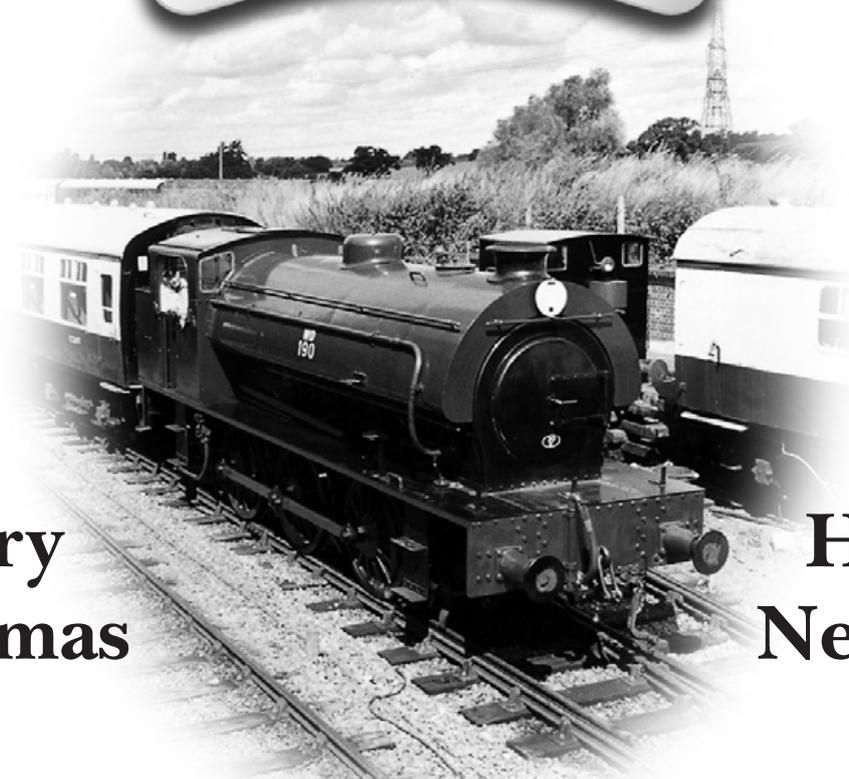


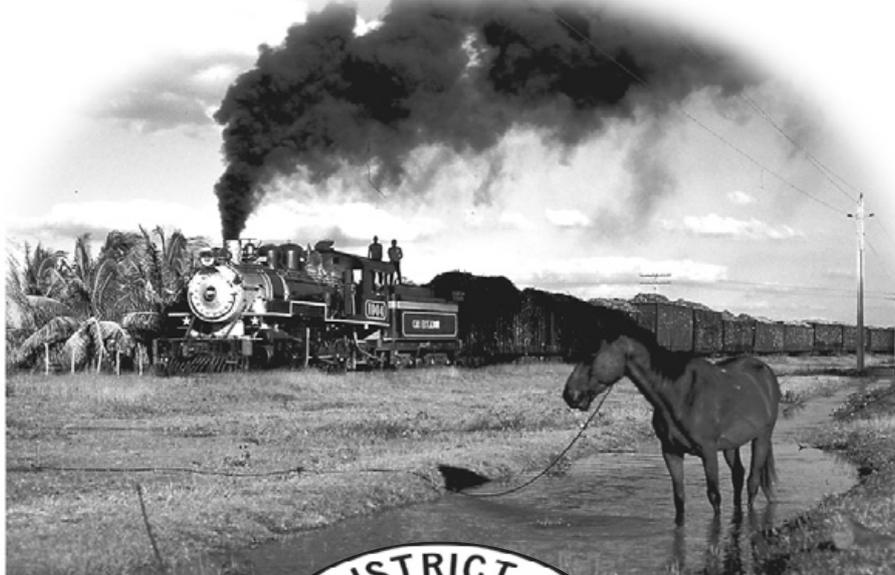
# THE MARLOW DONKEY



**Merry  
Christmas**

**Happy  
New Year**

**to all our Members**



Edition

**98**

December 2001



Contents:

Zafra 2001

Dresdener Dampflokkfest

BC and Across Canada

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

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CONTENTS	page
TIMETABLE	2
CHAIRMANS NOTES	2
RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT	3
LOCO NAMES SEARCH	3
ZAFRA 2001 - CUBAN SUGAR HARVEST	4
DRESDENER DAMPFLOKFEST	6
VISIT TO PRESERVATION SITES IN ESSEX	9
BC AND ACROSS CANADA	11
SWITZERLAND RUNS LIKE CLOCKWORK	12
WINTERS PAST 1977 & 1986	14

### FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS.

*Top: W55033 & WD 190 at Colne Valley Railway. 16-8-01 Alan Costello*

*Bottom: 21035 - A Loaded cane train heads for Ecuador mill, Cuba. February 2001 Peter Robins*

**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.

### 2002

Thursday 17 January	PHOTOGRAPHIC EVENING	
Thursday 21 February	AGM / BRING & BUY	
Thursday 21 March	FILM NIGHT	Frank Banfield
Thursday 18 April	WATERLOO & CITY RAILWAY	John Liffen
Thursday 16 May	WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY	Ivan Moore
Thursday 20 June	BLUEBELL EXTENSION	Mike Mason

## WEEKEND TRIP

April 2002

BAIE DE SOMME

By car

Register an interest with Gordon Rippington by December 2001

## DAY TRIP

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

Hire of dining coach on premier preserved line - June 2002

Please: **NO TALKING DURING PRESENTATIONS**

*Please note: The above programme is subject to change*

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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

On Saturday August 18th four society members, Keith Brown, Terry Dearling, Tim Speechley & myself including two wives set off on a Hertfordshire Railways merry-maker-shopping trip to York. At £19.50 this represents excellent value for a journey of this distance.

Now in captivity within the National Railway Museum (NRM) "Duchess of Hamilton" dwarfs many of the other exhibits. Standing at rail level one cannot help but notice the enormity of the boiler towering above. Not since 1960 on a shed bash round 1B have I stood so close to a Princess Coronation. With sister loco "Duchess of Sutherland" now out and about flexing her muscles this class of locomotive makes an awesome spectacle when being worked. After the NRM visit we awaited the departure of 4472 Flying Scotsman with a V.S.O.E. southbound working.

To round off a memorable day Tim won 1st prize in the raffle held during the return journey, but only after he had been told he had the winning number as Tim was otherwise preoccupied and did not hear the announcements.

With the impending return to steam of "City of Truro" (funds permitting) that old chestnut rears its head yet again. Travelling on the Ocean Mail from Plymouth on May 9th 1904 Charles Rous-Marten (C.R.M.) armed with stopwatches recorded the speed of 102 mph hurtling down Wellington Bank past milepost

171. Much has been written of that far off day's event. With all the known data, tractive effort, weight of train etc. I have seen no mention whatsoever of how accurate the ?mile posts are between each other. In other parts of the railway system they have been found to be inaccurate, in one such case of almost 40 feet further. So, if by chance the distance between mileposts 171? and 171 were incorrect this would also affect the speed recorded. Now almost 98 years on C.R.M. could never have envisaged that this piece of railway history is still in doubt to this day. With all the known information, and today's technology it may be possible to produce an assimilation of that famous day's event. We must wait and see if this comes to fruition.

