DIDCOT SELL-OUT FOR CASTLE CENTENARY ■ RACE TO SAVE DOON VALLEY

ISSUE 304 March 17 – April 14, 2023

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE BRITISH NEWS MAGAZINE

Flying Scotswomen!

FIRST ALL-FEMALE FOOTPLATE CREW FOR WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS LOCOMOTIVE

■ *TAW VALLEY* AND CALEY TANK GO BLACK ■ BLUEBELL BULLEID COACHES RUN MAIN LINE TO HULL ■ *SCOTSMAN* MARKS 100TH BIRTHDAY – AND IS BOOKED FOR STRATHSPEY SCOTTISH 'FIRST' ■ CLASS 58 BACK AFTER 21 YEARS FOR SEVERN VALLEY DIESEL FESTIVAL

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Just ask!
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Right: Having spent several months visiting the East Lancashire Railway in Bury, 1887-built Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Class 25 0-6-0 No. 52044 has returned to its home on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. With a new smokebox door fitted at Bury and more appropriate for its British Railways livery, the 'Ironclad' emerges from Mytholmes Tunnel with the first train of the day on February 14. MIKE HEATH

Flying Scotsman makes history yet again

LESS than a fortnight after A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* celebrated the 100th anniversary to the day that it ventured forth from Doncaster Works on a journey that would see it become not only the world's most famous steam locomotive, but also the first to circumnavigate it, the legendary locomotive has added a new chapter to its illustrious history.

Thanks to the National Railway Museum and a team of ladies from the East Lancashire Railway, where it is currently based, the A3 marked International Women's Day by running three round trips of the heritage line at the hands of an all-female crew for the first time.

The event despatched several highly positively-charged messages to all four corners of the globe, hopefully including those where women's rights to equal opportunities are still, in the 21st century, shamefully far less respected than in others.

Here in the UK, the groundbreaking feat served to further underline the fact that the railway heritage movement is an all-inclusive sector, hopefully dispelling the tired old myth that it's a male domain. Heritage, railways, or otherwise has universal appeal and its door must forever be open to all.

The event at Bury will also serve to reinforce the pride in the sector's portfolio and Britain's world-shaping historic part in the development of railways.

Kings of the Castles

While *Scotsman* is a guaranteed crowd-puller, locomotives built by rival 'Big Four' companies in its early days can still give it a run for its money, as was evident at the line-up of four GWR Castles to mark the centenary of the class, which brought a sell-out success to Didcot Railway Centre, as reported in our special feature on pages 64-70.

Among the line-up was none other than No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle*, which triumphed over A1 Pacific timings when the GWR challenged the LNER to running trials 98 years ago.

Yes, we in the UK have much to celebrate in terms of transport technology, especially on steel wheels, and we have every reason to look forward to the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, the world's first steam-hauled passenger line, in two years' time. Also in this issue, John Titlow recalls his visit to its forerunner event, the Rail 150 cavalcade in 1975.

Our railway heritage is precious, and in these cost-of-living crisis times, where spare money is short, we must explore every means to keep what we have achieved so far, rather than let the wagon slip backwards. Times may be difficult for many, but there are some superb galas on the way in 2023, and the railways that stage them richly deserve to see them supported.

'Use it or lose it' is the loud and clear message. History shows that we twice came close to losing *Flying Scotsman*, and had that happened, how much the poorer we would all now be.

Robin Jones Editor

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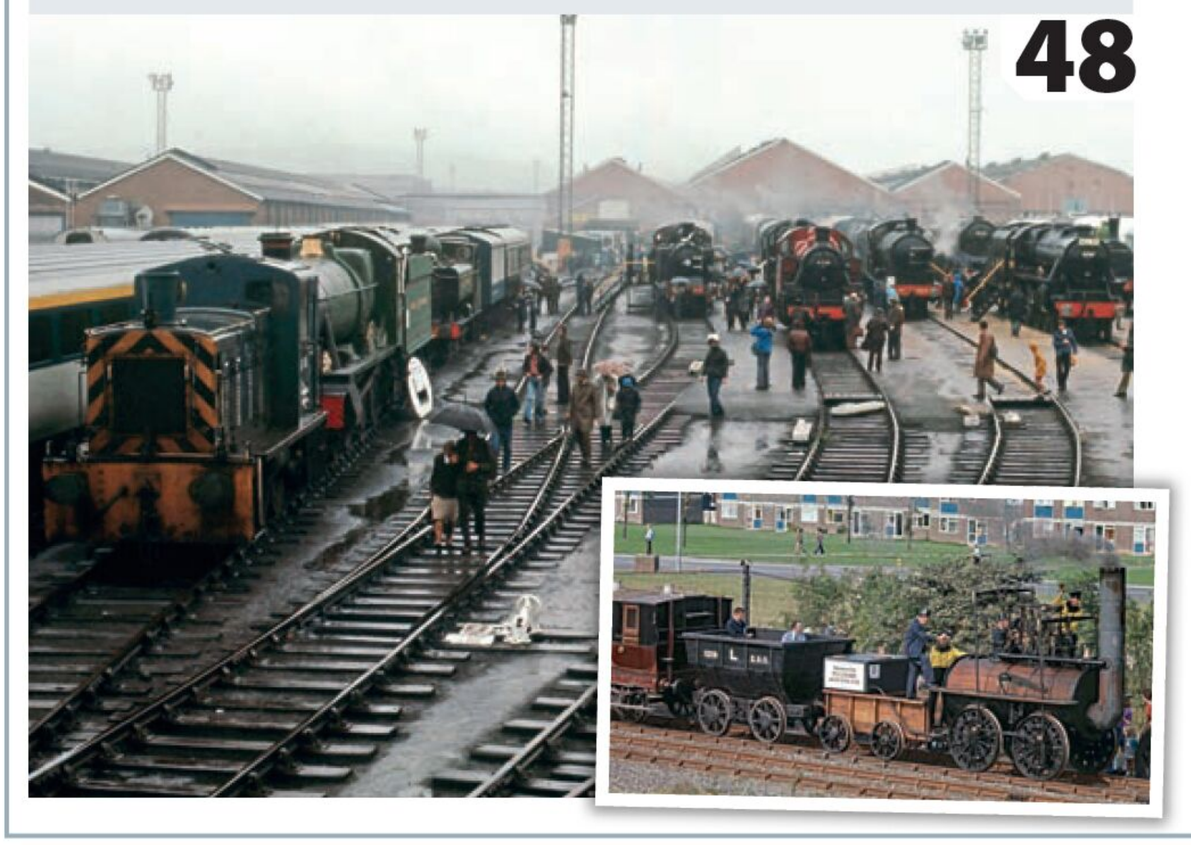
Rail 150 cavalcade: My ringside seat!
The planned celebration for the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025 looks set to be one of the biggest events in the history of the heritage sector. John Titlow attended its landmark predecessor, the Rail 150th anniversary exhibition and steam cavalcade in August 1975, and captured all the action on camera in comfort from an exclusive viewpoint in a friendly farmer's field.



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CONTENTS: February 24 started as a rather grey day but was blessed with a brief spell of sunshine as it drew to an end, much to the relief of those partaking in a 30742 Charters event with BR (S) Battle of Britain class No. 34072 *257 Squadron*. The Bulleid light Pacific is seen at Pokehill on the Spa Valley Railway and will be visiting the East Lancashire Railway for the summer – see news pages 18/19. MARTYN TATTAM
COVER: Pictured in front of A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* at Bury Bolton Street for its International Women's Day all-female crew specials on March 8 are stationmaster Chandra Law, driver conductor Linda Henderson, fireman Steph Elwood, cleaner Charlotte Instance, driver Beth Furness, guard Lesley Hampson and (in front) Amy Harbour from the National Railway Museum. EAST LANCS RAILWAY

Castle centenary line-up a Didcot sell-out success!
The first four-locomotive line-up event of the year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Charles Collett's Castle class fittingly took place on GWR territory on Saturday, March 4 at Didcot Railway Centre, reports Owen Hayward.

Rise of the Urie locomotives
With T3 4-4-0 No. 563 taking the spotlight recently, Owen Hayward paid a visit to Ropley to look at another LSWR class that may have passed some people by – but promises to be something just as equally enticing.

Business as usual inside Bridgnorth Shed
Despite the difficult financial situation on the Severn Valley Railway, locomotive overhauls are continuing inside Bridgnorth Shed. John Titlow takes a look at what is involved in keeping the operational fleet running.

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O gauge Wickham trolleys and accompanying sheds arrive, along with N gauge Class 28 Co-Bos.

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Flying Scotsman marks 100th birthday at Edinburgh

By Robin Jones

All set to celebrate its birthday: *Flying Scotsman* arrives at Edinburgh Waverley on February 24.

ONE hundred years to the day it moved for the first time out of Doncaster Works to enter LNER traffic as the first of Nigel Gresley's Pacifics, A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman,* complete with support coach, appeared at a special celebratory birthday event at Edinburgh Waverley station.

Organised by the National Railway Museum, the event was off-limits to the general public and had not been publicly announced – unlike its centenary launch at King's Cross on October 14 (as highlighted in issue 299) – and took travellers at the station by complete surprise.

To mark the occasion, Poet Laurate Simon Armitage read his new work, The Making of *Flying Scotsman* (a phantasmagoria), while dancers from the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and South Morningside Primary School performed 'The Flying Scotsman', devised by Hugh Thurston in 1966, on the platform alongside the locomotive. The event concluded with a performance from Celtic band the Red Hot Chilli Pipers.

Simon rode on No. 60103 as part of the process of writing the poem, in which he describes how the locomotive 'coughed into life', and how it features 'vast steel circumferences' and 'rippling bodywork pouring with sweat.'

'Absolutely incredible'

Speaking to BBC Radio 4's Today programme, he said: "There's something very dreamlike about the whole contraption and the experience of standing next to it. There's just something absolutely incredible when you're up close and personal with it."

He said that No. 60103 is "an emblem of when we could have pride" about railways.

His poem is now displayed as part of *Flying Scotsman*: 100 Years, 100 Voices, a new exhibition at the National Railway Museum in York. Launched on February 19, it showcases the legacy of the locomotive through the lives it has touched.

The A3's support crew were said to have been up all night working in a siding to ensure that the appearance of the locomotive's paintwork was pristine.

Dame Mary Archer, chair of the Science Museum Group, in welcoming invited guests and media representatives to the station, said: "*Flying Scotsman* became an icon – representative of an era of steam and an engineering skillset that Britain had mastered.

"I am struck by the sheer number of people whose lives have been touched by *Flying Scotsman*, from the people who made and operated it to those who have travelled with it and those who saw it pass by. *Flying Scotsman*'s enduring appeal is its ability to connect with people.

"We rarely find ourselves waving at strangers and yet we wave at passing steam engines without a moment's hesitation. That says something.

"I think we can say with some confidence that *Flying Scotsman* truly is the people's engine."

NRM director Judith McNicol said: "Edinburgh Waverley is a fitting location to mark the centenary of the world's most famous express passenger locomotive. It was here that *Flying Scotsman* completed its record-breaking non-stop journey between London and Edinburgh in 1928, and Edinburgh is also the birthplace of Sir Nigel Gresley, *Flying Scotsman*'s designer.

"Today, *Flying Scotsman* is an undoubted star of the NRM's collection and is recognised around the world as a triumph of British ingenuity and engineering. I've seen first-hand how much this engine means to our audiences. *Flying Scotsman* is the best ambassador for the NRM.

"It will now spend the rest of the year travelling around the country to give people the chance to see the engine for themselves and to take part in this special anniversary."

Eilish McGuinness, chief executive of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "In 2004, we supported the National Railway Museum in acquiring the majestic *Flying Scotsman* and placing it in the care of the National Collection to make it publicly accessible forever, and we later contributed towards its preservation.

"That is why it is so wonderful to be celebrating its centenary in Edinburgh and knowing that this much-loved heritage icon will be seen right across the UK in the coming year, bringing joy and wonder to all!"

Marking time

Alex Hynes, managing director of Scotland's Railway, added: "Edinburgh Waverley was honoured to host a visit from *Flying Scotsman* on such a special occasion and our team has pulled out all the stops for this special occasion. The most famous steam locomotive in the world always draws a crowd.

"Visitors to Princes Street Gardens, just across the road from Waverley, will see a familiar *Flying Scotsman* theme when the world's oldest Floral Clock blooms later this year, too. Make sure to pop in to see it while on your way to the station."

Also at the event was Stephen Parkinson, Baron of Whitley Bay, who has been Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Arts and Heritage since October.

At 11am, a minute's silence was held to mark a year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The anniversary year will end with *Scotsman* visiting the Locomotion museum in Shildon for the Centenary Festival. The A3 will be in light steam outside the museum building.

Dame Mary Archer, chair of the Science Museum Group, addresses guests at the 100th birthday event at Edinburgh Waverley. JASON HYNES/NRM

Piper Kevin MacDonald, from the Red Hot Chilli Pipers, with pupils from Morningside Primary School and members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society beside *Flying Scotsman* at Edinburgh Waverley on February 24. JASON HYNES/NRM

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The Making of the *Flying Scotsman* (a phantasmagoria)

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The blueprint came from the future, plans
for a spaceship powered by water and coal;
they fired up the furnace with kindling and oily rags
and strong-armed the bellows till the flames sang.
In went the chainmail and breastplates of knights
for the casings, shields for the footplate.
For the boiler they threw in an ancient vat
that once distilled present from past.
For the frame, suspension bridges were commandeered.
In the forge, blacksmiths practiced their dark arts.
They needed more heat: in went ovens, braziers, kilns,
quartered segments of sun, in went
anthracite kernels that burned with blue breath.
For the firebox they used the Bank of England's
inmost vault, locked with a bombproof door,
in it went, and rivets grown from the knuckles
of dinosaurs coaxed back to life from their DNA.
In went vices and anvils, centurions' helmets.
They shovelled in measures of volume and space: cubits,
choirs, gallons, furlongs, fathoms, spans and roods.
An acre of village green for the famous paint.
The smokestack was a girder of solid air.
Sandboxes held the Sahara in their embrace.
(Later there'd be a Haynes Manual for all this,
as if you could build the thing in your garage one rainy weekend
from spent matches and candle wax).
From Snowdon, Ben Nevis and Scafell Pike
they recovered the giant pulleys and gears
that rolled those mountains into position,
used them for wheels.
They needed more speed: in went a time-lapse film.
Some engine parts were machined from language alone:
spindle glands, pear drop stink bombs, hornguides, eccentric rods…
They'd need more metal - they diverted a foundry's flow
of pulsing magma into the cauldron where nuclear fusion
took place, where the barrel-fronted
snub-nosed fizzog was starting to bake, and threw in
the odd volcano or two to up the Fahrenheit.
Swords for the slidebars, grease from the earth's axel.
In the organ loft of the cab the shiny plumbing
of tubas, trombones and trumpets got wrenched into shape.
Welds were soldered with silver bracelets
and silver torcs belonging to tribal princesses; hawthorn
and blackthorn needles tickled the faces
of gauges and dials - whitesmiths and tinsmiths applied
the finishing touches here and there
as the range and hearth were hung with ships' clocks,
beer pumps, embalmers' flasks and the like.

Then a nip of single malt and it coughed into life,
came from the tunnel's mouth,
shunted slowly forward crunching inches and yards
under its vast steel circumferences,
straining, hissing, the rippling bodywork pouring with sweat,
skirts trimmed with petticoats of steam,
the spiracle venting cumulonimbus into a blue sky,
devilment glowing red in the lantern's lens,
and stood there all hide, horn, bill, hoof, claw, fin, and tail
as they fell to their knees, astonished to find
this beast had wings - this creature could fly.

Poet Laureate Simon Armitage on the footplate of *Flying Scotsman* on February 24. JASON HYNES/NRM

➜ Oxford Professor of Poetry from 2015-19 and Professor of Poetry at the University of Leeds, Poet Laureate Simon Armitage was awarded a CBE for services to poetry in 2015. In 2019, he received the Queens's Gold Medal for Poetry.

A resident of West Yorkshire, Simon has 12 full-length published collections, most recently Magnetic Field. He is also a broadcaster, playwright, novelist and the author of three best-selling volumes of non-fiction.

New *Scotsman* stamps are the last Royal Mail special edition featuring Queen Elizabeth II

A COLLECTORS' set of 12 stamps depicting *Flying Scotsman* – which comprises the last special stamps to carry the silhouette portrait of the late Queen Elizabeth II – was released by Royal Mail on March 9.

A further four stamps in a miniature sheet illustrate railway poster art from the 1920s and 1930s.

The silhouette of The Queen, adapted from a 1953 design by sculptor Mary Gillick, has featured on all special stamps since 1968. Future special stamps will feature a silhouette of King Charles III.

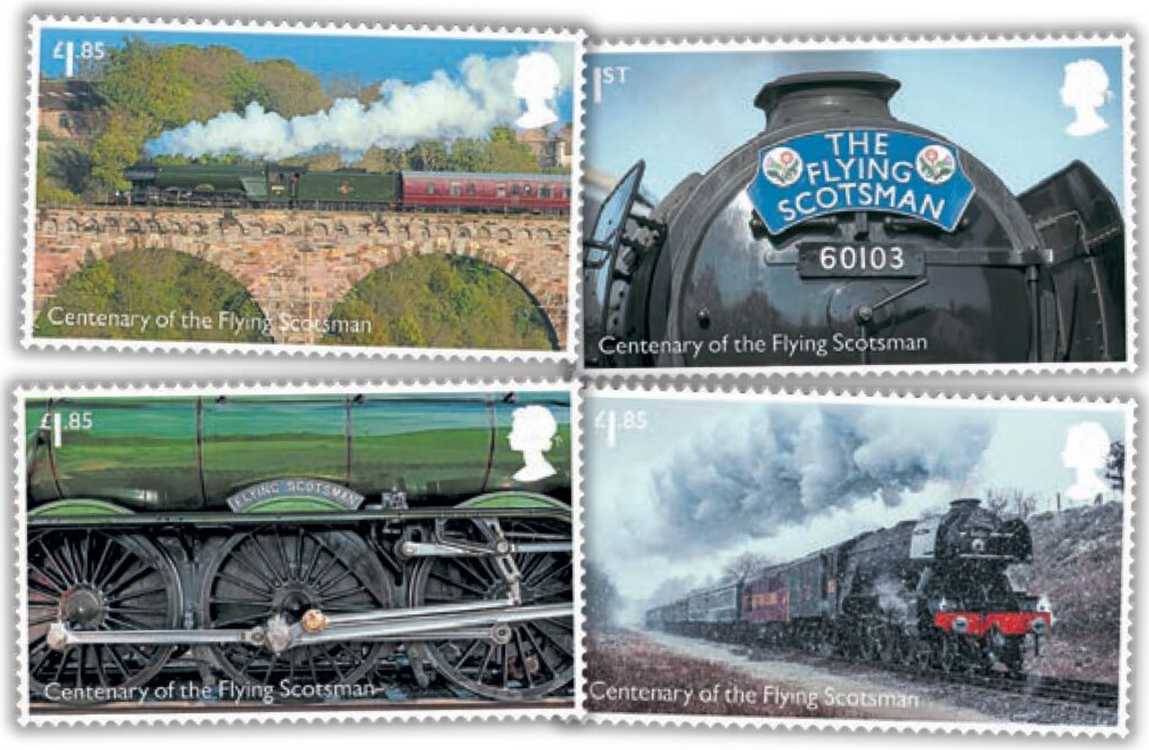
The stamps, which are available in a presentation pack, depict *Flying Scotsman* at locations including Pickering station on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, Ribblehead Viaduct in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, steaming through Blyth in Northumberland, in a blizzard at Heap Bridge on the East Lancashire Railway, the Royal Border Bridge at Berwick-upon-Tweed, London Victoria station, and in close-up at Shildon in County Durham.

Royal Mail worked closely with Bob Gwynne, associate curator at the National Railway Museum, to select the images featured on the stamps, which were chosen from hundreds of period photographs. David Gold, director of external affairs & policy at Royal Mail said: "*Flying Scotsman* is a national treasure of engineering and design that conjures up the golden age of steam travel.

"This remarkable locomotive epitomises the romance of rail travel and is loved all by people over the world. We are honoured to mark this landmark milestone with a set of special stamps."

➜ The stamps are available to order now at www.royalmail.com/flyingscotsman and on 03457 641641.

Some of the new Royal Mail *Flying Scotsman* collectors' stamps, the last special stamps to feature the portrait of the late Queen Elizabeth II. ROYAL MAIL



World's most famous crewed by first ever all-female team

By Robin Jones

IN another major first in its proud 100-year history, *Flying Scotsman* was crewed by an all-female team for three round trips on the East Lancashire Railway to mark International Women's Day on March 8.

The ground-breaking crew comprised three ELR volunteers in Linda Henderson, Charlotte Instance and Steph Elwood, along with Beth Furness from Network Rail, who drove the A3.

Linda began volunteering at the ELR in 1993 at just 14 years old, along with her mum and younger brother. Throughout the years she has taken on many different roles at the railway, including dispatcher and signal operations manager, and in March 2017 she became the ELR's first-ever female main line locomotive driver.

Steph joined the ELR team in October 2021 with a background in maintenance and repair, eager to push herself further and build on her self-confidence. She was soon placed on a fast-track course and passed her firing exam in September 2022, becoming the second ever female fireman on the heritage line.

Love for trains

Charlotte came to the ELR in the summer of 2021 and helped to get the station shop up and running. She quickly began following in her great grandfather's footsteps when she joined the steam crew as a cleaner and had the privilege of preparing and cleaning *Flying Scotsman* during one of its visits to the line, since when she had worked her way up to the coveted position of locomotive driver.

Beth's love for trains began at her local railway when she was a 16-year-old, and she has worked in roles including operations, fitting, signalling and fireman. She has previously worked for the National Railway Museum and now works as a section planner for Network Rail.

She said: "Historically, the railways have been a male-dominated industry, but this is changing. Since 2017, our female workforce has grown twice as much as our male workforce and today, about 19% of people working at Network Rail are women.

"Never Mind the Gap is an industry-wide collaboration that offers two-week work placements to show women what it takes to be a train driver and to work at one of our stations, as well as gain experience in engineering, communications and investment. Once you join the industry, there's lots of support available to grow your career.

"I'm hoping that the team today and the magnificent *Flying Scotsman* can inspire more young women to come forward."

NRM director Judith McNicol said: "*Flying Scotsman*'s centenary is a chance to celebrate the history of this famous locomotive, but also to reflect on how far we've come in terms of women's opportunities in rail and what still needs to be done.

"When *Flying Scotsman* was built in 1923, equal voting for men and women was still five years away, and despite playing an important role in keeping the railways running, especially during the world wars, many higher status occupations were not open to women.

"I hope that by working with our partners to mark International Women's Day, we can highlight and celebrate the achievements of women in the rail industry."

Celebrating women

Tracey Parkinson, general manager at the ELR since 2017, who has an extensive 28-year background in railways and has worked in roles including fireman, said: "This is an incredible opportunity to celebrate the contribution of women in the railway industry and the iconic *Flying Scotsman* in its 100th year. We are honoured to be a part of it and to have female volunteers crewing the locomotive and in supporting operational roles.

"We want to help shine a spotlight on women in the rail industry over the past 100 years and the future opportunities for women within the railway sector, including at the ELR."

She added: "We have some very exciting things planned for *Flying Scotsman*'s time at the railway, including the chance to ride behind it and enjoy a luxury dining experience. "It will also be on static display at our Heywood and Bury stations for the public to get up close and personal.

"We want people of all ages, genders and backgrounds to know that they are welcome at ELR, with or without experience.

"We offer extensive training programmes in a variety of roles at the railway and our hardworking volunteers are crucial in keeping the doors open."

The heritage line celebrated International Women's Day with a private event that saw local primary schools, children's charities, community groups and the NRM team ride behind No. 60103.

History makers: Stationmaster Chandra Law, conductor driver Linda Henderson, fireman Steph Elwood, driver Beth Furness and guard Lesley Hampson with No. 60103 at Bury Bolton Street on March 8. ELR

Left: Driver Beth Furness and conductor driver Linda Henderson look back as No. 60103 reverses onto its train on March 8. ELR

Right: LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* at Bury Bolton Street station just after 9am on International Women's Day, March 8. NRM

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Hornby's new model of *Flying Scotsman* as it ran in preservation after Alan Pegler bought a second tender in 1966 to use as a water carrier. HORNBY

New models across the gauges for *Scotsman* centenary

FLYING Scotsman centenary year's lead sponsor, modelmaker Hornby, has released a new range of metal-bodied 00 gauge limited edition collectors' models to represent the locomotive in six of its 'incarnations' during its career.

The models are part of the Margate manufacture's modern-day Hornby Dublo range launched in 2020. Each comes in a bespoke box with a medallion featuring *Flying Scotsman*'s centenary logo, operator, running number and year, plus a numbered commemorative certificate.

The six depict the locomotive as LNER A1 No. 1472, LNER A1 No. 4472, LNER A3 No. 103, BR No. 60103, No. 4472 in the Alan Pegler era and No. 4472 in the heritage era with two tenders. There is also a special *Flying Scotsman* 100th anniversary four-wheel coach.

Speaking at the 100th birthday event at Edinburgh Waverley (see page 6), Hornby marketing and development director Simon Kohler said: "Quite a few years ago, I managed to persuade my then CEO that Hornby should create a suite of tools that would allow us to produce as many variants of *Flying Scotsman* as possible.

"Through these models, Hornby has had the privilege of forging a strong relationship with both the National Railway Museum and the Science Museum. We are proud and honoured to be part of the celebrations."

Above: Following its conversion from an A1 to an A3, *Flying Scotsman* carried the LNER number 103 from May 1946 to December 1948.
Below: The new Hornby Dublo model of *Flying Scotsman* as A1 No. 1472 prior to its conversion to an A3. BOTH: HORNBY

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 299, Hornby produced a TT gauge model of the A3 in 2022.

Also on February 24, Trix and Märklin launched two and three rail HO gauge models of the A3, which includes a factory-installed smoke unit that produces a speed-dependent dynamic smoke exhaust that can be digitally controlled, among numerous other features.

To view the full Hornby Flying Scotsman centenary collection, head online and visit https://uk.hornby.com/catalogue/flying-scotsman-centenary

First coloured £2 in two decades as Scotsman centenary coins go on sale

THE Royal Mint has launched its collectable £2 coin in several formats to mark *Flying Scotsman*'s centenary in collaboration with the National Railway Museum, part of the Science Museum Group.

The coin, as reported in Headline News, issue 302, features the inscription LNER followed by 4472, *Flying Scotsman*'s second service number, as well as the date of the locomotive's centenary. The design captures a side-on view of the locomotive steaming. The edge inscription reads 'Live for the Journey', a fitting tribute to a locomotive that continues to be admired 100 years since it emerged from Doncaster Works.

One of the new £2 colour coins in front of the locomotive pictured on it. Inset right: *The Flying Scotsman* silver proof £2 coin. BOTH: ROYAL MINT

The colour version of the coin was officially released on February 21. The last coloured £2 coin was issued more than 20 years ago.

Ffion Gwillim, in the Royal Mint's design team, ensured that the colouring on the coin was inspired by *Flying Scotsman*'s iconic LNER apple green livery.

Rebecca Morgan, director of collector services at the Royal Mint, said: "*Flying Scotsman* is a wonderful example of British craftsmanship, design and engineering, which led to the creation of one of the world's most famous locomotives.

"While the Royal Mint's expertise and craftsmanship is closely linked with precious metals, it was important for us to highlight the skill and engineering behind the locomotive as part of the coin's design to mark its milestone centenary.

"It is rare for colour to feature on a £2 coin, so we anticipate this to be extremely popular with not only railway enthusiasts, but also coin collectors across the world."

The coin is now available to buy at www.royalmint.com/shop/limited-editions/100th-anniversary-of-the-flying-scotsman/

A brilliant uncirculated coin costs £12 and the colour version (limited edition of 15,000) costs £21. A silver proof colour coin (limited edition of 4472) is priced at £85, a silver proof Piedfort colour coin (limited edition of 1923) at £135, and a gold proof coin (limited edition of 300) costs £1225.

A set featuring the gold proof coin and a 1923 gold sovereign is available in a limited edition of 100 at £1975.

Scotsman will launch the first Strathspey steam gala in years

By Owen Hayward

ADDED to the calendar of events for the centenary year celebrations for A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* is its first working visit to a Scottish heritage line, at which it will also launch the Strathspey Railway's first steam gala to take place for several years.

While No. 60103 has run through Aviemore before on a railtour on May 10, 2019, double-heading with LNER B1 No. 61306 *Mayflower* from Edinburgh to Inverness, it has neither visited the Strathspey nor operated public services on any other Scottish heritage line in preservation.

It spent two days at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway in May 2016 after being stopped from working a Steam Dreams railtour across the Highlands because Network Rail had not completed gauging assessments over the planned Fife and Borders routes in time. During the stay at Bo'ness, it was serviced and the railway was open for viewing, but the A3 did not haul any services. It was also stabled there ahead of the 2019 working.

Previous Strathspey galas began as just a two-train service due to low home fleet availability, but were often built upon with support from the Scottish Traction Engine Society that would rally at Boat of Garten. With the fleet now having grown to three operational resident locomotives (with a fourth, Caledonian Railway 812 class 0-6-0 No. 828, presently on loan to the Spa Valley Railway), the opportunity has been taken to stage the first big steam event for some time, with an additional guest locomotive also yet to be confirmed.

Previously billed to take place between September 1 and 3, the gala will now take place from September 15-17 to especially coincide with the visit of the centenarian locomotive, which will kick off proceedings on day one before going on static display in light steam at Boat of Garten for the remainder of the event.

No. 60103 will then operate services along the full length of the line on the two following weekends (September 23/24 and September 30/October 1) before it departs for the next event of its celebration year, heading 'The Hadrian' railtour on October 14 from Derby to Darlington via the Settle and Carlisle line.

Strathspey now added to the itinerary: A3 No. 60163 *Flying Scotsman* waits at Edinburgh Waverley on February 24, all set for its action-packed centenary year. PAUL BICKERDYKE

Beavertail comes home

When on static display during the steam gala, footplate access will be available with entry via the tender from LNER Beavertail observation saloon No. 1719, which is moving to Scotland from the Great Central Railway on a three-year loan agreement (with option to extend to five) with Railway Vehicle Preservations Ltd.

One of two observation saloons found on the high-speed 'Coronation' services between London and Edinburgh, No. 1719 was built at Doncaster in 1937 and operated for just two years before being placed in storage when the Second World War began. The carriages never ran as a full set again; various carriages returned to service in 1948 as general operating stock, while the two saloons only saw occasional use on charter trains until transfer to the West Highland lines in 1956.

The downward slopes of the window ends offered limited visibility and they were rebuilt by BR in 1959 at Cowlairs works in Glasgow. No. 1719 retains its rebuilt condition with taller and angled end windows, while No. 1729 is stored in the One:One Collection museum building at Margate in Kent, where it has been fully restored to original condition. No. 1719 was withdrawn in 1968; it moved to John Cameron's short-lived Lochty Private Railway running line and museum on what was once part of the East Fife Central Railway but closed in 1992. From there it moved to the GCR under private ownership and the care of RVP Ltd, which launched a fundraising appeal to restore it, with a return to service coming in 2007.

With competition from several other private charter vehicles at the GCR meaning reduced opportunities for its use, its 'homecoming' to Scotland will make it available to Strathspey service trains during the operating season, with LMS Engineer's inspection saloon No. 45021 on the opposite end allowing for scenic panoramic views of the railway and its surroundings in both directions.

At present, the Beavertail is at Nemesis Rail in Burton upon Trent, where a substantial amount of work has been carried out to bring the carriage back up to standard, including renewing some of the body framing and damaged panelling, fitting replacement wheelsets, and rebuilding the observation window end and refitting the glass.

LNER Beavertail observation saloon No. 1719 is to move to Strathspey for three years on loan to the Aviemore line, having been out of service for overhaul. Pictured inside Rothley carriage works on the Great Central Rail on January 29, it has since moved to Nemesis Rail for completion of the interior, and it is expected to move to Scotland at the end of March. PAUL HARRISON/RVP

Going big for galas

Flying Scotsman will be one of up to five engines operating at the gala event, which will see resident LMS Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 pair Nos. 46464 and 46512 *E.V. Cooper, Engineer,* and LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 5025 joined by an additional as-yet unconfirmed guest locomotive.

Operations manager Kieran Murray said: "We are delighted to be welcoming *Flying Scotsman* to Strathspey in its centenary year for what will also be its first time operating public passenger services on a heritage line in the country.

"Pairing it with the Beavertail observation carriage will also be a unique opportunity to see these two icons together, so we are all very excited. While *Flying Scotsman* will undoubtedly be a star over the weekend in its own right, we are currently negotiating an additional visiting locomotive that we are sure will also prove a draw as it is one that is very rarely seen away from its home line.

"The steam gala is still in the early planning stages but we hope to have an intensive timetable in operation that will include demonstration freight working as part of the event, for which we are currently working on several wagons for."

Flying Scotsman's first departure from Aviemore will be a big ceremony, with music and traditional Scottish bagpipes. On the operating days following the gala, five round trips behind No. 60103 will operate, departing from Aviemore, with tickets being bookable for seats aboard one of these. They will also allow unlimited travel on the regular timetable services that will be operating alongside.

As this issue went to press, the Strathspey confirmed that its diesel gala over the April 7-10 Easter weekend would likely become a mixed traffic weekend due to logistical issues in bringing in visiting locomotives for the previously planned event, but options were being considered carefully.

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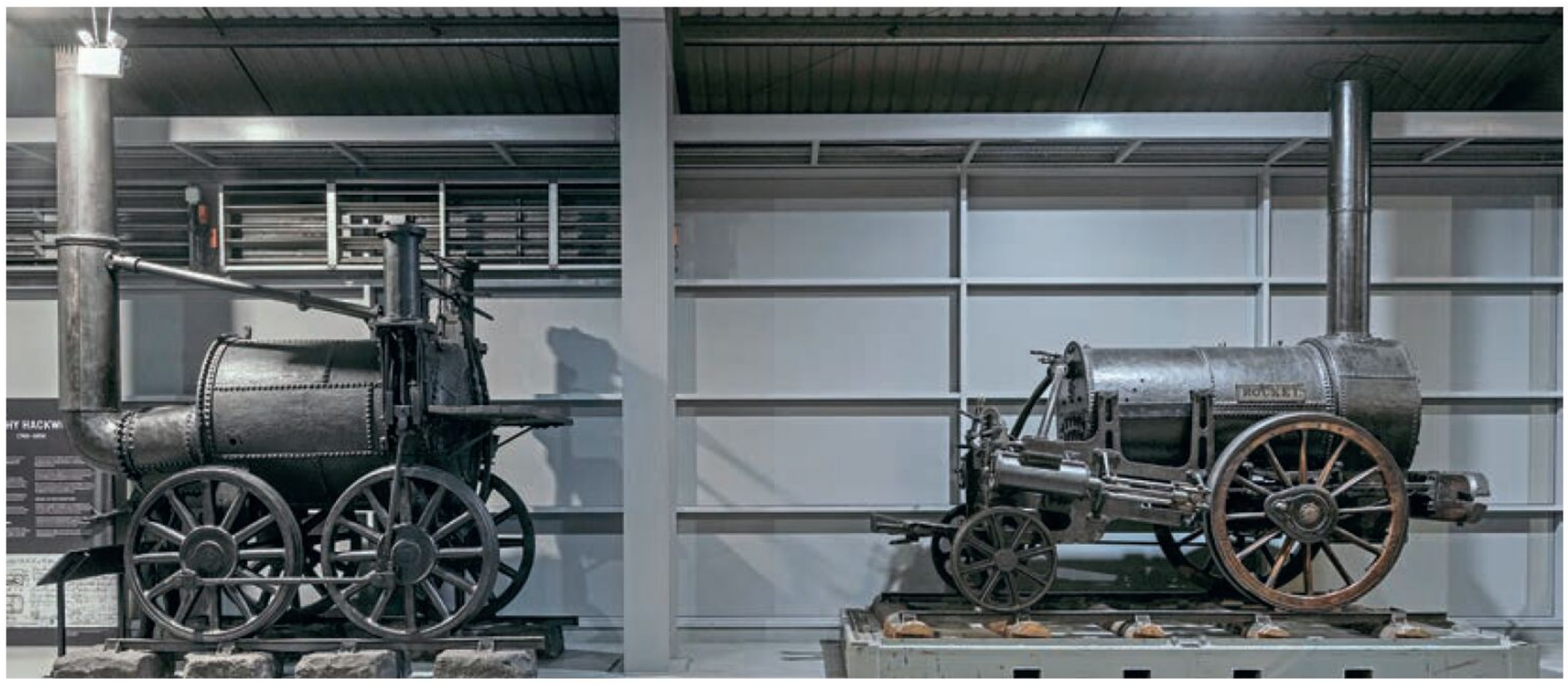
Rocket goes on display at Shildon's Locomotion

By Robin Jones



Stephenson's *Rocket* next to *Sans Pareil*, another Rainhill Trials entrant, in its new location inside Locomotion at Shildon. NRM

GEORGE and Robert Stephenson's *Rocket* is now on public display in the Locomotion museum in Shildon after being moved from the National Railway Museum in York on March 1.

Built in nearby Newcastle at Robert Stephenson and Co, the world's first locomotive workshop, in 1829, it is first time that *Rocket* has visited Locomotion and will join early legends of the steam age such as Timothy Hackworth's *Sans Pareil* and *Locomotion No. 1*. It is the first time that the trio of early locomotives have been on display together.

The temporary move allows *Rocket* to remain on show to the public while repair work is completed at the NRM's Station Hall as part of the museum's Vision 2025 development masterplan.

Rocket won the Rainhill Trials, a competition held in 1829 to find the best design of steam locomotive for the Liverpool & Manchester Railway and also to decide whether steam locomotives, as opposed to horse traction, was the future way of transport.

The delicate move was carried out by the museum's conservation team and specialist contractor Constantine, which also moved *Rocket* to the NRM in 2019.

Rocket's chimney was first removed, before the locomotive and chimney were carefully packed into a wooden crate which then travelled on the back of a lorry to Shildon.

On arrival, the locomotive was slowly unloaded and moved into Locomotion on a skate designed to spread the engine's load and minimise the chances of any damage. The move took place while the museum was open to the public with visitors getting the chance to see *Rocket*, from a safe distance, as it arrived in its new home.

It has gone on display next to *Sans Pareil* and alongside more than 50 rail vehicles already on show.

Head of Locomotion, Dr Sarah Price, said: "We are delighted to welcome such a well-known locomotive to the museum, especially one with such strong connections to the North East.

"I am excited for our visitors to see *Rocket* here in Shildon and I am sure it will very quickly become a star object for our visitors."

The move coincides with the construction on Locomotion's New Hall (see News, page 44), which will house an additional 46 vehicles from the National Collection with carriages, wagons and locomotives celebrating the North East's role in the development of railways. Robert Stephenson and Co celebrates its bicentenary later this year.

A forklift removes the outer frame of *Rocket's* travel case outside Locomotion in March 1. NRM

The chimney of Stephenson's *Rocket* is carefully reattached after being removed for transit. NRM

Tribute to Severn Valley pioneer Tony

THE Severn Valley Railway is in mourning one of its longest-serving volunteers, Tony Bending, who died suddenly and unexpectedly on February 19 aged 77.

David Williams, a fellow SVR pioneer, director and friend to Tony for almost 60 years, said: "Tony was one of the most well-known and respected volunteers on the SVR.

"Like many of the early members who were mourning the upcoming end of steam traction on BR, Tony joined the SVR Society in 1966 and took part in working parties at Bridgnorth and down the line to Hampton Loade. He joined a group of 18 people who bought locomotive No. 43106 straight from BR at Preston in 1968 and helped restore it to pristine condition.

"We were teenagers who tore about Britain photographing steam before it disappeared in 1968. At that time, neither of us were local to Bridgnorth, Bewdley or Kidderminster, but as early members of the burgeoning SVR Society, we had a chance to buy and preserve steam locos and coaches on a picturesque stretch of railway.

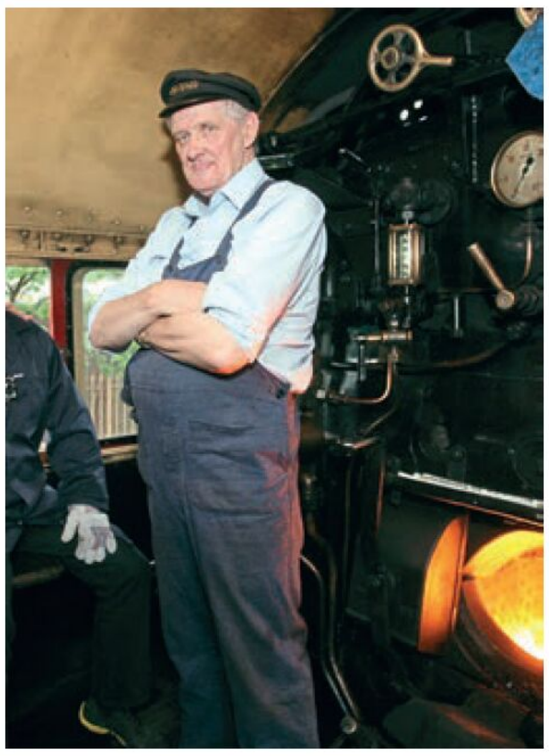
"The society managed to purchase the first stretch of 4½ miles and, of course, success breeds success; that eventually became the 16 ½-mile line we have today. At the beginning, there were no other preserved standard gauge railways within a 100-mile radius of the West Midlands.

"Very early on, Tony became involved in marketing and publicity activities, and his organisational and analytical flair was soon recognised. It was put to good use as a director of the SVR Company (also known as the Guarantee Company) from 1973 and SVR Holdings plc (the train operating company) from 2011. He was a director of both companies at the time of his death.

"Tony's managerial experience with British Telecom in Birmingham and London saw him 'in at the start' of the computer world, and his knowledge of it at a sound, practical level saved the SVR from some large maintenance fees over the whole railway.

"He was on the first SVR footplate courses for 'outsiders' in 1969 and became a prolific driver, achieving a lifelong ambition of handling a Duchess, King, A4 and Bulleid Pacifics. His last turn, however, was on his favourite No. 43106 the 'Flying Pig', just before his 75th birthday in September 2020.

"So much more could be related, but suffice to say that Tony really 'lived' SVR for 57 years. Our condolences go to his family and close friends. Rest in peace, dear friend."



Severn Valley powerhouse Tony Bending on the footplate. BOB SWEET/SVR

Taw Valley in wartime black for big Severn Valley gala

By Robin Jones and John Titlow

BULLEID West Country light Pacific No. 34027 is to feature in the Severn Valley Railway's April 14-16 Spring Steam Gala in wartime black livery for the first time.

Last year, the locomotive carried purple livery in its temporary identity change as No. 70 *Queen Elizabeth II* to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

On February 23, No. 34027 emerged from the Bridgnorth Shed resplendent in wartime black, complete with Southern Sunshine lettering and cabside number 21C127. Sunshine lettering was carried on the Southern Railway between 1939 and 1948.

Built at Brighton Works in 1946, *Taw Valley* was originally numbered 21C127 and entered service allocated to Ramsgate Shed before moving to Exmouth Junction in 1947. After Nationalisation, it was renumbered 34027 and rebuilt from its original form at Eastleigh in 1957.

As No. 21C127, Bulleid Pacific No. 34027 *Taw Valley* emerges from Bridgnorth Shed paintshop in black for the first time on February 23. JOHN TITLOW

Top of the bill

While the preserved Bullied Pacifics have been turned out in a variety of liveries, none have carried wartime black, and its appearance is a first for the heritage era. Several preserved unrebuilt Bullied Pacifics – but no rebuilds – have carried Southern Sunshine lettering.

In its new livery, No. 21C127 will top the gala bill with guest GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle*, making its first appearance on a heritage line away from its Didcot Railway Centre base in its 99-year history.

The latest guest to be brooked for the event will be GWR small prairie 4555, the sole member of the original 4500 class currently in service. Seventy-five of the original 4500s were produced at Swindon between 1906 and 1924, and No. 4555 was one of the very last batch to be built. It never went for scrap, thanks to its sale by BR in 1965 to preservationists who first ran it on the Dart Valley Railway

The three-day gala has a GWR-theme, with home-based 4-6-0s No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* and 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* and pannier No. 7714, freshly painted into BR livery (picture, page 89). Negotiations were underway with locomotive owners for a third guest for the high-profile event.

Popular with crews

SVR's head of steam locomotive engineering, Duncan Ballard, said: "We are delighted that 4555's owners, the Dartmouth Steam Railway & River Boat Company, have agreed to it coming to our gala. It's been on hire at the East Somerset Railway for the past three years and now that their large prairie No. 4110 looks set to return to service, the small prairie can come to us.

"I think it's going to be popular with our footplate crews, because, of course, the SVR is already home to another of the class, No. 4566. This particular locomotive was withdrawn from service in 2017, but it's worth spending some time viewing it at The Engine House, Highley, where it's now on static display pending overhaul."

➜ ***Pendennis Castle* to come early to the SVR for April 13 trips – see feature, from page 64.**

➜ **Tickets, including money-saving multi-day rovers, for the Spring Steam Gala are available at svr.co.uk**

Two spring galas and seaside summer for *Erlestoke Manor*

GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* is to spend the summer on the West Somerset Railway and will take part in its April 28-May 1 Spring Steam Spectacular.

The loan of the recently overhauled 1939-built locomotive has been mutually agreed by its owner, the Erlestoke Manor Fund, and its Severn Valley Railway home.

Still to complete its final running-in, No. 7812 will appear in the line's April 14-16 Spring Steam Gala before being taken to Minehead. It will return in the autumn to take up duties for the remainder of the season in the run-up to Christmas, traditionally the busiest time of the year at the SVR.

SVR's head of steam engineering, Duncan Ballard, said: "This is an excellent opportunity for the SVR to continue our close working relationship with the WSR and builds on the arrangement some years ago when the then WSR-based *Raveningham Hall* spent an extended period in service at the SVR.

"No. 7812 will be of considerable benefit to the WSR during its peak summer season. If it remained at the SVR, we would find ourselves over-supplied with steam engines for our anticipated requirements."

EMF chairman Adrian Hassell said: "With 2023 being the 50th anniversary year of the EMF and No. 7812 fresh from its full overhaul, we're delighted that the summer season hire will help maximise the opportunities for supporters and the wider public to enjoy the sight and sound of No. 7812 in action."

GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* catches the last light as its approaches Kidderminster on December 7 during a series of test runs. KENNY FELSTEAD/SVR

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Back to black for Caley tank

By Owen Hayward

THE Scottish Railway Museum Collection Trust and the Scottish Railway Preservation Society have approved the temporary repaint of Caledonian Railway 0-4-4T McIntosh 439 class No. 419 in BR lined black livery as No. 55189.

The proposal was made by photographic charter group In Search of Steam, and the newly-repainted Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway-based locomotive will star in a small number of events in this guise, which will be carried for up to 12 months, after which it will be repainted either back into CR colours or into its LMS guise of No. 15189, an identity it has yet to carry in the heritage era.

It could be the final time that the Caley tank appears in BR colours for some time; the owners of No. 419 prefer more ornate liveries on the iconic Scottish tank engine and thus the BR livery has only been carried once before in preservation when a similar arrangement took place back in 2009 before No. 419 was last withdrawn for overhaul. Again, it featured in a series of charters just before its ticket expired, meaning that its appearance as No. 55189 over the next year will be the longest it has worn black since BR days.

Caledonian Railway 0-4-4T No. 419 will revert to its BR identity (No. 55189) for up to 12 months and star in a limited number of photographic charters being planned by 'In Search of Steam'. It last wore the livery in 2009, seen departing Bo'ness during a 30742 Charter on March 1 of that year. MARTIN CREESE

Plea for support

In response to several pledges of help to cover the costs, a significant factor in the proposal's approval, an appeal has been launched for donations. If there is sufficient support and the costs involved are exceeded, then any surplus funds will be invested in clearing vegetation from lineside locations for the charters to use and/or repairs to appropriate goods wagons to bring them back into service for the events.

Plans were still being finalised as *Heritage Railway* closed for press; a provisional two-day stint was being considered to coincide with a charter being run at the Strathspey Railway on April 24/25 of that month so participants travelling from further afield will not need to make two long-distance trips. Focus on these dates will be at lineside locations that are not well lit in the autumn months and will likely feature No. 55189 running with some Mk.1 coaches and possibly a box van or two.

A possible further three dates will then be organised in November, to include a night shoot at either Bo'ness or Birkhill stations.

Some additional dates are being agreed in February 2024 as a reserve in case of poor weather at the previous events or if there is higher than anticipated demands for charters.

Prices are expected to be in the region of £110 to £120 per day, which reflects the high costs now involved in operating heritage railways. In return, the itineraries will be planned to offer the best value for money; they won't be standard 'nine-to-five' days, instead aiming to capture the best of the light on offer around sunrise and sunset, which will bring out the best of the locomotive and its new livery.

First choice

Those donating to the repaint appeal will have first choice of booking dates before remaining places are opened to all, details of which will be published by the organisers in due course. For more information, see facebook.com/insearchofsteam

➜ Donations to the repaint fund can be made online at cafdonate.cafonline.org/22888#!/ and Gift Aiding is encouraged to maximise value.

Catch a train through the Dee Valley to your own home!

ENTHUSIASTS looking for a home to enjoy beautiful countryside, combined with heritage steam and diesel trains, may bid for the station house at Carrog on the Llangollen Railway, which has just gone on the market.

Purchased privately in years between the closure of the Ruabon to Barmouth line in December 1964 and revivalists opening the track to the station in 1996, the sale also includes the ticket hall and tearoom, which are currently leased back to the heritage railway on an annual seasonal basis from March through to the new year, enabling trains to stop there and for passengers to alight.

Situated between the Llantysilio and Berwyn mountains, the station house, which dates back to 1865, is a three-bed property and comes with a garden, two adjoining garages, car parking and a paddock, with the plot coming in at about 0.39 acres in size.

A substantial part of the station's eastern platform is also included in the sale.

Although it would be ideal for the LR to purchase the building, at present the funds and resources are not available to entertain such a proposal.

"We would love to acquire Carrog station house, but the sad reality is that the purchase cost and upkeep is beyond the current means of the Llangollen Railway Trust, especially when considering that Carrog will not be the terminus of the line when Corwen station is opened," said spokesman Terry Pickthall.

"The LR Trust would, though, be delighted to work with the eventual purchaser to discuss a continued lease of the beautifully restored ticket office and waiting room, as referred to in the sales details."

The rest of the station site is owned by Denbighshire County Council, from which the railway leases Platform 2, its waiting room, the signalbox, yard and car park.

The property is listed as freehold with an asking price of £400,000. The listing can be found online at rightmove.co.uk/properties/132104789/

Viewings should be arranged through that listing or by calling Cavendish Estate Agents on 01824 703030.

Barking out a new world record on the Nene Valley

A BID to set a new Guinness World Record for the number of dogs carried on a steam train will be attempted at the Nene Valley Railway.

Saving Saints Rescue UK, a charity dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming St Bernards and other larger breeds, is to hold its first annual dog show weekend in Peterborough's Nene Park on April 15/16. Many of these dogs are rescued from European countries where there are no official animal shelters.

The event will include a host of activities including shows, agility courses, a social dog walk around the park, arts and crafts, and Easter egg and treasure hunts, plus a Saturday evening barbecue with live music from local singers.

Visitors are invited to camp overnight. On the Sunday, the focus will switch to Wansford station, where the record attempt will be held at about 6.15pm.

A charity spokesman said it welcomes all dogs for the record attempt, but only friendly canines will be allowed on board and must be kept control of.

The doggy train is likely to be hauled by 1959-built Polish Tkp 0-8-0T No. 5485.

➜ More details about the charity can be found at www.savingsaintsrescue.co.uk

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Mid-Norfolk urgently appeals for repair funds before season can start

By Robin Jones

THE Mid-Norfolk Railway has delayed the start of its 2023 season while it raises funds to carry out urgent track and bridge repairs.

Following the line's management restructure (announced in issue 303), a new business model was implemented as a matter of urgency.

"It has become clear that, like many other heritage railways, the financial climate means that the revenue that the railway is currently raising does not allow it to keep pace with the deterioration of the permanent way," said a statement from the railway.

The most pressing issue is the permanent way in the vicinity of Crownthorpe Bridge and its weigh beams. The track and beams must be replaced immediately to allow running to Wymondham as the rate of deterioration has accelerated since the last six-month inspection, to the point the bridge and associate track is unusable.

Accordingly, a new emergency appeal will be launched to raise at least £50,000 to allow the railway to reopen and run services from Dereham to Wymondham.

Despite previously announcing March 4 as the reopening, this will be delayed until such time as the railway is confident that trains can be run. Other remedial work and inspections must also be addressed.

Initially, the service will be a 12-mile round trip to Thuxton.

Central to the issues faced by the heritage line is the condition of the permanent way that the railway inherited from BR.

With the end of passenger services in the 1960s, BR ceased maintaining the line and as such, the state of the track was one of the principle reasons for the total closure, as to rectify the faults was economically not viable.

Mid-Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust chairman Charlie Robinson said: "The MNR has not been immune to the financial pressures that the sector has been under. Our costs have risen dramatically and therefore to achieve the ambitious objectives that the railway set itself, when the trust was set up, we have to pull together as an organisation and find ways to grow the business so we can raise the funds that are needed not just to stand still, but to also carry out the projects that have long been aspired to.

"The railway is a significant contributor to the regional economy and as such, we are very aware of our responsibilities to maintain that contribution, but to do so we also ask for the support of the business community and people of the region to ensure the long-term future of the railway."

Class 47 D1933 *Aldeburgh Festival* and a rake of Mk.3 coaches arrive at Thuxton, set to be the immediate limit of Mid-Norfolk Railway passenger services once they are restarted. MNR

New trust council member Graham Watts, who has now taken on the railway's commercial portfolio, said: "From a commercial perspective, the railway has a significant portfolio of activities already, but what we must do is be ruthless in driving our costs down to increase the profit element of the revenue we already generate and introduce new services that grow the business.

"Key to that is also to growing the working membership. We need not just people interested in railway activities, but also people with the skills that any business needs, including administration, information technology, marketing, human resources management and many more."

➜ To donate to the MNR appeal, visit www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk/donations

Up to 18 compulsory redundancies at Severn Valley?

THE Severn Valley Railway may make up to 18 compulsory redundancies in a bid to save an extra £300,000 in staffing costs this year.

As reported last issue, the railway is taking steps to address soaring operating costs and falling passenger numbers of up to 30% since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by the current cost-of-living crisis.

A SVR statement said: "Taking 2022 and 2023 together, existing measures mean we will have identified a saving of £650,000 in staff costs. This has been achieved by not filling vacancies and redeploying existing staff to cover. We are also having to allow for a significant statutory increase to minimum wage levels.

"We need to reduce costs in the coming year. For the first few months of our season, we will run on fewer days than last year, with fewer departures. We will review this in mid-May. We will also undertake an ambitious reduction of utility costs and only carry out essential work on rolling stock and infrastructure.

"Additionally, we will make a large-scale reduction in salary costs.

"We have been tasked by the board of directors to make an additional £300,000 of savings in staff costs this year. We are about to begin a consultation period for compulsory redundancies, likely to affect up to 18 paid roles, across the railway and at all levels."

The railway was running between Kidderminster and Highley only for the weekends in March because engineering work is taking place at two locations north of Highley. The full line will reopen on Saturday, April 1 with the Open House Weekend, when visitors can glimpse areas of the railway not normally accessible to the public.

LMS 5MT 4-6-0 No. 45212 with the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's 'red' steam crane at Haworth station during a 30742 photographic charter on March 1. EDWARD BOBROWSKI

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Twin anniversary celebrations on Isle of Man

By Owen Hayward

A PROGRAMME of twin celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the Isle of Man Steam Railway and the 130th of the Manx Electric Railway has been announced.

In 1870, the Isle of Man Railway Company was formed and over the ensuing decade constructed two major 3ft gauge lines, the first from Douglas to Peel, which opened on July 1, 1873. The line to Port Erin opened a year later and it is this section on which the steam railway now operates, with few concessions to modernity. A third and final line was built in 1878/79 by the Manx Northern Railway and ran between St John's and Foxdale.

Construction of the Manx Electric Railway commenced in 1893, with a short section between a depot at Derby Castle in Douglas through to Groudle Glen opening on September 7.

