

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Crowds pack winter galas as 'Flying Pig' takes final bow



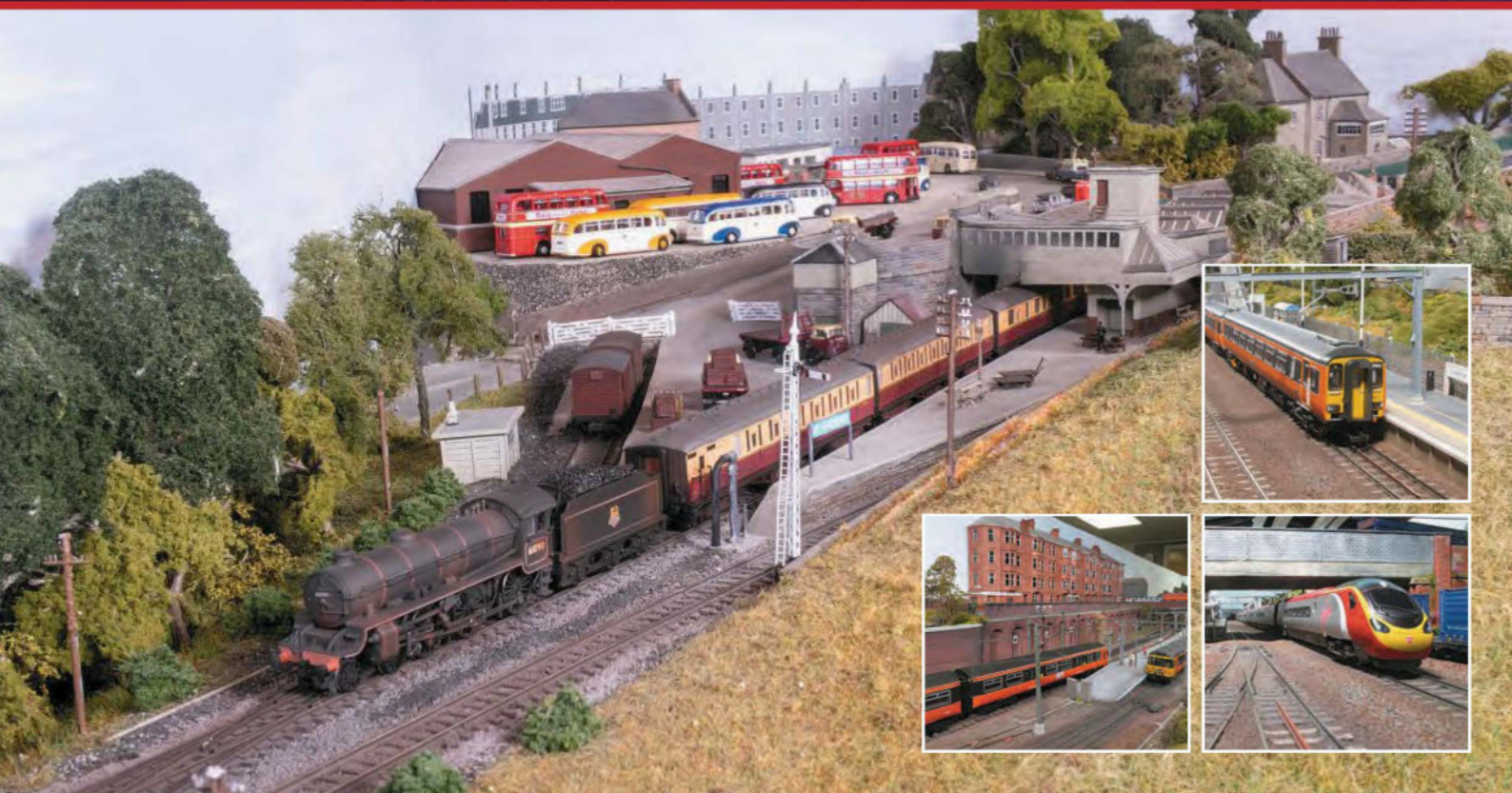
**2024
EVENTS
GUIDE**

Bodmin offers
PANNIER FOR SALE
as heritage lines feel financial pinch

■ **BLUE PETER FOR SEVERN VALLEY TEST RUNS – IN BLUE** ■ **£270K 'CURE' FOR STANWAY VIADUCT FAILURES FOUND** ■ **YOUNGEST EVER DRIVER PROMOTED AT BLUEBELL** ■ **DARJEELING B OVERHAUL SECURED IN 10-YEAR STATFOLD DEAL**

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BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92214, disguised as scrapped sister No. 92000, heads towards Rabbit Bridge at Swithland with the 'Windcutter' rake of 16-ton mineral wagons during a Timeline Events photographic charter at the Great Central Railway on January 4. GAVIN THOMSON

Experimentation and much innovation hold the key to continued sector success

EVER since the heritage railway sector became 73 years old, with the reopening of the Talylyn by volunteers, overcoming perceived obstacles big and small has been its trademark. Some of its biggest successes has been down to those who are prepared to rip up the rulebook, establish blueprints and plan new courses of action from blank sheets of paper.

For long it has been widely considered that January and early February are 'close down' periods, during which many heritage railways do not run in an attempt to save costs at a time of the year when the weather and lighting conditions are held to be far less attractive to visitors.

In this issue, we report on the huge success of several post-Christmas galas that drew the crowds. The Severn Valley Railway took a chance by holding its first ever Winter Steam Gala on January 6/7 (as featured on pages 70-73) and reaped big dividends in crowd-pulling terms, as did its winter diesel day on December 29. Likewise, the Swanage Railway's January 6/7 Winter Warm Up attracted a sizeable flurry of out-of-season visitors, which will have done much good to the economy of the Purbeck resort at a time when it least expected it.

On a much smaller scale, the Nene Valley Railway held a commendable four days of 25-minute shuttle round trips based around the original *Thomas* the

Tank Engine and for which (as reported in Next Stop, page 106) all 700 tickets sold out – at a bargain price of £5, which could not fail to appeal to families in the current economic climate.

Across many walks of life, there has been a long-held Christmas tradition that life goes flat after the decorations are taken down after Twelfth Night,

and comparatively few visitor attractions of any description are open. Railway enthusiasm does turn off once the fire has been thrown out from the engine pulling the last Mine Pie Special; recent events have shown that there is a ready market for those who want to see action on heritage lines in

“As in 1951, where's there's a will – and where a strategy is properly thought out – there can be a way.”

the 'close down' season.

Of course, costs and the availability of manpower are big issues, but as we saw back in 1951, where's there's a will – and where a strategy is properly thought out – there can be a way.

You have only to look at the widespread successes of festive season innovations made in recent years – illuminated trains pioneered by the Dartmouth Steam Railway and the 'Polar Express' based on the hit movie – which serve to highlight that there is ample room for more. Keep those ideas steaming through – and fast!

Robin Jones Editor

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COVER: January 7, 2024 was the final day in service for Ivatt 4MT No. 43106, affectionately nicknamed 'The Flying Pig' by enthusiasts. Driver Will Marsh has a chat with station staff at Hampton Loade ahead of its last run up Eardington Bank during the Severn Valley Railway's successful Winter Steam Gala: see feature, pages 70-73. JOHN TITLOW



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'Flying Pig' and Taw Valley farewells boost gala crowds

A successful new venture saw the Severn Valley Railway run its first-ever Winter Steam Gala on January 6/7. It attracted large post-festive season crowds and saw two locomotives bowing out of service, reports John Titlow.



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2024 Events Guide

If you're planning a visit to one (or more) of our many heritage lines and museums, why not also consider a visit to a special event too? Galas, beer festivals and more – there's something for everyone. See what's happening where and when with this handy guide.

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The Swanage Railway tradition of a post-New Year gala once again saw enthusiasts flock to the most easterly end of the Jurassic Coast. Owen Hayward reports on the event at which a certain LSWR locomotive was reaching its full potential after further improvement works.

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The skills forming the backbone of preservation are imperative for keeping heritage railways alive. Sally Clifford finds out how the young volunteers at North Tyneside's Stephenson Steam Railway are playing their part to help keep this industry on track into the future.

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'Jacobite' operator to work with ORR to solve door locks issue

By Robin Jones

WEST Coast Railways said it will work with the rail regulator in its aim to continue to run heritage stock on the national network, despite a 'disappointing' High Court decision.

After this magazine closed for press last issue, it was announced the Carnforth-based operator of 'The Jacobite' had failed in its application for a judicial review of the Office of Road and Rail's decision making process, which it used to refuse granting WCR a further Regulation 5 of the Railway Safety Regulations 1999 exemption – essential for heritage train companies intending to operate hinged-door carriages on the main line unless central door locking (CDL) is in place.

Following an application submitted by West Coast two years prior to its exemption expiring, the company was told that, following an ORR inspection on a 'Jacobite' service last July, its exemption would not be renewed.

West Coast challenged the ORR procedure in reaching this decision and the hearing took place at the High Court of Justice in November.

The judgment handed down on December 22 concluded the ORR's decision not to grant a further exemption certificate was lawful.

Solution sought

However, the judgment does not require a suspension of West Coast services nor prevent the company operating charter journeys on the main line. Neither did the court rule on the adequacy of the safety procedures West Coast has in place.

A spokesman for WCR, the UK's largest main line heritage rail operator, said they were disappointed with the decision but the company remains committed to working constructively with the ORR to find a long-term solution and secure the future of iconic heritage services on the main line.

The current exemption runs until February 28, after which it must be

renewed if the heritage stock is to continue to be used.
The statement said: "West Coast will now consider ways to safeguard services enjoyed by thousands of customers every year, evaluating options such as grounds for an appeal, and the potential to work with the ORR on a new exemption application."
West Coast commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are disappointed by the judgment. We have decades of experience of operating on the main line and safety has always been, and remains, our top priority. We will now reflect and consider options to enable us to continue running safe services enjoyed by so many visitors from the UK and around the world, upon which local businesses along our routes rely."



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"We are committed to finding a long-term solution. Our operational experience tells us that our safety measures: A steward for every four doors, with secondary locks and monitoring, a train manager and a guard, guarantee the safety of our passengers and colleagues.

"The ORR's decision to revoke our exemption would require us to install a modern safety system on carriages from a different era. The estimated cost of £7 million would present a significant financial challenge for WCR.

Economic boost

"Fulfilling our commitments to customers and the businesses that depend on our operations is paramount for us. Our 'Jacobite' service alone boosts the economies of Mallaig and Fort William, bringing an estimated £20 million into the UK's tourism sector. If WCR's exemption to operate on the main line is revoked permanently, this would lead to £50 million in lost value to both local and national communities.

"That is why it is essential we explore all options to protect our operations on the main line, whether through an appeal or other measures."

West Coast has been granted an exemption from using CDL since 2005. It has been permitted to run passenger services on the main line with an alternative locking system

and robust traditional safety measures through ORR exemptions.

However, the same regulations that allow for exemptions are now being used to force WCR to install modern CDL on its heritage carriages. The prohibitive cost would wipe out the operator's profits for close to a decade, the company said.

The company believes the ORR should extend its exemption certificate in the short term, to safeguard the running of the steam train services including 'The Jacobite' and A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman*.

West Coast owns about 63% of the UK's main line heritage rolling stock and operates more passenger charter trains than any other company.

In more than 40 years of operation, it has never had an incident of serious injury or a fatality relating to a door opening in traffic, and has carried out detailed risk assessments that demonstrate its secondary door locking system, with proper maintenance and monitoring, is safe for its passengers and workers.

Two Great Centrals set to join up in March for anniversary!

A UNIQUE event on the weekend of March 16/17 will see Great Central Railway and Great Central Railway (Nottingham) link up to mark the 125th anniversary of the opening of the London Extension of what was then the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway.

It is the first time the two companies have teamed up to offer a single ticket for an event on the two sections of the line, looking to

their future as a reunified 18 mile heritage railway.

Linked events will take place at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre, Rushcliffe Halt station and along the length of the GCR from Loughborough to Leicester North.

GCR general manager Malcolm Holmes said: "While this is the first time we've worked so closely together, it's the start of a new era. As we work towards becoming one

railway, both companies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing them to sharing good practice (News, page 34).

Milestone

"What better place to celebrate this new chapter by coming together to mark a significant milestone in the story of the GCR.

"It's just a shame we're not one railway yet – so our visitors will have

to make do with a heritage bus service running through the event by way of rail replacement!"

Opened in March 1899, the GCR was the last Victorian main line railway to reach London. Linking Sheffield, Nottingham, Loughborough and Leicester with the capital, it faced stiff competition from other railways, was never a sound financial success and was absorbed into the LNER in 1923.

Scotsman helps pull in bumper crowds as loco's centenary year reaches an end

MORE than 30,000 visitors descended on the Locomotion museum in Shildon for the free exhibition marking the end of LNER A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman's* centenary year programme.

The exhibition ran from December 16 to January 7, after which the locomotive, built at Doncaster in 1923, was due to return to the National Railway Museum at York where, as reported last issue, careful consideration was being given to the future maintenance operation of the A3 following the expiry of the previous contract on December 31. No final decision had been made as we closed for press.

Visitors were able to see No. 60103



No. 60103 on display outside Locomotion on December 20. JASON HYNES/NRM

in light steam outside the main hall during the event.

Locomotion head Sarah Price said that the exhibition had "gone absolutely brilliantly and

the feedback from visitors has been phenomenal.

"We've loved meeting people, not just from this region, but from around the world."

OBEs for two heritage railway personalities

TWO men from the heritage sector have been made officers of the Order of the British Empire in King Charles' New Year's Honours List.

Edward Album, a senior corporate lawyer in the City of London who has been the legal advisor to the Friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line for more than 40 years, was honoured as Founder of the Settle to Carlisle Railway Trust and for services to railway heritage and to communities in the North of England.

He was instrumental in establishing the trust, initially to raise funds for the repair of Ribbleshead viaduct, cited by BR as the main reason for its plans to close the line in 1989. BR costed the repair as £10 million, but eventually it was repaired at for just £2.5 million raised by the trust, of which he was the first chairman.

During the Eighties campaign to save the line, he had regular liaison with the Department of Transport and leading political figures of the day.

Friends chair Alison Cosgrove said: "Mr Album has served the line with expertise and distinction for almost 40 years and has been active across a wide range of transactions. He



Edward Album (left) with Michael Portillo. FOSCL

instigated the purchases of some of the dilapidated station buildings at Kirkby Stephen and Ribbleshead, and these have now been completely refurbished. He also led the purchase of the Station House at Dent on behalf of the friends only a few years ago.

"Mr Album has been a highly valued and distinguished committee member, and his service to the line has been unparalleled."

Councillor Carl Les, the leader of North Yorkshire Council, has been honoured for providing strong and effective local government. However,



Coun Carl Les, interim chairman of Wensleydale Railway plc. NYC

he is also a volunteer director and current interim chairman of Wensleydale Railway plc, which he joined in August 2009.

Having represented the Catterick area for more than 20 years, he was chosen to lead the former North Yorkshire County Council in May 2015. He then led the local government reorganisation during which the eight former councils in North Yorkshire merged into the current one.

He has been a member of the North Yorkshire Police Authority for 15 years and now chairs its police and crime panel.

Blue Peter for Severn Valley test runs

LNER Peppercorn A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* has been booked for trials and running on the Severn Valley Railway in February, following the completion of its overhaul by LNWR Heritage at Crewe, and its repaint into BR blue livery.

Built at Doncaster in 1948, it was bought from BR by Geoff Drury and forged close links with the BBC children's programme of the same name.

The A2's main line certificate expired in September 2001 after which it was based at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, where it worked until the end of the 2002 season when its boiler certificate expired

In October 2014, No. 60531 was sold by the Drury family to Jeremy Hosking under the ownership of the Royal Scot Locomotive & General Trust, of which LNWR Heritage is a subsidiary.

Following its latest overhaul, it undertook a steam test in August 2023 with plans for it to be main line certified in 2024.

It will become part of the Locomotive Services Limited operational fleet.

RSL> trustee Peter Greenwood confirmed that it was hoped to take *Blue Peter* to the Severn Valley, which benefits from a main line connection, significant workshop facilities and reasonably long running line on which it can accumulate a decent mileage prior to hopefully working its own way back to Crewe.

Bridgnorth Cliff Railway reopening

BRIDGNORTH Cliff Railway may reopen in February after more than a year of closure after damage was discovered to a retaining wall owned by the town council.

Following November's completion of £750,000 repairs paid for by the council, one of the oldest and steepest funicular railways in the UK, connecting Low Town to High Town, passed a safety inspection January 5.

Owner Dr Malvern Tipping said it was hoped to reopen it within weeks.

BR closed it in stages through the 1960s. The first heritage trains ran in 1973, although 500 yards of track between the Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire sections was later removed by BR, leading to the long-held ambition to reinstate the link with some parts already constructed.

To mark the anniversary, the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre will be hosting a Meet The Fleet event, with trains moving inside the Ruddington venue. The

bus collection will be on display and the miniature railway will be running. The GCR's 'quirkiest station', Rushcliffe Halt, three miles south, will be open, linked by heritage bus.

Unique track

On the GCR in Leicestershire, a selection of steam and diesel services will showcase the unique double track main line railway.

The Loughborough locomotive shed will be open to visitors, and there will be a range of attractions

in Quorn & Woodhouse yard.

Andy Fillingham of the GCR(N) said: "It's a special occasion and we hope to welcome new visitors and familiar friends to try something different. We're marking the past, but looking to the future where trains run the full length of this wonderful Midlands heritage corridor."

→ A single ticket for both sites will be available at www.gcrailway.co.uk. Children travel for just £1 with full-fare-paying adults.

Grange still planned for a delayed Battlefield debut

By Robin Jones

FOLLOWING a meeting at Tyseley Locomotive Works on January 6 between directors of the 6880 Betton Grange Society and Tyseley's engineering team, several outstanding tasks required to complete the 81st GWR Grange 4-6-0 were discussed. It was agreed that it was unlikely that these would be achieved in time for the planned members-only steaming at Tyseley on January 13, which had already been postponed for a week.

Although there was a chance that the work could have been completed in time, there was no guarantee that the locomotive would be able to move under its own power should

any faults be identified during a private test steaming the day before. At that stage it would be too late to cancel the event, so the decision was taken to postpone it while outstanding work is carried out, as announced on *Heritage Railway's* website and Facebook page after our last issue closed for press.

In addition to the remaining work, the locomotive is mostly in green undercoat and has several external fittings still awaiting fitment. Delaying the steaming will allow the locomotive to be brought up to a more presentable condition, said a society statement.

Outstanding tasks are mainly superficial, such as fitting handrails to the boiler sides and cab, pairing

the locomotive and current tender (on hire from WR 4-6-0 No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor*), and fitting of the safety valve cover.

A revised date for the initial steaming for members and supporters will not be announced until the locomotive is finished and has been test-steamed to avoid more delays.

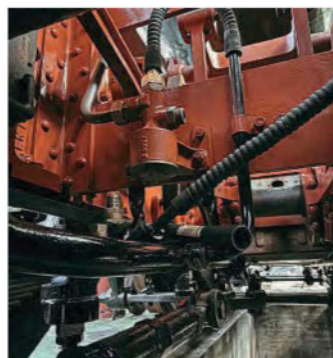
However, as this issue of *Heritage Railway* magazine closed for press, it was thought at least a further three weeks will be needed to allow time to finish the outstanding jobs and complete painting in lined BR mixed traffic livery.

"Betton Grange's directors apologise for the inconvenience and disappointment caused to those who booked train tickets and made other travel arrangements to witness the first steaming of a Grange since the mid-1960s but feel supporters will understand the importance of ensuring the locomotive is in a suitable and safe condition for its unveiling," said the statement.

No. 6880 is still on course for test runs on the Battlefield Line in February, as reported in issue 315, and while it will miss that line's February 3/4 Winter Warmer Steam Gala, it could be available to run during the Leicestershire line's February half-term period, providing that the tests are satisfactory.



Handrails being fitted to the newly-painted Betton Grange inside Tyseley Locomotive Works on January 6. 6880



Pipework to the vacuum returning valve fitted. 6880

Tendering to Success

THE next major goal for the Betton Grange project is the creation of a historically appropriate tender which will be capable of main line operation.

When Charles Collett introduced his first Granges in 1936, they were initially paired with Churchward 3500-gallon tenders cascaded from older locomotives (some 4000-gallon examples from Stars were also repurposed). A number of Collett 3500 types were built at Swindon Works under lot A118 specifically for the new 4-6-0s, which was for 27 tenders each weighing 22 tons empty, 45 tons when full.

These new tenders, Nos. 2242-2268, were completed in 1930, their height better aligned with the locomotive's cab cut-outs, giving a more aesthetically pleasing profile than the 4000-gallon versions when matched with Granges. However, none of the Collett 3500-gallon tenders survived and it is this type that the society wants to build for No. 6880. The last of the lot, No. 2268, will be the subject of the replica due to having '68' as its last two digits; appropriate for pairing with a 6800 class locomotive.

It is estimated that £150,000 will be needed to build the tender to main line standards. So far, about £35,000 of the target has been raised. A suitable tender chassis has been acquired, which needs a complete 'nut and bolt'

Manx railways review acknowledges its economic value

By Owen Hayward

IN April 2023, the Isle of Man Government announced that it was commissioning an independent review of the island's state-owned transport network to review its efficiency, identify areas for improvement, and investigate potential savings on considered closures.

Engineering consultant firm SYSTRA was selected to carry this out, having undertaken a similar process in 2017/18. On January 9, the first results of the findings were published which highlighted the importance of the island's heritage railways – and how closing any of the extensive network would yield "new disbenefits generated from the loss of service while the cost of savings would be relatively small."

Proposals were mooted to consider closure of the Castletown to Port Erin section of the steam railway, with the Laxey to Ramsey lines of the Manx Electric Railway also considered as a way to possibly create savings.

However, the SYSTRA findings – conducted over the summer of 2023 with a public consultation, stakeholder consultation, and site visits – concluded that such actions would severely damage the appeal of the railways to the tourist market on which much of the IOM heavily relies. In particular, the line to Ramsey is considered as "the most scenic part of the MER" and that closure "would result in a fall in visitor numbers to the island and reduction in visitor spend."

Spending benefits

"Our analysis of the wider economic impacts of the heritage railways has shown that for every £1 spent in subvention and capital investment, there is a benefit to the economy of £2.80," the report stated. "The total direct and indirect impacts on the economy total about £17 million each year formed of a mixture of spending by visitors and spending by the railway itself. This is another area in which the Isle of Man is unique."

An alternative proposal was to single-track the line to Ramsey and

build a cycle path adjacent to it, but SYSTRA found that "this would not represent value for money unless usage across the year averaged more than 475 cycle trips per day" with the seasonal nature of tourism likely to make it unviable. However, a potential commuter service would only need "88 passengers per service to return positive value for money."

The report highlighted lost opportunities for income, with the IOM's GoExplore cards, which allow for multiple days of travel on all the railways as well as bus network, not seeing its prices rise in line with inflation on full travel fares.

The report concluded it that the railways would fare better remaining under public ownership, as the scale of capital spending and grant requests forecast to be needed would see the government required to continue heavily supporting them to ensure their long-term survival.

It suggested that a board of directors to oversee the management and development of the railway should be formed, comprising

representatives from stakeholders such as the Department for Education, Department of Infrastructure, enthusiast and supporters associations, the Visit Isle of Man tourist board, and an independent off-island representative with experience of heritage railways.

The board's purpose would be to provide support to railway management, covering a cross section of skills and experience, while the railway would still require a parent department within government.

The full findings of the report are available to view at www.gov.im/news/2024/

→ Following the announcement last issue that the MER had been nominated in three categories at the British Trams Online's Tram of the Year awards, on January 7 the MER revealed it had won in them all. Trailer No. 19 took Heritage Tram of the Year, while the MER itself scooped Tramway of the Year. The July 2023 Transport Festival, which incorporated the line's 130th anniversary into a week-long celebration, won Event of the Year.



Above: The numberplate for the proposed new tender. 6880

Left: No. 6818 *Hardwicke Grange* is seen outside Swindon Works with one of the Collett 3500-gallon tenders of the type which the 6880 Betton Grange Society plans to build a replica of. COURTESY BOB MEANLEY

restoration, and about £40,000 of the overall cost will be consumed by constructing a brand-new tender tank and top.

To raise the necessary funds, the society launched its Tendering to Success appeal, with a range of benefits for those making

contributions. These include the Ton-Up Club for donations of £100, with bonuses including a *Betton Grange* pen and pin badge, inclusion on the 6880 Roll of Honour, and a special thank-you card.

Those donating £350 can join the 3500 Tank Club with the benefits

listed above, plus a replica shed plate with the GWR or BR(WR) shed of the donor's choice, or a replica 6880 smokebox display plate.

The Chassis Club is for those donating £1100. Each will receive all of the above, plus a replica tender plate numbered 2268 and the donor's name on a plaque mounted inside the tender.

Alternatively, you can sponsor one of the many parts needing to be either refurbished or purchased: rivets, tank sheets, coal bunker sheets, chassis parts, axle refurbishing, wheel turning, axle boxes or springs, ranging in value from £10 to £10,000.

Donations can be made by cheque, made payable to 6880 Betton Grange Society Ltd and sent to: Lynn Moore, 6880 Tender Appeal, 224 Staining Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 0DL.

It is the group's understanding that others have constructed GWR-style 3500-gallon tenders using a Churchward or Collett chassis, notably for Manors such as Nos. 7802, 7820 and 7821, but that for *Betton Grange* will be the first to be numbered in the original Collett series and is expected to be the only one suitable for operation on the main line.

As far as the society can ascertain, tender No. 2268 ran with four different Granges – No. 6839 *Hewell Grange* (1950), No. 6850 *Cleeve Grange* (2955), No. 6851 *Hurst Grange* (1958) and No. 6836 *Estevarney Grange* (1961) – but its fate is unclear and it is presumed scrapped.

→ For more about the Tendering to Success appeal, visit www.6880.co.uk or contact Lynn Moore at lynn@6880.co.uk



The newly-painted tender borrowed from *Foxcote Manor*. 6880

Seaton Tramway goes prehistoric – by purchasing 'Jurassic' building

A VISITOR centre celebrating the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Jurassic Coast will receive a new lease of life after its freehold was purchased by the Seaton Tramway, with plans to reopen it this spring.

The centre, which previously offered an interactive experience looking at the history of the coastline, its fossils and marine life, was closed in September 2021 by East Devon District Council. On January 5, the tramway concluded its acquisition of the site, marking a significant milestone in its 54-year history, and intends to gradually reopen the centre.

Jurassic Discovery will initially welcome visitors with a family-friendly café and a soft play area for children aged one to 12, with the equipment having been bought from the nearby Pecorama railway attraction in 2021.

An immersive dinosaur exhibition will then be opened this summer, featuring state-of-

the-art animatronic exhibits from the Natural History Museum. The new attraction is expected to bring both a significant boost to the local economy and community, while also creating numerous job opportunities.

'New era'

Tramway CEO Jenny Nunn said: "The council's decision marks a new era for Seaton and its visitors. Jurassic Discovery isn't just an attraction; it's a leap into the world of dinosaurs and prehistoric life. Our plans include a dino-themed soft play area for young explorers and a cutting-edge visitor experience that narrates the story of dinosaurs, their extinction, and their connection to our current environmental challenges. We are committed to creating an engaging, educational and entertaining space that resonates with all age groups."

Seaton Tramway won the Large Attraction of the Year Award,



East Devon councillor Paul Arnott presents the keys to the Seaton Jurassic discovery centre to Seaton Tramway team members (from left to right) Steve Waite, Jenny Nunn, Lee Taylor and Wendy O'Neill following the line's formal acquisition of the site on January 5. SEATON TRAMWAY

Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award, Tourism Event of the Year Award and Experience of the Year Award at the Devon Tourism

Awards in November, and as such its teams plan to bring the same award-winning magic to the new attraction.

The very best go west: Worth Valley announces gala line-up

By Owen Hayward

GREAT Western is set to dominate the gala scene this spring, with the Erlestoke Manor Fund's namesake 4-6-0 No. 7812 set to star at the Bluebell Railway on May 10-12 (page 26), the Great Western Society's new Saint No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* confirmed for the Epping Ongar Railway's April 26-28 steam weekend (issue 314), and 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* set to work special trains at the East Lancashire Railway throughout the same month (page 42). The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway has also announced a Western takeover for its March 21-24 event.

Prior to its voyage to the ELR, No. 4079 will headline at the KWVR alongside the Great Central Railway's modified Hall No. 6990 *Witherslack*

Hall, making its first visit away from the Leicestershire line since returning to service after an interim overhaul last year.

Happy birthday

Although the class celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2023, the centenary for *Pendennis Castle* itself takes place this year, it having been outshopped from Swindon in February 1924 and starting life at Old Oak Common, from where it took charge of services bound for South Wales and the West Country.

Meanwhile, WR 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* was also allocated to Old Oak Common for two years from new and again for a further 11½ years from January 1952.

Up to 10 locomotives will be operating throughout the weekend;

other home fleet stars include LMS Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas*, LMS 'Black Five' No. 45212 and LNWR 0-6-2T Webb Coal Tank No. 1054, which returned to the line from Crewe Heritage Centre in November for winter maintenance.

No. 1054 will head out on hire again during 2024, with its first announced visit being to the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 steam gala.

Throughout the weekend, tours of Haworth sheds will be available for a £5 supplement, which will offer a behind-the-scenes look at some of the overhauls taking place within, including the line's GWR 0-6-0PT No. 5775, which starred in EMI's 1970 *The Railway Children* film.

Goods trains and brake van rides will be on offer as part of an intensive timetable, although the railway

makes no promise of snowfall – which appeared at its 2023 event.

A May holiday

After its stopover in Yorkshire and Lancashire, the Castle will then head to Staffordshire where it shall spend the entirety of May operating at the Churnet Valley Railway – which will include a starring role at that line's own steam gala, which is being formulated especially to mark the locomotive's centenary.

Full details of its visit (including the dates for the gala) were still being finalised as this issue went to press, but in addition to the railway's two currently operational USATC S160 2-8-0s and No. 4079, BR 4MT No. 75014 from the Paignton & Dartmouth will also star, which arrived on the railway in January.

Diesel event success continues at the Severn Valley

THE Severn Valley Railway has been boosted by £30,000 after its new Winter Diesel Day on December 29 attracted higher visitor numbers than expected.

Services carried more than 1000 paying passengers, plus hundreds more shareholders, delivering £30,000 in ticket revenue alone – 35% higher than officials had hoped for.

"It's fair to say that, once again, the SVR has absolutely smashed it!" said managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster. "We'd never before tried to run a short diesel-enthusiast event like this in the winter season, but we wanted to give it a go and are very pleased that we did."

"We saw a timetable that ran perfectly, and a strong sense of team purpose across the railway, for which we are hugely appreciative. This is yet more proof of how the SVR's strong commitment to enthusiast events continues to be the right one."

Highlights included the long-awaited return to service of the line's Class 108

DMU and the provision of steam heat, thanks to Class 40 No. 40106, Class 46 D182 and GWR 0-6-0PT 7714 double-heading with various diesel locomotives.

"This aspect of our winter event brought a nostalgia all of its own," added Gus. "We took passengers back to the days of the late 1960s and 1970s when diesel steam heating was the norm, before BR phased it out by the mid-1980s."

"I heard many positive comments from visitors about how much they valued this. The atmosphere across the line, particularly as the light faded, was absolutely wonderful."

Buoyed by 2023's success, visitor engagement manager Lewis Maddox is already planning an extra enthusiast-focused event for later this year, in addition to the four steam and diesel galas that are already well-established in the railway's calendar.

"This one is going to be a mixed traction and real ale festival, and we are looking at holding this in June," he said.



Three in one: Class 33 No. 33108, Class 37 No. 37263 and the Class 108 DMU at Highley on December 29. DAVID BISSETT/SVR

→ 'Flying Pig' and Taw Valley farewells boost Winter Steam Gala crowds – feature, page 70-73.

Manning Wardle Class L 0-6-0ST No. 1210 of 1891 *Sir Berkeley* was back on track for the Middleton Railway's New Year's Day Mince Pie special. Its two-year overhaul briefly broke the engine's tradition of transporting passengers for the popular annual event. Returning to the rails in April, a busy programme during the year culminated with it pulling three carriages for the traditional run to the northern edges of Middleton Park. On the day there was a break in the downpours that dominated December, although some earlier drizzle, ahead of the many passengers embarking on the Mince Pie run, resulted in a beautiful rainbow – a perfect send-off for the final journey of the season ahead of the line's Easter reopening. SALLY CLIFFORD



Stockton & Darlington bicentenary boosted by Arts Council grant

A £1.25 million grant awarded to Durham County Council to fund world-class events, skills development, and community activities will boost the bicentenary celebrations for the Stockton & Darlington Railway, taking place in 2025.

The Place Partnership award has been given by the Arts Council England through the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The expanded into the Light three-year culture and events programme will include a 'spotlight' year in 2025, with current plans for the bicentenary enlarged.

The programme has been developed by the council and its partners. These include The Bowes Museum, Beamish

Museum, Durham University, No More Nowt (formerly East Durham Creates), The Forge, Northern Heartlands, Redhills and TIN Arts.

It comes as County Durham looks to cement its place as 'The Culture County' after becoming the first location be shortlisted for UK City of Culture status.

Coun Amanda Hopgood, county council leader and portfolio holder for culture, creative, tourism and sport ahead of the formation of the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority, said: "County Durham and the North East are yet again in the spotlight for our ambitious programmes of world-class events and community-led activities."

Mountaineer replica may make first moves this summertime

THE project to build a replica of original Ffestiniog Railway George England 0-4-0STT No. 3 *Mountaineer* has progressed to the point where it is hoped to have it running on air for the summer.

Mountaineer, a side tank with an open footplate, was the first of four small England locomotives to be delivered to the Ffestiniog in July 1863. Worn out and withdrawn and scrapped in 1879, it is the only one of the original quartet not to have been rebuilt, the survivors being No. 1 *Princess*, No. 2 *Prince* and No. 4 *Palmerston*.

The £250,000 project to fill a major gap in UK narrow gauge heritage sector was officially launched by 1863 *Mountaineer* Locomotive Ltd at the Warley National Model Railway Show in November 2019, when the first boiler components had been delivered from Israel Newton to North Bay Railway Engineering Services in Darlington where the locomotive is being assembled. The completed boiler was hydraulically



The boiler of the new *Mountaineer* on the chassis at North Bay Railway Engineering. 1863MLL

tested in May 2020 and has now been trial-fitted to the rolling chassis.

The coupling rods have been ordered and the eccentric core blanks are being machined.

The company is now seeking to raise £1800 for the two Allen expansion links.

→ **To donate to the project to recreate an historical locomotive, visit [PayPal.me/1863mountaineer](https://www.paypal.me/1863mountaineer)**

Carriage flips over on Poole Park line

AN investigation was launched after a train derailed on the Poole Park Railway while it was carrying passengers.

Steam outline diesel *Howard* struck debris on the 10¼in gauge line on December 22, causing it to 'jump' off the tracks, its carriage then flipping onto its side. The carriage was carrying

passengers, but nobody was injured. Operator Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council checked the locomotive following the incident and found no issues with it, while the council arranged for the derailed carriage to be inspected by engineers while the line is closed until the February half-term.



The New Year's Day afternoon sun creates a striking scene as LMS Jubilee No. 45690 *Leander* passes through Springside Farm on the East Lancashire Railway with the 1pm service from Bury to Rawtenstall. KALLUM BUCKLEY

East Lancashire appoints new general manager

THE East Lancashire Railway has appointed Lee Kenny as its general manager on a permanent basis.

Lee impressed during his eight-month spell as acting general manager since Tracey Parkinson stepped down after six years in the role, as reported in issue 309.

He was previously deputy general manager and has been part of the organisation for more than three decades, having first joined as a volunteer at the age of 12.

The former diesel traction engineering fitter was ever present in the ELRF's traction and rolling stock department before becoming head of the department 12 years ago.

Lee said: "I have watched the railway grow from its infancy in the late 1980s to the major tourist attraction it is today.

"I have now been given the opportunity to take the ELR forward for many years to come.

"I look forward to continuing to work with our dedicated and very much valued team of volunteers and staff, and we will continue to explore ways that we can improve and better support them.

"Like many other heritage railways around the country, we face considerable challenges in sustainability, fundraising, improving safety, embracing equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation, and we continue to grow our community and business partnerships.

"These will be very much our focus in the short to medium term."

ELR chairman Mike Kelly said: "Lee stepped into the role last May as acting general manager at a very challenging time for the railway.

"Lee has shown great leadership and brought stability, and he has successfully managed a number of very important events, including our famous Santa specials."

Tribute to A1 and P2 engineer and pioneer David Elliott

The heritage sector has been in mourning for David Elliott, technical director of The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, who died on December 16 following a long illness. Here, the trust, the builder of new Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* and Gresley P2 2-8-2 No. 2007 *Prince of Wales*, pays tribute to him.

IT is no exaggeration to say that David Elliott was a pioneer of new-build steam.

Since he began volunteering in 1991, David made possibly the greatest contribution to the objectives of The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust of any one individual, and in so doing has paved the way for new-build projects in the UK and overseas.

We were not surprised to hear of David's passing in December as, in his characteristic pragmatic style, he had informed those working within the trust and its supporters of his prognosis after being diagnosed with prostate cancer two years ago. Nonetheless, we are deeply saddened to lose a dear friend and quite brilliant colleague.

David took an early interest in railways, influenced by his grandfathers: one worked for the

Railway Clearing House and the other was a signalman at Velvet Hall on the Berwick to Coldstream line and later at Belford on the East Coast Main Line. Despite spending his childhood in Kent, his father's interest in the railways and family ties to the North East meant that LNER was David's favourite company. He recalled that they would often take trips to his grandparents' house in London, where he would go spotting trains on the adjacent East Coast Main Line.

Young curiosity

Other day trips would end up at King's Cross or Potters Bar, or else visit the more locally situated Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway to visit its fleet of locomotives akin to Gresley Pacifics, of which *Hurricane* was his favourite. Although David possessed Ian Allen ABCs, he found number

collecting dull and instead spent his time trying to understand how the engines worked – for which he had quite the aptitude!

In his professional life, David enjoyed a wide and varied engineering career, starting off as a mechanical engineer with British Railways (BR) at Derby in 1973 and becoming a senior technical officer. After six years with BR, he joined Westland Helicopters as an advanced project engineer, before joining Westland's Hovercraft division on the Isle of Wight. Later roles included commercial manager for Pilatus Brittan-Norman, working with the Ministry of Defence and other overseas defence agencies. His stories about selling Trilander aircraft were hilarious and entertained young and old alike!

In 1996 he returned to railway work, overseeing Adtranz's signalling

installation on the Kuala Lumpur monorail system. It was during this latter period that David's relationship with The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust gathered pace – initially in a voluntary capacity – becoming heavily integrated in the design and construction of *Tornado*.

David was concerned about some preservation practices of the time, seeing old components painstakingly restored when a new one would have been much the better and cheaper solution, so he was therefore most interested to see an advert for a project promising to build a whole steam locomotive from scratch – and an LNER A1 to boot! He responded offering his services on contracts and commercial aspects and was invited to the King's Cross roadshow in March 1991. On arrival he was surprised to find that his seat was on the stage rather than in the audience! As the first professional engineer to join the management of the trust, he adopted the role of technical director; while the job title changed through the years to engineering director, David held this post until his death.

Drive and innovation

For virtually the entire construction period, David was the driving force behind the trust's major engineering efforts. In each case, his philosophy was to take the original drawings and adapt and redesign them to incorporate modern technological and fuel efficiency measures but keeping the externally elegant appearance unaltered. The result has been, in the case so far of *Tornado*, an exceptionally efficient and powerful steam locomotive with very high degrees of reliability, which is essential when operating on Britain's high speed main lines.

His personal drive, innovation, imagination, and ability to enthuse those around him has resulted in a locomotive which in all respects is a natural recreation of how the steam locomotive might have progressed if it had remained in regular service. David's presence during main line operations, discussing issues with crews, has been of major reassurance.

One particular run of note came on April 12, 2017, after Network Rail granted permission for *Tornado* to 'go for the ton'. Between Thirsk and York,



The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's technical director, David Elliott, with under construction P2 2-8-2 No. 2007 *Princes of Wales* at Darlington Locomotive Works in January 2022. When completed, it will be the UK's most powerful express passenger steam locomotive – and will be known as a Gresley-Elliott P2. JACK BOSKETT/A1SLT



David in front of No. 60163 *Tornado* on August 5, 2008, as the A1 moved publicly for the first time at the old Darlington Locomotive Works in Hoptown Lane. KEN RICHARDSON/A1SLT



New-build Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* back at Darlington after its record-setting test run on April 12, 2017. Inset: Early on April 12, 2017, *Tornado* reached 101mph during a test run on the East Coast Main Line. BOTH: ROBIN JONES

the locomotive achieved an incredible post-steam era record of 101mph, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 228, delighting and thrilling a large section of enthusiasts and non-enthusiasts alike, bringing much kudos to the trust specifically and UK railway heritage more generally. This would not have been allowed without the high degree of faith the industry placed in David's engineering capabilities.

Tornado is currently being fitted with the new European Train Control System, the first steam locomotive in the world to receive this state-of-the-art digital in-cab signalling system. If steam is to survive on the main line for the long term, then it is essential that ETCS be fitted; not an easy task in the hostile environment resulting from steam, heat, hot water, oil and ash.

David has been central to the integration of this highly complex system, demanding even greater supplies of electricity than the locomotive has hitherto been capable of generating, all to be fitted discreetly, and it is no exaggeration to say that the task of Network Rail and Thales (the international electronics contractor) has been made significantly easier through David's imaginative, untiring and can-do engagement.

Once *Tornado* was complete, David had the opportunity to right a long-standing wrong! One of his most cherished childhood books was his father's copy of the 1947 *Model Railway Handbook* by W J Bassett-Lowke, where on page 65 was a picture of a 2½in gauge model of Gresley P2 *Cock O' The North*. He asked his father to take him to see it and was devastated to hear that the P2 had been rebuilt into a Pacific.

David's work on P2 No. 2007 has been even more in-depth than that required on *Tornado*. The P2 class,

of which *Prince of Wales* is the latest incarnation, was designed by famed Chief Mechanical Engineer of the LNER, Sir Nigel Gresley, responsible for world steam speed record holder A4 Pacific No. 4468 *Mallard*. The P2 was an exceptionally powerful locomotive yet undoubtedly had design problems when conceived in the 1930s.

Crowing glory

The intervention of the Second World War and Sir Nigel Gresley's untimely death resulted in these not being addressed. To make the new P2 viable, David has completely designed-out these original challenges, and with the aid of 3D CAD and computer simulation such as CFD has demonstrated to the rail industry that the locomotive will be a remarkable performer.

His crowning glory has been the complete redesign of the three-cylinder monobloc which in its original form was sub-optimal in its performance. The cylinders were also physically too wide for today's railway, with the chance of making contact with platform edges. David has redesigned the cylinders, innovatively using a 3D-printed model to help inform the building contractor of the

correct approach to fabricating this highly complex component.

Its delivery in October 2023 undoubtedly marks the culmination of David's contribution to the UK's steam heritage scene, in spectacular fashion.

Work will begin later this year on constructing David's final design, the complex valve gear, the component which will make the P2 Britain's most powerful steam locomotive. David went international with his research, with critical information from South Africa and the United States aiding the redesign.

Such is the significance of his influence on the new locomotive that it will forever be known as the 'Gresley-Elliott' P2 – a supreme accolade and personal tribute.

David's engineering accomplishments were only outshone by his warm and friendly personality, coupled with his wit and good humour. He always had time to explain his work, and has enthralled numerous enthusiasts with occasionally lengthy, yet always accessible, presentations on his beloved locomotives and their key design features – wearing his trademark black shirt! He passed on his skills to those with whom he

worked, always seeking to educate the next generation, and we are fortunate that his knowledge was shared with individuals who will continue his work on the P2.

