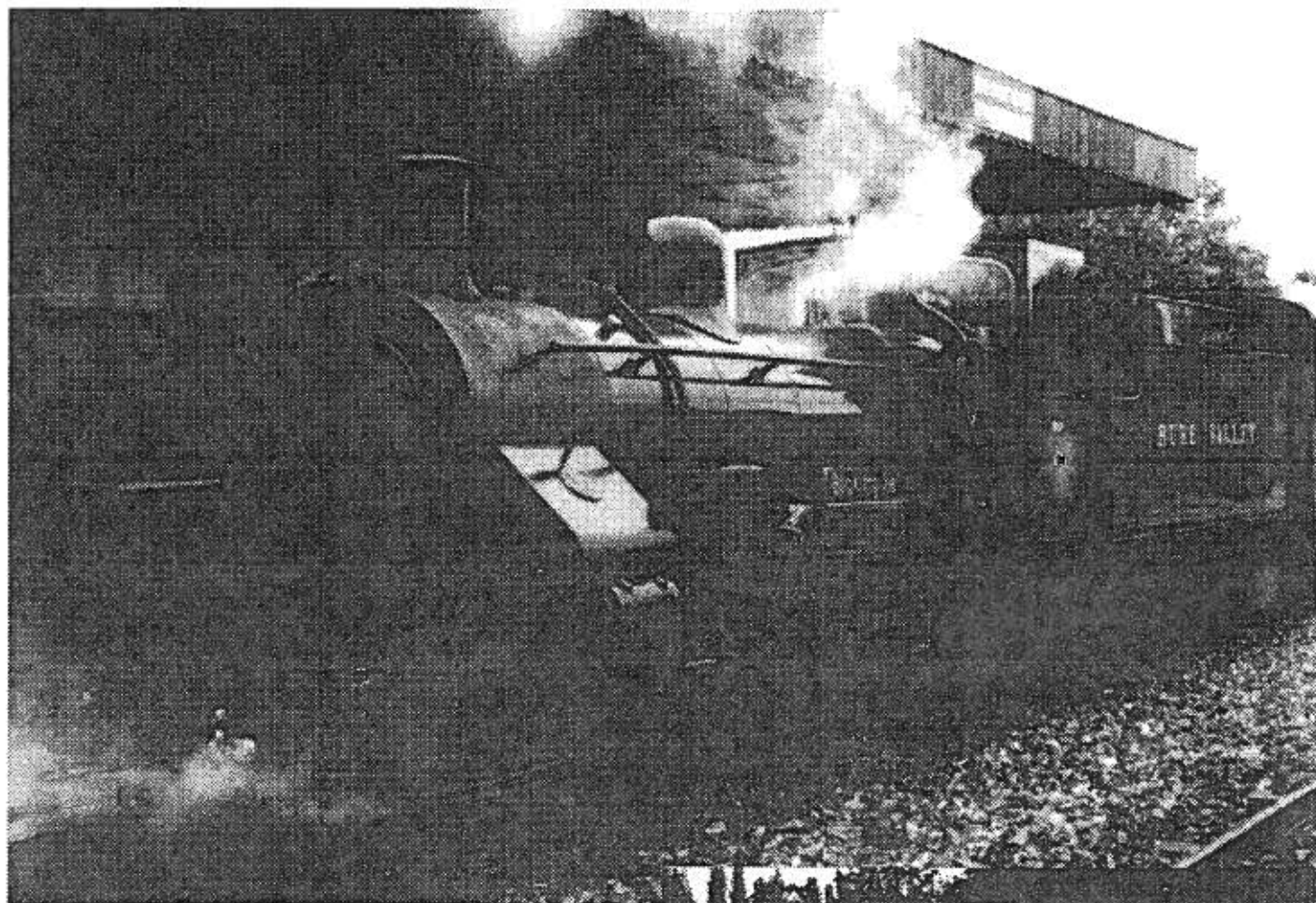


# THE MARLOW DONKEY



*Celebrating*  
**20 YEARS**  
of  
The Marlow & District  
Railway Society



Edition

**82**

October 1997



Contents

The Sun Chemical Fire  
South African Steam Holiday  
Book Reviews

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS: Main shot: *No 6 at Wroxham on the Bure Valley (Eddie Lewcock).*  
*Inset : The Mono Rail at Chester Zoo (Alan Costello).*

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

By the time this appears in print, our second big event to celebrate over 20 years of existence will be in our minds and a great deal of organisation and work has already been done by your committee along with David Shepherd's team to ensure success at Court Gardens. Our thanks must go to them and also to our President Sir William for his contribution to the evening. Hopefully our name will be more widely known in Marlow and that new numbers will join to supplement our numbers. Posters, press and radio have been utilised, along with direct approaches to a number of societies in the area to ensure maximum visibility for our Society.

It was a pity that the Amberley outing fell through due to lack of numbers, it may have been due to the extra visits to Arundel and Littlehampton being overlooked, they were clearly missed by one or two vocal critics on the matter. The situation however, is a repeat of one or two previous events when members were harangued by a previous chairman on the subject of non support of visits.

To get the balance right, your committee has decided to circulate a list of alternative venues for next year for a democratic choice on the subject.

A trip to Switzerland again this year only proved to show again how much better public transport is organized over there than here, bearing in mind that there are a large number of private companies running railways over there. Whilst financial subsidies explain some of the improvements there are a number of areas where the details have been thought through. For those older than the back pack generation, baggage, can for a small fee be sent from one station to another leaving you free to enjoy a day touring, unhampered by luggage. Buses actually go to the Railway Stations and connect timewise with the trains so that there is rarely more than a few minutes to wait on transfers.

Who has tried to read some of our television screens on bright platforms, not a patch on the clear lettering and display on most Swiss stations.

Fortunately lines like the Chilterns have set a very good standard but there is still far too much amateurism being show, like having to cut services, having got rid of too many staff or trying to get customers to play at Guards. (The legal implications of that one makes the mind boggle)!

Tilting trains are trains of the future here but are already in regular service in parts of Europe and I managed a ride in Pendolino between Bellinzona and Zurich, as a finale to our holiday.

The tilting was noticeable for the first few minutes but then fell into place for the rest of the run. Because of the tumble home in the upper part of the coach body, there was a feeling of being in one of the older aircraft cabins before the large bodied Airbus came along.

In Britain, one greatly encouraging sign is the resurgence of rolling stock orders and potential orders which should be a shot in the arm for industry, the 2,500 wagons for E W & S will be built in York works, recently closed by ADtranz. Tilting trains will be built in Derby and a large quantity of D.M.U's and E.M.U are likely to appear in the next few years. It seems a pity that E.M.U.'s destined for Ashford and Hastings lines must be dual voltage (according to Press reports) but maybe they will run day trips to Northern France in them!!

Time now to close, we have chosen a full programme for Autumn and Winter, which I hope everyone will enjoy. In the meantime - Bon Voyage.

*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 16 October	THE HEATHROW EXPRESS	Danny Martin
Thursday 20 November	2' GAUGE RAILWAYS	Fred Pugh
Thursday 18 December	Christmas Social	

### 1998

Thursday 15 January	MEMBERS PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENING	
Thursday 19 February	AGM	
Thursday 19 March	FFESTINIOG RAILWAY	Peter Jarvis
Thursday 16 April	THE BRITISH STEAM TRAM	Nick Kelly
Thursday 21 May	RAILWAY ARTEFACTS	Laurence Waters



## WHAT'S ON IN OUR REGION

(Extended region for the winter season)

### 18-19 October

GLOUCESTER WARICKSHIRE STEAM FAIR  
Toddington Station  
Tel: 01242 621405

### 19 October

TRANSPORT EXTRAVAGANZA  
Dean Forest Railway

### 31 October-1 November

PHOTOGRAPHERS EVENINGS  
Didcot Railway Centre

### 26 October

GIANTS OF STEAM  
Bluebell Railway

### 12 December from 4pm

HUNGERFORD VICTORIAN EXTRAVAGANZA  
Traction Engines and Victorian fun  
fair

## EDITORS NOTES

I would like to thank again all the regular contributors especially Keith Brown, Alan Costello and Eddie Lewcock. Regular readers will no doubt notice that 10 and 20 Years Ago is not in this issue. Roger Bowen has been unable to produce this due to pressure of work, however he will endeavour to produce a bumper version for the next edition of the Donkey.

