



NEW BEACHY HEAD WITH TENDER SEES DAYLIGHT AT BLUEBELL!

ISSUE 317 March 15 – April 12, 2024

HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

BETTON GRANGE

BOOKED FOR SEVERN VALLEY
SPRING GALA



DOUBLE FALCONS
TO FLY AGAIN AT CORRIS AFTER 100 YEARS

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■ £500K BID TO SAVE WORLD'S OLDEST STATION ■ PENDENNIS CASTLE MARKS
ITS CENTENARY ■ LADY OF LEGEND JOINS COTSWOLD STEAM FESTIVAL ■ SHOCK
£140K ESTIMATE FOR DARJEELING B OVERHAUL ■ DUKEDOG NOW BACK IN
FORMER CAMBRIAN HOME ■ PARTIAL SCRAPPING FOR 'PIONEERING' LMS EMU

SPECIAL EVENTS 2024

& DYMCHURCH RAILWAY

January

1st

Mince Pie Specials

February

10th

Valentine's Diner

13th - 15th

The Bug's Book Worms



April

20th

Winston's Wine Train

June

1st

Fish & Chips Supper

12th

Breakfast Safari

16th

Father's Day & Mini Beer Festival

22nd

Meet Batman™

23rd

Meet the Original Stormtrooper

29th

Heritage Tour



August

21st

Hythe Venetian Fete

24th - 26th

Dymchurch Day of Sun

October

26th - 27th

Autumn Gala

28th - 31st



Halloween Spooky Special



December

1st

Santa Specials

7th - 8th

Santa Specials

14th - 15th

Santa Specials

21st - 24th

Santa Specials

28th - 31st

Mince Pie Specials



March

10th

Mother's Day

17th

RH+DRSA Special
Winston Churchill Returns

29th - 31st

Good Friday & Easter

May

11th - 12th

Steam & Diesel Gala

July

20th

Fish & Chips Supper

27th

New Romney Country
Fayre & Motorbike Festival

September

8th

Bus Rally Day

14th

Celebration of Heritage

21st - 22nd

Bluey Meet & Greet

28th

Dungeness Sunset Diner

November

23rd - 24th

Santa Specials

30th

Santa Specials



SANTA SPECIALS



Andy Booth's Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway A class 0-6-0 No. 52322 is seen departing Emsay station on the Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway with a fully-loaded engineers train during a 30742 Charters event on February 21. MIKE HEATH

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Preservation is about the whole picture, not just the star exhibits

BRITAIN'S standard gauge heritage fleet is on course to celebrate two landmarks this year. Once the test steamings of GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* are completed, we will delight in the sight of the first class member at work for nearly six decades. Later this year, again all being well, the replica of LBSCR Brighton Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head* will emerge on the Bluebell Railway. There is no doubt that both new-builds have immense crowd-pulling potential and will boost attendances at every venue they visit.

At the other end of the scale, however, the majority of an irreplaceable item of heritage traction is about to be scrapped.

As reported in News, page 26, one of only two surviving prewar EMUs still in original formation, Class 503 4SUB No. 4732, is now losing two of its three cars because its owner, the Heritage Electric Train Trust, has decided that it can no longer afford to restore them and will instead focus on saving just one driving car.

I fully understand and sympathise with the predicament that HETT has found itself in. Enthusiasm most often has no limits – but finance certainly does.

Steam has always been the predominant image of the railway preservation movement. By its very nature, electric traction comes a poor third in the minds of the general public. Unless a heritage electric locomotive or multiple unit can be passed for operation on the national tube network, it has nowhere else to run. It is highly unlikely that there will ever be a fully-fledged electric railway, and the best future that a preserved EMU can hope for is being locomotive-hauled stock. Yet, as a movement, we should – and indeed must – avoid the pitfall of saving just the 'enticing' parts of our

rich railway heritage, while ignoring all aspects of the complete spectrum.

Here is where the Coventry Electric Railway Museum played a crucial role. But sadly, that venue is no longer with us, its collection of heritage stock having been dispersed to other sites in the hope of giving items the chance to survive. As with the complete Class 503 set, this is no longer the case, and as we closed for press, it was moved out of its current Margate home to meet its destiny. The set is a classic part of 20th-century Merseyside transport history and surely among that locality's public

guardians of heritage, there must have been a means of saving all three cars for the day when their value is fully appreciated by a future audience. As we reported last issue, separate moves are currently underway to save one of the last Merseyrail Class 507 EMUs.

Does nobody have an empty warehouse where such vehicles might be housed while restoration resources are amassed? It seems

there is a crying need for a new national electric railway museum which could be developed as a major tourist attraction while also offering education and training facilities?

The heritage sector was still very much in its early stages when a largely-indifferent public paid little attention to the loss of the last Grange, a decision that future generations came to regret. We have achieved so much over the last 73 years since volunteers saved the Tallylyn Railway: let us not stand back and lose any of what we have saved so far – any of it – or we will come to regret the day.

Robin Jones Editor

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COVER: Appropriately sporting a 'Centenarian' headboard and train reporting number, GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* celebrated its 100th birthday at Didcot Railway Centre over the weekend of March 2/3. The GWR's rival to *Flying Scotsman* spent time stored at Didcot before the establishment of the museum there in 1974; see Headline News, pages 8/9. OWEN HAYWARD

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Centre

A rainbow arcs above BR 9F No. 92214 on its final day in steam at the Great Central Railway on February 26. MARTIN CREESE



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With most of the population counting the days – and probably the hours – to the arrival of spring after a dull, windy and rain-drenched winter, John Titlow offers advice on how to take the best seasonal lineside views by making the most of post-rain sunshine and choosing the right location for heritage and main line shots.



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Collaborative efforts ensure Spa's steam gala is no 'Standard' story

Owen Hayward paid a visit to the Spa Valley Railway's gala, where, despite being faced with a series of setbacks in the days immediately beforehand, volunteers persevered to run the gala as planned.



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The 'Ninety Fives'

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the appearance of the first of William Stanier's Class 5 4-6-0, better known as 'Black Fives'. Fifties trainspotter turned BR steam driver Dave Wilson recalls his hands-on experiences of these mixed traffic masterpieces.

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Katie at the dawn of steam!

Having been raised with an appreciation for history, it was love which brought Katie Wright to Stephenson Steam Railway. Sally Clifford chats to her about her roles and finds out what volunteering has brought to her life.



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Betton Grange booked for Severn Valley steam gala

By Robin Jones

THE Severn Valley Railway is set to host the eagerly-awaited gala debut of new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*.

As this issue of *Heritage Railway* closed for press, the 81st Grange was still undergoing final refinements, including painting and lining Tyseley Locomotive Works, and was being readied for its first private steaming and yard runs in March, prior to being taken to the Battlefield Line for test running (as reported in issue 314). Subject to all work being completed and the tests being satisfactory, the locomotive was pencilled in to be unveiled to members of the 6800 Betton Grange Society Ltd at Shackleton.



The numberplate fixed to the cabside. SCOTT BARNES/6800

Afterward, it was booked to be taken to the Severn Valley Railway where, all being well, it will be rostered for the April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala.

Due to the last-minute delays in completion and testing, No. 6880 was unable to attend the East Somerset Railway's 50th Anniversary Steam Gala on March 16/17, nor the planned 30742 Charters event with six milk tankers on March 25 (see separate story).

The SVR expects the new locomotive to be a big crowd-puller at its gala. Managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "We are extremely pleased to be hosting the gala debut of such an important engine. It really is incredible to think that this will be the first time a Grange class will have been seen in service for 59 years, and we know it's going to be a big draw."

Subject to examination, testing and commissioning of the locomotive, *Betton Grange* will join LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No 72 *Fenchurch*, from the Bluebell Railway (picture, page 22), and Lambton, Hetton & Joicey Colliery Railway Kitson 0-6-0T No. 29, from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, as well as members of the SVR's home fleet, including Stanier mogul No. 13268, appearing for the first time in its new lined LMS black livery and bearing its new number, and the SVR's flagship GWR 4-6-0, No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*.

"Having the brand-new *Betton Grange* and the 152-year-old *Fenchurch* in our line-up means



GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* inside the Tyseley Locomotive Works paintshop on February 16. ROBIN JONES

we're covering a huge span of years with the rolling stock at our spring event," added Gus. "This is the first opportunity to see a Grange on a GWR line since the mid-1960s; with *Hagley Hall* and No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, we will have a complete line-up of medium-sized, named GWR classes. It looks like, once again, we've got a cracker of a gala to deliver, and we are very much hoping to build on the success we had last year."

The SVR reported strong advance ticket sales; see svr.co.uk

As we went to press, it was also confirmed that *Betton Grange* has

been pencilled in – subject to its completion, successful testing and appearances beforehand – to visit the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 bank holiday weekend gala (see separate story).

No. 6880 has already been booked to appear in the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's Cotswold Festival of Steam on May 25-27, as reported last issue.

• For updates on the steaming of No. 6880, visit <https://bit.ly/bettongrange> or scan this QR code.



Dartmouth Steam Railway's BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75014, masquerading as former Stoke-on-Trent-based sister No. 75035, approaches Consall on the Churnet Valley Railway during a 30742 Charters event on March 4. ROBERT FALCONER

Bridgnorth Cliff Railway running again

BRIDGNORTH'S 'other' heritage railway reopened on Monday, March 4, after having been closed for more than 14 months.

Services on Bridgnorth Cliff Railway, England's oldest and steepest inland electric funicular railway, resumed at 9am. The line, which runs for 11 feet up and down the town's sandstone cliffs, has linked High Town with Low Town since it opened on July 7, 1892.

It was closed on December 21, 2022, pending the rebuilding of a deteriorating retaining wall on a neighbouring property which was beyond its direct control. During the closure, a

team of skeleton staff continued to maintain and care for the railway in readiness for its reopening.

All staff underwent updated training immediately prior to the reopening, while the interiors of the two stations have been repainted in a fresh livery.

Due to popular demand, the railway has introduced card payments as an option for passengers.

For the first week of its resumed operation, residents from the WV16 and WV15 postcode areas were given free travel until March 8.

Lady of Legend steps in for spring galas

GWR Saint No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* has not only stepped in as the star guest in place of fellow new-build No. 6880 *Betton Grange* at the East Somerset Railway's 50th Anniversary Steam Gala on March 16/17, but it will also feature in the 30742 Charters' six milk tankers photographic event at Cranmore on March 25.

Furthermore, No. 2999 (pictured overleaf) will, if all goes to plan, then meet up with *Betton Grange* at the Cotswold Festival of Steam.

An ESR statement said: "We are tremendously grateful to the Didcot Railway Centre for allowing us the hire of *Lady of Legend*, which will stand in at the event.

"No. 2999 is set to be the first of its class to ever traverse the ESR and will appear alongside home fleet locomotives GWR large prairie No. 4110, LMS Ivatt 2MT No. 46447 and Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST 1719 *Lady Nan*."

Tickets are available online now at www.eastsomersetrailway.com

A GWR statement said that the award-winning Cotswold Festival of Steam is already shaping up to be one of the best yet. This year's theme is 'Western Workhorses', and the event will feature up to eight locomotives working to an intensive timetable.

Tom Willson, chairman of the festival's organising committee, said: "Seeing the Saint grace the rails of the GWR really is a dream come true for the many supporters of our railway. It is an extremely elegant design that will look very



The six milk tank wagons amassed at Cranmore, on the East Somerset Railway, on February 25 for the forthcoming charter event now involving GWR 4-6-0 No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*. JOSH BRINSFORD

much at home on our beautiful Cotswold railway."

Richard Jermyn, of the Great Western Society, added: "We are equally delighted to see *Lady of Legend* appear at the GWR, an ambition we have held since the locomotive was completed.

"We have had a long and happy relationship with the GWR, and a number of locomotives from Didcot have visited the Cotswold line over the years.

"Original Saints worked expresses over this route between the Midlands and the West Country; seeing a Saint on one of its old stamping grounds will be a real thrill."

For the first time in the heritage era, all four operational two-cylinder 4-6-0 types will work together as the new-build locomotives join GWR resident 4-6-0s No. 7820 *Dinmore Manor* and 'Modified Hall' class no.

7903 *Foremarke Hall*, spanning the period of Swindon design from 1902 (when the original Saint class was introduced) to 1950, representing the three great Swindon locomotive engineers: GJ Churchward, who introduced the Saints; Charles B Collett, who designed the Granges and Manors; and FW Hawksworth, who introduced the 'Modified Halls'.

It is also expected that two GWR 2-8-0s will operate together. Fresh from its visit to the WSR, No. 2807 will be in service alongside No. 3850, which is rapidly approaching the end of its own overhaul in Tuddington.

SR Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S N Co.* completes the line-up of home fleet locomotives.

Tickets are now on sale, including discounted early bird tickets available until April 22, at www.gwsr.com

Eight in steam at big Minehead May gala

UP to eight engines are set up run during the West Somerset Railway's May 3-6 gala weekend.

Joining the previously-announced LNWR Webb coal tank No. 1054 and BR B1 No. 61306 *Mayflower* is GWR 2800 heavy freight 2-8-0 No. 2807, courtesy of Cotswold Steam Preservation Ltd and the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. Returned to service last September after a swift overhaul, it will be the 2-8-0's first venture away from the Cotswolds under its new boiler ticket.

A second locomotive also making its first venture away from home since overhaul will be GWR 0-6-2T No. 6695, from the Swindon & Cricklade Railway. It arrived at the WSR on February 23 on an extended loan and will return home in June.

Furthermore, new-build GWR No. 6880 *Betton Grange* has also been provisionally booked (see story opposite).

The home fleet will be represented by WR 0-6-0PT No. 9466, WSR mogul No. 9351, and WR 4-6-0 No. 7828 *Odney Manor*. Goods trains, shunting demonstrations, local and express services, and double-heading are all billed to feature, with the triangle at Norton Fitzwarren and turntable at Minehead being used so as to have as many services as possible with locomotives running smokebox first.

Immediately afterwards, GWR enthusiasts will be further spoiled for choice, with Didcot Railway Centre's 50th anniversary event and the Bluebell Railway's branch line gala weekend both running on May 10-12. The Didcot event is set to see GWR 0-4-2T No. 1466 return to service following its overhaul at the WSR.

Meanwhile, at the Bluebell, Severn Valley-based 0-6-0PT No. 7714 will join fellow guests GWR pannier No. 1369, which is visiting from the South Devon Railway, and SVR shedmate No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, which will then head to the WSR for the summer months on extended loan.



Now for the next one after *Betton Grange*! On March 5, new-build Marsh Atlantic No. 32424 *Beachy Head* was moved out Atlantic House at Sheffield Park and partnered with its tender for the first time the following morning. Commissioning work will now begin to launch it into service this year. JAMES CUMMINS/BLUEBELL RAILWAY

Flying Scotsman's GWR rival celebrates centenary

By Owen Hayward

WHILE its class as a whole celebrated its 100th anniversary last year, March marked the centenary of GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* with a weekend event of steam at its Didcot Railway Centre home before it set out on its travels.

Delivered new to Old Oak Common from Swindon on March 4, 1924, its working life saw it take charge of services to South Wales and the West Country. The following year it partook in the locomotive exchange trials, during which it was loaned to the LNER to compete against the company's iconic A3 and A4 express locomotives, such as No. 4472 *Flying Scotsman*.



More than 100 *Castle*-related assets were on display, including the Great Western Society's seldom-shown collection of numbers and nameplates from scrapped and preserved members of the class. OWEN HAYWARD



To mark the centenary of No. 4079, many of those involved in its restoration following its return to the UK came together to celebrate the achievements at Didcot on March 2. FRANK DUMBLETON/GWS

It successfully out-performed its rivals, the locomotive being described as having "covered itself in soot and glory", which then resulted in the GWR sending *Pendennis Castle* to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley that year with a notice that proclaimed it to be "the most powerful express locomotive in Britain" – a cheeky jab towards *Flying Scotsman*, also on display there.

No. 4079 was withdrawn in 1964 and would likely have been scrapped had Mike Higson not purchased it. It

was stored at Taplow, where the Great Western Society's Reading group rented the goods shed, and appeared at the September 1965 open day, before it was sold on to John Gretton and Sir William McAlpine, the latter also owning *Flying Scotsman* from 1973.

Pendennis Castle was moved and stored in the former Didcot depot's lifting house; it is purported that the gantry crane there only survived as McAlpine would not allow the scrap man, who had been charged with

dismantling it in November 1966, to cut it up around his engine and so paid him off.

Down Under

In 1977, the *Castle* was sold again, this time to Hamersley Iron in Australia, and it left UK shores on May 29 that year. For 17 years, No. 4079 ran excursions Down Under and in 1989 journeyed to Perth to sit alongside its old rival *Flying Scotsman* during the A3's visit to the country. However, with prospects for an

Wareham bid axed for now

THE Swanage Railway has called time on its current plans to run services to Wareham after finding that a two-year trial proved commercially unviable.

Swanage Railway Trust chairman Frank Roberts said: "I would like to thank our dedicated and professional staff and volunteers who worked so hard to put the infrastructure in place so the Swanage Railway could operate its two-year trial heritage diesel train service to the main line at Wareham in 2017 and 2023.

"My grateful thanks are also due to our valued and appreciated partners and stakeholders – local councils, Network Rail, South Western Railway (previously South West Trains) and the Government's Coastal Communities Fund – for their enduring commitment and assistance.

"While our trial heritage train service on the busy Network Rail main line into Wareham was operationally successful, it did not deliver commercially. Any future service to Wareham would require a subsidy so it could operate.

"We appreciate the disappointment this may cause to people in the Isle of Purbeck. Operating on 90 selected days between April and September in 2017 and 2023, the 2023 trial heritage train service to Wareham was operated against the background of the Government underwriting reduced price £2 tickets for bus journeys in England.

"During the trial, Wareham ticket prices reflected the additional costs of running over the national railway network into Wareham while not detrimentally affecting the fare structure of our important heritage services between Norden, Corfe Castle, Harman's Cross, Herston and Swanage."

However, he added: "The Swanage Railway's important connection with the national railway network at Worgret Junction enables excursion trains from anywhere in the country to run to Corfe Castle and Swanage, bringing several hundred passengers on each train and much-needed business to the Isle of Purbeck."

Triple business awards win for Seaton

THE Seaton Tramway has scooped three honours in the Jurassic Business Awards.

The 2ft 9in gauge line's latest success follows its triumph at the Heritage Railway Association 2024 awards in Brighton on February 10, at which it carried off the Environmental Innovation award, as reported last issue.

The latest successes came on February 29 at the awards event celebrating business excellence within the Jurassic Coast communities, organised by Marketing West and hosted at Sidmouth Rugby Club.

The Tramstop Café won the Café, Pub and Fine Dining Award, and nominations "praised this café right across the board."

The tramway also took the Tourism Award. One judge said: "An attraction like this is good for the local economy as it has a knock-on effect, bringing in visitors to enjoy the scenic beauty of East Devon

who then visits other businesses in the area."

However, the pinnacle of the afternoon was the unexpected and prestigious Business of the Year Award, highlighting the tramway's overall excellence and impact on the local business community.

The tramway's commercial manager, Steve Waite, said: "These awards are fantastic recognition of the hard work and dedication of our entire team. Winning the Business of the Year was particularly special and unexpected.

"It's an honour to be recognised among such distinguished businesses in Charmouth, Seaton, Sidmouth, Lyme Regis and Axminster."

The tramway is to open Jurassic Discovery later this spring, firstly with a soft play area and café, followed by a new walk-through animatronic dinosaur exhibition set to open for the summer.



Perfect Prairies: For the first time in preservation, an example of the 4100, 5100 and 6100 numbering series of large prairies were seen together. Visiting from the Battlefield Line was No. 5199, which was posed alongside Didcot-based Nos. 6106 and 4144 on a Timeline Events night shoot on February 10. MARTYN TATTAM



A cake was made in the image of No. 4079 for the centenary weekend celebrations. OWEN HAYWARD

operational future looking uncertain as traffic rapidly increased, Hamersley began to consider options for the locomotive's future, not wanting it to become a standalone display. In

early 2000 it was offered to the GWS, which agreed in return to arrange and pay for its repatriation and to restore it to operational condition.

After a formal handover on April 19, *Pendennis Castle* started a 10-week voyage home, arriving on July 8 (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 16) – 23 years, one month and eight days after it left. Its return journey meant it was the first 4-6-0 to circumnavigate the world – and is only the second steam locomotive to do so after its longstanding LNER rival.

Following a lengthy restoration, No. 4079 returned to steam at Didcot on April 2, 2022. Since, it has starred at several other railways' gala events, with more visits set to take place throughout 2024.

March 2/3 saw Didcot Railway Centre celebrate the locomotive's centenary at its home base with displays of more than 100 Castle-related artefacts, including models,



After spending the morning shunting about the depot, *Pendennis Castle* worked trains on one of the museum's two demonstration lines. OWEN HAYWARD

numbers and nameplates from scrapped and preserved classmates, and archive photographs.

Each morning, *Pendennis Castle* shunted around the former GWR depot, taking coal from the coal stage, lining up outside the locomotive shed alongside classmate No. 5051 *Dryslwyn Castle* and King class No. 6023 *King Edward II*, before finally taking a spin on the museum's turntable. Meanwhile, 0-4-0ST No. 1340 *Trojan* and new Saint No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* worked services on the two demonstration lines. In the afternoon, the Saint and Castle swapped places, allowing visitors a chance to ride behind the centenarian.

Event co-ordinator Sarah Jermyn said: "We had a great turnout, and it was great to see so many people coming to celebrate with us. Having more than 100 other Castle exhibits on show, including some rarely seen

nameplates and numberplates, was fantastic.

"Our new beer, *Pendennis 100*, was launched, and the cake created by The Cake Lady of Oxfordshire was happily consumed. We were thrilled to welcome so many people to the museum to help us celebrate this landmark anniversary for a locomotive that is renowned for having outperformed *Flying Scotsman* in its lifetime."

The *Pendennis Castle* celebratory weekend was the second major event for start of the 50th anniversary of the DRC, with the February half-term week having seen resident large prairies No. 4144 (operational) and No. 6106 (static display) joined by No. 5199, courtesy of the 5199 Project, which brought together an example of the 4100, 5100 and 6100 series of numbered locomotives together for the first time in preservation before No. 5199 was withdrawn for overhaul.

Hopes for KESR 'Terrier' to return for June anniversary

WHILE the route is synonymous with the class, the Kent & East Sussex Railway has been devoid of any LBSCR 'Terrier' power since 2022, with both No. 2678 *Knowle* and No. 70 *Poplar* having been out of service following failures just months apart.

However, with the former Colonel Stephens light railway celebrating 50 years since opening as a heritage line, KESR workshop staff are now hoping to bring *Knowle* back into service in time to take part in celebrations this year.

On March 2/3, the A1X 0-6-0T was moved into Rolvenden workshops. Its motion was removed before it was rapidly lifted up on stands to allow the wheels to be extracted and facilitate the necessary assessments to fully ascertain the extent

of work required – and help establish if it can indeed be repaired sufficiently to make limited running appearances during the KESR's golden anniversary year.

Although its most recent overhaul was completed in 2020, with *Knowle* undertaking tests on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway that December, concerns were found in November 2022 with the motion and frames, which sadly necessitated its withdrawal from service. It has since been kept stored in the Rolvenden sheds.

Earlier the same year, resident classmate *Poplar*, which had returned to service only that spring, encountered a catastrophic motion failure itself while visiting the Bluebell Railway, which resulted in it too being withdrawn.

With *Poplar's* repairs and return to service hampered by ongoing insurance matters, *Knowle* therefore presents the only currently viable choice for one of the resident 'Terriers' to appear in the KESR's anniversary year.

It will not, however, be a thorough scheme of works. The plan is to undertake sufficient work to enable it to perform only light duties; the full extent of work required is much greater and would therefore take much longer.

General manager Robin Coombes said: "We don't want to raise everyone's hopes too much as this is not a full overhaul.

"It is an attempt to repair *Knowle* so that it would be able to run well enough for 'gentle' duties, perhaps during some of our special 50th anniversary events.



On March 3, 'Terrier' No. 2678 *Knowle* could be found up on stands at the KESR's Rolvenden works. An assessment is taking place to determine if repairs can be carried out to make the locomotive available for limited duties during the railway's 50th anniversary year. ROBIN COOMBES/KESR

"We are currently assessing how realistic this aspiration is. It would be a wonderful bonus to have *Knowle*

with us for at least some of our celebrations."

Read more online at <https://kesr.org.uk/>



North Norfolk Railway interim general manager Graham Hukins. NNR

Interim general manager to head up Poppy Line

THE North Norfolk Railway has appointed Graham Hukins as interim general manager.

A railway statement said: "Hugh Harkett has been quite unwell for a several weeks and required hospital treatment earlier this month. His doctors have advised him to take it easy for several weeks.

"In light of this, Hugh has temporarily stepped back from the managing director role for a period of time to enable his recuperation. Given the urgent need for day-to-day management of the railway at the start of a new season, Graham Hukins has been appointed as interim general manager."

'Honoured'

Graham, the line's commercial, business and administration manager, said: "Firstly, very best wishes to Hugh for a speedy recovery following his unscheduled visit to 'the works'. I am honoured and humbled that the board has asked me to provide leadership and additional support to the business at this difficult time. My aim is to work with the wider management team to provide continuity and stability and deliver another successful season.

"I should also like to thank to everyone who has conveyed good wishes, encouragement, and offers of help as I set about covering the role while Hugh recuperates."

Before moving to the Poppy Line, Graham was head of visitor experience and marketing at Didcot Railway Centre from September 2019 to August 2021, and before that was operations and commercial manager at the Royal Engineers Museum at Guildford. He is also a non-executive director of Tourism South East.

Double Falcons to take flight at Corris after 100-plus years

By Owen Hayward

AFTER almost a century since a pair of Hughes Falcon 0-4-2STs were last seen at Maespoeth Junction, history will be made in June when No. 3 *Sir Haydn* returns to its former shed on the Corris Railway to star alongside that line's new-build example of the class, No. 10, for the first time since its completion last autumn.

The visit of No. 3 to the Corris may not be the first time that it has returned to its former home, but as the only surviving example of the three Falcons originally built for the railway, its appearance alongside the new build will be a significant moment in the line's history. The sight of two operational Falcons together will be for the first time since in the early 1920s.

Three of these locomotives were supplied by the Hughes Locomotive Company in 1878, being outshopped from Falcon Works at Loughborough (in what later became the Brush Traction workshops in 1957). They were initially built as 0-4-0STs but during rebuilds of the trio between 1883 and 1900 were fitted with the trailing wheels to improve stability.

By 1920, all three were badly worn, which resulted in the railway placing an order for a new Kerr Stuart locomotive the following year. Another 0-4-2ST design manifested itself in 'Tattoo' No. 4, which quickly entered service and initially ran the line solo, although No. 2 was kept operational as reserve.

In 1923, all three Falcons were assessed and later, when No. 4 was showing signs of needing to



The ornate yellow and black lining was applied to Corris Railway's new-build Falcon No. 10 in February, having run in plain red since construction was completed last October. LUKE RYAN

be withdrawn for serious repairs, including a new boiler, Corris chief engineer Alfred Hume used a combination of parts taken from two of the Falcons to make another operational example.

While it is often cited that No. 3 was the rebuilt one, utilising parts from No. 1 (and eventually No. 2), research conducted by author Martin Fuller for his *Tallylyn & Corris Steam Locomotives* volumes suggests that actually there was more of No. 1 used than No. 3, the latter's identity believed to have remained as that locomotive's bunker was the one used in the rebuild which brought the builder's plate with it.

With the limited facilities available, it was considered a remarkable feat at the time, which ultimately played its part in the locomotive surviving.

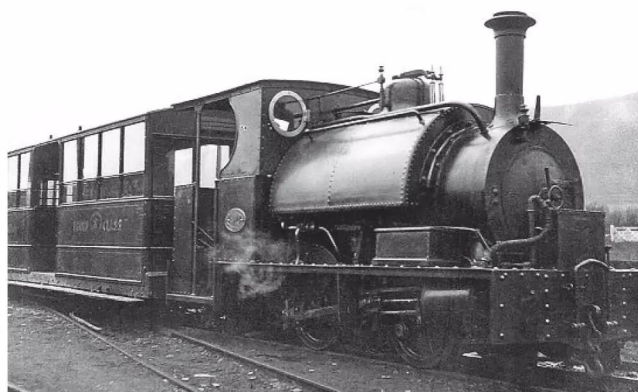
However, the locomotive identified as No. 3 was found not to be particularly satisfactory and when the GWR acquired the Corris

in 1929, it was swiftly dispatched to Swindon works for repair. The company allegedly did not want to fund repairs, and this decision may have been what ultimately resulted in the remains of identities Nos. 1 and 2 being scrapped in 1930, thus providing the funds for the required work. On its return, Nos. 3 and 4 then operated the line together until its closure in 1948.

During No. 3's visit to Maespoeth, it will run every Saturday and feature in a gala day on June 15 that will see it in service alongside other locomotives, all sharing the Victorian engine shed for the first time in the heritage era. The presence of an operational trio of steam locomotives is another first in more than a century.

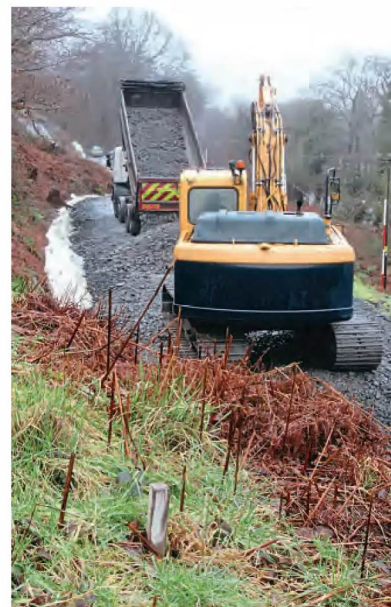
Heading south

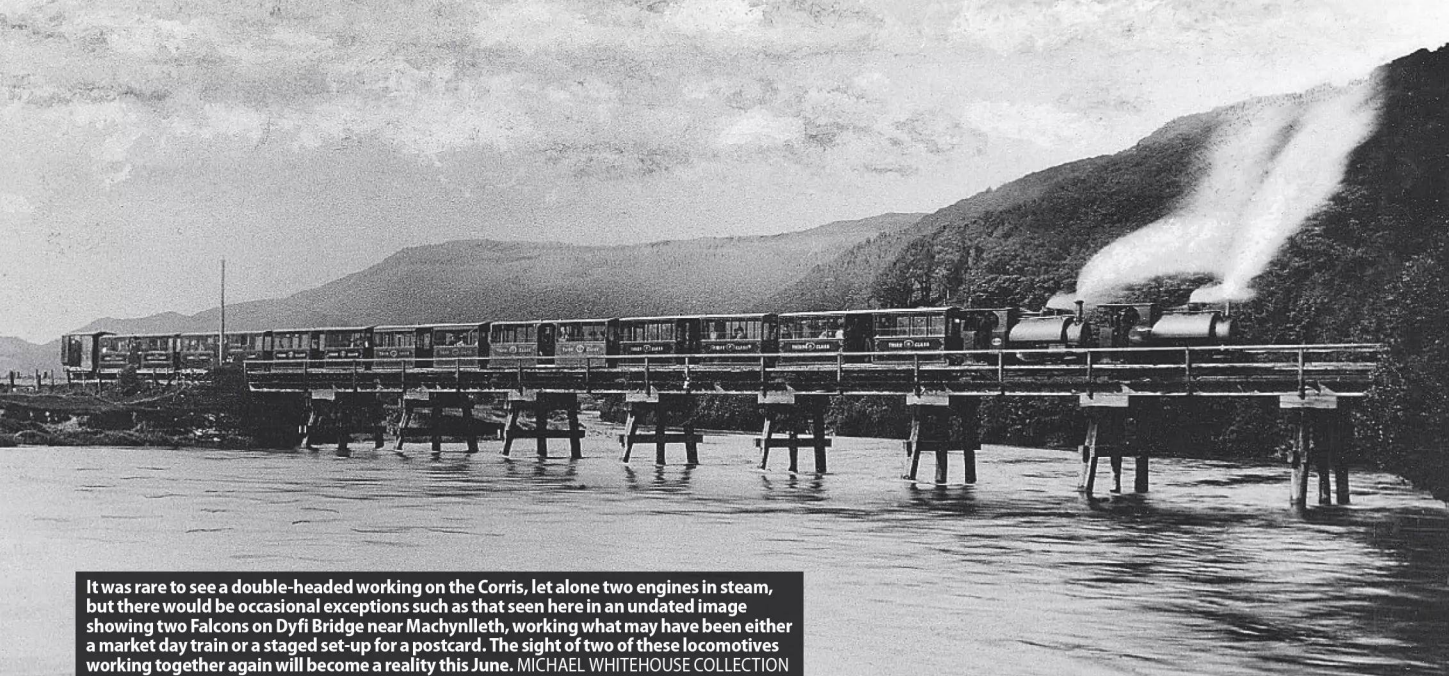
Meanwhile, the railway's extension project continues to make substantial progress with a delivery of materials



Above: Despite being used heavily from new, Corris No. 1 failed in the early years of the 20th century and thus was seldom photographed. The new-build No. 10 bears a cab design similar to that of its predecessor seen here. MARTIN FULLER

Right: Groundworks south of Maespoeth Junction are taking place to build up the new embankment that will allow the Corris Railway to extend to double its current length. On February 14, materials were delivered and then spread in steady, drizzly rain. The white peg in the foreground represents approximately the proposed line of the east rail. DAVID COLEMAN/CR





It was rare to see a double-headed working on the Corris, let alone two engines in steam, but there would be occasional exceptions such as that seen here in an undated image showing two Falcons on Dyfi Bridge near Machynlleth, working what may have been either a market day train or a staged set-up for a postcard. The sight of two of these locomotives working together again will become a reality this June. MICHAEL WHITEHOUSE COLLECTION

to be used for building the new embankment south of Maespoeth Junction. Much material has come from the new road bridge carrying the A487 road across the Afon Dyfi at Machynlleth, which was completed at the start of February. With up to 20 lorries a day unloading during mid-February, the groundwork will gradually be built up to level out the new embankment.

On receiving the material, the first move is to prepare the ground on which is to be tipped. This requires the top soil and sub-soil to be excavated to sound material to form a level 'bench' in the steep, sidelong, sloping ground. These 'benches' form a series of steps along the hillside, on which drainage stone replicating the steps are placed. Over this foundation/drainage layer, geotextile is laid, upon which the general fill being delivered can be tipped, spread, and rolled in.

Coastal getaway

At the end of June, the Falcon pair will then travel together from Maespoeth to Tywyn, with No. 10 paying a reciprocal visit to the Tallylyn Railway, during which it will star at the railway's annual Anything Goes gala on July 6/7.

With the Corris's previous No. 7 new-build project in 2005, in 2011 an opportunity was presented for it to visit close neighbours at the TR (which united it with No. 4 *Edward Thomas* in the process). The chance for it to be tested across a longer distance allowed engineers to identify areas for improvement that later resulted in greater power and lower water consumption.

While No. 10 has been built with much greater understanding and experience, the opportunity for similar testing was one that could not be passed up.

The Anything Goes gala will see an intensive timetable comprising goods and passenger services with



In 1974, the Tallylyn Railway ran a strengthened 12-coach train for its society AGM, worked by Nos. 1 *Tallylyn* and 2 *Dolgoch*, seen here approaching Ty Mawr bridge. For this year's July 6/7 Anything Goes gala, not only will No. 10 star alongside the preservation pioneering pair, but this particular service will be recreated to mark its half-centenary. DAVID MITCHELL/TR

a twist. Additionally, as its name indicates, all available forms of traction will be in service.

While it proves itself, No. 10 will be double-heading throughout the event with TR's Nos. 3, 4 and 7 in turn, pairing with both former residents of the Corris, while workings with No. 7 *Tom Rolt* provide an opportunity to compare two 'new' locomotives from different railways.

No. 7 started life as a 3ft gauge 0-4-0WT Andrew Barclay locomotive, built in 1949 for the Bord na Mona (Irish Turf Board). It was rebuilt by the TR volunteers into its current 0-4-2T guise to provide a much-needed extra locomotive to meet rising passenger numbers and entered service in 1991.

Double-length train

On July 7, the service will include a recreation of the TR Preservation Society's 1974 AGM train, which saw Fletcher Jennings pair 0-4-2ST No. 1

Tallylyn and 0-4-0WT No. 2 *Dolgoch* double-head a 12-coach service up the Fathew Valley, possibly the longest ever to have run. Comprising eight bogies coaches and four various four-wheel designs, normal service rakes usually comprise up to four and two of the different types.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of such an unusual sight, Nos. 1 and 2 will once again head up a strengthened rake that will combine two sets of coaches from Pendre to Abergynolwyn, with No. 7 assisting from the rear. The train will divide at Abergynolwyn, with the front half continuing to the terminus at Nant Gwernol and the rear portion returning to Tywyn Wharf.

A locomotive cavalcade will take place each day with that on the Saturday happening at Tywyn Wharf station, while on the Sunday, a cleverly planned timetable will see all locomotives parade through Abergynolwyn.

Event organisers Owen Hayward and Phil Budd said: "With such a high bar set after last year's event, to take it up a notch each time will always prove a challenge and we hope that what is on the agenda for the 2024 weekend will be just as alluring, if not more so.

"No doubt the sight of such a lengthy train will be a talking point and its unlikely to be repeated again any time soon, but to also host Falcon No. 10 for the occasion will really make this one not to be missed.

"The final details are being agreed and shall be available very soon."

For those wanting a more relaxed day, the same weekend will also see the first of the annual beer festivals taking place at Tywyn Wharf. The bar will open on Friday, July 5; past years have seen it drunk dry by the end of the Saturday!

➔ For full details on the appearances of the Falcons at both railways, visit corris.co.uk and tallylyn.co.uk

IN BRIEF

→ THIS year's Fawley Hill Vintage Festival will take place on May 17-19. The event, which will include rich and varied forms of transport ranging from road steam, triplanes, Spitfires and old Formula 1 cars to horses and camels, is being run in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support at the private Fawley Hill, estate near Henley-on-Thames. It will also feature antiques and vintage shopping, a fairground, and music all weekend. For more details and to book tickets, visit www.fawleyhill.co.uk

→ A NEW photography exhibition, **Echoes of the Blitz: Underground Shelters in Ukraine and London**, has opened at London Transport Museum in Covent Garden.

Featuring 70 images, it has been created in partnership with n-ost, a Berlin-based journalistic network. It includes contemporary photography of Ukrainian people sheltering in Metro stations and wartime images of Londoners taking refuge at tube stations in the 1940s. The images document the important role transport infrastructure has played during wartime and the resilience of people and the harsh realities of escaping aerial bombardment. The exhibition runs until spring 2025.

→ THE Severn Valley Railway's Engine House at Highley will host artisan stalls at its Spring Gift Fayre on March 16/17, running from 10.30am to 4.30pm each day. Dozens of suppliers will be offering local, hand-made goods, including arts, crafts, cakes, candles, and home décor.

→ THE Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's popular Gin Train is returning on March 29/30.

Passengers will be introduced to hand-crafted gin from Isle of Wight distillery Mermaid Gin.

During the 3 ½-hour journey, passengers will be served four gin and tonics and given a masterclass in the history of gin. Tickets, costing £49.55 per person, also include a day rover ticket for unlimited travel of the line.

Book online at www.kwvr.co.uk or telephone 01535 645214.

Darjeeling tank will cost at least £140k to repair – shock report

By Robin Jones

THE overhaul of Sharp Stewart B class 0-4-0WTT No. 19B – the only locomotive from the British-built Darjeeling Himalayan Railway resident in the UK – is set to cost its new owning group an unexpected six-figure sum before it can steam again.

As reported in issue 308, the Darjeeling Tank Locomotive Trust was successful in buying No. 19B and two matching replica coaches at the auction of its former owner, the late Adrian Shooter's private Beeches Light Railway, on June 21 last year, and agreed to have it overhauled and based at the Statfold Barn Railway.

At Statfold, the report from the initial visual inspection looked like exceptionally good news, with only the expected issues as with every 10-yearly overhaul apparent, such as grooving above the foundation ring.

However, the subsequent results from the non-destructive and ultrasound testing were the opposite. DTLT chairman Jeremy Davey said: "We learned that the old copper firebox, nursed along so carefully for the last 20 years, despite its patches and cracks, needs to be replaced. Additionally, some other areas of concern emerged, which meant lengthy discussions about the best way forward".

It had already been decided that the key objective of the overhaul was to aim for 40-50 years of boiler life before further major work was required. The 19B team needed to look at the most effective approach from both an engineering and an economic viewpoint and after much consideration with the benefit of detailed condition reports, the choice was between: the overhaul of the chassis with a new boiler – with the likely total cost being about £200,000; or overhauling the chassis, and overhauling the boiler with a new inner firebox, outer wrapper, and part-replacement of the backhead and throatplate – costing about £140,000.

In the light of these negative reports, Graham Lee's Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust offered to meet a significant part of the overhaul



The Sharp Stewart 19b No. 4977 stamp found on the bronze flange fitting on the chimney driver's side. DTLT

cost in the shape of £50,000 worth of work donated.

The DTLT had built up reserves of nearly £20,000 through supporters' donations and corporate match-funding since purchasing the locomotive and carriages. Grant application opportunities are now being researched by the restoration team, and these will be greatly assisted by a 30-page detailed engineering condition report written by 19B passed fireman Will Smith.

Not the original boiler

19B treasurer 'Fuzz' Jordan said: "These are exceptionally generous donations by Statfold Barn and the 200-plus supporters. On behalf of the trustees, I cannot find words to tell you how grateful we are.

"There are then sufficient funds available to overhaul the chassis, ready for the boiler. But what was the decision about the boiler, given it was believed it was pretty much the original 1889 one?

"The trustees had wanted to keep this almost-original working 1889 boiler operational, given it was a very rare piece of engineering history and not replace parts until it was a 'Tiggers Broom' boiler!"

Jeremy said: "The earliest we can now get 19B back in service, assuming we can fund repair work at the pace required, is spring 2025. If we go for a new boiler, then we're looking at another 18 months for the design, manufacture, and certification, and

No. 19B will miss potentially three main operating seasons."

Raising the extra estimated £60,000 needed was seen as a challenge. Despite the DTLT team raising £300,000 in three months last year to buy no. 19B, it was decided this was a step too far, as the team want to give back to the heritage community and not just keep asking and taking from supporters.

Trustee Andy Savage said: "The interesting news broke when Will Smith's report was circulated, which made the decision-making far easier."

Among the many images Will illustrated his report with were the bronze flange on the driver's side of the dome base casting where the vacuum ejector steam take-off valve is fitted.

Will said: "Once the boiler was shotblasted, we found a stamping underneath it: 'B 4977'.

"We have looked closely and we are pretty sure it's an original fitment, not a replacement 'robbed' from another boiler. No. 19B's works number from Sharp Stewart & Co's Atlas Works in Glasgow is 3518, while B 4977 was the works number of an almost-identical B class locomotive built in 1903."

Its manufacture was just prior to the company merging with others to become the North British Locomotive Company.

No. 4977 is better-known as 27B, or 784 in the all-India numbering scheme, and is one of the very modified Bs now at Tipong Colliery.

New rail campaign group for North Devon

A NEW rail revivalist group was launched in Bideford on March 1.

The Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance is to campaign for a new rail link between Bideford and Barnstaple and the upgrade of the Tarka Line between Exeter and Barnstaple.

The launch meeting at the Royal Hotel included 30 representatives

from 13 stakeholder organisations who have pledged to commit jointly to build on local council resolutions already passed and funding already committed to develop a compelling case to be put to the Government to support the reconnection of the 'long-marginalised' Torridge community of more 40,000 people, and an Alliance statement.

A statement from North Devon Conservative MP Selaine Saxby said that she "wholeheartedly" supports the alliance's ambitions: "The proposal to re-establish the old railway line between Barnstaple and Bideford, although not necessarily a replica of the former route, would be a huge advantage for locals and tourists alike."

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The rising sun casts a golden light across the frosty Hampshire countryside as Bulleid Pacific No. 34070 *Manston* rounds Wanderer's Curve with a short freight rake during the February 24 photographic charter. NICK GILLIAM

Weathering the storms at Mid-Hants!

By Owen Hayward

ALTHOUGH many will advocate for a clean and presentable engine for a good impression to the public, a photographic charter on February 24 at the Mid-Hants Railway proved that a weathered one can have its own merits.

As steam was phased out in the 1960s, locomotives became more and more grimy as less and less time was spent cleaning them; a contrast to the practices of proud enginemen in the decades beforehand.

The last few years have seen Southern Locomotives Ltd maintain unrebuilt Bulleid Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34070 *Manston* in a lightly weathered appearance as would have been present as it approached withdrawal in 1964.

On February 24, photographers were out bright and early for a day's charter with the locomotive, organised by Warwick Falconer and Matt Allen.

Pairing the air-smoothed machine with a short freight rake and a train of Mk.1 coaches in turn, the day was blessed with a crisp and golden dawn and some glorious sunshine – a dramatic contrast to the storms suffered by the UK in January and February – with some attendees describing it as one of the best days' photography on the railway for some time.

Manston is on loan to the MHR until May, when it will return to the Swanage Railway for the June 7-9 Strictly Bulleid 2 gala (News, page 44).



A few hours into the day and the frost has cleared, with blue skies above *Manston* as it approaches Bishops Sutton foot crossing, now coupled to a rake of SR green Mk.1 carriages. NICK GILLIAM



Manston, the last locomotive to be built on the Southern Railway before Nationalisation on January 1, 1948, passes through Ropley station with a passenger set during the charter. DAVID BUTCHER

First steps for Princess return

THE 6201 Princess Elizabeth Society Ltd has revealed that work to dismantle the LMS 4-6-2 has commenced at Carnforth, ahead of an eventual overhaul getting underway.

In 2022, No. 6201 was found to have a cracked boiler throatplate which necessitated its withdrawal from service for investigation. Subsequent non-destructive examinations recommend the removal of all boiler fittings and attachments for examination; with the boiler ticket not far off expiring at the time, the work required would have likely necessitated a boiler lift and so the locomotive has since remained stored at Carnforth. On February 28, the owning group confirmed that No. 6201 had moved into the workshops, where it is being stripped down for a full condition assessment that will determine the costs involved in undertaking a thorough overhaul.

