DOUBLE SUNNY SOUTH VICTORIES IN HRA 2024 AWARDS

ISSUE 316 February 16 – March 15, 2024

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Betton Grange booked for Cotswold Festival

NATIONAL TRUST'S GREAT STEAM GIVEAWAY

- STUNNING SUCCESS FOR GREAT CENTRAL AND BATTLEFIELD LINE GALAS
- BODMIN AUTO TRAIN TO MOVE TO WEST SOMERSET
- *PALMERSTON* FOR RHEIDOL STEAM FAIR COMEBACK
- TRIBUTES TO BLUEBELL'S CLIVE GROOME

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The War Department (WD) "Austerity" 2-10-0 is a type of heavy freight steam locomotive that was introduced during the Second World War in 1943, and is a powerhouse of an engine. The Austerity 2-10-0 commands respect wherever it roams, its presence on the rails could not be ignored. The Austerity 2-10-0 was based on the Austerity 2-8-0, and was designed to have interchangeable parts by R.A. Riddles. It was built cheap, but it was built powerful. It had the same power output as the 2-8-0 but a lighter axle load, making it suitable for secondary lines. 100 were built for the war effort, with 150 being built in total. Even now after 90 years, the Austerity still makes appearances on the rails, proving that the old guard won't be put down easily.

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On February 3, members of the Kent & East Sussex Railway celebrated 50 years to the day of passenger services resuming on the line, with trains initially running to just beyond Rolvenden, as it marked the start of the railway's 50th anniversary celebrations. Standing in front of one of the original 'Terriers', LBSCR No. 70 *Poplar* and Rother Valley Railway No. 3 *Bodiam*, with the original reopening headboard, are: Liam Head (left), KESR general manager Robin Coombes (centre), and engineer and volunteer Dick Dickinson, who was a young fireman back in 1974 and is still a driver today. The railway was officially opened by the then Ashford MP William Deedes on June 1, an event which will be celebrated with gala on the same date this year (see News, page 32). *Poplar* currently remains out of traffic while insurers continue to investigate its mechanical failure during the July 2022 'Terrier' weekend at the Bluebell Railway, which saw its two connecting rods bent just months after returning to service. KESR

New heights for heritage sector

THE resounding success of the Great Central Railway and Battlefield Line winter gala have greatly illuminated a dismal winter and paved the way for what could well be a superb 2024 season, proving beyond doubt that heritage railways have lost none of their popularity – far from it.

We now eagerly await what stands to be two new pinnacles of the sector: the launches, all being well, of two new-build standard gauge steam locomotives, not forgetting the return to action of the market leader in the field, A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*.

As we closed for press, the green livery of GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* was drying in the Tyseley Locomotive Works paint shop, in advance of its first private trial steaming and yard moves – before, if they prove successful, the locomotive is moved to Shackerstone for test runs and then south to the East Somerset Railway, where it has been pencilled in as the jewel in the crown of its 50th anniversary gala, and then on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for the eagerly-awaited Cotswold Festival of Steam.

This year may also see the first moves of replica LBSCR H2 Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head* at the Bluebell Railway: again, if successful, 'standing room only' will be a gross understatement, maybe for years to come.

New-build projects do much more than fill in missing historic gaps in the heritage fleet. As our special feature on pages 68-73 highlights, while they come at an immense cost of many years – in some cases, decades – of volunteer labour without the 'easy' benefit of anything like a 'Big Four' dedicated production line, perseverance against the odds and, most essentially, relentless fundraising, the net result is precious steam era skills kept alive and re-learned for the 21st century, and the sector refreshed and reinvigorated with new 'must see' crowd-pulling attractions wherever they visit.

Those who take on board such projects and see them through to their conclusions are the ultimate heroes of our heritage, their sterling efforts magnified many times over in terms of overall benefits to the movement as a whole.

Everyone who has an interest in heritage railways can play their part too, by contributing to a new-build scheme of their choice, either by making donations, no matter how modest, or by joining as a volunteer and offering their skills in a wide range of disciplines, from the workshop to the public relations department.

We all know off by heart the classic locomotives from the steam era and those responsible for them: heritage should not mean merely preserving treasures from the past, but also keeping alive the process that was responsible for them.

Robin Jones Editor

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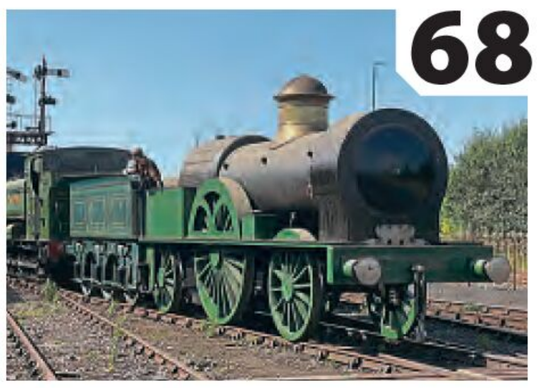
Great Central winter wonder is a winner!
Blessed with radiant sunshine and no rain during all three days, the Great Central Railway's January 26-28 Winter Gala proved to be one of the most successful in the heritage line's history, attracting more than 5000 people to pack the trains and witness non-stop action, reports Robin Jones.

Pre-order Issue 317: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

ABOVE: Back on the Keighley & Worth Valley, LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45212 headed services, topping-and-tailing at times with Class 37 No. 37025 while access to the Keighley terminus was unavailable because of major works being undertaken, as reported on News, page 29). ROB BATTY

CONTENTS: The first locomotive to visit the Staffordshire line since 2019, BR Standard 4MT No. 75014 *Braveheart* departs Consall on its first day of service at the Churnet Valley Railway on February 3, appearing courtesy of the Dartmouth Steam Railway. No. 75014 had primarily been based at Stoke shed between 1963 and 1967 and therefore is likely to have run on the CVR route at some point during those years. ROBERT FALCONER

COVER: Appearing courtesy of owner Andy Booth, Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Class 27 0-6-0 No. 52322 bursts forth from below Rabbit Bridge on the Great Central Railway during the Winter Steam Gala on January 26, after which the locomotive returned to the Embsay & Bolton Abbey where it is currently on loan. The three-day event proved to be a runaway success (see pages 50-55 for full coverage). JOHN TITLOW



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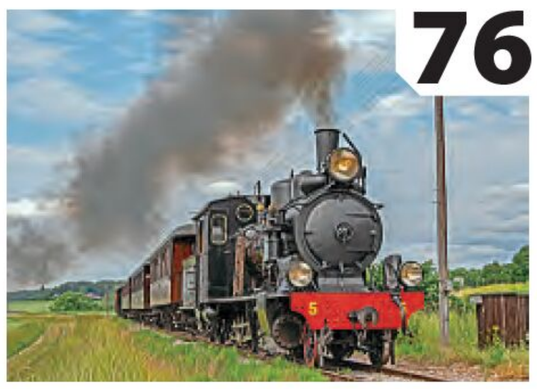

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Betton Grange booked to headline Cotswold Festival

By Robin Jones

This magnificent painting by Malcolm Root GRA for the 6880 Betton Grange Society depicts *Betton Grange* emerging from Twerton Tunnel with a London to Bristol express. The now completed new-build locomotive will be a star guest at the GWSR.
MALCOLM ROOT/6880 SOCIETY

NEW-BUILD GWR 4-6-0 No. *6880 Betton* Grange has been booked as a star guest for the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's award-winning Cotswold Festival of Steam.

Subject to completion and successful running-in, and following earlier public appearances, No. 6880 will appear at the Cotswold line's May 25-27 popular bank holiday weekend event.

Festival organising committee chairman Tom Willson said: "We are thrilled to welcome this brand-new steam locomotive, and it's sure to be a star attraction.

"The Grange class, as a powerful mixed-traffic design, could be found working over most of the GWR network until the mid-1960s and was a common sight on the Stratford-upon-Avon to Cheltenham line, part of which is now used by the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, so this is, in a way, a welcome homecoming for the class."

Paul Appleton, a director of the 6880 Betton Grange Society, added: "A Grange visiting the G/WR will be a real highlight for the locomotive. It is the fulfilment of a dream long held by many people to see one of the sadly-missed Grange class locomotives running once again, and where more fitting than on one of the lines where the class was such a familiar sight in the days of steam?"

The society will have a stand at the festival where members of the team will be available to answer questions about the locomotive and their plans to build a replica Collett 3500-gallon tender to operate with 6880. The locomotive will at first run with a borrowed tender.

Last year, the festival won accolade as 'Best Event in the Cotswolds' in the annual Cotswolds Awards organised by Cotswolds Concierge.

As contracts are finalised, the festival team will announce further visiting locomotives that fit the theme 'Western Workhorses'. The visitors will run alongside the G/WR's own fleet, which includes two other WR two-cylinder 4-6-0 types, No. 7903 *Foremarke Hall* and No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* – the latter being a smaller version of the Grange. Toddington's locomotive depot and Winchcombe carriage and wagon department will both be open to visitors.

Gala first at East Somerset

The culmination of a 26-year project begun by Quentin McGuinness and Will Naylor in 1998, *Betton Grange* entered the paint shop at Tyseley Locomotive Works on January 29. It was intended to carry out private steamings and test running in February, before taking No. 6880 to the Battlefield Line for loaded test runs.

Again, subject to completion, the Battlefield Line aims to run *Betton Grange* in public service over March 10 (see News, page 10).

After that, No. 6880 will be taken to the East Somerset Railway, where it has been pencilled in for the line's 50th Anniversary Steam Gala on March 16/17, which, all being well, will see a Grange operate on GWR metals for the first time since 1965.

Gala tickets are £20, and No. 6880 will run alongside GWR large prairie No. 4110 and Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0 No. 46447, with Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1719 of 1919 *Lady Nan* on driver-for-a-tenner operations.

No. 6880 will be the first GWR-design 4-6-0 to operate on the ESR since the David Shepherd era when both WR No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor* and No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* operated on the line.

ESR business manager Simon Bending said: "We are thrilled to be welcoming *Betton Grange* to celebrate our 50th anniversary on March 16. It will be a very special moment for staff and volunteers when it runs here."

The Betton Grange Society confirmed that it has also held talks with the Severn Valley and West Somerset railways about potential visits this year.

30742 Charters set to deliver 'the one that got away'

WITH a diverse collection of freight rolling stock to be found across our heritage railways, there are not many consists that have been missed at photographic charters. However, for some, October 1996 is one that brought with it a missed opportunity when several milk vehicles came together at the Severn Valley Railway for an autumn diesel event, their departure coming before a chance to recreate scenes from the 1960s could be seized.

Now, a chance conversation with the team at the East Somerset Railway, at which new GWR 4-6-0 *Betton Grange* is set to star in the 50th Anniversary Steam Gala, (see separate story), brought with it a fresh chance to revisit the opportunity.

With the ESR having two residents on the line, discussions with other milk tanker owners have seen the photographic charter organisers reach an agreement for up to four further vehicles to temporarily head to Cranmore which, when coupled to the railway's full-brake vehicle, will allow for classic scenes of steam era milk trips in the south west to be brought to life.

To help finance the required lorry movements, an appeal has been launched to raise £4000. Those donating £50 or more will benefit from rewards such as priority booking on any charters taking place with the consist, with at least four expected to take place between March and November; donations of £600 or more will receive a free place on all these events.

In addition to the planned use of *Betton Grange*, subject to its completion and testing, members of the ESR home fleet, plus a possible further visiting locomotive later in the year, are planned to feature.

To support the appeal, visit: tickettailor.com/events/30742charters/1141356

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Tribute to Bluebell's footplate stalwart Clive Groome

By Owen Hayward

RENOWNED for his lectures on footplate practices, having started his BR career on steam at Norwood in 1951, the heritage sector was in mourning on February 4 when it was announced that Bluebell stalwart Clive Groome had died at the age of 93 following a short illness.

A former Nine Elms 'Top Link' fireman, after his transferral there in 1954 he later became a driver in 1961. He regularly drove to Bournemouth and Salisbury as part of No. 3 link before the depot's closure. On August 14, 1966, he drove BR(E) Peppercorn A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* on the Locomotive Club of Great Britain's 'A2 Commemorative Railtour' excursion to Salisbury and Exeter.

He also spent eight months in India, where he fired WP pacifics on the broad-gauge route between Madras and Bagalore, as well as a YD 2-8-2 on metre gauge lines.

Steam was evidently his passion; despite BR training him on a variety of diesel and electric machines, he was unable to maintain his interest in the job and in 1979 he resigned. Four years later he started giving his Footplate Days and Ways lectures about steam locomotive operations, with an increased demand for technical and practical input seeing these become full multi-day hands-on footplate courses hosted at several lines, not least the Bluebell Railway, where he was a qualified driver. His career and depth of knowledge and experience meant he was held in high regard by so many.

His three daughters followed him onto the footplate, and while he was on duty driving S15 No. 847 during *Flying Scotsman*'s visit to the line in April 2017, Liz, Ruth and Rebecca were all rostered onto the famous A3 on the same day, as driver, fireman and cleaner respectively.

A Bluebell statement said: "The Bluebell Railway is saddened by the passing of one of the railway's most recognisable and outstanding volunteers. Thanks to his incredible knowledge, enginemanship and experience, which was hugely invaluable to making what the railway is today, his loss will leave a huge gap.

"His Footplate Days and Ways courses brought joy to many who took part in them over the years at the Bluebell Railway, generating many future volunteers to take up an interest in keeping steam alive as a direct result.

"Clive's unique ability to pass on his knowledge, gained from his time spent on the footplate on the Southern Region from 1954 through to 1967, allowed so many to enjoy the experience of operating and working a steam locomotive, a very special gift, which he was only too happy to share with those who wanted to learn more.

"To many, he was a friend and a mentor, both on and off the footplate. He will forever be a legend in the world of steam and an outstanding representative of what the Bluebell strives to be. Our heartful condolences to his daughters, his friends and colleagues at this very difficult time."

Clive Groome, a stalwart of the Bluebell Railway's footplate crew, ran a series of popular footplate courses and lectures after resigning from BR. OWEN HAYWARD

Palmerston back in steam at Aberystwyth for summertime spectacular

THE Vale of Rheidol and the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland railways are once again working hand in hand after agreeing for small England 0-4-0STT No. 4 *Palmerston* to return to Aberystwyth, where it helped operate the line to Devil's Bridge on several occasions during the earlier decades of 20th century, for display in the refurbished GWR locomotive shed before undertaking its overhaul to bring it back into steam.

Palmerston will join other items from the VoR's collection on display in its new museum, including former Dinorwic Quarry 0-4-0 *Fire Queen*, which moved from Penrhyn in January (see news pages 14-16).

No. 4 was loaned to the VoR to operate services for short stints during 1912-14 and again during 1920-22, helping with increased traffic generated by the opening of a Territorial Army camp in Lovesgrove, as well as timber traffic.

It returned for the first time during the heritage era in 2014; dating from 1864, it is the oldest-surviving locomotive to have worked on the line.

Its recent boiler certification expired in 2022 and it has since been stored awaiting its turn for attention. Following arrival in late February and a short spell on display, it will enter the VoR's Aberystwyth works in July for a rapid overhaul to commence.

It is expected that *Palmerston* will then return to steam in time to headline the VoR's Autumn bank holiday Rheidol Steam Festival, again working trains up the gradients to Devil's Bridge.

Small England No. 4 *Palmerston* passes Troedrhiwfelen Isaf during its last visit to the Vale of Rheidol in 2014, where the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways locomotive will now be overhauled later this year. JOHN JONES

Summer festival

As part of this, the weekend of August 24-26 will include an intensive timetable of train services, with the operational resident GWR 2-6-2Ts, NG13 Garratt and Quarry Hunslet and Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-0s also featuring. The weekend also coincides with the Aberystwyth Big Tribute music festival and street food fair.

Event organiser Phil Budd said: "It will be an exciting weekend to be in the Rheidol valley, with plenty to enjoy. It will be great to see *Palmerston* in steam, hauling trains alongside our resident locomotives. With the long summer evenings and fantastic Aberystwyth sunsets, it will be a brilliant time to visit Ceredigion."

VoR managing director Llŷr ap Iolo said: "We are very grateful to Paul Lewin and the team at the Ff&WHR to agreeing to the loan of *Palmerston* for the 2024 season. We are excited to have it running on the Vale of Rheidol Railway at our event in August. It has been 10 years since its last visit to Aberystwyth, so it will be great to have it here again for all to experience once more."

Ff&WHR general manager Paul Lewin said: "For those looking to make the most of precious leisure time, a visit to Wales has never looked more appealing. As we prepare to celebrate our platinum jubilee, we can only begin to imagine how pleased our founders would be to see us working together, striving to continue to be the best place to see narrow gauge steam."

Following the event, *Palmerston* will return home to Boston Lodge on the Ff&WHR in readiness for the October 4-6 Bygones Weekend.

➜ Both the VoR and Ff&WHR commence their operating seasons on March 23. Full details of the Rheidol Steam Festival will be confirmed at rheidolrailway.co.uk/events/steam-festival-weekend/

West Coast looks at way forward following heritage coaches ban

By Robin Jones

WEST Coast Railways was considering its next step in its hopes of running heritage Mk.1 carriages in public services on the main line.

As reported last issue, the Carnforth-based operator of 'The Jacobite' failed in its High Court application for a judicial review of the ORR's decision-making process, which it used to refuse the granting of a further Regulation 5 of the Railway Safety Regulations 1999 exemption.

However, just after we closed for press, on January 10, the ORR then revoked the current exemption, which was due to run until February 29. WCR has reaffirmed that it is keen to work with the ORR to identify solutions to enable its services to continue to operate, protecting jobs and vital income for businesses along its routes.

In the long-term

It may consider applying for a new short-term exemption of perhaps six to nine months, during which time it can engage in a constructive manner with the ORR to agree a long-term solution to the problem.

In common with all other charter operators, WCR had been running main line passenger services without CDL under an exemption since 2003, using Mk.1s with an alternative locking system and robust traditional safety measures.

In more than 40 years of operation, WCR has never had a fatality or an incident of serious inquiry relating to a carriage door opening in traffic.

WCR commercial manager James Shuttleworth said: "We are extremely disappointed by this decision. We remain committed to working with the ORR to agree how we can safeguard the future of our heritage services.

"We now ask the regulator to reconsider urgently in the interests of our passengers and business partners.

"Our much-loved services, enjoyed by so many visitors from the UK and around the world, support a large number of businesses along our routes. 'The Jacobite' alone has become an intrinsic part of Scottish tourism, boosting the economies of Mallaig and Fort William. For everyone relying on these incredible heritage services this decision is a body blow.

Get in touch

"For passengers with bookings for WCR services that are affected, we will notify them well in advance if we do not expect their service to run. They will then be offered a full refund and can rebook their excursion if they wish. They are encouraged to contact WCR via enquiries@westcoastrailways.net for more details."

With the exception of 10 Mk.1s owned by Locomotive Services Ltd which have been fitted with CDLs at a total cost of about £800,000, no other charter operator has yet to make such modifications.

Fears sounded in Lochaber for future of 'The Jacobite'

By Hugh Dougherty

HUGE concern in Lochaber surrounds the continued operation of 'The Jacobite' following the Office of Rail and Road's decision to rescind the exemption granted to West Coast Railways to operate Mk.1 carriages until February 29.

Ian Blackford, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, said he speaks for many in his constituency who worry that the service may not run in 2024.

He told *Heritage Railway*: "'The Jacobite' steam train service is one of the Highland's most-loved tourist attraction and is extremely popular with visitors to Lochaber. There is huge concern locally that the service may not run this season as a result of the ORR's decision to deny a further extension to WCR."

In 1995, when 'The Jacobite' began running, about 16,000 passengers were carried over 100 days of operation. By 2022, that figure was 110,000 from more than 300 trips, as there was still a Covid-19 pandemic lag.

"The financial impact on Fort William and Mallaig – should the service not go ahead – will be devastating for the Scottish west coast economy as a whole," said Mr Blackford.

"Local business experts have advised me that many passengers stay overnight in Fort William and the surrounding area to access 'The Jacobite' service. This equated to approximately 150 rooms each night in B&Bs, guest houses, and hotels, over 200 nights of the season. The withdrawal of the service would mean an estimated loss of more than £3 million in the overall takings for the business of the area."

Wider consequences

He added that the figure could easily be doubled by adding in the lost revenue to pubs and restaurants, while Mallaig cafes, which traditionally provide refreshments to 'The Jacobite' passengers will be particularly badly hit, with a knock-on effect for local employment and suppliers.

Local Member of the Scottish Parliament Kate Forbes said: "This is not the outcome WCR was hoping for, and the ball is in their court as to their next steps. 'The Jacobite' is hugely important to Mallaig, as well as Glenfinnan and Fort William."

LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No 45231 *Sherwood Forrester* is the centre of attention at Mallaig on July 1, 2020, as it prepares to run round for the return trip to Fort William. Most of the passengers went to cafes and restaurants in the village, business which will be lost if the train does not run. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Heather Gray, owner of appropriately-named Jac-O-Bites café, opposite Mallaig station, said: "'The Jacobite' brings us a huge amount of business. We are very concerned. We felt the impact immediately when the train was temporarily suspended in July last season, but its loss in 2024 will have a devastating effect, not just on this café, but also on cafes hotels and guesthouses throughout Mallaig."

A spokesman for Highlands and Islands Enterprise said: "'The Jacobite' steam train is an important asset for the local tourism sector, attracting visitors and expenditure to Mallaig and Fort William in particular. "Hopefully, it will continue."

Pathfinder turns to 80s blue and grey for Settle and Carlisle trip

WITH the ORR exemption for West Coast Railways' Mk. 1 stock being terminated, the wider effects of this development are starting to impact on touring companies which have relied on the Carnforth-based Train Operating Company until recently to run their charters.

Pathfinder Railtours was the first to publicly acknowledge this fact when it announced a planned stock change for its February 24 Settle and Carlisle excursion.

A Pathfinder statement said: "Due to a change in circumstances, our original 1960s carriages from West Coast Railway Co are unavailable for this rail excursion. But fear not – we've turned this challenge into an opportunity to transport you back in time to the unforgettable blue and grey era of the 1980s."

The tour will now run with Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* pulling a rake of Mk. 2 blue and grey-liveried coaching stock supplied by Riviera Trains.

"Visually, we will make fond memories of the days when No. 34092 *City of Wells* performed these duties four decades ago over the same route."

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The award-winning LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 giving the impression of speed at it heads along its Swanage Railway home on October 8, 2023. OWEN HAYWARD

Sunny South seaside winners in HRA 2024 awards

By Robin Jones

THE Swanage Railway-based team that restored former National Collection LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 has taken a top accolade at the Heritage Railway Association Annual Awards 2024.

The prestigious Chairman's Special Award, which is not handed out every year, went to the 563 Locomotive Group for the stunning results achieved in bringing a locomotive that had not steamed in more than 75 years back to life.

Meanwhile, the Volks Electric Railway beat stiff competition to be named Railway of the Year at the biggest awards event in the heritage rail sector. Judges were impressed by the authenticity, attention to detail, and dedication to the unique history of Brighton's seafront line.

The world's oldest working electric railway, built in 1883, just knocked the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway and Seaton Tramway into joint second place to take the title. It is the first time that a railway with no steam traction at all has won the honour.

Twice the success

A double winner at the awards evening held in the Double Tree by Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel on February 11, sponsored by Inspire Structures, was the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways. The line's new-build reinterpretation of long-lost double Fairlie 0-4-4-0T No. 8 *James Spooner* took the Coiley Award for Steam Locomotive Engineering, sponsored by Hargreaves, back to North Wales. Judges felt that the technical challenges faced in constructing such a complicated locomotive from scratch, almost exclusively in-house, merited winning this engineering-focused honour.

In the Rising Star category, sponsored by Purple Lighting, Osian Hughes of the Ff&WHR won by an extremely narrow margin.

Osian moved to heritage rail from the education sector and has spearheaded a fresh perspective to the marketing of the famous narrow gauge line. He was heavily involved in the development of the train 'experiences' that the FfWHR now promotes successfully.

Meanwhile, a small team dedicated to the rescue and restoration of an important part of modernising the railways in the 1960s collected a top honour. The National Wagon Preservation Group, based at the Chasewater Railway, took the Morgan Award for Rolling Stock Preservation, sponsored by Paint Man Paints, for its work on a train of Merry Go Round coal hoppers, which transformed the transportation of fuel to power stations but have now all but vanished.

HRA chief executive Steve Oates said: "This is the biggest event in heritage rail and it's specifically designed to celebrate the achievements and successes in every part of this varied and dynamic sector.

"To see unique railways like the Volks Electric triumph over far bigger and more famous lines is proof that the heritage rail world is flourishing in all manner of different ways, despite the adversity we so often face. And to have a train of down-to-earth galvanised steel coal hoppers pick up a top award, on the same night as a gleaming Victorian express steam engine, also demonstrates the depth of passion and commitment that is key to everything that heritage rail is good at."

In the Diesel and Electric Locomotion category, sponsored by Give Life 365, the Severn Valley Railway picked up the award for its special events programme celebrating 50 years of main line diesel locomotive preservation.

The Infrastructure Award, sponsored by Ernest R Shaw, was won by the Llangollen Railway for its Corwen station project. The all-new station returned passenger trains to Corwen permanently for the first time since 1964 and went on to serve 30,000 visitors in the first month since opening.

Car No. 8 heads west along the Volks Electric Railway on June 2, 2021. STEPHEN FURLEY

Innovation and more

Seaton Tramway won the Environmental Innovation Award, sponsored by Premier Park, beating the competition with a festival designed to celebrate the rich natural and cultural heritage that surrounds the 2ft 9in gauge electric tramway.

The Award for Innovation in Business and Customer Experience, sponsored by PNP Events, was won by the Keith and Dufftown Railway for the conversion of a redundant DMU trailer car into a whisky bar known as the 'Dram Tram'. The conversion has opened up a range of new business opportunities for the Banffshire-based line.

The 15in gauge Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway won the Award for Marketing and Communications, sponsored by Fox and Edwards Events. The Cumbrian line impressed with the depth and thoughtfulness of its marketing and communications activities, but also for the amount of research and measurement that its team undertook to ensure that it was delivering on wider business goals.

The Talyllyn Railway's Tracksiders group of young volunteers scooped the prize in the Team of the Year category, sponsored by Expian. The team was first formed in 1997 to encourage young people to participate in hands-on tasks on the world's first volunteer-run heritage railway. Going from strength to strength, seven of the original recruits are still active volunteers 24 years later, and the Tracksiders recruit new youngsters every year.

The Lord Faulkner Young Volunteer of the Year award went to Jonathan King, of the Downpatrick & County Down Railway. Jonathan is the youngest steam locomotive fireman in Ireland, has been playing a vital role in recovery from a devastating flood, and also became a director of the line at the age of 23.

➜ **In the 12 months after winning the HRA's Railway of the Year 2023 award, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway welcomed a record-breaking 130,000 visitors, continuing its year-on-year growth, latest figures have revealed.**

‘Best ever’ Battlefield winter gala draws in large crowds

By Robin Jones

MORE than 1000 visitors attended the Battlefield Line’s most successful winter gala to date on February 3/4 to welcome back a former resident after more than 42 years.

BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78018, which was built at Darlington North Road in 1953 and entered traffic at West Auckland shed in 1954, was withdrawn by BR in November 1966 and sent to Woodham Brothers scrapyard at Barry the following June. It rusted there until October 1978, when it was purchased and moved to Shackerstone on what was then known as the Market Bosworth Railway for restoration. However, it was resold unrestored to the Darlington Railway Preservation Society (DRPS) in 1981 and moved to Darlington that July.

Work begins

The locomotive was stripped down before the restoration, replacement, and sourcing of fixtures and fittings – many of which has gone missing at Barry – began. The boiler and firebox were found to be in good condition, having been last overhauled at Crewe in 1960. In November 2012, when the restoration reached the reassembly stage, No. 78108 was taken to Loughborough on the Great Central Railway, deemed to have better facilities than the 1839 goods shed at Darlington in which the 2MT was housed. At the GCR it was reunited with sister No. 78019 (see feature, pages 50-55).

No. 78018 steamed in August 2016 for the first time in 50 years, and it will remain in the ownership of the DRPS, with Loughborough Standards Locomotive Group as its custodian.

The other guest locomotives at the Battlefield gala were the 5199 Project’s GWR large prairie No. 5199 and the Great Western Society’s 2-6-2T No. 4144. Afterwards, both were taken to Didcot Railway Centre for running during February.

Huge success

Battlfield director Adrian Lock said: “The event was the best winter gala we have ever had.”

Subject to its completion at Tyseley Locomotive Works, new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* will run its first public trains at Shackerstone over March 9/10.

The next big events at Shackerstone are the Rails and Ales Festival on July 26-28 and the Models Weekend on August 10/11.

Above: BR Standard 2MT No. 78018 is seen awaiting departure from Shackerstone with the first service of the gala to Shenton on February 3, while prairie No. 4144 waits to be given the right-away off shed. MARTYN TATTAM

Right: Visiting from the Didcot Railway Centre, large prairie No. 4144 rounds the curve at Congestone with 11.15am Shuttle service from Market Bosworth to Shackerstone. MARTYN TATTAM

One of the highlights of the gala was the double-heading of two GWR large prairies. Nos. 5199 and 4144 are seen awaiting departure from Shenton with the last service on February 3. MARTYN TATTAM

Former Defence Logistic Organisation Thomas Hill Vanguard diesel shunter No.01547 shunts GWR 2-6-2T No. 4144 out of the locomotive shed at Shackerstone in readiness for the gala. GRAHAM NUTTALL

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Visiting from the nearby Great Central Railway, BR Standard 2MT No. 78018 bursts from underneath the occupation bridge at Market Bosworth with a service from Shackerstone. MARTYN TATTAM

Final call is made for entries in the RCTS photographic competition

MARCH 31 is the closing date for the joint Railway Correspondence & Travel Society/Mortons Media railway photographic competition – a free-to-enter contest.

You can submit up to two entries in any or all of the four categories using photographs taken since January 2022.

The Overall Competition winner will enjoy a money-cannot-buy main line cab ride courtesy of DB Cargo, this most likely taking place somewhere in the north of England.

The winner of the Modern Traction category will join GB Railfreight for a session on one of its locomotive driver simulators, while the *Heritage Railway* winner will be entertained at the Nene Valley Railway, a trip which includes a tour of the sheds at Wansford and a cab ride. For the People and Railways category winner, their destination is the East Lancashire Railway for a cab ride, with a choice of steam or diesel traction, while the Railways and the Environment prize-winner will visit the Severn Valley Railway for a look behind the scenes at Kidderminster diesel depot and enjoy a diesel cab ride.

In addition, each of the winners will receive a RCTS book and a one-year subscription to a Mortons magazine of their choice.

The second prize-winner in each category will receive a RCTS book and Mortons subscription of their choice, while the third placed entries will have the choice of either a RCTS book or a Mortons subscription. A Judges' Special Commendation prize of two first class tickets and tea for two at the Talyllyn Railway will be awarded to a further stand-out image deemed worthy of recognition. For more information and to submit your potentially prize-winning pictures, please visit the RCTS website at rcts.org.uk and follow the competition link.

Good luck!

One of the competition's top prizes is a money-can't-buy cab ride in a Class 66, courtesy of DB Cargo. PAUL BICKERDYKE

Thomas trip for fundraising young heroes

THOMAS the Tank Engine is to haul a special train to the official reopening of the Nene Valley Railway's Orton Mere signalbox, with two schoolboys who raised thousands of pounds to restore it following an arson attack as the special guests on board.

The 'box was targeted early on March 13 last year in a series of arson attacks in the Orton area of Peterborough and has been out of action ever since.

Most of the signalling equipment inside the 'box, which had been donated or purchased over the years to give a period look, was destroyed, but the lever frame escaped largely intact.

As reported in issue 305 of *Heritage Railway* magazine, 12-year-old enthusiasts Oliver Walker and Harry Cowley, students at Nene Park Academy, set up an online fundraising page for the restoration of the 'box and then held a sponsored walk on a footpath alongside the line from Railworld Wildlife Haven at Peterborough to Wansford station on April 6.

On Sunday, March 9, a special train hauled by *Thomas*, aka Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1800 of 1947, will run from Wansford at 9.30am to Orton Mere for the reopening ceremony, which will start at about 10am.

The ceremony will also be attended by local dignitaries and members of the fire crews who attended the blaze.

Tickets for the special, including a celebration drink, can be booked at https://nvr.org.uk/

Afterwards, *Thomas* will aul two branch line trains around Wansford to Yarwell at 1.30pm and 3pm, with tickets costing a further £5.

Tornado testing on Cambrian route after Nene Valley visit?

By Robin Jones and Owen Hayward

PEPPERCORN A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* may undergo test runs on the Cambrian line west of Shrewsbury before it returns to regular traffic on the national network.

Tornado has been expected to undergo test runs at Network Rail's Rail Innovation & Development Centre at Melton Mowbray (previously known as the Old Dalby test track).

However, Ed Akers, Network Rail's principal programme sponsor, East Coast Digital Programme, said: "With operations at the RIDC site currently affected by a landslip, we are considering options for the best approach to deliver dynamic European Rail Traffic Management System (ETCS) testing on the *Tornado* locomotive as part of our heritage pathfinder project.

"The potential feasibility of using the Cambrian line is one option under consideration, and we have commissioned a report to consider its viability, but no decision has yet been made".

A loaded test run will be fitted into the plan as the testing concludes, and commercial railtour operations are expected to begin towards the end of May or in early June.

Tornado was withdrawn from main line service in November 2021 after several tender wheel flats caused by slippage from falling leaves were detected, as reported.

After appearing at the Great Central Railway in January 2022, the A1 was moved to the nearby Locomotive Maintenance Services base Loughborough for dismantling and a major overhaul.

It was to be complete in July that year, but delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic while the boiler was being restored at Meiningen Works in Germany, and additional work needed on the driving wheels and tyres led to its completion date pushed back to the spring of last year.

However, boiler issues further delayed completion of the overhaul, which will include the installation of ETCS equipment – making *Tornado* the first steam locomotive fitted with an in-cab signalling system.

In January, significant progress was made, with all motion, lubrication systems, brake rigging, valves and pistons returned to the locomotive, and the installation of fitments in the cab and smokebox had been advanced.

Tornado was due to return to the GCR in February, where testing will initially be static before moving to dynamic testing, which includes hauling trains and running at up to 60mph.

The locomotive will also undertake system tests of the ETCS equipment, including temporary balises (electronic beacons) on the track, so the sub-systems are all proved before full dynamic ETCS testing.

***Tornado* nearing the conclusion of its overhaul inside Locomotive Maintenance Services Ltd's workshops.** A1SLT

Scotsman will return to main line – but not until autumn

By Owen Hayward

WITH its centenary year celebrations concluded, A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* is being rested before it resumes main line work, its owner the National Railway Museum has confirmed.

The locomotive is being displayed at both the York museum and Locomotion in Shildon for the first part of 2024.

After travelling 10,000 miles around the UK as part of its 100th birthday celebrations, *Scotsman* spent the Christmas and New Year period on show at Shildon, and more than 37,500 visitors came to see it since arriving on December 16, as reported last issue.

On January 18, it departed under its own steam to return to the NRM's main museum hub and from January 26 was displayed as part of the Flying Scotsman Story exhibition within the Great Hall, with visitors able to see the A3 for free and enjoy the view of the footplate via an accessible ramp. *Scotsman* will then travel back to Locomotion later in the year, where it will go on public display once again.

Meanwhile, the NRM announced plans for a competitive tender to appoint the next custodian to operate and maintain the locomotive to enable it to resume main line workings, with its previous contract with Riley & Sons having expired at the start of 2024.

An invitation to tender was due to be published online in the coming weeks, and the contract is expected to be awarded in late spring.

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***Tornado* heads a van train into Wansford station during its previous visit to the Nene Valley Railway in 2019.** NATHAN WILSON/NVR

Afterwards, No. 60163 will be taken by road to the Nene Valley Railway for its first official commitment following overhaul.

Easter at Nene Valley

Having last visited the railway in 2019, during this visit *Tornado* will once again be available for a limited number of driver experience courses, before operating just three days of public passenger trains which will include an evening at the helm of the railway's 'Fenman' fish and chip dining services on March 30.

The driver experience courses on March 28/29 will allow a select few the chance to get behind the controls of the A1. They are limited to two participants, who will each receive an hour's tuition, followed by an hour of practical experience, taking it in turns to drive and fire *Tornado* for a distance of a about 15 miles. The locomotive will operate light engine, so guests will not be able to be accommodated.

Five courses per day were being offered, with most having sold out as this issue went to press; experiences are priced at £595 plus booking fees.

From March 30 to April 1, No. 60163 will then work public service trains along the full route of the line between Yarwell and Peterborough. Four round trips per day will be on offer, with travel tickets allowing unlimited passage aboard all of these, with the A1's train comprising a rake of Mk.1 coaching stock.

In addition to the guest, another newly-overhauled star locomotive will also be in steam. Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1800 of 1947 (alias No. 1 *Thomas*) will operate further shuttles between Wansford and Yarwell in between the A1's services, with one trip aboard included in the rover ticket prices, which are set at £25 for adults and £15 for children. Further shuttle rides are at the fixed price of £5 per person.

Picture-perfect

On April 2, *Tornado* will make one final appearance on the line as part of a Nene Valley Railway Wagon Group photographic charter. Entitled 'East Coast Freight Storm', the A1 will be coupled up to the rake of restored goods wagons for a day of photography that will include accompanied track access to Wansford Tunnel, as well as locations further along the line.

The full itinerary will be released to participants nearer the day; however, it is currently planned that the locomotive will be turned partway through to have it facing the sun.

The day will commence at 9am with a safety briefing, before photography commences a short while thereafter. The price of this charter is £140.

Furthermore, an opportunity was also on offer for two people to each enjoy a half-day's ride aboard the footplate of locomotive during the charter.

With one slot available in both the morning and the afternoon, the passenger will have a unique view of the event and the action in the cab from their prime position sat on the fireman's seat.

Each place was priced at £100 – and sold out instantly!

To book tickets for all experiences and service days, visit the line's website, nvr.org.uk, or call 01780 784444.

Whitwell & Reepham to stage 15th anniversary gala days

WHITWELL & Reepham station will hold gala weekends on February 25/25 and March 2/3 to celebrate 15 years since opening as a heritage venue and also mark 65 years since the closure of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway system.

Visiting will be Peckett R2 0-4-0ST No. 1370 of 1915 *May*, which worked at the Yates Duxbury & Sons papermill at Heap Bridge, near Bury, and which was linked to what is now the East Lancashire Railway, where the locomotive ran after being preserved.

It was sold by owners the Beet family to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre in January last year, where it is now based.

At Yates Duxbury, *May* worked alongside Whitwell & Reepham's resident Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 945 of 1904 *Annie*, which is currently sidelined awaiting overhaul.

The galas will also feature Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-4-0ST No. 7681 of 1951 *Agecroft No. 3*, which was retired from Agecroft power station near Manchester in 1981, and which returned to steam in February 2022 following a lengthy restoration by three Whitwell volunteers, ass reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 291.

The galas will feature an intensive timetable with passenger services, double-heading, and demonstration goods trains, and will include a model railway exhibition, craft stalls and a beer festival.

Once the custodian is appointed, *Scotsman* will resume a programme of rail tours in the autumn. It is expected that the locomotive will continue to visit heritage railways and will remain main line operational.

NRM director Judith McNicol said: "Our intention is to keep *Flying Scotsman* main line operational, and once the new custodian is appointed, we will create a calendar of activity that includes main line tours, visits to heritage railways and our museums."

While 2023 marked the centenary of the locomotive's construction, 2024 is the 100th anniversary of it receiving its iconic name; built as part of an order by the GNR as No. 1472, it entered service in 1923 as part of the LNER roster after the original company was absorbed into the latter. It initially carried the GNR number, but ahead of its appearance at the British Empire Exhibition in February 1924 was renumbered to 4472 and christened *Flying Scotsman* after the London to Edinburgh express service. When asked if there was any intention to celebrate this occasion, a NRM spokesman said that "there are no specific plans" in place.

With its successful centenary celebrations concluded, *Flying Scotsman* is back on display inside the National Railway Museum at York while a tender process for its next main line custodian takes place. NRM

National Trust giveaway as Penrhyn focuses exhibits

By Owen Hayward

SIX locomotives and a carriage have vacated the former Penrhyn Castle Railway Museum as part of a major restructuring of exhibits by the National Trust, with ownership of many now transferred to railways around the British Isles.

The removal of the various exhibits has come about as the National Trust seeks to better tell the story of Penrhyn's industrial history and bring to the forefront items in the collection that have not been shared before. The Stable Block, which was previously home to the railway museum, will now change into Industrial Penrhyn, sharing Penrhyn Castle's industrial heritage story.

Ceri Williams, general manager at Penrhyn Castle and Garden, National Trust Cymru, said: "With the development of the Penrhyn Quarry Railway in 1798, the slate industry in North Wales was catapulted to a global scale and changed the face of North Wales forever.

"As part of our new experience in the Stable Block, Industrial Penrhyn will share this remarkable development of technology and entrepreneurship.

"The new experience will also go hand-in-hand in highlighting Penrhyn Castle's role in this globally significant history alongside our partners and communities as part of the World Heritage Site Slate Landscape of North West Wales."

Several locomotives and wagons linked to Penrhyn Quarry will remain on display, including 0-4-0ST *Charles*, a Hunslet-built locomotive which ran on the PQR until the 1950s. It will now take centre stage in telling this remarkable story, accompanied by the Penrhyn directors' saloon coach and quarrymen's open coach.

Richard Pennington, senior collections and house manager at Penrhyn Castle and Garden, National Trust Cymru, said: "We have been reviewing the way we display our collection as we look at how history is presented at Penrhyn Castle, and part of this process was to look at our locomotive collection in terms of relevance to Penrhyn Castle's industrial heritage story.

"In order to bring this pivotal part of the Penrhyn's story to the forefront, we have returned or rehomed some of the locomotives that are unconnected to the property's story to other museums, where their stories can be better explained and interpreted. We are looking forward to the locomotives being given new opportunities, some of which will go back into operation, and others will provide new and engaging experiences for visitors where they will be cared for by skilful and passionate staff, apprentices and volunteers."

The Stable Block will be closed temporarily while work is carried following the removal of the locomotives and their tracks.

WHAT'S GONE WHERE?

VESTA: BURY TRANSPORT MUSEUM

On January 24, Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T No. 1223 *Vesta* arrived on the East Lancashire Railway, where it was promptly shunted into the Bury Transport Museum.

Built in 1916, the locomotive was operational at the Shotton Steelworks in North Wales for its working life before being preserved by the Industrial Locomotive Society. It was then gifted to the National Trust and, after being displayed at Shugborough Hall in Staffordshire, was put on display at the castle's museum.

It will be on an initial three-year loan to the ELR, after which full ownership will transfer to the railway, thus giving the line two 0-6-0Ts from this builder, with operational 1903-built No. 32 *Gothenburg* residing there and brought into steam in order to shunt the new arrival into the museum. Although both were built by the same firm, there are obvious differences between the pair, *Vesta* being lower in height with deeper bufferbeams compared to its older worksmate.

Keith Whitmore, chairman of BTM and Bahamas Locomotive Society, said: "We welcome such a notable new exhibit arriving in the museum just a month later than ex-LTSR/LMS Stanier Tank No. 2500 from the National Railway Museum. Our museum collection is becoming a significant national collection of exhibits, as well as a display of the history of transport in East Lancashire."

No. 1223 *Vesta* arrived on the East Lancashire Railway on January 24 as the deaccession of the National Trust's Penrhyn Castle Museum collection continued. CALLUM PORTER/ELR

After four decades under the care of the Bahamas Locomotive Society, the National Trust has now transferred full ownership of No. 1054 to the locomotive-owning group based at Ingrow. OWEN HAYWARD

NO. 1054: BAHAMAS LOCOMOTIVE SOCIETY

For more than 40 years, LNWR 0-6-2T Webb Coal Tank No. 1054 has been in the care of the Bahamas Locomotive Society, the National Trust having placed it with the group in 1973 when it moved from the castle to the society's then base at the Dinting Railway Centre. There it was returned to steam in time for the Rocket 150 celebrations held to mark the sesquicentenary of the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway.

Since then, it has remained under custodianship of the BLS, regularly running at the Keighley & Worth Valley, with occasional visits to other lines for galas. Now, as part of the NT deaccession, full ownership has been passed to the society, a move welcomed by chairman Keith Whitmore.

He said: "We are delighted to receive the Coal Tank into our collection and wish to thank the National Trust which, for many years, has supported us in our endeavours to maintain and operate this unique locomotive for the benefit of all."

A formal ceremony for members is expected to take place this year before the locomotive heads out on tour to a number of heritage lines.

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The sole-surviving locomotive from the Padarn Railway company, *Fire Queen,* arrived for display in the Vale of Rheidol's former GWR locomotive shed on January 22, ahead of its return to its original locomotive shed in Llanberis at a later date. PHIL BUDD/VOR

FIRE QUEEN AND DINORWIC DIRECTORS' SALOON: VALE OF RHEIDOL (FOR NOW)

The first assets known to vacate the PCM were two former Dinorwic Quarry items of stock, which transferred to the Vale of Rheidol Railway for display within the former Great Western Railway locomotive shed at Aberystwyth. This building has been converted into a multi-functional display space and is due to open as a museum on March 23.

Dating from 1848, *Fire Queen* was built by A Horlock and Co for the Padarn Railway, a narrow-gauge line utilising the unusual gauge of 4ft and spanning seven miles between Dinorwic Quarry and Port Dinorwic in North Wales.

It is the only surviving locomotive from that line, and was one of two identical locomotives built for the PR, which connected the quarry (located at Llanberis) with the port at Y Felinheli. Despite being retired in 1886, it remained stored at the quarry until 1969 when, along with a former quarry directors' coach, it was saved and taken to the PCM for display. The saloon joins the locomotive at Aberystwyth.

The pair's display within the VoR museum will only be temporary, as *Fire Queen* is destined to return for display within its original locomotive shed at Llanberis, which is to be restored thanks to grant funding provided by the UK Government. The saloon coach, built in 1896 by the Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Co, will eventually go on display at the Bala Lake Railway.

Llŷr ap Iolo, managing director of the VoR, said: "We are grateful to Julian Birley for offering us the directors' coach for short-term display until the BLR can exhibit it, and also for recommending us to Cyngor Gwynedd as a temporary home for *Fire Queen*. It is good that the public can continue to enjoy it, rather than it being temporarily stored behind closed doors. We are excited to have such a historic exhibit to display in our museum to showcase alongside other rare and unseen rolling stock from our collection until it returns home to where it belongs, at Gilfach Ddu."

The Padarn Railway directors' saloon arrived on January 17 at Aberystwyth, where it will be on display until the Bala Lake Railway is ready to accept it for display there. JAMES CORBETT/VOR

Above: A tarpaulin covering kept the arrival of *Hawarden* on January 26 quite literally under wraps until it was unloaded. SALLY CLIFFORD

Right: *Hawarden* is now on display in The Engine House on the Middleton Railway, where it joins other Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST locomotives. IAN SMITH/MRT

HAWARDEN: MIDDLETON

Another Hudswell Clarke departing Wales was 0-4-0ST No. 526 *Hawarden*, built in 1899 for the John Summers Ltd Globe Ironworks at Stalybridge, which was transferred to the Middleton Railway in Leeds on January 26 on loan from the Bahamas Locomotive Society, which initially took it on, along with *Vesta,* but had no space to display both locomotives together. Middleton Railway chairman Charles Milner said: "The Middleton Railway is very grateful for the generosity and kindness shown by the BLS by placing *Hawarden* on loan to us. Visitors will be able to see the locomotive on display when the railway reopens in April 2024."

Society chairman Keith Whitmore added: "We have been working with the trust for the last few years following its decision to reinterpret the story of railways at the castle to solely tell the story of the PQR there, which meant that a number of objects there, including locomotives, became surplus to requirements.

"We are honoured that we have secured new homes for other exhibits including *Hawarden*, a former Stalybridge working locomotive, and we are delighted that we have been able to work in partnership with the Middleton Railway to secure a new and permanent home for a Leeds-built Hudswell Clark engine."

As with *Vesta*, after three years on loan to the Middleton Railway, ownership of the locomotive will transfer to the MRT.

HAYDOCK: ISLE OF WIGHT

Robert Stephenson Works No. 2309 *Haydock* looks set to be the asset to have travelled the furthest to a new home – the 0-6-0T having moved more than 300 miles south to join the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's collection, where it arrived on February 1.

Built in 1879, it was used at a multitude of locations as a contractor's locomotive. It found itself put to work on the development of the North Eastern Railway at Bolton Percy in about 1903 but spent much time at the Haydock Foundry near St Helens under ownership of Richard Evans & Co Ltd (and its NCB successor). It was presented to the NT in 1966.

Haydock bears some similarities to the first locomotive to work trains on the IOW's Freshwater, Yarmouth & Newport Railway, No. 2838 *Freshwater* of 1887, which was outshopped by the same firm and as such fills an important gap in the history within the island's collection, representing the type used in the construction period of its railways.

The locomotive will go on static public display in the Steam Railway's Train Story exhibition centre at Havenstreet. The intention is to cosmetically return it to as-built condition and paint it as *Freshwater*.

Peter Taylor, chairman of the IOWSR, said. "We are extremely grateful to the National Trust. The locomotive will further enhance our collection for the benefit of the wider community."