The anniversary celebrations for the first steam railway will begin on July 1 at 9.30am with the unveiling of a plaque at Douglas station by Lieutenant General Sir John Lorimer, Governor of the Isle of Man. A line-up of locomotives will be specially decorated with headboards, shields and flags, after which they will set off in turn, accompanied by music from the Douglas Town Band and with the first departure at 9.50am being double-headed by IOMSR Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T No. 4 *Loch* and Manx Northern Railway Dubs and Co. 0-6-0T No. 4 *Caledonia*.

On arrival at Port Erin, the Rushen Silver Band will provide a musical welcome.

Fair and more

A set of commemorative covers will also be available, delivered to Port Erin by members of the Ramsey Philatelic Services by train. A Victorian Fayre will also be opened by the governor in the station grounds, running from 11am until 4.45pm.

No. 1 *Sutherland*, the locomotive that hauled the first trains, will be displayed in the station sidings at Port St. Mary throughout the day, where the Manx Steam and Model Engineering Club will also operate a miniature railway on track panels built by schoolchildren from on the island over the last decade.

Photographic exhibitions and a special dining service, which will honour former IOMRC secretary George Henry Wood who served on the board from 1870 until his death at the age of 89 in 1925, will also available.

On July 23, an eight-day festival celebrating all of the Island's transport networks will begin with a programme that includes parallel running between Derby Castle and Groudle on the Manx Electric Railway, Motorman taster sessions, Beyer Peacock locomotive line-ups at Port Erin, closed line bus tours, workshop tours, cavalcades and much more.

Caledonia will spend a few days on display at Knockaloe, a branch of the former Douglas to Peel line that opened in 1915 to specifically to serve the First World War internment camp by transporting goods from boats moored at Peel Quay directly into the camp. *Caledonia* was the only locomotive capable of managing the line's incline and at its peak made an average of 18 round trips a day.

The IOMR's No. 8 *Fenella* will also return to Peel (the line to which closed 55 years ago), where it will be placed on a panel of track for a day adjacent to the sandstone platform and stone water tank on July 23.

The week will include cavalcades on the Douglas Horse Tramway, as well as both the Snaefel Mountain Railway and MER, where trams will parade through Laxey station in numerical order. The Groudle Glen Railway will run Bagnall 2-4-0T *Sea Lion* with its original four-wheeled coaches, both locomotive and stock dating from 1896.

The festival will be rounded off with a steam extravaganza at Douglas station, where all available locomotives will line up with a selection of vintage rolling stock.

Electric dreams

The MER's celebrations will begin on Sunday, September 10, three days after the actual anniversary on September 7. A parallel run between Derby Castle and Groudle Glen featuring GF Milnes unvestibuled saloon cars Nos. 1 and 2, both dating from 1893, will set off at 8.50am.

An as-yet unannounced special guest of honour will unveil a commemorative plaque at Laxey station, travelling aboard No. 1 in a second parallel run, with No. 2, departing at 9.40am. On arrival at Laxey, the guest will also open the Victorian Fayre there.

Snaefell tram shed will be offering tours at intervals throughout the day for an additional supplement, as too will the Laxey cars Sheds at Lower Rencell Hill. Motorman taster lessons will once again be available.

➜ For more information and to book tickets, visit https://tinyurl.com/2vmxp9vz

As it prepared to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its opening on July 5, 2003, the 2ft gauge Hayling Light Railway has added Alan Keef 4WDM No. 11 from Thorpe Park amusement park to its fleet. Built in 1984 for the park's Treasure Island Railway that operated between 1983 and 1993, No. 11 was retained as a works and rescue locomotive for the park's Canada Creek Railway ride, which, in turn, closed in 2011. The stock remained stored at the park, with ownership of No. 11 now being transferred to the HLR, along with the majority of the track. The locomotive is currently being rebuilt to meet the HLR's needs and will arrive later in the year. HLR

Three heritage lines are victims of vandalism

VANDALS targeted the Churnet Valley Railway on February 19, with several intruders damaging a fence using tools they had brought with them.

The railway posted images from CCTV and passengers on social media, and said: "Sadly, again some members of the public believe it is perfectly acceptable to trespass on the railway. Some people don't understand that even a heritage railway such as ours will kill." Protective equipment at Leekbrook level crossing was also destroyed.

Rolling stock on the West Somerset and Swanage railways were also hit by vandals, with both attacks occurring on February 26. The Swanage Railway incident saw windows smashed on its Swanage Belle dining carriages, with further damage sustained inside.

At the WSR, windows were smashed on the operational Class 117 DMU, and its interior, along with doors on adjacent carriages, was also damaged. Locks were broken on freight wagons.

The police were alerted by a nearby resident and officers detained three minors.

It comes as a blow to WSR volunteers as the DMU had been prepared for the start of the railway's operating season, which beings on March 18. General manager Kerry Noble said: "We are very grateful to the resident who reported this activity and to the police for responding rapidly and taking the appropriate action. Nevertheless, this is a very disappointing incident following work that staff and volunteers have undertaken over the winter.

"We will all be working hard to ensure that these vehicles can be back in use again as soon as possible."

Windows on the West Somerset Railway's Class 117 DMU smashed and interiors damaged during the February 26 vandal attack. RICH HISCOX/CREATIVE COMMONS

'Quirky' Rushcliffe Halt marks 60th anniversary of its closure

By Robin Jones

AN open day attended by hundreds of visitors was held to mark six decades since the Great Central Railway's 'quirkiest' station was closed by BR.

While the GCR's London Extension was opened in 1899, Rushcliffe Halt – now part of the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) – was built 12 years later to serve Rushcliffe Golf Club. Accordingly, its layout did not conform to the typical GCR 'island' platform design. It closed in 1963 during a 'cull' of many smaller stations on the route.

While GCR(N) trains have run to the halt in the past, they are currently unable to do while repairs to bridges on the heritage line await completion.

Visitors arrived at the open day in a vintage bus provided by the Nottingham Area Bus Society based at the nearby Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre.

Visitors saw the progress made on restoring the halt, where many original features survive. Two platform shelters have been recreated and interpretation boards tell the story of the halt and its working life.

The volunteer team's Phil Sharpe said: "We may not have trains at the moment and our station may be small but we are very proud of it. We were delighted to welcome so many people to our open day.

"Perhaps you can't call the anniversary of closure a celebration - but what's been achieved since by everyone who has given their time and money is certainly something to celebrate.

Thanks to supporters

"We'd like to thank everyone who has donated or worked at Rushcliffe Halt over the preservation years.

"We have reached a milestone and the best for the station is still ahead."

The team is preparing a project to improve visitor facilities and providing a viewing area on the site of the long demolished original station building.

Meanwhile, the nearby 1946-built brick-and-concrete signalbox nearby is returning to life.

Rushcliffe Halt porters recreate the days when passenger services called. TOM INGALL

The GCR(N) signal and telegraph team, assisted by the counterparts on the Loughborough to Leicester North section of the GCR, have installing a floor, power and a lever frame. Visitors were able to step inside the 'box for the first time, see the work so far, and even pull the first lever to be fitted.

The exterior of Hotchley Hill signalbox is being restored. TOM INGALL

The next project at the signalbox will involve extensive repairs to the concrete structure.

➜ To support the work at Rushcliffe Halt, donations can be made to the LNER GC Trust, which has a dedicated fund for the project, c/o CAF bank, sort code 40-52-40 and account number 00010221.

Vulcan for Poppy Line's spring gala

BAGNALL 0-6-0ST No. 401 *Vulcan* has been confirmed as the second visiting locomotive for the North Norfolk Railway's April 14-16 steam gala, starring alongside previously announced West Country light Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone* from the Swanage Railway.

Built in 1951 for the Steel Company of Wales for use at the Abbey works at Port Talbot, *Vulcan's* design was to be Bagnall's new standard postwar heavy shunter, but ultimately its high specifications meant it was too expensive for industrial duties.

Its appearance comes courtesy of the North Tyneside Railway. The gala will see at least three locomotives from the home fleet in operation each day, with the daily roster varying for each, meaning visitors could see and ride behind seven different locomotives across the long weekend.

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GC runs Mountsorrel branch services only as two historic bridges replaced

FAMOUS for its double-track heritage main line, the Great Central Railway has switched to running branch services while two 125-year-old bridges are replaced.

Services between Loughborough and Leicester North have been suspended for the whole of March while the bridges near Quorn & Woodhouse station are lifted and replaced.

As a replacement service for visitors, heritage DMUs and railcars are running between Leicester North and Swithland, where they change onto the onto the Mountsorrel branch and head to Nunckley Hill visitor centre and museum.

'Leading attraction'

GCR chairman Richard Patching said: "The contrast between the branch line and our main line is really something. The train slows right down, leaving plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and relax.

"As our main line was built in the 1890s, we need to keep investing in the railway so we continue to serve the community as a leading attraction and employer. We are relieved we don't have to close entirely, so now is definitely the time to come and see us for this very rare chance to travel from Leicester to Mountsorrel!"

The Mountsorrel branch was built to carry trains laden with stone from the local quarry. It fell out of use in the 1950s but was relaid by volunteers as a community project. What was an empty site was turned into a visitor centre telling the story of the quarrying and railways in the area, along with other village stories.

A DMU service from Leicester North at the end of the Mountsorrel branch. GCR

One of two bridges being replaced near Quorn & Woodhouse station. GCR

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Southern Locos Ltd takes on *Sir Frederick Pile* from MHR

By Owen Hayward

UNRESTORED rebuilt Bulleid light Pacific No. 34058 *Sir Frederick Pile*, which has been stored at the Mid-Hants Railway since arriving there from the Avon Valley Railway in 2011, is being transferred into the ownership of Southern Locomotives Ltd.

Taking its tally of light Pacifics to seven, an agreement between SLL (which has already instigated plans for its restoration to commence) and the MHR (where workshop space for the full overhaul of No. 34058 would not have been available for many years) has been reached. The company has now taken on the project alongside the restoration of two of its own locomotives, Nos. 34010 *Sidmouth* and 35025 *Brocklebank Line*.

No. 34058 was built at Brighton in 1947 with air-smoothed casing and numbered 21C158. Rebuilt in March 1960 with the casing removed, it continued in service for just four more years until withdrawn from Eastleigh in October 1964 with an estimated 812,568 miles on the clock.

From there, it was moved to Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard from where it purchased by Mike Vout in 1986 and taken to the AVR. There, Mike and close colleagues devoted themselves to acquiring or making many of the parts required for rebuilding, although the frames, boiler, axleboxes and wheels were never restored.

Mike died in 2015 and the locomotive was donated to the MHR, with a dedicated group working to raise funds for the work required. During 2022, the MHR approached SLL with a view to pooling resources that would help both organisations restore, overhaul and maintain their 10 Bulleid Pacifics; No. 34058 is just one part of the long-term strategic partnership.

Good friends

SLL and Mike Vout have had a long association, having liaised on several occasions in the past as he collected the parts to overhaul his locomotive. SLL's Willie Bath included him in several bulk purchases of materials for new parts when making purchases for SLL, which resulted in No. 34058's new coupling and connecting rods, and new tender frames. In return, when Mike's friend and colleague Andy Richards managed to persuade British Steel to cut several sets of steel sheet for tender frames to imperial measurements, SLL benefitted with material to construct three new frames.

The sheets for No. 34058's new tender frames are stored and will be delivered once SLL can organise construction. Both parties also came together on a bulk order for tender wheels following Willie's organisation of the correct pattern for these.

Preparations are being made to lift the boiler off of the frames at the MHR; this may take place at Arlesford prior to the chassis being loaded onto a lorry for transfer to Sellindge.

It is hoped that the boiler overhaul will be carried out under contract at Ropley, with work possibly starting later this year. SLL asked its inspector to give a preliminary examination of the boiler; the general consensus as that it is in a reasonable condition, although after 58 years of inactivity, there will still be a fairly significant amount to do.

Fundraising will be a joint effort between both organisations. The MHR has also organised the delivery of four panels of track to SLL's Sellindge base in March to provide storage space for the locomotive when it departs Hampshire.

Once at Sellindge, the restoration of the chassis will commence immediately, with the removal of the driving springs, axleboxes and more to enable the lifting of the frames in a similar manner to the process undertaken with *Brocklebank Line*. After this, the clock will start ticking to grit-blast, needle-gun and bring the frames up to standard before entering Herston Works, hopefully in mid-2024.

Work is earmarked to take place alongside the restoration of *Sidmouth*, also in the early stages of restoration, which will undoubtedly prove an economical boon for the manufacture and machining of components. A tentative timescale of four years has been estimated, with *Sir Frederick Pile* set to return to the MHR as its main base.

Lancashire holiday

Meanwhile, SLL's unrebuilt No. 34072 *257 Squadron* will spend the summer at the East Lancashire Railway to assist with locomotive requirements there following the recent withdrawal of classmate No. 34092 *City of Wells* and the Furness Railway Trust's WR 0-6-2T 56XX No. 5643, the latter of which has now returned to the Ribble Steam Railway in Preston for overhaul.

Following its appearance at the Kent & East Sussex Railway during April and May (as reported last issue), No. 34072 will return to its current operating base at the Spa Valley Railway for the June 17/18 Summer Steam Up, after which it will move to Bury for its third visit about 30 years after its first.

It is hoped that *City of Wells* will be completed in time to see the Pacific pair operating in tandem before *257 Squadron* returns south.

Eddystone will also be off on a short holiday when it visits the North Norfolk Railway for the April 14-16 Spring Steam Gala. The weekend will feature double-heading, non-stop runs and demonstration goods workings, in addition to

SR Battle of Britain classes Nos. 34058 *Sir Fredrick Pile* and 34053 *Sir Keith Park* rub shoulders at Arlesford on the Mid-Hants during the summer 2017 steam gala. The unrestored locomotive will now be overhauled by Southern Locomotives Ltd following the transferal of ownership to the company, taking its tally of these light Pacifics to seven. SLL

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Preparations for No. 34053's boiler lift were well under way. The light Pacific is pictured almost fully stripped inside Herston Works on January 19. DAVID ENSOR/SLL

The frames for Austerity 0-6-0 No. WD76050 *Norman* have been transferred to the East Lancashire Railway's Bury workshops, where overhaul will now be completed. SLL

opportunities to ride on the line's varying vintage carriage rakes.

SLL has hinted at the possibility of steaming four of its operational locomotives at Swanage early next year. Currently residing there are Nos. 34028 *Eddystone* and 34070 *Manston*.

No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* is currently in Herston Works, where the boiler is almost ready for removal. The front half of the locomotive will be transported to Tyseley Locomotive Works, where the boiler will then be craned out and swapped with the overhauled one from *Sidmouth*, which is currently at Weybourne on the NNR. With the 'new' boiler in the frames, these will then return to Herston for the locomotive to be reassembled, while the removed boiler will now be repaired under contract in Tyseley. With this work expediting the overhaul, *Sir Keith Park* could be undergoing running in at Swanage in the first months of 2024, meaning it would only need No. 34072 to be taken there to have a four-locomotive 'Bulleid fest'.

Elsewhere, the overhaul of SLL's BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80104 continues at Tyseley. Boiler work is concentrated on the rear upper copper tubeplate, which, following the removal of tubes, has revealed that the holes would be oversized after cleaning and tapping, compromising the integrity of the plate. To avoid the expense of a full replacement, a specialist copper welder is being employed to build up the edges and reduce their size, before Tyseley engineers cut new threads in this to make them correct in size. Although this is estimated to cost in the region of £25,000, it represents only about 20% of the price of a completely new tubeplate.

Other parts have been transferred to Herston, where SLL volunteers are working on refurbishing and overhauling them where necessary.

The overhaul of Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn-built Austerity 0-6-0ST No. WD76050 *Norman*, which is being restored to Longmoor Military Railway condition, is also due to resume following the transfer of the frames, boiler and other parts to the ELR, where plans to complete the locomotive are being made.

New general manager is appointed at Epping Ongar

FOLLOWING the departure of Dean Walton as acting general manager in December 2022, the Epping Ongar Railway has appointed former Mid-Norfolk Railway equal George Saville as his successor.

Initially joining on a short-term contract through the 2023 operating season, George brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience from his time at the MNR, Nene Valley and other railways and locomotive groups.

He said: "I am honoured to be joining the Epping Ongar Railway, a heritage railway that has been such a success and has so much future potential.

"As the railway's new general manager, I look forward to leading and serving the dedicated and loyal volunteers and staff of the Epping Ongar Railway and helping them build on the success they have already created."

George began volunteering with heritage railways as a teenager at the Rutland Railway Museum, now Rocks by Rail. From this, he met locomotive owner Gerald Boden, which led to him becoming involved with the Nene Valley Railway's galas and events planning. He has driven locomotives during Steam on the Met specials on the London Underground, and helped overhaul and operate locomotives such as the WR 0-6-0PT 94XX No. 9466 with the late Dennis Howells.

George Saville, the new general manager of the Epping Ongar Railway, at the controls of No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* during its visit to the Mid-Norfolk Railway in 2021. EOR

He became the MNR's first operations manager, led a team to produce the railway's rule book, and introduced steam galas there, before applying to become general manager.

More recently he has led the railway to take on the lucrative Polar Express franchise (which latterly included purchasing 19 Mk.3 carriages to help improve the service), negotiated a storage contract with Greater Anglia, and led the railway through the Covid-19 pandemic. His departure from the MNR follows a recent restructure of the management there.

EOR managing director Roger Wright said: "We are delighted to have George join us at short notice and look forward to him helping us further develop one of Essex's major leisure destinations. We would like to thank Dean Walton, our previous general manager, for all the hard work he has put into the Epping Ongar Railway to help us to where we are today."

Shunter's arrival at Llangollen

THE Llangollen Railway has taken delivery of Hunslet 0-4-0DM No. 2145 from the Tanat Valley Light Railway to aid with shunting duties at the Pentrefelin carriage works.

Built in 1940, the locomotive worked the Newport Royal Ordnance Factory, shunting the private sidings that connected to the GWR's South Wales main line. After withdrawal, it was preserved at the Dean Forest Railway in the early 1970s before moving to the TVR.

It has now been purchased by a member of the LR's Suburban group, which will now restore the locomotive, which has not operated for about six years, and use it for shunting at the carriage shed to relieve Class 08 D3265 of some of the workload.

Hunslet 0-4-0DM No. 2145 arrives at Llangollen on February 20. LR

Bluebell extends 'kids for a quid' offer throughout 2023

By Owen Hayward

Over the February half-term, the Bluebell Railway's services could not run the full length of line owing to trackwork north of Horsted Keynes. However, it proved to be the perfect opportunity to launch freshly overhauled former LBSCR A1X 0-6-0T No. 72 *Fenchurch* into traffic, which operated the services with three Southern Region compartment carriages on the truncated line. On February 13, the Terrier is seen emerging from Three Arch Bridge with a morning departure from Horsted Keynes. JAMES CUMMINS/BR

THE Bluebell Railway's 'kids for a quid' offer proved to be such a successful draw over the February 11-19 half-term that it has been extended to cover most of 2023.

With the exception of special events, children aged between three and 15 can now enjoy the discounted travel rate when accompanied by a full fare-paying adult during any weekend and school holiday when trains are running on the 11-mile line.

Due to the truncation of the line north of Horsted Keynes, where track relaying was taking place at Vaux End, half-term services were limited to operating between there and Sheffield Park only. However, the holiday was also a perfect opportunity to launch newly-overhauled LBSCR 0-6-0T A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* back into traffic following a winter period of finishing off and crew familiarisation training runs.

Fenchurch headed a three-coach rake of vintage SR compartment carriages, including birdcage brake No. 3363, over the truncated line, with SECR O1 0-6-0 No. 65 operating alongside on some days when it hauled the Golden Arrow dining services. A temporary ice skating rink at the south end of the Sheffield Park locomotive shed also proved immensely popular over the week.

Less is sometimes more

Bluebell plc chairman Paul Churchman said: "We had a good number of visitors and *Fenchurch* was very popular with the kids. Ice skating did very well; although half-term was across only one week (last year West and East Sussex, Kent and Surrey half-terms were all on two differing weeks) and we took less money than last year, by only operating between the two stations, using *Fenchurch*, and having just one week of costs means the margin is showing that we did better. The moral here is that less is sometimes better, in some cases.

"The ice rink brings in families with teenage children as well as couples. This shows we have to offer more than just a train ride – and broadening the offer so we can appeal to a wider customer base is something the team is working on constantly."

As *Heritage Railway* went to press, the track at Vaux End had been reconnected and a tamper had arrived to finish off alignment of the relaid section. A substantial amount of ballast reclaimed from this stretch will be reused on the relay of a 'wet' section of line just north of the 731-yard Sharpthorne Tunnel.

However, a setback saw Maunsell Q 0-6-0 No. 30541 withdrawn from traffic eight years into its 10-year boiler certificate. It was stopped in December 2022 when firebox defects were discovered, and with just two years left of service before it would need to be withdrawn, it was decided not to undertake repairs now.

However, given that the cylinders were rebored, and steam pipes and piston rods replaced early last year, it is in mechanically good condition and consideration was being given to a possible rapid overhaul, but dependent on availability of finance for new tyres and a new tender tank.

Hall's helping hand

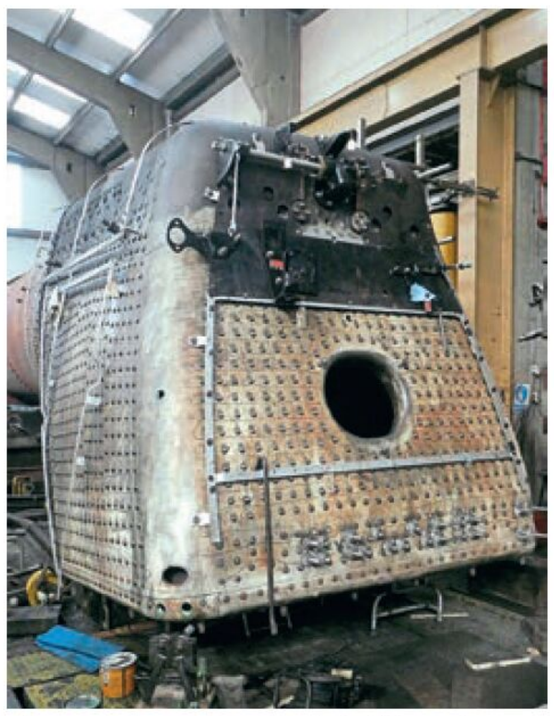
The withdrawal has left the railway with just three 'big' engines, BR Standards 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73082 *Camelot* and 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80150 plus No. 65. The latter, much like the 'Terrier', is limited in what it can haul and during the summer months is normally in charge of the dining services. To provide enough cover for maintenance and failures, the hire of WR 4-6-0 No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* from the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre has been extended until later in the year.

The boiler for resident SR Battle of Britain No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair*, owned by the Bulleid Society, is now upright in the Sheffield Park workshops after being trial-fitted to the frames. Retubing is nearing completion, as is work on finishing the ashpan, while the locomotive's tender is in the process of being repainted.

No. 34059's owning group has confirmed that once its boiler has been returned to the frames, that of West Country No. 21C123 *Blackmoor Vale* will be lifted off and taken to South Devon Railway Engineering, where a new inner firebox awaits fitting. It is hoped that an agreement will be reached to overhaul other items from this locomotive at Sheffield Park, although new items of motion are thought to be required.

Also in the works is SECR H 0-4-4T No. 263, for which the boiler was removed back in November 2022. Despite being withdrawn only at the expiration of its ticket just a few months before in February, like No. 30541, it too has received a large amount of mechanical work since its last overhaul was completed in 2013. With the boiler in very good condition, work began as it was believed that the turnaround for this unique and popular locomotive would be relatively quick. It does, however, require new crown girders, tyres, springs and cylinder block.

Funding has been provided by the Bluebell Railway Trust, in part thanks to a bequest specifically for this locomotive.



Tubing of the boiler for SR Battle of Britain class No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* is well underway, while the backhead has had the crinolines fitted, which the cladding will eventually be mounted on. JOHN FRY

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Two of the completed projects that were outshopped just weeks apart: SR 20-ton engineering wagon ED62002 and Bulleid five plank-open merchandise No. 12058 sit outside the workshops on February 26. MATTHEW LANDER/BR

Delivering the goods – and vintage coaches too!

AT HORSTED Keynes, the Bluebell Railway's wagon division has outshopped three wagons from the carriage and wagon workshops. On February 13, the restoration of SR 20-ton engineer's wagon ED 62002 was officially completed after a two-year-long restoration, which has seen the vehicle finished off in the bright 'orange oxide' colour the region's engineering fleet were found in.

Behind this on February 21 was SR eight-plank open No. 37786 that had undergone a rapid one-week repaint and spot-plank replacement. It was in overall good condition, with just three planks requiring swapping out.

It has been repainted into the previously worn SR freight brown and early SR-style lettering; it had been hoped to change this for the later style that the wagon would have carried, but it has retained the current style to meet requirements for a forthcoming filming contract. The livery will be rectified in few years' time when it undergoes a major overhaul.

Also finished was SR Bulleid five-plank merchandise open No. 12058. The restoration has seen it revert from its departmental shunting wagon conversion to its original specifications, including unpainted English hardwood finish.

The wagon division will undertake repaints on two of the railway's three plank opens – LMS No. 474558 and BR No. M480222 – while it awaits a shunt to bring one of its next major projects, Shell/BP class A spirit tanker No. 4497, down from Kingscote to facilitate the replacement of its timber packers and undergo a repaint.

SR motor car truck No. 39617 was planned to be the next major project but has been delayed until later in the year as it will be required for background work in an upcoming film job.

Centenarian Pullman parlour brake third *Car 54* has been returned to its bogies after having its brake gear remade and has transferred over to the paint shop for the next phase of external finishing. While undercoat is being applied, work will continue on the interior, including fitting of doors and droplights that required the vehicle to sit level on its wheels to facilitate.

Its position on the jacks has been taken by the line's LNWR observation saloon No. 1503 for brake rigging work to enable this to return to service soon. LBSCR four-wheel Stroudley brake No. 949 has been lined and lettered in the main works and has also spent a week in the paintshop for varnishing.

This carriage, built in 1881, has been restored to its former glory after having been used as a storage shed at a farm near Cranleigh, where it is believed to have sat since soon after the First World War.

Restoration commenced in 2004, and it will form part of a Terrier-hauled Stroudley train with first No. 661 (restored and operational), third Nos. 328 (undergoing restoration) and 992 (stored), and brake third No. 725 (stored) to become possibly the oldest standard gauge train in the country.

After a week in the paintshop, Stroudley four-wheel brake third No. 949 is inching ever closer to completion. Work underneath and further layers of varnish are still to take place before it can be released for service. RICHARD SALMON/BR

Now 100 years old, Pullman parlour brake third *Car 54* is back on its bogies and in the paintshop at Horsted Keynes. MATTHEW LANDER/BR

Award presentation recognises half a century of hard graft at Mid-Hants

THE Mid-Hants Railway has been presented with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson.

As reported in issue 295, the award, the highest honour that a voluntary group can receive, was announced in last year's Platinum Jubilee Honours List, but the presentation ceremony was postponed following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September. It instead took place on February 27.

Mr Atkinson said: "This award has been given in recognition of the contribution made by the Watercress Line's many dedicated volunteers over almost 50 years."

Railway president Richard Lacey said: "Everybody at The Watercress Line is honoured that our efforts have been recognised by this award.

"Since 1974, our wonderful volunteers, working with our small core of paid staff, have driven the restoration of the railway and reconnected Alresford to Alton by rail. Their skills, dedication and sheer hard work in restoring, operating and maintaining the railway, and in delivering events, has benefited the local community.

"Without the enthusiasm and commitment of our extraordinary volunteers, none of this would have been possible."

Two volunteers from the railway will also attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, along with other recipients of last year's award.

Mid-Hants Railway volunteers gathered at Arlesford on February 27 for the presentation of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson. MHR

Edward Thomas to go to Aberystwyth for overhaul

By Owen Hayward

THE Talyllyn Railway's Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST No. 4 *Edward Thomas* will bow out of service following its starring role in the David Mitchell photographic charters on March 19-22 – and work on its overhaul will begin in the Vale of Rheidol workshops after a decade following its last overhaul.

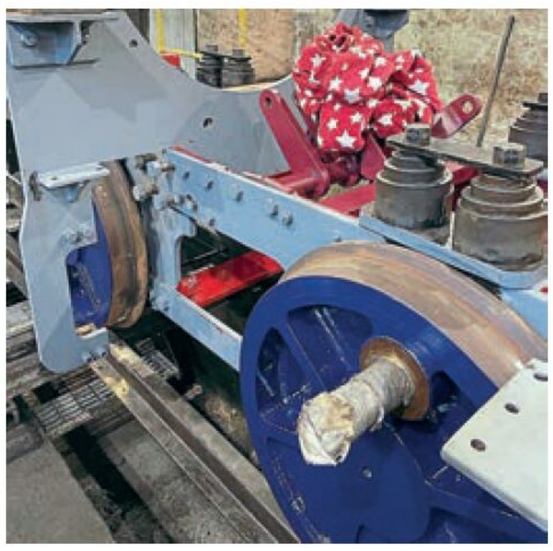
The 'Tattoo' will make its final operating appearance wearing Corris red colours that have been rapidly applied in the Pendre paintshop especially for the charters, after which it will depart to Aberystwyth on April 17.

It is envisaged that, as the axleboxes were renewed and horns machined in 2018, the work required to complete the overhaul will be limited to a retube of the boiler and boring the cylinders, although a full assessment will determine this once dismantled and inspected.

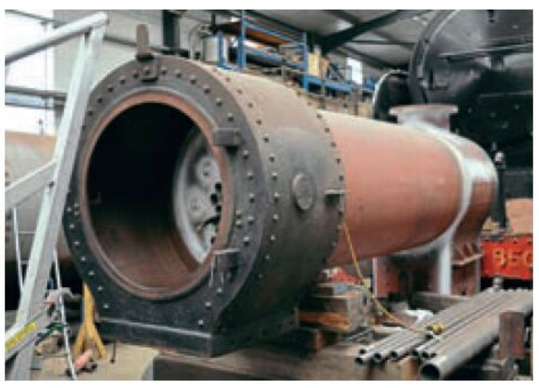
Meanwhile, the fully-painted frames for Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* have entered the workshops at Pendre, where the redesigned brake gear is being made and fitted.

Cylinder liners have been shrunk into the bores and new draincock holes have been bored through and tapped. The first coats of the locomotive's new blue livery have been applied to the driving wheels

The boiler is at the Mid-Hants Railway's Ropley workshops and volunteers there are continuing to fit the new tubes.



The first taste of the new blue livery for No. 1 *Talyllyn* is visible on its driving wheels that have now been painted in the Pendre works. NATHAN SPENCE



The boiler for Fletcher Jennings No. 1 *Talyllyn* is currently at the Mid-Hants Railway's Ropley works, where the tubes are now being installed. OWEN HAYWARD

Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST No. 4047 of 1921 No.4 E*dward Thomas* in undercoat for its new red livery on March 2 as it was being prepared for a series of photographic charters before withdrawal for overhaul. LUKE RYAN/TR

King Edward I is moved to Crewe

GWR 4-6-0 No. 6024 *Edward I* has been taken to the LNWR Heritage workshops at Crewe for the next phase of its overhaul.

Over the past 11 years, the 6024 Preservation Society has undertaken the third overhaul in preservation of No. 6024 at Minehead on the West Somerset Railway on behalf of the owner the Royal Scot Locomotive and General Trust.

As engineering and technical requirements for operation on Network Rail have changed over that time, the trust wanted assurance of the condition of the locomotive prior to the completion of the overhaul.

On February 23, it was transported by road to Crewe for an engineering audit by industry stakeholders and authorised bodies as part of this assurance process.

Once the necessary tasks required to complete the overhaul are made clear, it is planned for the locomotive to be returned to Minehead for the society to complete it.

No. 6024, the 36th locomotive to be rescued from Barry scrapyard, was withdrawn from traffic on April 15, 2012, after running for a few weeks on the SWR after its main line ticket expired.

Grant to boost Foxfield's appeal

THE Foxfield Railway has been given a £9500 grant to boost the delivery of its heritage message to visitors.

The grant has been awarded by the Association of Independent Museums and the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of AIM's New Stories: New Audiences scheme to enable small museums to develop and broaden their offer to new and non-traditional audiences.

The railway will produce new displays and interpretation panels telling the story of Foxfield Colliery and in particular the lives of women, children and animals who worked in coal mines.

It will also create an education pack and audio-visual presentation of the colliery's history, which opened in 1880 and closed in 1965, as well as improving the presentation of the historic colliery buildings.

Foxfield museum manager Anthony Dawson said: "The Foxfield Railway is unique in still having part of the colliery complex the railway once served, including the ferocious Foxfield Bank. This project will tell new, engaging stories and enable us to open the colliery on a monthly basis."

The private mineral railway opened in 1893 and the Foxfield Light Railway Society began to operate trains over it just two years after the mine closed.

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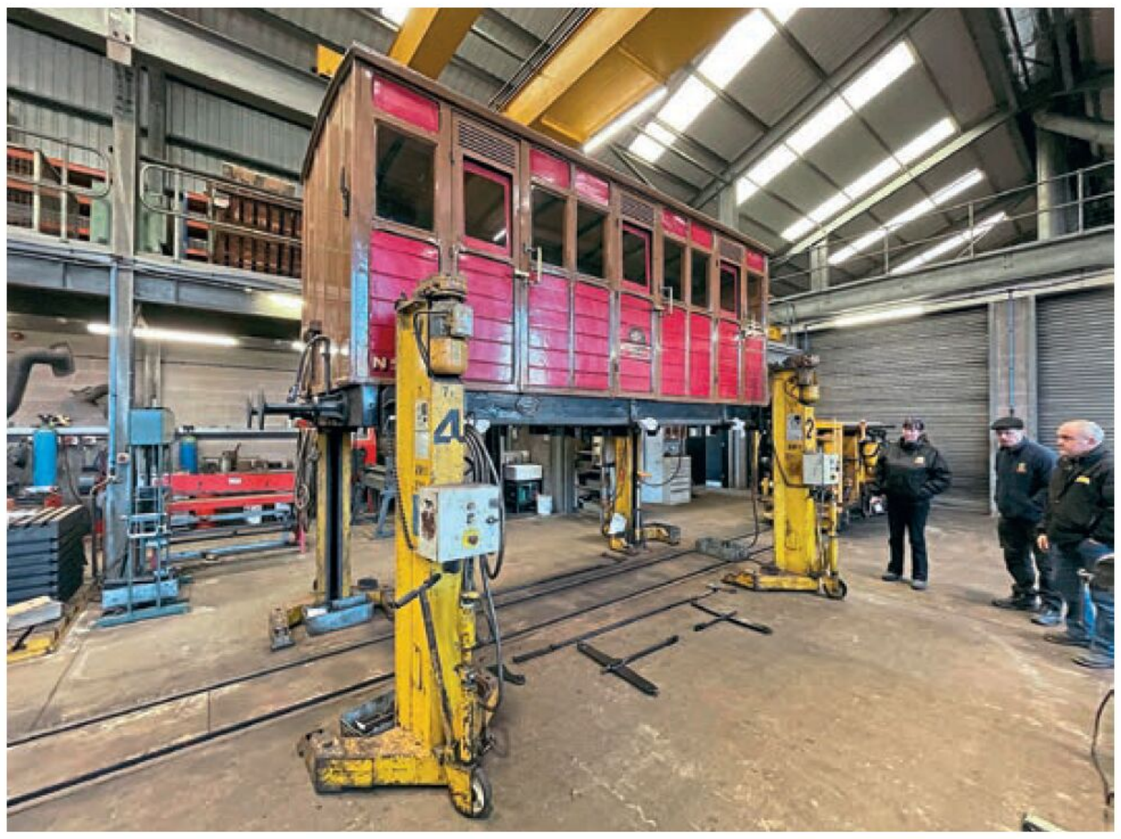

Built in 1867, carriage No. 4 was sent to the Vale of Rheidol's Aberystwyth works for repairs at the end of 2022. On January 27, it was up on jacks while the wheelsets were turned and brake gear and springs overhauled. TR

A new arrival on the Talyllyn Railway is former Statfold Barn Railway brake van No. 14. Its bogies have been sent away to be regauged for the 2ft 3in line. LUKE RYAN/TR

The overhaul of 0-4-0WT No. 2 *Dolgoch* is entering the final stages, and with painting now complete, the final external fittings are being refitted, with steam testing due to commence once the new connecting rods have been delivered. Cracks were discovered in the old left-hand side rod and the decision was taken to replace both sides with new ones. It is expected that, subject to successful running in, No. 2 will debut at the Founders Day celebrations on May 14.

Diesel stalwart stopped

On the diesel front, Ruston & Hornsby 4WDM No. 5 *Midlander* has been taken out of service, in need of substantial gearbox repairs and overhaul, meaning it will be unavailable for the majority of the 2023 operating season.

Built in 1940 and then rebuilt to its current appearance in 1980, this shunter was a stalwart of the engineering fleet following its arrival in 1957, even operating a limited winter season for a few years between Twywn Wharf and Rhydyronen. It was not until work on the extension to Nant Gwernol, however, that it truly came into its own – when it aided in transporting spoil, rock and rails up and down the line for six years.

It has taken a back seat in more recent years but is still a significant part of the TR history; its absence – in a year where the diesel fleet is set to gain more recognition with two planned running days – will be noticed. A request for donations towards the cost of the work required has been made. These can be sent by post to: Talylllyn Holdings Limited, Wharf Station, Neptune Road, Tywyn, Gwynedd LL36 9EY or online by visiting talyllyn.co.uk/support/donate

Meanwhile, the railway's new open carriage, which is being built in the carriage workshops at Pendre, has seen the seat frames assembled, painted and fitted, while the slats for them have been drilled and are now being varnished and fitted. One of its original Victorian-era four wheelers, namely No. 4 (nicknamed Lulu), is presently at the VoR workshops, where work to return it to service has been undertaken.

Initially failed with a broken spring, the opportunity has been taken to strip the brake and draw gear for cleaning and painting, along with fitting new horn guides and overhauling all the springs. The axles have been subject to non-destructive testing and passed; both have had the wheels turned to profile. The carriage was due back at Tywyn as this issue of *Heritage Railway* went to press.

The railway has also received donation of former Statfold Barn Railway brake van No. 14, which will help maintain the efficiency of engineering trains as the unnumbered Corris Railway-owned bogie brake van is set to return there later this year following a period on hire. The capability of having a brake at each end of engineering trains has reduced wasted time in shunting to reform these workings. The SBR was using No. 14 only as a lineside hut and so its donation has been warmly welcomed by the TR; its bogies have been sent away to be regauged for the line, and the correct style of buffers and drawhooks will be fitted.

The seats for the Talyllyn Railway's new open carriage are starting to be installed, with slats being positioned for drilling before going for varnishing prior to final fitting. TR

Bluebell's new appointment as 'Southern Six' reforms

THE board of the Bluebell Railway has co-opted Tony Astor as its new infrastructure director, who started on March 1.

He replaces Barry Luck, who stood down after three years in the role. He had previously indicated that at his own appointment that he wished to serve no more than that in the position.

Tony spent nearly 40 years in the airport business, with almost half of that time at British Airports Authority, culminating in reaching senior management level at Heathrow, with roles including focus on jet fuel infrastructure projects. These included major contract negotiations and developments of new related facilities at the airport's Terminal 5.

Tony set up his own airport consultancy business in 2008 and worked at a number of high-profile airports in the Middle East before partially retiring in 2019, at which time he also became a volunteer project manager at the Bluebell, initially in the carriage and wagon department and then moving to infrastructure to oversee the power upgrade project at Horsted Keynes.

He said: "Many businesses are facing unprecedented challenges and I hope to bring my business experience in project management and infrastructure development to ensure the railway's projects are delivered in the most cost-effective and timely manner. Knowing that the volunteers are the backbone of the railway, I am looking forward to helping them achieve great results as we deliver the future works programme."

Bluebell Railway plc chairman Paul Churchman said: "We welcome Tony Astor to the board and know he will work tirelessly to build on the great work of Barry Luck in delivering a range of complex infrastructure projects across the railway.

"We thank Barry for his service since 2020 and wish him well as he continues with his various volunteer roles at the Bluebell Railway."

On February 27, the first meeting of the reformed 'Southern Six' took place at Sheffield Park, bringing together various leading members from six heritage railways based in the south of England to promote cooperation and solidarity to become a strong and united group. It comes following a similar meeting between key figures of the Spa Valley, Bluebell and Kent & East Sussex railways in October last year and incorporates those three lines along with the Mid-Hants, Isle of Wight Steam and Swanage railways.

It is hoped that as a collective, the alliance will adopt a uniform approach to the ever-increasing demands on the industry and achieve the best possible results for all. Meetings will be held every two months, with the first producing much discussion, sharing of ideas and the formation of intent to create strategies to cope with various areas of need for this year and beyond.

Five-year upgrade for Blackpool depot as 'soap star' tram returns

By Owen Hayward

Blackpool Tramway Balloon No. 710 arrives at Rigby Road depot 12 years after it was last seen there. It will be cosmetically restored and become part of a new development within the 1935 depot building behind it. GARY MITCHELL

A FIVE-year vision for the Blackpool Tramway's Rigby Road depot, known as Tramtown, has been revealed as the heritage seafront tram tour operator seeks to better conserve and present its historic fleet.

A £70,000 appeal has been launched to aid the purchase of new shed doors as part of the first phase of the work on the 1935 building, the only one of its type in the UK still in operation.

The heritage tram and depot tours receive more than 500,000 visitors each year. The plan has been developed to improve both visitor access, which is currently restricted to pre-booked tours, and fleet maintenance by developing a new visitor centre in part of the depot and undertaking essential repairs to the building.

With some finance coming from Blackpool Council and Blackpool Transport - £800,000 has been allocated for phase one - which will see the heritage workshop relocated into the main tram shed, as the building it currently occupies is required for a new electrified bus fleet.

A partition wall will be erected to separate this third of the shed from the rest of the building, and the roof over the new area will be replaced.

However, one of the biggest and most important aspects of this phase will be the fitting of new purpose-built doors for a third of the tram shed. Currently open to the elements, the doors would provide the first truly watertight area and protect both the vehicles stored here and the engineers working on them.

Head of heritage Bryan Lindop said: "These will help keep out the elements and stop the deterioration of some of the structure. It will also make the workshop nice and warm for everyone to work in and for our visitors to come round and see inside in a nice cosy environment."

Future phases will see the creation of a new exhibition area, including a café, conference facilities and retail areas, and a mezzanine floor built to allow visitors to freely walk about and look over the fleet. It is envisaged that work on all phases will be completed by December 2027.

Star comes home

The tramway also welcomed back Balloon tram No. 710, a vehicle that has been regularly asked about by the general public after its appearance on long-running soap Coronation Street, when villain Alan Bradley collided with it during an episode broadcast on December 8, 1989.

As reported in issue 295, No. 710 was acquired by the Fleetwood Heritage Leisure Trust as part of a batch from Blackpool Transport Services Ltd in 2011, the plan being to create a tram exhibition as part of the regeneration of Wyre Docks. Unfortunately, with developers set to move in on the site, the collection was set for disposal, but of all the vehicles in its collection, No. 710 was the only one not to have had a firm commitment at that time and faced a real risk of being cut up.

The trust did not pursue a return to Blackpool Tramway as the Rigby Road depot had a surplus of the design and did not believe another would be taken in. That proved not to be the case when, on February 8, the Balloon was successfully moved from the docks to the heritage tramway depot, where it will be restored.

Built as open-top tramcar No. 247 by English Electric at Strand Road, Preston, in 1934, No. 710 retains its chrome handrails and door fittings, swing-over seating and half-drop windows, with the top deck's curved corner glazing also remaining unaltered from its wartime enclosed conversion. Renumbered in 1968 as part of a general numbering scheme following the introduction of a new computer system, No. 710 became the first Balloon to run outside Blackpool in 1985, when it visited Crich Tramway in exchange for Glasgow Corporation Transport No. 1297.

More than 11 million viewers watched on December 8, 1989, when it was involved in the death of Coronation Street antagonist Alan Bradley – one of the soap's most famous moments.

It ran regularly as a seasonal tram until November 4, 2007, when it was withdrawn and mothballed before being sold to the trust in 2011 as part of a disposal of traditional trams when the tramway was upgraded to its current light rail operations.

Blackpool Transport's heritage project manager Paul Greenwood said: "Since we started tours of the heritage depot in 2014, we have been regularly asked 'which one is the Alan Bradley tram?' Given how popular it is with the public, despite only appearing on screen for a few seconds, it made sense that we brought it back.

"We are looking to develop a third of Rigby Road into an exhibition, which No. 710 will be a key part of as it appeals to the general public as well as regular tram enthusiasts."

No. 710 will be cosmetically restored for display at the Tramtown heritage depot, where it will be returned to 1980s colours. Although an operational restoration is not currently planned, this has not been ruled out for the future – although there are several vehicles ahead of it in the queue.

➜ Donate to the Rigby Road door appeal at gofundme.com/f/rigby-road-tram-shed-doors. Depot and heritage tram tours operate throughout the year. To book, visit blackpoolheritage.com

Right: The heritage Rigby Road depot building, which dates from 1935, will undergo a five-year, four-phase schedule of work to conserve the structure, improve maintenance facilities, and develop a visitor centre with amenities to better educate the public on the history of the seaside resort's tram fleet. BLACKPOOL TRANSPORT

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New arrival for the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway: Class 20 D8110, purchased from the Harry Needle Railroad Company, is towed to Embsay after delivery on February 21. M ANDERSON/EBASR

Ex-Harry Needle 'Chopper' joins Yorkshire Dales

By Owen Hayward

THE Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway has purchased Class 20 No. 20110 from the Harry Needle Railroad Company, taking delivery of the newest member of its diesel fleet on February 21.

It is the second HNRC diesel sold in recent months, with No. 20166 bought by a member of the Caledonian Railway, as reported last issue, having been advertised by the firm as part of a mass reduction in assets that has seen examples of Classes 08 and 47 listed for disposal.

Among the list of available locomotives are also 0-4-0 and 0-6-0 Barclay locomotives and two Class 04s, D2867 (operational at the Battlefield Line) and D2853 (operational and fully restored, based at Barrow Hill Roundhouse).

No. 20110 (D8110) was built at Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns' Darlington Works in January 1962, first being allocated to Eastfield depot in Glasgow and later moving to bases such as Tinsley, Toton and Bescot before its main line career ended on September 14, 1990. It still retains its automatic token catcher recess from its time spent operating on the West Highland Railway.

It entered preservation with the South Devon Diesel Group in 1991 and visited several railways before being sold to HNRC, which moved it to the Battlefield Line. Its acquisition by the EBASR comes following a review of the 2022 Santa operations that saw a high operating cost.

An EBASY spokesman said: "Although the locomotive is undoubtedly an attraction in its own right, strategically it is also the right fit for us for a number of reasons. During the 2022 Santa season, the combined motive power hire charges (three steam and one diesel) and fuel costs were astronomical – nearly £70,000.

"We do not expect coal prices to fall back to what they were any time soon. Therefore, during the next season we hope to use fewer steam locomotives and significantly reduce our coal usage and hire fees.

"The savings we can make by having an additional small economical main line diesel locomotive on hand are expected to be significant."

The purchase has been financed thanks to loans from members and is thus 100% owned by the Yorkshire Dales Railway Museum Trust.

Although the railway has four other main line diesel locomotives, only Class 37 No. 37294 is operational, with Class 31 No. 31179 undergoing overhaul and not expected to be complete this year. Having the operational 'Chopper' will therefore also provide additional cover for when No. 37294 is out of traffic for maintenance.

Trust director and diesel locomotive manager Danny Ferguson said: "We are absolutely delighted to have secured our own operational Class 20 for Embsay, which will prove extremely useful to us in the future and which I am sure will prove to be a popular and beneficial acquisition."

Winter works

Like most heritage railways, the EBASR has been using the winter period to carry out general maintenance and work on some much larger projects, one of which has been the relaying of a quarter-mile of track at Skibeden between Embsay and Holywell Halt, with both new rail and sleepers. This project was completed in-house by a relatively small but dedicated team in just eight weeks.

Work has also been progressing well on laying and burying cable between the railway's two operational signalboxes at Embsay and Stoneacre to enable electric key token working to be introduced for the first time. The necessary signalling regulations have been written and the railway's volunteer signalmen are currently in the process of being trained on the new system, which will bring considerably enhanced flexibility to future train operations.

Meanwhile, work is nearing completion of a further extension to the carriage shelter at Embsay, which will enable a further four carriages to be stored undercover and away from the worst of the Yorkshire weather.

In the workshop, the operational carriages have been inspected and serviced ready for the start of the season, while work continues on completing the extensive overhaul of former Mk.1 BG No. 81517, which has been converted into a further catering vehicle for the line's highly successful 'Dales Dining' operation and the comprehensive restoration of a genuine Midland Railway bogie carriage No. 3300 to, as far as possible, 'as-built' condition.

"We have made terrific progress during the past two months," said the trust's press officer, Richard Jones, "but none of this work over the winter could have been achieved without the tremendous contribution made by our volunteers and staff, who have all pulled together to ensure success. It has been a great team effort."

Above: The carriage shed at Embsay has been extended to accommodate a further four vehicles under cover. EBASR

Left: A quarter-mile length of the line has been relaid in just eight weeks, using new rail and concrete sleepers. RYAN WHITAKER/EBASR

KESR volunteer Geoff makes nationwide superstar final

By Geoff Courtney

A KENT & East Sussex Railway volunteer – hailed by one of the line's managers as "a breath of fresh air" who always strived to ensure visitors had the best time possible at the railway – has reached the final of a prestigious nationwide hunt to find the country's top tourism superstar.

He is 70-year-old Geoff Colvin, the railway's chief stationmaster, who became a KESR volunteer at the start of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and was promoted to his present role last year.

The annual 'tourism superstar' competition is run by the official tourist board VisitEngland in partnership with the Mirror newspaper and is now in its 11th year. The 10 finalists, of which Geoff is one, are selected by a panel of judges from hundreds of nominations sent in by tourist attractions and local tourist boards, with the winner of the coveted title being determined by a public online vote.

KESR visitor experience manager Heather Packham said: "Geoff is unquestionably a superstar and a breath of fresh air, not only because he always strives to make sure visitors have the best time possible at the railway, but also because he is full of ideas to help improve what we do. He also makes sure those he works alongside feel valued, playing down his own personal role and highlighting the team effort."

Heather's praise was endorsed by Robin Coombes, the railway's general manager, who said that winning would not only be a reward for Geoff's personal contribution, but also an accolade for the countless contributions of the hundreds of volunteers who selflessly gave their time to the railway.

Railway superstar: KESR chief stationmaster Geoff Colvin, who is one of 10 finalists in a nationwide tourism superstar competition. ALISON MILES/KESR

"Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the railway, and it is their role in providing a wonderful visitor experience day in and day out that is frequently mentioned in our many five-star reviews. Without volunteers like Geoff, we simply would not be here." Robin added that he hoped Geoff's success in reaching the final would inspire others to come and see "the fun and fulfilment that volunteering can bring."

As a boy, Geoff lived in Southampton, "spending time in the local park generally amusing oneself, in an era when mum presented you with sandwiches in the morning, suggested that behaving would be good, and that a return when tea was ready would be good too."

First volume

His local park was alongside the Southampton to Bournemouth main line, and this led to the young Geoff becoming a trainspotter. The acquisition of his first Ian Allan Combined Volume was in the summer of 1960. "Nelsons, Schools and King Arthurs were still in action and broke up the steady procession of Bulleids and Standards," he reminisced.

"Some Sundays involved a bike trip to Eastleigh, a sneak through the fence and an opportunity to view the local residents and those on the scrap line that had arrived to meet their fate. No. 30770 *Sir Prianius*, which looked loved, spent a while on shed in the autumn of 1962 and we hoped it would find a good home. Then it was gone."

A move to Bristol in 1966 resulted in a "brief flirtation" with Hymeks, Warships and Westerns, and in the early 1980s, with a young family in Birmingham, he enjoyed trips to the Severn Valley and Great Central railways.

After a career in social work, Geoff retired in 2019 and moved from his then home in Dorset to Tenterden. "The KESR was just down the road, and a tentative enquiry started my journey," he said.

"Becoming chief stationmaster came along rather more quickly than I had anticipated, if I had thought about it at all.

"Discovering the history of the line has been fascinating and stimulating, and sharing it with our visitors both young and old is a joy. If I am able to create memories for our visitors, I will be well satisfied."

Voting in the competition is open until midnight on March 20, with the winner being revealed on March 25, during English Tourism Week that runs from March 17 to 26.

To cast your vote in the contest, visit www.mirror.co.uk/travel/tourism-superstar-2023-meet-10-29084078

BR Standard class 2MT No. 78019 at Loughborough Central during a reconstruction of an incident that led to a passenger sustaining injuries as they alighted from the train. RAIB

RAIB investigates passenger injury at Great Central

THE Rail Accident Investigation Branch confirmed on February 15 that it was looking into an incident that occurred at the Great Central Railway a month before, which had resulted in a passenger sustaining a serious injury.

A train arriving at the railway's Loughborough Central station at 11.49am on January 14 reportedly stopped with the leading door of the first carriage adjacent to the platform ramp.

Though full details have not been disclosed while the investigation takes place, it is known that the affected passenger then lost their footing as they alighted from the train via this door, which then resulted in their sustained injuries.

The RAIB said that its investigation will seek to identify the sequence of events that led to this, taking into consideration the actions of those involved and anything which may have influenced them, the methods of working used when trains call at Loughborough Central, including the status of the platform train interface, the arrangements in place to manage and control the risks associated with passengers boarding and alighting from GCR trains, and any underlying management factors. This is independent of any investigation by the railway industry of its regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, and will publish its findings and any recommendations at its conclusion.

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Class 58 comeback – 21 years on at big SVR festival

By Robin Jones

WHEN Class 58 No. 58023 makes its historic first ever heritage sector appearance at the Severn Valley Railway's May 18-21 Spring Diesel Festival, it will be the first time that a 'Bone' has seen operation in the UK since the withdrawal of the entire class in 2002.

The locomotive is one of the special guests lined up for what SVR interim managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said will be a diesel gala on a scale that's "never been seen before – with up to 13 classes of heritage locomotives and an extensive fleet of visiting modern diesels to mark 50 years of diesels in preservation."

Another guest will be Class 47 No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*, accompanied by a set of push-pull Driving Brake Second Open coaches, which were specifically designed to work with the locomotive during its BR operations. Originally numbered D1948, the locomotive entered traffic in August 1966. Later equipped with electric train heat equipment, it was renumbered 47505 in 1974. Five years later, it became part of the Scottish Class 47/7+DBSO push-pull project and was outshopped from Crewe Works in late 1979 in its current identity of No. 47712.

It was named at Glasgow Queen Street station on April 30, 1981. ScotRail blue-stripe livery was applied to the locomotive during overhaul at Crewe Works in early 1985 and was carried until its overhaul at Doncaster in 1991.

Now owned by members of the Crewe Diesel Preservation Group, it has been repainted by RMS Locotec's Wolsingham workshop into its former Scotrail livery and is now based at Locomotive Services Limited's Crewe Diesel Depot.

"Securing No. 58023 is a real coup – this loco is going to be an absolute cracker at our event and we are extremely grateful to its owner, Ed Stevenson, for agreeing to its first appearance in preservation for the SVR's special celebrations," said Gus.

"Bringing together 47712 and the DBSO push-pull coaches is yet another heritage railway first for the SVR, and we are extremely grateful to Locomotive Services Group for providing both locomotive and coaches."

A total of 50 Class 58s were constructed by British Rail Engineering Limited at Doncaster between 1983 and 1987 for use on power station coal traffic. They were all withdrawn by 2002, although several found further use in mainland Europe, particularly in France and Spain, where they were deployed working construction trains on new high-speed lines. Their unusual narrow body shape with a cab at each end led to them being nicknamed 'Bones' by enthusiasts.

The first 'Bone' to be preserved was No. 58016, which was bought in June 2010 by the Class 58 Locomotive Group, which later acquired No. 58045 as a spares donor.

In 2016, Nos. 58012 and 58023 were saved from Ron Hull Junior's scrapyard at Rotherham and are now based on the Battlefield Line. No. 58023 was the first class member to be started in the heritage era.

No. 58022, which was also bought from the Rotherham scrapyards in 2016, is to be dismantled, as previously reported, with its frames used for the Ivatt Diesel Recreation Society's new-build Class D16/1 LMS No. 10000 at the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

Running alongside No. 58023 at the festival will be SVR-based WR Class 42 D821 *Greyhound*, the first diesel to appear in preservation half a century ago.

D821 was purchased from B R by the Diesel Traction Group in 1973 and, following a series of different homes, arrived at the SVR in 1991. It has recently undergone extensive bodywork repairs and will be reappearing at the festival in BR monastral blue with full yellow ends.