May I offer my personal thanks to all the contributors to the "Donkey" during 2001 all of which goes to provide an excellent publication.

To the committee, a special thanks for your support during the year.

Finally, with the festive season almost upon us may I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Gordon Rippington.

# RAILWAY ROUNDABOUT

Following on from the Tram emphasis in the last Donkey. News of the new Light Rapid Transit that will eventually link Portsmouth with Gosport via a tunnel under Portsmouth Harbour. The tunnel will be made from pre-constructed segments lowered into a trench 2,500ft long by 40ft wide dredged out from the harbour channel. The tunnel will take £37m of the £150m cost, and will close the harbour each night during lowering of the segments from midnight to 7am when the first continental ferry leaves. A great deal of planning is going into this project for Portsmouth is a major Naval and commercial port with over 200 shipping movements per day. Harbour users have been playing computer games to practice moving in and out of the harbour that has a narrow entrance, which will be even more restricted during construction work. Work will start in 2003 and take two years to complete, when completed it will only take 90 seconds for trams to pass through the tunnel.

There are two proposals both by the same company to build a rail tunnel from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. One proposal is for trains to run out on bridges from both land ends and then via a tunnel meeting in the centre on the ocean bed. The other is for a full length tunnel which would enable Islanders to travel from Newport to Waterloo. The first scheme would cost £60m and the second £180m. Though there is not a large population living on the Isle of Wight, and many are retired, it is the most expensive stretch of water to cross per mile in the world. Your editor doubts if either scheme will come to fruition, but then I guess people thought that about the Channel Tunnel.

## Another Tunnel

## LOCO NAMES SEARCH

Just a little something for you to do between Christmas and the New Year.

Hidden in this grid are the names of 56 British Railway 4-6-0 locomotives as listed below. Once you have found all 56, there will be 34 letters left over, which, when re-arranged, will form the names of two further 4-6-0's having something in common with each other.

The hidden names, which run in straight lines only, will be found running horizontally, vertically or diagonally and can be read either forwards or backwards. No names turn on to more than one line.

N	I	L	A	B	R	I	S	K	R	E	B	F	O	Y	T	N	U	O	C
O	A	B	L	E	N	H	E	I	M	Y	E	B	B	A	H	T	A	B	O
H	C	M	E	K	W	A	H	N	R	E	D	N	A	S	Y	L	B	E	L
P	L	A	Y	N	A	C	K	G	A	T	A	B	I	D	U	Q	O	C	O
O	A	G	A	R	N	L	U	P	I	R	R	E	N	O	W	N	T	N	S
R	N	N	T	E	E	N	D	E	R	L	V	I	C	T	O	R	I	A	S
E	M	O	R	P	T	L	U	L	M	O	W	H	S	A	E	E	N	R	U
L	A	T	P	O	E	E	L	L	A	H	Y	E	L	T	S	A	A	B	S
L	C	E	N	S	S	E	G	I	R	D	T	A	L	A	R	S	M	M	W
E	K	I	N	G	J	O	H	N	T	O	Y	R	L	L	N	A	A	E	E
B	I	D	E	S	A	I	L	O	A	R	B	G	O	S	P	E	M	M	L
L	N	F	O	L	R	I	L	R	N	R	A	E	O	W	C	A	S	E	T
I	N	S	A	O	N	R	A	E	U	N	G	L	R	D	K	O	R	R	S
C	O	Y	L	E	H	T	I	E	X	A	J	A	A	T	I	C	T	K	A
K	N	A	T	T	S	D	N	D	M	I	J	I	F	Y	B	V	A	I	C
L	R	T	N	E	O	E	R	E	T	A	R	R	E	R	O	L	A	H	Y
I	E	S	D	R	I	B	R	O	O	M	E	M	A	N	O	R	A	T	B
N	V	O	I	V	L	Y	H	R	L	L	A	H	E	R	E	M	E	K	N
G	L	B	I	E	E	K	O	O	R	B	G	N	I	H	C	N	I	H	E
D	I	V	A	D	T	N	I	A	S	W	I	N	D	O	N	H	R	U	T

# ZAFRA 2001 - THE CUBAN SUGAR HARVEST

As one person on the tour commented, there are now only two main centres left in the world where steam enthusiasts gather to see steam locos working for their living - Reshui ( for the Jingpeng Pass in China ) and Santa Clara ( for the Cuban sugar harvest ).

Having previously been to China, I decided to go to Cuba for the 2001 Zafra or Sugar Harvest, and of the four or so tours advertised to run in February 2001, I decided to go with Steam and Safaris. Unfortunately we were booked to fly to Havana via Madrid with Iberia. Their timekeeping was worse than Virgin Cross Country on a bad day and customer service was virtually non-existent. Our flight left Heathrow late but we thought that they would have allowed us to connect with the Havana flight. Not so. Our seats had been sold and we were told that we would be continuing on to Havana the next day. At least we managed to visit the railway museum at Madrid Delicias during our enforced 24hr. stay. After the nine and a half hour flight we arrived at Havana where it took 2 hours and 20 minutes to clear immigration and collect a very scratched and grubby suitcase. We were then bussed to the Havana Plaza hotel arriving well after midnight.

The next morning, we went for breakfast, met the rest of the group, who more sensibly had decided to go with either Air France or BA, the self proclaimed worlds favourite, and could see Havana in all its glory from the fifth floor restaurant. Although some of the buildings looked very old and weatherworn, everywhere was surprisingly clean and free of litter. The most amazing thing was the vast number of old American cars of the 1950's which were still in use. We also noted a Hillman Minx, a Vauxhall Velox, and a number of Ford Consuls during the tour. It was a car enthusiasts paradise as well. We were driven to first mill, "Augusto Cesar Sandino", in relatively modern air conditioned minibuses which was just as well seeing as the conditions outside were now hot and humid, at 10:00 in the morning. This mill achieved notoriety last year when one of their locos, No.1382, a Baldwin product of 1915 suffered a boiler explosion. Remnants of the wrecked engine could still be found at various points around the shed. Our Spanish speaking guide asked when the next train was due from the cane fields and was told ten minutes. Note - A Cuban ten minutes can be anything from five minutes to two hours.

Sugar cane is usually cut by machine but sometimes by hand and is then loaded into trailers which may be hauled by various ancient varieties of tractor or in some cases oxen to the loading point or "acopio". The most we saw was two trailers hauled by fourteen oxen. At the loading point, the cane is mechanically stripped of waste, chopped and loaded into railway cane cars. At many loading points, cane cars are shunted using a cable attached to the car furthest away and winched in to move the vehicles. Throughout the day, locos arrive with empty cane cars and leave with loaded cars. The number of loading points per mill, the number of loaded cane departures from loading points and the distance from loading point to mill varies widely from mill to mill. Cane must however be processed at the mill within 24 hrs. of cutting or else it is rendered useless. There are about sixty sugar mills in Cuba which

have steam locos allocated, although after taking mills closed for repair and those where steam is not now regularly used out of the equation, about thirty were left with working steam in 2001. Mills are all given a three digit number starting from 1xx in the west to 6xx in the east. The locos are numbered from 1101 to 1910 with higher numbers being given to more powerful machines. Most were built by Baldwin or Alco, between 1895 and 1925 and include 3',2'6", & 2'3" gauge examples. All are oil burners and produce vast quantities of thick black smoke - completely inefficient but they make very nice pictures.

