ELSECAR RAILWAY'S £25M REVIVAL

ISSUE 313 November 24 – December 22, 2023

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Swanage £450k 'Save our railway' appeal launched

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

FLYING SCOTSMAN RETURNS TO DONCASTER

■ PHOTOGRAPHING FESTIVE STEAM AT ITS BEST ■ 37 UK STEAM NAMEPLATES IN '£1M' US RAILWAYANA AUCTION ■ BRITON IN INTENSIVE CARE AFTER ARGENTINE STEAM TRAIN ROLLS DOWN EMBANKMENT ■ LLANGOLLEN GALA BACK IN 2024

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The Dean Forest Locomotive Group's GWR small prairie No. 5541 is seen tackling the grade up to Norchard High Level during a Mike Tyack charter on November 11. Its boiler certificate was due to expire this winter but has been granted a 12-month extension to see it through 2024. See also News, page 15. MARTYN TATTAM

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Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm
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DISTRIBUTION & PRINTING
Distribution
Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 3rd Floor, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP
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SUBSCRIPTION
Full subscription rates (but see page 30 for offer): (12 months 13 issues, inc post and packing) – UK £67.60. Export rates are also available – see page 30 for more details. UK subscriptions are zero-rated for the purposes of Value Added Tax.
Enquires: subscriptions@mortons.co.uk

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ISSN No 1466-3560

Published
Every four weeks on a Friday.
Advertising deadline
December 7, 2023
Next issue on sale
December 22, 2023

MORTONS MEDIA GROUP LTD
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A beacon for the new age of the volunteer

THE official presentation of an MBE to Talyllyn Railway pioneer John Bates on October 26, awarded in The King's Birthday Honours, was a glowing tribute to the entire heritage railway sector.

In 1951, during the latter days of post-Second World War austerity, John and a group of like-minded visionaries set about rescuing a remote narrow gauge line in a far-flung corner of mid-Wales, making regular trips from their homes across the border in England to undertake the necessary hard slog purely on a voluntary basis. Swimming against a tidal wave of seemingly insurmountable odds, the world's first heritage railway came into being – and set the blueprint for others to follow. Had it not been for the members of that group who were prepared to give up their spare time to travel to Tywyn and its hinterland in an age when car ownership was a fraction of what it is now, where would we be today? I think it is probable that, considering the widespread enthusiasm for the railway over many generations, another rail revival scheme may have taken root elsewhere – but if not for the Talyllyn showing us the way, how much would have been lost in the process?

Heritage in any form, rail or otherwise, is a priceless commodity. Let it disappear and you lose the historic identity of a community along with it.

In the distant days long before the Heritage Lottery Fund and other modern sources of funding, it was sheer graft, not grant aid, which bestowed us with the mouth-watering portfolio of heritage lines and museums we cherish today. However, in the current climate of the cost-of-living crisis, following the losses suffered by heritage lines during the Covid-19 lockdown, the long-term existence of our magnificent achievements is anything but assured. With soaring prices for coal, gas and electricity at the forefront of running costs for heritage lines, it seems that one person holds the key to survival – the volunteer.

> "Heritage in any form, rail or otherwise, is a priceless commodity. Let it disappear and you lose the historic identity of a community along with it."

Many of our preservation venues have renewed their appeals for people to give up their free time to help. Indeed, voluntary labour in the sector has many rewards – for example, it enables young people to gain work experience, which adds a star rating to their CVs and may well lead to a professional career of their choice. The roles on offer are rich and varied – from train and station staff to stock maintenance, permanent way, catering, sales and administration. You do not even have to attend your railway on a regular basis: thanks to computer technology, office and promotional staff can work from home. How many railways are in need of someone who can inform their local media on a regular basis about what is going on at their line and to update social media sites?

At the age of 94, John Bate is still volunteering at the Talyllyn Railway and shining a beacon in the darkness – one which we should – and must – all follow wherever we can.

Our heritage railways need you now.

Robin Jones Editor

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COVER: The Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust's 2-8-0 7F No. 53808 bowed out of service at the Mid-Hants Railway on November 4. The day beforehand, it starred in one final 'Mad Hants' photographic charter, which paired the heavy freight locomotive with a rake of goods wagons. Having endured a mix of weather conditions on the day, the iconic locomotive was graced by a rainbow at Northside Lane as the event drew to a close: see News, page 11. STEPHEN MORLEY

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Swanage launches £450k SOS appeal to combat winter costs

By Robin Jones

A £450,000 'Save Your Railway' appeal has been launched by the Swanage Railway Trust to combat rising operating costs and declining passenger numbers.

The appeal is aimed at boosting the financial reserves of the Purbeck Line through the early months of 2024 before the main trading season resumes in the spring.

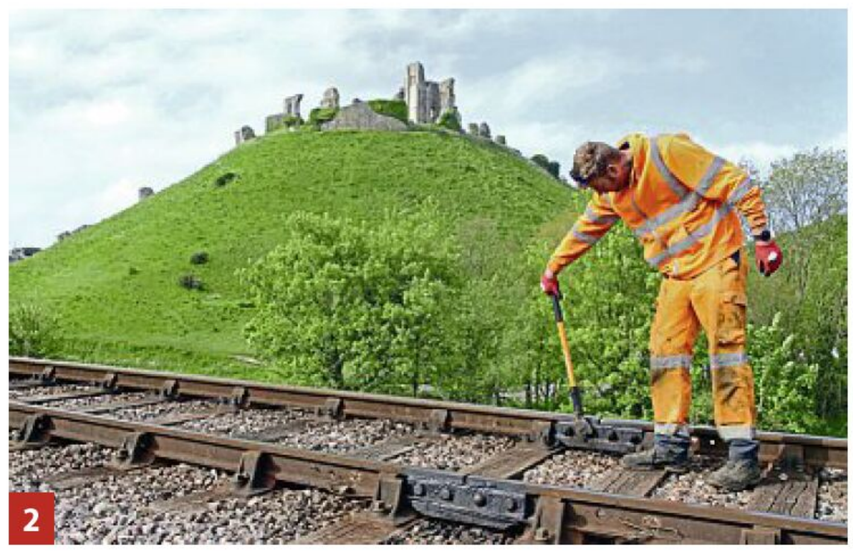
Meanwhile, the Swanage Railway Company, which operates trains on behalf of the trust, has set its own target of cutting operating costs by £350,000, while also working on an initiative to attract more visitors next year.

Trust chairman Frank Roberts, a volunteer on the line for nearly 40 years, said: "We are well aware that the cost-of-living crisis is affecting very many people, but every pound donated to our Save Your Railway appeal will help the Swanage Railway.

"Since the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the railway has found it challenging to attract more passengers, while also trying to reduce strong inflationary and economic pressures. While our passenger numbers are recovering, they have not returned to 2019 levels – with more than 141,000 people so far this year, compared with more than 202,000 people for the whole of 2019 – and inflation continues to increase our operating costs, with the railway having to pay more for coal, oil, water, and other services.

1: Swanage Railway Trust chairman Frank Roberts.

2: Swanage Railway track maintenance underway at Corfe Castle.
BOTH: ANDREW PM WRIGHT



Challenge and opportunity

"We have also had to carry out the expensive upgrade and overhaul of a Victorian metal girder bridge, carrying the Swanage Railway over a road near Furzebrook at the western end.

"To increase income, we will be repositioning the Swanage Railway into a broader and more commercial visitor experience while also maintaining our heritage train business.

"It's a challenge as well as an opportunity to shape the Swanage Railway for the future.

"We are working to make the Swanage Railway more efficient and effective, as well as being capable of attracting increasing numbers of passengers.

"We have gaps in our management structure that need to be filled by willing volunteers with relevant skills and experience.

"The longer-term survival of the Swanage Railway depends on a positive and quick response to our call to arms."

Anyone interested in finding out more about volunteering should contact the Swanage Railway's volunteer recruitment and retention officer, Lisa Gravett, on 01929 475212 or email iwanttovolunteer@swanagerailway.co.uk. Details about volunteering can also be found at swanagerailwaytrust.org/volunteering

➜ Donations to the Save Your Railway appeal can be made at swanagerailwaytrust.enthuse.com/saveyourrailway, while cheques can be sent to the Swanage Railway Trust, Station House, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1HB, marked 'Save Your Railway Appeal'.

Moorsline launches £50K fundraiser with 'Piglet'

WHILE it has been celebrating its half centenary this year, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway is not letting up on safeguarding its future with the launch of a new £50,000 fundraising appeal. With its director of mechanical engineering and TV star Paul 'Piglet' Middleton as its face, this fundraiser is an appeal with a difference.

One of the stars of Channel 5's Yorkshire Steam Railway and Big Steam Adventure programmes, Piglet has worked tirelessly at the railway since he was 16 years old. With base costs to run the railway spiralling ever upwards, now more than ever it needs help to ensure that it will continues to entertain visitors for the next 50 years.

To run daily services across its 18-miles, steam locomotives require three tonnes of coal each per day; previously, that would have cost £540 but current coal supply issues has seen this rise to £1350.

Worn brake blocks are replaced on locomotives every other month, and with most tender locomotives requiring 12 blocks at a time, each one costing about £100, it can cost in the region of £7200 a year per locomotive on these components alone.

Furthermore, all eight tyres on bogie coach wheelsets require replacement at 10-year intervals, a job which itself can cost £25,000 per vehicle. With up to 35 coaches in use at any one time, here is also one of the great general maintenance expenditures – and that is before you even look at 18 miles of track with its 36 bridges and other infrastructure.

All donors who contribute to the appeal will be entered into a prize draw which could see them win a year of free travel on the Moorsline.

Other incentives on offer include donor names being featured on a new piece of station artwork for contributions of £25, while £120 will sponsor one of the railway's apprentices, from whom you will receive a personal letter of thanks, and £500 will secure two tickets to an exclusive event hosted by Piglet himself.

"It's really important that we get support from anyone who can give donations; it's absolutely crucial to keep these engines running," he said.

Donations of £120 will help sponsor apprentices like Jack (right), who are employed in the workshops and learn the skills required to help keep the railway running under the careful guidance of people like Paul 'Piglet' Middleton (left).
NYMR

"It's increasingly expensive to keep locomotives like these in steam; that's the material costs alone, never mind the skilled labour required to keep them going.

"We have a huge amount of maintenance to carry out this winter and we need that funding to help support buying the materials – from rivets to stays and all the copper plate, brasses and bronze required – to make sure that in the spring we are all ready to go again.

"It's all about the history. In the UK, here was the birth of the railways. This is where it all started – and this is where it is going to continue."

➜ To donate, visit nymr.co.uk/pages/category/piglets-journey-fundraising

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Briton in hospital after Argentine steam train rolls down embankment

By John Titlow

A BRITISH traveller was reported to be in hospital in intensive care after a special tourist steam train in Argentina completely derailed and toppled onto its side, dragging its carriages down an embankment, on November 11.

The tour was organised by American company Trains and Travel International LLC, under the title of 'The Old Patagonian Express – The Final Chapter', with tickets costing from $7595 (£6200) for the basic package. It was running over the scenic 249-mile 2ft 51/2in gauge line between Esquel and Ingeniero Jacobacci via El Maitén in the foothills of the Andes Mountain range when the incident occured.

The trains are commonly known by two names, the Old Patagonian Express and, in Spanish, La Trochita, meaning 'little gauge'.

A total of 53 passengers were on board when it toppled at low speed; they were mainly Americans, but it is reported at least one Brit and one Australian were also on board.

Several people suffered varying degrees of injury, mainly fractures, broken ribs and bruising, while a British man is now in intensive care.

Notorious section

The locomotive involved was No. 104, a 2-8-2 built by Henschel & Sohn, Germany, works number 19405 of 1922, which now belongs to Rio Negro province, which owns the line north of the provincial boundary.

Other tour operators have avoided running over this section for many years. It appears the train had already safely negotiated the section a few days earlier in the opposite direction.

The incident happened about four miles west of the Río (river) Chico Bridge as the train was heading from Ñorquinco to Ingeniero Jacobacci at the northern end of the line.

This section is notorious for accidents, and washouts in particular, due to erosion of the sandy embankment, which was destroyed after heavy rain hit the area just over a month ago. It was rebuilt but needed to be compacted further. Sources indicated that the accident occurred due to roads giving way in the terrain.

Ambulances from El Bolsón, Maquinchao and Comallo arrived, and it was reported that a unnamed man from the UK was transferred to Bariloche after some initial interventions in the hospital in the town on the southern line of Rio Negro. He was referred to the city to undergo a CT scan for multiple trauma but on November 12 was transferred to an intensive care unit because of an irregular heartbeat.

James Fetchero, a passenger on the train, posted on social media: "What a day! At about 11.15am this morning as we were going about 17kph, we hit a washout on the line.

"No. 104 rolled over and took the entire train down the embankment. It is pretty scary to be trapped in a wooden coach as it rolls down the hill.

"Our wood stove was burning and the danger of fire was immediate. We had to kick out doors and crawl out and through the remains of the vestibule. I was lucky, with only bruised ribs and hip, but others were seriously injured.

"It took hours to be rescued from out in the middle of nowhere. The passengers and crew remained calm and worked together to help the injured – an experience I will never forget."

James had a lucky escape because he was in the one carriage that caught fire, in which the seriously injured were travelling.

A railway statement said: "We inform our passengers that the tourist service 'La Trochita', which connects the Ing. Jacobacci station with Ojos de Agua, will be temporarily suspended."

Esquel and El Maiten have sizeable Welsh Patagonian populations. Spanish is the dominant language, but Welsh and the languages of the native Indians are also spoken.

Henschel & Sohn 2-8-2 No. 104 on its side after its train rolled down an embankment following the derailment on November 11. JAMES FETCHERO

LMS Stanier 'Black Five' No. 45212 as spent much of the year away from its home line in the heart of Yorkshire. Having operated 'The Jacobite' services in Scotland over the summer, its return home was brief before transferring between valleys on November 2 when it moved from the Keighley & Worth to the Nene Valley Railway, where it will work Santa specials. Before then, No. 45212 worked one day of regular public trains on November 5, seen passing beneath Wansford's signal gantry with an arrival from Peterborough. OWEN HAYWARD

Nene Valley seeks new leader

THE Nene Valley Railway is advertising for a new general manager to join its payroll and lead the line through its next phase of development.

The successful candidate will be responsible for managing all the various functions needed to support the day-to-day operation of the 7½mile line and its further development.

The ideal candidate will be able to ensure that the railway is safe to operate and commercially successful, while being an inspirational leader with commercial intelligence, and who can manage a team of paid and volunteer staff, said an NVR statement. The postholder will work with the railway's trustees to help define and refine the NVR's strategic goals and then lead the management team to achieve them, reporting to the chairman of the NVR Ltd's board of trustees.

A proven track record in a senior management role is essential, and candidates are sought with a good level of business and commercial awareness.

Strong communication skills will be essential to help inspire staff and volunteers, as well liaise with external stakeholders and bodies such as the Office of Road and Rail, Charity Commission and Heritage Railway Association.

The job will necessitate some weekend working with at least one evening meeting each month, with some bank holidays also required. The vacancy is currently advertised with a salary of £40,000, although this may be increased for 'exceptional candidates'.

Following the resignation of Sarah Piggott in April after several years, Tracey Spring has been interim general manager.

For the job specifications and how to apply, visit nvr.org.uk/article.php/74/vacancies

Advertisement – see page 105.

UK-US tie-up with huge 'Holy Grail' GWR collection sale

EXCLUSIVE

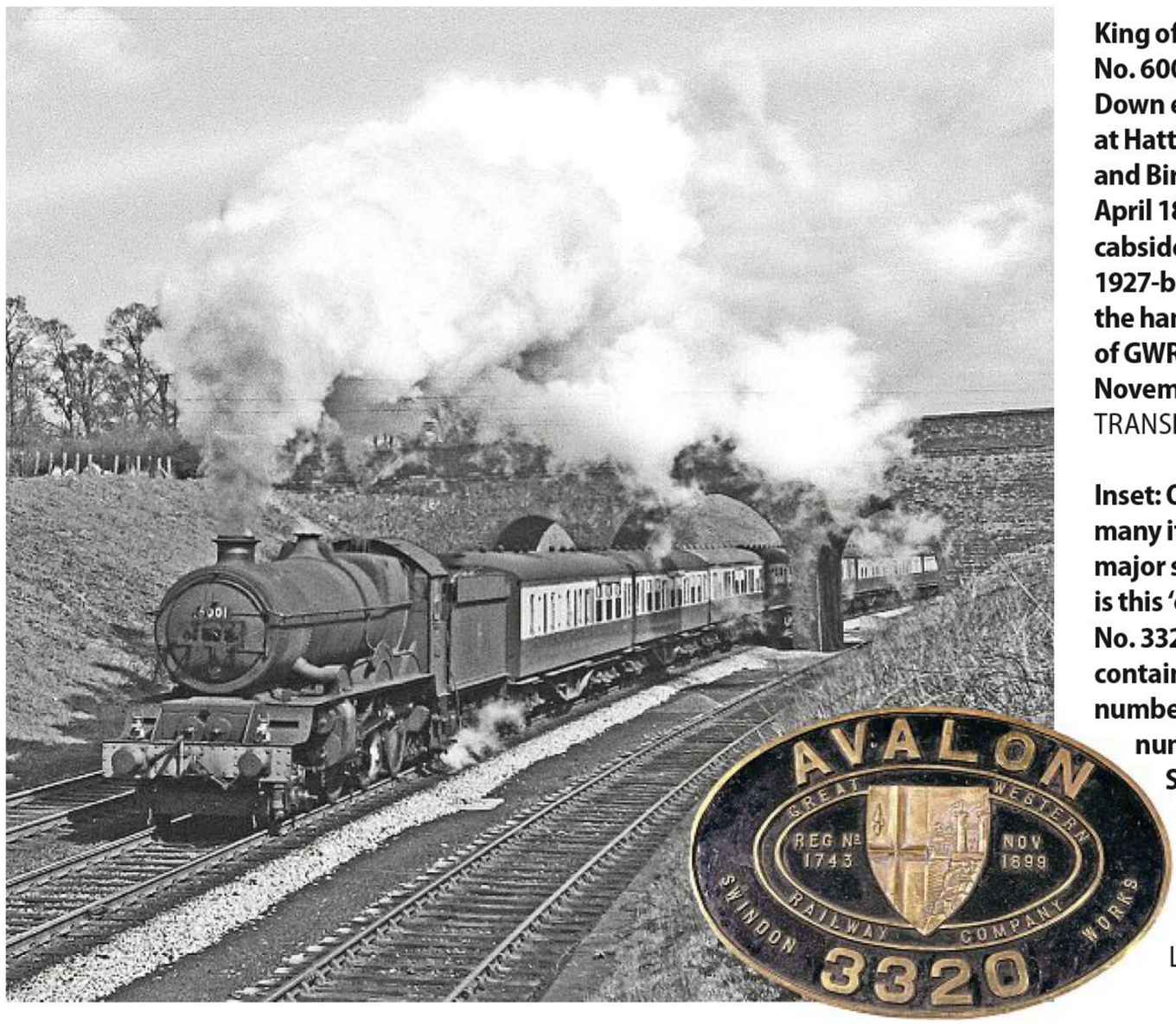
By Geoff Courtney

ONE of the world's largest private collections of GWR railwayana, including no fewer than 37 nameplates, 47 brass numberplates, and 'combined' name and worksplates that are regarded by many as the 'Holy Grail' of GWR memorabilia, is to go under the hammer at auction in the USA on November 30.

The sale, which is being held by Leonard Auction, of Addison, Illinois, is set to excite the vast army of GWR aficionados in the UK, many of whom may have been unaware of the collection's existence.

It was amassed over decades by the late Tom Jones, who was born and brought up in northern England and developed a love of trains from an early age. He progressed from collecting model trains to railwayana, and this lasted for much of his life, even after moving to the US, where he worked in the financial sector.

At the peak of steam railwayana prices 20 or so years ago, the value of the collection would undoubtedly have been at least £1 million, but even today it may sell for a minimum of £500,000 and possibly more due to the scarcity of some of the items going under the hammer.



King of the track: GWR 4-6-0 No. 6001 *King Edward VII* heads a Down express from Paddington at Hatton, between Warwick and Birmingham Snow Hill, on April 18, 1956. A nameplate and cabside numberplate from the 1927-built 4-6-0 will go under the hammer at a major auction of GWR railwayana in the US on November 30.
TRANSPORT TREASURY/RC RILEY

Inset: On a plate: One of the many items that will be in a major sale of GWR railwayana is this 'combine' from Bulldog No. 3320 *Avalon*. The brass plate contains the 4-4-0's name, number, registration (works) number, date of build, and Swindon Works and GWR identification, and is one of five in the auction to also include the GWR coat of arms.
LEONARD AUCTION

Kings and Castles

GWR classes represented in the nameplate category are King, Castle, Hall, Grange, Star, Armstrong, County (both pre and post-Grouping), Duke, Earl, Badminton, City, Bulldog, Bird, and Saint – a rollcall of locomotives that embraces the history of the company. There are also three classes of 'interlopers' – LMS Princess Royal and Princess Coronation, and LNER A3.

The nameplates collected by Tom indicate no particular theme other than their GWR heritage, but royalty has its share, including *King Charles II* and *King Edward VII* from the King class, Star class quartet *Queen Charlotte*, *Prince George*, *Princess Eugenie* and *Norwegian Monarch*, and *Princess Helena Victoria* from an LMS Princess Royal Pacific.

Geography played a part too, typified by *County of Somerset* from the pre-Grouping County class and *County of Hereford* from the post-Grouping class, and rivers, such as *River Tawe* and *River Plym* from a pair of Bulldogs, and *Thames* from a Duke.

Among the cabsides are plates whose matching nameplate will also be going under the hammer, this selection including Star Nos. 4013, 4044, 4054, 4060, and 4061, Saint Nos. 2906 and 2924, Duke No. 9073, King Nos. 6001 and 6009, Castle No. 5041, Grange No. 6819, Hall No. 6947, and post-Grouping County No. 1017.

Vast collection

In addition to the huge selection of nameplates and brass cabside numberplates on offer, many GWR collectors will have their eyes set firmly on the brass 'combines', which, as their in-house name suggests, are a combination of the locomotive's name and number, Swindon Works and GWR identification, registration (works) number, and date of build, although the date was usually ground off by the GWR in later years to disguise the age of these locomotives.

A handful of 'combines' also carried the GWR coat of arms, and five of in the auction have this added embellishment, raising them to an even higher level and leading them to be considered the 'Holy Grail' of GWR collecting.

Speaking to *Heritage Railway* from his Illinois office, John Leonard, the founder and principal of the auction house, said Tom Jones had assembled a "once-in-a-lifetime" collection, which also included station totem signs, headboards, smokebox numberplates, and carriage and finger boards, the majority of which was on display in his Connecticut home.

"He was a discerning collector who purchased much of his collection from notable dealers," said John.

"I hope the auction will be a celebration of his dedication to the hobby while offering collectors a chance to own these items, many of which haven't been available for more than 30 years."

Explaining the reasons for selling the collection in one auction and holding it in the US rather than the UK, he explained: "We looked at all options, but agreed with the family that offering the collection at one sale would bring more excitement and offer collectors the chance to view the entire collection together, while the family preferred to sell it from States using the internet to reach the UK."

The auction starts at 5pm UK time on November 30, and will be held live online via leonardauction.com, The-Saleroom.com, LiveAuctioneers.com, and Invaluable.com.

Romney's farewell to original 1920s locomotive shed at gala weekend

IT has served Kent's main line in miniature for almost a century, but the original 1926/27 locomotive shed at the 15in gauge Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway saw its final use on October 23 ahead of its demolition.

The years had taken their toll on the structure and thus it was deemed to be beyond economical repair, resulting in the decision to knock it down and start anew.

Davey Paxman 4-8-2 No. 6 *Samson* was the last locomotive to move 'off-shed' on October 23, which gave a long blast on its whistle; later that day, No. 2 *Northern Chief* and *Shealagh of Eskdale* (on long-term loan from the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway) were shunted out, leaving the building almost entirely empty save for the soon-to-be-removed rails; the locomotive fleet is being temporarily shedded in one of the permanent way buildings.

Demolition started in earnest; a new, modern building will replace the shed and will be better equipped for the needs of the modern RHDR, with rails spaced correctly and at the right height, as well as airlines and smoke hoods for steaming up.

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Flying Scotsman returns to birthplace for Remembrance Weekend visit

By Robin Jones

GRESLEY A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* returned to Doncaster, the city of its birth, for Remembrance Weekend on November 11/12.

Thousands of people attended the ticket-only two-day reception for the A3 at Freightliner Railport.

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, said: "It is testament to the hard work and determination of many people in our city that we can now welcome *Flying Scotsman* back home.

"I am delighted that thousands of visitors got the opportunity to see *Flying Scotsman* for themselves, as I know how much this means to local people."

In honour of the visit, and to recognise Doncaster's award of city status, which was given in 2022, Freightliner marked the occasion by naming Class 66 No. 66508 *City of Doncaster*.

***Flying Scotsman*, the world's most famous locomotive, steams into Doncaster's Freightliner Railway for Remembrance Weekend.**
BEN HARRISON PHOTOGRAPHY WWW.BENHARRISONPHOTOGRAPHY.CO.UK

'Honour'

Tim Shoveller, the chief executive officer of G&W UK/Europe, presented the mayor with a commemorative plaque. He said: "It is an honour to have the *Flying Scotsman,* a key part of our national rail history, on our site and to be part of this special centenary celebration.

"This weekend is particularly poignant as we remember the sacrifices many men and women made during war. Many ex-service men and women work in our business today."

First Bus provided park-and-ride services and displayed a vintage bus at the event. Fire crews from Doncaster Blue Watch filled up the A3's tender with 5000 gallons of water, ready for the return journey to York.

The Locomotion museum in Shildon is set to host a special visit from *Flying Scotsman* this Christmas to conclude its centenary year's celebrations.

The A3 will be at the museum from December 16 to January 7 and will give the public a last chance to it in light steam as it marks its 100th birthday.

The event will include a host of free family events and activities, including make-and-take craft sessions.

The specially commissioned short film Flying Scotsman: 100 Years, 100 Voices will also be screened, showing a range of stories from everyday people with a strong connection to the locomotive.

Visitors will be able to access *Flying Scotsman*'s footplate and see down the tender corridor introduced by the LNER in 1928 to enable fresh crew to travel between the support coach and the footplate without having to stop.

Head of Locomotion Sarah Price said: "We know from previous visits that *Flying Scotsman* has a unique appeal.

"I hope that families and railway enthusiasts from across the region will join us this Christmas to help celebrate *Flying Scotsman*'s very special birthday."

Book now

The event is free to attend but (free) museum admission tickets must be booked prior to arrival and parking on site will be limited. For more information, visit www.locomotion.org.uk/whats-on/flying-scotsman-christmas

No. 60103's visit to Locomotion is sponsored by CrossCountry and the *Flying Scotsman* centenary programme has been supported by Hornby Hobbies (lead sponsor) and backed by the National Heritage Memorial Fund and Players of the Peoples Postcode Lottery.

An aerial view of *Flying Scotsman* at Freightliner Railport. DCC

***Flying Scotsman* remembers the fallen.** DCC

Farwell to former HRA and Toddington director Bill Hillier

TRIBUTES have been paid to Bill Hillier, long-serving Heritage Railway Association director and the first Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway company director, who died in early November aged 87.

Bill, who lived in Evesham, served as a director of the HRA from 2000 until 2021. Its president, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, said: "Everyone involved in the HRA was so terribly saddened to hear that Bill has passed away.

"For so many years he played a pivotal role in the organisation and heritage rail as a whole – particularly in establishing a proactive relationship with industry regulators.

"The HRA would not be the organisation it is today without his efforts and that is widely recognised.

"Much of what Bill started is still in place today. His legacy will live on in the stronger position the whole sector is now in.

"Our condolences go to his family and the many people who knew and worked with him over his long association with heritage railways, including at the G/WR, where he served as a director for a number of years."

More tributes

G/WR chairman Richard Johnson said: "Bill was the first company secretary of the railway from the 1980s onwards and dealt with a huge amount of the administrative work necessary to incorporate and subsequently manage the affairs of the company.

"Bill was also a guard and a stationmaster at our railway for many years, and as a collector of railway tickets, dealt with the acquisition and supply of tickets to our booking offices.

"I believe that the ticket date stamping machines in the booking offices were all supplied by him.

"Bill's death is a timely reminder of the debt which we all owe to those who in the early 1980s were farsighted enough to undertake all the work necessary to begin the long job of building of the railway we have today."

Elsecar Railway to be reborn under £25m council plans

By Robin Jones

A £25 million scheme which will involve reopening the moribund Elsecar Heritage Railway as part of a major visitor attraction with a new-build locomotive was unveiled by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council on November 6.

The scheme, which has been developed over the past two years based on extensive public consultation in collaboration with Historic England, centres around the site of the former site of the Elsecar Ironworks, now a scheduled ancient monument.

It includes a new heritage railway destination, including a reconstructed 1849 *Fitzwilliam* locomotive to run on the revived line, powered by sustainable fuels.

The locomotive will be a replica of the first built by manufacturer Isaac Dodds & Son, an 0-4-2 named *Fitzwilliam,* constructed in 1849 for the South Yorkshire Railway. Dodds had taken over part of the works of Samuel Walker & Co. in Holmes, Rotherham, while he was superintendent of the Sheffield & Rotherham Railway.

The Heritage Action Zone project also includes a new rail college and rail technology test track, training more than 400 students annually, and advanced engineering workshops showcasing the region's innovation.

Designs for new buildings for the ironworks site have been closely inspired by the Victorian furnace sheds which originally stood there. They will replace a deteriorating replica station built in the 1990s, when the importance of the ironworks was not understood.

A 3D vision of new buildings inspired by the original Elsecar Ironworks furnace sheds. WIGNALL & MOORE

For families

The plans also include a 'Cultural Canteen' and outdoor events and performance area, against the spectacular backdrop of the ironworks furnaces and restored blast wall, and an active travel hub and cycle hire to enable families and visitors to explore the Elsecar Valley.

The site lies on the east side of the successful Elsecar Heritage Centre and its major indoor events space, which will be refurbished over the next year with funding already secured from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport through the Cultural Development Fund, administered by Arts Council England. The heritage centre was established in the 1990s in the Victorian workshops of Elsecar's last colliery, which closed 40 years ago.

The heritage railway, located on the southern part of the South Yorkshire Railway (later Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire/Great Central Railway) freight-only branch from Elsecar Junction on the Mexborough to Barnsley line. The branch closed in 1984.

In 1994, the council began a project to restore part of the branch as a heritage railway, which opened two years later. The Elsecar Heritage Railway took over operations from the council in 2006. However, the mile-long line ceased operations and during the Covid-19 pandemic surrendered the lease to the council in November 2020, after which most of its stock was dispersed elsewhere. The council may work with trustees of the original heritage line to progress its revival.

A council statement said that funding options are being explored for the new development, which has been costed at about £25 million to be delivered in full. It may be progressed in stages as funding becomes available.

"A series of consultation events, activities and special tours are planned for the New Year when the public, beginning with local residents, can share their thoughts about the new vision and how it should be taken forward," said the statement.

Celebrating heritage

"It focuses on creating jobs, skills, and quality life-changing experiences for South Yorkshire communities. It is closely aligned to Barnsley's 2030 vision as 'a place of possibilities'.

"Elsecar has a long history as an international centre of coal mining and ironworking, with many achievements to its name. The new development will share that history and celebrate the wider innovation heritage of South Yorkshire."

Council leader Coun Sir Stephen Houghton said: "We are determined to transform this remarkable historic site into something which is unique, sustainable, and will thrive long into the future.

"The redevelopment will not happen straight away. We need to secure funding and it will take time to deliver, but this vision is the starting point for something very special for Elsecar."

No trains to Broadway after Stanway Viaduct repairs start

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's Broadway terminus will be closed until the start of the 2024 running season in March while the first phase of repairs work on 120-year-old Stanway Viaduct is carried out.

Beginning on November 6, the line's permanent way department lifted the track over the 15-arch viaduct before Walsh Construction removed the ballast down to the membrane – which will be replaced with a new concrete deck and a waterproof bituminous membrane.

The viaduct will then be allowed to dry out for a year before repairs to the water-damaged brickwork begins, a process that could take up to three years, but which will not affect trains crossing. The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Trust is currently trying to raise £1.5 million to complete the full repairs on the 656ft viaduct. This second phase is expected to cost a total of £1.2 million – £400,000 for each of the three years it will take to do the work.

Cheque presentation

In a short ceremony at Broadway station, Matt and Gemma Walters, Simon Knight and Carrie Ayling, the adjacent Broadway Caravan and Motorhome Club site team, presented a cheque for £670 to the trust's finance director, Maurice Hall, towards the project, following an earlier donation in May.

Broadway is a popular destination for caravan and motorhomers visiting the railway, the club's 118-pitch campsite being based on the site of the station's former goods yard.

Matt said: "The money has been raised through raffles and the 'Book Swap Box'. We have a close relationship with the G/WR and a large number of our guests stay here to visit the railway, especially during special events when we are always fully booked, often weeks in advance. We also have a board which not only displays a QR code to access the train times, but also tells our guests which locomotives are running, like that on the stations. There's always a group of people looking at it on the railway's running days."

Meanwhile, the line's entirely volunteer-run Santa Express trains, which run from November 25/26 to December, were more than two-thirds sold out as we closed for press.

Track has been lifted from Stanway Viaduct to allow the first phase of repairs to begin. PAUL FULLER/G/WR

The railway is also holding its annual day for The James Hopkins Trust and Heart Heroes for families to travel by steam train to the North Pole (aka Winchcombe).

➜ To donate to the Stanway Viaduct Appeal, visit members.gwrt.org.uk/donate or fill in an a leaflet, which can be found at the line's stations.

Pre-order Issue 314 : Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Autumn shades to the fore as BR Standard 2MT 2060 No. 78018, on loan from the Great Central Railway, hauls a Remembrance Day service on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway on November 11. ALAN WEAVER

Somerset & Dorset 7F bows out on Mid-Hants

THE Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust's 7F 2-8-0 No. 53808 formally bowed out of service at the Mid-Hants Railway on November 4.

Built in 1925 for the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway, for which it was numbered 88 and later became LMS No. 6978, it spent its entire working life allocated to Bath Green Park shed working local goods between Bath and Evercreech Junction, and after the Second World War it hauled summer Saturday holiday services to Bournemouth.

Withdrawal came in March 1964, after which it was taken to Barry scrapyard alongside classmate No. 53809, now based on the North Norfolk Railway.

In 1970 a price of £2500 was agreed with the then-named Somerset & Dorset Circle, which became the S&D Railway Museum Trust three years later. The 7F was towed to Bristol in October 1973 to appear at that year's Bath Road Diesel Depot open day before being moved to the trust's base at Radstock. When the project to create a museum there fell through, it was transferred to the West Somerset Railway in January 1976.

Prolonged preservation

The group established a new base at Washford station and No. 88 moved to that station the following December for what ended up being a prolonged restoration project, the locomotive not making its debut until August 1987 but in time to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the S&DJR.

It was a regular performer on the WSR over the ensuing years, with overhauls carried out between 1996-2005 and 2014-2016, but in March 2020 the trust was controversially presented with an eviction notice by the WSR plc, forcing it to remove all its assets, including the 7F.

Following negotiations, No. 53808 transferred to the MHR on August 27 that year, where it became a regular performer. Sadly, its tired mechanical condition resulted in it being sparingly used in 2023, despite the railway experiencing a shortfall in operational locomotives. After its appearance at the April 29-May 1 spring steam gala, it was used only as a last resort to ensure it stood the best chance of appearing at the October 6-8 autumn gala event.

In charge

On its scheduled farewell day, it made three round trips of the line from Alresford before taking charge of that evening's 'Real Ale Train' from Alton, before the fire was dropped at Ropley shed. Although certification does not expire until December 31, the workload of Christmas services was considered too much for the 7F's condition.

Funding for the required overhaul remains a major concern; prior to its departure from the WSR, it was being used on a 'run and restore' agreement. Trust chairman Roger Hardingham said: "We will announce an appeal in the New Year for the overhaul to add to the funds it has earned during its hire period. So far, the boiler should be a standard overhaul, but the chassis and wheels will need the major attention. We also have plans underway to build a new tender tank and deal with associated work on the tender chassis."

➜ To join or support the trust, visit www.sdrt.org

SDJR 7F No. 53808 crosses Grosvenor Road on its final planned day in service on November 4. ROD ORMSTON/S&DRT

'Provisional' agremeent could see Washford back with West Somerset

SINCE being given 12 months' notice by West Somerset Railway plc to quit the site in February 2020, the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust has been gradually clearing assets from its home of more than 50 years. While the land has belongs to the plc, the track and shed buildings on it have been the property of the S&DRT, whose chairman, Roger Hardingham, confirmed that discussions had been taking place with a provisional agreement now in place to sell them to the WSR Heritage Trust, hopefully by the end of 2023.

He said: "All the rolling stock has now all moved from the site apart from Coach No. 4, which is waiting for loan agreements to be finalised. The two diesel shunters have now been sold and we have put on long-term loans many items of rolling stock, artefacts, and buildings such as the Wells Hut and Lamp Room, with lampposts and signal posts also being distributed to like-minded trusts. The signal frame and levers from the demonstration 'box at Washford have been loaned to the Tarka Valley Railway at Torrington, which will rebuild a signalbox on its site. This LSWR location was clearly very suitable for our LSWR/SR equipment.

"Some items must be stored by us in three containers which will leave Washford in the coming weeks. We can then concentrate on our strategy for the future, which includes the development of our museum status and vast artefact and records collection."

Stanier mogul No. 2968 to re-enter Severn Valley service

Words and pictures by John Titlow

THE sole-surviving Stanier mogul is poised to make its Severn Valley Railway comeback hauling festive season services during late November and December.

As reported last issue, No. 2968 returned to steam for the first time in more than 10 years following overhaul.

After passing all static test and its full boiler inspection on October 19, the opportunity was taken to give it a light engine test to Highley and its first full journey over the line to Kidderminster in a decade on October 21 to attend the Stanier Mogul Fund's annual general meeting. It was the surprise guest, the trip made possible by close cooperation with the SVR engineering staff.

Members viewed the locomotive in the dock outside Kidderminster Railway Museum and it ran along the adjacent siding several times before returning light engine to Bridgnorth.

On its first loaded test run since overhaul, Stanier mogul No. 2968 storms out of Bewdley Tunnel on November 6.

Successful runs

Despite it being half-term and with daily services in operation, further light engine testing continued on November 1. No. 2968 ran two full return trips from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster, but on the first run it pulled LMS buffet carriage No. 149 to Bridgnorth. These runs were deemed successful, so the following day's testing was cancelled.

Loaded test runs started in earnest on November 6 and continued over the next two days. Three daily return workings took place with six teak carriages and one Mk1. A Royal Mail carriage was added on one run on November 7. No regular service trains were running apart from private charters hauled by Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 21C127 *Taw Valley*.

Crews were very impressed with its performance, in particular for its smooth running, quick acceleration and free steaming. It has a long and narrow firebox, and fires very easily.

Several outstanding jobs are yet to be completed, including the fitting of the steam pipe cladding from the smokebox to running plate.

Another is the final connection from the steam manifold to the steam heating; the casting is on site and needs final machining before fitting. Then, a further inspection is necessary by the insurance inspector for it to enter full service.

Conversion due

Currently, the locomotive is in its wartime guise as No. 2968 in unlined black livery. In late January it will return to the paintshop for full lining-out and conversion to its original 1934 guise as LMS No. 13268 for the first time in preservation.

A fund spokesman said: "We are thrilled to see our locomotive back in traffic following such an extensive overhaul. The recent spell of testing has demonstrated what fantastic work has been undertaken by the SVR's full time staff, alongside volunteers of the SVR and SMF. We are confident it will be a popular performer on the SVR, and perhaps further afield, in the years ahead."

No. 2968 will also star in a Stanier Mogul Fund members' preview event on December 30 for the Mince Pie Steam Special, for which tickets are available.

To help keep No. 2968 running, you can become a member of the fund, the ambition of which is for the locomotive to be in traffic for its 100th birthday in 2034. Visit https://staniermogulfund.org.uk

No. 2968 creates a ghostly image as it runs through Hampton Loade with a test train on November 7.

No. 2968 pulls forward out of the dock at Kidderminster before heading back to Bridgnorth following the Stanier Mogul Fund's annual general meeting on October 21.

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Two more locomotives for Bury Transport Museum displays

By Owen Hayward

BURY Transport Museum has been sent a new locomotive exhibit – and is on track to receive a second.

On October 30, four-wheel battery electric locomotive works No. 1378 moved from the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester to the East Lancashire Railway's locomotive depot at Bury Bolton Street, prior to the 1945 English Electric shunter joining the museum displays.

The locomotive worked at Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) in Bolton for 45 years before it moved to the Science and Industry Museum, where it had resided for more than 30 years. While at the ELR depot, it will receive a new battery charge before moving into the museum at the opposite end of the station.

Museum chairman Keith Whitmore said: "We are delighted to have this operational piece of Lancashire history to be displayed in our museum and are grateful to the Science and Industry Museum gifting the locomotive for future generations to explore.

"It is pioneering for its time as a battery electric locomotive when British Railways was about to embark on a substantial programme of steam locomotive building after the Second World War. We are looking forward to working closely with the Science and Industry Museum and others in the Science Museum Group on a number of new projects over the coming months."

New audiences

Sarah Baines, creator of engineering at the Science and Industry Museum, said: "The move has come as part of our ongoing work to restore and reimagine our globally important Grade II-listed Power Hall. Relocating a small number of objects from Power Hall will enable us to increase accessibility within the gallery when it reopens and create a clear and engaging experience for visitors.

"It's wonderful that our partnership with ELR means this piece of local railway history can now be enjoyed in new ways by new audiences."

Meanwhile, while it was built for the London, Tilbury & Southend route in 1934 and based at Shoeburyness, the first Stanier 2-6-4T to be built, 4MT No. 2500, has spent almost more than half its lifetime preserved than it did in operational service, with much of the heritage era spent in the north of England.

That could be set to continue as discussions are currently under way that could see the three-cylindered locomotive also move to the Bury museum.

The National Railway Museum's LMS Stanier 2-6-4T No. 2500 could be moving to Bury Transport Museum, with negotiations currently underway between the two organisations. TONY HISGETT/CREATIVE COMMONS

Withdrawn in June 1962 after just 28 years of service, it immediately became part of the National Collection for display at York. In the 1970s and 1980s it ran at Bressingham Steam Gardens, with a further short spell on display at Barrow Hill in 2015/16.

With the Bury museum having recently taken 1887-built Horwich Works 0-4-0ST shunter *Wren* on loan from the National Railway Museum, it might become a new outpost for NRM exhibits; as *Heritage Railway* closed for press, planning the logistics was underway, with a hope to seeing No. 2500 move to Bury soon.

Keith said: "We had a discussion a few months ago about it in addition to Lancashire & Yorkshire radial tank No. 1008 and the NRM wanted to look at moving it out of York. We are delighted to work in partnership with the Science Museum group and see No. 2500 reach a new audience at Bury."

'On the cards'

An NRM spokesman said: "'We can confirm that negotiations with East Lancashire Railway concerning LMS Stanier Tank No. 2500 are ongoing and we look forward to working with them in the future."

When asked if the plan for No. 1008 was still going ahead, Keith said: "It is very much still on the cards but it is not ready to be released from York. We are expecting that to remain the case probably until some time in 2024."

Battery electric locomotive No. 1378, which has been at the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester for more than 30 years, has moved to the East Lancashire Railway and will take up residence in Bury Transport Museum. DAVID DIXON/CREATIVE COMMONS

Mid-Hants seeks new chief

THE Mid-Hants Railway is looking for a new chief executive officer following the decision of Amanda Squires to step down.

Advertising the position as requiring strong business leadership with the sensitivity to work with a volunteer workforce, the ideal candidate will have "charismatic fundraising ability" and support the chairman of the Watercress Line Heritage Railway Trust and fundraising ambassadors to raise both its profile and fundraising reach.

The successful applicant will have a wide range of responsibilities; with the sector having witnessed a substantial shift in demographics and behaviours, the new CEO will need to lead the organisation through change, building on the success of products such as the Steam Illumination festive services.

They will also need to work with teams to boost volunteer numbers and support the current 450-plus who are actively involved.

The new post-holder will also work closely with various teams at the railway to lead and plan for the upkeep of the permanent way, locomotives, and rolling stock while maintaining standards, safety and efficiency and retaining strict control on costs and sales activity to ensure targets are met as the railway seeks to build a more sustainable future.

Experience of management of volunteers alongside paid staff in the heritage/tourism sector would be ideal, as too would be a pre-existing ability, or ability to, obtain sufficient knowledge of the rail industry to build on current partnerships and form new ones.

Excellent networking skills will benefit press relations and publicity requirements.

Depending on experience, the advertised salary is expected to be in the region of £75,000-£85,000 per annum, plus a range of benefits, the wage reflecting the importance of the role and the level of input required, with some weekend working expected.

The deadline for applications is November 30.

For full details and to apply, see uk.linkedin.com/jobs/view/chief-executive-officer-the-watercress-line-at-guardian-jobs-3755928695

The interior of the refurbished 1864 Aberystwyth locomotive shed has been turned into a multi-purpose display space. JOHN R JONES/VOR

Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2Ts Nos. 7, 8 and 9 outside the locomotive shed. No. 7 has also been repainted and carries 'GWR' lettering, a style that has not been worn since 1955. ANDREW SIMMONDS

Rheidol pair reliveried as new display shed unveiled

By Owen Hayward

AS ITS daily operation drew near to its end, on October 30 the Vale of Rheidol revealed that two of its iconic 2-6-2Ts had undergone a repaint, one being outshopped in unlined BR black for the first time since the 1950s.

No. 8 *Llywelyn* now carries the plain livery with the early BR crest 'cycling lion' logo displayed on its tanks below the nameplates, which have been refitted for the first time in more 30 years.

Its previous livery since 1996 was GWR green, with 'Great Western' lettering on the water tanks and no nameplate. The new livery was never carried by this exact locomotive, with only sister No. 9 *Prince of Wales* adopting the colour post-Second World War.

Rheidol tank No. 7 has also seen its livery change, it too having carried the Egyptian font livery worn by No. 8 but now displaying the simpler 'GWR' lettering – the only locomotive to have received this treatment under that company's ownership of the line. It wore this scheme from 1948 until 1955.

Charter stars

The pair subsequently starred in several days of photographic charters, with black No. 8 paired up with the matching crimson and cream coaching stock that had been repainted from WR colours at the start of the year.

The VoR's Aberystwyth station is also home to the standard gauge GWR locomotive shed that dates back to 1864. As reported in issue 307, it has been undergoing substantial refurbishment to transform it into a multi-purpose display space that will allow some of the VoR's stored collection to be publicly displayed.

VoR spokesman Will Smith said: "It has been our long-term aspiration to open a display space in Aberystwyth to showcase the railway's interesting collection of locomotives, collected by Peter Rampton from all over the world.

"Much of the collection has not been seen for decades and gained it the nickname 'Collection X'.

Investing for the future

"Over recent years, developments at Aberystwyth have taken place as part of the Wales to the World Project, a £2.5 million redevelopment of the Aberystwyth terminus, supported by £1.6 million of European Regional Development Funding funding through the Welsh Government's Tourism Attractor Destination programme, led by Visit Wales.

"The first phase comprised major remodelling of the track and signalling at Aberystwyth, together with construction of new platforms and toilets opened in 2019. The second phase was a three-road carriage shed constructed on the site of the former Carmarthen platforms (opened 2021) and a booking office (opened this year). The engine shed development has constituted the third and final phase.

"The GWR engine shed in Aberystwyth was famously home to Manors and Dukedogs, and was used by the VoR for stabling locos and carriages from 1968 onwards following the closure of the main line depot. After many years of continuous use as a steam shed, an upgrade was needed to improve working conditions for the staff and make it suitable for operating a tourist railway in the 21st century."

On October 31 and November 1, the engine shed was opened up to allow more than 500 visitors to preview what it had to offer, with a small selection of the stored collection of vehicles displayed, including the late Chiltern Railways founder Adrian Shooter's Model T Ford railcar, which the VoR acquired when his extensive collection went to auction earlier in the year. The building, which can accommodate various gauges including standard, will open regularly in 2024 once the entrance hall has been completed.

During November photographic charters on the line, the newly repainted No. 8 *Llywelyn* emerges from Quarry Cutting. The nameplates have not been carried for more than 30 years. ANDREW SIMMONDS

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WR pannier No. 9681 tackles the climb from Middle Forge to Norchard High Level, the cold November air highlighting the clean exhaust. KARL HEATH

Whitecliff scenes at autumn charter in the Royal Forest

WITH its Royal Forest of Steam weekend having been a rousing success not even a month beforehand, a photographic day on November 6 run by 30742 Charters brought photographers flocking back to the Dean Forest Railway for a simple yet dazzling day chasing WR 5700 0-6-0PT No. 9681.

Coupled to a rake of Dogfish ballast hoppers, and a GWR Toad brake van, the formation bore resemblance to classic steam era scenes of ballast workings out of Whitecliff Quarry.

Served by the Coleford Railway from 1883 to 1917, it was latterly served by the Severn & Wye Railway. The original line branched off the old main line at Coleford Junction, Parkend, with construction sponsored by the GWR. The Coleford line was steeply graded, following the course of the old Milkwall tramway; the gradient was 1-in-31 falling from Milkwall to Coleford Junction, and while the route from Wyesham Junction closed on December 31, 1916, the section between Coleford and Whitecliff remained open to serve the quarry there, which remained in operation until 1976.

Blessed with golden autumn sunshine and a cornucopia of colour thanks to the changing leaves, the day took in the northern end of the DFR between its main Norchard hub and current limit of operations at Parkend.

No. 9681 passes the Coleford spur as it arrives at Parkend with a steam era ballast working. NICK GILLIAM

Prairie for Warley centrepiece

GWR large prairie No. 5164, which has been stored at Barrow Hill Roundhouse since 2014 and was acquired by the Severn Valley Railway-based Erlestoke Manor Fund from the 5164 Preservation Group in 2021, was booked for display at the Warley Model Railway Club Show at the National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham on November 25/26.

Buy now to save money on 2024 Severn Valley ticket price increases

THE Severn Valley Railway has launched a 'price buster' early-bird offer for several of its special events in 2024 so visitors can save money by buying in advance.

Tickets for next year's spring and autumn galas and the very popular Step Back to the 1940s weekends in the summer are now available at 2023 prices to help people beat next year's planned increase. However, the offer is only available on purchases made until January 7.

SVR's visitor engagement manager, Lewis Maddox, said: "Rising costs mean we will need to increase the ticket prices for our events in 2024 but to help those who love a bargain, we are making this special offer available for a limited period.

"Our special events this year have proved very popular, and we know that many people are already planning their diaries for 2024. We wanted to give them an extra incentive to come and visit.

"Tickets for one of these events would also make a wonderful Christmas present."

The offer for 2024 tickets at this year's prices includes April's Spring Steam Gala, May's Spring Diesel Festival, the 1940s weekends in late June and early July, the September Autumn Steam Gala, and the Autumn Diesel Bash in October.

As highlighted in this issue's Up and Running, page 98, tickets for the line's seasonal services have been selling fast. GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, back from its summer visit to the West Somerset Railway, will be rostered.

The line's first-ever winter steam gala on January 6/7, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 311, will see five locomotives in operation, including USATC S160 2-8-0 *Omaha*, visiting from the Dartmouth Steam Railway, and recently overhauled Stanier mogul No. 2968 (see News, page 12) making its gala debut.

The event will also be be the last chance to see Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 21C127 *Taw Valley* in its current wartime black and Ivatt 4MT 'Flying Pig' 2-6-0 No. 43106 as it reaches the end of its current boiler ticket and is withdrawn for overhaul.

Services are planned to run from 8am to 7pm on both days and will include an evening special on the Saturday, with No. 43106.

Lewis said: "This is going to get 2024 off to an amazing start. We've not done anything as early in the season as this for quite some time, but we're confident it's going to go down very well."

➜ For details of all the offers and events, visit svr.co.uk or telephone 01562 757900.

Midsomer Norton acquires additional trackbed

THE Somerset & Dorset Railway at Midsomer Norton has secured 750 yards of trackbed of the former route over the Mendip Hills to safeguard its future expansion ambitions.

The purchased section runs from just south of the Chilcompton Tunnels to Redan Bridge, together with several acres of adjacent former agricultural land that the vendor stipulated had to form part of the purchase. The additional land provides a useful point of road access and, in the long term, has income potential for the trust.

A railway statement said: "There was a protracted period of detailed negotiations with the previous landowner, who is happy to see an operational railway reinstated.

"The purchase was funded from a generous legacy left to the trust with the request that it should be used for the future development of the railway.

"The change of ownership was confirmed as from Tuesday, October 10, and now enables the trust's ambitions of extending the operational railway to move one important step closer."

However, linking the current southern terminal point of operations with the newly-acquired land is hindered by an infilled cutting leading up to the tunnels, which are themselves also occupied by tenants of Highways England. The trust is continuing to liaise with all key stakeholders over these issues.

Part of the former S&D route, acquired for the eventual extension from Midsomer Norton. S&DRHT

Mid-Norfolk Railway back at Wymondham during 2024

THE Mid-Norfolk Railway has made progress in its efforts to return services to Wymondham.

The work to replace the life-expired waybeams that carry the rails across Crownthorpe Bridge will, together with associated trackwork replacement needed to run to Wymondham, be completed before the next summer's running season begins. This has been partially funded due to the generosity of supporters who have donated more than £40,000 to date. This sum, topped up from general railway funds and through the efforts of the head of permanent way to source materials, means the project can now proceed at a lower cost than first anticipated. The permanent way department has completed the relaying of the level crossing at Gravestone which, together with other essential work carried out, ensured that trains could continue to run to Thuxton and that the line is ready for 'Polar Express' services.

Platform 2/3 at Dereham has also been extended, an aspiration for some years which has become a reality with the signing of a contract that gives the line a franchise to run the 'Polar Express' for the next seven years, with the temporary platform removed.

To increase its capacity for special events, like the beer festival which returned this year, the railway has bought Mk.1 duel braked BFK coach No. E1402. After minor refurbishment including a complete repaint, it will enter service next year and allow the railway to create two rakes of vacuum-braked heritage coaches for regular two-train operations.

New Mid Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust chairman Graham Watts said: "Not running to Wymondham this year has been disappointing, but despite that the railway is making progress. Everyone is looking forward to the 'Polar Express', and then it is our intention to run a full programme of events next year for the first time since 2019."

Join the Back on Track appeal at www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk/emergencyappeal

Nos. 7754 and 68067 approaching Carrog on September 23. The pannier will have a formal launch weekend in April 2024, with a steam gala weekend also due to take place. RICHARD WALLIKER

Llangollen steaming back onto the gala scene in 2024

By Owen Hayward

ONCE host to the groundbreaking Steel, Stars and Steam events, the Llangollen Railway is set to host its first steam gala since October 2019 – with provision in place for a starring guest locomotive.