While the required amount is still yet to be determined, the society is appealing for donations towards the cost while the assessment takes place. Further details are available at 6201.co.uk

Permanent promotion for Mid-Hants' CEO

FOLLOWING her appointment as interim CEO for the Mid-Hants Railway last year, Rebecca Dalley has been permanently promoted to the post.

A statement to members and volunteers said: "Although an interesting field was offered in the public recruitment process, we are delighted to be able to secure Rebecca's commitment to take on the permanent role. She was clearly the best candidate, and we are confident that it is in the best interests of the railway to proceed with her appointment without completing the formal competition.

"Your warm welcome and open dialogue has been key to capturing her longer-term interest in the role.

"I am sure you will join us in offering our congratulations and confidence in Rebecca's leadership over the coming years."

Homecoming celebrations for ex-Cambrian GWR Dukedog

By Owen Hayward

THE sole-surviving GWR Dukedog has returned to a shed it called home during its working life – after going on loan to the Vale of Rheidol Railway for display in its new Aberystwyth museum.

The class combined components from two other classes of GWR 4-4-0s, namely frames from Bulldogs and boilers from Dukes, which is where the type's nickname is derived from. Built at Swindon in 1938, No. 9017 was a collection of parts from the two locomotives it officially replaced, utilising the frames of No. 3424 (which had been built ONLY in 1906 itself), while the boiler was meant to come from No. 3258 *The Lizard* (built September 1895). However, official records suggest that little – if anything – from *The Lizard* ended up being used, with the boiler and cab coming from No. 3282 *Chepstow Castle*.

Cambrian days

When the GWR absorbed the Cambrian Railways in 1923, the permanent way restrictions resulting from its light build meant that heavier locomotives could not be operated on the route. While the Dukes were allowed to run on it, by the 1930s they had surpassed their estimated life, with the frames in particular being found to be in poor condition. Simultaneously, the Bulldogs were being withdrawn, with that class having an improved straight-topped frame construction.

A successful trial of the combination, which produced No. 3265 *The Duke* in 1929, resulted in the first 20 examples of the class

being outshopped in 1936-38, with the final nine following a year later.

No. 9017 entered service under the original GWR identity of No. 3217 and while it was intended to carry the name *Earl of Berkley* from new, many of the earls from which the locomotives were to take their names indicated to the GWR they would rather their titles were carried by a more prestigious class and so on this occasion the name was transferred to Castle No. 5060.

Meanwhile, No. 9017 spent the majority of its life working on the Cambrian route, being allocated to both Aberystwyth (6F) and its sub-shed at Machynlleth (which was shed code 89C until 1963) until it was withdrawn from service in October 1960 at Oswestry shed.

In 1961 it became the subject of the first ever appeal for funds to purchase a locomotive for preservation, destined for the Bluebell Railway, which, at the time, was its only suitable home.

Oswestry District traffic superintendent Oliver Velton was instrumental in its survival as he placed the locomotive in store at Oswestry works to allow sufficient time for funds to be raised to secure its purchase. Velton had done the same for the Welshpool & Llanfair railway Beyer Peacock 0-6-0Ts Nos. 822 *The Earl* and 823 *The Countess*.

Sadly, the appeal failed to raise the full amount required. To ensure the Dukedog's survival, Tom Gomm (of enamel badge fame) and enthusiast Peter Summers stepped in to make up the difference, with Summers also covering the cost of transportation for No. 9017 to Sussex; it even arrived



Following its arrival back at Aberystwyth on February 28 after more than 60 years away, No. 9017 once again resides within a shed it previously called home, with *Fire Queen* in the foreground. It will be on display within the Vale of Rheidol's new museum for the foreseeable future. PHIL BUDD/VOR

with its own supply of Welsh coal! Having adopted the *Earl of Berkley* nameplates for the first time in 1963, it has remained based in Sussex for its entire heritage-era life, with only short stints visiting other venues. The closest it got to returning to its former home shed was a visit to the Llangollen Railway in 2009.

Its loan to the VoR for display will also be the first time a class member has been seen in Aberystwyth since the last was withdrawn from there in May 1960.

Out of hiding

VoR managing director Llŷr ap Iolo said: "We are very excited to announce the loan of this locomotive to go on public display here in Aberystwyth. As part of the project to construct our new museum, standard gauge track was laid to facilitate this kind of visit; the Dukedog seemed the perfect choice to be the first standard gauge locomotive to be put on display. I am very grateful to the board of the Bluebell Railway for making this loan possible."

No. 9017 was last operational in June 2011, when it was withdrawn pending overhaul following the discovery of several boiler and mechanical faults. It had been considered for overhaul by the group working on the new-build LBSCR Brighton Atlantic *Beachy Head* project but was subsequently displaced by the LSWR pairing of B4 0-4-0T No. 96 *Normandy* and 4-4-2T radial tank No. 488.

Bluebell operations and commercial director Neil Glaskin said: "Since 2011, the locomotive has been stored under cover and this has meant limited chances for the

public to see it. By displaying the loco in the new museum, everyone will have the chance to admire this fascinating machine."

Local stories

The news was welcomed by Aberystwyth resident John Davies, now aged 93 and due to celebrate his 94th birthday on March 23, shortly after this issue went to press. No. 9017 was one of many he worked on during his footplate career, which began in Aberystwyth in 1952, and he was reunited with the locomotive on February 28.

"I spent a glorious week in the summer of 1955 firing No. 9017 with driver Tom Phillips," he recalled. "We worked the 9.55am all stations from Aberystwyth to Welshpool each day, where we serviced the engine. Our return working was the 'Cambrian Coast Express', all the way to Aberystwyth. Working with Tom felt like a holiday job because of his light handling of the loco."

"We were climbing Talerddig bank with No. 9017 when Tom said, 'shall I show you how to get the best out of a Dukedog?'"

"I stood in the driving position as he demonstrated the easiest way to fire it. It was one of the best working weeks of my life."

No. 9017 will be on display for two years within the 1938 GWR locomotive shed, which will open in conjunction with VoR services starting on March 23. The shed has been transformed into a museum and events space as part of a larger project called Wales to the World, which is developing the terminus at Park Avenue into a GWR-style station suitable for the modern tourist.



Following the arrival of No. 9017, it was reunited with John Davies (right), who once crewed the Dukedog after starting his railwayman career at Aberystwyth in 1952. He is pictured here with his daughter Heather. PHIL BUDD/VOR

Tributes are paid to one of Didcot's founding fathers

MEMBERS, volunteers and staff of the Great Western Society and Didcot Railway Centre were in mourning after Graham Perry, former chairman and one of the group's founders, died on February 9, just a few weeks short of his 80th birthday.

Born on April 1, 1944, Graham was one of the four schoolboys who started a fundraiser to preserve GWR 0-4-2T No. 1466, a move which eventually resulted in the establishment of the GWR-centric museum set in the grounds of the former 1932 engine shed and depot.

Upon its establishment, Graham was initially the treasurer of the GWS, remaining in the position until 1968, when he then became chairman – a role he held until retiring in 2001.

In April 1961, Graham and three of his trainspotting friends wrote a letter to *The Railway Magazine* launching an appeal to raise funds and save one of the iconic auto train 0-4-2Ts, and it was published on the August edition. He had previously recalled

discovering that they were pioneer railway preservationists when a group of them were travelling home from a spotting tour.

"We had passes for all the sheds in Scotland. But that was when I decided to give up trainspotting – I just got fed up with it," he said.

"Then, coming back on the train, somebody bought *The Railway Magazine* and that was when we discovered the letter."

With the question of propriety on the group's mind, the society was launched in May 1962, with membership being taken in large numbers.

By March 1964, the £750 to purchase No. 1466 had been raised and became the first in a subsequent "frenzy of preserving locomotives and rolling stock while still available straight out of BR service."

A GWS statement said: "Graham recalled that his interest in railways must have started when he was a toddler in 1947 or 1948 when his



One of the founding members of the Great Western Society, Graham Perry (left), met the Princess Royal at Didcot Railway Centre on May 27, 2003, the same year he was awarded an MBE for services to railway heritage. GWS

mother used to take him to the footbridge over the railway in Southall to watch trains. Years later, the same footbridge was where the GWS was conceived.

"Apart from what must have been almost full-time voluntary input to the GWS, Graham had a career in local government and later with a marketing agency in Ardington, close to his home village of East Hendred.

"In April 2001, Graham handed over the GWS in good order to his successor as chairman, Richard Croucher. Two years later he was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to railway heritage and was a guest that year when the Princess Royal visited.

"Our condolences go to Graham's wife Linda, his daughters Becky and Emma, and his grandchildren."



The special headboard marking the retirement of owners Adrian and Sandra Corke. RICH KELSEY

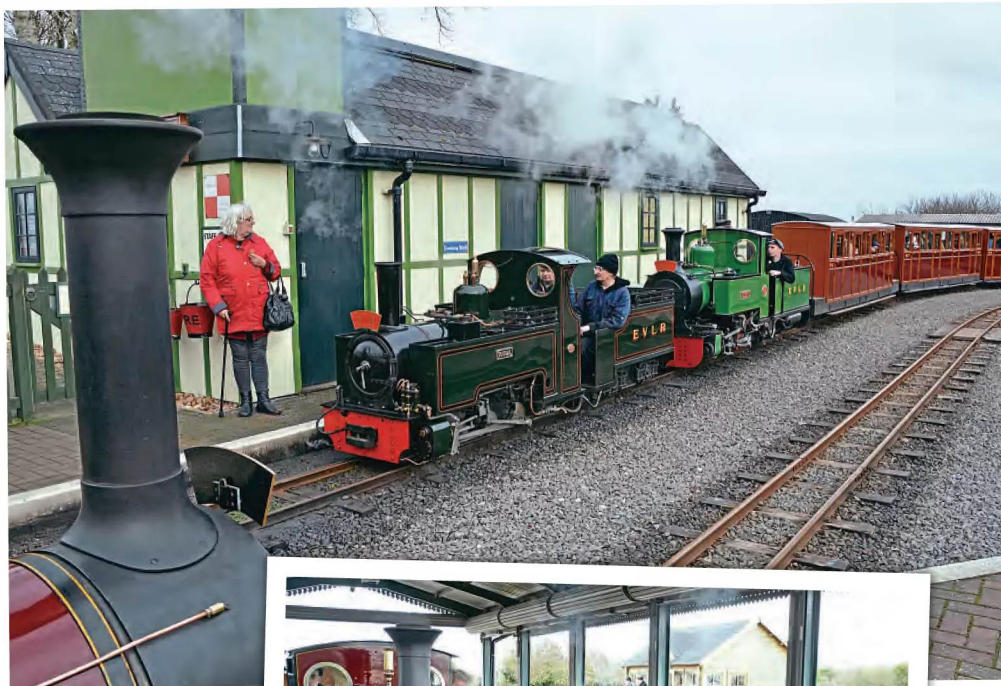
Spring gala farewell as Evesham Vale owners depart

AN early spring gala was held at the 15in gauge Evesham Vale Light Railway to bid farewell to Adrian and Sandra Corke, who have owned the railway for the last 12 years.

The event on February 25 featured a half-hourly service from Twyford station with all present steam locomotives (*Dougal*, *Monty* and *St Egwin*) in operation, double-headers, and the occasional freight train.

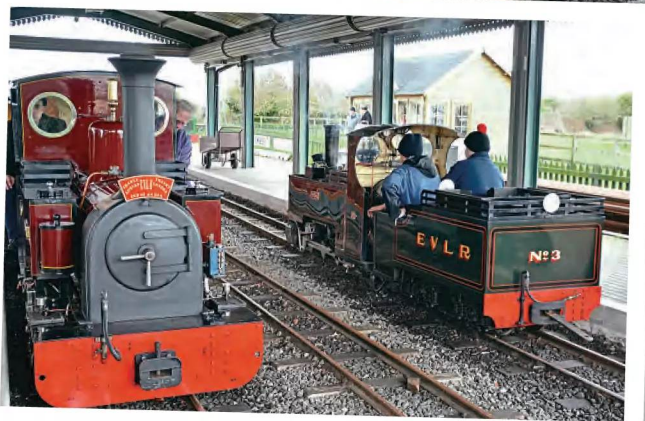
As reported in issue 311, the 1¼-mile line, originally built by Jim and Helen Shackell and which opened on August 1, 2002, has been bought by David and Katherine Nelson-Brown, who own the Perrygrove Railway.

Based inside Evesham Country Park, the EVLR carries nearly 50,000 passengers annually and is open for 170 days.



Above: Left to right at the Evesham Vale Light Railway's February 25 gala are Exmoor Steam Railway 0-4-2 of 1996 *Monty*, Severn Lamb 0-6-2T of 1970 No. 3 *Dougal*, and Exmoor Steam Railway 0-4-0T+T No. 312 of 2003 *St Egwin*. RICH KELSEY

Right: *Monty* (left) and *Dougal* in Twyford station. RICH KELSEY



A1's Easter Nene Valley visit pushed back to May

By Owen Haward

WHILE the overhaul of Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* has experienced setbacks, and is now on the final straight, the remaining jobs have taken longer than envisaged and its Easter appearance on the Nene Valley Railway has had to be rescheduled.

The start of March saw work continuing to refit the lagging and piping at Locomotive Maintenance Services at Loughborough, with cab pipework and cabling almost completed as this issue went to press.

During mid-February, work in the smokebox was concentrated on fitting spark arrestor screens, which have needed to be manufactured and cut to fit around the main steam pipes. Static testing was due to

commence imminently ahead of its transfer to the Great Central Railway, where *Tornado* will be reunited with its tender and commence running-in trials later in March. It was originally intended to then transfer the Peppercorn A1 directly to the NVR for its Easter visit, but with work slightly behind schedule, it will now first head out in April to undertake testing of the European Train Control System (ECTS) on sections of the Cambrian (as reported last issue), before visiting Peterborough at the end of May.

A1 Steam Locomotive Trust chairman Steve Davies MBE said: "*Tornado's* overhaul, combined with the fitting of ETCS, is rapidly approaching completion. There have been the inevitable interruptions one would expect with a project of this

complexity, and both parties agreed that the best approach to remove the risk involved is to push *Tornado's* appearance slightly to the right.

"The NVR team is now working on the revised schedule which we hope will not inconvenience too many. It is always a pleasure to operate at the Nene Valley and we look forward to renewing old acquaintances."

A NVR statement said: "While it is extremely disappointing to miss the Easter event, we are committed to *Tornado* visiting NVR this spring. We are pleased to announce the new dates for the visit of *Tornado* to the Nene Valley Railway from May 21-27."

The sold-out driver experiences will now take place from May 21-23, with the A1 then working public passenger services over the bank holiday weekend of May 25-27.

On May 24, the NVR Wagon Group will host its East Coast Freight Storm photographic charter, with the A1 at the head of the restored express freight rake. It will see the consist travel across the full line for photographic runpasts at several locations. The wagon group has recently been concentrating on reinstating the vacuum brakes throughout the entire rake of 18 wagons especially for the occasion, with the train prototypically representing such workings that could commonly be seen travelling along the east coast main line.

Limited places remain available, priced at £140 for the full day. To book, visit nvrwagons.co.uk/courses-and-experiences, and see nvr.org.uk for more information on the *Tornado* public services.

New general manager for Wansford

THE Nene Valley Railway has appointed Tracey Spring as its new general manager.

Tracey has carried out the duties on an interim basis since the previous general manager, Sarah Piggott, left the role.

A statement said: "The NVR board wish to congratulate Tracey on her appointment as general manager. She has shown over the past few months that she has the enthusiasm and expertise to successfully manage our railway and we

hope that all people, volunteers, and staff, will give her their utmost support."

Tracey said: "I am delighted to have been given this opportunity and I thank the board in its belief and support in my appointment. I have been at the railway for just over four years, 3½ years as deputy general manager and the last six months as interim general manager.

"I have witnessed first-hand how much the staff and volunteers give to the

railway and how they pull together to get through tough and strange times. I am looking forward to working with the team and taking us forward in a positive manner.

"Heritage sites must be able to show off and preserve the past, as well as adapt and transform to catch the eye of a continuously evolving customer base. I am excited, and I am dedicated to leading the railway in the way forward."



Nene Valley Railway general manager Tracey Spring. NVR



Richard Bromell (left), from Charterhouse, and Richard Lee (right), from Plankbridge, with Bournemouth tramcar 113, which remains safely in the dry. CHARTERHOUSE

Century-old tram for sale

A 100-year-old Bournemouth tramcar is to be sold at auction on April 3 and is expected to fetch between £3-4000.

Tramcar 113, which is believed to have run from Lansdowne to Southbourne, is being sold by auctioneer Charterhouse in Sherborne. Richard Bromell, of Charterhouse, said: "In nearly 40 years of working in auctioneering, this is certainly the first time I have been asked to sell a full-sized tramcar!"

After No. 113 was decommissioned, it ended up in garden nursery in Milton Abbas before moving to a local farm. Ten years ago, it was rescued by businessman Richard Lee, of Plankbridge, in Piddleshinton, to be used as an office.

"It seemed a great idea to use the tram car as an office as

it perfectly complements our shepherd hut manufacturing business," said Richard.

"While it has served us well over the past 10 years, it is now time to let the next custodian look after it."

In unrestored original condition, it retains features such as coloured ruby glass panels and painted signage.

Measuring 23 feet long by 7½ feet wide, it could also be used as a studio, be converted into additional accommodation for family or friends, be developed into an Airbnb business, or even possibly be restored back to its former glory by enthusiasts, said a Charterhouse statement.

More details about the tram and the auction can be found online at <https://charterhouse-antiques.com>

Appeal launched to bring Peter's Hibberd back to life

THE family of the late railway author photographer Peter Nicholson has launched an appeal to restore one of the locomotives in his collection.

Hibberd Planet 4wDM No.2201 of 1939, built for the Surbiton Sewage Works in Surrey, was bought by Peter from there in 1976. He moved it to Brockham Museum and then to the now-closed Gloddfa Ganol museum at Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1978, to the Somerset and Avon Railway in 1990, to the Vobster Light Railway in 1992, and then to the Devon Railway Centre in 1998, where it has been based ever since.

Peter died on October 30 last year, aged 75, as reported in issue 313.

His grandson, Josh Brinsford, said: "The locomotive has not worked for many years, but this is something I would really like to change. I would really like the locomotive to move to the Westonzoyland Light Railway, near Bridgwater, which will mean that we can finally start a major restoration for an eventual return to traffic.

"The amount we are hoping and needing to achieve will be £6000, which will pay for the locomotive's transportation from the Devon

Railway Centre to the Westonzoyland Light Railway, £2-£4000 for the wheels to be reprofiled, £500-£1000 for the engine work, which will include new hoses and an oil and radiator overhaul, £200-£300 for the brakes to be sorted and controls for the engine to be replaced, £75-£150 for the gearbox controls to be freed up, and finally an additional £500 in case of cost increases."

Josh also appealed for volunteers to help with the restoration at Westonzoyland.

Donations can be made online at <https://gofund.me/45e1357f>



Hibberd Planet 4wDM No.2201 of 1939 being shunted at the Devon Railway Centre at Bickleigh. JOHN BRINSFORD

Dartmouth railway seeks paddle steamer engineer!

THE Dartmouth Steam Railway & River Boat Company is recruiting what it says may be surely the most unique engineering career position in the UK!

The company is seeking an engineer for the award-winning steam-powered paddle steamer *PS Kingswear Castle*, which operates on the River Dart from Dartmouth. Built in 1924 on the Dart itself (its engines are even older, dating back to 1904, eight years before the sinking of the *Titanic*), it now operates on home waters once more and is a member of Britain's historic fleet, being officially listed as

of pre-eminent national importance as the last remaining coal-fired paddle steamer in operation in the UK today.

Applications are invited from fit and healthy individuals, preferably with a measure of experience with (coal) steam-powered engines and a desire to work in South Devon, which offers a magnificent coastal lifestyle.

Enquiries in the first instance are invited by email to enquiries@dsrrb.co.uk for details and a full job description. The successful applicant will be provided with full training on this unique vessel.



Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 1873 of 1937 Jessie running on the section of the Barry Tourist Railway adjacent to Harbour Way. JAKE DIDCOTE/BHR

Brief steam reprise at Barry

SINCE the Barry Tourist Railway formally ceased running services in 2022, when the rail depot it had been operating out of was taken over by Transport for Wales for servicing and storing its new trains, heritage traction has been notably absent in the resort.

On March 2, steam had a brief return when Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 1873 of 1937 *Jessie* commenced testing on the line following its overhaul at the Flour Mill Workshops

at Bream, in the Forest of Dean. The BTR has not currently been wound up and still retains running rights over some of the causeway, as well as a shed at Plymouth Road.

Following delivery to the BTR, the Hunslet commenced testing over the line. Reported to have performed 'as well as expected', *Jessie* is due to go back to the Blaenavon Heritage Railway in the coming weeks, ahead of a full return to service there.

Help save Goathland's Harry Potter access bridge

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway has launched a public SOS fundraising appeal to save an access bridge that featured in the hit movie *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Goathland station, the filming location of Hogsmeade station in the film, is accessed using Bridge 27A, which was built in 1935 in its current form. However, due to weather conditions and time, the steel girders that give strength to the structure of the bridge have deteriorated, making it unsafe for vehicles to cross.

Donations will allow the necessary repair work to begin, and when completed, visitors and volunteers will once again be able to safely access the station for parking and deliveries, and emergency services will be able to use the bridge too.

The NYMR's popular educational school visits will also be able to continue; last year, the line welcomed more than 1000 schoolchildren to learn about the importance of the railway.

Members of the public are being invited to donate £10 each towards the repairs.



The deteriorating girders beneath Bridge 27A, which provides access to Goathland station. MIKE BRAHAM/NYMR

NYMR director of civil engineering Tim Bruce said: "Our bridges are absolutely crucial for an operating railway. Some of our bridges are more than 150 years old and despite regular maintenance work to care for them and prolong their lives, the metalwork is starting to show its age.

"The campaign to repair Goathland's Bridge 27A is essential to ensure that future generations will be able to access Goathland station for many years to come. Donating just £10 gets us closer to our goal to rebuild the bridge, meaning we can reopen our magical station to the world."

To donate, visit www.nymr.co.uk/hogsmeade



Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-6-0ST No. 49 heads a demonstration freight at Causey, on the Tanfield Railway, on February 25. The line will operate freight trains on the last Sunday of the month for the next few months. HENRY W ELLIOTT



Fireman Simon Sparks prepares to depart from Loughborough Central on No. 92214 on February 23. GRAHAM NUTTALL



Prior to its withdrawal, No. 92214 enjoyed a full week of operation on half-term and weekend trains. It is seen passing Kinchley Lane with the 3pm Leicester North to Loughborough on February 24. GRAHAM NUTTALL

Sun-soaked farewell to an icon of the Great Central

By Martin Creese

A MUCH-LOVED member of the Great Central Railway fleet bowed out of traffic in February and is now set to wait several years before it steams again.

As a child I used to raid my late father's book collection. One of our favourite books was *Main Line Lament* by Colin Walker, a wonderful book charting the GWR through the BR era. One chapter looked at the Annesley to Woodford Runners, which Robert Riddles BR Standard 9F 2-10-0s came to dominate for nine years from 1956 until the traffic was moved away.

Colin wrote: "The sight of their 10-coupled driving wheels racing around and exhaust frothing above their smokeboxes before falling behind in a trail as long as their rattling bouncing trains was quite unforgettable".

More than 30 9Fs were allocated to Annesley for the runners, which saw coal from Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire pits for London and the

south of England and steel billets from Scunthorpe and Consett for South Wales. Loaded trains were pathed at 30mph and empties at 33mph, but the running was considerably quicker with engines working two round trips, sometimes three.

Modern-day

Fast-forward to February and the sound of a Riddles 9F on Great Central metals once again falls silent with the withdrawal of No. 92214. Built at Swindon in 1959 as one of the last batch of the class, its working life lasted just six years, most of its life in South Wales, although it was allocated to Bath Green Park in 1964.

Sold to Dai Woodham's Barry scrapyard, in December 1980 it became the 117th engine to be rescued and was initially based at Peak Rail's former Buxton base, returning to steam at the Midland Railway – Butterley in 2004. It has been resident at the GCR since 2014 and is now owned by the David Clarke Railway Trust.

With the current boiler certificate expiring, a farewell weekend was held on February 24/25, culminating with a last non-stop run from Leicester to Loughborough. One final steaming took place on February 26 for a photographic charter, the brainchild of GCR fireman and Tony's Trains of Rugby owner Anthony French and run through my 30742 Charters.

Running with the GCR mixed freight set, the sold-out day saw 35 photographers treated to some fabulous runpasts which allowed us to imagine, if only for a 1/250th of a second, that we were back in the early 1960s!

There is something different about a goods working on a double-track main line. Watching No. 92214 work through the loops at Swithland, with a long trail of exhaust hanging in the air and the rhythmic sound of short wheelbase wagons drumming over rail joints, you get a sense of what the GCR was like when the runners were in their prime – and that is the power of preservation, recreating

what seemed so ordinary at the time but has been missing from the railway scene for so long.

Weather show

What such send-offs can never control is the weather, but even that seemed to understand the occasion, providing cold temperatures and spells of glorious sunshine which culminated in double rainbows for the last runpasts past Kinchley Lane as the sun set (see centre spread, pages 54/55).

My thanks to the staff and volunteers of the GCR for a fabulous day.

A GCR statement said: "There are no plans to commence the overhaul on No. 92214 yet, and it will remain complete and on public display whenever possible."

"The 9F is likely to be out of traffic for a number of years while our engineering effort is focused on getting *Britannia Pacific* No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* and then the GCR O4 2-8-0 No. 63601 back in service."



No. 92214 passing the Rothley end of Swithland sidings during the February 26 photographic charter, the day before its boiler ticket expired. MARTIN CREESE



No. 92214 departs Rothley with the mixed goods on February 26. MARTIN CREESE

'Tractor' concludes line-up for KESR anniversary diesel gala comeback

By Owen Hayward

THE Kent & East Sussex Railway's first diesel gala in more than a decade has confirmed its full line-up with the addition of a Class 37 to the April 12-14 event roster – perhaps the largest diesel locomotive to ever grace the light railway.

Built by English Electric in 1961, No. 37714 began life as D6724 and initially worked out of March Depot. Its early days were spent on duty in the Eastern Region, and its first passenger service role came in Scotland in the mid-1990s.

After renumbering and relocations, including a stint in Spain, the locomotive was bought by the Heavy Tractor Group in 2017 and resides at the Great Central Railway, where it is currently joined by the first example of the class, D6700, on loan to the group from the National Railway Museum.

Despite its deceptively large appearance, the 'Tractors' have a relatively low axle loading which, save for rebuilt 37/7s and 37/9s, which are RA7, gave them route availability five classification, which straddles the GWR's blue and red RA classification scheme with a 4-6-0 7800 Manor (No. 7822 *Foxcote Manor*) and 4-4-0 City class (No. 3417 *City of Truro*) both RA blue and having appeared on the line during the heritage era.

Last one standing

The second of the visiting trio is Class 17 Clayton D8568, appearing courtesy of the Diesel Traction Group and Severn Valley Railway. The sole survivor of its class, the 'Claytons' were operated by BR for just a decade in Scotland and the North East, mainly hauling freight. D8568 was withdrawn from service in October 1971 but found service with two cement companies before being



The Heavy Tractor Group's Class 37 No. 37714 *Cardiff Canton* will headline the KESR's first diesel gala in 14 years this April when it visits the former Colonel Stephens railway. KESR

bought by the DTG in 1983. The final guest is Class 20 No. 20087, which is on loan to the KESR from Road and Rail Steam Services and arrived on the railway during 2023.

The guest fleet is being supplemented by the resident fleet of locomotives, with Class 14 0-6-0DH D9504 making its debut following a comprehensive overhaul that has lasted four years and Class 03 0-6-0DM D2023 also in operation.

The final rostered locomotive will be Ruston & Hornsby 0-4-0DM No. 423661, which was built in 1958 for Rowntree Mackintosh, York, where it was identified as *Rowntree No. 7* and donated to the KESR in 1987. Throughout the event it will be operating driver-for-a-tenner experiences at Tenterden Town station, which can be booked online in advance or, subject to availability, in person on the day.

An evening Beerex service will operate on April 12, top-and-tailed by No. 37714 and D8568, with the 'Tractor' leading the charge to Bodiam while the 'Teddy Bear' works

the return. Modelled on the KESR's popular Real Ale and Cider trains, this special service will offer an on-board selection of real ales. Food and entertainment will be available at Tenterden Town Station, with a band playing from 6pm. The Beerex train will depart at 7.30pm and arrive back at Tenterden at 10pm. Included in tickets for the Beerex train is live music at Tenterden, dinner, and a complimentary first pint.

Vintage transport

A vintage bus connection will run between KESR's Tenterden and Network Rail's Headcorn stations, allowing for those wishing to attend via public transport the easy opportunity to do so, with services to Headcorn served by trains departing the capital out of Charing Cross, Waterloo East and London Bridge, or from Folkestone and Ramsgate on the Kent coast.

→ Advance tickets are available with a discount offered against on the day fares; visit kesr.org.uk for more information and to book.

Blaenavon visitor for Mid-Suffolk season

THE Mid-Suffolk Light Railway's Easter Steam Up weekend will feature Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1219 of 1910 *Caledonia Works* visiting from Blaenavon's Heritage Railway as its duty locomotive for the coming season.

The locomotive, which was delivered new to Stewart & Lloyd Ltd at Clydedale Works in Mossend, near Motherwell, will be in operation on all of the line's open days this year and will stay at least until the Everything Goes day on September 1.

The March 31/April 1 event, the first big weekend of the line's 2024 season, will also feature the 1906-built Cockerill Steam Tram and the Heritage Railway Association Restoration Award-winning 1934-built Fowler 0-4-0DM *Shreddie*, the Shredded Wheat Factory shunter.

Visitors will also be able to see progress on the railway's Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST 1604 of 1928 and 1891-built LNER Y7 0-4-0T No. 985 resident in the restoration shed.

In traffic will be the line's Victorian four-wheel coaches, and the museum, souvenir shop, café and the Middy real ale bar will be open, with Easter Bunny hunts on offer for younger visitors.

Chinnor line prepares for first steam gala

THE Chinnor & Princess Risborough Railway is to hosts its own steam gala this autumn.

While diesel galas have been prominent in the railway's history, these have recently been rested, although they are promised to return in the near future.

While the railway currently has to rely on hired-in motive power to provide steam services, it is gearing up for a weekend of steam on September 20-22.

GWR 2-6-2T No. 4555 arrived at the railway in February from the Dartmouth Steam Railway for the 2024 season. It will be joined by two further as-yet unconfirmed visitors for the gala with all three expected to see equal use throughout.

West Somerset ex-BR shunter change hands

THE West Somerset Railway-based Diesel & Electric Preservation Group has bought Class 09 No. 09019 from JJP Holdings Ltd, with the shunter due to remain on the railway as it has since preserved in 2013.

The DEPG has been undertaking servicing and maintenance of the former Hither Green TMD shunter for several years, so it made sense that the group opted to take on full ownership.

The 09 will be offered to the railway with maintenance provided in a fully inclusive package.

Meanwhile, the future of BR class 08 D3937 (08769) on the Dean Forest Railway has been secured after Valley

Rail Preservation, a locomotive-owning group based on the Avon Valley Railway, acquired the shunter following the disbandment of Dean Forest Diesels late last year.

Future plans

Formerly known as *Gladys*, the 'Gronk' will continue to be based on the DFR following the signing of a deal between the two bodies, and as such the shunter will be seeing some serious investment over the coming months.

DFR chairman Adam Dickinson said: "We have signed a long-term contract with the new owner and the locomotive will remain based at the

DFR for the foreseeable future. It has joined its extensive shunter fleet, and we will benefit from the experience and knowledge this brings.

"We look forward to working with Valley Rail Preservation in the future."

The winding up of DFD has also seen Class 31 No. 31210 – which has yet to run in preservation – change hands.

On February 22, it was delivered to the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre at Ruddington on the Great Central Railway (Nottingham), where it was due to be on display over the joint 125th anniversary weekend event (for more details, see News, page 21).

Bid made to save world's oldest station for £500k

By Robin Jones

A £500,000 SOS appeal to save the world's oldest railway station has been launched by the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

The group is seeking to buy the derelict Heighington station building, which stands five miles north-west of Darlington, on the Tees Valley Line between Bishop Auckland and Saltburn, and carry out urgent work to stabilise it in time for the S&D's 200th anniversary celebrations next year.

As reported in issue 312, new research by the Friends and Historic England found that the building was completed in 1827 as Aycliffe Lane, now the mid-1830s as previously thought, leading to experts now believing that it is the oldest station in the world. Given Grade II listing in 1980, the recent research has now seen its status elevated to Grade II* by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It is therefore now in the top 8% of English Historic buildings and recently added to the Heritage At Risk Register.

The Friends hope that £400,000 can be raised through grant applications, with the remaining 20% of the necessary finance from donations from the general public and business.

Friends chairman Niall Hammond said the station is "one place that encapsulates why the S&DR is internationally important", adding: "It is where *Locomotion No. 1* was first



Heighington, the world's oldest railway station: Sedgfield MP Paul Howell said the building is in a "shocking state" and has offered the Friends of Stockton & Darlington Railway his full backing and support in its bid to save it. FSDR

placed on the tracks, where three boys became its first passengers, and the world's first railway station – the cobbles outside it may well be the world's first railway platform!" He also said that current condition of the station is a blot on the plans for the bicentenary celebrations, which are set to attract a worldwide audience.

Varied history

The buildings remained in their original use as accommodation for passengers and housing for railway workers until the station was downgraded in the 1970s to an unstaffed halt.

The buildings began to fall into disrepair. The station building was purchased and renovated back into an inn in 1984, when it operated as

an inn called Locomotion No. 1 until it closed in 2017. A previous effort to reopen was aborted after vandalism and incidents of criminal damage. Since, the building has remained empty despite several attempts by local authorities to save it and is at risk of once again falling into ruin.

Once purchased, the Friends will seek to restore the buildings to reflect their origins as an early station and Georgian-themed inn offering food and drink to visitors and residents, as well as a space for businesses and communities to meet.

The building is accessible by rail on the world's oldest operating main line, at the edge of the Aycliffe Business Park and a short distance from Heighington and Aycliffe villages, and roughly halfway between Darlington

and Shildon with their railway museums and connected by the new long-distance SDR walking route opening in 2025.

Chance to help

"The world's oldest railway station is of international heritage importance, and we want people from around the world help us save and make it accessible to all," said a Friends statement. "Help us to make it once again a place to welcome and serve travellers on the railway and tell the story of the SDR where modern railways began 200 years ago."

→ For details of the appeal and to donate, visit sdr1825.org.uk. Private or business sponsors seeking more information can email chair@sdr1825.org.uk

New shed for Wakes Colne collection

THE East Anglian Railway Museum has completed construction of a new exhibition building to allow it to protect more vehicles in its historic collection.

The building, which has been erected on a former orchard site purchased by the museum some years ago, tackles the problem of undercover storage, a widespread issue for heritage lines when it comes to ensuring the longevity of rolling stock and other valuable assets. Here, it cleverly takes advantage of a rise in gradient up the former goods yard at Chappel & Wakes Colne station with two 55-yard tracks entering the shed on the level from the lower south-end of the yard. Visitors will be able to enter further up the yard directly on to a walkway at platform height, running the length of the building between the two tracks.

The walkway will then ramp down to a 2700sqft exhibition annex for large, non-wheeled exhibits at ground level.

EARM project manager Allan Robinson said: "This new exhibition shed provides the museum with a first class, fully accessible area in which to display a selection of our most interesting vehicles."

"Although it will be a while before the building is fully ready for the public, the first three restored GER vehicles are already safely indoors."

These vehicles are GER four-wheel first-class No. 19, full brake No. 553, and 'Pooley' weighing van No. 960701.

The restoration of 1873-built two-compartment brake No. TB308 (the grounded body of which was last used as a chapel) is nearing completion and will join the restored vehicles once fitted with



Three Great Eastern Railway vehicles have already taken up undercover residence in the East Anglian Railway Museum's new display shed. A raised walkway between the two tracks shall be installed in time, allowing step-free access for all to see future displays within the building. EARM

new leaf springs.

The annex area already holds the body of a North London Railway brake coach (No. 70), as well as the only surviving section of a London

Tilbury & Southend Railway coach.

Further vehicles and exhibition displays are being prepared for the building's formal opening at a later date.



Over the February 10-18 half-term holiday, LMS Royal Scot 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* worked trains on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, substituting for BR Standard 7 No. 70000 *Britannia*, which was originally announced but saw cylinder repair work overrun. On Monday, February 12, the light of a setting sun catches *Royal Scot* as it passes through Green End, between Grosmont and Goathland. MAURICE BURNS

Right: Visiting from the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Peckett R2 0-4-0ST No. 1370 of 1915 *May* (right) ran alongside resident Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-4-0ST No. 7681 of 1951 *Agecroft* No. 7681/Bolton No. 1 on February 25 during the first of two successive 15th anniversary gala weekends at Whitwell & Reepham Railway, which also marked 65 years since the pre-Beeching closure of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway network. The event featured an intensive timetable with demonstration goods trains. JAMES KINDRED



New Statfold partnership sees a Warley model show revival planned this autumn

By Owen Hayward

IT may have withdrawn from its annual landmark exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham, but a new partnership with the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust Ltd will now see the Warley Model Railway Club continue putting on such shows at the Tamworth haven for smaller gauge steam locomotives.

In January, the club announced its annual November show, which had become renowned for including centrepiece displays of standard and narrow gauge locomotives and rolling stock, was to be stood down for the foreseeable future as organisers – some of who had been involved in the planning for nearly 30 years – wished to retire and there were insufficient replacements stepping forward in order to see it continue.

Now, the club has partnered with the team at Statfold Country Park to see a smaller-scale but no less

impressive show join the events calendar listing there on October 12/13.

The exhibition will welcome up to 30 model railway layouts spanning an array of scales and eras, along with a choice selection of quality retail trade stands and manufacturers. A revamped programme of modelling demonstrations is currently being formulated to reflect the varying emergences of techniques, technologies and demographics of the modern and diverse hobby.

Moving forward

Tickets will also include full access to the Statfold museum's collection of locomotives (the largest in the country) and rolling stock, along with unlimited rides on both the 2ft and 12½in gauge railways, with themed attractions around the site for entertaining younger visitors.

Warley exhibition manager Nigel Smith said: "This new and inspiring venture is not just the old Warley National Model Railway Show

reloaded. It's about the club and our associated charity moving forward within the dynamics of this ever-popular hobby.

"By joining forces with the people at Statfold, we can mitigate those daunting factors which resulted in the winding up of our NEC event and continue the club's endeavours and charitable aims to promote the benefits and merits of railway modelling to the wider public. All in all, this will make for a splendid and invigorating day out for established enthusiasts and family groups alike."

Statfold Country Park has ample on-site free parking but will also offer a free connecting bus service to and from Tamworth railway station and the town centre for those travelling by public transport. Catering services will also be available, situated at locations within the country park.

Further details will be available in due course via both the Statfold Country Park website, www.statfold.com, and the Warley MRC show website, thewarleyshow.co.uk

Joint GC gala event promises non-stop action

MORE details about the groundbreaking Great Central joint gala on March 16/17 to mark the 125th anniversary of the London Extension in 1899 have been released.

As highlighted in issue 315, for the first time in more than 50 years, the Great Central Railway will be reunified with Great Central Railway (Nottingham) for a major weekend of events

History will be made as the Leicestershire line is reunified once again with the GCR(N) at the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre in Ruddington, offering visitors a glimpse into the future when reunification will be permanent, an ongoing project and part of GCR's fundraising campaign.

For the event, the two halves will be joined by a specially-commissioned 125th anniversary rail replacement bus service using vintage Routemaster buses.

Footplate visits and more

All stations along both lines will be open, and there will be opportunities to visit the footplates of some of the steam and diesel locomotives at both lines. There will also be expert-led behind-the-scenes tours of the Loughborough locomotive sheds and exclusive access to some of the buildings to which access is usually restricted access.

Both Loughborough and Ruddington stations will be running their popular miniature ride-on trains; great fun for all the family. Visitors to Ruddington will also have the chance to drive a train on the model railway or visit the collection of heritage vehicles from the Nottingham Area Bus Society.

Steam trains will be making regular journeys between Loughborough and Leicester North, and refreshments will be available at every GCR and GCR(N) station.

'Perfect opportunity'

Day tickets allow full access to all attractions across both lines and include both the train travel and reunification bus service. For children aged three to 15, tickets cost just £1 (under-13s must be accompanied by an adult).

GCR's head of marketing and communications, Simon Bracewell, said: "Whether you've been to the GCR or the GCR(N) before or visiting us for the first time, this is the perfect opportunity to experience our historic railways in a way that has never been seen before!"

➔ For more information, visit www.gcrailway.co.uk/whatson20

More services for 2024 as Severn Valley Railway seeks income boost

By Robin Jones

THE Severn Valley Railway is to increase its passenger services from March 26 in a bid to boost its fortunes.

Having opened at the start of the February half-term with an off-peak timetable, in the run-up to Easter, the railway will have more steam- and diesel-hauled services, along with its Class 108 DMU which has recently returned to service following extensive repairs.

The DMU allows for a mid-morning first departure from Bridgnorth, a facility which was greatly missed in the 2023 season.

The railway will operate three timetables, A, B and C, designed to expand and contract the number of services in anticipation of lower or higher numbers of passengers. Timetable C, which will usually operate on high-season Saturdays, will, for example, feature three steam and one diesel-hauled service.

SVR's head of operations, Steve Wainwright, said: "Last year was all about survival. We were faced with huge uncertainty over passenger numbers, as well as spiralling costs, and we had to be extremely cautious with our timetables.

"As we approach our main running season in 2024, we can be a little more optimistic. Our expert timetabling team has taken all the factors into account, including the need to provide a great visitor experience, to keep costs under control, to fully man our trains, stations and signalboxes from our pool of volunteer staff, and to make best use of our small resident operational steam fleet."

Visitor experience manager Lewis Maddox added: "We are delighted with what the timetabling team has devised. Their plans allow for an innovative timetable within a realistic



LBSCR 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 leaves Kingscote with the 12.45pm from East Grinstead on the Bluebell Railway on February 10. It will appear in the Severn Valley's April 18-21 Spring Steam Gala, with Lambton 0-6-0T No. 29 from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and, subject to final testing, GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 Betton Grange (Headline News, page 6). NICK GILLIAM

budget which can be comfortably managed within the constraints of our fleet and pool of staff. Plus, we've built in the capacity to earn extra revenue from charter trains.

"It's going to allow for a fantastic day out for passengers, with plenty of choice of services, and on many days the chance to travel behind or encounter three different types of traction! And that's what a day at the SVR is all about – travelling back to the golden age of heritage rail and making unforgettable memories."

For more information on timetables and days out, visit svr.co.uk

Triple honours

The SVR took three top honours at the Heritage Railway Association's Annual Awards 2024 presentation evening at the Double Tree by Hilton Brighton Metropole

Hotel on February 10, and was highly commended in two further categories.

As reported last issue, the SVR carried off the Award for Diesel and Electric Locomotion for its series of events held last year in celebration of 50 years of diesel preservation.

This year's May 16-19 Spring Diesel Festival line-up will include both a Freightliner Class 59 and 70, in addition to the first-named guest, Locomotive Services Group's Class 37 No. 37409 *Loch Awe* in new ScotRail livery, as reported last issue.

SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "Securing one of Freightliner's Class 70s is a real coup. Very few have ever appeared at heritage railway galas, and our event offers the rare opportunity to travel behind one as a passenger. At an impressive 3690hp, it's quite a bit

of kit, and we think it's going to be a big draw."

At the ceremony, Jonathan received the Railway Magazine Preservationist of the Year Award, both for his work as a volunteer with the Class 50 Alliance and for his role at the helm at the SVR over the past year. The SVR-based Class 50 Alliance and the Fifty Fund won the Rail Express Modern Traction Award, and the Class 50 Alliance was also highly commended in the HRA Team of the Year category.

The SVR was also highly commended for its restoration of LMS corridor composite No. 24617, as reported in issue 315, in the Morgan Award for Rolling Stock Preservation category.

A talented line

SVR chairman Chris Walton said: "Any one of these awards and commendations would by itself be cause for celebration; that the SVR and its associated groups and people scooped this many in a single evening is inspiring. It shows the breadth of the SVR's talents and the depth of its determination to continue as a leading member of the UK heritage sector."

HRA chief executive Steve Oates said: "That the SVR has so many new additions to their trophy cabinet is testimony to the hard work and dedication of everyone there. I must give huge congratulations to Gus and the entire team at the Severn Valley for what they've achieved. I look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the next 12 months, and perhaps even welcoming them back on stage at our next awards event."



The SVR team presented with the Heritage Railway Association 2024 Award for Diesel and Electric Locomotion. JACK BOSKETT/HRA



Freightliner Class 70 No. 70007 passes Northampton with a Felixstowe North to Trafford working on May 15, 2018. A class member will appear at the Severn Valley Railway's Spring Diesel Festival on May 16-19. MANA TRANSPORT PHOTOGRAPHY/CREATIVE COMMONS

LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45960 *Leander* will bow out of service this May for overhaul, having visited the Lakeside & Haverthwaite, Mid-Hants and Epping Ongar railways on a farewell tour. ROBERT BATTY



Capital conclusion for Jubilee's springtime farewell tour

By Owen Hayward

A STALWART of the main line scene throughout the last decade, Chris Beet's LMS Jubilee No. 45960 *Leander* will bow out of service in May as it falls due for overhaul – with a farewell tour of heritage railway visits announced set to conclude with a visit to the outskirts of London.

Its final months will commence with its appearance at the East Lancashire Railway for the Legends of Steam event on March 15-17, at which it is booked to appear alongside LNER A4 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* and BR Standard Class 7 No. 70000 *Britannia*.

Previously billed as a steam gala to also feature members of the home fleet to allow for maximum seat availability on services behind the three iconic locomotives, they will instead be supplemented by a feeder DMU service shuttling between Bury and Ramsbottom.

Meeting the family

Leander will work solo for the majority of the three days, with a double-headed service with *Britannia* timetabled for the morning of March 17, commencing at Bury Bolton Street at 9.30am and running to Rawtenstall. It will then bank the return working to Bury before detaching and resuming solo duty.