The costs of preparation and transportation to the island have been shared between the National Trust and a group of railway members.

Perhaps the furthest to have travelled for a new home, Robert Stephenson-built No. 2309 *Haydock* arrived on the Isle of Wight on February 1. IOWSR

Set to cross the Irish sea, *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* will move to County Waterford after restoration to working order. NATIONAL TRUST

KETTERING FURNACES NO. 3: WATERFORD SUIR VALLEY

Much like *Haydock*, the 3ft gauge Black Hawthorn-built 0-4-0ST No. 859 *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* is also crossing an ocean to reach its new home. It is bound for a new life in Ireland's County Waterford, where it shall join the Waterford & Suir Valley Railway.

Alan Moore, voluntary director and company secretary of Waterford & Suir Valley Railway Company CLG, said: "I cannot communicate adequately the level of excitement at this announcement.

"When the company was formed, the mission statement included an ambition to one day operate with steam. We are now one big step closer to achieving this.

"We are so grateful to the National Trust for transferring ownership of the *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* to us. We hope to do the trust proud as we endeavour to restore this beautiful locomotive to its former glory and to put it back into operation."

Kettering Furnaces No. 3 last steamed in 1962.

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Redundancies as GCR looks to ensure financial security

By Owen Hayward

SEVERAL lines announced redundancy programmes throughout 2023 as they try to balance their books amid spiralling energy prices and other factors that are hitting the tourism and leisure industry hard. On January 16, the Great Central Railway became the first in 2024 to publicly announce it would be doing the same as it seeks to make savings of about £250,000.

General manager Malcolm Holmes said: "We are not alone in the heritage railway sector, or indeed the whole leisure industry, in having seen our overall costs increase hugely over the four years since the beginning of Covid-19 and the Ukraine war.

"In particular, the cost of heating and lighting our sheds, stations and cafes is a substantial unavoidable burden. While these costs have at least stabilised, we are forced to pay an extraordinary price for coal for our locomotives, which has also soared. In the meantime, families have less disposable income to enjoy days out.

"We continue to grow, raise funds, and diversify our business so we are far more of a visitor attraction than just a train ride, but the time has come where cost-cutting cannot be avoided. It's going to be a tough few weeks because I am so proud of our team and the hard work they have invested in the railway."

"We continue to grow, raise funds, and diversify our business so we are far more of a visitor attraction than just a train ride, but the time has come where cost-cutting cannot be avoided."

In addition to the redundancy programme, the railway company has sold its 50% share in Stanier 2-8-0 8F No. 48305 to the David Clarke Railway Trust, the GCR's official supporting charity, with other assets also in line for disposal.

Protecting assets

However, speaking to *Heritage Railway,* Malcolm advised that the railway would "not be selling off the crown jewels", adding: "Putting the 8F into the trust will actually protect it, as should the plc ever find itself insolvent, it means the asset is not something that can be liquidated.

"Our revenue is not matching costs, so selling major assets like this would really only be a short-term solution if we continue to make a loss on trading. We therefore must be prudent and make sure we are making sensible financial decisions that will help secure and ensure our long-term financial stability.

"This is absolutely not a crisis situation but a recognition that we are not immune to turbulent financial times and that we have to plan accordingly.

"The railway has ambitious plans to grow in the future. We have generous supporters who delight in seeing the line thrive and hundreds of thousands of visitors each year who enjoy travelling on our heritage trains and exploring the line.

"We want to be a key economic driver in the East Midlands. We hope people will continue to support the railway by visiting our stations and refreshment rooms and enjoying our vibrant special events."

Farewell to the Forties

One cost-saving measure for 2024 is resting its previously-announced 1940s weekend scheduled to take place over May 31 to June 2. The high costs of staging the event, despite its popularity, means that Malcolm feels it would be unjustifiable given the redundancy situation.

With 2024 also being the 80th anniversary of D-Day, many re-enactment groups are unavailable as their members are travelling to Normandy for events to mark the occasion there.

A field adjacent to Quorn & Woodhouse station, where displays and the event's popular 1940s shopping village are usually sited, is also unavailable this year, and both of these factors would have drastically affected its success.

"We know this will be a disappointing decision because the event is visited by thousands of people every year," said Malcolm. "However, it costs a significant amount of money to stage and while the railway moves through staffing and financial changes, we feel this is the most prudent thing to do."

In its place, the railway has announced it will stage an all-night gala on June 1, during which both regular passenger and goods trains will operate overnight from Saturday evening and continue through into the early hours of the Sunday. Steam is also set to make a return to the Mountsorrel branch from May 29-June 2, for which locomotive options are being explored.

For 2025, the 1940s event will return as a comprehensive retrospective, encapsulating the entirety of the decade and celebrating the wartime years as it explores the profound impact the railways had on the country in the postwar years.

'Striking' guest announced for Severn Valley diesel festival – with more VIPs set to come

LOCOMOTIVE Services Group's Class 37 No. 37409 has been named as the first of several guests for the Severn Valley Railway's Spring Diesel Festival, taking place on May 16 to 19.

As the SVR looks to build on the outstanding success of its diesel events in 2023, the four-day festival will feature an intensive timetable of diesel traction.

Loch Awe, which hauls premium charter trains, was recently overhauled, and repainted into a 'striking' 1980s ScotRail livery, in which it has not run previously, before re-entering traffic.

SVR's managing director, Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, said: "It will be an honour to welcome No. 37409 to the Valley. Our event will be one of the first occasions at which it appears in this guise, and we are very grateful to our friends at LSG and delighted that, once again, they are giving such great support to our events."

Outshopped in 1962, No. 37409 has run under several different numbers and was allocated largely to Wales and Scotland.

Gala guest Class 37 No. 37409 in its new ScotRail livery. BRAD JOYCE/SVR

The ScotRail livery allows it to represent the second generation of the class, when they were extensively refurbished by BR in the 1980s. It will run alongside classmate No. 37263, which is on an extended visit from Telford Steam Railway.

➜ **Further information about the festival and advance tickets are available now at svr.co.uk**

Small pannier for Bluebell's May gala event

SOUTH Devon Railway-based GWR pannier No. 1369 is to appear at the Bluebell Railway's May 10-12 branch line weekend.

The sole survivor of its class, the short wheelbase veteran of the Weymouth Quay tramway and Wenfordbridge branch will run alongside GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* which, as reported last issue, became the first guest engine booked for the gala.

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Bodmin pannier sale sees auto train Minehead-bound

By Owen Hayward

THE Bodmin & Wenford Railway has sold GWR pannier No. 6435 and its accompanying Hawksworth auto trailer third No. 232 to West Somerset Railway plc chairman Jonathan Jones-Pratt.

The sale was conducted through Jonathan's company, JJP Holding Ltd (JJPH), and completed weeks after the BWR offer the pannier for sale, as reported last issue, as part of a review of its finances.

No. 6435 last ran in 2022, and Jonanthan will now take it to the WSR to be overhauled. He said: "We are very thankful to the BWR for allowing JJPH to add this fine set-up to our fleet of heritage railway locomotives. I am really looking forward to bringing it home, and the first job will be a very good clean.

"Plans are underway to decide when we start the overhaul, and the hope is to get it into traffic as soon as possible, knowing that there is already an orderly queue forming."

Soon to be a former Bodmin & Wenford Railway resident, No. 6435 has been bought by Jonathan Jones-Pratt and will move to the West Somerset Railway, along with auto coach No. 232. WSR

Expanding collection

It joins Jonathon's other fleet of locomotives, namely Hawksworth pannier No. 9466, which he bought from the family of the late Dennis Howell in 2019, and WR 4-6-0 No. 4936 *Kinlet Hall*. Between 2016 and 2020, he also owned unrestored GWR 4-6-0 No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle*, having purchased it from Peter Waterman OBE before then selling it on to another private buyer.

The acquisition of the small pannier came as a surprise to many, with the WSR having disposed of classmate No. 6412 to the South Devon Railway in 2008.

"The engine has been missed for many years," Jonathan said. "When restored, No. 6435 will run at the WSR as it is ideal for us – we are now finding that running smaller engines suits our running costs.

"It will very much be part of the furniture but will be available for visits away from the railway. We can't wait to have it, as it can cope with six coaches, which deals with most of our trains. As we also have the auto coach, they will run together on special days as an added home attraction." The overhaul for No. 6435 will be carried out on the WSR, but it will not commence until No. 4936's is completed. The locomotive is currently undergoing contract overhaul at Tyseley Locomotive Works.

Elsewhere, Vintage Trains has sold its stored GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7760 (see Main Line News, page 56).

IN BRIEF

Doubled-up Class 47s to mark 30 years on the G/WR

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway will double up its Class 47s for a running day on Sunday, August 4 to mark the 30th anniversary of the first workings of No. 47105 on the Cotswold line.

It will top-and-tail services all day with classmate No. 47376 to allow visitors the full 'Brush' experience.

Matlock to Buxton campaign meeting

A MEETING to discuss the campaign to restore the Buxton to Matlock line was scheduled to be attended by three candidates for the position of East Midlands Mayor on February 8.

MEMRAP, the Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership, which wants to see the 23 miles of railway restored – which includes Peak Rail – arranged the meeting at the Whaley Bridge Uniting Church at 6pm.

Stephen Chaytow, from MEMRAP, said: "Reprovisioning the fabulous Monsal Trail and connecting it to stations along the reinstated railway and would ensure visitors can continue to enjoy this spectacular attraction within the Peak District National Park."

Capital signs sale

FIVE signs from London terminals will come under the hammer at Railwayana UK Ltd's March 1-3 online auction. Rare, mint examples from King's Cross (York Road) and Paddington feature alongside Broad Street and Charing Cross totems, with an SR Waterloo target also being offered among a sale of more than 70 British Railways enamel totem signs.

The auction also includes four Southern brass tender plates from the first two Bulleid Pacifics, No. 21C1 *Channel Packet* and 21C2 *Union Castle* in 1941, a brass nameplate from *Union Castle*, a set of Bulleid locomotive electric headlamps, and the chimney and flame-cut numeric cabside panel from No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific*'s last overhaul (see page 74).

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East Somerset seeks new chairman

THE East Somerset Railway is looking for a new chairman after Dick Masters announced his intention to resign following 22 years in the role.

At the line's recent annual general meeting, he said he was proposing to step down and give someone else the opportunity to take charge and lead the railway forward.

From a desperate financial position in 2000, the railway has made tremendous progress, developing the site and its commercial activities, expanding its operations and motive power, and greatly improving its finances.

In a statement, Dick said: "This is a challenging and most rewarding role as there are many ways in which we would like to develop and improve the East Somerset Railway, preserve more of the heritage, and provide still more for our visitors to see and do. These days, the ESR is in a much stronger position financially, able to generate profit regularly, offering visitors much more than just a train ride, and it is in a great position to develop further. It is a wonderful opportunity for someone."

Outgoing East Somerset Railway chairman Dick Masters in the cab of GWR 2-6-2T No. 4110, which his railway agreed to overhaul on behalf of the Dartmouth Steam Railway. ESR

The railway's board has approached volunteers and the line's wider membership to see if anyone wishes to step forward and be considered for this role.

It also welcomes applications from outside the railway, particularly from anyone with an interest in heritage railways and who has relevant business or charity experience.

➜ Anyone interested in the role or who would like to discuss it is invited to email info@eastsomersetrailway.com or telephone 01749 880417.

Track upgrade in Bridgnorth yard full steam ahead

By John Titlow

THE Severn Valley Railway started work on replacing the worn-out rails on road number one and pit road two in Bridgnorth Shed yard, once the successful Winter Steam Gala on January 6/7 was over.

The two roads – the lines closest to Platform 2 – were lifted and worn-out rails and points placed in the scrap skip, sleepers were dug out, and concrete cut back and broken out in preparation for concrete pouring on January 29 to raise the rails on the locomotive inspection pit to the new level.

It is not just a simple job of rail replacement because work incorporates replacing a set of points and raising both lines by about 11 inches, creating a level yard for the first time. The project is being led by volunteer project manager Nick Yarwood, with volunteers doing the majority of the work and saving a considerable amount of money.

Nick said: "The project has been a year in the planning and is being delivered by volunteers, workshop staff for steelwork fabrication, and the full-time permanent way team.

"With finance being very tight, all concreting work is being done by the railway's adaptable volunteers, who have shown the ability to turn their hand to something completely different with skill and enthusiasm.

"Weather permitting, works are planned for completion in mid-March."

During October, three sets of points were recovered from the former oil depot near Brownhills, on the disused South Staffordshire line between Lichfield and Walsall, which was last used more than 20 years ago. It is one of these that is being used for this phase of the project.

The pointwork was donated as part of the landmark partnership between the Severn Valley Railway and Network Rail, and removal was carried out by the heritage line's permanent way team, assisted by volunteers.

"We are fortunate and very appreciative of the assistance given at Brownhills by Quattro Plant Ltd, which leases the old oil terminal and yard," said an SVR statement.

Quattro is a specialist equipment supplier to the rail industry which kindly loaned one of its road/rail vehicles to the team, which was essential to the success of the operation.

The others sets of points will be used elsewhere on the SVR for planned replacements.

Meanwhile, sleepers were replaced at Highley on the crossover at the northern end of the station during January.

The Great Western used long through-bolts instead of screws to fix the chairs to the sleepers. These had rusted and could not be removed, so were cut off before the sleepers could be removed.

All ballast and metalwork had to be removed, including 15 yards of track lifted out the way. The replacement sleepers are just over 22 feet long and once in place, all trackwork and ballast was refitted. This work was completed at the end of January.

Left: Bridgnorth Shed yard is cleared to enable rails to be lifted on roads one and two on January 11.

Right: Replacing sleepers at the north end of Highley station on January 14.
BOTH: JOHN TITLOW

Fairbourne centenary for the *Count*

THE Fairbourne Railway will be celebrating the 100th birthday of Bassett Lowke Atlantic 4-4-2 *Count Louis* over the May 25-27 bank holiday weekend with a gala event that will also play host to the Ruislip Lido Railway's oil firing 2-4-0STT No. 6 *Mad Bess*.

***Count Louis* was built for racing driver and automobile engineer Count Louis Zborowski, who helped set up the 15in gauge Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway but died before the line's construction began.**

The Fairbourne started as a 2ft gauge horse tramway before being converted into 15in gauge in 1916. In 1986, it was entirely rebuilt and reduced to 12¼in gauge, although it retains a short distance of dual gauge, allowing for stock of the larger gauge to be operated.

The locomotive was purchased by the FR in 1925, becoming its first steam locomotive at the time, and remained based on the line until it was sold in 1987.

Now privately owned, it previously returned to Fairbourne to celebrate that line's own 100th anniversary in 2016.

Restoration progress at Peak Rail

HUDSWELL Clarke 0-4-0ST No. 750 *Waleswood* has moved from the Chasewater Railway to take up residency at Peak Rail.

A former Skinner & Holdford's shunter for the firm's Waleswood Colliery and Coking plant, it entered preservation in 1975. An overhaul that started in 1990 was stalled, and it was not until 2019 that it steamed once again.

Meanwhile, the overhaul of RSH Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 7136 *Royal Pioneer* took a step forward on January 27 when its frames were lifted off of its wheels to allow them and the axleboxes to be removed.

The task was undertaken with assistance from Andrew Briddon and East Midlands Railway, which supplied the rail vehicle lifting equipment used on the day.

Cliff tramway hit by blaze

SALTBURN Cliff Tramway's station sustained 'extensive' damage following a devastating blaze, said to have been caused by an electric fault, on January 15.

Fire crews were called to the building in Altern Bank at about 10.30am after smoke was seen billowing from the building.

The two trams were undamaged as they were parked halfway up the line.

Redcar and Cleveland Council said it was unclear as to whether the tramway, which is closed for winter maintenance, will open in time for Easter as planned.

The cliff lift, which dates from 1884, is the oldest water-balanced cliff funicular still in operation in Great Britain and the second oldest in the world.

Sherpa for Ruislip Lido

THE Ruislip Lido Railway's May 4-6 steam gala will feature visiting Milner Engineering 0-4-0STT *Sherpa* on loan from the Fairbourne Railway. The 1978-built locomotive is based on a Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Sharp Stewart B and ran on the Réseau Guerlédan Railway in Brittany before being acquired by the Fairbourne in 1986.

It is planned to operate a three-train service each day, starting at 11am.

In return for hosting *Sherpa*, the railway's 1998-built 2-4-0ST+T *Mad Bess* will visit Fairbourne for its annual steam gala during May 25-27.

Vera filmed on Wensleydale

THE Wensleydale Railway featured in the second episode of the 13th series of ITV's drama series Vera, about Northumberland detective Vera Stanhope, played by Brenda Blethyn, which aired on January 14. The episode is based around the death of a young woman found near a remote rural railway crossing.

A section of the heritage line near Redmire station was used for scenes filmed last July, and the line's Class 142 and 143 Pacer DMUs also appeared.

Washford purchase for West Somerset Trust as trolleys moved to Wales

By Owen Hayward

THE Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust has sold its remaining track and shed within the Washford station goods yard to the West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust as it concludes the vacation of its former home. Furthermore, the heritage trust has signed a new 10-year lease with West Somerset Railway plc for use of the site that will enable some of the charity's carriage restoration projects to move under cover for the first time.

Heritage trust chairman Mike Thompson said: "I am really pleased that we have been able to reach an agreement with the S&DRT for the Washford assets. The agreement will benefit both the WSRHT with improved facilities and the S&DRT by providing funds to invest in their future activities. The deal was very complex to finalise owing to the need for simultaneous agreement between three parties, which of course required three sets of legal teams.

"I must especially thank Roger Hardingham (S&DRT chairman), Joy Boswell (WSR plc finance director) and Steve Williams (WSRHT vice chairman), who between them had the tenacity to navigate an extremely complex set of articles in the final agreements."

Roger said: "I am delighted to have completed the final arrangements at Washford, which will allow the S&DRT to embark on new ventures elsewhere along the original S&D route, and other locations, to keep the fascinating history of the Somerset & Dorset Railway alive."

The agreement has secured proper covered facilities for the heritage trust's carriage restoration team which until now has had to work largely in the open at Williton. As a result of the new lease, which came into effect on February 1, the WSRHT will now cease restoration activities at its former worksite and move into the new facility, to which it plans to move most of its fleet of carriages over the next 12 months. The collection is currently split between locations at Williton and Dunster. All future carriage restoration activities will then take place in the three-track shed at Washford.

As part of the lease agreement, the WSRHT has agreed to adopt and operate all activities using the WSR plc Safety Management System.

Above: The SDRT has donated three rail trolleys, previously stored at Washford, to the Rail Trolley Trust as it concludes the vacation of its former home. RTT

Left: The RTT has also received donation of a road trailer from David Buck, which will eventually be used for carrying some of the charity's vehicles between locations. RTT

It will also invest further in the Washford site and will work with the plc to support the sustainability of the heritage and historic nature of Washford station.

Forgotten trolleys

As part of the S&DRT's steps to move out of Washford, the trust has also donated three railway trolleys to the Rail Trolley Trust, which is amassing perhaps the largest collection of these permanent way support vehicles in the country, with vehicles currently located primarily at the Chasewater and Tanat Valley railways.

In 2018, the S&DRT donated a Wickham advertising leaflet to the RTT, which led to the organisations collaborating in an effort to trace the history of the three vehicles unpowered trailers at Washford. When the clear-out of Washford commenced, the RTT enquired of their fate, which has now resulted in ownership being passed over; they will be moved to join the collection at the Tanat Valley.

RTT chairman Jonathon Flood said: "The RTT would like to thank the S&DRT for this very generous donation and for ensuring that these vehicles survive and find further use. All three are four-wheeled, unpowered flat trailers with steel frames. One of them has 'SDJR No. T1' painted on the frames. Some of the wheels and axles appear to be of Wickham origin.

"The RTT continues to appeal for funds towards the £10,000 target we set last year and hope that as we are able to share more positive news, more donations will be forthcoming to enable us to move more of our collection to our secure locations, provide further suitable storage accommodation for some of our older and more historic vehicles, and make some significant progress on several restoration projects."

The RTT has also received a donation of the last-surviving example of a Geismar steel two-seater personnel carrier and a purpose-built road trailer to carry these vehicles from David Buck, with the assets collected from his Fifield home in late 2023. A professional survey has been carried out on the latter and a plan is being formulated for the necessary works to enable it to be put to use transporting some of the collection as required.

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Real estate boost for Urie restoration

THE Urie Locomotive Society's restoration of LSWR S15 4-6-0 No. 499 has benefited from support from the Southampton branch of global real estate advisory firm CBRE, which has donated £850 to the restoration fund which will help to pay for some of the hundreds of new boiler stays required.

The donations have been made through CBRE's Benevity platform, which rewards employees' volunteering efforts, with Sam Wyatt, surveying executive at CBRE Southampton, having been the society's volunteer co-ordinator since 2022 after being regularly involved with the Mid-Hants Railway since 2016.

ULS chairman Mark Pedley (left) with Sam Wyatt aboard sister S15 4-6-0 No. 506 at the Mid-Hants Railway. URIE LOCOMOTIVE SOCIETY

Hours of dedication

He first started volunteering in the heritage sector as a high school student in Australia, through his father's involvement. He has clocked up more than 550 volunteering hours which saw him named as one of his employing company's top volunteers worldwide in 2023. "I love learning traditional skills and the physical work involved, which contrasts with my desk job, as well as the fact it is an escape from our modern, digital world," said Sam. "Volunteering has many personal benefits, but also has a huge impact on small charities.

"At the Urie Locomotive Society alone, volunteer labour is worth more than £100,000 each year, and CBRE's donation has a tangible impact."

The Urie Locomotive Society's chairman, Mark Pedley, added: "As a small charity, volunteering and generous donations like this from CBRE make a huge difference in our activities."

A familiar face returns in managerial appointments for Brecon Mountain and Severn Valley railways

A YEAR after departing as general manager of the Talyllyn Railway, Stuart Williams is returning to Wales to take up a similar position at the Brecon Mountain Railway.

In February 2023, Stuart departed his previous railway management position after five years to lead a trust that is developing and promoting three remote islands of Orkney.

Between 2010 and 2017 he was also a volunteer and director of the Dean Forest Railway, as well as a director of the Heritage Railway Association from 2020 to 2023.

Llŷr ap Iolo, managing director of the Vale of Rheidol Railway, which acquired the BMR in October 2023, said: "I am very excited about the appointment of Stuart as the general manager of the Brecon Mountain Railway.

"We are fortunate to have recruited such an experienced and capable person to fill the role."

Stuart, who will start in his new role on March 23, said: "I am thrilled to return to Wales to take up the position. My experience in Orkney has proven instrumental in gaining experience in effective collaboration with funders, community development, and the essential transition to net zero skills that will undoubtedly contribute to the success of my new role."

Meanwhile, the Severn Valley Railway has approved the permanent appointment of Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster as managing director of SVR (Holdings) Plc.

Stuart Williams, the new manager of the Brecon Mountain Railway. VOR

Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, now confirmed as Severn Valley managing director. SVR

Gus has been fulfilling the role in an interim capacity since March 1 last year, following his retirement from his previous role as Avanti West Coast's executive director of operations and safety. He was already an extremely well-known face at the SVR, having volunteered there for more than 30 years.

Gus said: "It's been a pleasure to be the SVR's interim MD for the past 11 months, as the railway works hard to counteract the long-term impacts of pandemic lockdowns, rocketing costs, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis that threatens visitor numbers.

"There's a very real sense that we are heading in the right direction, but I must reiterate the message that tough times still lie ahead. We cannot be under any illusion that things are 'back to normal', but I am confident we can meet these if we all work together for the good of the SVR."

SVR (Holdings) Plc chairman Chris Walton said: "This is great news for the railway. It's yet another step in stabilising our organisation as we continue to meet the many challenges we face.

"He has brought in new board members who have significantly strengthened our leadership. His experience and connections with main line rail companies continue to yield invaluable benefits and enable us to secure diverse income streams and benefits in kind."

Bluebell P class to go on show at Margate's One:One

SECR 0-6-0T P class No 178, affectionately known as *Nettle*, is to be loaned to Jeremy Hosking's One:One Museum at Margate.

The museum, in one of the former warehouses of model manufacturer Hornby, is set to become what some have described as the "south's equivalent to the National Railway Museum in York."

It is currently home to locomotives and rolling stock such as BR(M) 'Black Five' No. 45379, LNER Coronation Beavertail saloon No. 1729, and SR luggage ban No. 2464, which formed part of the funeral train for Sir Winston Churchill.

Built at Ashford Works in 1910, after the outbreak of war, No. 178 was allocated to Margate shed. Its appearance within the museum will therefore see it return to a locality with which it has historical ties.

'Ambassador'

A Bluebell spokesman said: "Allowing No. 178 to be displayed on loan in dry, undercover storage at Margate as part of its growing collection protects the locomotive from the elements at Sheffield Park. It puts this locomotive to use as a static ambassador for the Bluebell Railway in the unique surroundings that the One:One collection offers at Margate.

"With work progressing on the overhaul of classmate No. 323 *Bluebell* to running condition, *Nettle*'s display will hopefully encourage more support and generate a drive to donate while the locomotive awaits its turn in the queue to be restored.

"Hopefully, with support and donations, we might see *Nettle* return to working order on the Bluebell in the not-too-distant future."

The overhaul of No. 323 has made rapid progress in the workshops at Sheffield Park, with the boiler from No. 178 having been swapped over and undergoing rigorous non-destructive testing; a result of this has seen the lower part of the backhead removed for replacement. The driving wheels have also been swapped between the two locomotives, with one having been found to be cracked on No. 323's sets.

New year blues: *Douglas* is out, but *Talyllyn* draws near

By Owen Hayward

AFTER just over a decade in service, the Talyllyn Railway bid farewell to Andrew Barclay 0-4-0WT No. 6 *Douglas,* which has been withdrawn for overhaul.

Its last overhaul completed in 2013, No. 6 made headlines in 2018 when it adopted RAF blue to commemorate its 100th birthday, as well as commemorate its RAF heritage; it entered service with the Airservice Construction Corps before transferring to the base at Calshot Spit, Southampton, where it worked between 1921 and 1945. After being retired and stored there, it was purchased by Abelson & Co. (Engineers) Ltd in 1949, which then presented it to the TR in 1954.

No. 6 worked its last public services on January 1 and then worked private charters on January 20 and 25 before its final fire was dropped. The locomotive will initially be dismantled to assess the work required to return it to service, however, with No. 2 having returned to service in 2023 and Nos. 1 and 4 both due back in the early part of 2024, No. 6 will be mothballed for a short time to avoid a spate of withdrawals in close succession in a decade's time.

Meanwhile, the first day of public services for Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* is expected to be March 23, following a private charter to launch the TR's 75 appeal on March 22. The appeal will raise necessary funds to allow the railway to continue to develop and secure its future, with money being raised to match that being provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support, amid other projects, a major redevelopment of Pendre workshops and running sheds.

The railway has confirmed a number of additional events for its 2024 calendar, including a behind-the-scenes weekend (March 30/31), Awdry Extravaganza (July 20/21) and, returning after a five-year absence, Late Night Steam (August 2-3), which will see services run overnight in the hope of enjoying moonlit views of the Fathew Valley.

Young members to the fore

On May 26, the railway will also be celebrating the success of its young volunteers by running the railway entirely with those who have worked their way up through the ranks after starting in the line's Tracksiders volunteering group.

Talyllyn Tracksiders has provided opportunities for under-14s to experience their first volunteering opportunity on the railways, with two or three weekend working parties a year that accommodate up to 30 youngsters and their guardians at a time and involves them in projects ranging from painting fences to building footpaths.

Those who continue to volunteer can join the Navvies (for ages 11-18), which provides weekly sessions to see in more detail how various departments come together to run the railway (operational roles require a minimum age of 16).

On May 26, all operational roles will be filled by those who began with the Tracksiders in a celebration of the railway's continuing encouragement to start volunteering from an early age.

Meanwhile, the Young Members Group (YMG) encompasses all members aged 14 to 25 and organises regular social events and dedicated working parties on specific projects, such as wagon restoration and maintenance. On August 23, it will be the turn of this generation of volunteers to take over the reins of the railway.

A recent project undertaken by the YMG has been the refurbishment of the Corris Railway's battery electric locomotive No. 9 *Aberllefenni*, the locomotive to work in the Welsh slate industry.

The diminutive locomotive arrived on the TR for the September 2023 Heritage Weekend, when it performed shunting demonstrations at Tywyn Wharf.

"We had more than 20 young members take part in the several working parties over a week," said project leader and YMG committee member Ffion Freeman. "Several hours of sanding, priming and about five layers of yellow paint, two layers of black on the bottom and it was done – finished off by our talented young signwriter Keira Thompson, hand-painting No.9 on the side.

"It was great to see so many young volunteers learning new skills which can be transferred to also help out around our own fantastic railway."

Above: To the letter: On January 31, the hand-painted lettering for No.1's name was completed on the tanks, save for the final coats of varnish, as the overhaul of the railway's namesake nears completion at Pendre works. TR

Left: January blues: No. 6 on its second-to-last day in steam on January 20 on a private charter. Its final day of service was a Network Rail charter five days later. It will be mothballed for a while before its next overhaul is started. LUKE RYAN

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway is mourning the death on January 26 of Jim Price, a popular and very long-serving volunteer. A railway statement said: "Universally remembered as a lovely bloke, he loved working as a guard at Woody Bay. He also contributed greatly to the railway with his joinery skills and served on the committee of the old Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Association in the early days back in the 1980s." As a guard, Jim is pictured walking up the platform at Woody Bay as Maffei 0-4-0T *Sid* steamed into the station on a snowbound February 20, 2010. TONY NICHOLSON/LBR

Left: Corris Railway battery electric locomotive No. 9 was repaired and repainted by the railway's young members' working group, with the project completed on January 30 before it returned home. LUKE RYAN

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Shedding light on the dark: Severn Valley launches Bewdley night shoots and photography workshops

By John Titlow

GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 provides banking duties at Bewdley on January 7. The photoshoots will have it on appropriate stock the right way round. JOHN TITLOW

THE Severn Valley Railway is to stage a series of night shoots and photography workshop events.

The first nighttime event, which will take place on February 23, was advertised on social media and sold out immediately.

Seeing a pent-up demand, a second one was arranged for the following day. Professional lighting will illuminate Bewdley Station between 6.30pm and 9.30pm, recreating scenes of a busy junction station from the late 1950s.

GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* and pannier No. 7714 will be paired with appropriate stock and posed at various locations within the station. For more atmosphere, a vintage bus will be parked in front of the station building for added interest.

Places are limited and there will be no access without a valid ticket. They cost £60 and are on sale at https://svr.co.uk/event/evening-photoshoot-7714-7812-at-bewdley-station

For all levels

On May 12, July 28 and September 29, photographic workshops will take place at the Engine House, Highley. The railway has teamed up with Lee Chapman, of Chappers Photography, an experienced photographer and fully-qualified lecturer in adult education.

At the May event, attendees will learn more about the theory behind photography and useful tips and tricks, before testing their skills to the test in a range of settings, scenarios and cameos in and around the railway. This full day is an opportunity for photographers of every level to enhance their current set of skills and promises to be a hands-on experience.

The day starts from either Kidderminster or Bridgnorth by train to Highley for an 11.30am start at the Engine House. There will be a classroom session offering tips and advice on railway photography and help setting up your camera. It will be followed by indoor and outdoor sessions to discuss the challenges of photography in different lighting conditions. Opportunities inside the Engine House will include access to the royal carriage and locomotive's cabs. Afterwards, the session moves to Highley station to capture moving trains, followed by travel to one of the other stations for additional shots.

The following workshops will be different, using a variety of techniques and locations.

➜ Limited places are available at https://svr.co.uk/event/heritage-railway-photography-workshop/ and it costs £80 for the full day.

Oldest Peckett to join Quainton

THE oldest-surviving Peckett has found itself a new home after being acquired by the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre after years spent in outdoor static display storage at a Kent paper mill.

W4 class 0-4-0ST No. 614 *Bear* was offered for sale last May by the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway after a review of its collection deemed it surplus to requirements.

Built in 1896 for James Dunlop & Co. Ltd.'s Clyde Ironworks, it was rebuilt in 1934 by the Andrew Barclay works which made it a unique hybrid that then carried plates for Peckett on one side of its cab and Barclay on the other.

Around the same time, it was acquired by Colvilles Ltd, which amalgamated the James Dunlop and David Colville Firms into one steel-making company. When that became part of British Steel in 1967, *Bear* was presented to the Locomotive Club of Great Britain.

After a period in storage at Falkirk, it was moved to the SKLR in August 1971 for static display, with ownership transferred to the 2ft 6in gauge in 1996. During its time there it was cosmetically restored but, as ever with anything stored outdoors, in recent years its condition has begun to deteriorate.

It has now been acquired by the Quainton Road centre, which plans to undertake another cosmetic restoration, and consideration for a future return to steam is not being ruled out.

It is the second Peckett acquired by the centre within the last 12 months, with R2 class No. 1370 *May* having been purchased from a private owner at the start of 2023.

SKLR chair Liz Fuller (left) and Charles Firminger (centre), who was involved in *Bear*'s arrival back in 1971, hand over the Peckett's nameplates to Quainton Railway Society curator Vickie Aylward on December 12, 2023, after the oldest-surviving Peckett-built locomotive was acquired for the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. PAUL WILLIAMS/SKLR

IN BRIEF

Small prairie is set to mark its centenary at Chinnor

DARTMOUTH-BASED GWR small prairie No. 4555 will celebrate its 100th birthday year by hauling services on the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, starting from March 10.

Mums can travel all day with a day rover adult ticket for just £8, and combined travel and mini cream teas in a box can be reserved in the train restaurant to mark Mother's Day. Accompanied children can travel for just £1.

No. 4555 has been specially repainted from GWR livery to BR lined green.

For more details and to buy tickets, visit www.chinnorrailway.co.uk

First-time visit to Poppy Line for *Hercules* for half-term

THE Dartmouth Steam Railway's GWR 2-8-0T No. 4277 *Hercules* will make its first-ever visit to the North Norfolk Railway to haul trains during the February 17-25 half-term week, when it will appear alongside award-winning sole-surviving Class 104 driving trailer car M56182.

Dormice by Dartmoor Line

NETWORK Rail has taken a 35-year lease on seven acres of unplanted grassland on the outskirts of Okehampton next to the Dartmoor Line to create new habitats for rare hazel dormice, a legally protected species. Hazel, hawthorn, and oak trees, brambles and honeysuckle are among the trees and plants being introduced in the two fields, leased from Okehampton United Charities, with new hedgerows plant. The line, which reopened to regular passengers in 2021, was previously the Dartmoor Railway, a heritage line.

Ecclesbourne £30k appeal to reconnect Duffield split

By Owen Hayward

THE Ecclesbourne Valley Railway has launched an SOS appeal to raise £30,000 for essential repairs after a landslide cut off the main line interchange at Duffield.

The slippage occurred following embankment damage that began last April but was exacerbated by Storm Babet in October.

The landslide, which occurred through no fault of the railway, has left the EVR in a challenging situation, with passengers currently unable to enjoy trips along the full length of the line. Furthermore, the railway's financial stability is at risk; because passengers arriving by rail to the main line interchange at Duffield are no longer able to easily access the heritage line, revenue for its continued operation and maintenance is reduced.

The slippage site on February 3, with concrete retaining blocks preventing slippage onto the line. EVR

Track slew

Insurers have been assessing the slip, but to overcome the setback in the meantime, a dedicated team of engineers at the railway have developed a comprehensive plan to realign the track away from the landslide by moving it onto the unused side of the formation, allowing trains to run again and restoring full functionality. Financial support from the community and railway enthusiasts is essential to make that vision a reality. However, as this side of the land has never had track on it, a new trackbed will need to be built to accommodate the line.

"We are reaching out to the community for their support during this challenging time," said WyvernRail plc chairman Neil Ferguson-Lee. "Every contribution, no matter how small, will help us restore this iconic railway and continue to provide unforgettable experiences for our passengers.

"The closure has probably cost us £30,000 to £40,000 in lost revenue and increased costs, which is down to not being able to run in to Duffield and the need for different arrangements to operate our trains."

Concrete retaining blocks installed to prevent the slip covering the line cost £25,000 which had to be paid for out of the railway's own existing funds.

While the insurance company will foot the repair bill of the landslip and damage, the realignment work needs to be carried out while their assessments and work are completed in order to re-link the divided sections of the railway.

It will also enable services to continue while the embankment repairs are carried out, further reducing disruption to the railway.

It is hoped that the realignment work will be completed by the summer.

To this end, the £30,000 appeal has been launched to fund the work, which surpassed £11,000 as this issue went to press.

➜ Donations can be made securely online through the VER's GoFundMe campaign at gofundme.com/f/operation-duffield

Alternatively, the fundraising team can be contacted directly at 01629 823076 or by emailing ticketoffice@e-v-r.com.

Rare double 'Thumper' weekend for Lavender line

THE Lavender Line is offering a rare chance to see two Class 205 'Thumper' DEMUs operating together with a double unit running weekend on April 20/21.

The line is home to units Nos. 1133 (which carries BR Southern Region green) and 1118 (which sports BR blue), but usually only one is in service for the railway's open days.

The railway is also the only one in England to have two of these units based together, with only the Caledonian Railway at Brechin, Scotland, also having a pair based in the same location.

While trains normally operate only from Platform 2 at Isfield, this event will see trains depart from both platforms throughout the weekend, with both cars being coupled together at times to form a four-car unit. The last time that two Class 205s were seen operating together in this manner was also at Isfield in February 2019, when the railway commemorated the 40th anniversary of the route's closure by BR.

A closely matching event took place in July 2015 when No. 1133 visited the Spa Valley Railway to appear alongside that line's own Class 207 unit, No. 1317, a rare occasion on which any such unit has travelled from its home for an external event.

Full details were still to be confirmed, but it is planned to run the two units on services between 11am and 4pm each day, with day rover tickets allowing for unlimited travel. The Lavender Tea Rooms will be open, serving a selection of refreshments. See lavender-line.co.uk for more information. The railway is also offering driver experience courses using its 'Thumpers' in either two or four-car formation on days when the line is not operating public services. For further details and availability, email enquiries@lavender-line.co.uk

Class 205 'Thumpers' Nos. 1133 and No. 1118 side by side at Isfield. LAVENDER LINE

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SCAN ME

Above: Newly-restored Pullman brake third *Car No. 54* at Horsted Keynes as it concludes a day of testing on January 24. RICHARD SALMON/BRPS

Left: The refurbished interior of Pullman *Car No. 54*. RICHARD SALMON/BRPS

Bluebell Pullman conversion for accessible fine dining

By Owen Hayward

THE conversion of parlour brake third *Car No. 54* at the Bluebell Railway will provide the first-ever accessible Pullman dining car when it enters service in the spring on the line's luxury 'Golden Arrow' services.

Originally built as a Kitchen Third by Claytons in 1923, it was rebuilt into its brake configuration in 1937; when new, it was one of the first three K-type Pullman designs, which incorporated a steel underframe with separate timber body in place of the all-timber build of the original cars. *Car No. 54* went on to see use on the services such as the 'Devon Belle' and 'South Wales Pullman', ending up as part of the spare set for BR's 'Blue Pullman' trains.

Upon withdrawal, it first moved to the Dart Valley Railway, before moving to the Birmingham Railway Museum (now Tyseley Locomotive Works), and finally Carnforth, form where the Bluebell purchased it in a heavily stripped state after a restoration project to see it run as part of the 'Orient Express' was aborted.

Long time coming

Restoration commenced in 2016, with the entire end structures requiring replacement. A grant from the Department for Transport also meant that the former luggage bay could be converted into a wheelchair-accessible entrance, with an electric wheelchair lift and widened interior doorways to allow access to the seating area.

The project has taken nearly eight years to undertake and has cost about £800,000. On January 23, it made its first test runs along the line from Horsted Keynes to East Grinstead (the line south towards Sheffield Park is currently divided for track renewal work) to prove its mechanical equipment, with Class 73 E6040 providing motive power for the occasion. The following day, Parlour third *Christine/Car No. 64* was added for further commissioning tests, focusing on couplings and ride hides.

All that remains to complete *Car No. 54* is a further coat of varnish before it can join the 'Golden Arrow' trains in the spring.

The decision to use E6040 on these test runs was to undertake some mileage accumulation following a period of electrical work and fault finding.

Its last few years at Eastleigh saw it used only for shunting and as such, many of the various systems fell into

Test runs for *Car No. 54* also provided an opportunity for Class 73 E6040 to accumulate some mileage as work to make the locomotive available for service continues. JAMES CUMMINS/BRPS

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New facility at Locomotion boosts access for visitors

A NEW accessible Changing Places toilet has opened at the Locomotion museum in Shildon, improving access and inclusion for all visitors, as part of a multi-million-pound programme of investment, as reported in previous issues of *Heritage Railway*.

Equipped with a hoist, changing bench and a peninsular toilet, it is located in the museum's Main Hall and was funded by a grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with support from Durham County Council and Muscular Dystrophy UK.

The museum converted a storeroom to make way for the accessible toilet.

Head of Locomotion, Sarah Price, said: "As the museum undergoes significant investment and improvement, it is important that we ensure our spaces are open and accessible for everyone."

disuse, subsequently developing faults when called back into service after so long.

Various seals – including those around the fan access point – have been replaced, while internally the cab floors have been repaired, with new linoleum flooring laid.

Project lead Paul Auckland said "Things didn't go as smoothly as we had hoped for getting the loco straight into service, but after quite a bit of work since May by a dedicated band of engineering volunteers guided by Mark Bott, we are looking forward to the 2024 operating season.

"Maintaining and improving the locomotive is an ongoing commitment, so anyone wishing to join us should contact volunteer.recruitment@bluebell-railway.com

Meanwhile, the railway's second diesel-powered addition of 2023 – Class 207 Thumper No. 1305 – was temporarily moved to Sheffield Park ahead of the commencement of track relaying work in order to position it over the pit roads within the locomotive yard. This is to facilitate jet washing and access underneath to remove pipes and equipment to overhaul or repair as required.

Bodmin permanent way coach gets pristine rebuild

THE Bodmin & Wenford Railway has completed a 12-month reconstruction of its deteriorating permanent way coach to showpiece condition.

The BR Mk.1 BSK was built at Doncaster in 1953 and converted at St. Blazey in the 1970s to a rerailing vehicle, forming part of the depot's emergency works train, and renumbered ADB975033. Half of the vehicle became storage for tools and equipment, with a small workshop area, complete with sliding doors on either side. A galley, saloon, and toilet and washing facilities were provided in the other half for the crew, with a small driving compartment also installed at one end for when the train was being propelled. Underslung between the bogies, racks were fitted for further heavy equipment stowage.

With the rundown of St. Blazey depot in the 1980s and 1990s, the vehicle became surplus to requirements and was donated to the BWR, where it was used as part of the permanent way train until December 2022, when it was taken out of service for a much-needed overhaul.

Spending most of its time outside at Bodmin, exposed to the worst of the Cornish climate, it deteriorated badly. The roof leaked in many places, flooring rotted, side panels rusted, and it was not a good place to work from for the railway's track gang.

However, its rebuild in the Bodmin General workshops has resulted in a superb transformation that has seen it returned to traffic and much involved in the winter track maintenance programme.

The faded and peeling green livery, replaced by a smart red.

BWR spokesman Jimmy James said: "Within the standard of works is equally impressive, as is the attention given to the frames, brakes and bogies.

"It has been a Herculean task for the dedicated workshop staff.

"We believe that this unsung and unique vehicle will be an asset to the railway for at least another two decades."

Above: No. ADB975033 at the head of the BWR permanent way train, with Class 08 No. 08359 providing the motive power, at Bodmin Parkway on January 25, with a Great Western Railway IET set in the distance departing for Penzance. The 5525 smokebox number plate is from a GWR 2-6-2T formerly of St. Blazey (83E) shed. JIMMY JAMES

Above left: Resplendent following its rebuild, permanent way coach No. ADB975033 at Bodmin General station. JIMMY JAMES

Below: The driving compartment of No. ADB975033. JIMMY JAMES

'Tractors' near retirement as DRS announces disposals

WITHIN the last two decades, several Class 37s were bought back from heritage lines and returned to main line use by Train Operating Companies, but now their time on the national network could be drawing to a close once more following the announcement by Direct Rail Services that it will be retiring its own fleet of the locomotives.

Since their introduction, the Class 37 locomotives have played a vital role in DRS's operations, from nuclear flask trains to freight services, snow clearing and much more. These locomotives have become synonymous with versatility and are a distinctive presence on the UK rail network, becoming 'cultural icons' thanks to the passion and support of enthusiasts.

"The decision to retire the Class 37 locomotives is driven by the need to modernise the fleet, embrace newer technologies, and meet the environmental and operational challenges of the future," a statement said. "This move aligns with DRS's commitment to providing efficient and sustainable rail services." A total of six examples of the class were listed for disposal by DRS via a competitive tendering process, the deadline for bids on which was set as February 15.

Gottfried Eymer, Nuclear Transport Solutions' managing director – rail, said: "It is the end of an era for the Class 37s at DRS. They have been a firm favourite with staff and enthusiasts alike, but the time is right to focus on more modern and efficient engines such as our excellent Class 68 and 88s."

Premium dining back on offer at Severn Valley Railway

FOLLOWING the success of its high-end dining experiences last year, the Severn Valley Railway has released dates and bookings for similar events in 2024.

The Gin Train will run on selected dates in March. Hosted on board a restored teak dining carriage, the connoisseur team from Piston Gin will take guests on a journey along the line, with the chance to sample innovative gin creations.

On selected dates in both February and March, guests can take a vintage afternoon tea in first-class carriages with selection of treats. For those craving a more substantial meal, the SVR's catering partners at Bewdley-based Paisley Flour will be offering Sunday lunch dining on selected dates in February and March, including Mothering Sunday.

Space is strictly limited and early booking is advised. Full details and booking information are available online at svr.co.uk

Track panels in store awaiting regauging and laying at the Tweeddale Heritage Railway's yard and workshop near Broughton. THR

Scottish line awaits green light for laying down track

By Hugh Dougherty

HOPES of laying track on the Scottish Borders-based Tweeddale Heritage Railway in 2023 were thwarted by planning and landowner negotiations taking longer than initially expected.

However, volunteers on Scotland's newest narrow-gauge railway have used their time to stockpile more than 1000 yards of track to allow laying to start as soon once all the hurdles have been cleared.

As reported in issue 297, a group of local enthusiasts have been working away behind the scenes for the last five years, restoring 2ft 6in gauge locomotives, rolling stock, and track in their workshop near Broughton.

The group, which has been working towards a £200,000 scheme to open an initial 700-yard line, has acquired a stock 2ft gauge track panels from the former peat extraction railways of William Sinclair & Company at Ryflat, near Carnwath, and Auchencoch at Penicuik. It now plans to regauge the panels to 2ft 6in gauge.

Group founder member Jim O'Neill said: "We were disappointed that planning and land negotiations have lasted longer that we would have expected or wanted, but we are quite certain that all will soon be well and that we'll be able to start laying the line and, crucially, also reveal the railway's location, which we are unable to identify while negotiations continue. Having stockpiled the track as it became available made eminent sense, while we've also been working on overhauling our diesel locomotives over the winter. We are looking forward to later this year when we are very hopeful that the Tweeddale Heritage Railway will take to the tracks."

Broughton was originally served by the standard-gauge Symington, Biggar and Broughton Railway, which opened in 1860 and extended to Peebles in 1864. Passenger traffic ended in 1950, with goods trains continuing until 1966, after which the line was lifted.

Bramley Line team faces further wait for decision

By Robin Jones

BRAMLEY Line Heritage Railway members who are aiming to reopen the long-mothballed Wisbech to March line must wait for several more months before a decision is made as to whether to restore it as light rail with trams or as a classic heritage line.

The members have worked for several years to have the 7.8-mile GER branch released to them so that trains can run between the two towns again. The line closed to passengers in September 1968 and to freight in 2000 and was then placed out of use in 2002.

The BLHR currently has permission from Network Rail to work out of the old Waldersea Sidings goods yard and is endeavouring to keep the ever-growing vegetation down on the section of line towards Coldham a mile away. Due to Network Rail not carrying out maintenance on the line for the last 20 years, although the line was never officially closed, the current condition of the sleepers, trackbed, bridges, and road crossings will involve much expense to get it up and running again.

Various studies

In the yard, the BHLR has Ruston Hornsby 165DE 0-4-0 shunter No. 312989 – owned by the Thompson Locomotive Collection – and a coal wagon, oil tanker, and one of the last guards vans to run on the line, owned by members; the group is currently not allowed to run any powered vehicle on the branch.

The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority's plans have, for the past 10 years, included the reopening of the line as a commuter rail link, but nothing has yet happened, apart from various feasibility studies to see if it is worthwhile, and if so, what form of transportation to use.

The BHLR has held talks with CPCA and NR representatives as to the options being proposed and whether the BLHR would be involved in any future running. NR is currently undertaking another study for the CPCA which should be completed by the end of April, before the authority begins to study it and invite all interested parties to comment. The CPCA will take these observations into account before making a final decision, which will happen towards the end of 2024.

Looking towards Waldersea through cleared brambles. BLHR

BHLR chairman Clive Freeman said: "We understand the Network Rail finance period is 2024-29, so it is unlikely that any decisions made this year will have any funding allocated to them until 2030. We did ask an NR representative if there would be any financial help for the BLHR or was there anything on the books to sell the line, and the answer to both was no, as far as he knew, six months ago."