Returning to No.105 "Augusto Cesar Sandino", a 3' gauge system, we saw black smoke on the horizon as we headed for our photo spot. No.1350, a Baldwin 2-8-0 of 1916 was approaching with a loaded cane train. As the crew saw us they turned the burners on which produced a deep toned drumming noise and copious quantities of black smoke as the train passed. The crew indicated that they would be back for more and twenty minutes later they had returned and were taking another heavy load of cane back to the mill. That afternoon, we called at No.201 "Armistad con los Pueblos" where although the mill was closed, two locos were collecting cane from the loading points and tripping it to another mill and No.211 "Ruben Martinez Villena" where after giving the crew a few dollars, they posed their train and performed run pasts over the flat crossing at Roble. We stayed the night at the somewhat tacky resort of Varadero.

The next morning, we set up our cameras at Contreras Station to photograph No.1531 a Baldwin 2-6-0 of 1925 from mill No.315 "Jose Smith Comas" approaching with an empty train for the loading point. When the crew saw us the black smoke stopped and the loco coasted to a stand. Some negotiation took place between our guide and the loco crew, some dollars changed hands, the train reversed and then came forward with the required black smoke. It was a shame the sun had just gone



*20865 - Loaded cane train near Contreras station heading towards Jose Smith Comas mill.*

behind a cloud. Later in the day we called in at mill No.303 "Australia" which had a reputation for having even more mercenary crews. Everyone there claimed to be a driver and invited members of our group onto various loco footplates and then asked for five dollars. The shed was filthy and the locos were

exceptionally grubby and No.1620, a Henschel 2-6-0 of 1920 was wearing the latest unpainted rust livery. If only the shed staff spent more time looking after their locos rather than fleeing photographers !!! Even the local children all knew four words of English - "Give me one dollar" . At the loading point we paid the driver of No.1607, a Baldwin product of 1920 to give us a smoky departure. No problem with the smoke but the driver obviously hadn't passed any money to the fireman, as he came out of the cab and danced on the running plate as the loco passed by. The line crosses the motorway on a level crossing - ungated of course - and we did see No.1607 and its crazy crew highball over the crossing with about one thousand tons of sugar cane, in the total faith that someone was holding a red flag to the road traffic. We left No.1607 and headed towards our hotel at Cienfuegos on the Caribbean Sea. We were advised to be careful in Cienfuegos as the local female population would take a keen interest in us - not for our good looks, wit and charm but for our dollars. As we waited at traffic lights in Cienfuegos, the American in our group opened the window of the bus and called to a group of girls "Hi, I'm American and they're British". The response was interesting to say the least.

Our next mill was No.443 "Pepito Tey", an attractive 2'6" gauge system which was only about twenty minutes drive from the hotel. I have never before managed a swim in a pool and a paddle in the sea between morning and evening photo sessions. The oil burners on the narrow gauge locos are nearer the ground than on their standard gauge cousins, which has the effect of enhancing the drumming noise and shaking the ground as the train passes. Also, "Pepito Tey" locos were driven flat out at all times which I am sure made some very interesting video footage.

bull. As I walked by past this bovine bulk, I heard a loud bellow, looked round to see the bull and flailing tether charging the person behind me. Luckily he was a good runner! We returned to the train and continued on towards the mill. There was a familiar burning smell wafting into the caboose and smoke could be seen from one of the cane cars. On most railways a hot axlebox would be good excuse to abandon any photography and return to the depot at reduced speed. Not so in Cuba. Although squeals of protest were coming from the cane car, we performed one more photo run past and flames could now be seen coming from axleboxes. As our typically laid back Cuban brakeman returned to the caboose, he commented in his best English "Needa some oil". On arrival at the mill, one of the many under-utilised mill employees cleared out the mass of burning wadding from the axleboxes and then left them to cool down.

Mill No.440 "Ifraín Alfonso" is home to the largest steam locos in Cuba. Unfortunately, No.1910 their Alco 2-8-2 of 1925 was under repair and so the smaller No.1637 was left to do the honours. Despite reversing from a water stop to get a good run up the steep climb towards the mill, No.1637 stalled about a hundred yards short of the summit and was obliged to reverse and try again, fortunately with more success.

We started the long haul across the island to Guardalavaca in the East as we had two days worth of charters booked at the super scenic 2'6" system at mill no.635, "Rafael Freyre" - or so we thought !!! For some reason - still not known at the time of writing - the charters were booked out to the "Steam in Paradise" group on one day and a non-photographic group from one of the hotels on the other day. Luckily we were allowed to join the "Steam in Paradise" group and managed to get the classic Cuban shot on Barjay curve. Whereas most mill systems have very plain scenery, the West line of the "Rafael Freyre" system heads through rolling hills set between the higher peaks. The mill was not operating due repair work being carried out. Although the inside of a mill is normally completely out of bounds but we were taken inside and shown the massive stationary steam engine which drives all the mill operations with its connecting rods removed.

Heading back towards Havana, we called in at mills No.504 "Ecuador" and No.522 "Venezuela" which have been described as being like Belgium with palm trees - a reference to the flat terrain. Mill No.503 "Orlando Gonzalez Ramirez" operated two colourful 2-8-0's. One was in a shade of S&DJR Prussian Blue and the other was in a very close shade of Southern Malachite Green. The attraction of this standard gauge system was the section running through the main street at Limones where loaded cane trains would be mercilessly thrashed past the shops and houses.

A portent of things to come was at mill No.404 "Cuidad Caracas" where three locos were seen in various states of dismantling. Only the wheels and frames with two steam pipes rising from the cylinders remained of No.1630, a Baldwin 2-8-0 of 1920. A tree had taken root between the frames and was now about six foot high. The last mill visited was No.207 "Gregorio Arlee Manalich" a dual gauged system with an abundance of ninety degree crossings - a railway modellers dream.



*20881 - Empty train climbs away from Pepito Tey Mill on the 2'6" gauge system.*

The next day we had a caboose ride at the rear of the train on the 2'6" gauge system at mill No.403, "Mal Tiempo", allegedly the home of the noisiest locos in Cuba. I can confirm that their reputation is well deserved and the "Mal Tiempo Rumble" caused by the drumming oil burners could be heard all over the surrounding countryside. On the return trip, we stopped to photograph the train crossing a picturesque river bridge which entailed walking down a pathway next to a rather large tethered



21035 - A Loaded cane train heads for Ecuador mill.