Following this, No. 45960 will then head to the Lake District for a week

which will see it united with the Beet family's Ivatt 2MT No. 46441 for the first time at the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway. The 2MT was a regular sight on the routes around Lake Windermere, running from Morecambe to Lakeside via Ulverston; Jubilees also operated on the line and the appearance of *Leander* will make it the first of its class to do so since the 1960s.

Leander will first star in a sold-out photographic charter on March 22, before taking on the LHR's first daily running services on March 23/24. There are also plans to undertake a private steaming of both the Beet family's locomotives together at some point in the week beforehand, should there be sufficient time to do so.

Leander will next head south to Hampshire, where it shall then headline the Mid-Hants Railway's April 26-28 steam gala, appearing alongside Bulleid light Pacific No. 34070 *Manston*, which has been on loan to the Watercress line since December.

Full details were still to be confirmed, but it was expected that Urie S15 No. 506 and LMS Ivatt 2-6-2T No. 41312 will also be in service on passenger and goods workings, while Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1788 *Kilmersdon* will be back from its holiday to Midsomer Norton and employed on short driver experience courses within Ropley yard once more.

The Jubilee's final stop on its farewell tour is the Epping Ongar Railway, which has rescheduled its own steam gala to avoid clashing with the Mid-Hants event and cater for the Jubilee's availability as a result.

A festival of steam will now take place over three consecutive weekends, with that of April 27/28 being a Western Weekend starring previously announced guest locomotive Saint class No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* running alongside resident Hall class No. 4953 *Pitchford Hall*.

Coincidentally, the construction of No. 2999 utilised many parts from one of No. 4953's classmates; No. 4942 *Maindy Hall* supplied many of its parts for the new-build project, including boiler, frames and motion, after the locomotive was bought by the Great Western Society specifically for the project in 1974.

Nos. 2999 and 4953 will work trains solo, double-headed and top-and-tailed each day, providing ample opportunities to enjoy the sounds of them hard at work through the Essex countryside.

The first May bank holiday weekend will then see two WR 4-6-0s be joined by *Leander*, along with Bill Parker's GWR small prairie No. L150 (5521) and EOR's resident industrial Hawthorn Leslie 0-6-0ST No. 3437 *Isabel*, for a weekend of pure steam action across the 6 ½-mile former London Underground Central Line route.

With gradients as steep as 1-in-65, the locomotives will be put through their paces on an intensive timetable across all three days.

Although there is very limited parking available, vintage bus connections to National Rail's Shenfield and LU's Epping stations will make it easily accessible and allow for real ales to be enjoyed at the on-board bars right through into the evenings.

Final fling

The final weekend of the festival will take place on May 11/12, billed as *Leander's* Last Hurrah, which will see No. 45960 out in service for the final time before its current boiler certification expires and its final fire is dropped.

The Jubilee will take pride of place over the weekend on services while also offering a rare opportunity for those wishing to take a turn at the controls on the Saturday.

EOR general manager George Saville said: "We are all immensely proud at the Epping Ongar Railway to be given the honour of being the last heritage railway that this icon of steam will operate at before it is withdrawn from service for its major 10-year overhaul.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to have this classic steam locomotive run between Ongar and Epping".

Fire-damaged funicular will not reopen in time for Easter holiday break

SALTBURN Cliff Tramway will not reopen until after Easter, having sustained extensive damage during a fire on January 15, as reported last issue.

As a result of an electrical fault, the Grade II-listed structure

suffered serious internal damage to the building and its operating equipment, in particular the electrical pump room.

The tramway, which opened in 1884, was closed for winter maintenance at the time.

Coun Carrie Richardson, cabinet member for climate and culture at Redcar and Cleveland Council, said: "A full rewiring will be needed, along with careful restoration of this grade-listed structure. Our teams are continuing to work

hard on a plan to make sure the tramway reopens as soon as possible.

"However, this is likely to take some time and, although we can't put a date on reopening at this time, it will not be this Easter."

Grand Easter weekend opening for Northampton & Lamport extension

By Robin Jones

FOLLOWING 16 years of hard graft, the grand opening ceremony of the Northampton & Lamport Railway's southern extension and new station at Boughton is to be held on Saturday, March 30.

Completing the extension has involved repairing a seven-arch low viaduct, restoring a LNWR Victorian signalbox to full working order, tracklaying track, erecting semaphore signalling and building a new station platform.

The railway, which has more than 300 members, is run entirely by volunteers. It attracts about 10,000 visitors a year, despite operating only on Sundays and some Saturdays and Bank Holidays, and the opening of the extension will hopefully see that figure grow.

The line occupies a section of the Northampton to Market Harborough route that was finally closed by BR on August 16, 1981, the intermediate stations on the route having been closed for many years. Three years later, a revivalist group was formed by Michael William Papworth, of Northampton, with the intention of reopening a section as a heritage line.

Following the granting of a Light Railway Order, the line carried its first fare-paying passengers in November 1995, with the official grand opening taking place on March 31, 1996.

Up to now, services have run over the 1½-mile section from Pitsford & Brampton station. However, in 2007, work began on a half-mile southern extension to a run-round loop at the former Boughton Crossing on the A5199, with the first panels of track laid south of Bridge 11.

Support

The signalbox is from Betley Road, near Crewe. It was preserved during 2005 and, following restoration, was re-erected at Boughton in spring 2008. It dates from 1875 and is the earliest design built by the LNWR.

The extension has been supported by public donations and the former Daventry District Council. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (LEADER) provided finances to cover the cost of purchasing materials for the refurbishment of Bridge 11 and the construction of a new station platform at Boughton. Work on the platform began in 2019, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic was not



The new Boughton station looking north in February. DAN CALLIS/NLR

completed until early 2023. Work on Bridge 11 commenced in 2019 with the installation of a new waterproof deck. Repairs to delaminated brickwork were undertaken 2021. Brickwork stitching was undertaken in the summer of 2023 and final repointing completed last autumn.

The project has been completed by a small band of volunteers working mainly on Sundays, with normally between six and eight people attending each work party.

When first open, the new station will have booking office and waiting room facilities provided in a Mk.3 coach stabled in the bay platform. Temporary toilet facilities have been

provided thanks to a donation from a supporter.

Future plans

The long-term ambition is to build a permanent station building at Boughton. It would likely be a modest brick building, possibly similar to the original LNWR buildings at Davenport in Greater Manchester.

The railway has no designated parking at Boughton. However, there is a public car park serving the Brampton Valley Way around the corner, while Pitsford & Brampton will remain the railway's main station and hub.

The morning opening ceremony is a closed event for invited guests only, which includes a passenger train and a demonstration freight. The railway will open to the general public at 11.45am.

The first public train will depart Pitsford & Brampton at noon with further trains every hour, on the hour, until 3pm. Trains will depart Boughton on the half-hour, while demonstration freights will operate inbetween passenger trains throughout the day.

→ For more information, visit www.nlr.org.uk



The future Boughton station site in 2006, prior to work starting. GORDON TITMUSS



The Boughton running-in board. DAN CALLIS/NLR

Plans for UK's first heritage-era working wooden wagonway take shape

A SCHEME has been launched to build a working replica of Scotland's oldest railway, the Tranent to Cockenzie Waggonway, which dates from 1722.

The 1722 Waggonway Project, a voluntary unincorporated association, established in 2017, has been working to excavate the remains of the waggonway and the associated salt pans, and revive salt-making in Cockenzie. It has also opened its own heritage centre.

The project team now wants to use the information gained from its archaeological digs to build a working wooden wagonway in its original format, using traditional

techniques and materials. It also wants to install a replica horse gin and 18th-century pit headgear at one end of the line, with a coalfauld with unloading tippers at the other end. Its plans also include a full-sized 18th-century working salt pan house.

The group hopes to recruit residents, school pupils, students and military veterans as volunteers to help create the replica line, while providing educational opportunities and skills-based training. It aims to complete the project in the next five years.

A group statement said: "There are currently no working wooden

waggonways or 18th century-style salt pan houses in the UK and this will be a significant living history heritage asset."

Paul McLennan, Member of Scottish Parliament for East Lothian, said: "This ambitious project aims to rebuild a working wooden waggonway, exactly as it was constructed 300 years ago, by upskilling local people throughout the construction process and beyond.

"Once completed, the project will complement the wider heritage offer of Cockenzie, Port Seton and Prestonpans by providing a new insight to industrial past of this

corner of East Lothian. Such an attraction will bring new tourists to the area and will support culture and heritage for the county.

"I give my full support and look forward to seeing the project develop."

Fundraising has begun for the first phase, including the materials, design, marketing, planning, project costs and more at a cost of about £100,000. Constructing the waggonway and an initial fleet of three wagons is estimated to itself cost about £70,000.

→ A crowdfunding page has been launched at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/waggonway



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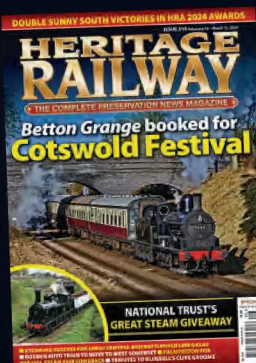
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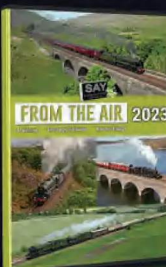
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Cirencester Town station building is to receive vital repairs. CDC

Repairs are given the green light at Cirencester Town station building

SIXTY years after it saw its last passenger train, Isambard Kingdom Brunel-designed and Grade II-listed Cirencester Town station is to benefit from £158,000 worth of vital repairs by its owner, Cotswold District Council.

The council's cabinet authorised the expenditure on the landmark, which has stood vacant for several years, in response to a survey where engineers identified structural instability in the west wall adjacent to the old platform.

The wall was identified as structurally unstable, due partially to extensive rot in structural timbers.

The necessary remedial work involves rebuilding the brick and timber wall, along with associated works to the parapet and guttering above it and the abutting walls. To address the immediate concern, structural scaffolding has been erected to support the wall ahead of the repair works.

The council had initially collaborated with New Brewery Arts on a renovation proposal for the station, however, with New Brewery Arts deciding not to proceed, the council is now exploring alternative strategies to ensure that the site contribute to the town centre's cultural and historical significance.

Coun Lisa Spivey, cabinet member for communities and public safety, said: "This investment underscores our commitment to preserving the Old Station, while we look at all options to protect these buildings for future generations and bring them back into use."

"Unique buildings like this are often a challenge as they come with high price tags for maintenance. Also, the Old Station was designed for a specific purpose, which brings difficulty in adapting it for use in other ways."

Opened by the Cheltenham and Great Western Union Railway on May 31, 1941, the station closed to passengers on April 6, 1964, and was given Grade II listing status on July 23, 1971.

It was reported to be in a poor internal condition in 2016, having been empty since 2012.

Prewar EMU is sent for partial scrapping

By Owen Hayward

THE type first appeared in 1938 when introduced by the LMS, subsequently surviving the Second World War Two, the Beeching Axe, and the cutters' torch – but time has sadly caught up with Class 503 4SUB EMU No. 4732, as its owning charity has decided that, facing an array of varying circumstances, the full three-car consist is no longer a viable project.

The Heritage Electric Train Trust trustees made the difficult decision to send two of its cars for scrap and focus preservation efforts on just one vehicle in order to improve its chances of success.

Built by Metropolitan Cammell and the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Company for use on newly electrified lines out of Liverpool, the type could be seen across the Wirral and Mersey lines.

Grouping pioneer

The original LMS batch was first classed as AM3; 19 were built as part of the first lot, before BR built a second batch of 24 in 1956. The differences were almost non-existent, with passenger door buttons on the bodysides added to the BR version. The first batch was considered a highly advanced design, with air-operated sliding doors controlled by the guard, replacing the conventional slam-door design.

Withdrawals began in 1980, and the final unit finished service on March 29, 1985. A farewell tour for the class then ran on April 13.

One unit was earmarked for preservation. Formed of car Nos. 28690, 29720 and 29289, it was the last of the original fleet built in 1938 to have entered service and was initially kept in operational condition, running special trips along the Merseyrail network until 1988. Later sold, two cars moved to the now-closed Steamport museum in Southport.



In 1996, these then moved to the site of the Coventry Electric Railway Museum before the third was acquired from Birkenhead, returning the unit to its original three-car set-up. As such, it is currently just one of only two prewar main line EMUs still in its original formation, with the National Railway Museum's SR Class 401 2BIL being the only other such example. However, this claim will shortly be consigned to history when two of the three Class 503 cars are scrapped.

Having moved to the Locomotive Storage Facility warehouse in Margate in 2017, a new home had to be found as the current venue is set to open as the One:One Museum, and the unit's current condition meant it could not remain there for display.

A HETT statement said: "HETT has taken the decision not to pursue with the restoration of its three-car Class 503 Wirral EMU and will be retaining only the driving motor brake second car as a future project; that car will be moving to an alternative storage site soon. Both the driving trailer and centre trailer cars are to be disposed of."

"This decision by the trustees has not been taken lightly and is based on sound reasoning of the realistic position this unit now finds itself in and what prospects present themselves for the vehicle's future."

"There is no prospect of the unit ever running again under its own

Time is being called on two-thirds of this Grouping era first-generation EMU, which is currently stored at Margate. Only one driving end will be retained by the Heritage Electric Traction Trust due to its condition and insufficient support. HETT

power. The infrastructure that would permit this does not exist and the unit will never be of the standard required for main line running. The absence of any spare parts makes this prohibitively expensive.

Low on support

"The support needed to fund the continued existence of the unit has failed to materialise to a significant level and current support will only fund the monthly cost of very basic storage of one coach."

"The trailer cars are in very poor condition and would require extensive renovation to be brought up to display standard. HETT feels the display of a single vehicle in the future will offer the same interpretation value as a full unit and that the considerable reduction in associated costs will make that a more viable option over the next decade."

By March 5, all three vehicles had been moved to Cockshute sidings – the final location that all three were to be seen together. The two destined for scrap were being stripped of recoverable components, but HETT announced that the cab of the driving trailer being cut up was to be donated to The Cab Yard and would join the extensive collection held at the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway. The final vehicle was due to move on to a new, unconfirmed home at some point in the near future.

'Thumpers' are stripped for spares and scrapping

THE Swindon & Cricklade Railway has sent its Class 205 DEMU 'Thumper' unit for scrap, with its remaining Class 207 driving trailer also set to depart under new ownership.

Recognising their deteriorating condition and the limited resources available to work on the vehicles, the heritage line opted to scrap the Class 205s as it was unlikely they would ever be completed; both trailers needed a substantial amount

of interior and body repairs, having been exposed to the elements for numerous years. Their demise, however, is not without a silver lining, as a number of spares were recovered for other surviving examples of the class, including the Mid-Hants Railway's own unit, No. 1125. The first of the vehicles departed the railway on February 9.

Meanwhile, motor brake standard open No. 60901 from Class 207 unit

No. 1302 has been sold and will depart for a new home.

Once paired with motor brake second No. 60138, the unit was torched in an arson attack May 20, 2016, with the latter trailer damaged beyond repair and subsequently scrapped.

The surviving vehicle was cosmetically restored but the project was pushed back, and as such it was felt that disposal was the best option.



LMS 'Black Five' No. 44806 passes Abbot's House Farm with a North Yorkshire Moors Railway dining service on February 18. ALAN WEAVER

Membership drive to bring Severn Valley's ex-Iranian railway's 8F locomotive back to steam

By Robin Jones

THE Stanier 8F Locomotive Society, the owner of Severn Valley Railway-based 2-8-0 No. 48773, is aiming to recruit new members to take an active part in the ongoing story of a uniquely well-travelled locomotive with a glorious past in both war and peace.

It was built by the North British Locomotive Co in Glasgow in 1940 as part of a War Department order for use in France, for which it was numbered WD 307. That country fell to Germany before the 8F could be exported, so it was loaned back to the LMS and renumbered 8233.

Subsequently sent to Iran as Iranian State Railways No. 41.109, double-heading 700-ton supply trains intended for the Soviet Union, on August 19, 1942, it was famously derailed after colliding with a camel. In 1944, it was converted to oil-burning and two years later was sent to the British Army's Middle East Forces in Egypt where, as No. WD 70307, it worked in the Suez Canal zone. For a while, the locomotive was loaned to Egyptian State Railways but was withdrawn by 1948, needing a new firebox. Thankfully not scrapped,

it was repatriated to the UK and overhauled at Derby between 1952 and 1954, and it became No. WD 500 on the Longmoor Military Railway.

Bought by BR in 1957, and later twice withdrawn for scrapping, it survived each time, finally ending its service in August 1968, based at Rose Grove.

It participated in several end-of-steam railtours, including the Locomotive Club of Great Britain's 'Farewell to Steam' on August 4, 1968, as well as two organised by the Manchester Rail Travel Society in conjunction with the nascent SVR, where it arrived on September 30 that year after being bought direct from BR.

The locomotive has achieved the greatest mileage in preservation of any of the SVR's locomotives, logging 151,805 miles. On September 27, 1986, a service took place at Highley to dedicate No. 48773 as a memorial to British military railway personnel who lost their lives on active service during the Second World War, for which it carries a plaque.

It last ran in traffic on January 13, 2008, and, cosmetically restored, it was displayed in the Engine House at Highley.



On August 4, 1968, as reported in issue 254, No. 48773 was displayed at Kidderminster Town station during the Last Days of Steam evening, marking half a century since the end of timetabled steam on BR. ROBIN JONES

The society aims to return No. 48773 to steam but first must increase its active membership, especially in the younger adult age group.

No. 48773 is set to be involved in Meet the Engine events in the Engine House on April 6/7 and 20/21 and May 4/5.

The footplate will be open to visitors without charge, and they will have the

opportunity to meet existing society members who will be able to recount more of its proud history.

Discounted membership fees will be available to visitors on the day, and junior membership fees are always available to applicants up to 25 years old.

For more information, visit www.8fsociety.co.uk

Moonlit Severn Valley sell-out steam photographic nights

Words and pictures by John Titlow

THE Severn Valley Railway entered into organising diesel night photography events at its Kidderminster diesel depot last year – and they sold out immediately. Now, similar steam sessions have proved also to be a soaraway success.

Over the late evenings of February 23/24, steam took over Bewdley station, where GWR 4-6-0 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* and pannier No. 7714 were posed in various positions around the Great Western station, recreating scenes of yesteryear.

The first steam event was advertised on the SVR website – and sold out instantly! Accordingly, a relief was added the following night. Admission was limited to 25 people to enable a comfortable evening of photography and cost £60 for the three-hour session.

Before anyone was allowed onto the platforms, a safety briefing was given by SVR Company Ltd director Martin Creese to explain the dos and don'ts, which everyone adhered to.

Lineside access was not permitted at the station, and people were advised to wear appropriate footwear rather than loose-fitting shoes.

Martin, the organiser of 30742 Charters, brought along the lighting to illuminate the event, and it worked extremely well.

Multiple views

No. 7812 was placed in Platform 3 on an appropriate No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*, where it sat for the majority of the time, and No. 7714 was attached to the goods, then shunted onto Bewdley North Viaduct alongside the signalbox. Plenty of time was given for everyone to move around and cover many angles.

Once everyone was happy, the pannier tank and its goods consist was moved forward towards Platform 2, just beyond the ornate footbridge for more shots, enabling a recreation of No. 7714 passing No. 7812 sitting in Platform 3. Again, plenty of time was allowed for people to take photographs from either side, giving a good variation of angles.

One minor issue was shooting from the footbridge. When you walked over it, the boards moved slightly, hence moving your tripod and creating a blurred image. People were aware of this and kept still when taking time exposures.

Towards the end of the shoot, No. 7714 was run to the south end of the station and No. 7812 backed out beyond the bracket signal that controls Bewdley Station from the south, giving a completely different viewpoint from inside the fence in the yard.

Once all train movements had stopped, the barrow crossing, which is used for disabled access to Platforms 2 and 3, was utilised for additional shots under very strict control. Again, all participants kept within the set boundaries.

Thankfully, the weather throughout the event was very kind to the participants, with no rain – though wet platforms can add a character all of their own. There was a full moon, providing extra light in the sky and giving it a slightly blue colour.

The majority of participants did not use flash, which could have caused problems, especially with long exposures, and tripods were the order of the evening, which worked considerably better under the circumstances.

Thanks to volunteers

All station staff, crews, and guards were volunteers and did an excellent job entering into the spirit of the occasion.

The start time was 6.30pm and it was supposed to finish at 9.30pm; time was extended, enabling more shots to be taken. There was no pressure to hurry from the crews despite that after the photographers had left, the locomotives had to be disposed of.

What made this event viable was that both locomotives had been in service either side of the separate daytime event, running footplate experience courses (see pages 40/41), so did not need to be steamed specially – a very wise decision economically.

Bewdley night shoot under a full moon, with GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* and its carriages in platform 3.





Above: The crews of *Erlestoke Manor* take a momentary breather during the night shoot.

Left: *Erlestoke Manor* is posed 'getting set' to pass the Bewdley South signals with its rake of seven maroon Mk. 1 coaches.

Visitor engagement manager Lewis Maddox said: "I started photographing the SVR back when I was aged 14, and I have had my camera in hand ever since to capture our amazing railway in every season and every type of weather. Once you're bitten by the snapping bug, it's hard to shake off!"

"With this in mind, daytime photographic charters were reintroduced last year and we've now successfully run three additional night shoots to showcase our unrivalled fleet of locomotives and rolling stock.

"It's important for the SVR to use our assets to create moments from yesteryear that can't be achieved during a normal operating day; Nos. 7812 and 7714 at Bewdley station with appropriate stock is preservation perfection, and this shows that the SVR recognises the importance of an interesting programme of enthusiast events (not just galas!) and how we can reap the rewards.

Future opportunities

"We are looking to expand our programme of photoshoots, hopefully with one or two utilising both Arley and Bewdley. We are always looking at ways to increase revenue; having locomotives out



Essential Great Western by moonlight: A pannier tank passes a passenger train at Bewdley in platform 3.

during the day on public service or footplate experience and then using them in the evening while 'hot' makes absolute sense."

The buffet was open for food and hot or cold drinks, and a vintage bus was positioned in front of the station

to add to the atmosphere. Bewdley lends itself for night shoots, being typically Great Western and having three platforms, and there is plenty of opportunities for cameos from different angles.

The success of these two evenings

will pave the way for more in the future. Watch the SVR website for future night shoots, but book quickly – they sell out instantly, and spaces are strictly limited to 25 people.

➔ For further details when available, visit <https://svr.co.uk/all-events/>



GWR 0-6-OPT No. 7714 at Bewdley North signalbox with its goods rake.



Erlestoke Manor and its train at rest in platform 1 at Bewdley.

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ROBIN JONES, EDITOR



A community weekend was held on February 17/18 at the Swanage Railway, during which the Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum was also operating. The driver of the museum's Ruston & Hornsby locomotive No. 283871 is seen observing LSWR T3 No. 563's arrival at Norden, with the ruins of Corfe Castle beyond. ANDREW PM WRIGHT

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T3 award winners now plan to commence T9 overhaul

By Robin Jones

A 'DREAM' combination of LSWR T3 and T9 4-4-0 in regular service is the new aim of the award-winning 563 Locomotive Group at Swanage Railway Trust.

As reported last issue, the group, together with the Swanage Railway, carried off the Heritage Railway Association Chairman's Special Award 2024 at the presentation evening at the Double Tree by Hilton Metropole Hotel in Brighton on February 10 for the restoration of William Adams T3 No. 563.

The T3 was donated to the Swanage Railway Trust by the National Railway Museum in 2017 and began a £650,000 six-year restoration (almost entirely covered by donations), with work on the carried out by specialist contractors at the Flour Mill workshops at Bream in the Forest of Dean, as well as at the Swanage Railway's Herston engineering works.

On October 7, church bells rang out in Swanage as No. 563, resplendent in its new lined-out 1890s Drummond passenger green livery, hauled its first passenger train since 1945, as highlighted in issue 312. The locomotive was withdrawn by the Southern Railway after running more than 1.5 million miles, before being used to help celebrate the centenary of Waterloo station in 1948.

Thanks for support

Group chairman Nathan Au, a volunteer driver on the railway, said: "We are also very grateful to everyone who has been involved with the T3's restoration for their hard work and commitment, as well as to our supporters for their donations,



LSWR dream team: The out-of-ticket T9 No. 30120 alongside award-winning T3 No. 563 at Swanage station during January's Winter Warm Up event. NATHAN AU/563LG

contributions, and faith in the project that turned a non-working exhibit into a fully working steam locomotive from the late Victorian era.

"It was a thrill to see the T3 steam for the first time and drive the locomotive when it hauled its first passenger trains since 1945 – experiencing what it was like to be a Victorian engineman."

Trust chairman Frank Roberts, a Swanage volunteer of 40 years, said: "I would like to thank the NRM for its faith in donating the T3 to the Swanage Railway Trust so the

Victorian locomotive could be fully restored for the public to enjoy it hauling passenger trains for the first time since 1945.

"Had it not been for the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and then the celebrations marking the centenary of London's Waterloo station, No. 563 – the last of the T3s – would have been cut up for scrap metal.

Living history

"The T3 is a time machine, a living and breathing machine when glamorous railways ruled supreme with their brightly painted and highly polished steam locomotives.

"When No. 563 was born, the motor car was a curiosity and the first aeroplane had yet to fly. Railways powered by steam dominated the movement of people and freight.

"By the time the T3 was retired after the Second World War, the transport landscape had changed forever; the dawn of mass motoring was on the horizon and aircraft were crossing the world."

Also based at Swanage is T9 'Greyhound' No. 30120, which is owned by the NRM, but which has not run since September 2020, when its boiler certificate expired.

Its previous heavy overhaul saw the Flour Mill carry out repairs to the cylinder block before it returned to steam in August 2010, and the Bream

experts could well be involved in its next overhaul.

A 563 Group statement said: "No. 30120 – or 120, as we shall generally refer to it from now on – is now very much on the 'front burner' so far as the 563 Locomotive Group is concerned.

"We are now at the stage of crossing the Ts and dotting the Is with the NRM and expect to make an announcement very shortly.

"As you may appreciate, 120 is a national asset – it is public property – and this dictates that all those who care for it as owner and custodian are clear about their respective responsibilities. We take these very seriously, as we are keen to ensure that 120 becomes part of the core Swanage steam fleet.

No. 563 will be used on selected days throughout the 2024 season, including during the Victorian Weekend taking place on March 22-24, when it will be joined by SECR O1 0-6-0 No. 65 visiting from the Bluebell Railway.

Both will run alongside U 2-6-0 No. 31806 and rebuilt West Country 4-6-2 No. 34028 *Eddystone* in a busy timetable across all three days.

→ The Swanage Railway has also just won the Business of the Year Award from The Total Guide to Tourism in the Purbeck Business Awards for its contribution to tourism in the Isle of Purbeck.



Members of the 563 Locomotive Group at Swanage Railway Trust receive the Heritage Railway Association Chairman's Special Award on February 10.

JACK BOSKETT/HRA

Poppy Line to mark 60th closure anniversary

THE North Norfolk Railway is to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the closure of its route with special steam and diesel services on April 6/7.

It was on April 6, 1964, that BR closed the line from Melton Constable to Sheringham.

When the majority of the rest of former Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway network was closed in 1959, the section from Melton Constable to Sheringham survived, with modern diesel railcars providing the service.

Despite these being more economical to run than steam trains, passenger numbers continued to fall, and the occasional goods trains contributed very little revenue. When the Beeching Report was published

in 1963, the line was one of those that faced the axe. By the time the final services ran on, enthusiasts had begun to try to reopen a portion of the old M&GN, eventually saving the present-day heritage railway from Sheringham to Holt.

Special timetable

The anniversary weekend has been designed to give visitors the chance to experience trains similar to those that ran just prior to closure and will recall some of the earliest activities of the revivalists. The special timetable will feature a railcar made up of Class 104 and 101 vehicles dating from the 1950s, both types having been regular performers in East Anglia prior to preservation and very similar to the trains which ran in the years

immediately prior to the closure of the line.

Visitors will also be able to follow a special trail throughout the weekend, exploring the last six decades through six important objects located across the line.

Class 31 D5631, which was built in 1961 and was once based at Norwich working goods trains throughout East Anglia, including rare trips to Melton Constable and possibly Sheringham, will be in service. It was also used to run the occasional passenger train, sometimes deputising for steam engines which by the 1960s were in the twilight of their careers.

Other Class 31s worked over the line in the early 1960s, and D5631 will head both passenger and goods

trains each day, recreating the Class 31s' duties.

Steam on show

Two steam locomotives will also be in action, including GERY14 0-6-0 No. 564, which was built at Stratford in 1912 and spent most of its working life in East Anglia prior to withdrawal from in 1962 and purchase by the M&GN Society. The locomotive was towed to Sheringham in 1967 in the same train as the unique Quad-Art train of teak-bodied carriages, which are 100 years old this year and will be paired with No. 564 for this event.

Full details and timetables can be found at www.nnrailway.co.uk/opening-dates/ and passengers booking online in advance receive a generous discount.



Sheringham station shortly before the line closed in 1964. NNR COLLECTION



Class 31 D5631 enters the Kelling Cutting incline. STEVE ALLEN/NNR

Back to the 1960s for Llangollen's gala

By Owen Hayward

FURTHER details of the Llangollen Railway's April 12-14 1960s branch line gala have been revealed.

Up to four locomotives will be in steam, with recently overhauled WR 0-6-0PT No. 7754 formally rededicated at the start of the event as it officially re-enters traffic following a few brief appearances on Santa specials in December.

Also set to return to service is GWR 2-8-0 No. 3802, which has been undergoing a thorough bottom end overhaul during the last two years. During February, several volunteer working parties have seen the heavy freight locomotive start to be reassembled, with the BR unlined black livery being reapplied, giving the 2884 class locomotive a fresh shine in readiness for its comeback.

Following its failure during the opening weekend of the Heritage Railway Association Infrastructure Award 2024 winning Corwen station last June, a new axle crown brass

bearing has been produced in-house by volunteer machinists for Kitson 0-6-0ST No. 5459 *Austin No. 1* to rectify the hotbox issue that took it out of service. The new component was installed in the axlebox at the end of February.

Harking back to scenes common across the early days of preservation and late industrial era 'track bashing' charters that many yards and collieries hosted as they neared closure, No. 5459 will be working a passenger carrying brake van service, allowing for a unique view of the railway – including the 690-yard Berwyn Tunnel which has recently been the focus of a substantial track relaying scheme.

The fourth locomotive appearing at the gala will be Huddswell Clarke Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 1752, currently running as scrapped BR J94 No. 68067.

On loan to the LR since 2021, when steam services resumed following the collapse of the line's previous plc, after this event it will depart to commence a new hire agreement at another railway, which had yet to be

announced as this issue of *Heritage Railway* went to press.

The Austerity will be working in top-and-tail formation with resident Class 26 No. 5310, operating a shuttle service between Corwen and Glyndyfrdwy stations.

The timetable will further be supplemented by a DMU comprising either the Class 127/108 hybrid unit or the full Class 108 unit, which over the winter months has received fully refurbished seating. With both No. 5310 and multiple unit carrying BR green liveries, the 1960s atmosphere will be further enhanced as a result.

Catering outlets will be open at Llangollen and Glyndyfrdwy stations, with sales vehicles at Carrog offering merchandise and models to support restoration projects of locomotives such as BR Standard 4MT No. 80072 and GWR small prairie No. 5532.

The timetable for the gala and advance tickets will be available to purchase nearer to the time; see www.llangollen-railway.co.uk for more information.

Sporting use for Victorian roundhouse

A DEVELOPER has applied for planning permission to convert a Grade II-listed roundhouse in Leeds into a sports facility.

The circular roundhouse in Wellington Road, Hunslet, was built in 1847 by Thomas Granger for the Leeds & Thirsk Railway, which became part of the NER, and which used it until 1904. UK Padel Club Ltd wants to convert it into a padel tennis centre, with five indoor and five outdoor courts.

Leeds City Council agreed to defer and delegate approval to the authority's chief planning officer at a meeting on February 15. Historic England said the proposal was a "very interesting new use" which would apparently have a minimal physical impact on the structure.

Son boosts restoration of Victorian signalbox where late father worked

By Geoff Courtney

VOLUNTEERS are close to completing the major restoration of a Victorian era London & South Western Railway signalbox that has been match-funded by the son of a signalman who operated the 'box seven decades ago.

The 20-lever 'box, which is believed to date from 1877, was at Liphook station, between Guildford and Petersfield on the Waterloo-Portsmouth via Woking line. On opening, it replaced two huts at either end of the station that were manned by railway policemen, the forerunners of today's signallers, and is one of only two such LSWR Type 2 'boxes that survive.

It remained in daily use until February 1975 and was saved for preservation by the Hollycombe Steam Collection, which lifted it by crane and relocated it by lorry to the collection's location two miles away. There it became a popular public attraction, but it was closed in 2014 for a major restoration, which started five years later following a fundraising campaign and is now close to completion.

In a boost to the £10,000 project, match-funding for the work came from Mike Lampport, whose father Matt worked at Liphook station either side of the Second World War, including being the signalman there from 1948 to 1956.

Mike, who is 76 and lives at Ely, followed in his father's career railwayman footsteps, starting as a BR accounts clerk at Woking in 1964, becoming public affairs manager for Network SouthEast, and retiring from National Express in 2008.

He has clear memories of his father's time at Liphook and readily recalls one experience at the station when he was just three years of age.

Lighting-up time: The former Liphook station signalbox, at its home beside the Hollycombe Steam Collection clock tower, lights up a dark sky. Opened by the LSWR, believed to be in 1877, and closed by BR 98 years later, the 'box is currently in the final stages of a major restoration that has been match-funded by the son of a signalman who worked in the 'box in the early 1950s.

HOLLYCOMBE STEAM COLLECTION ARCHIVE



Boxed in: A relaxed Matt Lampport smiles for the camera during a shift in Liphook signalbox, where he worked from 1948 to 1956. His son Mike is match-funding a restoration of the 'box, which closed in 1975 and was preserved by the Hollycombe Steam Collection. MIKE LAMPFORT

"It was a warm, sunny afternoon in 1951, and I was brought to the station to see my dad, only to be handed up to the fireman of a Drummond 'Black Motor' 700 class 0-6-0 that had arrived in the Up platform with a parcels train," he reminisced.

"All went well until he lifted me higher and bid me to pull on what looked like a piece of dirty thin rope looping down from the cab roof.

Deafening whistle

"He pulled it down further, and with my tiny hand still touching it, there came a deafening whistle. At this point, I was hurriedly handed back to the comforting arms of my mother, still bawling my head off.

"It didn't put me off railways, as 70-odd years later, I am still just as interested!"



EMU calling: Southern Railway 2-NOL EMU No. 1847 calls at Liphook with a Waterloo-Portsmouth train on June 8, 1958, while a porter walks to the far end of the opposite platform to await the arrival of an Up train approaching in the distance. Another SR reminder is a target station sign on the lamppost on the left, an example of which sold for £1100 at auction in July 2022. The station's Victorian signalbox was saved for preservation when it closed in 1975 and is close to reopening after a major restoration. TRANSPORT TREASURY/ROY HOBBS

Of his decision to give financial support to the signalbox restoration, Mike said: "Before my dad died, I told him his story would be told. I knew the restoration would be a long job, but I am delighted with the outcome, and I know my dad would have been as well."

Matt Lampport, who died in November 2014 at the age of 91, was born in Godalming and launched his railway career in 1939 as a 16-year-old junior porter for the Southern Railway at Liphook. After serving in the Second World War with the Royal Artillery on coastal anti-aircraft guns, he returned to Liphook, which during the conflict had become a hive of activity due to the location there of a large Corps of Royal Engineers' depot.

His first postwar role at the station was as a goods porter, and after

Nationalisation in 1948 he was promoted to signalman at the station, in which role he remained until promotion in 1956 to the busier signalbox at Shalford Junction, where the Portsmouth and Redhill lines meet south of Guildford.

Family lineage

Four years later he became stationmaster at Selling in Kent, followed by promotion to Esher in Surrey and Guildford, where he was assistant stationmaster, and subsequently stationmaster at Havant, where more than a century before, his maternal grandfather had worked on the railway. His final position prior to retirement in August 1984 was stationmaster at Haselmere, where he was responsible for a number of stations, including Liphook, where his railway career had started 45 years earlier.

Speaking after his final railway shift, Matt said: "If I was asked to sum up what was the best thing about being a railway signalman, it was the feeling of responsibility that came from the trust that the railway had in you to keep it and its passengers safe at all times."

The Hollycombe Steam Collection, which dates from the late 1940s, is a working steam museum. Among its attractions are two railways offering public rides, one of 1½ miles in 2ft gauge, with both steam and diesel locomotives, and another in 7¼in gauge also with steam.

Museum manager Lucy Dyke said: "A huge thank-you to Mike and his family for helping us to achieve our ambition to restore the 'box."





The new *City of Truro*, driven by operations manager Ben Harding, emerges from the tunnel after the name reveal. LVR

A City of Truro for the 21st century

THE Lappa Valley Railway's new locomotive has been officially named *City of Truro* – echoing the legendary GWR 4-4-0.

Lappa Valley, a railway and leisure park near St Newlyn East, issued an appeal for suggestions of names for the new Bo-Bo, designed and built by Alan Keef Ltd of Ross-on-Wye, as reported in issue 310, and which arrived at the railway last year.

Thousands of suggestions were submitted, and it was siblings Henry, Edward and Poppy who came up with the ultimate winner.

Hundreds of well-wishers gathered at a special event as the trio were

given the honour of unveiling the name in dramatic fashion – with it roaring out of the railway's new tunnel after being signalled with a whistle and green flag by the three children. It was then blessed by Canon Chris McQuillen-Wright, from the Benefice of Towan Blystra, which includes St Newlyn East church.

Lappa Valley owner Keith Southwell said: "This is a really special moment in the history of Lappa Valley, as we kick off our 50th celebrations with the first brand-new main line train to join us since 1974.

"We had some excellent name suggestions. However, we chose *City*

of Truro because we are extremely proud of our Cornish DNA and the name reflects our passion for the county we call home."

City of Truro is a diesel locomotive forming part of a new set which includes five passenger carriages and a buggy wagon. The locomotive is equipped with an extremely economical diesel engine, cutting emissions compared to current diesel options. Featuring low-floor access, the train significantly increases the number of wheelchair users able to ride each trip. Representatives of Alan Keef Limited attended the ceremony.

Wine follows gin on Spa Valley trains

By Geoff Courtney

THE Spa Valley Railway will follow up its series of gin trains ending on March 23 by turning its attention to wine lovers throughout spring and summer – with steam-hauled specials that include a vineyard tour.

These trains will run twice a day on May 25 and the weekends of June 8/9 and 22/23, July 6/7 and 20/21, August 10/11 and 17/18, and September 14/15, with departures from Tunbridge Wells West station for a five-mile journey to Eridge at 11.30am and 12.55pm. Passengers will disembark at the national network station of Eridge for a short walk to Wildwood Vineyard for wine-tasting sessions featuring white, red, rosé, blanc fizz and a pink Vermouth.

The family-owned vineyard has produced a number of award-winning wines in recent years, including achieving gold and silver medals at an international ceremony in Germany.

The trains will return from Eridge at 2.45pm and 4.10pm, and tickets for the steam-hauled return journey are £10, while the wine-tasting, which is bookable at the vineyard and includes a tour, costs £12.

One of the features of the Spa Valley is its 1891-built steam depot at Tunbridge Wells West that was coded 75F by BR and is the last remaining LBSCR engine shed still in railway use.

Beckton No. 1 makes it seven for National Trust's Penrhyn clear-out

FOLLOWING the donation of six steam locomotives to various museums and groups, as reported last issue, the National Trust clear-out of the former Penrhyn Castle railway museum has seen a seventh vacate the museum in the guise of Neilson & Co 0-4-0WT No. 1561 *Beckton No. 1*, which has passed into the collection of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society at Bo'ness.

Built in 1870 at the firm's Glasgow workshops, No. 1561 started its working life more than 350 miles further south at the Gas Light & Coke Company's gasworks at Beckton, in East London, where it carried the name *Alderman* during its first few years. Low headroom in the site's retort houses resulted in locomotives being limited to a maximum height of just 8ft, hence No. 1561's somewhat quirky appearance.

It was tasked with shunting coal to and from the piers along the company's Thameside waterfront. By 1878, a further six examples of this design had been purchased and delivered to assist. Originally fitted with a basic cab roof, this was later removed, and the locomotive underwent a rebuild in Beckton during 1929.

In 1963 it was finally withdrawn and preserved by the Industrial Locomotive Society. It was placed on extended loan to the NT and moved to the castle museum the same year, where it remained until it departed for Bo'ness at the end of January 2024, as part of the NT's plans to better coordinate its displays and make them relevant to the region.

Following its arrival there, the ILS has officially transferred ownership to the SRPS; its arrival at the Scottish



Beckton No. 1 (right) has joined the Scottish Railway Preservation Society's museum collection after vacating the Penrhyn Castle Museum in January. It is seen alongside No. 1 *Lord Roberts*, with both locomotives having been built at the Neilson & Co works in Glasgow. SRPS

heritage line has seen it return to its country of birth for the first time in 154 years.

Museum director Dr Becky Peacock said: "We are very grateful to the ILS for donating *Beckton No. 1* to the Museum of Scottish Railways. The locomotive is a wonderful

addition to the collection." *Beckton No. 1* is set to go on display alongside locomotives such as 0-6-0T No. 1 *Lord Roberts* of 1899 and North British Railway's C class 0-6-0 No. 673 *Maude*, both of which were built much later at the same locomotive works in Glasgow.



Young fundraiser Jacob Holden with Kidderminster stationmaster Geoff Smith. LESLEY CARR/SVR

Jacob's model fundraising for Severn Valley

AN eight-year-old enthusiast's idea to raise funds for his beloved Severn Valley Railway inspired support from more than 100 people – and raised more than £200 for the line's Survival Fund.

Jacob Holden invited like-minded youngsters and their families to join him for an afternoon of model railway fun at St George's Hall, Bewdley.

Jacob owns a wide collection of model railway track and rolling stock and wanted to share his hobby with others, raising money for the heritage line through donations at the same time.

"That was my dream come true, seeing all the people there for the afternoon," said Jacob. "It was amazing! Diesels are my favourite, and I love how they arrive at the platform so gently. When I'm old enough, I would like to be a volunteer and I would like to drive a diesel."

Mum Danielle Oakley said: "Jacob has had a real passion for trains since he was tiny. We recently moved to Bewdley, and he had an idea, just out of the blue, to do a fundraiser for the Severn Valley, saying he wanted children from all over to come and play with his trains."

Dad Jason said: "We are really proud of him. We visit the railway probably twice a month and love it. It feels important that the local community should support the SVR, making sure it keeps going, because it's a fantastic experience for everyone to enjoy."

As a thank-you for his support, Jacob was treated to a tour of a diesel cab during a half-term visit to the SVR, and he met volunteers at Kidderminster station.

SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster said: "It's wonderful that a young person has such a passion for heritage rail and see the efforts he's gone to in order to help us."

→ The Survival Fund has so far raised more than £470,000 towards its £1.5 million target. To donate, visit svr.co.uk

The 'Shenfield Shark': Essex icon is no more

By Owen Hayward

A SHARK brake van which stood marooned next to a main line station siding for three decades despite efforts by enthusiasts to have it saved has been scrapped.

There are not many pieces of rolling stock that develop a cult following; locomotives catch the eye of the majority and encourage people out to travel. That is even truer when it comes to main line steam, with local residents often flocking to boundary fences and stations to glimpse classic traction passing through.

However, on a rare occasion, sometimes a piece of workaday rolling stock catches the public's attention and weaves its way into their hearts. There appears to be enthusiasts who had not heard of the 'Shenfield Shark', one of BR's ballast plough brake vans, which was laid up in a siding adjacent to the Essex station for more than 30 years.

End was nigh

Sadly, over the final weekend of February, the van – which had become somewhat synonymous with the station – was cut up in situ while the line was under a possession as full recovery was ultimately found to be impossible.

Built in 1956, the precise date of its abandonment at Shenfield is uncertain, but it is believed that it was sometime during either 1988 or 1989, having been failed with a hotbox during a ballast trip working to Southend Victoria and shunted into the siding that was to become its home – until now.

As a result, its working life was therefore a minimum of 32 years long. Conversely, this has meant that its time sitting in the siding has been a maximum of 36 years.

An attempt to recover the vehicle was made in 2014 when Network Rail made provisions to tow it on skates to Chelmsford for collection by road. Its eventual destination was to be the Epping Ongar Railway, which would have seen it preserved in close proximity (and with a direct connection to it, as the heritage line occasionally runs a vintage bus connection to Shenfield station for some of its events).

During final checks to confirm ownership of and NR's subsequent right to dispose of the vehicle, a query was raised that resulted in the plan being halted. Further concerns about the vehicle's structural stability then meant that this option was no longer practical.



As the sun sets on February 20, the iconic 'Shenfield Shark' awaits its fate, having moved for the first time in more than 30 years to a spur at the opposite end of the siding it had been stabled on, ready to be scrapped on February 24. Despite having been exposed to the elements for so many years, its external condition was still surprisingly good. OWEN HAYWARD



Left: Taken during an arranged viewing on November 10, 2021, this image shows the interior of the guard's cabin, a testament to the build quality of the vehicle. OWEN HAYWARD

Over the years there have been several enthusiasts and groups asking after the Shark. Recognising that there was ample interest in the vehicle, in November 2021 DB Cargo advised that the vehicle was officially up for disposal, with the proposed method of extraction being to crane it out while the line was under an engineering possession.

However, safety concerns raised also resulted in this option not being viable.

Towards the end

In February it was finally revealed that with no safe way of removing it complete, the brake van was to be cut up at the end of the month. Accordingly, over February 17/18 a possession commenced that saw NR engineers attend the site and assess the vehicle prior to No. DB993733 then being pinch barred the 100 yards up the siding to a headshunt spur adjacent to the station car park – the first time and furthest distance it had travelled in all its years there – where it was cut up by contractors over February 24/25.

A statement issued by the DB press office said: "Our most recent plan was to find a way of lifting the wagon out whole from Shenfield station, working in collaboration with Network Rail.

"This is something we have looked at several times over the years with various approaches explored, but we have never found a way of achieving this which met fully with all of the safety requirements.

"We had thought that moving the Shark further away from the overhead lines would enable us to finally lift it out.