"It's fitting that the loco that started it all is going to be at this special event," said Gus. "And we'll also be showcasing the SVR-based newly overhauled and repainted Class 33 No. 33108.

"Thanks to the amazing support of a host of main line operators, including Colas, GBRailfreight and Locomotive Services Group, we will also be assembling an enviable collection of modern diesel traction.

"The Spring Diesel Festival will bring together the widest range of operational diesel locomotives ever assembled on a heritage railway. It's going to be on a scale that's never been seen before."

A Colas Rail Class 56 will also attend, and further guests may be announced after we closed for press.

➜ Tickets for the four-day intensively timetabled festival are available now at svr.co.uk, including money-saving multi-day tickets.

Class 58 No. 58023 set to make class history at the Severn Valley's spring diesel festival. TONY MIDDLETON/SVR

D821 in its new livery, with newly painted Class 33 No. 33108 in the background. GUS DUNSTER/SVR

Scotrail-liveried Class 47/7 No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. BRAD JOYCE/SVR

RSH 0-6-0ST NCB No.49 draws the empty stock out of Marley Hill carriage shed.

RSH 0-6-0ST NCB No.49, with the mixed goods and passenger train, waits for the road at Andrews House station on a damp and grey February 26.

TV show boosts Tanfield season start

Words and pictures by Dave Wilson

IN WHAT was described by Tanfield Railway general manager Simon Smith as "the Robson Green effect", the line got off to a flying start on its first day of operation in 2023.

The railway featured in episode seven of BBC2's Robson Green's Weekend Escapes, broadcast on January 31 – and well before the first train was due to depart at 11am on February 19, the station car park at East Tanfield was nearly full and the platform thronged with visitors. It soon became clear that the usual four-coach train would not be able to cope with the passenger numbers.

Some quick thinking saw Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-6-0ST NCB No. 49, in the hands of driver Jonny Charlton and his fireman Luke Griffith, despatched to the carriage shed for an extra coach. Several years ago, the railway built a second carriage shed at East Tanfield to allow it to keep all of its wooden-bodied vintage carriages under cover, and on the day, this turned out to be a blessing.

However, the extra shunting involved in 'strengthening' the train meant that the 11am departure was delayed by 10 minutes. It was a very similar story for the freight and shunting demonstration on February 26.

During the closed season, work at the railway has continued on several fronts. The refurbishment of the 1855-built Marley Hill engine shed is nearing completion and, once the building works are finished, the railway's plan is to create a more visitor-centred experience, with new displays and interpretations. The aim is to allow many more items of rolling stock and artefacts to be made publicly accessible.

Running in parallel with the work on the engine shed has been the major overhaul of Hawthorne Leslie 0-4-0ST Keighley Corporation Gasworks No. 2. On February 23, No.2 was, for the first time in almost two years, back in steam. Following a successful hydraulic test, No.2 was ready for the visit of the boiler inspector to have its in-steam test, which was passed with flying colours; with only a few snagging jobs still to be completed, it was expected back in traffic in time for Easter.

June 16-18 will also see the return of Tanfield's Legends of Industry gala, with guest engines announced nearer the time.

RSH 0-6-0ST NCB No.49, with the 'strengthened' 11am departure from East Tanfield, enters Causey Woods en route to Andrews House on February 19.

The interior of the newly refurbished Marley Hill shed. On the left is Barclay 0-6-0ST *Horden* and on the right Keighley Gasworks No.2 and RSH 0-4-0T *Sir Cecil A Cochrane*.

With safety valves open, Hawthorne Leslie 0-4-0ST Keighley Corporation Gasworks No.2 awaits the arrival of the boiler inspector for its steam test on February 23.

Pre-order Issue 305: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Early start for Polar Express tickets

By Owen Hayward

WHILE most families have just recovered from the festive season, heritage railways have already been formulating their 2023 Christmas plans – with two lines already releasing their Polar Express tickets for sale.

In recent years, these trains, inspired by the 2004 Warner Brothers animated feature film starring Tom Hanks, have proven immensely popular, and demand often exceeds availability, with record visitor numbers often carried over the short time period in which they operate.

The on-board entertainment that re-enacts scenes from the international box-office smash has won over passengers, the trips offering an experience a step up from the regular Santa Special services.

The Telford Steam Railway's services will commence on Friday, November 24 and operate over 21 days until December 21, initially running Friday to Sunday, but adding Tuesdays to Thursdays to the available days from December 5. Passengers will be greeted by characters from the film as they make their way to their seats for a journey aboard the train, with lights and performances during the ride as passengers then head to meet Santa and claim a gift.

Andrew Barclay 0-6-0ST No. 2138 *Swordfish* was the Telford Steam Railway's steam locomotive for its 2022 Polar Express services, pictured in full PE regalia during its visit courtesy of its owner and Buckinghamshire Railway Centre home. IAN HEIGHWAY/TSR

Helping hand

TSR marketing manager Richard Owen said: "We had another successful season in 2022, with more than 20,000 passengers carried. The feedback we have received has been very positive, which makes all the hard work worthwhile.

"The decision to release the 2023 tickets earlier than usual was made to allow our customers maximum time to purchase their tickets, as we fully appreciate the impact that the increased cost of living will be having on families. Our Polar Express trains remain extremely popular and we have found that our customers want to buy tickets as early as possible to guarantee that they can come again."

The Telford journey lasts about an hour, with activities and visits to Santa's Workshop once passengers return to Spring Village station. Book at telfordsteamrailway.co.uk/thepolarexpress.html

Meanwhile, in Devon, the Seaton Tramway's Polar Express Tram Ride trips – the longest running of these experiences in the UK, having begun in 2015 – will commence on the same day but run right up until Christmas Eve. Trips will operate on Wednesdays to Sundays, with Tuesdays being added from December 12. The experience will last two-and-a-half hours and whisk excited passengers away to the 'North Pole' aboard a specially-decorated single-deck tramcar.

Marketing manager Josh Castree said: "Our 2022 season was our best production yet, with people coming from as far as Wales and Scotland and East Devon. We even have families who have come to us every year since 2015!

Planning ahead

"We release our tickets 'early' to get ahead of the year, while also riding on the recent memory of Christmas. It does also give passengers time to plan ahead."

Off-peak days (Wednesdays and Thursdays, plus November 24) will offer two departures each day, while Fridays will present four opportunities to experience the adventure. Weekends see a peak service of eight trips per day, offered between December 19 and 23. The final day will see seven trips, the last arriving back at the Seaton terminus at about 8.30pm. Bookings can be made online at tram.co.uk

Aberystwyth gets a hand-built signalbox

LOCAL master craftsman Carwyn Lloyd Jones has built a traditional wooden-framed signalbox by hand for the Vale of Rheidol Railway's Aberystwyth terminus.

The plans were drawn up by the VoR's designer, James Corbett, and the structure is similar in appearance to that of the original long-disappeared 'box in Smithfield Road (now Park Avenue).

Lacking a blueprint of the original, Carwyn, the owner of Timber Designs Wales, searched the internet to find similar 'boxes and studied photographs to work out the finer details.

A VoR statement said: "We think it looks great. Thank you, Carwyn."

Right: The new hand-made traditional signalbox at Aberystwyth station. VOR

New miniature railway for Norfolk coast

NORTH Norfolk District Council has given the green light to a new miniature railway in Cromer.

With backing from the town council, the Cromer Light Railway Club has been granted planning permission to construct a new track and engine shed on land opposite the Amazona Zoo, to the southwest of the town centre.

The club was formed in 2020 by members of the team that ran Norfolk's 7¼in gauge Ashmanhaugh Light Railway, which closed after 18 years.

Club treasurer Alan Ball said it was hoped that the railway could be up and running towards the end of August or September.

In a submission to the council, the club said the new railway could create a link to the Meadow, through the Cromer Hall campsite, cutting road traffic on Hall Road and therefore becoming a more substantial and useful attraction.

The Meadow is located next to the resort's visitor centre and car park, about 300 yards from Cromer Pier.

Tyseley appeals for additional manpower

VINTAGE Trains and Tyseley Locomotive Works have stepped up their recent recruitment drive by looking to appoint about 10 extra staff.

The works has a full order book until 2024 and receives many requests for engineering work which currently it does not have the capacity to handle, said a statement. It is seeking fitters/machinists, boilermakers and welders/fabricators.

At the same time, Vintage Trains is expanding its tourist services and needs additional staff, including a commercial manager, an accountants and passenger sales and marketing assistants with social media expertise.

Applicants should email developments@vintagetrains.co.uk with their CV and salary expectations.

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FREE SEVERN VALLEY TRIPS FOR NATIONAL LOTTERY PLAYERS

The Severn Valley Railway has offered free afternoon trips between Kidderminster and Highley as part of the National Lottery Open Week between March 18 and 26.

The trips are offered to Lottery players on a first come, first served basis. Tickets are available to pre-book online at svr.co.uk/lottery for the noon departures from Kidderminster to Highley on March 18/19 and 25/26.

Passengers can return on any timetabled service and must bring proof of a National Lottery purchase with them on the day of travel. This can be either a draw-based game or a scratch card, bought on any date in store or online.

Michael Dunn, the SVR's head of commercial and visitor experience, said: "We are thrilled to be taking part in this national event. We are making hundreds of free tickets available as our way of saying thank you to National Lottery players.

"It's thanks to them that the Severn Valley Railway has been able to benefit from significant grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Over the years, it's helped to make many different SVR projects possible, including the restoration of our flagship GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* and the restoration of Falling Sands viaduct, as well as building The Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley and the carriage shed at Kidderminster."

The SVR reopened for its 2023 season on March 4, running between Kidderminster and Highley only on weekends during the month. Essential engineering works taking place north of Highley, prevent operation of the full line until April 1.

RIGHT: GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 heads over Falling Sands viaduct, which was restored thanks to National Lottery players. ALAN CORFIELD/SVR

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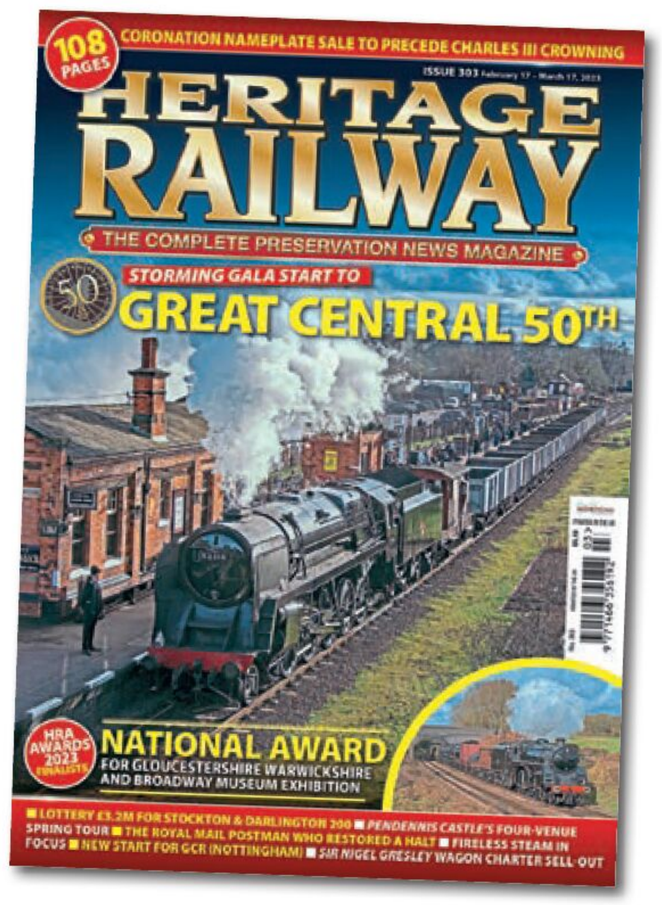

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Scotland's shortest private heritage line is on the market

By Hugh Dougherty

SCOTLAND'S Saughtree station, complete with track, working diesel locomotive, two BR tube wagons and a brake van, is up for sale for £500,000 – and current owner Geoff Mann, who bought the then semi-derelict station in 1989 and restored and extended it, would like to see it bought by someone who would keep the train wheels turning.

Dating back to 1867, the stone-built station is situated a mile north of the hamlet of Saughtree (pronounced Sawtree) and two miles from the border with England. It once served the Border Counties Railway that linked the Newcastle & Carlisle railway, near Hexham, with the Border Union Railway at Riccarton Junction, Roxburghshire.

Its remote location meant it was never served by frequent services, with just one train each way timetabled to call on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Services were temporarily suspended altogether on December 1, 1944 as a wartime economy measure, being reintroduced in August 1948, before full closure to passengers came under BR on October 15, 1956. Freight continued until September 1, 1958.

In the 1990s, the station was converted to residential use and also operates as a bed-and-breakfast with a railway theme.

Londoner and lifelong railway enthusiast Geoff said: "My late wife Meg and I extended the station accommodation and decided that if we had a station, we needed track.

"I knew the late Bill McAlpine well and I asked him for help. He put me in touch with Les Prothero, who had built Bill's railway at Fawley Hill, and he came to lay our 200 metres of track, with the help of family and friends.

"Once we had the track down, we decided we needed a train, and our brake van came from Chesterton Junction. We followed that up with our Ruston shunter and two pipe wagons that had been at Manchester Piccadilly station, and our train was complete.

"We have a headshunt, points, a siding and an ex-Caledonian Railway lattice-post signal, even though this was a North British Railway line!

"We run the train regularly and people come to see it in action by invitation. Most weekends in the summer, groups of enthusiasts seek us out to see what is probably Scotland's shortest operating private heritage railway."

Named in memory

Geoff acquired the locomotive, named *Meg of Saughtree*, in memory of his late wife, from the Humberside Locomotive Preservation Group, after it had spent its career on industrial duties in and around Hull. As delivered to Saughtree in 1996, it was non-working, but, by a lucky chance, Meg had a relative who had been a fitter with Ruston, and he restored the engine to working order. "It's worked perfectly, ever since," said Geoff.

In recent years, the six-bedroom extended station house has been run as a successful bed-and-breakfast business with a railway theme by Geoff's son and his wife. They now feel that the time is right to move on, while Geoff, at the age of 85, feels he has completed the Saughtree railway project and wants to see it go into safe hands as a lasting piece of Borders railway heritage. Commenting on who might buy it, Geoff quipped: "Maybe Nicola Sturgeon might buy the station. Not only would she have a retreat as far away from crowds and media attention as she could get, but she'd have her own working railway, too!"

Details of the property are online at www.savills.com or available by phoning 0131 247 3738.

Above: *Meg of Saughtree* at the head of its train at the station, with a period crane on the platform. SAVILLS

Right: The station house and buildings from above, showing the period cut-stone station and its remote location. SAVILLS

Weardale Railway to reopen 16 miles to Bishop Auckland after refurbishment

By Robin Jones

THE fist service to run over the whole 16 miles of the Weardale Railway for more than three years will operate on Saturday, April 22 following extensive refurbishment of the lined by The Auckland Project, which acquired it in January 2020.

In conjunction with Weardale Railway Limited, the project will run the service between Bishop Auckland and Stanhope to coincide with the Bishop Auckland Food Festival, which attracted about 30,000 visitors last year.

Festival visitors will be able use the heritage DMU services to explore the Durham Dales, while residents of Stanhope and Wolsingham will be able to use them to travel to the event.

It is intended to reintroduce regular services from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope, with trains running on selected Saturdays and Sundays during this summer.

In May last year, the railway restarted operations over the six miles between Stanhope and Wolsingham, with intermediate stops at Frosterley and Kingfisher, where a new halt was built to serve the local leisure centre.

The railway will operate its regular timetable between Stanhope and Wolsingham on selected dates throughout March and April.

Weardale Railway general manager Wayne Dixon said: "We've been working hard to get Weardale Railway back on track for the people of Bishop Auckland and Weardale. Thousands of passengers have enjoyed a ride on the railway since we opened the line between Stanhope and Wolsingham. This year, we hope even more passengers will be able to enjoy our services as we expand our timetable and extend the line to Bishop Auckland."

The Auckland Project's CEO of development, David Maddan, said: "The reopening of the line from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope is a landmark moment. We have ambitious plans for the future, which we hope will benefit the residents of Weardale as well as those who wish to explore the beauty of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by train."

The Weardale Railway's Class 122 'bubblecar' No. E55012 in operation. WR

Pre-order Issue 305: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

One-off: K5 class No. 61863 hauls a freight train past B17 4-6-0 No. 61605 *Lincolnshire Regiment* at Chelmsford station in about 1956. The 2-6-0 started life in September 1925 as a Nigel Gresley-designed K3 but was substantially rebuilt in June 1945 by Edward Thompson, Gresley's successor, with a new boiler, two cylinders instead of three, and new frames and wheels to become the first and only member of the K5 class. No. 61605, also a Gresley design, was named *Burnham Thorpe* on entering traffic in December 1928, but was renamed in April 1938. Chelmsford's Essex Record Office is to host a one-day conference on the past, present and future of the county's railways on April 1. TRANSPORT TREASURY/DR IAN ALLEN

Railway history of Essex – and its future – in one day

By Geoff Courtney

ESSEX is not a county that might spring instantly to the minds of steam enthusiasts – although until the London boundaries were fiddled around with in 1965, the vast Stratford works and engine shed complex was within its borders – but it has a railway history that stretches back more than 180 years.

And on April 1, that history, allied to the present and the future, will be the theme of a one-day conference at the Essex Record Office in the county town of Chelmsford, featuring top industry speakers and historians.

The Great Eastern Railway Society will be represented by chairman Peter Walker with a talk titled 'All things Great Eastern', and archivist Lyn Brooks, who will provide highlights of the society's historical collection, supported by Colin Runeckles, of Ilford Historical Society, on 'The impact of the Eastern Counties Railway on the village of Ilford in the late 1830s.'

While a village no longer, and indeed like Stratford no longer in Essex, as it was when I grew up there in my steam-era trainspotting days, Ilford had a very early Victorian railway presence thanks to its ECR station opening in June 1839.

Speaking of the present and facing the post-Covid challenges will be Jonathan Denby, head of corporate affairs for train operating company Greater Anglia, and the future role of rail travel in Essex will be in the spotlight with a talk by Alastair Southgate, Essex County Council's head of transportation strategy.

Graham Rowland, of the Holden F5 Steam Locomotive Trust, which is building a replica of a GER F5 class 2-4-2T, will be another to address the audience, on 'Building a steam locomotive in the 21st century.' The F5 is a class fondly remembered by 1950s Essex trainspotters due to them operating Epping-Ongar trains until electrification in 1957. The line was closed in 1994 but has been partially reopened by the Epping Ongar Railway as a heritage line.

Another highlight of the conference will be a display of paintings and a talk by acclaimed railway artist Malcolm Root, who has lived in the Essex town of Halstead all his life.

A fellow of the Guild of Railway Artists, 72-year-old Malcolm said his local line was an integral part of his life as a youngster.

"We lost steam in Essex quite early, but I have clear memories of steam on the Halstead line and remember trying to draw trains when I was at infant school," he told *Heritage Railway*.

Aside from those stations in towns that were once in Essex but are now part of Greater London, the county's oldest operational station is Brentwood, which was opened by the ECR in July 1840. The busiest station is Chelmsford, used by 4.6 million passengers in 2021/22 – down from a pre-Covid peak of nearly nine million – and the least used, at 7408 passengers, is White Notley on the 6½-mile Witham to Braintree branch line.

The conference starts at 10am, and tickets are available for £35 including lunch, with a £5 discount for early bookings.

EPB carriage moves to Swanage as spares source

THE Swanage Railway's Heritage Carriage Group took delivery of a new acquisition during February – BR Class 415 4EPB trailer second No. 15396, which was previously located on the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway. However, this carriage was not purchased for restoration but is acting as a source of spare parts for the Purbeck line's Bulleid carriage restorations, having contained many such features in its design.

No. 15396 was deemed surplus to requirements at the NIR, as it also required a vast amount of time and expenditure to fully restore. The doors on the EPB trailer have been found to be in better condition than those currently fitted to Bulleid semi-open brake third No. 4366 that is one of the group's projects (alongside maintaining composite No. 5761) and will be salvaged for reuse amid other parts – luggage racks were also removed which then facilitated the extraction of the seats. The group intends to reuse as much as possible of the EPB vehicle, offering anything else that remains for sale for reuse, with scrap a last resort. Because of the coupling arrangement on No. 15396, work has been carried out on the railway's road-rail interchange siding at Norden.

4EPB trailer second No. 15396 departs the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway for Swanage, where it has since been dismantled as a source of spares for the railway's Bulleid carriages. SRHCG

Stockton & Darlington world-first bridge gets £131k grant

By Robin Jones

DURHAM County Council has been given £161,000 by Historic England to repair and revitalise the remains of the world's first iron railway bridge.

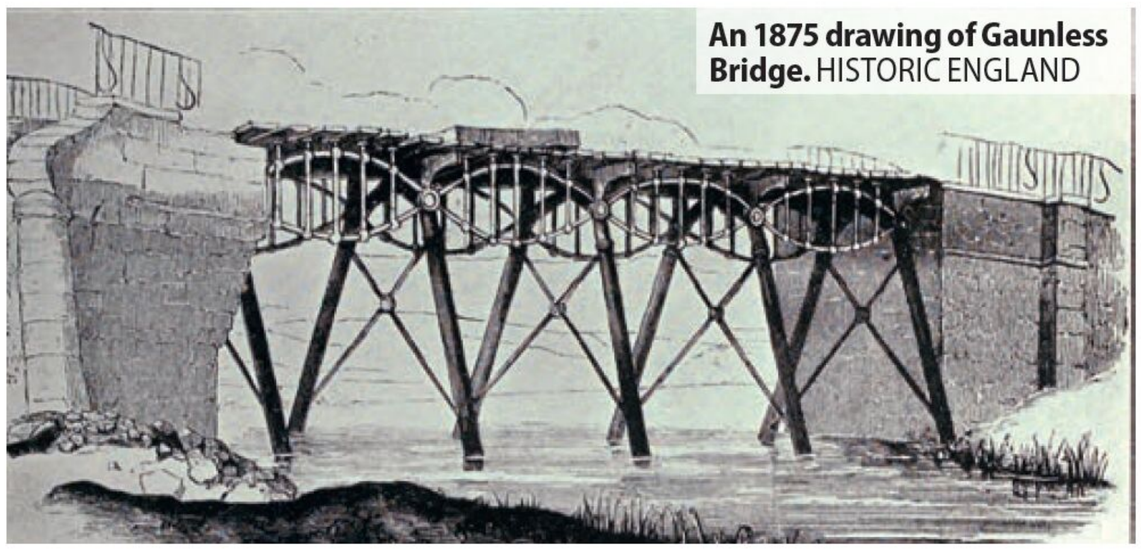
Completed in 1823, Gaunless Bridge was designed by Stockton & Darlington Railway matermind George Stephenson and spanned the River Gaunless in West Auckland. It was the first bridge to use the lenticular truss design, with two curved girders in a lens shape, one above and one below. It is particularly unusual as its wooden deck is installed above the truss girders, whereas in most lenticular trusses, the deck is hung beneath the trusses on rods or cables.

Forming part of a branch line serving the Witton Park Colliery, the bridge originally carried horse-drawn coal wagons before steam traction took over in about 1833. It was the first iron bridge for a railway, as opposed to a tramway: Pont-y-Cafnau, a Grade II*-listed Scheduled Ancient Monument that spans the River Taff in Merthyr Tydfil, is held to be the world's oldest surviving iron tramway bridge. Designed by Watkin George, it was built in 1793 to carry a tramway and aqueduct serving Cyfarthfa Ironworks.

Gaunless Bridge remained in use until 1901, when it became unable to take the weight of the increasingly heavy coal wagons.

The bridge was subsequently dismantled and the ironwork was preserved and eventually went on permanent display at the National Railway Museum in York, but the stone abutments supporting the structure remained in place and are now part of the Stockton & Darlington Railway Scheduled Monument. However, they have fallen victim to vandalism in recent years.

The grant from Historic England will be used to repair the abutments, which will then support a new bridge deck that will form part of the new 26-mile Stockton & Darlington Railway walking and cycling route.



An 1875 drawing of Gaunless Bridge. HISTORIC ENGLAND

Alongside the repair work, Historic England will involve the local community, running sessions about the history of the bridge with local schoolchildren, and setting up a volunteer group dedicated to the long-term care of the site.

This project is part of the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zone, a five-year initiative focused on rejuvenating and restoring the 26-mile stretch of historic railway, and designed to help realise its potential to become a major heritage attraction and visitor destination in the build-up to its 2025 bicentenary.

Coun Elizabeth Scott, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for economy and partnerships, said: "As the world's first iron railway bridge, Gaunless Bridge is a key part of our rail heritage, both at a local and national level. We are pleased that this funding is allowing us to restore and repair the abutments, helping preserve this important structure.

The movement of ironwork from Gaunless Bridge to Shildon's Locomotion museum as part of the NRM's Vision 2025 plan was delayed by the pandemic and is now due to take place later this year.

One of the surviving abutments of Gaunless Bridge. HISTORIC ENGLAND

The surviving section of ironwork from the bridge outside the National Railway Museum in York. HISTORIC ENGLAND

Celebrity Alan Titchmarsh relaunches Mid-Hants Railway's 'Watercress Belle' fine dining experience

By Owen Hayward

FOOD and wine lovers can enjoy a first-class culinary experience behind a steam locomotive following the relaunch of the Mid-Hants Railway's 'Watercress Belle' fine dining service.

The service has been 'on hiatus' for a few years while the restaurant car, BR Mk.1 No. 1973, underwent overhaul in the Ropley workshops. The interior layout has been modified to open up the kitchen space, with partition walls and redundant cupboards removed to make for the easier flow of personnel through the vehicle. The railway has also employed a new catering firm, Lemon Stone Events, which uses locally sourced ingredients in meals.

It was launched on February 18 by broadcaster and gardening expert Alan Titchmarsh at an event sponsored by estate agent Hellards, and the inaugural journey was toasted with wine from Arlesford's Hattingley Valley vineyard.

Alan, a patron of the Watercress Line, then addressed passengers on the platform by referencing WH Auden's poem, Night Mail, in reading his own take on the classic which he named after the dining service.

> "We are delighted to launch the new 'Watercress Belle' fine dining service, combining superb food and wine with the style and nostalgia of the golden age of steam."

"The Watercress Line's wonderful new dining service on 'The Watercress Belle' is a fantastic way to enjoy all the fine flavours of the produce that Hampshire is so famous for," he said. "All this on board the inviting ambience of a steam train that has been transformed into a first-class restaurant travelling through the glorious countryside.

"The Watercress Line has always been a jewel in north Hampshire's crown – and it has now become even better."

Once seated aboard the luxurious and lavishly presented carriages, diners were served amuse-bouches and a three-course dinner, followed by petit fours, prepared by the LSE chefs and offset with a carefully curated wine list.

Mid-Hants CEO Amanda Squires said: "We are delighted to launch the new 'Watercress Belle' fine dining service, combining superb food and wine with the style and nostalgia of the golden age of steam. It will offer a memorable and highly enjoyable experience to food lovers, steam enthusiasts and anyone wishing to dine in style.

"The 70-year-old train has been beautifully restored to create a warm atmosphere of original wooden interiors, with richly upholstered seats, cosy table lamps in the windows, and tables elegantly set with white damask cloths – ready for diners to relax and sample some of Hampshire's finest local food and wines."

For more information, visit watercressline.co.uk/the-watercress-belle-dining-train

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***Lilla* back at work doing what it was built for 132 years ago: hauling stone trains.** CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

Aggregate and stone for the footpath repairs being unloaded from *Lilla's* train. CHRIS PARRY/FF&WHR

Lilla reprises role as quarry locomotive for one day

By Robin Jones

FORMER Snowdonian slate quarry 0-4-0ST *Lilla* has hauled its first stone train in 68 years.

Hunslet No. 554 of 1891 was built for for Cilgwyn Quarry and transferred to Penrhyn Quarry in 1921. It was worked there until it failed a boiler test in 1955 and was laid up.

In 1963, *Lilla* was bought by enthusiast Bernard Latham, who restored it in his back garden and, once operational, moved it to the Knebworth Park & Winter Green Railway in the grounds of Knebworth House, Hertfordshire. After moving to other venues, *Lilla* came to the Ffestiniog Railway in 1993 for the Hunslet Hundred event – and stayed there. In 1997, it was bought by a consortium of FR members and has remained in the fleet ever since.

In October 2004, its boiler was condemned and a new welded one was built in Boston Lodge Works, enabling it to return to service in spring 2008.

On February 14, Valentine's Day, *Lilla* was engaged to haul a load of more than 30 tons of aggregate and stone along the Aberglaslyn Pass on the Welsh Highland Railway as part of a National Trust Cymru project to repair a 110-yard section of the Fisherman's Path, one of the national park's most popular trails which was washed away during winter storms.

Teamwork

The path, used by thousands of walkers each year, closely follows the Afon Glaslyn. As part of the repairs project, the trust will upgrade the drains along this section to help minimise the risk from floods again.

The stone was loaded onto *Lilla*'s train by a digger and then unloaded in three hours, 2 ½-miles downstream, by a team of WHR and trust staff and volunteers.

The footpath team will use motorised wheelbarrows to carry the materials for the final leg of the journey.

The team of four aim to complete the repairs in time for the busy spring months, when Beddgelert becomes a bustling hub for walkers exploring the local paths network.

Footpath ranger Jack Peyton said: "We are used to working in hard-to-reach, wild places and often rely on helicopters to move in the stone required for footpath maintenance and repairs.

"Eryri (Snowdonia) is a wet place, so erosion is an ongoing issue for us. The effects of climate change will likely increase the impact, making the maintenance and repairs of footpaths ever more important.

"A good footpath helps minimise the impact of erosion of soils and fragile upland habitats, as well as allowing thousands of visitors to enjoy the area safely.

"It's been great to work with the WHR and we are especially grateful to it for donating the time and resources to help us repair this special footpath."

Future help

The railway runs parallel to the path and provides the only vehicle access on the east bank of the river at Aberglaslyn. Once the restoration of the line from Caernarfon to Porthmadog was completed in 2011, a special gate was installed near Bryn y Felin to allow the railway to help with the upkeep of the path.

Ff&WHR marketing officer Chris Parry said: "It was a pleasure to be able to assist the National Trust with improvements to the Fisherman's Path. Access there is always a problem when heavy equipment or material is needed, so a steam train was the ideal solution. Naturally, we are ready and available to help with any further work in the future."

BR Standard 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41312 sits at Arlesford ready to depart with the inaugural trip of the new 'Watercress Belle' dining service. OWEN HAYWARD

Right: Bookings are available for tables of two or four aboard the luxurious 'The Watercress Belle'. OWEN HAYWARD

Mid-Hants Railway patron Alan Titchmarsh cuts the ribbon to officially launch the new 'Watercress Belle' dining service at Alton on February 18. To his left is Gordon Thorday, from Hellards estate agents, which sponsored the launch evening. OWEN HAYWARD

Race is on to save Doon Valley by summertime deadline

By Hugh Dougherty

THE Ayrshire Railway Preservation Group, which operates the Doon Valley Railway, has been told that Milestone Developments Limited has offered the buildings that the line leases for sale – threatening the loss of vital infrastructure and, in turn, its survival.

On the market are the ticket office, gift shop, customer toilets, exhibition and artefacts room, volunteer rest room, signalbox café, museum, joiners and metal shop and surrounding ground.

If the railway fails to raise the cash, its existence would be under serious threat. The group has therefore launched an SOS appeal to raise £250,000 by Monday, July 31 to purchase the buildings deemed essential for the railway to continue operating.

Group chairman Archie Thom said: "We need all of the accommodation to operate and to welcome visitors to our open days, and we are working hard to raise the money necessary to buy the properties.

"We are looking at all avenues, such as grants and corporate funding, and we have strong support from the community and local councillors, but we are also appealing to all who value Scotland's only working industrial heritage railway.

"It may well be possible to buy only some of the buildings. The customer toilets in particular are vital to our being able to continue to run. Without them, we can't welcome customers on site. Ideally, we would want to purchase all of the buildings and that's why we have launched this urgent appeal.

"We are keen to state, however, that all our activities for this season are carrying on as normal and visitors are as welcome as ever at our operational days."

If the railway closed, it would mark an end to 21 years of preservation at the Dunaskin site, where the group already owns the station, locomotive shed and wagon repair shop. Under threat would be the group's extensive collection of standard gauge industrial locomotives, including the DVR's unique fireless Barclay 0-4-0, wagons and 2ft 6in and 3ft gauge industrial engines. Historic artefacts in the museum include an early Glasgow & South Western Railway electrical cabinet and the goods crane from Stranraer goods shed.

Preferred buyer

Scottish Coal, which owned the site and buildings, sold it off to Milestone Developments of Ayr in 2015. While the company has given the railway notice of the impending sale of the buildings, it has said it would be pleased to see the railway buy them if it can raise the funds by the July deadline.

Milestone Developments director Stuart Jackson said: "We purchased Dunaskin about 10 years ago. In that time, we have always supported and worked closely with the ARPG. Our vision was to create and establish a masterplan for the land within our ownership which covers a large part of the Dunaskin and Waterside area. Dunaskin no longer fits within our portfolio unfortunately, and for that reason we have decided to sell.

"Over the last year, we have worked with ARPG to try to facilitate the purchase of buildings and lands they require to protect their long-term future at Dunaskin. We value the contribution that ARPG has made over the years by preserving the industrial and railway heritage of the area, and we feel that ARPG is an integral part of the future of the wider area and wish to see that continue.

"Discussions have been ongoing. We remain supportive of ARPG and it would be our preference to see the group secure the land and buildings it requires.

"However, we must set a deadline for the proposed sale to complete or we will have no option but to put the land on the open market for sale."

Left: Resident Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2244 (NCB No. 10), pictured in action on August 24, 2019, returned to steam on the Doon Valley Railway on January 31 after its overhaul was completed. It will be running at open days this year, although the railway's future is now in the balance. DVR

Right: The Doon Valley Railway's existence could be threatened if it cannot raise the £250,000 it needs to purchase the currently leased buildings from Milestone Developments. Amid the buildings it would lose is one that houses the museum displays, as well as others that provide customer toilets and the necessary engineering workshops. DVR

Seasonal preparations

Despite this announcement, the DVR is back in steam for the coming season thanks to boiler repairs being completed on the line's workhorse, Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2244 of 1947, ex-National Coal Board Ayrshire Area No. 10.

The boiler was reunited with the frames and the locomotive steamed for the first time since 2019 on January 31. All was reported well and limited movements were carried out at Dunaskin.

Following a boiler inspection in February, the locomotive was expected to haul passenger trains on the line's first open day of the new season on Easter Monday, April 10, and on subsequent steam open days.

A DVR spokesman said: "We are delighted to have No. 10 back in steam.

The overhaul was delayed by the Covid-19 shutdown, but now we are back on track. We hope that many people will come along to experience Ayrshire-built industrial steam in action on its native rails."

Driving experiences

Meanwhile, the DVR is offering a return to its popular diesel driving experiences, using resident 1959-built Sentinel No. 10012 of 1959, the only diesel to work on the NCB's Doon Valley system, and Barclay diesel No. 347 of 1947, which was built for the Ministry of Defence as part of its Second World War munitions production drive, and worked at the Powfoot munitions factory at Annan.

➜ Full details of supporting the Doon Valley Railway's SOS appeal and its 2023 running days can be found online at https://doonvalleyrailway.co.uk

The railway's Sentinel 4wDM No. 10012 of 1959, powered by a Rolls-Royce engine, is on the roster for this year's diesel driver experiences. DVR

Heading the railway's LMS inspection saloon at Dunaskin, Barclay Second World War 0-4-0DM No. 1 *Powfoot* is offering a turn in its 'handles' for aspiring diesel drivers. DVR

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Back to the Sixties for Oldland Common

By Owen Hayward

ONCE a stop on the Midland Railway's Mangotsfield to Bath branch, Oldland Common is now the northern terminus of theAvon Valley Railway.

Closed by BR on March 7, 1966, and demolished soon afterwards, volunteers are now fundraising to revert the heritage line's reconstructed station to a 1960s appearance.

The original station was opened on December 2, 1935, to support suburban development in the area, with two wooden platforms long enough for four coaches and winding ramps up to an adjacent road bridge that crossed over the line.

The branch connected Bath with the Midland's Bristol to Gloucester main line, and later the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway connected to it at Bath, where the GWR also had a station. Oldland Common thrived and saw more passengers than Bitton after opening. Although it was a Midland Region station, it came under Western Region control in 1958, when the long-serving Midland red colours were replaced with the WR's trademark chocolate and cream until closure, by which time it had been downgraded from station to halt status.

Some TLC

Oldland Common project leader Joseph Dean said: "Last year a small group of younger volunteers at the AVR, all aged just 18 years old, decided they wanted to do something with one of the arguably more 'unloved' stations on the line. Bitton station, quite rightly, takes much of the glory as the headquarters of the line and also being the only station which has features dating back pre-closure, primarily the original station building and the old goods shed.

"When it came to deciding which station we wanted to put our efforts into, Oldland Common was the obvious choice. It is situated on the site of the original station, and had survived in preservation longer than Avon Riverside, so was arguably 'first in the queue'. It was also approaching 25 years since Oldland Common station had been reconstructed in preservation, so felt this could all tie in quite neatly!"

The original wooden platforms were demolished shortly after closure and the line was lifted in 1971, having survived as a single line route for coal traffic to the Bath gasworks.

The AVR extension opened on March 19, 1991, and the new platform was built in 1997 with more durable materials and made long enough to accommodate six-carriage trains. The only features it currently boasts is an array of lampposts along it.

Plans for the station include repainting station lamps into WR colours, fitting period-style totem signs, and creating a large station running-in board similar to the original seen in the 1960s to improve the appearance of the station and capture the heritage atmosphere of the original. A modest fundraising target of £2500 has been set to purchase all the required features, with larger donations being recognised with items of memorabilia such as totem-style magnets and replica Edmonson tickets.

Fresh start

"Thanks to some small initial internal funding, we have made a start on repainting the rather sorry-looking lampposts into their new colour scheme," Joseph said. "Seeing the new shade of cream and chocolate go down was a proud moment for the few of us working on this project."

➜ To support the appeal, visit www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/oldlandcommonproject

The original Oldland Common station as seen from North Street bridge. BR Standard 3MT 2-6-2T No. 82036 arrives on December 31, 1963. AF SAUNDERS/AVR

Some of the station lamps have now been painted up to topcoats, with cream on the post and chocolate on the base. JOSEPH DEAN/AVR

East Lancashire adds vintage coaches to station pubs for benefit of visitors

THE East Lancashire Railway has boosted its pub trade by adding static carriages at two of its stations to give customers extra seating and better protection from the weather.

The carriages have been placed alongside the Trackside Pub at Bury Bolton Street, adding 100 extra seats, and the Buffer Stops pub at Rawtenstall, providing another 40 seats, and generating vital extra revenue for the railway.

ELR chairman Mike Kelly said: "We fully appreciate that sitting outside through the winter season is not possible every day.

"So, while the railway is closed in January and February for important track maintenance works, we brought up a couple of vintage carriages to ensure that there is an additional welcome place for people to enjoy a drink in a unique setting.

"We put in extra heating and set the carriages in both platforms, and customer feedback has been a big thumbs-up!

"It was the pub staff who had the idea and it has been a joint effort to get it in place, so a big thank-you goes to all our staff and volunteers who have made it possible."

The Trackside was voted 2022 Pub of the Year for the Bury area because of its selection of real ales and ciders. The railway was also recognised with a TripAdvisor Travellers Choice Award for 2022.

The BR Mk.1 coach which has been positioned at Bury Bolton Street station to add 100 extra seats for customers of the award-winning Trackside pub. ELR

Padstow branch line prairie is back at Bodmin General

By Robin Jones

A VETERAN of passenger services on the branch line from Bodmin General to Padstow has returned after 62 years.

The Waterman Railway Heritage Trust's GWR 2-6-2T No. 5553 was outshopped from Swindon in November 1928. It was first allocated to Bristol Bath Road and later shedded at Yatton, Machynlleth, and from November 1960, St Blazey – from where it was used on the Padstow trains.

For a few months in the summer of 1961, it was allocated to the Moorswater sub-shed on the Looe branch until that line was dieselised. Withdrawn in November 1961, it arrived at Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard in March the following year – and stayed there until January 1990 when it became the last of 213 steam locomotives to leave after being bought for heritage purposes.

It was bought by the Waterman Trust and restored to working order in 2002, after which it was based on the West Somerset Railway. After its 10-year boiler ticket expired, it was moved to Crewe and then Peak Rail for overhaul. October 2021 saw it returned to steam and two months later again hauled a revenue-earning train.

It has been hired by the BWR for a nine to 10-months stay because of a current locomotive shortage on the line, and it arrived by road on February 15.

Fleet shortage

The only operational home-based steam locomotive at present is Par Docks Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Judy*. The boiler ticket of Bagnall 0-6-0ST No. 2766 of 1944 expired on December 29, and on-loan GWR 0-6-0PT No. L92 (5786), which hauled festive season and half-term services, has returned to the South Devon Railway. It will be replaced either by the SDR's GWR 2-6-2T No. 5526 or pannier No. 6412 until the end of May, by which time the BWR hopes to have its own GWR prairie No. 5552 back from heritage steam specialist Leaky Finders of Exeter. The BWR will then prioritise work on one of its own panniers, Nos. 4612 or 6345.

A restored rake of china clay hooded clay wagons will be a main feature of the BWR's May 20/21 gala. Further galas are planned for the autumn.

Meanwhile, Network Rail will be replacing the GWR footbridge at Bodmin Parkway main line station with an all-new structure, complete with lifts later this year, and site investigations have taken place pending its removal.

It is unclear whether a new home will be found for the historic footbridge; the BWR does not have space for it.

Above: On-loan GWR 2-6-2T No. 5553 hauls a half-term service at Bodmin Parkway on February 19. When it ran there in BR days, the station was known as Bodmin Road. JIMMY JAMES/BWR

Left: GWR 2-6-2T No. 5553 climbs towards Bodmin General with the 6.15pm Bodmin Road to Padstow in June 1961 at the location known as Mrs Harrison's straight.

'We didn't know we owned a railway viaduct' – says surprised councillors

By Hugh Dougherty

EAST Ayrshire councillors received a surprise at their meeting on Wednesday, February 15, when they discovered that the council owned a B-listed railway viaduct in Newmilns.

It had always been assumed that the 1896-built sandstone and blue-brick 1035ft-long 26-arch structure, which dominates the Ayrshire town, was owned by National Highways, as part of the Historic Railway Estate.

However, engineers from the Ayrshire Roads Alliance revealed that the bridge was not listed on its structures databases. Following subsequent enquiries, council ownership was confirmed.

The engineers told councillors that repairs costing £99,000 were necessary to keep the structure – which is closed to the public – safe, and part of the town's heritage.

Councillors agreed to the request for funding and so the long-term future of the viaduct, built in 1896 by the Glasgow & South Western Railway to extend the existing line from Galston to Darvel in 1896, is now assured.

Newmilns Viaduct is owned by East Ayrshire Council and repairs will be carried out. HUGH DOUGHERTY

The last trains ran over the viaduct in 1964 when the line closed to all traffic, and the structure was kept standing as a monument to Newmilns' railway and industrial heritage, which, in its heyday, saw the railway busy with mills traffic. Although the deck is fenced off, several arches have been converted for storage or use as industrial units.

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Rule Britannias

– on the former GER main line, at least

By Geoff Courtney

FOR the many trainspotters in the 1950s who were fed on a diet of such pre-Nationalisation grandees as Kings, Merchant Navies, Princess Coronations and A4s, the new Britannia Pacifics were mere B-listers, members of a supporting cast that didn't warrant top billing.

However, they were state-of-the-art locomotives for other enthusiasts whose everyday fayre was rather more mundane, and into that category came those of us living in the eastern environs of London within the proximity of the Liverpool Street to East Anglia route.

Yes, we had Gresley's B17 4-6-0s bearing the names of country houses and football clubs, but they were edging towards their sell-by dates as the decade progressed, and the very last I recorded passing through my local station of Ilford was No. 61625 *Raby Castle* on a Down Yarmouth express on December 16, 1958.

By then, however, the 'Brits' had well and truly come to the rescue, looking fine in their modern way and possessing an aura and arrogance that, for us east of the capital, was in stark contrast to their predecessors.

They looked the part and indeed played the part by bringing the route to Norwich into the modern era with two-hour trains for the 114½ miles from London to the cathedral city, a schedule that wouldn't look out of place today. Recordings of 'Brits' abound in my Ilford logs, starting with No. 70008 *Black Prince* on the Down 'Broadsman' on April 9, 1957 – followed in the next seven minutes by B17 Nos. 61654 *Sunderland* and 61659 *East Anglian* heading for Yarmouth and Clacton respectively – and ending on August 2, 1961, with No. 70011 *Hotspur* on a Down Clacton.

It wasn't on only the former Great Eastern line that these Pacifics, the first of the Standard locomotives, strutted their stuff, however, for every BR region had them at some point.

Again, turning to my logs, I recorded Nos. 70039 *Sir Christopher Wren* and 70040 *Clive of India* and on the ECML at Hitchin and Hatfield respectively, No. 70052 *Firth of Tay* on the WCML at Oxenholme, No. 70043 *Lord Kitchener* also on the WCML, at Lichfield Trent Valley on 'The Lancastrian,' Nos. 70045 *Lord Rowallan* and 70048 *The Territorial Army 1908-1958* at Rhyl, on each occasion heading 'The Irish Mail,' and 86C (Cardiff Canton) members of the class on numerous occasions at Reading General, including on 'The Red Dragon' and 'Capitals United Express.'

US-inspired design

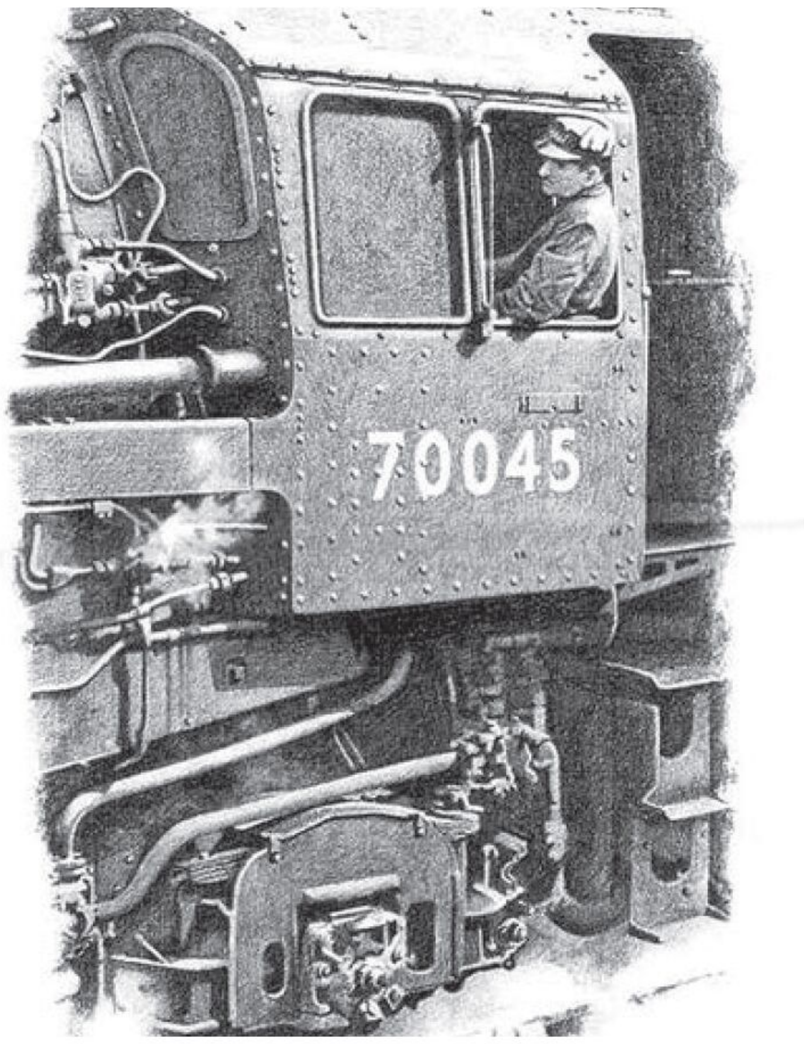
The 'Brits' are the subject of the latest book to emerge from the Transport Treasury stable, with compiler Alan Butcher at the helm, taking us through the class's 17½ years in service, accompanied by photographs and detailed captions of every member of the 55-strong line-up. He writes that initially their US-inspired design with high running plates clear of the wheels failed to endear them to enthusiasts, but was appreciated by drivers and fitters as it reduced the need to crawl beneath the locomotive, while unusually, a pre-production mock-up of the cab enabled inspectors, drivers and firemen to have a say in the design.

The titles of the seven chapters sum up the class's history, including 'On the Great Eastern' – where, writes Alan, the crews took them to heart – 'Unloved on the Western?', his question mark indicating that there wasn't dislike over the entire region, 'Meandering around the LMR,' and 'An untimely demise,' while the Southern, North Eastern and Scotland regions also come under the spotlight.

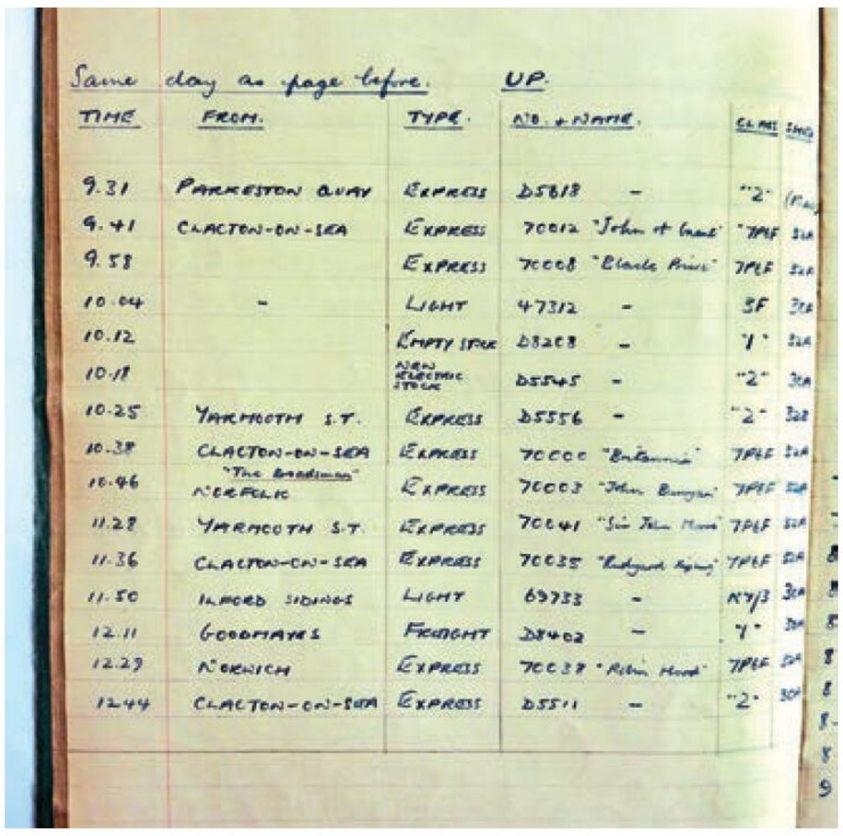
This is a publication for enthusiasts who admired the 'Brits' for their looks and, in many cases, their names – how compelling were *Iron Duke*, for example, *Lightning* or *Shooting Star* for teenage trainspotters – but, through the captions, it is also for historians and those fascinated by the engineering asides of steam developments in the 1950s. For instance, in his caption to No. 70040 *Clive of India* at Bethnal Green on February 16, 1957, Alan tells us that from that locomotive onwards, the trailing truck had plain bearings, with different covers to the previous Timken fitted examples, and on a similar theme, No. 70018 *Flying Dutchman* passes Tilehurst with an Up express on August 1, 1959, sporting a modified front step arrangement, Western Region smoke deflector handholds, and oblong section coupling rods.

The 'Brits' may have had a comparatively short life, but their countrywide allocations ensured they became an integral part of many trainspotters' lives as UK steam entered its twilight. Two survive – Nos. 70000 *Britannia* and 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* – to show the youngsters of today what we of a certain age were able to enjoy more than half a century ago when the class was in its pomp.

A 'Brit' at home: In a photograph from the new Transport Treasury publication British Railways 'Britannia' Pacifics, an immaculate No. 70037 *Hereward the Wake* carries a 'Day Continental' headboard at its home shed of Stratford (30A) in the late 1950s. Beside the Pacific is 0-4-0 diesel shunter No. 11505, which was subsequently renumbered D2955. TRANSPORT TREASURY



Work of art: The driver of Britannia No. 70045 *Lord Rowallan* waits for the green light in a pencil drawing by Guild of Railway Artists member Chris Ashmore. The drawing, which is in a private collection, shows in detail the engineering intricacies of just a part of the large Pacific, which was built at Crewe in June 1954 and withdrawn in December 1967. CHRIS ASHMORE



Same day as page before. UP.

TIME	FROM.	TYPE.	No. + NAME.	CLASS	SHED
9.31	PARKESTON QUAY	EXPRESS	D5818	–	"2"
9.41	CLACTON-ON-SEA	EXPRESS	70012 "John of Gaunt"	7PLF	30A
9.58		EXPRESS	70008 "Black Prince"	7PLF	30A
10.04	–	LIGHT	47312	–	5F
10.12		EMPTY STOCK	D8208	–	"1"
10.18		NEW ELECTRIC STOCK	D5545	–	"2"
10.25	YARMOUTH S.T.	EXPRESS	D5556	–	"2"
10.38	CLACTON-ON-SEA	EXPRESS	70000 "Britannia"	7PLF	30A
10.46	"The Broadsman" NORFOLK	EXPRESS	70003 "John Bunyan"	7PLF	30A
11.28	YARMOUTH S.T.	EXPRESS	70041 "Sir John Moore"	7PLF	30A
11.36	CLACTON-ON-SEA	EXPRESS	70035 "Rudyard Kipling"	7PLF	30A
11.50	ILFORD SIDINGS	LIGHT	69733	–	N7/3
12.11	GOODMAYES	FREIGHT	D8462	–	"1"
12.23	NORWICH	EXPRESS	70039 "Robin Hood"	7PLF	30A
12.44	CLACTON-ON-SEA	EXPRESS	D5511	–	"2"

Britannias rule: Despite the arrival of main line diesels nearly three years before, no fewer than 12 Britannias on 13 expresses, including class pioneer No. 70000, were logged by a teenage Geoff Courtney passing through Ilford in the space of a little over three hours on July 13, 1960. One, No. 70003 *John Bunyan*, was hauling the Up flagship 'Broadsman' and another, No. 70040 *Clive of India*, the Down 'Norfolkman,' while No. 70008 *Black Prince* was logged twice, on an Up express and two hours later on a Down train to Clacton. This photograph is of the log of the seven members of the class on Up trains recorded that day between 9.31am and 12.44pm. GEOFF COURTNEY

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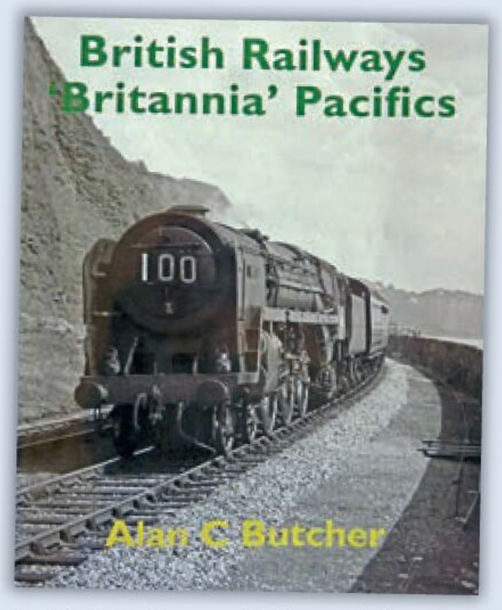


British Railways 'Britannia' Pacifics is a detailed insight of the first BR class of Standard locomotives.

Carriage that's worth its salt!

By Hugh Dougherty

SITTING on what was once the busy line from Falkland Junction to Ayr West Dock is a carriage that's worth its salt. Thought to be the only Great Eastern Railway carriage in Scotland, the former six-wheeler, with an intact underframe, its Clemenson running gear and fixing points, has found a new life combining railway heritage with high-quality sea salt production.