We have been moved and humbled by the outpouring of respect and support since David's death.

Lasting contribution

David leaves a widow, Dominique, with whom he moved to Bishop Auckland to take on the A1 project. There will be no formal funeral, but a memorial service is likely to be held in the spring. The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's chairman, Steve Davies, said: "While we were all aware that David was unwell, we were greatly shocked and saddened at his passing.

"His reach across preservation was immense, with projects across the UK, in Australia and the United States benefitting from his expertise. His legacy in the UK will live on through *Tornado* and *Prince of Wales*, the many other projects he has helped, and the people he has inspired.

"Our thoughts are very much with his family at this time, and the whole The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust community will forever remember his contribution fondly."



David inspecting the monobloc for the new P2 at Howco in August 2022. A1SLT



David (left) presents the trust's Ed Laxton with his certificate on completion of his machinist apprenticeship on August 5, 2023, at the first open day at the new Darlington Locomotive Works. A1SLT

Bodmin reviews collection as it seeks stability for the future

By Owen Hayward

THE Bodmin & Wenford Railway has become the latest line to launch an SOS funding appeal as it looks to secure its future – with a GWR pannier tank locomotive and a BR DMU on the list of assets that are being considered for disposal.

Although its operations are viable, managing director David Nelson-Brown said that there was “a legacy of accumulated debt needed to be cleared to move forward”, with “as much money currently going out as there is coming in.”

He said: “The railway has an immediate cash crisis this winter. This has stemmed from lots of things and has built up over time. We didn’t run any trains in 2020 and we have been recovering ever since, and now it has really caught us up.

“We must be realistic about what funds can be raised and so we have listed a number of vehicles for sale to test the market and see what might be possible to sell to help us. We do not intend to sell everything that has been advertised, but we are unsure yet as to which vehicles may have to leave.”

‘Heavy heart’

In recent months the railway has been undertaking a review of its collection, with three Mk.1 coaches and a SR PMV having been advertised for sale during 2023. However, just two days into the new year, David announced that the smaller of the railway’s two pannier tanks was another asset identified for potential disposal. “It is with a heavy heart that the railway is considering the sale of

No. 6435,” he said. “The GWR auto-fitted pannier tank is a much-loved loco by crews and very capable on our steeply-graded line, but financial pressures require us to release this capital.

“The loco last ran in 2022 when its boiler ticket expired; it had new tyres fitted in 2021. It is, of course, complete and has been dry-stored since the expiry of its ticket, but it does require a full overhaul. It had a lot of work carried out in 2020, including on a large number of crown stays.”

With the stark reality that No. 6435 could very well depart, David said that chocolate and cream-liveried GWR Hawksworth auto-trailer No. 232 could also be for sale as the departure of the auto-fitted locomotive would likely result in its reduced use. No. 232 saw its restoration complete in 2011, returning it to an auto-coach construction having had the driving end and much of the interior gutted when it was converted to a director’s inspection saloon.

Class 121 DMU ‘bubblecar’ No. 121020, one of the last of its class and used by Chiltern Railways working the Princess Risborough to Aylesbury line until 2017, and recently restored GWR toplight corridor third No. 2434, currently on a three-year loan to the South Devon Railway, could also be sold. Bought by the Bodmin & Wenford Railway Trust, No. 121020 was used until 2020 when it was stopped for repairs, before debuting once again at the September 23/24 diesel gala last year. Sadly, days after the event concluded, graffiti vandals sprayed



GWR pannier No. 6435, pictured in service on the Bodmin & Wenford Railway on May 24, 2018, is potentially up for disposal. BWR

a large tag on one side of the unit which necessitated its withdrawal from service.

“We don’t want to sell anything, but we must be realistic about what is required to for us to fulfil our aims. We need a core fleet for commercial passenger operation, a maintenance fleet to look after the railway, and we want to preserve things connected

to the local china clay operation,” said David.

“Anything that doesn’t fit in those three categories is on the potential disposal list.”

The recent arrival of the National Wagon Preservation Group’s fleet of CDA hopper wagons (see page 24) will not be affected, nor will the BR clay hood wooden plank wagons.



On the morning of January 10, the Diesel Traction Group’s Class 52 D1015 *Western Champion* undertook a loaded main line test run on a GB Railfreight-worked train following engine repairs, its first outing on the network since 2021. In December 2016, one of its MD655 engines failed, which was subsequently replaced by an overhauled unit in 2021 that also failed. Now fitted with two MTU 12V538 engines, the test was to prove them and, if successful, resume making the locomotive available for future railtours. PAUL FINCH

Ffestiniog *Prince* prepares for revival anniversary comeback

ON December 30, the Ffestiniog Railway’s small England 0-4-0STT No. 2 *Prince* was removed from storage at the Glan-y-Pwll sheds near the terminus at Blaenau Ffestiniog, from where it was towed by 0-4-0ST large quarry Hunslet *Lilla* to Boston Lodge in preparation for its overhaul.

Prince’s last boiler ticket expired in September 2022, with fundraising having taken place since to fund the required work. The project is expected to commence once single Fairlie 0-4-4T *Taliesin* has been completed, so that *Prince* will be completed in time to appear in 2025 for the 70th anniversary of the Ffestiniog revival.

Prince’s working life ended in 1936 when the firebox and boiler were found to have issues. A lack of money delayed the order for a new boiler, which was finally placed with Adamsons in September 1943 and delivered in July 1945.

The closure of the line in 1946 meant it was never reassembled; when the preservationists took over in 1954, the England was found as it had been left – with the new boiler waiting to be fitted. The ideal candidate to be the first locomotive to be restored, working its first train in preservation on August 2, 1955, and becoming the mainstay of the railway’s first services.

Must do better:

Cost-cutting messages are issued by two major lines

THE Great Central Railway is set to make a loss of about £500,000 in the current financial year, general manager Malcolm Holmes said in the pre-Christmas edition of the line's RailMail newsletter to supporters.

"It's been a very challenging year financially," he said. "With the massive hit of the rising cost of utilities (quadrupling during 2022), the price of coal, and the problems faced with the delivery of dining services at the end of that year, 2023 was always going to get off to a difficult start.

"Our outgoings are still exceeding our income, a position that is clearly not sustainable in the long term. We no longer have the benefit of a rich benefactor who can be called upon to offer support, so we must be able to stand on our own two feet.

"I must acknowledge the generous and steadfast support of the Friends of the Great Central Main Line and the David Clarke Railway Trust, which have provided much-needed financial assistance during the year, and whose fundraising efforts help to ensure our long-term success.

"We will need to work hard to get to a position where we can balance our books."

He said that top priorities for this year included: the delivery of high-quality and consistent customer service, with the creation of volunteer visitor welcome hosts in line with common practice at other visitor attractions; making the most of the new 2024 passenger timetable; increasing revenue from in-train dining, cafes, professional services (testing and filming) and

family visitors; interpretation and telling the stories the railway has to tell to further enhance the visitor experience; and maximising revenue from special events.

Meanwhile, Bluebell Railway plc chairman Paul Churchman reported that the financial situation there had made a drastic turnaround during 2023. "In 2022 we posted a loss just short of £400,000, but this was only this amount because we received grant income to the tune of nearly £1 million that must be treated as income in accounting purposes" he said. "This meant that the business lost nearly £1.4 million.

"As we came into 2023, it was apparent if we didn't change what we did we would lose another £1.4 million, and with no more grants to be received, this would be catastrophic. So, in the early part of 2023 we set about making some very dramatic and quick changes so we could survive."

Changes implemented included a £250,000 reduction in the staff payroll, reduced spending in all areas, and fewer trains operating across less operating days in order to consolidate demand to maximise return.

"All of this – and the sheer blood sweat and tears from everyone involved – meant we were able to reduce our loss to about £200,000, although I do not have the final figures yet and am hoping it may be less," Paul added.

"The key thing is to continue this work to get to a break-even position in 2024."



Class 153 No. 57371 in the yard at Quorn on Woodhouse after being delivered to the Great Central Railway in December. JOHN DAVIES/GCR

Modern traction joins GCR's heritage fleet

WHILE the Great Central Railway is famous for main line scenes from the BR steam and diesel days thanks to its double track, it will now be able to even recreate the modern main line as two Class 153 railcars join its collection.

First introduced in 1991, the 153s were ordered to replace the ageing Class 121 and 122 'bubble car' units, with the 'new' units being created by diving the two-car Class 155s and converting the separated carriages into single cars.

The two units now being based on the GCR will not be classed as 'preserved' but as part of a partnership with local Train Operating Companies for training new drivers, providing valuable income for the railway. Until recently, this scheme has used the GCR's heritage railcar fleet but, from a

national rail perspective, is a long way from the modern technology fitted to today's main line trains. The 153s will therefore provide a more relevant training experience.

The first of the two units, No. 57371, arrived on December 13, with the other expected to arrive at the end of January. The appearance of the pair at diesel galas has not been ruled out, and neither have driver experience courses, opportunities likely to appeal to modern traction enthusiasts and help the GCR reach a new audience.

General manager Malcolm Holmes said: "We are delighted to have the 153s on fleet. They offer us great potential for growing our testing and training income from new customers, while providing more realistic training facilities for our existing TOC clients."

Quarry Hunslet 'first' nears return to steam

HUNSLET 0-4-0ST No. 409 *Velinheli*, the first example of the iconic 'Alice' class of quarry locomotives built in 1886, successfully passed its hydraulic test on January 4 at Boston Lodge Works on the Ffestiniog Railway.

Last operational in 2016, its withdrawal from service at the Launceston Steam Railway came just two years after it underwent a 10-yearly overhaul, with the boiler cited as the cause and condemned as a result. With the locomotive's owner committed to other projects, a team from the Ff&WHR stepped in with an offer to help.

A new boiler had already been planned for its next overhaul, but this was brought forward, with work starting in 2018; a revised boiler design was created with flanged and welded plates but a riveted foundation ring. It was carefully planned to fit exactly as the previous one did, while complying with modern requirements.

The new component, privately funded, was test-fitted in the break between Christmas and New Year ahead of the January test; although *Velinheli* runs at a pressure of 120psi, the boiler is designed for a pressure of 180psi to allow it to be used on other examples of the class if required, with the test being conducted with a pressure double that.



The team restoring *Velinheli* at Boston Lodge. PAUL LEWIN/FFWHR

No. 409 will be reassembled over the next few months, with a target for completion in the spring. It will be based at Boston Lodge under the care of the supporting team although is expected to go out on hire to other lines.

IN BRIEF

→ THE overhaul of Aveling & Porter 2-2-0 traction engine *Blue Circle*, the last railway locomotive to be built by the company in 1926, has begun on the Nene Valley Railway. It is hoped that it will return to steam as soon as this summer.

→ THE tender for the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's WD 2-10-0 No. 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn* has been painted Brunswick green ahead of a move to storage while it awaits the overhaul of the rest of the locomotive to be completed.

→ BOSCASTLE Locomotive Ltd has received the first insurance settlement following the theft of parts and materials from its stores on the Great Central Railway in 2022. It is hoped that this payment will now allow for orders to be placed for new parts.



Visitors GWR 2-6-2T No. 5553 and WR 4-6-0 No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* double-head a gala service past Hood Bridge. BERNARD MILLS/SDR

Visiting locomotives bring gala success to South Devon

By Robin Jones

THE South Devon Railway's December 28-30 Winter Steam Gala with two visiting locomotives has been hailed a great success.

The event featured WR 4-6-0 No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor*, which was visiting from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for the 'Polar Express' services earlier in the month, and GWR prairie No. 5553, booked at short notice from the Bodmin & Wenford Railway especially for the gala. It was the first appearance of No. 5553 on the Buckfastleigh line in the heritage era.

The visiting pair ran alongside GWR pannier No. 6412 from the home fleet.

The event featured a six-carriage carmine and cream Mk.1 rake, a three-carriage pre-Nationalisation rake featuring two GWR carriages, and SR Bulleid TSO No. 1456, which is owned by the Bluebell Railway and on long-term loan to the Mid-Hants Railway. That line granted permission for it to visit to provide additional capacity for the 'Polar Express'. It was the first time that a Bulleid coach ran on the SDR.

Also in service was auto trailer No. 233, newly repainted in maroon, as well as a demonstration engineers' train operating morning and evening.

SDR general manager Ernest Elsworth-Wilson said: "We saw more than 1000 people attend the event, which for a small-scale gala in the middle of winter is a very pleasing result, and a very healthy surplus was made from ticket sales."

The next special events on the South Devon Railway are the March 30-31 Easter gala and Back To The 1940s on July 6/7.

As reported in issue 313, the line's £3 million share issue was formally opened on December 1, with a minimum figure of £350,000 to raise. Ernest said the response so far has been pleasing, with share applications

coming in daily. The appeal has been established to fund an array of capital investment projects, including a new restoration hub, an extended and upgraded running and maintenance building, improved visitor facilities and infrastructure upgrades. It also includes the major works required to see GWR Collett goods 0-6-0 No. 3205 steam again following its recent sign-up to a 50-year lease with the SDR.

Shares can be bought online or by sending in a form with a cheque or making a bank transfer. For more information about this (and upcoming events), visit www.southdevonrailway.co.uk/shares



No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* heads a short goods train past the weir below Staverton Bridge on December 29. ROBERT SHERWOOD/SDR



GWR pannier No. 6412 departs Buckfastleigh for Totnes on December 29, with the Southern Railway Bulleid coach on the rear of the train. THOMAS MILLS

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Agency set to contest order to remove infill from bridge

NATIONAL Highways is to contest an order by King Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council's to remove thousands of tons of concrete used to infill the disused Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway overbridge at Congham.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 312, members of the council's planning committee voted unanimously on October 2 to order the Government agency to restore the bridge carrying unclassified St Andrew's Lane over the former South Lynn to Fakenham line, which is earmarked to be turned into a greenway, giving it until April 10 to extract the infill.

National Highways used emergency powers to undertake the £126,000 infilling in March 2021, claiming it was a cost-effective solution to ensure the long-term safety of the bridge.

However, the Government-funded company said that the time given for the removal of the infilling was unrealistic and still claims that the work was justified on traffic safety grounds.

'Particular importance'

Hélène Rossiter, head of the Historical Railways Estate at National Highways, said that an appeal is being lodged with the Planning Inspectorate, taking the view that the council's decision did not adequately reflect the safety concerns raised.

The Heritage Railway Estate Group, an alliance of engineers, sustainable transport advocates and greenway developers which has been campaigning against the agency's treatment of historic former railway bridges, said that the 1926-built structure is of particular importance as only surviving example of a bridge built entirely using an innovative system of modular concrete components developed by renowned railway engineer and locomotive superintendent William Marriott.

It was more impressive than the five other bridges fully or partly constructed with Marriott system products, only two of which now remain.

Bluebell Railway promotes youngest ever steam driver

By Owen Hayward

THE Bluebell Railway played host to an extra special occasion at the end of 2023 when Ben Gray, aged just 21, became the youngest driver ever to be passed out to drive steam locomotives in the heritage line's 64-year history.

Ben, the son of the Bluebell's locomotive engineering director, Tim Gray, began his career at the line aged nine, although railways were firmly in his blood from an even younger age. His first ever accompanied drive of a steam locomotive was at the Evesham Vale Light Railway (after hours at the end of a public day) aged just five!

Ben's progression at the Bluebell was rapid. Having excelled and obtained his necessary badges, being part of The 9F Club, he joined the

locomotive department as a cleaner at 16 years old. From there he rose up through the ranks, becoming a passed fireman in late 2020. During this time, Ben worked on various turns on different locomotive types at the railway, as well as visiting gala engines such as *Cheltenham*, *Clan Line* and *Flying Scotsman*.

After several years honing his skills as a fireman, Ben was then recommended to be added to the Bluebell's driver training programme in early 2023, with a view to an assessment later in the year. This process is spread out over several days, giving assessors time to look at various aspects of locomotive working, practical handling, and footplate knowledge of its participants.

Ben first took an exam on shunting duties and smaller locomotive handling in October, this being carried out on SECR 01 0-6-0 No. 65.

The latter examination was undertaken on December 30, his 21st birthday, for which he worked a larger locomotive – visiting WR 4-6-0 No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* – on a regular passenger working along the full length of the line, something Ben successfully completed being officially passed out by Bluebell inspector Chris Suitters.

A statement said: "This shows The Bluebell Railway's vision and drive to encourage more younger volunteers to follow in his footsteps so that they too can reach their full potential like



Ben with No. 6989 Wightwick Hall, on which he passed his final driving assessment on December 30, 2023, aged just 21. He has become the Bluebell's youngest qualified steam driver in the preservation society's 64-year history. ANDREW BLOWERS/BR

Ben has in becoming the railway's youngest ever passed driver. The railway is extremely lucky to have a range of younger volunteers who, like Ben, wish to keep steam alive and ensure that we continue to bring enjoyment for future generations to pass on.

"Everyone at the railway congratulates Ben on passing his exams, and we wish him the very best driving on The Bluebell Railway for many years to come."



Bluebell Railway inspector Chris Suitters (right) presents Ben Gray with his driver's grade card after successfully passing his assessments on December 30. TIM GRAY/BR

Green award success for Cornwall's Railholiday

VINTAGE carriage restorationist Railholiday has added another trophy to its cabinet by winning the Most Sustainable Small Business category in this year's Cornwall Sustainability Awards.

The family business of Dave and Lizzy Stroud, who restore and convert derelict classic carriages into self-catering holiday accommodation, has five carriages: four at St Germans and one at Hayle alongside the Cornish main line.

Dave said: "It is a great honour and privilege to win this award. This year is our 25th anniversary of letting carriages, so this is a great way to celebrate our silver jubilee.

"Sustainability has always been at the heart of all we do, from restoring our carriages using wood from our own woodland to gardening for optimum wildlife benefit or immersing ourselves in community actions.

"However, we couldn't do it without the support of our amazing team,



The clerestory-roofed Travelling Post Office at St Germans has been the most popular Railholiday coach, originally built in 1889 as No. 2086. RAILHOLIDAY

our guests, and our local community. We also rely on a broad network of other sustainable businesses – our suppliers, our craft and tradespeople, and our green service providers."

He also expressed gratitude to Great Western Railway for its improvements to the Cornish railway timetable, which enables Railholiday's guests to easily explore Cornwall and Devon by train.

This year, Railholiday extended it £50 low-carbon discount to include

residents of Cornwall and Devon, as well as guests arriving by train.

Among Railholiday's initiatives is a green blog, published online at Railholiday.uk

Dave added: "The Cornwall Sustainability Awards are a force for good, and being in a room with like-minded people is inspiring.

"When sustainability becomes the norm, then we will all be winners."

The carriages may be booked at www.Railholiday.co.uk



No. 2968 at Bridgnorth after the arrival of the Stanier Mogul Fund's Mince Pie Steam Special from Kidderminster on December 30. JOHN TITLOW

Members' special celebrates return of Stanier mogul

CELEBRATING the recent return to steam of unique LMS 2-6-0 No. 2968, the Stanier Mogul Fund ran a members' Mince Pie Steam Special on the Severn Valley Railway on December 30. For supporters of the fund, it was free, and members were allowed to bring guests for the bargain price of £20.

The train had to fit in with the regular standard festive timetabled service trains and left Kidderminster

at 12.40pm for a steady run to Bridgnorth.

A layover of about an hour gave members a chance to inspect the locomotive as it ran round before the return run, departing promptly at 3.15pm.

Behind the locomotive were six of the SVR's Midland carriages packed with 200 supporters. The sound of the Mogul climbing Highley and Eardington Banks without a slip was

excellent, with a crisp exhaust beat from the chimney.

A fund statement said: "This happy occasion saw 200 supporters in attendance, which in itself demonstrates the strength of support for and interest in this unique locomotive."

"Plans are afoot for a wider Return to Steam special in the summer months – watch this space! And if you think the Stanier Mogul is looking

spectacular now, wait until you see its fully lined-out guise as LMS 13268, as it will emerge from Bridgnorth's paintshop in the coming months."

Lifetime membership of the fund costs £60, which includes two magazines a year. However, lucky guests who joined on the day of the Mince Pie Steam Special were offered lifetime membership at just £40.

For further information, visit <https://staniermogulfund.org.uk>

First phase of Hythe Pier track restoration is complete

THE replacement of the first 50 yards of track, points and sidings on the 2ft gauge Hythe Pier Railway was completed during the first week of December.

The Hythe Pier Heritage Association commenced the restoration of the track on the Grade II-listed Victorian pier during the summer of 2022 with the closing of the shore station platform. A temporary platform was positioned just beyond the limit of the project, entitled Phase 1 Track Restoration.

Progress was subsequently delayed by issues including planning applications centred around the removal of a non-functioning Victorian beam. This was eventually resolved by the HPHA installing a new support beam alongside the original beam.

The installation of the new beam allowed the HPHA to proceed with the removal of the existing track and decking in advance of replacing cross beams and the laying of new deck boards.

Before the new track could be laid, investigations had to be carried out

to find a level surface. Over the 102 years since the track was first laid, there has been movement in the structure, noticeable in recent times as the train approached the shore station.

Detailed work

At the start of December, despite the inclement weather, the new rails, points and buffer were unloaded from an articulated vehicle and craned into position over the ticket office roof, overhead cables and pedestrian walkway – all without disruption to the ferry traffic.

Once the track was in position and alignment and gradient confirmed, the task of securing it was carried out in driving rain. The new points and sidings were similarly secured.

The third rail that provides the power for the world's oldest continuously operating electric pier train had been shut down at the beginning of the installation, temporarily suspending services along the 700-yard pier to the ferry operation. The 250V DC third rail was subsequently removed ahead

of the installation of a new rail. During this short period, train staff reverted to using the former method of transporting bulky passenger luggage and goods to the ferry by handcart, as was the case before the railway opened in 1922.

The whole installation was completed in just four days.

The restoration of the track was financed by the HPHA through grants and specific donations, and it was carried out by Alan Keef Ltd of Ross-on-Wye under the supervision of Alice Keef.

Much preparatory work was carried out by volunteers from the Hythe Shed (at the Pier) and engineers from the Hythe and Southampton Ferry Company (formerly Blue Funnel Ferries).

The train continues to operate from the temporary platform, while the construction of a new platform at the shore station is set for completion in the coming weeks.

HPHA director Alan Titheridge said: "The association is thrilled in finally getting this work complete. Now that we have established the track level,



The aligning of track and points on the pier railway on December 6. ALAN TITHERIDGE/HRHA

we can get on with constructing a new platform and see the train once again bring its passengers into the station."

→ To continue its restoration of the Victorian pier and railway, the association has invited further support in the form of donations, which can be made at www.hythepierha.org.uk



The overhaul of a third S160, No. 3278 *Franklin D Roosevelt*, continues in the workshops at Cheddleton. The boiler has recently passed a hydraulic test. CVR



USATC No. 6046 returned to service on the Churnet Valley in time to work the railway's 'Polar Express' services, pictured during a rehearsal train on November 30, 2023. DAVID GIBSON/CVR

Churnet Valley on track for S160 trio as No. 6046 returns

By Owen Hayward

USATC 2-8-0 S160 No. 6046 has returned to service on the Churnet Valley Railway alongside No. 5197, bringing a pair of operational classmates together on the Staffordshire line once more – and a third example is on the horizon.

No. 6046's boiler has received a new tubeplate at the firebox end, following which a full retube was carried out. In tandem with this work, some new flexible stays and smokebox rivets were also fitted.

A new chimney was cast for the locomotive, the pattern having been made in-house at the railway's own carriage shop, with new pipework made and fitted to feed ancillary equipment such as the air pump and injectors. Following reassembly, it has been repainted to a high standard, once again adorning hi-gloss black.

No. 6046 worked many of the CVR's 'Polar Express' trains, with footplate crews commenting positively on its free steaming capabilities. Its return to service alongside No. 5197 means the CVR once again has a pair of these Baldwin Locomotive Works machines.

Three times a charm

Meanwhile, in the Cheddleton workshops, a third S160 is also progressing apace. Built in 1944, No. 3278 is a product of the American Locomotive company rather than Baldwin. It was shipped to the UK where it was run in on LNER metals before being used on



The newly built tender tank for No. 3278 in the yard at Cheddleton. CVR

the GWR region, but before the year was out it was shipped over to France.

After the Second World War, it then became one of 248 locomotives given to the Italian State Railways before being sold again, this time to Hellenic State Railways in Greece, where it worked until the early 1980s.

It was repatriated in 1984 when bought for preservation, returning to Britain with WD Nos. 3652 (now 90775 at the North Norfolk Railway) and 3672 (*Dame Vera Lynn* at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.) No. 3278 went to the Mid-Hants, where it was named *Franklin D Roosevelt*.

It returned to steam in the 1990s, running for a 10-year stint before withdrawal pending overhaul. In 2014, its owner moved it to the former MOD site at Long Marston with some work contracted to



Midland 4F No. 44422 will be given a repaint to improve its cosmetic appearance while plans for its overhaul are formulated. CVR

Tyseley, but by January 2021 it had moved again to the CVR.

A new regulator handler and fitted assembly were made and ratched, along with the reverser. It has been converted from right to left-hand drive, and the boiler has recently passed a hydraulic test.

It is currently expected to return to service wearing Longmoor Military Railway blue livery; an expected date has not yet been given.

Meanwhile, LMS 4F No. 44422 has received cosmetic care in the form of a repaint being carried out by volunteer working parties. It was withdrawn in 2013 following the discovery of several firebox stays being in poor condition. Some work was carried out by the West Somerset Railway (with which the owner, 44422 Locomotive Company Ltd, had signed a 25-year agreement) that saw it steam again in 2016.

A bottom end overhaul

commenced in 2018, but in 2019 the WSR terminated the agreement and the 4F moved to the CVR that December.

An inspection of 4F's boiler has been conducted as plans are being formed to return it to service once more.

Coach work

Three coaches also returned to service on the line in the final quarter of 2023. Mk.2 Nos. 5149 and 5228 have undergone full repaints and some interior repairs, while Mk.1 No. 4392 has seen a major interior rebuild concluded.

BR CCT No. 94581 is also receiving bodywork repairs as it is being converted to a steam heat and generator vehicle; work is well advanced, with all the pillars, roof corners and closure plates completed and steelwork for the body sides now delivered.

From valley to mill: Barclay *Dougal* heads to Kent

THE Welshpool & Llanfair Light and Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light railways have announced that an agreement has been reached which will see diminutive Andrew Barclay 0-4-0T *Dougal* head south from mid-Wales for a four-year stay in Kent, during which time it will be returned to steam.

Dougal was built in 1946 for the extensive narrow-gauge system of the Provan Gasworks in Glasgow, its low design enabling the engine to work in the restricted confines there.

Following withdrawal, *Dougal* was rescued by the W&LLR in 1969 and, after a restoration, first steamed in 1975, being given the name of a character from the popular Magic Roundabout children's television TV series. It proved a popular attraction at special events for many years before significant boiler repairs became necessary in 2014.

Dougal made its furthest journey in late 2018 to Taiwan for the annual sugar festival to mark the signing of a cooperation agreement between the W&LLR and Taiwan Sugar Co.

Currently on static display at Welshpool following the expiry of its

boiler ticket in 2014, *Dougal* will be loaned from the W&LLR in Powys to the SKLR in Kent.

The first two years of its stay will involve the required boiler work and other repairs at the SKLR workshop to allow it to return to steam, with the subsequent two years spent operating on the Sittingbourne line with occasional visits to its Welsh home to take part in special events.

As two of the only surviving 2ft 6in gauge lines in the UK, the W&LLR and SKLR have closely cooperated for many years; most recently, Sittingbourne's freshly restored to original condition locomotive, *Premier*, was star turn at the W&LLR's 2022 steam gala.

The SKLR is also now home to several of the 'toastrack' carriages which originally operated on the Welsh line in the early days of preservation, one of which made a brief return to the W&LLR in 2023 to take part in the line's 60 Years of Preservation event.

W&LLR chairman Steve Clews said: "This is a great opportunity for us to work more closely with our friends at Sittingbourne while returning to



Pictured at Llanfair Caereinion prior to the expiration of its boiler certificate in 2014, *Dougal* will now head south to Sittingbourne where it will be overhauled and returned to steam. ANDREW CHARMAN/W&LLR

service a much-loved locomotive for both railways to make the most of.

"We thank the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway for the generous offer to our volunteers to take part in the restoration."

SKLR chairman Liz Fuller said: "This is a great opportunity for the W&LLR's

south-east based volunteers to come and work on one of their locos without having the long journey to Wales. Sharing the engine shed and facilities with our volunteers can only strengthen the relationship between the two railways, as well as sharing specialist skills."

Festive goodwill triumphs after post-Christmas Bitton break-in

AVON Valley Railway staff and volunteers were left disheartened when thieves struck during the festive season, stealing a large number of cast iron track chairs worth thousands of pounds.

Having enjoyed a successful Santa special season, staff were dismayed to find the materials gone, believed to have been stolen sometime between December 23-28.

The assets were kept in the yard at Bitton, earmarked for use in relaying the track over the winter months. It is believed that they were likely passed over a nearby fence to be taken away down an adjacent cycle path.

An AVR spokesman said: "After a lot of hard work put in by our volunteers and staff over another successful Santa season, to discover we were targeted by thieves again hurts.

"The chairs stolen were earmarked for planned trackwork within the yard at Bitton and had been collected and acquired by our volunteers over several years.

"The value of about two tons of 'scrap' cast iron will be nothing compared to the price we will now need to pay to replace them with new, somewhere in the region of £3000 to £4000 – money that

we didn't need to spend. As a result, the railway is now working on improving its site security to protect its assets and has already sought quotes to purchase new fencing materials and improve its CCTV coverage.

"This is another drain on the railway's funds, and it invites you to visit the Avon Valley Railway Heritage Trust website where you can donate, with any money raised going to improve site security and hopefully replace some of the stolen components."

Christmas is often described as a time of goodwill, and this was certainly the case for the AVR's supporters as they swiftly stepped in with donations towards the £5000 appeal. Less than a week later, on January 3, more than £3200 had been received.

"We are overwhelmed by the kindness since our Robbery Appeal went live," a spokesman said. "Our target is £5000, so we are nearly there!"

This year marks the railway's 50th anniversary and it plans to celebrate the occasion on April 14, details of which were still to be announced as we went to press.

→ To donate to the appeal, visit www.avrht.org/robbery-support-fund

Colne Valley instigates winter clear-out of surplus stock

THE Colne Valley Railway has begun a large disposal of surplus assets following a review of its collection and requirements, with a mix of rare and highly sought-after vehicles made available.

The first items of stock advertised on December 16 were Avonside 0-4-0ST No. 1875 of 1921 *Barrington*, which was built for the Bombay Harbour Improvement Trust before later being acquired by Rugby Portland Cement, which employed it at the Barrington Cement Works in Cambridgeshire. It has not run for many years, requiring a full overhaul.

In the same listing was an LNER vacuum-braked 20T brake van, the design of which became the basis for the standard BR brake vans. Although the bodywork is heavily deteriorated, its rarity and low asking price meant that within hours of it being advertised, eight offers had been received and a sale was quickly agreed. A Mermaid ballast wagon was also advertised and quickly snapped up.

With good momentum, further stock has since been advertised. BR Mk.1 CK No. 15981 seeks offers of about £10,000. Built in 1956, it has latterly been converted into a half-kitchen, half-seating area catering vehicle (in use as such until 2020) but retains its vacuum brake equipment, with the doors and wheels described as in good condition.



Having spent many years on static display, Avonside No. 1875 *Barrington* is being offered for sale by the Colne Valley Railway. CVR

Mk.1 BG No. 80792, presently in use as an office coach, has a similar price tag. While the exterior is weather-worn, the vehicle is watertight and, like the CK, it retains all its vacuum brake gear.

The final vehicle on offer is BR CCT No. 94434, with Nos. 94737 and 94889 having been advertised at the end of 2022.

While the latter pair had been in static use as seating and classroom vehicles on an isolated section of track within the station, No. 94434 has been used as a stores vehicle in the sidings.

While advertised as having "no leaks", the bodywork is poor and requires attention; offers are sought in the region of £5000.

Interested parties should contact CVR chairman Paul Lemon on email at chairman@colnevalleyrailway.co.uk

Standing room only

New Year crowds pack out Bluebell for Bulleid's first trains

**Words and pictures
by Owen Hayward**

THE lure of a Bulleid machine proved to be a welcome New Year boon for the Bluebell Railway when its newly-overhauled Battle of Britain No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* debuted on public service trains.

Sir Archie's first restoration was completed at Sheffield Park in 2009, however, in October 2011 the discovery of leaking stays, star-fracturing platework and cracks in the thermic syphons necessitated its early withdrawal from service, the necessary repairs requiring the boiler to be lifted. With so much work to be done, which would avoid the risk of further fractures appearing, the decision was made to overhaul the boiler to return No. 34059 to service with a fresh 10-yearly ticket.

The boiler was passed by the inspector on September 25, 2023, (as reported in issue 312)

and subsequent reassembly, testing and commissioning saw the Bulleid return to service – albeit in aesthetically incomplete condition – in time for the railway's festive services.

The New Year's Day steam-up, therefore, was the first opportunity for the general public to sample the locomotive working general service trains ahead of its transfer to the paintshop at Horsted Keynes for the full BR lined green livery to be completed.

Bluebell at its best

It was fast made clear that the appeal of this locomotive was not to be underestimated, with *Sir Archie's* first departure from Sheffield Park at 11.30am being nearly full to bursting point. Although the stock was still dressed in lighting equipment from the Bluebell's 'Steamlights' services (the last of which had run the night before), No. 34059 looked at home at

the head of a rake of Mk.1 coaching stock, with a parcels van included in the consist for good measure.

LBSCR A1 No. 72 *Fenchurch* continued to earn its place in the spotlight. The 'Terrier' ran two return trips with LNWR Observation saloon No. 1503 as its only stock across the full length of the line, affording passengers a panoramic view of the countryside in both directions. As with the Bulleid's services, these trips were also fully loaded, with the normal upgrade supplement for travel aboard the saloon waived for the day.

Also making a welcome return was the operation of a vintage goods train. With the Bluebell goods division having completed the restoration of several of the railway's wagons over the last few years, a sizeable mixed train was marshalled that comprised several SECR and SR designs (amid others), worked by SECR 0-6-0 O1 No. 65, resplendent

in its lined Chatham green. A SR Queen Mary was attached to the rear, with the set being remarshalled at the end of each journey to move the brake van to the correct end of the formation.

A second main service train was worked by long-term loanee WR 4-6-0 No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall*, courtesy of the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton Road. The set was formed of a mix of vintage four-wheeled, bogie and SR green Bulleid coaching stock.

Wightwick Hall has seen its loan extended through 2024, having originally been signed to help with the 2022 operating season and arriving on the Bluebell that June.

Icing on the festive cake

Bluebell Railway plc chairman Paul Churchman said that the event proved to be far more popular than was envisioned, superbly rounding off the operating season after a very

Bursting forth: Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* erupts from Sharpthorne Tunnel with its first general public working since completion of its overhaul. It was due to move into the paintshop for the final livery applications to be applied.





No. 72 Fenchurch coasts down the 1-in-75 through West Hoathly with the 11.45am from East Grinstead.



The white post marks the end of the 1-in-150 climb through Mill Place as **Sir Archibald Sinclair** approaches Kingscote on its final working of the day.



The operation of a vintage goods train was a sight welcomed by many, with SECR 01 0-6-0 No. 65 allocated to the duty and seen here passing through the site of West Hoathly, having just exited the tunnel. COURTENAY FORDER



WR 4-6-0 No. 6989 **Wightwick Hall** passes through Leamlands with the 1.05pm departure from Horsted Keynes, bound for East Grinstead.

successful Christmas period. "It was an amazing success, much more so than expected," he said. "We had a good mix of families and enthusiasts, and the freight train went down well with everyone – more of them to come in 2024 as not only do the enthusiasts enjoy them, but they also give added value and appeal to our family customers. It was on a par with a summer Saturday in terms of visitors and revenue.

"Our 'Steamlights' was an amazing success and went very well, with most trains at 100% capacity. Santa went very well too. We did have slow uptake on sales on the set that started at East Grinstead but as we got nearer the time, we saw sales pick up and actually, it was almost on budget; the Sheffield Park set was sold out from October.

"The whole Christmas period went very well and was in line with expectations. We did exceptionally well on catering sales in particular.

"It is a much-needed cash injection as we now head into the two months where we don't run any train until February half-term – and then not again until March."

Winter works

The winter closedown is set to be a busy time for the railway, with the new-build Brighton Atlantic No. 32424 **Beachy Head** imminently due to move out of Atlantic House and into the railway's workshops for final assembly and commissioning work to commence, ahead of a projected debut in the latter half of 2024. Its place in its home of nearly

18 years will be taken by the LSWR pairing of B4 No. 96 **Normandy**, the overhaul of which will commence in earnest, and the iconic Adams radial tank No. 488, which will be dismantled and assessed ahead of its own overhaul starting.

Track renewal will take place on the line through Beeches Wood (just north of Sheffield Park), which has been subject to a speed restriction for most of the year. Work also continues in the carriage and wagon workshops, with Pullman brake third No. 54 rapidly nearing completion and ongoing work to renew door locks and carry out repairs across the four Metropolitan Railway Chesham carriages.



SECR 01 0-6-0 No. 65 was required to shunt the freight after arrival at Kingscote to reposition the brake van ready for the return journey, pictured running through platform 1 to this, having moved the rest of the wagons over to platform 2.



Bound for Horsted Keynes, LBSCR 'Terrier' No. 72 **Fenchurch** passes Nobles Farm with the LNWR Observation saloon on the 10.35am departure from Sheffield Park.

Well-known model retailer to permanently close this year

A STAPLE of the model railway sector for nearly 80 years, Hattons Model Railways announced on January 8 that it will be closing its doors permanently this year.

Founded in 1946 by Norman Hatton after he'd been demobbed from the army, he opened the first shop in Smithdown Road, Liverpool, selling items he knew were in demand, ranging from firewood and bric-a-brac to second-hand toys and fireworks. He quickly realised that toys, and especially model trains, were his bestsellers and the business expanded from there, requiring a new premises which, in 1958, was bought on the same street.

Norman retired in 1998 and his children, Keith and Christine, took over. Sadly, Keith died unexpectedly in 2008.

Challenging climate

A Hattons spokesman said:

"Over the decades we have been privileged to serve enthusiasts and share our passion for model railways with hundreds of thousands of customers.

"Changing market conditions have had a large impact on the business; we have seen this in declining customer numbers, changing customer demographics, and supply chain disruption.

"Increased cost of compliance has become a large factor. Brexit, Goods and Services Tax and other operational costs of running an international business have all increased dramatically over the past few years. Despite the company's best efforts to adapt to changing market conditions, it has become clear that continuing operations is no longer sustainable. As such, the decision has been taken to wind down in an orderly fashion.

"We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our loyal customers, dedicated staff, and the entire model railway community for their unwavering support.

"The company has cherished the opportunity to contribute to the passion and joy that model railways bring to people's lives."



Bagnall 0-4-OST *Judy* with its unique brake van passenger train. JON HIRD/BWR

Small means beautiful for Bodmin passenger train

By Robin Jones

THE Bodmin & Wenford Railway's one-day post-Christmas Winter Steam-Up offered GWR small prairie No. 5552 and diminutive Par Docks Bagnall 0-4-OST *Judy* on an intensive timetable of 10 departures from Bodmin General between 9.45am and 4pm.

No. 5552 worked the service train of three BR Mk.1s, much as it did in BR days on Cornish branch lines when it was based at Truro shed (83F).

Judy hauled four trips a day from Bodmin General to Bodmin Parkway with a brake van carrying 15 passengers at a time, the locomotive dwarfed by its load on the steep gradients.

Word had spread about *Judy*'s unusual seven-mile return trips, and the sight of its unique combination proved to be particularly popular. One visitor even set off from Nottingham at 5am just to sample this rarity.

The weather was kind, and the event was well-attended.

Meanwhile, the railway is now closed to the public for the usual winter break when maintenance becomes the priority for permanent staff and volunteers.

Twelve days of trackwork are planned for January, February and early March, while in the workshops, the locomotives and rolling stock will be receiving considerable attention ahead of the 2024 season commencing.



GWR 2-6-2T No. 5552 and Bagnall 0-4-OST *Judy* at Bodmin General on December 29. JIMMY JAMES/BWR

Class 08 No. 08359 shunts the Bodmin & Wenford Railway's newly acquired rake of eight redundant CDA hopper wagons at Bodmin General on December 14. As reported last issue, the railway will use them to create a second heritage china clay train. DAVE LETCHER/BWR



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Deal secures Darjeeling tank for 10 years at Statfold Barn

By Robin Jones

THE Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust has agreed a landmark deal to have the late Adrian Shooter's Sharp Stewart B 0-4-0SWTT No. 19 overhauled at the Statfold Barn Railway and based there along with its replica carriages.

Trust chairman Jeremy Davey and fellow trustee Andy Savage have concluded formal arrangements with Graham Lee, founder of the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust, for the future of the 1889-built Darjeeling Himalayan Railway locomotive.

Jeremy and Graham have signed a cooperation agreement covering 19B's operation for the next 19 years.

"It is an agreement that we are all delighted with. Statfold has kindly agreed to carry out the overhaul in its superb workshops, something we are very excited about given the high standard of its work," said Jeremy.

The overhaul is planned to start imminently and will be aligned to 19B's conservation management plan authored by Andy. Using the National Railway Museum's plan as a

basis, Andy said: "This sets out how we will care for No. 19B and respect its heritage going forward."

Graham said: "I am delighted to have been able to offer No. 19B and the carriages a home and formally welcomed the operating crew and trustees to Statfold at the signing."

"My engineering workshop team look forward to commencing the overhaul, which we all hope will be straightforward with no major issues to be rectified."

As with all steam locomotive overhauls, the unknown factor is the condition of the Victorian boiler which will, as ever, be established only when it is inspected thoroughly out of the frames. Constructed of iron and copper, it is thought to be the oldest largely original steam locomotive boiler still operating.

Jeremy said: "Presently, we know of no major causes for concern, but until we get the boiler out of the frames, the tubes out, and a good look by our boiler inspector John Glaze (who has looked after it since it landed back in the UK in 2003), we won't know for sure."

The cooperation agreement



The agreement for the overhaul and operation of No. 19B at Statfold Barn has been signed by Andy Savage, Graham Lee and Jeremy Davey. DTLT

also covers No. 19B's operations at Statfold, detailing how its crews, formed around the ex-Beeches Light Railway team, will conform to Statfold's operating standards, ongoing maintenance and protection of the locomotive and the two associated blue carriages. Importantly, the agreement accommodates the trust's plans

to tour to other railways and the development of Indian-themed events at Statfold.

The agreement was signed six months to the day from when the trust purchased No. 19B and the two carriages at the Beeches Light Railway auction. If all goes well, without any unwelcome surprises, the aim is to have it steaming again for the main summer 2024 season.

Trust treasurer 'Fuzz' Jordan said: "This marks the end of the beginning phase made possible by donations, loans, covenants and crucially, Graham Lee."

"No. 19B and the carriages' futures are now secured at an amazing railway."

"But we could always use more income to invest in 19B's continuing operation post-overhaul and to start an overhaul fund for 2034."



The Statfold Barn Railway museum shed at Christmas, with No. 19B taking centre stage. DTLT

Erlestoke Manor returns west – but not before a springtime Sussex stopover

MANOR class No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* will once again spend the summer on loan to the West Somerset Railway, having starred at the Bluebell Railway's branch line weekend first.

Renowned for its exceptionally Southern and constituent companies' rolling stock and stations, the Bluebell surprised enthusiasts with an unexpected gift on Christmas Eve – the announcement that No. 7812 would be appearing at its May 10-12 branch line weekend.