The BLHR's long-term aim is to reopen the line from March to Wisbech, with a station at Coldham and yard at Waldersea. Its intermediate aim is to run from the north side of Chain Bridge Road crossing because of the river bridge condition, through to before the A47 at Redmoor, with the station at Coldham and yard at Waldersea. However, its short-term aim is to run on the mile-long section of track between the position of the original signalbox and station at Coldham and the Waldersea yard, to give rides, set up a small museum to pass on the history and memories of the line, and generate tourism for the area.

Call for volunteers

"To do this, the main thing we would like is the CPCA and NR to make a decision that they will not be doing anything for the next five years with the line.

"This could allow us to work towards running on the line and, with their help, to do repairs where necessary so we can establish a running presence on the line," said Clive.

"We need more volunteers and helpers to carry any of this out. This could be the start of another running heritage railway, which could also ultimately be for commuters as well, because it could pull into March and drop off passengers to catch trains to Cambridge and Peterborough and elsewhere round the country.

➜ To volunteer for the BHLR, email office@bramleyline.org.uk or telephone 07425 630028.

Left: Ruston Hornsby 165DE shunter No. 312989 in Waldersea yard looking towards March. The 1952-built 0-4-0DE was used at Castle Cements depot in Middlesborough and entered preservation at the Tanfield Railway in 1994, being moved to the Aln Valley Railway in 2004. It is part of the Thompson Locomotive Collection. BLHR

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On the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, services are currently running top-and-tail due to the closure of Keighley station for rebuilding work. Network Rail, via its contractor, AMCO, is undertaking a multi-million-pound refurbishment of the station, including significant areas on the KWVR side, which will be closed until March 1. During this time there will be no passenger services into Platforms 3 and 4. LMS 'Black Five' No. 45212, just back from a spell on the Nene Valley Railway helping with festive season trains, heads a southbound service at Damems on January 13. BEN BUCKI

Commemorative board marks Abbots Ripton disaster

A COMMEMORATIVE interpretation board to mark the Abbots Ripton rail disaster of January 21, 1876 – in which 13 passengers died and 53 passengers and six crew members were injured – has been unveiled in Huntingdon's Priory Road cemetery, where three of the victims are buried.

At a ceremony on January 22, the board was unveiled by Coun Phil Pearce, Mayor of Huntingdon, and Charles Saunders, who recently restored the grave of victim Dion William Boucicault. The event attracted local residents, history enthusiasts and town councillors, all joining together to pay respects to the past and to underscore the importance of historical preservation.

Coun Pearce said: "This interpretation board serves as a lasting tribute, recounting the events of that historic day, and also paying tribute to the individuals who perished. May this space become a site of reflection and remembrance, ensuring the memory of the disaster lives on for generations to come."

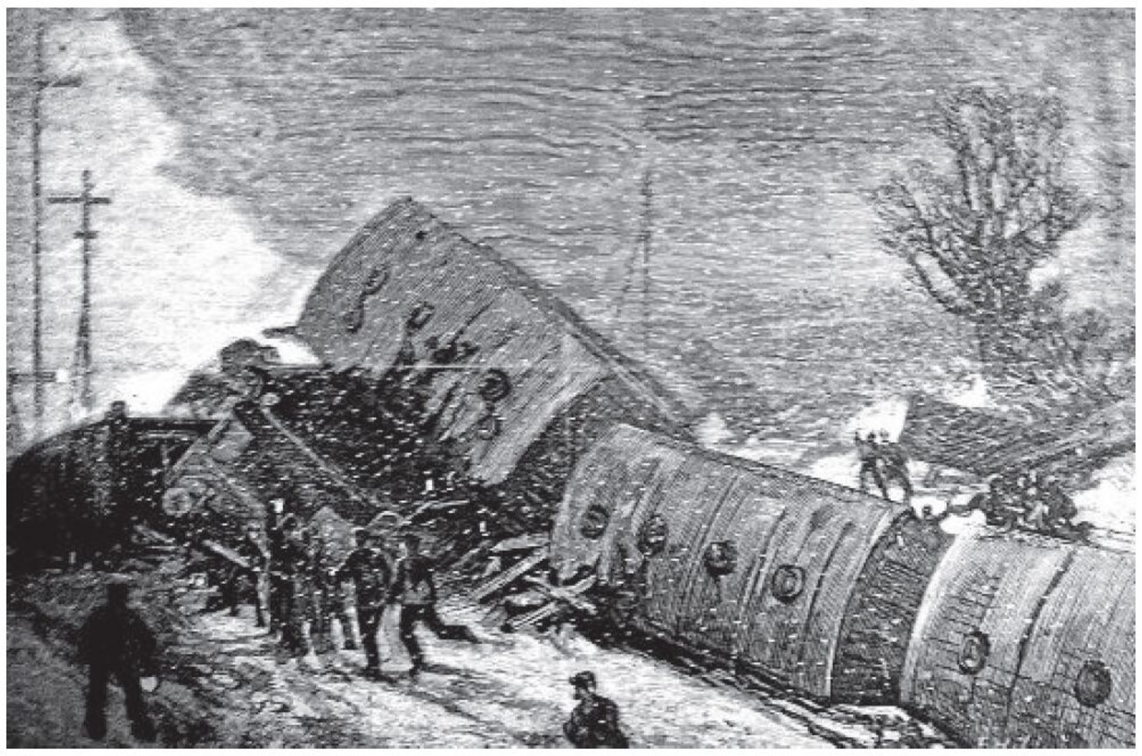
Prayers of remembrance were led by the mayor's chaplain, the Rev Jon Randell, adjacent to the Boucicault grave, with a closing prayer being held adjacent to the graves of Miss M and Miss E Burdon Sanderson, who also died in the accident.

The tragedy occurred when the GNR's southbound 'Special Scotch Express' (known as the 'Flying Scotsman' after 1923), running late in a snowstorm and at its top speed of 40-45mph, was involved in a double collision in blizzard conditions. The semaphore signal arms had been frozen by heavy snow and so showed as 'clear', therefore giving express driver no warning of the presence of a coal train backing on to the main line from a siding, making a collision inevitable.

Minutes afterwards, a northbound express from London to Leeds hit the wreckage.

Up to then, the GNR's section of the East Coast Main Line had a second-to-none safety record and was considered to be exemplary for railway safety. That record disappeared in an horrendous few moments.

There are plans for further commemorations to mark the 150th anniversary of the disaster in 2026.



The wreck of the 'Special Scotch Express' after the Leeds train had ploughed into it. ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

The Mayor of Huntingdon, Coun Phil Pearce, and grave restorer Charles Saunders next to the new board. HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR

From shire to shire and valley to valley: 'Black Five' No. 45212 approaches Wansford on the Nene Valley Railway in the district of Cambridgeshire on November 5, 2023. The Stanier locomotive was paying the line short visit from its home at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway in Yorkshire, returning there by rail on December 28. OWEN HAYWARD.

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From dream to living heritage as KESR prepares for jubilee

EXCLUSIVE

By Geoff Courtney

AS the Kent & East Sussex Railway gears itself up for its golden jubilee as a heritage line, general manager Robin Coombes has spoken exclusively to *Heritage Railway* about the line's first 50 years, the present, and his optimism for the future.

The line was reopened in the preservation era on Sunday, February 3, 1974, and in the half-century since that historic day has moulded itself into a major heritage sector player, a status due to be further reinforced in two years with the reopening of the link from its current western extremity to the Rother Valley Railway's eastern terminus at Robertsbridge, two miles away.

"This year marks a significant milestone as we joyfully celebrate our 50th anniversary," Robin said. "In reflecting on our past, we pay tribute to the extraordinary efforts that have gone into preserving the KESR.

"Over decades it has been a journey marked by relentless determination, overcoming countless obstacles, and an unwavering commitment that has transformed a dream into a living heritage.

"Our golden jubilee celebrations will be a testament to history, acknowledging the blood, sweat and tears shed by our passionate volunteers and staff. It will be a celebration of joy, achievement, and the incremental growth that has brought the railway to the remarkable place it stands today.

"As we navigate the challenges and reap the rewards of running a heritage railway in the 21st century, our present will be a focal point of our gala celebrations. We will shed light on the intricacies of managing a living piece of history, highlighting the daily challenges we face and the extraordinary rewards that come with operating a heritage railway in the modern era."

Clayton for Kent: The Diesel Traction Group's unique class 17 D8568 will appear at the KESR's first diesel gala in 14 years, where it will appear alongside resident class 14 'Teddy Bear' 0-6-0DH D9504 and on-loan Class 20 No. 20087 (D8087) over the three-day weekend of April 12-14 as part of the line's golden jubilee celebrations. PAUL WINTERS/DIESEL TRACTION GROUP

Golden opportunity: The logo that the KESR has commissioned to celebrate its golden jubilee. KESR

Optimism in the air

Of the future, Robin said optimism "fills the air," adding that the jubilee celebrations would spotlight the opening to Robertbridge, which would symbolise continuity and progress.

At the reopening in February 1974, almost exactly 20 years after BR closed the line to passengers, trains ran a mile from Tenterden to Rolvenden, after which the line was extended to Wittersham Road in 1977, to Northiam in 1990, and in 2000 to the current terminus of Bodiam, giving a running line of 10½ miles.

Ten years later, the line was extended another mile to the site of a former halt at Junction Road, but no trains regularly run on that stretch. From there it is two miles to the western end of the Robertsbridge-based Rother Valley Railway at Northbridge Street, and this gap will be filled with the current work.

The golden jubilee celebrations start on April 12-14 with the railway's first diesel gala for 14 years, featuring class 17 D8568, Class 33 No. 33202 (D6587), Class 14 0-6-0DH 'Teddy Bear' 0-6-0 D9504, and Class 20 No. 20087 (D8087).

Steam will take centre stage on June 1/2 with as-yet unannounced locomotives, some of which will be guesting for this special gala event being held exactly 50 years to the day since Ashford MP William Deedes officially reopened the railway at Tenterden Town station.

Other attractions at this event are also under wraps, and there will be opportunities for visitors to go behind the scenes to see restoration work being carried out. In addition, a 50th birthday logo has been commissioned for publicity and marketing use.

Robin said that the gala would encapsulate "the very essence of the railway's past, present, and future," adding: "It will emphasise the imperative of sustaining our legacy and welcoming a new generation of enthusiasts and adventurers.

"It will not be just a celebration of our rich history, but also a declaration of our commitment to the journey ahead, where the tracks of the past meet the challenges and rewards of the present, paving the way for a future that embraces new adventures and sustains the legacy we have worked so hard to preserve."

Other events planned for this year include a 1940s weekend, a real ale and cider festival, Mothers' and Fathers' Day events, a steam punk weekend, and also celebrating their 50th anniversary, the end-of-year Santa specials.

Old-timer: Preserved A1X 'Terrier' *Sutton* (BR No. 32650) descends Tenterden bank on February 3, 1974, the day the KESR was reopened as a heritage line almost exactly 20 years after it closure to passengers. The 1876-built 0-6-0T, which was withdrawn by BR in November 1963 after 87 years in service, is currently under overhaul at the Spa Valley Railway. DAVID HEPBURNE-SCOTT

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Just a few short months before withdrawal, No. 76077 is seen near the site of Anne St Halt at Widnes on August 5, 1967, with a Locomotive Club of Great Britain brake van tour of local lines. IAN HOLT/RITCHIE MERCER COLLECTION

Appeal is launched to put Toddington mogul's next major step on the boil

By Owen Hayward

BR Standard 4MT 2-6-0 No. 76077 – the 186th locomotive to be saved from Barry scrapyard – will soon join the operational heritage-era fleet with its owner, Toddington Standard Locomotive Ltd, having launched a £150,000 appeal to fund the boiler overhaul. The aim is to see it in traffic by the end of 2026.

Outshopped from Horwich in December 1956 and withdrawn by BR in December 1967, it moved to Woodham Brothers' scrapyard with Nos. 76079 and 76084 the following September, being one of just five class members sold to the scrap merchant. In 1987, heavily cannibalised to provide spares for other preserved members of its class (including its tender, which now runs behind No. 76017, currently stored under private ownership at Southall), No. 76077 was purchased by the Standard 4 Locomotive Preservation Society and became the last member of its class to leave Barry.

After some 30 years stored at Toddington on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, restoration commenced in late 2017, with TSLL being formed by railway volunteers to acquire and fund the restoration of the locomotive, which is considered to be a suitable choice for operating the 14-mile Cotswold line's eight-coach services.

While the frames for the front half of the locomotive are currently at Locomotive Maintenance Services' Loughborough workshop, the boiler remains on the G/WR, with TSLL putting its overhaul out to tender following a professional inspection detailing the work required. Although in generally good condition, having been overhauled at Eastleigh just three years before withdrawal, the parallel front section of the barrel and front tubeplate must be replaced.

Minimising work

Andrew Meredith, TSLL's engineering director, said: "While it would be possible to carry out repairs, the cost of replacement isn't too much greater than the labour and material costs of replacement. Fitting these new items will help ensure trouble-free operation over the first 10-year boiler insurance certificate and minimise the amount of work that might otherwise be needed at the next overhaul."

Other work known to be required includes repair of some corrosion pitting at the bottom of the tapered barrel section, the fitting of new studs for the dome cover, cutting out and replacing corroded platework at the front corners of the firebox throat plate, and the replacement of numerous studs and stays, along with the replacement of the foundation ring and, finally, the fitting of 156 smoke and 24 flue tubes.

"The boiler has suffered over the past 50 years, being stored outside firstly in the salty sea air at Barry scrapyard and then at Toddington," Andrew said. "It is fundamentally sound, and I am confident that after the overhaul it will give good service for the foreseeable future."

G/WR marketing director Ian Crowder said: "The boiler overhaul project has got off to a good start with almost £10,000 banked already. It's important that we raise a 'fighting fund' to get the work started sooner rather than later, but we will also launch a component sponsorship scheme to fund specific elements of the overhaul, such as tubes and stays.

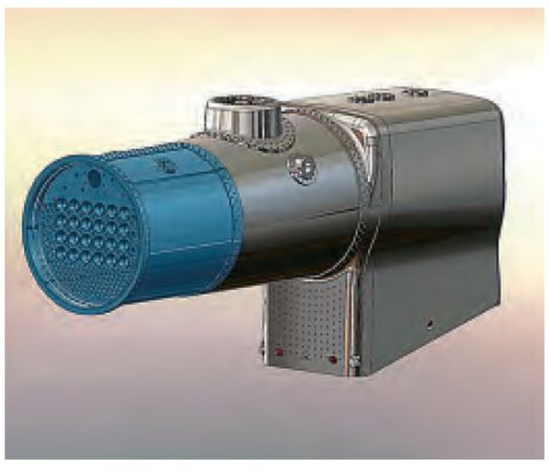
"No. 76077 may not be a glamorous locomotive with a fancy name – it spent its working life handling goods traffic in and around the industrialised North West – but as a modern heritage locomotive, it counts among the most useful and easiest to maintain and operate.

"What's more, the very fast pace of restoration seems to have captured the imagination of many people. In less than 10 years, we are transforming an incomplete and corroded kit of parts into a living, functioning locomotive."

It is hoped that No. 76077, which departed Barry Scrapyard in May 1967 after several previous preservation attempts failed, will be operational throughout its 70th birthday year in 2027. "We are on target to meet that date despite delays during Covid-19," said Andrew. "However, to meet our deadline it is vital that we raise the necessary money for the boiler overhaul as quickly as we can to press on with the overhaul without interruption due to a lack of funds."

➜ For full information or to request a brochure, email info@standard76077.com or visit standard76077.com/boiler-appeal/

The boiler of BR Standard 4MT mogul No. 76077 at Toddington on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. A £150,000 appeal has been launched to fund the boiler overhaul. IAN CROWDER/TSLL



CAD artwork of the locomotive's boiler; the blue shaded section needs replacing. DAVID DUNPHY/TSLL

IN BRIEF

Seaside holiday for Furness No. 20 this summer

BRITAIN'S oldest operating steam locomotive will enjoy a summer holiday of its own this July, when it visits the West Somerset Railway for the 150th anniversary of the opening of the line between Watchet and Minehead.

A six-day event is planned to take place from July 16-21 to commemorate the opening of the extension to the seaside resort with 0-4-0 Furness Railway No. 20, which was built in 1863, starring at the celebrations. Further details were still to be confirmed, but tickets are on sale now: see west-somerset-railway.co.uk/events/view/the-150-event

May gala for Churnet Valley

THE Churnet Valley Railway has confirmed that its spring steam gala will take place over the bank holiday weekend of May 4-6.

It will feature resident USATC S160s Nos. 5197 and 6046 alongside visiting BR Standard 4MT No. 75015 *Braveheart* from the Dartmouth Steam Railway and GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* from Didcot Railway Centre. Further details, including timetables, will be published in due course.

Llangollen revises gala plans

DUE to a clash with a previously agreed private charter, the Llangollen Railway has decided not to go ahead with the planned autumn steam gala of September 14/15. However, a provisional date for 2025 of September 6/7 has been set. The spring event of April 12-14 will continue as planned.

Boom time for Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

THE British-built Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, a UNESCO World Heritage site, recorded its highest-ever passenger numbers and revenue in the financial year ending December 2023.

The line, run by the Northeast Frontier Railway, amassed almost 17.3 crore (about £1,632,000), beating all previous records.

The Ghum Winter Festival, which ran from November 25 to December 10, proved extremely popular with locals and tourists alike, promoting tourism and cultural heritage along the DHR route.

The extra income has been attributed to the adding extra joyride services, a sharp increase in numbers during the peak tourist season, and growth in passenger traffic after new coaches were introduced.

Darjeeling station is undergoing upgrades with new features including heritage-type windows and a Kanchenjunga viewpoint.

Making a return after 38 years – Nene Valley's Danish delight!

By Robin Jones

A CLASSIC Danish locomotive which had not steamed for 38 years has made its comeback into traffic on the Nene Valley Railway.

DSB (Danske Statsbaner – Danish State Railways) F class 0-6-0T No. 656 – nicknamed 'Tinkerbell' because of the sound it makes with its fitted shunting bell – was built by Frichs of Aarhus in 1949, to an Otto Busse design of 1893.

After the devastating attacks of the Second World War, Danish railways found shunters in short supply. The postwar Fs largely followed the original drawings, with Allen straight link valve gear fitted, as designed by LNWR chief engineer Alexander Allen at Crewe in the 1850s and long since superseded in UK practice. There were, however, slight modifications, such as stronger buffers and bufferbeams, and a larger-capacity coal bunker.

With a comparatively low maximum speed of 27-31mph as the Fs were primarily intended for shunting, several were used on branch line traffic.

Back after decades: Danish State Railways F class 0-6-0T No. 656 undergoing test runs at the head of a rake of continental coaches on the Nene Valley Railway on January 19. PAUL ROE/NVR

Unique opportunity

Between 1893 and 1949, a total of 132 Fs of three different types were built. The oldest of the 13 survivors dates from 1899; No. 656, the sole example in the UK, was built in 1949.

After withdrawal from service, No. 656 was placed into store at Aarhus depot, from where it was bought by enthusiast Richard Hurlock and transported to Peterborough to run on the NVR, unique in the UK as the only heritage line able to accommodate stock built to Berne or continental loading gauge.

No. 656 was steamed for the first time on the NVR in 1976, before entering regular service after the formal opening of the line in 1977 on the lighter off-peak trains.

A distinctive feature of black-liveried No. 656 is that it carries the red and white colours of the Danish flag around its chimney.

It has also starred in the TV series Secret Army, made by the BBC and Belgian national broadcaster BRT (now VRT), which told the story of a fictional resistance movement in Nazi-occupied Belgium. Broadcast between 1977 and 1979, it included a sequence in which No. 656 and its train were 'shot up' by a Mosquito aircraft.

In 1985, No. 656 was sold to John Snasdell when Richard Hurlock moved to the USA. It was taken out of traffic in 1986 with a failed firebox and spent the next 16 years in store in Wansford shed awaiting overhaul. In 2004, John Snasdell donated the locomotive to the railway.

Full overhaul

The dismantling of No. 656 began during the winter of 2003/04, and by 2005 the boiler had been removed and the extent of the necessary work to repair it was established. The rest of the locomotive was then taken apart to allow a full overhaul to proceed.

The overhaul and fundraising for it were slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic.

All the parts were reconditioned, and vacuum braking was installed for the first time. Previously, No. 656 was air-braked only and could not haul vacuum-braked stock. Now under the wing of the NVR Small Loco Group, lighting has been fitted to the front and rear fixed headlamps, along with cab lighting, all running on LED and powered by a car battery in a wooden battery box on the top of the side tank of the fireman's side.

On January 19, No. 656 underwent loaded test runs with four air-braked coaches, and two full round trips were completed with no issues. During the test runs, No. 656 created an enormous amount of interest from occupants of the caravan site at Ferry Meadows, the outside valve gear being a sight to behold, and the youngsters were attracted by the constant ringing of its bell – all boding well for No. 656 and its trains becoming a popular family attraction.

No. 656 was rostered to enter service at the February 10/11 Winter on the Continent Weekend when it was scheduled to haul the line's four first class continental coaches.

Once in regular traffic, its coaching rake is set to include recently restored teak-bodied balcony-ended 76-seater Norwegian coach No. 601, which was built in 1925 for Oslo suburban services.

No. 601 was bought by Richard Hurlock and arrived on the NVR in January 1977.

In September 1982, it was used in scenes filmed on the NVR for the James Bond movie Octopussy starring Roger Moore as 007. It was used as Octopussy's private onboard massage parlour in the film's circus train.

F class 0-6-0T No. 656 on shed at Wansford on January 22. ROBIN JONES

Norwegian State Railways coach No. 601 being repanelled inside the Wansford workshop on January 22. ROBIN JONES

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£500k needed to get *City of Peterborough* steaming again

THE Nene Valley Railway has launched an appeal to help fund the completion of overhaul for BR Standard 5MT No. 73050 *City of Peterborough*, which is owned by its namesake city's council and from which the heritage line lease it.

Built at Derby Works in April 1954, No. 73050 had a career of just 14 years, including stints piloting the 'Pines Express' before withdrawal in June 1968, having run around 825,000 miles. Its current preservation life is not far off four times that length, having been saved the same year.

It was selected by the late Rev Richard Paten to be preserved in Peterborough, and BR allowed it to make a single run from Manchester via Wakefield and on to New England shed in steam on the night of September 20, 1968, a month after the end of steam haulage on the national network. First kept in a siding at the old Peterborough East station, the formation of Peterborough Locomotive Society to look after No. 73050 led directly to the establishment of the NVR.

No. 73050 has appeared in TV adaptations of Agatha Christie's The Mystery of the Blue Train and Murder on the Orient Express, disguised to appear as a continental locomotive.

Last operational in 2014, its overhaul commenced in 2017 with some funding provided by the council and a bequest from the estate of a supporter.

The boiler is currently at the Heywood workshop of Riley & Son for contract overhaul to be carried out there, while the locomotive's tender is on loan to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway where it is being used behind BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92134, which is awaiting its own new tender.

Meanwhile, work on the frames and mechanical components has been taking place in the NVR's Wansford workshop, where rewheeling took place on January 10.

Work at an estimated cost of £500,000 is still needed before the locomotive will return to steam, with available funds currently at half that. The railway has therefore launched a series of 'COP' schemes to help raise the required amount.

Donors who set up a standing order to the value of £20 per month will be subscribed to the COP Supporters' Club, receiving a monthly newsletter detailing work carried out and an invitation to an annual open day every March. Those donating £50 per month will be COP Crusaders, with invitations to visit the workshops and personally inspect the progress every three months.

Those who wish to donate more are advised to get in touch and discuss; joining the COP Champions tier will entitle them to personal liaison with the workshop to answer questions as the overhaul progresses, as well an entitlement to monthly visits and advance notice of major work taking place. They will also be awarded complimentary seats aboard the locomotive's first trains, and a footplate pass to use within its first year back in service.

For full details, visit nvr.org.uk/article.php/152/73050-city-of-peterborough

The overhaul of BR 5MT No. 73050 *City of Peterborough* took a notable step forward on January 10 when the locomotive's frames were rewheeled in the Nene Valley Railway's Wansford workshop. An appeal has been launched to help fund the remaining work, including contracted overhaul of the boiler at Riley & Son's Heywood works. ROBIN JONES

Manchester museum historic roof replacement underway

THE vital replacement of the roof on the Grade II-listed New Warehouse at Manchester's Science and Industry Museum has begun.

The museum is on the site of the world's first inter-city passenger station, Manchester Liverpool Road, which opened in 1830 as part of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. The station frontage and 1830 warehouse are both Grade I-listed.

In 1978, Greater Manchester Council purchased the earliest part of the station following its closure by BR three years earlier. The museum opened at this site on September 15, 1983, and later expanded to include the whole of the former station.

The museum celebrates ideas that change the world, from the Industrial Revolution to today and beyond.

At more than 140 years old, the New Warehouse, which dates from the 1880s when the station grew into a hub of 19th-century industry, is the next building to undergo essential conservation work as part of a £14.2 million programme taking place across the museum's globally-significant site.

Its roof is now in need of essential repairs.

The museum will remain open throughout the work, and visitors will be able to see engineering in action as scaffolding is erected around the New Warehouse this winter as part of the project, funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, to complete urgent repairs.

The New Warehouse now houses the main museum entrance, three permanent galleries – named Revolution Manchester, Textiles Gallery, and Experiment – three changing exhibition spaces, a café, shop, and conference space, spread over three floors.

Working with Manchester-based architect Buttress, which specialises in restoring listed and historic buildings, the work will include critical repairs to the roof, which is nearly as big as two Olympic-sized swimming pools. The roof will then be tiled with about 60,000 Welsh slate tiles from the UNESCO World Heritage site of Blaenau Ffestiniog, the sole-remaining quarry producing this type of slate. The new tiles will be used to match the original slates and will be nailed to match the historic way they were previously arranged.

The project will also aim to improve thermal efficiency and make the building more environmentally sustainable, including key restoration work to the masonry and windows and replacing single-glazed rooflights with heritage-style double glazing. Additional roof insulation made from environmentally-friendly and natural wood fibres will be added to support better energy performance.

The current plastic gutters do not meet heritage standards for a building of this status and need replacing. New lead-lined gutters will be made from cast iron, reflecting the original ones on the building, and will give them a new life expectancy of 100 years.

Manchester-based 3D Scaffolding is constructing a monumental scaffold with an equivalent of 41 miles of tubular materials to support the temporary roof structure.

New safe roof access walkways and inspection facilities, crucial for long-term maintenance, will also be installed.

The project will take place alongside other restoration work at the site, including the Upper Yard, gantry and the viaduct, alongside continued work on Power Hall, and is expected to be completed by mid-2025.

Museum director Sally MacDonald commented: "The changes taking place now will mean visitors can enjoy our museum for years to come.

"We have always been a place of change and transformation and the work on New Warehouse is our next step to future-proof our historic site."

The New Warehouse from Upper Yard. SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP/LEE MAWDSLEY

Railway archive images set to give a boost to heritage lines

By Geoff Courtney

TWO of Scotland's major heritage railways, the Bo'ness & Kinneil and Strathspey, are set to receive a financial boost following the launch of a book featuring photographs of steam, some previously unpublished, taken in the 1950s and 1960s in the west of the country.

The images were the work of railwayman Bill Smith, who was born in 1926 and in the course of his career became a prolific and respected railway photographer, covering everything from main line expresses to colliery and other industrial locomotives.

As part of his professional duties in BR's Scottish Region train planning department in Glasgow, Bill picked up information about forthcoming unusual workings or locomotive allocations that a majority of enthusiasts, especially photographers, were unaware of.

In the introduction to the book, which has been published by Transport Treasury under the title The Steam Railway Western Scotland, the three compliers – Bob Avery, Graham Maxtone and Dave Davidson – give as an example of this inside knowledge a series of photographs depicting three troop specials in 'deepest'

Saddle tank at work: The couple pushing a youngster in a pram on October 18, 1955, are wary as an 0-4-0ST shunts a boiler across a street in the Caledonia Works complex of Andrew Barclay Sons & Co in Kilmarnock.
WESTERN SCOTLAND STEAM/TRANSPORT TREASURY/WAC SMITH

Dumfries & Galloway in May 1965 featuring No. 45573 *Newfoundland*, No. 72006 *Clan Mackenzie*, and classmate No. 72008 *Clan MacLeod*.

"These days of smart phones and websites mean it is possible to 'trainspot' without leaving the house," they write. "Arguably, this takes much of the fun out of the hobby and doesn't produce railway photographs."

Bob, Graham, and Dave add that before and after Bill's retirement in 1982, his expertise found outlets as a train planner and later as secretary of the Scottish branch of the Stephenson Locomotive Society.

In these roles, Bill, who died in 2009, organised a large number of enthusiasts' tours covering much of Scotland's network, ranging from brake van trips over rarely visited goods branches to tours lasting several days using such preserved locomotives as *Glen Douglas*, *Gordon Highlander*, Jones goods No. 103, and Stirling single No. 123.

After steam ended, he went on to photograph modern traction, but with less enthusiasm. Instead, he travelled to other countries which still used steam traction, and he also photographed ships operating on the Clyde.

Everyday life

"We have tried to choose pictures about which we could contribute something more than just a date and location," continue the trio in their introduction. "Often in the background of Bill's pictures are snippets of now vanished aspects of everyday life in Scotland, which add interest to the railway setting."

Without doubt that aim has been achieved handsomely, for some of the details and comments in the captions are fascinating. An ad hoc selection includes the caption to an image of B1 No. 61332 heading a Dundee-Glasgow train on March 31, 1956, that includes: "Against a backdrop of classic Glasgow tenements, and some trees struggling against the constant smoky atmosphere and no doubt chilly early spring weather, the passengers will be collecting their belongings as the train passes under Keppochhill Road on the last half-mile to Queen Street."

Then, this comment accompanying an image of Standard Pacific No. 72001 *Clan Cameron* heading a Glasgow-Spean Bridge special train in conjunction with a gathering of members of the Clan at their ancestral home Achnacarry Castle on June 16, 1956: "It was reported that all the special train's crews had the surname

Smokescreen: Royal Scot No. 46107 *Argyll and Sutherland Highlander* passes Dalmarnock Junction on the WCML at Rutherglen on March 11, 1961, with a long train of mineral wagons. The 1927-built 4-6-0 was a Glasgow Polmadie (66A) locomotive from Nationalisation until withdrawal in December 1962 and possibly a resident there throughout its 35-year service, thus an elusive engine for southern-based trainspotters.
WESTERN SCOTLAND STEAM/TRANSPORT TREASURY/WAC SMITH

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All at sea: The driver of ex-Caledonian Railway No. 56361 eyes photographer Bill Smith during shunting duties at King George V dock at Shieldhall, Glasgow, on March 13, 1956. Behind the 0-6-0T is *MS Antenor* and on the other side of the dock *Clan Macaulay*. WESTERN SCOTLAND STEAM/TRANSPORT TREASURY/WAC SMITH

Turn-around: Class K2 No. 61764 *Loch Arkaig* after arriving at Crianlarich Upper station with the 2.50pm from Glasgow Queen Street on June 17, 1961. WESTERN SCOTLAND STEAM/TRANSPORT TREASURY/WAC SMITH

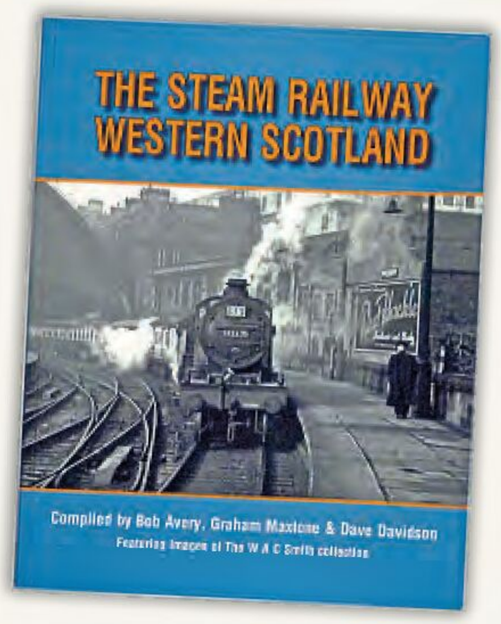
of Cameron. While this may not have caused the roster clerk at Fort William too many issues in adjusting the booked rosters to fit, his counterpart at Eastfield may have found it more challenging."

In the caption to a photograph of a 30-ton steam breakdown crane lifting derailed 0-4-4T No. 55220 near Glasgow Central station on November 4, 1955, the writer muses: "The local traffic inspector is seen having a quiet smoke, while no doubt contemplating the writing of the required investigation report. The fitting staff who accompanied the crane on its journey from Polmadie to site are in all likelihood mentally assessing the potential for an overtime payment as they strive to rerail the errant 55220."

Bob, who met Bill on one occasion at Carlisle station when two steam-hauled specials were operating, and his fellow compilers Graham and Dave, have pledged to donate royalties from sales of the book to the Bo'ness & Kinneil and Strathspey railways.

Robin Fell, managing director of Transport Treasury, said: "I am delighted Bob, Graham and Dave have decided to donate their royalties. They have done a superb job with their research that has resulted in fascinating and detailed captions, which we often strive for in our publications.

"It is a most generous gesture, and I hope sales lead to handsome donations to the two very popular lines."



→ The Steam Railway Western Scotland is compiled by Bob Avery, Graham Maxtone and Dave Davidson (softback, 112pp, £14.95 + £3 p&p, ISBN 978-1-913251-64-2, cheques payable to Transport Treasury Publishing and sent to 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe HP13 7PJ).

Steam secured, ambition achieved: Plym Valley purchases a Barclay

By Owen Hayward

WHILE several heritage lines rely on hiring locomotives to fulfil their operational requirements, the Plym Valley Railway's purchase of Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2248 *Albert* from a supporter has secured a steam presence for the long term – and fulfils one of the line's primary goals in the process.

Built in 1948 for the British Sugar Corporation's Worcester and Somerset plants, *Albert* arrived on the PVR under private ownership in 2004 where, following repairs and overhaul, it returned to steam five years later.

Last August the railway announced it had been offered the opportunity to buy the locomotive (which had recently completed another overhaul) for £40,000. With one of the PVR Co. Ltd.'s goals being to own an operational steam locomotive, an appeal was set up, and on January 14, the railway announced that the purchase had gone ahead.

Big help

At a small ceremony at the PVR's Marsh Mills depot, director of motive power and rolling stock, Aaron Cook, said: "A massive thank-you to everyone who has donated towards the appeal. I can't press home how much this has helped.

"When its owners approached to say the engine was going to be put up for sale, we could never have afforded it, and we honestly thought the PVR would be without steam once again.

"We started looking at many options, which included becoming a diesel-only railway, hiring a steam engine, or the restoration of another steam engine, but it became very quickly apparent that if *Albert* was to go, this would probably mean the end of PVR steam.

Congratulations to all

"We did wonder if the Save Our Steam appeal would be successful, as past efforts to raise money have not always been so. This time I can honestly say a massive thank-you and I'm so pleased how well we have all done. The Plym Valley Railway Association has given the SOS a massive amount, and we managed to get to a total of £31,180 of the £40,000 target. This has allowed the railway to purchase *Albert,* which it would not have otherwise done so.

"I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Liddicoat for bringing *Albert* to the railway and letting us use the engine. It has kept us in steam for many years, has been the face of the railway, and has been a fantastic engine which they have worked so hard on, especially at the beginning of *Albert*'s time with us. I would also like to thank them for the advance notice and their cooperation every step of the way in giving us the opportunity to acquire the engine."

As *Albert* was undergoing maintenance and inspections, it was unable to be in steam.

A formal handover ceremony is planned to take place at a later date.

The previous owners (centre) of Andrew Barclay *Albert* shake hands with PVR representatives after the railway successfully completed purchase of its first operational steam locomotive in January. PVR

Middleton Peckett on the move

By Sally Clifford

New beginning: Jim Dutton with Peckett No. 2103 at the Middleton Railway before its departure to the Ribble Steam Railway. SALLY CLIFFORD

JIM Dutton's passion for steam led to his latest acquisition. The 75-year-old travelled from his home on the outskirts of Wigan to Leeds to see Peckett No. 2103 safely onto a low-loader, ready for its journey from The Middleton Railway to Ribble Steam Railway.

Built in Bristol in 1950, No. 2103 will join Jim's other engine, Hawthorn Leslie 0-6-0ST No. 3931 of 1938 *Linda,* at the railway.

The R4 Class 4 special shunting engine is one of three Pecketts built in 1948 for Croydon Power Station B.

'Intermittent' residency

Ian Smith, vice president of the Middleton, the home of No. 2103 for the last 27 years, said: "They were delivered; however, because Croydon Power Station wasn't ready, they were returned back to Peckett & Sons Ltd. When they were finally delivered in 1950, Peckett put new works plates on it."

No. 2013's residency at Middleton Railway, he said, has been intermittent.

"It has been here twice, first in 1981 and it then moved to Great Yorkshire Railways, Harrogate, in 1986, and Murton in 1989, before coming back to Middleton in 1996."

Following overhaul at the Middleton, No. 2103 began transporting passengers along the two-mile line. For the last 15 years, it has been on display in the Engine House.

Jim, a retired gas services engineer, purchased *Linda* – a former workhorse for the British Steel Corporation at Corby and later a passenger locomotive at the Swanage Railway, where it adopted is current name – in the late 1990s and spent a decade restoring it.

Jim, who helps out in the workshop at Ribble, also owns a 3 ½in gauge and 5in gauge model collection. I always wanted to own a steam engine from being a little lad, train spotting," he said. "Everything was steam then and my grandfather was a driver at Wigan. My father bought me an electric train set when I was about three.

"I just like steam engines – anything steam."

Doubled-up Victorian steam for Swanage

WITH LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 having stolen the show at the Swanage Railway's Winter Warm Up weekend of January 6/7 (as reported last issue), the first opportunity to witness it operating alongside another product of the 19th century will be presented during March 22-24, with the Purbeck line playing host to a Victorian-themed weekend and steam gala.

Built in 1896 at Ashford Works by the South Eastern & Chatham Railway, O1 0-6-0 No. 65 will appear alongside No. 563 on what will be only its third visit away from its Bluebell Railway base this century. Both the T3 and O1 carry their striking pre-Grouping liveries, with just three years separating the build dates of each.

Although the Victorian era pair will dominate proceedings, the weekend will also be a steam gala event with SR dominance as U 2-6-0 No. 31806 and West Country No. 34028 *Eddystone* will also be in service.

'Teddy bear' duo secured for anniversary bash

THE BR Class 14 celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, and while the East Lancashire Railway's half-centenary event in 2014 (which brought together 10 of the 19 UK-based preserved examples) will be hard pressed to replicate, the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway will celebrate the occasion with its own gathering of 'Teddy Bears' on July 25-28 – with two guests already secured alongside the resident pair.

The first batch of 26 of these 0-6-0 diesel hydraulic ls was built at Swindon Works, with the expectation that they would take on trip working movements between local yards and short distance freight services.

Their central cabs also allowed for good all-round visibility which, with their dual controls, made them well-suited for shunting duties too.

Initially all allocated to the Western Region, several make it over to the Eastern Region.

Fifty-six were built in total, but their working lives were short-lived as the work for which they were designed rapidly disappeared; as early as 1968, disposals were taking place with the entire class out of BR's hands by 1970.

Many were sold into industrial use, while the remainder were scrapped, but even then, work was drying up fast, rapidly deeming the survivors as surplus. In addition to the 19 saved for UK heritage purposes, five were exported overseas.

The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's resident Class 14 D9537 *Eric*, all set for July's 60th birthday bash. EVR

Over an extended weekend of July 25-28, EVR-based D9525 and D9537 *Eric* will be joined by the Severn Valley Railway's D9551, with D9504 arriving from the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

The event will mark the final appearance of *Eric* before its withdrawal immediately afterwards for a mechanical overhaul to commence.

➜ Given the high cost involved in staging such an event, the railway has announced a sponsorship scheme to allow businesses and individuals to support it. Four packages are available, with offerings including colour adverts in event programmes, corporate day preview tickets and prominent positioning of advertisements on the railway's website.

For event details and sponsorship information, see www.e-v-r.com/14s-at-60/ or email ticketoffice@e-v-r.com

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LMS 'Black Five' No. 5428 *Eric Treacy* departs Ruswarp with a North Yorkshire Moors Railway Whitby winter excursion service on January 4. JACK LORD

Bid to save one of the last Class 507 EMUs from scrap gains momentum

By Robin Jones

A BID to save the first-built Merseyrail Class 507 EMU before the last of the class is withdrawn and scrapped has been gathering support.

The 33 Class 507s were built by BR at York Works between 1978 and 1980 as one of five classes based on the 1972-built Prototype Electro Pneumatic Train (PEP) prototype, alongside the 313s, 314s, 315s and 508s.

The 507 units spent their working lives on the Merseyrail network of third-rail suburban lines centred on Liverpool.

The campaign to save a unit began last September in response to the withdrawal of Merseyrail's Class 507 and 508 stock, which had been proceeding slowly up until that point but gathered pace in the final months of 2023 as the new Class 777s were introduced.

BR Class 507 EMU No. 507001 at Southport station. JAMES GLEIG/C507PS

Increasing interest

A mailing list was set up by local man Robert Hampton to gauge interest in preserving a 507 and for interested parties to receive a regular newsletter with progress updates.

Within a few weeks, more than 100 people had signed up to register their interest in saving a unit for preservation and the number now exceeds 200.

With the knowledge that there was genuine support for a preservation attempt, Robert approached Merseytravel and Angel Trains, which confirmed that if a credible attempt could be formulated, they would support it. An inaugural meeting was held in Liverpool on November 19, at which the Class 507 Preservation Society's constitution was agreed, and a five-person committee elected, with Robert as chairman.

The society then launched a search for a site that would be prepared to host the unit.

Royal link

Unit No. 507001, the first of the class to be built, was identified as its preferred preservation candidate, and it is expected to be one of the final units withdrawn this summer.

The unit also has a special place in history as it worked a royal special train, conveying the late Queen Elizabeth II to Kirkby after she officially opened the Merseyrail underground on October 25, 1978.

The society's campaign was boosted in late November when No. 507001 emerged from overhaul in a heritage blue/grey livery similar to that worn when introduced into service by BR in 1978, attracting much interest from enthusiasts.

Indeed, the unit has become something of a celebrity in its final months of service, with more attention drawn to the efforts to preserve it.

As *Heritage Railway* magazine closed for press, the society was continuing discussions with the unit's owner, Angel Trains, as well as Merseyrail and Merseytravel.

The society is in contact with an organisation that is prepared to offer No. 507001 a home where it can be kept securely and viewed by the public.

➜ To support the society, visit www.class507.org.uk or twitter.com/class_507, email hello@class507.org.uk, or write to: Class 507 Preservation Society, 54 Woodsorrell Road, Liverpool L15 6UD.

Architect firm appointed for Crewe Heritage Centre upgrade

LONDON architectural practice 6a has won a publicly tendered contract, estimated to be worth £45,000, to draw up plans for a major upgrade of Crewe Heritage Centre for Crewe Town Council.

Established in 2001, 6a is associated with projects for cultural institutions such as art galleries, collaborations with artists, and residential buildings. The practice won the Royal Institute of British Architects National Awards in 2011, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021 and the Erich Schelling Medal for Architecture in 2012.

It will now conduct a feasibility study into options to transform the former railway works, which is now a visitor attraction housing locomotives, rolling stock and relics including the sole-surviving BR experimental Class 370 Advanced Passenger Train, No. 370 003/006 and three open signalboxes (Crewe Station A, Crew North Junction and Exeter West). It is managed by Crewe Heritage Trust.

The search for a design team was launched in November after the council said it was seeking a consultant for a review of Crewe's conservation area. The project aims to deliver a 'modern heritage leisure attraction' on the site near to Crewe Station.

Tram tracks are rediscovered in centre of Leeds

TRAM tracks last used 65 years ago have been uncovered during a £270 million road scheme in Leeds city centre.

The tracks were found six inches below Sovereign Street, once the location of Leeds Corporation Tramways' main depot during work on the Connecting Leeds project.

The city's tramways opened in 1891 and the last service ran on November 7, 1959.

The discovery has prompted calls to keep a section of the street showing the tracks.

A supertram project for Leeds was cancelled in 2005 and a trolleybus scheme was refused planning consent in 2016.

Whisky, gin, and James Bond after Spa Valley's record year

By Geoff Courtney

WHISKY, gin, fine dining, and comedy are all on the menu as the Spa Valley Railway prepares for the arrival of spring with a programme of Saturday steam-hauled specials that includes a new interactive experience for passengers.

On February 24 and March 9, trains will feature grain and malt whisky tasting in collaboration with the Chatham Dockyard-based Copper Rivet Distillery. The £40 ticket price includes mixer and canapés, and departure from Tunbridge Wells West station is at 3pm on both days for a return trip to Eridge

Gin tasting will follow on March 2, 16 and 23, again leaving Tunbridge Wells West at 3pm for return journeys to Eridge. Passengers will be offered three gins from the Anno Distillery of Marden, near Maidstone, and the £35 ticket price includes tonic water and canapés.

March 16 and April 20 are the dates for the new experience, a Live and Let Dine train featuring an interactive James Bond spoof comedy. Spa Valley commercial manager Jonnie Pay explained: "The adventure promises to be an evening filled with fun, laughter, amazing entertainment and onboard dining.

"Passengers must be prepared to be shaken, not stirred, by a host of hilarious characters who will serve up comedy mayhem alongside a three-course dinner.

"There will be outrageous super villains, death-defying missions, and many of the well-known Bond movie clichés as passengers watch the hero trying to unravel who is out to get him and why. It is sure to appeal to anyone who loves comedy classics such as Austin Powers, Johnny English, and The Naked Gun."

Tickets are £89.50 and include the show, return journey from Tunbridge Wells West to Eridge, three-course meal, and tea/coffee and mints. The trains will leave Tunbridge Wells at 6pm.

Caledonian Railway 812 class 0-6-0 No. 828 (BR No. 57566), currently on loan from the Strathspey Railway, is expected to be the locomotive rostered for the trains.

The railway has announced that last year it had a record 75,768 visitors. "A huge shout-out and enormous thank-you must go to all the volunteers for their continued drive to keep our railway and attraction going for people to enjoy all year round," said Jonnie.

Right: Scottish visitor: Caledonian Railway 812 0-6-0 No. 828 passes through the woodland at Adams Well on the Spa Valley Railway on January 14 with an Eridge-Tunbridge Wells West train. The on-loan 0-6-0 is due to be rostered to haul a series of specials in February, March and April, comprising whisky and gin tasting trains and a James Bond spoof. OWEN HAYWARD

Connemara Railway extends towards Oughterard

IRELAND'S Connemara Railway project has made significant progress after a burst of winter track-laying took the line two-thirds-of-a-mile east of its Maam Cross station base in the direction of Oughterard, the next station towards Galway.

A temporary railhead has been established using 3ft gauge track, and a test train has been run over the line to check it out as a prelude to passenger operations.

Chairman Jim Deegan said: "We cleared the trackbed which hadn't been disturbed since closure of the line in 1935 and its subsequent lifting immediately after and laid our narrow-gauge track which will remain in place as a temporary measure until we lay our permanent 5ft 3in gauge track in the future.

"The narrow gauge will allow us to start passenger services from Maam Cross in the summer.

"The re-laid track is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers in the heart of the wildest Connemara bogs in the middle of a harsh winter!"

Work has also finished on completing the line's replica signal cabin at the west end of Maam Cross station. Fully fitted out with a lever frame, rescued from Ennis South cabin thanks to Iarnrod Eireann co-operation, as well as instruments and furniture, the cabin makes an impressive sight at dusk, showing off its recently installed internal lighting beside the also lit operational starter signal at the end of the opposite platform.

"We are making rapid progress in turning the clock back to Maam Cross as it was in 1934," said Jim. "But we are still looking for funds and more volunteers to help us make our dream come true. If anyone can help, either with a donation, or hands-on or in-kind assistance, please e-mail us at info@connemararailway.ie"

The latest winter track-laying drive has taken the 3ft gauge rails two-thirds-of-a-mile east of Maam Cross. A test train tries out the new line. JIM DEEGAN/CONNEMARA RAILWAY

The replica signal cabin, built in exactly the same place as the original, and the semaphore signal shine at dusk at Maam Cross station. JIM DEEGAN/CONNEMARA RAILWAY

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Taking pride of place at the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition in November 2016 was the under-construction new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*. QUENTIN MCGUINNESS/6880

Time called on Warley national exhibition

By Owen Hayward and Robin Jones

AFTER 30 years as one of the biggest events in the UK modellers' calendar, the Warley Model Railway Club's annual exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham has been suspended "for the foreseeable future" as past organisers look to retire with no replacements coming forth to take on the required positions.

The high-profile Warley National Model Railway Exhibition is loved by many for its broad range of exhibits which have regularly included one or more full-size centrepieces, ranging from locomotives such as GNR 0-6-2T N2 No. 1744 in 2011, Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* in 2014, and the Erlestoke Manor Fund's GWR 2-6-2T No. 5164 at the last event, on November 25-26, 2023, when its transportation to the event was sponsored by Accurascale, to items of rolling stock.