Brought on site in 2021, on appropriately-named Salt Pans Road, by Blackthorn Salt, the carriage, believed to date from the 1880s, is thought to have been designed by the GER's locomotive and rolling stock chief James Holden and built in the company's works at Stratford.

"We brought it here after we acquired it from Hendrick's Gin Girvan distillery," said Whirly Marshall, who founded and directs the Scottish sea salt company with her husband, Gregorie. "We were looking for something of character to complement our blackthorn salt tower and, given the railway heritage of the site, we are delighted to have the carriage as our hub for hospitality and events, such as our annual open day."

Blackthorn has sensitively restored the six-wheeler, which arrived needing lots of TLC after Hendrick's had used it for promotional purposes for 10 years, even taking it around the county on the back of a lorry to events, branded as 'The Horseless Carriage of Curiosities.'

It now leads a quieter life, after Whirly and Gregorie replaced woodwork, reglazed windows, made the roof watertight, and fitted replacement drop-window straps and door ventilators. The work was done as sensitively as possible to respect the character and heritage of the original.

Two three-quarter width partitions with folding seats to give the impression of what the compartments would have been like have been fitted, with information displays on the vehicle's heritage and the unique Blackthorn salt-making process. The rest of the interior is open and has a wood-burning stove, whose chimney, Whirly admits – who carried out extensive research into the carriage – would not please many railway enthusiasts!

"I am very alive to our role as railway heritage custodians and striking a balance between preserving the carriage and using it for a modern-day purpose," she said. "I know that heritage railways and museums are struggling with that self-same dilemma. We take the view that the carriage links our business with the railway heritage of the site we occupy, while ensuring that this historic item of rolling stock survives.

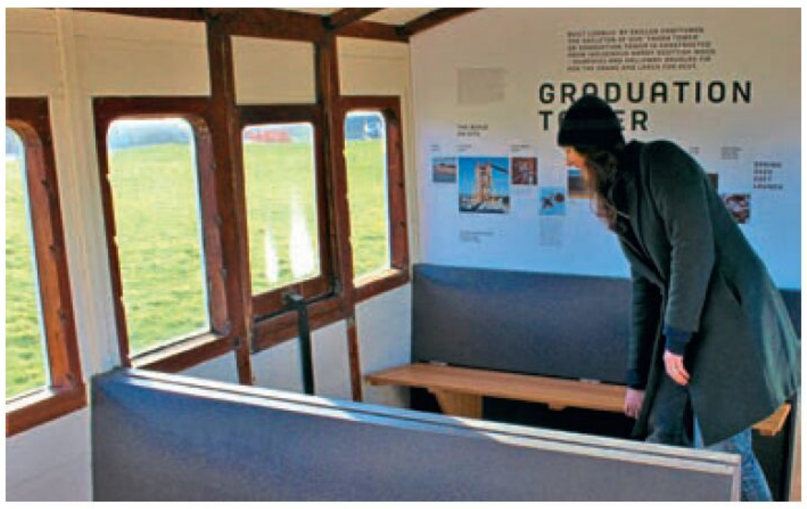
"As we are right by the seaside, I like to imagine that this carriage might have run in excursion trains to the Norfolk coast in its heyday, so we are keeping that tradition alive!"

Although Whirly was able to glean plenty of information about the GER, she has no idea when the Blackthorn carriage came out of service or why it survived withdrawal, and she hopes that readers may be able to help: "It would be great if anyone could say exactly when it was built, what lines it might have run on, what its fleet number was, and how it survived to come to Hendrick's Gin. I'd be delighted for any help in finding all of that out."

Whirly's empathy with local railway heritage is well-founded, for the track on which the coach body sits was opened by the Glasgow & South Western Railway in 1873 and for more than 100 years conveyed millions of tons of Ayrshire coal to Ayr Dry Dock for export, mostly to Ireland.

The historic Ayr Waggonway, commemorated by the name of Waggon Road, which runs close to the Hawthorn site, also brought coal down the docks between 1775 and 1838, and when the Glasgow & Ayr Railway opened in 1840, its original terminal station was at Newton-on-Ayr, again, close to the Blackthorn coach.

➜ Anyone who is able to share information about the railway service life and times of this survivor should e-mail Whirly at marshall@blackthornsalt.co.uk



Above: Two compartments have been refitted at one end of the coach with fold-down seats to show how it was configured. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Right: The five-compartment carriage sits on abandoned railway tracks with Blackthorn Salt's salt graduation tower, where sea water is run down through blackthorn twigs, to produce high quality salt, behind. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Above: The carriage 'in service' with Hendrick's, its previous incarnation where it was badged up as the Horseless Carriage of Curiosities. HENDRICK'S GIN

Left: The doors have been restored with traditional, leather window straps, while the notches for securing blinds can also be seen. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Whirly gets into seaside excursion train mood as she waves from one of the carriage's drop-down windows. But can readers help her know if the vehicle ran to the Norfolk coast? HUGH DOUGHERTY

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Glasgow's loss is Brechin's gain following Network Rail's footbridge donation

By Robin Jones

A 146-year-old footbridge railway in Glasgow's southside has been donated by Network Rail to the Caledonian Railway at Brechin.

The bridge, which was made by Paisley ironworks Hanna, Donald & Wilson in 1877 and linked Darnley Road and Moray Place at Strathbungo, was removed in January as part of the Glasgow to Barrhead electrification project, a Scottish Government investment to decarbonise passenger by 2035.

Key stakeholders and Network Rail explored several options to try to keep the footbridge in Glasgow, but could not find a suitable location for both it and the railway columns that once supported Susie's Store in Nithsdale Road, which was also demolished as part of the project.

The heritage line intends to use the columns to develop ramp access to Brechin station and provide much-improved facilities for visitors.

The footbridge will be installed as part of the current restoration and improvement work at the station.

Network Rail's project manager for the bridge work, Michelle McCaig, said: "We are so pleased to have been able to find a new home for the footbridge and railway columns. Ideally, we wanted to try to keep the bridge in Glasgow, as we know the significant role it has played in the community over the years, but unfortunately a viable solution couldn't be found.

"However, as the former footbridge was built as part of the Caledonian Railway and the charity is the only preserved and remaining part of this network, it seems fitting the bridge will once again be part of this.

"By being part of Brechin station, this provides a great opportunity for the footbridge to continue to be used and appreciated."

Caledonian Railway Brechin Ltd chairman Jon Gill said: "We are thrilled to be able to incorporate these fantastic parts of our railway heritage into our live preserved railway; this will ensure that visitors will be able to continue to enjoy their use for years to come."

Back in Strathbungo, work is now underway to install a replacement for the footbridge by July.

The 146-year-old footbridge in Moray Place prior to removal. NETWORK RAIL

Coronation nameplate is the crown of GCRA March sale after £20,000 hammer price

By Geoff Courtney

A *CORONATION* nameplate from landmark LNWR George the Fifth Class No. 1800 sold for £20,000 at a Great Central Railwayana auction on March 4, appropriately just nine weeks before Charles III is crowned at Westminster Abbey.

The 4-4-0 was built at Crewe in June 1911 and was the 5000th locomotive to be outshopped by the works, an achievement recorded on the brass nameplate. After Grouping in 1923, No. 1800 was renumbered 5348 by the LMS and subsequently 25348 before being withdrawn from Chester Midland shed in June 1940.

Fittingly, the crown-mounted plate was bought by a collector who lives in Crewe, a connection that delighted auctioneer Mike Soden: "There was a lot of interest in the plate before it went under the hammer and it was particularly pleasing that it went to a railwayana enthusiast who lives in the town where the engine was built 112 years ago.

"It is a beautiful plate that would grace any collection, and how apt that it has returned to Crewe just a few weeks before the coronation of Charles III."

The new monarch is the great-grandson of George V, in whose honour the locomotive was named.

A second nameplate that also went for five figures was *Lady Margaret Hall*, from GWR No. 7911, a February 1950 Swindon product withdrawn from Oxford (81F) in December 1963. Mike said the plate, which sold for £12,500, had attracted considerable interest before the sale, while he said the realisation was the highest achieved by a member of the class for many years. The prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

The Oxford University college after which No. 7911 was named was founded in 1878 as the first women's college at Oxford, but has also accepted men since 1979.

➜ See Geoff Courtney's column on pages 78-80 for a comprehensive round-up of railwayana auctions throughout the country.

A *Coronation* nameplate, one of which sold at auction on March 4 for £20,000, is seen here in detail on LMS George the Fifth Class 4-4-0 No. 25348. TRANSPORT TREASURY

Farewell to Fred – saviour of the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway

By Robin Jones

The earliest days at Ingoldmells just after the late Fred Ellis had invited the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway to move its stock from storage in Burgh-le-Marsh to his developing Skegness Water Leisure Park. LCLR ARCHIVES

Fred had a passion for restoring Karrier lorries, seen during the 2019 Classic Wheels event. They were the first vehicles he used when he created his business. DAVE ENEFER

THE Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway is mourning the death of its company chairman Frederick (Fred) William John Ellis.

Fred was also president of the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway Historic Vehicles Trust, whose chairman, Richard Shepherd, summed up his extraordinary contribution to saving, rebuilding and reopening the LCLR at a new home in Skegness Water Leisure Park, as "quite simply, Fred was the best friend the LCLR ever had."

Born in 1948, Fred attended Skegness Morris School and became a trainee draughtsman with the Anglian Water Board and then a quantity surveyor and contracts manager with Simons of Lincoln. His principal business, Ellis Bros (Contractors) Ltd., was started in 1947 by his father Kenneth and uncles Brian, Ronald and Douglas. The firm was instrumental in new-build projects after the Second World War and the huge backlog of repairs and improvements to existing buildings, which followed the easing of rationing and the lifting of the moratorium on all but essential building work after the war, hence the 'Contractors' in the title.

When the original LCLR line at Humberston closed in 1985 and the locomotives, carriages, wagons, rails and all other equipment went into storage initially at Burgh-le-Marsh, Fred became actively involved.

As his uncles died or retired, Fred acquired their shares to take control and the company then became one of the largest developers in the area. It built hundreds of new houses in the Skegness area and created an extensive rental property portfolio under his leadership.

Fred began developing the water park at Ingoldmells after buying 133 acres of grazing land off Walls Lane in 1989. In spring the following year, Ellis Bros group CEO John Chappell (now also company secretary of the LCLR) took a speculative call from the late Willam (Bill) Woolhouse, from Fotherby, near Louth, one of the original founders of the line, who had heard that the company might be looking for a railway for the park…

Passion for engineering

Beyond his day job, Fred was a very keen engineer, fascinated by how things work and how they can be taken apart, improved, and put back together better than before.

John recalled: "I knew briefly about the LCLR, having visited it in about 1984/5, so picking myself up off the floor and knowing how Fred's mind worked and his engineering passion, it was a no-brainer. I set up the meeting with Fred, myself, Mr Woolhouse and his fellow director John Burdett and the rest, as they say, is history!

"The meeting was held in the winter of 1990/91 and Fred became enthused with the LCLR, particularly due to the skills, enthusiasm and sheer 'likeability' of the volunteers, many of whom were also its shareholders. He recognised that the railway's story had a bit of The Titfield Thunderbolt's sheer bloody determination about it, and that also appealed to us.

"So began an unwavering moral and financial commitment to the railway. He always saw his role as a part of a team effort."

The LCLR was rebuilt by volunteers and reopened in 2009. As reported in issue 228 of *Heritage Railway*, on April 25, 2017, the railway operated a Royal Train for Princess Anne's visit to the park to see the development of modern facilities for holidays in the Skegness area.

Fred used to own three aeroplanes housed on the original Skegness Airfield a quarter of a mile to the north of the present-day one, which is within the water leisure park. When holiday camp chain Butlins obtained planning permission to redevelop it, and the airfield business operator went bust as a result, Fred cut a 500-yard length of grass at the water leisure park and with two flying friends flew his planes from Butlins to the water leisure park to keep them out of the hands of the Official Receiver.

'Private and modest'

Fred supported a wide range of charities including Skegness Sea Scouts, Skegness RNLI and Lincolnshire Ambucopter, Cat's Protection and Skegness Day Care Centre, and occasionally sponsored youngsters' sports teams.

John said: "All of us who were honoured to know Fred and share his passion for our railway, its conservation of rare and valuable artefacts, the joy it gave to our passengers young and old, and the flora and fauna which thrive along its route, were aware that Fred remained a very private and modest person, despite being an extremely successful and driven entrepreneur, with roots firmly in the times when success meant building something physical and tangible.

"Before I came to work for him, he was driving me around some of his building sites (pre-leisure development) and I was in awe of what he was doing. It was typical of Fred's humble style that he described himself as a 'tin pot builder'. Well, if that lifetime was as a tinpot builder, maybe more of us should aspire to being 'tinpot'! What a legacy."

Fred is survived by his wife, Jean, his daughter Kay and sons Ian and Sam and his five grandchildren.

During the 2019 Classic Wheels event in the Skegness Water Leisure Park, Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway flagship Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1008 of 1903 *Jurassic* hauls one of the line's Ashover Light Railway carriages to the left of RAF Binbrook Lightning jet fighter (the trainer version), which Fred Ellis rescued from being a redundant gate guardian on a Lincolnshire farm and is now being restored adjacent to the line by a small group of enthusiastic volunteers. It was the last year that the event, which showcased Fred's love of preserving vehicles, was staged because of Covid -19 lockdowns, and about 4000 people attended. DAVE ENEFER

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Last chance to save the 'Clacton Express' EMU?

By Owen Hayward

A BR Class 309 EMU's future could be in jeopardy unless a purchase and restoration plan can be settled in the next few months.

Unit No. 309624 has been based at the Lavender Line since the closure of the Coventry Electric Museum in 2018, but due to changing priorities was offered for sale in 2021.

In March 2021, the Clacton Express Preservation Group agreed to purchase it to prevent it from going to scrap. The deal was funded by a private benefactor, but the CEPG announced on February 10 that this individual had decided to step back for personal reasons, meaning the group now needs to find a new backer to keep the unit's future secure.

As a result, No. 309624 has been listed 'for sale' and the group's priority is to try to keep the three-car unit together. A condition of the sale is that it must be removed from the Lavender Line's Isfield site within two months of purchase, although an existing storage agreement between the CEPG and Lavender Line expires in October; the CEPG has offered its assistance in continuing the restoration of the unit wherever it is moved to as part of the sale.

Time could be running short for Class 309 EMU, which is now up for sale again after a benefactor stepped back from the project. Unit No. 309624 (displaying its Departmental number. 960102) is seen sitting at Isfield on the Lavender Line in June 2022. CEPG

'Exceptional potential'

No price has been disclosed, although the outgoing benefactor has a value in mind and is open to negotiations, but transport costs are reported as being a low five-figure amount depending on the destination and rises in fuel costs.

CEPG chairman Brad Wright said: "This unit has exceptional potential for many heritage railways, essentially being Mk.1s with cabs.

"The set was given a major bottom-end overhaul in 2001 so is in great condition with virtually no wear on the tyres. The unit can be piloted, eliminating the need to run around, and all the plans are in place to blue star the set to enable cab control. The unit is air-braked, but conversion to dual braking isn't impossible. All of these factors give the set a few great USPs – all we need now is to find others who can see this potential and help us to unlock it."

Built in 1962, Class 309s are Mk.1 bodyshell 'express' EMUs, running primarily on the Great Eastern Main Line between London and Clacton (which resulted in the nickname 'The Clacton Express').

The first express 25Kv AC units built by BR that could also achieve 100mph, the last Class 309s were withdrawn from passenger use in late 2000 and sent for storage at the Ministry of Defence Pig's Bay site near Shoeburyness, although No. 624 was transferred to Eastleigh works and converted to a Class 960 (No. 960102) Departmental unit for cab signalling tests at the Old Dalby test track.

Once retired in 2004, it too was sent for storage before ending up first at the Coventry museum and moving to Isfield in 2018.

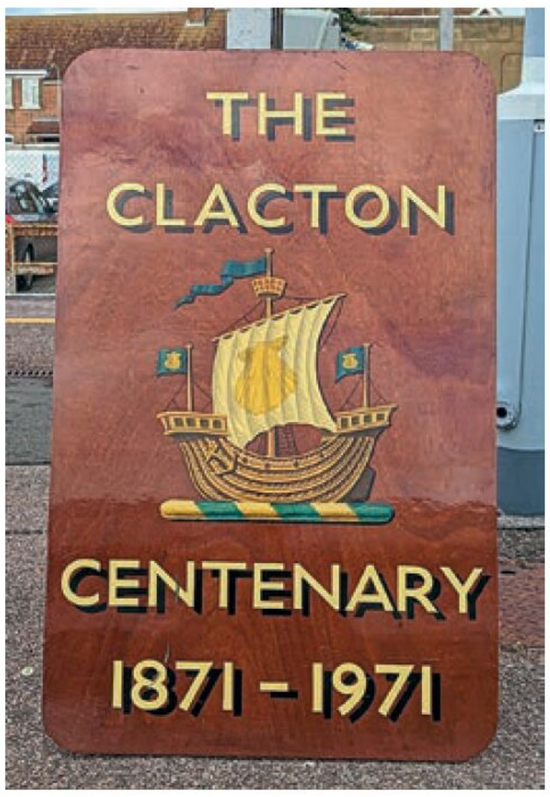
Other options for the survival of No. 309624 are being explored in the background. In the meantime, an exhibition on the Class 309 has been set up at the East Anglian Railway Museum and it is believed to be the largest collection of artefacts and memorabilia relating to the class ever gathered.

Exhibition

Thanks to several loan agreements, it includes destination boards, coach letter boards, original parts, manuals and drawings, with a highlight centrepiece being the original Clacton Centenary headboard carried by various units during 1971.

The exhibition will be accessible during EARM open days for approximately six months and can be found in the museum's exhibition centre.

For more details on the sale, visit clactonexpresspreservationgroup.com or email chairman.cepg@gmail.com



In 1971, several Class 309 units wore this headboard on special workings that commemorated what is believed to be the 'birthdate' of modern Clacton-on-Sea. It is part of the temporary 309 exhibition at the East Anglian Railway Museum at Chappel & Wakes Colne station. CEPG

A year's notice for 'Teddy Bears' picnic! Ecclesbourne marks 60th anniversary

MORE than a year's advance notice has been given to diesel enthusiasts, particularly followers of the Western Region Class 14 diesel hydraulic 0-6-0s, by the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, which has announced a four-day celebration to mark the 60th anniversary of the 'Teddy Bears' during July 25-28, 2024.

The event follows on from the East Lancashire Railway gala in 2014 that marked the half centenary of the class by bringing 10 examples together between July 25-27 for a long weekend of services worked by them and which culminated in an impressive nonuplet headed finale, with the 10th locomotive (maroon-liveried D9523) having unfortunately failed during the first day.

Built between 1964-65 at Swindon Works, 56 examples of the class were completed for trip working between local yards and short distance freight trains. Their good all-round visibility from the cab combined with dual controls also made them capable of shunting duties. A total of 19 were preserved in the UK, with a further five being exported to Belgium and Spain. The EVR weekend will also feature visiting locomotives operating alongside its two resident examples. D9537 *Eric* has been providing sterling service since arriving at its new home railway from the ELR in 2018, although once the anniversary event has passed, it will be withdrawn for overhaul. Stablemate D9525 arrived in 2022 following purchase from the Heritage Shunters Trust at Rowsley on Peak Rail.

The power unit is seized and since transfer to EVR, volunteers have been working on overhauling it as they seek to bring it back into service.

With the rising cost of fuel, road transport costs for proposed visiting locomotives is expected to be very expensive. In a bid to offset this, the EVR is encouraging sponsorship deals with local and national rail businesses through advertising and corporate packages, which it hopes will assist the costs and make the event a success. Details of the Teddy Bears @ 60 weekend and regular updates will be published at www.e-v-r.com

Building Locomotion's New Hall underway for October finish

By Robin Jones

CONSTRUCTION has begun on the major new collection building at Locomotion in Shildon that will significantly expand the visitor attraction and create one of the world's biggest collections of historic railway vehicles.

Due to open in November, the 2000 square-metre New Hall will house a further 46 vehicles from the National Collection, including carriages, wagons and locomotives, and will celebrate the North East's role in the development of world railways. It will also be a key hub in plans to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025.

New Hall will be built on the brownfield 'Ashfield's' site, close to the museum. Locomotion's existing collection building, Main Hall, will remain open to the public as usual during construction.

The design of New Hall is inspired by historic engine sheds and will feature simple, sustainable and hard-wearing materials with high levels of insulation to reduce demand for heating and cooling.

Aerial shot of the site of New Hall at the Locomotion museum in Shildon. LOCOMOTION

An artist's impression of the new collection building at Locomotion. AOC ARCHITECTURE WITH J&L GIBBONS LANDSCAPE

New gardens, specially designed to encourage the flora and fauna commonly found on railway embankments, will be planted around the building. The 'Railway Gardens' will increase biodiversity, helping the museum meet its net zero carbon targets, support sustainable drainage, and offer new volunteering opportunities for the local community.

Chris Ayre, from building contractor Nationwide Engineering, who will work with AOC Architects and J+L Gibbons Landscape Architects to deliver the New Hall, Coun Elizabeth Scott, from Durham County Council, and Dr Sarah Price, head of Locomotion, make a site visit prior to work commencing on the new collections building. LOCOMOTION

The building work is scheduled to be finished in October before a series of complex rail moves will take place to begin displaying the historic exhibits across three pairs of tracks, allowing visitors to easily see the collection and learn about their significance.

The exact vehicle layout is yet to be announced but will include stars from the museum's existing collection, as well as new arrivals from the National Railway Museum in York and other locations. The vehicles and objects chosen will highlight the significance of coal in the development of the railways, along with related stories of freight transportation and the industrial railway, and many of the vehicles on display will have strong connections to the North East.

Planning permission was approved in June 2022. Locomotion head Dr Sarah Price said: "After a lot of thought and effort spent at the planning and design stages, I am delighted to mark the start of building work on our New Hall."

Durham County Council's Cabinet member for economy and partnerships, Coun Elizabeth Scott, said: "We are really excited to see work getting underway on the New Hall development and at the prospect of having one of the world's largest collections of historic railway vehicles right here in County Durham.

"We were really pleased to be able to put some of the Levelling Up funding we received towards Locomotion, and this new attraction will undoubtedly draw more visitors to both the museum and the wider county, in turn boosting our economy."

The museum will host a series of exhibitions and events throughout the year, culminating in a visit from A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* to celebrate the locomotive's 100th birthday at a centenary festival from December 16 to January 2.

New Hall has been supported by county council as lead funder, the Wolfson Foundation, the Foyle Foundation, the Sir James Knott Trust, the Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust, The Platten Family Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne and Wear and Northumberland and the Northumbrian Water Branch Out Fund.

NCB Fife area Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 19 in black waits at Bo'ness station with the 12.30pm service to Manuel on the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway on February 12. To the left are Class 27 No. 27001 and experimental Hydrogen Multiple Unit No. 614209 (converted from Class 314 emu No. 314209). PAUL BIGGS

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Castle Bridge has been given a new lease of life by recent repair work that lasted eight weeks. HRE

The repairs at Wortha Mill Bridge on Dartmoor, including the installation of anchors, tying together the spandrels (the sides of the bridge) and the arches in order to limit further fracturing and movement between them. HRE

Three historic Devon bridges receive life extensions following £243k worth of repairs being carried out

THREE historic long-disused bridges in Devon have undergone repairs totalling £243,000 to ensure that they are safe for years to come while retaining their distinct characters.

The repairs have been carried out by the Historical Railways Estate, once part of BR and which is now looked after by National Highways on behalf of the Department for Transport.

Elsewhere in Britain, National Highways has been widely criticised for infilling old bridges in its portfolio of 3100 historic structures.

Wortha Mill Bridge on Dartmoor, Broadpark Road Bridge at Brentor, and Castle Bridge in Exeter have all undergone an extensive programme of works including masonry repairs, repointing of brickwork, the removal of vegetation and roots that can damage the bridges, and the installation of fencing.

Ecology surveys were also undertaken and enhancements such as bat and bird boxes will be installed at the sites later this year as a result.

Wortha Mill Bridge crosses the disused SR Tavistock to Okehampton line and the River Burn. A well-used footpath runs across the top of the bridge leading to Brent Tor.

The Budleigh to Exmouth Cycleway runs underneath three-arched Castle Bridge that carried the Exmouth to Tipton St John branch.

Broadpark Road Bridge was part of the GWR Launceston to Plymouth branch.

HRE civil engineer Matthew Irwin said: "All our structures are inspected yearly by a team of skilled examiners and where there are known to be rare species present, they will be accompanied by qualified ecologists.

"These examinations allow us to plan work well in advance and ensure that the most critical tasks are prioritised. They also allow us to programme ecological surveys to ensure that no harm is caused to the wildlife, as well as suggesting measures that enhance the local biodiversity."

A HRE statement added: "Although we are only funded to maintain safety on HRE structures, we work closely with a wide variety of organisations to help them take on structures or lease them from us. These organisations often repurpose structures for walking and cycling routes.

"We are working with the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway to reopen a number of structures for use by a heritage railway. We are also working with Holsworthy Town Council to allow Holsworthy viaduct to be opened for active travel."

Happy 40th birthday gift for Blaenavon – a new brake van for restoration

AS IT enters its 40th year, Blaenavon's Heritage Railway has acquired a new brake van for its 'Windcutter' set thanks to one of its carriage and wagon volunteers.

When Matthew Harris heard that BR 20-ton brake van No. B955112 was potentially going to be scrapped, he saw an opportunity to fulfil a dream.

"Since 2019, I've been involved with carriage and wagon restorations and in that time I've been part of some very satisfying projects, most recently the repaint of SR Queen Mary brake van No. S56286 (at Midsomer Norton), which sparked a desire to own a brake van myself," he said.

Built in 1963, No. B955112 started out under London Transport ownership as No. B587, one of a batch for locomotive-hauled engineering workings and one of just four of this design remaining; two of them (Nos. B583 and 584) reside at London Transport Museum's Acton Depot with couplings for transporting tube stock around the network, while No. B586 is stored on the Epping Ongar Railway and owned by London Underground. No. B587 was privately purchased and arrived in 1994 at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, where it has remained ever since.

Matthew has launched a fundraiser in the hope of expediting the restoration of No. B955112 in time for the railway's September 8-10 40th anniversary gala, top-and-tailing the Windcutter mineral wagons with the railway's own BR(M) brake van No. B950114 that is nearing the end of a restoration in the Eric Edward's shed – the building made possible thanks to a bequest from the namesake long-serving volunteer who passed away in 2014.

"Once the brake van is transferred to Blaenavon, it will be stripped back to establish what can be kept and what will need replacing, but I plan to make some modifications to improve the longevity until it needs another overhaul of timber," Matthew said. "The end goal while it is based at Blaenavon is to complement the railway's Windcutter coal train and other freight-based events and operations. Although with its history being based on London Transport territory and books, I'd always be keen for it to be repainted in its original LT guise and visit other LT-based heritage railways for events."

➜ To support the restoration of the brake van in time for the 40th anniversary, visit gofundme.com/f/br-20t-b955112-restoration

Soon to move to Blaenavon is brake van No. B955112. MATTHEW HARRIS/BHR

Rare LNWR carriage needs to find a new permanent home to survive

By Robin Jones

Left: The 'Paddy Train' heading from Hednesford up to Cannock Wood Colliery behind one of its Austerity saddle tanks in the early 1960s. CRM

AN appeal has been launched to find a new permanent home for the sole-surviving standard LNWR passenger carriage.

The six-compartment brake third survived by entering industrial service, while all other preserved LNWR carriages are royal and picnic saloons, TPO, and an observation car.

Built at Wolverton in 1917 and a typical LNWR wooden-bodied non-corridor carriage, it survived through LMS and onto BR ownership as No. M22667M before being withdrawn in 1957 and purchased by the National Coal Board in 1958 for use as a 'Paddy' train taking miners to work. The Cannock Wood Colliery 'Paddy' ran from Hednesford to the colliery but ceased in the mid-1950s due to the older carriages having fallen into disrepair. However, trade union pressure led to restoration of the service in 1958, for which the LNWR brake third was purchased. The service finally ceased in 1964.

Bought by the Railway Preservation Society (West Midlands) in 1964, the carriage moved from the group's Hednesford base to the Chasewater Railway in 1970.

The vehicle was surveyed by a carriage and wagon specialist just over a decade ago and re-sheeted, and was then deemed to be restorable. However, a combination of lockdown and storms led to its exposure and rapid deterioration. The cant rails had deteriorated significantly, leading to failure in some areas and detachment of side panels.

However, the steel underframe, floor, ends and partitions are all in reasonable condition, as is much of the side panelling, even that which has detached. The roof is still managing to keep the interior reasonably dry, although reduced to bare boards in places.

The carriage urgently needs to be moved to a site where it can be conserved prior to full restoration. Removal of some of the still-attached side panels may be required, and bracing and sheeting would likely be required to move the vehicle.

Chasewater volunteers have offered to provide assistance with getting the carriage ready to move to a new home.

Chasewater Railway Museum curator Barry Bull said: "This rare LNWR carriage deserves to live on as part of our railway heritage. I very much hope that it can find a new home and our decades of trying to look after it will not have been in vain.

"While there are those who say it should just be broken up or sold off as components, it really deserves better than that. Even if a full restoration seems some way off, just conserving it to provide that future would be a significant contribution."

➜ The carriage is being offered for a nominal sum to a suitable home. To arrange a viewing or for more information, contact carriage and wagon team member Bill Owen by email at LNWRbrake@chasewaterrailwaymuseum.uk

The LNWR brake third in the Chasewater Railway's Brownhills West yard in February. CRM

Sir Drefaldwyn back in action after 23 years

FRANCO-BELGE 0-8-0T No. 10 *Sir Drefaldwyn* will rejoin the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway for the coming season. The locomotive, built in France in 1944 for the German Military Railways and originally operated with a tender, later saw service in Austria on the Salzkammergut Lokalbahn before being sold to the WLLR in 1969. It entered traffic the following year. *Sir Drefaldwyn* last steamed when its boiler ticker expired in 2000, and its latest overhaul began in 2014. In early October, it passed its steam test and its final assembly followed the lagging of the boiler.

Double award celebration for Seaton Tramway

THE Seaton Tramway has scooped two accolades in the 2023 Devon Tourism Awards.

The tramway won the silver award in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category and bronze in the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism category.

Tramway chief executive Jenny Nunn said: "We are thrilled to receive these awards and honoured to be recognised for our efforts in providing a unique and enjoyable experience for our visitors.

"These awards are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, as well as the support of our visitors. We look forward to continuing to deliver exceptional experiences for all who visit Seaton Tramway."

At the awards ceremony (left to right) are tramway staff Lee Taylor, Leeann Gardiner (from category sponsor Dartington Crystal), Josh Castree, Nicola Stone and chief operating officer Jenny Nunn. NICK WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY/DTA

More than 90,000 passengers are carried each year and a variety of activities are on offer, including birdwatching trams, tram driving lessons and various interactive family events throughout the year.

The awards ceremony was held at Plymouth Argyle on February 2.

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Bridge is overhauled just in time for the start of Toddington's new season

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has completed significant remedial work on its steel rail-over bridge No. 32, which crosses the road between Gretton and Gotherington, near Prescott.

While the highway below was closed for this essential work to be carried out, Gloucestershire County Council took the opportunity to carry out road resurfacing work in the area.

The work on Bridge 32 was funded by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Trust and undertaken by civil engineering firm Walsh Construction, which has carried out repairs on several of the railway's bridges and earthworks in recent years.

The railway has many steel bridges, all of which are well over 100 years old. Its finance director, Richard Winstanley, said: "These steel bridges are really beginning to show their age. This one is suffering leaking decks following failure of the waterproofing, which has led to corrosion. In addition, the ballast walls at the deck ends are being rebuilt, while there are other brickwork repairs too.

"The bridge is also being shotblasted back to bare metal, rust-proofed and completely repainted. When complete, the bridge will be a much more attractive feature for drivers passing beneath it and it should last perhaps another 100 years."

The work began the day after the railway's 2022 season ended on January 3 by lifting the track over the bridge before contractors moved in, and finished the job before services resumed on March 4.

Other work carried out during the winter break included track replacement, painting and repairing stations and other structures, and a significant amount of drainage and landscape management works to ensure that water runs freely across the railway from the Cotswold hills to the rivers Severn and Avon.

Richard said: "Much of this work is carried out by our skilled volunteers. The railway is extremely fortunate that it is supported by about 850 volunteers in a wide range of roles, many of who are happy to be out in all weathers to undertake this vital but rewarding work.

"The generosity of the public in supporting the railway both by travelling and contributing to the trust means that we can undertake such works to a very high standard."

Repairs underway to Bridge 32 on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. JONATHAN TAYLOR/G/WR

The new chocolate and cream paint finish to the girders. JONATHAN TAYLOR/G/WR

Strathspey's ambition to construct its own foundry

THE Strathspey Railway has applied to Highland Council for planning permission for a foundry and wheel lathe shed at its Aviemore base.

The railway wants to cut costs by carrying out more repairs to locomotives and stock in-house, while making its own components wherever possible.

It has also requested a change of site for a running shed at the railway's yard at Dalfaber, which was granted planning consent in 2018.

In a submission to planners, the railway stated: "This new application is for an amendment to the siting of the running shed to facilitate the development of a shed that would accommodate a wheel lathe and a foundry.

"The sheds are required to accommodate recently-acquired equipment for which there is no room in the railway's existing machine shop.

Benefits

"Heritage railways such as the Strathspey require numerous small and medium-sized cast components such as piston and valve ring blanks, brake blocks, firebars and other grate components and similar.

"It is beneficial in financial and environmental terms if these can be produced on site rather than having to be sourced from elsewhere, especially when raw material can be sourced on site.

"Such on-site production reduces transport costs, safeguards the engineering side of the railway which employs seven people locally, and maintains the relevant skills and expertise."

It is expected that the foundry would operate only on one or two days each month.

Having its own wheel lathe would mean the railway could avoid having to send its wheelsets by road to England for checking and reprofiling.

IN BRIEF

German tank with *Scotsman* past to return home

THE Nene Valley Railway has sold its German Class 64 2-6-2T No. 64-305, which is now set to return back to its homeland for overhaul and eventual return to steam.

Built in 1934 by Krupps in Essen, it operated throughout wartime, after which it came under the Deutsches Bundesbahn (West German State Railway).

Withdrawn on June 8, 1974, it was originally purchased by members at the Severn Valley Railway, arriving at Bridgnorth later the same year. It was steamed very little as the measurements provided prior to purchase proved to be incorrect, making it too large for the SVR's loading gauge.

It was sold to Richard Hurlock and moved to the NVR in 1977, where it made a full return to steam; the NVR purchased it from Mr Hurlock in 1985. The locomotive last ran in 1987, after which its air pump was loaned to Flying Scotsman Services ahead of the A3's historic visit to Australia.

No. 64-305 was shunted out of the Wansford locomotive shed on March 5, ready for collection. Its new owners had not been disclosed as *Hertiage Railway* closed for press.

Visitor centre plan for Keighley water tower

THE Keighley & Worth Valley Railway plans to turn the stone water tower at Keighley station into a visitor centre.

The heritage line has asked Bradford Council for planning permission to convert the 1883-built Grade II-listed structure to a new attraction, inside which visitors could learn more about the history of the railway and the tower itself.

The proposal has been backed by a council conservation officer.

Furness No. 20 for Blaenavon

FURNESS Railway 0-4-0 No. 20 is to visit the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway in late spring.

Owned by the Furness Railway Trust and based at the Ribble Steam Railway, the 1863-built Sharp Stewart locomotive will haul services on May 20/21 and then during the May 27-29 coal train weekend. It will also be in action for the June 17/18 model railway show.

March 18 restart for WSR

THE West Somerset Railway was able to begin its 2023 season on March 18 following progress on remedial works on a 'potato field' landslip that blocked the line at Tribble Bridge near Combe Florey before Christmas, as reported in issue 302.

The stretch has been made safe, although temporary speed restrictions will be in place, pending further work for which a public appeal is ongoing.

RAIL 150 CAVALCADE: MY RINGSIDE SEAT!

The planned celebration for the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025 looks set to be one of the biggest events in the history of the heritage sector. **John Titlow** attended its landmark predecessor, the Rail 150th anniversary exhibition and steam cavalcade in August 1975, and captured all the action on camera in comfort from an exclusive viewpoint in a friendly farmer's field.

The 150th anniversary of railways took place between Shildon and Darlington at the end of August 1975. The event celebrated the Stockton & Darlington Railway, which opened on September 27, 1825, when it became the world's first public railway to use steam locomotives – placing Britain at the head of the global transport revolution that followed in its wake.

On that watershed moment in human history, 0-4-0 Locomotion No.1, which hauled an 80-ton train nine miles between Shildon and Darlington at the opening ceremony, was designed and driven by the 'father of the Railways', George Stephenson, with a passenger carriage attached for dignitaries.

The announcement on February 7 by the National Heritage Lottery Fund that £3,211,630 had been awarded in grant aid towards projects linked to the 2025 bicentenary, as reported in Headline News last issue, brought memories of the Rail 150 cavalcade flooding back, prompting me to look back at my photographs of the event. Going through my diary of the time reminded me of the spectacle and the fun we had.

Rail 150 was an amazing event to attend, especially for a young man with an interest in railways, predominantly steam. It was the perfect opportunity to see locomotives I had never seen before, and mainly ones that ran in the north of England. Who would have thought nearly 50 years ago that we would still be here and close to celebrating 200 years of railways at its birthplace?

Early days

The event itself was huge – beyond most people's comprehension. In these earlier days of operational railway preservation, main line heritage steam running was slowly establishing itself and expanding. Little did we think it would evolve to where it is today!

In those days I travelled around on a motorbike, so with a tent on board I left London, heading for Northallerton for a gathering with railway friends.

We camped in campsite found by a friend as close to Shildon as possible and cooked our own food, not having enough money for restaurants, let alone bed and breakfasts. For me, this was the early stages of a lifetime of travel and railway photography.

However, we did have enough money to get out to the local pub every night for several pints of genuine Old Peculiar; this was long before Theakston's Brewery was bought out by one of the multi-nationals. "There cannot be a beer called Old Peculiar," said Wilf, thinking we were winding him up. He eventually went to the bar and asked in a mumbled voice, afraid of looking silly – and to his surprise, it was true!

At the campsite, one of our group snored so much in the night that he woke the baby in the next tent; the following morning, the snorer complained to the parents that the baby had awoken him!

Cheap as chips

Dawn broke on August 30, 1975, with rain pouring. It was fortunate to have a friend, Ray Scofield, with a car, so we headed off to the museum at Darlington where admission cost the grand sum of 40p! Sadly, the rain did not ease at all, even when visiting the exhibition at Shildon, which cost £1, but it had to be done. I managed a shot in the rain of the shuttle train with J27 0-6-0 No. 2392 and three carriages departing Shildon Wagon Works level crossing running to Shildon Siding next to the main line. The cost of the shuttle was 10p.

Greater thought should have been given to the positioning of the official seating for viewing the cavalcade: this proved to be a problem because it was the wrong side of the sun for any photographs – although this setback did not stop it being sold out.

Information about steam movements and exactly what was happening had been difficult to get hold of. Most of it came from magazines and contacts, long before the internet and mobile telephones. It was only by talking to people could you get an idea of the following day's cavalcade – unless you had seats and programmes, which were hard to come by. If you were not in the know, it was down to a visit to the local signalbox to get information. We were certainly not the first to ask the signalman at Heighington, where there might be a chance to get some photographs. He recommended some fields further down the line, where we found a good clear place and a friendly farmer.

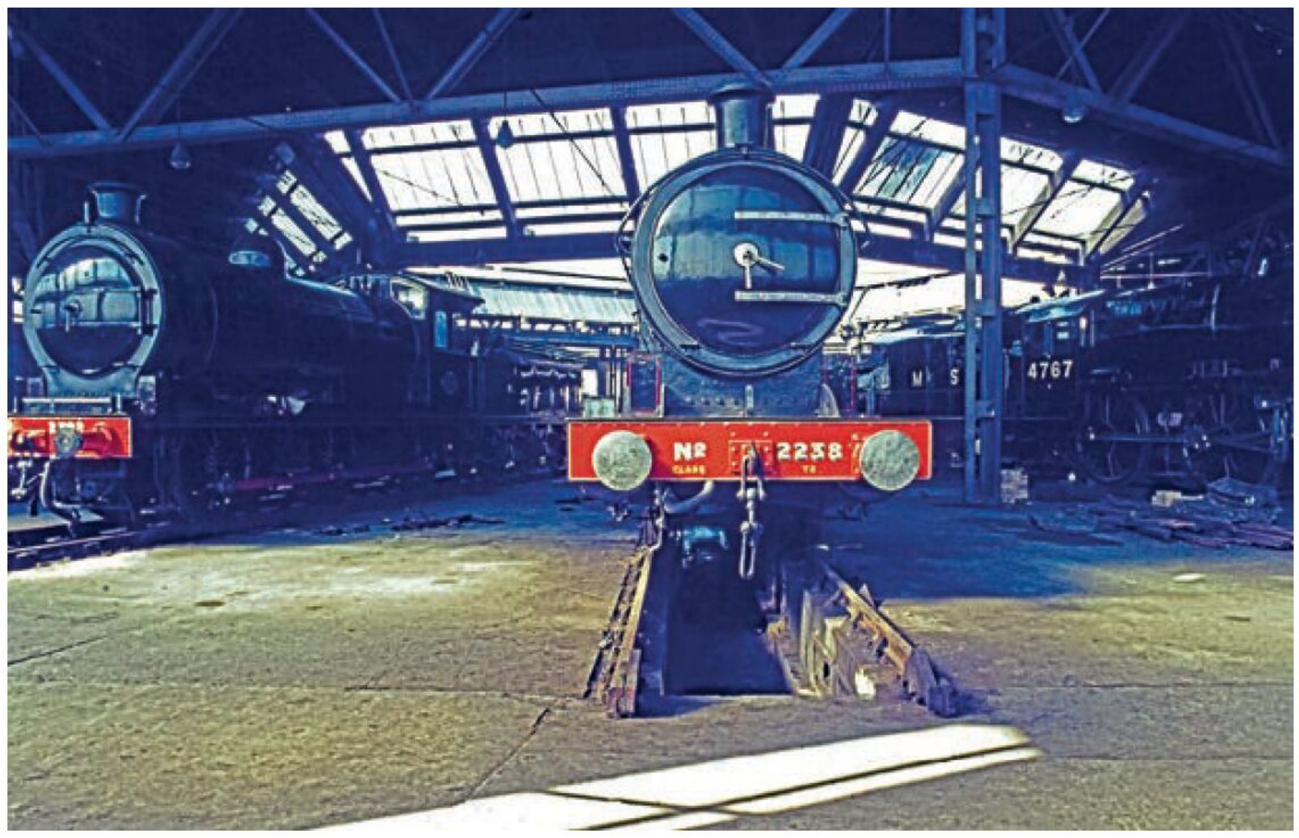
On August 31, the day of the cavalcade, the rain of the previous day ceased, leaving clear,

Leading the Rail 150 cavalcade was the replica of George Stephenson's *Locomotion No. 1*, which hauled the first train on the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway on September 27, 1825.

LNER A3 Pacific No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* tows NER Fletcher 2-4-0 No. 910.

Above: LNWR Precedent 2-4-0 No. 790 *Hardwick*, now on static display at the Locomotion museum in Shildon.

Right: Nos. 2392, 2238 and 4767 inside Thornaby roundhouse on September 1, 1975.



A view of Darlington station and its gathering of steam classics on August 31, 1975.

Midland Compound 4-4-0 No. 1000 in the cavalcade.

blue skies. Our friendly farmer was charging £1 admission to his field for cars, irrespective of the number of people in them.

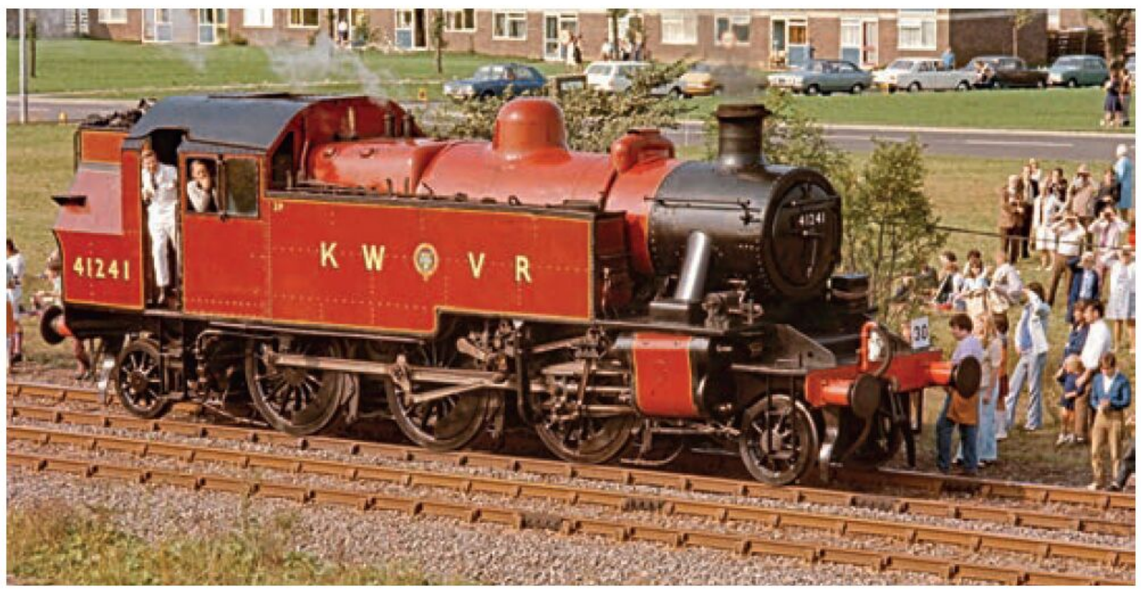
We had a minor problem: a TV company had parked their van in the middle of everyone's shot! It was moved after gentle persuasion, but the gap along the top of the wall was slowly filled by people. Initially, the police on duty were not interested, but when the TV company got involved, the police kept the area clear for us. As it transpired, we had the only clear section of line!

The cavalcade and order of procession

The cavalcade took place from Shildon Works three miles to Heighington and was appropriately led by the replica of ***Locomotion No. 1***, which had been built especially for the 150th anniversary. The replica is currently at the Head of Steam Museum in Darlington and is expected to be restored to working order for the 200th, which could include a run over Skerne Bridge.

It was followed by:

- **NCB North East Area Bagnall 0-6-0ST Austerity No. 2779 of 1945** (repainted as No. 2502/7 for the cavalcade. Since named *Gamma*, it is currently in storage at the Tanfield Railway).
- **LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 4767 *George Stephenson*** (now undergoing a heavy overhaul and rebuild at Carnforth with the aim of it taking part in the 2025 celebrations).
- **NER T2 0-8-0 No. 2238** (now at the Locomotion Museum in Shildon).
- **NER P3 0-6-0 No. 2392** (in working order on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway).
- **LNER K1 2-6-0 No. 2005** (under repair at Carnforth).
- **Caledonian Railkway 439 0-4-4T**



Proudly carrying its decidedly non-authentic maroon livery in the cavalcade is LMS 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41241.

Members of the public, including young children, stand next to the cavalcade running line to inspect Wantage Tramway 0-4-0WT No. 5.

London Transport Bo-Bo electric *Sarah Siddons* is towed by WD 2-10-0 No. AD600 *Gordon*.

Prototype Class 252 High Speed Train No. 252001 provided the modern traction presence for the event.

No. 419 (in working order at the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway).

- **LNER D49 4-4-0 No. 246 *Morayshire*** (under restoration).
- **GWR 57xx 0-6-0PT No. 7752** (stored at Tyseley Locomotive Works as No. L94).
- **GWR Manor 4-6-0 7808 *Cookham Manor*** (on static display at Didcot Railway Centre).
- **GWR Modified Hall 4-6-0 No. 6960 *Raveningham Hall*** (at Margate in the One:One collection awaiting restoration).
- **LNER V2 2-6-2 No. 4771 *Green Arrow*** (on display in the Danum Gallery, Library and Museum in Doncaster).
- **LNER B1 4-6-0 No. 1306 *Mayflower*** (in working order at LNWR Heritage, Crewe).
- **LMS 8F 2-8-0 No. 8233** (on display inside the Engine House at Highley on the Severn Valley Railway).
- **WD 2-10-0 No. AD600 *Gordon*** (on display inside the Engine House at Highley on the Severn Valley Railway).
- **London Transport Bo-Bo electric No, 12 *Sarah Siddons,* towed by No. 600** (inside London Transport Museum's Acton depot).
- **LNER A4 4-6-2 No. 4498 *Sir Nigel Gresley*** (recently restored to working condition at LNWR Heritage, Crewe).
- **GNR Stirling Single 4-2-2 No. 1, towed dead by 4498** (on display in the National Railway Museum, York).
- **LNER A3 4-6-2 No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman*** (in service and celebrating its centenary year).
- **NER Fletcher 2-4-0 No. 910, towed dead by No. 4472** (on display in the Darlington trainshed at Kirkby Stephen East on the Stainmore Railway).
- **GNER U 4-4-2 990 *Henry Oakley*** (at the NRM in York).
- **LNWR Precedent 2-4-0 No. 790 *Hardwick*** (at Locomotion in Shildon).
- **Midland Railway Compound 4-4-0 No. 1000** (on display in Barrow Hill Roundhouse).
- **LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 5690 *Leander*** (in working order at Carnforth).
- **LMS Princess Royal 4-6-2 No. 6201** *Princess Elizabeth* (at Carnforth for boiler repairs).
- **Wantage Tramway 0-4-0WT No. 5** (on display at Didcot Railway Centre).
- **Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 'Pug' 0-4-0ST No. 51218** (on display at Oxenhope Exhibition Shed on the Keighley & Worth

NER J27 No. 2392 departs Shildon on August 30, 1975.

LNER K1 2-6-0 No. 2005 inside the roundhouse at Thornaby on September 1, 1975.

The Shildon Works yard populated by guest locomotives on August 30, 1975.

Valley Railway).

- **LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 32636 *Fenchurch* with whitewashed coal** (recently restored at the Bluebell Railway).
- **SR S15 4-6-0 No. 841 *Greene King*** (stored at Grosmont on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, cannibalised to provide parts for sister No. 825).
- **SR Merchant Navy 4-6-2 35028 *Clan Line*.** (under repair at an undisclosed location).
- **LMS 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41241**, painted in preservation-era Keighley & Worth Valley Railway maroon livery (in working condition on the KVVR).
- **BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 41306** (in working order on the Severn Valley Railway).
- **BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 *The Green Knight*** (undergoing overhaul on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway).
- **BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92220 *Evening Star*** (at the NRM in York).
- **BR Class 252 No. 252001** prototype high speed train (at the NRM in York).

➜ GNR No. 1, GNR No. 990, NER No. 910 and the Stirling Single appeared in the 100th celebrations in 1925.

The afternoon was spent watching the slow procession of steam locomotives between Shildon and Heighington, with many rarities in steam.

Looking at several of my photographs, it is unbelievable to think such breaches of health and safety regulations could ever happen again, but I do not recollect any incidents at all. During the procession, people wandered inside the fences, setting up chairs on the trackside, and locals sat on their rooftops or windowsills with feet dangling out of windows to enjoy the event.

Back in time

There were no tapes to restrain people from wandering over tracks: people even stood in the four foot of the opposite line. I wonder what it was like for the footplate crews as they passed near to people at walking pace.

In some photographs, children are searching for the coins they placed on the rails for the locomotives to run over... how things have changed. BR staff, BTP and the local police were praised for the way they managed the event; everything was done low key, and it worked.

It was left to common sense for people to be aware of their personal safety, but this approach has been eroded over the years. The world is indeed a very different place now.

Back then, we used to avoid getting roads and cars in our photographs and complaining when we did. However, such views now create a wonderful time warp.

Modern cars do not have the same style or character because designs have become so similar. Even people with their clothing date the pictures: we saw left-over hippies and flared trousers! Who would be seen in them now? All photographs of the cavalcade were taken at Newton Aycliffe with Greenfield Way in the background, but only the houses give it away now. This railway location is completely unrecognisable: trees have taken over along the embankment and it is difficult to see any rails here at all.

The crowds were estimated between 250,000 to 300,000 so there was a huge traffic jam heading back to Darlington – just enough time for a quick visit, costing 25p, to see the locomotive.

After the cavalcade, *Locomotion* and No. 2779 were coupled together to return to Shildon, followed by WTC No. 5, No. 51218 and No. 32636. According to Ray Scofield's notes from the day, the locomotives continued to Darlington before heading to various destinations afterwards.

- They departed Darlington at 5.20pm: Nos. 44767, 2238, 2392 and 62005 to Thornaby.
- 5.30pm: Nos. 419 and 246 to Scotland via West Hartlepool.
- 10pm: No. 5690 to Dinting Railway Centre.
- 10.30pm: No. 841 to Colne.

SR S15 4-6-0 No. 841 *Greene King*, which is now used as a source of spares for sister No. 825.

Caledonian Railway 0-4-0T No. 519 ventured south of the border to celebrate.

The last on a first: BST Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92220 *Evening Star,* which in 1960 became the last steam locomotive built for British Railways, joins in the celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the world's first steam-hauled passenger line.

- 11pm: No. 41241, 990 and Stirling No. 1 to York.
- 11.15pm: No. 35028 and 46201 to Tyseley.
- 12am: No. 1000 and NER No. 91 to York.
- 12.30am: No. 92220 to York.
- 1am: Nos. 43106 and No. AD600 *Gordon* to SVR.
- 3am: No.41241 from York to Keighley.

Although it was past midnight and we were camping near the East Coast Main Line, we headed to an overbridge in the dark to watch the procession. Torches were used to identify them as they passed by – Nos. 5690, 841, 1000, Stirling Single No. 1 and 92220, among others. The lights of the fireboxes glowed into the darkness as they headed south. What an end to a memorable day!

More to see

Other departures took place on September 1, at 10am No. 7808 to Didcot and at 4pm No. 75029 to Cranmore on the East Somerset Railway. On September 2 at 12.30pm, Nos. 4472 and 6960 headed south along the ECML towards York, and on September 3, No. 48233 returned to the Severn Valley.

Not knowing about these movements on September 1, we went to Thornaby shed where some of the locomotives were. Kept inside for safekeeping were Nos. 2005, 4767, 2238 and 2392. Sadly, they were not positioned great for photography, facing chimney first, away from the turntable.

Thornaby was the last roundhouse to be built by BR. Opened in 1958, it closed in 1964 and was demolished in the summer of 2011.

The event offered far more than the 31 locomotives in steam, with exhibitions of carriages and wagons on display. We would have loved to have spent more time there, but work constraints made that impossible, so we headed home the following day.

Film was expensive and you had to be economic with its use. With so much happening at the time, I could see myself running out – and trying to find more slide film away from the towns and cities was not easy. Regrettably, I used Fuji 100, which was not so bad, but I could get only one additional Agfachrome at the time. It had grain-like golf balls.

Little did I know at the time I was capturing a small piece of history. With the help of modern technology and various photo processing suites, these slides of nearly 50 years ago have been brought back to life, with dirt spots and scratches removed, and quite a few required rebuilding to make them suitable for publication. Digital images have taken over and no comparison can be made between it and 1975 film, but there is a certain warmth to slides, and care was taken not to over-process.

The National Railway Museum, along with heritage lines and other organisations, now have two years to make the planned major world milestone a once-in-a-lifetime event to showcase what Britain has given the world. Shildon will be the place to be in 2025.

What a show

I cannot imagine locomotives like the Stirling Single, *Henry Oakley*, *Hardwick*, No. 1000 or other gems ever being steamed again, but nothing is impossible. Let's look forward to the 200th and wonder what could steam... we may all be pleasantly surprised! Nearly 50 years on, we have strong preservation scene that is perfectly capable of staging a spectacular show. In 1975, we would never have dreamed of seeing such a variety of steam locomotives working, so the bicentenary could easily eclipse the 150th. Shildon Wagon Works will, sadly, not be part of the event. Its closure by British Rail Engineering Limited, with the loss of 2900 jobs, was announced on April 23, 1982. A delegation from the works travelled to London on March 2, 1983, to hand in a petition to the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, followed by mass protests – which fell on deaf ears.

The works closed on June, 29, 1984, and the last wagons were completed and delivered by August 1984, bringing the curtain down on 151 years of history before demolition. HR

LNER A3 Pacific No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* and WR 4-6-0 No. 6960 *Raveningham Hall* near Northallerton while returning to Carnforth after the cavalcade.