With 2023 having had a Midland flavour thanks to the visit of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway pairing of Class 27 0-6-0 No. 52322 'Pug' and 0-4-0ST No. 11243, the

Manor's visit looks set to transport enthusiasts to the South West, where the GWR and SR could once be found crossing one another at locations such as Exeter and Plymouth, or even Templecombe on the Somerset & Dorset route.

Although it is not expected to run at the event, long-term loanee No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* will keep its fellow product of Swindon Works company during its nights at Sheffield Park, having been on loan to the line since June 2022. Its stay is currently extended through 2024.

Perhaps most commonly associated with working expresses along the Welsh Cambrian route, their light axle loading led to their

deployment on many routes across the regions, including branch line services.

Go west (again)

Following the completion of its most recent overhaul at the end of 2022, No. 7812 spent the majority of 2023 working services on the West Somerset Railway before returning to the SVR to work festive services there. After its appearance in Sussex, it will once again head to Somerset for the summer season.

EMF chair Adrian Hassell said: "Last year's travels for No. 7812 proved a superb exercise to the mutual benefit of the Erlestoke Manor Fund, the Severn Valley

Railway and the West Somerset Railway. The same situation for all three organisations applies this year, with the added arrangement that *Erlestoke Manor* will visit the Bluebell Railway. This will be an excellent and rare opportunity for a Manor to steam in Sussex."

"The trustees of the EMF are planning a special train on the WSR for EMF shareholders in the summer. Details will be announced as soon as available and via the fund's newsletter."

Peter went on to assure supporters that "the SVR remains the home of the EMF, with its other Manor (No. 7802 *Bradley Manor*) due to return later this year."

Help the Helston Railway's £250k southern push

THE Helston Railway has launched a £350,000 Making Tracks appeal to further extend the line southwards.

The railway is currently extending over the Lowertown Viaduct to Nancegollan to provide a new station.

This work again entails excavating a large cutting which also has been filled in, and funds are needed for rails, ballast and infrastructure.

Nancegollan was the biggest station on the GWR branch and served the fishing port of Porthleven. The eight-mile branch from Gwinear Road, the southernmost in the UK, opened in 1887 and closed to passengers in 1962 and goods in 1964.

The Helston Railway Preservation Society was formed with about 12 members in 2002. In April 2005, members began clearing the trackbed. The society ran its first passenger trains in December 2011/

Services currently run between Prospidnick and Trutall Halt, with a midway request stop at Trevarno.

The railway also wants to build a new access road into Prospidnick station, providing better facilities.

"This will bring the ability to again get long loads such as carriages in to the railway, something that was lost after a local landowner blocked our previous entrance. As importantly, it will also give us a much nicer public entrance instead of having to come through an old farmyard," said a railway statement.

"We are all excited at the prospect of getting on with these projects and indeed are in the early stages of starting, but now, to try and facilitate getting the infrastructure completed quickly, we need to put out an appeal for funds to help us get there. We receive no grant funding, and it is a big ask for just our members and volunteers to attempt to fund bigger tasks like these.

"With second-hand bullhead rail costing about £750 per 60ft length, cost of ballast and materials for road making and so on, we need to raise £350,000.

"We believe this will enable us to increase our visitor offering and so help to bring much-needed tourist trade in to Helston and the surrounding area, as well as benefitting ourselves."



Work underway to extend the Helston Railway's running line south from its current terminus at Truthall Halt. HR

The railway is also seeking more volunteers for a wide variety of roles, from drivers and firemen to lineside vegetation clearance.

→ To donate to the appeal, visit www.helstonrailway.co.uk or send a cheque

to Helston Railway Preservation Society, Trevarno Farm, Prospidnick, Helston, Cornwall TR13 0RY or make a balance transfer to the society via sort code 30-13-88 and account number 00722128.



The boiler of No. 1363 on a trolley while the firebox repairs are being made. GWS



The upper part of the cab of No. 1363 being prepared for a new roof sheet to be fitted. The chassis is in the background, with a new coal bunker fitted. GWS

Restoration of GWR saddle tank moving ahead at Didcot

WORK is progressing on the restoration of GWR 0-6-OST No. 1363 at Didcot Railway Centre.

A new cab roof is being fitted, while new platework has been welded in the outer firebox.

A new coal bunker has been fitted to the chassis, while the saddle tank is also being repaired with some of the corroded platework being replaced.

No. 1363 was built in 1910 to a short wheelbase design for hauling heavy loads around exceptionally tight curves and based on nine 1392 class 0-6-OSTs that the GWR had inherited from the Cornwall Minerals Railway.

The five 1910 locomotives were numbered 1361-65 and were the last saddle tanks built at Swindon. Unusually for such small machines of this type, the GWR fitted them with outside cylinders. They remained virtually unaltered throughout their long working life.

An updated version of the class were six pannier tanks, Nos. 1366 to 1371, which were built in 1934. One of them, No. 1369, is preserved on the South Devon Railway.

No. 1363 is the oldest genuine Great Western engine at Didcot. It spent most of its working life at Laira (Plymouth), being used in the docks, often to power the ocean liner

expresses between the ship and the main line station, and accordingly is fitted with full vacuum brake and steam heating equipment.

Withdrawn by BR in November 1962, No. 1363 became Laira's last steam locomotive, and was eventually being bought by a group of Great Western Society members.

It moved in steam to Totnes in August 1964, and was restored there to full working order.

In May 1969, No. 1363 moved to the society's former depot at Bodmin, where it received a new front buffer beam.

When the Bodmin depot closed, it moved to Didcot.



New platework being welded in the outer firebox of the boiler. The lower part of the throatplate is being replaced. Once that has been riveted in place, the firebox side sheets can be replaced. GWS

Sir Timothy Laurence inspects Stanway Viaduct after £270k 'cure' for failed joints is found

By Robin Jones

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has found a solution to 'surprise' structural problems discovered within its 120-year-old landmark Stanway Viaduct during waterproofing works.

As reported last issue, an open joint where the mortar bond has failed was found in several brickwork courses well below the track level of both parapets on the outstanding architectural feature of the Cotswold line. Evidence suggests that the problem has been progressively developing over many years and may be down to an original design fault. The problem was exposed after all track materials had been removed in order to renew the failed waterproof deck while both parapets are leaning slightly outwards.

The failed joints extend across nearly the full length of the gently curving 656ft-long 15-arch viaduct, which opened in 1904. BR lifted the track from the viaduct in 1979, but the G/WR re-laid a single track over it in 2005.

As with the first phase of the waterproofing works, the fresh round of repairs estimated at £270,000 are being funded by the Gloucestershire

Warwickshire Railway Trust, and Walsh Construction of Worcester is pressing ahead.

On January 5, progress on the repairs was inspected by trust president Sir Timothy Laurence KCVO, CB, husband of the Princess Royal.

During his visit, hosted by trust chairman Philip Young and the line's civil engineering director, Dr Graham Plant, Sir Tim saw that the gap in the mortar had been cleaned and cement grouted, and learned about the technique for stabilising the parapets. Stainless steel ropes attached to the parapets will be secured to the reinforcing mesh within the new deck to reduce the risk of further movement.

Dr Plant said: "We have pressed ahead to jet-wash and grout the failed joints."

"The wire ropes can be adjusted to take account of construction tolerances in any future movement of the parapets. We and our consultants have burned the midnight oil exploring a range of options and this is the neatest and most cost-effective remedy. Importantly, it does not affect the heritage appearance of the 120-year-old viaduct and minimises the delay in resuming train services to Broadway."



Sir Timothy Laurence inspecting Stanway Viaduct, with the newly installed grout visible along the faulty joint between the common red and the engineering blue bricks. JACK BOSKETT/G/WR

Sir Tim said: "This is a neat solution that has been developed collaboratively between G/WR's engineers, designer Jonathan Symonds, and contractor Walsh Construction."

"Importantly, it does not affect the external appearance of this heritage structure and I compliment the railway on the way it is tackling the project to preserve it for future generations to enjoy."

"I appreciate that the additional work has significantly added to the cost of the viaduct's refurbishment

and that reopening of the line to Broadway will be delayed by a few weeks, but I look forward to returning and travelling over the viaduct when this initial stage of the project is completed."

A £1.5 million public appeal for urgent repairs to the viaduct was launched last March, as reported in issue 305. Sir Tim added: "I encourage anyone who loves this outstandingly beautiful line to support the trust's appeal."

→ To donate, visit www.gwrt.org.uk/donate/stanway-viaduct-appeal

Red Wheel plaque unveiled at Shrewsbury Abbey

RESTORED Shrewsbury Abbey station has been awarded a National Transport Trust Red Wheel heritage plaque in recognition of the importance of the historic Abbey Foregate site.

The station, which had been built on part of a ruined medieval monastery, opened on August 13, 1866, as the temporary terminus of the Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway.

The station became the permanent terminus of the railway after financial difficulties caused the abandonment of its planned extension to Market Drayton and closed on June 22, 1880; a rare example of a railway closure in Britain in the 19th century.

After several attempts it reopened on April 13, 1911, on what had become the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, but closed to regular services on November 6, 1933.

The Royal Engineers rebuilt the line in the Second World War with a top-secret storage explosives depot at Kinnerley, the station reopening for military personnel in 1941. The railway was then closed by the military in 1960.

After Shrewsbury Abbey station closed, the goods yard was occupied by an oil depot until July 5, 1988. The original station building and platform built for the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire

were restored in 2005/6 and now forms the headquarters of the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust, which opens to the public on certain days.

A ceremony and reception took place on December 14 at the station, when Mrs Anna Turner, the Lord Lieutenant for Shropshire, officially unveiled the Red Wheel plaque, which bears concise information and a QR direct link



Martin Wood, Shrewsbury's town crier (the world's tallest town crier at 7ft 2in), the Mayor of Shrewsbury, Coun Rebecca Wall, and the Lord Lieutenant for Shropshire, Mrs Anna Turner, next to the Red Wheel plaque. NTT

to the National Transport Trust website (www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk). It is the first Red Wheel for Shrewsbury, and one of only 170 in the UK.

National Transport Trust chairman Stuart Wilkinson acknowledged the achievement of the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust in restoring the station from a ruin: "It is vital that heritage buildings are restored where possible but even more important that such buildings are used, as this one clearly is. We are delighted to award a Red Wheel, No. 170, in recognition of this first-class effort."

Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust chairman Philip Davies said: "The award acknowledges the significant history and transport heritage of Abbey station. It is now called the Abbey Station Visitor Centre, where people can discover the important railway heritage of Shrewsbury and the surrounding area, and displays of historic artefacts and information, and it also enjoys a role as a community venue for social and charitable organisations."

The Red Wheel heritage plaque scheme promotes and commemorates transport heritage across the country and is the transport equivalent of a Blue Plaque.

From Scotland to Kent by steam for Burns Night feast

By Geoff Courtney

THE Kent-based Spa Valley Railway will take on a distinctly Scottish flavour on the evening of January 27 as passengers celebrate the traditional Burns Night in memory of the Scottish poet and lyricist Robert 'Rabbie' Burns.

Two return trips will run from the railway's Tunbridge Wells West station to Eridge, hauled appropriately by Caledonian Railway 0-6-0 No. 828, with onboard performances by the Reeling on the Ceiling Ceilidh Band, featuring musicians playing the fiddle, accordion and guitar.

Activities will start on the platform at Tunbridge Wells West at 6.30pm with a performance by the band, which has broadcast on both radio and television. Then, passengers will depart at 7pm on the first of two return trips to Eridge and be served a four-course Burns Night feast, accompanied by the band playing Scottish Ceilidhs, and each journey will include



Scottish guest: Caledonian Railway 0-6-0 No. 828, seen here at Ramslye on the Spa Valley Railway, where it is on long-term loan, is to head Burns Night trains from Tunbridge Wells West to Eridge on January 27. HUGH WAGHORN

an interlude at the intermediate station of Groombridge for more music and dancing.

Passengers will also be invited to write a poem as part of the celebrations, with a prize for the best poem of the evening. Spa Valley's commercial manager, Jonnie Pay, said: "It is the first time we have put on a Burns

Night event. Visitors will enjoy a wonderful evening of live music, superb food and, to cap it all, a steam locomotive with true Scottish heritage."

Tickets are £80 per person, including a welcome aperitif and the four-course meal. Booking details may be found at www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

Strathspey Railway-based No. 828 was built at the Caledonian Railway's St. Rollox Works in Glasgow in August 1899 and was withdrawn by BR from the Ayrshire shed of Ardrossan (67D) in August 1963 when numbered 57566. It is owned by the CR828 Trust and is on long-term loan to the Spa Valley Railway.

Easter bonnet for Llangollen small prairie No. 5532

By Owen Hayward

WITH the overhaul of pannier tank No. 7754 now complete, the attention of Llangollen Railway motive power department volunteers has turned to helping complete the restoration of GWR small prairie No. 5532, a locomotive which has yet to run preservation.

With the boiler currently at Tiseley Locomotive Works for contract overhaul work, the LR team is looking to raise £5500 to cover the cost of acquiring a new copper safety valve bonnet and the machining of the blower ring.

Withdrawn from Laira depot on July 10, 1962, and with 705,111 miles of service completed, No. 5532 spent 20 years in Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyards before initially being bought by the Dean Forest Railway. It was the 124th locomotive to be rescued from the scrapyards out of the eventual 213.

When the Llangollen Railway Great Western Locomotive Group also sought a small prairie, it chose No. 5538, but as that had a cracked cylinder, parts were subsequently exchanged with the DFR including the frames, which meant that No. 5532 joined the Welsh heritage line's collection. While much of the bottom end work has been



Above: A new copper bonnet for the safety valves of No. 5532 has been sourced. LRGWL

Right: Small prairie No. 5532 could be the next locomotive to return to steam on the Llangollen Railway. It has yet to run in preservation. OWEN HAYWARD

completed, having sat idle for several years, it was decided to strip back and lift the locomotive to allow for an in-depth clean to remove years of dust and workshop grime from the components, as well as undertake an inspection of the axleboxes.

One of the components needed to complete the overhaul in the long term is a replacement copper bonnet that sits around the safety valves on the top of the boiler, the original having been lost when the locomotive was sold for scrap. The group has been offered one that is



surplus to requirements elsewhere but needs to raise £4000 to cover its purchase and transportation by Easter 2024.

Furthermore, quotes for machining the blower ring, which sits inside the smokebox, have come in at approximately £1500, bringing the current total required to about £5500.

In order to finance this without detracting from current boiler overhaul fund, the group announced that it was hoping to encourage 100 donors to contribute the sum

of £55.32 each, with all donations also being able to benefit from Gift Aid, which will help the restoration further still.

Donations can be made to the Llangollen Railway Great Western Loco Group Bank via sort code 53-81-03 and account No. 05404274.

Further information about the appeal can be found through the project's Facebook page, at facebook.com/5532locomotive

→ The Llangollen Railway's first steam gala since 2019 will take place on September 14/15.

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR



During the Bluebell Railway's New Year Steam Up on January 1, SECR 01 No. 65 passes through West Hoathly with a demonstration goods train. OWEN HAYWARD

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Royal presence: No. 6004 *King George III* simmers after arrival at Paddington with an express in the early 1950s. A totem sign from the terminus will be among three such platform signs from the capital coming up for auction on March 16. TRANSPORT TREASURY



Ready for the off: Battle of Britain No. 34050 *Royal Observer Corps* awaits departure on March 14, 1959, from Waterloo, one of whose totem signs will be going under the hammer on March 16. TRANSPORT TREASURY/AE BENNETT

Totem trio to fly the flag for London in railwayana sale

By Geoff Courtney

THE iconic totem signs introduced by the newly-formed BR in February 1948 were for several decades a much-appreciated and widespread source of information at stations throughout the country, from Thurso to Penzance and Ipswich to Abergystwyth.

However, they were a comparatively rare feature at the termini of one surprising location: London. The capital had 16 terminus stations on Nationalisation in 1948, but only seven were ever fitted with totems – the Southern Region's Charing Cross, Cannon Street, London Bridge and Waterloo, the Western Region's Paddington, King's Cross on the Eastern Region, and the London Midland Region's Broad Street.

Among the other nine, high-profile absentees were Liverpool Street, Marylebone, Victoria, and Euston.

On March 16, totems from King's Cross, Paddington and Waterloo will go under the hammer, the first time a trio of London totems will have appeared at a single auction.

GW Railwayana's Simon Turner, who will be selling the signs, forecasts a total realisation for the three of up to, and perhaps beyond, £25,000.

The record for a totem is £30,000, for the Scottish Region station of Crianlarich Lower, achieved by GWRA in November 2022.

It is believed only one of the King's Cross suburban platforms carried totems at the station, and the last time an example appeared at auction was 18 years ago.

No specific policy

Richard Furness, one of the country's leading authorities on totem signs and co-author with Dave Brennand of the seminal book on the subject, *British Railways Station Totems* the

complete guide, said BR had no specific policy on which stations would be equipped with the signs, adding: "It came down to the regional managers."

He conjectured that some of the larger stations with a high number of platforms, such as the London termini, may not have been equipped with them due to cost, while some regions favoured them more than others, the two that were most pro-totem being the Southern and Western.

Coincidentally, three of the GWR nameplates also going under the hammer in the auction are from locomotives that were shedded at Old Oak Common (81A) throughout the 1950s and would thus not have been strangers to Paddington and its totems – *Goodrich Castle*, *Brocket Hall*, and *King George VI* from, respectively,



Old-timer: A plate from a Hawthorns & Co of Leith 0-4-0PT that was built in 1856 for an Ayrshire ironworks. The plate, which is to be auctioned on March 16, is one of the oldest surviving industrial locomotive workplates. GW RAILWAYANA

Nos. 5014, 5987, and 6028.

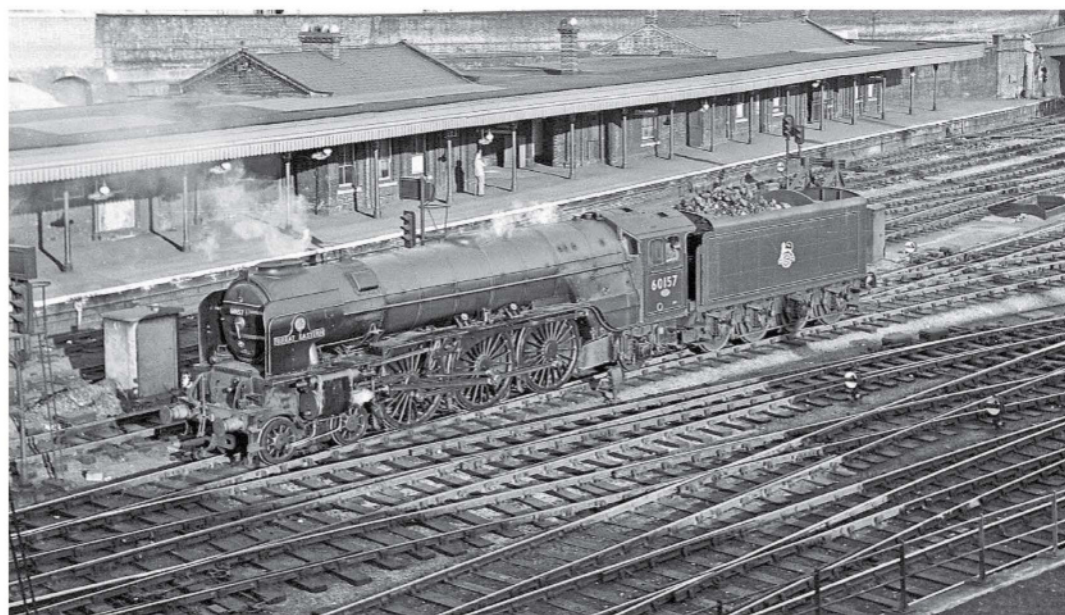
Of the three termini, Waterloo is the oldest, having been opened by the London & South Western Railway in July 1848.

The Great Northern Railway opened King's Cross in October 1852, and the GWR opened Paddington in May 1854 as a replacement for a temporary station that had opened in June 1838.

Nearly a century before the totem sign era, in 1856, Hawthorns & Co of

Leith, Edinburgh, built an 0-4-0PT for the Dalmellington Iron Co of Ayrshire, and a workplate from the locomotive (works No. 138) will also feature in the auction. The engine was at the ironworks all its working life until withdrawal on the closure of the works in 1921, and the plate is one of the oldest surviving industrial locomotive workplates.

→ Geoff Courtney's railwayana column on pages 68/69 has further details of the auction.



Great shot: Class A1 No. 60157 *Great Eastern* looks in fine fettle between duties at King's Cross on June 17, 1957. A totem sign from the terminus will be one of three from London at auction on March 16. In the background is the King's Cross York Road platform, which had its own totems, some of which are visible beneath the canopy. TRANSPORT TREASURY/ROY VINCENT

Tilbury tank arrives in Bury

THE now unique LMS 4P three-cylindred 2-6-4T No. 2500 – which for its entire working life was allocated to the London, Tilbury & Southend route between Fenchurch Street and Shoeburyness – arrived at the Bury Transport Museum on December 8 and has gone on display.

As reported in issue 312, the move is part of a growing relationship between the Lancastrian venue – which already has Horwich Works shunter *Wren* on display – and the Science Museum Group and National Railway Museum, which owns the aforementioned 0-4-OST and No. 2500. Also arriving on loan was four-wheel battery electric locomotive works No. 1378, which was previously based at the Manchester Museum of Science & Industry.

Built by English Electric at Preston in 1944, it worked at Bolton's Halliwell Power Station; a new 400V charger is required before it can see regular use on shunting demonstrations.

East Lancashire Railway director and museum chairman Keith Whitmore said: "We are absolutely delighted to be strengthening our working partnership with the National Railway Museum. No. 2500 is a large tank locomotive built in 1934 that now looks very much at home in our museum, representing the zenith of steam power on the LMS before postwar British Railways came into being.

"We are working closely with the Science Museum Group to ensure that our museum is a must-see visitor attraction in the North West, and we are looking forward to further announcements shortly on a further refresh of our displays."

The NRM's Paddy McNulty added: "We are proud to be working with ELR and the BTM to enable LMS locomotive No. 2500 to go on display.

"This will give the public additional opportunities to see this important part of the National Collection for themselves."



LMS Stanier 2-6-4T No. 2500 protrudes from an entrance way at the Bury Transport Museum on December 8, where the pioneer of its design is now on display. BTM

Final locomotives bid farewell as they depart S&D Trust's Washford site

By Owen Hayward

AFTER a period being advertised for sale, on December 20 the final two locomotives departed the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust's former base at Washford on the West Somerset Railway for pastures new, each having been acquired by relative newcomers to the heritage scene.

Built in 1941 by Andrew Barclay works for use at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Puriton, near Bridgewater, 0-4-0DM No. 349 has now taken up residence on the Leiston Works Railway in Suffolk.

This project is slowly rebuilding part of the private railway that spurred off the Great Eastern Railway's Aldeburgh branch line and ran to the Richard Garrett & Sons engineering works, which was renowned for its traction engines.

Initially run with Suffolk Punch horses, 0-4-0WT No. 6158 *Sirapite* (built in 1906 by Aveling & Porter) became the works shunter in 1929 and spent 33 years operating before being replaced in 1962 by a battery electric locomotive. The line closed in 1968, with *Sirapite* surviving into preservation.

The concept of reviving the line began in 2010 when an opportunity to acquire part of the former trackbed arose; a short section was formally reopened on June 1, 2019, which coincided with the 160th anniversary year of the line's original opening.

A railway statement said: "This latest addition to our rolling stock collection will enable us to make full use of the works line we have recently finished relaying. The loco will also play an important part in assisting with the unloading and loading of visiting steam locos to our line in the future.

"A big thank-you must go to the Friends of Leiston Railway for its support, and well done to all of the team who made this possible."

Meanwhile, Ruston & Hornsby 4WDM No. 210479 was moved to the Vale of Berkeley Railway's base at Sharpness Docks.

Built in 1942 for the Air Ministry at Sealand, Flintshire, in 1943 it was transferred to Broadheath, Cheshire, but returned to Sealand by December 1945. It changed hands

several times in the ensuing years before being acquired by the S&DRT in 1971.

S&DRT chairman Roger Hardingham said: "The two diesel shunters left the site in early December for pastures new. These engines have found new homes to begin useful operations, and which otherwise would not have been used elsewhere.

"We are delighted that we are either loaning or selling non-accessioned items to other heritage sites since our departure from Washford. Our new strategies for the future of the trust will be announced in early 2024, which will include the overhaul of our 7F No. 53808 and the preservation and wider circulation of our large and historic artefacts and coaches from the old S&D."



The Leiston Works Railway's new Andrew Barclay 0-4-0DM No. 349 arrived on December 20 in Suffolk, where it will assist with the fledgling line's future operations. LWR

IN BRIEF

Buy a bag of ballast!

WEST Somerset Railway supporters have been asked to buy a bag of ballast for use on the line.

The West Somerset Railway Association buys ballast by the lorry-load, of about 40 bags or 20 tonnes, and this year aims to purchase six lorry-loads. Supporters are invited to buy a bag for £13.

An association spokesman said: "Fresh ballast is an ongoing need for track maintenance and is needed for everything from a complete relay of a section of track to regular spot repairs to keep the track safe."

Donations may be made at wsra.org.uk/buy-a-bag-of-ballast/

Bomb scare stops Mid-Hants

THE Mid-Hants Railway's 'Steam Illuminations' were disrupted on December 16 when a suspected explosive device was discovered at a nearby address.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal team and Hampshire Police were called to a local residence following the discovery, which resulted in the railway having to temporarily suspend services out of Alton station.

Shortly before 6.15pm, police confirmed that "the item was not an explosive device" and that it had been removed, allowing the railway to resume its operations.



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Fundraising boost as two GCRs sign landmark co-operation deal

By Robin Jones

THE two heritage-era Great Central Railways have progressed their long-held ambition to join, creating an 18-mile line between the outskirts of Leicester and Nottingham, with the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

As featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 310, the reunification project has been making progress in its bid to join the GCR at Loughborough with the GCR (Nottingham).

The two lines were connected until the 1970s, when BR removed old bridges and a long, key embankment at Loughborough.

In what is one of the biggest projects ever undertaken by a heritage railway, since 2013 more than £5 million has been raised and spent on building, refurbishing and replacing the bridges required.

Fundraising for the next stages has now passed the £2 million mark, allowing for a contract for the final design work that must take place before a formal planning application is lodged in the coming months.

One of the key bridges to be replaced crossed the A60 road in Loughborough, now track is being relaid on its replacement, which will reconnect the GCR(N) to the national rail network.

Directors from both railways have signed a memorandum of understanding, committing them to working together as the project gathers momentum on wide-ranging areas from operating standards to publicity.

GCR managing director Malcolm Holmes said: "As we move towards

one railway, we must work ever more closely together. The memorandum of understanding is an important step.

"We have also established a project board to guide the rest of the work. It's made up of rail industry professionals, and they are already hard at work.

"Much has already been achieved and we now want to complete the job and run the reconnected railway for the benefit of our community and region."

Andy Fillingham, a director of Great Central Railway (Nottingham), said:

"The A60 bridge signifies the rejoining of the two railways. New ballast is on the bridge and soon we will have track here again. That will allow us to bring trains into the north from

the main line, which in turn delivers economic benefit.

"Even before the two halves of the Great Central Railway are reunified, it's another big step forward."

GCR chairman Richard Patching added: "I remember riding on the line between Leicester and Nottingham in the 1960s.

"We are looking forward to collaborating ever more closely with our partners, stakeholders and supporters to deliver this shared vision. Reunification gathers pace with the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

"I'd also like to thank everyone who continues to support our fundraising. To pass the £2 million mark, all banked for the work ahead, is extraordinary. We are humbled and so excited to keep pushing forward."

→ More information about the reunification project can be found at www.gcrailway.co.uk/unify

"It's another big step forward."



Andy Fillingham, Malcolm Holmes and Richard Patching stand on the A60 bridge prior to track-laying with the completed memorandum of understanding. GCR



The A60 bridge, part of the GCR Reunification project. On the left, new ballast will carry trains between the two sections of the GCR, and on the right, relaid track will take trains to the national network. GCR

Ffestiniog stalwart returns to service after delayed overhaul

THE Ffestiniog Railway's pair of 'old ladies' will once again be seen running together with the completion of the overhaul for Hunslet 2-4-OSTT *Linda*.

Withdrawn in 2019 following its starring appearance at the Hunslet 125 gala, work on the boiler started almost immediately and was rapidly completed, but the Covid-19 pandemic delayed work on the chassis. The staff at Boston Lodge worked extremely hard to continue working on *Linda*, while at the same time overhauling double Fairlie *David Lloyd George* and completing the construction of

its new-build sister, *James Spooner*. For this reason, the return to traffic, intended to celebrate *Linda*'s 60 years' service at the Ffestiniog Railway in 2022, was delayed.

During December, *Linda* undertook test runs with *Blanche*, operating festive shuttle services between Porthmadog and Minffordd, after which it then moved into the paint shop at Boston Lodge where the iconic Ffestiniog Railway green livery will be reapplied to the main locomotive, the tender having been already finished following rebuild work earlier on in the overhaul.

Linda will return to traffic in March, when it will be a regular sight on the Ffestiniog Railway's Quarryman service starting in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

An ever-popular guest driver locomotive, thoughts are being given to offering a limited number of opportunities to drive and fire *Linda* during the year.

The cost of the overhaul was more than £80,000, which was funded by members of the Ffestiniog Railway Society.

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway general manager Paul Lewin acknowledged the society's

invaluable support: "Here at the railway, we all love our Hunslets, and *Linda* is the favourite of many people.

"*Linda*'s overhaul was made possible by the generosity of our members and, of course, we are eternally grateful to them for their support.

"Despite the recent years being financially challenging for everyone, the members have continued to dig deep. I can't emphasise enough how grateful we all are.

"I hope everyone gains as much pleasure from travelling behind this loco as I do."

Modern signalling in as Mid-Hants temporarily retires Medstead 'box

By Owen Hayward

AT 4.31pm on November 5, 2023, the mechanical signalbox at the Mid-Hants Railway's Medstead & Four Marks station was signed out of use after 40 years controlling train movements between Alton and Ropley.

Originally located at Wilton South, it was moved to the MHR and subsequently commissioned at Medstead on May 28, 1983. Now, the lever frame and mechanical interlocking have reached the end of their serviceable life, resulting in the need for a new temporary 'box, which was commissioned on November 13 at 4.45pm.

In the interim period, the Wilton South 'box will be open to the public as a museum before work starts to commission it back into service in the near future. The existing structure also needs significant structural works to allow for the new lever frame.

Space and operational constraints dictated that the only way to achieve this goal was to design and build a new, temporary electrical panel box and use power activation of all points and signals. In turn, this move has enabled changes to the signalling layout which gives more flexibility and enhanced safety, while also easing the physical effort required of signallers to operate the 'box.

The line's signals and telegraph team designed a new control and track indicator panel with associated route relay interlocking. Additionally, the design included full track circuiting of the signal panel area, with all signals and points now power operated.

The Down home signal was re-sited to provided compliance with railway

signalling standards in colour light form, a change deemed necessary to achieve maximum sighting of the signal in times of poor visibility. The signal sits in a dark and steep sided cutting located 650 feet above sea level, where it is regularly subjected to significant adverse weather conditions, resulting in extremely poor visibility. Allowing for maximum sighting of this signal in any weather allows for approaching trains to maintain speed on the very steep 1-in-60 gradients, avoiding the potential risk of slipping to a stand.

The S&T team built, installed and tested the entire works to Network Rail standards and practices.

Testing, testing

The signalling design work was carried out by Watercress Line volunteers who are all suitably qualified railway signal engineers. The team also had to resource qualified signalling engineers from the railway industry to fulfil the role of independent design checkers. Testing was conducted by a combination of the project's own team and individuals sourced from the railway industry; all being qualified as required by the relevant railway testing standards.

One significant issue was obtaining sufficient suitable equipment to implement the design, a relay-based interlocking system requiring more than 200 relays and about 5000 yards of wire, achieved by a combination of refurbishment of redundant NR equipment and the purchase of new items.

The line's heritage spokesman said: "The Watercress Line is extremely fortunate to have a team of professional signalling engineers as volunteers. All of the work on the



The control panel for the new 'box at Medstead & Four Marks station also displays train and signal indicators for the terminus at Alton.

MATT BENTLEY/MHR



Pat Butler, head of signalling and telegraph at Mid-Hants, signs control of the new temporary Medstead signalbox over to operations manager Richard Bentley on November 13.

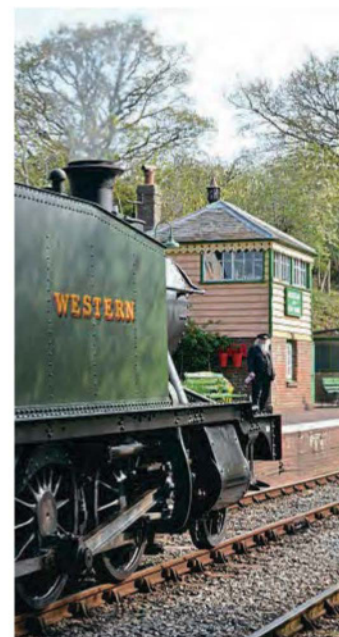
MATT BENTLEY/MHR

temporary panel, 'box, and associated resignalling works conforms to the railway industry's safety and standards where applicable.

"Design work and installation, together with the development and procurement of equipment and materials, has been carried out to the very highest standards that comply with both Watercress Line and BR/Network Rail standards.

"The S&T team has many contacts within the railway industry and has been able to source the necessary assistance from those who work for Network Rail or its contractors, thus ensuring a high quality, safe, and fully compliant product.

"In developing and certifying the electro-hydraulic signal operating unit, the project has worked jointly with the Bluebell Railway, where this unit and method of working signals will be applied to its infrastructure.



Once used for controlling train movements at Wilton South, the signalbox at Medstead & Four Marks is being temporarily retired as the lever frame and interlocking are now life-expired. OWEN HAYWARD

Further units are also being provided to the Bodmin & Wenford Railway."

The project team has also produced all of the training materials necessary to train and test signallers on the new system, including the development of a fully functional PC-based simulator on which signallers must demonstrate a level of capability before being allowed to progress with training on the actual control panel.

Nomination

The installation of the panel signalbox has, as reported last issue, been shortlisted for the Heritage Railway Association's 2024 Infrastructure Award. The winners will be announced during the annual awards dinner in Brighton on Saturday, February 10. For more details about the event, visit www.hra.uk.com



Linda (left) banks a Minffordd shuttle across Pen Cob on December 1, 2023, with fellow Hunslet Blanche leading the service. The iconic pair of locomotives, often referred to as 'the old ladies', have not been seen in service together since 2019. CHRIS PARRY/FFWHR

Raising the standards

Ecclesbourne makes its mark on the steam scene

Words and pictures
by Owen Hayward

IT may be a relative newcomer on the heritage railway scene, its current full nine-mile length having opened only in 2011, but over December 21 and January 1, the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway presented a show to rival some of the best, its Winter Steam in the Valley event boasting two BR Standards – and a Duke, of sorts!

Since April 2021, the railway has taken BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80080 on loan from the Princess Royal Locomotive Trust at the Midland Railway Centre (with Lancashire & Yorkshire Class 27 0-6-0 No. 52322 also having appeared during both 2019 and 2020), which has helped the EVR to continue further its steam offerings and move away from the reliance on DMU and diesel locomotive-only services. For the festive season of 2023, BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78018 was hired from the Great Central Railway, its second appearance in the Derbyshire Dales having also operated on the line in 2019, and providing an ideal opportunity for the railway to host a steam gala over the New Year period.

In addition to the two BR Standards, the gala also served as an opportunity to debut freshly-overhauled Bagnall-built Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 2746 *The Duke*, the final certifications for which had only been received days before.

Built in 1944, No. 2746 is one of the 52 Austerities that were sub-contracted by Hunslet to Bagnall. Entering service as WD75158, it first worked at the Central Ordnance Depot at Hilsea, Hampshire, and remained in service with the War Department until 1962, when it was based at Long Marston.

From there, it was sold to the National Coal Board, moving to the Prince of Wales Colliery at Pontefract. Its career life ended at Featherstone Colliery.

Following purchase by a group of Peak Rail members, No. 2746 entered preservation there in 1983, where it was restored to operational condition in 1988 and given its name.

Under new ownership, it arrived at Wirksworth on the EVR in 2010 and overhaul has progressively occurred since, with the majority of the boiler work taking place at Locomotive Maintenance Services in Loughborough over the last few



No. 78018 passes below Coldwell Street bridge as it approaches Wirksworth station on New Year's Eve.

years.

Completion has seen it return to service for the first time in nearly 25 years, and also gives the EVR a resident steam locomotive powerful enough to work service trains, with two Andrew Barclay 0-4-0STs the only others based there.

The Duke was booked to bank the first departure each day with class 14 D9537 *Eric* as insurance, while

No. 80080 worked at the leading end; however, on December 31 the 'Teddy Bear' developed a starter motor fault, which withdrew it from the event. Its replacement, Class 31 No. 31601 *Devon Diesel Society*, was not prepared in time to join the service, meaning that for one train only *The Duke* worked solo in charge of the return trip, the 4MT detaching at Shottle.



After working the first train each morning, *The Duke* ran trips to Ravensthorpe with a GWR Toad brake van, tackling a steep 1-in-27 gradient in the process.



In the fading light, long-term loanee No. 80080 heads through the fields at Windley on December 31, 2023. MARTYN TATTAM



The EVR will soon boast both a single and two-car Derby Lightweight DMU, with driving trailer No. 79612 completed and finished in BR blue livery (above left), while the restoration of motor car No. 79018 continues in the workshops.





On December 31, Bagnall Austerity *The Duke* climbs through the cutting just outside Shottle with its first solo working after completing its recent overhaul.

No. 2746 could then be found working brake van rides up the 1-in-27 gradient to Ravensthorpe, a climb made ever more challenging by the weather conditions.

Nos. 70018, 80080 and 31601 worked the two-train service between Wirksworth and Shottle in turn, with services continuing top-and-tailed towards Duffield. These terminated at Holloway Road as the line beyond remains closed following a landslip outside the station, as

reported in issue 313.

The EVR has a clear vision for the future. Recognising the importance of steam as an attraction for visitors, major investment is being made to improve the facilities for locomotives and crew.

A new inspection and servicing pit has been built in the yard and awaits the fitting of rails before it can see use. The restoration shed will also be extended to provide more covered accommodation, with the

current shutter doors being retained to divide the operational and restoration sides.

The DMU fleet is also set to expand. The star of the fleet, Derby Lightweight single railcar *Iris* (presently on loan to the Great Central Railway) is soon set to be joined by a new two-car version with driving trailer No. 79612 essentially complete and available for service, while the restoration of driving motor brake second No. 79018

is progressing apace inside the workshops at the hands of resident contractor LS Engineering.

The attention to detail here is sublime, with much research having been done to get panelling colours and material patterns as close to accurate as possible.

Both vehicles were once gutted when converted for use as an ultrasonic test train.

With one LMS porthole carriage currently in service (corridor brake third No. 27001), a second will join it this year as third open No. 27162 nears completion.

WyvernRail plc chairman Neil Ferguson-Leigh said: "There is no denying that the event was a celebration and a bit of fun for our team, too. Our steam department has done much of the hard routine work, so it was an opportunity for them to enjoy themselves and us show our appreciation for them."

"We have finished a barnstorming year, despite the very serious presence of the landslip at Duffield. Turnover in comparison to 2022/23 was more than 15% higher, and we broke our record for Christmas income, too."

"Combined with the presence of two BR Standard locomotives and topped off by the return of *The Duke*, it was as much a celebration as anything else. It also served as an experiment to gauge the market for an event after the completion of our Christmas season, as well as provide a source of revenue before the shutdown period."



Visiting 2MT No. 78018 heads away from Duffield on January 1, 2024. ROBERT FALCONER

Your chance to buy 'Atlantic Coast Express' for £120k!

by Robin Jones

NEARLY 60 years after Bulleid West Country Light Pacific No. 34023 (21C123) *Blackmoor Vale* hauled the last legendary 'Atlantic Coast Express' out of Padstow on September 5, 1964, a thriving catering business under the same name and based in a converted cattle wagon on the trackbed is on the market.

After 15 years running their al fresco eatery on the hugely popular Camel Trail, which occupies the phenomenally scenic westernmost stretch of the LSWR 'Withered Arm' between Padstow and Wadebridge, Kelly Littlejohns and Dougal Holley have decided to sell up and seek pastures new.

As highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 281, the 21st-century Atlantic Coast Express, which takes its name from the named train from Waterloo that first ran on July 19, 1926, is to be found at Penquean Quarry, midway between the two towns.

Focal point

The owners traded on the Camel Trail for 12 years under the banner of Treats On Trikes before acquiring the BR wagon from Wisbech seven years ago and renovating and converting it into a full kitchen, which mostly runs on solar energy, and placing it next to the old trackbed running past the disused slate quarry, which predates the coming of the railway in 1899.

The converted van is the focal point of an open-plan dining space offering views of the Camel estuary, and which employs chefs in its fully-equipped professional caterer's kitchen with vast experience of high-end dining.

The ACE currently serves crepes, ice creams, coffees and shakes, but the van could be used for any manner of food and drink offering.

While the modern-day ACE is now accessible by car, the owners arranged a water taxi service via third party providers, with special events timed around spring tides so boat access is possible.

Diners may also arrive on foot, by bicycle, or even on horseback.



A statement from the owners said: "After 15 happy, successful years on the Camel Trail, we have decided to sell our beloved business.

"It was a very difficult decision as we have poured our hearts and souls into ACE and are so proud of the thriving little business we have created.

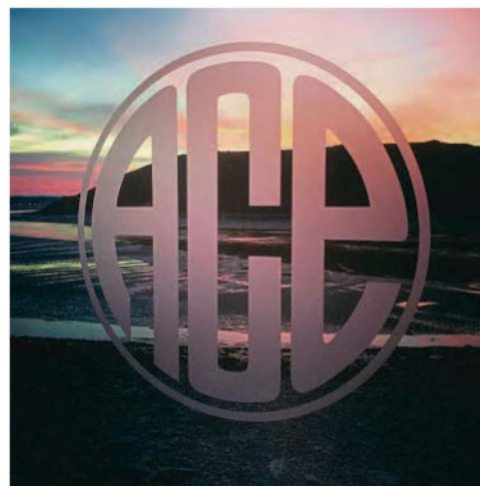
"However, it is time for us as a family to spread our wings and see what other opportunities come our way.

"We would like to thank our incredible team for all their hard work and dedication – we couldn't have done it without you guys. We'd also like to thank each and every customer for their loyalty and smiles – we hope that we don't lose touch."

For the past five years, Kelly and Dougal have established and cemented a reputation for their Supper Clubs, extremely popular monthly events that sell out 60 covers every time, throughout the summer.

"ACE takes pride in its green and socially conscious business practices. The carriage is off-grid and predominantly powered by solar energy because environmental sustainability has always been a priority," the statement continued.

"They [the owners] use compostable packaging, source local produce and suppliers, contribute to the local food



Above: Dougal Holley and Kelly Littlejohns outside their 21st-century Atlantic Coast Express eatery, located next to the trackbed where the famous named steam-hauled train last ran six decades ago. ACE

Left: A spectacular sunset over the Camel estuary as viewed from a window in today's Atlantic Coast Express. ACE

bank and carry out regular litter picks and initiatives to preserve this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."

'Ready to go'

On offer is the entire business, lock, stock and barrel, including the van, carriage, all catering equipment and associated assets. It comes with the remaining balance of a 12-year lease granted in October 2018.

"It is a business ready to go for the right person who recognises the unique opportunity presented.

