following August Bank Holiday (27 - 31 August this year).

So why go all the way to Dorset just to attend a traction engine rally when there are several of these far closer to home, such as Knowl Hill, Stoke Row, Woodcote and Prestwood? One factor is that whereas in 1996 these rallies attracted between 22 and 43 engines, The Great Dorset had well over 200 and these form only the core of many different attractions for in addition there are very large numbers of preserved tractors and other agricultural machinery, vintage cars, commercial vehicles and motorcycles, fair organs (over 100 in '96), stationary engines, models of all sorts including many scale and larger live steam traction engines and all sorts of specialist vintage collections amongst which old blowlamps from around the world vintage lawnmowers! and milk bottles from the past are just three examples. Add to all this the large heavy horse display area and the huge working fairground with a mixture of old-time and bang up to the minute rides, an auto jumble area covering several acres plus dozens, no hundreds, of stalls selling all sorts of things - food, clothes, tools, junk, craft work - you name it, it's there, - you get some idea of what's on offer. It is as if a vast nomadic city had suddenly been set down in a Dorset farm.

Another significant difference between 'Dorset' and other rallies is that so many of the exhibits work. There is ploughing by steam, threshing by steam, wood sawing by steam and at the other end of the rally site, a good mile away, lots of the old tractors are at it too - raking, ploughing, driving machinery and so on. For exhibits not involved in these activities there is the opportunity to display themselves in one of the display rings. The one for (mostly) the steam exhibits is a long oval which incorporates quite a steep hill. This means that engines have to proceed into the ring, up the hill, round at the top and then go down the hill again before returning to their stabling point. There are generally two display sessions a day for steam, one in the late morning and one in the afternoon, lasting a couple of hours a time. The highlight is

always the heavy haulage when two, three or even four road locomotives will work together to drag some specially prepared heavy load on an extremely substantial trailer up the hill. Last year the load was an industrial diesel railway locomotive and the sight of the road locos struggling to get the load up the hill was too exciting to miss and the sound of the (South African?) chime whistle fitted to one of the combatants was just out of this world. But don't arrange to meet your friends at the real ale beer tent at one o'clock like I did as either a) you'll miss the spectacle or b) you'll be late!!!

Non steam exhibits generally display in a separate ring on the level but unless you go for more than one day I would opt for the steam action every time.

Another spectacle not to be missed is the line up of showman's engines in front of the fairground. You will never see so many examples of this type of engine anywhere else and by day they provide a glorious vista of polished brass and gleaming paintwork all hot and working with spinning flywheels, belt driven dynamos and the associated sounds and smells of steam. As night falls the sight is even more impressive with coloured lights ablaze everywhere, though the close proximity of the beer tent may have enhanced my personal view of the scene.

If you are thinking of going for a day trip I would strongly advise you to go early as in a single day you will only be able to scratch the surface of everything on offer. Aim to be there for opening time at 9 a.m. and plan not to leave until late - all those showman's engines are too good to miss after dark. Wear comfortable shoes as you can walk miles during the course of the day. Bear in mind that if it's been very dry it will be very dusty but if it has been wet it will be muddy so put those wellies in the boot of the car just in case.

The title GREAT Dorset Steam Fair may sound a bit presumptuous but the event is so huge these days that I believe the word 'great' does not do it justice. It is the biggest event of it's kind in Europe, if not the World and to put it in perspective the 1996 catalogue of entrants ran to 148 pages. It is a unique spectacle and in my opinion not to be missed. Do go!

WHAT'S ON IN OUR REGION

28-29 June

BANBURY STEAM AND VINTAGE VEHICLE RALLY

Over 50 traction engines and 200 commercial vehicles

Well signposted

5-6 July

CHILTERN TRACTION ENGINE CLUB RALLY

Prestwood Nr. Gt. Missenden

5-6 July

LEIGHTON BUZZARD RAILWAY

Heritage Weekend

12-13 July

WOODCOTE RALLY

Woodcote, Nr. Reading

26-27 July

BLUEBELL RAILWAY

Steam Fair and Vintage vehicle Rally

2-3 August

GREAT BUCKS STEAM WORKING

Worminghall, Nr. Aylesbury

9-10 August

KNOWL HILL STEAM & COUNTRY SHOW

Over loads of traction engines and commercial vehicles, a great day out.

Fireworks and music Saturday night.

27-31 August

THE GREAT DORSET STEAM FAIR

Over 200 traction engines and 300+ commercial vehicles

The biggest and the best

RIDING RAILWAY BY-WAYS IN EAST ANGLIA

In March I had to spend a few days in Suffolk, and found that I had a spare day. Naturally, my thoughts turned to what the local railway scene had to offer.