"However, Network Rail has made a decision on safety grounds that the use of a crane is not possible, so we are unable to remove the vehicle from site as we would have liked.

"Regrettably, we only have a very narrow window to fulfil this operation while a possession is in place and therefore, we have to proceed with the revised plan to dismantle it on site.

"Unfortunately, we are not in a position at this late stage to hold up the contractor."



GWR 0-6-0PT No. 1369 is seen approaching Staverton station on the South Devon Railway, working the 1.15pm Totnes Riverside to Buckfastleigh half-term trains service on February 11. COLIN WALLACE

Discover the many secrets of Holborn tube station

LONDON Transport Museum has launched a brand-new behind-the-scenes tour of London Underground's Holborn station, with tickets available to book now.

Originally opened in 1906 as a complex of four platforms to serve the Piccadilly Line, Holborn station has much more to explore than is immediately apparent.

On this new tour, due to start in the summer, ticketholders will step behind concealed doors and explore the expansive disused areas which lay concealed, some not seen by the public in nearly 30 years.

Led by an expert tour guide, visitors will explore closed-off areas, including the two closed platforms of the former Aldwych branch, and also experience an unexpected view of the Piccadilly Line, complete with vintage posters, original Leslie Green Edwardian design, and an early 20th century signalling cabin.

Written using content drawn from London Transport Museum's extensive archive and collection, the tour will reveal the twists and turns of the 20th century as visitors hear how

the station's disused spaces came to be used in surprising ways over the years, including as scientific laboratories, providing shelter for London Transport staff in wartime, and even housing a model rail club.

Also covered will be how staff members may have felt working there during the height of the Blitz, how the big modernisation project of the 1930s led to the closure of the nearby British Museum station, and how Holborn station is still playing a key role in the future of the underground today as part of a massive upgrading project of the signalling system.

The exclusive Hidden London guided tours at Holborn start from July 31 and will take place on Wednesday to Sunday each week, with tickets costing £45.

Other Hidden London tours running from April to September include Baker Street: The World's First Underground; Piccadilly Circus: The Heart of London; Piccadilly Circus Tour and Lunch at the Hard Rock Café; Clapham South: Subterranean Shelter; Down



Exploring one of the hidden passageways at Holborn tube station. LTM

Street: Churchill's Secret Station; Down Street and Luxury Cocktail and Nibbles at The Flemings Hotel; Aldwych: The End of the Line; Charing Cross: Access All Areas; and Charing Cross and Classic Afternoon Tea at The Clermont.

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

Meanwhile, UKTV's *Secrets of the London Underground*, co-hosted by Hidden London engagement manager Siddie Holloway, has been renewed for a fourth series. Hidden London co-developer Chris Nix will also be acting as its historical consultant, with the series set to air later this year.

Environmental alliance forged as KESR looks to safeguard nature

EXCLUSIVE

By Geoff Courtney

THE conservation of nature and an operational steam and diesel heritage line may sound an unlikely alliance, but for the Kent & East Sussex Railway it is a partnership which is bridging the gap between 19th century Victorian technology and the 21st century determination to safeguard the country's environmental future.

Spearheading this partnership is a sustainability group formed by the Tenterden-based KESR, the role of which is to identify, protect and enhance biodiversity along the line's 10½-mile route. Such an agenda may seem based more on modern parlance than the everyday aims of a preserved railway, but that would underestimate the resolve of the group to make a difference to the countryside through which the KESR runs.

Ecology is nothing new to the railway, for initiatives over the years have included bird boxes, bug hotels and nature-friendly gardens at stations, while the forestry and conservation team has planted more than 1000 trees at Rolvenden and Wittersham Road stations that were supplied by the Woodland Trust and Ashford Borough Council.

Indeed, the railway was highly commended for its environmental innovations in the recent Heritage

Railway Association's 2024 awards, and the sustainability group sees this as a stepping stone for even more progress in the coming years.

Under the leadership of chairman Paul Vidler and Keith Barron, who is the lead on biodiversity and habitats, the group has set its sights on measuring the state of the railway's biodiversity over its 'estate' of 300 acres and how to preserve and enhance it, and the Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy has been engaged to coordinate a two-year biodiversity survey.

Encouraging results

Early results are enormously encouraging and confirm how ecologically rich and diverse this railway 'estate' is. Some 89 species of birds have been identified, 17 of which are on the red list of endangered species and 22 on the amber list, and 15 species of bumblebees. And the news gets even better, for among the birds were nightingales and turtle doves, two species which have seen numbers plummet by 90% in the past 50 years.

The railway's lineside vegetation alone was found to support at least 37 bird species, of which eight are red-listed and 11 amber-listed, and along the line's 10½ miles, 60 yellowhammer, 57 reed bunting, 49 skylark and 24 linnet territories have been identified, while two rare bumblebee species were revealed.



Standard bearer: Visiting from the Great Central Railway, BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019 approaches Tenterden Town on December 29. Tracksides are trees that in summer are home to some of the diverse wildlife that is currently at the heart of a major sustainability study being conducted by the railway. OWEN HAYWARD

The group is also working with the Kentish Stour Catchment Partnership, which is currently surveying a large pond between the railway's Rolvenden and Wittersham Road stations with a view to a potential restoration that would support the introduction of great crested newts.

It is not only within the world of birds, insects, and aquatic wildlife that the railway's environmental initiative is having an impact, for a major development is the planting of elm trees as part of a Kent County Council tree establishment strategy.

Many will remember the Dutch elm disease that was rife in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s, an ecological disaster that killed 25 million trees, resulting in very few mature elms surviving and fundamentally changing the English landscape. In the ensuing years, a disease-resistant

elm species has been developed, and 10 of these will be planted lineside. In addition to being disease-resistant, these trees can also tolerate drought and waterlogging, making them ideally suited to the railway's lineside habitats, and it is expected there will be considerable interest in how they thrive.

Wildlife spotting

The railway is also to provide passengers with guides to help them spot wildlife during their journeys and on April 7 is organising a Green Fun Day in collaboration with local community groups to offer a range of family activities, including nature and garden talks from Sissinghurst Castle Garden experts. In addition, group bird-watching guided trips with onboard ornithologists and featuring stops along the line will be held during May and June.

Keith Barron told *Heritage Railway* that the biodiversity survey would be confirmation that the KESR was custodian of not only an important part of Britain's transport history, but also of wildlife habitat and its residents.

"We are committed to sustainability and conservation, and like other heritage railways, we have a unique opportunity to protect and regenerate nature in the habitats we care for, helping to link up green corridors that benefit both nature and people who live nearby," he said.

"We are the custodian of not only a piece of history, but also of a unique green corridor with a rich mosaic of different habits, supporting a wealth of flora and fauna. This is just the beginning of an important journey for us as a heritage railway, so watch this space."



Award winners: Paul Vidler (left) and Keith Barron, members of the KESR sustainability group, with a highly commended award presented to them at the Heritage Railway Association Awards 2024 ceremony in Brighton on February 11. ROBIN COOMBS/PAUL VIDLER



A fine line: A song thrush perches on the KESR line, where a major two-year environmental survey is being carried out. DAVID CAMPBELL/WILDSTARTS

Cavan & Leitrim's Ballinamore station is restored as a local community hub

By Hugh Dougherty

BALLINAMORE station on the former Cavan & Leitrim Railway has been saved from demolition, thanks to a 2.4 million Euro project which has converted it into a community hub, arts and enterprise centre.

Dubbed Junction Ballinamore, the restored buildings – including the station house, booking office, waiting room and locomotive shed – were officially opened on February 16 by Heather Humphreys TD, the Irish Government rural and community development minister. The project is managed by Leitrim County Council with funding from the Rural Development Fund.

Mrs Humphreys said: "As Minister for Rural and Community Development, I am absolutely delighted that my department was able to support this project with funding of €2.4m under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

"I know that this is a really important project for Ballinamore and its surrounding areas, particularly because it brings a derelict and vacant building back into community use."

Ballinamore station was opened in 1887 and was the hub of the C&LR, with trains coming in from Dromod and Drumshanbo, and, after 1920, when an extension was built to serve Ireland's only commercial coal mines, from Arigna as well. After the railway closed in 1959, the station was bought by the diocese of Kilmore, which opened St Felim's College, using the buildings. St Felim's closed in 2014 when pupils moved to a new school within the town and there were fears that the railway station would be bulldozed.

However, local interests and the council saw its heritage value and potential, and its restoration has been done sensitively, with inlaid strips laid to 3ft gauge, recalling the railway that the buildings once served, as well as information boards carrying information and pictures of railway days.

Junction Ballinamore is also the starting point for the Cavan Leitrim Greenway, the first section of which



A drone shot showing the main station building on the left and loco shed on the right, with strips laid to 3ft gauge to show where some of the tracks were. LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL



The buildings reveal the quality of the restoration and the design of the station, common on the Irish narrow gauge. LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

Right: Ballinamore in its heyday: Robert Stephenson-built 4-4-0T No. 8 Queen Victoria sits at the station in the 1890s.
HUGH DOUGHERTY COLLECTION



uses the old C&L trackbed from the station to Corgar Lough, so that the path further underlines and cements the station's railway heritage.

The restoration of Ballinamore station means that three of the C&L main stations have survived and been restored. Dromod is the headquarters of today's restored Cavan & Leitrim Railway, which runs to Clooncolly, while Belturbet, where the narrow-gauge trains met broad gauge Great Northern Railway of Ireland services, has been fully restored

by the Belturbet Heritage Railway. Ballinamore station is of a design often used on the Irish narrow gauge, with the stationmaster's two-storey, house built on to the station building, which features a glazed screen and clock.

Similar stations were built on the Clogher Valley, County Donegal and Londonderry & Lough Swilly railways, and several examples remain intact today, notably Donegal Town station, home of the Donegal Railway Heritage Museum.

A4 Bittern overhaul needs new engineer

THE Sir Nigel Gresley Locomotive Trust Employment is seeking to appoint a new deputy locomotive engineer who will become a key part of the team set to overhaul A4 Pacific No. 60019 Bittern.

The trust is about to begin the contract overhaul of A4 'Pacific' 60019 Bittern at a location in North Yorkshire.

The deputy locomotive engineer's responsibilities will include helping establish a new engineering facility; progressing the overhaul to a plan drafted by the trust's Chief Mechanical Engineer; managing day-to-day overhaul activities; and, from time to time, supporting the operation of sister No. 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley.

Role for you?

The full-time salaried position will offer the opportunity to develop the applicant's skills in both management and practical engineering, working with the trust's highly experienced and skilled team and reporting to its locomotive engineer.

The candidate should be able to demonstrate knowledge of steam locomotive engineering at a practical level and operational experience with either Network Rail or heritage railways would be an advantage.

Experience in a supervisory role will also be beneficial in helping lead the volunteer engineering team and liaising with sub-contractors.

→ For further details and expressions of interest, send your CV to: chairman@sirnigelgresley.org.uk



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Infilling and clearing historic bridge cost the public £476k

GOVERNMENT agency National Highways spent £476,000 by infilling the 162-year-old Great Musgrave bridge in Cumbria and then being ordered to clear it again, new figures have revealed.

In 2021, National Highways spent £124,000 on blocking the bridge, to the anger of revivalists who pointed out that it crossed the trackbed of

a future connection between the Eden Valley and Stainmore heritage railways, as reported in issue 282.

The work was carried out using emergency powers which allowed it to act before seeking planning consent. The agency claimed that the overbridge was unsafe for lorries.

However, surveys showed that repointing at a cost of only £5000 may

have allowed it to carry loads of up to 40 tonnes. The case was highlighted in the House of Lords and led to demands that the Government took action to protect redundant railway bridges. Eden District Council then ordered National Highways to remove the infill after refusing retrospective planning permission, and the work cost a further £352,000.

Graeme Bickerdike, of campaign group Historical Railways Estate, said: "The country's legacy railway assets were gifted to us by skilled craftsmen during a period of exceptional ambition and courage during the Victorian era.

"They will continue to serve us for many more years if we look after them properly."

Footplate days are now a big winner on the Severn Valley

By John Titlow

THE Severn Valley Railway's footplate experience courses have been hit by a surge in public demand, with those in January and February a virtual sell-out.

Many railways are offering the courses again, giving ordinary members of the public the opportunity to fire and drive a steam locomotive without having to spend years building up to the essential level of experience necessary to be on the footplate in charge of a train.

The SVR's courses have become extremely popular, especially with the use of powerful locomotives pulling a reasonable rake of carriages.

Starting on February 3, the line ran footplate experiences on various dates throughout the month and into March using GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* and pannier No. 7714. The courses involved an early start from Kidderminster, departing at 8.45am to Highley. Four returns took place, with the last returning to Kidderminster at 4.42pm.

The 'taster' comprised four miles of driving and firing, including room for three guests travelling on the train. The 'introductory' course saw eight miles of driving and firing, including four guests travelling on the train, and the 'Intermediate' was for 16 miles of driving and firing, including room for six guests. All were sold out.

On February 9 and 23, two 'Intermediate' sessions ran each day, necessitating both Nos. 7812 and 7714 in action.

Appropriate clothing and footwear are essential, including gloves, because controls can be very hot. Participants must be 18 years of age, physically fit, and able to climb a 6ft vertical ladder.

'Day to remember'

On February 3, Helen Reeves and her partner Eddie joined a footplate experience. Helen is Swindon-born, and both of her grandfathers and three uncles worked at the GWR works.

She said afterwards: "It was great experience to actually be on the



Concentration on the road ahead as the first footplate experience on No. 7812 runs round at Highley station on February 3. JOHN TITLOW

footplate. All the volunteers were super-friendly and made the day; their enthusiasm for the SVR knew no bounds. From the meet-and-greet chaps to the fireman and driver and the guards, their passion shone

through making our day one to remember."

Soon, the dream of getting onto the footplate becomes a reality when the full summer programme starts.

Bronze experiences begin on

With the first footplate experience of the day, GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor* approaches Borle Viaduct, heading for Bridgnorth, on February 16. JOHN TITLOW





Above: Helen Reeves opening the regulator on No. 7812 Erlestoke Manor with driver Lawrence Mortimer. SVR

Right: The return footplate experience headed by GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7714 climbs Eardington Bank, emerging from Oldbury Tunnel and heading for Kidderminster on February 16.

JOHN TITLOW



With the first footplate experience run of February 4, No. 7812 heads into Stanley Cutting while approaching Highley. JOHN TITLOW

June 7, and run until October 11. Participants can experience the challenge of driving and firing a steam locomotive while hauling a heavy train of carriages. There are morning and afternoon sessions, each comprising eight participants.

The full 16 miles from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth will be covered, and participants will fire and drive for more than eight miles. Places are limited to eight on each experience and the cost is £400.

Silver experiences start on June 14 and finish on October 18. Like the bronze, the full line is covered, except that participants will drive and fire for all 16 miles. Places are limited to four per experience and cost £700.

The gold experiences is the big one, where you will drive and fire the full 32 miles of the SVR – and it comes with a big price of £1300. These start on June 28 and finish on October 25, and places are limited to two per experience.

On all experiences, participants can bring up to 10 guests, and freedom of the line tickets cost £25.

Bringing out the big guns

Large locomotives will be used, which have bigger footplates, making it easier to accommodate four comfortably. Subject to availability, they are GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*, No. 7714 Stanier mogul No. 13268 and BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069.

Safety is the primary issue. Each session begins with a briefing before anyone is allowed on the footplate itself.

Participants are given detailed instructions on how to drive the locomotive, from using the reverser, regulator, brakes, looking at the road ahead and signalling – everything an experienced driver will know. Firing is not a simple case of throwing coal randomly into the firebox but knowing where to put it, how to look after the water in the boiler, ensure the driver has enough steam, use of the injector, even how to stand safely on a moving locomotive whilst

handling the shovel.

Fireman Kieran Chadney outlined the main things a first-time footplate experience participant needs to know.

"Hot bits!" he said. "There are lots of hot pipes and fittings in the cab of a locomotive. And you can't tell purely by sight what's what. And the last thing you want is someone grabbing hold of something and burning their hand."

"Balance – things can get very bouncy when on the move and the last thing you want is for someone to fall over, especially on a tender locomotive where the loco and tender move around separately from each other, so how to position themselves is another key element when they are firing."

"Also, how to hold the shovel and the weight of the coal. I always tell people not to be a hero and go for the biggest shovel full of coal. Do what you feel comfortable with and if needs be, you can just put an extra few rounds on."

What are the easiest mistakes for them to make?

"People tend to get confused with what's the front and the back of the firebox, so end up putting the coal in the wrong place," he continued. "But

that's easily rectified with another shovel full."

"Again, it can be quite difficult to reach the front of the firebox, as most people aren't used to flinging coal some six to eight feet off the end of a shovel while on a moving platform."

"So, in some instances, I'd need to borrow the shovel to get a few rounds 'up the front' to help maintain the pressure."

Good advice

"Injectors can catch people out, making sure they're operated in the correct order – water first, then steam to turn on. And the way in which to turn the handles... a few people tend to open up the valves more instead of closing them."

Finally, what attracted Keiran to this duty, and how does he find it?

Kieran replied: "This was my first time doing a footplate experience and it was as much of a learning curve for me as it was for the participants, but it was good fun giving people the opportunity to fire a steam engine and seeing the looks on their faces as it all comes together and the engines working along the line."

"It's something that I'd definitely put myself forward for doing again."

Drive a diesel!

DIESEL driving courses are also on offer at the Severn Valley, with classes 37, 40, 42, 46, 50 and 52 taking part.

Again, the day starts with the important safety briefing at Bewdley, followed by a tour of the locomotive engine room and a start-up procedure demonstration.

Afterwards, you will travel in the cab, driving for eight miles, then acting as secondman. The return is spent in the rear cab of the locomotive.

Behind the scenes

Included is a tour of the award-winning Kidderminster Diesel Depot, which is normally off-limits to the general public.

Morning and afternoon sessions are available, limited to four people per trip and costing £600, and the price includes bringing up to 10 guests.

There is the option of spending an additional 32 miles travelling in the train with your guests. The diesel courses begin on June 10 and end on September 30.

Happy memories

With both steam and diesel footplate experiences, a presentation folder with a certificate provides a memento.

All crews on both the steam and diesel experiences are voluntary, as are the guards.

→ Footplate experiences are not cheap, but this could be the only way you can get onto the footplate and drive or fire a working locomotive – maybe once-in-a-lifetime experience.

For full details, visit <http://tinyurl.com/SVRfootplate>

→ It has been announced that steam and diesel locomotive experiences will restart at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for participants aged 16 and over – see overleaf.

PRE-ORDER ISSUE 318

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British loco pair set to steam for first time since repatriation

By Robin Jones

DEALS have been announced for two repatriated British-built narrow-gauge locomotives – including one recovered from a swamp – to be overhauled and returned to steam for the first time in the heritage era.

Quarry Hunslet 0-4-OST No. 704 of 1899 *Nesta* is to be overhauled following its acquisition by the privately-owned 2ft gauge Richmond Light Railway at Headcorn in Kent.

Nesta, one of Hunslet's four Penrhyn Small Quarry class locomotives, was withdrawn from service at the Penrhyn Quarry in North Wales in the 1960s. However, a 1965 news article about the end of steam in the Welsh quarries prompted an American antiques dealer to buy several locomotives from Dinorwic and Penrhyn quarries, including *Nesta*, for export. *Nesta* ended up at a railway/mining museum in Puerto Rico, where the weather was allowed to take its toll.

In 2016, enthusiast Robert Gambrill found *Nesta* in a swamp, purchased it, and repatriated it to Britain. He placed it on display in as-saved condition at the Bala Lake Railway's Llanuwchllyn Heritage Centre.

The Richmond Light Railway has drawn up outline plans for conservation work with the intention of returning *Nesta* to operable condition, while taking great care to conserve as much of the original as possible.

Mindful of *Nesta*'s original home at Bethesda, a decision has been made to work with the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways team at Boston Lodge in the coming years.

Initially, the locomotive will be transferred to the FR and should once more be on display to the

Above: *Nesta*'s nameplate.
JOHN WOODEN/
FR

Right: *Nesta* on display inside the Bala Lake Railway's Llanuwchllyn Heritage Centre.
STEVE RICHARDSON/FR

public in its unrestored state. It will form part of the new display for the behind-the-scenes tours scheduled to commence this summer. Visitors will be able to see and discuss the work on the engine, from the earliest steps through to completion.

Physical work on the locomotive is unlikely to commence until the end of 2024, once a full conservation and repair plan has been drawn up.

Making connections

Once complete, it is expected that *Nesta* will make regular visits from its new home railway to North Wales.

F&WHR general manager Paul Lewin said: "Through the Great Little Trains of Wales, there is an incredible spirit of cooperation and support.

"Wales always has been and is now increasingly the place to visit if you are interested narrow gauge railways.

"Ffestiniog, Talyllyn, Rheidol and Bala are all working hard to bring new ways to connect visitors to the railways. Working with the team at the Richmond Light Railway on *Nesta* is just one small part of a most compelling offer."

Meanwhile, the private Statfold Barn Railway is to undertake the full restoration of an all but forgotten 2ft gauge locomotive.

Black Hawthorn 0-4-OST No. 748 of 1883 *Portugesa* (later known as *Escucha*) has moved to the Staffordshire venue, where a 30-year loan deal has been completed between the Hawthorn Engine and Carriage Trust, *Portugesa*'s owner, and the Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust, which has earned an impressive reputation in locomotive restoration and is aiming to have *Portugesa* steam within five years.

The 6in-cylindred unique survivor was built for export and ordered through dealer Phillips of Swansea, setting sail from the Welsh port. Its early history remains unclear, but during the second decade of the 20th century it became based at the Minas y Ferrocarriles de Utrillas in Teruel, Spain. There it was named *Escucha* and was ultimately modified to have side tanks and longer frames.

In 1984, the late Eric Maxwell brought *Escucha* back to its birthplace locality. Based at the Tanfield Railway,

restoration began, and a shed was built to house the locomotive.

A substantial amount of work was done to the chassis, although the boiler was never tackled. Sadly, the restoration was not completed when Mr Maxwell died, after having ensured that ownership went to a new trust formed to safeguard his extensive collection of standard and narrow-gauge locomotives and rolling stock.

'Unmissable opportunity'

Hawthorn Engine and Carriage Trust chairman Stewart Waugh said: "Opportunities for restoration to be completed in the North East were limited, and the deal agreed with Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust was an unmissable opportunity to see *Portugesa* back in steam in a short period of time.

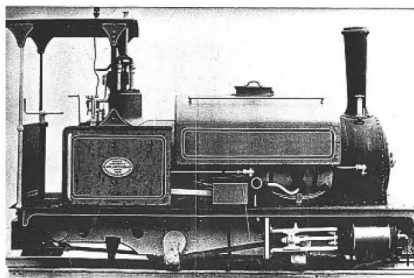
"We are really pleased to be working with the Statfold team and cannot wait to see the locomotive in action. We are also hoping that there might be opportunities for *Portugesa* to visit the North East once it is back in working order – we know Eric would have been very keen to see that.

"We've been working hard behind the scenes for many months to secure a bright future for as much of Eric's collection as possible. This is a great step forward."

Statfold's Henry Noon said: "It is a great honour to be entrusted with this historically important British-built locomotive, which will be restored to working order and given a secure home in the company of the renowned Statfold collection.

"It is intended that once restored, the loco will tour other railways to be seen and admired by as wide an audience as possible.

"Eric Maxwell visited us on many occasions, and we would like to think he would be pleased with this collaboration."



Above: A locomotive built by Chapman & Furneaux and thought to be near-identical to the earlier *Portugesa/Escucha*. The firm was the successor to Black, Hawthorn & Co. HECT

Right: Quarry Hunslet 0-4-OST *Nesta* at Penrhyn Quarry. FR/GILBERT ROSCOE





Mid-Hants Railway CEO Rebecca Dalley congratulates long-service volunteers Brian Lawes, Mark Walden, Steve Hayden, Chris le Corney and Jim Russell. MHR

Five volunteers with a combined total of 250 years' service are honoured by Mid-Hants

THE Mid-Hants Railway has celebrated the sterling service of its 'Fab Five' – volunteers who have worked on the Watercress Line for a combined total of more than 250 years.

Long-service certificates were presented to Brian Lawes, Mark Walden, Steve Hayden, Chris le Corney and Jim Russell at the line's annual general meeting in Alton on February 3.

The line's CEO, Rebecca Dalley, and president Richard Lacey thanked the men, who each received a certificate to mark the 50-year service milestone.

Rebecca said: "We are fortunate to have these men as part of our valued team of 450 volunteers, who are the lifeblood of The Watercress Line. Without their support and expertise, it would be impossible to keep this much-loved heritage railway running."

"We are always keen to hear from anybody who would like to get involved as a volunteer; please see our website for more information and get in touch."

Jim Russell joined the fledgling heritage railway in Alresford in 1973, aged 16. He became a signalman in 1981, a foreman of signalmen in 1983, a district signalling inspector in 1986/7 (and continues in the role), then a guard and shunter in 1987, and passed out as a diesel driver in 2003. He was elected to the Mid-Hants Railway Preservation Society board in 2000 and was chairman for seven years.

Dedicated service

Jim joined the Board of Mid-Hants Railway Ltd in 2005 as the director of safety, standards and operation until 2010. He became chairman of the rules and regulations committee until 2019 and rejoined the Mid-Hants Railway Ltd Board in the same year as the director safety and standards.

Chris le Corney became a volunteer in 1973. He has always been involved in restoring wagons and vintage carriages and recreated a c1960 freight train. He is chairman of both the wagon group at Alton and the

Mid-Hants Croydon group.

Steve Hayden joined the railway in 1972 and helped to lay the track from Ropley to Four Marks, and from Alton to Four Marks, to get the fledgling line up and running. He still works twice a week on building and gardening projects and has been a member of the permanent way group for the past 15 years.

Brian Lawes first became involved with the railway in 1973 to fight the proposed line closure, and then worked on preserving the line. He was appointed permanent way manager, helping to get trains running from Ropley to Alresford. He now volunteers for the miniature railway, T-Junction and shop.

Mark Walden shared an early love of trains with his grandfather and volunteered in 1973. He has been manager of the building department, and he received a lifetime achievement award in 2016 from the Transport Trust.

→ Find out more about volunteering at <https://watercressline.co.uk/volunteer/>

Footplate and cab experiences restart at Moorsline

THE North Yorkshire Moors Railway has reintroduced its popular steam footplate and diesel cab experiences, with booking now available for April 2 until November 3.

The Steam Footplate Experience includes a 36-mile return footplate ride between Pickering and Grosmont and a souvenir certificate signed by the locomotive's driver.

This experience starts from and returns to Pickering station, departing at 10.55am and returning at 1.50pm. The cost is £430.

The Diesel Cab Experience includes a 36-mile cab ride and a signed souvenir certificate.

It operates on various dates throughout the year: during the gold timetable, the service starts at 9.55am from Pickering (return departs Grosmont at 1.30pm); and during the silver timetable (Sundays), the service starts at 2.30pm from Grosmont (return departs Pickering at 4pm). The price of the experience is £250.

All participants should be physically fit and aged 16 years and over. A medical declaration will be required to sign on arrival.

→ For more information and to book, visit www.nymr.co.uk/steam-experience or www.nymr.co.uk/diesel-experience



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Waste steam ash helps keep canal open

THE steam era came to the aid of its predecessor the canal age when waste ash from locomotives at Didcot Railway Centre was collected to seal water leaks around the edges of lock gates.

Matt Hudson and Roger Jones, of charity the Canal and River Trust, based on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Newbury, are seen here shovelling the ash into bags on February 5.

"You pour the ash in where the gate is leaking and it seals like magic," said Roger. "We'd like to thank everyone at Didcot Railway Centre for allowing us on site to help with this valuable work." Water leaks in the canal are expensive; it costs about £600 an hour to run electric pumps to keep the waterway full.

The GWR owned the canal, which allows navigation from Reading to Bath, from 1851 – and did its best to run the business down.

In 1926, the railway applied to abandon it, but the Minister of Transport refused permission and the GWR Remained the owner until Nationalisation in 1948, when the canal was transferred to the custodianship of the British Transport Commission.

The restored canal is now part of the 2000-mile network of rivers and canals owned by the Canal and River Trust.

Right: Matt Hudson and Roger Jones collecting the waste steam ash. FRANK DUMBLETON/GWS



Swanage summer gala set to be a strictly Bulleid affair

By Owen Hayward

SEVEN years after its showstopping Bulleid-centric event to mark 50 years since the last days of steam on the Southern Region, Strictly Bulleid 2 is set to bring together several examples of the West Country and Battle of Britain classes to run across the full 9 ½ miles from the seaside resort right up to its Network Rail boundary at the River Frome.

The March/April event of 2017 saw five of these powerhouses descend on Dorset with SLL's resident fleet of Nos. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* and 34070 *Manston* joined by Nene Valley Railway-based based No. 34081 *92 Squadron*, the East Lancashire's 34092 *City of Wells*, and the Royal Scot Locomotive & General Trust's No. 34046 *Braunton* for the occasion.

Partnering up with supremos Southern Locomotives Limited, this year's event will take place on June 7-9. *Manston* will once again feature, this time being joined by Nos. 34028 *Eddystone* and 34072 *257 Squadron*, both of which were absent from the 2017 line-up as they were undergoing overhauls which were not completed until 2021 and 2018 respectively.

Manston will have returned to the railway following its period on loan to the Mid-Hants Railway (where it arrived in December 2023), while *257 Squadron* will be making a short visit away from its current base at the Spa Valley Railway.

It is hoped that a fourth member of the SLL collection will be present for the occasion; No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* is currently undergoing overhaul, with the front end of the locomotive having now returned to Herston



On February 15, the overhauled boiler from No. 34010 *Sidmouth* was steam-tested in the frames of No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* at Tyseley Locomotive Works. This half of the locomotive then returned to Herston for its overhaul to continue. MALCOLM GARNER/SLL



On November 7, the boiler for No. 34058 *Sir Fredrick Pile* was lifted off its frames at Sellindge. SIMON TROY/SLL

"The Swanage Railway hopes to once again steal the limelight with another weekend that will be dominated by these iconic locomotives from the region."

Works in Dorset, having been located at Tyseley Locomotive Works since last year. While there, the boiler has been swapped with the overhauled one taken from No. 34010 *Sidmouth*; this underwent an initial steam test at Weybourne (where the work had been carried out under contract) on December 8, 2023.

Steam test

Although it was intended to refit the superheater header and elements before departing the works, it was noted that the header needed some repairs and so the boiler was transferred immediately to Tyseley to facilitate a swap with the good header off the boiler that was fitted

to that locomotive at the time.

Following completion of this work, on February 16, another steam test was performed on the overhauled boiler in the frames, which proved there were no leaks and so facilitated its return to Dorset, where the SLL team has continued reassembling the locomotive.

SLL confirmed that invitations to other operational Bulleid locomotives had been submitted but could not confirm any further details as we went to press. The announcement has come following a hectic programme of winter works for its volunteers, which highlighted the vast complexities that owning groups endure with such a large collection of locomotives.

Unfortunate failures

In addition to progress with *Sir Keith Park*, *257 Squadron* was faced with several unfortunate failures during the festive season. Having spent the summer of 2023 on loan to the East Lancashire Railway, No. 34072 returned to the Spa Valley where it was prepared for service on that line's 'Polar Express' services, but on its second day of running, a universal joint that connects the injector control handles to the injectors dislodged itself and dropped off. Attempts to find it were unsuccessful, hampered by it being within hours of darkness with heavy rain, and so a replacement was borrowed from No. 34053 and ferried to Tunbridge Wells for fitting.

As reported, this mishap was just the first in a streak of bad luck, with a mudhole door joint failing the

following week, followed quickly by the fracturing of a bogie spring. The locomotive ran only 10 days for the 'Polar Express' season – less than half of what was planned.

Meanwhile, work has commenced on the restoration of No. 34058 *Sir Fredrick Pile*. With the front half of the locomotive now at Sellindge, on November 7 the boiler was removed from the frames and placed on a raised sleeper stack to allow for better access. All driving wheel springs have been released in preparation for repairs, with hopes that the contractor will confirm they are fit for overhaul and will not need full replacement. The dragbox will need to be replaced with that of No. 35025 *Brocklebank Line* being recovered for No. 34058.

Before the frames can be lifted to facilitate extraction of wheels and axleboxes, the pistons must be removed; once the wheels are clear, the frames can be cleaned, repaired and treated in the same way that *Sidmouth's* have been, with that particular Bulleid having recently had new rivets fitted to the frame extensions, plus a new dragbox fitted.

The overhaul of SLL's BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80104 also continues on the boiler at Tyseley, where a new front tubeplate has been made and is ready for fitting, while tube holes on the rear end of the boiler have been built up; tube fitting was expected to occur before early March.

SLL has also supported the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge by presenting a replica Hawkinge nameplate to the museum's chairman, Dave Brocklehurst MBE.



With no less than four members of the SR Battle of Britain class amid its fleet, SLL has supported the BoB Museum at Hawkinge by donating a replica nameplate for No. 34069 *Hawkinge* to the collection there. SIMON TROY/SLL

Oldest miniature railway in Scotland hits 75!

By Hugh Dougherty

THE Strathaven Miniature Railway, Scotland's oldest railway in its category, is celebrating notching up three-quarters of a century of running round in circles on its 7¼in gauge track at Strathaven Park in South Lanarkshire. The SMR opened on Saturday, May 14, 1949, when its first train was pulled by 2-6-0 *Margaret*. On Tuesday, May 14, 2024, the same locomotive will haul an anniversary special to mark the historic event.

Strathaven Model Society secretary Ian Samson said: "We realised that when Kerr's Miniature Railway at Arbroath closed in 2020, we had fallen heir to the title of Scotland's oldest miniature railway.

"In heritage railway terms, when you think about it, we actually predate the Talylyn and the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway, the UK's and Scotland's first heritage railway respectively. The B&K didn't run its first train until 1981, so we have been around for a very long time."

The SMR's first train of 75 years ago will be re-enacted on May 14, and miniature railway clubs from all over Scotland will bring along their steam locomotives to mark the



event, running on the SMR's 7¼in, 5in, 3½in and 2½in tracks, with the main emphasis on original locomotive *Margaret*, still a stalwart of the line in action, on the main 0.4-mile circuit.

A public celebration is to be held on Saturday, June 22, when Provost Margaret Cooper, of South Lanarkshire Council, will afford the society a civic reception, with all park activities being free for the day to attract as many visitors as possible to the railway. Passenger donations on the day will be donated to a local hospice.

"We estimate that we have carried about 765,000 passengers over the last 75 years," said Ian. "We plan to be running when we reach our centenary in 2049, and 'the wee train' – as the railway is known to generations of Strathaven folk – has earned its place in the community.

"We have produced a logo for the 75th, which will be on sale as a badge. We get a steady stream of enthusiasts visiting us during our season when we run every Saturday and Sunday from March to the end of September, and visitors will be especially welcome in this, our special 75th year."



This early picture of 2-6-0 *Margaret* and the original carriages used when the Strathaven Miniature Railway opened has been discovered in a local archive. SMR



Above: Attention for *Margaret* between runs. This Strathaven stalwart is in fine fettle after spending 75 years pulling passengers. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Left: Proudly proclaiming that the line has notched up 75 years, as well as being Scotland's oldest miniature railway, is this badge specially created for the line's historic milestone. SMR



Full steam ahead for 2-6-0 *Margaret*, which will re-enact the first Strathaven Miniature Railway train of May 14, 1949, on the same date 75 years later. HUGH DOUGHERTY

New NRM exhibition highlights disability within rail travel

GO As You Please is a new temporary exhibition at the National Railway Museum in York, highlighting underrepresented and authentic stories about disability alongside 20th century railway artwork.

Part of the national Curating for Change programme, it explores rail travel from the perspectives of people with lived experience of D/deafness, disability, and neurodivergence.

It includes a specially-commissioned original artwork called *Shifting Landscapes* by neurodivergent artist Hayley Wall.

Object labels for the exhibition include quotes from community participants and, in a first for the museum, the exhibition includes many accessible features, such as QR codes that lead to an audio descriptive tour, portable object labels, and a British Sign Language exhibition overview.

'Eye-catching'

The exhibition includes a film called *We Do Get Out and About*, created by Manchester-based filmmaker David Bewick, which has subtitles, a transcript, and British Sign Language interpretation.

Go As You Please is curated by Amy Thraves-Connor, curating for change fellow at the NRM. She said: "I hope visitors are drawn to the exhibition for its eye-catching artwork and are encouraged through this artwork to engage with stories they otherwise might not have thought relevant to them.

"The unexpected narrative explores the experience of travel and destination from a range of often-overlooked perspectives. I want visitors to the exhibition to make their own interpretations and memories from these artworks and feel encouraged to question their thoughts around disability."

Go As You Please is on display now in the NRM's Highlights Gallery in Great Hall until June.

→ For more information, visit www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/whats-on/go-as-you-please



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Paper mill reunion for former Bowaters locomotives

By Owen Hayward

TWO locomotives that were once owned by the same paper mill – but ran on two different gauges of track – have been reunited for the first time in preservation after moving to go on display together in the One:One Collection.

As reported last issue, the Bluebell Railway's SECR P class 0-6-0T No. 178 moved to the Margate museum on February 21 for undercover storage and display. It was then joined the following day by the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway's Kerr Stuart Brazil class 0-4-2ST No. 926 *Leader*, both locomotives having previously been employed together at the Kent mill complex.

Rich history

Paper manufacture began at Sittingbourne in 1708, before the Sittingbourne Paper Mill was completed in 1769 with materials brought in by barge along Milton Creek. A 2ft 6in gauge horse-drawn tramway was introduced in 1906 to convey the deliveries to the mill but was quickly converted to accommodate steam operations by 1908, with *Leader* and classmate *Premier* being the first two locomotives to appear on the line. As the creek silted up, a deepwater dock was built on the Swale Estuary and the railway was extended in 1916 to



Kerr Stuart Brazil class *Leader* on its last day in service on May 22, 2022. It is set to go on display at the One:One collection alongside another former Bowaters locomotive, P class No. 178 from the Bluebell Railway. OWEN HAYWARD

connect to this. A second mill opened at Kemsley Down in 1924, which saw the railway reach its maximum length of 3½ miles, with sidings and double-track sections bringing the physical track total to 10 miles.

A standard gauge line was constructed to connect the dock and mill to the Southern Railway branch which connected Sittingbourne to the Isle of Sheppey, on which two Bagnall 0-4-0ST locomotives were employed, the first from 1935 and the second from 1942. One was scrapped in 1954, and the second, No. 2542 *Jubilee*, eventually entered into preservation at the East Anglian Railway Museum in Essex in 1976.

To replace the scrapped locomotive, Bowaters purchased P No. 178 from BR; the locomotive had been loaned

to shunt at Ridham Docks in 1953 and again in 1956 so was no stranger to the complex and was thus seen in the same vicinity as *Leader*. While there, No. 178 was painted into SECR lined green, but with that extant company's branding replaced with the name *Pioneer II* (spoken as Pioneer the Second).

Preservation first

The P was withdrawn in 1969 after suffering severe damage to the cylinders, with *Leader* also being withdrawn in the same year – just before the narrow gauge line was preserved.

Margate will be the first time both locomotives have been seen together since No. 178 departed after being sold to the Bluebell.



P class 0-6-0T No. 178 with sister No. 323 *Bluebell* inside the engine shed at Sheffield Park on March 28, 2013. No. 178 was withdrawn from service in October 2020 pending its next 10-yearly overhaul. ROBIN JONES

A SKLR statement said: "The railway has limited covered storage for its locos and as the 1905-built Brazil class locomotive is expected to be out of service for some time, retiring to the seaside is the best option. The locomotive was operational until 2022, when its 10-year boiler certificate expired. It then joined the back of the maintenance/overhaul queue. *Triumph* retired from service in 2008 to await its overhaul and returned to the engine shed for that to start last year, however, the damage to the paint and metalwork is stark and adds to the overhaul cost, so the opportunity to move *Leader* to dry storage was snapped up! We would like to thank the One:One Collection, for arranging for the relocation and safe keeping of the engine."

Special celebration for 175 years of Essex viaduct

By Owen Hayward

THE East Anglian Railway Museum is holding a special weekend to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the landmark Chappel Viaduct.

Spanning the Colne valley, it was built by the Colchester, Stour Valley, Sudbury & Halstead Railway under the direction of engineer Peter Bruff, who was also instrumental in the development of both Clacton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze as resorts.

The first train ran across the viaduct on Monday, July 2, 1849. On entering the branch line, the engine's chimney became entangled with the triumphal arch that had been erected, causing the arch to fall onto the engine, which continued to Sudbury adorned with foliage and woodwork.

As part of the commemoration, a new exhibition by renowned Chappel-based artist Wladyslaw Mirecki will be staged at the museum

Goods Shed between June 15 and August 18.

On display will be Mirecki's 64 watercolours of the viaduct's arches. He has painted each of the 32 arches from both east and west perspectives. It is fortunate that the museum has a space adequate for the exhibiting of the complete set.

Born in Chelmsford of Polish parents, Mirecki is self-taught and has painted all his life. He painted while studying for his science degree at Kingston Polytechnic, London, between 1975 and 1978, and then during his time as an industrial designer and while co-proprietor of Chappel Galleries (from 1986 to the present day).

The viaduct was built with seven million bricks, making it one of the largest brick-built railway structures in the UK. The Stockport and Ouse Valley viaducts used approximately 11 million. For comparison, the Stanley Dock warehouse in Liverpool,

the world's largest brick-built warehouse, now 550 apartments, took 27 million and Battersea Power Station six million to construct.

Sited on the Gainsborough line between Marks Tey and Sudbury, the 32-arch structure lies just to the south of Chappel and Wakes Colne station, where the East Anglian Railway Museum is located.

The viaduct was under threat in the 1970s when the Government announced that the Marks Tey-Sudbury line would close in 1974, with the viaduct to be demolished.

The plan was abandoned in the aftermath of the oil crisis triggered by the 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war, which had raised concerns about the future availability of petrol.

In 1967, the viaduct was Grade II-listed as being of special interest and in 2002 it became a scheduled monument due to its role in the 'stop line' strategy developed to respond in the event of an invasion in 1941.

The Historic England listing states: "The defence line at Chappel Viaduct represents the survival, in a single grouping, of the whole spectrum of defensive structures deployed along the 'stop lines'.

"Examples of all four major pillbox types deployed along the 'stop lines' are represented, and there is also excellent survival of the complementary defence mechanisms of anti-tank cubes and anti-tank cylinders, as well as two spigot mortar gun emplacements.

"Of the individual elements of the defence line, several represent exceptional survivals: the FW3/28 artillery pillbox is the last of its type to survive on the Eastern Command Line."

The 175th anniversary of the structure presents an opportunity to celebrate its place in history.

Check <https://earm.co.uk/events/chappel-viaduct-display/> for details of opening times

LNER paddle steamer Waverley bucks the trend

By Hugh Dougherty

FOR the first time since he became general manager at Waverley Excursions five years ago, Paul Semple has not had to launch an appeal to pay for the famous LNER-built paddle steamer's winter repairs and dry docking.

"We carried a record 157,000 passengers in 2023 and lost hardly any sailings to weather or technical failures, so, the result is that we have enough to cover everything this winter," Paul said.

"We've bucked some quite gloomy trends in the preservation world at

present, with some of the best-known heritage railways such as the Great Central and Swanage having to launch appeals to keep going.

"Our success has been down to the cost of fuel oil dropping from a record 94p per litre in 2022 to 69p last year, while we attracted new passengers by keeping our timetable fresh. That involved visiting piers such as Warrenpoint and Shoreham-on-Sea for the first time and returning to others we hadn't been to for some years, such as Troon, Craignure, Tenby, Portishead and Ipswich."

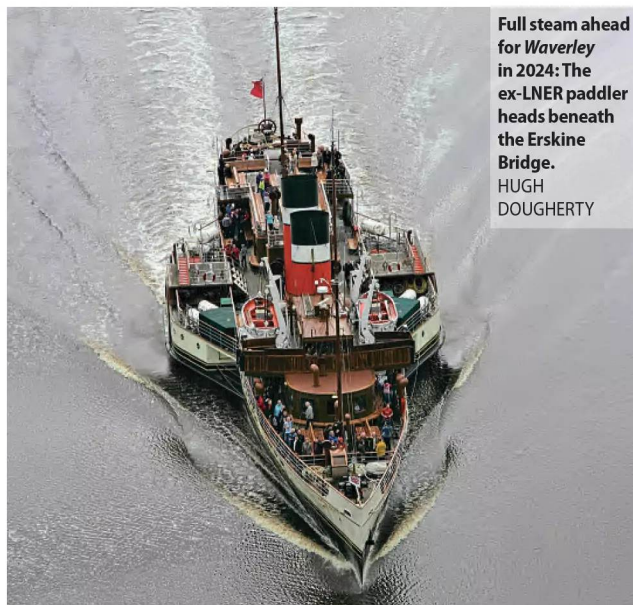
Season highlight

Paul promises more new and old-favourite destinations this season, while he says that the highlight will take place in August when *Waverley* meets *PS Kingswear Castle* on the River Dart, again offering something new to attract passengers.

Waverley Excursions is also offering free travel to anyone aged under 16 when accompanied by a fare-paying adult in a bid to popularise the paddler among children, families and young people.

"We are doing this for the first time as we want to establish the boat with children as they are our future passengers," he explained. "I first saw *Waverley* as a wee boy and was smitten. I want other children to be the same!"

Paul said it is easier to freshen the timetable than it is for a heritage railway, which runs between fixed



Full steam ahead for *Waverley* in 2024: The ex-LNER paddler heads beneath the Erskine Bridge. HUGH DOUGHERTY

points, but he feels that success will flow from applying the same principle as the ship. He says that this includes value for money and effective marketing, using what's appropriate and where.

"We had 30,000 leaflets delivered to home in Argyll and Bute and it really paid off, while we use local papers extensively where we call and find that this generates passengers.

"One of the things that I'm sure many heritage railways have already done, but what we're doing for the first time, is to commission an economic impact study. We know that the ship and attractions such as heritage railways do have an impact on local economies and tourism and

we have estimated ours in the past, but this study will give us firm figures to use when seeking future support for the ship from a variety of public and private bodies and communities."