Focal point

It has also been a central point for model manufacturers, preservation societies from all over Europe, groups, and projects to converge in order to promote their causes and drum up business, support and donations.

The club was formed in 1967 and displayed three layouts at the Bridgnorth Model Railway Club Exhibition in May that year. It became the Warley Model Railway Club in 1971 and held its annual show at the Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre in Smethwick. However, the popularity of its events outgrew available space, and in 1993 it hired the hall at the NEC for the first time.

An open statement to exhibitors and visitors on behalf of the club said: "The Warley exhibition is different to many other major shows. It is run by a team of volunteers from within the club, some of whom have organised and delivered it for more than 30 years. The members have considered present market conditions and their ability to deliver what is a complex undertaking and have concluded that the time has come to cease holding an exhibition at the NEC for the foreseeable future.

"We are in the process of evaluating the present market conditions and the resources available to the club to plan what we can and need to deliver in the future."

Exhibition manager Nigel Smith added: "This will be disappointing to many, visitors and exhibitors alike. However, we are an ageing membership, and we must be realistic about what we can deliver in the future. Many of our existing team have been involved for 30-plus years and would like to retire gracefully."

"When our club decided to create the Warley national exhibition, it was primarily to create a showcase for our wonderful hobby," added interim club chairman Alan Turner. "I believe we succeeded in doing that. We are amazed that our exhibition has remained the premier exhibition in the country for 30 very successful years. Many of the organising team have been a part of it since the very beginning.

"We thank all of those who have supported this exhibition over the years, whether as organisers, stewards, exhibitors, traders or just visitors – we couldn't have done it without you.

"Warley club is in very good health and has plenty of exciting plans for the future."

Club member Steve Flint, a former *Railway Modeller* editor, said that that although he was disappointed to see the end of the show at the NEC, he felt that it was a carefully considered decision by the members. "The hobby is alive and well at grassroots level, but the commercial boom period of recent decades has probably run its course, having been slowed by the effects of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the ever-increasing age of enthusiasts," he said.

"Moreover, the tick of the demographic time bomb is getting more prominent, as the next generation of younger enthusiasts required to take over the staffing and running of such a prestigious event does not seem to be materialising.

"Hence, it is time for Warley Model Railway Club to step aside with pride, having had the privilege of promoting this great creative hobby to the nation at the NEC for more than 30 years with the full support of hundreds of volunteer enthusiasts, manufacturers and retail traders."

New sessions

The news came in the wake of the announcement by one of the sector's major retailers, Hattons of Liverpool, that it would also be winding up business this year, as reported last issue. On January 15, Paignton Model Shop also said that it too would be closing in the second week of March.

Meanwhile, following the long-term success of the NEC event, the club remains keen to encourage modelling and new members.

It has launched a new series of Saturday morning modelling sessions, running from 10am to 1pm at its clubroom in Oldbury, on March 2 and April 13.

Subjects to be covered include how to start planning a layout and building base boards, laying track, points and wire for operations, ballasting track, buildings and landscaping and soldering.

A test track will be available on which visitors can run their stock.

To book a place at one of these events, visit http://tinyurl.com/mr2k6pz2

Unaccompanied children are not permitted to attend.

Star guests lined up for Minehead

LNER B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower* and LNWR 0-6-2 Coal Tank No. 1054 will stage a 'double first' as guests at the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 Spring Steam Spectacular.

While *Mayflower* visited the WSR at the head of a railtour in 2015, the gala will be the first time that the B1, now part of the Locomotive Services Ltd fleet, has hauled public services over it.

Also, it will not only be the first time that Keighley & Worth Valley Railway-based No. 1054 will have visited the WSR, but the furthest into the West Country that it has ever been. During the gala, No. 1054, visiting courtesy of the Bahamas Locomotive Society, will head local passenger trains and short goods workings.

The pair will run alongside home-based WR 4-6-0 No. 7828 *Odney Manor*, WR pannier No. 9466, and WSR 2-6-0 No. 9351.

Rare track

Passengers will be able to travel down the rarely-opened section between Bishops Lydeard and Norton Fitzwarren. The turning triangle at Norton Fitzwarren and turntable at Minehead will both be in use, ensuring that as many locomotives as possible will be facing smokebox-first.

One of the guests at the WSR's June 6-8 Summer Diesel Festival will be Severn Valley Railway-based Class 50 No. 50033 *Glorious* (courtesy of the Class 50 Alliance), which previously visited the WSR on June 5, 1993, when, with sister Class 50s Nos. D400 *Fearless* and 50007 *Hercules,* it hauled Pathfinder Tours' 'Bishops Triple' charter from York.

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Severn Valley freezes fares to boost family market offering

IN a bid to encourage more cash-strapped visitors in the current economic climate, the Severn Valley Railway has pegged most of its regular fares at last year's prices.

Tickets are now on sale for day tickets throughout the service train calendar until October half-term, while 'freedom of the line' tickets offer unlimited journeys throughout the day along the full length of the line. Advance booked adult fares start from £25.

The SVR also continues to make short journey tickets available. Pegged at lower prices, they allow a return journey along part of the 16-mile route and last year proved popular with those who could not spend a full day at the railway, who wanted to explore a specific area, or were travelling with younger children. It is also possible to make single or return journeys between any number of stations, and these tickets, now with standardised pricing, are often used by walkers or cyclists, and can be bought at booking offices on the day of travel only.

For visitors wishing to make repeat visits, unlimited passes are available for individuals, couples, families, and those who need to travel with a carer. In a new move, the passes will be valid for 12 months from the date of purchase. They allow unlimited visits on normal operating days and access to added extras such as a 10% discount in refreshment rooms and shops, discounts on special event tickets, and the chance to bring up to two dogs for free.

"We've worked hard to have a range of tickets to match the needs of all visitors," said SVR visitor engagement manager Lewis Maddox. "We are particularly pleased that we've been able to keep most of our day tickets at the same price as last year. Prices are rising all around us, so this was something we really wanted to do to help visitors and ensure as many people as possible can enjoy a trip on our amazing trains."

Find out more about ticket options at svr.co.uk

Darjeeling Tank 19B overhaul begins at Statfold Barn Railway

By Phil Marsh

THE overhaul of 1889 Sharp Stewart 0-4-0ST No. 19B, built for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, has commenced at the Statfold Barn Railway's workshops.

There was nervousness among the Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust leadership team, who formed a Plan A and an alternative Plan B; the decision on which one was implemented depended on what was found when the boiler was removed and, crucially, inspected!

Plan A was hoped for as this was the course of action if no major repairs were required to renew its boiler ticket and return to service by the summer. Plan B would have been problematic, for if the boiler's condition was found to be poor, a replacement one would have been needed, costing an estimated £150,000.

Statfold's engineering team began dismantling the locomotive on January 8, and 32 hours later the boiler had been lifted off the frames and in the workshop. All tubes were removed by January 23, and the smallest member of the workshop team, Steve, spent many hours in the boiler barrel cleaning out scale, mud and debris.

Trust chairman Jeremy Davey said: "The great fear was that we would find a catastrophic fault requiring a new boiler. Newer boilers can be given a replacement barrel or inner firebox, but not with this one. It is so original it would simply be wrong to Trigger's broom it!"

Years of history

The only non-original 1889 parts are the front tubeplate, the tubes, a patch behind the front tubeplate, some stays, the wash-out bosses, and some patches in the firebox. The barrel, dome, throatplate, outer firebox, foundation ring, firehole ring, many of the stays, and nearly all the inner firebox are original Low Moor iron or arsenical copper: in short, all the main bits are 135 years old.

Jeremy added: "With the boiler removed, you can see the remains of the studs for the original boilermakers plate. This locomotive has patina and history in spades – what a privilege to work with and care for it."

"Obviously, there will be some work to do," said trust treasurer 'Fuzz' Jordan, adding: "We need to replace pieces of plating on the lower sides of the outer firebox where it has sat between the frames, and the outside has suffered corrosion."

This is a straightforward repair, with no other major work being obvious at this stage of the overhaul. Shotblasting, followed by non-destructive testing, is required to check for any cracks needing weld repairs, followed by a metal thickness survey.

Boiler inspector John Glaze told Jeremy he was "confident we can give this boiler another 10 years."

Meanwhile, the trust has announced a second Supporters Day at Statfold in early April. Invitations will be sent out to supporters with full details of the overhaul progress, future plans, and a visit to check out 19B's overhaul progress – and maybe take in a train ride or two at Statfold.

Jeremy said the trust is looking to boost its volunteer team, especially with people who enjoy hands-on engineering. There is much work needed on the chassis, frames and other parts, with no special skills required!

➜ **Visit www.darjeelingtank.org.uk**

The bunkers being removed from No. 19B on January 8. DTLT

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Sharp Stewart 0-4-0ST No. 19B, about the be dismantled at Statfold Barn workshops. DTLT

Checking the firebox tubeplate on January 23. DTLT

The boiler tubes being cut out on January 12. DTLT

Lisbon tram No. 730 on arrival at Beamish Museum. BEAMISH

A taste of Portugal as Lisbon tram moves to Beamish

BEAMISH – the North of England Open Air Museum has expanded its tram fleet with the arrival of Lisbon No. 730 from its previous home at the Wirral Tramway.

The Lisbon 'standard' class emerged in Portugal after the First World War, which saw a move to home-built tramcars (rather than imported vehicles) to mitigate rising import costs during a period of political turmoil and social unrest.

No. 730 entered service in Lisbon in 1938. Later withdrawn, it came to the UK in the mid-1990s and was first stored at Colyton on the Seaton Tramway, with the aim of regauging it and using it as a mobile shop. Subsequently privately purchased, it came into the ownership of the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society in 2004. In 2013, No. 730 visited Beamish as part of the tramway's 40th anniversary celebrations, participating in the museum's Great North Steam Fair.

The tram is expected to join the Beamish fleet in service later this year.

Quainton's northern line extension on hold – but expansion still possible

By Phil Marsh

FIVE years ago, the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre laid a set of buffers and a mini-track panel half a mile north of their Quainton Road base, reaching the Doddershall road-over-rail bridge.

This move installed a highly visible physical marker aimed at demonstrating the ambition to extend the Up yard demonstration line past Rewley Road station and behind Quainton Road's Up platform station building, through the northern arch of the 1896 built three-arch road-over-rail Station Road bridge.

This extra track section was planned to run past the location of the former Metropolitan Line (to Verney Junction) junction with the former Great Central Railway.

High Speed 2 has transformed the area with major construction and earthworks, including using much of Quainton Road's overflow field car park and surrounding land.

Station Road bridge was to be strengthened using expensive (just under £2 million) supporting props as it had a three-ton weight restriction imposed due to its condition.

The Station Road bridge in May 2022, showing preliminary HS2 work and the former food storage Nissan huts and sheds at Quainton Road. PHIL MARSH

However, to save money and avoid another long-term road closure, it was decided to fill the arches with foaming concrete on a temporary basis to strengthen the bridge for use by heavy traffic.

The stopped-up Station Road bridge at Quainton Road looking south along the former Great Central Railway trackbed on January 21. PHIL MARSH

The former GCR, a freight line since 1968, is due to be relaid in the next three years, when the central arch's concrete will be removed to enable a new 90mph track to be laid through it as far as the Calvert landfill facility, two miles northwards.

Although that development has stymied the northwards extension, another opportunity has emerged because of HS2.

The high-speed railway virtually clips the former food storage area Nissan huts and associated sheds (now the museum area) that were acquired with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant more 30 years ago.

This area now isolates just over 30 acres of agricultural land from its parent farm, being bounded by the former GCR and HS2, so not very commercially viable for continuing farming operations. The centre aspires to acquire this farmland and build light industrial units to house various transport relics, maybe even from London Transport Museumm given Quainton Road's Metropolitan Line history.

The remaining part of the overflow car park on the other side of the GCR alignment could also see light industrial development as infill generating rental income for the centre.

Had the plans to reconstruct the Brill Tramway as far as the A41 at Waddesdon 30 years ago not been squashed, the opportunity to see vintage trains operate under HS2 was lost.

Yet HS2 may well bring mutual benefits to the area as EKFB, HS2's contractor at Quainton, has already donated surplus materials and track lifted from the freight line in the area.

Corris celebrates a 'full shed' as Tattoo approaches the end of its ticket

THE completion of winter works on the Corris Railway's two 0-4-2STs has concluded a long-held dream for the revivalists of the former slate line – two complete and operational steam locomotives.

Following its arrival last August, the new Falcon design, No. 10, has undergone final fettling and completion work, which has included the full lining out the paintwork and adjustments to the buffer fittings. Its completion means that the railway's engine shed at Maespoeth Junction houses two permanently CR-based steam locomotives for the first time since 1948, when the line was closed by BR, with the two surviving locomotives (Nos. 3 and 4) later saved by the Talyllyn Railway where they continue to reside to this day.

However, this celebratory occasion will be short-lived as Kerr Stuart Tattoo No. 7 will be withdrawn in the winter months at the end of 2024 for its second overhaul to commence. Completed in 2005, its first overhaul was carried out at the end of 2014 to enable it to return to service in time for the start of the 2015 operating season. The duration of this next one is unlikely to be as swift.

"As with all of these stoppages, it is uncertain how much this work will cost and its likely duration," a CR statement said. "Both will depend on how much of the work can be carried out by the railway's own volunteers." Services on the line will commence on Good Friday, running on selected days until the end of October, with one of the two steam locomotives heading trains each day subject to the usual caveats.

The number of operating days is limited by the number of volunteers available to operate the trains and staff the museum and shop at Corris.

The railway encourages anyone interested in joining in to contact via enquiries@corris.co.uk or 07785 765874.

Pre-order Issue 317: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Converted Eden Valley station and holiday lets on the market for £1.4m

CLIBURN station, which was built to serve the original Eden Valley Railway and later converted into a four-bedroom family home and holiday let business, is now on the market for offers of about £1.4 million.

The station opened to passenger traffic on the line (later part of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and then the NER) between Clifton Junction, near Penrith, and Kirkby Stephen via Appleby-in-Westmorland on June 9,1862, and closed on September 17, 1956.

It was bought in 1964 and the main building was converted into accommodation, with the other railway buildings being used to house farm animals.

In 2012, *Heritage Railway* magazine ran a competition to celebrate the opening of a new holiday let in the station's original signalbox.

Since then, the current owners, Gavin and Wendy Matier, have developed the business further but have now decided to move on to pastures new and let someone else take the project to the next level. The couple bought the site in 2004 and have carried out complete renovations of Station House, the signalbox, and the weigh office.

Station House is described as a wonderful piece of Victorian architecture, with sandstone mullioned windows and many original features.

The Victorian cast iron pillars from the waiting room have been incorporated into one of the bedrooms and the main family bathroom.

Highlights of Station House include the en-suite master bedroom, which was part of the original ladies waiting room, and has views out to the garden and paddock to the rear. There is a dining room, kitchen diner, lounge and garden room with a stone-flagged floor, timber roof and a feature timber wall.

The interior of the one-bedroom signalbox features an upside-down layout with ample natural light streaming into the lounge through windows on three sides.

The cosy living space boasts some exposed red brick walls, kitchen, bedroom with ensuite and garden.

The sandstone former weigh office, which features a lounge and mezzanine bedroom, bathroom and kitchen has a decked seating area with an outlook on to woodland.

Both the signalbox and the weigh office along with a three-bedroom BK Bluebird Sheraton 2006 static caravan are currently used as holiday lets.

There is also a small five-caravan certified location site affiliated to The Motorhome and Caravan Club, all of which yield an income.

The estate sits in 4.5 acres of land and 14 acres of woodland, and offers potential for development, subject to planning consent.

Other buildings on site are the open garage, a large 70ft barn and a Dutch barn, which has been converted into three stables.

The property is being marketed though Lune Valley Estates, a professional independent agency based at Caton.

For further details, visit www.facebook.com/LVE56625 or contact Katrina or Rob at team@lunevalleyestates.com or telephone 015242 56625.

The converted Cliburn station signalbox. GAVIN MATIER

Left: Cliburn Station House. GAVIN MATIER

New directors appointed to West Somerset

WEST Somerset Railway plc has appointed two new directors to fill newly-created voluntary posts after advertising the vacancies.

Malcolm Smith and Robin Wichard will begin working with the plc board and senior staff immediately, with an initial three months as board advisers. Their director posts will be confirmed at the end of this period.

Until recently, Malcolm was recently managing director of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, where he is also a qualified volunteer driver, fireman, and controller. He had a long and successful career in television news and other areas, culminating in work at the most senior levels in TV news. Malcolm also has a degree in physics and an MBA; before studying at university, he worked for a period with BR in a junior management position. Based in Woolacombe, Malcolm will become operations director.

Robin Wichard was previously a member of the senior leadership team at West Somerset College, where he held a lead position, including responsibility for student behaviour modification strategies and safeguarding. His subject leadership was in the humanities, including history and other related subjects. His degree was in archaeological studies, and he has written a number of books with a historical focus. Since leaving teaching, he has undertaken various volunteer roles on the WSR, including initiating and managing the very successful 1940s event.

He has been station master at Blue Anchor and, most recently, Minehead. While continuing his various current volunteer roles with the railway, Robin will take up the position of director (external fundraising).

WSR plc chairman Jonathan Jones-Pratt said: "We are delighted that Malcolm and Robin have agreed to join us. Both bring wide senior-level management experience, together with very significant heritage railway experience. For us, this is an ideal combination of expertise. We very much look forward to working with them."

HERITAGE RAILWAY

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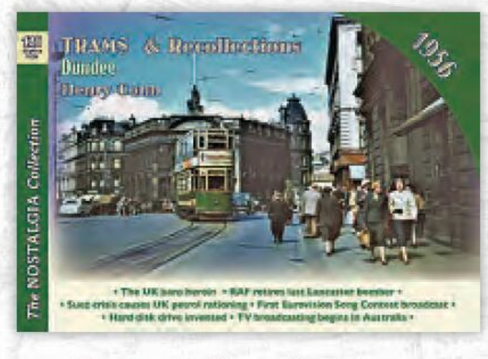

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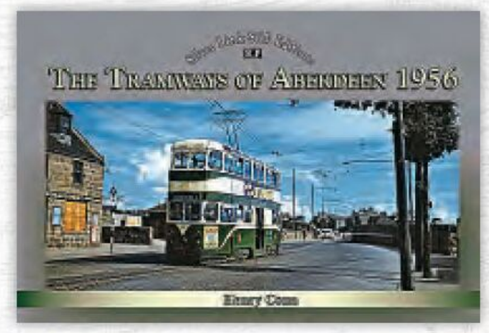

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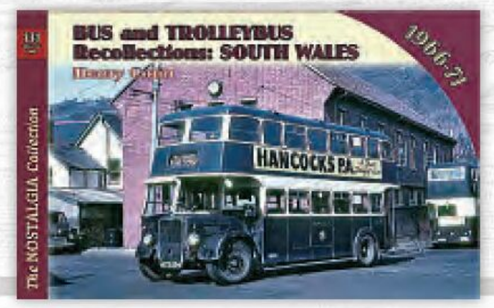

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Lucky 13 launch three-week nameplate auction bonanza

THE mainstream railwayana auction scene opens its 2024 season with three flagship sales in March – Great Central on March 2, GW Railwayana on March 16, and Talisman a week later – and at the end of January no fewer than 37 nameplates were set to go under the hammer, with that number possibly increasing before Mike Soden opens proceedings with the GCRA auction.

That first auction will have 13 nameplates seeking new homes, comprising five from the GWR, four from the SR, two from the LNER, and another two from the LNWR/LMS. The GWR line-up starts chronologically with *Princess Helena* from No. 4051, a Star class 4-6-0 that was built in June 1914 and survived into BR ownership before being withdrawn from Worcester (85A) in October 1950.

Next up is *Cardigan Castle* from No. 4087, built in June 1925 and withdrawn from Bristol's St Philip's Marsh (82B) in October 1963, and two classmates are *Nanhoran Hall* and *Heatherden Hall* from Nos. 4947 and 6946, the first of which was built in August 1929 and the second 13 years later in December 1942. Withdrawals came respectively in September 1962, also from St Philip's Marsh, and June 1964 from Pontypool Road (86G).

Finally, within the GWR selection is *Odney Manor* from No. 7828, a post-Nationalisation engine that was outshopped by Swindon in December 1950 and pensioned off when a resident of Shrewsbury (6D) in October 1965.

The Southern Railway weighs in with nameplates from two King Arthur class 4-6-0s built by North British of Glasgow in 1925, *Sir Balan* from No. 30769 and *Sir Mador de la Porte* from No. 30785, both of which were withdrawn from Eastleigh (71A), in February 1960 and October 1959.

LNER contenders

The other two SR representatives, both built at Eastleigh, are Lord Nelson No. 30863 *Lord Rodney,* which entered service in October 1929, and Schools class No. 30910 *Merchant Taylors,* built in November 1932, with withdrawals occurring in February 1962 from Eastleigh and November 1961 from the London shed of Nine Elms (70A).

Two Nigel Gresley-designed engines are the LNER contenders: B17 class No. 61619 *Welbeck Abbey*, named after a Nottinghamshire monastery, and D49 No. 62742 *The Braes of Derwent*. Each was constructed at Darlington, the B17 in November 1930 and the 'Hunt' in August 1932, and withdrawals came in September 1958 from the Cambridgeshire shed of March (31B) and in November the same year from Leeds Neville Hill (50B).

Finally, there is the LNWR/LMS Crewe-built duo of *Merrie Carlisle* from Precedent 2-4-0 No. 860 and *Baltic* from Claughton 4-6-0 No. 2445. The first was built in May 1877, was 'renewed' – in effect a new locomotive – in December 1894 to become an Improved Precedent carrying the same name and number, and was taken out of service by the LMS as No. 5050 in 1933.

No. 2445 was built unnamed in July 1917, renumbered 5948 by the LMS in July 1923, and given the name of the White Star Line vessel *Baltic,* which was carried on an LNWR-style plate but with LMS identification. It was taken out of service in April 1937.

Within the cabsides selection is 6946, being sold with its nameplate, and 7828, which will go under the hammer separately from its nameplate, as will its smokebox numberplate, while other cabsides include 4912 and 6949 from *Berrington Hall* and *Haberfield Hall,* and a second smokebox, 4087, again separately from its nameplate.

The smokebox plate from No. 30769 will also feature, as a single lot with its nameplate, and within the worksplate category is an LNER 1928 example from B17 No. 61601 *Holkham*.

Lengthy totems

The totem selection includes two lengthy examples – Abergavenny Monmouth Road and Cheltenham Spa Malvern Road. The Welsh station was opened in January 1854 as Abergavenny, and the Monmouth Road suffix was added by BR in July 1950, only for it to be dropped in May 1968 and the original name reinstated. The station is now Grade II-listed and is still open.

Cheltenham Spa station was opened in March 1908 as Cheltenham Malvern Road, renamed with the Spa added in January 1925, and was closed in January 1966.

Joining the signs is SR target Heathfield, a Sussex station opened by the LBSCR on the Polegate-Eridge 'Cuckoo' Line in April 1880 and closed to passengers in June 1965 and to freight three years later.

A BR(W) 'Wash and brush up' doorplate will also feature, and another enamel is a BR(NE) 'Way out Zetland Hotel straight ahead' direction sign from Saltburn station in North Yorkshire.

The 90-room former LNER Grade II-listed hotel was designed by William Peachey, architect to the Stockton & Darlington Railway, and opened in July 1863. It closed in 1983 and was converted to apartments in 1989.

The auction is live online and starts at 10am.

Ace Trains comes up trumps as SR and LMS play their hands

TWO Ace Trains O-gauge models comprising an SR Schools class 4-4-0 and an LMS 2-6-4T achieved the top realisations in an 89-lot sale of a model railway collection held by Duggleby Auctions of Scarborough on January 12. The SR representative was No. 908 *Westminster* that fetched £550, and the runner-up No. 42546 from LMS Class 4 that went for £460. Both prices exclude buyer's premium of 22% (+ VAT). The collection had been put together over 50 years by York printer Ted Kenny, who died three years ago. His interest in model trains started as a youngster in the 1940s when he was given a train set for Christmas. His layout became so extensive over the years that it eventually occupied an entire room in his house.

Auctioneer Graham Paddison said: "Three-rail Hornby Dublo was Ted's great passion, and included a prewar model of A4 *Sir Nigel Gresley,* but also diesel and electric. His interest did extend to two-rail OO-gauge and O-gauge, and he hunted down many collectable locomotives, some of which were on display as he didn't have layouts on which to run them."

Pre-order Issue 317: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Activity below the headliners with steam, diesel, and electric traction

AS reported in last month's issue, GW Railwayana's March 16 sale is headlined by 20 nameplates, comprising 14 from the GWR, one from the SR and five from the LNER, and in addition three London termini totems and a worksplate dated 1856 from an 0-4-0PT.

There will be, of course, much activity below these high flyers, including cabside plates from three locomotives whose nameplates will also go under the hammer – 4086, 5987 and 6982 from *Builth Castle*, *Brocket Hall*, and *Melmerby Hall* – which will be joined by 4015 and 4999 (Star class *Knight of St. John* and *Gopsal Hall*), and E3029 from a Class 83 electric locomotive. There is also the smokebox numberplate from No. 4086 to complete the Castle's set, and from another 4-6-0 whose nameplate will be in the sale, No. 5926 *Grotrian Hall*, and additionally within this category will be 6949 from *Haberfield Hall* and 70017 from Britannia Pacific *Arrow*.

Heritage Modern Traction is headed by nameplate *Resolve* from July 1964 Brush-built Co-Co D1753/47491/47769, a badge from Class 50 Co-Co D446/50046 *Ajax*, and a headboard used on Deltics to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. This particular one was also carried by No. 55021 (ex-D9021) *Argyll & Sutherland Highlander* on the final trip by a Deltic on the West Highland Line that ran from Edinburgh to Oban on August 28, 1981.

On the same theme, but from several decades earlier, is a mid-1950s steam era 'Cambrian Coast Express' headboard.

Enamels include a BR(M) station direction sign to Kentish Town West in northwest London, which was opened in April 1867 but was closed in April 1971 due to a a major fire. BR made moves to close it permanently, but this was averted, and it reopened 10 years later following repairs costing £400,000.

Also going under the hammer will be a 'Ladies Room' doorplate in pink, a colour which the Southern Region experimented with in the 1960s.

The auction is live online and starts at 9.30am.

Derailing of 'Fifteen Guinea Special' landmark locomotive is in the picture

IMAGES of the filming of a movie involving the deliberate derailing of one of the 'Fifteen Guinea Special' locomotives will go under the hammer in a JustaClickAgo auction of photographs, negatives and slides on February 19-25.

The locomotive was 'Black Five' No. 44781, which in the movie The Virgin Soldiers was disguised as a Malayan steam engine that was derailed and wrecked after the track was blown up by guerrillas.

Filming took place in 1968 at Bartlow in Cambridgeshire, on the former Saffron Walden branch line that had closed in 1964 but where the track was still in situ.

The comedy-drama starring Lynn Redgrave, Hywel Bennett and Nigel Davenport was released in 1969 and featured a group of young British soldiers billeted in Singapore in 1950 during the Malayan emergency.

After filming, preservation efforts to save the 'Black Five' failed and the 4-6-0, which was one of the locomotives that on August 11, 1968, hauled the 'Fifteen Guinea Special,' the last BR main line steam passenger train, was cut up on site by Kings of Norwich.

Last steam line

About 50 colour slides from the 1970s of the 1ft 11¾in gauge Vale of Rheidol Aberystwyth to Devil's Bridge railway, BR's last steam-operated line, that show the line's 2-6-2Ts in blue livery when under BR ownership prior to its privatisation in 1989, will also feature in the auction, as will colour slides of East Germany narrow gauge steam in the period 1970 to 1989.

Diesel traction will include black-and-white negatives of prototype Class 53 No. 1200 *Falcon* at Bristol in the early 1970s. The 100mph Co-Co diesel was built by Brush as D0280 in October 1961, renumbered by BR in December 1970, and was withdrawn in October 1975 and cut up the following April.

There is also a black-and-white negative of another main line Co-Co diesel, No. 10001, which was built at Derby in July 1948 and became a much-travelled locomotive that had 1,101,700 miles on the clock, mainly on the London Midland Region, when withdrawn in March 1966. I logged the engine at Oxenholme on July 26, 1958, on the Down 'Royal Scot' double-heading with classmate No. 10000, and the pair again two days later on the same train. Presumably they had headed an Up train to London between the two days, an illustration of their busy operating schedule.

Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **February 19-25**
  JustaClickAgo
  (photographs, negatives and slides)
- **February 23**
  Lacy Scott & Knight
  (railwayana and model trains)
- **February 24**
  Transport Auctions of London
- **February 29**
  Vectis *(model trains)*
- **March 2**
  Great Central Railwayana
- **March 16**
  GW Railwayana

Overseas steam makes the running

OVERSEAS steam starred in GW Railwayana's timed auction of general railwayana that ran from December 16 to January 7, following the sale for £1475 of a cabside numberplate from preserved South African Railways' Class 25NC No. 3536. The 4-8-4, which had a tractive effort of 45,360lb-ft, was built by North British of Glasgow in 1955 (works No. 27396).

The GWR made its presence felt after this four-figure success when three platform gas lamps sold as a single lot for £800, a locomotive headlamp for £625, and a Sugg's gas lamp for £550. Between this GWR trio at £775 was a BR poster featuring an illustration of a DMU by AN Wolstenholme that advertised cheap trips on May 29, 1960, to such locations as Ashbourne and Buxton.

Close behind the Sugg's lamp came a reminder of pre-Grouping days when three Midland Railway ex-Derby shed cast iron signs comprising a notice to drivers and firemen, a beware of trains warning, and a turntable pit numberplate sold as a single lot for £500.

Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

Industry plays its part in TAL line-up

INDUSTRIAL steam will spearhead the railwayana selection in a Transport Auctions of London sale on February 24, when worksplates from three locomotives built between 1902 and 1912 will go under the hammer.

The oldest is an R&W Hawthorn Leslie & Co plate (works No. 2532) from 0-4-0ST *Atlas* that was known to have still been in use in 1960 at Eastwood Cement Works in Lewes, Sussex, and the second oldest, dated 1906, is from an Andrew Barclay Sons & Co 0-4-0ST (works No. 1072) built for Lochgelly Iron & Coal Co in Fife, which numbered it 12.

The third plate is from another 0-4-0ST, built by Hunslet Engine Co (works No. 1107) for Pope & Pearson's Altofts Colliery in Normanton, West Yorkshire, which closed in 1961.

A smokebox numberplate from a preserved East Germany 2-10-0 will also feature in the auction. It is from Deutsche Reichsbahn Class 50 No. 50 3576, which entered service in 1941 and was one of the engines in the class that were rebuilt between 1958 and 1962 incorporating newly-developed boilers. The standard goods class, one of the most successful ever built in any country, was introduced in 1939 and comprised no fewer than 3164 locomotives when production ceased in 1948, with some surviving until the late 1980s. Two original Bradshaw's publications, an 1842 Railway Companion and 1887 Continental Railway Guide, will also be going under the hammer, as will London Underground maps and cab destination plates.

The auction is live online and starts at 10am.

IoW joins in as wagons roll

FOUR wagonplates were under the spotlight in Great Central's 'Bloxham'-style two-day auction of general railwayana on January 11/12 when they sold as a single lot for £1200.

The oldest was dated 1947 with no constructer identified, and the other three a Swindon plate from a 1950-built wagon, a Cowlairs example dated 1961, and a York 1962 plate.

Another set of four plates that sold for £600 comprised Chas Roberts dated 1948, and three from 1956, built by P&W MacLellan, Head Wrightson, and Cravens. Muscling in between was an Isle of Wight Railway 'Beware of trains' cast iron sign from Rosemary Lane foot crossing south of Ryde St Johns Road station that fetched £620. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

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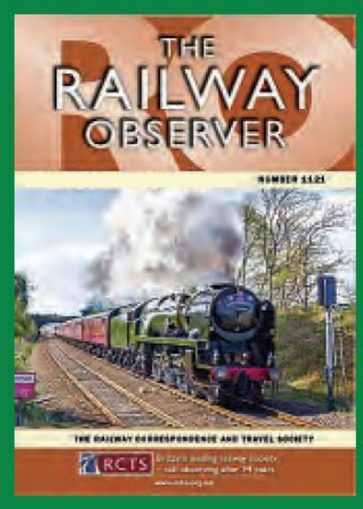

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GREAT CENTRAL WINTER WONDER IS A WINNER!

Blessed with radiant sunshine and no rain during all three days, the Great Central Railway's January 26-28 Winter Steam Gala proved to be one of the most successful in the heritage line's history, attracting more than 5000 people to pack the trains and witness non-stop action, reports **Robin Jones.**

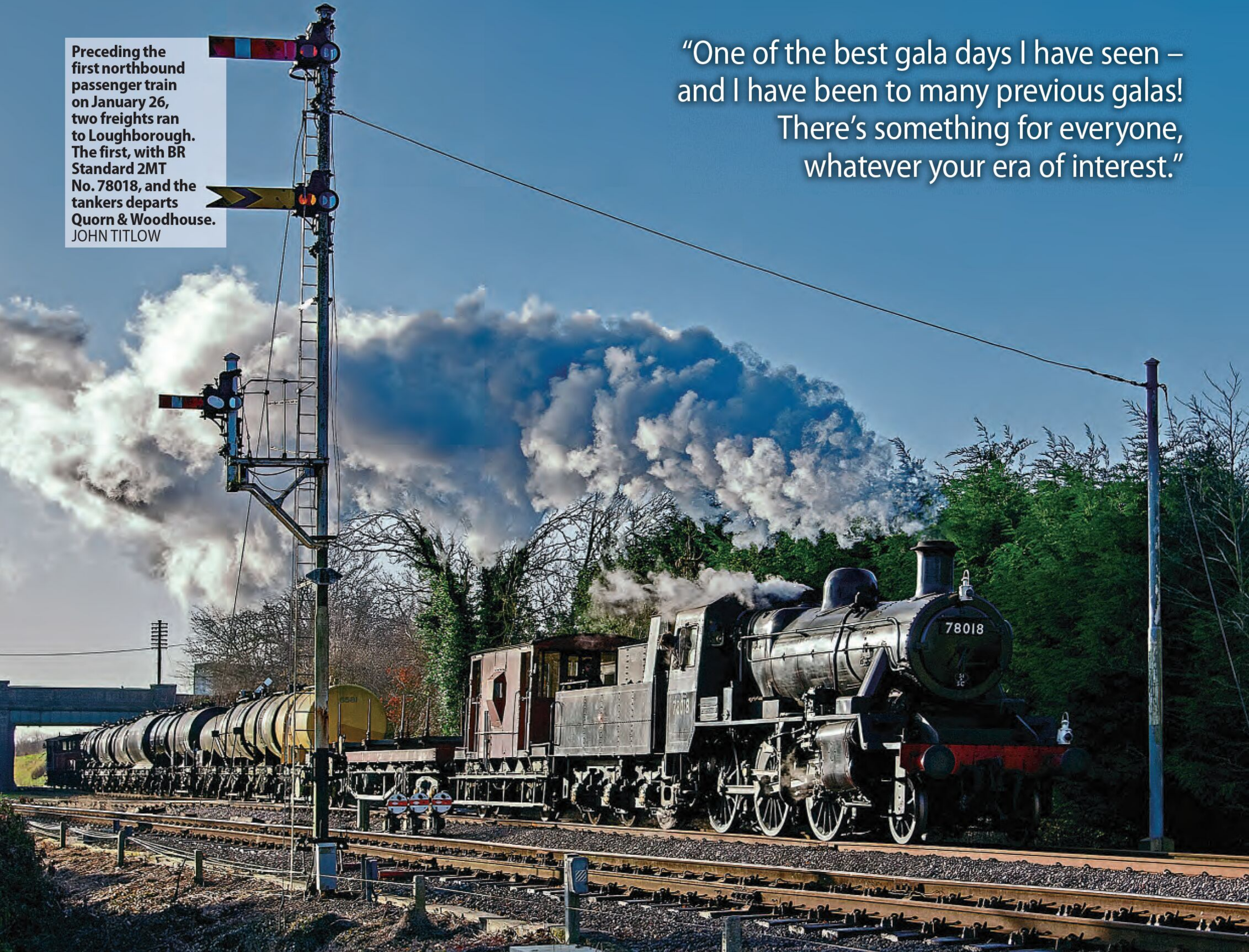
The Great Central Railway's first event of 2024 underlined for all time the double-track heritage line's place not only in the sector, but also as a cornerstone of the local economy.

Each of the three days saw services filled to capacity, along with station platforms, car parks, and vantage points like the legendary Kinchley Lane overbridge – arguably the most popular photographic location in the UK heritage portfolio. An intensive and much-varied timetable featured freight trains including lengthy van and oil tanker workings alongside regular passenger services, and all of which could not fail but delight.

General manager Malcolm Holmes said: "The Winter Gala can be summed up as 'simply amazing'. The weather gods were on our side, with dry sunny weather for our first gala of the year.

"More than 5000 people visited during the three days, and I was delighted by the public's reaction, not just all the smiling faces of both enthusiasts and families, but also on our social media channels – they have been flooded with compliments. Once again, it leaves me truly proud of our team for delivering a first-class event".

Among the comments posted were: "What lovely weather for a winter steam gala – we had a great day out on Friday. The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway loco was a superb guest, and thanks to the people who turned out *Witherslack Hall* in such absolutely sparkling condition."



Preceding the first northbound passenger train on January 26, two freights ran to Loughborough. The first, with BR Standard 2MT No. 78018, and the tankers departs Quorn & Woodhouse. JOHN TITLOW

Immaculately turned-out WR 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* on a goods rake passing Woodthorpe. JOHN TITLOW

Stanier 8F No. 48305 runs under Kinchley Lane bridge in the cutting approaching Rabbit Bridge. JOHN TITLOW

The heritage double-track main line at its finest? BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92214 pulls away from Swithland, heading for Loughborough, with the tanker train. JOHN TITLOW

Severn Valley Railway-based BR Standard 4MT No. 75069 leads home-based 5MT No. 73156 away from Loughborough. JOHN TITLOW

L&Y A class No. 52322 passes Kinchley Lane with the 1.15pm Loughborough to Rothley Brook service after a layover at Quorn & Woodhouse sidings. PAUL BIGGS

In the last rays of the setting sun, visiting BR Standard 4MT No. 75069 departs Quorn & Woodhouse with the tanker train on January 26. JOHN TITLOW

BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 twins Nos. 78019 and 78018 catch the glint of the teatime sunshine on January 26. ALAN WEAVER

Another visitor posted: "One of the best gala days I have seen – and I have been to many previous galas! There's something for everyone, whatever your era of interest."

A third said: "From my perspective, the first major event of the year was a big success, with the weather being onside. The crowds seemed to be out in force on all three days."

Visiting for the event were Andy Booth's Lancashire & Yorkshire A class 0-6-0 No. 52322, which has recently been running on the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, and BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 from the Severn Valley Railway, standing in for USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 2253, which had been booked but, as reported last issue, failed the day before the SVR's January 6/7 Winter Steam Gala with a leaking wash-out plug.

The home fleet in action were BR Standard 9F 2-1-0-0 No. 92214, WR 4-6-0 No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall*, BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73156, LMS Stanier 8F 2-8-0 No. 48305 and BR Standard 2MTs Nos. 78018 and 78019.

Also making appearances were longer-term visitors NER electric autocar No. 3170, which is normally based at Embsay, and Derby Lightweight railcar No. 79900 *Iris* from the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

GCR's head of marketing and communications, Simon Bracewell, said: "We have taken a digital approach to our marketing over the last six months, targeting not just enthusiasts but also family audiences, and we have seen a huge shift to online purchasing at this event.

"The 2023 Winter Gala had about 1000 ticket sales and 2024 saw a staggering 1700 tickets sold online. One advantage of online purchasing was being able to get straight onto the platform on arrival, saving valuable minutes in the quest to get that griddle car breakfast first thing in the morning!"

The event's huge success followed that of the 2023 gala season, which included the Railways

BR Standard 4MT No. 75069 pilots BR Class 5 No. 73156 on the 1.45pm Loughborough-Leicester North as they pass LMS 8F No. 48305 at Swithland Sidings on January 26. GRAHAM NUTTALL

LMS 8F No. 48305 on the mixed freight at Kinchley Lane on January 27. KEVIN WHITEHURST

At Work gala, recreating the era of the Beeching Axe and which earned the railway the 2024 Heritage Railway Association Interpretation Award, sponsored by *Heritage Railway* magazine.

It also bodes well for the forthcoming special joint event with the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) on March 16/17 to mark the 125th anniversary of the opening of the London Extension, as reported in our last issue. A single ticket for both sides is available at www.gcrailway.co.uk, with children traveling for just £1 with full-fare-paying adults. HR

Panned view: NER 1903-built autocar No. 3170, the predecessor of all passenger-carrying modern traction, runs at line speed after departing Quorn & Woodhouse. JOHN TITLOW

LMS Stanier 8F No. 48305 makes a storming start out of Loughborough. ALAN WEAVER

The wind in the right direction as No. 6990 *Witherslack Hall* heads south from Loughborough with the tanker rake. ALAN WEAVER

52322

HERITAGE RAILWAY
THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Visiting Lancashire & Yorkshire A class 0-6-0 No. 52322 approaches Quorn & Woodhouse at sunset on January 27 during the Great Central Railway's successful Winter Steam Gala.
ROBERT FALCONER

Tyseley selling two locos with a third for oil firing conversion

By Robin Jones

VINTAGE Trains has been finding new owners for two of its locomotives after more than half a century – and plans to convert a third to oil firing as part of its future strategy.

The Tyseley-based operator has deaccessioned LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 5593 *Kolhapur* and GWR pannier No. 7760 as surplus and aims to convert GWR 4-6-0 No. 4965 *Rood Ashton Hall* to oil burning.

Kolhapur, which was built by the North British Locomotive Company in Glasgow in 1934, was withdrawn by BR in October 1967 and a year later was bought by 7029 Clun Castle Ltd, which formed the Standard Gauge Steam Trust, and which acquired a long-term lease on part of the Tyseley depot site, which evolved into today's Tyseley Locomotive Works. In the 1980s, *Kolhapur* was restored to LMS crimson lake livery, becoming a regular on railtours. It last steamed in 1997 when its boiler certificate expired.

No. 7760 was built by North British in 1930 and later became one of several pannier tanks sold by BR To London Trasport for use of Underground engineering trains.

As No. L90, it was bought by 7029 Clun Castle Limited in 1971 and over the decades has visited several heritage lines.

A Vintage Trains statement said: "We are deaccessioning *Kolhapur* as it is non-standard with the rest of the collection. Furthermore, the estimate to return it to main line operation is about £750,000.

"However, No. 4965 can be returned to traffic quickly for about £100,000 in its current configuration… for approximately one third of the cost of returning *Kolhapur* to service.

"We will approach this work in stages. Funds are available for its 10-year boiler overhaul, and this work will commence in March.

"Subsequently (subject to funding), we will modify its cylinders to fit almost anywhere within the Network Rail loading gauge and, furthermore, convert it to burn liquid fuel based on the GWR oil-firing system.

"When all this work is funded and completed, No. 4965 will be as useful and gauge-friendly as No. 5593 would have been. These steps will also begin our journey to further improve our environmental footprint and provide resilience against summer fire risk, which we consider is only likely to increase.

Built in 1964 at the Vulcan Foundry, Newton le Willows, Class 37 No. 37240 arrives at Tyseley Locomotive works on December 19, having been bought from Boden Rail Engineering, which bought it from the Llangollen Diesel Group in 2018 after it spent 16 years on the Deeside line following its restoration there. VT

One goes, the other stays: GWR panniers Nos. 7760 and 7752 around the turntable at the June 2008 open weekend to mark 100 years of Tyseley depot. TONY HISGETT/CREATIVE COMMONS

"We have determined that we will concentrate our operating main line fleet of express steam locomotives on GWR designed Castles, No. 7029 *Clun Castle*, No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* and No. 5080 *Defiant*, together with *Rood Ashton Hall*.

"This enables a single defining brand and core livery, and also simplifies future workshop repair schedules as all four locomotives share common designs and parts.

"Our Castles already fit within Network Rail's loading gauge to many interesting destinations, and the Shakespeare Line (North Warwickshire Line) has been returned to a loading gauge acceptable for all our workable fleet.

"We will return our Hall to operation next, very largely (but not exclusively) for our 'Shakespeare Express' and 'Polar Express services'. We will complete the reconstruction of a largely new tender for *Defiant*, for which funds are on hand. Its boiler will be assessed during 2024 and, once we have costed the repairs necessary, we will seek funds.

"Recently acquired English Electric Type 3 No. 37240 has now arrived at Tyseley and, once some new wheel bearings have been fitted, this will be available for main line operations, together with our existing diesel stalwart, Brush Type 4 No. 47773.

"Expect to see No. 37240 lead some 'Diesel Explorer' tours in the second half of this year.

"In relation to No. 7760, since our pannier tanks were originally purchased, all three have only ever been steamed once simultaneously, and only two have ever been required to be used together on main line excursions at any one time.

"A review of the three locomotives Nos. 7752, 7760 and 9600 determined that No. 7760 is surplus to our collection, being an identical twin to No. 7752. Both Nos. 7752 and 9600 (both currently in store) are in very good condition. No. 9600 only requires a retube and minor stay work. No. 7752 requires the same,

Three-day Cornish Riviera getaway on offer from Midland Pullman in April

MIDLAND Pullman is offering customers the chance for three days in the Cornish Riviera between Friday, April 12 and Sunday, April 14.

Departing from Berwick-upon-Tweed, the luxury high speed train in the blue livery of the Midland Pullman will head south along the East Coast Main Line, picking up passengers at Alnmouth, Morpeth, Newcastle, Durham, Darlington, Northallerton, Thirsk, York and Doncaster, before heading southwest for the final pick-up at Chesterfield.

From here, the train will continue southwest towards Somerset and across the River Exe to hug the coastline at Dawlish, before climbing the Devon Banks and crossing Royal Albert Bridge into Cornwall.

There is an option to alight the train at Truro or continue to either St Erth or Penzance. Overnight accommodation is not included, so guests are free to book wherever they choose.

The next day, Saturday, April 13, is one to be spent at leisure, where guests are free to explore the many delights Cornwall has to offer.

Sunday, April 14, will see a late-morning departure from Penzance, before calling at St Erth and Truro for additional passengers. The tour will then retrace the outward journey north, setting down passengers on route.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining or first class non-dining. For more details and to book, visit midlandpullman.com

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together with a new set of wheel tyres, which are in stock. VT seeks well-wishers to fund this work and engineers to assist undertaking the small amount of fitting work. There is then no reason why these two locomotives cannot return to the main line as 'nice to haves', but the charity is not currently in a position to fund this work as improvements to our carriage stock, our restaurant cars, and catering facilities must take priority, together with keeping Nos. 7029, 5043, 47773 and 37240 in operation."

Outlining VT's future strategy, the statement said: "We will develop our core brand: running Great Western designed locomotives and Pullman restaurant car trains to meet market demand, particularly for our growing 'Shakespeare Express' services.

"There is also a clear need to increase our operational diesel fleet to provide additional motive power for 'Diesel Explorers' and special private trains, together with resilience and support for our express steam trains.

"In 2024 we are implementing the following next stages of our plan to continue this work. We have completed the fitment of controlled emission toilets to our train and would like to thank Network Rail for its kind support on this project. This work has significantly enhanced our environmental impact.

LMS Jubilee No. 5593 *Kolhapur*, which has not steamed for nearly 27 years, in store in Tyseley's new carriage shed which was completed last year, as reported in issue 308. ROBIN JONES

"We have agreed a fitment plan with the Office of Rail & Road for central door locking (CDL) on our train. This has enabled us to receive the appropriate regulation approval to continue to use our vintage train on the main line railway.

"We are improving our restaurant car facilities and bringing our catering arrangements in-house. This decision requires some detailed work in complying with regulations and also expanding our facilities, both on-train and at our Tyseley depot for preparation. We have acquired Mk.1 First Open carriage No. 3110 to increase our dining capacity, running alongside our four Metro Cammell Pullman cars.

"Pullman parlour car No. 353 is undergoing a major refit, we are adding kitchen facilities in our access for all BSO, and we are fitting a travelling bar in our BFK.

"We will reactivate or add air-braking equipment to our core dining train so it is available for use in either air or vacuum-braking mode, which will further facilitate our special private train hire service.

"The decision to augment our restaurant car services is market-led. Our 'Shakespeare Express' services in particular are now loading to capacity, both for Pullman Sunday lunch and tourist afternoon tea. We will provide additional capacity, both on board every train and with an increased number of trains."

No. 7760 was seen departing Tyseley by road on January 31, its destination unconfirmed.

Bulleid Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* passes Greenholme with the Railway Touring Company's 'The Winter Cumbrian Mountain Express' from Euston to Carlisle and return, steam-hauled between Carnforth and Preston, on January 27. DAVE COLLIER

Slam-door unit returns to Waterloo as debut draws near

By Owen Hayward

HISTORY was made in London on January 27 when, after an absence of just over 18 years, a Class 423 EMU returned to Waterloo station thanks to a collaboration between the Southern Electric Traction Group, South Western Railway, GB Railfreight and Network Rail that saw stars align for the momentous occasion to take place.