All too soon, we had to head for the airport to suffer two more late flights with Iberia. I had enjoyed my first tour of Cuba. Although photographically, Cuba is nothing special, the sight and sound of eighty year old American built locos still working hard for their living is absolutely spectacular. The Cuban people are very laid back, and most are very friendly. According to our American colleague, they must also be superb mechanics, as the Americans could never keep their own 1950's cars working. As long as Castro survives, the Cuban time warp should remain. However once the Americans can trade freely, I suspect that the mill systems that survive will be operated by brand new General Motors diesels.

*Peter Robins*

## DRESDENER DAMPFLOKFEST

Monday 30 April 2001

At the end of April/beginning of May this year, whilst I was on a coach tour of Germany focused on RAF activities during the Second World War, I had a pleasant surprise whilst in Dresden. Having bombed the Mohne and Eder Dams, escaped from Colditz and visited the site of the Great Escape at Stalag Luft 3 at Zagan, Poland. The coach was approaching our hotel in Dresden; it traversed a long viaduct crossing over the main line and yards. Imagine my surprise to see a roundhouse with seven locomotives in steam and several others on static display.

After checking in at the hotel, which was nearby, I obtained information from sceptical females at reception who could not comprehend why a mad Englishman wanted to rush off to see puff-puffs. From the map they provided I was able to walk to the Bahnbetriebswerkes Altstadt to visit Dempflokfest Dresdener 2001.

The site was half a kilometre long between roundhouse one and a traverser shed, with a second roundhouse '4' in between. Several sidings ran along the length of the site, which was adjacent to one of the main lines out of the Hauptbahnhof, about a kilometre away.

As Dresden was in the former German Democratic Republic, most of the locomotive numbers quoted are those of the GDR Deutsch Reichsbahn, whilst the ex numbers are those given by the pre-war Deutsch Reichsbahn before partition of Germany. DB numbers are of the post unification Deutsch Bahn.

Roundhouse one had seven locomotives in steam, which came on to the turntable in turn, each being rotated three times then left for five minutes in a suitable orientation in the sun for a three quarters photo shot. Highlight of roundhouse one was the streamlined Pacific 01-1103-01.



**01-519**

4-6-2  
1930, rebuilt 1963

**03-2240-0**

4-6-2  
1930, rebuilt 1960

**24-083**

2-6-0  
Schichau, Ebling 1936

**35-1113-6**

2-6-2  
1940 Berlin Maschinenbau  
rebuilt 1961

**50-3708-0**

2-10-0  
1936

**41-1185-2**

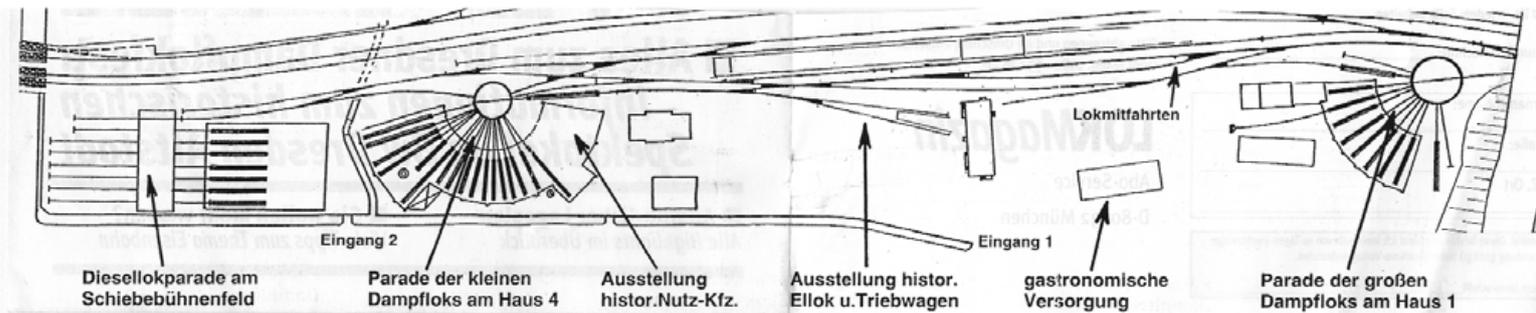
2-8-2

**03-1103-1**

4-6-2 (streamlined)

A further locomotive was in steam on siding one between the roundhouses, 50-3648-8, a 2-10-0 built in 1941, rebuilt 1961, now in the Sachsen Eisenbahn Museum was giving free footplate rides.

In siding 2 were several steam locomotives in a static display together with diesel hydraulic B-B locomotives and several -D- jackshaft drive shunters.



**1-135**, ex 17-1055

4-6-0 class S-10  
Prussian State Railways 1914

**03-001** (ex 03-2001-0)

4-6-2  
Borsig 1930

**89-6009**

0-6-0  
Humboldt, Köln 1902 Henschel, Kassel

**01-137** (ex 01-2137-6)

4-6-4T  
Henschel, Kassel 1935, Rebuilt 1963

**62-015** (ex 62-1015-7)

Henschel, Kassel 1928

**V240-001**

B-B diesel hydraulic

**V80-007**

B-B diesel hydraulic

**345-088-9**

(in DB Cargo colours)  
- D -, jackshaft drive

**346-850-1**

(in DB Cargo colours)  
- D -, jackshaft drive

Siding 3 held the latest version of the DB lo-floor 2 car DMU 642-056-6 whilst siding 4 held an ICE-TD 4 car tilting DMU 605-018-1, both open for inspection by the public.

Outside Roundhouse 4 there were seven older steam locomotives of Prussian State Railways parentage on display.

**75-515** (ex XIV HT Bahn 1-806)

2-6-2T  
Sachsische machinefabriken 1911

**92-503-5** (ex PSR 7-901)

0-8-0T Prussian State Railways T13  
Union Giesserei, Königsberg 1910

**78-009** (ex PSR 5-409)

4-6-4T Prussian State Railways T19  
Vulkan Werks, Stettin-Bredow, 1912

**80-023**

0-6-0T  
AmJung Lokfabriken, Jungenthal, 1928

**93-230**

0-8-0 Prussian State Railways G8

2-8-2T Prussian State Railways T14, 1914

**57-3297-9** (ex 33-2327)

0-10-0 Prussian State Railways G10  
Hohenzollern Aktiengesellschaft,

Dusseldorf Grafenberg 1923

Outside the traverser house at the end of the site were ten diesel hydraulic and electric locomotives of either East German (DDR) or Russian (USSR) origin, some in DR colours, some re-engined and now in DB colours. One refurbished Russian Co-Co diesel electric W232.01 was in Schaufele livery but on hire from ADtranz.