After Llangollen Railway plc entered administration in March 2021, the LR Trust (which took over operations that summer) has focused on rebuilding the line's stability with a gradual phasing in of enthusiast events "when the time is right".

With the recent opening of the Corwen extension firmly placing the railway back on the map, along with the return to service of flagship GWR pannier No. 7754, the managing team has given the green light to the return of a steam gala event.

With No. 7754 now completed and due to share Christmas duties with Roger Hibberd's Hudswell Clarke Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 68067, a formal launch weekend is first expected to take place over April 12-14, 2024, before the main operating season commences. Detailed plans are still being worked on, but it is intended to run a steam-orientated branch line-themed gala with both the six coupled tank engines and GWR 2-8-0 No. 3802, which will also have been repainted following completion of substantial mechanical refurbishment work.

Returning home

It is currently planned that the gala will be the Austerity's last LR running days, after which it will return to the Great Central Railway, having been on loan since August 2022.

Trust manager Tom Taylor confirmed that an all-steam September event is also planned, although the dates have yet to be confirmed. Using Nos. 3802 and 7754, alongside resident Kitson 0-6-0ST No. 5459 *Austin No. 1*, provision has already been made to allow for a guest locomotive to be brought in for the occasion, with several offers already received and in the process of being negotiated.

The event is expected to see both passenger and engineering freight workings operate, and rides available aboard a brake van, with careful planning looking at an intensive timetable while taking into consideration the now-removed Deeside loop that has reduced a passing point on the Llangollen to Glyndyfrdwy section.

The railway's last steam gala weekend ran over October 12/13, 2019, when WR 4-60 No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor* made a return visit to the Dee Valley, where it had been based since 1985 before moving to the West Somerset Railway in 2017. During that event it worked services alongside GWR No. 6430, large prairie No. 5199 and Class 25 D7535, the Manor adopting a 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard for the occasion.

Suspended sentence for Dean Forest arsonist

THE Dean Forest Railway was left counting the cost after an arsonist caused £45,000 damage to a GWR Siphon G van parked at Lydney Junction awaiting restoration.

At about 6.45pm on March 24, 2022, emergency services were called to the fire in the wooden-bodied vehicle, which was parked next to nine carriages. Fire crews found that the van had collapsed, and smoke was billowing across the nearby main line, triggering emergency signalling to warn train drivers to slow to a crawl, causing delays.

Police found that a digger on the site had been tampered with, and two men and a woman were hiding beneath a canopy.

At Gloucester Crown Court, Paul Irving, 26, of Steel Avenue, Lydney, was sentenced to a 12-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, and ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work, attend 30 programme sessions and monthly judicial reviews and pay a £156 victim surcharge. He pleaded guilty to damaging the vehicle by fire, either intending to destroy or damage it, or being reckless whether it would be destroyed or damaged. DFR chairman Alan Dickinson said the cost of repairing the fire damage was £45,000, and that the vehicle may be stripped for spares, while security at the site was being stepped up with CCTV cameras being fitted.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service tackle the blaze in the Siphon G van at Lydney Junction. DFR

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Washouts and damage as freak autumn storms strike

By Owen Hayward and Robin Jones

The Caledonian Railway's Bridge of Dun station was flooded by Storm Babet on October 21. CR

STORMS Babet and Ciaran brought chaos to the British Isles and left their mark with flash flooding and fallen trees on heritage railways.

Staffordshire's Amerton Railway was closed on October 20/21 when the Amerton Brook burst its banks and flooded the surrounding fields and main station yard. Although the water level receded by the Saturday afternoon, the railway remained closed on the Sunday to let it reduce further and for inspections to be carried out.

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway cancelled services on October 21 as local river levels rose; overnight from the day before, the A458, which follows much of the line, was closed after being flooded by the Afon Banwy neu Einion. The railway decided to suspend services for safety reasons, but after the water level lowered and following minor maintenance and tree clearance, Sunday services ran.

The strong winds in the days prior to the main brunt of Storm Babet brought down a large tree at Dolgoch Falls, adjacent to the Talyllyn Railway, with the area therefore closed until further notice. Although the tree was swiftly cleared, bridge repair works were still required and so the closure remained in effect as the railway's daily services concluded on November 5, with alighting passengers able only to access the nearby hotel.

Torrential rain on October 20 exacerbated a problem that has prevented Ecclesbourne Valley Railway services running between Shottle and Duffield since June 10 as a precautionary measure. In February, railway officials began monitoring a potential slippage of a railway-owned embankment leading into Duffield, and Office of Rail and Road advice was sought.

A stone wall was erected at the foot of the slope, but Storm Babet led to the rear driveway of a house at the top collapsing and slipping down towards the track. Operator WyvernRail plc chairman Neil Ferguson-Lee said the slippage has not yet blocked the track but has reduced the loading gauge.

This means services during the December 31-January 1 Winter Steam in the Valley gala – featuring BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78018 (continuing its loan spell from the Great Central Railway), BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80080, 1954-built Barclay 0-4-0ST *Brian Harrison*, Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST of 1955 *Cathryn* and, returning to steam after 15 years following overhaul completion, 1944-built Bagnall 0-6-0ST *The Duke* – will run only from Wirksworth to Shottle.

> "The railway receives a lot of community support, and we recognise the importance of helping those who have been affected by this terrible event..."

Supporting the community

Further north at Brechin, the Caledonian Railway was flooded as the River South Esk rose more than seven feet. Brechin station, which is on higher ground, escaped relatively unscathed, but Bridge of Dun station, where the main maintenance facilities are located, is closer to sea level and suffered the worst effects of the storm, with water almost at platform level.

Several buildings sustained water damage and rolling stock that has been partially submerged will require axlebox inspections; as a precautionary measure, much of it has now been moved to higher ground, and while track remained in good condition, fencing alongside the route was damaged, with much needing replacement.

Despite suffering its own damage, the local community was first and foremost in the railway's thoughts as it made a £1000 donation to a fundraising scheme set up by support charity Brechin Buccaneers.

CR director Jon Gill said: "In Brechin alone, 370 residents were identified for evacuation on the Thursday, with many having to be rescued by boat and helicopter the following day. These and many others now have no homes or possessions and are in temporary accommodation – this situation is likely to extend beyond Christmas.

"The railway has donated £1000 to a fund to support them and is also providing other support to help move donations of furniture and clothes, old furniture and so on, as well as provision of the railway's generators and so on as required. Although the railway has suffered badly, this can all be repaired.

"The railway receives a lot of community support, and we recognise the importance of helping those who have been affected by this terrible event, including other local businesses.

"We expect to focus our fundraising efforts to the end of the year on support for those affected, rather than specifically the railway at this time. Those affected are mostly from the more deprived areas of Brechin and many have no insurance due to previous flooding or decisions borne of the cost-of-living crisis."

Aside from the flooding, Angus Council is currently running a consultation to allow local residents, as well as those further afield, to consider the benefits of a number of improvements to the railway and associated infrastructure, including the return of the line to Montrose and provision of a walking and cycle route alongside the line.

Funding hopes

Jon added: "This is a great opportunity to improve Brechin and the railway's resilience to events like this, but it is dependent on a positive response to the consultation.

"Hopefully, it is enough to get what we need; the hope is to apply for round three Levelling Up funding in November, with the railway providing the 10% match-funding required."

Elsewhere, the Strathspey Railway at Aviemore ran services as normal over the weekend, after suspending them on October 19 due to the weather warnings in place.

In England, the Severn Valley Railway – which was decimated by freak floods in 2007 – was hit by Storm Babet on Friday, October 20, when services were not running. The line was subject to flooding in places, but an inspection during the late afternoon confirmed that it had cleared, and the line was safe to operate. Services went ahead as planned on the Saturday and Sunday.

At the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, there were no train services through to Whitby on November 2 due to flooding on the line, and there was disruption to the service due to flooding at Fen Bog.

However, the later planned Light Spectacular services ran and the line was back up and running as planned on November 3.

The section of Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's embankment which is slipping towards the track and is being held by a stone wall. EVR

The collapsed driveway at the house at the embankment top. EVR

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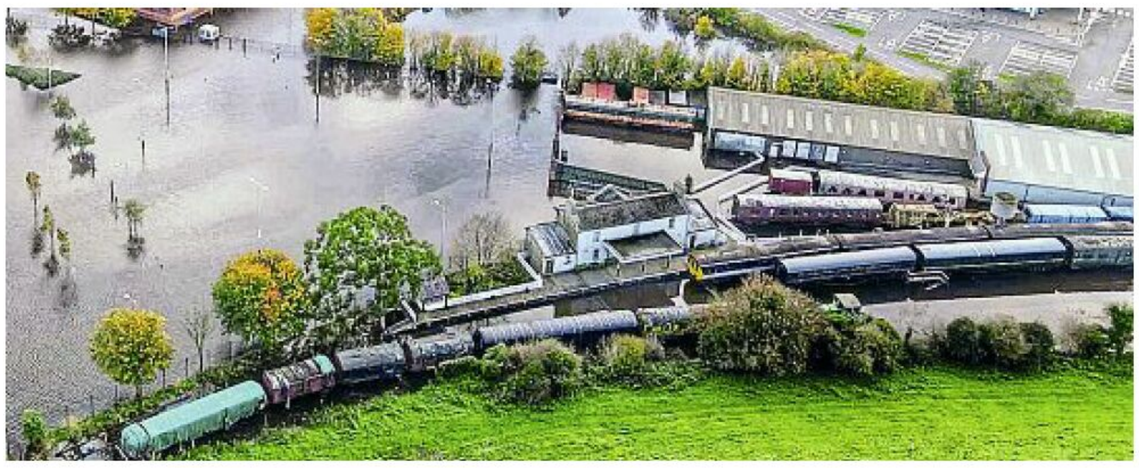


Above: Drone footage shows the extent of the flooding affecting the railway, with tracks well under water. DCDR

Left: Grim-faced chairman Robert Gardiner surveys the damage after gaining access to Downpatrick station, almost three days after the flood. "But we'll be back!" he vowed. DCDR

Downpatrick down, but not out – after suffering too

By Hugh Dougherty

DOWNPATRICK & County Down Railway volunteers said that they were down, but not out – after devastating floods hit on Thursday, November 2.

Flood waters inundated Downpatrick after several consecutive nights of heavy rain, causing the River Quolie to burst its banks and wreak havoc on the railway terminus, workshops, and historic carriage gallery, undoing years of work and effort. As an immediate consequence, the popular and, crucially for the railway, revenue-generating 'Lapland Express' events, usually held on the weekends in the run-up to Christmas, have been cancelled, although the D&CDR was exploring the possibility of hosting alternative events with a Christmas theme. An even greater casualty was the cancellation of the line's January 6 New Year Diesel Gala, to which Dublin-based Tailte Tours was planning to run a bus to widen access to the event.

'Shocking' damage

Chairman Robert Gardiner said: "The extent of the flooding and the damage it has done to the railway is quite shocking. We were unable to access our premises for several days because the water levels didn't drop until pumping was carried out in the town by the authorities and, when we did gain access, it was clear that a great deal of damage had been done. But we fully intend to repair that damage and return our railway – Ireland's only heritage branch line – to full working order as speedily as we can."

Robert reported that flood water has penetrated the axle boxes of operational stock, while the line's DEMUs, including its famous 'Derry Girls' set, will all need their electrics, including traction motors, dried out and thoroughly tested. Tracks in and around the station and out on the line have also been undermined, with ballast washed away in places, while workshop equipment and restoration projects have been badly affected.

The DCDR was checking its insurance position and, in common with all affected businesses in Downpatrick, is lobbying the authorities for financial aid, although the current absence of a functioning Northern Executive at Stormont is affecting the speed at which aid may be made available.

Donations welcome

Following closely on the heels of the railway's Covid-19 enforced closure, the flooding has come at a time when the line was really starting to get back on its feet, having enjoyed a successful season for 2023 and being thoroughly established as a key tourist offering in County Down.

Although no decision on a recovery appeal has yet been made, while volunteers continue to assess the damage, financial support and help in kind are invited. Anyone, agency, or business which can help the DCDR realise its vow to get back on track should contact Robert Gardiner at robert.gardiner@downrail.co.uk

River works saved Gloucestershire Warwickshire from storm damage

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, hit by landslips and embankment erosion in past years, recently completed two separate remedial works that saw the line avoid the excesses of storms Babet and Ciarán.

Unnoticed by many passengers on trains leaving Winchcombe station for Broadway, the River Isbourne now flows freely beneath the high railway embankment following the completion of the projects by Walsh Construction, which, as reported last issue, has also been contracted to carry out repairs to the railway's Stanway Viaduct. The works have eliminated the risk of the embankment being eroded which, left unchecked, could eventually have led to significant stability problems.

G/WR infrastructure manager Ian Scholey, a professional civil engineer, said: "This is an area with a history of flooding, which has caused erosion of the banks at the foot of the railway embankment and an increasing risk of damaging the railway embankment itself. In addition, deposits of gravel had formed an island on the upstream side of the bridge, interrupting the flow of water.

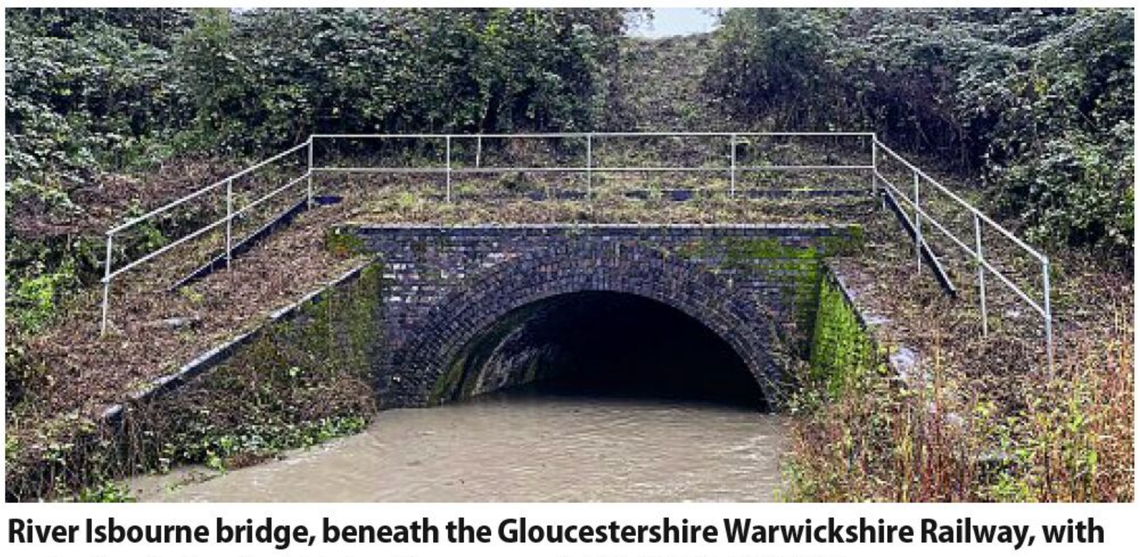
"Walsh installed steel sheet pile walls to contain the river, as well as gabions (stone filled cages), to protect the embankment and nearby properties. The work has taken some time to complete as it was interrupted by the need to carry out works elsewhere on the railway, Covid-19, and flooding in 2020.

"Recent heavy rain in the aftermath of Storm Babet – which, fortunately, was not as severe as elsewhere in the country – has vindicated this work.

"The river, which carries run-off from the Cotswolds hills, was more than a metre and a half higher than its normal level, yet it flowed unimpeded beneath the bridge that carries the railway, causing no damage to the river banks or surrounding property.

"I have no doubt that without the work that has been done, the storm river flow would have caused extensive damage on both sides of the railway embankment."

The railway's civil engineering director, Dr Graham Plant, added: "With some 60 culverts, bridges, and an aqueduct taking water across 14-mile line, drainage is a vital aspect of maintaining the integrity of the railway. The bridge over the River Isbourne is, at 13 feet high and 16 feet and six inches wide, the largest of these structures. The work completed here will help secure the railway for future decades."



River Isbourne bridge, beneath the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, with water levels five feet higher than normal. IAN SCHOLEY/G/WR

The Bodmin & Wenford Railway's works train was hauled by Class 08 No. 08359 to Colesloggett Halt for fallen tree clearance on November 2 after Storm Ciaran struck. The tree had not fallen across the railway but had blocked the lane to the neighbouring farm as winds of gale force nine, with gusts to violent storm force 11, swept across Cornwall. JIMMY JAMES/BWR

‘Reborn’ 08 gets new lease of life thanks to battery power!

By Robin Jones

BRITAIN’S first re-engineered battery-powered shunter was launched at Barrow Hill Roundhouse on October 19.

Invited guests from the rail freight sector and facility operators, the UK Government and local authorities, and rolling stock owners joined Positive Traction for the launch of the groundbreaking 08e prototype.

Free from carbon, nitrogen oxides and particulate emissions, the 08e can fulfil day-to-day operating needs as well as meet the demanding environmental, social, and governance requirements of shareholders, customers, employees and neighbouring communities.

From this – to this! Forlorn and all but forgotten, Class 08 shunter No. 08308 is pictured stored at Wolsingham on the Weardale Railway, and then in action at Barrow Hill on October 19 following its conversion and rebuild by Positive Traction. PT

Chosen for the job

The 08e began life as a Class 08 shunter, built by BR at Derby Works in 1958. Later renumbered 08308, it last saw service for the Caledonian Sleeper at Inverness. Since then, it was stored at Wolsingham on the Weardale Railway, then selected by Chesterfield-based Positive Traction for the conversion, before being partially dismantled and moved south.

As the 08e prototype, it is fitted with modern ‘plug-in’ traction batteries and control equipment, is rated at about 450hp, and tractive effort has been increased from 35,000lbf to 45,000lbf – equivalent to a Class 33.

Cab modifications deliver all-round visibility but retain the familiar classic 08 control desk, reducing driver and depot staff training time. Cab enhancements include double-glazing, remote monitoring equipment and roof-mounted heating, ventilation and an air-conditioning unit. Improvements incorporate standard BMAC head/tail light clusters, regenerative braking, internal and external CCTV, and new oil-free connecting rod bearings to reduce maintenance and prevent oil loss onto interior floors.

Designed for ease, the retained 08 frames, traction motors and buffer-beams can be maintained at ground level. Doors around three sides of the bonnet allow changes to battery and control equipment modules with a forklift truck.

Ethernet connections support remote diagnostics, multiple working, and remote control.

New future

Alistair Gregory, director of Positive Traction, said: “Class 08 shunting locomotives have been the workhorses of ports, distribution centres and depots across Britain’s railway for more than 60 years.

“As the UK moves towards Net Zero, diesel engines are increasingly unacceptable. To address this challenge, Positive Traction has developed the 08e, a cost-effective, battery-powered alternative for environmentally friendly operations.

“I’d like to thank all our partners for supporting our cleaner, greener UK transport vision, including Lithion Battery Inc; Barrow Hill Limited; Stagecoach Yorkshire and their own partners Volvo, which kindly supplied the very latest electric Volvo BXL bus to bring our guests from Chesterfield station to Barrow Hill in a sustainable way.”

Following the launch, the 08e will remain on test at Barrow Hill before moving to a customer site for operational evaluation.

Engineering firm goes from contactor to loco owner

DEVON-BASED engineering firm Leaky Finders is renowned for its high-quality overhauls, having recently been entrusted with projects such as Maunsell Q No. 541 from the Bluebell Railway and main line-registered Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line*. Now the firm of boilersmiths and engineers has a project of its own to tackle – after purchasing WR pannier No. 9629.

As reported in issue 310, the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway Locomotive Group offered the unrestored 5700 0-6-0PT for sale, sparking much interest with potential buyers. Built at Swindon in 1945 and withdrawn in 1964, in 1981 it became the 128th locomotive to be rescued from Barry. It was bought by the Marriot Hotel Group and sent to Carnforth for a five-year cosmetic restoration, after which it went on static display outside the Cardiff Holiday Inn for nine years before its owner donated it to the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway in 1995.

During its time there, the group began to acquire a large number of the missing components, including a boiler, but the locomotive has yet to run in the heritage era.

With the expertise and facilities available, the team at Leaky Finders thought it an ideal opportunity to progress the business. Director Rory Edwards said: “We saw it as a natural progression for the company, if I’m honest. We have the skills and facilities to undertake all the repairs required, with a loco of that size being ideal to hire out to several railways to operate their services.

“With coal prices remaining high, there will certainly be greater demand to operate services with smaller locos.

“The 5700 is renowned for its reliability, while also being relatively powerful for its size.

“We hope to get the chassis and boiler in the workshop as soon as we have some space to be able to make a start on the work started by the previous owner, the P&B Locomotive Group. We are fortunate that nearly every component required

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Preservation pioneers: John Bate (left) was presented with his MBE by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, Edmund Bailey, on October 26, in front No. 7 *Tom Rolt*, a locomotive Mr Bate was responsible for designing in 1969. LUKE RYAN/TR

Preservation pioneer and engineer presented with MBE at Tywyn

By Owen Hayward

TALYLLYN Railway stalwart volunteer John Bate was formally presented with his MBE on October 26 at Tywyn Wharf station in the presence of family and friends from the line which he has been involved in for more than 70 years.

As reported in issue 308, John was recognised in this year's King's Birthday Honours for services to the pioneering heritage railway and the wider sector.

He has been an integral part of the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society since it was formed in 1951, when he started as a volunteer on the decrepit line, helping to mend the trackwork to an acceptable standard to successfully commence running passenger trains on what would become the first volunteer-run heritage line in the world, setting the precedent for all that followed.

After a major landslip at Dolgoch in 1957, his engineering expertise was put to the test as he led the charge to reinstate the fallen earthwork and reinforce it for years to come. Following this, in 1963 he then became the railway's first paid chief engineer, overseeing multiple locomotive overhauls and rebuilds, the construction of passenger carriages and an engineering plant, and introducing a self-propelled ballast tamping machine and 'flail mower' machines, which were used to keep the railway's hedges under control; the former has recently been replaced, while the latter continues to patrol the line to this day.

John also turned his skills to building new motive power for the line with the construction of a new steam locomotive. 0-4-2T No. 7 *Tom Rolt* was completed in 1991 and incorporated many components from a little-used 3ft gauge Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT that had come from Bord na Mona (Irish turf board). The motion, boiler, cylinder and wheels were all reused, while the water tanks were developed to allow the locomotive to work a full round trip without the need for topping up.

Upon completion, it took its name from one of the founding members of the preservation society, although it had initially been voted to be named *Irish Pete,* which had been chalked on the side when it arrived in Tywyn, recognising its roots.

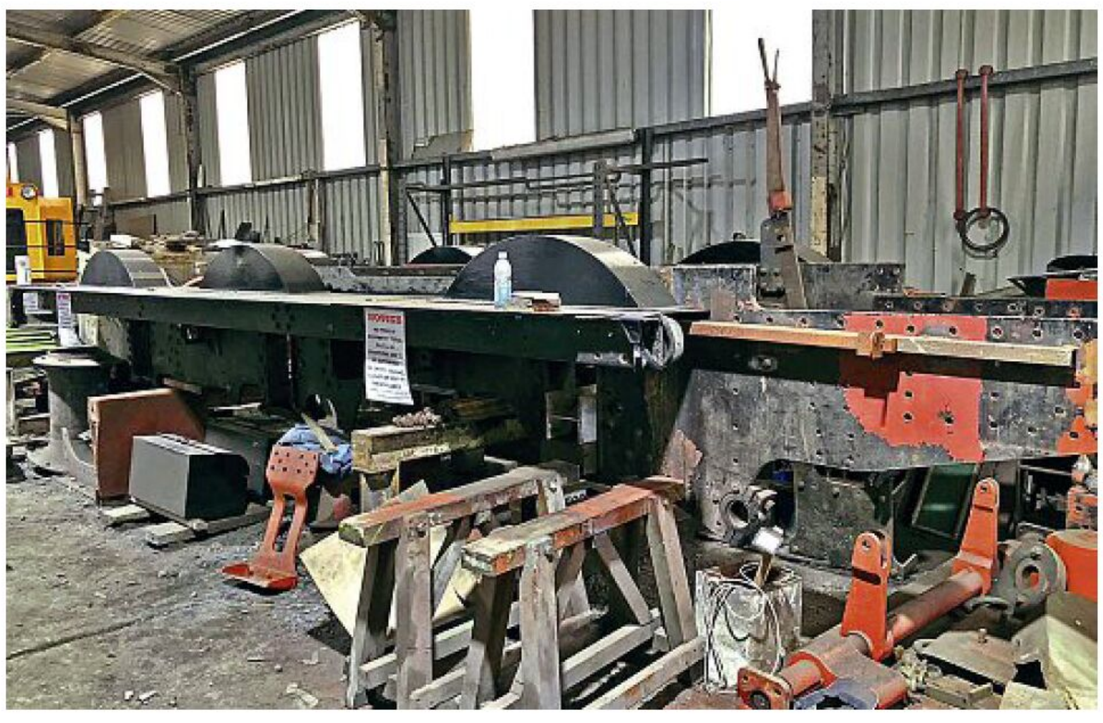
John remained in the role of chief engineer for 30 years, retiring in 1994, and he continues to be a volunteer at the age of 94 – both a voice of wisdom and an inspiration to all volunteers.

His MBE was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, Edmund Bailey.

John said: "I'm very surprised to receive this award; I've done nothing more than my work. I've not made any attempt to achieve anything special, I was just doing my job – and I'll leave it at that."

A TR statement said: "This was very richly deserved, for without John we may not all still be here running our railway for future generations to enjoy. The entire heritage railway movement thanks him."

has been found and purchased by it. The inclusion of a number of wooden patterns with the sale of the loco also enables us to further increase the business by offering raw and machined castings as part of our services."



Right: The frames for No. 9629 in the workshops at Blaenavon. The as-yet unrestored pannier has been purchased by engineering firm Leaky Finders, which will return it to steam and put it out for hire. LEAKY FINDERS

Doon Valley 'bowled over' by club's Santa support

DOON Valley Railway volunteers are literally 'bowled over' by unexpected support from Dunaskin Doon Bowling Club, which has allowed Santa trains to run on November 25/26 and December 9/10.

Chairman Archie Thom was surprised and delighted when bowling club secretary Lorna Rae got in touch to say that the railway, which lost its toilet and catering buildings in the recent land sales at its site (issue 310), was welcome to use the bowling club's facilities to allow this year's Santa trains to operate.

Archie said: "We had thought that there would be no chance of running trains, at the very least until next summer, but we were delighted to hear from Lorna, whose offer we quickly accepted. It's a wonderful example of the local community supporting us.

Doon Valley Santa services are ready to run thanks to Dunaskin Doon Bowling Club. DVR

"The even better news is that the bowling club generally doesn't have matches on Sundays during the summer, and there's every possibility that we will be able to make use of the clubhouse so that we'll be able to run trains for the public sooner that we'd imagined – and that will mean valuable revenue, as well as maintaining our operating presence at Dunaskin during our 50th year on site."

Lorna said: "Dunaskin is a small village with an important heritage background and both the railway and bowling club play an important role in the local community."

Presenting: *James Spooner* (The Second)

Words and pictures by Owen Hayward

WILL the real *James Spooner* please step forward? Following its debut at the Ffestiniong & Welsh Highland Railways' October 6-8 Bygones weekend, the current holder of the mantle for 'newest steam locomotive in the world' was officially named at a ceremony hosted at Blaenau Ffestiniog on October 20.

The naming was carried out in the presence of not only the local community and invited dignitaries, but also descendants of both the man responsible for overseeing the Ffestiniog Railway's construction and one responsible for the iconic double Fairlie design.

Born in 1790 in Powick, Worcestershire, James Spooner was employed as a surveyor when he first went to North Wales. He lived in Morga Lodge, Porthmadog, when he was tasked with surveying a route from there to the slate mining town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, a job he undertook in 1830/1 (having first surveyed a route for what would become the Croesor Tramway, latterly the Welsh Highland Railway in 1825). Following the successful Act of Parliament in 1832, Spooner then oversaw the line's construction that lasted until 1836, assisted by civil engineer Thomas Prichard.

Spooner then went on to become the FR's first general manager after it opened, being a paid officer from 1844 until his death in 1856; during the latter decade, he instigated the process of upgrading the permanent way in anticipation of his ambition to employ steam locomotives on the route, something that did not take place until eight years later.

A 'Fairlie' simple solution

The first locomotives to arrive were a pair of 0-4-0STTs named *The Princess* and *Mountaineer* (which were later rebuilt in the 'England' design that can be seen on the railway today), but their limited strength meant that when the approval to carry passengers was formally granted at the end of 1864, the limitations of a single line fast became restrictive. Although permission was given to double the line, the FR company was approached by engineer Robert Francies Fairlie, who had devised a locomotive that could pull longer trains and vastly improve capacity.

The issue of navigating the tight corners of the route was a swivelling power bogie beneath the 'double' engine, which comprised a long, rigid boiler with central fireboxes, thus increasing power while also meeting the natural restrictions of the railway.

The first of these, No. 7 *Little Wonder*, arrived in 1869 and was ultimately deemed a success, if not without its flaws. Withdrawn after just 13 years, it nevertheless set the benchmark for the design and the second, No. 8, was completed in 1874 to the design of George Percival Spooner (James Spooner's grandson) with many improvements, such as a revised bogie design to better account for the weight of the cylinders, and thus went on to set the pattern for all subsequent double engines on the line. It was named *James Spooner* in memory of the line's first manager.

Local student Lois (right) was invited to help unveil the nameplate for *James Spooner* at the October 20 ceremony.

No. 8 was withdrawn for the start of an overhaul in December 1928, but this was abandoned a few years later and the locomotive was condemned in 1933. The boiler was scrapped two years later but some parts were salvaged for reuse, including the wheels and some of the motion, much of which still survives under No. 3 *Livingstone Thompson* at the National Railway Museum in York.

The project to build *James Spooner II* was announced in March 2016 as a replacement for the retiring No. 11 *Earl of Merioneth II* (an earlier new build from 1979 to replace No. 3, which had also used the name during its working life) and has utilised some parts from that locomotive, including the power bogies.

Off to Blaenau

Although *Spooner* made an appearance at the Bygones event, it was uncertain that it would have been ready for the

During a photographic charter on November 6, *James Spooner* runs through Dduallt with the Victorian-era coaching stock in tow. FRCO

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occasion, and so to ensure that those who had been involved in and funded the project were the first to enjoy the completed locomotive, an official launch date was set for October 20, when, as with restored large England No. 5 *Welsh Pony* three years before, the formal naming ceremony took place.

Invited guests arrived at Porthmadog station to a waiting train headed by the new No. 8, alongside which No. 5 was positioned; both locomotives are turned out in lined dark plum livery to symbolise their unique place in the railway's history, both identities having once been ruled out for ever being seen running along the route again.

The original Fairlies were built sans cab roof and the new No. 8 has been constructed with this in mind, with an easily removable section to create an 'open top' as desired; although the rain was falling heavily (causing flooding at lines across the nation), the crew for the day braved the elements to enable this feature currently unique to a FR Fairlie to be witnessed.

The new *James Spooner* then departed ferrying guests to Blaenau Ffestiniog, passing No. 12 *David Lloyd George* at Tan-y-Bwlch and arriving at its destination alongside a waiting No. 10 *Merddin Emrys*.

Master of ceremonies Dr David Gwyn welcomed all to the occasion by joking: "You may notice it is raining – this is a very important part of the tradition of the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, and it really wouldn't be fair to bring you here on a sunny day.

"A personal thanks to everyone involved on this magnificent project; you see the fruits of all the hard work: the newest steam locomotive in the world – unless there's been one built on the quiet without anyone telling us – to a Victorian pattern, this distinctive double engine of the Ffestiniog Railway."

Dr Gwyn went on to introduce Ff&WHR chairman Dr John Prideaux, who said: "There are three things I would like celebrate with you. The first is the memory of James Spooner, the original engineer of the Ffestiniog Railway. The second is our magnificent new engine, and the third is our railway as a whole – it has survived and prospered despite the Covid-19 pandemic."

He went on to describe James Spooner as "a genius in the way in which he laid out our railway through this most amazing countryside and landscape."

"Laid out on a continuous descending gradient, which was just steep enough to keep loaded slate trains rolling downhill, under gravity, to the harbour of Porthmadog, rolling down without getting too fast easily, but not too steep to allow the horses to pull them back up again to Blaenau Ffestiniog," he said.

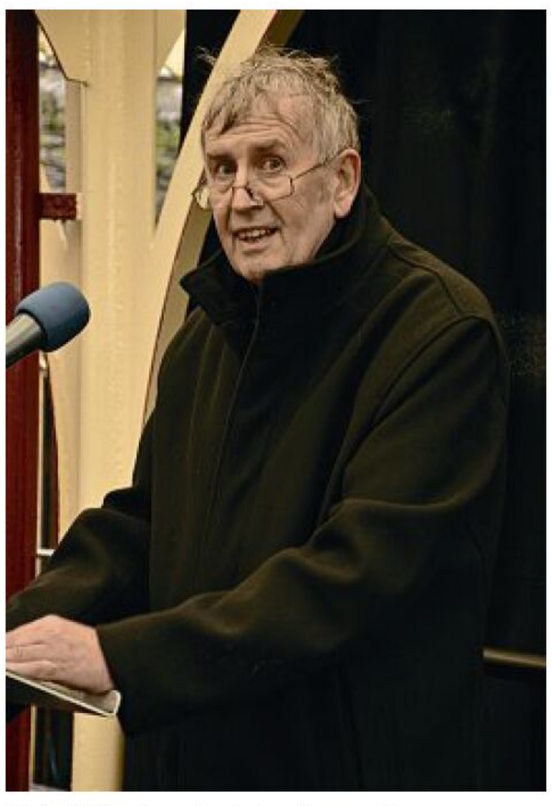
"This, the newest steam engine in the world, is a magnificent

With the sun starting to set on the horizon, Double Fairlie No. 8 climbs the deviation spiral at Ddualllt with the vintage set during a photographic charter on November 6. WILL STRATFORD

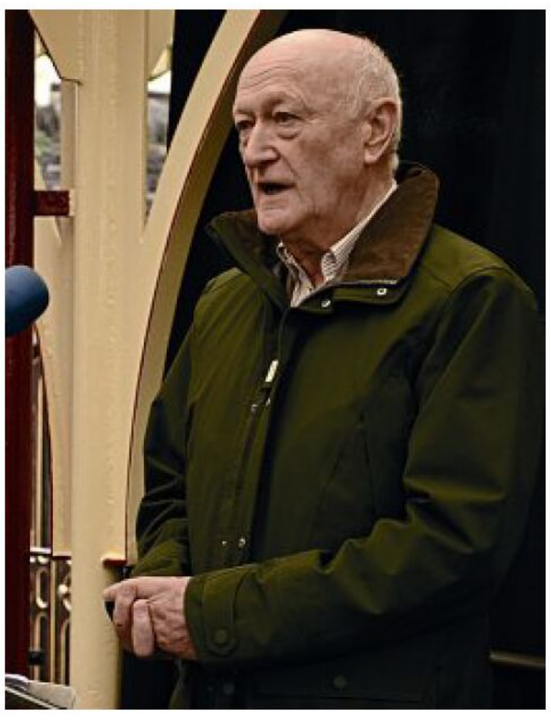
Plum livery pair: Large England No. 5 *Welsh Pony* (currently stopped with a crank pin defect) and then-unnamed double Fairlie No. 8 were positioned beside one another at Porthmadog ahead of the special train's departure to the naming ceremony.

The ceremonial train paused at Tan-y-Bwlch on the Up journey to allow the world's newest steam locomotive to refill its water tanks.

Former director Sam Miller (left) was presented with a replica *James Spooner* nameplate by FfWHR chairman Dr John Prideaux, recognising his efforts in the early days of the project.



Chief Mechanical Engineer Jon Whalley highlighted how much of the new locomotive was made in Wales.



Chairman Dr John Prideaux, who told the crowds the occasion was a celebration of the railway, the locomotive, and of the man James Spooner.

Presenting: *James Spooner* (The Second), continued from page 23

achievement which has been made here in this part of Wales.

"It will be No.8 because that was the traditional number for an engine called *James Spooner*, but for me it will be No.8 because it took us eight years to get to finish it.

"It's been a long time and there's been a lot of people involved – and if one thing really stands out, I would say it's been the amazing teamwork that has gone on at Boston Lodge – and I'd like to thank everyone who's been involved."

A local engine

Chief mechanical engineer Jon Whalley also gave a short speech, adding: "The first *James Spooner* may have been built in Bristol, but we have made most of this locomotive here in North Wales. We are very proud of this, as keeping the skills required alive to build and maintain a locomotive like this is very important for the railway to have a sustainable future.

"We started work on the project in 2014, and the plan at first was a replacement boiler design that would replace those in the other double Fairlies which were getting order.

"When we unveiled it at Bygones this year, we got many admirers, including four descendants of Robert Francis Fairlie, who came from Peru, the United States and South Africa. As I was driving that day, I was able to introduce them to a descendant of James Spooner, Mr Nigel Spooner, which was very pleasing."

Following a traditional Welsh performance by a choir of children from Ysgol Maenofferen, Liz Saville-Roberts MP invited one of the pupils to assist in the unveiling of the *James Spooner* nameplate; all four had been masked during the uphill journey for maximum impact at the ceremony.

A subsequent presentation of a replica plate took place to former director Sam Miller, who played a huge part in the early stages of the project.

With the locomotive now named and ready for traffic, it saw its first day working public trains on October 27, when it worked two trips to Tan-y-Bwlch with the 'Woodland Wanderer' service as part of the local half-term school holidays.

A few weeks later, on November 5/6, the FR hosted two days of an annual photographic charter week that travels round between some of the narrow gauge lines of North Wales. With the new Fairlie available, this, of course, played a starring role in the weekend schedule being paired up with the FR's Victorian era heritage carriages, while other scenes included quarry Hunslets Britomart, *Hugh Napier* and *Lilla* on slate wagons, as well as First World War era scenes with French Army 2-4-0DM *Moelwyn* and re-enactors in period costume. HR

Vale of Rheidol and Brecon Mountain lines set to re-merge

By Robin Jones

IN A move which would reunite both lines after 28 years apart, the Vale of Rheidol Railway has been negotiating to buy its previous owner, the Brecon Mountain Railway.

"This merger represents an historic milestone for both railways and safeguards the future of the BMR for future generations to enjoy," said a VoR statement.

The VoR, which dates from 1902 and was the last steam railway to be operated by BR, was bought by the much newer BMR in 1988. The BMR, built by Tony Hills and his business partner Peter Rampton as a narrow gauge railway using the trackbed of the former Brecon & Merthyr Railway, ran its first passenger trains in June 1980.

Both lines operated under unified management until 1996, at which point a decision was made to establish them as distinct entities, with Tony overseeing the BMR and Peter taking charge of the VoR.

Since then, both railways have significantly developed, with BMR extending services to Torpantau and the VoR developing new workshops, restoring stations and launching new visitor facilities. Sadly, Tony died in 2015 and Peter in 2019.

Baldwin 2-6-2 No. 15511 of 1897 *No. 1 Santa Teresa* runs round its train on the Brecon Mountain Railway on August 29, 2019. ROBIN JONES

VoR managing director Llŷr ap Iolo said: "This proposed acquisition seems the natural progression for the VoR to carry on the legacy of both Tony Hills and Peter Rampton. Having worked with them for more than 30 years, it will be a privilege to continue Tony's work with the American 2ft gauge theme of the BMR."

His BMR counterpart, Matthew Hills, said: "Bringing the two railways back together will not only guarantee the future of BMR but also the development of the railway. I and my fellow director believe that this is the best way to secure the future of the railway and my father's legacy. The VoR and the BMR will continue to operate as separate entities, each with its unique charm and character."

The merger aims to boost investment in enhanced visitor experiences at both railways with shared resources, increased operational efficiency, cost savings and new job openings and career prospects through the expansion of operations.

The VoR is expected to take over BMR operations in the coming spring.

➜ **Making the grade at Torpantau! – feature, pages 82-85**

Moorsline celebrates 50 years of *Eric Treacy*

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway celebrated a second 50th anniversary on November 5.

The day marked half a century since LMS 'Black five' 4-6-0 No. 5428 *Eric Treacy* arrived on the line, and to mark the milestone, it was rostered for traffic for the day.

The locomotive initially left Tyseley on November 3, 1973, with the Great Western saloon in tow. It stayed in York on the way up, where GNR J13 (LNER J52) No. 1247 from the National Collection was added to the train. Together, they arrived on the NYMR on November 5, 1973, and *Eric Treacy* has been there ever since.

Long-standing NYMR volunteer John Hunt said: "I can't believe it's been 50 years! A group of us went down to Tyseley in 1973 to repair the locomotive so it was ready for the move up to Grosmont. On the day of the move, it was shunted in the yard by *Flying Scotsman*, and I can remember it was awfully foggy on the way to York.

"*Eric* was then pulled by a Class 37 for its final leg of the journey... there was much excitement at Grosmont as it arrived on NYMR metals, where it has remained for the last 50 years and is an icon in the history of the NYMR."

LMS 'Black Five' No. 5428 *Eric Treacy* at Grosmont, forming the 10.30am service to Pickering. TONY WINWARD

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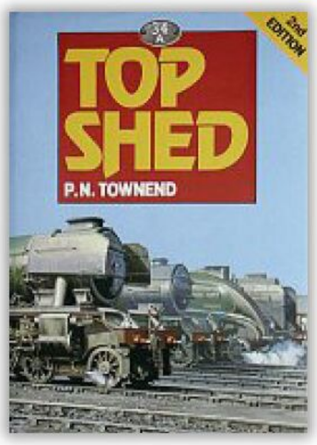
Farewell to Peter Townend, the last 'Top Shed' master

By Robin Jones

TRIBUTES have been paid to former King's Cross shedmaster Peter Townend following his death on October 18 at the age of 98.

Peter began his career as an LNER premier apprentice at Doncaster Works in 1941, and worked his way up to be master at 'Top Shed' from 1956-61. He was the last person to hold the post before steam was phased out.

Before then, he worked in the Locomotive Drawing Office before being attached to the Norwich and Cambridge divisions of the motive power organisation, working at several depots in East Anglia and continuing his training as a mechanical foreman at Liverpool Street.



Peter retired in 1984 but continued to advise on heritage projects, and also wrote several railway books, beginning with Top Shed, about the depot and station, which was published by Ian Allan. He also travelled around the UK to visit LNER-themed events.

Support and advice

A statement from the National Railway Museum said it was "deeply saddened", adding: "One of the last great figures from the age of steam, Peter was responsible for fitting the double chimney and deflectors on *Flying Scotsman* in the late 1950s. He also had responsibility for *Mallard* (along with *Flying Scotsman* and *Green Arrow*) as shedmaster at King's Cross. Peter later supported and advised this museum on many projects."

In April 2014, he made a 700-mile round trip from his home in Torquay to the Locomotion museum at Shildon for the 'The Great Goodbye', the final part of the NRM's award-winning landmark 'Great Gathering' reunion of the six surviving A4 Pacifics, so he could say farewell to No. 60008 *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and No. 4489 *Dominion of Canada* before they were shipped back to their museum homes in North America.

He recalled: "I have seen the A4s as they were built and have ridden on them since the 1940s. At King's Cross, I had 19 of them allocated, including the two from America/Canada."

In July 2014 (as reported in issue 192), he attended a VIP ceremony at Darlington Locomotive Works in Hopetown Lane for the dedication of the frames for The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's new Gresley P2 2-8-2 No. 2007 *Prince of Wales*.

Peter once described his five years at King's Cross as "probably the hardest I have experienced, but I am glad I had the opportunity to be associated with the depot in all its vicissitudes while steam traction was still at its peak on the Great Northern main line."

The A3 smoke deflectors he devised were inspired by those he had seen on German steam engines. *Flying Scotsman* received its trough-type deflectors in December 1961.

Above: Former King's Cross shedmaster Peter Townend and King's Cross divisional manager, the late Dick Hardy, with the statue of Sir Nigel Gresley after it was unveiled on the station's western concourse on April 5, 2016, on the 75th anniversary of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's death. PHILIP BENHAM/GRESLEY SOCIETY
Inset left: Peter Townend's first book, Top Shed.

Left: A wreath in honour of Peter Townend was placed on the smokebox of A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* while it was displayed in the Great Hall at the National Railway Museum in October during the half-term period. NRM

Appeal launched to bring landmark Gaunless Bridge back to home territory

THE National Railway Museum has appealed for donations to towards the cost of returning of the world's oldest-surviving iron railway bridge to its County Durham home.

October saw the 200th anniversary of the erection of the Gaunless Bridge, which was designed by George Stephenson in 1823 for the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Located on a branch line at West Auckland, it was the first bridge to use the lenticular truss design and carried horse-drawn coal wagons.

A presentation model of the bridge made for the NER 1875 to mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of the S&DR is now in the Science Museum in London.

In 1901, the Gaunless was dismantled and replaced by a steel bridge because it was no longer able to take the weight of increasingly heavy wagons.

Kept in storage at Brusselton Colliery, it was re-erected in the first York railway museum in 1927 to mark the centenary of the S&DR. When the NRM in York opened in 1975, the bridge became the centrepiece of its entrance and car park, and it remained there until earlier this year. Following major conservation work in West Yorkshire, it has arrived at the Locomotion museum in Shildon, to be positioned between the existing collections building and the £8 million New Hall, which will house more than 50 vehicles from the National Collection.

Gaunless Bridge at the National Railway Museum in York in 2020. NRM

The bridge move is part of the run-up to the bicentenary celebrations of the S&DR in 2025.

NRM senior curator Anthony Coulls said: "It is a remarkably simple design, but it is a very successful design. If you talk to civil engineers, the significance of the lenticular truss is right up there. They are really important because they enable you to make sectional spans of bridge. Previously, you were governed by how long a piece of iron you could cast, or how long a piece of timber you could fettle and fabricate from a tree.

"It is our aim to use the stories of the past to inspire and engage with the engineers of the future, and Gaunless Bridge did just that. These aren't just things: they are solutions to problems."

Locomotion head Sarah Price said: "It is such an iconic piece of architecture. We want to give it a really prominent position in the museum.

"People round here are so delighted that it's coming back – there is a real pride."

➜ If you would like to contribute to the appeal towards the relocation of Gaunless Bridge to Shildon, visit www.locomotion.org.uk

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On Thursday, October 19, the Bodmin & Wenford Railway operated a very unusual train, believed to be for the first time on the line – or anywhere else. Diminutive Par Docks Bagnall 0-4-0ST *Judy* hauled four clay hood wagons, plus a Shark ballast plough brake van, from Bodmin General to Bodmin Parkway for winter storage in Parkway shed. The load of about 60 tons proved to be no problem for the first half a mile of the journey on a 1-in-80 gradient to Walker Lines, and then it was downhill for the next three miles to the main line at Parkway. *Judy* only ever worked on short-level track at Par Docks and was never designed for steep gradients. Earlier in the day, it worked the three miles of 1-in-40 from Boscarne Junction to Bodmin General, with a 40-ton load consisting of a brake van and a lowmac. JIMMY JAMES/BWR

Preservationists mourn the death of Dave Steinle

By Geoff Courtney

DAVE Steinle, a highly respected and popular supporter of the country's steam preservation scene for more than half a century, whose many roles included accompanying No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* to Australia as a member of the Pacific's support crew, has died at the age of 80.

A Merchant Navy professional engineer in his early days, Dave became part of the preservation movement in the early 1970s, when he helped to restore SR S15 class No. 841 at Chappel & Wakes Colne, following which he started his association with No. 4472, then owned by Sir William McAlpine and based at Southall in west London.

This led to him becoming part of the A3's support crew during its visit Australia in 1988/89, a hugely successful tour that included a 422-mile non-stop run from Parkes to Broken Hill in New South Wales, a world-record distance for steam.

Widely travelled

Having taken early retirement, Dave became a freelance railway modeller, while a particular mission, inherited from his father Fred, was to see and record as many surviving steam locomotives as possible. He travelled widely, visiting Europe, North, Central and South America, and India.

Volunteering was also an important part of his life, and he became a popular member of the teams at Mangapps Railway Museum and Canvey Island Miniature Railway.

Mangapps' owner John Jolly described Dave as a "lifelong and immensely knowledgeable and well-travelled railway enthusiast, engineer and modeller."

Initially, said John, he helped prepare Mangapps' rolling stock for photo charters, but he expanded his activities into almost all of the museum's operations, including engineering, painting and lettering, trackwork, and as a guard and a popular 'meeter and greeter' of visitors.

Popular volunteer

"With his dry humour and many stories, he had a strong rapport with our younger volunteers," recalled John. "One piece of advice to the youngsters was 'always take opportunities when you see them.'

"Sadly, we had recently seen less of him, due initially to the Covid-19 restrictions and then mobility problems connected with a knee

Crowd-puller: No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* attracts an audience at Seymour, in the Australian state of Victoria, during its tour Down Under in 1988/89. The station, north of Melbourne, is a former major railway hub that was the location of a large 20-bay locomotive roundhouse and marshalling yard and is now home to a heritage collection of ex-Victorian Railways' steam and diesel locomotives and other rolling stock. Memories of the successful visit to Australia have been recalled by the death on October 27 of Dave Steinle, a member of the A3's accompanying support crew on that tour. ZZRBIKER/CREATIVE COMMONS

operation. However, on his most recent visit last month, he seemed much better, back to his usual good humour and talking of attending more regularly, which makes his demise more of a shock. He will be greatly missed by us and the wider heritage railway community."

Dave, who lived in Corringham, near Thurrock, died on October 27 from what is believed to have been a heart attack. He leaves a widow, Paula, and a son.

The final thought on this much-loved steam railway enthusiast, engineer, restorer, and volunteer, comes from John: "Dave would illustrate his advice to young volunteers with a story of his first voyage as a ship's junior engineer, to Argentina. Near the docks at Buenos Aires were tango clubs, which were exotic but seedy. Dave badly wanted to enter but couldn't summon the courage. He said he regretted that for the rest of his life!"

Track ganger Colin Dewey observes the weathered Austerity and its freight pass by, having emerged from Wansford tunnel during the first of the day's scenes.

The 'driver' and guard of No. 68080 await their next turn of duty, while No. 68018 can be seen arriving in the distance.

Filthy delights at Wansford as lost Boston shunters 'revived'

Words and pictures by Owen Hayward

PHOTOGRAPHIC charters often present unique opportunities to recreate lost scenes, and on October 30 the Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group once again pulled out the stops for its final event of the year – using not only visiting Hunlset Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3193 *Norfolk Regiment,* but also the railway's own out-of-service classmate WD75006 as the volunteers set out to recreate Lincolnshire's Boston Docks.

Both Nos. 3193 (on loan from the Northampton & Lamport Railway until January 2024) and 75006 were renumbered as Nos. 68018 and 68070 respectively for the occassion, which were two of a fleet of shunting locomotives allocated to Boston's shedcode 40F.

In addition to the change of identities, both were heavily weathered to give the impression of a pair of careworn shunters, with locomotives like these often being the forgotten workhorses of goods traffic across the nation.

To set the scene, appropriate signage was produced to transform Wansford into Boston in 1961 when it was operated under BR(E). In addition to a station nameboard, volunteers donned both regionally and period-appropriate attire, while wagons were enhanced with local posters and lettering.

As with all of the NVRWG's charters, the freight vehicle collection was the stock of choice for the event, with up to 18 vehicles in use throughout the day.

Looking 'local'

Much like at the Great Central Railway, which is renowned for its wide variety of goods wagons and ways of utilising them, the freight rake at the NVR has established itself well and comes into its own there, making regular appearances on charters and freight driving experience courses.

Of particular note on this occasion was pallet van No. B778810, which, along with under-restoration B781768, is a genuine ex-internal user vehicle from Boston Docks and were both there based until 1987.

The details of the charter were worked out by NVRWG volunteer Matt Baker, who said: "As we fast approach the Santa season, we wanted to end the NVRWG's 2023 event season on a high. We had an opportunity to decide whether to run our usual freight experience with either Austerity No. 3193 or 'Black Five' No. 45212. I suggested we did a photo charter with the Austerity, as utilising the 'Black Five' would have been restrictive due to conflicts with group members' availability.

"In my mind, though, a War Department Austerity on BR wagons was not going to cut it. We needed

With an Eastern region running board renaming Wansford as Boston for the day, 'scrapped' Austerity No. 68018 (in reality renumbered No. 3193) takes a run through with the freight train in tow while observed by a member of platform staff.

Having been turned during a lunch break and facing the sun for the afternoon, No. 68018 passes beneath Wansford signal gantry during a run-through with the freight rake, its exhaust almost entirely masking the semaphores above.

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a BR loco, and after a quick search I found where the nearest J94s were shedded; many called the North Eastern and Eastern Regions home, with a large number in North Lincolnshire, but then one location stood out to me – Boston.

"Boston was the nearest location to Peterborough shedding J94s, having three locos in 1961 – Nos. 68018, 68070 and 68077. Of those, No. 77 remains in preservation at the Spa Valley Railway, while No. 70 was once represented by No. 3840 while at the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway, leaving just No. 18 as the only Boston-based J94 not seen in the preservation era.

"I also had a slight bias towards the location as it is the town of my birth and remains the home of the families of me and my wife.

"Tim then suggested we dig out No. 75006. I was initially hesitant, unless the NVR would allow us to repaint it temporarily. I was met with some hesitance, but persisted and if permission could be granted, I could show what was achievable. On the weekend of October 14/15, I painted the red No. 75006 with yellow lining into a heavily weathered black No. 68070 – with regular demonstrations that it would all wash off with water.

"Not only did I convince Tim and the NVR management, the N&LR were also impressed and gave permission for No. 3193 to receive the same treatment."

As the sun starts to set on a successful day's photography, No. 68018 and its train are reflected in the waters below while crossing the River Nene. The locomotive had been turned during the break for lunch, resulting in this river bank shot – an ideal location for an image like this, its reflection having otherwise been obscured by the reeds earlier in the day.

Wansford station provides a multitude of angles for photography, with a locomotive yard adjacent to the main station's two platforms and footbridge, plus a few hundred yards approach to a tunnel on the west side (along which participants were escorted for the first shots of the day), plus a level crossing and river bridge on the east side. There are banks and fields either side of the bridge with public footpaths, all of which equally present great vantage points; all of these were fully maximised by the attendees.

While No. 75006 has been out of service since 2005 pending overhaul, the illusion of a living locomotive was created through a bucket of oily rags being strategically burned inside the smokebox, and with the locomotive yard containing a turntable, No. 3193 was turned to face west during the lunch break, thus facing the right direction for the afternoon sun.

This enabled some of the locations used to be revisited, with the added benefit of additional vantage points becoming viable options depending on what shot was being sought.