Following the launch of a £50,000 appeal to fund the purchase of the required equipment to certify it for main line use, the SETG's 4VEP No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* was towed to the LSWR/SR terminal to celebrate the 88th birthday of the man after which the unit was named, with Gordon and his family invited to the occasion. After joining BR in 1950, his career saw him climb the ranks and start with the Southern Region in 1983 before being appointed as its general manager in 1985, holding the position for five years. From 1990 to 1992 he served as managing director of Regional Railways and also as an external board member for the Office of the Rail Regulator from 1993 to 1996.

Chance refurbishment

Unit No. 3417 was built in 1967 and was withdrawn in 2005; as the slam-door fleet neared its end on the main line, in 2004 No. 3417 was chosen by South West Trains to be refurbished and repainted into as near delivery condition as possible. The project was overseen by Wimbledon Park-based fleet production manager Chris Buckland, who selected No. 3417 as it was the freshest from overhaul, had suffered few mechanical failures, and its overall condition was very good. Chris and a small group of fitters continued to tend to No. 3417 after its withdrawal, setting the stage for the SETG which continues to maintain the unit. Over the last few years, restoration work has been carried out at Strawberry Hill depot, and the trip to Waterloo on January 27 marked both the completion of it to passenger-carrying standards and the beginning of the next stage in its preservation career – the commencement of work to return it to main line passenger service.

SETG spokesperson Steve Upton said: "It's been a rollercoaster of highs and lows over the past five months or so to get the unit ready.

"January 27 was chosen because it was the closest weekend we could get to January 17, when in 2009 No. 3417 was delivered from Wimbledon to East Grinstead, starting its preservation career.

Above: The day also celebrated the 88th birthday of former BR Southern Region manager Gordon Pettitt, who attended to witness the EMU's first appearance at Waterloo in nearly two decades. JAMES CUMMINS

Left: Class 423 4VEP EMU No. 3417 *Gordon Pettit* No. 3417 sits in platform 19 at Waterloo after arriving from Strawberry Hill depot. The removal of the class 73 from one end after arrival giving the impression of a unit ready to depart under its own power as it had prior to withdrawal in 2005. JAMES CUMMINS

Get away this autumn on five-day tour of the valleys with Steam Dreams

STEAM Dreams has announced a 'trip of a lifetime' under the title of 'The Welsh Dragon' between Sunday, September 15 and Thursday, September 19.

Starting from Paddington, the train will firstly head northwest through Banbury and Birmingham to Shrewsbury for a brief pause as the steam locomotive is swapped for diesel traction.

From Shrewsbury, the tour continues west on the Cambrian Line past Welshpool and Newtown, then after Dovey Junction turns north to follow the coast, with views across the Irish Sea. The train follows the sea, crossing Barmouth Bridge and passing Harlech, before arriving at Porthmadog and then Pwlhelli as the sun sets. From here, passengers will be transferred to hotels in Snowdonia, where they will stay for three nights.

Chance to explore

The Monday and Tuesday will be spent in Snowdonia, where guests will have the opportunity to explore the area.

Close at hand are the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways and the Snowdon Mountain Railway, with plenty of other attractions such as castles, gardens, and coastal walks in the vicinity to keep passengers entertained.

The fourth day, Wednesday, September 18, will see guests transferred to either Bangor or Llandudno Junction to board the train and take the North Wales Coast Line east past Colwyn and Prestatyn back into England.

Having been steam-hauled from Bangor, the train will pass Chester and then head to Crewe, where the steam locomotive will be uncoupled and replaced with a diesel. From Crewe, the tour is planned to head south, once again passing through Shrewsbury and on to the Heart of Wales Line

Just prior to reaching the coast again, the tour is expected to turn east along the Swansea District Line and then pick up the South Wales Main Line at Briton Ferry, passing Port Talbot, Bridgend, and eventually arriving at Cardiff Central. Accommodation will be provided in Cardiff for the night.

Steaming home

The final day of the excursion will see a relaxing morning and then a departure, steam-hauled, from Cardiff Central, through Newport and onto the Gloucester–Newport Line. After Gloucester, the train will take the Golden Valley Line, past Stroud and Kemble, to pick up the Great Western Main Line at Swindon, and the home leg into London.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class and premium standard class.

➜ For more details and to book, visit steamdreams.co.uk

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"The team, led by our chief engineer Chris Buckland, has achieved something that many people inside and outside the heritage railway movement thought impossible; we never intended to be trailblazers – a group that still numbers less than 30 people has taken a pretty much derelict four-car unit, sourced a repaint from a major UK train builder, found it a shed, equipped it with all (well, most) of the trimmings, and set up a micro-version of a railway works in there, taught themselves skills that were lost to almost every major railway depot decades ago (I'm thinking about our trim shop in particular), sourced spares for equipment that became obsolete 20 years ago, and established working relationships within both the heritage and big railway worlds.

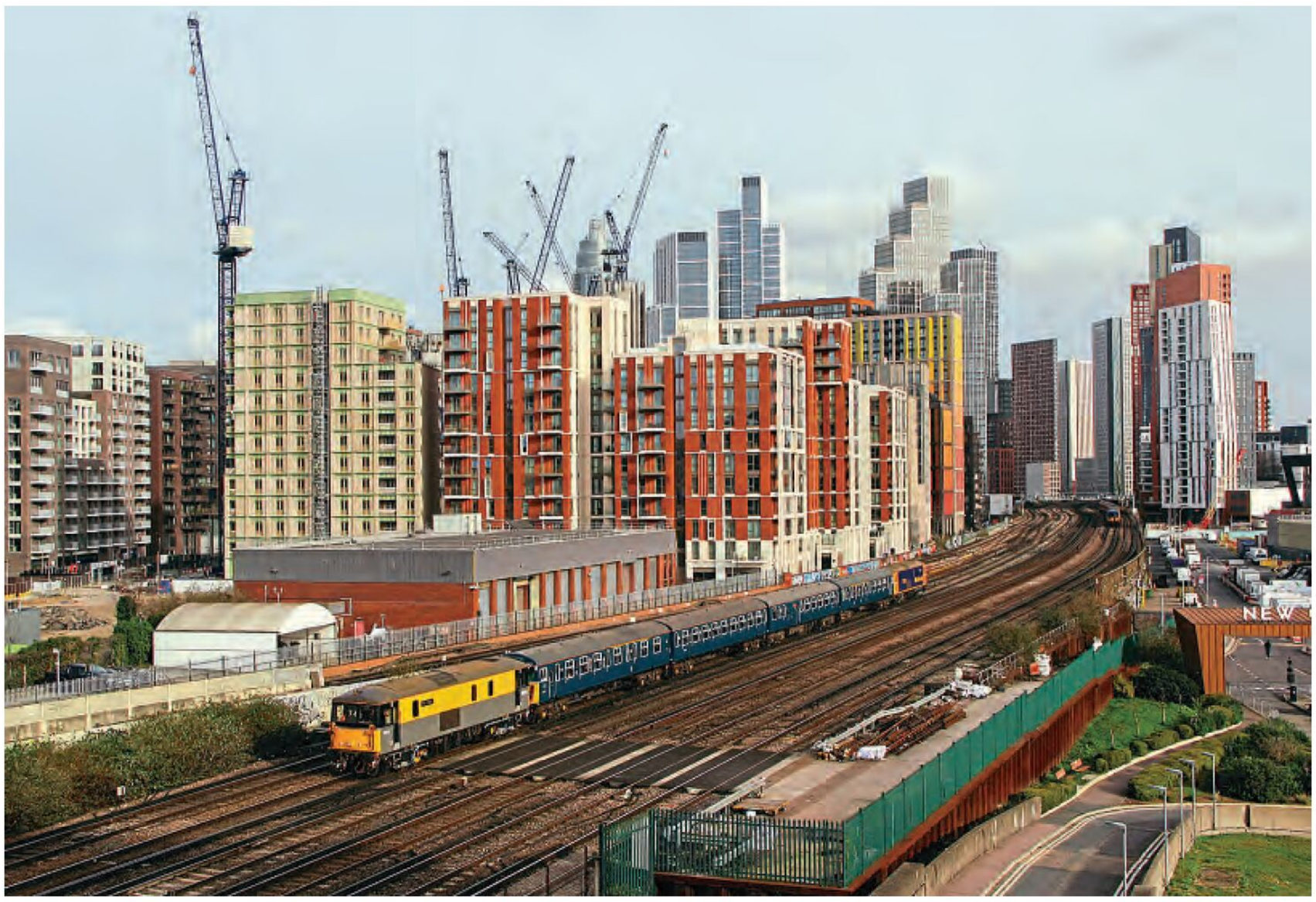
Supportive network

"The achievements are myriad, and we are all deeply proud of what we have done so far. The reaction at Waterloo, both from the VIPs and the enthusiast public, has been unexpected and deeply heartening.

"We had massive support from the Bluebell Railway, SWR, GBRf and Network Rail, which all combined to make sure that we could do this – as soon as we said we wanted to do this to show Gordon Pettitt himself what has been achieved with 'his' unit, everyone wanted to pitch in.

"The modern railway is a complex and heavily regulated operation, and GBRf and NR in particular burned the midnight oil to allow us to slot a 50-year-old EMU back into the network.

"They should be proud of what they achieved; their efforts and professionalism give the lie to the popular myth that the railway has forgotten how to embrace a 'can do' attitude.



Sandwiched between Class 73s Nos. 73119 *Paul Taylor* and 73109 *Battle of Britain*, 4VEP No. 3417 *Gordon Pettitt* passes New Covent Garden Market (which is sited on what was once Nine Elms motive power depot) as the convoy returns to Strawberry Hill depot from Waterloo on January 27. HENRY MARLOW

"The next step for the unit is a return to heritage railways for events such as diesel galas. It spent some time in the mid to late 2000s visiting various railways on the Southern Region and we had a jolly time. There are a few who have Southern locomotives kicking about that could work in multiple with the VEP – we must bring push-pull working to the masses!

"On the engineering side, the unit lacks GSM-R cab radios and OTMR 'Black Box' equipment, as well as the now mandatory CET toilet and central door locking equipment (CDL). Chris firmly believes the CDL alone will require £20,000 per coach minimum; that's £80,000 before you get near the design and engineering change documentation we would need to prepare. It's going to be a major job; £80,000-plus is small fry for some preservation projects, but it's currently out of our league.

"Our thinking at present is CDL/CET first – that means we can carry fare-paying passengers while boxed in with two Class 73s, for example.

"Obviously, having the unit driven under its own power is the ultimate goal, but getting passengers aboard sooner rather than later is the immediate aim. People are interested and we want to keep them interested.

"Our plan has always been to lock the unit like a CIG; i.e., the outer ends of each vehicle and a set in the middle. Obviously, the compartments in the driving trailers would be locked individually, as well as the double doors on the motor brake and the in-swinging guards doors."

While the unit is currently not available for passenger use on the national network, 2024 will see it appear at heritage railways as locomotive-hauled stock, its transport to these destinations being via the main line.

Full details of such appearances will be published in *Heritage Railway* once confirmed.

➜ To support the fundraiser, visit gofundme.com/f/Returning-3417-to-the-Mainline

Double highlights this May with Branch Line Society

By Tim Hobman

THE Branch Line Society has announced tours on consecutive days in May.

The first is on Saturday, May 25, under the title of 'The Hanson Hanse', with the destination of King's Lynn. The motive power is expected to be Class 50 No 50008 *Thunderer* in top-and-tail formation with a Class 20.

Starting out from Eastleigh, the tour is expected to take the Wallers Ash Loop towards Basingstoke, Reading, and Slough for further passenger pick-ups.

En route to the next pick-up point of Ealing Broadway, the tour is planned to traverse the Dawley Up goods loop and Hanwell goods loop, then after Ealing pass through Willesden Junction, Harringay and Hornsey for a reverse move and the final pick-up at King's Cross. Leaving King's Cross, the route north will take the Hertford Loop before rejoining the East Coast Main Line just south of Stevenage and then running to Hitchin to turn northeast along the Cambridge branch.

After Cambridge, the next highlight is the Coldham Lane Down goods loop, prior to arrival at Ely to set down passengers and then the destination of King's Lynn.

After two hours there, the train will first head through Ely West Curve and March Down goods for a reverse move at March West Junction, before returning to Ely to pick up passengers who would have enjoyed four hours in the city.

The return journey to Eastleigh is planned to take the West Anglia Main Line back to Stratford to set down passengers, having paused en route at Harlow for a photographic opportunity. From Stratford, the train will take the North London Line to set down more passengers at Ealing Broadway before retracing the outward journey to Eastleigh.

Sunday, May 26 will see 'The Millbrook Meander' run from Eastleigh to Weymouth. No. 50008 will be joined by a Class 66 and depart from Eastleigh, picking up at Southampton Airport Parkway and Southampton Central. The train is then planned to continue through Southampton Maritime Freightliner Terminal, Redbridge and Romsey for the final passenger pick-up at Salisbury.

The next stop will be Gillingham for a photo stop, followed by Yeovil Junction for a reverse move, and Yeovil Pen Mill for another reverse move, before arriving at Dorchester to set down passengers.

After Dorchester it is only a short run to the destination of Weymouth for just over two hours to explore.

The return journey to Eastleigh will first pick up passengers at Dorchester, then pass through Poole, Bournemouth, Brockenhurst, Redbridge, and Millbrook Freightliner Terminal before setting down passengers at Southampton Central, Southampton Airport Parkway, and then Eastleigh.

➜ For more details and to book first or standard class tickets, visit www.branchline.uk/fixture.php

Tickets for RTC's 'The Great Britain XVI' are on sale now

By Tim Hobman

THE Railway Touring Company has released the schedule and booking information for its 16th 'Great Britain' tour.

Starting from London Victoria on Saturday, April 13, the train will be steam-hauled through South London to Kent, passing through Dartford and Gravesend before crossing the River Medway and catching a glimpse of Rochester Cathedral and castle.

Continuing past Chatham, the train will run along the coast past Whitstable, Herne Bay, Margate, and back round to Ramsgate, then follow the White Cliffs to Folkstone and Ashford.

At Swanley, it will once again pick up the Chatham Main Line to head towards Kensington Olympia to join the Great Western Main Line. Heading west, it will then join Cotswold Line, passing Charlbury and Moreton-in-Marsh, to arrive at Worcester for the evening, where passengers will be escorted to overnight accommodation.

The following day's destination is Lancaster. Leaving Worcester, the train will travel north towards Bromsgrove to face the 1-in-37 Lickey Incline. The steam locomotive will work hard up the gradient and then skirt Birmingham towards Stafford and follow the West Coast Main Line through to Crewe, with a water stop there before reaching its destination for the evening.

On Monday, April 15, the journey will follow the Cumbrian Coast Line to Carlisle.

Having already passed through Barrow-in-Furness, Ravenglass and Sellafield, the train will stop briefly at St Bees to service the locomotive. Reaching the end of the Cumbrian Coast Line at Carlisle, the train will then take the Glasgow South Western route north, crossing the border into Scotland at Gretna Green, and then head towards Dumfries before travelling through remote landscape to end the day at Glasgow.

Tuesday, April 16, will see the tour venture north to Inverness, passing through Stirling, where passengers may glimpse the castle and the Wallace Monument, before continuing on to the golfing town of Gleneagles and Perth on the River Tay.

Bound for Inverness

From here it picks up the Highland Main Line, travelling through Kingswood Tunnel, Inver Tunnel, Piltlochry and Killiecrankie Tunnel, before reaching Blair Atholl. There will then be a climb to Druimuachdar summit at 1484 feet above sea level, the highest on the UK main line. Passing Newtonmore, Kingussie, Kincraig and Aviemore, the train will then conquer Slochd Summit, 1315 feet above sea level, before arrival in Inverness.

The following day, passengers will have the option of staying in Inverness to explore or take a steam-hauled excursion to Kyle of Lochalsh.

Those travelling will be treated to a journey crossing the Caledonian Canal by a swing bridge before enjoying extensive views across the Beauly Firth towards the Black Isle as the train heads westwards to Dingwall, from where there is a steep climb heading for Garve, followed by another steep climb to Corriemuillie Summit and then the descent to the head of Loch Luichart.

There is free time to explore Kyle while the steam locomotive is serviced. Passengers will then return to Inverness via the same route for an overnight stay.

On Thursday, April 18, the train will head east and follow the coastal route overlooking the Moray Firth, through Nairn and Forres. Next, the tour will pass through Elgin, before turning slightly inland towards Keith. The Aberdeen to Inverness Line then continues to wind cross-country to the Granite City, where the train will stop, allowing passengers time to explore.

The route to Edinburgh now follows the North Sea coastline through to the natural harbour at Montrose, then Arbroath, and Dundee. Leaving Dundee, the train will pass the Tay Bridge and follow the north bank of the Tay to finally cross the river at Perth. The route to Edinburgh is via Stirling and Linlithgow, arriving at Waverley in the late evening.

On Friday, April 19, the train will take the East Coast Main Line south towards the border near Berwick-upon-Tweed, passing through Morpeth and crossing the River Tyne at Newcastle, from where it takes the Tyne Valley Line through Hexham and Haltwhistle to Carlisle. Passing Carlisle by way of the Upperby Curve, the excursion is planned to head south on the West Coast Main Line, through Penrith and over Shap Summit at 916 feet above sea level.

Skirting Oxenholme on the edge of the Lake District, the train will pass Lancaster and Preston once again, before leaving the WCML at Wigan. The final part of this day's journey will involve the line to Liverpool via St Helens, with Liverpool being the destination for the evening.

The next day, the tour will leave Liverpool Lime Street and pass through Edge Hill, before heading towards Runcorn and over the River Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal on Runcorn Bridge. From here, the tour will run along the WCML to Crewe for a water stop. Taking the Welsh Marches Line, the tour will head to Shrewbury and then to Craven Arms for the junction with the Heart of Wales Line.

Final night

Crossing the border at Knighton, there will be another water stop before continuing over the Knucklas Viaduct and through Llangunllo tunnel. The train will then pass Sugar Loaf, before the downhill stretch to Llandovery and Llandeilo on the way to Swansea and the last overnight stay.

The final day, Sunday, April 21, will see the tour leave Swansea and follow the Great Western Main Line past Port Talbot steelworks to Bridgend. Here the train will divert from the main line and follow the Vale of Glamorgan line via Barry to Cardiff, Newport, Chepstow and Gloucester, where there will be a water stop at Gloucester,

The steam locomotive will take the train on to Swindon over the Golden Valley Line. Passing Swindon, the tour will pick up the Great Western Main Line, passing through Didcot, Reading, Maidenhead and Slough, en route back to Paddington.

Tickets are available in either premier class or first class, with a supplement for those wishing to visit Kyle of Lochalsh.

➜ For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net

Maritime or floral: tandem trips for passengers thanks to UK Railtours

UK Railtours is offering customers the choice of 'The Harbourmaster', a tour of track not usually visited by passenger trains, or a trip to the National Botanic Garden of Wales on Saturday, April 13.

Departing from Paddington and picking up additional passengers at Slough, Reading, Swindon and Bristol Parkway, passengers for both tours will be aboard the same train as it continues to travel west through the Severn Tunnel and into Wales.

At Newport, the tour will take in the first part of non-passenger track, entering the Alexandra Dock Junction Up and Down goods loop for a locomotive swap. Having been provided with two GB Railfreight Class 66s in a top-and-tail formation, the excursion then heads for Cardiff, Bridgend and Port Talbot Parkway.

From Court Sart Junction, the train will follow the diversionary Swansea District Line as far as Bynea and is planned to enter the Llandeilo goods loop, before continuing along the main line to Llanelli.

At Llanelli, passengers who have booked on the National Botanic Garden of Wales tour will leave the train and either be transported by coach to the garden or have the option to explore the town for more than five hours before the return journey.

Meanwhile, 'The Harbourmaster' is planned to leave Llanelli, bound for the Carmarthen, avoiding lines as far as Whitland, then on to Clarbeston Road Junction and a break of about 90 minutes at Haverfordwest.

Leaving Haverfordwest, the tour will continue southwest as far as Herbrandston Junction and then take the Robeston Branch. After exploring the branch, the tour will return to Milford Haven for a brief photo stop and then head back to Llanelli to pick up the passengers who alighted there. The return trip to London will be via the Swansea avoiding line and the Bishton flyover, with a brief stop at Alexandra Dock Junction again to swap locomotives.

Passengers will then be set down at their joining stations on return to Paddington.

Tickets are available on both tours in first class dining and non-dining, and also standard class, with a discount for junior travellers.

There is a supplement for passengers choosing to visit the Botanic Gardens.

➜ For more details and to book, visit www.ukrailtours.com

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Western Champion is set for main line comeback

A SUCCESSFUL test run for Class 52 Western D1015 *Western Champion* has given light at the end of the tunnel for the locomotive's main line comeback.

As we went to press last issue, D1015 had headed out light engine from Kidderminster traction and motive power depot on the Severn Valley Railway, bound for Avonmouth on the national network – its first venture out since 2021.

There it attached to the front of Class 66 No. 66714 *Cromer Lifeboats*, which was working the 9.20am Avonmouth-Penyffordd cement train, and worked the consist as far as Gloucester Yard, where it then detached and returned home light engine.

Tom Sawyer, chairman of the Diesel Traction Group (DGT), which owns the locomotive, said: "On-board DTG engineers reported that the test run went well and was deemed a success, with only a couple of minor snags to address.

"There are a number of possible railtour dates during 2024 which are now being considered, but no details have been finalised."

The run took place to test out new engines installed in the locomotive; on the return leg of a trip to Scarborough on December 17, 2016, one of the Western's MD655 engines failed, subsequently being replaced by an overhauled unit in 2021.

"Sadly, this engine also failed during the loaded part of a main line test run," Tom said. "The decision was taken to obtain two MTU 12V538 engines, a later development of the MD655, and overhaul and modify these engines and change both of those on D1015 as a way of improving reliability." Having previously sported BR maroon, when D1015 does work its first tours, it is believed that will be the first BR blue example of the class to work a main line tour in 47 years.

Class 52 D1015 *Western Champion* pilots a GB Railfreight Class 66 through Standish Junction in Gloucestershire as it works the 9.20am Avonmouth to Penyffordd cement train on January 10 as part of its recommissioning for main line running. D1015 detached at Gloucester yard and returned to Kidderminster. DON BISHOP

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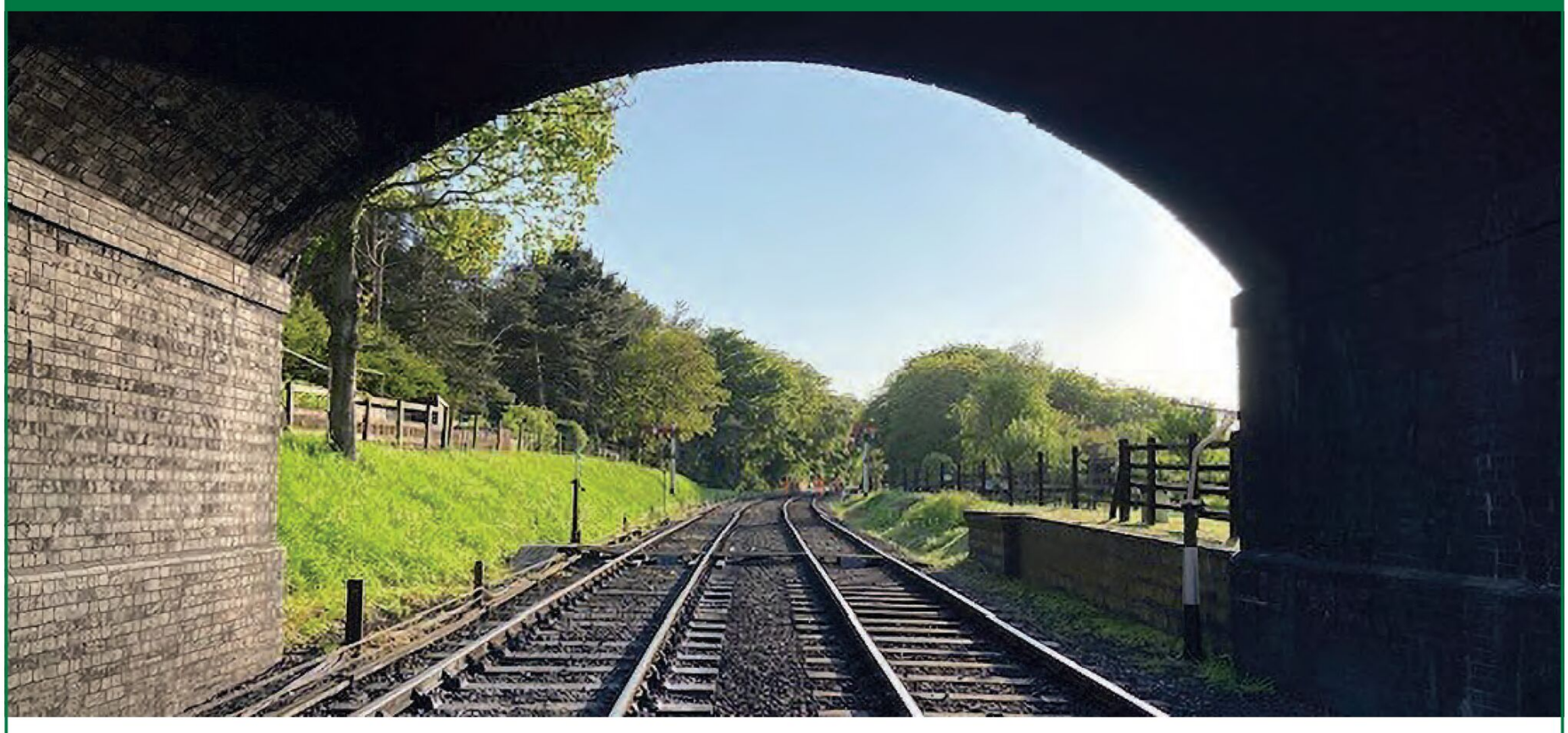

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Push your rail passion ... become a volunteer

THE nation is alive with the sound of preserved railways... but take a closer look and you'll realise that the lifeblood for these lines is the army of volunteers.

Heritage lines are an integral part of the tourism fabric of the UK, providing a huge variety of destinations and keeping alive skills which could easily have died out decades ago.

While many roles are filled by full-timers, we all know that if a railway relied entirely on paid staff they most likely wouldn't survive, so volunteers are exceedingly valuable.

And right now, this sector needs as many volunteers as possible.

Volunteering is a great way to make like-minded friends, but also to make a real defference.

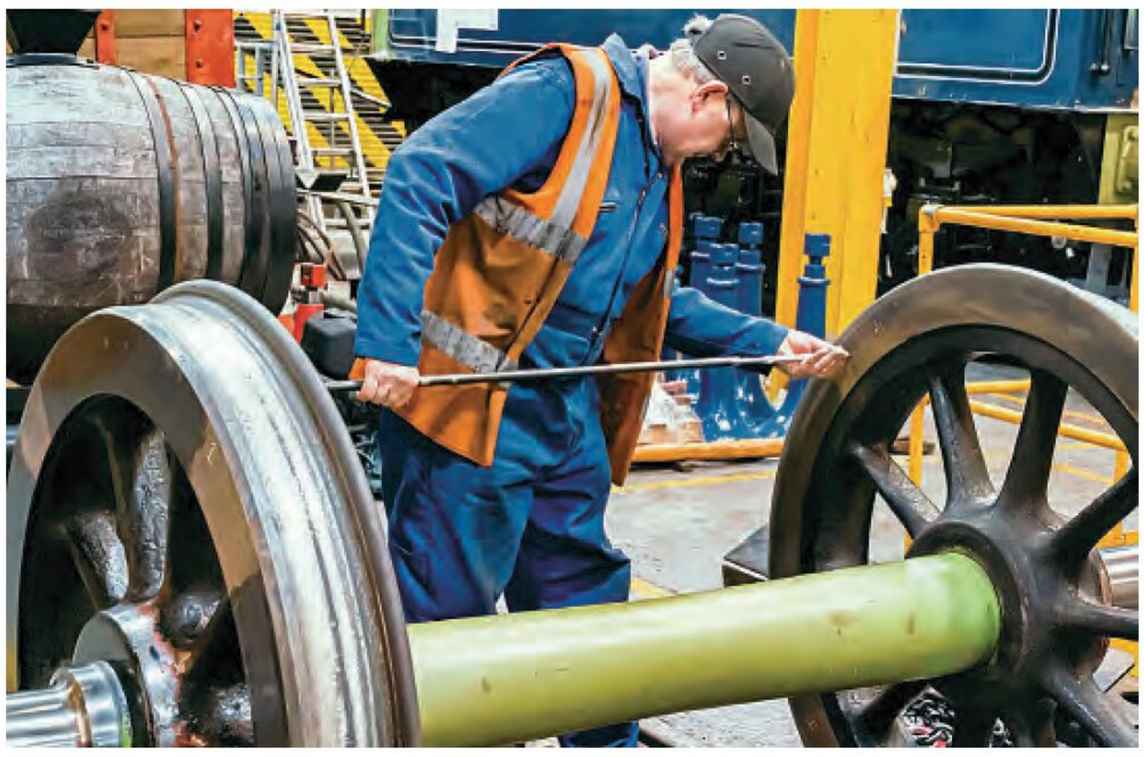
While the skills you learn or utilise may be specific to the job, the way they are applied and the care and attention can be carried over to many other aspects of life.

For a youngster, volunteering looks great on a CV and is so flexible – if you find you don't like working in one area, you can easily change to another. For the more experienced, a lifetime of work and skills can be utilised for a great cause.

There are roles for all ages and abilities no matter how much time you can commit, so get in touch with your local line today.

Steam department volunteers pull together to prepare a fleet of locomotives for a gala at the Blaenavon Heritage Railway. While some have come from railway backgrounds, many have started with no prior knowledge.

The next generation is so important for preserved railways. Here youngsters are hard at work on the Talyllyn Railway.



Sometimes a more experienced head is needed as part of the voluntary army.

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February

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: No. 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

24 'The Settle & Carlisle Winter Express'
Bristol Temple Meads, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: No. 34067 *Tangmere*. 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

5 'The Whitby Jet'
Shrewsbury, Whitby and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

6 Bath excursion
London Victoria, Bath Spa and return.
Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

7 'Thunderbirds are Go!'
Derby, Linlithglow.
Loco: Class 57 TBA. BLS

8 BWC Two (Day 1)
Bo'ness, Fort William.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. BLS

9 'The Stratford Flyer'
Manchester Victoria, Stratford-upon-Avon and return. Steam-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. RTC

9 'The Whitby Jet'
Barrow-in-Furness, Whitby and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

9 BWC Two (Day 2)
Fort William, Oban and return.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. BLS

9 'The Cwm and Glo'
Rare tracks excursion departing Burton-on-Trent. Diesel-hauled throughout.
Loco: TBA. PT

10 BWC Two (Day 3)
Fort William, Bo'ness.
Loco: 37403 *Isle of Mull*. BLS

11 'International Rescue'
Linlithgow, Derby.
Loco: Class 57 TBA. BLS

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: 86259 *Les Ross*. 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 Edgcumbe*. 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 Carlisle-Crewe.
Loco: 34046 *Braunton*. SD

26 'The Golden Arrow'
Bristol Temple Meads, Canterbury and return. Steam-hauled from West London.
Loco: TBA. ST

27 'The Whitby Flyer'
King's Cross, Whitby and return. Steam-hauled between York and Whitby.
Loco: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

29 West of Scotland Push-Pull (Day 1)
Crewe, Edinburgh Waverley.
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 Waverley, 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 Waverley, Crewe.
Loco: 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer*. IC

April

1 'The Torbay Riviera Pullman'
Hull, Paignton and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

4 'The Cambrian Coast Express'
Shrewsbury, Pwllheli and return.
Locos: Class 67, 2x class 97s TBA. PT

5 'North Wales Coastal Pullman'
Plymouth, Llandudno and return.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

6 'Worcester Steam Express'
Norwich, Worcester and return. Diesel-hauled from Leicester (return).
Loco: No. 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

6 Newcastle excursion
King's Cross, Newcastle and return.
Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

6 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
York, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).
Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

6 Exeter excursion
Hastings, Exeter and return.
DEMU: 1001. HD

9 Bluebell Railway excursion
Shoeburyness, Sheffield Park and return. Diesel-hauled between Shoeburyness and West London.
Loco: 46100 *Royal Scot*. SD

12 'Cornish Riviera Pullman' (Day 1)
Berwick-upon-Tweed, Penzance.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

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 'Cornish Riviera Pullman' (Day 2)
Penzance, Berwick-upon-Tweed.
Loco: Midland Pullman HST. MP

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 Cambrian Coast Express'
East Midlands Parkway, Pwllheli and return.
Locos: Class 67, 2x Class 97s TBA. PT

18 'The Great Britain XVI' (Day 6)
Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh 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

Class 47 No. 47712 *Lady Diana Spencer* approaches Leicester station on January 28 with the return working for InterCity's two-day 'East Anglian Push Pull' excursion, which commenced at Crewe the day before and ran to Norwich for an overnight stay. No. 47712 propelled the stock on the outward journey and on to Sheringham the next morning, before arriving back at Crewe at 9.36pm on the Sunday – 12 minutes ahead of schedule.
JASON CROSS

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
BLS	Branch Line Society branchline.uk
HD	Hastings Diesels hastingsdiesels.co.uk
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PT	Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
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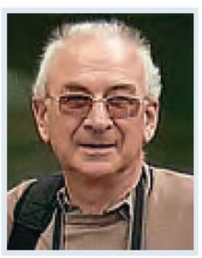


In his latest column, **Don Benn** covers the work of Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35018 *British India Line* on the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express', the well-travelled Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* from Par to Plymouth, and centenarian LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563 on the Swanage Railway.

AS I write this, there is much uncertainty over the main line steam scene, mainly as a result of West Coast Railways losing its judicial review over the continued use of non-central door locking rolling stock (CDL) on the main line. This decision has resulted in a shortage of CDL-fitted stock for some services being advertised in 2024. It is to be hoped that this can be resolved as soon as possible. In addition, DB Cargo has announced that it will reduce the amount of main line charter work it can undertake. My DBC driver contact has told me that it looks like he won't be doing much if any future steam work, which is a great shame as DBC has a realistic – and, in my view, operationally correct – attitude to the use of diesels on their steam worked trains; ie, if they are required to assist, then they should be on the front of the train and not on the back, and should only be taken if required for shunting at the destination or for use if a generator car is not available.

I start this time with another contribution from Sandy Smeaton, who was on the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' on October 7, 2023, hauled by Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35018 *British India Line*. Details of the Carnforth to Carlisle section are shown in Table One, and Sandy tells the story:

"This trip took place during a weekend of very wet weather, with disruption to services, especially in Scotland. However, the 'CME' left Euston on time but behind Class 57 No. 57012 and not Class 86 electric No. 86259 *Les Ross*, which had been boxed in at Rugby in error by Network Rail.

"No. 57012 left Preston about 10 minutes late and after a maximum of 82½mph took seven seconds under 29 minutes to stop in Carnforth loop, where it promptly failed. The 209 miles from Euston must have proved too much for it! No. 47804 eventually towed the miscreant to the depot and No. 35018, with its support vehicle, backed onto the train. On the footplate were Steve Chipperfield and Martin Soames. The load was 11,396 tons tare, about 430 full.

"After an initial quick start, MP 7 was passed at 37½mph, the short climb to MP 9½ producing a minimum of 31. Thereafter, the speed profile was 61½/36/72½/29 at MPs 13/26/31½/37¼, passing Shap Summit sign in 42m 49s, schedule 42 minutes. From Oxenholme to Shap Summit it was drizzling and wiser to avoid slipping than push the engine too hard. The Carnforth-Carlisle start-to-stop time was 72m 55s, well within the booked 77m, but 25½m late due to No. 57012's failure.

Slow progress on the banks

"Despite the loss of servicing time at Carlisle, departure for the Settle and Carlisle was only 12½ late. However, immediately at the start of the 1-in-132 climb from Petteril Bridge Junction, No. 35018 found it difficult to keep its feet and passed MP 304 at only 21½mph. After Low House speed rose to the line limit and Appleby was passed in 45½m, 2½m up on the schedule. The maximum at Ormside Viaduct was 62½, but before Crosby Garrett speed fell to 35½. After a brief recovery to 43½ at MP 269, Kirkby Stephen was passed at 28½. There was then a slip entering Birkett Tunnel and by MP 264 we were down to 15½. Recovery after Mallerstang was to 30 with a minimum of 19½ before Ais Gill Summit.

"After watering at Hellifield we got away 19m late and despite hurrying down to Clitheroe were held at Horrocksford Junction for the 5.20pm Clitheroe to Rochdale and then waited before Whalley

On October 7, 2023, No. 35018 passes Low Baron Wood with the southbound 'Cumbrian Mountain Express'. HOWARD ROUTLEDGE

Above: LMS Jubilee class No. 45596 *Bahamas* at Par on September 24, 2023, with the empty stock working of the 8.51am from Bristol. SANDY SMEATON

Right: Driver Steve Chipperfield on the regulator of No. 35018 at Carlisle on February 2, 2020. DON BENN

for it to clear the section and attempt the climb to Wilpshire. Thirty-eight was reached through Whalley station but fell to 15 on the wooded section to Langho. Once in the open fields south of Langho, speed recovered to 19½mph, but in the heavily wooded section either side of Wilpshire Tunnel there was little hope on railheads encrusted with leaves and the Pacific slipped to a stand. Setting back a few feet produced little progress and the rails were then hand-sanded. This allowed some slow progress between six further stalls until clean railhead was reached, and the Summit

TABLE ONE: CARNFORTH TO CARLISLE

Date	Saturday, October 7, 2023
Train	6.48am Euston to Carlisle
Loco	MN Class 4-6-2 No. 35018 *British India Line*
Load	Eleven coaches, 396 tons tare, 430 tons gross
Driver	Steve Chipperfield
Firemen	Martin Soames
Recorder	A Smeaton
Position	Eleventh coach
Weather	Drizzle Oxenholme to the summit

		sched	mins	secs	speed
Carnforth DGL	0.00	0.00	00	00	29½ late
Carnforth	0.34		02	10	19½
MP 7	1.09		03	41	37½
MP 8	2.09		05	21	35½
MP 9	3.08		07	12	31
Yealand MP 9½	3.59		08	10	31½
Burton and Holme	4.83		09	58	52
MP 12	6.09		11	19	58½
MP 13	7.09		12	19	61½
Milnthorpe	7.63		12	52	59½
MP 14½	8.59		13	52	56½
Hincaster Junction	9.59		14	58	53/50½
MP 17	11.09		16	41	53½
MP 18	12.09		17	51	49½/46½
Oxenholme	13.20	16.30	19	15	49
MP 20	14.09		20	23	45½
MP 21	15.09		21	44	44
Hay Fell	16.59		23	53	41
MP 23½	17.59		25	22	40/41½
Lambrigg	18.34		26	28	40
MP 25	19.09		27	37	38½/36
MP 26	20.09		29	15	36½
Grayrigg RR	20.26	26.00	29	32	38
MP 27	21.09		30	37	52½
Low Gill	22.09		31	41	58
Dillicar	24.09		33	36	69
MP 31½	25.59		34	52	72½
Tebay	26.30	32.30	35	28	70
MP 33	27.09		36	10	66
MP 34	28.09		37	08	56
Scout Green	29.24		38	31	43½
MP 36	30.09		39	49	36½
MP 37	31.09		41	36	31
MP 37¼	31.34		42	06	30/29
Shap Summit	31.59		42	36	31
Summit Sign	31.70	42.00	42	49	33½
MP 38¼	32.34		43	48	44
Shap Old Station	33.81		45	20	67
Harrisons Sidings	35.75	46.00	47	00	71/73
Thrimby Grange	37.09		48	07	70/66½
MP 45	39.09		49	53	71½
Clifton	41.09		51	30	76/78
MP 49	43.09		53	02	76
MP 50	44.09		53	50	75½/70
Penrith	45.32	55.00	54	52	70½
MP 53	47.07		56	23	68/67½
Plumpton	50.07		58	51	75
MP 57	51.07		59	40	74½
Calthwaite	52.46		60	47	76½/78
Southwaite	55.82		63	31	70½/67
Wreay	58.26		65	40	67½/69
MP 66	60.07		67	15	66½
Upperby	62.07		69	40	38
Carlisle	63.09	77.00	72	55	25½ late

"...In the heavily wooded section either side of Wilpshire Tunnel there was little hope on railheads encrusted with leaves and the Pacific slipped to a stand."

LSWR T3 No. 563 approaching Corfe Castle on January 6, 2024, with the 10.30am from Swanage.
DON BENN

TABLE TWO: PAR TO PLYMOUTH

Date	Sunday, September 24,2023
Train	5.01pm Par to Bristol
Engine	LMS Class 6 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas*
Load	Eight coaches, 278 tons tare, 305 tons gross
Driver	B. Monteith
Fireman	C Porter
Recorder	A Smeaton from third coach
Weather	Rain, heavy at times

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Par	0.00	0.00	00	00	3½ late
MP 281	0.81		02	55	22½/28½
MP 280	1.81		05	15	26
Treverrin Tnl W	2.26		06	18	24
Treverrin Tnl E	2.57		06	54	41
MP 278½	3.31		07	51	48/51
Lostwithiel	4.36	9.00	09	10	45½/47
MP 277	4.81		09	45	45½
MP 276	5.81		10	59	50½/51
Brownqueen Tnl	6.56		11	53	46/50½
Bodmin Parkway	7.79	13.00	13	27	41/40½
MP 273	8.81		14	53	48
MP 272	9.81		16	11	42½
MP 271	10.81		17	37	40½/37½
Largin	11.81	20.00	19	10	38½
MP 269¼	12.56		20	17	41/45½
Doublebois OB	13.61		21	44	43½
MP 267	14.81		23	11	55/59½
Moorswater Viaduct	16.34		24	48	56
Liskeard	16.94	30.00	25	28	50/55
MP 263¾	18.06		26	46	49
Menheniot	20.04		28	51	62½/58/61
MP 260	21.81		30	37	60/58½/63
MP 258	23.81		32	36	59/60/51
St Germans	25.47	39.00	34	24	52½
Nottar Viaduct E	26.84		35	46	66
MP 263½	28.31		37	08	63
MP 262½	29.31		38	37	23*/4* sigs
Saltash	30.49	45.00	44	45	13*
St Budeaux Ferry Rd	31.64		48	19	41½/51
Keyham	32.49		49	23	47½
Dockyard	33.10		50	12	40
Devonport	33.45		50	45	35½
Plymouth	34.74		54	13	2¾ late

* brakes or speed restriction

gradient post was finally passed at 11mph.

"There was a further check before Daiseyfield Junction to let the 3.23pm York-Blackpool North proceed. The maximum after Hoghton Summit on the run down to Preston was 63½mph, where we stopped 68½ late. Had 6V38 12.46pm Carlisle Yard-Chirk log train (1600 tonnes), usually a Class 70, preceded the 'CME' as booked, we might have fared better on Wilpshire – or would that have slipped too, as I'm told it has occasionally?"

Well, at least that 'CME' completed its journey back to London, unlike the disaster on January 27, 2024, when it terminated at Crewe more than three hours late due to a points failure at Preston.

No. 45596 in Cornwall

Following my report of Jubilee No. 45596 *Bahamas* on the Bristol to Taunton and Plymouth to Par sections of 'The Royal Duchy' in *Heritage Railway* 315, Table Two shows the detail of the return from Par to Plymouth on September 24. Sandy Smeaton takes up the story on what was a very wet and dreary day: "The return departure was at 5.04pm, three minutes late, and we were now running ahead of an Atlantic front and its heavy rain.

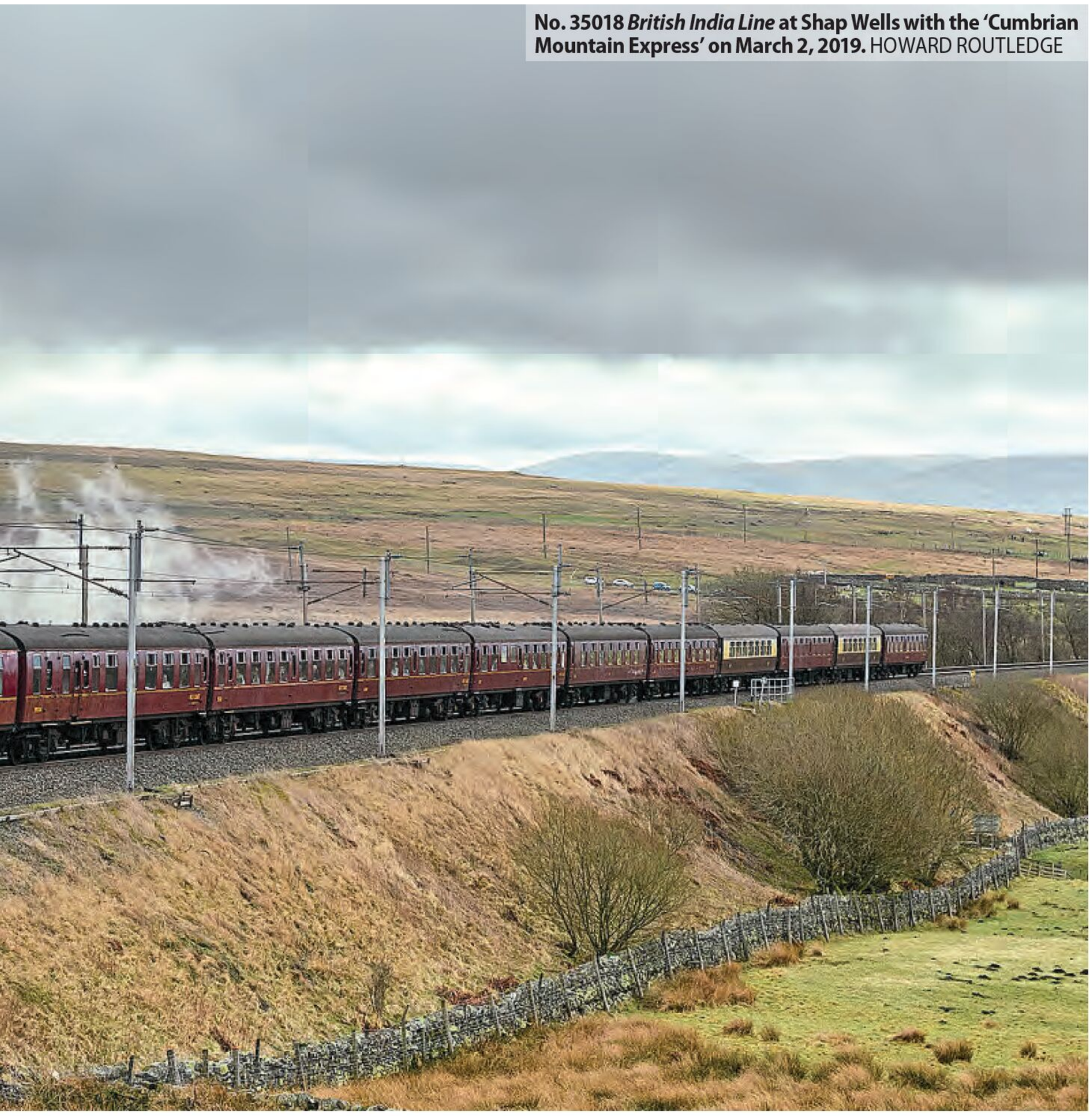
"The 1-in-84/109/62 climb to Treverrin Tunnel produced a minimum of 24mph. On the eight-mile climb from Bodmin to Doublebois, speed hovered about the 40 mark, followed by a maximum of 63 on the drop down to St Germans. We stopped in Plymouth's Platform 8 in 54m 13s from Par, booked for 55 minutes. No. 45596 came off the train to water from the hydrant on Platform 7".

I will cover the Plymouth to Exeter section next time. Moving on to the work of LSWR T3 class 4-4-0 No. 563 on the Swanage Railway I visited on Saturday, January 6 specifically to see how this 132-year-old restored locomotive was coping with the steep but short gradients. With four very full coaches, the answer is very well, as Tables Three and Four show. The immediate starts were slow but then as the engine was opened up it simply sailed up the hills at line speed. Any fears about it not coping were groundless and the load was increased to five coaches the next day, January 7.

Just as I was finishing this column I received the sad new that my old friend Brian Smith had passed away. I knew Brian from 1964 when I became aware of somebody who was often seen on the footplate, especially on the best runs with the fast drivers. He was known as 'that man from Clapham', one Brian Smith, who had an official role on the railway as a member of the Loco Testing Section at Brighton. This section was responsible for steam locomotive problems that were either causing issues in maintenance or steaming problems on the road. The former was certainly important in the 1950s, but not a big problem in the 1960s as steam was on the way out. The ability to raise steam was an issue to ensure trains as far as possible ran to time. Thus, Brian was around a lot of the time and, as time went by, he became a friend and the source of much useful information on the drivers and enginemen, and he was the one who drove us home the night

"The immediate starts were slow but then as the engine was opened up it simply sailed up the hills at line speed."

Pre-order Issue 317: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.