No doubt you will also have noticed the demise of 'Railway Roundabout' this is partly due to pressure of work on myself, but mainly the cessation of articles from those on the 'inside' of the railway industry.

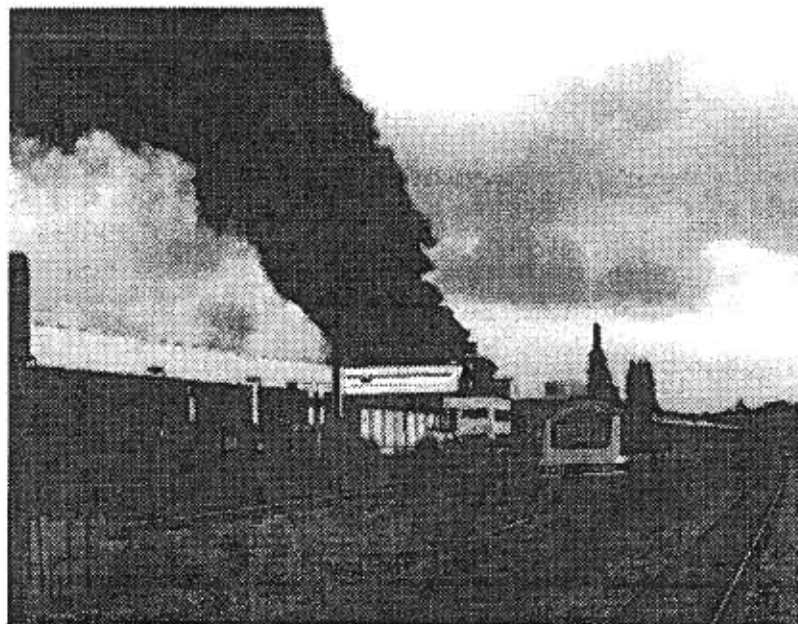
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# THE SUN CHEMICAL FIRE AT SLOUGH

by Tim Edmonds

One of the advantages of my place of work in Slough is that it is located opposite the railway station. Many employees have a grand panorama of the railway and, while my desk isn't in a prime spot, I can see enough of the station to notice if anything interesting passes by. So far I have only identified one other railway enthusiast on the staff: one of my group who, unfortunately for him does not have a view of the railway. The rest of our colleagues have now become used to my occasional calls to him when I spot something unusual passing by and sometimes chip in with their own contributions!



*While an up HST passes at reduced speed, the fire at Sun Chemical rages at the lineside. This was the view from platform 2 at Slough station shortly after 9:30 June 12 1997*

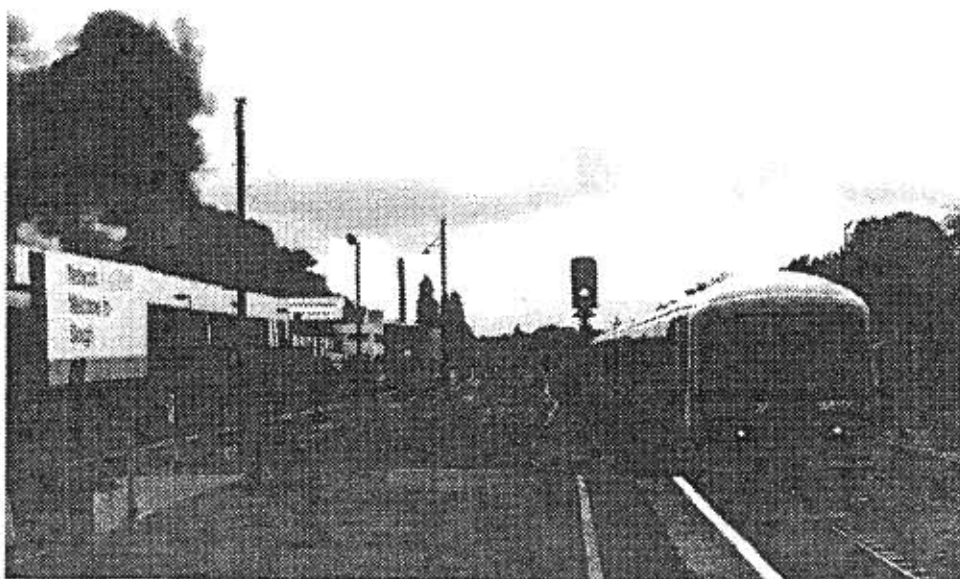
Langley using the fast lines only. At that time the fire was gradually spreading southwards into a building immediately adjoining the relief lines and there were sounds of explosions as tanks and drums of chemicals in and around the factory became engulfed. Occasionally there was a roar when a fireball blasted through the dark clouds of smoke as the fire fighters battled to control the inferno.

Many of the surrounding roads were closed and I learned later that several industrial and residential areas had been evacuated, so it seemed incredible that any trains were allowed past the fire at all. At reduced speed they were fanning the flames and the danger of an explosion onto the line was obvious even from a distance. At about 10.00am common sense prevailed, the 06.46 from Exeter was stopped at Slough and all rail traffic was suspended over the section to Langley./

I returned to work but managed an occasional wander over to the north side of the office to see what was happening. It was late morning before the blaze was under control and not until mid-day that the black smoke began to die down and disperse. Rail traffic over the fast lines resumed shortly afterwards but the relief lines were not open until the next day.

The chance of witnessing an incident such as this is rare, and I count myself lucky to have been ready and able to photograph it. Nevertheless it was a worrying situation and was frighteningly close to being a major disaster, and I am full of admiration for the bravery and the dedication of the emergency services who had the job of dealing with it.

*The view from the London end of platform 3, Slough station at about 9:40. A class 156 heads for Paddington with the fire at Sun Chemical raging at the lineside. Services were suspended at 10:00 12 June 1997.*