Wagons can make money

While goods vehicles are often a low priority for many railways, charters such as these prove that their presence can attract photographers and subsequently turn a profit. The NVRWG has run sold-out charters with the likes of LNER classes A1 No. 60163 *Tornado*, A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* and A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* in the past – all coupled with the gradually expanding express freight set. The ability to recreate scenes such as those on October 30 would also not be possible without them.

Wagon group manager Tim Hobman said: "The NVRWG is bucking the trend in preservation to prove that wagons can provide an income. In preparing for this event, we have sought to recreate a lost moment in history by paying close attention to detail and providing a heritage Eastern region photographic charter which, without vehicles such as those in our collection, would not have otherwise been possible. Interest in charters like this helps bring in valuable income; as the group's members organise and run these themselves, this gets reinvested in further wagon restorations which, in turn, will make future charters even more appealing.

"Our charters are a great way to introduce yourself to this world; we are very relaxed, but offer some interesting scenes at an affordable price."

"Although it was not a sell-out, the event was profitable, with the proceeds going towards the continued maintenance and restoration of the NVR wagon fleet after the NVR fees and coal costs"

Matt added. "Money was never the true focus of the event, that being an authentically themed recreation displaying that the NVRWG has the dedication and skills to host a truly heritage event."

For future events organised by the group, visit nvrwagons.co.uk

An effectively grimy out-of-service No. 75006 (alias 68080) waits for its classmate to pass with the freight. The van closest to the photographer is Palvan No. B778810, which actually came from Lincolnshire's Boston Docks; fittingly, the theme of this particular charter.

The 'fireman' of No. 68080 converses with the shunter while No. 68080 shuffles about the yard behind. Both locomotives were carefully weathered to give a careworn appearance for the day.

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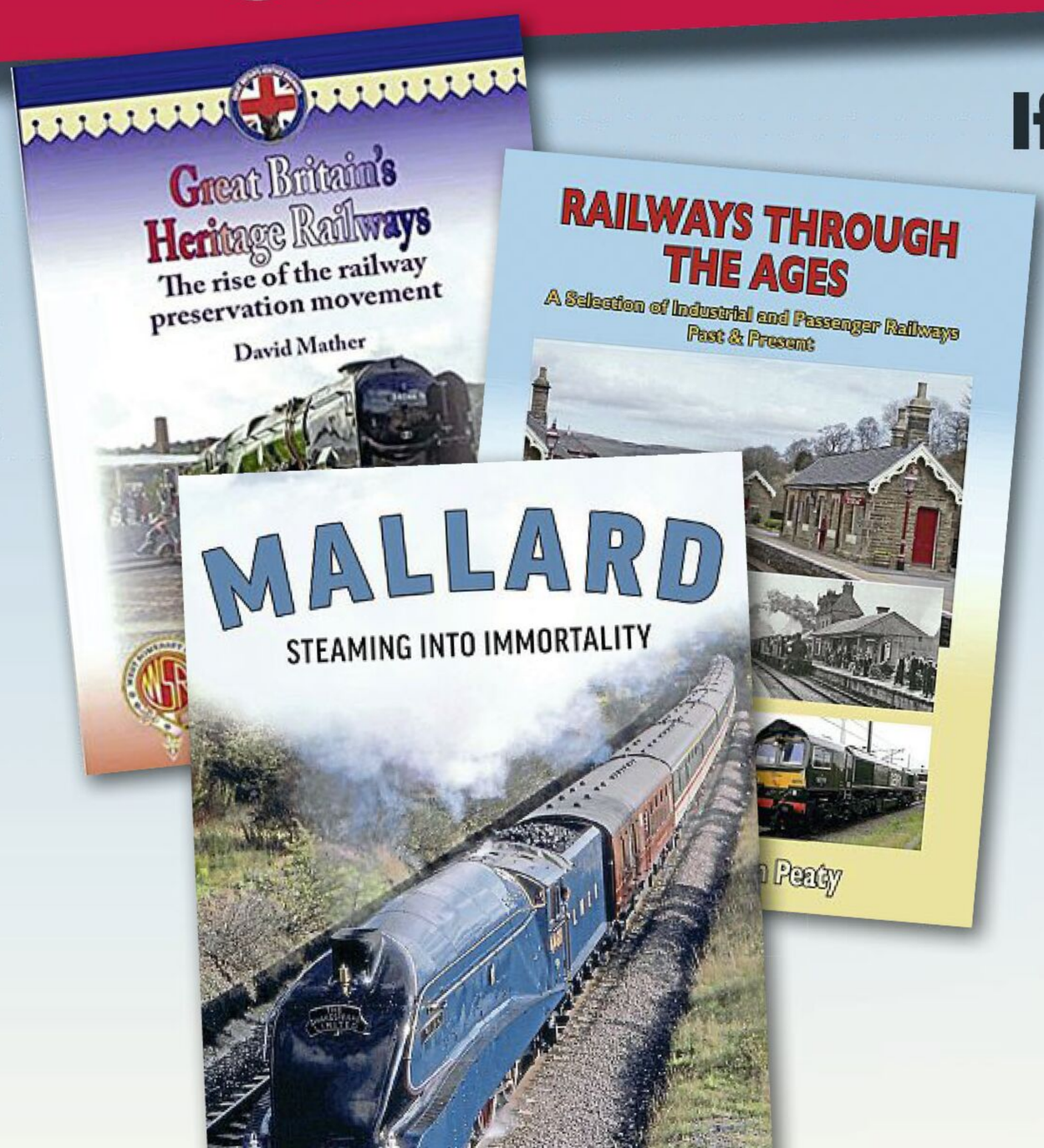

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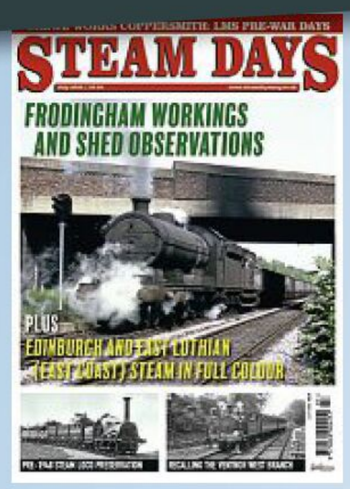

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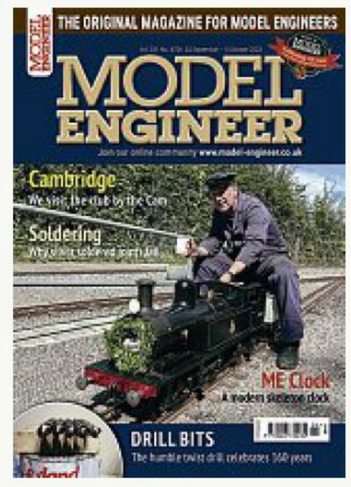

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Hopetown Darlington ushers in new age for the railway

By Robin Jones

THE name of the £3.6 million major rail heritage visitor attraction set to open in Darlington next summer, heralding the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025, has been announced as Hopetown Darlington. It will encompass both purpose-built and heritage buildings – including the former Head of Steam Museum – into a major family attraction expected to receive more than 300,000 visits per year, including 80,000 from outside the local area.

The name draws on the historic Hope Town Foundry and Hopetown Carriage Works, and also celebrates the rich rail heritage of Darlington's Northgate area.

Spanning 323,000sqft over 7.5 acres, the site will feature a £600,000 train-themed adventure playpark, sponsored by Homes by Esh, and designed and built by specialists CAP, in consultation with schools including Reid Street Primary School and Beaumont Hill Academy.

The site also includes a new exhibition hall, housed within the restored carriage works and sponsored by Darlington Building Society, which will showcase a series of travelling exhibitions. A state-of-the-art 4D virtual reality time travel ride will take visitors on a journey through the past, present and future.

Also within the carriage works will be a community hub and The Stores, sponsored by Bussey & Armstrong, encouraging visitors to engage with the museum's collections and add to their context through community-led exhibitions and events.

VIP view

As previously reported, onsite partners include The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, which is already occupying the new custom-built Darlington Locomotive Works. Visitors to the trust's new premises can watch from a viewing platform as volunteers and staff carry out the maintenance and construction of steam locomotives including A1 4-6-2 No. 60163 *Tornado* and P2 2-8-2 No. 2007 *Prince of Wales*.

Also relocated to Hopetown Darlington are Darlington Railway Preservation Society and North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group, which have moved into the newly-restored 1861 shed.

A car park below Skerne Bridge will be accessed from John Street and have space for more than 200 vehicles, plus electric charging points.

Following the controversial move of S&DR *Locomotion No.1* from Head of Steam to the Locomotion museum at Shildon, a spokesman for the locomotive's owner, the National Railway Museum, said that it will be displayed Hopetown Darlington on a six-month loan period in the first half of 2025.

The agreement also allows for two further loans (totalling 12 months) between 2026 and 2030.

Hopetown Darlington has been made possible with funding from Darlington Borough Council, Tees Valley Combined Authority, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, Historic England and the Railway Heritage Trust, as previously reported.

A digital impression of Hopetown Darlington as seen from North Road. DBC

'Brilliant asset'

Darlington's cabinet member for local services, Coun Libby McCollom, said: "The level of investment that has been made in this site is really something to celebrate.

"Darlington is known around the world for the part we played in global history, and now we are also placing ourselves on the map as a town that offers a major family visitor attraction.

"Hopetown Darlington will draw in tens of thousands of visitors to our town each year and create hundreds of jobs, as well as bringing footfall to local shops and businesses.

"With a playground and blockbuster special exhibitions, as well as a state-of-the-art reimagining of how the permanent collection is displayed, it is going to be a brilliant asset for our town and our region."

The new Darlington Locomotive Works will welcome visitors next summer. DBC

The four-road engine shed in Whessoe Road, designed by William Peachey and built in 1861, is now part of Hopetown Darlington. DBC

Greater Anglia ramp donation boosts Poppy Line

THE North Norfolk Railway is set to improve its provision for passengers with limited mobility in 2024 thanks to a donation of ramps from main line train operator Greater Anglia.

The ramps, previously used to help passengers on Greater Anglia's Class 321 EMUs, will help customers on and off the NNR's steam and diesel-hauled services.

The NNR's commercial, business and administration manager, Graham Hukins, said: "We are very grateful to Greater Anglia for these ramps. The vintage carriages we use were built before access was a consideration in the design, so having sufficient lightweight ramps will enable us to widen the range of historic vehicles that are accessible to wheelchair users and will form a key part of our initiative to diversify our audience and welcome more visitors with disabilities."

Currently, the railway has a limited number of heavy ramps, which often require the strength of two people. The donated ramps are much lighter and can be operated by one person.

Greater Anglia's head of corporate affairs, Jonathan Denby, said: "We are always happy to support the local community where possible and practical."

➜ Full details of the NNR's popular festive services, the Norfolk Lights Express, and Santa specials, can be found at www.nnrailway.co.uk

Jonathan Denby, of Greater Anglia, and Graham Hukins, of the Poppy Line, with one of the donated ramps. NNR

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Help Hunslet *Wheldale* clear its final hurdles

A SMALL but dedicated team of Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway volunteers are celebrating after raising more than £250,000 towards the overhaul of the line's Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. S112 *Wheldale*.

The £300,000 appeal was launched by the line and the locomotive's owner, the Yorkshire Dales Railway Museum Trust, in 2015. A team led by Mike Walsh raised the money by informing passengers about the appeal and seeking donations on board trains, through a display in the former Cabman's Shelter at Embsay station, an annual draw, and sales through the station's popular Bric-a-Brac shop.

The 1944-built locomotive entered Ministry of Defence service as No. WD75118 and worked at several locations including the army base at Bicester before it was sold to the North Yorkshire Area of the National Coal Board in 1965.

Hunslet 0-6-0STs *Wheldale* and *Beatrice* in service of the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway on September 20, 1992. MIKE HEATH/YDRMT

Steam stalwart

It was sent to work at Primrose Hill Colliery, Swillington, and after that pit closed, it moved to Allerton Bywater in 1971, followed by a brief interlude at Newmarket Colliery in 1978, before moving on to Wheldale Colliery, near Castleford in 1981, where it became No. S134. The last steam locomotive to be overhauled by the NCB at its Allerton Works, it was finally withdrawn from service in 1982 and moved to Embsay.

After attention in the trust's workshop, and named *Wheldale,* after the last colliery at which the locomotive worked, it became a stalwart of the heritage line's steam fleet until withdrawn for overhaul in the mid-1990s.

Following a period in storage and on display, the chassis is currently receiving a comprehensive overhaul at the workshops of Statfold Barn Engineering, near Tamworth, while the boiler – after initial work carried out in-house at Embsay – is to be undergo a full repair at the Israel Newton & Sons workshop, near Matlock.

Trust spokesman Richard Jones said: "The overhaul of *Wheldale* is progressing well and we hope it won't be too long before this popular locomotive returns to service, the Austerity class being ideally suited to our railway. However, to achieve this, further donations are required."

➜ **Donations can be made via www.ebar.org.uk/wheldale**

Buckfastleigh future for Collett Goods secured

THE long-term future of sole-surviving GWR Collett Goods 0-6-0 No. 3205 has seen its long-term future secured in a 50-year deal with its owner, the 2251 Locomotive Fund, which has seen the South Devon Railway take on custodianship.

One of the 2251 class which was numbered 120, the 1946-built locomotive was preserved by the 2251 Fund in 1965, which purchased it not long after it was withdrawn by BR. It arrived at Buckfastleigh on the Dart Valley Railway (later the SDR) that same year.

In February 1967 it was towed, with motion dismantled, to Stourbridge, where it hauled a four-coach train to Bridgnorth the following month and became the first locomotive on Severn Valley Railway. On Saturday, May 23, 1970, No. 3205 hauled the first public passenger train, comprising six GWR coaches from Bridgnorth to Hampton Loade and back, with an hourly service following. It remained on the SVR for several years until moving to the West Somerset Railway for a short stint, finally returning to Buckfastleigh in 1998.

Withdrawn for overhaul in 2006, it returned to service in 2010 but developed a crack in the boiler barrel in early 2016. A subsequent examination concluded it needed a major rebuild and new cylinder block, and it has not steamed since.

Set to steam again

With this new agreement in place, the stage is set for the popular locomotive to run once more as the SDR seeks to overhaul it.

SDR Ltd chairman Jon Morton said: "We are thrilled to take on the custodianship of No. 3205.

"This collaboration with the 2251 Locomotive Fund underscores our commitment to preserving the heritage of steam locomotion.

"As the primary stewards of No. 3205, we are excited to showcase its historical significance to railway enthusiasts and the wider public."

A fund statement said the group chose the SDR as the ideal custodial home for the locomotive because of its track record and passion for preserving the golden age of steam, and said the group is confident that No. 3205 will thrive under its care.

"This agreement ensures that No. 3205 will find a permanent residence at the SDR, where it will not only be preserved, but also celebrated as a living testament to the rich history of rail travel on the GWR," it said.

Sole-surviving Collett Goods No. 3205 is set for a return to steam with a new share issue being launched on December 1 by the South Devon Railway, set to raise the funds for the locomotive's overhaul amid other key projects. Pictured during its last period in steam, No. 3205 is seen at Sheffield Park on May 17, 2013, during a visit to the Bluebell Railway. OWEN HAYWARD

The SDR's operating company, South Devon Railway Limited, has also announced a £3 million share issue, to be launched on December 1, to help raise capital to continue the line's operation and the ongoing preservation and restoration of its locomotives, rolling stock and infrastructure. The railway has also identified several major projects which it believes will greatly enhance the presentation and interpretation facilities for visitors, volunteers or members. These include new buildings for carriage repairs and phase two of the running and maintenance shed, new visitor facilities at Buckfastleigh and upgrades to the museum there. In addition, it will also fund new overhaul projects, of which No. 3205 will be part of.

➜ **For more information, visit southdevonrailway.co.uk/shares**

Second tourism accolade caps award-winning year for KESR

By Geoff Courtney

Season's greetings: Father Christmas defies the elements at Tenterden Town station as he prepares for last year's KESR festive season. Will it be a white Christmas this year? ROBIN COOMBES

SANTA specials are not only an opportunity for heritage railways to introduce the joy of steam operations to a young audience, but they are also a vital source of income that has become even more welcome since the Covid-19 pandemic.

That is certainly the case at the Kent & East Sussex Railway, but this festive season's operations at the Tenterden-based line have taken on an even greater significance, with the news that the specials are to pick up the railway's second prestigious tourism award of the year.

Whether that award is gold, silver or bronze will be revealed at a ceremony in Brighton on December 15, but whatever the outcome, a medal is a certainty due to the railway having made the shortlist of three in the 2024 Beautiful South Awards, which are run by Tourism South East and judged by experts in the tourism industry.

KESR general manager Robin Coombes said: "We couldn't be more delighted and prouder that our Christmas experience has been recognised in these awards.

"The Santa specials are a massive undertaking which requires meticulous planning, and their success is therefore testament to the vision, hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers, who give up many hours of their time each festive season to deliver such a huge event.

"We simply couldn't do any of this without them."

Extra Santa trains

As if to emphasise the importance of the Santa trains, which last year carried 14,000 passengers, this year's programme includes more days of running and an extra train each day, with services running every weekend in December up to and including Christmas Eve.

The trains, which have operated every year since 1974 except 2020 due to the pandemic, will run a steam-hauled 70-minute Tenterden to Northiam and return service, and include festive refreshments, a family photograph, an on-board magician, educational presents for the children, and Father Christmas himself, handing out presents with help from his elves, and at Tenterden station entry to a winter wonderland marquee and unlimited free rides on vintage gallopers.

This year will additionally include a 'quiet day' service on November 26 for those who prefer a less intense visit, including families who have children with specialist needs. This service will feature no Christmas music, but will include the other features of the Santa specials. Post-Christmas, the railway will run a normal Tenterden-Bodiam service on December 29-31 and January 1, which will include a Kids for a Quid promotion.

The Beautiful South Awards success caps a year for the KESR during which the railway's volunteer chief stationmaster Geoff Colvin was voted VisitEngland Tourism Superstar of the Year in a public poll, and Elliott Waters, who has a regular railway day job but is a weekend guard and Pullman conductor volunteer, having reached the finals of the Rail Person of the Year category in the National Rail Staff Awards scheme.

"From the beginning of the year to the end, our volunteers have staunchly supported our staff and been a credit to the railway," said Robin.

➜ To book tickets, visit https://kesr.org.uk/

Major tour for world's biggest planned for 2024

Union Pacific simple articulated 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 'Big Boy'. UP

UNION Pacific 'Big Boy' articulated 4-8-8-4 No. 4014, the world's largest operational steam locomotive, will star in a 'Four Corners' tour in 2024 to celebrate the railroad's history and connection to communities and its employees.

The tour is expected to reach all four corners of Union Pacific's 23-state system, with anticipated stops in Chicago, Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston in Texas, Nampa in Idaho, Portland in Oregon, Roseville in California and Salt Lake City, Utah.

A total of 25 'Big Boys' were manufactured by the American Locomotive Company between 1941 and 1944 and operated by UP in revenue service until 1962.

Only eight survive, the other seven being on display around the United States.

Weighing 1,100,000lb, No. 4014 was restored in 2019 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad's completion.

UP CEO Jim Vena said: "As we move forward at Union Pacific, we remember where we came from; the 'Big Boy' represents the history of Union Pacific and the United States.

"When No. 4014 comes to town, we will celebrate with the communities where we operate, our employees and their families.

"Together, we will marvel at how far technology has brought us."

Tour dates and route information will be released in 2024.

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LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45690 *Leander* on Burrs Bank with the 2.50pm service from Bury on November 4. KEVIN WHITEHURST

‘Legendary’ steam gala will unite stars at Bury

BILLED as ‘three days, three legends’, the East Lancashire Railway’s March 15-17 gala will see LNER streamlined A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* visit Bury for the occasion, courtesy of the Sir Nigel Gresley Locomotive Trust Ltd.

The A4 has recently been starring on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, where it ran at that line’s 50th Anniversary steam gala in September, subsequently working some of the Moorsline’s daily service trains throughout October and November.

Another Eastern Region icon, BR Standard 7MT No. 70000 *Britannia* is also set to star at the East Lancashire gala. It made heritage sector headlines when, during a Steam Dreams tour of the Surrey Hills on August 22, it suffered a failure of its crosshead, which fractured in two and was thrust through and broke the cylinder cover.

As a result, the Pacific was stranded on the main line just after Chillingworth station, where the main connecting rod had to be removed in situ prior to the train being recovered.

Britannia was returned to LNWR Heritage Crewe works by road in the following days, where repairs have been ongoing.

Completing the star-studded line-up will be LMS Jubilee No. 45690 *Leander*, which has seen its main line certification expire but has been granted a short extension to its boiler certificate that will see it continue to operate on the ELR through until it is withdrawn for overhaul in the spring.

The visiting locomotives will be supplemented by the ELR’s home fleet, with full details of the event to follow.

Tickets are already on sale, with prices starting at £22 and £34 respectively for child and adult one day rovers, with both two and three-day options also on offer; see eastlancsrailway.org.uk/events-activities/legends-of-steam/

Sue is the first lady of Wensleydale!

THE Wensleydale Railway has appointed its first female train driver.

Volunteer Sue Threadgold, from Harrogate, recently passed her driver training and is now qualified to drive the line’s Class 142 and Class 143 Pacer DMUs.

Sue also became the line’s first female train guard in 2018. The railway currently has three female guards.

Sue said: “I have been a volunteer at Wensleydale Railway for eight years.

“I trained as a crossing keeper first, then as a trainee guard, passing out as train guard in 2018. I then began my driver training in 2022.

“My goal when I joined was to become a train driver, so I am really happy to have fulfilled my ambition.

“I would encourage more people to get involved in their local heritage railway. It’s really rewarding to be part of a great team, helping to keep our history and heritage alive for the public to enjoy!”

Newly-qualified driver Sue Threadgold with Pacer DMU No. 143623. WR

Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) chairman Chris Walton wants to hear from ‘missing’ shareholders. SVR

Help SVR find its ‘lost’ shareholders

THE Severn Valley Railway has issued an appeal to track down shareholders who have lost contact with the heritage line.

Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) plc chairman Chris Walton said: “We think that the most likely explanation is people have moved. If they’ve forgotten to update their address with us, it’s unfortunately impossible for us to contact them.

“A lot of shareholders purchased shares in support of the SVR many years ago and may even have forgotten they have them! However, we’d love to hear from them so we can make sure they receive any annual shareholder benefits to which they’re entitled. If anyone holds shares in the SVR or thinks they or a relative may have a holding, and they’ve not received postal or emailed updates from us for some time, then we are asking them to please let us know. We’ll then update our records and put things right.”

Shareholder relationship manager Karen Bromell can be reached at shareholders@svrlive.com

Explore hidden stations with 2024 bookings now open

LONDON Transport Museum’s award-winning tours of some of its completely closed and partially ‘abandoned’ operational stations on the Underground network will return from January 10.

Named by public vote at the Tiqets’ Remarkable Venue Awards 2022 as ‘Best Hidden Gem in the World’, the seven tour packages on offer focus on disused sections of Shepherd’s Bush, Euston and Baker Street stations, and also offer an opportunity to see inside Aldwych’s fully closed site. The ‘secret’ subterranean shelters of Clapham South will also be available to explore.

Many of these hidden gems contain callbacks to a bygone era, with period posters and advertising still in place, while others have retained their 19th century architecture.

As part of this latest round of offerings, the museum is reintroducing tours of the disused sections of Piccadilly Circus station, included in which is lunch at the nearby Hard Rock Café, while Charing Cross tours can be supplemented with an afternoon tea at the Clermont railway hotel.

Many of these locations have starred on UKTV’s Secrets of the London Underground television programme, but now curious tube and history fans can witness them all first-hand.

Tours will run on Wednesdays to Sundays starting from January 10, with finish dates varying from February 15 through to March 10. Prices are set at £44 for adults, with concessions benefitting from a £5 discount; lunch and afternoon tea options are extra and must be booked at the same time as the tour.

Can’t make it to London?
The museum also offers a virtual tour option held via Zoom, taking participants on a journey covering more than 160 years of the network’s history, exploring how it grew and evolved as well as taking in some of the ‘forgotten’ stations, some of which went on to be repurposed in often surprising manners.
➜ To book places on the tours, visit ltmuseum.co.uk/hidden-london

Boost for Kent fine dining with *Scotsman* USA tour Pullmans

By Owen Hayward

CUSTOMERS of the Kent & East Sussex Railway's 'Wealden Dining' services will be able to step aboard two more historic Pullman cars from 2024 following the announcement that privately-owned vehicles Nos. 246 *Lydia* and 247 *Isle of Thanet* are to be based on the former Colonel Stephens light railway route for the foreseeable future.

Both cars date from 1925. *Lydia* is a kitchen vehicle, while *Isle of Thanet* (originally named *Leona*) is entering traffic as a parlour first. Both saw out their first years of life based overseas; initially allocated to the Milan to Nice 'Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits' trains, they were based in Italy until 1928, when they were moved back to the UK and renovated and debuted on the prestigious 'Golden Arrow' trains.

During the Second World War, *Lydia* had the distinction of not only being retained for use by Winston Churchill – being kept occasionally at Westerham, close to his Chartwell home –but was also included in General Eisenhower's special train, code-named 'Bayonet', as he toured southern England planning the D-Day landings.

Following the cessation of hostilities, *Lydia* would later be found allocated to the 'Bournemouth Belle', 'Queen of Scots' and 'Tees-Tyne Pullman', before returning once more to the Southern Region for Southampton boat trains and the 'Bournemouth Belle' until 1966.

Leona was first renamed *Princess Elizabeth* upon return to sovereign soil but suffered damage by enemy action during the war.

Following a rebuild in 1947 as a guard parlour for use in the 'Devon Belle', it then transferred to the Southern Region in 1950, where it was renamed *Isle of Thanet* for a new role as part of the 'Thanet Belle' diners.

Despite this, much of its time was spent with *Lydia* in the 'Golden Arrow' and along with *Aries* (the KESR's own kitchen first, which is undergoing restoration) was included in the inaugural run of the electric-hauled incarnation of the 'Golden Arrow' service in 1961.

Withdrawn from service in 1967, *Thanet* was selected for preservation and, at an official presentation at Kensington Olympia station, was offered to the American Ambassador by the Duke of Edinburgh.

Continued prestige

However, before being exported again, both carriages were included in the consist for the funeral train that conveyed the body of Sir Winston Churchill, along with the family mourners, from Waterloo to Hanborough on January 30, 1965.

Fame would not stop there, as both carriages then joined A3 No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman* at the start of its ill-fated tour of the USA in 1969.

Although the A3 would eventually return home, the Pullman cars remained in the States, where they went on display at the National Railroad Museum at Green Bay.

Pullman kitchen first *Lydia* arrived on the KESR on November 7 to join the railway's fine dining 'Wealden Rambler' services. KESR

In 2000, following their purchase by a private buyer, both cars would also return to Britain for restoration. Initially sent to Carnforth, *Lydia* was latterly up on display at the National Railway Museum, York, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1965 funeral train.

Both vehicles will now be based on the KESR, joining the line's other Pullman cars *Barbara*, *Theodora* and *Aries*.

Lydia was the first to arrive, landing on KESR metals on November 7, while *Thanet*'s arrival date had yet to be confirmed but was expected to be in the following weeks.

Commercial manager Andre Freeman said: "While some work is first required, the cars are in good order and will enable us to provide an all-Pullman dining experience sooner than we had previously envisaged.

"With services to Robertsbridge now firmly on the horizon, the release of the Maunsell carriages currently within the Pullman set will also prove invaluable.

Anniversary year

"Next year is our 50th anniversary and coincidentally coincides with the 150th anniversary of the introduction of Pullman services within the UK; on Monday June 1, 1874, the first Pullman service ran from Bradford Forster Square station to London St Pancras!"

'Wealden Dining' trains are popular and can become fully booked up to a year in advance. For availability, menus and booking details, visit kesr.org.uk/pullman-dining/

Wasting no time: Hythe Pier railway restoration's first phase gets on track

THE Hythe Pier Heritage Association wasted no time in starting the first phase of its track restoration project once planning permission was given at the end of September.

The old station had already been closed, with a temporary platform installed 50 yards down the pier to allow the work area to be isolated.

The original Victorian beams have been painstakingly cleaned by hand and painted with several coats of a high-quality protective paint. They will remain in place but will no longer be load-bearing. The old track has been removed, revealing several decades of detritus.

A large crane was used to lift into position the three new steel beams that had arrived on a flatbed lorry. All three beams lined up with the pre-prepared bolt holes – even though very little of the pier is actually straight!

The crane then unloaded the new wooden cross beams that would sit on top of the steel beams to support the new planks that form the pier deck.

Apart from a few minutes when the wooden planks and steel beams were being lifted overhead, access to the pier, train and ferry was maintained throughout.

The structure under the train track and new points has been reinforced and made safe, and the old deck planks have been removed to be replaced with the new.

Once complete, a new platform will be constructed, hopefully in time for Christmas.

The association is funding the full restoration of the 700-yard pier and its 2ft gauge electric railway by means of grants and donations, which can be made via www.hythepierha.org.uk

The old boards on Hythe Pier are lifted following the removal of the track. JOHN GREENWOOD/HPHA

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Dazzling Bo'ness charter finale lights up the night

WITH many heritage railways having completed daily running or their main operating season by early November, this quieter month often provides an ideal opportunity for photographic charters to take place, benefitting from stunning autumn colours.

With Caledonian Railway Class 439 0-4-4T No. 419 currently running in BR black as No. 55189, charter group In Search of Steam arranged a spectacular weekend with the McIntosh locomotive that saw a dazzling finale on Bonfire Night.

Established by Jonny Gourlay and Andrew Fowler, the 0-4-4T was renumbered for a long weekend over November 3-5 as scrapped classmate No. 55260, operating with a set of Mk.1 coaches box vans to recreate scenes of the Killin branch line, which connected its namesake town to the nearby Callander & Oban Railway main line. Opened in 1886, the line lasted until 1965 when both it and the adjacent main line were simultaneously closed.

Welcome support

Jonny said: "At a time when our heritage railways are experiencing the crunch, it is encouraging to see the willingness of both enthusiasts and the railways themselves to band together and raise some much-needed funding and publicity.

"That was the core aim of the recent BR lined black repaint for the Scottish Railway Preservation Society's No. 419 at Bo'ness. A refresh of colour, paid for by photographers, with the intention to have No. 55189 star at several photographic charters on her home line.

"After three dates with No. 55189 leading up to November, the decision was taken to run the locomotive as sister No. 55260, as this suited both late crest and Caledonian chimney. Wooden numberplates, worksplates and smokebox dogclips were fitted to complete the look. This would allow us to faithfully recreate scenes of the Killin Branch goods on Friday, Killin mixed passenger on Saturday and Aberfeldy mixed pick-up on Sunday.

"To be more faithful to Scotland, the forecast leading up to the weekend gave suggestion to wet and cloudy weather.

"We were all rather surprised, then, to turn up on the first morning as the sun began shining. Various pleasant photographs around the Birkhill area were taken before the cloud set in at about lunchtime that wouldn't pass until Sunday morning.

"Fortunately, we also had three night shoots to lighten the mood, the highlight featuring LNER J36 No. 65243 *Maude,* making a rare appearance outside the museum."

The finale of these night shoots fell on Bonfire Night, which resulted in local displays filling the sky around Bo'ness. Not one to miss an opportunity, the combination of these and the locomotives in the yard facilitated some stunning shots that rarely appear 'naturally'.

"The highlight came on the third day, with five glorious minutes of golden hour sunshine on the Avon Viaduct, with three runpasts to a chorus of cheers from many happy photographers," Jonny concluded.

(Not) seeing red (yet!)

The 439 class was originally due to be repainted during the winter months, the BR black repaint having initially been agreed with the SRPS for only one year. However, interest from a photographic charter group from Germany for an event in the spring may see it retain the scheme for an additional year before it is repainted into the more ornate LMS crimson, a scheme the locomotive has yet to adopt in the heritage era, having worn one of the Caledonian liveries for the majority of that time. Following the charters, the SRPS announced it was looking to raise £6000 to acquire a new Westinghouse for the Caledonian locomotive.

"The air pump on locomotive No. 419 suffered frost damage several decades ago and was weld repaired at the time" a statement said. "The pump's condition has deteriorated to the extent it now requires replacement. We have located a complete Westinghouse pump of the correct type in good condition, together with a substantial amount of spare parts, in America. We need your help to cover the costs of about £6000."

➜ To donate, visit https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/22888#!/DonationDetails

A stunning conclusion to a weekend of photography at Bo'ness as fireworks light up the sky behind Caledonian Railway No. 55260 on Bonfire Night. CHRIS PATON

On day one of the charter, No. 55260 leads a short goods working through Birkhill. JONATHON GOURLAY

No. 55260 simmers in the yard at Bo'ness during a night shoot on November 4. Alongside is No. 65243 *Maude* (NBR No. 673), which was making a rare appearance outside of the museum over the weekend. JONATHON GOURLAY

GCR brings in fresh safety measures after serious injury

By Robin Jones

THE Great Central Railway has implemented new safety measures following an incident in which a visually impaired passenger sustained a serious injury while alighting Loughborough Central station on the line.

As reported in issue 304, the incident occurred at 11.50am on Saturday, January 14, when a six-coach train made a planned stop at Platform 1. The door used by the passenger opened onto the platform end ramp, about 1.6 metres beyond the end of the level part of the platform. The passenger, who was registered as severely sight impaired or 'blind' because of developing cataracts as an infant, lost his footing and fell because he was unable to safely negotiate the step down onto the ramp, said the Rail Accident Investigation Branch in a report published on October 31.

"This was because the level platform was only about two metres longer than the distance needed to safely accommodate all of the train's doors, and the train's brakes were not performing in a consistent, predictable manner," the report detailed. "Measures implemented by the railway had not effectively controlled the risk of passengers using doors which were not adjacent to usable platform."

The train was being hauled by BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 78019 and the coach involved was Mk.1 Tourist Second Open No. 4857.

Following the accident, GCR staff and visitors including an off-duty doctor went to the passenger's assistance and an ambulance took him to hospital, where it was identified that he had sustained a spiral fracture to the left femur and underwent surgery, which included replacement of a prosthetic hip joint.

Three days later, the GCR appointed two staff members to undertake an internal investigation.

Measures implemented by the railway had not effectively controlled the risk of passengers using doors which were not adjacent to usable platforms, said the report: "Witness evidence indicates that, two weeks after the January 2023 accident, a train again stopped so that the leading door of the leading coach was beyond the level part of the platform and that passengers had alighted on to the platform ramp.

Similar incident

"RAIB identified that the accident on January 14 was not an isolated occasion where a coach door had not been safely accommodated at Loughborough Central station.

"A very similar accident happened in 2014 when an elderly visually impaired passenger fell when they tried to alight from a coach at a door that was adjacent to the platform end ramp at Loughborough Central.

"This passenger was taken to hospital but discharged after being examined. This accident was notified to GCR staff at the time and an accident report was completed, although RAIB found no evidence that it triggered a review of the associated risk assessment or that any changes were made as a result of it."

The RAIB report said that two underlying factors were that the GCR did not have effective processes for learning lessons from operational experience, and had no effective process to support the identification, management, and monitoring of risk.

The report made recommendations to the GCR relating to the assessment and control of risk, learning from previous events, ensuring that the needs of disabled passengers are considered, and relating to auditing and assurance of its risk management activities.

A recommendation was made to the Heritage Railway Association (HRA) concerning the provision of guidance on managing the risks around the passenger/train interface at heritage railway stations.

Changes made

Two learning points were identified, the first being a reminder of the importance of having a robust system to manage staff training and competence records, and secondly a reminder to duty-holders of the importance of prompt accident reporting.

A week after the accident, GCR committed to arrange a thorough review of its safety management system, which is in progress, and transferred safety responsibility to the new general manager.

A new GCR board health, safety and environment committee was established to scrutinise safety performance and to hold the general manager and the company's executive to account for the discharge of their safety responsibilities.

The GCR now has a new executive-level role, a head of safety and compliance, and an individual has been appointed to that post.

GCR reviewed all its risk assessments associated with passengers boarding and alighting from trains and now routinely operates five-coach trains that can be fully accommodated in its platforms unless there is a specific need for longer trains – when extra staff will be provided on trains and platforms to ensure visitors' safety.

Reconstructions of the position of the train at the north end platform ramp to allow measurements of the platform-train interface were staged on January 22 and 30. The photograph shows the near door of the coach above the platform ramp, as was the case when the passenger was severely injured when alighting on October 19. RAIB

The effect of the new mitigations was observed and reviewed by the RAIB in February.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "This accident was very sad, and we were eager to learn from it and make our railway safer.

"We thank RAIB for the thorough investigation into this accident, the findings of which align with our own internal inquiry.

"The safety of our visitors, staff, and the public remains our top priority, and we are already well on the way to implementing the recommendations from this report.

"We look forward to supporting the development of future guidance from the HRA."

Second 37 for Dartmouth line

On October 17, No. 37703 was towed from Westbury, where it had been moved to from Toton behind Class 66 No. 66003 to Paignton, to start its new career on the Dartmouth Steam Railway. DAVID HUNT

A CLASS 37 diesel which spent six years on hire in Spain has been given a new life on England's 'sunshine' line.

Outshopped from English Electric's Vulcan Foundry at D6767 in November 1962, No. 37703 has been bought by a private individual from the Harry Needle Railroad Company and moved to the Dartmouth Steam Railway on October 17.

It will become part of the DSR running fleet and work alongside classmate D6975.

First allocated to Thornaby, the locomotive was later based at Gateshead, Thornaby again, and Cardiff Canton, where it was renumbered 37703 in January 1987. Later shedded at Toton and Eastleigh, following privatisation it became part of the EWS fleet, and in May 2001, as part of a contract hire agreement, it departed for Spain, where it was renumbered L25.

Returning in May 2007, it was transferred to Toton, acquired by Direct Rail Services in August 20, moved to Barrow Hill and a year later went to the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway.

Later renumbered 37067, it was stored by DRS and in January 2020 returned to Barrow Hill.

As No. 37703, it visited the Swanage Railway for its May 2022 diesel gala.

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Autumn blue: The striking livery of ex-Caledonian Railway 0-6-0 No. 828 stands out amid the autumnal hues of the High Weald on a Spa Valley Railway real ale train on October 22. OWEN HAYWARD

Spa Valley record at 'brilliant' real ale festival

By Geoff Courtney

VOLUNTEERS and staff at the Spa Valley Railway raised a glass to their October 19-22 Real Ale and Cider Festival after a record number of visitors travelled on the steam-hauled trains.

Commercial manager Jonnie Pay said: "A total of 1924 tickets were sold over the four-day event for travel to Eridge, which is the highest-ever number for the beer festival. In addition, many more enjoyed the live entertainment and food stalls, sampling some of the 169 different beers and ciders available."

The railway's 1891-built steam depot, the last-remaining LBSCR engine shed still in railway use, became the 'pub' for the festival, so providing a nostalgic venue that added to the attraction for railway, real ale and cider enthusiasts.

Praising the joint effort that led to the successful event, Jonnie said: "It could not have taken place without all the wonderful volunteers from both the railway and the Campaign for Real Ale, and we are also grateful to the Tunbridge Wells Together Improvement District for providing funds to market the event. We had an absolutely brilliant four days, and it was a huge success."

The steam trains were worked by two on-loan locomotives, Mid-Norfolk Railway-based Standard 4MT class 2-6-4T No. 80078 and Strathspey Railway-based ex-Caledonian Railway 812 class 0-6-0 No. 828 (BR No. 57566).

Ancient and modern: Caledonian Railway 0-6-0 No. 828 and BR Standard 2-6-4T No. 80078 represent two different steam eras while working real ale trains on October 22 during the Spa Valley Railway's Real Ale and Cider Festival. No. 828 was built in 1899 and is on loan from the Strathspey Railway, while the Mid-Norfolk Railway-based Standard 4MT was outshopped by Brighton in 1954. The two locomotives are seen passing at Groombridge loop in golden afternoon sun. OWEN HAYWARD

Llangollen seeks clarity for the future over stock ownership ambiguity

THE Llangollen Railway is seeking to rectify a problem that plagues heritage lines regarding the often-vague ownership status of items of rolling stock. The net result can be 'linear scrapyards' as railways hesitate to restore vehicles that they cannot be certain is their responsibility to do so.

At Llangollen, the railway's officials are running the rule over its own collection, which has come about in the wake of the previous plc's administration.

In a statement, the LR announced that "the board of the Llangollen Railway Trust has instigated a process over the last two years of identifying the legal owners of all plan, traction and rolling stock located on the railway and ensuring that the correct legal agreements are in place between the owners and the railway to enable the assets to remain.

"This action is necessary to protect the railway against liabilities associated with the assets while on the railway's premises. While significant progress has been made in some areas, there are still many assets on the railway which have 'no verified owner' and 'no legal agreements' in place."

The LRT has accordingly issued notice for all parties with a claim to ownership of assets based on the railway to notify the board by December 31. Following this date, any assets for which ownership has not been claimed and proven will thereafter be considered as the property of the trust and will subsequently be dealt with accordingly.

Anyone with a genuine claim for ownership of assets should contact the heritage engineering manager either by email – ccme@llangollen-railway.co.uk – or in writing to: Llangollen Railway Trust, The Station, Abbey Road, Llangollen LL20 8SN.

Sighting set southwards after Corris Falcon makes its nest

By Owen Hayward

THE Corris Railway's new-build Falcon 0-4-2ST No. 10 completed its first spell in public service on October 21, almost bringing the end to what has been a 16-year project – but a new chapter in the heritage line's story has begun as it now sets its sights on completing its southern extension project to Pont Y Goedwig.

When completed, this section of line will double the current length of the railway; of the 1380ft distance being built, the railway has so far completed 492 feet in two sections, with 177 feet of trackbed off its current limit of operations (including about 180 feet of laid rail), plus 492 feet on the southernmost end.

However, the main obstacle that prevents their linking is the need to rebuild an embankment that spans a distance of 656 feet and varies in height of up to 33 feet.

"At the deepest section, we have so far come up about 20 feet," said CR press officer John Simms, "but there are sections where proportionally we have a greater height to come up. It is a bit complicated, but the contractor is forming the embankment as best he can, relatively level.

"The final alignment will be climbing at 1-in-30, so in profile, it is a bit wedge-shaped, except that the ground naturally rises quite steeply for the last 130 feet or so as it approaches Maespoeth Junction, reducing the need to fill up."

This work was made necessary following the loss of part of the original route of the line to road improvements made on the adjacent A487.

The cost of the remaining embankment work, including purchasing the materials required, has therefore been estimated to be about £150,000.

The railway also needs to cross the Goedwig stream, which will necessitate further fundraising to be carried out.

Winter works

In addition to the extension, the winter shutdown will allow volunteers to focus on the other essential tasks to keep the current railway running.

Although No. 10 has performed well since its delivery from Alan Keef Ltd and its launch, as reported in issue 311, as is inevitable with a new machine, a snagging list was drawn up as it worked trains during October. Engineers from both the CR and builder's workshops were due to work on these minor problems following the conclusion of the main operating season.

The railway's southward extension requires the embankment to be built up over geotextile layers in places. CR

In the new year, the Falcon's paintwork will also be completed, with the addition of lining out, ahead of the resumption of passenger train services at Easter.

A 36-page full colour booklet telling the story of the Falcon from inception right through to its first workings has been produced and can be purchased from the CR's website shop for £3 plus postage.

The latest new-build carriage is also moving towards completion in the workshops at Maespoeth Junction. When finished, it will offer first class accommodation for the first time in the history of the line's revival.

Among developments with the goods fleet, a new trestle waggon has been completed so that the railway can demonstrate once again how slabs of slate were conveyed along the Dulas Valley from the quarries to the Cambrian Railways main line station at Machynlleth.

"Painting, track maintenance and control of lineside vegetation is always ongoing, and more volunteers will be welcome – trackwork is cheaper than gym fees!" said John.

The railway run Christmas trains over the weekend of December 9/10 using Kerr Stuart Tattoo 0-4-2ST No. 7, which will see its boiler ticket expire at the end of 2024.

Planning is currently underway with a view to arranging a gala featuring both Nos. 7 and 10 running together in the autumn months beforehand.

The trestle waggon has at last been fitted with its wheelsets and axle boxes and loaded with representative slate slabs. CR

The Corris's new carriage is starting to take shape in the railway's workshops, where the north end of the vehicle has started to receive a coat of primer. CR

National Transport Trust Awards entry deadline extended to December

THE deadline for entries to the 2024 National Transport Trust Annual Restoration Awards has been extended to December 1.

The trust's annual ceremony recognises the efforts of those involved in the preservation of transport heritage in all its forms – rail, road, air and water. Awards, many of which come with a financial grant, are given to specific projects of merit.

Individuals who are making a significant personal contribution to preservation are also recognised.

NTT awards director Paul Brook said: "Proposers can nominate either their own project or the work of others, and do not need to be a member of the trust to apply. Awards are made to restoration projects judged to be technically interesting, socially significant, or which fit in some other way with the trust's remit of preserving the past for the future.

"The project should be well on the way to completion, with the lion's share of the work completed by the owner or project group, rather than a commercial restoration."

Judges will sit between April and May to decide winners and allocate any financial contributions.

➜ To apply, head online and visit www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk/award-form/awardform/22_apply-for-a-restoration-award

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With the overhaul of 1950-built Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46441 nearly complete, the locomotive was steamed in late October and moved under its own power for the first time since 2002. It is now undergoing testing and running-in trials before entering service next year at the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway, its home since 2018 after 16 years on static display at the Ribble Steam Railway. In the 1990s, it worked on the main line when it was a regular at Carnforth and based on the East Lancashire Railway. Continuing its running-in period, No. 46441 is seen passing Finsthwaite while heading for Newby Bridge and Lakeside on November 6. SHEP WOOLLEY

Family tribute to narrow gauge crusader Peter Nicholson

By Josh Brinsford

I AM very sorry to report that the well-known railway author, journalist, and photographer Peter Nicholson (my grandfather) passed away on Monday, October 30 at the age of 75 following a long battle with cancer.

Peter, who was born in 1948, was a frequent visitor to many heritage railways in the UK of all gauges, from miniature and narrow to standard gauge.

He had a huge interest in narrow gauge railways, owning many diesel and steam locomotives and rolling stock since the 1960s, and still owned several items of standard, narrow gauge and miniature railway equipment right up until the very end of his life.

Peter had worked for *The Railway Magazine* since 1999, compiling the Classic Traction and Miniature pages, and also the *Narrow-Gauge Diary* every month.

Peter was a well-known name in the 1970s and 1980s when he and friends formed the Barry Steam Locomotive Action Group (BSLAG) in order to save as many locomotives from the infamous scrapyard as possible.

One of his favourite engines at Barry was GWR Churchward 2-8-0 No.2807, which he campaigned to save, being the oldest survivor of the 2800 class (see feature, pages 52-55). No. 2807 returned to steam after overhaul, just the day before he died (as reported last issue).

Peter was also well-known in the narrow gauge world. He saved many steam and diesel locomotive from the 1960s to the 1980s, including repatriating engines from France and elsewhere.

Before he passed away, he owned Hibberd Planet No.2201, Lister Railtruck No.6299, Motor Rail Simplex H No.105H006 and Wickham trolley No.4165.

Among the locomotives he helped save were Hibberd Planets Nos. 1830 (1933), 2025 (1937) and 2201 (1939), Lister 'Railtruck' No. 6299 (1935), vertical-boiler locomotives No.106 *Kathleen* (1877) and *Llanfair* (1895), Hibberd No. 1568(1927) and 1747(1931); Orenstein and Koppel No.4470 (1930) and 7728 (1938); Joffre No.2442 (1915), 2451 (1915), 3010 (1916) and 3014 (1916), Wickham trolleys No.4810 (1948) and 4813 (1948) and Hunslets No. 4396 (1952) and 6018 (1961).

Peter will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him and our family thanks everyone who has shown their support. We are very grateful, and we will all remember the good times with Grandad.

Peter Nicholson in the cab of unique surviving Clayton Class 17 D8568 in June 2022. JOSH BRINSFORD

New GCR(N) carriage shed on course for completion by end of the year

A FINAL push to raise the last funds needed to complete the Great Central Railway (Nottingham)'s new four-carriage shed at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre by the end of 2023 is underway – as a project milestone was passed when the steelwork for the roof was lifted into place.

As reported in issue 310, £40,000 of grant funding was awarded to the GCR(N) from Rushcliffe Borough Council from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund, part of UK Government's Levelling Up agenda. The money, combined with match-funding from the East Midlands Railway Trust and LNER (GC) Heritage Trust, means the project, which had stalled through lack of funds, can be completed in December.

However, to complete the funding jigsaw, the GCR(N) has been raising £15,000 to install roller shutter doors and fit out the building with lights and power.

As *Heritage Railway* closed for press, about £8000 was still needed.

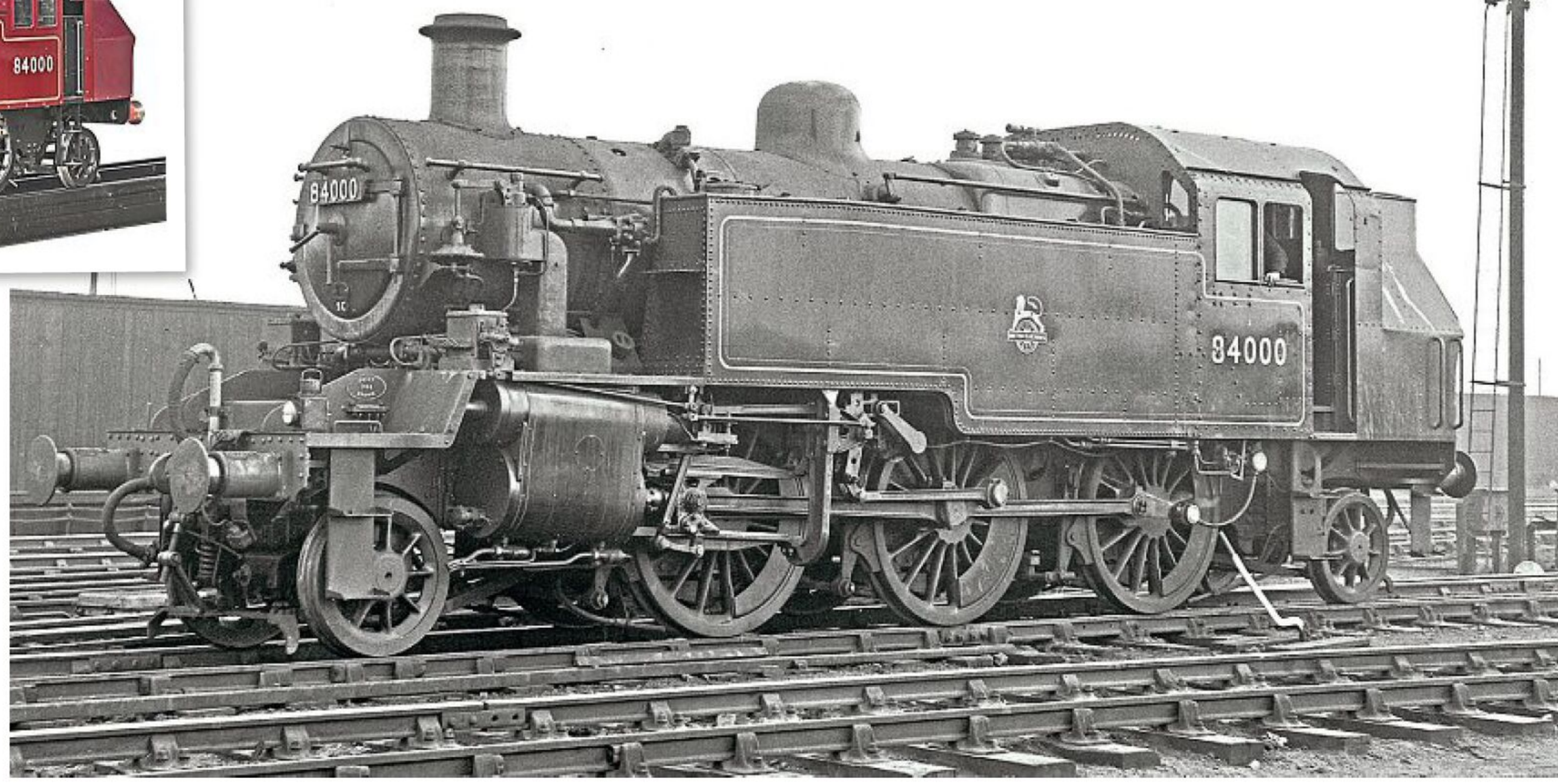
The Great Central Railway (Nottingham)'s new carriage shed takes shape at Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre on October 19. TOM INGALL

Trust chairman Andy Fillingham said: "It's extraordinary how quickly the shed is taking shape. The floor is almost ready for concrete to be poured, and the vertical steelwork has been erected. Roof beams are being craned into place, so it won't be long before the block work walls will be built. Our contractors, Now Build and Intelligent Fabrications, are doing an excellent job, despite the recent bad weather.

"The shed will help the railway thrive in future, and because it will have a level concrete floor inside, when it isn't being used for storing carriages, it will be an event space for visitors.

"As we continue to work towards connecting our railway to the Great Central in Leicestershire, creating an 18-mile heritage line across the Midlands, the shed will be a tremendous asset."

➜ Donations can be made at lnergctrust.org



Above: The model of No. 84000 going under the hammer on December 13 with a top estimate of £10,000. DREWEATTS
Right: Standard fare: BR Standard Class 2MT No. 84000 at its home shed of Crewe North (5A) on August 8, 1953, just five weeks after entering traffic following its construction in the nearby locomotive works. The 2-6-2T was reallocated to Bolton's Plodder Lane depot (10D) on the day the photograph was taken and withdrawn in October 1965 after a service life of a little over 12 years.
TRANSPORT TREASURY/AG ELLIS

It's all in the detail as award winners go under the hammer

By Geoff Courtney

AWARD-WINNING live steam 5in gauge models representing two contrasting steam locomotive eras are set to be the stars in a Transport Sale being held by Dreweatts auction house at Donnington Priory, Newbury, on December 13. With estimates of up to £10,000, they comprise a preserved ex-LMS 0-6-0T dock shunter and a BR Standard Class 2MT.

The 0-6-0T on which the shunter model is based was Glasgow & South Western Railway Class 5 No. 9, built by the North British Locomotive Co. of Glasgow in November 1917. On Grouping, it became LMS Class 2F No. 16379, and after withdrawal in April 1934 was sold to Haford Colliery near Wrexham. Its second withdrawal came in 1962, but as the last-surviving GSWR locomotive, it was saved for preservation and is now on display at Glasgow Riverside Museum.

Built to exhibition standard in 2003 by the late Richard Arnold Castle, of Watford, in its LMS No. 16379 guise, the model has won a number of awards, including a Model Engineering Exhibition silver medal.