No. 35018 *British India Line* at Shap Wells with the 'Cumbrian Mountain Express' on March 2, 2019. HOWARD ROUTLEDGE

TABLE THREE: CORFE CASTLE TO SWANAGE

Date	Saturday, January 6, 2024
Train	11.15am Norden to Swanage
Loco	LSWR T3 Class 4-4-0 No. 563
Load	Four coaches, 132 tons tare, 140 tons gross
Weather	Fine
Position	Second coach
Timed by	Don Benn

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed	gradient
Corfe Castle	0.00	0.00	00	00		level
MP 131½	0.18		01	11	15½	80R
MP 131¾	0.43		01	59	19	80R
MP 132	0.68		02	47	22	80R
MP 132¼	0.93		03	26	24	80R
MP 132½	1.18		04	02	26½	level/132F
MP 132¾	1.43		04	36	26	level
MP 133	1.68		05	14	17*	132R
Harmans Cross	1.88	7.00	06	30		level
	0.00	0.00	00	00		level
MP 134	0.80		02	17	26	76F
MP 134½	1.30		03	32	23½/28	478/78F
MP 135	1.80		04	37	26	200F
Herston	2.12		05	37	18*/23	200/300F
MP 136	2.90		07	24	18*	110F
Swanage	3.00	10.00	08	52		level

TABLE FOUR: SWANAGE TO CORFE CASTLE

Date	Saturday, January 6, 2024
Train	12.00pm Swanage to Norden
Loco	LSWR T3 Class 4-4-0 No. 563
Load	Four coaches, 132 tons tare, 145 tons gross
Weather	Fine
Position	Second coach
Timed by	Don Benn

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed	gradient
Swanage	0.00	0.00	00	00		level
MP 136	0.20		02	00	13	300/110R
MP 135½	0.70		03	29	25½	level/110R
Herston	0.88		03	47	27½	300/200R
MP 135	1.20		04	33	28	78R
MP 134¾	1.45		05	10	23½	78R
MP 134½	1.70		05	48	24½	78/478R
MP 134	2.20		06	57	25½	76R
MP 133½	2.70		08	08	23	76R
Harmans Cross	3.00	10.00	09	21		level
	0.00	0.00	00	00		level
MP 133	0.20		01	29	21/26½	132F/level
MP 132½	0.70		02	43	19½	132R/80F
MP 132	1.20		03	58	28	80F
MP 131½	1.70		05	33	10*	80F
Corfe Castle	1.88	6.00	06	32		level

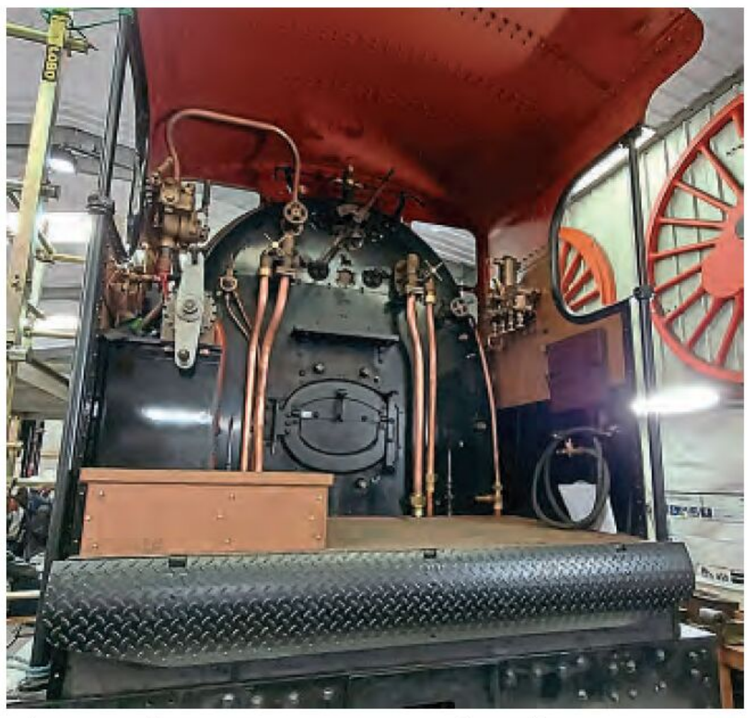
No. 563 starts off from Corfe Castle with the 12.45pm Norden to Swanage service. DON BENN

of Gordon Hooper's epic run on the 9.20 pm down on May 15, 1965. His daughter Vicky has given me details of his early career: 1953-1957 apprenticeship, Crewe Works; started aged 15; and 1957-1958 production office, Crewe Works. He then did two years of National Service, followed by 1960-1963 London Bridge, Drawing Office, St Thomas Street. After his spell at Brighton and at the end of steam on the Southern, in 1967 he moved to the Railway Technical Centre at Derby, from where he retired aged 73 after a very long career of 58 years. Sadly, Brian died on January 29, 2024, at the age of 87 after a long illness. I will always remember him both as a friend and as someone with great technical ability. What he didn't know about Bulleid Pacifics wasn't worth knowing. Next time, I will include a log of what is probably his greatest exploit when he and driver Gordon Hooper coaxed a Merchant Navy Pacific up to 3000 indicated horsepower – one of the greatest steam runs ever recorded. HR

Above: The late Brian Smith on the footplate of No. 34015 on the 8.35am down at Southampton on September 14, 1966. TERRY JACKSON

FRESH FRUITS OF THE NEW STEAM ERA

With the imminent completion of GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* and its eagerly-anticipated public debut, and the forthcoming return of A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* to action after two years, **Robin Jones** and **Owen Hayward** take a look at the current progress being made with other new-build standard gauge steam projects.



Above: Following its return into the Atlantic House workshop at Sheffield Park, the assembly of No. 32424 has including installing backhead fittings and pipe runs. OWEN HAYWARD

In a sector as permanently vibrant as that of railway enthusiasm and heritage, it seems that building new locomotives was always going to be a logical stage of natural progression. The pioneers of the embryonic preservation movement bought redundant steam locomotives from BR and industry, some still in working order, and when those supplies were exhausted turned to Dai Woodham's scrapyard at Barry before setting out on the long, arduous and painstaking road to restoration. Sadly, many locomotive types did not make it to Barry and were rendered extinct elsewhere, leaving gaping voids in the future heritage steam fleet which enthusiasts longed to fill.

Following the success of more manageable miniature and then narrow gauge new-build projects, the next step forward would be standard gauge, which comes at a far greater cost both in terms of expense and time. Without the production lines and associated resources of the steam era, a standard gauge new build might well take decades to bring to fruition.

In 1990, market leader The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust was founded with the intention of building the 50th Arthur Peppercorn LNER A1 4-6-2, and thanks to a combination of magnificent engineering expertise and a honed ability to raise essential funds from the wider public, No. 60163 *Tornado* was completed at Darlington in 2008. This can-do message resounded loud and clear throughout the heritage sector and showed the path for others to follow.

As the sector's first big news story of 2024, we now see the emergence of GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*. The seeds of the project to recreate a class last seen in 1965 were sown in 1998, and dogged perseverance and expertise on several fronts has now brought forth ripe

Below: For the first time since the original *Beachy Head* was withdrawn in 1958 and subsequently scrapped, the shape of an LBSCR H2 Atlantic locomotive came together at Sheffield Park on August 16, 2022. JOHN SANDYS/BRPS

P2 No. 2007 *Princes of Wales* and its monobloc inside Darlington Locomotive Works. A1SLT

fruit destined to draw the crowds wherever it goes.

Its builders, however, are by no means alone, and a plethora of commendable standard gauge projects are underway which, if all goes well, will see a succession of new locomotives appear in the years to come.

The next standard gauge new-build set to enthral us is likely to be the Bluebell Railway-based replica of LBSCR Brighton Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head*, of the Southern Railway-built 4-4-2 No. 424, the original having been withdrawn in April 1958 and scrapped the following month.

This project was formally announced in October 2000, but work had been underway for some time, the boiler for the scheme having been discovered in a yard near Maldon station in Essex in 1986. In 1999, the wheelsets for the tender were acquired from a scrap merchant in Uxbridge after a dummy locomotive on which they were used (by Madame Tussauds for a display at Windsor station) was cut up.

Work has gathered rapid pace in recent years. On August 16, 2022, a key milestone was reached when the rolling chassis was wheeled out of the project's dedicated workshop at Sheffield Park station and the boiler was lowered into place with just some minor fettling.

Since then, work has been carried out to complete the assembly of the Atlantic, with backhead fittings installed, along with the myriad runs of steam and lubrication pipework, which has included making all the brackets and clips to hold them in position.

During 2023, work focused on connecting everything from the front of the locomotive to that at the back. The steam pipes within the smokebox have been fitted and the blower ring mounted onto the blastpipe. The maze of steam heat and vacuum brake pipework has also progressed, having to take into consideration the positioning of damper control rods as they work their way down the locomotive. The vacuum braking on the tender has been tested and proven satisfactory, and focus has turned onto the front half, after which the air brakes can be tested (the locomotive being fitted with dual braking as per the original design).

Although there is still much to do, *Beachy Head* is expected to move into the Bluebell's main workshops in March, when the final assembly will be completed and full testing will commence, with a view to the locomotive debuting in autumn 2024.

➜ **To follow the progress of the new Beachy Head, visit bluebellrailway.com/brps/atlantic-latest/**

Prince of power

Five years after the completion of the phenomenally successful *Tornado*, The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust announced in November 2013 that it would go one better – by taking a step forward that probably would never be bettered and building, at an estimated £6 million, the seventh example of Sir Nigel Gresley's P2 Mikado, hailed as Britain's most powerful express passenger type, and sadly none of which had been preserved.

Construction of No. 2007 *Prince of Wales* at Darlington began in 2014, its design based on No. 2001 *Cock o' the North* with some modifications to improve maintenance, address historic problems, and comply with modern railway operations. In the years that followed, steady and regular progress was made under the guidance of the trust's technical director, David Elliott, who died on December 16 following a long illness (issue 315).

The unique fabricated monobloc was delivered last October, and the boiler, which was manufactured in Meiningen in Germany. is anticipated this spring, a little later than first forecast.

The trust is starting the recruitment process for an engineering manager and is also planning a body of work that will see these larger components fitted to the P2.

This year will see significant visual advances made as the locomotive comes together. Focus will initially be on the monobloc and pony truck, before moving onto the boiler and tender as funds allow, as well as smaller components that support the larger elements, the installation of which will each cost about £30,000 to £50,000.

In the very near future, the trust will launch The Valve Gear Club, raising funds for this distinctive feature based on the Lentz-Franklin valve gear, developed and adapted for the P2 by David Elliott. Manufacture of components for the poppet valve gear can be arranged before installation onto the locomotive.

Towards the end of 2024, the trust will also be launching a new club to raise funds for the electrical work required.

Tornado has more than seven miles of cabling, and *Prince of Wales* will require similar equipment before it can operate on the main line. Former trustee and electrical engineer Rob Morland will lead this aspect of the project, which is timed to coincide with the final stages of the tender build and will likely include preparation for ETCS signalling equipment.

With so much in the pipeline, there is a definite sense of excitement within the trust.

➜ **Find out more about the P2 project and how to contribute online at www.a1steam.com**

Gathering of the new Clan

Registered charity the Standard Steam Locomotive Co Ltd, which was incorporated on April 30, 1996, is building what would have been the next BR Clan Pacific at the premises of CTL Seal, Sheffield, a classic BR era type that did not escape the scrap man.

The Robert Riddles design was based on that of the Britannia class, but with a smaller boiler and other weight-saving measures to increase route availability. Ten were built between 1951 and 1952.

Hengist is being built to the Lot 242 standard, which was the design to be used for the 15 locomotives scheduled for the 1954 building programme and which was subsequently cancelled by the 1955 Modernisation Plan.

The main changes are a stronger frame design (similar to that of No. 71000 *Brittania*), a coil sprung pony truck, and a revised cab design to combat draughts.

The £4 million project has previously been based at the Swanage and Great Central railways.

Numerous components, including the frames, have been produced to date. The bogie side frame plates are fastened to the central stretcher and work is now concentrated on the critical task of fitting the axlebox guides to them. All of the suspension components are in stock. The bogie spring cradle and leaf springs are all available for fitting once the frame is complete.

The project is currently producing an improved dragbox which was designed in 1958.

With the exception of the rectangular section side control springs, virtually all of the components for the bogie are in stock.

Design work is nearing completion on the coil sprung pony truck. This was intended for the last batch of Britannias but was implemented only on the unique No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester.*

An order has just been placed with Trefoil Steel Ltd in Sheffield for the casting and machining of the pony truck wheels.

Initial design work is underway on the driving wheels and the project team hopes to restart work on the cylinder pattern shortly.

Discussions have been held with various organisations on the boiler design, which will differ from the original Clan type in that it will be all welded instead of riveted, and an all-steel inner firebox, both measures intended to save weight. The boiler pressure will have a working pressure of 250 psi as opposed to 225 psi of the original.

Once a detailed design for the boiler is agreed, the next step will be to seek tenders for its manufacture.

➜ **For more details about the project and how to donate, visit www.theclanproject.org**

Fitting *Hengist*'s smoke deflectors. SSLC

Repositioning the frames of No. 72010 *Hengist*. SSLC

All-purpose locomotive

The decision to start the project to build a new NER Worsdell O class 0-4-4T (LNER G5), based at Hackworth Industrial Park in Shildon, was made at a time when heritage railways would never have considered such sharp rises in costs bringing about a change in operating strategies, but the team behind building No. 1759 foresaw a shortage of locomotives of this size and capacity and decided to address it.

As it homepage mission statement reads: "Most small to medium-sized locomotives are more than 60 years old, with all of the associated problems. In addition, many of the preserved industrial-type locomotives are either too small or do not have the capacity to cope with longer, heavier trains – we intend to address this problem!"

The G5 will provide an ideal-sized locomotive that can handle the majority of four to five-coach services at the majority of heritage lines. In 2009, the decision was taken to build the locomotive to main line operating standards so that, should the option be pursued, it could obtain the appropriate certification.

The most recent fundraising appeal launched by the G5 Locomotive Company Ltd focuses on financing construction of the two water tanks, estimated to cost about £24,500.

In the workshops, the frames have been lifted up to allow the bogie to be moved out so that the rails on which the rolling chassis will rest can be relaid on new sleepers with refurbished NER rail chairs.

While the bogie is more accessible, further painting of the otherwise hard-to-reach areas will be carried out before it needs to return underneath the frames.

Once this step has been completed, further assembly work will be carried out, including the refitting of the cylinder block (the covers for which have been undergoing machining) and running boards, which will make it look more like a locomotive.

Elsewhere, Cooks Foundry in Sheffield has successfully completed casting a new driving wheel, the need for which came about following inspections of the previous castings necessitated by issues experienced by other projects.

This and the existing wheels have been fully examined and re-tested to main line standards and passed with no reservations or restrictions, paving the way for the wheelsets to be fully assembled.

➜ **For more details about the project and to offer support, visit www.g5locomotiveltd.co.uk**

Go-anywhere Standard tank

Potentially one of the most versatile up-and-coming new builds is the Severn Valley Railway-based 82045 Steam Locomotive Trust's project to construct a new BR Standard 3MT 2-6-2T.

The scheme to build No. 82045 began the 1990s. More recently, attention has focused on the boiler and firebox, the latter now fully stayed and awaiting fitment of the foundation ring. The boiler barrel is currently undergoing work to fit the dome and mounting pads for the regulator linkage.

Once these two major components have been sufficiently progressed, they will be united with one another, allowing for a trial fitting of the boiler in the frames.

When in situ, fittings will be temporarily attached, and the necessary pipework made up before it is removed for the final hydraulic and steam tests. The benefit of doing the work at this stage will mean that final reassembly will be quicker without precious time wasted on the ticket to manufacture things at the later stages.

Project spokesman Neil Taylor said that the biggest development for 2024 will likely be the contracted completion of the boiler by SVR by the end of the year. "The small tubes have now arrived, and I have been told that the flues will soon follow," he said.

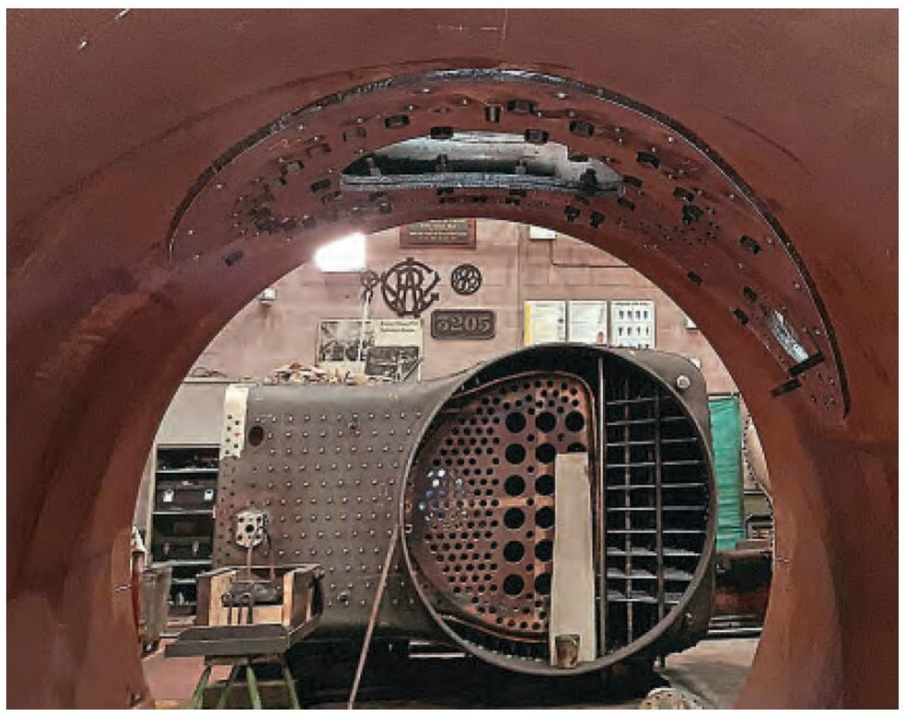
"We do not want the boiler ticket to start too soon, so we will delay the test cycles until the rest of the build is in a more advanced position.

The frames of No. 1759 were lifted in December to allow for the trailing bogie to be extracted and the rails underneath to be replaced. G5LCL

The cylinder block and its covers have been machined and are expected to be refitted to the frames later this year. G5LCL

The new driving wheel casting is complete, with all eight wheels reinspected at main line standards, passing without restriction. G5LCL

The rolling chassis of No. 82045 in the Bridgnorth yard in June 2023, with the water tanks, coal bunker and smokebox fitted above the solebar. TONY MASSAU/82045SLT



A view of the new firebox as seen through the boiler barrel in the Bridgnorth workshops in December 2023. JOHN PAGGETT/82045SLT

We do, however, plan to do a trial fit in the frames as soon as the boiler has good integrity."

Elsewhere, the sanding, vacuum brake and steam heat piping continues to be assembled, while outstanding work on the motion is undertaken.

It is estimated that a further £300,000 is required to complete No. 82045. Neil said he was "absolutely sure that this will happen, but I cannot be precise about when we will hit that target."

It is a type that could well lend itself to batch-building in future years, when it may well be thought more desirable to build from scratch than to patch up a worn-out, historic locomotive.

➜ Visit www.82045.org.uk for details of how to support the project.

A 'Bloomer' for Birmingham

To mark the 150th anniversary of the West Coast Inter City route in 1988, Vintage Trains, at Tyseley Locomotive Works, began the construction of a working replica of a James McConnell LNWR 'Bloomer' 2-2-2, No. 670, with financial assistance from Birmingham City Council.

Described as a representative of the pioneer standard gauge high-speed steam train, the new locomotive, using some original parts from the 1850s, will be the only working example in Britain with a 7ft single driving wheel.

These locomotives were at the forefront of engineering technology, with high boiler pressure, a superior valve chest design, and patented fireboxes to burn coal (instead of coke), and they even included hopper grates for removing ash and clinker.

These innovations allowed the locomotives to run successfully for nearly 35 years, hauling up to a dozen daily trains between London and Birmingham.

The type's nickname came from American feminist Amelia Bloomer because of her dress reform to reveal ladies' legs. The locomotive's design revealed 'naked' driving wheels and the lower parts of the locomotives' anatomy.

An accurate, full-sized, non-working replica 'Bloomer' was built by apprentices for static display outside Milton Keynes station in 1991 and is now in Milton Keynes Museum.

The working replica in original LNWR Southern Division format was designed by Tyseley's former chief engineer, Bob Meanley, very closely based on the original design, and even has an original tender underframe, together with wheels and brake gear from two other examples. The manufacture and assembly of the main components of No. 670 has also been completed: frames, cylinders, boiler and wheels (including the single driving wheelset with crank axle).

The boiler was built by Babcock to an insurance company-approved welded design. The highly ornate brass dome has also been manufactured, together with most of the motion parts and connecting rods and several other components which are currently in store awaiting fitting, all with funds kindly provided by well-wishers.

Progress of the replica (90% of which was completed in 1990) has since been intermittent as funds permit, and it is estimated that about £250,000 is needed to complete it: a dedicated person to lead fundraising is being sought.

There have been hopes that it may steam in time for the completion of the High Speed 2 rail link between the cities, and No. 670 might even be permitted to run a demonstration train in its Birmingham terminus.

➜ To donate to the project, email developments@vintagetrains.co.uk or write to Vintage Trains Charitable Trust, 670 Warwick Road, Tyseley Birmingham B11 2HL (the new 'Bloomer' has been allocated the number of that address!).

New LNWR 'Bloomer' No. 670 being shunted into the new carriage shed at Tyseley Locomotive Works last summer. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE/VT

New Holden tank

The building of new GER Holden F5 2-4-2T No. 789 started in the early 2000s as a joke between friends. Its first base being on a private farm in Ovington, Essex, the Holden F5 Steam Locomotive Trust fairly quickly got frames cut and assembled, a smokebox made, and coal bunker fabricated. The stay at Ovington ended in 2012 when plans to develop the land led to the project temporarily moving to Mangapps Railway Museum at Burnham-on-Crouch, before transferring in 2014 to Tyseley Locomotive Works, which remains its current base.

No. 789 will carry the pre-Grouping company's livery upon completion, a feature that will no doubt make it highly desirable for many lines amid the current tide of BR blacks and greens. As with *Beachy Head*, No. 789 is a direct replica, taking its number from the locomotive built at Stratford Works in 1904 and scrapped in 1958 as BR No. 67218. It was one of two anomalies of the F5 having been fitted with an F6 cab, which sported additional cab side windows. They became synonymous with the London Underground-owned Central Line between Epping and Ongar, and many have lamented the fact that none survived into preservation.

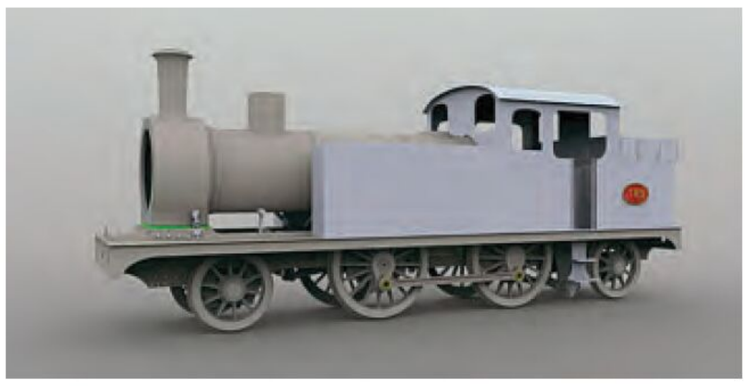
Work behind the scenes continues, with materials and components coming together: 80% of the wheelset components have arrived at Riley & Sons engineering workshops in Heywood, and once the tyres have been delivered, the assembly of the leading and trailing wheelsets will commence, with the driving sets to follow after. The crank axle design saw the engineering team study the one on Y14 No. 564 at the North Norfolk Railway.

Design work continues on the radial wheelset guides, while quotations are currently being sought for casting the hornblocks, with the intention being to create a rolling chassis soon.

The engineering team at Tyseley has recently manufactured 85% of the spring hangers and pins and are working out quotes for the cost of pistons, rods, and crossheads which will all be cast at the same time as cylinder covers, patterns for which are already on hand.

Again, with heritage lines now looking for smaller, more economical locomotives, the F5 could certainly prove invaluable once up and running.

➜ **To donate to the project, visit holdenf5.co.uk**



Above: CAD work continues, with tank, cab and boiler designs giving a glimpse of what No. 789 may look like in future. ELLIOT POWICK/HF5SLT

The newly-manufactured spring hangers at Tyseley Locomotive Works. HF5SLT

The current assembly of No. 789 at Tyseley Locomotive Works. OWEN HAYWARD

A tale of two Counties

In 2005, the Great Western Society launched a project to build a replica of Hawksworth County No. 1014 *County of Glamorgan*, which was scrapped in December 1964. Following an agreement with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, the project is using parts from four of the 'Barry 10', the last locomotives in the legendary scrapyard – WR 4-6-0 No. 7927 *Willington Hall*, prairie No. 4115, Churchward 2-8-0 No. 2861 and 2-8-0T No. 5227, together with a 3500-gallon tender. A large number of new parts must be constructed, including the driving wheels.

Original County parts are also being used in the construction of No. 1014, which include the original chimney from No. 1006 *County of Cornwall*, the regulator from No. 1011 *County of Chester*, and the reverser from 1024 *County of Pembroke*.

Excellent progress continues to be made on No. 1014's chassis, with the coupling rods trial-fitted, followed by the first of the connecting rods. These were manufactured from new using material of the correct grade (EN14) supplied by Somers Forge of Halesowen

GWR 4-6-0 No.1014 *County of Glamorgan* outside the shed at Didcot Railway Centre during a shunt on January 28. FRANK DUMBLETON/GWS

The primed chassis and wheel for B17 No. 61673 *Spirit of Sandringham*. B17SLT

Boiler donor locomotive GWR 4-6-0 No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle* at Tyseley Locomotive Works on November 16, 2023. ROBIN JONES

The cylinder block for the new Churchward 'Night Owl' No. 4709 at Didcot Railway Centre. MIKE SOLLOWAY/GWR

from material left over from an order for components for nuclear submarines. Also required were new crossheads and slidebars to match, while the inside motion is either to hand or on order. The project team are often asked about the next steps – something which is never too easy to forecast.

Although the boiler may look finished, the team is yet to order the firebars, grate, ashpan, internal steam pipe, top feed tray, tubes and superheater header, and main steam pipe, together with other small items.

Once the pipework and cladding have been completed, the boiler will be removed and returned to Heritage Boiler Steam Services in Liverpool, where the internal steam pipe and top feed tray will be installed, followed by the tubeplate and tubes.

The tender is within three months of completion to undercoat condition.

➜ To support the project, visit www.county1014.org

In 2013, a spin-off idea to build the 41st Churchward County 4-4-0 was discussed, again using second-hand and new parts, and in January 2018 the independent Churchward County Trust Ltd was established.

The GWS has since donated components to No. 3840 *County of Montgomery*, including the Standard No. 4 boiler currently on No. 5227 at Didcot, two 3ft 2in diameter wheelsets and four axleboxes.

Rapid progress has seen major components manufactured, including two cylinder blocks, four 6ft 8½in driving wheels, a new main frame plates and stretchers assembled at Tyseley, and a new rear dragbox.

In 2023, David Bradshaw, chairman of the Hawksworth County project, also took over the same position on the Churchward scheme.

The Gloucester Warwickshire Railway has offered the locomotive a base once completed, as the type was historically appropriate to the line.

➜To support No. 3840, visit www.churchwardcounty.org.uk

Spirit of Sandringham

With no less than rock star and railway enthusiast Sir Rod Stewart CBE as its patron, the B17 Steam Locomotive Trust is building an LNER B17 4-6-0 express passenger steam locomotive, to be known as No. 61673 *Spirit of Sandringham* for main line and heritage railway use.

The scheme was announced in spring 2008. In April 2015, the frames were rolled at Tata Steel and delivered to the Llangollen Railway that September to construct No. 61673. However, with the closure of Llangollen engineering business in 2020, that October

LMS-Patriot Project members saw the all-new boiler for No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior* when Heritage Boiler Steam Services held an open day at its Merseyside workshops on July 15. THE LMS-PATRIOT PROJECT

the completed main frames were moved to the workshops of CTL Seal LTD in Sheffield, where the *Hengist* project is a bedfellow.

The trust has continued to push forward with the development of the rolling chassis for 61673 *Spirit of Sandringham* but has also completed the design stage of the smokebox and is currently completing the redesign of the bogie chassis.

All six coupled (driving) wheels are cast, non-destructive tested and machined, while the Timken roller bearings and tyre steel for all wheels, including the tender, are in stock. All axles, both for the coupled wheels and the bogie wheels, are now in the process of being machined.

The trust has raised its first £1 million. Its annual open day will be held at CTL Seal Ltd on April 13.

➜ Its current appeal is 'Let's put a face on 61673!' for the smokebox, with a target of £55,000. Donations can be sent to B17SLT, 171 Clifton Road, Shefford, Bedfordshire SH17 5AG. Enquiries should be sent to B17enquiries@gmail.com.

The 'Night Owl'

In 2010, the Great Western Society's 4709 Group was formed to build the 10th example of a Churchward 47XX 'Night Owl' mixed traffic 2-8-0, none of which survived.

The No. 4709 project involves manufacturing new components and the use of spares from the abovementioned 'Barry 10' locomotives – plus, as previously reported, the No. 8 boiler from unrestored GWR 4-6-0 No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle*, which the group is buying from its private owner. The locomotive had previously been stored at Loughborough on the Great Central Railway but last year was moved to Tyseley Locomotive Works for the boiler to be lifted.

Tyseley has completed the refurbishment of No. 4709's horn guides, and it is hoped to fit these to the frames and align them later this year. The group then plans to machine No. 4709's front end, including the pony truck and newly cast/machined cylinders.

➜ See also Next Stop, page 106. **To support the project, visit www.4709.org.uk**

New fort for *The Unknown Warrior*

The LMS-Patriot Project, which is constructing a replica of the final Patriot 4-6-0 to be built, No. 5551 *The Unknown Warrior*, was launched at a Llangollen Railway gala in April 2008.

All of the original unrebuilt locomotives were withdrawn by November 1962 and the whole class by December 1965, with none surviving.

The frames were cut in March 2009, a tender was acquired in December 2010, a second one in July 2012, and the building of the boiler began at Crewe Heritage Centre in January 2016, it being trial-fitted to the frames in November 2018.

Much regular progress has been steadily made since the launch and, as reported in issue 315, in December the project moved to Tyseley Locomotive Works from its last base at the Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust's West Shed at the Midland Railway – Butterley.

Once No. 6880 *Betton Grange* has departed, Tyseley will be in a position to accommodate the Patriot chassis in its workshop.

➜ Donations to the LMS-Patriot Project can be made at www.lms-patriot.org.uk/how-you-can-help HR

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Elfkarleo Bruk, an 0-4-0T built by Hughes in Loughborough in 1873, inside the Swedish National Railway Museum main collection building at Gävle on July 5, 2022, and which is set for display at the revamped venue.

TO SWEDEN FOR STEAM!

Sweden's National Railway Museum at Gävle will soon reopen after a six-year closure and refurbishment and will again bring the country's railway history into sharp focus. In the meantime, **John Titlow** reports, in words and pictures, on neighbouring first-class heritage lines and preservation venues.

In *Heritage Railway* issue 296, we reported exclusively on a steam freight in Lapland, high up in the Swedish Arctic Circle. Two issues later, we looked at that country's National Railway Museum at Gävle, with its wonderful collection of historic British-built locomotives dating back to 1856.

After being closed for six years, the museum is now in the final stages of renovation and is set to reopen for the summer. There will be no steam specials when it reopens, but on September 28 it plans to offer live steam action.

Sweden is not the first European destination that comes to mind when planning a steam railtour. For a country with a population of 10.5 million, there is a surprising number of heritage railways and steam running on the main line. The majority of preservation sites are in the south and central regions, where most of the population lives. Researching a visit to Sweden it is very easy, as various websites list the heritage lines and give full details of operating days and timings: it is a simple case of fitting in what's possible, because most run only at weekends.

With time constraints heading north on an overnight train into the Arctic Circle, not all could be fitted inside two weeks. I made the decision to visit the Gävle museum, where special access was granted, along with three very diverse working heritage railways and the museum at Grangersburg, all in the central region, to see how much they differ from their British counterparts.

Several Swedish locomotives have found their way to the UK, especially the B class 4-6-0s, the equivalent of our 'Black Fives'.

In its infancy, the Nene Valley Railway, which is built to Berne loading gauge, relied on Swedish locomotives for services, like B No. 1697 and S 2-6-2T No. 1178; both are still at Wansford and in need of repair. Also, there is the distinctive Y7 railcar No. 1212.

Another was S1 No.1928, a 2-6-4T which is apparently stored in a private garden in Kent. Another B, No. 1313, is at the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway.

A Swedish locomotive that has been anglicised is G11 2-8-0 No. 1931, now masquerading as WD No. 90733 on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway. Designed by Robert Riddles and built by Vulcan Foundry at Newton le Willows in 1945, its

Lennakatten Railway Falun 2-8-0 No. 5 *Thor* approaches Marielund on June 29, 2022.

Swedish alterations were removed during a heavy overhaul, and it returned to steam in 2007. It was even deemed British enough to work photographic charters.

What struck me most of all about Sweden is how short the running seasons are and how there are few days throughout the year on which heritage lines operate. This fact opens up many questions regarding funding, especially with costs relating to restoration of steam locomotives and, in particular, boiler certification.

Boiler certificate lasts 10 years in the UK, with the possibility of an extension. In Sweden, there appears to be a completely different set of rules, with boilers lasting double this time and some even longer.

One boiler had not been lifted since 1996 and is still in operation: the lack of regular use and how the Swedes winterise the locomotives is very different. All water is fully drained out of the engine and tender, all washout plugs are removed, and a dehumidifier is used to remove all moisture.

Due to very hard winters, cabs are fully enclosed, and there is an abundance of wooden-bodied stock on all gauges. These carriages look very attractive, especially with their balcony ends where people can enjoy the ride.

At every place I visited, there was a genuinely warm welcome from everyone connected to the railways, and there is certainly a common bond between enthusiasts. There were no issues regarding trespassing because lines tended to be unfenced.

As in the UK, there is a seriously dedicated group of volunteers who contribute money and time to work on their railways with great enthusiasm and who are only too happy to show you around and explain the work they are undertaking.

Above: E2 No. 1182 at Pershyttan on the Nora Berslags Veteran Railway on June 24.
Below: On the Nora Berslags Veteran Railway, E2 2-8-0 No. 1182 and diesel No. T23 at Nora station on June 24, 2022.

Converted railcar No. 838 *Angelholm* at Nora on the Nora Berslags Veteran Railway on June 24.

Motala 2-4-4T No. 15 of 1923 inside Grängesberg Railway Museum.

Turbine locomotive M3t No. 72 up on jacks inside Grängesberg shed.

Nora Bergslag's Veteran Railway

I first visited the standard gauge Nora Bergslags Veteran Railway, which was running a special midsummer service (midsummer's day is a big celebration in Nordic countries).

On the day of my visit, the train ran from Nora to Pershyttan behind E2 2-8-0 No. 1182. It left Nora chimney-first; then, after about two miles, a diesel took over as it reversed down the short branch to Pershyttan.

This operation runs on Sweden's first public standard gauge line – the Nora-Ervalla-Örebro railway, which was just over 11 miles long, opening using steam traction in 1856 and hauled by Förstlingen (first one), built 1853 at Eskilstuna Mekaniska Verkstad by Johan Theofron Munktell. Its main purpose was to serve the area's mines and ironworks. Along part of its route is Järle, the oldest station still in use in Sweden.

During the 1960s, the railway was in decline and the last ore train ran in 1974. In 1976, the company was taken over by the state, finally closing in 1985. In about 1976, a group of enthusiasts began to collect rolling stock for a potential museum or heritage line, and when the state railway closed, they took over.

Nora is the base of its operations, with its distinguished brick-built station building alongside Lake Norasjön. By 1988, the society had acquired more than 100 vehicles.

Nora is not only the main station, but its workshops and roundhouse are also here. Much of it was left when the railway closed, including spares for repairing the locomotives.

The line has three working steam locomotives: E2 2-8-0 No. 1182, Y3 2-6-2T No. 16, and B 4-6-0 No. 1267. It also runs 1950s railcars, typical of the transition period after steam and similar to railcar Y7 No. 1212 at the Nene Valley.

The wonderfully restored roundhouse dates back to 1891 and the station building was built around the same time. The stock is wooden-bodied, typical of Swedish Railways.

At Nora, there is a collection of railcars, freight wagons, and E1 2-8-0 No. 1046 outside a small shed.

Accommodation could not be closer to a working railway because two sleeping carriages have been converted alongside the lake and station into a bed and breakfast. As is typical in Sweden, full cooking facilities are provided, enabling guests to self-cater. Walking across to the nearby shed to watch the locomotive being prepared for the day before breakfast is a must.

Operating days are Fridays and Saturdays in July and Saturdays in August. There are also additional days; visit https://angtagetutinora.se

Turbine locomotive M3t No. 73 on shed at Grängesberg on June 27, 2022.

Grängesberg Railway Museum

A must-see venue was the standard gauge Grängesberg Railway Museum, which specialises in preserving what is left of the TGOJ (Trafiaktiebolaget Grängesberg-Oxelösunds Järnvägar) railway.

In the late 19th century, the TGOJ came into being by taking over several lines in central Sweden specifically to carry iron ore from Bergslagen to the port and ironworks in Oxelösund. It was always an independent line and stayed so when railways were nationalised in the mid-20th century. Its independence was strengthened by its use of turbine steam locomotives.

What makes the museum at Grängesberg unique is that it has two preserved turbine steam locomotives and, according to the venue, the world's only working example. Having never seen one, it was an essential trip to make. I had been in touch with museum staff beforehand and they kindly pulled one out for photographing; my thanks go to Jonas Nilsson for this.

Several countries and manufactures toyed with the idea of steam turbine locomotives, but it appears that Sweden was the only country to use them regularly.

The two preserved 2-8-0s were designed by Swedish engineer Fredrik Ljungström and built by Nydqvist & Holm (NOHAB). Designated Class M3t, No. 72 was built in 1929 and No. 73 in 1936. They were in use until the 1950s when the line was electrified.

The LNER toyed with the idea and the LMS achieved more success with the design. No less a figure than William Stanier visited Sweden, which inspired his design for the Turbomotive 4-6-2, No. 6202, built in 1935. It was inspired by the Swedish Ljungström locomotives first introduced in 1922 and used turbines instead of cylinders.

After a turbine failure, No. 6202 was rebuilt as a conventional locomotive in 1952, using new mainframes and a set of cylinders of the same type used in the Coronation class, and renumbered and named No. 46202 *Princess Anne*. On October 8, 1952, after only two months in service, while hauling an express train bound for Liverpool Lime Street, it was involved in the Harrow and Wealdstone rail crash. No. 46202 was taken to Crewe, where it was deemed beyond economical repair and scrapped, but its destruction led to the construction of BR Standard 8 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*.

The Grängesberg museum was established in 1979 and covers a vast area which was a shunting yard. It is now filled with wagons, carriages, and steam locomotives, mostly in need of restoration, but they are saved, which is extremely important.

The signalbox controlling the yard has been restored.

Around the yard are three wagons built by Birmingham Carriage & Wagon Company at Smethwick. Two are alongside the roundhouse, while the other is completely hidden among the many 'saved' wagons in the yard.

The 10-road roundhouse, which dates from 1928, has been recently re-roofed and the important exhibits are kept undercover and protected from the severe winter.

One of the turbine locomotives was up on jacks being worked on when I visited in 2022.

The museum is desperately short of funds and working members, but there is a dedicated core which deserve support in preserving what it has.

It would be wonderful to see one of the turbines in steam – even if it is only around the yard.

Mallet No. 12 departs Tallas on the Jädraås–Tallås Railway on June 26, 2022.

Jädraås–Tallås Railway

For what this railway lacks in length, it more than makes up for in its authentic character – especially around its base at Jädraås. Here was the beating heart of the original Dala–Ockelbo-Norrsundets Järnväg (DONJ) railway, which ran for 53 miles from Linghed to Norrsundet.

It was built in stages between 1874 and 1895 to a gauge of 891mm, which equates to 35in – or three Swedish feet! – to transport ore and timber.

Although it is not particularly long at just under four miles, this railway, its base and the remains of the blast furnaces immediately below the station has to be a time warp. This place is a must if you enjoy industrial archaeology, especially around the blast furnaces, and much of it remains as it was on the day its workers left.

Jädraås has a six-road roundhouse, works, carpentry shop, forge, original water tower, storage buildings and everything you would expect to keep the railway running. It's a bit like a mini-Swindon but now has a population of about 200.

It is now recognised by Swedish authorities as the equivalent of the UK's Grade I status for being one of the most intact railway environments existing in the country, and thus is of significant importance.

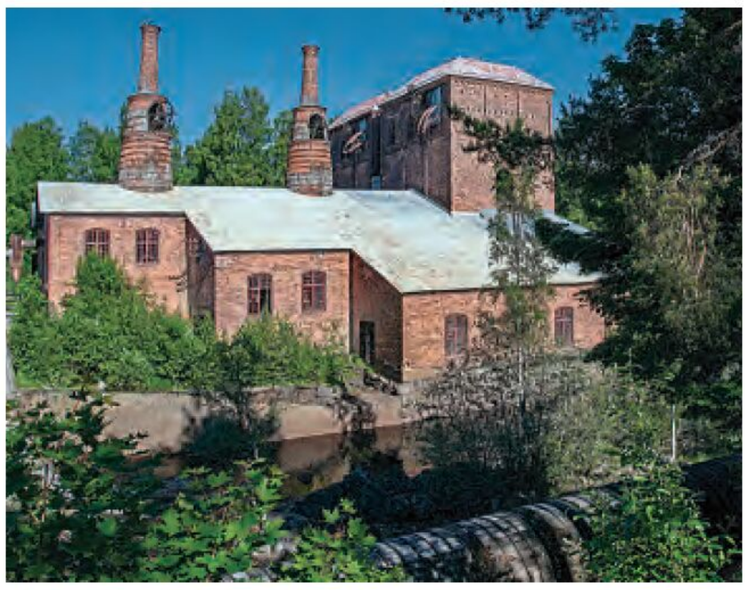
The railway closed in 1970 and the heritage line took over the section between Jädraås and Tallås, that same year extending to Svartbacken in 2004. It is the most northerly preserved line in Sweden – and perhaps Europe.

It has a wonderful collection of locomotives and stock, much of it from the original railway. A favourite has to be the Mallet 0-6-6-0 built for the line in 1910 at Atlas works, Stockholm, which was in steam for my visit. Trains start in Jädraås for a journey time of about an hour. Services mainly run on Sundays, and on the occasional Saturday.

On July 20/21, it will hold its Big Train Weekend. The cost for unlimited travel on a day is a very reasonable £15: see www.jtj.org for details.

Nos. 4 *Sigbjörn*, 2 *Korsån* and 9 *Tallås* pose outside the shed at Jädraås on the Jädraås-Tallås Railway.

A locally-built vertical-boilered inspection car on the Jädraås-Tallås Railway on June 26, 2022.



Jädraås ironworks was built in 1857 and was in operation until the 1930s.

Vertical-boilered steam railcar *Majorn* inside the shed at Jädraås on the Jädraås-Tallås Railway.

No. 5 *Thor* about to depart Uppsala on the Lennakatten Railway on July 6, 2022.

On the Lennakatten Railway, railcars Nos. 2109 and 809 pick up passengers at Länna on July 6, 2022.

Lennakatten (Uppsala-Lenna Järnväg)

This railway has to be Sweden's premier heritage line – and its longest, at just over 20 miles. It runs alongside a series of lakes from Uppsala to Faringe.

Apparently, its nickname, Lennakatten, is derived from a steam coach bought in 1888 that made a hissing sound similar to that of a cat.

The railway was once part of the Roslagen 891mm gauge network which ran from Stockholm East beyond Uppsala to Hargshamn – a very roundabout route to Stockholm.

The section between Uppsala and Lenna opened in 1876. Goods carried were timber, milk, cattle, and materials in and out of the ironworks at Lenna. A passenger service was popular, enabling people from the city of Uppsala to get into the countryside.

Steam finished in 1958. After several branch line closures, various lines were converted to standard gauge in the 1960s. The section between Uppsala and Faringe lost its passenger services in 1966.

Freight continued but in 1974 the Stockholm-Roslagen Railway Museum Association (SRJmf) started running trains between Uppsalla and Faringe in cooperation with Swedish Railways. After freight traffic stopped in 1977, the line was closed and SRJmf and City of Uppsala took over the line.

The city now owns the line and leases it back to SRJmf, which is responsible for its running and maintenance under power passed by the Swedish Parliament in 1979.

SRJmf currently has about 2000 members, with 250 working. It is 100% run by volunteers, and membership gives free travel. The volunteers are a mix of nationalities including British, Dutch and Finnish; accommodation is provided for workers.

Lennakatten station adjoins the main line in the city of Uppsala and many of the stations on the line are as they were in early days, having been lovingly restored.

All workshops, freight wagons and sheds are at the opposite end of the line at Faringe, necessitating a long empty coaching stock move in the morning to collect passengers. There is little else here apart from a large outlet warehouse, which is very popular.

The railway's seven steam locomotives range from 2-8-0s to mix of tanks. Operating on my visit was 2-8-0 No. 5 *Thor,* built by Falun of Sweden in 1909.

SRJmf is fortunate to have a collection of locomotives and stock which originally ran on the line, including diesels and railcars. The railcars are a scaled-down versions of their standard gauge counterparts.

Vintage wooden-bodied stock, complete with wooden seats, give an authentic feel to the railway. Speeds along the line are 25mph for steam and 30mph for railcars; timekeeping is good.

Along the route are attractions such as lakes to swim in, which are surprisingly warm. At Selknä, there is a vintage bus running to the nature reserve at Fjällnora. Often running from the railway, it takes 10 minutes and is included with the price of the ticket.

The line's season begins on May 10 and runs into September. May 26 will mark its half-centenary of running since its inaugural train, and there will be a special service on the day. Its busiest days are in July and August.

Day tickets giving freedom of line cost a very reasonable £20, and concessions apply. You can stand on the verandas of the carriages when travelling!

There is a mix of diesel, railcar and steam workings. It is possible to ride them all, and there are more than enough trains to keep you occupied in a day.

Getting to Uppsala from Stockholm's Arlanda Airport is easy and takes 20 minutes by train before a simple change of platforms.

For further information, visit www.lennakatten.se HR

No.5 *Thor* approaches Länna on the Lennakatten Railway on June 29, 2022.

Getting there

Sweden is easy to get to, with direct flights from the UK taking about 90 minutes, and no special formalities are necessary.

English is widely spoken, and accommodation is readily available. It's easy to get around, with empty roads away from the cities – but watch your speed: cameras are everywhere!

Especially worth looking out for is the end-of-season galas that tend to take place in September and October, when railways run intensive services.

➜ There are more preserved railways and museums of varying gauges in the country. For a full list, visit **https://www.tagsommar.se/museijarnvagar**

Catch-up year for Hornby

– but *Locomotion No. 1* highlights announcements

THE Hornby 2024 range was described by some in the modelling community as a 'low key' affair again this year, however, that was not to say it did not herald some interesting new announcements.

Back to the beginning

With the recent release of Stephenson's *Rocket* and the L&MR *Lion* and *Tiger* locomotives firmly denoting the firm's interest in the earliest era of railway history, topping the bill for its 2024 catalogue was the announcement of the Stockton & Darlington Railway's 0-4-0 *Locomotion No. 1*. Built by George and Robert Stephenson in 1825, it became the first steam locomotive to work a passenger-carrying train on a public railway. It is believed to be the first locomotive to make use of coupling rods to link the driving wheels together.

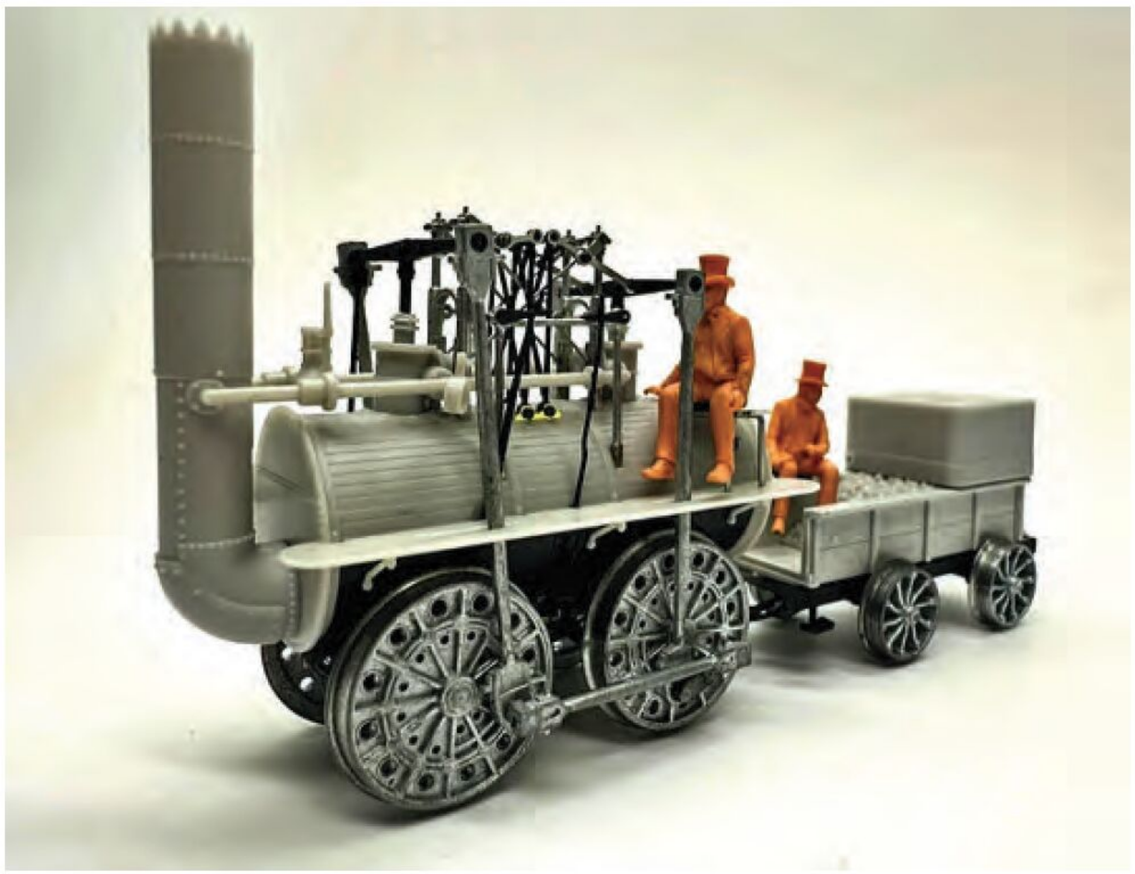
Locomotion No. 1 suffered a boiler explosion on July 1, 1828, which necessitated a rebuild, but the rapid advancements in design soon rendered it obsolete; in 1850 it was converted into a stationary boiler, but its historical importance was recognised in 1857 when it would be preserved and put on display.