"This is your chance to own and continue the legacy of the 'Atlantic Coast Express,' offering a lifestyle business opportunity in a truly remarkable location," the statement added.

The guide price for the ACE is £100-£120,000. For more details, contact Kelly or Dougal on 07980 955398 or at theatlanticcoastexpress@gmail.com

Meanwhile, *Blackmoor Vale* is awaiting overhaul at the Bluebell Railway and needs a new inner firebox, costing £199,900.

Ready for the royal treatment as Welshpool's *Countess* overhaul commences

THE stage is set for a return to service for Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway flagship Beyer Peacock 0-6-0T No. 823 *Countess*. The locomotive's overhaul commenced in the Llanfair Caereinion workshops,

it being stripped for assessment of condition and work required.

Last operational in February 2021, particular focus will be given to the boiler and bottom end, with the cab, tanks and boiler removed to

facilitate the required inspections. A railway spokesperson said: "This work is an important first step to help us determine the likely extent of work required and associated cost, labour and timescale

commitment to return *Countess* to operation. A detailed project plan for overhaul based upon this information will be presented to the board in due course and we will keep the membership updated."



No. 24617 at the beginning of its restoration on September 9, 2022, soon after moving into Kidderminster Carriage Works.



After restoration and full lining, No. 24617, with its distinctive circular window, sits at the end of the Midland rake of carriages at Kidderminster Town station on October 27.

Mk.1 coach forerunner overhauled on Severn Valley

Words and pictures by John Titlow

EARLY BR carriage No. 24617, considered a forerunner of the Mk.1 type, has returned to Severn Valley Railway service after undergoing its first major overhaul since it was built.

Following more than 50 years of regular service on the heritage line, CK (corridor composite) No. 24617 finally entered Kidderminster Carriage Works in September 2022.

Built by BR in Derby in 1950 to what is considered a very successful design dating back to the LMS before the Second World War, they are typified by a circular portal window, copying that used on the 1938 West Coast Main Line expresses.

After the war, BR built 240 of this type over a two-year period, the first batch of 75 emerging in LMS red and the later ones, including No. 24617, carrying crimson and cream livery.

When entering service, it briefly carried the number M24617, M signifying Midland. BR changed its numbering system in 1951 with the introduction of Mk.1 stock and it became SC24617M after it was allocated to Scotland. Later, it was transferred to the Western, becoming W24617. After an overhaul and repaint into maroon livery, it was declared surplus to requirements at Didcot.

In 1968, No. 24617 was preserved by the LMS & BR Coach Fund, becoming one of seven vehicles to arrive from Didcot on the nascent SVR. In almost ex-works condition, it was pressed into service and has seen continual use for nearly 70 years due to its build quality. In 2007, the fund donated all its vehicles, including No. 24617, to the SVR Rolling Stock Trust, now known as the SVR Charitable Trust.

No. 24617's claim to fame was in 1978 when *The Thirty Nine Steps* was filmed on the SVR. Lead character Richard Hannay, played by Robert Powell, boarded the carriage at the start of his journey and it starred in all of the railway sequences filmed on the line; these lasted about five minutes in the finished film.

Up until 2021, the carriage had run every season since 1968, one of

only two SVRF carriages to achieve this. General maintenance has taken place over the years; several areas have been repainted, and there have been repaints both internally and externally, but never a thorough overhaul – until 2022.

Along the way, discoveries were made about the people who built it. When one of the compartments was stripped down, the names of the original builders were revealed. The present restorers would have added their names, perhaps to be discovered 70 years later!

Having entered the carriage works, No. 24617 was stripped internally of all floor covering and upholstery. External end pillars have been repaired and rebuilt where necessary and replacement body panels fitted.

The internal wiring was removed and replaced, and replumbing of the lavatories and replacement roof tanks were fitted.

The veneered corridor passages, compartment panels and doors were either stripped and thoroughly cleaned for renovation or replaced as necessary.

The windows surrounds have been replaced, with particular attention paid to the sliding windows.



The restored third class compartment of No. 24617 shows the high standard of workmanship.



The completed refurbished first class compartment.

In what has become standard practice on the Severn Valley Railway, replacement glass has been fitted with either toughened or laminate. It costs twice as much as laminate but is stronger and tolerates removal several years later; laminate tends to crack when disturbed.

All the compartments have been completely refurbished with seating material that was reproduced copying original designs. In the third class compartments, the upholstery is correct for the period, while in first class an LMS 1936 pattern is used which would not have been fitted in 1950.

New floor covering throughout has been fitted and, finally, it was repainted and painted.

Overall, the internal decor is pure LMS, especially the electrical system.

The bogies had been overhauled and exchanged recently, which is common practice. They would be best described as GWR-inspired, as the frames and axleboxes are LMS 'style', but the brake gear is Swindon practice.

Due to various other essential works that had to be carried out by the team at the carriage works, the overhaul process took considerably

longer than anticipated. No. 24617 was outshopped from the works just before the autumn steam gala on September 23.

Hailed as a restoration of the highest standard, it has joined the LMS maroon rake of carriages. Despite being built after the LMS was incorporated into BR in 1947, it becomes a welcome addition, making little visual difference to the other superbly restored LMS carriages that make up the rake.

Paintshop chargehand James Broughton led the project on a daily basis. Colin Astbury was in charge of the carriage and wagon works and Hugh McQuade was technical specialist.

Nomination

Like the Mid-Hants Railway's installation of a panel signalbox at Medstead & Four Marks, as described on page 34 of this issue, the SVR's restoration of No. 24617 has been shortlisted in the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2024, in the Infrastructure Award category. The winners will be announced at the February 10 presentation dinner in Brighton. For tickets, visit www.hra.uk.com



The pencilled names of the men who built No. 24617 and original wiring exposed during the start of restoration in September 2022.

'Polar Express' success inspires new theatrical venture for Mid-Norfolk

By Owen Hayward

THE runaway success of 'Polar Express' services on heritage lines in recent years has helped many reach new audiences and bring the joy of theatre onto the railway world, prompting the Mid-Norfolk Railway to go one step further in 2024.

The railway will look to adapt the formula, which saw it run 93 'Polar Express' trips prior to Christmas, with an all-new on-board run of performances away from the festive season.

In partnership with Twisted Reality Productions, a new 'immersive live train show' will be brought to the county this Easter, an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* story entitled 'Alice on the Wondertrain'.

'Exciting' programme

The experience has been devised by MNR theatrical director Paul Andrew Goldsmith who, along with his partner Katherine Vince, was the driving force of the theatrical elements of the 'Polar Express' heritage trains.

He said: "The new show will be packed with comedy, music, multi-sensory elements, interaction and characters. It's aimed at all ages."

MNR chairman Graham Watts said: "We are all excited by this programme.

"It will mean we have finally overcome the many issues that the railway has faced in recent years, together with the disappointment of not running the programme as planned for last year.

"The last few years have been disappointing, and it could be argued that we at the railway underestimated the effects of Covid-19, together with other external factors that impacted the railway. This programme will, I am sure, show that the railway is back – and in many ways better than before."

Looking – and booking – ahead

The line's 2024 operating season will begin on February 6 with the Dereham station buffet and tea room opening every Tuesday through to Sunday. It will be joined by the County School tea room opening on February 10, with the expectation that it will be open every Saturday and Sunday throughout the season.

Trains will begin running on February 21, initially with a DMU service, followed by the first steam trips on March 9.

Amid the other events planned for the year is the return of the steam gala on June 28-30.

The railway will also continue to offer its 'kids go free' group tickets scheme, which has now been running since 2021. These tickets will be available for all standard running



Class 33 No. 33202 Dennis G Robinson sits at the Thuxton T2/9 signal on December 23, ready to take the 93rd and last Mid-Norfolk Railway 'Polar Express' of 2023 back to Dereham. MNR

days, but do not include special events or special trains.

Graham said: "What is clear from the experiences of other heritage railways is that to raise the revenue needed to maintain and develop the railway, we must run attractive activities that will bring families on a regular basis.

"Equally, however, if we are to fulfil our charitable objectives, we must also ensure that there are primarily railway heritage-focused events,

such as the planned railway galas. These are the events that bring the enthusiasts out.

"The trick is to strike a balance between them, and that is what this programme is ultimately seeking to achieve."

→ Further details of all events and ticket information will appear on www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk. All afternoon tea and Breckland Flyer diners must be booked in advance via the website.

Decade-old Manx diesel nicknamed 'The Cabbage' still needs £40k to run

A DIESEL-ELECTRIC locomotive which, despite being bought in 2013 as a back-up for the Isle of Man Steam railway has only seen 31 days of use in the last five years, has racked up a total bill of almost £249,000 in repair work since its arrival – with an estimated £40,000 more still required before it can run again.

Controversially bought for £420,000 from Motive Power & Equipment Solutions in North Carolina, USA, No. 21 was the first 'new' locomotive to join the island's fleet in more than 20 years, the last one before being Hunslet Bo-Bo No. 18 *Ailsa*, built in 1994 for London Underground's Jubilee line extension project.

IoM Railways had originally approached the treasury requesting £750,000 for a new-build design to act as a rescue locomotive and shunter but was allocated only £400,000, with the final locomotive incorporating many reclaimed parts. Early tests revealed that

the locomotive had issues with overheating, which were resolved under warranty, but it did not officially enter traffic until August 2019. However, it lasted only a few weeks before a power supply issue took it out of service once again.

Amid the many issues caused by currently plague it are slipped tyres on the wheels, software problems with the on-board computers, oil leaks, transmission seizures, and traction motor flashovers. Last used on June 17, 2021, the locomotive, which has been nicknamed 'The Cabbage' by volunteers and enthusiasts, is currently stored off of its bogies in a bus depot adjacent to the Douglas locomotive sheds.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that to date, almost £250,000 has been spent on repair works (including labour, parts and other associated costs) for No. 21, with an estimated £40,000 still needed before it will be able to run again. Required work includes

the replacement of a cracked axle, gearbox repair, motor refurbishment and bogie reassembly.

Local volunteers have expressed concerns about "throwing good money after bad", with the total combined costs almost amounting

to the sum originally requested for a purpose-built locomotive.

When asked if the Department of Infrastructure was considering selling No. 21, a spokesman said that it "could not predict the outcome of future decision-making."



No.21 in service with a mixed train at Port Erin station in July 2014 as part of the annual transport festival. PHIL PARKER/CREATIVE COMMONS

Narrowing the narrow-gauge generation gap!

By Robin Jones

TWO UK narrow-gauge railways spanned a generation gap of nearly nine decades during special visits in December.

With the Bala Lake Railway closed, and the weather too uninviting for a private visit of the day, retired railwaymen John Hurst and John (Bach) Roberts met in the town instead for the first time in 60 years.

John Hurst was not only the last stationmaster of Bala station until it closed on January 18, but aged 21, he was also the youngest anywhere in the UK. It was where he met his wife, Gwen.

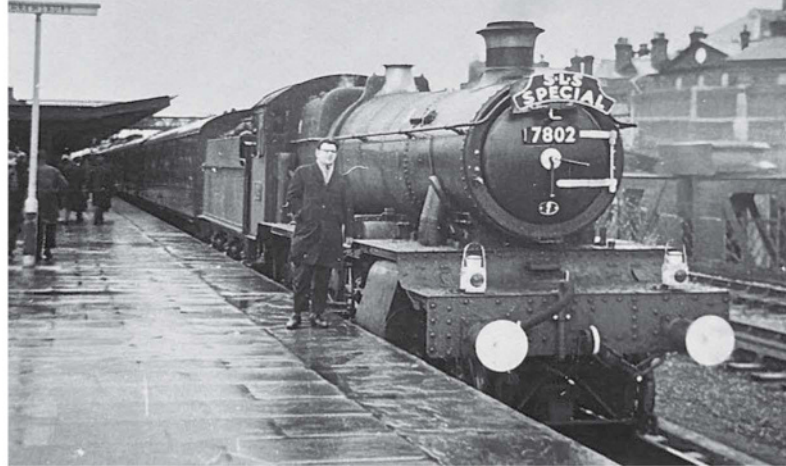
John Bach joined the railway at Llanuwchllyn in 1947, 75 years ago, when it was still part of the GWR and which is now the heritage line's western terminus, home of the award-winning Llanuwchllyn Heritage Centre. He was relief signalman on the Ruabon-Barmouth line, as well as the line from Bala to Blaenau Ffestiniog, and over the years worked all of the signalboxes.

In 1965 he transferred to

Ruabon and later Shrewsbury before returning home to Bala to become a postman. He was an avid photographer and has an extensive record of life on the railways at that time.

Meanwhile, a successful visit by Year Three pupils from Richmond School in Skegness paved the way for the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway to build relationships with the area's schools and the communities they serve. The visit was, for many of the children, the first time they had travelled on a train of any sort, and only a handful had seen a steam engine before.

For the occasion, the LCLR, which became the world's first heritage railway to be built by enthusiasts when it opened near Cleethorpes in 1960, steamed its flagship 120-year-old Peckett 0-6-0ST *Jurassic* to take the pupils for a ride along its track in its current home at Skegness Water Leisure Park. It enabled the youngsters to experience first-hand and ride on vehicles that had served First World War battlefields, industry, agriculture, and the holiday trade.



A photograph taken by John (Bach) Roberts of John Hurst standing beside GWR 4-6-0 No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* at Shrewsbury station on Sunday, January 17, 1965, on the Stephenson Locomotive Society excursion departing for Welshpool for the last passenger train to Oswestry and Whitchurch before closure of the line the following day. The 1938-built locomotive survived as part of the Severn Valley Railway fleet. JOHN ROBERTS

The school's deputy headteacher, Ricki Danks, who organised the visit, said: "Certainly, the children enjoyed their visit and learned a lot from travelling on the train and experiencing at first-hand how this form of transport helped create modern Lincolnshire and the world we live in."

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway Historic Vehicles Trust chairman Richard Shepherd said: "The day was an eye-opener and made us realise that other schools and their pupils in the area could use our unique railway

to learn so much about the area's history, society, and economy in such an enjoyable way.

"This was the first time we hosted a large-scale visit from a school – 60 children in total – and it was a joy for our volunteers. Hopefully, the children and their teachers enjoyed it as much as we did. The children were polite and well-behaved and a credit to Richmond School. We hope to welcome them again and now plan to approach other schools to suggest that they may wish to make a similar visit".



Left: The last stationmaster of Bala: John Hurst (left) meets up with signalman John (Bach) Roberts, who joined the GWR in 1947. Both brought mementos along: the clock from Bala signalbox and single line tokens from Bala Town, Bala Junction, Llanuwchllyn and Drws-y-nant. BLR

Right: Pupils from Richmond School with 1903-vintage steam locomotive *Jurassic* at Walls Lane station, Ingoldmells. Behind *Jurassic* are an Ashover Light Railway coach and the 'Queen Mary' carriage that ran on Lincolnshire's Nocton Estates Railway. RICHMOND SCHOOL, SKEGNESS



Wissington goes back home as 'Middy' prepares for new loco

HUDSWELL Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1700 *Wissington* has returned to its North Norfolk Railway home following its latest loan spell at the Mid-Suffolk Railway.

The 1938-built former British Sugar Corporation locomotive, which is owned by the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway Society, left the 'Middy' following its popular Steam and Light Festival on New Year's Day, after hauling the line's sold-out Santa specials.

Wissington previously worked the 'Middy' from July 2012 to January 2013, returning that April and staying until September 2015, coming

back for the 2016 summer season, and starting its last loan spell in June 2022.

It is planned to hire another steam locomotive to start the 2024 season, during which the line aims to have its 1928-built Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1604 running for the first time since 1970 and in the heritage era.

Hudswell Clarke built the original Mid-Suffolk Light Railway locomotives and No. 1604 is of a similar design. It spent its entire life at the Bardney sugar beet factory in Lincolnshire and will be restored as the next locomotive in line as No. 4 in the original MSLR numbering system.



The early-morning sun catches *Wissington's* water tank as it pulls the stock into Brockford station following the run around and the first movements of December 17. JAMES KINDRED

Springtime star visits for Bury and North York Moors

By Owen Hayward

SOME of the UK's biggest steam icons will visit heritage lines at the start of the new season, with the East Lancashire Railway taking top spot for opportunities to enjoy a ride behind them.

As reported in issue 313, the line will host its Legends of Steam gala on March 15/16, featuring visitors BR Standard 7 Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia*, LNER A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* and LMS Jubilee No. 45960 *Leander*.

Not content on settling with just the idea of a showstopping gala, the ELR has also secured a visit from GWR 4-6 0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* from Didcot Railway Centre, which is celebrating its own centenary year in 2024.

In addition to operating regular public daytime services on April 10-14, 20/21 and 27/28, No. 4079 will also haul the railway's dining services. April 13's 'The Red Rose' will offer an atmospheric evening and meal aboard one of the opulently restored Pullman-style carriages, while on April 20 super sleuths will have a chance to flex their investigative muscles with a 'murder mystery' excursion with a 1920s theme.

The final opportunity for onboard excellence will come on April 27 with a premium night diner, the ELR's



ultimate dining experience with live music and other entertainment, freshly prepared canapes and much more.

Prior to its appearance at the ELR gala there, *Britannia* will spend February half-term running on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Appearing courtesy of Locomotive Services Ltd, No. 70000 will work a series 'Britannia Specials' between Pickering and Grosmont in a similar manner to those run with No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* during the autumn of 2023.

Alongside seat-allocated tickets on board the train, there will be a range of family activities including an interactive fairytale themed show for two to seven years-olds with Storycraft Theatre in the classroom at Pickering station on February 13.

There will be creative adventures on board, with activity sheets and coloured pencils to allow youngsters to gain inspiration from the journey. Interactive signalbox demonstrations are also on offer for families.

Acting NYMR CEO Laura Strangeway said: "We are so excited

to open a little earlier in 2024 for these incredible special services featuring the iconic *Britannia*.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for enthusiasts, but also a great way for families to spend a half-term day out together."

Tickets can be booked online now at www.nymr.co.uk/Britannia

The railway will also host its first diesel gala since 2016 over the weekend of June 14-16. Further details for both events will be available online at nymr.co.uk once confirmed.

Prior to its appearance at the East Lancashire Railway's gala in March, No. 70000 *Britannia* will first visit the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for February half-term to run some seat-allocated services. JOHN HUNT/ NYMR

KESR welcomes 2024 with new award for its trophy cabinet

By Geoff Courtney

STAFF and volunteers at the Kent & East Sussex Railway welcomed the arrival of 2024 with a new addition to its trophy cabinet earned by the line's ever-popular Santa specials.

The award was presented to general manager Robin Coombes at a ceremony in Brighton on December 12 in recognition of the railway's Santa trains winning third place in the prestigious annual Beautiful South Awards for Excellence run by Tourism South East.

Standing with Santa Claus after the presentation, Robin said: "The trains have been enjoyed by generations of families and regularly carry upwards of 14,000 passengers. It was a great honour to collect, with Santa, the award.

"Our specials have been developed over many years and are complex and intense to operate, but this award recognises just how good they are. I want to acknowledge the dedication

of those who go above and beyond, particularly the long hours worked by many.

"I extend my sincere gratitude to each and every volunteer for their extraordinary effort. Our Santa specials simply would not work without them."

The specials, which have operated every year since 1974 other than 2020 due to Covid-19, ran from Tenterden to Northiam at weekends in December up to Christmas Eve, followed by a normal Tenterden to Bodiam service on the last weekend of the year. Steam locomotives on the roster were Hunslet 0-6-0ST duo *Swiftsure* and *Sapper*, and Great Central Railway-based guest BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019.

This year will be a significant one for the 10½-mile railway, as it will include celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of its reopening as a heritage line after closure by BR to passengers in 1954 and to freight seven years later.



Christmas present: KESR general manager Robin Coombes holding the Beautiful South Awards for Excellence bronze trophy presented to him at a ceremony in Brighton on December 12. With him are (from left) Fran Downton, chief executive of Tourism South East, Alice Fry from awards sponsor Touch Stay, and Santa Claus. NICK WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY

Listed status is granted to surviving Stockton & Darlington public house

By Robin Jones

A PUB built to serve the needs of customers of the Stockton & Darlington Railway – the world's first steam-hauled passenger line – has been given Grade II-listed building status by English Heritage.

The Railway Tavern, in High Northgate, Darlington, was one of three pubs built in 1826/27 by the S&DR, regarded by historians as, in effect, 'proto-railway stations', built before the concept of the station had fully developed.

Each of the pubs were constructed next to one of the S&DR's coal depots, which had been expected to be the railway's primary source of revenue as the success of passenger services was unexpected at the time.

Darlington's coal depot was at the end of a short branch line, just north-west of where the Great North Road (now High Northgate) crossed the Cocker Beck.

S&DR chairman Thomas Maynell had privately built an inn at the railway's Yarm coal depot which, from its opening in October 1825, did a good trade in serving people who often travelled long distances to buy coal.

Rich history

In June 1826, the S&DR decided to build its own inns at both the Stockton and Darlington depots, the following month borrowing £1305 19s from railway pioneer Joseph Pease to pay for their construction. The Railway Tavern was about 380 yards from the main line and so did not develop into a fully functioning railway station.

The inns, together with a third commissioned the following month for the Aycliffe Lane depot, were designed by John Carter, a master mason who had overseen the construction of bridges along the line.

Tenders to operate the newly-built Darlington inn were invited in

May 1827, but the local magistrates refused to grant a licence. In response, the S&DR built a small retail brewery just to the south, on the northern bank of the Cocker Beck – and which did not require magistrates to grant a licence to sell beer for consumption off the premises. The brewery was leased out in May 1828 and initially proved profitable, but following a change in the law which allowed the S&DR to finally obtain a licence for its Railway Tavern in autumn 1829, the brewery failed and was converted into warehousing for iron, the building surviving until it was demolished by 2014.

Passenger services on the S&DR were initially provided by private coach operators and were only taken in-house by the railway company at the end of 1833. Although it has been speculated, the Railway Tavern is not known to have played a direct role in the railway's passenger operations. However, in 1833, the inn's landlord, Thomas Stephenson, did propose to run a service transporting passengers and luggage between the railway and the town centre.

The Railway Tavern was the most successful of the three as a pub and is the only one still operating as such.

It remained in railway ownership as a pub until it was auctioned off in 1870, the associated coal depot being closed at about the same time, with the land subsequently redeveloped with the laying-out of Melville Street and surrounding housing by the 1890s.

Like the S&DR's other buildings, the Railway Tavern was architecturally modest. It was refurbished in 1871 by local architects John Ross and Robert Lamb and is thought to have included the addition of a large bay window to the bar. It was refurbished again by notable Darlington architect GG Hoskins, the surviving plans being dated 1898.

Subsequent alteration, probably in the late 20th century, saw the



The Railway Tavern in Darlington is now Grade II-listed in recognition of its role in the formative years of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.



The Grade II-listed single-span footbridge in Wigan was built in 1887 to cross the Liverpool and Bury Railway, which by then had become part of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway. HISTORIC ENGLAND

amalgamation of public rooms into two rooms separated by the original central entrance lobby and off-sales counter. The interior retains most of its Victorian bar counter as reconfigured by Hoskins, along with some fitted bench seating thought to date from his alterations. The first floor of the building is understood to be domestic in character but includes one room believed to have been used as a meeting room by the S&DR.

New listings

The pub is the latest of nine new listings made recently relating to the S&DR, which will be the focus of a major bicentenary event in 2025. The others are Etherley Inclines (summit and supper sections); the lower section of the southern Etherley Incline; Bruuselton Inclines;

the route along the River Gaunless; the earthworks of the 1825 main line and associated features within Preston Park; the walling of the former railway coal depot; Dene Beck culvert; and railway accommodation bridge, 65m south of Dene Beck.

Also newly listed as Grade II is the 1887-built unusually long single-span Deep Pit footbridge in Highfield Road, Hindley, Wigan. Built during the peak period of railway bridge construction, it crossed nine tracks with an unusual large ramp on the south side, rather than steps leading up to it. "It has survived with very little alteration and its architectural interest lies in its elegant design," said a Historic England statement.

A total of 227 historic buildings and sites were added to the National Heritage List for England in 2023.

Musical score to celebrate Stockton & Darlington bicentenary is revealed

THE score for a new popular musical to celebrate the 200th anniversary in 2025 of the world's first steam-hauled passenger line, the Stockton & Darlington Railway, has been unveiled.

In the summer, Gateshead composer Stuart Brayson – who collaborated with Sir Tim Rice on the West End hit *From Here To Eternity* – was commissioned to write

songs for the musical, titled *Darley's Magical Ride*.

Stuart's commission came from Darlington Borough Council and Darlington Building Society following an introduction by Darlington Operatic Society chairman Julian Cound. The score was unveiled to a private audience at Darlington's Hullabaloo children's theatre, with two songs performed

live by the musical's educational partner, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College musicians.

A novel idea

A children's book, *Darley's Magical History Tour*, is about a magical little train which goes back in time, forms the basis of the musical, which will be premiered at the launch of the bicentennial celebrations.

The book was written by journalist and author Peter Barron, a former editor of *The Northern Echo* newspaper.

The building society created the character of Darley to encourage youngsters to save. On opening a junior account, they get a Darley train moneybox, and can add carriages when savings milestones are reached.



Up for grabs: One of the Metro Cammell trains of 1979 in Broomloan Road depot. HUGH DOUGHERTY



First day in service for new trains on the Glasgow Subway, one of the soon-to-be driverless units in action on the 1898-built line. SPT

New Glasgow trains bring call to preservationists and museums

By Hugh Dougherty

THE first two of the new four-coach trains on the 4ft gauge Glasgow Subway made their debut in public service on Monday, December 11 – and their introduction could mean a bonus for heritage venues.

The eventually driverless Stadler-built trains will be phased into service to run alongside the 44-year-old Metro Cammell sets, which will gradually be withdrawn as more new units come on stream. When station works including fitting platform doors are complete, the Stadler sets will work in driverless mode.

The withdrawal of the older trains, built between 1977 and 1979 to replace the original subway rolling stock of 1896, means that they will be surplus to requirements. Owner and operator, the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, is now sending out a call to preservationists and museums to put in bids for the stock, which, although state-of-the-art in 1979, uses traction equipment long since rendered vintage by modern-day developments.

Project director Mark Toner said: "It has become increasingly hard to keep the older trains in service and passengers have commented on

the difference with the new walk-through trains, which are smoother and quieter.

"We are keen to see examples of the 1979-built rolling stock go to good homes as part of our valuing the heritage of the railway. Although we are aware that the gauge is not a common one, much of the equipment would be of interest and of use to preserved electric traction groups, perhaps in the heritage tramway field."

The trains being withdrawn have traditional Westinghouse compressors, GEC traction motors and contactors, and an earlier

call, in 2016, in the belief that the replacements would be in service by 2020, resulted in some interest from preservation groups and museums. Glasgow Riverside Museum, for example, which already houses original subway carriages, seems very likely to accept a train.

However, the SPT is aware that circumstances may have changed for many groups in the interim and is renewing the call for interest in complete trains, motor coaches, trailers and equipment.

→ Anyone wanting to enquire or express an interest should contact the SPT via enquiry@spt.co.uk

Standard heads GWR in battle for model honours at sale

By Geoff Courtney

BR Standard, GWR and industrial live steam locomotive models, and an acclaimed LNER poster, were the stars of a saleroom and live online Transport Sale held by auction house Dreweatts in Newbury on December 13.

The top realisation of £8000 was achieved by an award-winning 5in gauge Standard 2MT No. 84000, built by the late Richard Castle, of Watford, in 2008. It features a silver soldered boiler built by Western Steam of Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, and among its awards are a Model Engineering Exhibition medal and an international memorial trophy.

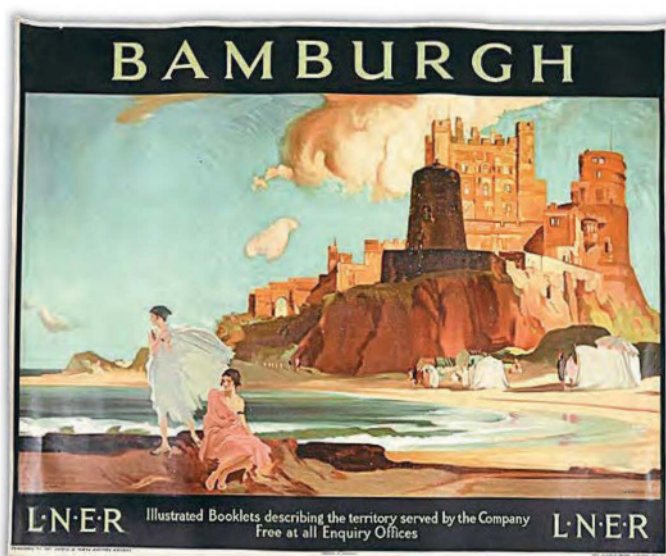
The full-size 2-6-2T on which the model was based was built at Crewe in July 1953, withdrawn from the Wrexham shed of Croes Newydd (6C) in October 1965, and cut up four

months later, thus ironically having a significantly shorter life than the model itself.

Behind this Standard locomotive at £5500 came another 5in gauge live steam 2-6-2T, albeit from a class introduced more than two decades earlier. It was GWR No. 6102, one of 70 designed by Charles Collett for working the London suburban services and thus a familiar sight for Paddington trainspotters.

Industrial steam then played its hand, in the 7¼in gauge form of a blue-liveried 0-6-0ST that went under the hammer for its top estimate price of £5000.

Nine railway posters also went under the hammer, of which the star at £5000 featured the 12th century Grade I-listed Bamburgh Castle on the Northumberland coast. The poster was issued by the LNER in 1925 and was the work of Scottish artist and



Poster success: The Bamburgh poster by Sir William Russell Flint that sold for £5000 at auction on December 13. DREWEATTS

illustrator Sir William Russell Flint (1880-1969), who was president of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours between 1936-56. Prices

exclude buyer's premium of 26% (+ VAT).

→ See Geoff Courtney's railwayana and models auction column, pages 68/69.



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FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Celebrations to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Douglas to Port Erin line

Celebrations to mark the 130th Anniversary of Manx Electric Railway services to Laxey

Celebrations to mark the 125th Anniversary of Manx Electric Railway services to Ramsey

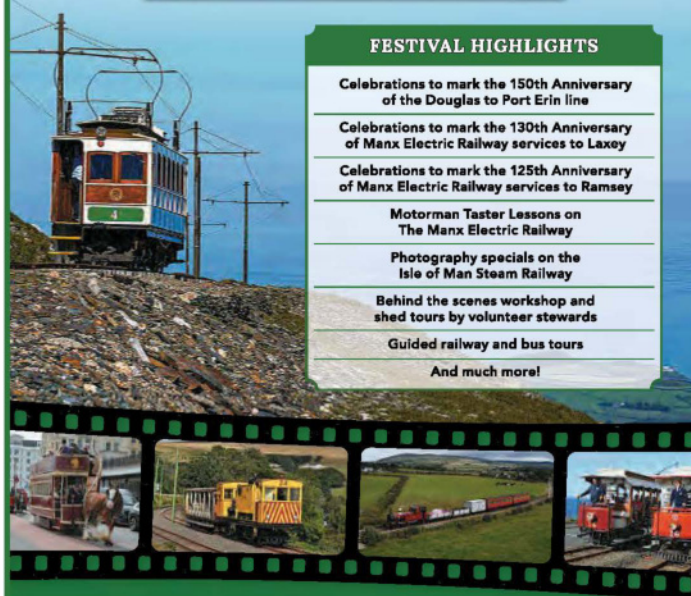
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OVER HERE, OVER THERE!

With heritage railways in the UK facing unprecedented times, there could be a case for railfans to travel overseas to get their 'fix'. **Chris Eden-Green** offers his thoughts on the heritage railway scene he explored across the Atlantic in 2022.

There's no getting around the fact that railway enthusiasm and preservation is as British as the concept of railways itself. With more than 150 heritage railways and museums in the United Kingdom, plus another five in the Republic Of Ireland, one cannot deny that the UK loves its volunteer-run private lines; a far cry from 1951, when the Talylyn Railway was seen as unusual. You might imagine, therefore, the concept of heritage steam traction worked by dedicated enthusiasts is predominantly something to be found in Britain, except... it isn't.

Although many British residents may declare proud national allegiance, influence from the USA is difficult to avoid altogether. There are multiple American fast-food chains in most UK towns. Google is the default internet search engine; itself a Californian-originated service. Tesla has produced some of the UK's best-selling cars of recent years. General Motors has supplied the UK's network with US and Canadian-built diesel locomotives from its electro motive division, starting with the Class 59s of 1985. And nearly 90% of UK shoppers use the Bellvue, Washington-founded website we all know as Amazon.

If we look at historic moments in locomotive development, we have America to thank for more than you might think. George Jackson Churchward looked at American design

practices when he conceived some of his most famous types, including the UK's first Pacific 4-6-2, No. 111 *The Great Bear* of 1908, which was built seven years after the Baldwin Locomotive Works built the first Pacific for use in New Zealand. Subsequently, it would be hard to imagine engines like *Flying Scotsman*, *Mallard*, *Clan Line* and *Duchess Of Sutherland* as anything other than 4-6-2s.

Churchward also brought the 2-8-0 type to the UK, a wheel arrangement that began in life on the Lehigh Valley Railroad in Pennsylvania. Without this, we would not have the 2800s, 8Fs, Dub-Dees, Robinson 8Ks or Somerset & Dorset 7Fs.

Nigel Gresley made transatlantic exchanges, too. The original A1 Pacifics took inspiration from the Pennsylvania Railroad K4s, including boilers that were referred to as 'conical' instead of tapered.

For a while, the American Locomotive Company bought a licence for Gresley's conjugated valve gear and fitted it to some of its 'switchers' - and let's not forget, a pair of Crosby chime whistles manufactured in Massachusetts found their way to the UK in the early 1930s. One was fitted to Gresley's P2 No. 2001 *Cock o' The North* and the other was gifted to Captain Howey for use on the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. This type of whistle was later copied for use on

Gresley's A4s, meaning that while *Mallard* holds the world-speed record for steam traction, it has a voice that originated in Boston.

And who patented the 4-4-0 wheel arrangement? A civil engineer from New Jersey named Henry Roe Campbell. But what of the USA's railroad preservation?

Difference and distance

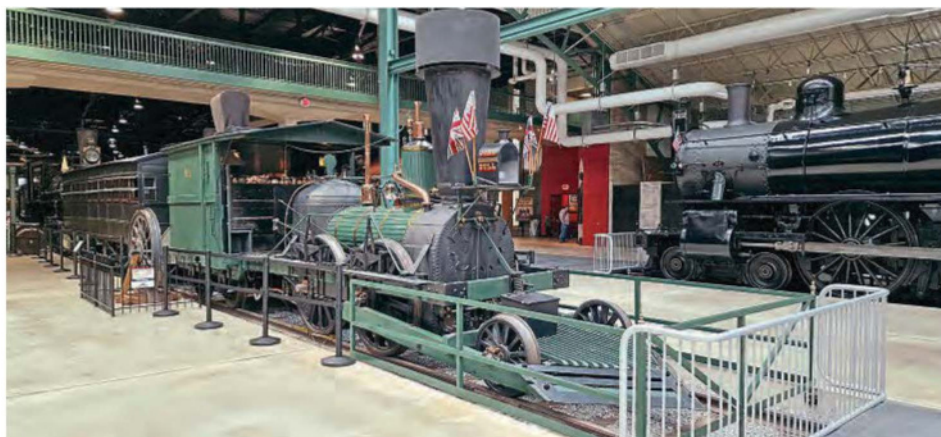
The USA did not receive its first steam locomotive until 26 years after Richard Trevithick's Pen-y-darren locomotive, which made its public debut in 1804. Indeed, history implies a rather 'here today, gone tomorrow' attitude towards rail transport.

With domestic inter-state passenger services mostly abandoned in favour of personal motoring and short-haul flights, combined with mass dieselisation from the 1930s, it is hardly surprising that working standard gauge steam ended in the USA in 1962, six years before the 'Fifteen Guinea Special.'

However, if you are prepared to travel across a broad radius, you will find a fascinating spectrum of preserved railroads and museums all over the country. This curious railfan experienced more than 50 of them throughout the summer of 2022. So, to anyone curious of transatlantic railway heritage, I would like to compare and contrast some of the highlights

One of the USA's premiere tourist railroads, the Strasburg runs through Amish and Mennonite farmland. Norfolk & Western 4-8-0 No. 475 is one of its regular operational locomotives.





Above: The replica of Camden & Amboy 2-4-0 *John Bull* inside the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.

Right: Running footplate experience day trips following boiler work in 2022, N&W No. 611 crosses one of the rural farm tracks over the Strasburg Railroad.



of my itinerary with some of our own lines. Listing a full recollection would take forever and a day, while some railroads, such as the Nevada Northern or East Broad Top, were simply not on my agenda, so if there's any I've missed out, it is not through failings of theirs.

If an American railfan asked a Brit where the best railways and museums to visit are, most of the big names – like the Bluebell, North Yorkshire Moors, Talylyn, Ffestiniog, Keighley & Worth Valley and the National Railway Museum – may be among the first to come to mind. However, what if you are a Brit looking to sample US steam? What can you expect from the selection of places I visited? And how do they compare with some of the best of the UK's heritage railway sites?

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway

Location: Sheepscot, Maine
Length: 3.5 miles
Gauge: 2ft

One of the famous Maine Two-Footers, this line opened in 1895 and originally boasted 44 miles of track. After closing in 1933, most of the rolling stock and infrastructure were broken up in the following years. However, enthusiasm for this and the other Maine narrow gauge lines remained strong.

Walking around the railway's base at Sheepscot, reopened by preservationists in 1989, one can be reminded of the preserved Corris Railway. There are many exciting reconstruction projects, such as a new three-road half-roundhouse, a recreation of WW&F Baldwin 2-4-4 No. 11, and new carriage construction among the period station buildings; as well as more than three miles of

running line. Yet, it doesn't feel like the railway is overreaching itself in the process.

Turning facilities are authentically primitive, with manual turntables at each end of the line, as opposed to the state-of-the-art traverser at Corris.

The railway (branded uniquely as a rail-WAY instead of the usual rail-ROAD) is normally open on Saturdays from May to October, with trains usually hauled by Portland 0-4-4 Forney No. 9. However, the winter season can offer some spectacular photo charters in the New England snow: Canada is less than 130 miles away, after all.

The Mount Washington Cog Railroad

Location: Near Whitefield, New Hampshire
Length: 3.5 miles
Gauge: 4ft 8in

While not the world's first rack-and-pinion railway, this line opened 27 years before the Snowdon Mountain Railway.

The two differ on a number of levels. The SMR is a mile longer and uses the double-bladed Apt rack-and-pinion system to climb the mountain. But 'the Cog' climbs nearly twice as many feet above sea level and uses its own Marsh cog system, named after the line's prominent figurehead, Sylvester Marsh.

Gradients are incomparable too, as the steepest on Snowdon is famously 1-in-5.5, while Mount Washington's trains climb up to 1-in-2.6 (about 38% in US terminology).

The locomotive fleet is equally different to its Welsh counterpart. While Snowdon was worked by several Swiss-built 0-4-2Ts, Mount Washington boasted a fleet of quirky New Hampshire-built 0-2-2-0 four-cylinder locomotives dating back to 1874. This place

managed to evade diesel power until 2008!

Trains usually traverse the line every half an hour, with a bio-diesel service operated all year round. However, two return steam runs a day still climb the mountain during the height of summer. Lineside access here is achievable, but weather conditions and the state of the adjacent footpath can make this mountain fatally hazardous.

The Strasburg Railroad

Location: Strasburg, Pennsylvania
Length: 4.5 miles
Gauge: Standard

This line is arguably the most famous standard gauge heritage railroad in the US, which can trace its roots back to 1832. The preserved section was bought out by a group of railfans in November 1958 and quickly went from carrying 9000 passengers a year to 125,000.

This line has often been compared to the Bluebell Railway, however, despite being operated as a steam-run tourist outfit since the early 1960s, the comparison seems to end there.

While the Bluebell currently has almost 30 steam locomotives and four stations aiming to recreate different eras in the railway's history, Strasburg's regular fleet is at about six engines, and there is just one station.

In a similar fashion to UK railways like the North Norfolk, South Devon and Statfold Barn, Strasburg's business offers overhaul work for other heritage groups, including recent boiler work on Norfolk & Western J class 4-8-4 No. 611.

The scenery is nothing you cannot see from the adjacent road. However, this provides fantastic opportunities for railfans to



Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway No. 9 trundles through the forest of Maine from the current northern terminus at Trout Brook.



No. 9 *Waubek* awaits its next duty at the Mount Washington Cog Railroad's base station. The locomotive has been climbing Mount Washington since 1910.



Every April, the Harrisburg, Lincoln & Lancaster Railroad marks the passing of Lincoln's Funeral Train with commemorative decorations.



Northern Central Railroad No. 17 York stands outside the line's base at New Freedom, Pennsylvania.

photograph trains from the lineside.

If you are lucky, you might be able to photograph trains at four locations in the same trip.

Strasburg's headquarters is next door to the Railroad Museum Of Pennsylvania, which offers an incredible variety of rolling stock, from the replica *John Bull* of 1939, through PRR K4 4-6-2s and geared locomotives, to more modern traction including a pair of GG1 electric. But be prepared for an entry charge.

The Harrisburg, Lincoln & Lancaster Railroad

Location: Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

Length: 2/3-mile

Gauge: Standard

One of two Pennsylvania tourist lines running on part of the route of Abraham Lincoln's Funeral Train, this operation began as recently as 2020 on the site of the Star Barn park. Running replica American Standard 4-4-0 No. 331 (previously Central Pacific No. 63 *Leviathan*) with a fleet of replica saloon coaches, the owner of this line has plans to expand the current out-and-back run into a full circuit with a bridge and station at either end.

There are normally only three to four trains on running days, with no service on Sundays for religious reasons. However, visitors may also get a chance to see a replica of the 16-wheeled saloon carriage that carried Lincoln to his resting place.

This railroad is still in the early stages

of development – but don't forget the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, itself a former trunk route between major towns, initially reopened with just 700 yards of track. Big things can have small beginnings.

The Northern Central Railway

Location: New Freedom, Pennsylvania

Length: 10 miles

Gauge: Standard

Also on the Lincoln Funeral Train route, this operation took over part of the route between Harrisburg and Baltimore using specially-commissioned replica rolling stock. Interestingly, replica Rogers 4-4-0 No. 17 *York* was built by the Kloe Works in 2013, which also built the replica Schenectady 4-4-0 running at Harrisburg.

Both locomotives are modern oil burners, instead of wood, with modern injectors and airbrakes. Steam traction is supplemented on some days by former Pennsylvania Railroad GP9 diesel No. 6076, built in 1959.

Some of the scenes here may come across as manufactured to outsiders, but don't let the 21st-century engineering put you off enjoying the ride.

After all, the Welsh Highland Railway now runs Garretts with corridor stock over and above the second-hand tank engines and wooden compartment coaches from its working life, but that does not spoil the scenery.

Just like the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, this line runs alongside an open cycle

path so lineside opportunities are plentiful here. However, with the price of fuel going up, trains with insufficient bookings are not always guaranteed to run.

The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad

Location: Cumberland, Maryland

Length: 16 miles

Gauge: Standard

With the same working length as the Severn Valley Railway, this line runs on the remains of the Connellsville Extension through the Allegany Hills to Frostburg; about six miles from the state line with Pennsylvania.

The route was opened in 1912 as part of George Gould's ambition to link the two states and survived into 'Chessie System' ownership before closing in 1975.

The line has been running in preserved form since 1989. However, if you had reservations about the Severn Valley's recent off-peak timetable, this service operates just one return trip per day on Fridays-Sundays from May to September, subject to usual locomotive availability, of course.

The current highlight is the operation of Chesapeake & Ohio H6 2-6-6-2 Mallet No. 1309, the final domestic steam engine built by Baldwin in 1949.