The Standard class model, of 2MT 2-6-2T No. 84000, was also built by Richard Castle and it too is an award winner, including an international memorial trophy. The full-size locomotive on which the model is based was outshopped by Crewe in July 1953 and withdrawn from the Wrexham shed of Croes Newydd (6C) in October 1965.

Michael Matthews, Dreweatts' steam and model engineering consultant, said neither model had previously appeared at auction, and spoke to *Heritage Railway* of his admiration for top model makers such as Richard Castle: "They are perfectionists with wonderful hand skills and patience who go that extra mile to get as close as possible to the real thing. Their models are works of art in their own right."

➜ **See Geoff Courtney's Railwayana and model train auctions column on pages 68-69 for details of other models in the sale.**

Right: Old survivor: the model of preserved Glasgow & South Western Railway 0-6-0T No. 9/LMS No. 16379 that is being sold at auction on December 13 with a top estimate of £10,000. DREWEATTS

Driver reunited with line's flagship *Jurassic* after 'last' journey 37 years ago

LINCOLNSHIRE Coast Light Railway flagship Peckett 0-6-0ST No. 1008 of 1903 has been reunited with the man who drove what was thought to be its last journey 37 years ago.

In 1986, the year after the LCLR's original line at Humberston closed and it faced an uncertain future, Graham Morris, of Daventry, owner of Kerr Stuart 0-4-0ST No. 4256 of 1922 *Peter Pan*, took it on a low-loader to the Leighton Buzzard railway, where it steamed for three weeks until its 10-yearly boiler ticket expired on the day he returned it.

LCLR Historic Vehicles Trust chairman Richard Shepherd travelled to Leighton Buzzard to drive and fire *Jurassic*. *Jurassic* and the rest of the LCLR's rolling stock and track were eventually placed in storage before the railway was relocated to Skegness Water Leisure Park, in Walls Lane, Ingoldmells, where it reopened in 2009. *Jurassic* was restored with the help of a Lottery Heritage grant and returned to steam at Skegness in 2017. Graham decided that after 37 years, it was time to renew his acquaintance with *Jurassic* and spent much of September 2 on the footplate, and in and around the LCLR accompanied by Richard, who is still very much an active LCLR volunteer on the line.

Richard said: "Absolutely remarkable to be back on *Jurassic*'s footplate with Graham after 37 years; that visit to Leighton Buzzard helped keep together the LCLR's volunteers at a time when our railway seemed inevitably doomed.

"In the long run, by Graham making it possible for *Jurassic* to run one last time in 1986, it was a significant factor in enabling us to rebuild our railway. Now that *Jurassic* is the star of the show here in Skegness, we were delighted to share its footplate with Graham and show him what has been achieved, not only with *Jurassic*, but with the rest of our collection".

Graham Morris (right) with LCLR Historic Vehicles Trust chairman Richard Shepherd, beside *Jurassic*.
JOHN RABY

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Scenic views from the trains include those of Difflin Lake, which gives its name to the line. Alan Keef diesel *Earl of Oakfield* passes by the water on August 13. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Difflin Lake Railway marks 10 years on track

By Hugh Dougherty

THE Difflin Lake Railway is marking its 10th year of operation during its 2023 season, the 15in gauge line having opened at Oakfield Park estate in County Donegal in 2103.

Since then, during the summer, at Christmas and at Easter, its steam and diesel-hauled trains have carried an estimated 300,000 passengers over its two-and-a-half miles of track, offering unique views of the estate from the comfort of a railway carriage.

Director David Fisher said: "We are very proud to have completed our first decade in service. This year we will carry about 60,000 passengers, whereas five years ago it was 20,000, so our popularity is growing.

"We are the busiest heritage railway in Ireland and the longest miniature line, and, of course, being situated just outside Raphoe, which was served by the County Donegal Railway, we pay tribute to that line by painting our closed carriage in CDR livery, while our steam locomotive, *Duchess of Difflin*, also carries the CDR red. We see ourselves as keeping the railway heritage of Donegal and Ireland very much alive."

The line runs from the main station at Oakfield Park, where an engine and carriage shed are situated, along with Buffers Buffet, and round though woods and across meadows.

Trains pass gardens and Difflin Lake itself, and round an iconic wood sculpture made from railway sleepers, and then arrive back at the station.

With a top speed of 9mph on straights and 5mph on curves, and a maximum 1-in-30 gradient, the pace is sedate, in keeping with the ambience of the park and with the line's narrow gauge atmosphere.

Trains are steam-hauled on the last Sunday of each month during the summer season by Exmoor Steam Railway-built 0-4-0T *Countess of Difflin*, while Alan Keef diesel *Earl of Oakfield* shares normal duties with James Duncan-built diesel *Bishop of Twysden*. The rail is 14lb to the yard, flat-bottomed with galvanised steel and wooden sleepers, and the line is run under line-of-sight regulations, without signals, and with one engine in steam or diesel.

On a Steam Sunday, *Countess of Difflin* is seen and heard in full cry as the 0-4-0T comes out of the reeds. DLR

➜ **Full details of opening dates, train times, fares and Oakfield Park can be found online at https://oakfieldpark.com**

Once-threatened Darlington railway building's transformation into house

A FORMER railway building that once faced demolition until its owner discovered that the new Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter would be developed next door is now to be turned into a house of multiple occupation.

Darlington Borough Council has granted planned permission for the curiously-shaped Signal House, in Whessoe Road, which stands next to an engine shed built by the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1861 and is currently being restored as a part of the Head of Steam Museum for conversion into a house for 22 people. It stands alongside the site of the level crossing that linked the SDR's North Road workshops, where about 3000 locomotives were built, to its main line.

Following the conversion, the ground floor of Signal House, currently occupied in part by Harry's Handcrafted Donuts, will continue to be commercially let.

The redevelopment of the building is due to start later this year, with work on the Head of Steam scheduled for completion in 2025.

The Signal House, in Whessoe Road, saved from demolition. GOOGLE

Severn Valley bids a fond farewell to driver John Price

By Robin Jones

A MEMORIAL day to bid farewell to Severn Valley Railway driver John Price senior and celebrate his 60-year rail career was held on the line on Sunday, October 29.

John, 76, who died on August 1, began his career as a cleaner at Tyseley shed on January 1, 1962. He quickly progressed through the ranks to become a fireman and spent the last few years of BR steam firing locomotives including GWR Kings, Castles, Halls, prairies and Panniers. He even managed to get a trip on an LNER V2, a journey he loved very much and talked of on many occasions. He became a driver at Saltley shed during the diesel era, before moving on to Worcester Shrub Hill. He also fired and drove several steam locomotives on the main line. He later moved on to the freight with Colas Rail, retiring in 2017.

He started volunteering on the SVR in the early 1970s and worked in various departments, including both the steam and diesel locomotive departments, on-train dining, the 1940s event, the DMU group and latterly catering at Arley Tea Room. He proudly served as locomotive superintendent for a time.

When he retired from the footplate on December 22, 2021, his railway career had spanned 59 years, 11 months and 22 days.

The memorial event, organised by driver Tom Clarke and fireman Harry Bradley, saw John's family and friends celebrate his life, and his widow Debbie was presented with mementos to remember him by. A special headboard was commissioned representing John's railway career, beginning with a BR steam era emblem, moving to a BR diesel era one, and finishing with the SVR Logo.

John's favourite spot

The day started at the King and Castle at Kidderminster Town station with the presentation of a memorial plaque in 'John's Corner'. Since the opening of the pub, John religiously sat in the corner by the bar – a spot where some years earlier he had sat on the buffer stops of the old goods yard with a Class 47 he was driving. Guests were then invited to board the chartered train hauled by Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 21C127 *Taw Valley* for John's last journey along the SVR. His ashes were carried in the cab in his old footplate bag while his friends and family were invited to ride on board.

At Bridgnorth, a plaque was unveiled by locomotive owner Phil Swallow in the cab of *Taw Valley*, the last steam locomotive John drove before his retirement. A replica presentation plaque was given to Debbie, and on the return run, she boarded the footplate at Bewdley,

Above: John Price senior's widow, Debbie, with Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 21C127 *Taw Valley* carrying the wreath in his memory while heading the special train on October 29. RICHARD HERINGTON/SVR **Inset: The memorial plaque inside the cab of *Taw Valley*.** RICHARD HERINGTON/SVR

Harry Bradley recalled: "John would always say, 'Where are we going, the moon?' if he felt you'd put too much coal on. And as we climbed Bewdley Bank towards the tunnel, John's favourite section of the SVR, the full moon shone brightly over the train and railway. Tom gave a long blast on the whistle and Debbie and Harry scattered John's ashes into the firebox, using his old firing shovel."

On arrival back at Kidderminster, the headboard was placed on the wall in the King and Castle, and the wreath carried by the locomotive was presented to Debbie.

A memorial collection raised £1510 for the SVR Charitable Trust Survival Fund.

Fellow SVR volunteer Richard Herington said: "John saved his best talents for when it came to encouraging the future generations and teaching them the art of being an engineman.

Left: John on the footplate of Ivatt 4MT 'Flying Pig' 2-6-0 No. 43106. HARRY BRADLEY/SVR

"He encouraged so many of our current footplate crew, and always wanted to make sure they succeeded in having a long and successful footplate career, just as he had enjoyed.

"He would be firm but fair, and he always made sure that praise was given out when it was due. He always said that drivers he worked with in BR days passed on their knowledge to him, and it was his job to pass that on to those on the SVR. In return, he simply asked for those he taught to teach future generations.

"John's support of the SVR wasn't just in a voluntary capacity. He contributed generously to several locomotive groups and societies, but his greater financial contribution was over the bar in the King and Castle. He was part of the furniture of the K&C, famously claiming his corner by the bar."

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The frames for Beyer Peacock 2-4-0T No. 12 *Hutchinson* inside the workshops at Douglas on October 26. These, along with a new boiler built at Bridgnorth, returned to the Isle of Man from a contractor at Bouth, England, where much of the frames and tanks have been attended to prepare the locomotive for a return to service. GRANT TAYLOR/IOMSRSA

Hutchinson returns home to Douglas

By Owen Hayward

THE Isle of Man steam railway locomotive fleet could be back up to four-strong in 2024 following the return of one of its fleet of Beyer Peacocks from Bouth to the Douglas locomotive sheds.

Built in 1908 as a one-off order, *Hutchinson* was similar in design to the 1905 locomotives Nos. 10 *G.H. Wood* and 11 *Maitland*. As was common at the time, the same treatment having been applied to its predecessors, the locomotive was named after company director William A Hutchinson.

Reboilered shortly after the Second World War in 1946, No. 12 saw regular service until the Manx Government takeover in 1978.

By 1977 the condition of the boiler was poor, and the locomotive saw limited use; the decision was soon made to order a new one, which was delivered from Hunslet of Leeds and arrived in early 1981, at which time reassembly began. This was to include larger water tanks and a square cab modelled loosely on that carried by No. 16 *Mannin*.

These cumbersome new additions, together with a blue livery, gave Hutchinson an ungainly appearance. The traditional cab returned after an overhaul completed in 2001.

Last operational in August 2019, work started to return *Hutchinson* to service in May 2021. The frames, bunker and tanks were despatched to an off-island contractor at Bouth, and a new boiler was constructed at the Severn Valley Railway's Bridgnorth works.

New smokebox

A substantial amount of refurbishment work has been undertaken on the frames and motions to prepare it for a return to service. However, before final reassembly can take place, a new smokebox must be fabricated to replace the old life expired one.

Following the return of the major components to the IOMSR works on October 23, it is hoped that No. 12 will return to service in the early part of 2024. With the railway set to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the line between Douglas and Port Erin (this year's anniversary having centred on the opening of the original Douglas to Peel route, as featured in issue 309), the availability of a fourth Peacock will provide a much-needed spare locomotive for the busy summer period.

A spokesman said: "Following repairs to the frames, the new boiler fits well, hence the boiler and frames have been returned to the in-house workshops for assembly and final fitting. This will take place in conjunction with the other planned work we have over this winter season."

Aside from several Christmas services, all of the IOM railways are currently closed until March 12, when the Manx Electric Railway will be the first to resume services, the steam railway following three days later.

The annual Manx Transport Festival is also set to run from Tuesday, July 30 through to Sunday, August 4, returning to a six-day format after its extended run in 2023 for the steam and electric railway's anniversary celebrations.

Welshpool mishap

THE Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway cancelled or restricted some services on November 2 when a car crashed onto the track after going through a hedge near the eastern end of the line in the early hours of that morning. The driver of the Ford Kuga attended hospital for treatment, and the track was said to have been damaged.

Strathspey confirms plans for series of festive train services

THE Strathspey Railway will run a series of festive services – despite earlier doubts following the 'heavy shunt' involving A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* on September 29.

After the incident, the railway said that plans to release 'Santa Express' tickets were on hold while it reviewed its position.

However, it has since been announced that its festive services will run on December 9/10, 16/17 and 21/22.

There will be no further services in 2023 after the 22nd.

All children will have the chance to meet Father Christmas at Aviemore station; however, this year there will be no presents.

Trains will run at 11am and 2pm. To book, visit https://tinyurl.com/festiveservices

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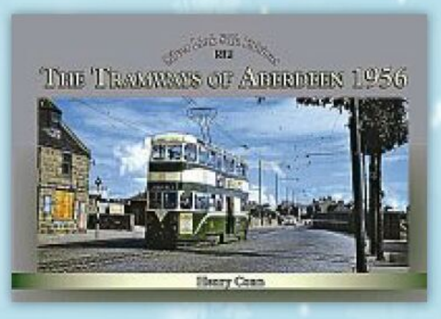

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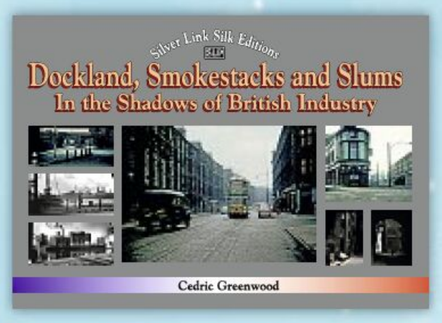

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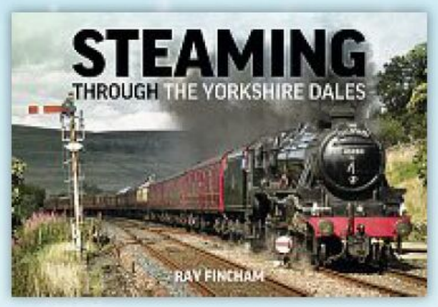

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WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* heads through Tyseley with the 'Polar Express' from Birmingham Moor Street on December 10, 2022.

PHOTOGRAPHING FESTIVE STEAM AT ITS BEST

While the heritage era has witnessed a constant rise in the number and variety of Christmas specials aimed at the family market over the years, combined with the seasonal weather conditions, they so often gift an early present or two for lineside cameramen, as photographer **Robert Falconer** explains.

As the shadows lengthen and the days grow short, the year approaches its end. We naturally start to take stock at how well the year has gone with all the busy steam action, including splendid galas, many of which have attracted bumper attendances in 2023.

However, the year is not over yet, and in many ways the best is still to come as heritage railways are busy displaying their Christmas trees and lights for festive fun.

Now is a crucial time for heritage lines to make money before the quieter months, with many trains full of excited children (and adults). Being a lineside photographer, it is also a time when I get excited too. With many trains in operation as the colder weather arrives, there can be some spectacular photographic opportunities.

We all have different reasons for why we take pictures of trains. For some, it might be a record of a great day out, and for others, it might be for more creative reasons, to capture the drama and atmosphere that steam creates.

For me, our heritage movement is a portal into our past. It is timeless scenes of the golden age of rail travel that I try to capture, which constantly becomes a bigger challenge as we head deeper into the 21st century.

Our festive trains have evolved over the years. Once, it was all about the man with the beard in the red coat, and all trains were known as Santa specials, but now they come in many varieties, such as 'Elf Explorer' or 'Train of Lights', and more Americanised with the 'Polar Express'... but I won't open that can of worms. Father Christmas does seem to take more of a backseat from the limelight in the marketing of the festive season trains these days.

With many types of headboards and decorations, it adds to the challenge in creating the images I like to take. This is where I can make the most of the time of year.

Making the most of the light

With the shortest day of the year, falling on December 22 for 2023, the sun seems to

GWR 2-6-2T No. 5553 back in steam on Peak Rail on Christmas Eve 2022.

struggle to get into the sky. Low sun and long shadows can help hide what you don't want to see. The angle of the sun can also create other challenges, as less of the landscape will be lit where months earlier, the sun would blaze down from high on a cutting or passing a nearby wood.

This means you could find that one of your favourite locations is all in the dark. This factor means extra planning, and location scouting could be required to ensure the train sees the light – but you will find the effort is well-rewarded.

For much of the year, the sun is well into the sky when the trains operate, but with the shorter days of December, you can capture scenes at sunrise and sunset. There are great opportunities for silhouettes at the right locations, and the chance to photograph engines getting ready in the cold morning air as the sun rises. These days, many sheds don't offer the same access as they used to, but there can be some opportunities, such as from the platforms at Bridgnorth and Bewdley with good views of the shed or servicing area from a place of safety.

Heritage railways are not the only place to photograph festive steam; there can be an increase in action on the main line, with charters to destinations like York or Chester for Christmas markets. With most main line locomotives undergoing maintenance through the winter months, December can be one of the few opportunities to see steam working hard on a cold morning, with the exhaust trailing across the landscape.

Once the last fire is dropped on the eve of the big day itself, that does not mean it is all over. From Boxing Day to the new year, railways run trains mainly known as Mince Pie specials. Some will run right through and others on selected days, so it is worth finding out beforehand to avoid a wasted journey. It can be a strange time when no one knows what day of the week it is, but it is a great chance to burn off some of that Christmas Day turkey!

Two years that really stand out for post-Christmas photography were 2000 and 2014,

Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells* at Summerseat on the East Lancashire Railway on December 11, 2022.

USATC 2-8-0 No. 5197 heads the 'Polar Express' on the Churnet Valley Railway on December 16, 2022.

Andrews House welcomes Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 7098 of 1943 No. 49 as it arrives with a Boxing Day service on the Tanfield Railway last year.

with sun and snow all week up to January. In both years, I also did photographic charters at the Foxfield Railway. Foxfield Bank is dramatic at anytime of year but with a thick covering of snow, it was out of this world.

Of course, we are at the mercy of the great British weather: it is not even possible to guarantee a sunny weekend in summer, let alone December. But with some patience and planning on where to go, the results can be sprinkled with festive magic.

Christmas crackers

One of my most memorable was Christmas Eve 2010. There were two LMS 'Black Fives' running on the East Lancashire Railway, with some very cold weather. The sky was clear blue, and a thick covering of snow lay all across the landscape. It was as Christmassy as it gets.

The festive season of 2022 was also a great time for photography, with lots of cold blue skies and an added helping of snow. It was the first Christmas that really felt like things were back to normal again after the Covid-19 pandemic turned our lives upside down. Railways were free to operate with no restrictions, making it much easier to provide a full service.

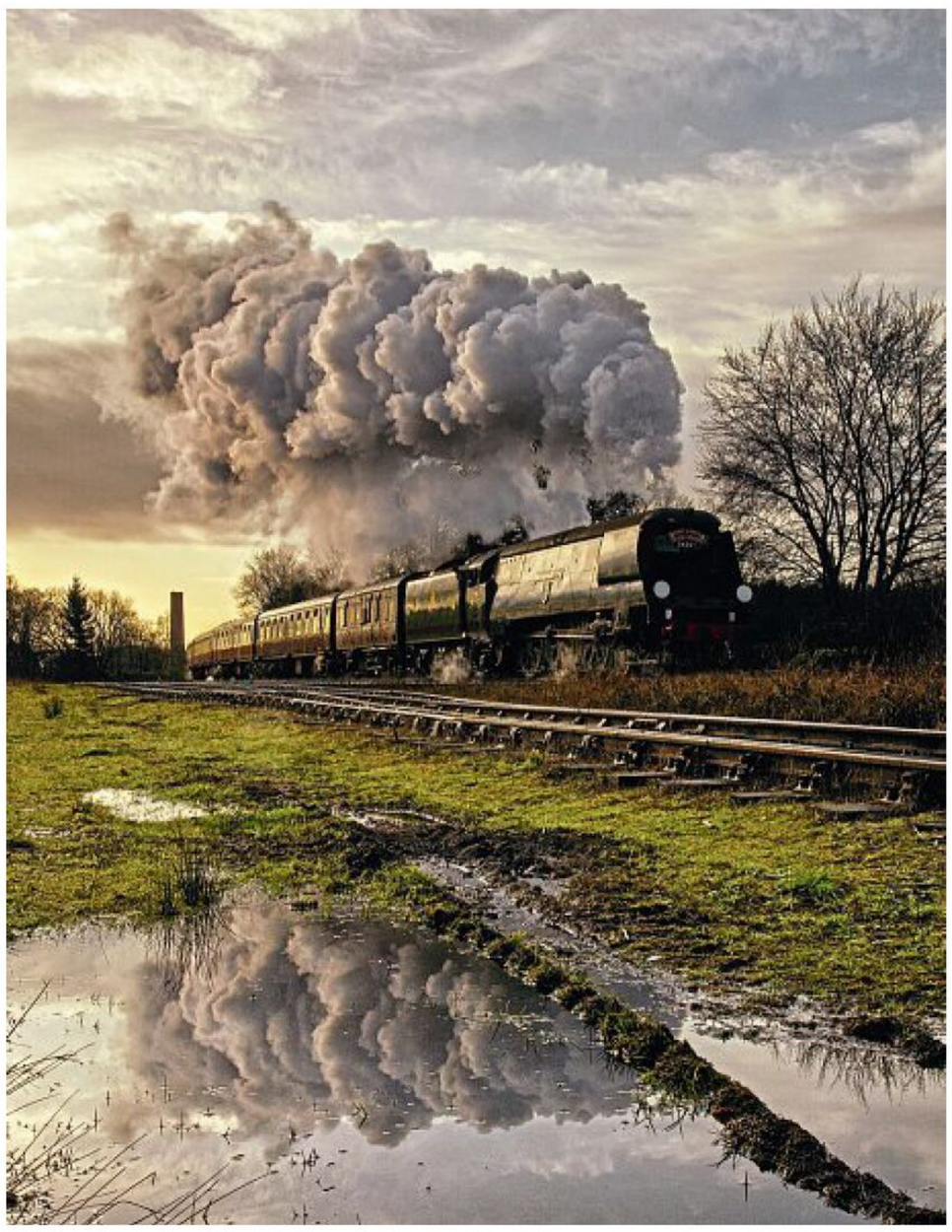
My steam action started on November 19 with 'The Christmas Cheshireman'. The weather in the west could not have been better for the sight of LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* on an all-maroon rake, a sight not seen on the Welsh Marshes since March 1994. I tried a location I'd not done before, which took some finding – a lovely open stretch of embankment on the climb out of Shrewsbury – and with such a great sight, it felt like Christmas had come early! But there was much more to follow.

A week later, on November 26, I had the chance for some steam on my doorstep as LMS Princess Coronation 4-6-2 No. 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* was due through my hometown of Chesterfield with 'The Yorkshire Yuletide Express'. It was windy and unsettled, which deterred me from travelling too far, so the nearest footbridge just outside Chesterfield station would do. To my surprise, the sun broke through the fast-moving clouds to illuminate the exhaust. Standing on the wrong side of the line for the unexpected sun, it gave some moody images.

For me, Christmas does not really start until December, and on the 3rd I photographed my first heritage line Santa special, at the East Lancashire Railway. The boiler ticket of Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells* was coming to an end, so it was a good chance to get some final, memorable images of this impressive locomotive which has always delivered in front of the camera. The purchase of the locomotive by the ELR was completed in March 2019 and it was taken out of service in January, returning to traffic in September following the rapid completion of its 10-yearly overhaul.

Last December was also a rare opportunity to photograph LNWR 'Coal Tank' 0-6-2T No. 1054 on an ELR festive train before it moved back to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, where larger engines are favoured more on their December trains.

The following Saturday saw more good sunshine in the West Midlands, with Tysley Locomotive Works flagship WR 4-6-0



Reflections of West Country 4-6-2 No. No. 34092 *City of Wells* at Ramsbottom on the East Lancashire Railway on December 21, 2022.

LMS 4-6-2 No. 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* powers through Chesterfield on an icy November 26, 2022.

B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower* heads 'The Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker' through Accrington on December 21 last year.

Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 2F 0-6-0 No. 52044 steams through Burrs on December 11, 2022.

No. 7029 *Clun Castle* running on the 'Polar Express' south from Birmingham Moor Street. It might only be a short main line run, but the sound coming through the station at Tyseley was memorable. Luckily, we stayed within a pocket of clear blue sky, but further west the storm clouds gathered, and snow was falling!

The next day, I checked the webcams at the ELR and realised I had to get there asap – despite the forecast of a dull day (don't believe the weatherman), the sun shining on the snow gave us a day to remember. As well as more action from *City of Wells,* there was a chance to capture another vintage KWVR locomotive, Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 2F 0-6-0 No. 52044.

It was so cold that the snow lingered for another week and repeated frosts froze over ponds and canals. The following Friday, I captured some of these icy scenes at the Churnet Valley Railway, which was running the 'Polar Express'. This line is in a great position for recreating the atmosphere of the hit film of the same name with a ready-made USA locomotive, S160 2-8-0 No. 5197. It was facing east, a rare sight in recent years, and there were new locations possible as the train left Cheddleton for Consall.

The following Wednesday, December 21, saw my final visit of the year to the ELR, just in time to capture GWR 0-6-2T No. 5643 before its boiler ticket ran out. However, the main reason I was in the area was for some main line action over the other side of neighbouring hills, with B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower* making a rare venture north working 'The Pennine Moors Christmas Cracker' – and it would climb over Copy Pit eastbound.

The weather at Gregson Lane was stunning and the B1 worked hard heading for Blackburn. I knew that the low winter sun would not reach the line on the main climb to Copy Pit, so I opted for Accrington, a place I had not visited before but knew that thhere was a viaduct right through the middle surrounded by terrace houses, well in keeping with the steam age feel.

Waiting on an old footbridge just after the viaduct, I watched in horror as the train crawled across very slowly with no exhaust, and even continued coming off the viaduct. The closer the train came, I knew I was running out of time for a decent shot and was muttering under my breath 'come on, come on'. Then, just in time, *Mayflower* opened up for the hard climb out of Accrington and I went home very happy indeed.

I would see one more Santa special, on my local line just over the hill, on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. GWR prairie No. 5553 was seeing its first Christmas back in steam at Peak Rail. The sun stayed out just long enough for the last train of the day, and I then made

An East Lancashire Railway festive service is taken past Ewood by Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 2F 0-6-0 No. 52044 on December 11, 2022.

the short journey home thinking about all the food and presents to come.

With mild, wet weather due to spoil the end of the year, I had one last chance for some festive steam – and there would be the added magic of a dusting of localised snow and ice, which made the last couple of miles driving a little challenging! On Boxing Day, I went north for the Tanfield Railway's Mince Pie specials. I bought a day ticket online a few days earlier with the plan to ride some industrial action up the grade, but the conditions were so good for photography that I ended up spending all day lineside.

With the trains stopping at Causey Arch, it gave me a chance to chase the trains, which had the added bonus of burning off some of the turkey from the day before.

In action was Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 7098 of 1943 No. 49. Shooting south all day, the exhaust would catch the light beautifully, and as the sun started to sink into the horizon, No. 49 turned to gold as it left East Tanfield. What a fitting end to my year's steam photography, with some of the best highlights at the end of the year.

This December, forget the Christmas shopping and capture some festive steam instead. HR

In action at Bury on the East Lancashire Railway on an icy December 3, 2022, is visiting LNWR 0-6-2 'Coal Tank' No. 1054.

Getting steam up in the Marley Hill yard on Boxing Day 2022 is RSH Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 49.

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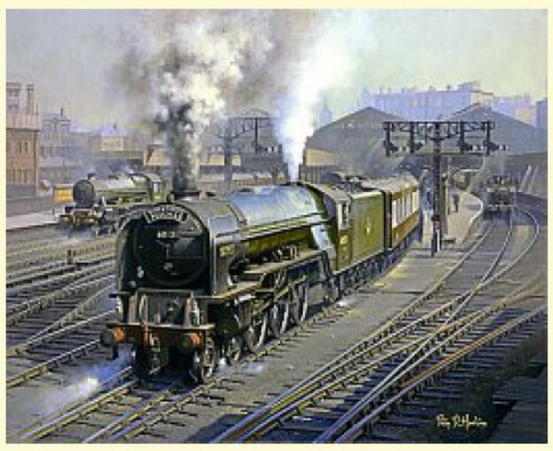

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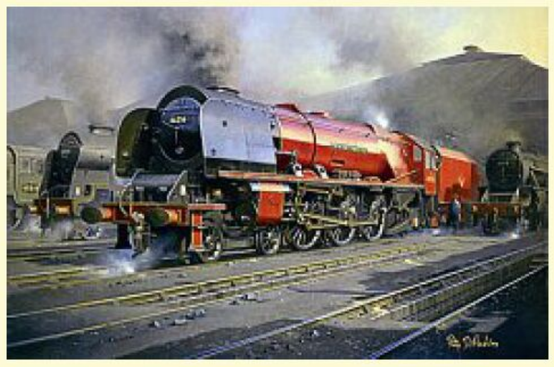

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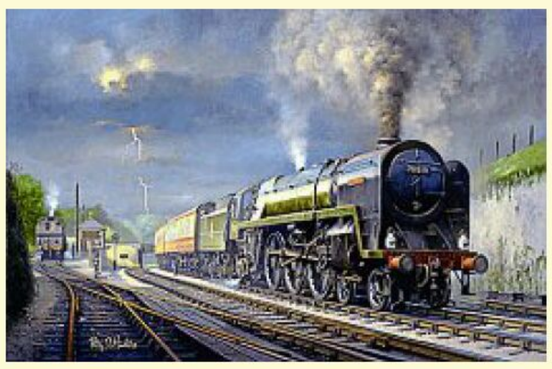

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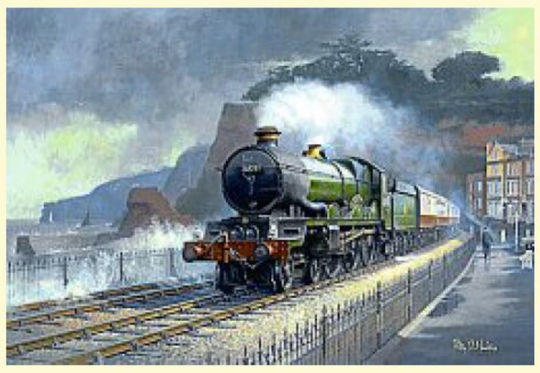

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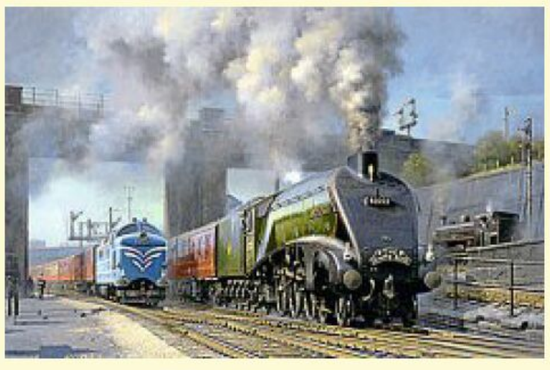

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2024 'Footplate' Calendar

'Winter Scotsman'

'Arriving At Snow Hill'

Another year and another fabulous collection from the original paintings by Philip D. Hawkins FGRA. Titles included are:- 'Pacific At New Street', 'Passing Through Beaconsfield', 'Summer Lightning', 'On The Banks Of The Torridge', 'Arriving At Snow Hill' & 'Winter Scotsman'.

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COTSWOLD COMEBACK DELIGHTS THE CROWDS!

The return to gala traffic of the oldest working GWR-built locomotive was among the highlights of the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's October 28/29 Autumn Showcase, when an intensive service highlighted what the line has to offer both the enthusiast and the general public, reports **John Titlow** in words and pictures.

The title Autumn Showcase did exactly what it suggested. All of the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's operational steam locomotives and several of the diesel fleet were out hauling either freight or seven-coach passenger trains.

A surprise late addition was the appearance of Churchward 2-8-0 No. 2807 on the Sunday, when it took over the duties of WR 4-6-0 No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall*. It was No. 2807's first official passenger workings at a gala since its previous boiler ticket ran out in 2020, since when it has undergone a heavy overhaul and, as reported last issue, returned to steam on September 21.

The 2800 class was designed for long-distance heavy freight working and examples were found throughout the GWR system and frequently seen on what is now the Broadway to Cheltenham Racecourse heritage line. Built at Swindon in 1905, No. 2807 is owned by Cotswold Steam Preservation Limited and is the oldest-surviving GWR-built locomotive in working order. There are only two older Swindon-built locomotives, No. 3717 *City of Truro* from 1903 and Dean Goods No. 2516 from 1897, both are displayed at STEAM – Museum of the GWR Railway in Swindon, and are thought unlikely to steam again.

No. 2807 was on display in the car park at Toddington for footplate visits on the Saturday, before it swapped places with No. 7903 the Sunday.

Steam locomotives working on both passenger and goods trains on the two days were 1941-built Merchant Navy 4-6-2 No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S.N. Co.* and Collett 4-6-0 No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor,* built at Swindon in 1950. Both performed on passenger and goods trains.

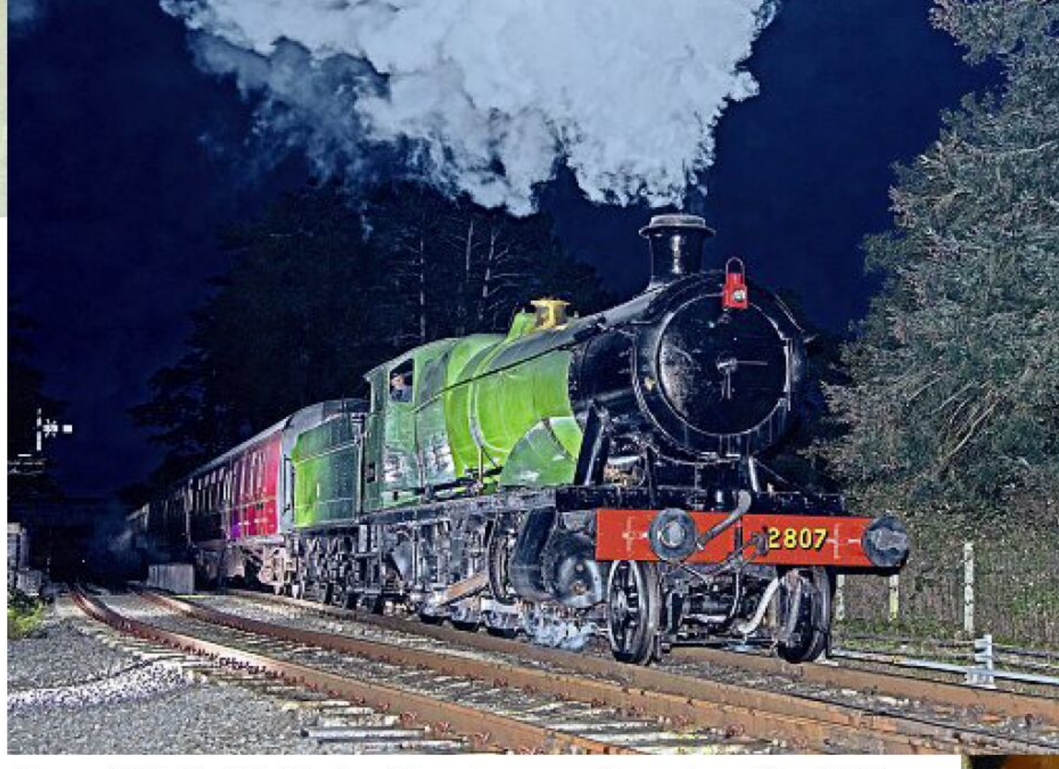
The event was also a showcase for modern traction, with diesels not only hauling their own trains but often providing banking duties. Saturday was the day for the Class 47 Co-Co Type 4 Diesel Electrics built by Brush Electrical in Loughborough, No. 47376 (D1895) in 1965 and No. 47105 (D1693) in 1963. Both worked passenger trains, while No. 47105 also did one run on the goods from Cheltenham Racecourse to Toddington.

Also working on the Saturday on passenger duties was Class 24 Bo-Bo No. 5081 (24081), a Sulzer Type 2 built by BR Crewe in 1960.

All changed the following day when Class 37 Co-Co 37215 (D6915) English Electric Type 3, built at Newton-le-Willows in 1963, was in operation. It did one run from Toddington to Cheltenham Racecourse with a freight in the morning before changing to passenger duties.

Class 20 Bo-Bo 20137 (D8137), built by English Electric at Newton-le-Willows in 1966, and green Cloas 37 Co-Co D6948 (37248) English Electric Type 3, built at Newton-le-Willows in 1964, also provided motive power hauling passenger trains. The line's Class 117 DMU, built by Pressed Steel,

Merchant Navy 4-6-2 No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S.N. Co.* exits Greet tunnel with the freight from Broadway to Cheltenham on October 29. Its Southern route indicators denote routes; Hither Green Sidings and Feltham via Brentford also Plumstead and Feltham via Brentford.



Above: With its third train of the day, recently restored No. 2807 leaves Broadway on October 29.

Left: With the 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard, GWR 4-6-0 No. 7820 departs Winchcombe on October 29.

Above: GWR 2-8-0 No. 7820 catches the early morning sun at Toddington shed.

Right: Heading for Cheltenham Racecourse, No. 2807 departs from Gotherington.

Linwood, in 1959, was very busy over the weekend, running shuttles and full line trains.

Access all areas

Normally off limits, both the locomotive shed at Toddington and carriage shed at Winchcombe were open for inspection. Inside the locomotive shed, progress on the second 2800, No 2874, owned by the 2874 Trust and being restored from Barry scrapyard condition, could be seen. Also, 2884 class No. 3850 was on view as a rolling chassis, its tender resplendent in black. The chassis is expected to be despatched soon to Riley & Son for the boiler to be refitted. Also on display was Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1976 of 1939, which is privately owned and having a new boiler built. Locomotive owners had their own stands, including the team restoring BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76077.

The 2ft gauge Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway was in steam, using Hunslet 0-4-2T No. 2075 of 1940 *Chaka's Kraal No. 6*.

GW/R spokesman Ian Crowder said: "This really was a wonderful occasion to showcase all that's best about the GW/R.

"The mixture of steam and diesel has great appeal, and the attraction of 'behind the scenes' visits and brake van and footplate rides provided the opportunity to immerse visitors in the railway and help give and understanding of how it all works.

"Trains were well-loaded and there was an almost carnival atmosphere. There's no doubt that it was hugely enjoyed by both volunteers and visitors.

"Given the uncertain weather of late, the clouds cleared to provide sunshine both on the Saturday and Sunday. Sunshine, steam and diesel in the glorious autumnal Cotswold countryside... if that isn't the perfect combination, I don't know what is!"

"The small gala committee team did a wonderful job," Ian added. "Now they are putting their minds to the May 24-26 Cotswold Festival of Steam – back to its former regular spot of the late bank holiday weekend."

Plans are already underway for next year's Autumn Showcase, which will take place on October 26/27.

The line's Santa services start on November 25 and run on weekends until December 23, and also midweek on December 20, 21 and 22. Several trains are already sold out.

Dinmore Manor will visit to the South Devon Railway for its 'Polar Express' and other Santa trains, exchanging places with GWR 2-6-2T No. 5526, which will again work the GW/R Santa and post-Christmas trains.

At Buckfastleigh, No. 7820 will take part in the December 31-January 2 Mince Pies, Manor and More winter steam gala, alongside the home fleet.

Meanwhile, at the G/WR, steam-hauled Mince Pie specials start on December 27, and a daily two-train timetable will run until January 1. For further details, visit www.gwsr.com/your-visit/timetables HR

Class 20 No. 20137 is about to enter Greet Tunnel heading for Winchcombe on October 29.

Chaka's Kraal No. 6 returns its train to Toddington on the narrow gauge line.

HERITAGE RAILWAY
THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Newly-overhauled GWR Churchward 2-8-0 No. 2807 departs Winchcombe, passing through a Cotswold landscape of rich autumn hues on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway on October 29. JOHN TITLOW

2807

Tornado now all set for first test runs before Christmas

By Robin Jones

PEPPERCORN A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* was booked to undergo test runs at the Rail Innovation and Development Centre at Melton Mowbray before Christmas at the conclusion of its overhaul, which has cost more than £500,000.

Tornado will then return to operation both on the main line and heritage railways in the spring.

The A1's boiler was moved from Darlington Locomotive Works to Locomotive Maintenance Services (LMS) in Loughborough on September 26 and was immediately reunited with the frames.

On arrival, the ashpan was fitted beneath the firebox and it was lifted as one onto the frames. Minor adjustments were needed to best position the boiler. Having been steamed to appreciate expansion, the boiler was then secured on the frames.

To ensure that all clearances were understood, the boiler was steamed outside the LMS works during October 14/15. The locomotive was then moved inside to enable further reinstatement of pipework and fittings. The smokebox has since been sealed and bolted down to the saddle.

Steaming again: A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* outside the Locomotive Maintenance Services works in Loughborough. A1SLT

The overhaul team then focused on connecting the pipework and reinstalling the footplate fittings and associated connections.

More work

Towards the end of October, the brick arch formers were assembled, and the concrete cast was put in situ. The arch is now ready for service.

However, it was discovered that the newly-fitted take-off for the second turbo generator, which shuts off steam direct from the boiler, fouled the cladding and will need adjustment. The injector clacks also require lapping to improve their seating.

During the overhaul, the engine has been fitted with European Train Control System (ETCS) equipment, moving signalling from the lineside into the locomotive's cab. The East Coast Digital Programme requires all trains running between King's Cross and Peterborough to have the capability in the future and *Tornado* is the first steam locomotive to be fitted with this technology.

Tornado was scheduled to be taken to the RIDC (formerly known as the Old Dalby test track) for running-in and ETCS testing prior to Christmas.

Its overhaul began in January 2022, after the locomotive had clocked up more than 130,000 miles. When withdrawn from service, *Tornado* was no longer the 'youngest' A1, as it had overtaken No. 60153 *Flamboyant* for its time in traffic.

The overhaul is the most intense maintenance period that the A1 has undergone since it was completed in August 2008 at a cost of £3 million. During this time, every aspect of the engine has been assessed, tested, and refurbished or replaced as necessary, from the frames and boiler to the ashpan and tender, meaning that the engine will be in top condition on its return to traffic.

So far, in addition to the cost of the overhaul, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust has lost income anticipated from earnings running trains during its two-year absence and has appealed to supports for donations as an essential part in the locomotive's journey back to steam.

To donate and to find out more, visit www.a1steam.com

Fears raised for future of historic GWR signalbox

CONCERNS about the deteriorating condition of the Grade II*-listed GER signalbox at Thetford station, on the Breckland Line between Cambridge and Norwich, have been sounded.

Thetford Town Council raised the concerns at a recent meeting that the 1883-built 'box, one of only six GER Type 4 examples left, was falling into disrepair, with boarded-up windows and peeling paint.

Historic England said that the' box – which retains the decoration to the operating floor, as well as the original 1883 McKenzie & Holland lever frame – is an important element in one of the finest surviving station complexes in East Anglia.

A Network Rail spokesman said it was aware of the council's concerns, adding: "We have a schedule of inspections, repairs and renewals to make sure the fabric of the building is maintained and address any safety issues that may arise which may impact the operational railway, which is our main priority."

Help block Liverpool Street redevelopment proposal

GRIFF Rhys Jones OBE, the comedian, writer, actor and TV presenter, has appealed to the public to donate to the Victorian Society's campaign to stop the partial demolition of London's Liverpool Street station, saying if it goes ahead, "no listed building is safe."

The plan by Network Rail, developer Sellar and rail network operator MTR, which has just been published after months of delays, include demolishing much of the listed sympathetic 20th-century trainshed that closely matches the Victorian original, severing the link between the two listed Victorian buildings, and cantilevering a 21-storey tower above the Grade II*-listed former Great Eastern Hotel and station, as reported in issue 303.

Griff, who is president of the Liverpool Street Station Campaign (LISSCA) and the Victorian Society, said: "It is unacceptable that Network Rail has ignored the 22,363 people who have signed the petition against the plan and the experts in the heritage and architecture sectors who say not to do this.

"These plans are insensitive, unnecessary, and traduce a famous gateway to London, a listed working part of our history. I know all the heritage bodies combined are appalled by the precedent it would set. It must be rejected. We will fight to ensure that it is. I urge the public to donate to our fundraiser to ensure we can match the developer's deep pockets."

'Terrible precedent'

A LISSCA statement said: "The new tower would set a terrible precedent for the treatment of listed buildings, conservation areas, Network Rail's care for London's great termini, and views of St Paul's Cathedral."

A Historic England statement said: "The architectural harmony and heritage significance achieved by the last redevelopment would be destroyed, and the natural light over the concourse lost.

"The proposed tall buildings above are of grossly disproportionate scale and would trample on the station and the former Great Eastern Hotel, which is now listed at Grade II in recognition of its role as an impressive station frontage and for its lavish interiors."

LISSCA will ask Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to 'call in' the proposal and hold a public inquiry.

A public meeting about the plans was held at Bishopsgate Institute in London on November 21. As we closed for press, nearly £15,000 had been raised for a fund to cover the legal costs of fighting the plan. To donate, visit https://justgiving.com/campaign/savelivstreet

To formally object, visit www.planning2.cityoflondon.gov.uk and input the planning reference 23/00453/FULEIA

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LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* enters Maidstone East station after exiting Week Street Tunnel with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Armistice Kentish Belle' on November 11. ROBIN COOMBES

Wintry Cumbrian offerings start off 2024 tour programme for RTC

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company's first trip for 2024 is 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' on Saturday, January 27.

Starting from Euston behind a Class 86 electric locomotive, the train will be hauled north along the West Coast Main Line to pick up passengers at Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Rugby, Nuneaton, Crewe, and Preston. Continuing through Lancaster to Carnforth, the locomotive will then be changed for steam from the West Coast Railways Carnforth pool.

Heading north once again, the train will pass through Penrith and on to the destination of Carlisle. There will be about two hours for passengers to explore the city before the return trip, this time via the Settle and Carlisle line. After a brief water stop at Appleby, the locomotive will make the climb to Ais Gill summit, then on to Settle, passing over the famous Ribblehead Viaduct.

At Settle, the locomotive will once again take on water before heading to Hellifield, Clitheroe, and Preston to not only drop off the first passengers, but to also say goodbye to steam traction in favour of the Class 86 once again. The tour will then continue to Crewe, via Wigan and Warrington, and set down passengers en route back to London.

'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' will also run on Saturday, February 10, this time departing steam-hauled from Manchester Victoria.

Heading to Bolton to collect more passengers, the train then takes the West Coast Main Line north to Preston for the final pick-up. As before, the train will take the route via Shap and Penrith to Carlisle for a stop of two-and-a-half hours. The return journey to Manchester is planned to be via Settle and Hellifield to Preston, where the steam locomotive will be replaced with a diesel to take passengers back home.

Two more tours on Saturdays, February 17 and March 16 follow the same format at the first trip. Leaving Euston behind a Class 86, the excursion is planned to head north, picking up passengers en route to Carnforth for a swap of locomotive to steam traction. The train will then continue to Carlisle for a break of about two hours, the return journey being via the Settle and Carlisle line.

Tickets for each of these tours are available in premier dining, first class or standard class. For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Festive Midland freight lines for Pathfinder excursion

PATHFINDER Tours has announced a pre-Christmas bash to Midland freight lines and locations under the title of 'The Festive Midland-Ian' on Saturday, December 16.

Starting from Gloucester with two Class 60s in top-and-tail formation, the train will head to Cheltenham Spa, Worcester Shrub Hill, Stourbridge Junction, and Birmingham Snow Hill to collect passengers. After leaving Birmingham, the tour hopes to pass Small Health goods for Caledonia Yard, then back to Tyseley Up through sidings. After an hour's break at Banbury, the train will hopefully venture up the Kineton branch to the Network Rail limit, before returning to Leamington Spa, then Hatton Down Good Loop, Dorridge Up and Down Goods Loop, Bordesley Down goods loop and non-stop through Birmingham New Street.

The next planned destination is Wolverhampton Logistics Centre, then Dudley Port Up goods, Bescot Stadium, Bushbury Down goods loop, Stafford RMT and Oxley chord, before returning to Wolverhampton and Bescot on route back to Birmingham New Street for the first set down point of passengers.

The title of the trip is a nod towards Ian Loveday's contribution to the enthusiast excursions he devises for Pathfinder, including access to heavily-sought after lines.

Mayflower planned for Steam Dreams 'Spirit of Christmas' evening trip

STEAM Dreams is offering customers the chance to join an evening soiree on Wednesday, December 20 behind B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower*.

The circular tour is planned to start from Paddington at 5.15pm, where guests will be welcomed aboard the train and escorted to their seats in either Pullman dining, first class, or premium standard class.

New for this year is the chance to purchase a ticket for The Helicon Club, where guests can start the trip with champagne and canapés and end their evening with coffee, all in the luxury of the private Hippocrene Bar on board the train. Tickets for this experience include Pullman dining and allow for the added extras inside the bar car. Pullman dining passengers will be welcomed on board the Mk.1 Pullman cars with champagne and canapés before partaking in a four-course meal. First class and premium standard class passengers will be seated in festively decorated 1960s carriages.

The trip returns to Paddington at 10.15pm. To book, visit www.steamdreams.co.uk

‘The Jacobite’ ends the season on a high

By Rodney Towers and Robin Jones

WEST Coast Railways’‘The Jacobite’ season has ended on a positive note, despite an interruption by the Office of Rail and Road at the start of the peak period.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 309, the ORR imposed a prohibition notice on the West Highland Extension daily summer service, a plank of the local tourist economy, on July 15 – six days after ORR inspectors found issues with the hinged doors on the BR Mk.1 carriages. A second ORR inspection of proposed safety arrangements for ‘The Jacobite’ led to the issue of a temporary exemption certificate.

A West Coast Railways spokesman said: “Bookings remained very good throughout the season, with most days sold out in advance.

“The ORR intervention didn’t help, but bookings rapidly recovered as soon as the service recommenced running.”

The locomotives used for the 2023 season were Ian Riley’s LMS ‘Black Five’ Nos. 44871, 45212 and 45407.

On Monday, October 30, ‘The Jacobite’ stock made its end-of-season return home, steam-hauled and double-headed from Tom Na Faire Depot, Fort William, to West Coast’s Carnforth bases as usual. This 15-hour main line path has become one of those ‘must’ annual empty coach stock movements to be seen somewhere. Suitable locations depend on both the weather and the shorter daylight hours at this time of the year. If the weather is favourable, County March Summit, on the border of Argyll & Stirling, is one of the more stunning spots to be.

Taking the A82 from Crianlarich to Fort William, after a right turn at Tyndrum, and a one-and-a-half-mile climb, the road tops out with a most spectacular view to the north, dominated by the iconic shaped 3260ft Beinn Dorain.

The road north follows the railway closely for much of the ascent. There is limited parking at the top but no sign to say this is a summit, or even has a name. Yet on the railway, this is County March Summit of 1024 feet. For steam locomotive footplate crews, they know the summit only too well because of the heavy work they must do while working trains up the five-mile approaches on either side.

From this vantage point, the train can first be seen two to three miles away after departing Bridge of Orchy, then steaming across the southern slopes of Beinn Dorain, before entering the wide but hidden sweep around the horseshoe bend.

The train reappears around the western flanks of Beinn Odhar, headed this year by Nos. 44871 and 45407, here in their home territory element as they storm the final ascent to the summit.

An unlikely name for a railway summit anywhere; in Scotland it sounds even more unusual and yet there are two of them! The more southerly summit on the West Highland Line is the better known not for its name, but more certainly for the spectacular views its location offers. The other summit is on the Far North Line but is of lower altitude and at a remote location where the line traverses open moorland.

County March makes such an unusual combination of two words that they invite questions. Doug Carmichael, chairman of the Friends of The West Highland Lines, suggested that “March, used in this sense, probably originates from medieval terminology, when March was used to describe a border or boundary.” Such suggestion is supported if we go even further back in history to where the term ‘March of Wales’ is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086.

David Crossley, also a Friends member, said: “In historical terms, the difference between March and County is that March is a region at a frontier governed by a Marquess, while County is the land ruled by a Count or a Countess.”

That invites one further question: was County March perhaps therefore the consequence of some romantic arrangement between a Count and a Marchioness?

Once over the summit, there is a long run down to Crianlarich where the train halts to allow service trains to pass, exchange tokens for these long sections of single-track working, and take on water. After some 50-60 minutes in Crianlarich, the train commences a short climb from the station before emerging into open country where the locomotives can be seen working hard as the track levels out before falling away through scenic Glen Falloch.

The weather, visibility, and light were all good this year, but to have such a combination can often prove very disappointing.

Having left Tom Na Faire Depot just after 9am, the train was on time at midday at Crianlarich. While the train arrived at Craigendoran Junction about 30 minutes behind schedule, it went on to reach Beattock Summit on time at 6.50pm. After being cleared to leave Beattock at about 50 minutes early, the train was then held at Lockerbie for one hour 20 minutes for scheduled pathing reasons,

‘Black Five’ Nos. 44871 and 45407 cresting County March Summit southbound with ‘The Jacobite’ stock on October 30.
RODNEY TOWERS

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LMS 'Black Five' Nos.44871 and 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier* rounding the western flanks of Beinn Odhar on the climb to County March Summit on October 30. RODNEY TOWERS

before finally reaching Carnforth and completing all movements an hour early, just after midnight!

West Coast Railway's careful preparations and operational performance were being well achieved within the pathing schedules and requirements of Network Rail. Complications can, of course, arise over such a long distance on main lines but this home run was a good one.

Meanwhile, 2023 has been the busiest ever year for the West Highland Extensions' landmark Glenfinnan Viaduct, world-famous for appearing in the Harry Potter films, and visitors eager to glimpse and photograph 'The Jacobite' crossing it.

Emily Bryce, the National Trust for Scotland's operations manager for Glenfinnan, said: "Our visitor centre has welcomed almost 500,000 people since January, a massive 46% up on 2022 and 9% up on our previous busiest year in 2019."

➜ The 2024 'The Jacobite' season will be virtually the same dates as 2023; Easter until the end of October. For more details, visit https://westcoastrailways.co.uk

The last working of 'The Jacobite' for 2023: 'Black Five' No. 44871 emerges from Beasdale Tunnel No. 3 into the superb autumnal golden colours of the landscape on October 27. DAVE COLLIER

The Class 125 Midland Pullman HST passes Offord Cluny on a 'Whitby Jet' excursion from Potters Bar to Whitby on November 11. BEN SCOTT

Festive week to Valentine's Day covered by UK Railtours excursions

By Tim Hobman

UK Railtours has announced a tour to fill the gap between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Under the title of 'Another Awkward Week Adventure', the tour, like ones of previous years, is planned to start from Peterborough on Saturday, December 30, with the motive power of two Class 66s courtesy of DB Cargo.