**102-188-0**

-B- diesel, jackshaft drive  
VEB Karl Marx, Babelsberg 1959

**346-670-9** (in DB colours)

-D- diesel, jackshaft drive

**120-338-9** (ex DR 220-338-8)

Co-Co diesel electric  
Oktober Revolution,  
Woroshilograd, USSR 1973

**232-218-8** (in DB Cargo colours)

Co-Co diesel electric

**234-304-4** (in DB Regio colours)

Co-Co diesel electric

**130-002-9**

Co-Co diesel electric  
Oktober Revolution,  
Woroshilograd, USSR 1970

**232-031-5** (in DB Cargo colours)

Co-Co diesel electric

**241-802-8** (in DB Cargo colours)

Co-Co diesel electric

### **W232.01**

B-B diesel hydraulic, type V100

Co-Co diesel electric

VEB LEW Hans Heilen, Hennigsdorf wearing the colours of Schaufele, but owned by ADtranz

Two vintage electric locomotives were on static display, E77-10, a 1-B+B-1 three section articulated locomotive with jackshaft drives, built by Krauss, Munchen in 1925, and E44-01 Bo-Bo locomotive, of which no information was at hand.

Half an hour before the fest closed, to a cacophony of steam and diesel whistles, an enthusiasts special on its way home passed the site on the adjacent main line hauled by vintage crocodile electric DR class E254 and tailed by steam locomotive 35-1097-1 a 2-6-2 tender loco), being worked hard for the benefit of fest attendees. Whilst the fest was in progress, ordinary traffic continued on the adjacent main line, mainly consisting of 2 or 3 or 4 double deck carriages pushed or pulled by class 110 DR electric locomotives.

Overall an enjoyable three hours, totally unexpected, my only regret that I had not bought my camera with me on this tour.

**Trevor Jones**



## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

*Dear John,*

*The latest Donkey arrived this morning, and was read as I trundled round the Preston-Lime Street-Piccadilly triangle. The ex-member still has work to do, with only a 153 on the Preston to Liverpool, and a 156 on the Manchester Airport to Windermere train.*

*Keith Brown's dog-less tale is the cause of my missive.*

*A few points of fact: Morecambe station is not a "bus shelter type station". When it was re-sited nearer the town centre back in the 90s it was given a brand new station building complete with booking office. The stop on the way is Bare, not Bear! Railtrack's wonderful station regeneration work is finally to begin at Carnforth, where the station has won awards for its unattractiveness. Preston's roof has at*

*long last been finished, and now work has begun on refurbishing the buildings on platforms 3 and 4, the main island platform. By the way, Arriva Trains Northern are the guys with the huge driver shortage, not First North Western.*

*Can anyone come up with a less productive stretch of double track than the Settle Junction to Carnforth line? 5 trains each way, Monday to Friday. I think it's one block section, of over 20 miles - am I correct? I see in the winter timetable that the line is shut on Saturdays and Sundays for a period from January to March. Seems that all those track-bashing steam locos have taken their toll on the infrastructure!*

*Regards,*

*John Sears*

## VISIT TO PRESERVATION SITES IN ESSEX

On 16th August 2001 we visited the Colne Valley Railway and the East Anglian Railway Museum.

We went from Bishop's Stortford on the A120 to the Braintree Bypass from which the Colne Valley Railway was sign posted. It operates steam days on Wednesday and Thursdays (as well as Sundays) during the school holidays with diesel power on Tuesdays and Fridays. As it was a Thursday, at the entrance there was a notice stating

it was a steam day, giving the fares and facilities available. From the car park we walked along a path to the ticket office/souvenir shop (mainly Thomas toys) located in a converted coach. The charge was £6 each with no concessionary fares. From the coach we carried along a path next to the line with views across to the sidings. Stock stabled in them included Class 31's 31270 and 31255 (un-numbered and in EWS livery), D2041 and Railbus 79978. Also there appeared to be an ex Southern Region MLV coach in green livery. After about 100yds we reached the station. Stabled in the platform were Pullman Coaches with another row of coaches/dmu's in a siding at the back of the station (including 59501 which was bought from Chinnor). We went over the footbridge and joined a 3 coach train with Hunslet WD 190 at its head. Trains were running halfhourly between 1130 and 1530. We left the station passing their Farm Park and after about 400yds came to a halt. That was as far as the train went. The engine ran round and returned passing through the station, past the yard for about another 400yds. Again the engine ran round and we returned to the station. I think as much time was spent waiting while the engine ran round as actually on the move.

We then went to the buffet car to have one of their all-day breakfasts as advertised on the poster at the entrance to the site only to be told that there was no hot food available - only tea, coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches, cakes or ice-cream. It was not permitted to visit the yard. There was evidence of a lot of excavation work that I assume is for their diesel shed. A number of industrial 0-4-0 and 0-6-0 tanks were stabled around the site

but the 2 LMS class 5's were not seen (although there was a boiler) and the Merchant Navy 35010 could just be seen with its

casing removed at the far end of the site. Close to the line is their Farm Park with various small animals that would interest children. In my opinion the £6 charge was a little high compared with other railways - they don't even issue Edmonson tickets.

We then went on to the East Anglian Museum passing through a number of villages with names all

ending in Colne. The Museum shares Chappel and Wakes Colne Station with Great Eastern. The platforms are above the station



*31 255 at CVR. 16-8-01*



*D2041 at CVR. 16-8-01*

entrance so after paying the non operating day fare of £3 (including Edmonson tickets even without trains), we went up the steps through the Great Eastern booking office out on to Platform 1 (used by GE) over the footbridge to the opposite Platform that is used by the museum. It was possible to look round the site with only the engineering workshop closed to visitors (Health and Safety). 3 Signal boxes can be visited with

visitors allowed to pull the levers in the Chapel Main box. Again as at the CVR refreshments were limited to hot and cold drinks and light snacks at the entrance although there is a new outlet on the platform which is open at busier times.

Working days are very limited mainly one Sunday a month plus special days such as 'Thomas', Beer and Cider Festivals.

Only main line loco on site was Class 37 37003 in all over green livery. The ex GER tank 69621 is away being overhauled, but there were a number of industrial steam engines to be seen. Class 04 diesel D2279 was there carrying the number 11249, and hidden under a tarpaulin was Class 08 D3940 (08772). As the station is shared with the Great Eastern (it runs an hourly

*W55033 & WD 190 at CVR. 16-8-01*



*Spelbrook Signal Box. 16-8-01*

To change the subject, between Harlow and Bishop's Stortford at Spelbrook, there is a manned signal box and level crossing-Spelbrook Crossing (note spelt with only one l) the gates still operated by the signalman. Unusually the two gates only cover one track each and are only at one side when open to road traffic. The road is quite narrow and there is only room for one car to cross so one gate easily shuts off the road. The signalman is kept very busy as there is normally 8 trains an hour each way plus the occasional freight.

**Alan Costello**

Keith Brown's dog-less tale is the cause of my missive.

service between Marks Tey and Sudbury) there doesn't seem to be anything stopping people getting off the trains or even using the GE entrance to the station going on to the site without paying. The only person I saw connected with the railway was in the entrance hall. There is also a miniature railway giving rides but again it was not open. Amount of track that can be used by trains is limited to the station area, a short stretch to north and south and the yard. Nearby is the impressive 32 Arch Chappel Viaduct. It's difficult to see all of it due the the large amount of trees in the area, but it is possible to go up to it as there is a car park and footpaths at the south end. They have a souvenir shop which includes an extensive used railway book section.