Plan ahead

Waverley has been undergoing winter maintenance, including deck timber renewal, with dry docking taking place at Greenock before the first sailing of the season from Glasgow on Friday, May 17. Over the season, the world's last sea-going paddler will visit Northern Ireland, North Wales, the Bristol Channel, south coast piers and the Thames. Full details are at www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk



Waverley general manager Paul Semple has plenty to smile about as he inspects decking repairs on board the paddle steamer. HUGH DOUGHERTY



Above: Artist Wladyslaw Mericki, who has made two paintings of each of the 32 arches of Chappel Viaduct. EARM

Right: Bulleid Merchant Navy 4-6-2 No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific* crosses Chappel Viaduct with 'The Alresford Adventurer' charter over the Sudbury branch on November 4, 2001. STEVE KNIGHT/CREATIVE COMMONS



THE FRESH GREEN LIVERIES OF SPRING!

With most of the population counting the days – and probably the hours – to the arrival of spring after a dull, windy and rain-drenched winter, **John Titlow** offers advice on how to take the best seasonal lineside views.

There are two ways of defining when spring starts and finishes. Astronomical spring starts on March 20, ending this year on June 21, and meteorological spring starts on March 1, ending on May 31. However, in these days of global warming, nothing is certain anymore and there is no predetermined time for its beginning or end. By the start of February, you begin to feel the heat of the sun – and it at this time that the days become noticeably longer, especially in the afternoons.

I was walking the Seven Valley Railway line at Highley in early February and wished I had left my winter jacket at home, with

temperatures into double figures, but later that same week it was nearer zero. Something is very wrong.

There is a historic proverb that sums up the end of spring: 'Ne'er cast a clout 'til May be out'. 'Clout' in Old English refers to clothing, in particular winter coats, which should not be cast aside too early. One moment you can be bathed in warm sunshine and the next day frozen in a bitter wind. One guide towards the end of spring historically used to be the May blossom on the hawthorn tree, and when this finished, it tended to be the start of summer.

One bush that provides splendid lineside colour is the gorse, with its bright yellow



The 9.05pm from Bridgnorth with the Great Western set hauled by new-build Saint No. 2999 *Lady of Legend* climbs out of Stanley Cutting after departing from Highley on April 17, 2021. The hawthorn is in full bloom.

flowers, which can often continue into the summer. Ground-based flowers like primroses, daffodils and bluebells can also add colour but tend not to stand out so much among the grass.

Two lines have been named after spring flowers, the Bluebell Railway and the Primrose Line (the sadly long-gone and much-lamented GWR Kingsbridge branch), but none have been named after gorse or hawthorn, to my knowledge, despite both flowering in spring.

Just because it is spring, it does not mean the end of frosts, or even snow – many a good frosty morning in spring can produce wonderful steam effects, even into May.

With the sun climbing higher, it starts to open up locations where the sun never reaches in winter. Low sun in early spring throughout the day can still give reasonable glints.

The sun moves at 15 degrees an hour, and when the clocks spring forward it makes a considerable difference, especially in the early mornings: this opens up many locations, with the sun further round in the east.

This hour-earlier sunrise can make or break a location, depending on train timings. A good example of this is the footpath crossing at the top of the SVR's Stanley Cutting. With trains departing Highley emerging from the cutting, the sun reaches into the cutting,

LMS Princess Coronation Pacific No. 46233 *Duchess of Sutherland* climbs the last bit to Ais Gill summit on May 23, 2013.



further illuminating the train much more (see photograph left of GWR 4-6-0 No. 2999 *Lady of Legend*)

West winds in particular can be a killer in the mornings, especially with any sort of exhaust, because it blows over the train and can ruin a photograph.

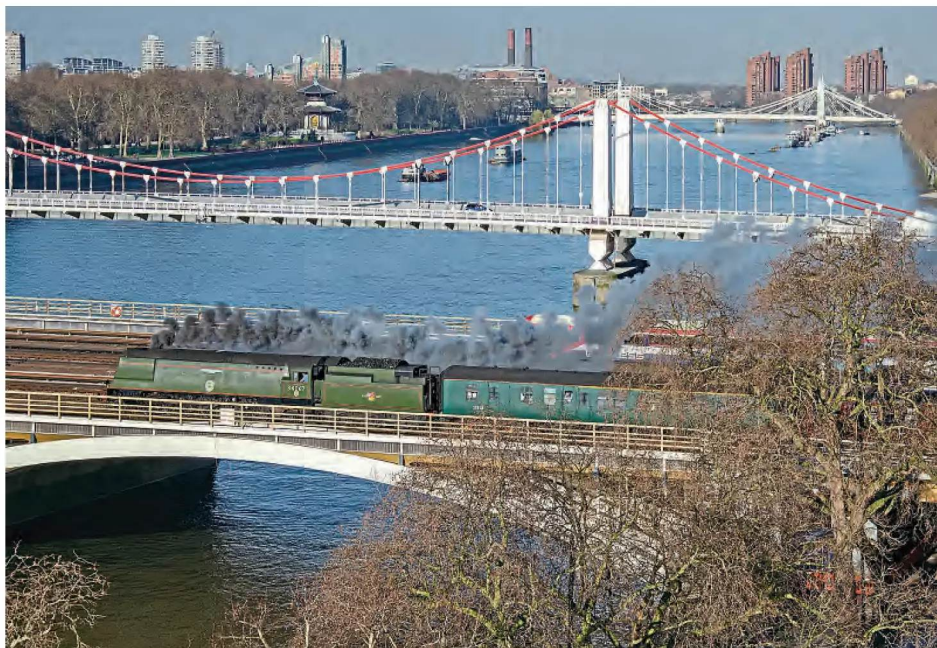
One feature which can be extremely difficult is the fogs and early-morning mists. Don't give up because occasionally something special can be achieved.

The months of spring

Despite the showers, personally I have found April to be the better spring month as the leaves start to appear, giving a great variety of greens before the uniform green of summer. After a storm, the clarity of light can improve because dust is pulled down, out of the atmosphere.

March sees little leaf growth, with trees still resembling winter, and May can get too warm for exhaust. The end of May is very close to the summer solstice, when the sun is at its closest, reaching its highest point of the year in the northern hemisphere.

In this country, spring starts earlier in the south, slowly moving north. Places sheltered from the wind can show buds early, and exposed locations – particularly on the fells



Looking upstream, Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* crosses the Thames on the Grosvenor Bridge after departing London Victoria; despite being April 20, 2013, the trees show no sign of blossoming.



Bulleid Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34046 *Braunton* leaves Whitehouse Farm Tunnel on April 13, 2014.



A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* running through Hadley Wood on the slow line early on March 29, 2012.

and mountains – can be many days behind.

Many preserved railways hold spring steam galas, notably the SVR, Bluebell, Gloucestershire Warwickshire, East Lancashire, West Somerset and the Keighley & Worth Valley to name a few. The East Somerset and Llangollen are recent additions to staging these, and all are very popular.

Main line tour companies start to run more day trips, taking advantage of the longer days. It can be very comfortable sitting in your carriage and listening to the locomotive working hard in the dark, but there is nothing like looking out at the countryside, especially over the Cumbrian Fells, in daylight.

Trains running through woods and as a background can be rather pleasant, with the exhaust highlighting green variants.

Main line locations

The Settle to Carlisle line is a great favourite for linesiders throughout the year, especially in winter with the possibility of snow on the hills, but many locations are not possible because the sun is not high enough above the hills to get onto the line. The climb along Mallerstang Edge sees no sun at all in winter because it is hidden by trees alongside the line, and there is also the issue of the high fells nearby the line.

Sun gets on the lower locations like Birkett Common, where it is raised on an embankment, but even this can be problematic.

Ais Gill in winter tends to get no sun in the afternoon when the train passes heading south because it has already disappeared behind the hills. Yet, in the middle of spring with the higher sun, Ais Gill works very well and is a popular location. Many more locations open up in spring (as seen in the photograph of LMS Princess Coronation 4-6-2 No. 46233 *Duchess of Sutherland*).

Lineside trees and vegetation can be a problem. In steam days, most linesides were burned back to avoid fires; all this has stopped now. Lineside trees create their own problems in autumn when the leaves fall, causing loss of traction. Many linesides have now become mini nature reserves.

Tunnels and cuttings can also be problematic, but in spring they open up as locations. Hadley Wood station on the East Coast Main Line is a point in question because the sun has to get above the tunnel and be in the east for a Down train in the morning on the slow line (see the photographs of A1 Peppercorn 4-6-2 No. 60163 *Tornado* and BR Britannia Pacific No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*).

Sonning Cutting was always difficult and needed midday sun in the spring to get into it properly. Sadly, it is now ruined by catenary (see the photograph of GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle*).

Fields of yellow rape seed flowers can add considerable colour to a photograph, which is best taken at height, looking down on the train. Whitehouse Farm Tunnel on the Marylebone line was a good location for this, but the footbridge has now been encased to stop idiots throwing items at passing trains (as pictured top left with West Country light Pacific No. 34046 *Braunton*).

With the warmth of our large cities, spring can come earlier than in the countryside, but there can be anomalies. Take the photograph of Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* crossing the Thames on Grosvenor Bridge after departing Victoria early on morning in the middle of April: the trees in Battersea Park on the South Bank show little sign of being in leaf, rather looking more like winter.

Heritage railway locations

Two examples which depict great variety of greens are the views of Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons No. 31 at Fawley Hill on May 20 and, just over a month later, that of Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT *Eigiau* on June 25 at the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway. Again, something is wrong with our weather patterns because you would expect all greens to be the same approaching July.

One of my favourite effects is dappled lighting: the locomotive has to be in sun, but shadows across the carriages gives a dramatic effect. LNER D49 4-4-0 No. 62712 (246) *Morayshire* in black paid a fleeting visit to the Nene Valley Railway a week before the official start of meteorological spring. Faint greens were starting to appear on the trees; should they have been further forward or in full leaf, it would have been impossible to take this shot.

The Severn Valley is fortunate to have many places with woods alongside its line, which tend to be clear of lineside vegetation. Eardington Bank, Hay Bridge and approaching Bewdley Tunnel are good examples of this and are recommended locations.

On the Nene Valley, it is worth the long walk to Caster where the River Nene bends tightly around. If you time it right, buttercups are in the meadow and the willows turn a lovely shade of green in springtime.



Greens are starting to appear on the trees a week before spring officially begins as No. 62712 climbs towards Ferry Meadows on the Nene Valley Railway through the cutting in dappled lighting on February 21, 2015.



The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has Chicken Curve, with trees and a nice hill in the background. There is also the road bridge at Stanton as the train approaches through the cutting to Broadway; the trees here produce some lovely spring colour.

The Swanage Railway has several places where the line runs alongside woods: around Harmans Cross, Dickers Crossing and from Corfe Castle are good locations.

An example of morning mists is the picture of LSWR T9 4-4-0 No. 30120 on the Swanage. The approaching shot was not great, but the going away worked well because the sun was powerful enough to penetrate, giving a misty atmospheric glint on the locomotive. In processing suites, using the haze filter and contrast helped to push through the fog



Above: At the private Fawley Hill Railway, Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1026 of 1913 Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons No. 31 runs through a springtime scene passing a herd of alpacas on May 20, 2016.

Left: In thick fog on the Swanage Railway on March 14, 2014, LSWR T9 4-4-0 No. 30120 glints through. The haze filter and contrast were pushed hard to see through the fog.



British Railways Standard 7 4-6-2 No. 70013 *Oliver Cromwell* powers through Hadley Wood on April 11, 2011.



GWR 4-6-0 No. 5029 *Nunney Castle* heads through Sonning Cutting on April 24, 2011.



without removing it. Once the mist lifted, it was unbroken sunshine throughout the rest of the day.

Another line which starts regular services in early spring is the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, offering plenty of opportunities along most of its length for spring photography.

The climb from Grosmont to Goathland runs through and alongside trees, and with the sun getting higher, it opens up many locations, especially Esk Valley and Beck Hole.

Once the clocks change, Darneholme is a popular place for photographing the first train of the day.

Of course, we all have our favourite railway and locations, but do try to seek out different places for variety.

By June 21, the leaves have become clearly uniform: the photograph of BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73082 *Camelot* climbing Freshfield Bank on the Bluebell is a prime example of this.



S Severn Valley Railway flagship GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* heading early-morning goods out of Bridgnorth climbs through Oldbury Cutting on April 15, 2023.



Running through the woods in late springtime at the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway, Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT No. 5668 of 1912 *Eigiau* hauls a short rake of hoppers on June 25, 2015.



GWR 4-6-0s Nos. 4965 *Road Ashton Hall* and No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* double-head through Cockwood Harbour on April 27, 2013.

My advice to photographers is to get out before the lineside vegetation starts to grow too much, especially the infernal ferns and stingers which become prolific and ruin many a location.

Be prepared for April showers and enjoy the warm sunshine... but never have your winter coat, hat and gloves too far away! **HR**



BR Standard 5MT 4-6-0 No. 73082 *Camelot* climbs Freshfield Bank with a regular Bluebell Railway service train on June 21, the astronomical end of spring.



Merchant Navy Pacific No. 35006 *Peninsular & Oriental S N Co.* departs Gotherington, heading for Cheltenham, on May 14, 2023.



On its second run since overhaul, BR Standard 7 Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia* rounds the curve passing Woofferton on the Welsh Marshes line on May 4, 2022.



LNER A4 Pacific 60019 *Bittern*, masquerading as scrapped sister No. 4492 Dominion of New Zealand, approaches Welwyn North with the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain IV' on April 16, 2011.





HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

February 26 saw the final day in steam for the Great Central Railway's BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92214, which has bowed out of service following expiration of its boiler certification. Having spent the weekend operating its last public passenger services, it is pictured during the 37042 Charters' photographic day, which saw it paired with the mixed goods rake. As the successful day drew to a close, the final runpasts at Kinchley Lane were graced with a double rainbow overhead. MARTIN CREESE

Duke of Gloucester will be based at Crewe for 10 years

By Robin Jones

UNIQUE BR 8P Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* is to be based at Crewe under a new 10-year operating agreement signed with the Royal Scot Locomotive & General Trust.

Once its current overhaul at Tyseley Locomotive Works is completed in June or July, the agreement with the BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust will see No. 71000 initially move to the Severn Valley Railway for testing and commissioning before moving to Crewe, from where it will undergo loaded test runs, then becoming available to main line tours, interspersed with periods of operation on heritage lines.

No. 71000 will be operated primarily by Locomotive Services (TOC) Limited and will haul Saphos Trains trips.

The Duke will become a key member of the high-profile fleet of locomotives based at Crewe, including *Royal Scot*, *Britannia*, *Blue Peter* (which was set to undergo test running on the SVR in March), *Mayflower*, *Braunton* and *Sir Nigel Gresley*.

Trevor Tuckley, chairman of the BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust, said: "We are delighted to be part of this stable of very special steam locomotives. The Duke was built in 1954 and was intended to be the first of a class which would see steam continue until the main lines were converted to electric traction. However, BR decided to introduce diesels instead."

"The Duke was then scrapped as the only unfinished prototype. Against the odds, Colin Rhodes decided that this machine should be saved for future

generations to see in working order, the final design of British Express Steam Locomotive, and so started the 'impossible dream.'

"He returned it to the main line in the configuration it was scrapped, plus the addition of a Kylchap exhaust."

"This latest overhaul has carried out the improvements that we believe Robert Riddles, the designer, would have done if he had been allowed the time. This completes the 'impossible dream.'

"I would like to thank Michael Whitehouse and Alastair Meanley for their help and assistance during the Duke's overhaul at Tyseley."

'Unique story'

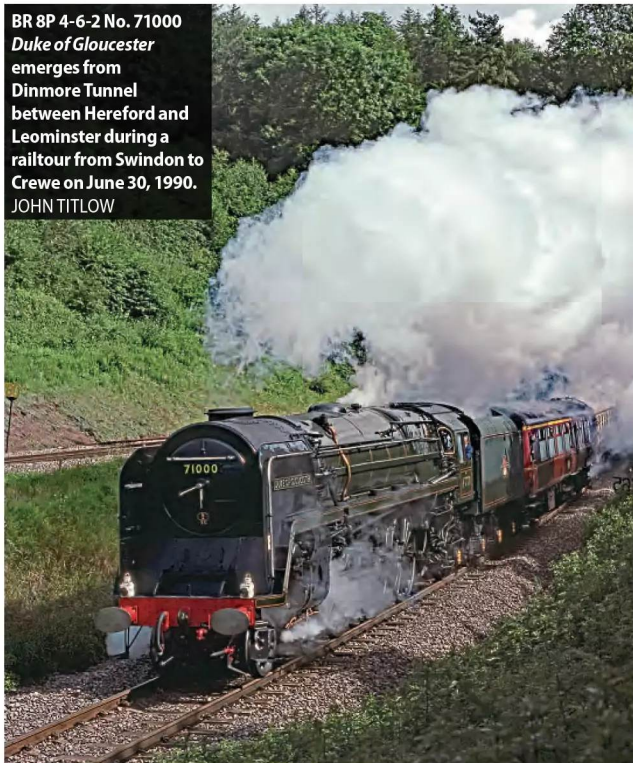
Jeremy Hosking, trustee of the Royal Scot Locomotive & General Trust and chairman of Locomotive Services (TOC) Limited, added: "We are delighted to have been given this wonderful opportunity to work with a like-minded organisation which clearly shares our passion for the protection and careful use of iconic steam locomotives."

"No. 71000 is a locomotive with a unique story, offering a vision of what might have been. It is clearly supported and managed by a professional, dedicated and enthusiastic team whose outlook is forward-thinking while also holding pragmatic values we hold dear at RSL> and within the Locomotive Services Group."

"I very much look forward to seeing the Duke heading our restored Mk.1 coaches for everyone to enjoy."

Withdrawn from service in 1962 after just eight years' service, the

BR 8P 4-6-2 No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* emerges from Dinmore Tunnel between Hereford and Leominster during a railtour from Swindon to Crewe on June 30, 1990.
JOHN TITLOW



locomotive was saved by the 71000 Preservation Society and moved from Barry scrapyard to a new home at Loughborough on the Great Central Railway on April 24, 1974, to be joined seven months later by its new tender.

No. 71000 returned to steam on the GCR in May 1986 and its formal recommissioning was undertaken by HRH The Duke of Gloucester at

Rothley station on November 11 that year. After an illustrious second main line career, including its performance in the September 30-October 3, 1995, 'Shap Trials', when it broke the record for the fastest northbound ascent and achieved the highest equivalent drawbar horsepower (dhdhp) figures during the event, it was withdrawn in 2012 when its boiler ticket expired.

Locomotive Services Ltd duo LNER B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower* and LMS 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot* pass through a very wet Atherstone with the 5Z61 8.55 Crewe Holding Sidings to Southall light engine and position move on February 21. GRAHAM NUTTALL



'Exmoor Coast Pullman' is all set for a Minehead getaway

MIDLAND Pullman has announced a trip under the title of 'Exmoor Coast Pullman' on Saturday, May 18, with a chance to travel on heritage metals.

Starting from Whitchurch on the Welsh Marches line, the tour is planned to head south to pick up passengers at Shrewsbury, before heading for Wolverhampton to collect more passengers at Wellington, Telford Central and Codsall en route.

After Wolverhampton, the tour will head for Worcester, picking up at Stourbridge Junction, Kidderminster, Droitwich Spa and Worcester Shrub Hill, from where it is scheduled to run to Bristol and on to Taunton to join the West Somerset Railway.

The train will then travel the full length of the heritage line for either a stop at Dunster or the terminus at Minehead. Passengers will have two hours to explore, before returning to Whitchurch via the same route.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining or first class. For more details and to book, visit midlandpullman.com

Sir Nigel Gresley is heading to Chester this May

LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* has been booked to haul a Steam Dreams trip from London to Chester on Saturday, May 11. Departing from Euston, No. 60007

will head along the West Coast Main Line to pick up additional passengers at Milton Keynes Central and Northampton. From here, the tour will continue to Crewe and then

take the North Wales Main Line to Chester. Passengers will have four hours to explore the city of Chester before returning diesel-hauled to London.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class and premium standard class.

→ For more details and to book, visit steamdreams.co.uk

A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* out on its first test run following winter maintenance, from Crewe to Chester, passing Beeston Castle Hill with a strong crosswind on February 26. KEVIN WHITEHURST



Steam Dreams offers 'Shrewsbury in Springtime'

By Tim Hobman

STEAM Dreams is to run a trip on Saturday, April 27 under the title of 'Shrewsbury in Springtime', with a variety of off-train options.

Starting from Paddington, the tour will head west along the Great Western Main Line to pick up passengers at Slough and Reading, before heading north to Didcot Parkway and Oxford. From here, the train plans to take the Cotswold Line to Shrewsbury.

It is hoped that the outward journey will feature some rare metals, such as the Royal Oak carriage loop, Hinksey Yard reception road, and the Down Bescot goods loop, but these are ALL subject to Network Rail approval. At Shrewsbury, there is the option of just exploring the town or

taking one of the off-train options. The first of these is a cruise of the River Severn, or passengers may wish to visit Ironbridge and Blists Hill Museum.

Road coaches will be provided to the first stop of Ironbridge, where there is the chance to walk across the legendary bridge, and then customers will be transported to the Victorian world of Blists Hill Museum for about two hours to look around. The third off-train option is the chance to visit the National Trust's 18th-century mansion of Attingham Park.

For those who choose to remain on board the train, Steam Dreams is offering a circular tour of Cheshire and Lancashire featuring some rare track in the capable hands of a Class 66 from GB Railfreight.

First heading into Wales, the train will pass through Gobowen and Wrexham to Rossett Junction. Crossing back into England, the next destination is Chester, where the train will pass through the Down and Up goods loops and take the line to Warrington.

Turning east at Mickle Trafford Junction, the tour is planned to head towards Manchester but will divert onto the freight-only line at Northwich before turning back toward Crewe on the main line.

Before reaching Crewe, the train will again take a freight line to avoid the busy station before heading back to Shrewsbury.

After picking up passengers at Shrewsbury, the return journey is planned to take the Welsh Marches line through Hereford and

Abergavenny. The train will then take the Maindee Curve to avoid Newport and set down passengers at Bristol Parkway before returning to London.

Again, the return journey will hopefully feature some rare metals, including Hereford Down relief, Maindee Hereford loop, East Usk Up and Down branch to Up relief at 156.74, Up relief to Up main at 156.03, Swindon Up main to Up Swindon reception at 77.00, and Up relief at Stevenston, subject to approval.

Tickets are available in first class dining and non-dining, and standard class, with a discount for juniors.

There are supplements for the various additional offerings.

For more information and to book onto the tour, visit steamdreams.co.uk

Bahamas to head Railway Touring Company's 'The Royal Duchy' tour

ON Sunday, May 5, the Railway Touring Company will host a tour between Bristol and Par under the title of 'The Royal Duchy', with the rostered locomotive being LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas*, which will haul the trip throughout.

Departing from Bristol Temple Meads and heading southwest, the tour will pick up additional

passengers at Yatton and Taunton. Leaving Taunton, there will then be a climb to Whiteball Summit before passing Tiverton Parkway and arriving at Exeter St. David's for a water stop and the opportunity for more passengers to join the trip.

The route from Exeter will see No. 45596 head across the Dawlish Sea Wall and the South Devon banks

to Plymouth, where passengers will have the option to leave the train and spend five hours exploring the city.

After Plymouth, the train will take those who opt to stay on board across the River Tamar via the Royal Albert Bridge into Cornwall to the final destination of Par for a break of three hours. Buses will then be laid

on to take passengers to the seaside town of Fowey or the harbour village of Charlestown. After turning and servicing at St. Blazey, *Bahamas* returns to Bristol via the same route.

Tickets are available in premier dining, first class and standard class, with a discount for junior travellers. For more details and to book, visit www.railwaytouring.net



The way we were: Two Class 50s in multiple, barely finding room at Glasgow Central's Platform 1, head up their Mk.1 coaches on a London service in April 1974, immediately before electrification. HUGH DOUGHERTY



On Monday, May 6, 1974, Class 87 No. 87015, complete with Electric Scots headboard, attracts plenty of attention at the head of the first Down Royal Scot at Glasgow Central's Platform 2, as it waits to leave for Euston, due five hours later. HUGH DOUGHERTY

Fifty years of Electric Scots to be marked at Glasgow Central

By Hugh Dougherty

PLANS are underway to mark 50 years since the introduction of the Electric Scots, the brand name given by BR to the new electric trains running between London and Glasgow and introduced on Monday May 6, 1974.

The trains, comprising Class 86 and 87 locomotives hauling air-conditioned Mk.2 coaches, revolutionised travel between the two cities, with promotional material boasting of the Royal Scot, still named, and the crack train on the West Coast Main Line completing the journey in five hours.

Slower journeys had been the norm as the overhead wires were extended north from Weaver Junction, terminal point of the original Euston to Crewe electrification, for several years as new signalling was installed, overhead line masts and feeder stations installed, bridges raised, and new track laid.

Regular Glasgow-London trains, headed by two Class 50s and working in multiple, were diverted on to the former Glasgow & South Western Railway to allow work to be done

on the former Caledonian main line via Beattock, with diversions south of Carlisle, often being via the Settle and Carlisle line. BR planners fully expected that the S&C would close once electrification of the main line was complete, with the Nith Valley line being singled south of Kilmarnock, both proposals appearing in a report of 1968 which set out and costed the scheme to the Government.

Plans being considered

A spokesman for Avanti West Coast said the anniversary is on the company's radar and that the possibility of working with Locomotive Services Limited to bring one of its Class 87s up to Glasgow Central on May 6 was being looked at. There are difficulties, however, because of the continuing ASLEF dispute which, said the company, makes timetable planning difficult, and there are several planned West Coast Main Line blockages scheduled to be in place on May 4-6. Other thoughts revolve combining the golden jubilee of the Electric Scots with a celebration of the completion

of the refurbishment of Avanti's present-day successors, the Class 390 Pendolinos.

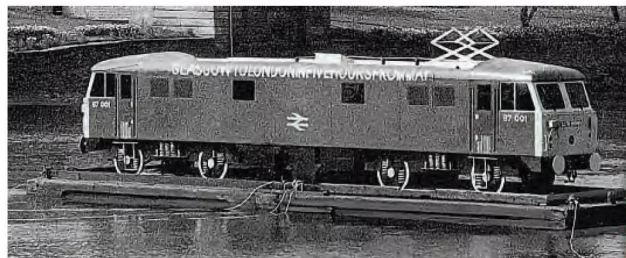
The departure of the first electrically-hauled Royal Scot was marked by BR Scottish and London Midland Region top brass, while Glasgow Provost, Sir William Gray, waved the train away as the Glasgow Police Pipe Band played it out of Glasgow Central, hauled by No. 87015, one of the new locos built for the electric services. For four weeks before, a full-scale replica of Class 87 No. 87001 floated on a barge in the Clyde, upriver from Central Station Bridge, emblazoned with the words 'Glasgow-London Five Hours from May'. Local media hailed it as a bold PR stunt, and the locomotives captured the imagination of Glaswegians, alerting them to the new 100mph electric services southwards.

Glasgow man Dennis Daly travelled regularly to Euston on his way to and from Cambridge University, where he was a post-graduate student in the years immediately before and after electrification. He said: "The electric trains transformed travel on the Glasgow-London line.

The five-hour journey, in really comfortable, air-conditioned coaches was truly revolutionary. During the electrification work, for one or two years previously, I became used to travelling diesel-hauled down the Nith Valley line and sometimes, south of Carlisle, over the Settle and Carlisle. The entire Glasgow-London journey could take as much as seven or eight hours. I still have the line guide that was given out then to publicise the service. It makes fascinating reading today, especially as the industry described for places such as Glasgow, Motherwell and Crewe, is largely gone. There's no doubt that the nationalised BR took did everything it could to market the new trains, and the service improvements were wonderful."

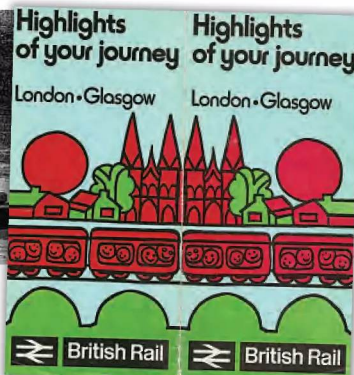
Winning scheme

The extension of the overhead wires from Weaver Junction to Motherwell cost £38 million for new signalling and £36 million for electrification, and BR had to fight for government money against stiff competition for road-building projects. A large part of the reason for the new, fast services, was to give the railways a more level playing field in competition with air services between Glasgow and London, and the move won traffic back to the railway. Much was made at the time of the electric locomotives 'flattening' the gradients leading up to Shap and Beattock Summits, which were real challenges to steam and its diesel replacements, even two class 50s working in multiple, while line improvements allowed the electrics to achieve a five-hour inter-city timing 50 years ago, just 25 minutes more than the best timings on the West Coast Main Line today.



Above: The mock-up Class 87 No. 87001 floats on its barge on the Clyde to publicise the new services. MITCHELL LIBRARY, GLASGOW

Right: The souvenir line guide from 1974, introduced to publicise the Electric Scots. COURTESY DENNIS DALY





LMS 'Black Five' No. 44871 heads past St James bridge, south of Doncaster station, with the Railway Touring Company's 'The White Rose' from King's Cross to York and return on February 24. The sun faded as a downpour began and a rainbow appeared. ALAN WEAVER

Hastings Diesels heading to Exeter this spring

HASTINGS Diesels' second excursion of the 2024 season will see DEMU No. 1001 head to Exeter Central under the title of 'The Cogload Climber' on Saturday, April 6.

Starting from Hastings, the tour will pick up passengers at St. Leonards Warrior Square, Crowhurst, Battle, Etchingham, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, and Bromley South en route to London for another pick-up at Kensington Olympia. The tour will then join the Great Western Main Line for a final passenger pick-up at Reading.

After leaving Reading, the excursion is planned to take the Berks and Hants Line past Westbury

to Cogload Junction, which gives the tour its name. From Cogload Junction, the train will head past Taunton to Exeter, before climbing to Exeter Central. There will then be just over four hours to explore Exeter.

The return trip is planned to take a slightly different route, this time via Salisbury to allow passengers to disembark at Basingstoke and Waterloo, before setting down other at their joining stations en route to Hastings.

Tickets are available in first and standard class, with a buffet car available.

For more details and to book, visit www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk

London Transport 4TC heads for Gloucestershire and East Anglia

UK Railtours has announced its first trips in several years that will utilise London Underground's 4TC stock.

On July 27, Class No. 33012 Lt. *Jenny Lewis RN* will depart Basingstoke, bound for the Dean Forest Railway. At Lydney Junction, the tour will cross over onto the heritage line and run to Norchard via Parkend for a

two-hour break. Although full details were still to be confirmed as we went to press, UKRT confirmed that it was in the final stages of planning a tour starting at London Fenchurch Street the next day, which will explore several branch lines in East Anglia before returning to the capital; for details see ukrailtours.com

'The White Rose' running from Hereford to York

SAPHOS Trains is offering customers the chance to visit York and experience a trip through the Pennines on Wednesday, April 17, with the outward and return journey being very different.

Under the title of 'The White Rose', the tour will depart diesel-hauled from Hereford and take the Welsh Marches line north to pick up passengers at Leominster, Ludlow, Craven Arms, Church Stretton, Shrewsbury and Crewe.

At Crewe, the locomotive will be swapped for steam from a pool of engines that include LMS Royal Scot 4-6-0 No. 46100 *Royal Scot*, West Country 4-6-2 No. 34046 *Braunton*, and BR Standards 7 Pacific No. 70000 *Britannia*.

Continuing from Crewe, the tour will take the West Coast Main Line to pick up passengers at Warrington Bank Quay, before turning east to the

final pickup at Manchester Victoria. From there, the train will then take the former Midland Railway route across the Peak District via Sheffield and then turn north through Meadowhall, Swinton, and Pontefract on the Dearne Valley Line to York.

There will be about three hours to explore York and all it has to offer before the return trip, this time through Wakefield and the Calder Valley Line via Hebden Bridge, Todmorden, and Rochdale to Manchester Victoria.

From here, the tour will retrace the outward journey, swapping locomotives at Crewe and setting down passengers on route back to Hereford.

Tickets are available in Pullman dining, first class and standard class. For more information about the tour and to book your place, visit saphotrains.com

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'Neasden Nonsense' for UK Railtours

By Tim Hobman

ON Saturday, April 20, UK Railtours is planning 'Neasden Nonsense', making use of Hastings Diesels DEMU set No. 1001 in an extended seven-car formation.

Starting from Tonbridge, the tour will pick up passengers at Bromley South and London Victoria. From here, the excursion will take some rare metals in the form of the Battersea Reversal Line and Acton South West Sidings, heading towards Greenford. Next is the Greenford branch, another rare

line for passenger traffic, which will lead on to the Chiltern Main Line at South Ruislip and a non-stop run to Princes Risborough.

From there, the tour will take the single line to Aylesbury, then Aylesbury North Loop, and on to Aylesbury Vale Parkway for a 20-minute stop.

Once under way again, the train is planned to retrace its steps towards High Wycombe and Gerrards Cross, eventually heading back into Gerrards Cross turnback siding.

After this, the excursion is bound for the capital once again, where

it is hoped to enter the HS2 site at West Ruislip, before returning east to South Ruislip and Neasden.

It is then planned to take the mostly freight-only curve on to the Acton Branch to gain access to the Great Western Main Line at Acton, and then to West Ruislip for a reversal on to the Down spur. Afterwards, the tour is planned to return to South Ruislip and then towards Park Royal and the normally freight-only second side of the Greenford Triangle, still signalled by lower quadrant semaphores. Having passed Greenford East Junction, yet

another reverse move is planned to complete the triangle and head back towards Greenford South Junction and Drayton Green.

Taking the Up West Loop towards Haynes and Harlington, there will be a further reversal in the bay platform before returning to London Victoria.

Passengers will then be set down at Bromley South and Tonbridge before the end of the day.

Tickets are available in first class and standard class, with a buffet car available onboard.

For more details and to book, visit ukrailtours.com



Battle of Britain 4-6-0 No.34067 *Tangmere* at Birkett Common on the long climb to Ais Gill, running 20 minutes early after not stopping at Appleby for water with Pathfinder Tours' 'The Settle & Carlisle Winter Express' on February 24. A new feature this year is the Riviera Trains rake of Mk.1 blue/grey coaches; however, the Mk.2 second from the front clearly showed it had been targeted by graffiti vandals, who apparently sprayed three coaches prior to the trip. RODNEY TOWERS

Steam day trip on two gauges

VINTAGETrains is offering a steam 'dual gauge' option for its trip from the West Midlands to North Wales on Saturday, June 8.

The 'Ffestiniog Express' will depart behind steam from Dorridge, Widney Manor, Birmingham New Street, Wolverhampton, Stafford and Crewe to Llandudno Junction, where passengers can make their own way to the town centre. The train will continue diesel-hauled along the scenic Conwy Valley line to Blaenau Ffestiniog for a choice of either visiting the new exhilarating zip wire experience in the slate quarries or taking a trip along the Ffestiniog Railway to Tan-y-Bwlch and back.

For more details and to book, visit vintagetrains.co.uk/train-rides/

Kings Heath's station sign returns – 85 years after its closure to passengers

A WOODEN sign from the original Kings Heath station, which closed to passengers on January 27, 1941, due to the Second World War, has been returned to the site ahead of its anticipated reopening.

Transport for West Midlands has acquired the original sign from the current owner, marking as a symbolic step forward in readiness for the return of passenger services to the Camp Hill Line.

The station was built on the Birmingham & Gloucester Railway's main line and opened in 1840 as Moseley, but when a second station of that name opened to the north in 1867, the first was renamed Kings Heath. It was used for freight and as a coal yard into the late 1960s, after which it was demolished.

Coun Liz Clements, Birmingham City Council's cabinet member for transport, said: "The return of



the Kings Heath sign is a big step towards restoring the community's history and illustrates the station's vibrant future."

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street added: "How fitting that the original station sign will also be making a long-awaited return – once again

Coun David Barker, of Brandwood and Kings Heath ward, West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and Coun Liz Clements, of Birmingham City Council's cabinet, take delivery of the historic Kings Heath Station sign. WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

taking up its rightful pride of place on the new Kings Heath station."

The Camp Hill Line will also be served by new stations at Pineapple Road and Moseley Village.

Each will have two platforms suitable for six-car trains, along with stairs and lifts.



The multi-functional community space inside the refurbished Henley station building. NR



Lord Peter Hendy and Angela Okey officially reopen the refurbished Henley-in-Arden station building on February 22. NR

New lease of life for Henley-in-Arden station

HENLEY-IN-ARDEN station – which serves the North Warwickshire Line also known as the Shakespeare Line, the southbound route of Vintage Trains’ ‘Shakespeare Express’ – has been given a major facelift.

Its original GWR station building of 1908, which had been left empty since the 1990s, has been repurposed into a stylish and welcoming community space and bar.

Concerned about the deterioration of the building and the developing signs of anti-social behaviour, local community group Friends of Henley Railway Station stepped into action to lead the major transformation. With the support of the Railway Heritage

Trust, Network Rail, West Midlands Railway and Henley-in-Arden Parish Council, the Friends carried out structural repairs to the building before reworking and renovating the space, which now houses a community bar and lounge equipped with IT facilities, which can be hired for small functions.

The building even accommodates its own micro-brewery which local residents will run, with their products being served in the bar alongside other local beers, local wines, soft drinks and snacks.

On February 22, representatives of all the groups involved in the refurbishment joined Network Rail chairman Lord Peter Hendy

for its official opening, who said:

“It is wonderful to see partners and volunteers coming together to put the railway at the heart of the local community.”

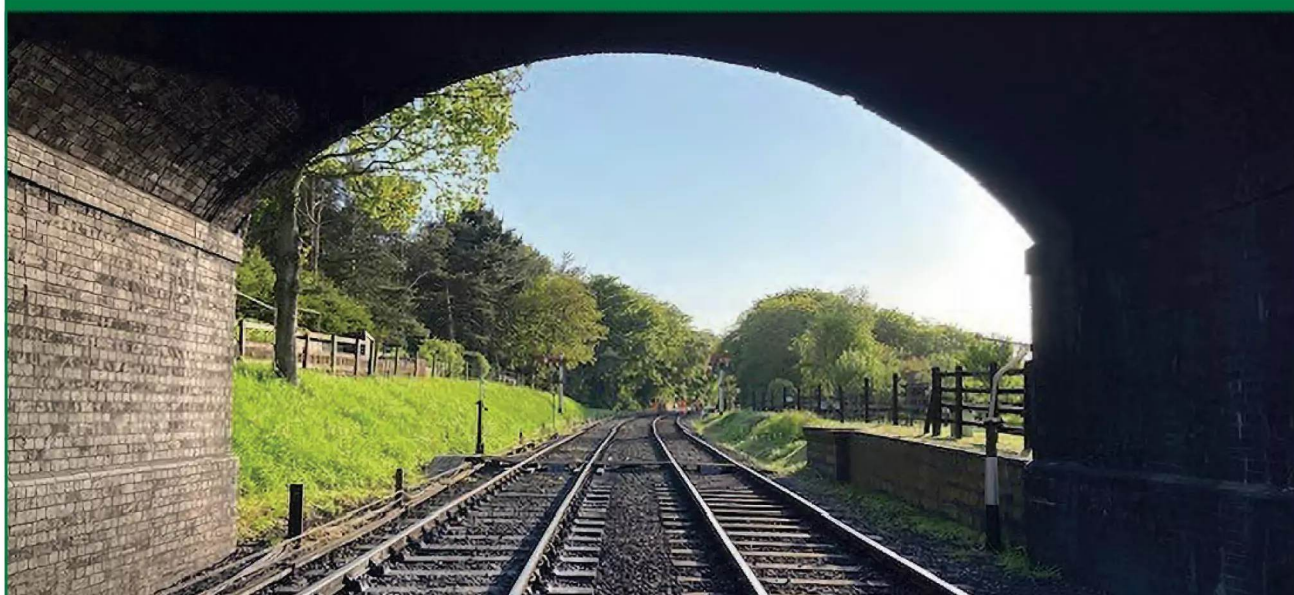
Angela Okey, chair of Friends of Henley Railway Station, said: “After living in Henley for several years and walking my dogs past the derelict building every morning, it saddened me to see the state of disrepair of what was once an iconic and beautiful landmark. The aim was always to make this a community project, and by involving local people with the same love of their town, it has been a delight to work on and watch the enthusiasm of everyone.

“As well as being a welcoming meeting place for residents, we hope it will attract more footfall to our beautiful town of Henley-in-Arden, which in turn will support our local businesses and traders.”

Railway Heritage Trust executive director Tim Hedley-Jones added: “We are pleased to have supported this project with grants to restore the building, and we have presented the station with a plaque to record its history, which Lord Peter Hendy has unveiled.”

All income and profits from the bar and community space will be invested back into the building, its facilities, and the station area.

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Specialists in on & off track Vegetation Control | Japanese Knotweed Control | Arborist Services

For more information please call **01379 384200** or visit **www.encompassenvironmental.co.uk**

Host of events marking D-Day

June 6 is the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings... D-Day. Codenamed Operation Neptune, it was the largest seaborne invasion in history. Every year many events take place around the UK 'marking' that 1940s spirit, and to celebrate historical magazine *Best of British* joining the *Heritage Railway* family of publications, we wanted to let you know where some of these great family friendly events are being held this spring.

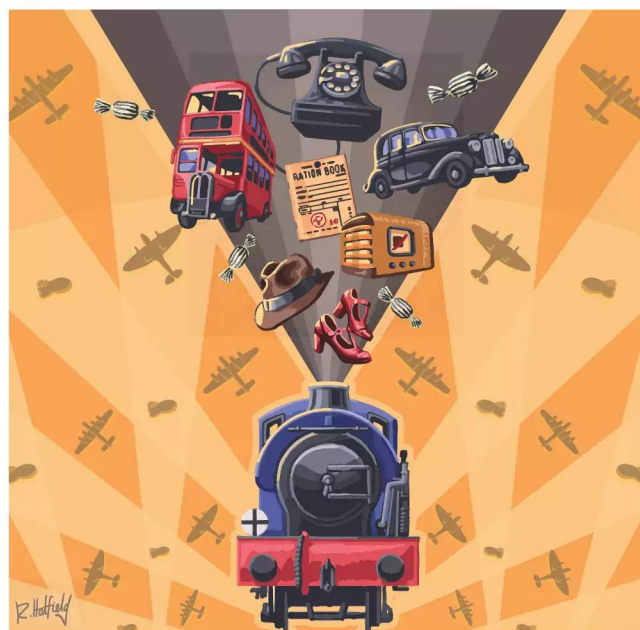
APRIL 2024

- 31-1 Sandtoft Trolleybus Museum 1940s Event Belton Road, Sandtoft, Doncaster, South Yorkshire (bainbridgeevents.co.uk, 07754 704779)
- 5-6 April Staveley Hall 1940s Wartime Event Staveley Hall, Chesterfield, Derbyshire (01246 385200, staveleyhall.co.uk)
- 6-7 1940s Weekend Whitwell & Reepham Railway, Reepham, Norfolk (01603 871694, whitwellstation.com)
- 6-7 No Man's Land Multi-Period Living History Event, Bodrhyddan Hall, Rhuddlan, Rhyl, Denbighshire (01745 590155, bodrhyddan.co.uk)
- 11 Chesterfield 1940s Market Town Centre, Chesterfield, Derbyshire (01246 345777, visitchesterfield.info/whats-on/chesterfield-1940s-market-p777291)
- 20-21 Military History Weekend The Helicopter Museum, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset (01934 635227, helicoptermuseum.co.uk)
- 27-28 Kelham Hall Vintage Festival Kelham Hall, near Newark, Nottinghamshire (facebook.com/groups/160181713603936)

May 2024

- 4 Meet the Yanks Discovery Day, Staffordshire Regiment Museum, DMS Whittington, Lichfield, Staffordshire (01543 434394, staffordshireregimentmuseum.com)
- 4-5 1940s Weekend Heskin Hall, Chorley, Lancashire (01257 452044, heskinhall.com)
- 4-5 Operation Ashbourne Codename 'Bolthole' 2024, Darley Moor Airfield, Ashbourne, Derbyshire (facebook.com/events/959002918681598)
- 4-6 Dad's Army Live, North Norfolk Railway, Sheringham, Norfolk (01263 820800, nnrailway.co.uk)
- 4-6 Sandwich Salutes the 40s Town Centre and Quay Green, Sandwich, Kent. (07736 057836, sandwichevents.org.uk)

- 5-6 Classic & Vintage Vehicles Papplewick Pumping Station, Ravenshead, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (0115 963 2938, papplewickpumpingstation.org.uk)
- 4-5 Second World War Event, Abbey Station Visitor Centre, 192A Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (07784 553386, abbeystationshrewsbury.com)
- 10-12 Brougham Hall Wartime Weekend Brougham Hall & Penrith Town Centre, Cumbria (facebook.com/wartimeweekend)
- 11-12 1940s Melton Mowbray, Play Close Park, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (07837 398610, facebook.com/1940sMeltonMowbray)
- 11-12 Temple at War, Cressing Temple Barns, Braintree, Essex (07907 594307, templeatwar.co.uk)
- 11-12 Wartime Britain 2024, REME Museum, Chippenham, Wiltshire (01249 894869, rememuseum.org.uk)
- 11-12 Village at War, Rural Life Living Museum, Tilford, Farnham, Surrey (01252 795571, rural-life.org.uk)
- 12 Bressingham 1940s Day, Bressingham Steam Museum & Gardens, Diss, Norfolk (01379 686900, bressingham.co.uk)
- 12 Vintage Rally, Burton Agnes, Driffield, East Yorkshire (01262 490324, burtonagnes.com)
- 18-19 1940s Weekend, Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent (01580 765155, kesr.org.uk)
- 18-19 Blyth Battery Goes to War, Blyth beach, Northumberland (ianlevy.org.uk/events/blyth-battery-goes-war-0)
- 18-19 Home Front Amberley Museum, near Arundel, West Sussex (01798 831370, amberleymuseum.co.uk)
- 18-19 Spirit of Wartime, Sherwood 1940s, Thoresby Park, Newark, Nottinghamshire (bainbridgeevents.co.uk, 07754 704779)
- 18-19 The Wartime Village, The Village Church Farm Museum, Skegness, Lincolnshire (01754 766658, facebook.com/churchfarmvillage)



1940s WEEKEND

Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th May 2024

Enjoy the Vintage displays & Entertainment throughout the weekend at Tenterden and Bodiam Stations, Trains every 45min!