Lineside access is not much of a problem, with the railroad running alongside an ungated cycle path (except for the 914ft-long Brush Tunnel); a far cry from the stringent approach taken by the likes of the Avon Valley and Bure Valley railways.



C&O Mallet No. 1309, entering public service in May 2022, stands at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's Cumberland terminus.



The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's C&O Mallet No. 1309 brings its stock across the North Branch Potomac River into Cumberland.



Mind your ears! The Cass Scenic Railroad's annual Parade of Steam creates a spectacle that few places in the world can replicate.

What's more, you won't be short of onboard catering, as the 'Frostburg Flyer' boasts up to three forms of refreshment facilities!

The Cass Scenic Railroad

Location: Cass, West Virginia

Length: 11 miles

Gauge: Standard

If geared logging locomotives are your jam, then Cass is the place to visit. Running in tourist form since 1963, trains climb a number of switchbacks to the top of Bald Knob (don't laugh!) more than 4700 feet above sea level. But brace yourself for four hours-plus to do a full round trip.

Negotiating the switchbacks can immediately remind you of the Bodmin & Wenford Railway. However, the operation is more reminiscent of the Darjeeling & Himalayan Railway, with no stations during direction changes and the locomotives remaining coupled at one end of the train, normally propelling them up the mountain. Gradients reportedly rise as steep as 1-in-11 in some places, but this is rarely a cause for concern.

The base at Cass provides incredible opportunities for gala weekends and cavalcades, the most notable being the annual Cass Parade Of Steam; keep your eyes peeled for a specific date in June. Few preserved stations in the UK have the open space to provide such spectator displays; Horsted Keynes on the Bluebell and Quorn & Woodhouse on the Great Central spring to mind.

Otherwise, linesiding here isn't for those without a serious 4x4 vehicle.

The J&L Narrow Gauge Railroad

Location: Youngstown, Ohio

Length: 1/5 mile

Gauge: 1ft 11in

Every heritage establishment has a beginning, normally a small one. This is one such example of an early operation with high aspirations.

Established in the mid-1990s, Youngstown Steel's public image was accelerated in 2019 by the return to steam of Jones & Laughlin Porter 0-4-OST No. 58. Which, if you've never seen such an engine before, looks rather

like a painted brick on wheels! Since then, Youngstown has reunited it with three other members of the J&L Porter fleet, with a fourth being used for spares.

The rustic nature of the site fits the industrial image that the museum aims to recreate. The eventual goal is to represent the steel industry of the Shenango Valley, hence the collection of local steelworks switchers and freight cars.

Owner Rick Rowlands posts regular updates on YouTube of the museum's latest developments in track extension and asset maintenance, which includes a unique stationary 'Tod' Engine.

If you enjoy the likes of the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway or Amberley Museum, this site is still in the beginning stages by comparison.

However, it offers up a far more laid-back approach compared with much larger tourist railroads.

The Age Of Steam Roundhouse

Location: Near Sugarcreek, Ohio

Length: 1/5-mile

Gauge: Standard

Many renovated roundhouses in the USA have become railroad museums. The one that was recommended to me the most was Age Of Steam – and when stepping onto the site and seeing the massive 18-road complex, it became easy to see why.

This place is relatively new on the heritage scene, having been constructed as recently as 2010. But while this may not have the lore of other railroad sites, it offers a huge collection of rolling stock from the Eastern states, as well as some Canadian Pacific and Canadian National interlopers.

Notable engines include USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 2630 and former McCloud River Railroad No. 19, famous for appearing in the 1972 Lee Marvin film *Emperor Of The North*.

The only equivalent in the United Kingdom to such a place has to be Barrow Hill Roundhouse, near Chesterfield.

However, while the former Midland Railway engine shed allows visitors to roam at their free will during their open days, this American counterpart requires booking as part of a guided tour.



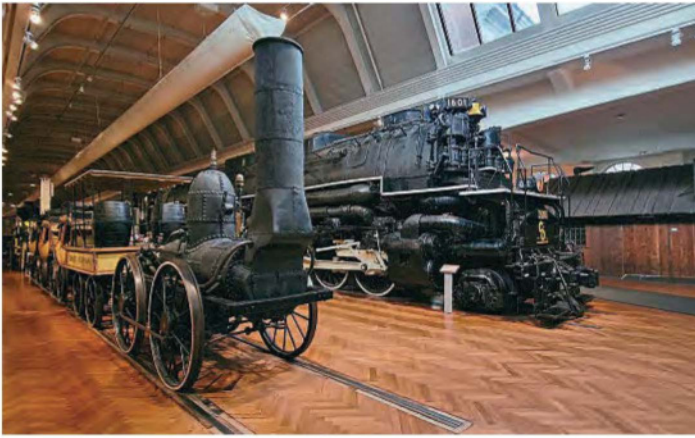
Mow Lumber No. 4 is one of nine listed Shays at the Cass Scenic Railroad in West Virginia.



Smokebox rags are lit inside CP No. 1278 during an Age of Steam photographic charter.



Coupled to a fleet of hand-me-down freight cars from local steel mills, photo opportunities with the J&L Narrow Gauge Railroad's Porter 0-4-OST No. 58 can be made by special request.



Built 62 years after the original, the replica De-Witt Clinton stands inside The Henry Ford Museum next to C&O No. 1601 of 1941.

The Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village

Location: Dearborn, Michigan
Length: 2.5 miles
Gauge: Standard

If you ever wondered if North America has an equivalent to Beamish Museum in County Durham, look no further. Walking around the Greenfield Village is like stepping back in time to the early 1920s, with Ford Model Ts scooting around the period street scenes and offering rides to visitors. Unlike Beamish's short out-and-back demonstration lines, the village's railroad offers a complete circuit tour of the site.

Admittedly, the open coaching stock makes the ride look like a theme park railroad, but the historic motive power includes some unique survivors.

Duties are normally shared between Detroit & Lima Northern 4-4-0 No. 7 and Mason Bogie 0-6-4 No. 3, the only operational example in the world. If you're lucky, you might find unique 4-4-0 Edison (rebuilt by Henry Ford from a Manchester 0-4-0 switcher of 1870) also doing the rounds.

The museum has a vast collection of transportation on display, from automotive to aviation engineering. Keen railfans will be met by the sublime and the ridiculous, in the form of a replica of De-Witt Clinton with matching coaches adjacent to the massive C&O Allegheny 2-6-6-6 No. 1601.

Also be sure to look out for one of the world's many Rocket replicas, commissioned by Henry Ford in 1928.

The Illinois Railway Museum

Location: Near Union, Illinois
Length: 5 miles
Gauge: Standard

Located less than an hour's drive away from Chicago, the IRM runs on part of the old Elgin & Belvidere Electric Railway, opened back in 1907. The museum was initially founded in 1953 in the northern suburbs of Chicago and moved to its current location in 1967.

You can think of this museum as a cross between the Midland Railway – Butterley and the National Tramway Museum at Crich. The 'Aladdin's cave' experience offers something for everyone, from lines of static rolling stock in various states of repair to model railroads and running lines stretching through the surrounding cornfields.

The collection includes a number of large main line engines from local lines such as the Chicago Burlington & Quincy and Illinois Central. But interlopers from further afield, such as Norfolk & Western Y3A Mallet 2-8-8-2 No. 2050, are also accommodated here. Perhaps the highlight for diesel fans is the unique Nebraska Zephyr train, made up of E-5A No. 9911A and a collection of stainless-steel passenger cars.

If you're a tram (or 'streetcar') enthusiast, the short electric tramway circuit gives visitors a chance to travel in one of the museum's many tramcars. The oldest operational of these, Chicago Surface Lines No. 1374, dates back to 1905. Elevated railway enthusiasts are also catered for, with Northwestern Elevated Railroad 'L' Car No. 24 of 1898.



One of the last operating F-unit diesels in Colorado standing proud onsite at Golden on the Colorado Railroad Museum.

The Colorado Railroad Museum

Location: Golden, near Denver, Colorado
Length: 1/5 of a mile
Gauge: Mixed, Standard and 3ft

Walking round here feels like someone looked at the Great Western society's Didcot Railway Centre and wanted to emulate bits of it to show off Colorado's Railroad history – even though this site pre-dates Didcot by eight years!

A circular dual-gauge demonstration line surrounds the site, which is home to a wide range of rolling stock that would have worked in Colorado. Here you'll find a unique range of locomotives, including the oldest preserved steam locomotive in Colorado, Denver Leadville & Gunnison 2-8-0 No. 191 of 1880. There is also the last iconic F-unit diesels used on the Rio Grande network, Nos. 5771-5762, donated to the museum in 1996. One of the famous 'Galloping Goose' railcars and Pikes Peak Cog Railroad 0-4-0Ts are also based here, as well as the largest steam locomotive preserved in the state, Chicago Burlington & Quincy 4-8-4 No. 5629.

On running days, you may be lucky to find motive power ranging from Rio Grande Southern 4-6-0 No. 20 of 1899 through to the massive K37 2-8-2 No. 491. However, much like Didcot, open days are not always operating ones, so keep this in mind when planning your visit.

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

Location: Chama, New Mexico/Antonito, Colorado
Length: 64 miles
Gauge: 3ft



Passing Baldwin 2-10-0 No. 1630, the stainless steel Zephyr reverses along the Illinois Railway Museum's demonstration line.



Rio Grande Southern 2-8-0 No. 74 outside the entrance to the Colorado Railroad Museum at Golden.



K28 No. 476 leads K36 No. 482 double-headed past Cascade Canyon on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, as trains have done since the 1880s.



Working a 'School Train' footplate experience course, K36 No. 484, known as 'Old Reliable', pauses at Toltec Siding on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.



With working replicas of Jupiter and No. 119 built in 1979, the Golden Spike ceremony is regularly retold at the Golden Spike National Historical Park in Utah.

The remains of the old Denver & Rio Grande route from Alamosa through to Durango has been running in preserved form since 1970, making this the longest-preserved narrow gauge railroad in the country. Operations are usually carried out by one of the ubiquitous Baldwin K36 2-8-2s. However, occasional special trains use more historic motive power, such as K27 No. 463, C19 2-8-0 No. 315 or T12 4-6-0 No. 168 (referred to by some C&T workers as 'I Think I Can', 'I Thought I Could' and 'I Wish I Could'). These are often matched with older wooden-bodied coaching stock.

Do not expect express timings: a single full-line trip is normally timetabled at six hours, and speeds rarely exceed 15mph. Imagine travelling nearly three times the length of the preserved Welsh Highland Railway on less up-to-date rolling stock, although this is no bad thing for authenticity as the timings are no different to how they were in the 1920s. Few narrow-gauge railroads offer similar levels of immersion.

Standing at 10,015 feet above sea level, the wayside depot at Cumbres Pass is the highest railroad station of any kind in the country; interestingly, the 2ft gauge Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway in the Scottish borders has the highest elevated station of any UK heritage line, a narrow gauge railway in both countries holding similar claims.

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

Location: Durango, Colorado
Length: 40 miles
Gauge: 3ft

While the Cumbres & Toltec can offer the more authentic Denver & Rio Grande experience, this former mineral branch offers more dramatic scenery and a round trip that's achievable in a day. It usually takes three hours and 40 minutes to travel up to Silverton, but it allows more time at each end of the route.

Regular trains each way do not normally occur here. During the May-September season, three trains depart from Durango in the morning and do not return until the early evening; one of which sometimes terminates at the remote picnic area of Cascade Canyon. This mix of full and half-line round trips puts one in mind of the current peak timetable run by the Ffestiniog Railway.

Motive power is usually one of the surviving ALCO K28 or Baldwin K36 2-8-2s but in recent years the railroad has introduced former White Pass & Yukon diesel locomotives on early departures and hot summer days.

Railfans wishing to photograph trains from the lineside can easily chase a train out of Durango as far as Rockwood. After that, road users won't see the line again until they are above Silverton.

The most dramatic locations are only reachable on foot, so be prepared for miles of trekking that makes walking the Aberglaslyn Pass as easy as Regent's Park.

Note of interest: this line was owned and run by its parenting railroad company until 1978, so working steam continued on a single narrow-gauge line for 16 years after the official 'end' of standard gauge US steam. Perhaps the Durango & Silverton has some parallels with the Vale Of Rheidol in its history, too?

The Golden Spike National Historical Park

Location: Promontory Summit, Utah
Length: ½-mile
Gauge: Standard

The opening of the American Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 is immortalised in history and reinterpreted in films and TV shows ranging from Disney's *The Lone Ranger* to *Peanuts*, but with development of a shorter route across Salt Lake, the Union Pacific Railroad abandoned the original line before the First World War. However, from starting out as a tourist attraction in 1969, this place has cemented itself in modern American folklore with replicas of the two original locomotives from the Golden Spike ceremony.

Keep in mind this is not a heritage railroad, but a State Historic Park, meaning that although there are working steam engines here, reenactments are offered instead of rides. Furthermore, the nearest catering facility is more than 25 miles away. You really are out in the sticks here, yet no historic site in the UK can match the lore of this place.

A potential UK equivalent to such a big landmark of railway history, such as a Rainhill Trials Reenactment Park, may only exist in people's dreams.

The Nevada State Railroad Museum

Location: Carson City, Nevada
Length: 1 mile
Gauge: Mixed, standard, and 3ft

Established in 1980, this site initially served as a base for the Virginia & Truckee Railroad



Restored in 2015, *Glenbrook* brings some empty passenger stock forward ready for loading at the Nevada State Railroad Museum.

collection purchased by Paramount Pictures – the American film and television production and distribution giant – in the 1930s.

With a roundhouse surrounded by a dual-gauge demonstration line, this place offers vibes of Dinetri Railway Centre. However, like similar museums, open days are not always operating ones.

On running days, motive power includes unique V&T 4-6-0 No. 25, regarded as the railroad's first new steam locomotive since 1876.

Narrow gauge rails were recently laid to run 1875 2-6-0 'Glenbrook' built for the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company. For those who seek an engine similar to Furness Railway No. 20 of 1863, then a rare treat is the sight of wood-burning 4-4-0 No. 22 *Inyo*. Built by Baldwin in 1875, *Inyo* is regarded as one of the oldest working steam locomotives in the country.

It is not all about steam either, for the museum has a pair of historic internal combustion 'motor cars', the oldest of which, McKeen car No. 22, was built as far back as 1910.

On event days, it is possible to photograph line-ups of multiple engines around the turntable.

Access around the site allows visitors to roam free without too many boundaries.

But here I issue a word or two of warning to those who venture towards the less-populated areas: you are in the desert, so watch out for fire ants!

The Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad

Location: Near Oakhurst, California

Length: 2 miles

Gauge: 3ft

Another place where Shays are the prime form of motive power, this is all that remains of the former Madera Sugar Pine Lumber Company system which once boasted 140 miles of track.

Rescued in 1965 by former Hungarian cheese maker Rudy Stauffer and his family, this line operates two locomotives rescued from Tuolumne, California, one of which, No.10, is claimed to be the largest narrow-gauge Shay ever built.

The open coaching stock has been fashioned out of flatbeds, with walls made from solid halves of tree trunk to offer the illusion that you are travelling on a real logging train. A visually novel use of former freight wagons, rather like the Middleton Railway's use of converted PMV vans as passenger coaches.

Local fire hazard laws apply here, so if there is any risk of lingering forest smoke, trains may be banned from running. The best thing to do is call ahead on the morning you intend to travel.

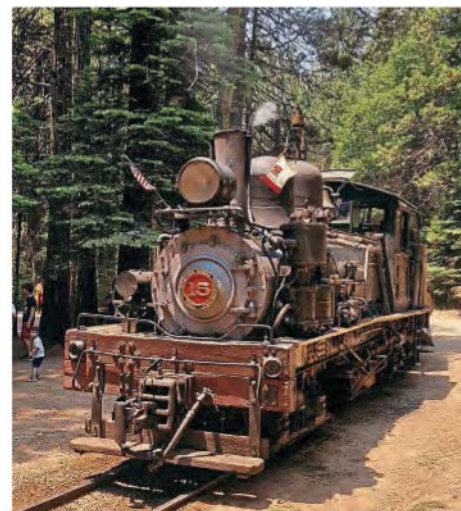
Railtown 1897

Location: Jamestown, California

Length: 3 miles

Gauge: Standard

If you like to combine railroad and movie history, then this is a must-see place. Railtown



No.15, one California's Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad's resident Shays, which was built by Lima in 1913.

has more than 100 films and TV show credits, starting with JP McGowan's *The Red Glove* (1919), through *Petticoat Junction* and *Little House On The Prairie*, right up to the BBC's *Seven Wonders Of The Industrial World* (2003).

Children of the 1980s and 1990s will be excited to see the 1891-built Rogers 4-6-0 Sierra Railway No. 3, star of many productions including *Back To The Future – Part III* (1990).

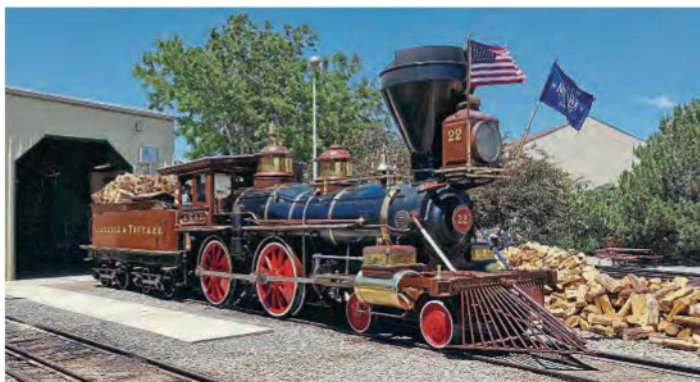
Do not think of this railroad as a big film set, however. The base at Jamestown began in life as part of the Sierra Railway, built to serve the logging industry in Stanislaus and Tuolumne County. Being less than six hours' drive from Hollywood, the film industry just so happened to like the look of this route for many Western-themed motion pictures.

A round trip here is doable in 45 minutes but, like the Foxfield, North Norfolk and Keighley & Worth Valley, a short running line matters less than the feel of the experience.

On the advice of the author...

If you are unsure of what to expect before you book a flight to the US, or if you would like to discover more about the sort of motive power you can find at these railroads, then you can learn more about both in *Steam Locomotives In Profile – In The USA*, available to order on DVD, BluRay and digital download from www.e-gmedia.co.uk/shop

Also available in pdf eBook form is my diary, *The Making Of Steam Locomotives In Profile – In The USA*, documenting a full behind-the-scenes look at the production of the series. **HR**



Veteran 4-4-0 No. 22 *Inyo* at the Nevada State Railroad Museum. It was restored to running order in 1974, having previously been displayed in Utah.



Rogers 4-6-0 Sierra Railway No. 3, which dates from 1891, resting inside the roundhouse at Railtown 1897 in Jamestown, California.



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On December 12, 2023, No. 46100 *Royal Scot* passes Torr Vale Mill on the outskirts of New Mills in Derbyshire's High Peak. The *Royal Scot* 4-6-0 was heading the Saphos Trains 'Christmas White Rose' excursion to York, with electric traction having worked the first part of the trip between Rugby and Crewe. The former cotton mill is a Grade II*-listed structure dating from the 1780s. At the time of its closure in 2000, its 210 years of textile production was the longest continuous production in the UK. ROB FALCONER





Steam a no-go on Northern Ireland Railways in 2024?

By Hugh Dougherty

It is looking increasingly certain that no steam trains will operate on Northern Ireland Railways in 2024, as there are no qualified steam drivers on the system.

The situation has arisen following the sudden death of the railway's only qualified steam driver, much-valued and admired Noel Playfair, at the age of 62, on January 16, 2023, as reported in issue 303.

Despite NIR's owning company Translink stating last year that it would look at the situation after an appropriate time had elapsed, no action has yet been taken, leaving the company with two passed steam firemen – but no steam train drivers. That situation has resulted in the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland's Whitehead base being unable to run steam trains over NIR. A society spokesman said it is "a huge blow for the RPSI".

Whereas the society previously ran steam trains to and from Dublin and Portrush, the famous 'Portrush Flyer' and other operations such as steam and jazz trains, Easter Bunny and Santa specials on the main line, its northern operations are now confined to Whitehead Excursion Station yard, where trained volunteers expertly run popular steam train rides throughout the operating season.

Translink will officially open Belfast Grand Central station, its new state-of-the-art rail and bus transport hub,

towards the end of 2024. Whereas steam has been involved with RPSI's close cooperation in the past, such as on the 50th anniversary of the forming of the company, unless moves are made urgently to train at least one NIR steam driver, the opening of the new station, built with eight platforms to allow for the future expansion of the railway system, will be a diesel-only affair.

As it is situated on the former Great Northern Railway of Ireland Grosvenor Road goods depot site, beside the former and present Great Victoria Street stations, the new terminus has direct links with the railway heritage of the location. Many enthusiasts feel that involving a GNR(I) locomotive and train in the event would be very much expected, as well as offering a tremendous publicity opportunity given the popularity of steam with the public.

'Under consideration'

When asked if steam is being considered for the opening, a Translink spokesman said: "The operational opening of Belfast Grand Central station is due in quarter four of 2024. Plans to mark this occasion are still under consideration. Translink continues to work with the RPSI and the Railway Safety Authority to assist with arrangements that would enable steam train operations to continue. Training for steam drivers is carried out by the RPSI."

However, according to the RPSI, no moves to remedy the situation



The pulling power of steam: The RPSI's former Great Northern Railway of Ireland 4-4-0 Q class No. 131 is lost among the crowds at Belfast Great Victoria Street on April 4, 2018. Could steam yet appear at the opening of Belfast Grand Central later this year? HUGH DOUGHERTY

had yet been made. The spokesman said: "RPSI volunteers can operate within our premises at Whitehead to overhaul and prepare locomotives and carriages for the main line, but to get a steam train out on the main line we must have a driver, fireman, guard, and inspector from the railway company, in Northern Ireland from NIR, and in the Republic of Ireland from Iarnród Éireann."

"All are regular NIR and IE staff who volunteer for steam train work. We provide the necessary classroom training and practical experience, with training overseen by one of the main line steam operators in Britain, usually including a week's supervised experience and examination on a line such as the North Yorkshire Moors Railway or the Fort William to Mallaig line."

"This gives NIR and IE confidence that their steam staff know what they are doing on their main line railways."

South of the border, the RPSI is able to operate steam trains extensively from its Dublin base, thanks to IE having three qualified steam drivers and two firemen on its staff.

However, with no qualified steam driver on NIR, main line trains have been unable to operate north of Dundalk.

Given that training drivers takes time, the RPSI said it is working on a short-term fix and a longer one but cannot at this stage predict when steam trains will operate out of Whitehead again. The impact on the society's revenue generation has been, and is, significant.

When NIR celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018, it chose a steam

train, hauled by former GNR(I) Q 4-4-0 No. 131, running between Belfast Great Victoria Street and Whitehead, to mark the event, with the presence of steam generating huge public and media interest.

'Real achievement'

Speaking from his seat on that steam special, NIR managing director Richard Knox told *Heritage Railway* magazine: "It is a real achievement to have reached our half-century. We decided to mark the event with steam as, 50 years ago, we still had steam in service."

"Steam trains really catch the imagination of the public, help put the railway on the map, and celebrate our rich heritage of which we, as part of the state-owned Translink organisation, are very proud."

Now, steam fans are hoping that NIR continues to live up to those sentiments, while traders in Portrush, who looked forward to the crowds arriving in the popular resort on the 'Portrush Flyers' during the summer, and the Dublin shops which benefitted from RPSI shoppers' specials from Belfast, are also backing steam's return.

When asked if NIR recognises that heritage steam trains have a contribution to make towards tourism in general and railway tourism in particular, a spokesman said: "Translink has a history of working with the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland and has always actively supported steam operations in Northern Ireland. We see this relationship continuing going forward."



In happier times, former GNR(I) 4-4-0 No. 171 *Slieve Gullion* sets back on to the coaches of the 'Portrush Flyer' at Portrush in July 1985, ready to leave for Belfast with the crowds it brought. HUGH DOUGHERTY



Bulleid West Country 4-6-2 No. 34046 *Branton* passes Kemsing on its way to Canterbury with Saphos Trains' 'Golden Arrow' on December 16. PETER HOLLANDS

Settle and Carlisle double for No. 34046 *Branton*

By Tim Hobman

STEAM Dreams has announced two trips in March with West Country light Pacific No. 34046 *Branton* heading over the Settle and Carlisle line.

The first tour on Wednesday, March 20 starts from Norwich, heading diesel-hauled westwards to pick up at Thetford, Ely and Peterborough.

After leaving Peterborough, the tour continues across the country to join the West Coast Main Line for Crewe, where *Branton* will take charge of the train.

From Crewe, the railtour heads towards Blackburn and the Ribble Valley Line to Hellifield, before taking the Settle and Carlisle line to the destination of Carlisle.

There is a planned break of about two hours in the cathedral city before the diesel-hauled return journey home.

Saturday, March 23, will see a tour, either diesel or electric, head from Euston via the West Coast Main Line, picking up at Milton Keynes, Rugby, Lichfield Trent Valley and Crewe, before continuing north to Carlisle

for a break there lasting about two hours.

On the return leg, No. 34046 will take over, departing Carlisle for Settle and then heading back towards the WCML for the journey home.

Tickets are available on both trips in Pullman class, first class or premium standard at <https://steamdreams.co.uk>

Castle set to tackle Shap in March

VINTAGE Trains is staging a rare opportunity to travel behind GWR Castle 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* as it tackles Shap Fell unassisted by a diesel.

The tour, on Saturday, March 16 and under the title of 'The Shap Mountaineer', will see the train depart from Birmingham New Street diesel-hauled to Carnforth. From there, No. 5043 will take the train forward single-handed to Carlisle and then return the train to Crewe, where diesel traction will again take over.

The trip will give passengers the unique experience of hearing

the locomotive working hard to reach the summit, something not often witnessed on the main line nowadays.

Alternative pick-up points from Birmingham New Street are Wolverhampton, Stafford, Crewe, Warrington Bank Quay, and Preston, as the train will take the West Coast Main Line to Carlisle.

Tickets are available in Pullman class, first class and tourist class, with an early-bird discount applied to tourist tickets purchased before January 31.

→ For more details and to book, visit <https://vintagetrains.co.uk>

Lakeland adventure for April

ON Saturday, April 13, 'The Lakelander', run by Saphos Trains, will depart diesel-hauled from Leicester and take the Peterborough to Birmingham line to pick-up additional passengers at Narborough, Hinckley, and Nuneaton, before heading northwest on the West Coast Main Line. The next passenger pick-up will be at Tamworth and then Lichfield Trent Valley, Rugeley Trent Valley, Crewe and finally Preston.

At Preston, a member of the Carnforth steam locomotives pool will take charge of the train, being BR 7P Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia*, LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* or West Country light Pacific No. 34046 *Branton*.

Continuing north, the tour will pass through Lancaster, over Shap, and down into Penrith, before finally arriving at Carlisle for a stop of about three hours.

The return journey will head along the Cumbrian Coast, through Workington, and passing Sellafeld and Ravenglass before skirting the edge of Morecambe Bay on route back to Carnforth and a fast run back to Leicester, then setting down passengers.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class non-dining and standard class.

For more details and to book, visit <https://saphostrains.com>

'Thunderbird' double for Branch Line Society dates

By Tim Hobman

THE Branch Line Society is offering two opportunities to travel behind a GBRailfreight Class 57/3 in March this year as part of positioning moves for its 'BWC Two' Scottish excursion.

On Thursday, March 7, under the title 'Thunderbirds Are Go!', passengers can join the Mk.2 coaching stock move at Derby, Chesterfield or Swinton, before the train takes the Hemsworth loop and passes Hare Park Junction and Turners Lane Junction for a further passenger pick-up at Castleford and then York.

From York, the destination is Scotland, passing Darlington Down South loop before picking up more passengers at Darlington and Newcastle. Guests can then enjoy a run north through Berwick-upon-Tweed Down goods, Grantshouse Down passenger loop and Drem Down passenger loop before arrival in Edinburgh in the late

afternoon. Passengers may choose to alight here or stay on the train to Linlithgow via the Newbridge Down passenger loop. This trip is one way only and open to members and non-members of the society.

The positioning move from Derby to Linlithgow is to prepare for the 'BWC Two' tour between Friday, March 8 and Sunday, March 10. This excursion is for society members only but allows those fortunate enough to be on the tour a three-day exploration of Scotland behind Class 37 No 37403 *Isle of Mull*.

Photo stops

The first day starts out from the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway, bound for Fort William. The train will first head back toward Edinburgh via Linlithgow, picking up passengers at both locations and arriving at Edinburgh early afternoon.

From the Scottish capital, the tour will head toward Dalmuir for another passenger pick-up and take in the Bo'ness Down passenger loop,

Greenhill Down goods loop and Cowlares East Curve on route. After Dalmuir, the train will continue on West Highland Line to Fort William, with a photographic stop at Ardlui in the late afternoon and arriving at Fort William in the early evening.

The second day starts from Fort William and will retrace the route back to Ardlui for a photographic stop and a run round.

From here, the train heads west to Oban for a two-hour lunchbreak and a photographic stop before returning to Fort William. There is an option for those who do not wish to travel to Ardlui to alight the train at Tyndrum and be picked up again when the tour is en route to Oban.

The final day will firstly see a trip to Mallaig in the morning before getting back to Fort William by lunchtime.

The afternoon will see a return to Glasgow, featuring a Class 66 attaching at Wemyss Bay for a reverse move. From Glasgow, the train returns to the Bo'ness & Kinneil

Railway, taking in various loop lines on route.

Once the weekend tour is complete, there is another chance for non-society members to travel back from Scotland to Derby on the return positioning move, again behind a GBRailfreight Class 57/3.

Heading south

Under the title of 'International Rescue' on Monday, March 11, the train will start at Linlithgow and head towards Edinburgh for a further passenger pick-up. From here, the return route to Derby is planned to be via Carlisle and then take the Tyne Valley Line to Darlington and York, to set down passengers at both locations. The train is then planned to proceed south-west to set down at Swinton, Chesterfield and finally Derby.

Tickets are available in first class non-dining for all tours, with an option for a guaranteed table for two people, at www.branchline.uk/ fixture.php

Rare rails offered up by UK Railtours

By Tim Hobman

UK Railtours has announced its first 'off the beaten track' railtour of the 2024 season for Saturday, March 23, under the title of 'The Gateway Galloper'.

Starting from King's Cross with two Class 66s in top-and-tail formation, the tour will pick up passengers at Potters Bar, Stevenage, Huntingdon and Peterborough before heading north to Grantham and turning west towards Nottingham.

From there, the tour will head to Castle Donington Distribution Depot and then reverse to visit the East Midlands Gateway freight facility.

After a brief pause, the excursion will head to Burton West yard before another reversal to Derby for a break of about 90 minutes.

Once back on board, guests will then be treated to more freight lines with a visit to Chaddesden sidings, a pass of Toton yard, and then a reversal on to the Mapperley goods branch.

Heading away from the Toton area via the High Level goods line, the tour will pause at Nottingham to set down any passengers who might wish to alight there.

After this brief stop, the train will retrace the route of the outward journey to Grantham and down the East Coast Main Line, dropping off passengers en route back to London.

Tickets are available in first class dining and non-dining, and also standard class. There is a concession available for junior travellers under the age of 16.

To book and for more information, head online and visit www.ukrailtours.com



Left: Direct Rail Services Class 66 No.66420 passes beneath Pitlochry station's Victorian footbridge with a container train from Inverness on February 19, 2010. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Stay of execution for Pitlochry's Victorian footbridge after replacement plans rejected

THE A-listed, Victorian Highland Railway footbridge at Pitlochry station has been given a temporary stay of execution by members of Perth and Kinross Council's planning and placemaking committee.

On December 13 they threw out a recommendation by council planning officials to give Network Rail the green light to remove the bridge and replace it with a wheelchair-accessible version. The dismantled bridge was to have been offered to heritage railways for further use.

Councillors voted by nine votes to two to deny granting listed building consent after considering 26 objections to the proposal, which Network Rail said had been carefully designed to accord as much as possible with the architecture of the station.

The company is now likely to take the design to go back to the drawing board and reapply, especially as similar schemes are proposed to remove all the former Highland Railway footbridges at stations

on the line between Pitlochry and Aviemore and replace them with similar structures to the Pitlochry proposal.

Campaigner Sally Spaven, Highland Mainline Community Partnership chair, and Katie Howie, its treasurer, who is also convener of the Pitlochry Station Liaison Group, which pushed for retention of the original bridge, said: "We are not against step-free access for all passengers but we do not consider that the proposed design accords with the listed building status and unique heritage character of Pitlochry Station and that another solution, taking local views fully into consideration, needs to be found by Network Rail."

Among solutions discussed by councillors was the possibility of leaving the original bridge in situ and building another bridge further up the platform to meet the needs of all passengers while still keeping the station's railway heritage intact.

Steam Dreams ended 2023 on a high – and may repeat successful London festive circulars this December

By John Titlow

STEAM Dreams ended 2023 on a high with its successful 'Santa Steam Express' on a circular route out of London Victoria.

Four trains a day ran on December 15, 18 and 21, departing at 9.20am, 11.44am, 3.31pm and 6.20pm from Platform 7.

The trains started behind a diesel and then ran via Longhedge Junction, under the Waterloo lines to Kensington Olympia and Willesden for a short stop.

After departing Willesden, it was steam – the rostered locomotive was LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45231 – all the way back to Victoria on a slightly unusual route. Heading south, it was via South Acton, Kew, across the River Thames at Barnes Bridge, through Clapham Junction and back under the Waterloo Lines to pass Longhedge Junction once again, then over the Thames on Grosvenor Bridge and passing Battersea Power Station into Victoria.

It was an early start with the empty coaching stock from Southall at 6.48am where the locomotive and stock are kept for arrival in Victoria at 8.58am. After the last train, it returned to Southall at 10.25pm.

Stock would be best described as an eclectic mix. As usual, the carmine and cream Mk.1 was behind the locomotive, which was followed in random order by three blue carriages, three Pullmans and three carmine and cream, plus one raspberry ripple.

Loadings were very encouraging, especially with the midday, afternoon and evening trains being either nearly full or full.

The early morning trains had some spaces available, and prices started from £65.

Due to its success, Steam Dreams is now considering running a similar train this year. A decision will be made during the summer.



Above: LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45231 crosses the River Thames on the approach to Barnes Bridge station on December 15. JOHN TITLOW



Left: No. 45231 is about to set the train back out of Platform 7 in London Victoria Station on December 15. JOHN TITLOW

Raising the roof: Storm Henk halts Dartmoor Line services

DARTMOOR Line services were cancelled after high winds caused by Storm Henk ripped the corrugated iron roof off the classic footbridge at Okehampton station and blew it on to the tracks at midday on January 2. Class 150 DMU No. 150247, with the Exeter Central to Okehampton service, was stopped before reaching the station, previously the headquarters of the heritage Dartmoor Railway. After discussions, the DMU was permitted to enter the east end of the station platform with one door opened to release the passengers.

Immediately afterwards, operator Great Western Railway issued

a statement which said: "The footbridge at Okehampton station has been damaged by the strong winds and until it is inspected, we are unable to run trains in to Okehampton station. A number of trees have also fallen along the line, which has meant we have had to suspend the train service."

During the shutdown, the debris between the platforms was carefully taken away and deposited out of the way in the bay platform with a view to keeping its pattern safe in the case of a rebuild.

A limited road replacement service was set up between Exeter St Davids and Okehampton.



Pictured is the damaged footbridge with (on the right) the larger roof sections saved in the bay platform line. DAVID HUNT

LMS 'Black Five' to head RTC's 'Cheshireman'

THE Railway Touring Company has announced that LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 44871 will head 'The Cheshireman' tour on Saturday, March 2.

Starting out steam-hauled from Euston, the train will take the West Coast Main Line, picking up additional passengers at Watford Junction and Milton Keynes, before turning onto the Northampton loop line for another pick-up.

From Northampton, No. 44871 will continue north to rejoin the WCML at Rugby for another passenger stop, before heading along the Trent Valley Line to Nuneaton for the final pick-up.

After leaving Nuneaton, the 'Black Five' will get the chance to run fast past Lichfield, through Shugborough Tunnel, and on to Stafford. Rejoining the WCML at Stafford, the tour heads for Crewe before taking the North Wales Coast Line to the final destination of Chester.

Customers will have about three hours to explore the city before returning to Euston, again behind No. 44871 and via the same route.

Tickets are available in premier dining, first class and standard class, with a discount for junior travellers and family tickets. Visit www.railwaytouring.net

Vintage Trains adds new 'Shakespeare Express' dates

THE new Vintage Trains 'Shakespeare Express' season will start on Sunday, April 7 with a return trip from Birmingham Snow Hill to Stratford-upon-Avon.

The trip will depart between 10am and 10.15am and will call at Birmingham Moor Street and Tyseley and, on the outward journey only, at Henley-in-Arden. On some Sundays in the spring and autumn, the 'Shakespeare Express' will also depart from Worcester, Leicester or Derby.

For further details of the trips and of the new dates added for 2024, visit <https://vintagetrains.co.uk/the-shakespeare-express/>

See Birmingham's Grade II-listed Power Signal Box at work – on the internet!

By Robin Jones

VIRTUAL reality tours inside Birmingham New Street's iconic 1960s Power Signal Box can now be accessed online – a year after moving its last trains through the station.

In September, Network Rail gave special access to the University of Birmingham to completely scan the insides of the 'box' so it could be recorded forever.

The project involved making a series of 3D laser scans and taking panoramic images over two floors, including the relay room and signalling panel.

These were then stitched together to build a fully interactive online model, which is compatible with virtual reality headsets and went live on the internet on December 19 at <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=a7aSN6y5sDH>

Built as part of the West Coast Main Line modernisation, the Birmingham PSB was one of four power signalboxes in the West Midlands replacing 64 manually operated 'boxes'. Its 56 years of operation ended on Christmas Eve 2022 when its 1960s analogue technology made way for digital, and control for all train movements through Britain's busiest station outside London was passed over to the West Midlands Signalling Centre in east Birmingham.

John Korbes, Network Rail local operations manager, said: "Having worked at Birmingham Power



Birmingham New Street's Grade II-listed Power Signal Box. NR

Signal Box for many years, I am not alone in saying we all had heavy hearts when we said goodbye to a building which had been integral to the smooth running of the national railway network.

'Permanent reminder'

"It fills me with great pride and satisfaction that the team at the University of Birmingham have recorded the signalbox, nearly exactly as it was when it was powered down, as a permanent reminder of the huge role it played in our railway's history."

Bob Stone, emeritus professor in extended realities at the university, said: "It's been a real privilege to capture the New Street PSB digitally before its historical contents were dismantled and lost forever. Being able to use sophisticated 3D scanning

technology to record such a complex installation in less than half a day just goes to show how powerful it is in helping to preserve important regional and national railway heritage assets, leaving a legacy to be enjoyed by future generations, young and old."

Work is now underway to convert the insides of the building into a training academy for railway signallers. Its exterior is Grade II-listed and will not be subject to change. It was given listed building status in 1995 because of its "dramatic and exceptional architectural quality" and "strongly sculptural form".

It is one off Birmingham's best surviving examples of Brutalist architecture – defined by imposing facades built from pre-cast concrete.

It was also only surviving 'box' to use the Westpac Mk.1 signalling system until it closed.

Cornwall's oldest 'box' to close after 145 years

PAR station's signalbox which dates from 1879 and is the oldest working one in Cornwall is to close in the spring. Along with the 'boxes' at Truro and Lostwithiel, which is



The soon-to-be-redundant Grade II-listed signalbox at Par station. N CHADWICK/CREATIVE COMMONS

Grade II-listed, are being made redundant as part of a digital upgrade.

Signalling at Par, Lostwithiel and Truro will be controlled centrally from Exeter St Davids.

Built to the first GWR standard design, the Par 'box' was set up to control the GWR main line onwards to Penzance, together with the junction for the Newquay branch.

Located at the southern end of Platform 2, it was originally less than half its current length, containing only 26 levers. In 1913, the frame was replaced and a new frame of 57 levers added. A panel was later added to control the section through to St Austell and Burngullow. Signals controlled from Par carry the identification code 'PR'.

In July 2013, it was one of 26 "highly distinctive" signalboxes listed by Ed Vaizey, minister for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in a joint initiative by English Heritage and Network Rail to provide a window into how railways operated in the past.

At Nationalisation in 1948, BR inherited about 10,000 signalboxes. At the end of 2019, Network Rail said 86 were still in use.



LMS 4-6-0 No. 46115 Scots Guardsman passes Cramlington in Northumberland with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Edinburgh Christmas Market' from York on December 16. HENRY WINSKILL

Class 37 photoshoot raises £3k for children's hospice

A CHARITY photoshoot at Network Rail's Holgate Engineering Works in York has raised £3000 to support Yorkshire-based charity Martin House Children's Hospice.

More than 70 photographers attended the one-off event on the evening of December 16, marking the end of the season for NR's Rail Head Treatment Trains.

Five Class 37s stationed at the works throughout their RHTT season were cleaned and made to look their shiny best by volunteers from across the rail industry, before being lit to capture enigmatic and atmospheric images under the evening's moonlight.

The photographers each made a donation to attend the event, organised by NR colleagues. Recently, staff from Network Rail and DB Cargo were presented with a Heart of Gold award for raising more than £250,000 for the charity through organising a series of rail tours across the country.

NR programme director Chris Gee, one of the event's organisers, said: "It has been a busy season for the locomotives based at Holgate and it was lovely to see them presented so



Class 37s Nos. 37407, 37419 and 37425 lined up outside Holgate Engineering Works for the charity fundraising event on December 16 after completing their Rail Head Treatment Trains duties for the season. CHRIS GEE/NR

nice after working hard throughout the autumn keeping the nation's passengers moving.

"Network Rail has supported Martin House's incredible work for a number of years now and it is amazing that

we have been able to raise even more money for it through this special event."

Pathfinder Tours offers a final chance with Welsh Coal mine farewell tour

By Tim Hobman

ON Saturday, March 9, Pathfinder Tours is giving customers the chance to visit the Welsh coal mine of Cwmbargoed under the title 'The Cwm and Glo', which translates as 'The Valley and Coal'.

With coal production expected to cease in 2024, this is possibly the last time a passenger train will be able to visit the mine and so is an opportunity not to be missed.

The tour begins at Burton-on-Trent, picking up at Birmingham New Street, Worcestershire

Parkway, Cheltenham Spa, Bristol Parkway and Severn Tunnel Junction.

From here, the train is expected to head into East Usk Yard for a reversal and then up the Uskmouth Branch towards Newport, next passing through Alexandra Dock Junction Up and Down Goods, Rumney River Bridge Junction, Pengam Sidings, Cardiff Central, Down Miskin loop, Pontyclun, Tremains Down Passenger loop, and an optional set-down point of Bridgend for those not wishing to visit Margam Knuckle yard.

For those staying on the train, it is hoped that the tour will continue away from Bridgend, through Stormy Down passenger loop, Margam Abbey Works East Junction, and into Margam Knuckle Yard for another reversal and a run back to Bridgend via the same route to collect those who may have alighted.

The next locations will see the train pass through Pencoed Up passenger loop, Up Miskin loop, Leckwith loop, Ninian Park, Cardiff Central, Heath High Level, Ystrad Mynach South Junction and on to

the Cwmbargoed branch for the highlight of the tour.

After another reversal, the return leg of the excursion is expected to pass Down Rhymer loop, Caerphilly, Cardiff Central, Cardiff West, and Newport for the first set-down point of the home stretch.

Passengers will then be able to return to their joining stations on the way back to Burton-upon-Trent.