Heading south on the East Coast Main Line, the tour will pick up additional passengers at Huntingdon, Stevenage, Potters Bar and Finsbury Park, before heading across London to the final pick-up at Staines.

From Staines, the tour is expected to take in some rare metals on route to Eastleigh for the first set-down of passengers who have booked one of the off-train options. These will be taken by coach to Beaulieu for three hours to explore all of the attractions there, which include the National Motor Museum, palace and gardens.

Passengers who decide to stay on the train after leaving Eastleigh will be transported to Southampton Docks, where it is hoped that the tour will take in some non-passenger track comprising of Eastern Docks, the Up Yard reception and Western Docks, although these will be subject to track inspection and condition on the day. It is also hoped that the railtour will take in some other rare metals to and from Southampton.

Once the docks has been fully explored, the train will return to Eastleigh for a short break of about an hour while the stock is cleaned and serviced and the passengers from Beaulieu rejoin the train.

The return journey is planned to be via Romsey, Laverstock Loop, Basingstoke and Reading, before setting down passengers at their pick-up stations en route back to Peterborough.

Tickets are available in standard class, first class non-dining and first class dining, with a small supplement for those visiting Beaulieu Motor Museum and Palace House.

UK Railtours has also announced its first offering of 2024 under the title of 'The Sarum Seraph' on Saturday, February 10. Starting from Peterborough and with Valentine's Day in mind, the tour is planned to head for Salisbury for a 90-minute stop.

After Peterborough, passengers can join the train at Huntingdon, Stevenage, Potters Bar or Finsbury Park, before the tour makes its way across London and then west to the destination.

With a relatively short time in Salisbury compared with other tours, the focus for this trip is on enjoying the luxury of the train. Tickets are available for either first class non-dining or first class dining, with those choosing to dine treated to a light breakfast and a decadent six-course dinner on the return journey.

For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

Green plaque honours Thomas Cook

THOMAS Cook (1808-92), the pioneer of package tourism, has been honoured with the unveiling of a green plaque at Loughborough's main line station.

In 1841, Cook hired a train to take people from Leicester to Loughborough for a temperance rally and in doing so created his first package excursion. The plaque was unveiled on October 17 by Leicestershire County Council chairman Dr Kevin Feltham, representatives from East Midlands Railway, Honorary Alderman Mike Jones, and Stan Cramer from Loughborough Baptist Church, who nominated Thomas Cook for the honour.

In 2019, the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland was chosen as the new permanent home of the Thomas Cook archive collection.

New era dawns for historic 184-year-old Wingfield station after renovation

WINGFIELD station has been taken off Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register following the completion of the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust's flagship renovation project.

The station, which was built in in 1836-40 by the North Midland Railway on its line between Derby and Leeds, and which has been hailed as one of the word's first purpose-built passenger stations, was closed in 1967.

Designed by architect Francis Thompson, the structures survived alongside the railway, which is still use as part of the Midland Main Line.

In private ownership, the station fell derelict and in 2019 was compulsorily purchased by Amber Valley Borough Council and passed on to the trust.

The Victorian Society recognised Wingfield station as one of the top 10 most important buildings in the country at risk of being lost forever. Historic England awarded the trust a grant for urgent repairs, including reroofing and the repair of trackside elevation. A £137,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund enabled the renovation to be completed.

Historic Windfield station following restoration. DHBT

In October, an open day was held to allow the public to view the completed restoration.

Historic England regional director Louise Brennan said: "The strength and diversity of our heritage sites across the Midlands is something to be extremely proud of, to care for, and preserve for future generations.

"We hope the register continues to help save more irreplaceable heritage sites and encourages people to care for and enjoy their heritage."

Thompson designed 13 stations for the NMR, of which Wingfield is the only one to survive as built.

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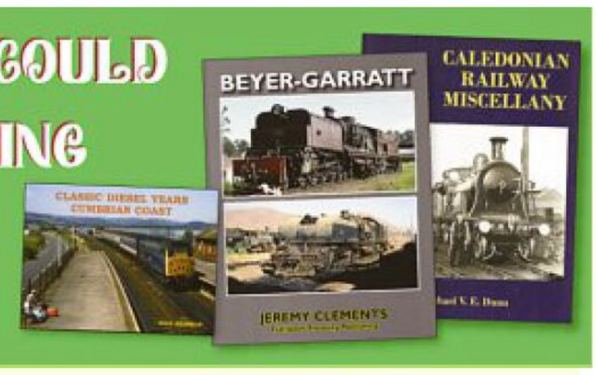
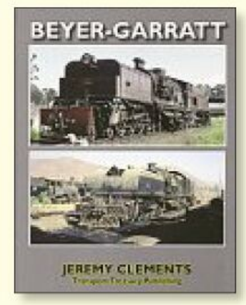
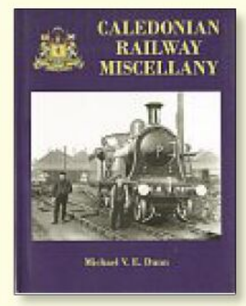


Beyer-Garratt • £56.95



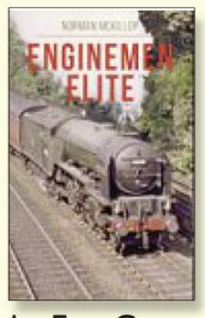
At 353 hardbound A4 format pages, this is a BIG book, and it is absolutely crammed with photographs, both colour and B&W, drawings and some paintings on very largely British built Beyer-Garratt locomotives. It starts by covering the history of both Beyer-Peack and Herbert Garratt, and then covers the development of the Garratt type in eras - before World War 1, between the Wars, and Post World War 2. But within this very simplified description their lies an incredible amount of historical and technical information. It is difficult to imagine that this is not the last word on the Garratt's built by Beyer-Peacock; anyone interested in articulated engines really should have a copy of this book.

Caledonian Railway Miscellany • £47.70



Much praised best-seller of 320 A4 format, gloss paper pages, 339 B&W photos & two colour prints, all devoted to the staff, locomotives, places served, and the like on the Caledonian Railway, from the 1860s up to the Grouping. An intimate portrait of life on the Caledonian, on the footplate, on the tracks, in the stations, or the Company's workshops. The majority of the photographs are pin-sharp, and well worth looking at with a magnifying glass, there is so much detail in them. We have never before come across a book which illustrates so vividly what life was like on the railways of the time - a sheer delight and a book you will return to frequently for many years to come! Hardback.

Enginemen Elite • £ 12.02



During the age of steam on Britain's railways, few engine men picked up the pen to write about their life on the footplate and the engines on which they worked. One who did was Norman McKillop, ('Toram Beg') who whilst still working as an engine driver, contributed to many publications. First published in 1958 *Enginemen Elite* is an account of McKillop's career from 1910 when he joined the North British Railway as a cleaner; in time, based at Haymarket shed, he rose to become a top link driver on the East Coast Main Line. A master and a lover of the locomotiveman's craft, his observations about the engines he drove are fascinating and insightful. This very well written book on life on the footplate has been out of print for many years, and this reprint is to be welcomed - and enjoyed.

Classic Diesel Years - Cumbrian Coast £14.22

Forty-eight full page B&W photos of trains on the Cumbrian Coast Line between Workington and Carnforth, very largely taken in the 1980s and 1990s. The locomotives seen are really 'classic' diesels, on varied freight duties, including rail from Workington and, of course, nuclear products to and from Sellafield. Passenger trains are mainly DMUs, but there are some shots of locomotive hauled trains, and also the TPO train which continued during this period. Landscape format with colour covers.

From the Files - Locomotives that Were & Locomotives that Weren't £33.90

In this lovely book, artist & writer Robin Barnes looks at locomotive development around the world over the years, considering and illustrating some 25 locomotives which actually were built, and a further 14 which never saw the light of day. It is true to say that he is drawn to the unusual and downright strange, as some of the locomotives featured in this book make clear. Very readable historical and technical details are provided for each locomotive or machine illustrated and, in many cases, there are secondary illustrations, be they paintings, technical drawings, or Robin's own photographs. 96 large format (297 mm x 297 mm) pages. 65 paintings and illustrations by the author in a variety of styles, and 28 mainly colour photographs. Hardbound. This is a book which will enlighten and entertain in equal measure for years to come!

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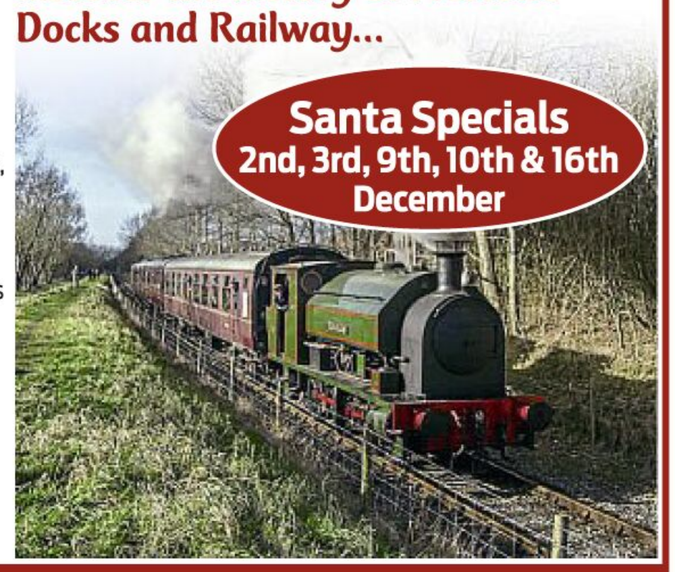

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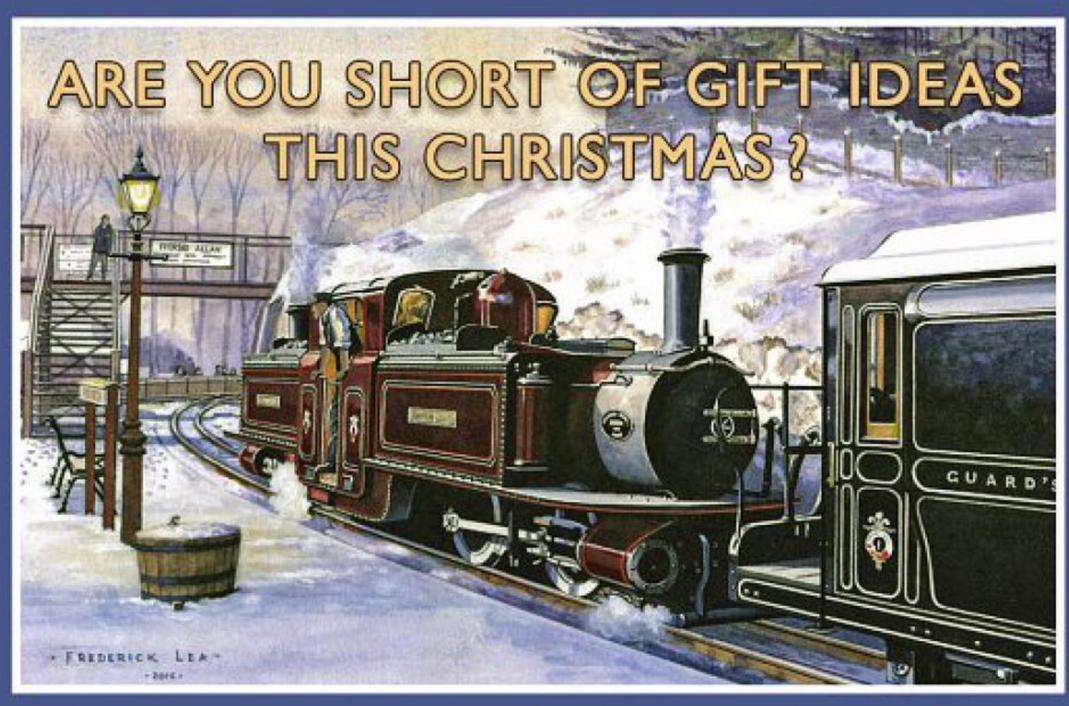

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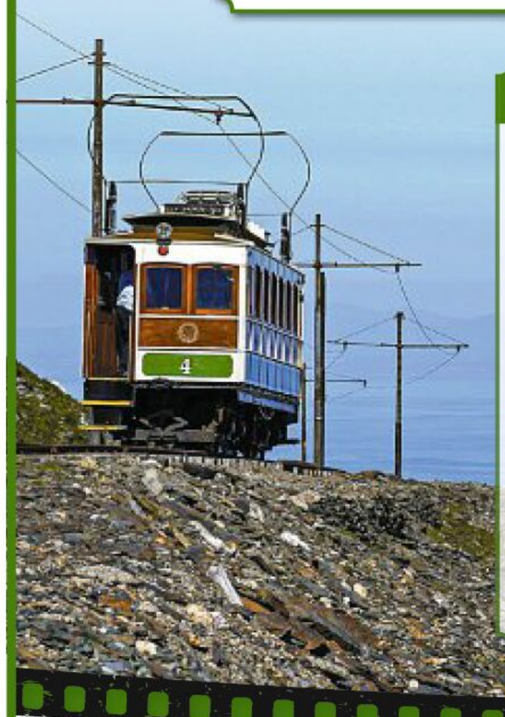

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Celebrations to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Douglas to Port Erin line
- Celebrations to mark the 130th Anniversary of Manx Electric Railway services to Laxey
- Celebrations to mark the 125th Anniversary of Manx Electric Railway services to Ramsey
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November

25 'The Winchester Christmas Excursion'
Burton-on-Trent, Salisbury and return.
Loco: Class 40 40145. PT

25 'The Christmas Cheshireman'
Bristol Temple Meads, Chester and return.
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

25 'The Capital Christmas Express'
Chester, London Paddington and return. Steam-hauled outward only.
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

25 Forth Bridge Circular
Circular tour from Edinburgh Waverley.
Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

26 Edinburgh Christmas Market Weekender (return)
Edinburgh Waverley, London Kings Cross. Diesel-hauled from York.
Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

28 Bath Christmas Market
London Victoria, Bath and return.
Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

28 'The Christmas White Rose'
Birmingham New Street, York and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: Castle Class TBA. VT

29 'The Manchester Christmas Market'
London Euston, Manchester Piccadilly and return.
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

30 'Bath Christmas Pullman'
Ulverston, Bath Spa and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

Thundering out of Barnsmoor Clough tunnel and up the grade to Dove Holes in the beautiful autumn colours of the surrounding Derbyshire countryside, LMS Jubilee No. 45699 *Galatea* (running as No. 45627 *Sierra Leone*) oversaw Railway Touring Company's October 29 'Buxton Spa Express', which had originated at Preston at 10.35am. ALAN WEAVER

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
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

December

1 Bath Christmas Market
Bury St Edmunds, Bath and return. Diesel-hauled between Bury St Edmunds and West London.
Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

2 'The Bath & Bristol Christmas Express'
Three Bridges, Bath Spa, Bristol and return.
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

2 'The Edinburgh Christmas Market'
York, Edinburgh and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

4 'Bath Christmas Pullman'
Newcastle, Bath Spa and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

5 'Great Western Christmas Envoy'
Solihull, Bath Spa, Bristol and return. Steam-hauled from West London (outward).
Loco: TBA. ST

5 'The Merchant Venturer'
Solihull, Bath Spa and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: Castle Class TBA. VT

6 'The Christmas Sussex Belle'
London Victoria, Eastbourne and return. Diesel-hauled from Eastbourne to Hastings (return).
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

8 Shoeburyness to Winchester
Shoeburyness, Winchester and return. Diesel-hauled from West London to Shoeburyness (return).
Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

9 'Edinburgh Christmas Pullman'
Oxford Junction, Edinburgh Waverley and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

9 'The Chester Christmas Cromptons'
Eastleigh, Chester and return.
Locos: 2x Class 33s TBA. PT

9 'The Lincoln Christmas Express'
London King's Cross, Lincoln and return.
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

9 Manchester Christmas Market
London Euston, Manchester Piccadilly and return.
Loco: 2x Class 50s TBA. UKRT

10 'The Christmas Waverley'
York, Carlisle and return.
Loco: 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. RTC

13 'The Worcester Christmas Express'
Cambridge, Worcester and return. Diesel-hauled from Leicester to Cambridge (return).
Loco: 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. RTC

14 'Edinburgh Christmas Pullman'
Cardiff Central, Edinburgh Waverley and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

15 'Santa Steam Express'
Four circular tours departing London Victoria.
Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

16 'The Festive Midland-ian'
Rare track circular tour from Gloucester.
Locos: 2x Class 60/66 TBC. PT

16 'The York Yuletide Express'
Norwich, York and return. Steam-hauled outward only.
Loco: 'Black Five' 44871. RTC

16 'The Edinburgh Christmas Market'
York, Edinburgh and return. Steam hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

16 'The Christmas Golden Arrow'
Gloucester, Canterbury and return. Diesel-hauled to West London (outward).
Loco: TBA. ST

18 'Santa Steam Express'
Four circular tours departing London Victoria.
Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

19 'Edinburgh Christmas Pullman'
Holyhead, Edinburgh Waverley and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

20 'The Spirit of Christmas'
Circular tour from London Paddington.
Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

21 'Santa Steam Express'
Four circular tours from London Victoria.
Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

23 Carols at Sherborne Abbey
Peterborough, Sherborne, Yeovil Junction and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. UKRT

30 'Awkward Week Venturer'
Peterborough, Eastleigh, Southampton Docks and return.
Loco: Class 66 TBC. UKRT

January

27 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'
London Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Steam: TBC.
Electric: Class 86 TBC. RTC

13 'The Ayr Extension'
Crewe, Ayr and return.
Loco: Class 86 or 87 TBC. IC

February

10 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Manchester Victoria, Carlisle and return. Diesel-hauled from Preston (return).
Loco: TBC. RTC

10 'The West Riding Limited'
London King's Cross, Leeds and return.
Loco: Class 90 TBC. IC

10 'The Bath and Gloucester Steam Express'
London Paddington, Gloucester and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: 'Black Five' TBA. RTC

10 'The Sarum Seraph'
Peterborough, Salisbury and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. UKRT

17 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'
London Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).
Loco: Steam: TBC.
Electric: Class 86 TBC. RTC

24 'The White Rose'
London King's Cross, York and return.
Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

Regular Tours

Fris-Suns until Dec 23
'The Polar Express'
Return journey from Birmingham Moor Street.
Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle* or 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*

May 15, 2011, and West Country class No. 34067 *Tangmere* is seen in Bickley cutting with the 10.40am private charter from St Pancras to Canterbury West. DON BENN

WITH FULL REGULATOR

LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW

In his latest column, **Don Benn** looks at a 1961 run from Charing Cross to Ashford via Maidstone East with double-headed 4-4-0s and at the Continental boat trains, including the 'Golden Arrow' with West Country light Pacific No. 34100 *Appledore* in 1961, and Class 71 electric E5009 in 1971.

TABLE ONE: CHARING CROSS TO ASHFORD

Date	April 5, 1961
Train	8.52am Charing Cross to Ashford Ian Allan special
Locos	E1 Class 4-4-0 No. 31019
	T9 Class 4-4-0 No. 30117
Load	10 coaches 340 tons tare, 360 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn
Weather	Cloudy

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Charing Cross	0.00	0.00	00	00	
Waterloo	0.75		04	00	*/sigs stop 0*
London Bridge	1.85		10	00	20/45
New Cross	4.85	12.00	15	00	sigs 30*
Hither Green	7.20		18	30	45/38
Grove Park	9.00		23	15	tsr 15*
Chistlehurst	11.25	23.00	29	00	35/22*
St Mary Cray	12.50		32	00	55
Swanley	16.35	31.00	37	15	30*
Eynesford	19.35		41	15	54
Shoreham	21.60		44	00	45
Otford	23.00		47	15	36/25*
Kemsing	25.95		52	00	32
Wrotham	28.50		56	00	61
West Malling	33.70		60	30	75
East Malling	34.75		61	30	70
Barming	36.50		63	00	60
Maidstone East	38.90	63.00	67	00	35*
Bearsted	41.70		73	15	42
Hollingbourne	44.00		76	00	53
Harrietsham	46.40		79	00	55/48
Lenham	48.10		81	15	51
Charing	52.10		85	15	70
Ashford	58.15	90.00	92	15	

net time 82½ mins
timed to nearest quarter minute

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LSWR T9 No. 30117 and SECR D1 No. 31749 pass Chislehurst Junction on April 12, 1661, with the 8.52am Charing Cross to Ashford special. DON BENN

Rebuilt West Country 4-6-2 No. 34100 *Appledore* in Bickley Cutting with the Down 'Golden Arrow' in the last week of steam in June 1961. DON BENN

TABLE TWO: VICTORIA TO DOVER MARINE

Date	Sunday, June 4, 1961
Train	11am Victoria to Dover Marine 'Golden Arrow'
Engine	Rebuilt WC class 4-6-2 No. 34100 *Appledore*
Load	Eight Pullmans, two coaches and three vans 439 tons tare, 470 tons gross
Crew	Stewarts Lane
Recorder	C Hudson

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Victoria	0.00	0.00	00	00	¼ min late
Battersea Park	1.30		03	58	25
			pws		10*
Brixton	3.20		08	14	36
Herne Hill	3.95	8.30	09	39	42
West Dulwich	5.05		11	35	38
Sydenham Hill	5.70		13	08	32
Penge East	7.20		15	42	51
Kent House	7.85		16	30	54
Beckenham Jct	8.65	16.00	17	25	56/53
Shortlands	10.00		19	11	55
Bromley South	10.85		20	08	52
Bickley	11.95		21	39	41
Bickley Jct	12.30	22.00	22	37	39
Petts Wood	13.75		24	41	32
Orpington	14.90	26.00	26	36	33
Chelsfield	16.40		29	06	32
Knockholt	17.65		31	27	30
Polhill SB	20.35		34	48	64
Dunton Green	21.65		36	07	73/74
Sevenoaks	23.20	36.30	37	32	67
Tunnel North	23.80		38	05	65/63
Weald SB	26.20		40	20	67
Hildenborough	28.15		41	56	81/82
Tonbridge	30.65	44.30	44	22	51*/62
Paddock Wood	35.95	50.00	50	19	53*
			pws		40*
Marden	40.50		54	58	66
Staplehurst	43.00		57	21	74/76
			sigs		20*
Headcorn	46.35		61	09	20*
Pluckley	51.55		68	41	61
Chart SB	55.10		72	12	67
Ashford	57.20	69.30	74	08	73/76
Smeeth	61.50		77	51	71
Westenhanger	65.30		81	15	68/65
Sandling	66.55		82	29	67/72
Cheriton SB	69.25		84	48	70
Shorncliffe	70.35		86	01	51*
			sigs/pws		22*
Folkestone Central	71.05		87	55	15*
Folkestone Jct	72.05	86.00	89	48	46/53
Archcliffe SB	77.60		96	56	20*
Dover Marine	78.00	97.00	98	36	2 late

* brakes or speed restriction
net time 90 minutes

ONE of the first trains I timed seriously was the Ian Allan excursion to Ashford and Eastleigh works on Wednesday, April 5, 1961, during the Easter break. The first leg from Charing Cross to Ashford (Table One) was headed by BR(S) T9 4-4-0 No. 30117, then based at Eastleigh and Stewarts Lane's E1 4-4-0 No. 31019.

With 10 coaches for 360 tons, these veterans did well after recovering from early delays and pulled back four minutes of lost time from Swanley to Ashford by dint of some fast running up to 75mph, causing much excitement to this young, fresh train timer.

After visiting the shed and works, during which the 4-4-0s were turned, they took us sedately to Redhill, losing five minutes on the 60-minute booking for the 46.05 easily graded miles, maximum speed 58mph at Paddock Wood.

There the train reversed and was taken forward to Woking by Schools class 4-4-0 No. 30909 *St Pauls*.

> "I bunked off school on one of the fine days in that last week to take my best shot of the train in a sunlit Bickley Cutting."

This did rather well passing Reigate, 1.84 miles in six and a half minutes at 30mph, then streaking away to 72mph at Deepdene before falling to 34mph at Gomshall summit.

We were stopped by signals at Guildford in 29 minutes 45 seconds for the 20.42 miles from Redhill despite a temporary speed restriction to 20mph before Chilworth.

Woking was reached exactly in the 45-minute schedule and here the train reversed again to be taken on to Eastleigh by another Schools class, No. 30913 *Christs Hospital*, which produced a maximum speed of 78mph at Wallers Ash prior to a signal stop before Winchester Junction. Despite this, three and a half minutes were gained on schedule. No. 41293 took us into Eastleigh Works.

After visiting the works and shed, about which I can remember nothing, No. 30913 took us back to Waterloo in 93 minutes for the 73.55 miles, net time 85 minutes.

We left Eastleigh 12 minutes late but were a minute early at Waterloo; 48mph at Roundwood summit and 72mph maxima at Hook and Hersham; 252 miles, and a very fine day out.

As my photograph shows, this tour was repeated a week later but with D1 4-4-0 No. 31749 instead of E1 No. 31019, which was withdrawn by the end of April and scrapped in June.

TABLE THREE: DOVER MARINE TO VICTORIA

Date	Saturday, April 17, 1971
Train	6.05pm Dover Marine to Victoria 'Golden Arrow'
Engine	Class 71 2552 hp Bo-Bo E5009
Load	Three Pullmans, six coaches and two vans
	11 vehicles.384 tons tare, 415 tons gross
Recorder	Don Benn
Weather	Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Dover Marine	0.00	0.00	00	00	9½ late
Archcliffe Jct	0.39		02	08	28½
Folkestone East	5.84		09	07	64
Folkestone Central	6.91		10	04	60*
Folkestone West	7.54		10	42	61
MP 67	9.84		12	52	68½/71
Sandling	11.43		14	15	60*
Westenhanger	12.67		15	26	67
MP 62	14.84		17	18	77½/79½
Smeeth	16.54		18	34	76
MP 58	18.84		20	24	78
Ashford	20.73	23.00	21	58	70
Chart SB	22.83		23	52	67
MP52	24.84		25	29	78
Pluckley	26.39		26	34	84
MP 49	27.84		27	35	86½
MP 47	29.84		28	56	90
Headcorn	31.64		30	07	92
MP 43	33.84		31	40	85
Staplehurst	35.01		32	30	83
MP41	35.84		33	10	82
Marden	37.45		34	20	80½
MP 38	38.84		35	21	83
MP 36	40.84		36	47	84
Paddock Wood	42.03		37	36	86½
MP 33	43.84		38	53	85
			sigs		18*
Tonbridge	47.30	45.00	43	48	51½
MP 28	48.84		45	40	53½
Hildenborough	49.83		46	46	58
MP 26	50.84		47	44	63
Weald	51.86		48	31	64
Tunnel South	52.17		49	02	61½
Tunnel North	54.17		51	06	57
			sigs		26*
Sevenoaks	54.72		52	13	49½
Dunton Green	56.29		53	49	66
Polhill	57.65		55	06	64
Tunnel South	58.14		55	33	62
Tunnel North	59.59		57	04	57½
			sigs		50*
Knockholt	60.29		57	58	53½
			sigs		28*
Chelsfield	61.54		60	08	35
Orpington	63.00	63.00	62	14	55
Petts Wood	64.20		63	32	60
Bickley Jct	65.43		65	09	45½
Bickley	65.89		65	49	54
			sigs		30*
Bromley South	66.99		67	10	37½
Shortlands	67.85	69.30	68	30	50
Beckenham Jct	69.19		70	13	55½
Kent House	69.99		71	08	56½
Penge East	70.65		71	51	51
Sydenham Hill	72.11		73	31	58½
West Dulwich	72.76		74	16	60
Herne Hill	73.86		75	40	34*
Brixton	74.66		77	00	29*
			2 sigs stops		0*
Victoria	78.00	82.00	86	58	14½ late

* brakes or speed restriction

net time 78 minutes

The last year of main line steam in Kent was 1961, though steam survived on some branches for a while longer. This meant the end of the steam-hauled Continental boat trains to Folkestone and Dover, including the 'Night Ferry' and 'Golden Arrow', both of which became electric loco-hauled by the very fine class 71 2552hp Bo-Bos. Table Two shows the detail of a good run on Sunday, June 4 that year; behind Rebuilt West Country class Pacific No. 34100 *Appledore* on a heavy 13-vehicle, 470-ton load including eight Pullmans.

Appledore was the regular 'Golden Arrow' locomotive for the last few weeks of steam operation and I took many photographs, most of which are not good enough for publication. However, I bunked off school on one of the fine days in that last week to take my best shot of the train in a sunlit Bickley Cutting. Actually, it was with the connivance of my form head, who was sympathetic to my railway interest and turned a blind eye! I am grateful to the Rail Performance Society for the use of the log and to C Hudson for his commentary:

Fine run

"Last steam-hauled journey on the South Eastern Section one week before the last day of steam on Sunday, June 11, and, fittingly, a journey on the 'Golden Arrow' behind a Bulleid Pacific; not a Merchant Navy but a light Pacific rebuilt only eight months previously in September 1960. A good performance on this heavy but not tightly timed train with a fine sprint downhill from Sevenoaks to Tonbridge, giving the fastest time recorded with steam between these two points. The permanent way slacks (PWs) and signal checks between Tonbridge and Ashford cost about five minutes; this would have been recovered by Dover Marine but for the further PWs and signal check approaching Folkestone Central."

Ten years later, it was clear that the days of the 'Golden Arrow' were numbered so I decided that a run on the train would be appropriate. I went for the Up train from Dover Marine but thought that I would experience part of the French side too, so I caught local trains from my home station of Ashford to Dover and then boarded the *SS Invicta* to Calais. It was very full, with 1315 passengers, as the captain proudly told us, saying that the crossing was to be in fine but slightly windy conditions. I escaped down to the café for a cuppa and to enjoy the crossing as I do not suffer from mal de mer. *Invicta* was one of my favourite cross-channel ferries. It was built by William Denny of Dumbarton in 1939 and entered service in 1940. It was a mere 4220 GRT (Gross Registered Tonnage) had a capacity for 1304 (!) passengers, with a top speed of 22 knots – all of which were used to take us across to Calais

Class 71 electric locomotive E5015 passing Bickley Junction with the Up 'Golden Arrow' on June 17, 1962. DON BENN

in one hour and 17 minutes as opposed to the booked one hour 20, helped by the SW wind. We arrived 20 minutes late and I went through passport and customs to photograph SNCF 1969-built 3500hp diesel locomotive No. 72029 arriving on the anonymous 'Golden Arrow' from Paris. Back through passports and customs to board the Up train headed by Class 71 electric locomotive E5009, which had a load of 11 for 415 tons, including three Pullmans (Table Three). *Invicta* was nine minutes late and we left by the same amount. Time was being regained by some fast running, and if it

On August 6, 1985, 4CEP unit No. 1505 leads the 9.45am Victoria to Folkestone Harbour past Tonbridge. DON BENN

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wasn't for the signal check approaching Tonbridge, no doubt to let a Down Hastings line train across our bows, we would have been through there in about 42 minutes 15 seconds for the 47.30 miles from Dover. The climb to Sevenoaks tunnel with 64mph at the south entrance was good, but more checks intervened, and we arrived in Victoria 12 late but with an estimated net time of 78 minutes for the 78 miles. Mission accomplished. The last 'Golden Arrow' ran on September 30, 1972, and *Invicta* was withdrawn in August 1972 and subsequently scrapped.

listed; you could tell by placing a glass of beer on a table – but this was denied by the crews. We then crossed France via Reims and Chalon-sur-Marne to enter Germany at Apach, from where we caught the 6.05am to Trier hauled by 2-10-0 No. 51.512, and forward to Koblenz behind Pacific No. 001.150, which gave us a maximum speed of 76mph on seven coaches for 220 tons. This was followed by a day's photography, including the bridge over the river at Bullay, plus more runs with the Pacifics.

Next time, more from No. 45596 *Bahamas* and from the heritage lines. HR

TABLE FOUR: VICTORIA TO FOLKESTONE EAST

Date Thursday, July 1, 1971
Time 4pm Victoria to Folkestone Harbour
Units 3x 4CEPs + MLV, 3500 hp
Recorder Don Benn from unit 7143
Weather Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Victoria	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Brixton	3.20	5.00	05	27	31½*
Herne Hill	3.95	6.30	06	35	41½
West Dulwich	5.05		08	07	47½
			sigs		16*
Sydenham Hill	5.70		10	38	13*
Penge East	7.20		13	28	45½
Kent House	7.85		14	19	50
Beckenham Jct	8.65	12.00	15	23	47½
Shortlands	10.00	13.30	16	55	53
Bromley South	10.85		17	49	54½
Bickley	11.95		19	02	53½
Bickley Jct	12.30	16.30	19	50	44*
Petts Wood	13.75		21	22	49
Orpington	14.90	19.00	22	40	59½
Chelsfield	16.40		24	07	61
Knockholt	17.65		25	17	61
Tunnel North	18.35		26	00	67
Tunnel South	19.90		27	16	74
Polhill SB	20.35		27	37	74½
Dunton Green	21.65		28	45	74
Sevenoaks	23.20	27.00	30	09	60*
Tunnel North	23.80		30	43	58½/63
			pws		52*/44*
Weald SB	26.20		33	24	55½
Hildenborough	28.15		35	09	68½/71
Tonbridge	30.65	34.00	37	39	45½
MP 31	32.10		39	13	63
MP 33	34.10		40	53	79
Paddock Wood	35.95	39.00	42	22	70½/67
Marden	40.50		46	09	77½
Staplehurst	43.00		47	58	83/86
Headcorn	46.35		50	29	72/70
Pluckley	51.55		54	52	80
Chart SB	55.10		57	42	65/63
Ashford	57.20	57.00	59	45	64
Smeeth	61.50		63	23	74½
MP 62	64.10		64	36	78
Westenhanger	65.30		66	23	70
Sandling	66.55		67	33	62*
			sigs		23*
Folkestone West	70.35		72	09	29*
Folkestone Central	71.05		73	20	41
Folkestone East	72.35	72.00	76	35	4½ late

* brakes or speed restriction
net time 71 minutes

EMU to Folkestone Harbour

Later the same year on Thursday, July 1, 1971, my brother accompanied me on a trip to what was then West Germany to photograph the coal-fired Class 01 Pacifics and Class 44 2-10-0s working on the Mosel valley line from Koblenz to Trier. The 01s still worked most of the semi-fast Eilzugs and the 44s, single or in pairs, the heavy ore trains and other freight. I went to work in the morning in the traffic costing office at Paddington and then caught the 4pm boat train from Victoria to Folkestone Harbour for the 6pm sailing to Boulogne. Table Four shows the run in the 12 CEP plus MLV formation on times which were then quite tight.

Although our net time of 71 minutes was inside the schedule, running was lethargic at times, especially east of Tonbridge. In any case the 10 minutes allowed for transfer from train to ship at Folkestone Harbour was inadequate and *St Patrick* left 31 late, to lose another 12 minutes on the crossing. I thought that this lovely old ship

SNCF electric locomotive No. 72029 arrives at Calais Maritime with the 'Golden Arrow' from Paris on April 17, 1971. DON BENN

Quartet of late arrivals make it a lucky 13 at GCRA auction

FOUR additional nameplates have been added to Great Central's December 2 auction, bringing to 13 the line-up in this category. As reported in last month's column, the early declared runners comprised nine LNWR, GCR, GWR, SR and LNER plates, and these have now been joined by two further examples from the SR, one more from the LNER, and a Britannia plate representing the Standard era.

The Southern Railway additions are *Wellington* from Schools 4-4-0 No. 30902 and *Wadebridge* with Cornwall badge and scroll from West Country class Pacific No. 34007, that from the LNER *Loch Morar* from K2 class 2-6-0 No. 61781, while the 'Brit' is *Flying Dutchman* from No. 70018

No. 30902 was built at Eastleigh in April 1930 and withdrawn from the London shed of Nine Elms (70A) in December 1962. No. 34007 was outshopped by Brighton in August 1945 and withdrawn from Salisbury (70E) in October 1965, No. 61781 emerged from the Leeds works of Kitson & Co in July 1921 and ended its days at Eastfield, Glasgow (65A) in December 1958, and No. 70018 was a June 1951 Crewe product that was withdrawn from Carlisle Kingmoor (12A) in December 1966. The smokebox numberplate from this Pacific will also be going under the hammer, separately from the nameplate.

Other locomotive items include a worksplate numbered 1995 from Darlington December 1938-built LNER K4 class 2-6-0 No. 61995 *Cameron of Lochiel* that incorrectly identifies Doncaster as the builder and the construction date as 1937, while another, an LMS 1921 plate, has a curved double-headed arrow below the date.

'Bizarre' quirk

Of these anomalies, Great Central auctioneer and director Mike Soden mused: "The K4 worksplate is bizarre. It was for a Scottish engine so was probably cast at Cowlairs Works, which was known for getting things wrong. The LMS plate with the arrow is certainly a quirky item. It may have been an instruction of what was to go on the plate that was misinterpreted by the pattern maker."

A third worksplate is an 1881 Neilson & Co example from LBSCR D1 class 0-4-2T No. 235 *Broadwater*, which was renumbered 2235 by the SR and withdrawn by BR from Brighton in May 1949 before its new post-Nationalisation number 32235 could be applied.

GWR cabside numberplates include Nos. 5056 from Castle class *Earl of Powis*, 6809 from *Burghclere Grange*, and 2350 from an 1884-built 'Dean goods' 0-6-0, and within the smokebox numberplate selection is, in addition to 70018, the plate from GWR Star No. 4015 *Knight of St. John*.

There is also a headboard from 'The White Rose' King's Cross-Leeds express, a train I logged at Hadley Wood on July 8, 1961, headed by No. 60063 *Isinglass*. Ten minutes before the A3 Pacific passed through on that Saturday evening, I had recorded Deltic D9004, then just two months old and yet to receive its *Queen's Own Highlander* name, on the Down 'Aberdonian', thus giving me, as if it were needed, a stark illustration of the changing of the guard from the steam to the diesel era.

Look north

And talking of Scotland, the totem selection includes Boat of Garten, which opened in 1863, was the location of a subshed of Aviemore (60B), was closed by BR in 1965, and is now a category B-listed station on the Strathspey Railway heritage line. The live online auction starts at 10am.

Main line diagram is rated highly

A 1929 LMS Rates Department diagram of the St Pancras-Luton main line was the joint top seller in the Paperchase October 14-31 quarterly email and postal auction with a realisation of £610. It was split into two parts, covering the St Pancras-Elstree and Elstree-Luton sections, with each part in clothbound gold-titled covers and coloured fold-out plans.

At the same price was a single lot of 35 Great Northern Railway tickets to or from stations in Lincolnshire, while third place went to a Cheshire Lines Committee 600-page volume of special traffic arrangement notices for the year 1924 (£330). Prices exclude buyer's premium of 12.5%.

Three out of four in railway poster sale

POSTERS from three of the four post-Grouping railway companies and BR, including a joint LMS/LNER issue, will be a feature of Onslows' vintage poster sale on November 30.

From the Southern Railway come a Southampton poster by Doris Zinkeisen (1897-1991) dating from 1938, and another promoting Poole by Leslie Carr (1891-1961) that was issued in 1947, shortly before Nationalisation, while the LNER is represented by 'The Broads', released in 1931. It was the work of Tom Purvis (1888-1959) and was one of more than 100 painted by the artist for the LNER during a 20-year career with the company.

The LMS weighs in with two circa 1930 issues, 'The Irish Mails' by Bryan de Grineau (1883-1957), illustrating a train hauled by Royal Scot No. 6123 *Royal Irish Fusilier*, and Derwent Water in the Lake District by Charles Baker (1880-1940). Cromer, on the north Norfolk coast, is the subject of the joint LMS/LNER poster by Walter Dexter (1876-1958) that was released c1938, and representing the BR era is a promotion of camping coaches dating from 1955. The live online auction starts at 2pm.

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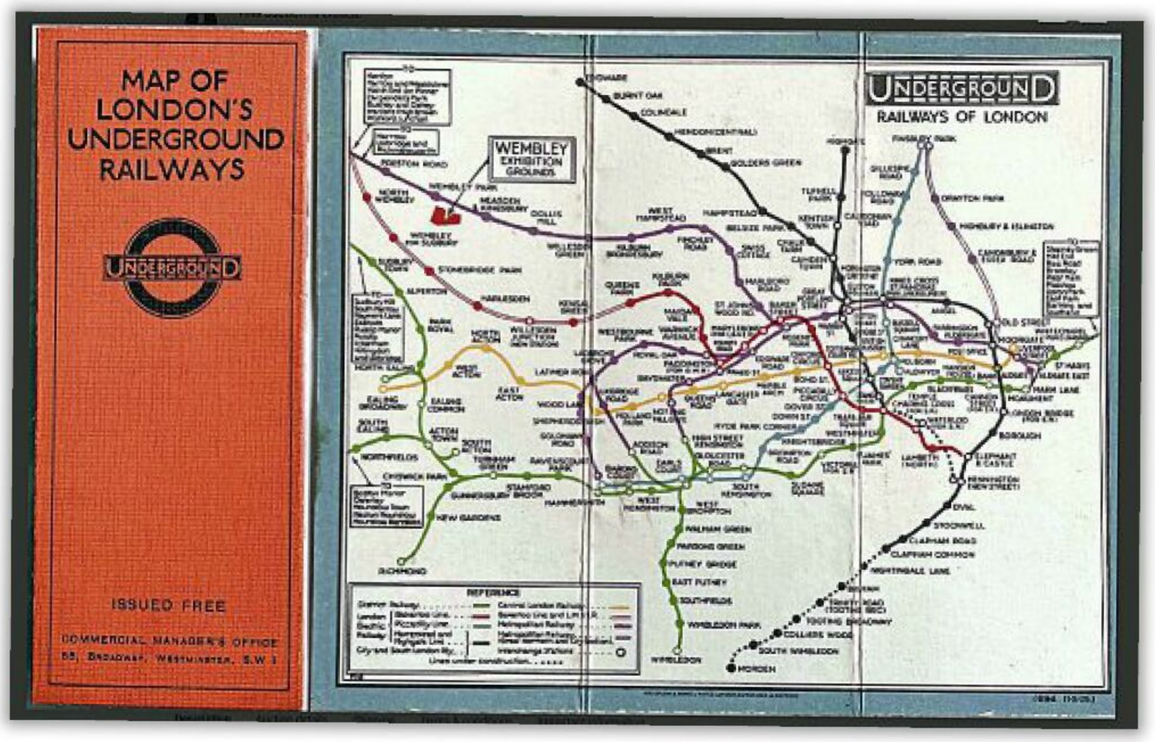
West is best with Grange leading the way



THE GWR, supported by BR's Western Region, dominated proceedings at a Transport Auctions of London live online sale on October 28, at which nameplate *Penrhos Grange* from No. 6868 headed the charts with a £4500 realisation, followed immediately by one of its cabsides at £1500 and its smokebox numberplate at £300.

A second cabside, No. 3440, believed to be from *City of Truro*, went under the online hammer for £3500. This number was carried by the 4-4-0, reputedly the first steam locomotive in the world to reach 100mph, from new in 1903 until 1912, when it was renumbered 3717 and the No. 3440 transferred to a Bulldog class engine that was withdrawn in 1948.

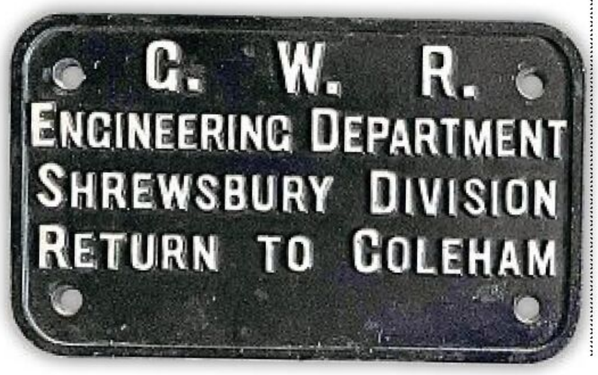
City of Truro itself was withdrawn in 1931 and saved for preservation, and from 1957-61 ran enthusiasts' specials and occasional timetabled service trains, in its original identity of No. 3440, and TAL principal Michael Wickham was confident this was the plate that went under the hammer.

Other GWR cabside numberplates in the auction that found new homes included 1925 from an 0-6-0ST (£1200) and 2573 from a 'Dean goods' 0-6-0 (£1000), but these two realisations were trumped by a GWR 1930s Cornwall poster, the work of Frank Sherwin (1896-1985), that went for £2400.

Remaining with the GWR, 35 miscellaneous items of hardware went for £850, a 12-inch dial clock with a 'GWR 1217' ivorine plate for £800, and a 'Please adjust your dress before leaving' cast iron sign for £700, a price matched by a single lot of five small cast iron plates, one of which was an 'Engineering department Shrewsbury division return to Coleham' example. The post-Nationalisation Western Region also got a look-in, when a Newton Abbot station totem sign sold for £1200.

Travelling from the west to the far north, and from the GWR to the Great North of Scotland Railway, a First World War service badge realised £1200, four times its top estimate.

Among the London Underground memorabilia were two 1946 Harry Beck poster maps that achieved £3200 and £1200, a 1925 first issue pocket map (£1600) and another from 1933 (£1200), while a Liverpool Street platform bullseye sign from the 1930s went for £2200 and another from Baker Street for £1700. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).



Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **Ends November 26**
  JustaClickAgo *(photographs, negatives and slides)*
- **November 30**
  Onslows *(vintage posters)*
- **November 30**
  Talisman Railwayana
- **December 2**
  Great Central Railwayana
- **December 13**
  Dreweatts *(Transport Sale)*
- **December 14**
  Vectis *(model trains)*
- **December 15**
  Lacy Scott & Knight *(railwayana and model trains)*

→ A c1938 Hornby O-gauge electric model of LMS Princess Royal No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth* and a 45mm gauge live steam Welshpool & Llanfair Railway 0-6-0T No. 823 *Countess* built by Bob Hines, of Norfolk, each sold for £1200 at a railwayana and model train auction held by Lacy Scott & Knight of Bury St Edmunds on October 27. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22.5% (+ VAT).

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Jubilee nameplate joins classmate in TRA auction

THE main line steam nameplate selection at Talisman's saleroom auction on November 30 has been boosted to five by the addition of *De Robeck* from the consecutively numbered LMS Jubilee No. 45678. This 4-6-0 was built at Crewe in December 1935, withdrawn from Stockport Edgeley (9B) in December 1962, and was named after Irish-born Admiral of the Fleet Sir John de Robeck (1862-1928), who in retirement became president of the MCC.

As reported in last month's column, four early nameplates consigned to the auction comprise *Central Provinces* and *City of St Albans* from LMS duo Jubilee No. 45582 and Princess Coronation Pacific No. 46253, *Bradford* from LNER B17 'Footballer' No. 61667, and *Kinross-Shire* from a second LNER Gresley-designed representative, D49 No. 62718, while from the heritage modern traction era comes *The Queen's Own Mercian Yeomanry* from D1111/47528.

Other late arrivals include an 1887 Vulcan Foundry worksplate (works No. 1207) from Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Class 25 0-6-0 No. 937 that was withdrawn from Springs Branch, Wigan (10A) as No. 52024 in May 1954, and two enamels comprising a GER trespass sign and a BR(M) stationmaster's doorplate.

The trespass sign is ex-Pampisford station in south Cambridgeshire, which was opened by the GER on the Shelford-Marks Tey line in June 1865 and closed in March 1967, while the doorplate carries the name H W Smith, who was stationmaster at Altrincham, which was opened by the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway in July 1849 and closed in April 1881 on its replacement by a new station, which remains open today. The auction is at Newark Showground and starts at 10am.

Activity above and below as award winners go under the hammer

ALTHOUGH two award-winning 5in gauge live steam model locomotives are expected to take centre stage in Dreweatts' December 13 Transport Sale, with estimates of up to £10,000, as reported on news page 42 in this issue, there will be plenty of activity below, including five models in four different gauges that are anticipated to break into four figures.

This selection comprises another award winner, 2½in gauge GWR No. 6800 *Arlington Grange*, GWR Nos. 3071 *Emlyn* and 4705, both in 3½in gauge, 5in gauge LMS 0-4-0T No. 1529, and a gauge one GCR/LNER Atlantic No. 192.

The Grange was made by the late Richard Castle, the builder of the two £10,000 estimated models, while the models of 4-2-2 No. 3071, a member of the GWR 3031 'Achilles' class, and 'Night Owl' 2-8-0 No. 4705, were both built by Colin Tickle, a former chief mechanical engineer of the heritage Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, who died earlier this year.

He also built the 5in gauge LMS model of 1907 Derby-built Midland Railway No. 1529, which became BR No. 41529 and was withdrawn in April 1961.

Finally from the four-figure estimated models there is GCR Class 8B 4-4-2 No. 192, which was renumbered 5192, reclassified C4 by the LNER, and was withdrawn by BR in November 1950 before its new No. 62900 could be applied. The 155-lot auction is being held at Donnington Priory, Newbury, and starts at noon.