# A SOUTH AFRICAN STEAM HOLIDAY

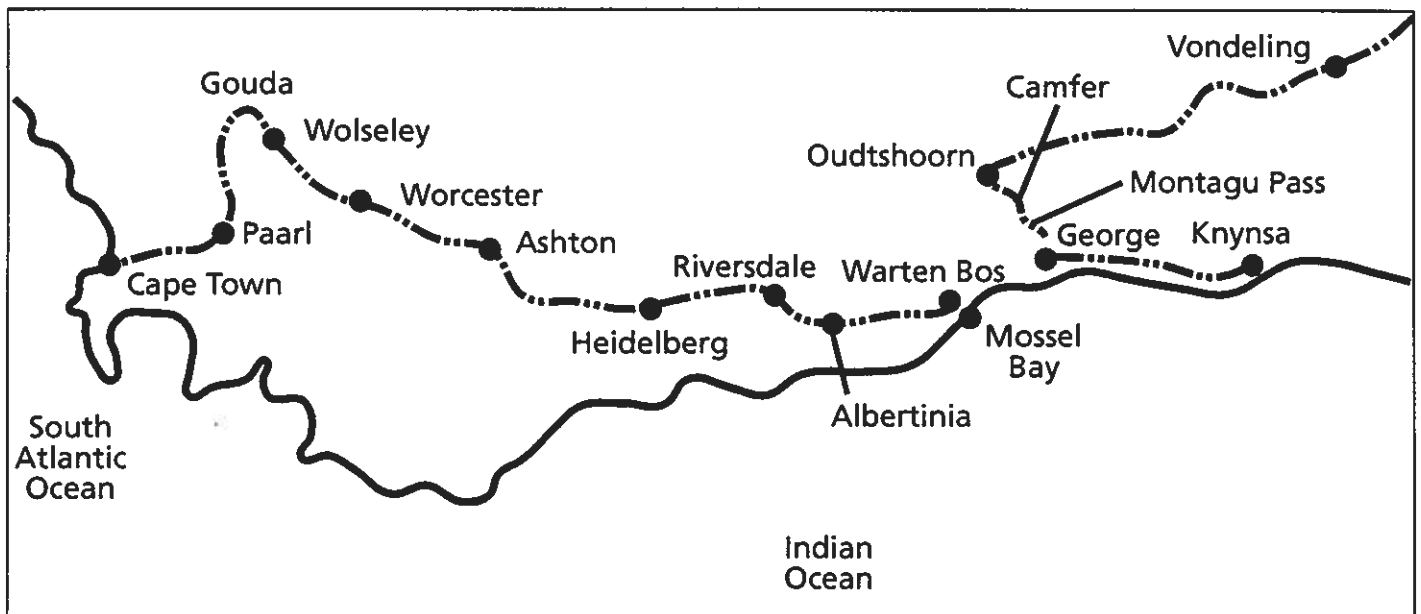
Keith Brown

Having spent a couple of weeks or so last October thumbing through holiday brochures my wife suddenly thrust a tour package in front of me that I could not resist. Six days on a train in South Africa and flying up to Victoria Falls for a further week. I had to read the tour itinerary a few times to fully appreciate that my wife had agreed to sleep and eat on a train for six days. However, I did read on to see that the selected hotel at Victoria Falls was of a high class.

Prior to our trip I had researched what steam preservation consisted of in the Southern & Western Cape areas of South Africa and discovered that in 1960 the Railway Society of Southern Africa was founded. The Railway Preservations Centre at Krugersdorp was established in 1982. However it is just on the Reef that preservation is taking place. Since 1982 a number of working steam railways have opened, mostly under the auspices of the RSSA. In Cape Town the RSSA owns several locomotives and operate special trains over an industrial branch line. The Western Cape collection of locomotives is based at Dal Josafat loco depot near Paarl when volunteer workers work side by side with Museum employees. Classes 15A, 15CA, 15F, 16D, 16DA, 19D,

in Cape Town where on number one platform our home for the next six days was awaiting. Our luggage was passed through open carriage windows by the porters who directs us to our respective compartments. Initially this looked rather small but once we had unpacked and stowed the contents of our cases away in the overhead racks we settled down and found that there was sufficient room to move about in. The day time seating converted to beds for the night and each bed was made up by the stewards while we ate in the dining car.

I made my way up to the country end just in time to see our first locomotive backing down on to our train. This was an oil-fired Class 25NC numbered 3417 and carried the name Caroline. She was built in 1952 by Henschel & Sohn and was of 4-8-4 wheel arrangement. Her weight of 117 tons looked mighty but this weight did not include her tender which besides holding 18 tons of fuel also had a water capacity of 10500 gallons making a further 105 tons to haul. Departure was on time at 15.30 local time and Caroline burst in to life hauling her 490 ton train of twelve coaches which included a baggage can behind the loco and bringing up the rear was a refrigerator truck which acted as a deep freeze and a fridge.



25NC, and GF Garratt are stationed there. The first modern 'steam safari' was the Union Limited operated by the RSSA in 1977 to mark the end of the Union Castle mailship service from South Africa to the United Kingdom. The Transnet Museum (now the Transnet Heritage Foundation) who now operate The Union Limited which my wife and I travelled on became actively involved in long distance tours in 1988 so we were confident from the outset that early teething problems had at least been resolved.

The day of our departure, February 22nd 1997, duly arrived and take off from terminal three at Heathrow was at 18.45 on Air Namibia's one and only Boeing 747 which after picking up at Frankfurt gave us a full passenger load to Namibia's capital Windhoek. Here the 747 was left and a 737 took us on the last leg to Cape Town. Quickly a coach conveyed us the short distance to the main station

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Caroline had no trouble at all in keeping time through the north-eastern suburbs of Cape Town which were rather depressing. The shanty townships looked more like a collection of garden sheds but as we travelled onwards the local Metro trains were left behind and the mountain range which stayed with us for the next four hours came into view. We said goodbye to Caroline at Dal Josafat and watched her depart for a well earned rest. Two preserved green Bo-Bo electrics for the overnight leg to George. Laying in our beds around midnight with the windows open and the moon shining on the mountain range and listening to the throb of the two diesels working hard up front was bliss. At 06.00 I was woken by the steward with tea and biscuits and still the diesels were burbling away up front. Breakfast was served around 7am in the beautifully restored dining car "Protea" built in 1933 and used during the 1946 Royal Tour of

South Africa. Our train pulled in to George around 9am and the train disgorged its passengers numbering 53 in to this pleasant town which is also a considerably important junction. It boasts a steam shed and menu sidings as it is the focal point for the timber traffic in the area. An elderly 0-8-0 class S2 with a twelve wheeled tender tolled in with yet another load of logs, uncoupled and retired to shed.

Prior to our departure on the next stage of our tour a steam special with many American tourists went down the line to Kynsna behind a very smart Class 19D built after the war in 1948. This route is single tracked with passing places. Kynsna is approached over a series of low bridges to this lagoon where it is said that over 20 species of fish are to be found. The main products of Kynsna are oysters and yellowwood furniture the latter from the ample supplies in the area. The Thessens company on the lagoon is world renowned for producing ocean going and racing yachts. This resort is thriving and the railway is spending large sums of money relaying track and has recently installed a new turntable. We had an evening cruise on the lagoon with a splendid dinner on board. Overnight on the train and next morning while having breakfast the two locos were readied and turned for the long up hill slog back to George. The highlight of the return to George was the traversing of Kaaimans River bridge - possibly one of the most photographed locations in the world. Our train reversed a half a mile or so then stormed back over the bridge to be captured on video film for posterity. Before arrival at George the two locos had to tackle three more stiff climbs the most difficult that from Victoria Bay in to the junction. Speed on the last section was not more than 12 mph but make it they did.

The next stage from George to Oudtshoorn meant climbing through the Montagu Pass and for this the leading Class 19D was replaced with Jenny. Jenny was built by Beyer Peacock in 1957 and is a GMAM 4-8-2 + 2-8-4 and weighs in at 195 ton. Coupled behind it is an auxiliary tank containing 6500 gallons of water. With the GMAM coupled behind the Class 19D the train eased out on to 21 mile section from George to the summit appropriately named Topping. The line climbs 16934 on gradients initially at 1 in 100 through indigenous forests then steepening to 1 in 80 and finally after a huge horseshoe curve out of the forests on to the ruling grade of 1 in 3 compensated, with successive views of George far below. Two vertical exhausts crashed off the rock faces as the locomotives reached for the clouds. A stop is made at Power too enable the crew to clean the fire for even more hard climbing to follow. High up as we were the rails were wet as mist clung to the mountains and the wheelslip from both engines as they heaved the train in to motion once more was very exciting. Even more dramatic though was the opportunity given to the camera brigade to film another run past high up on the Quteniqua mountains. The train was backed in to a short tunnel and the restart was ear shattering. Both locos lost their grip at first but quick correction allowed them to burst out of the tunnel with swirling black smoke and sparks flying high in to the sky. The noise, smell of steam and the truly magnificent observation of power was just what

made the holiday so memorable. The extremity of our tour eastwards was soon upon us at Oudtshoorn - famous for the ostrich. It used to be their feathers that they were bred for but nowadays it is their cholesterol free meat.

