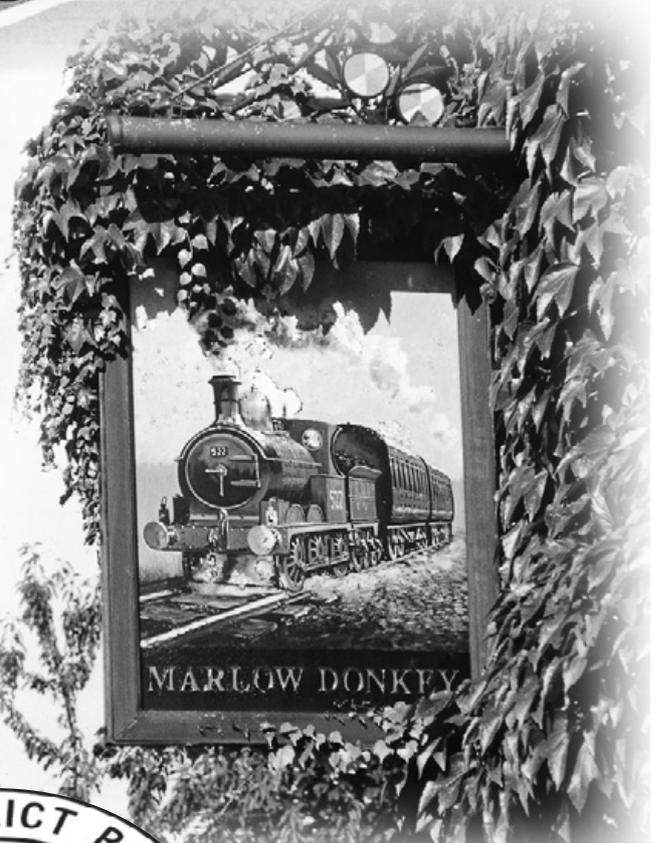
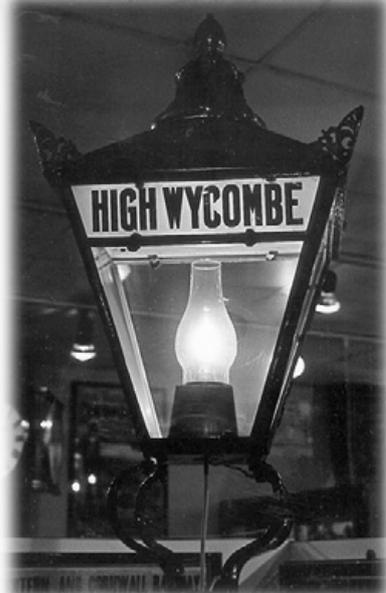


THE MARLOW DONKEY



Edition

97

September 2001



Contents:

My Friend Rover

Setts & Studs

Railway Ramblers

The Marlow Donkey - The Magazine of the Marlow and District Railway Society

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS.

*Main picture - At Marlow station all are aboard the 14.09 for Maidenhead, but the clock reads 14.07 while the guard checks and waits. 14 June 2001
Not quite the 14xx and auto trailer that one normally associates with the name, but at least the pub sign at the 'Marlow Donkey' retains a railway connection.
25 July 2001 ----- High Wycombe Station lamp at Didcot Railway Centre, where there are many small exhibits on display. 1 April 2001 - All pictures Tim Edmonds*

Latest Copy Date for next issue of The Marlow Donkey 10th November 2001

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TIMETABLE

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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

2001

Thursday 18 October	INDIAN STEAM	Dr Brandham
Thursday 15 November	AMERICAN RAIL TOUR	Mike Walker
Thursday 20 December	CHRISTMAS GATHERING	

2001

Thursday 17 January	PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENING	
Thursday 21 February	AGM / BRING & BUY	
Thursday 21 March	FILM NIGHT	Frank Banfield

WEEKEND TRIP

April 2002 BAIE DE SOMME **By car**

Booking date: December 2001

DAY TRIP

***** To Celebrate 25 Years of the MDRS *****

Hire of coach on premier preserved line dining train - June 2002

Please: NO TALKING DURING PRESENTATIONS

Please note: The above programme is subject to change

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

A round of thanks to the members, their families and friends who participated on the coach trip to the Crich Tramway Museum and Chatsworth House on July 1st. Blessed with good weather an enjoyable day (I think) was had by all.

To Alan Costello, a member of some 23 years now residing on the 'Eastern Region' we offer our sincere thanks for his regular bookshelf contribution in the Donkey. We all wish you well for the future.

The recent Sheringham Station Appeal raised almost £31. Thank you all for your contributions.

Looking ahead, being planned for April 2002 is a repeat visit to the Baie de Somme railway gala weekend. Those members that are interested in this trip please advise me.

On a lighter note, browsing through a second-hand bookshop, I came across a copy of the Trains Illustrated Annual for 1955. This was always placed on my wanted list at Christmas but in '55' the chubby chap in the red outfit forgot my copy (no more sherry and mince pies for him). Within the first article penned by G.Freeman Allen he relates to a holiday in South Devon with his wife. He quotes, "only the grossest bribery will induce her to go near a railway if not actually going to travel on it but here at Dawlish the promise of a deckchair and a tea booth close by allows me to train watch to my heart content, but due to the intense Saturday traffic I find it difficult to replenish the tea." Countless 'Addicts' have no doubt had the same demands made upon them; myself included at this great observation point. Having experienced something akin to those busy far off days in the mid 70's with loco hauled sets, now such scenes as this will soon be a thing of the past, except when a steam or diesel charter is routed this way. The wheel really will have turned full circle.

G.W.Rippington.

GEORGE STEPHENSON AND THE ROCKET

So it happens yet again, a recent article, no names, no packdrill, attributed the 'Rocket' to George Stephenson! It is an understandable mistake, made once some years ago at the entrance to the Science Museum. (I should have photographed it!) and repeated on the Bank of England notes, explained away as the designer and the locomotive that set the future of British railways.