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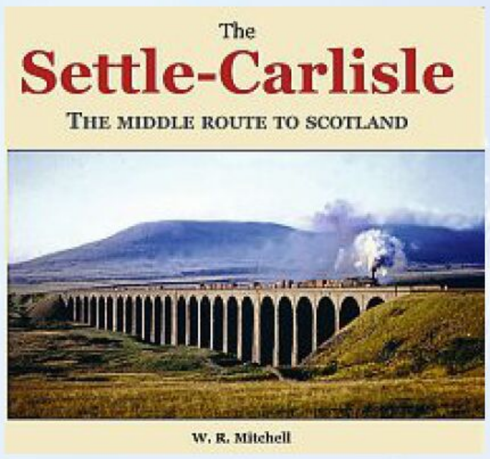

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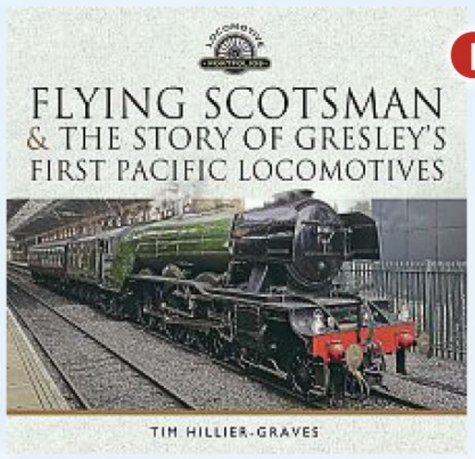

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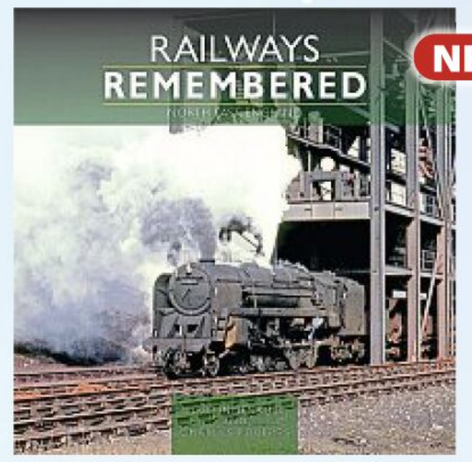

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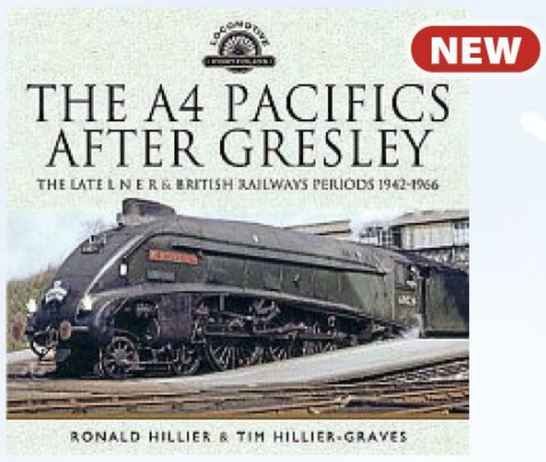

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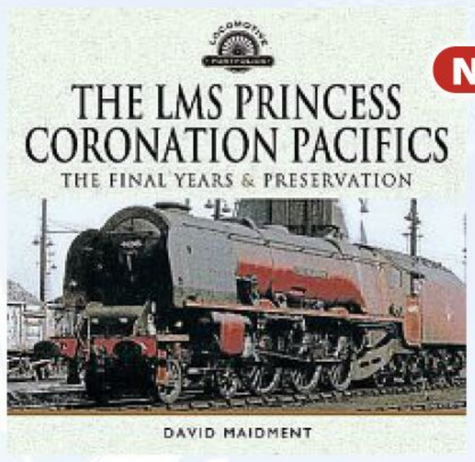

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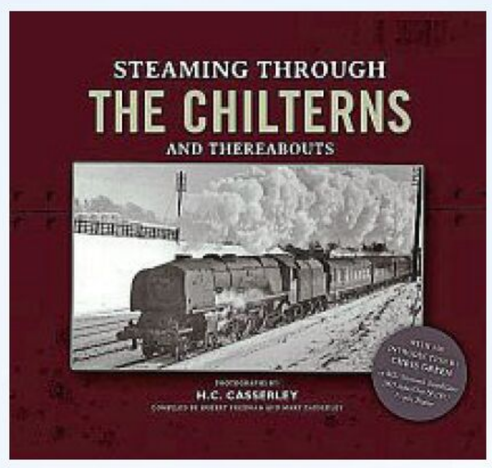

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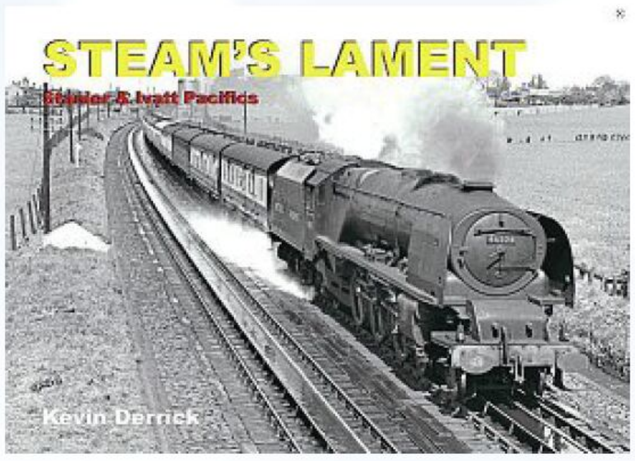

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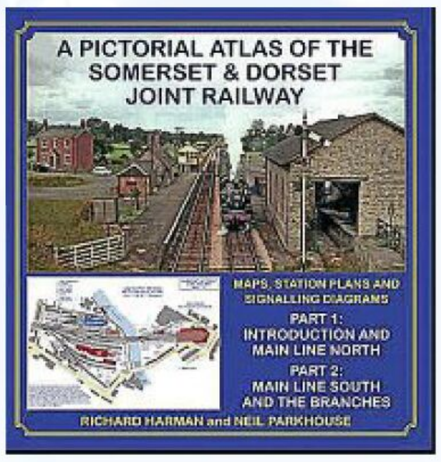

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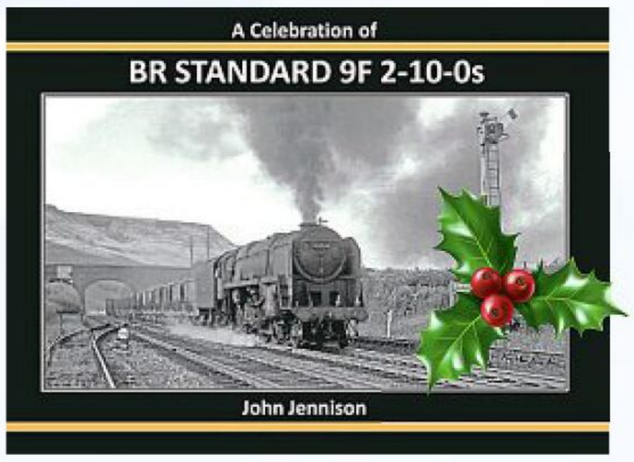

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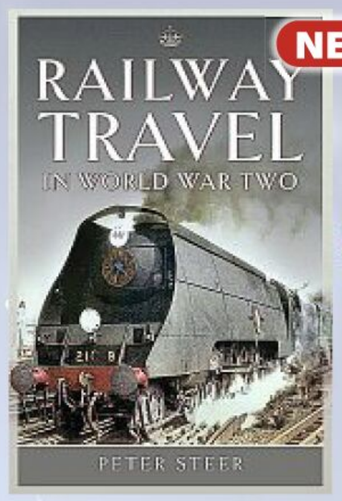

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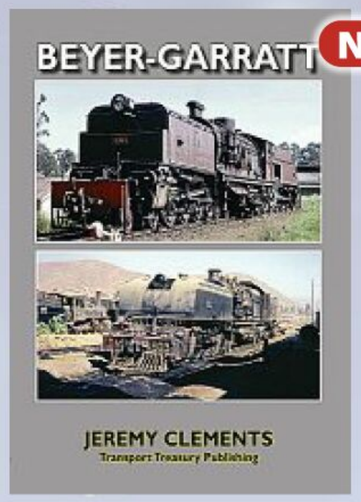

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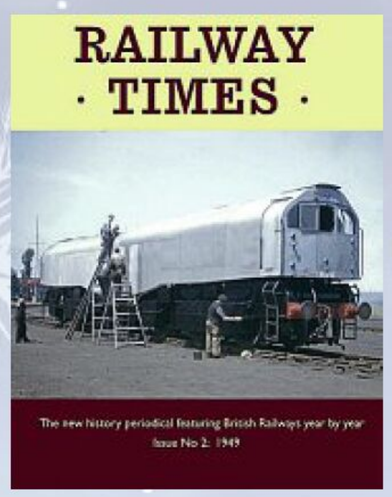

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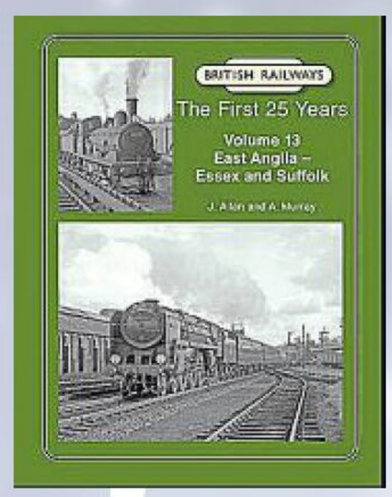

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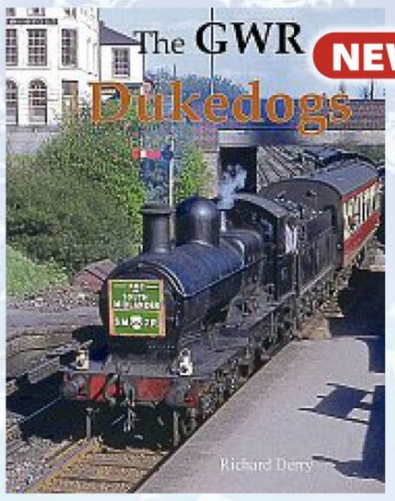

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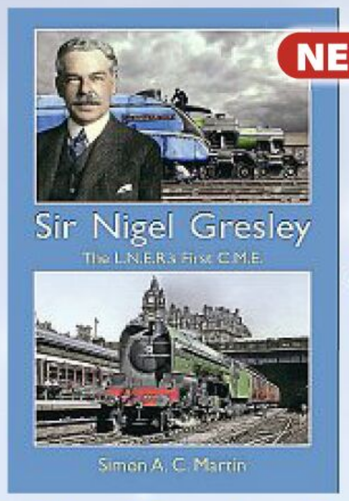

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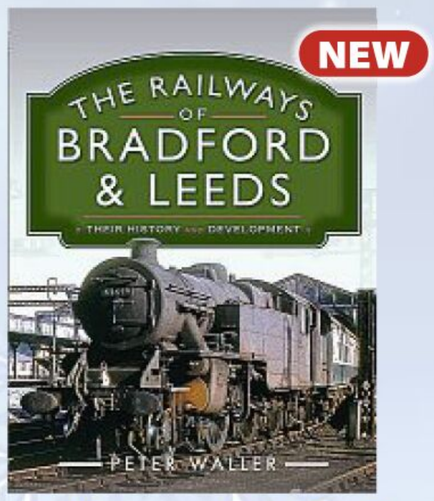

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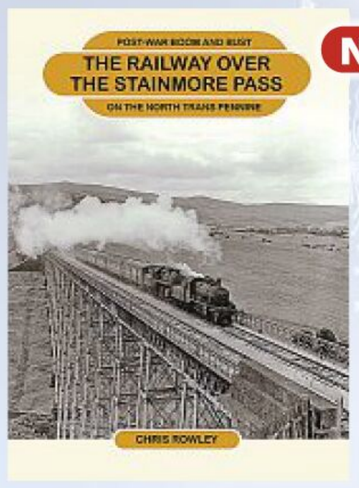

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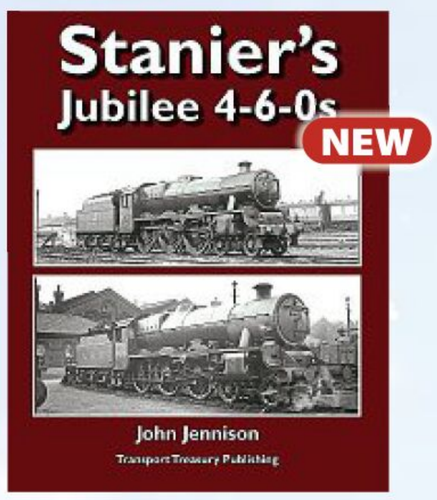

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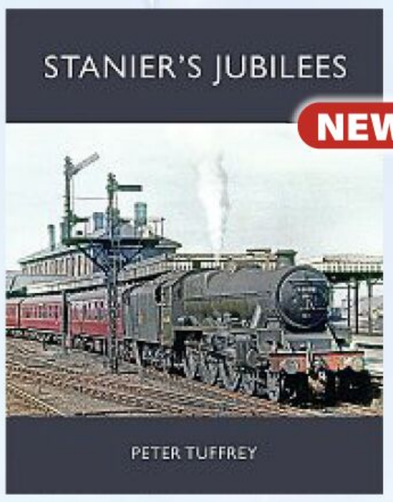

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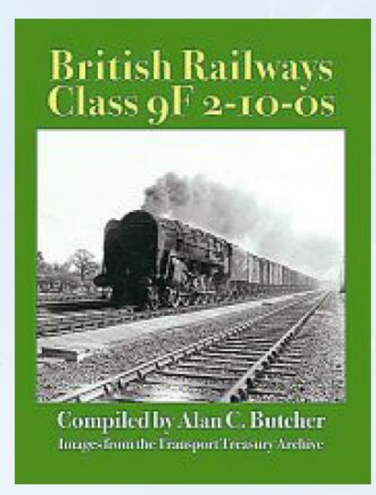

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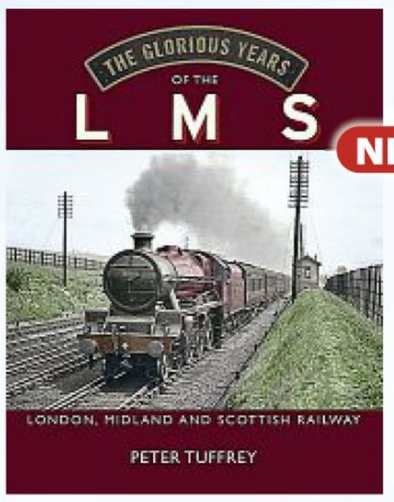

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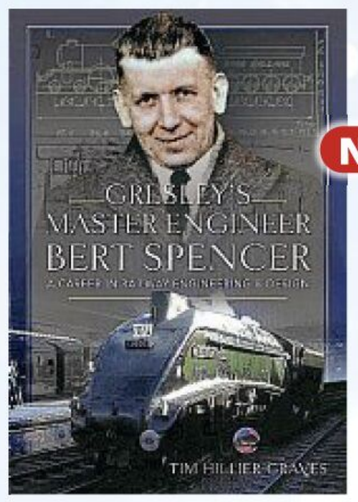

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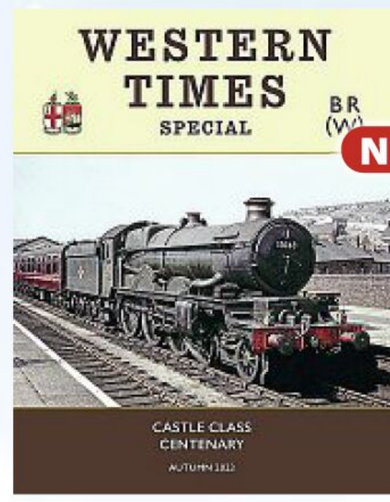

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STERLING WARTIME SERVICE – AT HOME AND ABROAD

In a special feature marking their 80th anniversary, **Dave Wilson** gives a brief history of Robert Riddles' War Department Austerities, of which a few examples survived.

In August 1942, the North British Locomotive Company received order No. L943 to build 350 locomotives. Four months later, in the darkest of dark days, January 1943, the first of Robert Riddles' 'Austerity' 2-8-0s rolled off the production line – and nine more were built before the end of February. When the Second World War ended, a total of 935 2-8-0 Austerities had been built, along with 150 2-10-0s.

All of these locomotives were built by just two companies: the North British at its Hyde Park and Queens Park works in Glasgow, and Vulcan Foundries in Newton-le-Willows. Both firms continued to construct the War Department locomotives throughout the remaining years of the conflict, with the final 10 2-8-0s being outshopped in March 1945, by North British, and in May 1945, Vulcan Foundries completed the remaining five of its order. The last of the 2-10-0s were turned out by North British in September 1945.

The nominal owner of the locomotives was the War Department/Ministry of Supply, which, in the first instance, 'loaned' them to the railway companies. The first 10 were loaned to the LNER and the 11th to the LMS; the next three went to the LNER again but, for reasons unknown, the 15th remained in WD ownership.

By the end of December 1943, a staggering 395 2-8-0s and 12 2-10-0s had been built and loaned to the LNER and the LMS – an astounding effort at any time, yet this was achieved under wartime conditions!

The pace did not let up and by December 1944, there were 826 2-8-0s and 100 2-10-0s available for duty. Throughout 1943 and the early part of 1944, the majority of WDs being built were going into service with the LNER and the LMS. However, during 1944 they began to see service with the GWR and on the Southern.

In 1945, some were being transferred to the Dutch Railway Company – Nederland Spoorweg, which, in 1946, purchased 184 2-8-0s and 103 of the 2-10-0s. One of these engines, 2-10-0 No. 73755, was the 1000th locomotive sent to Europe as part of the war effort. It was later preserved by Nederland Spoorweg and is now in the Netherlands Transport Museum in Utrecht. It is named *Longmoor,* after the military railway in Britain which played a major role in shipping the engines to Europe.

In 1953, two of the Dutch-owned 2-8-0s were sold to Swedish State Railways; in a remarkable turn of events, one of them survived until the 1970s, when it was purchased for preservation on the Keighley &

WD 2-8-0 No. 90733 bursts out of Mytholmes Tunnel on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway with a Keighley-Oxenhope passenger service in October 2014. One of two engines sold by Nederland Spoorweg to Swedish State Railways in 1953, it was substantially modified during its time in Sweden. This included alterations to the cab and reducing the length of the tender. Following its return to the UK, a new tender was made and the cab was returned to its original profile.

Coaled up and ready for work, No. 90047 sits outside Wakefield shed. The cabside circle relates to a short-lived bonus scheme designed to speed up the movement of coal trains around West Yorkshire in the mid-1960s. COURTESY KEN WEBB

No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn*, seen approaching Goathland on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, is currently the subject of a fundraising appeal for its overhaul at Grosmont, which will see it converted to oil burning, as reported in issue 311.

Worth Valley Railway and became No.90733 – the next number in the series which, after the formation of BR, was 90000 to 90732, the latter being named *Vulcan* to commemorate the work of Vulcan Foundries.

The renumbering scheme was implemented in 1949. Numbers 90000 to 90421 were allocated to 2-8-0s built by the North British and Nos. 90422-90732 to those built by Vulcan Foundry. The 25 remaining 2-10-0s, all North British-built, were renumbered 90750-90774: the last two, Nos. 90773 and 90774, were both, somewhat bizarrely, named *North British*.

Following the demise of steam on the national network, all BR-owned engines were scrapped and cut up. However, one of the engines that remained in WD ownership was 2-10-0 No. 600 *Gordon*. It was never shipped abroad and became the last steam locomotive owned by the MoD. After the Longmoor Military Railway closed in 1969, *Gordon* was moved to the Severn Valley Railway in 1972 and remained in service there until 1999, since which time it has been a static exhibit and is displayed in the Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley.

The first of the locomotives to be sent to Europe for the war effort landed at Dieppe in October 1944, just three months after the D-Day landings.

It is worth noting that the first engines to be shipped were not the British 'Austerities', but the American-built USATC S160 2-8-0s; the first of the British-built engines sent across the Channel in late 1944 and early 1945 were the 2-10-0s.

Earlier, in 1944, 10 of the 2-10-0s were shipped to Egypt, after which four of them went first to Palestine and then on to Syria. A further 10 destined for Egypt were instead diverted to northern Europe.

Perhaps the strangest of the allocations occurred after the war, in 1947, when 12 of the 2-8-0s, being held in store at Longmoor, were despatched to Hong Kong and began work on the Kowloon-Canton railway.

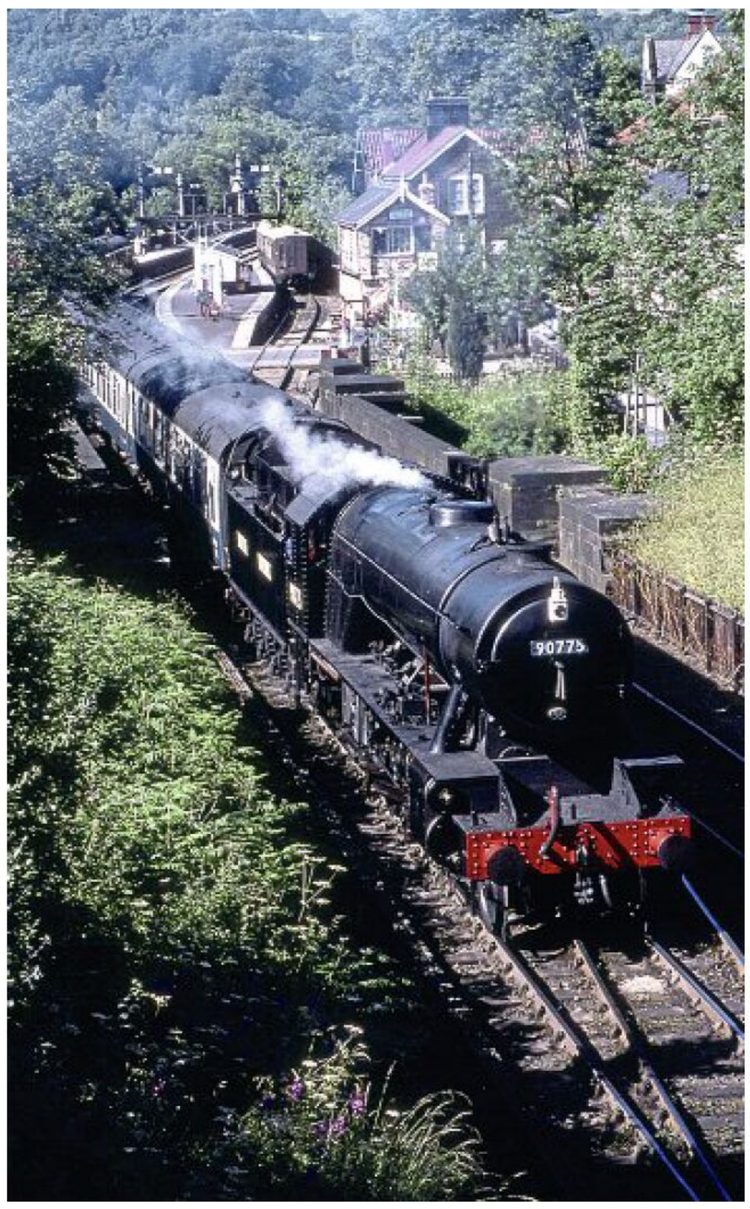
From the end of 1945 and throughout 1946, all of the engines shipped to Europe began to return to Britain, with the exception of those sold to Nederland Spoorweg (in 1949, 49 of the NS locomotives were returned to the War Department).

The repatriated engines were offered for sale; the LNER, in 1946, purchased 200 of them. The Syrians bought the four 2-10-0s they had obtained in 1944, and 16 of the 2-10-0s were sold to Greece.

Two of the engines sold to Greece's Hellenic State Railway eventually returned to Britain

No. 5820, nicknamed 'Big Jim', one of the American-built S160s shipped to Europe in large numbers during the Second World War, leaves Keighley with a freight working to Oxenhope. This photograph provides an example of the substantial differences between the S160s and British 'Austerities', though the duties they undertook were broadly similar.

Grubby and work-stained WD 'Austerity' No. 90329 trundles through Keighley with a southbound freight on July 28, 1964. COURTESY KEN WEBB



Above: On the kind of duty the 'Austerities' spent their working lives performing, No. 90733 crosses Mytholmes Viaduct with a freight train for Oxenhope during a Keighley & Worth Valley Railway gala, 'banked' by another classic freight engine, LMS 4F 0-6-0 No. 43924.

Right: No. 90775, one of the 2-10-0s repatriated from Greece, departs Grosmont with a service to Pickering on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Like No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn*, No. 90775 was one of the 16 2-10-0s sold to Hellenic State Railways after the Second World War.

and became part of the heritage fleet as No. 90775 (the next number in the 2-10-0 sequence) and No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn*.

When BR came into being in 1948, 425 of the 2-8-0s and two of the 2-10-0s were on loan to the newly-nationalised railway, and 108 of the 2-8-0s and 23 of the 2-10-0s were 'stored' at several sites.

Eventually, BR became the owner of 733 of the original 935 2-8-0s and 25 of the 150 2-10-0s. The 2-10-0s were all based at Scottish sheds except – there's always an exception – No. 90763, which was at Carlisle Kingmoor and later at Bidston (Carlisle Kingmoor was, for a period, 68A and as such part of the Scottish Region; it later became 12A and thus a part of the London Midland Region).

In 1948, BR conducted a series of locomotive exchange trials and both the 2-8-0 and the 2-10-0 'Austerities' were involved. The 2-8-0s were No. 77000/90101, which was based at Cardiff Canton at the time, and No. 63169/90490 which was a New England (Peterborough) engine; the 2-10-0s were Nos. 73774/90750 and 73776/90752, which were based at Motherwell. During the trials, the participating freight engines worked over three different routes: Acton to Severn Tunnel Junction, Ferme Park to Peterborough, and Brent to Toton.

During the BR era, the 2-8-0s were allocated right across the country, however, they did not remain long on the Southern Region, which initially had 50 of the 2-8-0s on loan; although most, if not all of them, had been reallocated prior to 1955. Withdrawal of the 2-8-0s began in 1959 when the first one was withdrawn; two followed in 1960, and there were none in 1961.

However, this was no reprieve – in 1962, 80 went. The biggest cull was in 1965, when 201 were axed; the final 123 engines went at the end of 1967. The 25 Scottish-based 2-10-0s were withdrawn en bloc in 1962, including No. 90763, which had returned from Bidston to Carlisle Kingmoor.

The Austerities may have been built as wartime expedients but they gave sterling service for more than two decades. During the decline of steam they became thoroughly neglected and were often seen in the most appalling grimy and work-stained condition; nevertheless, they remained masters of the coal train and a regular sight in the coalfields and collieries of Northern England and South Wales.

As an aside, one of the engines on loan with the Southern was No. 90127, which, in 1948, was at Feltham before moving to Hither Green in 1950. When I began working for BR in 1962, No. 90127 was allocated to 55C Farnley Junction – the shed I started at. Another of the Southern-allocated engines was No. 90655, which was an Ashford engine but by 1967, No.90655 had been transferred, via a spell at 55G Huddersfield, to 56A Belle Vue (Wakefield), the shed at which I finished working for BR.

This happenstance means that my first main line (unofficial) outing, while still only an engine cleaner, was a run to Mirfield with an Austerity – and my last as a fireman at Wakefield were both on Austerities too. HR

In something approaching the grimy state of the late BR years, No. 90711 (actually No. 90733) begins to slip as it gets its train underway. The choice of disguise is because No. 90711 was allocated to the Bradford shed at Low Moor and was associated with visiting the Worth Valley line during the final year of BR operations.

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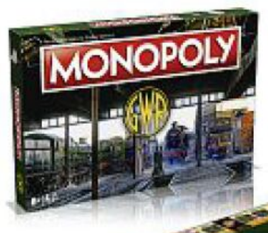

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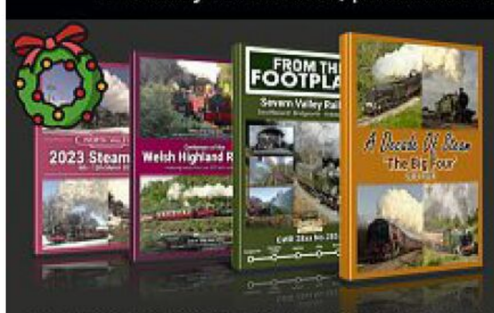

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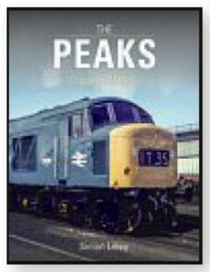
The Peaks
Classes 44/45/46

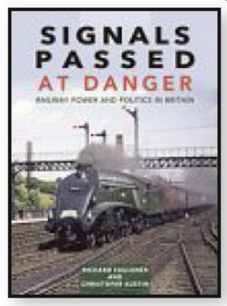


Simon Lilley

Covering the three types collectively known as the Peaks, from the first ten being given the names of British mountains, these locomotives originated under the Modernisation Plan of 1955 as BR's Type 4 design. The book recounts their careers from design, introduction and operations through to withdrawal and preservation, drawing extensively on original source material and lavishly illustrated with over 250 black and white and colour photographs most of which are previously unpublished.

ISBN 9781800352681, hardback, 280mm x 215mm, 240 pages, colour and B&W photos **£27.50**

Signals Passed At Danger
Railway Power and Politics in Britain



Richard Faulkner and Christoper Austin

This traces the stormy relationships between politicians and the railways and the upheavals caused by frequent reorganisations as various political theories were tried and found wanting. The story begins with the undue parliamentary influence of railway directors in the nineteenth century, continues with the broken promises of governments after two world wars to recompense the railways for the depredations of war, concluding with the irresponsible experiment of privatisation and attempts to deal with its consequences.

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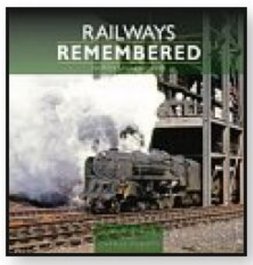


Martin Jenkins & Charles Roberts

This new colour album explores the railways of the north east from the 1950s through to the 1970s using largely hitherto unpublished images mainly drawn from the files of the Online Transport Archive. These cover steam, diesel and electric traction. Whilst focusing on the main line railways, the area's heavy concentration of industrial lines is also featured in this wonderful nostalgic reflection of the fascinating railway network of this part of the country.

ISBN 978180035275, hardback, 250mm x 250mm, 160 pages, approx 170 colour photos **£22.50**

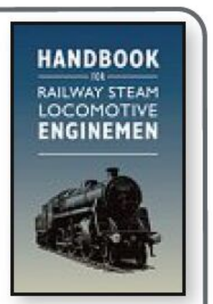
London Railway Atlas
Sixth Edition

Joe Brown

This latest fully revised sixth edition reflects the dynamic and evolving railway network in the capital and includes additions such as the now fully opened Elizabeth Line and the Battersea Power Station extension of the Northern Line which opened in 2021. The maps on the large format pages show all tracks and platforms and feature all the lines in the capital, both open and closed, stations, changes of station name and station opening and closing dates.

ISBN 9781800352636, hardback, 297mm x 210mm, 160 pages **£27.50**

Handbook for Railway Steam Locomotive Enginemen



This is a reprint of the handbook issued by British Railways in 1957 to all footplate grades working with steam power. In lucid terms, and with the aid of over 90 diagrams, many of which employ a variety of colours to distinguish, for example, saturated steam, superheated steam, exhaust steam, air, oil and water passages, the book provides an concise and accessible guide to the basic principles of steam locomotive construction and operation.

ISBN 9781800352889, paperback, 234mm x 156mm, 200 pages, colour diagrams throughout **£20.00**

abc British Railway Locomotives
Combined Volume Summer 1959

This facsimile reprint, listing all the locos in service and their allocations, covers an interesting period. Many of the new diesel classes were coming into service though steam was still supreme across most of the network; indeed, BR Standard steam locomotives were still under construction. As with all of our *abc* reprints, this volume provides a wonderful, nostalgic snapshot of a railway scene which has long since disappeared.

ISBN 9781800352685, hardback, 150mm x 105mm, 328 pages, over 170 black and white photos **£13.50**

Bachmann reveals plethora of winter product releases

ON November 1, Bachmann revealed its final product announcements for 2023, featuring an array of models across the scales. Amid new toolings and modern image collections are plenty of heritage forms of traction, including a number of preserved identities which are sure to capture the interest of many modellers.

1

2

1. 9466 Returns

WR 0-6-0PT No. 9466, which is owned by Jonathon Jones-Pratt and based on the West Somerset Railway, has previously been released sporting BR black as it currently appears. However, this popular locomotive now returns to the Bachmann OO gauge range in the GWR green livery it could be seen in from the 1980s right through to the early 2010s. It, too, will be accompanied by a further two running numbers that will cover BR early and late crests, with RRP set at £164.95 each.

2. N Gauge Ivatts

Following the upgrades to the Graham Farish N scale Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 to allow sound-fitted models to be offered for the first time, the Bachmann Collectors Club's next N scale model was revealed to be the unique No. 46441 in BR lined maroon livery. The real locomotive was saved for preservation by Dr Peter Beet and was based at Steamtown Carnforth until the 1990s. Receiving this livery (which was never applied to any members of the class during their working lives) in 1992, No. 46441 operated on the main line and heritage railways until 2002, when it went on static display at the Ribble Steam Railway in Preston. As illustrated on News, page 41, the locomotive is presently nearing the end of an overhaul at the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway. Prices start at £148.46 for DCC-ready versions (representing a 10% saving on RRP) and can be purchased only via the BCC. Joining the main Graham Farish range are three other identities, including No. 46464, known as the Carmyllie Pilot, which survives on the Strathspey Railway where it too is currently undergoing overhaul. Prices for these start at £164.95.

3. Bulleid 'Booster'

Possibly the biggest surprise this winter comes by way of the manufacturer's EFE Rail range, in which Bachmann has invested in a suite of brand-new tooling to model the Southern Railway 'Booster' locomotives in OO gauge. This pair of pioneering electric locomotives has never been produced in model form before and Bachmann's tooling covers a timescale of almost 30 years, capturing the various changes and modifications that the real locomotives underwent during this time. Five models make up the launch range, catering for Southern Railway and BR Southern Region modellers all the way from the first days in traffic through to their final operations in 1969. RRP is set at £184.95 for each of the five liveries offered, and will be released only DCC-ready.

4. More bogies for narrow gauge

With development of the OO9 scale Gloucester bogie carriages now complete, three further models will be released this winter – giving a welcome boost to the OO9 rolling stock fleet.

New identities include Ashover Light Railway No. 4 in lined crimson, which will complement the previously announced No. 1. Both survive in preservation, with No. 4 being found on the Golden Valley Light Railway in Derbyshire. No. 1 survives on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, and the two other liveries announced for these coaches are based on those applied to carriages there;. RRP is set at £59.95.

Other highlights include new Hunslet Austerity identities in N, narrow gauge station buildings for OO9, and the infamously 'haunted' Class 37 No. 37069 *Thornaby TMD* in OO gauges. A plethora of wagon varieties have also been announced for both N and OO scales.

5. Thompson brakes

Another new tooling, this time as part of the Bachmann Branchline range. LNER Thompson Full Brake coaches are being released in four different liveries and will nicely complement the five other diagrams of Thompson coaches that the manufacturer first released back in 2017. This all-new model sports separately-fitted detail components and close coupling mechanisms, and has an RRP of £69.95 per carriage.

3

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Accurscale returns to O gauge

RENOWNED for its high-quality OO gauge models, Accurascale has revealed it is rejoining the O gauge market following its initial release of the BR 24.5-ton HUO hopper wagon four years ago. For its first locomotive in the scale, the manufacturer has selected the Ruston and Hornsby 88DS diesel mechanical shunter.

A model Accurascale began work on in the days before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ruston 88DS has been an exciting project for the manufacturer as it looks to further develop its range in O gauge.

Following extensive surveys of a couple of prototype subjects, not to mention Accurascale's trademark extensive archive research and development, tooling was initiated following plotting out of the detail differences to cover the major variants of this venerable locomotive. This process began earlier this year and the first tooling sample was received in late September.

A total of eight locomotives will make up the initial production run for Accurascale, featuring a wide variety of liveries which in themselves demonstrate the large tooling suite to cater for the various detail differences between these locomotives. Delivery is envisaged for quarter one of 2025, with RRP being £229.95 for the DC/DCC-ready locomotive and £319.99 for sound-fitted versions.

6

7

From Northern Greats to Cornish port: Rapido wows modellers with autumn announcements

AHEAD of the November 25/26 Warley exhibition in Birmingham, Rapido revealed a mouth-watering slate of new models that were in development that ranged from a rerun of a previous sell-out success to an almost novelty niche pair of industrial locomotives.

6. The return of the Single

In 2018 the manufacturer wowed modellers when it released the first ever ready-to-run version of the Great Northern Railway 4-2-2 Stirling Single No. 1 in partnership with Locomotion Models. It won an award for 'Best OO Locomotive' that same year and very quickly sold out. Second-hand models have often sold for mid to high three-figure sums as collectors have since sought to acquire models, with a rerun of this popular release highly requested.

The manufacturer and NRM model outlet have once again teamed up to bring a new batch of models to the market, which for this occasion will also offer the Single with the smaller tender that the preserved example was paired with from the 1930s until the discovery and restoration of the correct larger variant design at Peterborough in 2014. The former will be available through Rapido's approved retailers, while the larger tender variant will once again be exclusively available through Locomotion Models.

As ever, DCC-ready and sound-fitted examples will be available of each, with prices set at £249.95 and £349.95 respectively. Delivery is expected in the fourth quarter of 2024.

7. SECR O1

With its range of SECR wagons, it was surely only a matter of time before the manufacturer announced something to pull them, and this is to come in the form of the 0-6-0 O1 design. Initially introduced between 1878 and 1899 as the O class to a Stirling design, 58 of these were rebuilt by Wainwright between 1903 and 1927 as they became displaced by the more powerful C class. Only one made it to preservation, No. 65, which can be found on the Bluebell Railway, and this identity is one of 11 variants being produced, which will include SECR grey, East Kent Railway black and both BR and SR black livery variants to appeal to all eras.

The model is currently at the tooling stage, with the first samples expected in the spring of 2024; a final delivery date was yet to be confirmed but the order book is open, with RRP starting at £199.95 for DCC-ready versions.

8. GNR J13/LNER J52/2

A class of locomotive that is historically significant, 1959 0-6-0ST No. 1247 became the first locomotive to be purchased directly from BR when it was acquired by Captain WG (Bill) Smith, who used it to haul railtours on southern and eastern territory until the BR ban of 1962. In 1980, after basing it at a number of railways and museums, Smith donated No. 1247 to the NRM and was made the first honorary life member of the supporting Friends group. Alhough it has not steamed for many years, its place in preservation history is absolute.

The only previous model in OO scale has been in the Hornby range for many years, so Rapdio's newly tooled version will bring this class right up to modern standards. Thirteen versions are planned, including No. 1247 in its 1960s railtour condition, with other identities covering green, grey and black colours from the GNR, LNER and BR time periods.

Design work is complete, with the first tooling samples due in early 2024. RRP starts at £164.95.

9. Port of Par Twins

Industrial designs have leapt into the fore in recent years, with Pecketts, Hunslets and Manning Wardles just some of those released en masse, but there are few who would have foreseen the Port of Par Bagnall pairing of *Judy* and *Alfred* ever being contemplated.

This pair of diminutive 0-4-0ST locomotives, although outwardly similar, were built 16 years apart and are the only two of their interestingly quirky design to have ever been so.

Built to be just 90in high, the pair worked the Port of Par, operated by English China Clays, their low height facilitating passage beneath a low bridge carrying the GWR Penzance to London main line.

Variations between the pair include tanks (riveted and welded) and handrails (flush mountings versus turned fittings).

These new models will be available as both single locomotives and in special edition twin packs covering dark and light green (both lined and unlined), as well as the fictional Port of Par yellow, worn by *Alfred* in 2004 (which, by happy coincidence, meant it could play the part of either *Bill* or *Ben* from the Thomas the Tank Engine stories.)

RRP starts at £139.95 for a single DCC-ready model, while twin packs are set at £279.95.

8

9

Model the Lynton & Barnstaple in O-16.5

WITH ready-to-run O gauge having boomed in recent years, Dapol subsidiary Lionheart Trains has taken on the realm of narrow gauge for the scale, with its range of L&B locomotives and carriages now available in O-16.5 gauge.

To start off, six different versions of the iconic 2-6-2T Manning Wardle locomotives span from the design's as-delivered appearance in 1898, through to its final 1930s SR appearance, incorporating detail differences ranging from alternate cab designs, to cylinder and motion covers. Named locomotives *Taw*, *Yeo* and *Exe* are the available identities in this first batch with DCC-ready, fitted, and sound variants available, and prices start at £378 RRP.

To accompany these locomotives, Lionheart has also produced a range of matching carriages, each in appropriate liveries for the time periods. Carriage classes cover all third, open third and brake third variants, with a total of 10 options to choose from.

These models were arriving in shops in November with an RRP set at £108 for each model.

A Standard success story

With the release of Hornby's new models of the locomotives, **Daniel Long** tells the tale of the BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0s, which became a highly versatile class that spread into almost every corner of the nation's railway network.

THE Standard 2MT was a vision of the future that never quite happened. When British Railways was formed, it inherited a hodgepodge of varied equipment drawn from a host of companies that had each had their own standards. For such a large system, standardisation of parts would be paramount.

In many ways, it was the best time to do this. The Big Four (GWR, LMS, LNER and SR) had struggled through the Second World War. Although trains kept running, the system was decimated by the challenges of conflict. Life-expired stock was pushed to its limits, and the entire network needed major investment. Something had to be done, but there was no money and no time.

Enter Robert A Riddles. Appointed to the role of Member of the Railway Executive for Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, essentially the position of Chief Mechanical Engineer in the old companies, he had to find a way forward. Some of the decisions were made for him. Circumstances meant that Britain's railways would continue to be steam-powered; electrification would simply be too expensive, and dieselisation was still an experimental field in Europe. What was needed was the years of knowledge in steam that would ensure an efficient range of locomotives capable of taking over in every part of the UK.

The BR Standards were the answer: a new line of robust designs that could travel over the majority of the network, drawing on the expertise of the Big Four, mainly the LMS and GWR. By this point, steam had a justly deserved reputation as a dirty, exhausting occupation. The Standards would have to raise the bar in terms of usability. Gone were the days when crews would be handed a stout mackintosh and told to lump it. This new breed of engine would put comfort a little higher on the priority list.

Setting the Standard

Twelve types were designed, with the humble Standard 2MT tender engines right at the bottom of the power range. The number was its power rating, while 'MT' showed it was meant to operate mixed traffic duties. The class would be a development of the Ivatt 2MT, which had only been introduced in 1946. The LMS had experimented with hopper ashpans, rocking grates and self-cleaning smokeboxes, which Riddles incorporated into his new range of engines. The tender on the Standard 2MT also included roller bearings and smaller windows for crew comfort. Ironically, a feature which was kept was the conventional fall plate, meaning the class did not have the reputation for draughtiness that other BR Standards developed.

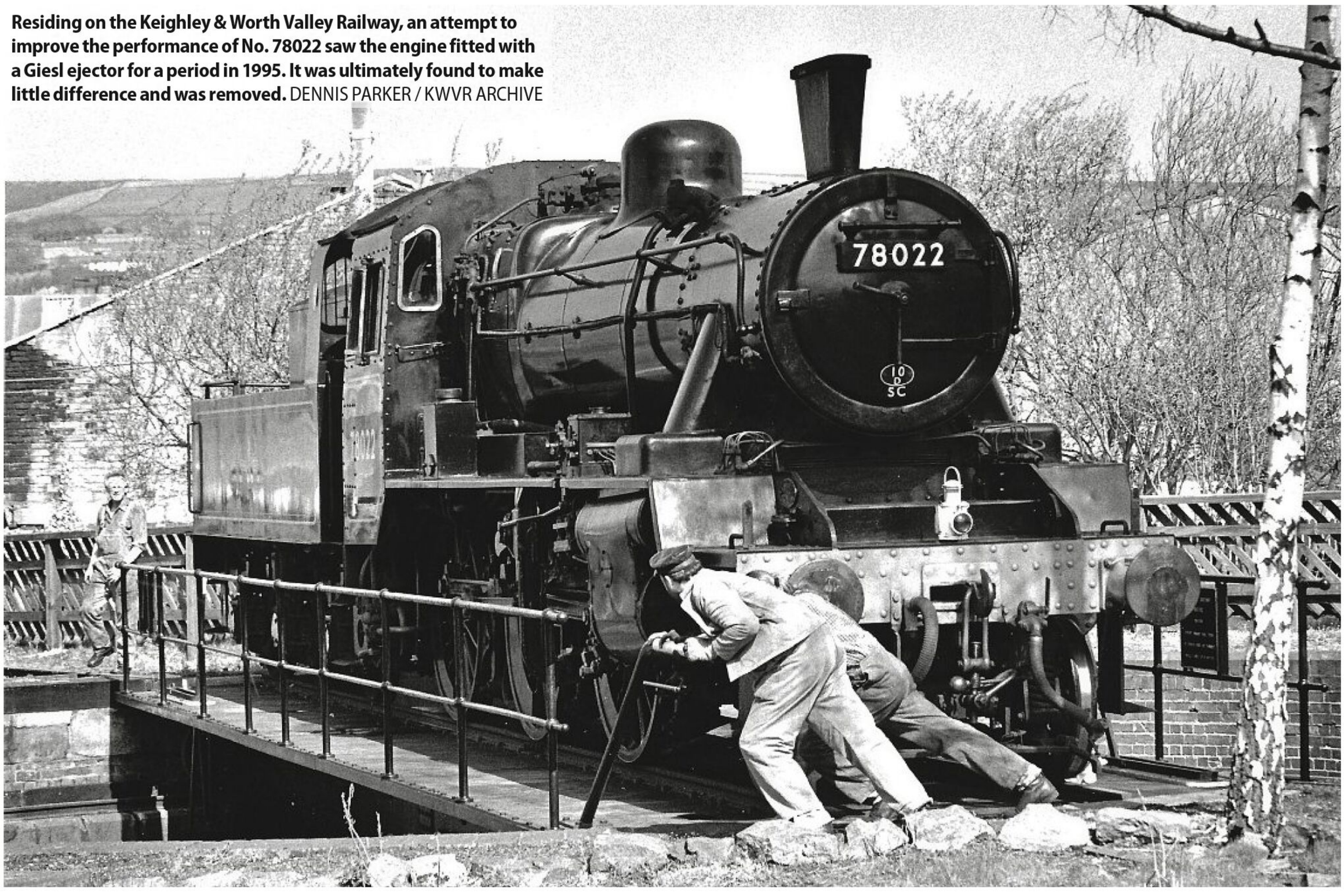
Every member of the Standard 2MTs would be built at Darlington Works, but they would be spread over the entire network, save for the Southern Region. Careful adjustments to the Ivatt cab design saw that the engines had universal reach, able to run over every single part of British Railways. The locomotives would prove invaluable as replacements for the outdated and old-fashioned stock that made up the bulk of branch line services. Light and nimble, yet sure-footed for all that, the Standard 2MTs made for the perfect branch line locomotives. Little wonder that the Western region, with its wealth of delightful secondary lines, received the first order of 10 2MTs.

The 2MTs go west!

This initial batch was allocated to Oswestry, but the class soon found itself reaching out across mid-Wales, transferred to Machynlleth to operate across the ex-Cambrian network. Compared to the older locomotives that had trundled through the valley, the enclosed cabs and modern comforts of the Standard 2MTs made them popular among crews.

While the first of the Standard 2MTs were being made at Darlington, the last of the Ivatt 2MTs they were inspired by were being outshopped from Swindon. Also assigned to Oswestry, the Ivatt locomotives were favoured by the Welsh crews, in spite of the almost identical features!

Although more than capable of tackling local passenger workings and branch goods, the Standard 2MTs struggled with timekeeping on some of the more distinguished runs



Residing on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, an attempt to improve the performance of No. 78022 saw the engine fitted with a Giesl ejector for a period in 1995. It was ultimately found to make little difference and was removed. DENNIS PARKER / KWVR ARCHIVE

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A far cry from February 1955 when it was caught in a snowdrift at Bleath Gill, No. 78018 is seen at Lodge End on the Great Central Railway in January 2023. OWEN HAYWARD

The first of this design of BR Standards to have rolled out of the works in 1952, No. 78000 arrives at Newbridge on Wye on July 18, 1959. G H HUNT/COLOUR RAIL

Pictured on June 15, 1960, No. 78030 was the only member of the class to be allocated to Crewe North shed, but it was kept in top condition for officers' specials in addition to its regular workday duties. D FORSYTH/COLOUR RAIL

Now preserved, No. 78022 brings a freight working through Wigan in an undated scene from its BR days. COLOUR RAIL

to which they were allocated. The challenge of the line to Aberystwyth was the need for light but powerful engines that could handle the prestigious Cambrian Coast Express. Trains often exceeded seven coaches on the formidable Talerddig banks, and the Standard 2MTs did not shower themselves in glory on these workings. They were swiftly replaced by GWR Manors and 4300s.

Despite these setbacks, the 2MTs continued to prove themselves on local passenger and goods services, earning places in sheds across the Western Region in places as far flung from Wales and Worcester to Kingham.

Northern soul

The second batch of engines were sent to the North Eastern Region and the London Midland Region, with 35 dispatched from Darlington starting in December 1953. One of the more memorable incidents for the 2MTs occurred to No. 78018 in February 1955. It was caught in a snowdrift at Bleath Gill, near Stainmore Summit. The rescue team not only had to contend with 40mph winds, but also with a film crew that had been assigned to document the rescue operation. The resultant film, Snowdrift at Bleath Gill, is an iconic piece of visual history, showcasing the hard physical work that went into ensuring that Britain's railways kept moving.

The economic efficiency of the Standard 2MTs meant that they quickly displaced many older engines, and that they could be found on a wide range of duties. Although often working on secondary routes, the class could show a clean pair of heels if required. Those working services on the Preston line were recorded reaching more than 60mph on the three-mile hill between Aughton Park and Maghull, much to the chagrin of passengers travelling in the front coach, who reported uncomfortable 'fore-and-aft' motion due to the speeds reached!

Outside of the workaday duties that characterise any railway, the Standard 2MTs were often seen on excursion work as well as on permanent way trains and horsebox specials. No. 78030, for instance, was Crewe North's only example of a Standard 2MT, used on station pilot duties, officers' specials and inspection saloon work. Little wonder, therefore, that this engine was always nice and clean to showcase what British Railways could achieve. Far from the most glamorous of engines, the incredible variety of Standard 2MT workings showed that their go-anywhere, do-anything abilities meant they were always in demand.

Given their size, one of the more unusual workings assigned to the class was at Preston Docks. The privately owned dockside engines were not fitted with steam-heat facilities, and so the Standard 2MTs were sent to keep banana vans warm during unloading. It was not the only time that the class was used as glorified boilers. No. 78009 – a Worcester engine – was seen in January 1963 working all the way through to York shunted between a Class 46 diesel and its train because the diesel's train heating boiler had failed.

Scottish distinction

The Standard 2MTs that ended up in Scotland often replaced locomotives dating back to before the Grouping Act of 1923. The Lauder Branch, for example, was upgraded to carry the weight of both Ivatt and Standard 2MTs, displacing the staple, if makeshift, motive power of a J67 tank engine coupled to a Highland Railway tender for water. As elsewhere on the network, the class distinguished itself on local freight workings and passenger trains. Those allocated to Keith soon found favour among crews on the Craigellachie-Boat of Garten passenger service. While British Railways was gaining a reputation for dirty engines and worn-out stock, those which pulled these trains were spotless, and maintained to the highest standards.

As the years went on, the Standard 2MTs continued to find new homes throughout Scotland, often filling gaps in the roster where pre-Grouping engines had operated. In October 1957, No. 78053 spent five weeks deputising for No. 46460 on the St Combs branch, which involved the installation of a cow-catcher.

End of the line

Although the class was much-needed at the time of construction, the winds of change would see their work wiped out with the stroke of a pen. The Beeching Act saw the end of the many branch lines where numerous 2MTs had found their work and, because they had been built to replace time-expired stock, it was swiftly seen that there was a surplus of engines on BR's books. Though the class was moved to work on freight, pilot, and shunting duties, it was a waste of talent, and a role which was disappearing almost as swiftly as the branch lines the class had worked on.

Despite the first member of the class leaving Darlington Works in December 1952, the first of the 2MTs had been withdrawn in November 1963 and the last by 1967. In all, 65 Standard 2MTs were built. Hindsight would suggest that this was too many, considering the proliferation of the Ivatt class and the rapidly decreasing roles which suited the abilities of this type of engine. But hindsight is 20/20, and the decisions of 1955 were not a consideration when No. 78000 rolled out of Darlington Works in 1952.

The BR Standards had started life as a bold statement about the shape of Britain's railways. The depressingly short life of the 2MTs just goes to show how quickly that shape could change. The classes were designed to operate for some 40 years before withdrawal; many barely worked 10.

Sleeping giants

Although the class could not to set out its stall on BR metals, preservation has found the 2MTs to be incredibly versatile machines, ideally suited to the majority of tasks assigned to them.

Essentially designed as the ultimate branch line engines, outfitted with the latest modern conveniences, it's little wonder that the Standard 2MTs have proven to be effective operators on the heritage circuit.

All four of the class that were preserved were saved from Barry scrapyard, and while they slumbered for many years, three have run in preservation. No. 78022 first ran in 1993 at the Severn Valley Railway, while the Great Central has restored Nos. 78019 and 78018 to steam, and they first ran in 2004 and 2016 respectively. Although not the most elegant of locomotives, all three have proven that the BR Standard 2MT can more than hold their own against other engines. They are economical runners and can handle whatever is required of them.

But what of the fourth preserved member? No. 78059 is currently being converted into its tank engine equivalent at the Bluebell Railway. When rescued from Barry, it was purchased without a tender. This ongoing project will bring back to life a class that has not been seen in service since 1966.

2MT in miniature

The Standard 2MTs travelled the length and breadth of Britain, with only the Southern Region not having any allocated to their depots but regularly seeing visits of examples from other regions as inter-regional trains ran through to Willesden. It's little wonder, then, that Hornby's new model of this versatile locomotive has been highly anticipated by modellers.

Fortunately, Hornby has more than delivered. The Standard 2MT is a stunning model, beautifully crafted to capture the appearance that makes the prototype such an interesting design. The diecast boiler and sturdy five-pole motor should make for an amazing performer, capable of tackling whatever is thrown at it. DCC-ready with an eight-pin decoder socket and space for a 28mm speaker, it meets the mark for modern modellers.

The five models in this first batch cover the major variations of the class. The liveries of BR black and BR green, both lined and unlined, are captured in every detail, with the crisp finish that is expected of high-end models today. Wherever possible, detail has been picked out to break up the potentially dull looks of this locomotive.

Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the intricate pipework. The decision to emphasise this feature is understandable, but for my money it stands out far too much, even for an ex-works example of the class. Some light weathering to dull down the finish would transform the look of this model.

Within these five models, it's clear that even the 2MTs, despite their short lives, had detail variations, and Hornby has worked hard to capture as many of these as possible.

The earlier examples of the class, for instance, are equipped with fluted rods, while models from later batches are plain. This attention to detail really does make a difference when capturing the appearance of these locomotives.

There really is nowhere to hide when looking at the 2MTs, and Hornby's models rise to the occasion.

Included is a small bag with other details that can be fitted, such as brake rigging, cylinder cocks, and even a snowplough for those who may want to recreate their own version of Snowdrift on Bleath Gill.

Those hoping for a cow-catcher to recreate the five-week stretch that No. 78053 spent on the St Combs branch will sadly have to fend for themselves.

When the Standard 2MT first rolled out of Darlington Works, it was designed to be an engine that could go anywhere and everywhere. They operated the length and breadth of the UK, from the wilds of the Scottish Highlands to the industrial heartlands of England.

No BR-based model railway would be complete without one of these engines trundling around – and I'm sure quite a few people will pick one up just because they like them! HR

While there are currently no preserved identities in this first batch of releases, the tooling for these new models caters for a wealth of detail variations. With four different BR liveries to choose from, these will make an excellent addition to many BR steam era layouts. HORNBY HOBBIES LTD.

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MAKING THE GRADE AT TORPANTAU!

With moves to bring two Welsh narrow gauge lines back together under one umbrella once again (see News, page 24), **John Titlow** looks at the history of one of them, the Brecon Mountain Railway, reporting in words and pictures.

The Brecon Mountain Railway, one of the 12 Great Little Trains of Wales and the only one located in the south of the principality. Like the others, it runs through stunning scenery; in this case, climbing into the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The BMR is one of the newest and least-known Welsh narrow gauge railways and is certainly worth visiting for the ride up the scenic valley behind steam.

The railway is unique in the UK because of its transatlantic American flavour and use of Baldwin steam locomotives. It is operated by the Brecon Mountain Railway Company Limited with paid staff and no volunteers, but this does not mean the employees are not enthusiasts.

Originally, the BMR trackbed was part of the standard gauge Brecon & Merthyr Railway, which opened between Brecon and Dowlais Top in 1863. The line was notable for its fierce gradients and having the highest standard gauge tunnel in the UK at Torpantau, 1313 feet above sea level and 666 yards long.

In 1923, the line became part of the GWR and then BR in 1948. Passenger trains ceased in 1962, then freight ended in 1964 when the line was abandoned and the track lifted. The route laid dormant until the mid-1970s, with all infrastructure gone apart from bridge abutments, Pontsticill station house, and its waiting room.

Tony Hills' dream

Tony Hills was an accountant from the Midlands, but his passion was railways and in particular, American 2ft gauge.

He became an active volunteer on the Ffestiniog Railway and restored several wagons at his home in Birmingham. He also restored his own Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST, No. 827 of 1903 *Sybil*.

Having had enough of accountancy, in 1970 he moved with his family to Gilfach Ddu, Llanberis, to establish a business there. He bought several locomotives, some of them imported for his own use, but as his plans changed, he sold off the excess in his collection. During this time, he was searching for a location to build a railway. His criteria were that it had to be scenic and near a large conurbation. The closed section of the Brecon & Merthyr between Pant and Torpantau fitted the bill perfectly.

After nearly five years of negotiations with 12 different landowners including Welsh

With the shed and station in the background, Baldwin 4-6-2 works No. 61269 of 1930 No. 2 awaits departure at Pant on September 27.

Climbing past Pentwyn Reservoir, Baldwin 4-6-2 No. 61269 of 1930 No. 2 departs Pontsticill on September 28.

Water, Tony acquired the use of five miles of the trackbed from Pant in 1977. The original section to Pant Station was unavailable, so adjoining land was bought for a deviation.

Rebuilding a railway is not easy, especially in a National Park, and planning permission had to be obtained.

In 1977, his locomotives and the engineering business he had created at Llanberis moved to Pontsticill and construction began to reinstate the line. Over the next two years, the station house at Pontsticill was renovated, the old waiting room was converted into a small workshop, and a new storage shed was built. Seven bridges along the line were repaired or replaced, and track was laid between Pontsticill and Pant between 1979 and 1980. In June 1980, this section reopened to passengers using *Sybil* and a single carriage. Two further extensions completing the line took place. In 1995, Pontsticill to Dol-y-Gaer opened, and the final section stopping just short of Torpantau Tunnel opened to passengers on April 1, 2014. At Torpantau station, the old trackbed can be seen heading towards the tunnel in a small cutting.