Next day it was back to George and onwards to Mossel Bay, The locos main task back to George was to keep the long heavy train in check. It is only when looking back up the mountain on our descent does one realise how steep our climb had been. The Montagu pass was originally blasted through the mountain to link Cape Town with Port Elizabeth. The train journey at its fastest was thirty hours but now ships can complete the journey in twenty two hours. Back at George our two trusty steeds retired to shed to be replaced by another two Class 19D loco for the journey down to the coastal resort of Mossel Bay. This is where Bartholomew Dias first set foot onto the African soil. Allowing our party a couple of hours to explore the area we then travelled a mile or so down the line where the sandy beach and the railway meet. Many of our party bathed in the clear blue waters whilst some watched the two locos retire to Voorbaai depot. Two preserved class 32 diesels backed on and I was not surprised to note that they were the same pair that had headed our train during our first night. What did surprise me was that as soon as they had coupled up they started to move the train forward with many of our party in the sea and others watching from the trackside. After about three hundred yards they stopped to our relief. The problem for this move was because the kitchen car was on a camber and all the cooking oil had drained to one corner of the frier and the chef was concerned that the evening meal would be spoilt.

These two diesels soon opened out and as we ate another excellent dinner we drew into Hartenbos where the diesels ran round the train to face Worcester and the return overnight journey to this centre of the South African fruit growing region. The giant headlight on the leading diesel picked out the twisty route back and by first light we were exchanging them for the same two preserved electrics for the short run to Das Josafat. Here presentation s on behalf of the tourists were made to the train crew for all their efforts. Nothing was too much trouble for them. The electric locos were replaced for the last leg of the rout by yet another preserved Class 25NC number 3322 - the second oil-burner used on the trip. On leaving Das Josafat the train passed slowly by the depot. I estimate a dozen or so locos were sunning themselves in their semi retirement. As Cape Town drew near our train was passed by the 'Blue Train' on a special costing far more I expect than we paid. It was rather a sad occasion as we drew in to Cape Town at the end of a most memorable journey but at least my wife and I had the Victoria Falls to look forward to.

I had not expected to see steam in Zimbabwe but on my first visit to Victoria Falls station a giant Garratt was at the head of yet another tourist train. This appeared to be a 4-6-4 + 4-6-4 but before I could inspect it thoroughly it moved off with its train to the carriage sidings.

Early one morning I heard more sounds of steam whistles and on investigation I found a very faded green Zambian



Class 10 of 1922 vintage with two ancient carriages. This was in fact 'The Victoria Falls Safari Express'./ Express is may not be but impressive it certainly was. The coaches were a 1900 restored first class coach and a dining car of similar vintage. I filmed it leaving on its daily journey over the border to Livingstone and yes the trip also took in a tour of the Zambian Railway museum. The attendants on the train were in period dress of all white with pith helmet and burgundy sash. Very smart indeed. We sampled this delight two days later. The attendants offered various drinks as we settled in our plush seats and canapes were served with more drinks on both outward and return journeys. This is when we both tasted ostrich for the first time. The train passed over the Victoria Falls bridge where bunji jumpers leapt from its side pulling up only inches from the raging waters of the Zambezi river which had just fallen hundreds of feet. Who said rail enthusiasts were crazy.

Zambia is the complete opposite to wealthy Zimbabwe. The train passed the now closed loco depot with massive coal bunkers and rows of water columns. The vast marshalling yards were under feet of grass and many derailed wagons were strewn about. Only a couple of lines appeared to be used but from these may enormous freight trains pass through on their way from the coastal ports of Mozambique through Bulawayo, Livingstone and onwards northwards to Lusaka and beyond. The daily

connection from Victoria Falls and the south is a single coach attached to the rear of a southbound freight which is collected later in the day by a northbound working. Despite the poverty around, the railway museum is a mecca for anybody wishing to study what the Rhodesian Railways system was all about. The curator of the museum has performed miracles with hardly any money to spend. There are displays of everything imaginable from uniforms through the ages to ticket machines and old time tables. Menu cards, loco plates, signals and cutlery all are there for the student of RR. Outside the museum there are examples of many differing types from the Class 7 right up to the giant Garratts. If money was available the large proportion of these could be put in to working order. Many are in a far better condition than those rescued from Barry which are giving us all so much pleasure today. Most have not been robbed of vital parts and the dry weather and sun has prevented their metals from deterioration.

On leaving Victoria Falls for the flight back to Windhoek our party of eight were treated to a flight in a Douglas DC-6B. This particular plane was the last but one and was originally purchased by the Yugoslav airline JAT. They sold it to the Yugoslav Air Force who in turn passed it on to Marshall Tito for his personal VIP transport. This truly was the climax of an unforgettable holiday.



## WATCHING THE TRAINS GO BY

Gordon Rippington

Having earned a few extra Brownie points, management allowed me out to play, destination, the Great Central Railways' Summer Gala, held during the week of June 7th to 15th with an intensive service, including freight movements, it was an opportunity not to be missed despite the gloomy weather forecast for the Saturday.

On arrival at the line, an overbridge near Woodthorpe afforded good views in either direction. Being a damp overcast day the plume of smoke visible over Loughborough, heralded a departure within minutes Class 4 75029 in green livery running tender first came in to view, hauling a rake of coaches in three liveries, blood & custard, maroon and blue/grey.

From the opposite direction came A2 60532 Blue Peter, again tender first trailing an all blood & custard rake of coaches, much more appealing to the eye.

Next stop Kinchley Lane, roughly mid-way between Quorn & Woodhouse and Swithland Sidings, here the double track gives an authentic look of the Main Line. In the direction of Quorn and Woodhouse a chime whistle sounds, in the still air the galloping exhaust beat with more haunting sounds from the chime whistle (from a Brit me thinks), 9F 92212 in work stained black livery, shuffles past with four coaches plus the Royal Mail TPO set, an unlikely but pleasing combination. Moments later from the Swithland direction, Black Five 45231 clanked past with a mixed collection of loose coupled wagons and vans. With the brakes being applied comes that lost but not forgotten sound of ringing steel as the buffer heads meet, with a wave of the flag from the Guard, a

crow of a Midland hooter, the train is then propelled back to Swithland.

Further passenger workings with 75029 & 60532, were followed by the now famous windcutter rake of wagons, this time double headed by 8F 48305 & 5MT 45231, amidst much smoke and steam, from the safety valves, the train trundled past to that rhythmic sound that only short wheel base wagons make.

Next to pass was the recently restored BI 1264 in NE green livery according to locals in the know, it had had a few teething problems during the week, only to be expected after 30 years asleep.

The next view point chosen, was the causeway around Swithland Reservoir, which allows a distant view of the train movements. The first at this location was a simultaneous event involving the 9F on a Loughborough bound passenger, also the double-headed combination on the windcutter. This was staged for those who had paid the £2.50, to witness trains passing/shunting in and around the Swithland sidings. To gain access to this area a coach was provided, to shuttle patrons to and fro from Rothley, suitably adorned with Destination Blind, proclaiming "On Hire to British Rail", a nice period touch.

Having arrived at Rothley Station with moments to spare before the 9F appeared heading towards Leicester North, the BI drew in with a well filled train. Standing at track level the sheer size of the ten coupled 9F was quite overwhelming. Although principally a freight locomotive, it is a very graceful design, in the fifties I well recall one



of these mahines hurtling through Little Chalfont Station the South Yorkshireman bound for Marylebone, before a ban was imposed on such duties. As Rothley is the passing point between sections the next arrivals would see two smoke box first with 75029 & 60532, the class 4 arrived first, and drew up well past the overbridge in the open. Standing on the embankment high above the simmering Class 4, this location offers one loco passing

another both in green livery and B.R numbers. With a muffled whistle Blue Peter glides past to complete this period scene, within moments 75029 receives the right of way, the double chimney erupts with 'clag' as it propells its train towards Loughborough. With the light now fading fast photography is almost impossible however a most enjoyable day was had 'Watching the Trains go by.'

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## THAMES VALLEY TO SEVERN VALLEY

SATURDAY 17TH MAY 1997

An early start to High Wycombe Station was made by Ernie Dove and myself, to be greeted by a Great Western 125 in G.W. livery, we were told its destination was somewhere in Wales.