46100
46100

HERITAGE RAILWAY
THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* climbs over Shap summit while approaching Tebay with Saphos Trains' 'The Lakelander' on February 11. Just 20 minutes later, sister locomotive No. 46100 *Scots Guardsman* passed the same spot – as seen overleaf – with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express.' JOHN TITLOW

Two Scots over Shap summit – and both within 20 minutes!

By John Titlow

Double take? Only 20 minutes after the photograph on the preceding pages was taken, sister LMS 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* is seen climbing over Shap on the approach to Tebay with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' on February 11. JOHN TITLOW

WHEN did two LMS Royal Scot 4-6-0s last run over Shap summit on one day – let alone 20 minutes apart?

Two tours took place on February 11, Saphos Trains' 'The Lakelander' and the Railway Touring Company's 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'.

The Saphos train originated at Rugby at 5.50am for a journey through the Midlands via Stafford to Preston, where No. 46100 *Royal Scot* took over for a run to Carlisle. This arrangement was unusual because the tour operator normally exchanges locomotives at Crewe.

Preston was departed six minutes late for a steady run to Grayrigg and a scheduled stop in the loop. From there, it was a standing start for the run over Shap, but watching it come past, you would have thought it was running non-stop over the climb, showing no signs of slipping on the damp rails. It arrived three minutes early at Carlisle.

After a three-hour break, No. 46100 departed at 3.31pm, returning via the Cumbrian Coast to Carnforth to change locomotives. The tour arrived back at Rugby eight minutes early at 11.18pm.

The Railway Touring Company train had much further to travel. It started at Euston at 6.54am, travelling via the West Coast Main Line to Carnforth, where West Coast Railways' No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* took over.

The tour arrived at Carnforth eight minutes late at 10.56pm but departed on time, slowly.

Time was lost on the climb over Shap before passing Tebay seven minutes down. Slightly more time was lost as it passed through Penrith. On the approaches to Carlisle, time was made up marginally, and the deficit was reduced to a four-minute late arrival at 12.47pm.

Scots Guardsman departed Carlisle one minute late at 2.24pm, heading south towards Settle. Nine minutes was allowed at Appleby, and the summit at Ais Gill was reached five minutes down.

No. 46115 was changed at Preston for modern motive power, with Euston reached two minutes early at 10.17pm.

From the lineside, both Scots passed Tebay within 20 minutes of each other: No. 46100 was on time at 11.46am, followed by No. 46115 at 12.06pm, running seven minutes late.

This day was a test for the Scots and despite the inclement weather, it drew many people out.

From the lineside, it was difficult to distinguish any difference in speed as they passed: both were working hard, and it was No. 46100 that had the disadvantage after starting from Grayrigg.

Surely, to watch and photograph two Scots climbing northbound over Shap within 20 minutes of each other must be a first in the heritage era?

LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* passes Workington harbour with Saphos Trains' 'The Lakelander' on February 11. DAVE COLLIER

LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* outside the Locomotive Services Limited paintshop at Crewe on February 8.
SIR NIGEL GRESLEY LOCOMOTIVE TRUST/TREVOR CAMP

Timings released for newly-blue *Sir Nigel Gresley*

FOR the much-anticipated visit to the Nene Valley Railway of A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* over the Easter period, the provisional timings of its April 5 movement from Crewe to the heritage line have been released.

Leaving Crewe at 9.45am, the movement will see No. 60007 head south on the West Coast Main Line, passing Stafford at 10.16am and then Nuneaton at 10.58am.

Sir Nigel Gresley will then head east towards Leicester, passing North Junction at 11.27am and taking the line towards Melton Mowbray, Oakham, and Stamford, before joining the East Coast Main Line and arriving in Peterborough at 1.26pm.

From here, the A4 will continue south to Fletton Junction and on to NVR metals, with an expected arrival at Orton Mere at 1.40pm.

The movement will allow the public to see the locomotive for the first time following the recent repaint at Crewe into British Railways Express Blue livery.

Deltic *Alycidon* main line return for the coronation

by Tim Hobman

CLASS 55 No. 55009 *Alycidon* is set to return to the main line on Saturday, May 13, to celebrate the crowning of King Charles III in a railtour called 'The Coronation Deltic' for UK Railtours.

Alycidon is planned to return to the East Coast Main Line for the rail tour from King's Cross to York, picking up at Potters Bar, Stevenage, and Peterborough. Passengers will have five hours in York to explore or may elect to remain on the train to travel to Scarborough for a break of about four hours.

Two off-train options are offered for travellers, the first being the opportunity to visit Castle Howard, where passengers will need to alight at Malton.

For those leaving the train at York, there is the second option of visiting the Yorkshire Air Museum in Elvington.

Between York and Scarborough, the railtour will be renamed 'The Centenarian' as a fitting tribute to former Deltic driver Harry Wilson, who will be on the train with his family and celebrates his 100th birthday in May.

The return journey will see the Deltic take a slightly different route south, through Gainsborough and past Lincoln, before taking the Sleaford Avoiding Line through Spalding and back to Peterborough for the home stretch. No. 55009 has been out of traffic since a failure in March 2019. With testing taking place in March, the tour is planned to be the first outing of the locomotive.

Tickets are available in Standard Class, First Class and First Class Dining, with a supplement for off-train activities and a discount for those booking before April 3.

➜ For more details and booking, visit www.ukrailtours.com

Lincoln Christmas Market is scrapped after 40 years

A DECISION has been made to scrap the popular railtour destination of Lincoln Christmas Market after 40 years.

The City of Lincoln Council's executive committee has axed the market in its current form because it has grown to a scale that is considered unmanageable and has instead elected to hold smaller themed events in the run-up to Christmas.

The decision will have a knock-on effect on railtour operators. 'The Christmas Market', or 'Lindum Fayre', has, for many years, been a popular destination for many railtour companies, with the majority of tours being steam-hauled.

In recent years, Steam Dreams, UK Railtours, and The Railway Touring Company have offered excursions to Lincoln in the build-up to the festive season, with the city hosting such locomotives as A4 Pacific *Sir Nigel Gresley*, LMS Coronation 4-6-2 *Duchess of Sutherland*, A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* and B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower*.

UK Railtours operations manager Simon Farrow said: "We are saddened to hear that Lincoln Christmas Market has been cancelled. It has been a staple itinerary for many years and has always been very popular with our customers.

"While we appreciate that in recent years the market had grown into something a little too big and had lost some of its charm, we hope that the City of Lincoln Council can retain the event while bringing back some of its lost magic."

It is hoped that the alternative Christmas attractions planned for this year will still provide a worthwhile destination for railtour companies so as to continue the annual spectacle of steam in Lincoln.

Leading role is cast for *Sir Nigel Gresley* in Saphos programme

SAPHOS Trains' first tour of the year was 'The Lakelander' behind LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot*, which made another appearance for the tour operator on March 1 with the fully-booked St David's Day 'Welsh Marches Express.'

Class 40 D213 *Andania* hauled the outward leg from Holyhead to Hereford before the Scot then took over for the run to Cardiff, returning to Crewe in the afternoon. The train to Holyhead was behind a diesel.

The previously reported 'Golden Arrow' on April 1 and the 'Cotswold Explorer' on April 8 are fully booked, and April 15 sees the 'Great Western Envoy' from Rugby via Northampton, Milton Keynes Central, Leighton Buzzard, Hemel Hempstead and Watford Junction to Bath and Bristol.

More this year

A northbound 'Welsh Marches Express' runs from Paignton to Shrewsbury on May 10. A return trip over the Settle and Carlisle route from Crewe on May 17 is followed by 'The Lakelander' from Leeds to Carlisle on May 20, outward over Shap returning the via the Cumbrian Coast.

After A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*'s visit to the Nene Valley Railway in April, projected Saphos tour dates for the locomotive are May 10, June 14, July 13 and 27 on the 'Welsh Marches Express.' It will head the 'English Riviera Express' on June 3 and 24, July 8 and 22, August 12 and 19.

No. 60007 returns north for two Settle and Carlisle 'Fellsman' trips on August 5 and September 20, and on December 12 it completes the Saphos year with the 'Christmas White Rose' from Crewe to York.

Before then, on November 23/24, No. 60007 heads the Steam Dreams charter to the Edinburgh Christmas market, taking over York after a Deltic brings the tour from its starting point of King's Cross.

Blue Peter attention

Meanwhile, at Locomotive Services Limited's Crewe base, work continues on A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter*, with the axleboxes being machined. The bogie has now been rebuilt and riveted together, and is also painted. Valve gear is all fitted, lubrication and steam pipe work is coming towards completion, and the crossheads are currently being machined.

All tours in the north have a choice of steam from the LSL pool of either No. 46100 *Royal Scot*, LMS 'Black Five' No. 45231 *The Sherwood Forester*, BR Standard 7P Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia* or No. 60007, while in the south it's Bulleid West Country 4-6-2 No. 34046 *Braunton* and B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower*.

➜ For further information, visit https://saphostrains.com/trips-tours/

Hastings DEMU is all set to visit 13 London termini – in just one trip!

HASTINGS Diesels Limited begins its 2023 running with a trip to Bath and Bristol under the title of 'The Avon Ambassador' on Saturday, March 25.

Making an early start from Hastings, the tour aboard DEMU No. 1001 is planned to take the line to Tonbridge and pick up additional passengers at Redhill, Guildford, and Reading, before a sprint to Swindon and onwards to Bath Spa. Those wishing to leave the train here will have five hours in Bath; alternatively, passengers can remain on board and travel to Bristol Temple Meads for a four-hour stop. The tour returns to Hastings over the same route.

The next tour is in partnership with UK Railtours under the title 'The Baker's Dozen' on Saturday, April 15. It is planned to take an anti-clockwise tour of the capital, visiting 13 London termini in one day, and will involve many of the lines intersecting the city. Starting at Liverpool Street, the tour is scheduled to visit Fenchurch Street, King's Cross, Euston, St Pancras, Marylebone, Paddington, Waterloo, Blackfriars, Victoria, London Bridge, Charing Cross, and Cannon Street. As *Heritage Railway* went press, this tour was sold out, but customers are invited to join a waiting list.

There is no dining option for either of these tours, but a buffet car is available.

➜ **For further information, visit www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk/railtours**

Bluebell Bulleids go main line for filming in Hull

By Owen Hayward

LMS 4-6-0 'Black Five' No. 44932 made its way from Carnforth to Hull on February 13 with a rake of passenger stock to participate in a contract filming job – complete with three Southern Railway Bulleid carriages from the Bluebell Railway.

The three carriages, Nos. 2526, 1482 and 1464, along with BR Mk.1 buffet No. 1818, were observed departing Sheffield Park over the first few days of the month, their destination a closely-guarded secret.

However, all was revealed when the main line convoy behind No. 44932, along with some of West Coast Railway's own coaching stock and Class 47 No. 47804, arrived at Hull at 11.47am.

The stock had been hired by Apple TV for its latest feature film production called Blitz, a wartime drama following the lives of Londoners during the titular period of the Second World War. It has both been written and is being directed by Steve McQueen, director of 12 Years A Slave and previous Apple TV mini-series success Small Axe.

Following arrival at Hull Paragon, shunt moves to position the stock ahead of the week's filming took place, with the station's Platform 2 dressed up with vintage signage and paraphernalia to reflect the 1950s period, raising questions as to whether the scenes being filmed would be set after the war. It was also observed that the Bluebell's running boards on the Mk.1 Buffet were left in place during the move, though these were turned to mask the destination names by the time filming commenced.

No. 44932 and the four Bulleid coaches inside Hull Paragon after turning. DAVE JEPSON

Pathfinder warns of 'use it or lose it' scenario following tour cancellations

By John Titlow

PATHFINDER Railtours cancelled its first tour of the year on March 18 and another on April 8.

Bookings were low for the March 18 Class 40-hauled trip from Crewe to Great Yarmouth. Confidence in booking may have been dampened by the threatened rail strikes by the RMT union, which would have cancelled the tour regardless. Even steam over Shap, returning over the Settle route on April 8 behind LMS 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman*, failed to get enough bookings and was also cancelled.

A Pathfinder spokesman said: "We can confirm that the Class 40 railtour to Norwich was cancelled due to a very low number of bookings throughout the train. There were a variety of reasons why this railtour didn't run, but the cost of living situation is certainly a contributing factor. It also turns out that this would have been cancelled anyway due to industrial action."

"The railtour industry is going through a turbulent time and every tour promoter needs the support from the enthusiasts and general public if they wish to see railtours continue.

"It is now on the verge of a 'use it or lose it' scenario.

"On a much more positive note, we have a great rail excursion programme for 2023 for the 50th year for founder Peter Watts, and we will continue to operate our exclusive excursions for everyone to enjoy into the future."

Bookings were still available for the March 25 'Marsh Magician' in first class only, with standard class being completely sold out. This train covers special track around Liverpool Docks that has not seen passenger use for several years.

The 'Cumbrian Coast Express' on April 21 is to be the firm's only run in 2023 over this scenic line due to pathing difficulties, while the 'Spring Cornish Explorer' on April 29 from Dorridge to Penzance behind a pair of Class 37s will be a highlight for the English Electric fans.

The April 14-17 'Spring Highlander' land cruise, starting at Cheltenham to Perth, Dundee and Fort William, has limited seating available.

The May 8 trip to Windsor will compete with the Midland Pullman running the same day. On May 20, the 'Heart of Wales Explorer' departs Bristol Temple Meads to Shrewsbury behind two Colas Rail Class 37s, and May 29 with two Class 33s from Burton upon Trent to Paignton, with talk that the train may go all the way to Kingswear.

On June 10, 1973, Peter Watts ran his first train, from Gloucester Eastgate to Pwllheli. To celebrate the anniversary, Pathfinder will run a special train to Weymouth with Class 40 locomotive D345, organised by Peter himself. It starts at Burton upon Trent at 6.40am, returning at 10.40pm, picking up at Tamworth, Coleshill Parkway, Birmingham New Street, Barnt Green, Worcestershire Parkway, Cheltenham and Swindon on the outward journey only. It then heads via Reading and Basingstoke and the South Western Main Line. The return is via the 1-50 Bincombe Bank before heading for Yeovil, Westbury and Bristol.

➜ Visit www.pathfindertours.co.uk/day-tours/

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LMS 4-6-0 'Black Five' No. 44932 approaching Hull Paragon with the full train of four green and four maroon coaches on February 13. DAVE JEPSON

No. 44932 usually carries lined black livery with British Railways lettering on the tender. To fit in with the time period of the film, the lettering was covered over with a sticker that rebranded it as 'Southern Railway'. This is, of course, incorrect, but such workarounds are not uncommon for filming work, which often needs to strike a balance between historical accuracy, availability of correct stock, and the costs to hire them.

While the film is set in London, much of the filming for Blitz has taken place around Hull's Old Town, with a star-studded cast including Irish actor and Oscar nominee Saoirse Ronan (Lady Bird; Little Women; Atonement) as its leading lady, accompanied by names such as The Jam frontman Paul Weller (making his feature film acting debut), Line of Duty's Stephen Graham, and Erin Kellyman (The Falcon and the Winter Soldier). Comedian Kathy Burke is also set to make an appearance.

Parts of the Old Town were dressed to represent bomb damage, complete with debris and damaged vehicles. Although the consist was due to return to Carnforth on February 17, filming finished sufficiently early to enable the return working to take place 24 hours ahead of schedule. One of the Bluebell's carriages will be transferred to Leavesden studios by road, before the rest return to Sussex by rail once the heritage line's current track relay has been completed. No. 44932 will haul the working.

Further filming days are set to take place at Horsted Keynes station during March.

Two-in-one as UK Railtours offers choice of destinations

By Tim Hobman

UK Railtours has announced two tours in one for Saturday, May 20, with the train either taking passengers to Crich Tramway Village, Chatsworth House and historic Chesterfield or to Barrow Hill Roundhouse for its Rail Ale event.

Starting from Finsbury Park with two locomotives from the GB Railfreight pool, the excursion will head north along the East Coast Main Line, picking up passengers at Potters Bar, Stevenage and Peterborough. At Grantham, the train will take the goods line and divert via Bottesford to Nottingham, then Attenborough, from where it will take the curve on to the Trent High Level goods line and the Erewash Valley Line past Toton Depot and Ironville Junction to the first stop at Alfreton.

There, coaches will be waiting to transport customers to Crich Tramway Village, where passengers can explore the site, ride some of the many trams, and see the extensive number of vehicles on display.

For those who decide to stay on board, the next stop will be Chesterfield for a four-hour break. There is a choice to explore the market town or take the second off-train option and visit Chatsworth House. Chesterfield market will be in operation when the tour is planned to visit, and those who decide to stay in the town may like to visit the parish church with the famous crooked spire or take in the delights of the Queen's Park. Chatsworth House has plenty to see and do, from the extensive art collection to the 105-acre garden.

Customers who have booked on the Rail Ale at Barrow Hill tour will remain on the train after Chesterfield and be transported to the roundhouse, where there will be a chance to explore the site and its displays of locomotives, rolling stock, railway artefacts, its signalbox, and short running line.

However, the main event will be more than 350 real ales, ciders and craft beers, with a wide selection of food also available within the atmosphere of the roundhouse and the addition of a music marquee hosting live bands.

After a three-hour stop, the train departs to collect customers from Chesterfield and Crich before heading south via Ambergate, Leamington Spa, Banbury, and Princes Risborough to Finsbury Park, before setting down passengers at Potters Bar, Stevenage, and finally Peterborough.

There are tickets available in standard, first and first class dining, with a supplement for off-train activities and a discount for those booking before April 10.

➜ For more details and booking information, visit www.ukrailtours.com

SRPS kicks off 2023 with Inverness tour

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society is offering a tour to Inverness on Sunday, March 26.

Class 37 No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* will haul the society's rolling stock from Linlithgow, picking up passengers at Dalmeny, Dalgety Bay, Kirkcaldy, Ladybank, Cupar, and Dundee Tay Bridge.

It will then follow the east coast of Scotland, crossing the Forth and Tay Bridges en route to Aberdeen, before continuing to Inverurie and then passing Keith, Elgin, Forres and Nairn, before arriving mid-afternoon.

There will be two hours to explore the area, before returning home via the Highland Line, through the passes of Slochd and Drumochter, past Blair Atholl to Perth, and then along the north shore of the Tay to Dundee.

There are options of standard or first class travel, with or without a dining option. A buffet car is also available. Visit www.srps.org.uk/railtours

Bookings boost for Statesman Rail season

TICKET sales are looking good for Statesman Rail's early-season tours, with only limited places remaining on its April 11-13 'Lord of the Isles Statesman' trip from Rugby to Kyle of Lochalsh.

The 'Dorset Coast Statesman' on April 19 and the 'Settle and Carlisle Circular' on April 22 also have only limited places left. The 'Settle and Carlisle Circular' on April 5 and the 'Llandudno Victorian Statesman' on April 29 are fully booked.

More spaces become available the following month. May 10 sees the 'Snowdonia Statesman' from Chesterfield to Llandudno, May 20 the 'Dorset Coast Statesman' from Whitchurch to Weymouth and the 'Yorkshire Coast Statesman' from Newport to Scarborough on May 31.

An addition is the 'Yorkshire Coast Statesman' on May 27 from Ayr to Scarborough. Leaving at 6.20am and returning at 10.50pm, it picks up at Troon, Kilmarnock, New Cumnock, Kirkconnel, Dumfries, Annan, Gretna Green, Carlisle, Penrith and Oxenholme.

➜ Visit www.statesmanrail.com

Intercity runs its first tour

UNDER the Locomotive Services Limited banner at Crewe, Intercity entered the market, running its first tour over three days with its newly restored Driving Brake Standard Open push-pull set.

At its head was Crewe Diesel Preservation Group's Class 47 No.47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* (picture, News page 27), one of the original 12 allocated to the push-pull pool.

The set emerged from the Crewe Heritage Depot at 9.22am on February 24 before pulling into Platform 12 to start its inaugural run over Shap and Beattock to Edinburgh, arriving half an hour early at 2.14pm. Passengers alighted and the empty coaching stock went to Joppa Straight for the night.

The following day, the stock arrived into Platform 10 at Waverly for a 9.02am departure over its old stomping ground, non-stop to Glasgow, taking 45 minutes. It departed Queen Street at 10am, taking 52 minutes to return to Edinburgh.

Heading east

At 11.22am, it was off to Glasgow once again, this time taking 48 minutes. From there, it headed north via Stirling and Perth to Inverness, arriving at 4.48pm.

On February 26, it departed from Inverness to Glasgow via Aberdeen, Perth and Larbert before making one more run to Edinburgh, taking 50 minutes. At 4.15pm, it was up the East Coast Main Line to Newcastle, Durham and York, before heading east through Todmorden and back to Crewe at 10.35pm.

The tour was fully booked at the bargain price of £139. Passengers had the option to book their own accommodation.

➜ Details of further tours will be posted at https://inter-city.co.uk/

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Tornado overhaul leading to main line 'world-first'

By Robin Jones

NEW-BUILD A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* is to make its delayed public comeback following its overhaul with a visit to the North Norfolk Railway from May 27 to June 4, prior to a return to main line action.

Special trains will depart from Sheringham at 10am, 11.40am, 1.20pm, 3pm and 4.40pm each day. Tickets include a reserved seat for a trip from Sheringham to Holt and return, with time at Holt to take photographs.

Fares for advance bookings vary from £19 to £21 for adults and £13 to £14.50 for children. *Tornado* will also haul 'The North Norfolkman' dining train on Saturday, June 3, for which advance booking is essential.

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust said *Tornado*'s return to traffic has been delayed by a concern about the quality and installation of the small tubes in its refurbished boiler following an inspection by British Engineering Services after its return to the UK from DB Meiningen in Germany.

Investigation

A trust statement said: "It was hoped that a hydraulic and steam test would go smoothly and it would be reunited with the frames soon after. Alas, this has not been the case.

"At present, we are unable to confirm if this is a material or welding issue, so all parties (A1SLT, DB Meiningen and BES) have agreed that the most expeditious action is to replace the small tubes while we investigate the issue. This approach will not only ensure continued quality and reliability, but will also be the fastest route to complete the boiler, ready for installation on the frames. While we are obviously disappointed that there is additional work required in this area, we are working hard to return *Tornado* to the rails as soon as possible. Our focus now is on completing the locomotive ahead of its planned visit to the NNR, European Train Control System testing at Network Rail's Rail Innovation and Development Centre near Melton Mowbray and we remain committed to running the first of the 'Aberdonian' trains on July 20." Tickets for the trust's 'Aberdonian' trains are selling well as *Heritage Railway* closed for press, with premier dining already sold out on the first train.

The first components for The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's European Train Control System project fitted into *Tornado's* tender locker. A1SLT

However, the overhaul has given *Tornado* the chance to be one of the first steam locomotives to be fitted with cutting-edge digital signalling equipment, funded by the East Coast Digital Programme. As the end of the overhaul is in sight, the ETCS equipment is taking its place on and around the locomotive.

As part of the development of the national network, the deployment of digital signalling has been authorised on the East Coast Main Line from King's Cross. From 2026, all trains on the route will need to be fitted with ETCS to continue operating south of Peterborough – *Tornado*'s home route. Eventually, ETCS will roll out across the network, with key routes being operational in about 2030.

The trust was asked to partner with ECDP to fully install ETCS equipment to enable operations on routes where there would be no traditional signals remaining. Described as a Level 2 No Signals ETCS railway, it would be a world-first for steam.

Also being fitted with ECT are two 'Black Fives', one from West Coast Railways and the other from Locomotive Services Limited.

The trust said: "This pioneering project not only provides significant learning for all steam locomotive operators and owners, it also gives us a template design for installation on No. 2007 *Prince of Wales*.

"This world-first will not only allow *Tornado* to continue to operate on the national rail network for many years to come, but will also pave the way for fitting to other steam locomotives in the UK and overseas thus protecting heritage operations into the digital railway age.

Having made the necessary alterations over the last 12 months to allow space in the tender and cab for ETCS equipment, the first components are now installed, and areas of change in the metalwork are being prepared and painted in line for completion with the wider overhaul."

➜ While the cost of retubing has been covered by the boiler's warranty, *Tornado's* longer than expected absence from the main line has impacted earning capability. The trust has appealed for donations towards the wider overhaul costs – for more details, visit www.a1steam.com

Left: Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34046 *Braunton*, complete with Golden Arrow regalia, races past Atherstone on March 3 with the 5Z35 9.40am Crewe Holding Sidings to Southall light engine move in readiness for Saphos Trains' 'Golden Arrow' railtour the following day. GRAHAM NUTTALL

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Nine summertime 'Garden of England' countryside trips from Steam Dreams

By John Titlow

NINE dates have been announced for Steam Dreams' Garden of England tours from London Victoria, departing at 10am and returning at 3pm. They are all on Tuesdays – June 22, July 4/11/18/25 and August 8/15/22/29 – and feature a circular route through the Kentish countryside via Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Paddock Wood, and then the Medway Valley through Maidstone, Strood, Gravesend and Dartford. Pullman-style dining and first class are available. B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower* is advertised for June 22 to July 11 and BR 7P Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia* from July 18 until August 29.

Steam Dreams' first tour of the year, the March 16 trip from London Victoria to Bath, was cancelled due to RMT union industrial action. The March 25 trip from Euston to Carlisle, as reported last issue, will now start the new season. LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* will take over at Crewe for a northbound run over the Settle and Carlisle route, returning via Shap.

Steam Dreams is becoming a specialist in organising split-day tours, aimed at people who do not want a long day but seek a trip out on the main line. The May 27 Paddington to Oxford trip departs at 8.45am, arriving at 11.10am.

Three options are available here: a city visit; coach excursion to Blenheim Palace with entry to the palace, park and gardens; or a boat trip down the Thames, returning to Paddington at 10.15pm.

The afternoon trip almost returns to London, departing Oxford at 1.30pm and running through Didcot for a dash up the Great Western main line before turning north to join the Great Central Chiltern line before passing High Wycombe on its way back to Oxford at 4.30pm.

The first of two tours to Portsmouth is on May 31, departing Shoeburyness at 6.50am with a 11.20pm return, and picking up at Southend East, Southend Central and Barking. Steam heads the outward leg and returns the train to West London, from where a diesel takes the train back to Shoeburyness.

The second, on June 10, is another split day tour, this time from London Victoria at 8.30am, returning at 10.45pm. It runs via Epsom, Leatherhead and Guildford, arriving in Portsmouth at 11.45am, and allows nearly seven hours to explore the city or an optional excursion to visit the Isle of Wight Steam Railway.

In the afternoon, there is a circular trip from Portsmouth and Southsea, starting behind a vintage diesel via Havant and Chichester to Barnham for a brief stop and reversal. From Barnham, the train is steam-hauled past Chichester Harbour, Havant, Cosham, Portchester, Fareham to Eastleigh, where the diesel takes over.

The train then reverses to Cosham Junction, before taking the branch line towards Portsmouth and Southsea station. Elsewhere, Steam Dreams' 10th 'Emerald Isle Explorer' tour to Ireland from May 3 to 11 is booking well, with only a few places left.

➜ For more details, visit www.steamdreams.co.uk/tours.php

Midland Pullman honours coronation with charity train

TO celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on May 6, Locomotive Services Limited will be donating the use of the Midland Pullman train for a very special tour on behalf of the Railway Children Charity two days later.

The money raised will go to vulnerable children in the UK, India and East Africa.

The train will depart Paddington at 10am, heading for Bath and Newport and returning via Chepstow to Paddington. Two options are available: first class for £200, which includes a light lunch and a glass of wine, or the fine dining option for £500, including a seven-course Best of British menu.

There will also be entertainment on board, plus wine and cheese tasting.

For further information, visit www.railwaychildren.org.uk/get-involved/pullman/

On March 25, the 'Whitby Jet' runs from Dundee, picking up at Dundee, Leuchars, Markinch, Kirkcaldy, Inverkeithing, Edinburgh Gateway, Edinburgh, while its 'English Riviera Pullman' on April 12 is full, as is the 'Highland Clansman' on April 26 and the Llandudno Victorian Pullman on May 1.

Seats are still available on the April 1-3 'Lord of the Isles Pullman' from Paignton to Kyle of Lochalsh.

On May 3, the 'Yorkshire Coast Pullman' heads through York to Scarborough, starting at Maidenhead at 6.15am and returning at 10.45pm, picking up at Reading, Tilehurst, Didcot Parkway, Swindon, Kemble, Stroud, Stonehouse, Cheltenham and Worcestershire Parkway.

May 13 sees the 'North Wales Pullman' run from St Albans to Llandudno, departing at 6.55am and returning at 10.05pm, and picking up at Luton, Bedford, Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby, Oakham, Melton Mowbray and Leicester.

An all-Scottish affair on May 24 sees a tour to Fort William start at Morpeth at 5.25am, returning at 11.50pm, and picking up at Alnmouth, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Dunbar, Drem, Edinburgh, Linlithgow and Falkirk High.

➜ For more details, visit https://midlandpullman.com/

The Midland Pullman at Carlisle with the 'Settle & Carlisle Pullman' on February 22. TONY WINWARD

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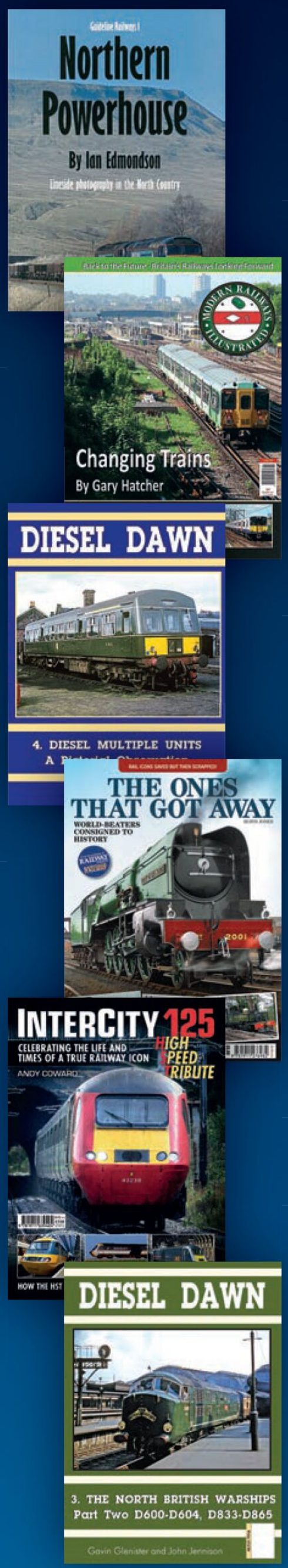

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March

17 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

18 'The Great Eastern'
Crewe, Norwich, Great Yarmouth and return.
Loco: 40145. PT

18 'The Second Bite'
Derby, Whitby and return.
Loco: 50008 *Thunderer* + Class 37. BLS

18 The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express
London Euston, Appleby and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: 86259 *Les Ross* + Steam TBA. RTC

18 Castles Up The Lickey
Birmingham Moor Street, Worcester and return. One trip each AM and PM.
Locos: 7029 *Clun Castle*, 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* (AM/PM TBC). VT

18-20 'West Highland Pullman'
Three-day tour of Scotland and West Highland line. Departs Finsbury Park (18) and Fort William (19/20).
Loco: 43406 + 43055 (HST). MP

25 'The Avon Ambassador'
Hastings, Bristol Temple Meads and return.
DEMU: 1001. HD

25 Settle and Carlisle Steam Special
Coventry, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth.
Loco: TBA. NB

25 'The Edinburgh Flyer'
York, Edinburgh and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

25 London to Settle & Carlisle Railway
London Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Crewe and Carlisle.
Locos: TBA. SD

25 'The Whitby Jet'
Dundee, Whitby and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

26 'The Shakespeare Express'
Birmingham Moor Street, Stratford-upon-Avon and return.
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

31 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

April

1 'The Golden Arrow'
Bristol Temple Meads, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled from London to Canterbury.
Loco: TBA. ST

1 'The Snowdonian'
London Euston, Llandudno Junction and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. UKRT

1 'The Stratford Flyer'
Norwich, Stratford-upon-Avon and return. Steam-hauled between Norwich (outward) and Peterborough (return).
Loco: 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland*. RTC

1 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

February 4 saw LMS 'Jubilee' No. 45699 *Galatea* steam under the classic Georgian bridges at Sydney Gardens, Bath, with 'The Bath & Gloucester Steam Express'. The loco had mixed identities, with No. 45562 from classmate *Alberta* on the cab sides and No. 45627 *Sierra Leone* on the front and nameplates. DUNCAN SAVIDGE

1-3 'Lord of the Isles Pullman'
Three-day tour of Scotland. Departs Paignton (1) and Inverness (2/3).
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

8 'The Cumbrian Fellsman'
Leamington Spa, Appleby and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: TBA. PT

8 'The Cotswold Explorer'
Norwich, Worcester Shrub Hill and return. Steam-hauled from West London.
Loco: TBA. ST

8 'The Last Chance'
Tour of Yorkshire freight lines, departing Finsbury Park.
Locos: Classes 60, 66 + 90 TBC. UKRT

12 'The English Riviera Pullman'
Hull, Paignton and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

14 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

15 'The Great Western Envoy'
Rugby, Bristol Temple Meads and return. Steam-hauled from London (outward) to Rubgy (return).
Loco: TBA. ST

15 'The Great Britain XV'
London Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

16 'The Shakespeare Express'
Birmingham Moor Street, Stratford-Upon-Avon and return.
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

16 'The Great Britain XV'
Bristol Temple Meads to Llandudno only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

18 'The Great Britain XV'
Llandudno to Edinburgh only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

19 'The Great Britain XV'
Edinburgh, Aberdeen and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

20 'The Great Britain XV'
Aberdeen to Blackpool North only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

21 'The Great Britain XV'
Blackpool North to Scarborough only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

22 'The Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Tyseley Locomotive Works, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Hellifield (outward).
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

22 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Telford Central, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).
Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

22 London to Winchester
London Victoria, Winchester and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. SD

22 'The Great Britain XV'
Scarborough to Norwich only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

22 Test Valley Scenic Tour
Winchester, Southampton and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. SD

23 'The Great Britain XV'
Norwich to King's Cross only. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

26 'The Highland Clansman Pullman'
Thirsk, Aviemore and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

26 London to Chesterfield for Chatsworth
London Victoria, Chesterfield and return. Steam-hauled outward only.
Loco: TBA. SD

28 The Golden Age Of Travel By Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.
Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

29 'The Spring Cornish Explorer'
Dorridge, Penzance and return.
Locos: 2x Class 37 TBC. PT

29 'The North Wales Coast Explorer'
Birmingham New Street, Llandudno and return. Diesel-hauled from Chester to Llandudno (outward).
Locos: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*, 37240. VT

29 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Coventry, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

30 'The Royal Duchy'
Bristol Temple Meads, Par and return.
Loco: 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. RTC

Regular Tours

Daily (AM) from April 3 'The Jacobite'
Fort William, Mallaig and return.
Loco: LMS 'Black 5' TBA. WCR

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
BLS	Branch Line Society Branchline.uk
HD	Hastings Diesels Hastingsdiesels.co.uk
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PT	Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR	West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

CASTLE CENTENARY LINE-UP A DIDCOT SELL-OUT SUCCESS!

It is only fitting that the first event of the year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Charles Collett's Castle class locomotives took place on GWR territory. Stepping up to the mark as host venue on Saturday, March 4 was Didcot Railway Centre, with the first of two four Castle line-ups to be staged this year, reports **Owen Hayward.**

Built in 1932 on the site of a former broad gauge depot, Didcot's four-road engine shed could accommodate up to 24 locomotives (depending on type) and examples of the Castle class regularly passed through the adjacent station, including GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* on April 17, 1964 – just a short while before withdrawal.

With four roads leading into the structure, which remains largely unaltered since its closure by BR in 1965, it proved an ideal venue for the March 4 occasion, with plenty of space for crowds to amass and photograph the line-up of locomotives and several unique opportunities throughout the day making use of the whole site.

Nos. 4079 and 5051 *Drysllwyn Castle* both reside at the centre and were waiting outside the shed adjacent to the water cranes, ready to greet the arriving public at the start of the day. But the most exciting aspect of the event was undoubtedly the arrival the final two sister locomotives – Nos. 7029 *Clun Castle* and 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* (the latter had returned to steam and passed its main line trial runs just eight days before) – that came in from Tyseley Locomotive Works at the head of a Vintage Trains shareholders special.

Managing the numbers

Long before the gates were due to open at 9.30am, queues gathered for entry (with staff arriving at 7am reporting there were people waiting then). Online ticket sales had closed four days beforehand, having reached the 1500 cap implemented in a bid to manage numbers.

Although a large site, visitors are allowed to freely roam most of it, including crossing the tracks as there are few (if any) movements in the yard on a normal day. However, on this occasion, that would have proved problematic had there been substantial crowds present.

"We can normally accommodate larger volumes of people because they spread themselves out over the whole site on the day," said events co-ordinator Sarah Jermyn, one of those responsible for the proposal and planning of the event. "The main focus was always going to be the locomotive line-up in front of the shed, but we would also need to be moving them around the site. If we had too many visitors, this would, of course, be a big risk; we haven't held an event as big as this for some years, so it's been hard to properly envisage what a crowd of 2000 people actually looks like."

Events and marketing manager Chrissy Crisp added: "We capped online ticket sales at 1500 to begin with as we also needed to accommodate 300 people arriving on a railtour from Birmingham. We felt that we could offer some tickets on the door, which we initially advertised as being 250 places. On the day, we monitored everything carefully and liaised with the operating team, with us all agreeing that we could accommodate slightly more

Crowds respect the cordon as they encircle the Castle line-up. Few probably noticed No. 4144 passing by in its new livery with GWR lettering following a repaint over the winter months. OWEN HAYWARD

GWR 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* and WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* depart Banbury en route to Didcot with the Vintage Trains shareholders' special on March 4. JOHN TITLOW

people to ensure we didn't risk turning too many away." In total, 2176 people attended the gathering, which included more than 300 walk-ins.

Beginnings

Planning began last autumn, with an approach to VT made about the possibility of bringing its two locomotives over "always being at the heart" of it, according to general manager Richard Jermyn.

"*Edgcumbe* was obviously not ready at the time," he said, "so there was much negotiating to find suitable dates – not just for the locomotives from Birmingham coming to us, but also when we could also supply *Pendennis* to them to reciprocate.

"We also wanted to make sure that, after all the work put in to restoring it, we also have an opportunity to enjoy it here at Didcot. Once it returns from its travels (see below), No. 4079 will stay here for the rest of 2023."

Incoming excursion

The visit of Vintage Trains-owned Nos. 5043 and 7029 came thanks to the scheduling of the special which, with two locomotives at the front, operated without diesel assistance – while also presenting some unusual movements for viewing. Departing tender first from Tyseley Locomotive Works with the

Above: A moment in history as four WR Castle class locomotives line up outside the 1932 engine shed at Didcot Railway Centre on Saturday, March 4. From left to right are Nos. 4079 *Pendennis Castle*, 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*, 5051 *Drysllwyn Castle*, and 7029 *Clun Castle*. OWEN HAYWARD

Left: No. 7029 *Clun Castle* takes a spin on the turntable behind the locomotive shed. OWEN HAYWARD

Above: Among the crowds with their cameras, one person stood out. Artist Glynis Dray took a seat and recorded the occasion in pencil sketch form. OWEN HAYWARD

Right: No. 4079 watches on as classmate No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* is turned in readiness for the return mainline working to Birmingham Snow Hill. OWEN HAYWARD

passenger stock, the steam locomotives ran empty coaching stock to Birmingham Snow Hill, where they then ran round the train together for the onward working, with *Clun Castle* at the front.

Departing from there at 8.19am, the express ran back to Tyseley's main line station and on through Widney Manor, Dorridge and Leamington Spa to within a minute of scheduled time. From there, the Castles gained time for a few stops, passing Banbury three minutes ahead of schedule and Heyford six, before dropping two minutes down at Oxford and arriving at Didcot Parkway on time 10.10am.

Once passengers alighted, the consist then moved forward to Didcot East Junction before slowly propelling back into the sidings of Didcot Terminal Complex at 10.29am. There they detached and returned to the junction before reversing to the railway centre's gateway, where they separated, and subsequently, with the crowds dispersed to the sides to allow them clear access, backed down individually to join the line-up outside the shed.

Didcot officials cordoned off a large area to ensure that a clear view of the four locomotives could be enjoyed by all – and every possible inch of the perimeter of this was taken. Those seeking a more elevated view wandered up the track to the top of the coaling point, with the bank either side of the building equally covered by excited spectators.

The cold air emphasised the steam wisping from the three 'live' locomotives, with the breeze often blowing it across the front of them all, no doubt to the annoyance of those in search of the 'perfect' shot but otherwise adding to the atmosphere for those enjoying the historic moment. After all, when was the last time that four restored Castles were seen together in the same place? A discussion with members of the Great Western Society proved inconclusive, with belief that Tyseley may have had five 'Castles' at one point, but two of them likely incomplete.

Didcot certainly has nearly always had two, with No. 5051 having been based there since 1970. Later that decade, No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* arrived and was gradually restored, returning to service in 1990 but leaving later that decade to take up regular main line duties.

When the Science Museum decided to refurbish some of its displays in 1996, No. 4073 *Caerphilly Castle* was temporarily transferred to Didcot while STEAM at Swindon was being completed, for which it departed in 1999; the following year, *Pendennis Castle* arrived after being reimported from Australia.

Richard Jermyn was one of the last people to ride in the cab of No. 4073 on the main line, and the first to drive No. 5029 after restoration. "Because we are landlocked, arriving and departing stock has to be towed to and from Didcot West Yard, where the transporting lorries have access," he said. "I rode in the cab of *Caerphilly Castle* from there on its journey into the railway centre in 1996; it may not have been in steam, but I am proud to have been one of the last people to lay stake to that claim.

"We also have an unwritten rule here that the first person to drive a locomotive after its overhaul is completed is a fireman. When *Nunney Castle* was outshopped, it just so happened to be my turn!"

Following their visit at Didcot Railway Centre, where the locomotives were serviced and turned, Nos. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* and 7029 *Clun Castle* run light through Didcot Parkway as they head for the Terminal Complex sidings to collect the carriages ready for the return trip to Birmingham. OWEN HAYWARD

Living history

Harking back to its GWR and BR days, Didcot's grounds were once again fulfilling the purpose for which the site was originally intended – stabling and servicing locomotives between duties. Following nearly two hours lined up outside the shed, No. 4079 shunted over to sit on a spur off the turntable at the back of the depot.

Shortly afterwards, No. 7029 followed, to be turned ready for the return leg of the railtour. Once clear, the *Earl* also went for a spin before all three lined up on the coaling road, with No. 4079 positioned for its tender to be topped up.

The two guests were oiled up and ventured back out on the main line at about 2.30pm, running light engine together through Didcot Parkway's Platform 4 to position themselves at the right end of the stock for the upcoming journey. Stock was propelled back out onto the East Junction before being signalled back into the same platform, from which it departed at 15.01pm.

A chorus of whistles echoed around Didcot as the two departed from the main line station and that left behind at DRC bid one another farewell.

The return paused at Banbury for a photographic opportunity, arriving at 3.41pm and setting off for Birmingham again at 4.15pm; arrival at its destination was at 5.40pm. Following departure of its classmates, *Pendennis Castle* took up duties on Didcot's demonstration running line in place of newly-repainted GWR large prairie No. 4144, which has been outshopped in unlined green with GWR lettering.

The event was welcome success for Didcot, with its shop and refreshment outlets doing substantial trade. "It was our busiest event day since before the pandemic" said Chrissy, "but there was also a real buzz about the place that we haven't felt before. For the start of the year, this was the event to go to and kicked off 2023 for us with a bang. It was so uplifting to see so many enthusiasts in one place and all here for the same reason – to celebrate steam."

"We have sent locomotives elsewhere a lot recently, but by approaching Tyseley and agreeing for them to bring their Castles here, hopefully we can encourage more people to bring things here as well," added Sarah. "For example, at Easter we will be welcoming Furness Railway No. 20 (as reported last issue), so we are keen to build positive relationships with other railways because our volunteers have been saying for a while to do another enthusiast event."

The success of the Castle line-up comes on the back of Didcot's visitor numbers having soared by 53% in the last 12 months, with society membership also on the rise.

"We could not do things like this without our volunteers," Chrissy said. "We'd like to thank everyone who came along and supported us, but especially the volunteers, because without them, we could not hold events like this."

Left: A member of the crew for No. 5043 takes a moment to oil the locomotive ahead of its venture back out onto the main line at the end of the gathering. OWEN HAYWARD

Right: Crew of the visiting Tyseley-based Castles take a moment to admire *Dryslwyn Castle* in close quarters, with the four locomotives carefully staggered in alignment to allow clear views from most angles. OWEN HAYWARD

COLLETT'S CASTLES MADE 'BIG FOUR' GWR EVEN GREATER

By Robin Jones

AMONG the proudest moments of 2023 – and indeed that of the 72-year history of the operational heritage sector – has been the exact 100th anniversary of Gresley LNER Pacific *Flying Scotsman* entering traffic, as highlighted in Headline News in this issue.

However, as a leader in British locomotive technology, Gresley was certainly no lone figure in 1923, for the first year of the Grouping saw all of the newly formed Big Four companies attempting to take express train travel to the next level and beyond. This year, we are also celebrating the centenary of the GWR 4073 class Castle 4-6-0s.

The Grouping saw the GWR empire absorb 560 miles of track, 18,000 employees and a further 700 locomotives, many of them decidedly non-standard and therefore considered obsolete in terms of the expanded company's overall strategies.

In the same year, prewar train speeds were restored, and with 400-ton loads now a regular occurrence, more powerful engines than the George Jackson Churchward's groundbreaking Star 4-6-0s were needed – and literally fast.

Replacing Churchward as GWR Chief Mechanical Engineer in January 1922 was journalist's son Charles Benjamin Collett, who joined the Swindon drawing office in May 1893 as a junior draughtsman and by 1900 had progressed to become assistant manager of Swindon Locomotive Works. He graduated to works manager in 1912 and became Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer in May 1919, having received an OBE for producing munitions during the First World War.

By no means a great inventor, Collett was nonetheless a magnificent innovator, and developed Churchward's revolutionary locomotives designs to the next stage and beyond so that they received their maximum potential.

Under Collett, Swindon Works was modernised and expanded to become the finest locomotive manufacturing and repair base in Britain, with vastly improved locomotive-building techniques. By 1924, his department employed 45,000 people, with 14,000 of those employed at Swindon Works.

In the post-First World War years, the GWR experienced soaring demand for holiday traffic to the West Country, and invested heavily in its flagship Paddington-Penzance route.

Taking the Stars, Collett designed an updated version – one which would conform to the weight limit allowed on the West of England line.

Powerful

An enlarged boiler with a greater evaporative rate, a bigger grate, and increased diameter cylinders brought the nominal tractive effort to 31,625lb. The end result was the Castle class, heralded as the most powerful British express locomotives of the time – 10% more powerful that the Stars.

The first, No. 4073 *Caerphilly Castle*, made its debut at Paddington on August 23, 1923. No. 4073 was displayed alongside Sir Nigel Gresley's *Flying Scotsman* at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924. The GWR board was delighted and declared its engine to be more powerful than its bigger LNER rival, and was correct at least in terms of its 31,625lb tractive effort alone.

GWR general manager Sir Felix Pole suggested to LNER Southern Area general manager Alexander Wilson that a trial of the two types should take place on an exchange arrangement.

These trials began in April 1925, with No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* flying the GWR flag on the East Coast Main Line and A1 Pacific No. 4474 *Victor Wild* representing the LNER on GWR routes. The first morning saw No. 4079 haul a 480-ton train from King's Cross to Doncaster. LNER officials fully expected that climbing Holloway Bank would be problematic for the smaller, lighter engine – but it was recorded by railway author Cecil J Allen that *Pendennis Castle* accomplished a faster start from King's Cross to Finsbury Park than any of the LNER Pacifics he recorded. Furthermore, No. 4079 kept well within the scheduled time and used less coal.

Victor Wild competed against GWR No. 4074 *Caldicot Castle* on the 'Cornish Riviera Express.' The Pacific indeed kept to time, but its longer wheelbase proved unsuited to the many curves on the route. It was also found that *Caldicot Castle* burned less coal and was always ahead of time: on the final two days of the trial, it gained 15 minutes on the schedule in both directions.

Between 1923 and 1950, 171 Castles were built, 16 of them rebuilds of Stars and one from the components of Pacific No. 111 *The Great Bear.*

The first Castles appeared with a Star-type tender and did not receive the high-sided 4000-gallon version until 1926. The average coal consumption of the Castles was one of the lowest in the country.

The class was found to be superbly able to haul express trains of more than 400 tons over the South Devon banks and the twisting Berks & Hants route.

Castles hauled the 'Cheltenham Spa Express', which, in its day, was the fastest train in the world. From 1932, it was timed to cover the 77.3 miles from Swindon to Paddington in 65 minutes, an average speed of 71.4 mph.

No. 5006 *Tregenna Castle* achieved a record on June 6, 1932, by hauling the up 'Cheltenham Flyer' from Swindon to Paddington in 56 minutes 47 seconds for the 77.3 miles, against a schedule that was normally 65 minutes.

The Castles deservedly gripped the public imagination, particularly those of schoolboy trainspotters.

Royal Train

The class also received an enormous publicity boost when King George V and Queen Mary visited Swindon Works on April 28, 1924. They boarded the footplate of No. 4082 *Windsor Castle*, which was heading the Royal Train, and the monarch 'drove' the locomotive to Swindon station.

The design of later Castles was slightly modified by Collett's successor, Frederick Hawksworth, giving them a larger straight-sided all-welded tender, while selected members of the class were fitted with larger superheaters and double blastpipes and chimneys.

The fastest recorded speed of a Castle was 102mph, achieved by No. 7018 *Dryslwyn Castle* at Little Somerford in April 1958 while hauling 'The Bristolian' from Bristol Temple Meads to Paddington.

The non-stop run over 117.6 miles took 93 minutes 50 seconds, an average speed of more than 75mph.

The highest mileage of any class member was the 1,974,461 miles by No. 4080 *Powderham Castle,* during a career lasting 40 years and five months.

FROM A CASTLE TO A KING

WHILE the Castles were designed to the maximum permitted axle loading of 19½ tons, Collett considered such a limit to be a disadvantage – and that the locomotives did not fully address the problems encountered by the heavy, long-distance, non-stop passenger train.

He told Sir Felix Pole that if the limit was raised to 22½ tons, a more powerful machine could be produced. Pole told him to design a 'Super Castle', capable of hauling heavier passenger expresses at average speeds of about 60mph, and so Collett came up with the ultimate in GWR motive power – the Kings.

The class of 30 Kings was exactly what the GWR needed after its rival, the Southern Railway, introduced its Lord Nelson 4-6-0s in 1926, which bettered the 31,625lb nominal tractive effort of the Castles with 33,510lb. By contrast, the Kings, a larger version of the Castles, had a tractive effort of 40,290lb.

Collett lengthened the firebox and boiler barrel of the Castle, increased the diameter by 3in, extended the wheelbase, enlarged the grate and slightly enlarged with cylinders. The Kings' 6ft 6in driving wheel diameter was 2½in less than the standard for GWR express passenger engines.

The Kings became famous among crews for their sure-footedness, their tremendous weight-pulling capability, excellent adhesion, safe running, and the fact that they were nevertheless light on coal. It was the ultimate British 4-6-0 design.

Extra day for *Pendennis* on the Severn Valley

IN ADDITION to its booked appearance at Severn Valley Railway's April 16-18 Spring Steam Gala, the railway has announced an additional running day on Thursday, April 13 for visiting *Pendennis Castle*.

Operating excursion-style services from Bridgnorth, No. 4079 will run three round trips in advance of its gala appearance. Using a different headboard for each trip, the day will loosely recreate three famous 1960s railtours – the 'Birkenhead Flyer', the 'Zulu' and the Stephenson Locomotive Society specials – with No. 4079 paired with the SVR's BR Mk.1 maroon coach set.

"It's a real coup to have *Pendennis Castle* for our Spring Steam Gala," said Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, the SVR's interim managing director. "But we also felt it deserved its own headline day to acknowledge its remarkable first-ever heritage line appearance outside Didcot, and for the chance to recreate something very special from the past."

Tickets for the excursion day are available now online at svr.co.uk. If passengers wish to start their journey in Kidderminster, they should contact 01562 757900 or contact@svrlive.com after booking online. For those who have already booked tickets for the Spring Steam Gala, an additional 10% discount applies. SVR members will automatically receive 33% off tickets when they check out online.

As reported last issue, No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* will then visit the Mid-Hants Railway for its April 29-May 1 Spring Steam Gala.

Afterwards, it will be taken to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for the May 12-14 Cotswold Festival of Steam.

No. 4079 will then take part in a second four-Castle line-up at the Tyseley Locomotive Works June 17-18 open weekend, which will also feature *Clun Castle*, *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* (both in steam) and *Defiant*.

It will be the first time Nos. 4079 and 7029 will have been seen in steam together at the depot since March 1967, with the last appearance of the former there being prior to the 'Great Western Envoy' to Didcot on May 29, 1977, immediately before its export to Australia.

On the Saturday morning, all four will be lined up around the turntable, where some of Tyseley's other stored collection can also be found. There will also be turning demonstrations throughout the day, followed by a three-Castle cavalcade, with shuttles within the depot operating with each operating locomotive in turn.

Adult tickets for this event are £15 and £5 for children. To book, visit vintagetrains.co.uk/castle-centenary-celebrations-open-weekend

Fathers' Day 'Shakespeare Express' trips will run to Stratford-upon-Avon behind No. 5043 in the morning and No. 7029 in the afternoon. It will be possible to ride behind both locomotives (one each way) on the Stratford midday departure. Bookings are now available on Vintage Trains' website at www.vintagetrains.co.uk

STEAM venue marks Castle centenary with new special exhibitions

STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway at Swindon will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Castle class with two new exhibitions by photographer Jack Boskett.

The first, 100 Years and Still Steaming, will showcase scenes of Castle locomotives working on heritage railway lines at the forefront.

The second exhibition, entitled From Railways to Royalty, will highlight Jack's work in his 13 years as a professional photographer.

His varied career has led him to photograph railways, royalty, and many subjects in between. Visitors will see portraits of prime ministers, celebrities, and members of the Royal Family during public engagements.

Jack said: "I have spent a lot of time hand-picking my photographs for this exhibition, which coincides nicely with the coronation of King Charles III in May and also the 100th anniversary of the GWR Castle class in August.

"I am really looking forward to see what the reactions are from STEAM visitors and I hope it gives plenty of creative inspiration to budding photographers who are looking at expand their railway photography."

The combined exhibitions will feature 150 of Jack's best pieces of work on display in STEAM'S *Caerphilly Castle* Hall between Saturday, April 29 and Monday, September 10.

On August 12, visitors are invited to meet Jack in person and find out more about his work.

Admission to both exhibitions is included with STEAM admission.

Visitors can find out more and book their tickets online at www.steam-museum.org.uk

➜ Also to mark the centenary, former Tyseley Locomotive Works Chief Mechanical Engineer Bob Meanley will give a free talk on May 15 at 7pm about the character and appeal of the class in STEAM's *Caerphilly Castle* Hall alongside No. 4073, the prototype.

Part of the Friends of Swindon Railway Museum's 2023 Lecture Programme, both members and non-members are welcome to attend the free talk. A small, voluntary donation to the Friends group would be welcome.

THE EIGHT SURVIVING CASTLES: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

No. 4073 *Caerphilly Castle*

Once its showpiece duties on the GWR stand in the Palace of Engineering at the British Empire Exhibition were over, class prototype No. 4073 was allocated to Old Oak Common as its first shed before transferring to Bristol Bath Road in July 1950. Later allocations saw it move to St Phillips Marsh Road (October 1952), Bristol Bath Road again (February 1953) and finally Cardiff Canton (February 1957).

Originally due for withdrawal in 1955, it received an overhaul at Caerphilly Works between August 1956 and January 1957, after which it continued in service until its time finally came in May 1960, having run 1,910,730 miles in service.

It was refurbished at a cost of £11,000, initially for displaying at Swindon, but it was handed over to the Science Museum as part of the National Collection. A ceremony took place at Paddington station that saw the formal handover made by Dr Richard Beeching on June 2, 1961, after which No. 4073 was taken to the museum at Kensington with the aid of Pickford Scammel Constructor units.

It remains in the almost pristine ex-works condition of when it was handed over to the National Collection from BR, and despite being withdrawn so soon after an overhaul, it has never steamed in preservation. There are presently no plans for this to change and so it remains on display in the STEAM museum at Swindon.

