

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

**Top award for
Great Central gala**



**New GWR Grange
for Battlefield test runs**

■ LMS PATRIOT PROJECT MOVES TO TYSELEY ■ BODMIN GETS A SECOND CLAY TRAIN FOR CHRISTMAS ■ HOW TO TAKE BETTER PANNING SHOTS ■ BLUEBELL STANDARD TANK GIVEN TO WEST SOMERSET ■ BRITAIN'S NEWEST STEAM LOCOMOTIVE RUNS



The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express

**Saturday 27th January, 17th February
and 16th March**

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Saturday 24th February

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Saturday 9th March

Join us from Manchester Victoria, Stockport, Wilmslow and Crewe to visit Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Edinburgh Flyer

Saturday 23rd March

Join us from York, Durham and Newcastle to visit Edinburgh.

The Whitby Flyer

Wednesday 27th March

Join us from London Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon, Peterborough and York to visit Whitby.

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Saturday 6th April

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The Santa season on the East Lancashire Railway began with the arrival of some seasonal cold weather – frost on the ground and bright sunshine. West Country class No. 34092 *City of Wells* is seen in the last of the morning glint working through Strongstry on the 9.35am Santa special from Bury Bolton Street to Ramsbottom on November 25, 2023. MARTYN TATTAM



Railway heritage: an ultimate theatrical stage

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HISTORIANS have said that the concept of railways originated in the theatres of ancient Greece, in which parallel grooves were cut in stage floors so that large items of scenery fixed to wheels could be easily and efficiently moved during performances.

Drama and railways have remained bedfellows, especially in modern times, with film and TV producers spoiled for choice with heritage lines by their nature having the ability to recreate period scenes often at a stroke to mutual benefit. Remember the police drama series *Heartbeat* and the immense publicity it bestowed on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway during its 18 series from 1992 to 2010?

In so many ways, our heritage railways are the greatest moving stages of all, each journey playing out what life was like on public transport decades ago. This principle was rarely more apparent than in the Great Central Railway's third annual Railways at Work gala, which, during August 19/20, as reported in issue 310, visibly excelled in its inspirational recreation of the seminal year of 1963, when BR chairman Dr Richard Beeching's report, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, was unveiled on March 27.

The railway was not merely content to run steam and diesel services along the line where the stations have superbly retained their 1950s and 1960s appearances: a team descended to bring scenes from those controversial times to restage history for modern audiences 60 years on.

While porters loaded freight from railway wagons on to road freight vehicles of the day, a host of actors and re-enactors played the roles of placard-waving anti-cuts protestors and police in early 1960s uniforms who were sent to restore

order. One of the re-enactors, who took the part of Dr Beeching, so easily impressed as his double!

The result was a magnificent and highly-innovative event which took months of planning and earned top marks for education through entertainment, plus rave reviews across the board.

The event has now carried off the 2024 Heritage Railway Association Interpretation Award, sponsored by this magazine through our publisher, Mortons Media.

Such events of this very high standard offer immense potential for the whole of the heritage sector and could well be followed by other lines and museum venues, adding a new dimension what they have on offer to the general public. The resources are there, in terms of local groups and vintage vehicle owners – it just requires ingenuity to arrange, and Loughborough showed big time that it can be done.

In a similar vein, the management of the Dartmouth Steam Railway brought the concept of illuminated festive trains from North America to Britain, and it was quickly taken up by lines big and small around the country.

That railway excelled itself in the field again this year when, as reported on page 10, it gave sufficient tickets to take 750 people from Torbay's fostering, care experienced and disability families on two exclusive Train of Lights trips.

Our heritage railway portfolio has been built on huge excesses of solid graft, but one gem of a fresh idea can unlock the path to a fortune, not just in revenue but also the goodwill of the local communities. Keep them coming – and make your visit to the GCR's Railways at Work gala in 2024 an absolute must!

Robin Jones Editor

ISSUE 314

December 22, 2023 – January 19, 2024

News



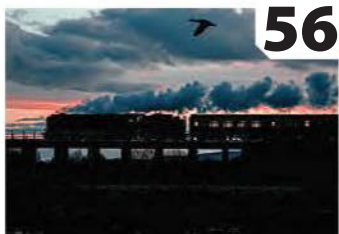
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- Great Central Railway lands major award for Railways at Work gala
- Shortlist published for Heritage Railway Association Awards 2024
- *The Unknown Warrior* moves to Tyseley Locomotive Works
- Stanway viaduct repair works uncover further structural defects
- Britain's newest locomotive steams



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- £5m package to support Worth Valley improvement projects
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- LMS comes top at £500K Stateside auction of British railwayana
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Don Benn's column looks at trips with *Bahamas* and *Manston*, plus a rather unusual train on the Mid-Hants.

CONTENTS: With a backdrop of the city's plethora of bridges, LNER A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* crosses Newcastle's King Edward Bridge and the river Tyne with *Steam Dreams*' November 23 excursion to Edinburgh. Later during this journey, the A4 suffered a failure of its right-hand cylinder, which saw it removed from the train – see Main Line News, page 56. **RODNEY TOWERS**
COVER: With an overnight snowfall having changed the scene, LNER 0-6-0 P3 No. 2392 climbs through Beck Hole on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on November 29 working a short mixed freight during the final morning of a two-day photographic charter. Over the weekend of December 2/3, several other lines also received snowfall – see news, pages 22-24. **MATT FISHER**



Regulars

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Centre

LMS Royal Scot 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* crosses the impressive 28-arch Royal Border Bridge near Berwick-upon-Tweed on December 2.
JONATHON GOURLAY



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Home on the Grange!

A 26-year project to fill another major gap in the UK heritage steam fleet portfolio will reach its conclusion with the first public steaming of new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* and its subsequent running-in trials, planned to take place the Battlefield Line, writes Robin Jones in an exclusive report.





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Panning: Life in a faster lane!

When photographing trains at speed, generally we want that image frozen and pin-sharp, but with panning the train itself must be sharp and the foreground and background blurred. John Titlow explains how in words and pictures.



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Eyes on the future at The Last Hurrah

The GCR's Last Hurrah gala drew its 50th anniversary year celebrations to a close. Owen Hayward sat down with the line's general manager Malcolm Holmes to talk about what the future might hold, such as double track to Leicester North.

A heritage museum for the digital age!

Embracing change is integral to preserving the past, as Sally Clifford found out during a visit to the Vintage Carriages Trust's Carriage Works Museum at Ingrow on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, and reports in words and pictures.



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Models



Model News

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Accurascale reveals all-new tooled models of popular GWR 0-6-0 pannier tank locomotives, while Heljan goes big with the LNER U1 Beyer-Garratt.



Going underground: The Metropolitan E Class

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Luke Ryan looks at a class of locomotive synonymous with the Underground network.

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The axeman, played by George Sheridan, wields his report, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, while protected by the strong arm of the law at Quorn & Woodhouse station. ANDREW PAUL



Police contain anti-Beeching cuts protestors on the platform at Loughborough Central. ANDREW MAXTED

Great Central lands national award for Beeching era re-enactment gala event

By Robin Jones

THE Great Central Railway has won the 2024 Heritage Railway Association Interpretation Award for its Railways At Work 1963 gala, in which the turbulent times of the Beeching Axe were recreated by dozens of re-enactors.

The event looked back at the times when railways were the backbone of Britain long before road transport became king, with a mixture of locomotives hauling passenger and freight trains to reflect the 'changeover years' from steam to diesel. The award was sponsored by *Heritage Railway* magazine via our publisher Mortons Media.

Actors played the part of protestors demanding the reversal of the Government's controversial Beeching report which laid out plans for an unprecedented wave of closures of lines and stations across the country.

Re-enactors from Derbyshire-based On-The-Beat Classic Police Hire attired in accurate police uniforms of the period dealt with placard-waving protestors, while others reprised the role of porters loading and unloading wagons with classic road vehicles in attendance, as highlighted in issue 310.

One re-enactor, George Sheridan, played the part of Dr Beeching himself – with remarkable resemblance.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "I was delighted to learn that the GCR has won the 2024 HRA Interpretation Award.

"Railways at Work is one of the events we are most proud of and in many ways is the best of what we do at the GCR. Bringing together re-enactors with our double-track main line to show how railways supported society through the movement of goods as well as passengers has proved to work very well.

"The guest appearance of Dr Beeching himself was a particular highlight, although did result in some disorder – needing the intervention of our 1960s police force!"

Back to the 1960s

"Interpretation is a particular focus for the GCR at the moment as we work to improve the visitor experience throughout the year by better telling the stories we have to tell. Railways at Work will be back again on August 10/11, when the GCR will once again return to the 1960s."

It was in 1963 that the British Transport Commission Police was dissolved and became the British Transport Police. On-The-Beat Classic Police Hire was formed in 2021 by Joseph Lane, based around his collection of classic police vehicles and uniforms from the 1950s to the early 21st century, but predominately the 1960s.

For the gala, the group ensured it had a mixture of the then newly-introduced BTP helmet plates, combined with the now-obsolete BTCP helmet plates.

The group, which has its own Facebook page, consists of serving officers, retired officers, and those with a keen historic interest in the British police force. It stages a few big shows each year, featuring its collection of 12 vehicles with its members dressed in period uniform, the aim being to both educate and build engagement with the

public regarding police history. A spokesman said: "The group has a combined interest with railways and therefore Railways at Work was a unique event for us to portray the British Transport Police."

The event was one of six successful galas marking the 50th anniversary of the heritage line's first passenger trains.

The award, announced exclusively here in the sponsoring magazine prior to the HRA awards presentation dinner in Brighton on February 10, is the second major accolade for the GCR in a month. At the Leicestershire Tourism and Hospitality Awards held at Athena Leicester on November 30, the GCR was voted Best Day Out in Leicestershire.

Malcolm said: "What better accolade is there than to be voted the 'best day out' by judges who really know their subject – the

There will be a mixture of passenger and demonstration freight trains, with BR Standard 9F No. 92214, LMS Stanier 8F No. 48305, and WR 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* in action, along with the visiting 1903-built NER electric autocar No. 3170.

There will be departures from Loughborough throughout the day between 10am and 3.45pm, with a free tea or coffee and mince pie from the griddle car – and exclusive footplate visits at Leicester North station will be available.

See in 2024

Children will travel for £1 with a paying adult, or free if they were on the Great Central Santa Express and received a golden ticket.

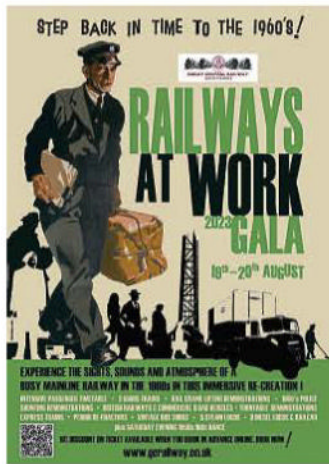
December 31 will feature a series of Night Rider trips to see in the New Year. The first of several evening services will leave Loughborough Central at 7.15pm and call at all stations to Leicester North.

The New Year will be celebrated on the platform at Loughborough before the first return trip of 2024 departs at 12.05am to Leicester North and back to Loughborough for 1.10am. To ride, book online at <https://tickets.gcrailway.co.uk>

The January 26-28 Winter Steam Gala will feature visiting USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 2253 *Omaha* and Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway A 0-6-0 No. 52322, alongside six home fleet locomotives in an intensive passenger and freight timetable (advertisement, page 25).

On March 16-18, the GCR Anniversary Open Weekend will be held in partnership with the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the London Extension, which opened in 1899.

➔ **Hopes of extending double track from Rothley to Leicester North: see feature, Eyes on the future at The Last Hurrah, pages 78-81.**



The poster from the gala that won the HRA Interpretation Award. GCR

public!

"This award pays testimony to the amazing work the whole staff team – both paid and voluntary – put in to provide a first-class experience to all our customers across the railway.

"We have even more exciting plans for 2024 with new events and experiences."

In the meantime, there will be much to see and do at the GCR between Christmas and New Year.

A three-coach dining train on Christmas Day sold out, but a series of Betwixtmas Steam Days will be held between December 27-30.



With the remains of the 13th century Hadleigh Castle atop the hill behind, LMS 'Black Five' No. 45231 *The Sherwood Forester* catches the sun at Hadleigh Park on December 8 with a Steam Dreams excursion from Southend Central to Winchester, the last steam trip along the former London Tilbury & Southend Railway route for the year. Despite the empty coaching stock move from Southall having ended up an hour behind schedule due to overhead wires having come down on the lines around West London, the train departed Southend on time, having foregone a planned layover at Shoeburyness depot. OWEN HAYWARD

HRA Annual Awards 2024 – shortlist

THE shortlist of entries for what is the world's biggest heritage rail awards – the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2024, sponsored by Inspire Structures – has been announced.

It is created from dozens of entries, following an extensive debate and vote by a panel of experts drawn from leading heritage rail figures and journalists chaired by National Railway Museum senior curator Anthony Coulls.

The headline Railway of the Year category sees the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway competing against the Seaton Tramway and the Volks Electric Railway in an all narrow-gauge shortlist.

The Coiley Award for Steam Locomotive Engineering, sponsored by Hargreaves, is contested by the Sir Nigel Gresley Locomotive Trust for its overhaul of postwar steam speed record-holder LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007, the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways for the construction of double Fairlie 0-4-4-0T *James Spooner*, and the Richmond Light Railway for overhauling 2ft gauge Bagnall 0-4-OST *Pixie*.

The Diesel and Electric Locomotion award shortlist comprises the North Norfolk Railway's restoration of Class 104 DMU driving trailer No. M56182, Seaton's upgrade of Tramcar No. 9 to improve accessibility, and the Severn Valley Railway's events celebrating 50 years of diesel preservation.

The Morgan Award for Rolling Stock Preservation, sponsored by Paintman Paints, features the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's restoration of the line's former Midland Railway six-wheel crane, the Manx Electric Railway for the restoration of trailer No. 19, the SVR for the restoration of LMS-designed corridor composite carriage No. 24617, and the National Wagon Preservation Group for its 'Merry-Go-Round' coal train project.

The Keith & Dufftown Railway's 'Dram Tram' conversion of a redundant DMU carriage, Seaton's Natural Seaton Festival, and the Kent & East Sussex Railway's Santa specials 'quiet day' feature in the Award for Business and Customer Innovation, sponsored by PNP Events. The Seaton Natural Seaton Festival is also competing for the Award for Environmental Innovation, sponsored by Premier Park, alongside the KESR's Looking Inwards and Outwards environmental initiative.

On the Lord Faulkner Young Volunteer Award shortlist are Daisy Shennan, from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, Jonathan King, from the Downpatrick & County Down Railway, Jacob Short, from Peak Rail, and the Avon Valley Railway's Joseph Dean.

Shortlisted for the Infrastructure Award, sponsored by Ernest R Shaw, are the Rother Valley Railway's Hither Green turntable installation, the restoration of Bricket Wood station

building by its Heritage Trust, the installation of a panel signalbox at Medstead & Four Marks on the Mid-Hants Railway, and the Llangollen Railway's new Corwen station.

The Award for Marketing and Communications, sponsored by Fox and Edwards Events, sees the MHR again shortlisted for its 'In the Loop' series on YouTube, alongside the RER for events marketing, and the Toddington Standard Locomotive Ltd for fundraising towards BR 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76077.

In the Rising Star Award, Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's Sam Hall, Chelsea Lamb, from Peak Rail, and Osian Hughes, from the F&WHR, are all in the final list. The Team of the Year Award, sponsored by Expian, features the SVR-based Class 50 Alliance, the Tallylyn Railway's Tracksiders young volunteers, the Blythburgh station team from the Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway, and the RPSI's Dublin fundraising group.

Finally, another as-yet-unnamed project that has seen significant success during the last 12 months is set to receive the Chairman's Special Award.

HRA chief executive Steve Oates said: "I don't think I've ever seen a shortlist as rich and varied as this one. It really is representative of the whole spectrum of heritage rail in the UK."

The winners will be announced at the awards dinner on February 10.

Strathspey seeks new general manager

THE Strathspey Railway Company is seeking to appoint a new general manager.

Reporting to the company chairman and the board of directors, the successful applicant will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the railway at all levels and across all departments, including the implementation of the company's vision and strategy, ensuring compliance with company policies and the requirements of regulatory bodies such as the Office of Rail & Road.

The full-time position offers between £35,000 to £45,000 per annum inclusive of all overtime, depending on the candidate's experience and qualifications.

The basic week is 37.5 hours, but because of its seasonal nature as a tourist attraction, the job will involve working unsocial hours including evenings, weekends and public holidays.

For details, see advertisement on page 105.

New Patriot project moves to Tyseley Locomotive Works

By Robin Jones

THE 15-year scheme to build a new LMS Patriot 4-6-0, No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior*, took a major step forward in December as the chassis was transferred to its new assembly base at Tyseley Locomotive Works.

The LMS Patriot Project switched venues after the Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust (PRCLT) wanted to see the chassis moved outside its West Shed workshop at the Midland Railway – Butterley as soon as practicable, the priority being to access the wheel drop on No. 1 road for repairs to be carried out.

The PRCLT had stopped all work on *The Unknown Warrior* in July. "It also became very clear that PRCLT saw workshop and museum capacity and resource availability as a major challenge in the medium term," read an LMS Patriot Project statement.

The project organised a volunteer group to paint the frames in the last week of November, a prerequisite for their move outside the workshop. There was therefore nothing to be gained by staying at West Shed until the new wheelsets were available in 2024, to allow rewheeling.

Tyseley will not be in a position to accommodate the chassis in its workshop until the spring, following the completion and departure of another landmark new-build project,

GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, as exclusively revealed in our special feature on pages 48-53.

However, at a start-up meeting on site at Tyseley in November 2023, the scope for transferring the chassis and the many components stored in containers to the works for storage was discussed.

More support

Project volunteers undertook preparation work to secure the chassis for movement to Birmingham by specialist haulier Reid Freight, and its journey was safely made over two days. Loading began at 11am on December 5, with delivery to Tyseley early the next morning.

The project's 12T box van has also been moved to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, where it will be accessible to the project under the care of that line's new general manager, Simon Scott, who is now supporting the project as a volunteer following his resignation as PRCLT Chief Mechanical Engineer in July.

Arrangements are being made to relocate the component containers, which are on Midland Railway – Butterley, and other materials from the site.

LMS Patriot Company chairman Colin Hall said: "I am delighted with the co-operation we have enjoyed with our new Tyseley partners,



Components of new-build LMS Patriot No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior* newly delivered to Tyseley Locomotive Works on December 6.
ANDY COLLINSON/LMS-PATRIOT PROJECT

the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, and indeed our own volunteers in organising all this at quite short notice. The transport itself was a challenge.

"We are now much better placed to go on to rewheeling at Tyseley when the new wheelsets are delivered by Riley and Son of Heywood, Bury, in 2024".

The LMS built the 52 express steam passenger locomotives of the Patriot class between 1930 and 1934. The type was based on the Royal Scot chassis, combined with the boiler from Large Claughton 4-6-0s, earning

them the nickname of Baby Scots. The last was withdrawn in 1965.

The new-build scheme was formally launched at the Llangollen Patriot Gala in April 2008, by the project's first commercial sponsor, John Buxton, managing director of Cambrian Transport, the Llangollen as the initial construction base.

In issue 131 of *Heritage Railway* magazine, a successful appeal to cast the six driving wheels was launched.

→ Anyone wishing to donate to the LMS Patriot Project should visit at www.lms-patriot.org.uk/section/support

First steps in return of another GWR large prairie

THE Erlestoke Manor Fund acquired GWR 5101 class large Prairie No. 5164 from its previous owners, the 5164 Preservation Group, in 2021 under an agreement to return the locomotive to operational condition. Since then, the fund has been gradually fundraising and acquiring the components required for its upcoming overhaul, with the locomotive on static display at Barrow Hill Roundhouse since 2014, shortly after its last boiler certificate expired.

On November 25/26, the prairie was a centrepiece of the annual Warley Model Railway Club's exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre, near Birmingham, the EMF having a fundraising stall alongside. Transport to the venue was partly sponsored by Accurascale Model Railways, which also donated an OO scale model of



Erlestoke Manor Fund volunteers ran a stall alongside GWR large prairie No. 5164 at the annual Warley National Exhibition Model Railway November 25/26 prior to the 2-6-2T moving to Tyseley Locomotive Works.
GARETH RUSHTON/EMF

the fund's flagship, No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, as a prize for a raffle held over the weekend.

Immediately after the event, No. 5164 was transported to Tyseley Locomotive Works, where it will be stored pending completion of the fund's second Manor 4-6-0, No. 7802 *Bradley Manor*, currently

undergoing repairs to its cylinders ahead of returning to service during 2024. Afterwards, work will begin on dismantling the prairie for overhaul to commence, with hopes that it will be completed ahead of its centenary year in 2030.

It is anticipated that the overhaul will be led by the next generation

of younger volunteer engineers under the guidance of the stalwart volunteers working on the two Manors. The timing of its return to steam will depend on the finance raised through the fund's appeal for support, details of which can be found at www.erlestokemanorfund.co.uk/want-to-help/donate

Christmas is for youngsters – especially beside the seaside!

By Robin Jones

THE Dartmouth Steam Railway gave away £20,000 worth of tickets to take 750 people from Torbay's fostering, special guardians, disability and care experienced families on two exclusive Christmas 'Train of Lights' trips at the start of its festive programme.

The November 23 event was organised by Torbay Council's Children's Services to help create magical memories and a shared experience in the run-up to Christmas.

The annual round trips, which include an evening of festive storytelling and an expanding series of lineside light displays, are among several events that the local authority offers, working with a wide range of corporate fostering partners, as part of a package of support for foster carers.

This also includes training, local support groups and networks, and professional advice from a team that includes social workers and experienced foster carers as mentors.

'Highlight of the year'

DSR managing director John Jones said: "This is now the fourth year that we have handed over the first two Train of Lights service to Torbay Council's Children's Services free of charge. For many of the staff and me, it is the highlight of the year to see all those happy faces and it's of particular importance to me personally as my parents fostered children for many years when I was a child."

The railway ran its first Train of Lights in 2018, introducing an

American concept to Britain and winning the Heritage Railway Association's 2020 Award for Special Events in the process, revolutionising the festive season programme for many UK heritage lines.

Coun Nick Bye, Torbay's Cabinet member for children's services, said: "It was absolutely amazing to join all the fun and experience the magic of the Train of Lights, and I would like to say a huge thank-you to the DSR and everyone who helped put this fantastic event together."

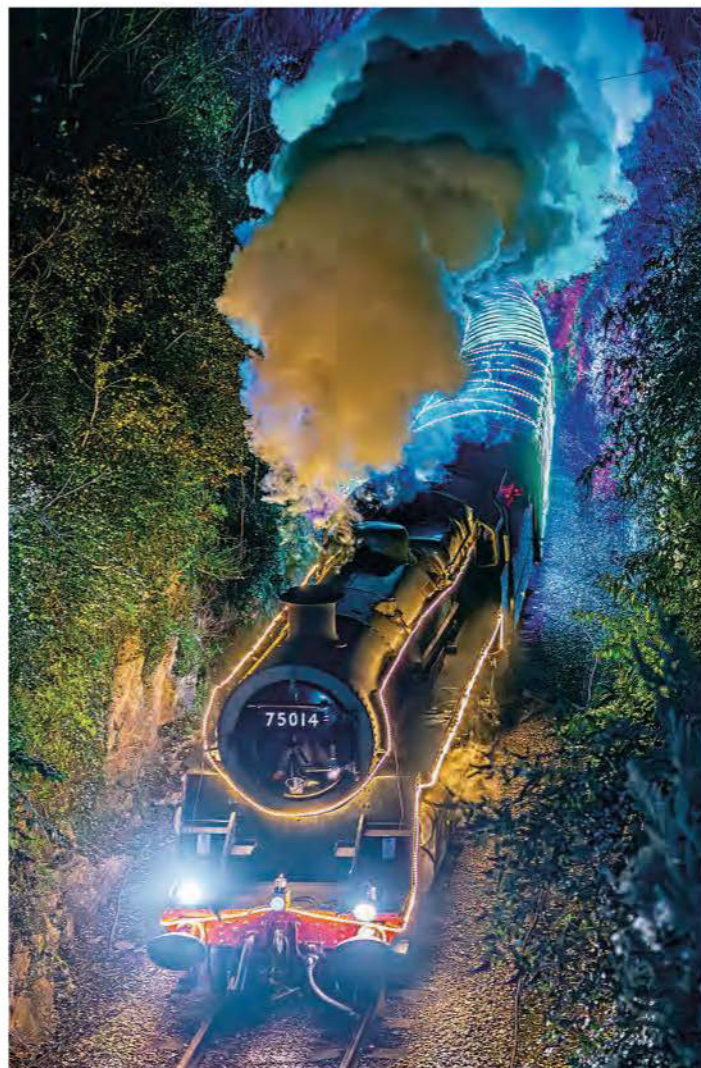
The gift of fostering

"It is an incredibly generous gesture by the railway company to provide this again, and you could see from the excitement on everyone's faces that it's so very much appreciated."

"We are absolutely committed to doing all we can in Torbay to supporting fostering families, special guardians, families with children who are disabled, and care experienced children, and the Train of Lights is an annual highlight."

"Providing a safe and loving foster home is one of the best gifts you can give to a looked-after child, but many of our foster carers have also described fostering as a gift and a privilege."

One family said: "Thank you so much for such a wonderful, magical evening – the children absolutely loved every minute of the Train of Lights! The gasps and excitement is something we treasure in between the very busy and daily challenges we face raising a child with disabilities." Another added: "Their eyes lit up and we heard, 'Oh, wow, look! Look! Did you see that!'"



BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75014 *Braveheart* weaves its way through an enchanted forest with the Train of Lights on the Dartmouth Steam Railway. TIM CLYBURN/DSR

Ukrainian families and hosts enjoy a trip from Dereham to the North Pole

THE Mid-Norfolk Railway's 'Polar Express' season began with a special trip for Ukrainian children currently living in the county after escaping from the ongoing war in their homeland.

As a leading railway charity, the MNR gives great weight to taking its place within the local community and the line's trust council felt this was a suitable gesture of support towards the children and their families.

MNR chairman Graham Watts said: "The war in Ukraine is in the news on a regular basis and it is now two years since this conflict began."

"There is little we can do; however, we can hopefully bring some fun and joy at this time of time of the year to families who find themselves living here in Norfolk not through choice."

The trip, organised in conjunction with Dereham Ukraine Centre, saw 145 Ukrainian refugees and their host families from Dereham and the surrounding villages jump on board.

The outline operating schedule for 2024's programme at the railway is available online now at www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk, with more details of events being published soon.



Ukrainian refugee families enjoyed a trip aboard the Mid-Norfolk Railway's 'Polar Express' experience in November as the railway showed its support for those displaced by the war in their home country. MNR

The *Duke* is back out on a turntable – with a fire!

By Robin Jones

UNIQUE BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* was moved out of the Tyseley Locomotive Works shed onto the turntable for a special private viewing by members of the owning trust on December 3 – in advance of its planned return to the main line in 2024 after a 12-year absence for overhaul.

The Crewe 1954-built Robert Riddles locomotive was shunted onto the turntable by a diesel so that the 70 guests could view its progress, with a warming fire burning in the grate. The *Duke's* boiler passed its hydraulic test in late November, and a steam test was being arranged.

Trevor Tuckley, chairman of the BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust, said that 2024 will be very special to the group as the *Duke* will return to the main line where it belongs in its 70th birthday year.

"It is 50 years since it was moved from the scrapyard at Barry and part one of the 'impossible dream' was started," he said.

"This involved returning it to the main line in the condition when it was scrapped as the only unfinished BR steam locomotive prototype, plus

adding the Kylchap exhaust; 2024 will see it with the improvements we believe Riddles would have made following his period of main line working, had he been allowed the time.

"We will then have completed the 'impossible dream' after 50 years of effort by so many people whose contributions have made this possible.

'Fantastic milestone'

"Those who have worked tirelessly in the very many activities required to get us here... some of those people's efforts are clear to see when we look at the *Duke*, and there are others whose work has gone on unnoticed in the background. Without them, we would not have reached this fantastic milestone."

The trust has also launched an appeal to cover the cost of the forging of a new centre connecting rod.

"The primary objective of our current overhaul was to return the *Duke* to the main line in the most reliable condition possible," said Trevor. "This has involved a meticulous review of every component.

"The non-destructive testing of



BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* displayed on the Tyseley Locomotive Works turntable. BRC8SLT

the coupling and connecting rods highlighted a few small cracks in the centre con rod; all the other rods were sound. This has involved ordering new forging, along with a complicated machining process.

"This was an unexpected and therefore unplanned expenditure, which has cost £6000 for the forging and £14,000 for the finishing, which has included heat treatment and retesting. In line with our prudent financial controls, we have been able to cover this cost, but as you would expect, it has reduced our planned financial float."

→ He appealed for supporters to donate towards the cost via www.theduke.uk.com or to send a cheque to: BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust, Aurora House, Deltic Avenue, Rookley, Milton Keynes MK13 8LW.



The new connecting rod for the *Duke*, which cost £20,000. BRC8SLT

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, steam festival and 'Royal' railway lensman scoop top Cotswolds awards

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has come top in two categories in the annual Cotswold Awards, organised by the online and social media guide Cotswold Concierge and voted for by the public.

The heritage line was voted Best Attraction in the Cotswolds in the Experience Awards category, in which the Cotswold Wildlife Park and Blenheim Palace were also winners.

Scooping top spot in the Events Awards category was the railway's Cotswold Festival of Steam, which took place on May 12-14, as featured in issue 307, and voted Best Event in the Cotswolds 2023.

A third award was for Professional Services and the Best Photographer category was won by Jack Boskett, renowned for his pictures of railways and royalty. Jack edits the GWR's membership magazine, *The Cornishman*, named after 'The Cornishman' express that once ran over the line en route from Wolverhampton and Penzance.

He is an official voluntary photographer on the railway and a trainee steam locomotive fireman. He often successfully features



Racing the train: Equine horse takes on iron horse in the form of Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsulas & Oriental SN Co* as it passes Didbrook on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway – which has a Racecourse station – on September 22, 2021. JACK BOSKETT/GWR

photographs of the line in national newspapers.

The railway's plc chairman, Richard Johnson, said: "These awards were a complete surprise, and we are thrilled to have been nominated top in these categories.

"That the winners are chosen by public vote confirms that our railway is in the mainstream of attractions that make the Cotswolds the amazing place it is for families to visit.

"The awards showcase just what this beautiful region has to offer and

I'm proud that we are playing a part in bringing visitors to it.

"The Cotswold Festival of Steam has long been considered a 'railway enthusiast' event and while that remains true, it is broadening its appeal and drawing families excited by the wide range of things to do on our railway, which really is a 'living museum'.

"It is the premier event in our summer range of activities. The festival brings a variety of visiting steam locomotives, as well as offering

rare opportunities to ride in a goods brake van on our demonstration goods train; enjoy visits and rides on a steam locomotive footplate, as well as take a look behind the scenes to discover how our volunteers restore and maintain locomotives and coaches.

"I am deeply grateful to everyone who voted for us – it's a real feather in the cap for all our volunteers who work so tirelessly to make a visit to our wonderful Cotswolds railway such an unmissable experience."



Class 142 'Pacer' DMU No. 142055.
SIMON THOMAS/ THE 142055
GROUP

New home is being sought for 'Pacer'

THE owners and supporting group of preserved Class 142 two-car 'Pacer' DMU No. 142055 are looking for a new home for the two-car unit after being asked to vacate its current base at the Foxfield Railway.

No. 142055 arrived at Foxfield from Gascoigne Wood sidings in September 2020, where it had been in storage following its release from service with Northern Trains in February 2020.

Volunteers supporting the owners began cleaning and keeping the Pacer maintained, with a view to it being introduced into service on the heritage line. However, following the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic and a recent spate of vandalism which caused damage to the DMU's windows, the group has been unable to get the set running in passenger service.

While expressing thanks to Foxfield, which originally offered a home to No. 142055, and for the support during the time it has been located there, the group is considering several possible options as a new home base.

However, any heritage railway willing to offering accommodation is invited to email 142055group@gmail.com.

Government's £5m boost for Worth Valley

THE Keighley & Worth Valley Railway is set to receive a £5 million package from the Government's Levelling Up funding to support a series of improvements including the reinstatement of traditional signalling at Keighley and bringing into use the passing loop at Haworth to enable more services to run on the line.

The grant aid will also include the overhaul of the line's DMU fleet and a new maintenance facility for it, and potentially restoring a section of double track from Keighley to provide rail access to the proposed site of the new DMU depot.

The package of projects will enhance operational flexibility on the five-mile line. The travel enhancements to and from Keighley station, along with other improvements being made to passenger facilities, aim to boost incoming tourist traffic to the line via the national network.

Keighley's Conservative MP, Robbie Moore, who took Levelling Up Minister Jacob Young to the heritage line in November to make the case for the funding, said that announcement was a "double dose of incredible news" following October's £1 million grant to the line towards the cost of the Bridge 27 renewal under the Government's Community Ownership funding, as reported in issue 312.

"The minister had the opportunity to see the benefits of potential enhancements to the line through improving the signalling and it is fantastic to see the Government listening, acting, and now delivering on our calls," said Mr Moore.

Although the railway will have a lot more operational flexibility as a result of the signalling enhancements and the development of an operational base at the Keighley end of the line, the grant will not, as incorrectly reported elsewhere, fund the introduction of commuter trains on



At the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway's DMU Gala, at which it returned to service, newly repainted in BR blue, Class 101 Nos. 51565/51189 is seen at the top of Keighley bank on October 29. ANDREW DENNISON

the KWVR. With increases in leisure traffic on the rail network, the package of projects is well-placed to encourage use of the railway to access the tourist destinations of Haworth and Oakworth.

'Game changer'

Railway chairman Matt Stroh said: "These projects were identified as our 'game changers' because they provide us with so much more flexibility.

"The developments mean we will be able to respond to changing passenger demands and to benefit from more commercial opportunities, while also being able to run civil maintenance and shunting operations, which are currently constrained by the operational restrictions imposed by having just the one passing loop.

"Opening up an operations base at the Keighley end of the line will improve greatly the range of services we can run, and undercover accommodation and a proper maintenance base for our fleet of DMUs – and not forgetting the venerable and much-loved

railbus – will protect them from the Yorkshire elements. This package of developments will help set the foundations for keeping the railway operational for future generations to enjoy."

The latest grant is part of an award of £19,814,140 to Bradford Council under the Levelling Up fund. Also included in the bid package, which was submitted in 2021, is the construction of the Advanced Robotics and Engineering Institute, a pioneering facility for technical education to accommodate up to 250 full-time undergraduates and 40 postgraduate students, as well as research and development, and the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

Bradford Council leader Coun Susan Hinchliffe said: "This is excellent news for Keighley and the wider district in so many ways. The town has a proud engineering and manufacturing tradition."

Due to the timeframe since the bid's initial submission, the projects will undergo a validation check to ensure that they still provide outcomes to meet funding objectives. Delivery is scheduled for 2026.



Almost two years after being stopped with leaking tubes, *Thomas* is back in action at the Nene Valley. NVR

Thomas steams back to Wansford for New Year trips

ALMOST two years after failing with leaking tubes, the original children's favourite *Thomas* has returned to steam at the Nene Valley Railway.

An initially-planned swift repair, quickly turned into a full retube with new rivets on the boiler barrel, throatplate and tubeplate too. The Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T has re-entered traffic with a fresh

boiler ticket. Originally No. 1800, the locomotive took on the identity of the fictional children's storybook character in 1971 when the author of the stories, the Rev Wilbert Awdry, officially named it as such in a ceremony at Wansford station.

To celebrate its return, *Thomas* will be running shuttles between Wansford and Yarwell

on December 30/31, 2023, and January 6/7, 2024.

A Peterborough service will also run with the Nene Valley Railway's Class 143 Pacer unit.

Rover tickets include travel aboard all *Thomas* shuttles, or £5 per person for one return journey behind *Thomas* only. Children aged under one travel free.

Book at <https://nvr.org.uk/>



LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. W11 Newport approaches Ashley during a Timeline charter event on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway on November 19, its last day in steam before its 10-yearly overhaul. NICK GILLIAM

Bluebell seeks 50k to get EMU back on the main line

By Owen Hayward

THE Southern Electric Traction Group (SETG) has launched a £50,000 appeal to help bring BR 4VEP EMU No. 3417 Gordon Pettitt back into main line operating condition.

Established by a number of Wimbledon Park Depot staff, the SETG has been progressively working on the restoration of the four-car Class 423 unit (comprising driving trailer Nos. 76262 and 76263, and centre trailers Nos. 62236 and 70797).

No. 3417 was built in 1967 and on January 17, 2009, was formally handed over by South West Trains to the Bluebell Railway, which then put it into the care of the SETG, the latter having the specialist operational and technical knowledge to ensure

the unit's long-term future and main line potential.

After a time stored in the open at Clapham Yard, No. 3417 first moved to Ilford Carriage Works, where it received a professional grade repaint before transferring to Strawberry Hill depot after the loan agreement was signed in 2015. Although externally good, the long period stored outdoors had led to some internal water and mould damage, one of the group's primary focuses as it works towards bring the unit back into a serviceable condition with the manufacture of new and refurbishing of existing interior wall panels and seat trims.

More recently, the focus has concentrated on a rewire for the heating circuits of non-driving trailer No. 70797, while No. 76263 has had its

cab and passenger bay restored from a fairly poor condition.

2024 timeframe

The group has a dedicated area within Strawberry Hill depot in which to work, providing both security and vital undercover dry storage, and it is envisioned that the unit will return to service at some point in 2024, initially in use on heritage railways as locomotive-hauled rolling stock (having been used in this manner during visits to the Bluebell, Mid-Hants and Swanage lines in the past), with the return to the national network to follow.

In view of this, several checks and exams are currently under way to certify the unit for passenger-carrying use.

The £50,000 appeal has been launched with the main line return in mind, for which much equipment – such as GSMR radios and OTMR 'Black Box' systems on both driving trailers – is required. Anti-override components will be fitted to the buckeye couplings, while existing loos will be converted to controlled emission toilets to meet modern main line standards. Crucially, central door locking will be installed.

When completed, the 4VEP will become the first heritage EMU to return to main line service, with steam and diesel locomotives and even DEMUs having reappeared on the national network, but no electric-only unit having yet made the grade.

→ To donate to the appeal, visit gofundme.com/f/Returning-3417-to-the-Mainline



4VEP No. 3417 Gordon Pettitt could be back on the main line in the very near future, with an appeal launched to help fund the required equipment. Before then, it will appear on heritage lines as loco-hauled stock. SETG



The passenger bays of the four trailers have seen water and mould damage repaired. How long is now left before this view is improved by paying passengers in the seats? SETG



Above: Duncan Mitchell and Mervyn Allcock, from MPower Kernow Community Interest Company, the company to receive the BAM Nuttall Partnership Award for 2023 from Paul McCracken, of BAM Nuttall, goes to for bringing back the turntable at St Blazey.

Left: On April 30, 2023, A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* became the first locomotive to use St Blazey turntable since its restoration.
ROBIN JONES

St Blazey turntable, Wensleydale and Leighton Buzzard come in with leading heritage honours

By Robin Jones

THE restored main line turntable at St Blazey depot in Cornwall, the Leighton Buzzard and Wensleydale railways and GWR Rowden Mill station were among the big winners at the 2023 National Railway Heritage Awards.

Announced by the awards' executive director, Tim Hedley-Jones, with Bill Reeve, director of Rail, Transport Scotland, as the guest of honour at the ceremony in the Merchant Taylors' Hall in London on December 6, the annual competition recognises, acknowledges and rewards, for the public benefit, the very best in re-use, restoration and conservation of the UK's historic railway infrastructure.

The BAM Nuttall Partnership Award was made for the restoration of the Grade II* 65ft Cowans Sheldon 1952 turntable at St Blazey by the MPower Kernow Community Interest Company, which, as reported in issue 306, was first used since being repaired for turning LNER A3 Pacific

No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* on April 30, midway through the Railway Touring Company's 'The Royal Duchy' from Bristol Temple Meads to Par and back.

The main aims of the project were not only to provide an operational turntable in Cornwall, but also to provide engineering training for young people.

"This is an impressive project where the detailed research has been successfully combined with the practical issues of restoring a structure in an inhospitable environment," said Tim.

"It has brought back into use a facility that will be much used in the future."

Shortlisted for this award were City of Edinburgh Council for work on Edinburgh Granton Gasworks station and civic square and Network Rail Wales & Western for restoration of the Paxton canopy area at Paddington station.

The Hendy & Pendle Trust Volunteers Award went to the Wensleydale Railway for the

replacement of the NER-style level crossing gates at Crakehall.

In recent years the gated crossing had been controlled manually using four metal 'farm-style' gates which, while functional, proved difficult to control in windy conditions, making operation at times less than straightforward for railway staff. The gates also failed to present a particularly pleasing visual aspect as part of a heritage railway.

Work began in May 2022 on a nine-month project to replace them. Research was carried out and, with the aid of evidence from NER sources and Siemens, a pattern based on the NER's Southern Division design of gates was commissioned.

"The overall look of the completed gates is excellent," said Tim. "The quality of workmanship, both in terms of the construction and fitting of the gates in position, is extremely well done."

Runners-up were Hollingbourne station community café and hub (Kent Community Rail Partnership

and Southeastern) and the viaduct at Randalstown (Tidy Randalstown).

The Avanti West Coast Community Award for the restoration of a railway building for community use was made to the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership for the work completed at Okehampton station (see also Main Line News, page 61).

Tim said: "The reopening of the line to regular passenger services was the catalyst that has led to an excellent project in restoring a station that might so easily have been lost. It is a remarkable survivor that has been resurrected from oblivion."