A few points of fact: Morecambe station is not a "bus shelter type station". When it was re-sited nearer the town centre back in the 90s it was given a brand new station building complete with booking office. The stop on the way is Bare, not Bear! Railtrack's wonderful station regeneration work is finally to begin at Carnforth, where the station has won awards for its unattractiveness. Preston's roof has at long last been finished, and now work has begun on refurbishing the buildings on platforms 3 and 4, the main island platform. By the way, Arriva Trains Northern are the guys with the huge driver shortage, not First North Western.

*317 653 at Spelbrook Signal Box. 16-8-01*



*317 714 at Spelbrook Signal Box. 16-8-01*

# BC AND ACROSS CANADA

April/May 2001 by Mike Hyde

It had cleared from being a typical dull wet morning in Vancouver. We had recently had a run from end to end on the city's unmanned overground system called 'Skytrain'. The more enjoyable since we had not paid for the two hour round trip! Due to industrial action all public transport in Vancouver was at a standstill; buses, trolleys, ferries. But the Government had decreed that the 'Skytrain' must run as an essential commuter link to business. However there was no one to check tickets or to empty ticket machines! Never look a gift horse or a free ride, in the mouth, say I. And a very interesting trip it was too. As we settled into our cabins aboard The Canadian for the overnight journey to Jasper, I went over in my head just what we had done in the past four or five days.

There is no doubt in my mind that one of the least promoted yet beautiful areas of North America is British Columbia. I had been to Vancouver twice before and visited Vancouver Island as well as travelled on the Royal Hudson to Squamish, but that was nothing to what I had subsequently experienced. Initially, after a day in the city touring the usual spots in the showers that frequent the west coast, we watched the early morning Budd RDC Railcar depart North Vancouver for Prince George. Soon it was to be our turn behind immaculate 2-8-0 BCR No. 3716, Montreal built 1912. She proved to be reliable and hearty. Her sister loco plus semi-steamlined Royal Hudson No. 2860 were both being overhauled in the nearby workshop.

As we ran up along the shore of Howe Sound on the 40 mile journey to Squamish (a rail route only completed in 1956 by the Pacific Great Eastern – named after our own Great Eastern) the weather brightened. On arrival, a short tour of the West Coast Railway Heritage Park was in order. Since I had last seen the collection it had moved location to north of the station and had expanded. A ride on 4800ft of 7.1/2in gauge train took us on a run around the site. This allowed a fine view of the stock of over 60 vintage cars and locomotives before a closer inspection on foot. CPR F7A Unit No.4069 (B Unit 4459 under repair), 1951 Alco RS-1 GN No.182 (a repaint only but GN typical - it was in fact Proctor & Gamble's No.1), 1910 Baldwin 2-6-2ST PGE No.2, and GE 65,70,80 Ton switchers, to name but a few. Other pieces include box cars, cabooses, hoppers, snow plows, business cars, sleepers, coaches and steam/diesel cranes. The WCRHP is in fact affiliated to the West Somerset Railway and the Keith & Dufftown Railway in UK.

Soon after we were on our way again, to Whistler for an overnight stop. Unfortunately we arrived just as the mountain lifts were closing for the day so I was not able to judge the quality of the skiing facilities. Apres ski seemed well catered for, at least as far as bars and eating places. Next morning we again headed north and the scenery really became stunning as the train ran between mountains, around lakes and through unspoilt countryside. You truly begin to feel something of the pioneering spirit and a sense of adventure. Point 'zero' is reached at Lillooet, that is, where the Cariboo wagon trail for the 300 mile trek to the Barkerville gold fields started in 1858. In truth it would have been a hard task just to get this far and what lay ahead was to get no easier for another hundred miles. Appropriately this next place is called One Hundred Mile House (260 miles of rail from Vancouver), or Exeter, after the Marquis of Exeter who later bought the ranch and roadhouse. But first one had to climb over 2000 feet high above the Fraser River. The railway makes a 2.2 per-cent grade up to Hilltop onto the Cariboo Plateau, eventually

to Horse Lake at an elevation of 3864 feet above sea level, the highest point on the line. Our trip by steam was only halfway to Prince George but some say, the most spectacular part. The Budd Railcars do the whole 462 miles in 14 and a half hours but we were there for the ride and another overnight stop at Exeter. The return journey was just as wonderful particularly overlooking the Fraser River gorge and the reflective lakeside runs. Each and every train is preceded by a MoW rail/road vehicle in case of rock falls or landslides. With ongoing trackwork there was much to look out for as well as the massive freights, at work or rest and, of course, those marvellous Budd Railcars.

We spent the night on the journey back at Lillooet, still a place with the feel of a frontier town, but with an interesting museum. En route we had the pleasure of being shown over the pride of BCR, their new luxury passenger train, the Whistler Northwind. It will run all the way to Prince George and there one can link up with Via Rail's Skeena from Jasper to Prince Rupert. So I for one, have much more to see and to travel in this neck of the woods. And I cannot wait to achieve it.

There is no doubt that the run through the Canadian Rockies is worth every penny. For my money the east to west journey is the better direction but this time I settled for the reverse. Trackworks befell us several times so it was not surprising we were 3 hours late into Jasper. A late night and an early morning so as not to miss too much of the splendid scenery would normally set me back but I love the area and was raring to go. Our coach took us along the Icefields Parkway with photo-stops en route including the Athabasca Glacier and Columbia Icefield. Arriving late evening at Banff did not allow time to investigate until the morning. A trip 770 metres up Sulphur Mountain by gondola was refreshing and left time for a visit to the Rocky Mountaineer rail/bus terminus, to view a few passing freights and to take in a town tour (including model shop, of course). That evening I had arranged dinner at the former CPR depot (station) at Lake Louise. En route I detoured to take in an Osprey's nest and Morant's curve, the famous CPR photographer's frequent location and still used by the RM publicity machine. The station building at LL is now a very nice restaurant and in summer one can eat in old dining cars positioned alongside the depot. Right on cue for our visit, a freight rumbled past as we arrived and another, just as we were departing in the dark. Quite a memorable day.

Back at Jasper we awaited the Eastbound Canadian running only 2 hours late. So a wander around, talk to train crew, see off The Skeena (F40. 6457 plus 2 coaches) and photograph the plintheled CN4-8-2 No.6015. Eventually into our 'Silver & Blue Class' coach for the 2 and a half day run to Toronto via Edmonton and Winnipeg. Edmonton was a surprise to me. Via Rail no longer runs into the city centre and the magnificent Union station but passes on a 'park and ride' style out of town platform by an airfield. Tantalisingly the city can be seen in the distance. Then a reverse move by our 3 F40s 6443/6/2 back onto the main line, right alongside a major workshop area and freight yard, and we are away. Winnipeg was unchanged and allowed a quick dash under the station to what had been the freight yards and was now a shopping/restaurant area. Rather a pity but the Station Railway Museum (manned by volunteers) was closed! Perhaps they were unaware that our passengers would have liked to buy souvenirs.