First of the class: No. 4073 *Caerphilly Castle* on display inside STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway at Swindon. JACK BOSKETT/ STEAM

No. 5029 *Nunney Castle*

Taking the name of a small castle near Frome in Somerset, No. 5029 was built in 1934 and became something of a 'poster child', appearing in many publicity and 'life on the railway'-type photographs. During the Second World War, it hauled trains carrying children from London into the countryside on the first day of evacuations.

No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* still awaits the day of its frame lift for attention to its lubrication pads, here at Crewe on November 11, 2022. JOHN TITLOW

Its first allocation when built was to Old Oak Common in West London, where it was based during the majority of its working life. During the last few months under this allocation, in October 1957 it was chosen to haul the Royal Train from Paddington to Gloucester. A reallocation to Worcester came in 1958 before short stints at Shrewsbury, Newton Abbot and Laira over the next few years, culminating in a final shedding at Cardiff East Dock from December 1962, where it remained until withdrawal alongside other class members a year later.

It was the last steam locomotive delivered to Barry by rail, languishing in the scrap yard for 12 years before becoming the last of its class to leave in May 1976. It was saved, along with GWR 0-6-0PT No. 3738, by an individual called Warwick Ormandy, but he sold both to a consortium (that included the Great Western Society with 50% stake) before any restoration work on No. 5029 had started. It was restored at Didcot and returned to main line duty in 1990, but by then had changed hands and was now outright owned by one individual.

Nunney Castle was sold to Jeremy Hoskings in the early 2000s and is now part of the Locomotive Services Limited fleet. It last ran in 2015 (though the boiler certificate did not expire until two years later) and is presently dismantled at LNWR Heritage at Crewe, undergoing overhaul.

No. 5051 *Drysllwyn Castle (Earl Bathurst)*

Built in 1936, No. 5051 was another of the 21 Castles to be renamed after earls, with the ceremony taking place in August 1937 and the replacement name coming from a denamed Dukedog class locomotive, No. 9008. *Earl Bathurst* remained the Castle's identity for the rest of the locomotive's main line working life, with *Drysllwyn Castle* applied to No. 7018 a few years later.

No. 5051 was first allocated to Landore depot, Swansea, where it remained for almost its entire time in service, working trains to London and the Midlands. In June 1961, it moved to Neath for nearly two years, with a final transfer to Llanelly in February 1963 (joining No. 5080 *Defiant*) for its final few months. Withdrawal came that May, deemed as surplus to requirements by BR and with an estimated 1,300,000 miles on the clock. It, too, was sent to Barry, from where it was bought by John Mynors, a Great Western Society member, in March 1969. John then took it to Didcot Railway Centre in February 1970.

Restoration saw No. 5051 return to steam in 1979, at which point it was reunited with the original *Drysllwyn Castle* nameplates. It then took part in the Rocket 150 celebrations at Rainhill in 1980, and also steamed regularly during the 150th anniversary celebrations of the GWR in 1985.

Drysllwyn Castle also ran on the main line until 1986, when the relevant ticket expired, though it continued steaming at Didcot until overhaul fell due in 1990. A second stint in steam began in 1998, which saw it return to main line working again, substituting for GWR 4-6-0 No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* on the now defunct tour operator Past-Time Rail's 'Torbay Express' in the summer of 2003; the Castle's maximum speed of 75mph saw it easily keep to time for the run between Bristol Temple Meads and Kingswear.

No. 5051 is now on static display at Didcot, paired with a Collett-style tender, while it awaits its place in the overhaul queue.

Dryslwyn Castle (Earl Bathurst): **On a test run to Oxford, No. 5051 returns to Didcot on January 16, 1980.** JOHN TITLOW

No. 5080 *Defiant (Ogmore Castle)*

No. 5080 was outshopped in 1939 as *Ogmore Castle*, a name that had already been applied to an earlier example of the class, No. 5056, which was renamed *Earl of Powis* in September 1937 and went on to be carried by another two members of the class: No. 7007 (which in turn was renamed *Great Western* in January 1948) and finally to No. 7035.

First allocation was to Old Oak Common for express working to Birmingham and the West Country, taking charge of named trains before transferring to Cardiff Canton in August 1940. Its posting flitted between here and Swindon over the next few years, transferring to the latter on January 9, 1941, for just a few months, returning to Wales on March 20 that year. Its next Swindon stint came in August 1949 but just less than a month later had again returned to Cardiff Canton. It then went to Landore in December 1955, before its final transfer came to Llanelly in September 1961 for its final two years in service.

During its working life, it hauled many named expresses, such as 'The Red Dragon', 'Pembroke Coast Express' and 'South Wales Pullman', a duty it upheld until the very end despite displacement from some coming in the form of Britannia class pacifics to the region. Withdrawal came in April 1963 and that October, *Defiant* was taken to Barry scrapyard, where it spent 11 years before being acquired by the Birmingham Railway Museum Trust (now Vintage Trains), originally as a source of spares for No. 7029.

But, at the end of 1985 it saw restoration commence, and a return to steam was made in 1987.

It hauled its inaugural train (donning a 'Red Dragon' headboard for the occasion) on June 11, 1988, from Tyseley to Didcot and was a mainstay of the tour operator's fleet until withdrawn in 1997. It now awaits overhaul.

Above: The overhauled tender of *Defiant* at Tyseley Locomotive Works on January 10. VT

Right: No. 5080 *Defiant* crosses Swithland Viaduct on May 29, 1989, during a visit to the Great Central Railway. JOHN TITLOW

No. 7027 *Clun Castle*

Vintage Trains' flagship WR No. 7029 *Clun Castle* has the distinction of hauling the last official steam train out of Paddington, to Banbury on June 11, 1965, being withdrawn in December that year.

Named after a ruined medieval castle in Shropshire, No. 7029 was outshopped from Swindon works in May 1950. It was first allocated to Newton Abbot and subsequently Plymouth Laira, Newton Abbott, Old Oak Common and finally Gloucester Horton Road. It had a double chimney and a four-row superheater fitted in October 1959.

Its most famous moment came on May 9, 1964, on the Plymouth to Bristol leg of the Ian Allan special train Z48, run to mark the unofficial 100mph record set 60 years earlier by GWR 4-4-0 No. 3440 *City of Truro*. No. 7029 reached a recorded 96mph on the descent of Wellington Bank in Somerset.

The late Pat Whitehouse bought No. 7029 for scrap for £2400 in 1966, with ownership passing to 7029 Clun Castle Ltd. In the heritage era, it has always been based at Tyseley.

In 1967, carrying GWR livery, *Clun Castle* hauled special trains to mark the closure of the GWR route to Birkenhead, from King's Cross to Newcastle and over the Settle to Carlisle route, and in 1972, it ran in the 'Return to Steam' tours after BR relaxed its post-1968 ban on steam locomotives.

September 1987 saw *Clun Castle* paired with GWR 4-6-0 No. 6000 *King George V* for a series of South Wales weekend enthusiast specials between Swansea and Carmarthen.

In 1988, it was driven part-way to Tyseley by the then Prince Charles in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the London & Birmingham Railway and also ran the first 'Shakespeare Express' under the Vintage Trains banner.

Following its latest overhaul, No. 7029 returned to action in October 2017 at the Tyseley Open Weekend, carrying BR Lined Green livery.

It made its first moves on the main line for 31 years in February 2019 when it went out on its light test runs before working its first main line train since October 1988.

No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*

Built in March 1936, No. 5043 was originally named *Barbury Castle* and was renamed *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* after one of the directors of the GWR. In September 1937, the name transferred from GWR Dukedog 4-4-0 No. 3200/9000.

First allocated to Old Oak Common, from June 1952 to February 1956 it was based at Carmarthen and Swansea (Landore) before returning to Old Oak Common, where a double chimney and four-row superheater were fitted in October 1958.

It was transferred to Cardiff Canton in April 1962 and in September that year to Cardiff East Dock shed, from where it was withdrawn in December 1963. In June 1964, it was sent to Barry scrapyard.

Sold to Birmingham Railway Museum, to where it moved in September 1973, it was stored initially as a spare boiler for No. 7029 *Clun Castle*. In 1996, the museum's trustees announced a project to restore *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* to main line running condition in its late 1950s condition, with a newly-constructed Hawksworth tender and double chimney. Indeed, It is one of only two Castles in the heritage era to be fitted with a double chimney, the other being *Clun Castle*.

In 1998, the boiler was removed from the frames and prepared for inspection, with welding undertaken by Babock. Following a meticulous restoration, in late 2007 the boiler was steamed up and approved, allowing No. 5043 to move under its own steam on October 3, 2008.

On October 16, 2010, No. 5043 hauled a southbound excursion over the Settle to Carlisle route, where, on the climb to Ais Gill summit, it was credited with generating an estimated 2030 equivalent drawbar horse power – believed to be a power output record for the entire Castle class.

On May 9, 2014, No. 5043 took an anniversary train from Tyseley to Plymouth to mark 50 years since the original Z48 train in 1964 – and broke the aforementioned record set by *Clun Castle* by two minutes.

Since restoration, it has worked specials not only over the former GWR system, but also to locations as far afield as North Wales, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

It was taken out of service in June 2018 when it was discovered that remedial work was needed, and the boiler was lifted in August 2020.

Happily, as seen by its performance on the shareholders' special to Didcot on March 4, it is once more part of Vintage Trains' operational fleet.

No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle*

A GWR hero of the above-mentioned locomotive trials on the LNER in 1925, having been outshopped from Swindon as the seventh Castle in February 1924, *Pendennis Castle* is named after the medieval fort opposite Falmouth. Its first allocation was to Old Oak Common and subsequently to Gloucester, Bristol Bath and finally Bristol St Philip's Marsh.

On May 9, 1964, No. 4079 took part in the high-speed Ian Allan railtour from Paddington to Plymouth with *Clun Castle*. However, when it reached 97mph, the firebars melted. No. 4079 was immediately withdrawn on arrival at Westbury.

Bookshop owner Mike Higson, who was seeking to purchase a steam locomotive, agreed to buy it from BR for £1750. It was then moved to Swindon for repairs to the damage and a repaint. Overhaul completed in March 1965, *Pendennis Castle* was transferred to the former Southall Railway Centre, where it appeared at one of the Great Western Society's first pre-Didcot open days. That November, it became the last Castle to arrive at Paddington before the end of BR steam.

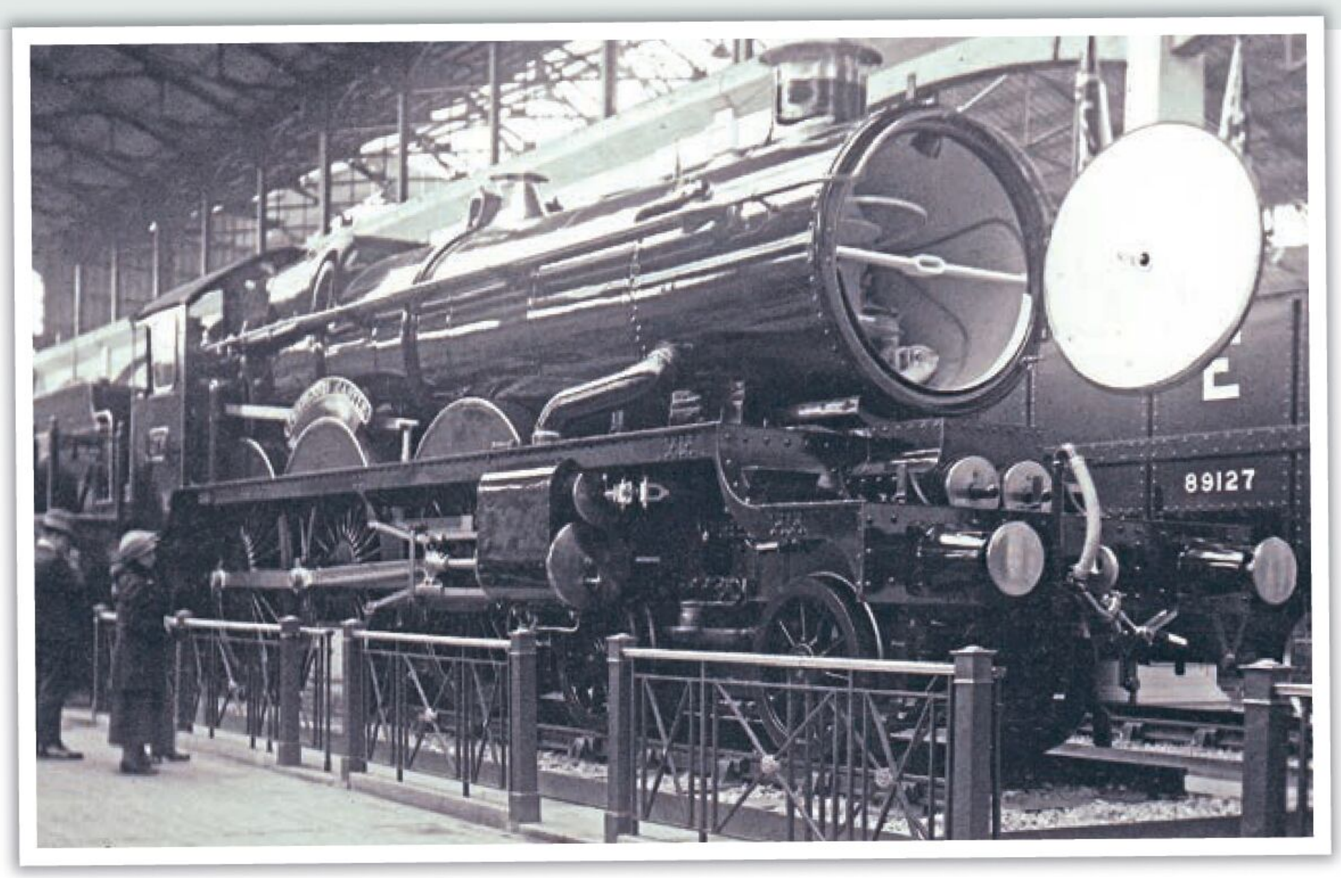
In 1967, No. 4079 was sold to William Alpine and John Grewtton and moved to Didcot. In 1971, it was among 23 steam locomotives approved for main line running after BR relaxed its steam ban. In April 1974, No. 4079 was reunited with *Flying Scotsman* for two steam specials from Newport to Shrewsbury.

Three years later, after McAlpine became the sole owner, it was sold to Hamersley Iron in West Australia for use by the company's employees' Pilbara Railways Historical Society. On May 29, 1977, it hauled the 'Great Western Envoy' from Birmingham to Didcot and return, and then ran to Avonmouth Docks for export.

The story of its Australian career has often been told in *Heritage Railway* magazine. It ended when Hamersley parent company Rio Tinto agreed to give it to Didcot Railway Centre. It became only the second locomotive after *Flying Scotsman* to circumnavigate the globe, and arrived at Portbury Dock in Bristol on June 8, 2000, as featured on the cover of issue 16 of this magazine.

On August 13, 2021, *Pendennis Castle* was steamed for the first time in 27 years, and on February 2, 2022, it moved under its own power for the first time since 1994.

As reported in issue 292, it was officially relaunched into traffic at a special event at Didcot on April 2, 2022.



No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* on display at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley on October 10, 1925, following its successful trials on the LNER. LEN NUNN COLLECTION/ NRM

The boiler of No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle* outside Loughborough shed on the Great Central Railway on May 31, 2000. ROBIN JONES

No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle*

WR 4-6-0 No. 7027 make up the portfolio of eight Castles – but will it last?

Built at Swindon in August 1949, its first shed allocation was Plymouth Laira, and it subsequently moved to Old Oak Common, Worcester and Reading, from where it was withdrawn in December 1963.

Arriving at Barry scrapyard in May 1964, it became the 23rd steam locomotive bought from there for preservation purposes in August 1972, initially intended as a source of spare parts for the other Castles at Tyseley.

It has never steamed in the half century of the heritage era that followed. Sold on to Pete Waterman's Transport Trust, in July 2016 it was bought by Jonathan Jones-Pratt, owner of No. 4936 *Kinlet Hall* and now chairman of West Somerset Railway plc.

In January 2020, No. 7027 was sold to another private owner and taken to the Great Central Railway at Loughborough, where restoration reportedly began.

However, last summer, the Great Western Society's 4709 Group bought it with the intention of donating the boiler to a project to create the 10th example of Churchward's heavy freight 'Night Owl' 47XX 2-8-0s. The chassis and other components could then be used to recreate a Star 4-6-0, and the locomotive might eventually be rebuilt back into *Thornbury Castle* if a No. 7 or No. 8 boiler became available.

The move generated widespread controversy, and talks are now underway with a potential purchaser of the locomotive parts.

A statement issued by the society board said: "The Great Western Society continues to be committed to buying the remaining components of 7027. The board of GWS agrees to hold those parts in good condition for six months. During this time, GWS will consider offers from properly funded groups for all or parts of No. 7027 to enable a rebuild of *Thornbury Castle* if viable.

"The GWS has no plans to build a Star." HR

Those who departed following the main line stars may have missed an equally appealing scene when four GWR tank engines lined up outside the engine shed. 56XX No. 6697 on the left is the interloper amid the three prairie tanks, with No. 4144 (right) the only operating locomotive present, which had just been outshopped in its new GWR-lettered livery. It will spend the summer at the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway. OWEN HAYWARD

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For a minimum shareholding of £50, payable in instalments, you help the Fund in its aims, receive regular newsletters and can take advantage of our events - such as special trains and driving experiences.

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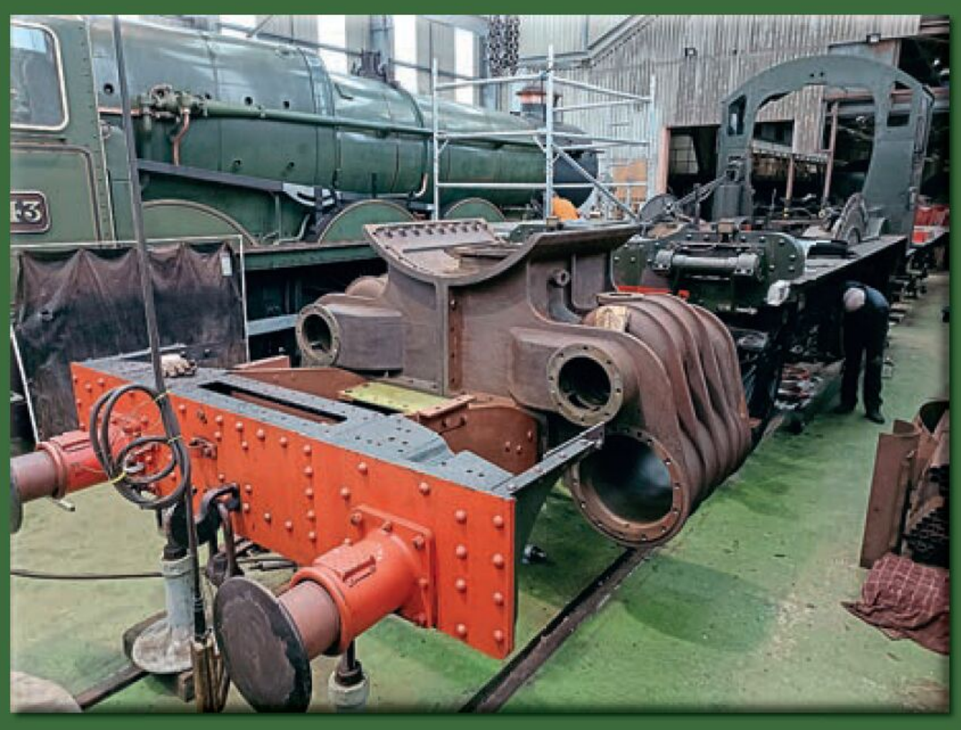
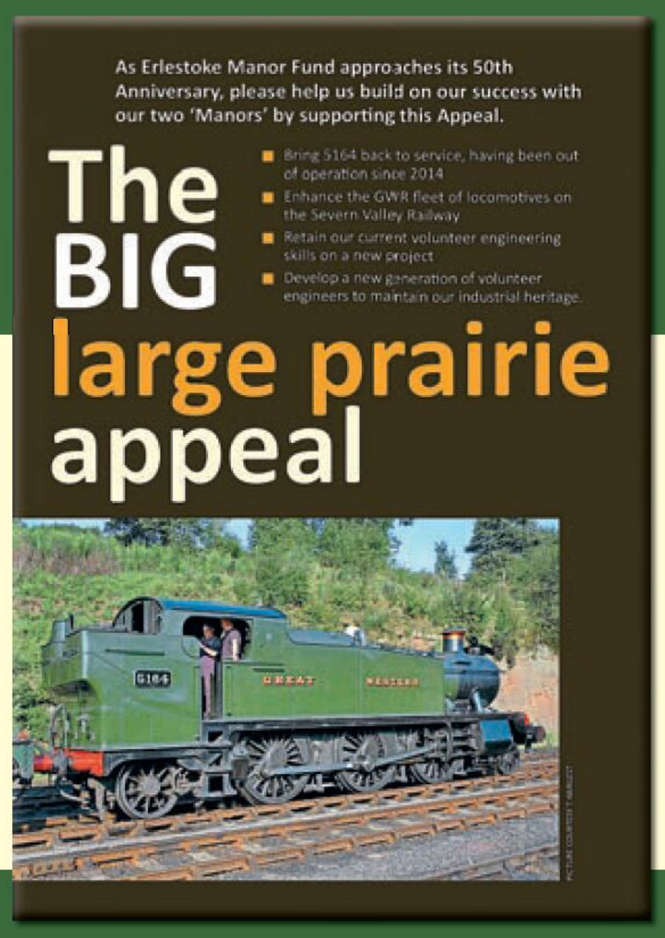


Formed in 1973, the EMF was successful in the rescue through fund raising and the purchase of firstly *Erlestoke Manor* and latterly *Bradley Manor* from Woodham's scrap yard in Barry, South Wales. Having been cast aside by British Railways as surplus and outmoded at the end of 1965, 7812 was rescued in 1974 and 7802 in 1979.

Once saved, the Fund's attention focused on returning 7812 to working order, which was achieved in 1979. Initially purchased solely for spare parts, the Fund was encouraged to restore 7802 to working order, a practical and financial feat which was achieved in 1993. Since then, both locomotives have proved their usefulness in regular heritage railway service, each covering more than 100,000 miles in preservation, mainly on the Severn Valley Railway.

In late 2021, GWR Large Prairie 5164 was acquired by the Fund. 5164 currently remains on static display under cover at Barrow Hill Roundhouse, near Chesterfield. It is planned for full overhaul and return to operation.



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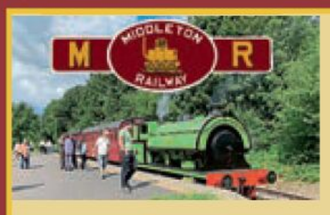

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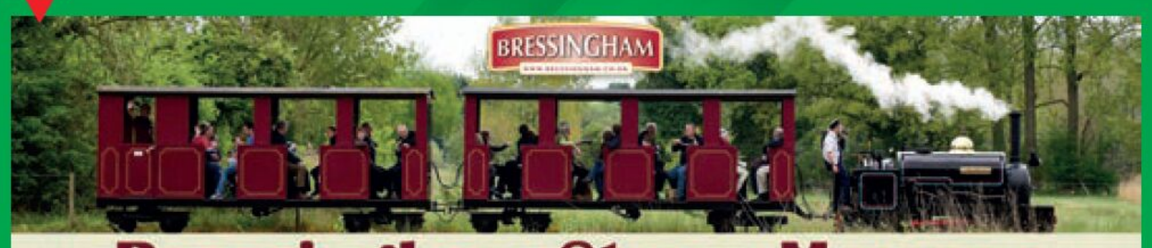

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Places to visit this spring

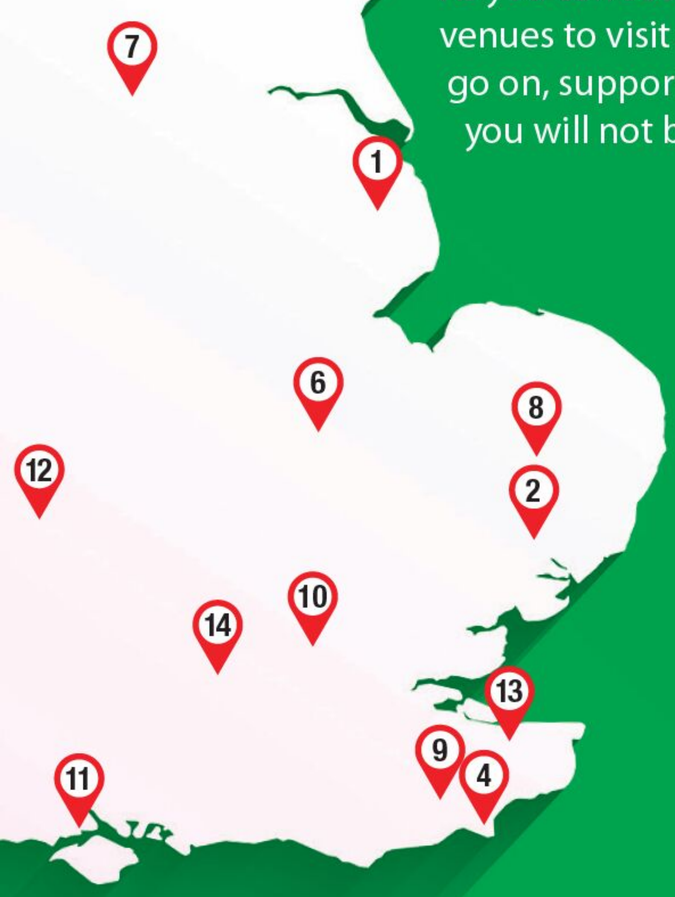
After a very strange few years for heritage railways and their supporters and volunteers, at long last we are able to look forward to a spring season full of hope and events for all the family – ranging from the die-hard enthusiasts to those simply in need of a great day out.

We're sure you will have your favourite heritage line, museum or attraction to visit, but if you are looking for somewhere a bit special, a part of the country you may not have been to for a while, or an attraction on your doorstep you'd forgotten all about, then take a look at our map and the adverts on these pages to gain some inspiration.

All the venues and businesses here provide a memorable day out or help with that essential short break that often combines inspiration, entertainment and education... you really can't beat a super day out with the family at one of the fabulous attractions highlighted on these pages... and maybe some lovely locally-sorced food and hospitality too!

Even better, you can always find some interesting byways and highways to and from any museum, heritage line or attraction, so it's a great opportunity to get off those motorways and explore the great British countryside.

As you can see from the map here, there are venues to visit around the country, so go on, support these great British attractions... you will not be disappointed!



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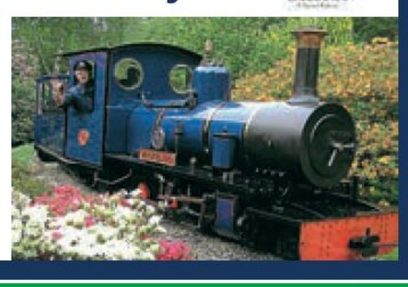

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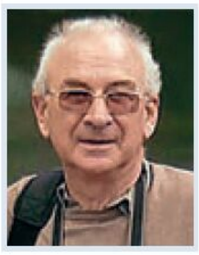

Don Benn looks at the recent work of LMS class 7P 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* over the Settle and Carlisle line, Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35018 *British India Line* over the same route in September 2022 and on the Southern in 1964, plus D1921, also on the Southern, in 1966.

AFTER the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' on January 28 this year ran with diesel assistance, all fingers were crossed that the repeat train on February 11 would be pure steam, and fortunately so it proved. I had decided not to risk a 4am start and midnight finish, and even my Scottish correspondent opted out. However, others took the risk – and it is rumoured that the lack of diesel involvement had something to do with the fact that the Railway Touring Company boss was on the train. If so, well done to her. I have received details of the performance southbound over the Settle and Carlisle by No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* from two correspondents, Bill Long and Graham Southway. Table One sets out the detail.

No. 46115 has been an inconsistent performer over the years and didn't seem to be on top form on this trip, taking about 80 minutes going north from Carnforth to Carlisle with its 445-ton load, speed falling to a minimum of 16mph over Shap.

Certainly, I have timed a number of faster runs behind Carnforth's superb Class 5XP Jubilees with similar loads.

However, this is not to criticise this pure steam effort in 2023 as we don't know the conditions on the footplate – especially what the coal was like. Who would have thought in 1965 when I had a run with this loco from Carlisle to Carstairs that it would

TABLE ONE: APPLEBY TO HELLIFIELD

Date	Saturday, February 11, 2023
Train	CME Carlisle to Euston
Loco	LMS Class 7P 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman*
Load	11 coaches, 412 tons tare 445 tons gross
Driver	Phil Heelis, coaxed by Mick Rawling
Fireman	Martyn Soames
Recorder	Graham Southway
Position	Ninth coach
Weather	Cloudy, mostly dry

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Appleby	0.00	0.00	00	00	
MP 276	1.35		04	01	41/51
MP 275	2.35		05	16	50½
MP 274	3.35		06	32	44½
MP 273	4.35		07	58	39
Griseburn	5.35		09	37	34
MP 271	6.35		11	17	38
Crosby Garret Tnl	8.35		14	00	45/49
MP 268	9.35		15	21	44½
MP 267	10.35		16	46	39½
Kirkby Stephen	10.79	15.00	17	24	38/37½
MP 266	11.35		18	19	38½
MP 265	12.35		19	59	33½
MP 264	13.35		21	54	30½
Mallerstang	14.35		23	16	37½/39½
MP 262	15.35		25	15	35½
MP 261	16.35		27	01	32
MP 260	17.35		29	04	26½
Ais Gill	17.60	25.00	29	35	32
Moorcock Tnl	19.85		32	35	60½
Garsdale	20.68	27.00	33	22	56
MP 253½	23.85		37	19	28½*
Dent	23.95		37	31	31½
Mp 251½	25.85		40	06	53½
Blea Moor Tnl	26.54		40	53	49
Blea Moor SB	28.86	36.00	44	08	30½/27
Ribblehead	30.10	39.00	46	39	36½
MP 245	32.35		49	16	65½/63½
Horton	34.85		51	38	65½
Helwith Bridge	36.85	46.00	53	06	61/65
Settle	40.85		57	30	58/55
Setle Jct	42.83	52.00	57	30	64
Long Preston	44.85		61	46	40½
Hellifield	45.89	58.00	65	47	

*brakes or speed restriction

Right: No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* heads the Railway Touring Company's 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' at Durranhill on January 28, 2023. SANDY SMEATON

Pre-order Issue 305: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

BR Class 47 D1924 *Crewe Diesel Depot* sits at Crewe station with Saphos Trains' 'The William Shakespeare' railtour on April 13, 2019. DON BENN

still be on the main line 58 years later? I digress, so here is Graham Southway's account of the train running on February 11:

"The timing from Appleby to Hellifield is a very tight 58 minutes, a time rarely achieved. No attempt at the Blue Riband as the train was a carriage short, but the time could be interesting if No. 46115 is anywhere near its best. Hard work for Martyn firing as from MP 275, more than 95% of the 15 miles to Ais Gill Summit is at 100 rising.

"The aim is to use the two miles of 440 rising-level-176 falling to Ormside to get close to 60mph or more. We didn't get close and only passed MP 275 on the 100 rising at 50.6mph after five minutes

TABLE TWO: HELLIFIELD TO CARLISLE

Date	Tuesday, September 27, 2022
Train	8.08am Lancaster to Carlisle
Loco	Rblt MN Class 4-6-2 No. 35018 *British India Line*
Load	11 coaches, 417½ tons tare 445 tons gross
Driver	Mick Rawling
Fireman	Robin Russell
Recorder	A. Smeaton
Position	Third coach
Weather	Sunny and cool

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Hellifield DGL	0.00	0	00	00	1 late
Long Preston	1.13		04	18	35
Settle Junction	3.13	6	06	51	57/57½
Settle	5.13		09	11	46½
Stainforth Siding	6.88		11	46	36
MP 240	8.63		14	58	30½
Helwith Bridge	9.13		15	57	32½
MP 241	9.63		16	51	35½/39
Horton	11.13	19	19	17	35½
MP 243	11.63		20	09	34½/33½
MP 244	12.63		21	53	34½
Selside	13.38		23	13	32½
MP 245½	14.13		24	38	31½
MP 246	14.63		25	36	30
MP 246½	15.13		26	37	28½
Ribblehead	15.88	25	28	18	25½
MP 248	16.63		30	19	22*
Blea Moor	17.13	29	31	38	22½
MP 251	19,63		36	47	42/43
MP 253	21.63		39	47	34*
Dent	22.03		40	32	30*
Garsdale	25.30	40	45	11	51½/55½
Ais Gill	28.38		48	50	47
MP 262	30.63		51	13	63/59½/62
Mallerstang	31.63		52	13	61/58½
MP 264	32.63		53	14	59½/65/60
Kirkby Stephen	35.21	52	55	42	60½/65/56½
Crosby Garrett	38.38		58	51	59½/63/62
Griseburn	40.63		61	02	64½/65/63½
Ormside	43.63		63	50	65½/66/53½
Appleby	45.88	63	66	09	54½/51½/64½
Long Marton	48.83		69	15	62½
Kirkby Thorne	50.63	68	71	02	59½
New Biggin	51.98		72	24	58½
Culgaith	53.31	71	73	45	63½
Langwathby	56.88	75/87	77	25	53
MP 290	58.63		79	15	61
Lazonby	61.23	92	81	57	50½/62
MP 295	63.63		86	36	20* tsr
MP 297	65.63		89	07	41½
Armathwaite	66.74		90	46	37/45
Low House	68.31	99	93	05	35½/29
Cotehill	69.63		95	23	43
Howe & Co. Siding	71.63	103	97	42	59/56
Cumwhinton	72.78		98	54	56½
Scotby	73.98		100	15	45
Petteril Bridge Jct	75.78	110	104	08	17½/22
Carlisle	76.69	114	107	38	5 early

* brakes or speed restriction

"The timing from Appleby to Hellifield is a very tight 58 minutes, a time rarely achieved. No attempt at the Blue Riband as the train was a carriage short, but the time could be interesting if No. 46115 is anywhere near its best."

On June 26, 1964 Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35013 *Blue Funnel* calls at Andover with the 7pm from Waterloo to Exeter. DON BENN

TABLE THREE: ANDOVER TO WATERLOO

Date	Friday, June 19, 1964
Train	4pm Plymouth North Road to Waterloo
Engine	Rblt MN class 4-6-2 No. 35018 *British India Line*
Load	Seven coaches and one van, 261 tons tare 275 tons gross
Crew	Salisbury
Recorder	Don Benn
Weather	Fine and warm

	miles	Sched	mins	secs	speed
Andover	0.00	0.00	00	00	11¼ late
MP 62½	3.75		06	57	46½
Hurstbourne	5.25		08	30	65/63
Whitchurch	7.15		10	17	65½
Overton	10.75		13	37	67/64
Oakley	13.95		16	37	66
Worting Jct	16.05	20.00	18	46	60
Basingstoke	18.55	24.00	22	57	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	10¼ late
Newnham Siding	4.10		06	54	55
Hook	5.60		08	28	64
Winchfield	7.95		10	40	72
Fleet	11.30		13	25	76
Farnborough	14.55		16	07	75
Sturt Lane Jct	15.50		16	59	73
MP 31	16.80		18	01	72
Pirbright Nct	18.30		19	09	75
Brookwood	19.80		20	28	76
Woking Jct	23.05		25	01	25*
Woking	23.50	27.00	26	19	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	9¾ late
West Byfleet	2.61		04	30	61
Byfleet	3.89		05	41	69
Weybridge	5.14		06	52	60
			pws		18*
Walton	7.21		11	11	38
Hersham	8.38		12	47	56
Esher	9.90		14	28	64
Hampton Court Jct	10.95	12.00	15	31	60
Surbiton	12.25	15.00	17	49	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	12¼ late
Berrylands	1.06		03	02	42½
New Malden	2.26		04	33	54½
Raynes Patk	3.40		05	50	59
Wimbledon	4.85		07	19	61
Earlsfield	6.51		09	00	62
Clapham Junction	8.11	11.00	11	10	38*
Queens Road	9.23		12	57	50
Vauxhall	10.73		14	40	45
Waterloo	12.04	18.00	18	11	12½ late

16 seconds of running. A mile in and we passed MP 274 at 44.3mph.

"Decent noise from up front but speed fell slowly to 42.6mph as we dived into Helm Tunnel, leaving it at 40.4mph. MP 273 was passed at 39mph and things were looking grim as we only passed MP 272 at 34mph. We hit the respite then, a mile and a quarter of 166r, left at 38mph; then a mile and a half of 200 rising to Crosby Garret Viaduct, 44mph. A half-mile of level track saw a further pick-up to 45mph and the momentum saw us up to 49mph at MP268 as we entered Waitby Rock Cutting. Round the curve then through Kirkby Stephen on easing 264 rising at 38mph, held back on the 100 rising past the signalbox, MP 2661/2. We were holding 39mph to MP 266, but again the continuous 100 rising bit back and we were down to 33.7mph at MP 265. Birkett Tunnel was entered at 31.5mph and left at 30.9mph; a minimum of 30.4mph at MP 264. Here there is the final respite, 3/4m of 330r around Mallerstang. Nice bit of noise as we got close to 40mph at MP 263, 3 miles of 100r to the summit. Sometimes we get a rousing run around the long curve to Ais Gill viaduct and onwards to the summit. Did we? Not this day. Speed fell slowly to 35.6mph at MP 262 and to 32.2mph at MP 261.

46115 'not at its best'

"We crossed Ais Gill Viaduct at just under 30mph and struggled a bit to pass MP 260, the climbing summit, at 26.7mph. Once the 100r was left, on the level we passed the Summit Board – hardly any lettering now visible – at 31.9mph. Blue Riband Section, MP 275-MP 260 took us 23 minutes 47 seconds; to the summit board, 24 minutes 19 seconds. Appleby to Ais Gill summit board had taken 29 minutes 35 seconds. Just one of those days when No. 46115 wasn't at its best. That's the thing about steam locomotives – two runs are rarely the same.

"Mostly down grade all the way to Settle. Decent pick-up to 61mph into Moorcock Tunnel and 56mph through Garsdale. Bit of 330 rising to Rise Hill Tunnel, 52.5mph in; 47mph out. Through Dent at the permanent 30mph; across Arten Gill Viaduct at 50mph; Dent Head Viaduct, 264 rising 53mph and up the 264 rising into Blea Moor Tunnel, 49mph. The usual trundle onto Batty Moss Viaduct, 27mph and through Ribblehead station, MP 274 /2, 176 falling, 37mph. Mostly 100 fallingdown to Selside, 65mph and MP 243 at 64mph. We dropped down through Horton-in-Ribblesdale, MP 242 1/2, 65mph and running in the early 60s over Sheriff's Brow and through Taitland's Tunnel. We passed Settle station at 58mph. Only recorded the speed through Long Preston, MP 232 1/2, 290 rising, 40mph before we slowed for the entry into Hellifield."

35018 northbound

On Tuesday, September 27, West Coast ran at 8.08am Lancaster to Carlisle via Preston and the Settle and Carlisle line. The locomotive was No. 35018 *British India Line* and the load 11 coaches for 445 tons full. Mick Rawling and Robin Russell were in charge of the train and the lax schedule meant that they had an easy day at the office, bringing the train into Carlisle five minutes early. Sandy Smeaton sent me the details and Table Two shows the run northbound from Hellifield, which requires little comment.

Back in 1964, I had another run with No. 35018, again on the 4pm Plymouth North Road, from Andover to Waterloo. In that last summer of steam on the Waterloo to Exeter route (apart from a few trains in summer 1965), the 7pm Waterloo to Exeter had an Andover stop added, which was very useful as us gricers could now catch the 4pm Plymouth back to Waterloo, giving a more civilised arrival time of 10.08pm. With the right driver, the 7pm Down could give us a storming run, and even time over the 66.35 miles was normal.

On Friday, June 19, we caught the 5.09pm Waterloo to Woking behind rebuilt West Country Class pacific No. 34025 *Whimple*. At that time, the 5.09pm Down worked by a Basingstoke crew often produced some fine performances. Driver Harris turned in a superb effort with 10 coaches for 355 tons, getting to Woking in 27 minutes 48 seconds, net 25¼, including a near stand for signals outside Woking. We were past Surbiton in 15 minutes 12 seconds, doing 76mph, and touched 78mph at Hersham. The enthusiastic crew whistled at every station!

Return to Waterloo was on the 6.03pm Woking, 11.55am from Plymouth North Road; rebuilt Battle of Britain Class No. 34052 *Lord Dowding* on just six coaches. Despite being on time, driver Hooper of Salisbury, standing in for Bert Cambray, needed to hurry due to a relaying slack at Oatlands, and produced a naughty 78mph at New Malden!

Fine run with 35013

All that set us up for the 7pm down, which had a full 12 coaches for 445 tons as it was a Friday evening. Driver Cox, also of Salisbury, was known to be one of the many fast men at Salisbury shed and we set off like a rocket over nine minutes late in attempt to regain

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On September 27, 2022, No. 35018 *British India Line* sits at Carlisle having arrived with the 8.08am from Lancaster via the Settle & Carlisle. SANDY SMEATON

Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35018 *British India Line* heads the 10.22am Waterloo to Bournemouth service near Pirbright on June 23, 1962. DON BENN

it all by Andover. His engine, rebuilt Merchant Navy Class Pacific No. 35013 *Blue Funnel*, was a regular at that time on the up 'Atlantic Coast Express' and 7pm down, and was in fine form. Only six minutes 30 seconds to pass Clapham Junction and 15 minutes nine seconds to Surbiton was a prelude to 82mph at Hersham and 81mph at Byfleet. We were over the MP 31 summit at 68mph in even time from the start despite a signal check at Woking and then 79mph after Fleet saw us stopped outside Basingstoke in just over 46 minutes from Waterloo for the 47¼ miles.

Ahead in the platform was a D65XX on the 7.08pm Waterloo to Southampton Docks, which had been given priority over the 7pm at Waterloo. Cox wasn't disheartened and continued in fine style, getting 80mph at Hurstbourne and 81mph before the Andover stop reached on 70 minutes 43 seconds, net time 60 minutes; the best of many fine runs on this train. The return to Waterloo with No. 35018 (details in Table Three) was, as always, an anticlimax.

Finally, a run behind D1921 on the heavy 13-coach 'Royal Wessex' on Wednesday, November 16, 1966 (details in Table Four). Ernie Harvey was a character and although not known for producing anything much by way of performance, he could offer entertainment. He had an allotment by the side of the main line and I recall once, as we passed by on a Down train, he was holding up a pair of beanpoles in the veritable V sign! D1921 was one of six Brush Type 4s transferred to the Southern in October 1966 to help a motive power shortage caused by the premature withdrawal of steam locomotives. Much derided then, I now regard them as one of the finest – if not the very finest – of all diesels.

"Just one of those days when No. 46115 wasn't at its best. That's the thing about steam locomotives – two runs are rarely the same."

TABLE FOUR: WATERLOO TO WINCHESTER

Date	Wednesday, November 16, 1966
Train	4.35pm Waterloo to Weymouth
Loco	Brush Type 4 2580 hp Co-Co No. D1921
Load	13 coaches, 443 tons tare 480 tons gross
Driver	Ernie Harvey Nine Elms
Recorder	Don Benn
Weather	Strong NW wind, wet and cold

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Waterloo	0.00	0.00	00	00	¼ min late
Vauxhall	1.29		03	03	38
			pws		33*
Queens Road	2.81		05	07	44
Clapham Junction	3.93	7.00	06	53	40*
Earlsfield	5.58		09	06	54½
			sigs		34*
Wimbledon	7.24		11	27	37
Raynes Park	8.64		13	16	54½
			pws		49*
New Malden	9.78		14	38	47*
Berrylands	10.98		15	57	54
Surbiton	12.04		17	10	58½
Hampton Court Jct	13.34	18.00	18	25	66
Esher	14.39		19	20	71½
Hersham	15.91		20	36	75
Walton	17.08		21	20	75
Oatlands Box	18.12		22	21	73
Weybridge	19.15		23	11	70
Byfleet	20.40		24	20	65½
West Byfleet	21.68		25	30	64
			sigs stop		27* to LL
Woking	24.29		29	29	0*
			29	38	
			sigs		8*
Woking Jct	24.75	33.00	32	38	28½/51
			sigs		23*
Brookwood	27.99		37	51	18* to TL
Pirbright Jct	29.49		40	33	49½
MP 31	31.00		42	08	55½
Sturt Lane Jct	32.15		43	18	64
Farnborough	33.20		44	13	69
Fleet	36.48		46	52	75½/76
Winchfield	39.83		49	27	70/68
Hook	42.16		51	25	70
Newnham Siding	43.70		52	42	69/75
Basingstoke	47.75		56	19	63*
Worting Jct	50.26	62.00	58	54	51½
Wootton Box	52.50		61	18	61
Steventon Box	53.95		62	38	68
Waltham Box	55.10		63	35	70
Roundwood Box	56.20		64	32	66
Micheldever	58.05		66	05	73/74
Weston Box	60.20		67	52	70
Wallers Ash Box	61.70		69	11	66
			sigs		27*
Winchester Jct Box	64.45	79.00	72	55	34/48½
Winchester	66.55	82.00	76	39	5¼ early

Victorian vets take centre stage at GNRA sale

TWO LNWR nameplates from locomotives built more than 140 years ago will be making their auction debuts in Great Northern's timed online sale that will run from April 6-8. They are *Caradoc* and *Duchess of Lancaster*, from Francis Webb-designed Precedent class Nos. 2192 and 480, both of which have been in the same family for many years.

No. 2192 emerged from Crewe (works No. 1919) in April 1875 and was withdrawn in January 1894, while, despite its lower number, No. 480 was built at the same works more than five years later, in November 1880 (works No. 2404) and was taken out of service in February 1897.

Each of these 2-4-0s was officially 'renewed' on withdrawal, but this was a term used by LNWR for accountancy purposes and they were in fact replaced by new locomotives using the same number and name.

Great Northern boss Dave Robinson said the second nameplate from No. 2192 had never surfaced.

Among a selection of handlamps in the auction is a PW inspector's Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway example plated for the Macclesfield Bollington & Marple Railway, an 11-mile line opened jointly by the MSLR and North Staffordshire Railway in August 1869.

This will be joined by a Cheshire Lines Committee ex-Brunswick shed lamp, and also by a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway pattern lamp stamped L&NWRY, a style produced only in 1922 after the two companies had merged the year before Grouping,

More memories of the North Staffordshire Railway will be recalled by a 1912 LMS Stoke worksplate.

These works were opened by the NSR in 1864, with locomotive construction starting four years later. Records indicate that the engines built there in 1912 were three K class 4-4-2Ts and a Class KT 4-4-0. The LMS closed the works in 1927.

It was originally planned to hold the auction at Poynton Leisure Centre, but in a late switch, Dave Robinson decided to make it a timed online auction and this will be Great Northern's second of the year, following an email and telephone 'Alpha' sale of 556 lots of general railwayana that ran from January 21 to February 2. The highest realisation in this auction was £1050 (plus buyer's premium of 15%) for a BR(M) totem sign from Guide Bridge, a Greater Manchester station opened by the Sheffield Ashton-under-Lyne & Manchester Railway in November 1841 as Ashton & Hooley Hill. It was renamed in July 1845 and is still open today.

Bloxham signals that demand remains strong

SIGNALLING items from the Victorian era of rail travel were among the stars in Great Central's 'Bloxham'-style live online auction on February 18, which featured 600 lots of general railwayana.

Pride of place went to a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway circa 1860 Preece's combined block bell and signal indicator that went for £2350, while a 10-lever frame manufactured by the Railway Signal Co of Liverpool in 1898 for the London & Southern Western Railway sold for £520. Ironically, despite its origins, the frame ended its operational days near Skegness, far away from the LSWR.

Sandwiched between this pair at £1150 was a Wrexham Mold & Connah's Quay Railway cast iron boundary marker, which fetched £1150. This nine-mile line opened for goods traffic in January 1866, followed four months later by the launch of passenger trains, and at Grouping in 1923, by which time it was part of the Great Central Railway, it became the LNER's most westerly outpost.

From more modern times was a BR(W) refreshments enamel sign (£440), and from the region's predecessor, a GWR two-lever detonator frame removed from the Carn Brea yard signalbox in Cornwall on its closure in 1973 (£400). Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

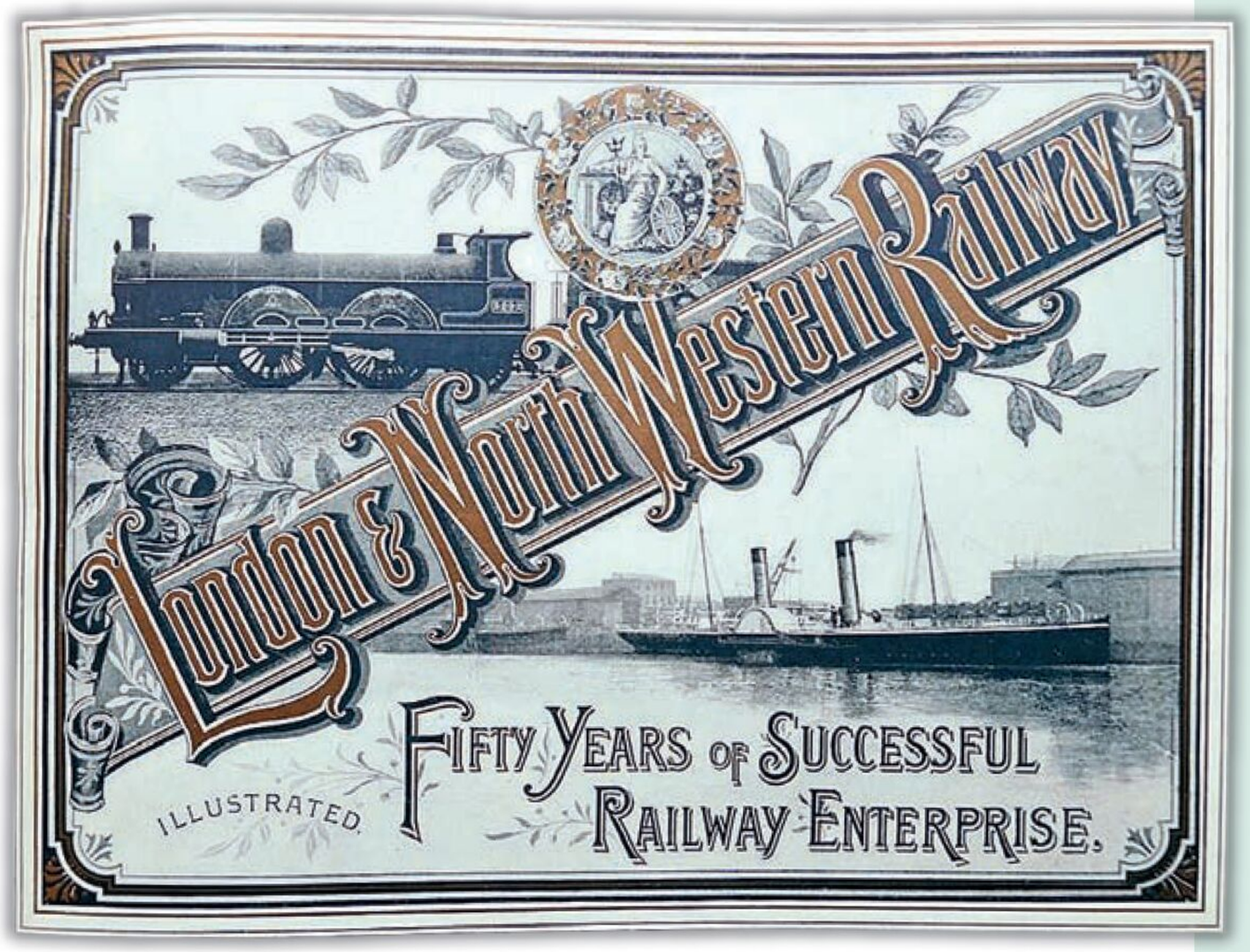
"An excellent auction with only a handful of not-solds," said auctioneer Mike Soden of this 'no frills' sale "The demand is still very much there, with no signs of it abating."

Paperchase makes light work of railway plan

A MIDLAND Railway cloth-bound plan of the Burton and Ashby Light Railways dated June 1906 was the top seller in the Paperchase January 14-31 auction with a realisation of £460. The 3ft 6in gauge electric tramway ran 10 miles between Burton upon Trent and Ashby-de-la-Zouch via Swadlincote, and was operated by the MR from opening in July 1906 until the 1923 Grouping, and subsequently by the LMS until the line's closure in February 1927.

From 1925 came a bound and gold titled ex-Perth 800-page volume of the LMS northern division's passenger and freight working timetables (£410), and at £360 was an LNWR commemorative book titled Fifty Years of Successful Railway Enterprise, a publication dating from the 1890s that contained within its leather-bound hardback covers 276 gilt-edged pages of illustrations, diagrams and maps. The company recorded its golden jubilee in July 1896 and the book is from that period, when the LNWR was the UK's largest joint stock company.

Close behind this book with a realisation of £320 was a bound volume of Caledonian Railway public timetable booklets dated May, July and October 1910. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 12½%.



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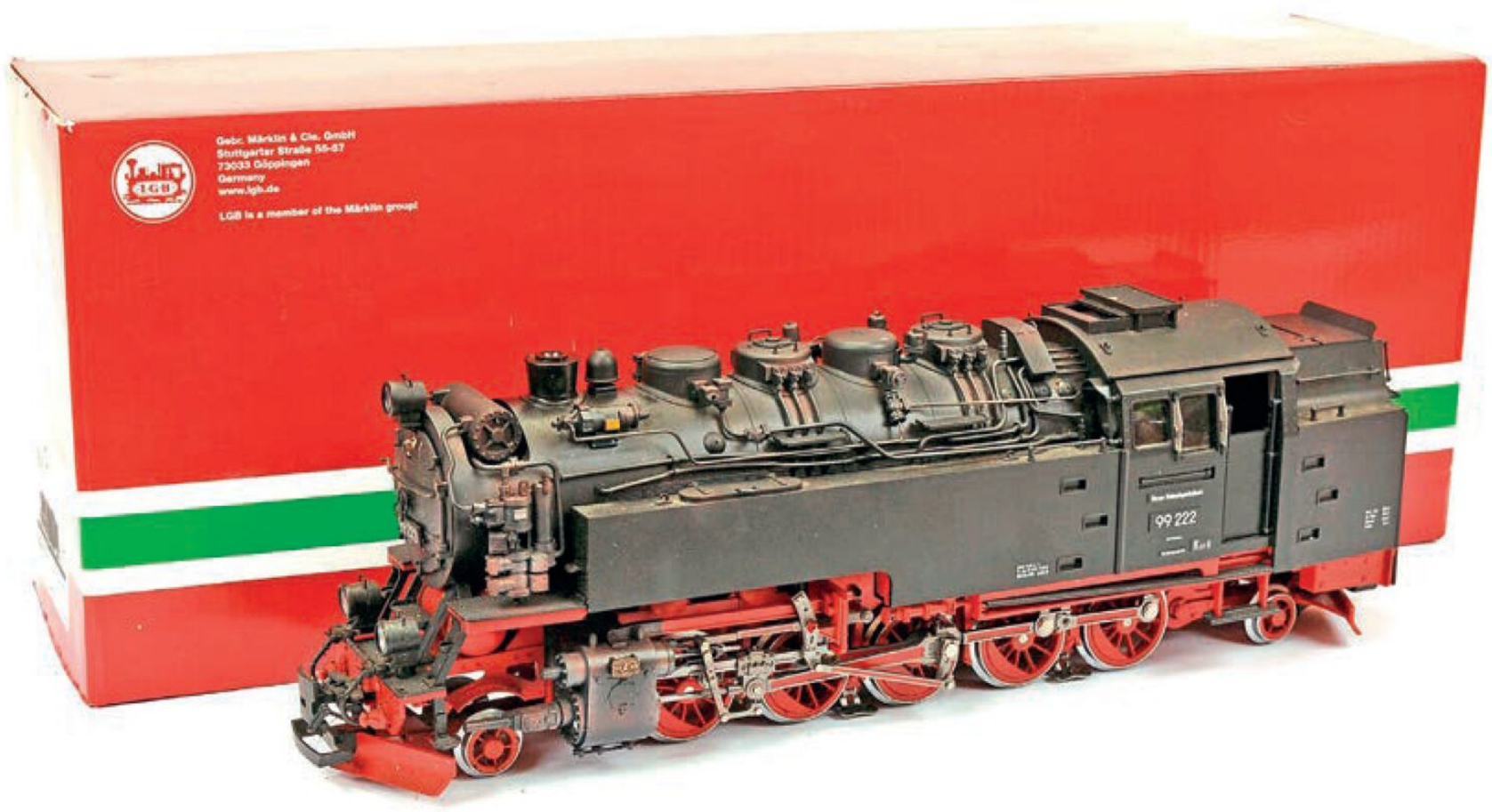
Welsh quartet set to entertain TRA saleroom audience

A QUARTET of BR(M) totems from the former LNWR Llandudno Junction to Blaenau Festioniog line were late entries in Talisman's saleroom auction being held at Newark Showground on March 18. They are Llandudno Junction, Dolgarrog, Llanrwst & Trefriw, and Betws-y-Coed.