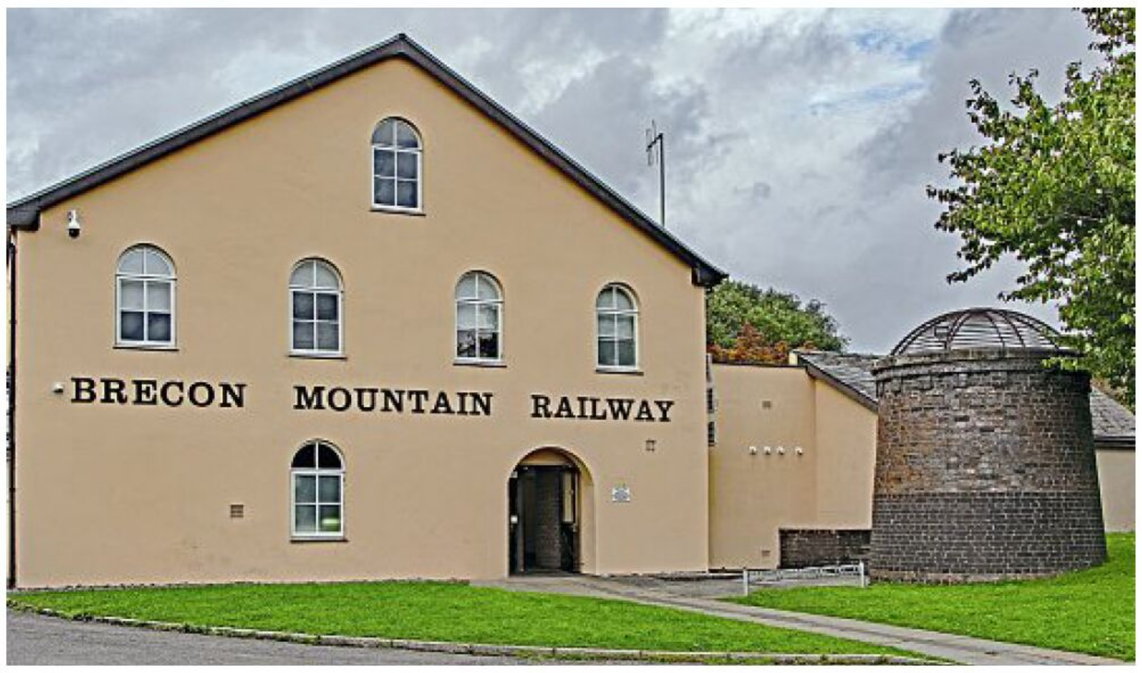
The railway is built solely for passenger use and gives a journey of about five miles, taking one-and-a-half hours.

However, not stopping at rebuilding the BMR, Tony, in partnership with fellow enthusiast Peter Rampton, bought the Vale of Rheidol Railway when it was privatised in 1988. Tony then managed both the VoR and BMR until 1996.

Before Tony died in 2015, he was fortunate to see his railway reopen to Torpantau. All his family were originally involved in the construction and operation of the line. Today, his eldest son Matt follows in his father's footsteps and is managing director.

It is worth considering the amount of work that has gone into the building of Pant station and the workshop complex. Originally, this was a hillside that went down to the lane alongside, but now it has blended in with the surroundings through large stone retaining walls. The buildings were constructed over three periods between 1982 and 1996 and provide passenger facilities including toilets, a café, shop, and booking office, as well as an extensive workshop capable of maintaining and building locomotives, carriages and wagons. With the completion of the workshop at Pant, all works were concentrated there.

Three ventilation shafts that belonged to the LNWR line 80ft below are in Pant station's car park, and one is alongside the station building itself. The large car park is on the site of the former Brecon & Merthyr branch line into Dowlais.



Above: The Pont station building and ventilation shaft pepperpot of the LNWR line below.

Right: Baldwin No. 2 running round at Torpantau on September 28..

Baldwin 4-6-2 No. 2 leaving Dolygaer loop at the start of the 1-in-47 climb on September 28.

Diesel No. 001, which was built in 1987, outside the Pant works. Inset: The builder's plate.

Motive power

The BMR has two US-built Baldwin steam locomotives in full working order.

No. 1 *Santa Teresa* was a Baldwin 2-6-0 built in 1897 in Philadelphia, which spent its working life in Brazil. It started on the Mogiana Railway as No. 26 with a four-wheel tender but was later sold to Santa Teresa Sugar Mill and regauged to 2ft 6in.

The sugar mill system closed in 1976, leaving No. 1 rusting, and it was brought to the UK in 1990. There was a failed attempt to rebuild the locomotive, but in the process, it had been regauged to 2ft. The abandoned project was purchased by the BMR in 2002 as a kit of parts. Its boiler, cab and tender were scrapped.

The 2ft gauge Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad in Maine, USA, had the same class of locomotive, which it rebuilt in 1913 as 2-6-2s at the standard gauge Maine Central workshops.

Because little was left of No. 1 worth salvaging apart from the rods, cylinders, valve gear and main frame, the decision was made to not just to restore it, but to convert it to the 2-6-2 rebuilt version.

To do this, the locomotive needed a bigger boiler, new tender, cab, wheels and axles. All this was done at the BMR's workshops at Pant, including all boiler works. No. 1 entered service in 2019; sadly, Tony never saw the completed locomotive running.

Again, a Baldwin, No. 2 was built in 1930 for the Eastern Province Cement Company in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, as a 4-6-2. While driverless in 1973, it ran away, derailing and wrecking itself.

The BMR bought it as salvage from the insurance company in 1974 and shipped it to the UK. At Pant workshops it was fully rebuilt between 1993 and 1997 and has since completed two 10-year periods of operation. It has just returned to steam for its third 10-year stint.

A long-term project at Pant is the construction of a new locomotive that ran on the Sandy River Railway. Scrapped in 1936, No. 10 was a Forney-type Baldwin 2-4-4T of 1916, which is being built from the original drawings.

Most of the rods and motion, spring and brake gear are complete, as is the driving wheel sets, which have been modified from 36in to 33in diameter. The new cylinder block and its machining is also complete. Currently, there is no date yet for completion. The main frame is presently under construction.

Two diesels are on site. In the rear of the works was TU7 No. 1698, a Bo-Bo diesel hydraulic built by Kambaka in Russia in 1981. It was imported from Latvia in 2010, rebuilt and regauged from 750mm to 2ft by the BMR.

The second is No. 001, an 0-6-0 which was built in the Pant workshops in 1987. Also built the same time was identical No. 002, which was supplied to the BR for use on the VoR.

Passenger and goods wagons

Currently, the BMR has five carriages built at the railway, which have been in use since 1980. The line had new designs for building American-style clerestory carriages.

It has 10 goods vehicles, which are copies of regular American 2ft gauge wagons, consisting of two box cars, low and high gondolas, and flat wagons with a mix of timber and steel frames. There is one caboose (brake van), a replica from the Sandy River Railway.

All of the carriages and wagons are air-braked and locally built at Pant, where all maintenance is undertaken by the line's own staff. All of the bogies were imported from South Africa and restored in the works.

One interesting item of machinery from the 1890s is the original wheel lathe and hydraulic press from the Southend Pier tramway. It is operational but tired and now more of an ornament, which is on view.

Passenger numbers and employees

Before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, passenger numbers were at about 55,000 a year in the summer season, with 10-15,000 on Santa services. The railway closed for 18 months during the pandemic.

Since reopening, numbers are creeping up, rising to about 47,000 in summer and 13,000 on Santa trains. The railway employs about 24 people during the summer, with extra staff at Christmas, plus entertainers during the festive season.

Importing coal

Ffos-y-Fran coal mine is little over three miles from Pant, but in April 2023, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council infinite refused an extension of its life for three years.

The railway has been fortunate to use Ffos-y-Fran steam coal for the last 16 years but, like the rest of the heritage sector, faces having to import it from Poland or Colombia.

Baldwin 2-6-2 No. 15511 of 1897 No. 1 *Santa Teresa* raises steam at Pant station on August 29, 2019. ROBIN JONES

The nameplate of No 1 *Santa Teresa*. Note the firebox extending into the cab, which is typically American.

No. 2 reaches its journey's end at Torpantau, the climb having started before Taf Fechan Reservoir in the valley below.

Again, that begs the question that more damage will be done to the environment and Co2 emissions by transporting coal over such long distances rather than by producing it locally.

Timings, the journey and getting there

Pant station is three miles north of Merthyr Tydfil on the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park, not far off the A465 Heads of the Valley Road.

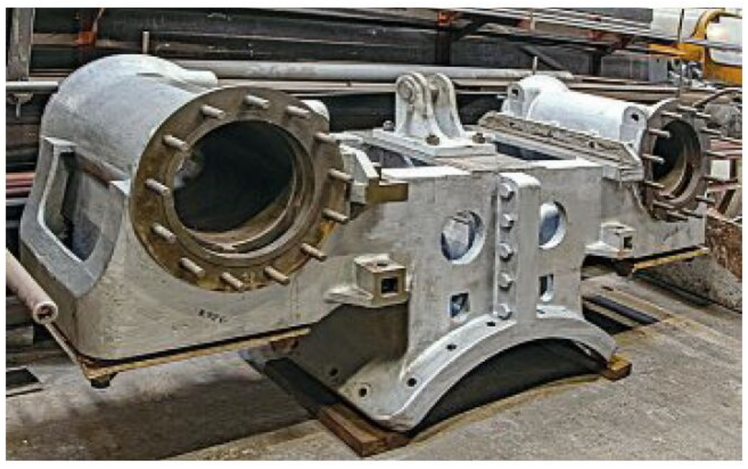
Presently, getting there is not helped by the extensive rebuild of the A465, where jams often occur and where major detours are in operation. A link on the line's website helps overcome travelling issues, with brown signs to Pant station. Visit www.bmr.wales/, which gives up-to-date directions and full details of services.

Standard operating days are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and weekends throughout the year. The Santa season starts on November 28 and follows normal operating days, with the addition of Monday, December 18.

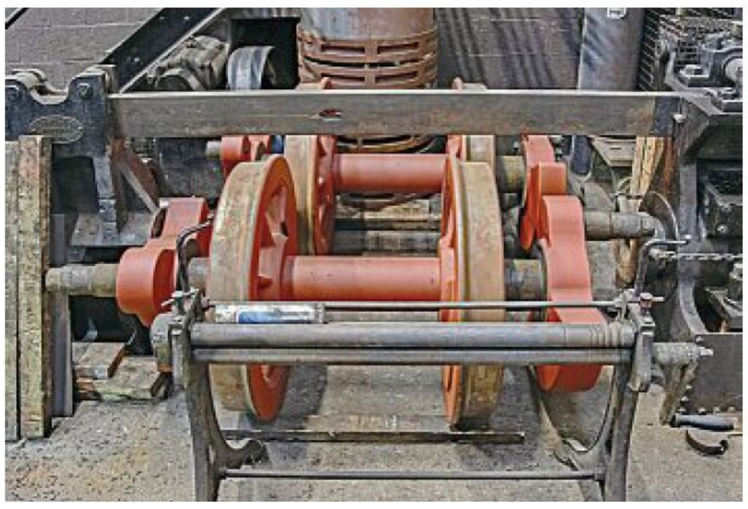
Tony Hill wanted this railway to be different from other UK narrow gauge lines and to that end, he succeeded – especially with the American flavour.

This is a very scenic railway with wonderful views across the Taf Fechan Reservoir and into the National Park. If you enjoy Baldwins thrashing their hardest up the 1-in-47 grade to Torpantau, then this line is highly recommended. HR

Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST No. 827 of 1903 *Sybil*, which was restored by the late Tony Hills and hauled the first Brecon Mountain Railway passenger train.
ROBIN JONES

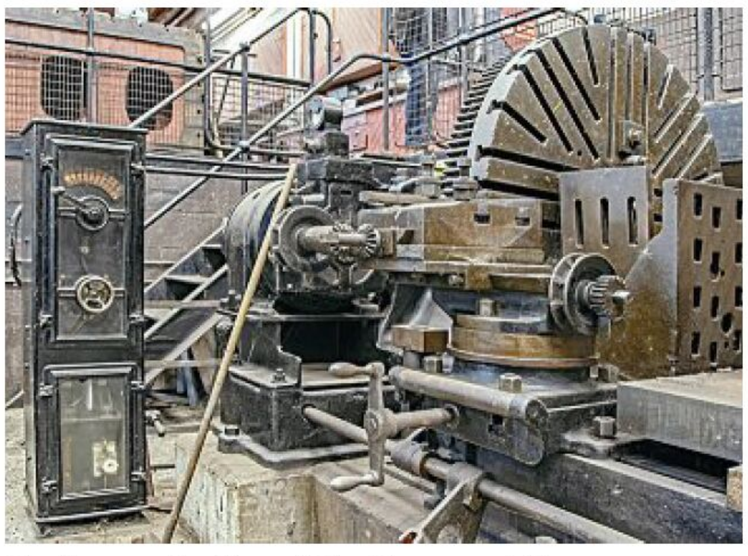


Cylinder casting of long-term new-build project Sandy River replica Baldwin 2-4-4T No. 10.



The driving wheels of No. 10.

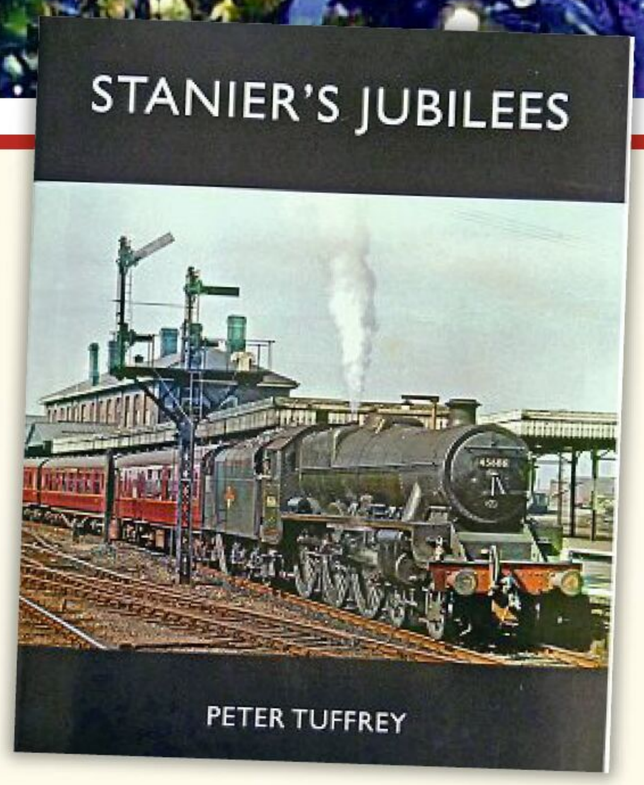
The end of the line at Torpantau. The cutting beyond leads to what, at 1313 feet, was the highest standard gauge tunnel in the UK.



The former Southend Pier Tramway lathe.

Stanier's Jubilees

By Peter Tuffrey (hardback, Great Northern Books, 160pp, £27.50, ISBN 978-1-914227-53-0).



BR'S mixed traffic Hall, Jubilee and B1 class 4-6-0s had their appeal to 1950s trainspotters in varying degrees, **writes Geoff Courtney.** With near identical tractive efforts of about 27,000lb ft, these all-rounders were put to similar work around the regions, but the GWR Halls and former LMS Jubilees had the benefit of all being named, unlike Thompson's LNER B1s, only a few of which enjoyed that prestige, and then mostly with names that were meaningless to teenage minds.

To many, the William Stanier-designed 'Jubs' were the lead singers in the trio, for they arguably looked the part more than the Halls or B1s, and their names had variety. They were essential to the London Midland Region's express operations and popped up everywhere, illustrated by my logging members of the class in the late 1950s at such geographically diverse locations as Oxenholme, Rhyl, Lichfield, Rugby and Bedford.

In his introduction to this, his 24th publication for Great Northern Books, Peter Tuffrey says that the class was the backbone of LMS and BR London Midland Region passenger services for a number of years, and that despite initial design flaws, were well-liked by enginemen and enthusiasts alike.

Virtually every member of the 191-strong class is featured photographically in either black-and-white or colour, and with detailed captions, starting with the LMS era and thence onward to the days of BR. No. 5552 *Silver Jubilee* starts the ball rolling at Nottingham Midland station in 1935, and No. 45742 *Connaught* brings it to a halt at Carlisle Kingmoor shed in July 1964.

Eye-catching images

Images to catch the eye include the smokebox of No. 45595 *Southern Rhodesia* being cleaned in Patricroft shed yard by a young railwayman who, despite his inhospitable, smiles happily at the photographer, and a group of four trainspotters at Carlisle station in July 1965 gazing admiringly at the driver of No. 45573 *Newfoundland* while a younger member of the fraternity stands respectfully further back, with a duffle bag doubtless containing the day's provisions slung over his shoulder.

There is also the intriguing image of a train waiting at St Pancras station in 1957 headed by three locomotives, comprising No. 45617 *Mauritius*, a 'Black Five' and a 4MT, with the first carriage clearly numbered M1M, and another of No. 45699 *Galatea* on 'The Devonian' crossing the River Derwent at Five Arches Bridge just north of Derby station, watched from the trackside footpath by a long line of people, including families, who appear to be fascinated by the passing train.

I also enjoyed the fine sight of No. 45711 *Courageous* at speed descending from Beattock summit at Harthope in April 1958 with a Manchester express – steam locomotives are surely the most photogenic of any form of transport when at full tilt – while No. 45731 *Perseverance* double-heading a freight train at Hest Bank station near Lancaster in 1962 with an unidentified classmate illustrates that more mundane work wasn't beneath them.

The Jubilees were no strangers to Scotland, and north of the border images include No. 45670 *Howard of Effingham* at Glasgow St Enoch in July 1961, No. 45727 *Inflexible* at Edinburgh Waverley with a Perth express in June 1956, and No. 45693 *Agamemnon* passing the remains of Bellahouston station in southwest Glasgow after the station's closure in 1954.

The changeover years from steam to diesel can be found with a photograph of No. 45629 *Straits Settlements* piloting D214 *Antonia* on a southbound express at Winwick, near Warrington, in October 1964, and No. 45721 *Impregnable* is at the heart of a relaxing scene at Carlisle in July 1965 as the driver leans out of his cab chatting almost conspiratorially with what may be an off-duty colleague on the platform while the fireman leans out of the other side gazing at the track below.

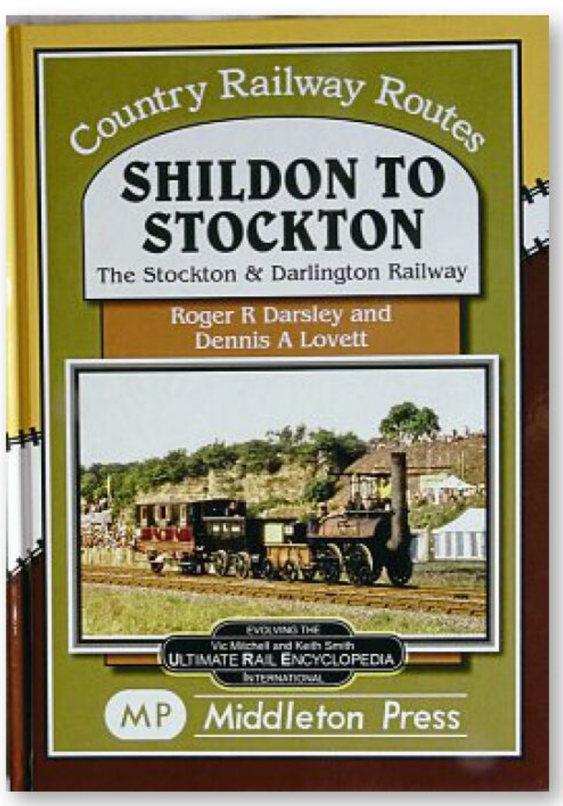
Today the railways are all hustle and bustle, constant tannoyed announcements, advice about unattended bags, and platform barriers aplenty, but half a century ago there was time for the footplatemen to pass the time of day, catching up with all the latest news before the guard waved the green flag.

LMS ALL-ROUNDER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Shildon to Stockton: The Stockton & Darlington Railway

By Roger R Darsley and Dennis A Lovett (hardback, Middleton Press, 98pp, ISBN 978-1-910356-79-1).

IN 2025, one of the best events in the history of the heritage sector will attract a worldwide audience marking the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. It was the first railway to use steam haulage to transport not only goods but also passengers, and sowed the seeds of a transport revolution which would change the globe.



Part of the Country Railway Routes series, here is a definitive guide to the S&DR and its branches. It follows the classic MP format of covering every station, junction, motive traction depot and every point of note along the route, with a combination of archive photographs, track diagrams and maps.

The essential history of the line is covered in the introduction before the journey begins, leading into Shildon, the first railway town. All the famous landmarks like Skerne Bridge, Darlington Bank Top station and Whessoe Road engine shed are covered in sequence, and the modern-day views include the likes of the Locomotion museum at Shildon and Hopetown Carriage Works, where we see P2 No. 2007 *Prince of Wales* taking shape.

If you plan to visit the S&DR for the centenary or its build-up, this affordable, accessible, yet detailed facts-at-a-glance volume is an absolute must.

ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

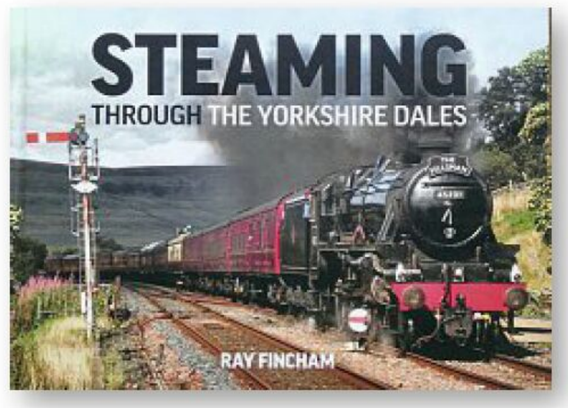
Steaming Through The Yorkshire Dales

By Ray Fincham (hardback, Gresley Books/Mortons Books, www.mortonsbooks.co.uk, 104pp, £27, ISBN 9 78-1-857946-17-8).

THE survival of the Settle and Carlisle line is one of the great triumphs of the heritage era. World-renowned for its bridges, tunnels, embankments and cutting, in the 1980s BR decided that it was little used and no longer viable and should go the way of Beeching closures. However, the public was having none of this and fought a long campaign to save it – not as a heritage railway, but as part of the national network.

Their arguments won the day in 1989, and for their sterling efforts we owe them a massive debt of gratitude. Their vision was validated by the subsequent increase in traffic, which has for years included steam-hauled railtours.

This landscape album excels as a fitting and inspirational tribute to these tours, which are captured in 97 full-size quality colour views and accompanied by detailed captions. Today's main line steam classics are captured in action over the 33 miles of the route between Langliffe in the south and Crosby Garrett in the



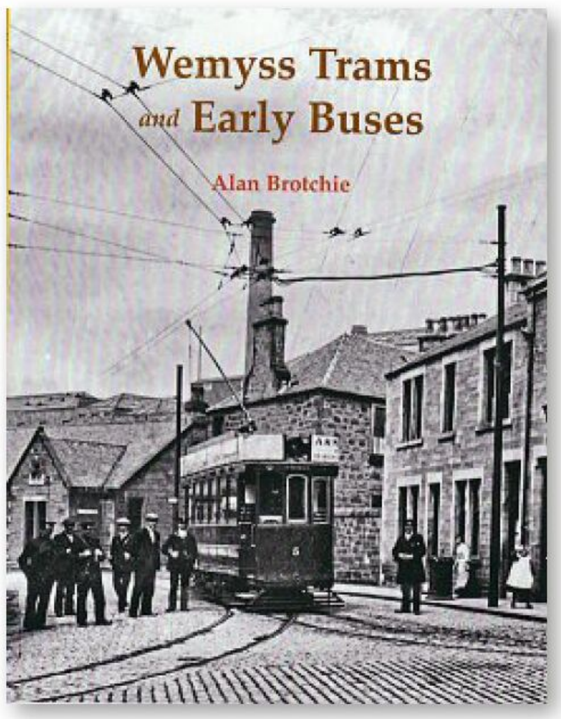
north. We see the likes of new-build A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*, LMS Princess Coronation Pacific No. 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland*, LMS 4-6-2 No. 6201 *Princess Elizabeth*, Jubilee No. 45699 *Galatea*, Royal Scot 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsaman* and more. Each page contains a view of which most linesiders would be justifiably proud, and they can be savoured all year round within homes many hours away from this magnificent line and its awesome scenery.

HERITAGE HEIGHTS

Wemyss Trams and Early Buses

By Alan W Brotchie (softback, Stenlake Publishing Limited, tel: 01290 551122, www.stenlake.co.uk, 96pp, £29.95, ISBN 978-1-840339-22-2).

Pre-order Issue 314: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.



PROLIFIC tramway author and tram restorer Alan Brotchie has dug deep into the tramway and early bus past of Wemyss Fife coalfield, once served by the narrow gauge Wemyss & District Tramways Company.

Its 3ft 6in trams ran on a 10-mile electrified line, linking Kirkcaldy with Leven between 1906 and 1932. Sections of street running were interspersed with cross-country right-of-way stretches. The trams were the brainchild of local coal magnate and laird Randolph Gordon Erskine, also builder and owner of the Wemyss Private Railway, which transported coal from the laird's pits to the docks.

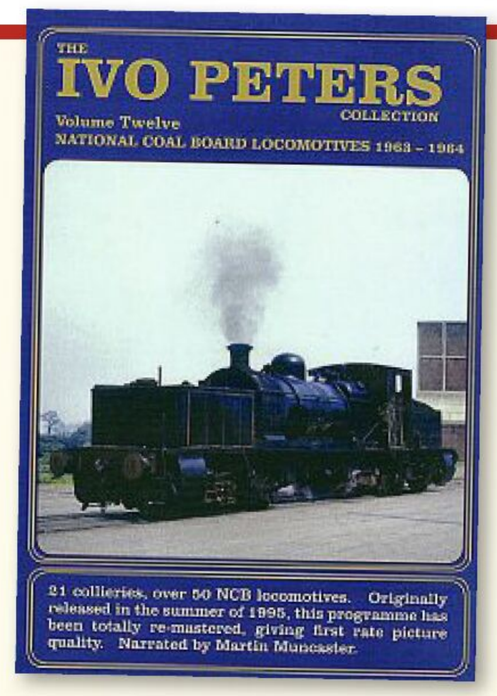
Wemyss saw the tramway as essential to providing his workers with cheap and efficient transport, and the local towns and villages all benefitted from the tramway, a must in Edwardian times for any self-respecting urban area of its day. Sadly, the trams, as did all the narrow gauge Scottish small-town systems, similar to the Wemyss company, gave way in the early 1930s to the all-conquering motor bus, whose debut is covered in the book.

Well-illustrated, with many coloured postcards of the era used to good effect, beautifully written and thoroughly researched, this is a book for anyone who finds tramways, and narrow gauge ones in particular, fascinating. Not forgetting the early buses and social history included, this is just the ticket.

LOST SCOTTISH TRAMWAY REDISCOVERED

The Ivo Peters Collection Volume 12 – National Coal Board Locomotives 1963-1964

DVD (ivopeters.co.uk, 54 minutes, £16.95).



INITIALLY released on DVD in 2021, this collection of Peter's extensive collection of historic railway documentation has been slightly updated with some corrections and additions to its locomotive identification.

Although the locomotives of NCB collieries are often recalled as being visually tired and often heavily weathered machines, Peter's cinefilm (often accompanied by either the Rev Teddy Boston, of Cadeby Light Railway fame, Norman Lockett, or both) of the numerous collieries included in this feature would suggest that, actually, some enginemen at the NCB took great pride in their workhorses right up until the end, with many industrials captured in immaculate condition. The trio can often be seen on footplates – Boston being particularly adept at convincing the crews to take a passenger or three – or even mucking in with shunting moves, something you would need several months of training and endless examinations passed to even warrant entry into a yard for in the modern age.

The entourage also had a knack for convincing those working at the places they visited to drag out dead locomotives from sheds or even empty out sidings to allow access, resulting in a wealth of interesting and perhaps often forgotten designs that never escaped the camera lenses. Sporadically mixed in amid all of these are several recognisable locomotives that have survived into preservation, and it is interesting to observe the differences of 'then and now'. Some of the information in the narration is noticeably dated from original VHS days, but for the most part this is only there to give an insight to what is on screen and is not too intrusive. While for some the big expresses will always be the stars, footage such as that on this release really goes to show just how much went on in the collieries and industrial settings – which makes for captivating viewing.

A CAPTIVATING SNAPSHOT OF LATE NCB DAYS

The Stately Trains Collection

By Mike Heath (softback, Silver Link Books, Morons Media Group, www.nostalgiacollection.com, 80pp, £10, ISBN 978-1-857946-13-0).

AS reported in issue 311, Stephen Middleton received an award at the National Transport Trust's annual ceremony on September 12 for the restoration his Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1208 of 1916 *Seacole/Nightingale*. However, Stephen is far more widely known for his magnificent restorations of vintage pre-Grouping wooden-bodied carriages, often from 'no hoper' states of dereliction.

This all-colour reference volume details each vehicle in Stephen's Stately Trains fleet, which is based on the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway and showcases their finest points. They include his ground-breaking restoration of NER petrol-electric autocar No. 3170, which made history as the world's first use of an internal combustion engine in a passenger-carrying vehicle. He retrieved the body, which had survived for decades as a holiday home, orchestrated the construction of a new chassis and power units, and recreated what was a global transport history landmark. As the book explains, Stephen has also refurbished a station building at Glyndyfrdway on the Llangollen Railway, after buying them in 2011.

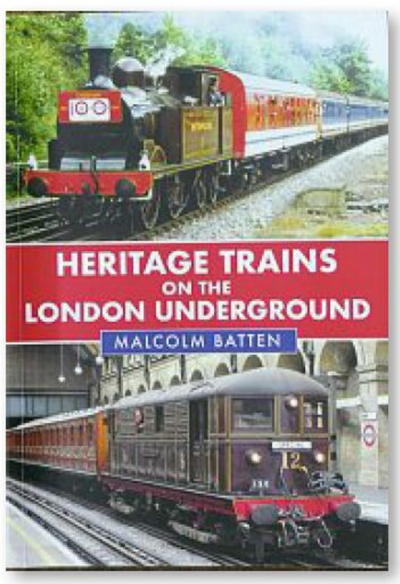
ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST ALL ODDS

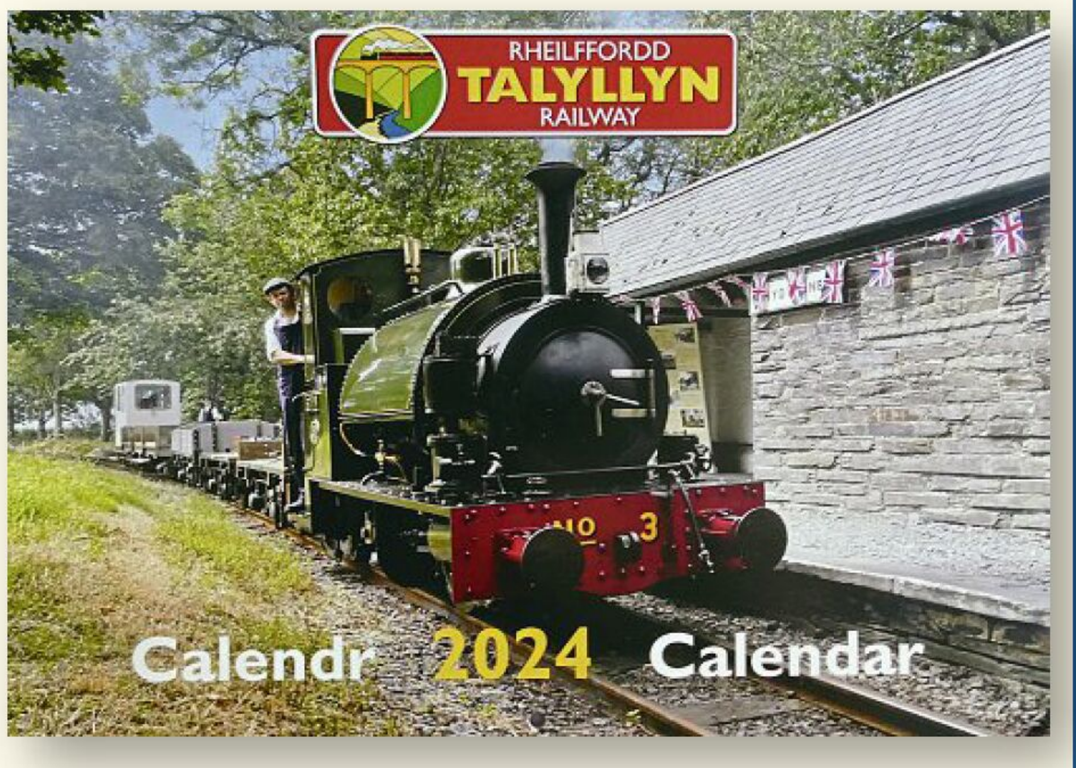
Heritage Trains on the London Underground

By Malcolm Batten (Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, 96pp, £15.99, ISBN 978-1-398115-29-3).

HERE is a superbly comprehensive record of the special events and their trains – steam, diesel and electric-hauled – that have taken place over the world's first subway network since 1963.

The end of Underground steam in 1971, the return of Metropolitan Railway Bo-Bo electric No. 12 *Sarah Siddons* in 1982, the 1989 Chesham branch centenary with WR pannier No. 9466, the Steam of the Met programmes in the 1990s featuring GWR 0-6-0PTs Nos. L90 (7760) and L99 (7715), GWR prairie No. 4144, the sole-surviving Stanier mogul





Talyllyn Railway 2024 calendar

(www.talyllyn.co.uk, £8 plus £3.95 p&p).

COMPRISES of stunning quality colour photographs donated by resident and visiting photographers to illustrate each month of the year, with a box on each day for notes and facts about many aspects of the busy pioneer heritage railway today as you turn each A4 page, such as young volunteers, driver experience, railways weddings, guided trains and the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Wharf station.

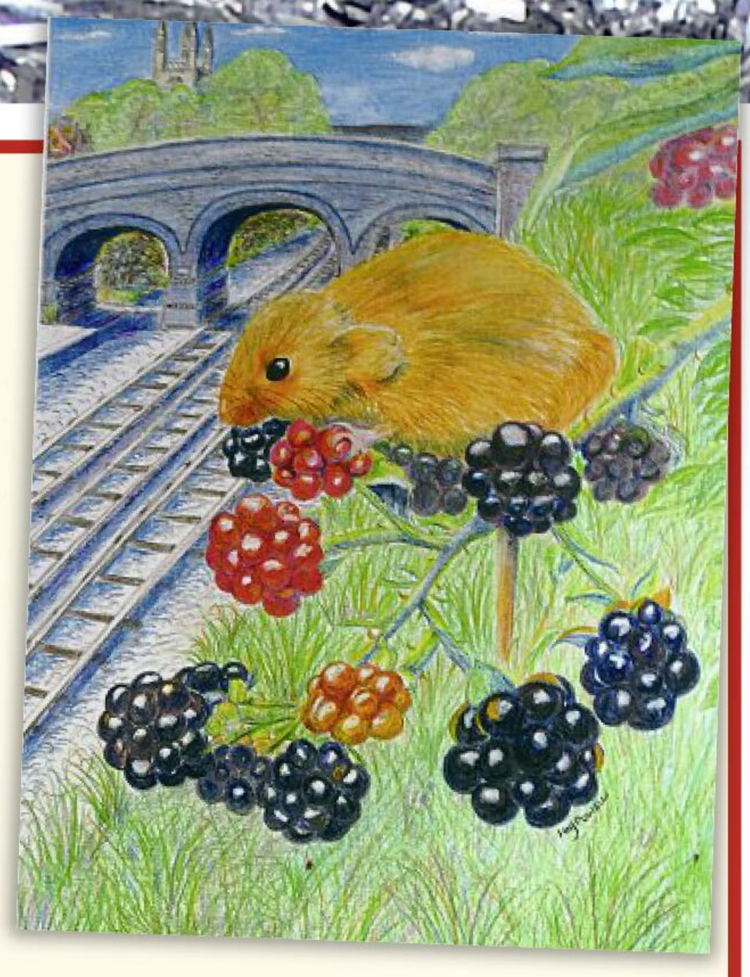
Bourne's Lost Railway Heritage Bridge 234

Artwork by Helen Powell (cheques to HNJ Powell, 6 Westwood Drive, Bourne, PE10 9QH). Posters A2 size (42x59cm), £19.99 each or two for £35, p&p for one or two posters, £5.50; cards (15x21cm), £3 each or £10 for four, p&p £2.70 for one, £3.50 for four).

A FORMER mayor of Bourne in south Lincolnshire, Helen Powell was a leading light in the town's campaign to stop its last publicly accessible railway structure from being demolished to make way for a modern housing estate. Sadly, because of a planning inspector's decision on appeal, Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway Bridge 234, which for generations served as a gateway to Bourne, once a busy four-way junction, was demolished in August 2022.

An accomplished artist, Helen was inspired to create this view of the line from Saxby heading into Bourne beneath the late Victorian three-arch bridge, on a route which in 1959 became part of the first system within BR to be closed – before anyone heard the name Beeching.

The field mouse feasting on blackberries is reminiscent of the surrounding land which lasted as an unofficial nature reserve long after the last train ran, until the developers moved in.



A PORTRAIT OF PARADISE LOST

No. 2968 (the return to traffic on which is reported in News, pages 12/13), and B1 4-0 No. 1264 among others, the Underground 150 event in 2013 and starring Bill Parker's maroon-liveried GWR prairie No. L150 (5521), and the Hammersmith & City 150 celebrations of 2014. These events, which are covered in the volume by a series of excellent colour photographs, drew crowds from far and wide but are almost certain never to be repeated because of new signalling systems; also, London Transport Museum's exhibitions, guided history tours and Acton depot open days are still very much with us and recommended.

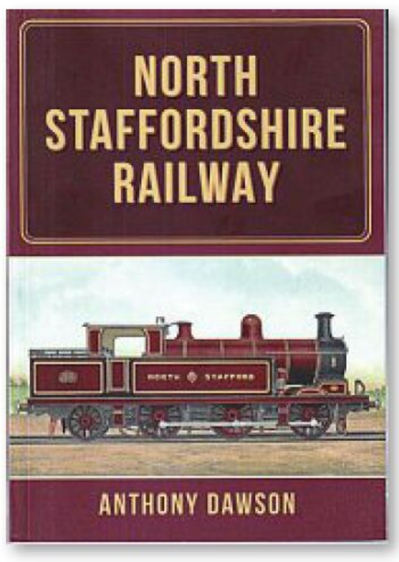
For completeness, the volume includes final sections on the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre and the Epping Ongar Railway, which were both once part of the Underground empire.

CAPITAL SUCCESS

North Staffordshire Railway

By Anthony Dawson (softback, Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, 96pp, ISBN 978-1-398114-43-2).

AS reported in issue 309, the Foxfield Railway celebrated the centenary of the passing of the 'Knotty' at the Grouping of 1923. This concise history also marks the anniversary of the passing of this much-loved company which, based in Stoke-on-Trent, carried two-thirds of the UK's pottery. It built its own locomotives and coaches and ran a sizeable canal system and the narrow gauge Leek & Manifold Valley Light Railway.



The author has assembled a fascinating treasure trove of rare archive photographs to illustrate this very absorbing Knotty biography. A final chapter deals with the company's representation of the heritage era at the Foxfield and Churnet Valley railways.

A KNOTTY MUST READ

Western Steam 2024 calendar

(Steam – Museum of the Great Western Railway, Swindon, www.steam-museum.org.uk/shop, £8 plus £2.95 p&p).

THIS glossy A4 colour calendar features GWR steam in action on a variety of heritage lines, from the Dartmouth Steam Railway to the Blaenavon Heritage Railway, complete with detailed captions. Each page has spacious boxes for writing notes.

A Race Against Time: Photographing the last years of steam on Britain's railways 1962-1971

By Don MacKinnon and Alan Kreppel (hardback, Strathwood Press, strathwood.co.uk, 442pp, £59.99, ISBN 978-1-800688-77-3).

THE two authors spent a great deal of their teenage spare time during the period of 1962-1971 recording the soon-to-vanish steam operations on BR. Then, in 2013, the pair launched a plan to digitise the huge number of monochrome negatives they had captured back then.

Don's health was already causing concern, however, as he was receiving ongoing treatment for blood cancer. Sadly, he died in April 2020 and the planned book to publish the pair's superb railway images was left unfinished. Alan subsequently made it his task to complete what they had both begun so many years before and pay tribute to his friend's photographic skills.

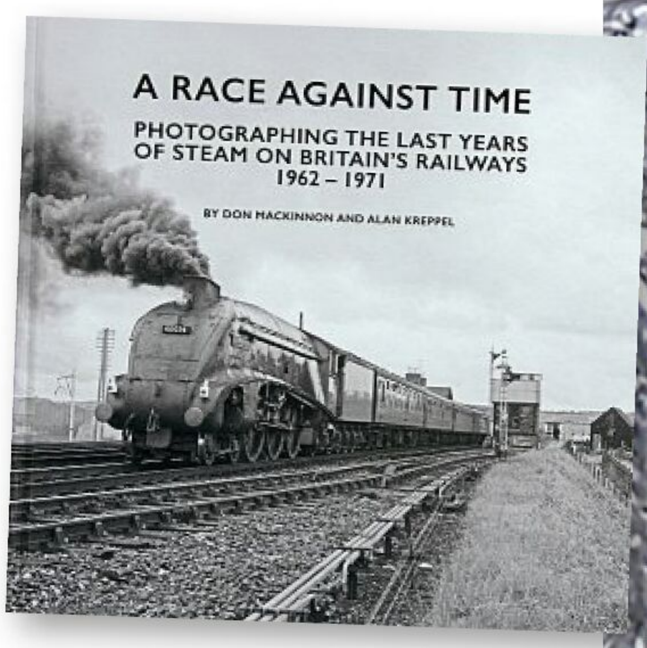
This large-format, self-published book has been limited to a print run of 500 copies. Sometimes, the words 'self-published' can mean 'low quality', but not in this case. It is a very substantial volume that allows the excellent images to be reproduced on quality art paper at a size that does justice to the images the pair originally produced on medium format Rolleiflex, Mamiya, and 35mm Leica M3 equipment.

The 400 photographs contain a wealth of detail portraying the twilight of varied steam activity around the UK from Weymouth to Aberdeen. These terrific pictures are provided with detailed informative captions and the text gives an account of their numerous expeditions to record the steam railway scenes before they vanished.

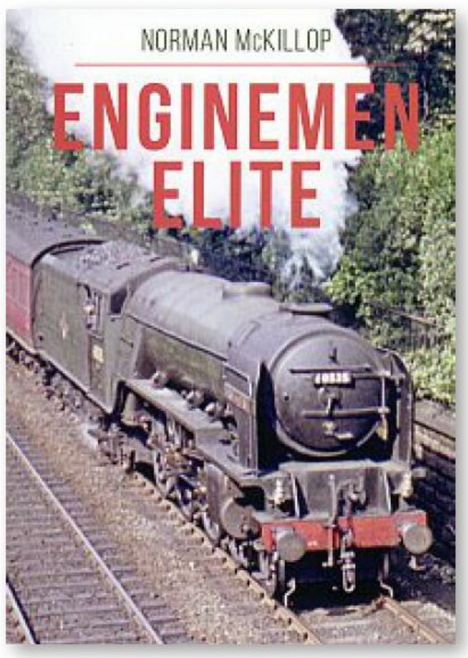
This is very much a book to savour – the wealth of detail really repays time spent by the reader. The nighttime photographs are quite extraordinary, as are so many of the other images included in this publication.

The book really showcases quality black-and-white photography! Strongly recommended.

WINDOW ON THE FINAL STEAM ERA



Pre-order Issue 314: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.



Enginemen Elite

By Norman McKillop (softback, Crecy Publishing, www.crecy.co.uk, 154pp, £8.99, ISBN 978-1-800352-85-8).

THIS is a terrific autobiographical account of life on the steam railway and on the footplate.

Here is a very vivid record of a 46-year footplate career on the railways, which commenced before the First World War in 1910 and through to the mid-1950s on BR.

Norman McKillop began as a cleaner on the North British Railway and rose to be one of the East Coast Top Link drivers based at Edinburgh Haymarket Shed. There are fascinating insights into the various locomotive types he worked with.

He was also an active trade unionist who wrote a history of ASLEF, and social concerns feature in this autobiography.

He also wrote under the pseudonym 'Toram Beg' (which means 'wee Norman' in Gaelic).

Enginemen Elite was originally completed in 1957 and published in 1958; this reasonably priced reissue of such a wide-ranging and well-written account should not be missed by anyone with an interest in life on the footplate during the hey-day of steam operations.

A VOICE FROM THE STEAM HEYDAY

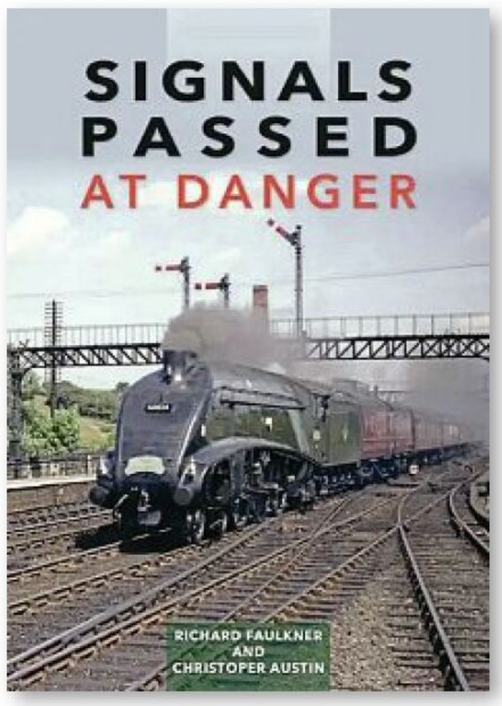
Signals Passed At Danger: Railway Power and Politics in Britain

By Richard Faulkner and Christopher Austin (hardback, Crecy Publishing, www.crecy.co.uk, 200pp, £25, ISBN 978-1-800352-56-8).

FOLLOWING their previous books, Disconnected and Holding the Line, (which dealt with railway closures and reopenings respectively), Signals Passed At Danger by Richard Faulkner (Labour Peer Lord Faulkner of Worcester) and Christopher Austin (former British Rail parliamentary affairs manager) draws on research and first-hand experience of the authors, leaving no aspect uncovered of the relationship between the Government and the railways over the last 180 years.

Even what constitutes a 'defining moment' can sometimes be open to debate, but their arguments are clearly explained and evidenced over the course of 12 chapters and several appendices.

Their analysis ranges from parliamentary scrutiny of leading Victorian railway engineers and the role of politicians in early 20th century industrial relations to the 'Big Four' Grouping and onwards, covering Nationalisation, Privatisation and, as a stop press, the current pressure on the industry to deliver savings.



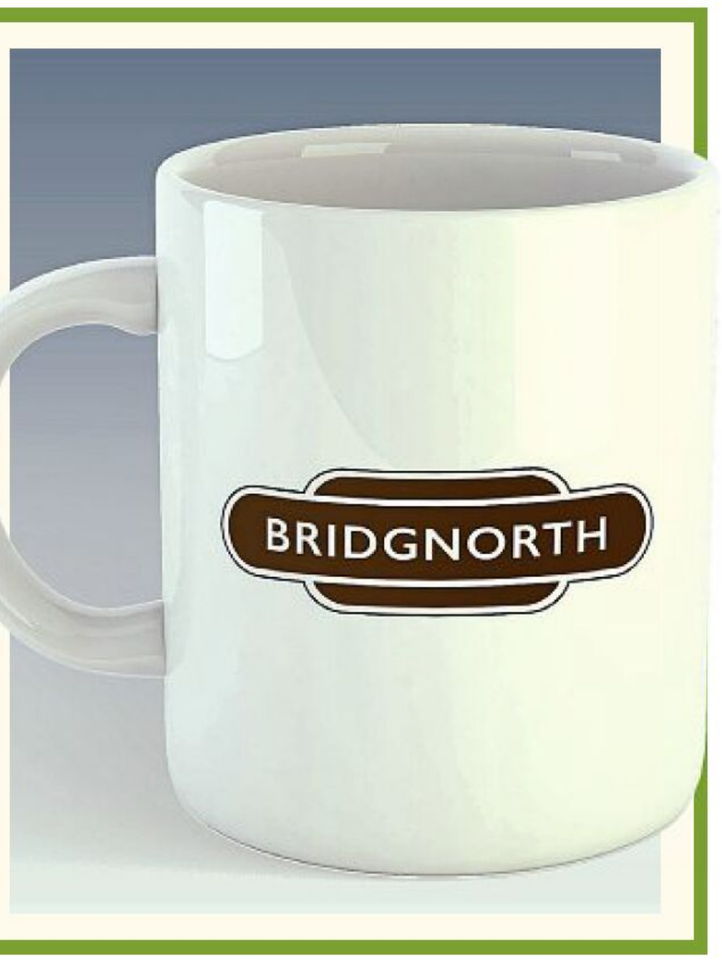
It is well worth reading for a thought-provoking insight into what has influenced the shape and direction of our railways. In a few years from now, as policies evolve, perhaps there may be scope to add another chapter on differences between England, Scotland, and Wales.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL DIMENSION

Severn Valley totem mug

(https//svrshop.co.uk, Tel: 01562 757517, email: contact@svrlive.com, £10 plus £4 p&p; recorded delivery first class £5.50).

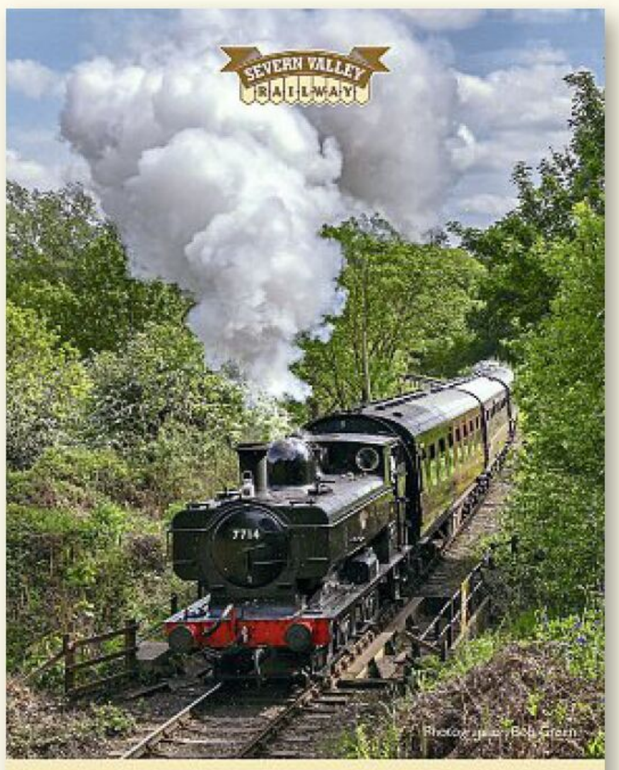
THIS ceramic mug can be printed with a totem sign featuring any of the SVR's nine stations or halts of your choice. Place your order and they are usually ready from Kidderminster Town Station Emporium within two to four days – and they are dishwasher safe.

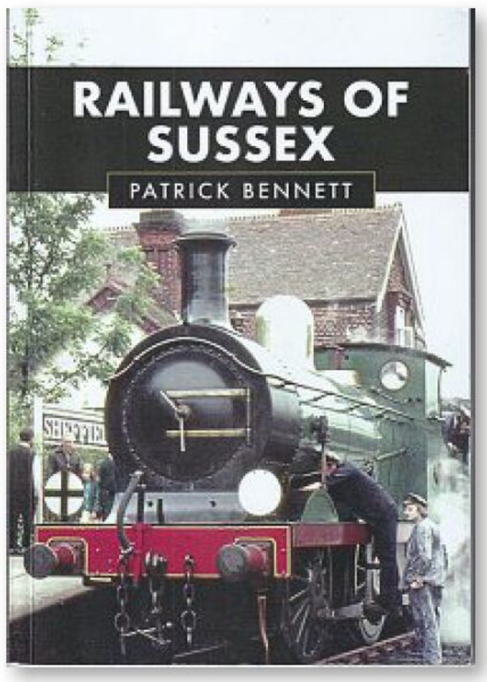


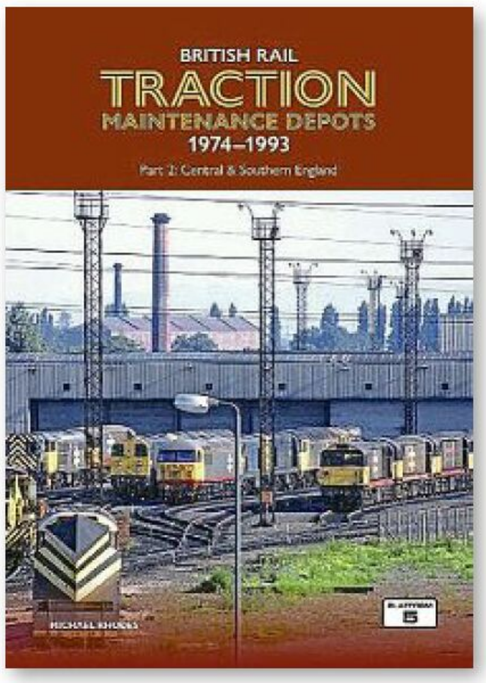
Severn Valley 2024 calendar

(https://svrshop.co.uk, tel: 01562 757517, email: contact@svrlive.com, £9.99 plus £4 p&p).

THIS A4 colour calendar features 12 steam locomotives, with a mixture of those currently running and others being overhauled. One for every month from January to December, it will provide ideal inspiration for your next trip!







Railways of Sussex

By Patrick Bennett (softback, Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, 96pp £15.99, ISBN 9781-3-98114-77-7).

IF you love Sussex, you will love this potted account of the history of the growth of the county's railways, from the LBSCR's building of the Brighton Line, through the encroachment of the LSWR and SECR, up to the Bluebell, Kent & East Sussex and Spa Valley railways we enjoy today.

The rich and varied history includes rare archives pictures from many of the lines that have either vanished or still with us now– the Volks Electric Railway, Colonel Holman F Stephens' lines, including the Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway, the Rye and Camber Tramway and the Rother Valley Railway. Well-informed captions mean that regular Sussex visitors and even long-standing residents will learn something different on every page.

SPLENDID HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

British Rail Traction Maintenance Depots 1974-1993 Part 2: Central & Southern England

By Michael Rhodes (softback, Platform 5, www.platform5.com, 96pp, £21.95, ISBN 978-1-915984-02-9).

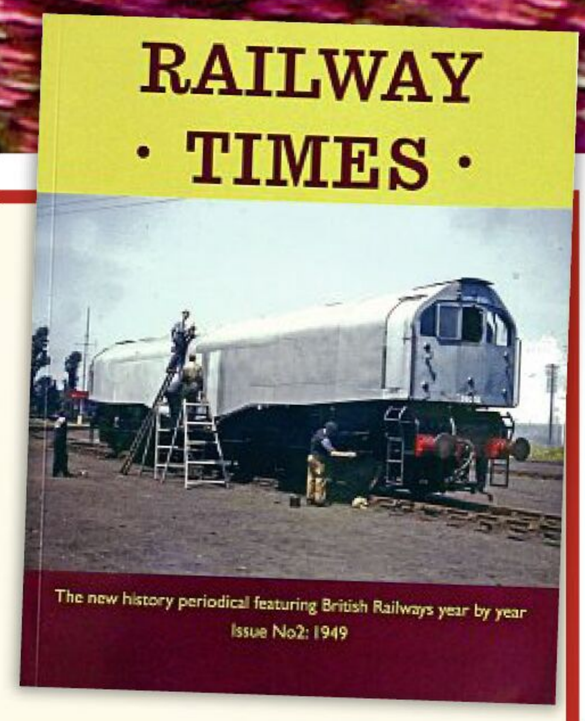
THIS volume follows a similar format to the first edition, which featured northern England, but covers a much larger geographical area – from Barrow Hill and Shirebrook in the North Midlands to Norwich in the east, Eastleigh in the south and St Blazey in the west.