Most travellers will tell you that the prairies are boring. Each to their own but for me the long straight tracks and vast wheat

growing lands of mid Canada are a real part of the country. The old wooden Grain towers are fast disappearing but the few that remain still give me a stir as I reach for my camera. The modern steel circular towers are not the same but at least continue the traditional backdrop. On board, food and service is excellent and the cabins are comfortable. However in the singles the bed pulls down and covers the loo! Be warned, but you are not in the cabins for long. Doubles looked much better.

The Royal York in Toronto is the former CPR hotel right outside the Union station. From here you can walk for miles underground (in winter you need to) through shopping areas and a variety of eating places. The station building and the hotel make a very impressive complex, a short walk from the CN Tower.

For our last full day I took the party on a 2 hour ride to Niagara Falls by train. This is a joint Via Rail/ Amtrak service bound for New York. We took the 'People Mover' bus to the falls, rode the 'Maid of the Mist, climbed the Skylon Tower, etc. However the return trip to Toronto was not to be so simple. Apparently this route from USA is used by illegal immigrants etc, so US Customs take 2 hours to search the train their side. Then Canadian Customs take an hour (perhaps they are quicker or not so thorough?) to do the same. We opted out. Alongside the rail station is a bus station where a coach was due to leave for Toronto. As the manager would take my party and some other rail passengers (by putting on a duplicate service so as not to overcrowd the scheduled bus – now that's what I call initiative!) plus would accept our return rail tickets, we went by Greyhound. The bus actually stopped outside our hotel at precisely the time

we were due in by train! As to the train, we never heard when/if it got in. If you are ever thinking of journeying from USA to Canada by rail this route, you have been warned that this type of delay is normal.

I have yet to travel Eastern Canada by rail but for the time being I should very much like to see more of BC and to again sample their hospitality.

**Mike Hyde.**

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## SWITZERLAND RUNS LIKE CLOCKWORK

by Mike Hyde

As I outlined our itinerary to the railway official, I smiled as at first he did not believe me, then said 'you have covered all the important and interesting lines bar one and I cannot see how you could have done that in the time you had'. Actually 'that one' was closed due to a landslide. Furthermore another line we later tried was closed for the same reason. So we hardly missed anything. Believe what you read or hear about Swiss transport integration and trains running to time. But do not be surprised if a Swiss is occupying your reserved seat. It happened to my party several times and the ticket inspectors did not want to know. That said I found most railway officials very helpful and with a reasonable command of English.

Eurostar to Paris is the usual start. In our case, RTC, it was thence by SNCF to Montreux. In all about 10 hours and then you are sitting on the balcony sipping your Geneva and tonic, admiring the traffic. Beautiful steamers come and go frequently on the lake, Lac Lemman, as bendi-trolley buses zip up and down the main road. In the background one can hear the trains passing through the station. A transport paradise in many respects.

My first morning came with a little drizzle so I opted for a trolleybus ride, end to end, to/from Villeneuve and Vevey. At the latter town, the bus terminus is at the funicular to Mont Pelerin, but it was not open at the time. An alternative trip could have been a short train ride (we had the excellent Swiss Rail Passes for the week) to Chamby for the railway museum and a 15 min run to Blonay, even on to Vevey. From the many choices we decided on the exciting 1.1/4 hour climb by rack

railway (MOB) to Rochers de Naye (2045m). A 2-car EMU to Caux then change to our RTE Special steam charter 1992 SLM Winterthur 0-4-2T No. MGN.1 pushing our coach to the summit, with me on the footplate! The weather closed in and it snowed as one side of my body froze and the other side roasted. Up through the tunnels, snow sheds and finally across the ridge to enter the mountain one side and reappear the other. Then a 200 yards walk from the station along a pedestrian tunnel to the restaurant and lookout place. Just as we arrived, the view cleared and we could see out across the Swiss and French Alps and down over Lake Geneva (Leman). Magic for a first day.

Next day we were off on a five-hour run to Luzern via Zweisimmen, Speiz and Bern. The first leg was by the magnificent 'Golden Pass Express' with cream and brown high windowed panoramic cars, some trains but not ours, having an observation front and rear! En route to Les Avants we passed the new single car EMU also in the cream and chocolate livery. Three changes of train, at Speiz from NG to Standard Gauge, got us to Luzern and another world. This marvellous city has everything from an old town and wooden bridge, to lakeside views, buses everywhere you look and lots to do.

In the morning we had a fairly early departure to Brienz in another comfortable train. With little exception all the main line rides were extremely smooth, stable and quiet, even over points, etc. A real joy and it shows what can be done. To reach Brienz, which sits on the Brienzer See in the Bernese Oberland, you must first cross the Brunig pass where a rack

kicks in, then reverse at Meiringen. This ride alone is worth the journey. Brienz is the lower point of the Rothorn Bahn (BRB), the oldest (1892) steam cog railway in Switzerland. Warm sunny weather had been ordered and had arrived for the 60-minute climb up the 1,678 metres to the Rothorn Kulm (alt 2350m). We were booked to have a 1992 0-4-2T steamer (identical to MOB) but it failed there and then. On came the faithful diesel to push us to the summit. Steamer BRB No.12 brought us down later. But with such stunning views as we climbed the 25% grade to above the snow line, no one seemed to care what was doing the work. Six tunnels and two galleries add spice to the ride with occasional stops to let off walkers or to allow for crossing trains. It's a constant and regular service which the mountain cows seem not to mind. At the summit the Lungern and Sorenberg aerial cable cars can take you down the other side. But for my money sitting there looking across the lake to the Eiger, Monch and the Jungfrau takes some beating and believing. The reverse journey was also a real joy.

To vary the tour, we next day ventured on to the 'Wilhelm Tell Express' from pier 1. The first part was a 3.1/2 hour boat trip on a magnificent paddle steamer to Fluelen, calling at many ports and resorts down the Vierwaldstattersee, the lake of Luzern. It was relaxing and most refreshing, including coffee and cake in the first class lounge. The bar was open if required. A short break at Fluelen and our train arrived to take us by panoramic coach to Bellinzona, under the Gotthard Pass, in 2 hours. A brief look around the station area and we returned to Luzern via Fluelen, Brunnen and Vitznau in our reserved first class coach.

The most gruelling part of the holiday was the next day's early start to Brig via Olten. This was to get us to Brig for the lunch time 'Glacier Express'. But not before we had further trouble with Bern commuters occupying some of our seats. At Brig we walked out of the station into the forecourt for our street running Furka Oberalp (FO) Glacier Express (the slowest in Switzerland!). From Andermatt we climbed the Oberalppass at 2033m before reaching Disentis where we adjourned to dining cars for lunch.

Right on time we were in Chur – yet another language change, this time to Rumantsch. We were due to take an afternoon run to Arosa but the ticket clerk said trains were not running because of a landslide. He was half right because whilst most rested or took in the town, I went for the Postbus to Arosa. Surprise, it only went half way and there was the train No.622 with 4 coaches and a cement wagon. So onwards and upwards on a very enjoyable ride to the holiday town and back again. Well worth it for a morning or afternoon tea break.