The person most alleged to have created this fiction was Samuel Smiles who wrote on the 'Lives of the Engineers' but Smiles himself relied on earlier writers who credited George as the builder of the 'Rocket'.

It has taken a great many years to get a balanced view of affairs, for various reasons including a reluctance to pull a national hero off his pedestal.

So confusing has the situation been that several respected societies joined together and held a one day conference on 26 June 1993 at the Mersey Maritime Museum in Liverpool. This resulted in a book entitled 'Perceptions of Great Engineers', fact and fiction, edited by Denis Smith and catalogued ISBN0 901805653. It covers a number of famous engineers and does its best to get to the facts straight. It is published by the Science Museum for the Newcomen Society, National Museum and Galleries on Merseyside and the University of Liverpool.

I have taken a few extracts from it to create this article but do strongly recommend a read of its contents, leaving your dot com activities aside for a few moments. What is extraordinary is the large number of footnotes, many of which are well worth reading.

Engineers reviewed include Watt, Jonathon Hornblower, George Stephenson, Samuel Smiles and others.

Turning to George, Adrian Jarvis produced a fascinating paper pointing out that he did not invent the blast pipe – after all it was Trevithick himself who had pointed out to Robert the value of turning the exhaust into the chimney. George had in fact removed the blast pipe from some earlier engines, thus making them slower at generating steam.

No letters can be traced of George advising Robert on how to build the Rocket rather the reverse, George asking Henry Booth how the new steam locomotive was coming along.

George's 'ideas' were based on heavier locomotives of existing designs, 'Rocket' was revolutionary with its multi-tubular boiler and cylinder with crossheads driving a wheel, George liked

primitive, coarse arrangements and not something like slide bars that needed accuracy. In fact George was wedded to chain drive!

Despite the claim that can be seen to this day at George's cottage in Killingworth that George was the 'inventor' of the railway locomotive – no one believes this one! Your writer photographed this inscription only a few years ago at the cottage entrance over the front doorway.

George had only built – some years before 'Rocket', slow moving monsters that did not presage the coming of high speed rail travel at 30-40 mph, whilst additionally some of his civil engineering exploits were non to hot. The claim that he invented the crossing of Chat Moss, when constructing the L & M Railway does not bear examination. His idea was to pile spoil in, whereas the already proven method used by the canal engineers was clearly satisfactory. The spoil would slowly dissipate in the bog!

The use of the multitubular boiler by Robert Stephenson was, not as revolutionary as may be thought. In 1815, John Rastrick built the first screw propeller ship with a multitubular boiler. (Page 73 of book).

Without going into too much detail, you could study the book for yourself, it is made abundantly clear that 'Rocket' was a Robert Stephenson creation, George looking backwards and not forwards in the matters of locomotive design. Robert included slide bars and items requiring accuracy in manufacture, which George shunned.

In parenthesis, we marvel at the rapidity of obsolescence these days. Is it realised that 'Rocket' was obsolete by the time that the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, the 'Planet' locomotives being much more practical for day to day service.

So now you know why I wrote and told this monthly magazine writer that he had produced a canard!

E. W. Lewcock

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Hi John

Just to let you know we are settling in here OK. Just joined the Bishop's Stortford Railway Club. It meets weekly in the old booking office at Bishop's Stortford station. It also has a model railway and an engineering section (nearby) that runs 5" steam locos.

Membership is £10 per year but there is no magazine. During summer months they normally show videos, but from September they have a speaker every week. They have around 35 members but the room is not very big and I'm told that if there is a popular speaker it is necessary

for some people to stand! Frequency of trains here is similar to Wycombe with every other Stansted Express stopping (ie half hourly) as well as the stopping train to and from Cambridge.

I hope everything is going well at the M&DRS and you had a good time at Crich.

Best Wishes to all

Alan Costello

WHAT'S ON

16th October at 7.30pm

'A Further Look at Rail Transport and the Future' -
Cliff Perry, Managing Director, AEA Rail Technology,

Rose Street
Methodist Church
Wokingham

6 - 7 October 01 : Festival of Steam

Kew Bridge Steam Museum

6 - 7 October 01 : Steam Enthusiast Weekend

Mid-Hants Railway

6 - 7 October 01 : Autumn Steam Gala

North Yorkshire Moors Railway

6 - 7 October 01 : 1960s Weekend

West Somerset Railway

A mixture of steam and heritage diesel trains operating a busy timetable as the Railway recreates the change of motive power on the Western Region of British Rail in the 1960's. Many other period attractions.

7 October 01 : Double Header Day

Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

Special hourly train service with all trains Double-Headed. Extra engines will be in steam throughout the day, workshops will be open to the public and staff will be available to answer questions.

13 - 14 October 01 : Steam & Vintage Gala

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Steam engines of all shapes and sizes can be seen together with a large selection of Classic Cars, Vintage Vehicles, Models, Crafts, Entertainment, Children's rides and for the grown up children Classic Vintage Fairground rides.

14 October 01 : Classic Vehicle Day

Severn Valley Railway

A comprehensive gathering of classic cars, commercial vehicles, buses, coaches and motorcycles at stations all along the line.

20 - 21 October 01 : Steam Gala Weekend

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

20 - 21 October 01 : GWR Branch Line Weekend

South Devon Railway

20 - 21 October 01 : Steam Gala

Spa Valley Railway

26 - 27 October 01 : Photographers Evenings

Didcot Railway Centre

Night steam displays on Friday and Saturday evenings. Normal operations during the day on Saturday.

27 October 01 : Meet the Railway Workers

STEAM: Museum of the GWR, Swindon

Join former engine drivers, firemen and railway workers to find out more about life inside the Swindon Works. The real experiences of the railway worker will be described with practical demonstrations.