On time our train departed to Snow Hill but we lost some five or so minutes approaching Hatton. To me just looking out of a train window in this old country of ours gives me so much pleasure. Indeed I was lucky enough to see a fox running away with that classic pose, body going forward and head turned back to look at us. How people can go hunting to kill animals, I do not understand.

We were over five minutes late arriving at Birmingham Snow Hill Station resulting in us missing our intended train. After a wait of twenty minutes we departed for Stourbridge Junction, the train was clean and fast (Regional Railways). On arrival at Stourbridge Junction, a wait of fifteen minutes, then "Disaster", two burly men accosted me, saying "You can write the report of the days trip as you have never done it before." (Thank you Gordon and Tim).

To me Stourbridge Junction has two oddities, one the branch line to Stourbridge which is three quarters of a mile long, the shortest in England I am told, also the station clock which is in the middle of the car park (different). On to Kidderminster to find it was heavy horse day, all the stations down the line had these magnificent creatures on show.

We were about ten minutes late at Kidderminster, so we missed the first train off Kidderminster, but it gave us time to look around at the station and museum. In the museum I must confess to being confused to the size of two large sack-barrows they must have been for a giant (any ideas lads). Before departure I went to snap a shot of the engine 5764, as we all do, when a member of MDRC made a remark to me "Is this it! Is that little thing going to pull us with six coaches on?" I knew better, I have had lots of rides on 5700 class with eleven or twelve on, yes those Western tanks had lots of guts.

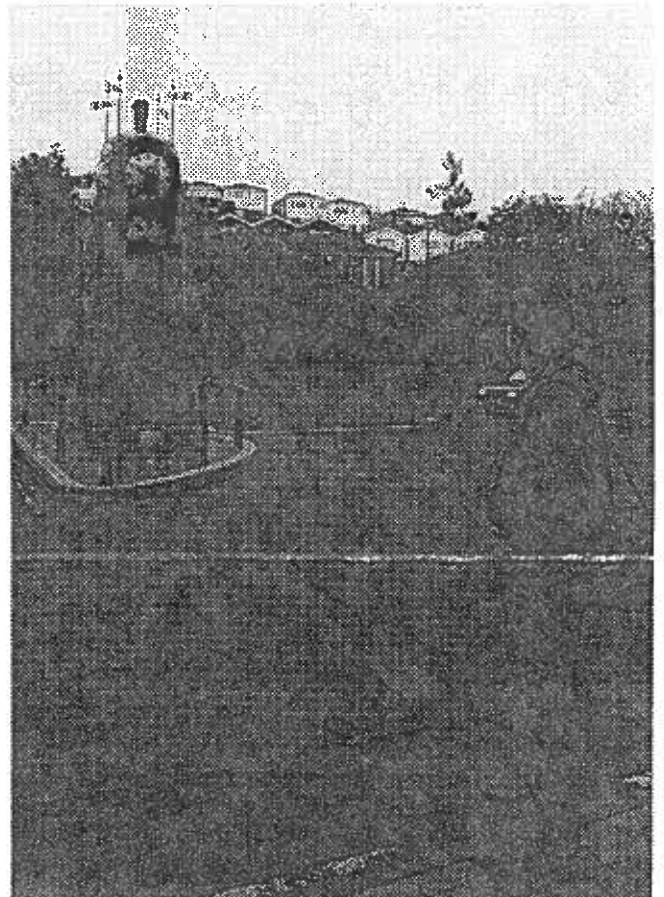
The ride on the Severn Valley in early summer is splendid, plus those two picture postcard stations of Arley and Highley, and I also think that by being up from the river and looking down into the valley adds to the view. We, Ernie Dove, Terry Dearing and myself decided to go to Bridgnorth, an interesting little market town, with two railway systems, a church designed by Thomas Telford, a large Saturday market and a cinema called "The Majestic" you can just see Peter Sellers and Margaret Rutherford coming out as in the film "Smallest Show on Earth" (1957), plus steam trains, do you remember the film?

It being lunchtime we looked for a place of refreshment and so as I am now a writer we chose "The Shakespeare" or was it because it had cheap meals for mature people, sorry Ernie. We had a good meal and beer (Hancocks). Refreshed and merry we returned to Bridgnorth Station for return to Kidderminster. This time we had engine 2968, a nice engine if not G.W.R. The weather on the day was very misty up to the midlands, but on the Severn Valley Railway it was overcast and humid.

A good day was had by all and a big thank you to all concerned. So back from the Severn Valley to the Thames Valley.

Tony Caton - 16.06.97

*John Tuck Donkey Editor 'admiring' the new station clock at Stourbridge Junction. Now here's a brave editor. Who would like to write a caption for this one?*



# HOLIDAY 1997

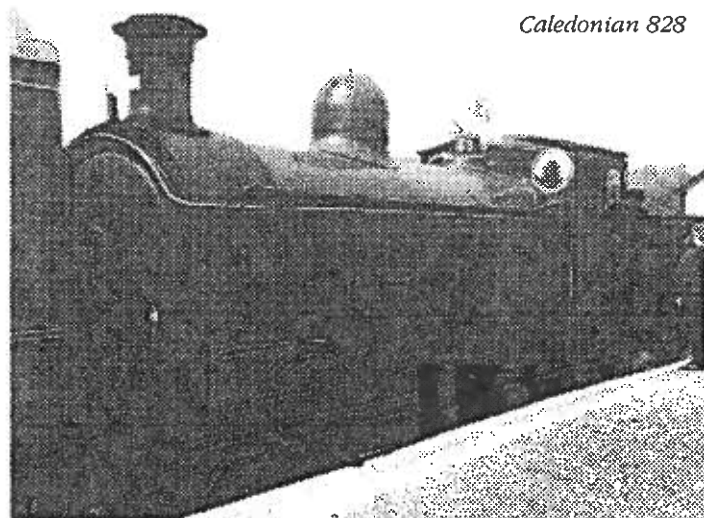
## Part 1

by Alan Costello

In February amongst coach tours advertised in the local press was one for a six day Highland Railways trip. We went ahead a booked 2 places, and 7o'clock on a Thursday morning in April found us outside the Wycombe Chiltern Centre. True to railway tradition the coach arrived 20 minutes late having started at Watford. After an 11 hour ride, we reached our hotel in Newtonmore (near Aviemore) in the Spey Valley.

The next day, in glorious weather, we were taken to Inverness to joint the Sprinter to Kyle of Lochalsh. We found our reserved seats and sat back and enjoyed the run to the West coast. After a meal break, we rejoined the coach and travelled back to Inverness along the shore of Loch Ness.

On the Saturday, the coach took us to Mallaig stopping at the Parachute Regiment and Bonnie Prince Charlie's monuments on the way, The ticket office was closed, but a note had been left telling us our reserved seats could be found on the train. We joined another Sprinter and travelled over the scenic line to Fort William.



*Caledonian 828*

With the weather remaining fine, the next morning we went to Aviemore and then to the Cairngorm Chairlift which took us up to around 3600 feet so that we could see what snow looks like. The afternoon was spent taking a return trip on the preserved railway from Aviemore to Boat of Garten. Haulage was by the Caledonian 0-6-0 number 828 in blue livery. Most of their engines were locked away in the shed although the two diesels D5305 and D5396 were at Boat of Garten together with a L.M.S Class 5 (No. 45000) hiding under a tarpaulin.

Plans to extend the line are in hand and track has been laid beyond Boat of Garten. The souvenir shop at Aviemore was a bit cramped and became rather overcrowded after the arrival of a train especially as it also included the ticket office.