First class and standard class tickets are available on this tour, with a discount for junior travellers. For more details and to book, visit www.pathfindertours.co.uk



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Feb, 25	Springtime in Sicily
Feb, 28	Rail Wonders of South-West Spain
Apr, 5	Railways and Paradores of Galicia
May, 3	Italian Vintage
May, 9	Railway Ramble - Vouga
May, 23	Rotterdam and the Dordt Steam Festival
May, 24	Little Trains of the Dolomites
June, 1	Gorgeous Georgia (with Armenia add-on)
June, 6	Southern France and the Pyrenees
June, 6	Vintage Central Portugal
June, 13	Douro - Rail, River and Wine
June, 23	Classic Bulgaria and the Cherry Festival
June, 23	Norway - Rails and Fjords
July, 3	By Rail to the Midnight Sun
Aug, 8	Vintage Baltics
Sept, 6	Hidden Slovenia
Sept, 7	Mountain Railways of Trentino
Sept, 12	Harz Mountains
Sept, 12	Vintage Port
Sept, 15	Vintage Slovenia
Sept, 26	Magical Minho
Sept, 26	Rail Wonders of Sardinia, Corsica and Pisa
Sept, 27	Little Trains of the Dolomites

Oct, 6	Classic Montenegro
Oct, 10	The Railways Around Bilbao
Nov, 20	Naples and Amalfi Coast
Worldwide Rail and Culture Tours	
March, 14	Icons of Australia (4 pages)
May, 2	The Canadian
June, 4	Rail & Natural Wonders of Alaska
Oct, 5	USA Western States (4 pages)
Oct, TBC	The Railways of Mexico
UK Tours	
May, 9	Springtime in Scotland
May, 30	Portmeirion and the Railways of Snowdonia
June, 7	Central Wales - Trains, Ales and Gardens
Railway Enthusiast Tours	
March,	25th Anniversary Special
May	ALSA Barcelona tour
TBC	Bigboy steaming special to US
Sep	The Great Peruvian Adventure (Summary)
Dec	Enthusiast Tour - possibly Romania
April, 5	Vietnam
Oct, 10	The Eger Counter

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January

27 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'

Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBC.

Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. 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'

London Paddington, Gloucester and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: 'Black Five' TBA. RTC

10 'The Sarum Seraph'

Peterborough, Salisbury and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.

Loco: Class 67 TBC. UKRT

17 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express'

Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBC.

Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

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



Left: Stanier 'Black Fives' dominated the festive season for main line tour workings. On December 16, No. 44871 passes through the city of Lincoln with the Railway Touring Company's 'York Yuletide Express', which originated at Norwich. The return journey was diesel-hauled.

ALAN WEAVER

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*. SD

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.

Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: Class 86 TBA. RTC

29 West of Scotland Push-Pull Day 1

Crewe, Edinburgh Waverly.

Loco: 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. IC

30 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Manchester Victoria, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

30 West of Scotland Push-Pull Day 2

Edinburgh Waverly, Oban and return.

Loco: 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. IC

30 'The Golden Arrow'

Poole, Canterbury and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. ST

31 West of Scotland Push-Pull Day 3

Edinburgh Waverly, Crewe.

Loco: 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. IC

April

6 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

13 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 1

London Victoria, Worcester. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

13 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Liverpool Lime Street, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

14 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 2

Worcester, Lancaster. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

15 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 3

Lancaster, Glasgow Central. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

16 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 4

Glasgow Central, Inverness. Steam hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

17 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 5

Inverness, Kyle of Lochalsh and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

18 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 6

Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PT	Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR	West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

Waverley. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

19 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 7

Edinburgh Waverley, Liverpool Lime Street. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

20 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 8

Liverpool Lime Street, Swansea. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

20 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 9

Swansea, Paddington. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

WITH FULL REGULATOR LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



In his latest column, **Don Benn** looks back at No. 34067 *Tangmere* working in Kent in 2008 and the work of main line stalwart LMS Class 6 Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas* on the last 'Royal Duchy' of 2023.

AT THE time of writing, the various heritage railways were running their Christmas specials, and all require longer trains than normal, so big engines are needed. In the south, that means Bulleid Pacifics, and no less than five are working as follows: Modified West Country No. 34028 *Eddystone* on the Swanage Railway; Battle of Britain No. 34070 *Manston* on the Mid-Hants Railway; modified BoB No. 34059 *Sir Archibald Sinclair* on the Bluebell Railway; and BoB No. 34072 257 *Squadron* on the Spa Valley Railway. In addition, modified West Country No. 34046 *Braunton* was working the Steam Dreams Christmas circular trains out of Victoria. Of the Merchant Navy Pacifics, No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S.N. Co.* is resident at the Gloucester Warwickshire Steam Railway, No. 35028 *Clan Line* is under overhaul, and No. 35018 *British India Line* is at Carnforth. My favourite Bulleid, No. 34067 *Tangmere*, has also been banished to foreign lands north of Watford, so it's no longer easy to see it or travel behind for those of us living in the south. That was not always the case and it put in probably its finest work in the mid-2000s when I accumulated substantial mileage behind it when it was based at Southall.

On June 4, 2008, I had booked on the 11.23am Victoria to Canterbury West via Maidstone East and 5.45pm return via Dover and Tonbridge Steam Dreams' special, for which *Tangmere* was rostered,

The day started on the 8.33am from Robertsbridge with Class 375 units, and to add variety I changed at Tonbridge on the 9.34am to Waterloo with No. 508208. This was booked non-stop to London Bridge, and I relished the chance of timing one of these units, now all withdrawn.

The climb to Sevenoaks tunnel was excellent, reaching 69mph at Weald before the driver eased for a relaying slack, but then touched 75½mph at Dunton Green before signal checks ruined the rest of the run. Transfer to Victoria was via Waterloo and the No. 211 bus. Class 47 No. 47245, which was due to bring in the stock for the steam special, failed with flat batteries; the only locomotive available was electro-diesel No. 73136, but the only West Coast driver in the area with the required traction knowledge was the one due to take No. 34067 out. He was dispatched by taxi to Stewarts Lane to bring the ED and its stock in, hence we had a late start – but the climb out of Victoria was made unassisted. My thanks to my old friend John Clifford for this information.

With Pete Roberts in charge of *Tangmere* on 11 coaches for 400 tons, we left 51 late and lost more time en route as the engine did not seem to be steaming very well. However, the climb of Bearsted bank out of Maidstone was good with a minimum of 30mph. Eventual arrival at Canterbury West was an hour late.

Martin Mill bank

Things improved on the return run, as shown in Table One. Despite signal checks in the Minster area, Pete coaxed a very good climb out of *Tangmere*, and we kept the booking to the Folkestone West water stop. Table Two shows comparisons with two other runs with No. 34067. The killer is the 1-in-71/69 stretch to just before Martin Mill, where speed dropped to 24mph compared with 30½mph on the Valentine's Day trip earlier in 2008, when No. 34067 had a lighter load of 10 for 370 tons and was steaming better. Later in the year on December 22, rail conditions were poor and signal checks didn't help, so *Tangmere* struggled, and I think we were lucky to make it.

Pete, being an ex-Nine Elms man, knows how to handle this light Pacific and even when short of steam is able to work the engine hard when needed and then allow it to recover on easier stretches. On the June run, we left Folkestone West on time and ran the 39.28 miles to a signal stop outside Tonbridge in 42 minutes 46 seconds. After a steady climb to Sandling and running up to 67½mph at Smeeth, the engine was eased again, speed dropping to 50 at Chart Siding but then averaging 73 from Pluckley to Paddock Wood, maximum 75. The signal stop outside Tonbridge was caused by an Up Hastings train and we duly followed this up the bank to Sevenoaks tunnel, reaching



No. 34067 passes through Paddock Wood on April 5, 2008, with the 6.10am from Nottingham to Folkestone Harbour. DON BENN

TABLE ONE: CANTERBURY WEST TO FOLKESTONE WEST

Date Wednesday, June 4, 2008
Train 5.45pm Canterbury West to Victoria
Loco BoB Class 4-6-2 No. 34067 *Tangmere*
Load 11 coaches, 372 tons tare 400 tons gross
Driver Pete Roberts
Fireman Not recorded
Weather Cloudy
Recorder Don Benn from eighth coach

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Canterbury West	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
MP 71	0.67		03	05	28½
Sturry	2.41		05	35	48/57½
Grove Ferry Xing	6.47		10	31	34*
MP 78	7.67		12	11	48/55
Minster	11.51	21.00	18	53	8*/4* sigs
Minster South Jct	11.92		21	20	18
MP 84	13.67		24	33	46
Richborough Xing	14.97		26	01	54
Sandwich	16.22	29.00	27	29	56
MP 88	17.67		28	59	58½
MP 89	18.67		29	59	60
Deal	20.42	34.00	31	57	46*
MP 91½	21.17		32	57	47½
Walmer	21.98		34	06	42
MP 93	22.97		35	06	38½
MP 93½	23.47		35	57	32
MP 94	23.67		36	57	28
MP 94½	24.17		38	08	24
Martin Mill	24.69		39	10	30
MP 96	25.67		40	50	38½
MP 96¼	25.92		41	15	35
Guston Tunnel North	26.41		42	03	38½
Buckland Jct	28.74	46.00	46	40	18*/29
Dover Priory	29.71	48.00	48	48	19*
Hawkesbury St Jct	30.30		50	50	6*
Folkestone East SB	36.04		61	23	51½
Folkestone Central	37.09	63.00	62	33	53
Folkestone West	37.72	65.00	64	20	¾ early

* brakes or speed restriction

42½mph before a temporary speed restriction after Hildenborough and 38 afterwards. Despite a severe signal check approaching Orpington, caused by a fault in the automatic routing system, we were just a minute late at Bromley South, where we alighted to make our way home, the richer for winning first prize in the on-train draw.

Next, in Table Three, is a run with *Tangmere* from Folkestone West to Tonbridge on December 22, 2008. This was on the continuation of the 11.24am Victoria to Canterbury West which on this occasion stopped in the goods loop beyond the station. Once again, Pete Roberts was in charge and the load was 11 coaches for 400 tons. The run from Victoria to Tonbridge had been a bit subdued after being banked up to Grosvenor Bridge by Class 37 No. 37676, and nine minutes had been lost on the Bromley South to Tonbridge section.

However, a storming run on to Ashford followed, maximum 79mph before Headcorn, and even time was reached by milepost 52; 22.47 miles in 21 minutes 45 seconds. The full log of this section was included in HR 312 and the Martin Mill section is shown in Table Two. Due to delays on that section, we left Folkestone just over 13 late and Pete made a determined effort to regain time with a good climb to Sandling and a dash down past Smeeth at 72½mph, followed by a minimum of 64½ up to Chart Siding. I was hoping for a clear run through to Tonbridge but after 77½ at Pluckley we sighted adverse signals and were put through the Up goods loop at Headcorn for no apparent reason and then encountered another signal check outside Tonbridge. Pete will run up to about 79mph



June 4, 2008, and No. 34067 *Tangmere* rests at Canterbury West. DON BENN



On April 12, 2008, No. 34067 storms away from Ashford with the 1.30pm from Folkestone Harbour to Taunton. DON BENN

TABLE TWO: MARTIN MILL BANK

Date	February 14, 2008					June 4, 2008			December 22, 2008		
Train	1.04pm Canterbury West-Victoria					5.45pm Canterbury West-Victoria			1.43pm Canterbury West-Victoria		
Loco	BoB class 4-6-2 No. 34067 <i>Tangmere</i>					BoB class 4-6-2 No. 34067 <i>Tangmere</i>			BoB class 4-6-2 No. 34067 <i>Tangmere</i>		
Load	Ten coaches, 338½/370 tons					Eleven coaches, 372/400 tons			Eleven coaches, 367/400 tons		
Driver	Pete Roberts					Pete Roberts			Pete Roberts		
Weather	Cloudy, cold NE wind					Cloudy			Drizzle		
	miles	gradient	mins	secs	speed	mins	secs	speed	mins	secs	speed
Deal	20.42	260/140/70 R	00	00	48*	00	00	46*/47½	00	00	12*sigs/27
Walmer	21.98	120/72/64 R	02	09	44½	02	09	42	04	43	24*/22*sigs
MP 94	23.67	71 R	04	45	32½	05	00	28	08	48	25/20½/22
MP 94½	24.17	69 R	05	42	30½	06	11	24	10	10	17½
Martin Mill	24.69	L/120 R	06	34	36	07	13	30/38½	11	19	27/30½
MP 96¼	25.92	120/280/400 R	08	40	31	09	18	35	14	06	20
Guston Tunnel	26.41	210 R	09	36	32/38	10	06	38½	15	11	28/43

slipping at times throughout the climb

TABLE THREE: FOLKESTONE WEST - TONBRIDGE

Date Monday, December 22, 2008
Train 1.43pm Canterbury West to Victoria
Engine BoB Class 4-6-2 No. 34067 *Tangmere*
Load 11 coaches, 367 tons tare 400 tons gross
Driver Pete Roberts
Recorder Don Benn from eighth coach
Weather Cloudy, cold

	Miles	Sched	Mins	Secs	Speed
Folkestone West	0.00	0.00	00	00	13¼ late
MP 67	2.30		06	15	38½
Sandling	3.86		08	30	44
Westenhanger	5.13		10	07	52½
MP 63	6.30		11	22	60
MP 61	8.30		13	14	69
MP 59	10.30		14	56	72½
MP 58	11.30		15	48	67
Ashford	13.19	15.00	17	23	69
Chart SB	15.29		19	20	64½
MP52	17.30		21	08	72
Pluckley	18.85		22	22	77½
MP 49	20.30		23	43	75
			sigs goods loop		20*
Headcorn	24.10	26.00	29	20	24*
MP 43	26.30		32	49	53
Staplehurst	27.47		34	03	57
MP41	28.30		35	56	61½
Marden	29.91		36	28	64
MP 38	31.30		37	40	70
MP 36	33.30		39	22	71½
Paddock Wood	34.49	36.00	40	24	72
MP 33	36.30		42	03	64
			sigs		18*
Tonbridge	39.76	44.00	48	58	

* brakes or speed restriction
net time 41 minutes

“Pete made a determined effort to regain time with a good climb to Sandling and a dash down past Smeeth at 72½mph...”



June 14, 2009, and *Tangmere* is seen passing Paddock Wood at 75mph with the 13-coach 11.30am working from Victoria to Canterbury West. DON BENN

TABLE FOUR: BRISTOL TO TAUNTON

Date Sunday, September 24, 2023
Train 8.51am Bristol to Par
Engine LMS Class 6 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas*
Load Eight coaches, 278 tons tare 305 tons gross
Driver Andy Taylor
Fireman R Griffiths
Recorder Sandy Smeaton from seventh coach
Weather Light rain or drizzle

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Bristol Temple Meads	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Bristol W Jct	0.44	2.00	02	16	15½
Bedminster	1.05		03	45	30
Parson Street	1.86		05	11	39
MP 121	2.69		06	25	44
MP 122	3.69		07	44	47
Flax Bourton Smt	4.71		09	04	46
MP 124	5.69		10	12	57½
MP 125¼	6.94		11	25	65½
Nailsea	8.10		12	26	70½
MP 127	8.69		12	56	72½
MP 128	9.69		13	44	74½/76
MP 129¼	10.94		14	45	70½
Yatton	12.03	16.00	16	45	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	2½ late
MP 131	0.66		02	36	33
Huish Crossing	1.81		04	17	48½/54½
Puxton and Worle	3.65		06	21	53
Worle	4.20		07	00	48½
Worle Junction	4.66	7.00	07	34	52
MP 136½	6.16		09	13	55
Uphill Junction	7.72	10.00	10	53	56½
MP 140	9.66		12	51	61½
MP 142½	12.16		15	12	66
Highbridge	14.94		17	39	68½
MP 147	16.66		19	10	69
Dunball	18.66		20	54	70
Bridgwater	21.25	24.00	23	04	72/69½
MP 153	22.66		24	16	72½
MP 155	24.66		25	54	74½
Cogload Flyover	27.74	32.00	28	28	69½/74
MP 160	29.66		30	09	65½
MP 162	31.66		32	13	48
Taunton	32.80	37.30	34	43	R/T

* brakes or speed restriction

No. 45596 *Bahamas* at Norton Fitzwarren on September 24, 2023, with the 8.51am Bristol Temple Meads to Par 'Royal Duchy' working. MAURICE PUGH

when recovering time so I reckon the net time for the 39.76-mile section would have been no more than 41 minutes. We were 18 late off Tonbridge and regained four minutes to Bromley South, where we left the train. In the drizzle, the climb to Sevenoaks tunnel was affected by slipping but on the limit of adhesion; No. 34067 had managed 42 on the 1-in-122.

Bahamas to Cornwall

Continuing the travels of LMS Jubilee No.45596 *Bahamas*, Sandy Smeaton made the journey from Scotland to be on the last 'Royal Duchy' of 2023 on September 24. Details of the sections from Bristol to Taunton and Plymouth to Par are shown in Table Four and Table Five, and Sandy describes the running:

“This, the last of the four 'Royal Duchy' trips of 2023, was worked by *NBahamas*. The previous trips were operated by Nos. 60103, 45699 and 46115, all with nine coaches. However, to provide a greater margin on Hemerdon at a time nearing leaf fall, the RMB was removed from the consist, giving No. 45596 an eight-coach load. This meant that after Yatton, all seats in the two standard class coaches were taken, requiring some ingenuity to get a window seat.

“The weather on the day was poor, with frequent rain turning very heavy on the return from Par. The crew on the down run were Andy Taylor and Roger Griffiths. Departure from Temple Meads was on time. Flax Bourton summit was passed at a minimum of 46mph, followed by a maximum of 76 before stopping to pick up at Yatton. The start-to-stop time was ¾ minute over the tight 16 minutes allowed. An easier 37½ minutes were allowed for the next section to Taunton, which took 34 minutes 43 seconds, with the maximum of 74mph not reached until near Cogload Jn. We left Taunton 2½ minutes late and reached 50 at Bradford LC, with Wellington passed at 48. On the steeper three-mile 1-in-90/86/80 section, speed fell to 27½ entering the tunnel after a slight slip before MP



173. The summit post was passed at 34½ and after reaching 69, we stopped in Tiverton Loop for water, having taken 26 minutes 10 seconds against the 22 allowed. The engine was probably not worked hard due to the railhead conditions. The next sprint down to Exeter produced a maximum of 74½ but we were stopped opposite Riverside Yard due to congestion caused by over-running engineering work.

"Exeter was eventually left 18 late. Almost four minutes was regained as soon as Dawlish Warren, but the gain was only 2¼ minutes at Newton Abbot. The maximum at the start of the climb to Dainton was 58½, falling to 38 at Stoneycombe, with a minimum of 19½ at MP 217¾. Totnes was passed at 60½, falling to 22½ at Tigley and recovering to 37 at Rattery. Both climbs seemingly

completed with minimum fuss. A signal failure now brought us to a stand after Ivybridge, causing a 7½-minute loss on schedule. After watering at Plymouth and waiting for a path, we left for Par 41½ late. A Gunnislake local caused a check before Devonport, so two minutes were dropped by Saltash. The minima on the climbs were: after St Germans, 35; after Menheniot, 37; and before Doublebois, 38. The last climb before Par to Treverrin Tunnel produced a minimum of 34 after 49 through Lostwithiel. Arrival in a windy Par was 39½ late – late enough to ensure the few pubs had stopped serving food! A quaint local custom?"

More from this day next time. We can only hope that this bastion of pure steam continues and that maybe next year, I too will be able to sample a 'Duchy'. [HR](#)

TABLE FIVE: PLYMOUTH TO PAR

Date	Sunday, September 24, 2023
Train	8.51am Bristol to Par
Engine	LMS Class 6 4-6-0 No. 45596 <i>Bahamas</i>
Load	Eight coaches, 278 tons tare 305 tons gross
Driver	Andy Taylor
Fireman	R Griffiths
Recorder	Sandy Smeaton from seventh coach
Weather	Damp, cloudy

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Plymouth	0.00	0.00	00	00	41½ late
MP 247½	0.43		01	51	23/12* sigs
Devonport	1.29		05	09	20/19
Dockyard	1.68		06	16	22
Keyham	2.25		07	47	31/39½
St Budeaux Jct	2.93	5.30	08	52	36
St Budeaux	3.10		09	10	33
Royal Albert Bdge E	3.73		10	41	17½*/15*
Saltash	4.25	10.30	12	33	17½
MP 253	5.93		15	13	48
MP 255	7.93		17	28	61
MP 256	8.93		18	37	48
St Germans	9.26	16.30	19	02	48
MP 257¾	10.18		20	15	43½
MP 258	10.93		21	30	35
MP 259	11.93		22	59	44
MP 260	12.93		24	14	52½
Menheniot	14.70		26	05	60
MP 262½	15.43		26	53	50½
MP 263½	16.18		27	57	37
Liskeard	17.80	28.30	29	56	60/64½
Foot Bridge	18.78		30	54	51½
MP 266¾	19.68		32	04	38
MP 267¾	20.68		33	29	47/43
Doublebois	21.13		34	05	46½/49
MP 269	21.93		35	08	41/44/39½
Largin	22.93	35.30	36	34	43½
MP 271¾	24.68		38	31	62/63½
MP 273	25.93		39	43	59½/48
Bodmin Parkway	26.95	40.00	40	56	50½
MP 275½	28.43		42	23	65/47
Lostwithiel	30.38	44.00	44	35	49*
MP 278¾	31.18		45	40	40
Treverrin Tnl E	32.16		47	12	34
MP 280	32.93		48	22	50/50½
MP 281	33.93		49	57	22½*
Par	34.73	55.00	52	47	39½ late

* brakes or speed restriction



No. 34067 *Tangemere* approaches Wye with the 12.45pm Folkestone Harbour to Canterbury West excursion on January 24, 2009. DON BENN

USA auction house boss impressed by collectors' knowledge

"INCREDIBLE" and "very impressed" were two of the accolades given by the principal of the US auction house that on November 30 handled the high-profile sale of the late Tom Jones collection, which comprised, among other artefacts, no fewer than 37 mainly GWR nameplates and 47 cabside numberplates.

As reported in last month's issue, the top realisations were spread from \$13,000 (£10,276) to \$8500 (£6719), but there was enough activity below these high flyers to keep GWR collectors in the UK on their toes.

To list the realisation of every lot beneath those I reported on in last month's issue would test the patience of everyone, but a selection will suffice to provide a flavour of what was described by the auction house principal, John Leonard, as a "once-in-a-lifetime" collection.

In fact, the highest sub-£6719 price was achieved not by a GWR representative, but by LNER *Great Northern*, one of just four non-GWR plates in the sale, from Class A1 (later A3) No. 1470, which sold for £6324. This plate was fitted to the Pacific from new in April 1922 until it was controversially rebuilt as an

A1/1 in 1945. Behind came a long parade of GWR plates, headed by *Dog Star* from Star class No. 4-6-0 No. 4001 at £5928, and at £5138 each, *Lady of Lynn* from Saint class 4-6-0 No. 2906 and *Cleeve Abbey* from Castle class 4-6-0 No. 5091. Other class representatives included *Duke of Cornwall* from Duke class 4-4-0 No. 3252 (£4743), *City of Winchester* from City class 4-4-0 No. 3718 (£4347), and *County of Hereford* from County class 4-6-0 No. 1017, which went under the hammer for £3952.

Bulldog and Bird class plates were led by *River Plym* from No. 3376 (£3754) and *Kingfisher* from No. 3448 (£3359), and further down the

pecking order came the two top cabside numberplates, 6001 from *King Edward VII* and 6029 from *King Edward VIII*, both at £2964, and nameplate *Helmingham Hall* (No. 6947), which fetched

£2569. Bulldog class 'combine' plates, incorporating name, number, works number, and in some cases the GWR coat of arms, enjoyed themselves in the spotlight, and following the success of the *Etona* and *Tregeagle* plates, as reported last month, came



those from No. 3322 *Eclipse* (£5928) and at £5533 each, Nos. 3336 *Titan*, 3337 *The Wolf*, and 3358 *Tremayne*. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 20%.

The 562-lot auction, which achieved total sales of £507,308, also included smokebox numberplates, headboards, station totem signs and other memorabilia.

John Leonard, whose company put the items under the hammer at its base in Addison, Illinois, told *Heritage Railway* of his admiration for the UK railwayana movement. "We were very impressed with the depth of knowledge within the railwayana collecting community and amazed at the level of details known about so many of the items.

"We have been fortunate to handle many incredible collections over the years, and this ranks highly with them. Our team has very much enjoyed working on this project and being able to handle these unique items, which are rarely seen in the

United States." He said Tom Jones's family was very happy overall with the results, adding: "He kept very detailed records of most of the items, and we and the family knew what he had paid for many of them. He bought primarily at a time when the market was more robust than now, so we were not surprised that most of the items sold for less than he had paid for them.

"The family had been approached by many people following his passing, and they were happy that the auction provided a transparent marketplace with fair market prices that far exceeded what was being offered to them privately."

Tom Jones was born and brought up in northern England and developed a love of trains from an early age.

He progressed from collecting model trains to railwayana, and this lasted for much of his life, even after moving to the US, where he worked in the financial sector.

GWR trio and BR Standard support model stars

THREE live steam model locomotives and an LNER poster were the top performers in Dreweatts Transport Sale in Newbury on December 13 at prices from £5000 upwards, as reported in the news section on page 44 of this issue, but a large selection of other live steam models also kept collectors alert with realisations well into four figures.

Leading this pack came four models that each sold for £4800. Three were GWR representatives, comprising No. 7813 *Freshford Manor* and 'Night Owl' 2-8-0 No. 4702 both in 5in gauge, and an award-winning 2½in gauge model of No. 6800 *Arlington Grange* built by the late Richard Arnold Castle, of Watford. The fourth model in the group was of BR Standard Class 2MT

2-6-0 No. 78035 built in 5in gauge.

Just below this quartet were three LNER 5in gauge models at £4500 apiece: B1 4-6-0 No. 1008 *Kudu* (BR No. 61008), V3 class 2-6-2T No. 398 (BR No. 67689), and J39 class 0-6-0 No. 1940 (BR No. 64959).

This trio was followed by a closely-matched selection of four GWR and LNER contenders, headed by another 'Night Owl', No. 4705, built to exhibition standard by the late Colin Tickle in



3½in gauge (£4200). Next up at £4000 was another Colin Tickle 3½in gauge exhibition quality model, of GWR 3031 'Achilles' class 4-2-2 No. 3071 *Emlyn*, while two Nigel Gresley engines in

gauge one built from Aster of Japan kits then came to the fore.

They were A4 Pacific No. 4468 *Mallard*, which went for £3800, and another LNER star, No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* (£3600).

The highest-priced diesel model was 7½in gauge BR Class 03 shunter D2050 (£2200), and a rake of five gauge one 'Brighton Belle' coaches, including Pullman cars *Audrey* and *Vera*, went for £4500.

Prices exclude buyer's premium of 26% (+ VAT).



Nameplate line-up is a sign of the times and may even increase

WHAT is believed to be a UK railwayana record of 20 nameplates in a single auction will be going under Simon Turner's live online hammer at his March 16 sale. The selection consists of 14 plates from the GWR, a sole SR representative, and five from the LNER, leaving the LMS as the only one of the Big Four to miss out.

From the GWR come *Butleigh Court* from Saint class No. 2934, *Knight of the Bath* (Star class No. 4014), *Builth Castle*, *Goodrich Castle*, *Earl Baldwin* and *Lydford Castle* from Castle class quartet Nos. 4086, 5014, 5063 and 7006, another class quartet comprising *Grotrian Hall*, *Campion Hall*, *Brocket Hall* and *Melmerby Hall* (Nos. 5926, 5941, 5987 and 6982), *King George VI* (No. 6028), Grange pairing *Hardwick Grange* and *Tudor Grange* (Nos. 6818 and 6857), and a 'combine' name and numberplate from



Bulldog class No. 3321 *Brasenose*. The SR offering is *Sir Sagramore* from King Arthur No. 30771, while the LNER contingent is *King Edward VII* from GCR No. 259/LNER C5 class No. 5259, *The Berkeley* with fox from D49 No. 62754, and three flamecuts from north of the border. These are *Dumbiedykes* (D30 No. 62427) and *Luckie Mucklebackit* and *Lord James of Douglas* from D11 Nos. 62678 and 62687.

Some collectors feel that the number of nameplates now regularly appearing at each major auction is too high, but while Simon understands

their concern, he does not expect a return to days of yore. In fact, possibly the opposite.

"Yes, I am aware so many plates in each sale makes some collectors feel uncomfortable, but I don't think it will change, and certainly not in the short-term," he said.

"Many, perhaps a majority, of the nameplates come from deceased's estates, and that is an indication of our times.

"I feel the numbers we are now seeing will become the norm and may even increase."



GER boards join forces with BR(E) to lead the pack

GREAT Eastern Railway signalbox nameboards and BR Eastern Region station totem signs from a single collection were a major force in a Lacy Scott & Knight railwayana and model trains auction at Bury St Edmunds on December 15.

The top realisation was achieved by a Bury St Edmunds Junc nameboard that went under the hammer for £1700, while two others were

Newmarket (£720) and Snailwell Junc (£650), the latter a 'box near Newmarket. Totems that mixed it up with these nameboards were Saxham and Ribsy, on the Bury St Edmunds-Newmarket line, and Fordham, on the Ely-Newmarket route, that sold for £950 and £700 respectively. Away from the delights of East Anglia and into the heart of our capital city, a 1950s Harry Beck diagrammatic



poster map of the London Underground system fetched £920, more than 15 times above its top estimate of £60.

Model trains were an integral part of the sale, and the top table was occupied by two 45mm scale live steam locomotives, comprising

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway 2-4-2T *Lyn* made by Accucraft of California (£1300) and Sandy River & Rangely Lakes Railroad 2-6-2 No. 24 by Roundhouse of Doncaster (£980).

Next up was a pre-war Hornby Dublo Southern Railway 0-6-2T No. 2594 that went for £720, followed by another Lynton & Barnstaple engine in 45mm scale live steam, 2-6-2T *Exe* made by Pearse Models that sold for £700. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

BURY ST EDMUNDS JUNC

We must all accept that the times, they are a-changing

COLLECTORS will have their own thoughts about the year that has just gone, writes Geoff Courtney, be it delight at the acquisition of a longed-for reminder of former years such as a nameplate, a station totem sign, or an unassuming poster, or perhaps regret that such a reminder was too big a hit to one's bank balance and so went to another home.

It was certainly a year that saw a seismic change in the overall auction scene, brought about by the post-Covid environment. Saleroom sales are all but a thing of the past and will doubtless remain so, with Talisman Railwayana being the only mainstream specialist auction house to still hold them, while colour catalogues have also been mainly consigned to

history, again with the exception of Talisman and also GW Railwayana.

The internet rules, and with that come significant benefits to the auction houses themselves in terms of cost and flexibility, and indeed to vendors and buyers, who are being offered a staggering number of options to buy and sell due to the sheer number of sales now being held.

What was previously an orderly, tried-and-trusted and relatively calm programme of events that enabled one and all to plan a fair way in advance has given way to a tsunami of late changes and additions, allied to a new way of buying.

Being an IT wizard isn't a necessity for collectors, but it sure helps.

It is a reflection of life today, and understandably so. Due to such changes as downsizing, perhaps the need to raise capital, or, sadly, the deaths of collectors, memorabilia is coming onto the market in such numbers that the old way of doing things would have struggled to cope.

With those changes has come a new breed of collector from the diesel and electric era that has introduced new verve to the hobby we all love. Changes in life are invariably a challenge and sometimes difficult to accept, but such is the strong foundation on which the movement has been built by so many over decades that the world of railwayana can look ahead with confidence to a bright – and continuing – future.

Railwayana Auction Calendar

■ Ends January 31

Paperchase

■ January 20

Thirsk Railwayana

■ January 21-February 3

Great Northern Railwayana (*'Alpha' sale*)

■ January 25

Vectis (*model trains*)

■ February 19-25

JustaClickAgo (*photographs, negatives and slides*)



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'FLYING PIG' AND TAW VALLEY FAREWELLS BOOST GALA CROWDS

A successful new venture saw the Severn Valley Railway run its first ever Winter Steam Gala on January 6/7, attracting large post-Christmas crowds, with two locomotives bowing out of service, reports John Titlow.

The Severn Valley Railway's new Winter Steam Gala was a decidedly no-frills affair without visiting locomotives, but nonetheless a good timetable showcased the resident fleet at a quieter time when enthusiasts are looking for an operational heritage line to visit.

Volunteers and management worked together to make the event a resounding success, to the point where it is now likely to become a regular feature in the enthusiast calendar.

The first train off Kidderminster was at 8.30am and from Bridgnorth at 9.10am, and from then on it was non-stop action with services passing at Hampton Loade, Arley and Bewdley. Small delays occurred on the Saturday, but Sunday was generally on time.

On the Saturday, trains ran until 10.40pm, and steam finished at 7.20pm on Sunday. The final train was from Bridgnorth behind Class 37 No. 37263, arriving Kidderminster at 8.15pm. It had 11 coaches and was used to return the stock to the carriage shed.

A clever move saw Bewdley station use island Platforms 2 and 3 instead of Platform 1 to allow passengers a much quicker change of direction by simply crossing platforms

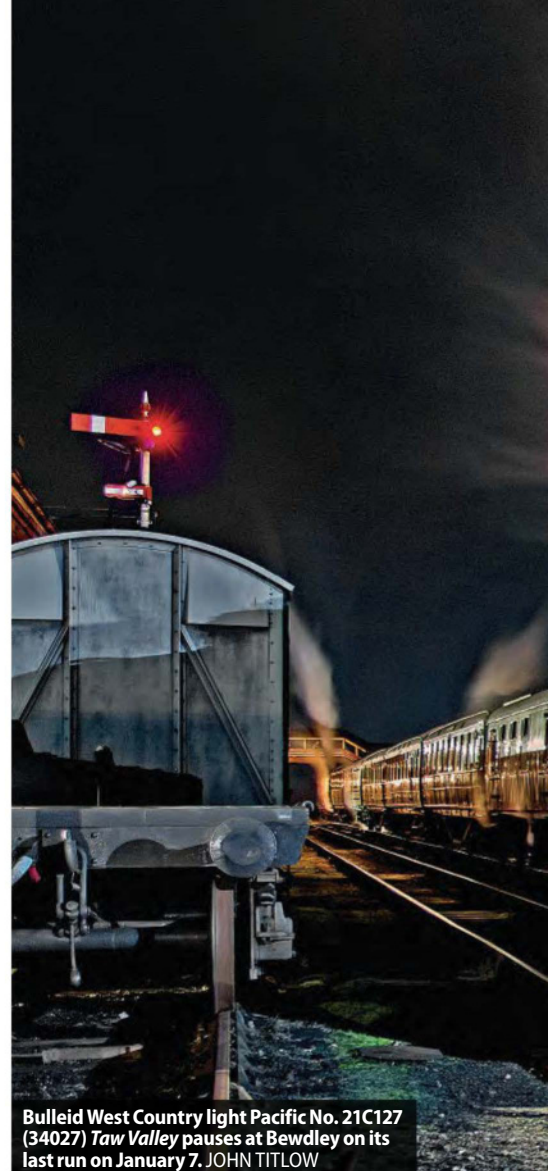
without having to use the narrow footbridge – and helping keep the timetable on track.

Eardington once again opened and proved a popular station to visit with trains stopping. What is now becoming a tradition is the oil lamps illuminating the station at night, adding to the atmosphere; there is no electricity there.

Fleet in action

The regular stalwarts were in steam. Visiting USATC S160 2-8-0 2253 *Omaha* was failed the day before the gala due to a leaking washout plug so BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069, which was on standby duty, took its place.

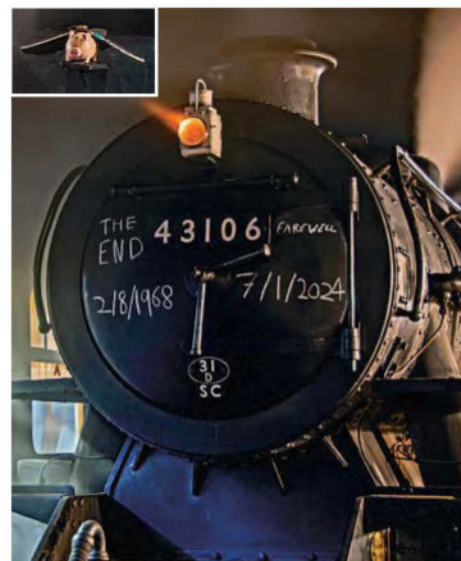
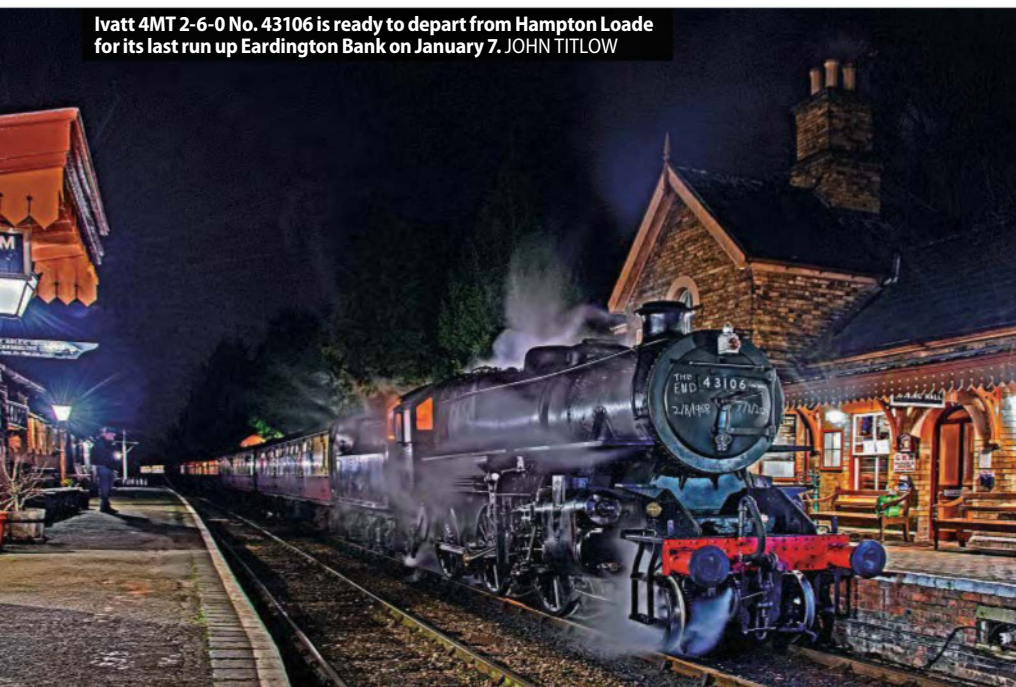
Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 21C127 (34027) *Taw Valley* bowed out quietly, working its last weekend for some time. Immediately after the gala, it entered Bridgnorth Shed for a full mechanical and boiler overhaul. LMS Stanier mogul No. 2968 entered the fray in its first gala for more than 10 years. Wandering GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* ran both days and will remain there for the April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala before visiting the Bluebell Railway and holidaying for the summer at the West Somerset Railway (see News, page 26).



Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 21C127 (34027) *Taw Valley* pauses at Bewdley on its last run on January 7. JOHN TITLOW

GWR pannier No. 7714 looked perfectly at home on four Great Western coaches, running local trains mainly between Bridgnorth and Highley but even venturing as far as Bewdley with the local. On the Sunday it provided banking duties to No. 21C127 on the 4.35pm from Bridgnorth. Flagship GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* was in light steam

Ivatt 4MT 2-6-0 No. 43106 is ready to depart from Hampton Loade for its last run up Eardington Bank on January 7. JOHN TITLOW



Recalling a tradition from the final days of BR steam, 'Flying Pig' No. 43106 is seen with its smokebox door chalked with farewell slogans.

Inset: A miniature flying pig on the buffer beam of No. 43106! BOTH: JOHN TITLOW



on Bridgnorth Shed as standby but was not needed. All the locomotives that took part performed well and again are a credit to the engineers at Bridgnorth.

Four other sets of stock were in use: eight-coach LMS and BR Mk.1 sets, plus seven-coach carmine and creams and the LNER teak rake interspersed with Mk.1s.

However, most of the lineside conversation was about what is going to happen to Ivatt 4MT 'Flying Pig' 2-6-0 No. 43106 and its uncertain future. Its boiler ticket expired that weekend.

Despite often being called the 'Marmite Loco', love it or hate it, No. 43106, a veteran of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway

system, proved very popular with passengers, filling most of its trains.

However, No. 43106 is generally tired mechanically and several of its superheater elements have been blanked off. Apparently, its boiler is in reasonable condition, but now at the end of its 10-year ticket, it needs a full retube.



With the first working of the gala from Bridgnorth, Stanier mogul No. 2968 works through Stanley Cutting after departing Highley on January 6. JOHN TITLOW



A tale of two moguls: Fresh from overhaul, No. 2968 stands alongside No. 43106 at Bridgnorth on January 7, its final day in service prior to withdrawal. GRAHAM NUTTALL



LMS 5P4F 2-6-0 No. 2968 climbs towards Bewdley Tunnel with the carmine and cream set. JOHN TITLOW



Climbing to Orchard Crossing, approaching Bewdley, GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 looks perfectly at home on the four-coach local service on January 7. JOHN TITLOW

In a surprise move after its last up run to Kidderminster, No. 43106 was turned to face north for its last run in the dark down to Bridgnorth. This move caught many people out (me included), who had turned up at Bewdley to watch its final departure. Videographer Matt Fielding and I made the drive to Hampton Loade to attempt night shots of this.

We have all heard about pigs might fly but one humorous little addition on the front running plate was a winged pig! It would be interesting to see how many people noticed it.

The driver was Will Marsh, who, along with the abovementioned Bridgnorth Shed team, has been responsible for keeping No. 43106 running lately.

It surprised many people to see that most carriages were full at this time on a Sunday

evening, soaking up this popular engine's final run for some time.

Huge crowds – despite little sunshine

The weather was difficult for photographers from the lineside, but although the event was blessed with dry conditions, you had to be lucky to catch the sun. Views from the train overlooking the flooded River Severn gave an idea as to how dangerous rivers can be, following the deluge from Storm Henk which inundated large swathes of the country in the days before the gala. Most riverside footpaths were impassable, and it was impossible to walk between the majority of stations.

Managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "Yet again, we've shown that the SVR is second-to-none when it comes to enthusiast

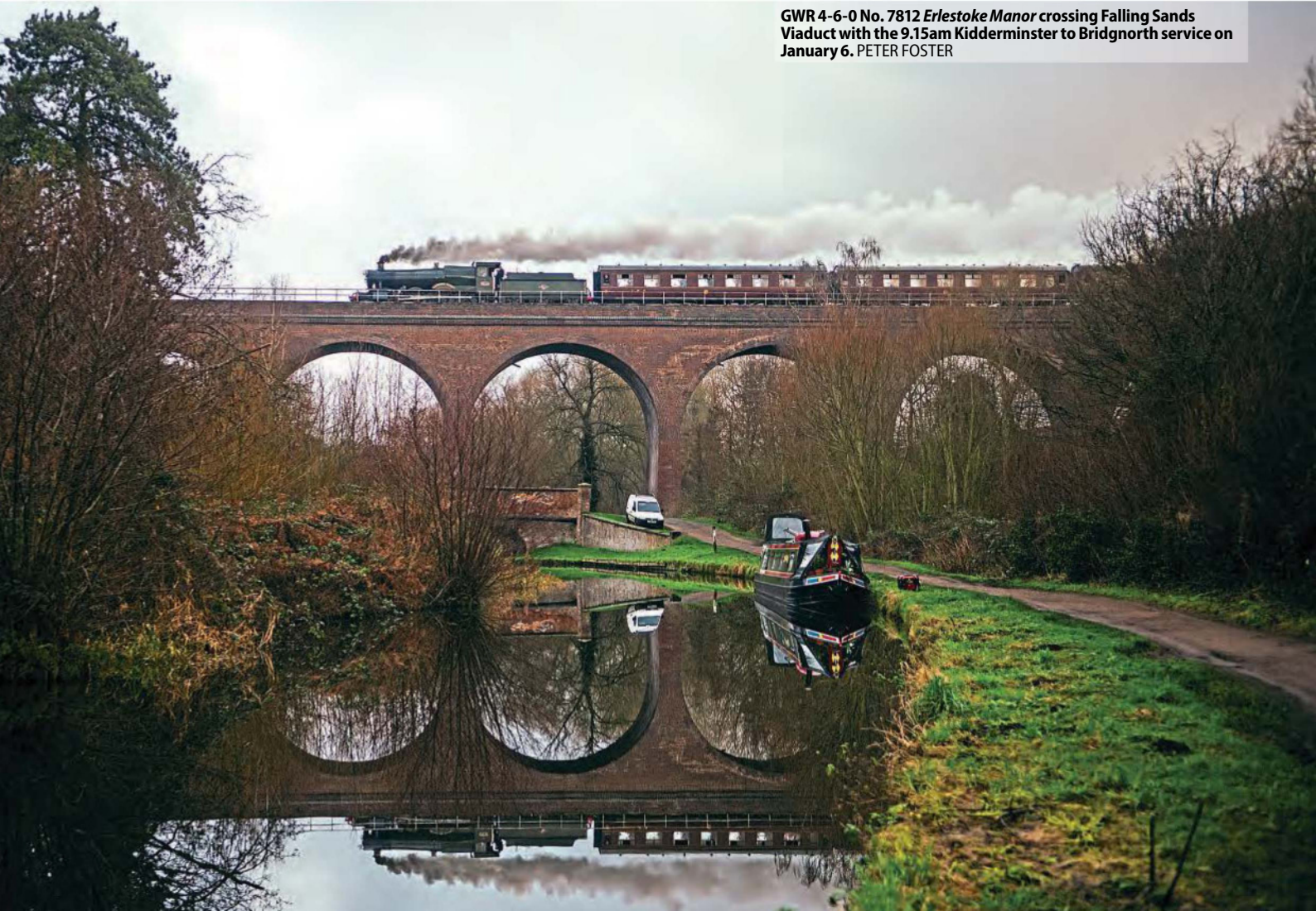
events. We'd never done an event of this sort at this time of year before, but our instincts were that it would be a winner, and we were absolutely spot on!

"I was genuinely overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of visitors and volunteers who thanked me personally for putting this event (and the winter diesel day) on in what is traditionally a quiet period for enthusiasts.

"We definitely got the formula correct – nothing too complicated – and people supported it in their thousands. I am very grateful to everyone who came and also to our amazing volunteers and staff who worked so hard to plan and deliver two brand-new events at the end of a very long season."

The railway reported that passenger numbers across the two days were in excess of 2500, significantly more than had been budgeted

GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 Erlestoke Manor crossing Falling Sands Viaduct with the 9.15am Kidderminster to Bridgnorth service on January 6. PETER FOSTER



In the twilight of its boiler ticket, Ivatt 4MT 2-6-0 No. 43106 climbs towards the Devil's Spittleful, a rocky sandstone knoll crowned with Scots pine, as it heads to Bridgnorth with its penultimate train on January 7. GRANHAM NUTTALL



for, with passenger revenue double what was anticipated.

The next running dates on the SVR are half-term week, February 10/11, 13-15 and 17/18. Visitors for its Spring Steam Gala will be LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 *Fenchurch*, from the Bluebell Railway, and Lambton, Hetton & Joicey Colliery Railway Kitson 0-6-2T No. 29, from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. The Spring Diesel Gala runs on May 16-19.

Last April, as reported in issue 306, the railway launched a £1.5 million Survival Fund appeal as operating costs soared in the current economic climate. So far, nearly £500,000 has been raised from the general public, but the SVR not out of the woods yet. If you wish to help ensure this magnificent railway's future, donations can be made at <https://my.svr.co.uk/donate/q/34> **HR**



A busy Great Western scene at Hampton Loade on January 6 as No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* runs in as pannier No. 7714 with the four-coach local service prepared for departure. JOHN TITLOW



BR Standard 4MT No. 75069 enters Hampton Loade with a midday service on January 6. JOSH BRINSFORD



Ascending to Eardington summit after emerging from Knowlesands Tunnel, No. 21C127 *Taw Valley* heads to Kidderminster on January 6. JOHN TITLOW

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2024 EVENTS GUIDE

If you're planning a visit to one (or more) of our many heritage lines and museums, why not also consider a visit to a special event too? Galas, beer festivals and more – there's something for everyone. See what's happening where and when with this handy guide.

Below: Having returned to service at the Bluebell Railway in February 2023, LBSCR A1 No. 72 *Fenchurch* has already visited two other lines for galas and will add a third when it appears at the Severn Valley Railway's spring steam gala in April. The 'Terrier' is seen at Arleside on the Mid-Hants Railway back in October 2023, when it appeared at that line's autumn steam weekend. OWEN HAYWARD



Abbey Pumping Station

- April 6 Railway Gala and Model Railway Exhibition

Avon Valley Railway

- March 31/April 1 Chocolate Train
- June 1/2 'Brick Express'
- June 7-9 Bitton Beer Bash

Bala Lake Railway

- March 2 Winter Steam Gala
- March 29/April 1 Easter Hunts
- May 4-6 Steam on Road and Rail
- July 13 TLC Teddies Grand Day Out
- July 27 A Day with 'Alice the Little Welsh Engine'
- August 24-26 Steam Gala
- September 21/22 Model Railway Show

Battlefield Line

- February 3/4 Winter Steam Gala

Bluebell Railway

- May 10-12 Branch Line Weekend
- May 18/19 Road Meets Rail
- June 1/2 Southern at War
- June 29/30 Model Railway Weekend
- September 20-22 Beer Festival
- October 11-13 Giants of Steam

Brecon Mountain Railway

- May 25/26 Spring Steam Gala
- September 7/8 China Clay Gala

Bressingham Steam Gardens

- March 29-April 1 Easter at Bressingham
- May 4-6 Steam Gala
- May 10 Nights at the Museum
- May 12 1940s Day
- June 14 Nights at the Museum
- June 15-16 Commercial Vehicle Rally
- July 14 Narrow Gauge Model Railway Exhibition
- July 27/28 Fire Engine Rally
- August 9 Nights at the Museum
- August 10/11 Steam in Miniature
- August 24-26 Buster's 100th Birthday Bash: Roller Rally
- September 13 Nights at the Museum
- September 22 Model Railway Exhibition

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

- February 11 Paddington Visits
- March 29-31 Day Out With Thomas
- April 20/21 Spring Transport Festival
- May 5/6 Day Out With Thomas
- May 27 Dragon Adventure
- June 16 Ridgeway Run Classic Vehicles 40th Anniversary
- July 13/14 Day Out With Thomas
- August 11 Emergency Services Day
- August 26 Pre-88 Classic Vehicle Show
- September 29 SHOWBUS
- October 5/6 Day Out With Thomas

Crich Tramway Village

- March 24 Model Trams Exhibition
- April 21 Model Trams Exhibition
- April 28/29 Behind the Scenes
- May 12 Model Trams Exhibition
- May 19 Dog-Friendly Day
- May 25-31 Seaside Fun
- June 9 Model Trams Exhibition
- June 22/23 Living History Weekend
- July 7 Classic Motorcycles Day



Having been gradually rebuilt following the previous plc entering administration in 2021, the Llangollen Railway will hold a branch line weekend in April to launch its newly overhauled pannier tank No. 7754. This September will see the first steam gala since 2019, with negotiations currently underway to secure a visiting locomotive for the occasion. With demonstration engineering trains and the newly-opened extension to Corwen, it promises to be weekend with much to offer.

OWEN HAYWARD



Left: The Heritage Railway Association's Heritage Railway magazine 2004 Interpretation Award-winning Railways at Work gala will return to the Great Central Railway this summer. The weekend is a 'must-see', with freight trains in operation, plus re-enactors in period costumes performing loading and unloading demonstrations in the goods yard at Quorn & Woodhouse, alongside many other cameos.

OWEN HAYWARD

- July 14 Model Trams Exhibition
- August 5/6 Build It! Model Bricks Days
- August 10/11 Sounds of the 50s & 60s
- August 12-16 Discovery Week
- August 19-23 Woodland Week
- September 7/8 Steampunk Weekend
- September 14/15 60 Years of Electric Trams Gala Weekend

Dean Forest Railway

- May 25/26 Spring Steam Gala
- September 14/15 Diesel Gala
- November 2/3 Royal Forest of Steam Gala

Didcot Railway Centre

- February 10/11, 14, 17/18 Perfect Prairies
- March 2/3 Pendennis Castle 100th Birthday Celebrations
- March 29-April 1 Steam into the Forties
- May 4-6 1940s Weekend
- May 10 55th Anniversary Day
- June 22/23 Model Railway Exhibition
- July 13/14 Brick Adventures
- September 27-29 Autumn Steam Gala

East Lancashire Railway

- March 15-17 Legends of Steam Gala

- May 4-6 Day Out with Thomas
- June 27-29 Summer Diesel Gala
- August 3/4 Day Out with Thomas
- September 13/14 Autumn Diesel Gala
- October 5/6 Day Out with Thomas
- October 11-13 Autumn Steam Gala
- November 9/10 DMU Gala

East Somerset Railway

- March 16/17 Steam Gala

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

- January 1 Winter Steam in the Valley
- May 12 Vintage Road & Rail Rally
- July 25-28 Class 14s @ 60 Gala

Epping Ongar Railway

- February 25 Winter Bus Rally
- April 26-28 Steam Gala
- June 15/16 1940s Weekend
- July 7 Classic Car Rally
- July 26-28 Beer Festival
- August 17/18 Vintage Steam Rally
- September 1 Vintage Bus Rally
- September 20-22 Autumn Diesel Gala

Fawley Hill

- May 17/18 National Transport Trust Vintage Transport Festival

Ffestiniog Railway

- April 19/20 'The Snowdonian'
- May 11 Caernarfon Food Fair
- May 18/19 Model Railway Workshop
- June 7/8 Real Ale Festival
- September 14/15 Super Power Weekend
- September 21 Trailfest
- October 4-6 Bygoness Weekend

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

- May 25-27 Cotswold Festival of Steam
- July 12-14 Diesel Gala
- October 26/27 Autumn Showcase

Great Central Railway

- January 26-28 Winter Steam Gala
- March 3 Railwayana Swapmeet
- March 16-18 125th Anniversary Open Weekend
- April 20/21 Road and Rail Steam Weekend
- April 26-28 Spring Diesel Gala
- May 11/12 Open Weekend Extravaganza
- May 18/19 Heritage Bus Rally and Railcar Weekend
- May 31-June 2 1940s Experience

- June 16 Railwayana Swapmeet
- July 6/7 Vintage Vehicle Weekend
- August 10/11 Railways at Work
- August 24/25 Vintage Vehicle Weekend
- September 6-8 Autumn Diesel Gala
- September 15 Railwayana Swapmeet
- September 20-22 Beer Festival
- October 3-6 Autumn Steam Gala
- November 5 Bonfire and Fireworks Extravaganza
- November 16/17 The Last Hurrah Gala
- December 27-30 Twixmas Steam Gala
- December 31 New Year Nightrider

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)

- March 16-18 125th Anniversary Open Weekend

Isle of Man Railways

- July 30-August 4 Manx Transport Festival

Isle of Wight Steam Railway

- May 4-6 Beer Festival
- May 11/12 Model Railway Weekend
- May 19 Festival of Transport
- July 6/7 1940s Experience
- July 27 Railway Proms
- August 23-26 Island Steam Fair
- September 7/8 Cider & Cheese Festival
- October 12/13 Beer Festival
- November 2 Race the Train

Gwili Railway

- November 4 Murder Mystery train

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

- March 21-24 Steam Gala
- June 20-23 Diesel Gala
- October 17-20 Beer Festival

Kent & East Sussex Railway

- May 18/19 1940s Weekend
- June 1/2 50th Anniversary Gala

- June 14/15 Beer Festival
- June 29/30 Steampunk Weekend
- August 11 Vintage Bus Rally
- October 12/13 Austin Counties Car Rally

Llanberis Lake Railway

- March 30-April 1 Easter Egg Hunt
- August 5-9 Superhero Week
- October 28-November 2 Halloween Hunt

Llangollen Railway

- April 13/14 Branch Line Gala
- June 1/2 Diesel and Industrial Gala
- July 6/7 Classic Transport Weekend
- August 3/4 1960s Weekend
- September 14/15 Steam Gala & Steampunk Weekend
- October 5/6 Railcar Gala
- November 2 Fireworks Train
- November 10 Poppy Train

Middleton Railway

- June 15/16 Model Railway Exhibition
- July 6/7 Leeds Steampunk Market
- August 3/4 Food and Ale Festival
- October 5/6 Autumn Gala

Mid-Hants Railway

- April 26-28 Spring Steam Gala
- May 25-June 2 Day Out With Thomas
- June 15/16 All Changes (Through The Ages Weekend)
- July 12-14 Diesel Gala
- September 14/15 Engineering Open Weekend
- October 4-6 Autumn Steam Gala

Mid-Norfolk Railway

- March 2 Dereham Model Railway Exhibition
- May 12 Vintage Bus Day
- May 25-27 Diesel Gala
- June 28-30 Steam Gala
- August 3/4 1940s Weekend
- August 23-26 Beer Festival
- September 27-29 Mixed Traffic Gala



Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

- March 31/April 1 Easter Steam-Up
- May 5 Brake Van Day
- May 26/27 Middy in the Forties
- June 2 Colne Valley Car Club
- June 9 Brake Van Day
- June 15 Music Festival
- June 23 East Anglian Classics
- June 30 Vintage Bis Day
- July 7 Land Rover Day

- July 14 Brake Van Day
- July 21 Suffolk Craft Fair
- July 28 Norfolk & Suffolk Narrow Gauge Modellers
- August 11 Big Bus Day
- August 18 Motorbike Day
- August 25/26 Model Mania
- August 31/September 1 Loco Gala
- October 27 Vintage & Bygones Day

Northampton & Lamport Railway

- March 30 Boughton Extension Opening
- May 4-6 Brampton Bear Specials
- June 1/2 Model Weekend
- June 9 Classic Car Rally
- June 29/30 Diesel Gala
- August 24-26 Family Fun Weekend
- September 1 Cheese and Cider train
- September 21/22 Gala Weekend

North Norfolk Railway

- March 29-April 1 Steam into Spring
- April 6/7 60th Anniversary of Closure
- May 4-6 Classic Sitcoms with Dad's Army Live
- June 7-9 Rails & Ales
- July 6/7 Vintage Transport Festival
- July 8-14 Vintage Week
- July 20/21 Make Tracks to the Sixties
- August 24-September 1 A Festival on Rails
- September 21/22 Steam Back to the Forties
- October 5/6 Autumn Showcase

North Yorkshire Moors Railway

- February 10-18 Britannia Specials
- March 23 Daily running commences



Having celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first stretch of line to Peel, the Isle of Man steam railway will this year mark the same for the opening of the route to Port Erin at the six-day-long Summer Transport Festival, which will also include the island's Manx Electric, Snaefell Mountain, Groulle Glen and Laxey Mine railways. Some of the steam railway's Beyer Peacock locomotives are seen lined up at Port Erin during the 2023 celebrations. OWEN HAYWARD

Set in an authentic GWR locomotive depot, Didcot Railway Centre easily recreates depot scenes of the steam era. Over February half term, the museum will host the first line-up of an example of the 41XX, 51XX and 61XX numbering series of WR large prairies since the end of BR steam. OWEN HAYWARD



- June 14-16 Diesel Gala
- September 26-29 Steam Gala

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway

- March 29-April 14 High Speed Easter Egg Hunt
- May 4-6 Steam Gala and Behind the Scenes Weekend
- June 13 The Ratty Arms 50th Anniversary
- October 28-November 1 Half-Term Double-Headers
- October 30/31 Chris Vine Young Engineers' Days

Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

- July 27 Country Fayre
- September 8 Bus Rally
- October 26/27 Autumn Gala

Seaton Tramway

- March 9 Mother's Day Twilight Trams
- April 12 Sensory Story Tram
- July 27/28 Natural Seaton Festival

Severn Valley Railway

- January 6/7 Winter Steam Gala
- April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala
- May 16-19 Spring Diesel Festival
- September 19-22 Autumn Steam Gala
- October 3-6 Autumn Steam Gala

South Devon Railway

- March 30/31 Easter Heritage Spectacular
- April 6/7 Mad Hatter's Travelling Tea Party

- May 4-6 Family Fun Weekend
- May 24-27 Rails and Ales
- July 6/7 1940s Weekend
- August 23-26 Rails & Ales
- September 14/15 Heritage Open Days
- October 5/6 Family Fun Weekend
- December 26-January 1 New Year Steam Spectacular

Spa Valley Railway

- February 9-11 Winter Steam Up
- April 27/28 Day Out with Thomas
- May 4-6 Day Out with Thomas
- July 12-14 Summer Steam Gala
- August 2-4 Summer Diesel Gala
- September 21/22 Model Railway Weekend
- October 17-20 Beer Festival
- October 26/27 Model Bricks Show

Statfold Country Park

- February 18 STATBUS at Night
- March 16-17 Spectacle of Steam
- April 13/14 Model Railway Show
- April 28 Drive It Day
- May 11/12 Steam in Miniature (with SteamPunk)
- June 8/9 Sweet Indian Steam
- June 22/23 Midlands Fire & Rescue Event
- July 7 Cars in Strawberry Park
- July 20/21 1940s Weekend
- August 24/25 The Big Statfold Weekend Festival
- September 1 Mini National Day
- September 14/15 Road, Rail and Ale
- September 22 STATBUS

Swanage Railway

- January 6/7 Winter Warmer

- May 10-12 Diesel Gala
- June 28-30 Roads To Rail Steam Rally
- September 6-8 Classic and Steam Vehicle Show

Talylln Railway

- March 30/31 Behind The Scenes Weekend
- May 30 Children's Party
- July 5-7 Beer Festival
- July 6/7 Anything Goes and Garden Railway Gala
- August 2/3 Late Night Steam
- August 17 Race The Train
- September 28/29 Heritage Weekend

Telford Railway

- April 6/7 Alice's Adventures to Wonderland
- May 19 Ford Model T Rally
- June 2 'Exotic Express'
- June 9 Pacer Day
- June 23 Classic Transport Rally
- June 30 Creation Station
- July 7 Miniature Traction Engine Rally
- July 28 Model Railway Exhibition
- August 4 'Exotic Express'
- August 18 Creation Station
- August 24/25 1940s Weekend
- September 1 'Exotic Express'
- September 8 Rover Car Rally
- September 29 Anything Goes Diesel Gala

Welsh Highland Railway

- April 19/20 'The Snowdonian'

- May 11 Caernarfon Food Fair
- June 7/8 Beer Festival
- September 14/15 Super-Power Weekend

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

- April 20/21 Vintage Weekend
- June 21-23 Beer Festival
- July 13/14 Vintage Weekend
- August 30-September 1 Steam Gala

West Lancashire Light Railway

- April 28 Friendly Engines Day
- June 16 Strawberries & Steam
- July 6 Volunteers' Day
- August 3/4 Summer Gala
- September 22 Working Engines Gala
- November 3 Children In Need Day

West Somerset Railway

- May 3-6 Spring Steam Spectacular
- June 6-8 Summer Diesel Festival

Yeovil Railway Centre

- April 28 Model Railway Collectors' Swapmeet
- May 11/12 Model Railway Weekend
- July 14 Turntable Day
- July 27/28 Tractor Days
- August 11 Steampunk and Classic Cars
- September 8 Model Railway Collectors' Swapmeet
- September 15 Steam and Comic-Con 

All information was correct at the time of going to press. To check for additional dates and events, book tickets, or find out more information, please check with the relevant venue.

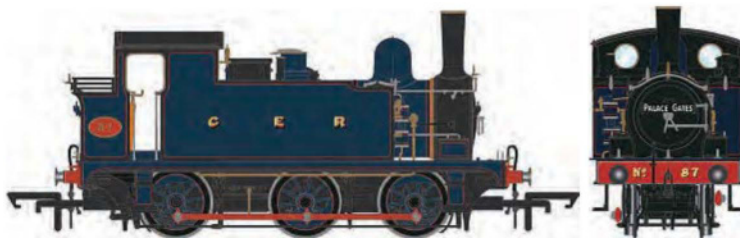
Locomotion Models reveals great Eastern exclusives

TWO new exclusive models of the National Collection in miniature have been added to the Locomotion Models' range of products, with both finding their origins in Eastern region territory.

Following the announcement back in October 2023 that it would be producing the LNER J67/68/69 class of 0-6-0Ts, one identity was notably absent from those listed by Accurascale. Many modellers have hoped that the sole-surviving example of these former GER locomotives, No. 87, would be added

to the roster – and now it has thanks to Locomotion Models.

Part of the National Collection, J69 No. 87 was built at Stratford works in 1904 and started working suburban services out of Liverpool Street. There it remained until August 1960, when it moved to Parkeston, surviving in service for just three more months before being withdrawn that November, upon which it was identified as a locomotive that should become part of the NRM's collection. First placed on display at the Clapham



Transport Museum, it moved to the York museum when that opened in 1975. Since 2013, No. 87 has been on display at Bressingham where it is turned out in its GER livery.

The OO scale model is available exclusively through Locomotion Models with prices set at £139.99 and £239.99 for DCC-ready and sound-fitted versions respectively. A £30 deposit is payable when placing orders to secure these.

The second model announced was an N scale model of the LNER Dynamometer No. 3591, the vehicle that recorded the 126mph land-

speed record set by A4 pacific No. 4468 *Mallard* on July 3, 1938. Previously released in OO scale by Rapido in partnership with Rails of Sheffield, the manufacturer announced in 2023 that this popular model would be scaling down to N gauge, with this particular exclusive variant reflecting the current as preserved condition of the carriage on display in York.

Price is set at £99.95, again with a £30 deposit payable at time of ordering.

For more information, visit www.locomotionmodels.com



Ellis Clark and KR Models go head-to-head after revealing separate dub-dee projects for OO gauge

STILL a relative newcomer to the scene, KR Models has announced that it will be producing the WD 2-10-0 locomotives for OO gauge – which will put it head-to-head with the Ellis Clark models also being planned!

The KR Models project is still in its early stages, with a CAD model currently being worked on, but the manufacturer says it will boast some innovative features, including a synchronised smoke unit that will use a non-oil-based fluid that has been specially developed and will be safe for periods of long use.

Four liveries will be produced, covering LMR, olive drab, khaki sand, and BR black with early crest. Prices start at £240 for DCC-ready variants

and rise to £370 for DCC sound-fitted with smoke unit.

Meanwhile, the Ellis Clark project is already at CAD stage (as pictured), which includes livery render samples. This is the manufacturer's first foray into the OO gauge locomotive market and promises to be as highly detailed as the firm's O gauge models, with design and engineering taking place in the UK.

Five different liveries will be produced, with BR black and late crest being added to the EC offerings; KR's olive will instead be rivalled by EC's Brunswick green offering. Delivery is anticipated to be in the first half of 2025, but order books are already open with prices starting at £295.



Fine Minks: Rapido scales down more of its wagons

HAVING already scaled down its selection of SECR wagons, with the six-wheel brake van and Dynamometer car currently in the process of doing the same, Rapido has announced that the GWR Iron Mink wagons are also to receive the same treatment.

One of the most recognisable designs that came out of the Swindon wagon drawing office,

what made these wagons so recognisable was the fact that they shunned traditional wooden construction and were made from metal instead. More than 4000 were built up to 1901, when the GWR reverted to wooden bodies.

The suite of tooling being created will cater for a number of variants, including brake, vent, and door variations to incorporate some of



the styles that were also built by private wagon builders based on the GWR's design.



Just as with the SECR wagons, these Minks are being released in triple packs, with a selection of individual numbers and liveries also being released. The first tooling samples are due in the spring, but pre-orders are open now (packs of three at £69.95 and single models at £24.95). Amid the liveries being offered are a few novelty 'what ifs', which have also been carried over from the OO scale counterparts.





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STANIER'S STEAM SUPREME The 'Black Fives'

Perhaps one of the most iconic classes of steam locomotive, lasting right up until the final day of BR steam, **Daniel Long** takes a look at what made these Stanier machines so desirable ahead of the imminent release of new models in two different gauges.

ARGUABLY the ultimate mixed-traffic design, William Stanier's 'Black Fives' were a turning point for the LMS. Successful from the off, these efficient machines became the backbone of the network, able to turn their hand to whatever was required of them.

Why they were needed

The dream of any operating department is an engine which can go anywhere and do anything, and it was an area where the newly-formed LMS was severely lacking.

None of its constituent companies had anything close to the competition in this area, whereas the LNER could draw on Gresley's Great Northern moguls, the Southern on the Billinton K class and the Urie H15s, and the GWR on a rapidly expanding range of 4300s and various 4-6-0s, most notably the Halls. There was a need for something new.

When William Stanier arrived at the LMS in 1932, his task was to deal with an ageing locomotive fleet and transform the nature of the mixed-traffic division. Although the Hughes Crab had been a success across the network, Stanier quickly saw areas where it might be improved. His own development changed the original so much that it became a class of its own, and the Stanier Mogul soon became a force to be reckoned with. Many of the features developed here, such as the tapered boiler and firebox design, would be implemented into what was arguably his masterpiece – the Class Five.

The Class Fives, more commonly known as 'Black Fives', drew on Stanier's experience on the GWR, where the Hall had proven to be practically perfect for both operating and traffic departments. His design would share many details, such as the

cylinder arrangement, tapered boiler, and six-foot driving wheel diameters, but these similarities do not belay the fact that Stanier's new locomotives would proudly stand in a class of their own.

Instant success

Such was the need for new motive power on the LMS that two outside contractors had to be found to support Crewe Works. The first of the 'Black Fives' delivered was 5020 from Vulcan Foundry in August 1934, while the first member of the class, 5000, from Crewe would not leave there until February 1935. By this point, some 50 engines had already been delivered by Vulcan, with more on the way from the third supplier, Armstrong Whitworth.

No. 5020 was quickly sent north to Scotland, where there was a motive power shortage. While much attention

seems to have been focused on the newly-delivered Pacifics and Jubilees, the 'Black Fives' swiftly proved its value as maids-of-all-work. The low-axle loading meant that these new engines could travel over the majority of the system, while tackling formidable loadings on fast-fitted freights and challenging timings on fast expresses. Early trials with No. 5020 saw the class commended for its free-running and stability at speed.

Before long, the class could be found in every part of the LMS, performing all sorts of duties. Stanier had succeeded in creating an icon of locomotive design, as comfortable running fast fitted freight services as it was taking charge of the Royal Train north of Carlisle. Upon entering traffic, the 'Black Fives' became a mainstay within the LMS and were often seen not only in the Highlands where they began their careers, but as far south as



The first of the class to be delivered in 1934, No. 5020 (as 45020) passes through Stafford on July 28, 1961.
ALAN CHANDLER MBE/COLOUR RAIL

No. 45110 brings the final leg of 'The Fifteen Guinea Special' (the last BR steam-hauled service) through Roby on August 11, 1968. Fifty-five years later, the same locomotive made headlines again when it was sold by the Severn Valley Railway and moved to Carnforth. MH YARDLEY/COLOUR RAIL





Above: No. 45125 passes through Killin Junction on June 18, 1960. COLOUR RAIL

Right: The oldest-surviving example of the class, having been outshopped by the Vulcan Foundry works in 1934, No. 5025 now resides on the Strathspey Railway where its restoration won the 2022 Coiley Locomotive Engineering accolade at the Heritage Railway Association awards. OWEN HAYWARD

Bournemouth. I can only imagine the sighs of relief that would have come from the operating department! This truly was a go-anywhere, do-anything engine – and the way in which the class became synonymous with the LMS is a credit to its success.

Devil in the detail

When the class entered service, there were still a number of teething issues to resolve and refinements to make. This resulted in an incredible array of detail differences between each member of the class. Over time, the 'Black Fives' could be seen with a multitude of different top-feed and boiler combinations. The first 20 engines were so-called domeless engines, but as boilers were swapped out at various overhauls, modellers would do well to refer to specific pictures if they want to recreate those members of the class.

Although the success of the 'Black Fives' was not in question, towards the end of the 1930s it became clear that there were serious problems with the frames. The lightweight construction that gave them such incredible flexibility on the national network was a major factor in the development of cracks in the mainframes. The outbreak of war not only paused construction of the 'Black Fives' to replace older pre-Grouping locomotives, but it also halted investigation into this major issue. It was not until 1946 that the frame problems were resolved, and work could begin on fitting it across the class at large.

Experiments

In 1943, approval was finally given to continue producing 'Black Fives', and the steady development of this LMS staple seemed set to continue. In 1947, then-CME George Ivatt looked to new ways in which the standard LMS classes might be improved. One alteration which would have a lasting effect on the design of British steam was the implementation of roller bearings. Produced by British Timkin, these axleboxes were wider than the traditional plain bearing counterparts. This meant there was not enough room to fit the ashpan, and so the boiler and rear axle were moved back

four inches, and the smokebox was extended to match the new, slightly longer wheelbase. The trial was a success, and when British Railways produced the BR Standards, the Class 5, 6, 7 and 8s were fitted with roller bearings on coupled axles.

This change affected the last batch of 'Black Fives', but there were other options that Ivatt wanted to explore. Foremost was the potential replacement of Walschaerts valve gear with a more efficient solution. As such, Caprotti and Stephenson valve gears were trialled. The Stephenson gear seemed to provide no clear advantage, but significant time and effort went into exploring the impact that the Caprotti valve gear could have. A first batch of 20 was ordered, 10 with plain bearings and 10 with roller bearings. The straight running boards and splashers gave these engines a distinctive look, but was it one which translated to continuing the solid performance of the class as a whole?

More teething trouble

One of the first duties to which the Caprotti Fives were assigned was the Manchester to Bournemouth Express, which ran via Birmingham. The class quickly gained a reputation for stalling in the tunnels around New Street and were just as quickly reassigned! Further south, complaints came through that where 'Black Fives' would easily keep time on the climb from Temple Meads, the Caprotti 'Fives' could not begin to match their performance. This turned out to be the result of inaccurate cut-off readings and a design flaw in the exhaust valves. After adjustment, the Caprotti 'Fives' proved to be free-running performers, with lower maintenance costs than their counterparts with Walschaerts valve gear. That said, they never quite managed to perform as successfully on starting or at low speeds.

The last of the 'Black Fives' was, perhaps, the ultimate evolution of the design. With outside drive on the centre axle, as opposed to inside drive on the leading axle, it gained an even higher running board, but also threw off the reputation that other Caprotti 'Fives' had earned for sluggish

starts. By this point, however, further development of the 'Black Fives' was halted in favour of the British Railways Standard Five.

Nationalisation

The class of 842 'Black Fives' remained complete well into BR days. One of the more unusual workings for the class during this time occurred in 1953, when the Southern Region's fleet of Bulleid Pacifics were taken out of service following a crank axle failure caused by metal fatigue. The 'Black Fives' made up some of the substitutes for the light Pacifics, with seven transferred to Nine Elms, where the class performed admirably in unusual conditions. These engines were fitted with additional lamp brackets on the smokebox to facilitate Southern Region headcodes. The 'Black Fives' would continue to venture into Southern territory until the end of steam.

The first of the 'Black Fives' to be withdrawn was No. 45401, not because of the gradual replacement of steam but because it was involved in a collision with Jubilee Class No. 45630 *Swaziland*; the boiler from No. 45401 actually lasted until the end of steam. Despite a concerted effort to abolish steam during the following years, the 'Black Fives' held out quite effectively, no doubt because of the versatility

and efficiency of the design. More than half of the class survived until 1967 and at the beginning of 1968 some 150 examples of the engines could still be seen thundering up and down the national network, passengers and freight following in their wake.

One last hurrah

The last three engines in service, Nos. 44781, 44871 and 45110, were only withdrawn after pulling British Railways' last steam-hauled service. 'The Fifteen Guinea Special' ran from Liverpool Lime Street via Manchester Victoria to Carlisle and back, with four engines sharing the train over the journey.

No. 44110 pulled the train to Manchester Victoria, where it was taken over by No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*. Nos. 44781 and 44871 double-headed the return journey to Manchester, where No. 44110 returned the train to Liverpool Lime Street.

Except for No. 44781, all of the engines involved in this historic train have been saved for preservation. Indeed, No. 44871 is currently a regular performer on the main line, but at the time it seemed that steam would never return to British Railways metals, let alone the familiar chuff of the 'Black Fives'. ➔



The class that goes anywhere: No. 45379 passes below Marconi Bridge on the Epping Ongar Railway during a visit to the former Great Eastern Railway-come-London Underground Central Line on June 8, 2014. Normally based at the Mid-Hants, it is now currently kept at the Locomotive Storage Ltd facility in Margate following the expiration of its boiler ticket in 2018. OWEN HAYWARD

Preservation

Even now, the 'Black Fives' have a well-earned reputation for being able to go anywhere and do anything. These adaptable machines are regular performers both on heritage railways and the main line. With 18 examples to be found the length and breadth of the UK, and only four not having run since being preserved, it's clear there is a demand to see these engines run – and a need for them as well.

The role of the 'Black Fives' today has not really changed since their conception. They are able to handle whatever is thrown at them. As such, the class is not just popular on the heritage railway circuit but can also be seen stretching their wheels on the main line.

It's a credit to Stanier that his design continues to prove itself some 90 years after the first of the class rolled out of Vulcan Foundry.

The models

It will come as no surprise that such an iconic class of locomotive is a popular choice for modellers. The class was so far-spread that it can be found almost anywhere, doing almost anything. As such, there has been great excitement for newly-tooled models that might capture the power behind this rugged design.

Ellis Clark

O gauge has become an increasingly popular scale over the last few years, and the 'Black Fives' are a worthy addition to recently produced models. The 'Black Five' was the first locomotive project announced by the team at Ellis Clark Trains, and choosing such an iconic prototype has not made the job any easier! In keeping with the fidelity demanded by a discerning customer base and an increased scale, the team have focused their efforts on one specific form of the 'Black Fives' – namely the batch made by Armstrong Whitworth between 1936 and 1937. With more than 200 examples of the class covered by this relatively uniform batch, there's plenty of flexibility to work with here.

The finescale model sets an O gauge standard for what O gauge



Ellis Clark Trains' O gauge models of these powerful locomotives boast a wealth of detail with die-cast, brass and plastic used effectively to create a high-quality product. Numbered and unnumbered versions are on offer in a range of liveries to suit most modellers' tastes. ELLIS CLARK TRAINS



can offer, pushing the level of quality as far as possible. From the outset there has been a healthy mixed-media approach to materials, where die-cast, brass and plastic are used wherever is most appropriate. The boiler, running plate and frames are die-cast, which should make for a hefty model.

Providing the much-needed power to move such an impressive engine will be a Maxon motor combined with an ABC Helical gearbox. Like the prototype, the Ellis Clark Trains team seems to have designed their engine with the capacity to go anywhere and do anything!

Of course, this focus on haulage would mean nothing without an eye for detail, and the Ellis Clark Trains team have set their sights high with this project. Their 'Black Fives' feature impressive cab details, including firebox glow as well as sprung axleboxes and removable working locomotive lamps. The sound project, however, sounds most exciting. DCC

sound has revolutionised how many run their model railways, and the 'Black Five' seems to be another step change in this evolution. Sound was recorded on Nos. 45407 and 45231. The range of sounds are extensive indeed, allowing modellers to really capture the distinctive noises of a 'Black Five'. My favourite is the option to fold in the sound of the Westinghouse pump that can be found on main line-certified 'Black Fives', which shows just how detailed the team have been willing to get. To ensure that every aspect can be reproduced, a high-end boom box double speaker has been fitted to these models.

Hornby

Of course, the appeal of the Ellis Clark Trains models is undeniable, but they might be a little big for most modellers. For those who model in OO gauge, Hornby has been developing new tooling for the 'Black Five' that will include an equally impressive array

of options for modellers. It might not seem that long ago that the 'Black Five' was super detailed to match the higher standards that people have come to expect, but the team at Hornby have not taken the decision to start again lightly. It's clear that the approach has been to make the 'Black Five' into a staple of the range for many years to come, with options that will allow them to produce as broad a variety of the class as possible.

With so many detail changes, this will have been no small feat. There must be hundreds of tooling variations produced to capture the range of engines. The decision has been to create an option for the Caprotti variation on the class is one which particularly impresses. The tooling for this captures effortlessly the distinctive high running board that distinguishes it from other members of the 'Black Fives'.

Of course, it's not just these elements of the models that look set to impress. The Hornby team are developing exciting new features on their models that could well set the standard for future models in their range in the form of smoke and lights. Personally, the addition of a steam generator is something that could add much authenticity of the model if done correctly. Capturing smoke and steam at such a small scale, however, is a formidable challenge, and I would like to see it in action before judging one way or the other. Similarly, the decision to include working headlamps in such a small scale might be a frustration given the host of different duties that the class undertook. Having the option to choose this sort of detail is a must for modellers. **HR**



The Hornby model improves upon the previous tooling for the class in OO gauge and now even boasts a steam generator and working lights as the firm looks to meet the high demands from modellers. HORNBY

Scottish show heralds start of modelling year

THE first of the major set-piece events on the modelling calendar is now only a few weeks away, with enthusiasts from across the UK preparing for a feast of layouts and inspiration at Model Rail Scotland.

The show is once more at the SEC (Scottish Event Campus) in the heart of Glasgow from Friday, February 23 to Sunday the 25th, and there will be scores of layouts and a host of societies and exhibitors for visitors to see.

Among the layouts this year are Glen Farist, Levenbank, Castlebridge and Eyemouth in N gauge, OO scale models of Dalziel North, Tulloch Bridge, Griffen Road, Depot 254, Clucas Bay and Fountainhall TMD to name just a few of the many great displays, as well as the O gauge models of Eastfield, Raventhorpe, Borrington by the Sea and Harviestoun. There are exhibitors using many other gauges too including N, P4, S7, table top, HO gauge and even Lego.

When it comes to societies, you'll be able to meet folk from the Highland Railway Society, the Caledonian Railway Association, the Scalefour Society, the Rail Riders Club and so many more... plus there will be demonstrations by Wigan Finescale Modellers, the Scottish Region Study Group and a host of others... which all-in-all makes for a brilliant day out for any modeller or enthusiast.

And of course it's not just the layouts and dioramas, as there will be something to pique everyone's interest, with accessories, techniques of painting, lighting systems, white metal castings and components, plus many more activities and experts.

The host of traders will be keen to help you transform your own layout, or even just provide that background information or friendly piece of advice for a fellow enthusiast or someone just starting out.

Don't miss out, enjoy the show.



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PURBECK PERFECTION

The Swanage tradition of a post-New Year gala once again saw enthusiasts flock to the most easterly end of the Jurassic Coast. **Owen Hayward** reports on the event at which a certain LSWR locomotive was reaching its full potential.

For years, enthusiasts have been starved of their 'fix' in the winter months, with Christmas trains taking over from as early as November, while the months of January, February, and sometimes even March were reserved for routine maintenance and major infrastructure projects.

But with rising base costs now rapidly eating into festive profits, some lines have more recently decided that it is time for change in order to balance the books.

The first weekend after New Year's Day is now a regular gala time in the Purbeck Isles, with its Winter Warm Up offering mileage behind traction to appease both steam and diesel enthusiasts alike.

This year's event had an extra lure: it was the first gala appearance of the newly-restored LSWR T3 No. 563, which also had a turn on the engineering freight set too.

Back on form

Following its official debut in October, having undergone a £650,000 restoration over a six-year period, No. 563 returned to Herston Works for some fine-tuning. Although during testing it could manage five coaches, its steaming ability was not as hoped and for its public trains saw the pre-booked services

restricted to just three vehicles.

"This was obviously unacceptable going forward and the reason it was limited to this during the first period was to give it a chance to make it up the line without stopping for steam," a statement for the Swanage Railway Trust 563 Locomotive Group said. "Initial investigations pointed to a few issues. A new baffle plate for the firebox has since been fabricated to better direct airflow in the firebox under the brick arch, and the blower as also been improved by reducing the size of the holes in the blower ring, enabling this to draw the fire better."

Suspensions were also raised about the opening of the blastpipe cap. No drawings were available for the Adams T3 pattern fitted; however, help was sought from the Bluebell and Isle of Wight Steam railways, which have other LSWR locomotives in the forms of Adams radial tank No. 488 and O2 No. W24 *Calbourne* respectively. An inspection of that fitted to T9 No. 120 (also currently at Swanage) was carried out. The result: confirmation that the diameter orifice on the cap was some 2.5 inches (almost 50%) larger than it should have been. With a drawing and pattern on hand for the Drummond blast pipe cap fitted to M7

No. 30053, a new blank was ordered, bored out to a suitable size, and fitted. A test run in November saw two Class 33 locomotives (the rolling resistance and weight of which were estimated to be equal to six Mk.1 coaches) attached and No. 563's performance was much improved.

More work will be carried out, including the removal of the piston tail rods; these were fitted to the locomotive during the 1960 overhaul at Eastleigh and have proved to be a maintenance and lubrication headache. One benefit of this is that the livery No. 563 is painted in will now be more authentic, as these tail rods were removed by the time the T3s were painted into Drummond livery.

Southern region stars

Starring alongside No. 563 was Southern Locomotive Ltd's Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone*. By the time this locomotive had been built in 1946, the T3 had already been withdrawn (this having happened only the year before, following a previous withdrawal in 1939 lasting only a month due to the demand for locomotives at the start of World War Two). The Bulleid had been a stalwart of the Swanage 'Polar Express' trains during November and December,

The ruins of Corfe Castle dominate the horizon as D6515 Lt. Jenny Lewis RN approaches Townsend Farm with a freight working bound for Swanage. ANDREW PM WRIGHT





Bulleid light Pacific No. 34028 Eddystone departs Norden with the ballast wagons in tow. OWEN HAYWARD

SLL's other operational locomotive normally based there (No. 34070 *Manston*) having been hired to the Mid-Hants Railway to cover a last-minute shortfall.

Representing the diesel era were Class 33 Cromptons D6521 *Lt Jenny Lewis RN* (TOPs No. 33012, built September 1960) and No. 33111 (built in October the same year and owned by the Class 33/1 Preservation Company Ltd). Much like the Bulleid, they were allocated across the Southern Region, the former having worked trains between Waterloo and Swanage during the summer of 1966 and the latter being the last of its class to work a 4TC set to the seaside resort in September 1971. This sight could be replicated in the very near future with a 4TC set undergoing restoration on the line.

Throughout the weekend, the four locomotives rotated on passenger and freight duties, with two four-coach sets on January 6 not quite meeting demand, resulting in one

rake being boosted to five for Sunday, January 7.

The freight train comprised a rake of BR-era Dogfish hoppers and a Turbot open wagon, each of which were built with ballast carrying in mind. Although introduced after the T3 had retired, the set's workings with No. 563 were an historic moment as it marked the first time in 80 years that the locomotive had worked any such freight train.

No. 120 was on static display at Swanage station during the weekend. Stabled in the loop headshunt, it provided a few opportunities to see it side by side with No. 563, both locomotives of the LSWR and Nine Elms works, with the T9 coming into existence six years after the T3 but its total working life having totalled a decade longer when it too was finally withdrawn in 1961. The T9 is now the focus of the SRT563LG's attention, with plans currently being formulated to see it assessed for overhaul, ➔



LSWR T3 No. 563 works an engineering freight through Wilkswood on January 7. On this occasion, passengers were able to travel aboard the brake van for an additional supplement, which enabled the Victorian locomotive to be enjoyed from close quarters on the return working. OWEN HAYWARD



Above: With a semaphore raised to indicate its route into the station, Class 33 No. 33111 approaches Harmans Cross with a train from Swanage. OWEN HAYWARD

Left: The striking livery of No. 563 catches the eye and makes it stand out as it glides through Woodyhyde with a passenger service bound for Norden. OWEN HAYWARD

"The Winter Warm Up was an evocative and atmospheric celebration of the best of steam and heritage diesel trains."