Llandudno Junction was opened in 1858 and re-sited in 1897, Dolgarrog in 1916, Llanrwst & Trefriw in 1863, and Betws-y-Coed in 1868. Llanrwst & Trefin was also re-sited, in 1868, and has seen a number of name changes over the years, including becoming Llanrwst North in 1989 and – wait for it – North Llanrwst in 2004. The line is still open as the Conwy Valley Line, with trains operated by Transport for Wales. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21, North Llanrwst was used by just 92 passengers, although Dolgarrog fared little better, at 102.

Four Midland Railway ex-Beighton signalbox lever plates will also feature in the auction. They include 'Home from L.D & EC.Rly to Great Central Rly' and 'Points Up Main Line & Gt Central Line,' and are being sold as a single lot. The now demolished 'box was six miles south-east of Sheffield.

The auction – which, as reported in last month's column in *Heritage Railway*, includes LMS Jubilee nameplates *United Provinces* and *Hyderabad* from Nos. 45578 and 45585, and *Ballymoss*, from Class 55 Deltic D9018/55018 – is being held at Newark Showground and starts at 10am.



Narrow win for LGB of Germany in model auction head-to-head with SR

TWO G gauge models headed a Vectis railwayana and model train auction at Thornaby on February 17, while on the same day a similar sale held by Lacy Scott & Knight saw a 5in gauge live steam 0-4-0T make the headlines.

The leader of the Vectis duo at £1100 was an LGB of Germany model of Harz Narrow Gauge Railways' 99 class No. 99 222, a 2-10-2T built in 1931 that survives today on the metre gauge line. Behind at £850 came an Accucraft SR Lynton & Barnstaple Railway 2-6-2T No. E188 *Lew*. Shadowing these two with a price of £800 was a late Victorian/early Edwardian 2½in gauge live steam train set built by Ernst Plank, a German manufacturer of toy steam engines established in 1866. The set included an 0-4-0 named *Vulkan,* which comprised a brass boiler and free-running front wheels with the rear wheels fixed to a single cylinder on both sides. The engine was attached to a four-wheeled tender, and also included in the set was a tinplate covered wagon and running track.

Over at LSK in Bury St Edmunds, the 5in gauge live steam top model with a realisation of £1800 was a 'Chub' 0-4-0T named *Olive* made from CJ Kennion Brothers castings, behind which, at £850, was a prewar Hornby O gauge electric LMS Princess Royal Pacific No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth*. The Vectis prices exclude buyer' premium of 25%, and those at LSK 27%, both including VAT.

Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **March 17**
  Vectis *(model trains)*
- **March 18**
  Talisman Railwayana
- **Ends March 24**
  Great Central Railwayana *(photographs)*
- **March 27-April 2**
  Railwayana Sales *(photographs)*
- **April 6-8**
  Great Northern Railwayana
- **April 14-May 2**
  Paperchase
- **April 15**
  Great Central Railwayana *('Bloxham' sale)*
- **April 15**
  Thirsk Railwayana

Ticket from 'world first' overhead line sells for £360

A Liverpool Overhead Railway 3d ticket for a first class journey from Wapping Dock – believed to have been issued in the first few weeks of the line opening – sold for £360 in a Paddington Ticket Auctions' postal sale that ended on February 3.

The seven-mile line, which was carried on mainly iron viaducts, opened on March 6, 1893, and was the world's first elevated electric railway, the first to use electric colour signals and automatic signalling, and also the first to operate electric multiple units. It closed in December 1956 despite public opposition, and in doing so created another, but ironic, first – by becoming the first electrified urban railway to close in the UK.

From the other side of the world, seven Kowloon-Canton Railway tickets sold as a single lot for £350 and 18 Japanese tickets, also a single lot, for £270. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 10% (+ VAT).

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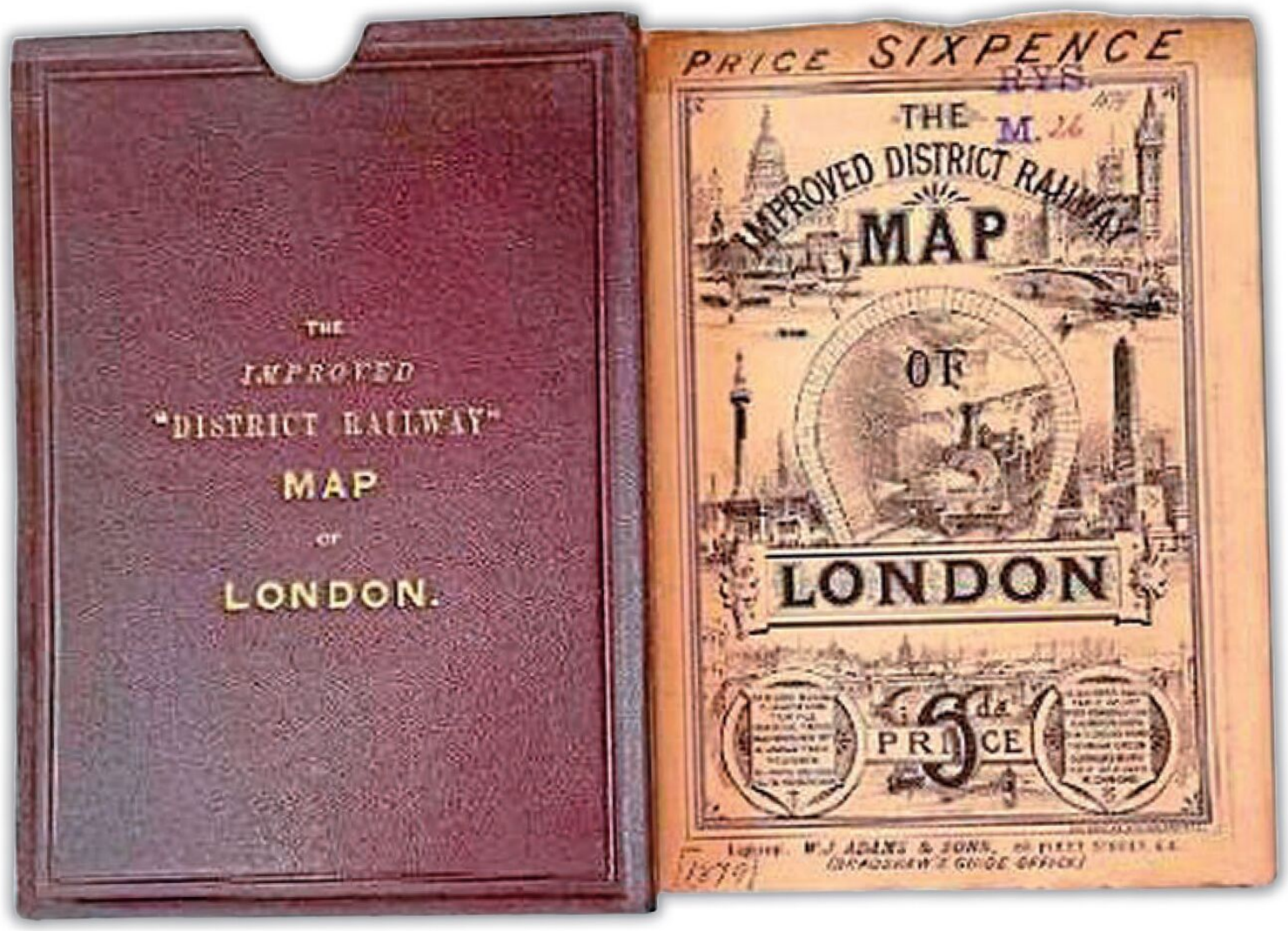
GWR close to Underground with capital poster duo

THE Underground movement may have put on its expected strong show in the Transport Auctions of London live online 400-lot sale on February 25, but the GWR was breathing down its neck thanks to a complementary pair of posters that, ironically, were promoting the capital itself.



Issued in 1936, they were by Ernest Coffin (1868-1944), and each offered a bird's eye view of parts of central London. The first, which sold for £1500, included Westminster Bridge, the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and Paddington Station, and the second Trafalgar Square, the Strand, Fleet Street and St Paul's Cathedral (£1300). A third GWR poster, of Tenby by Ronald Lampitt (1906-88) and dating from 1946, fetched £700.

Station totem signs BR(W) Didcot and BR(Sc) High Street sold for £850 and £750 respectively, while GWR cabside numberplate 5757 went under the hammer for £600. This was from a 1929 Swindon-built 0-6-0PT that was withdrawn by BR from Westbury (82D) in November 1960 and sold to London Transport, which renumbered it L91 and extended its working life until 1970.

The London Underground items that just pipped the GWR posters comprised platform roundels Knightsbridge (£1700) and Oxford Circus (£1600), with Bank offering support at £1300, and a bid of £1000 secured an 1879 'improved' first edition District Railway map of London showing the District and Metropolitan railways within its original leather-cloth slip cover. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

"Generally speaking, prices were steady and we achieved a successful sale rate of 97%," said TAL principal Michael Wickham, as he processed the day's events of what was the second of five railwayana auctions on successive Saturdays.

Hargreaves Steam Railway Coal

Hargreaves will have available in 2023 for the UK Heritage Steam Railway market the Low Smoke emission Ffos-y-fran Welsh Steam Coal

Hargreaves also have available throughout the 2023 Steam Season, Polish Steaming Coal in 3 sizes and also the established Newburn Steaming Ovoids.

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On track with O gauge Wickhams

THE third project announced under the Ellis Clark Trains brand has been delivered and is perfect for those operating small layouts or wanting to set the scene of permanent way works.

The Wickham type 27 inspection trolleys saw the first example roll out of the firm's Ware works in 1948 for delivery to Nigerian Railways in Appa, before the Western Region of British Rail received its first Type 27A the following year. Various types of trolley were introduced by Wickham, and examples of this type could be found operating on the network right up until the mid-1990s.

Their ability to ferry up to eight people with a light amount of equipment, or even more when towing accompanying trailers, meant they were incredibly useful and cheap to operate; their Ford car engines, gearbox and reverser also making them easy to repair and replace parts on. Examples of the Type 27 can be found on the Severn Valley Railway (No. 9021) and at Midsomer Norton (No. 7504).

The Ellis Clark models pack much detail into a relatively small space, with detailed dials on the control panel, etched grills, correctly detailed finescale wheels and even directional lighting. Each model is accompanied by a flatbed trailer, of which two variations are available – full flat and planked sides – with a plethora of liveries to choose from.

A limited edition version has been produced in the WR's iconic chocolate and cream colour, as preserved at Didcot Railway Centre, with other preserved versions being the Somerset & Dorset Railway's maroon trolley (as B40W) with white roof, and Mangapps Farm Railway Museum's example with black with wasp stripes. Other general release liveries include BR green, BR maroon, BR all-yellow, and yellow with wasp stripes. Accompanying trailers are also available in matching colours.

Prices start at £150 for DC examples of these interesting vehicles and one accompanying trailer. Additional trailers can be bought individually, each priced at £28.

Those looking to create an authentic scene at the lineside will also be interested in EC's first laser-cut kit that has been introduced to accompany the release of the Wickhams. The dual-lane Wickham sheds could be found at the lineside from the 1940s to accommodate these vehicles, often at a 90-degree tangent to the main running line.

Kits are priced at £45 and include all laser-cut components, including hinges for the doors, along with glazing and a metal cast stove and chimney.

All items are exclusive to EC's website: ellisclarktrains.co.uk

CO-BOs, new gos, and nos for Rapido Trains

THE end of January saw Rapido Trains' N gauge class 28 models arrive – the first ever ready-to-run model of the Metropolitan Vickers type 2 diesel electric locomotive.

Known as 'Metrovicks', 'Crossleys' and 'Co-Bos', 20 locomotives were built under the pilot scheme for diesel locomotives during BR's 1955 modernisation plan, being introduced between 1958/59.

It was unique in BR practice for having a both a six and four-wheel bogie with drive on all axles. The V8 two-stroke, eight-cylinder Crossley engines were problematic from the off, with frequent failures leading to the return to their builders in 1961 for remedial work to rectify both these and issues with cab windows falling out. They did not last long and were withdrawn after just 11 years in service, with one – D5705 – surviving into preservation.

It is currently being overhauled at the East Lancashire Railway.

The Rapido model of the class represents the post-1961 'flat-screen' modifications, with a wealth of separately fitted parts, including handrails, windscreen wipers and headcode discs. Directional lighting is fitted as standard and can be additionally controlled through DCC, for which a Next18 decoder socket is provided.

Eight models are available, which includes D7505 in BR green with small yellow panels. The RRP is £119.95 for DC versions, rising to £219.95 for sound-fitted, and are available from Rapido's own webstore as well as its approved list of stockists.

The manufacturer has also announced that thanks to a positive response to its proposal, its Wisbech & Upwell Tramway coaches will be produced in BR maroon, in addition to the already announced GER and Titfield Thunderbolt liveries.

A proposal for its first British outline O gauge model, the LNER J70 tram, however, did not receive sufficient expressions of interest, so Rapido has opted not to progress any further with this locomotive, though this may be revisited in future.

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RISE OF THE URIE LOCOMOTIVES

With T3 4-4-0 No. 563 taking the spotlight recently, **Owen Hayward** paid a visit to Ropley to look at another LSWR class that may have passed some people by – but promises to be something equally enticing.

THE overhaul of LSWR 4-4-0 T3 No. 563 has dominated the headlines somewhat in recent months as its first steaming since 1945 draws ever closer thanks to the sterling efforts of Swanage Railway volunteers and Flour Mill contractors. However, while the limelight has been on this veteran, over at Ropley on the Mid-Hants Railway, another LSWR locomotive is progressively making its way through the works, while another is in regular service – step forward the Urie Locomotive Society and its two S15 4-6-0 examples, Nos. 499 and 506.

Built at Eastleigh in 1920, No. 499 is the oldest surviving example of the S15 class and is just one of two that remain of the Urie design era. From 1927, Maunsell made modifications to his predecessor's locomotive that saw the boiler pressure increased and cylinder bore reduced by half an inch, amid many other alterations.

Both Nos. 499 and 506 entered service at Nine Elms before moving to Feltham in 1940 to work the new marshalling yard there. Interestingly, a year later No. 499 was commandeered, along with Nos. 496-498, to help on the Great Western Railway with the increased freight traffic there. They remained with the rival company through much of the war, none being returned to their home region until March 1943, with the last being handed back that July.

Both of these Urie locomotives were withdrawn in January 1964, with No. 506 being selected to haul No. 499 and two other classmates on their final journey that June to Woodham Brother's scrapyard at Barry; unfortunately, a blown superheater element at Staines saw it stopped mid-journey.

The rest continued with a different locomotive while No. 506 returned to Feltham, not moving to Barry until August. There they languished until the formation of the ULS in April 1972, the goal – save one Urie-designed member of the class.

First purchase

No. 506 was bought in March 1973 for £3000, just days before the introduction of VAT, thus saving a not insignificant sum. It did not leave Barry until April 1976 while a home for it was secured (which members voted in favour of the Mid-Hants) and funds for transportation were raised. Sadly though, the top of the firebox was found to have cracks following a metallurgical test in 1979 and it was deemed unrepairable, so the ULS returned to Barry to find another, which came from Maunsell design S15 No. 30825.

"A more than fair price was put forward as soon as it came across the scrapper's weighbridge," publicity officer Stephen Bedser recalled. "The society obviously snapped Dai Woodham's hand off for it before he could change his mind!"

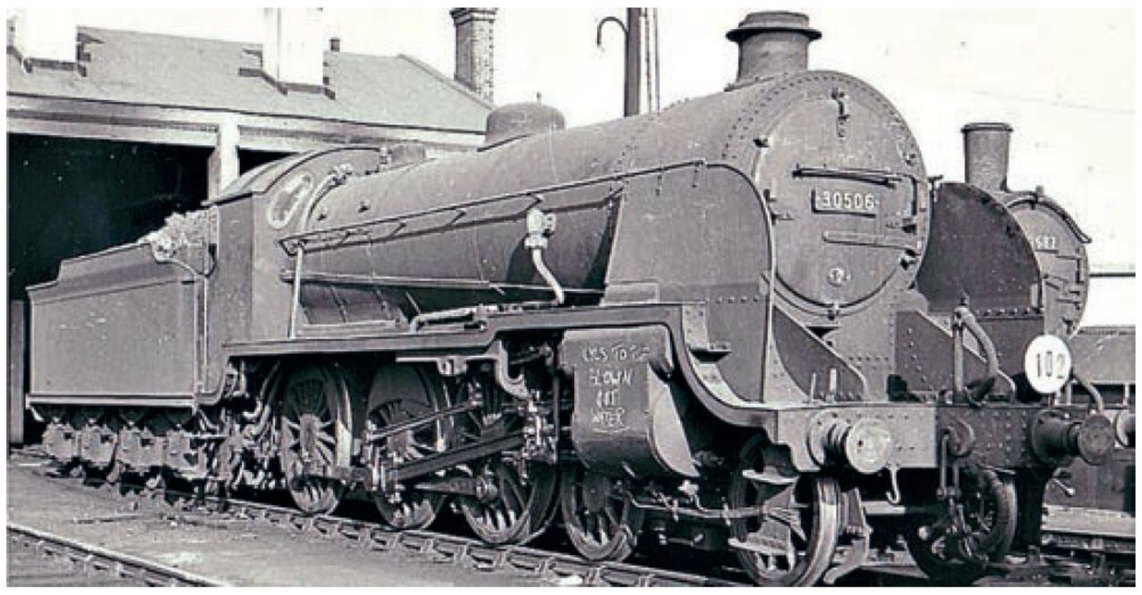
No. 506 was also found to have corrosion and wastage on the frames, and this would take time to rectify.

Meanwhile, No. 499 had been languishing in the scrapyard as it awaited its own fate, its tender having been sold to go with U class 2-6-0 No. 31625. A proposal was made for the ULS to acquire it initially as a source of spares for No. 506.

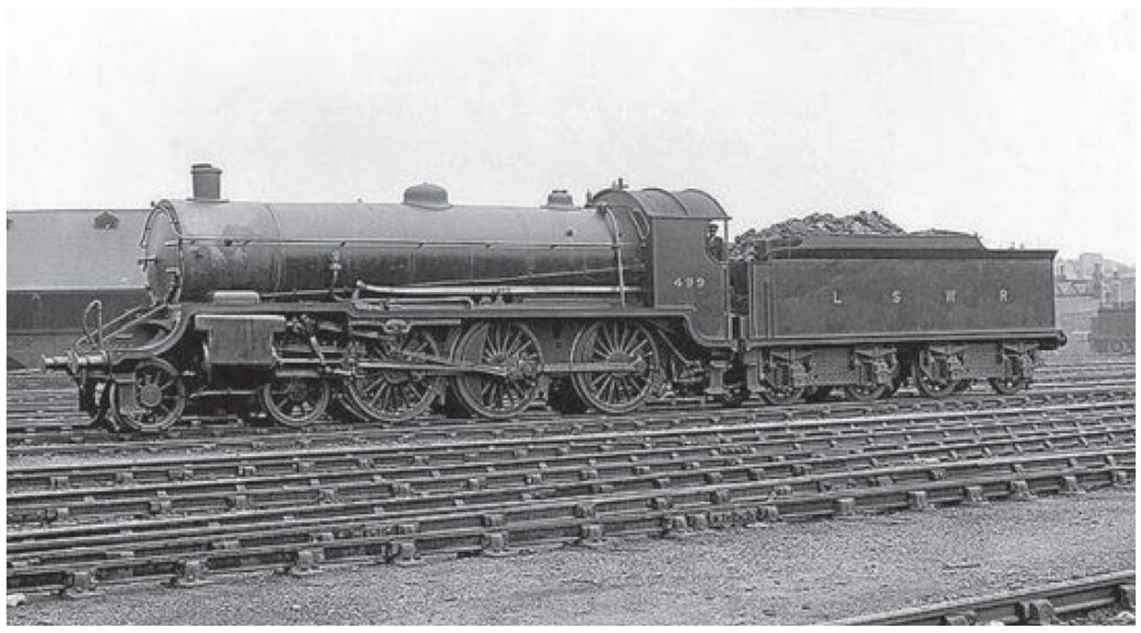
By 1980, a sale was agreed, but the intentions were different and the oldest Urie example of the class was also to be restored – but not until after No. 506 had been finished. No. 499 was moved to Ropley in 1983.

No. 506 first steamed on the MHR in 1987, running for a full 14 years before coming out of service for overhaul. A renewed operating

No. 506 visited the Great Central Railway for its Winter Steam Gala, pictured at Rabbit Bridge on January 29. Its condition represents the later modified version of the class. Such was its popularity that the railway has already requested No. 499 once that has been completed. JOHN TITLOW



An undated photo of the society's second S15, No. 506, in BR days. Partially legible chalking on the cover suggests it was stopped at this point with water in the cylinders. The locomotive has been restored into this later modified condition and now runs in unlined Southern black. ULS



Urie class S15 No. 499 as it looked when originally built – and the appearance it will return to once restoration is completed by Urie Locomotive Society volunteers, along with with stovepipe chimney and absent smoke deflectors. ULS

New plates for the bogie pivot points on the tender underside have been fitted, the old ones having been rather worn. OWEN HAYWARD

No. 499 has come a long way since this photograph taken shortly after the society purchased it from Barry scrapyard in 1980. Originally acquired as a source of spares, it was later decided to overhaul it as the oldest class survivor. ULS

agreement saw it overhauled again, returning to steam in 2019 – a year before its centenary.

Restoration of this second Urie S15 has been carried out in two phases to date, and where No. 506 represents the class at the end of its life, No. 499 will be an example of the design as it was first introduced, complete with stovepipe chimney and absence of smoke deflectors.

In 1996, the front end was taken to Ian Riley Engineering at Bury, where the boiler was removed and used on No. 506 (which is what enabled it to run for such a long period of time before being withdrawn for overhaul). While there, some remedial work was carried out on the frames, and the wheels and crank pins were also turned. The rolling chassis returned to Hampshire in November 2008, but did not move to Ropley until 2011. Here it was lifted off the rails (minus its wheels) onto a specially laid concrete plinth and restoration commenced once more, which included the replacement of the front third section.

"What was interesting when the frames were rubbed back was that original scribed lines were found for the axles and angling of the cylinders," engineering director Barry Stratton said. "It was amazing to find that, after all these years, the 'fingerprints' of those who built it back in the 1920s were still there."

Smart spending

As with any outdoor project, protection from the elements is half the battle. You can finish a job to a beautifully high standard, but if left exposed, that will quickly deteriorate. With no shed space available, the ULS volunteers did the next best thing and erected a makeshift shelter over the frames of No. 499 – perhaps one of the most valuable investments made. This has meant there is no constant battle to stop components rusting or degrading and allowing investment elsewhere.

Speaking of expenditure, the ULS has been very self-sufficient, though it does work hand-in-hand with its host railway.

"We won't contract out work we can do ourselves unless we absolutely have to," chairman and director Mark Pedley told me. "We have a very good working relationship with the MHR and regularly help one another out. If we have too many people about for the work available, some of us will go and help with railway tasks knowing that when we need help, we can get it in return. There's even a member of paid staff in the workshops who will come down on some weekends after a week in there for his job and carry out machining tasks. While we do collect a hire fee for our operating locomotive, it stays within the railway to pay for work – such as that on the boiler – that we cannot do ourselves. Again, it helps them out, and in return, we get use of the facilities, along with help from the paid skilled staff when we need it."

The society is equally clever in repurposing other assets. The replacement ashpan for No. 499 has been made with steel sheet offcuts shaped by hand (and you may be interested in knowing that parts of a fire extinguisher were used for that of No. 506!) Nothing is wasted here, where it can be avoided – especially time.

"We want to do it once, and do it well," Barry said. It can be very easy to do the easy jobs first, but here work has been methodically planned to avoid excessive fitting and removal of components, while also making things easier for the volunteers. At present, the tender chassis is upside down in the yard at Ropley.

"This makes working on the underside much easier, compared to having to reach above your head all the time," Mark explained. Currently, focus here is on the back end. Stretchers have been braced after cracks were found, and new pivot castings for the two tender bogies have been fitted.

Amid much new stuff, the bufferbeam is the original and even retains some impact damage from a collision at some point during its earlier working life; only minor, but its retention means there is some originality amid much new metal here. Once the back end and bottom is done, work will concentrate on the front end, which will need to be completely taken apart, cleaned up and riveted back together before being flipped over.

The water tank is integral to the frame as the floor is riveted to the frames first before the tank body is built in situ. That, too, will be riveted; welding would be quicker but won't work as well. It also means the design is kept as true to the original design as possible, something that is key to this overhaul, with even minor aspects such as flush rivets on the bufferbeam as opposed to raised countersunk

It may require a closer look, but the spokes of the leading bogie wheels for No. 499 are now painted in Holly Green with black tyres. OWEN HAYWARD

The front section of the frames for No. 499 have been replaced and also been painted into Holly Green, giving a taste of what's to come in the years ahead. OWEN HAYWARD

On February 18, No. 506 was back in action at the Mid-Hants for the half-term running, having returned from its short holiday to the Great Central Railway. It is pictured with the first Alton-bound departure out of Ropley. OWEN HAYWARD

used on No. 506.

That is not to say some alterations have been incorporated where practical; the ashpan has been bolted, whereas the original would have been welded – a minor change that will make it quicker and easier to repair as it wears through in service. It has also been made thicker than the original, helping to prolong its life.

Boiler work

The boiler for No. 499, now returned from its classmate, is currently in the boilershop at Ropley, where new copper laps are being welded in to the firebox. A new throat plate and outer wrapper half sides are also to be fitted, but in general the boiler itself is pretty good. "Eastleigh built them like battleships," joked Barry.

A decision is yet to be made on how to deal with oversized holes on the steam dome, and firebox crown stays still need to come out, but work progresses at a steady pace.

Perhaps most excitingly, though, are the first applications of LSWR Holly Green (a darker shade than that being applied to the T3) on the bogie wheelsets. In a sector primarily dominated by BR black and green liveries, it will be refreshing to see something both different and unique, representing one of the earlier operating companies that are just as much a part of our railway history as their later successors.

No. 506 has been to two other heritage railways in the last 12 months for galas – the Severn Valley (April 2022) and Great Central (January 2023) – and was well received by public and crew alike. "Neither place really wanted to see it leave," Barry mused. "We have already had requests from both to play host to No. 499 when that is completed, as will many other lines, I've no doubt."

Mark is confident that the society's aim to have a double-headed train with both locomotives will be possible "with time to spare" ahead of No. 506 next being withdrawn for overhaul, though he is wary of committing to specific timescale because, as the last few years have demonstrated, anything could happen before then.

A similar desire is to see both locomotives at the head of a train formed of the society's nine goods vehicles, some of which are currently operating in the MHR freight set, while others, such as ex-MoD Long Marston 'pillbox' brake No. WD49001, require restoration that won't commence until the locomotives are running.

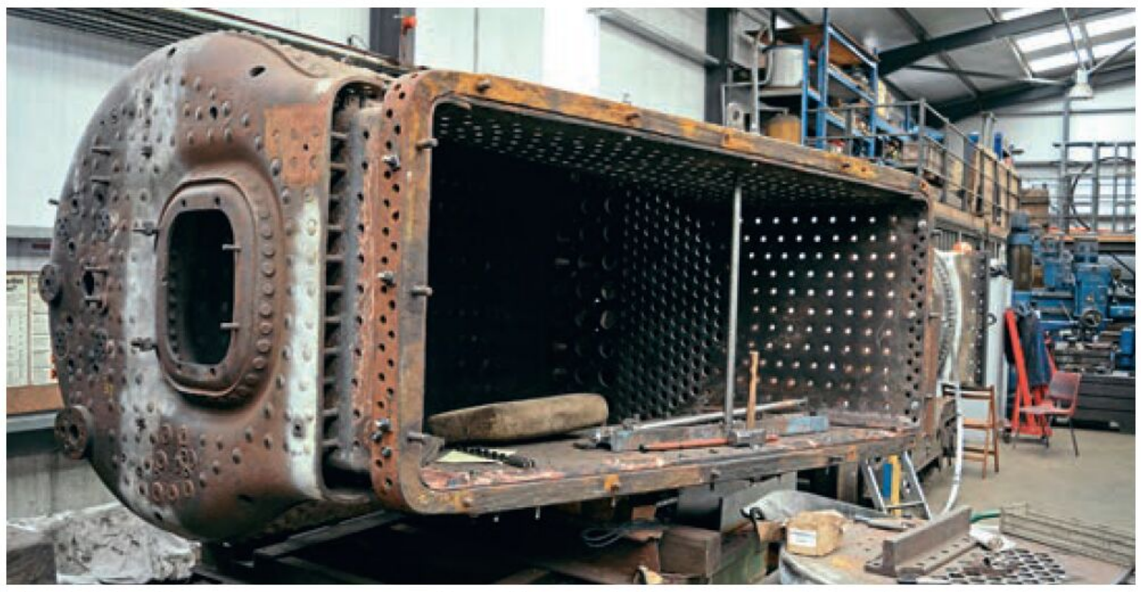
The society has just upgraded its website to process membership applications online. Currently, a modest £15 per year for adults, rates are set to face a small rise in light of increasing printing and postage costs for its Stovepipe magazine. To sign up, visit uriesociety.co.uk

With No. 499 set for a return to steam soon, perhaps we will be able to enjoy a LSWR gala in the years to come with No. 499, 506, and 563 brought together. Add Swanage's M7 No. 30053 (LSWR No. 53), which is also not far off completion of overhaul, or maybe even the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's own 0-4-4T W24 Calbourne (LSWR No. 209), and you have a recipe for something truly exciting.

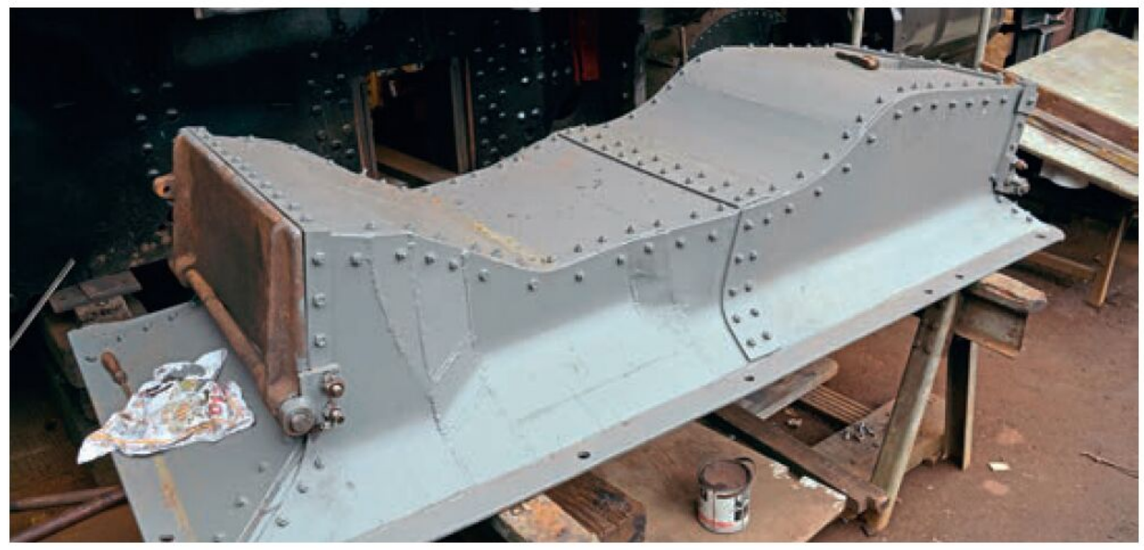
All that would be missing is the Bluebell Railway's Adams radial tank No. 488, B4 0-4-0T No. 96 *Normandy* and the two Beattie well tanks, Nos. 30585 at Quainton Road and 30587 at the National Railway Museum in York – all of which, sadly, are out of ticket. Perhaps such a tantalising proposal might inspire people to get some of these going?

When approached about the prospect of an overhaul for *Normandy*, Bulleid Society chairman John Fry said: "There is currently no space in the overhaul list (at the Bluebell Railway) for this engine, but the society is considering possible outside contractors for parts such as the boiler. We are aware the driving wheels will require new tyres, too.

"The return to traffic of No. 96 would be welcomed by the railway since it is ideal for shunting, and it was the main source of motive power when the northern extension first started." HR



The boiler for No. 499 is currently in the workshops at Ropley, where a new section of outer firebox wrapper will be welded in around the bottom. New copper laps have also been fitted inside. OWEN HAYWARD



The new ashpan for No. 499 has been completed, assembled and riveted together in contrast to the original that would have been welded. This will make it easier to replace wasted sections, and thicker metal will also help prolong its working life. OWEN HAYWARD

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BUSINESS AS USUAL INSIDE BRIDGNORTH SHED

Despite the current difficult financial situation on the Severn Valley Railway, locomotive overhauls are continuing inside Bridgnorth Shed – but no additions will be undertaken until the present jobs are completed, freeing up space. It is most important is to keep the steam fleet running and fully operational, reports **John Titlow,** in words and pictures.

Inside Bridgnorth Shed, morale remains very high despite the cutbacks being made on the Severn Valley Railway. Many full-time staff volunteer extra hours as drivers, firemen and cleaners, preparing the locomotives for the day's work.

With the running of steam locomotives, it goes without saying that regular maintenance is essential for reliability; as with your car, in addition to the annual service, you would do regular checks on aspects like oil and water. For a steam locomotive, there is the monthly mechanical examination that takes place after 30 days in steam, the annual examination every 12 to 14 months, and the valve and piston examination every 20,000 to 25,000 miles.

Much of this schedule dates back to pre-1968, when steam running was a daily occurrence. A system has been built up over the years by the experience gained operating the SVR's steam fleet combined with BR practice and by observing other organisations, and it has become the industry norm throughout the heritage sector.

Will Marsh, the mechanical team leader at Bridgnorth, is the author of the inspection schedules. He has assembled a maintenance list that has not only helped the SVR, but also several other heritage lines. All examination lists begin with the locomotive and tender number, mileage, date, and the examiner. Each area of inspection is then broken down into sections, with sub-tasks containing instructions on how to carry out each stage of the examination. Where any observations or dimensions need to be checked against a tolerance, further information is included within another SVR guide. Observations arising are fully detailed on the forms, including any repairs.

Monthly wash-out and more

The 30 days in steam inspection consists of a complete boiler wash-out: the locomotive is moved over the pit and all the waterways within the boiler are washed out, blowing out all the boiler tubes and also checking for any signs of leaking or faults. Once this procedure is complete, the locomotive is moved into the shed for any reported defects to be addressed, after which a full in-steam examination is conducted by a qualified locomotive examiner to check any completed repairs and ensure that applicable items are checked against the schedule of examination.

The monthly mechanical examination includes: cab pipes and valves; carriage warming apparatus; gauge frames; brake systems; cylinder cocks and gear; sanding apparatus; injectors, clacks and pipes; piston and valve glands; smokebox fittings; spark arrestor; elements and steam pipes; axlebox wedges; oil trimmings, pipes and clips; springs and gear; water indicator; grease nipples; motion oil bath; poppet valve gears; rocking/drop grate; ashpan and dampers; speed indicator; and electric lighting

Mechanical examination

Every 12 to 14 months, the annual mechanical examination involves a full boiler inspection by the SVR's insurance examiner in a cold and hot state. Once passed, it will be given another boiler ticket to operate for another maximum

GWR 4-6-0 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* with its wheels on the wheeldrop inside the shed and BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 in the background at Bridgnorth on February 23.

Inside the bright and recently refurbished shed at Bridgnorth, GWR pannier No. 7714, pictured on December 9, is resplendent after a repaint by Ronan O'Brien.

Rods belonging to No. 75069 inside the shed on February 15.

period of 14 months. At the same time, a deeper round of mechanical inspections takes place on items that are different to those on the monthly inspection. This includes: calibration of pressure and vacuum; continuous blow-down valves; gauge frames (prism type); handbrake; roller bearings; electric lighting (turbo generator); wheels and tyres; crank axles; bogie and truck; draw gear; combined external water valve and sieve; buffer height and guard irons; axle boxes; atomiser; regulator handle control of cylinder lubrication; mechanical lubricators, pipes and connections; tender and tanks/bunkers; reverser and reversing gear; and main frame, stays and brackets.

Valve and piston examination

The valve and piston examination is a much more comprehensive affair. Before any work can commence, it involves a complete strip-down of the motion. All connecting and valve rods must be removed before the valves and pistons can follow likewise. The front covers on the cylinder blocks must also be removed for the valves and pistons to be drawn out through the front.

All parts again have to be measured and tolerances checked, examined for wear, and parts replaced where necessary. The examination consists of: slide valves; cylinder and piston assembly; piston valves; steam operated drain cocks; connecting and coupling rod bushes; valve gear; slide valves; cylinder and piston assembly; piston valves; steam operated drain cocks; connecting and coupling rod bushes; and valve gear.

GWR pannier No. 7714 underwent a valve and piston examination before Christmas.

An example from the schedule of inspections and the sub-section regarding the cylinder and piston assembly included:

- Examine cylinder bore for fractures, ridges, and wear.
- Check piston head clearance in bore.
- Examine piston head, rod, and nut for flaws.
- Renew piston rings.
- Examine crosshead cotters, and re-metal crossheads or slippers if necessary.
- Clear steam and exhaust ports of deposits.
- Remove blast pipe and clear of deposits.
- Lightly hammer test main steam pipes in smokebox.
- Examine air valves and relief valves.
- Test mechanical lubrication to cylinder bore.
- Clean oiling points to cylinders and steam chest.
- Examine condition of piston glands.
- Extract piston head carrier and examine spring.

The sub-section was as follows:

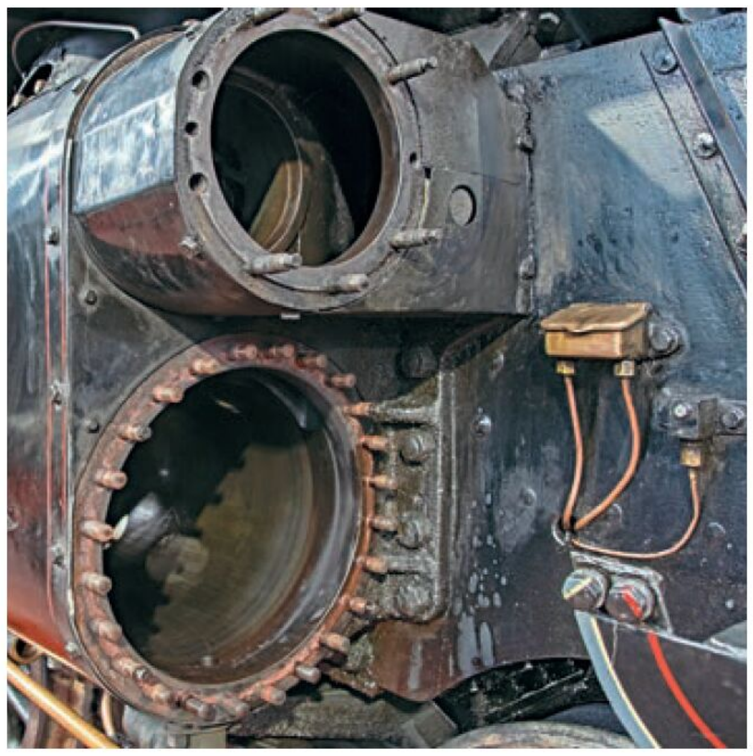
- Maximum wear in cylinder bores found to be 0.016in (left-hand) and 0.017in (right-hand), therefore no boring was required.
- Piston head clearance in bore measured at 0.127in (left-hand) and 0.114in (right-hand) against the GWR repair limit of 0.156in.
- Both piston rods subject to NDT exam with no issues found.
- Crosshead clearances checked and both were within tolerance (0.062in).
- Blast pipe removed and found to be in a poor condition with some cracking around top flange. New casting is to be procured using a pattern borrowed from the Great Western Society in early 2023.
- Noted that whereas the piston gland arrangement in left-hand cylinder is of Swindon design to drawing No.114840A, the right-hand side is of a modified set-up with a smaller aperture in the rear of the cylinder block, making it impossible to fit the same set-up as the left-hand side. This arrangement may be evidence of a Kerr Stuart design, and that the left-hand block may have been changed at a later date.

Immediately after the examination, No. 7714 (also pictured on pages 30/31) went into the paint shop inside the shed for the top half to be repainted after several years of service. There was no change in its black livery, but it took on a slightly different guise, emerging with hand-painted early BR crests on the pannier tanks used between 1949 and 1964 and the numberplate backgrounds in red. It is fully operational and at Bewdley, ready for active service. Meanwhile, work continues on other locomotives inside the shed.

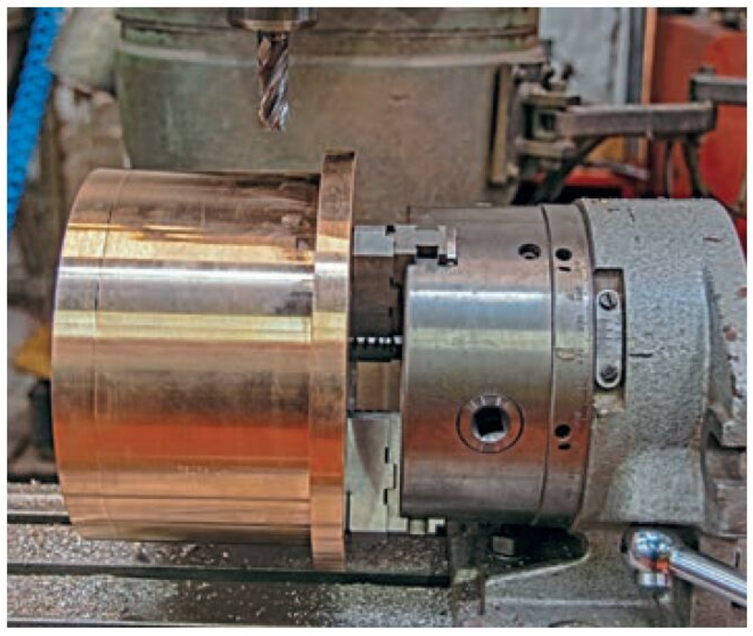
BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069

The latest locomotive to go through the works is No. 75069, which is undergoing a valve and piston examination and is in the process of reassembly in preparation for continued service.

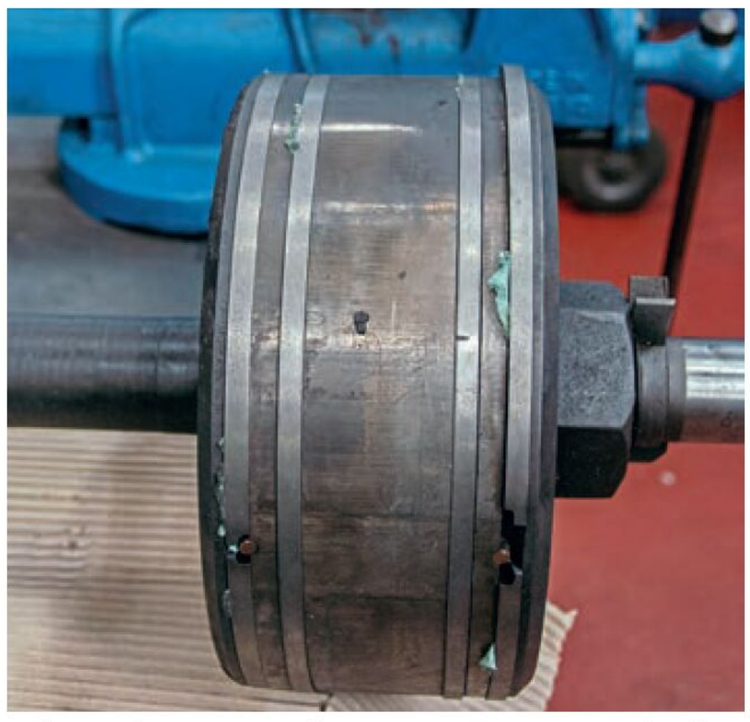
This task has not been as straightforward as initially hoped, as it was discovered that six out of the eight motion bushes were loose in the rods. These bearings weigh about 20kg and are cast off-site by a specialist foundry and supplied as a basic casting. Considerable time is then spent inside Bridgnorth's machine shop, where skilled engineers machine them to the required dimensions,



The valve and piston examination for No. 75069 under way.



New bronze bearing for No. 75069 inside the shed: the casting is being machined.



Valve and new rings of No. 75069. Paper is wedged in the rings to squeeze them in for easy fitting, but it will disappear when working.

cast the white metal liner, and mill out the essential oilways. Once fully machined, they are then press-fitted into their respective rods and oiling rings are fitted, and final machining to the fine tolerances is carried out before refitting to the locomotive.

Stanier mogul 2-6-0 No.42968/13268

The frame is sitting inside the shed, looking nearly complete with its motion on. The boiler is awaiting an out-of-frame examination prior to reassembly.

GWR 2-6-2T No. 4150

With the boiler trial-fitted, No. 4150 is ready for all the copper pipework to be manufactured and fitted. The original pipes were sold, enabling the 4150 Fund to purchase the locomotive. An added complication is that the pipework must be imperial in size and not metric, such is the authenticity. Imperial pipes are not the industrial standard now so are naturally more expensive, and being used under pressure, all pipes have to be certified.

New-build BR Standard 3MT 2-6-2T No. 82045

Progress is continuing, especially with the firebox inside the boiler shop. The inner section has been installed inside the outer and the stays are currently being fitted. The completed boiler is outside on a flat wagon. The backhead is located at the rear of the firebox facing the cab. Snubs have been welded onto it where fittings such as boiler water level gauges, pressure gauges, steam brake valve, firehole door support and other important items are fixed to. Work on the chassis is progressing fitting pipework for the sanders and lubrication pipework.

Bulleid West Country 4-6-2 No. 34027 *Taw Valley*

Before Christmas, on one of its last runs, No. 34027 sounded like it was missing a beat as it climbed away from Bridgnorth and soon after entered the shed for inspection and works. During a steam test, Bridgnorth's engineers discovered that the problem was a defective middle piston valve ring on the front head.

Working on it was not an easy and straightforward task because the middle piston valve is accessed from inside the smokebox through a large, removable plate around 3x3ft with numerous bolts securing it in place. As you can imagine, over time these bolts had seized and were impossible to undo, so needed cutting out by heat. The plate was rotten and so was replaced in the process. Once access was gained, the centre valve rod was disconnected from its crosshead at the rear end. The front valve cover was removed before the valve could be taken out through the front of the locomotive. A new valve head was cast from a foundry outside the railway using a SVR-owned pattern for West Country valve heads. It had to be machined, with new rings produced and fitted, and reassembled.

On February 27, the locomotive was given a cold insurance exam and passed. After No. 7714 left the paintshop, No. 34027 in its purple guise as No. 70 *Queen Elizabeth II* entered for a repaint into wartime black with Southern lettering by SVR painter Ronan O'Brien. It emerged into the sunshine on February 23. In the autumn, it will be inside again for a full valve and piston examination, plus an intermediate overhaul, and also a projected repaint into BR livery – so now is the chance to see it in black!

GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*

After undergoing a major overhaul, all locomotives tend to have teething problems so must be fully tested prior to pulling trains. On its first test run, the centre driving axle bearing of No. 7812 ran hot, so work was needed to sort the problem out, and this meant the removal of the complete axle.

To enable this work to commence, the wheeldrop had to be brought back into use after its disconnection during the recent shed works. It has recently been reconnected, fully inspected and certified for use by the insurance assessor. All lifting devices have to be annually inspected.

To repair the bearing, the centre driving wheels must be removed, which means all con rods have to come off; this is now done and the wheels have been separated from the loco. The bronze axlebox bearings have been re-metalled and remachined, then

With the rods, pistons and valves removed, BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 is set to undergo its valve and piston examination on January 12.

***Dunrobin*'s driving wheels inside the paintshop.**

"For a steam locomotive, there is the monthly mechanical examination that takes place after 30 days in steam, the annual examination every 12 to 14 months, and the valve and piston examination every 20,000 to 25,000 miles."

reassembled. A similar process will take place with the front drivers.

Presently, this work is ongoing and confidence is high that it will appear in the SVR's Spring Steam Gala before its move to the West Somerset Railway for the summer season.

Sharp Stewart 0-4-4T No. 4085 *Dunrobin*

Built for the fourth Duke of Sutherland for his private use, and believed to have been the basis for the Highland Railway's W class, *Dunrobin* is a long-term project undergoing a full restoration as an outside contract for Beamish Museum. It is fully stripped down to its frames, which are sitting over the frame lift at present: the wheels have been painted and lined, awaiting fitting. Its motion and cab fittings are presently in store and the boiler is being worked on, as is the replacement cylinder block in preparation for fitting. Once completed, it will cover about 1000 miles on the SVR for testing and may be used on service trains.

Shark brake van No. DB993898

The 20-ton ballast plough brake van, referred to as a Shark, was built at Smethwick in 1957; the DB prefix refers to a Departmental vehicle built by BR. The attached plough can be lowered and raised to spread newly-dropped stone ballast around the track. It is an unusual visitor inside the shed, having work done on its wooden ends, and shows the good cooperation between the different departments on the SVR.

Keeping the skills alive

My special thanks go to Will Marsh and SVR head of steam engineering Duncan Ballard at Bridgnorth for helping with the technicalities and giving me permission to use extracts from the examination form, giving readers an insight into the complexities of maintaining the steam fleet.

Indeed, everyone inside the shed has been very friendly and helpful, willing and eager to explain the sterling work they are doing to keep steam-era skills alive and its traction running on one of Europe's finest heritage railways in the 21st century. HR

The frames of *Dunrobin* on the frame lift awaiting attention while the boiler and wheels are worked on.

Shark brake van No. DB993898 undergoing rebuilding inside the shed. The paintshop is in the background.

Stanier mogul No. 42968 inside the shed on February 15.

STAR LETTER

Magnificent GC winter gala recreated last days of steam

THE Great Central Railway gala at the end of January (as featured in issue 303) was, indeed, a superb event. I guess that I was standing very near John Titlow when he took your front cover photograph of the 9F with the mineral train!

I was pleased to pay the £33 fare based around the idea that this was less than £5 per engine – and considerably better value than a main line steam trip, where so little action can be observed.

Looking back at my first Ian Allan ABC book, a shed book for 1956, I can see that No. 73082 was an early sighting, and this must have been while on holiday at Herne Bay in late July 1957. No. 73156 was also seen in 1958/9, probably at Sheffield Victoria or Leeds City.

The Standard classes were relatively unusual in my home town of Huddersfield during the 1950s, other than the BR Class 5s, but by the mid-1960s Britannias and 9Fs were reasonably common for a while, and diesel failures could produce a pair of Patricroft BR Class 5s on a Newcastle express.

April 20, 1968, was a particularly memorable day, being pulled by two LMS Class 5s from Stockport via Buxton to Stalybridge, then Nos. 73069/134 via Huddersfield to Rose Grove, followed by Nos. 48773 and finally 92160 into Liverpool.

Visiting from the Mid-Hants Railway, Urie S15 4-6-0 No. 506 heads out of Loughborough with a rake of mineral wagons on January 27. ROBIN JONES

So, the GC gala came closer to repeating that experience than ever before, with the pairing of the two BR Class 5s being the highlight. And it's worth remembering that all seven locomotives came via Barry, so we must give eternal thanks to Dai Woodham for not scrapping them.

BR black is, of course, the most appropriate livery for the five Standards that were operating, but lovers of pre-Grouping livery might be pleased to reflect on that four were in LNWR livery and designed by a LNWR man!

As a final thought, I've long thought that the optimum length for a heritage railway is seven to eight miles, a situation where one train can provide an off-peak service and two a peak time one.

The Dartmouth Steam Railway combines together all the factors that make a commercially successful heritage railway. It is certainly very sad, but not too surprising, that some of our longer, leading heritage railways are now struggling financially and having to reduce operations. Maybe the GC might want to ponder this fact?

David Smith, Sheffield

TRACK TALK

Fireless memories

I WAS very interested in the article in issue 303 on fireless locomotives, in particular the last operational one, No. 1952.

In 1981, I was rail engineering supervisor for Shell Oil in the North East and Scotland, and I used to visit Ardrossan Refinery about every six weeks. I well remember No. 1952 and its driver, Peter Brown, whom I think probably retired with the locomotive.

Unfortunately, I have no photos of that time and although your pictures show it in very smart dark green and lined yellow, I seem to remember it in company bright yellow with a pecten (shell) on the accumulator front. It would be nice to see it back in its working colours again, but perhaps that is not permitted as it is not owned by the company now.

David Reid, Richmond, North Yorkshire

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Alan Pegler's *Scotsman* role should not be downplayed

AS the PR advisor to Flying Scotsman Railways during Dr Tony Marchington's ownership of the Pacific from 1996 to 2004, I have followed with interest the recent correspondence concerning the National Railway Museum's alleged lack of acknowledgement it gives to Sir William McAlpine for his part in saving the locomotive for the nation.

On this subject, last month's issue carried a letter from David Ward, a former InterCity Charter Trains director, who was involved with No. 60103 during its ownership by Alan Pegler, Sir William and Tony. David's letter, headlined 'Sir William was the true saviour of *Flying Scotsman*,' followed correspondence in the previous issue from Lady Judy McAlpine, who accused the NRM of consistently ignoring her husband's role in the locomotive's existence.

While I have no strong views one way or the other on the NRM's stance over this matter, I am a little concerned that the criticism of the museum seems to have morphed partly into criticism of Alan Pegler.

Lady McAlpine wrote that when she heard Alan's daughter saying how much her father loved the engine, she felt someone needed to correct the image, and David said in his letter that Pegler left the locomotive in the USA with considerable debts to creditors and no plan or money to ensure its future.

As a railway journalist, I was fortunate to meet and interview Sir William on a number of occasions. He came across as a genuinely nice, humble and thoughtful man who was admired by many and deservedly appreciated by everyone within the railway preservation movement.

His ownership of *Flying Scotsman* from 1973 until its sale to Tony for £1.5 million in 1996 was a triumph and must never be questioned, but I would challenge David's claim that "the fact that *Flying Scotsman* exists today in this country in the National Collection is entirely due to Sir William."

Alan Pegler had played a significant part in that when, back in 1963, he saved the Pacific from a near-certain date with the scrap man, and Tony had helped when he spent £1 million overhauling the engine after he became its owner. I should add that the £1.8 million National Heritage Memorial Fund grant to the National Railway Museum towards its purchase and the £350,000 raised in a public appeal and matched by Richard Branson also helped.

I was also saddened by David saying that he believed Sir William came to regret the decision to sell it to Tony. Never having been a confidante of Sir William, and never having sensed during my time as Tony's PR advisor that Sir William felt that way, I am in no position to question that claim, but I think it unfortunate that it is aired in public.

Such views should, in my opinion, be left behind closed doors, especially when the two people concerned are sadly no longer with us.

Geoff Courtney, Bedfordshire

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Wonderlab – future path for young engineers or a theme park?

THE Star Letter by Dr Ron Fitzgerald in Platform, issue 301, 'Wonderlab: An interactive diversion from the core mission?' is, for me, the most impressive piece of prose I have seen – but it seems the implications of what was in the letter passed by the railway press and your readers.

With that in mind, can I ask just what is a WonderLab? That's not a wind-up question, as I understand it as an interactive experience, ie., a computer console or a tablet on a pole surrounded by a very expensive mural. Just how is that, as has been said, inspiring and making future younger people think like and to be engineers?

We know what happens next: children being children will say, "Dad/mum, look, I have made that big blue engine to 200mph." I know society has moved on, but what inspired me to be an engineer for 50-plus years was seeing people design, build and restore pieces of engineering – the best interactive experience you can have, therefore, is to be actively involved experience.

I know the National Railway Museum has stated that it's not in the restoration business, but why not? Other heritage sectors have viewing galleries to workshops, be that steam, automotive, sea or aviation. Would not it have been possible to keep the workshop and build up with a volunteer workforce, having apprenticeships to pass on the skills, and then drag in one of the no-hopes that litter the sidings and restore to either main line status or static, even one of their own engines, no time limit?