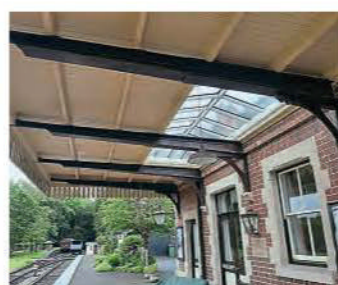
On the shortlist were Bishopstone station (Govia Thameslink Railway) and Eynsford station (Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership).

Hit with visitors

The National Highways Award for a restoration project on a closed line, which highlights bringing back into sustainable use a building or structure no longer owned by the railway industry, was made to Paul



The new east crossing gate at Crakehall on the Wensleydale Railway.



Above: The restored Okehampton station building, as seen from the forecourt.
Left: Rowden Mill station building canopy cantilever.



The entry to Cullybackey station.



Folkestone Harbour station renovation with the restored viaduct swing bridge walkway surface.



Barclay 0-6-0T No. 1641 of 1919 *Doll* emerges from beneath the new Chamberlains Bridge on the Leighton Buzzard Railway.



Work began in January 2022 to restore the historic group of four arches at London Bridge Island. The most prominent, the 'corner' facing London Bridge, took the name of the company once occupying the arch, the Scottish wine merchant Findlater's.



Sydney Gardens balustrade wall safety railings looking north towards Beckford Road bridge.

Kirwan and Cecilia Chavez-Brandon for the restoration of Rowden Mill station at Bredenbury, near Bromyard, Herefordshire, for visitor accommodation (as highlighted in issue 310).

"Rowden Mill station seems to be a hit with guests and has plenty of glowing online reviews and strong bookings," said Tim. "This project provides a great opportunity to introduce guests to the importance of our railway heritage and it will ensure the success of the next chapter in the station's story."

The couple beat off stiff competition from People for Places Developments Ltd for Edinburgh's Engine Yard and the National Trust for Castlefield viaduct in Manchester.

The Great Western Railway Craft Skills Award, recognising the best use of traditional craft skills in the restoration of a building or structure, was made to Robert and Anne Christie for the impressive restoration work undertaken at the Cullybackey station in Ballymena, dating from 1856 when it was opened by the Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine and Portrush Junction Railway.

"This is an outstanding example of what can be achieved by private

individuals without any outside funding," said Tim. "Their love of the project shines through in all that they have done. Most impressive is the length they have gone to in order to obtain heritage materials that complement the existing structure."

Shortlisted were Colt Construction for the platform canopy at Morpeth and Chiltern Railways for historic furniture at Warwick station.

Network Rail carried off the Network Rail ground Operational Enhancement Award for the sympathetic way in which safety railings were installed at Sydney Gardens in Bath, arguably one of the most sensitive of locations where the provision of new fencing was required.

Shortlisted were the Rother Valley Railway for Robertsbridge turntable and Transport for London for step-free access at Cockfosters station.

The Network Rail Conservation Award for the best restored structure, supported by funding from the Railway Heritage Trust, was won by Centenary Lounge Ltd for the splendid restoration of the refreshment rooms on the Down platform at Leamington Spa. Runners-up were the Great Western Society for

the restoration of the GWR water tank at Didcot Railway Centre and Network Rail for that of Holyhead station's train shed.

The Urban Heritage Award, sponsored by the Arch Company, was made to Benedict O'Looney Architects and Network Rail and the Railway Heritage Trust for work completed on Peckham Rye station in London.

Runners-up were ScotRail Trains for Aberdeen station concourse and Avanti West Coast for heritage tile restoration at Coventry.

The Translink Structures Award for the best restored structure, such as a viaduct or tunnel, was made to two projects. Firstly, National Highways was recognised for work on Westfield viaduct near Bathgate. The second award was made to Network Rail and Story Contracting for the project on the viaduct across the Forth at Stirling.

Making the shortlist were Network Rail, Story Contracting and Ropetech Access Solutions Ltd for work on the Royal Border Bridge at Berwick (centre spread) and National Highways for the Teviot Viaduct at Roxburgh.

The SouthEastern Commercial Restoration Award, for projects

bringing a railway building into a new commercial use, was made to the Arch Company, Benedict O'Looney Architects, and Frankham for the restoration of Findlater's Corner at London Bridge station.

Runners-up were Centenary Lounge for the refreshment rooms at Leamington Spa and Ltd Journey Counselling & Wellbeing for the North British Railway listed Ladybank station in Scotland.

Special commendation

The Leighton Buzzard Railway was given a commendation for securing its long-term future while working with the developers of an adjoining major housing development.

The initial proposals included building houses over the line severing its main depot and 'countryside' terminus off from its main line. Through considerable effort, careful negotiation and the active support of the railway's landlord, the Arnold White Group, a deal was reached with the developer that saw the construction of a deviation line, plus Chamberlains Bridge. The railway was able to continue to operate without interruption during the construction of the diverted line.

"In addition, and perhaps its biggest heritage benefit, is the agreement between the developers and the railway, which gives the railway a 250-year lease on all its infrastructure, thus guaranteeing the continuation of the line in the long term," said Tim.

"The railway and its officers are to be congratulated for this excellent outcome, which is a considerable heritage benefit in its own right."

Best of all

The Greater Anglia Award for the best overall entry went to Folkestone Harbour Ltd for the project at Folkestone Harbour station that has seen the location transformed.

The harbour branch line and station were mothballed from 2009 and officially closed five years later. Since 2015, work has been underway to conserve, restore, redevelop and repurpose former harbour and railway infrastructure as a key enabler for a major regeneration and redevelopment project on the site. All significant surviving historic elements have been included within the scheme, making it a significant undertaking. The work on the railway infrastructure included repairs to the 13-arch brick-built viaduct and the swing bridge installed by the Southern Railway in 1930.

Other railway features that have been carefully restored include the Saxby and Farmer signalbox of 1930, which retains its lever frame and apparatus, and the platforms built by the SECR in 1904 during the programme to extend the pier, along with the platform canopies installed by the Southern Railway in the late 1930s.

"The result of this project is that a new destination has been created from decay and dereliction by celebrating, renewing, and enhancing the infrastructure that has underpinned 180 years of railway and marine engineering and operations," said Tim. "If the measure of success is how many people now visit the site and enjoy the ambience, amenities and artistry of this quite unique location in this corner of Kent, then it has been a very successful transformation indeed." **HR**

■ **Pictures: National Railway Heritage Awards.**

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LMS 'Black Five' No.44871 passes over the River Cuckmere, near Berwick, East Sussex, on the approach to Eastbourne with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Sussex Belle' on December 6. PETER HOLLANDS

'Forgotten' Standard tank donated to West Somerset

By Owen Hayward

THE ownership of BR Standard 2-6-4T No. 80064 has been transferred to the West Somerset Railway after the locomotive spent almost 40 years on the Bluebell.

In a textbook case of locomotives owing their survival to individuals or groups coming together to save them, only to later disband, the 80064 Locomotive Fund has become the latest to wind up.

Formed in 1972, that December the fund purchased No. 80064 from Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard. The 2-6-4T had entered service at Watford in June 1953 and toured the regions during its working life.

Starting out on Midland Region metals, in December 1959 it transferred to the Southern Region, commencing with a month at Dover Marine before moving to Ashford in January 1960. Its stint there lasted just over a year before it was reallocated to Tonbridge in May 1961.

In June 1962 it moved yet again, this time to Exmouth Junction, which, after electrification of the Kent Coast line, was transferred to Western Region control. Its time at Exmouth would be the second longest of its career, lasting nearly three years, before it was moved for one final time to be shedded at Bristol Barrow Road in May 1965. Withdrawn that September, like so many locomotives, it was sent to Woodham Brothers' scrapyard at Barry.

Following its purchase by the fund, it moved to Buckfastleigh on what was then the Dart Valley Railway (now South Devon) in February 1973 where restoration commenced, steaming for the first time in heritage

in 1981, and being used on the DVR's second route between Paignton and Kingswear for the 1982/83 season.

In 1984, No. 80064 moved to the Bluebell and ran out the rest of its boiler certification, being withdrawn in 1990 and lying idle and often hidden since with classmates Nos. 80151 (operational) and unrestored 80100, more often the subject of discussion. Part of the reason for an overhaul not having been started is that extensive copper welding was believed to have been needed around the firebox.

With membership declining, the owning group took the decision to close and in accordance with its constitution decided to donate No. 80064 and its other assets to the West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA), taking it closer to both its preservation origins and former members of the wound-up fund.

A statement issued said: "The fund's membership was not very active after restoration was completed and less so after the engine came out of service. This was mainly due to being located some 170 miles from the base of its restoration.

"During the intervening 32 years, we have seen our membership

decline and because of this, our constitution places us under obligation to identify a suitable recipient for the locomotive.

"The fund had been approached by other railways over the years but by returning the locomotive to the West Country and donating it to a charitable trust which supports an operating steam railway, the remaining fund members can satisfy this instruction.

"Additionally, it will give almost all the present fund members and the families of past members, plus many unknown benefactors who contributed to the restoration, easier access to enjoy the engine in service.

"As a charitable trust, the WSRA has been chosen to become the new owner of No. 80064 and other assets of the fund.

"We believe the WSRA will be able to return the locomotive to traffic in a relatively short time, and the remaining members look forward to seeing it in steam once more.

"Our fund members have made many friends at the Bluebell Railway over almost 40 years. As individuals, we intend to remain in contact and wish them and the Bluebell Railway every success in the future."



Setting off:
No. 80064 ready to leave the Bluebell by road for Somerset on November 29, after spending almost 40 years based in Sussex.

JOHN HILDITCH

Why have a stairlift when you could have a real lift?

A Stiltz Homelift will help you continue living in the home you love.

Stairlift? No Thanks

A Stiltz Homelift is an ideal and affordable alternative to a stairlift. You can now safely travel between the floors in your home while keeping your stairs the way they have always been.

Neat & Discreet

A Stiltz Homelift can be installed into almost any room in your home. A Stiltz is uniquely compact with the smallest model taking up just over half a square metre – now that IS discreet. The homelift plugs directly into a standard domestic socket and uses less power than boiling a kettle. The homelifts run on self-supporting rails so there is no need to drill into walls and the motor is fully self-contained within the lift car. Neat.

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expense and emotional upheaval of moving house or the disruption of adapting your home for downstairs living. Save money instead; live comfortably and independently in the home you love for as long as you want, with a Stiltz Homelift.

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Mr. Eames

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An early Christmas clay train gift for Bodmin & Wenford

By Robin Jones

AN early Christmas present on December 8 saw the Bodmin & Wenford Railway take delivery of the first of eight redundant CDA hopper wagons so it can create a second heritage china clay train.

Also, the National Railway Museum's LSWR Beattie 2-4-0 well tank No. 30587, a veteran of the sharply curving Wenfordbridge freight-only line serving Wenford clay dries, has returned for a second spell on the heritage line.

As reported in issue 270, a scheme to restore a rake of wooden-bodied china clay wagons to reflect Cornwall's rich rail freight heritage was launched by BWR member Evan Gray and his dad Bryan, restoring the clay hood wagons currently based on the heritage line which are surviving examples of 875 built by BR between 1954 and 1960. So far, the project has restored eight of the nine clay hoods on the BWR, to run them behind steam at special events and for charters.

Now the newly-acquired hopper rake will perform the same duties behind a suitable diesel locomotive from the Bodmin fleet.

Save our rakes

As reported in issue 310, a joint appeal was launched by the BWR and the National Wagon Preservation Group to save a rake of five four-wheel CDA hoppers to continue the line's portrayal of the story of china clay traffic.

Between 1987 and 1989, 125 wagons were constructed new, with a further 13 made by converting pre-existing MGR hoppers, displacing the wooden-bodied clay hood and including a rolling roof to protect the material inside.

On July 25, main line operating company DB Schenker issued a



The rake of nine redundant CDA wagons delivered to Par Docks on December 6. JOHN HIRD/BWR

tender list for the disposal of 40 stored wagons. The last operational examples were removed from traffic by DB Cargo on August 11, with the vast majority of the remaining wagons now destined for scrap.

The cost of acquiring the wagons was estimated at about £3000 per vehicle, including haulage costs and VAT. Sufficient funds were raised from both individuals purchasing wagons privately for the project, and an NWPG fundraiser to secure all eight identified CDAs was launched at nwpg.co.uk and via nationalwagonpresgroup@gmail.com

NWPG said that a quantity of spare parts would be obtained to ensure the long-term operational future of the saved wagons. The private individuals who funded the wagons will have them maintained in an operational condition by the BWR

at no cost to them in exchange for a permanent loan.

On December 6, nine CDAs were propelled from St Blazey yard into Par Docks by DB Cargo Class 66 No. 66165 for onward transport by road, eight of the wagons destined for the BWR and one for the Plymouth Valley Railway.

Bring home the Beattie

On December 7, 1874-built No. 30587, now under long-term loan from the NRM, arrived from York back to its spiritual home in Cornwall.

Currently non-operational, the intention is to bring it back into service as soon as finances permit. In the meantime, it will be stored under cover at Bodmin General, and will be on static display for special events during the 2024 season.

The smokebox wreath and the disc with 'Tony 72F' was in memory of

the late Tony Hallworth, the BWR's traction inspector, who as a young man working for BR from Wadebridge shed, fired No. 30587 many times along the Wenfordbridge branch.

His widow, Vicky, was on hand to witness the arrival, and a new locomotive for the Perrygrove Railway named in his memory has just become Britain's newest steam locomotive (see Headline News, page 9).

No. 30587 and its two sisters were withdrawn by BR in 1962, the other survivor being No. 30585, which is based at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre.

Part of the National Collection, it was loaned to what is now the South Devon Railway at Buckfastleigh in April 1978 but in December 2001 was taken to The Flour Mill workshops at Bream, in the Forest of Dean, for restoration to working order and arrived at Bodmin in November 2002.

It was withdrawn for its 10-yearly overhaul in 2012 and returned to The Flour Mill, reappearing at the BWR in Southern livery, numbered 3298, in 2013. It was called by the NRM in 2017 and in 2019 its boiler tubes failed during a visit to the Bluebell Railway.

The locomotive was moved from the Locomotion museum at Shildon to York in 2022.

Another delivery by road to Bodmin General saw IVA wagon No. 239 8 5910 arrive from Birmingham. Formerly owned by Touax Rail Ltd, it has been acquired by the BWR diesel group as storage for spare parts.



Back 'home': LSWR 0298 Beattie well tank No. 30587 is delivered to Bodmin General from the National Railway Museum at York. WILL DINGLE/BWR



On December 8, the second CDA is offloaded at Bodmin General, with Class 47 No. 47306 in the background. JIMMY JAMES/BWR

Severn Valley festive services heading for sell-out

Words and picture by John Titlow

THE Severn Valley Railway's Christmas season started on November 25 with a two-train service from Kidderminster to Arley for a pantomime at the station.

Five return workings took place on December weekends, with additional trains on Friday, December 22. On the 24th, it was to be reduced to a four-train service. Ticket sales were doing well at the time of *Heritage Railway* going to press.

From Bridgnorth, the 'Enchanted Express' with Father Christmas on board started on December 2. Stanier Mogul No. 2968 was hauling its first public train since overhaul.

Four return workings to Highley took place at weekends finishing on December 24, proving to be very popular and were expected to sell out. Reviews on social media have been excellent.

Motive power changed over the weekends on both the 'Enchanted Express' and Santa trains. Locomotives used were Nos. 75027, 7714, 4930, and 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* after returning from the West Somerset Railway.

The two-car DMU returned to service for transporting staff from Bewdley to Arley and running a special service on the evening of December 2 in connection with Bewdley's Christmas lights switch-on. It proved very popular, changes to the timetable adding



Recently-restored Stanier mogul No. 2968 departs Bridgnorth with an 'Enchanted Express' to Highley on December 9.

more services reflecting this. The Christmas trains selling out proved that the SVR is an important contributor to the West Midlands economy, not only to businesses but also in terms of employment.

The new January 6/7 winter steam gala will be the last chance to see Ivatt 4MT 'Flying Pig' No. 43106 and Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34027 for some time due to their 10-year boiler tickets running

out. No. 43106's future is uncertain at present, but *Taw Valley* will enter Bridgnorth Shed for a full overhaul. Other locomotives in service will be Nos. 3268, 7714, 7812 and 2253: a full timetable is published at <https://svr.co.uk/event/winter-steam-gala/>

Regarding the line's 2023 appeal for funds to combat the impact of the economic crisis, managing director Gus Dunster said: "The SVR Survival Appeal is approaching

£500,000 and we are heartened by the thousands of donations that have been made since it launched in April. There is still more work to be done in order to reach the £1.5 million reserve in the bank that will enable us to build up our long-term resilience. We are extremely grateful to those who have donated to help secure the railway's future."

→ To contribute, visit <https://svr.co.uk/survival/>

Perfect prairies: Didcot plans line-up of 'larges'

DIDCOT Railway Centre will bring together examples of the three different numbering sequences of GWR large prairies for the first time in the heritage era during the February half term.

The large prairie originated from a designed Churchward-George prototype built in 1903; No. 99, which was built with the standard No. 2 boiler, flat-topped tanks and 5ft 8in diameter driving wheels. A subsequent 39 followed from Swindon Works with modifications including sloped tanks to aid visibility with more tweaks over ensuing years. Initially identified as the 3100 class between 1912 and 1927, this first batch was later reclassified as the 5100 class. The prototype became No. 5100, while the remainder took on Nos. 5111-5149.

The 5101 class, first introduced in 1929, were essentially a Charles Collett version of the Churchward design but benefitting from an increased axle loading. The first of

these filled in the numerical gap of its forerunners, 5101-5110, before resuming at 5150; by 1934, the 5100 series had been exhausted and so new locomotives were numbered from 4100.

The next variation was the 6100 class, a straight Churchward design, and a straightforward development of the 5101s that benefited from increased boiler pressure (225psi, up from 200psi), which also resulted in increased tractive effort. A total of 70 were built in two batches, the first between 1931 and 1933, and the second in 1935. They became nicknamed 'Tanner One-ers' due to their 61xx numbering resembling a sixpence and a penny.

None of the 5100 class survived, and only one of the 6100 made it into preservation. No. 6106 is based at Didcot, where it is currently on static display.

Of the 10 examples of the 5101 class that made it into preservation, No. 5193 has been rebuilt into a mogul at the West Somerset

Railway and resembles a 'what might have been' small-boilered version of the 4300 class (adopting the No. 9351 as a result). No. 4115 was stripped for spares, its frames scrapped at Tyseley in 2016. No. 4144 is currently operational and also based at Didcot.

Over the first 2024 half-term dates of February 10/11, 14 and 17/18, the centre will bring together an example of all three numbering sequences, with its resident prairie pair being joined by No. 5199, courtesy of the 5199 Project (see picture, page 53), that locomotive's last appearance before being withdrawn for overhaul on February 27. Nos. 4144 and 5199 will work services on the demonstration lines each day, with photographic opportunities planned to take place outside the 1932 locomotive shed and coal stage.

The weekend before, February 2/3, No. 4144 will star with No. 5199 at the Battlefield Line's own Winter Steam Gala.

Winter excursions on the NYMR

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway is to run a series of special steam-hauled excursions from Pickering to Whitby between Christmas and New Year.

The pre-booked, seat-allocated services depart from Pickering station at 11.10am each day (10.15am on Sundays), running from Thursday, December 28 to Sunday, January 7.

The buffet carriage will serve hot and cold drinks and snacks.

There will just over an hour-and-a-half (two hours and 30 minutes on Sundays) in Whitby before the service departs at 2.30pm.

Adult tickets cost £45 each and children aged up to 15 travel free. When you buy one day, you get 12 months free to hop on and off the standard bronze, silver and gold services.

Dogs are permitted on these services at a cost of £3 each.

→ Annual passes are valid for these services but must be booked online in advance.

Join a Romanian heritage railway working party!

By Bill Parker

A TEAM of British volunteers helped run a successful holiday event in Romania at the beginning of December, using The Flour Mill's Manning Wardle 0-6-2T No. 1877 of 1915, formerly known as *Chevallier* and colloquially known as *Vlad*.

The last day of November is celebrated as St Andrew's Day and the first of December is Romanian National Day, so three round-trips ran on the two public holidays and Saturday, December 2.

Harry Billmore, chief engineer of the Fairbourne Railway and a driver on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, joined the locomotive crew, having given Sebastian (Sebe) Vintila, the SAR's engineer, a footplate ride in June, when Sebe was in England helping to assemble *Vlad*, which will be on loan for two years.

Despite the time of year, the weather was kind, and on the nine trips, the 'Mocanita', as the railway is known locally, carried nearly as many passengers as the 10 trips of the gala weekend in September after *Vlad* arrived.

The cost of moving the locomotive to Romania was paid for that weekend, so with it loaned to the railway free of charge, most of this



The working party at Cornatel on December 2. On top of Manning Wardle *Vlad* is Bill Parker, of The Flour Mill. Left to right: Jill and David Rowbotham (Talylllyn); Alasdair Stewart (Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland); Gary Timmins (Talylllyn); Laurie Webb (Roandola, Romania); Laura Raymond (Ffestiniog and Heritage Railway Association); Leon Phelps and Geoff Phelps (The Flour Mill); and Neil McGregor (Buckarest lawyer). HARRY BILLMORE

and future weekends' profits can be reinvested in the line and not in hiring fees.

The 2ft 6in gauge Sibiu Agnita Railway currently operates over 4½ miles between Cornatel, about 15 miles from the city of Sibiu, and Hosman, in the scenic and undeveloped Hartibaciu valley at the foot of the Southern Carpathian Mountains. Abandoned by the state railway company back in

2001, the railway has been saved from scrapping by being listed as a historical monument.

Apart from spot resleepering, the track has not been maintained for more than 20 years and the sleepers and ballast are in pretty poor shape, so much work will be needed to permit regular steam operations, and the railway is hoping to attract more help from the UK. Thanks to direct flights to Sibiu from Luton, often

very inexpensive off-season, this is a chance to revisit the past – as near as possible back to the 1950s and 1960s in North Wales, perhaps.

A major work party is being planned for March. Anyone interested is asked to contact Bill Parker at The Flour Mill, preferably by email at theflourmill@aol.com

Full details of the work party, once the dates have been confirmed, will be available at www.theflourmill.com



Above: Harry Billmore driving *Vlad* at Cornatel. BILL PARKER

Left: No, it's not Snowdonia, but Mocanita in the Hartibaciu Valley, as Manning Wardle 0-6-2T *Vlad* passes through. BILL PARKER

Didcot prepares for 55th anniversary – with planned return of GWR auto tank

By Owen Hayward

NOT since the withdrawal of No. 1450 in December 2020 has a GWR 1400 auto tank been seen operating on a UK heritage line – but that looks set to change in 2023, with Didcot Railway Centre's own No. 1466 expected to return in time to mark the museum's 55th anniversary on May 10.

Last operational in 2000 when it was withdrawn due to the condition of its foundation ring, work to return the 0-4-2T to service began in 2019 when it was transported to Western Steam Engineering Ltd in the Forest of Dean. While mechanically good, it was known that a new backplate, firebox plating and repairs to the boiler barrel were required. Later transferred to the West Somerset Railway, a new copper tubeplate was also made at South Devon Railway Engineering.

The reassembly of the firebox took place in recent months and was signed off by an independent inspector. Engineers have since started reaming out the stay holes in the copper wrapper. The safety valve was also dismantled, inspected, and then reassembled with four new pillars and two new spindles. A new blower ring casting was delivered to the WSR, where it started to

be machined.

The chassis of the locomotive was due to enter the paintshop for preparation and first coats to be applied.

Museum pioneer

No. 1466's place in preservation was secured after four schoolboys wrote to our sister title, *Railway Magazine*, in 1961 in the hope of drumming up support to purchase and preserve it in running order. That letter led to the foundation of the Great Western Society, the 1400 being its first locomotive.

While it missed the original target of being ready for the society's 60th anniversary in 2021, it is expected that it will be officially launched back into service on May 10, which coincides with the 55th anniversary of Didcot Railway Centre.

The society was offered use of the former GWR locomotive depot, which it accepted, establishing itself there in 1967 before opening in 1969. Over the following five-and-a-half decades it has flourished into a successful GWR-centric museum in an authentic setting.

Full details of the event were still to be confirmed, but it is hoped that the opening day can be recreated to some degree.



LSWR T3 No. 563 arrives at Norden from Corfe Castle, the East Hill of the Purbeck Hills in the distance, on October 17. ANDREW PM WRIGHT

T3 to make gala debut at Swanage winter warmer

SOLE-SURVIVING LSWR T3 No. 563 will make its gala debut at the Swanage Railway's January 6/7 Winter Warm Up weekend.

Since completing its debut run during the October 2023 half-term, as highlighted in issue 312, the 4-4-0 has undergone further work to help improve its performance.

A spokesman for the Swanage Railway Trust's 563 Locomotive Group said: "It's had a new cap fitted to the blastpipe and we've seen a great improvement in performance as a result, so we are looking forward to enjoying that during the Winter Warm Up."

The gala will also feature diesels, with No. 563 operating alongside West Country 4-6-2 No. 34028 Eddystone and Class 33 pair Nos. 33012 and 33111 in action.

An engineering freight train will also run, thus presenting the first opportunity to see No. 563 with wagons following its restoration; the set is expected to contain several Dogfish hoppers, some of which have recently been repainted.

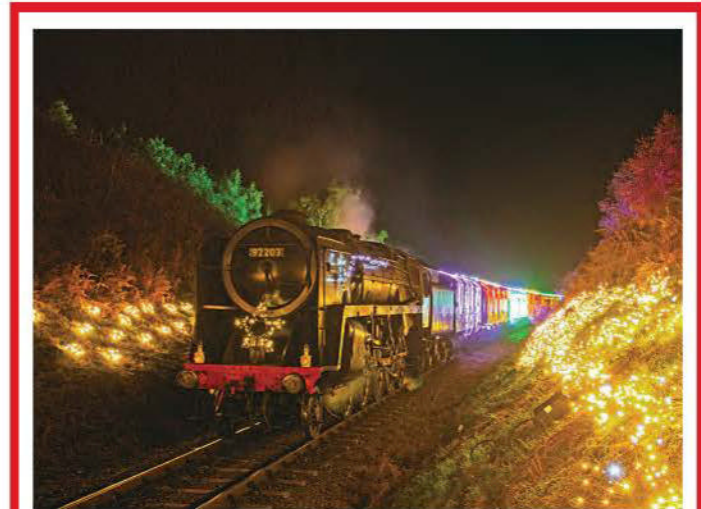
Catering facilities will be open at both Swanage and Corfe Castle, with the museum also accessible in the goods shed of the latter station.

→ The farewell CrossCountry tour from Leeds to Swanage to mark the retirement of the operator's Class 125 high speed train fleet after more than four decades raised £63,000-plus for The Brain Tumour Charity.

The recipient for the September 26 trip, as featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 312, was chosen in memory of former CrossCountry employee Jo Taylor.



The frames of No. 1466 are ready and await the boiler which is rapidly nearing completion at the West Somerset Railway, where the auto tank's overhaul is being carried out under contract. DRC



BR Standard 9F No. 92203 at the head of a 'Norfolk Lights Express' test train in Kelling Cutting ahead of the launch of the North Norfolk Railway's illuminated festive services on November 10. The trains were due to run most evenings until New Year's Day, and Mince Pie specials during the day from December 27 to January 1. DAVE BALLARD/NNR

Winter whiteout greets 'Santa special' goers in the north...

By Owen Hayward

THE supermarket shelves may be stocked up with festive goods before Halloween has even passed, but for many Christmas does not start until December 1. For the first families travelling aboard 'Santa specials' in the north of the country, a blanket of snow helped cement the feeling that the holidays were well and truly on their way.

The enhancement of the magic was not only for those travelling aboard some of the most popular services of the year, but also afforded an opportunity to many photographers to capture stunning moments.

Difference in a day

Yorkshire was the first area reported to have received snowfall, with the landscape changing quite literally overnight. None quite reaped the benefit as much as those enjoying a photographic charter on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on November 28/29.

The first day was blessed with glorious sunshine and saw resident BR Standard 9F No. 92134, paired with a short mixed freight set, perform runpasts at various locations.

Photographic charters have been absent on the Moorsline for some years; this was arranged by Matt Fisher six years after his previous event on the line in 2017.

Overnight the snow fell, bringing icy sub-zero temperatures the following morning for participants. Many local roads were closed off or impassable as a result, including those leading to Levisham station.

With daily services not in operation, you would be forgiven for thinking this was not an issue: however, with a dining train booked to operate, it necessitated some careful planning – and the co-operation of the booked charter, too, with LNER P3 No. 2392 called upon for assistance.

"The day was rather chaotic: roads closed, ice, snow all over them, and cars in ditches," Matt said. "We still managed to run the charter for

those who did make it and used the Grosmont to Goathland section, managing to get two locations in sun and snow and making it all worthwhile in the end.

"The railway decided not to try and get anyone in to open Levisham 'box, which was a sensible decision as it's an awful road in bad weather.

"The diner therefore ran from Grosmont to Goathland twice, the first departure at about 1.30pm.

"I happily agreed to finish the charter about 1.20pm so they could use No. 2392 to top-and-tail to save running round at Goathland."

Festive treats

Some surrounding areas received a light dusting of snow too, with more arriving into the weekend that brought about picturesque scenes just in time for the many Santa special services running, a substantial majority of which have entirely or come close to selling out.

North of the border, the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway ran its advertised services on both days, top-and-

tailoring trains. The Thomas blue livery of Neilson, Reid & Co. 0-6-0T No. 5710 *Lord Roberts* provided a striking contrast against the snow-covered country backdrop, while Caledonian Railway Class 439 0-4-4T No. 419 in its BR black livery assisted from the rear.

An appeal launched on November 8 to secure a new air pump for this unique locomotive was so well supported that just 10 days later it had surpassed the £6000 target and achieved £10,500.

All of the railway's Santa trains had sold out by November 26, with a waiting list established for those hoping to secure any cancelled spaces.

Back in Yorkshire, by contrast the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway received a relatively light dusting across its five-mile route.

Unperturbed, resident BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75078 could be found working the railway's 'Elf Explorer' trips and keeping passengers warm with the provision of steam-heated carriages.

Visiting the Nene Valley Railway to help run festive services there, LMS 'Black Five' No. 45212 passes the Fletton Loop spur as it heads for Peterborough on December 3. HAYDEN SHEPPARD





Above: Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 5102 *Cathryn* heads away from Matlock at Peak Rail with a December 2 'Santa Special' working. ALAN WEAVER



Right: The sunlight catches the caps of the Dee Valley on December 2 as WR pannier No. 7754 debuted on the Llangollen Railway's Santa specials seen passing through the picturesque Berwyn station. RICHARD WALLIKER

The East Lancashire Railway was also treated to a covering as SR West Country No. 34092 *City Of Wells* and LMS Jubilee No. 45690 *Leander* took charge of the Christmas services there. Patronage was high, with many of the December trains very close to having sold out.

The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway had to wait until Sunday, December 3 before it saw snowfall, and volunteers pulled out all the stops to ensure platforms were clear and

that services ran as advertised. Aware that the conditions were likely to prevent some people from attending their booked trains, the railway promised to be as flexible as possible, moving passengers to trains later in the day or on alternative dates where possible. Trains here also ran top-and-tail with BR Standard 2MT No. 78018, visiting from the Great Central Railway, representing steam motive power, with resident Class 14 D9537 providing rear assistance.

While the snow enhanced the experience for many, it was not the case for every line. The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway opted not to run its advertised services on either day, with concerns centred on everyone's safety on the local roads, the conditions of which were described as 'treacherous'. All of the railway's December trains were reported as sold out and refunds were offered to those whose planned visit was cancelled.

The Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway ran its 'Tinsel Train' services as planned on December 2. However, as the conditions changed overnight, Cumbria Police advised people to only travel if necessary, so in response, services were suspended the following day for the safety of passengers and volunteers alike.

A railway spokesman said: "This was the first time in several decades that we have failed to run an advertised day's service!"



1



2



3



4

1: Nobody would have believed that less than 24 hours after this photograph was taken, the scene would change drastically with the arrival of a heavy snowfall. With a short mixed set in tow, BR Standard 9F No. 92134 passes through Green End on the NYMR during a Matt Fisher charter on November 28. MATT FISHER

2: LNER P3 No. 2392 works a mixed freight train out of Goathland on day two of the November photographic charters, the snow lying fresh and undisturbed on the ground. ANDREW JEFFERYS

3: LMS Jubilee No. 45690 *Leander* bursts out of Nuttall Tunnel on the East Lancashire Railway on December 3. KALLUM BUCKLEY

4: On the Tanfield Railway, 0-6-0ST *Austerity* No. 49 passes through Bobgins crossing on December 3 with the day's second 'North Pole Express'. DAVE HEWITT

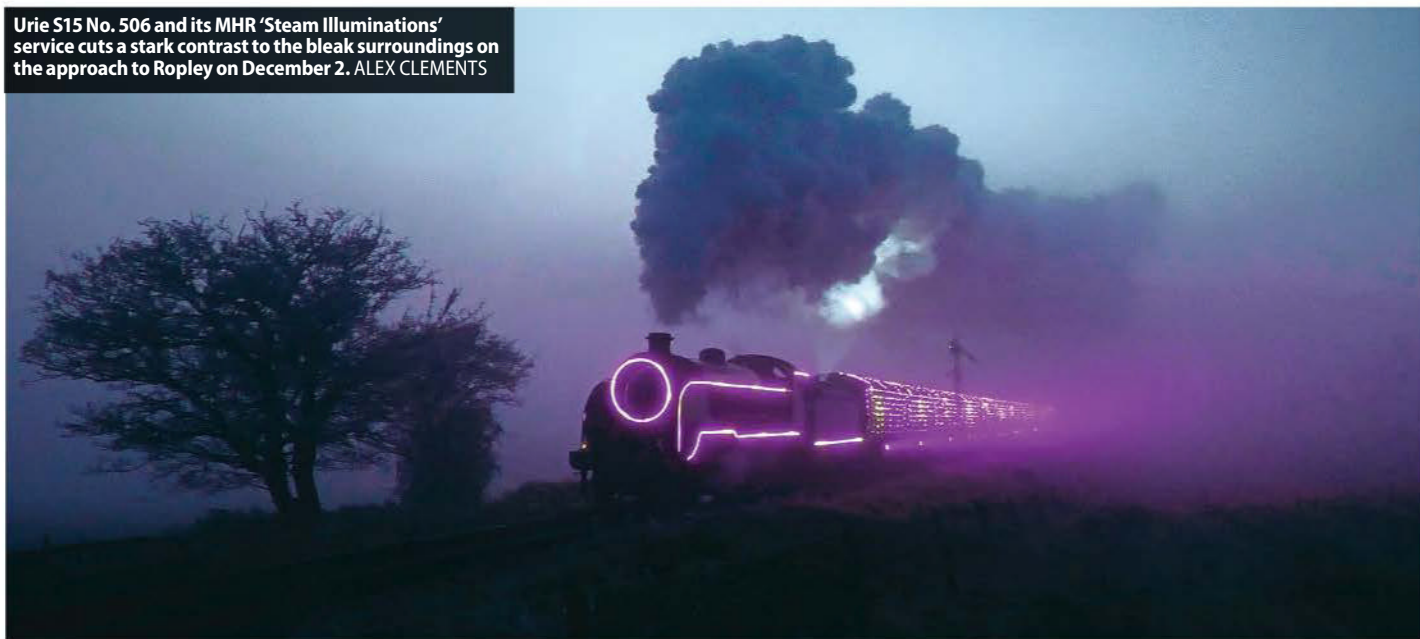


Neilson & Reid 0-6-0T *Lord Roberts* reverses to the north end of Bo'ness Station to take on water on December 2. TIMON ROSE



Snow did not deter visitors to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway on December 3, where BR Standard 2MT No. 78018 arrives to a crowd at Wirksworth. EVR

Urie S15 No. 506 and its MHR 'Steam Illuminations' service cuts a stark contrast to the bleak surroundings on the approach to Ropley on December 2. ALEX CLEMENTS



... As fog enhances evenings in the south

WITH Peterborough seemingly the furthest location down the country where snowfall reached, the south of England became enshrouded with fog throughout the same weekend – and the atmosphere was particularly enhanced at the lines running illumination trains.

These services have seen a boom in popularity since their inception as the 'Train of Lights' at the Dartmouth Steam Railway in 2018, with many

lines adding their own spin on the services as they strive to improve the experience year on year.

The Mid-Hants Railway's Steam Illuminations trains commenced on November 24; the town of Alresford partook in the occasion with a parade of lanterns, many of which were made by pupils at the local primary school, the parade making its way along the high street at 5.40pm and arriving at the station at about 6pm.

There they were ready to greet SR Urie S15 No. 506 as it arrived with the stock ready for the 7pm departure to Alton, the train festooned with lights.

On December 2, the fog rolled in and as the Urie locomotive made its way through the countryside, the presence of the exterior LED lights meant the train stood out amid the bleak surroundings.

The fog lingered for most of the weekend; over in Tenterden, the Kent

& East Sussex Railway's Santa specials were also graced by its presence, converting photographs into almost greyscale finishes as the fog settled around the stock.

Over the same weekend, the Epping Ongar Railway also ran its 'Lights Express' services each evening, with the weather creating a somewhat eerie atmosphere when diffused by the trees of Epping's ancient woodland. **HR**



A freezing fog severely restricted visibility at Tenterden Town on the KESR as visiting BR Standard 2MT No. 78019 shunts on December 3. ROBIN COOMBES

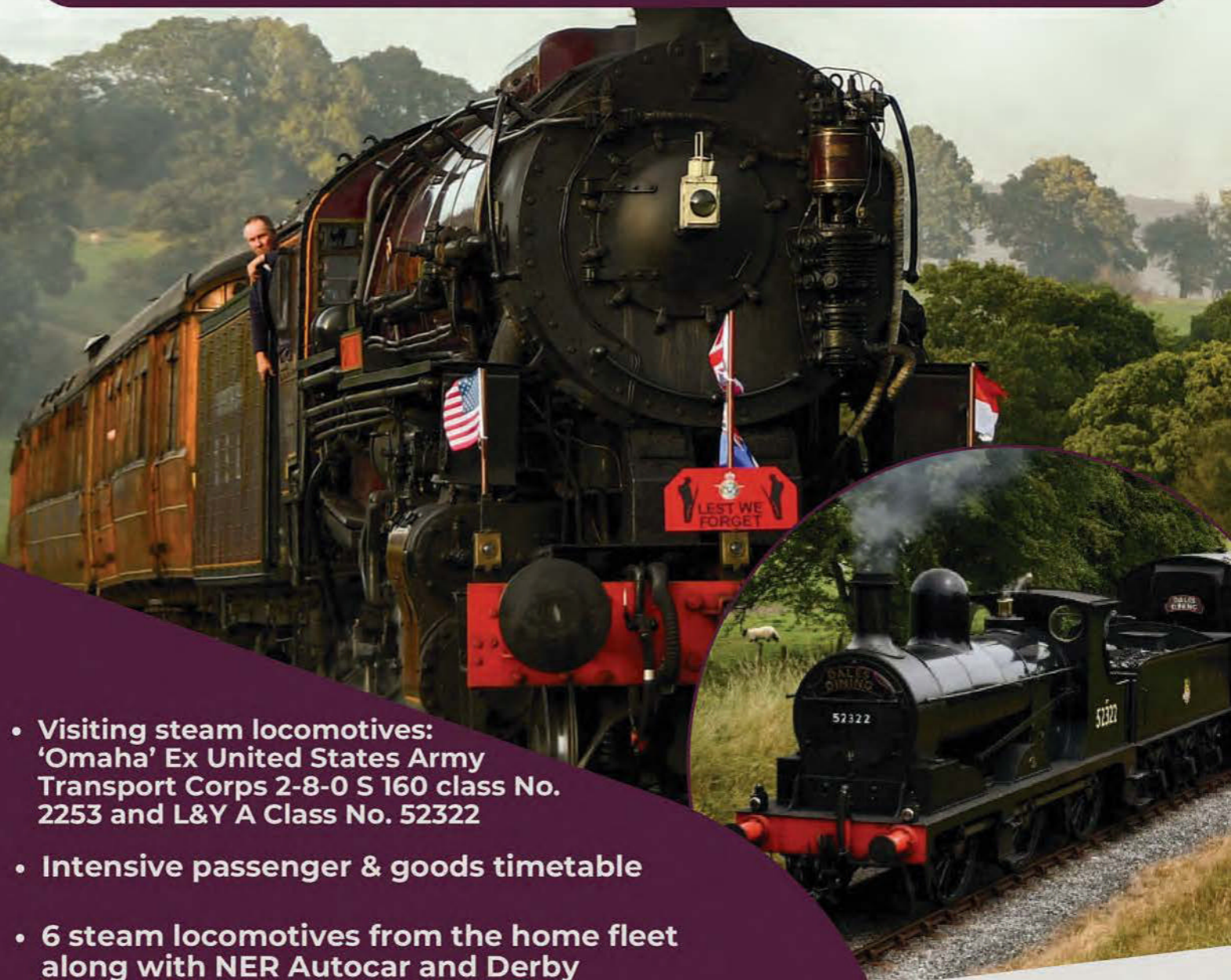


WR 4-6-0 No. 4953 *Pitchford Hall* pauses in the woodland at Coopersale on December 1 during one of the EOR's 'Lights Express' services. OWEN HAYWARD

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'Reborn' Llangollen success recognised in tourism award

By Owen Hayward

THE efforts of volunteers at the Llangollen Railway as it continues to rebuild into a top-tier heritage line has been rewarded – by the Go North Wales Tourism award for Attraction of the Year.