27 - 28 October 01 : Giants of Steam

Bluebell Railway

29 October - 4 November 01 : Stepney Specials

Bluebell Railway

SETTS, STUDS AND MAD WOMAN'S KNITTING A VIEW OF THE M&DRS TRIP TO CRICH

by Tim Edmonds

The National Tramway Museum at Crich has long been on my list of places to visit, but I had never managed to get there until the Marlow & District Railway Society's trip this year. On Sunday 1 July 2001 my wife, teenage son and I were among a coach-load of 33 participants in the outing, including some who opted for the alternative destination of Chatsworth House. The Museum is located in part of a large limestone quarry overlooking the Derwent Valley on the edge of the Derbyshire Peak District. The Tramway Museum Society first leased the site at Crich in 1958 and subsequently purchased it. Their collection of trams and associated paraphernalia has been gradually extended and enhanced to become one of the best museums of its kind, both nationally and internationally.

The heart of the museum is the largest collection of preserved trams in Europe, many of which are in working order and are used on an operating line a mile long. There is a large hall containing static and small exhibits, connected to the workshops and running lines by a traverser which came from London Transport's Acton Works. Close to the entrance is a reconstructed townscape around one end of the running line, which provides rides to a terminus overlooking open countryside via a small mining display. The townscape is still being extended, notably by a pub with superb decorative tiling on its exterior and which is due to open in 2002. In addition to the buildings there are many items of period street furniture collected from here and there. The main entrance gates are from Marylebone station and were re-erected at Crich in 1974, while the cast-iron arches in front of the Tea Rooms came from Ambergate station. Other attractions include a video theatre, library, shops, refreshment facilities and some marked walks. In the afternoon we had time to enjoy one of these walks and noticed that it was crossed by the remains of a 2ft gauge industrial line that must have been part of the original



*An evocative street scene at Crich, with Tramcar No 7 from Chesterfield, built in 1904, passing a reconstructed pub with classic Ford, Standard and Triumph cars parked outside.
1 July 2001 - Tim Edmonds*

quarry.

On the operating line trams are timetabled so that one leaves every twenty minutes, and there are four intermediate stops. With our entrance tickets we were each provided with a pre-decimal penny (full fare) or half-penny (half-fare) coin which was required to purchase a ticket from the conductor on our first tram ride. These tickets then gave unlimited travel during the day. Working the services were Sheffield No 74 and Chesterfield No 7, both double-deckers and dating from 1900 and 1904 respectively. There was also Southampton No 45, an open-topper dating from 1903, and it was exhilarating to experience its rapid acceleration when riding on the top deck. On some services there were two tramcars in close succession. The second vehicle was the 'Access Tram', Berlin No 3006, a 1969 single-decker that has been specially adapted for wheelchair users and others with access difficulties, and which runs on demand.

Although the emphasis is on electric tramways, the first exhibits you encounter on entering the Exhibition Hall feature trams using other sources of power - both horse and steam. Here an 1885 Beyer-Peacock 0-4-0VB tram loco, originally exported to Australia, is now coupled to a

*Wheelchair passengers wait for a trip on the Access Tram at Crich.
1969-built Tramcar No 3006 is adapted to carry people with mobility difficulties, and works on demand throughout the day.
1 July 2001 - Tim Edmonds*



*Southampton Tram No 45, Built 1903
1 July 2001 - Mike Hyde*

Dundee & District trailer dating from 1894. The main part of the hall is imaginatively set out in the style of a Trade Exhibition circa 1902 and includes a fascinating selection of exhibits of all kinds. One that caught my eye was a 15" gauge live steam model of a tram and trailer from the Manchester, Bury, Rochdale & Oldham Steam Tramway. This was made in 1941 and powered by a two-cylinder Stanley Steamer car engine. Another highlight is the 87-key Gavioli organ, a marvellous mechanical instrument which plays using 'books' of folded punch-cards. Over a hundred years old and now restored to its original condition, this machine was demonstrated every hour, after which the versatile curator performed an excellent show of magic tricks!

The day was a worthwhile one, in spite of the long

journey, and was made particularly enjoyable by the friendliness and enthusiasm of the volunteer staff. The site is vast and there are ambitious plans to extend the exhibits with further reconstructions, so I look forward to returning in a few years time to check on progress (and to sample the pub). For those who are wondering, the title of this report refers to some of the tramway artefacts that can be seen at Crich. Setts are granite road blocks, and many were recovered from Liverpool to form the roads in which much of the Crich tramlines are laid. Studs are road-surface current collection devices used as an alternative to overhead wires and Crich has one originally from Wolverhampton. The overhead wires on the operating lines have been recovered from many systems around the country, and it is the complex patterns that they form at junctions which was once aptly described as 'mad woman's knitting'.

Thank you to Gordon Rippington for all his efforts in organising an excellent day out and to coach driver Gavin for his work behind the wheel. Perhaps the best compliment was my son's enthusiasm and request for 'more trips like this'.



*Sheffield Tram No 74, Built 1900
1 July 2001 - Mike Hyde*



*Leeds Tram No 399, Built
1926
1 July 2001 - Mike Hyde*

RAILWAY RAMBLERS

HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Railway Ramblers was formed in 1978 when Nigel Willis, the club's founder member, placed a small ad in The Railway Magazine asking if there were other individuals in the UK who were interested in accompanying him on walks along abandoned railways. The response was far greater than Nigel had ever expected, as a result of which he decided to form a club - Railway Ramblers.

The club's main purpose is to bring together groups of like-minded people to explore old railways, but it has also done much to encourage the preservation of old railway lines as public footpaths and cycleways. As most railway enthusiasts know, Dr. Beeching and his successors axed about 8,000 miles of railways within the UK, but thanks to the efforts of local authorities and Sustrans (the charity behind the National Cycle Network), between 1,500 and 2,000 miles of this discarded network have been brought back into use as public walks and cycle trails.