As far as I can remember, my only other visit to the Lowestoft area was in 1946 when I went on holiday with my parents to Corton, between Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. On that occasion, we travelled via Liverpool Street, Ipswich and the East Suffolk line to Beccles from where the train continued to Yarmouth over the now closed line through St. Olaves. We changed at Beccles on to the local service for Lowestoft. My memories are somewhat vague about the journey (after 51 years!), except that we were hauled by a B12 4-6-0, then numbered in the 85xx series, and from Beccles by a J15 0-6-0 which, no doubt run down by the reduced wartime maintenance, managed to exhibit a rusty hole in the SIDE of its chimney in addition to the more conventional one at its top!

Back to 1997. The station at Lowestoft is basically an old building but decently modernised, clean and presentable, and conveniently situated in the town centre. It is somewhat incongruous to find that the two platforms in use are long enough for 10 or 12 coach trains when the longest train normally in use is a two car 'Sprinter'.

I discovered that I could get a Day Ranger ticket which allowed me unlimited travel between Felixtowe - Ipswich - Lowestoft - Norwich - Great Yarmouth and Sheringham for £7.00, or to be more precise for £4.60 using my Senior Citizens railcard. Good value for money indeed.

I set off on the 09.06 from Lowestoft to Ipswich via the East Suffolk line. There were only 5 customers on the train as we left Lowestoft past quite extensive but empty sidings along the north side of the harbour. I concluded that the EWS freight revolution has not yet reached this part of East Anglia.

We turned south at Oulton Broad North Junction and stopped at Oulton Broad South station, then Beccles, Brampton, Halesworth (former junction for the 3' gauge Southwold Railway - closed in 1929), Darsham and Saxmunden from where the truncated remains of the former Aldeburgh branch is retained for nuclear flask traffic as far as Sizewell. We continued through Wickham Market, Melton and Woodbridge to Westerfield, before which the branch from Felixtowe trails in from the South-East, and then into Ipswich.

The East Suffolk line is served these days by examples of Class 153 single car diesels. These ride well and are fitted with comfortable high backed seats. My train (Question - Can you call a single car unit a train?) was No.153 314 which rejoiced in the name 'DELIA SMITH', complete with a strange dot matrix likeness of this well known East Anglian lady on each side. Despite her cooking abilities there was no refreshments trolley on board!

As I said earlier, there were only 5 customers on board at the beginning of the journey, but at most stations others joined, until after Woodbridge the Class 153, which was fitted with 60 seats, was nearly full. The recently publicised modification to allow bicycles to be carried was in evidence but without a bicycle in sight.

We were briefly held approaching Westerfield to allow a lengthy container train from Felixtowe docks, hauled by 'Mainline' liveried 56007 to precede us to Ipswich, where we arrived 2 minutes late at 10.30.

I then travelled Anglia Inter City on the 10.35 train from Ipswich to Norwich, pushed by 86230 'The Duke of Wellington'. The train was 2 minutes late at Ipswich but was on time arriving at Norwich. The trains used on the Liverpool Street - Norwich services are formed of rather drab Mk 2 stock with DVT's at the Norwich end. These DVT's were originally built for the Glasgow - Edinburgh push-pull

services. The train I travelled on was carrying very few passengers.

Not having visited Norwich for many years it was rather sad to see the once busy and extensive goods yards and carriage sidings adjacent to Thorpe station, trying to turn themselves into a sort of East Anglian rain forest. However, Crown Point depot, just outside the station, is still active with both diesel and electric traction to be seen.

I next intended to travel on the branch to Sheringham. This was something to particularly look forward to as it would be a new line for me. Unfortunately, by now it was raining steadily. I waited on platform 5B for the 11.49. This time came and went and at 12.01 the train arrived in the form of another Class 153, this time 153 306 'Edith Cavell'. About 6 passengers alighted, and 10 boarded only to be told that Anglia Railways regret that there would be a delay due to a fault with the train. The good news was that a fitter was due to arrive from Crown Point depot any minute. The problem turned out to be that the orange lamp on the side of the vehicle which is supposed to be 'on' when the plug doors are open, was not working and to operate a train in this condition on today's super safety conscious railway is strictly against regulations.

The fitter, clad in orange day-glo wastecoa, duly arrived with his tool box and proceeded to change the bulb. Word obviously got around, and soon about 10% of the staff of Anglia were forming an arc around the toiling fitter - a tribute to a master craftsman at work? Alas the fault turned out to be more deep seated and after about ½ an hour the train was declared a failure, and sadly in this day of the lean, mean, asset limited railway, no spare train was forthcoming. But all was not lost. The conductor asked us to follow him, which the whole train load of 10 did, like rats following the pied piper of Hamelin. He led us to the cab rank where 3 taxi's were waiting. The 10 were divided into those for North

Walsham, for Cromer and for Sheringham and went on their way. I opted out as track bashing by taxi just didn't seem to count.