It presently resides at the National Railway Museum's appropriately-named Locomotion outpost at Shildon. With 2025 being the 200th anniversary of the S&DR, it will spend the first six months of the year on display at Darlington's Head of Steam museum.

The model, which is based on the preserved condition, has already seen a working sample delivered which boasts a high level of intricate details, including working parallel motion that catches the eye as the model makes its away along. The minute size of the model has seen Hornby opt to fit the model with era one-style magnetic chain couplings, a feature seen on models such as *Rocket* and the accompanying rolling stock, as well as Accurascale's Chaldron wagons.

Despite its small size, provision for a sugar cube speaker in the tender is being made for DCC sound conversion. Etched nameplates and two Victorian gentlemen figures will also be included, with all wheels having pick-ups to ensure smooth and reliable running.

RRP is set at £169.99 for DCC-ready, with delivery of completed models expected as soon as the autumn of this year.



Preserved icons

A number of popular preserved identities have also been included in the range for 2024. Eastern region modellers will no doubt be keen to get their hands on a model of ex-BR(E) B1 No. 61306 *Mayflower* (RRP £219.99), a member of the Locomotive Services Ltd pool that puts in regular appearances on main line excursions as well as a small number of preserved route visits. Meanwhile, the BR standard 9F tooling welcomes the addition of No. 92203 *Black Prince* (RRP £249.99), which resides on the North Norfolk Railway, having been based there since 2010. The NNR then purchased it from the late David Shepherd in 2015.

On the diesel side, the Severn Valley Railway's Class 09 D4100 *Dick Hardy* will be available sporting BR green with wasp stripe ends as per its current appearance, with RRP set at £189.99.

Other models include variants of the Thompson 2-6-4T L1, BR Class 47 and GWR Castle class locomotives, with new running numbers and liveries for a select number of previously-released carriage and wagons.

Joke's on you: Rapido reject livery to become a reality?

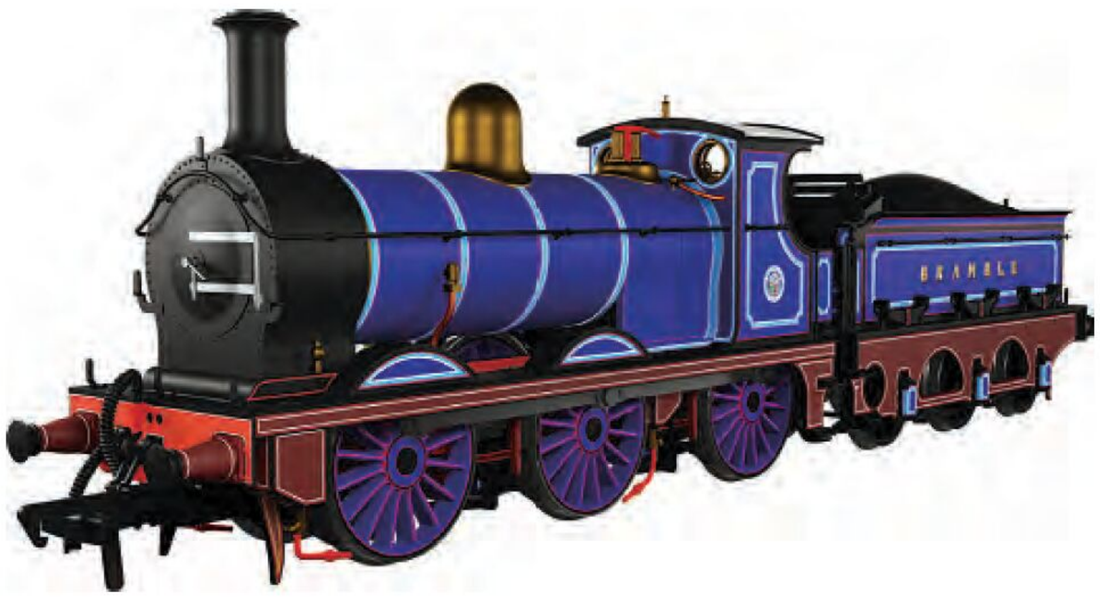
RAPIDO Trains has been known for sharing some amusing 'rejected' livery ideas for some of its models (such as the tartan-patterned Jones Goods).

However, the response to one was so unexpected that the manufacturer has put it up for consideration.

Following the Bluebell Railway's pattern for naming its SECR P class locomotives after plants (27 *Primrose*, 178 *Nettle*, 323 *Bluebell*), Rapido is taking provisional orders for a variant of its upcoming SECR O1 as No. 65 with the name *Bramble* – sporting Bluebell Blue livery as per No. 323.

"The community reaction to our 'rejected' livery of *Bramble* the blue O1 was unexpected: you absolutely loved it," a statement said.

"We mulled it over and had a word with the folks at the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society to ensure we could reproduce their crest on the side of the loco. We are pleased to say they agreed."



The release of the model will only go ahead if sufficient orders are received. RRP starts at £199.95 for DCC-ready versions, with orders also available through registered stockists.

Send your model news to staff writer **Owen Hayward** on **OHayward@mortons.co.uk@mortons.co.uk**

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A class of their own

More than 60 years after the first Class 37 rolled off the production line, it remains an icon of the British railway scene, with some examples still running on the main line today. **Daniel Long** covers the class's extensive history, which manufacturer Accurascale has replicated in miniature.

I WAS too late to see steam on the Cambrian. By the time I came to Aberystwyth to study, it wasn't diesels which had displaced main line steam from the area, but a more modern flirtation with ERTMS signalling.

Locals still lamented the loss of steam railtours to the areas. The traction I saw was limited to a host of 158s on passenger workings and Network Rail's canary-yellow Class 97s.

They say familiarity breeds contempt and, truthfully, I was distracted by the sheer quantity of charming narrow-gauge locomotives to realise the significance of this seemingly workaday class of locomotive.

Because the 97s, as they were classified, were not simply departmental engines rumbling up and down the Cambrian at the beck and call of Network Rail. They were refurbished Class 37s, and the most modern dated all the way back to 1964. I would often see these engines when travelling through Shrewsbury, a similarly contrary location where I could arrive signalled in under ERTMS and then be signalled out by semaphores!

February 2024 marks 60 years since the last Class 37 rolled out of Vulcan Foundry, but like Shrewsbury's semaphores, the class has carved out a place for itself on the modern railway and on heritage operations up and down the country. Considering their age, there are a surprising number that can be seen not just in heritage operations, but also on the main line up and down the country.

Modernisation plan

The origins of the Class 37s date back to the modernisation plan of the early 1950s. Britain had a comprehensive fleet of steam engines, but times were changing, and more modern solutions were the order of the day.

Compared to their steam engine counterparts, diesel locomotives were quicker to prepare, cheaper to run, and cleaner in almost every way. Where Britain struggled, however, was in its success in the construction of steam engines. There had been a plan for new steam engines, which would slowly be replaced by electrification over a number of years. By 1955, orders for BR Standards were well underway.

The modernisation plan essentially turned this whole process upside down. The demand for new steam engines was replaced by demand for diesel locomotives.

These would, in theory, be cheaper in the long run and make the expensive process of electrification a less urgent demand. At that time, diesels for main line operation were a curiosity and far from the norm. To make the rapid transition that was expected, mistakes would have to be made. And they were.

The introduction of the Class 37s was a correction in many ways. The class was ordered almost as an add-on because of the need for a Type 3 locomotive. English Electric had good form with this sort of engine, having produced similar for use in East Africa.

When the order was first made in 1959, British Railways was looking for options which were tried and tested. English Electric offered a design that was not only proved in challenging conditions, but it could also incorporate elements drawn from the already successful Type 4 locomotives the company already offered.

The English Electric design used many of the same internal elements of the African design, although the motors were de-rated to a 1750hp power plant. Experience with the Class 40s and Deltics also allowed the team to offer a cheaper, quicker production process.

The Class 37s had to hit the ground running. There was no prototype produced and the first off the production line entered service in December 1960, having only been delivered less than a month before.

On August 11, 1986, No. 37047 makes its way through Newcastle with an engineering train. R SIVITER/COLOUR RAIL

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A few short months after being built, the first of the class, D6700, is pictured stabled at Stratford Shed on March 18, 1961, where it was allocated from new until moved to Haymarket on March 2, 1968. F. HORNBY/COLOUR RAIL

On the rather wet day of July 29, 2018, D6948 pilots classmate No. 37215 out of Toddington on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. OWEN HAYWARD

The class quickly proved itself. Before the first batch was delivered, repeat orders were made. Eventually, some 309 examples of Class 37s would run throughout the country.

The Class 37s were expected to undertake a host of different roles, from heavy freight work to passenger services on secondary routes. While Type 4 and 5 locomotives would tackle more prestigious duties, the humble Type 3 would become a veritable workhorse for the network.

The roll-out

The first members of the class were dispatched to the Eastern Region, but they quickly found homes across the network. Before long, everywhere but the Southern Region had a host of Class 37s on their books, performing anything and everything that was required of them.

The class quickly became known as 'Tractors' because of the sound of the engine, which many have commented as having an agricultural note to it. Other nicknames include 'Syphons' and 'Growlers'.

When originally built, the Class 37s were fitted with distinctive split headcode boxes which allowed for the fitting of a door so that crew could be exchanged en route. It was quickly realised that this feature would be redundant, and the split boxes were soon replaced with a single central headcode box. The class was also fitted with steam heating boilers to operate passenger trains, though it was not long before these were isolated or removed from many members, which were understandably put onto freight duties. The water tank used as part of the steam heating system was converted to carry fuel.

Given the size of the locomotive, the spread of the engine's weight over six axles meant the individual axle loading of the engine is relatively light. The ability for such a powerful engine to travel over a significant proportion of the railway has made the Class 37s invaluable in many parts of the country.

For many years, they were the only engines operating loco-hauled services on the West Highland line, for example, and four were sent to back heavy trains up the notorious Lickey Incline. They could go anywhere and do anything.

At one point, the Western Region experimented with the Class 37s on Express duties and lifted the speed limit on the class to 100mph on services between Paddington and Bristol. It was one of the few times where the Class 37s were overstretched.

A pair of engines were required to run the service, but eventually the wear and tear caused by high-speed running saw them replaced by a Type 4.

Syphon subsets

The continued success of the class came not from its versatility as built, but in the easy way in which the class could be adapted to suit new duties. Many different subsets have been seen over the years, carefully adapted to different roles on a constantly changing railway. By the mid-1980s, there were many distinct variations to suit the needs of the day more comfortably. These subsets were highly varied to match the range of duties the class undertook.

The Class 37/4s, for example, were given new re-geared bogies and fitted with electric train heating (ETH) as steam heating fell out of use. This shift was what allowed the class to continue providing an invaluable service on loco-hauled passenger services on the Cambrian line as well as the West Highland and West Country, to name but a few areas. These engines were still in use on passenger services less than half a decade ago!

The Class 37/7s, in comparison, were designed to suit the tough and hardy requirements of the heavy freight trains that were the beating heart of South Wales' industry. Substantial loads of coal and metal were out-shipped from here, and a reliable class of engine was needed. Extra ballast was fitted, and the gearbox was altered in order to meet the needs of the mills and mines. The class became a regular performer on the steep branch lines that served the collieries of South Wales, with merry-go-round trains of more than 30 32T hoppers regularly taken.

From 1968, three Class 37s were needed to haul the heavy loads between Llanwern and Port Talbot Docks, but the work would slowly be taken over by more powerful engines such as in the Class 56s, 60s and 66s. Three locomotives on one train is really no way to run a railway – but I bet it was fun to watch.

Old dogs, new tricks

Even though the arrival of new engines has allowed the Class 37s to be superseded, the class has still found roles to play on the modern railway. Beyond their position on the Cambrian network, these versatile and powerful engines are popular for spot-hire because they can go pretty much anywhere that is required. Over the years, many class members have been refurbished to thrive on a more modern railway.

Despite being built to run a railway where steam was still king, the Class 37s have managed to find invaluable positions to this day. Just some of the roles undertaken in recent years have included operating peak-time loco-hauled services on the Rhymney line, railhead treatment trains across the network, and the movement of passenger stock, including EMUs,

Par for the course: No. 37061 works a clay hood train through Par on August 21, 1985, passing No. 37058 in the process. The front ends of these locomotives were changed over the years, with No. 61 seen retaining its nose-end doors, while No. 58's were plated over. R TRETHEWEY/COLOUR RAIL

More than six decades after it was spotted at Stratford, D6700 continues to ply its trade. It approaches Quorn & Woodhouse station on June 17, 2023, during the Great Central Railway's 50th Anniversary gala. OWEN HAYWARD

for which members of the class have been specifically modified.

On the Cambrian, there simply isn't another option for motive power because modern alternatives like the Class 70s are too heavy. The class is not just used by Network Rail but has also recently been hired out for timber traffic because these are the only locomotives that are fitted with ERTMS. The irony that this steam-age piece of technology is also a pioneer of the next generation of signalling technology cannot be overlooked.

On heritage railways too, the class has proven incredibly popular. These are big engines with a reputation for reliability that has them in high demand. Just two years ago, the first-built member of the class, D6700, was moved out of the National Railway Museum to the Greast Central Railway at Loughborough, where preparations are being made to restore it to running condition once more as part of a five-year loan.

More than 30 examples that have been preserved, each representing a unique part of the class's rich historical tapestry. Although heritage machines, the success of the class is that they are hardly treated as such.

An unidentified Class 37 sporting Railfreight triple grey livery drags a HST along the coastal route of Dawlish in May 1989.
T B OWEN/COLOUR RAIL

The models

The popularity of the Class 37s over the last 60 years has made them the perfect choice for model railway manufacturers. Bachmann, Lima and Vi-trains have all had a go at capturing the look of the Type 3, and in Bachmann's case, more than once! Each manufacturer's efforts have come with their own unique list of pros and cons. The entry of Accurascale into the market represents a shift, for it aimed from the outset to produce a model that would stand apart from the crowd.

Part of the Accurascale ethos is the development of a tooling set which allows for the creation of as many individual members of the class as possible. With the Class 37s, this is perhaps more important than ever given the incredible range of different combinations which the class ran with.

The team's recent releases take into account an enormous array of variations, from the distinctive

headcode boxes through to the bogies and grill combinations. A closer look at how each detail is fitted and applied shows that careful thought has been given to how the model is made, with metalwork and plastic used where appropriate to maintain the highest of standards. It's hard to list the various options developed by the team here, and how each means that almost every member of the class can be represented in the range accurately.

Of course, it's not just what's on the outside that matters. The 'Tractors' were justly named for their performance and so the model continues to match up to the prototype. A five-pole motor, combined with two flywheels and a helical gearbox, guarantees excellent performance and superb running at all times. Naturally, the model makes the most of the six axles of the prototype and is geared with all-wheel drive, as well as all-wheel pick-up. The detail of the development process means that the Class 37 runs at a scale top speed of 100mph, which is as fast as the real engines would have run. It's truly a little wonder to behold.

Those who model in a finer scale will no doubt be delighted that provision for their needs has already been accommodated, with drop-in EM and P4 wheelsets available separately. Those looking for further bells and whistles need look no further than the exceptionally produced DCC sound fitting on offer. Those who know their 37s will know the different sounds that come from the originals and those which have been refurbished, and this choice is reflected in the DCC chips available.

Given the long life of the class, it's little wonder that the Accurascale team seem to have revelled in choosing examples which stand out from the crowd. Certainly, the more modern liveries are very distinctive, but personally speaking, I prefer the cleaner livery choices of the 1960s and 1970s. That said, I would love to see the police livery that featured in the InterCity 125 Train Jam TV advert from the 1980s. It's one I'd love to have on my own model railway, if the chaps at Accurascale are listening...

HR

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THE JOHN FOWLER NARROW GAUGE LEGACY

The Statfold Barn Railway has in the past year witnessed the heritage era public working debut of the former Sena Sugar Estates John Fowler 0-4-2T No. V11 (15513 of 1920), which has been restored to a high standard. **Mark Smithers** looks back at the development of Fowler railway locomotives to place this latest success in context.

John Fowler & Co, based in the Steam Plough Works in Leeds, was well-known in the production of a wide range of agricultural machinery, notably road locomotives and ploughing engines for customers at home and abroad, many examples of which are still extant today.

The firm's early steam locomotive orders tended to be for standard gauge customers, or for broader gauges such as 5ft 3in or 5ft 6in, and ranged from 0-6-0 tender locomotives for the London, Chatham & Dover Railway in 1866 to four members of an attractive double-framed 0-6-0ST class in 1885 for the Brecon & Merthyr Railway, the last of which survived in industrial use until 1944, albeit rebuilt by the GWR as a pannier tank.

In 1877 or thereabouts, because of its preoccupation with agricultural matters, John Fowler & Co decided to initially distribute and then improve upon the portable track panel railway system pioneered by Paul Decauville for use on plantations or by the military, and which was normally available in 400mm (15.75 in), 500mm (19.69in) and 600mm (23.62 in) gauges.

Although not primarily interested in portable railways, 15in gauge pioneer Arthur Percival Heywood was struck by the fact that Decauville's minimum gauge was only a little more than his own.

A surviving Fowler catalogue of October 1878 in the Museum of Rural Life at Reading University stated that "a steam locomotive is now being constructed in 16in and 20in gauges which will weigh about 30cwt empty and 36cwt with water and coal'. It was clear that Heywood was trying to persuade Fowler's to build 16in gauge locomotives, but on balance of probabilities from examination of the maker's photograph of the first Fowler slim-gauge locomotive, 2-4-0ST *Hercules* of 1878, it seems that it was built to 20in gauge. Following Heywood practice, it had a boiler of the simple cylindrical firebox pattern and *Effie* – pattern inside link motion driving outside valves with rocker arms projecting upwards on the outside.

The next major development in the story was the appearance of two Fowler 20in gauge 0-4-2Ts, works Nos. 3688 and 3821 *Little Beauty* at the 1879 Royal Agricultural Society of England Kilburn Show. Both had Heywood-pattern boilers and it was stated at the time that they were the first Fowler 20in gauge locomotives. That claim is difficult to reconcile with the existence of *Hercules* in the previous year and the most plausible explanation comparing the works photographs of *Hercules* and 3688 in their boiler and valve gear designs is that the latter was a rebuild of the former.

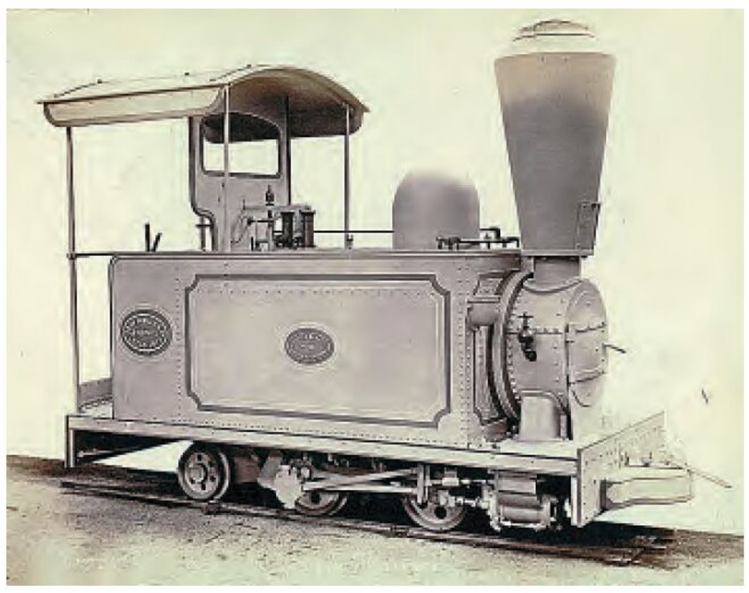
Making its public debut on June 10, 2023, Fowler works No. 16453 of 1925 Sena Estates V11 stands with a train at Statfold Junction station. MARK SMITHERS

No. 3688 was given a general styling inspired by contemporary midget locomotives built by Belgian builder Couillet (which supplied Decauville), while *Little Beauty* had outside link motion and a tank styling that later inspired Heywood's Ella. Heywood's comment on the 1879 locomotives was: "While agreeing with you that an even grip of the rail is a most desirable thing, I am convinced that this most not be gained at the loss of adhesion... therefore, I think Messrs Fowlers' engines, with bogies in front (sic – was he referring to *Hercules*?), no matter how little weight the bogies carry, are not the most suitable engines for narrow-gauge traffic." Heywood went on in 1881 to condemn the use of outside link motion but did purchase No. 7006 *Muriel*'s first boiler from Fowler in 1893.

John Fowler & Co had therefore entered the market for slim-gauge engines, and this move all but eliminated standard-gauge steam locomotive production, but a settled line of evolution proved elusive in the years that followed.

From 1880, much effort was expended on 2-4-0T and 0-4-2T locomotives using the Grieg & Beadon patent jackshaft drive with upwardly offset cylinders to reduce propensity to damage from obstructions. These proved to be unreliable in service and not capable of enlargement beyond locomotives with 6in cylinders, but two of them achieved immortality by being used on the 18in gauge portable lines in conjunction with the abortive Suakin-Berber Railway (Sudan) Campaign in 1885, having originally been supplied to Cyprus, possibly for fortification construction. These were works Nos. 4449-50 of 1882 which, according to a report by Major WH Rathbone RE of the 10th Railway Company, were named *Staggie* and *Much Quicker.*

Major Rathbone went on to praise the design of the Fowler locomotives, stating that they coped better with track irregularities than



The other Fowler 20in gauge locomotive at the 1879 Kilburn Show was works No. 3821 *Little Beauty,* which was built for work in Cuba and is not believed to have had a long operational career.
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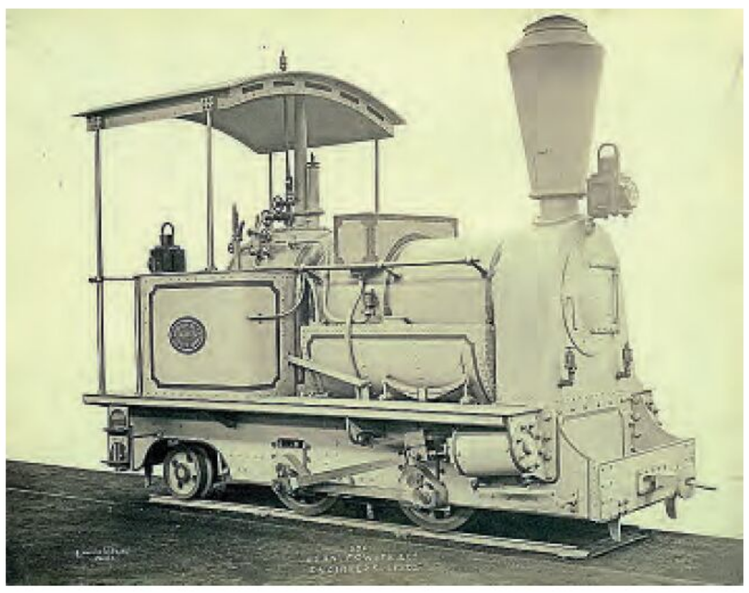

Apart from its inverted saddle tank, 2ft 6in gauge 0-4-2ST No. 4020 of 1880 was more conventional than its precursors and its chassis appears to have inspired later products by Falcon/Brush, Hartley, Arnoux and Fanning and Kerr, Stuart. The customer was named as Brooks & Co.
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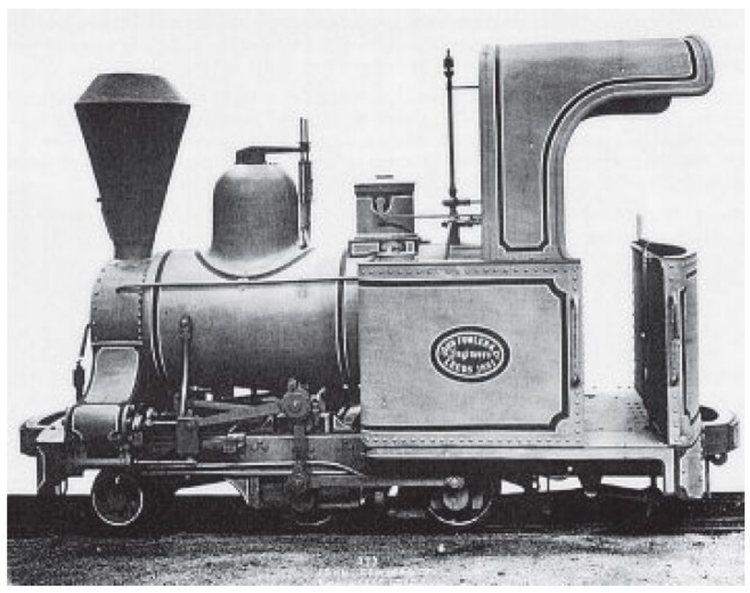

Fowler's expended much effort in the early 1880s on development of the Greig & Beadon Patent 2-4-0T and 0-4-2T jackshaft drive locomotives. This 2-4-0T, works No. 4085 of 1881 of unknown gauge was supplied to Mirlees, Tait & Wilson of Glasgow for shipment overseas, possibly to Hawaii.
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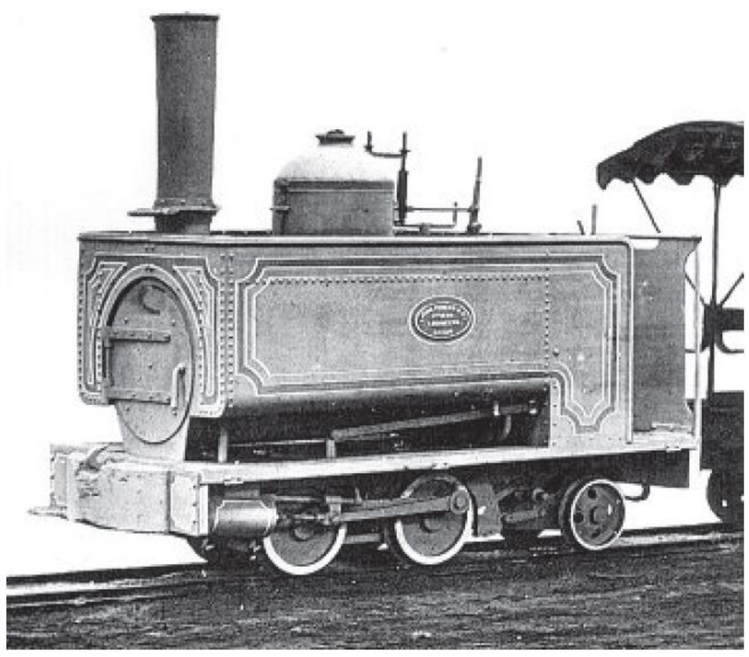

This 20in gauge 0-4-2T, works No. 3688 of 1879, was one of the two Fowler locomotives demonstrated at the 1879 RASE Kilburn Show. No. 3688 was used for nearly a decade as a maker's demonstration locomotive, being sold in 1888 and ending its days as a fairground attraction.
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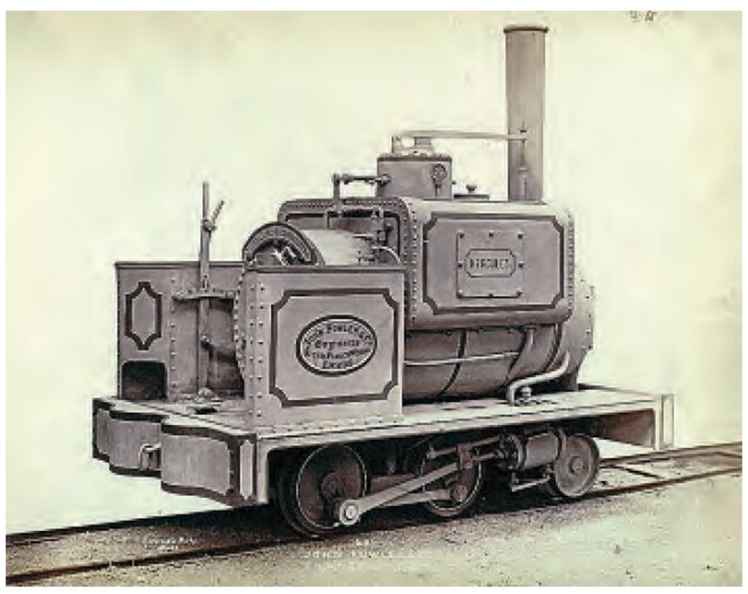

John Fowler & Co's first venture into narrow-gauge locomotive building was 20in gauge 2-4-0ST *Hercules* of 1878, with its boiler and cylinder/motion configuration inspired by Arthur Heywood's *Effie*. Heywood strongly disapproved of the pony truck, however.
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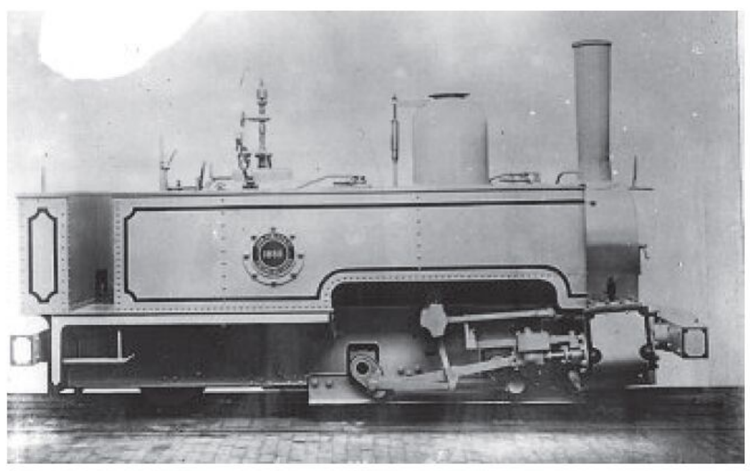

Although Works Nos. 5058-62 were completed in June 1885, several weeks too late for a campaign that had already been abandoned, the Royal Engineers did not give up on 18in gauge trench tramways and ordered two more 0-4-2Ts, works Nos. 5063/4, for delivery in 1885, probably to Chatham. They differed from the previous five in having Joy's valve gear, conventional drive and a boiler pitched 3in or so higher. Crucially, they were also fitted with Major English's pattern of trailing truck. Fowler locomotive evolution was beginning to settle.
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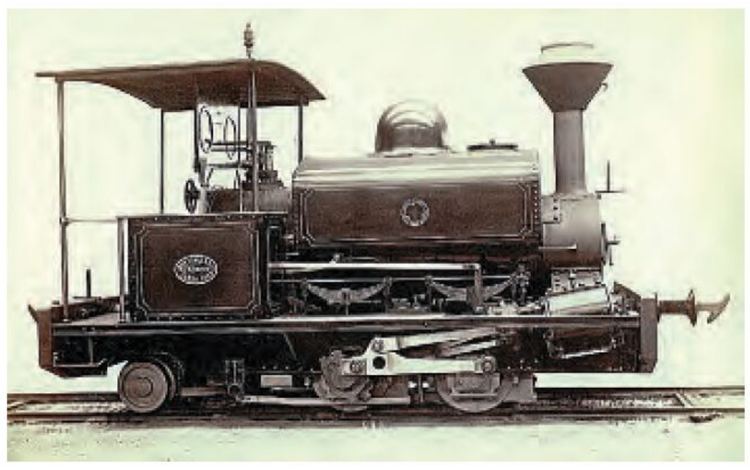
the 1883 Vulcan Foundry locomotives *Vulcan* and *Mercury*. It may be that his damning opinion of the latter resulted in their sale to Thomas Russell Crampton for his 'double single' experiments in the Royal Arsenal in 1886 (although two similar locomotives built to replace them served out their time on the Chatham Eastern Defences Military Tramway) but nothing further was heard of the Suakin 'Greig and Beadons'.

Apart from a solitary 0-4-2T survivor in Australia, the main legacies of this branch of Fowler evolution were: (1) a few locomotives built up to 1885 with drive onto an upward projection on the coupling rod, a simplified substitute for the Greig and Beadon system; (2) outside mainframes normally set to 2ft gauge maximum compatibility on locomotives built for lesser gauges; and (3) the use of three-point suspension for six-wheeled four coupled locomotives in which the coupled axle springs (one on each side) formed compensating levers.

One departure from the Greig and Beadon mould in 1880 was works No. 4020, a 2ft 6in gauge 0-4-2, which despite its inverted saddle tank configuration appeared to foreshadow much of early Kerr Stuart practice.

In the mid-1880s, several narrow-gauge 0-4-2s were built, the most notable being seven 18in gauge specimens for the Royal Engineers in 1885, the first five of which (works Nos. 5058-62) had been ordered for Suakin and had link motion and offset drive (no doubt Major Rathbone would have had misgivings as he did about 18in gauge railways generally). A subsequent pair, W/Ns 5063-4 completed

Left: In the mid-1880s, the classic narrow-gauge Fowler outside-framed 0-4-2ST appeared, combining a Leeds-pattern boiler with the Joy's valve gear and English-pattern trailing truck found on works Nos. 5063-4. This 18in gauge example worked at De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines, Kimberley, South Africa. AFRIKANER MUSEUM



Above: Once the limitations of the Greig & Beadon system were realised, Fowler's turned to upwardly offset drive accompanied by outside link motion, with the eccentrics located laterally between the inside of the crank web and the outside of the axlebox. This example, works No. 4650 of 1883 of unknown gauge, was built for Canter & Co of New Zealand. A similar pattern of drive and motion was used on five 18in gauge 0-4-2Ts, works Nos. 5058-62, belatedly supplied under the direction of Major English to the Royal Engineers for the abortive Suakin-Berber Railway Campaign in 1885.
MUSEUM OF RURAL LIFE/READING UNIVERSITY

later in the same year, had a boiler pitch raised by about 3in and Joy's valve gear was employed (these were the 18in gauge locomotives referred to in the 1889 Manual of Military Railways). This latter measure was highly influential on following Fowler practice, and Joy's valve gear was used on several Fowler narrow-gauge products right up to 1923. Another important refinement that followed on many subsequent Fowler products was the 'crankshaft suspended' side control mechanism for the trailing truck, introduced by Major Thomas English of the Royal Engineers in 1883 – he was also probably responsible for the three-point suspension, which was employed on several military narrow-gauge locomotives of the late 19th century.

One point that must be emphasised is that the 1885 Royal Engineers' 18in gauge locomotives were not built with frame spacing suitable for 2ft gauge owing to a loading gauge restriction of 5ft 6in. Apart from one example (works No. 5062 scrapped at Longmoor in 1919), the others ended their days on the Royal Arsenal Railways and were scrapped in 1922.

In 1886, 18in gauge 0-4-2ST works No. 5289 was built with 6in by 10in cylinders to 18in gauge for the Adamant Diamond Mining Co of Kimberley, South Africa. This locomotive had the 2ft gauge-compatible mainframes, allied to Joy's valve gear and a typical 'Leeds' pattern boiler with no dome, three-point suspension and raised 'inverted U-shape' firebox wrapper. Its main constructional features were taken from the earlier 2ft 6in gauge works No. 5231, also supplied to South Africa during the same year with wider frame spacing and lower front tubeplate necessitated by the gauge but a firebox width of similar dimensions. Locomotives of this general type in 18in, 2ft, and 2ft 6in gauges proved to be a popular product for export in the latter 14 years of the 19th century, and the last example was not built until 1923 (works No. 15932 for Pleystowe Mill, Queensland, Australia). Sadly, this locomotive was scrapped in 1971 and the only survivor of this branch of Fowler locomotive engineering today is a larger 2ft gauge machine with 8 ½in by 12 in cylinders at Cayalti, Peru (possibly works No. 10363 of 1905).

Twentieth-century Fowler narrow-gauge steam locomotive evolution took an interesting path: there was a shift initially from saddle to side tanks, although two 2ft gauge 0-8-0 tender specifications (five locomotives for Argentina and one for Australia) were built employing radial driving axles on a pattern inspired by German Klien-Lindner practice. On the specimens for Leach's Argentine Estates, the first and fourth axles had the radial gear but, unlike the Klien-Lindner system, the supporting yokes were not linked. On the other locomotive, for No. 14744 of 1916 for Kalgoorlie & Boulder Firewood Co, Australia, only the fourth axle was sleeved. Sadly, Fowler did not have the requisite experience in engineering locomotives of this type and they met with limited success.

In the 1920s, the German-inspired inside-framed high-pitch boiler short-wheelbase well tank of 0-4-0 or 0-6-0 arrangement made its presence felt in the company's product policy (as with *Limpopo* on the Bredgar & Wormshill Railway and *Cheetal* on the West Lancashire Light Railway), along with handsome 0-4-2T and 0-6-0Ts employing Walschaerts valve gear (present on 1912-vintage Saccharine) and, often, an attractive cab with rounded or conventional roof. These types are normally associated with Queensland's sugar railways.

One of these, *Tully No. 5*, is currently under restoration in a workshop in Yorkshire where much work has already been undertaken, including boring out its surviving original cylinder from 9.5in to 10in to match the other cylinder fitted in Australia (from a Bundaberg Foundry locomotive) and repairs to the firebox wrapper. Four 18in gauge 0-4-2Ts (works Nos. 17146-9) were built in similar style in 1927 for De Beers Consolidated Mines, South Africa as the last non-miniature locomotives (to date) of that gauge completed in Britain. Sadly, all were scrapped by 1958, even though two larger Bagnall stablemates survive.

There were three 2ft gauge 0-6-2 tender locomotives for the Queensland Government Railway's Innisfail Tramway (works Nos 16255 of 1924 and 17110-1 of 1947), one of which survives at Woodford.

The last narrow-gauge steam locomotives under Fowler were works Nos. 21648 of 1936 and 22752 of 1938, built respectively by Kitson for Uganda and Hudswell Clarke for Australia, both 2ft gauge, the former being a German-pattern 0-4-0WT and the latter a 'Leeds Mainstream' outside-framed 0-4-2T. Fowler had taken the strategic decision to pull out of steam locomotive manufacture, but it was not to be the end of the story as seven further 2ft gauge Fowler-pattern 0-6-2Ts and an 0-4-2T, all of 2ft gauge, were built under licence in Queensland's Bundaberg Foundry in 1952/3 for the local sugar industry, and all of these survive in their native country in varying conditions.

Built for the Neranwood Hardwood Company, Queensland, 2ft gauge 0-6-2T Works No. 16194 of 1923 *Alison* was sold in 1931 to Farleigh Sugar Mill, Mackay, in the same state, and it is now part of the Australian Narrow Gauge Museum Railway Society's collection at Woodford, which I visited in February 2006. MARK SMITHERS

This 0-6-2, works No. 17110 of 1927, was built for the Queensland Government Railways' 2ft gauge Innisfail Tramway and is pictured at the Australian Narrow Gauge Museum Railway Society's collection at Woodford. MARK SMITHERS

***Miallo*, a 2ft gauge 0-4-2T (works No. 20276 of 1934), representing the final era of Fowler steam locomotive construction. The characteristic cab profile with rounded roof is present, along with Walschaert's valve gear. The locomotive was supplied to Mossman Sugar Mill and is seen at Woodford.** MARK SMITHERS

By 1938, Fowler's had pulled out of steam locomotive construction, and when South Johnstone Sugar Mill wanted a duplicate of 0-4-2T works No. 17881 of 1928, Fowler's sub-contracted the construction of the engine to Leeds rival Hudswell Clarke. This locomotive is Fowler works No. 22752 of 1938 and Hudswell Clarke No. 1705, pictured at Woodford. MARK SMITHERS

Sena Sugar Estates No. V11

The Sena Sugar Estates in Mozambique had an extensive network of 500mm, 2ft and 3ft gauge lines, which remained active into the late 1970s. The first locomotive to be supplied to SSE was works No. 7528 of 1895, which was built to 2ft gauge for a circular fairground track but had been suitably adapted as a 500 mm gauge 0-4-2 well tank for export in 1898 to Mopeia Mill. Sadly, this quaint machine, with its 4½in cylinders and outside frames and link motion, has long disappeared, but six Fowler 0-4-2Ts (works Nos. 11054 of 1907; 11938 of 1909; 13573 of 1912; 14984 of 1919; 15513 of 1920 and 16453 of 1925) were built to a more practical 500mm gauge design for the Mopeia Estate, and four survived.

Although supplied with side tanks, the design owed much in its inspiration to the classic Fowler 0-4-2STs, including the domeless 'Leeds-pattern' boiler, the 2ft gauge-compatible mainframes, three-point suspension, and Major English's trailing truck.

Rather unusually for Fowler practice of the Edwardian era, Joy's valve gear was rejected in favour of 'inside-to-outside' link motion, but with the outside bellcranks connecting downwards onto the valve rods (as per Kerr, Stuart practice) rather than the arrangement used on *Effie*. The cylinders were 7in by 10in and the coupled and trailing wheels were 1ft 9in and 1ft 7in diameter respectively. For water feed, two injectors were mounted one on each side at upper firebox wrapper level, as with the Royal Engineers' locomotives, but unlike the latter, the water feed from these was into the

boiler barrel, whereas on the Royal Engineers' locomotives, backhead feed would have had to be resorted as the 5ft 6in width limit would have allowed insufficient space between the boiler cladding and the inner surface of the tanks for clack valves to be located there. The Sena locomotives were also fitted with a Mumford's No. 1 donkey pump, mounted on the left-hand side of the smokebox. The last-built of these locomotives, works No. 16453 of 1925, was fitted with a dome on the boiler barrel when new.

Most of the Fowler 0-4-2Ts were eventually converted to 600mm gauge and transferred to Morromeu and Luabo Mills. The gauge conversion would have been relatively easy owing to their design. They carried on working for several years, with at least four surviving until the cessation of operations brought about by the turmoil of Mozambique's struggle for independence from Portugal, finally achieved on June 25, 1975.

The surviving four locomotives then remained derelict, along with other 600mm gauge specimens from Fowler, Peckett and German manufacturers, until several ex-Sena locomotives were imported into the UK in 1999 by Peter Court. One of these, Henschel 'Feldbahn' 0-8-0T works No. 14676 of 1916, was purchased by Jonathon Whitehead.

While awaiting collection in Banbury, one of its injectors was stolen and Jonathon returned to the site to discuss possible compensation. While waiting for Peter Court's agent, Jonathon came upon Fowler works No. 15513 of 1920, which was in a terrible condition. Its wheelsets had been taken out, and the frames were severely bent and torn around the horns because of being dragged sideways. Most of the motion was missing and there were no boiler fittings.

While restoration of the locomotive would be a daunting task, it had much in its favour, being an attractive classic British export side tank design. Jonathon decided to formulate a plan to secure a favourable deal on the locomotive as compensation for the loss of the 'Feldbahn's' injector.

Restoration of the locomotive was made possible only by the existence of many of the original drawings at the Museum of English Rural Life in the University of Reading. Jonathon commenced work in 2008 and new chassis components required included pistons, rods, slide bars, motion and brake gear. Sundry fittings, including those for the boiler, also required replacement. In all, more than 100 patterns were required for new castings.

For the boiler work, which required a new barrel and inner firebox, Jonathon contracted with John Johnson of Banks, Southport, which also carried out the required extensive remedial work on the frames; this involved straightening and riveting in new sections. Other contractors were involved in the weld repair and remachining of the cylinders, replacement of one driving wheel, and the provision of new tyres throughout. The locomotive was reassembled and painted in original Fowler Midland Red livery at Johnsons.

The donkey pump has not been reinstated owing to the difficulty in sourcing a replacement, but a new spark arrester chimney to the original design (replacing the 'balloon' spark arrester fitted by Sena Estates) has now been fitted.

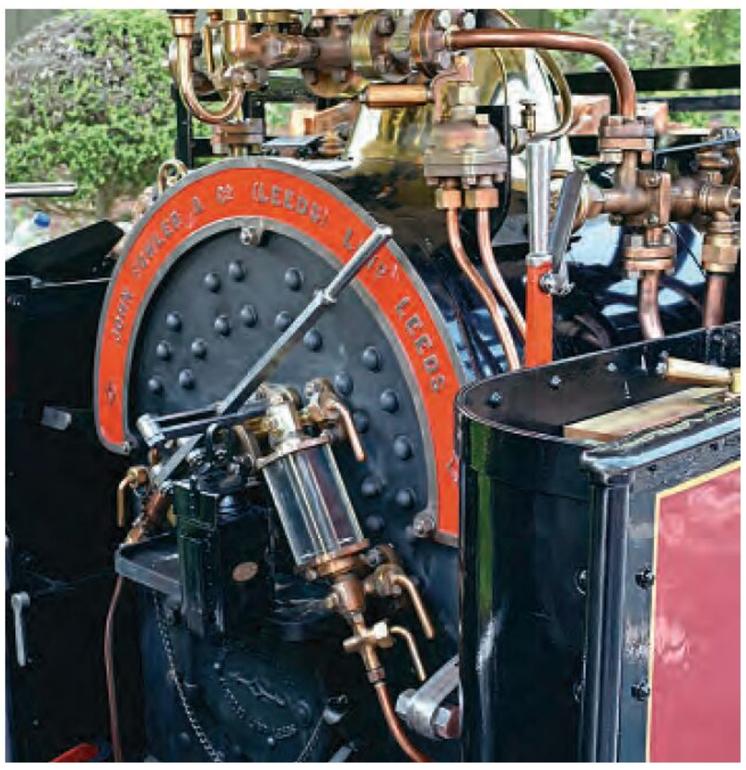
As for its three surviving sisters, works No. 11938 of 1909 is part of the Vale of Rheidol Museum Collection and is currently unrestored and works No. 13573 of 1912 is now Zambezi on the Bredgar & Wormshill Railway and has been restored with the donkey pump. This latter locomotive remained 500mm gauge throughout is life in Africa and was regauged only during restoration. Works No. 16453 of 1925 has been restored to working order in private ownership.

Sena Sugar Estates V11 made its public debut at Statfold Barn on June 10, 2023, an instant hit with the visitors to the Summer Enthusiasts' Weekend and a credit to all involved in its restoration from little more than a scrapyard hulk.

During the latter part of 2023, the locomotive paid a visit to the Bredgar & Wormshill line to meet up with the two Fowlers based there, and it is currently intended that it will visit other UK-based heritage narrow gauge railways as the opportunities present themselves.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Jonathon Whitehead, Jonathon Palterman, John Browning, the late John Kimber, and the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, for their help in the preparation of this feature.

Above: This view of Sena Estates V11 emphasises the high standard of restoration and the neat appearance of the design generally. The indirect drive to the valves is also evident in this view, as is the domeless 'Leeds pattern' boiler. MARK SMITHERS



Right: The backhead area of Sena Estates V11. Points to note are the generally spartan backhead and the pull-out regulator, a feature going back to the 1880s on Fowler narrow-gauge locomotives. Another important feature is the mounting of the injectors at high level at the firebox end, a feature found on the 18in gauge Royal Engineers' locomotives of 1885. MARK SMITHERS

Left: Statfold Barn's resident Fowler 0-6-2T works No. 13355 of 1914 *Saccharine* in action on June 10, 2023, during the enthusiasts' weekend. The former South African plantation locomotive has a canopy, Walschaert's valve gear an English pattern trailing truck, and a turbogenerator for the headlamp. MARK SMITHERS

Young Railway Photographer of the Year is back for 2024!

RAILWAY 200 is the theme for the second Young Railway Photography of the Year event, which was officially launched on February 1 and is now open for entries.

Organised by the National Railway Museum, the Railway Photographic Society, and supported by partners from the railway and photography industries including *Heritage Railway* publisher Mortons Media, Network Rail, and GB Railfreight, the competition is seeking the best images from the UK's most promising young railway photographers aged 25 and under.

Running until January 31, 2025, the contest returns as part of Railway 200, a year-long programme of events and celebrations to recognise the significance of the past 200 years of railway history and the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in September 2025.

From complete novices to accomplished amateurs, it aims to encourage more young people to take part in railway photography. Entrants are invited to submit a portfolio of up to six images in two age categories: 18 and under and 19-25.