The annual ceremony took place on November 23 and saw the railway score on seven elements: use of innovation; engaging with the local community; sustainability; achievements; skills; social inclusivity; and overall quality. As previously reported, the railway has achieved great success in rebuilding in the wake of the administration of the previous plc.

Initially restarting services utilising its fleet of heritage DMUs, the railway has gone on to resume steam and diesel-hauled trains, with its own resident GWR 5700 pannier No. 7754 completing overhaul at the hands of LR volunteers at the end of September.

The crowning jewel for the line was the opening of its highly anticipated extension to Corwen last summer, the station having built from new a few hundred yards away from the site of the original.

In a feat of engineering, the existing embankment was widened to accommodate the platform and loop line, with much of the station's construction work carried out by a dedicated team of volunteers and locally sourced contractors.

General manager Tom Taylor said: "We had to work with the rest of the tourism industry just to survive, but this year we have fulfilled our long-

held ambition of taking the railway back to Corwen, which is already making a big difference to the town.

"The amazing team of volunteers and staff at our railway have been key to getting us back from the brink of collapse to where we are now.

"This award is for them. We are totally focussed on moving forward now, supporting our partner organisations in the Dee Valley as we head towards it becoming a national park. As part of this vision, the Llangollen & Corwen Railway must continue to stabilise, recover and develop a really polished offering – for both the local community and our visitors to enjoy and benefit from for many years to come."

LR chairman Phil Coles added: "It's been a lot of very hard work over two-and-a-half years, with an awful lot of input from visitors, volunteers and staff. So many of our team have gone over and above in their dedication to our railway and this award is the icing on the cake after a highly successful 2023 season."

The railway's press officer, Terry Pickthall, said: "For me as an LR volunteer of some 17 years, winning this award means everything to me and my colleagues.

"To turn our railway around from the brink of mismanaged collapse to being back as a nationally recognised tourist attraction in just two-and-a-half years has been an incredible achievement.

"It's not been easy, and we still have a lot of work to do, but we are all walking a foot taller from the win and I am more optimistic about our future than at any time I can remember."



Llangollen Railway Trust manager Tom Taylor (second from left) and chairman Phil Coles (second from right) were presented with the award for Attraction of the Year 2023 at the Go North Wales tourism awards by Jonathon and Oliver Seldon, from event sponsors SF Parks. LRT/GNW



The railway's extension to Corwen opened in June and has helped the railway grow, leading to its win at the Go North Wales tourism awards for 2023. OWEN HAYWARD

Line moves a step closer to step-free

IN A bid to become an accessible attraction for the less mobile, the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway has begun replacing its platform at Sittingbourne Viaduct station for it to become step-free.

The project has received a boost from building product supplier Ibstock, a leading UK manufacturer of a diverse range of building products and solutions. The group has eight core product categories, including flooring and lintels, and rail and infrastructure.

Ibstock's factory in Sittingbourne generously topped up an existing grant from Swale Borough Council providing concrete beams for the new beam-and-block concrete

platform which sits on top of cast concrete piers, and also provided pre-cast concrete platform edging.

All these concrete products were delivered free of charge by Seymour Transport Ltd.

The use of pre-cast concrete products was a key enabler for reconstruction of Sittingbourne Viaduct platform due to the lack of road access to the station site.

By choosing beam-and-block construction, it was possible for the materials to be delivered to the railway's Kemsley Down station, from where it was taken to the opposite end of the line (which has no road access) by train. There, it was unloaded by the railway's



Left: A new platform being constructed at Sittingbourne Viaduct station will enable step-free access to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway's services for the first time. SKLR

volunteers who had already dismantled the old platform and installed new foundations and concrete piers for the first section of the replacement.

The new platform will be higher and wider than the demolished structure, with the increased width

and height intended to enable wheelchairs and pushchairs to be directly driven or pushed up a ramp into the awaiting train.

The gap between the platform edge and the waiting trains is also being reduced to make boarding easier.



The new Lappa Valley train, built by Alan Keef, passes the boating lake straight outside East Wheal Rose. OLLIE RIDGE/LVR

Another first-class honour for Lappa Valley Railway as new train debuts

By Robin Jones

THE Lappa Valley Railway has won a major accolade in Cornwall for the second year running.

The railway was named Large Visitor Attraction of the Year in the prestigious Cornwall Tourism Awards, which took place at Truro Cathedral.

Tourism industry experts judged the entrants on key aspects and an undercover visit, which noted the warm welcome, well-maintained facilities, and very friendly and helpful staff.

LVR managing director Keith Southwell said: "We are humbled to have been recognised in this way for a second year.

"This would not be possible without the hard work and commitment of our entire team. Every single one lives and breathes the Lappa values of inclusivity, fun, nature, and enabling families to make special memories.

"We have made a significant number of investments to evolve Lappa Valley Railway over the last few years, including our new Engine Shed Indoor Soft Play, adventure golf, and the arrival of a brand-new train."

Lappa Valley train driver Ben Patrick was also named as the year's unsung hero, using his experience as a young full-time carer for

his father to help visitors with disabilities and additional needs feel more comfortable, as well as encouraging young train fans.

"We are extremely proud of Ben and everything he continues to achieve, especially in the face of adversity," said Keith.

"We are very lucky to have him as a key member of our team and believe he is very deserving of this award."

In 2023, the LVR received gold in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category at the awards.

The railway will celebrate its 50th birthday in 2024, starting with the official naming in February of its new locomotive, a Bo-Bo diesel designed and built by Alan Keef of Ross-on-Wye (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 310). The name, yet to be announced, has been chosen by a young visitor.

The locomotive is the first 15in gauge locomotive built specifically for Lappa Valley since Severn Lamb 0-6-4T No. 1 *Zebedee* in 1974. The order includes five new carriages and a buggy wagon.

It arrived in late October and underwent several trials, commissioning, and driver training. It entered service on October 27 in time for the railway's popular fireworks display evenings.

Other special events in 2024 will include the opening of a new station.



The Lappa Valley team inside Truro Cathedral with the gold award for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year. LVR

Island Line anniversary to be remembered – at Llanelli

WITH 2024 being the 35th anniversary of the introduction of 'new' former London Underground tube trains on the Isle of Wight's Island Line, the London Transport Traction Group has announced that it is to repaint one of its two preserved members of the Class 483 fleet into Network SouthEast livery.

Converted from ex-London Underground 1938 tube stock between 1989 and 1991, these two-car EMUs were introduced to replace the ageing 'standard' tube stock which had been operating on the Isle of Wight since 1967. After a little over 30 years of work on the island, No. 483006 was the last of its type to run in service on January 3, 2021, bringing an 80-year career to an end.

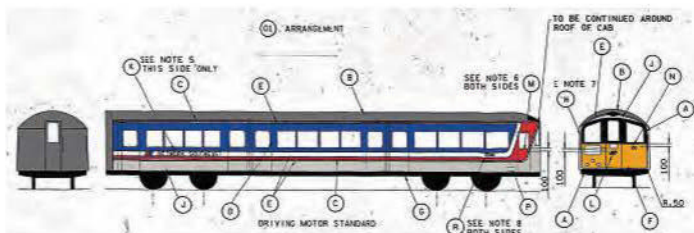
Since withdrawal, No. 483006 has been homed at the Llanelli &

Mynydd Mawr Railway's Cynheidre headquarters, later to be joined by No. 483008.

Since the last of these trains were withdrawn in 2021, all remaining units have been fortunate enough to survive. Most of these are presented in their final livery of Island Line red, or else in an interpretation of London Transport red.

However, when first introduced, these units carried the affectionately nicknamed 'toothpaste' livery of Network SouthEast.

A LTTG spokesman said: "With the 35th anniversary of the Class 483s upon us and the 40th anniversary of Network Southeast not far away, now is the ideal time to display No. 483006 in the eye-catching red, white and blue that marked the birth of Island Line.



The planned retro livery for Class 483 No. 483006, which currently carries Island Line red livery. LTTG

"The 1938 tube stock is an icon of the 1930s design legacy inherited by the London Underground, but for more than 30 years the Class 483s represented all that it was to travel by train on the Isle of Wight.

"Whether as an islander commuting to work or school, a family coming off the ferry or hovercraft at Ryde looking forward to a week's holiday by the sea in Sandown or Shanklin, or any number of grandparents taking children to see the steam railway at the new Smallbrook Junction station, these

are the trains which took them there and brought them home again.

"The essential service they provided was only substantially interrupted by flooding, and for a time the Class 483s held the claim of providing the most punctual and reliable service on any railway in the UK – not bad for trains which were already more than 50 years old!"

→ The group is appealing for donations to help cover the costs of this work. Visit <https://gofund.me/0895703c> or ltractiongroup.co.uk for more information.

LMS makes its mark in \$500k GWR auction across the pond

By Geoff Courtney

TWO LMS 'interlopers' beat off strong competition from a line-up of GWR nameplates and other railwayana in a high-profile and eagerly-awaited live online £500,000 auction in Illinois, USA, on November 30.

The 562-lot sale comprised one of the world's largest private GWR collections. It was put together over many decades by the late Tom Jones, who was born and brought up in northern England and developed a love of trains at an early age. He progressed from model trains to railwayana, and this interest lasted for much of his life, even after moving to the US, where he worked in the financial sector.

With a particular passion for the GWR, he amassed an enviable collection of nameplates, cabside numberplates and worksplates, the last category of which included name, number, registration (works) number, and build date 'combines' that are highly prized by GWR aficionados.

Tom was not, however, solely GWR-orientated, and this was illustrated by the auction including three LMS nameplates and an LNER plate – and ironically, it was two of the LMS representatives that sold for the highest prices.

A duchess and princesses

These were *Duchess of Atholl* from Princess Coronation No. 46231 and *Princess Helena Victoria* from Princess Royal No. 46208 that each fetched \$13,000, which at the exchange rate at the time of the sale converted to £10,276.

The third LMS plate, *City of Sheffield*, from Princess Coronation No. 46249, went for \$8500 (£6719).



Star turn: GWR Star No. 4061 *Glastonbury Abbey* climbs Hatton Bank between Warwick and Birmingham Snow Hill with a six-coach special on September 24, 1955. A nameplate from the 4-6-0, which was withdrawn in March 1957 from its long-time home at Wolverhampton Stafford Road (84A), sold at auction on November 30 for £7509. TRANSPORT TREASURY/RC RILEY

Between the realisations for these Crewe-built products came six of the 33 GWR nameplates on offer and the highest-priced 'combine'. Heading these nameplates was *Brunel* from Armstrong class 4-4-0 No. 4169 (\$12,000/£9486), followed by *King Edward VII* from 4-6-0 No. 6001 at \$11,000/£8695, *Glastonbury Abbey* (Star class 4-6-0 No. 4061) and *County of Somerset* from 4-4-0 No. 3834, both at \$9500/£7509, *Princess Charlotte* from Star class No. 4054

(\$9000/£7114), and *Earl of Eldon* from Dukedog class 4-4-0 No. 3212 that achieved \$8500 (£6719).

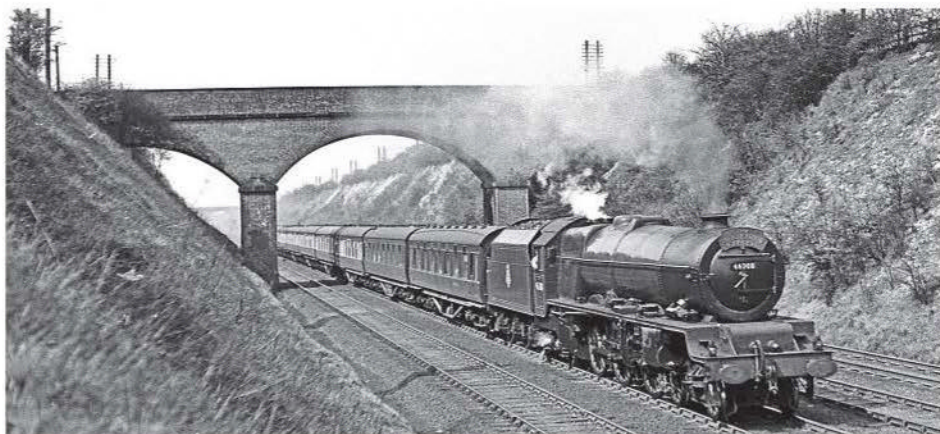
Mixed in with these nameplates was the top 'combine', from Bulldog No. 3323 *Etona*, which matched the £7509 price of the plates from Nos. 4061 and 3834, while a similar item from Bulldog No. 3359 *Tregeagle* equalled the £6719 for the plate achieved by No. 3212. The prices quoted exclude buyer's premium of 20%.

The auction, which achieved total sales of \$641,745 (£507,308), was held by Leonard Auction of Addison, Illinois. Its founder and principal, John Leonard, said that Tom Jones had assembled a "once-in-a-lifetime" collection that also included station totem signs, headboards, smokebox numberplates, and carriage and finger boards.

➔ See Geoff Courtney's railwayana column next issue for further details of the auction's realisations.



Climbing to the top: Princess Coronation No. 46231 *Duchess of Atholl* is photographed in the iconic WCML setting of Shap on March 3, 1956. A nameplate from the LMS Pacific was the joint top seller at £10,276 in a railwayana auction in the US on November 30. TRANSPORT TREASURY/NEVILLE STEAD



Mersey beat: LMS Princess Royal Pacific No. 46208, one of whose *Princess Helena Victoria* nameplates has sold at auction in the United States for £10,276, heads 'The Merseyside Express' at Tring on April 14, 1952. TRANSPORT TREASURY/NEVILLE STEAD



Plummeting temperatures on December 2 saw the woods between Charlie's Gate and Bodmin Parkway transformed into a winter wonderland as Class 47/3 No. 47306 *The Sapper*, a former resident of St Blazey shed, head a Bodmin & Wenford Railway Santa special in top-and-tail mode with GWR small prairie No. 5552, which was once allocated to Truro shed, and which returned to traffic in August following overhaul. JON HIRD/BWR

Sharp decline in passengers recorded on shortened Manx horse tramway

PASSENGER numbers on the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway have fallen sharply since the line was shortened.

The Isle of Man's Minister for the Department of Infrastructure, Tim Crookhall, told the House of Keys that there were only 45,000 passengers in 2023 compared with 78,000 in 2018.

When work to reconstruct Douglas promenade ran late and over budget, it was decided to reinstall the tramway tracks only to the war memorial rather than all the way to the sea terminal.

Mr Crookhall said he believed the shorter length has hampered

numbers in the tramway's first full season since the promenade refurbishment and the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, he said that the figures did not include income from "Go Explore tickets", which could be used on all of the Manx heritage railways and buses services, including the tramway.

There had been a 42% increase in income from multi-trip tickets since 2018, he said.

The minister said that operating costs had reduced from £340,140 to

£313,808 over the period, but because of the lower tramway income, the Government's subsidy towards the service had increased from £200,140 to £269,000.

He said that talks with the Visit Isle of Man agency over the issue were taking place, with the aim of making a decision soon.

MHK Daphne Caine, chairman of the Douglas Bay Tramway Heritage Trust, called for the reinstatement of the full tracks to the sea terminal as an investment for tourism on the Isle of Man.

IN BRIEF

Diesel trio for Darjeeling

THREE new diesels are being built for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

The trio, estimated to cost about £570,000 each, are being constructed by the Northeast Frontier Railway at its workshops in New Bongaigaon, Assam, and Tindharia, and are set to run on the UNESCO World Heritage Site from the middle of 2024.

"Once these new locos begin to operate, we will increase the number of services to accommodate more toy train enthusiasts and tourists visiting the Darjeeling hills every year," said a DHR spokesman.

Shunter for Telford

CLASS 03 D2051 moved from the North Norfolk Railway to the Telford Steam Railway, where it arrived on November 23.

The shunter, which has not been operational for the best part of 20 years, currently has a seized engine.

Its new owner is investigating the cause, with the intention of returning it to active service.

Bodmin coach for sale

THE Bodmin & Wenford Railway is offering Mk.1 BSK No. 534627 for disposal. In regular use until just before the Covid-19 lockdowns, it has had the rearmost compartment converted into a micro buffet. The luggage bay has also been converted for disabled access, with a separate cycle storage area. Some bodywork and mechanical attention will be required before it can see regular use again. Interested parties should email David Nelson-Brown at david.nelson@bodminrailway.co.uk

Hudswell Clarke saddle tank for sale

Tanfield Railway-based Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1366 *Renishaw Ironworks No. 6* is being offered for sale by its private owner.

Built in 1919 for Appleby Ironworks at Scunthorpe, it has recently undergone an extensive overhaul, returning to service at the October 14/15 Run It weekend.

Fitted with vacuum brakes, it is advertised as being in full working order.

Serious enquiries should be made to Martyn Ashworth in the first instance at martynhts@btinternet.com or on 07798 916115.

Scrapped *Rodwell Hall* plates donated to Toddington trust

A NAMEPLATE and cabside numberplate for GWR 4-6-0 No. 4964 *Rodwell Hall* have been donated to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Trust by a well-wisher.

Keith Farndon, who is not a member or volunteer, but is a friend of a steam department volunteer at the line, wanted them to go to a good home.

Trust chairman Phillip Young said: "What a wonderful and generous gesture to offer something of such value and relevance to the railway."

"Built in 1929, the locomotive's first allocation was Fishguard, and it was also based variously at Oxley, Tyseley, Banbury and finally Pontypool, from where it was withdrawn in October 1963. We are, of course, very grateful to Keith."

No. 4964 was broken up at Cashmore's, Newport.

The plates, and a photograph of No. 4964, are now displayed in The Goods

Shed locomotive department facility at Toddington and are available to view on request.



The donated name and numberplate from *Rodwell Hall*. JACK BOSKETT/GWR

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR



December 1-3 saw the Ffestiniog Railway running shuttles between the harbour at Porthmadog and the Christmas market taking place at Minffordd. On the first day, these services were top-and-tailed by main line Hunslets *Linda* and *Blanche*; the former had just left Boston Lodge works after a thorough overhaul that included new platwork in the tender tank. The shuttles proved an opportunity to start running the locomotive in before it heads into the paintshop for the FR green to be reapplied. An official return to service will take place in the spring. CHRIS PARRY/FFWHR

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Above: L&YR Aspinall Class 27 No. 52322 will visit the Great Central Railway for its Winter Steam Gala on January 26-28, 2024. OWEN HAYWARD

Left: BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019 passing through Swithland sidings on the Great Central Railway during the November 18/19 Last Hurrah gala (see also pages 74-78). It subsequently moved to the Kent & East Sussex Railway for Santa services and will be staying for the Spa Valley Railway's February 9-11 Winter Steam Gala. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Head starts for gala planners as starring line-ups emerge

By Owen Hayward

ENTHUSIASTS will already be making plans to visit their galas of choice in 2024.

Keen to ensure that these events attract as many as possible, some guest locomotives have already been announced.

Kicking off the year with its winter gala on January 26-28, the Great Central Railway will welcome Peter Best's USATC 2-8-0 S160 No. 2253 *Omaha*, the Baldwin Locomotive works-built locomotive having appeared at the Severn Valley Railway's own winter event a few weeks beforehand, where it has been since autumn. *Omaha* will star alongside a second visitor, East Lancashire Railway-based L&YR 0-6-0 Aspinall Class 27 No. 52322, courtesy of Andy Booth.

Sole-surviving NER electric autocar No. 3170 will also be in service alongside Derby Lightweight railcar *Iris*; the former will be making its final appearance on the line at the event.

The autocar was a star attraction at the November 18/19 Last Hurrah gala (see pages 74-78), while *Iris* arrived from the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway in September 2022 for a diesel gala and saw its visit extended through 2023.

As with all Great Central galas, expect to see an intensive timetable including its iconic freight workings as part of its service pattern.

Splendid steam in the south

The Spa Valley Railway will host its winter gala on February 9-11 with up to five locomotives in steam. Headlining is BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019, which has been visiting the nearby Kent

& East Sussex Railway to help with Santa trains. It will take a detour to Tunbridge Wells West before returning to its GCR home.

Having spent much of 2023 away from Tunbridge Wells, Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34072 257 *Squadron* will undoubtedly also prove an attraction for many, being accompanied by BR standard 4MT No. 80078 (on loan from Stuart Robinson) and Caledonian Railway No. 828 (on loan from the Strathspey Railway).

The weekend will also see the first public workings of newly-overhauled Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2315 *Lady Ingrid*, which was seen in steam around the 'west' during the railway's October beer festival before returning to the shed for final fettling and painting. Although it was once a regular on the railway's service

trains, 0-4-0s are not permitted on the section to Eridge that runs adjacent to the Network Rail line to Uckfield; its owner has therefore decided to offer the Barclay for sale. Serious enquiries should be directed to Spa Valley steam engineering manager Matt Dives at matt.dives@spavalleyrailway.co.uk

As reported last issue, the East Lancashire Railway's March 15-17 steam weekend is themed around Legends of Steam, with BR Standard 7MT No. 70000 *Britannia* and LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* already secured.

Another event with a guest already in the bag is the Severn Valley Railway's April 18-21 spring gala. LBSCR 0-6-0T A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* and the home fleet will star alongside a further two visiting locomotives, with shuttle services

Bluebell's Bulleid is set to welcome the New Year



New livery: BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80151 has been sporting the purple look this festive season after being dressed for a Cadbury's promotional shoot. It will enter the paintshop in early 2024 for its BR black livery to be reapplied. NICK GILLIAM

THE Bluebell Railway's newly overhauled Battle of Britain 4-6-2 No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* will work its first trains for the general public on New Year's Day.

A three-train service featuring the Bulleid and visiting WR 4-6-0 No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* working two main long rakes of coaches, with LBSCR A1 'Terrier' No. 72 *Fenchurch* supplementing with the LNWR observation saloon, present an ideal opportunity to enjoy a panoramic view of the line as it passes through the wintry Sussex countryside.

SECR 01 0-6-0 No. 65 will also be in steam, working a demonstration goods train between Horsted Keynes and Kingscote, with the second trip continuing back to Sheffield Park.

No. 34059 recently exited the workshops at Sheffield Park following overhaul.

With testing completed in early November, it was rostered to work some of the railway's Santa specials in December. However, while the mechanical work is completed, the final application of the BR lined green livery is not due to be carried out until later in January when space in the paintshop at Horsted Keynes becomes available.

The Bulleid's inclusion in the New Year's Day 2024 steam programme sees it substituting for BR Standard 4MT No. 80151, which had initially been billed to operate.

The 2-6-4T, along with a CCT storage vehicle, had been wrapped in a



Pictured during its visit to the Mid-Hants Railway on October 6, LNWR Webb 0-6-2T Coal Tank No. 1054 will make its first visit to Somerset for the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 spring steam gala as its tour of UK heritage lines continues throughout 2024. OWEN HAYWARD

and freight workings included in the timetabled mix.

On April 26-28, the Mid-Hants Railway's spring gala will see West Country 4-6-2 No. 34070 *Manston* star courtesy of Southern Locomotives Limited and the Swanage Railway. *Manston* arrived on the MHR on November 28 following the failure of Dartmouth Steam Railway-based No. 5239 *Goliath* earlier that month.

The GWR 2-8-0T had been on loan to the line since May to help a locomotive shortfall, but it was reported that some cracked stays were discovered, resulting in its withdrawal for repairs.

The appearance of *Manston* will therefore give a flavour of the near future, with resident classmate No. 34007 *Wadebridge* undergoing overhaul at Ian Riley's workshops in

Bury, which is due back in service on the Watercress Line in 2026.

Go west

The Epping Ongar Railway hopes to repeat the success of the visit of GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* with the Great Western Society's new-build No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*, which will arrive from Didcot Railway Centre for the line's April 26-28 gala.

The event has been brought forward to slightly earlier in the year than its usual June billing, the latter month starting to experience hotter temperatures that brings both fire and crew health concerns.

A second visitor was being negotiated, and it is hoped that up to five locomotives will also be in service there, with resident GWR 4-6-0 No. 4953 *Pitchford Hall* operating alongside Hawthorn Leslie

No. 3437 *Isabel* and Bill Parker's small GWR prairie No. L150.

Meanwhile, making its first visit to the West Country will be LNWR Webb 0-6-2T Coal Tank No. 1054, which is set to star at the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 Bank Holiday spring steam weekend.

It will operate local passenger trains and short-formed parcel services. Currently under National Trust ownership, this is set to be transferred to its current custodians of the Bahamas Locomotive Society at a formal ceremony, due to take place in the spring of 2024.

No. 1054 will also visit other lines during 2024 due to the high police escort costs imposed on lorry movements in and out of Haworth, making it non-viable to regularly return it to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway.

purple vinyl layer for a Cadbury's Secret Santa promotional shoot in November. However, when work began to remove this layer from the parcels van, it was found that it was lifting the paintwork beneath.

With no opportunity for a repaint before the New Year and not wanting to run the locomotive in a superficially poor state at a peak time, it has therefore retained this scheme throughout the festive season. A repaint will be carried out under contract in early 2024.

Normal fares apply for the 'mini-gala' day, including the successful Kids For A Quid offer that has run throughout 2023. For timetables and tickets, visit www.bluebell-railway.com



Although aesthetically unfinished, No. 34059 Sir Archibald Sinclair passes Hazeldene with a Santa special working on December 2. NICK GILLIAM

IN BRIEF

Expert's advice in STEAM's new photographic exhibition

LOCOMOTIVES Through the Lens, a new photographic exhibition, is running now in the Caerphilly Castle Hall at STEAM – Museum of the Great Western railway, Swindon, until the middle of 2024.

It explores the stories behind Richard Bell's photographs in STEAM's new 2024 calendar, as featured in last issue's Christmas gifts guide. Covering the period from 2008 to 2023, the images showcase the wealth of preserved GWR and WR locomotives operating during that time on both heritage railways and on the main line, accompanied by explanations of how the photographs were achieved – sometimes demonstrating that the right weather conditions, persistence, and good luck play as much a part in getting the perfect shot as experience and know-how.

Swindon Museums manager Frances Yeo said: "This finale to our 2023 exhibitions programme at STEAM explores the motivations and commitment needed to achieve the perfect photograph.

"Richard's experience, dedication and enthusiasm for the subject matter comes through in every image, as well as in his accompanying commentaries."

Volunteers suspended as police conduct investigation

POLICE were investigating allegations that a group of North Yorkshire Moors Railway were abusive towards staff. The railway has also been investigating aspects of the running of Lewisham station, which has a 60-member volunteer group.

A NYMR spokesman said: "We can confirm that a review and investigation was held regarding the activities of some volunteer members of the Lewisham Station Group.

"Currently, a small group of volunteers have been asked not to return in a voluntary capacity. As this is an internal matter and part of an ongoing police investigation, we are not able to make further comment.

"We are working hard to ensure that the remaining volunteers are supported and we appreciate that this has been a difficult time."

Bluebell Railway launches appeal for platform tractor

AN appeal for a Lister platform tractor to be displayed inside the Bluebell Railway's Sheffield Park station has been launched. These machines were used at most major termini to transfer mail sacks from one part of the station to another and were usually seen hauling a line of four-wheel trolleys. Any readers who know of the whereabouts of one are invited to email stroud717@btinternet.com



Above: No. 5526 departs Winchcombe with a race train. JOHN TITLOW

Right: WR 4-6-0 No. 7820 in its transatlantic guise heads to the South Devon Railway's North Pole station with a 'Polar Express' on December 1. SDR



Gloucestershire Warwickshire race trains return behind prairie

By John Titlow

IN what is becoming an annual exchange of locomotives, WR 4-6-0 No. 7820 *Dimore Manor* moved from its home base at Toddington on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway in mid-November.

In return, GWR 2-6-2T No. 5526

arrived at Toddington on November 15 and after inspection was pressed immediately into service on the 17th for the race train to Cheltenham Race Course. Further trains ran on November 18.

The G/WR has operated race trains since 2003 for Classic Hospitality to the two principal meetings: the Cheltenham Festival in March and

the November meeting. The service avoids the traffic jams at the end of the day when everyone tries to leave after the last race; racegoers glide past the queuing cars to a peaceful exit from Toddington.

Ex-Barry scrapyards No. 5526, built at Swindon in 1928, is perfect for the line. The locomotive was withdrawn from Westbury in 1962,

however, the class was a familiar sight over the Cheltenham Spa-Honeybourne line.

No. 5526 was moved to Toddington in 1985 for overhaul, but the lack of facilities at the time saw it transferred in 1988 to the then Swindon Works Heritage Centre. From Swindon, it moved to the South Devon Railway.

However, the engine has visited the GW/R on at least two other occasions.

While visiting the GW/R, No. 5526 was rostered on the 'Santa Express' trains, which ran from November 25 to December 23. All of the tickets for the two-train service were sold out.

Visiting GWR prairie No. 5526 climbs away from Winchcombe past Chicken Curve with a Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway race train on November 17. JOHN TITLOW



Festive fun

The Santa trains started at Cheltenham Racecourse and ran to the North Pole station of Winchcombe to meet the big man in red.

No. 5526 was also due to head the G/WR mince pie specials from December 27 to January 1, with a two-steam diagram from Toddington at 10.15am, 11.20am, 12.35pm, 1.50pm and 3pm. From Cheltenham Racecourse, the services were to run at 10am, 11.05am, 12.20pm, 1.35pm, 2.45pm and 3.55pm, the last train being diesel from Toddington at 4.10pm and 5pm from Cheltenham RC.

Meanwhile, *Dimore Manor*, in an Americanised format, hauled the SDR's 'Polar Express' trains, running from November 24 to December 23. The railway had needed a bigger locomotive for these services.

After Christmas, the SDR was scheduled make more use of the locomotive on New Year festive Trains, running from December 26 to January 1.

Major projects make progress on GCR(N)

By Robin Jones

THE new carriage shed at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre in Ruddington was completed in early December.

The structure at the northern terminus of the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) stood partially-built for several years until external funding revitalised the project. It will now house up to four carriages under cover, with room for a small workshop and storage area. A polished concrete floor will be laid in early 2024 to allow the space to host events and exhibitions.

Andy Fillingham, from the GCR(N), said: "The new building is looking very smart. We've worked with two local companies, Intelligent Fabrications and Now Build, and the team have kept the project on time, despite the storms in October. With sidings laid inside the building, it won't be long before we are able to protect

passenger carriages from the weather and vandalism."

As reported in issue 310, Rushcliffe Borough Council awarded a £40,000 grant to the GCR(N) from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda, financing local investment. Additional funds came from two supporting charities, the East Midlands Railway Trust and the LNER (GC) Heritage Trust.

More to do

Supporters have raised £8500 towards the installation of a roller shutter door and electrics in the shed. If the remaining £8500 can be raised, this work will also be carried out early next year, ahead of the building's formal commissioning.

Further south along the line at Rushcliffe Halt, the unique 1940s LNER Hotchley Hill signalbox is being readied for service once again.

Contractors have recently carried out repairs to the concrete parts of the structure, complementing the work done by volunteers to install a new wooden floor and lever frame.

For many years the structure was just a brick shell. Built immediately after the Second World War, it represents the LNER's vision for the future.

"Both the carriage shed and the signalbox are vital for resuming survives towards Loughborough," said Andy. "When we are reunified with the Great Central Railway in Leicestershire, they will remain important assets to help the whole 18-mile heritage line develop. We'd like to thank everyone who has donated to either project, and we hope they are enjoying seeing the progress as much as we are!"

→ **Donations to the carriage shed fund or Hotchley Hill signalbox fund can be made at lnergctrust.org**

→ **Eyes on the future at Last Hurrah gala – see feature, pages 78-81.**



Hotchley Hill signalbox with repaired concrete on December 3. TOM INGALL



A panoramic view of Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre's railway carriage shed in December. TOM INGALL

G/WR patron to chair Science Museum Group

VICE Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, KCVO, CB, husband of the Princess Royal and patron of the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, has been appointed as chair of the Science Museum Group for a four-year term, starting on January 1.

The 68-year-old has pursued a portfolio career centred around built heritage, major projects, railways, and urban regeneration since leaving the Royal Navy in 2010. He chaired

English Heritage from 2015 to 2022, which has more than 400 historic sites and 40 small museums. The SMG The Science Museum Group comprises the Science Museum in London, the National Railway Museum in York, the Locomotion museum in Shildon, the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, and the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester.

Sir Tim's other activities include membership of the Great Western

Railway Advisory Board, senior advisor to the engineering consultancy Tetratex Europe, and patron of the Windsor Leadership Trust, while contributing to several charities.

His 37 years of naval service included four warship commands, culminating in chief executive officer of the organisation which manages MoD property and infrastructure worldwide. He was equerry to Queen Elizabeth II from 1986 to 1989.

ELR asks for £2 million grant to repair Baron Street shed

THE East Lancashire Railway is to bid for £2 million of Government funding to replace the roof of its Baron Street shed where locomotives and rolling stock are stored.

Dating from 1856, the Grade II-listed building is the oldest continuously working locomotive shed in the world.

Last year, the railway spent about £100,000 on roof repairs last year

in attempts to make the almost 170-year-old building rain and wind-proof. It now plans to ask for a grant from the Community Asset Fund.

On November 30, new Conservative Party chairman Richard Holden MP, in the company of Bury North MP James Daly and Tottington councillor Luis McBrier, toured the premises in advance of the bid being lodged.

East Lancashire Railway chairman Mike Kelly said: "It needs a lot of renovation to make it secure, to make it wind-proof and watertight, and make it a good space for our staff and volunteers."

"If we can secure that funding, hopefully within the next 12 to 18 months we can have the roof fully renovated to be wind-proof and watertight, and a good, safe environment."

IN BRIEF

May date set for vintage festival's return to Fawley Hill

THE Fawley Hill Vintage Festival, organised by the National Transport Trust at the home of the late Sir William McAlpine, with its private standard gauge railway, will be held on May 17-19.

The event will feature steam and diesel-hauled trains taking visitors around the animal sanctuary, as well as traction engines, steam rollers, aircraft, cars, buses, boats, motorcycles, bicycles, tanks, and a military encampment – along with camels and horses.

Music and entertainment will be provided from noon into the evening.

There will also be fairground rides, an autojumble, and vintage and modern shops, and awards and prizes for vehicles and people.

A dog café and family fun dog show will take place on the Saturday and Sunday.

The festival, near Henley-on-Thames, is being held in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support.

It will run from 10am to 11.30pm on the Friday and Saturday, and from 10am to 6pm on Sunday.

Discounted tickets are on sale now at www.buytickets.at/fawleyhill

Gwili Railway's Olwen sold

ROBERT Stephenson & Hawthorns No. 7058 of 1942 *Olwen* departed the Gwili Railway on November 27 after being sold by the line's preservation society to an undisclosed buyer.

The 0-4-0ST, which worked on the internal railway system at Earley power station, near Reading, and arrived at the Gwili in 1978, has been out of ticket for several years.

It was felt that it was now too small to meet the needs of the railway's current services, with other, more powerful locomotives ahead of it in the overhaul queue, meaning it would not have been restored to running order for many years.

Parts from scrapped Class 31 go on the market

CLASS 31 No. 31106, which was previously based at the Weardale Railway but sold to Hanson & Hall Rail Solutions for an unsuccessful return to main line service, departed Nemesis Rail's Burton-on-Trent depot bound for EMR Kingsbury scrap merchants on November 28.

It was said that one of the reasons for its demise was scrap-sized tyres that would have cost in the region of £100,000 to replace.

The locomotive's overhauled main and auxiliary generators were being offered for sale and are currently stored in Chesterfield. Interested parties should contact info@hansonhallrail.co.uk

Winter Surrey circular with classic DEMU

HASTINGS Diesels Ltd's Class 201 DEMU will make a brief emergence from winter hibernation on January 6, 2024, for a trip to Guildford.

'The Surrey Hills Surprise' will depart Hastings at 8.50am with the six-car unit of No. 1001 picking up at St Leonards Warrior Square, Crowhurst, Battle, Etchingham, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge on its way into Surrey, with the 203-mile round trip expected to take in Lewisham and Hayes, where at the latter there will be a pause for photographs before the consist continues towards Blackfriars and East Croydon. After a two-hour layover, the return journey to Hastings will travel via Redhill.

Normally rested over the winter months due to railhead conditions and therefore reduce the risk of damaging the unit's wheelsets, it is expected to be the only tour with No. 1001 before the spring.

Ticket prices start at £47 per person. To book, visit www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk/railtours/

'Black Five' Wensleydale Christmas

LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier*, which hauled the Wensleydale Railway's 'Polar Express' services from November 10 to December 23, was also to head regular services between Leeming Bar and Leyburn on December 29/30 and a special diesel service on December 28.



A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* with firebox aglow makes light work of Micklefield Bank at Huddleston Grange not long after sunrise with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Christmas Waverley' from York to Carlisle and back on December 10.

ROB FALCONER

Flying Scotsman's operational future yet to be announced

By Robin Jones

THE National Railway Museum has yet to decide on the future of LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 after the conclusion of its hugely successful centenary year programme.

The museum's current six-year contract with Riley & Son (e) to operate the world's most famous steam train expires on New Year's Eve.

A statement issued by the York museum, which owns No. 60103, said: "The NRM is focused on the delivery of *Flying Scotsman's* centenary celebrations, which will conclude with a visit to Locomotion in Shildon between December 16 and January 7.

"The current contract to maintain and operate *Flying Scotsman* runs until December 31, 2023. After the success of *Flying Scotsman's* centenary year, and the locomotive's two popular visits to the NRM, its future operation after this date is being carefully considered.

"Future arrangements will ensure people have the opportunity to see and experience one of the collection's

star objects and will conserve and safeguard the locomotive's future.

"The NRM is committed to making *Flying Scotsman* accessible to all and this includes building on the success it has had in our museums in the centenary year and operating it up and down the country."

A museum spokesman added that 6400 people rode behind *Flying Scotsman* in 2023 and many thousands more will have seen it at centenary events.

Last trip of the year

Its final main line excursion of 2023 was the Railway Touring Company's sell-out 'Worcester Christmas Express' from Cambridge, picking up at Ely, March and Peterborough, before heading through Stamford, Melton Mowbray and Nuneaton, bypassing the centre of Birmingham by taking the Camp Hill line to King's Norton, passing Barnt Green, descending the 1-in-37 Lickey Incline to Worcester.

On the return journey, the A3 was replaced by a West Coast Railways Class 47 to return the tour to

Cambridge. No. 60103 then headed for York before being moved to Locomotion on December 14.

Children from the St John's CE Primary School attended to see the engine arrive for the special Christmas exhibition.

Flying Scotsman will be in light steam during the event and there will be the opportunity for cab visits.

The specially created film, *Flying Scotsman: 100 Years, 100 Voices*, will be screened, showing stories from people whose lives have been touched by the locomotive. There will also be 'make and do' activities for youngsters.

Admission to the exhibition is free, but tickets must be booked in advance online at <https://my.locomotion.org.uk>

The museum is closed between December 24 and 26.

Another centenary for the locomotive will take place in 2024, that of it being named *Flying Scotsman* by the LNER, it having originally being just No. 1472 under the GNR.

New face to lead Talyllyn engineering team

HAVING bid farewell to Chris Smith, who, after five years in the post of engineering manager, has moved to join the engineering team at the Churnet Valley Railway, the Talyllyn Railway has recruited former Wells & Walsingham Light Railway operations manager Graeme Wigglesworth as his replacement.

Having spent 20 years working in IT, redundancy led Graeme to start as a driver on the Wells & Walsingham Light Railway before

finishing his first season in the senior role.

He later moved to be engineering manager at the National Tramway Museum at Crich.

His career has also seen him take a seat on the Heritage Railway Association's business development committee, as well as vice-chairman of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway Society.

Right: New Talyllyn engineering manager Graeme Wigglesworth. TR





Restored Barmouth Viaduct is open again for trains and walkers. NETWORK RAIL

Barmouth Viaduct reopens after four-year restoration

THE completion of the £30 million four-year restoration of the Cambrian Coast Line's 156-year-old Grade II*-listed Barmouth Viaduct was celebrated on December 8.

Network Rail, representatives of the community, rail industry partners and the local council joined Wales Office minister Fay Jones for the unveiling of a plaque to mark the milestone, six days after trains returned to the iconic structure following a 13-week closure.

Built in 1867 by the Aberystwyth and Welsh Coast Railway in 1867, the 842-yard viaduct is the longest in Wales and the longest wooden railway bridge in Britain.

Heritage in mind

When restoration work began in 2020, Network Rail engineers found the viaduct to be in a much worse condition than originally anticipated. Many of the timber elements had significantly decayed and a large portion of the metallic elements had corroded.

The programme was planned to preserve the viaduct's industrial heritage, with components replaced on a like-for-like basis to retain its

majestic appearance. Realising the impact that a long-term closure of the line would have on the community, the work was purposely spread over several years with four shorter closures.

The viaduct is now fully operational, and members of the public can once again walk across it to enjoy the sweeping views of the surrounding countryside and coastline.

Barmouth's mayor, Coun Owain Pritchard, said: "To many people, Barmouth Viaduct is an iconic landmark in a stunning setting.

"To the people of Barmouth and Meirionnydd, it is also a vital link between communities, taking children to school and people to work, to shop, and to the doctors.

"We are grateful to all the people who have worked on this huge project – a great early Christmas present for Barmouth."

Tim James, rail director at contractor Griffiths, added: "Griffiths is proud to have completed the reconstruction in a safe, sustainable, and timely manner. We used innovative techniques to slide the bridge into place and at the same time demolish the old structure."