Thinking about it later, I wondered if these taxis formed the very late return working from Sheringham, and what happened to any one wishing to travel from say North Walsham to Cromer. Answers on a postcard.....

With my plans thwarted, I instead travelled on the 12.35 to Yarmouth, and 13.11 return. Yarmouth used to have quite a maze of railways including 3 stations at Vauxhall, Beach and South Town, extensive facilities for freight, and especially fish trains, and was served in pre-grouping days by 3 Railways, the Great Eastern, Midland and Great Northern Joint, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Joint. Nowadays it just has an abbreviated terminus on the site of Vauxhall station, but to be fair it probably has more trains to and from Norwich (i.e. 19 trains each way Mon-Sat) than in G E days. In true Anglia style, the 'Sprinter' was named 'Henry Fogg' complete with dot-matrix pictures. Was he the inventor of the fog horn?

Back at Norwich, there was only time to observe that Anglia had borrowed (or stolen?) a Regional Railways class 158 to form the next train to Sheringham, and that the train from London was 60 minutes late due to signalling problems at Bethnel Green. The video screens were telling disgruntled customers awaiting the return working to London that RAILTRACK were responsible and were attending to the problem. The day of the buck passing railway is with us.

Needing to be back in Lowestoft by late afternoon, I caught the 15.01 'Sprinter' from Norwich, covering some more new track in the process. I enjoyed myself travelling on Anglia Railways, but I still haven't been by train to Sheringham!

ALAN MORRIS

TEN YEARS AGO

MARLOW DONKEY No 41 MARCH 1987

Roger Bowen

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 Bowen

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 overriding 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

JUNE 1997 - ALAN COSTELLO

This month starts with 4 pocket sized booklets that cost less than £10.

FREIGHTMASTER

MARK RAWLINSON

FREIGHTMASTER PUBLISHING

NO ISBN

With so many HST, DMU and EMU's about these days, interest in freight trains is increasing. To cater for this market, this book that comes out 3 times a year listing times of freight and T.P.O. trains. Part one takes a detailed look at over 40 places giving the booked traction with arrival/departure/passing times. Part two gives the routes of the trains by commodity, and part three lists the duties of each class of loco. Although it doesn't guarantee that the times are correct, as trains tend to be withdrawn or new ones started, it gives a good idea of the varied trains that can be seen.

THE RAIL ENTHUSIAST'S QUIZ BOOK

HOWARD JOHNSTON

ARCTURUS

ISBN 1 900032 16 3

About 1500 questions (and fortunately answers) on all railway subjects can be found here. There are 100 chapters containing 1 picture and 15 written questions. Some are relatively easy eg. What does a collector shoe do? to What is the length of the Forth Bridge? Chapters include questions on steam and modern traction classes, abbreviations, names, number and foreign railways to list a few. Plenty of questions to get you thinking. I suggest some good reference books would be useful!

NATIONAL RAILWAYS - A guide to the privatised railway

JOHN GLOVER

IAN ALLAN

ISBN 07110 2457 X

This looks at Britain's railways since 1993. After a short history of our railways, there is an abbreviated description of the Railways Act 1993. The jobs of the Franchising Director and Rail Regulator are described. Other chapters look at the Railtrack and the Freight Companies, with the main section listing the 25 Train Operating Companies giving their areas of operation. Rolling Stock companies, European Passenger Services and Union Railways are also described. As this book came out last year the new owners area not given but the booklet gives a good background to the privatisation scene.

LONDON UNDERGROUND STATIONS

DAVID LEBOFF

IAN ALLAN

ISBN 0 7110 2226 7

Each station is listed in alphabetical order with the lines served and the number of passengers carried in 1993. Layout, design and history of each station is given together with, if applicable, any notable features. At the end of the book, a list of closed stations on open and closed lines is given, together with stations owned by the various new Rail Companies.

TRAINS ANNUAL 1958

Ed C.J ALLEN

IAN ALLEN

Finally a look at another of my collection of Trains Annuals. I found this a bit disappointing. The 4 double page colour paintings in earlier issues have gone leaving a one page colour print. Contents include the North Western lines over the Pennines and a feature showing how some designs for locos by the 4 Companies would have looked if they had been built. Foreign railways feature as usual, the main article being about the Semmering Pass in Austria - at that time the only surviving steam route over the Alps - soon to be electrified. American railways appear again with a look at modern (1958) railway coaches in the U.S.A. Photo features cover Dainton Bank, ex LNER Pacifics and the Highland Railways.