> "I have heard said that it is another case of cultural vandalism – with that, I agree, no doubt it is."

Now, that would be an interactive experience to inspire - it's about noise and smells; I still remember the smell of heavy engineering works 50 years on.

We know when you destroy assets, they are inevitably lost forever and also the skills that go with that loss... just look at the British industry – it's littered with losses of great skills and innovation.

Then there are those who point to that old chestnut, *Flying Scotsman,* as an inspiration. However, you ask anyone of a younger generation about *Scotsman* and usually all you get is 'the most famous engine in the world' – well, yes, probably, but why is it? Most do not realise it is an engine named after a train and not the other way round; plenty of other engines pulled the train, sometimes much faster and with better reliability. You could have had the whole package there – *Scotsman* in for maintenance in the NRM workshop – what better way to pull in the crowds and try to inspire younger wannabee engineers?

I have heard said that it is another case of cultural vandalism – with that, I agree, no doubt it is.

Sometimes, it looks like the NRM is trying to turn the museum into some sort of theme park.

I know the railway heritage sector has other major issues to concern them, like coal, energy and bums on seats, but the loss of this workshop will have repercussions for generations to come.

PJ Lawrence, email

Where have all the nation's engines disappeared to?

I DON'T know whether it's me, or has the revered museum become a waste of time?

Being of an age to have been in the old LNER museum across the tracks and at the south end of York station more than once, and the Clapham Museum, what we now have has, over the years, been dumbed down to become a poor representation of what is supposed to be the National Collection.

My question for you is how many of the National Collection locomotives are on display for the nation to see, and if you can put a number to the question, where are the rest? Since the people in charge of the care of the collection saw fit to give some locomotives away a few years ago, where are they?

The money being wasted on the refurb over the road should have been used on locomotive maintenance – if only cosmetic – to get them on display.

It seems that the powers that be are more interested in selling food and toys than running what should be a brilliant museum.

Remember the Great Gathering (of the six A4s) – whatever happened to the people who put that on?

Alan Bell, email

➜ *The National Railway Museum has responded to the above two letters as follows:*

The majority of National Collection railway vehicles are on display at the National Railway Museum in York and at Locomotion in Shildon.

At the time of writing, there are also a further 63 vehicles operating and on static display with heritage railways and museums around the country, from Cheltenham at the Mid-Hants Railway to Green Arrow at Doncaster Gallery, Library and Museum.

The full list of vehicles can be found online at https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/search/museum/national-railway-museum

The National Railway Museum and Locomotion are undergoing significant changes as part of the Vision 2025 masterplan, which will revitalise our galleries and buildings.

These include the refurbishment of Station Hall's roof to preserve this historic railway structure and developing our interactive gallery for families called WonderLab: The Bramall Gallery.

WonderLab has been developed in conjunction with advisers who are working in the rail industry, and through hands-on learning, it will explore fundamental engineering principles and inspire the next generation of engineers.

As work takes place, there will be some disruption to the museum. Station Hall is temporarily closed, for example, but we are confident we will continue to give visitors a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

As a national museum, we have a duty to appeal to a broad range of people with all levels of confidence and experience in science, technology and the railways.

Far from 'dumbing down', recent exhibitions have explored topics such as technological innovation on today's railways, and our curatorial colleagues are involved in numerous research projects and academic partnerships.

Many thousands of visitors have returned to the National Railway Museum since the pandemic and the museum ranks in the top 1% of TripAdvisor's most popular attractions worldwide. We have also had an enthusiastic response in the past few months from the many people of all ages taking part in Flying Scotsman's centenary programme.

Hengist Locomotive Works Open Day
Saturday, 15th April 2023
10:00 to 16:00

BR Standard Class 6 72010 'HENGIST'

LNER B17 61673 'Spirit of Sandringham'

We are delighted to announce that we are able to welcome visitors to view the continuing construction progress of two previously scrapped classes of steam locomotives

CTL Seal Ltd and both new build projects are proud holders of the "Made in Sheffield" Award.

Both new build teams, founder members of the Main Line Steam Builders Group, will have representatives on site to answer any questions on their project.

Tours of the works will be available in the afternoon, subject to guides being available. Other organisations will be attending as follows:

Narrow gauge new build ..... Gowrie Group
Boiler and Engineering Skills Training Trust (BESTT)..... Gordon Newton
Trackside Magazine..... Mel Holley
Diamond Rail Services..... Jenny Dempsey
Live steam models..... Ray Walker
Bridge the Gap G.C.R..... Barry Lycett
0 gauge model loco building ..... Mike Roffe and Vernon Harrod
Woodhouse Farm (catering)..... Andrew Wincott

Members of both projects get free admission to the works on production of a membership card.
School parties and University students will have free admission.
Admission fee for non-members £3.00. Refreshments will be available.

Come along and see us at:
Hengist Locomotive Works
CTL Seal Ltd.
Butterthwaite Lane,
Sheffield
S35 9WY or S35 9WA

(from North) (from South)

72010 HENGIST
MADE IN SHEFFIELD
HERITAGE RAILWAY ASSOCIATION
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HERITAGE RAILWAY

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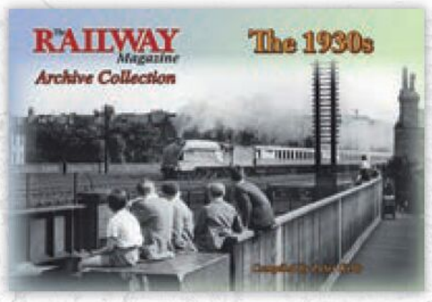

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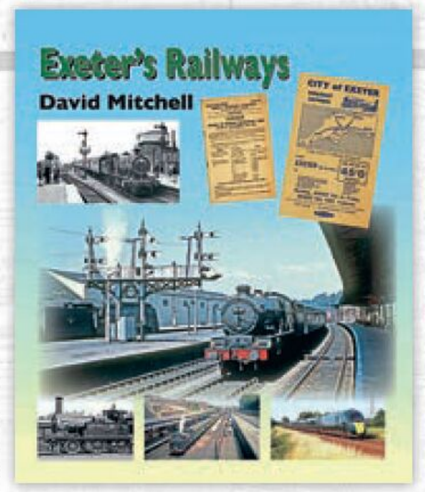

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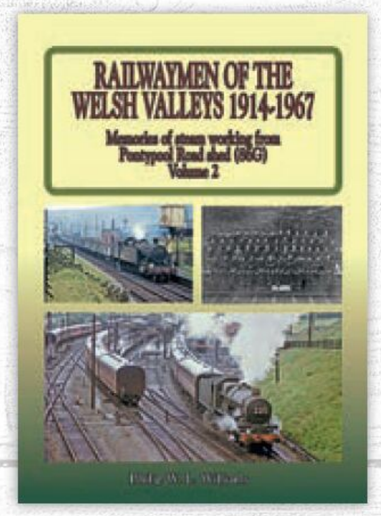

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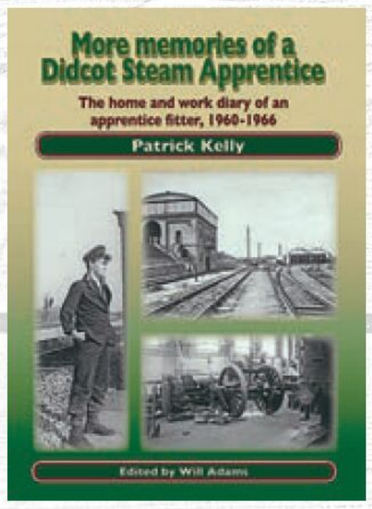

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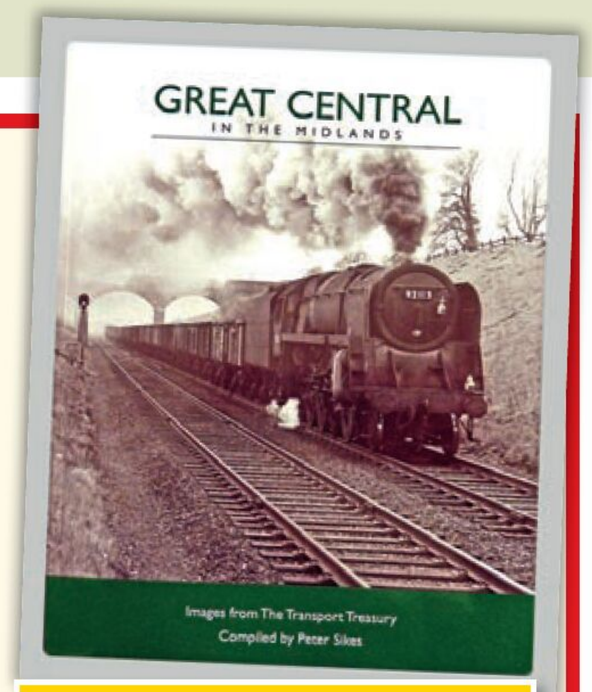
Great Central in the Midlands

Compiled by Peter Sikes (softback, Transport Treasury Publishing, 112pp, £14.95 inc p&p. Cheques payable to: Transport Treasury Publishing, 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe HP13 7PJ. ISBN 978-1-913251-36-9).



EDITOR'S CHOICE

LONDON steam-era trainspotters followed a well-trodden path in an insatiable desire to 'cop' steam, **writes Geoff Courtney**. It was a path that involved buses and Underground trains transporting us to Liverpool Street, King's Cross, St Pancras, Euston, Paddington and onward south of the Thames to mainly Waterloo.

Other termini may have been deemed worthy of the occasional visit, especially Victoria, but Marylebone was unfairly treated almost as an outcast and so rarely checked despite its proximity to Paddington.

This point was emphasised as I began reading Transport Treasury's latest release, Great Central in the Midlands, which early doors has photographs of two expresses that graced Marylebone with their presence, 'The Master Cutler' from Sheffield and 'The South Yorkshireman' from Bradford and Sheffield. In 1958, however, the former was switched to King's Cross, thus leaving Marylebone with just a single named express.

Recalling my indifference toward the terminus, I decided to check my trainspotting logs and Marylebone merits just one mention – and even then by default. I was at South Hampstead station on April 26, 1961, having caught a local train out of Euston to pass the West Coast Main Line shed of Camden (1B) and hopefully 'cop' a locomotive or two.

The Marylebone line passes over the West Coast Main Line at South Hampstead, and during my 43 minutes while waiting to return to Euston I recorded two Standard engines, two ex-LMS 2-6-4Ts, a 'Black Five', and a DMU passing overhead, a haul which doubtless failed to result in a new underlining in my Ian Allan Combined Volume.

Meanwhile, on the WCML during the same period I recorded, among others, Princess Coronation No. 46240 *City of Coventry* on the Down 'Red Rose' to Liverpool and No. 46234 *Duchess of Abercorn* which, according to my notes, was apparently on an Up semi-fast Wolverhampton train. The Pacific was shedded at Carlisle Upperby (12B) at the time, so perhaps it was ex-Works.

Two other named Up expresses were also logged – 'The Ulster Express' and 'The Shamrock' – hauled respectively by D308 and D303, two diesels that were just five months old and a sign that the steam era was drawing to a close.

Large variety

However, I digress, and so return to the Great Central Main Line and this latest publication, which, with 178 photographs, covers the line from Staveley Central through Nottingham and Leicester to Brackley Central in Northamptonshire.

As mentioned, two of the earlier images are of 'The Master Cutler' and 'The South Yorkshireman', with Standard Class 5MT No. 73157 at Woodford Halse on the former and LNER B1 No. 61008 *Kudu* at Nottingham Victoria on the latter (with two young trainspotters eagerly scribbling down its number), while there is also LNER A3 Pacific No. 60111 *Enterprise* with a 'Master Cutler' headboard at Leicester Great Central shed (38C).

Named expresses, photogenic as they are with their often-named motive power, are, however, not this book's raison d'être, as the compiler, Peter Sikes, explains. "A large variety of classes of locomotive are featured, especially at Nottingham, where the wonderful cathedral-like Victoria station initially shared services with the Great Northern Railway," he writes.

"Then there were the cross-country services that joined the GCR main line at Culworth Junction bringing Great Western engines as far north as Leicester and Nottingham, plus the introduction of Midland-type classes transferred as they neared the end of their working lives."

Thus, we find, for example, January 1908-built J11 class 0-6-0 No. 64433 at Staveley Central in 1957 and a delightful image of A5 class 4-6-2T No. 69812, which entered traffic in November 1912, bustling along the line near East Leake, Nottinghamshire, in February 1958, hauling a solitary and very ancient-looking inspection saloon.

From the more modern era, photographs of Class 9F 2-10-0s on freight trains abound, including Crosti-boilered No. 92021 near Loughborough in April 1964, and Nos. 92073 and 92091 double-heading – and both seemingly working hard – on a goods train north of Lutterworth in August 1960.

A couple of 'Brits' that also feature, No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* at Leicester Central in July 1960 and 70040 *Clive of India* on a Woodford-Nottingham Victoria train at Newton in July 1962, help bring to this book motive power that lasted to the very end of BR steam.

STEAM OLD AND NEW IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND

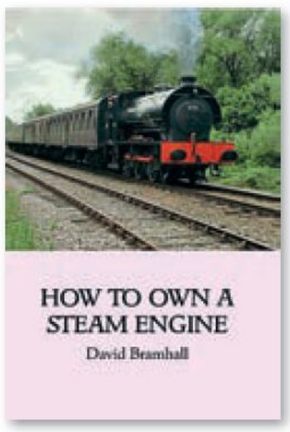
How To Own A Steam Engine

By David Bramhall (paperback, Walnut Tree Books, 113pp, £7, ISBN 979-84902-4765-4)

HOW many of us have dreamed of owning our very own steam engine? For the many who do, the idea is just that – a dream. But sometimes, with the right people at the right time with the right opportunity, the stars align.

David Bramhall was part of the group that, in 2009, came together to buy Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3193. Over the course of a decade, they worked, quarrelled, and laughed as the group brought together what started as a kit of parts and turned it into an operating machine once more, a process David recorded carefully throughout.

In this, he shares some of those experiences to show that locomotive ownership is no bed of roses. You can gain a clear impression of the author's sense of humour when the first line outright says how doing such a thing is 'crazy', listing many things that one must consider when making such a commitment – and that continues with the closing line of the first page that says everything comes together and 'you have… a bomb!' In essence, of course, he is



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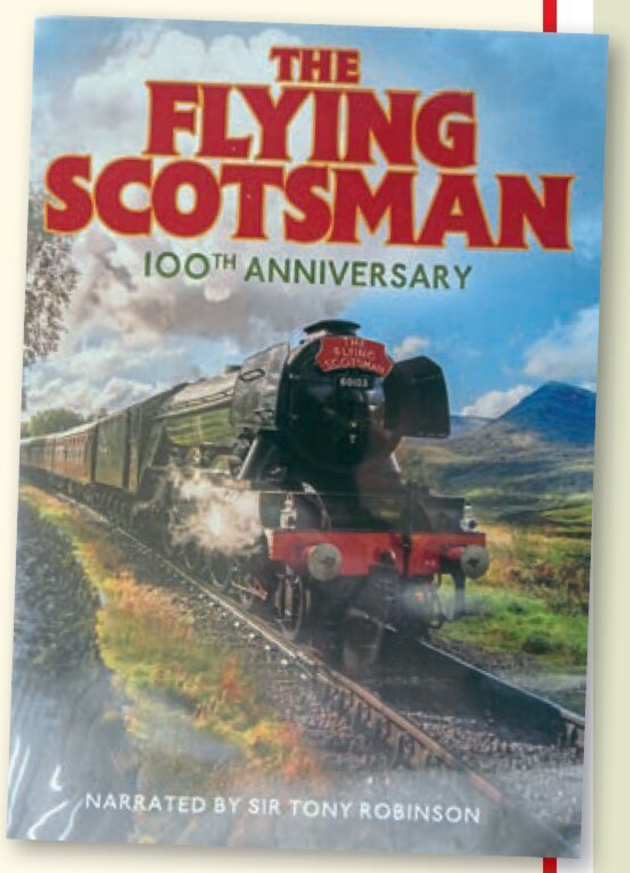
The Flying Scotsman: 100th Anniversary

Narrated by Sir Tony Robinson (DVD, Reel2Reel Films Ltd, 55 minutes, RRP £15.99, from online retailers)



THE centenary of A3 Pacific *Flying Scotsman*, which, as reported in Headline News this issue, has just celebrated its 100th birthday, is reinforcing its position as the world's most famous steam locomotive with a series of headline-grabbing tours and events scheduled throughout the year.

Much has been written about the legendary locomotive, which will continue to make history long into the heritage era. This feature-length DVD brings much of that history to life, with English actor, author, broadcaster and comedian Sir Tony Robinson presenting with great enthusiasm a documentary packed with essential video clips.

There are interviews with former owners Alan Pegler and Sir William McAlpine, who in turn saved the A3 from the scrapyard but who are sadly no longer with us to tell the tale, and the engineers who have kept this national treasure running.

There are classic sequences from the locomotive's ill-fated trip to the USA which left Alan Pegler broke and the A3 marooned, potentially facing the scrap man, and also its historic trip to Australia under the McAlpine ownership.

The big value of this entertaining, enlightening and highly educative film is that the sequences do more than anything to bring the history into sharp focus, especially for the benefit of new generations.

Having starred in the comedy series Blackadder, Sir Tony's love of history has been evidenced in his subsequent career through productions like Tony Robinson's Time Travels and Walking Through History, to Around The World By Train With Tony Robinson.

BRINGING POPULAR HISTORY TO LIFE

not wrong – if not looked after, a steam locomotive's boiler can indeed explode, but with such stringent rules on maintenance and overhaul, many of us have undoubtedly forgotten that fact.

It isn't all 'doom and gloom', of course. David's 'diaries' of the years that followed recount many of the fun times had during the overhaul of the group's pet project, but importantly does not shy away from the realities of locomotive ownership.

For a start, they are expensive! Very expensive, as anybody involved with restoration and overhauls can attest to, I'm sure. But while those under ownership of a charity of a railway company may benefit from grant funding and donations, smaller groups can struggle to raise the capital. The funding for the overhaul of No. 3193 came exclusively from those involved in its purchase and overhaul which, as is to be expected when relying on this method of finance, sometimes ran a bit short, but they persevered.

Then, of course, there were conflicts within the group. David stresses here how important it is to set the goals of the group clearly from the off, as it can (and did) result in fractions that may perhaps have had grander ideas than were feasible or in line with what had originally been set out to achieve.

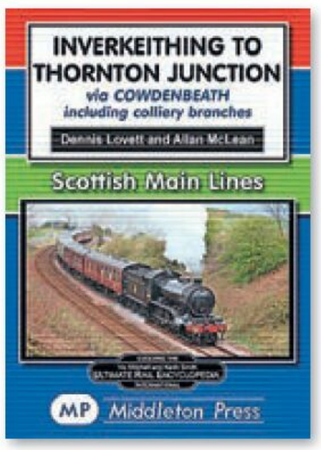
Working relationships with third parties – such as landlords of the ground on which you are based, or heritage railway management of where you plan to operate – are additionally highlighted. Likewise, working out hire agreements with those looking to borrow your locomotive; sometimes a group such as this is better off sending its pride and joy to a line and allowing the engineers there to complete any outstanding work in return for a limited number of free steamings when the alternative may be keeping it 'at home' but taking many months longer to get a fully operational locomotive.

David's book is no Bible for 'wannabe' locomotive owners. But it is an honest and personal view of both the highs and lows that one particular group experienced during their years working on No. 3193 which, having completed and spent a few years operating, they have now since sold to new owner Peak Rail.

AN INSIGHTFUL READ FOR OWNERSHIP DREAMERS

Inverkeithing to Thornton Junction via Cowdenbeath including colliery branches

By Dennis Lovett and Allan McLean (hardback, Middleton Press, 96pp, £18.95, ISBN 978-1-9103-5676-0).



PART of the Scottish Main Lines series, the volume follows the time-honoured standard Middleton format of archive black-and-white photographs of every significant point on a route, together with vintage track diagrams and large-scale plans and essential historical information.

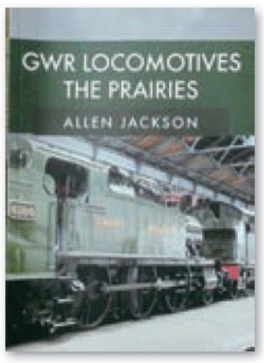
This volume covers a network of lines that had individual origins and came together under the North British Railway, served by a host of mineral lines, now disappeared, along with the local coal industry.

Between 1890 and 1970, the line as far as Cowdenbeath was part of the Edinburgh to Perth direct line, but today is it a much lower-key affair than in its past, with an hourly service served by ScotRail DMUs.

DETAILING ESSENTIAL LOCAL HISTORY

GWR Locomotives: The Prairies

By Allen Jackson (softback, Amberley Publishing, 96pp, ISBN, £15.99, ISBN 9768-1-3981-0963-6)



HERE is a mine of information about one of George Jackson Churchward's earliest and indeed most successful designs, the small and large prairie 2-6-2Ts.

The small prairies were used for branch line services and the larger ones for banking at inclines like Sapperton, Dainton and Rattery, as well as outer suburban work in London and Birmingham.

Not only is this handily-sized volume packed with historic black-and-white views of prairies in action, but it is also a wealth of information, such as extensive tables of historic working and movements and associated maps in colour.

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For further information and to book tickets visit
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Join us for the official launch of 6695 on Saturday 18th March!

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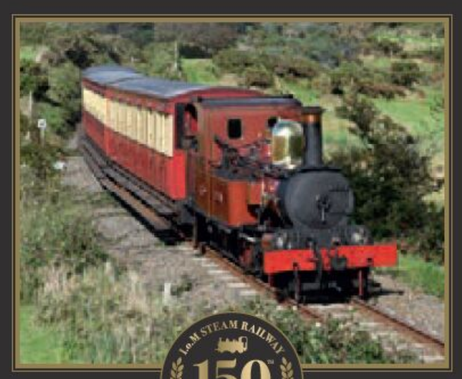
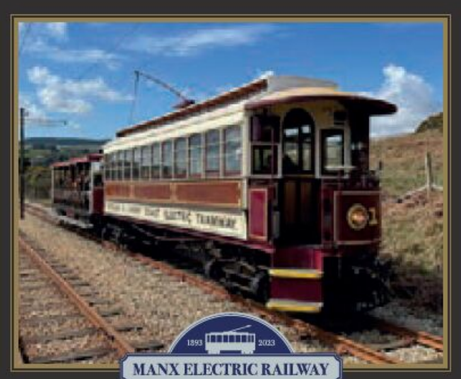
SAVE THE DATES

Join us in 2023 to celebrate two remarkable milestones of the Heritage Railways on the Isle of Man





SATURDAY 1ST JULY 2023
A glorious celebration of 150 years of steam.

SUNDAY 23RD JULY – SUNDAY 30TH JULY 2023
A week-long festival on our Island's award-winning Heritage Railways.

SUNDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2023
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Isle of Man TRANSPORT

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OPERATIONAL HERITAGE LINES AND MUSEUMS

SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex. Tel: 01798 831370. **Open: Weds – Suns.**

Bluebell Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL. Tel: 01825 720800.
Running: W/Es 7 sch hols.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.
Running: Weds + Apr 4-8, 13-15.

Chatham Historic Dockyard
Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent. Tel: 01634 820800.
Open: Daily.

East Kent Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042.
Open: Weds, Fris-Suns. Running: TBA.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway
10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.
Running: W/Es & Sch Hols.

Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway
12¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Exbury, Southampton. Tel: 023 8089 1203.
Open: Daily from March 19.

Hayling Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Hayling Island, Hants. Tel: 07902 446340.
Running: Weds, W/Es, sch hols.

Hollycombe Steam in the Country
2ft gauge, 1½ miles. Liphook, Hants. Tel: 01428 724900.
Open: Suns from Apr 9 + Apr 7, 10.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204.
Running: Suns, Weds + Apr 3-14.

Kent & East Sussex Railway
Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.
Running: W/Es & Weds from Apr 1, + Mar 19, Apr 6, 7, 10, 11.

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.
Open: TBA.

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.
Running: W/Es.

Mizens Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922. Running: **April 9.**

Old Kiln Light Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.
Running: TBA.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353.
Running: W/Es, then daily from Mar 27.

Royal Victoria Railway
10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.
Running: W/Es.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.
Running: Apr 7-10.

Spa Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.
Running: W/Es.

Volk's Electric Railway
2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton.
Reopens Easter 2023.

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538.
Running: Mar 19, Apr 1, 2, 5, 7-10, 12, 15, 16.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.
Running: Suns & Tue–Thurs from Mar 19 + Apr 7, 8, 10, 14, 15.

Bristol Harbour Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.
M Shed Museum open Tues-Suns.

Dartmouth Steam Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Paignton, Devon. Tel: 01803 555872.
Running: Sats & Tues, daily from Apr 1.

Devon Railway Centre
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon. Tel: 01884 855671.
Open: W/Es & sch hols from Apr 1.

East Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset. Tel: 01749 880417.
Running: W/Es + Apr 5, 7, 10.

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752.
Running: Apr 10.

Helston Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597.
Running: Thurs, Suns from Apr 9 + Apr 7, 10.

Lappa Valley Railway
7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile. Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.
Open: Weds-Suns. Daily from Mar 22

Launceston Steam Railway
1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665
Running: Apr 4-6, 9-12.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.
Running: Tue-Thur & W/Es from April 1 + sch hols.

Moors Valley Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415.
Running: W/Es & sch hols.

North Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, 1200ft. Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset. Tel: 01258 860696.
Open: Weds, W/Es.

Plym Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Marsh Mills, Plymouth. Tel: 01752 345078.
Running: Suns from Apr 2 + Apr 8, 22.

Seaton Tramway
2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Mar 25

Somerset & Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221
Running: Mar 19, Apr 5, 9, 10, 12, 16.

South Devon Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.
Running: Daily from Mar 25.

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.
Running: W/Es + Mar 24 & Fris from Apr 7.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.
Running: W/Es & bank hols.

West Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, 20 miles. Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.
Running: W/Es from March 12/19 and Tues & Weds from Apr 4 and bank holidays.

Yeovil Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.
Running: Mar 19, Apr 9, 10, 23, 30.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum
Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.
Open: Daily from Mar 28.

Bure Valley Railway
15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Apr 1.

Colne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.
Running: Suns from April 2 + Apr 5-8, 10, 12, 13.

East Anglian Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.
Open: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.
Running: Mar 19, Apr 2, 5, 7-10, 16, 29.

Ferry Meadows Railway
10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01733 398 889.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Mangapps Railway Museum

During the Welsh half term, the Llangollen Railway operated two long weekends of service (February 17-19 and 24-26) with Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 68067 and three suburban compartment carriages, pictured at Berwyn on February 18. Trains only shuttled between there and Llangollen due to ongoing trackwork further west along the line. An open day was also held on February 25 to encourage new volunteers to join up, a venture that proved to be a success, with 20 new members submitting their forms on the day. GEORGE JONES/LR

Pre-order Issue 305 : Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Following completion of repairs with JM Engineering at Quainton Road, Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 15 *Hastings*, built in 1888, was used on the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre's steaming day services on February 15 for running-in ahead of its return to the Kent & East Sussex Railway in March. On Sunday, February 19, it operated alongside resident Austerity NCB No. 66, built in 1964, which presented the rare sight of both the oldest and newest operating standard gauge Hunslets in steam together. No. 66 was also the last standard steam locomotive built in the UK for the home market before new-build projects such as No. 60103 *Tornado* began. OWEN HAYWARD.

Standard gauge, ¾ mile.
Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex.
Tel: 01621 784898.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Mid-Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 11½ miles. Dereham, Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.
Reopens: TBA.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.
Running: April 9, 10, 30.

Nene Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01780 784444.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Apr 12.

North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA. Tel: 01263 820800.
Running: Mar 19, then W/Es, Weds-Thurs and sch hols from Apr 1.

Wells & Walsingham Railway
10¼in gauge, four miles. Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk. Tel: 01328 711630.
Running: Daily.

Whitwell & Reepham Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Reepham, Norfolk. Tel: 01603 871694.
Open: Tues, Thurs-Suns. Running: Diesel W/Es, steam first Sun of month.

HOME COUNTIES

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¼ mile.
Quainton Road, Bucks. Tel: 01296 655720
Cafe open Mon-Fri. Running: Suns from Apr 2.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366
Running: Suns from Mar 19 + Mar 25, Apr 7, 8, 10, 13.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067
Reopens: TBA.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: W/Es + Weds from Apr 5.
Running: W/Es & bank hols from Apr 7.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Running: W/Es & bank hols from Apr 1 + Apr 14.

Great Whipsnade Railway
2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.
Tel: 0344 225 1826.
Running: W/Es then daily from Apr 1.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway
2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.
Tel: 01932 212235.
Reopens: Suns + Mar 25, Apr 22.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Suns + Apr 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13.

London Museum of Water & Steam
2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.
Tel: 0208 568 4757.
Open: Thurs-Suns.

MIDLANDS

Abbey Pumping Station
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX. Tel: 0116 299 5111.
Open: Daily.

Amerton Railway
2ft gauge, one mile.
Stowe-by-Chartley, Staffs.
Tel: 01889 271337.
Reopens: Easter 2023.

Apedale Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.
Tel: 0845 094 1953.
Running: W/Es & bank hols from Apr 1.

Barrow Hill Roundhouse
Standard gauge. Barrow Hill, near Chesterfield. Tel: 01246 475554.
Open: W/Es.

Battlefield Line
Standard gauge, five miles.
Shackerstone, Leics. Tel: 01827 880754.
Reopens: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 5, 12.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys). Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.
Reopens: Apr 7-10, 29, 30.

Chasewater Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Walsall, West Midlands. Tel: 01543 452623.
Open: Daily. Running: TBA.

Churnet Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 5¼ miles. Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.
Running: Mar 18, 19 then W/Es & bank hols from Apr 1.

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile. Crich, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 854 321
Open: Sats-Thurs + bank & sch hols.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Norchard, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.
Running: W/Es, bank hols from Apr 1 + Apr 6, 13, 14.

Echills Wood Railway
7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.
Running: Suns.

Evesham Vale Railway
15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Foxfield Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles.
Blythe Bridge, Staffs.
Tel: 01782 396210.
Reopens: TBA.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Standard gauge, 15 miles. Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Apr 5, Tues & Thurs from Apr 13.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323.
www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: W/Es.

Midland Railway – Butterley
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.
Running: W/Es & bank hols from April 7.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Pitsford, Northants. Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: Suns & bank hols + Apr 8.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Hunsbury Hill, Northampton.
Tel: 01604 702031.
Reopens: TBA.

Nottingham Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.
Running: Closed UFN.

Peak Rail
Standard gauge, four miles.
Matlock, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 580381.
Running: Mar 18, 19, Apr 15, 16.

The details in this list were correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise that you confirm details with the venue concerned. Pre-booking is often essential.
TBA = To Be Announced

Perrygrove Railway
15in gauge. B4228, Coleford, Gloucestershire.
Tel: 01594 834991.
Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es.

Rocks by Rail
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore, Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.
Reopens: TBA.

Leek & Rudyard Railway
10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs.
Tel: 01538 269948.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants.
Tel 0300 3023 150.
Running: Mar 19, Apr 9.

Severn Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 16 miles.
Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR.
Tel: 01562 757900.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Mar 27, Apr 6, 13, 14.

Statfold Barn Railway
2ft gauge, one mile.
Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU.
Tel: 01827 830389.
Open: Mar 18, 19, Apr 1, 2, 5-15.

Tanat Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Nantmawr, Shropshire SY10 9HW.
Tel: 01691 780042.
www.tanatvalleyrailway.co.uk
Open: TBA.

Telford Steam Railway
Standard gauge, one mile. Telford, Shropshire.
Running: Apr 8-10.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.
Running: Apr 9, 10, 30.

NORTH WEST

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.
Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 5, 6, 12, 13, 14.

Eden Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.
Running: Suns from Apr 2 + Apr 8, 10.

Great Laxey Mine Railway
19in gauge, ¼ mile.
Laxey, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 862007/670386.
Running: Suns from April 8.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile.
Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453.
Running: April 9, 10.

Heaton Park Tramway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.
Reopens: Suns from Mar 26.

Isle of Man Steam Railway
3ft gauge, 15½ miles.
Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 662525.
Running: Thurs-Mons + sch hols.

Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Near Ulverston, Cumbria.
Tel: 01539 531594.
Running: Daily from Apr 1.

Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway
3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER), 5½ miles (SMR).
Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 697473.
Running: Tues-Thur & W/Es + Fris from Apr 7.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.
Running: Daily.

Ribble Steam Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Preston, Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.
Running: Mar 25, 26.

South Tynedale Railway
2ft gauge, 4¾ miles. Alston, Cumbria.
Tel: 01434 338212.
Reopens: Apr 1.

Stainmore Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 371700.
Open: Suns from Apr 9.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria.
Tel: 01768 779747.
Open: Tues-Suns from April 1 + sch hols.

West Lancashire Light Railway
2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs.
Tel: 01772 815881.
Running: Suns & bank hols from Apr 2.

The Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway will celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on Sunday, May 7 with an extra day of services, most of which will be operated by 1903-built former Southam cement works Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 2 *Jurassic*, the line's flagship locomotive. Richard Shepherd, chairman of the LCLR's Historic Vehicles Trust, said: "*Jurassic* has operated through the reigns of five monarchs and in the 120th year since it was built, it will help people celebrate the coronation of the sixth, King Charles III, 63 years since the LCLR became the first heritage railway in the world to be built by enthusiasts on a greenfield site." *Jurassic* is pictured suitably decorated in June 2022 during celebrations for the platinum jubilee celebrations of HM the late Queen Elizabeth II. LCLR

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland. Tel: 0300 030 3311.
Running: Apr 8, 9, 10, 12, 29, 30.

Railway Museums

Beamish
The Living Museum of the North, County Durham. Open: W/Es & Sch Hols
Tel: 0191 370 4000.

Coleford GWR Museum
Coleford, Gloucestershire.
Open: Fris, Sats.
Tel: 01594 832032/833569.

Colonel Stephens Railway Museum
Tenterden station, KESR.
Open on KESR operating days.
Tel: 01580 765155.

Crewe Heritage Centre
Vernon Way, Crewe.
Reopens: TBA.
Tel: 01270 212130.

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre
Donegal. Reopens April 1.
Tel: 00353 (0) 749722655.

Head of Steam
North Road Station, Darlington.
Closed for redevelopment.
Tel: 01325 405060.

Irchester Narrow Gauge Railway Museum
Irchester, Northamptonshire.
Open: Suns.
Tel: 01604 675368.

Leeds Industrial Museum
Armley Mills, Leeds.
Open: Tues-Suns.
Tel: 0113 378 2097.

Locomotion: The National Railway Museum, Shildon
Co Durham.
Open: Weds-Suns.
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

London Transport Museum
Covent Garden.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 0343 222 5000.

Manchester Museum of Science & Industry
Castlefield, Manchester.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

National Railway Museum
Leeman Road, York.
Open: Weds-Suns.
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

Penrhyn Castle & Railway Museum
Bangor, Gwynedd.
Open: W/Es.
Tel: 01258 353084.

Rail Story
Ingrow, West Yorks.
Open: Carriage Works daily, Engine Shed Tues-Suns.
Tel: 01535 690739 or 01535 680425.

Railworld Wildlife Haven
Peterborough.
Open: W/Es.
Tel: 01733 344420.

Riverside Museum
Glasgow.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 0141 287 2720.

STEAM – Museum of the GWR
Swindon.
Open: Daily.
Tel: 01793 466637.

Tiverton Museum
Tiverton, Devon.
Open: Tues-Sats.
Tel: 01884 256295.

West Cumberland Railway Museum
St Bees, Cumbria.
Open one week per month or by appointment for special interest groups – contact petergrooke@btinternet.com

Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
Cultra, Co. Down.
Open: Tues-Suns.
Tel: +44 (0)28 9042 8428.

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To mark the end of half term in the south, over February 17-19 the Mid-Hants Railway offered 'driver for a tenner' courses with Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1788 *Kilmersdon* within station limits at Arlesford, experiences with proved immensely popular and sold out. It also ran a brake van trip to Ropley which departed at 4pm each day. Following the positive response, the MHR is investigating future dates on which to offer this experience. OWEN HAYWARD

Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society
Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.
Tel: 07889 297271.
Running: Mar 17, Apr 29.

Bowes Railway
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles. Springwell, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07850 916484.
Open: Tues, Thurs to pre-booked groups only.

Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles.
Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire.
Tel: 01472 604657.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Apr 1.

Derwent Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.
Running: Suns & bank hols from Apr 9.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 795189.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Apr 4.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles.
Ford Forge, Northumberland.
Tel: 01890 820244.
Open: Daily from Apr 1.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ. Tel: 01535 645214.
Running: W/Es, sch hols + weds from Apr 19.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway
2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.
Tel: 07407 500884.
Reopens: May 29.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.
Running: Apr 8-10, 29, 30.

Middleton Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles.
Hunslet, Leeds. Tel: 0845 680 1758.
Running: Sats & Weds from April 1.

North Tyneside Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. North Shields. Tel: 0191 277 7135.
Running: TBA.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.
Running: Daily from Mar 27.

Scarborough North Bay Railway
20in gauge, 7/8 mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Apr 1.

Tanfield Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.
Tel: 07508 092365.
Running: Suns + Apr 7, 8, 19.

Weardale Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles.
Stanhope, Co. Durham.
Running: Mar 18, 19, 25, 26.

Wensleydale Railway
Standard gauge, 22 miles. Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.
Tel: 01677 425805.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Apr 5.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)
15in gauge, four miles. Huddersfield, West Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.
Reopens April 9.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway
2ft gauge, 4½ miles. Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es from Apr 1 + sch hols.

Barry Tourist Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Barry, Vale of Glamorgan. Tel 01446 748816.
Running: Closed UFN.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.
Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols from Apr 1.

Conwy Valley Railway Museum
7¼in and 15in gauge, ¾ mile. Betws-y-Coed station, Conwy. Tel: 01690 710568.
Open: Daily.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile. Corris, near Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.
Reopens: TBA.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne, Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.
Running: W/Es + Tues-Thurs & sch hols from Apr 1.

Ffestiniog Railway
2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es from Mar 25 + Fris from Apr 7 + Apr 3, 10, 17.

Gwili Railway
Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 01267 238213.
Running: Suns, Thurs, bank hols from Apr 9 + Apr 8, 12.

Llanberis Lake Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870549.
Running: Suns, Tues-Thurs, sch hols.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.
Tel: 07956 082305.
Running: Mar 18, 19, Apr 8, 9.

Llangollen Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen, Denbighshire. Tel: 01978 860979.
Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 6, 11-13 and Fris from Apr 14.

Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Blaenavon, Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.
Running: W/Es, bank hols from Apr 1.

Rhyl Miniature Railway
15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.
Tel: 01352 759109.
Running: W/Es, sch hols from Apr 1.

Snowdon Mountain Railway
800mm gauge, 4½ miles.
Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.
Running: Daily from Apr 1.

Talyllyn Railway
2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.
Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.
Running: W/Es. Daily from Apr 1.

Teifi Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Henllan, Ceredigion, SA44 5TD.
Tel: 01559 371077.
Running: Apr 2-16.

Vale of Rheidol Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.
Running: Daily from Mar 25.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.
Running: Apr 8, 9, 20, 26.

Welsh Highland Railway
2ft gauge, 26 miles.
Caernarfon, Gwynedd.
Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es from Mar 25 + Fris from Apr 7 + Apr 3, 10, 17.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, eight miles.
Llanfair Caereinion, Powys.
Tel: 01938 810441. **Running: W/Es, Weds, Thurs, sch hols from Apr 1.**

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: Mar 17, 19, 25, then W/Es, Tues, bank hols from Apr 1 + Apr 5, 12.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles. Brechin, Angus. Tel: 01356 622992.
Running: Apr 8, 9.

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge.
Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Running: Apr 10.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Dufftown, Banffshire.
Tel: 01340 821181.
Running: W/Es, bank hols from Apr 7.

Lathalmond Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond, nr Dunfermline.
Tel: 07379 914801.
Open: Suns from Apr 2.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South Lanarkshire. **Running: Apr 9.**

Royal Deeside Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Banchory, Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.
Reopens: TBA.

Strathspey Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.
Running: W/Es, Weds, Thurs, bank hols from Mar 29.

IRELAND

Downpatrick & County Down Railway
5ft 3in gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down.
Tel: 028 4461 5779.**Running: Mar 17.**

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim.
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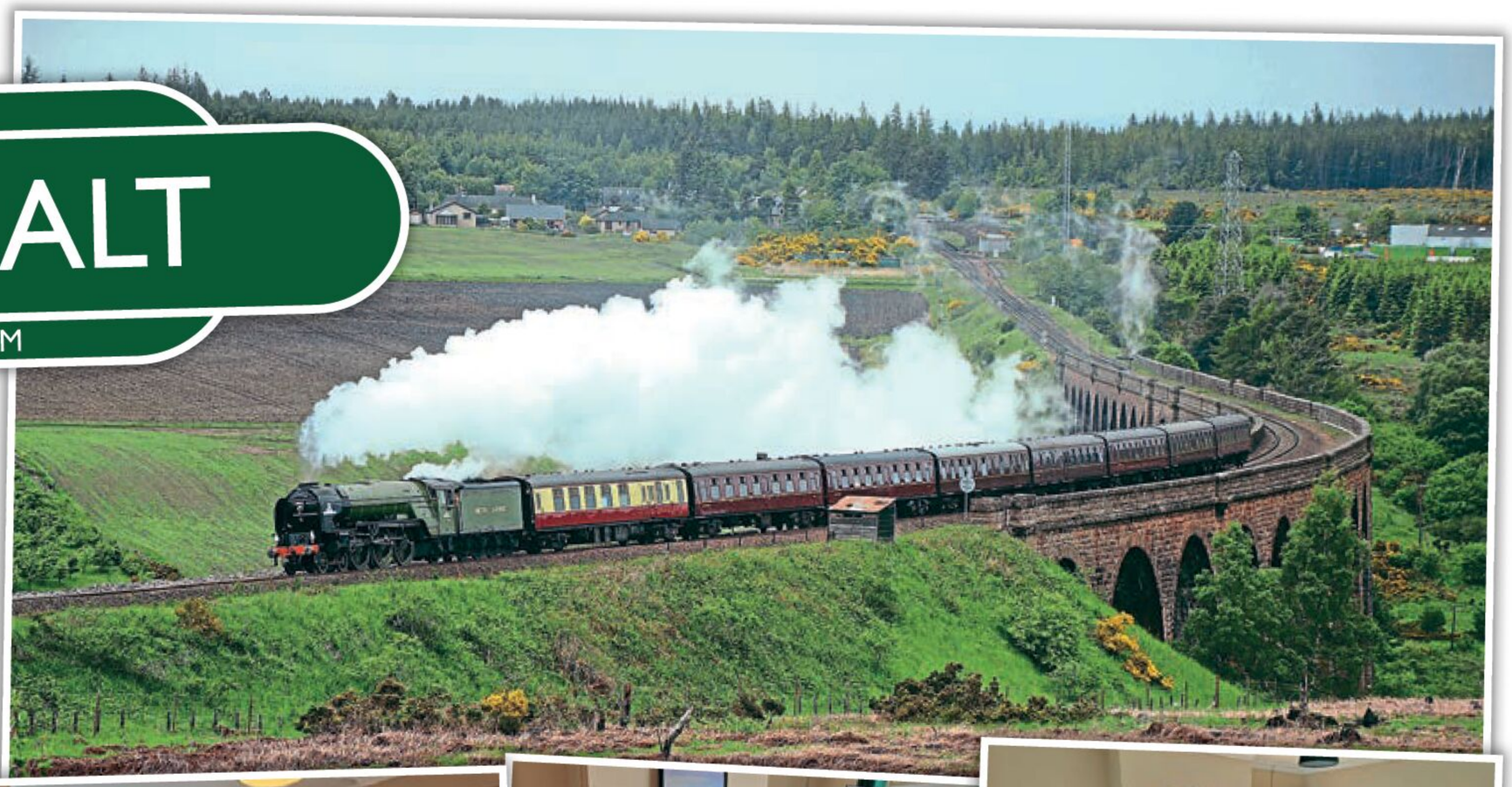

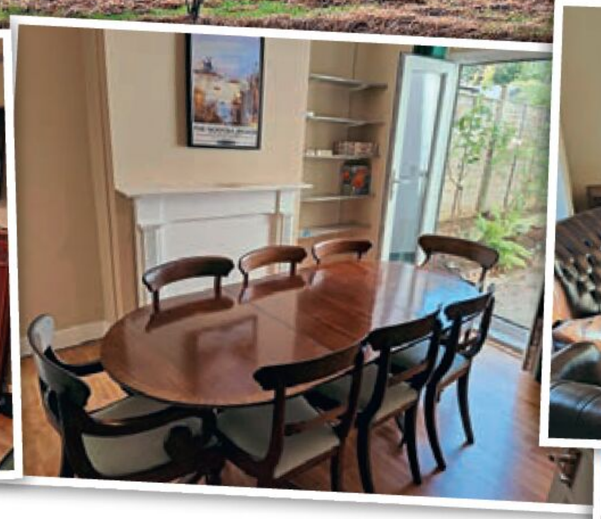

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Take a look at our what's on/events page on our website for more information and the special steam locomotives visiting the North Norfolk Railway this year, such as No. 60163 *Tornado* from May 27 to June 4.

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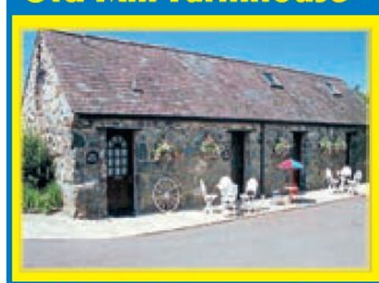

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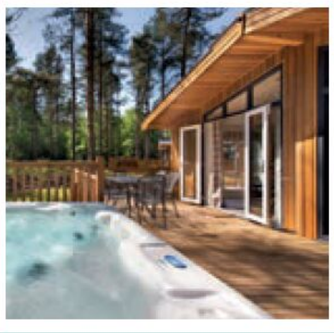

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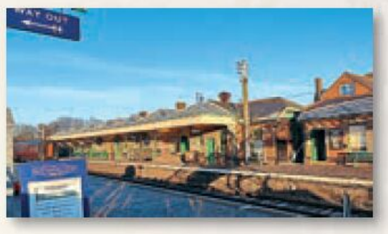

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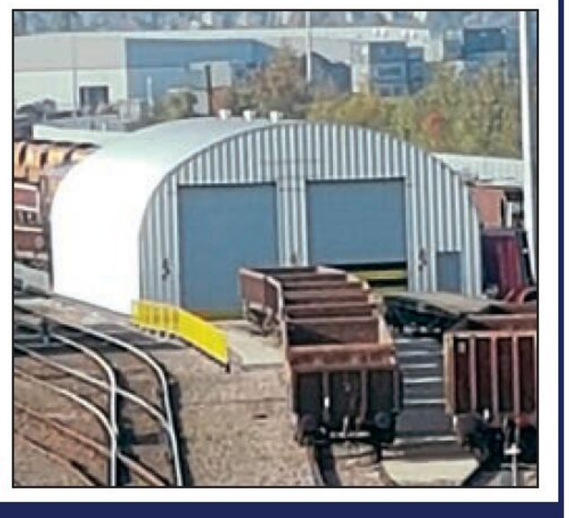

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Wickham shed for Stainmore Railway

By Owen Hayward

ONCE a common sight at the lineside, the Stainmore Railway Company will recreate an unusual piece of history that has been missing for nearly 60 years when it erects a salvaged railmotor (or more commonly known as a Wickham trolley) shed at Kirkby Stephen East, a station that once had two of these structures.

A few years ago, the SRC was invited to recover the remains of the building from a garden in Darlington, the residence of a former railwayman.

Having been given permission by the railway authorities to remove it after the line was closed in 1962, it was then erected and used as a garage at his property.

Now it is being restored, ready to play its part in the station's history, where two of these sheds for the engineering vehicles were once found just west of the junction signalbox.

The steel frame had suffered corrosion after being buried in the ground during its years as a garage, but local contactor Dean Nelson has recently completed the repairs, which included replacing missing frame sections.

The corrugated cladding and roofing sheets have been thoroughly cleaned, primed and painted, ready to be fitted once the structure is rebuilt on the original site of one of the two BR-era railtmotor sheds. Some wastage on the ends of the sheets will be patch-repaired using spare sheets already to hand.

When weather conditions improve, the base for not just this but also a second shed will be laid, with an offer coming in of another structure from nearby Greenriggs Farm.

An initial inspection has shown it will require similar work carried out to that on the first shed.

SRC is also fortunate in having two trolleys at Kirkby Stephen East, one of which is also being heavily restored. The existing petrol engine powered vehicle will be replaced by a diesel one; the second, which has survived as just a chassis, is being converted to a trailer. New 'U' beams have been added that will hold the wooden floor to the frames and it is intended to manufacture a seating structure in accordance with plans obtained.

A sight that hasn't been seen for 60 years, but could not be far off: A Rail Motor (Wickham trolley) outside Kirkby Stephen East's accompanying shed, which is just visible behind the trolley. MARTIN TORDOFF/SRC

Above: Pictured in 2016 prior to its reclamation by the Stainmore Railway Company, this railmotor shed was used as a garage in Darlington. SRC
Left: Volunteers are restoring one of the two trolleys back into operational condition. SRC

New future for Peter Kelly's models

FOLLOWING the death of Peter Kelly, *Heritage Railway*'s first managing editor when we launched in 1999, his family was tasked with clearing the house he rented in the small Lincolnshire village of Asgarby, a few miles to the east of our Horncastle base.

One problem his relatives faced was that of how to remove the substantial model railway layout he had built over the years.

Racing against time before the keys of the property had to be handed back to the landlord, *Heritage Railway* agreed to contact potential interested parties who might be willing to offer it a good home.

The Sleaford Model Railway Club, which based in Ruskington to the north of the town and regularly meet in the village hall, readily agreed to help.

Officials accompanied Peter's daughter, Alison Morgan, to the house and boxed up rolling stock and buildings. However, because of their sheer size and construction, the layout baseboards could not be moved in the limited time available, so with the clock ticking, the club members carefully lifted the track for future use.

Returning to Sleaford, it was decided to offer any items for which the club had no future use for sale to members. Other items were sold at the recent Lincoln Toy and Train Fair, with the proceeds going to club funds – and a quarter of the money raised being donated to the local air ambulance charity. As we closed for press, several hundred pounds had been raised for that cause.

Many of the recovered items are to be reused in the next layout being built by the club, which will have a Great Central Railway theme. One of Peter's model buildings, a shop, is to be refurbishment in his memory.

One of Peter's biggest loves, railways apart, was motorbikes, and he had worked on specialist publications in that field. The model building is to be restyled as a motorbike shop and will take pride of place on the new club layout, said official Eddie King.

Heritage Railway editor Robin Jones said: "Railway publishing owes a huge debt of gratitude to Pete, and we will never forget him. His models are keeping his memory alive and doing much to help others."

As reported in issue 302, Pete passed away peacefully at his home on December 28, aged 78.

Peter Kelly in happy times with his model railway layout several years ago. ALISON MORGAN

NEXT ISSUE
Issue 305 out April 14
Sally Clifford looks at the overhaul of GWR pannier No. 5775, one of the stars of The Railway Children movie.

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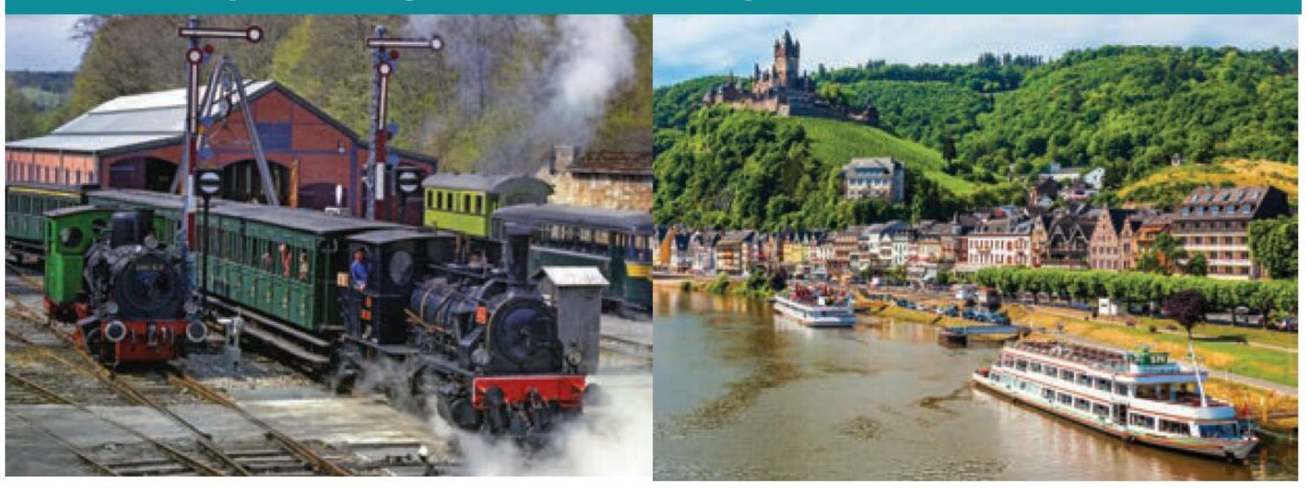

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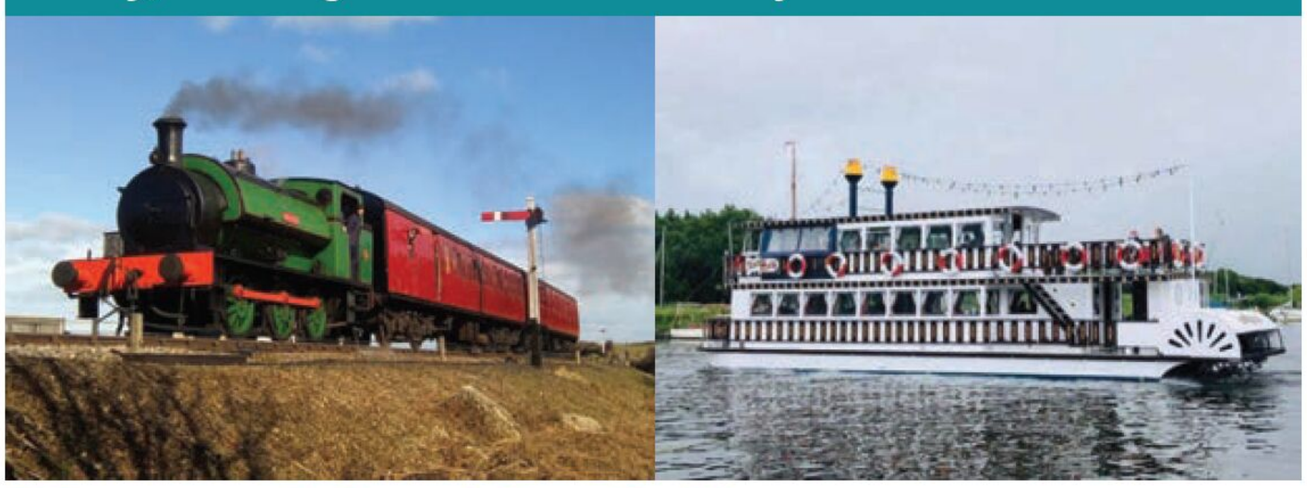

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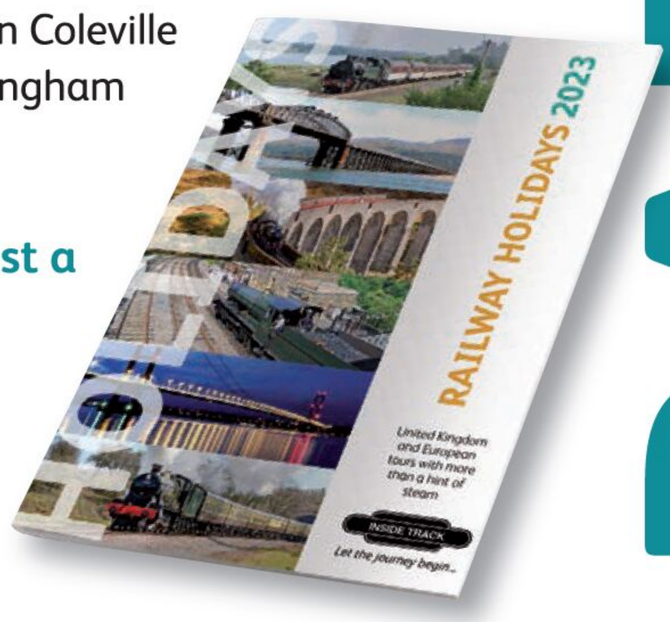

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