FOR INFORMATION AND TO BOOK ONLINE AND SAVE VISIT

www.kesr.org.uk



March

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 'Cogload Climber'

Hastings, Exeter and return.

DEMU: 1001. HD

7 'The Shakespeare Express'
Birmingham Snow Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon and return.

Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* or 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

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 'The Lakeland'
Leicester, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Preston (outward).

Loco: TBA. ST

13 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Liverpool Lime Street, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

13 'The Harbourmaster'
Rare tracks tour departing Paddington.

Locos: 2x Class 66 TBA. UKRT

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 White Rose'
Hereford, York and return. Steam-hauled from Crewe (outward).

Loco: TBA. ST

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 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Telford Central, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB



Class 40 D213 *Andania* is seen in early-morning sunlight at High Scales between Greenholme and Scout Green on Inter City's February 24 'Whistling Highlander' excursion from Crewe to Inverness, assisted at the rear by Class 47 No. 47805 (D1935). PAUL BERRY

20 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 8

Liverpool Lime Street, Swansea. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

20 Bath & Bristol Excursion
Horsham, Bristol Temple Meads and return. Steam-hauled outward only.

Loco: 61306 *Mayflower*. SD

20 'Neasden Nonsense'
Rare tracks tour departing Tonbridge and London Victoria.

DEMU: 1001. UKRT

20 'The Welsh Marches Express'
Birmingham New Street, Hereford and return.

Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*. VT

21 'The Great Britain XVI' Day 9
Swansea, Paddington. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA. RTC

27 Clun Line 50th Anniversary Pullman

London Victoria, Bath and return.

Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL/UKRT

27 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special
Darlington, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Loco: 34067 *Tangmere*. NB

27 'Bath & Gloucester Steam Express'
Paddington, Gloucester and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: 'Black Five' TBA. RTC

May

1 'The Fellsman'
Blackpool North, Carlisle and return.
Loco: TBA. ST

4 'English Riviera Express'
Shrewsbury, Dartmouth and return. Steam-hauled to/from Taunton.

Loco: TBA. ST

4 'The Spring Cornish Explorer'
Dorridge, Penzance and return. Diesel-hauled throughout.

Locos: TBA. PT

5 'The Royal Duchy'
Bristol Temple Meads, Par and return.

Loco: 45596 *Bahamas*. RTC

8 Chatsworth & Barrow Hill Excursion
Colchester, Barrow Hill and return.

Loco: 46100 *Royal Scot*. SD

10 'The Great Western' Day 1
Birmingham Snow Hill, Plymouth.

Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

11 Chester Excursion

Euston, Chester and return. Steam-hauled outward only.

Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. SD

11 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam
Circular tour from London Victoria.

Loco: No. 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

11 'The Cumbrian Mountain Express'
Euston, Carlisle and return. Steam-hauled from Carnforth (outward) to Preston (return).

Locos: Steam: TBA. Electric: 86259 Les Ross. RTC

11 'The Great Western' Day 2
Plymouth, Paddington, Birmingham Snow Hill. Diesel-hauled from Paddington.

Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
BLS	Branch Line Society branchline.uk
HD	Hastings Diesels hastingsdiesels.co.uk
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PT	Pathfinder Tours 01453 835414
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR	West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

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.

TABLE ONE: PLYMOUTH TO EXETER

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
Plymouth	0.00	0.00	00	00	R/T
Mutley Tunnel E	0.51		03	26	23
MP 242¾	3.16		06	39	63
MP 241	4.91		08	28	43½
MP 240	5.91		10	20	22½
MP 239¾	6.16		11	04	17½/16
MP 239½	6.41		11	55	18½
Hemerden	6.66	15.00	12	36	27½
Mast	8.55		15	24	45
Ivybridge	11.59	24.00	19	10	50/52/49
Wrangaton	13.86		21	51	52/59½
Brent	16.15		24	14	59
Marley Tunnel E	18.14		26	23	53½/60½/59½
OB	20.11		28	34	61½/37*
Totnes	23.10	38.00	32	03	65
UB	25.19		34	19	49
Hardup Lane	26.15		35	28	53/53½
Wrigwell Lane	27.65		37	18	38½
Dainton Tunnel W	27.98		37	50	33
Pipe	28.96		39	05	57/63½
Newton Abbot	31.86	50.00	42	00	61½
OB	33.69		43	46	65/66½
Teignmouth	37.00	55.30	46	54	59½/59
Dawlish	39.79	58.30	49	41	62½
Dawlish Warren	41.41	60.00	51	12	67½
Starcross	43.48		52	57	72
Exminster	47.09		55	51	77/77½
OB	48.50		57	00	73
Marsh Barton	49.93		58	32	41
St Thomas	51.09		61	05	21
Exeter St Davids	52.06	72.00	65	41	6¼ early

* brakes or speed restriction

TABLE TWO: YATTON TO TAUNTON

Date Sunday, September 7, 2014
Train 8.48am Bristol Temple Meads to Par
Loco/unit BoB Class 4-6-2 No. 34067 *Tangmere*
Load Nine coaches 322 tons tare, 345 tons gross
Driver Ray Churchill
Fireman Roy Wells
Recorder Don Benn
Weather Sunny periods, light wind
Position Seventh coach

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Yatton	0.00	0.00	00	00	½ min late
Huish Crossing	1.82		04	27	48
Worle Junction	4.79	07.00	07	42	64½
Uphill Junction	7.73	10.00	10	12	70½
MP 140	9.67		11	52	72
Brent Knoll	12.17		13	54	75
MP 144	13.67		15	03	77½
Highbridge	14.94		16	04	76½
Huntspill	16.67		17	55	75
Dunball	18.71		19	03	74/72
Bridgwater	21.25	21.00	21	08	73½
MP 153	22.67		22	19	72
MP 156	25.67		24	43	76½
Cogload Junction	28.07	29.00	26	49	71½/76
Creech St Michael	29.92		28	04	68
Taunton East Jct.	32.14		30	27	43½
Taunton	32.83	34.00	31	59	1½ early

start to stop average 61.6 mph

WITH FULL REGULATOR

LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



Don Benn covers the work of LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 No. 45596 *Bahamas* on the Plymouth-to-Exeter stretch of the returning 'Royal Duchy' on September 24, 2023, No. 34067 *Tangmere* on the morning Royal Duchy in September 2014, plus the record-breaking run with No. 35012 *United States Line* in April 1965 and No. 34061 *73 Squadron* from Yeovil Junction in 1964.

I START with the final section of the 'Royal Duchy', from Plymouth to Exeter and Bristol on Sunday, September 24, 2023. I am grateful to Sandy Smeaton for the details, which are shown in Table One, and he comments as follows: "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 and with 55 minutes allowed for this, we got away on time.

"Somewhere between dusk and darkness, we accelerated to 63mph before Plympton, falling off to a comfortable 16 at the 1-in-42/75 gradient change and passed Hemerden (MP239¾) at 27½. Totnes was passed at 65, falling to 49, recovering to 53½ on the short level section with a minimum of 33 entering Dainton Tunnel, the summit.

"The Starcross to Exeter level section produced a fine 77½ maximum. Plymouth to Exeter took 65m 41s, well within the 72 allowed.

"We were allowed away from Exeter 6½ early and ahead of 2M73, the 8.30pm stopper to Bristol; a very strange operating decision as it resulted in both trains being delayed. *Bahamas* was turned into Tiverton Loop, unscheduled, and the necessary slow approach delayed 2M73. The maximum before being turned into the loop was 70mph at the River Culm.

"After the restart, we entered Whiteball Tunnel at 56mph and reached 77mph on the run down to Taunton, stopping 4½ late. From Cogload Jn to Bridgwater, No. 45596 ran up to 75mph, but after Highbridge we caught signals from 2M73 and were



No. 45596 *Bahamas* passes Totton with the 'Dorset Coast Express' of July 26, 2023. DON BENN



No. 34067 *Tangmere* sits at Plymouth on September 7, 2014, after arrival from Bristol Temple Meads. DON BENN

then checked all the way to Yatton (2M73 is routed via Weston). The final section into Bristol produced a minimum of 52½mph at Flax Bourton Summit, where the regulator was shut, and we drifted down to stop in Temple Meads in 18m 27s and 6 late due to the checks from 2M73. *Bahamas* performed well throughout on a day of often foul weather. None of the delays were the fault of loco or crew."

Even time with *Tangmere*

On Sunday, September 7, 2014, I joined the 'Royal Duchy' behind No. 34067 *Tangmere*. The load was nine coaches for 345 tons full, and driving was Ray Churchill with Roy Wells on the shovel. Tables Two and Three show the running from Yatton to Taunton and Exeter to Plymouth on a cool but bright day. Unknown to us at the time, it hadn't been possible to coal *Tangmere* fully at Bristol, so Ray had to drive with care to reach Par – not that this showed in the early stages with this free-running Pacific.

With a light load, we ran inside even time from Yatton to Taunton and after reaching 77½mph, Ray was able to ease the engine as we were running on

time. After a steady climb to Whiteball, minimum 38mph and a lovely spell in the mid-70s down to Exeter, reached in 35 minutes 42 seconds from Taunton, we took water, arriving more than five minutes early.

We were just over three minutes late from St David's and soon bowling along nicely with speed in the low 60s through Starcross and Dawlish Warren. There was quite a severe reduction in speed in the Dawlish/Parsons Rock area, which may have been due to a temporary speed limit, but then we resumed the easy running to Newton Abbot before the steep climb to Dainton. Speed fell to 39mph at Stoneycombe 'box, but *Tangmere* slipped as we approached the tunnel, though Ray controlled it well – the minimum was 16mph.

On Rattery I did not detect any slipping as we plodded away up the steepest part at 17½mph, but with more noise up front recovered to 36mph at Rattery. We had the luxury of a clear road and ran fast down to Plymouth in 70 minutes 32 seconds from Exeter, more than 12 minutes inside the schedule and thus nine minutes early. Not bad for a Bulleid light Pacific short of coal. I had to



Ray Churchill on No. 34067 at Bristol Temple Meads. DON BENN

TABLE THREE: EXETER TO PLYMOUTH

Date	Sunday, September 7, 2014
Train	8.48am Bristol Temple Meads to Par
Loco	BoB Class 4-6-2 No. 34067 <i>Tangmere</i>
Load	Nine coaches, 322 tons tare 345 tons gross
Driver	Ray Churchill
Fireman	Roy Wells
Recorder	Don Benn
Position	Seventh coach
Weather	Sunny spells

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Exeter St Davids	0.00	0.00	00	00	3½ late
Exeter St Thomas	0.92		05	02	25½
MP 197	3.10		08	15	51½
Exminster	4.79		10	06	57½
Powderham	6.72		12	14	61
Starcross	8.55		13	49	63
Dawlish Warren	10.60	12.00	15	47	63
Dawlish	12.25	14.00	17	31	51*
Parsons Rock Tnl	13.34		19	21	43*
Teignmouth	15.01	18.00	21	04	51
Bishopsteignton	17.10		23	32	53
Newton Abbot	20.15	24.00	26	49	56
Aller Junction	21.16		27	52	56
MP 215½	21.60		28	25	58½
MP 216	21.10		28	55	54
MP 216 ½	22.60		29	31	47½
Stoneycombe SB	23.03		30	04	39
MP 217½	23.60		31	14	22½
Dainton Tunnel	23.89		32	08	16
Dainton Summit	24.10	32.00	32	42	18½
MP 220	26.10		35	09	58½/45*
Totnes	28.91	40.00	38	22	58½
MP 224	30.10		39	49	43½
MP 225	31.10		41	44	22½
Tigley	31.60		43	14	17½
MP 226 ½	32.60		45	54	27½/29½
MP 227	33.10		46	54	28
Rattery	33.60		47	55	36
Brent	35.85		51	31	50½
Wragaton	38.10		53	53	48
MP 233	39.10		55	11	61½/63½
Ivybridge	40.43	61.00	56	14	60
Cornwood	43.74		59	49	54
Hermerden	45.39		61	34	47½
Plympton	48.10		64	12	73½
Tavistock jct	49.10		65	10	60*
Mutley Tunnel	51.50		68	40	24
Plymouth	52.04	83.00	70	32	9 early

* brakes or speed restriction



Ray Churchill awaits the signal to take No. 34067 out of Plymouth on the 8.48am Bristol Temple Meads to Par. DON BENN

TABLE FOUR: SOUTHAMPTON TO WATERLOO

Date Sunday, April 4, 1965
 Train 4.34 pm Bournemouth West to Waterloo
 'Bournemouth Belle'
 Loco Rebuilt Merchant Navy class 4-6-2 No. 35012
 United States Line
 Load Ten Pullmans + one bogie van, 428½ tons tare, 455 tons gross
 Crew Gordon Hooper and Paul Daley, Nine Elms MPD
 Also on footplate Brian Smith
 Timed by Don Benn
 Weather Fine and sunny, light SW wind

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Southampton	0.00	0.00	00	00	½ min late
Northam Jct	1.05	3.30	03	23	30/14*
St Denys	2.11		05	17	41
Swaythling	3.45		07	04	54½
Eastleigh	5.80	10.00	09	24	63
Allbrook Box	6.66		10	17	64½
Shawford	9.61		13	02	65½
Shawford Jct	10.46		13	45	67
St Cross Box	11.50		14	43	68
Winchester City	12.70		15	51	69½
Winchester Jct	14.80		17	43	71
Wallers Ash Box	17.55		20	02	72
Weston Box	19.05		21	14	73
Micheldever	21.20		22	59	75
Roundwood Box	23.05		24	28	76
Waltham Box	24.15		25	22	80
Steventon Box	25.30		26	12	83
Wootton Box	26.75		27	17	77½
Worting Jct	28.98	37.00	30	53	7* sigs
Basingstoke	31.50		34	06	65½
Newnham Siding	35.55		37	13	78
Hook	37.08		38	21	84
Winchfield	39.41		40	00	90/93
Fleet	42.76		42	13	90/92½
Farnborough	46.05		44	24	88
Start Lane Jct	47.05		45	07	89
MP 31	48.25		45	56	87
Pirbright Jct	49.60		46	54	92
Brookwood	51.25		47	56	94
Woking Jct	54.50	58.00	50	12	85
Woking	54.95		50	28	86
West Byfleet	57.56		52	19	86½
Byfleet and New Haw	58.84		53	13	87
Weybridge	60.09		54	10	81
Oatlands Box	61.15		55	54	83
Walton	62.16		56	38	85
Hersham	63.33		56	27	87
Esher	64.85		57	33	86½
Hampton Court Jct.	65.90	67.30	58	17	88
Surbiton	67.20		59	10	85
Berrylands	68.26		59	59	83
New Malden	69.46		60	53	70*
Raynes Park	70.60		61	57	65½
Wimbledon	72.05		63	13	67
Earlsfield	73.66		64	43	71
Clapham Junction	75.31	77.00	66	38	41*
Queens Road	76.43		68	38	38*/33* tsr
Vauxhall	77.93		70	36	45
Waterloo	79.24	84.00	74	13	9¼ mins early

net time 69½ mins
 actual start to stop average: 64.06 mph
 average speed Hook to Surbiton 86.82 mph
 full regulator 22% to Winchester increased to 27% to Roundwood

"...the calculated figures over the final stretch being 2325EDBH and an amazing 3085IHP, one of the very few times this magic figure has been reached by any British steam locomotive in normal service."



On June 27, 1964, No. 34036 Westward Ho passes Yeovil Junction with the 10.35am Waterloo to Padstow. From the right, Brian Smith looks on. DON BENN

return home from Plymouth and so missed one of the best-ever climbs of Hemerden bank with a minimum speed of 29.8mph.

Breaking records with No. 35012

As a tribute to Brian Smith, who died recently, and to the late Gordon Hooper, I have shown in Table Four the record-breaking run on the up 'Bournemouth Belle' on April 4, 1965. Brian and Gordon were close friends and made a fantastic pairing on the footplate. Officially, Brian's role was to monitor engine performance to identify

any problems and make recommendations for improvements, but in practice he often took a hand with the shovel and injectors, though the drivers and firemen were always in charge. When I knew that the Hooper/Smith combination was out, then I did my best to follow.

We got away from Southampton just a fraction late and made a good, clean start to pass Eastleigh inside schedule at 63mph, where Hooper was using full regulator and 22% cut-off. Brian Smith was firing from Southampton and maintaining boiler pressure at 240lb-plus all the way. Not sure

Passing Wimbledon nine minutes early and travelling at 67 mph, No. 35012 was working the April 4, 1965, record-breaking 'Bournemouth Belle'. BRYAN BENN



if that was taken as a hint, but Gordon wound the cut-off round to 27% at Winchester Junction where we were doing 71mph, and I was by now getting really excited as I had timed nothing like this before. The noise from No. 35012 *United States Lines* was quite fantastic and increased as speed continued to rise, to 73mph by Weston box and 75 at Micheldever and finally to an unprecedented 76mph at Roundwood summit.

Brian Smith told me a few years ago that boiler pressure was being maintained at 245-250lb and that the second injector had to be used for a short spell to stop the engine from blowing off steam, so if the engine had been opened up to, say, 35% cut-off, then I think we would have achieved 80mph at the top of the 1-in-252 climb.

As it was, I had just timed what was probably the highest power output ever from a Merchant Navy class Pacific, the calculated figures over the final stretch being 2325EDBH and an amazing 3085IHP, one of the very few times this magic figure has been reached by any British steam locomotive in normal service. And what a demonstration of the steaming qualities of Bulleid's boiler!

In DW Winkworth's book, Bulleid's Pacifics, comparisons with big efforts by other British steam locomotives puts this climb to Roundwood second only to the supreme effort by LMS Princess Coronation No. 6234 *Duchess of Abercorn* on test, when compared on the basis of IHP per ton of engine weight set against duration. For the section of the climb from Winchester Junction, where cut-off was increased to 27% to the summit, the EDBH was 2175 and the IHP 2905. This was over a period of nearly seven minutes.

Gordon Hooper was not finished yet, though, and as if to show that No. 35012 was in no way winded by this phenomenal performance, we streaked away to reach 83mph at Steventon before



Driver Letchford peers out the cab of No. 35012 *United States Lines* at Southampton with the 13-coach down 'Royal Wessex' on August 6, 1962. BRYAN BENN

easing for the approach to Battledown where we had a severe signal check down to little more than walking pace, which I thought might be a prelude to more delays from engineering works. It wasn't, though, and then followed a breathtaking headlong flight along the South Western main line, incredibly unchecked to give an average speed of 86.82mph over the 30.12 miles from Hook to Surbiton, which included 93mph down Winchfield bank and 94mph at Brookwood, with an easing to 85mph past Woking and a minimum of 81mph at Weybridge.

Adverse signals and a track relaying speed restriction after Clapham Junction could not prevent an arrival in Waterloo just over nine minutes early, in an actual time for the 79.24 miles from Southampton of 74 minutes 13 seconds at an overall average speed of 64.06mph. I calculate the net time to have been 69½ minutes, which would have been good enough to have kept the new electric schedules that applied from July 1967 – and the fastest known time with steam. I have always regarded this run to be my best with steam, though others in 1965 came close.

Yeovil Junction

On Saturday, June 27, 1964, I had a day out with steam on the South Western main line as far as Yeovil Junction to see how trains were running and to record proceedings with my camera and stopwatch on this last summer of steam on the Southern route to Exeter – before the Western Region got hold of it and ruined a superb main line serving so many places compared to the route via the Somerton cut-off. Oh, how that decision is to be regretted now!

I started on the 8.35am from Waterloo to Ilfracombe and Plymouth as far as Salisbury, which was hauled by No. 34095 *Brentor* on 12 coaches for 445 tons and ran well enough. There I met Brian Smith, and we went on to Yeovil Junction on the 9.03am Portsmouth to Plymouth, which had No. 34057 *Biggin Hill* on just six coaches for 220 tons.

TABLE FIVE: YEOVIL JUNCTION TO SALISBURY

Date	Saturday, June 27, 1964
Train	11.10am Plymouth North Road to Brighton
Loco	BoB Class 4-6-2 No. 34061 <i>73 Squadron</i>
Load	Eleven coaches, 375 tons tare 405 tons gross
Weather	Cloudy and warm
Recorder	Don Benn

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Yeovil Junction	0.00	0.00	00	00	4½ late
Sherborne	4.60		07	52	56½
MP 115½	7.15		11	05	39
Milborne Port	8.25		12	40	51½
MP 113¼	9.40		14	05	50
Templecombe	10.65		15	13	72½
MP 110	12.70		16	51	75
MP 107½	15.20		19	34	47½
Gillingham	17.45		21	54	71
Semley	21.55		26	31	45
Tisbury	26.55		31	28	69/71½
Dinton	30.85		35	16	67/73
Wilton	36.65		40	22	47*
Salisbury	39.15	43.00	44	06	5½ late

We the spent some time watching the summer Saturday 100% steam-hauled trains and enjoying excellent pots of tea in the up side buffet, reputed to be the best anywhere on the Southern, before returning to Salisbury on the 11.10am Plymouth to Brighton hauled by No. 34061 *73 Squadron*, the details of which are shown in Table Five. More steam runs finished an excellent day out.

This column may be my last (possibly last of all, but maybe just a pause) due to the lack of pure main line steam as a result of West Coast Railways' loss of its Judicial Review concerning the fitting of Central Door Locking to its Mk. 1 rolling stock; an own goal if ever there was one. To me, being pushed around by a diesel locomotive or not knowing if the diesel is working or not isn't steam locomotive performance – and I know I am not alone in that view. [HR](#)



Big Four spread their wings with 4-6-0 nameplate quartet

NAMEPLATES from all the Big Four post-Grouping railway companies will headline Talisman's saleroom sale on March 23. They are *Hindford Grange* from the GWR, *Sir Bedivere* from the SR, *Newfoundland* from the LMS, and the oldest of the quartet, *Glenalmond* from the LNER.

The GWR contender is from 4-6-0 No. 6875, an April 1939 Swindon locomotive that was withdrawn from Bristol's St Philip's Marsh shed (82B) in March 1964, while the SR representative is from another 4-6-0, King Arthur No. 30457, built at Eastleigh in April 1925 and withdrawn from Nine Elms (70A) in May 1961.

The LMS offering is also from a 4-6-0, Jubilee No. 45573, which emerged from the North British works in Glasgow in September 1934 and was taken out of service in September 1965 when a resident of Leeds Holbeck (55A). Finally comes the LNER participant, from Great Central Railway Gorton-built Class 1A No. 4, which entered traffic in June 1913.

This 4-6-0 was renumbered 5004, and later No. 1349, by the LNER and reclassified B8, and was withdrawn from Sheffield Darnall in November 1947 just two months before Nationalisation. Five members of the 11-strong class, which was nicknamed 'Glenalmonds', did make it into BR stock, including Nos. 1357 *Earl Roberts of Kandahar* and 1358 *Earl Kitchener of Khartoum*.

Ex-ROD cabside

Joining the *Glenalmond* plate in the pre-Grouping line-up is cabside numberplate GWR 3017, from one of 20 almost new 2-8-0s bought by the GWR from the Railway Operating Division in 1919. No. 3017 was withdrawn in the mid-1950s, and all had gone by October 1958.

Another locomotive item is the smokebox numberplate from Gresley A3 No. 60100 *Spearmint*. This Pacific, named after the winner of the 1906 Derby, was built at Doncaster in May 1930 (works No. 1741) and regularly hauled 'The Flying Scotsman' in the hands of Haymarket driver Norman



McKillop, who wrote for the railway press under the pseudonym 'Toram Beg', Gaelic for 'Wee Norman'. It was withdrawn from Edinburgh St. Margaret's (64A) in June 1965.

Two carriageboards that will stir the memories of steam era trainspotters are 'The Mancunian' and 'The Mid-Day Scot' from WCML expresses that were a regular sight out of London Euston. The former ran to Manchester and the second to Glasgow, and I logged both during a seven-hour stint noting every train passing through Lichfield Trent Valley on a busy Saturday, August 6, 1960.

This was when Britain's railways were in a transitional phase from steam to diesel traction, and my

log illustrates that, with the Up 'Mancunian' being hauled by Type 4 (later class 40) 1Co-Co1 D226, and the Down 'Mid-Day Scot' by Princess Coronation Pacific No. 46238 *City of Carlisle*. The diesel was due to be one of the class named after a Cunard liner, in this instance *Media*, but for reasons that remain a mystery to enthusiasts, it was never fitted.

Mallard record

However, I digress, and must return to the auction and the steam era, and to an LNER seatback from the ECML station of Essendine, which was opened by the Great Northern Railway in October 1853 and on July 3, 1938, provided a grandstand view of LNER A4 No. 4468 *Mallard* storming through seconds after it had achieved a world record speed for steam of 126mph. The auction is at Newark Showground and starts at 10am.



Silver lining for TAL sale

NEARLY 250 items of GWR silverplate and china tableware and cutlery sold in five lots for a total of £5800 in a live online Transport Auctions of London sale on February 24.

The highest individual realisation of the five lots was £1700 for silverplate-marked Tregenna Castle Hotel, a former GWR establishment near St Ives in Cornwall that became Grade II-listed in 1952, was sold by British Transport Hotels in 1983, and still operates today.

Also from the GWR, 60 jigsaw puzzles sold for £900, a price just pipped by the £950 for a collection of ephemera from the LBSCR, South Eastern Railway, Southern Railway and other constituent companies that included letters, brass tags, and rule instructions booklets.

Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+VAT).

'Bloxham' auction is extended to two days

SALES of general railwayana – items that don't make it into mainstream flagship auctions – have been expanding in recent years due to the number of collections now coming onto the market. Great Central's sales at Bloxham were among the trailblazers in this category, and such is the popularity of this genre and the huge number of items that are available, an auction spread over two days is no longer a rarity.

Thus, Great Central's next 'Bloxham' auction will be a two-day affair on April 4/5, when 1200 lots will go under the hammer. Selecting 'general' memorabilia for inclusion in a preview such as this is often a subjective exercise, but one or two pieces or categories that made an early entry into the sale deserve a mention.

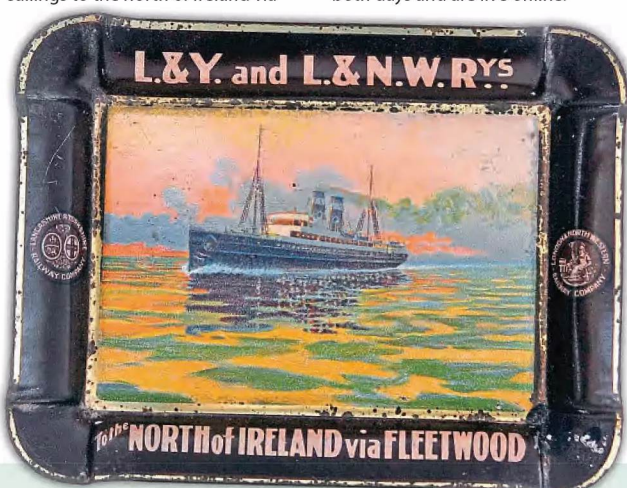
Wagonplates will feature heavily, many from a single collection, and among those going under the hammer are Scottish pre-Grouping examples, including a Great North

of Scotland Railway Aberdeen plate and a Glasgow & South Western Railway example dated 1903.

There is also a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway and LNWR presentation dish advertising sailings to the north of Ireland via



Fleetwood, and a GWR Swindon Works cast iron plate from a steam crane registered to lift up to five tons. The auction starts at 9.30am on both days and are live online.



Diesel nameplates with a strong steam flavour join GWRA sale record line-up

HERITAGE modern traction nameplates with a strong steam-era flavour are among latecomers to GW Railwayana's sale on March 16. They come from HSTs recently withdrawn by train operating company Great Western Railway, and such was their connection to days of yore that the company dubbed them its 'Class 255 Castle trains.'

There are 15 plates from HST power cars, five of which are names previously carried by Castle class 4-6-0s – *Chepstow Castle* (No. 4077), *Dunster Castle* (No. 4093), *Raglan Castle* (No. 5008), *Nunney Castle* (from preserved No. 5029), and *Westminster Abbey* (No. 5089), the HST power cars from which they come being respectively Nos. 43170, 43122, 43171, 43009, and 43027.

Sixth Castle

In addition to these five, there is *Acton Castle* from power car No. 43027, albeit not a name carried by a Castle class steam locomotive.

Other non-steam names include *The Royal British Legion* from power car No. 43056 – although LMS Royal Scot No. 46170 was named *British Legion* – and *The National Trust* from No. 43169.



To add to the five ex-steam Castle class names is *Restormel Castle*, although this is from Co-Co diesel Class 57 No. 57602, formerly Class 47 No. 47337. This name was originally carried by No. 5010.

The iconic HST was introduced in 1976 and with its InterCity 125 branding soon gained cult status. The 125 indicated its top speed, although power car Nos. 43102 and 43159 set a world-record speed for a diesel-powered train of 148mph when they top-and-tailed a test run between Darlington and York on November 1, 1987.

The withdrawal of the units by GWR leaves ScotRail as the only train operating company still using HSTs on passenger services. Many enthusiasts hope they survive until 2026 for their golden jubilee.

About 80 totem station signs will also go under the hammer in the auction, of which one, BR(Sc) Connel Ferry, on the Oban branch of Scotland's West Highland Line, is something of a misnomer, as the ferry to which it refers, across Loch Etive, was replaced by a bridge in 1903 when the Caledonian Railway opened the Connel-Balachulish branch. That line closed in 1966, but Connel Ferry station is still open, a reminder of a service across the nearby loch that ceased 121 years ago.

500 lots under hammer

As reported in my column in issue 315, among the steam locomotive railwayana in the 500-lot auction will be a record 20 nameplates, comprising 14 from the (original) GWR, one from the SR, and five from the LNER.

On the following day, Sunday March 17, auctioneer Simon Turner will host a 400-lot sale of general railwayana, including shedplates, posters and clocks. Both auctions will be live online, that on the Saturday starting at 9.30am and the Sunday sale at 10am.



Just the ticket as labels go under the hammer

A COLLECTION of 139 Metropolitan Railway, GWR, and Metropolitan & Great Central Joint Committee luggage labels sold for £680 at a specialist 160-lot postal auction held by Paddington Ticket Auctions that ended on January 26. The runner-up was a selection of 480 Caledonian Railway labels that fetched £450.

A second specialist postal sale held by the same auction house,

which is division of Great Central Railwayana, ended a week later on February 2 and contained railway, platform and other transport tickets from the UK and around the world.

The highest price was £1200 for four Canton-Kowloon Railway tickets sold as a single lot, followed by another four-figure realisation of £1050, for a Launceston &

Western Railway of Tasmania ticket dated December 27, 1901, for a first class Launceston to Railton journey.

On home soil came eight Liverpool Overhead Railway tickets that sold in two lots, each at £640, and two Mid-Wales Railway tickets that went for £620. The prices quoted for both auctions exclude buyer's premium of 10% (+ VAT).

Britannia leads the pack as LNER, Simplex and Hornby give chase

BR steam led the pack in Lacy Scott & Knight's model train auction at Bury St Edmunds on February 23, thanks to a 5in gauge No. 70000 *Britannia* going under the hammer for £8100.

Built in 1995 by Mr R Heynen, of Holland, the live steam model was followed by another in 5in gauge of an un-numbered LNER O1 class 2-8-0

that fetched £4750. In third place at £1600 was a rather more humble engine, a Simplex 0-6-0 also in 5in gauge live steam, ahead of the first O-gauge model, not of a locomotive but a Hornby Colman's Mustard van, dating from the mid-1920s, which sold for its top estimate of £1200, so edging out a Hornby O-gauge

SR Schools class 4-4-0 No. 900 *Eton* from circa late 1930s or early 1940s (£1150).

Further variety ensued when a 'Hornby Dublo' illuminated shop display sign, believed to date from 1954, fetched £1000.

Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **March 16/17**
GW Railwayana
- **March 23**
Talisman Railwayana
- **March 28**
Vectis (model trains)
- **April 3-13**
Great Northern Railwayana
- **April 4/5**
Great Central Railwayana ('Bloxham' sale)
- **April 12**
Lacy Scott & Knight (railwayana and model trains)
- **April 13**
Thirsk Railwayana
- **April 14-30**
Paperchase

A golden opportunity for Pacific model

MODELS of two locomotives built in very different eras of UK steam sold for £2100 and £1200 in a collectors' auction held by W&H Peacock of Bedford on February 2. The higher-priced of the duo was a 3½in gauge live steam Britannia class No. 70004 *William Shakespeare*, a Standard Pacific that was outshopped by Crewe in March 1951 and achieved a following by becoming a regular on the Southern Region's 'Golden Arrow' boat train when working out of London's Stewarts Lane depot (73A) from October 1951 to July 1958.

The second model, in 5in gauge and also live steam, was of an altogether more humble locomotive, a 1928-built Class 2F 0-6-0T in LMS livery but carrying its BR No. 47163. Both prices exclude buyer's premium of 17½% (+ VAT).

- A 5in gauge live steam model of Glasgow & South Western Railway 0-6-0T No. 5 sold for £2362 at a Vectis model train auction on January 25. The sale was achieved after close of play, with the highest realisation under the hammer being £900 for a Triang OO-gauge four-car set of Australian suburban EMU coaches comprising power and trailer cars and two centre cars. Both prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).



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GWR paperwork and steam from the 1950s make their mark

PAPERWORK from the pre-Grouping and early Grouping days of the GWR made itself known in the Paperchase quarterly auction held on January 14-30, when three lots each sold for £510. The pre-Grouping example comprised a 500-page bound volume of extra trains and specials arrangements notices for the Cardiff division throughout 1912, while a bound volume of the service timetable of the Cardiff and Newport area was dated July 1923.

The third item was another bound volume of the service timetable, covering the South Wales area and dated September 1924. Behind this trio was a collection of 80 black-and-white negatives of UK steam of mainly ex-LNER and LMS locomotives in the late 1950s, which sold for £360. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 12½%.

Indian summer A4 warms up for auction appearance

ONE of the Gresley A4 Pacifics that enjoyed an Indian summer working the three-hour Glasgow to Aberdeen expresses will be in the limelight in Great Northern's auction on April 3-13. It is No. 60027 *Merlin*, the smokebox numberplate from which will be a star feature in the online sale.

Built at Doncaster in March 1937 (works No. 1851), No. 60027 was a Scottish-based member of the class throughout its 28 years in service, which included not only the Glasgow-Aberdeen expresses late in its life, but also earlier the non-stop Edinburgh-London 'Elizabethan', which it was able to operate due to a corridor tender that allowed a crew exchange en route without stopping. The Pacific was withdrawn from the Edinburgh shed of St Margaret's (64A) in September 1965.

Jubilee nameplates have been a mainstay of railwayana auctions for many years and Great Northern will

continue that tradition with *Tobago* from No. 45635, a November 1934 Crewe-built 4-6-0 that was withdrawn from Carlisle Kingmoor (12A) in September 1964.

Worksplates in the auction include a 1949 Doncaster plate (works No. 2054) from Peppercorn A1 No. 60160 *Auld Reekie*, the Scottish nickname for Edinburgh. This was another Pacific shedded north of the border for its entire operational life, and it was withdrawn in December 1963 when also allocated to St Margaret's.

From an altogether more unassuming locomotive, but one which recorded a little piece of railway history, is an LNER Darlington 1914 worksplate from J72 class 0-6-0 No. 68698. On December 27, 1957, it hauled the last train on the Easingwold Railway in the Vale of York prior to its total closure. Passenger services had ceased in November 1948, but freight survived until that last working by



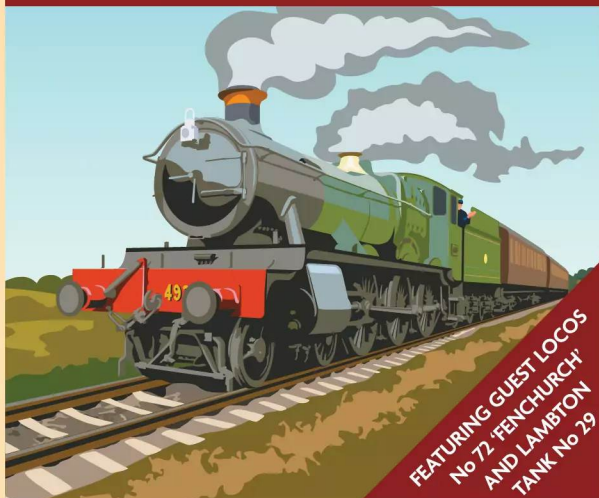
No. 68698, which was to survive for nearly another four years until being withdrawn from West Hartlepool (51C) October 1961.

The Easingwold Railway was a 2½-mile branch line running from the ECML station of Alne to the market town of Easingwold that opened in July 1891 and was privately owned through its 66 years in operation. Another train of note in its final year was an RCTS enthusiasts' special headed by J71 class 0-6-0T No. 68246 on June 23, of which Great Northern boss Dave Robinson said: "There will be old boys who will have travelled on that train and doubtless remember being carried in those open wagons."



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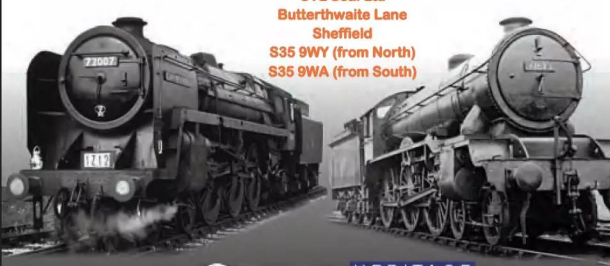
Tours of the works will be available in the afternoon, subject to guides being available. A number of associated organisations will be attending.

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Andrew Barclay No. 2315 *Lady Ingrid* was allocated to brake van trips between Tunbridge Wells and Groombridge, running three return journeys each day. On February 10, it approaches Groombridge with the first of that day's trips. MARTYN TATTAM

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ENSURE SPA'S STEAM WEEKEND IS NO 'STANDARD' STORY

Gala successes are the result of untold hours and months of planning that culminate in a few final days of hard graft and fun. **Owen Hayward** reports in words and pictures on a visit to the Spa Valley Railway's gala, where, despite being faced with a series of unfortunate events in the days immediately beforehand, volunteers persevered in order to run the event as planned.

The Spa Valley Railway's three-day Winter Steam Gala on February 9-11 made for a successful start to the railway after a record year for passenger numbers during its 2023 operating season: however, the event came under threat when beset by a sequence of unfortunate events involving its two starring BR Standard locomotives.

Headlining the occasion was BR 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78019, which appeared courtesy of the Great Central Railway and the Loughborough Standard Locomotive Group. Having spent the festive period gracing the nearby Kent & East Sussex Railway, the locomotive had returned to its Leicestershire base during January in order to appear at the GCR's own successful winter steam gala (as reported last issue) and from there was booked to return south to appear at the Spa Valley's own event.

Unfortunately, with only eight days before the gala to get the locomotive to Kent, the original haulier booked to undertake the move experienced an unforeseen issue that suddenly meant it could not carry out the job – which

threatened the 2MT's attendance altogether. Commercial manager Jonnie Pay said: "An urgent call was put in to Reid's Heavy Haulage, which was very kindly returned out of hours, and it was able to undertake this at short notice. If not, the likelihood of No. 78019 visiting was pretty much non-existent."

Standard setbacks

With an embargo in effect on the M25 for these large lorries during rush hours, the 2MT departed the GCR in the very early hours of February 8 to head south to the London orbital motorway in time to break there during the morning peak hours, ahead of continuing towards Kent, where it arrived in the early afternoon.

Meanwhile, BR 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80078 was experiencing its own setbacks. Having been partially dismantled for winter piston and valve maintenance, it was also discovered that the right-hand main steam pipe in the smokebox was defective and needed replacing. With no spare to hand, a call was

put in to Southern Locomotives Ltd, which agreed to lend that of classmate No. 80104 (currently undergoing overhaul at Tyseley Locomotive Works) in order to allow the locomotive (which was also once under its ownership) to return to service. This was collected from Birmingham and brought down to Kent, and while No. 78019 was being unloaded, volunteers were working to finish reassembling No. 80078.

With both locomotives in one piece by Thursday evening, warming fires could finally be lit to undertake the required tests before they could be released for traffic. With it being such a late hour, there was no chance of this being carried out before the Friday morning services commenced, meaning that Class 73 No. 73140 made a brief appearance on the first services to undertake shunt releases at Eridge that kept Caledonian Railway 812 class No. 828 and BR(S) Battle of Britain Pacific No. 34072 257 *Squadron* working services while testing of the BR Standards was concluded.



Double standards: The pair that nearly didn't make the event, BR standards 2MT No. 78019 and 4MT No. 80078, storm through Lealands bound for Tunbridge Wells West. MARTYN TATTAM



With headboard and route disc specially painted for the occasion, 257 Squadron (running as No. 34066 *Spitfire*) thunders through the woodland at Adams Well, recreating the 'Sussex Downsman' tour from 60 years ago.

"...the event came under threat when beset by a sequence of unfortunate events involving its two starring BR Standard locomotives."



Having departed Eridge, No. 828 climbs Birchden Bank on the approach to Groombridge with a full line brake van trip that formed the first working of the three-day gala.

No. 80078 enters Ramslye Woods as it heads towards Tunbridge Wells West. Once member of the Southern Locomotives Ltd fleet, it was returned to service in time for the event thanks to the support of its previous owners, which loaned a main steam pipe from classmate No. 80104.



Echoes of Aviemore: A scene reminiscent of times when No. 828 has double-headed with LMS Ivatt 2MT No. 46512 at its Strathspey Railway home, the Caledonian Railway locomotive leads No. 78019 through Poke Hill on February 9.



"My thanks must go to everyone who worked so hard and so late to make this happen," Jonnie said. "In particular, we are exceedingly grateful to the support from SLL in allowing us to borrow one of the main steam pipes from No. 80104 – without that, No. 80078 would not have been able to run as planned. It has been a hugely collaborative effort between so many, which is indicative of the ethos of all our volunteers."

Scrapped Bulleid reborn

It has become something of a tradition for Spa Valley galas to have a little fun with locomotive identities. At the event held in June 17/18, 2023, Andy Booth's Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0 tender conversion No. 2890 Douglas adopted the BR guise of SECR C Class No. 31592 to run alongside SECR O1 No. 65, which was visiting from the Bluebell Railway for the weekend (with both Chatham locomotives being preserved on the Sussex line).

The Scottish Steam Up on April 2/3, 2022, saw No. 34053 Sir Keith Park adopt a typically Scottish blue-backed smokebox numberplate and white buffers.

This time round, the opportunity was taken to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society and Locomotive Club of Great Britain's jointly

arranged 'Sussex Downsman' tour of March 22, 1964. One of the locomotives to work this tour was fellow SR BoB No. 34066 Spitfire, which took over the excursion from SR Q1 No. 33027 at Tunbridge Wells West; for the occasion, No. 34072 was renumbered to the identity of its fellow Bulleid locomotive.

No. 34066 was outshopped from Brighton Works as No. 21C166 in September 1947 and was first allocated to Ramsgate. In 1949 it transferred to Stewarts Lane near Battersea, where it remained for 15 years. On December 4, 1957, it was involved in a tragedy at Lewisham St John's station when it collided with a stationary train, killing 90 people and injuring 173 more.

The incident occurred when the driver failed to observe a yellow signal aspect in foggy conditions, which resulted in the train approaching a red at too great a speed to stop in time. Despite the damage sustained, it was repaired at Eastleigh Works and returned to service, before ultimately meeting the cutter's torch in January 1967.

Ingrid steals the show

Following its brief appearance on test during the railway's beer festival on October 22, 2023, privately-owned Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2315 Lady Ingrid made its formal return to service at this gala after its overhaul was

officially completed in the weeks beforehand. This overhaul's conclusion is a landmark in itself, being the first locomotive to be outshopped by the railway's volunteers since 2010, when RSH 0-6-0ST No. 62 Ugly was returned to steam.

As the railway's services have expanded and changed during the ensuing years, No. 2315 is now too small for regular use on the line, with



Above: The first locomotive to be outshopped from overhaul on the line since 2010, Lady Ingrid works a brake van trip towards High Rocks on February 10.

Left: No. 78019 emerges from below Fairview Lane bridge as it storms away from High Rocks halt.



its 0-4-0 wheel arrangement also preventing it from operating on the section running parallel to the Network Rail main line to Eridge.

With this and other circumstances in mind, its owner has decided to offer it for sale. It comes with vacuum braking and steam heat systems, as well as upgraded mechanical lubricators, modified cab, and a brick arch. The original makers' plates are also included; however, the nameplates will not.

Prospective buyers should contact Tony Attridge by emailing tonattridge@hotmail.com

No. 2315 is a former Strathspey Railway resident, and with No. 828 also on an extended holiday in the south, the two former Aviemore shedmates could be seen passing one another throughout the event.

Washing its face

Jonnie advised that the weekend saw 855 people visit to ride the trains, with those booking the Friday and Saturday evening fish and chip services bringing the final total up to 930, which he said was "rather disappointing" but that the event had washed its face in terms

of cost. "Reid Freight getting us out of the predicament with the 2MT was extremely appreciated," he commented. "Behind the scenes we had a team of people working hard shunting things into place, undertaking fitness-to-run exams, and completing repairs. Overall, it was one big team effort to make it all happen."

The two BR Standards ran together again on the weekend of February 18/19, which enticed 630 passengers, including further dining and murder mystery patrons, before No. 78019 returned to Loughborough. **HR**



On March 22, 1964, Battle of Britain class No. 34066 *Spitfire* prepares to depart Tunbridge Wells West, having taken over the 'Sussex Downsman' tour from SR Q1 No. 33027. Sixty years later, this identity could once again be seen running along the Spa Valley route. G PARRY COLLECTION/COLOUR RAIL



Having adopted the identity of its scrapped classmate, No. 34072 passes Poke Hill on February 10 with the late-running 11.50am from Eridge. JAMES TAVINER



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THE 'NINETY 'FIVES''

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the appearance of the first of William Stanier's Class 5 4-6-0, better known as 'Black Fives', of which 842 were built in 1934-1951, with 18 of them preserved. Following Daniel Long's feature on this fabled class in *Heritage Railway* issue 315, Fifties trainspotter turned BR steam driver **Dave Wilson** recalls his hands-on experiences of these mixed traffic masterpieces.