Local firm Grundon Waste Management Ltd took on the refurbishment of the Cholesey & Wallingford Railway's BR Dogfish ballast wagon No. DB992949, which was built by Metro-Cammell in 1959, introducing a new livery and making it a colourful addition to the permanent way train. The work was carried out by the company's fabrication department, a great supporter of the line, also assisting with shotblasting and painting of lamp-posts, fencing and panels from a Class 08 diesel. CVR Preservation Society chairman Dr Tony Stead said: "Apparently, Grundon staff find it an interesting diversion from repairing and painting skips and for the railway their efforts are much appreciated." DR TONY STEAD

Well tank *Willy* moves to Blunsdon for 12 months

KERR Stuart 0-4-0WT No. 3063 of 1918 *Willy* arrived at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway on November 29 in time to haul Santa trains – and will spend the next year on loan operating service trains.

Now carrying an unlined red livery, the locomotive had just undergone an overhaul at Bill Parker's Flour Mill workshops at Bream in the Forest of Dean.

Bought by the Admiralty for a First World War National Shipyard at Beachley Dock in Chepstow, also home to GER 0-4-0T 'Coffee Pot' No. 229, the conflict ended before it could see active service. The pair never left Chepstow and ended up working at bridge-builder Fairfield-Mabeys but were left standing outside during the 1960s and 1970s until they were bought by Bill and his brother Richard in 1980, who were introduced to them by Ivor Huddy.

After a three-year restoration at the Flour Mill, *Willy* ran there for the first time in the heritage era on August

18, 2012. In recent years, it has run at the Chasewater and Barry Tourist railways and Mangapps Railway Museum before returning to the Flour Mill for its 10-yearly overhaul in March.

Meanwhile, No. 229, which spent 15 years at the North Woolwich Old Station Museum before being craned out in 2008, will return to steam next year.

Restored cosmetically in 1984, it has not steamed since the 1960s. Several years ago, The Flour Mill restored the frames and started work on the boiler, but clients' work came first in the queue.

"Despite its tiny wheels and 140lb boiler pressure, little No. 229 deserves respect," said Bill. "With the approaching bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, when No. 229 will be 149 years old, it has to be in steam."

In December, Geoff started drilling the holes for the crown bolts in the top of the new firebox.



KERR Stewart 0-4-0WT *Willy* after arriving on the Swindon & Cricklade Railway. SCR



Drilling crown bolt holes in GER 0-4-0T No. 229's new firebox. THE FLOUR MILL

Quadruple award nominations for Manx trams in anniversary year

THE Manx Electric Railway's 130th anniversary year has seen four nominations for British Trams Online's Tram of Year Awards 2023.

Two of its vehicles are shortlisted under the Tram of the Year (Heritage) category.

GF Milnes 1894-built trailer No. 19 (renumbered 36 in 1898) returned to service for the first time in more than half a century at the July 2023 Transport Festival. Its restoration has seen it returned to as-built condition, complete with original number, work having commenced in 2019 at the Laxey Car Sheds.

The trailer was used on the MER's opening day on July 29, 1984, and is one of just two of the original batch of six to have survived, No. 20 being the second. The other four were scrapped after the fire at Laxey car sheds in April 1930.

Also nominated in this category is freight trailer No. 26, another Milnes-built vehicle dating from 1895, which began as a vestibuled

saloon car. However, it was withdrawn after just seven years of service and in 1918 was converted to a freight vehicle. Officially withdrawn for the second time in 1944, restoration to this condition commenced only in January 2023.

The MER itself has also been nominated in the Tramway/Museum of the Year (Heritage) category for its significant increase in passengers in its anniversary year. The Year of the Railway Transport Festival – which saw a number of special tours and a cavalcade at Laxey – picked up a nomination for Event of the Year.

Other nominations include the Seaton Tramway's modifications to double-decker tram No. 9 – which has created a weatherproof wheelchair-accessible bay on the lower deck – and East Anglia Transport Museum for its continued expansion and growing fleet of vehicles.

Voting is open until 10am on January 6; visit britishtramsonline.co.uk/tramofyear.html

Amberley Museum celebrates King's volunteering honour

By Geoff Courtney

AMBERLEY Museum in West Sussex, home to one of the country's most comprehensive collections of different gauge locomotives, has been awarded the highest honour in the UK for local volunteer groups.

It is the King's Award for Voluntary Service, which recognises outstanding work by local volunteer groups that benefits their communities. Described as equivalent to an MBE, it was created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's golden jubilee and is being continued by King Charles III.

Richard Vernon, chairman of the museum's trustees, said: "I am thrilled that the dedication, commitment and contribution of our volunteers has been recognised through this prestigious award. I am always struck by the variety of skills and knowledge our volunteers bring to the museum."

The award and certificate is to be presented to the museum by Lady Emma Barnard, Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, and two of the museum's volunteers will next year attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in the company of other recipients.

The working museum is located in a 36-acre former chalk quarry near Arundel that operated from 1846 to 1969 and which at its peak employed 100 people. It had its own standard gauge internal railway system that was linked to the nearby national network and had a fleet of four steam and diesel locomotives transporting

such materials as chalk, coal and coke to the kilns.

Social history

After the quarry's closure, a group of architects, surveyors, planners and museum professionals joined forces to create the museum as a centre for conserving industrial and social history. It now has more than 350 active volunteers and 20 exhibition areas covering subjects ranging from communications and vintage vehicles, including operational buses, to electrical goods and traditional crafts.

Marketing officer Joe Meacher said: "We showcase and preserve the transport, industrial, rural and communications history of the south of England, and we have a strong connection with the community, providing opportunities for volunteers to support our goal and enjoy the associated social environment."

For railway enthusiasts there is a public half-mile 2ft gauge steam and diesel-operated line with three stations, a short standard gauge demonstration track, and a collection of more than 30 locomotives in 13 different gauges, from 1ft 6in to 5ft 3in.

The museum's current operational steam locomotive is 0-4-0ST *Peter*, which was built to 3ft gauge by WG Bagnall in 1918 for the Ministry of Munitions, was subsequently converted to 2ft gauge, and has been a popular member of the Amberley stable for many years.



Reverse order: Amberley stalwart *Peter* runs round its carriages during the industrial trains gala on October 4, 2022. The West Sussex working museum, at which the 0-4-0ST is a regular and popular star attraction, has been awarded the country's highest honour for local volunteer groups. PETER EDGELER

Condemned 'Peak' generator gives hope to power classmate's future

THE long-awaited return to service of Class 45 'Peak' No. 45132 is once again within grasp following the news that the contractor has started the repairs to the main generator, with that from condemned classmate No. 45015 lending itself to the cause.

With No. 15 having been condemned at the Battlefield Line, it has been stripped of many usable spare parts; despite having sat outside in a decaying state for nearly three decades, an investigation revealed that the main generator of the locomotive was in surprisingly good condition. It was therefore acquired by Team 45, the group restoring No. 132 at the Epping Ongar Railway, to act as a donor for repairing the Essex-based 'Peak's' generator, which developed a further defect during loaded test runs in August 2019.

Initially sent to Bowers Engineering, where the defective unit had been rewound before, it was subsequently transferred to a new engineering contractor in Derbyshire which has also been working on the generators for Class 50 No. 50027 *Lion* at the Mid-Hants Railway. Following completion of work to those in October, priority has now turned to making a complete good generator for the 'Peak' with the best parts of those from Nos. 015 and 132.

By mid-November, the outer casing had been cleaned and painted and focus turned to machining the armature shaft, ready to fit the AC alternator; with No. 45132 having been an ETH-fitted class 45/1, the components from the original condition No. 45015 have required some modification for compatibility,

although this has not been a straightforward task as no drawings for the modifications were able to be found. Once the required machining has been completed, the armature can then be rebanded with resi-glass banding.

It is hoped that the generator could be ready to return to Essex during the winter months, provisionally resulting in a return to service in early 2024.

The restoration group has therefore renewed its push for donations to help cover the cost of this work. A fundraising appeal was set up with a target of £7500 and it is hoped that with progress now visible, this will encourage support.

→ To donate, visit gofundme.com/f/45132-main-generator-appeal or for updates, see 45132thebeast.wixsite.com/45132



The outer casing of the Crompton Parkinson main generator has been refurbished at the contractor's workshops while the armature has been taken out for machining and rebanding. TEAM 45



Unity: D&CDR chairman Robert Gardiner, in high-viz, welcomed the cross-border and cross-party group of politicians to the railway to see the damage first-hand. Pictures with Robert in the carriage gallery, which was also flooded, are (left to right) Coun Cadogan Enright, Senator Niall Blaney, David Honeyford MLA and Patrick Brown MLA. D&CDR



The visiting politicians inspect the damage to the yard for themselves after the flood water receded. D&CDR

Downpatrick launches £250,000 Back on Track appeal

By Hugh Dougherty

THE Downpatrick and County Down Railway has launched the Back on Track appeal to help repair the flood damage suffered by the line at the end of October and beginning of November, as reported in issue 313.

With unavoidable costs estimated by the society's insurers at £250,000, and doubt over how much Government aid might be available because of the society's charitable and voluntary status, as opposed to qualifying for business aid, chairman Robert Gardiner is appealing to the community, and also enthusiasts throughout Ireland, Britain and beyond, to donate as a matter of

urgency to get the line literally back on track.

"Make no mistake," said Robert, "we had seven days when the flood waters saturated our site and it's only now that we've been able to properly assess the costs. What we are facing puts the whole future of our operation in jeopardy, and our collection has immense historic importance both north and south of the Irish border, in Britain, and, in fact, throughout the preservation movement. That's why we are asking people to give whatever support they can and as soon as they can."

Robert said that he and all the volunteers were greatly encouraged by the visit of politicians to the

railway as part of their tour of the extensive flood damage, which has had a devastating effect on businesses in Downpatrick.

"We were visited by Lord Caine, from the Northern Ireland Office, and then, most encouragingly, a cross-party and cross-border group made up of Senator Niall Blaney, Fianna Fail, spokesman on Northern Ireland, Alliance Party infrastructure spokesman David Honeyford MLA, our local MLA Patrick Brown, and Coun Cadogan Enright. All took a great interest in the damage done, the challenges we face, and pledged to help our recovery.

"The cross-border representation, in particular, underlined the fact that

our collection preserves priceless and historic locomotives, rolling stock and artefacts from right across the island of Ireland, and we were delighted to see that recognition in practice. But, at the end of the day, we will have to raise a great deal of money ourselves, hence the appeal."

Full details of the Back on Track appeal are at <https://downrail.co.uk/appeal/>. Supporters can text RAIL to 70450 to donate £10 or RAIL20 to the same number to give £20. Any amount can be donated by texting RAIL with the figure added, again to 70450. UK taxpayers will also be able to Gift Aid their donation, and support can also be made via Paypal and bank card payments.

Unique Eurostar electro-diesel locomotive makes its return to the south

THE East Kent Light Railway is to host Class 73 No. 73130 until early 2025 following an agreement being reached with the locomotive's owner, 73130 Limited.

This particular example of the class is unique as it is the only remaining locomotive carrying the Eurostar adapter couplers which were provided to enable it to rescue failed Eurostar trains during the early years of its operation.

The unique 73 has been based on the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway since being purchased from the Coulsdon Old Vehicles & Engineering Society last November, making its operational debut there in March this year.

Following this new deal being struck, the locomotive departed the L&MMR's Cynheidre base by road on November 9 and was unloaded at Shepherdswell, the home of the East Kent Light Railway Trust, the following day.

Under the terms of the agreement, it will stay in Kent until at least March 2025, allowing the

owner an opportunity to get it ready for regular heritage railway passenger operations which will see it enter service on EKLR services during the 2024 operating season.

Graeme Gleaves, director of 73130 Ltd, said: "The loco can function like a regular diesel electric locomotive away from the third rail and its on-board diesel engine is a perfect size for heritage railway operations. We are especially excited to eventually use it with the East Kent's unique Gatwick Express stock in push-pull mode. This will be the only line in the country able to offer this experience."

EKLR general manager Matthew Plews said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for all involved to get this locomotive out to work. It's great to see it back on 'home turf', where it can be enjoyed by our visitors.

"We look forward to working with 73130 Limited and supporting it in returning the locomotive to regular traffic."



Unique class 73 No. 73130 departed Cynheidre on November 9 for the East Kent Railway, where it will be based until March 2025. MARK THOMAS/73130 LTD

The intention is for the locomotive to return to South Wales when the L&MMR is ready to accept it again. Until then it will act as an ambassador for the line.

There will be some special days out packages based around the loco on the EKLR, which will be

publicised by both the EKLR and 73130 Ltd when finalised.

→ A GoFundMe page has been set up for those wishing to support the ongoing maintenance of the locomotive. To donate, visit www.gofundme.com/f/eurostar-rescue-locomotive-73-130

Challenges, frustrations and achievements for the KESR

By Geoff Courtney

WHILE admitting that in 2023 the Kent & East Sussex Railway was at times “blown off course, distracted, and frustrated”, the heritage line’s general manager, Robin Coombes, has hailed several achievements and said he was more convinced than ever that the KESR was “a great little railway and a truly remarkable one.”

Delivering his annual report at the railway’s annual general meeting on November 4, Robin listed some of these achievements, which included survival in the face of numerous challenges, a 13% increase in passenger numbers, turning a ‘daunting’ £380,000 loss into close to break even, the recruitment of more than 150 new volunteers, and outperforming 2022 in most aspects despite the lingering challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, he balanced this statement with areas that needed improvement, including safety culture, communication, departmental collaboration, and accepting change.

In what was an upbeat but realistic assessment, Robin referred to the visit in the spring of No. 34072 257 *Squadron* as an example of success. He said: “We proved the armchair engineers wrong – a Bulleid Pacific didn’t cause our track to spread or bridges to collapse.”

Jewel in the crown

There were also mentions, among others, of a new level crossing at Northiam, the ‘Wealden Pullman’ that was “the jewel in the crown and continues to shine brightly,” and the railway’s sustainability group that he said was a focal point of innovation and a hub for brainstorming and implementing pioneering solutions.



Link to the past: On May 27, just a few days after the Kent & East Sussex and Rother Valley railways were given the green light to link up, Hunslet 0-6-OST No. 15 *Hastings* brings the KESR vintage set away from Junction Road, where the two lines will join, towards Bodiam. Speaking at the KESR annual general meeting on November 4, general manager Robin Coombes described the railway as “truly remarkable.” OWEN HAYWARD

He also dwelt on the green light for the link from Bodiam to Robertsbridge. “The KESR and its original vision will then be complete, with continuous steel rails stretching from Tenterden to London Charing Cross. But why stop there? You can travel onward to Brussels, Berlin, Moscow, Beijing, Hanoi, and eventually Singapore.”

This link, he continued, would mean that because more than half the railway’s current visitors lived closer to Robertsbridge than Tenterden, the latter would become their destination rather than the starting point, presenting the town with an opportunity for it to be promoted as an inland destination akin to Whitstable – “quirky, raw, and trendy.”

Change was an ever-present companion that the railway must

learn to embrace, continued Robin. “Change is not our adversary, it’s our dance partner on this journey. The climate crisis, evolving technology, and shifting landscapes are the new companions of our time. Embracing change is not a choice, it’s a necessity.”

“We recognise that we are part of the broader heritage railway sector. To thrive, it’s essential that we collaborate, share resources, and collectively envision the future. The challenges we face are not unique to the KESR but are shared by heritage railways across the nation.”

Uphill battles

Over the past year, he continued, the railway had faced its fair share of challenges.

“We have danced with uncertainty, navigated the twists and turns of

change, and encountered our own versions of uphill battles. However, what truly defines us is not how we weathered the storm, but how we harnessed its energy to propel our progress. The heroic efforts of many among us have not gone unnoticed.”

His message, he said, was: “We’ve done okay, and we are doing more than just surviving. Our aim is to pass on a well-maintained legacy to future generations. As we approach our 50th year, let’s celebrate our achievements, have fun, and set our sights on a sustainable future.”

“Our mission is not just to survive but to thrive, ensuring the KESR’s legacy is cherished, preserved, and enjoyed for generations to come.”

“Let’s celebrate our 50th anniversary with pride and enthusiasm, looking forward to the future with confidence.”



Admiring the restored, art-deco, Alhambra lower deck ceiling, are Jim Gilchrist, right, and Charlie McAloon, right. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Coronation tram mounted on its bogies

THE completion of the restoration Glasgow Corporation Coronation Mk.1 tram No. 1245 has moved a step closer – now that volunteers at Summerlee Industrial Museum workshop have mounted the tram body on its fully restored EMB bogies.

The body was raised on jacks and blocks to allow the bogies to be placed underneath, and work is now underway to connect the motors to the control unit and controllers as a prelude to test running the vehicle, possibly in 2024.

Volunteer team leader Charlie McAloon said: “Putting the tram back on its bogies has been a huge step forward and positive proof of the progress we are making.”

“The body is now fully glazed with modern safety glass and the upper deck seats, fully reupholstered, are ready to fit.”

“We have had a very welcome grant of £15,000 from North Lanarkshire Council, which will allow us to complete the lower deck seating and possibly the air brake system, too.”

Bala Lake donated four L&B replica carriages

By Robin Jones

THE 'heritage presence' of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway in Wales has been further boosted, with four replica coaches delivered the Bala Lake Railway.

The four coaches were built by Alan Keef Ltd, of Ross-on-Wye, for the 2ft gauge Treasure Island railway at Thorpe Park and acquired by the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway after that line closed in 1993. The L&B rebuilt them into their current form but later replaced them at Woody Bay with restored original coaches.

They were acquired by the Statfold Barn Railway in 2014 but following the arrival of three former South Tynedale Railway coaches in 2022, the L&B replicas saw little use and have now been donated to the BLR, which is aiming to extend into Bala town centre. They comprise No.1, brake third with guard's compartment, No.2, an all third, No.3, a brake Composite with a first-class compartment and No. 4, all third.

Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust chairman Graham Lee said "We took the decision to donate the coaches to our friends at the BLR to help ensure that they have sufficient passenger capacity for their extension into Bala.

"The coaches have served us at Statfold well, but with their little

use it was time for them to go and to be enjoyed by the visitors of the BLR."

The line is now looking forward to seeing the carriages behind one of its five Quarry Hunslets next season.

BLR Trust chairman Julian Birley said: "This is just an incredible boost to the railway and its future plans of extending into Bala.

"This now gives the railway three rakes of four coaches giving a greater capacity to entertain the increased number of passengers expected when the centre of the town is reached. With the long, drawn-out negotiations that have been on going in applying for planning permission from the Snowdonia National Park, it is great to see something actually associated with railways coming to the fore rather than dealing with subjects as mundane as sewage treatment works and phosphate discharges into the river.

"We are indebted to Graham Lee and look forward to him riding in them on our railway."

The Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways-built replica L&B Manning Wardle 2-6-2T *Lyd* at Boston Lodge, and the Fairbourne Railway fleet includes the David Curwen-built 15in gauge version of L&B 2-6-T *Yeo*. The Statfold donation now means that three narrow gauge lines in Wales now have an L&B presence.



The four replica Lynton & Barnstaple Railway carriages which have now joined the Bala Lake Railway fleet. BLR

"We are looking tentatively at 2024 as a likely date for testing and completion as the tram is really coming together now."

A three-coat and varnish repainting is currently underway, with the work being done by a professional vehicle painter, who will also varnish the completed internal woodwork.

The lower deck Art Deco Alhambra decorative ceiling panels, which were such a characteristic of the Coronation trams, have been fully restored by the volunteers, something that Charlie and woodworking supremo

Jim Gilchrist are particularly proud of.

"The Art Deco details, such as the ceiling panels and light fittings, which we have all restored and ready to fit, are so important as to how the tram will look, and we have paid as much attention to them as we have to designing a modern, future-proofed control system.

"We want the tram to look as much as possible like it entered service in 1939, but be able to run and – crucially – be maintained today and in the future when skillsets are, and will be, very different," said Charlie.



Left: On November 21, Reuben Pearce (left) presents Alex Alder with the 'lost' worksplate from No. 1589 Newstead, won at the November 18 GW Railwayana auction. OWEN HAYWARD

Lost plate reunited with 'lost' engine

By Owen Hayward

A WORK plate could perhaps be described as akin to a locomotive's birth certificate, identifying its 'place of birth' and year it came into existence. Usually coming in pairs, they are synonymous with steam locomotives irrespective of its status, purpose and builder. When the time came for locomotives to be scrapped, these plates were often removed and snaffled by collectors, even though some of the locomotives in question would go on to be preserved.

And so it was with great delight that on November 21, 'The Lost Enginemen' – the title of the restoration group – was finally able to reunite Hunslet Fitzwilliam class 0-6-0ST No. 1589 *Newstead* with one of these plates, which had been missing for many decades.

For many years this Hunslet was presumed scrapped, having been saved from the cutter's yard by a private owner, ultimately hidden away from prying eyes on private land in Hertfordshire. Sadly, that owner died in 2015 and the locomotive leapt into the limelight after it was put up for sale by his estate. Bought by Alex Alder, it presently resides on the Spa Valley Railway, where restoration is making headway. However, while one works plate survived with *Newstead* into preservation, the second had gone missing.

Initially presumed to have been lost, at the end of 2019 the group learned

that it had appeared at a Kidlington Railwayana Auctions (now part of the Great Central Railwayana group) sale in April 2002, where it sold for £100! An appeal to trace it bore no fruit.

However, fast-forward to July 2023 and chance browse of the GW Railwayana listings suddenly reignited that once more – the plate was included amid the lots for the November 18 sale!

Excitement mounted as team member Reuben Pearce poised himself ready to bid – winning the plate with the successful bid of £150 (plus buyer's fees). Just over a week later, it was delivered to Tunbridge Wells West and presented to team leader Alex in front *Newstead*, reuniting the pair for the first time since the 1990s at the very latest, but in all likelihood even earlier than that.

As reported in the last issue of *Heritage Railway*, the frames for No. 1589 have recently been rewheeled while the boiler is making progress with an external contractor; it is expected that this will be returned early in 2024.

With the motion almost ready to reassemble, it is hoped that *Newstead* could work its first public trains at some point in the summer of 2024.

The team would welcome new volunteers to help make its comeback a reality with regular working parties taking place in the shed at Tunbridge Wells West. Email contact@thelostengine.co.uk or call Alex Alder on 07710 750366.

"It's a challenge facing many heritage tramway, railway, and road vehicle restoration projects today, as to how much of the original you retain and how much you combine that with modern technology and techniques to ensure that the vehicle meets modern safety standards and lasts a long time in service.

"We believe that we are getting that balance right with No 1245."

Right: Back on its bogies, Coronation 1245 looks almost ready for the road, in the Summerlee workshops on November 7, 2023. HUGH DOUGHERTY



Flying towards the home straight after four decades

By Owen Hayward

THE overhaul of Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46464, affectionally known as the Carmyllie Pilot, has moved into the next phase following the successful completion of both a hydraulic and out-of-frames steam test in November.

On November 20, the hydraulic test was undertaken in the presence of the boiler inspector outside the Strathspey Railway's locomotive shed at Aviemore.

Wanting to waste no time, the various fittings for the next test were quickly assembled and the first warming fire was lit in the firebox at 9.30pm.

Just two days later, the out-of-frames steam test was undertaken and passed by the inspector. This now means that efforts can focus on refitting the insulation and cladding, along with mounting the manifold and associated valves on the backhead in readiness for the boiler to be returned to the frames.

No. 46464, which was outshopped from Crewe Works in 1950, was withdrawn in December 1966. It hauled the first scheduled passenger train on the Strathspey on July 22, 1978.

Shared name

The name *Carmyllie Pilot* was used, during their working years for No. 46464 and classmate No. 46463, which were both allocated to Dundee Tay Bridge (62B) shed, working alternatively out of Arbroath.

Both were often seen working the Carmyllie Railway branch, either to the Metal Box factory or the quarries at Carmyllie. Local railway staff referred to either locomotive as the Carmyllie Pilot, depending on which was on duty.

No. 46464 hauled the last passenger train from Brechin to Forfar on August 2, 1952, and also headed the final train to run over the Carmyllie branch on May 19, 1965.

It has not run since the 1980s, when it suffered accidental firebox



Volunteers who have been working on the overhaul of Ivatt 2MT No. 46464 were delighted with the news that the out-of-frames steam test was passed on November 22 at the Strathspey Railway's Aviemore workshops. CPCL

damage and was withdrawn pending repairs. It was initially saved by the late enthusiast Ian Fraser, of Arbroath, in 1966. He worked as a locomotive engineer with the LNER at Darlington, Doncaster and Inverurie and following his retirement made friends with many of the local engine crews. As a result of his interest, he eventually purchased several locomotives, including No. 46464 and Gresley D49 4-4-0 No. 246 *Morayshire*, which is currently being overhauled and returned to steam by the SRPS at Bo'ness.

No. 46464 was presented to Dundee City Corporation with the initial intention of going on display, but it ended up on loan to the Strathspey after being in storage for several years. After the accident that damaged the firebox, it was returned to Ian's ownership and moved to Brechin in 1989.

Restoration began but eight years after Ian's death in 1992, the

Caledonian Railway decided that it had neither money nor resources available to complete the job.

As a result, the Carmyllie Pilot Company Ltd was established, signing an agreement with new owner David Fraser to take on the restoration and operation of the 2-6-0.

Testing next

After first moving to a private site in 2002, in 2019 a new deal was agreed that saw it return to Aviemore for the overhaul to be completed there.

The boiler had previously been sent away to Northern Steam Engineering, returning from there in 2022, and further work has since been undertaken by volunteers.

While it had been hoped that the Ivatt could be running before the year ended, it is now expected that No. 46464 will be in a position to commence testing at some point during 2024.



Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46464 at Boat of Garden on the Strathspey Railway on August 22, 1978. STEVE JONES/CREATIVE COMMONS

A Severn Valley Railway gin and tonic? Mine's with coal!

THE Severn Valley Railway is selling a new brand of gin – with a big difference appropriate to the heritage line.

Produced in collaboration with Piston Distillery, which was originally founded in Worcester, the gin is infused with coal!

Inspired by the SVR's heritage, it has a rich fruit flavour with blackberries from hedgerows and wooden notes inspired by railway sleepers – while crushed and blended charcoal makes the gin

black in colour, representing the line's steam fleet.

SVR visitor experience manager Nicky Freeman said: "We are excited to be launching this. The special blend of flavours, combined with a hint of heritage railway, has resulted in a coal-infused gin, which we hope will be a popular choice."

Grace Stringer, managing director of Piston Gin, said: "This has been an incredible project to be involved with, combining the history of the railway with Piston's old-school

distillation methods. The end result is a refreshing, clean-tasting gin with a difference!"

The gin retails at £39.99 and is available from SVR gift shops (online sales are being made available soon) and at the SVR's award-winning pubs, The Railwayman Arms, at Bridgnorth, and The King & Castle, at Kidderminster Town station.

Right: A coal-infused Severn Valley Railway gin and tonic being poured. SVR



Join Friends to help save Great Central classics

A RECENTLY-LAUNCHED support group for the Great Central Railway Rolling Stock Trust has opened its doors to new members.

The new Friends of the Great Central Railway Rolling Stock Trust will aid the registered charity's work in restoring three of its seven pre-Grouping carriages, all of which are on the Historic 'At Risk' Register.

The trust, which is based at the Ruddington Transport Heritage Centre, needs support and donations to return these classic vehicles – including a pair of the legendary GCR Barnum coaches, Nos. 664 and 695 – to running order.

Membership costs £6.95 per month and includes private invitations

to view key stages of progress, supported by a knowledgeable guide with experience in restoration, with an understanding of the impact and effect these carriages had on the social developments of their day.

Members will also be given the opportunity attend major open days when the coaches will be running behind a steam engine. They will be entitled to a free first ride in a Barnum along the Great Central railway (Nottingham) towards Loughborough, where these coaches were known to travel.

A regular newsletter will describe restoration progress at key points.

To join or for more details, visit <https://gcr-rollingstocktrust.co.uk>



That's magic: No. 34072 257 Squadron passes through the Spa Valley Railway's Groombridge loop on June 18 with a train from Eridge. The SR Battle of Britain Pacific is one of the locomotives due to be rostered for 'The Wizard Express' programme of trains on January 20/21. OWEN HAYWARD

A wizard idea from the Spa Valley Railway

By Geoff Courtney

THE Spa Valley Railway has come up with a wizard idea that will comprise a programme of steam-hauled trains from Tunbridge Wells West station to Eridge – and feature Gherkin and Mrs Magogglesargon.

Gherkin is a young wizard in search of the perfect wand and Mrs M is his teacher, and the duo will combine to introduce slapstick comedy, magic and mayhem over the weekend of January 20/21.

The action will start at Tunbridge Wells, where pupil and teacher will perform their magic, following which they will join passengers on board 'The Wizard Express' and hand out

activity packs during the five-mile journey to Eridge, where magic will be performed on the platform.

Then it's back to Tunbridge Wells, with treats on the way and a prize awarded to the passenger wearing the best magical outfit.

The show will start at Tunbridge Wells West on each day at 9.50am, 12.30pm and 3.10pm, with trains departing for Eridge 25 minutes later. Tickets are £15 for adults, £8 for children, and £38 for families of two adults and two children.

Locomotives due to be rostered are ex-Caledonian Railway 812 class 0-6-0 No. 828 (BR No. 57566) and SR Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34072 257 Squadron.



A contemporary portrait of the interior of a Great Central Railway Barnum coach. GCRST

Brick-by-brick appeal for weather-proofing former Dundee tram depot

DUNDEE Museum of Transport has launched a brick-by-brick appeal to replace 2500 weather-expired Victorian bricks at Maryfield Tram Depot, currently being restored as the museum's new permanent home.

Supporters can donate £10 per brick as part of a £25,000 drive to weather-proof the historic tram depot, which was opened in 1901.

The museum has also released visuals showing what the revamped interior will look like after the museum's initial £5 million restoration work is complete.

Now it is calling on the local community and enthusiasts to back the appeal and make the displays a reality by repairing the exterior fabric of the tram shed.

The Maryfield museum will cover road, rail, and maritime themes, reflecting the variety of exhibits which will be moved from their current temporary home at Market Mews once building work is complete.

Executive director Dr Paul Jennings said: "We are at an exciting stage in the refurbishment of

Maryfield and I'd be delighted if people can support and recognise the restoration of one of an increasingly scarce number of tram depots dating from the earliest days of electric tramways in our towns and cities."

→ Full details of sponsoring a brick are at <https://crowdfunder.co.uk/p/restoring-maryfield-tram-depot#start>



Maryfield Depot from above, showing its surviving tram tracks. Its Victorian bricks are in need of refurbishment. DMOT



How the interior will look once refurbishment is complete. DMOT

Beyer champion's 20-year vision comes to fruition

By Geoff Courtney

THE statistics for a new publication on the much-admired and respected Beyer-Garratts are as impressive as the locomotives themselves. Its author, Jeremy Clements, had pondered on the idea of writing such a book for two decades before starting work on it six years ago, and within its 352 pages are nearly 140,000 words, accompanied by 482 images.

Its raison d'être is as straightforward as its Beyer-Garratt title. "The Beyer-Garratt epoch is an example of British engineering at its best, advanced by individuals who were giants in their respective fields," said 77-year-old Jeremy, a former banker who has recently moved from Ireland to Gloucestershire. "Their courage, vision and dedication reflected the standards that Charles Beyer instilled

in the enterprise from inception, and which were sustained through to cessation of locomotive construction.

"Their is a powerful story that deserves retelling, while adding fresh information that has come to light."

Jeremy admitted that there were reservations whether such a complex subject should be tackled by a single author but explained: "My excuse is that having been without a firm UK base since 1968, I knew no one suitable to collaborate in the project."

Author by accident

Travelling is in Jeremy's blood, for after becoming a bank clerk at the age of 17 in 1964, an insatiable desire to see the world, "but with no funds to realise that ambition", led to overseas employment with an international

bank, a career that took him to Africa, Latin America, and a decade in Australia and New Zealand, followed by another 10 years in mainland Europe.

Since leaving banking he has had had a variety of occupations,

including self-employment as a commercial manufacturer of model locomotives in seven, 10 and 15mm gauges, while he became an author in 2004 when, he says, he secured a contract with a railway publisher "almost by accident."

His determination to have the spotlight turned on Beyer Peacock is strong. "Considering how many works have been written about the products of Ashford, Brighton, Crewe, Doncaster and so on during the last 40-odd

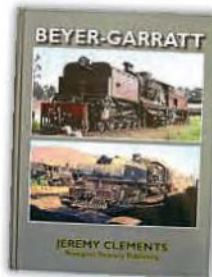
years, why has Beyer Peacock, with its ground-breaking and world-beating product, been accorded such meagre attention?"

Without being critical of the post-Grouping railway companies, Jeremy firmly waves the flag for Beyer.

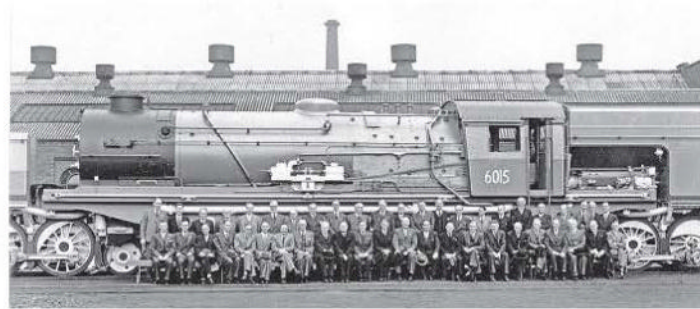
"The Big Four chief mechanical engineers and their predecessors never experienced competition beyond vying against opposite numbers in other divisions for adequate budgetary allocations," he averred.

"Their world was never exposed to the political, monetary, market, and technical risks the Beyer team had to tackle in struggling for corporate survival after the Great Depression."

UK railway company locomotives rarely strayed more than 100-150 miles from main workshops, he continued, and swift access to a train in trouble was facilitated, and traffic



Getting the message: This 1939 Beyer Peacock advertisement conveyed the message that the company had engineered ways of overcoming locomotive weight issues of very large Garratts. SIMON COLBECK COLLECTION



Men at the top: New South Wales Government Railways of Australia 4-8-4+4-8-4 Garratt Class AD60 No. 6015 provides the backcloth for a group photograph of Beyer Peacock executives and senior personnel at the company's Manchester works in 1952. The caption to the image, from the publication Beyer-Garratt, states that at the time the company was intensely busy meeting demand for large Garratts but ponders: "The more reflective of those present would have been wondering how much longer the good times would last."



World-class: Jeremy Clements, author of Beyer-Garratt, a detailed history of one of Britain's world-leading locomotive manufacturers. SACHA CLEMENTS-BARNES



Dr Alice Bunn is presented with a print of General Steam Navigation in original condition by Jon Netting. GSNIC

British space expert becomes patron of Bulleid retro-conversion group project

THE chief executive of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Dr Alice Bunn OBE, has agreed to become patron of the project to restore Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35011 *General Steam Navigation* to its original condition.

Alice, who previously served as the international director at the UK Space Agency, is responsible for increasing Britain's global influence in science, security and trade through space.

She has a background in metallurgy and has worked in organisations such as the Science Museum, London, and the Natural Environment Research Council. She has also played a significant role in international collaborations and agreements related to space missions and satellite imagery.

She also sits on the Board of EngineeringUK, chairs the professional engineering committee,

is president of the UKSpace trade association, acts as advisor to Orbitfab, and sits on the World Economic Forum Future Council on space technology.

A Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, she has a PhD in metallurgy from Darwin College, University of Cambridge, and received her OBE in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to the UK space sector and to charity.

A statement from General Steam Navigation CIC said: "Alice joins the project at a pivotal time, lending credibility and support to the GSNIC's Heritage Fund Lottery application and will help raise the profile of the project to put the steam back into General Steam Navigation at a national level."

"As chief executive of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Alice has a direct



Smokescreen: In an image from Beyer-Garratt, by Jeremy Clements, 20th Class 4-8-2+2-8-4 No. 741 *Bubi* heads a heavy coal train from Hwange Colliery in Zimbabwe on the Victoria Falls-Bulawayo route on July 24, 1985. NICOLAS TRUDGIAN

disruption minimised, by the many double-track routes.

"These conditions were vastly different from that confronted, for example, by a Kenya Uganda Railway Class EC3 with a 500-ton urgent wartime load on the single-tracked arduous climb over more than 300 miles from the coast to Nairobi (altitude 5500 feet). The Beyer Peacock product had often to perform reliably and consistently in circumstances more demanding than any UK CME ever had to confront."

'Certain irony'

Locomotive performance also came into the equation: "The ability of a South African Class GE to haul, without assistance, 500 tons over 20 continuous miles at 1-in-40 contrasted markedly with the LNER U1 that required the fireman to be almost perpetually on the shovel

and ran out of puff in a little over two miles while sharing 1200 tons with two Class O4 2-8-0s. There was a certain irony in the earlier abandoned proposal for a double O4 Garratt, which would have had a better proportioned boiler/cylinder relationship."

Robin Fell, managing director of the book's publisher, Transport Treasury, said: "The scope and amount of details that Jeremy has been able to unearth left us in awe."

"It is a story of courage, creativity, superb engineering, and adventure in the cause of mankind's most romantic form of transport."

In his introduction to the book, Jeremy writes that he was posted to Kenya in 1971, at which time he knew nothing of the country's railway system. On his first weekend, he was being driven by his boss near Nanyuki in central Kenya when he

spotted that a train was signalled on a straight stretch of undulating railway running parallel to the road. At five miles away the distant train could be seen, but Jeremy writes that he feared it was hauled by a diesel.

"When it breasted the final rise and came into full view about half a mile away, I realised I had been mistaken. Gliding along, making easy work of a six-coach train, was oil-burning East African Railways 4-8-2+2-8-4 Class 60 No. 6024 in smart lined maroon, bearing a polished brass numberplate that somehow reminded of a certain English railway, and with a cheerful African footplate crew aboard. That is how it all started."

→ Beyer-Garratt, by Jeremy Clements (hardback, 352pp) is £50 including p&p. Cheques to 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe, HP13 7PJ (ISBN 978-1-915281-05-0).

Great Dorset Steam Fair will not take place in 2024

THE Great Dorset Steam Fair – which has often featured railway locomotives on display – will not be held in 2024 due to rising costs, organisers have said.

The show, celebrating industrial and agricultural heritage on a 600-acre showground at Tarrant Hinton, near Blandford Forum, regularly attracted thousands of visitors.

It was cancelled in 2020 for the first time in its history and again in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, returned in 2022, but did not take place in 2023 due to "the ongoing economic situation," said organisers.

'Harsh reality'

Great Dorset managing director Martin Oliver said: "The GDSF is a world-renowned event and is enormously popular but, sadly, the harsh reality is that there is little we can do financially to make running the 2024 event viable."

"Post-pandemic, operating costs increased disproportionately when compared to our income, and would increase substantially again in 2024."

"The country is still gripped in the cost-of-living crisis, and we do not believe that we can risk imposing a significant increase in ticket and camping prices without drastically reducing attendance at the event, so a perfect storm situation exists."

"As an organisation, we have looked at every option possible financially to find a way forward; this has also included putting the event up for sale over the past few months through a specialist broker."

"While there has been interest in the sale and discussions are ongoing, we are yet to finalise a deal that would enable the 2024 event to run."

"Nevertheless, the event remains for sale, and we remain hopeful that there may be a GDSF in 2025 and the present management team will do all we can to assist in making this happen."

connection with OVS Bulleid, who was president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1946."

On becoming patron, she said: "While engineering technology is more important than ever for our future, we can always learn lessons from the past, which is why I am delighted to take up the role of patron for this project."

Alice visited Blunsdon on the Swindon & Cricklade Railway to look over 1944-built No. 35011 in early October and met members of the GSNIC directors and society trustees members of the heritage line where it is based. She learned more about the ongoing work to reconstruct General Steam Navigation, one of the last locomotives to leave Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard, to its pre-rebuilt air-smoothed condition, with Bulleid's unique chain driven valve gear, making it unique in preservation. She was made an honorary member of the General Steam Navigation Locomotive Restoration Society and presented with a print of the locomotive in original as-built condition.



Dr Alice Bunn, alongside the boiler of No. 35011 at Blunsdon, with treasurer Jon Netting and chairman Gerry Leyman from General Steam Navigation CIC. GSNIC

→ For more information on the project, visit www.35011gsn.co.uk



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Above: The extent of the demolition on December 6.

Left: Work in progress on the south wing at the right of the picture. It was unclear as to whether the relatively undamaged section to the left will also be demolished.

Fears for Ayr Station Hotel after demolition begins

Words and pictures by
Hugh Dougherty

CONSERVATION groups and local politicians have expressed their shock at the sudden demolition of a large part of the fire-ravaged Glasgow & South Western Railway Ayr Station Hotel.

Bulldozers moved in without prior notice on December 2/3. South Ayrshire Council ordered demolition contractors to remove the south gable and western gable walls as a prelude, it is believed, to the removal of the entire structure of the Grade B-listed hotel, once the pride of the town and regarded as an important part of local railway heritage.

MSP Siobhan Brown was one of five local Members of the Scottish Parliament who wrote to the council backing SAVE Britain's Heritage group's plea to save the hotel, which, said SAVE's architect, leading conservation engineer Ed Morton, was not as badly damaged by fire as it first appeared.

She said she was 'shocked' at what had happened, adding: "After seeing photographs of the demolition, I would like to know the reasoning behind it and the legalities of it."

"In our letter, we asked the council's chief executive to arrange to have the building inspected by a conservation engineer and to carefully consider all possible options for the retention of the hotel as a landmark for the town. I fear we may be too late for that now."

SAVE has now asked South Ayrshire Council for its plans for the rest of the building.

"We are shocked and surprised at the level of the demolition carried out and the lack of public information about the future of the rest of the building," a spokesman said.

The council says that what it terms 'safety works' are progressing well, allowing a pedestrian walking route to be opened across Bridge Street beside the remains of the former south gable wall and, crucially, allowing ScotRail trains to access Ayr again for the first time since the original fire of September 25 (reported in issue 312).

From December 4, passengers who previously had to transfer to and from Prestwick Town Station by bus now access Ayr station by a Class 156 shuttle service using Platform 4.