Two more fun days lay ahead before we had to make our way back to UK with the risk of rail strikes hanging over us. And were they good days. Take the 'Bernina Express' to Tirano – do! In my book this was it, the big one. The only line 'over' the mountains rather than through or under them. Viaducts, gorges, tunnels, spirals, looping tiers of lines, high alpine lakes, glaciers, amazing descents, street running, and an Italian ice cream at the end of it! Fantastic. The line has to climb gradients of 7% making it one of the world's steepest stretches of rail not using a cogwheel system. It crosses the pass at Ospizio Bernina at 2253 metres. At Brusio is the legendary

curved viaduct on a spiral. So many times you are not sure which direction you are going as you see your track both above and below you. It took some 4 hours each way but we had the added pleasure of dinner on board, from St Moritz to Chur, to put the icing on the cake.

The Ratische Bahn (RhB) produced their 'Historische Züge' 1906 SLMF 2-8-0 Rhb No. 107 for our final full day in Switzerland. This is a well turned out charter that runs only 4 times in the year for steam fans and tourists. We qualified on both counts so had our own vintage coach plus a very helpful railway official. The 3.1/4 hours to Filisur for a lunch break was fascinating. Stops for passing and crossing trains, stops for water and for stupendous photo opportunities. We were accompanied by a vintage electric 'crocodile' Co-Co Rhb No.416 which acted as pilot through long tunnels, banker if required and emergency fire tender should it be necessary, which it was not. The remaining 2.1/2 hour circular steam trip to Landquart via Davos and Klosters was stunning and over too soon. I was fortunate to be able to arrange a visit for a small party to the local RhB roundhouse and workshops. We saw our loco being put to bed and toured the shed to see a variety of electrics in spotless conditions. Not a scrap of rubbish, inside or out, not even a screw or anything lying about – no souvenirs! A short walk to the station and we were back in Chur in 20 minutes.

The return to UK next day, via Basle border station and Paris Est/Nord, was an anticlimax after the pleasures of the past week but apart from being rather hot we were relaxed and willing to go home. Eurostar seemed quite familiar again and soon we were racing through the Garden of England.

So what thoughts and memories? A very beautiful country with a marvellous transport system. Brand new low loader buses everywhere, clean modern trains, all running to time but somehow, nothing rushed. If it says 0941 it means 0941 yet there is time allowed to change trains. Excellent service but I wish the Swiss would smile more – perhaps they all imagine there is an apple on their head! And please tell them not to sit in reserved seats or to move when asked nicely!! Yes, I will return, if only to knock that apple off.

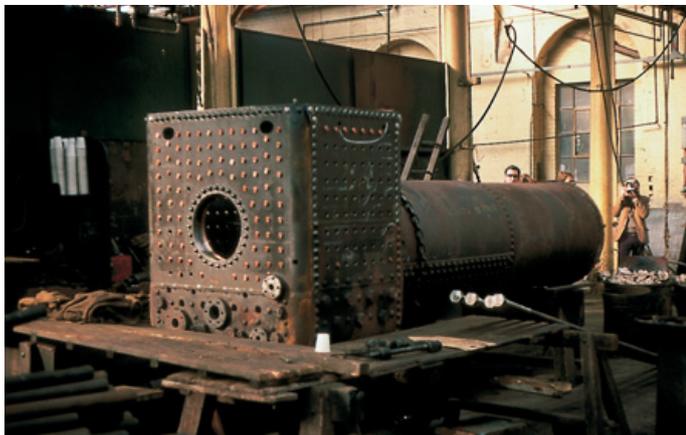
**Mike Hyde**

# WINTERS PAST - 1977 AND 1986

Compiled by Tim Edmonds

## 25 Years Ago

Ex-GWR 2-6-2T 9 'Prince of Wales' from the Vale of Rheidol line spends the winter undergoing overhaul in Swindon Works, eventually emerging in a modified BR blue livery with white lining.



*Boiler and firebox of 2-6-2T 'Prince of Wales' from the Vale of Rheidol line under overhaul in Swindon Works,*

*19 February 1977.*

Demolition of the former GWR station at Birmingham Snow Hill was in progress in January 1977, although the work was not completed for several months. Closed to main line traffic in 1967 it lingered on until 1972 as the unstaffed terminus of a rump local service. With commendable foresight, the demolition was carried out in such a way as to preserve the route of the railway for possible future use as a cross-city line.

Rather than carrying out the job piecemeal over a series of weekends, resignalling at King's Cross was concentrated into a period of nine weeks from 28 January. The western half was tackled first. During the work some outer suburban trains ran to and from Finsbury Park, and for a short period the closed York Road platform was used temporarily to terminate trains during peak times.

Seven of the class 52 'Western' diesel-hydraulics survived into the new year and continued in use on passenger workings, the most unusual being on 20 January when 1013 'Western Ranger' worked the 07.30 from Swansea to Leeds after the failure of the booked locomotive. The demise of the class was marked by numerous special trains and was concluded on 26 February when 1013 and 1023 'Western Fusilier' double-headed the 'Western Tribute' railtour from Paddington to Swansea and Plymouth.

## 15 Years Ago

Marylebone was the focus of special trains, both diesel and steam, during December. BR ran DMU



*1023 'Western Fusilier' and 1013 'Western Ranger' head through Ealing Broadway with the 'Western Tribute' railtour, 26 February 1977.*

Shoppers trains to Milton Keynes via Quainton Road and Winslow on 6 and 13 December, whilst a programme of Marylebone - High Wycombe 'Santa' trains operated on the weekends of 13/14 and 20/21 December. Locos rostered included 'Sir Nigel Gresley', 'Flying Scotsman', 'Clan Line' and 'Sir Lamiel'. Steam specials also worked out of Marylebone on two weekends after Christmas.

Bitter winter weather in mid-January caused havoc on many Southern Region lines, with the third rail system becoming iced-



*35028 'Clan Line' heads for Marylebone out of High Wycombe with a returning 'Santa Steam Special', 20 December 1986.*

up. This resulted in EMU stock being loco-hauled on several occasions, including the remarkable case of the 15.24 Victoria - Dover Priory being hauled by 56001 on 13 January.

On 19 January the final phase of the Ayrshire electrification scheme was completed four months ahead of schedule when services began on the lines to Ardrossan and Largs

George Dow, former BR Divisional Manager at Stoke on Trent and author of the three-volume history of the Great Central Railway, died on 28 January at the age of 80.

Following the completion of signalling work the new 1½ mile link from Trimley to a second Port of Felixstowe container terminal was opened during February.



*St Pancras still has some of its steam age atmosphere in the age of Midland Main Line HSTs. Here 14.55 departure for Leicester and Nottingham waits in the shadows of the train shed.  
7 June 2001*



*Looking towards St Pancras from above the tunnel mouths at the throat of Kings Cross station, with Channel Tunnel Rail Link work in progress.  
The car park is on the site of the loco servicing depot. 7 June 2001*

*Still intact and in use on the B485 at Hyde End, between Great Missenden and Chesham, is a former London Transport request stop sign, complete with fare stage label and on its original concrete post. 12 June 2001*