To generations of footplatemen they were known as 'the fireman's friend'. To trainspotters they were 'Black Fives' or 'Mickeys', a corruption of 'mixed traffic'. But in my case, they were both.

In the 1950s I was trainspotting and shed bashing in Leeds and surrounds, and in 1962 I began working on the railway, at Farnley Junction 55C, as an engine cleaner.

My first real acquaintance with these Stanier classics was immediately after Easter 1962 when, in the company of John Turner, who started on the same day, we were assigned to clean one of Farnley's finest. The charge-hand cleaner was a man by the name of Tommy Pace, a decent sort who tolerated our youthful antics and overlooked my early disappearances – more on this later.

Farnley supplied the motive power for passenger trains from Leeds City station to Manchester and Liverpool, for the York-Swansea mails, and a variety of parcels trains and newspaper trains. To cover these turns there were the LMS Jubilees: Nos. 45581 *Bihar & Orissa*, 45646 *Napier*, 45695 *Minotaur* and 45708 *Resolution* and 'Black Fives' Nos. 44896, 45063, 45075, 45079, 45080, 45204, 45211 and 45428.

Over the coming months I would clean all of them. The 'official' method was to use a milky fluid called Loco A solution, but the preferred and more usual method was using paraffin-soaked rags.

At the start of each shift, Tommy would give us a couple of the main line engines to clean and possibly one of the Ivatt 2-6-2Ts which worked as station pilots down at Leeds City station – and I recall we even had to 'super clean' No. 45080 when it was booked as 'stand-by' for Royal Train duties. Tommy didn't usually check our work... he did this time!

First steps

However, we did not spend all day, every day cleaning – we began to learn about the engines we were eventually going to fire and drive. There were days helping the boilermaster to build a brick arch or working with the steam riser learning how to start and then gradually build up the fire. On other days we worked on the ash pits and learned how to clean the fire, empty the smokebox, and rake out the ash pans – not the most glamorous aspect of railway work, but it had to be done.

We crawled over and under every inch of the locomotive. We learned how to couple up



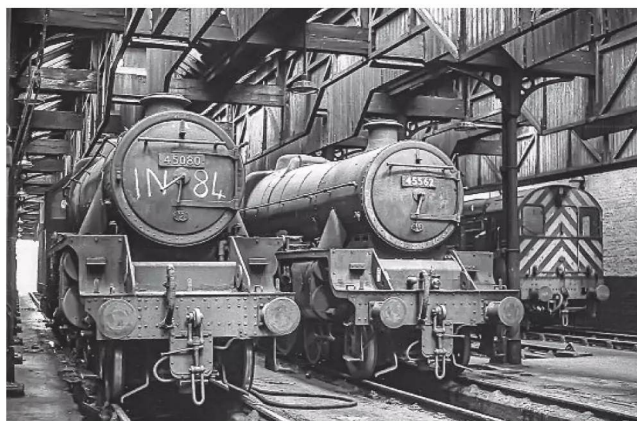
'Black Five' No. 44932 was constructed at Horwich Works in 1945 and is now one of the pool of locomotives operated by West Coast Railways. It is seen on June 8, 2023, at the summit of Aisgill with the southbound West Coast Railways 'Dalesman' railtour. DAVE WILSON

and the knack of connecting the vacuum and steam heating pipes, and we learned how to use and set the injectors. We even got to drive the engines off the ash pit and into the shed – under supervision, of course.

As the weeks passed, other little perks began. There were trips off-shed down to Copley Hill Yard on one of the 'Jinties' to collect the



'Black Five' No. 44686 is about to depart from Liverpool Exchange. You can see, clearly, the Caprotti valve gear and the changes to the locomotive's appearance brought about by this alteration. The strange dome-shaped object just to the right of the smokebox is the top of a water column – a common feature at the end of many a station platform in the steam era. NEVILLE WELLING



No. 45080 was one of the engines allocated to Farnley Junction during my time there, and the one we had to 'super clean' for Royal Train standby duty. However, in this 1965 shot, taken not long before Farnley Junction closed, it does not seem to have seen a cleaner's rag in months. Directly behind where the photographer is standing were the stores, to his right the foreman's office, and to his left the enginemens' mess room. KEITH SANDERS



stores van and locomotive coal, and then a real trip out on a 'Dub Dee', with a goods train to Mirfield – my first-ever footplate run on the main line. Next up was where my association with firing on the 'Black Fives' began, and this was where my early disappearances come in.

During 1962/63, Farnley men and engines worked the 'Red Bank' vans, which were the returning paper vans from the Manchester-Newcastle paper train of the previous night. This train, at the time, was always double-headed with a combination of Farnley's 'Black Fives' and Jubilees. I began to pester some of the drivers who worked the turn to let me go with them, and eventually it paid off.

'Unofficial' training

I went with driver Donald Dent on the train engine which, if my memory serves, was No. 45063. Over the following weeks and months, I persuaded several other drivers to let me ride out with them: Howard Smith, who was also the LDC man, and the Thurlow brothers Harry and Walter, who ran the mutual improvement classes all took me along. The only thing I had to observe was that as we passed the shed, en route to Manchester, I had to keep out of sight.

I was given the shovel and allowed to put a few rounds on – not easy when you've never done it out on the road but, gradually, I learned not to chuck coal all over the footplate and to get it to the right spots on the firebed. With

each trip out I got better and, eventually, I was doing my fair share, taking turns with the regular fireman. In this way I worked over the Pennines on all of Farnley's Jubilees and 'Black Fives' – it was great training for what was to come. There was no 'official' training given to footplatemen in those days; everything you learned, you learned by doing the job. The Jubilees might have had names and green paint, but I soon discovered that the 'Black Fives' used less coal and steamed like 'gud 'uns'.

After months of engine cleaning, riding out with the regular crew, and learning the necessary rules and regulations, it was my turn to face the shedmaster and the examination to become a passed cleaner.

The most important aspects of the examination were Rule 55, 'Detention of Trains on Running Lines', which covered what you had to do when brought to a stand by signals; and Rules 178/9, 'Trains Stopped by Accident, Failure, Obstruction or other Exceptional Cause.' You needed to have learned them by heart.

There were also some basic questions about the locomotive; such as 'how do you change a gauge glass?', and I remember being questioned on the passage of steam (the sequence of events which occur when the driver opens the regulator).

After passing the examination, my first 'official' firing turn was a Saturday evening shift on one of the Ivatt tanks working the

station pilot, followed by a couple of trips out on goods trains with 'Dub Dees'; and then a very early-morning fitted goods from Copley Hill Yard to Hillhouse Yard in Huddersfield with one of Hughes' 2-6-0s, more commonly known as 'Crabs'. In my exuberance, we arrived there with enough fire in the box to take us over Shap and sat in the yard at 6am with the safety valves roaring – I'm guessing I was less than popular with the locals!

Going solo

After taking our meal break, we walked up to Huddersfield station and relieved the crew on a parcels train from Liverpool, which we worked back to Leeds over the 'Leeds New Line' via Cleckheaton – this was my first proper turn as fireman on a 'Black Five'. I worked this turn several more times with 'Black Fives' and, on a couple of occasions, a parcels train from Leeds to Stalybridge, riding home on the cushions.

These runs to Stalybridge were my first trips over the Pennines on a 'Black Five' on my own. Those 'unofficial' trips out on the Red Bank vans were now paying dividends.

If my memory serves me, we stopped at Dewsbury and Huddersfield before tackling the climb over the Pennines. On leaving Huddersfield there's a short stretch at 1-in-96, followed by six miles at a continuous 1-in-105 to Marsden and the entrance to Standedge Tunnel. ➔



No. 44767, the only 'Black Five' to be fitted with outside Stephenson's link motion, storms away from Loughborough Central station with a recreation of the 'Belfast Boat Express' on the Great Central Railway. DAVE WILSON

Right: No. 45231 runs through Quorn & Woodhouse, on the Great Central Railway's twin-track main line section, with a mixed goods typical of the kind of the duties that 'Black Fives' were employed on during LMS and BR service. Travelling in the opposite direction with a rake of mineral empties is one of Stanier's 8Fs, another very numerous class, with 666 entering BR service. DAVE WILSON



No. 45428 is approaching Goathland station with the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's lunchtime 'Diner' service. No. 45428 is the only survivor of the engines I worked on at Farnley Junction. The only surviving member of the BR Standard 5MTs I worked on during my Nine Elms days is No. 73050, now based the Nene Valley Railway. DAVE WILSON

Early in 1963 I left Farnley and headed to the Southern Region to be made a fireman, firstly at Stewarts Lane and then moving a couple of months later to Nine Elms. It was here that my knowledge of working with Stanier's 'Black Fives' put me in good stead for working with the Standard Class 5s designed by RA Riddles. I had never worked a passenger turn with a 'Black Five', but one of my first duties at Nine Elms was the 7.54pm Waterloo-Basingstoke service, calling at Woking and all stations to Basingstoke, with one of Riddles' Standard 5s.

The first thing I found out was that a 'Black Five' and a Standard 5 were not the same. I was on the turn for four days that week, and though we didn't stop for a blow-up, it was, at times, a close-run thing.

The Standard 5s might have had rocking grates and padded seats, but they were fickle to fire than any 'Black Five' I'd ever worked on. There was also the issue of the different types of coal: at Farnley we worked with 'hard' coal, which was easy to split along the seams and quick to ignite; at Nine Elms I was working with soft coal, which was slower to ignite – making it easier to 'black' out the fire if you weren't careful.

I remained at Nine Elms until the end of 1965 and worked all kinds of trains with the Standard 5s... boat trains to and from Southampton docks, passenger trains to and from Bournemouth and Salisbury, and fast fitted goods from both Southampton docks to Nine Elms goods and down to Salisbury or Basingstoke. Probably my most memorable trip with one of Riddles' 5MTs was with No. 73117 *Elaine* on a boat train from Southampton to Waterloo. The turn should have had one of Bulleid's light Pacifics, but we were given No. 73117 *Elaine* – it was going to be hard graft.

The boat trains ran non-stop to Waterloo and were smartly timed; 10 well-filled coaches and two fully-loaded PMVs meant we had more than 400 tons behind the tender. It goes without saying that even with 35% cut-off and full regulator, we lost time on the climb to Micheldever, but once over the top we made it all back with some fast running between Basingstoke and Surbiton.

Back to black

After leaving Nine Elms, I returned to Leeds and began working out of Holbeck shed where I was reunited with the 'Black Fives'. There were a few parcels turns out to Skipton and then, following the failure of the diesel allocated to the job, a run to Morecambe with what might once have been called a 'Resi' – or Residential. It was a late afternoon turn calling at Keighley, Skipton, and then stations down the 'little' North Western as far as Bare Lane, where we were relieved to travel home pass in a DMU. It was great fun, and we enjoyed an excellent run with steam to spare.

During my time at Holbeck I also had a turn on one of Thompson's BIs with a run to Cleethorpes and back. I'd never fired 'through the letterbox' and there were a couple of points during the trip where the driver held the big door open while I filled the box up – not exactly copybook style. The BIs had padded bucket seats and electric lighting and, on this trip at least, they steamed well enough. However, one trip is not really sufficient to make any kind of judgement as to how they compared with Stanier's or Riddles' 5MTs.

During a production run which began in the LMS era in 1934 and ended in 1951, three



'Black Five' No.44871 passes under the A9 trunk road, just beyond Carrbridge, with the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain IX' railtour at the start of the long northbound climb to Slochd Summit on the Highland main line, a route the class worked with distinction from the beginning. Now owned by Riley Engineering of Bury, it has recently been one of the locomotives in regular use on 'The Jacobite' services between Fort William and Mallaig on the West Highland Extension. DAVE WILSON

years after Nationalisation, it was inevitable that there would be changes and alterations made. During Stanier's reign, the changes were primarily to the boiler; some had domes, some didn't, and there were also differences in the number of rows in the superheaters.

However, the biggest changes, which greatly altered the overall appearance of the 'Black Fives', were made when HG Ivatt took over as Chief Mechanical Engineer in 1945. Commencing in 1947, some of the locomotives being built were fitted with Caprotti valve gear in place of Walschaerts motion, roller bearings, and some with a double chimney too. 'There's always one' – and in the case of the 'Black Fives', this was No.44767, which was fitted with outside Stephenson's link motion. This oddity was, according to legend, the result of comments made to Ivatt about the GWR Halls and their inside Stephenson's link motion. Whatever the reason, not only is No. 44767 a 'singularity', but it is also one of the 18 surviving members of a class of 842 – which is really quite remarkable.

Despite several of the Caprotti variants being allocated to Holbeck, I never had the opportunity to work on them, so I really can't comment as to whether these alterations improved matters. One thing I can say is that, in my opinion, these changes rather spoiled the handsome lines of Stanier's original design.

Just as I never worked with one of the Caprotti's, I don't, sadly, have any logs of my own work on any of the 'Black Fives' or Standard 5MTs. However, I do have some details of the 'Black Fives' in action at the end of the steam era, firstly a run on a regular turn for the 'Black Fives,' the Manchester to Heysham 'Belfast Boat Express', taken on May 3, 1968, just months from the final curtain.

The engine was No. 45342 and the load seven coaches and a van for 290 tons. Signal checks and station stops meant that this run was one of sharp accelerations rather than all-out high

speeds, but there was some excellent work put in, nonetheless.

The 10 miles from leaving Bolton to the Chorley stop were run in 13 minutes 29 seconds, with the 5.9 miles between Lostock Junction and Adlington SB covered in 5 minutes and 34 seconds; an average just a whisker short of 64mph.

Showcasing capabilities

After leaving Preston, following signal checks and a permanent way slack, the 16.45 miles from passing Barton signalbox to a stand in Lancaster station took just 16 minutes 15 seconds, with a high of 77mph. Putting in better than mile a minute timings on short journeys, of necessity, means fast accelerations and late braking. The two drivers who took charge of No. 45342, on the 'BBE' that night, driver Sullivan and fireman Smith, from Patricroft MPD, in Manchester, over the Manchester to Preston section, and driver Jones, of Carnforth MPD, on the Preston to Heysham leg, were certainly doing their best to show what a 'Black Five' could do when given the opportunity.

The second run, made on June 10, 1963, was another named express, only on this occasion the 'Black Five' was deputising for one of Gresley's A4s – no mean feat.

Like the 'Belfast Boat Express' run, there is no shortage of 'gusto' running in No. 44785's performance on the 5.30pm Glasgow-Aberdeen service, the 'Saint Mungo'. The timings, taken by Terry Jackson, are over the Perth to Aberdeen section, with driver C Miller, of Perth MPD, in charge.

The load was seven for 275 tons and, on the day, the 16 miles between Burrelton and Kirriemuir Junction SB were covered in 13 minutes 59 seconds, an average of 68.65mph. After passing Alyth Junction at 68mph, the next five miles between Eassie and Kirriemuir were all in excess of 70mph, with a high of

76mph around Glamis. After the station stop at Forfar, the 7.3 miles between Auldbar Road and Farnell Road were covered in five minutes 56 seconds, with a maximum of 80mph; had it not been for a 20mph p-way slack just beyond Farnell Road, speed might have risen further.

However, an average of 73.82mph over the 7.30 miles was a more than creditable effort. The 'Saint Mungo' was given a timing of just 96 minutes for the 89.8 miles from Perth to Aberdeen, including stops at Forfar and Stonehaven.

Driver Miller didn't quite manage to match the sharp timings and the permanent way slack didn't help, but this takes nothing away from what was a very fine run with a 'Black Five' deputising for an A4.

Today, 90 years after the first one rolled out of Vulcan Foundry, several members of the class are still providing reliable and active service on Britain's main lines, and they are Nos. 44871, 44932, 45212, 45231 and 45407. Several more are at work on heritage railways, including No.45025, which was the fifth to enter service in August 1934, making it the oldest-surviving member of the class.

One of those engines which I cleaned and fired at Farnley back in 1962 is also one of the survivors – No. 45428 at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

Over the passing years I've been asked more than once which were the better engines – Stanier's 'Black Fives' or Riddles' Standard 5s? What I can say is this: having had one or two trips with Riddles' Standard 5s where, despite my best efforts, steam was in short supply, there was always that slight frisson when you got on one – would she steam, or would you be in for a 'rough trip'? I never had this with one of Stanier's 'Black Fives', although in fairness I did do a lot more work on the Riddles engines than on Stanier's.

Before I sign off, I would just like to say: "Happy 90th birthday, 'Black Five'." **HB**



1



Bachmann and Farish spring model releases are revealed

A RANGE of new models will be available in both OO and N scales this spring following Bachmann Europe plc's latest announcement of models joining its catalogue, with a few surprises included in the news.

1. Brush Type 2s

Eyebrow raising undoubtedly took place when the manufacturer announced it would be adding Class 31 locomotives to its range: many modellers questioned the decision given rival manufacturer Accurascale is well advanced with models of the class itself. However, the Bachmann offering will also cater for the Class 30 precursors, which were originally built with Mirlees engines, being reclassified as 31s after being fitted with the more successful English Electric 12SVT engines.

These models will boast Bachmann's new deluxe features such as motorised engine room fans and specially treated glazing to replicate the tint of the prototype's windscreens. In a first for British outline modelling, there will also be the option for DCC-controlled

automatic uncoupling, with locomotives fitted to standard NEM pockets at each end.

RRP for these models starts at £199.95 and rises to £359.95 for the deluxe sound-fitted versions. Amid the liveries and identities on offer is No. 31435, which was applied to Embsay & Bolton Abbey's D5600/31179 from February 1984 after being fitted with electric train heating equipment.

2. LMS diesel twins

Another newly tooled model, this time for the Graham Farish N scale range, are the iconic LMS-built locomotives Nos. 10000 and 10001, which were the first main line diesel locomotives built in Britain in 1947.

The specifications for these new models include all-wheel drive and pick-ups, a pre-fitted speaker, and working marker lights at each end, with the facility to change between passenger and freight headcodes; DCC-fitted version will have access to additional headcodes.

Several liveries are being made available of the pair to cover their



2

working life, which lasted up until 1966, with detail variations including the modifications for when they were trialled on the southern region.

RRP is set at £184.95 for DC-ready versions.

3. 'Dance Hall' brake vans

Following the successful release of the OO gauge versions a few years ago, the SECR 'Dance Hall' brake vans are also scaling down to N gauge. The nickname derived from the spacious interior cabins and the Farish model promises to accurately recreate the detail of the larger scale, with separately-fitted brake gear and metal handrails.

Four liveries will be available, including SECR grey and BR

departmental olive green, with two running numbers available for each. RRP is set at £34.95.

4. Heritage structures

Included amid the Scenecraft range of buildings announced (which also includes narrow-gauge engine sheds and workshops) is the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's Oakworth station in OO scale, which had only been available previously as part of a The Railway Children train pack, being accompanied by a WR 0-6-0PT in the fictitious GNSR ochre and two carriages. RRP for the building, available with both red and green detailing, is set at £79.95.

Joining the N scale collection is Midsomer Norton South signalbox, as per its appearance at the station on the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway heritage line there. In addition to the SR green scheme, it will also be available in chocolate and cream colours. RRP is £54.95 for each version.



3



4



60 Years of Scottish 'Tractor'

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society diesel group has commissioned an exclusive OO gauge model of Class 37 No. 37403 *Isle of Mull* ahead of the locomotive's 60th anniversary year.

Outshopped by Vulcan Foundry as D6607 in 1965, its main line career continues to this day and the locomotive can often be seen at the head of railtour workings or undertaking journeys to other

heritage lines away from its home at Bo'ness.

The model will represent *Isle of Mull* as it currently appears in large logo blue with full yellow ends, and it marks the society's first model commission since 1998. Price is set at £169.99 for DC versions and £259.99 for sound-fitted examples, which will include the manufacturer's 'Accurathrash' sound recordings. Delivery is anticipated



in the fourth quarter of 2025, with orders now open exclusively via the society's shop with a £30 deposit for DC models and £45 deposit on

sound-fitted ones; a £10 post and packing charge applies to all orders. → Visit shop.srps.org.uk to secure your models.



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Ps in a pod

With the tooling for these popular south eastern locomotives having been taken on by Accurascale in the wake of the closure of retailer Hattons, **Daniel Long** shares the story of the class that, while few in number, is rather varied.

PLACE and purpose define the origins of any locomotive; the P class 0-6-0T is no exception to the rule.

When Harry Wainwright began the development process on this diminutive locomotive design, he was not thinking about where the engines would end up. He could not have known that a P class would be the first engine to run on the Bluebell Railway. He could not have known that they would find use in wartime France. And he certainly couldn't have known that despite the small number of engines eventually produced, half would be preserved for future generations to enjoy and marvel at.

Railmotor experiments

What he did know was that the operating department faced a problem. The SECR had gained a bad reputation among the travelling

public for services which were often late, especially on branch lines and short-distance commuter services where rapid turnarounds were vital.

Initial experimentation with steam railmotors in 1905 proved they were more economical, but in practice they were highly unpopular both with the public, who preferred the comfort of conventional trains, and with operational staff, who found them dirty and cramped workspaces.

The final nail in the coffin was the need for a supplementary coach at certain parts of the day, which removed entirely the benefits of a railmotor when compared to a normal train. They might as well have designed a steam engine – and in 1907, that's precisely what happened.

Place and purpose

The P Class, therefore, was built to serve a specific purpose and to run in



A thick blanket of snow encompasses No. 31558 at Eastleigh on January 1, 1954. The locomotive only survived another six years before being cut up in 1960. COLOUR RAIL

specific places. This was the class that would, hopefully, redeem the name of the SECR with the travelling public.

With more than a passing similarity to the highly successful A1 and A1X 'Terriers', these small tank engines would be designed with motor-train equipment and have appropriate carriages fitted so they did not have to run around stock at each end of the journey. Two were constructed at first, numbered 753 and 734. They left Ashford Works in February 1909 and were soon set to work on the intensive services between Otford and Sevenoaks, as well as those between Reading and Ash.

The P class members were beautifully finished with the ornate styling typical of pre-Grouping locomotives on full show. The elegant green of the SECR was augmented by intricate lining, burnished safety valves, and a

characteristic copper cap on the chimney. They quickly proved popular with crews and passengers – especially when compared to the unpopular railmotors!

Keen to see what else could be done with the class, No. 753 was sent on trials between Nunhead and Greenwich Park, Beckenham Junction and Norwood Junction, Chatham Central and Strood, and over the Westerham branch. Results were positive, and so six more of the class were ordered and delivered in 1910. The class filled gaps in the locomotive stocklist, which is why Nos. 753 and 754 were followed by the non-chronological Nos. 27 and 178 in February, Nos. 555 and 558 in June, and finally Nos. 323 and 325 in July. The differences between the two batches were minor indeed, with the 1910 contingent being fitted with slightly shorter cab roofs



June 1957 saw No. 31556 allocated to Kingston Wharf at Shoreham Harbour, where the P class comprised the only locomotives permitted to operate the complex. No. 31556 was later hired from BR by the Kent & East Sussex Railway where it now resides. S C TOWNROE/COLOUR RAIL



Nowadays it is known for sporting a fictitious blue livery, but this undated photograph captured No. 31323 outside Ashford works long before it was preserved by the Bluebell Railway. COLOUR RAIL



Left: Sporting its now iconic preserved era blue colours, No. 323 Bluebell banks a 'Golden Arrow' service out of Sheffield Park on the Bluebell Railway on August 14, 2016. This popular locomotive will be returning to steam later this year. OWEN HAYWARD

(a reduction of some 4½ inches) and steam reversers.

Small but delightful

The major challenges of operating such small locomotives quickly became apparent. Though considerably more popular than the railmotors on motor-train services, the P class was found lacking when it came to coal capacity. Small coal stages were provided at Sevenoaks (Tubs Hill) and Beckenham Junction to avoid crews having to make an embarrassing – and lengthy – trip to running sheds when they were inevitably caught short.

Another difficulty that soon became clear was the small boiler which the engines were fitted with. Although fine for trains of two carriages, once three or four were needed, there simply was not the power to keep going unless skilfully fired with high-quality coal. The level of skill varied from crew to crew, while the coal was seldom high quality unless running top link expresses. Although the P classes remained on motor-train duties, it wasn't long before other engines came along to support them. An R class 0-4-4, for example, could run sandwiched between two three-coach sets on the line between Moorgate Street and Brixton, while the P Classes trundled along with two. Although better than the

railmotors they had replaced, it was not long at all before the P classes were replaced on motor-train duties themselves.

Such was demand, however, that the P classes continued to find work outside of the more stringent commuter services. One of the more wayward postings was on the Isle of Sheppey Light Railway, where the railcars had proven to be less than successful and were more commonly referred to as the 'Bone Shaker'. Although the ride was much smoother, No. 27, which was assigned to the duty, was moved on to Reading in only a couple of years.

Ps in our time

The advent of World War One saw an exciting new duty for the class. The War Office needed a railway system constructed at its ammunition, clothing and food depots in Boulogne. The SECR was contracted to build the permanent way and signalling and sent Nos. 27 and 753 to assist. Painted unvarnished olive green with large yellow numerals on the tank sides beneath the letters ROD, the two engines were shipped across the Channel to assist in April 1915.

The engines were renumbered 5027 and 5753 on arrival and stayed for a year until a collision caused major damage to No. 753. Both engines were repatriated by

1916 and No. 753 was dispatched immediately to Ashford Works for repairs to the bunker, cab and left-hand side tank. Both engines would be repainted austerity grey, with No. 27 sent to work at Folkestone Harbour.

Nos. 27 and 753 were not unique in their wartime work; Nos. 325 and 555 were regularly seen on the War Department railway from Westenhanger to Manston aerodrome and Lympne Camp. The line was renowned for its steep gradients, which, when combined with the heavy loads you might expect at a military aerodrome, meant that double-heading was a common sight. It must have been impressive watching those tiny locomotives snort up the hills with flatbeds of aero parts.

By the time the Grouping Act came into effect, the class had been all but stripped of passenger duties and dispatched to the harbours at Folkestone and Dover. Their light weight made them one of the few locomotives which were allowed to run along the sea front at Dover. Those based at Folkestone also found work as pilot engines in the shed and at Folkestone Central.

From 1938, members of the class were the only engines allowed to shunt at Shoreham Harbour's Kingham Wharf, which meant that Nos. 1323 and 1557 were sent to

Brighton. One ran trains along the quayside, while the other acted as coal stage pilot at the shed.

Ps on tour

The attempt to find a new home for the P class beyond harbour work saw it trialled in numerous situations. In the summer of 1928, No. A558 was sent to Wadebridge and tested on the china clay line to Wenford Bridge; however, its wheelbase was too long for the sharp curves of the route. On its way home, No. A558 was also trialled on the Lyme Regis branch line, but this was not a success either.

The P class did find a brief home as Winchester station pilot, replacing the B4 tanks for a spell before diesels took over. A member of the class was kept at Eastleigh in case of emergencies at Winchester, but the emergencies did not arise, and No. 31323 was often found laid up at the back of the shed, waiting for work.

With their similarities to the popular 'Terriers', it's little wonder that the class members were scoped out for hire purposes. No. 1556 was borrowed by the Kent & East Sussex Railway in 1938, with No. 1325 hired out the following year. Snowdown Colliery also took a liking to the P class, borrowing No. 31323 in 1943, 1945 and 1953. Bowaters Lloyd Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd liked the hire of its P class so much that it bought



Above: Long after being photographed at Kingston Wharf, No. 31556 sports the SECR livery and No. 753 at Tenterden station on the Kent & East Sussex where it now resides, presently partway through an overhaul that is currently paused. KESR COLLECTION

Left: For the first few months after returning to steam in 2010, No. 178 sported its Bowaters' name Pioneer II. Withdrawn in 2020, it has now moved to the One:One Collection at Margate for static display. ANDREW STRONGITHARM/BRPS



it. By 1958, the locomotive was surplus to requirements on British Railways and so became *Pioneer II* and was painted Brunswick green with light green panelling. Such was the extensive use of the engine by its new owner that it was totally worn out by the time it was preserved. Restoration would take more than four decades.

Withdrawal

The story of the P class is one where it was almost instantly outclassed from the outset. With only eight of the class built, it's amazing that they survived essentially intact until 1955 when the first – No. 31555 – was cut up after being condemned. Nos. 31557 was broken up in 1957, with Nos. 31325 and 31558 following in 1960.

As mentioned, No. 31178 found its way to Bowaters, and later to the Bluebell Railway, where it would join Nos. 31027 and 31323. No. 31556 was sold to James Hodson (Millers) & Sons Ltd, where it was called *Pride of Sussex* and used at its flour mill until 1970. It then found its way back to the now-preserved Kent and East Sussex Railway.

All preserved members of the class have steamed in preservation, forging bold new histories for themselves, well out of the shadow of the purpose they were designed to fulfil. Currently, No. 323 *Bluebell* is currently undergoing overhaul, having been the flagship of the Bluebell Railway since 1960.

Preservation is kinder to some engines than most, and with lighter loads and shorter journeys, the P class has truly found its place and purpose at last.

The models

Although small in number, the appeal of the P class is clear to anyone who looks. Immensely attractive little locomotives, with the elegant pre-Grouping stylings, make them immeasurably appealing as miniature marvels.

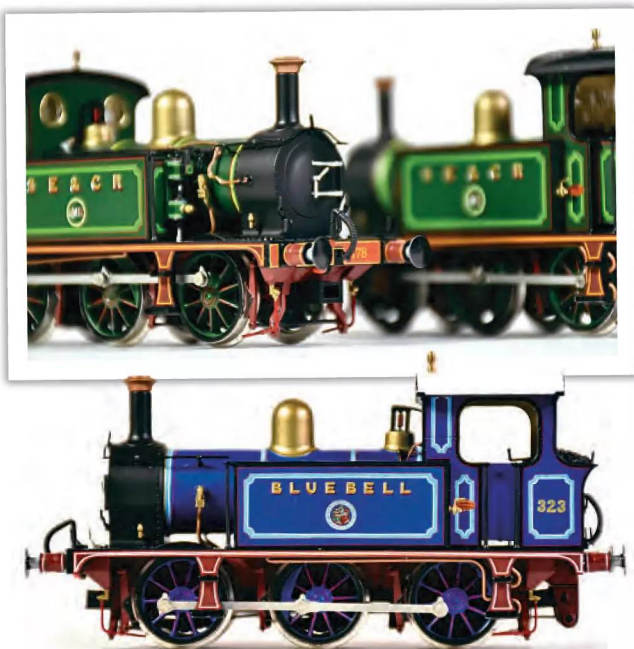
When Hattons first introduced its models in 2018, they were an instant hit. The initial releases covered the class from inception through to preservation, as well as those charming sidesteps along the way, such as *Pride of Sussex* and *Pioneer II*. The new batch of six from Accurascale aims in much the same direction, repeating the popular preserved Bluebell lined blue livery from the first run, but covering ground right back to the SE&CR.

Where the liveries are the same in the case of Nos. 31555 and 31557, the model itself is totally different thanks to the tooling variations!

I talk a lot about the tooling that goes into models nowadays, because I think it's worth recognising how crucial the detail differences are. In the case of Nos. 31555 and 31557, the major differences are with the cab and tank heights. As part of an impressive suit of options, however, smokebox rivet types, cab windows and buffer styles are but a few of the details catered for.

Tellingly, this short list of features is barely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the level of detail crammed into these pocket rocket locomotives.

I repainted one of these models some years ago and it was a genuine pleasure. Not only was the detailing exquisite, but it was more than robust enough to stand up to my



ham-fisted modelling attempts – as well as an unfortunate rapid fall down the stairs at one point where the only damage was a slight bend in the diecast footstep which fouled the siderods. My only critique was that the individually fitted cab steps were not well-glued into place, with many of mine needing attention on arrival. Hopefully, this minor fault will not be present on the upcoming batch from Accurascale.

When it comes to running, the big challenge for any manufacturer is a small tank engine. There is not the space to fit the usual tricks like large flywheels. The ex-Hattons model is exceptional in this regard, with

immensely satisfying control at even the slowest of speeds – perfect for a shunting engine. A six-pin decoder socket allows for easy conversion to DCC too.

For my money, the initial release of the P class was one of the finest tank engines I'd seen released ready-to-run, and I see no reason for this to change with this second batch. The level of detail included is exemplary. I am delighted that Accurascale has added it to its impressive suite of models. It more than meets the high standards it has set with its own releases. I hope this model continues to prove a success for many years to come. **HR**





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KATIE AT THE DAWN OF STEAM!

A love of history brought Katie Wright to Stephenson Steam Railway. Sally Clifford chats to her about her roles.

Katie Wright was brought up with a real acknowledgment of the history around her. Heritage railways and museums were popular places for family trips, but little did Katie know the important part they would eventually play in her volunteering role – and her career.

She said: “I grew up in Cramlington, in Northumberland. It was a mining community, so I was aware of North Eastern heritage. From a young age our parents always took us to heritage railways, lots of museums, mainly Locomotion at Shildon and the National Railway Museum, and the Tanfield Railway.”

Katie’s father and brother had model railways, but until she eventually found herself on the footplate at Stephenson Steam Railway, at Middle Engines Lane, in Wallsend, Tyneside, she had not expressed any interest and is often reminded of her childhood fear of steam engines!

“When I was young, my mum took us to see either *Tornado* or *Flying Scotsman* and apparently, I just screamed and cried because I was so scared. I was very young, so a giant engine that makes a lot of strange noises must have scared me a bit,” she recalled.

So, how did someone with a fear of steam engines end up volunteering with her local heritage railway?

“My interest in history was the main thing that got me to volunteer – I went to a lovely primary school that encouraged every subject; I was really interested in history and art.”

Katie studied GCSE history and, when leaving high school, had a keen interest in North Eastern industrial heritage which prompted her to respond to a volunteering role that she spotted on social media for Stephenson Steam Railway.

Her intention was to volunteer over the summer holidays before starting college in September to study A levels, but her plan took a different course, eventually leading to a full-time role as an archive assistant for Northumberland Archives.

Now aged 21, Katie continues to volunteer for the railway, which is managed by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums on behalf of North Tyneside Council, where she is currently working her way through the ranks.

She believes volunteering has been invaluable in helping her to find her future career and has also given her skills to progress through a variety of roles on the railway.

Key roles

“I started out as a trainee fireman,” she said. “I had a desire to try something completely different and really challenge myself and I thought it was absolutely fascinating.”

“It was amazing, I was really lucky to get on the footplate nearly straight away. I did a few cleaners turns, learning about the engine, which gave me basic knowledge – and it does spark your imagination.”

Volunteering in a mainly male-dominated environment, Katie was conscious that she was forging the way forward for more women



Hands-on: Katie gets to work on the footplate at Stephenson Steam Railway. KATIE WRIGHT

to get involved.

“I was aware they had never had a female trainee fireman – I think they remember a long time ago there may have been a woman on the footplate, so I was aware of that, but it was also really nice to think about all the people who had worked on the engine. There were many volunteers as well who were kind and friendly, and they encouraged me so much.”

Unfortunately, Katie’s preparations to undertake her fireman’s examinations were curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, although she hopes to pick up where she previously left off.

In the meantime, she has taken on other roles around the railway, including becoming an events committee member.

Katie played an integral role in organising the railway’s first 1940s vintage weekend in 2023 and also helped in the preparations for the North Tyneside Steam Railway Association’s 30th anniversary steam gala.

“It definitely nods to the history and the heritage side of things, because a lot of the time we run trains day to day and this is something different for visitors,” she said. “It was a fun day and catered for families as well,

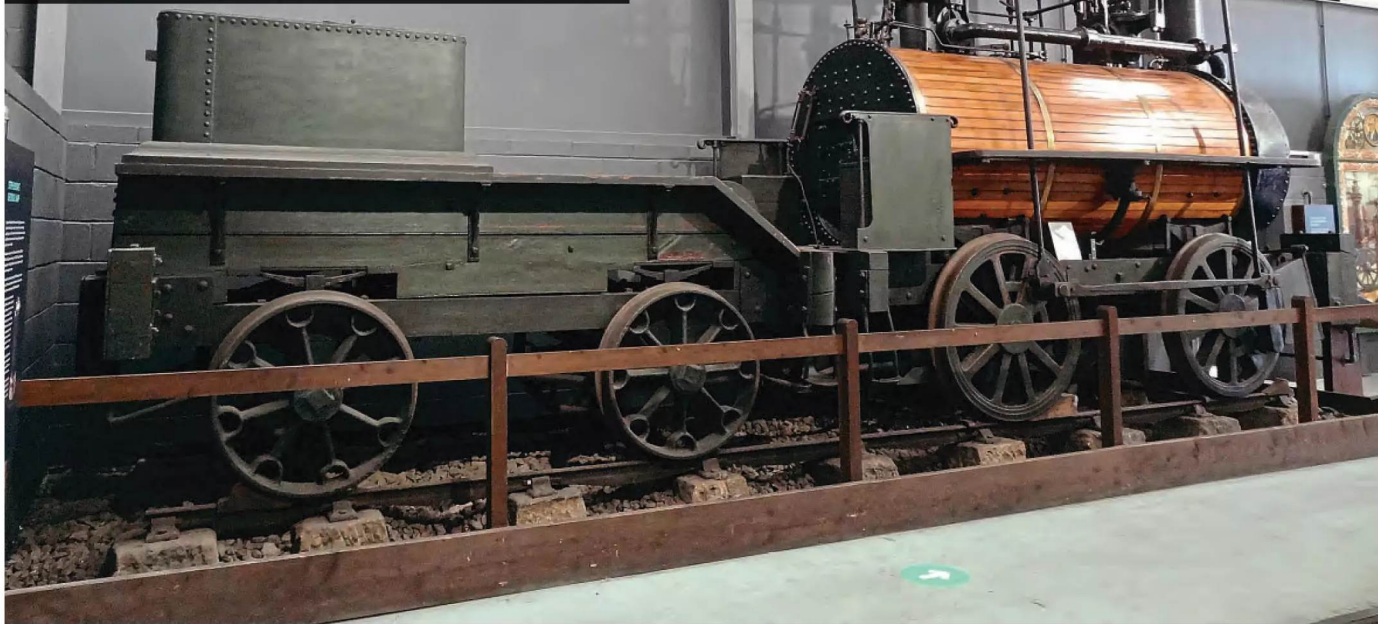


Firing up: Katie on fireman duties. KATIE WRIGHT



On track: WG Bagnall 0-6-0T No. 401 *Vulcan*, also known as *Thomas Burt MP 1837-92*, one of three built in 1951 for the Steel Company of Wales. SSR

Billy, the star exhibit in the Stephenson Steam Railway collection, was initially fabricated and assembled at Killingworth Colliery's West Moor workshops about four miles away under the supervision of George Stephenson and was used to haul waggons carrying coal from the mine to the River Tyne. An archaeological survey carried out by early railway experts Michael Bailey and Peter Davidson and published in March 2018 concluded that **Billy** was built in 1816, not 1826, and established it as the third oldest-surviving locomotive in the world, having been constructed 13 years before the more famous *Rocket*. SSR



because we are a family-centred railway.”

Katie also appreciates the importance of fundraising to help heritage lines such as the Stephenson Steam Railway to continue into the future.

Living history

Coal was once hauled along this line, and today visitors can retrace the journey, navigating the steep gradients along the two-mile industrial railway from Tyne towards the old coal fields of Northumberland in the railway's collection of BR 1950s carriages. Steam, diesel, and electric locomotives also form part of the collection at the railway,

which takes the surname of engineers George and Robert Stephenson, who hailed from Northumberland. Their engineering ingenuity led to some of the greatest developments in railway history.

However, back in their day, the railway would have been a very different place, with fewer females involved. As time has passed, so has the enthusiasm and encouragement for women to get involved in railways, driving trains, and pursuing careers in engineering.

Katie certainly enjoyed learning and developing some basic engineering skills when the pandemic ended her footplate training, she recalled. “I got more involved

in trackwork, the workshops, a lot of proper engineering skills, and I really enjoyed getting stuck in with some of the practical stuff,” she said. “There are always little projects going on, so I got involved with them, boiler washouts... and it really helped – I learned more about the engineering and developed skills.”

Preservation is another important part of her role, which ties in perfectly with her job at Northumberland Archives, she added.

“For years we have had a lot of people donating photographs and other things relating to the railway. People have had fathers or grandfathers who worked on the ➔



Back in time: Katie and her partner Steve Thornton during the 1940s vintage weekend. KATIE WRIGHT



A front view of Killingworth Colliery 0-4-0 Billy. SSR



Above: Katie and Steve at Stephenson Steam Railway. KATIE WRIGHT



Right: The railway boasts a range of steam, diesel, and electric locomotives. SSR

railways, or who were trainspotters, and they want to donate things to the association to be looked after."

As well as finding her career through the railway, Katie also met her partner, Steve Thornton, the railway's head of operations, who is also a driver and fireman.

"It has been a big part of my life," she said, adding that she is currently training for the responsible role of duty operations manager.

"They are in charge of everyone; all the volunteers. They are also the point of contact, the person to go to, making sure everyone is okay, and that everything runs smoothly," she

explained. "It is a very responsible role, and part of the reason why I wanted to take that on is I want to build a career where I can take on more responsibility and, potentially, be a manager one day."

Katie is keen to encourage other women who may be interested in volunteering at their local railway to go for it.

"It's an absolutely brilliant way to meet new people, develop new skills, meet new friends and, potentially, start a career," she said. "It doesn't matter what background you are from – it's about getting people involved and helping them to learn and be

themselves. I found myself volunteering there and I definitely grew as a person. There is something for everyone."

Engineering and railway operations manager David Grindley said: "There are a lot of women working on heritage railways around the country, whether it is in the ticket office, in the tearoom, driving, or helping on the footplate."

"When I first did Katie's induction, she was very shy and quiet and to see her progression is really rewarding." **HR**

➔ To find out more about the line, visit <https://stephensonsteamrailway.org.uk>



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STAR LETTER

Locomotive should leave UK only as last resort

I AM grateful to your correspondent Mark Smithers (p95, issue 316) for setting out the issues surrounding the permanent transfer by the National Trust of *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* to the Waterford & Suir Valley Railway in the Republic of Ireland. While I am sure that W&SVR is a reputable and responsible organisation, I agree that it is completely inappropriate for a museum artefact held on behalf of the nation by the NT to be donated to an organisation in a foreign country, impeding ready access by UK residents, unless the most rigorous process of seeking alternatives has been carried out. I have made this view known to the NT, citing some of the issues raised by Mark Smithers, and I have received the following response from the general manager of the Penrhyn Castle museum, of the NT, which has had charge of the locomotive:

"I would like to introduce myself as the general manager at Penrhyn Castle. Thank you for your email sharing your concerns about the transfer of *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* to the W&SVR. The National Trust has rehomed a small number of locomotives that are not connected to Penrhyn in order to focus on a new experience that will better tell the story of the castle and its industrial history.

"It is important that our railway heritage is protected and there are railway museums

and heritage organisations who have been established for this purpose. We are pleased to have been able to transfer five of these locomotives to well-established railway museums and charities in the UK that will provide public access and care for them.

"Thank you for raising your specific concerns about *Kettering Furnaces No.3*, which we have given to a well-established and regulated railway charity in Ireland who are committed to caring for her and providing public access. The UK and Ireland have a shared railway heritage and the trust has been in contact with the W&SVR for some time about a potential transfer.

"You may be interested to know that when she was given to the trust in 1963, it was considered to be in poor condition. In addition to repainting before it was delivered to Penrhyn, restoration work has been carried out. This included a significant restoration in 1967-1971, which involved replacing the smokestack. W&SVR has demonstrated that it is committed to undertaking a sympathetic restoration and is consulting experts and specialists. As part of this, it will carefully document the current condition and make it available to interested parties.

"W&SVR operates 10km of bullhead track narrowed to 3ft gauge on the original trackbed. The frequency of use of the locomotive and



Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST No.859 of 1885 Kettering Furnaces No.3 on display inside the Penrhyn Castle museum. ROBIN JONES

the length of track it will operate over will only be decided once detailed advice from the engineering and conservation advisors has been sought when the restoration is being completed. The locomotive, even in its final days, was regularly pulling 24 tons of iron stone in basic wagons. This weight represents significantly more than the loads to be managed when operating in Waterford.

"We hope that this additional context is reassuring and would like to thank you again for your interest in the trust and continued support as a long-standing NT member."

I have requested that this decision be reviewed by the National Trust.

Geoff Coombs, email

Petition launched to halt export

I WISH to express my concerns over the recent announcement of the gifting by the National Trust of the Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST *Kettering Furnaces No.3* to an organisation outside the UK.

I have no issues with the southern Ireland-based charity to which the locomotive has been donated. My concerns lie with the legal and moral background to the decision by the National Trust, supposed guardians of our heritage, which has seen fit to allow an historic artefact, held in trust by the NT for many years, to leave the UK. Leaving our shores will put the locomotive outside the sphere of influence of the UK railway heritage movement, where it surely belongs.

Furthermore, the locomotive's 'restoration' to passenger operating standards may well destroy many original features, and in order to make it suitable for its new role, modifications will surely have to be made that could significantly alter its nature. I firmly believe that this locomotive should remain in the UK in the custodianship of a suitable organisation that will continue its preservation.

In order to gauge support, I have opened an online petition and encourage all who share my concerns to add their names without delay at: www.change.org/p/stop-kettering-furnaces-no-3-from-being-exported

Stephen Seale, email

More treasures that can be found across the pond!

I JUST received issue 315 and enjoyed reading the Over Here, Over There! article by Chris Eden-Green. I have visited many of the facilities he mentioned as part of my research for a book I am writing about America's top transportation museums.

In my opinion, the two must-see sites are the incredible Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad and the fabulous Illinois Railway Museum. Each site is well worth a full day's visit, with many terrific photo opportunities.

I also recommend four additional heritage railways that were not mentioned in the article. Each one offers unique train rides:

■ **East Broad Top Railroad, Rockhill Furnace, Pennsylvania** (a three-hour drive west of Philadelphia). The only narrow-gauge railway east of the Mississippi River boasts six steam locomotives and an impressive collection of vintage rolling stock. The steam-driven shop complex features original tools powered by overhead line shafts and belts.

■ **Mid-Continent Railway Museum, North Freedom, Wisconsin** (a three-hour drive northwest of Chicago). This standard gauge facility features an impressive collection of authentic structures,

plus many restored wooden wagons and carriages.