No trains can use the station's other platforms, and trains south to Girvan and Stranraer are still suspended,

with replacement buses in operation.

Under threat is the unique sculpted G&SWR company crest on the fire-damaged section of the frontage, which is likely to be demolished shortly.

A council spokesman said once the condition of the crest has been assessed, it will be removed intact, if possible, and the council is keen to see it saved.

Archie Thom, chairman of the Ayrshire Railway Preservation Society, said the society would be delighted to see it saved and would offer the crest a home at Dunaskin.

"We'd be very pleased indeed to display it in our new museum as part of the station we are going to build," he said. "It is vital that this part of the hotel is saved, as is the G&SWR War Memorial."

The war memorial is sited against the north-west wall of the hotel, facing onto Platform 3. It carries the names of 302 G&SWR railwaymen who lost their lives in the First World War. Originally sited in Glasgow St Enoch station, the memorial was unveiled on February 17, 1922, and moved to Ayr after the closure of St Enoch in 1966. Its current condition is unknown, but, as with the crest, the

council intends to rescue it in as good condition as possible.

Esther Clark, founder of the Save Ayr Station Hotel Action Group, said: "I was shocked and saddened to discover that demolition had started despite the efforts of so many people and heritage groups to persuade the council that this unique structure, the pride of the railway when it opened in 1885 and such a vital part of Ayr and the town and the country's railway heritage, should be saved."

"Once lost, a building like this is lost forever. I was always convinced that it could have been adapted to new and modern uses, even after the fire, while retaining its character as a statement of the power and importance of Victorian railway, as well as being a worthy gateway for train passengers arriving in the town."

Council leader Coun Martin Downey said: "The council is following all relevant legislation within the Dangerous Buildings Act. We are doing nothing illegal. We have been left in this position by an absentee landlord and the town has been gridlocked since September by this situation. My number one priority is to reopen the town to get business moving again."



A Class 156 sits at the limit of working at Ayr Station on December 6 with a barrier across the tracks towards Girvan and Stranraer and a temporary buffer stop. The fire-ravaged hotel, parts still covered in scaffolding and protective sheeting, tower above the station.



Left: The unique carved stone G&SWR crest with the date of the hotel's opening will be saved by the council if possible.

Left: In fine order before the fire, the Glasgow & South Western Railway First World War memorial will have to be rescued and restored.

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HOME ON THE GRANGE!

A 26-year project to fill another major gap in the UK heritage steam fleet portfolio is to reach its conclusion with the first public steaming of new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* and its subsequent running-in trials, planned to take place the Battlefield Line, writes **Robin Jones** in an exclusive report.

Saturday, January 6 will see members of the 6880 *Betton Grange* (Society) Ltd and its supporters gather at Tyseley Locomotive Works for a private steaming of Britain's latest new-build locomotive behind closed doors. A week later, on January 13, No. 6880 will then be steamed at Tyseley in public.

Afterwards, it will be taken to the Battlefield Line to undergo test runs, and if all goes well, it may haul public services there during the February half term week.

The completion of the locomotive will see a Grange run for the first time in more than 58 years, and like the Great Western Society's new Saint 4-6-0 No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*, it will not only fill a major void in GWR preservation but will also mark another apex in the 74-year history of the operational heritage railway movement, one of which its project team can be justifiably proud.

For one, I long to see the 81st member of this class move under its own power – for I think I may have seen many of them in action in the last decade of steam. As an infant, my eight-year-old brother Stewart used to take

me trainspotting to Widney Manor station in Solihull on the Birmingham Snow Hill to Leamington line during his school holidays.

When we cleared my late parents' home in Shirley as adults, I decided to inspect the sofa, should the odd coin be rediscovered after slipping down the back. To my sheer delight, I found a well-worn Ian Allan locospotters guide, and thumbing through its pages I saw that all but a handful of the listed Granges had been underlined.

Then having four tracks, the line was a haven of delight for young enthusiasts with its rich, non-stop variety of both steam and early diesel types. However, we occasionally also visited Shirley station on the two-track North Warwickshire Line, which was about the same distance from our home, and Stewart said it was there that he recorded most of the Grange sightings as they headed along the route to Wales and the West Country via what is now partially occupied by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway.

In much later years, when I left the Birmingham Evening Mail newsdesk to move

into railway journalism, my work colleagues bought me, by chance, a print of a painting of No. 6861 Crynant Grange in full flight.

However, we now have a real-life Grange for everyone to see and enjoy in perpetuity.

The Granges – a third of a century overdue?

The story of the Granges began at the start of the last century.

George Jackson Churchward's GWR locomotive standardisation policy focused on a range of locomotive classes which would be suitable for the majority of duties and yet would share a small number of standard components.

In 1901, a design was produced for a 4-6-0 with 5ft 8in diameter driving wheels and the Standard No. 1 boiler. However, none we built during Churchward's lifetime, although his successor as Chief Mechanical Engineer, Charles B Collett, brought out the Hall 4-6-0s with 6ft diameter driving wheels.

In 1911, Churchward introduced the first of 342 4300 class 2-6-0s for mixed traffic purposes, but by the 1930s, some older

No. 6800 *Arlington Grange*, the first in the class number series, heads through Gwinear Road on October 15, 1960. R PATTERSON/COLOUR-RAIL





Above: No.6808 *Beenham Grange* double-heads with an unspecified locomotive through Doublebois on September 13, 1958. It was named after a 17th century building near Aldermaston to where the GWR general manager and his staff were evacuated in the first few months of the Second World War, they being brought down by special train from Paddington on a daily basis. TB OWEN/COLOUR-RAIL

examples were showing their age and the class as a whole struggled to cope with the tasks expected. So, Collett dusted down the 35-year-old Churchward design, modifying the cab to include controls to the then current style.

During 1936-39, 100 4300s were withdrawn, to be replaced by the new mixed-traffic 6800 Grange class – in effect, a smaller-wheeled version of the Halls, and named after Granges in GWR territory – and 20 Manors. The wheels, valve motion and tenders from the withdrawn engines were reconditioned and used in the construction of these 100 new locomotives.

World War Two stopped the remaining 4300s from being withdrawn. Two survive today: No. 7325 at the Severn Valley Railway and No. 8322 at Didcot Railway Centre.

The Granges were built in two batches to Lot No. 308: Nos. 6800-6859 between August 1936 and December 1937; and Nos. 6860-6879 between February and May 1939. Originally fitted with Churchward 3500-gallon tenders taken from withdrawn 4300s, but after the war, several were given newer tenders of the same capacity.

The GWR power class of the Granges was D (BR 5MT) and its route availability colour code was red.

Reliable performers, the Granges competently handled most duties, and their smaller driving wheels equipped them with a higher tractive effort than the Halls. They were often used for excursion trains and the haulage of perishable goods, such as fruit and broccoli.

Their axle loading prevented use on some cross-country routes that had been operated by the 4300s and so a lighter version, the Manors, were introduced for these duties.

Passing of the class

All the Granges were withdrawn between 1960 and 1965, the first being No. 6801 *Aylburton Grange* at Penzance depot, from where it was sent to Swindon to be cut up.

No. 6853 *Morehampton Grange*, which was based at Tyseley throughout its career, had received a heavy intermediate overhaul at



Above: No. 6880 *Betton Grange* on December 2 in the Tyseley workshops, where assembly has made rapid progress since the summer. COLIN HODGIN/6880

Below: the locomotive outside the works on May 30, 2022, after the chimney was lowered into position. PAUL APPLETON/6880



Swindon Works in August 1964. Withdrawn in October 1965, the early preservationists at Tyseley considered it, but instead chose Western Region 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle*, now the Vintage Trains flagship.

Two farewell tours saw No. 6841 *Marlas Grange* head an enthusiasts' special to Avonmouth Docks, while No. 6861 *Crynant Grange* and *Morehampton Grange* double-headed the last leg of a Locomotive Club of Great Britain 'High Peak' tour on September 18, 1965.

The last of the Granges, Nos. 6848 *Toddington Grange*, 6849 *Walton Grange* and 6872 *Crawley Grange*, were withdrawn in December 1965, and were some of the last GWR engines in steam on the WR.

In his definitive 2019 volume on the subject, *Great Western Grange Class Locomotives, Their Design & Development* (Pen & Sword, 200pp, £30, ISBN 1526752018), David Maidment related that Colin Jacks, a Tyseley depot fireman for many years, wrote that the Granges were "one of the most-loved engines on the GWR, a fireman's dream engine and a driver's home from home. No matter the weather or poor coal – plenty of steam and a comfortable ride. Never heard a hard word against them...never once had a bad trip. And they were brilliant at accelerating away – more than one guard was left standing on the platform!"

Another Tyseley fireman, RS Potts, recalled a trip with No. 6845 *Paviland Grange* hauling seven coaches from Swindon to Birmingham Snow Hill, leaving 25 minutes late but having recovered all but one minute by the time the destination was reached. The trip saw a descent down Fosse Bank to Leamington recorded at 90mph – a speed record for a Grange. Sadly, no Grange ended up at Dai



No. 6802 heads an Up coal train at Wolvercote Junction on August 29, 1948. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY

Woodham's Barry scrapyard, from where 213 locomotives were saved for preservation purposes thanks to his landmark decision to concentrate on the more profitable dismemberment of redundant goods wagons and save the lines of rusting hulks for a rainy day.

Second coming

The origins of the *Betton Grange* project lay in the restoration of GWR large prairie No. 5199. In July 1985 it became the 165th locomotive to be saved from Barry scrapyard, when – more than 22 years after withdrawal by BR – it was bought by the Great Western Locomotive Group and moved to Toddington on the Gloucester Warwickshire Railway.

That group broke up, however, and the 5199 Project Group was formed to restore the 1934-built locomotive which in 1988 was moved to Llangollen for work to continue. In 1990, it was moved to Long Marston

to be nearer the working members of the group, and five years later, the frames were rewheeled. The following year it was moved back to Llangollen, where a shop was set up at Carrog to raise funds. No. 5199 moved under its own power for the first time in more than 40 years on March 2, 2023, and has since visited several other heritage lines, most recently the West Somerset Railway and currently the Battlefield Line, to haul the 2023 Santa specials and selected services between Christmas and the New Year.

The restoration team had in the late 1990s begun looking for a second project to undertake once No. 5199 was complete. Inspired by The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's market-leading scheme to build a new A1 Peppercorn Pacific to fill a major gap in the LNER heritage fleet, the team opted to build a Grange.

The 6880 Society was formed in 1998 by 5199 stalwarts Quentin McGuinness and Will

No. 6873 *Cradoc Grange* crosses the span leading up to the Royal Albert Bridge at Saltash. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY





No. 6830 heads a passenger train through Wednesbury. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY

Naylor for the purpose of building the 81st Grange for use on both heritage railways and eventually the main line. Records showed that No. 6880 *Betton Grange* had been the next class member scheduled to come off the assembly line at Swindon Works before the GWR suspended production, never to resume.

The society chose to build the Grange using a mixture of new components and standard parts from other locomotives – in many ways mirroring the use of parts of the 4300s incorporated into the original Granges

in 1936.

The project team was reformed in the summer of 2003 as the Betton Grange Society Ltd, which became registered as a charity that October. The team was initially based at Llangollen and the frames were cut by October 2004, giving an identity to the new locomotive; the name is taken from the Grade II-listed 16th-century farmhouse Betton Grange, in the hamlet of Betton Strange, two miles south of Shrewsbury.

The cab was built from new and displayed

at the Crewe Works open day in 2005. That year, the society acquired the boiler from WR 4-6-0 No. 7927 *Willington Hall*, which, having been withdrawn in December 1965, arrived at Barry scrapyard that following February. One of the 'Barry 10' last locomotives to leave the scrapyard, it was earmarked for a short-lived museum set up at the Taff Vale Railway's Cardiff Bay station in Bute Street under the auspices of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales and the Butetown Historical Railway society, which in 1997



No. 6855 Saighton Grange at Oxley motive power depot near Wolverhampton. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY



No. 6857 Tudor Grange heads a mixed train at Birmingham Snow Hill. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY



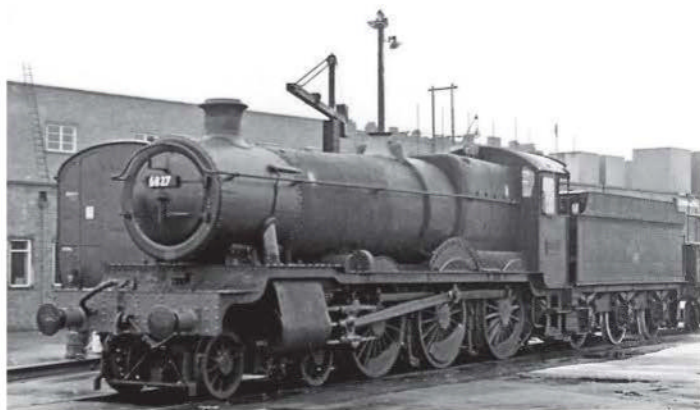
No. 6851 at Great Malvern station on May 9, 1959. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY



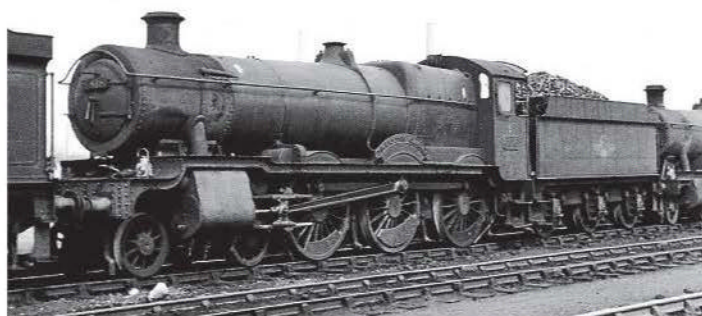
No. 6867 Peterston Grange heads a mixed freight through Dawlish. GREAT WESTERN SOCIETY



At Swindon Works, the GWR's two versions of 4-6-0s with 5ft 8in driving wheels: No. 7827 *Lydham Manor*, now on the Dartmouth Steam Railway, and No. 6879 *Overton Grange*, the last of 80 Granges built, until No. 6880. MIKE PEART



No. 6827 *Llanfrechfa Grange* outside Swindon Works on November 29, 1964, apparently after having had an intermediate repair. It was condemned less than a year later in September 1965. BEN BROOKSBANK/CREATIVE COMMONS



No. 6816 *Frankton Grange* at Neath motive power depot on April 15, 1963. ROB HODGKINS



No. 6815 *Frilford Grange* at Neath (General) with the last Saturdays-only Swansea (High Street) to Weston Milton service in July 1963. HUGH LLEWELLYN/CREATIVE COMMONS

relocated to the Vale of Glamorgan Railway, now the Barry Tourist Railway.

The three-row superheated Swindon No. 1 boiler of *Willington Hall* was bought by the *Betton Grange* team for £1 from the locomotive's then owner, the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The frames of No. 7927 were purchased for the Great Western Society project to recreate a GWR Hawksworth

County, No. 1014 *County of Glamorgan*.

Attention then focused on the completion of the main frames and extension frames, which arrived in April 2011. A successful appeal raised about £60,000 to have the cylinders cast, using polystyrene formers, in October 2014. An authentic chimney from No. 6868 *Penrhos Grange* was donated by the Llangollen-based 5532 Group. The Great Western Society at

Didcot provided the rocker arms for the valve from No. 4942 *Maindy Hall*, the basis for its new-build Churchward Saint No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*.

In 2010, the society bought unrestored GWR 4-6-0 No. 5952 *Cogan Hall* from the Cambrian Railways Trust with the long-term aim of fully restoring it to operational condition, but in the short term the society borrowed its



GWR 4-6-0 No. 6877 *Llanfair Grange* hauls the 8.50am Swansea to Paignton summer Saturday holiday relief express at Exeter St David's on July 25, 1958. Not calling at the station, it is held on the Down independent line, giving the crew time to chat with young enthusiasts on the platform.

Large prairie No. 5199 gets underway from Williton to Bishops Lydeard with the 3.22pm demonstration goods and brake van ride on April 18, the first day of the West Somerset Railway's 2023 spring steam gala. The project to restore No. 5199 from Barry scrapyard condition at Llangollen led to the scheme to build a new Grange. STEPHEN GINN



front bogie and Collett 4000-gallon tender for the Grange project, with the option to later rebuild the spare tender frame from GWR 4-6-0 No. 4936 *Kinlet Hall* for potential future main line running.

The spare driving wheelsets from 4300 No. 7325 were obtained on long-term loan from the Severn Valley Railway and the wheels retired at the South Devon Railway but subsequently exchanged with those from No. 5199. In April 2013, the frame was fitted to the driving wheels.

The boiler of No. 5952 was assembled on the chassis of No. 6880 so that the locomotive could be displayed at the Warley National Model Railway Show at the National Exhibition Centre, near Birmingham, in 2016. The boiler from No. 7927 was moved to Tyseley for overhaul later that year, while the chassis carrying No. 5952's boiler still in place appeared at Tyseley's June 2017 open weekend with a line-up of its Castle 4-6-0s.

On June 25, 2018, the new Grange was moved to Tyseley to test-assemble the boiler parts in the frame. It appeared at the June 2018 open weekend, paving the way for it to be fitted to the overhauled chassis prior to the final phase of assembly.

Ironically, during its test running on the Battlefield Line, No. 6880 is likely to run alongside No. 5199, which after several years on hire to the West Somerset Railway was brought to Shackerstone to run this year's festive services. The pair, products of the same enterprising restorationists at Llangollen, will meet before the boiler ticket for No. 5199 expires on February 27. **HR**



GWR 2-6-2T No. 5199 heads a Santa special on the Battlefield Line, is set to run there alongside *Betton Grange* as the latter undergoes test runs. No. 5199 will appear in the line's February 3-4 winter gala. BL



HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

On the crisp, cold morning of Saturday, December 2, LMS Royal Scot 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* is seen crossing the impressive 28-arch Royal Border Bridge, which was completed in 1850, near Berwick-upon-Tweed with the Railway Touring Company's 'Edinburgh Christmas Market' railtour from York. JONATHAN GOURLAY



Operators await court ruling on heritage carriage door locks

By Robin Jones

THE judicial review of the Office of Rail and Road's (ORR) refusal to grant 'Jacobite' operator West Coast Railways (WCR) a further period of exemption from regulation five of the Railway Safety Regulations 1999 took place in London's High Court over two days at the end of November, in front of the Hon Mrs Justice Thornton.

Judgment has been reserved, meaning a further short-term exemption has been granted by the ORR in order to continue using vehicles without Central Door Locking (CDL) ahead of the outcome.

The issue concerns the fitting of secondary carriage door locking systems to its heritage coaches. To recap, regulation five of the Railway Safety Regulations 1999 required all operators of slam-door stock to fit centrally-controlled door locks.

However, charter stock was never the intended target of this law and, since 2003, operators of main line heritage trains have been allowed exemptions (under regulation six), with stewards operating the doors at

all times and applying a secondary manual bolt. Most owners of charter stock had been granted two consecutive 10-year exemptions by the ORR, the last of which expired in March 2023. Henceforth, the ORR would grant further exemptions only if a plan to fit CDL had been agreed with them.

Main line heritage threat

The judicial review examined whether the ORR has followed the correct procedures in reaching its decision. If the determination of the review, expected early in the New Year, finds against WCR, which owns 63% of the total UK heritage rolling stock on the main line, it would have a profound effect on the continued use of unmodified heritage carriages for charter use. Carriages pulled by the likes of A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* may have to be withdrawn, changing forever the 'authentic' experience of the steam eras.

Safety issues have been raised by the ORR over time, leading to further improvements including increasing the provision of stewards on services

and signs above droplight windows. West Coast said it has robust safety procedures to protect passengers, with one steward per carriage to operate doors and monitor droplight windows, and signs placed above them.

The Carnforth-based operator said that while the ORR is working hard to boost safety for passengers, it is enforcing regulations that were intended for busy commuter services and not passenger-limited heritage services. There have been no incidences of injury relating to door locks since the regulations and the exemptions have been in place.

WCR's commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "A number of charter train operators, the majority of which use only later-build Mk.2 or Mk.3 vehicles, all had CDL fitted by their former owners, long before being sold to the charter sector, so they are compliant."

"Of the remaining four which operate the older Mk.1 coaches like ours, one has fitted lits 12 with an air-operated system, and another has a similar number to fit but has yet to develop and prove a system,

as they can't use air. The Scottish Railway Preservation Society has yet to apply for its 12, leaving us with about 120, by far the largest proportion. The number of operators doesn't actually reflect the number of vehicles involved."

Cost 'unviable'

WCR said that the installation of new technology on its heritage carriages would cost £7-million, making the sector unviable and wiping out profits for almost a decade. In court, the company made the case that it had been granted an exemption from using CDL since 2003 and has operated safely ever since.

An ORR spokesman said: "As the rail regulator, our role is to ensure that Britain's railways are run safely. There has been a regulation in place since 2005 which prohibits the operation on the main line of carriages with hinged doors for use by passengers."

The majority of operators had either installed central locks or had plans in place to do so, said the spokesman, although they did not refer to the actual number of vehicles involved.

Sir Nigel Gresley still set to fulfil 2024 tours despite failure in November

A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* will be fit to haul its planned 2024 tours despite suffering a right-hand cylinder failure on its northbound working on to York to Edinburgh leg of Steam Dreams' 'Edinburgh Christmas Market Weekender' on November 23.

Large pieces of piston ring became detached in the steam circuit, causing damage to the valve heads, preventing the locomotive from continuing on the tour.

Following a temporary fix, the A4 was moved back to Crewe in steam with assistance from Class 20 No. 20132 for full repairs, while the return leg of the tour was handed over to Class 40 D213 *Andania*.

Back at Crewe, it was found that a set of the A4's valve rings had disintegrated, causing some damage to the lining.

No. 60007 was ruled out of hauling the advertised Saphos Trains tour from Crewe to York on December 12, with one of the Locomotive Services Limited fleet standing in. However, the damage was rectified after the scope of

the A4's winter maintenance was extended.

It will now haul the first two tours of the Steam Dreams 2024 season.

On Saturday, March 2, it is planned to run from King's Cross to York, picking up passengers at Welwyn Garden City, Huntingdon and Peterborough, where there will be three-and-a-half hours to explore the city before the return journey by the same route, once again hauled by No. 60007.

South and north

On Wednesday, March 6, *Sir Nigel Gresley* is booked to haul a tour from London Victoria to Bath, picking up at Staines and Woking. The route of this trip will first head southwest through Surrey and Hampshire to Salisbury before turning northwest to Westbury to Bath Spa for a stop of just under four hours before the return journey to London.

On April 6, it will head the return leg of Steam Dreams' King's Cross-Newcastle trip, with diesel haulage outbound.



No. 60007 underwent a temporary fix after a valve failure so it could return to Crewe and is seen here at Wooden Gate, just south of Alnmouth, being hauled by Class 20 No. 20132 on November 27. LESLIE WHEELER

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class and premium standard class at steamdreams.co.uk

On May 23, No. 60007 will head a special Saphos Trains 'Fellsman'-variant trip to mark the 65th anniversary of its postwar speed record when it reached 112mph descending Stoke Bank on the East Coast Main Line in Lincolnshire

will a full train of passengers returning from an excursion to Doncaster Works (unlike world record-holding sister No. 4498 *Mallard*, which hit 126mph at the same location during a non-public trial run).

The trip will run from Crewe via Shap to Carlisle and back via Ais Gill to Crewe. For details, visit saphostrains.com



West County Pacific No. 34046 Branton departing Bath Spa across Brunel's St James Viaduct with Steam Dreams' Bath Christmas Market Express' from London Victoria via Salisbury at lunchtime on a cold November 28. DUNCAN SAVIDGE

Vintage Trains 'Polar Express' a resounding success

By John Titlow

THE Vintage Trains seasonal 'Polar Express' trains out of Birmingham Moor Street were once again a resounding success.

The company operated its seasonal trains – its 'Polar Express' being unique on the main line – from Friday, November 24, which served as a test day with three return trips to Dorridge for the second year in succession.

The first train was empty for the actors to prepare and familiarise themselves with their roles.

The second and third trains were dress rehearsals and open to charities, schools, staff, volunteers and the public (the latter at a discount).

The weekend trains started on November 25/26. Fridays December 1/8 and 15 saw four return trains to Whitlocks End with an additional train on the 22nd.

Saturdays December 2/9/16 and 23 saw five trains return from Moor Street.

The first two and last trains went to Dorridge, with the middle two going to Whitlocks End.

There were two interesting empty stock moves on Saturdays due to capacity at Moor Street. One train went to Bordesley for 36 minutes and the second return from Whitlocks End ran to Snow Hill after dropping passengers off at Moor Street. It then reversed back through Moor Street to Bordesley before returning to Moor Street.

Sundays 3/10 and 17 was a much simpler affair, with all five trains running to Dorridge and back.

WR 4-6-0 No 7029 *Clun Castle* was in charge of eight carriages, with Class 47 No. 47773 on the rear. The 47 hauled the train out of Moor Street, with the Castle returning it. No headboard was present – only a simple black headlight on the top headlamp bracket.

Before the first passenger workings each day, an empty stock move from the Vintage Trains depot at Tyseley to Moor Street proved very popular with photographers. At the end of the day, the consist was returned to Tyseley depot.

All journeys began from the bay Platforms 3 or 4 at Moor Street station, which restored in their original GWR condition was a fitting



WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* arrives at Birmingham Moor Street with the 'Polar Express' on November 11. JOHN TITLOW

showcase for No. 7029 under the canopy at night. A slick operation after the arrival at Moor Street saw an army of cleaners give the train a good clean before the next run.

The 'Polar Express', based on the book by Chris Van Allsburg made famous by the 2004 Warner Brothers film of the same name, centres around the adventure a boy

on a steam train travelling to the North Pole to see Father Christmas. Passengers turned up early for a show inside the Moor Street concourse before being led onto the train by the conductor.

Most of the services were fully booked, including all trains on December 23, the afternoon runs being the most popular.

Scottish Easter getaway for Pathfinder Railtours is no joke

By Tim Hobman

PATHFINDER Railtours has offered customers a four-day excursion to Scotland between March 29 and April 1 under the title of 'The Easter Chieftain'.

Starting from Eastleigh on the Friday morning, the train will pick up passengers at Salisbury, Westbury, Chippenham, Swindon, Oxford, Banbury, Leamington Spa, Dorridge, and Derby, before heading northeast to York. A Great British Breakfast will be served to all passengers joining the train before Derby, with a lighter breakfast for customers from Derby.

After York the tour will take the East Coast Main Line, passing Durham and crossing the River Tyne for a brief afternoon break in

Newcastle. Having left Newcastle, the train will continue north on the East Coast Main Line, crossing into Scotland as the evening meal is served, then passing Edinburgh and along the Highland Main Line to the final destination of Aviemore for the evening stay at the Macdonald Aviemore Resort.

Off-train adventures

The next day will see customers board a special train after breakfast at the resort and head for the Kyle of Lochalsh via Inverness.

There will be a light lunch on the outward journey and dinner on the return journey, and while at the Kyle of Lochalsh there are several off-train options to choose from. The first of these is a road trip to the Isle

of Skye, taking in the scenery and spending some time in the small town of Portree. The second is a visit to the village of Plockton and then a cruise along Loch Carron. A tour of Eilean Donan Castle is the next off-train option, with the final choice being an exploration of the Kyle of Lochalsh itself.

Sunday is planned to be a slightly more relaxed day, with two options for passengers.

After breakfast at the hotel, there is the chance to visit Aberdeen on a circular railtour, with lunch served on the way, and time to explore the granite city during the afternoon. Back on board, guests will have an evening meal as the train travels west across Aberdeenshire back to Aviemore.

For those who decide not to take this option, there are activities planned in and around Aviemore, which include a ride on the funicular up the Cairngorm Mountain and a visit to the Highland Folk Museum.

Home time

The final day will see a return to England, taking the Highland Main Line to Perth before heading south towards York. The train will then retrace the route of the outward journey back to Derby and then south to Eastleigh.

The tour will be hauled throughout by locomotives provided by DB Cargo UK, with Mk.2 coaching stock provided by Riviera Trains Ltd.

For more details and to book, visit www.pathfindertours.co.uk

RTC scoops top travel award for third year running

THE Railway Touring Company was named as Best Small Travel Company for Rail Holidays at the British Travel Awards on November 28 for the third consecutive year.

Established in 1997, RTC provides rail-themed holidays in the UK, Europe, and worldwide, as well as organising more than 80 main-line steam day trips each year.

For the annual awards, travellers vote on customer service, product

offering, and the best holidays across various categories.

'Thank you'

RTC managing director Kelly Osborne said: "It's a tremendous accolade for the team, who work so hard to research, plan and lead unique holidays combining great rail journeys and interesting destinations. What makes this win so pleasing is that it is a result of our

holiday clients voting for us – we can't thank them enough."

British Travel Awards director of events and partnerships Lorraine Barnes Burton said: "This year saw more than 1,500,000 votes cast to determine the winners and competition was fierce. RTC is therefore to be sincerely congratulated."

In 2023, the National Railway Museum selected the King's Lynn

company as its partner to run steam excursions to mark the centenary of A3 No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman*.

In 2024, RTC will take travellers on escorted holidays around Scotland, the Lakes, Ireland, and other scenic parts of the UK, and also further afield to Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Colorado and the Rocky Mountains and Sri Lanka on holidays featuring great railway journeys.

Scots Guardsman moves south

LMS 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* moved south on November 25 while deputising for rostered 'Black Five' No. 44932, hauling the Railway Touring Company's 'Capital Christmas Express' from Chester to Paddington.

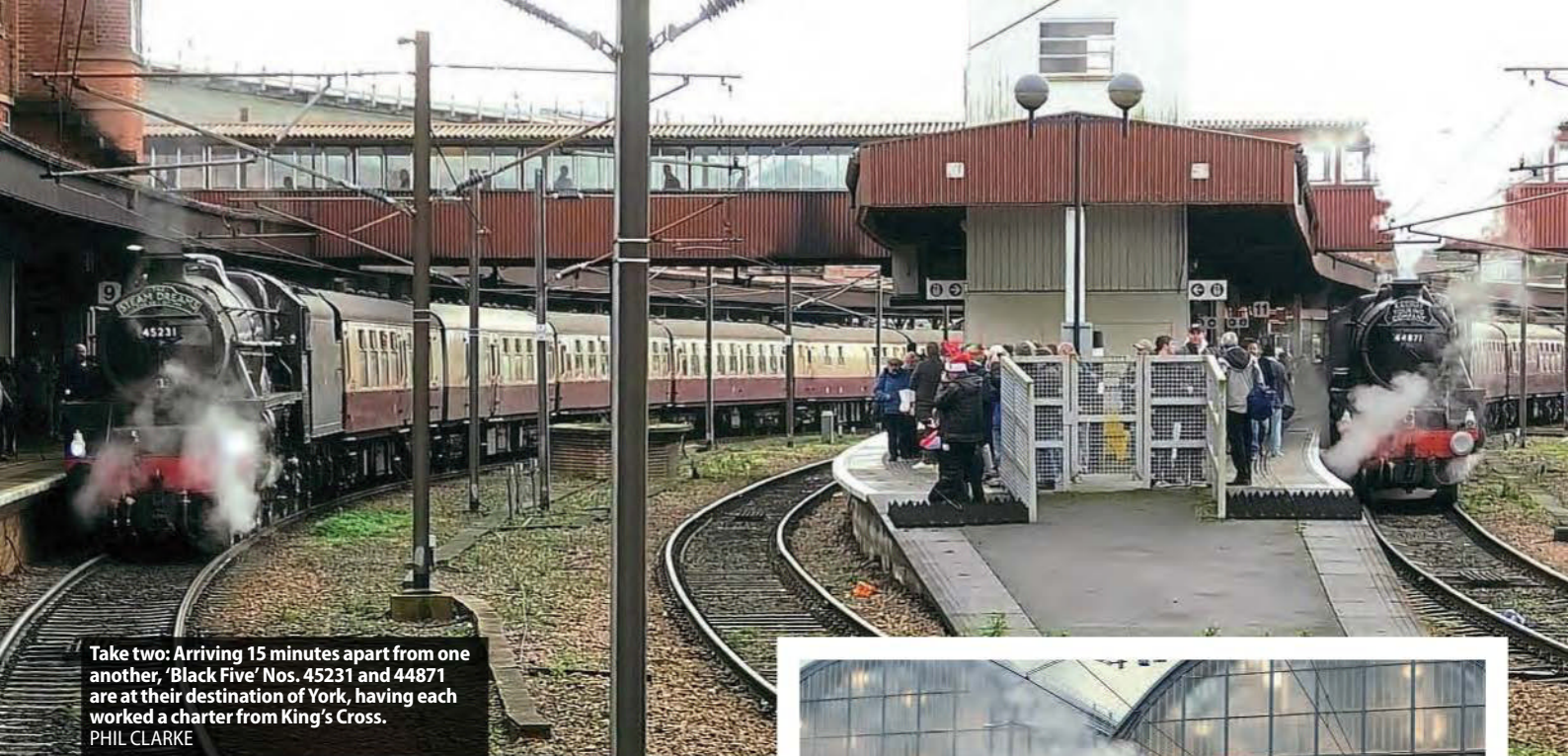
Picking up at Wrexham, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street, the day started with a 10-minute late departure from Chester at 6.52am, which increased slightly to a 12-minute late arrival at Wellington. Further delays occurred after a prolonged stop there, meaning more time was lost, departing at 8.52am, 26 minutes late. Time was made up by reducing the service stop at Banbury, departing five minutes down at 11.19am.

With no more stops it was a straight run up through Oxford via Didcot onto the Great Western main line at Didcot for an 11-minute late arrival at London Paddington at 1.41pm. The return was by diesel.

On November 27, the Scot returned to Carnforth with its support coach down the West Coast Main Line via Rugby, Crewe and Preston. On December 1, piloted by Class 47 No. 47804, it positioned the stock from Carnforth to York in preparation for the RTC tour from York to Edinburgh down the East Coast Main line the following day.



Against the backdrop of Birmingham, LMS 4-6-0 No. 46115 pulls away from Bordesley Junction on the approach to Small Heath on November 11. JOHN TITLOW



Take two: Arriving 15 minutes apart from one another, 'Black Five' Nos. 45231 and 44871 are at their destination of York, having each worked a charter from King's Cross. PHIL CLARKE

Missed chance for pair of 'Fives' at the Cross

By Owen Hayward

ONLOOKERS at King's Cross may have thought they were seeing double on the morning of November 18 when a pair of LMS 'Black Fives' departed the station mere minutes from one another, both bound for the same destination – but a signalling error meant that the pair missed the opportunity to be pictured side by side in the capital.

The first was worked by No. 44871, at the helm of the Railway Touring Company's 'Christmas White Rose' excursion. Departing from West Coast Railway's Southall depot at 4.50am, the set arrived at Platform 7 not long after 7am in readiness for its advertised 7.42am departure.

The second service was a Steam Dreams excursion with No. 45231 *The*

Sherwood Forester as the locomotive in charge. Departing Southall at 5.50am, it was scheduled to arrive at Platform 8 at 7.35am, allowing for a brief window where the pair could have been pictured side by side.

However, a local main line service was routed in to this platform by mistake, meaning that the set was held outside the station until Platform 6 became vacant.

The unfortunate result of this was that the Steam Dreams train began moving into King's Cross just as the RTC service departed, scuppering the chance to see a pair of the Stanier icons together at the terminal point of the ECML.

While it was a missed opportunity at the starting point of their respective journeys, the pair arrived at York just 15 minutes apart from one another,



The impressive trainshed roof of King's Cross towers over No. 44871 on November 18. Another the Stanier-designed locomotive should have been on the immediately adjacent Platform 8, but an LNER service was signalled there by mistake, delaying the arrival of the second charter and resulting in a missed opportunity to picture a pair of 'Black Fives' side by side in the nation's capital. JONATHAN BUSHELL

with RTC's excursion signalled into Platform 11 and SD to Platform 9.

Both sets returned to London that evening, with No. 45231 working its set the full length of the journey, while No. 44871 detached at Peterborough to stable overnight on the Nene Valley Railway, where yet

another classmate – No. 45212 – is based until December 28, when it will return to its Keighley & Worth Valley Railway home.

Originally set to follow 40 minutes apart, both down workings passed through Doncaster with just five minutes between them.

British Pullman tour plan to mark *Clan Line's* 50th anniversary

UK Railtours has announced an excursion on Saturday, April 27 to mark exactly 50 years since Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35028 *Clan Line* returned to the main line in the heritage era.

After retirement from BR in July 1967, *Clan Line* was bought by the Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society and entered a period of restoration.

Returning to the national network on April 27, 1974, *Clan Line* ran from Basingstoke to Westbury and back with a railtour at a time when there was a steam ban from London to Basingstoke.

This 50th anniversary tour will allow passengers the full experience. The train will depart from London Victoria and head

to Wimbledon to pick up the 'Atlantic Coast Express' route towards Basingstoke. From there, the train continues to Salisbury for a water stop and then on to Warminster, Westbury, and finally Bath.

After exploring the city, the train will return to London via the same route, again taking water at Salisbury.

Passengers on this tour will experience the luxury of the British Pullman, with a three-course brunch on the outward journey and a four-course dinner on the return journey, with tickets only available in Pullman Class and travelling in style on board the historic Pullman Cars.

For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

Steam duo for The White Rose courtesy of RTC

THE Railway Touring Company is offering customers the opportunity to travel steam-hauled to York behind LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* and return behind a 'Black Five'.

'The White Rose', on Saturday, February 24, will depart from King's Cross and pick up additional passengers at Stevenage, Huntingdon and Peterborough before taking the East Coast Main Line to York.

Passengers will then have just over three hours to explore the city before returning south hauled by a 'Black Five', which will leave the train at Peterborough, with a diesel taking it back to King's Cross.

Tickets are available in premier dining, first class and standard class, with a discount for junior travellers and family tickets.

For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Triple recreation from Intercity

By Tim Hobman

INTERCITY plans to start the 2024 season with three tours that will recreate the past.

The first will take passengers back to the 1980s when trains ran for a limited period from Euston to Ayr. 'The Ayr Extension' on Saturday, January 13 will start from Crewe and pick up passengers at Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western, Preston and Carlisle, before heading north along the West Coast Main Line to Glasgow Central.

There is an option to alight the train and spend time in the city or continue on, taking the Ayrshire coast route to Ayr.

After a brief photographic opportunity at Ayr, the train will retrace its steps to Glasgow Central for a break of about two hours.

While the tour does not start from Euston, Intercity has sought to recreate the experience heading north from Crewe with the motive power of both a Class 86 and Class 87, which would have been seen hauling this train historically.

After leaving Glasgow Central, the excursion will retrace its steps south along the West Coast Main Line to Crewe, setting down passengers on route. Tickets are available in first class dining and non-dining.

Heading east

The next offering on the weekend of January 27/28 a two-day exploration of East Anglia under the title of 'The East Anglian Push-Pull'.

Starting again from Crewe, the tour will head south, picking up passengers at Stafford, Nuneaton, Leicester and finally Peterborough before heading east and giving customers the chance to visit some lines not normally associated with locomotive-hauled trains.

Intercity plans to recreate the days of when Driving Brake Second Opens where a common sight on the line from Liverpool Street to Norwich and will make use of a ScotRail Push-Pull set coupled to Class 47 No. 47712 throughout the weekend.

Saturday's itinerary will see the train pick up passengers along the West Coast Main Line, before taking

the cross-country route via Leicester to Peterborough. From here, the tour will continue east to Ely, then take the avoiding line to King's Lynn.

After King's Lynn, the train will return to Ely before heading to Bury St. Edmunds, Stowmarket, and Ipswich.

Some passengers may choose to alight at Ipswich, but those remaining on the train will see a reversal to head for Norwich via Felixstowe Town, Felixstowe Beach, Boss Hall Junction, Europa Junction, and the East Anglian Main Line.

On the Sunday, the train will leave Norwich early and head to Ipswich to collect passengers who alighted there the evening before. From Ipswich, the tour will take the East Suffolk Line to Saxmundham and Lowestoft, then back to Norwich for a short break. The next destination is Great Yarmouth, with the promise of taking both the Acle and Reedham routes, then back toward Peterborough via Thetford and Ely, before heading home to Crewe.

Passengers can choose to spend the night in either Ipswich or

Norwich (accommodation must be booked privately), with travel provided in first or standard class on the train.

Back in time

The final excursion of the trio looks back about 20 years to a recreation of 'The West Riding Limited' on Friday, February 9.

Starting from King's Cross and picking up passengers at Stevenage and Peterborough, this tour will feature a sprint of two Class 90 locomotives up the East Coast Main Line to Leeds. After a reversal at Leeds, the excursion will take the Aire Valley line to Skipton for a short photographic opportunity. Returning to Leeds, there will be a break of about two hours, before heading to Bradford Forster Square and again via the Aire Valley line to Shipley. There will be a further photographic opportunity before returning to King's Cross via Leeds.

Tickets are available on this tour in first class dining and non-dining.

For more details of all tours and to book, visit inter-city.co.uk

Saphos Trains starts 2024 with three 'Golden Arrow' offerings

By Tim Hobman

SAPHOS Trains will kick off its 2024 season with three opportunities to travel on board the partly steam-hauled 'Golden Arrow' bound for Canterbury.

The first occasion is on Wednesday, March 13, with the tour starting from Kidderminster and bound for Canterbury via West London, picking up at Droitwich Spa, Worcester Shrub Hill, Cheltenham Spa, Stroud, Kemble, Swindon, Didcot Parkway, Tilehurst and Reading.

The return journey, departing in the mid-afternoon, will take passengers along the coastal line through Dover and Folkestone before heading back to London via Tonbridge and then setting down passengers at their joining stations back to Kidderminster.