Railway Ramblers has done its part by raising money for the purchase of various disused railway lines, which it has 'gifted' to Sustrans or other charities to convert into railway paths. As at November 2000, the club had purchased the following routes for use by the public:

* Whitehaven to Rowrah (7 miles) * Cleator Moor to Egremont (2 miles) * Princes Risborough to Thame (5 miles)

* Link from the Cheddar Valley Railway Path to Yatton railway station (a short but valuable connection whose purchase was supported financially by many other voluntary groups)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

* To discover, explore and document disused railway lines

* To encourage interest in the walking and conservation of disused railway lines

* To bring to the attention of the appropriate authorities those disused lines which we consider to be suitable for conversion into public footpaths or cycleways

* To promote signposting, clearing of undergrowth etc. on converted lines

* To create regional groups of the club throughout the United Kingdom, with Regional Secretaries to organise local activities

* To disseminate up to date information through reports and newsletters, etc.

* To respect private property and the Country Code at all times

The following contains news about recent path openings and improvements, although sometimes we don't find out about a path until its opening is 'old hat' with the locals! All details have been supplied by Railway Ramblers members, who are credited at the end of each entry.

Remember that many new path projects have been delayed, some by many months, due to the Foot and Mouth crisis in the countryside.

June 2001. Princes Risborough to Thame, Berkshire/Oxfordshire. This route has now been completed and will be opened officially on Wednesday 20 June. The trail starts at the eastern end of Thame (at Howland Road level crossing on the town's eastern bypass), and extends all the way to Princes Risborough, although the trackbed is left for the last 1.5 miles, since the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, and Chiltern Trains, still use it. The complete trail is 7.5 miles long, and a couple of pre-opening pictures can be viewed in our Photo Gallery. Further information about this route will be found in the entry for January 2001. (Sustrans Ltd)

May 2001. Kings Worthy to South Wonston, Hampshire. In 1970, Hampshire County Council purchased the Winchester end of the former Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway for improvements to the A34 trunk road. However, the 1 mile section from Kings Worthy to South Wonston was not used in this scheme, and gradually locals 'adopted' it unofficially for walking, cycling and horse riding. Now the local authority has decided to dedicate the route as a bridleway, although the HCC Countryside Service will first move in to clear vegetation and repair the long-neglected fencing. (Chris Cook)

May 2001. The Tissington Trail, Derbyshire. For many years, the southern end of this scenic railway path ended on the 'wrong' side of Ashbourne Tunnel, thus obliging path users who wanted to visit Ashbourne to make a long detour over a steep hill. However, in June 2000, the 400 yard tunnel was re-opened, courtesy of Sustrans Ltd, with a 6 ft wide path throughout, so that walkers and cyclists now arrive in Ashbourne at the site of the town's former station. The tunnel is fully illuminated, and a plaque on the wall adjacent to the south portal records its re-opening by a local politician. Sustrans now hopes to extend the trail southwards via minor roads and bridleways to Etwall, where it will join the Etwall-Mickleover railway path (3.5 miles), before continuing to Derby city centre via on-road cycle trails. It is hoped that the Ashbourne-Etwall section can be routed via the scenic Osmaston Park. (Graham Cox and Michael Hodgson)

April 2001. Didcot to Upton, Oxfordshire. Sustrans has just announced that, after 7 years of negotiation with local landowners, this 1.5 mile section of the former Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway is to be opened as a key link in the National Cycle Network, with possible future extensions towards Wantage and Newbury. Although relatively short, the line runs on an embankment and offers extensive views of the surrounding countryside. It can already be used by walkers and those with mountain bikes. (Sustrans Ltd)

March 2001. Chichester to Selsey, West Sussex. £25,000 was earmarked in mid March by Chichester District Council for the construction of a cycle trail between Chichester and Selsey, which will re-use part of the Selsey Tramway. (Jeff Vinter)

March 2001. Chepstow to Tintern, Gloucestershire. The southern end of this line, once part of the Wye Valley Railway, survived until the 1990s to convey stone traffic from quarries at Tidenham, south of Tintern. Sustrans Ltd, the path-building charity, is interested in constructing a cycle trail along the route, but the newly formed Wye Valley Railway Company proposes to put Tintern

back on the passenger rail network. The 1,188 yard Tidenham Tunnel (the 21st longest on the Great Western Railway) presents a problem for any would-be cycle trail, but the preservationists have offered to carry cycles on their trains free of charge so that the line would still be useful to cyclists. (Chris Cook)

March 2001. Watchet to Gupworthy, Somerset. Readers who know their railway geography will recognise this as the former West Somerset Mineral Railway. Exmoor National Park Authority has recently purchased the line's steeply graded incline, which ascends the Brendon Hills in 3/4 mile at a gradient of 1 in 4. The Authority has obtained a tree-felling licence to clear the mature trees which now block the route, after which the drainage will be repaired. Later, consultations will be conducted with private landowners to establish a long-term management plan for the line and its structures, and provide limited access for the public.

February 2001. Canterbury to Whitstable, Kent. A new walking and cycling trail - 'The Crab & Winkle Way' - has been established between Canterbury and Whitstable, using a mile of the former Canterbury & Whitstable Railway at the north, i.e. Whitstable, end. The line closed to passengers in 1931 and freight in 1952, so an absence of re-usable trackbed is not to be wondered at. As if this were not problem enough, part of Tyler Hill Tunnel at Canterbury had to be infilled, with concrete, in order to prevent the university buildings above subsiding into it. Clearly, no one can expect to walk or cycle here! Canterbury City Council designated the whole line a conservation area in 1999, so it is possible that more of the trackbed may become accessible in the future. The trail has just won an award for 'sustainable tourism' from the South East of England Tourist Board. (Sustrans Ltd/Kentish Stour Countryside Project)

February 2001. Barnstaple, Devon. A long missing bridge on the Tarka Trail between Barnstaple and Braunton has been reinstated - the former railway bridge over the River Yeo, just north of the former Barnstaple Town station (which still stands). (Sustrans Ltd)

February 2001. Meldon Viaduct to Lake Viaduct, Devon. This is part of a growing railway path which was planned originally to link Okehampton with the A386 near Bridestowe. However, Devon County Council has now acquired most of the trackbed as far as Lydford, so the trail could end up being a lot longer than envisaged. The new extension from Prewley Moor to Lake Viaduct extends the route to 3.5 miles. During the summer season, occasional local trains run from Okehampton station to Meldon, where the trail can be joined. It is hoped that future negotiations will allow the trail to be extended alongside the railway back into Okehampton.