For a change from railways, the penultimate day started with a tour of the local area finishing up at the

Glenfiddich Distillery. There, a guide showed us around the plant finishing up in the shop where free samples of the local product were handed out. Even on this day there was a bit of railway interest. The distillery was next to the closed Keith to Dufftown branch, and at the back of the buildings could be seen the preserved Derby/Leyland 140 railbut set, owned by a local group hoping to reopen the line, Lunch was taken in Dufftown where we saw the only rain for the week. We then returned to the hotel where we had a free afternoon.

12 hours were spend on the coach on the return next day, travelling back with what appeared to be a tour of Watford before reaching the set down point there and then onto Wycombe.

Overall, the content of the trip was excellent but it needs fine weather to make it a success. We would have liked a more comfortable coach and a driver who knew the local area.

# HOLIDAY 1997

## Part 2

by Alan Costello

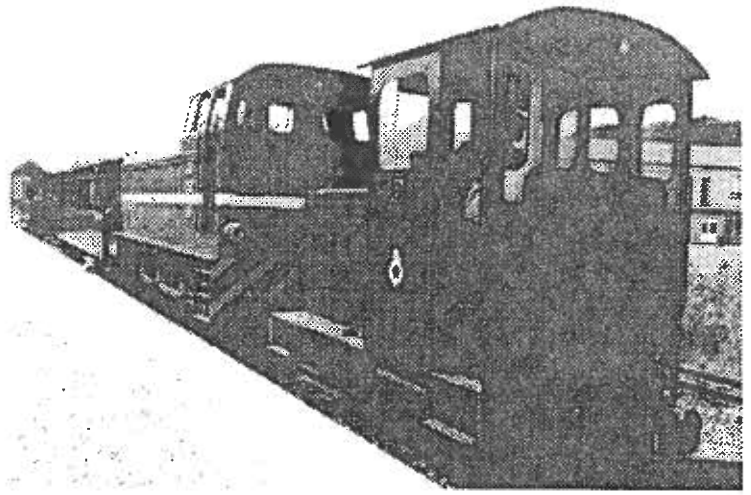
In June, we returned to the bungalow in North Wales where we stayed last year.

On the Sunday we visited Chester Zoo. It is reputed to be the largest in the UK. To help people to get round the zoo, a monorail has been built. It is oval in shape and is about 1 mile in length with two stations. 3 trains were in use, each consisting of 4 coaches accommodating 6 people in each, and appears to be automatic. Passengers can only travel to the next station. After the coaches are cleared, the barriers come down and then the coach doors on the other side open to let intending passengers get on. On the day of our visit the zoo was not too



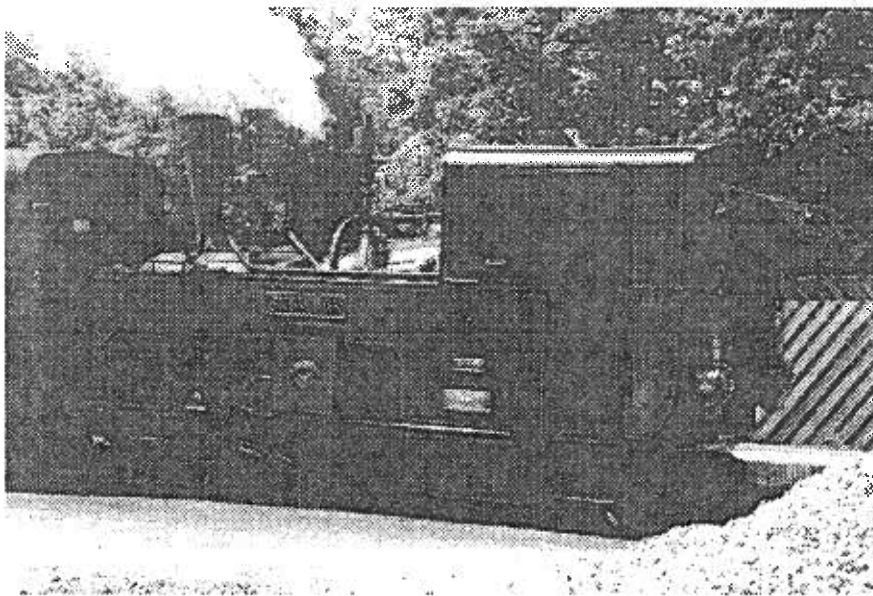
crowded, but I would think queues could be quite long on fine days.

The Welsh Highland Railway was advertising a Polish diesel week so after visiting the Ffestiniog Dam and Power station we went on to Portmadog. We got to the station just in time to see the small diesel 0-4-0 Glasfyn taking the large blue 2 foot gauge, Rumanian built diesel off the train. The battery had failed and the engine wouldn't start. (To make things clear, the diesel together with 2 others were built in Rumania last year but operated on Polish railways). So it was left to Glasfyn to haul the train as it did last year. A look round the shed found the same engines as last year, but the South African NG15 had been moved in preparation for restoration. It is hoped to have it back in working order in the next 18-24 months.



*Glasfyn removing Eryri off the train 16 June 1997*

With what looked, and turned out to be the last dry day of the week we went to Llanberis to try and get a steam trip up Snowdon this time. The 3 diesels and the D.M.U were in use together with 3 steam engines - the other 2 were in pieces around the yard. I was told normally the first 3 trains are diesel but the 1000 was restored for steam because it was



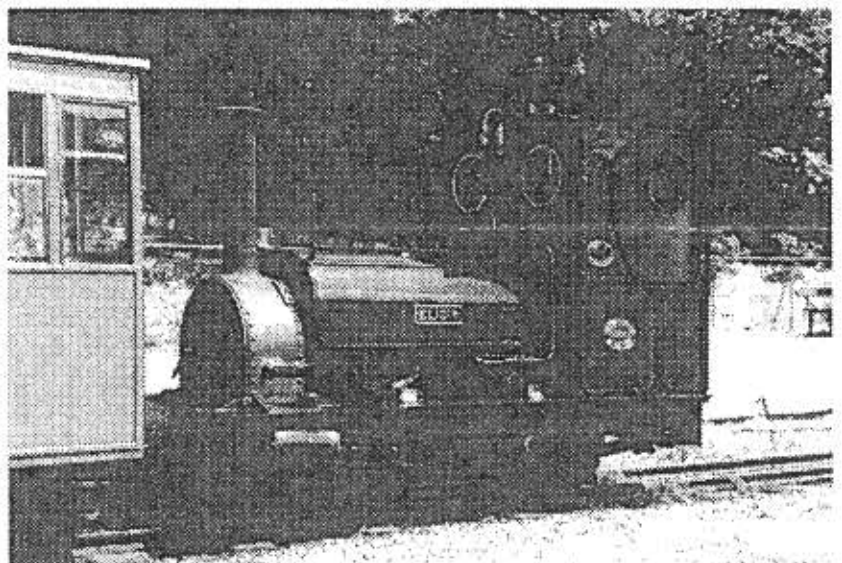
*Snowdon arrives at Llanberis station 17 June 1997*

required for the 13:00 run. So we joined the train and were propelled up the mountain by number 6 Padarn. The summit was clear and we had very good views. After another steam engine (number 4 Snowdon) arrived with a school party we returned downhill passing trains at all the passing points. We got off the train at 12:30 and just as the last tickets for the 17:30 (the last train of the day) were being sold.

A few minutes drive from the terminus is the Padarn Country Park where the terminus of the Llanberis Lake Railway can be found. This is a 2 mile 1' 11 1/2" gauge line running along the side of the lake. The train runs to Penyllyn where the engine runs round and returns stopping halfway at Cei Llydan, which has a childrens playground and picnic area. The

steam locos on the line used to work in the Dinorwic slate quarry. Our engine was a Hunslet 0-4-0ST ELIDRIR built in 1889 and look resplendent in red livery.