On Tuesday, March 26, the trip starts from Bristol Temple Meads, picking up additional passengers at Bath Spa. The tour continues along the Wessex Main Line for further pick-ups at Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge before turning towards London at Westbury for further stops at Pewsey, Hungerford, Newbury, Reading and finally Maidenhead.

The excursion then follows the pattern of the first tour and after leaving Canterbury passes through Dover, Folkestone and Tonbridge, on the way back to London and to retrace the route back to Bristol.

The third 'Golden Arrow' service is on Saturday, March 30, starting from Poole and taking the South West Main Line to collect additional passengers at Bournemouth, Brockenhurst, Southampton, Eastleigh, Winchester, Micheldever and Basingstoke, before turning north to Reading.

After the two-and-a-half-hour stop in Canterbury, it then heads back towards London via Dover as before, setting down passengers on route back to Poole.

Each of these railtours will be diesel-hauled to West London, when a steam locomotive from the Saphos pool will take charge of the train.

The pool includes BR Standard 7 Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia* and West Country 4-6-0 No. 34046 *Braunton*.

Tickets are available in either Pullman dining, first class non-dining or standard class for all of these trips. For more details, visit saphostrains.com



The special birthday party marking two years of success beyond expectations of the Dartmoor Line. GWR

Dartmoor Line carried 550,000 passengers in first two years

A COMMUNITY celebration marking the second anniversary of the reopening of the Dartmoor Line was held at Okehampton station on November 20.

In those two years, more than 550,000 passengers have been carried on the line, part of which was previously used as the Heritage Dartmoor Railway.

The route, from which daily passenger services were withdrawn in 1972, was the first line to be reopened under the Government's Restoring Your Railway programme, in just nine months and delivered £10 million under budget. The birthday party was organised by the modern-

day Great Western Railway, local rail support group Okerail, and the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP) to celebrate the positive impact the reopening has had on the local community.

Rail Minister Huw Merriman said: "The reopening of the Dartmoor Line was made possible through government investment.

"Two years on since services resumed, it has proved to be a huge success, providing vital links for passengers in the area."

Okehampton station itself was recently named Small Station of the Year at the National Rail Awards, as reported.



Soon after crossing the River Avon at Fladbury, West County 4-6-2 No. 34046 *Braunton* crosses the smaller bridge over the flood plain – being chased by a duck!

Late running on Saphos Trains Worcester jaunt

Words and pictures by John Titlow

IT WAS a long day for Saphos Trains' 'The Cotswold Explorer' from Peterborough to Worcester Shrub Hill on November 15.

The tour started diesel-hauled at 5.30am and headed up the East Coast Main Line towards King's Cross, and at Copenhagen Junction it turned west onto the North London Line to Willesden where Bulleid West Country No. 34046 *Braunton* was waiting to take over for the return run to Worcester Shrub Hill.

The Willesden departure was 11 minutes late at 8.13am before joining the Great Western Main Line at Acton, heading towards a service stop at Hanwell. Leaving 11 minutes down the outward routing was via Swindon and the Golden Valley towards Gloucester.

After losing its path, it was never able to make up lost time, finally arriving at Worcester 45 down at 1.29pm.

The return was via Evesham over the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway route, affectionately known as the Worse and Worse.

Despite leaving Worcester Shrub Hill six minutes late at 3.54pm, the steam section to West Drayton fared much better than the outward for an arrival at 7.13pm, seven minutes late. There were two stops en route,

at Charlebury and Hinksey reception sidings just south of Oxford, and Reading.

Diesel-hauled, the West Drayton departure was at 8.24pm (45 late) and Peterborough was reached at 10.56pm, 27 minutes late.

What made this tour interesting from the lineside was the number of river crossings around the Worcester area, as illustrated. On the outward journey it crossed the River Avon at Eckington on an attractive three-arch steel bridge; thankfully, the flooded river level had decreased, but it was still running fast.

Returning via Evesham, the line crosses the Avon three times, once at Fladbury, then either side of Evesham on attractive bridges.

An added bonus was the empty stock working to Henwick for the train to turn on the triangle at Worcester. Leaving Shrub Hill, the train ran via Foregate Street over the River Severn into Henwick siding.

After 25 minutes at Henwick, the train recrossed the Severn and through Foregate Street again to Tunnel Junction before heading into the nearby sidings for a break.

When trains terminate at Worcester, it is worth keeping an eye open for this turning move. Sadly, never enough time is allowed to enable passengers to walk to the Severn in time to take their photographs.



No. 34046 crosses the River Avon at Eckington as it approaches the journey's end at Worcester.



No. 34046 crosses the River Severn at Worcester with the empty stock working to Henwick for turning.



The most anticipated OO gauge model ever to be announced.

WD Austerity 2-10-0 (1943)

The War Department (WD) "Austerity" 2-10-0 is a type of heavy freight steam locomotive that was introduced during the Second World War in 1943, and is a powerhouse of an engine. The Austerity 2-10-0 commands respect wherever it roams, its presence on the rails could not be ignored. The Austerity 2-10-0 was based on the Austerity 2-8-0, and was designed to have interchangeable parts by R.A. Riddles. It was built cheap, but it was built powerful. It had the same power output as the 2-8-0 but a lighter axle load, making it suitable for secondary lines. 100 were built for the war effort, with 150 being built in total. Even now after 90 years, the Austerity still makes appearances on the rails, proving that the old guard won't be put down easily.

Prices from:

DCC Ready £240.00

DCC Sound £340.00

DCC Sound & Smoke
£370.00

Options include; **DCC Ready, DCC Sound**
and **Smoke unit installed.**



Available in Longmoor Railway Blue, Olive Drab Green, Khaki Sand, and BR Black early crest.

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December

22 'The Polar Express'

Return journey from Birmingham Moor Street.

Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle* or 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgumbe*. VT

23 'The Polar Express'

Return journey from Birmingham Moor Street.

Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle* or 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgumbe*. VT

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

6 'The Surrey Hills Surprise'

Hastings, Guildford and return.

DEMU: 1001. HD

13 'The Ayr Extension'

Crewe, Ayr and return.

Loco: Class 86 or 87 TBC. IC

27 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'

Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBC. Electric: Class 86 TBC. RTC

27 'The East Anglian Push-Pull' Day 1

Crewe, Ipswich, Norwich.

Loco: 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. IC

28 'The East Anglian Push-Pull' Day 2

Norwich, Ipswich, Crewe.

Loco: 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. IC

February

9 'The West Riding Limited'

King's Cross, Leeds and return.

Loco: Class 91 TBA. IC

10 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'

Manchester Victoria, Carlisle and return.

Diesel-hauled from Preston (return).

Loco: TBC. RTC

10 'The West Riding Limited'

King's Cross, Leeds and return.

Loco: Class 90 TBC. IC

10 'The Bath & Gloucester Steam Express'

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'

Euston, Carlisle and return.

Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBC.

Electric: Class 86 TBC. RTC

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.



Winter tours have seen a strong presence for LMS 'Black Fives', with three having become available after completing summer 'Jacobite' services. No. 44871 was the allocated motive power for Railway Touring Company's December 2 'Bath & Bristol Christmas Express' and is pictured departing Bath Spa with the outward working. DAVE COLLIER

24 'The Whistling Highlander' Day 1

Crewe, Inverness.

Loco: Class 40 TBA. IC

24 'The White Rose'

King's Cross, York and return.

Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

24 'The Settle & Carlisle Winter Express'

Bristol Temple Meads, Carlisle and return.

Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. PT

25 'The Whistling Highlander' Day 2

Inverness, Aberdeen, Crewe.

Loco: Class 40 TBA. IC

March

2 'The Cheshireman'

Euston, Chester and return.

Loco: 44871. RTC

2 York Excursion

King's Cross, York and return.

Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

2 'The Cathedrals Express'

Birmingham Snow Hill, Salisbury and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. VT

6 Bath Excursion

London Victoria, Bath Spa and return.

Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

9 'The Stratford Flyer'

Manchester Victoria, Stratford-upon-Avon and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

13 'The Golden Arrow'

Kidderminster, Canterbury and return.

Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. ST

16 'The Cumbrian Mountain Express'

Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBA.

Electric: Class 86 TBA. RTC

16 'The Cotswold Explorer'

Northampton, Worcester and return.

Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. ST

16 'The Shap Mountaineer'

Birmingham New Street, Carlisle and return.

Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgumbe*

20 *Carlisle Excursion*

Norwich, Carlisle and return. Diesel-

hauled between Norwich and Crewe.

Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

23 'The Edinburgh Flyer'

York, Edinburgh Waverley and return.

Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

23 'The Gateway Galloper'

Freight yards and rare track tour

departing King's Cross.

Locos: 2x Class 66s TBA. UKRT

23 Carlisle Excursion

Euston, Carlisle and return.

Steam-hauled over Settle & Carlisle line.

Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

26 'The Golden Arrow'

Bristol Temple Meads, Canterbury and

return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. ST

27 'The Whitby Flyer'

King's Cross, Whitby and return. Steam-

hauled between York and Whitby.

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

Loco: Steam: TBA.

Electric: Class 86 TBA. RTC

30 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Manchester Victoria, Carlisle and return.

Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward)

to Preston (return).

Loco: TBA. NB

WITH FULL REGULATOR

LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



Don Benn looks at two more runs with LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas*, plus a superb piece of hill climbing by Bulleid No. 34070 *Manston*, and a very unusual run with a mixed train on the Mid-Hants Railway.



No. 45596 at Euston with the October 21 'The Mancunian' to Manchester Piccadilly.
ALAN RAWLINGS

I AM still catching up with runs behind LMS Class 5XP (BR Class 6) 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas*. This superb loco is in top form, and even if it carries a tail gunner on most runs, the engine crews seem happy to let it do the work wherever possible. Alan Rawlings and Sandy Smeaton have sent details of a number of runs, all of which I have missed as I am on light duties at the moment. This time I am using the details of two runs from Alan Rawlings, the first being the Railway Touring Company's 'The Mancunian' on October 21, 2023. Alan tells the story and the train running log is in Table One:

"The limited number of London-based locomotives at present, other than the occasional visitor from Crewe, is providing plenty of work for *Bahamas*. That in itself is remarkable and quite a challenge for its dedicated support crew, given that *Bahamas* is currently living more than 200 miles from home. It was therefore a pleasant change for a LMS locomotive to be on LMS metals when it hauled 'The Mancunian' out of Euston on October 21. The route was unusual in that the outward journey was via Northampton and Stafford, then across to Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield, before joining the normal route at Cheadle Hulme. After dropping passengers off at the through platforms of Manchester Piccadilly, the train turned at Castleton and was booked to head home from Manchester Victoria directly to Crewe and southwards. Well, that was the plan.

"In the event, engineering work in the London area meant that the train would not be able to return to Southall on the Saturday night, presenting particular complications for loco and support crew. So, *Bahamas* would be detached at Rugby to return early with its support coach while the accompanying Class 47 No. 47804 took the train back to London. Another problem was weather-related following significant rainfall west and east of the Pennines, closing the conventional route to Crewe between Cheadle and Wilmslow. This resulted in a diversion at Slade Lane Junction

to take the airport route and then onwards through Styal to rejoin the main line at Wilmslow. All in all, this trip turned out to be an interesting one for steam and with rare track behind, helpfully, a gauge-friendly locomotive.

"The whole trip was very well-managed given the circumstances and that included the manner in which the crews explained how the dual motive power would operate. Southall to Euston to Rugby via Northampton is near the safe limit of *Bahamas'* water capacity and it was no surprise that driver Andy Taylor would ask for help up Camden Bank and later on the climb to Tring out of Watford. But this was the exception rather than the rule, and the open manner in which questions about diesel assistance were handled was refreshing.

"The exit from Northampton up the 1-in-230 through Long Buckby was particularly impressive, with 490 tons on the drawbar. Yes, a couple of minutes were dropped to the summit, crested at 56mph, but recovery time put us four early into the water stop at Rugby. Table One covers the slow line leg between Nuneaton and the next water stop at Stafford. The terrain is largely on a falling grade to around Hademore and then a gradual rise to Stafford. While the climb through Lichfield pegged *Bahamas* back a little, once again this locomotive demonstrated how much it can punch above its weight when asked. Not many minutes outside of even time for the journey and once again a performance of which the owners should be proud."

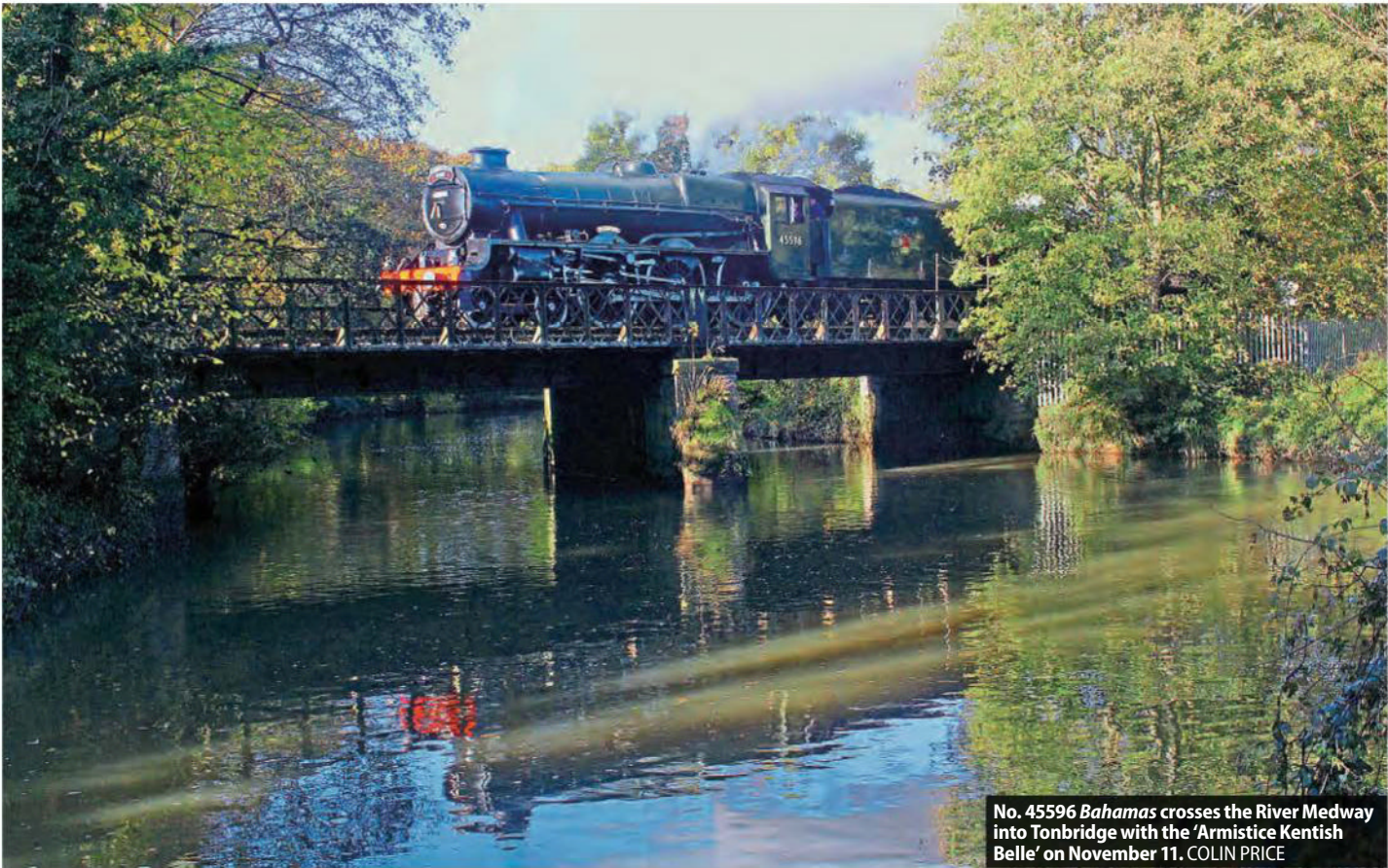
Bahamas on the Southern

Next, in Table Two is a run with No. 45596 on the Southern with the Railway Touring Company's 'Armistice Kentish Belle' on November 11, 2023. Alan writes: "It offered an unusual circular tour of Kent that visited both the Thames Estuary at Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey and the English Channel at Dover, plus the White Cliffs. It also passed through both Maidstone West and East on

TABLE ONE: NUNEATON TO STAFFORD

Date	Saturday, October 21, 2023				
Train	RTC's 'The Mancunian'				
Loco	LMS Class 6, 4-6-0 No. 45596 <i>Bahamas</i>				
Load	10 coaches plus No. 47804, 470 tons tare 490 tons full				
Driver	Andy Taylor				
Fireman	Fraser Birrell				
Recorder	Alan Rawlings from third coach				
Weather	Cloudy				
	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Nuneaton	0.00	0.00	00	00	
Nuneaton N Jct	0.40		01	37	23
MP 100	2.95		05	36	50
Atherstone	5.22		08	13	59
MP 104	6.95		09	51	67
Polesworth	9.45		12	00	71
Amington Jct	11.95	15.30	14	07	73
Tamworth	12.97		14	56	72/73
Hademore	16.56		17	53	68
Coventry Canal UB	18.17		19	26	62
Lichfield Trent Valley	19.20		20	25	61
Lichfield N Jct	19.82	23.30	20	58	59
Curborough Jct	20.70		21	57	60
Armitage	24.02		25	05	66
Cawardine	25.82		26	43	67
Rugeley Trent Valley	27.23		27	52	66
Colwich Jct	30.01	36.30	30	23	63
Shugborough Tnl S	31.52		32	03	60
Shugborough Tnl N	31.96		32	28	60
Milford	32.40	38.30	32	51	62
Baswich Viaduct	34.62		35	11	57
Stafford Jct No.1	36.02	42.30	37	53	26
Stafford Down GL	36.45	44.00	39	09	

their respective lines. This could only be achieved through a change of direction, for which a diesel, No. 47767, was required, but with the south-east



No. 45596 *Bahamas* crosses the River Medway into Tonbridge with the 'Armistice Kentish Belle' on November 11. COLIN PRICE

TABLE TWO: FOLKESTONE WEST TO BROMLEY SOUTH

Date	Saturday, November 11, 2023
Train	RTC's 'The Armistice Kentish Belle'
Engine	LMS Class 6, 4-6-0 No. 45596 <i>Bahamas</i>
Load	10 coaches + 47.746, 475 tons tare, 500 tons gross
Driver	Pete Roberts
Fireman	Trevor Wrench
Recorder	Alan Rawlings from eighth coach
Weather	Fine

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Folkestone West	0.00	0.00	00	00	
Cheriton High St OB	1.41		05	04	31
Continental Jct	2.30		06	42	37
Saltwood Jct	2.92	3.00	07	42	35
Sandling	3.90		09	14	37
Sandling Tnl In	4.30		09	54	39
Westenhanger	5.14		11	01	46
Herringe	7.30		13	26	62
Smeeth	9.02		15	02	66
Sevington	11.25		16	59	66
Ashford	13.13	15.00	20	04	27*sigs
Maidstone Jct	13.63		21	11	28
MP 58	14.40		22	58	26
MP 57	15.40		24	56	35
MP 56	16.40		26	33	39
MP 55	17.40		28	02	41
MP 54	18.40		29	29	41
Charing	19.24	24.00	30	37	43
MP 52	20.40		32	11	49
MP 51	21.40		33	18	51
Lenham	23.28		35	32	47
Harrietsham	24.94		37	24	67/69/55*
Hollingbourne	27.39		39	46	62
Bearsted	29.69		42	09	38*
Wheeler St Tnl	32.09		45	51	24*
Maidstone East	32.45	43.00	46	47	22*
Barming	34.87		52	16	35
East Malling	36.64		54	41	53
West Malling	37.63		61	31	57
Warmsley OB	41.99		61	31	36 min
Borough Green	42.78	58.00	62	36	54/49
Kemsing	45.38		65	33	59/61
Otford Jct	47.74	67.00	68	44	25*
Otford	48.37		70	12	27
Shoreham	49.77		72	45	53
Eynsford	52.02		75	03	67
Eynsford Tnl In	53.10		76	11	50*
Eynsford Tnl Out	53.57		76	58	29
Swanley Jct	54.90		79	47	20*
Swanley	55.02	78.00	80	17	22
St Mary Cray	57.69		83	54	57
St Mary Cray Jct	59.39	86.00	85	39	28*
Bickley	60.45		89	28	12*sigs/30
Bromley South	61.49	93.00	92	36	

* brakes or speed restriction

stalwart of *Bahamas* in charge, there was a good chance of decent running and loco performance.

"The day went smoothly in crisp autumn sunshine, so railhead conditions were not a problem, although a dead weight of 500 tons on the drawbar was quite a lump to haul around. The train did bite back on the tight, speed-restricted curve at Archcliffe Junction outside of Dover, where the diesel had to give *Bahamas* a nudge.

"Overall though, the powerful Class 6 was allowed to get on with it, and this it carried out competently. Table Two covers the main homeward leg from the final water stop at Folkestone West to the first set-down point at Bromley South.

"The climb from Dover through Folkestone to Sandling is a continuous uphill pull that, back in the day, challenged all boat trains, as it did *Bahamas*. Time was dropped on an impossible schedule, and it was only after the train had passed Westenhanger that we were able to tick off the miles downhill until the usual checks to pass slowly through Ashford.

"The switchback continued with a short, severe stretch of 1-in-100 before averaging out at 1-in-200/250 on the 10 miles to the summit at Lenham over the Downs, then onwards and down into the Medway Valley for the day's second pass of Maidstone. This route provides little respite for loco or fireman as the next two miles to Barming start at 1-in-100 before providing a downhill stretch through 'the Mallings' to gather momentum ahead of another demanding climb to Wrotham, where the fall back of speed suggested that, as for most of this log, *Bahamas* was on its own.

"With the increasingly chilly air after sunset and therefore the window only cracked open, from near the back of the train you could still clearly hear No. 45596 blasting away up front. And on the curves was the occasional flash of red and orange visible in the sky from the footplate. The spectacle of steam at night is arguably one of those memorable sights.

"The slightly easier timings as we approached our stop at Bromley allowed for recovery from the earlier challenges and arrival was more or less to time, much as the whole day that provided yet another opportunity for *Bahamas* to demonstrate its capability on everything it is asked to do."

I was particularly upset to have missed this run on my old home territory, and Pete Roberts also



hails from Kent. Next time, I will set out details of a run up the main line with Pete driving *Tangmere*.

Uphill Manston

I went to Bluebell Railway's Giants of Steam Gala on October 14, 2023, to see and ride behind Bulleid Battle of Britain class Pacific No. 34070 *Manston*, as well as some of the other 'giants'. I knew that David Foale, my old friend from the days of steam and long-time Bluebell Railway driver, would be in charge of *Manston* for part of the day so I joined



Above: Driver David Foale on *Manston* at Horsted Keynes on October 14, 2023. DON BENN

Right: *Manston* departs Horsted Keynes on October 14 with the 2.45pm Sheffield Park to East Grinstead service. DON BENN





Bahamas passes East Farleigh with the 9.43am London Victoria to Shellness 'Armistice Kentish Belle' on November 11, 2023.
BRYAN BENN



The cab of No. 72 Fenchurch at Medstead. DON BENN

the 11.45am from Sheffield Park for a ride to East Grinstead. The load was six coaches including the GN Directors' Saloon, 212 tons tare and about 230 tons full, and I was in the second coach.

The Bulleid climbed the 1-in-63/75/234/60/76 from Horsted Keynes to West Hoathley tunnel at 23-24½mph with a minimum of 22mph at the tunnel entrance and then ran down to the Kingscote stop, easily within the 14-minute schedule. From there, seven minutes are allowed to East Grinstead, which David said was very tight bearing in mind the restricted start and 1-in-75/55 climb to the summit between the Imberhorne Lane and Hill Place Farm bridges. Table Three shows how it was done, with the Bulleid worked in 45% cut off and using 160lb of steam, about ⅔ regulator. Remarkably, speed having faltered slightly when the 1-in-55 was reached, it recovered from 24½ to 26mph at the top. Six minutes and 49 seconds for this section is very good indeed, achieved by a great combination of man and machine.

Small engines

The week before, I attended the Mid-Hants small engine gala, primarily to see how the visiting locos would perform but also as my farewell to the S&D 7F No. 53808, which would shortly be withdrawn; its boiler ticket was about to expire and it was getting very tired. It was still running well and after a long spell of slipping away from Ropley, it managed to climb the steep gradients at 25mph with six on for about 230 tons. But the highlight of the day was to be the 12.20pm Alresford to Alton, hauled by Brighton built 'Terrier' No. 72 Fenchurch, visiting from the Bluebell Railway. A supplement was charged for this train and despite all the careful planning to ensure that supplement

ticketholders only could board, it wasn't full. With just two coaches for about 73 tons, it sailed up the hill to Medstead, where we then had to wait for Bagnall 0-6-0T No. 401 *Vulcan* to arrive from Alton before we could proceed to the Meon loop, where we were passed by Ivatt 2-6-2T No. 41312 on the 1.05pm freight out of Alton. Or so we thought.

However, No. 401 had apparently started a small lineside fire on its way up from Alton and the freight was still in the loop. We were told that the fire service was dealing with the blaze, and we witnessed a discussion on the platform which resulted in the freight backing onto the platform and being connected to our two-coach train. It had been decided that to minimise delays, the 1.05pm freight and our 1.45pm departure would be combined, and we duly left at 1.55pm with a combined consist of two coaches, three brake vans, and eight assorted wagons and vans, with No. 41312 on the front and No. 72 on the back. Both locos worked hard up the hill with about 220 tons, maintaining 24-25mph, as shown in Table Four.

I enjoyed this most unusual combination, though a few were moaning not to have had No. 72 by itself. Incidentally, although the official gradient profile shows continuous 1-in-60, readers will see a slight increase in speed at about MP 51½, which is apparent on all the runs I time up the hill, so I suspect a slight easing of the gradient there. My other comment is that the 13-minute booking is rarely kept due to the severe restrictions out of Alton and into Medstead; 10 minutes or less to pass Hants Hunt Bridge is good going.

Next time it's back to the main line with more runs from Nos. 45596 and 34067 in Kent, as promised. **HR**

TABLE THREE: KINGSCOTE TO EAST GRINSTEAD

Date	Saturday, October 14, 2023
Train	11.45am Sheffield Park to East Grinstead
Loco	Battle of Britain Class 4-6-2 No. 34070 <i>Manston</i>
Load	Six coaches, 212 tons tare, 230 tons gross
Driver	David Foale
Weather	Fine
Position	Second coach
Recorder	Don Benn, GPS

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed	gradient
Kingscote	0.00	0.00	00	00		level
MP 15¼	0.31		01	24	14½	75R
MP 15½	0.56		02	22	18	75R
MP 15¾	0.81		03	02	24½/25	75R
MP 16	1.06		03	38	24½	55R
Imberhorne Lane Br	1.18		03	55	25½	55R
Hill Place Farm Br	1.46		04	35	26	L/60F
East Grinstead	2.03	7.00	06	49		level

Consist: Five MK1 green coaches for 184 tons plus GN Directors' Saloon, 28 tons = 212 tons tare, well loaded.

TABLE FOUR: ALTON TO MEDSTEAD

Date	Saturday, October 7, 2023
Trains	1.05pm Freight Alton to Alresford combined with 1.45pm Alton to Alresford
Train engine	Ivatt LMS ZMT 2-6-2T No. 41312
Banking engine	LBSCR A1 Class 0-6-0T No. 72
Load	Two coaches, three brake vans and eight wagons 204 tons tare, 220 tons gross
Weather	Fine
Position	Last coach
Recorder	Don Benn, GPS

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed	gradient
Alton	0.00	0.00	00	00		level
MP 49¼	0.02		00	39	11	100R
MP 49½	0.27		02	00	17½	100R
MP 50	0.77		03	22	22½	level
Butts Jct	0.92		03	51	25½	level
MP 50½	1.27		04	35	23½	60R
MP 50¾	1.52		05	11	25	60R
MP 51	1.77		05	46	24	60R
MP 51¼	2.02		06	25	24	60R
MP 51½	2.27		07	00	26	60R
MP 51¾	2.52		07	38	24	60R
MP 52	2.77		08	15	24½	60R
MP 52¼	3.02		08	51	24½	60R
MP 52½	3.27		09	27	25½	60R
Hants Hunt Br	3.54		10	01	25	60R
MP 53	3.77		10	38	25½	60R
Summit	4.02		11	16	13*/#	60R/200F
Medstead	4.33	13.00	13	43		

Smiles for GWR as quartet breaks into five figures

WITH four nameplates breaking through the five-figure barrier, and a station totem sign coming within a hair's breadth of doing the same, GWR boss Simon Turner had every cause to smile after his November 11/12 auction – and smile he did.

The GWR led the victory parade with a £19,000 realisation for *King Charles I* from No. 6010, followed by LNER contender *Abbotsford* from Peppercorn A1 No. 60141 at £15,500, *Carn Brea Castle* from GWR No. 7015 (£13,500), and *Mysore* from LMS Jubilee No. 45586, which went for £10,500.

A BR(M) totem from the Nottingham station of London Road High Level got in on the act when it sold for £9900, and thence it was back to the GWR, with a name and number 'combine' plate from Bulldog

No. 3339 *Sedgemoor* going for £9200 and *Earl of Dudley* from Castle class No. 5045 for £9100.

A tight mid-table battle between the LNER and GWR then ensued, with victory going to the former thanks to *The Brocklesby* from D49 No. 62756 going to a new home for £8100, so pipping GWR duo *Lechlade Manor* (No. 7825) and *County of Caernarvon* (No. 1010), each of which sold for £8000.

Second-placed totem BR(Sc) St. Andrews kept the nameplates on their toes when it went under the hammer for £7800, and at that point the LNER returned to the fray with a trio of nameplates, *Hyperion* from A3 No. 60037, *Derbyshire* (D49 No. 62701), and *Bahram* (A2 No. 60531), fetching respectively £7600, £7100, and £6700.

BR(M) signalbox enamel nameboard Woodhead jumped onto the bandwagon when it fetched £5300 and the King cabside numberplate from No. 6010 joined in at £5000, a price that was matched by a second LNER A3 nameplate, *Donovan* from No. 60047.

If the LNER thought it had rounded off the nameplate selection, it was mistaken. That was achieved by the final GWR contenders: *Dolhywel Grange* from No. 6863 (£4400), *Helmster Hall* from No. 6912 (£3400), and *Mersey* from Bulldog class No. 3314, which realised £3100.



Following 6010 in the cabside numberplate category were 5055 from GWR Castle class *Earl of Eldon* at £3700 and E3030 from a 1960-built Class 83 electric locomotive, which achieved £3200, while the worksplate selection was led by a 1959 English Electric/Vulcan Foundry plate from Class 40 D211 *Mauretania* that went for £2900.

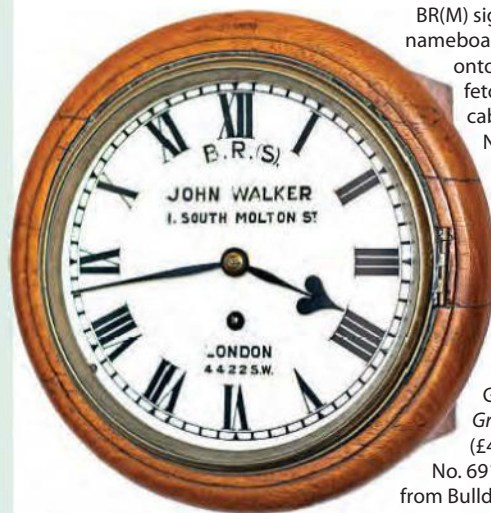
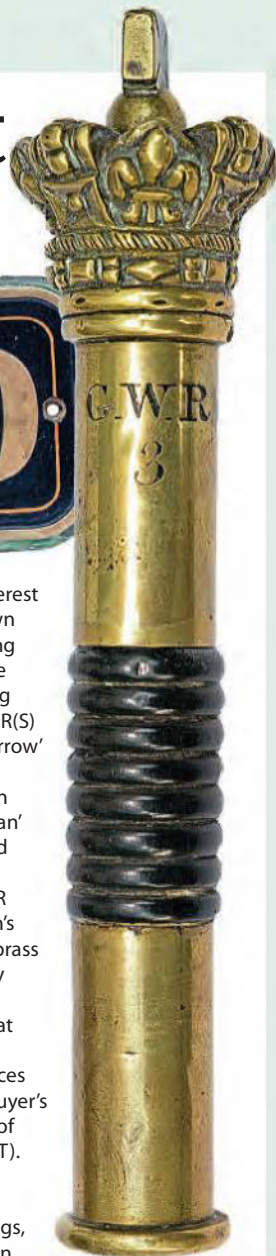
At the head of the smokebox numberplates was 4095 from GWR *Harlech Castle* (£2200), and the chimney cowl from Gresley A4 Pacific No. 60001 *Sir Ronald Matthews* deserves a mention after going under the hammer for £2000.

Two non-locomotive successes, each at £3200, were a painting by Albert Lawrence Hammonds (1930-94) titled 'Arrival at St Ives on a hot summer's day,' and a circa 1880 LSWR 8in dial clock that Southern Railway records indicate was last in railway use at Ryde Railwaymen's Sports & Social Club on the Isle of Wight.

Also among the enamels were a BR(Sc) Crianlarich Upper Station direction sign from the Helensburgh to Fort William route that went for £2800 and a BR(S) entrance sign for the station of Slinfold, on the Guildford to Horsham line, at £2600,

and of interest lower down the pecking order were the leading poster, a BR(S) 'Golden Arrow' example (£1700), an 'Aberdonian' headboard at £1400, and a GWR policeman's crowned brass and ebony engraved tipstaff that fetched £1300. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

Of the two days proceedings, boss Simon Turner said: "Fairly strong and brisk. Nameplates stood up well, can't complain, and there are people new to the market who fancy a steam nameplate. Totem prices also strong."



Jubilee is central to TRA saleroom

STEAM trumped diesel at Talisman's saleroom auction on November 30 when LMS nameplate

Central Provinces from Jubilee No. 45582 went under the hammer for £6400, leaving in its wake *The Queen's Own Mercian Yeomanry* from Class 47 Co-Co D1111/47528 (£3200) and LNER *Kinross-Shire* from D49 class No. 62718 (£3000). Non-sellers in the category comprised

LMS pair *De Robeck* from Jubilee No. 45678 and *City of St Albans* from Princess Coronation No. 46253, although both sold after the auction closed for £6000 and £12,000 respectively. *Bradford* from LNER B17 No. 61667 remained unsold.

The LNER, however, was not to be outdone in the worksplate and smokebox categories, with the former being topped by a 1948 Doncaster plate (works No. 2028) from A2 class Pacific No. 60537 *Batchelor's Button* that sold for £3900 and the latter by 60044 from Gresley A3 Pacific No. 60044 *Melton* (£3800).

Class 31 A1A-A1A diesel D5510 did its best to muscle in on the

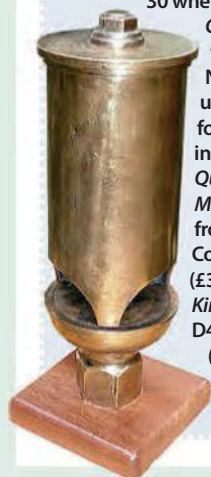
WISBECH ST MARY

worksplate selection, and while it failed to take the top spot it secured the silver medal thanks to its 1958 Brush Traction plate going under the hammer for £2600.

A chime whistle catalogued as being from LNER A4 Pacific No. 60029 *Woodcock* sold for £3300, a nameplate crest from preserved 1962-built Class 45 'Peak' D67/45118 *The Royal Artilleryman* for £1900, and Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway signalbox enamel nameboard Wisbech St. Mary for £1500. Two other winners in their

categories were BR(M) station totem sign Kents Bank at £1500 and another MGNJR artefact, a handlamp brass plated 'Foreman Cross Keys Bridge' that realised £1450. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

As he pondered post-auction, Talisman's Roger Phipps said: "We had another large attendance despite our Thursday date, and we continue to receive really good comments for carrying on with live saleroom auctions. We are looking forward to our 2024 events, which will return to Saturdays."





LNER and Gresley team up for top billing

THE top link pairing of the LNER and Nigel Gresley scored an overwhelming nameplate victory in Great Central's December 2 auction, with the duo winning gold, silver, and a joint bronze.

Top of the podium at a resounding £38,500 was *Guillemot* from A4 Pacific No. 60020, followed by *Loch Morar* (K2 class 2-6-0 No. 61781) at £15,500, and *The Cleveland* from D49 class 4-4-0 No. 62743 at £7000. The K2 was designed by Gresley in his Great Northern Railway days, so credit also goes to that company alongside the LNER.

Sharing the £7000 spoils with No. 62743 were *Lady Faringdon* (Great Central Railway Class 8E No. 364/LNER Class C5 4-4-2 No. 5364) and *Lord of the Isles* (LNWR Experiment class 4-6-0 No. 2623/LMS No. 5506). Following at £6000 were *Sir Francis Drake* (SR Lord Nelson class 4-6-0 No. 30851) and *Narcissus* from another LNWR representative, Waterloo class 2-4-0 No. 604/LMS No. 5087.

A duo at £4000 each comprised *Ruckley Grange* and *Hinchingbrooke* from, respectively, GWR No. 6846 and LNER Class B17 No. 61634, and finally *Berrington Hall* (GWR No. 4912) went for £3600.

Non-sellers included Southern Railway pair *Wadebridge* from West Country class No. 34007 and *Wellington* from Schools class

No. 30902. Another was *Flying Dutchman* from the sole BR Standard representative, Britannia No. 70018, but it did go to a new home at close of play for £10,000.

In the heritage modern traction corner, we find *Avenger* from Class 42 diesel-hydraulic 'Warship' D804, which kept the steam contenders on their toes by going under the hammer for £9000, some distance ahead of the £1500 runner-up, *Charles Wesley* with badge from Class 43 HST125 power car No. 43118. A non-seller in this category was *Howe* from Class 50 D423/50023.

Abroad – and home again

Overseas steam deserves a mention too, with Rhodesia Railways' Beyer-Garratt pair *Umguzo* from Class 20A 4-8-2+2-8-4 No. 729 (£2800) and *Udwai* from 15th class 4-6-4+4-6-4 No. 377 selling for £2700.

Returning to home territory, the leading worksplates were a 1956 Hudswell Clarke example from 0-6-0 diesel shunter No. 11117/D2501 that went to a new home for £3200, and a plate from 1938 Darlington-built K4 class 2-6-0 No. 61995 *Cameron of Lochiel* that sold for £1500.

This latter plate, described by Great Central auctioneer Mike Soden as 'bizarre', was cast with two inaccuracies, wrongly identifying

Doncaster as the builder, and the construction date as 1937.

The top GWR cabside numberplates were 6809 from *Burghclere Grange* (£2800) and 5056 from Castle class *Earl of Powis* (£2000), and the leading smokebox numberplate (£1500) was 92182 from a Class 9F 2-10-0. Also worthy of note were the top totems, BR(Sc) Boat of Garten (£4200) and BR(W) Birmingham Snow Hill (£3200), and a 'White Rose' headboard from the King's Cross-Leeds express (£2000).

Mentions must also be given for a GWR permissive block instrument believed to have been produced at Reading signal works (£3600), a Stockton & Darlington Railway ceramic house plaque from Broomielaw, on the Darlington to Barnard Castle and Penrith route that realised £3200 – four times its top estimate – a 1939 GWR 'Speed to the West' poster by Charles Mayo that sold for the same price, and a Bulleid Pacific whistle (£1600). Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

Auctioneer Mike Soden said: "Very strong in certain areas, not so strong in others. Nameplates did okay and in certain cases very well – the A4 realisation, for example, was the highest for a number of years – and some of the signalling equipment made good money."

Pre-Grouping steam fends off modern traction

HERITAGE modern traction may have put on its customary strong performance in a railway slides, negatives and prints auction held by JustaClickAgo on November 20-26, but steam from more than a century ago took the plaudits when 78 glass plate negatives went under the online hammer for £920.

The collection comprised mainly Great Northern Railway locomotives, including Stirling Singles, but also featured North Eastern Railway, Great Central Railway, and GWR/Cambrian engines, while locations included King's Cross 'Top Shed', Plaistow shed, and the stations of Doncaster, Acton, Aberdovey, Blisworth and York.

The collection had been in the vendor's possession for a number of years, and little was known of the photographer, but all the images were from the turn of the 20th century, with that of King's Cross depot having been taken circa 1900.

Diesel and electric traction made its entrance after this Victorian show of strength, led by a collection of 194 colour slides dating from 1981 that sold for £540. Deltics were among the locomotives photographed, as were other diesels in Scotland, East Anglia and the Welsh valleys, and Class 76 electrics in their final year of operation.

Behind this selection at £470 were 180 colour slides from a similar era that included Deltics on the ECML, 'Peaks', Class 40s, Class 76 electrics and first-generation DMUs. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 18%.

"Good results overall, with strong bidding on the glass plate negatives, and modern and overseas traction doing very well," said the auction house's Simon Stewart.

Signal gets the green light at 'Bloxham' sale

SIGNALLING made its presence felt at Great Central's two-day 1200-lot 'Bloxham'-style live online auction on November 16/17, with the realisations being led at £1000 for a complete Great Northern Railway wooden post somersault signal and £860 for an LMS 15-lever frame from Naas Crossing signalbox near Lydney, Gloucestershire, which closed in 1968.

Following at £760 was a 3½in gauge live steam model of an LBSCR 0-4-0T and a North Eastern Railway rug that went for £560, just ahead of four LNER, SR and BR Western Region D wagonplates that sold as a single lot for £520. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).