December 2000. Wivenhoe to Brightlingsea, Essex. Wivenhoe, on the line from Colchester to Walton-on-Naze, used to be the junction station for Brightlingsea. A railway path (of sorts) links the two communities, although scrap dealers dismantled a vital bridge 1.5 miles out of Wivenhoe shortly after the line closed. However, 'where there's a will, there's a way', and a trio of dedicated (or should that be mad?) members from the club's Eastern Area proved that even a missing bridge is no obstacle to the committed trackbed basher. (Phil Wood)

December 2000. Halewood to Southport, Merseyside. Improvements to the Trans Pennine Trail mean that a nearly continuous railway path now extends from Halewood (south east of Liverpool) to Southport on the Lancashire coast. The total distance is about 25 miles, with the only non-railway section following the towpath of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. (Ralph Rawlinson)

December 2000. Chester, Cheshire. A new railway path has been created from Hoole, in the east of Chester, to Hawarden Bridge station on the line from Bidston to Wrexham. The path is 10 miles long and re-uses much of the former freight line from Dee Marsh Junction to Mickle Trafford. At the western end, the route continues as a cycle trail towards Flint, although this section is not railway-based and follows local roads. The new railway path forms part of 'The Millennium Cycle Route in Cheshire', which was funded by a consortium of bodies including Sustrans Ltd, Chester City Council and Cheshire County Council. (John Fisher, Maurice and Hilary Blencowe)

November 2000. Whitby, North Yorkshire. The massive Larpool Viaduct which spans the River Esk to the west of Whitby station has now been opened to the public and forms part of the 22 mile long railway path between Whitby and Scarborough. (In fact, this viaduct is the path's crowning glory.) Restoration was carried out under a joint scheme involving the cycling charity, Sustrans Ltd, and various local authorities. The opening of the viaduct reduces the time taken to get between Whitby and the railway path by 20 minutes, and the views from the top are stunning. (Frank Watson)

November 2000. Abingdon, Oxfordshire. One mile of the former branch line from Abingdon to Radley is being converted by Sustrans Ltd into a new railway path. The trail will start at the east end of the Abingdon Science Park in Barton Lane (grid reference SU 508973) and extend to SU 522973, where it will continue northwards via a public footpath to reach Radley village. The section of old railway being converted is owned by Vale of White Horse District Council, but - amazingly - the council's Principal Engineer appeared to know nothing about the conversion works. Beyond SU 522973, the trackbed is owned by National Power. Sustrans hopes that this section too may become available at a future date. (Michael Steptoe)

November 2000. Centurion Way, Chichester, West Sussex. This popular railway path, which re-uses part of the former LBSCR branch line from Chichester to Midhurst, is due to be extended northwards to Binderton via the trackbed, and then to West Dean via a new cycle trail alongside the A286.

September 2000. Bedford to Sandy, Bedfordshire. A 4 mile length of the former Bedford-Sandy line between Bedford and Great Barford has been converted into a cycle trail. There are plans to extend the route into Sandy, presumably also along the former railway line, but the extension is being delayed until the local council can obtain more money. (Phil Wood).

PUBLICATIONS

The club publishes a quarterly magazine of news and reports, which is distributed free of charge to members. Additionally, the club's Chairman - Jeff Vinter - has published a number of books on the subject of walking old railways. Some of these are currently out of print, but may re-appear in the future in an omnibus edition, although this is a commercial decision for the publishers and one over which the club has little influence. However, the following titles are available on a mail order basis from Jeff at 1 Victoria Road, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 4HY. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'Jeff Vinter'. Please allow 7-10 days for

delivery.

The Taff Trail Official Guide

The Taff Trail passes through some of the most beautiful and varied landscape in South Wales. Running from the capital city of Cardiff to Brecon in the heart of the Beacons, this long-distance route for cyclists and walkers offers a fascinating mixture of landscape and heritage. Making use of canal towpaths, old railway tracks and tram-roads, features to be seen along the way include Cardiff Castle, the Victorian fantasy of Castell Coch, Cyfarthfa Ironworks, numerous chapels, rural archaeological sites, several nature reserves and woodland parks, and locks and lift bridges along the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. Features of this official guidebook include full colour photographs throughout, with clearly drawn sketch-maps showing places to be seen en route and local amenities. Also included are a glossary of Welsh place-names, details of heritage sites which adjoin the trail, and information on local bus and train services. Over 10,000 copies of this guide have now been sold, and this is the third edition, published in summer 1998. 128 pages in full colour. £6.50 including p&p.

Vinter's Gazetter

This useful gazetteer lists railway paths that are two miles or more in length and officially open to the public for walking and, in many cases, cycling. Divided into sections covering England, Wales and Scotland, it identifies the start and end points of each walk, together with the overall distance and classes of user to whom it is available (walkers, cyclists and horseriders). Those routes which have been inspected personally carry a further note as to their suitability for wheelchair users, young families with pushchairs, etc. Parents wanting to find traffic-free places where their children can ride bicycles, at home or on holiday, will find plenty of ideas in here! Six figure grid references are given where known. The text includes twelve high quality pen and ink drawings by Sussex artist John Fisher. Updated with details of new paths in April 2000. 38 pages. Price: £2.00 including p&p.