There is a mixture of colour and mono images, but all accompanied by detailed captions and notes about what was on shed at the time, plus a brief history of the depots themselves. Many of the locations are now long gone, as are the coal, steel, and other industries they supported.

It is not a comprehensive work, in the sense that not all depots within the area are included, but it still adds up to a good selection and

Railway Times Issue No. 2: 1949

Edited by Jeffery Grayer (softback, Transport Treasury Publishing, 80pp, £12.95 plus £3 p&p, cheques to Transport Treasury Publishing, 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe HP13 7PJ. ISBN 978-1-913251-56-7).



RAILWAY Times is a recently-launched biannual journal from Transport Treasury and features British Railways year by year, this issue covering 1949, **writes Geoff Courtney.** It was a year, explains editor Jeffery Grayer, that saw the retirement of locomotive engineers Hawksworth, Peppercorn and Bulleid, of whom he says all left their mark on the railways, although perhaps not always in the form of a lasting legacy. With regard to that latter comment, he cites "the never to be repeated double-deck EMU experiment, the short-lived tavern cars, and the perhaps best forgotten Leader fiasco."

Of the Leader much has been written over the years, but I had to acquaint myself with the tavern cars, for it is a subject of which I knew nothing. I learn from this publication that these were the result of a joint venture between then Hotels Executive and British Transport Commission, and were designed by Bulleid, who it is believed based them on The Chequers Inn, at Pulborough, Sussex.

Eight two-car sets were built for the Southern and Eastern regions at Lancing Carriage Works at a total cost of £64,000, a figure which represented nearly one-quarter of BR's entire restaurant car budget for the year. Described as a 'kitchen and tavern car,' they replaced conventional restaurant cars on the 'Atlantic Coast Express' and five Eastern Region named expresses, but heavy criticism of the concept from MPs, the media, and – due to them serving alcohol – the Methodist church, led to them being withdrawn and rebuilt in 1950 to a more traditional design.

Covering a year in the life of BR is a challenging task, but the contents page provides a steer on the wide-ranging subjects covered by the book. They vary from Barry Railway 0-6-0T finale to BR Standard liveries, from branch line closures to new diesel shunters for the Southern Region, and from the 'Capitals Limited' to self-weighing tenders.

Throw into the melting pot, among other ingredients, the Liverpool Street-Shenfield electrification, BR's new all-steel coaches, Beyer-Garratt on the Lickey, pannier tanks old and new, the Leader – trials and tribulation, and last of the Patriot rebuilds, and readers have a potpourri of BR's early history as the country continued its recovery from a world war.

Another essential ingredient is the photographs that accompany Jeffery's words, and I was particularly enamoured of an image of Lickey banker No. 58100, another of a top-hatted stationmaster chatting to the driver of an A4, flocks of racing pigeons being released from railway vans at Selby and Winchester, and floral Beverley station looking more like a Chelsea Flower Show entrant that a railway station.

WIDE-RANGING ROUND-UP OF BR'S EARLY POSTWAR DAYS

a reminder of days gone by when 'bunking' sheds was still a possibility.

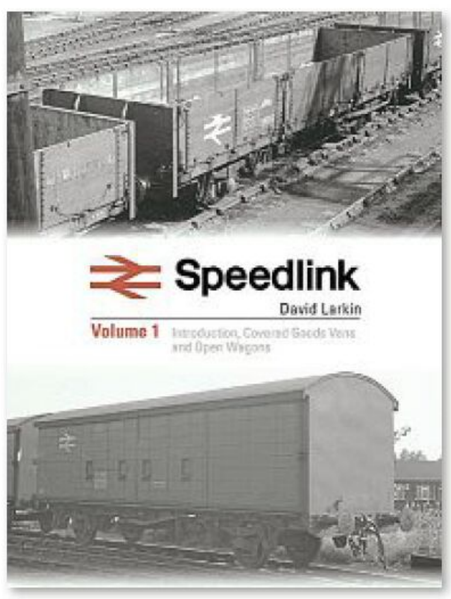
DIESEL SHED DAYS OF OLD

Speedlink Volume 1 – Introduction, Covered Goods Vans and Open Wagons

By David Larkin (hardback, Crecy Publishing, 160pp, £25, ISBN 978-1-80035-277-3).

THOSE with an interest in the ever-changing face of freight transportation will no doubt enjoy this hefty first part of David Larkin's series looking at the wagons that made up Speedlink. It is not until you look at a publication such as this that you truly begin to appreciate just how many different wagons designs there actually were, and the author has amassed an extensive collection of photographs to accompany when and where they were spotted, details often overlooked if the picture is not of a high-profile express locomotive.

HISTORIC RECORD OF THE CHANGING FREIGHT SCENE



James Spooner Glass Placemat & Slate Coaster

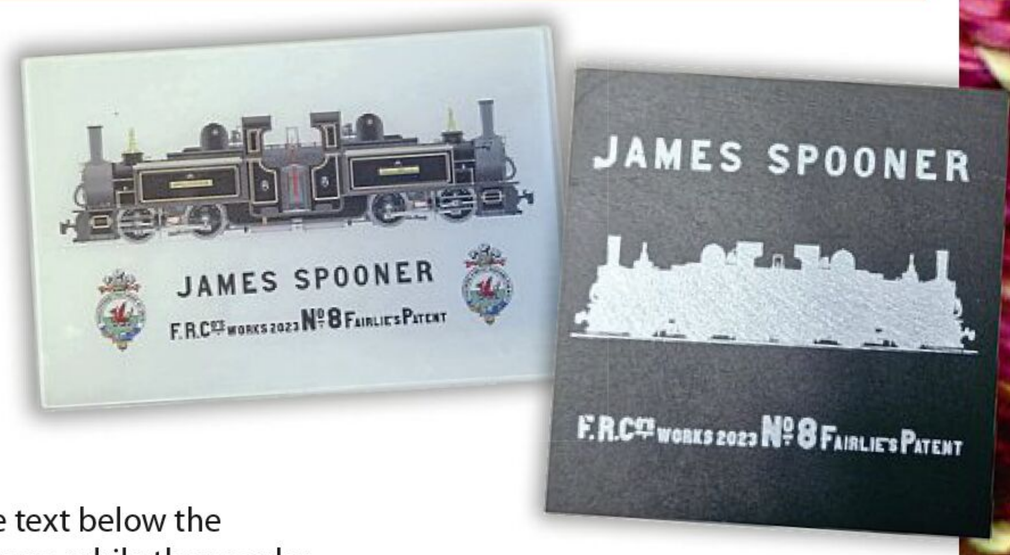
(www.festrail.co.uk/shop/, 01766 516034, placemat, £9.99; coaster, £5.99, plus p&p).

THE launch of the world's newest steam locomotive (News, pages 22/23) was accompanied a range of merchandise, and amid the usual keyrings and mugs is something a little more unusual – in the form of these two products.

Featuring artwork by Martin Ellis, the kitchen board can also double up as a food preparation surface and cutting board. Easy to clean and heat-resistant with a non-scratch surface, it make a rather aesthetically pleasing and practical alternative to the regular 'pocket change' nick-nacks.

Two designs are available: the launch edition (pictured) includes the worksplate text below the locomotive image, while the regular version replaces this with the year, but the *James Spooner* artwork and price is the same for each.

The coaster, meanwhile, is rather fittingly made with natural Snowdonia slate, with the outline profile of the double Fairlie printed onto it, along with the worksplate text. Only a limited run has been produced of these. HR



The Ivo Peters Collection Volume 13 – Steam In 1964

DVD (ivopeters.co.uk, 54 minutes, £16.95).

THE latest of the Ivo Peters releases, this edition looks at some of the steam-operated services amid the ever-increasing diesel domination.

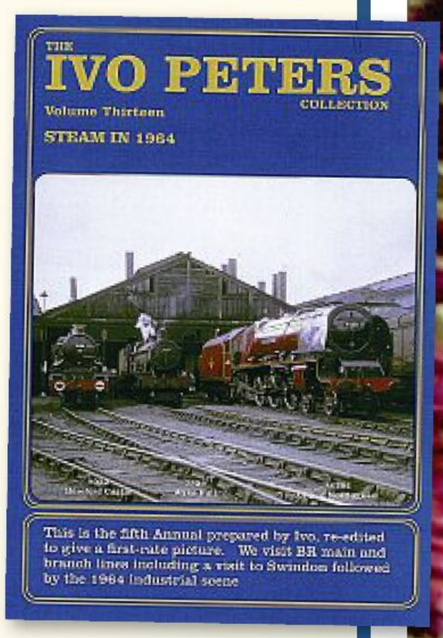
The first half focuses on some of the closing branch lines as well as main line steam in the Western Region, with Gresley's *Flying Scotsman* also making an appearance on a tour to Swindon and an enthusiast tour with WR 1400 No. 1450 on the Hemyock branch.

The focus of the first half lies in the Western Region, though includes a smattering of SR express locomotives and a LMS Duchess; Peters clearly had no favourites, but equally the number of locations achieved when filming some of these leaves you wondering how hard Peters' beloved Bentley was pushed to beat the trains between them – no doubt the substantially lower volume of road traffic was a significant factor in this.

The volume concludes with further scenes from industrial settings, including the slightly smaller gauges of the Stewarts & Lloyds Wellingborough quarries. Corby's Ironstone quarries also get a coverage, with the iconic Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 'Uglies' hard at work there.

One of Peters' trainspotting companions, the Rev Teddy Boston, can again be regularly sighted, having blagged (or in the process of) a cab pass on several occasions – and on one occasion is even captured helping 'reassemble' a decaying locomotive for a photograph.

TIMELESS SCENES OF STEAM AND THE PEOPLE DOCUMENTING THEM



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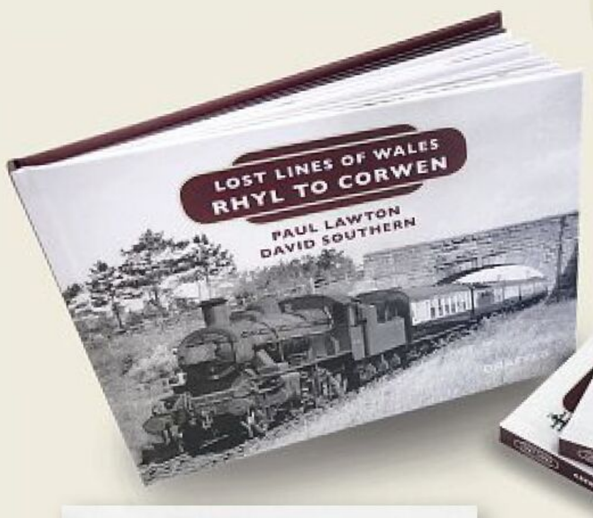

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- Ryde to Cowes
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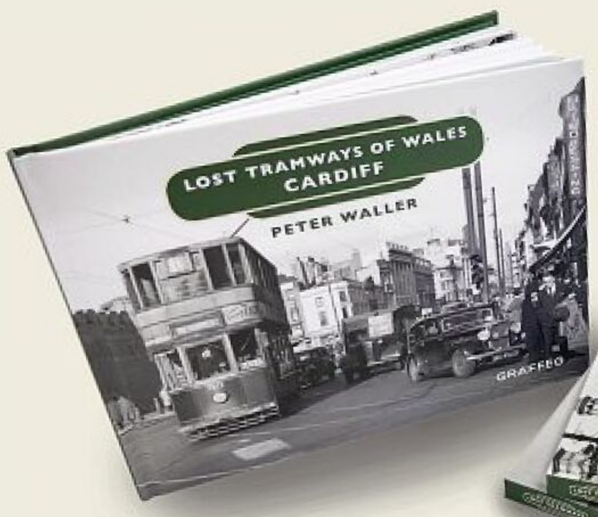

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Visting Coffee Pot No.1, from Beamish Open Air Museum, shunts a loaded chaldron wagon in Marley Hill Yard.

***Sir Cecil A. Cochrane* sits in Marley Hill shed ready for the 'night shift' during the Friday evening photographic event at Marley Hill.**

SMELL THE COFFEE POT AT TANFIELD GALA!

In glorious autumn weather, the Tanfield Railway held its Run It All gala on October 14/15 using its entire operational fleet alongside its special guest, Beamish Open Air Museum's Head Wrightson Coffee Pot No. 1, reports **Dave Wilson** in words and pictures.

The two-day end-of-season gala drew sizeable crowds and, along with a busy schedule of freight and passenger trains, there were guided tours of Marley Hill shed and workshops, as well as shunting demonstrations by both No. 6 and Head Wrightson 0-4-0VBWT Coffee Pot No.1 In operation from the home fleet was Barclay 0-6-0ST No. 1015 of 1904 *Horden*, formerly of Horden Colliery, which in May 1930 set a record for the most coal mined in a single day – 6758 tons.

In glorious late afternoon light, Hawthorne Leslie 0-4-0ST *Keighley Gas Works No. 2* pilots Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-4-0ST *Sir Cecil A. Cochrane* away from East Tanfield with the 4.36pm coal empties to Andrews House.

Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-6-0ST NCB No. 49 departs from Marley Hill yard with a train of hoppers for Sunniside.

Horden was joined by another Barclay, 0-4-0ST No. 1659 of 1920 No. 32 *Stanley*, which spent almost all its working life within a mile of the heritage line's current terminus at East Tanfield.

Indeed, No. 32 is one of only a handful of surviving locomotives known to have worked over section of the current Tanfield Railway in pre-preservation days.

The Barclay duo was complemented by locally-built Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST No. 2859 of 1911 *Keighley Gas Works No.2* and Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns No. 7409 of 1948 *Sir Cecil A. Cochrane*, which was named after a Liberal MP who represented South Shields in 1916-18. It spent much of its working life at Redheugh gas works, located alongside the River Tyne in Gateshead.

Also in action was RSH Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 7098 of 1943 No.49, which was initially owned by the Ministry of Supply but was later transferred to the National Coal Board and worked on the famous NCB Backworth system in Northumberland, before coming to Tanfield in 1980. The final member of the working home fleet was Ruston Hornsby No. 418600 of 1958 0-4-0DE *Tyne Improvement Commission No.35*.

There was also a cameo appearance from Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST *Renishaw Iron Works No.6*, used on shunting duties in Marley Hill yard. Recently acquired by new owners, having undergone major boiler work at Tanfield it will shortly be leaving the line for pastures new. HR

Barclay 0-6-0ST *Horden* takes the 3.35pm Marley Hill-Sunniside hoppers out of Marley Hill sidings and on to the main running line.

In lovely morning light, Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-6-0ST NCB No. 49 is pictured approaching Causey woods with the 10.20am Sunniside service.

Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST *Renishaw Ironworks No.6* shunts empty coal hoppers in Marley Hill Yard. It has just returned to traffic following major boiler repairs and is due to leave Tanfield in the near future.

Don't fly – take the train! This pheasant rode all the way from Marley Hill station up to the carriage shed and had to be literally shooed away. It must be one of the most unusual gala visitors ever!

Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No.32 *Stanley* passes Bobgins crossing with the 10.56am East Tanfield-Sunniside coal hoppers.

TRACK TALK

➜ The Titfield field still carries the name

I found the article about The Titfield Thunderbolt in issue 312 very very interesting.

About 20 years ago we purchased the field which had been used as a landfill site. We covered it in top soil and returned it to grass, which is its present state.

I can remember as a six-year-old boy, walking down and seeing the whole area as a big siding, and it was absolutely full of GWR vans, which were guarded by soldiers, this being early spring of 1944; and, of course, all these trucks were obviously waiting for D Day, because they suddenly disappeared.

When they were filming the collision scene with the steam roller and the lorry, my father wandered over to watch this happening and got into conversation with Stanley Holloway, who complained that he was very bored, as every time a cloud passed the sun, they had to stop filming to ensure each take was the same colour.

Of course, the field in question is called Titfield; in the trees between the field and the scrap cars are the remains of the original public house.

Robert Gardiner, Tunley, Somerset.

➜ Shining a light or two on west Cornwall

ISSUE 309 carried a great article about the fantastic reopening of Eardington station on the Severn Valley Railway – what an achievement!

However, can I just point out that Eardington isn't the only entirely oil-lit station left in the UK!

Both Trevarno and Truthall Halt on our railway are purely lit by oil lamps.

Colin Savage, general manager, Helston Railway.

➜ Remembering Leeds Central

LAST issue we carried a story about the restoration of the former lifting tower at Leeds Central station, and an appeal by local business community Wellington Place to hear from people with memories and memorabilia about the station to contact them via email.

The address is sophie@wellington-place.com

We want your news and views

Write to us at *Heritage Railway*, Mortons Media Ltd, PO Box 43, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6LZ or email editor@heritagerailway.co.uk.

STAR LETTER

Is burning steam coal affecting climate change?

IN Opinion, issue 311, you said "that the urgency of turning away from the mass burning of fossil fuels is bringing..."

Perhaps you would like to know coal production for 2022?

China, 4,430,000,000 tons; India, 937,000,000 tons; Indonesia, 690,000,000 tons; USA, 540,000,000 tons; Australia, 459,000,000 tons – and production is increasing year by year. Not much of a turning away in the evidence.

And then, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway is tackling climate change with an oil-burning conversion plan for WD Austerity 2-10-0 No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn*. Seriously? Isn't oil a fossil fuel? If you believe in all that unscientific nonsense, at least get things in perspective. CO2 is about 420ppm, man producing about 4%.

Let's call in 20ppm. Then, the UK is 'responsible' for 1%, 0.2 of 1%, that is one part per 5,000,000. And the heritage sector's contribution? Too small to register.

Terry Norton, email

Well-stocked with coal, newly restored LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 heads tender first from Corfe Castle on October 8, 2023, with one of its first public Swanage Railway services. ANDREW PM WRIGHT

CREDIT: DAVID CAWTHRA

The real Old Oak Common 56 years ago!

READING issue 312, on page 22 there is a photograph of a recreation of Western diesels on the turntable at Old Oak Common at the Severn Valley Railway.

Here is a picture I took at Old Oak Common turntable in June 1967 when I was touring the south of England to catch photographs of the last week of steam on the Southern.

Two Hymeks, three Westerns, and two Brush diesels around the turntable can be seen.

David Cawthra, Blackpool, Lancashire

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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, W/Es until Dec 20.

Bluebell Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL. Tel: 01825 720800.
Running: Weds-Suns until Dec.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10.

Chatham Historic Dockyard
Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent. Tel: 01634 820800.
Reopens: Feb 2024.

East Kent Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 21/22.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway
10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.
Running: W/Es until Dec 17.

Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway
12¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Exbury, Southampton. Tel: 023 8089 1203.
Reopens: March 2024.

Hayling Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Hayling Island, Hants. Tel: 07902 446340.
Running: Weds, W/Es.

Hollycombe Steam in the Country
2ft gauge, 1½ miles. Liphook, Hants. Tel: 01428 724900.
Reopen: Spring 2024.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 21/22.

Kent & East Sussex Railway
Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.
Running: W/Es until Jan 1 + Dec 22, 29.

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.
Running: Dec 3, 9/10, 16/17.

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.
Running: Thurs-Suns until Dec + Dec 18-20.

Mizens Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922.
Running: Dec 3, 10, 17.

Old Kiln Light Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.
Reopens: 2024.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 21/22.

Royal Victoria Railway
10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.
Running: W/Es until Dec 18 + Dec 18-22.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.
Running: W/Es until Dec 23 + Dec 22.

Spa Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.
Running: Thurs-Suns until Dec 23.

Volk's Electric Railway
2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton.
Reopens: Spring 2024.

SOUTH WEST

Avon Valley Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Bitton, Bristol. Tel: 0117 932 5538.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 19-22.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 21/22.

Bristol Harbour Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.
M Shed Museum open daily (ex Dec 25)

Dartmouth Steam Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Paignton, Devon. Tel: 01803 555872.
Running: Thurs-Suns until Dec 23.

Devon Railway Centre
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon. Tel: 01884 855671.
Reopens: 2024.

East Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset. Tel: 01749 880417.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 20, 22.

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752.
Reopens: 2024.

Helston Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597.
Running: Dec 9/10, 16/17, 20-23.

Lappa Valley Railway
7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile. Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.
Open: Thurs-Suns + Dec 19/20.

Launceston Steam Railway
1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665
Reopens: Spring 2024.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.
Running: Dec 16-24.

Moors Valley Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415. **Running: W/Es + Dec 19/20.**

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: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17, 20/21.

Seaton Tramway
2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.
Running: Weds-Suns + Dec 12, 19.

Somerset & Dorset Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17, 22.

South Devon Railway
Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.
Running: Thurs-Suns + Dec 18-20.

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.
Running: Thurs-Suns + Dec 18-20.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17.

West Somerset Railway
Standard gauge, 20 miles. Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.
Running: Fris-Suns until Dec 30 + Dec 18-21.

Yeovil Railway Centre
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 21-23.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum
Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.
Open: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17, 21-24.

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, widely considered to be the definitive fictional tale of the festive season, will be the subject of a two-hour one-man performance – by none other than Gerald Dickens, great, great grandson of the author, on the atmospherically-lit station platform at Didcot Railway Centre on Thursday, December 14. It will be the pinnacle of Didcot's December programme which includes, for children, 'Steam into Christmas and help Santa find his missing reindeer!' on 2/3, 9/10, 16/17 and 21-23, which will include steam train rides. There will also be a New Year steam day on January 1. Gerald is pictured during this summer's performance at Didcot of Charles Dickens' The Signalman. DRC

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Bure Valley Railway
15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858.
Running: W/Es + Dec 18-22.

Colne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.
Running: W/Es until Dec 30 + Dec 21/22.

East Anglian Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.
Open: Weds, W/Es.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17.

Ferry Meadows Railway
10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01733 398 889.
Running: W/Es.

Mangapps Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Tel: 01621 784898.
Reopens: Feb 2024.

Mid-Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 11½ miles. Dereham, Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.
Running: Daily until Dec 23.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.
Running: Nov 26, Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17.

Nene Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01780 784444.
Running: Thurs-Suns from Dec 2-24 + Dec 13.

North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA. Tel: 01263 820800.
Running:Thurs-Suns until Dec 23 + Dec 12/13, 18-20.

Wells & Walsingham Railway
10¼in gauge, four miles. Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk. Tel: 01328 711630.
Reopens: 2024.

Whitwell & Reepham Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Reepham, Norfolk. Tel: 01603 871694.
Open: Tues-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 (ex Dec 25). Running: W/Es until Dec 17 .

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Chinnor, Oxon.
Tel: 07979 055366
Running: W/Es until Dec 23 + Dec 21/22.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Wallingford, Oxon.
Tel: 01491 835067
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17, 22/23.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: W/Es (ex Dec 24).
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17, 21-23.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Running: Fris-Suns until Dec 31 + Dec 20/21.

Great Whipsnade Railway
2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.
Tel: 0344 225 1826.
Reopens: Feb 2024.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway
2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.
Tel: 01932 212235.
Open: Suns until Dec 17 + Dec 9, 16.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Weds & W/Es from Dec 2-24 + Dec 18, 21/22.

London Museum of Water & Steam
2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.
Tel: 0208 568 4757. **Open: Thurs-Suns.**

Passengers can extend the festive season with a trip to Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway to experience the wonder of winter in the spectacular Western Lake District between Boxing Day and New Year's Day 2024. With the excitement of the big day over, special 'winter warmer' trains are a great way to take in one of the most scenic narrow gauge railway routes in the UK. As part of the continuing festivities, everyone boarding one of the festive trains with a full-line return ticket during this period (December 26-January 1) can warm up with a complimentary cup of non-alcoholic festive fruit punch and a mince pie. To add a little sparkle, visitors will also see the engines dressed in their festive outfits. All of the stations will be adorned with Christmas decorations and offer great vantage points for the best photo opportunities at the turntables and passing loops. The railway's cafes, gift shops, and the Ravenglass Railway museum will also be open while trains are running. Tickets are available online now for the popular winter warmer trains at: www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk R&ER

Railway Museums

Beamish
The Living Museum of the North, County Durham.
Open: Daily until Nov 5
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: 2024.
Tel: 01270 212130.

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre
Donegal.
Open: Mon-Sat.
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 (ex Dec 25).
Tel: 0343 222 5000.

Manchester Museum of Science & Industry
Castlefield, Manchester.
Open: Daily (ex Dec 25).
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

National Railway Museum
Leeman Road, York.
Open: Daily (ex Dec 25).
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

Penrhyn Castle & Railway Museum
Bangor, Gwynedd.
Open: W/Es (ex Dec 23/24).
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: Weds, W/Es.
Tel: 01733 344420.

Riverside Museum
Glasgow.
Open: Daily (ex Dec 25).
Tel: 0141 287 2720.

STEAM – Museum of the GWR
Swindon.
Open: Daily (ex Dec 25).
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.

MIDLANDS

Abbey Pumping Station
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX. Tel: 0116 299 5111.
Reopens: Feb 1, 2024.

Amerton Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Stowe-by-Chartley, Staffs. Tel: 01889 271337.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-24.

Apedale Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.
Tel: 0845 094 1953.
Running: Dec 9, 27.

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.
Running: W/Es + Dec 22, 28/29.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys). Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-31.

Chasewater Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Walsall, West Midlands.
Tel: 01543 452623.
Open: Daily (ex Dec 25). Running: W/Es from Nov 26-24.

Churnet Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 5¼ miles. Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.
Running: Thurs-Suns until Dec 23 + Dec 13, 18-20.

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile. Crich, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01773 854 321
Reopens: Mar 9, 2024.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Norchard, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: W/Es until Dec 31 + Dec 6, 13, 20, 22.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.
Running: Fris-Suns until Dec 24 + Dec 21.

Echills Wood Railway
7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.
Running: Suns until Dec 10 + Dec 2, 9.

Evesham Vale Railway
15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.
Running: W/Es until Dec 31.

Foxfield Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Blythe Bridge, Staffs.
Tel: 01782 396210.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 21/22.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
Standard gauge, 15 miles. Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.
Running: W/Es until Dec 23 + Dec 20-22.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles. Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 8, 15, 21/22.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.
Open: W/Es until Dec 9.

Leek & Rudyard Railway
10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs.
Tel: 01538 269948.
Running: Dec 9/1, 16/17.

Midland Railway – Butterley
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 8, 15, 20/21.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Pitsford, Northants.
Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: W/Es until Dec 23.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunsbury Hill, Northampton.
Tel: 01604 702031.
Running: W/Es from Dec 3-24.

Peak Rail
Standard gauge, four miles. Matlock, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01629 580381.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-24 + Dec 22.

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.
Ropens: March 31, 2024.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants. Tel 0300 3023 150.
Running: Dec 2/3, 16/17.

Severn Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR.
Tel: 01562 757900.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 19-22.

Statfold Barn Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU.
Tel: 01827 830389.
Open: Fris-Suns until Dec 23 + Dec 18-21.

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: Tues-Suns until Dec 21.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.
Reopens: 2024.

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Blackpool, Lancs.
Tel: 01253 209521.
www.blackpoolheritage.com
Depot: Reopens 2024.
Heritage tram tours: Mons, Weds, Fris-Mons until Dec 23.

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.
Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: W/Es until Dec 31 + Dec 20-22.

Eden Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Warcop, Cumbria.
Tel: 01768 342309.
Reopens: 2024.

Great Laxey Mine Railway
19in gauge, ¼ mile.
Laxey, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 862007/670386.
Reopens: 2024.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile.
Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453.
Running: Dec 9/10, 16/17.

Heaton Park Tramway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.
Reopens: 2024.

Isle of Man Steam Railway
3ft gauge, 15½ miles.
Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 662525.
Running: Dec 9, 15/16, 21-23.

Kirkby Stephen East
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 371700.
Open: Suns.

Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Near Ulverston, Cumbria.
Tel: 01539 531594.
Reopens: 2024.

Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway
3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER), 5½ miles (SMR).
Douglas, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 697473.
Reopens: Mar 2024.

Tickets for the Severn Valley Railway's seasonal services have been selling fast, with two experiences tailored for families. Santa trains depart from Kidderminster and include a live pantomime show at Arley, Christmas gifts, and free 2024 return vouchers for children, while the 'Enchanted Express' departs from Bridgnorth for a magical steam-hauled journey, with costumed characters, a visit from Father Christmas, and on-board narration from Dame Julie Walters; children also receive gifts and free 2024 return vouchers. The 'Yuletide Festive Dining' and 'Afternoon Tea' experiences, which run on selected dates and are aimed at those who love fine food served in luxury steam-hauled dining carriages, are also proving extremely popular and some services are already booked out. Also, a new diesel day event will be held on December 29. For more details and to book,visit svr.co.uk or telephone 01562 757900. SVR

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

Pre-order Issue 314: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.
Running: W/Es until Dec 23 + Dec 18, 20-22.

Ribble Steam Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Preston, Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17.

South Tynedale Railway
2ft gauge, 4¾ miles. Alston, Cumbria. Tel: 01434 338212.
Running: Dec 9/10, 16/17.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 779747.
Open: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 20-22.

West Lancashire Light Railway
2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs. Tel: 01772 815881.
Running: Dec 3, 9/10, 16/17.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland. Tel: 0300 030 3311.
Running: Nov 26, Dec 9/10.

Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society
Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe. Tel: 07889 297271.
Reopens: 2024.

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: Dec 9/10, 16/17, 22/23.

Derwent Valley Light Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.
Reopens: 2024.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 795189.
Running: Fris-Suns until Dec 24 + Dec 19-21.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles. Ford Forge, Northumberland. Tel: 01890 820244.
Open: Dec 9/10, 17.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ. Tel: 01535 645214.
Running: W/Es + Dec 14/15, 21/22.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway
2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs. Tel: 07407 500884.
Running: Oct 28.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.
Reopens: 2024.

Middleton Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunslet, Leeds. Tel: 0845 680 1758.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-24.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24.

Scarborough North Bay Railway
20in gauge, 7/8 mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.
Reopens: 2024.

Stephenson Steam Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. North Shields. Tel: 0191 277 7135.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-24.

Tanfield Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07508 092365.
Running: W/Es until Dec 24 + Dec 20/21.

Weardale Railway
Standard gauge, 18 miles. Stanhope, Co. Durham.
Running: W/Es + Dec 12-14, 19-22.

Wensleydale Railway
Standard gauge, 22 miles. Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire. Tel: 01677 425805.
Running: Thurs-Suns until Dec 23 + Dec 13, 20.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)
15in gauge, four miles. Huddersfield, West Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.
Running: Fris-Mons until Dec 24 + Dec 20/21.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.
Reopens: 2024.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway
2ft gauge, 4½ miles. Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.
Running: Dec 9/10.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Blaenavon, Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles. Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.
Running: Tues-Thurs & W/Es until Dec 21 + Dec 18.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile. Corris, near Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.
Running: Dec 9/10.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne, Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.
Reopens: 2024.

Ffestiniog Railway
2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Dec 28-Jan 1.

Gwili Railway
Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire. Tel: 01267 238213.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-24.

Llanberis Lake Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870549.
Running: Nov 28-30.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire. Tel: 07956 082305.
Running: Dec 9/10.

Llangollen Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen, Denbighshire. Tel: 01978 860979.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-24 + Dec 20-22.

Rhyl Miniature Railway
15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales. Tel: 01352 759109.
Reopens: 2024.

Snowdon Mountain Railway
800mm gauge, 4½ miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.
Reopens: 2024.

Talyllyn Railway
2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles. Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.
Running: Tues from Dec 5 + Dec 16/17, 23.

Teifi Valley Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Henllan, Ceredigion, SA44 5TD. Tel: 01559 371077.
Running: TBA.

Vale of Rheidol Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.
Reopens: 2024.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.
Running: Dec 16/17.

Welsh Highland Railway
2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.
Running: Dec 9/10, 16/17, 22/23.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2-23 + Dec 18, 22.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: W/Es from Dec 2 + Dec 15.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles. Brechin, Angus. Tel: 01356 622992. **Running: W/Es until Dec 17.**

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge. Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Reopens: 2024.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Dufftown, Banffshire. Tel: 01340 821181.
Running: Dec 2/3, 9/10, 16/17.

Lathalmond Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ½ mile. Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond, near Dunfermline. Tel: 07379 914801.
Reopens: 2024.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South Lanarkshire. **Reopens: 2024**

Royal Deeside Railway
Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Banchory, Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.
Open: W/Es until Dec 23.

Strathspey Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.
Running: Dec 9/10, 16/17, 21/22.

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway
3ft gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down. Tel: +353 71 963 8599. **Reopens: 2024.**

Downpatrick & County Down Railway
5ft 3in gauge. Drumod, Co. Leitrim. Tel: 028 4461 5779.
Running: W/Es until Dec 23.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim. Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.
Running: W/Es until Dec 23.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and heritage events in the coming weeks

In addition to Santa specials, the 'Polar Express', illumination trains and Mince Pie specials this winter, why not warm up after the big day with a trip to some of these post-Christmas events?

DECEMBER 2023
- 26-31 – Winter Warmers, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
- 29 – Winter Steam Up, Bodmin & Wenford Railway
- 29 – Winter Diesel Day, Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
- 29 – Winter Diesel Day, Severn Valley Railway
- 29-31 – Winter Steam Gala, South Devon Railway
- 30/31 – Black Bun Specials, Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
- 31 – Winter Steam in the Valley, Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
- 31 – The Night Rider, Great Central Railway

JANUARY 2024
- 1 – New Year Steam, Bluebell Railway
- 1 - Winter Steam in the Valley, Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
- 1 – New Year's Steam, Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
- 1 – Winter Warmers, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
- 6 – Winter Steam Up, Helston Railway
- 6/7 – Winter Steam Gala, Severn Valley Railway
- 6/7 – Winter Warm Up, Swanage Railway
- 26/28 – Winter Steam Gala, Great Central Railway

Organising a gala or other big event and want it included? Let us know by emailing Owen Hayward at: ohayward@mortons.co.uk

HERITAGE RAILWAY

Christmas Gift Guide

Yes, it's that time again. While we've become accustomed to Crimbo carols being played in shops and on the radio since before the clocks went back, the run up to that time when the big man pops down your chimney can nonetheless be a stressful time; in particular, in finding ideal gifts for your nearest and dearest, and the feeling of impending doom at receiving dozens of pairs of socks, outrageous aftershaves that smell quite unlike anything else you've ever experienced and enough chocolate and salty snacks to give your doctor heart palpitations. So, we've made your life a hell of a lot easier with our exclusive Christmas Gift Guide! Check out some of these must-haves and leave the magazine open on these pages for all your loved ones to see…

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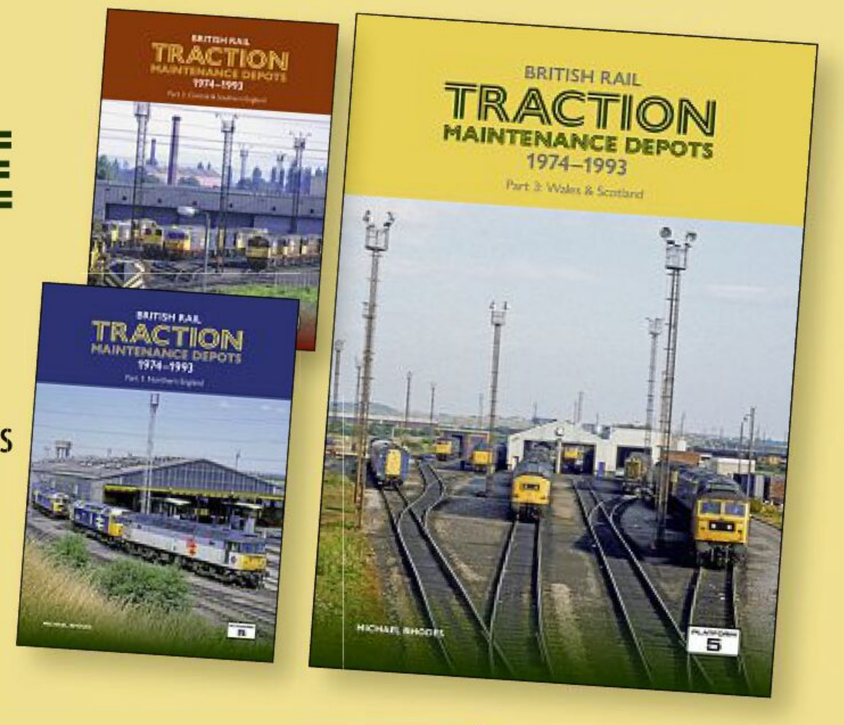

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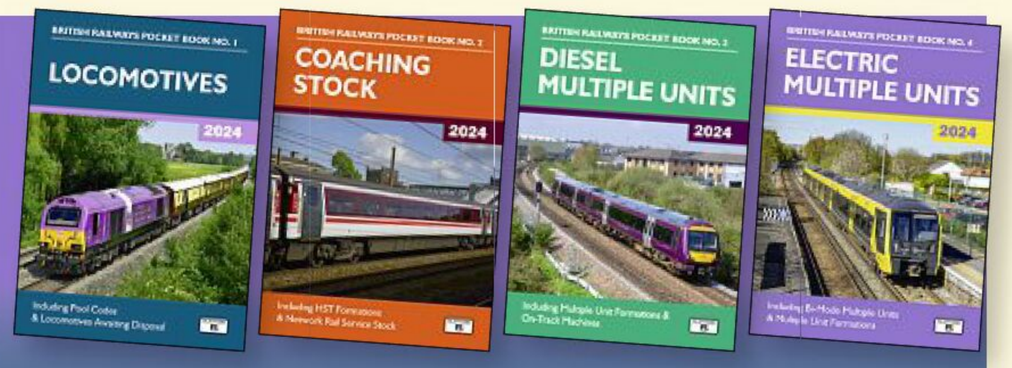

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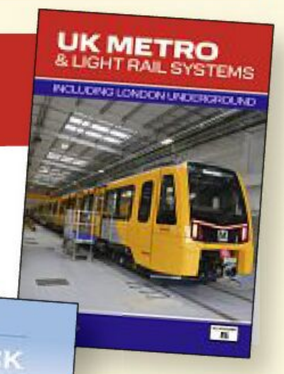

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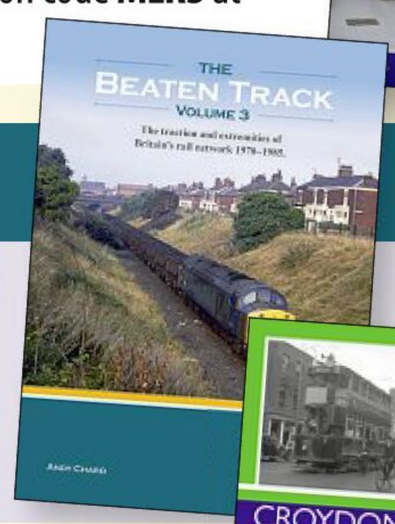

A third volume of the best colour photography from 1970–1985 featuring an assortment of traction types, very few of which can still be seen on the main line, many at railway locations that have long since disappeared or have changed out of all recognition. Hardback. A4 size. 176 pages. **Platform 5 Mail Order Price £31.95** plus P&P. Use promotion code **BT2M** at **www.platform5.com**. Cover Price £34.95.

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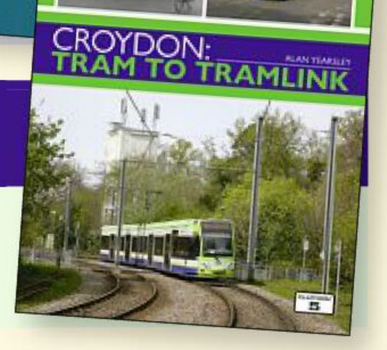

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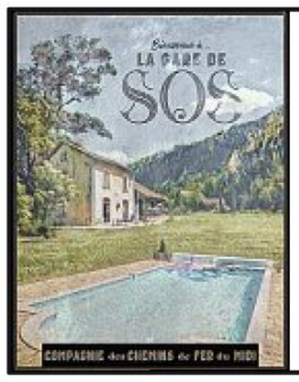

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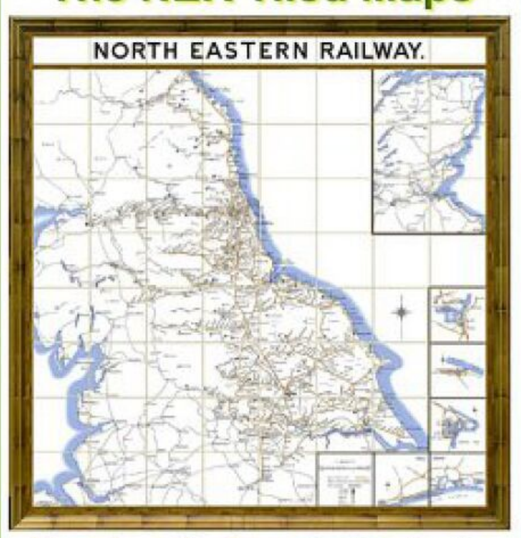

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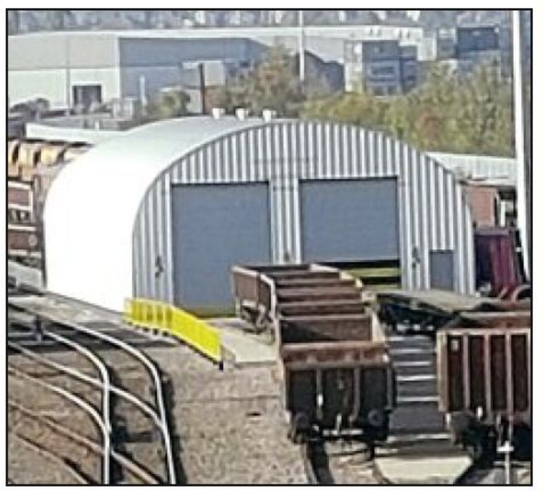

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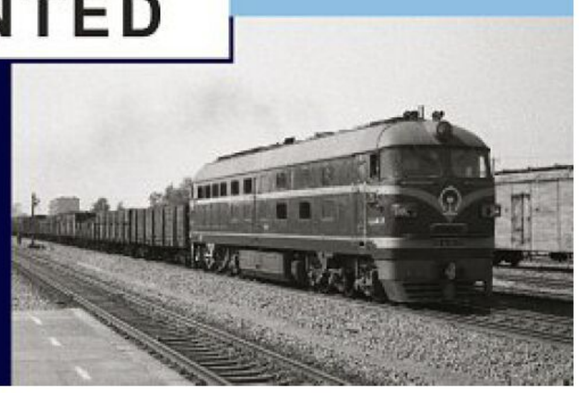

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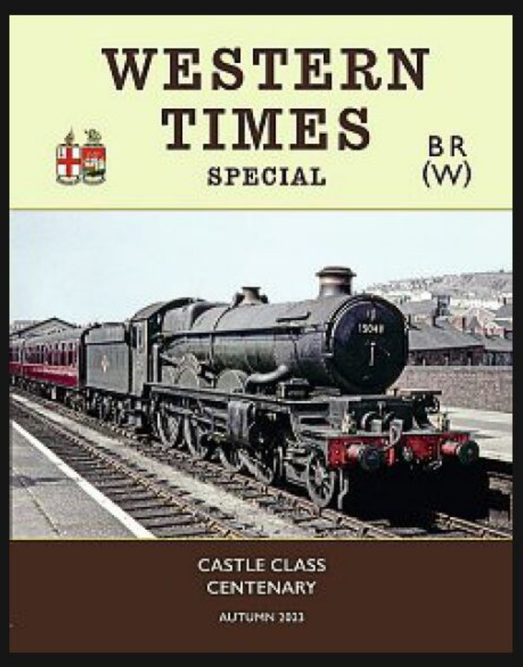

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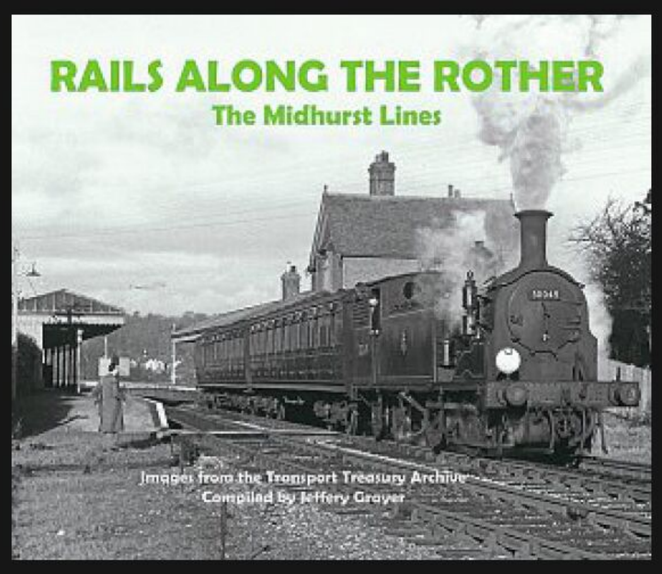

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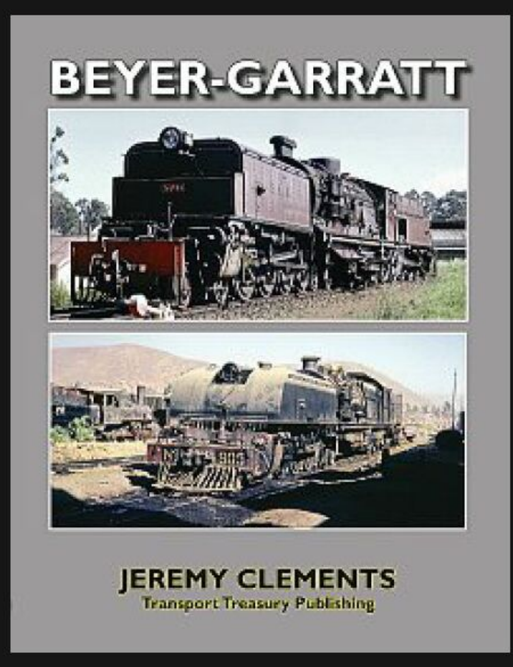

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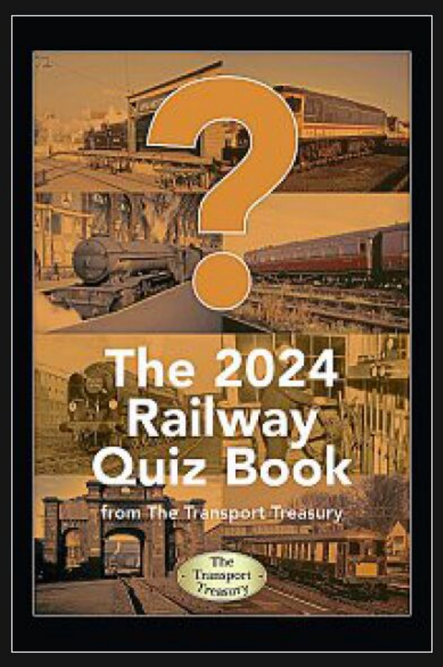

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A BR named train that was below the radar

By Geoff Courtney

HIGH-PROFILE named expresses on all six BR regions were familiar to steam era trainspotters, photographers and the public alike, but occasionally a named train popped up that was well below many people's radars. I came across one such example when recently scrolling through my 1950s book of logs I made at various stations around the country.

The station was Rhyl and the train 'The Welsh Chieftain,' which I recorded three times in early August 1959, hauled by Jubilee No. 45669 *Fisher* on the first of that month, and on August 4 and 6 by Standard 4MT No. 75028.

It took 64 years until earlier this month for my curiosity to be piqued enough for me to learn of this train's history, and after a considerable amount of research I discovered that it was one of four 'land cruise trains' launched in 1951 on a variety of routes in North Wales, although the NRM records 'The Welsh Chieftain' as having been introduced in 1959.

This train's circular route was Rhyl-Bangor-Caernarvon-Portmadog-Barmouth-Corwen and back to Rhyl, and the stock included former SR 'Devon Belle' observation car No. 13, which survives in preservation on the Dartmouth Steam Railway.

Some research indicates that the train ran for only three seasons, until 1961, although the NRM, which has a 'Welsh Chieftain' headboard in its collection, says it was circa 1964, while some BR named trains websites don't list it at all.

Above: Old-timer: No. 52119 in Rhyl shed yard on August 1, 1959. Although 68 years old at the time, the 1891-built Class 3F 0-6-0 still had more than three years left in service. GEOFF COURTNEY

Left: Welsh visitor: Standard 4MT No. 75028 pulls into Ruthin en route to Rhyl with 'The Welsh Chieftain' in early August 1959. TRANSPORT TREASURY/NORRIS FORREST

Our friends at the Transport Treasury photograph archive came up trumps with an image of No. 75028 entering Ruthin, between Corwen and Rhyl, on 'The Welsh Chieftain' in early August 1959, and perhaps the photograph was taken on one of the two days I logged the Standard Class 4MT 4-6-0, which was shedded at Rhyl (6K) during the summer of that year.

As a postscript, Next Stop compiler Owen Hayward has indulged me by providing enough space for a photograph I took during my Rhyl sojourn of a locomotive in the yard of 6K that illustrates some of the Victorian-era stock that was still in use nearly 12 years after Nationalisation.

It is Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Class 27 0-6-0 No. 52119, built at Horwich in April 1891 (works No. 77) as No. 1079, renumbered 12119 and reclassified 3F by the LMS, and withdrawn from Rhyl in October 1962 after a service life with the L&Y, LMS and BR of 71½ years.

A total of 484 Class 27s were built between 1889 and 1918, and such was the sturdiness of the John Aspinall design that 235 made it into BR stock while some 50, including No. 52119, were still in service in 1960. One member of the class, No. 1300/LMS No. 12322/BR No. 52322, survives in preservation based at the East Lancashire Railway.

SVR news editor steps down after 50 years

DAVID Williams is retiring as editor of the *Severn Valley News* magazine, which he has edited for more than half a century.

He joined the Severn Valley Railway Society in 1966, seven months after its founding. He took over as editor of *SVR News* from issue three and after the appearance of issue 224, he will hand over the reins to a newcomer.

He was a member of the society committee from 1967 to 1970 and became a director of the newly-formed SVR Company in 1972, taking over as chairman from 1979 until 2020. From 1977 until 2020, he was a director of Severn Valley Railway Holdings.

Alongside colleagues, he was instrumental in saving several locomotives, especially Ivatt 4MT 2-6-0 No. 43106, which cost £2500 in 1968, followed by BR Standard 4MTs 2-6-4T No. 80079 and No. 75069 from Barry scrapyard.

In the final years of BR steam, David was also a Master Neverer, a group of photographers who used to visit shed and clean locomotive before capturing them on film.

He was a locomotive fireman for five years and a driver for nine on the SVR. In 1975 when No. 43106 was visiting the Stockton & Darlington Railway 150th anniversary parade at Shildon, a BR driver could not be found on the day so David, having experience with the locomotive, had the honour of driving it over BR metals.

David Williams opening the history exhibition at the Engine House at Highley in 2015. SVR

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Issue 314 out Nov 22
We feature 'The Last Hurrah' – the conclusion of the Great Central Railway's 50th hugely-successful anniversary gala season.

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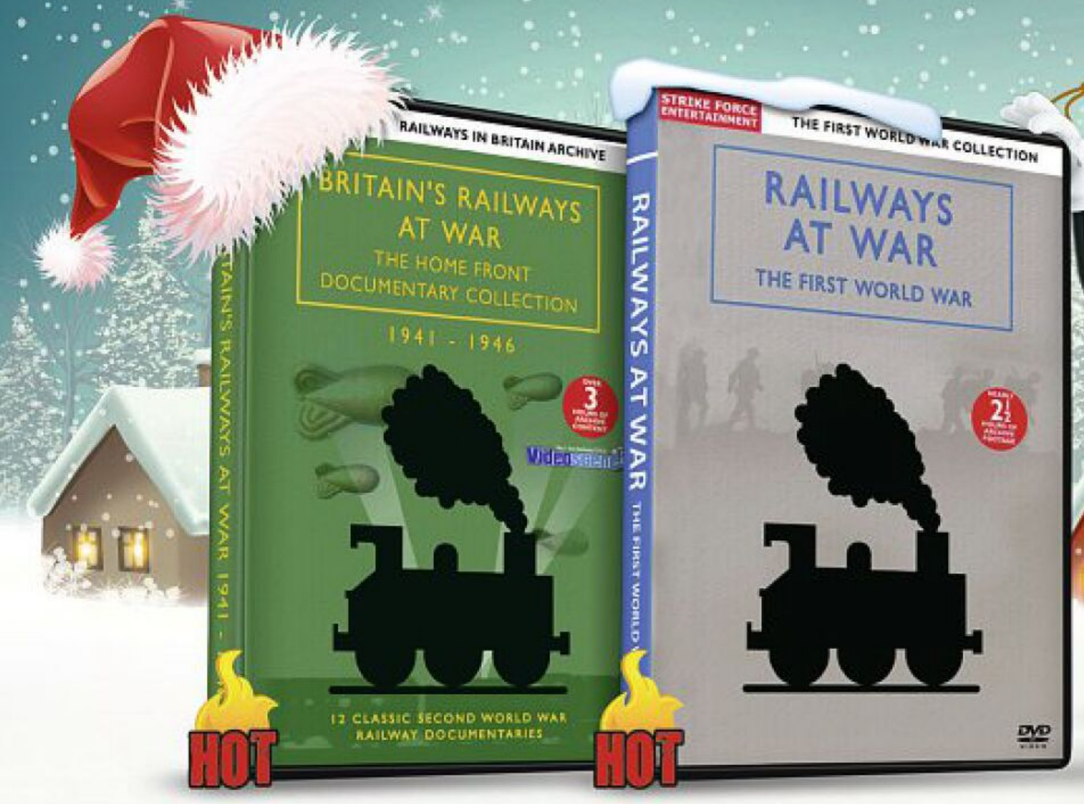

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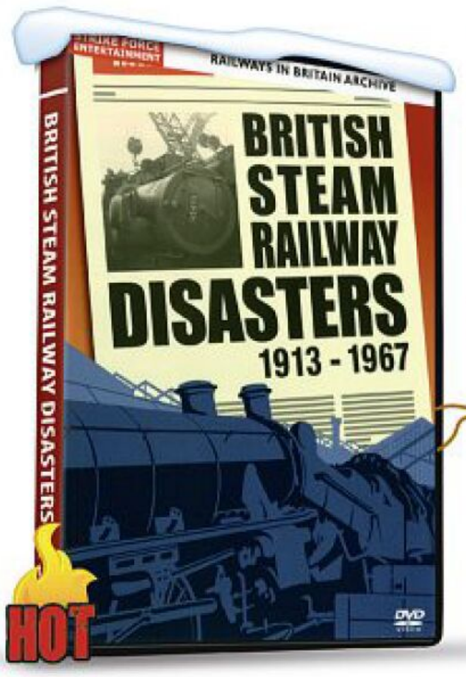

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