Railwayana Auction Calendar

■ January 11/12

Great Central Railwayana ('Bloxham' sale)

■ January 14-31

Paperchase

■ January 20

Thirsk Railwayana

■ January 21-February 3

Great Northern Railwayana ('Alpha' sale)



PANNING: LIFE IN A FASTER LANE!

When photographing trains at speed, generally we want that image frozen and pin-sharp. With panning, however, the opposite happens – because the train itself must be sharp but the foreground and background blurred to create an impression of speed, reports **John Titlow** in words and pictures.

New-build A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*, which is scheduled to make a new year comeback after its long-running overhaul, passes Hatfield on September 26, 2015.



More often than not, panning is overlooked and appears to be way down on our list of style choices when it comes to railway photography – yet the rewards of a good panned shot can give that extra angle and outlook on our hobby.

Panning shots tend to work when side on to your subject; I have never found it to work at other angles. In some ways, it has a similar failure rate to night photography, which can be high, but with digital there is nothing to lose, so it is worth the experiment.

On several occasions I have attempted panning, only to find that the images were unsuitable due to a too slow shutter speed where nothing is sharp at all, the subject going too fast, or both the image and background sharp, where too high a shutter speed was used or I did not hold camera steady enough following the train. I recently attempted one with WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* near Dorridge with a glint and failed completely. 🚫



Visiting from the Dartmouth Steam Railway, USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 2253 makes for an unusual sight climbing Eardington Bank towards Bridgnorth with a rake of teak carriages on September 15, 2023.



Southern Railway U class 2-6-0 No. 31806 departs Harmans Cross on the Swanage Railway on January 8, 2023.



Visiting from the South Devon Railway, GWR 2-6-2T No. 5526 climbs out of Winchcombe past Chicken Curve with a Race Train on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway on November 17, 2023.



LNWR 0-6-2T Coal Tank No. 1054 passes Garth y Dwr on the Llangollen Railway on June 9, 1997.



GNR N2 0-6-2T No. 1744 approaches Quorn & Woodhouse station on the Great Central Railway on December 13, 2014.

Using a high telephoto lens increases the movement of the train against the landscape – but it also boosts the likelihood of the subject not being sharp, or being too wide, where it can be too sharp. Everything has to be a compromise.

The primary aim of panning is to blur everything apart from the locomotive itself. Motion and wheels can give a very good indication of speed, spoked wheels blur beautifully when rotating as does their counterbalance weights, and even the connecting rods going up or down can add movement to the picture.

One of my best examples of this was LNWR Coal Tank No. 1054 on a charter on the Llangollen Railway in 1997. After a fantastic day with many locations covered, it was time to experiment. By moving slightly back and dropping the shutter speed, a pan was attempted. This worked well, blurring everything including the spoked wheels and rods but freezing the train itself.

The faster the train, however, the higher the failure rate.

The technique

The governing factor is to use a low shutter speed. It is essential to use shutter priority mode, then leave the camera to do the rest regarding exposure and focus. Digital cameras are much better at this than traditional film ones.

Zoom lenses are very helpful because without the locomotive in shot, guessing its size relative to the distance you are away from it can be difficult.

To achieve a pan, the speed of the train is relative to the shutter speed you use: a faster train warrants a higher shutter speed and a slower train a slower one. I have found anything from 1/40th to 1/80th gives the desired effect, but the biggest problem here is holding the camera steady and moving it at the same time.

Dropping down to 1/30th, it becomes very difficult to hold the camera steady while moving it and the subject then becomes blurred, which is undesirable.

Support the camera underneath by its base with one hand so it sits onto your palm and spread your thumb and finger onto the zoom ring from the underside to zoom in or out as necessary. Bringing your elbow into your body gives greater stability. Your other hand grips the camera to fire the shutter.

Rotate your body following the locomotive rather than attempting to keep the camera at arm's length. This helps steady the camera while moving it at the same time. You do not want to move the camera up or down because this can create vertical blur.

The camera needs to be moved parallel to the train's direction and, importantly, match the speed of the train. If you move it too fast, running ahead of the train, or too slow, letting

it get ahead, this tends to blur the locomotive. Watch the locomotive and let it come into the frame, and then follow it as it passes, firing the shutter at the same time.

Digital cameras have a single shot mode, plus a continuous low or high mode. Set it to the highest mode possible, maximising the numbers of images in one pass – you will be surprised, because there may be only two images that will be sharp enough. Others can be deleted.

Using a tripod is undesirable because you need flexibility to move the camera around in a constantly changing situation.

There are no tables I know of that can help regarding this, and it is generally guesswork with perhaps a little experience. What makes it worse is there is no guarantee at what speed the train will appear – it could arrive slower or faster than you expect, which does not help.

Composition

Composition-wise, it is best to have a little of the first wagon or carriage behind the locomotive on view. A tender locomotive can work well, even with cutting the tender in half. A good example of this is the shot of A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* approaching Hatfield at high speed.

If you zoom in too much, you lose the background, which is essential in creating movement. Too wide and it's difficult to see the train's movement, especially in the



LMS 'Black Five' Nos. 44871 and 45407 power past Stokesay in Shropshire on November 29, 2014.



New-build GWR Churchward Saint 4-6-0 No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* at full cry climbs Eardington Bank with the evening empty coaching stock on July 5, 2021.



Legendary veterans of the Wenfordbridge branch, LSWR Beattie well tanks Nos. 30587 and 30585 coupled together make a delightful picture at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (shutter speed 1/40th, aperture f20, ASA179).



The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Trust's 0-4-0ST 'Pug' No. 19, carrying its LMS number 11243, rushes past Didbrook with a three-coach train en route from Toddington to Winchcombe on May 14, 2023.

wheels and rods. The amount of exhaust can be an issue, so be prepared to zoom out, so not cutting too much out.

Locations

A nondescript, relatively clear section of line without bushes or too much undergrowth is a good place for a pan, but this sort of location can be rare nowadays, especially on the main line. A section of about 70 yards in length is suitable, giving the train space to run in. It is not essential to be 100% clear because low vegetation will become blurred with the movement and can add to the effect.

One of my favourite locations is the bottom of Eardington Bank on the Severn Valley Railway, where the train emerges from the

cutting soon after the station. The line is on an embankment with a background of trees, which helps create a blurred background; generally, there is little vegetation here and it provides a good height to look down onto your subject.

The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway departing Winchcombe on Chicken Curve where the railway is on an embankment is good, as there is plenty of width to get back here. The Great Central Railway around Woodthorpe used to be a good place until a housing estate was built there. Another one is near Quorn & Woodhouse works with the line on an embankment. Moorgates on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway is another, especially with the setting sun.

Test and practice first

In the days of film, a practice run was impossible, and you were lucky to take more than three frames a second. With manual cameras, shutter speed and exposure had to be preset by the photographer and you never got the results instantly – you were even lucky to see them on the same day or in the same week. Everything is so much easier now with digital because the results are instant.

So, you have picked your location and set the camera to shutter mode. Try a test shoot, pretending the train is running, but don't rush because you will be surprised how slow the train will be (apart from those on the main line).

Use any train running down grade, tender

GWR prairie No. 4561, heading two Collett carriages, passes Watersmeet on March 20, 1997.





LNER V2 2-6-2 No. 60800 *Green Arrow* climbs Freshfield Bank on October 20, 2003.

or bunker first, or a diesel to practice on. Check that you have blurred the background enough and then its fingers crossed and hope for the best when the train comes.

There might only be one image you capture which is sharp and in the optimum position. Under no circumstances delete images until you have seen them on the computer and enlarged them. All poor images can be deleted afterwards.

Another plus with digital is that all the information is attached to the image, so it is possible to see what shutter speed works in any given situation and noting it for future use.

Once you are achieving some satisfactory results, there is an add-on as you become more experienced – but be careful. After taking your usual front three-quarter shot using a shutter speed of 1/500th, it is possible to reduce the shutter speed quickly to take a pan at the same location providing there is enough width.

With digital cameras, this is a simple case of rotating the shutter speed wheel as long as you are wide enough from the train, and the aperture will automatically look after itself. This method would have been impossible with a manual camera.

Contrasting examples

Two completely contrasting examples are the two LSWR Beattie well tanks at Quainton Road and No. 60163 at high speed on the main line.

The two well tanks could not have been travelling at more than 10mph on the Quainton Road demonstration line, but a pan was achieved by using a very slow shutter of 1/40th.

The problem with this is multiplied by having to hold the camera steady while moving it at the same time, increasing the

failure rate.

Meanwhile, No. 60163 must have been doing well over 60mph, and a shutter speed of 1/80th second was used. Several images were taken as it passed, but only two out of perhaps 15 were sharp enough.

Charters

Charters by far give the best opportunities for panning shots. Generally, several runpasts take place at the same location, and you can move around to get a different perspective.

After covering several angles, it is

worth considering attempting a pan to get something different. One further advantage with pan shots, especially around Christmas, is that you don't see the Santa special headboards.

Conclusion

Panning is simply another aspect of our railway photography and one that adds drama to the speeding steam locomotive. We are always looking for different locations, so why not a different perspective?

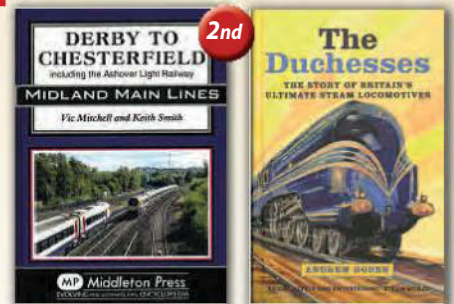
Good hunting with your camera. **HR**



LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* passes Stokesay while running late on February 14, 2022.

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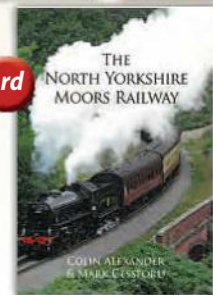


R3980 BR, Class W1 'Hush Hush' Streamlined, 4-6-4, 60700 - Era 5

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3rd



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EYES ON THE FUTURE AT THE LAST HURRAH

The Great Central Railway's 50th anniversary year celebrations drew to a close at its annual November 18/19 Last Hurrah gala. **Owen Hayward** sat down with the line's general manager, Malcolm Holmes, to talk about what the future might hold, such as double track to Leicester North and the creation of a sustainable railway.

November can be a quiet time for enthusiasts, a month where most railways put a pause on running services to allow for essential maintenance and preparations for the busy festive season that lies ahead.

Thankfully, there are still a few lines that operate services, and the Great Central Railway goes one step further with The Last Hurrah, its annual end-of-season gala that helps to sweep the winter blues away.

And with 2023 having been the railway's 50th anniversary year, it was a weekend that topped the celebrations perfectly with the usual intensive timetable that has come to be expected of GC galas: five steam locomotives, one diesel locomotive and two railcars – and the railway made the absolute most of everything at its disposal.

With Derby Lightweight railcar *Iris* having been on an extended visit to Leicestershire since 2022, it once again proved itself popular, shuttling up and down the line. It was not, however, the only single railcar present, as the railway once again welcomed Stephen Middleton's NER petrol-electric railcar No. 3170, it having previously visited for the branch line gala of January 2020.

Nos. 3170 and 3171 were introduced by the NER in 1903 with petrol engines that generated electricity for the traction motors, a pioneering feat of engineering at the time which would eventually be developed into the diesel electric technology that continues to power many locomotives worldwide.

No. 3170 was withdrawn on April 4, 1931, and for many years the body was used as a holiday home in Kirbymoorside, Yorkshire.

Saved in 2003, the NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust was formed to restore the vehicle, along with a matching trailer car, to form an Edwardian era multiple unit, re-entering service in October 2018.

Branching out

Its visit to the GCR gala saw it put to work shuttling between Loughborough Central and Swithland sidings, where it then reversed to venture down the Mountsorrel Branch to Nunckley Hill. General manager Malcolm Holmes is keen to see this 1.2-mile stretch of line utilised to its fullest, hence its increasing use at gala events.

"We've got it, so let's use it," he said. "It's another attraction and creates an interesting service pattern. Plus, there aren't many heritage railways where you can travel along



Midland Region 8F No. 48305 crawls into Quorn & Woodhouse on November 18 with the first tanker train working of The Last Hurrah weekend. OWEN HAYWARD



North Eastern Railway petrol electric autocar No. 3170 at Nunckley Hill on the Mountsorrel branch on November 18. The branch is becoming used more frequently at GCR events as the railway looks to maximise what it offers its visitors. DEREK CARRUTHERS



No. 3170 passes Class 37 D6700 just north of Quorn & Woodhouse station. The 'Tractor' was paired with the diesel brake tender for the weekend, it having just completed some maintenance work. DEREK CARRUTHERS

them and change onto another line as part of the same journey."

The autocar will stay at the GCR until after the Winter Gala of January 26-28, when it will return to its home base at the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Railway.

One of the aspects the GCR is most synonymous with is its impressive collection of freight stock. The 'Windcutter' mineral rake inevitably steals the show whenever that is out.

With such an extensive collection, even when some vehicles need to be stopped for maintenance there are still plenty of alternatives to fall back on, allowing the required work to be completed without interruption.

That void, however, will not have a chance to be missed. The award-winning box van train made a welcome reappearance in 2023 after undergoing remedial work itself, and the mixed set is also steadily expanding with flat wagons and other miscellaneous vehicles. A rake of petroleum and oil tank wagons has also been formed, with nine vehicles

(plus barrier wagons) currently comprising the formation, with more also in the works. Where freight presence is minimal to non-existent on many railways, the GCR's Quorn Wagon & Wagon volunteers have gone to great lengths to ensure that as much variety as possible is represented.

The presence of 'oddities' extends to encompass the likes of the new-build diesel brake tender. Introduced in the 1950s to help diesel locomotives by providing additional braking capacity on unfitted goods trains, they fell into disuse when wagons were gradually all fitted with vacuum and/or air braking systems, all of them being scrapped.

The new-build tender was first unveiled at the 2017 Last Hurrah, but in the last few years has been undergoing maintenance. Its re-emergence saw it appropriately paired with the National Railway Museum's Class 37 D6700, which is on long-term loan and under the care of the Heavy Tractor Group.

The 'Tractor' was primarily allocated to goods workings over the two days, with a few short trips on local workings.

One of the features introduced by the GCR in 2023 was a sufficient layover at Leicester North to allow visitors a chance to step onto the footplate of steam locomotives. With an intensive timetable not quite so accommodating of this, a locomotive was instead stabled in the goods yard at Quorn & Woodhouse for a prolonged period each day. D6700 was also stabled in this manner, allowing diesel enthusiasts the chance to step aboard the first locomotive of its class to have been built.

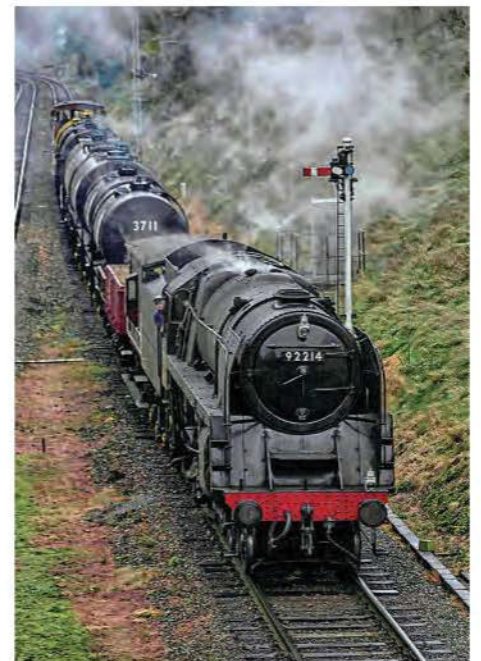
End to a year of celebration

With 2023 having been the GCR's half centenary, the Last Hurrah was a fitting way to close celebrations ahead of festive services. More than 2000 passengers were carried over the two days, and the railway received favourable comments about how it is run; that is not to say there were not minor hiccups.

A points motor failure on the Saturday morning threw things out of kilter almost from the off, with the offending component having to be wound by hand for the



Running in its correct identity once more, WR 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* passes Swithland Sidings with the 9am from Loughborough to Leicester North on November 19. GRAHAM NUTTALL



BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92214 arrives at Rotherley with the tanker train. GRAHAM NUTTALL

remainder of the weekend. Thankfully, with the interlocking still functional, there was no need to 'clip and scotch' the blades each time, which would more than likely have furthered delays. Only one train was cancelled as a result, with some unexpected alterations to the locomotive allocations made to get them back into the right places.

As the day drew to a close, a freight train was also found to have its brakes dragging, which required a stop in section for the vacuum cylinders to be drained. Despite this, the evening trains – which included a fish and chip diner service – ran with fairly minimal delay and had BR 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019 at the helm; shortly after event, the 2-6-0 departed for a festive visit to the Kent & East Sussex Railway, while classmate No. 78018 is currently at the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

Time to reflect

Having only taken on the role of general manager earlier in 2023, Malcolm Holmes has had a challenging year. Energy and base costs have risen sharply, and the market has been competitive. Starting in the railway's 50th year, though, has also inspired him.

"It has been one of transition and change for us all," he said. "But our 50th anniversary event itself was a pretty spectacular part of that – if also a little terrifying!"

"What was particularly emotional was seeing the railway's pioneers coming together once more. It was wonderful to celebrate with those who remain and reflect on what has been achieved since they set out with their dream all those years ago.

"That was also a good reminder of the legacy we have been entrusted with. We should remember that ambition and stubborn intent to preserve was so special; the spirit of endeavour to lead the railway forward."

With the sector facing a challenging time, Malcolm is always looking at what needs to be done to ensure the railway survives for another 50 years. Following his appointment to the role, the GCR plc board agreed that a new business plan was needed to steer the organisation in the right direction, with clarity and focus.

"It's the beginning of a new chapter – we've been through a tough few years, but the business plan is the vehicle for refocusing on the future and moving towards it confidently," he said. "The challenges we face are familiar stories: financial, skills, and people.

"The sector as a whole will be seeing a drastic change in its visitor base. For 50 years we have survived on reminiscence – people who come because they remember what we run from their youth. However, with the passing of generations we cannot rely on it to sustain us. We must stop, look, and think about our 'product' – is a steam train ride alone enough to attract people when compared to what rival sectors do?

"One thing is clear: people love history. You see the success of TV dramas such as *Downton Abbey* and how people are interested in that. We must make sure that our experience is more than just a train ride, while keeping the railway at heart.

"In this age of environmental awareness, we also need to look at how we are perceived in this field. We have to burn coal and that is increasingly being frowned upon; coal is the 'axis of evil', so we have to tackle that head-on and interpret why and how we use it. Railways celebrate the Industrial Revolution, but future generations may not look so favourably on that.

"We will be prioritising some key areas to ensure we continue to survive, and that

includes appealing to a broader community. Part of this will be getting the visitor experience right, which will involve creating the right welcome and telling a good story – what the railways have done for communities, during wartime, and for industry. That alone is pretty complex to work out and implement.

"Like every other railway, we must also strengthen our volunteer base. Part of that will be working hard to make our processes better so we can appeal to more people and attract the right skills."

Doubling up to Leicester?

With reunification set to link the GCR with the GCR (Nottingham) on the horizon, there is also the challenge of running an 18-mile heritage line. The response to this could lie at the opposite end of the line – with the potential for doubling it to Leicester North.

"Do people want to travel on an 18-mile line, and how do we encourage them to do so? The bridge is just one aspect of a much broader project, and we need to make sure what we do with it is financially viable,"

Malcolm continued.

"The two railways have come together with a memorandum of understanding about how we will operate as one and the way we will do things. That has been key, and it is reassuring that both railways are working well together to become one – something which is very symbolically important.

"There will be much work involved in maintaining such a long railway, and you can only raise the passenger fares so high before people start walking away. We will need to make sure there are sufficient attractions at each station to hold the interest of those who want to break up their journeys. The railway, in effect, needs to become a linear museum, creating interest all the way along. There also



A point motor failure resulted in the timetable slipping on November 18. In order to get some locomotives into the right position again, No. 48305 unexpectedly double-headed a service with 9F No. 92214, seen here crossing Swithland reservoir. OWEN HAYWARD

needs to be a suitable and attractive timetable to enable that, and the infrastructure in place to facilitate it.

"In one direction, you are limited to passing trains on the north route at Rushcliffe Halt. At the opposite end of our line, the single track to Leicester North is our final constraint. Careful studies make a convincing case for doubling this section, which will boost timetable capacity across the line. It's changed from a 'nice to have' project to almost a necessity.

"That in itself will be a major project to undertake, as Leicester North will then need to be fully signalled and gain a second platform. You then have to look at what you can add to keep people interested there too.

"There is a monumental amount of work to carry out and consider – and it has to start now, to be ready for when it is needed."

The right balance

The GCR has no shortage of locomotives currently at its disposal, and with a good number of overhaul projects also being carried out at Loughborough, that appears to remain the case for years to come.

"We do need to work closely with the groups based here, of course," Malcolm said. "We don't want to discourage efforts, but we must also make sure we don't have a glut of engines available with no work for them, and then find ourselves with a shortage if they all go out of ticket simultaneously.

"One project I am excited to see gain movement is the overhaul of BR Standard 7 No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*, which in turn will allow focus to shift to the Robinson O4 2-8-0 No. No. 63601."

The boiler for *Oliver Cromwell* is currently being overhauled at Tyseley and will return in the spring, whereafter it will be refitted to the frames and the locomotive reassembled. It is currently envisioned that No. 70013 will be back running by the summer, having last been steamed in 2018.

The O4, meanwhile, last ran in 2012 and it was initially believed that it would be confined to static display. However, an overhaul agreement was struck with the NRM in 2018 and work has progressed slowly since then.

"I'm personally very keen to see that back in action and we are confident that will be the case by 2028. Funds allowing, it might even be sooner! The class has a direct link with the line (like BR Standard 5MT No. 73156) and that will help to tell our story," added Malcolm.

Creating appeal

The GCR will not ease up on its push to continue attracting visitors. Whereas many lines are turning to character days as a low-cost/high-return way of appealing to families, Malcolm is keen to ensure any events are in line with what the railway is trying to achieve.

"The 50th anniversary weekend event was essentially a giant open day that appealed to local communities. The 125th anniversary of the Great Central Railway next year will be run in a similar manner.

"Freight is one of our draws, so there will be more of this appearing too. Of course, the hugely-successful and popular Railways at Work weekend also returns, an event we love as it is so engaging and helps tell the story of what the railways were built to do.



The heritage line has committed to returning Robinson O4 2-8-0 No. 63601 to steam by 2028. The class was synonymous with the Great Central route and its working presence will help the railway today tell its story better. CLIVE HANLEY/GCR



Could the single-track section from Rothley to Leicester North soon be doubled? General manager Malcolm Holmes believes there will be a viable business case for such an undertaking to ensure the railway can offer a suitable timetable when reunification is completed. OWEN HAYWARD

"The Kids for a Quid scheme proved to be very successful in the summer, so we may do this again, and our Santa Specials present children with a goody bag that contains a 'golden ticket' for free travel with a fare-paying adult during 2024.

"We do watch and see what other places are offering. We haven't gone down the route of a day ticket coming with a free return visit just

yet, but a good deal means people are likely to spend more at our secondary outlets, namely shops and cafes.

"The railway is not finished and never will be. Be it building better or new stations, a museum or more, there is still so much to do.

"It's quite inspiring to compare looking back at the pioneers of the past and then looking forward to the future." **HR**



Perfect panniers – new Great Western tanks from Accurascale

WITH its GWR Manors having proved a massive hit, and its GER 'Buckjumpers' having been so highly received following their announcement earlier in the year, Accurascale is set to add another six-coupled tank engine to its range with an all-new tooling for the GWR 5700 class panniers.

The manufacturer's goal with this project is to bring the ultimate model of one of the most iconic tank locomotives of them all to modellers in OO gauge. Although a locomotive class that has been modelled in ready-to-run format before, the Accurascale model brings a fresh approach and follows its philosophy of modelling variants never before done as a RTR model.

This means locomotives with backplate feed (not top feed fitted) feature heavily in the launch range.

Another striking variation among the contractor-built locomotives was the use of rivets for constructing the tanks. Later modifications like the large 8750 cab is also included, as is the 6700 sub-class that was built without steam heat or vacuum brakes, with relevant pipes and equipment missing from the model as per prototype.

Minute variations

One smaller but no less important change is around the cab area – when built, the 5700 class did not have an external front handrail or bunker steps, instead being flush with the cab side and built into the beading. The steps were also a later addition, and this will be reflected on the new models.

Smaller variations include whistles with or without a whistle guard, types

of water filler, which can either be screw down or clip down, position and number of spare lamp irons, cast or fabricated brake hangers, couplings were either screw link or three link, and right down to the route of the injector overflow pipe, which could either run through or around the running boards.

This vast suite of tools allows Accurascale to mix and match early and late features on the same locomotive, enabling a wide variety of prototypes to be recreated in faithful detail.

The first batch of models will have a total of nine identities – including three that have survived into preservation. The Llangollen Railway's recently-overhauled No. 7754 will be present in its bright NCB green livery, while the Severn Valley's

No. 7714 will be available in BR unlined black with early crest as per its current appearance. Finally, the Dean Forest Railway's own No. 9681 will be included in BR unlined black but with late crest to also match its current finish.

Absolutely quackers

Some may also observe that the range also includes No. 5741 in green with GWR lettering; the more astute might recognise this as also being the number of the character *Duck* in the Thomas the Tank Engine stories.

The model has already reached the tooling stage, with samples shown off at the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition over November 25/26. These samples are currently undergoing testing and evaluation by the Accurascale technical team before they progress to the decoration and production stages. It is anticipated that the locomotives will arrive in stock in the first quarter of 2025.

Models are priced at £139.95 for DC/DCC-ready models and £239.95 for DCC sound-fitted models, and can be pre-ordered via the Accurascale website for no money down or via monthly instalments at no extra cost, or via Accurascale's network of local stockists.

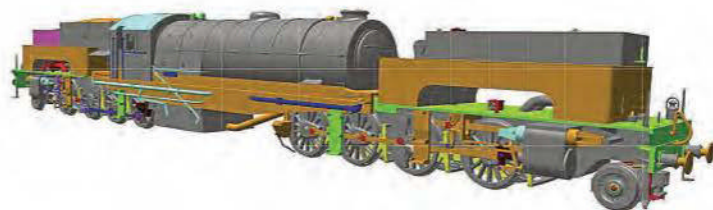


Heljan's Great Garratt

HELJAN is no stranger to the Garratt locomotives, having previously worked with retailer Hattons on an OO gauge model of the LMS 2-6-0+0-6-2 giants. Now it has set its sights on the LNER U1 2-8-0+0-8-2 Beyer-Garratt, which was the largest and most powerful steam locomotive to run on British rails.

No. 2395 famously made its public debut at the LNER's celebrations to mark the centenary of the opening

of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1925, and 100 years later we will celebrate this magnificent machine with a unique high-specification model that will appeal to collectors and fans of historic locomotives alike. Celebrating the centenary of the U1 and 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway opening in 1825, an exclusive model is also being produced for the Rails



of Sheffield and Locomotion Models' Railway Icons brand that will depict No. 2395 in works grey, as it appeared at the LNER's S&DR centenary cavalcade shortly after completion in 1925. This very special collectors' edition will feature bespoke packaging, plus DCC-ready and factory-fitted DCC sound options,

and production is strictly limited. The model is currently in tooling and first working samples are expected for review in January 2024, with first releases planned for early 2025.

Six different versions will be available, with RRP starting at £399 for DCC-ready versions and £520 for sound-fitted variants.





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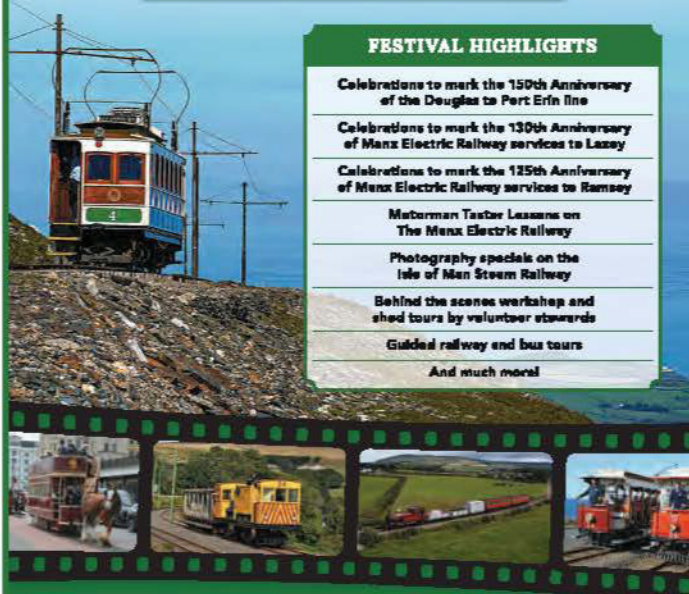
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Going underground

THE METROPOLITAN E CLASS

With 2023 marking the 160th anniversary of the London Underground, Luke Ryan casts his eye over a class of locomotive which, in preservation, has become synonymous with the network – and of which Rapido is soon due to release the first ready-to-run model.

IN these chilly winter months, it's hard to not want to stay warm, so naturally my mind has thrown itself to Austin Cooper's gorgeous Art Deco poster from 1924, proclaiming 'It is warmer down below. Travel in comfort by Underground' – so, for this month's Heritage in Miniature, let us travel down below and back to 1863 for the formation of the Metropolitan Railway, the world's first underground railway.

Metropolitan – a brief history

Opening to the public on January 10, 1863, the Metropolitan Railway ran from Paddington (Bishop's Road) to Farringdon Street via Edgware Road, Baker Street, Portland Road, Gower Street and King's Cross – all of which are still open to this day. At only 3.75 miles long, the Met was a far cry from today's sprawling Underground network but was by no means any less popular with the passengers of the time. The revolutionary idea to link London's main line termini without further congesting or altering the city above the surface seemingly struck a chord, and the Met garnered 38,000 passengers just on opening day!

Its success spurred on many underground railway scheme applications to Parliament, with a select committee recommending what it thought an underground railway should be: 'an inner circuit of railway that should abut, if not actually join, nearly all of the principal railway termini in the Metropolis'. By 1871, this view had come into fruition – the Met had expanded greatly from either end of its route, with the newer District Railway of 1868 meeting it at Kensington (High Street), Brompton (Gloucester Road) and South Kensington stations, providing an 'inner circle' of services between the various main line termini.

Fast-forward to 1908 and the Met became part of a joint marketing arrangement between the numerous underground railways that had shot up over the years, including the District, to promote travel by underground rail in London – for the first time, all of the lines were presented on a map under the banner of 'Underground'. While most

other underground railways had been absorbed into one company, The Underground Electric Railways Company of London, the Met fought for its independence all the way up to 1933, when it was eventually amalgamated into the newly-formed London Passenger Transport Board using the branding 'London Transport'.

The original locomotives

From its opening in January 1863 until that August, the Met employed the Great Western Railway's locomotives and stock to run its services; upon the withdrawal of the GWR's stock, the Metropolitan ordered its own locomotives.

An order was put in with Beyer Peacock of Manchester for 18 4-4-0 condensing tank locomotives, which were delivered in 1864 and became known as the A Class. They were very successful locomotives, with five more being built each year between 1866 and 1868, and an extra six in 1869. In 1879, more were needed, and more were ordered, with modifications; delivered between

1879 and 1885, they later became known as the B Class.

These locomotives were perfect for the suburban sprints, however, fell short on speed and coal capacity for the services working out towards Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

In 1891, four 0-4-4 tanks were ordered from Neilsons & Co of Glasgow which seemed to fit the bill and five years later a brand-new tank engine to the design of Thomas F Clark rolled out of the Metropolitan's Neasden Works.

The E Class

Built in three batches (Nos. 77 and 78 in 1896 and No.1 in 1898 being built at the Met's Neasden Works, with Nos. 79-82 in 1900/1901 built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co), the E class was just seven strong, though potentially intended to be larger, with numbers 83-89 being left clear for some years.

These tank engines were built for use on the Baker Street to Verney Junction services, Verney Junction being the furthest reach of the Metropolitan Railway's small empire

and where it met with the LNWR's Oxford to Bletchley line. They were more than capable of the work given to them and proved very successful. They were originally built with condensing gear fitted for use in the underground tunnels, taking the exhaust steam straight from the cylinders back into the water tanks to do what it says on the tin: condense back into water and be reused. The other idea behind the condensing gear was to eliminate exhaust in the tunnels to provide a cleaner environment. Of course, this gear only dealt with the steam, not the smoke produced from burning coal, thus leading to the Met employing the finest grade of smokeless Welsh steam coal it could find – though even that wasn't foolproof! The condensing gear was removed from the locomotives upon completion of the Met's electrification programme.

For more than 20 years, the E Class tanks became a regular sight on the Met's services to Aylesbury but in 1920 they were finally displaced from the Aylesbury passenger service by the much larger 4-4-4 H



In July 1954, No. 1 (by then L44) hauled the 50th anniversary special commemorating the opening of the Uxbridge branch of the Metropolitan network. COLOUR RAIL



Above: L48 is the only other example of the E Class to be modelled in miniature by Rapido. It is pictured here on shed at Neasden depot on September 1, 1953. M J READE/COLOUR RAIL



Right: Despite sources suggesting that the final steam-hauled passenger working on the London Underground took place in September 1961, this slide picturing Metropolitan No. 1 passing through Kingsbury is dated October 1; was this perhaps a move to relocate stock? Maybe a reader can help identify the reason for its appearance on the network that day. COLOUR-RAIL

class tanks. However, this wasn't the end for the Es, as they kept plugging away on the Chesham branch services, covering goods trains and engineering duties. All seven would survive into London Transport ownership, though Nos. 78, 79 and 82 were withdrawn in 1935. The surviving locomotives were eventually renumbered: Nos. 1, 77, 80 and 81 became L44, L46, L47 and L48 respectively. L47 was withdrawn in 1941.

The remaining three carried on their work on the Chesham branch on passenger services, but also found a new calling in working permanent way trains out of Neasden, sometimes getting as far as their old stomping ground of Aylesbury. These locos became popular on their outings and ended up on many specials, but

one particular member of the class seemed to get more limelight than the others – L44, otherwise known as Metropolitan Railway No. 1. The odd one out in the number sequence, No. 1 took the number of one of the original A Class locomotives that was scrapped after an accident at Bakerloo.

No. 1's history with special trains dates all the way back to 1904, when it hauled the first passenger train on the Uxbridge Branch from Harrow on the Hill adorned with flags and bunting; it would later return to the Uxbridge Branch in 1954 to haul the 50th Anniversary special. It hauled more specials throughout the 1950s and was used for some far more sombre trains too – the final passenger service on the Chesham branch in 1960 and, finally, the last ever steam-hauled passenger train

on the Underground network in 1961. No. 1 kept on going for a little while longer and went out in style as part of the Metropolitan Centenary Parade in May 1963, where it hauled a train of four Metropolitan bogie coaches and a milk van.

Preservation

You might think that No. 1 was a perfect fit for preservation, what with its almost celebrity status on multiple special workings over the years. However, it was not the loco that the Met Tank Appeal sought – it wanted an 0-6-2 F Class, L52! It was only when an inspection that a cracked mainframe was found, and London Transport offered L44 No.1 to the group that they happily accepted it! Over the years, No. 1 was kept working on various specials across the old Metropolitan lines and has

made visits to numerous heritage railways, its home base now being the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre.

It came to the forefront once again in 2013 during the Underground 150 celebrations, hauling the first steam-hauled passenger train through the tunnels since 1961 and traversing the original route of the Metropolitan Railway as it was in 1863, from Paddington to Farringdon.

It was also used during the 150th anniversary celebrations of the District Line in 2019, hauling what has been billed as the last underground steam services in central London prior to an overhaul to the signalling system which has sadly made steam locos incompatible. All these specials are very much continuing No. 1's long tradition of such things – and long may it continue.

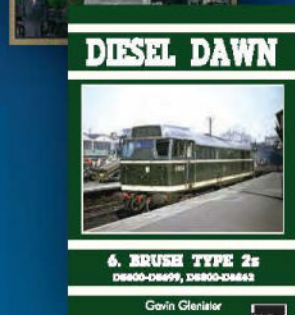
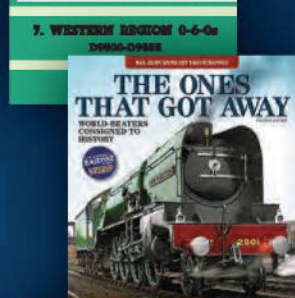
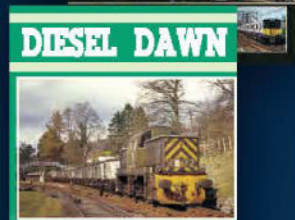
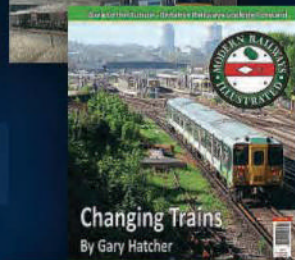
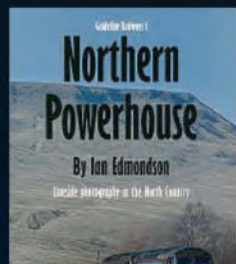


Above: Also in 2014, No. 1 paid a second visit to the Epping Ongar Railway in Essex, the only heritage line to run over a former London Underground route. The weekend of September 26-28 saw the railway mark the 20th anniversary of the cessation of tube services to Ongar with a LU-themed weekend, during which Met 1 is seen approaching North Weald with a demonstration engineering train. OWEN HAYWARD

Left: Met No. 1 has continued to work historic specials, even in preservation. In 2013, it travelled along the original route of the Metropolitan Railway to mark the 150th anniversary of the Underground and in 2014 celebrated the 125th anniversary of the Chesham branch, during which it is pictured here, heading away from Chorleywood on August 17. OWEN HAYWARD

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The models

Rapido announced this project back at the London Festival of Railway Modelling in March 2023, and as of the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition in November, the models are at the painted sample stage, so shouldn't be a million miles away from landing on store shelves and doorsteps around the country.

While I can't personally comment on the running of these models, the videos and updates that Rapido has released do inspire confidence in the smoothness and haulage capacity of these tank locomotives, with plenty of diecast metal to add to the weight, alongside fine injection-moulded plastic detail parts. The models are being offered in four different liveries: London Transport L44; London Transport L48; Metropolitan Railway No. 1 in 1999-2001 condition; and Metropolitan Railway No. 1 in 2013-2020 condition.

Now, you might think, 'wow, that's a lot of just No.1, why none of the other members of the class except L48?' The reasoning that Rapido has given is that because No. 1 is an 'orphan' loco, being built at Neasden on its own, there were some detail differences between it and the rest of the class, with only L48 No.81 being close enough to justify a release.

Consequently, the reason why the earliest livery is from the London Transport era is again down to detail differences that the locomotives had over their lives – too numerous to produce, it would seem, though



I suspect this is also down to a lack of information, drawings and photographs from their earliest period of life.

I think it is a sensible decision from Rapido to focus its efforts on producing a smaller number of variations – but ones they know it

can absolutely nail; the devil is in the detail, as the saying goes.

Having seen the painted samples in person at the NEC, I can say that they look absolutely wonderful – and even as a proud northerner, I'm slightly tempted by this charming staple of the south. **HR**



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A HERITAGE MUSEUM FOR THE DIGITAL AGE!

Embracing change is integral to preserving the past, as Sally Clifford found out during a visit to the Vintage Carriages Trust's Carriage Works Museum at Ingrow, on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. Sally reports in words and pictures.

Technology has led to a faster-paced society. Everything is at our fingertips... the tap of a screen can instantly fulfil a request in the same way that QR codes can expand on information you require.

Everyday life is constantly evolving to become quicker and slicker – and so it was only a matter of time before museums would adopt the same technology to improve the visitor experience.

It was during 2013 that the Vintage Carriages Trust incorporated QR codes onto its information boards dotted around

its impressive Carriage Works Museum at Ingrow stations on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway.

This type of technology is nothing new, but the visitor experience was evolving and, over the next two years, would be given what VCT vice chairman Ian Smith refers to as a 'refresh.'

It's not so much a case of the old making way for the new, but one of uniting the past and present in a companionable way to provide interest for generations preceding the bygone era of steam.

With that in mind, over the coming years, some of the older displays of station signs are being reconfigured to make way for the reformatting of memorabilia accumulated and collected within the four walls which has an important purpose but, as yet, has no permanent place to be displayed.

New boards featuring bite-sized information curated by VCT volunteer Paul Holroyd from literature and his vast knowledge are being installed.

"Most of it I already knew in my head; it is just a case of going into different reference books and checking," said Paul, whose interest in the railway developed through his two older brothers regularly taking him when he was aged four to see a double-headed Liverpool to Newcastle Express hauled by a Jubilee and a 'Black Five' or Patriot. "As a youngster it stuck in my memory," he said.

Joining the VCT more than 40 years ago solidified that interest, which he is now

Below: The Vintage Carriage Trust's Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1210 of 1981 *Sir Berkeley* hauling a 'double' 50th anniversary train past Globe Inn Curve on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway on January 10, 2015. The special not only marked the half centenary of the preservation of *Sir Berkeley*, which arrived on the KWVR in January 1965, but also that of the VCT itself. The locomotive was then owned by Roger Crombleholme, who subsequently presented the engine to the trust. The special comprised Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway four-wheel coach No. 176, which was built in 1876, and South Eastern & Chatham Railway brake third No. 3554, which was built post-Grouping by the Southern Railway in 1924. Both these vehicles also first appeared on the KWVR in 1965. ANDREW DENNISON





Evolving with the times: The Vintage Carriages Trust Carriage Works Museum at Ingham Station on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway.



Volunteer Paul Holroyd, who has curated the new information boards and displays in the museum.

enjoying passing on to others through his current project.