Books published by Jeff Vinter, Chairman, Railway Ramblers

Order from your local library.

Vinter, Jeff, Railway Walks: GWR & SR (pb, 192pp, b&w and colour illus),

Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990, ISBN 0862995787

Vinter, Jeff, Railway Walks: GWR & SR (hb, 192pp, b&w and colour illus),

Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990, ISBN 0862997224

Vinter, Jeff, Railway Walks: LNER (pb, 192pp, b&w and colour illus),

Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990, ISBN 086299733X

Vinter, Jeff, Railway Walks: LNER (hb, 192pp, b&w and colour illus),

Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990, ISBN 0862997321

Vinter, Jeff, Railway Walks: LMS (pb, 192pp, b&w and colour illus),

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MY FRIEND ROVER

Rover is not a dog but an unadvertised ticket available on the railways of Britain today. Oh yes they used to be well advertised, complete with leaflets for each area highlighting the places of interest. However the train operating companies now find that these tickets are extremely cheap (even more so if one has a senior railcard) that they keep this a secret from the unsuspecting public. I have used one for the last five years and have found them very convenient to explore at will the chosen area without the need to buy individual tickets for each journey undertaken. Booking office clerks usually have difficulty in finding the correct bar code

leave the car behind for a few days and let the train take the strain.

Although I had an itinerary worked out for the three days, experience has shown that it is best to be flexible, as trains have been known to be cancelled at short notice or late preventing connections. On the first day I decided to have a run up the S&C to Carlisle. Under good weather conditions I joined a well-patronised Class 156 for the journey. In the height of the holiday season these trains will be very full indeed unless strengthened, as on arrival at Carlisle I doubt if there were more than ten vacant

seats. This year is the 125th anniversary of the opening of the S&C and most stations were decked out in flags and bunting and naturally had been brightened up with a lick of paint. Each time I travel this line I appreciate it more and more. I may have missed it on previous trips but all the tunnels have plates attached showing the tunnel name and its length in good old English yards. Three coal trains passed on the journey coming south from Scotland, which shows that the line is not just for tourists anymore. The long disused station at Little Salkeld a few miles north of Appleby (of Eric Tracey's memory) is being renovated and is up for sale as a private dwelling. A retirement home for a rail enthusiast perhaps! Due to the terrible foot and mouth epidemic many farms were devoid of animals but a few cows were seen and they appeared to have a smile on their faces having avoided the slaughtermen. As the train rolled in to Carlisle I was surprised to see V2, 60800 Green Arrow together with support coach shut down in Upperby yards. Mental note to self to take photo on journey south.

to swipe in the fares manual to produce the ticket. With a little patience and a long queue behind you one eventually gets the rover ticket requested. For the area I chose this year the North West Rover allowed unlimited travel in the area bounded by the triangle Leeds, Carlisle & Chester with an opportunity to add on Carlisle, Dumfries, Hexham, Carlisle. Tickets come in two types, any three days in seven or a seven-day ticket. I chose on this occasion the former and one is expected to enter the date on the reverse of the ticket each day before commencing travel. Travelling ticket examiners are expected to check to see if the date has been filled in and on my trips this year and in the past this has rarely happened. If one was 'forgetful' one could easily have five or six days for the price of three which with a railcard cost £26.40 this year. The only restrictions are Monday to Friday the start has to be after 9am except for travel on the 8.40 Leeds to Carlisle train.

I drove up from home and called in to Doncaster for an hour or so and then travelled on to Knottingley to see what had changed there since my last visit quite some years ago. For a start the viewing area which looked down on to the depot was a builders yard which limited viewing somewhat but a couple of stored locos 56124 and the original Class 58, 58001 were parked up awaiting a decision as to their future. It does not seem very long ago that the Class 58's were new but my records show they were built between 1983 and 1987. Time marches on as they say. A drive around the M62 and through Bradford bought me to the area to seek out digs. I found what I was looking for quite by chance in Keighley and being very convenient to the station meant I could

Carlisle station is still being renovated. Now it is worse than it was on my last visit eighteen months ago as practically all the roof is missing on the bays north and south of the station. This coincided with a change in the weather as a cloudburst coincided with my arrival. In this part of England the weather is very fickle at the best of times. Freight was very prominent with six workings in the short time I was there and as a surprise my first sighting of a Virgin Voyager on test from Polmadie to Preston. I was searching to see its fleet number, which was eventually discovered, below platform level on the step leading to the drivers cab. No thought here given to number takers unless this is only a temporary measure. As the heavens were still running their water taps (raining I mean) I decided to go south to Preston for the afternoon and to travel on new lines back to base from Preston to Leeds on the Copy Pit route. No chance for a picture of Green Arrow as it was still pouring with rain. During the run back to Preston there was ample evidence of work being carried out for the WCML upgrade mainly with new signal trunking and an additional passing loop near Penrith. Virgin cross country trains now have one quiet coach formed in the set for those not wishing to hear everyone's conversation on mobile phones or loud music. Could I suggest that all coaches bar one be deemed quiet coaches and let all the music and phone people get in just one coach where they can appreciate the disturbance they convey to ordinary passengers just wishing to have a peaceful journey. It must be my age.

Railtrack has renovated Preston station. In fact the entrance looks welcoming which could not have been said about it on my last visit. The public announcements were very clear and precise

and above all truthful as I found out when at 16.45 they announced that my intended train the 1705 to Leeds is cancelled as we have not got a driver for it. I said earlier one needs to be flexible on these jaunts so the 1710 was used to Manchester Piccadilly to connect with a Liverpool to Scarborough service in order to reach Leeds. Another Virgin Voyager was at Preston together with the one I saw at Carlisle and they were coupled together so presumably going back to Scotland together to carry out further testing.