Due to the weather deteriorating over the rest of the week, only one more visit to a railway was made - Llangollen Steam Railway. On the day we went it should have been renamed the Llangollen Diesel Railway. On our arrival we saw that part of the track in Platform 1 was missing and there was an engineers train in Platform 2 with an industrial diesel at its head. Apparently, the day before there was a derailment, and it was decided to replace the track as soon as possible. Because of the shortage of platform space a 2 car Class 104 set in original B.R. green livery was operating the service. We managed to get in the front seats and had a driver's view of the line to Carrog. To do the same on the return it would cost £1.50 extra as the equivalent seats in the other coach were first class.



*Elidir at Gilfach Ddu station 17 June 1997*

# THE DAY OUR TRAIN CAME APART

The Bure Valley railway set in Norfolk countryside provides an attractive 9 mile ride through rolling countryside and one stretch runs alongside the River Bure itself. The track and a public footpath runs along the old LNER line from Wroxham to Aylsham.

During early and late seasons, traffic on Saturday change over days whilst holiday makers are on the move, is rather thin and the railway enthusiasts make arrangements on certain days to rent the line out to Groups of enthusiasts who then take turns to drive the loco.

I was lucky enough to be invited to join one group on a Saturday in June and arrived at Aylsham complete with my Fawley uniform just after 8 am to find a number of Gauge One Association members already there. A numbered ticket and roster for driving the double headed train showed that I was driving on the last leg of the first outward run in No 6 Loco and on the last leg of the 4th run, back into Aylsham on No2.

No 6. Blickling Hall is a modern 1/2 scale copy of the Indian ZB Narrow Gauge Tender Engine. To date there are two locos on the line, No7 being the second. A third, tank engine version is under construction and the claim is made that they are the most powerful 15 Gauge locos in Britain.

No 2 -Sandy River is an American style 2 - 6 - 2, somewhat older and built at Fairbourne. She will soon be transferred to an East Coast Miniature Railway..

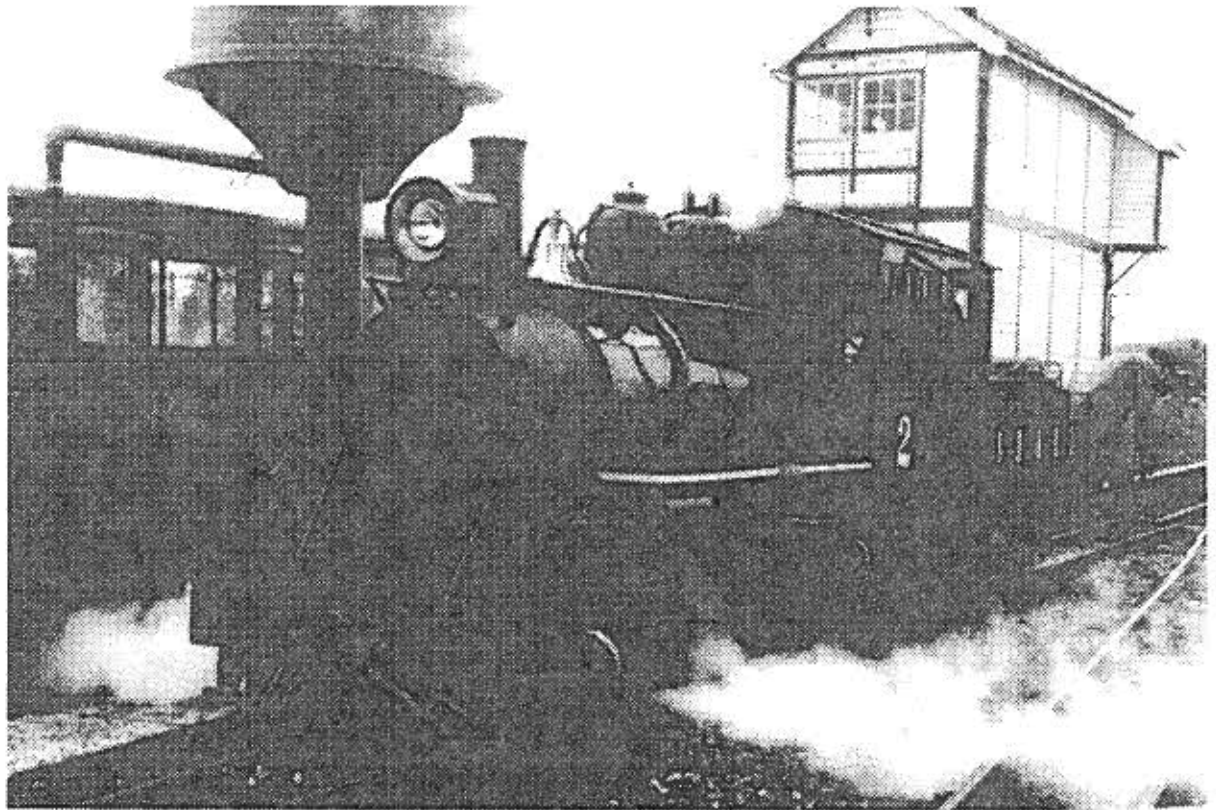
Automatic Air Braking is used on the line and No2 was our pilot engine for the day . I noted with interest that it was fitted with a Westinghouse type W self lapping brake valve which means that you can move the handle to the required braking position and leave it there. On older brake valves they merely open and close a hole in the brake pipe and you have to fan the handle back and forth, demonstration of this can be clearly seen on the Isle of Man Electric Lines.

A large investment was made in the Bure Valley line which has had its share of ups and downs. All seem agreed that the present management has business acumen and items like track maintenance are under control. The

coaching stock is excellent and well fitted out.

Both locos were in steam on our arrival and a double headed train was assembled with Sandy River No 2 as pilot engine. On shed also was Wroxham Broad No 1, a 2 - 6 - 4 tank which has the distinction of being converted from the steam outline diesel operated on the Fairbourne to a steam loco with plenty of tank capacity. Braking is by Automatic Air and the steam pump on No2 was kept hard at it all times as the air pipe joints on that machine were leaky. A belt driven compressor and a generator were discretely mounted inside the tender of No6 with access by 2 rear doors.

With two engines on, speed soon got up to the maximum permitted for Sandy River whose small wheels kept us from going much over 12 mph. The ZB's can run appreciably faster when required. The countryside in early summer following torrential rains the day before,



looked attractive clean and fresh on this pleasant summer day.

There were two changes of drivers before my turn and some knowledge of steam locomotive driving was very helpful as there is little time for comment when in the cab which is surprisingly spacious, seating two people comfortably side by side. My first job was to get the injector running with careful adjustment of the water valve after opening the steam valve one turn. The familiar singing noise of an injector on form soon came up.

Starting in full gear with the steam operated drain cocks open was reassuringly steady with about 50 psi in the steam chest. As speed picked up off went the injector, the water valve closed and cut off brought back to about 20% with steam at 100 psi in the steam chest. The boiler pressure held about 140 psi (safety valve lift pressure 150 psi) with no problem. Firing was mainly

under the door then left and right corners using Welsh steam coal. This particular batch of coal tended to clinker so fires were kept deliberately thin.

The engine rode well and all went well except for when my seat collapsed under me! Minor panic, but all was soon sorted out and the run continued uneventfully until all too soon the Cromer line appeared on our left and Wroxham station loomed up in the distance. We drifted down into the station with the gear in 45% and regulator shut, a position close to that used on the LMS locos of Stanier.

Our return run was enlivened by a continuous succession of whistles from the second engine and a steady brake application. On looking out of the window, the pilot could be seen steaming into the distance. Fortunately the driver looked back and stopped. The couplings on the line are unusual, being standard Caravan tow hooks giving a rigid coupling between vehicles.

When both locos were back together, it was found that the brake pipe hose was useless and a central buffer had broken off. However we soon got under way again with an unbraked pilot engine and returned to Aylsham without further incident.