Taking first place in the 19-25 age category in the inaugural Young Railway Photographer of the Year contest was this view of LMS 'Black Five' No. 45212 crossing Glenfinnan Viaduct on the West Highland Line with West Coast Railways' 'The Jacobite' service. BRADLEY LANGTON

Showcasing talent

An exhibition of shortlisted entries will be displayed at the National Railway Museum in York and at the Locomotion museum in Shildon in summer 2025, before the winners are announced at an awards ceremony.

The inaugural Young Railway Photographer of the Year competition was launched in 2019 and winners announced in 2022 (as reported in issue 291) to celebrate the centenary of the society.

Charlotte Kingston, head of design, exhibitions and communications at the NRM and inaugural competition judge, said: "I am pleased to announce the return of the Young Railway Photographer of the Year competition, which has a new theme as part of the nation's Railway 200 celebrations.

"This was one of the NRM's most popular recent exhibitions, and the skill, breadth of subject matter and imagination on show from previous entrants was fantastic.

"There couldn't be a better time to celebrate the railways in 2025, and the competition will inspire the next generation to think creatively about the railways. My thanks to all the partners involved in organising the competition, and I am looking forward to seeing how we build on the success of the inaugural competition."

Impressive range

Despite the disruption resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the inaugural Young Railway Photographer of the Year attracted 167 entrants who submitted more than 900 images. The youngest entrant to the competition was just eight years old. Entries ranged from impressive station architecture to historic steam engines, and images of the people who volunteer at heritage railways.

The overall competition-winning image was taken by Bradley Langton, (who was then aged 20), from Driffield, who impressed the judges with a spectacular reflected view of an LNER InterCity 225 at King's Cross station.

Society secretary John Hillier said: "The return of the Young Railway Photographer of the Year competition and the NRM's involvement provides the perfect opportunity for young photographers to be inspired to go out and produce a portfolio of shots based on the new theme.

"There are fantastic competition prizes, with the added bonus of possibly seeing their work showcased at the NRM and beyond."

Prizes include a tour on Network Rail's New Measurement Train for up to six people, the opportunity to contribute to the Railway Photographic Society's print folios, a GBRf cab simulator experience for up to four people, a behind-the-scenes tour of Boston Lodge with the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways for up to four people, tickets to ride on heritage lines across the country, subscriptions to some of the UK's leading railway publications, and copies of The Photographic Artistry of Rail Cameramen by John Hillier

The prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third placed winners in each age category, the overall competition winner, and the recipient of the prestigious Railway Photographic Society award.

The Railway Photographic Society Special Award in the first contest was awarded to 18-year-old Gwion Clark for 'Through the gap, old and new at Carlisle', featuring Bulleid Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35018 *British India Line* heading a Railway Touring Company charter. GWION CLARK

➜ To find out more about the competition, visit: www.youngrailphotographeroftheyear.co.uk

Railway 200 is a year-long national public engagement programme of activities, initiatives and partnerships for people of all ages.

The anniversary will be used to inspire the next generation of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) professionals and encourage young people to choose a career in rail's digital green future.

For more information, visit www.railway200.co.uk

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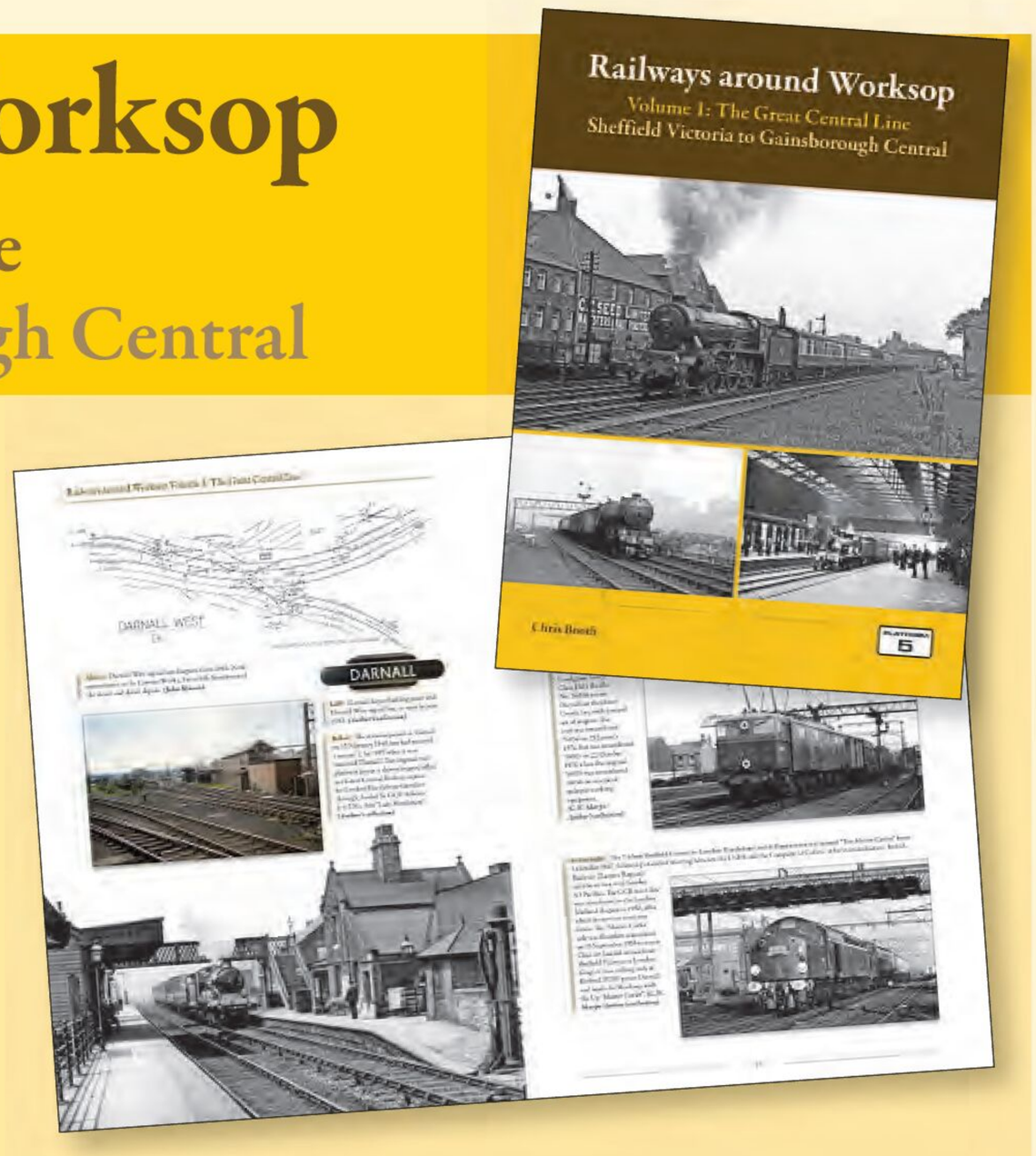

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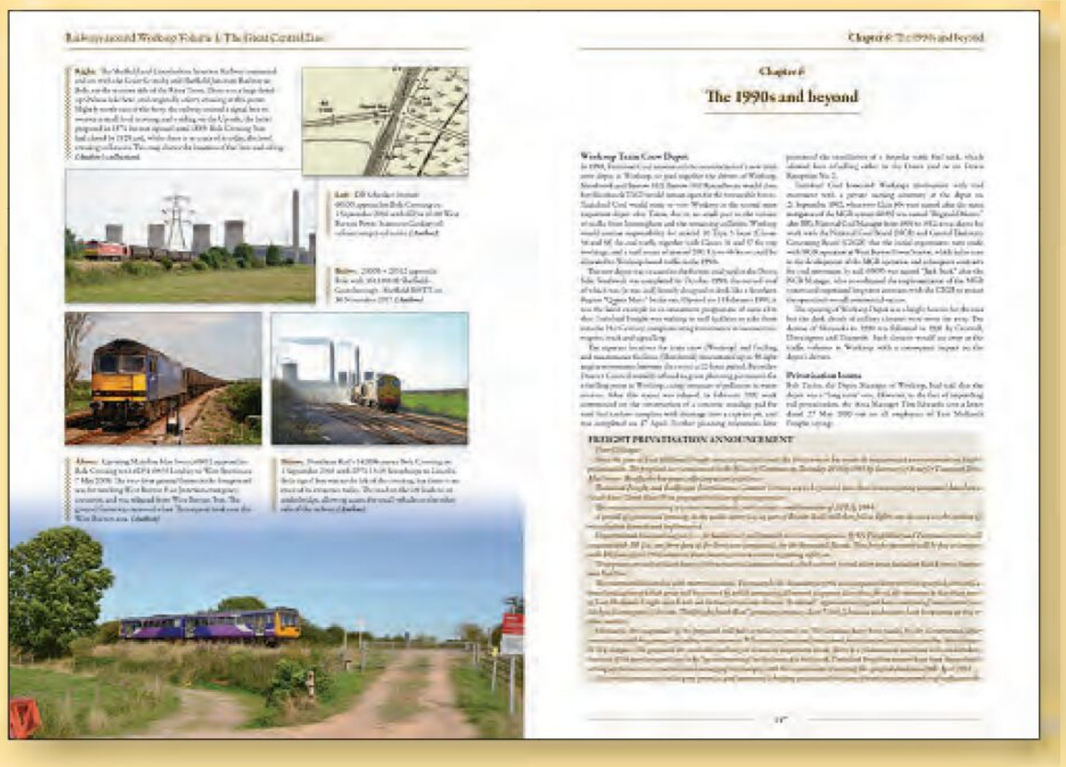

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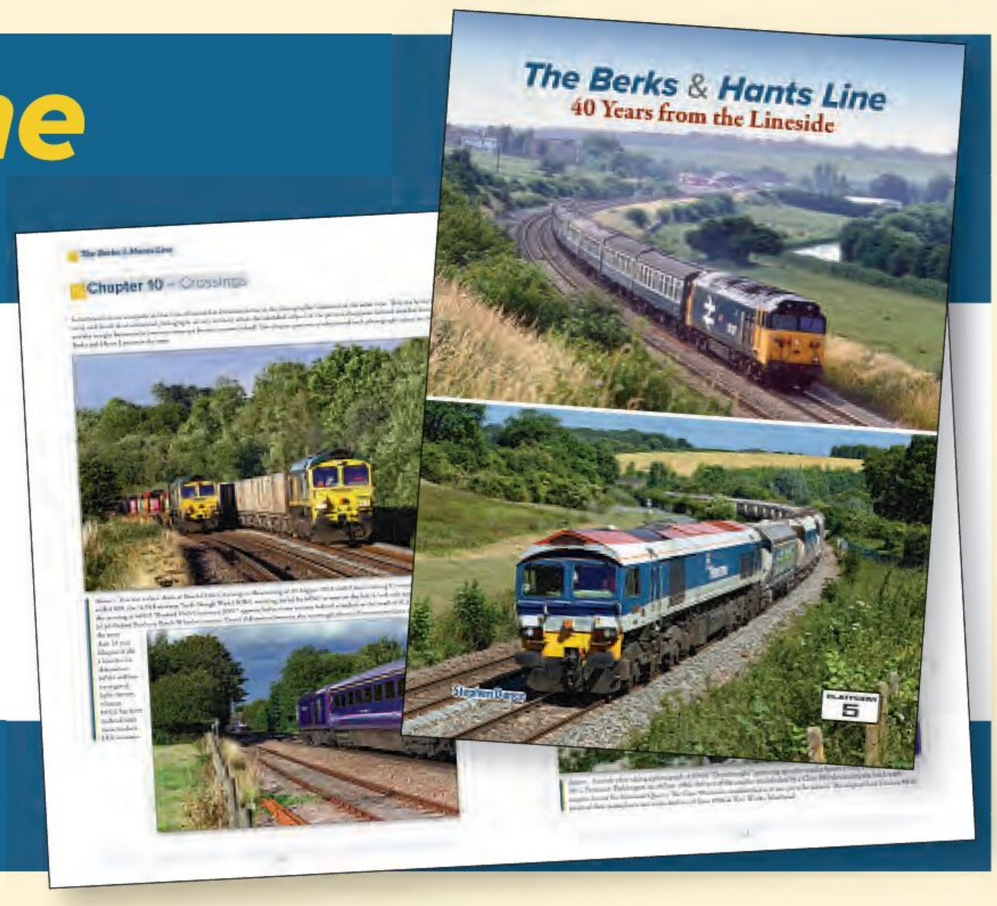

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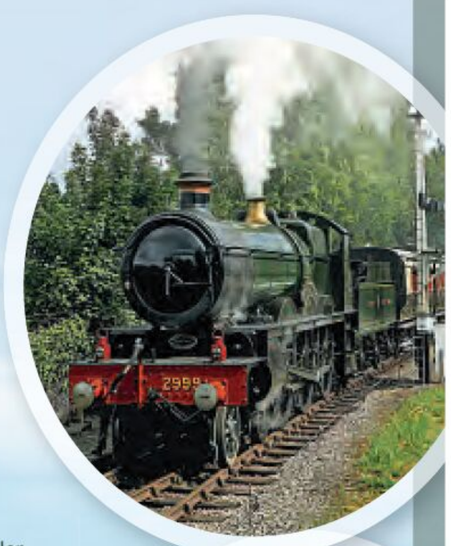

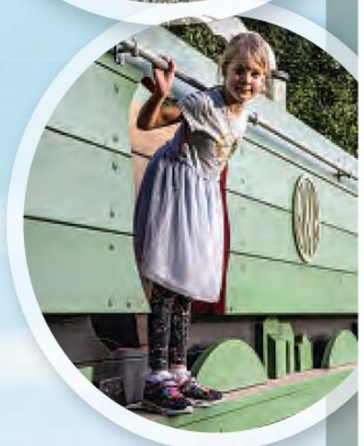

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STAR LETTER

This must never happen!

THE decision of the National Trust to rehome most of its industrial steam locomotives formerly based at Penrhyn Castle (News, pages 14-16) has already attracted much comment from industrial railway enthusiasts.

Several observations have been made in relation to individual locomotives and for the most part, except for the ultimate plan to move *Fire Queen* from its current place in the Vale of Rheidol Railway's Museum to its original small shed at Llanberis, relatively little for commentators to deplore.

There is, sadly, one glaring exception to all of this, namely the proposal for 3ft gauge Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST *Kettering Furnaces No. 3*.

The proposal is currently being put forward by the Waterford & Suir Valley Railway in the Republic of Ireland. This scheme is a six-mile 3ft gauge heritage railway running from Bilberry, Waterford City, to Kilmeadan station on part of the trackbed of the former Waterford, Dungarvan & Lismore Railway. The scheme, which would serve other attractions along its route and have a terminus in Waterford City, certainly has much to recommend it, as does the plan to eventually use a steam locomotive.

The problem is the current proposal (and associated fundraising) for the restoration of *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* to achieve this objective.

Pecketts under repair at the Bay of Islands Railway in New Zealand in 2007. MARK SMITHERS

Other possibilities?

Several arguments have now been put forward against such a move. Firstly, when Kettering Iron Company donated this locomotive to the National Trust, it did not expect it to be given away again, let alone shipped out of the country.

Secondly, the Waterford line would prove to be too demanding an environment for such a small locomotive for passenger operation. Thirdly, the work necessary to restore the locomotive to working order would involve much of the destruction of its historic fabric (including a new boiler). There are some historic locomotives that should simply be preserved as static exhibits, such as the North Pembrokeshire & Fishguard Railway 0-6-0ST *Margaret* and Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST works No. 641 of 1877 *Sharpthorn*, without such work being undertaken.

Why can't a suitable display venue for *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* be found in England? In the absence of a site alongside the eventual display venue for *Kettering Furnaces No. 8*, the Vale of Rheidol Railway museum has been suggested. There would be other possibilities: the National Railway Museum (alongside Black, Hawthorn and Company 0-4-0ST *Bauxite* of 1874) or its outpost at Shildon, while with Beamish Museum or the Tanfield Railway come to mind if – but only if – suitable covered accommodation could be found.

What should the Waterford & Suir Valley Railway do to achieve its ambition for a steam locomotive? Firstly, it needs to recognise that it should go for a more suitable design, even if this pushes up the budget and lengthens the project. One suggestion that has been made is a duplicate of the Southwold Railway's new *Blyth*. This path would appear to have much going for it, they would have an established design, and although nothing exactly like it ran in Ireland, there were three larger Sharpie 2-4-0Ts on the County Donegal system. If a greater Irish connection were sought, then one possibility would be offered by close examination of the Peckett 4-4-0T *Gabriel* at the Bay of Islands Railway in New Zealand, which although 3ft 6in gauge, appears to have its mechanical parts (excepting smokebox and front tubeplate), including firebox width, identical with its Schull & Skibbereen Railway sister (pictured). This locomotive could yield much useful information in facilitating a 3ft gauge new-build version.

'Unique relic'

More suitable Black Hawthorn locomotives did run on the island of Ireland, namely three 0-4-2STs in County Antrim. The difficulty here would be sourcing suitable drawings. There is a myriad of other Irish 3ft gauge designs, however, for which at least some drawings survive.

The desecration of a precious and unique relic of Britain's industrial railway heritage must not, even at this late stage, be allowed to happen. And, to preserve the credibility of a great scheme, the Waterford and Suir Valley Railway must find a more suitable way of solving its steam locomotive problem, even if means taking a bit longer to do it.

Mark Smithers, email

➜ *A National Trust statement said: "The National Trust is pleased to have been able to find new homes for a small number of locomotives that were previously on display at Penrhyn Castle but are not related to Penrhyn. These transfers have been made to well- established railway charities and museums who are committed to caring for them and providing public access."*

Lost Cornish museum scheme

I wondered if any readers could tell me what happened to the embryo preservation scheme, Cornwall Railway Museum?

I was reading Lewis Reade's book, Branch Line Memories, and the section on the Chacewater to Newquay branch talked of this scheme being based round the Lostwithiel broad gauge timber goods shed and locating it by the Zelah-Newquay road bridge at Lanteague.

Any information would be gratefully received.

Tony Cashmore, Nuneaton, Warwickshire

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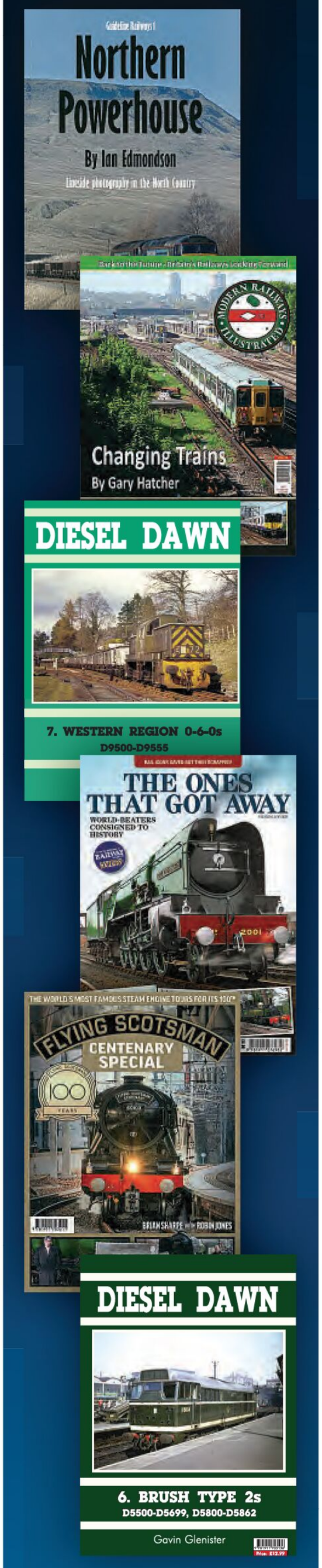

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SOUTH EAST

Amberley Museum
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex. Tel: 01798 831370.
Open: Weds-Suns.

Bluebell Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL. Tel: 01825 720800.
Running: Feb 16-18.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.
Running: Weds from Feb 27.

Chatham Historic Dockyard
Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent. Tel: 01634 820800. **Open: Daily.**

East Kent Railway
Standard gauge, two miles. Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042.
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 9.

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 17/18, Mar 9/10.

Lavender Line
Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.
Running: Feb 18.

Mid-Hants Railway
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.
Running: Feb 16-18. W/Es from Mar 9.

Mizens Railway
7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey. Tel: 07962 400922.
Reopens: Mar 31.

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.

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.

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 17/18, Mar 10.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway
Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.
Running: Feb 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.
Running: W/Es from Mar 16.

Gartell Light Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752.
Reopens: Spring 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: Mar 31.

Seaton Tramway
2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

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 16-18.

Swanage Railway
Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset. Tel: 01929 425800.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway
Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.
Running: Mar 10.

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: Mar 17.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum
Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.
Reopens: Mar 29.

Bure Valley Railway
15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk. Tel: 01263 733858.
Running: W/Es, sch hols.

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: Feb 18, 21, 24, Mar 10.

Ferry Meadows Railway
10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough,

Normally based at the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Railway, Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2320 will spend 2024 operating tours around Scunthorpe Steelworks with the Appleby Frodingham Railway – Scunthorpe. With its most recent overhaul completed in October 2022, it currently wears its red livery as National Coal Board No. 54. AFRPS

Pre-order Issue 317: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1219 *Caledonia Works* will be on loan to the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway for the duration of the 2024 operating season, courtesy of the Blaenavon Heritage Railway, where it is usually resident. "We are delighted to obtain this pretty little loco for the season – a real asset for the Middy this year," said John Durrant, MSLR'S locomotive superintendent. "Although its type never ran on the original line, it is very much a contemporary Edwardian machine and suits our period perfectly." *Caledonia Works* will work its first trains on the line over the MSLR's Easter running days of March 31/April 1 and stay in Suffolk until at least the gala weekend of August 30/September 1. Its appearance there sees it replace Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1700 *Wissington* which, having been on the line since the summer of 2022, has returned home to the North Norfolk Railway. OWEN HAYWARD

Cambs. Tel: 01733 398 889.
Running: W/Es.

Mangapps Railway Museum
Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Tel: 01621 784898.
Open: W/Es, bank hols, sch hols.

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, Cambs.
Tel: 01780 784444.
Running: W/Es.

North Norfolk Railway
Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA.
Tel: 01263 820800.
Running: Feb 17-25, Mar 10.

Wells & Walsingham Railway
10¼in gauge, four miles.
Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.
Tel: 01328 711630.
Running: W/Esm & sch hols.

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.

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles.
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366
Running: Suns from Mar 10.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles.
Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067
Running: Mar 17.

Didcot Railway Centre
Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.
Tel: 01235 817200.
Open: W/Es. Running: Weds from Feb 21 + Feb 17/18, Mar 2/3.

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.
Reopen: Mar 23.
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.

Epping Ongar Railway
Standard gauge, six miles.
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.
Running: Feb 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 16.

Leighton Buzzard Railway
2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888
Running: Suns from Mar 10.

London Museum of Water & Steam
2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.
Tel: 0208 568 4757. **Open: Thurs-Suns.**

MIDLANDS

Abbey Pumping Station
2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX. Tel: 0116 299 5111.
Open: Daily.

Amerton Railway
2ft gauge, one mile. Stowe-by-Chartley, Staffs. Tel: 01889 271337.
Reopens: 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 20-22, 24/25. W/Es from Mar 9.

Cambrian Heritage Railways
Standard gauge, 1¾ 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: Apr 6/7.

Churnet Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 5¼ miles.
Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.
Running: W/Es + Feb 20/21.

Crich Tramway Village
Standard gauge, one mile.
Crich, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01773 854 321
Open: Sats-Thurs from Mar 9.

Dean Forest Railway
Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Norchard, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.
Running: Weds + W/Es from Mar 13.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.
Reunning: Feb 17-25.

Echills 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.
Running: W/Es from Mar 2.

Great Central Railway
Standard gauge, eight miles.
Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.
Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk
Running: W/Es + Feb 21-23.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)
Standard gauge, 10 miles. Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.
Open: Mar 16/17.

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.
Running: Feb 17/18, 21, 24/25.

Northampton & Lamport Railway
Standard gauge, two miles.
Pitsford, Northants. Tel: 01604 820327.
Running: Mar 10.

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.
Running: Feb 18, 21/22. W/Es from Mar 9

Perrygrove Railway
15in gauge. B4228, Coleford, Gloucestershire.
Tel: 01594 834991.
Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es.

Rocks by Rail
Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore, Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.
Reopens: March 31.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Rushden, Northants.
Tel 0300 3023 150.
Reopens: 2024.

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: Easter.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway
2ft gauge, ½ mile.
Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.
Reopens: Mar 31.

NORTH WEST

Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours
Standard gauge, 11 miles. Blackpool, Lancs. Tel: 01253 209521.
www.blackpoolheritage.com
Depot: Reopens TBA.
Heritage tram tours: Resume Mar 29.

East Lancashire Railway
Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.
Tel: 0333 320 2830.
Running: W/Es + Feb 21-23.

Eden Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.
Reopens: April 2.

Great Laxey Mine Railway
19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 862007/670386.
Reopens: Easter.

Groudle Glen Railway
2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453. **Reopens: Mar 31.**

Heaton Park Tramway
Standard gauge, ½ mile.
Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.
Reopens: Easter.

Isle of Man Steam Railway
3ft gauge, 15½ miles.
Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 662525.
Running: Thurs-Suns from Mar 15.

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.
Running: Feb 17/18. Daily from Mar 23.

Manx Electric Railway and Snaefell Mountain Railway
3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER), 5½ miles (SMR). Douglas, Isle of Man.
Tel: 01624 697473.
Running: Daily from Mar 23.

The weekend of February 17/18 will see the Swanage Railway hosting a Community Weekend to allow the public a rare opportunity to look behind the scenes of the operation and restoration of the railway's services. With half-price travel for those living in local BH and DT postcodes, signalbox tours at both Harman's Cross and Corfe Castle, and driver experiences aboard an 08 at Swanage, it is hoped that the event inspires new volunteers to sign up. "Volunteering on the Swanage Railway is very fulfilling. It's a great way of meeting new people while assisting with worthwhile community projects at what has become one of Dorset's major tourist attractions," said Clare Collins, event organiser, volunteer guard, and volunteer director of the Swanage Railway Trust. "Our Community Weekend is a different and interesting day out for all the family – a rare opportunity to see behind the scenes of a working heritage railway, explore some of the many different roles required to operate the Swanage Railway, and find out about varied volunteering opportunities."

Pre-order Issue 317: Order your copy from **mrtns.uk/pre-order-hr** or call **01507 529529**.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway
15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.
Running: Feb 17/18. Daily from Mar 16

Ribble Steam Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Preston, Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.
Running: Feb 17.

South Tynedale Railway
2ft gauge, 4¾ miles.
Alston, Cumbria.
Tel: 01434 338212.
Reopens: Easter.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum
2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 779747.
Reopens: Mar 29.

West Lancashire Light Railway
2ft gauge. Hesketh Bank, Lancs. Tel: 01772 815881.
Reopens: Easter.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland.
Tel: 0300 030 3311.
Reopens: Spring 2024.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe
Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.
Tel: 07889 297271.
Reopens: April 27.

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: Easter.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway
Standard gauge, five miles.
Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 795189.
Running: Suns from Feb 25.

Heatherslaw Light Railway
15in gauge, two miles.
Ford Forge, Northumberland.
Tel: 01890 820244.
Reopens: Mar 29.

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: April 20.

Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.
Reopens: April 28.

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 17/18. Daily from Mar 23.

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.
Running: Suns from 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.
Running: Feb 17/18. W/Es from Mar 2.

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, Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.
Running: Feb 16-18, 20, 22, Mar 2.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway
Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Blaenavon, Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.
Reopens: Easter 2024.

Brecon Mountain Railway
1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.
Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.
Reopens: Mar 23.

Corris Railway
2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile. Corris, near Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.
Reopens: Mar 29.

Fairbourne Railway
12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne, Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.
Running: Feb 16-18.

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 18-25, 27-29, Mar 5-7, 10.

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.
Running: W/Es.

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.

Talyllyn Railway
2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.
Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.
Running: Feb 16-24. W/Es from Mar 9.

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 23.

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: Mar 23.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway
Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.
Running: Feb 17/18, Mar 10, 15/16.

Caledonian Railway
Standard gauge, four miles. Brechin, Angus. Tel: 01356 622992.
Reopens: Mar 30.

Doon Valley Railway
Standard gauge. Dunaskin, Ayrshire.
Reopens: May 26.

Keith & Dufftown Railway
Standard gauge, 11 miles.
Dufftown, Banffshire. Tel: 01340 821181.
Reopens: Mar 29.

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: Easter 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.
Running: Feb 17/18, 21/22, 24/25.

IRELAND

Cavan and Leitrim Railway
3ft gauge. Downpatrick, Co. Down.
Tel: +353 71 963 8599.
Reopens: Easter 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.
Museum open: Thurs-Sats.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and heritage events in the coming weeks

FEBRUARY
- 16-18 North Yorkshire Moors Railway, Britannia Specials
- 17/18 Didcot Railway Centre, Perfect Prairies
- 17/18 Swanage Railway, Community Weekend
- 18 Statfold Country Park, STATBUS at Night
- 25 Epping Ongar Railway, Winter Bus Rally

MARCH
- 2 Mid-Norfolk Railway, Dereham Model Railway Exhibition
- 2/3 Didcot Railway Centre, Pendennis Castle 100th Birthday Celebrations
- 3 Great Central Railway, Railwayana Swapmeet
- 9 Seaton Tramway, Mother's Day Twilight Trams
- 15-17 East Lancashire Railway, Legends of Steam Gala
- 16-17 Statfold Country Park, Spectacle of Steam
- 16-18 Great Central Railway and GCR Nottingham, 125th Anniversary Open Weekend
- 21-24 Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, Steam Gala
- 24 Crich Tramway Village, Model Trams Exhibition
- 29-31 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Day Out With Thomas
- 29-31 Didcot Railway Centre, Steam into the Forties
- 29-31 Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, High Speed Easter Egg Hunt
- 29-31 Statfold Country Park, Easter Eggspress
- 30/31 Talyllyn Railway, Behind The Scenes Weekend
- 31 Avon Valley Railway, Chocolate Train
- 31 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway, Easter Steam Up

Organising a gala or other big event and want it included? Let us know by emailing Owen Hayward at: ohayward@mortons.co.uk

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SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2024

Spring Transport Festival:	20/21st April
Dragon Adventure:	27th May
A Visit from Bluey:	9th June
Ridgeway Run:	16th June
Pre-1988 Vehicle Rally:	26th August
SHOWBUS:	29th September

Plus, several other special events throughout the year, and Steaming Days on Sundays from Easter to Halloween.

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Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

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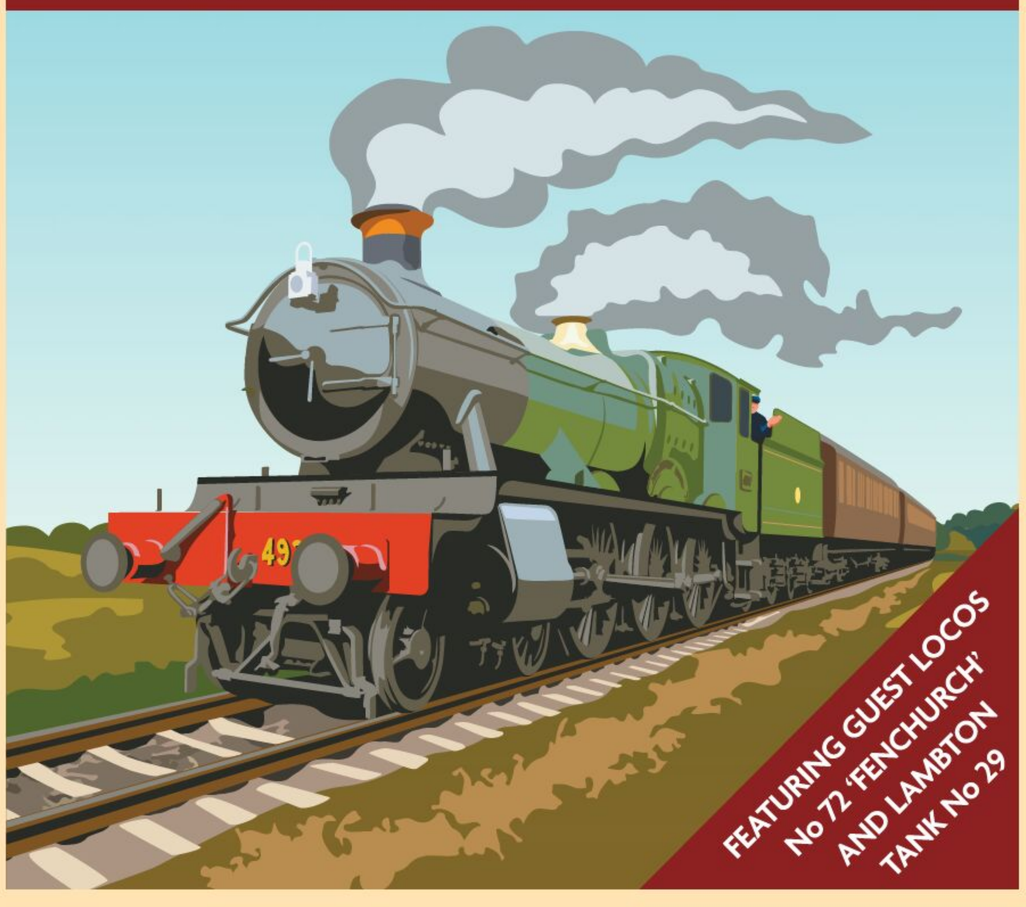
SPRING STEAM GALA

18 – 21 APRIL 2024



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WHAT'S ON AT STATFOLD COUNTRY PARK

STEAM EVENTS 2024

16th & 17th March
Spectacle Of Steam

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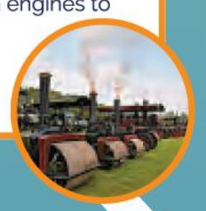

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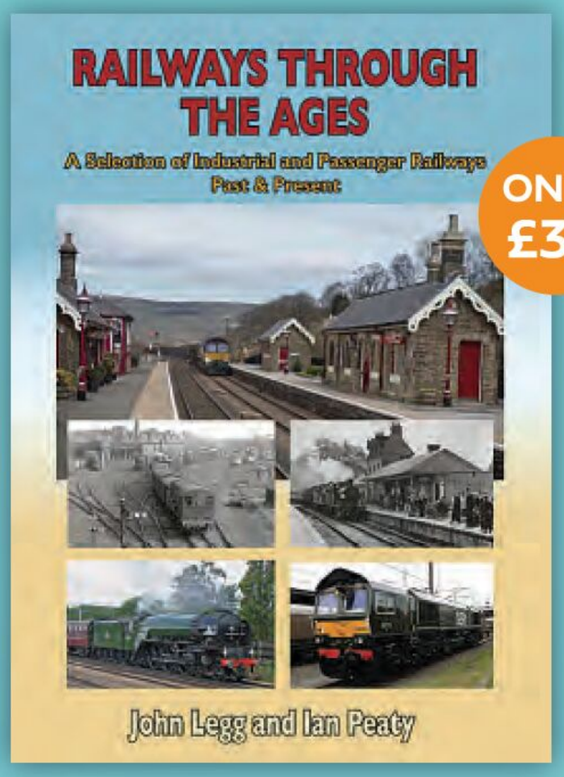

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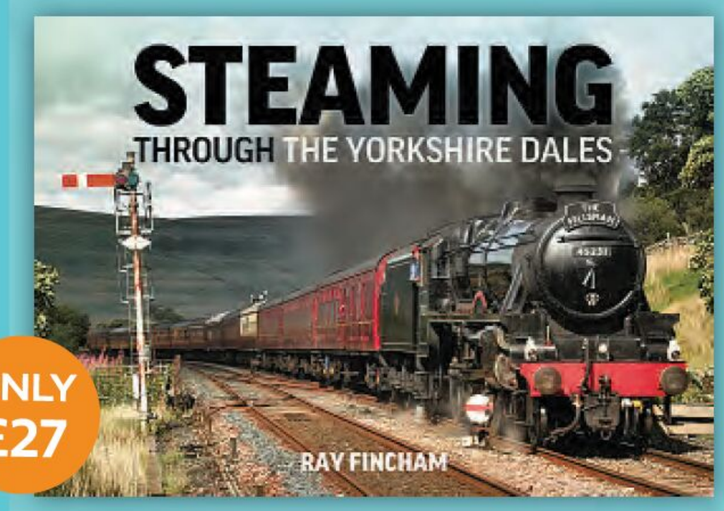

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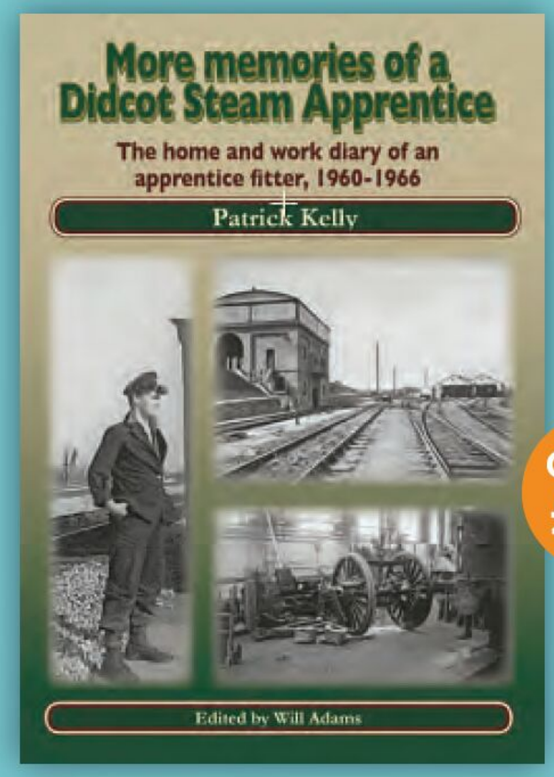

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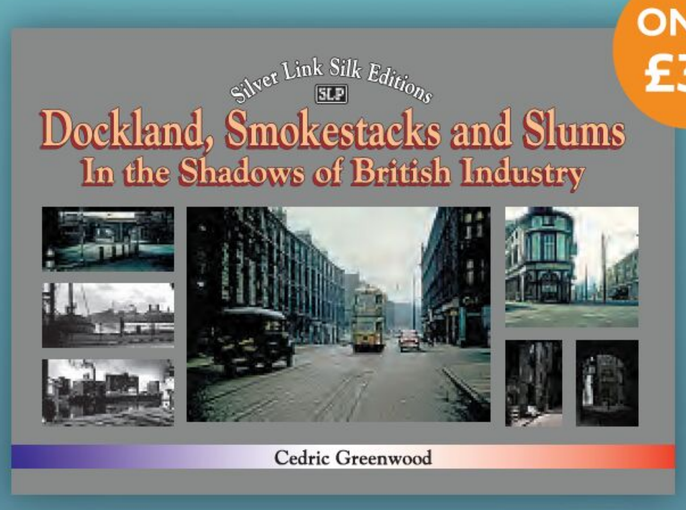

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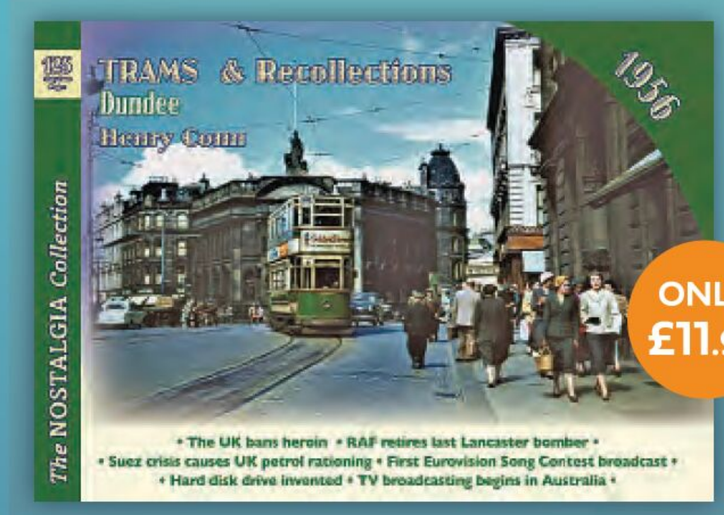

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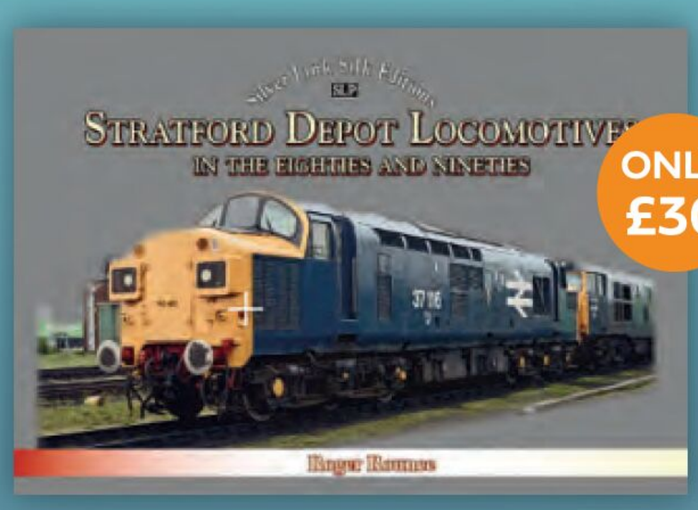

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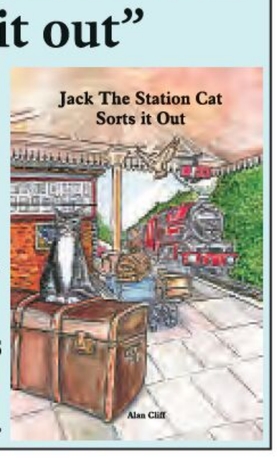

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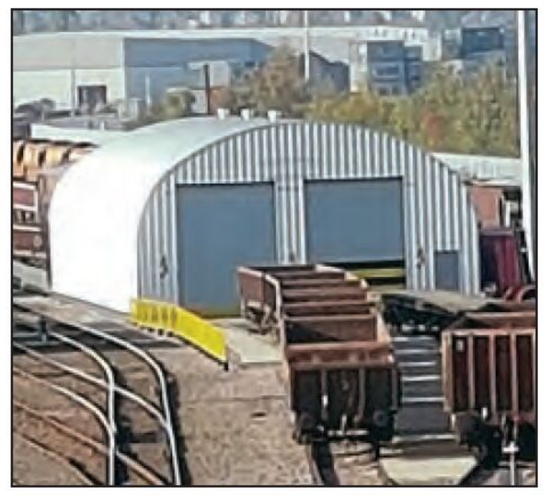

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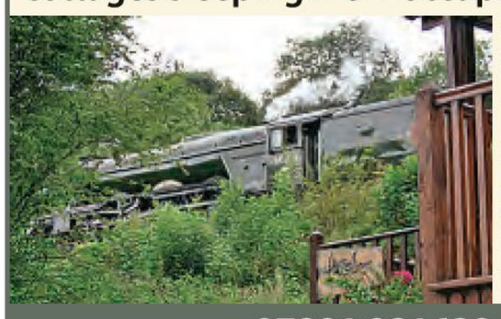

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Night Owl memories from 60 years ago

By Geoff Courtney

SOME of the class nicknames used by steam era trainspotters are self-explanatory, an example being 'Footballers' for certain B17s beloved by those of us whose stomping ground was the former GER main line out of Liverpool Street. Other nicknames were more esoteric, and in that category comes 'Night Owls' for the GWR 4700 class.

I was reminded of these heavyweight 2-8-0s when writing my report for last month's issue of Dreweatts' Transport Sale in December that included live steam models of two members of the class, Nos. 4702 and 4705.

The former, in 5in gauge, went under the hammer for £4800, but it was the latter, a 3½in gauge exhibition standard example which sold for £4200 and rang a distant bell that led me to search through an album of photographs I took more than six decades ago.

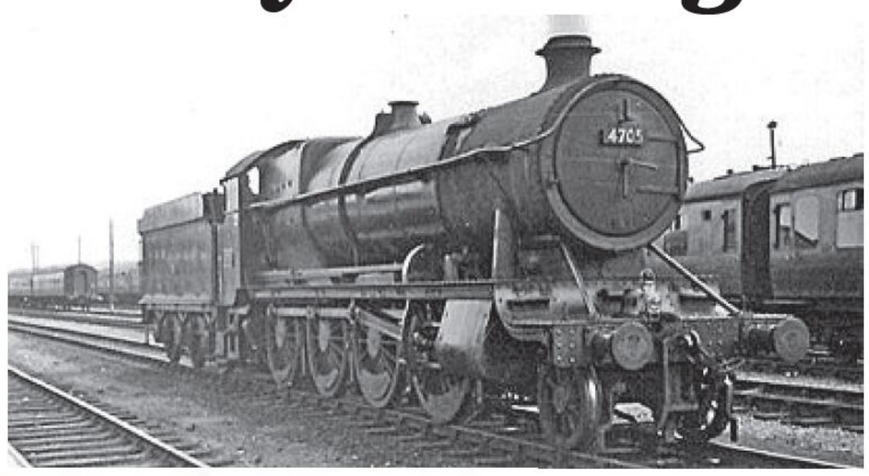
And there it was – No. 4705 at Newton Abbot, resting between duties on Thursday, August 17, 1961. The image may not be of the highest quality due to a combination of an inadequate camera and my equally inadequate photographic skills, but it serves as a reminder of a pre-Grouping class that was still capable of earning its keep at the highest level more than 40 years after emerging from Swindon Works.

The nine locomotives in the class were built between 1919 and 1923 to the design of GJ Churchward for fast heavy freight operations, which they carried out mainly overnight, thus earning them their 'Night Owls' nickname, but they were also occasionally called upon to help out on passenger expresses during the busy summer months, especially August.

They were heavy beasts, their weight with tender being nearly 129 tons, heavier than all the ex-GWR express engines of the late 1950s other than the Kings, but they were capable of showing a decent turn of speed that stressed shedmasters doubtless appreciated.

At the time I photographed No. 4705, it was allocated to Plymouth Laira (83D), and the low level of coal in the tender indicates that it may have arrived earlier that summer's day with a Down express from Paddington. Indeed, the class was no stranger to the GWR's London terminus, as Old Oak Common (81A) was home to five of the nine in the late 1950s.

One of my log books reveals that the class could be called upon to haul the most prestigious expresses when locomotives resources were stretched, for during a marathon trainspotting stint of nearly 10 hours at a busy Reading General on Saturday, August 30, 1958, I noted No. 4708 on the Down 'Royal Duchy' to Penzance. Although not on such a high-profile express, classmate No. 4704, which like No. 4708 was one of the 81A-allocated engines at the time, followed 3½ hours later on a Down express to Weston-super-Mare. The imposing-looking locomotives may have been designed as workhorses for freight operations, but they also had a pedigree that appealed enormously to shedmasters – and we trainspotters.



Right: No. 4705 simmers at Newton Abbot between duties on August 17, 1961. GEOFF COURTNEY

Left: The model of 2-8-0 No. 4705 that sold for £4200 at auction on December 13. DREWEATTS

Toby the Tram Engine returns to Wisbech & Upwell

By Robin Jones

A FIFTH memento marking the route of the legendary GER Wisbech & Upwell Tramway was unveiled on December 30, with work experience student Harvey Davies, of March-based SDM Fabrication, and his managing director Richard Melton revealing the memorial structure in Elm High Road, near the tramway's first depot outside Wisbech.

It featured a replica GER Class C53 (LNER J70) 0-4-0 tram, a fleet of which formed the mainstay of services on the five-mile standard gauge tramway which opened on August 20 and closed to passengers on December 31, 1927, and freight of May 23, 1966.

For about 12 years, the Rev W Awdry was the vicar of Emneth, a village near Wisbech, and drew much inspiration from the tramway for stories in his series of books featuring Toby, his coach Henietta and Mavis the Quarry Diesel, all of which are based on stock that ran on the fenland tramway. G70 No. 68221 was Toby's inspiration.

The Wisbech to Upwell Tram Memento Project was set up to mark the route of the line and operates through the local Well Creek Trust. It has been funded by private donations and work is carried out by volunteers under the supervision of trust member and local historian Bill Smith.

"Each memento is bespoke and illustrates the area in which it is located," said Bill. "Images of the old steam tram evoke numerous memories for locals and visitors and have been an inspiration for many. We can be assured that our heritage is being preserved for future generations to enjoy."

SDM produced two of the mementoes, and a trust statement said that without the generosity of Richard Melton and his training scheme, the project may not have reached fruition. Fundraising for the sixth final feature is ongoing. Donations can be made via www.wellcreektrust.org.uk

Harvey Davies (left) and Richard Melton, of SDM Fabrication, with the Wisbech to Upwell Tram Memento Project's fifth memorial structure. WCT

NEXT ISSUE
Issue 317 out Mar 15
As the LMS 'Black Fives' turn 90, Dave Wilson recounts his time working on the footplate of several of these Stanier powerhouses.

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THOSE BRIGHTER DAYS
Spring is a superb time at the lineside, when the days get longer but temperatures are still low enough for decent exhaust. John Titlow highlights his best seasonal locations for photographing steam.

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- Visit 4 UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Extra day in Petra & discover "Petra by Night"
- 4x4 Jeep tour in Wadi Rum
- Experience the buoyant waters of the Dead Sea
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