The journey across the Pennines from Manchester to Leeds is best

forgotten as this was a very packed three car Class 158 and until the stop at Huddersfield was standing room only and guess what, the air-conditioning had packed up. Fellow passengers say this is the norm and they have my greatest sympathy. Arriving at Leeds was quite an experience. As you will probably know this station is in the process of being updated and currently resembles a builders yard. I am told it will take another year to be completed. To reach one side of the station where my train arrived to the other where the Airedale services run from takes about ten minutes. One has to use very narrow walkways constructed of scaffolding and boards and up stairs and down along dark passages until ones arrives at the now finished eastside of the station. This area is quite impressive with new platforms and public information screens and if they manage to create the same for the rest of the station it will indeed be a showpiece one.

My journey back to Keighley was on one of the new Siemens Class 333 built for Northern Spirit. Sixteen three-coach sets have been built but of these eight will eventually be four car sets. They replace the ageing Class 308's although a couple of the latter are still plying their trade up to Skipton. They are similar to the Heathrow sets but the seating is rather on the hard side. The on train voice announcements can become very monotonous but as the guard on the lightly loaded train told me they are prone to fail at regular intervals. In fact failures of these sets are common, its all the gadgetry they come with nowadays I am told but reliability is improving. If you get the chance to travel on one try looking out of the window forward to the one you are sitting next to. The glass gives you a distorted mirror image, which is not at all pleasant. Spanish glass I suppose.

The intention on day two was to retrace the journey to Leeds and go to Preston via the Copy Pit route but train failures altered this plan. The 0845 to Morecambe would normally not be available with a Rover ticket but the announcer at Keighley said that this train was running 25 minutes late so when it arrived at 0910 I had in my possession a valid ticket. It appears the Class 156 for the Carlisle train had failed and the usual Class 150 for the Morecambe train had been utilised with a Class 142 "nodding donkey" substituted for the Morecambe train. I had not before taken the left fork at Settle Junction on to the line to the other Clapham and onwards to Carnforth, another station in urgent

need of repair. In the yard here were two examples of the coaches from the unloved Pilkington Set. From here the train travels up the WCML to Lancaster where the crew change and the train reverses out to call at Bear Lane and Morecambe. This is a bus shelter type station and as I was not intending to stay at this resort I nearly missed the return working which left after less than a minute after its arrival time. A quick dash back to Lancaster and the train was handed over to the original crew for its return to Leeds. I made my way back to Preston and set off to explore the two lines to Blackpool.



North West trains this day was in a right pickle. Was it an ex.member of our club who is now Operations Manager with this company? My intention was to go first to Blackpool South on the 1228 departure a train originating from Colne. At 1221 there was a service to Blackpool North which had started back at Buxton according to the timetable. At 1230 a Class 153 towing a Class 156 arrived. The former displaying Blackpool North on the blind so as the train split I hopped on the rear train. With the passengers for either destination boarded it was then announced that the first train the Class 153 was going to the South station and the Class 156 to the North station. Everybody was in the wrong train and a further few minutes lost while luggage, passengers, and pushchairs etc was moved. Departure to the South station was 24 minutes late.

The run down this line is not very inspiring despite going through posh sounding locations such as Lytham & St. Annes-on-Sea. What was interesting was the work being carried out alongside the track near to Ansdell & Fairhaven station, which is the detraining point for visitors to the open golf championships this year. All the stands to watch the golf were being erected as the edge of the course runs alongside the track. A special train service to this station will be in force during the championships so a leaflet at Preston revealed. One can only hope that punctuality will be better or customers will miss the tee-off. The South station is another bus-shelter but all Railtrack's efforts have gone in to the North station. Eight platforms all in a most clean and smart appearance with semaphore signalling still in existence.

I left Blackpool North on an HST and journeyed as far as Preston. This HST does a round trip from Euston between covering the early morning and late evening journeys from and to Holyhead. Back at Preston the Voyagers were in evidence doing

yet more trials and yes the 17.05 to Leeds was again cancelled due to staff shortages so it was to the digs by the same route as the previous day.

To make the most use of the ticket the last day took me to Chester and a stop off at Warrington Bank Quay. Although a normal working day the south end of the up platform was thronged with enthusiasts, mostly over the age of 40. The freight movements here are very frequent. Timber, coal, petroleum and infrastructure trains came and went utilising Classes 37,47,56,60,66 & 92. A very good variety for photographic and video purposes. Another Voyager came in to practise station work with the turban clad guard making train announcements to the other railway employees on the train. The trip over to Chester gave me the opportunity to sample the GEC Alstom manufactured Class 175's. These are noisier being diesel than the electric Class 333's but the ride was very comfortable and the windows did not distort the views ahead. The weed-killing train has not served this area for along time; the station at Chester could enter the horticultural world with their specimens, which besides those on the track grow out of the walls of the station as well. It would appear that the Class 175's are coping well as no sighting of Class 37's and coaching stock was seen. On my return to Warrington on impulse I boarded a northbound train to offer my last respects to those Class 47 friends at Wigan Springs Branch. Many old favourites were seen in various liveries and states of completeness. Noted were 47213, 47236,47331,47513, & 47584. All previously observed over their life of forty years or so. I could have gone on up to Preston to try to cover the Copy Pit route back to Leeds but my confidence in North West trains to run the service was low so back to West Yorkshire via Manchester and Leeds.

That ended my three days of doing exactly what I wanted without having to consider anyone else. Apart from not travelling on the Copy Pit route I achieved what I set out to do but now I have a reason to visit this area again when perhaps a new operator has taken over the NW franchise.

As I drove back home I called in to a location I had been informed about whilst talking to folk at Warrington. This was the village of Monk Fryston, which lies off the A19 north of

Knottingley. In railway geography it is called South Milford Junction and certainly was a hive of activity. It is four tracked here with crossovers to reach all lines from all lines. Many of the coal trains reversed from the numerous sidings either side of the tracks and quite a lot of traffic branches off here to service the Gasgoine Wood coalfield. Again much variety in the classes with class 37, 56,60,66/0,66/5 and even a 66/6. What is a great benefit to photographers is that overhead wires are not spoiling the shot.