Repairs were soon effected to provide full braking again and our return trip ran well if rather late, having lost well over an hour with the incident. Whilst my first driving spell had begun at Coltishall, famous for its connection with 242 Squadron RAF and Douglas Bader. The second turn started at Buxton, driving No2 a very different engine from No6. Having talked to the driver about the W brake valve at Wroxham, he offered to let me use it on this trip although sited his side of the cab; curiously he had been rather disparaging about its merits but I found it excellent to use, moving the brake pipe pressure to where you wanted it and holding it there.

No 2. was much lighter on her feet than No 6. and great care was needed not to slip continually when accelerating , any steam chest pressure over about 40 psi resulting in wheel slip. She rattled and banged her way along the track and was generally lively on the road. Boiler Pressure again stayed up well but the cut off was kept pretty long at all times.

Our first test of the brakes was a farm crossing taken at 5 mph and the brake pipe pressure of 50 psi was dropped a good way to slow the train before coasting gently over the crossing points, at Brampton which were also taken at 5 mph, a speed used all day through the passing loops.

After Brampton we put on steam again this time with sand on.(Thames & Chiltern trains please note), and no slipping took place. We were soon to speed and all too soon Aylsham Tunnel appeared and as we clattered through with all the sounds reverberating, it had the feel of real railroading. Brakes went on for the points outside the station but then power went on till half way along the platform. A request by the driver to stop the engine by the Platform 3 sign was met either by luck or by experience at Fawley!

So ended an interesting and entertaining set of runs which hopefully will be repeated one day. One final footnote, I can now claim to have been on two trains which on two consecutive days broke into two, for on the very next day at Fawley, our freight train broke into two on the 1:14 gradient whilst reversing downhill. As guard, a fairly quick exit to terra firma was made but again the automatic brakes plus the pinning down and the quick reaction of Brian Kitchen stopped the train pretty quickly. I suspect a large number of cameras and videos have that incident on tape!

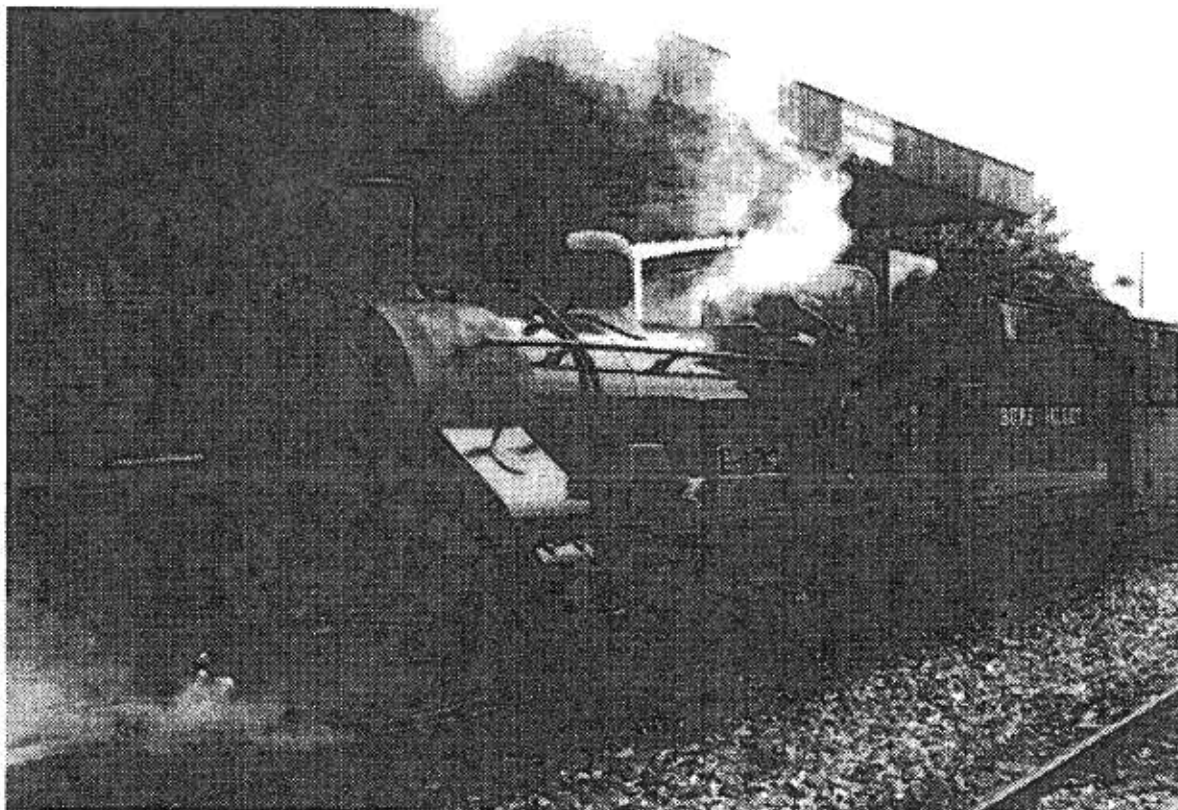
*E.W.Lewcock.*

*Opposite*

*Sandy River 2-6-2  
at Wroxham*

*Right*

*No 6 at Wroxham*



# BOOK REVIEWS

ALAN COSTELLO

## **A comprehensive Guide to Britain's New Railways**

Steve Knight (editor)

EMAP APEX Publications Limited

ISBN 1368-437X

This completes the story started by the book I reviewed in the last magazine. Each Train Operating Company is described in turn. Under various headings, details are given of the Company address and names of directors, area covered, subsidy, new trains on order, train maintenance arrangements, tolling stock and their future plans. A chapter explains how train leasing work and gives some examples of cost eg. an H.S.T power car - £236,000 per year. Other chapters look at freight operation by E.W.S, Railtrack and the Infrastructure Companies. Finally a list of abbreviations and acronyms is given. A very useful publication for people wanting to know what is happening to the railways today.

## **British Railways Pre-Grouping Atlas and Gazetteer**

Ian Allan Publishing

ISBN 0-7110-0320-3

Back in 1965 I bought this book for the sum of 21 shillings, now it costs £49.99. This is a reprint and not a new edition. Nevertheless, it is still worth buying if you wish to see the railway system at its height. It shows all lines that were in operation when the railways were amalgamated into groups in 1923. Lines are colour coded and each company, that operated the lines, is given by initials with the full name at the end of the atlas. A comprehensive index details stations and tunnels etc. Largest scale maps towards the end of the book show areas of Manchester, London, South Wales etc where lines were in abundance at that time.

## **World Metro Systems**

Paul Garbutt

Captiol Transport

ISBN 1-85414-191-0

On May 31st, services between Wimbledon and West Croydon and Elmers End and Addiscombe ceased, so that they could be rebuilt to become part of the Croydon Tram system. This follows the systems in Newcastle, Manchester and Sheffield and the one now being built in Birmingham. This publication looks at the case for the light railway in suburban areas and details the systems now in operation all over the world. A table gives brief information on each railway such as areas covered, how many cars each system operates and passengers carried, power systems and number of passengers carried. As other books by this publisher, a very informative book produced on quality paper.

## **Railway Roundabout**

R Christiansen

Ian Allen Publishing

ISBN 0-7110-245-6

Back in the late 50's, BBC TV produced a series of films on railways, and broadcast then during Children's television. They were made by Pat Whitehouse and John Adams and were of very good quality and I remember looking forward to each program. With the release of some of the films on video, this book has been published giving details of them. Contents of the films are described and reading the book shows the varied subjects covered. A large number of coloured photographs taken from the films are included in the book.

## **Trains Illustrated Annual 1959**

G Freeman Allen (editor)

Ian Allen

Only two articles featuring foreign railways this year. On one, Cecil J Allen looks at worked rail speeds at a time when there was only one train (French) in Europe, that had a booking of over 80mph. The other one looks at steam in Europe. There are 5 photo features - Temple Meads, Perth to Inverness line, Baltic Tanks, York and steam at London Southern Region terminals. Articles cover the Edinburgh to Aberdeen line, the L.C.D.R., South Yorkshire Joint line and the Longmoor Military Railway.