At present, the recently upgraded toilet facilities separate the old from the new. On one side are the travel posters and static memorabilia which have been displayed for many years, and the other part of the wall features the beginnings of the 'new' look.

A newly-painted wall bears the signs Bradford Exchange station and Leeds Central station – destinations that locals, who are among the museum's 15,000 annual visitors, are more than familiar with.

"People relate to places – put a sign in with a place on it and there will be visitors who relate to that particular place, wherever it is in the country," Paul explained.

Within the new information boards are nuggets of information he has discovered through his research and documented for visitors to view. For example, Ernie Wise, the late comedian and one half of the comedy act Morecambe and Wise, has a railway connection, as his father was a parcels porter at Leeds Central station.

Along the gantries, visitors can step in to the beautifully-restored wooden carriages, sit down, and savour an immersive experience of what it would have been like to travel in the different classes through audio sound.

Information boards, with the aforementioned QR codes reciting the expanded history, explain how the past has influenced the present.

"I think it's a fascination with the railways and a fascination with the old carriages and



Saying it all: A selection of original railway signs in the museum.



Serving the public: Some of the cutlery from train travels on display.

the way people travelled," said Bob Sprot, the VCT treasurer, whose retail background comes in handy for running the shop – his role when I popped by. "The way first and third class are very separate. The quality of first and third class is very different, and people find it fascinating."

Peelable blue plaques, another of Paul's projects, adorn the windows of the carriages hired for use in film and TV; The Railway Children and Brideshead Revisited are just some of the films, along with TV productions such as Peaky Blinders and The Forsyte Saga.

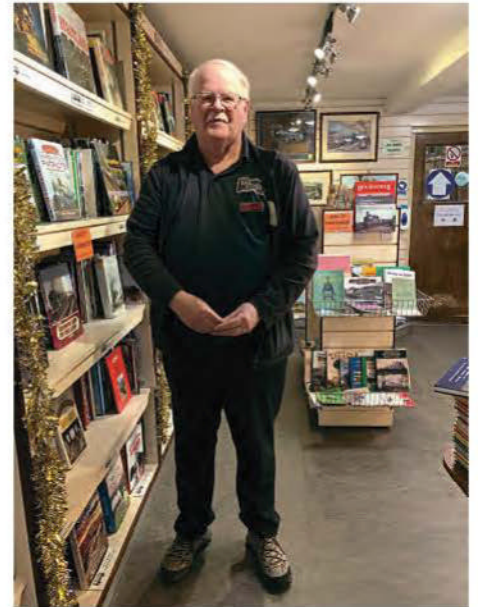
For younger visitors, there is plenty of information and static displays of interest, from signalbox bells to the cutlery used during train travels.

Coin conversions put into perspective pounds, shillings, and pence, while the importance of clocks is simply explained through 'Railway Time' – the standardised method to coordinate railway timetables.

Paul has also documented how train travel influenced what we ate. Fish was hauled fresh from the ports, for example, and even newspapers travelled by rail.

The museum's Bronte Country location close to Haworth invites questions about the travel experiences of the famous literary family. "Visitors ask if the Brontës travelled by train, and we explain they travelled through Keighley but not through Haworth as that part of the railway wasn't in existence," Paul said.

An original train register from Cleckheaton North is among the artefacts taking visitors



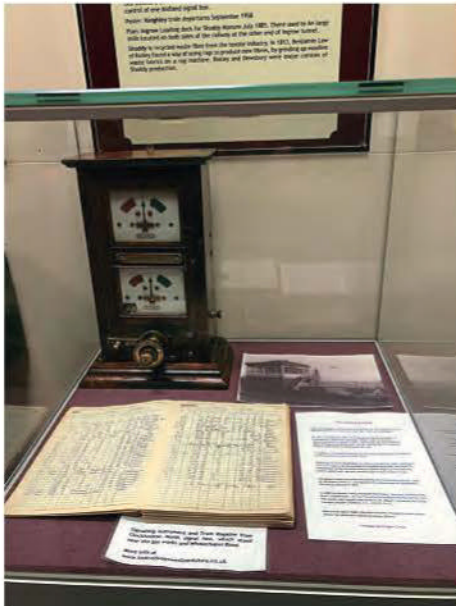
Happy to help: Bob Sprot, treasurer of the Vintage Carriages Trust, helps out in the museum shop.



Archive: The designated room for the magazines that help generate the VCT's income.



Tickets, please: Railway memorabilia makes up the displays at the Carriage Works Museum.



Something new: A signalling instrument and train register are among the new displays at the Carriage Works Museum.



The new display wall bearing the Leeds Central sign.



The Bradford Exchange sign is a focal point on the new display wall.

on a journey through what was, and continues to be, an important part of our social history.

The youngest locomotive-hauled carriage of the Vintage Carriages Trust's rolling stock is the Bulleid currently on long-term hire to the Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway.

Others include the four-wheeled Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway tricomposite carriage built in Gorton; the Derby-built Midland Railway No. 358; the Doncaster-built Great Northern Railway brake No. 589 and the Great Northern brake No. 2856; Metropolitan Railway brake No. 427; Metropolitan Railway No. 465; Metropolitan No. 509; Southern Railway brake No. 3554 and the E79962 Waggon & Maschinenbau diesel railbus.

Their history is part of Rail Story, a collaboration between the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, the trust, and the Bahamas Locomotive Society, giving visitors an insight and understanding into the and conservation of this important part of our heritage.

"They are old Victorian coaches and people love them," said Ian.

"Many people go 'wow' because they are

confronted with a carriage not at platform level or wheel level – they see it at its full height," said Bob. "They can go in and experience what the carriages are like, and our customers love that."

According to Ian, some of the carriages are used two to four times a year during the summertime for vintage train events and KWVR galas. Restricted use retains their condition.

Another interesting facet to this visitor experience is the workshop, where the refurbishment of Southern Railway carriage No. 3554 is currently taking place.

Alongside it is, perhaps, the most famous restoration, the Midland Railway carriage used in the 1970 film of *The Railway Children*.

"It was painted blue, but since then it was static outside Ingrow shed. It has been painted but apart from that, it had little done," said Ian.

The carriage, currently undercoated in its original maroon, has been in restoration for more than a decade.

Ian anticipates its completion could take

another two years as the moquette seating is still to be sorted. Once complete, it will become a museum exhibit and can also be used for filming.

"We are, primarily, a museum, but we are not in the business of being completely static – we do want to see these things run on occasions," added Ian.

This also adds another dimension to the immense interest here.

"The knowledge of what the objects are, and why they were used... we have to tell it in a way visitors can relate to and understand.

"We must take that story and make it interesting and relevant to them – and that is the challenge.

"What Paul and the museum have done is turn what is of interest into something far more relevant, something that visitors can relate to."

"We are embracing the future, and we are having to re-focus to tell the story that isn't in some people's memories anymore," Ian continued.

The Vintage Carriages Trust is supported



Metropolitan Railway Brake Third No. 427, which found fame in the 1970 movie version of Edith A Nesbit's classic novel, *The Railway Children*.



Work is underway to restore the Midland Railway carriage used in the 1970 film *The Railway Children*.



THE FORSYTE SAGA

This carriage was
filmed for
the 2002
Granada
TV serial

www.vintagecarriagestrust.org

Above: Peelable
blue plaques,
compiled by Paul
Holroyd, inform
visitors of the
carriages' TV and
film appearances.

Left: Southern
Railway carriage
No. 3554 in the
Carriage Works
Museum workshop.

Right: Ian Smith,
vice chairman of the
Vintage Carriages
Trust, on board
Hudswell Clarke
0-4-0ST No. 402
Lord Mayor, built in
Leeds in 1893, one
of the locomotives
in its collection.



through subscriptions taken out by its 500
members, along with the small museum
admission fee.

Its biggest income is from the sale of donated
books, magazines, and DVDs occupying
shelves around the shop, and the impressive
designated magazine room.

For more information, or to get involved,
visit www.vintagecarriagestrust.org **HR**



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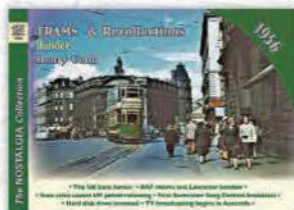
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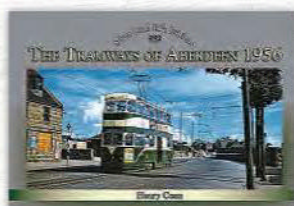
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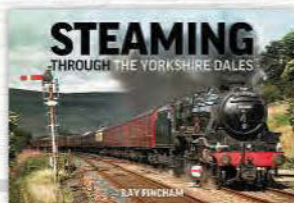
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The Glorious Years of the LMS and The Last Years of South West Steam

By Peter Tuffrey (hardback, Great Northern Books, 176pp and 160pp, £27.50 and £22.50, ISBNs 978-1-914227-55-4 and 978-1-914227-54-7).

THESE publications from railway author Peter Tuffrey cover the entire existence of the LMS from 1923 to Nationalisation in 1948, and the post-1948 era of steam in the south west counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, writes Geoff Courtney.

A comprehensive selection of photographs accompanies the author's tribute to the LMS, which at the time of its launch was the biggest transport concern in the world. After initial problems, he tells readers, it focused on serving passengers to a high standard up to the Second World War, during which it made a valuable contribution in terms of motive power provision, movement of goods, and war materials.

The early days make interesting reading. It was assumed that the LNWR, as the largest constituent company of the newly-formed LMS, would have the most influence within the fledgling LMS, but senior Midland Railway personnel took leading roles within two years, including Sir Guy Granet as chairman, J H Follows as chief general superintendent, and Sir Henry Fowler as chief mechanical engineer.

As a result, readers are told, the LMS took on a Midland Railway bias which antagonised the ex-LNWR employees.

This included adopting the Midland's crimson lake livery, and also the policy of using two locomotives on modestly loaded trains, which spread to the WCML, where it was not suited.

However, after an different start, the 1930s saw a change of outlook for the LMS, with Sir Guy Granet making way for Sir Josiah Stanier from the GWR due to Fowler's retirement. Stanier was set the task of modernising the rolling stock, leading to the introduction of the Princess Royal Pacifics, followed by the Jubilee class, the 'Black Fives', the 8F class, and the Princess Coronations.

During the Second World War, the LMS, under the control of the Railway Executive Committee, ran 90,000 special passenger trains and just over 49,000 war-related goods trains, while its main and subsidiary

workshops built a range of equipment from rifle components to tanks and aircraft parts, including for Lancaster bombers.

"The LMS existed for just 25 years and during that time the company, officers, and employees were able to create a lasting legacy of hard work, achievement and innovation," says Peter.

That legacy is evident in the book's 250 photographs, which starts with No. 6100 *Royal Scot* being prepared for its visit to America in 1933 and finishes with duties including lamp cleaning at Bletchley and displaying a poster of a Euston to Blackpool excursion for a fare of 12s.6d (63p).

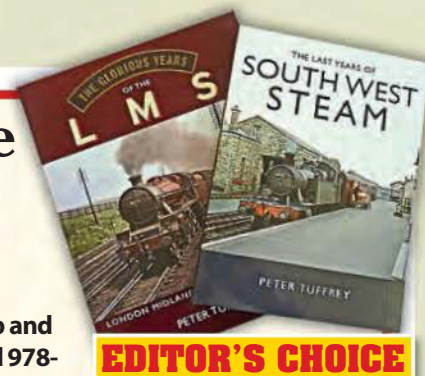
Between are chapters for nine different categories of locomotives, from express to tank engines, and thence to carriages, war work, road vehicles and railway stations.

On the subject of No. 6100's US visit, I was taken by an image of fireman J Jackson and driver W Gilbertson posing self-consciously in front of the 4-6-0 at Chicago while wearing totally unsuitable – but very smart – white shirts and trousers, with fitter WG Woods beside them in an equally unsuitable white shirt, tie, and suit. Very much a PR image, rather than a working man's!

Also looking smart are four dignitaries, including, judging by the chain and badge of office he is proudly wearing, the local mayor, during the naming ceremony at Lichfield station in June 1944 of Princess Coronation No. 6250 *City of Lichfield*.

Another eye-catcher is of classmate No. 6220 *Coronation* at speed beside Baltimore & Ohio Railroad P7 class Pacific No. 5304 *President Monroe* crossing a Maryland viaduct during the visit of the Princess Coronation to the USA in 1939, with both the locomotives looking splendid in their streamlined form.

Conversely, an image of a boilermaker crawling out of the firebox of a Class 8F emphasises the far less glamorous side of the steam locomotive era, and so too five men, one atop a ladder, cleaning and servicing work-worn Princess Coronation No. 6240 *City of Coventry* at Camden shed in 1943.



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Steamy affairs

The Last Years of South West Steam, Peter Tuffrey's 26th volume for Great Northern Books, is an unalloyed pictorial exercise in pure nostalgia. The author has approached it with his format of listing stations in alphabetical order, so the journey starts at Ashchurch and reaches the buffers at Yeovil Town.

From first to last, there are images of much-loved locomotive classes in familiar surroundings, including elderly Class 0415 No. 30584 at Axminster, Castle class No 5061 *Earl of Birkenhead* on 'The Cornishman' at Bristol Temple Meads, and Class 7F No. 53809 joining forces with Standard 5MT No. 73049 on a Bournemouth-Birmingham train towards Malsbury summit on the iconic Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway route.

In another double-header, there are Nos. 5153 and 7029 *Clun Castle* waiting for the 'right away' at Newton Abbot, and Standard 'Brit' No. 70024 *Vulcan* piloting No. 6018 *King Henry VI* up Dainton bank, both working hard as their combined tractive effort of 72,435lb is put to the test.

Diminutive 0-6-0ST No. 1361, however, is alone shunting wagons at Plymouth's Keyham station, and No. 34011 *Tavistock* needs no assistance with a short train, appropriately at Tavistock North, and neither does No. 7916 *Mobberley Hall* with just five carriages at Gwinear Road.

Freight features too, including ex-ROD No. 3032 crossing the impressive and now listed 1000ft-long, 100ft-tall 16-span Pensford viaduct over the Chew Valley, No. 31859 at Bude on the 1.15pm goods service to Exmouth Junction, No. 6873 *Caradoc Grange* at Truro, and Class 0298 No. 30585 with a China clay wagons train at Wenfordbridge.

It is, however, the passenger trains that will be remembered by so many on journeys to the south west. Crowded and noisy they have been, but they were the preface to an exciting week or two away from school and homework, and during which mischief and daring were ignored, or at best tolerated.

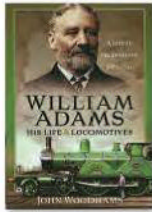
MEMORIES IN ABUNDANCE IN TWO PUBLICATIONS

William Adams: A Life in Engineering 1823-1904; his Life and Locomotives

By John Woodhams (hardback, Pen & Sword, 224pp, £25, ISBN 978-1-399071-96-3).

WILLIAM Adams is best known for his locomotives, especially the Adams radial tank. However, during his life he contributed much more to the railway industry. He started as a Blackwall apprentice in Bow Creek and then went to sea in the Royal Sardinian Navy before joining the North London Railway as a locomotive foreman at Bow Junction Locomotive Works. An inventive engineer, he pioneered continuous train brakes, free steaming locomotive boilers for rapid acceleration and frequent stops, which particularly suited suburban trains. He also invented a bogie with controlled side play, transforming future locomotive design.

In 1853, the NLR decided to provide its own locomotives and he was also tasked with surveying a proposed railway for the Isle of Wight. When this plan initially failed to win parliamentary approval and the project was later taken over by his brother Henry, William moved to a project to expand Cardiff's railway



system to cope with the increase in coal traffic at West Bute Docks.

He then moved on to Stratford to work with GER in expanding its locomotive and rolling stock capacity. He also made improvements to T7 and C8 class locomotives.

By now he was making a name for himself and in 1878 moved to the LSWR as locomotive and carriage superintendent at Nine Elms. He firstly removed locomotive No. 348 from service for testing his modifications. In 1886 he was placed in total charge of the locomotive department as it separated from the carriage departments. Now he was able to be more involved with locomotive upgrading and he went on to design new locomotives.

He died in 1904, leaving upgraded and designed locomotives, and also protégés in two of his apprentices, his son, John Henry, who, using his father's locomotive template, continued to design locomotives for the North Stafford Railway, and Frank Pettigrew, who did likewise for the Furness Railway (D4 Class between 1904-1907). John's work also included new L, K and C classes between 1911 and 1914.

Surviving William Adams locomotives include LSWR T2 radial tank No. 488 of 1885, which is awaiting a new boiler at the Bluebell Railway, LSWR No. 96 of 1893 (30096;

also at Bluebell), and LSWR T3 No. 563 of 1891 and now T3 4-4-0 No. 563 of 1891, which has made a dazzling debut on the Swanage Railway after being out of action for 75 years, while LSWR 02 No. W24 Calbourne of 1891 is running at the Isle of Wight Steam Railway.

This volume includes numerous black-and-white photographs, including his work with the Royal Navy, together with copies of his design diagrams for upgrades to locomotives including various boiler improvements.

MAN OF THE T3 MOMENT

Great Railway Era: Preston to the Fylde Coast, featuring Blackpool and Fleetwood

By Tom Heavyside (hardback, Middleton Press, 96pp, £19.95, ISBN 978-1-910356-81-4).

THIS volume unravels the historical complexities and forgotten corners of the rail network serving the peninsula in which Blackpool is its centrepiece.

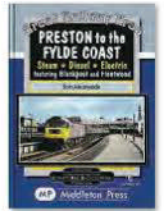
It is the second covering the Fylde area; 2018's Preston to Blackpool, including Fleetwood, focused on the changing scene up to 1990, since when local railways have undergone radical changes, not least of all the electrification of the line to Blackpool

North in 2018. This book looks at the last years of steam haulage in the 1960s, the diesel era, and the electric age, using archive pictures and maps with extended captions to look at the key points of the subject network, which in the 19th century opened up the area to develop as a major holiday destination.

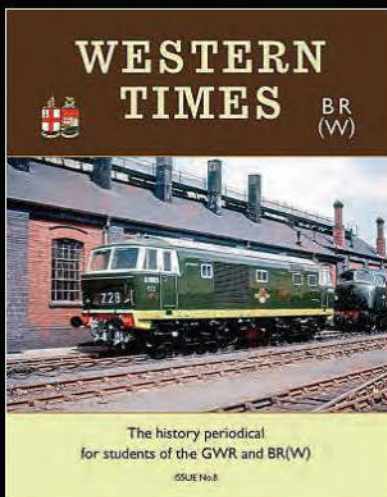
The volume covers engine sheds at Blackpool, Blackpool North, Fleetwood and Preston, rail-connected industrial concerns like ICI Hillhouse and the Royal Ordnance Springfields Factory, plus preservation sites that are no longer with us, such as the Lytham Motive Power Museum and the Fleetwood Locomotive Centre, and one that is, Thornton-Cleveleys station, which has been refurbished by the Poulton & Wyre Railway Society, which was formed in 2006 to reopen the line between Poulton and Fleetwood.

In July 2022, the Department of Transport announced that the line was among nine to be granted further development funding under the Government's Restoring Your Railway programme.

IN-DEPTH ESSENTIAL LOCAL HISTORY



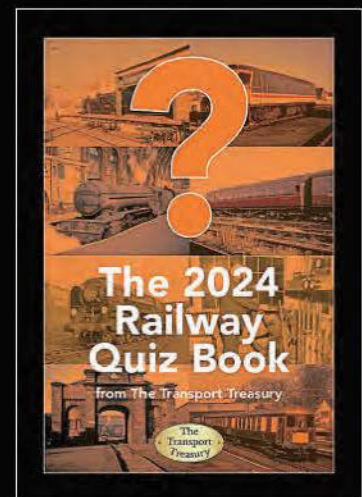
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OPERATIONAL HERITAGE LINES AND MUSEUMS

SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum

2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex.
Tel: 01798 831370.

Open: Dec 30/31.

Bluebell Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL. Tel: 01825 720800.

Running: Dec 28-Jan 1.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway

10¼in & 7¼in gauge, ¼ mile.

Running: Dec 26-Jan 2.

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: Dec 26/27, Jan 1.

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.

Running: Dec 29-Jan 1.

Lavender Line

Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.

Running: Jan 28.

Mid-Hants Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.

Running: Dec 27-31, Jan 5/6.

Mizens Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922.

Reopens: Easter 2024.

Old Kiln Light Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey. Tel: 01795 424899.

Reopens: 2024.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353.

Running: Dec 30-Jan 1.

Royal Victoria Railway

10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.

Running: Dec 27-31, Jan 1, 6/7.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Spa Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.

Running: Dec 27-Jan 1, W/Es from Jan 6.

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: Dec 31, Jan 1.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway

Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.

Running: Dec 29.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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: Jan 6.

Lappa Valley Railway

7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile.

Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.

Open: Dec 28-31.

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 29-Jan 1.

Moors Valley Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants. Tel: 01425 471415. Running: Dec 27-Jan 1, W/Es from Jan 6.

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 30/31.

Seaton Tramway

2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.

Running: Dec 27-Jan 1.

Somerset & Dorset Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street,

BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221

Running: Jan 1.

South Devon Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles.

Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.

Running: Dec 26-Jan 1.

Swanage Railway

Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.

Running: Dec 27-31, Jan 1, 6/7.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway

Standard gauge, three miles.

Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.

Running: Dec 31, Jan 1.

West Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, 20 miles.

Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.

Running: Dec 27-30.

Yeovil Railway Centre

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum

Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Bure Valley Railway

15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858.

Running: Dec 27-Jan 3.

Colne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.

Running: Dec 28, 30.



The Swanage Railway is one of the latest railways to take on the 'Polar Express' phenomenon, with SR Bulleid light Pacific No. 34028 pictured arriving at Corfe Castle on November 24. Though most railways conclude these trains before Christmas, Swanage will continue to run them from December 27-30 before wrapping them up to make way for the New Year diesel explorer services. ANDREW PM WRIGHT

East Anglian Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Running: Jan 1.

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.

Reopens: Feb 2024.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.

Running: Jan 1.

Nene Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel: 01780 784444.

Running: Dec 30/31, Jan 6/7.

North Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA.

Tel: 01263 820800.

Running: Dec 27-Jan 1.

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). Reopens: Feb 2024.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles.

Chinnor, Oxon.

Tel: 07979 055366

Running: Dec 27/28, 31, Jan 1.



An unusual sight at Bodmin Junction on November 28, diminutive Bagnall 0-4-OST *Judy* was shunted into the platform with the carriage set that formed the Bodmin & Wenford Railway's static Santa set. The carriage immediately behind the locomotive is GWR special saloon No. 9044, which was built at Swindon in 1881 for the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) and became Santa's grotto for the December trains. *Judy* was used to provide this and the waiting area carriages with steam heat. JIMMY JAMES/BWR

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Wallingford, Oxon.

Tel: 01491 835067

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Didcot Railway Centre

Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.

Tel: 01235 817200.

Open: W/Es (ex Dec 24).

Epping Ongar Railway

Standard gauge, six miles.

Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.

Running: Dec 28-31, Jan 5-7.

Great Whipsnade Railway

2ft 6in gauge.

Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.

Tel: 01325 225 1826.

Reopens: Feb 2024.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway

2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.

Tel: 01932 212235.

Reopens: Mar 2024.

Leighton Buzzard Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888

Reopens: Spring 2024.

London Museum of Water & Steam

2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.

Tel: 0208 568 4757. Open: Thurs-Suns from Dec 30.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Apedale Valley Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.

Tel: 0845 094 1953.

Running: Dec 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: Dec 28-Jan 1.

Cambrian Heritage Railways

Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys). Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.

Running: Dec 30/31.

Chasewater Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Walsall, West Midlands.

Tel: 01543 452623.

Open: Daily (ex Dec 25). Running: Jan 1.

Churnet Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 5¼ miles.

Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Railway Museums

Beamish

The Living Museum of the North, County Durham.

Open: Dec 27-Jan 7 then W/Es.

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: 01325 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.

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: Dec 27, 30/31.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth,

Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.

Running: Dec 31, Jan 1.

Echills Wood Railway

7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water

Park, Sutton Coldfield.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Evesham Vale Railway

15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of

Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.

Running: Dec 27-31.

Foxfield Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles.

Blythe Bridge, Staffs.

Tel: 01782 396210.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Standard gauge, 15 miles. Toddington,

Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.

Running: Dec 27-Jan 1.

Great Central Railway

Standard gauge, eight miles.

Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.

Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk

Running: Dec 26-Jan, W/Es from Jan 6.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Ruddington,

Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Leek & Rudyard Railway

10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs.

Tel: 01538 269948.

Running: Dec 31, Jan 1.

Midland Railway – Butterley

Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley,

Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Northampton & Lamport Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Pitsford, Northants.

Tel: 01604 820327.

Running: Dec 31, Jan 1.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles.

Hunsbury Hill, Northampton.

Tel: 01604 702031.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Peak Rail

Standard gauge, four miles.

Matlock, Derbyshire.

Tel: 01629 580381.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Perrygrove Railway

15in gauge. B4228, Coleford,

Gloucestershire.

Tel: 01594 834991.

Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es.

Rocks by Rail

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore,

Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.

Reopens: March 31.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Rushden, Northants.

Tel 0300 3023 150.

Reopens: 2024.



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 every day between December 26 and January 1 inclusive. Everyone boarding one of the festive trains with a full-line return ticket during this period can warm up with a complimentary cup of non-alcoholic festive fruit punch and a mince pie. To add a little sparkle, visitors will see the engines dressed in their festive outfits. All stations will be adorned with Christmas decorations and offer great vantage points for the best photo opportunities at the turntables and passing loops. MARK FIELDING/RER

Severn Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster,

Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.

Running: Dec 26-31, Jan 1/2, 6/7.

Statfold Barn Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79

0BU. Tel: 01827 830389.

Open: Dec 27-30.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway,

Toddington.

Reopens: 2024.

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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: Resume spring

2024.

East Lancashire Railway

Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.

Tel: 0333 320 2830.

Running: Dec 26/27, 30/31, Jan 1.

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. Reopens: Spring 2024.

Heaton Park Tramway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.

Reopens: 2024.

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Reopens: 2024.

Isle of Man Steam Railway

3ft gauge, 15½ miles.

Douglas, Isle of Man.

Tel: 01624 662525.

Reopens: Mar 2024.

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: March 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.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway

15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass,

Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.

Running: Dec 26-Jan 1.

Ribble Steam Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Preston,

Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

South Tynedale Railway

2ft gauge, 4¾ miles.

Alston, Cumbria.

Tel: 01434 338212.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria.

Tel: 01768 779747.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

West Lancashire Light Railway

2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs.

Tel: 01772 815881.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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Reopens: Spring 2024.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick,

Northumberland.

Tel: 0300 030 3311.

Running: Dec 27-29.

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.

Reopens: Mar 2024.

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: Jan 1, Suns from Jan 7.

Heatherslaw Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles.

Ford Forge, Northumberland.

Running: Dec 28-Jan 7.

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: Dec 26, 30/31.

Tanfield Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Near

Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

Tel: 07508 092365.

Running: Dec 26, 30.

Weardale Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Stanhope, Co. Durham.

Running: 28-30.

Wensleydale Railway

Standard gauge, 22 miles. Leeming Bar,

North Yorkshire. Tel: 01677 425805.

Running: Dec 28-30.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)

15in gauge, four miles. Huddersfield, West

Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.

Reopens: 2024.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East

Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.

Reopens: 2024.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway

2ft gauge, 4 1/2 miles. Llanuwchllyn,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.

Reopens: Feb 2024.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway

Standard gauge, 3 1/2 miles. Blaenavon,

Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Brecon Mountain Railway

1ft 11 1/4in gauge, five miles.

Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Corris Railway

2ft 3in gauge, 3/4 mile. Corris, near

Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Fairbourne Railway

12 1/4in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.

Reopens: 2024.

Ffestiniog Railway

2ft gauge, 13 1/2 miles. Porthmadog,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Dec 28-Jan 1.

Gwili Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd

Arms, Carmarthenshire.

Tel: 01267 238213.

Running: Dec 29/30.

Llanberis Lake Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870549.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway

Standard gauge, 1/4 mile. Cynheidre,

Carmarthenshire. Tel: 07956 082305.

Reopens: 2024.

Llangollen Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen,

Denbighshire. Tel: 01978 860979.

Running: Dec 28-30.

Rhyl Miniature Railway

15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.

Tel: 01352 759109. Reopens: 2024.

Snowdon Mountain Railway

800mm gauge, 4 1/2 miles. Llanberis,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.

Reopens: 2024.

Talyllyn Railway

2ft 3in gauge, 7 1/2 miles.

Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.

Running: Dec 26-Jan 1.

Teifi Valley Railway

2ft gauge, 1/2 mile. Henllan, Ceredigion,

SA44 5TD. Tel: 01559 371077.

Running: TBA.

Vale of Rheidol Railway

1ft 11 1/4in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth,

Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.

Reopens: 2024.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.

Reopens: 2024.

Welsh Highland Railway

2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Dec 28-Jan 1.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair

Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.

Running: Dec 28-30.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West

Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.

Running: Dec 29-31, Jan 2/3.

Caledonian Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Brechin,

Angus. Tel: 01356 622992.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Doon Valley Railway

Standard gauge. Dunaskin, Ayrshire.

Reopens: 2024.

Keith & Dufftown Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles.

Dufftown, Banffshire. Tel: 01340 821181.

Running: Dec 31, Jan 27.

Lathalmond Railway Museum

Standard gauge, 1/2 mile. Scottish

Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond, near

Dunfermline. Tel: 07379 914801.

Reopens: 2024.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway

2ft gauge, 3/4 mile. Leadhills, South

Lanarkshire. Reopens: 2024

Royal Deeside Railway

Standard gauge, 1 1/4 miles. Banchory,

Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Strathspey Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Aviemore,

Inverness-shire. Tel: 01479 810725.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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. Reopens: Spring 2024.

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim.

Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.

Open: Thurs-Sats.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and heritage events in the coming weeks

In addition to Santa specials, 'Polar Express' services, illumination trains and Mince Pie specials this winter, warm up after the big day with a trip to 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

FEBRUARY 2024

- 2/3 Battlefield Line Winter Steam Gala
- 9-11 Spa Valley Railway Winter Steam Up

Organising a gala or other big event and want it included? Let us know by emailing Owen Hayward at: ohayward@mortons.co.uk



The Hayling Seaside Railway has named its newest locomotive *Dave Scales* in honour of a popular volunteer who died in February. The four-wheel steam outline diesel, No. AK11, was built by Alan Keef of Ross-on-Wye in 1984 for the Treasure Island Railway at the Thorpe Park theme park in Surrey. That railway closed in 1993 and the locomotive, which previously carried the name *Ivor*, was later donated to the Hayling Island Railway Trust by Thorpe Park Resorts.

Needing a full rebuild, it was returned to Alan Keef for the work to be undertaken. It was delivered to the 2ft gauge line's Eastoke Corner headquarters on July 26 and subsequently entered regular passenger service. It was officially named by Heritage Railway Association chief executive Steve Oates at a ceremony on November 11.

A retired police officer, Dave joined the railway in 2014 and worked his way up to driver, later becoming its treasurer and playing a key role in the creation of the Hayling Light Railway Trust, the charitable body, in 2019. His grandson Alex helped with the unveiling, after which it headed a special for invited guests, including Dave's family and Thorpe Park representatives. HLR

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

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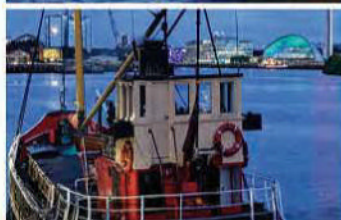
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war memorial engines. Very many parts have been manufactured and are ready to be fitted
to the chassis. In 2024 our new construction base will be Tyseley Locomotive Works, one of
the main heritage steam locomotive engineering centres in the UK. The boiler is being
manufactured at Heritage Boiler Steam Services Ltd, Huyton, Liverpool, and the tender frames
at Leaky Finders Ltd., near Exeter.

The project is funded by private donations and limited corporate sponsorship. Like the men
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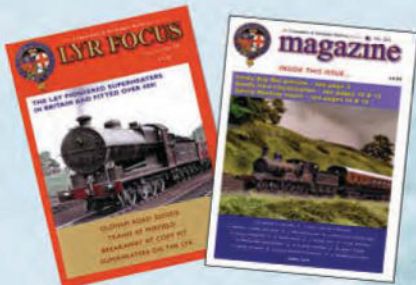
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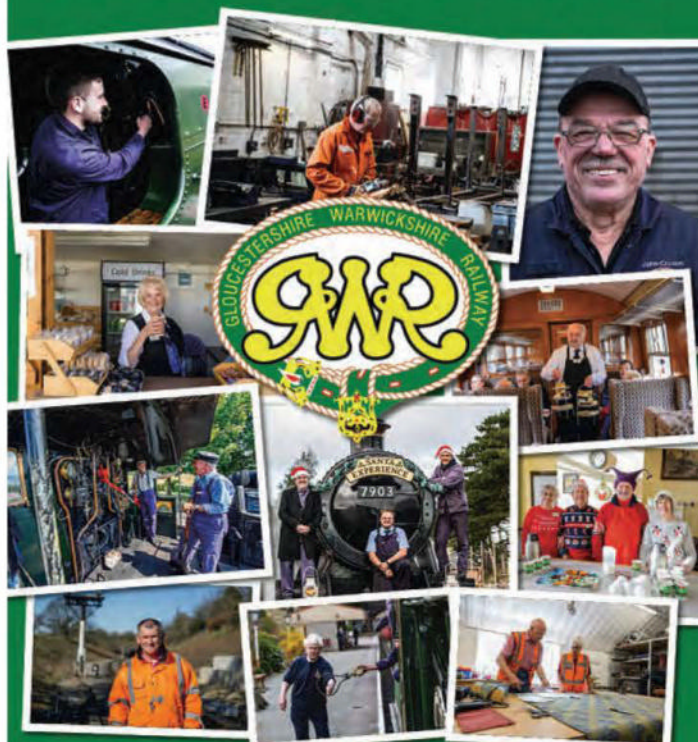
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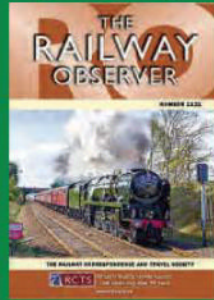


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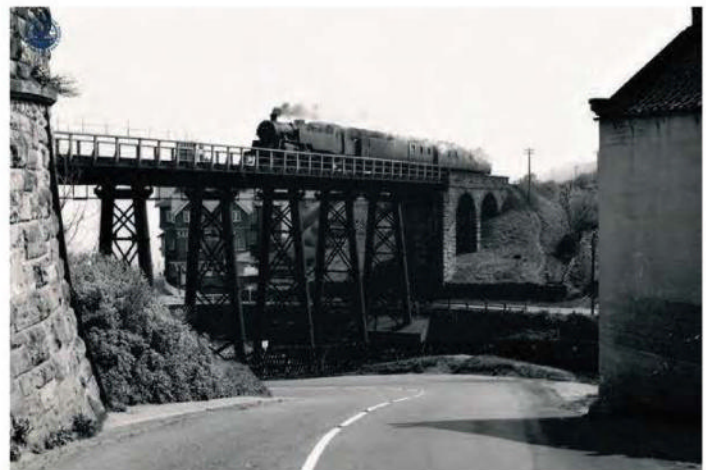
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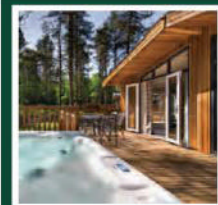
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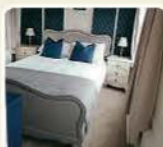
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Applications close at midnight Sunday 14th January 2024.

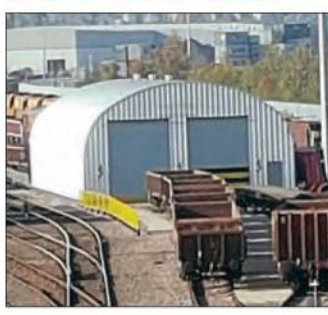


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£1 million lottery win for rail fan could see steam dream come true

By Owen Hayward

WHAT would you do if you won the Lottery? Would you be modest and spend carefully or blow it all on fulfilling a lifelong dream? For one Hereford rail fan, that question is no longer 'what if' but 'when'... and the answer might mean buying a steam locomotive!

Neil Leighton, 24, was in a group call with friends, aimlessly playing the National Lottery's instant win 'Cash Bolt Christmas Millionaire' on his telephone, when he looked down at the screen and realised he had won.

Neil said: "I was in my man cave, otherwise known as the shed in the garden, having a very chilled evening, enjoying a drink, and

chatting to my friends in the UK and the States. It wasn't until all the spins had completed that I even looked at the screen, where I saw a message 'Congratulations, you've won £1M...' at which point I said to my friends, 'I've won a million' and left the chat.

"I didn't tell my family the news until I was able to confirm the win for definite the following day. I walked into the house and my parents both jokingly said I looked far too happy and asked what had I been buying. When I told them I had bought something – a National Lottery instant win game – and I'd won £1 million, Mum screamed, used some colourful language, and then was convinced it was a scam."

Like so many of us, Neil has been fascinated by trains – particularly steam – since he was a young boy, which has led to a creative film-making hobby. "Ever since my grandad took me to see my first steam train when I was three, I have been fascinated. It started with Thomas the Tank Engine and, to be honest, I never grew out of it.

"Now, if I'm not visiting a railway, I'm busy writing and filming my own take on Thomas the Tank Engine storylines, which I share online, or collaborating with Thomas fans around the world on future projects.

"So, top of the list is buying my home, where I can have a train room, an entire space dedicated to trains,

and another room for filming and editing my Thomas content.

"I've even jokingly thought about how maybe one day I'll even swap the train room for an actual steam engine!"

Neil said that in addition to buying his own home, he would be treating his family in the run-up to Christmas, plan a holiday with his friends in 2024, and start driving lessons.

One of the team that has helped run the Tallyllyn Railway's runaway success that is the Awdry Extravaganza for the last three years, Neil has thought about volunteering at other railways, which, being able to drive, will help him achieve.

A winners photoshoot took place at the TR on December 5 – but Neil kept it a secret from his close friend Luke Ryan, who is the media creator at the line.

"I told everyone in our group except for him," Neil added. "It was a great laugh turning up without him even realising – it was a big shock for him!"

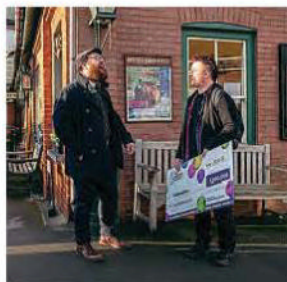
"He thought I was taking a family on a tour of the railway but walked around the corner and saw me there with the giant cheque instead."



Left: Neil Leighton won £1 million while in an online call with friends. Now he wants to have driving lessons, which will hopefully lead him to volunteering on a heritage railway in the future.

Right: Neil's photoshoot was at the Tallyllyn Railway on December 5, but kept it secret from Luke Ryan (left), who walked out to greet what he was expecting to be a group tour of the line.

BOTH: NATIONAL LOTTERY



Tallyllyn pays tribute to unusual volunteer

ANIMALS have played a pivotal role in railway history since the start, and while modern mechanical workhorses have seen our four-legged friends step out of the limelight, their part of the story is nonetheless still important. On occasion, however, there is still cause for them to once again to become stars of the moment.

Like all railways, Covid-19 lockdowns stopped all volunteering for lengthy periods of time. As vegetation started to encroach on the Tallyllyn Railway, management sought a simple but effective solution – hiring a pair of donkeys from a

local farm! Lady Maud and Hamish were set to work keeping the grass growth in check around the station at Rhydyronen.

Sadly, on November 10, ageing Hamish had to be euthanised. The TR broke the unfortunate news on its social media pages, which saw an outpouring of love and tributes for an animal that had been a part of the surrounding landscape at Rhydyronen for so many years, often watching from his field those walking to and from the station, from where his brays were often audible too. With the pair having been inseparable

Right: Hamish (right) and Lady Maude during one of their 'mowing' sessions at Rhydyronen during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Sadly, Hamish had to be put to sleep on November 10. TR



Above: To keep Lady Maude company, a new stablemate in the form of Arthur (left) has arrived. The pair have already visited Rhydyronen station to trim the grass this winter. TR

during their lives, a new companion was quickly sought for Lady Maude, who is now joined in the paddocks

by Arthur, who has already visited the station to carry out some winter mowing.

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 315 out Jan 19

Plan all your railway gala visits for the year thanks to our full guide to special events taking place throughout 2024.

PLUS

OVER HERE, OVER THERE

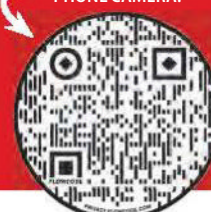
Chris Eden-Green took a transatlantic trip to discover the differences and similarities between heritage railway operations in the UK and the US.



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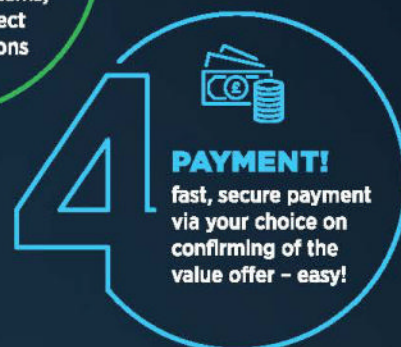
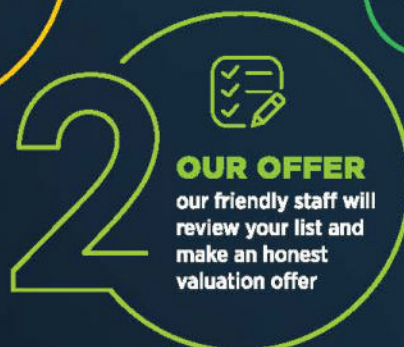
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