■ **Nevada Northern Railway, Ely, Nevada** (a four-hour drive north of Las Vegas). This remote location formerly owned by the Kennecott Copper Company features a well-preserved standard gauge yard complex that feels like walking straight into a time machine.

■ **White Pass & Yukon Route Railway, Skagway, Alaska**. The best way to visit this remote narrow-gauge line made famous by LGB is on a cruise ship. Even if you don't ride behind a steam locomotive, viewing the breathtaking scenery from a vintage carriage is a memorable experience.

Electric railway fans should also be sure to check out these four gems: Seashore Trolley Museum, Kennebunkport, Maine (a two-hour drive north of Boston); Fox River Trolley Museum, South Elgin, Illinois (a one-hour drive west of Chicago); East Troy Railroad Museum, East Troy, Wisconsin (a two-hour drive north of Chicago); and the Western Railway Museum, Suisun City, California (a one-hour drive northeast of San Francisco).

*Austin Weber,
Chicago,
USA*



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Campaigning for our heritage benefits all

TRAVELLING along the Midland & Great North Joint Railway from Saxby to Bourne in the steam era, one had to pass many bridges, viaducts and tunnels – but it was Bridge 234 which was seen by the locals as the last gateway into Bourne. The locomotive, along with its carriages, would then pass a further footbridge, known locally as the 'red steps', before coming to a halt at Bourne station.

Bourne had been a four-way junction with the lines leading to Spalding, Billingborough, Essendine and Saxby. The railway had brought prosperity to the town, with many workers heading for Bourne town. The street known as Austerby was home to quite a few railway workers; they had even been a pub down the street called the Railway Tavern. The house still exists today (built 1790).

Many businesses in Bourne boomed because of the railway. These businesses included the cress trade and the water industry (Mills and Baxter, and Lee and Green).

Today, there are no public vestiges of significance within the town to memorialise the golden age of Bourne's railway, apart from a few gatehouses dotted around, but these are now private residences.

The last of the public railway structure of any significance was Bridge 234, an occupation bridge that had remained hidden from an ever-growing housing development which was slowly creeping nearer and nearer.

Monumental campaign

There had been an almighty campaign led by the Bourne History Group to preserve the bridge as a monument in recognising the town's railway heritage. Sadly, as reported in issue 297 of *Heritage Railway*, this 1891-built occupation bridge was demolished in the name of progress in 2022.

As much as it pained a community to see the demolition of the bridge, and another piece of heritage erased from existence, all was not lost. As much as the campaign had been to save the bridge from demolition, there was another element to it – and that was to ensure that the bridge stood long after its demolition as a symbol for shining a light on our heritage, both locally and nationally.

In this sense, the campaign had been a huge success, much to the dismay of those who probably would like to have seen the Bourne History Group deflated in defeat and disbanded. Little did they know that the campaign was the beginning of something bigger, better, and brighter. A new light had been shone on our heritage – and it is here to stay.

Bridge 234 was a turning point in our town's history, (everyone could feel it, and still feels it) because for far too long, Bourne has suffered from cultural vandalism – probably no different to many other towns around the UK.

Maybe you are suffering from something similar right now. Maybe you are campaigning to save your heritage, but you are met with much apathy from a few people on social media who do not understand that the only real road to failure is the trend of doing nothing.

I therefore urge you to carry on your campaign with much enthusiasm, even when you are feeling downtrodden and alone (and there are times where you will feel completely



The approach to Bridge 234 at Bourne. Passenger services ended in 1959 and freight in 1965. BHG

alone). Keep your eye on the prize. Make sure your campaign is more than the heritage you are trying to save; make it a campaign alerting the community to the many other heritage assets in your town. Help them see how important our heritage is and why we should always fight for its survival, even if it sometimes seems futile.

Bridge 234 brought a community together, and who would have thought that a town would know the number of a bridge... how many towns do you know that know the number of its bridge?

Thus, we encourage you all to use Bridge 234 as a symbol to fight for your heritage, whether that be railway heritage or some other kind of heritage that your town boasts or has simply forgotten. Use our story to fuel your energy, to inspire, to persevere. Ours was a success story with a twist, because even though we lost our heritage, we gained something too, and now I hope that our experience might influence you to fight like the community of Bourne did. Bourne fought back – and so can you!

Be a brick

To help realise the symbol that Bridge 234 has become, we are attempting to rebuild parts of the pillar at Rippingale station from some of the demolition pile. Unfortunately, we are short of a few thousand bricks – therefore we are calling upon the good nature of this wonderful community in helping us to obtain the necessary number to rebuild part of the pillar, to stand as a symbol of our heritage and your heritage.

If you have any spare blue Staffordshire bricks and would like to donate to the Bridge 234 project, or you would like to donate money so we can purchase the blue bricks, please email me at bournehistory@hotmail.com

We hope the story of Bridge 234 will inspire you in your campaign, or your future campaign, to save and protect your heritage – even when the efforts may seem like a loss. All I can say is this. If I am asked, 'Would I campaign all over again even if I knew the outcome would be exactly the same?', my answer will always be 'yes!' without hesitation, because to see the community of Bourne come together for the love of our heritage is priceless, and that, right there, is down to Bridge 234.

Steve Giullari, chairman,
Bourne History Group,
Lincolnshire

New-build steam locomotives pave the way forward

FRESH Fruits of the New Steam Era in issue 316: a fabulous article on all the new-build steam locomotives keeping us all updated with the progress of each individual engine.

I note the Atlantic H2 appears almost complete – such a pity it's black and not as Douglas Earle Marsh and Robert Billington would have finished it in brown umber (a good match with the Pullman cars) – and the Holden F5 making progress, with the wheelsets away being completed.

I was disappointed that the 567 Group was not mentioned with its Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire 4-4-0, and also the LNWR George the Fifth missing.

Derrick Martin, Hornchurch, Essex

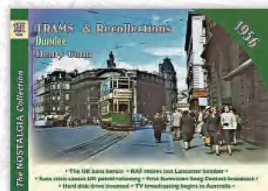
ANOTHER great issue of *Heritage Railway* received and devoured avidly. I especially enjoyed the article Fresh Fruits of the New Steam Era. As I read about *Beachy Head's* progress, I was reminded about the boiler find in a yard in Maldon.

I remember that when it was discovered, it was one of three boilers that appeared to have been built into a wall. Sadly, I cannot remember what type the other boilers were, but I would love to know what happened to them. Are they still in existence and have they become part of other restorations/new builds?

Tony Cashmore, Hartshill, Nuneaton, Warwickshire

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RAILWAY

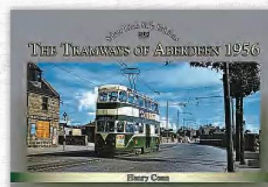
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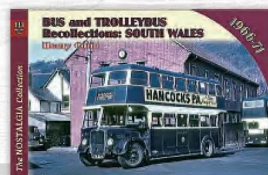
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Corners of the Cambrian

Compiled by Jeffery Grayer (softback, Transport Treasury Publishing, 112pp, £14.95 + £3 p&p, cheques payable to: Transport Treasury Publishing, 16 Highworth Close, High Wycombe HP13 7PJ, ISBN 978-1-913251-59-8).

IT was a trait among steam era trainspotters to have as our favourites not only regularly seen classes of locomotives, but also those that never entered our parish, writes **Geoff Courtney**.

One of my trainspotting chums had a penchant for the 'Hunt' D49 class, even though – or perhaps because – opportunities to see such an engine on the main line out of Liverpool Street were less likely than one of our local First Division football clubs winning the European Cup.

For me, it was, inexplicitly, the former GWR Manor class, although I did manage to 'cop' a few in service, including No. 7818 *Granville Manor* at Reading General on August 30, 1958, and No. 7805 *Broome Manor* at the same station on June 8 the following year. The former, a Tyseley (84E) engine, was working an Up Birmingham express, while No. 7805,

on an Up parcels train, was a Cardiff Canton (86C) resident and thus far from home.

That fondness for the class survives to this day, and I am fortunate enough to have recently obtained for my railwayana collection a cabside numberplate from No. 7821 *Ditcheat Manor*, one of the 10 built at Swindon in the post-Nationalisation era.

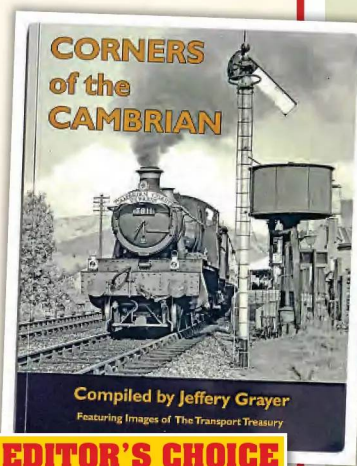
I therefore felt at home when this latest volume from Transport Treasury came through my letterbox, for any publication so titled would surely contain frequent mentions and images of the class, and that was confirmed by the cover depicting No. 7811 *Dunley Manor* on the 'Cambrian Coast Express'.

On browsing through the book, I soon found what I wanted, including Nos. 7803 *Barcote Manor*, 7818 *Granville Manor* and 7823

Hook Norton Manor on the express at respectively Dovey Junction, Welshpool, and Aberystwyth.

Mind you, the Manor hegemony was jolted somewhat by an image of 2-6-2T No. 5541 carrying one of the express's headboards and another of Dukedog 4-4-0 No. 9013 at Machynlleth, and conversely Manors plied their trade on lesser roles, as evidenced by images of No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* at Ellesmere on a two-coach train for Welshpool, No. 7813 *Freshford Manor*, also with just two coaches, at Welshpool bound for Whitchurch, and No. 7801 *Anthony Manor* with four coaches at Moat Lane Junction en route to Shrewsbury.

Manors, Dukedogs and 2-6-2Ts aside, other motive power on view captured by a variety of photographers includes Dean Goods 0-6-0s, 1400 class 0-4-2Ts,



a plethora of ex-LMS Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0s, and Standard tender and tank locomotives.

But to me, the Manors are still the stars.

WESTERN MEMORIES WHERE MANORS REIGNED SUPREME

Severn Valley Steam 2023

(DVD/Blu-Ray, www.steamvalleyproductions.com, 1 hour 34 minutes, DVD £15; Blu-Ray £20, both plus £3.45 p&p).

WE have come to eagerly anticipate this annual visual compilation of everything that has taken place on one of Europe's leading heritage railways over the previous 12 months, and again we are not left disappointed – far from it!

Comprising quality lineside footage from multiple locations, it features all locomotives that visited during the successful spring and autumn galas, including GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle*, B1 No. 61306 *Mayflower* heading the line's fabled LNER rake (and facing both north and south), USATC S160 No. 2253 *Omaha*, BR Standard 2MT No. 78018, Ivatt tank No. 41312, GWR 2-6-2 No. 4555 and Bagnall 0-6-0ST No. 401 *Vulcan*.

Also captured in action are flagship GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*, including footage of it during a freight charter, Ivatt 4MT 'Flying Pig' No. 43106 during the final year of its boiler ticket, Bulleid Pacific No. 21C127 *Taw Valley*, BR Standard 4MT No. 75069, GWR pannier No. 7714 undergoing test runs and returning to service following overhauls, Stanier mogul

No. 2968 and GWR 4-6-0 No. 7812 *Erlestoke Manor*.

If you missed out on experiencing SVR action last year or did visit and would love to again savour the highlights, including rare footage, this is an absolute must.

SEVERN VALLEY AT ITS FINEST

The New Steam Locomotive for the Corris Railway – Falcon Locomotive No. 10

By John Simms (softback, Corris Railway, corris.co.uk, 36pp, £3 plus £1 p&p).

WITH the announcement that the railway's oldest surviving original (No. 3 now called *Sir Haydn*) and newest (No. 10) locomotives are set to meet for the first time at Maespoeth Junction this June (see News, pages 10/11), now is the perfect time to read up on the story of the Corris Railway's latest project to reach completion.

Covering the story from the inception of the idea through to the locomotive's debut on September 9/10, 2023, this informative booklet is packed full of details and images showing almost every step of the construction of the new Falcon locomotive – at a more

than reasonable price, too. A fairly straightforward read, it details some of the differences and reasons between the Falcon as built and its predecessors (both the modified No. 3 and original trio built in the 19th century).

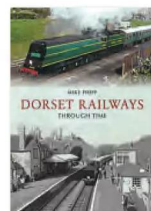
A new-build locomotive is always an astonishing achievement, let alone undertaking a second as the Corris has; it is surreal to see a project such as this, which has spanned almost two full decades, summed up concisely in less than 36 pages, but unless you went into the detail of every nut and bolt, that's probably for the best. There's no padding out; you could almost describe it as an abridged diary of the process.

For anyone looking to simultaneously learn about and support the Corris Railway and its new locomotive, this is an ideal way to do so, with all proceeds going towards the ongoing Falcon Locomotive Appeal Fund for No. 10's continued upkeep.

INTERESTING READ AT A POCKET-FRIENDLY PRICE

Dorset Railways Through Time

By Mike Phipp (Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, softback, 96pp, £15.99, ISBN 978-1-3981-8854-7).



MUCH attention is now justly focusing on the Swanage Railway following the recent national award success of restored LSWR T3 4-4-0 No. 563. However, as this volume emphasises, Dorset has been an important railway county from the start, with holidaymakers heading for the coast.

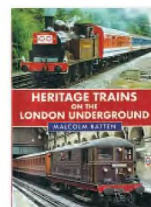
This well-illustrated (with many previously unpublished photographs, both archive and present-day) and very readable volume offers a concise history of its lines, from the 1847 arrival in Dorchester of what was to become the LSWR, the coming of the broad gauge GWR to Weymouth a decade later, the opening of the legendary Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway to Poole in 1870, and the 1880 building of the New Forest 'direct' route from Bournemouth to Southampton, the Beeching closures, and electrification to the present day.

INSPIRATIONAL DORSET DISCOVERY

Heritage Trains on the London Underground

By Malcolm Batten (softback, Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, 96pp, £15.99, ISBN 978-1-3981-1529-3).

A highlight of the heritage era has been the occasional operation of



steam and vintage electric trains over the tube network, including the legendary Steam on the Met events.

Steam on the Underground in the form of works trains hauled by ex-GWR pannier tanks ended on June 6, 1971, but in the decades that followed, it would reappear in the form of specials organised to mark anniversaries such as the Chesham branch centenary in July 1989. The popular Steam of the Met event first took place in May 1993.

This informative volume comprises a well-illustrated historical record of such special – and indeed landmark – events, the like of which we will probably never see again due to the introduction of new signalling systems.

SPLENDID REFERENCE VOLUME

Modern Traction in the North of England

by John Whiteley (softback, Amberley Publishing, www.amberley-books.com, 96pp, £15.99, ISBN 9-781-398116-62-7).

THE author, a well-known photographer, gets to showcase some of his work featuring modern traction from the early 1960s through to the latter years of BR in the 1990s.

It is displayed in the standard Amberley format of two pictures per page, adding up to a photographic survey of the changing scene over the years, mostly of the BR Blue era, but also covering sectorisation.

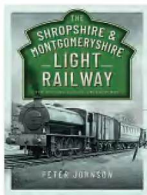
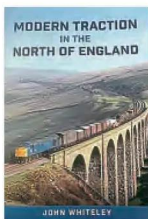
The captions are detailed and provide information on the train in each picture, but also in many cases, the history of the locomotive featured. The area covered ranges from northern Derbyshire and Cheshire, through Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria, and up to the Scottish border.

Image reproduction is very good, making this recommended reading. **REGIONAL PORTRAIT OF POST-STEAM YEARS**

The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway: The Rise and Fall of a Rural Byway

by Peter Johnson (hardback, Pen & Sword, 240pp, £38, ISBN 978-1-526776-17-4).

AUTHOR and historian Peter Johnson has written many books on Welsh lines, including



the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways. Here, he moves on from his 2008 atmospheric book on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway: this much meatier edition, while following a similar layout, contains much more information in each chapter and therefore has almost double the number of pages, **writes Dana Wiffen.**

This packed book starts with a full map of the S&MLR showing all 19 stations, and then goes on to offer a fully comprehensive history of the railway, including its predecessor the Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway (Wern Las to Llanymynech) and its ups and downs from 1869 to 1891.

The first 200 pages cover the early railway history, with the struggles to compete with low freight numbers and various accidents causing delays and fatalities, plus the lows of the receiverships of 1873 and 1891 to closure through to the revival of the Colonel Stephens years (1911-1941).

His involvement from 1906 saw him make several attempts to revive a 20-mile section of the line from Shrewsbury to Llanymynech & Criggion. There were constant delays in reaching an agreement on finance and the need to relay track, rebuild derelict stations and reinstate bridges, and approval was finally given by Shrewsbury and Oswestry councils allowing reconstruction to start on July 21, 1910, with the first train running on April 13, 1911. The revised railway was named the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway.

Further chapters cover the interwar years, the War Office railway until Nationalisation, and final closure in 1960, when a notice of closure statement from the commercial office of British Railways Western Region said: "The S&MLR has been fighting a valiant but losing battle for many years, and although the scars of the early occupation were partially healed by the present occupiers, this last engagement was decisive and it is sad to think that its demise will be without medals."

No stone is unturned as the book even includes photographs of headstones of most of those involved along the way, with newspaper cuttings highlighting the struggles and accidents, many maps, and pictures dating from 1864 onwards, with the bulk of these in the Colonel Stephens section from page 109. Evidence of what is left is also included, with mentions of the refurbishment of Shrewsbury Abbey station and the locomotive *Gazelle*, now preserved at The Colonel Stephens Museum in Kent.

Those who like finite details will particularly enjoy the 40-page appendices offering a wide range of information on stations and sidings,

staff, and figures from 1866 to the War Office years, not forgetting the various Acts of Parliament and locomotives and rolling stock, with additional photographs as well.

The turbulent years of this railway, known as the Potts Line locally, has not seen its memory fade, while its adoration by locals and enthusiasts alike should see this book sell well. **COMPREHENSIVE PORTRAIT OF A COLONEL STEPHENS CLASSIC**

Images from a Disappearing World: The Leicester & Swannington Railway

By Vic Millington (softback, Leicestershire Industrial History Society, www.lihs.org.uk, 130pp, £25 plus p&p, ISBN 978-1-999779-37-5).



THIS really is a book with a difference. At first glance, I did not think it would appeal, but within a dozen or so pages, I was hooked.

Vic Millington is an artist who decided the best way to convey the essence of a line as old as the Leicester & Swannington was through a series of paintings. In so doing, he has not only brought one of England's earliest railways to life, but has also created a world in which readers who never saw the line in use can somehow feel as though they did... in LMS and BR days, and in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, too.

He has achieved this by producing more than 100 colour images and presenting them in a semi-chronological/semi-geographical format, starting with the opening of the L&SR in 1832 and coming up-to-date with Class 66s on the present-day freight-only section.

Artistic licence is employed in a couple of the paintings to show trains and people of different eras in the same location at the same time, a curious but effective technique.

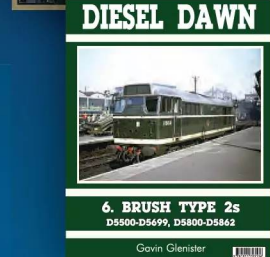
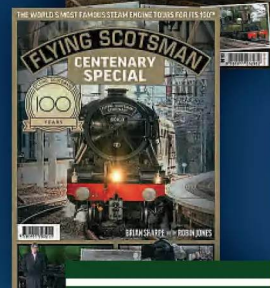
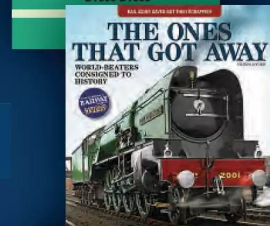
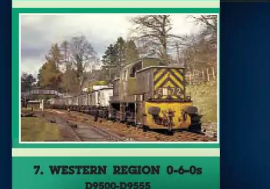
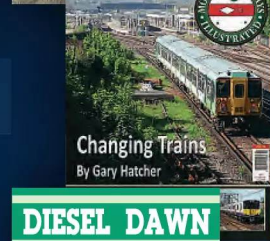
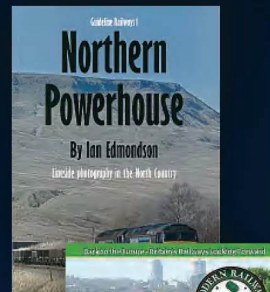
The book will appeal to colliery and quarry enthusiasts, as well as railfans, as some of the Leicestershire coal and granite sites served by the line over the years are featured in addition to stations and goods yards.

It should be noted that, apart from a few newspaper cuttings and extended captions (most of them handwritten), the book is almost entirely pictorial – but that is one of its strengths, for it is not intended to be a detailed history, more a visual 'journey'.

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Tel: 01798 831370.

Open: Weds-Suns.

Bluebell Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles. Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL.
Tel: 01825 720800.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + sch hols from Mar 23.

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.

Running: Weds + Apr 4/5, 11/12.

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.

Running: Suns from Mar 24.

Eastleigh Lakeside Railway

10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway

12¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Exbury, Southampton. Tel: 023 8089 1203.

Open: Daily.

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.

Reopens: May 5.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Havenstreet, Isle of Wight. Tel: 01983 882204.

Running: Tues, Weds, Suns, bank hols, sch hols from Mar 24.

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.

Running: Wes, W/Es, bank hols from Mar 29 + Apr 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11.

Lavender Line

Standard gauge, one mile. Isfield, East Sussex. Tel: 01825 750515.

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1, 20/21.

Mid-Hants Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG. Tel: 01962 733810.

Running: Thurs-Suns + sch hols.

Mizens Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey.
Tel: 07962 400922.

Running: Mar 31.

Old Kiln Light Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.

Running: W/Es.

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

15in gauge, 13½ miles. New Romney, Kent.
Tel: 01797 362353.

Running: W/Es. Daily from Mar 29.

Royal Victoria Railway

10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton. Tel: 02380 456246.

Running: W/Es.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.

Running: Suns + Mar 29/30, Apr 1, 3, 10.

Spa Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 1-4, 9-11.

Volk's Electric Railway

2ft 8¼in gauge, one mile. Brighton.
Running: Daily from Mar 29.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 29 + Apr 4/5, 10.

Bodmin & Wenford Railway

Standard gauge, 6½ miles, Bodmin, Cornwall.
Tel: 01208 73555.

Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns from Mar 19 + Apr 1, 6, 13.

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.

Running: Tues, Sats. Daily from Mar 26.

Devon Railway Centre

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon.
Tel: 01884 855671.

Open: w/eS, bank hols, sch hols.

East Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset.
Tel: 01749 880417.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

Gartell Light Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset.
Tel: 01963 370752.

Running: Apr 1.

Helston Railway

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597.

Running: Thurs, Suns from Apr 4 + Mar 29, 31, Apr 1.

Lappa Valley Railway

7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile. Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.

Open: Thurs-Suns, sch hols.

Launceston Steam Railway

1ft 11¼in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665

Reopens: Spring 2024.

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols, sch hols from Mar 29.

hols from 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.

Running: Suns from Mar 31 + Apr 13.

Seaton Tramway

2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.

Running: W/Es. Daily from Mar 25.

Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221

Running: Suns + Apr 1, 3, 10.

South Devon Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon.
Tel: 01364 644370.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

Swanage Railway

Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset.
Tel: 01929 425800.

Running: W/Es, sch hols + Mar 22, 29.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 29.

West Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, 20 miles. Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 23 + Tues, Weds from Apr 2.

Yeovil Railway Centre

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1, 14.

EAST ANGLIA

Bressingham Steam Museum

Narrow and standard gauge, one mile. Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.

Open: Daily from Mar 28.

Bure Valley Railway

15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk.
Tel: 01263 733858.

Running: W/Es. Daily from Mar 23.

Colne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex
Tel: 01787 461174.

Running: Suns, bank hols + Apr 3/4, 6, 10/11.

East Anglian Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Running: Mar 29-31, Apr 1, 3, 7, 10, 14.

Ferry Meadows Railway

10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cambs.
Tel: 01733 398 889.

Running: W/Es.

Mangapps Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Tel: 01621 784898.

Open: W/Es, bank hols, sch hols.

Mid-Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 11½ miles. Dereham,



The Deltic Preservation Society's Class 55 No. 55009 *Alycidon*, currently running as No. 55013 *The Black Watch*, will star the Great Central Railway's spring diesel gala on April 26-28. The iconic locomotive moved to Loughborough on February 27, where it is planned to work a special train for the society's AGM on March 23, conveying members from Loughborough to Quorn & Woodhouse station. ALEX STOJANOVIC



Easter return for Wissington

The North Norfolk Railway's Steam into Spring weekend, which will take place on the Easter bank holiday of March 29-April 1, will see resident Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1700 *Wissington* return to service on the Poppy Line after two years away on loan. Throughout the four days, the former British Sugar Corporation industrial locomotive will be paired with the railway's four and six-wheeled vintage coaches, which all date back to the Victorian era.

Wissington will run alongside WR 2-8-0 4200 class No. 4277 *Hercules* (on loan from the Paignton & Dartmouth steam railway), as well as the NNR's oldest locomotive, GER Y14 No. 564, which will be paired with the iconic Gresley Quad-art set. Designed by Sir Nigel Gresley, the rake will celebrate its centenary during the event. Advance tickets are on sale now. STEVE ALLEN/NNR

Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.

Running: W/Es, Weds, bank hols from Mar 28.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Brockford, Suffolk.

Tel: 01449 766899.

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1.

Nene Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 7½ miles. Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs.

Tel: 01263 820800.

Running: W/Es + Weds from Apr 3.

North Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA.

Tel: 01263 820800.

Running: Suns, bank hols, sch hols.

Wells & Walsingham Railway

10¼in gauge, four miles.

Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.

Tel: 01328 711630.

Running: W/Es, 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, bank hols + Apr 11.

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles.

Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1, 13.

Didcot Railway Centre

Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.

Tel: 01235 817200.

Open: W/Es. Running: Weds + W/Es from Mar 30.

Epping Ongar Railway

Standard gauge, six miles.

Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 29 +

Apr 3, 10.

Great Whipsnade Railway

2ft 6in gauge. Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.

Tel: 0344 225 1826.

Running: W/Es. Daily from Mar 29.

Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway

2ft gauge. Hanworth, Middlesex.

Tel: 01932 212235.

Running: Suns + Apr 13.

Leighton Buzzard Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Leighton Buzzard, Beds. Tel: 01525 373888

Running: Suns + Apr 1, 3/4, 10/11.

London Museum of Water & Steam

2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.

Tel: 0208 568 4757. Open: Thurs-Suns.

Railway Museums

Beamish

The Living Museum of the North, County Durham.

Open: Daily.

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.

Open: W/Es, bank hols.

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.

Museum of Scottish Railways

Bo'ness, West Lothian.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 01506 825855.

National Railway Museum

Leeman Road, York.

Open: Daily.

Tel: 033 0058 0058.

Penrhyn Castle & Railway Museum

Bangor, Gwynedd.

Open: Daily.

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

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.

Running: Mar 27.

Apedale Valley Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs. Tel: 0845 094 1953.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from 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: W/Es.

Cambrian Heritage Railways

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles (Oswestry), ¾ mile (Lyndcys). Oswestry and Lyndcys, Shropshire. Tel: 01691 728131.

Running: Mar 29-Apr 1.

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, bank hols + Weds from Apr 3.

Crich Tramway Village

Standard gauge, one mile.

Crich, Derbyshire.

Tel: 01773 854 321

Open: Sats-Thurs.

Dean Forest Railway

Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Northcote, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, nine miles. Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 823076.

Reopening: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 4/5, 11/12.

Echills Wood Railway

7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.

Running: Suns from Apr 7.

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.

Running: Suns, bank hols from Mar 31.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Standard gauge, 15 miles. Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + Tues, Weds from Mar 26.

Great Central Railway

Standard gauge, eight miles. Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW. Tel: 01509 632323. www.gcrailway.co.uk

Running: W/Es, bank hols, sch hols.

Great Central Railway (Nottingham)

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.

Open: Mar 16/17, Apr 9/10.

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: Mar 29-Apr 1, 6/7.

Northampton & Lamport Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. Pitsford, Northants. Tel: 01604 820327.

Running: Suns from Mar 31 + Mar 29, Apr 1.

Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Tel: 01604 702031.

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1, 14, 28.

Peak Rail

Standard gauge, four miles.

Matlock, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 580381.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 3/4, 10/11.

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.

Open: Mar 31, Apr 14.

Rushden Transport Museum & Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants.

Tel: 0300 3023 150.

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1.

Severn Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.

Running: W/Es + Apr 2-4, 18/19.

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.

Running: Suns, bank hols from Mar 31.

Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.

Running: Mar 31, Apr 1.

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: W/Es, bank hols Mar 29.

East Lancashire Railway

Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs. Tel: 0333 320 2830.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + Apr 3-5, 10-12.

Eden Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles. Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.

Running: Mar 30.

Great Laxey Mine Railway

19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 862007/670386.

Running: Sats from Mar 30.

Groudle Glen Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453. Running: Mar 31, Apr 1.

Heaton Park Tramway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.

Reopens: TBA.

Isle of Man Steam Railway

3ft gauge, 15½ miles.

Douglas, Isle of Man.

Tel: 01624 662525.

Running: Thurs-Suns + Mons from Mar 25 + Apr 2/3, 9/10.

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: 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: Tues-Suns from Mar 23.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway

15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.

Running: Daily.

Ribble Steam Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Preston, Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.

Running: Sats from Apr 13.

South Tynedale Railway

2ft gauge, 4¾ miles.

Alston, Cumbria.

Tel: 01434 338212.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 29 + Apr 2/3, 9/10.

Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 779747.

Opens: Tues-Suns from Mar 29.

West Lancashire Light Railway

2ft gauge. Hesket Bank, Lancs.

Tel: 01772 815881.

Running: Suns, bank hols from Mar 24.

NORTH EAST

Aln Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland.

Tel: 0300 030 3311.

Running: Mar 30/31, Apr 1, 10, 14.

Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe

Standard gauge, 15 miles. British Steel



On its first public train in 38 years, 1949-built Danish State Railways F class 0-6-0T No. 656, proudly displaying the colours of its home country's flag around its chimney, heads from Wansford to Peterborough along its Nene Valley Railway home on February 10. NVR

Steelworks, Scunthorpe.

Tel: 07889 297271.

Running: Apr 27.

Bowes Railway

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Springwell,

Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07850 916484.

Open: Tues & Thurs to pre-booked groups only.

Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles. Cleethorpes, North

East Lincolnshire Tel: 01472 604657.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

Derwent Valley Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near

York. Tel: 01904 489966.

Running: Suns, bank hols from Mar 31.

Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 795189.

Running: Suns, bank hols + Tues, Fris from Apr 2.

Heatherslaw Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles.

Ford Forge, Northumberland.

Tel: 01890 820244.

Running: Daily from Mar 28.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Haworth,

West Yorks, BD22 8NJ. Tel: 01535 645214.

Running: W/Es, sch hols, bank hols + Weds from Apr 10.

Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway

2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.

Tel: 07407 500884.

Running: Apr 20/21.

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.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 30 + Apr 3, 10.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Grosmont, North Yorks.

Tel: 01751 472508.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

Scarborough North Bay Railway

20in gauge, ¾ mile. Scarborough, North

Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

Stephenson Steam Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

North Shields. Tel: 0191 277 7135.

Open: Mar 29, 31, Apr 1, 4, 7, 11, 14.

Tanfield Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Near

Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

Tel: 07508 092365.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

Weardale Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Stanhope, Co. Durham.

Running: Mar 29-31, Apr 1, 3, 6, 10, 13/14.

Wensleydale Railway

Standard gauge, 22 miles.

Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.

Tel: 01677 425805.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + Weds from Mar 27.

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.

Running: Suns, bank hols from Mar 31.

WALES

Bala Lake Railway

2ft gauge, 4½ miles. Llanuwchllyn,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

Blaenavon's Heritage Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Blaenavon,

Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 29.

Brecon Mountain Railway

1ft 11¼in gauge, five miles.

Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols from Mar 23.

Corris Railway

2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile. Corris, near

Machynlleth. Tel: 01654 761701.

Running: Mar 29-31, Apr 1, 6.

Fairbourne Railway

12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols, sch hols from Mar 23.

Ffestiniog Railway

2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

Gwili Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd

Arms, Carmarthenshire.

Tel: 01267 238213.

Running: Weds, Thurs, Suns, bank hols from Mar 29.

Llanberis Lake Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd.

Tel: 01286 870549.

Running: Suns-Fris, sch hols.

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, bank hols + Fris from

Apr 5.

Rhyl Miniature Railway

15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.

Tel: 01352 759109.

Running: W/Es, sch hols from Mar 23.

Snowdon Mountain Railway

800mm gauge, 4½ miles. Llanberis,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

Talylllyn Railway

2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.

Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.

Running: W/Es. Daily from Mar 23

Teifi Valley Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Henllan, Ceredigion,

SA44 5TD. Tel: 01559 371077.

Running: TBA.

Vale of Rheidol Railway

1ft 11¼in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth,

Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.

Running: Daily from Mar 23.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Galas and heritage events in the coming weeks

MARCH

- 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
- 22-24 Swanage Railway Victorian Weekend
- 24 Crich Tramway Village Model Trams Exhibition
- 29 Talylllyn Railway Stations at Stations
- 29-31 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Day Out with Thomas
- 29-31 Didcot Railway Centre Steam into the Forties
- 29-31 Statfold Country Park Easter Eggspress
- 30/31 Talylllyn Railway Behind The Scenes Weekend
- 31 Avon Valley Railway Chocolate Train
- 31 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Easter Steam Up

APRIL

- 1 Avon Valley Railway Chocolate Train
- 1 Didcot Railway Centre Steam into the Forties
- 1 Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Easter Steam Up
- 1 Statfold Country Park Easter Eggspress

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.

Running: Thurs, W/Es from Mar 28 + sch hols.

Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair

Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols from Mar 23.

SCOTLAND

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Bo'ness, West

Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.

Running: W/Es, bank hols from Mar 24 + Tues from Apr 2.

Caledonian Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Brechin, Angus.

Tel: 01356 622992.

Running: Mar 30/31.

Doon Valley Railway

Standard gauge. Dunaskin, Ayrshire.

Reopens: May 26.

Keith & Dufftown Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles.

Dufftown, Banffshire. Tel: 01340 821181.

Running: W/Es from Mar 30 + Mar 29.

- 6 Abbey Pumping Station Railway Gala and Model Railway Exhibition
- 12 Seaton Tramway Sensory Tram
- 13 Talylllyn Railway Diesel Running Day
- 13/14 East Lancashire Railway Western Region Weekend
- 13/14 Llangollen Railway Branch Line Gala
- 13/14 Statfold Country Park Model Railway Show
- 19/20 Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway 'The Snowdonian'
- 18-21 Severn Valley Railway Spring Steam Gala
- 20/21 Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Spring Transport Festival
- 20/21 Great Central Railway Road Rail Steam Weekend
- 20/21 Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Vintage Weekend
- 21 Crich Tramway Village Model Trams Exhibition
- 26-28 Epping Ongar Railway Steam Gala
- 26-28 Great Central Railway Spring Diesel Gala
- 26-28 Mid Hants Railway Spring Steam Gala
- 27/28 Spa Valley Railway Day Out with Thomas
- 28 West Lancashire Light Railway Friendly Engines' Day

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23rd June - Steam Railway & East Anglian Practical Classics
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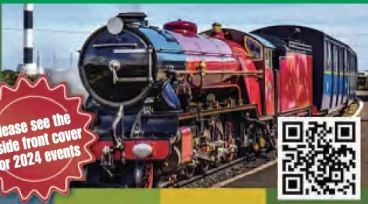
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Please see the inside front cover for 2024 events

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Places to visit this spring

After a strange few years for heritage railways and their supporters and volunteers, the sector is bouncing back, and we are able to look forward to a fantastic spring season full of hope and events for all the family – ranging from the die-hard enthusiasts to those simply in need of a great day out.

We're sure you will have your favourite heritage line, museum or attraction to visit, but if you are looking for somewhere a bit special, a part of the country you may not have been to for a while, or an attraction on your doorstep you'd forgotten all about, then take a look at our map and the adverts on these pages to gain some inspiration.

All the venues and businesses here provide a memorable day out or help with that essential short break that often combines inspiration, entertainment and education... you really can't beat a super day out with the family at one of the fabulous attractions highlighted on these pages... and maybe some lovely locally-sourced food and hospitality too!

Even better, you can always find some interesting byways and highways to and from any museum, heritage line or attraction, so it's a great opportunity to get off those motorways and explore the great British countryside.

As you can see from the map here, there are venues to visit around Britain, so go on, support these great British attractions... you will not be disappointed!

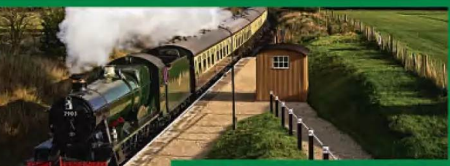


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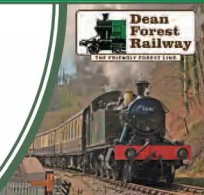
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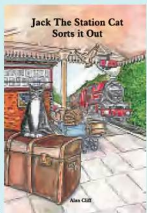
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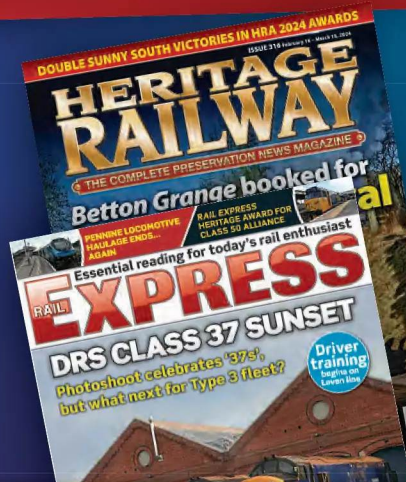
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Your lighter takes

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The day steam outshone a new diesel

By Geoff Courtney

DANIEL Long's feature in last month's issue saluting the long-lived Class 37 diesels was an interesting insight into the background of these iconic locomotives. These Type 3 Co-Co diesels, he said, had to "hit the ground running" in service due to there being no prototype, and as the entire initial batch of the class, numbered D6700-29, was allocated on my home turf to Stratford (30A) during my late 1950s/early 1960s trainspotting days, I thought I would check my logs to see just how hard they hit the ground.

The answer is: very hard. My first recording of the class was D6703 passing through with an Up Norwich-Liverpool Street express on Friday, February 10, 1961, fewer than six weeks after it had been outshopped by English Electric's Vulcan Foundry. As it flashed by, this newcomer must have been barely run-in.

That's only half the story, for the train it was heading was 'The Norfolkman,'

one of the line's flagship expresses that before these newcomers appeared had been the domain of Britannia Pacifics for a number of years.

Mind you, steam had a last laugh six months later, on August 2, when I logged the same titled train hauled by a steam locomotive. And no, it wasn't a 'Brit' but a modest B1 class 4-6-0, No. 61254.

Maybe a diesel had failed, but whatever the reason it came through Ilford 10 minutes earlier than D6703 had managed back in February.

The Class 37s, as they became, have deservedly earned admiration and accolades, and despite having been introduced more than six decades ago, some are still running on the main line, while more than 30 have been preserved. As Daniel wrote in his eulogy last month, those survivors "represent a unique part of the class's rich historical tapestry."

Even steam enthusiasts surely can't argue with that.



Double diesel delight: Type 3 D6703 stands light engine at Liverpool Street while Type 4 D205 nearby is the centre of attention. The date of the image is unrecorded, but D6703, which entered service on December 28, 1960, looks in pristine condition, indicating that the photograph was taken either at the end of that year or early in 1961. This Co-Co diesel, which was logged by *Heritage Railway* contributor Geoff Courtney at Ilford on 'The Norfolkman' fewer than six weeks after being delivered by English Electric, was a member of an iconic and long-living class of diesels that has gained a strong following among enthusiasts. TRANSPORT TREASURY/GEORGE HEIRON

Little blue engine 'first' in a Great Western depot!

THE Isle of Sodor has annexed Tyseley Locomotive Works – and Thomas the Tank Engine will be making a historical first appearance there for four days in April.

The Warwick Road home of Vintage Trains has joined heritage venues in hosting Day Out With Thomas: Bubble Tour this year, after securing the world-famous railway franchise.

There will be unlimited rides behind Thomas, aka ex-NCB Hunslet Austerly 0-6-0T No. 3781 of 1952, which was converted from a saddle tank to a side tank at the Mid-Hants Railway in 1994 to take on the role of the Rev W Awdry's most famous character.

More on offer

Thomas will be adorned in bubbles, and all children will receive a bubble giveaway onsite.

Visitors can meet Diesel, Duck and the Troublesome Trucks, and there will be singalongs and performances from Rusty and Dusty and Sir Topham

Hatt, storytelling sessions, a play pod with Thomas and Friends activities, a themed scavenger hunt, garden games, a roundabout, fairground ride, a balloon modeler, a bubble artist and Thomas and Friends giveaways for every child.

There will also be a grand finale engine race between Thomas and Diesel!

Tyseley's Class 88 No. 13029 will play Diesel and GWR 0-6-0PT No. 7752 will be Duck.

Two sessions of family activities will be held each day from April 3-6, the morning sessions from 10am to 1pm and the afternoons from 2-5pm.

When Tyseley last held a similar event 30 years ago, Thomas was not present, and other locomotives and rolling stock played the part of different characters.

This year, Tyseley has joined Mattel's Day Out With Thomas franchise, along with the Spa Valley Railway, to bring the number of participating venues up

to 12. Hopes were widespread that the shows on offer at each heritage line would encourage families to make return visits on normal operating days and instigate an interest in all things steam on steel wheels for a new, younger generation.

'Significant'

Vintage Trains chairman Michael Whitehouse said: "This makes our second significant franchise as this year will be our fourth Polar Express franchise operation which, on its own, grosses just under £1 million with us."

Free car parking is available onsite for up to 100 vehicles, including a few Blue Badge holder spaces. There is also on-street parking nearby.

The other Bubble Tour venues for 2024 are: Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (March 29-31, May 5/6, July 13/14 and October 5/6); East Anglian Railway Museum (March 29-April 1, August 24-26, October 26/27); Mid-



On song for the 2024 Bubble Tour. DOWT

Hants Railway (May 25-June 2); Spa Valley Railway (April 27/28, May 4-6); East Lancashire Railway (May 4-6, August 3/4, October 5/6); Caledonian Railway (July 27/28, August 24/25); Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway (May 11/12, July 13/14, September 7/8); Swindon & Cricklade Railway (August 24-26) and Whistlestop Valley (April 20/21, July 20/21, October 12/13).

→ To book tickets and for more details, visit www.quaytickets.com/dayoutwiththomas

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 318 out Apr 12

Coverage of the two heritage-era Great Central railways' groundbreaking March 16/17 joint 125th anniversary gala.

PLUS

WORLD'S FIRST AT 75

With the Talylyn Railway launching its namesake locomotive and 75th anniversary appeal ahead of the 2026 celebratory year, Owen Hayward finds out how the first volunteer-run line is securing its future.



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Rail Holidays of the World



See more by Train, Tram & Steam ~ Book Soon!

More Tramways of Germany ~ Departs 12 May 2024 - 15 days from £2,450pp

We return to Germany to ride a new selection of tram networks both large and small. This escorted tour heads to Hannover, Bremen, Braunschweig, Berlin, Frankfurt an der Oder, Cottbus, Erfurt, Jena and Leipzig.

- ❖ Unlimited travel on the public transport systems of all cities and towns we visit
- ❖ Visits to both the Schöneiche-Rüdersdorfer Strassenbahn and Wolterdorfer Strassenbahn
- ❖ Unlimited Standard Class rail travel at no additional cost for the duration of your stay
- ❖ Hannover Tram Museum excursion
- ❖ Chartered historic tram ride in Frankfurt an der Oder
- ❖ The Historic Tram Museum in Leipzig



Belgian Transport Extravaganza ~

Departs 8 June 2024 - 10 days from £1,550pp

An in-depth tour of Belgium using various modes of transport from trams, steam trains to boat lifts – an interesting way to explore this small country.

- ❖ 8-day Belgian Rail Pass for unlimited rail travel
- ❖ Steam train excursions at Maldegem and Mariembourg
- ❖ Excursion to the Canal du Centre
- ❖ Excursions to the Coastal Tramway and Ghent
- ❖ Public transport tickets for Ghent, Charleroi and Brussels

The Green Hills of Spain ~ Departs 13 June 2024 - 15 days from £3,140pp

Forget the usual Costa Spain coastal holidays and travel from the UK by train through France and along Spain's 'green' coastline, taking in the vibrant cities of San Sebastian, Bilbao, Santander, Gijon, Leon and A Coruña en route. Encounter some of the country's most beautiful and unspoilt beaches before returning via France to ride the La Rhune Rack Railway.

- ❖ Scenic rail journey between San Sebastian and Bilbao
- ❖ Journey on the metre gauge FEVE network
- ❖ Luggage transfer between hotels in Spain
- ❖ Basque Railway Museum
- ❖ Petit train de la Rhune Rack Railway
- ❖ Time to explore Bilbao, Santander, Gijon, A Coruña and León
- ❖ A mix of coastal, moorland and mountain scenery

Harz Explorer ~ Departs 1 June 2024 - 7 Days from £1,475pp

Travel by train from London via Aachen to Wernigerode for a 4-night stay, spending 3 full days exploring over 140km of narrow gauge railways through the Harz Mountains. An HSB pass will give you the freedom to plan your own routes or join your expert tour leader. Return includes an overnight stay in Frankfurt.

- ❖ Explore 140km of steam narrow gauge railway
- ❖ Ascend the Brocken by steam train
- ❖ Time to explore Quedlinburg - a UNESCO World Heritage town
- ❖ Explore Frankfurt with travel card included
- ❖ Good quality hotel in the heart of Wernigerode



Rails, Trails & Tracks of the Mid Pennines ~ Departs 16 June 2024 - 6 days from £1,125pp

A chance to enjoy a few transport-themed days in Brontë Country, including journeys on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway (KWVR) and the Settle-Carlisle Railway. Go behind the scenes of the KWVR and travel by vintage bus to learn more about the industrial history of the area. See Worth, Sladen and Bridgehouse Beck valleys, visit canals, tunnels and waterworks and enjoy a tour of Hebden Bridge, including the Rochdale Canal. Escorted by local expert and author, who was also an extra on the 1970 film The Railway Children.

- ❖ Behind the Scenes access to the KWVR
- ❖ Travel on the famous Settle & Carlisle Railway
- ❖ Enjoy the splendid scenery of the Brontë Moors
- ❖ Expert and knowledgeable tour leader

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