No. 34028 whistles up for the crossing at Quarr Campsite as coasts towards Wilkswood and Langton Matravers on January 7. OWEN HAYWARD



The old and the new: the Victorian era T3 is readied for duty while on shed at Swanage as Class 33 D6515 leads No. 33111 out of the station with the first train of the day on January 7. Both built in 1960, even with their ages combined the Cromptons come out three years younger than the age of No. 563, at 131 years. ANDREW PM WRIGHT



A late addition to the timetable, on the morning of January 7 the pair of Cromptons double-headed the first round trip of the line. Here, No. 33111 leads the train from Norden on the return leg of the journey. JAMIE SMITH



Eddystone brings a Swanage-bound passenger service through Townsend Farm on January 6. JAMIE SMITH

with a view to return it to service wearing SR colours as opposed to the BR livery it wore throughout its last stint in steam.

Swanage success

The event proved to be a welcome success for the railway, which in November had launched a £450,000 SOS appeal to help see it through the winter months as it faced rising costs and sought to boost its financial reserves. By the start of December, four weeks after launching, the appeal had already raised more than £43,000.

Swanage Railway Company chairman Gavin Johns said: "I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to plan and deliver our

splendid Winter Warm Up weekend, which saw steam and diesel trains operate between Norden, Corfe Castle, Harman's Cross and Swanage.

"We were blessed with glorious sunny weather and the feedback from visitors – who enjoyed passenger and freight trains running through the glorious Isle of Purbeck countryside – was very good.

"The Winter Warm Up was an evocative and atmospheric celebration of the best of steam and heritage diesel trains."

SR Trust chairman Frank Roberts said: "It was a real thrill to see our newly-restored London and South Western T3 class steam locomotive No. 563 haul five-coach passenger

trains for the first time on the Swanage Railway.

"Our Winter Warm Up event was also the first time that the T3 had hauled a freight train in some 80 years, which was very exciting.

"No. 563 is a real jewel in the crown of the Swanage Railway and a tribute to the hard work, commitment and dedication of the 563 Locomotive's Group's volunteers and supporters."

The railway's next big enthusiast event will be the steam gala over the weekend of March 22-24, followed by a diesel event on May 10-12. Full details can be found online at swanagerailway.co.uk/events **HR**

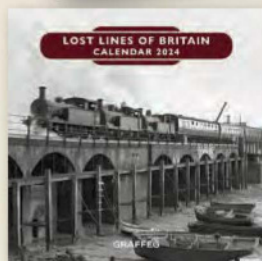
The sun shines down on No. 563 at Langton Matravers as the train heads away from Swanage. NICK GILLIAM



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Taking it all in: Aaron Denny learns about the boiler with Tom Ashcroft and BESTT trainer Lawrence Donaldson, removing wash-out plugs in the smokebox during the BESTT Boiler Wash Out and Examination course at Stephenson Steam Railway. DAVID GRINDLEY

STEPHENSON SKILLS FOR THE THIRD CENTURY OF STEAM

The skills forming the backbone of preservation are imperative for keeping heritage railways alive. **Sally Clifford** finds out how the young volunteers at North Tyneside's Stephenson Steam Railway – which is dedicated to railway pioneers George and Robert Stephenson – are playing their part to help keep this industry on track into the future.

Keeping the railway legacy alive is something David Grindley is passionate about. It was through involvement in the heritage sector that David, who previously worked as a steam technician at Beamish Museum for six years, recognised the need for skills to be passed on.

"Doing a heritage skills course many years ago highlighted the necessity of transferring skills from senior volunteers to younger ones so they can take over in years to come. It's all about the progression of the railway."

David's arrival in 2019 at the Stephenson Steam Railway in North Shields, where he is now engineering and railway operations manager, brought about an important change.

"When I first started, there was no established youth group, no young volunteers as such," he recalled.

In 2021, as normality began to resume following the lockdowns which took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, he established a youth group.

"After coming out of lockdown and everything went back to

normal, many young volunteers came forward. Many wanted to work in the rail industry, so they came here for experience and knowledge.

"We are almost like a stepping stone to get them experience on their CV," David explained.

He outlined how previous young volunteers are now driving and training drivers for the Tyne & Wear Metro, proving just how beneficial volunteering can be, both to the railways and to those giving their spare time to support this important part of our past – and future.

Since setting up the group, the railway now has a total of 14 young volunteers on board, ranging in age from 13 to 18.

David said they come to the railway on a designated day, usually a Saturday, and participate in tasks as varied as general DIY through to track maintenance.

As well as learning new skills and boosting their CVs, being a part of the group brings many other advantages, such as helping them improve communication and social abilities. "One of the benefits of volunteering



On the footplate: Left to right are diesel driver Neville Bilton with Benjamin Wood, Muhammad Aadil Majumder and Tom Ashcroft. DAVID GRINDLEY



Boiler work: Muhammad washes out the boiler foundation ring, removing sludge and scale. DAVID GRINDLEY



Hands on: Benjamin fits a mudhole door and checks alignment. DAVID GRINDLEY



Practical: Tom fits a mudhole door with a new door joint. DAVID GRINDLEY

is engaging with like-minded people," he added.

For those seeking a career on the railway, helping out behind the scenes gives them an insight into exactly how it works and equips them with transferable skills. Training is imperative to enable them to help keep the railway running and the legacy alive.

David explained that the Wellesley Community Trust Fund grant, which the railway received over a period of three years, enabled the line to put its young volunteers through

a recent boiler wash-out and examination course.

"It is a really good course," he said. "It gives participants an understanding of how the boiler works and how important it is to keep the boiler maintained. It also helps them in progressing to be a fireman or a driver. They get to know the principles of the working boiler."

Run by BESTT, the Boiler and Engineering Skills Training Trust, the four-day course specialises in providing hands-on, practical experience. One volunteer spoke of finding it

useful for their progression as a steam locomotive maintenance engineer and engineman.

Inspecting a steam engine and its mechanical parts, and then participating in a fitness-to-run examination and assessment, are just some of the elements of the course, which was delivered by Lawrence Donaldson, training consultant and trainer with BESTT.

Lawrence, who is an engineering assistant at the Kent & East Sussex Railway, was reminded of his own childhood days as a young volunteer. His

interest was stoked through accompanying his railwayman father to work in a railway repair works.

"One thing made me think with the youths I was training," he said. "The youngest was 14 and most of them were about 17, and broadly speaking, I was doing what they were doing 50 years ago."

"I wish I'd had that level of training when I was that age. Now there is an opportunity for more structured, more formal training that wasn't around back then."



Tom provides light for a visual inspection.
DAVID GRINDLEY



Back to school: In the classroom with BESTT trainer Lawrence Donaldson. DAVID GRINDLEY

He explained how the course is customised to suit those who take part.

"I have always believed that training has to be timely and relevant. Volunteers on the railway commit their time and energy and it's only right that the organisation seeks to develop their capabilities and skills

with their abilities and their commitment," he added.

"If you have young volunteers with a good, regular commitment, you should really have in place a system to develop that because there is always a need for new staff and capabilities. With the nationwide skills shortage, we are also losing heritage skills.

"Training and experience are both stepping stones towards becoming competent.

"If you can lead and guide them, and then apply them, and get them practising these functions and recognise their commitment to the railway, then with some training and instruction, they will know what they are doing, and their commitment will increase accordingly. It is a series of steps to gain commitment, confidence and competence.

"I would urge any railway to have a system in place to accommodate young people. The railways must devote time and energy to young people on that basis."

Launched in 2006, BESTT aims to provide skilled and

professional training and, ultimately, ensure that knowledge is passed on to the next generation and not lost.

Chairman Gordon Newton said it is the first course BESTT has run for anyone under the age of 18.

He said that as well as being an achievement for the participants involved, he also hopes it will encourage other young volunteers to get involved with their local railway.

"It is difficult getting volunteers," he said, "and this may be an incentive to get them and keep them. The message to railways is to look after your volunteers – because they can be the future people who keep the railways running." **HR**

→ For more information, visit www.bestt.org.uk. To find out more about the Stephenson Steam Railway, visit <https://stephensonsteamrailway.org.uk>

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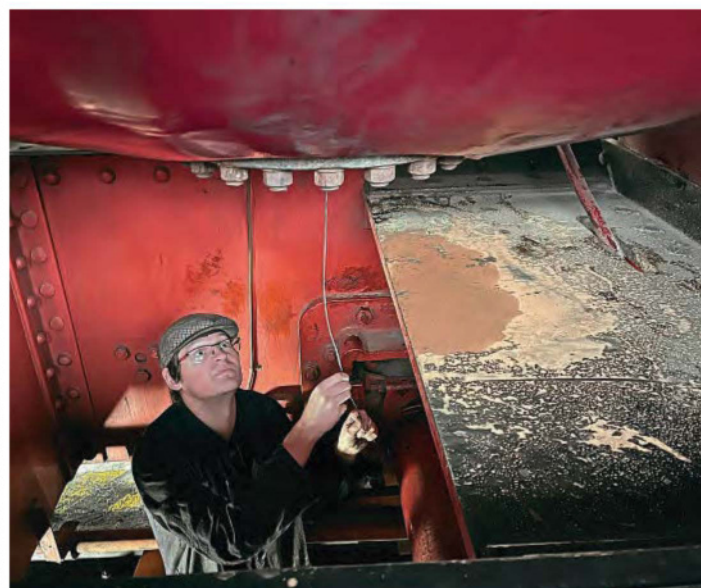
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Benjamin removes fusible plugs for inspection. DAVID GRINDLEY



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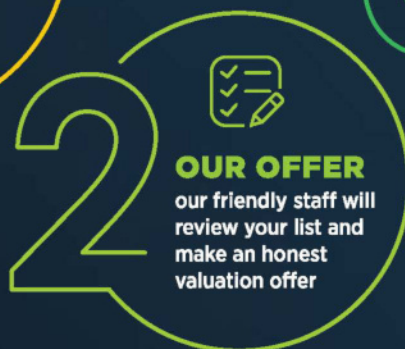
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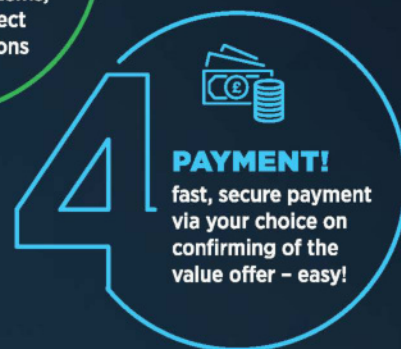
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Metropolitan railtour

THE photograph on page 85 of issue 314 queries the details of Met No. 1 (L44) pictured at Kingsbury on October 1, 1961.

The Six Bells Junction website shows that it was an afternoon railtour ('The Metropolitan'), organised by Southern Counties Touring Society from Wembley Park to Stanmore, Baker Street, New Cross Gate and Baker Street.

It also had haulage by electric locomotive No. 16 Oliver Goldsmith.

Kevin Driscoll,
Prestatyn,
Denbighshire

STAR LETTER

The day when my trainspotting ended

IN ISSUE 312, what is the connection between the pictures on pages 10 (Gobowen station) and 70 (The Royal Artilleryman plaque)?

The answer is that it was a fateful St David's Day in 1956 when the South Wales train stopped at Gobowen station, and there to greet me was not my mama and papa, but an ogre in khaki with three stripes on each arm.

So there and then ended for me and many other Taffs from different

towns en route our civvy life – welcome to two years of National Service: no choice of yes or no and no choice – it's the Royal Artillery for you!

I was a trainspotter no longer, but a daily sight of the 1400 class on its journey to Oswestry from the parade square at Park Hall Camp, where we learned to march and, most importantly, to step, all at the same time!

Other railway sights were to

follow at London Liverpool Street, Harwich and Hook of Holland... but spotting had come to an end as survival was uppermost until 1958.

Survive I did and now, years later, I regret not having a camera to record scenes now long gone.

I would like to say how much I enjoy *Heritage Railway*, and shortly there will be a need to renew subscription, which I will do with no hesitation.

Ron Shackell, Govilon, Gwent

Step up the Great Central Railway reunification push!

I HAVE enjoyed subscribing to *Heritage Railway* for many years, ever since my late mother bought for me an annual subscription as a gift.

I particularly enjoy updates on major infrastructures, whether line extensions or locomotive and coach restorations.

Issue 310 carries a feature on the proposed linking of the Great Central Railway and the Great

Central Railway (Nottingham). It had me holding my breath!

This is a project that will take at least a generation. I have been donating to this for several years, but your article has encouraged me to increase my level of giving.

To keep interest levels high, as well as donations, I recommend a regular quarterly reunification

update in *Heritage Railway*.

Roderick Chapman, Ferndown, Dorset.

→ See News, page 34. To donate or make a standing order to the reunification project, visit www.gcrailway.co.uk/unify, where donations, including standing orders, can be made.

Alternatively, you can text UNIFY to 70970 to give £5 or UNIFY to 70191 to give £10.



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Was the Thunderbolt really stolen from Oxford?

IN issue 312, the excellent article on the much-loved film *The Titfield Thunderbolt* mentions that the 1400 0-4-2T stolen by Dan and Mr Valentine was taken from Westbury depot.

In my collection of railway books, I have a slim volume all about this film; in it, author Simon Castens writes that this depot was, in fact, Oxford. More confusion!

Alan Barnes, email

The Titfield Thunderbolt still captures imagination

I VERY much enjoyed issue 312, in particular the article about *The Titfield Thunderbolt* film and how it still holds one's imagination!

I cannot think of Limpley Stoke without remembering its most famous resident, Miles Kington, who was such a delightful polymath. He wrote about *Franglairs* for *Punch* magazine, played the double pass with *Instant Sunshine*, and presented *Three Miles High* about steam engines in the Andes, among much more.

It was entirely fitting he lived where that *Thunderbolt* had puffed along in all our memories.

Nicholas Rule, email

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'Awaiting Turnaround at Devil's Bridge'.

Artistic inspiration through purchases on the internet

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed your readers' letter from artist Glynis Dray in issue 305.

As a fellow artist, I appreciate her work and I am in awe of her method of drawing on-site and painting at home.

I am a full-time carer, and over lockdown and since have been having a dabble with acrylic

modelling paints on canvas.

Looking through my old photographs and buying pictures off an internet sales site is my inspiration and source – here are two of my paintings.

Thank you and your team for another wonderful magazine.

*Clive Burbage,
Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands.*



'Much Wenlock Summer'.

It was Preston, not Wigan

IN issue 313 on page 79, you have a photograph of No. 78022 leaving Wigan.

You will find this was taken at Preston station, leaving south from the old Platform 5 (now Platform 3).

You can see the Royal Mail link bridge in the background,

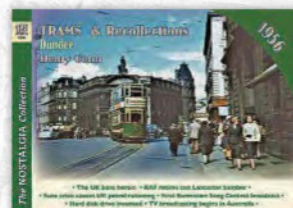
which linked the sorting office on Platform 5 with the main post office sorting office on West Cliff.

No. 78022 was a 10D Lostock Hall engine until withdrawn and was quite often on station pilot duties after LMS 'Jinty' No. 47472 was withdrawn.

David W Ashworth, email

HERITAGE
RAILWAY

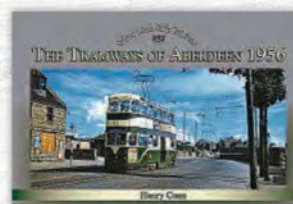
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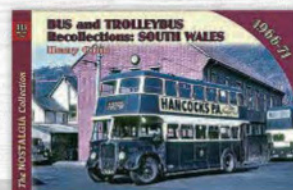
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Colonel Stephens Light Railway Locomotives

By Brian Janes (hardback, Pen & Sword, 176pp, £25, ISBN 9781399023436).

ANOTHER superb book from Brian Janes, using his depth of knowledge of all things Colonel Holman F Stephens while also being able to delve into the Colonel Stephens Museum archives at Tenterden Town, from where many of the numerous photographs are sourced and used in addition to some detailed information.

The volume chronicles the vast variety of locomotives that ran across the various railways Col Stephens was involved with. From the numerous recycled, swapped, hired and rented locomotives, some might raise an eyebrow to see that chapter one covers 'new and novel locomotives'. Yes, new locomotives were ordered to Stephens' specifications from Peckett and Hawthorne Leslie and, yes, the Kent & East Sussex Railway's No. 4 *Hecate* was unusual; novel and large it was, but it was not the only one.

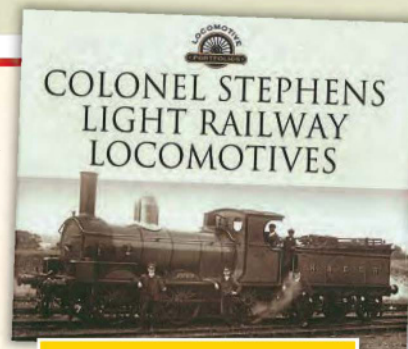
A favourite among enthusiasts today, there are some wonderful photographs of Stroudley's Terriers which were purchased second-hand, and while the first two went to the KESR, they were also purchased for the Edge Hill Light Railway, Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, and the Weston Clevedon & Portishead, while two were temporarily swapped to the Sheppey Light Railway and East Kent Railway (EKR) to assist with their construction before returning to their original lines.

The Ilfracombe goods locomotive was a small tender engine and in 1910 Stephens moved to purchase and then hire six; most had been rebuilt in some way, with the exception of No. 0394. He then looked to Beattie Saddelbacks which were similar to the Ilfracombe

locomotives: one, No. 7, went to the EKR (No. 7), while the other, No. 4, went to the KESR.

Manning Wardles have their own chapter with eight acquired, while three went to the Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway, four to the WCPR and one to the KESR. Each locomotive is detailed by its name. The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire's LNWR-built 0-6-2T coal engines were hired from the LMS and kept the numbers on them while they ran there. SER O and O1 class locomotives arrived from 1923, three each to the EKR where they were especially useful, and to the KESR. Some were still running in the 1950s.

The chapter Oddments/One-offs/Singletons, with 34 pages, covers unusual locomotives that ran across various Stephens lines from the tiny *Gazelle* to the much larger *Hecate*.



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Readers with some knowledge of Stephens' locomotives may find this to be their favourite chapter.

The narrow-gauge chapter covers the locomotives that ran on the Rye & Camber Tramway, Ashover Light Railway, Snailbeach District Railway and Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland railways. The book winds up with a namesplates chapter and a very useful locomotive index.

With interest in Stephens' lines still on the increase, this book will enthral both new and more established enthusiasts while also adding something extra to those who feel they may already have a wealth of knowledge on the King of Light Railways and his locomotives.

AN INSTANT HIT WITH ALL LOVERS OF LIGHT RAILWAYS

A World History of Rail: From the Steam Regime to Today

By Jeremy Black (hardback, Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, 288pp, £22.99, ISBN 9781398121010).

THE heritage of the Stockton & Darlington Railway will next year take centre stage on an international basis for the celebrations of the bicentenary of the world's first steam-hauled line.

It will serve to reinforce the fact that steam railways, a British innovation, reshaped the globe forever: the railways' use of self-propelled locomotives led to the development of motorised road transport, aircraft and beyond, and laid the blueprint for the modern world we have inherited.

This new, very readable and highly informative volume written by Jeremy Black, emeritus professor of history at Exeter University and author of more than 100 books, serves to reinforce the colossal importance of the railways' contribution.

In 1865, there were 20,000 miles of railways on the planet; despite modernisation and closures in many countries, there were still about a million miles by 2020.

Railways developed economic links that sustained the major powers, taking the products of the Industrial

Revolution to the next stages and beyond, and in turn integrating the settlement frontiers and patterns with the world economy.

Separate chapters deal with the early decades of steam, spanning the continent and other 19th century rail developments, rail strategies, and politics, both world wars and their aftermaths, and changes over the past 50 years.

The net result is an inspirational and thought-provoking account of how railways have – and still very much do – impact on economies and politics in countries big and small around the globe. Here is a very accessible book that contains much to offer all generations.

SPLENDID ESSENTIAL OVERVIEW OF OUR RAILWAYS

From scrap line to main line – The Deltic story 1982 to 2022

By Guy Middleton (hardback, Eastfield Media, www.eastfieldmedia.com, 256pp, £35, ISBN 9781838144029).

THE six surviving Class 55 Deltics have now spent roughly twice as long in preservation as they did in BR service, so there is much scope for a book covering their 'second life' – and this is delivered very well here.

This 256-page book is divided into 41 chapters, one for each year since 1982, covering what each locomotive did in that year, plus any fleet details such as overhauls, repairs, relocations,

sales and contracts

Every significant moment in the post-BR history is covered, backed up by a great selection of images of the locomotives at work and on shed, and including rarely seen shots of repairs and restoration work, making this a recommended buy for all Deltic fans.

DELTA IN DEPTH AND SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS

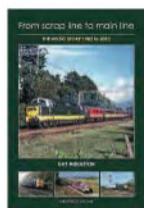
London Rail Atlas

By Joe Brown (hardback, Crécy Publishing, www.crecy.co.uk, 160pp, £25.70, ISBN 9781800352636).

THIS is now the sixth edition of this outstandingly popular map book covering all the lines in and around London. Several significant additions have occurred since 2018's fifth edition, most notably the completion of the Elizabeth line, the Northern Line branch to Battersea Power Station, and the extension of the electrification of the Overground to Barking.

The maps are drawn to a high degree of accuracy and include not only the Overground and Underground lines, but also industrial railways. Coverage ranges beyond the central areas to also include Tilbury, Gravesend, Windsor and Redhill.

For those who have not encountered this publication before, it should be noted that it is more



than just a book of maps. Almost half is taken up with a comprehensive index that details opening and, where appropriate, closing dates of lines, stations, yards and junctions, along with information of original operating companies, and again, where appropriate, the renaming of stations.

This is a highly recommended publication for anyone interested in maps and/or the railways in and around England's capital city.

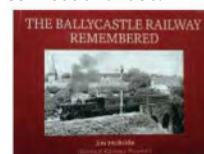
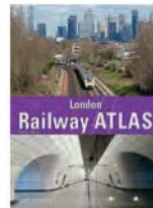
FIRST-CLASS CAPITAL RAIL GAZETTEER

The Ballycastle Railway Remembered

By Jim McBride (softback, County Donegal Railway Heritage Museum, www.donegalrailway.com / 00353 74 9722655, 64 pages, £13, ISBN 9781874518112).

THE Donegal Railway Heritage Museum here goes east to County Antrim to take in the Ballycastle Railway, a 16-mile, 3ft gauge delight, which ran from Ballymoney to the seaside town of Ballycastle between 1880 and 1950.

Author Jim McBride has also broken new ground with hitherto unknown



pictures unearthed from local sources around the area the line served, as well as including shots from well-known photographers.

The locomotives and rolling stock of the original Ballycastle Railway Company share room on the pages with those of the LMS Northern Counties Committee, which rescued and reopened the line in 1924 following the original company's bankruptcy.

All black-and-white, apart from a colour shot on the back cover of a last day working, the pictures well illustrate a line that, had it survived the Ulster Transport Authority axe in 1950, along with its iconic 2-4-2 compound tank engines, would have been a real asset to Ballycastle's tourist trade today.

A flavour on the railway in its last week comes from a reprint of an article from the *Meccano Magazine* of July 1951, written by well-known Irish narrow-gauge historian, the late Edward M Patterson.

Full of detail for railway modellers, this book is packed with atmospheric shots of the little trains and the people who ran them and travelled on them.

And it has a direct connection with the Donegal Railway Heritage Museum, for former Ballycastle Railway coach No. 318 – the last-surviving piece of the line's rolling stock – is on display there in its later guise as County Donegal Railways No 58.

FRESH INSIGHT INTO LOST ANTRIM RAILWAY

Railways Remembered: North East England

By Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts (hardback, Crécy Publishing, www.crecy.co.uk, 160pp, £22.50, ISBN: 9781800352759).

THIS book, the first Railways Remembered title in what will be a series covering specific regions and collections of photographs, certainly sets a high standard.

All of the images (about 200 in total) are in colour, many of them from the Online Transport Archive (a UK charity to which the authors, both trustees of the organisation, have donated their fees).

Others come from the Restoration & Archiving Trust, from custodians of other collections, or from individual photographers. That they cover an era from the 1950s to 1970s, when black-and-white was still the most common medium for capturing railway images, and that many have not appeared in print before, makes this publication even more noteworthy.

Well-balanced and captioned with particular thought, it flows seamlessly, starting in Northumberland, close to the border with Scotland, and working its way gradually south to areas that were once in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

The North East is an area where, even into the latter half of the 20th century, colliery and other industrial networks were as much a part of the railway fabric as main and branch line operations.

Although most, if not all, have been fairly extensively covered before, the real stand-out was the prevalence of shots that are likely to offer even the most well-read enthusiast something new to look at.

Each page was equally engaging, and if this is representative of the rest of the series, readers will be in for a real treat.

NEW QUALITY INSIGHT INTO PAST GLORIES

Branch Line Britain: Local Passenger Trains in the Diesel Era

By Paul D Shannon (hardback, Pen & Sword, 152pp, £30, ISBN: 9781399089906).

FOLLOWING the Beeching cuts of about

4000 lines between 1963 and 1970, this book concentrates on those lines that managed to survive – some only just.

BR had set about replacing old rolling stock that had taken over from steam-hauled trains, including early-generation DMUs and EMUs that were introduced in the 1950s and 1960s. The 1980s had also seen the introduction of low-cost Pacers, with many lasting until recently, when heritage lines have snapped them up to run on their lines for the same reasons.

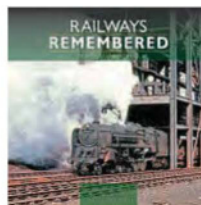
Electrification projects started in the 1980s mainly concentrated on the main lines, with many of the surviving branch lines running DMUs and those electrified EMUs.

Each chapter covers the country by regions, starting with South West England and finishing in Scotland. Each of the eight regions/chapters contains about 20 photographs, taken between 1973 and 2022, with most of them in colour, all capturing the charm of branch lines which still attract much interest today.

The gradual change of policy when realising that the potential of reopening small stations would attract extra business has seen various stations added to the network between 1990 and 1994, and continuing with less pace up until the handover to private operators.

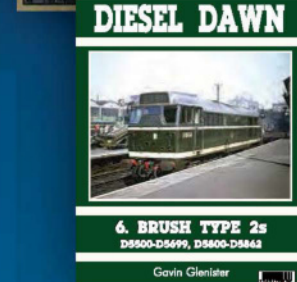
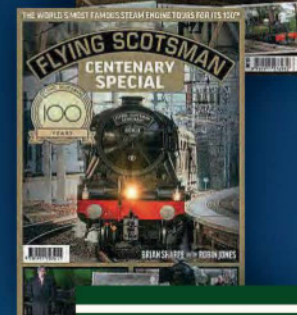
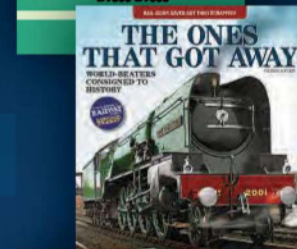
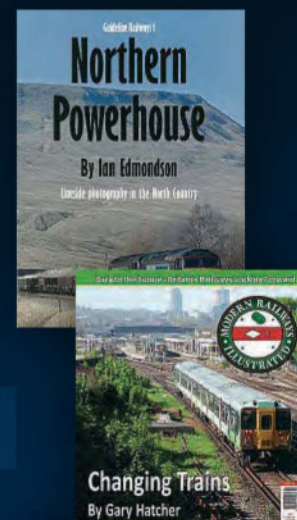
We are informed that between 2005 and 2015, four more branch lines have been reopened and, as we know, others have opened since then.

This volume captures the wide variety of DMUs and EMUs used around the UK while offering optimism for the continuing reopening of more lines in the future. **CELEBRATING MODERN-DAY BRANCH LINES**



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IN advance of the imminent launch of Britain's newest standard gauge steam locomotive, GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, (Headline News, pages 8/9) a new range of clothing has been launched.

Profits will go towards the upkeep of the locomotive and future developments.



FLYING THE FLAG FOR 21ST-CENTURY STEAM

OPERATIONAL HERITAGE LINES AND MUSEUMS

SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum

2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex.
Tel: 01798 831370.

Open: Weds, W/Es from Jan 27. Weds-Suns from Feb 10.

Bluebell Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL.
Tel: 01825 720800.

Running: Feb 10-18.

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: Daily from Feb 10.

East Kent Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.
Shepherdswell, Kent.
Tel: 01304 832042.

Reopens: March 2024.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway

10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway

12¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Exbury, Southampton. Tel: 023 8089 1203.

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.

Reopens: Mar 29.

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.

Running: Feb 10/11, 13-15, 17/18.

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: Feb 10-18.

Mizens Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey.
Tel: 07962 400922.

Reopens: Easter 2024.

Old Kiln Light Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.

Running: W/Es from Mar 18.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent.
Tel: 01797 362353.

Running: W/Es from Feb 3 + Feb 13-15.

Royal Victoria Railway

10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.

Running: W/Es.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Spa Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.

Running: W/Es + Feb 9, 13-15.

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: Feb 10/11, 14, 17/18.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway

Standard gauge, 6½ miles.
Bodmin, Cornwall.

Tel: 01208 73555.

Running: Feb 11, 13-15, 18.

Bristol Harbour Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Princes Wharf, Bristol. Tel: 0117 352 6600.

M Shed Museum open daily.

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: Spring 2024.

East Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset. Tel: 01749 880417.

Reopens: Mar 16.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Lappa Valley Railway

7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile.

Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.

Open: Thurs-Suns + sch hols.

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.

Reopens: Mar 29.

Moors Valley Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants.
Tel: 01425 471415. **Running:** W/Es, sch hols.

North Dorset Railway

Standard gauge, 1200ft. Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset.

Tel: 01258 860696.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Plym Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Marsh Mills, Plymouth. Tel: 01752 345078.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Seaton Tramway

2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.

Running: W/Es & sch hols from Feb 10.

Somerset & Dorset Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221

Reopens: Mar 31.

South Devon Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles.
Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370.

Running: Feb 10-18.

Swanage Railway

Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.

Running: W/Es & sch hols from Feb 10.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway

Standard gauge, three miles.
Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

West Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, 20 miles.
Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.

Reopens: Mar 23.

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: W/Es & sch hols from Feb 17.

Colne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex
Tel: 01787 461174.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

East Anglian Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Running: TBA.

Ferry Meadows Railway

10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cams. 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: Mar 28.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.

Reopens: Mar 31.

Nene Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cams. Tel: 01780 784444.

Running: W/Es from Feb 10 + Feb 14.

North Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA.



BR 2MT No. 78019 crosses Hexden Channel on the Kent & East Sussex Railway on December 29, 2023, as its visit to the former Colonel Stephens line drew near to its end. It returned home to the Great Central Railway in January ahead of that line's winter gala. OWEN HAYWARD

Tel: 01263 820800.

Running: Feb 17-18

Wells & Walsingham Railway

10¼in gauge, four miles. Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk. Tel: 01328 711630.

Running: W/Es & sch hols from Feb 17.

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. Running: Suns from Feb 11 + Feb 14.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles.

Chinnor, Oxon.

Tel: 07979 055366

Reopens: Mar 10.

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 + Feb 14-16. Running: Feb 10/11, 14, 17/18.

Epping Ongar Railway

Standard gauge, six miles.

Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.

Running: Feb 14/15, 17/18, 21/22, 24/25.

Great Whipsnade Railway

2ft 6in gauge.

Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.

Tel: 0344 225 1826.

Running: sch hols.

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.**

MIDLANDS

Abbey Pumping Station

2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX. Tel: 0116 299 5111.

Open: Daily from Feb 1.

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.

Reopens: Mar 30.

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: Feb 3/4.

Cambrian Heritage Railways

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Llynclys). Oswestry and Llynclys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Chasewater Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Walsall, West Midlands.

Tel: 01543 452623.

Open: Daily. Running: Jan 1.

Churnet Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 5¼ miles.

Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.

Running: W/Es from Feb 3 + Feb 13/14, 20/21.

Crich Tramway Village

Standard gauge, one mile.

Crich, Derbyshire.

Tel: 01773 854 321

Reopens: Mar 9.

Dean Forest Railway

Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Norchard, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.

Reopens: Mar 13.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Ecchills Wood Railway

7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.

Running: Spring 2024.

Evesham Vale Railway

15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Foxfield Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles.

Blythe Bridge, Staffs.

Tel: 01782 396210.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Standard gauge, 15 miles. Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.

Reopens: Mar 2.

Great Central Railway

Standard gauge, eight miles.

Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.

Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk

Running: W/Es + Jan 26.

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.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Midland Railway – Butterley

Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Ripley,

Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Northampton & Lampport Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Pitsford, Northants.

Tel: 01604 820327.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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.

Ropens: March 31.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Rushden, Northants.

Tel: 0300 3023 150.

Reopens: 2024.

Severn Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.

Running: Feb 10/11, 13-15, 17/18.

Statfold Barn Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU. Tel: 01827 830389.

Open: Fris-Suns.

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.

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.

Railway Museums

Beamish

The Living Museum of the North, County Durham.

Open: W/Es, sch hols.

Tel: 0191 370 4000.

Coleford GWR Museum

Coleford, Gloucestershire.

Open: Fris, Sats.

Tel: 01594 832032/833569.

Colonel Stephens Railway Museum

Tenterden station, KESR.

Open on KESR operating days.

Tel: 01580 765155.

Crewe Heritage Centre

Vernon Way, Crewe.

Reopens: Mar 29.

Tel: 01270 212130.

Donegal Railway Heritage Centre

Donegal.

Open: Mon-Sat.

Tel: 00353 (0) 749722655.

Head of Steam

North Road Station,

Darlington.

Closed for redevelopment.

Tel: 01325 405060.

Irchester Narrow Gauge Railway Museum

Irchester, Northamptonshire.

Open: Suns.

Tel: 01604 675368.

Leeds Industrial Museum

Armley Mills, Leeds.

Open: Tues-Suns.

Tel: 0113 378 2097.

Locomotion: The National Railway Museum, Shildon

Co Durham.

Open: Weds-Suns.

Tel: 033 0058 0058.

London Transport Museum

Covent Garden.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 0343 222 5000.

Manchester Museum of Science & Industry

Castlefield, Manchester.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 033 0058 0058.

National Railway Museum

Leeman Road, York.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 033 0058 0058.

Penrhyn Castle & Railway Museum

Bangor, Gwynedd.

Open: W/Es.

Tel: 01258 353084.

Rail Story

Ingrow, West Yorks.

Open: Carriage Works daily, Engine Shed

Tues-Suns.

Tel: 01535 690739 or 01535 680425.

Railworld Wildlife Haven

Peterborough.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Tel: 01733 344420.

Riverside Museum

Glasgow.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 0141 287 2720.

STEAM – Museum of the GWR

Swindon.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 01793 466637.

Tiverton Museum

Tiverton, Devon.

Open: Tues-Sats.

Tel: 01884 256295.

West Cumberland Railway Museum

St Bees, Cumbria.

Open one week per month

or by appointment for special

interest groups – contact

petergrooke@btinternet.com

Ulster Folk & Transport Museum

Cultra, Co. Down.

Open: Tues-Suns.

Tel: +44 (0)28 9042 8428.

Tel: 0333 320 2830.

Running: W/Es from Feb 10 + Feb 21-23.
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.

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: Feb 10-18.

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.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland.

Tel: 0300 030 3311.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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: Spring 2024.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 795189.

Running: Suns + Feb 16/17.

Heatherslaw Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles.

Ford Forge, Northumberland.

Tel: 01890 820244.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ. Tel: 01535 645214.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway

2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.

Tel: 07407 500884.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Middleton Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles.

Hunslet, Leeds. Tel: 0845 680 1758.

Reopens: Mar 30.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.

Running: Feb 10-18.

Scarborough North Bay Railway

20in gauge, 7/8 mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Stephenson Steam Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

North Shields. Tel: 0191 277 7135.

Open: Feb 21-24.

Tanfield Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Near Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

Tel: 07508 092365.

Reopens: Feb 18.

Weardale Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Stanhope, Co. Durham.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Wensleydale Railway

Standard gauge, 22 miles. Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire. Tel: 01677 425805.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Whistlestop Valley Railway (Kirklees)

15in gauge, four miles. Huddersfield, West Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.

Open: W/Es, sch hols.

Yorkshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1,000ft. Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.

Reopens: Mar 31.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway

2ft gauge, 4½ miles. Llanuwchllyn,

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and heritage events in the coming weeks

JANUARY

■ 26-28 – Great Central Railway, Winter Steam Gala

FEBRUARY

■ 3/4 – Battlefield Line, Winter Warmer Steam Gala

■ 9-11 – Spa Valley Railway, Winter Steam Up

■ 10/11, 14, 17/18 – Didcot Railway Centre, Perfect Prairies

■ 10-18 – North Yorkshire Moors Railway, Britannia Specials

■ 11 – Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Paddington Bear Visits

■ 25 – Epping Ongar Railway, Winter Bus Rally

Organising a gala or other big event and want it included? Let us know by emailing Owen Hayward at: ohayward@mortons.co.uk

Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.

Running: Feb 10/11, 13-18, 20, 22.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Blaenavon, Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Brecon Mountain Railway

1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.

Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Corris Railway

2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile. Corris, near Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Fairbourne Railway

12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne, Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Ffestiniog Railway

2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Gwili Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd Arms, Carmarthenshire.

Tel: 01267 238213.

Reopens: Mar 28.

Llanberis Lake Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870549.

Running: Feb 11-25, 27-29.

Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire. Tel: 07956 082305.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Llangollen Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen, Denbighshire. Tel: 01978 860979.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Rhyl Miniature Railway

15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.

Tel: 01352 759109. **Reopens:** Mar 23.

Snowdon Mountain Railway

800mm gauge, 4½ miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.

Reopens: Mar 23.

Talylllyn Railway

2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.

Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.

Running: Feb 12-24.

Teifi Valley Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Henllan, Ceredigion, SA44 5TD. Tel: 01559 371077.

Running: TBA.

Vale of Rheidol Railway

1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.

Reopens: Mar 2024.

Welsh Highland Heritage Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Welsh Highland Railway

2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon, Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.

Reopens: Spring 2024.

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: Jan 27.

Lathalmond Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond, near Dunfermline. Tel: 07379 914801.

Reopens: April 2024.

Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South Lanarkshire. **Reopens:** 2024

Royal Deeside Railway

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Banchory, Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.

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:** Spring 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.

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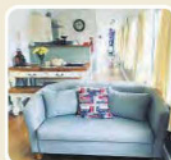
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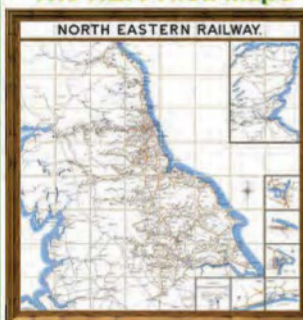
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Your lighter takes

If you've got a quirky photo, tale, poem, or anything else you think might be appropriate, please email staff writer Owen Hayward on ohayward@mortons.co.uk

Apprentices to the fore at Moorsline

By Owen Hayward

NATIONAL Apprenticeship Week 2024 will take place on February 5-11, and in recognition of this the North Yorkshire Moors Railway will showcase its own nine apprentices across its departments.

With its programme featuring a combination of theory and hands-on experience, the apprentices spend one day a week at college and four days of practical experience working alongside the NYMR's own teams 'on the ground', where they learn all the tricks of the trade needed in this industry.

With the theme for the 2024 week of celebration being skills for life, the Moorsline is well equipped for it, with two main areas employing apprentices being traction and rolling stock and lineside conservation.

Traction and rolling stock currently has four apprentices, with three based in the motive power department and one in carriage and wagon.

They are Jacob Swinburn (second year, training to be a steamfitter), Cameron Ross (second year, training

to be a machinist), Charlie Bauckham (first year, working currently in the boiler and fabrication department), and Beau Horrigan (first year, training to be a coach fitter).

All are studying at Middlesbrough College TTE, doing level three engineering maintenance.

MPD manager Nick Simpson said: "Apprenticeships at the NYMR are an incredible opportunity for anyone willing to get stuck in. With the right enthusiasm and willingness to learn, you can really progress into a fantastic career here."

"I know how beneficial this opportunity can be for young people, which is why I've worked with more than 20 apprentices at the NYMR and try to take on at least two new apprentices each year."

Charlie Bauckham said: "It's great; I wouldn't like to do anything else now. The best bit is getting inside the engines and finding out how they work. Getting to know the team and the social aspect is also as good as getting my hands dirty."

Since September 2019, the Lineside



The NYMR has nine apprentices working across the railway, an initiative it will celebrate this February as part of National Apprenticeship Week. NYMR

conservation team have worked very closely with the North York Moors National Park, funding 12 countryside worker apprentices over a two-year course through the National Lottery Heritage Fund Project, Yorkshire's Magnificent Journey.

With continued commitment to the scheme, the current apprentices are Aleisha Bell, Olivia Coman, Jasper Gray,

Tom Pearson (level two) and Xander Pearson (level four). Xander said: "During my level two apprenticeship I learned countless new countryside management skills and my self-confidence has grown massively."

"I am now onto a level four apprenticeship, providing me with a chance to step up in my career and prove my capabilities."

Thomas a huge success despite injector problems stopping it running its train

By Robin Jones

THE riverside fields below the Nene Valley Railway's Wansford headquarters had in recent years never seen the flooding of the magnitude of that cut across swathes of the country by Storm Henk over the festive period.

It was a case of 'water, water everywhere' – apart from in the railway's original *Thomas* the Tank Engine, where a problem with its injectors saw it pull out of its hugely successful sell-out shuttles to Yarwell.

Thomas was built as Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1800 in 1947, around the time that the Rev Wilbert Awdry wrote his second book in which the character appeared. The little blue engine spent its entire working life at the British Sugar Corporation's Peterborough factory and was named by the reverend as the original *Thomas* in 1971. When

replaced by a diesel, *Thomas* was sold to the Peterborough Railway Society.

Returning to steam after two years out of action due to leaking tubes, *Thomas* was rostered for the £5-a-head bargain shuttles on December 30/31 and January 6/7 – and its popularity reaped big dividends for the railway.

All 700 tickets on each day were sold out, while the Wansford gift shop did a roaring trade, said NVR interim general manager Tracy Spring.

On January 7, the injector problem saw *Thomas* again replaced by diesel traction, in the form of Class 14 No. 9529, which carried an appropriate headboard highlighting the type's 'Teddy Bear' nickname, to the delight the many young travellers.

Despite not hauling the six-coach shuttle of the day, *Thomas* continued to entertain the families at Wansford, in steam and stationary in Platform 1, before moving to a siding in front of the



Restricted to Wansford station on January 7 because of injector issues, *Thomas* the Tank Engine continued to give 100% entertainment value. ROBIN JONES

locomotive shed in full view of the platform from where families could admire and photograph the legendary character to their hearts' content. Tracy said that not a single complaint was made about *Thomas* not hauling the train on that last day.

With its injectors issue resolved, *Thomas* will be hauling more shuttles on February 17/18 and 24/25 during the half-term. For details and to book, visit nvr.org.uk

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 316 out Feb 16

Full coverage of the Great Central Railway's highly anticipated and popular January 26-28 Winter Steam Gala.

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NEW-BUILD ROUND-UP

With the imminent debut of GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*, we catch up on progress being made on some of the other major standard gauge new-build projects.



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- ❖ Return journey on the Weisseritztalbahn & Loessnitzgrundbahn steam railways
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