So next year if the franchises are still selling these tickets try one for a carefree few days and remember you should insert the date on the ticket before you travel.

Keith Brown - July 2001



GLIMPSES INTO AUTUMNS PAST - 1976 AND 1986

Compiled by Tim Edmonds



The ash is cleaned from the smokebox of 841 'Greene King' at March shed, where the loco was being serviced after working a special from Manningtree.

18 September 1976.



On the last Wednesday before the closure of King's Cross York Road station, 31190 calls with an up suburban service running through to Moorgate via the Metropolitan Widened Lines.

3 November 1976.

25 Years Ago

Named 'Greene King' after its preservation, ex-Southern Railway class S15 4-6-0 841 ventured to Ipswich from its base at Chappel & Wakes Colne in the early hours of 12 September. Six days later it heralded a welcome return of main-line steam to East Anglia by heading a special train from Manningtree to March.

From 4 October accelerated HST schedules came into force on the Paddington - Bristol/South Wales lines. These were the greatest accelerations to be implemented in Britain on a single occasion, and followed the clearance for 125mph running of 80 miles of the route.

The new timetable also saw the reopening of the station at Muir

of Ord (on the Highland line north of Inverness) and the extension of Matlock branch trains beyond Derby to serve the reopened Peartree station (Peartree & Normanton in its previous life) and new stations at Sinfin North and Sinfin Central.

Diesel working of the Great Northern line inner suburban services ceased from 8 November, with the commencement of EMU services over the Northern City line via Drayton Park and Highbury & Islington to Moorgate. This meant the end of through peak services to Broad Street via the Canonbury curve and to Moorgate via the Metropolitan Widened Lines, the latter resulting in the closure of York Road platform at King's Cross.

15 Years Ago

On 19 September the driver of 86211 'City of Milton Keynes' was killed when his Liverpool - Euston train ran into a Euston - Manchester train at Colwich Junction, between Rugeley and Stafford on the West Coast Main Line. The northbound train had come to a halt straddling the junction after the brake on 86249 'The Times' became automatically applied. About 70 passengers were injured and it was claimed that the strength of construction of the Mark III carriages prevented worse casualties.

It was Gala Day for the Marlow branch on 27 September when Chris Green, Director of Network SouthEast 'reopened' the refitted station at Bourne End. Chocolate and cream liveried class 120 railcar 55020 worked a half-hourly shuttle between Bourne End and Marlow, while 50035 'Ark Royal' was on display at Bourne End.

Marketed as the 'Blackmore Vale Express', a programme of steam-hauled specials between Salisbury - Yeovil Junction ran on the first three weekends of October using 777 'Sir Lamiel' and 35028 'Clan Line'. This was so successful that an extra weekend was added to the programme using 4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley'.



4498 'Sir Nigel Gresley' leaving Salisbury with the 'Blackmore Vale Express'. This was a weekend added to the original programme due to its popularity. 25 October 1986

The Stephenson Locomotive Society arranged a railtour to celebrate the 80th birthday of W.A. Camwell, himself the organiser of many railtours and for 23 years editor of the SLS Journal. The trip on 18 October ran from Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury behind green-liveried 47484 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel', from where LNWR 0-6-2 coal tank 1054 took the train to Stockport via Chester and Northwich. The return from Stockport to Wolverhampton was behind 86103 'André Chapelon'.

The first section of a 2ft gauge railway at Kew Bridge Steam Museum, the former water pumping station, was opened on 15 November. In steam for the occasion was ex Penrhyn Quarry 0-4-0ST 'Lilla' (HE554/1891).

Pictures taken by Tim Edmonds.



Decorated with ribbons for the opening day of the 2ft gauge railway at Kew Bridge Steam Museum, ex Penrhyn Quarry 0-4-0ST 'Lilla' moves offshed. 15 November 1986



Above: Portsmouth Corporation Tram at the new Milestones Museum in Basingstoke. In the background is a reconstruction of part of Winchester Chesil Station, the museum also contains a collection of Tasker steam road engines made locally in the Victorian era. Thornycroft is also very well represented in a reconstructed part of the original Thornycroft works. Several Thornycroft vehicles have been restored or under restoration. The museum is very well laid out and if you have a general transport interest your editor recommends a visit, allow about 3 hours. Further information can be found at www.milestones-museums.com or by phoning 01256 477766

Baie de Somme

MDRS WEEKEND TRIP

APRIL 2002

BAIE DE SOMME



Please speak to Gordon Rippington if you maybe interested in going.



A CFBS train on the embankment on the section between St-Valery & Noyelles.

Eddie Lewcock April 2000

The Spiritual Railway

The Line to heaven by Christ was made
 With heavenly truth the Rails are laid,
 From earth to Heaven the Line extends.
 To Life Eternal where it ends
 Repentance is the Station then
 Where Passengers are taken in
 No Fee for them is there to pay
 For Jesus is himself the way
 God's Word is the first Engineer
 It points the way to Heaven so dear.
 Through tunnels dark and dreary here
 It does the way to Glory steer.
 God's Love the Fire, his Truth the Steam,
 Which drives the Engine and the Train,
 All you who would to Glory ride,
 Must come to Christ, in him abide
 In First and Second, and Third Class,
 Repentance, Faith and Holiness
 You must the way to Glory gain
 Or you with Christ will not remain
 Come then poor Sinners, now's the time
 At any Station on the Line
 If you'll repent and turn from sin
 The Train will stop and take you in.

Tombstone in South Porch, Ely Cathedral

Loco No. 1 Aisne built in 1906 by Corpet-Louvet was restored by the CFBS over a period of 5 years and first steamed in 1992.

Eddie Lewcock April 2000



Right: NBL Co. built 140 C 231 moves slowly down the yard at Noyelles, light engine.

Eddie Lewcock 16 April 2000

